



Reveries of Wonder

September - October 2025

Youth Take the Lead:
Mime on Digital Safety and
Arts-Based Well-being,
Reach 2100 Children



Peer leadership expands
across Child Care
Institutions in Tamil Nadu as
13 care leavers step forward



Empowerment in action:
Project Sakhi expands life
skills education with
financial literacy sessions
for 105 adolescents



Dear NalandaWay Community,

As we enter the final stretch of the year, here's a snapshot of what September and October looked like across our programmes — and what you'll find in this edition.

In early childhood spaces, hundreds of parents and caregivers joined Community and Mothers' Circles across Tilapta and 14 Anganwadis in Bengaluru, strengthening everyday learning at home. In Chennai, arts-based learning across 29 schools helped children participate with more focus and confidence.

Among adolescents, Child Care Institutions, 13 care leavers stepped into peer mentorship, and 38 Government Home Superintendents completed a session on compassionate, child-centred leadership — strengthening support systems statewide.

We also return as a charity partner at the Freshworks Chennai Marathon on 4 January 2026, with staff, friends, and supporters running for children's empowerment and well-being.

Thank you for walking with us through every milestone. This is our final edition of the year — we'll see you again in January. Wishing you a safe, restful, and hopeful start to the new year.

With regards,
The NalandaWay Team



EARLY CHILDHOOD

Our initiatives with 0-10-year-old children were designed to improve their school readiness using the arts in fostering emotional well-being.

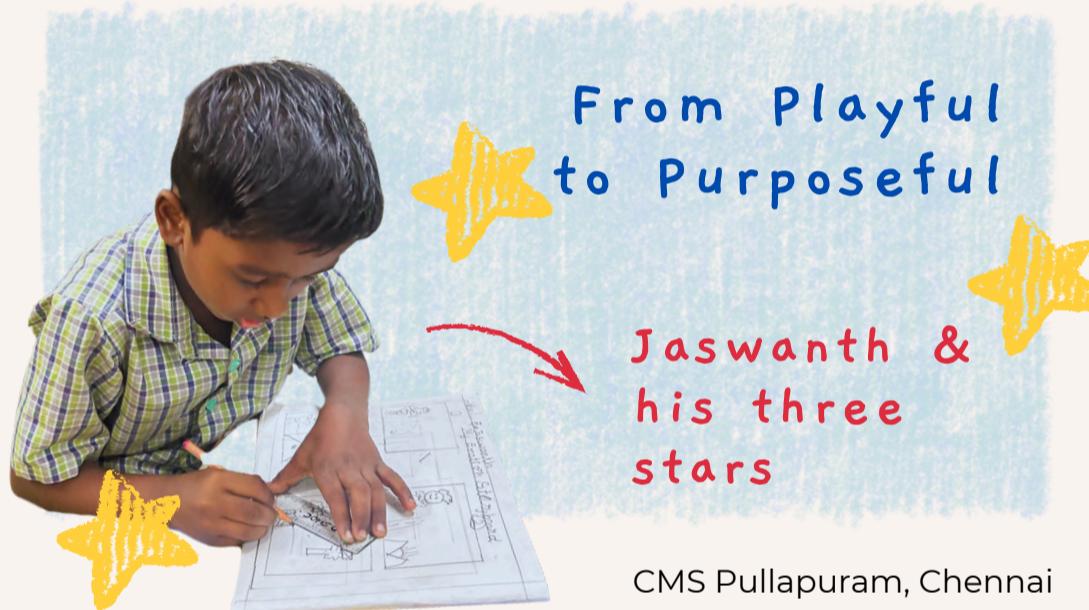


ARTS in Education

📍 Chennai

Little Stories, Big Changes!

From a playful sketch to a superhero dad — how art helped children see confidence, kindness, and home-grown heroes.



When Nalandaway's teaching artist first met Jaswanth S, a third-grader at CMS Pullapuram, she saw a boy bursting with energy — playful, curious, and often distracted. For the first few sessions, he found it hard to stay still or focus.

Everything changed during the first visual-art session. Once the materials were handed out, Jaswanth grew intent. He copied a picture from the classroom wall, but his lines were careful and confident. Sensing potential, the teaching artist told the class: "Those whose artwork is truly their own will receive three stars."

