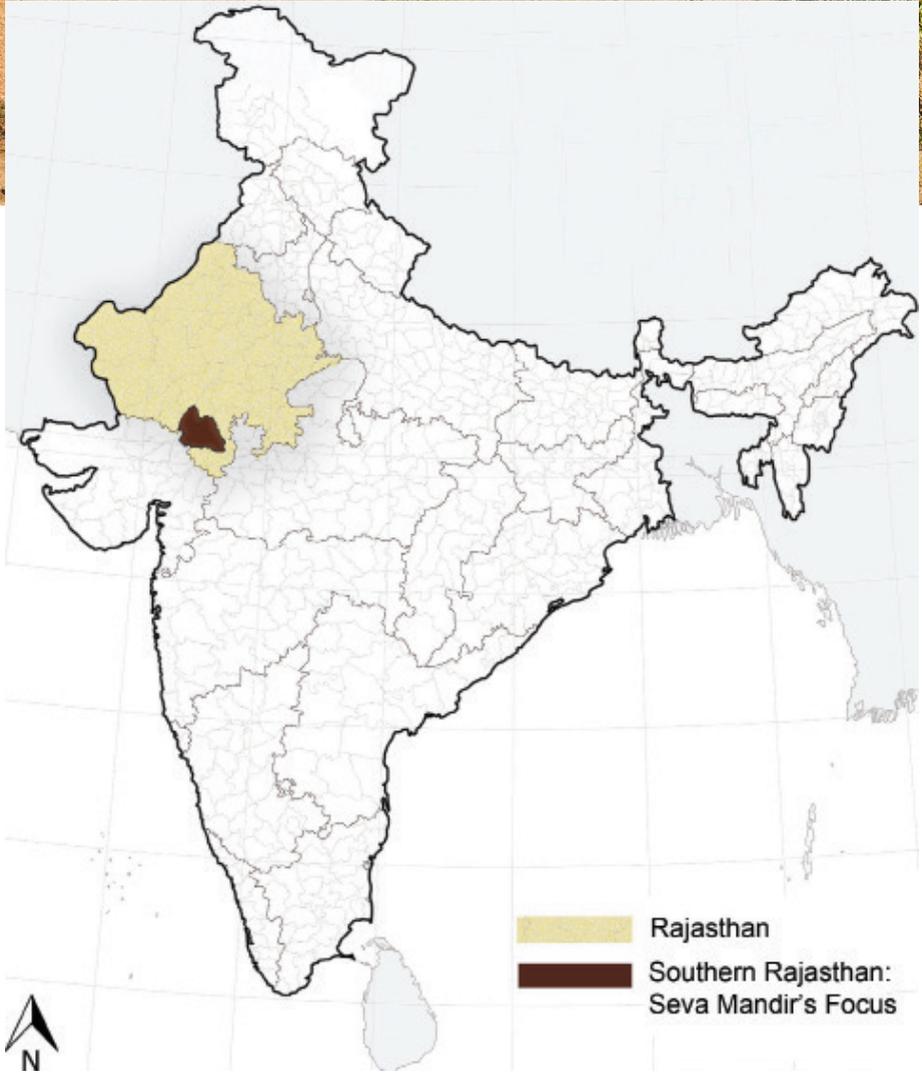
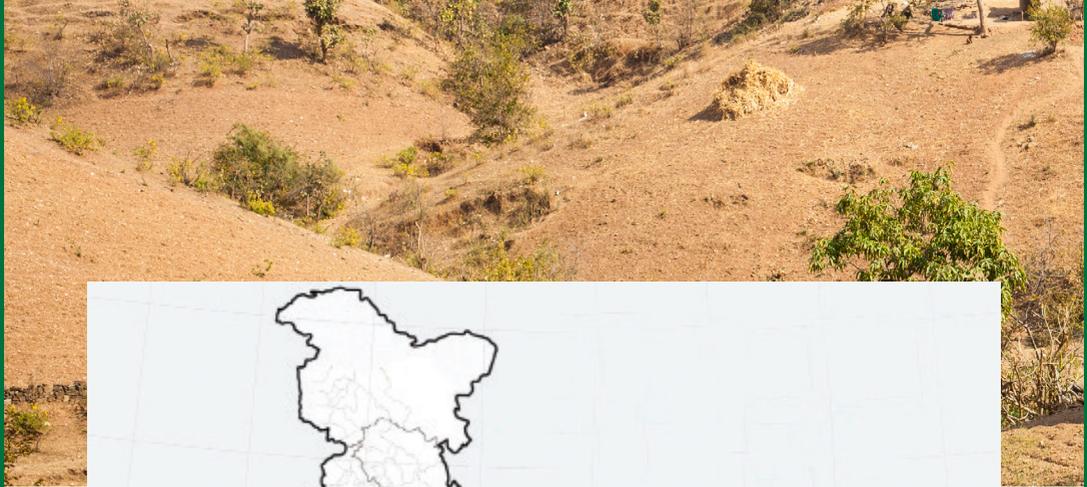




