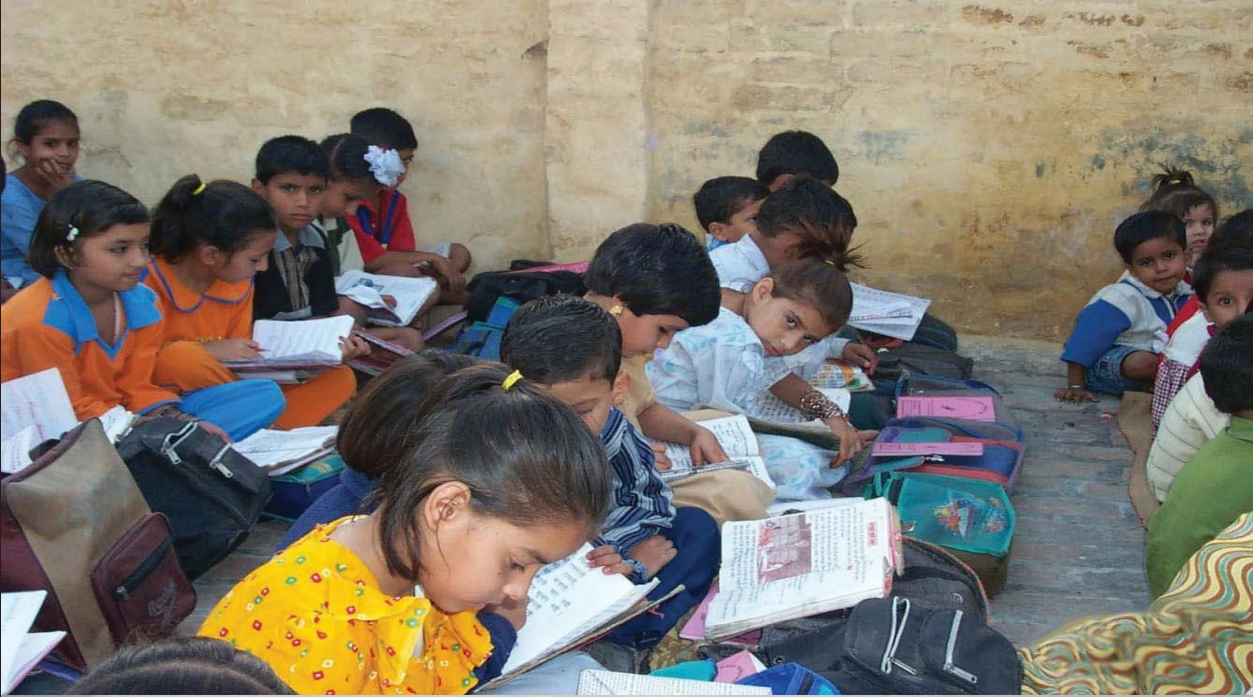


Mitre Making a Difference

Addressing child labour in India

Mitre is committed to the prevention and rehabilitation of child labour in India and has supported programmes run by the Sports Goods Foundation of India (SGFI) in the Jalandhar area for the past 11 years.



Homeworkers and child labour

India is the world's largest producer of inflatable balls, and has seen considerable growth in the industry over the last decade to accommodate the ever popular game of football.

The stitching involved in making footballs (soccer balls) is often sub-contracted out to homeworkers, providing essential income to poor families who live in small villages or who could not otherwise work in factories.

Children sometimes help out with this work in the home, which can prevent them from attending school. The SGFI have also found that in some cases, children choose not attend school because they have difficulty completing their homework, usually because their parents are illiterate and therefore unable to help them.

A united approach to rehabilitation

The SGFI was formed in 1998 by several major exporters in Jalandhar to address child labour in the sporting goods industry in India. The foundation has 25 voluntary members, which includes suppliers that produce footballs for Mitre.

Under the guidance and cooperation of agencies such as the WFSGI (World Federation of Sporting Goods Industry) and UNIDO (United Nations Industrial Development Organization), the SGFI identifies child labour and helps children to phase out of ball stitching work as quickly as possible, without causing any economic hardship to the families concerned, and provides them with educational and other opportunities.

SGFI initiatives include the monitoring of home stitching, an education programme, health promotion, self help groups, and the recycling of underutilised goods within communities.

SGFI education programme

Mitre supports the SGFI's education programme, which targets children who have dropped out of school or who have never attended school, providing literacy tuition and integration into schools, as well as literacy tuition for parents. The programme also includes regular health checks for the children.

The SGFI has been successful in establishing 30 tuition centres in Jalandhar, which have helped over 950 children from home-based stitching families to integrate into schools.

The Foundation also manages eight schools under the National Child Labour Project (NCLP), and runs local campaigns in the villages and poorer districts to encourage children to go to, and stay in, school.

Programmes are funded by members who contribute a voluntary 0.10% levy on all exported inflatable balls and the Government of India. The SGFI also receives support from industry brands such as Mitre.

For more information about SGFI, visit www.sgfi.org