



EK KADAM AUR

QUARTERLY REPORT

July - September 2025

Eight Years of IMPACT and INCLUSION

**Celebrating Saumya
Tripathi's Journey of
Mentorship and Inclusion**

*"I took unconventional
paths. But they led me to
where I truly belong, helping
others rise."*

- Saumya Tripathi



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Introduction

About Ek Kadam Aur

Ek Kadam Aur is a nonprofit organization registered in India (80G, FCRA) and the US (501c3) that works 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 third quarter of 2025, I'm reminded how much can be achieved when compassion meets purpose. Every milestone we reach, each child's first step toward independence, reaffirms what's possible when we work together as one community. Step by step, and child by child, we're turning inclusion from an aspiration into a daily reality.

The Arunodaya (Sunrise) for Children with Blindness Program continues to grow in both reach and depth.



Dr. Satish Tripathi
Founder/President

This quarter, 128 new children joined us, bringing the total to 681 students across eight states and one Union Territory. From learning to navigate a smartphone to mastering mobility and Braille, every child's journey reflects courage, curiosity, and the life-changing power of access to education.

On the organizational front, Ek Kadam Aur Foundation achieved a major milestone by receiving its Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Act (FCRA), paving the way for long-term global partnerships and sustainable growth. We also presented our work at the CEO's Event, organized in collaboration with J.C. Flowers Asset Reconstruction Pvt. Ltd., where children from Maharashtra showcased their digital literacy by confidently using smartphones and laptops. Watching them demonstrate independence and pride was among the most fulfilling moments of the year. Equally inspiring is the story of Ms. Saumya Tripathi - Director, Program Development and Expansion, included in this report, an example of a strong, evolving woman whose leadership journey embodies the same spirit of purpose, resilience, and growth that defines Ek Kadam Aur Foundation.

Our High School Leadership Program advanced meaningfully this quarter. Through 24 interactive webinars, students explored emotional intelligence, global diplomacy, storytelling, and career readiness, guided by the enthusiasm of our dedicated volunteers. Our interns from Columbia and Brown Universities completed their projects with excellence, contributing to Arunodaya's long-term sustainability plan, stakeholder engagement strategy, and data-driven program expansion.

As we approach the final quarter of the year, our focus remains clear, strengthen educator capacity, expand digital literacy, and deepen our impact where it matters most: in the lives of children and families we serve.

To our Board of Directors, educators, mentors, partners, donors, and the families who inspire us every day, thank you. Your trust, creativity, and unwavering support continue to light the path forward. Together, we are building a world where every child with blindness can learn, lead, and thrive.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Satish Tripathi".

Highlights of the Quarter

Strategic Expansion and Institutional Recognition

Ek Kadam Aur Foundation achieved a major institutional milestone this quarter with the approval of its **FCRA registration**, marking a new chapter in global collaboration and sustained international partnerships. This recognition strengthens the Foundation's capacity to scale its education, health, and empowerment programs nationwide.

Arunodaya Program Expands Reach

681 children across eight states and one Union Territory are now part of the Arunodaya Program, with 128 new enrollments this quarter. The program continued to expand digital literacy, parent engagement, and inclusive education for children with blindness through targeted state-level interventions and partnerships.

Continued Support from Strategic Funding Partners

The Foundation received renewed support from **J.C. Flowers Asset Reconstruction Private Limited** (JCF ARC) for 100 children and a major grant from **Edwards Lifesciences**, reaffirming donor confidence in the Foundation's impact model. These partnerships ensure continuity of educational and rehabilitation support for children with visual impairment across multiple states.

Empowering Youth Through Innovation and Learning

The High School Leadership Program continued to nurture young leaders through creative workshops, technology and entrepreneurship sessions. Supported by corporate partners Firstsource and Cognizant, the program provided **24 interactive sessions** led by 20 mentors, empowering students to think critically, lead confidently, and innovate for social good.

Arunodaya (Sunrise) for Children with Blindness Program



Arunodaya Impact

July - September 2025

681

TOTAL STUDENTS

8

STATES

128

NEW ENROLLMENTS
THIS QUARTER

201

STUDENTS
IN PHASE 1

152

STUDENTS
IN PHASE 2

123

STUDENTS
GRADUATED FROM
PHASE 2

109

TEACHERS

22

VISUALLY IMPAIRED
MEMBERS IN THE TEAM

Updates from Andhra Pradesh

In Q3 2025, the Arunodaya Program in Andhra Pradesh focused on strengthening family engagement, corporate partnerships, and community inclusion. The team continued to build on the program's foundation through parent counseling, stakeholder visits, and celebration of national events.

Parent Counseling and Community Engagement: As part of the launch of Phase 2 of the Arunodaya Program, a series of parent counseling sessions were organized across eight schools in Andhra Pradesh. These sessions encouraged parents to take an active role in their children's educational journey, especially those with visual impairments and other disabilities.

A total of 32 parents, along with mentors and special educators, participated in the discussions that promoted inclusive education and collaborative learning. Parents shared inspiring stories of transformation and growth, highlighting the impact of consistent mentoring and personalized teaching. Individual counseling and open Q&A sessions helped address concerns related to Braille and digital literacy, assistive tools, and learning progress - building trust and reinforcing confidence in the program's holistic support system.



