



Philosophy

We believe that intellectual empowerment, economic prosperity and social acceptance are the solution for extreme poverty and the road to world peace. Education inspires the student. Students inspire the world.

Mission

Our organization aims to combat poverty in India by empowering homeless children and their families with the powerful tool of international trade.

The Challenge

Last year, we connected with a University of Florida alumnus in New York City familiar with social entrepreneurship initiatives in India. We were astonished to hear that 25% of the population lived on \$.40 a day and that the government threshold for poverty was also a mere \$.40 per day! Thus, we founded UF Children's Hope India (UF CHI) as the first collegiate chapter of the New York based non-profit **Children's Hope India**. Brought together by the desire to bring about change through social enterprise underlined with business principles, **UF CHI** was established by three university students. In August 2008, we traveled to India to visit Shadipur Depot, an artisan slum colony in Delhi. We worked closely with social workers, teachers, and community leaders from Children's Hope India, one of India's largest NGO's, to run an educational camp for over 140 children and orphans. We created a two week program that served as an interactive model consisting of five personal development modules: financial literacy, computer literacy, cultural awareness, English literacy, and the arts.

We furthered our understanding of the current problems facing India's marginalized victims of poverty through meetings with Amod Kanth (Secretary General of Children's Hope Prayas), Ms. Arun Grover (director of the micro-finance program), and Mr. Amolak Kohli (Former Governor of the State of Mizoram, who along with Mr. Nalin Kohli, offered personal insights on the role of education and the private sector in developing India). In the course of building this extensive network we gained tremendous insight into how microfinance loans, by way of Self Help Groups (SHG's), can provide poor clients with the necessary capital to start or expand micro enterprises and effectively create and provide income for their families. During our committed 1,000 plus service hours over the past year, we learned how we can help bring economic prosperity and peace into the lives of the destitute children and families in India

At our project site, we met artisans and small business owners infused with a great talent for creating handicrafts; however, there was little understanding of marketing concepts and no international distribution chain to expand their production.

The Solution

Working in coordination with the infrastructure that Ms. Arun Grover has created for Prayas' Microfinancing Program, we aim to bolster the success of small businesses in rural villages of India through extending microfinance loans. Leveraging our relationships and various partnerships from our trip to India last year, we will provide approximately 90-100 microfinance loans to qualified artisans in the Children's Hope community so they can purchase higher quality raw materials for production of goods for sale in India and abroad.

Before arriving in India, we will work in conjunction with Children's Hope Prayas to devise a preliminary survey to further understand the needs and topical issues of the community. Questions that can be asked in the survey include number of earning members in the family, their current saving patterns, frequency and reasons for borrowing, and other questions to help UF CHI formulate a lesson plan intricately dedicated to achieving the community's respective goals. Based on the obtained results, we will utilize our on-the-ground network to form 15-20 self help groups of 5 people each to take part in an intensive, 14 day workshop led by UF CHI.

Three members of UF CHI will travel to India in May in an effort to train the artisans in documenting their products and using the existing computer lab to post their goods on our website. These products will then be sold through distribution networks that we are creating in conjunction with Children's Hope Prayas and our student

counterparts at Jesus and Mary College in Delhi. Children’s Hope India is supplementing our efforts with English and computer courses so the children and their families can leverage our efforts to make the most of the business concepts we teach them.

The lessons will be designed to teach the following:

Concepts	Objective
Entrepreneurship	Devising goals; creating mission statements; targeting business objectives to fulfill needs
Analytics	How to identify strengths and weaknesses in their handicrafts
Finance	Show villagers where they can get a microfinance loan to purchase material for their product; teaching them how to save and repay the loan.
Marketing	Selling the strengths of their handicraft
Quality Control	Raising the standard of their handicrafts so that it can be sold abroad

Providing an educational foundation is the first step in developing the livelihood of impoverished Indian handicraft makers. Once individuals go through our initial training, we will encourage them to take full advantage of marketing their products on an online marketplace. This provides them with a sustainable and effectual approach to promote goods on an international scale. We will seek outlets in the U.S. while our counterparts in India will seek distribution channels in Delhi. Our organization will consolidate shipments from different producers to lower freight and handling costs, promote their products to niche markets, and ultimately advance their businesses through our network and website.

After we return to the U.S., Children’s Hope will continue to oversee the collection and distribution of the micro loans through their current process by engaging social workers and operations staff at ICICI bank, one of India’s largest banks. The funds for our handicraft business will be kept in a separate account managed by UF CHI and supported by Children’s Hope India.

A key distinction of our project is the potential for long-term sustainability. In addition to online marketing, UF CHI will work on selling artisan products in brick-and-mortar establishments in the United States by collaborating with boutique artistry shops, the University of Florida student bookstore, and local fair trade businesses. Paid staff funded by Children's Hope Prayas ensures that we have the personnel in India to oversee our project with each incoming class of UF CHI students for years to come. UF CHI has created an ongoing recruitment process at the University of Florida and is committed to evolving as an organization. New recruits will become adept in the microfinance process and learn the intricacies of our mission; thus, we are focused on establishing a long term vision for the sustainability of this enterprise.

Use of Funds

Since our target site already knows how to make handicrafts, our objective is to teach them how to increase the *quality* of their craft so that it can be sold in stores *around the world* and our campus bookstore. The \$10,000 will help us achieve this by providing microfinance loans and business success workshops for the artisans to bolster the quality and quantity of their crafts. We will extend 90-100 microloans to artisans in Delhi so that they can purchase the quality raw materials to make their handicrafts. Once the crafts are complete, we will leverage the existing infrastructure of computers to demonstrate how they can place pictures of their products on the internet for people to purchase anywhere in the world. The revenue stream generated from their sales will go back into empowering the homeless and impoverished by providing the children of India with monetary resources to gain proper education and their families with an income.