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Our foundation

Fior Di Loto Foundation is a charitable tax-free foundation that works to help Indian girls who do not have a chance to get any education in the neighboring village of Pushkar, state of Rajasthan northwest India.

In addition, we are improving the quality of life to the impoverished community. We work daily to help the most disadvantaged part of the local community by giving, for example, economical support to elderly people, widows and needy families, medical assistance to sick people, building water wells, and in general, doing our best holding out a helping hand to those who need it.

Fior di Loto is a project that was born in Pushkar in 2003. We realized that help was needed in this community and we decided to give our best with passion and enthusiasm. From that day we became a strong family and nothing will stop us from keeping on with it!

About the founders



Mara Sandri
International President

Mara was born in Bologna, Italy. Since she was very young, she has maintained an interest in helping others. During her time in Italy, she worked for a government office, serving people.

When she moved to the Dominican Republic, she opened her hotel business. There she has built a reputation for improving and saving people's lives. After visiting India in 1983, she found India to be her spiritual home and there she felt a true calling for helping others.

Guadalupe Tapia Paykar
Secretary

Guadalupe was born in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic. She grew up in a small neighborhood in a big family. They always helped each other and giving and sharing was their sense of pride.

As a teenager, she worked in a community program. Later, as a sociologist, she developed programs for women's organizations in rural areas. She is proud to be part of the Fior di Loto Foundation because she believes that education can change and improve the life of many. Today she is the inspiration of the foundation.



Deepu Maharshi
President in India

Deepu was born in the holy town of Pushkar, India. He is a *Brahmin* (Priest). His dream is to build a free school where everyone can attend. When he met Mara and Guadalupe, his dream came true through the Fior di Loto Foundation. Doing this social work, he says: "It feels like heaven".

He has promised to work only for this foundation until he grows too old. Today Deepu is the anchor of the foundation in Pushkar.



Get to know our school

From the first moment the project operated from the kindness in every heart that supported the initiative. Our school -for those who have not visited it- represents the hope of many girls to be able to say: *"I can go to school too!!!"* For our community this means the guarantee of a right that should be accessible to all human beings regardless of race, caste or religion.

The school project started with 42 girls in 2003 and currently continues without delay and with our daily sacrifice. This 2019 we managed to provide education for 650 girls.

"We would like to especially thank our president Deepu Maharshi who deserves a special mention since none of this would have been possible without him".

As if that were not enough, we have managed to get 285 students to finish higher studies. We are proud to say that some of our former students are now teachers and nurses. Many of them are also graduates in economics and commerce.

In short, a book of a million pages would not be enough to explain this fabulous project. However, we hope that this humble digital magazine can summarize, in the best possible way, everything we have achieved this past 2019.

Finally, we would like to thank all the foundation's sponsors and volunteers for supporting us in our fight for schooling in India. Thank you very much for believing in us!





Music in our souls

Music is a universal language that does not understand cultures or borders. That is why from the foundation we want to empower girls through this medium, by making it a transversal subject of their education. Therefore, music can become a new mean of expression for the girls with which they can communicate to the world.

In the photo below, volunteer teacher Carmen from Spain along with her Spanish guitar class.



WE ARE SO PROUD OF YOU GIRLS!

"The donation of three guitars, a harmonium and two flutes in the summer of 2018 was an immense gift for the foundation, which allowed me to start teaching music to the students of the Foundation. With them I have learned about enthusiasm and the true value of things."

"In the classes they have shown me their absolute dedication: they are totally present and do not get tired of learning, they always want to learn more. We have formed a very good group, with great empathy and fantastic nonverbal communication. They have improved a lot, also in their singing skills."

"For me, it is an opportunity to see and share their joy because, even with few resources, they have been able to learn so much thanks to the respect and the ability to share and help each other. Love does not require effort. I thank to be able to serve, since I receive more than I give. Namaste"

- says Carmen from Spain

Always learning



At Fior di Loto we are open to new collaborations with volunteers with diverse expertises that may be beneficial for our students to learn. On this occasion, Ricarda, one of our volunteers, taught the girls the possibilities of the soundbowl and its applications on the different chakras. It is wonderful to see how the girls maintain interest in each class, even if the topics are varied. We always try to promote an enthusiasm for learning as well as camaraderie and respect between teachers and students.

