

ABOUT US

ASPIRE is a non-profit organisation, dedicated to ensuring inclusive and socially relevant education, addressing 21st-century challenges, for all. Its mission is to strengthen the public education system by improving governance, introducing innovative teaching practices, empowering teachers and local communities, and catalysing a synergic partnership among parents, teachers, and the panchayats towards the transformation of schools.

Launched in partnership with Tata Steel Foundation in January 2015, our flagship initiative, the Education Signature Program (ESP), implements a comprehensive Education Model for revitalizing public education. It aims to provide equitable and quality education from early childhood to secondary level for all children, aged 3 to 16. The Program has been replicated in seven tribal districts across Odisha, Jharkhand, West Bengal, and Chhattisgarh. The education program has reached over 1.5 million children since its inception in 2017 and currently covers 14,547 habitations in 39 blocks, including 6,293 government schools and 7,018 Anganwadi centers.

We've partnered with esteemed organizations like Tata Steel Foundation, HSBC, and Tech Mahindra Foundation, among others. Our rural digital literacy project also collaborates with Fondation Mérieux, France. The ESP program has received notable awards, including the UN Global Compact Initiative's Innovative Practices Award and Reimagine Education Award Bronze 2021.



A MESSAGE FROM ASPIRE

This year, Aspire has helped unlock something powerful: the belief that lasting change is not only possible—it's already happening.

In some of the most remote and underserved parts of India, communities are reimagining what education can be. Teachers once overlooked are leading transformation. Panchayats once dismissed are delivering results. Families long excluded from development conversations are now shaping the future of their children's learning.



At the heart of this progress is a simple but radical idea: **trust people**. When we place trust in communities—and in the government school system—and back it with the right support and training, they rise to the occasion. Our approach to foundational literacy and numeracy (FLN), developed in close partnership with government systems, is gaining momentum because it's built on that principle. It doesn't impose solutions from the outside. It co-creates them—with those who understand the challenges best. We now have not only a model that works, but a **scalable blueprint**—anchored in local leadership, government alignment, and deep community trust.

However, this is just the beginning. We know that progress can be fragile. True decentralization—giving teachers real autonomy, and communities real voice—requires policy, persistence, and partnership. That's the road ahead.

Aspire is committed to walking that road—with humility, urgency, and hope. We believe every child in India deserves a quality education—and that together, we can build an education system where no one is left behind.

Thank you for standing with us. The future is already being written—in classrooms, in panchayats, in remote villages—and it's brighter than ever.

Daya Ram

Executive Director and Founder, Aspire

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OUR REACH

4 STATES | 7 DISTRICTS | 39 BLOCKS



740

GRAM PANCHAYATS

14722

HABITATIONS

6479

GOVERNMENT SCHOOLS

6526

ANGANWADI CENTERS

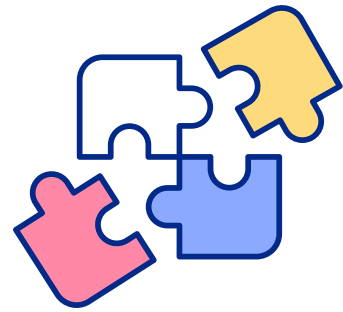
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WARDS

8

**MUNICIPAL CORPORATIONS AND
NOTIFIED AREAS**

OUR APPROACH



ASPIRE has developed a model that takes into account the diverse issues and dynamics involving multiple stakeholders in the education system. Our approach centers on three pillars: Access, Learning, and Governance. By simultaneously addressing these interconnected & critical aspects of education, we create synergies and build lasting impact on the regions education landscape.

ACCESS

- Enrollment
- Class Transitions
- Bridging Programs

LEARNING

- Foundational Learning
- School Libraries
- Local Language Integration

GOVERNANCE

- Community Ownership
- Capacity Building
- Stakeholder Engagement





KEY ACHIEVEMENTS AND IMPACT

CHILD LABOUR FREE ZONE (CLFZ)

ASPIRE is committed to universalizing access to education by creating Child Labour Free Zones (CLFZ) in alignment with the Right to Education (RTE) Act. The process begins with comprehensive child surveys to identify out-of-school children, followed by attendance tracking and the establishment of bridging centers to facilitate their transition to formal schooling.

Recent Updates from 2024-25

The entire Keonjhar district in Odisha, comprising 13 blocks, 299 panchayats, 79 urban wards, and 5015 habitations, has been declared a Child Labour Free Zone (CLFZ). In Hindol District, all children in 33 of 36 panchayats, including 13 wards and 269 habitations, are now enrolled in school, with efforts underway to declare them a CLFZ by the next quarter.

The West Singhbhum Expansion Program has seen 18 panchayats and 38 urban wards, comprising 3552 habitations, declared CLFZs. Specifically, the entire Lailore panchayat, with its 39 habitations in Manoharpur block, has been declared a Child Labour Free Zone, resulting in 211 children returning to school.

Furthermore, in 23 wards and 12 panchayats, children have been enrolled in school and are working towards CLFZ status after the Jharkhand elections.

In Odapada, we have achieved 50% of our target for declaring Child Labour Free Zones, marking significant progress in our efforts to eliminate child labor



COMMUNITY INITIATIVES

COLLABORATIVE ACTION: SCHOOL BUS INITIATIVE



Based on the efforts of the CRPF and PRIs, various stakeholders collaborated to successfully deploy school buses across 19 blocks in all projects in Odisha, enhancing transportation accessibility in remote area.

A total of 151 buses were allocated to different blocks in Odisha, contributed by various organizations: DMF (15), TSF (3), SAIL (2), JSW (11), Rungta (1), OMC (14), OMBADC (2), Tribeni Mines (10), and MGPS (Laxmi) (93), with 58 of these being free of cost.

The initiative supports 2,532 school children and 4,013 college students, significantly improving their access to education across the region

COMMENDABLE COMMUNITY INITIATIVE FOR EDUCATION

Inspired by a visit to **Ralegaon**, Maharashtra, organized by the **Tata Steel Foundation, Jay Prakash, Mukhiya of Kusmita Panchayat** in Hatgamharia block, West Singhbhum district, envisioned a future where every child in his community has access to quality education

- He organized **Gram Sabhas** to **raise awareness** about the importance of education and encouraged local parents to contribute to funding efforts
- He established **village education committees** in **10 villages**, which focused on **reducing school dropouts, strengthening FLN**, improving school facilities, and deploying full-time volunteers in schools lacking teachers, while also **setting up a school library** as part of an outreach program
- The committees also conduct monthly meetings to review progress and strategize for sustained improvements
- Due to a strong community backing, the panchayat now funds the honorarium of **10 FLN Volunteers** across **eight schools**. The initiative has achieved significant improvements in access to quality education for children in the community, thanks to its impactful partnership with ASPIRE.

Collaborative Action for Strengthening Education

- TSP Koira staff participated in the **Teachers' Conference** organized by the **Block Education Officer, Koira**, which brought together education officers from Gurundia, Kutra, and Bonai to discuss strategies for **improving education quality and school development**.
- The conference highlighted the role of innovative teaching-learning materials (TLMs) in improving learning outcomes, with officials recognizing TSP's efforts to promote creativity and interactive learning in collaboration with government education departments.

PREVENTING CHILD MARRIAGE IN KHARAGPUR,

COMMUNITY EFFORTS AND GOVERNMENT INITIATIVES

Child marriage remains prevalent in Kharagpur, with Paschim Medinipur district reporting rates exceeding 56%, among the highest in West Bengal (NFHS-5, 2019-21)

The West Bengal government's Kanyashree Prakalpa offers financial incentives to encourage girls to stay in school and delay marriage until 18

ASPIRE Kharagpur team, with community support, identified and prevented 13 child marriages in the Kalaikunda, Barkola, Arjuni, and Khelar clusters from October to December 2024

ASPIRE conducted awareness campaigns with both children and parents on the negative impact of child marriage, ensuring the children returned to school to continue their education



COMMUNITY EDUCATION RESOURCE CENTRE (CERC)

This year, our objective was to drive all 173 CERCs towards self-sustainability, a key factor in ensuring their long-term viability. To achieve this, we're exploring strategies such as installing solar panels to cut electricity costs, especially in rural areas. Our goal is to provide high-quality services, including skill development programs, academic support, job assistance, mass education, and essential services like photocopying, and Aadhaar facilitation, leveraging various media channels and community outreach initiatives



Core Functions

Skilling & Training

Offering essential computer skills training for students, teachers, and youth, covering internet usage, Microsoft tools, and Excel.

Academic Support

Addressing educational gaps, particularly in areas with limited qualified teachers, through resources like Khan Academy and personalized coaching in subjects such as Math, Science, and English.

Community Services

Providing support with job applications, certificates, train reservations, passport-size photos, xerox, driving licenses etc and government-recognized computer courses.

Mass Education

Through films, discussions, and awareness programs, CERCs engage communities and connect rural areas to global perspectives—serving as a 'window to the world' in the digital age.

STEM – E

The program integrates STEM in classroom and out-of-classroom settings, introducing strategies like peer group learning and hands-on activities. Students explore scientific concepts through experiments, such as acid-base tests and pH scale analysis, and learned mathematical concepts like triangle properties and the Pythagorean theorem, emphasizing experiential learning and critical thinking

We've evolved our STEM program into STEM-E, where 'E' stands for Ethics—highlighting the role of science in building a better, more equitable society. The program encourages co-creation with communities to explore science and mathematics in a sustainable, inclusive, and socially responsible way.

