

PROGRAM OFFICER

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EDUCATION

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LANGUAGES

Hindi, Punjabi, Urdu

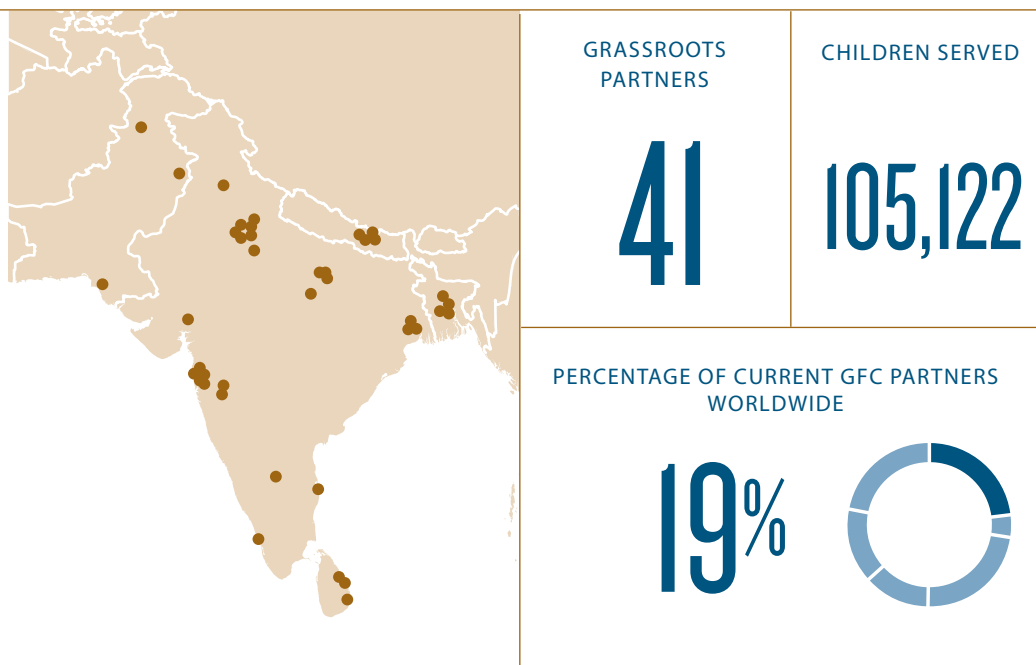
SOUTH ASIA

The United Nations estimates that one in five people is between the ages of 15 and 24. This is a generation of doers who dream big and inspire others to follow their lead. It's therefore not surprising that a number of The Global Fund for Children's grassroots partners in South Asia are sharpening youth leadership skills and using peer-engagement models to spur long-term change.

In India, where one-third of the population is

under the age of 15, youth entrepreneurship has played a key role in redefining the social sector. Access to low-cost technology, mobile devices, and online networks has catalyzed innovative and sustainable solutions to social issues, while also addressing the lack of traditional jobs in the country. The result is a stronger, youth-led job market that is centered on addressing social issues by using 21st-century skills and technology.

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COUNTRIES: Bangladesh (5), India (26), Nepal (4), Pakistan (3), Sri Lanka (3)

Regional statistics are current as of January 1, 2016.



SNAPSHOT



On their way to visit the National Museum in Delhi, these boys could hardly contain their excitement. GFC grassroots partner **Make a Difference** (MAD) utilizes its vast network of volunteers in 23 cities across India to improve education for children living in street shelters, orphanages, and government-run institutional homes. Reaching 5,000 children annually, MAD focuses on improving the quality of education, increasing school retention rates, and providing children with creative learning opportunities. © MAD

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Savvy grassroots organizations are taking advantage of this new wave of youth leaders, harnessing their potential and adopting the principles of youth-led community organizing. Through peer education, well-trained individuals lead skill-building and educational activities with groups of their peers to give them the tools bring about change. The peer groups then go on to engage wider audiences on social issues, thereby initiating a large-scale mindset shift in society.

The YP Foundation (TYPF) and **Equal Community Foundation** (ECF) are examples of GFC partners that are using this model to great effect. TYPF strengthens youth-led initiatives and movements, empowering young people to access critical information about their health, education, and rights. TYPF then helps them use this information to become successful leaders and advocates. Meanwhile, ECF uses the peer-education model to work with boys and men to end violence and discrimination against women and

girls. ECF draws on the influence of youth leaders, using positive peer pressure to encourage young boys to fight gender-based violence in their communities.

One of the most exciting things about peer education is that these projects are designed to eventually become self-sustaining. The hope is that peer educator groups will ultimately exist with little oversight and will be able to interact with peers in their communities on a deep, personal level.

By training youth leaders to educate their peers, grassroots organizations are able to simultaneously empower youth as agents for positive change and reach wide audiences at a low cost. Most importantly, by engaging these groups on issues like gender-based violence and human rights, grassroots organizations can begin a ripple effect of attitudinal and behavioral change that will spread throughout their communities. This change is what TYPF and ECF hope to inspire—peer groups are their innovative instruments for community transformation..

REGIONAL FOCUSES

→ ADOLESCENT GIRLS

More than 300 million adolescent girls live in South Asia. Girls in impoverished situations are often forced to drop out of school to support their families. They are at risk for sexual exploitation, violence and abuse, HIV, and early pregnancy and childbirth. Half of all females in India are married before the age of 18.