# SEVA MANDIR

Transforming Lives





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## Transforming Lives

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## SEVA MANDIR'S UNIQUE APPROACH

Since 1968, Seva Mandir has worked with 360,000 people across 700 villages in southern Rajasthan, one of the world's poorest regions, where people live on an average of USD 0.35 a day, to build cohesive and inclusive communities whose members are able to participate actively in the local decision-making which affects their daily lives.

Fostering democratic participation in the affairs of the community is the foundation for all of Seva Mandir's interventions in the region and is a key element of its success in supporting deprived rural and, more recently, peri-urban and urban communities.

The approach focuses on helping communities traditionally divided by caste, class and gender to establish village forums in which all members, not least women, can contribute to the process of designing solutions to local challenges. These include protecting and developing natural resources, helping farmers to grow enough food, improving access

to, and the quality of, education, providing clean drinking water and sanitation, and strengthening healthcare. Once this forum is established, Seva Mandir helps the community to create a village fund, which is managed by a locally elected body, and other self-help groups.

Through these mechanisms, Seva Mandir encourages the communities in which it is working to take responsibility for, and ownership of, projects which are implemented for the benefit of the entire community.

Seva Mandir's unique approach has led to the reduction of traditional social barriers based on caste, class and gender, allowing communities to shape their collective future. This approach, heavily influenced by the Gandhian notion of constructive work, strengthens the community's capacity for self-governance which is essential in order to improve daily living conditions and livelihoods on a sustainable basis.





## A SPECIAL FOCUS ON WOMEN

Seva Mandir's approach has led to the greater inclusion of women in community decision-making. This is particularly important in rural and tribal communities in which women have traditionally been marginalized. Greater inclusion in the affairs of the community has also led to women gaining greater self-confidence and respect.

Seva Mandir has provided guidance and support in a number of ways.

Womens' groups provide a forum in which women can discuss the problems they face, from domestic violence to health issues and childcare, and raise small loans.

Women's resource centers play an active role in resolving domestic and related disputes, including gender-based violence. These solutions are increasingly respected and supported by the men in the community.

Seva Mandir also focuses on the health-care needs of women, many of whom are malnourished, including care through locally trained health workers for expectant and new mothers.

In communities where female literacy is low and parents often see little benefit in educating their daughters, Seva Mandir is working to change attitudes, provide schooling opportunities where there is no government school, and to increase female literacy.

Seva Mandir's long experience shows that local communities which are more inclusive of women as leaders are more likely to thrive.





## NATURAL RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT

Southern Rajasthan is characterized by extremely arid conditions and soil erosion:

- Annual rainfall is less than 640 mm, and occurs in a span of 2-3 months
- Only 20% of the land is irrigated
- With climate change, the monsoon season is becoming less predictable
- **Seva Mandir has helped rehabilitate 16,000 hectares of common land**
- **6,000 families benefit from Seva Mandir's watershed projects**
- **10,000 farmers have improved their yield**

With almost no local industry, over 90% of the population depends on the land for survival. It is for this reason that Seva Mandir's Natural Resource Development Program plays a vital role in helping communities to improve daily living conditions and livelihoods.

The Program, in which local communities actively participate, focuses on:

**Watershed Development.** Through watershed development projects, Seva Mandir helps communities to collect and retain water that would otherwise run off the land causing further soil erosion. Watershed development is a precondition for providing irrigation systems, another of Seva Mandir's activities. These initiatives are the lifeblood of rural villages.

**Agriculture.** Seva Mandir works with farmers to improve agricultural practices and yields. These projects include various training sessions focusing on horticulture, animal husbandry, vermi-composting, vegetable cultivation, increasing crop productivity, and indigenous seed banks.





*Pasture and Forest Land.* Seva Mandir helps communities to recover, develop and share common pasture and forest land. Protecting these common lands for the benefit of the community as a whole, particularly against unlawful encroachment, is vital for preserving water, fighting land degradation and improving livelihoods generally.

*Livelihoods.* In the region in which Seva Mandir works, average monthly per capita income is less than Rs. 600 or USD 0.5 a day, half the daily income frequently quoted as the definition of poverty. The vast majority of the population survives on a subsistence basis.

Accordingly, alongside its Natural Resource Development activities, Seva Mandir is working with local communities to develop new income generation initiatives and to make existing ones more efficient, while improving

entrepreneurial skills through workshops and special programs.

