



**YOUNGISTAAN**  
FOUNDATION.ORG  
*Transforming Lives*

# EDUCATION PROGRAM

IMPACT REPORT 2023-24





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## ***About Youngistaan Foundation***

Youngistaan Foundation is an NGO based in India that works to improve the lives of the most underprivileged and disadvantaged people through programs that address: hunger, homelessness, poverty, education inequity, gender inequality, taboos on menstruation, emergency responses, animal rights, capacity building and many more issues.

Registered in 2014, Youngistaan Foundation has engaged with 50,000+ young people and provided them with a platform to connect with other socially aware individuals and effect real change in our neighbourhoods and communities through our programs as volunteers.



For the past 10 years, Youngistaan Foundation has been working amongst the most disadvantaged communities to uplift and empower individuals and families in a sustainable manner. This report outlines the work of the Education Program in the past year.



## ***From The Founder's Desk***

Dear Youngistaan Family,

Children hold the dreams of tomorrow, and at Youngistaan Foundation, we are dedicated to nurturing their boundless potential. Over the past decade, our Education Program has evolved from offering tuition support in underserved communities to directly engaging with children in government-aided schools and urban slums.

Walking this journey alongside these remarkable children has allowed us to build relationships rooted in trust, compassion, and understanding. This has empowered us to better address their unique needs and unlock their true potential.

Through our education program, interventions in Early Learning and Social Emotional Learning are transforming lives by creating safe, inclusive spaces where children can thrive both academically and emotionally. Watching them grow into confident, resilient individuals continues to inspire us every single day.

This journey of impact would not have been possible without the support of our core team, dedicated volunteers, generous donors, and compassionate partners. Thank you for believing in our mission and standing by us. Together, we've positively impacted thousands of young lives—and this is just the beginning.

We warmly invite you to continue this journey with us—whether by volunteering, donating, or connecting your organization's CSR initiatives with our programs. Collaborating with CSR partners has already allowed us to expand our reach and create sustainable impact in communities. Together, we can build a future where every child has the chance to thrive.

Warmly,  
Yellamaty Arun Daniel Kumar  
Founder & Director, Youngistaan Foundation







## ***Message from the Early Learning Program Head***

A child's early life experiences shape her present and future. The onus to invest in the holistic development of children in the early years lies with families, schools, and communities. All too often, 'school-readiness' puts pressure on very young children to read, write, and count.

Developmentally inappropriate pedagogies sound the death knell for children's imagination and harm their social-emotional wellbeing.

We ought to spend our energy on getting schools and communities 'ready' for young learners. Ready to play, sing, & dance with our students. Ready to tell stories, share laughs, and listen to our children. Ready to embrace the individual strengths and needs of each child as they transition from their homes to more formal and structured learning environments.

The science of early brain development has made it amply evident that the first few years of life (birth to 8 years) are critical for a child's wholesome growth and development.

This is when the brain is most flexible or 'plastic', and therefore, responsive socio-emotional interactions and high-quality cognitive stimulation in these years build a sound foundation for future learning and living.

We know that enriching learning opportunities & environments lead to better life outcomes.

The multidimensional nature of poverty creates barriers that affect young children's access to positive educational experiences and the subsequent opportunity to succeed.

At Youngistaan Foundation, we strongly believe that every child deserves a chance to reach their full developmental potential. Every child deserves a present where they thrive and a future where they continue to bloom and prosper.



How do we achieve this? They say it takes a village to bring up a child. So, we come together! Parents, Early Years practitioners, non-profits, ECD experts, and government agencies; brainstorm, collaborate, and form long-term relationships. Our primary role as adults in ECE is to serve young children.

We must come together to first transform ourselves as adult carers and build the right early start! Our endeavour at Jugnu, our play-based early years program, is to attempt to become worthy of our children!

**Neha Mathur**  
**Early Learning Program Head**







## ***Message from the Social Emotional Learning Program Head***

Children are innocent. Their trust and faith is simple. Sometimes, they are the most forgotten individuals in our society. Particularly, children in underserved communities are vulnerable in many ways.

They might face physical, social, emotional and developmental challenges; they suffer from malnutrition or neglect. Socially they are looked down upon, bullied, and ostracized.

Psychologically, these children face uncertainties, are often afraid, and struggle with feelings of being unwanted and unworthy. As a child, I personally faced many trials and know the feeling when there is no one to hear your voice.

In the year 2021, in post-pandemic community scenarios, we saw a massive disruption in children's lives not just in terms of their school life but also in relation to their social-emotional well-being. There was an urgent need to address this new way of life.

We also know that children are keen imitators and observers. They learn from the surrounding environment and adults in their life.

Children these days are exposed to social media, violence, and their social-emotional well-being is at risk. Somewhere the core values that strengthen their lives are getting lost. We need to create an atmosphere of inclusion, love and understanding where they can learn to understand and express themselves safely.

The call is to intentionally give the right foundation upon which children bloom into secure and confident young individuals.

It is the responsibility of families, communities, and society; all of us together to create such an environment.



Over the years, the Youngistaan Foundation team has taken concrete steps to create a safe and inclusive space where children and adolescents can thrive. Our systematic SEL program running in community contexts is an attempt to nurture children's skills and ready them for their future lives. Of course, we understand that change is a very complex and challenging process. We do understand that in order for change to be sustainable, attitudes, values, and ethics have to be addressed while respecting each child's life story.

A major highlight this year has been steps to connect with parents and plan to support and strengthen the family unit and build capacities of the community. Family life plays a key role where children learn social values and deal with relational dynamics in a safe and protective space. The qualities of a healthy family life contribute to healthy adult behaviour. This, in turn, will significantly impact the well-being of society at large. We are working as a catalyst of change in the lives of the children.

All we do is only possible with the support of our volunteer-mentors who implement the program in the field. I am very grateful for the volunteer team who serve with a smile in their hearts!

**Jesu Vandana**  
**SEL Program Head**







## *Alignment with relevant UN SDGs*

Our education programs foster holistic child development and create nurturing, inclusive learning environments. By addressing diverse needs, we empower children to thrive while advancing these Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs):



**SDG 3:** Promoted children’s mental and emotional well-being by integrating SEL activities to foster resilience and build positive relationships.



**SDG 4:** Provided access to meaningful and inclusive learning experiences, ensuring developmentally appropriate education for all children.



**SDG 5:** Created learning spaces that promote mutual respect and challenge gender stereotypes, encouraging equitable participation for all.



**SDG 10:** Addressed educational gaps by supporting children from marginalized communities and working with them to ensure equal opportunities for learning.



**SDG 11:** Nurtured responsible and socially aware children who are filled with potential and can contribute positively to their communities.



**SDG 16:** Developed essential life skills such as empathy, responsible decision-making, and conflict resolution to foster peaceful and inclusive environments.



**SDG 17:** Strengthened collaborations with schools, government agencies, and community stakeholders to deliver impactful educational initiatives.

We are committed to nurturing a generation of empowered, socially responsible and empathetic individuals contributing to a more inclusive and sustainable society.

