

PATTERNS OF PROGRESS

January - February 2026

Art on Wheels:

Art Vandis reached **250 children**, sparking joyful engagement



Our choirs step onto **larger stages**, growing in confidence and presence



Career Guidance & Future **Readiness Camp** supported **149 care-leaving** adolescents from 28 CCIs across 23 districts



Dear NalandaWay Community,

For us, the year began outside the usual programme setting.

At the Freshworks Chennai Marathon 2026, members of our team chose to run the 10k marathon together. The outcome was visible — finish lines crossed, funds raised, recognition earned. But more than that, it pointed to something familiar to this work: progress depends less on moments of intensity and more on sustained, collective effort.

That principle has carried through the past two months.

Across early childhood programmes, there are signs of classrooms becoming more responsive — where participation is not prompted but expected, and where teachers are adjusting practice to meet children where they are. In parallel, engagement with parents is beginning to translate into behaviour — small, consistent changes in how children are supported at home.

Among adolescents, the shift is sharper. With the right exposure and guidance, young people are demonstrating greater clarity in navigating education and career choices. In some cases, this extends beyond the classroom, into decisions that reflect growing awareness and agency.

The role of the arts remains central in this process. Across settings, it continues to create conditions for expression, confidence, and participation. There are also developments that sit less visibly but matter just as much. Reintegration planning is becoming more differentiated and grounded in context. Research emerging from programme work is entering wider forums, contributing to how impact is understood and evaluated within the sector.

Taken together, these are not isolated outcomes. They point to a direction that is iterative, field-informed, and dependent on collaboration. It is shaped as much by those who design and deliver programmes as by those who engage with them.

The work ahead will demand the same consistency. What is encouraging is that the foundations are being built with care.

With regards,
The NalandaWay Team



IMPACT SNAPSHOT

133 students engaged in arts-based SEL with volunteer support (Arts in Education, Chennai)



18 AWCs completed endline assessments, strengthening teacher-led evaluation (Kanna Moochi, Chennai)

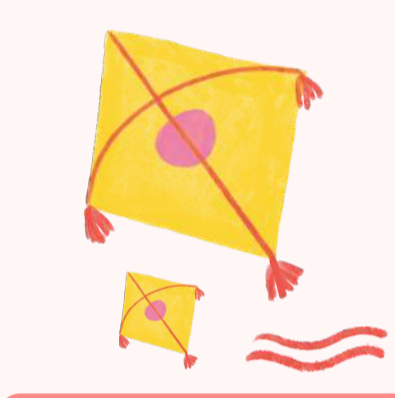


15 Anganwadi Centres saw increased parent and father engagement in caregiving (Gutar Goo, Noida)

140 children assessed across **14 centres** for learning and SEL outcomes (Kanna Mucche, Bengaluru)



316 students gained career pathway awareness across 4 schools (Foundational Learning, Tamil Nadu)



29 schools adopted arts-integrated classroom practices (Arts in Education, Chennai)



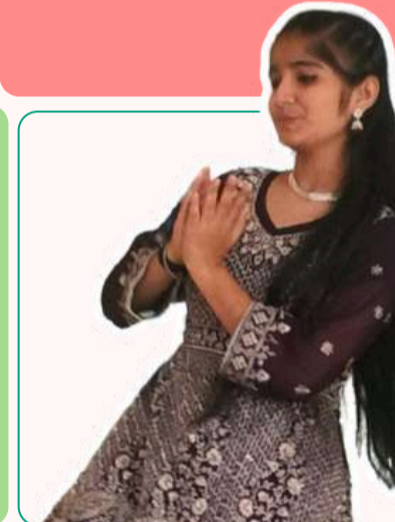
2,300 children showcased performances and artwork across **4 schools** (Apollo Schools, Delhi)

250 children engaged in **14 community-based** art sessions (Art Vandi, Tamil Nadu)

315 students demonstrated increased confidence and peer expression through SEL (Sampoorna 2.0, Jharkhand)



149 adolescents across **28 CCIs** gained clarity on careers and life readiness (Skilling & Wellbeing in CCIs, Tamil Nadu)



2 studies presented at **EvalFest 2026**, advancing participatory research (Research & Impact)



20 teachers and 72 parents strengthened wellbeing-informed interactions (Wellbeing through Musical Theatre, Chennai)



Children performed before **130+ audience** on a professional stage (Delhi Children's Choir, Delhi)

1,000+ books reached **246 students**, expanding learning access (Project Sakhi, Bengaluru)



29 staff strengthened child-centric caregiving practices (Skilling & Wellbeing in CCIs, Tamil Nadu)



Reintegration frameworks developed for child-centric system strengthening (Project Monitoring Unit)



Running Together: What It Meant to Show Up

In January, members of the NalandaWay community came together to participate in the *Freshworks Chennai Marathon 2026*, taking on the 10k run.

All participants completed the run, marking a shared moment of effort and commitment. Alongside this, the team raised **₹2,25,471** in support of NalandaWay's work.

Sriram V, Founder-CEO, was recognised with the *Changemaker award*, raising over **₹36 lakhs** and becoming the top fundraiser at the event.