Highlights from the community engagement sessions

IOCL CSR Committee Field Visit: On August 8–9, 2025, representatives from the Indian Oil Corporation Limited (IOCL) CSR Committee visited Arunodaya project sites in Visakhapatnam and Anapalli districts. The committee interacted with beneficiaries, parents, mentors, and educators, witnessing firsthand the progress of children.

The visitors observed Braille reading demonstrations, digital training sessions, and everyday learning routines. They praised the dedication of mentors and the transparency of implementation, expressing deep satisfaction with the impact and accountability of the program. The visit reaffirmed IOCL's trust and strengthened the partnership for future collaboration in advancing inclusive education.



IOCL CSR team members alongside Ek Kadam Aur team, a child from the program, and parents

Independence Day Celebrations: On August 15, the team celebrated Independence Day in Amalapuram with 32 visually impaired children, including 10 from the Arunodaya Program. The event began with a flag hoisting ceremony led by the local councillor, followed by patriotic songs, poetry recitations, and speeches on the meaning of freedom and unity.

Children participated in fun and educational activities such as vocabulary quizzes and poem competitions, fostering creativity and confidence. Parents and mentors joined the celebration, creating a joyful, inclusive environment that reflected the spirit of the day.

Voice of Impact



Sai Lokesh, a visually impaired child from Visakhapatnam, Andhra Pradesh, faced deep emotional challenges. Attending a regular school, he initially believed that every student had a visual impairment like him. When he realized he was different, he became withdrawn, depressed, and even attempted suicide three times. His parents were deeply concerned about his emotional well-being and future.

After joining Ek Kadam Aur Foundation, Sai Lokesh's life began to transform. With guidance and support from the foundation, he learned to use digital tools independently - sending messages, making calls, and accessing learning materials. This gave him a sense of control and confidence.

He also developed essential daily living skills, improved his orientation and mobility in familiar spaces, and began participating actively in group activities. His communication, social interaction, and decision-making skills grew steadily, and he started approaching challenges with curiosity and determination.

Today, Sai Lokesh manages his routine independently, engages actively in learning and social activities, and embraces life with renewed hope.

Updates from Chhattisgarh

In Q3 2025, the Arunodaya Program in Chhattisgarh focused on expanding digital literacy, increasing technology access, and promoting cultural engagement for children with visual impairments. The team strengthened learning outcomes through targeted training for children and educators, distribution of assistive devices, and celebration of national events, while extending program reach to marginalized and high-risk communities.

Digital Literacy and Training Initiatives:

- **Keyboard & Smartphone Training:** From July 28 to August 2, 80 children participated in advanced digital literacy training, building on the smartphone training conducted earlier in April. The training focused on keyboard skills and practical smartphone applications, enhancing their independence in learning. Ankita Sehdev, Manager of Inclusive Education at Ek Kadam Aur led the sessions.
- **Field Educator Training:** In September, Raipur hosted comprehensive training for new and existing field educators, including our Special Educator team. Training covered essential applications such as Bookshare, Notepad, Seeing AI, Gemini, and Be My Eyes, improving the quality of support for children with blindness across the state.



Glimpses from the keyboard and smartphone training session

Technology Access for Children: Smartphones were provided to children in Janjgir District to support their digital learning. Additionally, through collaboration with Mjunction Services Limited, 23 children including several from regions affected by Naxalite activity were enrolled in the program, extending the reach to marginalized and high-risk communities.



Smartphones provided to children with blindness

Cultural Engagement and Student Participation: Independence Day 2025 was celebrated with enthusiasm. Children actively participated in school-level events, performing cultural activities such as dance and poetry, reflecting their growing confidence and engagement in learning.



Scenes from the Independence Day celebration

Voice of Impact



Suman Suryavanshi, a child with blindness from Hathnewara, Chhattisgarh, joined the Arunodaya program on March 11, 2024. Initially shy and cautious, she faced challenges in navigating her surroundings and interacting with others. Over six months, Suman has gradually gained independence, learning to manage her daily routines confidently and move safely around her home.

With support from her father and Arunodaya teachers, Suman was enrolled in school, where she has embraced both academics and social activities. She has also become familiar with technology, using a smartphone to communicate and access learning resources. Regular guidance from her teachers has helped her overcome obstacles and explore new skills with curiosity. Today, Suman engages actively in learning, interacts comfortably with peers, and handles daily tasks independently.

Updates from Madhya Pradesh

In Q3 2025, the Arunodaya Program in Madhya Pradesh successfully concluded with the graduation of all enrolled students. The program educated a total of 71 children, including 32 children with blindness who completed Phase 1 and were enrolled in special schools, and 32 children who graduated from Phase 2, marking a significant milestone in promoting inclusive education.

Graduation Day Celebration: On 1st July 2025, 29 students gathered in Jabalpur to celebrate their graduation from the Arunodaya Program. The event, hosted at the Model High School Auditorium, was graced by Mr. Ashok Rohani, five-time MLA, and Group Captain Amitabh Rawat, Kargil War veteran and Head of Sainik Welfare, Jabalpur. Their presence inspired the students and highlighted the importance of resilience, dedication, and courage in the pursuit of education.



