

Country Profile India



STOP CHILD EXPLOITATION!

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India has close to 431 million children¹. While the country is the fourth-largest economy in the world, socio-economic disparities are widespread. India has the largest number of early married girls in the world², and the 2011 National Census reported that 10.1 million children are engaged in child labour. Adolescent girls in India suffer persistent vulnerability with gender-based violence and a high rate of secondary school dropouts. The country is home to the second-largest number of internet users across the globe³, 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 (2023).

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

³ World Population Review, 2025

Stakeholder Reach
2024

CHILDREN
20964

FAMILY AND
COMMUNITY
MEMBERS
15160

CIVIL SOCIETY
REPRESENTATIVES
110

LAW
ENFORCEMENT
AGENTS
519

GOVERNMENT
OFFICIALS
725

PRIVATE
SECTOR STAFF
4

Our Projects

Initiatives for Married Adolescent Girls' Empowerment (IMAGE)

Location : Karnataka state

In India, poverty and social norms lead to child marriages. Girls drop out of school, get pregnant early & in some cases even face domestic abuse and violence. The project empowers early married girls in evidence-based mental health care, sexual and reproductive health, nutrition and education. It empowers the girls in a movement to advocate for their rights and raise awareness to prevent child marriages.

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

Location : North Karnataka state

In socio-economically marginalised Devadasi communities from North Karnataka, harmful norms force adolescent girls into sexual exploitation. We empower children from these communities through access to education, life skills, vocational training, community sensitisation and advocacy for policy changes and stronger law enforcement.

In India, we prioritise the empowerment of adolescent girls through enabling access to education, life skills and protection from gender-based violence.



Photo credit : Children of India Foundation



The Mica Project

Location : Koderma and Giridih districts

Families reliant on mica mining face poverty, leading to child labour. We empower communities through children's clubs, sensitisation, parental income support through additional livelihood, and social security. We strengthen child protection, and advocate for formalised, transparent mica supply chains with the government and the private sector.

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 prevent online child sexual exploitation by empowering children on sexual health and rights, and engaging teachers, parents, law enforcement, and government to build awareness, share knowledge, and strengthen protection systems.



Photo credit : Children of India Foundation

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.

Miss-Collect

Location : Bangalore city

In Bangalore's slums, child labour in waste collection is driven by poverty and migration. We run early learning centres, bridge courses, and enrol children in school, while empowering mothers through training as garden instructors to increase family incomes.

Comprehensive Children and Community Empowerment Project (CCCEP)

Location : Coimbatore and Bangalore cities

In urban slums of Coimbatore and Bangalore, India, children drop out school, engage in hazardous labour, and experience sexual exploitation. We tackle key child protection issues through community and child empowerment, ensuring access to education, healthcare, and social protection for vulnerable children and their families.

" I told the officials how hard it is for girls like me to return to school after marriage."

Sujata

With support from our project, Sujata (name changed), a teenage survivor of child marriage advocated with the government for access to education. The government then facilitated early married girls' access to Open Schools to resume their studies.

Key Figures 2024

147

Child marriages prevented

466

Children engaged in mica mining and from waste collection communities re-enrolled in schools.

9904

Children empowered through education and awareness to prevent online sexual exploitation.

137

Youth advocates led campaigns to challenge gender norms and prevent child exploitation.

2887

Children increase their awareness on mental health care

Our Achievements

Our advocacy in Andhra Pradesh, India, contributed to the Social Media Abuse Protection Bill being brought to the state assembly for discussion.



The head of a prominent religious association in Telangana, India, issued a directive to spiritual leaders within the network, urging them to promote online safety awareness in their sermons and teachings to parents.



Successful collaboration with state level institutions in Karnataka - the Karnataka Legal Services Authority (KLSA) and Karnataka State Commission for Protection of Child Rights (KSCPCR) - to enable lobby and networking for child rights.



A total of 908 law enforcement officials enhanced their capacity to implement laws protecting the rights of vulnerable children and families from the Devadasi community.



Major Funding Partners

Mercedes Benz
Wipro Cares
International Labour Organization
The Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs
RVO Netherlands

Lead Implementing partner

Children of India Foundation

Learn more



About Terre des Hommes Netherlands

Terre des Hommes Netherlands is a global child rights organisation that works in Asia, Africa, the Middle East and Europe. We prevent and stop child exploitation, and empower children to make their voices count. We catalyse systemic change with the support of grassroots-level implementing partners. We ensure that children are at the centre of our initiatives.

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