10 YEARS

Celebrating a decade of
IMPACT

Education | Inclusion | Empowerment

Annual Report 2025

Contents

About
Ek Kadam Aur

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

Our Vision

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

Our Mission

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

Our Programs

Arunodaya (Sunrise) for Blind Program: Provides specialized training to visually impaired children (ages 5-17) from rural India, preparing them for mainstream education through one-on-one mentoring and special education support.

High School Leadership Program: Flagship initiative offering training in 21st-century skills, featuring entrepreneurship boot camps, and research-based learning opportunities for high school students.

Active Learning Program: Transforms traditional classrooms into student-centered learning environments through teacher training workshops and interactive learning methodologies.

Nurturing Youth Leadership: Hosts student interns from leading U.S. universities (NYU, Harvard, MIT) to foster global perspectives and create social impact opportunities while benefiting from academic insights.

Culture

The key principles that guide Ek Kadam Aur Foundation form the bedrock of our organizational culture.

OUR VALUES

Growth
We embrace continuous learning and development, fostering an environment where both our team and communities can reach their highest potential.

Respect
We honor every individual's dignity and contributions, building relationships based on trust and mutual understanding.

Inclusion
We celebrate diversity and ensure equal opportunities for all, creating spaces where every voice matters and is heard.

Teamwork
We believe in the power of collaboration, combining our diverse strengths to create meaningful impact through shared purpose and collective effort.

Our programs align with UNDP's four **Sustainable Development Goals** for 2030.

4 QUALITY EDUCATION

5 GENDER EQUALITY

10 REDUCED INEQUALITIES

17 PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS

Message from the
President

As Ek Kadam Aur completes ten years of its journey, I reflect not only on what we have built, but on why we began. In 2015, Ek Kadam Aur was founded with a clear and uncompromising belief that education, confidence, and dignity must reach children who are systematically excluded, not because they lack ability, but because they lack access.

What began as a small step rooted in equity has, over a decade, evolved into a mission shaped by communities, strengthened by evidence, and driven by inclusion. Our early years were grounded in listening and learning. Working closely with first-generation learners in rural and low-income communities taught us a foundational truth that continues to guide our work today. Talent exists everywhere, opportunity does not. From leadership and confidence-building workshops to academic and exposure-based learning, we learned that aspiration flourishes when children are seen, supported, and challenged. As we formalized our presence in India between 2016 and 2017, building trust within communities and strengthening governance structures, our focus remained clear. Education must be community-rooted to be sustainable.

The launch of the High School Leadership Program marked a defining chapter in our evolution. By working with adolescents across remote geographies in India and Nepal, we saw leadership emerge not as a privilege, but as a practice. Through mentorship, virtual classrooms, STEM exposure, career guidance, and global perspectives, students learned to communicate, think critically, and lead with empathy. Over time, HSLP matured into a holistic leadership incubator, integrating communication mastery, future-ready technology exposure, mental well-being, civic responsibility, and cultural awareness, preparing young people not just for examinations, but for life.

The COVID-19 pandemic tested every assumption we held about education delivery. Yet, it also revealed a powerful insight that reshaped our trajectory. Digital tools enable independence, not just continuity. As children navigated smartphones, audio platforms, and remote learning with confidence, we recognized that technology could dismantle barriers far beyond physical classrooms. This realization became the foundation for our most transformative work.

The year 2025 stands as a landmark in our journey. It marked Ek Kadam Aur Foundation's transition from a predominantly tactile, Braille-dependent support model to a digital accessibility-enabled learning ecosystem. While Braille remains a vital foundation of literacy, accessibility is no longer limited by physical materials.

Screen readers, smartphones, assistive technologies, and AI-enabled tools now power how children learn, write, communicate, rehearse, navigate, and participate independently. This shift reaffirmed a core belief. Empowerment is not delivered through assistance, but through accessibility-enabled independence.

Across nine states, we witnessed children independently coordinating events, preparing speeches using voice typing, navigating public spaces with confidence, and excelling in academics, sports, and cultural platforms. Parents transitioned from hesitation to advocacy. Educators evolved into trained accessibility facilitators. Schools began embracing inclusion not as accommodation, but as standard educational practice.

As we close this decade, Ek Kadam Aur stands as a stable, evidence-driven, multi-state organization with a clear roadmap for the future. Our work has reached hundreds of children, families, educators, and institutions. More importantly, it has demonstrated what is possible when education is personalized, technology-enabled, and community-rooted.

A heartfelt note of gratitude to our Board members, whose guidance and governance continue to strengthen our vision; to our volunteers and mentors, who give their time, skills, and compassion to bring learning to life; to our institutional and community partners, who walk alongside us in building inclusive and sustainable systems; and to our donors and supporters, whose trust and belief make this work possible. Each contribution, whether strategic, financial, or on the ground, has played a vital role in shaping Ek Kadam Aur Foundation's journey over the past decade. As we look ahead, we remain excited and deeply committed to continuing this journey together, learning from one another, strengthening our impact, and reaching many more children with opportunity, dignity, and hope.

Looking Ahead: The Decade Forward

The next decade calls us to move from demonstrating impact to embedding inclusion within systems. Ek Kadam Aur Foundation will focus on strengthening institutional partnerships, aligning closely with government education frameworks, and ensuring that digital accessibility becomes an integral part of mainstream education delivery. Our screen-reader-first, technology-enabled model will continue to evolve, supporting children not only through schooling, but into higher education, vocational pathways, and dignified employment.
We will deepen investments in educator and mentor capacity-building, expand evidence-based monitoring systems, and continue empowering parents as long-term partners in learning. Assistive technology, AI-enabled learning tools, and accessible digital platforms will remain central, not as add-ons, but as foundational enablers of independence and participation.

At the heart of our vision lies dignity. The future we work toward is one where children are not defined by disability or circumstance, but by ability, aspiration, and agency. As Ek Kadam Aur Foundation steps into its second decade, we remain guided by the same belief that inspired our first step ten years ago. When children are given access, they do not merely learn. They rise, lead, and transform the world around them.

Dr. Satish Tripathi

Dr. Satish Tripathi
Founder & President
Ek Kadam Aur

Board of
Directors (US)

Satish Tripathi Ph.D.
Founder/ President,
Ek Kadam Aur

Naveen Jha
Senior Advanced Leadership
Initiative (ALI) Fellow,
Harvard University

Fernando Quezada
Executive Director
Biotechnology Center
of Excellence Corp.
Massachusetts

Pradeep Agarwal, Ph.D.
Professor Emeritus at Georgia
Institute of Technology, Atlanta

Suresh C. Gupta, MD
Pulmonologist,
University of Maryland

Bianca Ghose
Former Chief
Storyteller at Wipro

Board of
Directors (India)

O.P. Sharma, Ph.D.
Research Consultant for NGOs
& Government Organisations

Usha Tiwari
Social Worker

Divya Tiwari
Sr. Manager,
Marketing, Sun Pharma

Advisory
Board

Meredith B. Rosenthal, Ph.D.
Professor, TH Chan School of Public Health, Harvard

Luis Gallegos, JD
President of the Board of the UNITAR and G3ICT

Binal Patel, JD
Partner at Banner Witcoff

Henna Sharma
Founder/Chief Happiness Officer at Hope and Happiness Coach

MNG Mani, Ph.D.
Former CEO, ICEVI

Jeremy Bhatia
Lead, Education & Social Impact Initiatives, Avenues

Gaurav Sharma
Founder, Little Giants International School, Madhya Pradesh

Himangshu Das, Ph.D.
Director at NIEPMD, Chennai

Namita Tripathi
Director of Netraheen Kanya Prashikshan Kendra

Alyna T. Chien
Associate Professor of Pediatrics, Harvard Medical School, USA

Dr. Marie-Caroline de Bokay
Advanced Leadership Initiative Partner, Harvard University

Stuti Kacker, IAS
Former Chairperson National Commission for the Protection of Child Rights

Leadership
Team

Biswajit Ghosh
Director of
Academic Affairs

Saumya Tripathi
Head, Operations &
Program Expansion

Deepthi T, Ph.D.
Head, Research &
Global Strategy

Deepak Shandilya
Senior Director - Global
CSR and Partnerships

Salome John
Chief of Staff &
Associate Director

Sharon Jose
Head, Global
Communications

Pallavi Kaushik
Head, External Affairs
& Active Learning

Dishari Malakar
Head, High School
Leadership Program

Varsha Mishra
Senior Compliance
Manager

Ankita Sehdev
Manager,
Inclusive Education

Anoop Dubey
Program Manager,
Uttar Pradesh

Srinu Masa
Program Manager,
Andhra Pradesh

Ajay Kumar
Program Manager,
Rajasthan

Bonita Sarkar
Program Manager,
West Bengal

Aashutosh Mahant
Program Manager,
Chhattigarh

Inclusion in
Action

Inclusion at Ek Kadam Aur begins within our own team. Across the Arunodaya program, 21 visually impaired colleagues serve as mentors, trainers, educators, and leaders, strengthening the program every day. Their expertise helps shape accessible teaching practices, improve systems, and maintain high-quality program delivery.

Biswajit Ghosh
Director,
Academic Affairs

Ankita Sehdev
Manager, Inclusive
Education

Ritu Jain
Compliance
Coordinator

Priyanka Kaushik
Compliance
Coordinator

Passang Bhutia
Compliance
Coordinator
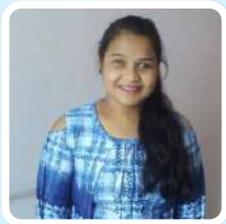
Neelam Behera
Special School
Educator

Rajkumar Naskar
Special Educator

Uttam Pandit
Special Educator

Laxmi Mahato
Special Mentor

Gouranga Mahato
Special Mentor

Eklas Mandal
Special Mentor

Delafroj Khatun
Special Mentor

Jacinta Toppo
Special Mentor

Srinivasa Ramayanam
Special Mentor

Prabir Hazra
Special Mentor

Biswanath Mahato
Special Mentor

Rani Basak
Special Mentor

Dulal Kaibarta
Special Mentor

Jesmina Khatun
Special Mentor

Umar Farukh
Special Mentor

Sagar
Special Mentor

10 Years of
Ek Kadam Aur

The First Step
2015 ## A Vision Rooted in Equity

Ek Kadam Aur began its journey in 2015 with registration in the United States as a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt organisation. Founded under the leadership of Dr. Satish Tripathi, the organisation was built on a simple yet powerful belief:

Education, confidence, and dignity must reach children who are systematically excluded.