# *Early Learning Program*





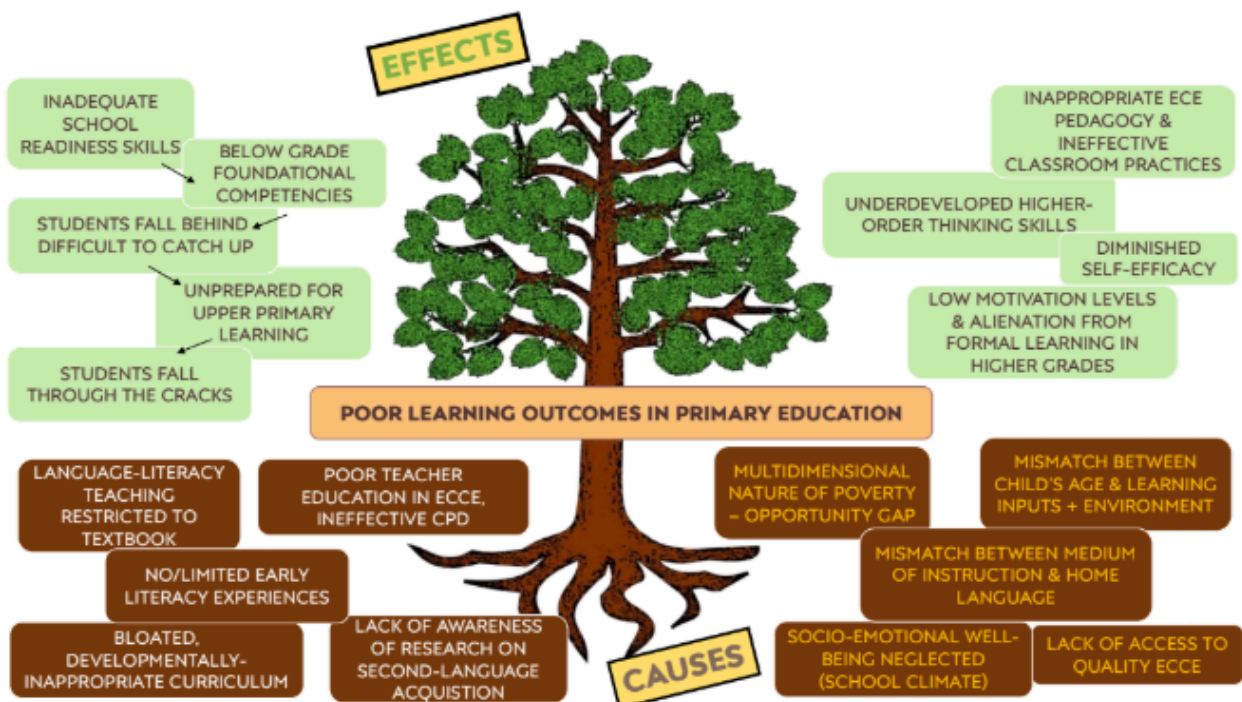


## Overview

### Inequity Leads To Poor Learning Outcomes

In India, school enrollment does not guarantee real learning. Learning outcomes across government schools and affordable private schools at the primary school level are inadequate and are only worsening with time. The "proportion of children enrolled in Grade 8 in India who can read at least Grade 2 level text has **declined from 76.5% in 2012 to 73% in 2018.**"

Periodic reports by Annual Status of Education Report (ASER) and National Achievement Survey (NAS) continually point to inadequate foundational learning levels. The multidimensional nature of poverty creates an opportunity gap, which in turn leads to poor learning outcomes. We are amidst a learning crisis where students in under-resourced community contexts are **running an unfair race and always trying to catch up.**







Students who are unable to gain mastery in foundational literacy and numeracy skills by Grade 3 are more likely to fall behind. The curricular content in and beyond Grade 4 is an insurmountable mountain for students who are still struggling to read, write and comprehend.

They continue to work below grade level and the **learning gap widens with age**, leading to struggling learners who are alienated from their own academic journeys. The roots of this learning deprivation can be traced back to early learning contexts at the foundational stage.

What if we were to address this crisis right where it begins?

## ***The Wrong Early Start***

“A balanced approach to emotional, social, cognitive and language development will best prepare all children for success in school and later in the workplace and community”.

“Yet significant disadvantages in the life circumstances of young children can undermine their development, limit their future economic and social mobility and thus threaten the vitality, productivity and sustainability of an entire society.

A remarkable expansion of new knowledge about brain development in the early years of life, linked to advances in the behavioural and social sciences, is now giving us deeper insights into how early experiences are built into our bodies, with lasting impacts on learning, behaviour and both physical and mental health.”



‘India Early Childhood Education Impact Study’ shows that young children (4 to 8) from under-resourced communities (rural areas of Telangana, Assam, and Rajasthan) have access to anganwadis or affordable private pre-schools, yet do not receive high-quality early learning experiences. The study states that “a growing body of evidence points to the fact that there is a learning crisis in India: children are enrolled in school but failing to learn even the basics. This crisis may begin long before children ever enter grade 1.”

“Identifying support children need in early years may help prevent learning problems from occurring and accumulating later.”

## A Foundational Learning Crisis

### 1. A Wrong Start

Pre-school treated as downward extension of primary school - 'whole child' neglected

Developmentally-inappropriate & bloated curriculums ignore child's holistic development

English as medium of instruction with no support for students' home language



Pre-schoolers do not acquire age-appropriate school readiness skills

### 2. Teachers Struggle

No/inadequate formal training in ECCE  
Vast variation in learning levels of students  
Limited language proficiency in English

*With inadequate foundational literacy and numeracy skills, "students who fall behind early are left behind in perpetuity."*



**Falling Behind**  
**Demotivated**

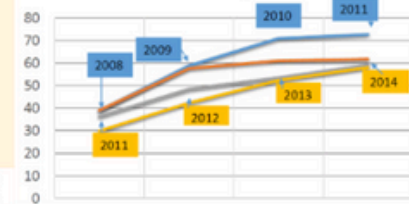
### Learning Poverty

72.8% of children in Class III and about 50% of children in Class V cannot read Class II-level texts (ASER 2018)



Figure 2: The learning profile has been shifting downward year to year in rural India

% Children who can do subtraction  
Cohorts over time: Std III-VI  
ASER All India (rural)



### 3. Learning Gap Widens & Deepens

Students learn less as they move to higher classes.

"Proportion of children enrolled in grade 8 in India who can read at least grade 2 level text declined from 76.5% in 2012 to 73% in 2018."

### 4. Current Crisis

% of children in Class 3 in govt. or private schools who were able to read at the level of Class 2 dropped from 18.1% (2018) to 5.2% (2022) in Telangana (ASER 2022)



**COVID-19**



# Our Theory of Change

Our Theory of Change is our response to this crisis:

## Our Response to the Crisis



### 1. The Right Start

Multilingual Pedagogy -  
Strengthen students' foundational language & literacy skills in their home language

Support second language acquisition (English) using research

### 2. Empowered Teachers & Classrooms

Year-round cycles of Teacher Professional Development & Coaching

Access to strategies to

### 3. An Early Learning Continuum

Pre-K curriculum designers to create curriculum for grades 1 & 2 so students experience continuity

Students gain necessary school readiness skills - successful transition to grade 1

Teachers as Equal Partners in the Foundational Learning Program





## ***Three-Pronged Approach***

The Youngistaan Foundation Early Learning Program is an intensive structured pedagogy intervention providing developmentally appropriate curriculum, relevant TLM, teacher development opportunities and extended support, and contextualised multilingual instructional approach.

### **1) Implement a developmentally-appropriate curriculum and adopt culturally responsive pedagogies**

**a)** We introduced and implemented a play-based, NCF-compliant pre-school curriculum (designed by a Harvard-educated early learning specialist) that focuses on the holistic development of each child in the classroom.

This curriculum is play-based, thematic, multi-sensory, inquiry-based and exploration-based.

The learning experiences designed under this curriculum focuses on:

- age-appropriate socio-emotional competencies
- gross motor and fine motor skills
- cognitive-sensory development
- oral language development in child's home language and English
- early literacy development in English
- number sense
- STEM skills development





**b)** The curriculum includes higher-order thinking skills even at this age and stage; providing meaning-making opportunities for students so that they can:

- Make meaningful connections between what they are learning and their own lives
- Listen with understanding
- Articulate and share their own thoughts and feelings



## **2) Adopt a multilingual approach to learning**

Research on early language education explicitly states the need to actively utilize the children’s home languages to teach and learn in the classroom. NCF for Foundational Stage (National Curriculum Framework) 2022 says, “The home language serves as a facilitator for all learning and enables children to form connections with prior learning and home learning.” Equally, the research is clear on the benefits of early bilingualism (introducing a second language in the early years) which include improved executive functions and cognitive flexibility.



