

Country Profile India



STOP CHILD EXPLOITATION!



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India has close to 430 million children.¹ While the country is the fifth largest economy in the world, socio-economic disparities are widespread. India has the largest number of early married girls in the world, and 2011 National Census reported that 10.1 million children are reported to be engaged in child labour.² The country is home to the second largest number of internet users across the globe, and children's vulnerability to sexual extortion and child sexual abuse material is growing at an exponential rate.

¹ United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division (2022).

² UNFPA-UNICEF GLOBAL PROGRAMME TO END CHILD MARRIAGE, 2020 Country Profile India

³ The most recently available decennial population census of India by the Ministry of Home Affairs

Stakeholder Reach
2023

CHILDREN
14134

FAMILIES AND
COMMUNITIES
17446

CIVIL SOCIETY
136

LAW
ENFORCEMENT
AGENTS
127

GOVERNMENT
OFFICIALS
1146

PRIVATE
SECTOR STAFF
49

Our Projects

Initiatives for Married Adolescent Girls' Empowerment (IMAGE)

Location : Karnataka state

In India, poverty and social norms contribute to child marriages. Girls drop out of school, get pregnant early and in some cases even face domestic abuse and violence. The project empowers early married girls in accessing education, health care, vocational training and protection from gender based violence. The girls are also organised into a movement where they advocate with officials for access to services, better implementation of laws, and spread awareness for a child-marriage-free society.

Children Empowerment for Getting Out of the Devadasi System (GOOD)

Location : North Karnataka state

A historic practice which began with the consecration of girl children for worship, today the Devadasi practice in few socio-economically disadvantaged communities forces young girls into sexual exploitation. We equip children from the community to advocate for their rights, nurture their life skills and ensure they access education. Other initiatives are community behaviour change and advocacy with authorities for policy changes & stronger implementation of laws.



The Mica Project

Location : Koderma and Giridih, Jharkhand

Families dependent on mica mining live in difficult socio-economic conditions forcing children to work. We take them out of child labour through child and community-led empowerment comprising children's clubs, additional income generation for parents coupled with community awareness. We strengthen child protection institutions and advocate with the government & the private sector to formalise supply chains & ensure due diligence.

Step Up the Fight Against Sexual Exploitation of Children (SUFASEC)

Location : Bangalore and Chennai cities

As part of the Down to Zero Alliance,⁴ we work to strengthen systems to protect children from online child sexual exploitation (OCSE), empower children to access their sexual and reproductive health and rights. The project works with multiple stakeholders such as school teachers, parents, law enforcement agencies and government representatives to create platforms for knowledge sharing, sensitisation and systems

⁴ Down to Zero (DtZ) alliance is a global initiative of a group of INGOs (Terre des Hommes Netherlands, Plan International Netherlands, Defence for Children- ECPAT, Free a Girl, CRC Asia and Conexión) to address sexual exploitation of children.

Terre des Hommes Netherlands is a global child protection organisation which protects children and prevents child exploitation, empowering children to make their voices count. We tackle issues at the roots by enabling systemic change. We ensure that children are at the centre of our initiatives.

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Misscollect

Location : Bangalore city

With large unskilled migration in Bangalore city, most slum dwellers engage in waste collection and poverty forces children to be involved in the process. They do not go to school & are at severe risk of abuse and exploitation. We set up early learning centres, bridge courses and enrol children in mainstream education. To increase economic capacities in families, we train mothers to be garden instructors in schools.

Comprehensive Children and Community Empowerment Project (CCCEP)

Location : Coimbatore city

The project works in the slums of Coimbatore city in India, where socio-economic vulnerabilities lead to children being out of school, working in worst forms of child labour and even facing sexual exploitation and abuse. We address major child protection issues through community and child empowerment initiatives ensuring children access education, health care and social protection.

Major Donors : International Labour Organization, Mercedes Benz, Wipro Cares

Achievements 2023

1. Lobby efforts and advocacy have influenced the establishment of a government order to make 'father's name as optional' in educational application forms which enables Devadasi children's access higher education. For many children of Devadasis their father's identity is unknown. This brings a lot of trauma and is one of the main reasons for children to drop out due to stigma and ridicule.
2. The State Government announces the development of a 'New Dhibra Policy' to formalise adult mica mining and protect the rights of adult mica workers to ensure reduction in child labour.
3. Children participate in an action research titled 'unmasking the digital playground of children' to arrive at the situation of online child sexual exploitation in India. This will help in designing interventions suited to the needs of children.

Lead Implementing Partner : Children of India Foundation

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"I found a new purpose in my life - to empower girls like me and stop child marriages. I don't want any other child to go through what I did."

Rupa

At the age of 14 Rupa was forcefully married. By 16 she had two children. The trauma was unbearable. With our support she was introduced to tailoring. She trains other early married girls and together they raise awareness against child marriages and advocate for policy changes.

We fight against Child Labour, Sexual Exploitation of Children and Humanitarian Crises.

Key Figures

58

Child marriages prevented

3193

Children at risk of and rescued from child labour access education

445

Children nurtured as agents of change

124

Parents taught positive parenting for online safety

1167

Families who access livelihood support increase their income