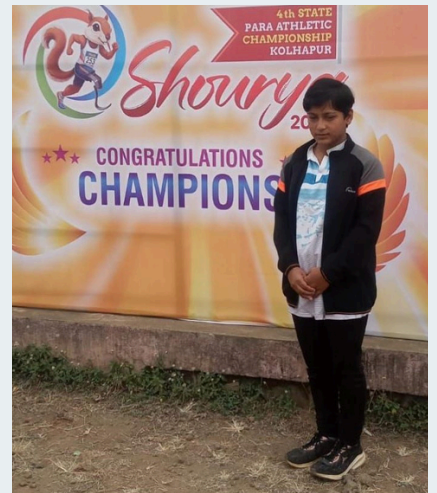




EK KADAM AUR

QUARTERLY REPORT

April - June 2025



From Shadows to Stars
Celebrating Academic Brilliance

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Introduction

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.

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 Blind Program:

A Program through which the Foundation identifies visually impaired children 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 Youth 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

Dear Friends,

As we move through the second quarter of 2025, I'm heartened by the progress we continue to make together, step by step, and child by child. This report reflects not only the work that's been done but the deeper momentum driving our mission forward.



Dr. Satish Tripathi
Founder/President

The Arunodaya (Sunrise) Program for Children with Blindness continues to expand its reach and impact across the country. This quarter alone, 74 new students joined the program, bringing us to over 570 children receiving direct, personalized support. From basic smartphone training and digital literacy to mobility and Braille instruction, our teams worked across 7 states and 1 Union Territory to ensure that children with blindness are not left behind.

We were fortunate to present our work at the Harvard Advanced Leadership Initiative Social Impact Hackathon, where we collaborated with Harvard faculty, fellows, and graduate students on our strategy for scaling Arunodaya. Their insights, paired with the innovative concept of a national student waitlist, have reinforced our confidence that the Arunodaya model is poised for broader implementation.

Our High School Leadership Program is also making significant strides. This quarter, we conducted 24 webinars, allowing students to explore a diverse range of topics, including emotional intelligence, global diplomacy, storytelling, and career skills, thanks to the enthusiastic participation of the volunteers. Additionally, perspective of our Capstone interns from New York University & Summer Interns from Columbia University and Brown University have been invaluable in developing Arunodaya program's long-term strategy and methodology for impact evaluation.

Every initiative this quarter has embodied our core values: inclusion, resilience, and a strong belief in the power of education. To all our supporters, thank you for your continued partnership. Together, we are making strides toward positive changes, and we look forward to the opportunities that the next quarter will bring as we strengthen our efforts and expand our impact.

Happy Summer!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Satish Tripathi". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Highlights of the Quarter

Students Rising Across India

This quarter, children in the Arunodaya program achieved major academic and personal milestones. From Krishna Pawar's national-level athletic training to multiple students securing First Division results, the stories reflect determination, skill, and the impact of consistent support.

Strategic Spotlight at Harvard

At the Harvard Advanced Leadership Initiative Hackathon, Ek Kadam Aur refined its funding approach for scaling Arunodaya. Experts endorsed the model and suggested a public waitlist to mobilize donors—affirming that the program is ready to expand its impact.

Internships Driving Innovation

Summer interns and NYU Capstone fellows worked with Ek Kadam Aur to strengthen data systems, digital tools, and strategy. Their contributions brought fresh thinking to inclusive education, technology integration, and community engagement.

Ek Kadam Aur at the Harvard ALI Social Impact Hackathon

On May 1–2, 2025, Ek Kadam Aur participated in the **Harvard Advanced Leadership Initiative (ALI) Social Impact Hackathon**. Representing Ek Kadam Aur were **Satish Tripathi, PhD, MPH** (Founder and President), and **Deepthi Telikicherla, PhD** (Scientific Head, Arunodaya Program), who presented the organization’s central challenge: securing sustainable funding to scale the Arunodaya program to reach all children with complete visual impairment who need inclusive, technology-enabled education and basic health services.