We have attempted to adopt a version of additive bilingualism, wherein daily classroom transactions including content instruction occur mainly in the children’s home languages (Telugu and Hindi) but, simultaneously, they are exposed to English (oral language) in a gradual, systematic manner.

We use methods of English literacy instruction in keeping with the principles of the science of second-language acquisition. This includes a multifaceted approach where play-based strategies such as music and dance, circle time, storytelling, and puppet theatre are used to immerse our young learners in a language-rich environment that nurtures both the home language and English.

According to NCF 2022, “Children should be exposed to and immersed in multiple oral languages from an early age.”

Therefore, we make a case for a multilingual approach to learning where teachers continue to build students’ oral language skills in their home language and use the child’s home language even while teaching the English curricular content (since the school offers English as the language of instruction).

We are leveraging techniques such as translanguaging (switching between languages) as a way for educators to scaffold the teaching of English and retain the home languages.

Currently, our pre-K teacher uses Telugu and Hindi predominantly with simple words and phrases in English while in K2 the teacher though continuing to use these home languages, progresses to introduce simple every day vocabulary and sentences in English.



### **3) Build capacities of teachers by providing high-quality professional development opportunities and coaching**

Student well-being depends on teacher well-being and competency. We welcome teachers as equal partners and as active agents of change.

We strive to empower teachers so that they can make informed instructional choices in the future and form communities of practice within the school and between schools to support the learning journeys of their colleagues.

The outcomes of providing continuous professional development opportunities are aimed at:

- Building teachers' capacities and classroom practice on child development and positive models of early care and education to address the diverse needs and strengths of their students
- Helping teachers use appropriate multilingual pedagogy to teach curricular content, develop students' oral language skills & vocabulary in L2 (English)
- Handhold teachers through the implementation of a play-based early learning curriculum
- Develop essential skills in teaching foundational numeracy, number sense, and foundational STEM



In the next 2 years teachers will be engaged in interactive workshops and follow-up mini coaching sessions where they will acquire essential skills in:

- Early years pedagogies including classroom routines, active learning experiences, progression of skills & knowledge, and gauging prior understanding
- Classroom management – understanding student behaviour, motivation and the art of gentle discipline
- Oral language development
- English as a second language
- Phonics and early writing
- Foundational STEM including pedagogical content knowledge for STEM, scaffolding and building scientific inquiry

Teachers attend class demonstrations and receive coaching every week on how to implement lesson plans successfully keeping in mind the diverse needs of their students.

This helps maintain the integrity of the curriculum and the vision of the program.

Teachers provide weekly feedback to the YF instructional coach to ensure teacher voices are heard loud and clear.





## ***Our Stakeholders***

### **Schools**

We work intensively with a government-aided school in Erramanzil Colony, Hyderabad. This 50-year-old school caters to children from three local bastis/low-income neighbourhoods. YF has been associated with Rabindra Niketan High School for a period of 10 years where we ran our volunteer-driven SEL (Social-Emotional Learning) and foundational literacy and numeracy programs for classes 5 to 9. We introduced a play-based early learning program in 2023 with a special focus on teacher development.



### **Teachers**

Teachers form the heart of our program. We believe that strengthening teacher capacities will strengthen classrooms and schools in the long run. We use a coaching model that offers consistent handholding and support for teachers but also provides them the creative freedom to design learning experiences based on appropriate early childhood pedagogies. The goal is to build self-efficacy in teachers so that they can make informed instructional decisions during the course of their professional career as educators.



## Families and Community

Students that we work with belong to low-income families where mothers are employed, mostly, as domestic workers and fathers as laundrymen, drivers, or security personnel. Forty percent of the student population belongs to scheduled caste and scheduled tribe and another forty percent to backward castes. While some students are first-generation learners, others have at least one parent who has studied till grade 10 or grade 12.



Our hope for parents and guardians is to help them support their children in their holistic development at home and in the community through responsive care strategies, storytelling, and simple games. Our program focuses on engaging with parents by organizing showcase events (Chai Pe Charcha) where children display their skills and special events such as Graduation Day celebrating student achievements. We also include space and time for conversations with the parent community at these events so that parents can ask questions and provide feedback.



## ***Impact Methodology***

### **Quantitative**

#### **IDELA Baseline 2023**

In April 2023, we conducted a baseline survey with 30 students from our partner school to understand the current learning levels of the children we would be working closely with in the near future. We decided upon IDELA (International Development & Early Learning Assessment) as it is a free-of-cost and rigorous global tool that has been used extensively in middle-income and low-income countries to measure children's early learning and development status.

The IDELA tool looks at the following domains of development.

- Motor development
- Early literacy
- Early numeracy
- Social-emotional development

Some general observations:

- Children exhibited rote memorisation of letters and numbers
- 5 & 6 year-olds had limited vocabulary when attempting to name animals and food items in English or in their home language
- Most 5 and 6 year-olds could not identify more than two aksharas in Telugu or Hindi
- Many students were unable to identify their own basic emotions or articulate the reason behind their feelings (emotional awareness) or how to cope with them (self-regulation)



## ASER Comprehension Task – 2023

**WHAT:** We conducted a reading comprehension assessment for 22 students (grades 2 and 3) using the ASER tool.

**WHO:** 2nd and 3rd grade students of a govt-aided school where the language of instruction is English.

**WHY:** To understand students' foundational learning trajectories beyond the basics of letter recognition. The IDELA assessment showed us that 61% of 6 year-olds in our sample set could recognise all the letters of the English alphabet.

But does that constitute real learning? Do students start gaining the skill to read with understanding in English by the end of grades 2 and 3?

### Word Level Reading & Comprehension

- |         |         |
|---------|---------|
| 1. hand | 2. star |
|         | 3. bus  |
| 4. cat  | 5. book |
|         | 6. day  |
| 7. few  | 8. old  |

### Para Level Reading & Comprehension Std 1 text

Amar goes to the market.  
It is very far away.  
He takes the bus.  
The bus takes four hours.

- Q. 1) How long does the bus take?  
Q. 2) Where does Amar go?

### QUALITATIVE OBSERVATIONS

Children either read each word letter-by-letter or remembered words by sight. They struggled to read unfamiliar words. Some used guessing as a strategy to read new words while others grew uncomfortable & fell silent. They did not demonstrate decoding strategies such as segmenting and sounding out parts of a new word.

Some children were afraid to read. A few expressed their discomfort when the assessors showed them the para level Std 1 text.

Children exhibited very limited vocabulary in English. 9 and 10 year-old students did not know the meaning of words like 'hand', 'old', and 'few'.