In its earliest phase, Ek Kadam Aur worked closely with rural and low-income communities, particularly first-generation learners with limited exposure to quality education. Early interventions focused on:

- Leadership and confidence-building workshops
- Foundational academic support
- Exposure-based learning to bridge aspiration gaps

This year shaped the organisation's core philosophy: exclusion is not caused by lack of talent, but by lack of access and opportunity.

Building Structure, Building Trust

From Vision to Organisation

In 2017, Ek Kadam Aur formally established its operations in India as a Section 8 non-profit company, enabling transparent governance, statutory compliance, and long-term sustainability.

Grassroots education programs were launched across rural districts of Uttar Pradesh. Key program components included:

- Academic and extracurricular support within government schools
- Mentoring to strengthen motivation and learning continuity
- Community engagement with parents and local stakeholders

A defining insight emerged during this phase:

Talent exists everywhere. Opportunity does not.

By the end of 2017, Ek Kadam Aur had earned deep community trust and built a strong institutional foundation for expansion.

2018

High School Leadership Program
Investing in Adolescents and Leadership

In 2018, Ek Kadam Aur launched the High School Leadership Program (HSLP), focusing on adolescents in remote and low-resource secondary schools.

The program expanded across Andhra Pradesh, Ladakh, and Nepal

HSLP emphasised:

- Leadership, communication, and critical thinking
- Exposure to mentors and professionals
- Virtual classrooms connecting learners with educators and volunteers across geographies

This phase established Ek Kadam Aur's early strengths in mentor-driven pedagogy, virtual learning delivery, and youth leadership development.

Leadership from the Ground Up
Learning, Ownership, and Community Engagement

2019

During 2019, the organisation deepened its focus on active learning and leadership, moving beyond conventional classroom methods.

Programs prioritised:
- Leadership and entrepreneurship skills
- The Active Learning Curriculum, supported by Jeremy Bhatia (Harvard Kennedy School Intern), introduced experiential and inquiry-based learning
- The Community Educator (Train-the-Trainers) Model, led by Saumya Tripathi, expanded to additional schools

At the same time, Ek Kadam Aur strengthened **community ownership of education**. Young adults and senior students from within the same communities were trained to mentor younger children, creating locally sustained learning cycles.

These efforts resulted in:
- Students taking ownership of their learning and aspirations
- Communities becoming active partners in education delivery

This phase laid the philosophical foundation for Ek Kadam Aur's future inclusion-focused work.

From Classrooms to Communities

2020

Scaling Leadership and Active Learning

In 2020, Ek Kadam Aur consolidated its leadership and community-based education models.

- Leadership and entrepreneurship initiatives were implemented
- Learner-centred, activity-based pedagogy
- Critical thinking, communication, and problem-solving

By the end of 2020, Ek Kadam Aur demonstrated that community-rooted education models can scale without compromising quality.

COVID and the Digital Turning Point
Continuity Through Technology

The COVID-19 pandemic disrupted education nationwide. Ek Kadam Aur responded by transitioning programs to fully digital and remote formats across Uttar Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh, and West Bengal.

Using smartphones, audio-based tools, and accessible platforms, learning continuity was ensured. Parents, especially mothers were engaged as co-educators in home-based learning.

A critical insight emerged:
Digital tools enable independence, not just continuity.

Children began navigating technology confidently, laying the groundwork for the organisation's next strategic shift.

Arunodaya Is Born
Addressing Educational Exclusion for Children with Blindness

In 2022, Ek Kadam Aur launched Arunodaya (Sunrise) - a structured response to the systemic exclusion of children with blindness from education.

The program began in:
- Uttar Pradesh
- Madhya Pradesh
- Rajasthan
- West Bengal

Arunodaya introduced:

- One-on-one home-based mentoring
- Digital literacy using smartphones and assistive technology
- Orientation and mobility training
- Daily living skills and parental counselling

Independence and confidence became central educational outcomes.

2023

From Home-Based Learning to School Inclusion

Turning Readiness into Participation

During 2023, EKAF focused on transitioning children trained under Arunodaya into mainstream government and private schools across five states: Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, West Bengal, and Chhattisgarh.

Support included:

- School enrolment facilitation
- Teacher orientation on inclusive practices
- Access to EPUB-based and audio-supported curriculum
- Provision of tactile learning materials

Continuous mentoring ensured children were actively participating in classrooms, not merely enrolled.

Scaling Inclusion

From Program to Institution

2024

In 2024, Arunodaya scaled across nine states, with expansion into rural and tribal regions.

Key system-strengthening efforts included:

- Educator training and master-trainer development
- Monitoring, assessment, and reporting frameworks
- Safeguarding, compliance, and data protection protocols

Quality assurance ensured consistency across geographies.

Consolidation and the Road Ahead
From Scale to Sustainability

The final year of the decade focused on consolidation and evidence-building.

Priorities included:

- Strengthening baseline, midline, and endline assessments
- Documenting outcomes and case studies for CSR and government engagement
- Workforce development, including educators with lived experience of blindness
- Alignment with national education policies

By 2025, Ek Kadam Aur emerged as a stable, multi-state, evidence-driven organisation with a clear roadmap for the next decade.

Arunodaya (Sunrise) for Children with Blindness

Our Impact

835 TOTAL STUDENTS

10 STATES

83 TEACHERS

21 VI MEMBERS IN THE TEAM

75 DISTRICTS

629 VILLAGES

246 ACTIVE IN PHASE 1

150 ACTIVE IN PHASE 2

706 ADMITTED TO SCHOOLS

Geographic
Coverage

Our programs have a presence across nine states: **Andhra Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, West Bengal, Maharashtra, Rajasthan, Telangana, and Karnataka.**

Digital Accessibility Led Learning Model

The year 2025 marked a decisive evolution in Ek Kadam Aur Foundation's approach to education for children with visual impairment and blindness. The Foundation transitioned from a predominantly tactile and Braille centric support system to a digital accessibility led learning model that places independence at the core of education delivery.

Braille continued to serve as the foundation of early literacy, while accessible digital technology became the primary medium for reading, writing, communication, and learning progression. A screen reader first approach was institutionalised across the program, enabling learners to independently access educational content, complete assignments, communicate with mentors, and manage their learning routines.

This shift positioned accessibility as a means to independence rather than support, strengthening the Foundation's focus on long-term empowerment in a digital world.

Strengthening the Learning Ecosystem

Recognising that sustainable outcomes depend on consistent reinforcement, the Foundation focused on strengthening the wider learning ecosystem. Educators and mentors were supported to deliver accessibility led instruction, parents were engaged to reinforce independent learning routines at home, and schools were guided to maintain inclusive participation of learners with visual impairment.

This ecosystem approach ensured continuity of learning beyond training periods and created alignment between home, school, and community environments. As a result, learners demonstrated greater consistency, confidence, and ownership of their learning journeys.

Orientation, Mobility, and Real World Independence

Orientation and mobility training remained a critical focus in 2025. Learners received structured instruction to build spatial awareness, safe movement, and decision making skills. Practice environments extended beyond classrooms to include school corridors, neighbourhood pathways, markets, and community spaces.

This emphasis on real world navigation enabled children to move with greater confidence and reduced dependency in daily activities. Improved mobility also supported participation in school attendance, community events, and public platforms.

Academic Progress and Co Curricular Achievement

Throughout 2025, learners demonstrated steady academic progress alongside co curricular achievements. Children participated in adaptive sports, public speaking, music, and competitive events at local, district, and state levels. Successes in examinations, scholarships, and competitions reflected disciplined preparation, structured mentoring, and growing independence.

Individual achievements, including state level sports recognition and academic distinctions, illustrated the effectiveness of a holistic approach that balances education, physical development, and confidence building.

State Level Examples with Learner Outcomes

Maharashtra

Krushna Pawar, an Arunodaya learner from Mahabaleshwar, Satara district, secured a gold medal at the Maharashtra State Powerlifting Competition in her first participation in the sport. A Class 10 student and NMMS Sarathi Scholarship recipient, Krushna balanced academics with yoga, public speaking, and competitive sports, reflecting holistic development and academic continuity.

In the same state, **Yugandhara Todkar** from Satara district topped her Class 6 school examinations, demonstrating consistent academic progress supported through structured learning routines.

Madhya Pradesh

In Jabalpur, twin brothers **Sanskar** and **Siddhant**, supported through the Arunodaya program, secured second and fourth ranks respectively in their Class 3 school examinations. Their performance highlighted early academic stability and sustained parental and mentor engagement.

📍 Uttar Pradesh

In Auraiya district, programs were held at the Tehsil level at the Block Education Officer's office and at the district level at Nagar Palika Inter College. Children including **Alphej, Chhavi, Mohan, Vishal, Shaurya, Mohit, Pooja, Sanjay Babu, and Anmol** participated in various competitions and won awards.

Chhavi and Alphej secured first place in Touch and Identify, Chhavi won the 100-meter cane race, Shaurya secured first place in Braille reading and writing, Anmol won second place in singing, and Sanjay Babu secured second place in Touch and Identify.

At Kompozit School, Babedi Ghazipur, **Kirti, Gudiya, Abdul Wahid, Monu, Arvind, and Shalu Kumari** participated and received awards. Gudiya Kumar secured third place in singing, Arvind Kumar and Abdul Wahid won second place in the Touch and Identify competition, while Kirti, Monu, and Shalu Kumar received consolation prizes.