The next day, Jaswanth worked in silence, drawing entirely from imagination. When he received his three stars, his wide smile said it all — pride, purpose, and a new love for art. Since then, he's been one of the first to pick up a pencil whenever it's time to draw!

Art, Collaboration, and Capacity-Building in Our Schools

At CPS OLK Area and CMS CMDA Maduravoyal, 146 volunteers engaged 192 students through collaborative art sessions like tape art and mask-making. These sessions encouraged teamwork, expression, and joy, leaving classrooms buzzing with colour and laughter.

Following quarterly breaks, art-based sessions resumed across 29 schools, helping children reconnect with learning and rediscover focus.



At CMS Ramanathapuram, the classroom buzzed with talk of heroes. The day's theme was "Unique Characters" — each child was to think of someone they admired and design their own character inspired by them.

While most children named superheroes from films and cartoons, S Prinathi, also in Class III, thought for a long while. When asked who her hero was, she said, "My father."

She explained that her father is kind, patient, and always supportive. When the facilitator asked about his "superpower," Prinathi grinned: "My dad's superpower is making cream buns appear — because that's my favourite treat, and he buys it for me every time I ask!"

Then she began to draw — her father as her superhero, surrounded by cream buns and a beaming smile.

Why These Stories Matter

Both Jaswanth and Prinathi remind us that such creative moments can lead to something lasting — focus, pride, empathy, or gratitude. In every classroom we enter, art becomes a language of possibility.

gutargoo

Uttar Pradesh

Where Play Teaches, and Communities Learn Together

During Poshan Maah, over 200 parents and children from 15 ICDS centres explored nutrition through play and storytelling. Fathers joined food-sorting games that challenged their assumptions about healthy choices, while mothers crafted clay thalis to discuss affordable, diverse meals.

The first Community Circle in Tilapta village created neighbourhood spaces where caregivers now share parenting ideas and everyday learning tips with each other.



Kanna Moochi

Chennai

A Season of Connection

In September, as part of Grandparents' Day, children invited their grandparents to the centres. Through songs, stories, and simple activities, children expressed love and respect for elders. The event strengthened intergenerational bonds and brought families closer to the programme.

Teaching Assistants attended training in puppet-based storytelling and peer-led planning, enabling them to lead imaginative, engaging classroom sessions.



kanna mucchē

Bengaluru

Parenting, Pedagogy, and Well-being Take Centre Stage

In Bengaluru, 220 mothers from 14 Anganwadis participated in Mothers' Circles that promoted mindfulness, empathy, and responsive parenting.

Teacher capacity-building sessions introduced storytelling, puppetry, and creative material-making — helping educators make every story come alive.

Children practised simple meditation and explored stories on healthy eating, exercise, sleep, and friendships — building awareness around emotional and physical well-being.



From Silence to Speech

When Tejas, aged three-and-a-half, first joined his Anganwadi centre, he hardly spoke a word. He communicated through gestures — pointing, nodding, or tugging at his teacher's hand — but speech felt distant.

In the weeks that followed, his teacher patiently engaged him through play, songs, and stories from the Kanna Mucchē curriculum. Slowly, Tejas began to hum along, then whisper, and eventually form words. Today, he sings rhymes, names his favourite story songs, and asks for the speaker when it's time for music.

He loves story time, especially the Kanna Mucchē songs, and often brings his colouring books to the teacher, eager for guidance. His parents say, "We weren't sure if school would help him speak, but now he's talking so much more clearly. We're amazed."

(Notes from an Anganwadi Centre in the Kanna Mucchē Project)



Foundational Learning

📍 Chennai

From Masks to Mastery: Students Make Their Mark

At CMS Shollinganallur, volunteers led a mask-making session with Grade 4 and 5 learners, followed by progress-card distribution and an exchange of handmade thank-you cards — strengthening connection between students, teachers, and visitors.

During a partner visit to Periyapalayam schools, teachers highlighted how new learning resources are improving participation and focus in class. Conversations also underscored areas where continued support can further enhance foundational skills.