Ek Kadam Aur Team at the Harvard ALI Hackathon

The Hackathon team working with Ek Kadam Aur included ALI Fellows **Andy Brown**, a global health leader with extensive experience in public-private partnerships, and **Patricia Betron**, a senior media and communications executive focused on social impact. They were joined by Harvard graduate students **Cameron Contreras** (Harvard Graduate School of Education) and **Jordan Tian** (Harvard Business School), who brought valuable insights in education, strategy, and innovation.

The team responded to Ek Kadam Aur’s mission with strong encouragement and thoughtful guidance. They affirmed that the Arunodaya model is impactful and ready for scale, and emphasized the need for a stronger, more focused funding narrative that clearly communicates the urgency and reach of the work. One specific and actionable idea was to maintain a visible waitlist of eligible students across different regions who are currently unreached due to lack of funds. This, they felt, would help potential donors connect more directly with the opportunity to make a tangible and immediate difference.

The experience offered valuable clarity, practical strategies, and renewed momentum. It reinforced our belief in the strength of our model while highlighting how targeted storytelling and clear data can unlock the next phase of growth. We are grateful to the Harvard Advanced Leadership Initiative for creating this opportunity and for their generous support in helping mission-driven organizations like ours scale meaningful, inclusive impact.

Arunodaya (Sunrise) for Children with Blindness Program





Students Rising Across India

Stories of Resilience, Achievement, and Inclusive Education

Rajasthan

Annu Kumari

Annu comes from a remote farming village where access to education and technology is limited. Her father works tirelessly to support the family. Since joining Arunodaya in December 2024, Annu has excelled especially in digital literacy, confidently navigating apps and learning platforms. Her First Division in the Final Examinations of the Academic Year 2024-2025 brought tears of joy to her father's eyes and pride to her entire village.



Neeraj

Life hasn't been easy for Neeraj, who lost his father at a young age. Raised by his mother, a daily wage worker, Neeraj faced many obstacles. But he never gave up. Through his dedication and the support of Arunodaya educators and mentors, Neeraj cleared his exams with flying colors. His success is not just academic, it is a powerful symbol of hope for his entire family.



Shivani Meena

From a small village where her family depends on farming, Shivani quietly worked hard, day after day. She joined our Arunodaya Program in December 2024 and blossomed into a confident learner. Her First Division result has brought immense joy and pride to her home and inspired many young girls in her village.



Anjali Meena

Anjali's journey has been full of challenges, but neither she nor her parents ever gave up on her dreams. With consistent effort and the guidance of her Arunodaya mentors, Anjali passed her exams with First Division and ranked Second in her school. She stands today as a beacon of courage, strength, and inspiration - not just for her family, but for all of us.





Students Rising Across India

Stories of Resilience, Achievement, and Inclusive Education

📍 Maharashtra

🏅 Yugandhara Todkar

Twelve-year-old Yugandhara from Satara, Maharashtra, is a bright and focused student in the Arunodaya program. With support from her family and regular guidance in braille and digital learning, she topped her Class 6 exams this year. Her success is a proud moment for everyone around her and a reminder of what's possible when children are included and encouraged to thrive.



🏅 Krishna Pawar

Krishna, a 14-year-old from Maharashtra, is a Class 10 student in the Arunodaya Program. A recipient of the NMMS Sarathi Scholarship, she balances academics with co-curriculars like yoga and public speaking.

She is also a state-level athlete in shot put and discus throw, recently selected for a national training camp for the Commonwealth Games. Krishna's journey shows how determination and the right support can open doors—in both the classroom and beyond.



📍 Madhya Pradesh

🏅 Sanskar & Siddhant Singh

Twin brothers Sanskar and Siddhant, aged nine, are students of Class 3 at Little Krishna Higher Secondary School in Jabalpur. As part of the Arunodaya Program, they've made remarkable progress—Sanskar secured 2nd position and Siddhant 4th in their class.

With support from their mentor, Rohit Pandey, and encouragement from their family, both boys are growing into confident learners. Their story highlights the power of inclusive education in unlocking potential.