Similarly, in Kannauj and Etawah, **Ojas and Divyansh** participated in the programs, and **Nandini** delivered a speech. All participating children received consolation prizes.

📍 West Bengal

Ayush Manna, an Arunodaya learner from West Bengal, secured third position in an adaptive chess competition at a state level inclusive festival. The achievement reflected strong concentration, strategic thinking, and balanced engagement in academics and co curricular activities.

Cultural Participation and Public Engagement

Ek Kadam Aur ensured that inclusion extended beyond academics to expression, confidence building, and public participation. Learners across states took part in national observances, cultural programs, literacy events, and institutional celebrations. These platforms enabled children to present performances, share ideas, and engage with wider audiences.

Participation in public events strengthened self expression, visibility, and social confidence, while also contributing to changing community perceptions around disability and ability.

By the end of 2025, the following outcomes were consistently observed across regions:

- **Children demonstrated increased confidence, independence, and participation**
- **Parents and caregivers showed greater trust in children's abilities and learning pathways**
- **Schools and institutions strengthened inclusive engagement practices**
- **Communities increasingly recognised children with visual impairment as contributors rather than dependents**

These outcomes reflected a shift from participation as exception to participation as norm.

Curriculum and Training Overview

In 2025, Ek Kadam Aur strengthened its curriculum and training systems to support consistent learning for children with blindness across home, school, and community settings. The focus remained on independence, accessibility, and continuity of learning.

A structured parent training curriculum was implemented across states to help families reinforce learning at home. The modules addressed understanding visual impairment, promoting independence, use of assistive technology, activities of daily living, emotional support, and school inclusion. This strengthened home based learning environments during the early phase of the program.

To ensure consistent implementation, digital literacy and inclusive teaching modules were developed for educators. Field educators were trained in screen reader use, accessible digital content, and basic digital skills, while mainstream teachers received guidance on inclusive classroom practices and tactile adaptations. These efforts supported uniform program delivery across diverse settings. Self paced learning modules were introduced for children to encourage independent study. Available for Classes 1 to 6, these modules combined audio guided instruction with accessible content and tactile activities, supporting both academic and functional skill development.

The Ananya Curriculum, aligned with the Expanded Core Curriculum framework, was revised to strengthen non academic learning areas such as orientation and mobility, daily living skills, sensory integration, and early digital literacy. All revisions were informed by field feedback to ensure relevance across contexts.

Training was delivered through a blended online and offline model across eight states. A Master Trainer approach supported cascading knowledge to field educators, with quality checks and regular reviews ensuring consistency.

- **68 educators trained**
- **15 Master Trainers developed**
- **1,249 parent sensitisation sessions conducted**
- **449 online training sessions delivered**
- **12 internal offline training sessions conducted**
- **2 special schools engaged under the special school model**

Quality Assurance and Monitoring

In 2025, Ek Kadam Aur strengthened its quality assurance systems to ensure consistent and high-quality implementation of the Arunodaya program across all states. A structured compliance framework was used to track learning progress, participation, and adherence to approved program standards.

Each state was supported by a dedicated Compliance Manager responsible for monitoring schedules, validating field data, and tracking child progress and family engagement. State level compliance was coordinated nationally to ensure uniform standards and timely oversight.

Weekly virtual review meetings enabled real-time monitoring and issue resolution. Field level challenges related to attendance, access, and learning continuity were addressed promptly through peer coordination or escalation to senior leadership. Action points were tracked until closure using shared monitoring tools.

Attendance and participation were monitored across online classes, field visits, parent sessions, and community activities to ensure regular engagement and reduce dropout risk.

A multi-stage assessment framework supported impact tracking throughout the program. Baseline, midline, and endline assessments measured progress in daily living skills, digital literacy, mobility, and independence. Monthly learning checks and school assimilation monitoring ensured continued support as children transitioned into classrooms.

All activities were implemented in line with approved internal guidelines, donor requirements, and inclusive education standards. Standardised tools, documentation, and review processes were followed across states.

Voices of Impact

📍 **Uttar Pradesh**

Shubham's Journey to a Confident Digital Learner

Shubham Raikwar, a Class 6 student from Jhansi, Uttar Pradesh, is a young boy full of curiosity, talent, and determination. With a deep love for music - singing and playing instruments like the sitar and tabla, Shubham always carried immense potential. What he needed was the right opportunity to unlock it.

That turning point came through Arunodaya, when a special educator introduced Shubham's family to the possibilities of digital learning for children with blindness. Initially hesitant, his parents were unsure how home-based learning could support their son. Their doubts gave way to hope when they learned how digital literacy could empower Shubham to use smartphones, type in Hindi and English, and learn independently.

Once enrolled, Shubham embraced learning with discipline and enthusiasm. His journey included training in daily living skills, assistive technology, screen readers, typing, and confidence-building digital activities. With consistent support from his educator and encouragement from his family, Shubham soon began operating a smartphone independently and practicing typing every day.

A defining milestone came when Shubham represented Arunodaya at the "Right to Write" English Typing Competitionin Noida. Competing alongside peers in a mainstream environment, he demonstrated not only speed and accuracy but also the power of inclusion.

Today, Shubham studies with confidence, communicates independently, and inspires other families who are unsure about digital education for children with blindness.

📍 **Maharashtra**

A Parent's Voice: From Worry to Confidence

Parents of Arjun Nalawade

For our family, Arunodaya has been nothing less than a blessing. It feels like a gift from God - one that has opened new doors of learning and possibility for our child. Earlier, we constantly worried about how our child would learn and grow, but today those fears have been replaced with hope and confidence.

Through Arunodaya, our child is now able to learn with ease and comfort. She uses a mobile phone and computer confidently and continues to make steady progress in her learning journey. Along with academic skills, she is also learning many essential life skills that are helping her become more independent every day.

What truly stands out is the dedication and compassion of the educators. They teach the children with patience, warmth, and encouragement, never scolding or losing heart. Their positive energy creates a joyful learning environment where children participate willingly and learn with enthusiasm.

We are deeply grateful to the entire team for always thinking about our children's growth and future. Because of your guidance, care, and belief in our children, what once seemed difficult has now become possible.

Through Arunodaya, I learned to read books using EasyReader, type using a keyboard, use shortcut keys, and travel safely with a cane. I also learned to use helpful mobile apps, identify objects, and perform calculations on the abacus. These skills have made me more confident and independent.

- **Gaurav Goud, Student, Arunodaya Program**

📍 Andhra Pradesh

Bhanu's Journey From Uncertainty to Confidence

Bhanu Kiran, a 9-year-old from Munagapaka village near Anakapalli, began his journey with limited access to learning and low confidence. Through personalized support under Arunodaya, he gradually developed curiosity, confidence, and joy in learning, achieving small but meaningful milestones in independence.

His parents have witnessed this transformation firsthand, sharing that they now see Bhanu happier, more confident, and increasingly independent. His smile, they say, fills their home with hope and reassurance about his future.

With continued mentorship and encouragement from partners like Indian Oil Corporation Limited (IOCL), Bhanu's learning journey continues to grow stronger, paving the way for a future filled with possibility.

📍 Telangana

Finding Her Voice: Akshitha's Journey

Once quiet and hesitant, **Akshitha** struggled to express herself. Through structured guidance and patience under Arunodaya, she gradually gained confidence. Today, she speaks clearly, communicates comfortably, and has even begun speaking in English.

Alongside communication skills, Akshitha now manages her daily routines independently. Her transformation reflects how inclusive education can help children discover their voice and self-worth.

📍 West Bengal

Anesa Mondal: Steps Toward Independence

Identified through a hospital outreach initiative, **Anesa** began her Arunodaya journey with limited exposure to structured education. Today, she reads and writes Braille, practices digital literacy, and confidently participates in daily activities.

With strong parental involvement and consistent mentoring, Anesa has developed academic skills, independence in personal care, and confidence in communication. Once shy, she is now steadily growing into a self-reliant learner.

📍 Rajasthan

Khushi & Nidhi: Rising with Confidence

Khushi Dhakar, a Class 9 student, once remained withdrawn in school. Through Arunodaya, she learned digital skills, mobility, abacus calculations, and assistive technology. One of her proudest moments was performing on stage for the first time - an experience that transformed her confidence.

Nidhi, once disengaged from school and daily routines, experienced a profound transformation through counseling, daily living skills training, assistive technology, and mobility support. Today, she attends school regularly and recently delivered her first public speech - an inspiring moment for her family and educators.

📍 Chhattisgarh

From Fear to Freedom: Stories of Anushka, Dileshwari & Harshita

Anushka Kaushik, who lost her vision due to illness, once struggled with fear, hesitation, and limited mobility. Social interactions felt overwhelming, and moving independently seemed impossible. Through Arunodaya, Anushka received structured support in daily living skills, digital literacy, and communication. Gradually, her confidence began to grow. Today, she moves freely within her surroundings, communicates with assurance, uses digital tools independently, and continues her education with renewed hope and self-belief.

Dileshwari, a bright Class 9 student from Chhattisgarh, faced significant challenges in reading and writing after losing her vision. With dedicated mentoring under Arunodaya, she was introduced to assistive technology such as TalkBack, EasyReader, and smartphone-based learning tools. Through consistent practice and encouragement, Dileshwari learned to read and write independently and now studies confidently, keeping pace with her school curriculum.

Harshita Gond was once withdrawn, hesitant, and unsure of herself. Enrolled in the Arunodaya Program, she received patient, individualized guidance that focused on building both skills and confidence. Today, Harshita independently operates a smartphone, types fluently in Hindi and English, and engages comfortably with others. Her journey is a powerful reflection of how inclusive education and compassionate mentoring can help children overcome barriers and thrive.

High School Leadership Program (HSLP)

In 2025, the High School Leadership Program (HSLP) evolved into a powerful platform for nurturing confident, empathetic, and future-ready young leaders across India and Nepal. Anchored in the belief that leadership is developed through practice rather than privilege, HSLP created an inclusive learning environment where students learned to think critically, communicate effectively, and lead with purpose.

