



INDIA

Every Child Learns

UNICEF Education Strategy 2019–2030

Adolescent education and skills

An online career portal strengthens career guidance among secondary students in India and helps them plan for future educational and work opportunities

Problem: In India, secondary students are not receiving information from schools on possible educational and professional development after graduation. This information is integral to help them transition from secondary school to higher education and decent work. Teachers lack the knowledge and necessary tools to help students identify career paths and motivate them to develop the skills that will allow them to pursue higher education towards fulfilling their career aspirations. As of 2018, India had a 24 per cent unemployment rate; without the knowledge and necessary skills for decent jobs, many young people in India have end up unemployed or have informal jobs, including the 3 million adolescents working in hazardous conditions.

Solution: In partnership with the government and the private sector, UNICEF India has supported the development of a career-guidance portal that provides secondary school students with knowledge and skills to identify and make informed decisions about their educational and occupational pathways. During the development of the career guidance portal, UNICEF collaborated with the Department of Education as well as private sector partners iDream Careers – who contributed career counselling materials – and Systems Applications and Products in Data Processing (SAP) software corporation, who created an app for the portal. As a result, the career portal is updated with information on relevant skills needed for decent jobs. It is now being integrated in the secondary school system as a tool for teachers to help students learn their options and guide them to make informed choices about their futures.

Features of the career guidance portal

Currently, the career portal provides up-to-date information for secondary students on scholarships, fellowships, educational requirements and a local and international list of colleges that offer relevant educational programmes. Information on the portal is available in specific state languages as well as English. Additionally, the portal attempts to break gender stereotypes by featuring pictures of women in traditionally male dominated professions and pictures of men in professions usually held by women. For instance, the portal features pictures of women engineers, women surgeons and women bankers. It emphasises that both girls and boys can apply to any of the 250 careers mentioned in the portal as well as their 10 respective career pathways.

Training for teachers and students

Teachers receive training, both virtually and in person, on how to navigate and use the career portal so that they can assist their students. Since the portal launch in 2019, 59,000 teachers have received training.

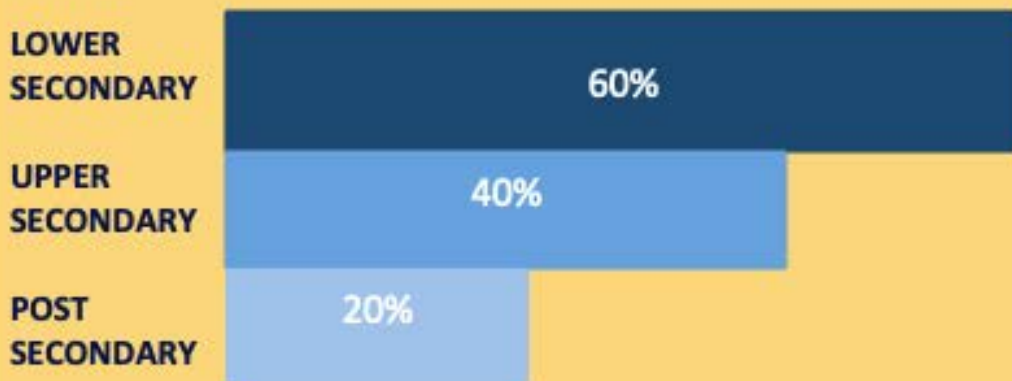
At career workshops, students are provided training on how to use the portal. After creating unique login IDs and passwords, the students are presented a diverse set of career options and guided on how to develop a career pathway and identify the skills that are needed to succeed in those careers. These widespread career options include corporate professions as well as creative ones such as photography, fashion designing and event management.

Dashboard

Portal usage data, such as gender and location, enables the system to identify where and how many schools are using the portal, which career and educational options get the most clicks and whether scholarship information is being accessed. Based on this analysis, the portal is continuously updated and optimized to improve user experience.



