STAND UP RAISE YOUR VOICE and TAKE CHARGE!

MILAAN FOUNDATION 2018 ANNUAL REPORT
VISION
We envision an inclusive and equal world, where every girl has the knowledge, skills, and social environment to pursue her dreams and explore her full potential.

MISSION
By 2030, Milaan will empower 10 million girls across India and build a movement of Girl Leaders with a thriving ecosystem of change-makers and networks.
AT MILAAN, We believe investing in adolescents, especially girls, is critical to drive change. We empower adolescent girls with the right skills, knowledge and information to take action to fight for a gender-equal world, where they have equal access to opportunities, freedom from violence and discrimination, and are respected.

MILAAN ADDRESS 4 DIMENSIONS THAT WE HAVE IDENTIFIED ARE CRITICAL FOR THEIR WELL-BEING:
1 Completion of Secondary Education, 2 Adolescent Health, 3 Enhanced Agency, and 4 Prevention of Gender Discrimination and Violence
WHAT AN INCREDIBLE YEAR!

THE GIRL ICON PROGRAM

The Girl Icon Program is a leadership development initiative for adolescent girls (12-18) year who have demonstrated the willingness and ability to challenge social barriers that restrict the unleashing of girls’ potentials in their communities.

268 Girl Icons
5520 Peer Girls
13 Districts
4 States
12 Partner Organizations
39 Sahyogis

THE MOVEMENT HAS ONLY JUST BEGUN - The Girl Icons now aim to reach 10 million people by 2025! The journey from hundreds of millions of girls around us over the next ten years. To fuel this stupendously ambitious dream, we draw our inspiration and energy from our Girl Icons. They have always shown extraordinary resilience in fighting violence, injustice, discrimination and anything that violates constitutional and human rights. We can hardly permit ourselves to do less, when we expect so much from them.

IN THE END WE BELIEVE IN THE RIPPLE EFFECT CAUSED BY THE POWER OF THE INDIVIDUAL. We have already seen real change created by our Girl Icons on the ground and we are excited to see it surpass us as an organization - an ever growing movement driven by the girls themselves as they grow into the leaders they were meant to be.

AS WE EMBARK ON THIS AMBITIOUS JOURNEY, i would like to thank our donors, our community partners, our knowledge partners and our staff for believing in our mission, for lending unconditional love and support and for giving us the space to learn and grow.

MILAAN FOUNDATION Building a movement of Girl Leaders.
WE’VE EXPANDED

WE ARE NOW WORKING IN 4 STATES IN INDIA – ASSAM, KARNATAKA, MADHYA PRADESH AND UTTAR PRADESH.

268 GIRL ICONS from 13 DISTRICTS in Uttar Pradesh and 2 districts in Bodoland, Assam were honoured as Girl Icons 2018-2020 cohort who were selected out of the 10,262 APPLICANTS!

SYNERGIES

We believe in collaboration and the power of a collective to reach our goals. We’ve partnered with 12 grassroots organizations in two states to implement the Girl Icon program! We realized the importance of a network to create a larger impact. Thus, the Girl Icon Community Network (GICN) was born. It is a support network of local community-based organizations which aims to build a sustainable support system for adolescent girls. Currently there are 11 organizations in Uttar Pradesh who are part of the GICN and will implement the program in their districts respectively. In Assam, we have successfully forged a unique partnership with the Action Northeast Trust.

GIRL ICON COMMUNITY NETWORK – PARTNERS

- Grameen Panuruthan Sansthan
- Prasar
- Menaw Sowa Kendra
- Jan Gramin Vikas Sansthan
- Vigya Foundation
- Jan Vikas Sansthan
- Asian Institute of Management Trust
- Gramin Vikas Sansthan
- Vishwas Sansthan
- Guru Kripa Seva Sansthan
- Abhivada Sansthit

DISTRICTS OF UP

- Azamgarh
- Barabanki
- Chandauli
- Ghazipur
- Hardoi
- Jaunpur
- Lakhimpur
- Mau
- Raebareli
- Siwan

STAND UP, RAISE YOUR VOICE (DON’T) TAKE CHARGE!
A resident of Ushrara of Hardoi district of Uttar Pradesh, Rosini has just passed her 12th board exams with 80%. This 18-year-old wants to be an advocate to fight for women’s rights in the future. Currently, she is pursuing her BSc at SDM Patel in Hardoi. She lives with her parents and three siblings. Her father works as a labourer while her mother is a housewife.

