

Opportunity through Education

Yatra Foundation Australia



2023-24
Financial Year
ANNUAL REPORT

**“Live as if you were to die tomorrow.
Learn as if you were to live forever”.**

– Mahatma Gandhi

Yatra Foundation Australia

Yatra Foundation Australia was founded in 2008 by four friends with the aim to improve access to quality education for some of the most disadvantaged children in India. With the understanding that a small charitable organisation based in Australia has limitations on what can be achieved in a vast and diverse country such as India, we can proudly say that Yatra Foundation has made a significant impact on the communities we serve. Together with our partner organisations located in Rajasthan and Tamil Nadu, we have impacted more than 9000 children, with a ratio of 1:1 of boys to girls. More than 7000 children have successfully transitioned to government schools after attaining the requisite entry level education required. Nearly 300 children have gone on to pursue tertiary education.

More than 180 teachers have been trained with the support from Yatra but of greater significance, 95% of those teachers are from within the communities of the students. And importantly, Yatra schools outperform government schools with respect to literacy and numeracy. Yatra also actively pursues gender balance in their schools and more importantly, girls are competing alongside boys in every facet of their education. This not only improves educational outcomes but demonstrates that girls are valued as equals. Value leads to respect and empowerment. This is happening in communities where most of the parents themselves, are illiterate. So, despite the overwhelming task of educating a country of more than 1.5 billion, making this small but significant impact can lead to generational change and recognition of the value of education. This is what motivates Yatra Foundation to continue in their goal of increasing access to quality education.

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Our vision

Every child has the right to receive an education, however the delivery of education remains a challenge for many communities across the world.

Poverty, economic or political instability, natural disaster, and conflict, remain barriers for children in many situations. Without quality education, children face barriers to future opportunities with employment and earning potential, restricting their ability for future decision making. This means children grow up having less control over their future. These inequalities also extend to health outcomes and young women are especially vulnerable to such inequality.

Yatra Foundation Australia was established in recognition of these educational gaps, with the primary aim of providing quality education to some of the most disadvantaged communities in India. These communities have limited access to government schools.

Yatra acknowledges the many complexities in delivering education to the disparate Indian population. Currently the education system is state based in its delivery and the educational outcomes and literacy rates are variable depending on state and locality. For this reason, partnering with locally based NGO's allows delivery of education that is regionally appropriate and meets the specific needs of those communities.

With a focus on improving access for girls and ensuring a non-discriminatory enrolment process, the vision is to increase opportunity for these children and their families through education.

Our mission

Yatra Foundation Australia aims to:

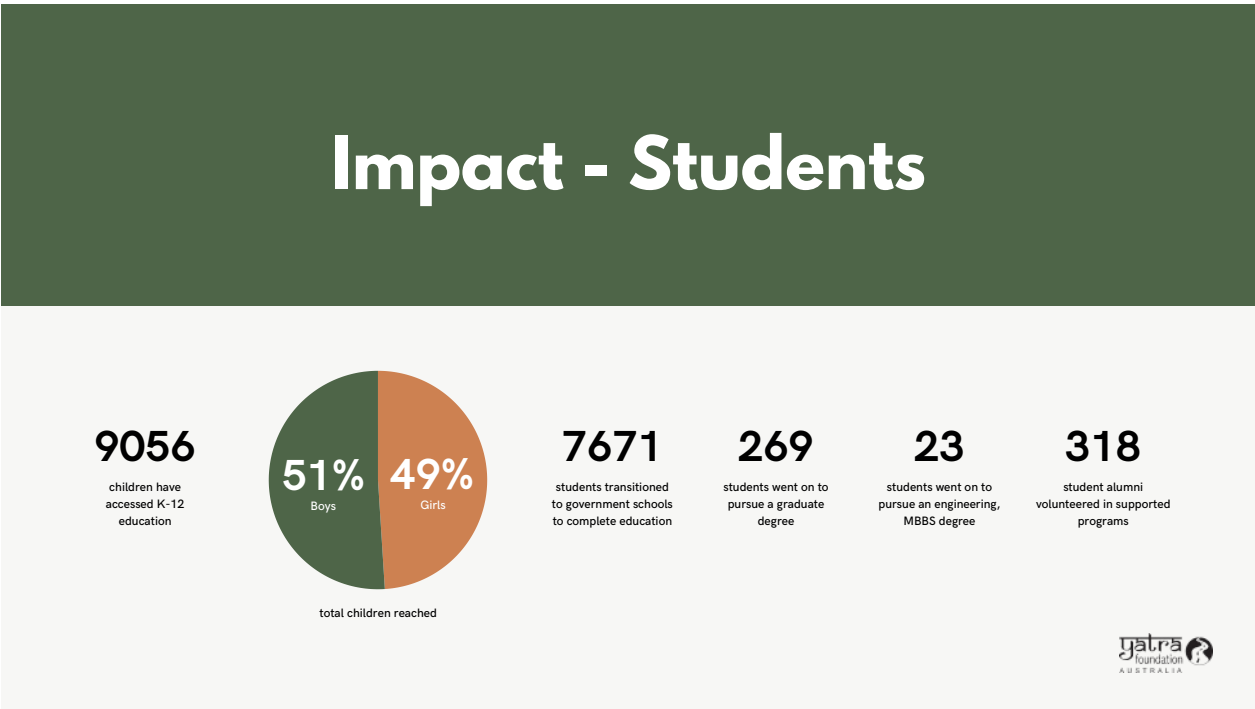
- ✓ Increase access to quality education for the most severely disadvantaged children in rural and remote India
- ✓ Be non-discriminatory with regards to gender, religious background, and caste
- ✓ Monitor outcomes and adapt programs to suit the changing needs of our partners and the communities that benefit
- ✓ Increase access to education in student numbers and the years of schooling by providing incentives for further education
- ✓ Incorporate child health education and public health initiatives into the school curriculum

Our history

Yatra Foundation was founded in 2008 by four friends with a shared common goal of improving the opportunity for some of the most disadvantaged children in India. Now 13 years into that journey the determination to continue with that vision, turning the dream into reality, is still a driving force. Continuous monitoring and evaluation of the projects has now provided Yatra with longer-term outcomes for the past students, furthering the determination to stay true to the goal of "making a difference" and promoting a love of learning for future generations.

AN OVERVIEW OF YATRA FOUNDATION

Snapshot of Yatra's Achievements



Impact - Students

LITERACY					NUMERACY				
	GOV	YATRA FARIYA	YATRA SEVA	YATRA ISHA		GOV	YATRA FARIYA	YATRA SEVA	YATRA ISHA
% children in STD 3 who can read STD 2	20.5%	70.5%	44%	37%	% children in STD 3 who can do subtraction	25.9%	75%	39%	45%
% children in STD 5 who can read STD 2	42.8%	92%	N/A	81%	% children in STD 5 who can do division	25.6%	91%	N/A	80%

Impact - Teachers

187

teachers trained

95%

of teachers are from
the same communities
as their students

91%

teacher attendance



[Click here to watch video on Seva Mandir project](#)



Partner organisations

Yatra Foundation partners with Local Not for Profit organisation to help deliver the education programs: Currently our partners are:

- Seva Mandir
- Gramin Shiksha Kendra (GSK)
- Isha Vidhya

1. Seva Mandir:

Seva Mandir works with more than 500,000 people in 1,300 rural villages in two districts (Udaipur and Rajsamand) of southern Rajasthan. Most of the population are subsistence farmers who struggle to make a living from their small landholdings. An increasing number of men leave the villages to look for work in distant towns to work as labourers in mining, construction work or agriculture. The women are left to manage the landholdings, look after the animals, labour in the villages in addition to caring for children. Many children end up working in the home or the fields to help the family make a living.

Malnutrition is rife, particularly among young children. In this patriarchal society, women continue to face domestic violence and illiteracy, and they lack socio-political and financial independence.

Seva Mandir has built up teams of skilled experts in several disciplines to provide sustainable social transformation. Since their inception more than 50 years ago, the fundamental principle underpinning all activities has been transforming social relationships within the villages, strengthening communities' capacity for self-development and governance, and reducing traditional social barriers based on caste, class, gender and age.

