



NalandaWay Foundation

Annual Report

April 2022 - March 2023



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Message from the Founder

Dear Friends,

Last year there were a lot of firsts at NalandaWay.

- Our partnership with the Government of National Capital Territory (NCT) of Delhi in developing the Delhi Arts Curriculum saw the completion of the pilot and the launch of the pilot study report by the Honourable Minister of Education Ms. Atishi Singh. The Director of Education, Shri. Himanshu Gupta, IAS, announced to the media that the Delhi Arts Curriculum will be scaled to all primary schools this academic year 2023-24.
- Honourable Minister of Education Tamil Nadu, Thiru. Anbil Mahesh, during the budget session of the Legislative Assembly, announced that the “Adolescent Well-being Programme” developed by NalandaWay in partnership with UNICEF would be scaled across all high schools in the state of Tamil Nadu.
- Our annual income from grants and donations crossed Rs. 6.6 crores for the first time since our inception 17 years ago.

We would not have come this far without the support of the many friends who have worked together, donors who supported us, partners and many other well-wishers who stood by us through thick and thin. I am also grateful that our vision, “to empower children and adolescents from disadvantaged communities through art and nurture them into hopeful, resilient and fearless individuals,” has largely been intact, without any distractions. In the coming year, we are more empowered to take our adolescent wellbeing and structured arts education projects to the next level through our partnerships with state governments.

While we are excited at the opportunities in the coming year, I am reminded of this saying by Mahatma Gandhi - “I will give you a talisman. Whenever you are in doubt, or when the self becomes too much with you, apply the following test. Recall the face of the poorest and the weakest man [woman] whom you may have seen, and ask yourself, if the step you contemplate is going to be of any use to him [her]. Will he [she] gain anything by it? Will it restore him [her] to a control over his [her] own life and destiny? In other words, will it lead to swaraj [freedom] for the hungry and spiritually starving millions? Then you will find your doubts and your self melt away.”

With my deepest gratitude and love,



Sriram V
Founder and CEO

At NalandaWay Foundation, we believe that whole child development needs education, art and mental well-being. And that's exactly how our projects are structured too - All our projects fall under three verticals,

1) Holistic Education

2) Expressive Arts

3) Well-being and Mental Health

1. HOLISTIC EDUCATION

Early Childhood

Gutar Goo

An early childhood literacy and arts initiative to support children between ages 3 and 6 years in the *anganwadis* of Noida.

Children in Transition

Foundational Learning in Standards 1, 2 and 5

Building foundational literacy and numeracy (FLN) and social emotional learning (SEL) skills for students in Standards 1, 2 and 5 in selected government schools across Chennai.

Adolescent Girls

Project Sakhi

Empowering adolescent girls from difficult and challenging backgrounds through a holistic programme in Chennai, Delhi, Bengaluru, Coimbatore, Thiruvananthapuram, Gurgaon, Pune, and Hyderabad.



Gutar Goo

 Noida, Uttar Pradesh

Gutar Goo is an early literacy and arts initiative of NalandaWay Foundation, designed with the objective of fostering the holistic development of children in the age group of 3-6 years.

Gutar Goo entered its third iteration in 2022-23. The project employed engaging storytelling and arts-based pedagogy to advance foundational literacy and numeracy skills (FLN), social emotional learning (SEL), and school readiness competencies along with promoting health and hygiene practices. We have also been strengthening and capacitating ecosystems (parents/

caregivers and *anganwadi* workers) to support young children's learning needs to enable smooth transitions, through workshops. The curriculum and workbooks were aligned with the Pahal Curriculum of the Government of Uttar Pradesh.

Impact Numbers

- 4 district training programmes conducted
- 18 engaging stories created
- 70 *anganwadi* workers upskilled
- 300 preschool children benefitted

“ Your workshops help us tremendously. There's always something new to learn from the NalandaWay facilitators. ”

- Anganwadi worker about the training programme



Foundational Learning in Standards 1, 2 and 5



Chennai, Tamil Nadu

The Foundational Learning project seeks to build foundational literacy and numeracy skills in primary school students, aged 6 to 10 years. The project works with schools run by Tamil Nadu's State Government and the Greater Chennai Corporation. We work with students in Standards 1, 2 and 5 to bridge

the learning gaps and develop their basic language and numeracy skills.