Arunodaya Impact

April - June 2025

571

TOTAL STUDENTS

74

**NEW ENROLLMENTS
THIS QUARTER**

139

MENTORS

43

SPECIAL EDUCATORS

35

**VISUALLY IMPAIRED
MEMBERS IN THE TEAM**

Updates from Andhra Pradesh

In Q2 2025, Arunodaya (Sunrise) Program in Andhra Pradesh continued to deliver structured, home-based education and family support for children with visual impairment. With 65 children currently enrolled across eight districts, this quarter focused on consolidating foundational skills and preparing for Phase 2, which begins in July.

Home visits focused on Braille, sensory, and mobility training: Special educators travelled across Allavaram, Ainavilli, Tuni, Rajahmundry, Kakinada, Vizag, Vizianagaram, and Srikakulam districts to provide hands-on instruction in Braille literacy and orientation and mobility skills. Each visit was adapted to the child's individual pace and needs.

"Seen Through Sound" Digital Training: Two digital training sessions were held this quarter to strengthen the use of assistive technology in the field. On April 30, special educators received hands-on training in TalkBack, Envision, Be My Eyes, and Voice Access, with expert inputs from a doctor and a lawyer on supporting the broader needs of children with visual impairment. A second session on June 14 trained mentors on the same tools, led by the Master Digital Trainer and attended by the local Mandal Education Officer (MEO), who encouraged continued efforts in inclusive education. Both sessions included interactive discussions, progress reviews, and on-ground problem-solving, enhancing the team's ability to integrate digital tools into everyday teaching and mentoring.



Glimpses from "Seen Through Sound" digital training sessions

Updates from Chhattisgarh

In Q2 2025, the Arunodaya program in Chhattisgarh focused on building digital inclusion and strengthening partnerships at the state level. With 15 children currently enrolled, including 8 in Phase 2, the program continued to provide focused support while contributing to wider efforts in inclusive education.

Smartphone Training for Digital Inclusion: A smartphone training program was organised in Raipur under the Arunodaya program, focusing on children with visual impairment. Conducted in collaboration with Samagra Shiksha, M Junction Kolkata, and Benetech, the sessions were held from April 23 to 26 and again from April 28 to 30. A total of 80 children from various districts of Chhattisgarh participated. The training introduced key accessibility features and assistive apps that support independent learning. It was facilitated by the State Project Office of Samagra Shiksha, with active involvement from Block Resource Persons (BRPs) and special educators across the state.



Glimpses from the smartphone training program

Growing with Nature on World Environment Day: Children and educators across Chhattisgarh marked World Environment Day with a tree plantation activity that encouraged care for the planet and collective responsibility. The event created space for children with visual impairment to actively participate in environmental action, reinforcing values of inclusion, sustainability, and community engagement.



Students planting trees on World Environment Day

Updates from Maharashtra

In Q2 2025, Arunodaya in Maharashtra continued to build inclusive learning environments through a combination of home-based instruction, digital training, and community engagement. The program currently supports 61 children across the state, guided by 39 mentors, 5 special educators, and 2 team members with visual impairment.

Digital Literacy Training for Children: On 21st May, a structured digital training session was conducted for children between the ages of 5 and 16. The program covered smartphone navigation, TalkBack gestures, voice commands, and educational app usage. Delivered online and offline by mentors and educators in Mumbai and across Maharashtra, the training followed a day-wise digital syllabus with clear implementation support for educators.

Yoga Day Celebration: On 13th June, children from Satara participated in International Yoga Day celebrations. The activity promoted physical well-being and focus, and reflected the program's emphasis on holistic development.



Glimpses from Yoga Day celebrations in Satara

TalkBack Assessment for Mentors: On 6th June, a TalkBack evaluation session was held to assess mentor readiness. Led by Master Trainer Mr. Ravi Kumar, the session evaluated 27 mentors and 4 special educators on their use of TalkBack and ability to guide children in digital accessibility. Based on their performance, mentors were categorised for further support and follow-up training, helping strengthen field-level capacity.

Helen Keller Day Events: Helen Keller Day was celebrated on 27th June at two locations—Ahilyanagar (with Anamprem NGO) and Satara (in collaboration with NAB India). Students gave speeches, sang songs, and demonstrated yoga, celebrating the legacy of Helen Keller while promoting awareness, inclusion, and expression.