Seva Mandir has sought to achieve its twin aims of improving lives and strengthening communities by engaging all members of a village in the process of self-governance, including decisions relating to, and the management of, development projects and education.

Seva Mandir and Yatra Foundation Australia

Seva Mandir has been working in collaboration with Yatra since 2012. The longstanding partnership has helped in providing quality education to more than 5000 children from rural and tribal areas. Initially, the SKs aimed to ensure that out-of-school children had access to quality education in areas where bringing them to formal schools was difficult due to distance, a lack of critical resources, poverty, and other issues. Over the years, accessibility and functioning of government schools has improved, and interest of communities in education has enhanced significantly. In this backdrop, the need for SKs is constantly reviewed, and they are run only in those areas, where accessibility to government schools remains challenging.





The key achievements for the period 22-23

In partnership with Seva Mandir, Yatra has established 20 Shiksha Kendras (rural educational learning centres) each with an average of 30 students drawn from the corresponding local village with the teachers often sourced from the same village. These children receive a quality bridging education with the aim of integrating them into government schools when the requisite skills have been acquired to equip them for future long-term success.

The beneficiaries are the residents of villages, who are young children, aged 6-14 years who reside in remote areas not serviced by government schools, and the teachers who are drawn also from the villages and given teacher training. Most of this population live on less than \$2 per day and over 90% rely on subsistence agriculture, where conditions are arid, the land degraded, and water is scarce. Public services are dysfunctional and there is a high level of malnutrition. Yatra Foundation has supported the primary education of more than 7000 children over the last twelve years through Seva Mandir facilitated Shiksha Kendra (SKs) in the rural and tribal hamlets of GirwaBlock, Udaipur.

Seva Mandir's performance against its targets for 2024 is summarized as follows:

1. Improved attendance: Target was 70%, achieved 73%.
2. Percentage of students who are girls: Target was 45%, achieved 48%.
3. Retention of students up to year 3: Target was 60%, achieved 100%.
4. Percentage of children at age-appropriate level: Target was 50%, achieved 75%.
5. Alumni of school returning to participate in education: Target was 1-2 per SK, achieved 2 per SK.
6. Attendance of instructors: Target was 75%, achieved 86%.
7. Percentage of passing out students who transition to government schools: Target was 100%, achieved 100%.

Overall, Seva Mandir has met or exceeded most of its targets, particularly in student retention, instructor attendance, and transitioning students to government schools. The closure of 7 SKs indicates a shift in focus towards government schools.

Some longer-term data for students from Seva Mandir are starting to be collected. Some of the initial findings are summarised below:

1. A total of 7200 children have been supported, with 3684 boys and 3516 girls.
2. 4800 children transitioned to government schools (2785 boys and 2015 girls), and 2400 transitioned to private schools (1990 boys and 410 girls).
3. 1000 children completed school to grade X in government schools (508 boys and 492 girls), and 38 in private schools (31 boys and 7 girls).
4. 140 children completed school to grade XII in government schools (98 boys and 42 girls), and 40 in private schools (34 boys and 6 girls).
5. 90 alumni entered degree courses (63 boys and 27 girls), 40 entered diploma courses (25 boys and 15 girls), and 10 entered professional courses (8 boys and 2 girls).
6. 80 alumni completed degree courses (60 boys and 20 girls), 35 completed diploma courses (25 boys and 10 girls), and 3 completed professional courses (2 boys and 1 girl).
7. 50 teachers were trained, with 28 boys and 22 girls of which 29 students found employment in private sectors, 18 started businesses, and 36 are working with the organization.
8. 1054 students are involved in solving community or village issues.
9. 3000 students are working in urban areas.
10. 2000 students are working in rural areas.
11. 300 alumni volunteers with the organization.

These findings indicate significant support and transition of students to higher education and employment, with active involvement in community issues and volunteering.

Strengthening Monitoring and Evaluation (M and E) system

The monitoring and evaluation system of Siksha Kendra was enhanced with support of Yatra Foundation. With regular implementation of monitoring and evaluation the efficacy of programs can be better understood and attention focused on areas that need strengthening.

