

## THE CHALLENGE



- 75% of Indian Women get Sanitary napkins wrapped in a newspaper or black polybag because of the shame associated with them.
- 64% of Indians believe that the main job of women is to be good wives and mothers.
- Extremely low level of gender related awareness and education among the citizens.
- One of the highest gender inequality rates in the world.
- One of the most unsafe countries for women.

Solution = Quality Gender Education

## THE SOLUTION

Imagine a world where young boys and girls have adequate knowledge and awareness about Gender, Sexuality, Sex Ed, menstrual health, and sexual harassment; a world where men are aware of their privileges, and women of their rights; conversation around gender related taboo topics has been normalized and everyone truly understands what equality means. Our solution aims at turning this difficult to fathom imagination into a reality.

**Proposal:** Alongside the core subjects of Math, Science, etc., Gender Education be added to the school curriculum as another compulsory course of study, which would not be as rigorous, but definitely important and valued.

**Duration:** This course would run from Primary to High School, covering increasing intensities of topics as it moves to older age groups. The class will be taken only once a week, keeping in mind the heavy curriculum from other subjects. A better understanding of the course structure can be gained from the curriculum below.

## An Idea of the Curriculum:



**Target Groups:** Private Schools, to initiate with, as government schools present the risk of government intervention in sensitive topics.

**Why India?**  One reason for this choice is the dire need for such education in a country which presently frowns upon sex ed and even menstrual education. Moreover, while the plan is to begin with the course in India, it could also be scaled up and **adopted in other countries** with slight edits to the course content based on culture.

**What's wrong with current efforts?** Currently, while there are a large number of NGOs which conduct workshops and seminars to educate people on similar issues, they have more or less failed because a 3-hour seminar is not near enough to **unlearn what you've learnt** and believed throughout the years of your life. Education X will take the time to **slowly and effectively dismantle** the ideas of patriarchy.



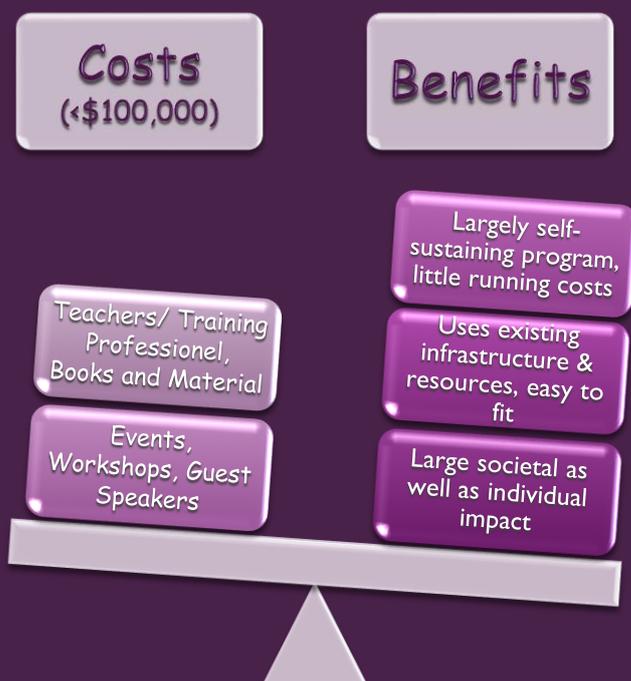
**Potential for success:** To bring about change in the social fabric of a place, the biggest challenge is to change rigid mindsets. This program targets individuals from a very early stage, before any rigid mindsets are even formed. It allows children to **understand and embrace equality** before any social stigmas get to them. And as this education continues until the age of adulthood, it ensures a whole generation of **better aware individuals** sensitive to the issues of the society.

Moreover, as the kids progress, so will the families, as **conversations will be normalized** and children will help their parents see what they have been learning. This program will be the first of its kind, and has a high potential to bring about **massive societal change**, growing in leaps and bounds towards achieving the 5<sup>th</sup> SDG – Gender Equality.

**Future prospects:** With the success of the program, it could gradually make its way into other regional education systems, and community education systems across the country. As social acceptance grows, 'Gender and Women's Studies' could also gain popularity as a field of higher study in India.

## IMPLEMENTATION

To bring about this major amendment in the education system, it is important to acknowledge that the current central educational system of India is under watch of the government, which is unlikely to welcome a gender education course with open arms, given the social, religious, and cultural standpoint of the country as a whole. What's the way out?



To work around this hurdle, the solution proposed is to **collaborate with existing non-governmental institutions** working to fight Gender Bias in the society, across India. These would assist and work with private schools to help set up the Education X program in each school.

**How long is the race?** 5-7 years - Starting from the time to collaborate with organizations and reach out to schools, to then setting up the program, training teachers, and solving miscellaneous issues, to where Education X finally running effectively in schools across the country.

**How will progress be evaluated?**

**Short term** – The students will take **assessments** for this course, much like any other, except for the assessments will be designed such that they require **personal thought** instead of rote learning.

**Long term** – It will take a few years for the results to show in the society by and large, for it requires at least a few years of education to try and do away with decades of passed down belief systems. But Education X will prove to be a revolutionary program once a generation of students who have taken this course during their school life move out into the world, and the impacts will

become clearly noticeable in the form of **reduced rates of crime** against women, increased **respect** and value for **rights**, and a generally better society as **gender-based oppression** will slowly but surely fade away.

### Possible Challenges:

- The schools not agreeing to the program.  
Overcoming it: The schools can be given incentives on publicity and reputation.
- Lack of financial resources  
Overcoming it: Grants from International Foundations and/or private grants can help.
- Lack of Human Resources  
It is highly unlikely to occur as existing organizations and teachers are being made part.
- Parental/family resistance  
Overcoming it: Workshops will be conducted for parents to help them understand the benefits of the program and how it will help their children grow better. Moreover, students will be given homework assignments to work on with their parents, so they feel aware and involved in the process.
- What if the program isn't successful?  
Overcoming it: The program needs to be given enough time before being evaluated, and if still unsuccessful, will be **reassessed and amendments** made to fit the needs.



### EFFECTS ON OTHER SDG<sub>s</sub>



### Resources

- <https://qz.com/india/252419/the-full-extent-of-what-urban-india-believes-about-menstruation-is-extraordinary/>
- <https://qz.com/india/985775/most-indians-believe-a-womans-sole-purpose-in-life-is-to-be-a-good-wife-and-mother/>

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