FRESHWORKS CHENNAI MARATHON 2026

A COLLECTIVE RUN FOR CHILDREN'S WELL-BEING

NalandaWay returns as a charity partner for the Freshworks Chennai Marathon on 4 January 2026. Last year, our team, friends, and supporters ran to champion children's creative and emotional well-being — raising funds that directly strengthened programmes across Chennai. This year, the movement continues.

Several runners have already registered, created fundraisers, and rallied their communities to support art, mental well-being, and joyful learning for children. Their commitment reminds us that the marathon is a collective stride toward a world where every child can dream freely and grow with confidence.

**AS WE GEAR UP FOR RACE DAY, WE INVITE MORE SUPPORTERS TO JOIN US
— BY RUNNING, FUNDRAISING, OR CHEERING OUR TEAM ON.**

freshworks
CHENNAI™
➡➡➡ MARATHON

powered by  **ASHOK LEYLAND**
Koi Manzil Door Nahin



Scan the QR code
to register or start
your fundraiser.

ADOLESCENCE

Recognising the challenges adolescents face, our emotional well-being interventions were designed to improve school engagement and prosocial behaviour. Programmes included workshops, games and activities focused on mental health awareness and peer support.



Project Sakhi

Chennai, Bengaluru, Hyderabad, Delhi, Thirunvanthapuram & Pune

PARTNERS IN CHANGE: LISTENING, LEARNING, AND GROWING TOGETHER

GlobalLogic representatives — Monika Walia, CSR Lead, and Swarnendu Biswas, Programs, CSR — visited Sakhi sites in Hyderabad and Pune to witness the programme's impact firsthand and engage with scholars, teachers, and parents.

In Hyderabad, Swarnendu met the Headmistress, class teachers, and Sakhi girls for an interactive session on education, values, and aspiration. Drawing from his own life, he spoke about perseverance and purpose, leaving the students visibly inspired. He also visited the homes of three Sakhi girls, where parents shared their hopes and appreciation for the project's continued support.

GlobalLogic

A Hitachi Group Company



In Pune, both visitors interacted with scholars and parents during the half-yearly donor visit, gathering valuable feedback on the programme's progress. Scholars spoke confidently about how Sakhi has strengthened their confidence, communication, and behaviour, while parents shared the joy of seeing their daughters grow more self-assured.

The visits reinforced how collaboration and care can create lasting change — not only in classrooms, but in homes and communities as well.



Health Checks, Financial Literacy for 105 Students, and 300 Reached Through Social Media Awareness

In Bengaluru, three cohorts attended a comprehensive health camp that helped identify and address early health concerns in ENT, skin, and menstrual care. Teachers also participated in a reflective workshop on adolescent development and mental well-being, deepening classroom support and collaboration.

In Hyderabad, the girls celebrated Teacher's Day with performances, leadership activities, and art competitions, while a movie outing offered joy and bonding beyond the classroom.

In Perambur and Choolai, a financial literacy session reached 105 students beyond the project, introducing practical lessons in saving, budgeting, and investing. Parent workshops on self-love brought together 21 parents, helping them prioritise their own well-being — many pledged to spend at least ten minutes daily on activities they enjoy.

Sakhi girls in Perambur also used art and performance to spread awareness. Their mime on social media safety engaged 300 students, sparking conversations on responsible digital behaviour.

In Delhi's Ambedkar Nagar, Friendship Day celebrations and 17 home visits helped build trust between the Sakhi team, parents, and scholars, ensuring better participation.



FLN Rolled Out in Two Schools; Art Sessions Reach 1,200 Learners

FLN curriculum was introduced for the first time in two Apollo Schools (Grades 3 and 4). Over two months, the team developed English and Maths workbooks aligned with NEP and NIPUN Bharat guidelines.

NalandaWay's Art Curriculum reached 1,200 learners across four Apollo Schools from September, with sessions in theatre, music, and visual arts — including museum-freeze role play, colour exploration, and Voice Adventure lessons on sargam, sur, and alankar.