A proud moment captured at the Graduation Day Ceremony in Jabalpur

Independence Day Celebration: In August, the team celebrated Independence Day in Jabalpur with great enthusiasm. The day began with a patriotic Prabhat Feri supported by the Biker Gang of Jabalpur, carrying messages of unity and pride. The National Flag was unfurled by Dr. Pushpraj Singh, a noted cardiologist, followed by cultural performances and certificate distribution by P.K. Mishra, Principal of Blind Girls School Jabalpur, Namita Tripathi, Advisory Board Member, and Manoj Trivedi, Program Manager for Madhya Pradesh.



Glimpses from the Independence Day celebration

Updates from Maharashtra

In Q3 2025, the Arunodaya Program in Maharashtra strengthened its reach through new school admissions, digital literacy training, sensory development sessions, and corporate engagement. The team worked closely with government institutions and corporate partners to promote inclusion, build educator capacity, and provide holistic learning opportunities for children with visual impairments.

Partnerships and Admissions: In July, the State Council of Educational Research and Training (SCERT), Maharashtra, granted formal approval for implementing the Arunodaya Program across all districts of the state. This recognition marked a major step in expanding inclusive education efforts.

Corporate Partnership – Visit to J.C. Flowers: On 17th July 2025, students from Satara who are part of the Arunodaya Program, along with their teachers and staff, visited the office of J.C. Flowers Asset Reconstruction Private Limited (JCF ARC). The event served as a powerful showcase of the students' digital learning journey, where they demonstrated their skills in screen reader navigation, digital drawing, and basic coding. The J.C. Flowers team was deeply moved and impressed by the students' confidence and competence in using assistive technologies.



JC Flowers team with Ek Kadam Aur team and students from Satara

Independence Day Celebration: Independence Day was celebrated online on 14th August 2025, with participation from 27 students across Satara and Ahilyanagar. Children presented patriotic songs, dances, monologues, and musical performances on instruments like the Dholak and Tabla. Their confidence and enthusiasm deeply impressed the audience, making the celebration a proud and memorable occasion.

Digital Literacy and Sensory Training: A two-day digital literacy training was held in Ahilyanagar on 21st and 22nd August 2025 for nine mentors and one special educator. Trainers Ravi and Jyotsna from Satara conducted the sessions, which focused on improving digital competency and the effective use of educational apps.

On 23rd August 2025, a sensory training and awareness program was organized for students with visual impairments, their parents, and field educators. Activities involving sound, smell, and touch helped enhance sensory development and strengthened family engagement. The session also included a community awareness segment on dengue prevention and highlighted Women's Equality Day and National Sports Day.



Glimpses from Digital Literacy and Sensory Training Sessions

Voice of Impact



Gaurav Pintu Javale, a 16-year-old, faced immense challenges in his academic journey. Despite being in the 10th grade, he was unable to read or write, and mathematics remained a daunting task. Both of his younger siblings also face visual impairments, adding to the family's concerns about education and future opportunities.

Gaurav's life began to change when he joined the Arunodaya program. With the guidance of Special Educator Kanchan Waghmare and Mentor Pallavi, he embarked on a structured learning path using Braille and other specially designed materials. Slowly, he started reading and writing simple words and sentences, while in mathematics, he progressed from basic operations on the writing board to confidently performing calculations on the abacus.

A key turning point was when Gaurav learned to use a smartphone and keyboard. Starting with simple English words, he gradually mastered typing and is now learning Marathi typing as well. These digital skills have opened new avenues for communication and independent learning.

Beyond academics, Gaurav's confidence and social abilities have grown immensely. He now participates actively in events, interacts with peers with ease, and presents himself confidently in gatherings.

Updates from Rajasthan

In Q3 2025, the Arunodaya Program in Rajasthan focused on strengthening learning outcomes and family engagement while ensuring that children with visual impairments continued to build skills for independent and inclusive education. The quarter also marked a major milestone with the graduation of 31 children from the program.

Graduation Day Celebration: On July 1st, thirty-one young achievers from the Arunodaya (Sunrise) for Children with Blindness Program celebrated their graduation in Rajasthan. This achievement reflected their growth in confidence, communication, and independence as they completed their learning journey under the program.



Moments from the Graduation Day Celebration

Parent Counseling Session: A parent counseling session was conducted on August 24th to enhance collaboration between families, educators, and the Arunodaya team. Parents were guided on using the parent module to track their child's progress, supporting digital learning, and encouraging regular practice at home.



Interactive Counselling Session with Parents and Mentors

Digital Literacy and Keyboard Training: Digital literacy and keyboard training sessions in Hindi and English were organized for educators on July 30th and from September 1st to 3rd. These trainings strengthened teaching capacity in technology use and accessibility tools, helping children build essential digital skills for education and communication.



Educators during Hindi and English keyboard training

Voice of Impact



Bharatendra's journey is one of dedication and purpose. As an educator working with visually impaired children, he goes beyond teaching and truly inspires. Through his patient and creative methods, he introduces children to digital literacy and helps them master Hindi and English typing, skills that open new doors to learning and independence.

What makes his approach remarkable is his ability to instill confidence in every child he teaches.