Kalpana Muthukumar, Roshne Balasubramanian, and Mirnalini Venkataraman were recognised in the Gold and Silver fundraising categories.

The run also saw participation from Dhivya Ramalingam, Farhat Akthar, Sheela Grace S, and Vinoth Kumar, along with supporters and runners from outside the organisation, Lakshmi Sundar, Rathna Raj, Sherral Joseph (Gold and Silver fundraiser) and Darwin Steni.

What began as a run brought together colleagues and supporters in a shared effort — combining participation with tangible support for the work.

EARLY CHILDHOOD

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



gutargoo | Noida

Classrooms, Caregiving, and Confidence Get a Reset



Teachers Rethink Readiness, Not Just Results

In Vaidpura, primary school teachers explored school readiness as more than academics — centred on children's emotional, social, physical, and cognitive development. Through interactive exercises, they engaged with practical ways to build early literacy, numeracy, motor skills, and positive classroom routines.

In Nithari, the focus turned inward. Teachers identified stress triggers and practised simple regulation techniques like breathing, mindfulness, and stretching. A collaborative art activity reinforced how creative expression can support emotional well-being and classroom engagement.

Mothers Step In Stronger for Everyday Care

Across **15 Anganwadi Centres in 7 locations**, Mother Circle Meetings created space for conversations on nutrition, vaccination, development, and home environments.

The sessions saw active participation, with mothers sharing experiences and strengthening their understanding of children's holistic growth and the role of consistent, nurturing care at home.

Fathers Show Up: From Providers to Participants

Across 15 Anganwadi Centres in 7 locations, Father Circle Meetings encouraged fathers to see their role beyond financial provision.

Through storytelling, role-play, and discussions using the Super Papa Guidebook, fathers reflected on communication, caregiving, and everyday engagement. Many left with a simple but powerful takeaway — spending even 15–20 minutes a day with their children can make a meaningful difference.



20 Minutes That Changed the Equation

Rajesh, father of a three-year-old boy in Kanawani, considered childcare primarily his wife's responsibility. His long work hours as a daily wage labourer meant he had limited interaction with his child. When invited to the Father Circle Meeting, he attended out of curiosity. The discussions on fathers' emotional and practical support in breastfeeding, maternal nutrition, and family planning challenged his assumptions. He learned about shared responsibilities and ways to support mothers through rest, nutritious food, and encouragement. Initially uncomfortable sharing experiences, he gradually participated in discussions at the second FCM, which focused on nutrition and family health. The interactive sorting activity on healthy and unhealthy food choices surprised him - he discovered several misconceptions about commonly consumed foods. The session on making mealtimes engaging for children gave him practical strategies he could implement despite his work schedule. He received the Super Papa Guidebook, developed in simple Hindi with practical, low-cost parenting strategies.

The relatable stories and suggested routines showed him how to find quality time despite busy schedules. He began spending 20 minutes each evening engaging his son in simple activities like storytelling or building blocks. His wife shared during a Mother Circle Meeting that Rajesh had started asking about their son's daily activities and helping with feeding routines.

A story of change from the field.



Kanna Moochi | Chennai

More Engaged Homes. Shared Ownership Emerging

TAs Find Their Flow in the Classroom

A focused Term 3 training aligned Teaching Assistants on story flow, facilitation, classroom management, and TLM creation. Follow-up visits reflected more consistent classroom delivery, clearer story flow, increased child participation, and greater use of low-cost, no-cost TLMs.

"This training built my confidence as a TA. Learning ECCE strategies, storytelling flow, documentation, child participation, and creating TLMs with low-cost and no-cost materials helped me plan better and make my classroom more engaging and child-centred. Sharing ideas with my team boosted my confidence and made my classroom more engaging."

Homes Shift from Screens to Shared Routines

Mother and Community Circle meetings focused on reducing screen time and encouraging meaningful engagement at home.

Parents explored simple, practical activities — like sorting, folding, and involving children in daily routines — linking everyday actions to children's development and stronger bonding.

"I used to give my child the phone when I was busy. After the session, I started involving her in small home activities like sorting vegetables and folding clothes. Now she enjoys helping me and we spend more time together."

Assessments Completed Across Centres with Greater Confidence

FA and SEL endline assessments were successfully completed across all **18 AWCs**, covering **8 children per centre**.

With prior baseline experience and a clear orientation, teachers demonstrated greater familiarity and confidence in conducting assessments.



kanna mucche | Bengaluru

From Structured Storytelling and Measurable Child Development

Storytelling Gets Structured, Not Scripted

The quarter began with recording three core stories to strengthen consistency across centres. This ensures children across classrooms experience the same quality of storytelling — supporting listening, language development, and imagination, while retaining the emotional richness stories bring.

Teachers Pause, Reflect, and Rebuild Practice

A focused capacity-building training created space for teachers to strengthen facilitation, classroom management, TLM creation, and preparation for the quarter.

The sessions also centred on reflection and personal resilience — helping teachers reconnect with their role in the classroom.

