

A group of young women, likely students, are smiling and raising their hands in a classroom setting. They are wearing yellow and orange shirts. The background shows a wall with various posters and a fire extinguisher.

Veerni Project ANNUAL REPORT

2020 - 2021

Courageous young women building a better world for all

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MISSION STATEMENT

'Veerni' in Hindi means a woman of strength and courage. Our mission is to educate and empower girls living in villages in the outskirts of Jodhpur so they may live healthy and fulfilling lives free from social and economic discrimination.

The Veerni Project provides a safe and nurturing environment for a total of 110 girls where they can live and attend secondary school. Universal secondary education is one of the sustainable goals of the United Nations. However, the milestone of 2030 is a long way from being achieved.

The Veerni girls come from rural and diverse communities of the Thar Desert. Education will empower them to make their own life choices. Education is the pillar from which all empowerment starts.

Our Accomplishments

- Veerni girls become role models in their communities, inspiring other girls to continue their education.
- Current student body - 110 girls - 90 in the Veerni Institute and 20 in Veerni Balika.
- Since 2005, 139 graduates progressed to higher education.
- Improved new premises and attendance in two excellent high schools: Apex and Modern Senior Secondary School.
- Improved health outcomes due to individual health plans, weekly doctors' visits, resident nurses, vaccinations, nutrition plans, hygiene instruction, including awareness of all aspects of women's health. HPV vaccination has been introduced.



The Situation in India

India is the hardest hit country by the coronavirus. According to Basharat Peer in an article for the New York Times, ***“the lockdown, the largest in human history, hit India's poor like a hammer”***.

Rural regions such as the Thar Desert where the Veerni Project is active, are now being seriously affected. In the words of Dr. Jain, a public health expert in India, “the disease accelerated in such locations with the risk causing mayhem” as only 20% of doctors are based in such settings”. The Indian government spends 1% of GDP on health care, one of the lowest in the world. As of March, there was one hospital bed for 1.826 Indians and one doctor for 11.600 patients.

Another challenge for the Veerni villages and the local population, apart from the loss of income aggravating poverty, is the serious lack of healthcare resulting in untreated illnesses and food shortage. Additionally, the return in large numbers of migrant workers on daily wages from the major cities of India who have lost their jobs is a concern. This migrant population all male is creating additional concerns not only for spreading the disease but causing safety concerns for young girls who are vulnerable in village settings.

According to the National Crimes Record Bureau (NCRB). Rajasthan has the highest number of rapes in the country. This is not helped by the feudal mindset of the desert villages "where women are treated as objects". This is the battle Veerni fights every day for the courageous Veerni girls.

As a result of the above, the local population of Veerni villages are facing serious hardships. Significantly, the closure of schools is taking a high toll on girls.

Message from Jacqueline de Chollet

"Reach high, for stars lie hidden in you. Dream deep, for every dream precedes the goal."
Rabindranath Tagore

In this past year, our very existence has been upended by Covid-19, which has dominated everyone's lives in the world. This pandemic, with the resulting detrimental effect on health, mortality, economies, livelihoods and education has affected the whole planet. But young people in many cases are bearing the brunt of it all. The loss of education for girls in the developing world has been widely documented and years of progress could be undone in just a short period of time. In the words of UN Secretary General Guterres, this could be a generational catastrophe. All the progress accomplished for girls in the world is threatened.

As a result, across the world 1.6 billion children have been impacted by the pandemic. Some may be at risk of never retuning to the classroom, girls being particularly vulnerable as schools are often the only safe place for them in the many rural settings of developing countries.

Given that circumstances are changing so rapidly in India, what is true today is not true tomorrow. The Veerni Project long term mission remains educating Veerni girls and young women but now our most important role is to keep them safe. As you will know from the Veerni Newsletters, the girls were sent home with a four-hour notice. They were armed with many supplies including personal toiletries, school supplies and various food items.

One of the threats to girls' well-being in India is the continuing incidence of child marriage. This concerns the Veerni girls, as in difficult economic times "one less mouth to feed" is related to the chance of marrying girls early. We must remember that the Veerni girls come from the poorest members of the community.



Child marriage is a violation of a girls' human rights. It is rooted in gender inequality and patriarchy: a girl belongs to her father and then to her husband. Nearly 1.5 million girls in India are child brides and it is more common in rural areas than in urban ones. Rajasthan being one of the worst affected states.

In this difficult year, as no other, Veerni has addressed all of these issues as well as keeping all the girls in education. Veerni has increased parents' consciousness of the welfare for their daughters. There is a heartwarming change in the attitude of the fathers who are pleading with Veerni to keep their daughters safe in the institute caused by the challenges they face. With the return of many young migrant workers from big cities to villages caused by the pandemic, the risk is even greater for girls. Early marriage protects them from unwarranted male attention and a way to ensure the virginity of the bride. But it certainly does not ensure the future welfare of the girls.

This crisis is crossing the river. The girls were on solid ground when the storm came, and at the present time, Veerni's purpose will be to ensure that the girls continue their journey until they are once again on Terra Firma. At Veerni, the girls' safety is a priority, and everything is done to guarantee their protection.

Veerni will survive and will address the current needs of the girls, while keeping them engaged in their education, healthy and safe. This will be the projects priority.

Veerni operates like a family and has always been led by the heart.

Just as we need funds for the girls' education, we will need funds as well for their general wellbeing if they study remotely and live in their villages.

As you will have read in the Veerni newsletters, Veerni has been in survival mode in the last year. All 110 girls were sent home at 4 hours' notice on March 20, 2020 armed with essential information, basic supplies such as sanitary napkins, bars of soap and strips of paracetamol. The Veerni Team visited the villages on a regular basis and distributed food supplies when necessary.

The government has just announced that schools will resume on June 26. We can only pray that this will take place and that all girls will be safely back in the institute by June.

I wish to take this opportunity to add a few words about the Veerni Project team in this incredible challenging year.

The Veerni Project managed a miracle as you will note in the report. 110 girls were kept in education and their health and wellbeing looked after, in the most difficult of circumstances. None of them were married off in cultures as mentioned above that do not value girls as much as boys.