He ensures that no child feels limited by their disability, encouraging them to explore technology and express themselves freely. Under his guidance, many children who once hesitated to use digital tools now navigate them with ease and pride.

For his students, Bharatendra is more than a teacher; he is a mentor who believes in their potential and walks beside them as they discover their own strength. His story reminds us that when compassion meets commitment, transformation becomes possible.

Updates from Uttar Pradesh

In Q3 2025, the Arunodaya Program in Uttar Pradesh achieved major milestones in expanding partnerships, strengthening educator capacity, and celebrating student progress. The quarter witnessed new collaborations with the state government, impactful parent engagement sessions, and remarkable student participation in national-level competitions.

Program Progress and Graduations: Across Agra, Auraiya, Ghazipur, and Kannauj districts, 56 students successfully advanced from Phase 2 to Phase 3 of the program, receiving their graduation certificates during events including the Independence Day celebrations. These milestones reflected the steady academic and developmental progress of children with visual impairments in mainstream education.



Moments from the Graduation Day Celebration

Independence Day and Parent Counseling Session: On August 15th, the Arunodaya team organized a combined Independence Day and Graduation Day celebration at the Auraiya Block Office. The event included a parent counseling session led by Director Saumya Tripathi, Program Manager Anoop Dubey, Master Trainer Kirti Saxena, and Compliance Coordinator Anjana Tripathi. The session focused on sensory development, parental involvement, and peer support, engaging 15 children, 10 parents, and 4 special educators. Parents expressed renewed confidence in supporting their children's learning journey at home.



Glimpses from the Independence Day celebrations and parent counseling sessions

Right to Write Typing Competition: Seven children from Uttar Pradesh participated in the fourth edition of the “**Right to Write**” typing competition organized by Saksham at HCL Foundation, Noida. The students demonstrated strong independent typing skills in both Hindi and English, earning certificates of appreciation. Their confidence and enthusiasm reflected the success of Arunodaya’s digital literacy training.



Children from Arunodaya participate in the “Right to Write” typing event.

Educator Trainings and Parent Sessions: From September 3 to 8, a digital training was conducted for special educators of the Uttar Pradesh team via WhatsApp. The sessions covered the Phase 1 timeline, parent counseling module, and use of digital applications and keyboard orientation for inclusive learning.

Another online parent training session connected 25 parents to program coordinators, enhancing communication, problem-solving, and engagement in their children’s learning journey.

Partnership with the Government of Uttar Pradesh: A major milestone this quarter was the signing of an MoU between Ek Kadam Aur Foundation, the Government of Uttar Pradesh, and Samagra Shiksha. This collaboration will expand the Arunodaya Program across multiple districts, enabling children with blindness to develop digital literacy, access inclusive and tactile learning materials, and participate fully in mainstream schooling while ensuring structured support for parents and teachers.

NAB Dwarka Training: On July 5, the National Association for the Blind (NAB) in Dwarka, New Delhi hosted a session on simplifying mathematical operations using laptops, led by Dr. Homiyar Mobedji, Sanjog Kumawat, and Hari Narayan from Saksham, along with the Ek Kadam Aur team. The session emphasized practical applications of technology in education and further enhanced digital literacy among participants.



Children from Arunodaya participate in the “Right to Write” typing event.

Voice of Impact



Maya Devi from Naglapyara, Agra, speaks with deep emotion as she recalls her daughter Sakshi’s journey. When Sakshi was born blind, Maya believed that her child would never be able to study or live independently. Every day felt uncertain. Sakshi needed help for even the smallest tasks, and Maya often wondered what the future would hold for her daughter.

Everything began to change the moment Sakshi became a part of the Arunodaya (Sunrise) for Children with Blindness Program.

Through home-based sessions and patient guidance, the little girl slowly started learning new skills that her family once thought were impossible. She was introduced to touch-based learning, digital literacy, and mobility training. With each passing day, Sakshi grew more confident and curious about the world around her.

Today, Maya watches her daughter with awe and pride. Sakshi now uses a smartphone independently. She types fluently, makes calls, studies using digital tools, and explores educational content on her own. She walks confidently with her cane and loves sharing what she learns with others.

For Maya, the biggest change is not just in Sakshi’s skills but in her spirit. “I see my daughter smiling more, asking questions, and believing in herself,” she says with gratitude. “Arunodaya has given her wings to fly.”

Updates from West Bengal

In Q3 2025, the Arunodaya Program in West Bengal focused on strengthening parent engagement, expanding school partnerships, and enhancing digital literacy for children with visual impairment. The team conducted targeted counseling sessions, school collaborations, and stakeholder engagement to ensure inclusive learning and community support.

Parent and School Counseling: In July, parent counseling sessions were conducted in South 24 Parganas to emphasize the importance of regular school attendance for children's academic and personal development. Joint sessions in East Bardhaman engaged both parents and schools to support smartphone-based learning, encouraging consistent participation during training periods.

International Literacy Day Celebration: On September 8, 25 children celebrated International Literacy Day at the Kolkata Centre for Creativity, showcasing Braille reading, smartphone navigation, and English keyboard typing. Cultural performances included poems, songs, and mouth organ music. Distinguished guests from the Kolkata Centre for Creativity and Disha Eye Hospital encouraged the children and highlighted the importance of literacy in all forms.