Glimpses from Helen Keller Day celebrations

Updates from Rajasthan

In Q2 2025, Arunodaya in Rajasthan continued to empower children through academic celebration, creativity, and digital learning. The program currently supports 87 children, including 32 in Phase 2, with guidance from 7 mentors and 3 special educators.

Academic Achievements Celebrated: Students who successfully passed their 8th and 10th-grade board examinations were honoured this quarter. Celebrations included family participation, photos with students and parents, and recognition of their hard work and determination.

Environment Day Celebration: Students from Arunodaya in Rajasthan observed World Environment Day with creative and impactful activities. They planted trees and symbolically tied oxygen masks around them to highlight the life-giving role of nature. A “Save the Environment” competition encouraged children to share ideas for a greener future, with prizes awarded to the most inspiring entries. The event was joined by Ms. Rinki Giri, District Youth Officer, who applauded the students’ environmental awareness and leadership.



Students planting trees on World Environment Day

Helen Keller Day Celebrations: Children explored Helen Keller’s life through technology, preparing AI-powered video speeches using the tool Gemini. The activity helped students reflect on the values of courage, resilience, and inclusion while building their digital and presentation skills.

Updates from Uttar Pradesh

The Arunodaya program continued to make meaningful strides in Uttar Pradesh this quarter, reaching 98 children with the support of 21 mentors, 9 special educators, and 1 field coordinator. In May, 96 children progressed to Phase 2, marking a significant step in their learning journey. By the end of June, 38 of them had successfully graduated, reflecting steady and structured progress.

Digital Learning and Literacy: Children were regularly trained in smartphone use, keyboard typing, and accessibility apps such as TalkBack. Fifty-six students actively engaged in digital reading and writing tasks, while verification videos captured their progress and helped educators tailor instruction more effectively.



Students engaged in digital learning

Experiential Learning in Malihabad: As part of hands-on learning, children visited mango orchards in Malihabad, where they explored the environment through tactile experiences. The visit deepened their understanding of agriculture and local ecosystems in a way that textbooks cannot replicate.



Tactile learning at the mango orchard

Spoken English for National Exposure: Three students from Uttar Pradesh, Chandan Yadav, Shubham Raikwar, and Nandani Raikwar, joined a national online Spoken English course designed specifically for visually impaired learners. The fifty day program focuses on building vocabulary, improving grammar, and developing spoken fluency through live classes and weekly practice sessions. It is helping the children grow in confidence and communication skills.

Educator Capacity Building: A six day blended training program consisting of three days of online sessions and three days of offline sessions was conducted for special educators and field staff. Led by Champion Trainers Kirti Saxena and Pasang Bhutia, the sessions focused on using smartphones as assistive tools for reading, writing, and navigation. This training further empowered educators to deliver high quality digital learning to children with visual impairment.



Glimpses from the training program

Field Visit by a Global Supporter: In early April, Ms. Smita Chand, a well-wisher and supporter of Ek Kadam Aur from the United States, visited Auraiya, Agra, and Dholpur. Joined by team members from Delhi and the local field team, she met students, families, and educators enrolled in the Arunodaya program.

Children demonstrated their smartphone skills and shared how their learning has evolved. Caregivers expressed the transformative impact of the program on their children’s confidence and daily lives. Ms. Chand’s visit reinforced the community’s trust in the program and strengthened global visibility for its continued expansion.



Ms. Smita Chand interacting with Arunodaya students

Updates from West Bengal

The Arunodaya program made steady progress in West Bengal this quarter, reaching 141 children across multiple districts through outreach, training, and targeted support. The state team also includes several visually impaired facilitators who bring lived experience into their work with children and families.

Strengthening Home-Based Learning: Over May and June, 27 parents were counselled to support consistent home-based learning. District visits were conducted in Purulia, Bankura, Birbhum, and North Bengal, during which students' learning progress was reviewed and hands-on guidance was provided to families.

