

Vacha Charitable Trust

Registered as: Trust | **Founded:** 1990

Head Office Location: Mumbai

Region of Impact: Maharashtra and Gujarat

Annual Budget (2012-13): INR 64 Lakhs (\$107,000)

Adolescent Girls Budget (2012-13): INR 48 Lakhs (\$80,000)

Staff Strength: 15 full-time, 12 part-time, 13 volunteers



Overview

Vacha Trust works to create a society without exploitation, oppression or discrimination against women, girls or any other section of society. Vacha works towards this through educational and empowerment programmes, resource creation, training and networking. The activities help in increasing girls' participation in civic life by imparting relevant life skills, facilitating discussions where girls can speak about their issues and concerns, and ensuring their continuation of education till Grade 12.

Adolescent Girls Program

Vacha has two programs that focus on adolescent girls - Urja and Tejasvi. While Urja is exclusively for girls and is carried out mostly in conservative communities, where girls are not encouraged to work with boys, Tejasvi is for both girls and boys, who are taught to work collaboratively with each other. Both programs are for children whose vulnerability is due to caste, ethnicity or minority status, and cover children in slums as well as municipal schools in their respective areas. These children primarily belong to Scheduled Castes, Other Backward Castes (OBC) and Scheduled Tribes. Vacha, along with its community-based interventions, also fills gaps in the school system and within government programs by providing supplementary education and facilitating community action for implementation of government schemes.

Model

Urja and Tejasvi are executed through the following activities per centre:

- Three sessions a week in children's neighbourhoods on English, computers and general studies
- Six special workshops in schools and *bastis* including health and sex education
- At least one gender, health, career fair for each group
- Two exposure trips to learn about area resources such as health centres, hospitals, transport system, police station, ward office, science center, nature park
- Mobile library (for girls who do not go to schools)
- Additional time is spent on special events, community contact and mothers' meetings.
- Catch-up Classes are conducted for weak students in municipal schools -who have not developed a good level of understanding in a particular language, get introduced to new languages with different scripts.



Milestones

- 1990: Started conducting gender trainings
- 1998: Initiated participatory research program on girls' health
- 2005: Started Program Tejasvi, followed by Urja
- 2008: Organized national symposium

Impact to Date

- 2,816 children impacted directly and 3,590 indirectly in 2012-13
- Reached out to 11 communities and 8 schools through Program Urja
- Reached out to 15 communities and 8 schools through Program Tejasvi

Theory of Change

If the development and empowerment issues of girls in poverty are highlighted, the girls will be empowered and stronger women will emerge. This, in a fast urbanising India that involves significant movement of poor labour force, will result in girls and women having a productive life, for themselves and their families.

Growth Plans

While Vacha's Urja Program extends to 11 slums and 8 schools, the Tejasvi Program has grown from 2 to 15 communities and from 1 to 8 schools over the past seven years. Parts of the program are already being executed in other geographies such as Surat, New Mumbai and North Gujarat. In the next three years, Vacha plans to reach and additional 20 slum colonies/slum rehabilitation projects and at least ten schools.

Vacha does see a need to produce more child-centred resources with added participation from children themselves and would like to involve relevant authorities and interested individuals on the issue of social vulnerabilities amongst children with a special emphasis on poor children's vulnerabilities. Vacha will thus initiate networking and advocacy work on child rights.

	2012-13 (a)	2013-14 (e)	2014-15 (e)	2015-16 (e)
Total Org Budget (INR Lakhs)	64	90	99	109
Total Adolescent Girls Budget	48	72	80	87
No. of Adolescent Girls	2,816	3,322	4,000	4,800

Leadership & Management

Vacha's team of 40 is headed by Sonal Shukla. Sonal has a background in Gandhian education, literature and aesthetics. She has been working on Women's Movement for over 3 decades. Sonal has written extensively on women's issues in Gujarati and English and is on the editorial board of interdisciplinary journals such as 'Girlhood Studies' and 'Quest in Education'. The team has a strong second-line management.

Partnerships

Vacha works in partnership with the Public-Private Partnership Cell (PPPC) of Mumbai Municipal Corporation. The team works with state institutions for primary education to create syllabus for gender training of teachers and girls and also provides this to two districts of Gujarat under its Education For All policy. Vacha has also participated in UNICEF, State Dept. of Education's consultation programs .

Funders

Vacha raises funds primarily through major grants by institutional donors and corporates and other smaller grants from women-focused private foundations. Examples of these include Empower, Global Giving, Star of Hope, Tata Trust and ONGC are some of these donors.

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