



EK KADAM AUR

Quarterly Report

Q3 2026 | July – September 2026

EK KADAM AUR
(One Step Forward)

PRESENTS

**MUSIC • DINNER
DANCE (DJ)**

An evening of music that lights the path
to education for children with blindness.

18 SEPTEMBER 2026
FRIDAY

7:00 PM - 12:00
MIDNIGHT

**INDIA COMMUNITY
CENTER (ICC)
MILPITAS, CA**

ANCHOR

FEATUREING

**SAMEER
KHERA**

**DR. PRAKASH
CHOUGULE**

**MEERA
IYER**

**VIDYA
GUDURU**

**MANDEEP
SINGH**

**LIVE MUSIC BY
VDAZE BAND**

**DJ SET BY
AUDIOTRONICS UNLIMITED**

Your participation helps provide:

- Education for children with blindness
- Accessible technology
- Pathways to independence

1,435
CHILDREN SUPPORTED

**MUSIC,
COMMUNITY &
PURPOSE**

Bringing the Bay Area together in support of **education, digital access, and independence** for children with blindness in India.



QUARTERLY REPORT

July - September 2026

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Introduction

About Ek Kadam Aur

Ek Kadam Aur is a nonprofit organization registered in India (80G, FCRA) and the US (501c3) that works toward delivering quality education to underprivileged children in India and Nepal. We work at the crucial juncture where blindness, poverty, and lack of accessibility converge.

Vision

The Ek Kadam Aur Foundation's vision is to create a world where every child has the right to quality education, access to skill enhancement, and healthcare.

Mission

Our mission is to help underprivileged children improve their lives through education, technology, and healthcare initiatives.

Our Values



Growth



Respect



Inclusion



Teamwork

Our Programs

Arunodaya (Sunrise) for Children with Blindness Program:

A Program through which the Foundation identifies children with blindness aged 5 to 17 years from remote regions of India to provide personalized one-on-one training from mentors and special educators to prepare them for regular mainstream schools.

High School Leadership Program:

An initiative of the Foundation that offers training in essential 21st-century skills such as communication and leadership. Students in this program have the opportunity to participate in an entrepreneurship boot camp and the I-Search (research-based) program.

Active Learning Program:

It fosters student engagement by transitioning from teacher-centered to student-centered learning, promoting the development of 21st Century Skills. Regular workshops and training programs on Active Learning are conducted for teachers and students in partner schools.

Nurturing Young Leadership:

We strongly believe in nurturing young leaders to public service. To facilitate this, we host several student interns from New York University, Harvard University, Columbia University and Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) from the US each year. While we engage them in social impact opportunities, we also gain from their insights and perspectives, especially from an academic lens.

President's Message

To our friends and partners,

The third quarter of 2026 was a period of significant milestones for Ek Kadam Aur Foundation, reflecting the expanding reach of our programs, growing international recognition, and the enduring strength of our partnerships. From advancing inclusive education in India to introducing our work on global platforms, we continued to translate our mission into tangible outcomes.



Dr. Satish Tripathi
Founder/President

Our flagship **Arunodaya Program** recorded **198 new enrollments**, bringing our cumulative achievements to **1,692 children trained in mobility and daily living skills, 758 receiving digital literacy training, and 1,019 enrolled in schools**. These milestones underscore our continued progress toward making education, technology, and independence accessible to children with blindness in underserved communities.

The accomplishments of our children offered compelling evidence of this progress. **Aritra Mondal** secured first place in the digital typing competition at Jadavpur University, Kolkata, before advancing to the Saksham Inter-State Typing Competition in Delhi. In Rajasthan, **Chitranshi Mahendra's** successful transition to mainstream schooling and her newfound ability to travel independently exemplify the lasting value of personalized education and sustained mentorship.

Our international engagements marked a pivotal development in Arunodaya's evolution. At the **ICEVI Africa Conference 2026**, I had the privilege of delivering a keynote address and conducting a workshop presenting our approach to educating children with blindness. Our subsequent engagement with **Prinshof School for Partially Sighted & Blind** in South Africa, together with strategic discussions involving educational institutions and disability-sector organizations in Nepal, laid the groundwork for potential international collaborations.

We were equally honored to receive the **Inclusion Impact Award at the World Inclusion Summit India 2026**, recognizing our contribution to advancing inclusive education.

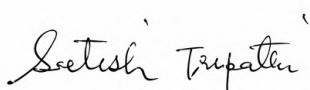
Our **September fundraising event in Milpitas, California**, brought together nearly **300 supporters**, reinforcing the vital role of community engagement and philanthropy in sustaining our mission. I extend my sincere appreciation to the volunteers, performers, families, and well-wishers whose dedication made the evening both memorable and meaningful.

Our broader commitment to educational excellence continued through the **High School Leadership Program**, which engaged **135 students** across four partner schools in India and Nepal, fostering competencies in communication, technology, artificial intelligence, and leadership. Our collaboration with Columbia University further enriched our work, with a summer intern contributing valuable research perspectives and strategic insights to inform Arunodaya's long-term expansion into neighboring countries.

As we enter the final quarter of the year, our focus remains on deepening program impact, strengthening institutional capacity, and pursuing responsible, evidence-driven expansion. The growing interest in Arunodaya beyond India affirms the relevance of our model and our ambition to advance inclusive education across geographical boundaries.

I extend my heartfelt gratitude to **our donors, educators, institutional partners, volunteers, and supporters worldwide**. Your commitment has been instrumental in every achievement this quarter. Together, we are building an enduring foundation for educational opportunity, independence, and inclusion.

With gratitude and optimism,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Seetish Tripathi", enclosed within a light orange rounded rectangular box.

Highlights of the Quarter

Strengthening Community Support in California

Ek Kadam Aur hosted a fundraising event, Music, Dinner and Dance, on September 18, 2026, at the India Community Center in Milpitas, California. The event brought together nearly 300 participants to support the organization's mission of transforming the lives of children with blindness through education and technology. It also provided an opportunity to raise awareness and strengthen community support for EKAF's work.

Expanding International Engagement

Ek Kadam Aur participated in the ICEVI Africa Conference 2026, sharing the Arunodaya model and exploring opportunities to extend its approach to South Africa. In Nepal, we engaged with education and disability-sector organizations to explore collaboration in capacity building, digital education, and adapting the Arunodaya model to the local context.

