

Silai School FAQs

What is the objective of UIL in setting up Silai Schools?

The primary objective of the Silai School program is to create a livelihood option through sewing and stitching and thereby financially empower a poor woman in a village. The second objective is to revive sewing and stitching as a hobby. In the first phase, remote non-electrified villages would be reached. UIL has set up 1000 Silai Schools across 15 states in India in 2011- 12.

What is a Silai School?

Silai School is an entity which is run by women trained by Usha. Silai Schools are run in the homes of the women, where the Usha Silai School Signage is displayed. This gives the household a distinct identity of its own. The Silai Schools have timings as per the convenience of the community, when the girls come and learn stitching.

Silai Schools have been set up in the remotest villages of the country. The aim of the program is to make one woman in a village, self reliant, by giving her stitching skills and a sewing machine to earn her livelihood. She would earn her livelihood by:

- i) Teaching other girls and women stitching
- ii) Stitching garments
- iii) Servicing of sewing machines

The company also signs a one year contract with the women for the continuity of the Silai Schools. In the duration of one year, the woman is expected to teach 20 girls / women.

Who is a woman entrepreneur in the Silai School program?

A woman entrepreneur is a lady who runs a Silai School in the village. The company adopts a selection process for identifying a woman to become a Silai School entrepreneur. After being identified she is trained on sewing and given a sewing machine to start a Silai School.

What is the criteria for selection of woman entrepreneur?

- a. The woman should be from the village and should be respected by the village community.
- b. The woman should preferably be a married woman in a village.

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- c. She should have a basic literacy / numeracy level, required for sewing.
- d. She should have a flair for sewing. There could be women in the villages who stitch clothes for their family members. Women who know how to use a sewing machine would be preferred.
- e. She should be confident to teach.

What is the criteria for selection of villages?

The selection criteria for the villages where the Silai School can be opened, is given below:

- i. A village with a population of minimum 500 people
- ii. Short-listing of those villages which have been identified by Government of India as "poor" / BPL, through Census / NREGA / NCAER data
- iii. Stress on non-electrified villages or village with less than 6 hours power supply
- iv. At least 10 villages should be chosen in a block, for training and monitoring to be more cost effective.
- v. Progressive and supportive community members
- vi. Ready availability of space for Silai school, *pro bono* contribution by community
- vii. Substantial availability of potential learners.
- viii. Availability of woman who knows sewing and is willing to teach.

What is taught in a Silai School?

In a Silai School the learners are taught stitching, embroidery and servicing of sewing machines. The course duration is six months. The course covers basic women garments (like blouse, suits, petticoat and a local ethnic garment), men garments (pant, shirt) and children garments (bibs, frock, jump suits). On the completion of the course, the learners are awarded with certificates from Usha International Ltd.

What is the criteria for selection of NGO? Can any NGO become a partner?

The criteria for the selection of the NGOs would be as follows:

- i. Registered under the Societies Registration Act / Under Section 25 of Companies Act

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- ii. Operational for at least 5 years
- iii. Having audited book of accounts with proper systems in place
- iv. Programs running in the identified or neighboring districts
- v. Having strong community linkages
- vi. Should be secular in nature and should have no political linkages

What is the role of the NGOs?

The Silai School program is implemented in the rural areas with the support of NGOs. The role of the NGOs is envisaged as below:

- (a) Be a facilitating factor for village entry.
- (b) Identification of the Silai School teacher.
- (c) Facilitate in organizing the training at the block level
- (d) Motivate the village women and girls to come to the Silai School for learning.
- (e) Monitor the progress of the program and communicate the same to UIL through regular reports.

Where are the Silai Schools operating in the country?

The Silai Schools are being operationalised on a pan India basis. The states where Silai Schools are running are Uttar Pradesh, Assam, Tamil Nadu, Rajasthan, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Chhatisgarh, Karnataka, Bihar, Jharkhand, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh, Kerala and Goa.