

# IKEA Foundation



## Testimonial for TARA AKSHAR

IKEA Foundation believes that Innovative, out of the box solutions to an existing problem, is the key to solve it. Our project with Development Alternatives - TARA Akshar, which is engaging 120,000 women in three districts of Uttar Pradesh totally reinforces it.

The use of multimedia to impart functional literacy skills in a group has proven to be extremely successful. Computerized graphics help women with no prior literacy skills to instantly relate to what is being taught and the constant repetition of the letters in various forms dovetailed with the new wave heuristics, unconventional memory techniques and a great set of trainers (who know the modules, the method of training etc.) has not just generated the eagerness to become neo literates in women, but has also helped improve their self-concept and improve their status in the family unit.

The first step towards empowerment is the feeling of being empowered and the feeling of being valued. By talking to these women, one realizes that the joy of being able to read a document before signing, being able to read and help ones child in homework, being able to board the right bus because one can read and being able to make a grocery list is second to none. In mere 56 days we have witnessed women write basic sentences and read paragraphs.

The best thing about the model is the flexibility in its implementation and ability to show results in a short time span. Women do not have to spend hours studying. A small group of 10 women taking out merely 2 hours from their daily schedule and learning a few alphabets a day enables them to grasp things easily. It would be great to work more on the long term sustainability and integration of the model in the national literacy schemes of the state/country's government so that the whole state or country can benefit from this very efficient functional literacy tool.

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