

## Small Steps...Big Strides in Indian Villages Making a Difference One Village at a Time

In the small rural village of Mod in the state of Maharashtra in India, the local high school had no toilet or bathroom facilities. The lack of basic bathroom facilities in schools is a common occurrence in rural India. However in Mod, this seemingly minor problem had become a major hindrance to the education of the young girls of the community. The lack of toilet facilities made it nearly impossible for many of the young female students to remain on campus for a full day of classes. But as a result of Lend-a-Hand India's Introduction to Basic Technology (IBT) program, the students of the Mod School were equipped with the skills and resources to make a change in their school and their community. In February 2007, the students designed and constructed toilet facilities on the school's campus. They identified a suitable location on the campus, prepared the design and budget, purchased the raw materials, choose the safety tank model most suitable for rural environment and as a group project undertook construction of the toilet.



In 2005, Lend-A-Hand India launched an ambitious Project PLAN 100, which aimed to start Basic Rural Technology Centers in 100 high schools to provide over 20,000 young boys and girls with life and job skills. In its second year, Project PLAN 100 is currently implementing its IBT curriculums in 6 schools. Under IBT, practical vocational training complements the standard academic curriculum of Indian secondary schools. The Program equips high school students in basic technology skills in engineering, energy and environment, agriculture and animal husbandry, and home and health. Over 40 different skill sets needed for economic and social development in rural environments are acquired through IBT. They include construction, fabrication, electrical maintenance, solar and biogas technologies, motor rewinding, nursery techniques, poultry and goat farming, compost making, soil testing, water analysis, blood and urine testing, knitting, stitching and food preservation, among others.

A large component of the IBT program includes community service projects, which has a two-fold objective. The students are able to gain hands-on experience as well as complete community improvement projects that benefit the entire village. Since completion of the sanitation project at the Mod School, the girls of the village are now able to attend school full time, and many of them are now also enrolled in the IBT program.



Lend-A-Hand India's programs not only build human capacity in rural India, but have a widespread and long term impact throughout entire rural communities. The simple activity of constructing a toilet in a high school is likely to impact the health and sanitary behaviors of the students, both at the school and at home, which then further influences those behaviors of the family, neighbors and the community. Lend-A-Hand India's holistic approach has created successful and sustainable development throughout the rural villages of Maharashtra.

The IBT program aims to empower India's youth to:

- To think and act by creating an academic environment with opportunities for practical experience;
- To learn and be productive in a work culture;
- To deliver new and needed technologies to India's rural villages; and
- To gain technical and vocational skills and plan for their future.

In order for thousands more of aspiring young men and women to obtain the necessary tools to make positive changes in their lives, Lend-a-Hand India needs to build on the success of Project Plan 100 in schools like Mod to other rural villages in India. [See how you can help empower India's youth.](#)