Throughout the year, the program combined leadership education, communication mastery, STEM exposure, career readiness, and mental well-being - offering students a truly holistic learning experience.

91
WEBINARS IN 2025

50
MENTORS IN 2025

900+
WEBINARS IN TOTAL

700+
TOTAL MENTORS SINCE INCEPTION
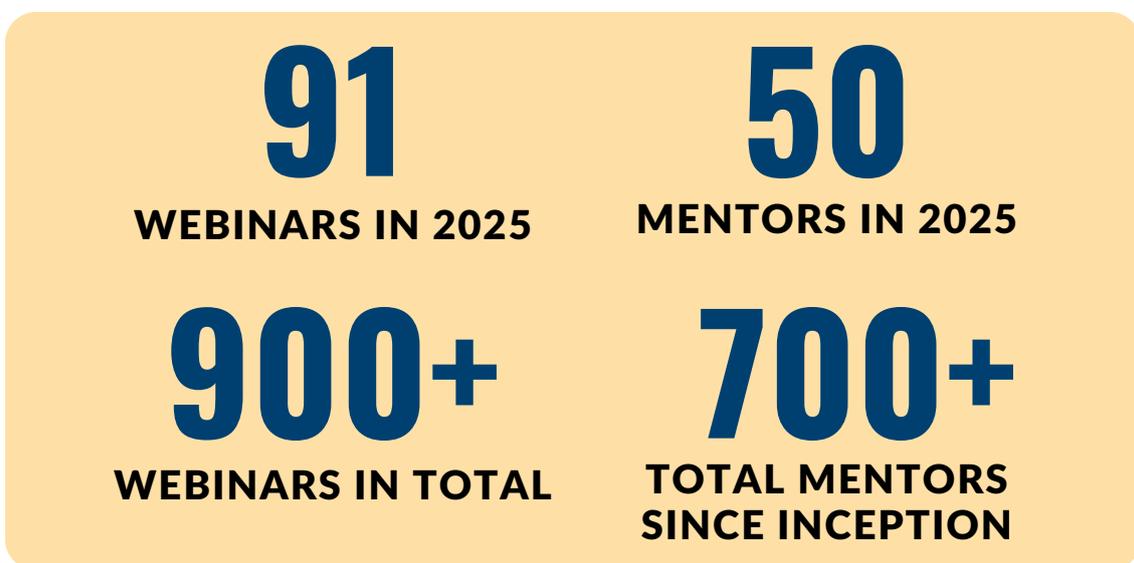
Number of enrolled students from our partner schools:

Lamdon Model Senior Secondary School, Leh, Ladakh:
150 Students

Ramakrishna Mission High School, Vishakapatnam, Andhra Pradesh:
30 Students

Ramakrishna Mission High School, Sitanagaram, Andhra Pradesh:
16 Students

N.K.Singh Memorial English Preparatory School, Kathmandu Nepal:
35 Students

Key Highlights

Leadership & Communication Excellence

Leadership development formed the foundation of HSLP, with sessions focused on building authenticity, emotional intelligence, inclusive leadership, teamwork, persuasion, and conflict resolution.

Communication was the program's core strength. Students participated in public speaking workshops, debates, storytelling sessions, Model United Nations (MUN) training, spoken English mentoring, active listening exercises, and expressive communication modules, strengthening confidence, clarity, and self-expression.

STEM Learning & Future-Ready Technologies

HSLP introduced students to key scientific and technological concepts through engaging, age-appropriate sessions. Topics included brain and learning science, atomic structure, algebra and polynomials, ecosystems, environmental sustainability, computer science evolution, and the scientific method.

Future-focused learning covered artificial intelligence, cybersecurity awareness, fake news literacy, digital citizenship, website development, carbon footprint analysis, and responsible social media engagement, preparing students for a rapidly changing world.

Career Guidance & Practical Skill Building

Students received structured career guidance covering career exploration, college and job applications, interviews, scholarships, entrance examinations, and professional documentation.

Practical skill sessions strengthened time management, emotional intelligence, presentation design, and effective use of tools such as PowerPoint - equipping students with essential real-world competencies.

Mental Health & Well-Being

Recognizing the importance of emotional resilience, HSLP prioritized student well-being through sessions on mental health awareness for teenagers, understanding emotions, stress management, self-love, journaling, art therapy, and healthy relationships with food. These sessions encouraged self-reflection, emotional regulation, and balanced personal growth.

Social Awareness & Community Leadership

HSLP encouraged students to become socially responsible changemakers. Discussions addressed civic awareness, children's rights, financial literacy, ethical decision-making, and conflict resolution. Interactive discussions helped students explore their potential to create positive societal impact.

Special sessions on **International Women's Day** and **Independence Day** connected leadership values with history, equality, and national identity.

Global Exposure & Cultural Learning

Students benefited from interactions with mentors from leading institutions and organizations, including global universities and industry leaders. These sessions broadened perspectives, inspired aspiration, and exposed students to diverse career pathways.

The **Cultural Exchange Program** and **I-Search Final Presentations** provided platforms for collaboration, critical inquiry, and peer learning, fostering confidence and global awareness.

Continuous Engagement & Feedback

Student participation remained high through interactive discussions, feedback cycles, doubt-clearing sessions, and structured reflections. Regular feedback via discussions and digital tools ensured continuous improvement and learner-centered program delivery.

Reflection, Vision & Goal Setting

Monthly orientations and reflective activities encouraged students to explore their aspirations and strengths. Exercises such as Dream Mapping, Superpower Mapping, goal-setting workshops, and future planning sessions helped students build clarity, confidence, and long-term vision.

Impact Summary

2025 positioned HSLP as **a holistic leadership incubator** that combined:

- **Strong communication and self-expression**
- **Authentic and inclusive leadership development**
- **STEM and emerging technology exposure**
- **Mental and emotional well-being awareness**
- **Career and scholarship preparedness**
- **Civic responsibility and community engagement**
- **Global mentorship and cultural learning**

The program empowered students not just to dream of leadership - but **to practice it with confidence, empathy, and purpose.**

Sessions Conducted in 2025

RESOURCE PERSON	AFFILIATION	TOPIC
Aditi Dey	Ambassador of Change, Ek Kadam Aur | Research Intern at Brown University Health	Public Speaking-Communication to make life easier
Salome John	Chief of Staff |Associate Director	Small Habits, BIG Changes
Hailey Surace	Junior, Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) USA	The Brain and How it learns best
Hailey Surace	Junior, Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) USA	The Power of Authenticity
Salome John	Chief of Staff | Associate Director	Activity of the month-February
Salome John	Chief of Staff |Associate Director	Discussion with the students
Dr. Deepthi Telikicherla	Scientific Head of Arunodaya Program | Ek Kadam Aur	Leadership Lessons Drawn from Indian History
Salome John	Chief of Staff |Associate Director	Your Favourite Character!

RESOURCE PERSON	AFFILIATION	TOPIC
Dishari Malakar	Executive Assistant | Ek Kadam Aur	Active Listening - A Skill to Communicate Better
Nikkita Narula	Practicing Counselling Psychologist and Art Therapy Practitioner	Embracing Ourselves- A Journey to Self-Love
Venugopal Mudhaliar	AVP- Risk and Compliance, Firstsource	International Women's Day
Salome John	Chief of Staff |Associate Director	Discussion with the Students
Tharani Devi	Director, Learning & Development Shared Services, Cognizant Technology Solutions Limited	Inclusive Leadership Through Diversity
Vidya Sathyan	Director, Finance, Cognizant Techonology Solutions Limited	Career Planning- Components and Way Forward
Dinothkumar L.	Assistant Manager - Operations, Firstsource	Well-Being: Why do we fall ill?
Salome John & Dishari Malakar	Chief of Staff |Associate Director , Executive Assistant	Role Playing Exercises - How would you make a difference in your society?

RESOURCE PERSON	AFFILIATION	TOPIC
Salome John	Chief of Staff |Associate Director	Feedback Session
Sunil Sanadhya	Senior Manager- Finance, Firstsource Solutions Limited	Emotional Intelligence
Salome John	Chief of Staff |Associate Director	Google Form Fill Up
Harold Furtado	Senior Operations Manager, Firstsource Solutions Limited	Chemistry- Structure of the Atom & the Periodic Table
Senthil Pandian NP	Senior Manager- HR, Cognizant	Crafting Your Narrative: The Power of Authentic Storytelling
Salome John	Chief of Staff |Associate Director	Google Form Fill Up
V C Keerthi	Director- Cybersecurity Leader & Tech Trailblazer, Cognizant	Exploring Computer Science- History, Evolution, and Modern-day Appliances
Neelabhra Bhattachrya	Senior Software Development Engineer, Hyland	Introduction to Artificial Intelligence (AI)
Smitha Murthy	Co-Founder of Myndstories	Mental Health Awareness for Teenagers

RESOURCE PERSON	AFFILIATION	TOPIC
Aadrit Banerjee	Postgraduate Student at St. Stephen's College, DU	Leading Together: Creative Models of Community Leadership
Tharani Devi	Director, Learning & Development Shared Services, Cognizant Technology Solutions Limited	Danger of Fake News and How to Avoid It
Dishari Malakar	Executive Assistant | Ek Kadam Aur Foundation	Online Debate on "Is Social Media Doing More Harm than Good?"
Nikitha Muthuyala	Senior Process Executive, Firstsource Solutions Lmt.	Time Management
Nazeer Basha	Senior Manager- Corporate Security | Strategy and Enablement	What does an Interview consist of and How to succeed
Tharani Devi	Director, Learning & Development Shared Services, Cognizant Technology Solutions Limited	Inclusive Leadership Through Diversity
Vidya Sathyan	Director, Finance, Cognizant Techonology Solutions Limited	Career Planning- Components and Way Forward