"I realised that when I slow down and truly listen, children open up in beautiful ways."

"This training helped me see that classroom management begins with self-management."

140 Children Assessed, Growth Seen Beyond Academics

Across **14 Anganwadi centres**, SEL and Formative Assessments were conducted with **140 children**.

Assessments covered language, numeracy, logical thinking, classification, motor skills, listening, and visual perception. SEL tools explored how children identify and respond to emotions—offering deeper insight into both learning and well-being.

ARTS in Education | Chennai

From Classrooms to Cohorts: Tracking Impact, Deepening Practice

A longitudinal study has been initiated to understand the sustained impact of Arts in Education on students over time (2022–2025).

Using a mixed-methods approach, the study focuses on art-based skills, art appreciation, and social-emotional learning (SEL), while also examining how continued exposure to arts education shapes overall development in alignment with NEP goals.

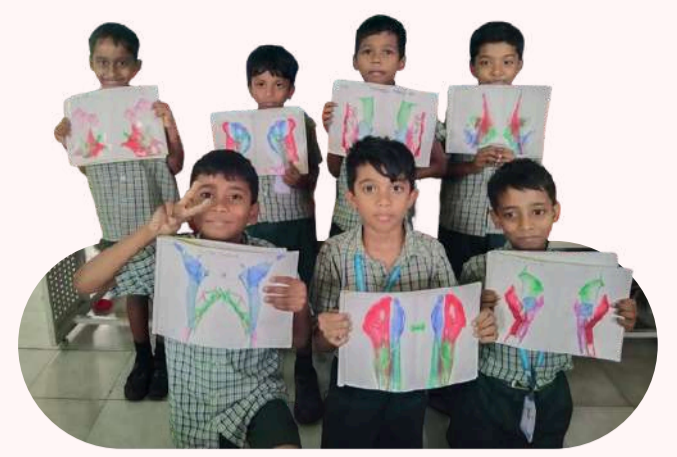
The study covers **4 schools** — CMS Pullapuram, CPS Ganeshapuram, CMS CMDA Maduravoyal, and CPS Sankarapuram — with **a sample of 60 students** across varying durations of programme exposure (one, two, and three years).

133 Students, 26 Volunteers: Classrooms Open Up to New Energy

The AIE Volunteering Engagement (2025–26), held on 18 February 2026 at CMS Chettiyar Agaram, brought together **133 students** (Grades 3–5) and **26 volunteers**.

Through structured, grade-specific activities — Paper Cup Homes, Frog Craft, and Pipe Cleaner Flowers — students engaged in creative expression while building fine motor and SEL skills.

A closing reflection circle saw volunteers share experiences of joy, stress relief, and a deeper appreciation for the programme's design and impact.



29 Schools, One Shift: Teachers Step Into Creative Classrooms

Phase III is underway across **29 schools** in Chennai (Grades 1–5), with facilitators co-leading sessions alongside GCC teachers.

This model is strengthening teacher confidence and classroom engagement. Teachers are not only participating actively but also beginning to carry creative approaches into other subjects — signalling early shifts in classroom practice.



Foundational Learning | Tamil Nadu

From Concepts to Models: Students Make Science Work

A STEM Science Workshop at AN Kandigai brought together students from Standards 6–12, with **30 students** presenting working models.

Projects ranged from lemon battery lights and food adulteration detection to solar energy solutions and water filtration — demonstrating applied understanding of scientific concepts.

The workshop saw participation from Michelin CRS Head Mr Anbarasu and five school heads, who noted strong student engagement — including active participation from slow learners, who confidently explained their models.

Career Choices Get Clearer for 316 Students

A career guidance programme across four schools engaged **316 students** (Standards 10–12), focusing on navigating higher education and career pathways.

Students explored how to align their interests, strengths, and skills with subject choices and future options. The sessions also introduced emerging careers, vocational pathways, and diverse higher education routes.

The outcome: students demonstrated greater clarity, awareness, and confidence in discussing and planning their next steps.



Consistent Support Helps Student Rebuild Confidence and Classroom Engagement

Yogitha, a 9-year-old student, is a calm and silent child. Her elder brother studies in class 5 at the same school. During Term 1, Yogitha was absent for an extended period due to parental conflicts, following which she stayed at her native place. She rejoined school only during the final examinations of Term 1. According to her class teacher, Yogitha struggled academically and showed minimal social interaction. She appeared withdrawn, rarely smiled and did not actively engage with her classmates.

The Teaching Assistant closely observed Yogitha and approached her with patience and care. Through consistent encouragement, respectful interactions and supportive guidance, the Teaching Assistant motivated Yogitha to focus on her studies and participate in classroom and play-based activities. Gradually, Yogitha began responding positively and started seeking support from the Teaching Assistant to understand basic concepts. Over time, she completed her workbook tasks independently and confidently shared her work with the Teaching Assistant.

Yogitha showed noticeable enthusiasm during the Health and Hygiene session titled "Nutrient Ninja", where she actively participated in group activities, particularly enjoying the clay modelling of healthy foods. She also demonstrated improved awareness of classroom discipline. On one occasion, when she entered the classroom without permission, she immediately recognised her mistake, stepped back and re-entered after seeking permission.