Creating Opportunities to Learn and Participate

Children with blindness participated in educational and cultural activities across program locations, including Independence Day and Janmashtami celebrations. In Delhi, students from the Arunodaya Program represented their states at the Saksham Inter-State Typing Competition on September 1, demonstrating their digital skills and gaining experience on a wider platform.

Reaching 135 Students Through Leadership Education

The High School Leadership Program engaged 135 students across four partner schools in India and Nepal. Sessions covered communication, public speaking, coding, artificial intelligence, emotional intelligence, well-being, and responsible leadership, helping students build skills for academic and personal growth.

Musical Dinner, DJ and Dance Evening in California

On September 18, 2026, Ek Kadam Aur hosted a Musical Dinner, DJ and Dance Evening at the India Community Center (ICC), Milpitas, California. The event brought together nearly 300 participants for an evening of music, entertainment, community engagement, and shared purpose. It provided an opportunity to bring together families, supporters, and community members around Ek Kadam Aur's mission to advance education, digital access, and independence for children with blindness in India.

The evening featured a musical program with performances by Dr. Prakash Chougule, Meera Iyer, Vidya Guduru, and Mandeep Singh. Sameer Khera anchored the event, while DJ Edwin Singh of Audiotronics Unlimited led the DJ segment, creating an enjoyable atmosphere for guests to connect and celebrate together. The program combined live music, dinner, and dance, offering participants an engaging experience while introducing them to the work and mission of Ek Kadam Aur.



Dr. Prakash Chougule played an important role in bringing the singers together and helping shape the musical flow of the evening. Beyond his contribution to the performances, he personally connected with families who resonated with Ek Kadam Aur's cause and subsequently extended their support to the organization. His involvement helped strengthen the connection between the event's cultural program and its wider purpose of building community support for children with blindness.

The event was led by Dr. Satish Tripathi, Founder of Ek Kadam Aur, with coordination support from Dr. Deepthi Telikicherla, Director, Research and Global Strategy, and Sharon Jose, Head of Global Communications.

Local volunteers, well-wishers, and supporters across the Bay Area contributed to event promotion and community outreach. Chhavi Goyal and Sanjeev Garg, Jyoti Kotti and Sridhar Kotti, along with their families and other supporters, played an important role in encouraging participation and mobilising the local community. Their collective efforts helped bring together a diverse group of attendees for the evening.

Student volunteers led by Keshav Garg and Nandini Garg also contributed significantly to outreach and event promotion. Their involvement reflected the importance of community participation in creating awareness and connecting more people with Ek Kadam Aur's work. The combined efforts of the organizing team, volunteers, families, and local supporters helped create an event that extended beyond entertainment to foster engagement with the organization's mission.

Throughout the evening, guests had the opportunity to enjoy the performances, dinner, DJ, and dance while learning more about Ek Kadam Aur's work. Many participants expressed interest in supporting the cause, creating opportunities to build relationships with individuals and families who share a commitment to improving educational opportunities for children with blindness.

The event served as a valuable platform for strengthening Ek Kadam Aur's presence within the Bay Area community, building awareness of its programs, and encouraging continued engagement. The participation of local families, volunteers, performers, and supporters demonstrated how community-led initiatives can bring people together around a shared purpose. The evening concluded as a meaningful gathering that combined cultural celebration with a collective commitment to supporting education, digital access, and greater independence for children with blindness in India.



»» EKA's Participation in the ICEVI Africa Conference ««

Ek Kadam Aur participated in the International Council for Education of People with Visual Impairment (ICEVI) Africa Conference 2026, held from September 28 to October 1, 2026, to present its work through the Arunodaya (Sunrise) Program and explore opportunities to expand its approach to supporting children with blindness internationally.

Dr. Satish Tripathi, Founder and President of Ek Kadam Aur, delivered a keynote address and led a dedicated workshop, sharing insights into the Arunodaya model and its key components, including home-based foundational learning, digital literacy, mentorship, teacher sensitization, parental engagement, and school integration. The workshop also provided an opportunity to discuss potential areas of collaboration.

Ms. Pallavi Kaushik, Head of International Affairs, participated in a panel discussion titled “How Can We Educate All Children with Blindness: The Arunodaya Way?” She also presented “How Can We Prepare Teachers to Include Children with Blindness in Mainstream Schools?” Both sessions highlighted the importance of foundational skills, accessible learning resources, assistive technology, practical teacher training, and ongoing support to enable children with blindness to participate meaningfully in education.



As part of Ek Kadam Aur's international outreach, Dr. Tripathi visited Prinshof School for Partially Sighted & Blind in South Africa and met with its Vice-Principal to explore opportunities to introduce the Arunodaya Program in the country. The visit marked an initial step toward understanding the local context and identifying possibilities for future collaboration.

Ek Kadam Aur's participation strengthened its international engagement and provided opportunities to exchange knowledge, build connections, and explore the potential expansion of the Arunodaya Program beyond India.



Inclusion Impact Award at the World Inclusion Summit India 2026



Ek Kadam Aur Foundation received the Inclusion Impact Award at the World Inclusion Summit India 2026, organized by the International Forums of Inclusion Practitioners (IFIP). Ms. Pallavi Kaushik, Head of International Affairs, accepted the award on behalf of Ek Kadam Aur Foundation.

The award recognized the work of the Arunodaya (Sunrise) Program in supporting children with blindness through foundational learning, digital literacy, individual mentorship, parental engagement, and preparation for school integration.

This recognition acknowledged Ek Kadam Aur's efforts to improve educational access for children with blindness, particularly those from underserved communities, and support their journey toward greater independence. It also highlighted the importance of sustained, community-based support in helping children build essential skills and prepare for meaningful participation in mainstream education.

Arunodaya (Sunrise) for Children with Blindness Program





Children Impact



1692

Children trained in
mobility & daily living
skills



758

Children receiving
digital literacy training



1019

Children enrolled in
schools



198

Enrollments this
Quarter

Ecosystem Strengthening



162 Mentors & Educators



50+ Teachers Trained



1500+ Peers Sensitized

Family Engagement



2500+

Parents Counseled



87 Districts



1065 Villages



Intra-State Digital Typing Competition: On August 20, 2026, Ek Kadam Aur Foundation organized an intra-state digital typing competition at Jadavpur University in Kolkata. The event brought together students with blindness from different districts of West Bengal, providing them with an opportunity to demonstrate their digital skills and independence.

The competition featured two categories: smartphone-based typing and laptop-based typing. Students demonstrated their ability to use digital devices and accessibility features, highlighting the role of accessible technology in supporting learning and communication.