RESOURCE PERSON	AFFILIATION	TOPIC
Salome John	Chief of Staff and Associate Director | Ek Kadam Aur Foundation	Dealing with Difficult Emotions Now and Always
Jayakumar Sridharan	Deputy General Manager - IOA Delivery | Cognizant	How to Create a Cover Letter for Applications to Colleges and Jobs
Vineeth Kumar	Associate Director - Human Resources | Firstsource	How to build your LinkedIn Profile
Dishari Malakar	Executive Assistant- Ek Kadam Aur	Introduction to Model United Nations (MUN)
Kunga Gyalmo	Alumnus, Lamdon Model Senior Secondary High School	The Economics of Being You
Dishari Malakar	Executive Assistant- Ek Kadam Aur	MUN- Presentation
Siddhanta Bora	Author	Art, Mental Health, and Entrepreneurship
Dishari Malakar	Executive Assistant- Ek Kadam Aur	Conflict Management for Students
Salome John	Chief of Staff and Associate Director | Ek Kadam Aur Foundation	Feedback Session

RESOURCE PERSON	AFFILIATION	TOPIC
Salome John	Chief of Staff and Associate Director | Ek Kadam Aur Foundation	Activity of the Month: What is your Superpower?
Amritesh Mukherjee	Writer and Journalist	Creativity for Future Leaders
Krittika Chandok	Mental Health Advocate | Public Speaker	"Feel it, Don't Fear it"- Understanding the Science of Emotions
Semonti Dey	PhD Scholar | Penn State University, Education Policy Studies	Speaking your Mind- Communicate Freely in English
Sara Batool	Poet and Writer	Poetry Workshop - Day 1
Sara Batool	Poet and Writer	Poetry Workshop - Day 2
Srutayus Das	Business Student and Leadership Enthusiast	Unlock Level 11
Samridhi Raj	Academic Scholar | University of Delhi	Personality Development
Hisham Premshaj	Academic Scholar | University of Delhi	Your Network, Your Superpower
Vama Gaur	Deputy Commander (Retd.) Indian Coast Guard	Future Business Leaders: It Starts From Now

RESOURCE PERSON	AFFILIATION	TOPIC
Salome John	Chief of Staff | Ek Kadam Aur	Activity of the Month- Goal Setting For Teenagers
Anagha Gopal	PhD Scholar | JNU	Expressing Yourself Through Stories
Dishari Malakar	Acting Head of HSLP | Ek Kadam Aur	Art of Persuasion
Salome John	Chief of Staff | Ek Kadam Aur	Discussion on Independence Day Celebration
Shaktiman Vats	Research Scholar and Public Speaker	Untold Legacy of Forgotten Bhartiya Queens
		INDEPENDENCE DAY CELEBRATION
Anusuiya Bhorkar	Rising Senior | Dominican Academy, NYC	Community Healthcare and Stroke Awareness
Dishari Malakar	Acting Head of HSLP | Ek Kadam Aur	Journaling
Dishari Malakar	Acting Head of HSLP | Ek Kadam Aur	Feedback Session
Jayakumar Sridharan	Deputy General Manager-IOA Delivery Cognzant	Introduction to Website Development

RESOURCE PERSON	AFFILIATION	TOPIC
Neha Arora	Linguistics Scholar	JNU	Simple English, Strong Voice
Pranav B. Savla	Researcher at Udot	Student at Plaksha University	How to be the Crazy One
Deepali Mehta	Certified Nutrionist and Food Relationship Coach	Psychology of Eating-Heal your Relationship with Food
Arti Mahato	Postgraduate Scholar-International Conflict Studies and Legislative Researcher	Introduction to Public Policy
Anusuiya Bhorkar	Rising Senior at Dominican Academy, New York City	Heart Smart: How to Have Heart Healthy Future?
Surabhi Agarwal	Product Manager, Author, and TEDx Speaker	Becoming the Best Version of Yourself
Parvathi Devi	Senior Manager- Learning & Development, Cognizant	Algebra: Polynomials
Dhrishiyaa Duggal	AI Psychology Evangelist and Cyberpsychology Evangelist	AI Psychology: AI, Mind, and Behaviour
Dishari Malakar	Acting Head- HSLP - Ek Kadam Aur	I-search Orientation

RESOURCE PERSON	AFFILIATION	TOPIC
Deepthi T.	Director, Research and Global Strategy, Ek Kadam Aur	Be Brave, Be curious
Visveswar Surendar	Associate Consultant- CGI	Effective Teamwork
Jayanth Bhaskaran	Manager- Information Technology- Cognizant	How to Make a Powerpoint Presentation
Viseswar Surendar	Associate Consultant- CGI	STEM- Ecosystems
Deepthi T	Director, Research and Global Strategy, Ek Kadam Aur	Doubt Clearing Session-I- Search Project
Dishari Malakar	Acting Head- HSLP - Ek Kadam Aur	In-Person session with Students at Sitanagaram with Dr. Satish Tripathi
Dishari Malakar	Acting Head- HSLP- Ek Kadam Aur	Activity of the Month
Dishari Malakar	Acting Head- HSLP- Ek Kadam Aur	The Role of Emotions in Interpersonal Relationships
Dishari Malakar	Acting Head- HSLP- Ek Kadam Aur	Civic Awareness and Children's Rights
Dishari Malakar	Acting Head- HSLP- Ek Kadam Aur	Financial Literacy for Students

RESOURCE PERSON	AFFILIATION	TOPIC
Raghuram K.	Manager. Front-End Architect- Digital Engineering BFS- Cognizant	The Scientific Method
Dishari Malakar	Acting Head- HSLP- Ek Kadam Aur	Dream Mapping
Dishari Malakar	Acting Head- HSLP- Ek Kadam Aur	Cultural Exchange Program- Prize Declaration for I-search Project
Tsering Gaphel	Founder-MissionLadhakUplift, Board of Directors Member - Ladakh Science Foundation, Senior Mentor for PMSSS Scholarship, Chair- Lamstan	Awareness Program on Various International & National Entrance Exams and Scholarship Schemes
Dr. Udayakumar T.	Functional Architech-Cognizant	Carbon Footprint: Meaning, Causes and Ways to Reduce It
Bianca Ghose	Marketing Communication Leader	Non-Profit Board Director	Communication Workshop
Dishari Malakar	Acting Head- HSLP- Ek Kadam Aur	Feedback Session

RESOURCE PERSON	AFFILIATION	TOPIC
Upasana Devi	Spoken English and Personality Development Mentor | School Educator	Master your English Communication with Confidence
Meghna Thakkar	Market Intelligence Manager (Danaher Corporation)	Career Connect
Dishari Malakar	Acting Head- High School Leadership Program	Activity of the Month- Resolutions 2026

Voices of Impact

Padma Chosdon represented **Lamdon Model Senior Secondary School, Leh**, at the **national-level Wipro Earthian Sustainability and Water competition**, where she engaged in an eight-month learning journey focused on environmental responsibility and leadership.

Through hands-on project work, Padma and her team explored real-life water challenges in their community, studied water footprints, and developed a practical and sustainable solution for water conservation.

The experience strengthened Padma's confidence, teamwork, and problem-solving skills, while deepening her understanding of sustainability.

Padma's journey reflects the spirit of the High School Leadership Program - learning beyond textbooks, leading with purpose, and using knowledge to create positive change.

Aarush Tuladhar, a student of **N.K. Singh Memorial EPS School, Kathmandu**, proudly represented Nepal at the **11th National Scrabble Championship**, where he competed alongside 90 of the country's most accomplished players in a demanding, multi-round tournament.

The championship tested far more than language skills, it required strategic thinking, time management, mental composure, and the ability to make sound decisions under pressure.

Aarush delivered a commendable performance, **winning 9 out of 16 matches** and finishing **33rd nationally.** A defining highlight of his journey was defeating Nepal's No.10-ranked Scrabble player twice, demonstrating not only strong preparation but also confidence and calmness in high-stakes situations. At one stage, Aarush climbed as high as 16th place, reflecting his potential to compete at the highest level.

Beyond rankings, the tournament proved to be a powerful learning experience. Aarush gained a deeper appreciation for consistency, resilience, and continuous improvement - recognizing that even small gains can lead to significant progress. His journey reflects a growing leadership mindset: embracing both success and setbacks as opportunities to learn, grow, and strive for excellence.

The High School Leadership Program helped me grow as a leader by giving me the opportunity to serve as a team captain. This role allowed me to build confidence, take responsibility, and make decisions while guiding others. I learned how to communicate clearly, work collaboratively, and lead my team with respect. The program encouraged me to express my opinions openly, which has made me more confident. These skills are essential not only for student life, but also for my future.

Jigmat lamo
Class 9, HSLP Graduate, Lamdon Model Senior Secondary School

Nurturing Young Leadership Program (NYLP)

Throughout 2025, Ek Kadam Aur provided several internship opportunities to students from the United States and India, enabling them to contribute meaningfully to our programs while gaining valuable, hands-on experience in global education and development. These internships supported EKA's core initiatives while fostering cross-cultural learning and leadership development.

Ambassadors of Change

In January 2025, **Aditi Dey** served as an **Ambassador of Change** representing the United States. As part of her contribution to the High School Leadership Program, she led a Public Speaking session aimed at building confidence and promoting leadership skills among students.

MIT IAP Internship Program

In the first quarter of 2025, Ek Kadam Aur Foundation welcomed two talented interns through the MIT IAP Internship Program: **Hailey Surace** and **Canon Robins**.
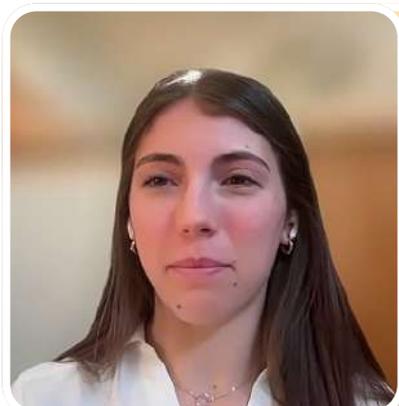
Hailey Surace joined as a **Program Analysis and Strategic Development Intern**, focusing on the flagship High School Leadership Program (HSLP). She contributed to strengthening program strategy, content delivery, and impact measurement to enhance student outcomes.

