



WOMEN'S EDUCATION PROJECT

Helping Young Women of Limited Means
Discover their Unlimited Potential



View WEP program videos here:

http://womenseducationproject.org/?page_id=2717



Women's Education Project

Helping Young Women of Limited Means

Discover their Unlimited Potential

Founded in 2002, **WOMEN'S EDUCATION PROJECT (WEP)** believes that educated women are the most efficient solution to fighting poverty. To help young women realize education and career ambitions that will make lasting social change in her own life, family and community, WEP prepares young women, (from the ages of 15 to 25) for the high school and college classroom and helps them to become self-reliant, healthy and socially aware.



THE NEED

WEP students come from the poorest backgrounds. Limited access to potable water, congested homes, illnesses, malnutrition, domestic responsibilities, debt and social pressures are among the daily obstacles which trap them in poverty—dreams of being a teacher, health care worker, or entrepreneur are lost forever. Their parents, daily wage earners (\$1-2 a day), are uneducated and cannot guide their daughters much less fund tuition, books or transportation.

WHAT WE DO

WEP partners with local institutions to develop study centers which provide

- scholarships to area colleges
- academic support courses—study skills, English and computer
- a library, computer lab and study rooms
- a health and wellness program: gender awareness, health and nutrition (kitchen garden training), personal finance, civic responsibility (volunteering), and rights
- career resources towards meaningful employment



OUR CENTERS IN SOUTH INDIA

Sudar ("light" in Tamil) in Madurai, Tamil Nadu is WEP's first center. 70 students attend this urban support center—a short walk from their slum community. After the academic day at area high schools and colleges, students come Sudar to study in the library and attend courses and workshops. In 2010,

- 40 received scholarships
- 23 graduated from college
- 16 began careers at institutions recommended by Sudar staff
- 40 volunteered 120 hours with orphans, the elderly and mentally challenged

At Ushassu ("morning light" in Telugu), 25 students come from villages outside of Hyderabad. Like the Sudar program, these students are both high school and college students, but study at the same college and meet on campus to attend Ushassu support programs. In 2010,

- 25 received scholarships
- 70% raised their grades; absenteeism decreased
- 20 students grew kitchen gardens to bring fresh vegetables into their homes



FIVE YEAR PLAN

By 2015, WEP will have 10 centers supporting 100 students at each center

- 2011—launch of Bangalore center; launch of a second urban program in Hyderabad
- 2012—development of curriculum and program
- 2013-2015—launch 6 programs throughout India supporting a total of 1000 students



WEP Ushassu Students gather before attending a class at college

FACT SHEET

Despite economic growth, India holds the largest population living on less than \$1.25 a day. As shown by the statistics below, educated woman provide income, healthcare, and participate in family decisions to lift her family from poverty.

A woman who has received no education

76.5% marry before the age of 18

At first birth 29.8% have at least three antenatal appointments, 18% receive post natal care

26.1% have children immunized

53.2% have children with stunted growth

60.2% of married women are anemic (mostly iron deficiency anemia)

30% of women know about HIV

34.9% participate in household decisions

A woman who has studied up to or beyond the 10th grade

86% wait until after studies to marry

85.3% have antenatal appointments and 73.4% receive postnatal care

71% of children get BCG, measles and polio vaccinations

26.3% have children with stunted growth

46.6 are anemic (this is still high)

96.7 have heard about HIV

43.5% participate in household decisions (this is still low)

National Family Health Survey India. 2005

GIRL CHILDREN DROP OUT OF PRIMARY SCHOOL DUE TO:

- early marriage—social traditions and pressure
- poor health and illnesses
- placement in low income employment
- household responsibilities
- poor access to transportation
- poor facilities and teaching at school

WHY SUPPORT WOMEN'S EDUCATION

- An educated woman has greater independence.
- If she is employed (with reliable income and safe working conditions), she contributes meaningfully to her community with an informed and knowledgeable voice.
- At home, she will spend a large portion of her income on nutritious food and healthcare.
- She will manage the family finances.
- She will have fewer and healthier children and ensure their education.

It is WEP's keystone belief that the decisions an educated woman makes as a self-reliant, informed, responsible citizen, effect lasting social change in her own life, her family and society.



Women's Education Project

Helping Young Women of Limited Means
Discover their Unlimited Potential

Our Team

Board of Directors

Suparna Bhasin, President
Sidney Small, Treasurer
Katherine Clark, Secretary
Aarabi Balasubramanian
Lisa Koonce
Elizabeth McCann
Reza Mirza
Brandi Moore
Nancy Settergren
Veerandra Srivastava
Zoe Timms



Please visit www.womenseducationproject.org for the board of directors biographies.

Zoe Timms—Founding Director, Women's Education Project

As a senior at the University of Wisconsin, Zoe Timms participated in the University's College-Year-in-India program. Through this experience, she had the opportunity to work closely with former child laborers who had left challenging low-wage employment in factories and fields to study—many for the first time. This opportunity catalyzed her commitment to a career in grass-roots education.

Following graduation and after three years in New York working with the Near East Foundation, she returned to India to work as head of the University of Wisconsin's College-Year-in-India, Madurai program. During this period, in 2002, she founded Women's Education Project (WEP). With the guidance of the local Madurai community, Zoe developed the center's philosophy: to provide a comprehensive educational program, in a caring, supportive, environment, enabling women from the poorest backgrounds to succeed in college and careers.

Today, this New York based 501(c)(3) foundation operates two centers Sudar ("light" in Tamil) founded in 2002 in Madurai, Tamil Nadu and Ushassu ("morning light" in Telugu) founded in 2008 in Hyderabad, Andhra Pradesh.

