



Hands To Hearts International

Hands to Hearts International (HHI) is a NGO focused on improving the health and development of vulnerable children (ages 0-3) globally by training caregivers in early childhood development (ECD) and nurturing parenting skills.

What Does HHI Do?

HHI provides a simple, adaptable, cost-effective and culturally relevant training program. HHI's training empowers women/care-givers to improve their ability to nurture their children's language, social, cognitive and physical development, and to best support their health and nutrition. It also cultivates attachment, establishing the base for all future relationships and a healthy social fabric. By providing quality information on ECD and connecting this to culture-specific tools, traditions and practices, HHI's information is applicable anywhere and meaningful regardless of resources or literacy.



History of HHI in India

HHI began working in partnership with orphanages in southern India in 2006. Within a year, India's Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) started sending Aganwadi Workers and Helpers, and to date, approximately 4,000 have been trained in HHI's ECD training.

HHI's core operating partner is **Viswa Yuva Kendra**, a community development organization based in Odisha that works primarily with impoverished rural populations.

In 2012, **Save the Children India contracted HHI** to apply its methodology to create their first program for children 0– 3 in Andhra Pradesh. HHI trained 17 master trainers at Save the Children. These master trainers subsequently trained 292 ICDS workers, and 6,700 mothers, and ultimately benefited 10,000+ vulnerable infants.

Through these various partnerships, **more than 22,000 caregivers** (ASHAs, SHG participants, orphanages' care-givers, crèches workers, ICDS workers, and mothers) **in India have participated in HHI's training**; in the states of Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Odisha, Delhi and Andhra Pradesh.

Benefits Of HHI's Training

For children

- Lower episodes of illness and stress
- Improved weight gain and nutritional status
- Greater bonding with caregiver
- Improved health and overall development

For women and care-givers

- Knowledge gain on ECD of 35% to 40%
- In Uganda, 193% increase in mothers providing linguistic learning to their baby
- 100% increase in providing cognitive stimulation; interacting while feeding their baby; and in time spent playing with their baby
- Lower corporal punishment and stress
- Improved nutrition planning, feeding practices

For communities

- Empowered women and community members
- Lower long term social costs
- Improved social cohesion
- More child friendly interactions in communities

HHI WORKS VIA PARTNERSHIPS

HHI's model is extremely flexible and adaptable to the needs and realities of its partners and the communities they serve. HHI's program is highly replicable, using a Training of Trainers (ToT) model, with follow up support, to build the capacity of partners and care-givers to improve ECD for vulnerable children.

Recognition of HHI's Work

- The Asia Regional Network on Early Childhood researched HHI's work in Odisha as a promising practice, their research was published in 2011 ARNEC report.
- In Odisha, an evaluation of HHI's program funded by the Fetzer Institute is underway.
- Advisor to UNESCO Asia on Early Childhood Care and Education, 2011-2013.