Rosini has been raised in a protective environment. “I never got a chance to go out. The time I went to Lucknow for the training, I travelled alone. I learnt that whatever challenges one may face, one should never give up,” shares Rosini. She faces constant pressure from her family to get married but takes a stand for herself with dignity and determination. She wants to complete her education despite her family pressurizing her to get married. “Everyone says girls will eventually get married so what is the point of studying?” I didn’t have anyone to guide me. Till date my mother has never told me to get up and go to study,” shares Rosini.

A big family and limited household income adds on to Rosini’s struggle. Due to financial instability, her dream
of becoming an advocate is still very distant. Roshni has worked as a teacher for two months at Mohanlal Smarak Vidyalaya in Hardoi teaching Science and Mathematics. “I enjoy teaching but I don’t want to be a teacher,” shares Roshni. Apart from teaching at the school, Roshni has been running coaching classes since she was in class 8. She had done some savings from these classes to support her education and herself. “I have a total of 15,000 rupees in my bank account now,” says Roshni.

THE GIRL ICON PROGRAM has provided Roshni with a platform to learn new skills and build her personality by experiencing the world outside her village. “If I wasn’t a Girl Icon, my dreams would be incomplete,” shares Roshni. She says that the first thing she will do when she becomes “someone” is to travel. She is hopeful about her future and has aspirations for her life.

THROUGH THE GIRL ICON LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT TRAININGS WE AIM TO BUILD KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS OF GIRLS TO EXPLORE THEIR FULL POTENTIAL AS GIRLS AND LEADERS IN THEIR COMMUNITIES.

WE ORGANIZED THE FINAL GIRL ICON LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT TRAINING for the graduating Girl Icons of 2016-2018 batch in Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh in June 2018. The training spread across 5 days and had a series of sessions which focused on building skills and knowledge around communication, leadership and etc.

THE GIRL ICON LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT TRAINING for the 2018-2020 Girl Icons was organized in phases in Varanasi and Lucknow in Uttar Pradesh and Rohinari in Assam. Altogether 268 Girl Icons had attended the first residential training, completing their first module. The training was divided broadly into 6 knowledge-based sessions -Goals and Aspirations, Education, Rights and Laws, Gender and Sex, Communication and Confidence Building.

“I never got a chance to go out. The time I went to Lucknow for the training, I traveled alone. I learnt that whatever challenges one may face, one should never give up”
DEEKSHA (NAME CHANGED) IS ONLY THIRTEEN BUT HER AGE DOES NOT DEFINE THE COURAGE SHE POSSESSES AT THIS YOUNG AGE. In her village named Jaliya Mau in Kekori district of Uttar Pradesh, Deeksha’s neighbours were getting their 13 year old daughter married to a man who was married twice already. Deeksha wanted to stop the marriage. Her family supported her and she mobilized her peer group members and informed the police. The neighbours were called to the police station and the marriage was stopped. The girl is now living at her grandmother’s house. She feels good that she helped secure someone’s life.

“THIS WILL HELP PREVENT THEM FROM MAKING THE SAME DECISION IN THE FUTURE BECAUSE THEY HAVE A YOUNGER DAUGHTER AS WELL,” shares Deeksha. This young talented girl has got double promotion in her school where she was promoted from class 6 to class 8. Currently she is studying in class 10. Apart from excelling in studies, Deeksha is also very empathetic towards the girls of her age in her village. She wants to help girls complete their education. “I have also helped 4 girls in my village and they are enrolled with me in my school. I am their senior,” she adds.

DEEKSHA HAS MULTIPLE IDENTITIES: A SUPER GIRL, A CLASS MONITOR, A POWER ANGER OF THE WOMEN’S POWER LINE IN UTTAR PRADESH AND A GIRL ICON.

In the future, she aspires to be a police officer because that is her father’s dream. She also wants to support her family so that her siblings do not have to face any hardships. She is planning to start by providing coaching to earn extra money. She also sees herself as a social worker helping others in her community along with working to attain her dream of becoming a police officer.
“I have also helped 4 girls in my village and they are enrolled with me in my school. I am their senior.”
NURTURING LEADERS THROUGH PEER MEETINGS
PREETI (CENTER) IS A PEER GROUP MEMBER OF POOJA (GIRL ICON) FROM INDORE IN MADHYA PRADESH

“When Pooja started her Girl Icon Journey, I was the only one in her peer group. We kept on asking girls to come for meetings, but it was very difficult as they didn’t quite understand the importance of a peer group. I used to be very shy too. Even Pooja was an introvert. We never thought she’d be one of the Girl Icons. But through training and guidance, she started addressing different issues as a part of Social action projects.