I wish to acknowledge the extraordinary contribution of the Veerni team this year. The list will be included later in the report but just wish to say that without their devotion, there would be no Veerni Project today. A special mention of the Veerni team members will be mentioned later in the report.

On behalf of the board and supporters of the Veerni Project, once more we wish to express our deep appreciation and thanks for the love and care the Veerni team bring to the Veerni girls and their families.

ACADEMIC INFORMATION

An Unprecedented Academic Achievement: In the academic year of 2019-2020, the examinations of board classes (10 and 12) were delayed and held in the month of August 2020. Girls of the Veerni Project have performed exceptionally well this year. They cleared exams with good marks. It is the hard work and commitment of Veerni staff, girls' parents, school teachers and, above all the girls that made this possible. The Veerni Project had a 100% pass rate in the final exams in 2019- 2020.

Graduated girls: Information about last year's graduated girls:

A total number of seven girls graduated from the Veerni institute. Their details are given below: -

S. No.	Girl's Name	Stream
01	Ranu	Science Biology stream
02	Durga	Science Biology stream
03	Krishna Raj	Science Mathematic stream
04	Sagar	Arts stream
05	Hem Kanwar	Arts stream
06	Durga	Arts stream
07	Kalpna	Arts stream



New Admissions at

the Veerni Institute



For the academic year 2020-2021, seven new girls were selected in classes 6 and 7. The academic documents of the girls were received from the parents of the girls. All the new girls have been enrolled in the modern senior secondary school. It is worth mentioning that this year, there were 191 applications received for the seven vacant places at the Veerni institute.

The school kit distributed to the newly enrolled girls, contained books, schoolbags, notebooks, stationery and subject wise study materials prepared by the school.



Academic Results

Academic Results for the year 2020-2021

The state government has decided to cancel all the exams due to the ongoing COVID-19 situation and promoted all the classes to the next level.

The Veerni Institute Result of academic year 2020-2021

Class Details	Number of Girls	Remark
Class 6th	6	Promoted to the next class
Class 7th	14	
Class 8th	13	
Class 9th	16	
Class 10th	16	
Class 11th	14	
Class 12th	11	
Total Girls	90	



The Veerni Balika Program Result of academic year 2020-2021

Class Details	Number of Girls	Remark
Class 6th	1	Promoted to the next class
Class 7th	7	
Class 8th	5	
Class 9th	6	
Class 10 th	1	
Total Girls	20	



ACTIVITIES

OF THE VEERNI PROJECT

Educational Activities

In the month of July, Veerni started offline and online distance learning programs for the Veerni girls. The first phase was called “School at Doorsteps” and the second phase was named “Tablet” Program – distance digital with offline study contents.

The Veerni Project, have established a Standard Operating Procedure that suits the gravity of this situation. We were constantly monitoring the situation and correcting our course in various aspects so as to provide better protection for our girls.



School at Doorsteps: 110 Veerni students have been learning from this program as Veerni girls are located in faraway villages. The Veerni team along with the teachers were continued to keep in regular contact with these students, visiting them at home to provide learning materials and worksheets on a regular basis as well as marking and discussing their work. Homework is being collected and new lessons have been distributed to the girls on regular basis. On a daily basis, digital content of the study material has been circulated by the Veerni staff members to 70 Veerni girls through WhatsApp groups as these girls do have technology to access. Class wise, WhatsApp groups have been created for girls who can access technology.

To take a virtual tour of the “School at doorsteps Program”; click here <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DAsbqOwgYDM>



Tablet Program: The Tablet program is underway and covering the girls from classes 10 to 12 through digital education. In these tablets, the study materials with animated videos have been installed. The best part of these tablets is that the girls do not need an internet connection to continue their studies as the material with videos have been installed onto the tablets. This makes it a fully functioning off-line learning program that gives all Veerni girls an access to education.

To take a virtual tour of the "Tablets Distribution Program; click here <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uBrZQ0hCjm4>



Re-opening of the Veerni Institute and Veerni Balika

On January 5th 2021 a decision was taken by the State of Rajasthan to reopen all schools and other educational institutions. Schools were instructed to reopen their institutes from January 25th. One week prior to this, the State published its Standard Operating Procedures (SOP's) according to which management of all institutions would need to adhere to. At the initial stage, schools were permitted to run classes only for grades 9 to 12 standard students. Certain mandatory restrictions and ground rules have been established which include a written consent form that all parents are obligated to sign, taking responsibility upon themselves when allowing their children to return to school. A second regulation stipulates that only 50% of the pupils would be allowed to attend per class, and on an alternating basis.

Our management staff met with the Board members to brainstorm how to put into action all the required SOP's, which included:

- Sanitization of the entire building, furniture, equipment, kitchen, toilets, water tanks as well as ensuring that there is a continuous supply of available sanitizers. It was suggested to also include foot operated sanitizers.
- Installation of partitions between the beds in the dorms keeping regulation distancing.
- The display throughout the Institute of Covid awareness posters and the distribution to each girl of a sanitizing kit and separate water bottle.
- Complete health check-up for each girl on arrival prior to admission to Institute.
- Seating arrangements in the dining room adhered to regulation social distancing.
- An isolation room set up in the Institute.
- No social events, prayers or other activities may be held.

To take a virtual tour of the "Reopening of the Veerni institute"; click here. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i_wcci5T6Qs

Arrival of the girls with parents:

In accordance with the State announcement to re-open schools, Veerni first welcomed 17 girls from Class 10, on January 25. This group was followed on January 30th by 11 girls from Class 12. In the first week of February, arrival of 62 more girls from Classes 8 to 11. Total number 90 girls rejoined the Veerni Institute and Veerni Balika by the second week of February.