Moments from the International Literacy Day celebration at the Kolkata Centre for Creativity

Special Recognition: Following the celebration, two children, Triyasha Basu and Moitree Roy Choudhury, were invited by Disha Eye Hospitals to perform at the Disha Samman Award Ceremony on September 20. Triyasha captivated the audience with her mouth organ performance, while Moitree impressed everyone with her soulful singing. Both received heartfelt appreciation from the audience and organizers, marking a proud moment for the programme.



Performance by Triyasha Basu and Moitree Roy Choudhury at the Disha Samman Awards

Collaborations and Stakeholder Engagement: A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Disha Eye Hospitals was signed to support 25 children in West Bengal. The team also engaged with Kalna Hospital authorities to facilitate data access for early identification and outreach of visually impaired children.



Ek Kadam Aur Foundation and Disha Eye Hospitals formalize partnership through MoU signing

Special School Engagements: Eight special schools partnered with the Arunodaya Program to introduce laptop and digital literacy training for children with visual impairment. Participating schools included Narendrapur Ramakrishna Mission Blind Boys Academy, APC Blind School Nabadwip, Bhimbar Blind School Darjeeling, Sri Aurobindo School for the Sightless Suri, Louis Braille Memorial School Hooghly, Calcutta Blind School, Light House for the Blind Kolkata, and Sri Sri Ramkrishna Satyananda Dristideep Sikshaniketan Birbhum.

Independence Day Celebration – Birbhum: On August 15, 2025, Independence Day was celebrated at Sri Sri Ramakrishna Satyananda Dristideep Sikshaniketan, Birbhum. The event featured flag hoisting, student performances including poems and patriotic songs, and an inspiring speech by Mr. Ghosh. Key dignitaries present included Mr. Pandey, IAS, Sub-Divisional Officer (SDO), representatives from Rampurhat Medical College, and the Sub-Divisional Police Officer (SDPO). Discussions on data sharing with local authorities were also held to strengthen program outreach.



Young learners dressed up to celebrate the spirit of Independence Day

Voice of Impact



Ruhina Mandal, a young girl from South 24 Parganas, was born completely blind to a family struggling to make ends meet. Her parents once believed education was impossible for her. But when the Ek Kadam Aur team reached out, they decided to give her a chance—and that changed everything.

At first, Ruhina was shy, withdrawn, and often bullied at school. She avoided studies and found even small daily tasks challenging. But with guidance, encouragement, and steady mentoring from the Arunodaya program, she began to open up and discover her potential.

Today, she is confident, curious, and independent. She reads and writes in Braille, solves sums using the Taylor Frame and Abacus, and performs her daily routines without help. Her love for music and learning shines through everything she does. Her parents, once filled with doubt, now watch with pride as their daughter flourishes.

High School Leadership Program (HSLP)

HSLP Impact
July - September 2025

24

**WEBINARS
CONDUCTED**

20

MENTORS

Number of enrolled students from our partner schools:

Lamdon Model Senior Secondary School, Leh:

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:

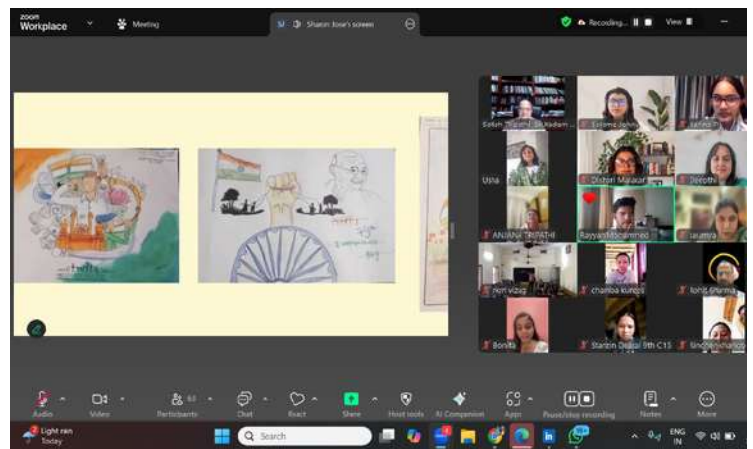
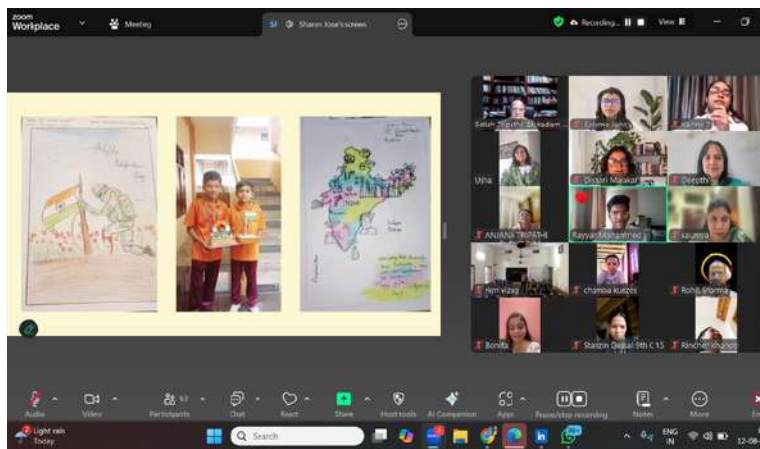
35 Students

