

GROWING WITH PURPOSE

March - April 2026

65 care leavers

fostered professional growth through 2 CCI retreat workshops



Our choirs reached an international milestone by participating in the **Breakthrough Prize 2026**



2,493 students

showcased a year of artistic learning across 14 government schools



THINK GOOD
SPEAK GOOD
DO GOOD



IMPACT SNAPSHOT

32 Anganwadi Workers strengthened mindfulness and classroom practices (Kanna Moochi, Chennai)



312 children, 36 Anganwadi Workers, and 18 centres recognised for programme commitment (Kanna Moochi, Chennai)



140 children across 14 centres completed endline assessments in learning and SEL outcomes (Kanna Mucche, Bengaluru)

16 Anganwadi Centres mapped during ecosystem groundwork (Communities that Care, Ranchi)



15 ICDS Centres across 7 locations supported families with school readiness and primary school enrollment (Gutar Goo, Noida)



2,160 students across 25 schools were recognised in Foundational Learning and STEM (Tamil Nadu) (1,010 FL + 1,150 STEM)



200 students from 5 schools explored mental health, safety, and self-expression through theatre (Well-being through Musical Theatre, Chennai)



65 care leavers across 9 districts built resumes, LinkedIn profiles, and career readiness skills (Vanam Vasapudam, Tamil Nadu)

158 students participated in art-based SEL sessions at the start of the new academic cycle (Sampoorna 2.0, Jharkhand)

100+ families reached, and 25 households onboarded for the next phase of research (HT Parekh, Delhi-Noida)

232 students participated in child protection awareness sessions (Project Sakhi, Bengaluru)



15 Sakhi girls explored career pathways through aptitude and career workshops (Project Sakhi, Delhi)



2,493 students across 14 schools showcased a year of artistic learning (Arts in Education, Chennai)

5,073 students across 29 schools participated in teacher-led visual and theatre arts sessions (Arts in Education, Chennai)

5 districts covered under evidence research for child protection and reintegration systems (PMU)

14 households completed the pilot phase of heat and caregiving research (HT Parekh | Delhi-Noida)

398 children across 3 schools engaged in community-based art learning (Art Vandis, Tamil Nadu)

17 choir learners performed live at VolFest before an audience of **8,000+ visitors** (Delhi Children's Choir, Delhi)



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



CCC and DCC learners represented India in an international Breakthrough Prize collaboration (Delhi & Chennai)

Dear NalandaWay Community,

As academic cycles concluded, children, educators, families, and young people came together to celebrate growth shaped by consistent engagement and shared effort.

Across classrooms and communities, children showed greater confidence and participation, caregivers became more involved in learning journeys, and adolescents and young adults continued building skills, self-expression, and clarity about their futures. The arts remained central, creating spaces for dialogue, belonging, and emotional growth.

Alongside these milestones, research, monitoring, and new initiatives continued to strengthen our practice, ensuring that the work remains grounded in evidence, context, and the voices of the communities we serve.

Together, these months reaffirmed something we continue to learn: meaningful change is rarely dramatic. It is built through relationships, reflection, and the courage to keep showing up.

With regards,
The NalandaWay Team



Understanding Heat, Sleep, and Early Childhood Care | Delhi NCR

NalandaWay Foundation, with support from HT Parekh Foundation, has initiated a research study to understand how heat impacts sleep, caregiving practices, and early childhood development among children aged 1–3 years in underserved communities. During March and April 2026, the pilot phase was completed across 14 households in selected urban clusters of Delhi and Noida to assess the feasibility of research tools and strengthen field implementation processes ahead of the full-scale rollout in May.



As part of the pilot, the study used sleep diaries as a primary data-collection tool and installed microclimate sensors and dataloggers in selected households to record real-time indoor temperatures. Caregivers, particularly mothers, also shared their observations on indoor heat exposure, sleep patterns, and caregiving experiences, contributing to the contextual understanding of the study.

Alongside the pilot, field teams reached over 100 families across communities in Delhi and Noida and onboarded 25 households for the next phase of the study. Household outreach, caregiver engagement, temperature monitoring processes, and baseline data collection protocols are currently being standardised to support ethical, context-specific, and consistent field implementation.





123

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.



ABC

gutargoo | Noida

Enhancing school readiness, progress tracking, and community partnership

Preparing Families for School Enrollment

School Readiness Meetings were conducted across all 15 ICDS Centres, covering 7 physical locations, to support children's transition into primary school and help parents navigate the admission process.

Headmistresses from nearby schools joined the sessions and explained admission procedures in a simple, step-by-step manner. Parents actively participated, raised practical questions, and received clarity on documentation requirements, including where and how to obtain missing documents.

These sessions increased parents' confidence and reinforced the importance of timely school enrolment.