In the remote rural region of Kotra (150 km from Udaipur), for example, Seva Mandir has worked with a local community to establish a small lentil processing facility for the production of dal which is then packaged and sold directly to purchasers in Udaipur and elsewhere.

This approach cuts out local middlemen, improves margins and increases farmers' resistance to market volatility.

Seva Mandir is assisting local communities to take up other livelihood initiatives, including harvesting wild honey, small fish farms in dams constructed to increase irrigation, and domestic cultivation of mushrooms.





## EDUCATION

- More than half of the children aged between 6 and 14 do not attend school
- Over a third have never been to school
- The average literacy rate among villagers aged 14 and over is only 33% and for women it is as low as 20%
- More than 10,000 children attend our education centers every year, half of them girls

Seva Mandir works with local communities to increase access to, and the quality of, education and to persuade parents that giving their children, especially girls, an education is in everyone's long-term interests. Seva Mandir's projects include:

*Balwadis*, preschool day-care centers for children up to the age of 5, run by Seva Mandir-trained local women, which provide preschool education as well as nutritional and child healthcare. These centers permit mothers to go to work and elder siblings to attend school.

*Shiksha Kendras*, schools established by Seva Mandir with trained local teachers providing tuition to children between the ages of 6 and 14 in areas where there is no functioning government school. These schools offer primary education which enables pupils to move to formal schools.

*Residential Learning Camps*, established and run by Seva Mandir, providing basic literacy and mathematics skills to children aged 6-14 who would otherwise have no education because, typically, either they have a paid job or they work in the family's fields to supplement its meagre income.

Eight-week long camps are held outside the sowing and harvest periods. By the end of three camps over the course of one year, the children are well equipped to progress to formal schools and those who do achieve high performance and attendance rates.





## HEALTH

- Infant mortality in Rajasthan is 57/1000 live births
- Over 70% of children and 60% of women are malnourished
- Only a third of all children have been fully immunized
- Over 50% of households drink from unprotected sources
- Around 75% of rural households have no toilet
- Our health program supports some 9,000 women and children in 150 villages
- Child immunization increased from 35% to 60%
- 16,000 people assured of access to clean water
- Over 3,000 people assured of access to toilets

*Women's Health.* Seva Mandir provides training to local traditional health workers who care for women before and after childbirth. More than 300 Traditional Birth

Attendants counsel women on the benefits of institutional deliveries but are also trained to perform home deliveries. They handle over 4,000 deliveries a year with infant mortality significantly lower than the state average. Seva Mandir offers obstetric care insurance in partnership with hospitals to provide women with access to checkups, curative medication and delivery services.

*Children's Health.* Seva Mandir trains *Bal-sakhis*, women who provide monitoring and care for newborns by counseling mothers on breastfeeding, nutrition, birth registration and the availability of government support in cases of severe malnourishment. Seva Mandir provides immunization and monitors malnutrition in special camps and *Balwadis*. Basic medicines and treatment are also provided for common childhood ailments.

*Clean Drinking Water and Sanitation.* Seva Mandir restores wells, builds water tanks, repairs handpumps, and installs toilets.





## DELWARA

Delwara, a town of 5,000 people from 27 different castes and different religions, is located just 28 km from Udaipur. It is Seva Mandir's first experiment in peri-urban development. The town faces a mix of rural and urban challenges.

In 2004, Seva Mandir and the people of Delwara founded the Citizens' Development Forum, consisting of 18 elected neighborhood committees and a central executive committee charged with directing development across the town, to which households contribute. Since then, Seva Mandir and the Forum have transformed the town's infrastructure and brought revolutionary social change. The main accomplishments include:

**Sanitation.** Half of the households did not have toilets, especially in poorer neighborhoods. Seva Mandir and the Forum built over 260 toilets connected to three newly constructed community septic systems.

**Waste Management.** Seva Mandir and the Forum set up daily waste collections and constructed a solid waste dumping and treatment ground.

**Access to Water,** greatly increased after the central lake was dredged, its feeders re-dug and several other water bodies rehabilitated.

**Youth Resource Centers,** established for young men and women from all castes, running recreational, educational and vocational activities.

**Heritage.** Delwara has a rich heritage of ancient temples, step-wells and *havelis*. Significant restoration and cleaning of the town's sites has been undertaken, renewing civic pride in local patrimony. A team of Delwara's young people now leads a heritage walking tour of their town.

Seva Mandir is replicating this experiment in another peri-urban community.





## URBAN

The urban poor of Udaipur also face challenges including domestic violence, the lack of quality education, unemployment, and the absence of community support systems.

**Women.** Seva Mandir helps women organize themselves into Self-Help Groups that give them financial independence to help their families avoid or escape from debt. They also serve as a forum for women to tackle social and legal issues which affect their daily lives.