Digital Literacy Training at Narendrapur: A three-day Digital Literacy Training was held at Narendrapur Blind Boys' Academy, with participation from special mentors and educators across 14 districts. The training focused on accessible smartphone use, TalkBack, and digital content navigation, further enhancing inclusive teaching capacity.



Glimpses from the training program

Celebrating Learning and Expression: Children took part in World Music Day and International Yoga Day celebrations, using music, movement, and self-expression as part of their holistic development journey. Ongoing support from local partners and volunteers continues to create a nurturing learning environment.



Students practicing yoga on Yoga Day

High School Leadership Program (HSLP)

HSLP Impact

April - June 2025

25

**WEBINARS
CONDUCTED**

18

MENTORS

Number of enrolled students from our partner schools:

Lamdon Model Senior Secondary School:

100 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

The High School Leadership Program continued its journey in the second quarter as a dynamic platform for knowledge-sharing and skill-building. Designed to equip students with core competencies in leadership, communication, personality development, STEAM, entrepreneurship, and critical thinking, the program delivered biweekly interactive sessions every Tuesday and Friday. Through engaging discussions, hands-on activities, and real-world problem-solving, students were encouraged to reflect, build confidence, and shape their vision for the future. With continued interaction with mentors, peers, and industry experts, the program is steadily strengthening students' leadership potential and laying a strong foundation for lifelong learning, innovation, and personal growth.

Mental Health Awareness Sessions: This quarter, the program continued its focus on holistic development by conducting five engaging sessions on mental health. Topics such as Emotional Intelligence, Coping with Difficult Emotions, and the intersection of Art, Mental Health, and Entrepreneurship were covered. These sessions created a safe space for students to reflect, express, and build emotional resilience, reinforcing the importance of mental well-being as a core leadership skill.



EK KADAM AUR FOUNDATION
FOR EDUCATION AND HEALTH

HIGH SCHOOL LEADERSHIP PROGRAM

EK KADAM AUR FOUNDATION PRESENTS
an online session on

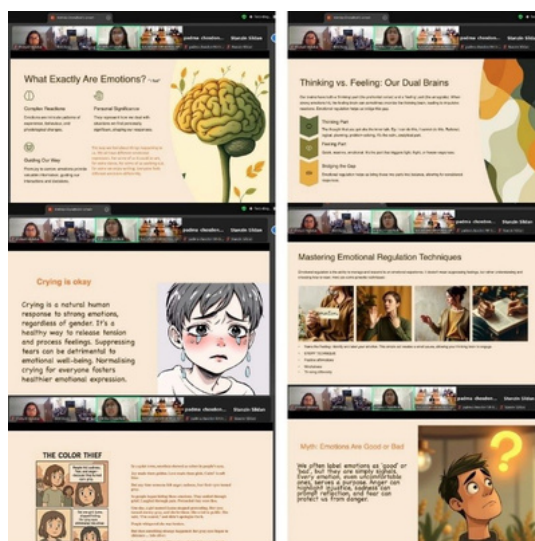
**"FEEL IT, DON'T FEAR IT"-
UNDERSTANDING THE
SCIENCE OF EMOTIONS**

**JUNE 27 | FRIDAY
8 AM (IST) | ZOOM**

Session Speaker
Krittika Chandhok
Mental Health Advocate | Public
Speaker

LET'S LEARN TOGETHER

ekkadamaur.org

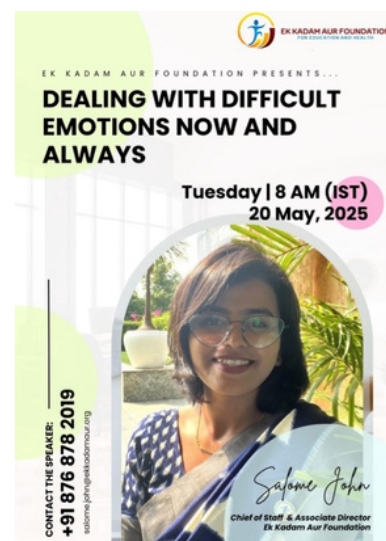


What Exactly Are Emotions?

Thinking vs. Feeling: Our Dual Brains

Crying is okay

Mastering Emotional Regulation Techniques



EK KADAM AUR FOUNDATION PRESENTS...