Tracking Progress Through Endline Assessments

Children's Formative Assessment (3-6 Years)

The team conducted the final assessment for Phase 6 of the project, covering the five themes addressed during the year-long intervention.

The assessment evaluated children's development in:

- Early literacy (Hindi and English)
- Numeracy skills
- Verbal expression and communication
- Social-emotional competencies

Children demonstrated progress in recognising letters and numbers, participating in conversations, taking turns, expressing confidence, and responding appropriately in social situations.

Endline Assessments with Mothers and Anganwadi Workers

In March, endline interviews were conducted with Anganwadi Workers, and Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) were held with mothers during Mother Circle Meetings.

Feedback was encouraging, with participants sharing that the sessions had strengthened their understanding of child development, caregiving practices, and emotional support. Many also reported applying these learnings in their homes and Anganwadi Centres.

Community Mobilisation Across Project Locations

The Gutar Goo team initiated the first phase of community mobilisation across 5 physical locations. Through direct interactions and brochure distribution, community members were introduced to the project and its objectives.

The team also reconnected with mothers who had participated in earlier Mother Circle Meetings, gathering feedback on the sessions and the Jachcha-Bachcha Kit. These visits helped strengthen community relationships and build deeper engagement with families.



Learning from One Another

During a Mother Circle Meeting on children's physical development, mothers discussed nutritious foods that support healthy growth. Many recommended traditional foods such as khichdi, daliya (porridge made from broken wheat), and daal (lentils).

A first-time mother of a 6-month-old baby shared her concern:

"I recently started introducing soft-cooked food, but my baby keeps spitting it out. I've been very worried."

While the NalandaWay team suggested consulting a paediatrician for further guidance, another experienced mother shared her own insight.

She explained that babies often reject solid food initially because they are used to milk during their first six months, and chewing is an entirely new experience. She suggested gently placing small amounts of food at the corner of the baby's mouth to help them gradually adapt to new textures, a method similar to pocket feeding.

This moment reflected the true spirit of the Mother Circle Meetings: mothers learning from one another, sharing practical wisdom, and building a supportive community where no parent feels alone in their journey.

A story of change from the field.



Kanna Moochi | Chennai

Empowering Anganwadi Workers Through Mindfulness & SEL

A training session on Mindfulness and Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) was conducted on 6 March 2026 at Asha Nivas Social Welfare Centre for 32 Anganwadi Workers (AWWs). The session focused on strengthening emotional awareness, self-regulation, and understanding how adult well-being shapes classroom interactions and child development.

Interactive Learning in Practice

The training used experiential activities to help participants connect with their emotions and responses:

- **Worry Box Activity** – AWWs reflected on personal stressors and shared them in a safe, supportive space.
- **Body Mapping** – Participants identified where stress shows up physically, helping them recognise emotional triggers.
- **Character Freeze Activity** – Through role-play of classroom situations, participants paused, reflected, and practised mindful responses such as deep breathing and calm communication.

The session also created space for personal reflection and "me-time," which participants deeply appreciated. Certificates were distributed at the end of the training to acknowledge participation and reinforce continued learning.

Celebrating Participation and Commitment

To recognise participation and consistent engagement:

- **312 children** received certificates
- **18 Anganwadi centres** were awarded shields
- **36 Anganwadi workers** received certificates for their commitment to programme implementation

These recognition efforts contributed to stronger ownership and deeper commitment across centres.

Voices from the Field

"The mindfulness session helped me personally. Usually, we don't get time to think about our own stress because of our workload. The activities and breathing exercises helped me slow down and feel relaxed."

The training strengthened participants' confidence in managing emotions, responding thoughtfully during challenging situations, and creating nurturing classroom environments.



Showcasing a Year of Learning

As part of the programme closure, exhibitions were organised across **3 Anganwadi** centres to showcase the journey of Kanna Moochi over the year.

The exhibitions featured:

- Children's work
- Teaching-learning materials
- Story-based activities
- Classroom processes

Parents, caregivers, and community members engaged with the displays, gaining deeper insight into children's

learning journeys and the programme's impact within the centres.

Reflection, Reporting & Planning Ahead

In April, the team completed and submitted the **Annual Report and Impact Report (AY 2025–26)** to Integrated Child Development Services officials and key stakeholders.

This marked an important milestone in documenting programme outcomes, learnings, and overall impact. Alongside this, the team is working on developing the Annual Plan for AY 2026–27.

Creating Safety, Building Trust: Praneetha's Journey

Praneetha, a child enrolled at the Anganwadi centre, initially needed additional time and reassurance to adjust to the classroom environment. She often preferred quiet spaces, observed others from a distance, and was hesitant to participate in group activities. During unfamiliar or overwhelming situations, she expressed her emotions intensely, indicating a need for consistent emotional support and a sense of security.

Concerned about her adjustment, the teacher spent time observing Praneetha's interactions and speaking with her grandparents to better understand her home environment. These conversations revealed that she had been exposed to frequent conflict at home, which had impacted her sense of safety and emotional confidence.