In the upper right photo, there is Ricarda supervising the practice of a student. In the photo below on the left, the volunteer Lourdes Garcia Valdecasas Gonzalez along with Lourdes -who run the workshop- and the student Santra Rawat smiling after class.

"Namaste! My name is Ricarda and I am from Germany. In this last project I did with the girls a workshop with soundbowl combined with a chakraleson.

Here you see the theoretical lesson first and then the practice with soundbowl. Few month ago I did a workshop about chakraleson. So they could experience with soundbowl and feel how it works when I put the soundbowl on a crownchakra." - says Ricarda





Advanced sewing classes

In July 2019 Peita Herrick from Australia returned to Fior Di Loto to once again teach sewing to interested students from class 6 and 7 for three months.

The girls took to the sewing classes with great enthusiasm and initiative and thanks to the help from the fabulous Monika from Switzerland they were taught all aspects of sewing from machine safety, handling, function and maintenance to fabric cutting, understanding pattern making and size alterations.

The girls learned how to make simple drawstring silk bags, sturdy shopping bags, decorative bunting flags and kurta dresses which included exercises in measurement and pattern cutting and use.

In the sewing room this year Monika and Peita also created a reusable sanitary pad project designing and formulating washable pads for students (see page 22).

An environmentally friendly cotton shopping bag was also designed and made by one of the women from the project. Besides, a block print was made with the school logo for promotion of the school and further fundraising.





In the picture, Peita with local women from the sewing project.

The sewing project

Peita Herrick also created a Fior Di Loto annex project outside the school which supports less fortunate mothers of students and local women. Eight women from near the school were offered a 3 month tailor course at the Reenu Tailor School where they will learn all aspects of tailoring and will each make 24 items for themselves.

On the other side of Pushkar Peita created a new tailor school in the home of Pooja and Bharti Kamawat. They are both sisters who completed their schooling at Fior Di Loto and went on to study tailoring and design. Having a shared dream of starting to teach tailoring, Peita provided hand sewing machines, an electric overlocker and all tools and sewing items necessary.

The sisters found eight women in need of support in their area and hence they began their own tailor school. Tuition costs, all fabrics and items for the two 3 month courses at both schools are provided by the Fior Di Loto sewing project.

Supporting and empowering women is the goal of the Fior Di Loto **Pushkar Project for Women**. In a textile manufacturing town such as Pushkar providing women with tailoring skills and access to sewing equipment means a great deal to their potential for income. Women can work from home making clothes for other locals from their neighbourhood and also have the opportunity for subcontract work from factories around Pushkar, or even the chance to get a tailor job in a factory.

"It's a great joy for me to be a part of Fior Di Loto India. Teaching sewing to the girls is so much fun and I feel it is important to their future potential to have these skills. The annex tailoring project was a pleasure to create. Seeing how thrilled the women are when they start to learn to sew and the sense of achievement and confidence I see them gain from the classes makes me really happy.

This year I received a generous donation from an old friend from the fashion industry who also knows how important it is to help women gain skills that will have the positive benefit of potential income, empowerment and independence.

I thank Fior Di Loto for existing, believing, persistently working hard and for nurturing and loving the women of our future."

- says Peita from Australia

Volleyball challenge



"My name is Uber Franchi, I am Italian. In 2018 I developed an idea with Mara: to create a volleyball challenge by creating teams of young girls.

With Mara we developed a tournament project with 72 participants, divided into 24 teams with 3 groups of 8 teams each, and each team consisted of 3 players who faced each other in three fields simultaneously. The top 3 teams in each group and the best player in the group were awarded.

All the participants had a great enthusiasm, which met the principles of collaboration, help and esteem. It makes me really happy to see that you do useful things that amuse the girls."