ONE SUCH ISSUE, WE TOOK UP WAS “EVE TEASING”. It was so common that we were ready to change our route but not ready to address the problem. But being a part of a peer group taught us to raise our voices. We organized a small play, depicting the problems we face with eve teasing. We stated our rights and what actions we can take if the problem persists. What was successful was that the girls started raising their voices against such issues. We have now become more aware.

BEING A PART OF GIRL ICON PROGRAM HAS HELPED US TO LEARN NEW THINGS; and my message to all the other girls will always be to follow their hearts. If you feel it’s wrong, always take help from your sisters and if you feel you’re right, don’t listen to anyone.”

Being a part of peer groups has influenced one’s sense of belongingness; it has helped girls in identity formation.

THE PEER GROUP MEMBERS STRENGTHEN THE GROUP by bringing their personal capacities in fulfilling a common objective. Forming and managing peer groups sometimes act as a challenge, but the Girl Icons understand the importance of unity and collective behaviour of the group. These meetings are facilitated by the Girl Icons Bi-Monthly on various issues, concerning the overall development of the Girl Icons and their peer groups. The monthly meetings have proven to foster functional relationships between the Girl Icons and their peers. Besides, the meetings also act as spaces to share and learn from each other.

5520 adolescent girls are part of the peer network.
LEADING CHANGE THROUGH SOCIAL ACTION

KHUSHBOO IS ONE OF OUR FIRST GIRL ICONS. She comes from a conservative community where girls are questioned on the simple choice to wear a pair of jeans or even when they look out the window. At the age of 21, Khushboo is a leader in her own way. A born activist, her outspoken nature has earned her quite the reputation as someone who is not afraid to speak up.

AS A GIRL ICON FELLOW, KHUSHBOO MOBILIZED A GROUP OF 20 GIRLS. “People questioned my actions. They tried to provoke my parents too.” She organized meetings in Surajkund park since there was no safe space for girls to meet. They shared their problems – some talked about their brothers putting restrictions on them and others about how their father’s work didn’t allow them to go to school, while their families had no problem sending them to work as house helps in a nearby colony. As a joint decision they planned to raise awareness on the importance of educating girls. “The nukkad natkal had a positive impact because two girls from my community were enrolled to school soon after. It was a proud moment,” says Khushboo.

KHUSHBOO LED HER GROUP TO ORGANIZE ANOTHER STREET PLAY, this time the venue was bigger. They gathered in Hazratganj to sensitize people on girls’ mobility, freedom and education. A media article was published. When people saw it, their attitude towards her changed. “Every time I am coming to meet me to include their girls in my peer group,” shares Khushboo.

KHUSHBOO’S PARENTS HAVE ALWAYS SUPPORTED HER EFFORTS. However, as the meetings progress, boys started participating in the meetings. The community was concerned about the congregation of boys and girls in one space. Her mother stopped her from organizing the meetings, ending in a fight. But Khushboo was adamant. She resumed the meetings. Khushboo continues to work in her community with a focus on children and young people, especially girls. She helps children enroll in school, assists her neighbours in filing forms, shares information on banking and applying for ration and Aadhar cards and organizes educational meetings.

KHUSHBOO ASPIRES TO BE A SOCIAL WORKER TO FIGHT VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND FOR GIRLS’ EDUCATION. Khushboo is a third-year student pursuing a Bachelor’s degree in Commerce. She holds many identities – she’s a Girl Icon...
“People questioned my actions. They tried to provoke my parents too.”

SOCIAL ACTION PROJECTS

- Child Marriage
- Dowry Prohibition
- Sanitation and Hygiene
- Menstrual Hygiene
- Gender Equality
- Save the Environment

55 SOCIAL ACTION PROJECTS WERE LED BY GIRL ICONS AND THEIR PEERS REACHING OUT TO 4826 COMMUNITY MEMBERS.
EMPOWERING GRASSROOTS WOMEN

WHEN SUNITA REACHED ADOLESCENCE, SHE ALONG WITH HER FOUR SISTERS STARTED FACING RESTRICTIONS – they weren’t allowed to play outdoors or wear clothes of their choices. She was taught “how to behave like a girl”. Sunita always objected to this. She was determined and confident that she was making the right choices for herself. She completed her college and started working as a field worker with a non-governmental organization. This was a turning point in her life. She learnt how to ride a scooter and felt empowered.

AFTER GETTING MARRIED, SUNITA’S MOBILITY WAS RESTRICTED. But by now, she had learnt how to handle her mother-in-law’s stereotypical perspective towards women.