At that point, it was evident that many of the city's schools were partially occupied and cannot function fully because a large percentage of parents are hesitating to sign the above mentioned consent. **However, we are pleased to inform that, despite the high risk involved in returning our girls to their studies, all the Veerni parents have signed the necessary obligation form. In doing this they have demonstrated their faith and trust in our management and in our capability to organize and monitor the new situation created by the pandemic.**

Below we will detail the essential changes that Veerni has successfully applied and put into action following government regulations: -

- We consulted with experts in the medical field as to how to proceed when inviting the girls back to the Institute. It was advised that each girl go through a thorough medical check-up prior to being admitted back into the Institute.
- The girls were invited to arrive accompanied by a parent at specific times so as to avoid crowding. The outside grounds at the entrance were marked with large well-spaced white circles showing each family where to stand and a number of Counselling Tents manned by our staff were set up to give each girl hand sanitizers and a new water bottle. It was here that both parents and students first had their temperatures taken on arrival. Explanations and briefings were given in great detail as to how each girl needs to conduct herself under the strict Covid rules and regulations inside and outside the buildings.
- In addition each girl underwent a complete health check-up as instructed by Dr. Deora. If there was the slightest suspicion of Covid the girls were sent for testing. In the end two girls were sent to be tested and happily they both came back with negative results.
- The parents were shown a small video clip on one of our laptops where they could see all the new arrangements and facilities that had been organised inside the institutes.
- Covid Awareness posters have been placed in various strategic positions throughout both buildings – in the dorms, the dining rooms, the class rooms and along corridors and stairways. Foot operated sanitizers were purchased and have been installed in easily accessible places.
- In addition a special room has been designated and prepared for cases in the event that isolation becomes necessary.



In-House organization and Education at Veerni

The Veerni team held long discussions to find an alternative teaching environment for the girls. Thinking “out of the box” a courageous decision was taken to concentrate all our classes “in-house” and to hold all studies on our own premises. We believe that it is in the best interest of the girls to continue their studies within the confines of the Institute instead of venturing out to mingle with other girls from their school, thereby endangering their own health and possibly being infected by Covid-19 virus. We have achieved this by transforming the large basement open space into a classroom. Tables have been arranged in such a manner that no one will sit in close proximity to anyone else.

To this purpose we also met with the school principal and management board and received their permission and assistance to move forward. We are satisfied with the arrangement at present where teachers come to conduct daily classes at the Veerni Institute for five hours a day. Another added value resulting from this is that, because the classes are smaller in number, the girls are also receiving far greater personal attention boosting their studying capabilities and achievements.

Reorganization of all other Facilities for the girls

According to the Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) instructions that have been issued we have had to provide different sleeping, washing and eating arrangements for the girls.

Dormitories: Each bed has been partitioned off from the others. Bathrooms are regularly sanitized and only four girls can shower at one time.

Dining room: Similarly the dining room tables have been cleverly partitioned down the middle thus protecting the girls from each other during meal times. Girls are divided into two groups, meals provided in two separate sittings. In both the above cases we will continue to add and make new arrangements as more girls join the Institute in the coming weeks and months.

Homework: During these hours the girls are divided in to two separate classrooms.



ACTIVITIES CONDUCTED

AT VEERNI INSTITUTE AND THE VEERNI BALIKA

School classes at the Veerni Institute: All school classes are conducted on the premises of the Veerni Institute. Teachers come daily to organize and hold classes for all students from classes 6 to 12. For five hours every day, our girls are actively involved in this educational programme which takes place in our specially converted “in-house classrooms”.

Additional study hours: Classes 8, 10 and 12 were focusing on Board-Exams and worked really hard this month. We have introduced additional study hours for those students who will be sitting for the board exams. In order to better prepare for these examinations, the preliminary exams will be conducted at the Veerni Institute.

Online tuition classes: Veerni has arranged online internet tuition classes for all the girls at the Institute. These online classes are conducted through a learning management system, in which students can view their course syllabus and academic progress. The Veerni Institute has a well-equipped smart classroom where our girls are receiving additional help with their schoolwork through online lectures. These lectures, led by Ms. Saroj Kanwar and Ms. Vimlesh are given to the 10, 11 and 12 senior classes.



Events and Celebrations

Motivational Lecture: An extremely interesting session for Veerni girls was conducted on March 15, by Life Coach and Motivational Speaker Amrita Dudhia. Ms. Dudhia is a coach and an expert in stress management and self-development. She inspired our students to never give up hope while striving to achieve whatever they are passionate about. She also carried out certain exercises to sharpen the brain, and suggested games like solving Suduko and speed cubing to improve concentration. She highlighted the importance of imagination as well as recognizing one's own strengths and mastering this as an art. Emphasis was also placed on ideal study methods by following a timetable, tips to score good marks and preparation for the forthcoming examinations. All in all, this was a very beneficial session for our students.





Celebration of Holi Festival: On March 29th all the Veerni girls celebrated the Holi Festival at the Institute. Holi is a famous Indian festival that is celebrated throughout India with extreme joy and enthusiasm. The ritual begins by lighting a bonfire one day prior to the start of Holi and this process symbolizes the triumph of the forces of good over evil. On the day of Holi itself people excitedly throw dyes and bright colors on their friends and families and in the evening they show love and respect for their close ones. Holi also represents the arrival of spring. As you will see from the photos all our girls had lots of fun and tremendously enjoyed the Holi Festival.

Movies: It is difficult to find the motivation to concentrate on studies in the middle of a pandemic, especially for our Veerni girls who experienced so many forms of hardship in their villages during the time of the nationwide lockdown. Every Sunday the Veerni team chooses a movie to be shown to our girls which will strengthen their confidence in themselves and further motivate them to concentrate on their studies. Naturally, by popular demand, the girls also love to see some of the entertaining Bollywood movies. After the tough days spent during lockdown in their village homes, this form of entertainment is both enjoyable and important for the girls.

Daily routine of the Veerni girls: -

Activity	Timing
Wake up alarm	05:30 am
Wash and Change	05:30 am - 06:15 am
Morning Attendance	06:20 am - 06:30 am
Breakfast	06:30 am - 07:00 am
Independent study period	07:15 am to 09.30 am
Rest time / Quality time	09:30 am to 11:00 am
Lunch	11:00 am – 11.30 pm
School (Classes at the Veerni Institute)	11:45 am – 03:15 pm
Rest Time / Quality time.	03:15 pm – 04:30 pm
Independent study period and Online study	04:30 pm – 05:45 pm
Games	06:00 pm – 07:00 pm
Wash and Change	07:00 pm – 07:15 pm
Evening Prayer	07:15 pm – 07:30 pm
Dinner	07:30 pm – 08:00 pm
Independent study and Online study	08:00 pm – 10:00 pm
Lights Out	10:00 pm

Note: Every Saturday and Sunday girls enjoy dance and music in their dormitories.