The pedagogical approach is shaped by insights from knowledge partners, including:

- University of Turku
- Homi Bhabha Centre for Science Education
- Vikram A Sarabhai Community Science Centre (VASCSC)
- Indian Institute of Science (IISc), Bangalore

Impacts

- Improved learning outcomes and stronger grasp of science and math concepts
- Increased student motivation and shift from fear to curiosity and confidence
- Greater engagement through hands-on learning and critical thinking
- Enhanced teaching confidence, enriching the overall classroom experience

Coverage

Odisha

Rolled out project-wide, covering 676 middle schools and 61,550 children—100% under TSP, 31% ESP, and 16% each under QUEST and DIL-SE.

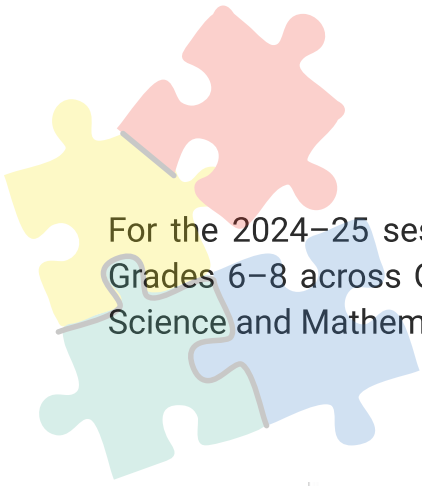
Jharkhand

Reached 6,366 children across 33 middle schools (37% of target) under the SIP project.

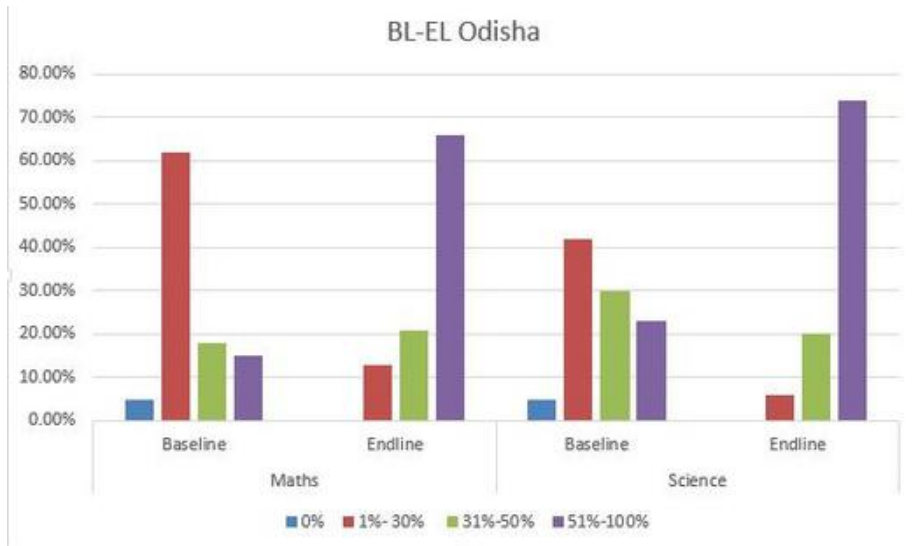
West Bengal

Reached 4,151 children in 18 middle schools, covering 62% of target.

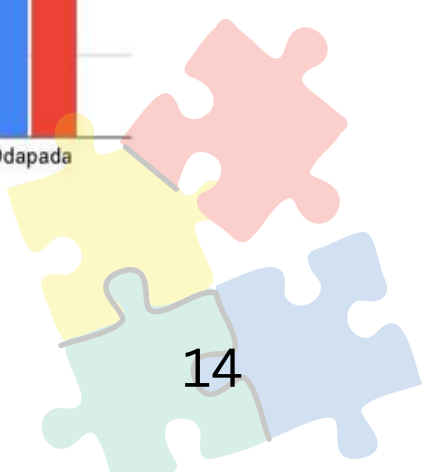
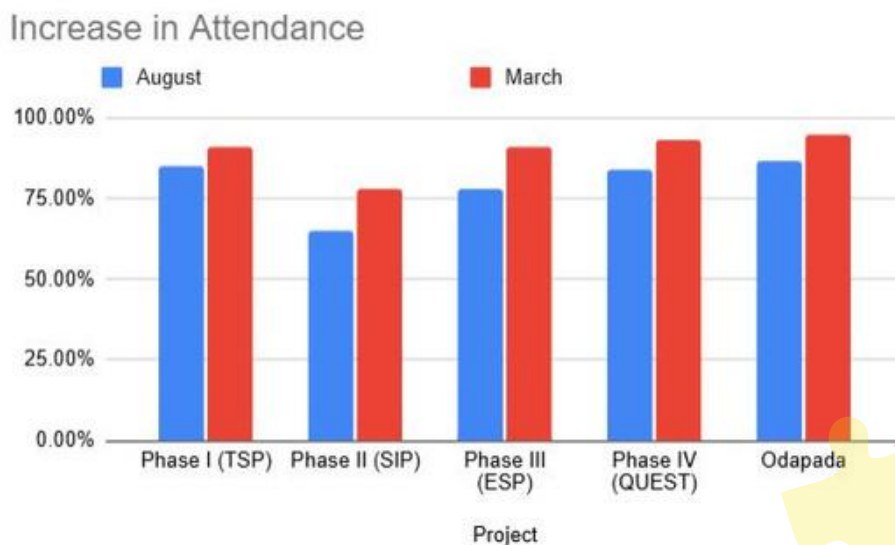
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For the 2024–25 session, Baseline and Endline Assessments were conducted for Grades 6–8 across Odisha. The results show significant improvement in children's Science and Mathematics scores.



The program has resulted in improvements in student attendance in middle schools across our project areas. The graph below illustrates the increase in attendance between the first month of intervention (August 2024) and the last month (March 2025).



BEBRAS CHALLENGE

The On November 15th, we collaborated with TCS to host the 2024-25 Bebras Challenge, a global competition that promotes computational thinking among students. The challenge featured 15 tasks that required students to apply problem-solving skills and computational thinking to overcome obstacles.

- 43,195 students (21,840 boys and 21,355 girls) from 636 schools across Odisha, Jharkhand, and West Bengal participated, earning widespread recognition on national and international platforms. What's striking is that alongside students from elite schools in developed countries, our program's tribal children also participated, showcasing their talents on a global stage.



UNIVERSAL K-10

A major milestone was reached this year with the achievement of **universal K-10 status (from Anganwadi to Grade 10)** across **19 blocks in Odisha**—an accomplishment that remains a challenge in most parts of the country. This success has been driven by a multifaceted approach that emphasizes improved governance, innovative teaching methods, teacher and community empowerment, and strong partnerships among parents, educators, and Panchayat leaders.



However, several systemic gaps must be addressed for sustained progress. These include a shortage of high schools, an insufficient number of teachers, and limited seats in government residential hostels

Addressing these issues requires concerted efforts by the government to recruit and train more teachers, expand high school and residential school capacities, upgrade infrastructure, and strengthen local governance institutions.

Local bodies and community-based organizations (CRPFs) have been actively engaging with authorities to address these concerns, resulting in gradual improvements.



KNOWLEDGE AND PARTNERSHIPS

NEW PARTNERSHIPS

Emerging Research-Practice Partnerships

In early September, Prof. (Dr) N V Varghese, Dayaram, and Dr. Kartika Bhatia participated in a workshop at St Andrews University to draw future research agendas. During this visit, Dayaram, Kartika, and Dr. Madhumita also toured several UK universities to share ASPIRE's work and explore research partnerships. Their presentations were well received, and follow-up discussions are ongoing with all institutions.

Institute for Fiscal Studies: Met with Dr. Sonya Krutikova to discuss a randomized controlled trial assessing the impact of ASPIRE's learning interventions.

London Metropolitan University: Engaged with Dr. Ambreen Shahriar and Dr. Shovita Dhakal Adhikari to explore research collaborations on out-of-school children and child labor.



University College London: Met with Professor Tristan McCowan to discuss partnerships for creating job-ready cohorts in higher education.

University of Sussex: Engaged with Professor Simon Thompson, Professor Geert De Neve, and faculty to establish research-practice partnerships addressing teacher training, child development, and learning outcomes.

Workshop at University of St Andrews Economics Department: Hosted by Dr. Margaret Leighton with participants from the ASPIRE, Tata Steel Foundation, and NIEPA, focused on developing a research agenda based on ASPIRE's work on school transformation.

Integration Lab (i-Lab) Global Partner Experience

Partner: **Keough School of Global Affairs, University of Notre Dame**

Focus: Child Labour Free Zones (CLFZ)
In partnership with Notre Dame's i-Lab, we began a research collaboration in September 2024 with a four-member MGA student team. Together, we explored strategies to ensure all children (ages 3–16) enroll in and complete schooling up to Class 10. The study, covering 11 blocks in Keonjhar, focuses on understanding the processes that enable and sustain CLFZs. By March 2025, the research scope and question were finalized, with interview tools and IRB clearance underway.

LUMA

This year, ASPIRE joined hands with **LUMA**, a science education network of Finnish universities, as part of the 1000 Schools Program.

