

India

Powerful women

In Odisha, two Indian artists and around a hundred schoolgirls are mobilising an age-old artistic practice, Pattachitra, to paint the power of women on school walls.

COUNTRY

India

LOCALISATION

District of Khurda, Odisha

DATES OF THE PROJECT

June 2023 – September 2024

ARTISTS INVOLVED

Subharsee Bindhani and Kanak Gayal

PARTICIPANTS

100 écolières de 3 écoles publiques

FUNDING

Fonds Metis
Budget 9,000 €

PARTNERS

Microfinance institution Annapurna Finance Private Limited, and public schools

SECTOR AND SDG'S



100
SCHOOLGIRLS INVOLVED

300
PEOPLE ATTENDED THE
FRESCO'S INAUGURATION

2,500
YEARS OF PATTACHITRA PRACTICE

GENDER INEQUALITIES

India faces structural problems of sexism and gender discrimination. In Odisha, one of the poorest states in the country, women have little access to education and the labour market. Because conventional banking services are not accessible to them, they depend on the loans offered by microfinance institutions to set up income-generating activities and become financially independent.

POWERFUL WOMEN

Metis has teamed up with Annapurna, the most active microfinance institution in the Odisha region, to offer two women artists the opportunity to introduce schoolgirls to their art. Painters Subharsee Bindhani and Kanak Gayal are both renowned for their expertise in Pattachitra (from *patta*, "cloth" and *chitra*, "painting"), one of the oldest art forms in Odisha – whose origins go back more than 2,500 years. She went to meet around a hundred schoolgirls from a number of state schools to introduce them to their art. She then worked with them to create ten murals on the walls of the schools, depicting powerful women.

The inauguration of these frescoes gave rise to festive moments of sharing, which brought together the young girls, their families and the managers of the Annapurna microfinance institution, some 300 people in all.

This initiative was a powerful catalyst for the emancipation of women and the promotion of gender equality.

THEY SHARE THEIR EXPERIENCE

"Odisha is a land of heritage. Our art, Pattachitra, is everywhere, in every home. But it saddens me to see that women, who are driving art forward, are being held back by society. The frescoes we have created show that women are capable of taking on different roles."

KANAK GAYAL