SEL is incorporated to ensure the holistic growth of every child. The project framework is based on the National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) guidelines, the Ennum Ezhuthum mission and the Samacheer Kalvi syllabus of Tamil Nadu. Our pedagogy includes activity-based learning and higher-order thinking practice.

Over the past year, we worked with domain and field experts to develop curriculum frameworks, lesson plans and teacher manuals. The project was implemented by NalandaWay's teaching assistants who worked closely with students, while also conducting a unique 'train the trainers'

programme.

Impact Numbers

- 12 schools and Panchayat Unions involved
- 34 teachers engaged
- 1790 students benefitted

“ I am really impressed with the curriculum and teaching methodologies.

The practice worksheets are very well thought out and really help the students with explaining the concepts clearly. It compels the students and teachers alike to think beyond the textbook, which was corroborated by the parents who expressed their children's performance levels have seen an improvement too. ”

- Teaching Assistant, Chennai





Project Sakhi



Chennai, Bangalore,
Thiruvananthapuram,
Hyderabad, Gurgaon,
Pune, Coimbatore
and Delhi

Project Sakhi is an intensive holistic development programme for adolescent girls. The project began in 2019 in Chennai and has since blossomed into nine cohorts. The objective is to equip girls from disadvantaged backgrounds to help them transition into thriving and resilient adults. Through our sessions, we empower them with the knowledge, attitude, habits, and skills to be self-sufficient individuals with agency and become contributors to the community.

The project has been running in seven schools and two childcare institutions

across seven states. Apart from direct intervention with the girls themselves, this year, we focused on providing periodic physical health awareness camps, and community sensitisation sessions with the larger student body, parents and other stakeholders.

Impact Numbers

- 7 states
- 9 cohorts
- 225 girls benefitted

“ No matter how challenging it is to run this project in seven different states while keeping the socio-cultural context of each cohort in mind, it is an extremely gratifying experience to see how much impact is created in each individual girl we work with, and the ripple effect that the project creates in the community. It makes all of the effort worth it! ”

- Senior Manager, Project Sakhi

2. EXPRESSIVE ARTS

Art integration in Schools and Communities

Art Vandis

A bright and colourful truck that travels across urban and rural Tamil Nadu, teaching art to children and community members.

Arts in Education

Creating a joyful art experience for young learners studying in Standards 1-5 through the introduction of different art mediums in the classroom.

NalandaWay Children's Choir

Chennai Children's Choir Delhi Children's Choir

Tapping into the transformative powers of music to help children emerge as more confident, hopeful and skillful beings.

Structured Art Education

Delhi Arts Curriculum

An initiative by the Government of NCT of Delhi and NalandaWay Foundation to bring about curriculum reforms by including arts in the mainstream education system.



Art Vandi



Across Tamil Nadu

In October 2022, we launched Art Vandi (art truck), an art-based intervention benefitting children, community members, teachers, and artists across Tamil Nadu.

Imagine art on wheels. A bright and colourful art truck, travelling through cities and rural areas, snaking through roads and lanes, along bumpy roads – creating a storm of art everywhere it goes...Its insides

are filled with colours and chart papers, masks and music, screens and stages... carrying a magical world. Now imagine what happens when this magical creature stops by a village for a few days. Think of the celebration of life it heralds for everyone and especially young children. That's what the Art Vandi is all about!

The Art Vandi experience is designed as a five-day workshop mainly for children in standards 6 to 8. Each day, students do different art-based activities and are divided into groups to create art-based outputs such as puppets, storybooks, theatre performances, zines, calligraphy, and photographs. On the final day, the children's

artwork is showcased in the form of an art carnival for the other children, teachers, parents and community members. During the carnival, the children put up a theatre performance and a movie is screened for children in primary grades.