It aims to engage children, youth, teachers, and families on novel math, science and technology education (STEAM) education through collaboration and sharing. An innovative and supportive platform designed to enhance collaborative project-based learning



STEM PARTNERSHIPS

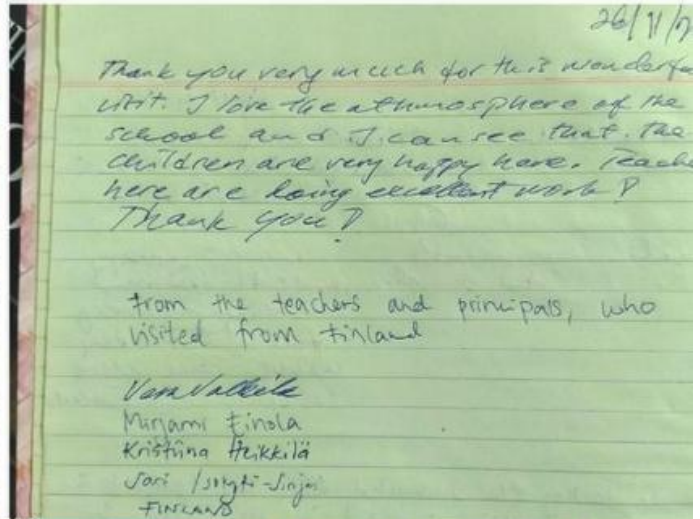
Vikram A. Sarabhai Community Science Centre (VASCSC)

VASCSC encourages scientific thinking and innovative science teaching. We have partnered with them to purchase science material and kits for the middle-school intervention program. VASCSC will equip our teachers with skills and knowledge needed to teach Science & Mathematics more effectively, using learner-centered innovative approaches and the new science kits.



Homi Bhabha Centre for Science Education (HBCSE)

HBCSE promotes excellence and equity in Science and Mathematics education and champions the use of hands-on, activity-based learning. We have partnered with them to bring practical, experience-based science education to government schools. Our collaboration began with the training of 25 teaching staff at HBCSE, who then cascaded the training to 118 teachers. As a result, 72,067 children across Odisha, Jharkhand and Kharagpur in grades 6–8 are now actively engaged in science learning through demonstrations and experiments in our Middle School Intervention Program (MSIP). We are also distributing Small Science (Halka Phulka Vigyan)—a series of innovative books developed by HBCSE and translated by us into Odia—for use in grades 3 to 5.



University of Turku, Finland

The University of Turku, one of Finland's leading multidisciplinary research universities, is our knowledge partner for pedagogic innovation and capacity building. In collaboration with Tata Steel Foundation, we are working with the University on developing classroom content, strengthening teacher education, and enhancing school management through administrator training. The partnership includes regular information exchange, benchmarking, school visits, and teaching demonstrations.

Indian Institute of Science (IISc) Bangalore

Our collaboration with the Indian Institute of Science (IISc), Bangalore—facilitated by Tata Steel Foundation—focuses on strengthening Science and Mathematics education at the high school level through intensive training for our staff. The program equips educators with advanced pedagogical skills, subject knowledge, and practical teaching strategies to enhance student learning. The IISc-led training held from 4th to 14th August 2024, covered key Class 10 Science chapters in Physics, Biology, and Chemistry. A baseline was conducted for all participants before the training. A total of **59 teachers participated**—31 in Science and 28 in Math. This partnership has enriched our teaching practices and empowered our team to better engage and inspire students in STEM subjects.





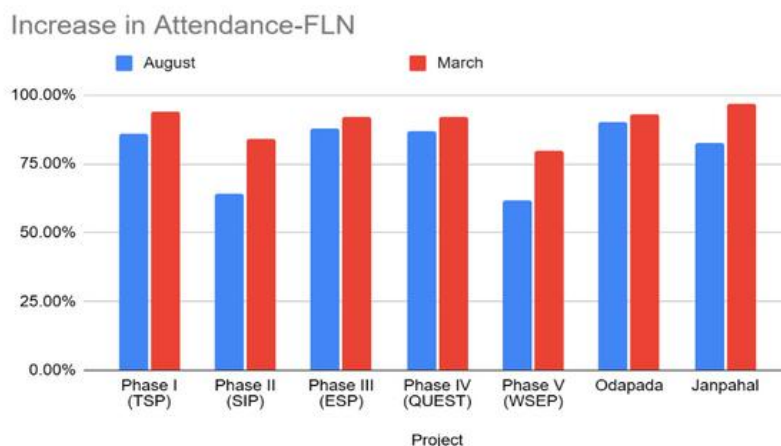
HIGHLIGHTS OF OUR WORK

FOUNDATIONAL LITERACY AND NUMERACY (FLN)

- Notable improvement in school attendance and punctuality among both children and government teachers.
- Classrooms have become more vibrant and child-friendly, with teachers adopting activity-based, child-centred teaching methods.
- Use of appropriate Teaching-Learning Materials (TLMs) and child-wise lesson planning has become more common, enriching the learning experience.
- Strengthened collaboration with government teachers and other education functionaries, leading to joint planning and training sessions in coordination with block and district education departments.
- Enhanced community engagement, with overwhelming support from parents and local stakeholders.

Impact(in numbers)

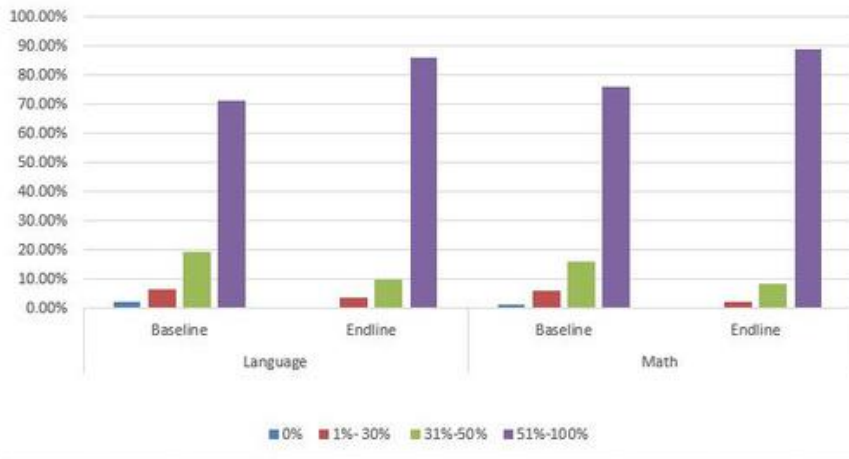
- **332,532 grade I-V children improved their foundational learning.**
- **5339 schools covered out of 5556 schools.**
- **4,146 local volunteers (87% women and 54.3% ST, 34.2% OBC, 8.6% SC, and 2.9% General) and 1,173 learning staff are engaged in teaching and supporting learning.**
- The program has resulted in improvements in student attendance across our project areas. The graph below illustrates the increase in attendance between the first month of intervention (August 2024) and the last month (March 2025).



- For the 2024–25 session, Baseline and Endline Assessments were conducted for Grades 1–5 across Odisha, Jharkhand, and West Bengal. The results show significant improvement in children's Mathematics and Language scores.

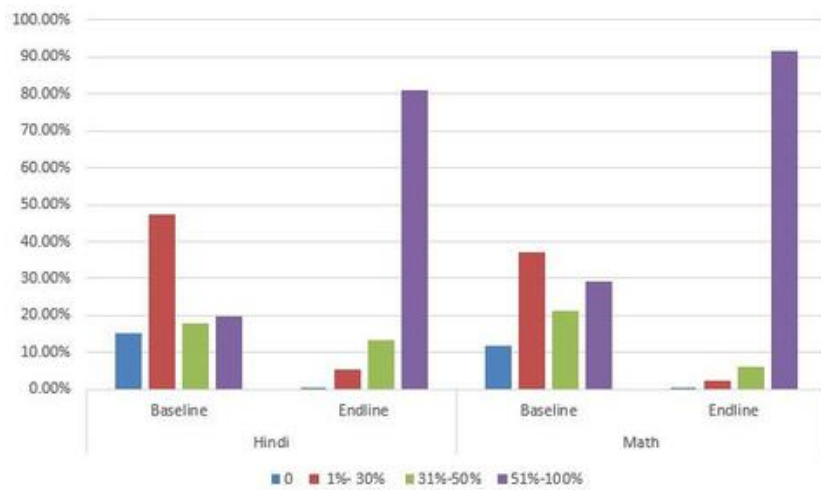
Odisha

BL-EL Odisha FLN



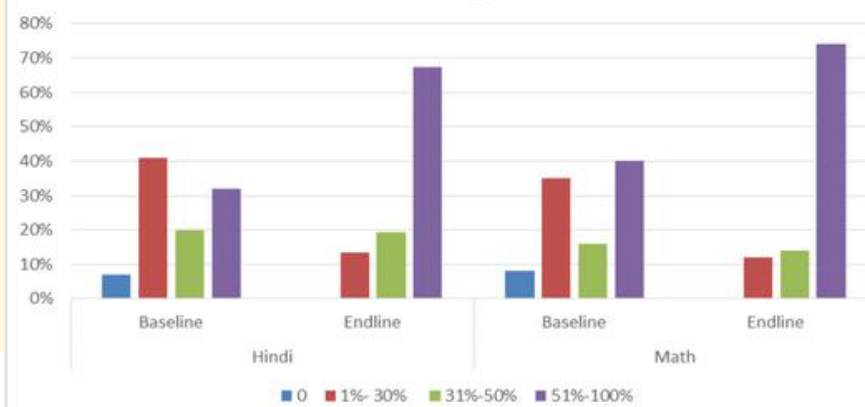
Jharkhand

BL-EL Jharkhand FLN



Kharagpur, West Bengal

BL-EL Kharagpur-FLN



Following the successful universalization of FLN in three out of four projects in Odisha (TSP, ESP, and QUEST), nearly 998 schools and 1105 teachers have gained the capacity to conduct FLN classes independently, without support from volunteers.