- says Uber Franchi from Italy (right photo)





Food initiative from GAMS Italy



I am Cristina, I work for a collective catering company called Gams. My work led me to have a particular relationship with food, from which a desire sprang. It has been years that GAMS planned to make an ALL SPECIAL RESTAURANT SERVICE.

Finally in October 2019 I left with my dream in my suitcase towards Puskar. In agreement with the company for which I will soon be serving, I packed my uniform and I gave these sweet little girls a carefree day of food.

There are no words to describe the emotion they gave in receiving food. I hope that this simple and humble gesture may have given the impetus to make my dream come true. Thank you!

- says Cristina from Italy





The most extraordinary volunteers

The daily help of our volunteers is invaluable! They are always willing to do anything to help.

In the photo above you can see Sonata Das distributing food among the little ones. In the photo below you can see the volunteers Jana Slancova from Czech Republic and Odalis Zorrilla from Dominican Republic helping with food distribution, always smiling!

In the lower right photo, the volunteers Chandini and Cala Gonzalez from Spain distributing balls of *gulab jamun*, a small typical Indian sweet.

Thank you all for collaborating on tasks that are so necessary for the daily life of our students!

The help of our volunteers is crucial for the proper development of the foundation. Volunteers both teach and help distribute clothes or food packages, prepare lunch, participate in group activities, design new workshops, paint the facilities, etc. They help where it is needed most.

In essence, the personal skills of each team member are used to contribute positively to daily activities. On this occasion it was the volunteers who cooked and served the food to the students.



Giving away new uniforms



The distribution of uniforms to the students was a very special day because we were able to ensure that everyone has the necessary clothing to attend class. As you may know, students have several uniforms, the regular one for daily class that is pink and blue, and a more comfortable tracksuit for sport practice, which was being distributed that day.

In the photos we can see the teachers along with Deepu, the President of the Foundation in India, distributing new uniform tracksuits to all the younger students.

"Thanks to the fees of our sponsors, each student receives each of their uniforms for free. Without their help, the families of our students could not afford neither the uniforms nor school supplies."