Formation of the Veerni Girls Governing Committee

In the month of March, the Veerni staff formed a Girls' Governing Committee at the Institute. The girls are all encouraged to engage in both teamwork and leadership activities. We also challenge them with more formalized leadership opportunities and promote initiative and responsibility of different forms and styles. Each and every girl is given a chance to experience being a member of the Governing Committee.

The following is a detailed list of the Governing positions of the Committee:

S. No.	Name	Position on Committee	Responsibility
01.	Tanisha	Minister of Education	Responsibility includes: Managing all educational related work with the girls.
02.	Sundar	Minister of Social Welfare and Food	Responsible for making sure that the girls attend their meals on time; making all the girls aware of the importance of food; and making sure that food is not wasted.
03.	Priyanka	Minister of General Maintenance and Cleanliness	Responsible for keeping the Veerni Institute clean, management of housekeeping and cleaning material.
04.	Varsha	Minister of Social Activities including TV hours	Responsible for conducting physical activities and management of TV content and hours.
05.	Lata	Minister of Environment and Water	Responsible to keep an eye on all water-related issues in the institute and to make the girls aware about water wastage.
06.	Mayawati	Minister of Health	Responsible for looking after all the girls with regard to their health issues and to report to the nurse about any illnesses.
07.	Jaswant	Minister of Order and Discipline	Responsible to maintain the level of the girls behaviour and discipline in the institute.
08.	Vashundhra	Minister of Energy and Power	Responsible to make the girls aware about electricity and to encourage them to use electrical items appropriately so as to save energy.



VEERNI
GIRLS

Parents' meetings: Each Sunday in the month of March parents were invited to visit their daughters to see their progress. Before meeting the girls, a thermal screening was done at the entrance to the Veerni building. Separate tents were placed for each parent outside the building so that social distancing and other safety protocol and regulations for Covid-19 were adhered to by the staff. Tea and biscuits were also served to the parents by the Veerni project.

Details of the parents' meetings given below: -

S. No.	Date of Parents Meeting	Classes
01.	March 7 th , 2021	10 th
02.	March 14 th , 2021	6 th and 12 th
03.	March 21 st , 2021	10 th and 11 th .



Health Activities

Veerni is careful about the safety and well-being of every girl and takes no chances when it comes to their health. We understand the worries that the parents/guardians may have for their child's well-being when staying at the Veerni Institute.

The Veerni Institute is visited once a week by Dr. A.S. Deora to provide medical services for the girls. In addition, they receive daily medical care from Ms. Vimlesh (our in-house and permanent nurse). Health education lectures are given regularly by Ms. Vimlesh and the topics covered are seasonal diseases, eye care, use of sanitary napkins, and other important health related matters. A volunteer Syiona Rao looks after the healthcare services at the Veerni Balika and Institute along with Veerni nurse Ms. Vimlesh. Health camps were organized on arrival of the Veerni girls at the Veerni Institute.

Distribution of nutritional supplements to the Veerni girls

Recent evidence has highlighted that supplementing nutrition could play a supportive role in preventing COVID-19 and strengthening the immune systems of the girls.

Dr. A.S. Deora – Veerni Board Member and Doctor, recommended daily doses of nutritional supplements to the Veerni girls such as Vitamin D, C, E and Zinc. He also included Omega 3 fatty acids, which might have a beneficial effect, potentially reducing SARS-CoV-2 viral load. These nutrients are well known for their antioxidant properties as deficiencies in these nutrients can result in immune dysfunction and increased susceptibility to pathological infections.

Since the girls of the Veerni Project come from the lower socio-economic strata of society, it is very likely that they might be deficient in these vital nutrients as they are currently back in the villages. We must keep in mind that in the Veerni Institute and in Balika, the diet of the girls is carefully monitored. This is the reason that under present circumstances, Dr. Deora has suggested Veerni provide nutritional supplementation in the form of a Combipill containing Vitamin C, Vitamin D, and Zinc in appropriate Recommended Daily Allowance (RDA) as recommended by ICMR.



The Veerni team has distributed nutritional supplements to all the Veerni girls as suggested by Dr. Deora and is being monitored regularly by the medical team of the Veerni Project.

These nutritional supplements will be continued for a period of three months in order to remedy any deficiency and will ensure an adequate reserve to cater to the future needs.

OTHER FACILITIES

AT THE VEERNI INSTITUTE

Healthy Food for the Veerni girls

Food is an essential part of girls' lives. It gives the energy and nutrients to grow and develop, be healthy and active, to move, work, play, think and learn. To achieve overall good health in the girls, Veerni provides nutritious meals to the girls at the Veerni Institute and at Veerni Balika. Good food is a basic need and it is of prime importance in the attainment of normal growth and development. Healthy eating can help prevent many chronic diseases.

Veerni provides the following meals to the girls with fruit in the afternoons. Their diet is carefully monitored.

- Breakfast including milk with nutrition supplement
- Snack
- Lunch
- Fruit in the afternoon
- Dinner
- Nutrition supplement at night



Well-Equipped Computer Lab

The Veerni Institute has a well-equipped computer lab for the Veerni Girls. The lab is fully furnished with 22 new computers. The lab has an internet connection and Wi-Fi. A highly qualified teacher has been appointed to teach computer skills to the Veerni girls.



Medical Care

Veerni's health unit is staffed by a full-time nurse who monitors the general physical development of our girls and provides immediate first-aid treatment if needed. Check-ups for dental, eyesight, weight and height are conducted on an annual basis. Arrangements exist for nebulizers. The Veerni Institute has a well-maintained room to accommodate the girls falling sick. The medical room is cleaned regularly with antibacterial cleansers. There is a bed in the medical room and bed covers are sterilized and changed on regular basis. The medical room is equipped with first aid medicines.



Sports Facilities

A healthy body shall always have a healthy mind. Keeping this in mind, the Veerni Institute developed a sports ground in the Institute and has extensive programmes for its students. It is mandatory for all students to get out on to the field and participate in sports activities.

They get trained under the talented and experienced teacher. Frequent matches are held between them and girls are divided in four groups named Alfa, Bravo, Delta and Charlie. Girls wear tracksuits and take great interest in all the events.