The event also featured cultural performances, including poetry recitation, singing, and music by the Behala Calcutta Blind School band. Foundation representatives, including Dr. Satish Tripathi, Founder of Ek Kadam Aur Foundation; Dr. Deepthi Telikicherla, Director of Research and Global Strategy; and Mr. Biswajit Ghosh, Director of Academic Affairs, were also present.

The program provided a platform for students to showcase their abilities, receive recognition, and participate in accessible digital and cultural activities.



Glimpses of students participating in the competition and receiving awards.

Educator Training and Capacity Building: On July 9-10, 2026, Ek Kadam Aur Foundation conducted a two-day in-person training program for Arunodaya educators at the Mahabodhi Society in Kolkata. Educators from different districts participated in practical sessions on the program curriculum and teaching methodologies. The training also provided an opportunity to share experiences, discuss challenges, and exchange teaching practices. Accommodation and other necessary arrangements were provided for educators traveling from outside Kolkata.



In-person training for educators conducted at the Mahabodhi Society in Kolkata.

Digital Learning Transformation: A midline survey was conducted among 40 students at Manbhum Drishtihin Shikshayatan in Purulia district, West Bengal, to assess their progress in digital literacy, academic engagement, and independent learning.

The assessment indicated increased interest in education, greater participation in academic activities, and improved ability to complete tasks independently. Students are increasingly using Gemini and other digital tools to understand questions, find information, and complete homework with less assistance.

The school leadership has also shown an active interest in digital accessibility, with the principal learning to use smartphones with TalkBack, note-taking applications, and other assistive tools. The program has also contributed to improved discipline and more structured daily routines.



Anisha Khatun: Progress Toward Inclusive Education

Anisha Khatun from Hunishole, Bankura, developed skills in Activities of Daily Living (ADL), Orientation and Mobility (O&M), abacus, and digital literacy under the guidance of her educator, Ms. Tapasi.

She learned to use assistive applications, including Be My Eyes, Seeing AI, and EasyReader, to access information and educational materials more independently. These skills have helped her approach learning with greater confidence.

Anisha's progress has also increased awareness in her village about the abilities of children with blindness. She has recently been admitted to a mainstream school, where the cooperation and encouragement of teachers are helping her continue her education with confidence and dignity. Her journey demonstrates the importance of accessible learning resources, dedicated mentorship, and collaboration between the Foundation and mainstream schools.

Aritra Mondal: From Learner to Typing Competition Winner

Aritra Mondal from Bankura district has made remarkable progress in digital typing during his six months with the Arunodaya Program. With regular practice and guidance from Special Educator Sagarika Rakshit, he developed strong typing speed and accuracy while improving his academic and functional skills.



Aritra secured first place in the intra-state digital typing competition at Jadavpur University and went on to participate in the inter-state competition in Delhi. Beyond typing, he actively engages in general knowledge activities, mathematical calculations, science-based questions, and quizzes. His journey highlights how accessible technology, consistent guidance, and opportunities to participate can strengthen the skills and confidence of children with blindness.

Smartphone Training: Between July and September 2026, Ek Kadam Aur Foundation conducted smartphone training sessions across six districts: Sakti, Balod, Mohla-Manpur-Ambagarh Chowki, Raigarh, Rajnandgaon, and Kanker. Children learned essential smartphone skills, including TalkBack and keyboard functions, to support accessible learning and independent device use.

Educational Kits and Assistive Technology: Children received educational kits containing assistive learning tools to support their academic progress and independence. In Balod, the kits were presented by Bhojraj Nag, Member of Parliament representing the Kanker constituency, and Divya Umesh Mishra, administrative head of Balod district. In Mohla-Manpur-Ambagarh Chowki, District Education Officer Yog Das Sahu presented the educational kits. These resources helped children access assistive technology and develop practical skills for learning and daily activities.



Students with their education kits alongside their educators.



Padmini Suryavanshi: From Isolation to Independence

Padmini gradually lost her eyesight as she grew older, leading to fear and social isolation. After joining the Arunodaya Program in August 2023, she received regular educational support and began learning Braille. In January 2026, she received an assistive educational kit containing a smartphone, keyboard, smart cane, talking calculator, talking watch, and AI smart glasses, along with training in their use.

Today, Padmini independently operates her smartphone and types in both Hindi and English. Her confidence, communication, and ability to manage daily activities have improved significantly. Her journey highlights the impact of sustained mentorship and accessible technology in helping children with blindness build independence.

Chovaram Yadaw: Growing Confidence Through Technology

Eight-year-old Chovaram Yadaw, a Grade 3 student from Gariyaband district, initially struggled to participate in school because accessible learning materials were limited and he felt isolated from classmates.

During a two-day assistive technology training program organized by Ek Kadam Aur Foundation in partnership with Samagra Shiksha on June 23-24, 2026, Chovaram received an educational kit and learned to use tools such as EasyReader, Bookshare, and Speech Central. He also began learning keyboard typing to support independent writing.

His mentor, Diamond Sahu, also conducted a classroom sensitization activity that encouraged classmates to include him. Chovaram has since become more confident, engaged more actively with peers, and begun typing English words and short sentences. His progress highlights the value of accessible technology, mentorship, and an inclusive learning environment.





Wari Festival and Guru Purnima Celebrations: The Arunodaya Program organized an online celebration of the Wari Festival, a traditional pilgrimage in Maharashtra dedicated to Lord Vitthal of Pandharpur. Students learned about the festival's cultural and spiritual significance, which reflects devotion, unity, humility, and service. They also dressed up as famous personalities from Maharashtra, learning about the state's history and cultural heritage while expressing their creativity.

Guru Purnima was also observed to recognize and appreciate the contributions of teachers and mentors. The celebration brought together students, educators, and parents, highlighting the important role they play in supporting children's learning and development.

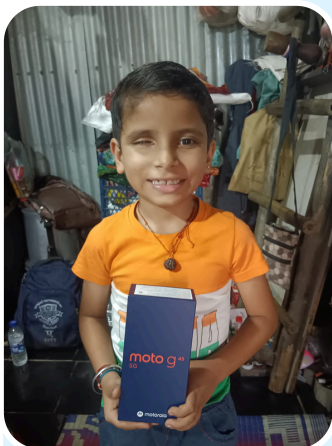


Students dressed as famous personalities during the Wari Festival celebration.

Ganpati Mahotsav Celebration: Children from Mumbai, Washim, Satara, and Ahilyanagar celebrated Ganpati Mahotsav through skits, storytelling, songs, dialogue presentations, and other creative activities. During Gauri Pujan, students also presented a special activity emphasizing the importance of education. These celebrations gave children opportunities to explore cultural traditions, express their creativity, and build confidence.