Yatra aims to oversee the transition of all School Capital funding from the Yatra Foundation to full community ownership. It is expected that in so doing, local governments will begin to implement Yatra Foundation protocols to optimize school readiness preparation to cope with increased enrolment in government schools. Yatra will begin the transition of School maintenance responsibilities to be taken up in partnership with the local community and government. The completion of such a transition will be expected in 2030.

www.sevamandir.org





2. Gramin Shiksha Kendra (GSK):

Gramin Shiksha Kendra was established as a Society in 1996, in response to a rural community-led demand for education in Sawai Madhopur. For the last 25 years, GSK has worked to enhance access to quality child-centric education in villages across rural Ranthambore.

Yatra Foundation established a partnership with GSK in 2008 and the combined efforts have focused around the Fariya community. The strong relationship has enabled children within the nearby communities to attend the school and become engaged in co-curricular activities such as the sports programs.

The Fariya school is affiliated with the Rajasthan State Education Board and is from pre-primary school to grade 8. The school functions on democratic principles, and the promotion of an open and free dialogue-based relationship between children and their teachers and among themselves. The school follows a unique pedagogy that is child-centric, contextual, interactive, multi-grade and multi-level, that allows children to learn at their own pace. Co-scholastic activities, such as carpentry, theatre, pottery, kitchen gardening, cooking, and sports are integrated into the regular curriculum through school.

The GSK program is built on the idea that the community is a partner in the process of education, rather than schools being merely a service provider to them. Community involvement lies at the heart of all GSK's interventions.

GSK continues to engage with the school Alumni who act as mentors and encourage enrolment of children into schools when there is resistance from families.

Projects for 2022-23

Gramin Shiksha Kendra's performance against its targets for 2024 is summarized as follows:

1. Improved attendance: Target was 70%, achieved 76%.
2. Percentage of students who are girls: Target was 45%, achieved 44%.
3. Retention of students to at least year 5: Target was 60%, achieved 61.53%.
4. Retention of students to year 8: Target was 60%, achieved 37.5%.
5. Percentage of children at age-appropriate level: Target was 50%, achieved 85%.
6. Basic computer literacy: Target was 50%, achieved 91%.
7. Maintaining integration of sports into the core curriculum: Target was 100%, achieved as sports is a subject for each class.
8. School monitoring committee composition: Target was 20 members, achieved 16 members (8 male, 8 female).
9. Parents and community assisting with sports: Target was 1 parent involved, achieved 35 parents involved.
10. Community running school: Target was local community in decision-making, achieved limited support on a need basis.
11. Alumni of school returning to participate in education: Target was 1-2 alumni, achieved 2 alumni working as Fellows in school.
12. Health status of students aged 3-5: Target was fit, unfit, weak; achieved 67% fit.

Overall, Gramin Shiksha Kendra has met or exceeded several targets, particularly in attendance, age-appropriate learning levels, and computer literacy. However, it fell short in retention to year 8 and community involvement in running the school.

Ongoing Activities – Major activities of Uday Community School held during this quarter include Children's Assembly, Cleaning, Dance Club, Kitchen Gardening, Cooking Club, Sports Club, Art and Craft, Pottery, Library, Drama, Life Skills, and Dance Movement Therapy Session.

- The School Management Committee was reconstituted through the democratic process. It has 16 members. 50 percent of these members are women.
- Shala Panchayat elections were conducted in the school for the children by the teachers.
- Children with the highest attendance every month were honoured in the meeting.
- The Forest Department provided jungle safaris to the children and water motors for the borewell.
- Health Camp – A health camp was organized in which HB and RBC levels of children were tested. Malnourished children were given necessary advice and medicines containing iron, vitamins, etc.
- Sports Camp – Two sports camps were organized this time, and 40 children from Katar, Faria, and Raikheda participated.
- Theatre – Through Forum Theatre, we staged the plays 'Meri Aawaz Suno' (Listen to my Voice) and 'Main Padhna Chahti Hoon' (I Want to Study) and established a dialogue with people on girl education.
- Computer Education-Two new computer sets were received, and a Wi-Fi connection was installed. Now, children are taking computer classes in convenient conditions.