Key Highlights

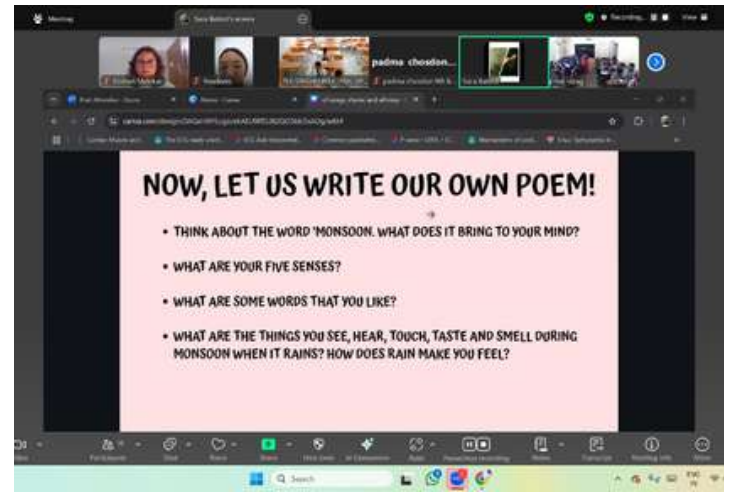
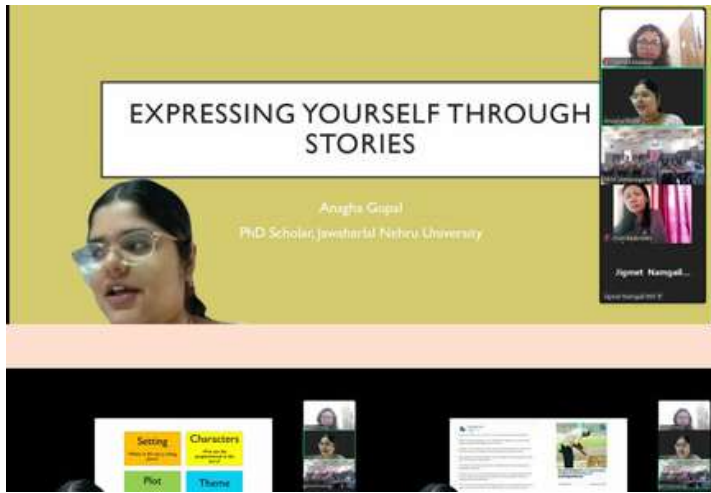
The High School Leadership Program continues to be a dynamic knowledge-sharing platform aimed at equipping students with essential skills in leadership, communication, personality development, STEAM, entrepreneurship, and critical thinking. With biweekly interactive sessions on Tuesdays and Fridays, the program offers engaging discussions, hands-on activities, and real-world problem-solving opportunities. It encourages self-reflection, builds confidence, and inspires students to develop a vision for their future, giving them the push to lead and make a meaningful impact.

Independence Day Celebration: On 12 August 2025, a virtual celebration was held to commemorate India's 79th Independence Day. The program brought together students from partner schools such as Lamdon Model Senior Secondary School in Leh, Ladakh, and Ramakrishna Mission High Schools in Vishakhapatnam and Sitanagaram, fostering a spirit of unity and pride. The event featured inspiring speeches, patriotic songs, dance performances, and art presentations by students, reflecting their deep sense of national identity and creativity.

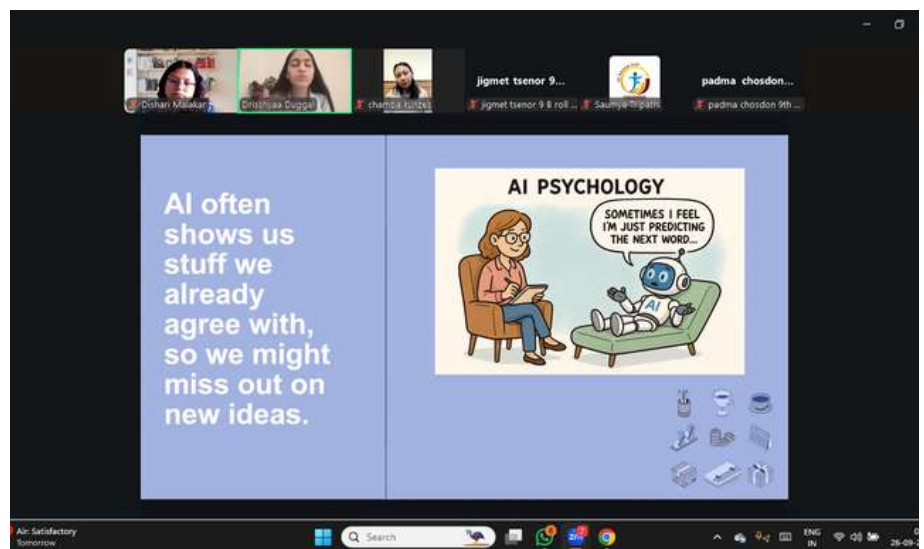
The celebration concluded with an address by Dr. Satish Tripathi, Founder of Ek Kadam Aur Foundation, who encouraged students to carry forward the values of leadership, responsibility, and service. The event created an inclusive space for young leaders to express themselves and reaffirm their connection to the ideals of freedom and equality.



