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Udayan Care

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SMALL INVESTMENT, BIG RETURNS

How is success measured? What is the economic return on USF's work? Are the investments justified in the results?

THE SHALINI WAY TO SUCCESS

The Udayan Shalini Program

Today, there are many charitable opportunities for donors to invest their money in. One of the largest areas in need of financial support is education for women. Girls are often unable to get secondary education because of the poverty and gender bias they face. Often young girls are required to work to sustain the families financially. 52% of women in India never receive secondary education and are married at a young age (UNICEF). In researching whether there is an economic return on investment in philanthropy particularly for education for women I focused my research on Udayan Shalini Fellowship. The Udayan Shalini Fellowship is a program that provides underprivileged girls with the higher education through financial and social support. The girls are inducted in the program for 5-6 years through which they get financial support and guidance to help them handle the socio cultural aspects of the world they face in their careers. The growing number of organizations and the steady number of donor's causes these charitable organizations to be analyzed and evaluated based on what socio-economic benefits it brings to its subjects. Donors are looking for a return on their investment, hence wanting to invest in a philanthropic charity that is committed putting the donations to good use. Today, philanthropic organizations are being evaluated on their purpose, transparency, and ability to demonstrate results to create a better future. The Udayan Shalini Fellowship (USF) is a great example of a philanthropic organization that is able to multiply their investments when providing education for underprivileged girls.

Background:

Spreading its wings in nine different cities, catering to more than 1,800 currently enrolled, the Udayan Shalini Fellowship is truly blossoming. In nine years, they have grown from a mere 72 Shalini's to 3500 graduates. But size is not the only criteria representing their success. The USF

program is currently sending their students to quality government schooling. USF has an incredibly low dropout rates around 4.5% and all of the remaining students go on to complete high school and college in a country where 34.5% of women are illiterate. Considering that the goal of USF is

to provide secondary and tertiary education for women, they also have the basic social and financial aid that they give to their

students. So what is it that makes USF unique and successful? In order to address this question, we turn to the idea of success.

What is Success?

Success is measured in two different ways; objective and subjective. Most organizations fail to provide an objective measure that demonstrates why donors should choose to invest in them. Of course, being able to demonstrate the return on investment to the public enables USF to distinguish itself from less strategic minded charitable organizations. The demonstration of this allows the donors to see that this organization cares and is serious about making a difference while putting the money to good use. This objective metric is one way to pull in more investments from donors so Udayan Care can continue to positively impact the lives of girls all over India.

Objectively Speaking:

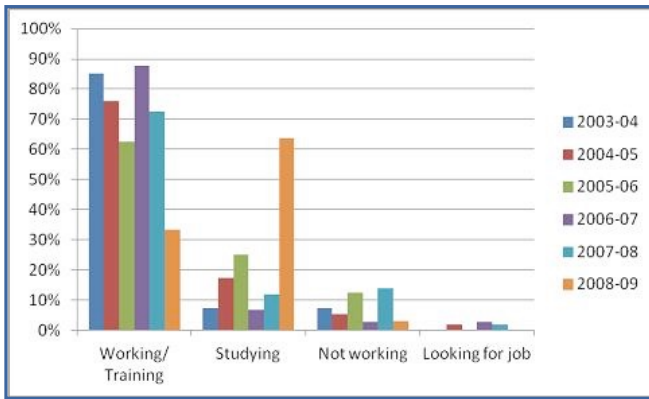
For perspective, as I analyze the data the average income the girls make today in one year is significantly more than what is invested in them in one year. (The data analyzed of the girls include salaries from 2014 and some of the girls graduated over 5 years ago.) Based on information from Udayan Care the average salary of the women the first year after they graduated is already generating an economic return. The economic return on investment is already huge. (In table below)

Investment in each girl (5 years)	INR 96,000
Average Salary per girl/year	INR 156,828
Economic return on investment	63.4%

Granted that the girls continue to work at the same salary, before the five years have

passed they will have produced all the expenditures that were invested in them during their time at USF. This is a true economic return. Further, this assumes that only 68% are working (others may be still studying or in training). If we were to factor in only those who are employed, the economic return on investment would come out to be higher. This is a very commendable measure of their ability to enable women in the workplace.