Glimpses from the Ganpati Mahotsav celebrations across Maharashtra.



Sarthak Sharma: Growing toward Independence

Sarthak Sharma, a Grade 3 student, is developing his digital literacy, mobility, and daily living skills through the Arunodaya Program. With guidance from his educator, Yogesh Jadhav, he is learning to use accessible applications such as EasyReader, Seeing AI, and Be My Eyes, as well as keyboard typing and online learning tools.

He is also learning to use a white cane, manage personal care, and organize his belongings independently. Sarthak's progress reflects his growing confidence and ability to take greater responsibility for his daily activities, reducing his reliance on his mother.

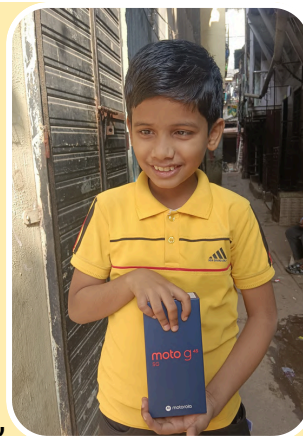
Virat Yadav: Growing toward Independence

Virat Yadav, a Grade 4 student, is developing his digital literacy, mobility, and daily living skills through the Arunodaya Program. When Field Educator Yogesh Jadhav began training him, Virat could use a mobile phone only with assistance and depended heavily on his mother for everyday activities.

He is now learning to use a smartphone for various tasks, including reading books with EasyReader, typing notes, setting alarms, and using applications such as Seeing AI, Be My Eyes, and Gemini to access information and visual assistance. He also practises taking photographs and recording audio and videos independently.

An important milestone has been learning to use a white cane, helping Virat move around with greater confidence. He is also developing daily living skills, including brushing his teeth, dressing himself, and organizing his clothes. Regular online classes are helping him strengthen his concentration and academic learning.

Virat is gradually taking greater responsibility for his daily routine and becoming more confident in his ability to learn and perform tasks independently.





Strengthening Digital Literacy and Access to Learning: In July 2026, an initiative supported by Dr. Suresh Gupta, a board director and supporter of Ek Kadam Aur, helped girls with blindness strengthen their access to digital learning through accessible smartphones configured with applications such as TalkBack and EasyReader. Students and parents received introductory guidance on using these tools to access digital books, support academic learning, and communicate more independently.

Similar initiatives in Dholpur and Hindaun, Karauli district, helped students develop access to assistive technology and digital learning resources. In Dholpur, students also visited Machkund Teerth Dham, combining technology-based learning with an opportunity to explore local history and cultural heritage.



Students with smartphones to support their educational journey.



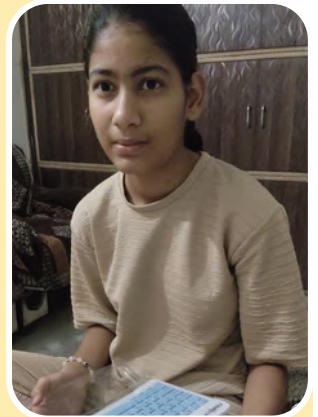
Jayesh: Building Digital Literacy and Academic Independence

Before joining the Arunodaya Program, Jayesh Kushwaha relied heavily on his family for everyday activities and schoolwork. With guidance from his field educator, he learned to navigate an Android smartphone using the TalkBack screen reader, access audio textbooks through EasyReader, and perform basic arithmetic using an abacus.

These skills have helped him complete school assignments more independently and participate alongside his peers in a mainstream classroom. His father shared that Jayesh can now operate his phone, read books independently, and send voice messages to his teacher, reflecting meaningful progress in his learning and communication.

Chitranshi Mahendra: Growing in Confidence and Independence

Chitranshi Mahendra has made inspiring progress through the Arunodaya Program with the support of Field Educator Jitendra. Initially, she faced challenges with mainstream schooling and independent mobility. With personalized guidance, she transitioned to a mainstream school and began strengthening her English through conversational practice, vocabulary exercises, and audio-based learning.



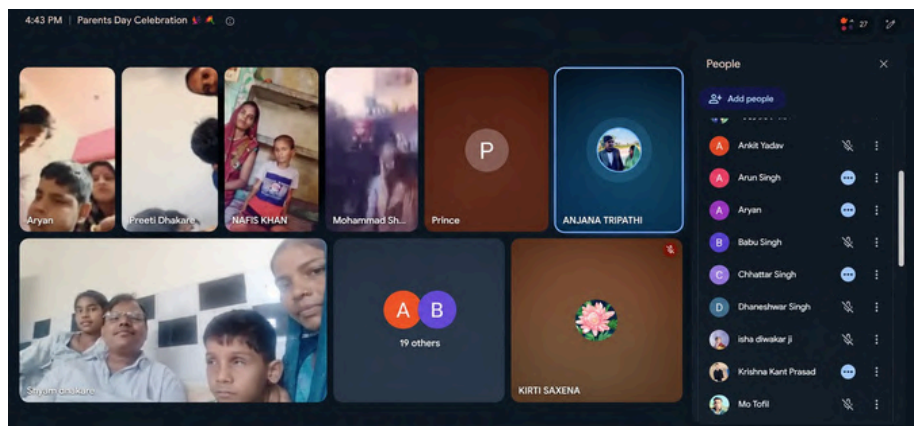
Today, Chitranshi attends school regularly, participates actively in class, and speaks English with greater fluency and confidence, earning appreciation from her teachers and peers. She has also developed strong orientation and mobility skills and can now travel to and from school independently.

Her journey reflects the power of consistent effort and individualized support. As Chitranshi continues to strengthen her academic and everyday living skills, she is building the confidence to navigate new challenges, embrace opportunities, and pursue her goals with greater independence.

Uttar Pradesh

Parents' Day Celebration: On July 26, 2026, the Arunodaya Program hosted a virtual Parents' Day celebration attended by 31 participants, including children, parents, and educators. The event featured videos of stories, poems, and songs performed by parents, followed by interactive games that encouraged children and parents to learn more about each other.

A highlight was a skit presented by educators in collaboration with the parents of student Saumya Mangal. The performance explored the roles and responsibilities of parents, teachers, and children, prompting reflection on the importance of family and educational support. The event concluded with parents sharing their experiences and educators offering guidance on supporting children's learning.