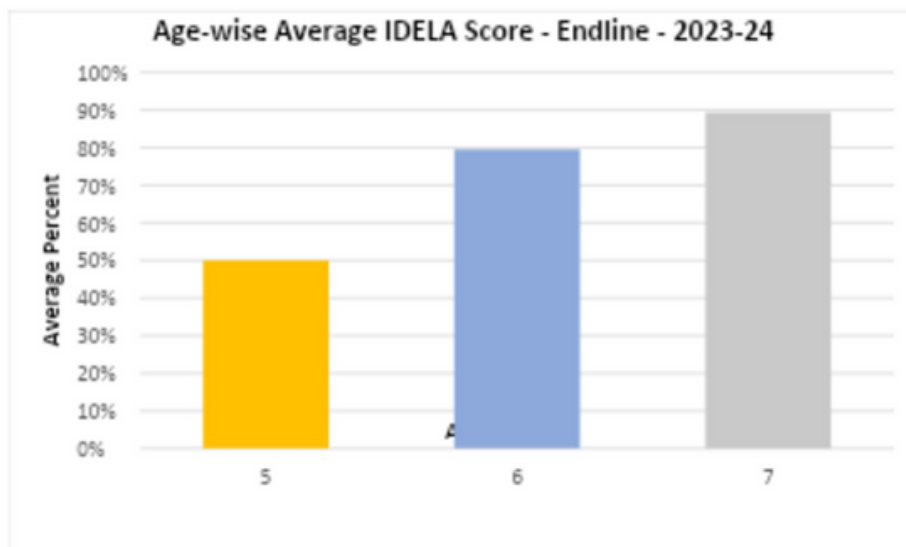
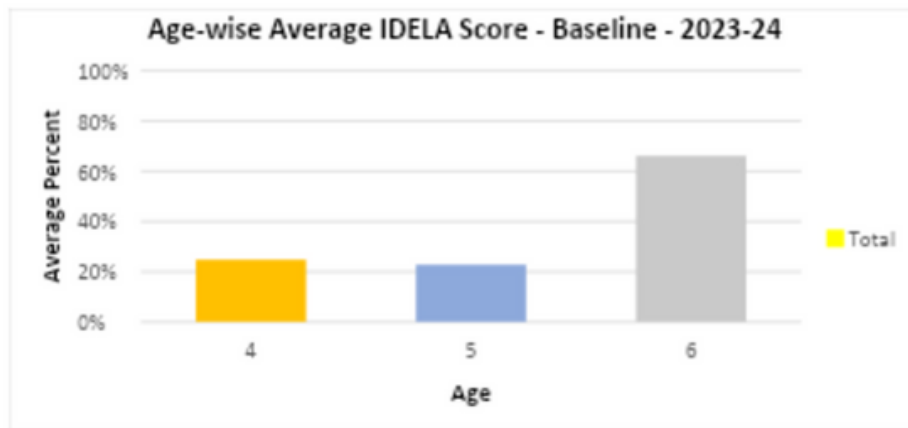
Of the 3 students who attempted to read the para level Std 1 text, 2 demonstrated medium fluency. None understood the meaning of the short text or the questions that followed. Students read the text somewhat mechanically and without understanding.

There was significant variation in the age and the learning levels of the children within a class. There were both 6 year-olds and 8 year-olds in grade 2. While a handful could read some words from the assessment, others in grade 3 struggled with letter recognition.



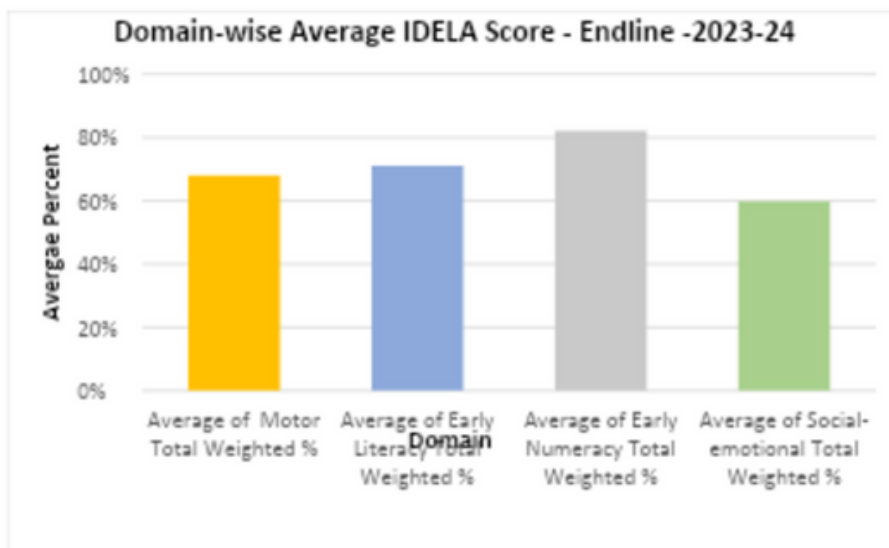
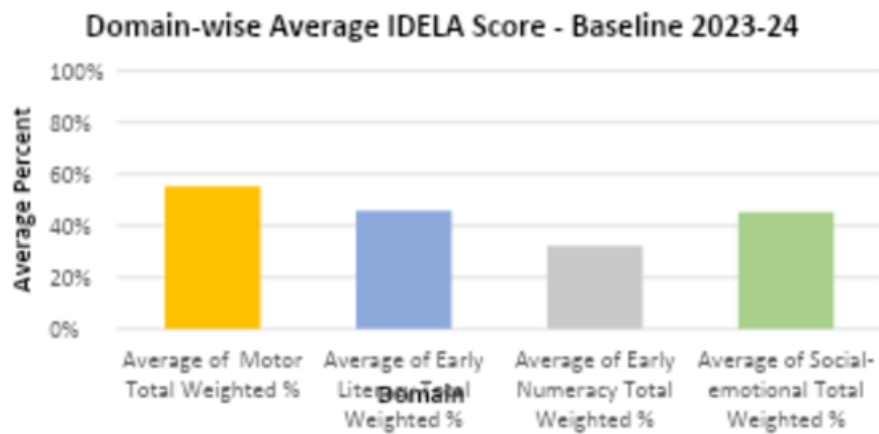


## Comparison between IDELA Baseline and Endline Results 2023-24





## Comparison between IDELA Baseline and Endline Results 2023-24





## *Analysis*

In 2023-24, based on the comparison between the baseline and endline results it was observed that on an average, Early Motor Skills, improved from 55% to 68%. The change can be attributed to a combination of children advancing on the developmental continuum and the play-based curriculum that targets gross and fine motor development through the year.

Looking at Emergent Literacy skills, these have improved by 25 percentage points (from 46% during the baseline to 71% during the endline). Children exhibited an enhanced expressive vocabulary, effortlessly naming animals and food items; a testament to the conscious effort of the teachers to encourage children to talk during story time and engage them through questions during the course of the school day.

Emergent numeracy skills have shown an improvement by 50 percentage points (from 32% during the baseline to 82% during the endline). A key achievement was the foundational skill of one-to-one correspondence, wherein 75% children correctly demonstrated the ability to count by assigning one number to each item in the correct sequence.

Moreover, our young learners demonstrated an enhanced understanding of their emotions with an improvement in emotional awareness by 15 percentage points (from 45% during the baseline to 60% during the endline). The quality of the children's responses was superior with 6- and 7-year-olds articulating clearly what makes them feel sad and how they cope with it.



## ***Impact Created in 2023-24***

### **Key Outcome Indicators of Change**

#### **Approaches to Learning**

Based on classroom observations and one-on-one conferencing with students:

- Children demonstrated an improved ability to control impulses specifically during free play time and outdoors play time
- Children showed longer attention spans wherein they remained engaged in purposeful activity for extended periods of time, such as 10 minutes or more



- With more opportunities to talk during instruction, many children openly expressed their own thoughts and shared experiences with their teacher
- With the introduction of a few simple classroom routines, children who exhibited greater dysregulation at the beginning of the year began to display self-control by following classroom rules





- Children demonstrated initiative and persistence where they would make a choice and follow through a set of actions during free play time. For e.g., a child selects relevant toys/materials, finds an appropriate spot on the floor, and settles down to carry out the play either by herself or with other classmates



- A major accomplishment was the transformation of children's behaviour post free playtime. Gradually, they assumed responsibility for all classroom materials by collecting and putting them where they belonged
- During free play time, children showed a greater propensity to share and cooperate with their classmates. There were less tears and complaints as the year progressed



## ***Social-Emotional Development***

Based on classroom observations and one-on-one conferencing with students:

- Children interacted and formed positive relationships not only with their trusted teachers but also with YF volunteers and other adults who came to visit them during the course of the school year
- Children exhibited prosocial behaviours towards each other by participating in joint play with at least one other child and sharing play materials
- Children were able to recognize and label basic emotions in books or pictures
- Children exhibited taking pride in their class work and accomplishments. They would excitedly show their artwork or building blocks creation to their classmates, teachers, and YF volunteers
- Circle Time instilled in all the children the skill to be able to wait for their turn and listen when others were talking.