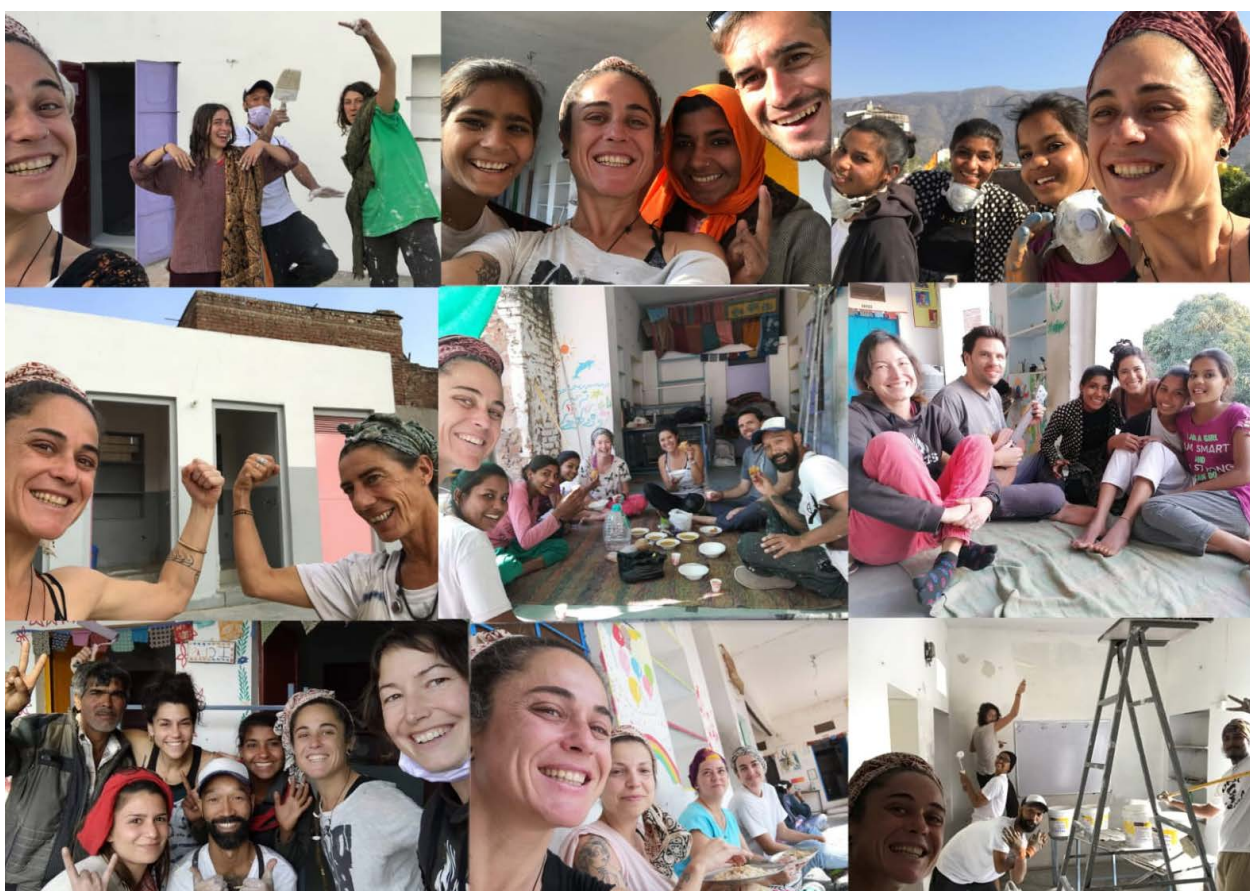
School renovation project

This year the visit of two of our sponsors turned into something completely unexpected. Lourdes García and Rebeca Orts, both tattoo artists, came to Pushkar with the idea of making a mural in our school. But they were the surprised ones when they saw the conditions of the school.

Both of them, with the help of Elena and Debla, made the renovation of our facade in just 4 days. The condition of the facade involved scraping, applying cement, and then painting. After 4 days together, Luli (Lourdes) decided to stay and finish the details of the facade. After seeing the amazing makeover on our facade Luli felt that she couldn't just leave the school like that; since the girls spend a lot of time in these classes and facilities. That's how the school renovation project really started.

"This year I had the time and money to get involved in a big project and I decided that my contribution would be to create a cleaner space, full of light and harmony. A proper place for our girls to come to receive knowledge and where the beauty and purity of our girls is reflected."

- says Lourdes García from Spain



The volunteers who worked on the project.

School renovation



The funds raised for the project amount to more than 2,550€ and were raised exclusively by Luli, among his family and friends.

The renovation took three and a half months of constant work. After Luli spent a whole month painting the school for herself, Junesh Twana (her partner) came to help as well. For a month he helped to restore the walls and the problems of water inlets in the classrooms. The painting project would not have made sense without his contributions. Thank you for your month of complete dedication!

During Christmas, Patri, a friend of Luli, came to work for 3 weeks and helped in this reform. Thanks to her and other volunteers who came, even if it was only for couple of days, we managed to have all the classrooms finished by the end of Christmas, when the students came back to school. Thanks to each one of you who have been involved in collaborating and making this possible. We also had a day of help from the teachers. Thank you all for participating.

"Our biggest gift was seeing the faces of joy and surprise of our girls on the way back to school as they saw their painted classes and totally new benches. It was a really special and emotional day. They have been my main motivation every day; they gave me the strength and love that kept me working and smiling full of love."

- says Lourdes García (Luli) from Spain

Luli only had half the budget necessary to invest in new table tops and benches for the classrooms. But thanks to Elena, who donated the other half of the budget, we were able to change them. Thank you Elena for helping us make this change possible!

Luli, along with the help of the girls she sponsors at the school, painted the legs of the tables and benches and thus the complete renovation of school furniture has been achieved! *"It has been wonderful to share this experience with them; and they loved being able to collaborate in improving the school that has given them education all these years"*, Luli tells us.