Parents and children during the virtual Parents' Day celebration.

Voices of Change



Kanak: Growing Through Learning

Kanak, a seven-year-old girl from Agra, was in Class 1 when she joined the Arunodaya Program. Initially, she struggled with regular school attendance and staying engaged in lessons. With consistent guidance from her special educator, she developed a stronger interest in learning and now attends school regularly.

She has also learned to use a mobile phone independently, supporting her academic progress and confidence. Kanak dreams of becoming a teacher when she grows up. Her progress reflects how early support and dedicated mentorship can help children overcome challenges, believe in their abilities, and work toward their dreams.

Bajrangi: Building Digital Skills and Confidence

Bajrangi, a nine-year-old boy from Agra, had never used a smartphone or computer before joining the Arunodaya Program. With regular guidance and practice, he learned to operate a mobile phone independently and type using a keyboard. These skills have helped him improve his schoolwork and take a greater interest in classroom learning.



Bajrangi's growing confidence has brought new hope to his family, who previously struggled to support his education due to limited digital knowledge. His journey shows how the right guidance and access to technology can help children with blindness develop greater independence and pursue their aspirations.



Karnataka



Janmashtami Celebration in Markunda, Bidar District: On September 4, 2026, Akshay, a student of the Arunodaya Program, participated in Janmashtami celebrations at his school in Markunda, Bidar district, Karnataka. Dressed as Lord Krishna, Akshay joined his schoolmates in the festivities.

His participation encouraged social interaction, strengthened his confidence, and helped foster a sense of belonging within the school community. The celebration provided an opportunity for children with and without disabilities to participate in a shared cultural activity.



Akshay and his schoolmates celebrating Janmashtami at school.



Malleesh: Building Independence Through Keyboard Typing

Malleesh has been developing his digital literacy skills through the Arunodaya Program, with a special focus on physical keyboard typing. With regular practice and guidance from his educator, Adison, he quickly learned to identify keys and type using a physical keyboard.

One of his key achievements has been learning to use the keyboard with greater independence and less assistance. His progress reflects his enthusiasm for learning and consistent efforts to build new skills.

Malleesh's journey shows how accessible learning opportunities and individual guidance can help children with blindness develop digital skills, build confidence, and move toward greater independence in education and everyday life.

From Digital Learning to School Enrollment

Vaishnavi has shown a strong interest in learning and made encouraging progress in digital literacy through the Arunodaya Program. With guidance from her educator, Adison, she learned physical keyboard typing and began developing individual note-taking skills to help her record information and engage more independently with educational content. A significant milestone in her journey was her admission to school, opening the door to new learning experiences and opportunities. The skills she is developing through Arunodaya will support her as she navigates this new chapter in her education.



Vaishnavi's story highlights the importance of accessible learning, digital literacy, and individual support in helping children with blindness prepare for school and work toward greater independence.



Independence Day Celebrations Across States



The Arunodaya Program marked India's Independence Day through celebrations and activities across several states, giving children opportunities to express their patriotism, showcase their talents, and participate in their schools and communities.

West Bengal

The celebration took place at a special school in Purulia, where students participated in dance, songs, recitations, speeches, and other cultural performances. The event was attended by Mr. Biswajit Ghosh, Director of Academic Affairs; Mr. Khokon Sardar, Principal Educator; the school principal; and other school authorities. Students from other schools and children enrolled through the Home-Based Education model also celebrated the occasion at their respective locations.

Telangana

An inclusive Independence Day celebration was held at a school in Mahabubnagar on August 15. The event began with flag hoisting and the national anthem, followed by cultural activities performed by students from the Arunodaya Program. Their participation highlighted the values of inclusion, equality, kindness, and mutual respect.

Karnataka

At the school in Vidya Nagar, students celebrated Independence Day together on August 15. The program included flag hoisting, the national anthem, patriotic songs, and speeches. Students with and without disabilities participated together, demonstrating teamwork and the importance of inclusive school environments.

Andhra Pradesh

The Independence Day celebration at Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalaya (JNV), Vizianagaram, on August 15 brought together JNV students, teachers, parents, students from the Arunodaya program, their families, and the Ek Kadam Aur team. Following the flag hoisting and national anthem, students participated in cultural activities. Our students also demonstrated their digital skills, and digital literacy kits and devices were provided to support their learning.



Rajasthan

An Independence Day celebration was held at the Brahma Kumaris Meditation Hall in Vaishali Nagar, Jaipur, bringing together children with disabilities, their families, and community members. The program featured patriotic songs, poetry recitations, and dance performances, including traditional Rajasthani folk dance. The event provided children with a platform to showcase their talents and concluded with an awards ceremony recognizing their participation and achievements.

Notable attendees included Apurva Singh, State Secretary, BJP Rajasthan; Akashdeep Arora, Deputy Director, Samagra Shiksha, Rajasthan; Dharmendra, State Consultant, UNICEF India; and Ramesh Agarwal, representative of Todi Foundation (India). Ek Kadam Aur was represented by Dr. Satish Tripathi, Founder and President; Saumya Tripathi, Director Program Development & Expansion; Pallavi Kaushik, Head of International Affairs; and Ankita Sehdev, Senior Manager, Inclusive Education. The event brought together government representatives, development organizations, families, and community members to celebrate the children's talents and achievements.

Maharashtra

Independence Day activities took place across Satara and Ahilyanagar. In Wai, Satara, a flag-hoisting ceremony was held on August 14, led by Mr. Harshvardhan More, Block Education Officer, and Mr. Sachin Sawant, Municipal Councillor. Twelve students participated in cultural performances and educational demonstrations showcasing how technology supports their learning.

In Ahilyanagar, four students performed patriotic songs and played the tabla, while others delivered speeches on freedom, patriotism, and national service.

Uttar Pradesh

On August 15, 2026, 50 children and teachers from different parts of Uttar Pradesh came together virtually to celebrate India's Independence Day. The online gathering featured videos of songs, poems, dances, and other performances recorded by students at their respective schools. Children who could not perform at school also prepared videos from home with support from their teachers, showcasing their recitations and musical talents.