IMPACT

At MCD Primary School, Gautampuri **280** learners from Grades 4 and 5 participated in a drawing competition on the theme "*Those Who Light Our Way.*"



Delhi Children's Choir

DCC's Emotional Resonance on Stage

On October 17, during their performance at Vivanta Taj, Surajkund (Faridabad), the Delhi Children's Choir turned challenges into harmony. Despite exam pressures and limited rehearsal time, the children showed remarkable leadership and composure — one of the oldest members, Noor-e-saba, led the entire ensemble.

Their repertoire, *Yaadon ki Almari*, blended memory, music, and emotion, moving the audience to two standing ovations. The concert became a shared moment of reflection and joy, leaving listeners deeply stirred — and earning the choir a potential offer for a future film feature from the Director of EX Squared.



Human Resources

200 Staff Trained in CPP and POSH

Over 100 participants attended a Child Protection Policy (CPP) session with the CPP–National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPC) team, enabling a shared understanding of child safety.

Over 100 employees participated in POSH training led by the Enfold Organisation, reaffirming our commitment to safe workplaces.

A session by our HR team at RGNIYD College supported 28 students in job-search strategies and networking skills.

Chennai Children's Choir

30 Young Singers Join the 8th Choir Batch

The Choir held auditions across five schools — 200 students participated, and 30 were selected for the 8th batch. The new members began regular rehearsals at Savithri Ammal Oriental School.



Kalakriti

Mandala Colours and Diya Art Light Up Kalakriti's Diwali Stall in Faridabad

Kalakriti's Diwali Stall at the EX Squared office in Faridabad drew children and adults into mindful art-making through mandala colouring and diya painting.

The event drew support from participants and visitors, showing how art can unite communities.



Well-Being and Skilling of Children in Child Care Institutions

📍 34 Districts across Tamil Nadu

Peer Leadership Expands in CCIs as 13 Care Leavers Step Up; Academic Support Boosts Exam Performance

This quarter, 13 care leavers were trained as Peer Champions to mentor younger peers with empathy and patience. The Peer Championship workshop, facilitated by Mr Vinoth, focused on the theme "Don't be a dictator; be a leader" and built skills in collaboration, listening, and role-modelling.



“I too faced similar fears during my first year. Now I tell my juniors, ‘We seniors are here for you.’

— Sridhar (name changed)

Art Vandi

📍 Chennai



“A New and Exciting Experience”: Art Vandi’s Puppet Workshop Delights Students

The travelling art van resumed its journey with a puppet-storytelling workshop at Savithri Ammal Oriental School. Students animated their own puppets and stories, filling the space with laughter and creativity.

The Head Mistress noted, “The school has never experienced a puppet + storybook workshop before — it was new and exciting for everyone.”



Academic Support Across CCIs



Children received personalised tuition in Math, Science, and Language, helping them strengthen concepts and prepare for unit and quarterly exams. Consistent study support improved clarity, learning habits, and confidence.



Learning Circles for CCI Leads

Regular Learning Circles offered project leads a supportive space to exchange ideas and strengthen facilitation skills. Sessions focused on facilitation techniques, setting healthy boundaries, and well-being for CCI Leads.



“I was very scared of Commerce and even failed in my first unit test. But Akka helped me understand each concept clearly. She gave small portions to study and taught simple techniques to remember important points. Because of her support, I cleared my midterm test, and gave me confidence to score more marks.

— Child in 11th grade, Tenkasi CCI

Well-being for Children Using a Whole-School Approach

📍 Chennai

Emotional Literacy Boosted for 1,876 Students Through Mask-Making and Theatre

Well-being sessions were introduced in four schools, reaching 1,876 children across 62 classrooms (Grades 6–9) through Musical Theatre. Children created emotion masks, using colour, shape, and texture to express feelings, while peer discussions helped them build emotional vocabulary, empathy, and confidence.



The musical theatre introduction song emerged as a favourite, with children describing it as uplifting and confidence-boosting. The mask-making activity saw high enthusiasm, with students enjoying creative work with colour sheets and eagerly requesting additional sessions — even during free periods.



“Making and wearing a mask to show our emotions was such a new and fun experience! I felt incredibly happy and loved doing the activity with all my friends.