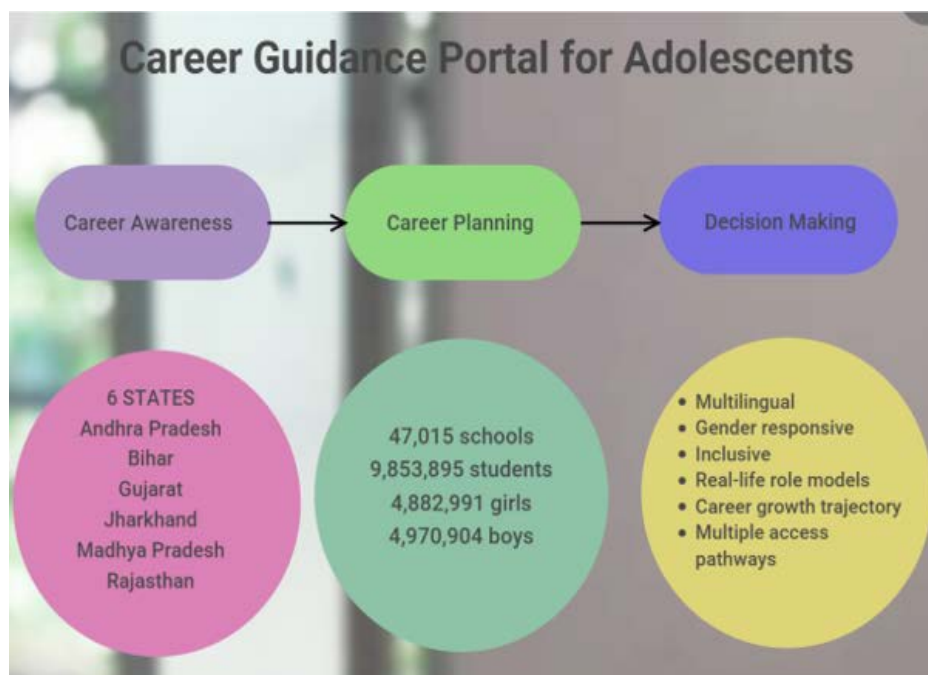
% Of Indian children enrolled
Source: OECD, 2017



Of an initial enrolment of 100 students, on an average, only 70 finish school in India.

Preliminary results, lessons learnt and next steps

The portal's ultimate success is predicated on comprehensive teacher training. UNICEF has supported workshops to train 59,000 teachers on effectively using the portal since its launch in 2019. Training in the state of Rajasthan – which was the first state to introduce the portal – are ongoing while trainings in another 5 states (Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Gujarat, Jharkhand and Madhya Pradesh) are underway.



There are currently 9.8 million students (49.6 per cent girls) from classes 9 to 12 registered on the portal in the 6 states, with 1.2 million students (50 per cent girls) as active users. Since teacher training is underway in the aforementioned 5 states, it is expected that more and more students will become active users in 2020 and beyond.

To help learners to take full advantage of the portal, teachers in Rajasthan have created WhatsApp groups and instructional YouTube videos. The 140,000 views gathered by these YouTube videos reflect the spreading popularity of the portal.

Education response related to COVID-19

To ensure access to continuous education during the COVID-19 pandemic, about 1,350 counselors in the country were further trained to support students during the crisis.

Next steps will include:

- Improving the portal with additional features for better accessibility and use. The proposed features include career videos and a chatbot in which the users can ask questions about any subjects related to the portal such as professions, education and scholarships.
- Adding a finance management system. This feature provides students with access to various potential scholarships and bank loans for further education.
- Developing a gaming app in collaboration with SAP which will take users through different career simulations.
- Adding online and blended learning components of life skills trainings necessary for educational and professional success. These include resilience skills through exercises that teach students to cope with pressure and rejection during their applications, negotiation skills taught through examples of how to deal with family pressure to choose a certain career path, and communication skills that are needed in the interview process.
- Reaching out to adolescents out of the public-school system, including tribal schools and ashrams, through a joint social media campaign among UNICEF and state governments.

With these additional next steps, the portal is expected to reach 10 more states and approximately 19.6 million more students in 2020.

Cost effectiveness

Through a UNICEF investment of US\$250,000, the career guidance portal has benefited 9.8 million secondary students in six states. This amounts to US\$1 needed to reach 40 adolescents.

The online career guidance portal is an important tool for equipping youth in India with the knowledge needed to navigate the transition to life and work after secondary school. By enabling youth to make informed decisions, the tool provides necessary life skills and ensures that **Every Child Learns**.



For more information, please contact:

Terry Durnnian, Chief Education, UNICEF India, tdurnnian@unicef.org
Forough Foyouzat, Deputy Representative, UNICEF India, ffoyouzat@unicef.org

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