**DEALING WITH DIFFICULT
EMOTIONS NOW AND
ALWAYS**

**Tuesday | 8 AM (IST)
20 May, 2025**

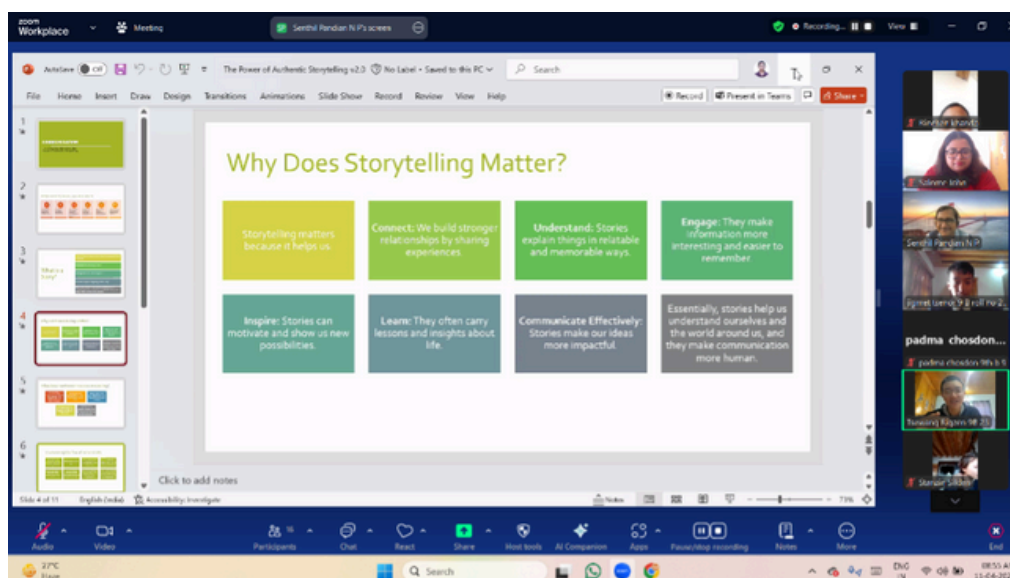
CONTACT THE SPEAKER:
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safome.john@ekkadamaur.org

Safome John
Chief of Staff & Associate Director
EKKADAM AUR FOUNDATION

Monthly Engagement Activities: A series of monthly activities added depth to student engagement in this quarter. An online debate on "Is Social Media doing more harm than good?" sharpened their critical thinking and communication skills. The introduction to Model United Nations (MUN), with "Climate Change" as the theme, helped students adopt a global perspective. A reflective activity, "What is your superpower?", encouraged them to identify personal strengths and leadership potential. Collectively, these activities fostered confidence, creativity, and a stronger sense of identity.



Corporate Volunteering Support: Our corporate partners, Firstsource and Cognizant, continued their valuable contribution to the program through consistent volunteering in this quarter. Their involvement brought real-world insights, and interactive engagement, significantly enriching the learning experience for students and strengthening the bridge between academic learning and practical exposure.



Sessions Conducted

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

TOPIC	RESOURCE PERSON	AFFILIATION
Mental Health Awareness for Teenagers	Smitha Murthy	Co-Founder of Myndstories
Leading Together: Creative Models of Community Leadership	Aadrit Banerjee	Postgraduate Student at St. Stephen's College, DU
Danger of Fake News and How to Avoid It	Tharani Devi	Director, Learning & Development Shared Services, Cognizant Technology Solutions Limited
Online Debate on "Is Social Media Doing More Harm than Good?"	Dishari Malakar	Executive Assistant, Ek Kadam Aur
Time Management	Nikitha Muthuyala	Senior Process Executive, Firstsource Solutions Lmt.
What does an Interview consist of and How to succeed	Nazeer Basha	Senior Manager, Corporate Security Strategy and Enablement