SUNITA ALWAYS WANTED TO WORK WITH GIRLS because she realized there are many girls out there who are unaware of the feeling of freedom and are held back by patriarchy. Sunita shares, “after joining Milan as a Sahayogi, I realized it’s not just the freedom of stepping out of the house we require as a girl or a woman, but we also need the right information, be able to talk about our body openly and make access to education mandatory for girls.”

“THE BEST FEELING OF MY LIFE TILL DATE IS WHEN A GIRL FROM MY GROUP BROUGHT FIVE GIRLS TO ATTEND THE MEETING. That day I understood how important my role as a Sahayogi is to the girls in my community,” shares Sunita. She brings a positive energy and is motivated to help girls realize their potential.

SAHAYOGI SUNITA IS FROM A SMALL DISTRICT CALLED JAUNPUR IN UTTAR PRADESH. At 32 years of age,
“The best feeling of my life till date is when a girl from my group brought five girls to attend the meeting. That day I understood how important my role as a Sahayogi is to the girls in my community.”

Sunita is expected to carry the responsibilities like any woman in rural India. She has two children – a daughter and a son – and she has big dreams for her daughter. “I hope that the society sees both my children as equal.”

WE ARE THRILLED TO HAVE SUNITA AS PART OF OUR GROWING NETWORK OF GRASSROOTS WOMEN who are taking a stand to empower girls and communities! Girls go through an intensive learning journey. Along the way they need help, support, and guidance. Local women who are part of the Girl Icon Community Network are identified as Sahyogis to help them with their work, motivate them, and support them emotionally. 39 strong women are working with the girls on ground to create change and break barriers.
16 Year Old Saumya is a National Tchoukball Player from Varanasi in Uttar Pradesh. Her parents have always been supportive of her decision to be a sports person. They have been by her side in every difficult situation. However, few members of her community made her path to success difficult.

It is a requirement that Saumya wears sports gear like shorts during her practice. However, her community has issues with the way she dresses. They compare her to her parents that they give too much freedom to their children. “The people in my community think girls should stay at home and take care of their family after marriage by cooking, washing and doing domestic chores. Their continuous taunts and judgmental comments were becoming hurdles for myself and my sister to achieve our dreams,” shares Saumya.

Saumya’s dream was stronger than the hurdles being created. She decided to join a stadium to be coached as a professional. Her hard work and determination paid off when she became a national player, and even won a gold medal. Her pictures and stories were published in newspapers and school magazines. Her success inspired many others in her community. She was a famous personality. “The community members also changed their mindset. Some even send their daughter’s to play at the stadium,” shares a proud Saumya.

Saumya proves that if we have grit, nothing is impossible. Today, her parents as well as people of
her community are very proud of her achievements. She is a member of My Life, More Faith program.

MY LIFE, MORE FAITH
(MLMF) IS ONE OF THE
INTERVENTIONS BY PRAVAK
funded by Amplify Change
which focuses on the issue
of Early and Child Marriage
through psycho-social
approach enabling young
people to take charge of their
lives and decisions.

MILAAN IS IMPLEMENTING
THE MLMF PROGRAM IN FIVE
DISTRICTS OF VARANASI
AND LUCKNOW division
working with 263 boys and girls
between 12-18 years through
a pre designed 50 hours
(approximately) curriculum
specifically designed to
address Early and Child
Marriage. The participants have
been divided into 10 groups
who are led by Volunteers/
Youth Facilitators.

Saumya’s dream
was stronger
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being created.

MILAAN
SCHOOL

We currently
cater to 406 students
and have
27 staff members.
WITH THE DREAM OF MAKING QUALITY EDUCATION ACCESSIBLE AND AVAILABLE TO CHILDREN from economically backward families in remote rural areas, in 2007, Milaan initiated the “Swarichna Learning and Resource Center” now known as Milaan School in a rural village named Kantaim in Sitapur District, Uttar Pradesh catering to 15 villages in Sidhauri Block of Sitapur District. The center is a creation of the collaborative efforts of the local community and Milaan.

THE MILAAN SCHOOL UNLEASHES THE POWER OF ACCESS TO EDUCATION as more and more children emerge from among the cohorts led with the drive and will for an education. The school transcends the physical boundaries of any educational institution to become a safe space for children to unleash their creativity, access various mediums for exposure and encourage dialogue and discussion. Our school is situated on a 2.00 acre plot with 22,000 sq feet of constructed two storey building.

