



The school is the first of the three structures that will become the Gyaan Center | Photo source [DK Architects](#)

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WOMEN'S DEVELOPMENT CENTRE WITH GIRLS SCHOOL, SUSTAINABLY BUILT IN RURAL INDIA



Built by local master craftsmen and constructed with hand-cut Jaisalmer sandstone, the school is powered by a canopy of solar panels

Spotted: Despite being India's third-largest state, Rajasthan has the country's lowest rate of female literacy. Most girls lack education and employment opportunities and there is a significant imbalance in the overall numbers of girls and boys, due to a high rate of female infanticide. Working with the Citta Foundation, New York City-based Diana Kellogg Architects designed the Rajkumari Ratnavati Girls School as part of a women's economic development centre. Within the centre, there is a market and exhibition space.

Built by local master craftsmen and constructed with hand-cut Jaisalmer sandstone, the school has space for 400 students in grades from reception to year 10. Located outside the city of Jaisalmer in the Thar Desert, the school is powered by a canopy of solar panels that double as the roof for a play area that is tucked between walls and runs alongside an interior staircase.

The school is the first of the three structures that will become the Gyaan Center, an organisation and place dedicated to promoting and supporting girls and women through education and into employment. As well as room for a market, there is exhibition space that will launch with a textile museum of pieces from local villages. The first intake of students is planned for early 2021, and construction of the rest of the centre is ongoing.

Education's evolution is exciting, with many sustainability and accessibility features being included for the first time. Innovations spotted by Springwise include a [book subscription service](#) for children from minority backgrounds and a [modular school](#) inspired by the indoor-outdoor feel of a treehouse.

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Takeaway:

Nearly a year into the coronavirus pandemic and the global figures pertaining to women's employment and future prospects continue to decline. Many research organisations predict economic gender equality to have been set back by nearly a decade as women shoulder the childcare, housework and home working burden required of months of isolation and quarantine. In the United States alone, **women lost more jobs** than men in almost all sectors of the economy. Despite the chaos, and maybe because of it as well, campaigners may have a once in a generation opportunity to design and push for significant social and civil change.