The toilets and taps near in the schoolyard have also been renovated to improve hygiene in the area where the girls drink and clean their food containers. We also painted the entrance hall and the interior of the toilets. We appreciate Diego and Elisa's help. Thanks to them we can say that the school renovation is almost finished. In addition, Luli chose the colors of our uniform to give more harmony to the school. Now there is more calm, order and much love in the atmosphere! Luli's decoration project is the only one that remains to be done; and it is intended to decorate the classrooms in a harmonious way; making the girls participate in creating beautiful yet educational illustrations for the walls.

In total, 1083€ were allocated to new tables; and 1023€ were assigned to paint, cement and general renovation. About 50€ have been saved to finish the classroom decoration project. The remaining 440€ of the proceeds have been earmarked for food aid to combat coronavirus in India (April 2020).

"Thanks to my full power girls Santra, Sonu, Payel and Dimple. I feel super proud of my little women" - says Luli



After three and a half months of hard work, I have to say that this is the most beautiful job I have ever done. I love our girls; their smiles and their looks full of love gave me strength. I have had a wonderful experience as a sponsor and volunteer in the foundation. I invite others to create their own projects and raise funds to carry them out. Together we can improve things and help the Fior di Loto Foundation to continue moving forward."

- says Lourdes García from Spain
(in the photo above, Lourdes in the center of the group)

Renovation school



Honoring our teachers



September 5th is the day dedicated to teachers in India. Every year we pay tribute to the teachers who help at the school. In this 2019, one hundred and one teachers received their recognition from the foundation. On this occasion, eleven social workers were also awarded.

In the photo above, you can see the female teachers along with their certificates of honor for their educational work. In the photo below, you can also see the male teachers. In the bottom right photo, Mara Sandri and Deepu Maharshi can be seen picking up an award given by guest of honor Shri Bhaghirath Chowdhari.





Diwali celebration

Every year we distribute winter sweaters and celebratory dresses for all girls and for the elderly and widows. On this occasion we also distributed food packages to sixty families in need.

In the photo above, Chris and Lucy from the United Kingdom celebrating the day together with the children. They both sponsor several girls and the widowhood pension project.

The lower left photo, you can see all the dresses and all the material for the Diwali program piled up on a table and ready to be distributed to the students. On the right, you can see an example of two of the dresses that were distributed during the celebration, so you can see how beautiful they are.

In the lower right photo, there is Deepu with a group of boys who are also part of the foundation, who were bought the ceremonial clothes to celebrate Diwali.



Our health program



In our health program, we assure medical attention to those people who cannot afford an operation. Without our aid, vulnerable people such as the elderly, widowers without pension or families below the poverty line would be left helpless in the face of a health emergency.

In the photo on the left, Deepu, the President of Fior di Loto in India, visiting Satyanarayan Gurjar, a man who has pushed a rickshaw with packages all his life by hand. Her hard and heavy work has had a huge cost on his health, causing him an hernia. Seeing him in such a poor condition, the foundation has helped him by paying for the operation he needs.

"Without our help, many families in the community would be left helpless in the face of a health emergency."

The girl in the photo below is a student from Fior di Loto whose name is Payal Jadam. She had a heart problem, and fortunately, the Foundation paid for the operation. As you can see, she is now recovered and has been able to return to classes.



Reiki Babies project

Recently, a new health program has been started so that young girls and women without resources can give birth in a suitable and safe environment: the Shyama Bagh Memorial Hospital in Pushkar. The cost of each birth and mother's care is £50 (60€).

Besides, both the baby and the mother will receive the medical treatment they require and she will also be taught how to take proper care of the baby. In addition, the baby will receive an official birth certificate, something that many of the students at Fior di Loto school do not have. If anyone is interested in contributing to this project, you can contact the Fior di Loto Foundation.