COMMUNITY OWNERSHIP IN EDUCATION

A MODEL FROM KUSMITA PANCHAYAT

In Jharkhand's Kusmita Panchayat, a major step toward educational reform began with the formation of the Panchayat-level education committee, Shiksha Sangh, on July 1, 2023, led by Mukhiya Mr. Jay Prakash Laguri. Inspired by community leader Mr. Jaypal Singh and supported by exposure visits and ASPIRE, the initiative aims to ensure school enrollment for all children, improve education and health standards, and establish model schools. The committee engages the community, monitors schools, and advocates for resources, while also forming village-level education sub-committees. Notably, the Panchayat has taken ownership of foundational learning by allocating honorariums for 10 FLN volunteers using locally mobilized funds.

Within a year, the initiative expanded to eight education committees across six villages, fostering community participation and accountability. Regular meetings are held via digital platforms, and transparent fund management has strengthened trust. Shiksha Sangh's first anniversary saw widespread participation, with students showcasing talents and contributions from parents, teachers, and volunteers recognized. Going forward, Kusmita Panchayat aims to become child labor-free, introduce career counseling, and offer free coaching for competitive exams, reflecting a long-term commitment to educational equity and holistic development, with expected technical support from ASPIRE.



BRINGING LEARNING TO LIFE WITH TLM

Deepshikha: Making Learning Joyful with TLM

Deepshikha joined ASPIRE as an FLN volunteer in March 2023 and now serves as a LEP teacher at Nuasahi Hata UGH School in Hindol. Faced with low attendance (45%), disinterest in learning, and a lack of teaching materials, she took a hands-on approach to transform the school environment.

Deepshikha created low-cost, engaging Teaching Learning Materials (TLM) using local resources—turning leaves, stones, and everyday items into alphabets, counting tools, and learning games. Through rhymes and visual aids, she made learning interactive and fun, especially for shy children. Her approach boosted attendance to 95% within three months and inspired government teachers to adopt her methods. By mobilizing parents, increasing classroom participation, and helping children overcome their fear of school, Deepshikha ensured that education became both accessible and enjoyable. Today, she is pursuing her B.Ed and continues to build classrooms where learning feels like play.



RUPALI MINZ – A RISING LEADER IN COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Rupali Minz from Kukurbhuka village, Odisha, was once a quiet and reserved girl with a strong sense of responsibility but little confidence to speak up. Her journey took a turn when she joined the Girls Right Protection Forum (GRPF), where regular meetings and training helped her build leadership and communication skills. Recognised for her dedication, she was elected as the Block-Level President of GRPF. In this role, she began leading meetings at the Anganwadi Centre, collaborating with community workers to raise awareness on children's education, health, and rights.

She also supported early childhood education by helping create a playful learning environment for young children. Her efforts have encouraged more adolescent girls to participate in community discussions and increased awareness among families about girls' rights and education. Rupali's transformation from a shy village girl to a confident community leader shows how the right support and opportunities can empower girls to drive change.



JYOTI FELLOWSHIP

Tata Steel provides the Jyoti Fellowship to academically talented students from economically disadvantaged SC and ST families, helping them pursue their educational and career goals. The fellowship is awarded to students in Class 8 in Odisha and Class 7 in Jharkhand, who have achieved at least 40% in their previous grade final exam.

In the 2024 exams, a total of 329 students from Odisha appeared, - 174 boys and 155 girls, with 190 students successfully passing. In Jharkhand, 654 students appeared, of whom 47 passed the exam.

Additionally, 240 students from Odisha and 234 from Jharkhand are continuing into their second year of the scholarship from the 2023 batch.



SCHOLARSHIPS

Access to education beyond Class 10 remains out of reach for many children in our program areas. With schooling no longer free, financial hardship often leads to the dropout of children. Sadly, it is often girls who are the first to be pulled out of school – they are expected to stay home, care for siblings, and shoulder household responsibilities, even when they aspire for more. In these moments, the support of generous donors has been a lifeline, enabling children to continue their education and move one step closer to becoming empowered individuals who can give back to society.

Hattangady Scholarship

The Hattangady Family Scholarship, funded by philanthropist and business leader Hema Hattangady, supports girls from underprivileged backgrounds who have completed Class 10 or higher, enabling them to pursue education up to the level they aspire to. Through ASPIRE, the scholarship has supported 41 girls across 15 blocks in Sundargarh, Keonjhar, and Jajpur districts.

The scholarship covers admission fees along with support for books, stationery, uniforms, travel, tuition, and accommodation in hostels where needed—ensuring girls can continue their education without barriers.



Each girl is paired with a dedicated mentor from our staff, who monitors their academic progress, addresses their needs, and provides guidance to help them excel in their studies.

As the first academic year of the Scholarship program draws to a close, many girls across different blocks are either appearing for their exams or have already completed them with remarkable results. One such bright student is Sneha Sahoo from Kutra block, a science student who secured second position in her class 11 Annual exams with an impressive 96.3%. With dreams of becoming an engineer, Sneha is dedicatedly working towards her goal.

Manisha Natarajan

In Telkoi Block, ASPIRE identified out-of-school children and prepared them to take the State Institute of Open Schooling (SIOS) exam, equivalent to the HSC examination, through Residential Bridge Course (RBC) centers.

Thanks to the efforts of Manisha Natarajan, a prominent journalist and anchor, 11 students (6 boys and 5 girls) who passed the SIOS exam received financial assistance covering admission fees, books, and uniforms. They were subsequently enrolled in the Arts Stream at Gopaljew Higher Secondary School on October 2, 2024

ASPIRE's team continues to mentor these students closely—regularly visiting colleges, engaging with faculty, and offering academic and emotional support. Home visits and parent interactions further strengthen this ecosystem, helping students build confidence, adapt to college life and stay motivated.



Anand Sen

The former Managing Director of Tata International Limited has committed to providing financial support of ₹50,000 per annum for a period of five years towards the higher education of two underprivileged girls from Chaibasa and Jagannathpur, Jharkhand.

This support will cover key educational expenses, including admission fees, tuition, books, travel, hostel accommodation, and uniforms. One of the beneficiaries is currently pursuing a Bachelor of Arts in History, while the other is enrolled in a Bachelor of Commerce programme.



THOUSAND SCHOOLS PROGRAM (TSP) – PHASE 1

STRENGTHENING FLN IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS (GRADES 1–5)

The Thousand School Program (TSP) was launched in 2015 in collaboration with the Tata Steel Foundation (TSF) across six blocks in three districts of Odisha—Danagadi and Sukinda blocks in Jajpur district, Joda and Harichandanpur blocks in Keonjhar district, and Koira and Kutra blocks in Sundargarh district. The program aimed to develop a scalable and replicable model to universalize elementary education in alignment with the Right to Education (RTE) framework.

To make productive use of the summer vacation, ASPIRE implemented a Summer Camp intervention aimed at addressing learning loss from the academic year—particularly in core subjects such as Language, Math, and Science. This initiative covered 697 out of 965 schools, reaching 25,610 children with the support of 343 volunteers and 271 staff members. Aligned with the mission of NIPUN Bharat, which focuses on achieving Foundational Literacy and Numeracy (FLN) by the end of Grade 5, ASPIRE supported FLN activities across 896 schools. Through the efforts of 344 volunteers and 352 staff, the program reached a total of 60,222 children.

COVERAGE

123	Gram Panchayats
2	Municipal corporation/NAC
2239	Habitations
1053	Government Schools
1493	Anganwadi centers
164115	3-16 Children Reached:164115

Based on baseline and endline assessments in Language and Mathematics for Grades 1–2, and Grade-3-5 there was a noticeable improvement: For Grade 1-2, the percentage of children scoring 70–79% increased from 4% to 20% in Language and 7% to 24% in Math. For Grades 3–5, the percentage of children scoring 80–89% increased from 10% to 16% in Language and 17% to 24% in Math.

In the Thousand School Program, ASPIRE expanded its Middle School Intervention from 100 schools in FY 2023–24 to 375 schools (100%) coverage in FY 2024–25 across six blocks. This intervention impacted 36,554 students, enhancing their understanding of Mathematics and Science through practical and experiential learning.

Additionally, a workshop titled “Our Culture, Our Toys” was conducted to promote the making of local Teaching-Learning Materials (TLMs) for FLN. This government-supported initiative was facilitated by 237 ASPIRE staff and 45 volunteers, and was attended by 60 local resource persons and 1,323 government teachers.



MEET SWARNALATA BANRA

CHAMPION AGAINST CHILD MARRIAGE IN SUKINDA BLOCK

Swarnalata Banra, the CRPF President, was honored by the district collector for preventing around 60 child marriages in Sukinda Block. Swarnalata, from Sukinda Gram Panchayat, got married in 1996 in Gobarghati. Despite leaving school after 8th grade due to health issues and her father passing, she became a leader with her in-law's support.

After marriage, supported by her family, Swarnalata began working for her community. She started by forming 5 self-help groups with 50 people and later collected Rs 8200/- through tree planting and wood sales, used the proceeds for women's empowerment.

In 2003, she helped educate children in her area, even enrolling 14 in the "Kalinga Institute of Social Sciences". Thanks to her efforts, Sonali Hembram excelled in cricket for Odisha, and Namsi Jarika made it to Odisha's hockey team. Encouraged by her community, Swarnalata entered politics in 2007 and was elected thrice as Sarpanch. In 2016, impressed by ASPIRE's work for the underprivileged, she joined CRPF and became Sukinda Block's ASPIRE President in 2017. Swarnalata took her role seriously, making Sukinda Block a "Child Marriage Free Zone" with ASPIRE's support, resolving 60-70 of child marriage cases by reaching every household. Recognized for her dedication, the Jajpur district collector honored Swarnalata on July 12, 2024, applauding her efforts at the collector's office.



SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PROJECT (SIP) – PHASE 2

Implemented in West Singhbhum in Oct. 2016, 2 blocks : Noamundi and Jagannathpur.

COVERAGE	
34	Gram Panchayats
769	Habitations
251	Government Schools
300	Anganwadi Centres
55993	Children Reached

Key Highlights (2024–25)

Learning Outcomes

- 12,251 students from Grades 3–5 assessed under FLN program
- 8th & 10th Support Classes reached 2,349 students (1,337 in Grade 8 | 1,012 in Grade 10)
- Focused sessions on Maths & Science with dedicated volunteers across 53 schools

Strengthening Governance

- 258 stakeholder meetings with SMCs, SHGs, PTAs, Gram Sabhas & health workers
- Block-level SMC Federation formed to strengthen school monitoring
- 226 community campaigns on child rights, education, health & environment

Child-Centric Events

- Children’s Festivals reached over 28,000 participants across 248 schools and anganwadis
- National Girl Child Day celebrated with 500+ attendees, promoting education and empowerment of girls

Capacity Building

- School Development Plan (SDP) training in 13 schools with 123 stakeholders
Focus: planning, issue identification, and RTE-based school governance

EDUCATION SIGNATURE PROGRAMME (ESP) – PHASE 3

Implemented in Keonjhar district in 2019, eleven blocks: Anandpur, Banspal, Champua, Ghasipura, Ghatgaon, Hatadihi, Jhumpura, Sadar, Saharpada, and Telkoi.

- ASPIRE, in collaboration with the government, organized Teaching Learning Material (TLM) workshops across all 11 blocks, attended by 3,503 participants including block education officials, headmasters, and government teachers. As a result, 665 teachers across 613 schools are now independently implementing Foundational Literacy and Numeracy (FLN) in their classes.
- Out of 1,643 volunteers engaged in the foundational literacy program, 86% were women which highlight strong female participation and leadership in educational support roles, contributed to the implementation of the program across 1,895 schools, reaching a total of 97,528 children.
- To support the Middle School Intervention Program (MSIP), ASPIRE also conducted pedagogy training in coordination with the government, attended by 817 participants, including BEOs, ABEOs, CRCCs, headmasters, and subject teachers.

COVERAGE

253	Gram Panchayats
3	Municipal Corporation/NAC
50	Urban Wards
4002	Habitations
2373	Government Schools
2726	Anganwadi Centers
266615	Children Reached

BLOCK-LEVEL SMC CONVENTION IN HATADIHI

On 15th February 2025, ASPIRE facilitated a Block-Level School Management Committee (SMC) Convention at Hatadihi Nodal UPS, aimed at strengthening community engagement in school governance. The event brought together 55 SMC members from 31 Gram Panchayats, focusing on building awareness of their roles, rights, and responsibilities in improving school functioning. Inaugurated by Headmaster Purnachandra Jena, the convention highlighted the SMCs' critical role in ensuring accountability, transparency, and better learning outcomes. Through workshops on the Right to Education (RTE) Act, school development planning, and effective monitoring practices, participants gained insights into tracking attendance, evaluating teacher performance, and addressing infrastructure needs.

The convention also featured group discussions where members shared local challenges and success stories. Common issues included irregular student attendance, limited parental involvement, and the need for capacity building among SMCs. The program fostered a spirit of collaboration and encouraged joint problem-solving among community representatives. By the end of the day, the convention had not only built awareness but also laid a strong foundation for grassroots efforts to improve education quality, demonstrating the power of community-led school development.



VIMSEN PENTHEI: A TRUE HERO FOR EDUCATION AND HUMANITY

In the quiet village of Dimuria, nestled in Telkoi block, lives Vimsen Penthei, a man of simple means but immense heart. As the vice-chairman of the School Management Committee (SMC) at Government UPS Dimuria, Vimsen has been tirelessly working for the betterment of the school and its children for the past three years. A farmer by profession and a father of three children who study at the school, Vimsen believes that education is the key to building a better society. To him, no child should be left behind.



One day, Vimsen noticed two children, Kanaka Munda and Aswini Munda, had stopped attending school. Upon inquiring, he learned their tragic story. The siblings had lost both parents—one to tuberculosis and the other to a snakebite—and were left orphaned. With no one to care for them, the children had started working to survive.

Vimsen couldn't ignore their plight. He began visiting them, talking to them, and convincing them to return to school. Despite his modest resources, Vimsen brought the children back to school and took them under his care. He fed them, provided them with clothes, and even let them stay with him temporarily.

Understanding that this was not a permanent solution, Vimsen approached various officials, including the Block Development Officer (BDO) and the Block Education Officer (BEO), to secure hostel accommodation for the children. The process wasn't easy as the children lacked proper documents for admission. But Vimsen, determined to give them a better life, went to great lengths to arrange all the necessary paperwork, even using his own identity to support their case.



Both children were admitted to the hostel, typically for classes 1-5, with Kanaka included due to Vimsen's efforts. Vimsen continued supporting them with clothes, essentials, and regular check-ins.

The children are now safe in the hostel, attending school, and dreaming of a bright future. With gratitude in their hearts, they said, "Vimsen uncle is like a parent to us. He gave us a life our parents could not have given. We promise to work hard and make him proud. Whatever we become in life, it will be because of him."

Vimsen's dedication doesn't stop with these two children. He is actively involved in the daily functioning of the school. He visits regularly to check the quality of food, observes teaching methods, tracks absent students, and ensures all issues are addressed. He has become the voice of the school, raising concerns with local authorities and pushing for developmental work.

In his free time, Vimsen cleans the school, saying, "This school is ours, for our children. It's our duty to keep it running." A 10th-pass, his actions reflect deep commitment—changing lives without needing a degree. Vimsen Penthei shows that true impact comes from compassion and dedication, not qualifications.

QUEST- PHASE 4

Quality Upgradation of Education Through Strategic Thrust (QUEST) – Phase 4.

The QUEST project, implemented in partnership with Tata Steel Foundation, began in July 2019 in the districts of Dhenkanal and Angul. In September 2021, the program extended its coverage to include the Hindol block of Dhenkanal, further expanding its reach and impact.



Annual Highlights: Project QUEST (FY 2024–25)

Access & Transition

- Achieved a 99.68% transition rate across all levels in Hindol and Banarpal blocks.
- Re-enrolled 5 dropped-out children through community mobilization.
- Residential Bridge Courses mainstreamed marginalized children into formal schools.
- 35 of 36 panchayats and 15 of 16 wards declared Child Labour Free Zones.
- Village Education Registers updated in 364 habitations (both physical and digital formats).
- 52 School Development Plans created, exceeding targets.

Learning Initiatives

- Summer camps successfully addressed learning gaps, endorsed by government teachers.
- 232 libraries set up; mobile libraries expanded reach.
- Tablet-based digital lessons scaled up by OSEPA to government schools.
- FLN program achieved 100% school coverage, with 57% of Grades 1–2 reaching A1 outcomes.
- Academic support in six high schools enhanced 10th-grade board exam readiness.
- Middle School Intervention Program launched in 19 schools; 90% of students met learning targets.
- 552 students participated in the BEBRAS Challenge, sharpening critical thinking.
- TLM exhibitions promoted low-cost, handmade learning materials across 45 schools and 100+ AWCs.

Governance & Community Engagement

- Strengthened governance through SMCs, PTAs, SHGs, Gram Panchayats, and youth groups.
- Capacity-building conducted for frontline workers, Mother Committees, and Girls Rights Protection Forums.

Observation Days & Festivals

- 33,803 participants engaged through Observation Days promoting child rights and education.
- 9,251 children celebrated creativity during Sishu Mahotsavs across 103 locations.

COVERAGE

36	Gram Panchayats
01	NAC
273	Habitations
233	Government Schools
433	Anganwadi Centres (covered 250)
25576	Children Reached

A LONG WALK TO A BRIGHTER START

JESLY'S JOURNEY TO EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

In the quiet village of Beruanpal, little Jesly Samal could often be seen playing outside her home – curious, lively, and full of questions. At just under five years old, Jesly had never been to an Anganwadi centre. The nearest one was nearly 2 kilometers away, and for her mother, Sasi Samal, the long daily walk with a small child wasn't always possible. During a routine household survey, Laxmipriya Sahu, GPCM of G-GP, Nuagan Cluster, noticed Jesly and inquired about her schooling. On learning about the distance barrier, Laxmipriya Sahu worked closely with the Anganwadi Worker to find a solution. Thanks to their joint efforts, Jesly was successfully enrolled at the centre at the age of 4 years and 10 months.

Today, Jesly attends the Anganwadi regularly. She sings songs, learns her letters, and enjoys nutritious meals, and shares laughter with her new friends – all within a safe, nurturing environment. Her story is a small but powerful reminder that with the right support, every child can take their first step toward a brighter future.



WEST SINGHBHUM EDUCATION PROGRAMME (WSEP) – PHASE 5

Implemented in West Singhbhum in Dec. 2021, 16 blocks : Anandpur, Bandgaon, Chaibasa, Chakradharpur, Goilkeria, Gudri, Hatgamharia, Khuntpani, Kumardungi, Jhinkpani, Manjhari, Manoharpur, Majhgaon, Sonua, Tantt Nagar and Tonto.