— Joshva B, 9th grade

Project Monitoring Unit (PMU)

📍 Chennai

Statewide Push for Child-Centred Care: 38 Superintendents Trained in Empathy & Compassion

As a Project Monitoring Unit (PMU) partner with the Department of Children Welfare and Special Services, Government of Tamil Nadu, NalandaWay conducted an inaugural capacity-building session for 38 Government Home Superintendents at the Integrated Training Centre of Social Empowerment (ITSCE).

The session, themed *Empathy & Compassion in Leadership*, helped superintendents reflect on their leadership styles and explore how empathy can strengthen child-centred care within Child Care Institutions. It laid a strong foundation for future leadership-development efforts across the state.



Work has also begun on a comprehensive training framework and modules to build the capacity of CCI staff. Designed through a preventive mental-health lens, the framework focuses on equipping caregivers to create safe, nurturing, and emotionally responsive environments that promote every child's well-being and growth.

Sampoorna 2.0

📍 Jharkhand

SEL Readiness Gains Momentum as Sampoorna 2.0 Charts Ranchi Classrooms

The Sampoorna 2.0 team completed field visits to 24 high schools across six blocks of Ranchi — Ormanjhi, Ratu, Mandar, Namkum, Itki, and Kanke — mapping school profiles, engaging headmasters, and introducing the project's vision. Despite logistical challenges, the team built strong local partnerships.

Interactive sessions were held at +2 Sadma High School, Ormanjhi, on healthy friendships and gender relationships, helping adolescents explore empathy, respect, and emotional awareness through audio stories and group activities.

Parallel visits to 16 Anganwadi Centres assessed early learning spaces and highlighted the role of play, art, and storytelling in nurturing confidence among young children. These visits also revealed infrastructural needs and opportunities for stronger community participation.

Moving forward, Sampoorna 2.0 will begin Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) facilitation sessions in selected schools, deepening its mission to make emotional learning an integral part of education in Jharkhand.



NALANDAWAY CIRCLES LAUNCHES WITH MENTAL HEALTH WORKSHOP FOR EDUCATORS

The first edition of NalandaWay Circles was held on 28 October, bringing together over 55 participants for My Mind, My Space, a mental health workshop facilitated by Deepika Sharma, child development practitioner-cum-researcher.

Designed for educators, the session focused on self-awareness, empathy, and emotional regulation. Participants engaged in reflection tools, creative exercises, and guided sharing that encouraged them to slow down, notice their emotional cues, and reconnect with themselves.

Feedback described the session as "refreshing," "real," and "deeply grounding." NalandaWay Circles will continue to create reflective learning spaces for educators and practitioners to explore mental health, creativity, and care.

For updates, follow [@nalandaway.org](https://www.instagram.com/nalandaway.org) on Instagram.

ARTS-BASED PARTICIPATORY METHODS FEATURED AT GENERATION MENTAL HEALTH SYMPOSIUM 2025

In September, the Research and Impact Team presented a symposium at the Generation Mental Health – Bridging Voices, Building Future: Youth Innovation in Mental Health Conference 2025 titled "Lived, Felt, and Expressed: Reimagining Youth Mental Health Through Arts-based Participatory Methods."

The presentation demonstrated how arts-based, participatory approaches can create empathetic and inclusive spaces that enable young people to express their feelings, build resilience, and foster a collective sense of mental well-being. Drawing upon three case studies, the presentation centred on young voices and lived experiences as a form of research and reflection through Creative Elicitation, Participatory Learning Action (PLA) workshops rooted in community dialogue, and Game-Based Learning.

Focusing on diverse and creative ways for youth to express themselves, the presentation also highlighted art-based participatory methods that foster agency, authenticity, and dignity.

IMPACT SNAPSHOT

38 Govt. Home Superintendents trained

PMU,
Tamil Nadu

1,200 learners
4 schools

Apollo Schools

1,876 children
62 classrooms

Whole School Well-being Programme

280 learners
Drawing competition
(MCD Gautampuri)



220 Mothers
14 Anganwadi Centres

Kanna Mucche



200+ parents and children
15 ICDS Centres

Gutar Goo

146 volunteers
192 students engaged
Volunteer sessions

29 schools
Arts in Education



4-day
Teaching Artist
Workshop conducted



13 care leavers trained
CCI Peer Champions



105 students
Financial literacy session



21 parents
Self-care & reflective parenting workshop



Looking Ahead

This year carries special significance — NalandaWay turned 20. Across programmes, the focus remained steady: supporting children's emotional well-being through art, expression, and connection.