Canon Robins worked as a **Research Intern**, conducting a feasibility study on the global scaling of the Arunodaya Program. His research identified key contextual factors, existing models, and the present status of similar initiatives in other countries, helping inform EKA's roadmap for adapting the program across geographies.

Research and Program Development Intern – Columbia University (SIPA)

Yini Li, from Columbia University's **School of International and Public Affairs (SIPA)**, joined Ek Kadam Aur as a **Research and Program Development Intern**. Her work focused on donor and stakeholder management, supporting research, communications, and strategic outreach to strengthen engagement and foster long-term partnerships. She presented her final report and recommendations to the Foundation's Senior Leadership Team, offering valuable insights to strengthen future strategic directions.

St. Xavier's University

Kousiki Chowdhury, a student from St. Xavier's University, joined Ek Kadam Aur Foundation as a **Data Optimization Intern**. She worked with existing program data to streamline documentation systems, enhance data accuracy, and improve analysis and internal reporting across various ongoing initiatives.

NYU Capstone Internship Program

During the first quarter of 2025, NYU Capstone interns **Joshua Chun, Nikola Stokuca, and Jacky Rodriguez** visited India for more than a week as part of their engagement with Ek Kadam Aur Foundation. Their field visit offered a deep and meaningful immersion into the lives of visually impaired children supported by EKA.

The team visited children in their homes across various communities, observed their progress, and interacted with families and special educators. They also traveled to remote areas to understand on-ground realities and the role of inclusive education in transforming lives. The interns engaged with children and educators at partner blind schools, meeting students from the Arunodaya Program.

Later in the year, four interns, **Joshua Chun, Nikola Stokuca, Jacky Rodriguez, and Karya Antmen**, successfully completed their internship with the Foundation. As part of their engagement, they conducted an impact assessment of the Arunodaya Program, culminating in a detailed final report and presentation.

Their findings were showcased at the NYU Wagner Capstone Expo 2025 held on May 7, where EKA Founder and President, Satish Tripathi, and Scientific Head, Deepthi T., were present to support and engage with the interns' work. Their presence highlighted the collaborative spirit and international relevance of the Arunodaya Program.

Interns Associated with EKA (2015–2025)

Massachusetts Institute of Technology

Andrew Emmel
2021

Brooke L Pulling
2024

Emmi L Mills
2022

Eric Liu
2022

Evan Andrews
2022
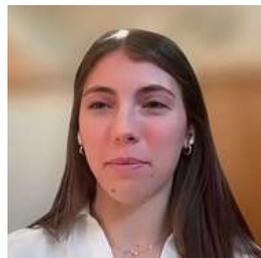
Hailey Surace
2025
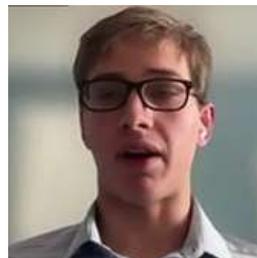
Canon Robins
2025

Gabriela Corea
2020

George Friedlander
2021

Indrayud Biswas Mandal
2020

Kanna O Pichappan
2024

Kartikesh Mishra
2021

Keaten K Clarno
2022

Lucky J Deignan
2023

Luke S Schenk
2023

Mercedes Melissa Riley
2020

Massachusetts Institute of Technology

Ngima Hyolmo
2021

Nikhil Kakarla
2022

Omkar Ghenand, BS
2021

Pragati Muthukumar
2021

Promia Chaudhury, BS
2021

Raymond Pan
2021

Robert Koirala
2020

Sabrina Queipo, BS
2021

Samir M Amin
2022

Sheng Huang
2021

Thomas L Stueber
2023

New York University

Ahram Hwang
2022-23

Ana Gutierrez
2021-22

Angelica Gualpa
2025-26

Devynn Barnes
2022-23

Fatema Husain
2022-23

Glenda Kee
2018

Joslyn Ryoko Hirose
2018

Kayla Savage
2021-22

New York University

Mariel Palomino
2018

Simran Bijalkumar Parikh
2021-22

Tatiana Walker
2021-22

Victoria Donohue
2022

Faisal Alhedaib
2023-24

Yue Feng
2023-24

Jackeline Rodriguez
2024-25

Josh Chun
2024-25

Karya Antmen
2024-25

Nikola Stokuca
2024-25

Rishi Inder Soneja
2023-24

Sydney Bertinetti
2025-26

Tara Moslehi
2025-26

Vicky Zhang
2025-26

Yeji Lee
2023-24

Maggie Soko
2025-26
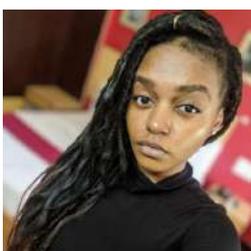
Laurienne Abraham
2025-26

Harvard University

Anne Dietterich
2020

Ayelia Ali
2022

Hiba Hasan
2019

Carefoote Virginia
2022-23

Catalfamo Emma
2022-23

Arpita Srivastava
2022

Snigdha Shahi
2020

Seema Kumari
2022 - 2024

Deekong Amp

Other Universities in the United States

Aditi Dey
2020-2025
Brown University
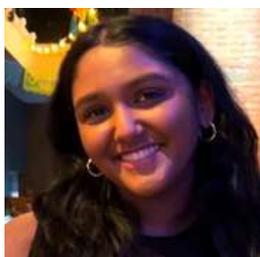
Shivani Muthukumar
2021-2023
Columbia University

Yini Li
2025
Columbia University

Nitya Garg
2020
Indiana University

Universities in India

Kousiki Chowdhury
2025
St. Xavier's University

Srutayus Das
2025
TAPMI

Anusha Acharya
2021
Tribhuvan University

Akshita Chung
2021
Delhi University

Inderpreet Kaur
2021
Delhi University

Padma Angmo
2021
Delhi University

Shruti Pansari
2021
Delhi University

Vasudha Raina
2021
Delhi University

Ambassadors of Change

Muhammad Rayyan
2024

Esha Bennet
2020-2026

Eva Bennet
2020-2026

Kunga Gyalmo
2024

Swaraj Karna
2023

Utkarsh Tiwari
2023

Anusuiya Bhorkar
2020-2025

Pranav Savla
2024

Active Learning Program

Program Origin

At Ek Kadam Aur Foundation, education is viewed as an active and engaging process rather than a one-way transfer of information. While access to schooling has improved across underserved communities, many classrooms continue to limit curiosity, critical thinking, and student participation. Through its early work in activity-based learning under the High School Leadership and Train-the-Trainers programs, Ek Kadam Aur observed that students learned more deeply when classrooms encouraged discussion, inquiry, hands-on activities, and real-world problem-solving.

These insights led to the formalization of the Active Learning Program in 2019. Middle school classrooms were identified as the initial focus, as this stage plays a decisive role in sustaining student engagement and shaping long-term learning outcomes. The program was designed to place learners at the center of the classroom, with teachers acting as facilitators and mentors who guide exploration rather than deliver information.

Early Implementation and Adaptation (2019–2020)

In its initial phase, the program piloted subject-specific modules in Biology and Mathematics. Teachers worked closely with the Ek Kadam Aur team to redesign lesson plans that prioritized exploration over memorization. Students were encouraged to ask questions, collaborate with peers, and demonstrate learning in diverse ways.

The COVID-19 pandemic posed significant challenges, yet it also underscored the flexibility of active learning approaches. Strategies were adapted for small-group instruction, home-based learning, and blended formats, demonstrating that effective active learning depends on pedagogy and mindset rather than physical infrastructure alone.

Strengthening Teacher Capacity (2020−2021)

Recognizing teachers as central to sustainable change, the program focused on intensive capacity building. Structured training equipped fourteen teachers with active learning methodologies, collectively impacting nearly 300 students. Teachers reported higher levels of student engagement, improved classroom relationships, and increased confidence in addressing diverse learning needs.

Policy Alignment and Academic Partnerships (2022)

The Active Learning Program aligned closely with India's National Education Policy 2020, particularly its emphasis on experiential and competency-based learning. In 2022, academic collaborations with Ramakrishna Mission College of Education, Coimbatore, and Avenues World School, São Paulo, strengthened academic rigor and enabled the exchange of global best practices.
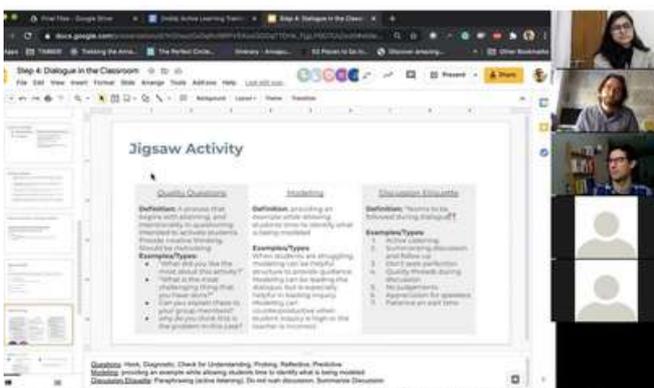
Program Integration and Impact (2023−2024)