Throughout the term, Yogitha made sincere efforts to improve academically, socially and behaviourally. The Teaching Assistant consistently acknowledged and reinforced her progress, boosting her confidence and motivation.

Observing Yogitha's steady growth brought a sense of pride and fulfilment to the Teaching Assistant. The positive transformation seen in Yogitha over time highlights the impact of a holistic child-development approach implemented through the foundational project.



ADOLESCENCE

Recognising the challenges adolescents face, our emotional well-being interventions are 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, Thiruvananthapuram & Pune



Celebrations and Annual Events Build Belonging and Voice

Across centres, festivals and annual events created spaces for expression and shared identity.

In Trivandrum and Hyderabad, Pongal and Sankranti were explored through storytelling, kolam, and group art. In Pune, celebrations centred on gratitude and new beginnings, with team-based activities like Til Ladoo making.

Annual Events saw Sakhi girls anchor, perform, and share their journeys. In Pune, performances and a memory showcase brought reflection to the fore, while in Bengaluru, Annual Day combined cultural programmes with leadership-based activities.



Workshops Create Space for Reflection and Decision-Making

Annual Workshops focused on leadership, relationships, career pathways, and self-awareness.

In Trivandrum, sessions on leadership and relationships, along with “My Strengths and Dreams,” supported reflection. In Bengaluru, workshops were tailored by age — covering career guidance for juniors and relationship awareness for older cohorts.

In Chennai (Choolai), a career guidance session with Elysian Inspires Foundation and Manam Vittu Pesuvom enabled both future planning and emotional expression.

In Delhi, a workshop with **22 teachers** used arts-based reflection to explore well-being and coping strategies.



Exposure, Volunteering, and Donor Engagement Expand Access

In Bengaluru, an exposure visit to the Indira Gandhi Musical Fountain Park introduced girls to war memorials, aeronautics, and environmental themes. Senior girls also led a digital literacy and cyber safety session for younger cohorts. In Chennai, a GlobalLogic (GL) volunteering engagement paired Sakhis with volunteers through clay activities, alongside conversations on college pathways.

In Bengaluru, the Samsung donor team distributed **1,000+ books to 246 students**, strengthening access to learning resources. The visit also provided a platform for girls to showcase their talents.

Health and well-being Remain a Core Focus

In Delhi, a health camp with the Billion Hearts Beating Foundation included health check-ups, BMI assessments, and a session on menstruation.



Skilling and Well-being in Child Care Institutions

| Tamil Nadu

149 Adolescents. 28 CCIs. 23 Districts. One Shift in Direction

A two-day Career Guidance Camp (January 2026) engaged 149 care-leaving adolescents from 28 CCIs across 23 districts, focusing on career pathways, scholarships, and life skills.

The camp addressed a critical gap — limited exposure and support as adolescents transition out of care — enabling participants to approach education, careers, and independent living with greater clarity and confidence.

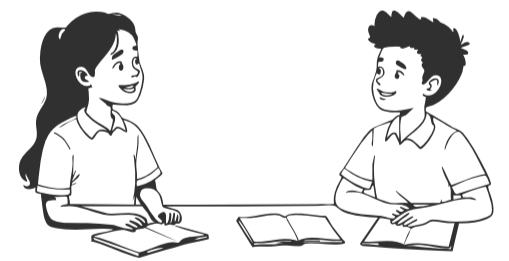
Two Days That Moved the Needle

Day 1 focused on self-awareness and career exploration — through counselling, activities, and exposure to opportunities that helped participants identify strengths and clarify choices.

Day 2 shifted to life beyond college — through alumni interactions, scholarships, and life skills sessions that strengthened confidence and preparedness for independent living.

Clearer Choices, Stronger Voice, Better Prepared Futures

- Participants explored higher education pathways and shortlisted courses aligned with their interests.
- Sessions built confidence in communication, decision-making, and self-expression.
- Increased awareness of scholarships, support systems, and realistic career pathways.



"I learned how to adapt to new environments, communicate better, and find solutions when facing problems. Speaking during the role-play activity using the microphone helped reduce my fear of public speaking and made me feel more confident and bold."

"One important lesson I learned was about perseverance. The story shared during the camp taught me that even if we fail once, we should continue trying without giving up."



When Lived Experience Leads, Mindsets Shift

The care leavers' panel — featuring Sugumar, Devika, Gayathiri, Essiki Ammal, Kowslaya, and Divya — brought real journeys into the room.

Their stories of navigating college, overcoming challenges, and building confidence helped participants move from “Can I?” to “How can I?” — shifting both aspiration and belief.

What's Next

- Endline across 34 CCIs
- 10th standard career guidance workshop
- Retreat workshop

Staff See the Shift Firsthand

Staff observed a clear change — participants moved from uncertainty to articulating career choices with greater confidence.

“After completing their 12th grade, many of our children were confused about their future and had very limited exposure to opportunities beyond their immediate environment. They were unsure about which career path to choose and lacked confidence in making decisions before career camp.