Challenges for the 2023-24 period:

- school attendance is reduced during harvesting season when children are required to work in the fields.
- migration is a constant challenge for the community as parents move for work and take their families with them.
- extreme weather, especially heat, and distance needed to travel to and from school is a barrier for attendance.
- tiger movement around the school perimeter has impacted children walking to school. The forest department has put rangers on patrol in the region however tigers continue to pose a threat to safety of children getting to school.

graminshiksha.org.in





3. Isha Vidhya:

Isha Vidhya is a not-for-profit education initiative, working for the economic and social empowerment of rural children in the villages across southern state of Tamil Nadu, India.

The foundation is committed to raising the level of education and literacy in rural India and to helping disadvantaged children realize their full potential.

This has created the possibility for the rural children to pursue higher education or find gainful employment and build a strong foundation for the future of these children and elevate themselves out of poverty. Isha Vidhya has been an active supporter of promoting education among female children in the villages and all Isha Vidhya schools have seen an increased enrolment of girls. Of the 8500 Isha Vidhya students, 47% are girls and 64% of the students are on a full scholarship. The remaining students make a small co-payment for their school attendance.

Yatra Foundation has partnered with Isha Vidhya for their Cuddalore school program via teacher salary and teacher training. This enables Isha Vidhya to recruit and retain the best available teachers. The teacher training program targeted at local rural teachers further extends the reach of Isha Vidhya and leverages the effectiveness by reaching much greater numbers of needy children.

The Isha Vidhya schools follow a carefully planned methodology designed to educate and nurture the wellbeing of rural children on all levels – academically, physically and mentally. The approach has been specially designed to compensate for the absence of an English-speaking environment and the shortage of qualified teachers, creating a scalable model for delivering quality education. Isha Vidhya uses a lot of learning aides and materials and therefore teacher training is essential to optimise learning opportunities.

Teacher Training Programs supported by Yatra Foundation have led to improvement in time management, technical knowledge, motivation and enthusiasm for imparting knowledge. Many of the teachers have become experts and innovators in the classroom, running educational programs such as English literature clubs, storytelling, special mathematics clubs, and classroom-based mock judiciary systems.

Since the partnership with Isha Vidya began, Yatra has supported more than 1600 children, many of whom have gone on to pursue tertiary education. More than 200 teachers have been trained and continue to work within the organisation. More detailed long-term impacts will be described as the M&E framework is refined within the Isha Vidya school community.

Isha Vidhya's performance against its targets for 2023-24 is summarized as follows:

1. Percentage of children at age-appropriate level: Target was 60%, achieved 62%.
2. Basic computer literacy: Target was 65%, achieved 97%.
3. Maintaining integration of sports into core curriculum: Target was 100%, achieved through sports classes.
4. Number of teacher training domain-wise: Target was 25, achieved 21.
5. Total training hours per teacher: Target was 35 hours, achieved 39 hours.
6. Alumni of schools returning to participate in education: Target was 1-2, achieved none.
7. Improved attendance per child: Target was 85%, achieved 91%.
8. Percentage of students who are girls: Target was 50%, achieved 50%.
9. Retention of students to at least year 5: Target was 85%, achieved 78%.
10. Retention of students to at least year 8 (who complete year 5): Target was 70%, achieved 60%.
11. Retention of students to at least year 10 (who complete year 8): Target was 65%, achieved 68%.
12. Retention of students to at least year 12 (who complete year 10): Target was 65%, achieved 43%.

Overall, Isha Vidhya has met or exceeded several targets, particularly in computer literacy, sports integration, and attendance. However, there are areas such as alumni participation in education and retention rates to higher grades where the targets were not fully met.

Isha Vidhya also makes qualitative impacts such as:

-  Transforming parental attitudes to education and increasing educational awareness in rural communities
-  Improving health and health awareness of the children and local communities
-  Increased employment opportunities and civic infrastructure around the Isha Vidhya schools
-  Increasing awareness and instilling pride in local traditions and culture among the children
-  Providing opportunities to thousands of volunteers to experience the joy of giving

ishavidhya.org

23/24 summary

Monitoring of projects

Following the appointment of an independent advisor in 2021, Yatra Foundation is now able to undertake monitoring and evaluation of the partner organisations to ensure service delivery is meeting the specified key requirements.

