



# EMPOWER HER!

Elevating women and communities through  
entrepreneurship and strong networks.



# A holistic effort for women's livelihoods, equality, and sustainable communities

**Empower Her!** takes a comprehensive approach to strengthen women's economic and social positions – at home, in the labor market, and in society. This four-year project is being implemented in rural areas of two Indian states and involves entire local communities, including men, youth, and authorities. It encompasses both basic entrepreneurship training and opportunities for businesses with a bigger potential to scale up. A fundamental component is the training of 200 women's networks, which enhances their ability to influence important social issues that directly affect them.



## Expected Outcomes

- ✓ **20,000 women** receive entrepreneurship training, of which
  - **15,500** will strengthen their small-scale family businesses, and
  - **4,500** will accelerate their businesses to the next level
- ✓ Increased incomes by at least **30 percent**
- ✓ **15,000 jobs** created
- ✓ **200 women's** networks advocating for issues regarding affecting their communities and gender equality
- ✓ **4,000 entrepreneurs** develop their businesses with renewable energy sources
- ✓ **7,500 men** are engaged in women's businesses and in advocacy work
- ✓ **2,000 youths** receive training in English and digital tools
- ✓ **Improved knowledge** around WASH (Water, Sanitation, Hygiene)
- ✓ **Strengthened families** – socially and economically

## Target Group

- ✓ **29,500 participants**, of which 20,000 are women
- ✓ **7,500 men** and **2,000 youths** – members of the family

## Project Period and Location

January 2024 – December 2027 in Rajasthan and Tamil Nadu, India

## Total Budget

12,000,000 SEK



# WIDESPREAD POVERTY AMONG INDIA'S WOMEN AND YOUTH IN RURAL AREAS

India has waged a successful battle against poverty and in the last 15 years, 415 million people have been lifted out of poverty. Despite this, approximately 200 million still live below the extreme poverty line (\$2.15/day). India is the world's most populous country, with 53 percent of the population under 30 years old. As much as one-fifth of young people are unemployed and the situation is even worse in rural areas.

Women's participation in the workforce is only 27 percent, and 66 percent of the work done by women is unpaid, according to the OECD. Without their own income, women's position in both society and the household weakens. Domestic violence is prevalent.

Up to a third of households live in so-called energy poverty and the time-consuming task of gathering fuel for cooking further limits women's and girls' access to education and livelihoods.

## Lessons learned and good results – it's time for the next level!

Hand in Hand has 20 years of experience in strengthening the social and economic status of women in India. Over the years, efforts have evolved, and in Empower Her!, our accumulated expertise is integrated into a comprehensive, holistic project where long-term sustainability is key. Strengthened women's networks, the opportunity to accelerate businesses, and

investment in sustainable energy are three main components. By involving the men of the families in the project, gender equality gains deeper roots, and by engaging the youth of the families in digital training and English language education, we strengthen the opportunities for the next generation.



# EMPOWER HER!

## Social and economic transformation for the women, their families, and the wider community.

### Focus areas of the project

#### Create livelihood opportunities

To create conditions for women to establish – and develop – income-generating activities is central to the project. Through a comprehensive approach including entrepreneurship training, strengthened self-help groups, and involvement of the family, the project will provide women with opportunities to earn their own income and develop their long term economic status. 20,000 women will participate in self-help groups and acquire basic skills in literacy, community development, gender equality, livelihood opportunities, climate and environmental issues, and understanding in how to work with savings and loans.

#### Accelerate businesses with potential

4,500 of the women with the greatest potential will undergo further training in entrepreneurship, where they will have the opportunity to invest and scale up their small family-based businesses to the next level. Through increased knowledge of market linkages, value chains, digital tools, mentorship, and access to capital, they can expand their enterprises to achieve better profitability and sustainability.

#### Empowerment of female leaders and networks for positive societal development

200 women's networks, known as Cluster Level Networks, will be trained. The leaders of these networks will engage in strategic advocacy efforts towards local authorities in areas affecting women, such as gender equality, environmental sustainability, education, and WASH (water, sanitation, and hygiene). Giving women a voice at the societal level is crucial for enhancing women's social, economic, and political empowerment.



The project's focus areas continue





## Streamline businesses with sustainable energy

4,000 of the entrepreneurs will have the opportunity to improve the energy efficiency of their businesses. This could involve optimizing operations with sustainable energy (such as electric sewing machines, lighting systems, cooling options) or transitioning to renewable energy sources. The initiative will benefit women through increased profitability, improved gender equality, and contribute to India's pursuit of a green economy.

## Involve men for strengthened families and gender equality

The 7,500 men that will participate will receive training in gender equality to support women in their development and entrepreneurship. Involving men in the family enables families to holistically discuss and address gender issues at both the societal and household level.

## Educate youth in digital tools and English

Within the project, the younger generation will be equipped to establish sustainable livelihoods and contribute to the development of their families and communities. The 2,000 youths in the project (aged 18–30) will receive training in both the usage of digital tools and English, benefiting their future plans. This will even advance their mothers' entrepreneurship efforts and the overall well-being of the family.



## The project primarily contributes to the following four of the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) for sustainable development:



### 1: NO POVERTY

- 1.1 Eradicate extreme poverty
- 1.b Create sound policy frameworks with poverty and gender equality perspectives



### 5: GENDER EQUALITY

- 5.1 End all forms of discrimination against women and girls
- 5.5 Ensure women's full and effective participation in leadership and decision-making



### 7: AFFORDABLE AND CLEAN ENERGY

- 7.2 Increase the share of renewable energy globally
- 7.3 Double the global rate of improvement in energy efficiency



### 8: DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH

- 8.3 Promote policies for job creation and entrepreneurship
- 8.6 Promote youth employment, education, and training







**Women's enhanced economic power and status in society are crucial steps for the individual, for gender equality, and in India's fight against poverty. Join us on this journey and witness how people and communities flourish in this priority project!**

**We are seeking funding  
for Empower Her! and look forward  
to a dialogue.**