However, after attending the camp, we observed a shift. The children gained clarity about facing society and confidently choosing suitable college courses. They were able to clearly articulate their preferred options, including courses, which they had previously been uncertain about. The Care Leavers' panel discussion had a particularly powerful impact. Listening to seniors share their real-life journeys deeply inspired the children. Many of them expressed a desire to return next year as panel speakers themselves, to guide and motivate their juniors.

The programme significantly improved their confidence and instilled a sense of responsibility toward mentoring others. The sessions were conducted in a supportive, mentor-like environment, making the learning both engaging and meaningful.

Overall, the training was impactful and arrangements were very good and contributed positively to the children's personal growth and academic decision-making.”

— Shared by a Vellore CCI Staff



Staff Strengthening: A Pause to Reconnect with Purpose

A one-day training with **29 staff** from Nilgiris, Ramanathapuram, Thiruvannamalai, Pudukottai, and Nagapattinam created space for reflection on well-being and role. Through creative exercises and shared experiences, staff reconnected with their motivation and the impact of their everyday work in children's lives.

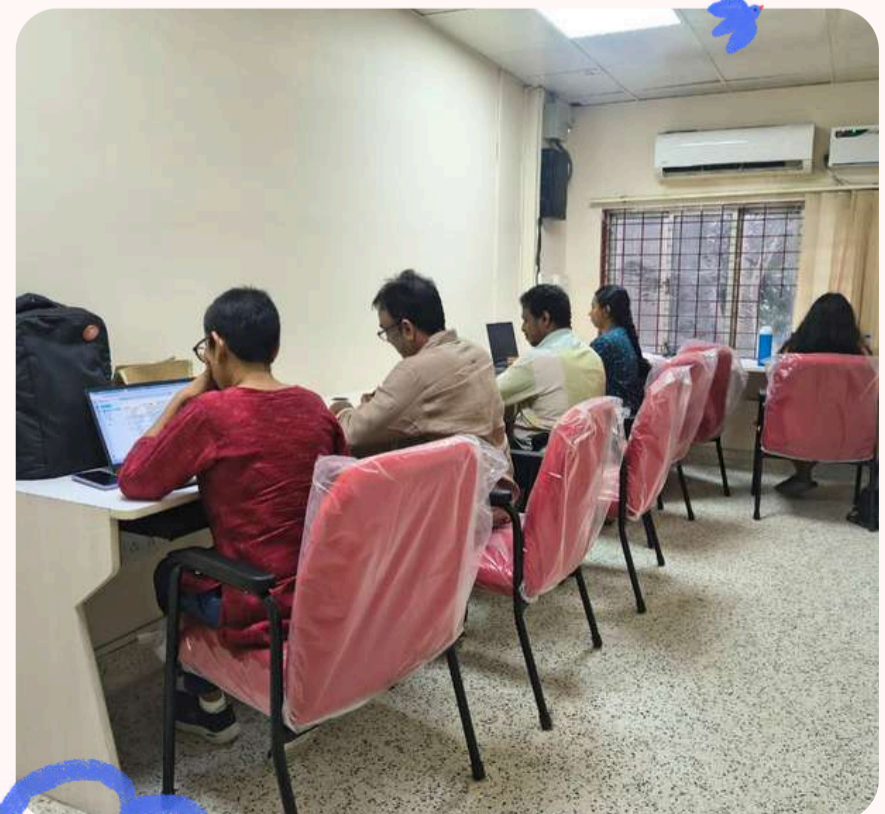
Project Monitoring Unit

From Planning to Practice: Reintegration Moves Towards Structured, Field-Led Action

A key milestone during this period was the formulation of a Collaborative Action Plan, developed through collective discussions and shared review processes. This approach ensured alignment across stakeholders, clarity in roles, and a unified direction for implementation.

Extensive groundwork was laid to develop specialised reintegration plans tailored to the unique needs of each category of children. The focus shifted towards identifying differentiated pathways, required support systems, risk factors, and transition preparedness needs — ensuring that reintegration planning is contextual, responsive, and aligned with the best interests of each child.

Leveraging NalandaWay's programmatic experience and field-grounded expertise in Child Care Institutions, focused efforts are underway to strengthen systems in line with the PMU's core objective of system and institutional strengthening. Field learnings are actively informing the drafting of reintegration plans, with working models being developed based on approaches proven effective in practice.



A visit to the Government CCI, Vellore enabled a deeper understanding of existing practices and operational challenges, ensuring that proposed frameworks remain practical and context-responsive.

In parallel, a structured content development exercise for staff capacity building is in progress. This aims to equip institutional teams with practical tools, guidance, and structured frameworks to support category-based, child-centric reintegration planning.

Overall, this phase marks a decisive shift from broad intent to structured, field-informed action. With collaboration, clarity, and model development at the forefront, the groundwork is firmly set for more targeted, practical, and sustainable reintegration efforts in the months ahead.