Based on one-on-one play-based summative assessments:

- 78% of our K2 students were able to understand how to identify their own emotions and expresses their feelings clearly and confidently.
- 84% of K2 students were able to verbally express empathy towards another in a simulated situation.
- 88% were able to identify and name at least 4 basic emotions.



## ***Early Language & Literacy Development***

Based on classroom observations, student work samples, and one-on-one conferencing with students:

- Children's oral language (home language and English) became progressively clearer and more expressive
- Some children who were quiet in the first 3 months of the academic year began to speak in complete sentences in their home language
- Children were able to follow simple one or two-step directions by the end of the first quarter
- Students learned to follow rules of basic conversation (e.g., waiting, taking turns)
- Students began to respond to stories read aloud (e.g., smiling, listening attentively, sharing their own thoughts)
- We observed that children began to describe personal experiences during Circle Time and Story Time
- Children demonstrated using language to connect new experiences to what they already knew during Circle Time and Story Time
- Many children began to demonstrate an interest in books and self-selected the book corner during free play time
- K2 students were able to understand the concept of letter-sound correspondence
- 4 and 5-year-olds who struggled with fine motor skills at the beginning of the year were able to grasp crayons and pencils properly by the end of the second quarter with help from the teacher
- K2 students began to say words and phrases in English





Based on one-on-one play-based summative assessments:

- 84% were able to verbally express their personal preferences, likes, and dislikes
- 72% were able to name and identify at least 4 local fruits and vegetables in their home language and in English
- 68% of K2 students were able to recognize and print some letters of the English alphabet



- 61% of K2 students were able to identify and recall the letter sounds (English Alphabet) taught as per the scope of the curriculum
- 63% of K2 students were able to hear, identify, and match the correct initial phoneme in given CVC words
- 81% children from Pre-K could draw standing, sleeping, and curvy lines by the end of the second quarter
- 89% were able to identify the sequence of events in a story
- 77% were able to identify and name characters in a story





## ***Early Numeracy Development***

Based on classroom observations, student work samples and one-on-one conferencing with students:

- Children could sort and classify objects into sets according to one specific characteristic
- Children were able to identify and reproduce simple patterns using different play materials
- Even our youngest learners were able to match objects by one-to-one correspondence to at least five by the end of the third quarter
- K1 students were able to count concretely and orally up to 10 and K2 students up to 30
- K1 students were able to recognize and forms numerals from 1 to 5 using concrete materials. K2 students were able to recognize and write numerals from 1 to 10
- Children were able to use simple measurement terms (big-small, tall-short, heavy-light) correctly
- K1 students could compare two or more objects according to mass. K2 students could order two or more objects according to mass
- Children were able to identify and sort three-dimensional objects and two-dimensional objects accurately

Based on one-on-one play-based summative assessments:

- 100% were able to reproduce simple patterns
- 100% were able to label objects correctly based on their size and height
- 100% compared correctly and identified which group has bigger size of objects



- 100% were able to display one-to-one correspondence up to 5 objects
- 78% were able to identify and name shapes using different materials



- 71% were able to arrange 3 objects in increasing order of length
- 85% were able to count correctly up to 10 on their fingers



## Science

Based on classroom observations, student work samples and one-on-one conferencing with students:

- Children displayed curiosity and a willingness to explore and ask questions when outdoors
- Children discussed and described their observations
- Children were able to sort and classify natural materials (e.g., leaves, seeds, rocks, etc.)



Based on one-on-one play-based summative assessments:

- 89% were able to identify private parts from a picture and knew who are allowed to touch
- 100% were able to identify parts of the body
- 70% were able to identify left and right on their body correctly
- 94% were able to tell the purpose of each of the 5 sense organs



## ***Student Victories***

### **Asad**

Asad was only 2.5 years when he was admitted into Pre-K. He was not ready for formal school and could not sit with his classmates. He would spend most of his time outside the classroom.

Sometimes you would spot him under the big, oval student table. So, the first few months of the academic year his teacher let him leave the classroom as and when he needed to.

The Youngistaan Foundation instructional coach would sit with him in one corner of the classroom, talk and play, while the teacher continued her lessons without disruption. Gradually, Asad began to demonstrate greater impulse control and willingly sat in the classroom for brief periods of time. His attention span increased and soon he was participating in classroom games, rhymes, and other learning activities.

### **Rohith & Nitya**

Rohith did not speak in the classroom for the first 4 months. He would not respond to any of the teachers, volunteers, or students. He would sit quietly. Nitya had a similar story.

She was quiet and afraid. It were the multiple opportunities for student talk that helped elicit responses from these two preschoolers. Slowly and steadily, Rohith began to express himself in short phrases. Nitya took a little longer. The biggest accomplishment was that both Rohith and Nitya would smile in school!





## Keerthana

Keerthana lives on the school campus. Initially, when her grandmother brought her to the classroom, she would bawl. This continued for over 2 months.

She would want to run home. Gradually, the play-based activities and free play time kept her engaged for longer periods of time. The Pre-K teacher's warmth won her over.

Now, she is the first one to run to the classroom each morning.

## Vinay

Vinay would routinely refer to himself as a “bad boy”. His challenging behaviour included frequent hitting, fighting, and snatching other children's toys.

Traditional discipline was not the answer and the K1 teacher realized that soon enough. Vinay was given responsibility and every time he labelled himself a ‘bad boy’ the adults in school would refute the statement and reinforce that he was responsible and calm.

Vinay was taken aback the first time he heard from an adult that he was not a bad boy! Here was a 5-year-old who was conditioned to view himself as ‘bad’.

By the end of the school year, the challenging behaviour had reduced significantly, and Vinay listened to the teacher's suggestions and was overall calmer.



## ***Teachers***

### **Teachers as partners**

Our education team firmly believes that establishing an equal partnership with teachers is the only way to build their capacities while simultaneously learning from them. Our first goal was to build a trusting relationship with the teachers and create a shared purpose. This meant multiple observations/conversations with the school leadership and teachers to understand the school's work environment, their current classroom practices, and individual teacher dispositions.

It was important for teachers to know that our team was coming into the school to solely support them without any judgement or punitive consequences. Our team had observed that during the IDELA baseline assessment teachers were visibly nervous because of the general culture in most schools that equates student performance with teacher performance without understanding the larger context of the learners.

### **Teachers as collaborators**

We hoped to invite teachers as collaborators as we implemented a new developmentally appropriate, play-based curriculum and pedagogy.

The first question was why. Why was YF there in the school? Did they need our help? If yes, what would that help look like? Why a new curriculum? What according to the teachers was working and what was not working?



When teachers saw themselves as collaborators, it made the transition to a new curriculum easier. We introduced opportunities for the teachers to create games and simple TLM which made them co-creators in the new curriculum.



We heard their feedback and trimmed the curricular content to avoid overwhelm. Our teachers realized that they had not only the freedom to share their opinions but also the power to shape the change that was occurring within their classrooms.



We leveraged teachers' strengths to help carve a space for our program. Our K1 class teacher used her craft skills to create relevant and beautiful resources for the classroom boards and TLM for daily lesson plans.