Currently, India has an astonishingly low number of women who work. Running at a mere 29% of working women, India has the lowest percentage amongst the developing countries. If we contrast this information



with the data that I have studied, 73% of the Shalini's (excluding those who aren't in touch and those who have or were dropped from the program) are currently in the workplace, 327 total. Furthermore, an additional 18% are currently studying in

On a smore subjective note:

One cannot ignore the subjective measures of success as they make it possible for the women to enter the real world prepared. Unlike objective measure of success such as numbers and statistics, defining subjective success is more difficult. Although the measures of success are different in all organizations, one thing that most would agree on is that it is never entirely based on money making. One of the young women I interviewed in India seemed to be making about 150,000INR more than any other person interviewed. Yet, when I asked her if she felt successful, she replied no. However, she rated herself as being very confident and motivated to achieve more.

college. From this we can conclude that 91% of those that have completed or are completing the Shalini program are inducted beyond a secondary degree while nationally, only about 48% of women achieve any sort of secondary education. Leaving the national statistics in the dust, it is nearly impossible to deny the objective success of USF.

Batch	Data	
	Count of Name	Sum of Salary
2003-04	27	666,000
2004-05	59	975,000
2005-06	32	352,000
2006-07	74	920,000
2007-08	102	1,175,500
2008-09	33	185,000
Grand Total	327	4,273,500

Instead of believing that having an income is the driving reason for success, perhaps it lies in the feeling of empowerment. All the girls I spoke to willingly admit that if it were not for USF, their lives would be completely different. USF is able to completely change the lives of these women through the personal connections they build, mentorships, workshops on life skills and socio cultural topics. USF's commitment to connect with the girls personally even after they graduate keeps them motivated and focused. Defining success for the women they help is about giving them opportunity, independence and a voice in society.

Of the 33 girls I personally interviewed 32 of them felt this program allowed to learn social skills to adapt to the world outside their reality. The group of attributes that closely followed this were the financial support, confidence and the mentoring they received that helped shape their future. Giving hope and confidence to those who are in a socially and economically poor situation is tough; nevertheless, USF builds strong, confident girls every day. Many programs are able to give needy people

Comparing and Contrasting

Every Shalini has a mentor *didi* of their own as well as workshops that are held at least once a month to build the confidence of uprising women. Even as I spoke to the women they all unanimously talked about how personality development and confidence that USF gave to them. They spoke highly about the workshops and undivided attention they were given from their mentors. As these women now walk into the world, they look back at USF as something that helped them develop skills like public speaking and perspective. USF brings taking the extra step to a whole new level.

Of course numbers and success stories are convincing, but let me persuade you further. Another organization much like USF is

financial support, but how many take the extra step? USF strives to not only provide women with their financial needs for education, but also, guide them into the real world. The Mentor Didi* program is a unique attribute that is a system where girls that have already graduated from the program return to assist upcoming Shalini's. The mentor is someone who can relate on a personal level, provide advice and support while a young girl is stepping into the world.

CAMFED. Granted that I did not do an in depth study of this organization as I did for the Udayan Shalini Fellowship, there are still many comparable points. They have many of the same goals and ideas in mind but fail to show the economic benefits that their students receive after completing the program. Furthermore, a return on investment is not represented in any of their public statistics. But, all of these things are minor in comparison to one thing.

CAMFED does not have the individual connection that USF builds with their women. In this way, CAMFED seems to fall lower than USF on the scale of subjective benefits.

Conclusion

Based on the assumption that charitable endeavors need to show measurable impact, in addition to photogenic and alluring Horatio Alger type stories, The Udayan Shalini Fellowship demonstrates a high performing example of social and economic return on investment. We can confidently predict significant improvement in educational levels achieved by fellowship recipients and also increasing household income their family. The benchmarks included the national statistics that USF nearly doubles in most cases. With this data as a starting point, I believe that Udayan care foundation represents one of the best examples of the positive impact of educating women in underdeveloped countries.

**Didi* is a term for “respected older sister” commonly used in India.

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