Well-being through Musical Theatre | Chennai

From Stress to Self-Awareness: Teachers and Parents Reframe Everyday Interactions

20 Teachers Add a New Spin to Classroom Practice

Teacher workshops were initiated across **five schools**, with sessions completed in two, engaging **20 teachers**.

The sessions focused on helping teachers understand how their emotional states shape classroom interactions. Through check-ins, reflection exercises, and scenario-based activities, teachers practised shifting from reactive responses to more intentional, trust-building approaches.



"This workshop gave me space to reflect on my wellbeing and encouraged me to take small steps toward self-care."

— Ms. Celine, GGHSS Kamaraj Nagar

72 Parents Revisit Parenting Through Wellbeing and Perspective

Parent workshops were conducted across five schools and completed in four, engaging around 72 parents.

The sessions created space to acknowledge parenting stress while introducing practical self-care and emotional well-being practices. Through guided visualisation, reflection exercises, and role plays, parents explored everyday parent-child interactions from new perspectives.

The workshops concluded with shared insights on building more supportive and emotionally aware relationships at home.

"The workshop helped me understand my child's perspective better and reminded me to care for myself as well."

— Ms. Sulaika Banu, GHSS Thiruvanchery

A Journey Through Musical Theatre

Akash, a Class 8 student, was known for being reserved in the classroom. Due to his stammer, he often felt insecure and feared being judged by others. To protect himself, he chose silence over speech, relying on gestures to communicate. Over time, this fear led him to withdraw from his peers, keeping his thoughts and feelings hidden.

A turning point came during a Musical Theatre session focused on the theme of "Overcoming Fear". The session created a safe and welcoming environment through music, movement and group activities. The non-judgmental atmosphere and strong sense of teamwork helped Akash feel confident. His classmates showed patience and encouragement, which slowly built his confidence. Taking on a character allowed Akash to express himself without the pressure of speaking as himself. Supported by his peers and guided by the facilitator, he stepped onto the stage and delivered his lines aloud. This moment marked a significant shift—from hesitation to courage.



By the end of the session, the student who once avoided speaking was able to communicate with greater confidence. Musical Theatre offered Akash more than performance skills; it gave him a voice and the courage to be seen and heard. His journey highlights how the right support and creative expression can transform fear into strength.

Outcome: Akash gained the courage to speak and express himself, moving beyond fear and self-doubt. In a supportive and creative space, he developed confidence and found the courage to be heard.

Art Vandi | Tamil Nadu

Art as Access, Culture, and Connection

Total Sessions: 14

Children reached: 250



The year kicked off with a burst of energy at the Freshwork Chennai Marathon's Health and Fitness Expo's Art Corner. Art Vandi's exhibit transformed into a bustling hub of "active creation". The visitors moved beyond passive viewing, diving into the focused craft of Miniature Marathon Runner Sculptures and the calming, communal process of Mandala colouring.

As the Art Vandi rolled into the Katankulathur zone, it brought with it the magic of storytelling. At PUMS Perumattunallur and PUMS Kalvai, students didn't just draw; they used Design Thinking to build segmented storybooks.

Local Legends

From community festivals to "spooky experiences," the children's sketches turned their personal narratives into tangible art.

The emotional peak came during a video showcase at Kalvai, where students were moved to tears seeing their own work on screen, a rare moment of self-admiration in a world where they are usually just spectators.

The Freedom to Create

Our stops at PUMS Melkalvai, Unamancheri, and Alapakkam reinforced a vital lesson: art flourishes in the absence of micromanagement. As the HM at Melkalvai aptly put it, "Namma pasanga gethu kaatitanga!" (Our kids showed their class!). By providing an open space instead of strict instructions, we watched 30 students turn simple puppets into raw, beautiful expressions of their community.



Adventures in Expression

Beyond the classroom, Art Vandi joined the Wellbeing and Skilling of Children in Child Care Institutions (CCI) Career Guidance Camp, turning the ITCSE campus into a treasure hunt of creativity. Whether it was crafting foil sculptures or celebrating Pongal with the students at Kalvai, every moment was an opportunity to spark joy and curiosity.

Sampoorna 2.0 | Jharkhand



315 Students Engage with SEL: From Classroom Conversations to Real-Life Action

4 Schools, 6 Sessions: Safe Spaces Strengthen Student Voice

Art-based Social Emotional Learning (SEL) sessions were conducted across government high schools in Namkum, Kanke, Ratu, and Mandar blocks of Ranchi.

Using Take It Eazy audio stories and simple art-based activities, sessions focused on empathy, friendships, gender relationships, and navigating failure. Activities such as Kindness Hand, Strength Shield, and Friendship Flower enabled reflection and peer learning.

Students participated actively in discussions and exercises — creating safer, more inclusive spaces where they felt confident to share, listen, and express their experiences.

When Learning Moves Beyond the Classroom

In one session, a Class 9 student shared how she helped prevent her friend's early marriage by reaching out to a trusted elder in her community. Because of this intervention, her friend was able to continue her education. A moment that reflects how SEL is translating into awareness, empathy, and real-life action.