Creative Workshops: To nurture imagination and self-expression, two creative workshops were organized during the quarter. Poet and writer Sara Batool led a two-day Poetry Workshop that introduced students to the art of writing and interpreting poetry. A storytelling session by Anagha Gopal encouraged participants to express personal experiences and ideas through narrative. Both sessions helped students strengthen their creative confidence and develop effective communication skills.



Technology and Innovation Sessions: Students gained exposure to the evolving world of technology and innovation. A session titled “AI Psychology: AI, Mind, and Behaviour” by Drishyaa Duggal introduced them to the relationship between artificial intelligence and human cognition, while prompting reflection on ethical and social implications. Another practical session on “Introduction to Website Development” by Jayakumar Sridharan, Deputy General Manager at Cognizant, provided hands-on learning in basic coding and web design. These experiences enhanced digital literacy and inspired students to apply technology for creative problem-solving.



Entrepreneurship Sessions: The program also focused on building an entrepreneurial mindset among students. Guest speakers conducted sessions on creativity, innovation, and resilience, encouraging students to think critically about real-world challenges. Through group activities and interactive discussions, participants explored how leadership and entrepreneurship are driven by teamwork, adaptability, and social impact.

Corporate Volunteering: Corporate partners Firstsource and Cognizant continued their active engagement through mentoring and volunteering initiatives. Their support has strengthened the quality and reach of the High School Leadership Program, ensuring meaningful learning experiences for participating students.

Sessions Conducted

TOPIC	RESOURCE PERSON	AFFILIATION
Speaking your Mind- Communicate Freely in English	Semonti Dey	PhD Scholar Penn State University, Education Policy Studies
Poetry Workshop	Sara Batool	Poet and Writer
Unlock Level 11	Srutayus Das	Business Student and Leadership Enthusiast
Personality Development	Samridhi Raj	Academic Scholar University of Delhi
Your Network, Your Superpower	Hisham Premshaj	Academic Scholar University of Delhi
Future Business Leaders: It Starts From Now!	Vama Gaur	Deputy Commander (Retd.) Indian Coast Guard
Activity of the Month- Goal Setting For Teenagers	Salome John	Chief of Staff Ek Kadam Aur
Expressing Yourself Through Stories	Anagha Gopal	PhD Scholar JNU
Art of Persuasion	Dishari Malakar	Acting Head of HSLP Ek Kadam Aur
Discussion on Independence Day Celebration	Salome John	Chief of Staff Ek Kadam Aur

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



Padma Chosdon
Class 9, Lamdon Model
Senior Secondary High
School

Joining the High School Leadership Program has been a truly life-changing experience for me. Before joining, I was hesitant to speak in English and often lacked confidence while expressing myself. However, through the various sessions and activities, I have learned to communicate in English with greater confidence and clarity. The program helped me overcome my fear and become more comfortable while interacting with others.

One of the most valuable lessons I gained was emotional awareness. I learned to understand and manage my emotions better, which has helped me grow both as a student and as an individual. Each session brought something new and inspiring—whether it was leadership lessons, teamwork exercises, or self-reflection activities, every experience added something meaningful to my journey.

I am truly grateful for this opportunity. The program has shaped me into a more confident, expressive, and responsible person. The lessons I have learned here will continue to guide me throughout my life.

Our students from Sitanagaram have been participating in the High School Leadership Program sessions since 2017. The sessions you organize are highly beneficial for our 9th-grade students. They find the speakers engaging and the topics you design extremely relevant and helpful, especially as they prepare for their 10th grade.

This year, our students have been eagerly looking forward to the sessions, which clearly reflects their enthusiasm and interest in the programs conducted by Ek Kadam Aur Foundation. They attend every session on time and maintain discipline throughout. The two microphones provided in the virtual classroom are being used effectively during the sessions.

Both boys and girls actively participate, competing to answer questions and respond to the speakers. Our teachers have also observed that these students have become more confident and spontaneous in expressing their thoughts.



D.V.S. Durga Prasad
Teacher Coordinator,
RKM. High School,
Sitanagaram

Nurturing Youth Leadership Program (NYLP)

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.

Summer Internship Program



Research and Program Development Intern – SIPA, Columbia University

Yini Li successfully completed her tenure as a Research and Program Development Intern. Her work focused on donor and stakeholder management, supporting research, communications, and strategic outreach to enhance 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.



Research Intern – Brown University

Aditi Dey, from Brown University, completed her internship as Research Intern with Ek Kadam Aur Foundation, contributing to the development and evaluation of the Arunodaya (Sunrise) for Children with Blindness Program. Her work involved critical data analysis, and impact assessment aimed at improving the effectiveness and scalability of our inclusive education initiatives.