Between November 2022 to March 2023, the Art Vandi travelled across schools in Chengalpattu district, Tamil Nadu. We also worked with students who are a part of our other projects, namely Vanam Vasapadum and Project Sakhi.

Impact Numbers

- 11 schools in Chengalpattu, 1 school in Chennai and 1 government home involved
- 100+ teachers engaged
- 127 storybooks created
- 2307 children benefitted

“ I wish I could puncture the tyre of the Art Vandi so that the truck never leaves my school. ”

- Student, Singaperumal Kovil





Arts in Education



Chennai, Tamil Nadu

NalandaWay's Arts in Education (AIE) programme aims to create a joyful learning experience for children through art. We train teaching assistants and teachers to expand upon the creativity of their students by integrating fine arts, music, drama,

and theatre exercises in teaching. The programme helps in engaging children better in classrooms, thus reducing absenteeism and drop-out rates.

In total, 36 Arts in Education sessions were conducted for students in Standards 1 to 5. During this academic year, the students were given exposure to visual arts and theatre. These sessions were conducted in two phases. Phase 1 consisted of sessions facilitated by the NalandaWay teaching assistants. Phase 2 comprised sessions conducted by school teachers and co-facilitated by teaching assistants. This was

done as an attempt to make teachers more involved and to build a more sustainable model of the project. To end the academic year and celebrate the progress so far, art exhibitions were conducted in all schools and students presented their artwork from the sessions they had during the year.

Impact Numbers

- 18 corporation schools across Chennai involved
- 135 art material kits distributed
- 120 teachers engaged
- 4500+ primary school students benefited
- 1,08,000 artworks created

“ Since we don't have any art classes, these Arts in Education sessions help a lot in giving them exposure to art. We also use some of these techniques in our academic classes. ”

- Teacher, CMS Angalamman Koil



Children in CPS Ganeshapuram were in tears as it was their last Arts in Education class for the academic year.





NalandaWay Children's Choir

 *Chennai and Delhi*

The NalandaWay Children's Choir (Chennai Children's Choir and Delhi Children's Choir) is one of our most prized initiatives. It aims to encourage children from the society's fringes to hone their musical and choral skills, while also addressing their SEL and life skills. The programme has been implemented in Chennai for the past eight years and in Delhi for the last five years. The choir students practise and rehearse

diligently throughout the year to refine their musical abilities. They are exposed to a rich curriculum which enables children to study music from beginner, intermediate to advanced level(s) through five distinct courses, namely: (i) Voice Fitness (ii) Repertoire (iii) Individuality (iv) Instruments' Knowledge and (v) Concert Presentation. Across both the chapters of the choir, 14 classes are conducted every term (three months). The curriculum spans four terms each year, offering the students a comprehensive and consistent learning experience.

In addition, we introduced SEL sessions for children this year, which connects the concepts in music to the core competencies of SEL. These include SEL domains of self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills and

responsible decision-making. We also initiated the 'Drum Circle Ensemble' which added a joyful layer to the musical learning of choir students.

Delhi Children's Choir's highlight came in the form of their first performance in over two years due to the break enforced by the pandemic. The performance titled 'O Le Le' was hosted by the Kiran Nadar Museum of Art in Saket, Delhi. Members of the choir seamlessly blended folk songs, with the songs heralding values of peace and harmony. The venue was packed to the brim with over 200 attendees which included parents, representatives from leading development sector organisations, as well as officials from the Government of NCT of Delhi, all coming together to make it an evening to cherish.

Impact Numbers

- 8 performances
- 100+ children trained

“ Chennai Children's Choir is a wonderful learning space. Here we get to learn not just music but also many other values. The teachers are not strict, they are understanding and help each one of us go at our own pace. My favourite part is getting to learn songs in many different languages apart from those in my mother tongue, Tamil. Personally, my favourite new language is Bengali. While learning to sing in this language, I have found it to be very similar to Tamil, which makes me feel happy. ”

- Student, Chennai Children's Choir





Delhi Arts Curriculum



The Delhi Arts Curriculum is an initiative by the Government of NCT of Delhi and NalandaWay Foundation to bring about curriculum reforms by including arts in the mainstream education system. The curriculum aims to enable children to have rich, holistic and immersive experiences in visual and performing arts - gaining art-based competencies across five art forms, exposure to local and global art and

developing important social-emotional skills.