Teachers See Confidence and Openness Grow

"I was present in the classroom during the session and truly appreciated the way it was conducted. The girls participated openly, without any force or fear, which was very encouraging to see. The topic of discussion was highly relevant and something that genuinely needs to be talked about with students at this age. Such initiatives are important for nurturing a safe and inclusive learning space.

The session helped build confidence among the girls, especially through the oath of creating a collaborative classroom environment, practising empathy, and supporting one another. We would be happy to welcome you again for more discussions with our students. Thank you."

– Archana Sapna Tigha, Headmistress,
Government Balika High School, Itki, Ranchi



Apollo Schools | Delhi

From Patriotic Performances to Art Showcases: 2,300 Children Take Centre Stage

300 Children Celebrate Republic Day with Voice, Performance, and Pride

The 77th Republic Day was celebrated across Apollo-supported MCD schools with active participation from children and Teaching Assistants.

Students led the celebration through dance, patriotic songs, poetry, and theatre. Grade 2 students presented a poem on Unity in Diversity, while Grade 5 students staged a play on Cleanliness and Education, reflecting on building a better future.

Teachers joined in with performances alongside students — adding to the energy and making the celebration a shared experience across classrooms.

Art Showcases Bring Learning to Life Across 4 Schools

- 4 schools | 2,000 children engaged
- 120 artworks | 30 performances | 5 installations

Four art exhibitions across Apollo MCD schools showcased children's learning and growth over six months of arts-based intervention.

The showcases featured dance, music, stage and street plays, alongside vibrant art displays inspired by renowned artists. Installations—including a butterfly photobooth, art pyramids, and best out of waste creations—transformed school spaces into creative hubs.

Themes like 'Udaan' and 'Dreams' reflected children's aspirations, with artworks on recycled materials capturing imagination and self-expression.

When Classrooms Turn into Stages, Confidence Follows

Across exhibitions, children stepped into performance spaces with conviction — many experiencing stage presence for the first time.

The showcases created moments of pride and visibility for students, with teachers and school leaders actively engaging in the process. For many children, the experience of performing and seeing their work displayed marked a meaningful milestone in their learning journey.

I liked it a lot, my own performance and other students' performances too. Shikha ma'am has taught us a lot, from painting, drawing, to acting. We have enjoyed everything.

— Student, MCD Gautampuri Evening School



I really liked the programme and even the drawings that have been made in the classroom and displayed today. Because it really helps students in expressing themselves. I am very happy with this intervention.

— Principal, Trilokpuri School



Kalakriti | Delhi

From First Stages to Full Showcases: Young Performers Find Their Voice

Learners Step into the Spotlight at Studio Safdar

At Studio Safdar, learners stepped into a professional theatre space for their first public performance — marking a significant moment in their artistic journey.

As the Delhi Children's Choir filled the room with music, theatre learners performed before a live audience for the first time — sharing not just performances, but their stories. The showcase brought together children from the Shadipur community, creating a space of encouragement, connection, and shared celebration.

In that intimate setting, art became a bridge — helping young people feel seen, heard, and confident.



Jashn-E-Kala: A Year of Learning Comes Alive on Stage

Jashn-E-Kala marked the culmination of year-long learning at the Kalakriti Centre.

The space transformed into a vibrant showcase of artworks and performances — from Aboriginal-inspired dot paintings, spill art, and scribble art to dance and musical theatre pieces. Performances explored themes of growing up, gender, and mental health, with children expressing these ideas through movement, music, and storytelling.

The Delhi Children's Choir added musical depth, with learners performing confidently as a collective.

When Art Builds Confidence, Connection Follows

More than a showcase, the event brought together children, parents, and communities in a shared celebration of growth.

Children performed as one ensemble — singing, dancing, and acting together — reflecting increased confidence, collaboration, and self-expression. With families present, the evening became a moment of recognition, connection, and pride.



Delhi Children's Choir | Delhi

130+ Audience, One Big Stage: DCC Performs at KNMA with Confidence and Inclusion

Balancing Exams and Rehearsals, Children Deliver Their Biggest Performance

In February, DCC marked its biggest performance of the year at the Kiran Nadar Museum of Art (KNMA), performing before an audience of 130+ attendees.

Balancing rehearsals alongside exams, the children demonstrated strong discipline, teamwork, and growing stage confidence — coming together to deliver a powerful and cohesive performance.



A Stage That Builds Confidence, Belonging, and Voice

With parents and dignitaries, including Dr. Rita Sharma, Additional Director, DOE and Director SCER, in attendance, the evening became more than a performance — it marked a significant learning milestone.

The experience strengthened children's confidence, expression, and sense of belonging on a professional stage.

Chennai Children's Choir | Chennai

Collaborations and Community Performances Strengthen Musical Exposure

Global Collaboration Brings New Musical Exchange

On 24 February, the CCC team collaborated with Detroit's S.T.A.R.S. (Singers Taking Action Reaching Souls), who brought Motown Magic to India through a live musical celebration of timeless Motown classics, infused with jazz and Broadway influences.