Our K2 teacher utilized her strong connect with the communities and parents to bring them on board a new curriculum that used play instead of traditional textbooks and did not encourage daily copywriting in notebooks.

### **Teachers as learners**

One of the main goals for our school-based program has been to offer teacher development opportunities for our early educators. Based on the gaps identified by our team as well as inputs from the teachers and school head, we created simple sessions on early literacy and early numeracy.

We created a cycle of learning, doing, and reflecting wherein an instructional coach conducted weekly coaching sessions with the teachers.

This included listening to their feedback, handholding them through the daily lesson plans, scaffolding new strategies, and discussing alternatives wherever necessary.

Additionally, the coach acted as the teacher's assistant during the week, indirectly observing the classroom and modelling best practices for the teacher without being intrusive or imposing.

The year-round, in-school coaching and individual mentoring has made a world of difference in teacher knowledge and attitudes. It is the antidote to ad hoc, one-size-fits-all teacher trainings.





## **Teachers as leaders**

Nothing empowers a teacher more than being in-charge of their own career journeys.

Our team has been mindful of not just our behaviour towards the teachers but even the language that we use while interacting with them. Our offerings are termed ‘teacher development’ rather than training.

We treat teachers as professionals and as leaders. Teachers take the lead in organizing events for parents and donors. This in turn aids in boosting their self-efficacy and motivation levels.

## **Teachers as stars**

If teachers are to unlearn and re-learn...

The teachers have always occupied centre stage at all school events where guests have been invited. Teachers feel appreciated, seen and heard.

We monitored and evaluated teacher engagement, improvement in teacher attitudes, knowledge and classroom practice based on the following qualitative means:

- 95 classroom observations by instructional coach
- Conversations with teachers during weekly coaching sessions
- 2 formal Teacher Reflections
- Weekly Teacher Feedback



### **Program impact on teachers:**

- Positive teacher attitudes towards unlearning the old and incorporating new strategies (e.g., using Montessori aids) and play-based methods in their daily classroom practice
- Increased motivation levels and self-confidence
- Improved knowledge in early years pedagogies
- Improved classroom management with reduction in traditional forms of discipline





## **Teacher reflections**

These testimonials are taken from 2 formal reflection sessions as well as the weekly coaching sessions with the teachers:

*“I have noticed that now children talk to me in the classroom. They are not afraid. Children who would not speak at all have begun to ask me questions and share during story time and Circle Time.”*

*“My little students are able to sit for longer without getting distracted and actually listen to the read alouds.”*

*“I have noticed that when children return to school after vacations, they have not forgotten concepts I taught them. This was not the case earlier. It is because of the new curriculum. The lesson plans are designed in a way that the same topics are repeated through the week in different ways. This helps the children retain information better.”*

*“I enjoy my classroom time using all the learning aids and story books that we have now. I feel my creativity is being used well. I like using new ways to teach children.”*

*“It is easier to manage the students. They can form a line and a circle for Circle Time. They know what to expect. They know when it’s time to sing the Goodbye song.”*



## ***Volunteer testimonials***

### **Shreya**

“The reason why I chose to join this program was because of the curriculum and the kind of change YF wanted to bring to the education system. This is something I’ve grown to become more passionate about and has inspired me to implement something like this in the future. I got to interact with children, learn how to actually speak to them and I got to understand how much of an impact we have on their lives. This program is not easy because you don’t see the impact immediately or even consistently, but this program has taught me to be more patient and understanding. I started appreciating the small victories that we saw on a daily basis. I truly think this program can make a real difference if implemented in all schools. I only hope to come back and do more.”

### **Harshavardhan**

“My experience at the school is one I look forward to every Saturday. The children are welcoming and them adoring us as ‘Anna’ is very satisfactory. After my time at the school I can say the reason for the program to be there at the school is one of recognising and targeting small things and habits of children that go a long way in building confidence and makes learning easy and adaptable. It can be anything from the way they hold their pencils or understand sound of the letters to them reacting to group situations. We are trying to build a good foundation. That is what the YF team and the teachers are trying to do with an effective curriculum at RBS. I think it is about them having better learning skills.”





## Abheesta

“Volunteering with the Early Learning Program (ELP) for the past 10 months has been an incredibly rewarding experience. The program curriculum blends play-based learning along with skill development. It helps children's education by an exceptional start in life. They started a love for reading, doing things creatively, and doing activities happily.

Every week's schedule helped me establish a strong relationship with children to teach them better. The year-end assessment showcases minute things that were left noticeably by me during weekends were working in favour of students at the end which helped them to progress and to transform better.”





# ***Social Emotional Learning Program***







## ***About the SEL Program***

The Socio - Emotional Learning (SEL) development program for young children and adolescents at Youngistaan Foundation began as an informal out-of-school program in 2016. Young volunteers were trained as mentors, with their training focusing on identifying children and adolescent needs and challenges. This included using tools for successful engagement such as child mapping, effective conflict management, constructive feedback strategies, and facilitation.

A holistic education is the key to becoming a well-rounded individual. While academic success is an important aspect of any child's life, research tells us that social and emotional factors play an equally important role in the overall development and psychological well-being of an individual. Bolstering students' social-emotional competencies build sound character, empathetic nature, and an adaptable and resilient personality - nurturing youth who will become responsible citizens and agents of social change.

Competencies such as self-awareness, social awareness, self-management, responsible decision-making, and relationship skills set up children for personal and professional success. Equally, these are essential not just for academic achievement but also for future workplaces that these students will occupy.

The current global scenario is being defined by many as a knowledge-based world and a future that is dominated by information-driven economies. Such a world, replete with rapid technological and scientific advancement will require students,



the citizens of tomorrow, to develop key 21st century skills and mindsets such as critical thinking, collaboration, communication, information literacy, media literacy, leadership, and flexibility. In order to be able to match their skill sets to work profiles of the future, every student deserves access to a comprehensive life skills program.



The need of the hour is a research-backed, comprehensive, and sustainable life skills program accessible to students within a safe and caring environment that encompasses key social-emotional competencies as well as critical 21st century skills. Having worked with children of all ages in local communities, Youngistaan foundation aspires to empower and upskill the children especially in underserved communities with vital social emotional competencies.





## ***About SEL (CASEL)***

We define social and emotional learning (SEL) as an integral part of education and human development. SEL is the process through which all children, young people and adults acquire and apply the knowledge, skills, and attitudes to develop healthy identities, manage emotions and achieve personal and collective goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain supportive relationships, and make responsible and caring decisions.

SEL advances educational equity and excellence through authentic school-family-community partnerships to establish learning environments and experiences that feature trusting and collaborative relationships, rigorous and meaningful curriculum and instruction, and ongoing evaluation. SEL can help address various forms of inequity and empower young people and adults to co-create thriving schools and contribute to safe, healthy, and just communities. (Source: Casel)

### **Importance of SEL**

- Research has proved that SEL will improve academic performance, Increase engagement, build good behaviour and cooperation with others
- social-emotional skills play a vital role in children, youth and are better equipped to manage daily challenges and challenges in life, to build positive relationships, and make informed decisions
- Individuals will be able to work collaboratively and have good relationships while respecting diversity and difference.
- Builds skills to work cooperatively with others, resolve conflicts, and persevere
- Prevents and reduces bullying, violence, Alcohol and drug abuse



## ***About community (families and background)***

Youngistaan Foundation has initiated support in various capacities to two urban slums with 295 households Ambedkar Nagar ( since 2020) and Gurubrahma Nagar( Since 2016) Bastis within the Khairtabad zone of Hyderabad District.

The families migrated from different states and settled in the city for nearly more than 40 years. The majority of people are daily wage labourers, few work as plumbers, electricians, drivers and as domestic helpers.