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

TOPIC	RESOURCE PERSON	AFFILIATION
Art, Mental Health, and Entrepreneurship	Siddhanta Bora	Independent Writer
Conflict Management for Students	Dishari Malakar	Executive Assistant, Ek Kadam Aur
Feedback Session	Salome John	Chief of Staff Associate Director, Ek Kadam Aur
Activity of the Month: What is your Superpower?	Salome John	Chief of Staff Associate Director, Ek Kadam Aur
Creativity for Future Leaders	Amritesh Mukherjee	Writer and Journalist
"Feel it, Don't Fear it"- Understanding the Science of Emotions	Krittika Chandok	Public Speaker

Voices of Impact



Being part of an organization that teaches real-life skills, I feel truly grateful to the Ek Kadam Aur (EKA) Foundation for giving me this amazing opportunity. The HSLP sessions aren't just classes, they're experiences that encourage us to speak up, think differently, and share our ideas without hesitation.

Whether it was learning how to write a cover letter, understanding how the Model United Nations works, managing everyday conflicts, or simply becoming more confident in communicating in English, HSLP covered it all. And what made it special was how practical and relatable everything felt. This journey changed the way I think. It helped me grow, from thinking like a boy to understanding the world more like a young adult. I've come to believe that even the smallest step can take you far, that tiny drops can fill an ocean, and that "Small efforts really can create a big difference".

-Aarush Tuladhar (School- Vice Captain), N.K. Singh Memorial English Preparatory Secondary School, Kathmandu, Nepal

Since 2018, our Class 9 students have been regularly attending Ek Kadam Aur's High School Leadership Program sessions. The content is practical, relevant, and focused on real-life leadership skills—especially in areas like behavioral awareness, emotional management, and communication.

The sessions are well-structured and engaging, delivered by professionals who understand how to connect with adolescents. They address important topics that are often difficult to cover in traditional classrooms. Over time, we've seen a clear improvement in how students approach challenges and interact with others. The program has added meaningful value to our school's co-curricular learning.

-Rajendra Sharma, Vice-Principal, N.K. Singh Memorial English Preparatory Secondary School, Kathmandu, Nepal



Nurturing Youth Leadership Program

Internships

We were pleased to host several student interns from the United States and India this quarter, offering them the opportunity to contribute meaningfully to our programs while gaining hands-on experience.

NYU Capstone Internship 2025



Four interns, **Joshua Chun, Nikola Stokuca, Jacky Rodriguez, and Karya Antmen**, successfully completed their internship with Ek Kadam Aur. 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 also showcased at the NYU | Wagner Capstone Expo 2025 held on May 7, where EKA Founder and President, Satish Tripathi, and Scientific Head, Deepthi Telikicherla., were also present to support and engage with the interns' work. Their presence highlighted the collaborative spirit and international relevance of the Arunodaya Program.

Summer Internships



Research and Program Development Intern – SIPA, Columbia University

We welcomed Yini Li from Columbia University's School of International and Public Affairs (SIPA) as a Research and Program Development Intern. Her work focuses on donor and stakeholder management, supporting research, communications, and strategic outreach to strengthen engagement and long-term partnerships.



Research Intern – Brown University

As part of our summer internship program, we welcomed Aditi Dey, a Research Intern from Brown University to support the development and evaluation of ongoing programs, particularly the Arunodaya (Sunrise) Program for children who are blind or visually impaired. The intern is assisting with data analysis, program documentation, and impact assessment to enhance the effectiveness and scalability of our inclusive education efforts.



Data Optimization Intern – St. Xavier's University

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



Our Impact Partners



Microsoft



This quarter, two new CSR partnerships advanced the Digital Arunodaya Program:

- **Microsoft Philanthropies** supported pan-India efforts through the donation of laptops, helping children with visual impairment access inclusive digital education.
- **Unislink** backed the program in Hyderabad, benefiting both children with visual impairment and their sighted peers in inclusive classrooms, along with parents and government school teachers.

These collaborations contribute to SDG 4 (Quality Education) and SDG 10 (Reduced Inequalities), while aligning with India's National Education Policy 2020. We continue to welcome support that strengthens digital inclusion for children across India.