→ ENTERPRISE & YOUTH EMPOWERMENT

Born into a challenging economy, youth in South Asia are struggling to gain traction as leaders and contributors, with the most disadvantaged youth facing the greatest challenges. To become productive citizens, young people need targeted assistance with vocational training, life skills training, and leadership development.

→ EDUCATION

Many children from poor families struggle to go to school. Rural schools often fail to retain students and to provide quality education. Poor children—including migrants, street children, and child laborers—cannot afford school supplies, transportation, or school fees.

→ STREET CHILDREN

In South Asia's urban areas, street children are ubiquitous. Children live, play, work, and sleep on the streets, begging and performing menial tasks to provide for themselves and their families. Because of their transient status, street children fall through the cracks of government services and often have no access to education or healthcare.



↑ **The Center for Awareness Promotion (CAP)** rescues and rehabilitates girls and young women who have been trafficked or exploited, offering them shelter and education to help rebuild their lives. After the earthquakes, CAP expanded its programs to meet the growing needs of its Kathmandu community. CAP now offers psychological counseling, including art and group therapy sessions, to children who have suffered trauma as a result of the earthquakes. The organization conducts many of these sessions at mobile camps where thousands of people are living outside due to the destruction of their homes.

Pictured above, a young girl proudly displays her art project from an art therapy session. Asked to draw what makes her happy, she drew her home and garden, which were destroyed in the earthquakes. © CAP

COUNTRY SPOTLIGHT: NEPAL

As pillars of their communities, our grassroots partners in Nepal have stepped up to help their neighbors recover in the aftermath of the April 2015 earthquakes. These local organizations serve children who were already vulnerable before the earthquakes, including orphaned children, survivors of sex trafficking, and children living in prison with their parents. They have readily adapted to children's changing and growing needs by expanding their programs and coordinating additional support. At GFC, we are deeply committed to supporting our partners not only in the immediate aftermath of an emergency, but for the long term. Now that many initial relief efforts have ended, our partners are helping their communities overcome the lasting challenges brought on by the earthquakes.

To keep their students safe, some damaged schools have been forced to conduct classes in temporary, low-resource learning centers that are often crowded and noisy. To address this problem, **Partnership for Sustainable Development (PSD) Nepal** is supporting the reconstruction of six rural schools, and plans to begin construction on another four schools in the coming months. Our partners also continue to address children's health and safety through a number of different workshops. **Gentle Heart Foundation** began offering health awareness classes to help earthquake survivors maintain cleanliness with limited resources. PSD Nepal offers workshops to children to help them understand how their bodies respond to stress, and to provide them with coping skills to deal with the emotional trauma they have experienced.

CELEBRATING EVERYDAY HEROES: MAJOR AWARDS

Our partners regularly receive international recognition for their critical impact on children's lives. In November 2015, **Aware Girls** was among five GFC partners that received the inaugural With and For Girls Award, a global award designed to identify and support strong, community-based, girl-driven organizations.

Founded in Pakistan in 2002 by a group of teenage girls, Aware Girls is the first organization in the country led by girls, for girls. Boldly confronting injustices, Aware Girls is empowering a new generation of young women leaders by equipping girls with education, leadership skills, health resources, and job opportunities. Since receiving its first GFC grant in 2010, Aware Girls has grown from reaching 2,000 children and youth each year to nearly 5,000, and has blossomed from a small organization to one of national-level impact. Co-founders Gulalai and Saba Ismail were recognized by *Foreign Policy* magazine on its 100 Leading Global Thinkers of 2013 list. In 2015, Gulalai participated in a private roundtable with First Lady Michelle Obama at the World Innovation Summit for Education.

Aware Girls' revolutionary work comes at a significant cost: the organization has faced numerous security threats. In spring 2015, GFC provided Aware Girls with a \$30,000 Maya Ajmera Sustainability Award to craft and implement an organization-wide security plan, and to continue to develop the next line of leaders within the



↑ Girls attending a training with Aware Girls in Pakistan.
© Aware Girls

organization.

Muhammad Shahzad Khan, founder of another GFC partner in Pakistan, **Chanan Development Association (CDA)**, won the 2015 Commonwealth Youth Worker Award. The award recognizes local heroes who play a pivotal role in the development of young people. CDA provides a platform for girls to discuss topics like reproductive health, HIV/AIDS, and violence against women—and then helps girls build their capacity to create change in their own communities. Quickly becoming a leader in its field, CDA has advised national-level ministers and senators, and the organization is a member of the United Nations Inter-Agency Network on Youth Development.

PARTNER SPOTLIGHT: PROTECTING AND EDUCATING YOUNG CHILDREN IN BANGLADESH



↑ Children settle in for naptime at one of Shobujer Ovijan Foundation's daycare centers.

For young women working in the garment industry in Bangladesh, childcare—let alone quality education for their children—is scarce. Many mothers are forced to leave children at home without supervision while they work long hours in the factories. These children have little or no access to education during a critical stage of child development.

Shobujer Ovijan Foundation (SOF) operates daycare centers in 28 garment factories in three cities in Bangladesh, providing high-quality care and education to hundreds of young children who would otherwise go without. Because SOF has negotiated space and resources from the factories, working mothers are able to maintain relationships with their children and have the opportunity to breastfeed young children. SOF also conducts monthly mothers' meetings and trainings on various topics, including child development, food and nutrition, and health and hygiene. Since becoming a GFC partner in 2013, SOF has increased the number of children it serves from 420 to more than 1,400.