COVERAGE	
183	Gram Panchayats
5622	Habitations
2088	Government Schools
800	Anganwadi Centres
275265	Children Reached

WSEP Major Highlights and Achievements

Learning Highlights

FLN Assessment (Grades 3–5)

Assessed 73,171 students across West Singhbhum under NIPUN Bharat to identify learning gaps in Foundational Literacy and Numeracy. The findings will guide targeted support strategies—such as remedial teaching and customized learning plans—to help students improve specific skills where they are struggling.

Academic Support Classes

- Class 8: Reached 8,417 students in 231 schools with 232 volunteers.
 - Class 10: Supported 3,555 students in 41 schools.
- Classes focused on core Math and Science topics to improve board readiness.

Early Childhood Education (ICDS)

- Reached 24,233 children across 800 AWCs.
- Emphasis on preschool readiness, hygiene, and routines.

Anganwadi Worker Training

- Trained 781 workers on NEP-aligned ECCE curriculum and pedagogy.
Summer Camps
- Held in 1,435 schools/habitations, engaging 49,129 children.
- Promoted joyful learning during vacations.

Governance & Community Engagement

Stakeholder Meetings

- 7,288 meetings with 2.1 lakh participants (46% male, 54% female).
- Covered themes like RTE, FLN, child protection, enrollment.
Capacity Building
- 1,203 sessions with 57,922 stakeholders (e.g., SMCs, SHGs, PRI members).
- Focus on roles, school governance, hygiene, library use, child rights.

Campaigns & Events

Children's Festivals

- Conducted in 1,730 venues.
- Engaged 145,965 participants in creative and science-based activities.
Child Labour Free Zone (CLFZ)
- Lailor Panchayat (Manoharpur block) declared CLFZ on 21 Sept 2024.
- Collaboration with government, civil society, and child rights advocates.



A LEADER WHO IGNITED THE FLAME OF EDUCATION IN BADA CHIRU

Narendra Banra, the Mukhiya (village head) of Bada Chiru Panchayat in Khuntpani block, West Singhbhum, Jharkhand, is a young man with a big heart and a deep commitment to transforming his community. From a young age, he has dedicated himself to bringing positive change and improving the lives of those around him.

A Vision for Change

One of Narendra's proudest achievements is the development of his Panchayat as a learning hub. "Education is the key to changing lives, and I wanted to make sure my village had access to it," he says. Through his collaboration with ASPIRE, the Community Education Resource Centre (CERC) was set up, bringing educational resources to the community. Alongside the CERC, Narendra helped create the Gyan Kendra library. This library is more than just a place filled with books; it's a space where students of all ages can access a wide range of materials—from school textbooks to competitive exam books, novels, general knowledge guides, and even digital learning tools.



Though Gyan Kendra is an initiative of the Panchayati Raj department of Jharkhand, Narendra has taken it a step further. During community meetings, he carries a book or two to share with the villagers, sparking curiosity and encouraging reading. "I want the people to know that reading can change their world," he explains. He even discusses various topics from these books, motivating school and college students to develop the habit of reading.

DILSE OPEN PROJECT- PHASE 6

After successful interventions in three panchayats of Odapada block, Dhenkanal district, Odisha under the "QUEST project," the program expanded in November 2022 to all 25 remaining panchayats under the "Dil Se Open Project," supported by Axis Bank Limited and Tata Steel BSL Limited. Aiming to ensure high-quality, equitable education for all children, the program covered the entire block and advanced the vision of comprehensive educational development. Activities are funded until March 31, 2025.

Major Highlights

- The household survey was conducted over a span of more than a month, starting on February 10 and concluding on March 14, 2025. During this period, a total of 30,685 households were surveyed, with the active participation of 79 enumerators. The survey was conducted using the ODK app for data collection.
- Achieved an average 99.74% student transition rate across AWC to primary, primary to upper primary, and upper primary to secondary.
- 14 of 28 panchayats and 171 of 183 habitations declared Child Labour Free Zones.
- Achieved Universal coverage of Anganwadis covering 298 out of 298 anganwadis.
- FLN coverage- Currently we are supporting 114 government Primary schools out of 124 schools benefiting 6265 children through 84 project volunteers.
- Middle School Intervention Program (MSIP) - Launched in 12 schools, MSIP strengthened academic outcomes through classroom support, reaching 1495 children.

COVERAGE

183	Habitations
28	Gram Panchayats
153	Government Schools
298	Anganwadi Centers
19643	Children Reached

SIKHYA SACHETAN RATHA: FOR EVERY CHILD'S RIGHT TO LEARN

"ASPIRE India's Sikhya Sachetan Ratha campaign embarked on a mission to revolutionize the Odapada block in Odisha by promoting quality education and eliminating detrimental practices like child labour and child marriage. Through a dynamic mobile awareness program, the campaign traversed across clusters and Gram Panchayats, engaging community members in vibrant rallies, informative meetings, and interactive events.

A diverse range of participants, including SMC members, PRI representatives, SHGs, youth, adolescent girls, teachers, ASHA and Anganwadi workers, and village-level child protection committees, came together to spread the message of education and collective action. ASPIRE's field teams, comprising Cluster Facilitators, Learning Facilitators, and others, played a vital role in organizing the campaign.

With the active participation of villagers, local governance bodies, partner NGOs, educational institutions, and volunteers, the campaign successfully sparked awareness and inspired a movement towards a brighter future for Odapada's children. By fostering collective action and ownership, the campaign declared its vision of transforming Odapada into a Child Labour Free Zone, where every child can learn, grow, and thrive."



BREAKING BARRIERS: THE STORY OF RUPALI NAYAK'S GROWTH WITH CERC

Rupali Nayak is a graduate from Anandapur village in Keonjhar district. She belongs to an ST family and lives with her parents and younger brother. Due to her family's poor financial condition, she could not continue her education after graduation. She mostly stayed at home helping her mother with household work. One day, she came to know about the CERC center and visited it with her father. After understanding the courses offered, she became interested and got admitted.

At CERC, Rupali began learning typing and gradually improved her writing and computer skills. She learned MS Paint, MS Word, MS Excel, PowerPoint, and basic computer knowledge. She attended regularly without missing a single day. Rupali also helped Class 10 students with their board exam preparation. Within six months, she completed her training. With support from ASPIRE NGO and CERC, she gained confidence and skills. Later, she got a job at a Honda showroom as a salesperson, where she uses her computer knowledge. Now, she is self-employed and supports her family. Rupali's journey shows how learning can change lives.



ODAPADA SURVEY

The household survey was conducted over a span of more than a month, starting on February 10 and concluding on March 14, 2025. During this period, a total of 30,685 households were surveyed, with the active participation of 82 enumerators. The survey was conducted using the ODK app for data collection

Key Findings:

- 1.9% of households have at least one child who seasonally migrates.
- Among 28,541 children aged 0-17, 8.3% lack an Aadhaar card, and 13.10% lack a birth certificate.
- Among 4,766 children aged 3-5, 6.6% don't attend Anganwadi, mainly due to distance.
- Among the 19,626 children aged 6 to 17 years, dropout rates stand at 9.2% at the primary level and rise to 18.5% at the upper primary level.
- Among out-of-school children, 77.5% belong to the 14+ age group.



300 SCHOOLS PROJECT, WEST BENGAL

The 300 Schools Project, supported by Tata Metaliks, commenced on January 1, 2021, with field operations starting on September 1, 2020, across four gram panchayats in Kharagpur block-1, West Medinipur district, West Bengal. The program started in 60 schools during its first year and expanded to encompass all schools in the block from the second year onward.



Access

- Expanded from 4 to 7 Anchals through stronger community and institutional partnerships.
- 4 Gram Panchayats (Barkola, Kalaikunda, Arjuni, Hariatara) declared Child Labour Free Zones.
- 4 NRBC centres established for 114 seasonal migrant children, ensuring uninterrupted learning.

COVERAGE

07	Gram Panchayats / Anchals
786	Habitations
294	Villages
150	Sansads
214	Government Schools
275	Anganwadis
20994	Children Reached

Learning

- Early Childhood Education extended to all 274 AWCs, benefiting 12,000+ children.
- Children's Festivals held in 188 schools, promoting joyful learning and community engagement.
- FLN program reached 5,510 children across 120 schools, boosting early learning through TLM innovation.
- Middle School STEM program impacted 4,151 students across 18 schools, with teachers independently leading STEM sessions, library management, and parent-SMC engagement.

Governance

- PRI and VEC members underwent 3 exposure visits, strengthening leadership on child marriage prevention and school management.
- 53 child marriages prevented through coordinated efforts of community stakeholders, ensuring girls' education continuity.





EDUCATION FOR MIGRANT CHILDREN AT BRICK KILNS

During the Anchal-level Child Labour Free Zone declaration in Barkola and Kalaikunda, PRI members identified seasonal migrant families from Jharkhand and Bihar living in local brick kilns. Their children, though temporary residents, were at risk of being excluded from education. Recognizing that every child deserves to learn, PRI members took swift action – holding meetings with kiln owners, who agreed to support the initiative. Local teachers were appointed, trained by ASPIRE, and paid by the owners to run Non-Residential Bridge Courses (NRBCs) at the worksites.

Today, four NRBCs function under PRI leadership, ensuring learning reaches even the most vulnerable.

Children Reached: 114 (Boys: 56 | Girls: 58)

A model of community responsibility, swift local action, and educational inclusion.