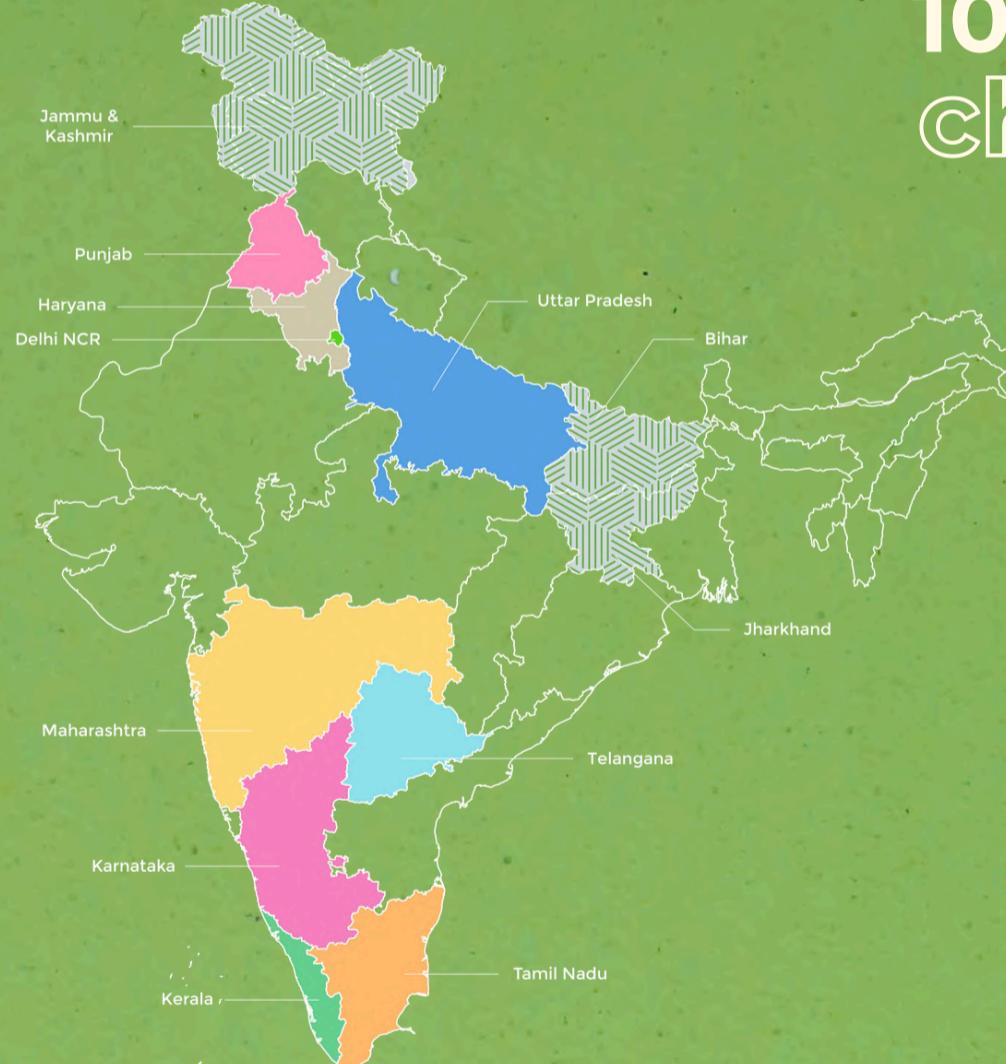
As we enter our next decade, the commitment is unchanged — children deserve spaces where they feel heard, valued, and hopeful.

Thank you for standing with us through these 20 years. We look forward to the next year — and the next chapter — together.

Our Partners



10 million
children
20 years
10 states



LEGEND

Locations where we have previously worked and left a lasting impact.

