



## Origins of Aflatoun

### ***Where and when***

Aflatoun began in Mumbai in 1991. Some academics from the Tata School of Social Sciences were doing a small program with street children. In 1992 there was a lot of violence in Mumbai between Muslim and Hindu people. The academics decided that children from different backgrounds should be able to meet each other so that they could lose the fears and prejudices of their parents' generation. As well as the street children, they brought together children from rich and poor backgrounds, and from the Hindu and Muslim communities. They taught these children that they were all equal because they all shared the same rights. So the program began with child rights. Later, the children asked to be given financial advice. Many of them survived on the streets because they had micro-enterprises and so they needed financial education. That's how the balanced approach of social and financial enterprise arose.

### ***Who and where***

One of the founders of the original program was an Indian woman called Jeroo Billimooria. Jeroo later moved to Amsterdam in the Netherlands. Living in this new city she began to wonder if the program she had helped to create back in India would work in other countries. So she found partner organizations in 10 pilot countries. Then she did something very wise. She gave them the children's text books that had been developed in India and urged the partners to edit them so that they would fit with the culture of their own country. The pilot was a success and the Aflatoun Board of Directors launched a campaign in 2007 to take the program to 75 countries and one million children by March 2011. Aflatoun is currently in 115 countries reaching four million children, and wants to reach 10 million children in 120 countries by 2015.

Aflatoun's partner organizations include large organizations like UNICEF, large NGOs like Plan International, ChildFund, Children International and Mercy Corps, and many small, dynamic local NGOs.

The Aflatoun Secretariat is a small, international team working from an office in Amsterdam. This is headed up by an Executive Director who is answerable to a Board of Directors. Each of the geographical regions that Aflatoun works in (Anglophone Africa, Francophone Africa, Middle East and North Africa, Americas, Europe, Central Asia, Asia) has its own Program Manager, also based in the Amsterdam Secretariat.