A COMMUNITY STANDS AGAINST CHILD MARRIAGE



In a quiet village of Abhaynagar, a young girl's future was at risk. Fourteen-year-old Monalisa Singh, a Class 9 student, and 18-year-old Samba Mudi had secretly married after meeting at a village fair. With Samba unemployed and Monalisa still studying, the marriage remained hidden for a few days – until concerned villagers raised the alarm.

Asha, a local volunteer, quickly brought the matter to the attention of Pooja (GPCM), Kanta Hemram (LF), Panchayat member Sampa Kotal, and Anganwadi worker Mampi Mahala. Without hesitation, the ASPIRE team, even amidst their ongoing capacity-building workshop, mobilized for action.

They visited Samba's home, where the boy's parents confirmed the marriage. Seeing Monalisa – barely 14 – standing before them, the team and community leaders patiently explained the risks of early marriage and the importance of education. With persistence and support from the village community, the family was convinced to send Monalisa back to her parents and help her return to school.

Follow-up visits by community mobilizer Pooja confirmed that Monalisa was home and ready to continue her education. This collective action reaffirmed the community's role in protecting the rights of its children and nurturing their dreams.

JAN PAHAL, CHATTISGARH

SUPPORTED BY THE HANS FOUNDATION | DEC 2022 – MAR 2025

Project Goal

Ensure all 6-14 children in the block receive equitable and quality school education through a revitalized public-school system that prepares them to realize their full potential

Key Achievements

- Out-of-School Children Enrollment:
- Direct Enrollment: 1,468 children enrolled in schools.
- RBCs (Residential Bridge Course): 125 children (69 boys, 56 girls) enrolled.
- NRBCs (Non-Residential Bridge Course): 157 children enrolled across 6 centers.
- Total Re-enrolled: 1,750 children.

Foundation Literacy and Numeracy (FLN)

- 6,911 children across 150 schools participated in FLN programs, aimed at boosting basic literacy and numeracy.
- Provided training to 150 local volunteers to assist government teachers.

Learning Enrichment Program (LEP)

- 1,916 children supported across 52 schools (grades 3-5).
- Focus on improving foundational literacy and numeracy in local languages.

Digital Learning

- 2,199 children engaged with digital learning tools (tablets, e-books, stories) at LEP, NRBC, and RBC centers.

School Libraries

- 235 libraries established across government schools to foster a culture of self-learning.

Community Engagement and Governance Strengthening

SMC Training: 3,621 members oriented across 233 sessions.

PRI Training: 945 members oriented across 75 sessions.

Community Mobilization: Engaged over 78,694 community members (parents, teachers, youth, SHGs, Anganwadi workers).

Key Initiatives:

Conducted 7,541 meetings, promoting education and community involvement.

Increased community responsibility in ensuring children attend school regularly, improving attendance rates to above 90%.



Educational Outcomes

Improved learning levels, with children progressing in literacy and numeracy through targeted interventions.

Significant rise in school attendance, reaching over 90% in some areas.



Empowered Local Governance

Empowered local governance bodies (SMCs, PRIs) to take proactive roles in school management. Local communities now actively support school operations, track student attendance, and address issues like child labor and dropouts.



Recognition and Scale-Up

The district administration has requested Aspire's intervention in additional schools, recognizing the model's success.

LETTER FROM DIST PANCHAYAT CHIEF



Dr. Pavan Kumar Singh, Jila Panchayat Adhyaksha of Korba, sent a letter to the District Collector of Korba requesting CSR funds to support the operation of the RBC Center

MR. AJIT BASANT, COLLECTOR OF KORBA, VISITS JAN PAHAL PROGRAM



The Collector of Korba district, Mr. Ajit Basant, visited the program and, impressed with our work, issued an order to build a New Primary School in Ranai Pahad, and upgrade a nearby primary school to middle school

CHHATTISGARH HOUSEHOLD SURVEY FINDINGS



- An HH Survey was undertaken to assess the educational status of children in 77 out of 114 panchayats of Pondi Uproda block, Korba. As of Sep 30, 2024, 28,903 households (100%) surveyed.
- Of 21,003 children aged 6-14, 854 (4%) dropped out, and 713 (3%) never enrolled
- Of 14,314 children aged 15-17, 1244 (22%) dropped out, and 155 (1%) never enrolled
- For both age groups, the dropout rate among boys is higher, with 58% dropping out and 54% never enrolled
- Of 6346 children aged 3-5 years, 443 (7%) children are not going to Anganwadi
- Prior to this survey, we have brought back 1388 out-of-school children including 897 through direct enrollment, 210 through RBC, and 281 through NRBC

SOCIAL AUDIT

Aspire recently conducted a comprehensive social audit to assess the state of education in 14,886 habitations, 6,595 schools, and 8,035 Anganwadis across Orissa, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, and West Bengal.

A team of 2,115 dedicated surveyors worked tirelessly to collect data.

We sought to understand the barriers that girls and boys face in accessing quality education. Our audit focused on:

Habitation-level data:

- Distance to Anganwadi, primary school, middle school, and high school
- Accessibility and availability of public transport
- Reasons for inaccessibility (e.g., hills, forests, rivers, lack of roads)



SOCIAL AUDIT

Type of Pre-primary school/Anganwadi data collected:

- Enrollment data for children aged 0-3 and 3-6 years
- Infrastructure and facilities (e.g., building type, drinking water, toilets)
- Staff availability and training
- Services provided (e.g., nutrition, health education)

School-level data collected:

- Type and category of school (e.g., primary, upper primary, high school)
- Enrollment data for boys and girls
- Teacher availability and qualifications
- Infrastructure and facilities (e.g., classrooms, toilets, playgrounds)
- Availability of mid-day meals, uniforms, and other services

The primary goal of this audit was to assess the accessibility and quality of education in these areas, identifying areas for improvement and informing future interventions. The findings from this audit is shared with the community to foster ownership and will help in developing targeted strategies to enhance the educational experience for children in these regions.



NEWSLETTER



This month at ASPIRE : January'25 Edition



This month at ASPIRE : April Edition



This month at ASPIRE : March Edition



This month at ASPIRE : February Edition



“Each edition brings alive field stories, program updates, student achievements, community initiatives, and special features like 'Great Educationists' and grassroots changemakers”

Launched in January 2022, ASPIRE’s monthly English newsletter, published on the 10th of every month, is shared with external audiences to highlight key achievements and updates. Following this, editions in Odia and Hindi were introduced to strengthen internal communication within our intervention areas. The latest addition, the Bengali newsletter, was launched in May last year, further deepening local engagement and outreach across communities.

Each edition brings alive field stories, program updates, student achievements, community initiatives, and special features like 'Great Educationists' and grassroots changemakers. Regular sections such as 'Meet Our Team,' 'Creative Corner,' and 'Case Studies' further showcase the spirit, creativity, and resilience of our communities. In addition, we feature Phuljhadi, an educational newsletter from the 90s, aimed at inspiring and engaging teachers with creative classroom ideas. Through these newsletters, we not only document milestones but also celebrate the voices and efforts driving change at every level.

ASPIRE RESOURCE CENTER

The Aspire Resource Centre is located in Masnajodi village of Ghatgaon block and spans across 70 acres of land. Designed as a dynamic training and resource hub, the centre aims to provide vocational training to the local youth and eventually evolve into a full-fledged community college.

The campus is well-equipped with three training halls, a kitchen and dining facility, a three-bedroom guest house, and a 100-bedded hostel. It has access to electricity, 24x7 water supply, and Wi-Fi connectivity, ensuring a fully functional and conducive learning environment.

Registered as a vocational training institution, the centre is managed and supervised by the local Panchayat, marking a strong example of decentralized governance and community ownership. We aspire to create a futuristic space where the local community takes initiative, leads development efforts, and becomes a central part of the transformation.

The centre will be closely linked with Community Education Resource Centres (CERCs), and will facilitate services such as career counselling, skill-building, and hands-on vocational training.

The centre is expected to operate independently, with the Panchayat taking full ownership. Masnajodi village will serve as a model Panchayat – showcasing best practices in local governance, community-led development, and sustainable rural transformation – inspiring other Panchayats to undertake exposure visits and adapt similar models in their regions.





VISITS

VISIT BY DR. SHANTHA SINHA AND DR. SHEKHAR BONU



From September 20th to 23rd, 2024, Padmashri Dr. Shantha Sinha and former IAS Dr. Shekhar Bonu visited key intervention areas of ASPIRE across Jharkhand and Odisha to observe educational programs, community involvement, and support the establishment of Child Labor Free Zones (CLFZ).

They praised the children's engagement, the community's commitment to education, and the significant progress towards declaring Child Labor Free Zones (CLFZ). Dr. Sinha especially lauded the grassroots efforts of Child Rights Protection Forums and called the work "revolutionary" in advancing child rights. Both visitors emphasized the importance of collective responsibility, continuous support beyond primary education, and stronger local ownership to sustain the impact. Their visit served as a catalyst, inspiring communities and ASPIRE teams to continue striving for systemic change and ensuring every child's right to education.

FIELD VISIT BY FACULTY MEMBERS OF UNIVERSITY OF TURKU, FINLAND



On November 26-27, faculty members **Vesa Valkila**, **Kristiina Heikkilä**, **Sari Isokytö-Sinjo**, and **Mirjami Einola** visited the **Sukinda** and **Danagadi** blocks to review the progress of our collaboration and shared positive feedback.

Key Observations:

Teaching Practices:

- Shift to activity-based learning with increased use of TLMs.
- Focus on student-centered, active engagement over rote memorization.