Indoor Games

Veerni has Indoor Games for its students and they are Table Tennis, Chess and Carrom Board at this moment but we have plans to add more to this domain.



Security and Safety

Veerni ensures that it is safe and secure for all the girls, and staff who work at the Veerni Institute and at Veerni Balika. Both the Centre's are heavily guarded and modern security measures have been implemented to ensure the safety of all the Veerni girls. Matrons are always remaining within the buildings to ensure the safety of the girls. Security personnel are vigilant day and night. They are on duty 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days in a year - including holidays and academic breaks and provide many vital services. The safekeeping of the Veerni girls is a top concern.

- Both the buildings are secured by a technology driven multi-pronged security system. It is an intense yet non-intrusive system with 24X7 surveillance and is monitored round the clock by security personnel, patrolling and high definition CCTV cameras.
- **Fire Alarms and Tubes:** The entire building is equipped with alarm-based Fire-fighting systems.
- **The emergency transportation service:** Veerni has a vehicle and a driver for emergency transportation of the girls to the hospital.
- **Identity Cards:** All the girls receive an identification card.

Holistic Approach Of The Veerni Project For The Veerni Girls

*Nutritious
Meal*

*Clothing
and
Uniforms*



*Safe and
Secure
Environment*

*Health
Care*

*Academic
Tutoring*

*Exposure
to
Sports*

VEERNI'S RESPONSE TO THE PANDEMIC OF COVID-19

At Veerni, we have always been highly aware of our responsibility towards the nation and are committed to provide all possible support to India's response to the COVID-19 challenge in the domain of disability.

Over the years Veerni has worked in some 45 villages. Because of the Veerni Institute, the project is still connected with most of those villages.

At this critical time Veerni is temporarily adapting its services to help ensure access to food and health care until the girls can go back to school and continue their education.

Veerni have been providing guidance and awareness to the villages so that they can stay safe. The immediate priorities will be to ensure awareness and understanding of the Coronavirus and to develop guidelines and training on protection against COVID-19. We believe in taking measurable steps to tackle the urgent need of the hour and our response to the pandemic is also built around this approach.

Veerni Project takes this opportunity to specially thank **FOTIS** organization for their immediate and unconditional financial support. Because of **FOTIS**, we are able to distribute Hygiene Kits to the Veerni girls and other rural girls.

Hygiene Kits: Veerni has been distributing Hygiene kits to all Veerni girls, and deprived ladies in the villages. Below items were contained in the Hygiene kit:-



Veerni also supported families of the Veerni villages where necessary and make sure that families are not going hungry. One of the consequences of the lockdown in India can be a lack of access to food.

Food Kits: The Veerni team distributed food kits to destitute and needy families in the villages. Whenever the Veerni team finds any such family who lacks basic food, the kit containing the below mentioned items is given out:-



FOOD KIT ITEMS

Rice – 5 Kg

Oil – 1 (1.5 liter)

Green Pulses – 2 Kg

Indian Spices (3 types) – 3 Kg

Salt – 3 Kg

Jiggery – 2 Kg

To take a virtual tour of the “Covid Relief Program”; click here.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OnEBNLdaBEc>

Picture Gallery – COVID Relief



COVID RELIEF PROGRAM

HEALTH OUTREACH PROGRAM:

There are 110 Veerni girls coming from 63 villages of the Jodhpur district. The Veerni team visited these 63 villages on a regular basis. The team is divided into two sub teams with both the matrons and Veerni nurses along with two other staff. They leave every morning to visit the villages. Apart from distributing study materials to the Veerni girls, the Veerni team visited villages to ensure understanding and awareness of Covid-19 amongst villagers so that people know how to keep themselves and their families safe. Veerni team has been providing general information about Covid-19; actions to prevent the spread of the virus; what to do if you become unwell or suspect someone has the virus; how to engage and support community members. Veerni distributed information leaflets to the villagers and shared health advice and information.

The following important points have been discussed by the Veerni team with the villagers to make them aware about the symptoms of the virus so that they can take proper precautions to prevent the infection of the virus:

- Coronavirus symptoms can take five to six days to appear; however, it can take up to 14 days as well.
- The most common symptoms include fever, dry cough and tiredness. Less common symptoms of Covid-19 disease are aches, sore throat, diarrhea, conjunctivitis and loss of taste and smell.
- One should seek immediate medical attention if he/she develops serious symptoms such as difficulty in breathing or shortness of breath, chest pain and loss of speech or movement.
- Older people and those with underlying medical problems like high blood pressure, heart and lung problems, or diabetes are at higher risk of developing serious illness. However, anyone can catch Covid-19 and become seriously ill.

THE SOCIAL IMPLICATIONS OF COVID:

Child Marriage: Veerni girls who are child brides are in more danger than ever of their parents sending to their in-laws below the legal age of marriage; or of parents organizing early marriages for their daughters if these girls remain out of education. However, on the positive side, Veerni has observed over the last few years that the fathers have become more supportive of their daughters, which wasn't the case earlier. This may prove life saving for the Veerni girls.

However, parents can still be put under extreme community pressure, and may be powerless to stop the practice of child marriage during the COVID times, as girls have to stay home. Hence, it was vital for Veerni to keep the girls engaged in education so that parents can have a say in their communities stating that their daughters are engaged in their education. In this case parents may not be forced into such marriages. An added problem is the return of young men who had migrated for work to towns to their villages putting extra pressure on the safety of girls.

A global charity said that four million girls are at risk of child marriage in the next two years because of the Coronavirus pandemic, as campaigners warned that the crisis could undo decades of work to end the practice. Deepening poverty caused by the loss of livelihoods is likely to drive many families to marry off their daughters early. If we don't start thinking about how to prevent it now it will be too late. We can't wait for the health crisis to pass first. A U.N. report predicted the pandemic could lead to an extra 13 million child marriages over the next decade.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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We wish to thank the "IF! International Foundation" for their continued interest in the VEERNI Project

Special thanks to all the board members of the Fondation Veerni for their support. To Francoise Zweifel, for the important work she does for the Fondation Veerni and her dedication to the girls of the Veerni Project; to Pierre Henchoz for his time, invaluable advice and wisdom, and grateful acknowledgement of the establishment of the Fondation Veerni; to Doris Mugrdichian for her reporting to the IF! Foundation; to Sophie Fauchier for her beautiful photographs; very special thanks to Sheila Besson for the editing of reports and newsletters for the Fondation Veerni.