“MILAAN HAS TAUGHT ME TO DREAM,” says Dharmirani, 16 year old Milaan alumnus who comes from Badi Mathew Purwa, a village in Sitapur District in Uttar Pradesh. She believes that every child deserves a childhood, especially girls. She aims to become a Civil Engineer. “I want to create big structures where people can come together and share ideas under the same roof for a better future,” shares Dharmirani. As she is the first child from her family to go to school, she sets an example for her siblings and other underprivileged children in her community to understand the utmost importance of Education. Dharmirani is a student at Lucknow Polytechnic pursuing Engineering.
THE JOURNEY OF MILAAN SCHOOL

2007
Founding members of Milaan from the University of Delhi started a learning center called Svanachar in Kanton village, Sitapur in Sitapur district of Uttar Pradesh PROVING NON-FORMAL EDUCATION TO 48 CHILDREN.

2008
1 acre of land was donated by community leaders to Milaan TO BUILD AND RUN THE FIRST SECONDARY SCHOOL at the time.

2009
Crowdfunding campaign “Build a School, Brick by Brick” RAISED INR 1.6 LAKHS TO BUILD THE FIRST 2 ROOMS OF THE SCHOOL.

2011
RTE, 2010 mandated non-government schools to meet the Infrastructure requirements OR ELSE. WITH AN INITIAL DONATION OF INR 3 LAKHS, Milaan started “One square feet of Happiness” campaign to raise INR 2 crores to meet the government guidelines and save this dream project.

2012
Started the construction of the school and the mid-day meal program to PROVIDE NUTRITIOUS LUNCH TO CHILDREN

2015
Achieved minimum infrastructure requirements (approx 18,500 sq ft) by the government and filed papers for SCHOOL RECOGNITION TILL GRADE 12 under the Uttar Pradesh Board.

2016
Svanachar now known as Milaan school awarded A LIFETIME AFFILIATION BY THE UP BOARD TILL GRADE 12.

2017
Delivered 100% pass result in both 10th and 12th grades. Re-envisioned the future of the school and PURCHASED 1 ACRE OF LAND TO SUPPORT FUTURE PLANS.

2018
Delivered 100% pass result in grades 10th and 12th and RECEIVED PRIMARY SCHOOL AFFILIATION.
RANGOLI MAKING, EVERY YEAR WE ORGANIZE INTER HOUSE COMPETITIONS IN OUR SCHOOL THIS YEAR STUDENTS PARTICIPATED IN RANGOLI COMPETITION, HERE’S A GLIMPSE INTO THEIR DESIGNS!

CELEBRATING REPUBLIC DAY:

EVERY YEAR OUR STUDENTS PREPARE EXCITELY FOR THE REPUBLIC DAY CELEBRATED ON JANUARY 26. HERE’S A GLIMPSE INTO THEIR DAY!

3RD ANNUAL FUNDRAISER

“The Celebration of Girl Leaders: We hosted our 3rd Annual Fundraiser “The Celebration of Girl Leaders on 29th September 2018 at Emllurst Art Museum, CA, USA. The event intended to bring together people of all backgrounds toward a common purpose – providing opportunities for young girls. We engaged support from many prominent people, our Girl Icon stories to drive change in the communities were appreciated for. We also featured “I am a Girl Icon” documentary for the audience to share the work of our Girl Icons in their communities.”

AMPLIFYING VOICES OF GIRLS

The Girl Icon VR Film: In partnership with the Oculus VR for Good Creators Lab program and Make A Fund. The social sector launched its first virtual reality film “GIRL ICON” directed by Subhash Espli Proctor and produced by Little Giant Wolf. The film features the story of Misan Girl Icon Raini Vanaasi.

The film has been globally acclaimed in many film festivals and made its first official selection at SXSW film festival at Austin, Tribeca film festival in New York and recently at Beijing International film festival.

LAUNCH EVENT OF THE GIRL ICON PROGRAM:

We organized the launch event of the Girl Icon Program for 2018-2020 cohort on 13 December 2018 in Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh. The aim of the event was to build a collaborative platform to instigate collective action by bringing together a close group of leaders from different sectors including the government, corporate, non-profit and media. The event was attended by Dr. Mona Shri Kaul (General Manager) Reshniya Khan (Swatiyaa Kanyakram National Adolescent Health Programme), Wajahat Yabubullah (Retired IAS Officer), Mr. Salawadhini (Breakthrough), Dr. Sumit Negi (E&G-Gender Program Advisor), Ms. Neha (KWA Protection Officer) at UNICEF, Ms. Kulsum (I-Partner), Mr. Ruppan from Kamathu Steels and Mr. Farrukh Rahman Khan (Regional Manager - Water Aid) and few other representatives. The participants have shown their interest to collaborate to further strengthen the program.