All the children are first generation learners studying in Government schools and some have discontinued their education due to various reasons.

## ***Beneficiaries***

<b>Direct Beneficiaries -</b>	90 children in Ambedkar Nagar urban slum (ages 3 to 14)	80 Children in Guru Brahma Nagar urban Slum ( Ages 3 to 18)
<b>Indirect Beneficiaries -</b>	Parent community 15 - 20 volunteer-mentors	Parent community 15 - 20 volunteer-mentors
<b>Date of Program initiation in respective basthi's</b>	2023 January - Ongoing	2016 to 2020 then again restarted in 2024 January to ongoing



## ***Our Observations and Research***

Functional illiteracy, underdeveloped academic skills, gaps in emotional & and social skills and uncaring school environments/negative role modeling lead to:

- Depletion of interest in academic work
- Low motivation levels amongst students as they go to higher grades
- Low self-efficacy among student
- Low self-worth among students



The COVID-19 pandemic further deteriorated the situation. Research shows that the unexpected shutdown of schools due to the COVID-19 pandemic has

had a drastic effect on the socio-emotional well-being of children. They have gone through many disruptions in their life socially, emotionally, mentally, and economically, which have led to emotional distress and impacted their overall well-being.



## ***Statement of Need***

Based on YF's work in local communities and child care centers, we have witnessed first-hand how the multidimensional nature of poverty hinders children's learning journeys and affects the development of healthy social and emotional competencies.

Post-pandemic community scenarios we saw disruptions in children's lives not just in terms of their school life but also in relation to their social-emotional well-being.

The need of the hour was an activity-based, explicit and systematic SEL program contextualized to the realities of marginalized children.

## ***Objective of the program***

The program was designed with an aim to build and strengthen approx 200 children's SEL (social-emotional learning)/Life skills and 21st-century skills which enable the beneficiaries to become empathetic and responsible leaders of tomorrow.

This in turn will aid in building safer and healthier communities, and eventually, a robust nation through a rigorous and systematic SEL (Social Emotional Learning) evidence-based curriculum tailored to the participants local and socio-economic contexts.





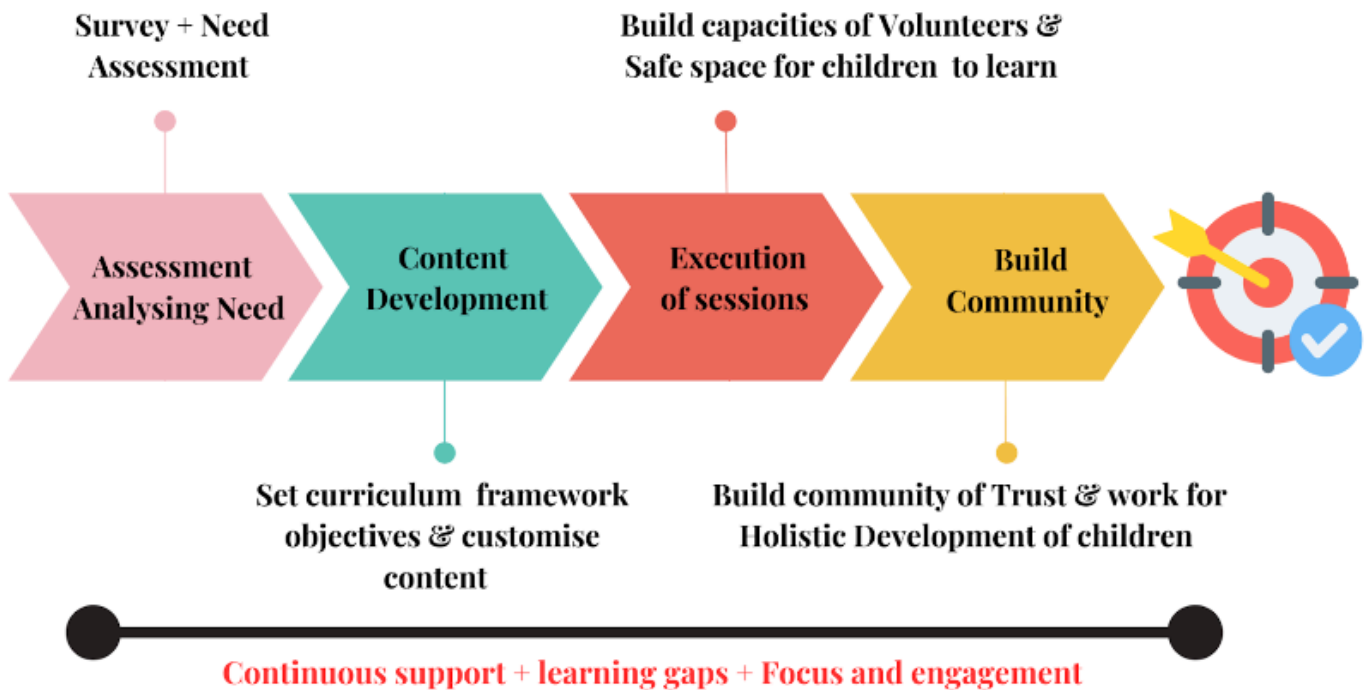
## ***Outcomes***

- Discovering their own strengths
- Making informed decisions
- Identifying and prioritizing future goals
- Increased self worth
- Managing their own emotions and behaviours
- Able to work collaborative relationships while respecting diversity and difference
- Establish positive relationships with peers and adults
- School enrollment





# Theory of Change



Youngistaan Foundation is committed to identify the basic needs of the children in the underserved community and support such communities with a platform to learn, grow and thrive and try to meet their basic needs.

We conducted a need assessment and analyzed various needs. Of Course there are many issues to address. As a first step we identified one such need of the hour was Socio-emotional learning or mental well-being of the children.





## ***Journey of Planning and implementation***

### **Step 1**

Need Assessment was done by the team collecting basic data of families in the community and to understand the age groups of children present in the urban slum and address the unique challenges faced and how we can consider and cater their unique needs into program design.

### **Step 2**

In House Onboarding of Volunteers and building their capacities to conduct sessions and nurture them through their journey to become responsible leaders and change agents.

### **Step 3**

Volunteer Mentors will acquire enhanced skills in implementing the SEL curriculum, fostering positive relationships, and effectively addressing the socio-emotional needs of children.

### **Step 4**

Children exhibit Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) competencies and key life skills, including self-management and responsible decision-making.

### **Step 5**

Partnerships with Parents & Community: Interacting with parents helps understand their context and progress, providing ideas for promoting new strategies and creating better learning experiences.





## ***Building Capacities of Volunteer Mentors***

**Total Number of Volunteers capacities built in 2023 - 2024 = 37**

**Total Number of Training sessions Conducted in year 2023 - ( 7 Initial Training + 16 Monthly Sessions and 42 Weekly training on content)**

- The SEL Program was re-ignited in 2023 on 7th January 2023 with 13 new volunteers who went through rigorous training sessions along with POSH policy and the team signed and submitted code of conduct documents.
- We designed 7 training modules as the initial step on their journey to build the capacities of volunteer mentors through a pre-designed series of experiential workshops (7 weeks) to enable them to implement sessions in the communities. We started to nurture our volunteers to understand their own strengths and values and work on themselves before they connect with children in these 7 training modules developed for the program.
- These 7 sessions are basically to help them understand themselves and understand the journey they have chosen to create a difference in the lives of children.