Based on this understanding, the teacher focused on creating a supportive and predictable classroom experience for her. Through regular routines, play-based engagement, one-on-one interactions, and consistent emotional reassurance, Praneetha was given the time and support needed to engage at her own pace.

Over the following weeks, gradual changes were observed in her behaviour. She began spending more time engaged in classroom activities, showed greater comfort in social interactions, and started participating more actively with her peers. Her confidence and sense of belonging within the classroom continued to grow over time.

Praneetha's progress highlights the importance of responsive early childhood education environments in supporting children's emotional well-being, building trust, and strengthening their readiness to learn and connect with others.

kanna mucche | Bengaluru

Celebrating growth and a meaningful learning year

March and April brought the academic year at Kanna Mucche to a heartwarming close. Across centres, children, parents, and Anganwadi teams came together to celebrate milestones, reflect on progress, and strengthen their shared commitment to early childhood development.

When Learning Took Centre Stage

Our Art Exhibitions across two clusters became vibrant spaces of learning, creativity, and expression. Children from nearby Anganwadis, along with their parents, gathered to witness their learning journeys come alive.

More than the artwork, it was the children's confidence that stood out. They demonstrated science activities like the germ experiment, explained handwashing steps, narrated stories, and performed in front of large audiences.

For many parents, it was an emotional moment to witness their children speaking and participating so confidently.



"I have never seen my child speak like this in front of others. I was surprised and very happy. I feel proud seeing this change."

– Ramya, Parent, Bidarahalli Centre

"Earlier, my child would hesitate even at home. Today, seeing them perform in front of everyone gave me so much confidence as a parent."

– Sahana, Parent, Swatantranagar Centre

Conversations That Strengthen Families

Parents and caregivers came together to learn, reflect, and share responsibility

Mother Circles: Everyday Nutrition, Everyday Care

Sessions focused on nutrition in early childhood and the role of family members in raising emotionally secure children. Using the resource book developed from Aadharshila and Navchetna under ICDS, discussions became more visual, relatable, and easy to apply at home.

“The pictures and examples made it very easy for me to understand what I should feed my child. I have started following some of these at home.”

– Mother participant

A Graduation Filled With Pride

Graduation Day marked the successful completion of another academic year. Certificates were presented to all children, recognising their participation and growth. Anganwadi centres were also honoured with shields for their continued partnership and support.

For many families, it was a deeply meaningful moment.

“This is the first certificate my child has received. I will keep it safe. It means a lot to us.”

– Parent, Hirandahalli Centre

“We have seen a big change in children this year—in their confidence, habits, and learning. This recognition motivates us to continue our work.”

– Anganwadi Worker, Rampura

Community Circles: Fathers Joining the Conversation

A notable shift this month was the increased participation of fathers and male caregivers. Their involvement reflected a growing understanding that child development is a shared responsibility.

“Earlier, I thought childcare was mostly the mother’s responsibility. Now I understand that my presence also matters. I want to be more involved in my child’s growth.”

– Father participant

These circles continue to build stronger awareness and shared ownership within the community.

Reflecting, Reviewing, and Preparing Ahead

As part of the academic year closure, the team submitted the annual report to the Women and Child Welfare Department.

During the review meeting, key programme milestones, challenges, and learnings were shared with the department team, creating space for constructive reflection and future planning.

“The progress seen in the centres is encouraging. At the same time, these discussions help us understand how we can strengthen the programme further in the coming year.”

– Veena, ACDPO, Bengaluru South

The discussion helped refine our approach and strengthen our plans for the year ahead.

Choosing Trust Over Convention

When Mithila first arrived at the Anganwadi, she found it difficult to separate from her father. She would cry, hold on tightly, and refuse to enter the classroom. It took nearly two months of patient support before she slowly began settling in. Over time, hesitation turned into curiosity.

Despite Kannada not being her mother tongue, Mithila adapted quickly. She began participating actively in stories, workbook sessions, and classroom activities. With each passing week, her confidence grew.

Her father remained closely involved, regularly checking on her progress, asking about activities, and staying engaged in her learning journey.

At one point, the family had decided to enrol Mithila in a private school the following year.

But during a Mother Circle and Community Circle meeting at Medahalli Anganwadi in March, on Mithila’s birthday, her father shared something that deeply moved the team.

After speaking about the changes he had seen in his daughter, her confidence, learning, and overall development, he announced that they had decided to continue her in the same Anganwadi for another year.

Her mother shared that the money they had planned for private school would instead be saved for Mithila’s future. The family also decided to enrol her younger brother in the same centre next year.

For the team, this was more than a decision, it was a reflection of trust, belief, and the impact of consistent early learning support.

Stories like Mithila’s remind us why this work matters.