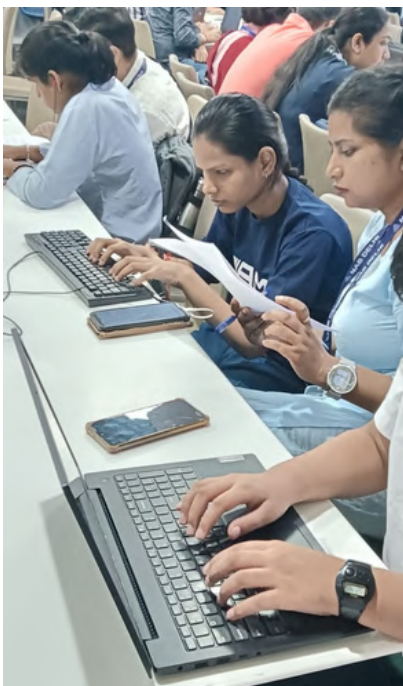
Videos were screened during the meeting, giving participants an opportunity to appreciate the children's efforts and creativity. Teachers congratulated the students on Independence Day, encouraged their talents, and joined them in making meaningful pledges for the future.



»» Saksham Inter-State Typing Competition ««

Students from the Arunodaya Program participated in the Inter-State Typing Competition, organized by Saksham Foundation at HCL Tech in Delhi on September 1, 2026. Featuring Hindi and English typing contests, the competition gave students with blindness an opportunity to demonstrate their digital literacy skills, build confidence, and interact with participants from other states.

Representing Andhra Pradesh, Sai Lokesh and Kusuma Devi participated alongside Sahasra from Telangana. Uttar Pradesh was represented by Chintu, Nandini, and Deeksha, while Saumya Mangal, Dev, and Rekha also attended independently. Tarachand accompanied the students from Uttar Pradesh, providing guidance and support throughout the event.



West Bengal was represented by Aritra Mondal, who had secured first place in the intra-state digital typing competition held at Jadavpur University in Kolkata before participating in the inter-state competition in Delhi.

The competition offered students a platform to showcase their abilities, gain experience, and connect with peers from different regions. All participating students were recognized with consolation prizes in appreciation of their efforts. Their participation highlights the importance of accessible technology, regular practice, and opportunities for children with blindness to develop digital skills and demonstrate their abilities on a wider platform.

»» Nepal Engagement and Partnership Development ««

During the quarter, Ek Kadam Aur explored opportunities to collaborate on inclusive education in Nepal. Pallavi Kaushik, Head of International Affairs, met with education and disability-sector organizations, university representatives, and local stakeholders in Kathmandu from September 9 to 12, followed by a virtual meeting with the Nepal Association for the Welfare of the Blind (NAWB) on September 13.

Discussions with the Nepal Association of the Blind (NAB), Tribhuvan University (TU), Karkhana Samuha, Inclusive Education Nepal (IEN), and other stakeholders focused on inclusive education challenges, curriculum adaptation, digital education, and capacity building. Capacity building emerged as a potential starting point, alongside opportunities to explore a joint funding proposal with NAB and TU and involve local partners in adapting learning approaches to Nepal's context.

The engagement also highlighted the importance of aligning future collaboration with Nepal's local education systems, available resources, and the needs of children with blindness. Working with local organizations and academic institutions could help Ek Kadam Aur identify relevant expertise and develop approaches suited to the local context.

Further consultations, including school visits, will be important to understand local needs and assess how the Arunodaya home-based model could be adapted. Ek Kadam Aur will continue engaging with potential partners to develop a locally informed collaboration plan and identify opportunities for future implementation.

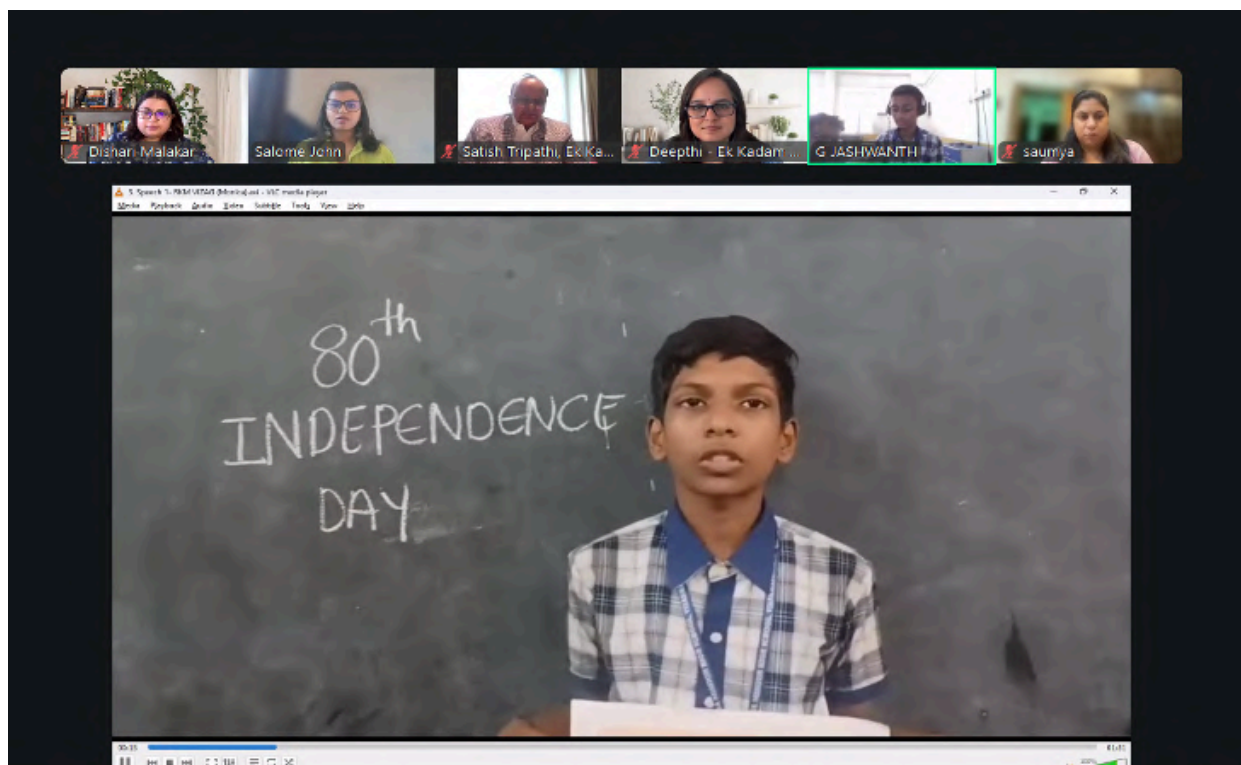


High School Leadership Program (HSLP)

During the third quarter, the High School Leadership Program engaged 135 students across four partner schools in India and Nepal. Through expert-led sessions and interactive activities, students strengthened their communication, critical thinking, and digital skills while developing greater self-awareness, emotional intelligence, and an understanding of responsible leadership and citizenship.