Taking the stage alongside them, our Chennai Children's Choir presented a special performance featuring a selection of folk songs from Tamil Nadu — celebrating local musical traditions in a powerful global collaboration. The evening also featured the Madras Musical Association (MMA) Choir.

The interaction exposed children to new musical styles and performance approaches, creating a meaningful space for cultural exchange and learning.



The performance was thoughtfully enabled with Indian Sign Language (ISL) — reflecting a commitment to accessibility and inclusive participation.

A Moment That Stays

One guest shared a reflection that stayed with us all: “Sitting there, I thought about how moments like these shape us so profoundly...”

Community Performance Marks Shared Celebration

On 28 February, the Tumbak-a-Tumba Music Programme brought together the V-Excel community — including students, parents, and different units — for an evening of music and participation. The event marked a moment of collective celebration as V-Excel continued its 25th-year journey, strengthening community engagement through shared musical experiences.

Human Resources & Internal Culture

Decoding PARAKH 2024

Our Thursday Circle featured Lakshmi Bharath and Shanmuga Priyan MK presenting on PARAKH 2024, a large-scale national survey to comprehensively evaluate the progress of learners across the Foundational, Preparatory, and Middle Stages, specifically aligned with the ambitious objectives outlined in the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020. The session saw enthusiastic participation from over 25 attendees, who actively engaged with and enjoyed the insightful presentation.



Research & Impact

From Field to Forum: NalandaWay's Research Gains National Recognition

NalandaWay's field-led research was featured at *EvaFest 2026*, with two abstracts selected and presented — marking a significant step in taking programme learnings to national platforms.

- Sakhi X VV Action-Based Research — Paper Presentation
- Narikuruvar Needs Assessment Study — Poster Presentation

The Action-Based Research was presented at Lady Irwin College as part of a panel on *Inclusive and Participatory Evaluation: Youth, Gender, and Communities: Multiple Perspectives*.

This recognition reflects a growing body of work that places children, young people, and communities at the centre of research and evaluation — moving beyond observation to participation and co-creation.

Research built with participation, not just observation

At the heart of this work were the Sakhi Senior Perambur Cohort, who engaged deeply with the research process — contributing insights, reflections, and lived experiences.

Arthi K., Asreen Banu S., Aswini T., Dhanushree Thi, Eniya S., Harini A., Harini P., Harini Priya B., Hemavathy K., Janani N., Kaviya R., Poongothai P., Sandhya R., Sangavi A., Saranya J., Shalini M., Sharmila P., Shobana R., Sushmitha R., Yamini S., and Arani S.

Their participation reflects the strength of youth-led and participatory approaches, and the potential for young people to shape conversations around their own realities.

A Collaborative Effort Across Teams and Functions

The research was led by Aravind R Syam, supported by Kirti Koushik and Darvi Joneja in analysis and documentation. The idea was initiated by Pradeepa, Associate Director - Projects, with Shravani Sandepudi and Garima Sharma shaping the research design and conceptual framework.

Mahalakshmi from project Sakhi anchored the process end-to-end — coordinating teams, ensuring alignment, and preparing Sakhi girls at every stage. Aravind and Shanmuga supported data collection, while Dhivya Ramalingam, Associate Director - Project, and Sameen Almas, Director, NalandaWay Foundation, contributed through review and feedback.

For the Narikuruvar Needs Assessment, fieldwork was supported by Prabhakar, Associate Director - Projects, Shanmuga, Gayathiri, Elamathi, Swetha, and Vigneshwari, with Kritika supporting analysis.



Building Knowledge that Informs Action

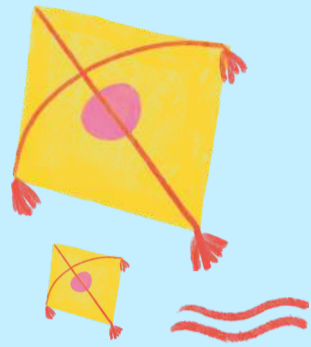
These studies contribute to a growing evidence base that strengthens programme design and informs practice — ensuring that interventions remain grounded, responsive, and relevant.

We hope this work continues to open up opportunities for deeper engagement, visibility, and meaningful change for the communities we work with.



WHAT CHANGED ACROSS PROGRAMMES

- Classrooms became **more child-centred** and **expressive**
- Families moved from awareness to **active engagement**
- Adolescents showed greater **clarity, confidence, and agency**
- Teachers and staff engaged in **reflection** and **well-being practices**
- Children **accessed public platforms** for expression and performance
- Research moved from field insights to **national recognition**



Looking Ahead

“Children must be taught how to think, not what to think.”

— Margaret Mead

The next phase of work will bring together consolidation, visibility, and reflection.

End-of-year showcases and in-school art exhibitions will create spaces for children to present their learning, with more performances strengthening confidence, expression, and collective participation. These moments will mark not just completion, but progress.

At the same time, endline assessments across programmes will help ground this work in evidence, offering clearer insights into learning, development, and areas that require sharper focus. Together, these efforts will help carry forward momentum, building on what is working, strengthening delivery, and moving towards more sustained outcomes.