ARTS in Education | Chennai

From 9–18 March 2026, art exhibitions were conducted across schools, including CMS MMDA 2, CMS Villivakkam, CPS Palavayal, CMS CMDA Maduravoyal, CMS Madipakkam, and CMS Mugappair Sector. The exhibitions featured student work developed through year-long visual arts and theatre sessions, with active support from teachers, Teaching Assistants, school leadership, and Academic Education Officers.

Parent participation was especially encouraging, with families contributing materials, sharing ideas, and actively engaging through school communication groups.

“We are truly impressed by the art exhibition organised by NalandaWay, which beautifully showcased the creativity and talent of the children. It was a joyful experience to witness our children learning in such an engaging environment.”

- Parent Reflection

Teachers Lead the Final Phase

In Phase 3, teachers took the lead in conducting sessions with support from Teaching Assistants, building on the co-facilitation model introduced earlier. Across 29 schools, 5,073 students participated in visual and theatre arts sessions, reflecting growing teacher confidence, ownership, and classroom engagement.

Measuring Impact Through Endline Assessment

Endline assessments were conducted across 9 schools through FGDs, interviews, creative reflection exercises, and qualitative documentation. The process captured changes in student engagement, creative confidence, emotional expression, and classroom participation, while also identifying key learnings for the next academic cycle.

Celebrating a Year of Learning

Customised mementoes and certificates were distributed across 29 schools to recognise the participation and contributions of students, teachers, and school leaders during the 2025–2026 academic year.



Stories from the Field

Finding Confidence Through Art

Preethi, a Grade 4 student from CMS Senniyamman Koil Street, initially felt discouraged during a thread painting activity when her first attempt did not go as planned. With encouragement from the Teaching Artist, she tried again and completed her artwork. Proud of her work, she shared that she wanted to recreate the activity at home and teach it to her sister — reflecting growing confidence, resilience, and joy in learning.

When Teachers Become Creative Partners

At CMS Mugappair Sector 2, teachers Rajaselvi, Leema, and Gokula Priya actively co-facilitated sessions and later independently led classroom activities. Their participation, including showcasing their own artwork during exhibitions, encouraged students to engage more openly, experiment creatively, and take greater pride in their learning journey.

Foundational Learning | Tamil Nadu

Certificate Distribution Across 25 Schools

Certificates were awarded to 1,010 Foundational Learning students and 1,150 STEM students across 25 schools. Designed with vibrant and student-friendly elements, the certificates were presented by the project team, teaching assistants, and the Associate Director.

For many students, receiving their certificates marked a proud milestone, recognising their effort, progress, and commitment throughout the academic journey.

Voices from the Classroom

“Social Emotional Learning has helped students identify and express their emotions better, including understanding different emotional states. Through activities like Teamwork Tower, they learned the importance of collaboration. Our teaching assistants also support co-teaching in ways that make learning more inclusive and engaging for students.”

— Ms Arivumani, Teacher, TMPS Selaiyur



Certificate Distribution Across 25 Schools



Ragini, a Grade 5 student at CMS GPW Colony, is a top-performing student who actively participates in classroom activities and consistently shows curiosity in learning. During a Social Emotional Learning (SEL) session on Dreams and Aspirations, students were asked to illustrate what they wanted to become in the future.

Ragini confidently drew herself as a District Collector, surrounded by police officers, clearly expressing her vision for the future. As part of the follow-up activity, Dream Dangler (a creative hanging display of dreams and goals), students were asked to research their chosen profession at home.

The next day, Ragini returned with a detailed dangler explaining the role and responsibilities of a Collector. The activity took her nearly two hours to complete. Reflecting on the experience, she shared:

“My ambition has always been to become a Collector, but I didn’t know much about the role. This activity helped me learn more about my dream.”

Through one simple classroom exercise, Ragini moved closer to understanding and owning her aspirations.

Communities that Care | Jharkhand



Laying the Groundwork for Change in Namkum

Over the past two months, the Echidna-supported “Communities that Care” initiative has begun laying its foundation in Ranchi, with a focus on strengthening Early Childhood Development (ECD) and nurturing mothers’ agency through community-led support systems anchored in Anganwadi Centres.

Understanding Community Realities

As part of the project’s initial groundwork, the team visited 16 Anganwadi Centres across Ranchi city and Namkum Block. Each centre reflected a different reality.

In some centres, children participated enthusiastically despite limited space and infrastructure. Others had adequate facilities but faced inconsistent attendance. While several centres demonstrated regular preschool and nutrition services, some faced challenges such as shared infrastructure and service delivery gaps.

These early observations are helping shape a grounded understanding of the local early childhood ecosystem and informing the next phase of intervention.

Moving Toward Implementation

Recce visits continue in Namkum Block as the team works toward finalising 35 Anganwadi Centres for the first phase of implementation.