Salome John – A Life of Purpose



Salome on her 1st Birthday
with her parents

"People were always at the centre of her choices." Being the only child in a modest home, Salome grew up in an environment where kindness wasn't just preached, it was practiced. Her parents, though humble and unassuming, were deeply committed to the St. Vincent de Paul Society, a Catholic lay organization known for serving the most vulnerable. Salome's earliest memories aren't of toys or games, but of food drives, visits to leprosy homes, and long afternoons spent sitting beside ailing strangers in dimly lit rooms. These weekend journeys with her parents, often to the very margins of society, from the stark walls of the cellular jail to forgotten alleyways, were never dramatic. But they quietly shaped her.

Salome still remembers one particular evening, her father's voice echoing as they walked home from yet another visit: "Let your work be of service to people. Survival is, of course, important- but being there for someone who has no one, that can be something fantastic. That was always my driving force."

Those words weren't just advice. They became her compass.

When it came time to choose a career path, Salome didn't hesitate, she wanted to study Sociology. But her family hesitated for her. "Why not something more practical? Something that offers more security?" they asked. Salome listened patiently. Then, quietly but firmly, she stood her ground. She wasn't searching for a job; she was searching for a mission. Eventually, with reluctant blessings, she enrolled at St. Xavier's College, Kolkata, where she pursued her Bachelor's in Sociology.

But Salome's hunger to serve went beyond the classroom. She wanted to roll up her sleeves, sit with people, and truly listen. Once again, she faced resistance at home, but she reminded her family of the values they had raised her with. Of the path she had already begun. Eventually, they saw it too.

Salome went on to complete both her Master's in Sociology and her Master's in Social Work from St. Xavier's University, Kolkata, graduating as a Gold Medalist. A dual foundation that gave her both intellectual depth and ground-level insight, a rare that would define her career.



Salome's Graduation ceremony

Then, in 2020, just as she stood at the threshold of new beginnings, the world shut down. COVID-19 swept across the country, silencing opportunities, halting plans. But Salome didn't wait for the dust to settle. She stepped straight into the chaos.

She began working with government programs in Delhi and Jharkhand, supporting children rescued from trafficking, work that was emotionally brutal, yet profoundly transformative. She then moved to rural West Bengal and Jharkhand, working with adolescent girls who, like her once, had dreams, but unlike her, lacked access to even basic education.

In 2022, she joined Ek Kadam Aur Foundation as the Program Manager for the High School Leadership Program. Within a year, she was promoted to Senior Program Manager overseeing both the High School Leadership and Nurturing Youth Leadership Program, a role that perfectly aligned with her love for systems thinking and her deep-rooted empathy for young people.

In 2024, Salome was additionally appointed Chief of Staff to the President, a role that provided her with an opportunity to drive strategic growth while remaining grounded in the stories of the children and youth she had always championed.

Her leadership journey started much earlier, though, almost humorously. From being appointed Class Monitor in school as a punishment for being the naughtiest student, Salome went on to represent the Social Sciences Department on the Student Board at her university. She also served as an Executive Member of the West Bengal Association of Professional Social Workers, where she represented young social work professionals just starting out, always advocating for the next generation.



Salome with a student beneficiary of the Arunodaya Program

What began as a little girl following her parents on quiet missions of care has become a lifelong commitment to transformation, equity, and hope.

Salome John didn't just find her mission. She became it.



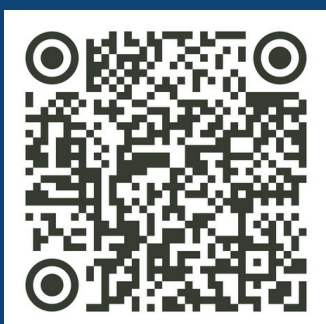
Salome being felicitated at Lamdon Model Senior Secondary School, Leh Ladakh by the school's Former Principal

We thank you for your continued support !

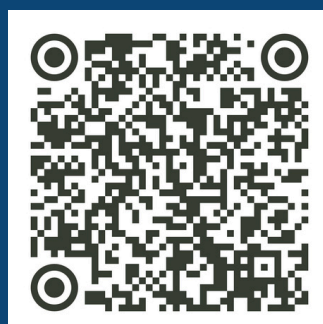


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