"Reiki Babies is a project I started in January 2020 after becoming aware of the difficulties girls and women from the very poor areas in and around Pushkar faced when giving birth to their children. All women and their unborn babies deserve the right to good clean conditions and the correct medical interventions if needed". - says Carole Williams from UK



In the photo, Carole Williams -our ambassador of Fior di Loto in United Kingdom and creator of the *Reiki Babies* project- holding a baby.

Sant Esteve school



This December 2019 it has been twelve years since the Fior di Loto school has been twinned with the Institut Escuela Sant Esteve in Castellar del Vallès (Barcelona, Spain).

Every year this Barcelona school raises money through a Christmas Fair. Then, they send the proceeds to India in order to help their sister school purchase school supplies and get the resources they might need.

Throughout these years the bond between the two schools has grown stronger and letters, videos and gifts have been exchanged. The Foundation has also made visits to the school in Barcelona to thank them for their work, the last one was made by Mara Sandri in June 2019. In the lower left photo, Mara appears with some students from the Sant Esteve school.

In the last exchange, the Barcelona school sent the letters that, as every year, the students had written, along with a pencil-seed. On the other hand, the Fior di Loto school sent some postcards (see next page) and a poster to raise awareness of the need to reduce water consumption (see page 24 for more info).

In the lower right photo, a group of Barcelona's tea-

chers holding the environmental awareness poster made by the foundation.

Besides, other initiatives and volunteers have emerged in Barcelona to carry out activities to help the Fior di Loto school from abroad. This is the case of Alicia Lorente Linares, a yoga teacher, who organized a yoga session on the beach in Barcelona to raise money which she later donated to the Foundation (photo below).





Sant Esteve school

"In the town of Pushkar (Rajasthan, India) there is a school led by the Fior di Loto Foundation that offers free schooling to girls from the poor families of Pushkar and its surroundings.

At school, girls stop being part of a disadvantaged, humble and tough environment to become part of an equal school for all where they are cared for, taught, looked at, acknowledged, helped, understood and pampered.

In their pretty pink school uniform they find a space where they can be girls who, like anywhere in the world, need to sing, play, learn new things and share moments with other girls."

- say Anna Roig and Xavi Canudas from Barcelona, who are teachers in Sant Esteve school and also ambassadors of Fior di Loto in Spain.



Anna Roig and Xavi Canudas visited the school in Pushkar in 2019 along with their daughter Duna.



On the left photo, Uber Franchi with his team, about to play basketball to raise funds for the foundation.

Collaboration from abroad

"My name is Uber Franchi, I have worked for years in a Volvo spare parts warehouse. I have always tried to involve my colleagues in activities where the proceeds were sent to the Fiordilotoindia Foundation: for which reason we gave ourselves the name of Volvo's Friends.

Simone, a dear colleague of mine, had this idea of creating a fundraising event. A basketball game was organized, where food and some objects would be sold around the basketball court during the game. We also involved my colleague Silvia, who made several trips with me to India. She was entrusted with the sale of many Indian items. Many people were involved: players, wives, children, friends... At the end of the day, we got 800 euros of proceeds.

Besides, the award ceremony was made following the tradition in Pushkar, which is: a necklace of flowers was given to each player by Silvia. The money collected, along with money collected from other activities, allowed the Fior di Loto Foundation to build a house to the Nirma family, a very poor girl who lives in a village near Puskhar."

- says Uber Franchi from Italy



In the photos above, Silvia in charge of the Indian item stall to raise funds for the foundation.

Environment

When we talk about our actions for the well-being of the planet we cannot forget to mention Monica Boog, our ambassador in Switzerland. This summer Mara Sandri, Monica Boog and the school girls planted 63 trees as an act of ecological awareness and respect for nature.

Monica Boog was also helping in the sewing machine course where, among other things, she got involved in sewing and designing washable pads. These are an ecological and above all, more affordable alternative to plastic feminine hygiene products. Few families in India can afford to buy disposable pads periodically. On the other hand, plastic accumulation is a serious growing pollution problem in India as well as around the world.

Therefore, we truly believe these fabric-made sanitary towels can help girls feel more confident about themselves and ensure class attendance.