Simultaneously, permissions and administrative approvals are being pursued at multiple government levels to ensure smooth implementation. A comprehensive needs assessment across selected centres is planned as the next major milestone.

Building Institutional Partnerships

Alongside field engagement, the team has initiated discussions with stakeholders at block, district, and state levels, including the Department of Women and Child Development, Health Department, and Social Welfare Department.

These engagements are helping clarify approval pathways, align priorities, and build stronger collaboration with existing systems; an essential step toward sustainable community impact.



Strengthening the Project Backbone

Behind the scenes, the project team continues to build its operational foundation. New team members are being onboarded, with orientation and training underway to ensure alignment with the project’s vision and methodology.

Planning processes are also progressing steadily, including the development of implementation timelines, research tools, and a detailed needs assessment framework.

Looking Ahead

As the project moves from exploration to action, its approach remains rooted in one core principle: listening to communities and building alongside them.

In Namkum, the journey is only beginning, but the foundation for long-term change is steadily taking shape.



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.



Skilling and Well-being in Child Care Institutions | Tamil Nadu

To support young adults transitioning into independent life, two batches of the Vanam Vasapudam retreat workshop were conducted, engaging 65 care leavers across nine districts in Chennai, Nagapattinam, Vellore, Cuddalore, Thanjavur, Ramanathapuram, Tirunelveli, Coimbatore, and Madurai.

The workshop created space for participants to reflect on their aspirations, strengthen life skills, and prepare for future opportunities. Through interactive sessions including SWOT analysis, group discussions, and exposure to internships, participants engaged deeply with their personal and professional journeys.

Turning Challenges into Possibilities

A young adult's journey of transformation through consistent support.

A young Computer Science student, growing up in a family facing financial uncertainty, joined the Python learning sessions with a strong interest in building his technical skills. Following the loss of his mother, his father became the sole earning member of the family, working as a daily wage labourer while supporting the education of both sons. Along with financial constraints, his father's health challenges added further responsibilities at home, making it difficult to maintain consistency in his learning journey. Despite these circumstances, his commitment to learning remained strong, often reflected in his words: "I am very interested in learning. No matter what work I have, I will finish it and attend class."

When he first joined the sessions, his interest in technology was evident, but his regular class attendance was sometimes affected by limited mobile data access. Although he had studied Computer Science in college, much of his academic learning focused on theory and exam preparation, leaving him with limited opportunities for practical application and hands-on learning.



With consistent guidance and encouragement from his tutor, he gradually became more engaged in the sessions. He started participating in class discussions, responding to questions, and applying concepts during programming exercises. This increased confidence also extended to his college environment, where he began contributing more actively in classroom discussions.

Today, he attends sessions regularly, often joining before the scheduled class time, and has developed the confidence to write basic programmes independently. Along with strengthening his technical skills, the learning experience has helped him build greater confidence in his abilities and clarity about his future goals.

He now aspires to build a stable career in fields such as government service, banking, or the software industry. His next goal is to continue strengthening his technical knowledge by learning Java with structured guidance. His journey reflects how access to consistent learning support can help young people build confidence, stay committed to their goals, and move towards a more secure future.



Programme Monitoring Unit

Understanding Stakeholder Experiences Across Child-Centric Systems

Mapping Voices Across the Child Protection Ecosystem

The Programme Monitoring Unit (PMU) has initiated a comprehensive evidence research study to gather qualitative insights from stakeholders across multiple levels of the child protection ecosystem. This marks an important step toward designing interventions in Education, Skill Development, Wellbeing, and Career Readiness for children in care.

Learning Visits Across Key Districts

Learning visits were completed across Coimbatore, Madurai, Cuddalore, Thanjavur, and Chennai, engaging stakeholders from district systems, Child Care Institutions (CCIs), and care-leaver networks.

Listening to Diverse Stakeholder Experiences

The research includes semi-structured interviews with District Child Protection Officers (DCPOs) and CCI Superintendents, Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) with children residing in CCIs, and in-depth interviews with care leavers to understand their transition journeys and long-term outcomes.

Building Evidence for Future Interventions

Insights gathered through this multi-layered approach will directly inform the design of targeted intervention models in Skill Development, Wellbeing, Education, and Career Readiness—strengthening reintegration outcomes and enabling more effective implementation across Child Care Institutions.

Strengthening Child-Centric Systems

This initiative reinforces PMU's commitment to evidence-driven planning, ensuring that future interventions remain child-centric while responding to broader system-level realities.



Sampoorna 2.0

| Jharkhand



158 Students Reached Through SEL Sessions

Rebuilding Safe Spaces Through Art-Based SEL | Ormanjhi, Ranchi

With the beginning of the new academic session, Art-Based Social Emotional Learning (SEL) sessions resumed for Class 9 and 10 students at Netaji Subhash Chandra Balika Awasiya Vidyalaya, Ormanjhi, Ranchi and have managed to reach 158 students so far. Students joined with fresh energy and openness as Take-It-Eazy stories introduced themes of self-acceptance, body image, emotions, empathy, and friendships.