By 2023, Active Learning had evolved into a core pedagogical approach across Ek Kadam Aur's programs, including leadership development, teacher training, and inclusive education initiatives. In 2024, over 300 students directly benefited from active learning classrooms, while teachers continued to independently apply and refine these practices, demonstrating sustainability beyond the pilot phase.
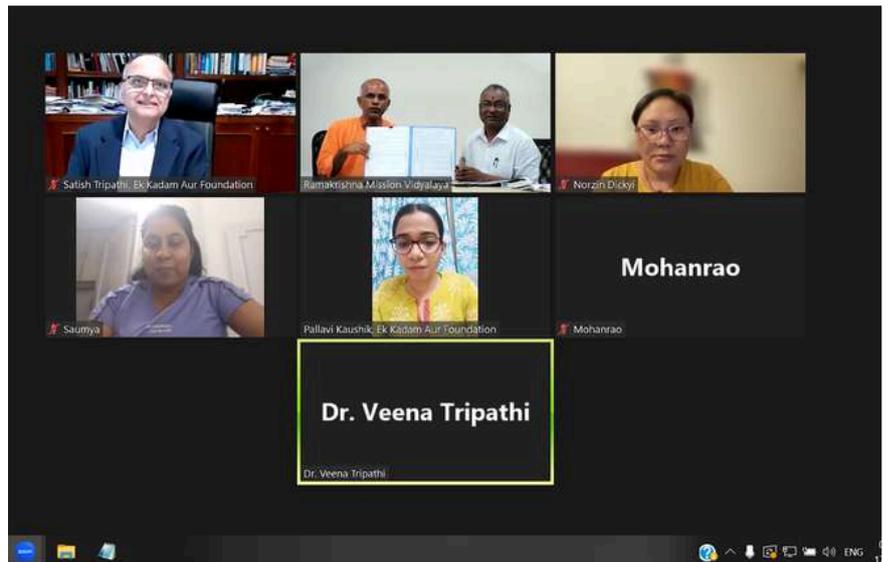
Looking Ahead

As the program moves forward, the focus will be on deepening teacher mentorship, strengthening documentation of learning outcomes, and expanding to new geographies and grade levels. The Active Learning Program continues to reinforce the belief that meaningful learning flourishes when curiosity is encouraged, voices are respected, and classrooms function as communities of learners.

Second World Conference on Blindness

On February 8–9, 2025, Ek Kadam Aur hosted the Second World Conference on Blindness at Wipro's Bengaluru campus. Anchored in the theme "**Reaching Unreached Children and Adults Through Educational Empowerment**," the conference brought together educators, parents, researchers, and advocates to engage in thoughtful dialogue on inclusive education, digital literacy, advocacy, and blindness prevention, with a strong focus on practical and accessible approaches.

The Arunodaya (Sunrise) for Children with Blindness Program was presented as a community-based model that places families at the centre of a child's learning journey. The discussions fostered shared understanding, encouraged cross-sector collaboration, and opened pathways for future academic partnerships and long-term impact research.

India Giving Day Concert

As part of India Giving Day 2025, Ek Kadam Aur Foundation organised a musical concert on March 8, 2025, at the Gaithersburg High School Auditorium in Maryland, USA. Led by **Sur Dhanuk Desi Bollywood**, the event featured live performances by the **Malhaar Band** and several accomplished vocalists.

The concert aimed to raise funds to support education for children with blindness in India through the Arunodaya Program. Over 400 attendees came together in solidarity to support inclusive education. Demonstrating strong leadership commitment, the Ek Kadam Aur Board of Directors matched all donations dollar-for-dollar, effectively doubling the impact of every contribution.

All funds raised support the expansion of educational access for children with visual blindness, enabling more children to attend school and pursue their aspirations. The event marked a significant milestone in the Foundation's global outreach and fundraising efforts, highlighting the power of community and music in driving social change.

Harvard ALI Social Impact Hackathon

In May 2025, Ek Kadam Aur participated in the Harvard Advanced Leadership Initiative Social Impact Hackathon at Harvard University, represented by Dr. Satish Tripathi and Dr. Deepthi Telikicherla.

Over two days of focused collaboration with global peers and mentors, the Foundation reflected on strengthening sustainability and scaling its impact. The Hackathon reaffirmed the relevance and effectiveness of the Arunodaya model and underscored the importance of clearer storytelling around unmet needs. Practical insights such as maintaining a real-time waitlist of children ready for enrolment helped sharpen how Ek Kadam Aur communicates impact to donors and partners.

American Foundation for the Blind Leadership Conference

In November 2025, Ek Kadam Aur Foundation participated in the American Foundation for the Blind Leadership Conference in Arlington, USA. The Foundation showcased its on-ground experience through the Arunodaya Program and subsequently contributed to a global panel discussion featuring Dr. Satish Tripathi and Dr. Deepthi Telikicherla.

The session examined how children with blindness learn in low-resource settings, where access to Braille materials and trained teachers is often limited. Ek Kadam Aur presented a balanced perspective - positioning digital access as a critical first step to ensure no child is excluded from education, while reaffirming Braille as essential for deeper and sustained learning.

The conference provided an important international platform to amplify Ek Kadam Aur's work and reinforced its commitment to ensuring that a child's access to education is not determined by geography.

EKA in the Media (India)

प्रभात

दिव्यांग विद्यार्थ्यांना झेडपीत ब्रेल किटचे वाटप

याशनी नागराजन यांचा विद्यार्थी, पालकांशी संवाद

सातारा, दि. २१ (प्रतिनिधी)- जिल्हा परिषदेच्या समग्र शिक्षा समावेशित शिक्षण उपक्रमांतर्गत दिव्यांग विद्यार्थ्यांना सीएसआरच्या माध्यमातून ब्रेल किटचे वाटप मुख्य कार्यकारी अधिकारी याशनी नागराजन यांच्या हस्ते करण्यात आले.

अंध विद्या थ्यांच्या शिक्षणात आधुनिक साहित्य, साधने, उपकरणामुळे शैक्षणिक प्रगती होते. विविध शैक्षणिक संकल्पना तंत्रज्ञानाच्या माध्यमातून समजून घेणे त्यांना सहज सोपे होते. अशा प्रकारच्या अनेक शैक्षणिक साधनाच्या संचाचे वाटप जिल्हा परिषदे अंतर्गत सामान्य शाळेत शिक्षण घेत असलेल्या विद्यार्थ्यांना साहित्यांचे वितरण करण्यात आले. या कार्यक्रमास अरुणोदय

सातारा - ब्रेल कीट वाटपप्रसंगी याशनी नागराजन, शबनम मुजावर, रवींद्र खंदारे, सम्मती देशमाने, हेमंत खाडे, माधवी आव्हाड व इतर.

असे नाव देण्यात आले. याशनी नागराजन यांच्या अध्यक्षतेखाली स्थायी समिती सभागृहात ब्रेल कीटचे वाटप करण्यात आले. या कीटमध्ये न्हाईंड मोबाइल, की पॅड, मोबाइल स्टँड, ब्रालिली बुक बॉक्स आदी शैक्षणिक साहित्याचा समावेश आहे.

साहित्य वितरणानंतर अरुणोदय

कार्यक्रमांतर्गत घेण्यात येणाऱ्या उपक्रमांची माहिती देण्यात आली. अंध मुलांसाठी या संस्थेचे स्पेशल एज्युकेटर घरी जाऊन मार्गदर्शन करत असल्याचे सांगण्यात आले. पालक यांच्याशी संवाद साधत शैक्षणिक आल्याने त्यांनी जाणून घेतली. प्राथमिक शिक्षणाधिकारी पेंठली.

शबनम मुजावर यांनी साहित्य साधनाचा उपयोग आणि त्याच्या वापराचे शिक्षणातील महत्त्व सांगितले. आधुनिक साहित्य साधनासाठी संस्थेच्या सहकार्याबरल उपशिक्षणाधिकारी रवींद्र खंदारे यांनी माहिती दिली. 'एक कदम और' या संस्थेचे प्रतिनिधी रोहित शर्मा आणि दीपेश ठक्कर यांनी साहित्य वापरासंबंधी मार्गदर्शन केले. जिल्ह्यातील ३४ अंध विद्यार्थीना सहा लाख १२ हजार इतक्या रकमेचा सीएसआर निधी विनियोग करुन ब्रेल कीट साहित्य पुरविण्यात आले. यावेळी विस्तार अधिकारी सम्मती देशमाने, अधीक्षक हेमंत खाडे, माधवी आव्हाड, ज्ञानदेव शेलार आदी उपस्थित होते.

निर्मल कॉलेज हिंडौन में विश्व दिव्यांग दिवस पर प्रतिभा का प्रदर्शन और प्रेरणा का संचार

■ निर्भीक राजस्थान

हिंडौन, ३ दिसंबर। विश्व दिव्यांग दिवस के अवसर पर निर्मल कॉलेज, हिंडौन में एक प्रेरणादायक कार्यक्रम का आयोजन किया गया। इसका मुख्य उद्देश्य दिव्यांग बच्चों की क्षमताओं का सम्मान करना और उनका मनोबल बढ़ाना था। सांस्कृतिक कार्यक्रम और अनुभव बच्चों ने नृत्य और भाषण जैसी पाठ्येतर गतिविधियों के माध्यम से अपनी अद्वितीय प्रतिभा का प्रदर्शन किया। यह कार्यक्रम तब और भी भावुक हो गया जब माता-पिता ने मंच पर आकर बच्चों के पालन-पोषण और उनके साथ अपने अनुभवों को साझा किया।

प्रोत्साहन और गणमान्य उपस्थिति

निर्मल कॉलेज के देवी

सहाय शर्मा ने बच्चों के आत्मविश्वास की सराहना की और उन्हें निरंतर प्रोत्साहित किया।

इस कार्यक्रम में एक कदम और फाउंडेशन के मैनेजर अजय कुमार और कई विशेषज्ञ उपस्थित रहे, जिन्होंने बच्चों का उत्साहवर्धन किया। स्पेशल एज्युकेटर- अमित फौजदार और

पुष्पेंद्र गुर्जर (भरतपुर) फील्ड कोऑर्डिनेटर- श्रीमती सपना, विक्रम, अभिषेक (करौली), और भटेंद, ग्रन्थ, राहुल (धौलपुर)। सभी अतिथियों ने दिव्यांग बच्चों को समाज की मुख्यधारा से जोड़ने के प्रयासों की सराहना की। यह आयोजन अदम्य भावना और क्षमता का शानदार प्रदर्शन रहा।

पার্পল ফেয়ারে প্রতিভা প্রদর্শন বিশেষ চাহিদাসম্পন্নদের

নিজস্ব সংবাদদাতা

Visually impaired kids gain digital skills

DEBRAJ MITRA

Calcutta: A group of children with varying degrees of visual impairment has taken the first step towards digital literacy.