Teacher-Student Dynamics:

- Positive changes in teachers' attitudes and behaviors.
- Growing community of motivated learners and teachers.

Student Progress:

- Move towards self-directed learning.
- More frequent application of concepts to real-life situations.

Classroom & Assessment:

- Improved classroom environment.
- Need for better assessment and evaluation methods.

DR. LIISA TOIVONEN

Dr. Liisa Toivonen, Counsellor from the Embassy of Finland, New Delhi, visited ASPIRE's intervention areas in Danagadi and Harichandanpur on 21st and 22nd August. During her visit, she observed various ASPIRE's programs and support programs, including the Foundational Literacy and Numeracy (FLN) classes, middle school interventions, Anganwadis, and Residential Bridge Courses.

She also engaged with government teachers and stakeholders, discussing teaching strategies, school management, and stakeholder involvement.

During her visit, Dr. Liisa noted the children's regular attendance, confidence, and active participation across programs. She appreciated the creative use of teaching-learning materials, the cleanliness of school campuses, and the practical learning approaches used in middle schools.

She was particularly impressed by the community's involvement in education and the efforts of adolescent girls in addressing social issues. Dr. Liisa highlighted the importance of strong stakeholder collaboration and commended ASPIRE's role in promoting quality education, community engagement, and child protection.



VISIT OF INDORE TOOFAN FC REPRESENTATIVES

Representatives from Indore Toofan FC, Anurag Srivastava and Indrojit Chaudhuri, visited ASPIRE project locations in Odisha and Jharkhand to explore possibilities of developing football and sports programs for kids. In Jharkhand, they visited the Girls' Residential Bridge Course (RBC) in Chakradharpur, where they interacted with over 200 girls striving for age-level learning and witnessed their enthusiasm for sports. In Odisha, they visited Masinajodi's Community Education Resource Centre (CERC) and the football grounds in Jharbada & Budhakhaman village.

The team engaged with the community, witnessing football training sessions in Jharbada, discussing potential collaborations to improve sports infrastructure, and attending stakeholder meetings in Budhakhaman village of Harichandanpur block. They also participated in a panchayat-led campaign in a nearby village focused on preventing child marriage, supporting education, and enhancing health benefits. Based on their findings, the team is now formulating a plan to introduce football and tribal sports in ASPIRE's programs, promoting confidence, teamwork, and leadership qualities among children.



VIKAS SAHYOG PRATISHTHAN, MAHARASHTRA

ASPIRE Odisha hosted two exposure visits for Village Sahyog Pratishtan (VSP), Khopoli, Maharashtra. The first, held from 7th to 10th January 2025 for VSP staff (GPCM and LEP teachers), focused on ASPIRE's core activities, the Right to Education Act, 2009, child rights, and the roles of SMCs and PRIs. Participants also observed FLN and MSIP classes, library sessions, and the Child Labour Free Zone (CLFZ) process driven by community ownership, while engaging with various stakeholders.

The second visit, from 8th to 10th April 2025 in Danagadi and Sukinda blocks, was designed for SMC members. It included training on ASPIRE's model, RTE, child rights, SMC/PRI responsibilities, and principles to eliminate child labour. Participants observed field practices including classroom sessions, library processes, CLFZ strategies, and use of the village education register. They interacted with stakeholders such as children, parents, SMCs, PRIs, Anganwadi workers, and SASS/CRPF/GRPF members, and concluded with the development of action plans for local implementation.



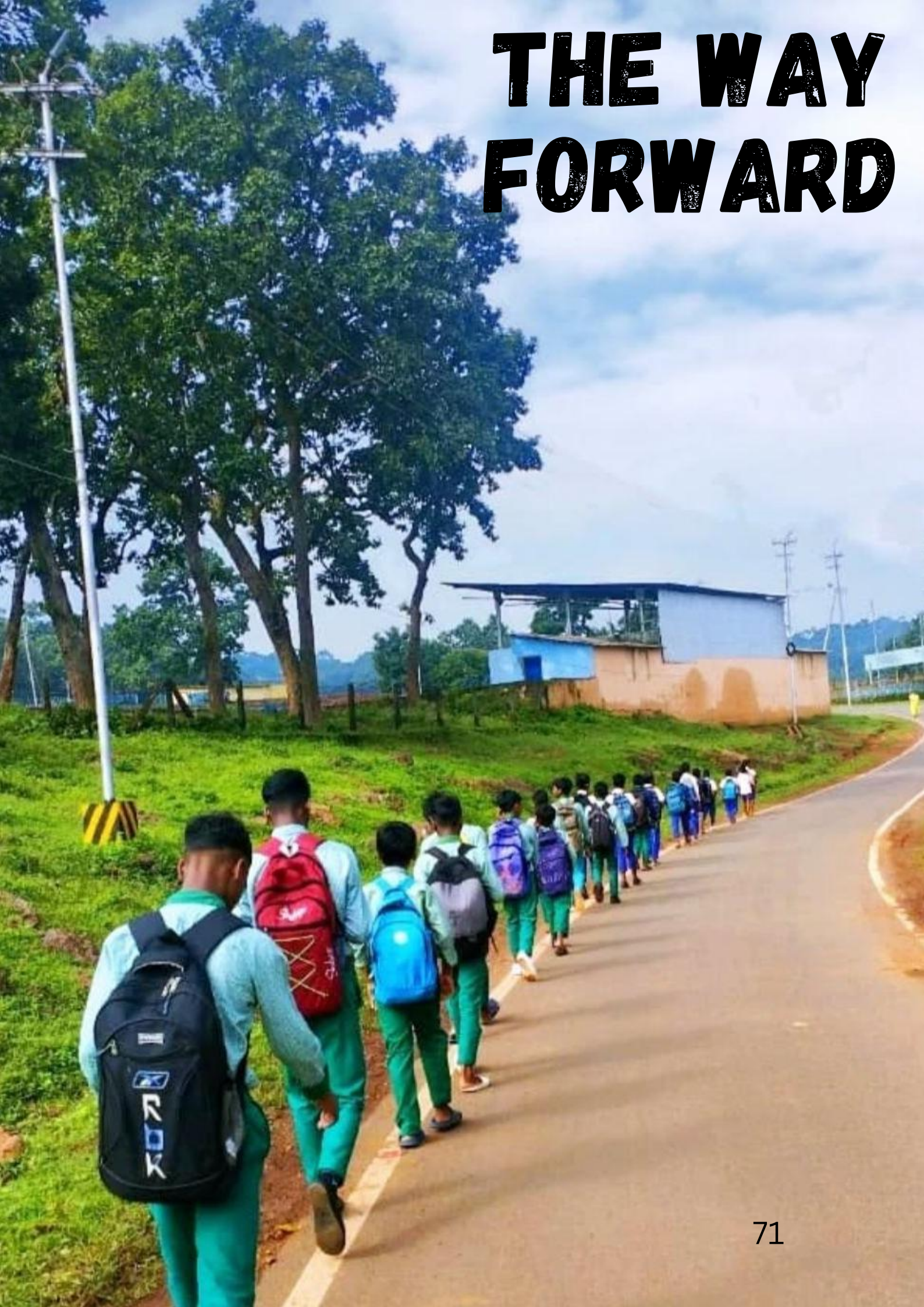
MV FOUNDATION

Our team of 26 members from Odisha, Jharkhand, West Bengal, Chhattisgarh, and Delhi visited Rangareddy, Vikarabad, and Suryapet districts to study MV Foundation's gender initiatives. Divided into three groups of 8-9 members, they explored key programs like Gender Committees in schools and Kishori Balika Sanghams (KBS) at the community level.

These platforms engage adolescents in addressing issues like child marriage, school dropouts, and gender inequality, while encouraging them to challenge social norms and take collective action. A key takeaway was the importance of including boys in these initiatives to promote shared responsibility for gender equity—an approach ASPIRE aims to strengthen within its own programs.



THE WAY FORWARD



Over the past decade, Aspire has grown from a bold vision into a movement that is reshaping education across tribal regions in Central and Eastern India. We've learned, adapted, and proven that when communities are trusted and supported, sustainable change is not only possible—it's already underway.

As we enter the next phase, our focus is clear: deepen community ownership, strengthen grassroots public institutions, and build lasting partnerships with the government and civil society.

We will invest in making **Community Education Resource Centres (CERCs)** self-sustaining hubs for lifelong learning—offering low-cost tutoring to children, supporting self-directed learners, and serving as the foundation of our exit and sustainability strategy.

Our **local volunteer teacher network**, now over 5,000 strong, has been pivotal in advancing foundational literacy. We will mobilize support from Panchayats, SMCs, and parents to co-finance honoraria while also enhancing volunteers' professional development, healthcare coverage, and access to qualifications.

Aspire will continue to **leverage government partnerships** to embed our model within the system—scaling training programs, strengthening DIETs, and aligning with NEP 2020. **Social audit findings** will drive grassroots advocacy and accountability.

We will **champion teacher empowerment**, advocate for decentralised decision-making, and promote Aspire's **proven FLN approach** as a replicable model. In conflict-affected regions, we remain committed to positioning education as a path to peace.

Finally, we will expand **co-creation with communities** and knowledge partners, integrating local wisdom with technical expertise, and rely on data-driven, collaborative strategies to inform our actions.

Aspire's vision of universal K–10 education remains firmly rooted in the belief that lasting transformation begins with those closest to the challenge. Together—with governments, communities, and partners—we will continue building a more inclusive, equitable, and resilient education system for all.

**THANK
YOU**

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