Through art-based activities, audio stories, and reflective exercises such as Beautiful Me and Kindness Hand, students explored their strengths, feelings, and relationships. The sessions created a safe space for self-expression and strengthened their understanding of self and others.

Case Highlight: Empathy Beyond the Classroom

During one session, a student shared how she helped a hungry elderly man and took time to understand his situation by imagining herself in his place. This reflected how SEL learnings are being internalised and applied in everyday life.

Voices from the Community

"I really loved the session. We learned about friendship, emotions, and empathy. We also understood that changes in our bodies are signs of growth. We felt comfortable sharing our thoughts and realised the importance of respecting others' feelings."

— Sangeeta (name changed), Class 10



WELCOME ABOARD!



Smita

Manager - Projects



Hiya Takal

Senior Associate -
Marcom



Jitsun Lamo

Manager - R&I



Indhu

Priyadharshini

Associate - R&I



New faces, same awesome team spirit!



Chennai Children's Choir | Chennai

Voices Beyond Borders, showcasing Chennai on the Global Stage

Voices from Chennai on a Global Stage

In April, students from the Chennai Children's Choir (CCC) participated in an international collaboration connected to the Breakthrough Prize ceremony.

As part of a special tribute celebrating the Breakthrough Junior Challenge, an initiative that encourages young people to creatively communicate scientific ideas, CCC students recorded a choral rendition of We Are the World.

Originally co-written by Lionel Richie along with leading global artists, the song carries a timeless message of unity and collective action.

The performance video was completed and shared with the organising team for inclusion in the final production.

For our students, this was more than a musical collaboration; it was an opportunity to represent their community on a global platform and contribute their voices to a celebration of science, creativity, and connection.



Art Vandi | Tamil Nadu

From preserving village stories to imagining future communities, through art.

Art Vandi reached 398 children across 3 government schools, with each school exploring a distinct creative journey rooted in their local context.

Community Stories at Nallambakkam

At PUMS Nallambakkam, students explored Community Narratives, bringing together local traditions, family memories, and personal aspirations through collaborative artworks. The sessions encouraged children to see their everyday experiences as stories worth sharing.

Preserving Folklore in Keerapakkam

At PUMS Keerapakkam, students stepped into the role of young storytellers and historians through a Visual Folklore project. Inspired by stories shared by elders, they transformed local legends and cultural memories into visual art, creating a bridge between generations.

Imagining Tomorrow in Guduvancherry

At PUMS Guduvancherry, students engaged in Future Mapping using design-thinking approaches. Through art and discussion, they reflected on the needs of their communities and envisioned ideas for positive change.

"Before Art Vandi, we thought art was only for drawing flowers; now we know it can help us tell our truth."
– Student participant

Art Vandi 2 Takes Shape

Our second mobile arts space moves one step closer to the road.

Alongside field sessions, Art Vandi's expansion reached an exciting milestone. The structural work for Art Vandi 2, both interior and exterior, is now complete, with custom layouts and cabinetry in place. The vehicle is now ready for its final creative transformation through sketching and painting before it begins its journey to new communities.



Project Sakhi

| Chennai, Bengaluru,
Hyderabad, Delhi,
Thiruvananthapuram & Pune

Bangalore: Safety, Skills, and Academic Success

The Bangalore Junior and Sub-Junior cohorts participated in an expert session on Child Protection Awareness, reaching 232 students and building their understanding of children's rights, safety, and legal protection. Junior Sakhis also attended a Career Counselling Session, gaining clarity on academic streams and future career options. During the college break, 11 Senior Sakhi girls enrolled in a computer course at Dream a Dream NGO while also engaging in creative hobbies. Adding to these milestones, the Junior cohort achieved a 100% SSLC pass result, reflecting their dedication and hard work.

Perambur: Academic Readiness and Future Planning

The Perambur cohort focused on public exam preparation through 27 academic sessions and 2 career guidance sessions. After completing Grade 10, the girls explored academic streams, degree options, and career pathways, with 98% successfully selecting their Grade 11 courses.

Hyderabad: Celebrating Milestones and New Beginnings

The Hyderabad cohort celebrated the Sakhi Annual Event with exam kit distribution, games, competitions, and awards as the girls neared completion of Grade 10. In April, the new Sakhi Centre was inaugurated, marking a major milestone. A Jiva Career Guidance Workshop for girls and parents also helped families make informed career decisions.

Choolai: Leadership, Empathy, and Parent Engagement

The Choolai Sakhis conducted an art-based leadership activity at Annai Ullam Old Age Home, engaging elders through creative activities and meaningful conversations. A Parents' Workshop brought together 18 parents to reflect on their daughters' growth, future academic plans, and skill development. Health kits were also distributed to support the girls during their examinations.

