

# Dreams for Daughters



In Patna, Bihar, PACT workers conducted a parent circle (a monthly meeting where they share information and spread awareness on community issues with adults) called *Dreams for Daughters* with 50 mothers from their community. The aim was to focus on the factors that hinder girls' development, and how mothers can be the bringers of powerful positive change in their daughters' lives.

## The Situation

Adolescent girls are often forced to drop out of school in order to stay at home to take care of the house and their younger siblings while their parents go to work, or go out to work themselves to help support their families. As a result, they become isolated, making them vulnerable to early marriage, violence, abuse and trafficking.

## The Solution

PACT (Parents and Children Against Trafficking/Harm) trains adults from communities to be informal child protection workers – to share information, spread awareness and activate government services for the safety and development of children. Armed with information about rights and entitlements, they are better able to approach appropriate stakeholders to ensure child protection officers become active, and families have access to needed services, making formal systems responsive.

In many communities, adolescent girls are often forced to drop out of school in order to stay at home to take care of the house and their younger siblings while their parents go to work, or have to go out to work themselves to help support their families. As a result, these girls become isolated, making them vulnerable to early marriage, violence, abuse and trafficking.

This session was focused around three main points: what were the mothers' dreams when they were 11-15 years old, what dreams did they have for their daughters now, and how they planned to accomplish these dreams for their daughters.

Most of the mothers said that, as young girls, they had dreamt of marrying into good families where they wouldn't face any domestic violence, or going to school. But many of them admitted they had been unable to fulfil their dreams. "I know what it is like to have broken dreams. What happened to me should not happen to my daughters," one of the mothers said.

At the session, many of these women said they wanted to educate their daughters at least up to Class 10, so that they have better employment opportunities when they grow up, and are self-reliant, and not dependent on anyone. They also want their daughters to marry into good families so that they will not experience the hardships the mothers themselves faced.

The mothers discussed various ways of planning and ensuring that their hopes for their daughters came true. They agreed that opening a bank account and saving money for their daughters' education was one of the surest ways to ensure a secure future for their girls. They also decided to work towards acquiring documents so that they can access government social protection schemes, like the Kanya Samridhi Yojana and the Kanya Vivaan Yojana, and strengthen their daughters' futures.