The survival of the Veerni Project is due to all the support we received in this last very challenging year. But most of all it is due to the commitment of the Veerni team.

They have been heroes.

A message from Mahendra Sharma (Director - Veerni Project)



2020 was a year like no other. When we started out we were looking forward to a great year for the Veerni Project, with plans to develop Veerni's own building for at least 150 girls and, with the strong development Veerni has seen over the past four years, we were well on track to achieving all the long-term targets we had set out for the VEERNI PROJECT.

Then Covid-19 struck the world with full force. The global pandemic presents a crisis on a scale many of us have never experienced before. The toll it has taken on human life is heartbreaking.

Our country went on total lockdown from March 20, 2020. At Veerni, we reacted quickly. There is no blueprint showing how to deal with a crisis like this, but within just a few hours we had adjusted our operations to address the situation at hand. March 20th, 2020 all 110 Veerni girls – 90 from the Veerni Institute and 20 from Veerni Balika, were sent home with their parents.

Throughout the year Veerni has taken new initiatives to make sure the Veerni girls remain in close contact with their school educational programs.

The Veerni Team started educational programs like “Schools at Doorstep” and “Digital Education” to make sure girls would continue their education while back at home. In the “School at Doorstep program” the Team visited villages to provide all the girls with learning materials and worksheets. In the “Digital Education Program” the girls were provided with “Tablets”.

We at Veerni have always been highly aware of our responsibility towards the nation and therefore we also provided all possible support to India's response to the COVID-19 challenge in all fields of disability. So, in this challenging year, Veerni has temporarily adapted its services to help other needy people to ensure access to food and health.

Under Veerni's “Health Outreach Program”, the Veerni staff provided guidance and awareness to the villages so that they could stay safe. At the beginning of the pandemic, the immediate priorities were to ensure awareness and understanding of the Corona virus. Veerni teams visited villages to ensure understanding and awareness of Covid-19 amongst the villagers so that they would know how to protect themselves and their families. Veerni teams provided general information about Covid-19 and continuously repeated which actions had to be taken in order to prevent the spread of the virus. The Veerni staff also distributed information leaflets to the villagers and shared health advice and information.

In January 2021, we managed to start working once again in the Institute and with great success. We followed all government guidelines in order to re-open both the Veerni Institute and Veerni Balika. To protect our girls from the Covid-19 virus a decision was taken to conduct all classes on-site at the Institute. The school agreed to send teachers to Veerni to conduct all classes inside the building. All ground floor rooms of the Institute were converted into classrooms. The girls received greater personal attention which helped to boost their studying capabilities and they were all extremely happy to be back in the Veerni Institute.

From the outset of the pandemic, Veerni's focus was concentrated on three major aims:

- That the Education of all Veerni girls would not be delayed in any way whatsoever and that they would all remain in touch with their school curriculum and education on a daily basis.
- Securing the well-being, health, and safety of Veerni girls, their families, and the people of the villages where Veerni has worked over the years.
- Steering the VEERNI PROJECT successfully through this unprecedented crisis.

We are proud to report that we have achieved all three above mentioned targets.

Last year was one of the toughest years we have ever experienced in the history of the Veerni Project. We would like to express special thanks to the founder of the Veerni Project - Ms. Jacqueline de Chollet who accompanied and supported us during these hard times and who guided us on a daily basis. She dedicated herself to performing the role of Motivator - something which was very much needed during these challenging and difficult days. There were many occasions when we lost hope, but Ms de Chollet was always there to guide us and to put us back on track in the right direction. I recall the daily conversations with her where we planned how the project could function during the time when hardly any other organizations were functioning in the field. As a result of her invaluable experience of so many years, we were able to take important decisions to keep the girls and their parents continuously engaged with the Veerni Project. The end result has shown that we were able to maintain our strength as a project and that we survived these difficult months while other similar organizations completely collapsed around us. I and the whole Veerni Team commend the efforts of Ms. Jacqueline de Chollet for her untiring commitment to the Veerni Project

We wish to express our gratitude to the Board of the Global Foundation for Humanity, to the Board of the Fondation Veerni, and to the many contributors who provide financial and moral support to ensure the continuing success of the Veerni Project. This support has proven to be invaluable for us.



(MAHENDRA SHARMA)
DIRECTOR
VEERNI PROJECT

ANNEXES

Current Covid-19 Update from Veerni Director May 24th 2021

In the words of Mahendra Sharma,

“The situation is only heading towards one direction which is bad to worse. It is utterly heartbreaking to see suffering at such scale.

It is a tragedy how the Covid 19 virus is spreading so rapidly leading to people dying in ambulances, dying on streets and even dying in the hospitals without oxygen supply.

In Jodhpur-We are still under lockdown until May 24, which is most likely to be extended to mid-June.

We would not be able to bring girls in the Institute as most schools would probably remain closed at least for a month.

We have done some food packet distributions for the needy people and will do some village works as and when needed. However, Veerni is in touch with all the girls. Up until now, all the girls and their families are doing well and safe in the villages.

Uncertainty has become the only certainty in our lives in these times. There seem to be fewer and fewer things about which we are certain. However, one big certainty we are keeping at the forefront is the hope that these times shall pass, and we will be able to move on with life as close to the previous normal as possible.