The project employed a wide range of art and domain experts to create a set of lesson plans for each age group.

A first of its kind, the pilot project began in the academic year 2022-23 and was run in nine government-run schools in Delhi. It employed four distinct approaches;

- Art Exhibition (ages 4-10)
- Musical Theatre (ages 12-13)
- Musical Poetry (ages 8-10)
- Artful School Transformation

The project was implemented by a team of NalandaWay's teaching artists who took the lead in delivering rich, well-researched

lesson plans with gradual transition to the sessions being conducted by the school teachers themselves. Before the teachers took over the baton, the teaching artists conducted a series of Teacher Transformation sessions with the teachers getting hands-on experience with various art forms to increase their confidence in conducting art-based sessions with their students.

At the end, the students, teachers and teaching artists organised an Arts Carnival in each of their schools which saw the parents becoming a part of the programmes as well. The Musical Theatre approach culminated with the students setting up their own stage production with the responsibilities of

costume design, art direction, script writing, direction and performance, with support from the NalandaWay teaching artists.

Impact Numbers

- 9 schools involved
- 89 teachers engaged
- 3989 children benefitted

“ Earlier, the students were not very confident. When I first came, they couldn't even say their names properly but now they sing it aloud. Students who couldn't speak are now dancing and making music. ”

- Ashra, Teaching Artist



3. WELL-BEING AND MENTAL HEALTH

Adolescents

Life Skills through Musical Theatre

Harnessing the strengths of art and theatre-based methodologies to build life skills in adolescents across Tamil Nadu

Vanam Vasapadum

Creating joyful art experiences for children in government-run homes that build their sense of self and well-being by means of a trauma-informed expressive arts intervention.



Life Skills through Musical Theatre

 *Across Tamil Nadu*

Life Skills through Musical Theatre project, launched in October 2022, harnesses the power of arts and theatre-based methodologies to benefit 9th standards students in government and government-aided schools across Tamil Nadu. Through this initiative, we aim to enhance students' life skills, aligning with the recommendations of the World Health

Organization (WHO), while fostering a positive attitude towards education and nurturing their artistic abilities.

In the course of implementation, training workshops were conducted to equip teachers with the necessary knowledge and skills to effectively facilitate Musical Theatre sessions.

We undertook a comprehensive evaluation of the intervention, employing quantitative and qualitative methodologies. The findings show that students displayed enhanced creative confidence, indicating their growing artistic abilities. They had improved awareness and knowledge about the WHO-endorsed life skills. The project played a vital role in improving students' attendance while also enhancing teacher-student relationships. The students showed refined self-expression, improved peer relationships, and enhanced leadership skills.

Impact Numbers

- 269 theatre play productions performed
- 455 schools and teachers engaged
- 15768 students benefitted

“ Through the Musical Theatre sessions, I was able to gradually get over my shyness. I found a friend in my own class where I earlier felt that I did

not belong. Now, we always spend time together. I did not talk to anyone in school and would wear a mask regularly, to hide my face and expressions from the other students and teachers. The Musical Theatre sessions and my friend helped me express myself better and made me feel like I can show my face to my classmates and even others in the school. ”

- Student, Government Higher Secondary School, Vellamadai, Coimbatore





Vanam Vasapadum



Across Tamil Nadu

The Vanam Vasapadum (The Sky is Ours) project is designed specifically for children and adolescents in government-run childcare homes. The project utilises trauma-informed expressive arts interventions to foster self-reflection through visual and performing arts. It offers a safe and exploratory environment where children can express their emotions, and develop peer connections while acquiring art, social emotional, and life skills.

The project underwent significant expansion this year reaching out to eight new sets of homes. Throughout the year, a diverse range of activities were planned and implemented across different homes. At some homes, we hosted workshops on photography and film-making, while at others we initiated Zumba sessions and musical instrument training. NalandaWay's Art Vandi (Art Truck) visited one of the homes and conducted a unique and fun workshop that focused on the children creating their own storybooks.