Many women who leave an abusive household lack support from their family or community. A short-stay home for women and girls provides a safe haven for these women and their children, and offers counseling, legal advice and livelihood training to create opportunities for financial independence.

**Children.** Seva Mandir operates a free 24-hour emergency phone service for children in need of aid throughout Udaipur. As an extension

of the *Balwadi* initiative, Seva Mandir operates four day-care centers for young children in Udaipur's slum areas.

**Safe and Educational Environments.** Seva Mandir has initiated projects to provide young slum dwellers with care, education and extracurricular activities that they would otherwise never receive. These include after-school tutoring centers, 'children's corners' that provide a safe and productive space for children to learn and socialize, and a Youth Resource Center which offers workshops, training and other activities that allow young adults to think creatively and explore career options.

**Community.** Since many slum residents are recent migrants to the city, there is often a lack of community support. Seva Mandir has established *Mohallas* that create a forum for them to meet and find solutions to the difficulties they face.





## WHAT OTHERS SAY ABOUT SEVA MANDIR

‘India can rightly be proud of its best NGOs, such as Seva Mandir ... .’

‘Seva Mandir hopes that its policy of building self-confident communities capable of holding the state responsible for fulfilling its responsibilities will spread to other parts of Rajasthan and indeed the rest of India. This would bring about fundamental change in India’s traditionally vertical society.’

Sir Mark Tully, *India: the Road Ahead*

‘Seva Mandir’s immunisation program is one of the most impressive we have ever evaluated, and probably the one that has saved most lives.’

M.I.T. Professors Abhijit Banerjee & Esther Duflo, *Poor Economics*

New Philanthropy Capital concluded in a report on Seva Mandir that it has excellent leadership, a clear focus on needy groups, an excellent reputation in the voluntary sector, great community reach and excellent know-how in the areas in which it works; it measures results and impacts, and is well organized, professionally managed, transparent and responsive.





## FUNDING

Seva Mandir is a not-for-profit organization: grants and donations from Indian and international aid agencies and foundations, as well as individuals, fund all of its programs and the overhead costs of managing them. Through efficient management, overhead costs are kept to only 13% of the annual budget of Rs. 160 million (USD 3.2m).

With government funding being limited to specific projects and not supporting the breadth of Seva Mandir's programs, some 50 institutional and corporate donors have represented the largest source of funding. Donors have included the Evangelischer Entwicklungsdienst, Plan International, Interchurch Organization for Development Cooperation, MacArthur Foundation, Ananda Trust, Ford Foundation, Target, Monsoon Accessorize Trust, Personal Development Trust. However, the economic climate has led to a sharp decrease in the contributions of such donors from over 80% of the annual budget to only 45%. The pressure

to identify new institutional and corporate donors and build relationships with them is therefore ever increasing.

Support from individuals is also critical. Today, Seva Mandir raises about 15% of its annual budget from individuals. Even relatively small contributions help Seva Mandir to make a difference to someone's life.

Donors either support specific programs or projects or contribute to the Comprehensive Plan which establishes budgets for projects for the next three years. Funds allocated to the Comprehensive Plan allow Seva Mandir the flexibility to prioritize and manage competing demands.

All donations to Seva Mandir are tax deductible for Indian nationals under 80G. Friends organizations in the USA and UK raise awareness of Seva Mandir's work and financial support for it which can be tax-deductible if routed through the Friends.





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# Seva Mandir

Transforming lives through democratic and participatory development

How your contributions can help:

**Rs.500**

sends a child to school for two months

**\$600**

supports one campaign for women's rights and wellbeing

**£350**

enables a village development committee to undergo training in management and governance



87% of all donations go to programs, while 13% is spent on support costs

To make a donation:

**INDIA**

Donations are tax exempted for Indian Nationals under 80 G. Wire a donation to: Seva Mandir Union Bank Account No. 394002010060708

**UNITED STATES**

Donate through Friends of Seva Mandir Inc (501 c3) [www.friendsofsevamandir.org](http://www.friendsofsevamandir.org)

**UNITED KINGDOM**

Donate through Friends of Seva Mandir UK [www.sevamandirfriends.org](http://www.sevamandirfriends.org)

**CHEQUE**

Send your cheque made out to 'Seva Mandir' along with the completed form below, to: SEVA MANDIR, Old Fatehpura, Udaipur, Rajasthan, India

Seva Mandir is eligible to accept foreign contribution with registration number 125690002.

Seva Mandir is registered under the Rajasthan Society Act with registration number 149/1967-68.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Nationality: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Cheque No: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone No: \_\_\_\_\_

PAN No: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_



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