Monitoring involves face-to-face engagement with the students and teachers twice yearly, along with regular online meetings. The face-to-face encounters are critical to nurture a trusting relationship with the partner organisations and objectively assess the qualitative and quantitative outcomes.

Several key indicators that are reviewed include:

- Enrolment of children by age and gender
- Attendance and consistency in attendance of children and teachers
- Adherence to teaching pedagogy
- Teacher training initiatives
- School committee record and engagement
- Progression and retention of students by year group
- Health and welfare of students and teachers
- Engagement of children in the learning process
- Degree of peer-to-peer learning
- Incorporation of sport and other extra-curricular activities
- Outreach to government school
- Utilization of funds

The program partners have been supportive of the implementation of the M&E framework. Importantly, the partner organisations have integrated these key indicators into their own reporting and internal assessment of their respective programs. There has been an improvement in the quality of data over the last year for all organisations and this continues to be refined as the organisations adapt to the Yatra M&E reporting frameworks.

As the M&E framework continues to evolve, some long-term data about the student's progression beyond school is starting to be collected. Information on further education, employment, location of employment, economic well-being and health and financial security, is being gathered and analysed. This information will strengthen the evaluation of the educational programs and their long-term benefits.



Communication with the board and partners

Yatra Australia have continued to meet regularly with our partner organisations via Zoom links to discuss the projects in India, in addition to monthly board meetings. These minutes can be found on the website. Regular online meetings also take place with our newly appointed Project Monitor, who can provide an independent assessment of the projects, including all the key indicators as described above.

In addition to regular online meetings the Yatra Board members visited all the school projects in January 2024. During the visits the Board were able to observe the classroom learning, engage with the community and family, and also meet with the key personnel involved with the education delivery.

Fundraising efforts

During the 2023-24 term there were no fundraising events. Yatra Foundation Australia are fortunate to have the continued support of many donors via the 'Yatri' program, with regular monthly donations. Some larger one-off donations were also made during this period.

Our people



Sanjay Jain
Co-founder
2008 - ongoing



Sophie Beaumont
Co-founder
2008 - ongoing



Renu Binaykia
Co-founder
2008 - ongoing



Ravi Savarirayan
Co-founder
2008 - ongoing

GOVERNANCE

Structure & management

Yatra Foundation Australia is registered with the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission (ACNC).

Our objectives and activities

The objectives for Yatra Foundation for the upcoming year include:

- ✓ Continued support for our partner organisations
- ✓ Implementation of an independent audit of the programs
- ✓ Continue to work with our local supporters
- ✓ Improve the awareness of Yatra and its projects and goals in Australia
- ✓ Increase the support network both locally and overseas
- ✓ Increase the financial support both locally and overseas
- ✓ Improve programs based on feedback from the communities
- ✓ Implementation of health and community welfare projects

ACKNOWLEDGMENT AND THANK YOU

Foundation, trust, corporate and supporters

The Hills Grammar School

Stobart Strauss Foundation

The Peggy Charitable Trust

Vanmali Foundation

Bellwether Foundation

Barneys Salon

Avani Winery & Mischa Tropp

Green Scribble

**We would also like to thank all our
individual supporters and volunteers.**

How you can help

Become a member

Contact info@yatrafoundation.org or go to our website www.yatrafoundation.org

Volunteer your time

Contact info@yatrafoundation.org or go to our website www.yatrafoundation.org

Make a donation

Visit our website and click on 'donate' for more information

Electronic Funds Transfer can be made directly to:

Account name: Yatra Foundation

BSB: 083-088

Account number: 81 287 6964

Or by cheque payable to
Yatra Foundation

C/O 265 Pigdon Street
Princes Hill VIC 3054

Support an event or fundraising activity

Please contact Sophie Beaumont on 0414 834 855 or Renu Binaykia on 0412 109 944 for more information.





Contact us

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