In the photo, Monica and Mara in the sewing workshop making ecological sanitary towels.

Environment

In our day to day we try to make girls aware of the importance of maintaining good hygiene habits. A gesture as simple as washing hands is taught at an early age in many western countries. However, in countries like India there is still a little time for this habit to be as common as it is in other countries.

From the foundation we teach that washing hands is a vitally important habit because it prevents food contamination and the transmission of diseases.

Educating young generations is a way of educating the entire community as well, as students tell their families what they learn at school.

Our commitment to the environment also emphasizes in classrooms the value of water as a natural resource and its primary role in our ecosystem. For this we try to transmit values about ecology, so necessary in our society nowadays. The waste of water, along with the constant use of plastic is one of the issues which contribute to the pollution of India. Therefore, we believe that it is crucial that new generations grow with empathy and respect for the environment.



"Hygiene is extremely important for our girls in Fior di Loto. It's a huge battle as in their daily basis hygiene barely exists... but here they learn really fast!"

- says Mara Sandri, International President of Fior di Loto Foundation

Environment



Manuela with the poster she designed to raise awareness.

"My name is Emanuela Schiavina and I am really happy to be an active part of this foundation. Last year I taught the girls how to concentrate in themselves.

And this year I tried to raise awareness about saving water, trees and the importance of reducing the use of plastic. I am sure that through advertising we can reach more people and help them reflect and change their habits.

It is very nice to meet all these girls and see how quickly they understand everything. I am so proud of them!"

- says Emanuela Schiavina



Sticker made from the poster.



Wall painting on the school gate based on the poster.



Our wishes for 2020



EDUCATION

The main focus of our foundation will always be to expand our education network so each year more girls in the Rajasthan area are granted the education they deserve. Both by ensuring they have the skills necessary to have a career of their own or by helping them to continue pursuing higher education if they are qualified to do so.



COMMUNITY

Our help with the foundation begins with the girls education but does not end there. We are aware that in order to promote true social change, the entire community must be involved. Therefore, we continue to create new social programs that can help the most vulnerable sectors of the community: the elderly, widowers, disabled or homeless people, etc.



ENVIRONMENT

Aware of the environmental catastrophe that the Earth is suffering right now, from the foundation we try to promote healthy and ecological lifestyle to the whole community. Only through environmental education and citizen awareness we will be able to stop the pollution that many cities in India suffer today.



TURN OUR PLANS INTO A REALITY!

Donate [HERE](#) and make our projects come to life!



Help our community grow

Thanks to the help of our sponsors, individual donations and the collaboration of hundreds of volunteers from all over the world, Fior di Loto is able to shape their educational and social dream, strengthening an entire community of people through so many varied programs. From health insurance to home construction.

In Fior di Loto we are convinced that your unconditional collaboration with the foundation will allow our aid programs to expand throughout Rajasthan region year after year.

And although there are not enough words to thank all the people who have made this year 2019 a success, we want to remind you of the meaning of a very special word for us... "*Dhanyaawaad*" means "*thanks you*" in Marwadi, the main language in Rajasthan. To all our sponsors we want to say thank you for being by our side one more year! A thousand *dhanyaawaads*! *Dhanyaawaad* for your donations, *dhanyaawaad* for supporting our projects, *dhanyaawaad* for being part of Fior di Loto!!

For those who are meeting Fior di Loto for the first time, we thank you for your kind interest in our work. There are many ways for you to get involved in our project. Join our community and participate actively for Fior Di Loto Foundation by making a donation to fund our projects or become a sponsor, so together we can change the course of as many lives as possible. Go to our [web page](#) to find our more!



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FIOR DI LOTO Annual Report 2019

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This digital magazine is not intended for commercial purposes. This magazine was designed by Laura Trilla, a graphic designer from Barcelona who visited Fior di Loto's school in 2018 and decided to work on this editorial project for free as a gift to the foundation. You can contact her on Instagram [@lauratrilla](#) or email lauratrilla95@gmail.com.

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