Trivandrum: Strengthening Partnerships and Programme Engagement

Following the appointment of a new Senior Superintendent, the Sakhi team introduced the project and formalised the partnership through an MoU signed on 17 March 2026. A monitoring visit by the leadership team provided valuable interactions with students and school stakeholders, strengthening engagement and motivation.

Pune: Exploring Career Pathways

A Career Guidance Session introduced Sakhi girls to the Jiva Programme, encouraging them to reflect on their strengths, interests, and future aspirations. The session helped them explore academic, vocational, and career opportunities with greater confidence.

Delhi – Ambedkar Nagar: Discovering Potential and Career Choices

A Career Guidance Workshop for 15 Sakhi girls focused on self-discovery, aptitude, and career exploration. Through interactive activities and psychometric assessments, the girls gained clarity about academic and career pathways aligned with their interests.

Across all locations, these months reflected the Sakhis' growth in confidence, leadership, academic achievement, and future readiness.



Well-being through Musical Theatre | Chennai



200 Students explored well-being and self-expression through theatre

Final Production Marks the Close of the Programme

The Well-being through Musical Theatre programme concluded with a final production event, bringing together 200 students from five schools. Through four student-led performances, participants explored important themes such as child abuse, cyber addiction, fear versus courage, and understanding mental health through Meethamulla Manithan (The Human Within).

The event brought together students, parents, teachers, and programme stakeholders to witness the learning journey. The programme began with Tamil Thaa Vazhthu (Invocation to Mother Tamil), followed by student performances. Students and teachers also reflected on their experiences, sharing how the programme shaped their

understanding of emotional well-being, teamwork, and self-expression. The event concluded with certificate distribution for all participating students, while schools were recognised for their contribution and participation.

Reflections from the School Community

The impact of the programme was visible not only on stage, but also in the responses shared by teachers and parents who witnessed students engage with difficult conversations through performance.

“My daughter has been part of these sessions, and what makes me happiest is seeing her speak openly about mental health at home. She is learning, reflecting, and creating awareness within our family as well.”

— Parent, GHSS Thiruvanchery



Finding Confidence Through Expression



Lishika Sree, a student interested in performing arts, showed interest when her group began preparing a drama on the themes of body shaming and bullying. From the beginning, she wanted to be part of a performance that could create awareness and encourage empathy among her peers. Her interest in acting and storytelling remained visible throughout the preparation process.

During role allocation, Lishika Sree was assigned the role of a student experiencing bullying because of her appearance. While she was willing to participate, she initially needed time and support to connect with the emotional demands of the character. Taking on this role encouraged her to reflect on the experiences of the character and the message the performance aimed to communicate.

With regular guidance and encouragement from the facilitator, Lishika Sree gradually began to approach the role with greater confidence. She started viewing it as an opportunity to express herself and develop new skills. To strengthen her performance, she practised Bharatanatyam movements at home and explored how facial expressions and body language could help communicate different emotions on stage. Her effort and consistency became visible during rehearsals.

As the preparation process continued, Lishika Sree began taking initiative within the group. She started sharing Bharatanatyam expressions and movement techniques with her peers and supported them in portraying emotions more effectively during the performance. She also contributed to group discussions on the impact of body shaming and the importance of presenting the theme with sensitivity.

Over time, noticeable changes were observed in both Lishika Sree and the group. She became more comfortable performing on stage, more confident in expressing herself, and more willing to support others during rehearsals. Her journey reflects how theatre can support self-expression, peer learning, and social awareness while creating space for children to build confidence and communication skills.

Delhi Children's Choir | Delhi

Building Confidence, Connecting Communities, Earning Global Recognition

VolFest Performance

On 29 March 2026, the Delhi Children's Choir (DCC) took the stage at VolFest, Baansera Park, delivering a vibrant performance that reflected months of dedication and rehearsal. The performing group included 17 learners, 4 accompanists, including one DCC learner who also performed as an accompanist, and 2 facilitators.

While VolFest welcomed 8,000+ visitors across its two-day celebration, DCC performed on the second day before a packed and energetic audience. Their performance featured a dynamic blend of contemporary songs and timeless classics, with Aasman Ke Paar emerging as a crowd favourite. Their stage presence, colourful costumes, and musical versatility received enthusiastic appreciation from the audience. One attendee shared:

"It was very engaging, and the fact that they performed songs from a variety of genres that catered to every age group so that they could vibe with it was the best part, and the word for it is AMAZING."

The experience strengthened the learners' confidence, teamwork, and comfort in performing before large audiences.

Breakthrough Prize 2026 | Global Recognition

In April, DCC reached an exciting international milestone by participating in the Breakthrough Prize, held in Los Angeles. As part of a global tribute performance of "We Are the World" alongside Lionel Richie, DCC proudly represented India on an international platform.