Special sessions were organised to discuss important aspects such as career awareness and stress management, featuring experts from their respective fields. Art closure events and annual events were organised at all the homes, offering opportunities

for the children to showcase their artistic accomplishments and celebrate their collective achievements.

Impact Numbers

- 14 districts of Tamil Nadu reached
- 18 government-run homes involved
- 54 performances (visual and performing arts)
- 90 staff members engaged
- 650 children benefitted
- Around 2000 sessions conducted

“ We are so happy to see our children's outstanding performances. Through these events, we could understand how talented our children are! Thank you NalandaWay for giving our children such opportunities. ”

- Staff at one of the government-run homes





NalandaWay Institute

Over the last 17 years, we have used art and play to serve more than six million children from disadvantaged communities in becoming creative, confident, resilient and joyful. We have worked with adult caregivers and teachers to help foster nurturing safe spaces for children and prioritise positive and preventive mental health for all.

In January 2023, we launched NalandaWay Institute to extend ourselves to join hands with others. NalandaWay Institute is the training and consulting arm of NalandaWay Foundation, offering capacity-building, tools and resources, and strategic partnerships. Since the launch, we hosted an open

webinar on Mental Health 101 and a two day experiential workshop in Mumbai covering mental well-being for adolescents.

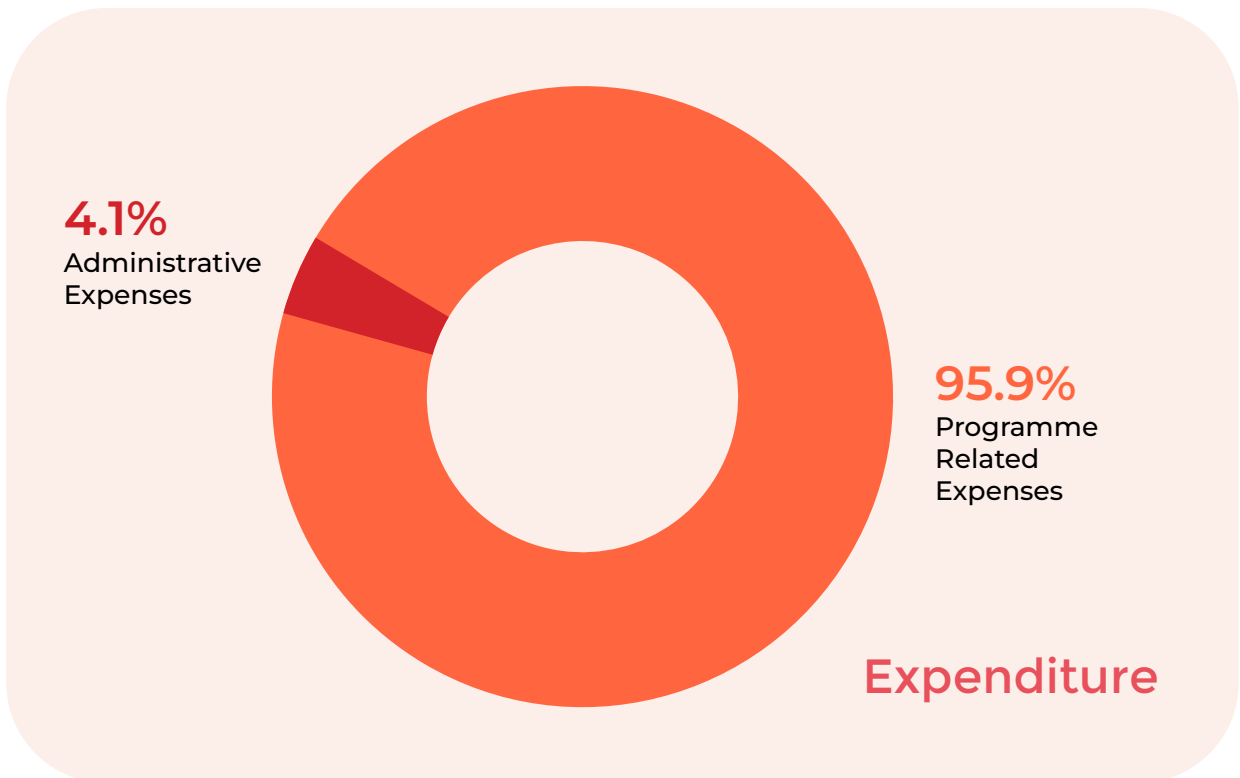
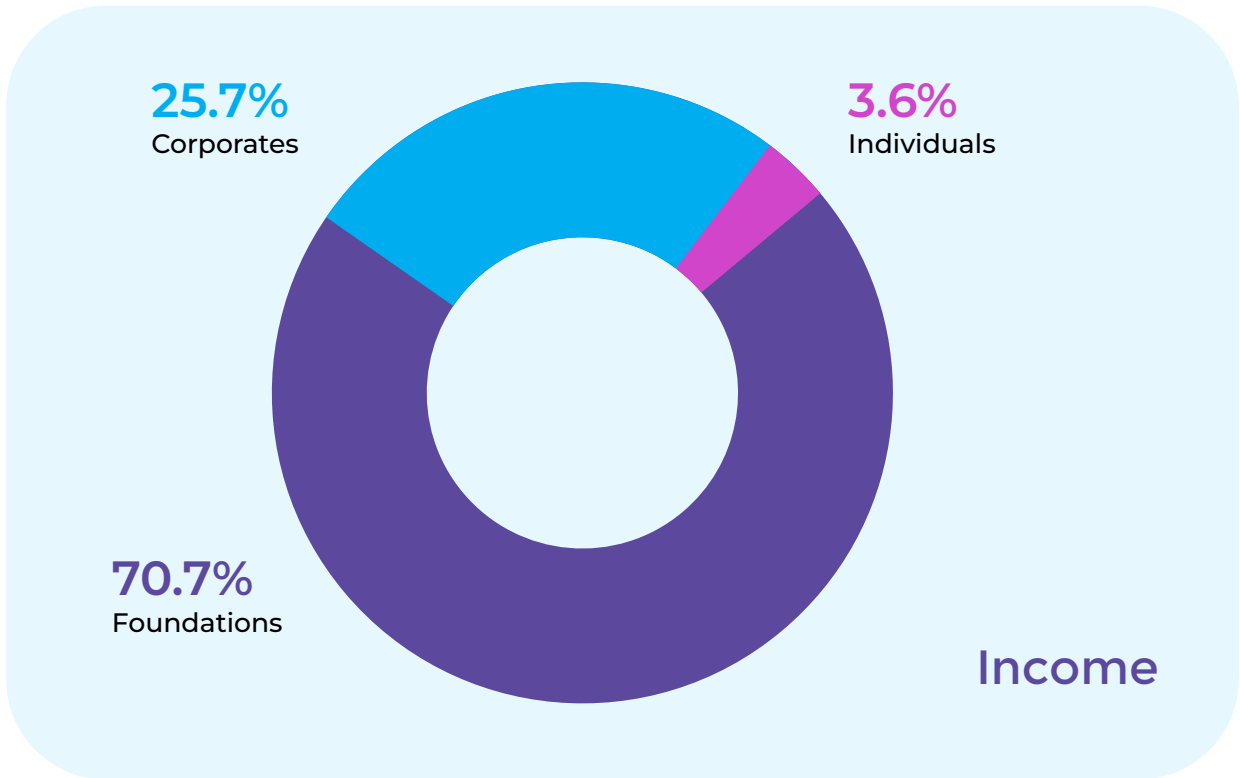
“ Really love the way the workshop was designed. I was able to connect with my own well-being. I had many meaningful discussions and conversations. Thank you so much for this beautiful opportunity. All the facilitators made us feel comfortable and created a safe space to express our feelings and thoughts. ”

- Participant of the experiential workshop



Financials

For the financial year April 2022 - March 2023



Partners



सत्यमेव जयते
Government of the National
Capital Territory of Delhi





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