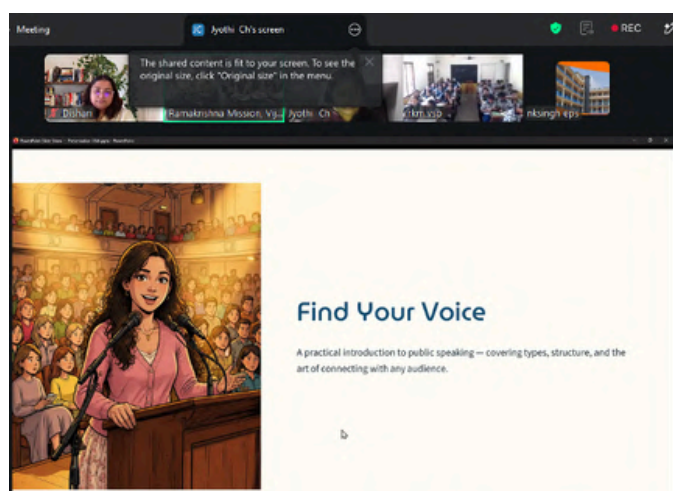
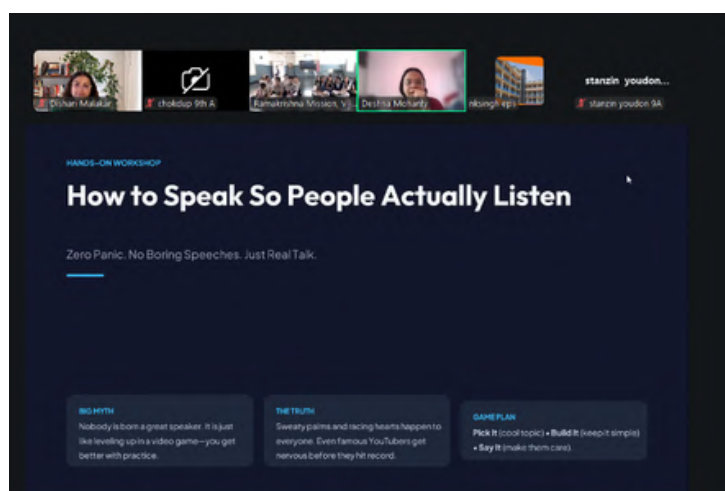
Celebrating Independence Day: The third quarter marked the celebration of India's 80th Independence Day, providing students with an opportunity to reflect on the values of freedom, unity, responsibility, and service to the nation. The virtual celebration brought together students from the Foundation's partner schools, who participated through poetry recitations, singing, skits, speeches, dance, and artwork.

The program provided a platform for students to express their creativity and patriotism while celebrating India's diverse cultural heritage. Through their active participation, students were encouraged to reflect on their roles as responsible citizens and young changemakers in building a more inclusive and progressive society.



Strengthening Communication and Public Speaking Skills: Recognizing communication as a fundamental leadership skill, the High School Leadership Program continued to help students express themselves clearly, confidently, and effectively. Sessions on Effective Teamwork, The Power of Authenticity, Active Listening, How to Ask for What You Want?, and Conflict Management encouraged students to communicate with clarity, listen with empathy, understand different perspectives, and navigate interpersonal situations constructively.

The two-day Talk the Talk Public Speaking Course provided students with practical opportunities to develop their public speaking abilities, organize their thoughts, deliver messages effectively, and engage an audience. Together, these sessions encouraged students to become more self-aware, articulate, and confident communicators, strengthening skills essential for their academic and personal lives.



Advancing Digital Literacy, Coding, and Emerging Technologies: During the quarter, students explored foundational concepts in computer science, coding, artificial intelligence, and website development through sessions such as Exploring Computer Science and Artificial Intelligence as Teenagers, Introduction to Website Development, and How to Become a Successful Coder?

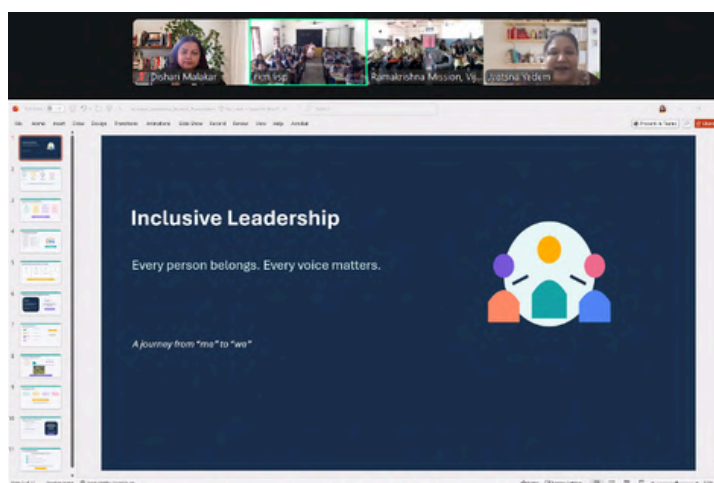
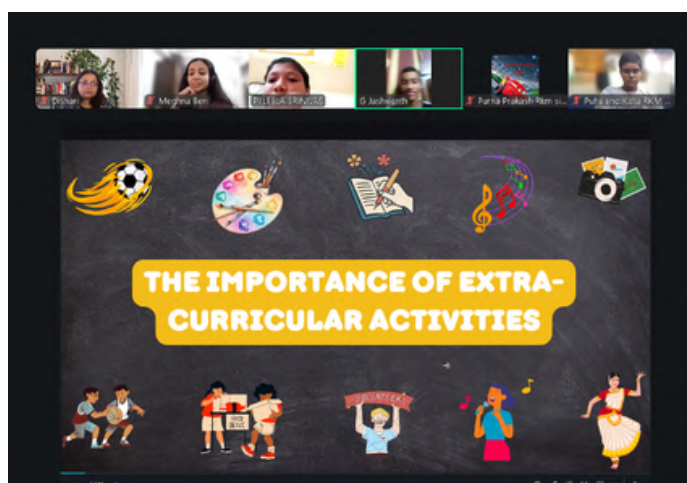
Led by professionals with industry experience, these sessions introduced students to emerging technologies and their practical applications in problem-solving and digital innovation. Students also gained insights into technology-related careers and the skills required to pursue them. By encouraging curiosity, logical thinking, creativity, and continuous learning, the sessions helped students better understand the opportunities offered by the rapidly evolving digital landscape.