This opportunity surfaced from an organic online search by the organisers for children's choirs in India, in which both the Delhi Children's Choir (DCC) and the Chennai Children's Choir (CCC) from NalandaWay Foundation appeared among the top results. Being shortlisted through this process made the opportunity especially meaningful for the learners, who approached the project with dedication, excitement, and pride.

DCC x Chehel Collaboration | Building Community Through Music

In April, DCC came together with learners from Chehel, a volunteer-led community education initiative in Zamrudpur, Delhi, for a joyful afternoon of music, movement, and creative exchange. The session brought together 17 DCC learners, 40 children from Chehel, and 15 volunteers, with a total of 72 participants.

What began as a playful jam session soon became a meaningful space for connection, where music helped break barriers and build friendships. As learners sang, danced, and created together, the session highlighted the power of the arts in fostering belonging, confidence, and stronger community connections. Together, these milestones reflected DCC's growing journey, using music to inspire audiences, connect communities, and create opportunities that extend far beyond the stage.



Looking Ahead

"Children need the freedom and time to play. Play is not a luxury. Play is a necessity."

— Kay Redfield Jamison

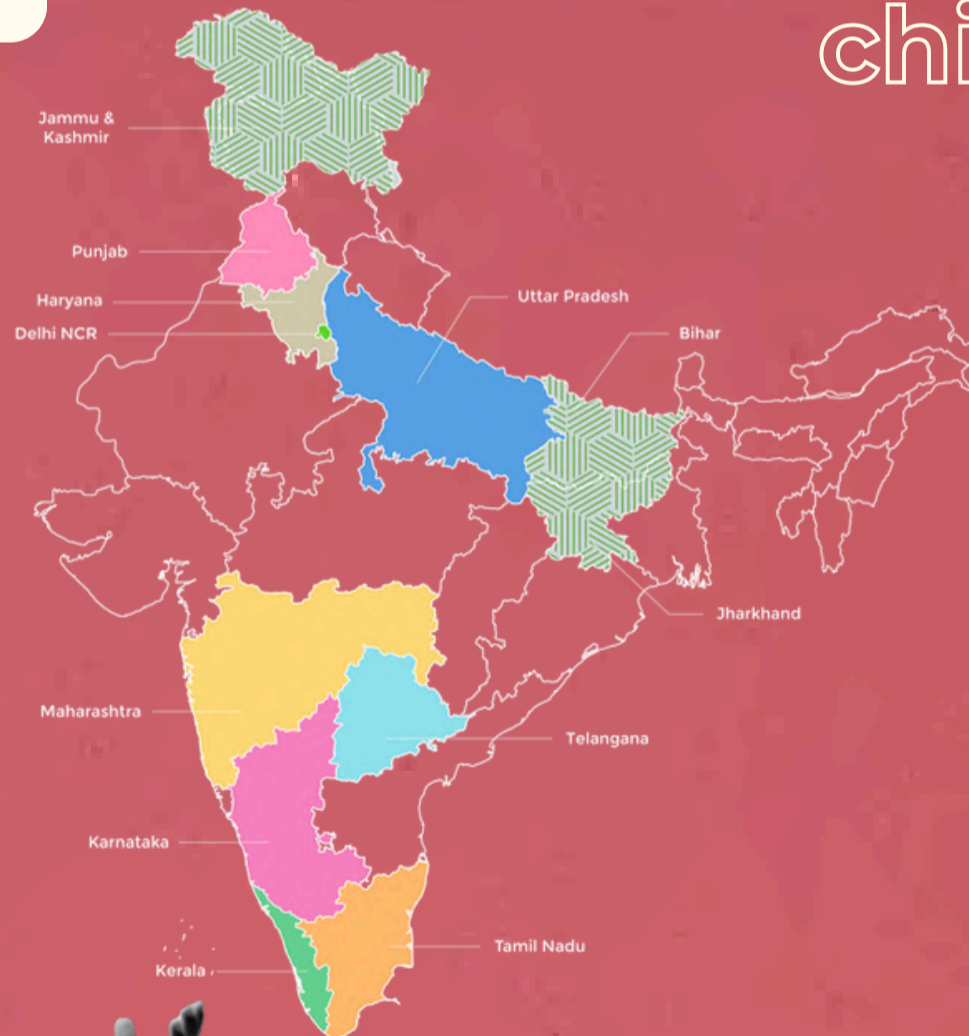
As schools pause for the summer break, we look ahead to a season of reflection, preparation, and new possibilities. In the months ahead, we will continue strengthening ongoing programmes while preparing to launch new initiatives as children return to classrooms in June and July.

Even during quieter school corridors, the work continues, nurturing spaces where art, play, learning, and emotional well-being come together to help children return with confidence, curiosity, and joy.

Our Partners



10 million
children
20 years
10 states



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