Data Optimization Intern – St. Xavier's University

Kousiki Chowdhury, a student from St. Xavier's University, served as a Data Optimization Intern with Ek Kadam Aur Foundation. She worked extensively with existing program data to streamline documentation systems, enhance data accuracy, and improve the efficiency of internal reporting mechanisms.



Our Impact Partners



Edwards

J.C. FLOWERS
ASSET RECONSTRUCTION

During this quarter, our partnerships with key supporters continued to strengthen the Arunodaya Program's reach and sustainability.

- **Edward Lifesciences** extended a generous grant to support children with blindness under the Arunodaya (Sunrise) Program. This partnership will enable us to provide accessible learning materials, assistive technology, and specialized educator support, ensuring that every child continues to learn with dignity and independence.
- **J.C. Flowers Asset Reconstruction Private Limited (JCF ARC)** renewed their partnership this quarter, continuing their support for 100 children. Their sustained commitment reflects a deep trust in our mission and ensures uninterrupted access to quality education, digital literacy, and life skills training for visually impaired learners.

Together, these partnerships are helping us expand opportunities for children with blindness and create a lasting social impact through inclusive education.





Saumya Tripathi – Building Lives with Empathy



Some stories are not written in comfort; they are carved from courage. The journey of Saumya Tripathi, Director of Program Development and Expansion at Ek Kadam Aur Foundation for Education and Health, is one such story. It is a path built on questioning norms, rebuilding systems, and reimagining what inclusion truly means in Indian education.

Raised by a strong, independent mother, Saumya grew up witnessing quiet determination. Her mother's mantra, "Make every odd situation work in your favor," became the foundation of her life. When faced with the option of a secure government job, Saumya chose purpose over comfort. Even after marriage, she continued living with her mother to care for her, a decision rooted in love and gratitude, supported wholeheartedly by her husband and in-laws.

From a young age, Saumya was a child who never stopped asking why. *"I never liked memorizing for marks,"* she says. That curiosity led her from Electrical Engineering into Education. *"I could build systems,"* she reflects, *"but I wanted to build lives."*

Destiny intervened one evening when Dr. Satish Tripathi, Founder of Ek Kadam Aur Foundation, was trying to order a pizza, but his call accidentally reached a school teacher in Auraiya, Uttar Pradesh. When he mentioned the Foundation's vision, the teacher immediately thought of Saumya. That chance connection marked the beginning of her journey with the Foundation. She began her first teaching assignment in a small village called Jhawar ka Purva in Uttar Pradesh. What started as a modest effort to teach a handful of children soon became her life's purpose.

In that village, Saumya met the raw face of reality. Many children chewed tobacco, skipped school, and lacked direction. Teaching them meant transforming their environment, not just their lessons. She began training older students to teach younger ones, turning learning into a collective effort. These young educators made education a community movement. She also expanded her work to Panhar Government School, where she integrated yoga, dance, and drama into lessons, turning classrooms into lively spaces of creativity and curiosity.

Then came the encounter that would change her life, her meeting with Ananya, a little girl who was blind. Ananya's fierce determination to learn, even without sight, revealed to Saumya that children with blindness lacked not ability, but opportunity. Parents, unsure how to help, often excluded their children from daily life. Teachers, too, struggled to include them. Saumya realized that true inclusion begins with empathy, with seeing the child first, not the disability.

That realization gave birth, in 2022, to the Arunodaya (Sunrise) Program for Children with Blindness, designed not only to teach children but to empower parents, teachers, and communities to participate in inclusion. Through Arunodaya, Saumya helped develop a model where technology meets empathy, combining digital literacy, orientation and mobility training, and life skills to help children with blindness live independently and confidently.

What began with one child's determination has now become a national movement. In just three and half years, the Arunodaya Program has reached over 740 children across India. Guided by Dr. Satish Tripathi's vision and Saumya's leadership, over 140 educators and mentors now work across eight states to ensure that every child learns with dignity and joy. The program also integrates AI-based monitoring to enhance accountability and support, not to replace people but to strengthen human-centered education.

"Arunodaya was never about one person," Saumya says. "It's about people coming together around a shared dream."

Ek Kadam Aur Foundation became the ground where Saumya evolved as a leader. Under Dr. Tripathi's mentorship, she learned to blend empathy with strategy and vision with execution. The platform also opened opportunities for her to collaborate with professionals and scholars from Harvard University, New York University, and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), bringing global perspectives into India's inclusive education movement. Over time, she began representing the Foundation in collaborations with government bodies, CSR partners, and academic institutions, working to align policy, technology, and community-based innovation.

For Saumya, leadership is not about titles or recognition. It is about building systems that sustain impact. Whether guiding educators in remote villages or presenting at national forums, her focus remains unchanged, to ensure that every child with blindness not only learns but thrives.

"I feel alive when I'm solving real-world problems," she says. "Every challenge is an opportunity to make learning meaningful."

From a curious child who always asked why to a leader shaping how, Saumya Tripathi's journey is a testament to courage, innovation, and compassion. In a nation striving for inclusive growth, she stands as living proof that when innovation meets empathy, one woman's conviction can become a guiding light for many.

***"I took unconventional paths," Saumya reflects.
"But they led me to where I truly belong, helping others rise."***

We thank you for your continued support !



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