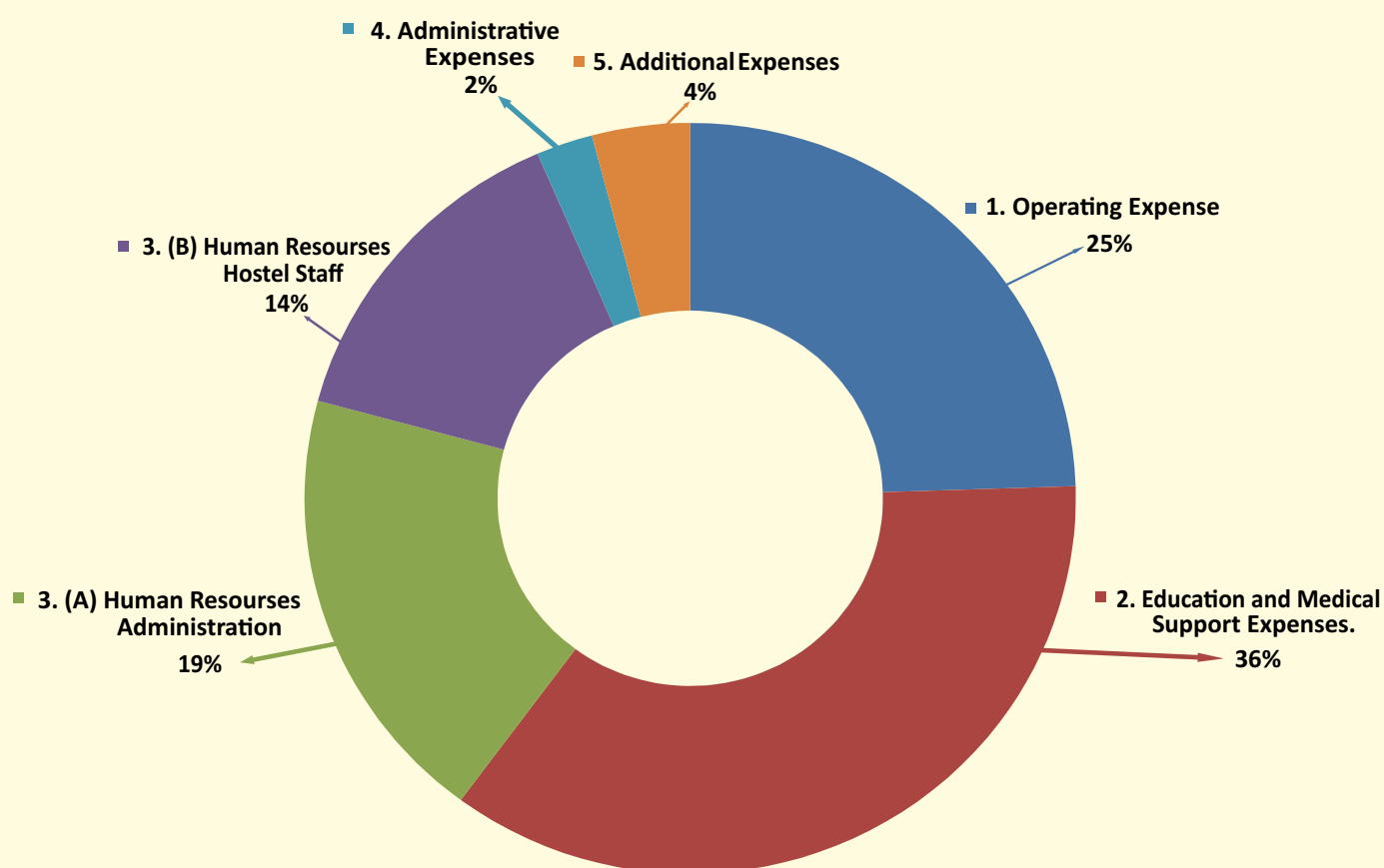
Budget available on request

THE VEERNI PROJECT

Veerni Institute

Expenditure Chart

From the period of 01st April 2020 to 31st March 2021

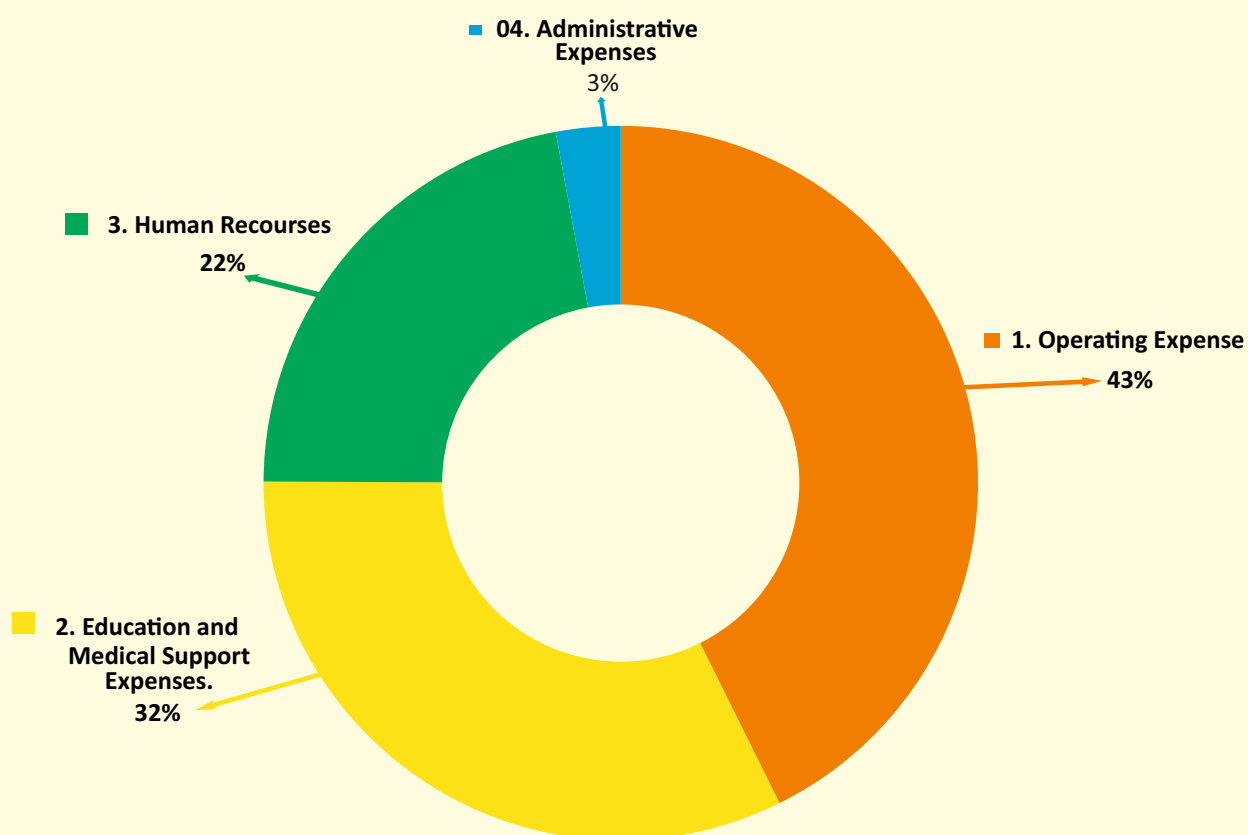


THE VEERNI PROJECT

Veerni Balika

Expenditure Chart

From the period of 01st April 2020 to 31st March 2021



Audit Report available on request

Veerni's former student achievements:

Following girls are providing their serving as nurses and health care worker during the time of Covid-19 pandemic:

01.	Name	Course Done	Position
01.	Ritu Tanwar	Post Graduate in Public Health	Public Health Awareness Officer – Under AIIMS (All Indian Institute of Medical Science)- Covid Wing
02.	Priyanka /Budha	GNM (General Nursing Midwifery)	Nurse – Working in a private hospital at Jodhpur
03.	Anne / Ramesh	GNM (General Nursing Midwifery)	Nurse – Working in a private hospital at Ahmadabad – In Covid ICU
04.	Priyanka Rathore	GNM (General Nursing Midwifery)	Nurse – Working in a private hospital at Jodhpur - In Covid Care
05.	Mamta	GNM (General Nursing Midwifery)	Nurse – Working in a private hospital at Jodhpur - In Covid Care

Two of Veerni's past students, Shobha and Mania are currently working in government.

Veerni Project



Congratulation

on your achievement




SHOBHA Choudhary

Ex Veerni Student – Shobha Choudhary
is selected for Rajasthan Police
and became Sub-inspector.

You have made Veerni proud

Shobha's complete story is available on www.veerni.org

Veerni Project


MAINA



Congratulations

on your achievement

Ex Veerni Student – Maina
is selected for Rajasthan Public
Service Commission (RPSC)
and became First Grade Teacher

You have made Veerni proud



Article published in the Hindi local Newspapers about the Tablets distribution done by VeerniSansthan.

Veerni girls will now be able to study with the help of technology: according to Mahendra Sharma.

Veerni Sansthan, Jodhpur has distributed 25 Tablets to the Veerni girls. The Director of VeerniSansthan said Veerni has been promoting girls' education for so many years. During this time of the Covid pandemic, Veerni has distributed the Tablets to the Veerni girls of classes 10 to 12, all the study materials have been installed on the Tablets, the difficult chapters will be learned easily by the girls through technology. Veerni girls will remain engaged with education, thanks to the Tablet program.

Veerni Sansthan is providing education along with a residential facility to one hundred and ten girls, catering for girls from class 6 to 12.

Kareena Khichi - a Veerni girl said "Now she will be able to study easily with this Tablet.

Sharma said- In a second phase, Veerni is planning to distribute more tablets to the girls.

वीरनी छात्राएं अब टेबलेट से तकनीकी शिक्षा के माध्यम से अध्ययन कर सकेंगी - शर्मा वीरनी संस्थान में ग्रामीण क्षेत्र की प्रतिभाओं को दिए टेबलेट



सूर्यनगरी तहलका रिपोर्टर
जोधपुर। वीरनी संस्थान जोधपुर द्वारा 25 छात्राओं को टेबलेट प्रदान किए गए। संस्थान के डायरेक्टर महेंद्र शर्मा ने बताया कि बालिका शिक्षा को बढ़ावा देने के लिए

संस्थान पिछले कई वर्षों से प्रयासरत है तथा कोरोना काल में बालिकाएं शिक्षा से जुड़ी रहे इसी उद्देश्य से संस्थान ने कक्षा 10 से 12वीं तक की वीरनी छात्राओं को टेबलेट प्रदान किए। इन टेबलेट में संपूर्ण

गाइडलाइन की पालना भी होगी। यह सभी छात्राएं जोधपुर के आसपास के 50 गांव से हैं। शर्मा ने कहा कि संस्थान और भी जरूरतमंद छात्राओं को टेबलेट का वितरण करेगी।

अध्ययन सामग्री डाली गई है। तथा बालिकाएं सरलता से प्रत्येक विषय की जटिलताओं को समझ सकें ताकि तकनीकी शिक्षा के माध्यम से अध्ययन कर सकें। वीरनी संस्थान द्वारा 111 छात्राओं को निशुल्क शिक्षा के साथ छात्रावास सुविधा प्रदान की जा रही है। जिसमें कक्षा 6 से 12 तक की छात्राएं शामिल हैं। करीना खीची ने कहा कि टेबलेट मिलने से शिक्षण कार्य में आसानी होगी। और सरकारी

वीरनी छात्राएं अब टेबलेट से तकनीकी शिक्षा के माध्यम से अध्ययन कर सकेंगी: शर्मा



जोधपुर, 23 नवंबर। वीरनी संस्थान जोधपुर द्वारा 25 छात्राओं को टेबलेट प्रदान किए गए। संस्थान के डायरेक्टर महेंद्र शर्मा ने बताया कि बालिका शिक्षा को बढ़ावा देने के लिए संस्थान पिछले कई वर्षों से प्रयासरत है तथा कोरोना काल में बालिकाएं शिक्षा से जुड़ी रहे इसी उद्देश्य से संस्थान ने कक्षा 10 से 12वीं तक की वीरनी छात्राओं को टेबलेट प्रदान किए। इन टेबलेट में संपूर्ण अध्ययन सामग्री डाली गई है। तथा

तकनीकी शिक्षा के माध्यम से अध्ययन कर सकें। वीरनी संस्थान द्वारा 111 छात्राओं को निशुल्क शिक्षा के साथ छात्रावास सुविधा प्रदान की जा रही है। जिसमें कक्षा 6 से 12 तक की छात्राएं शामिल हैं। करीना खीची ने कहा कि टेबलेट मिलने से शिक्षण कार्य में आसानी होगी और सरकारी गाइडलाइन की पालना भी होगी। यह सभी छात्राएं जोधपुर के आसपास के 50 गांव से हैं। शर्मा ने कहा कि संस्थान और भी जरूरतमंद छात्राओं को टेबलेट का वितरण करेगी।



FONDATION **VEERNI**

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