Promoting Well-Being, Emotional Intelligence, and Life Skills: The program continued to emphasize the importance of physical, mental, and emotional well-being as essential components of personal growth. Through sessions such as Emotional Intelligence, and addressing questions such as - How Does Your Brain Work and Why Do We Fall Ill, students explored how the brain and body function, factors that influence health, and the importance of recognizing and managing emotions.

The session on The Importance of Co-Curricular, Extracurricular Activities, and Skill-Based Learning in Today's World further highlighted how learning beyond the classroom contributes to creativity, confidence, collaboration, and practical skill development. Collectively, these sessions encouraged students to make informed choices about their health, emotional well-being, learning, and personal development.

Nurturing Leadership, Citizenship, and Social Responsibility: The Leadership, Citizenship, and Social Responsibility focus encouraged students to develop the knowledge, values, and skills needed to become responsible and inclusive leaders. Through sessions such as Leadership Lessons Through Your Favorite Superhero, Civic Awareness and Children's Rights, The Danger of Fake News, and Inclusive Leadership Through Diversity, students explored leadership qualities, their rights and responsibilities, critical thinking, and the importance of embracing diversity.

The Dream Mapping session encouraged students to reflect on their aspirations and identify pathways toward achieving their goals. Additional activities, including Feedback Sessions on constructive feedback, further emphasized self-reflection and positive interpersonal relationships. Together, these engagements helped students strengthen their sense of responsibility, empathy, and confidence as emerging leaders within their communities.





Voices of Change



Dr. Sravani

Homeopathic Consultant
at Olive Homeocare

It was a rewarding experience to be part of Ek Kadam Aur Foundation's High School Leadership Program as a speaker and share my knowledge with the students. Their enthusiasm, curiosity, and eagerness to learn made the session truly meaningful.

I appreciate the Foundation's efforts to create opportunities for students to gain knowledge, build confidence, and develop essential life skills. I am glad to have contributed to this initiative and hope it continues to inspire and empower more students.

I have been participating in the High School Leadership Program for the past few months, and this experience has played a crucial role in shaping my personality and improving my ability to communicate in English. Earlier, I used to feel afraid of speaking English and often struggled to express my thoughts clearly. However, the program has helped me overcome that fear, organize my thoughts better, and communicate with greater confidence. Today, I feel proud that I can even write a testimonial on my own!



Jashwanth

Student, RKM High
School, Visakhapatnam

One thing I truly appreciate about this program is the way our questions are welcomed and respected, no matter how simple they may seem. This creates a comfortable environment where we feel encouraged to ask questions, share our ideas, and learn without hesitation. The sessions have helped me become more confident in expressing myself and have shown me the importance of being curious and open to learning.

I hope the program continues to reach many more students like me and helps them build confidence, improve their communication skills, and discover their potential.



Sessions Conducted



TOPIC	RESOURCE PERSON	AFFILIATION
Growing Up: Understanding Adolescence without Confusion	Chitranshi Baranwal	Co-Founder & CMO, Genie Pads
Effective Teamwork	Pallavi Kaushik	Head, International Affairs at Ek Kadam Aur
Activity of the Month - Leadership Lessons through your Favourite Superhero	Dishari Malakar	Program Manager- High School Leadership Program
The Power of Authenticity	Pranoo Deshraj	Associate Assessment Specialist Firstsource
Exploring Computer Science and Artificial Intelligence as Teenagers	K. Arokya Dass	Project Manager at Cognizant
Active Listening	Amrita Lal	Lead- Assessment Development Firstsource
Civic Awareness and Children's Rights	Salome John	Head- Arunodaya Program for the Blind
The Danger of Fake News	Rachel Jeremiah	Program Manager- Global Leadership Development Cognizant
How does your brain work?	Chitranshi Baranwal	Co-Founder & CMO, Genie Pads
Why do we fall ill?	Dr. Sravani	MD - Homeopathy

TOPIC	RESOURCE PERSON	AFFILIATION
Activity of the Month	Dishari Malakar	Program Manager- High School Leadership Program
Emotional Intelligence	Deshna Mohanty	Assistant Manager - Presales Firstsource
Importance of Co-Curricular, Extra Curricular Activities and Skill-Based Learning in today's century	Meghna Beri	Associate Assessment Developer Firstsource
Introduction to Website Development	Deepak Keynes	Cognizant
Inclusive Leadership through Diversity	Jyostna Yedem	Senior Editor at Firstsource
How to ask for what you want?	Deshna Mohanty	Manager - Presales at Firstsource
Dream Mapping	Dishari Malakar	Program Manager - High School Leadership Program
Conflict Management	Pruthividhar Pendyala	Project Manager at Firstsource
How to Become a Successful Coder?	K.Arokya Dass	Manager- Projects at Cognizant
Talk the Talk - 2 Day Course on Public Speaking 1/2	Jyothi CH	Consultant - Software QA at Firstsource
Talk the Talk - 2 Day Course on Public Speaking 2/2	Deshna Mohanty	Manager- Presales at Firstsource
Activity of the Month: Feedback Session (How to give constructive feedback?)	Dishari Malakar	Program Manager - High School Leadership Program

Nurturing Youth Leadership Program (NYLP)

Summer Internship Program: Columbia University



Ek Kadam Aur Foundation hosted **Vania Desianti**, Columbia University, New York, for its Summer Internship Program 2026. Her work focused on two strategic priorities: evaluating the impact of the Arunodaya Program and exploring its potential expansion into Indonesia. The internship provided an opportunity to apply academic research to real-world challenges in inclusive education and program development.

Vania conducted a longitudinal analysis of 229 children who completed baseline, midline, and endline assessments, identifying statistically significant improvements in digital literacy, social-emotional well-being, mobility, and daily living skills. Her findings contributed to the development of a draft research manuscript, strengthening Arunodaya's evidence base. The analysis provided valuable insights into children's progress across key developmental areas and highlighted the importance of data-driven program evaluation.

She also undertook a preliminary assessment of opportunities in Indonesia, examining educational needs, the policy environment, prospective institutional partnerships, and a potential pilot implementation framework. This work helped map potential pathways for adapting the program to a new context while considering local needs and implementation requirements.

Her contributions provided valuable research insights to support evidence-based program evaluation, strategic decision-making, and the exploration of international expansion opportunities. The findings will inform ongoing efforts to strengthen Arunodaya's impact and assess the feasibility of extending its model to new geographies.



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