

Visions Global Empowerment *India Programs Overview*



Introduction

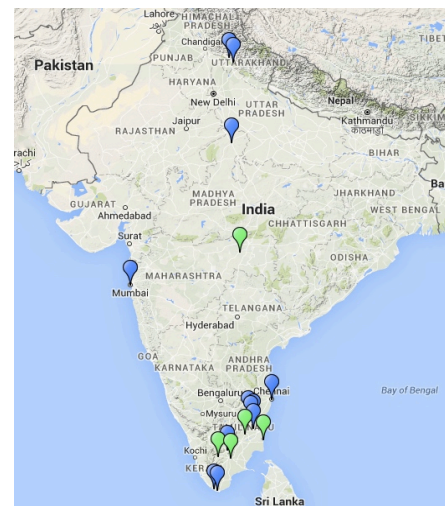
Visions Global Empowerment (“Visions”) is a registered 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization based in Los Angeles, California, USA that aims to change patterns of inequality by supporting educational initiatives for youth affected by conflict, poverty, and disability. Visions imagines a world where all people have access to quality education, feel empowered, and are capable of participating as leaders in today’s society. Visions currently serves communities in Sri Lanka (*Northern & Eastern Provinces*), India (*states of Tamil Nadu, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, & Uttarakhand*), and Ethiopia (*Amhara Region & Addis Ababa*).

Visions first began its work in India in 2008, and has since partnered with over a dozen local nonprofit organizations and dozens more schools. Our current projects are taking place in the following areas, though the vast majority of Visions’ efforts are focused on disadvantaged communities in Tamil Nadu.

1. Tamil Nadu: Chennai, Tiruvannamalai, Thirukovilur, Ulunderpet, Tiruchirapalli, Dindigul, & Kanyakumari.
2. Uttarakhand: Dehradun & Rishikesh
3. Maharashtra: Mumbai
4. Madhya Pradesh: Gwalior

Youth Learning & Empowerment Centers

Our Visions “Youth Learning & Empowerment Centers” have become the mechanism through which we provide daily after-school tutoring, as well as regular Leadership & Life Skills and spoken English training to rural youth. These centers are now regularly serving over 900 children across 26 villages. Through organizing regular trainings for the 26



Blue = Current Projects
 *Green = Past Projects

locally-based community educators (1 per village) who are implementing this program on a daily basis, Visions is now reaching youth in the districts of Tiruvannamalai, Cuddalore, and Villupuram.

All participating students are now receiving regular leadership development training (once per week on average), English training (twice per week on average), daily after-school tuition, and mentoring, and have access to periodic service opportunities to put their newfound skills and talents into practice. Simple structures were equipped with electricity in several villages so that students would have a safe and well-lit place to study after-school hours. Students and parents alike are holding each other accountable in ensuring their children regularly attend school and these after-school sessions.

e-Learning Program

Visions launched its newest initiative – the Visions e-Learning Program – in December 2015 for the benefit of an estimated 1,400+ schoolchildren across 9 schools in India. This innovative new initiative is designed to promote learning advancement in Mathematics, English-language, and technology literacy for Grades 1-5 youth from disadvantaged backgrounds. The underlying intent is to reduce the learning gap, develop critical skills, and promote academic achievement in core subject areas.

This new tablet-based, self-paced learning program is being introduced at schools in 3 Indian states, including Tamil Nadu (6 schools), Maharashtra (2 schools), and Uttarakhand (1 school). Based off initial assessment data, nearly all children participating in this program live at or below the poverty line, including a majority (83%) of whom live in “extreme poverty” based off international poverty definition standards.



Each participating school received 25-30 tablet devices; 1 portable, battery-powered internal routing device uniquely designed by Zaya Learning Labs (based in Mumbai); and 20-30 personal headphones. All tablets come pre-loaded with English-language, Mathematics, and General Subjects learning software. Visions is concurrently working on digitizing its own uniquely designed Leadership & Life Skills curriculum, which the organization has developed over the past 12 years, and plans to make that content available on all tablet devices by early 2017.

Youth Guidance & Support Program

Bridging the gap between school and either higher education or the working world has always been a major challenge and concern. With this in mind, Visions launched a new Youth Guidance & Support Program in January 2016, beginning with the first graduates of our Visions Leadership Program who have been attending Visions trainings and programs for the past 4+ years. This new initiative includes:

- Providing training to graduates in Communicative English, Presentation and Interview Skills, CV-writing, and Goal-Setting
- Assisting scholarship awardees to select and join courses and programs in reputable institutions, mostly with assistance from the government schemes (as most, if not all, students are from scheduled castes and have access to free university)
- Visions staff being in regular communication with scholarship awardees to track and document progress and overall development, and to provide crucial mentorship
- Organizing two programs per year for the scholarship awardees to interact with the Visions Executive Director and /or other Visions headquarters representatives (when visiting India) and for further leadership training
- Providing access to content for Higher Education Preparation and opportunities
- Guiding the graduates with the support of experts to select and pursue higher education with government support and if needed and possible with Visions' support

In June/July 2016, the first nine participants of this new program officially began their university careers at institutions throughout the state of Tamil Nadu, studying everything from Aeronautical Engineering to English to Nursing.

Institutional Support

For the past several years, Visions has been supporting the SAWED Radiance School for Tribal and Dalit Children in Dindigul, Tamil Nadu. We have provided the salaries of 3 teachers for the past 3 years while this new school established itself. Additionally, Visions supported putting large chalkboards in all the classrooms, establishing a sports playground, and developing a library at the school.

In 2011, Visions worked in partnership with the Nandalala Seva Samithi Trust in Chennai to establish the Jayalakshmi Ramachandran Scholarship Fund to support enterprising and high-achieving medical students that lacked the financial resources to attend university. Since initiating this endowment fund, 12 individuals have received scholarships totaling more than \$20,000.

Visions has also facilitated support for various institutions, such as the Him Jyoti School for Girls in Dehradun, Uttarakhand; the Ramana's Garden Children's Home & School in Rishikesh, Uttarakhand; and the Gwalior Govt. School in Gwalior, Madhya Pradesh.