On Monday afternoon, at a multidisciplinary interactive art centre off EM Bypass, the students fiddled with cell phones and keyboards with remarkable ease, considering their visual impairment. They typed the English alphabet, numbers and even their names on the screen.

The programme at the Kolkata Centre for Creativity on World Literacy Day, was the culmination of a two-month basic digital literacy training provided by an NGO.

Ten-year-old Rehan Molla sat with his phone in hand, his delicate fingers deftly handling the device. A soft voice from the device guided him with every touch, telling him which alphabet he had pressed.

Rehan came from Canning in South 24-Parganas, the gateway to the Sundarbans. In the past month and a half, Rehan has learnt the entire English alphabet, not by looking at a book, but by listening to his phone.

Rehan's mother, Neezan Molla, 36, watched with pride.

"I could not study because of money and facilities. My husband runs a rag-picking shop, and we barely earn ₹10,900 a month. But I want my children to study so that they are no less than others," she said.

The tool that is opening up these opportunities is called Screen Reading Software in Android phones and VoiceOver on iPhone — an accessibility service that reads aloud text, describes on-screen actions, and helps visually impaired users navigate apps, type messages, and even browse the Internet. With headphones or external keyboards, children can also hear what they type, strengthening their reading and writing skills.

On Monday, 25 visually impaired children, aged between five and 16, from different districts came together to show-

case their abilities. For several of them, this was the first time their parents had seen their children confidently engage with literacy.

Six-year-old twins Baisali and Baidurjya Das were among the participants, busily typing the alphabet on their phone screens. Their mother, Subhra Das, said: "They have started learning Braille in school, but I feel that if they want to progress, they must also be technologically independent. They are just at the basics now, but they are learning fast."

Instructors regularly visit homes to guide children on how to use screen-reading software and other digital learning methods, ensuring that literacy is accessible in more ways than one, said the founder of the NGO that

trained the children.

"The traditional method of learning is through Braille, but after a certain level, we have seen that we cannot carry it any further. Braille books are also not available in every subject. The world is moving forward digitally. Then why should the visually impaired children stay behind?" said Biswajit Ghosh, director and founder of Ek Kadam Aur Foundation.

He said digital literacy will help them be independent. "When these children grow up and sit for competitive exams, they can take the test without the help of a scribe," said Ghosh, former principal of Ramakrishna Mission Blind Boys' Academy in Narendrapur.

Additional reporting by Samarpita Banerjee

Little fingers busy identifying alphabets and typing them through keyboards during the programme on Monday. Pictures by Samt Kr Sinha

CSC e-Governance Services India Limited

We are Hiring !!

Applications are invited for Instructor/Trainer and clerical posts on contractual basis for Government ITI Santuri, Jamuria and Old Malda Campuses, Approved by NCVET. Campus and Trade wise vacancy is listed as:

Location	Electrician	Fitter	1-Mech	Welder	Drawing	Exp. Skill	Clerk
Santuri	Theory-1	Practical-1	Practical-1	Practical-1	Theory-1	Theory-1	1
Jamuria	Practical-1	Theory-1	Practical-1	Theory-1, Practical-1	Theory-1	Theory-1	1
Old Malda	Practical-1	Practical-1	Practical-1	Theory-1	Theory-1	Theory-1	1

Qualification and Exp. as per DGT/NCVET norms. (https://ncvet.gov.in/), (dgt.gov.in)

Interview Details

Tuesday, 10:00 AM, 9-Dec-25 at Govt. ITI Santuri, Purulia
Wednesday, 10:00 AM, 10-Dec-25 at Govt. ITI Jamuria, West Bardhaman
Friday, 10:00 AM, 12-Dec-25 at Govt. ITI Old Malda, Malda

Walk in interviews are scheduled!

Interested candidates should reach on the given time and venue with their updated resume, Original Educational and Experience Document with 2 set of photocopies.

लुई ब्रेल दिवस एक कदम और फाउंडेशन का 8वां फाउंडेशन दिवस मनाया गया

करौली | शहर के नेहरू युवा केंद्र पर लुई ब्रेल दिवस एक कदम और फाउंडेशन का 8वां फाउंडेशन दिवस मनाया गया। इससे पूर्व लुई ब्रेल के चित्रपट पर पुष्प माला अर्पण करने के साथ दीप प्रज्ज्वलित किया गया।

कार्यक्रम के दौरान विशेष शिक्षक धौलपुर के हरिशंकर ने कार्यक्रम को संबोधित करते हुए बताया गया कि हर साल 4 जनवरी को विश्व ब्रेल दिवस मनाया जाता है। इस दिवस पर लुइस ब्रेल का जन्म हुआ था। लुइस ब्रेल ने ही ब्रेल लिपि को जन्म दिया था। इस लिपि के माध्यम से नेत्रहीन व्यक्ति, दृष्टिहीन या आंशिक रूप से नेत्रहीन व्यक्ति पढ़ सकते है। कार्यक्रम के मुख्य अतिथि बाल कल्याण समिति के अध्यक्ष अनिल शर्मा ने बताया कि इन नेत्रहीन बच्चों से मिलकर अच्छा और इन बच्चों से संबंधी कोई भी कार्य हो तो हम हमेशा व एक कदम और फाउंडेशन की मदद के लिए तैयार है।

बाल कल्याण समिति के सदस्य फजले अहमद ने एक कदम और फाउंडेशन की ओर से किए जा रहे कार्य की सराहना की। इस दौरान एक कदम और के एसोसिएट मैनेजर राजस्थान के अजय कुमार ने बच्चों से ब्रेल लिखने व पढ़ने की प्रतियोगिता करवाई गई और बच्चों को पुरस्कार देकर सम्मानित कर सभी बच्चों को ब्रेल की पढ़ाई करने के लिए मोबाइल दिए गए। इस अवसर पर पुष्पेंद्र, विजेंद्र बैरवा, मुनीश अली, रामेश्वर, सपना व नेहरू युवा केंद्र के स्वयं सेवक नेहरू लाल उपस्थित थे।

दिव्यांग बच्चों की प्रतिभा ने बांधा समां

हिंडौन सिटी | विश्व दिव्यांग दिवस पर शहर में एक प्रेरणादायक कार्यक्रम आयोजित हुआ, जिसका उद्देश्य दिव्यांग बच्चों की क्षमताओं को सम्मान देना और उनका मनोबल बढ़ाना था। बच्चों ने नृत्य, भाषण और अन्य गतिविधियों के माध्यम से अपनी प्रतिभा का अद्भुत प्रदर्शन किया। कार्यक्रम का भावुक क्षण तब आया जब माता-पिता ने मंच पर अपने अनुभव साझा किए। विशेषज्ञों और समाजसेवियों ने बच्चों का उत्साह बढ़ाया और उन्हें मुख्यधारा से जोड़ने के प्रयासों की सराहना की। आयोजन ने बच्चों की अदम्य भावना और क्षमता को उजागर किया।

EKA in the Media (USA)

Indian American Philanthropists Lead Global Movement for Blind Children's Empowerment

HiIndia Newsdesk

CHICAGO, IL – Indian Americans are bridging continents and transforming lives in rural India through the Ek Kadam Aur Foundation (EKA), a nonprofit organization registered in both the United States and India. EKA's flagship initiative, "Arunodaya," meaning Sunrise in Sanskrit, seeks to empower more than 288,000 blind children in India, ensuring that visual impairment does not define their future. Founded by Dr. Satish Tripathi, based in the Chicago area, EKA combines personal engagement with innovative technology to create lasting impact. The Arunodaya program provides individualized, home-based learning for children aged five to seventeen, often reaching remote villages with little or no access to specialized education. Mentors—many of whom are visually impaired themselves—visit children six days a week, using smartphones, keyboards, and screen readers to teach skills such as object recognition, basic English, mathematics, and independent mobility. As children progress, they are prepared to transition into local mainstream schools.

Pradeep K. Agrawal, Professor Emeritus at the Georgia Institute of Technology and a member of EKA's board, emphasizes the foundation's 360-degree approach. Beyond academics, the program assists families in securing government disability IDs and social welfare benefits, trains school staff to foster inclusive classrooms, and encourages peers to cultivate empathy and cooperation.

The impact has been profound. One mother shared:

"We had lost hope. But when the mentor started coming to our home, and my son began reading and speaking using the phone… it was like seeing sunrise after years of darkness."

Since its inception in 2015, EKA has trained over 740 children across eight Indian states, including Maharashtra, Chhattisgarh, and Andhra Pradesh. One hundred eighty-eight students have graduated from Phase 2 and continue their education in mainstream and specialized schools.

Online Media:

Where Hope Learns to See: Ek Kadam Aur Brings Children with Blindness from Isolation to Inclusion — New India Abroad

Indian-American Philanthropists Lead Global Movement for Blind Children's Empowerment — Hi India

Our
Impact Partners

Our progress is made possible through the collaboration of corporate partners, philanthropic supporters, and individuals who believe in inclusive education.

Together with partners including the Nawal & Bina Todi Fund, we are expanding access to education for children with blindness and fostering sustainable community solutions. We acknowledge our corporate partners below.

A Step Forward Towards Inclusive Education

For Online Donations

Ek Kadam Aur, USA

1781 Reserve Court
Highland Park, Illinois 60035, USA
+1-646-732-2090 | E-mail: admin@ekkadamaur.org

**Ek Kadam Aur Foundation For
Education and Health, India**

Flat 17C, Tower D, Viceroy Park Thakur Village, Kandivali
East, Mumbai 400101, India

Follow us on