### **Monthly/weekly training sessions**

- We invested nearly **300+ Hours** and supported volunteers with training/ feedback structures/ peer learning performed well
- We created comfortable and safe space during training sessions



- Volunteer mentors were taken through the best practices of teaching various objectives – especially on how activity based learning can be conducted, and few classroom management techniques
- We conducted a pre-community content training session every weekend on Saturday before they visit children on Sunday
- We monitored - adapted weekly lesson plans based on volunteer-mentor feedback and reflections taken after every session with the children in the community

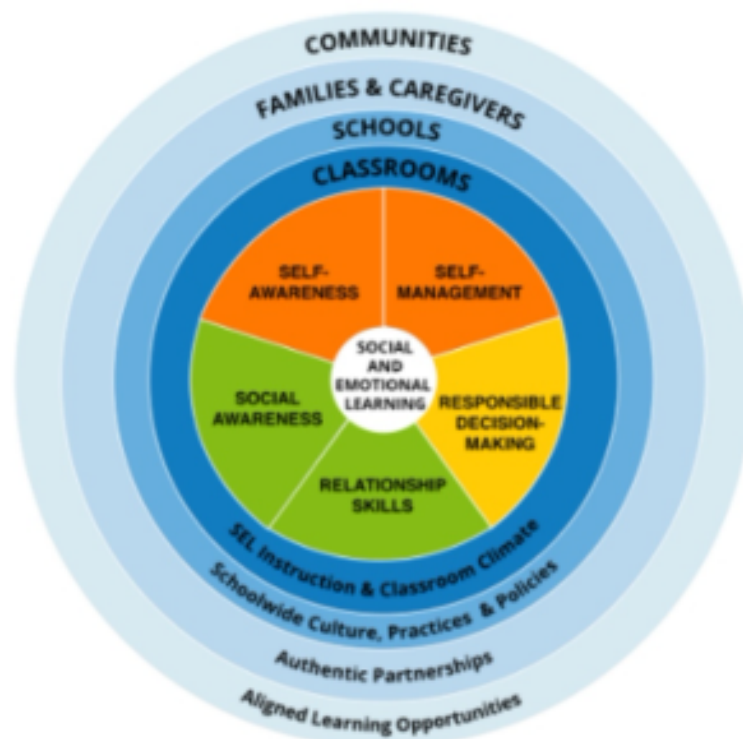


- Quarterly Review and Evaluation of Volunteer Mentors: Recording periodic reports/feedback and addressing the needs for smooth implementation, as well as recognizing the volunteers with awards, spotlights in new letters and collaborating with other volunteers



## ***Curriculum and Content***

We referred the research-based CASEL framework (Collaborative for Academic, Social, & Emotional Learning) and ISELF (Indian Social & Emotional Learning Framework) and Customized activities to our community context with clear objectives to implement a series of developmentally appropriate, activity-oriented, learning experience sessions.



## ***Sessions Design***

Our activities were contextualized as per need of the children's learning levels and designed keeping in mind the five SEL competencies i)Self-Awareness, ii)Self-Management, iii)Relationship skills, iv) Responsible Decision making and v) Social Awareness.



- The Session plans were designed appropriate for the respective age groups of Age 6 - 8 , Age 9 - 12 and Age 13 to 15.
- We also catered to 3 - 5 Age group: children at this age need to reach many milestones during their early years across various domains of development including - Physical Motor Development, Socio Emotional Learning, Oral Language Development, Cognitive Development, Creativity, and Foundational literacy and numeracy skills.
- The most significant step is to understand child development in each of these domains. Each child develops at their own pace. It's our duty to provide children with developmentally appropriate activities and check their growth and progress at various stages. Hence we have developed inhouse activities using content of Anganwadi themes and pre - School activities to ensure they are school ready
- The trained volunteer mentors conducted a weekly, 30 mins rapport building/ice breaker session followed by 90-minute interactive sessions with children living in their respective communities, and childcare centres
- Total number of sessions conducted in 2023 - 2024 April was 48. ( Hours Invested 2 hours per week, approximately 120 hours including Summer camps and other activities





- We focussed and developed activities to nurture the life skills and mental well-being using strategies of
  - 1) Quality Circle Time activities
  - 2) Talk & Dialogue - Debate and group discussion
  - 3) Story Telling
  - 4) Stimulated discussions like
    - a) Role Plays
    - b) Case study analysis
    - c) Scenarios
  - 5) Film Viewing
  - 6) Poster Making
  - 7) Reflective worksheets and conversations
  - 8) Survey , social awareness projects
  - 9) Art and Games





## Themes

Below are the themes which we have focussed under each competency in the year 2023 - 2024:

SEL MODULES				
Self Awareness	Self Regulation	Relationship Development	Social Awareness	Decision Making
Know yourself	Self Control	Introducing self	Hearing/Listening	Problem Solving
My special Interest	Dealing with anger towards others	getting to know each other	Listening during conversation	Identifying problem causing behaviour
Identifying emotions	Asking questions	Joining a group	Listening for information	Finding Alternative solutions
Expressing your emotions	following rules	Accepting differences	Reflective Listening	Deciding on best solution
Posture	handling change	Empathy	Active listening	Thinking before Acting
My Values	identifying stress	Meeting new people	My role model	Responding to postive advice
Something special about me	Dealing with another person's anger	Being a Good sport	Fostering good identity	Making wise choices
Facial expressions	Self talk	Co-operating	Empathy	Brainstorming together
Tone of voice	interpreting body language	Thinking before Acting	Accepting Differences	Accepting consequences
Voice volume	Gestures	Avoiding Fights	Taking Decisions together	caring about others

SEL modules for the 2023-2024 period.



## ***Literacy Component***

### **Language development**

As children attend schools their medium of instruction or text books are in English language and they are not exposed to language many struggle to read and write. We observed the need for language development and upskill children's vocabulary.

- We added our own intervention to help understand strategies to improve literacy component vocabulary
- First 15 Min time was allocated to build children's vocabulary and give exposure to the English language.

### **Material used**

- a) Gup shup books- on Animals, fruits, vegetables, greetings and parts of the body to enhance vocabulary.
- b) Sentence builder and Sight words
- c) Pratham story books

### **Expectations**

Children are expected to acquire the skills of listening, speaking, reading, and thinking in an integrated manner.

- Develop interpersonal communication skills.
- Attain basic proficiency like, developing ability to express one's own thoughts orally Interpret and understand instructions and polite forms of expression and respond meaningfully orally
- Acquire varied range of vocabulary; understand increased complexity of sentence structures both in reading.
- Express an awareness of social and environmental issues
- Read and interpret critically the texts in different contexts- including verbal and pictorial mode



We introduced practical strategies to handle everyday challenges and helped children discover simple ways to bounce back from setbacks.

We have focused on the unique needs of the children living in this particular urban slum.

### **Empowering underserved children**

We focused on the unique needs and how SEL can empower them to overcome challenges, build resilience and thrive both academically and personally.

### **Play and games**

Through interactive activities, art, and play we encouraged children to express their emotions, thoughts, and dreams, fostering self awareness and self expression.

### **Story and art/crafts**

Through storytelling, arts and crafts we made SEL learning an enjoyable and memorable experience for the kids.

They actively participated, shared their thoughts and connected with their emotions. we focussed on helping children recognize and express their feelings in healthy ways.

### **Building confidence and resilience**

We introduced practical strategies for building self confidence, handling challenges and bouncing back from setbacks.

These skills will empower children to navigate their academic and personal lives with resilience.





## **Fostering positive relationships**

We explored the value of kindness, cooperation, and respect in building positive relationships. The kids learned the importance of teamwork, communication and conflict resolution.

## **Creating safe spaces**

We emphasized the importance of creating a safe and supportive environment where these children can freely express themselves, receive emotional support and develop healthy relationships.

## **Language development**

Through stories, word plays, worksheets and gap shup books , pratham stories and sentence builder books children developed vocabulary and basic communication in English which still need to be practiced and nurtured through continuous support as its a process.



Circle Time



Group Activity



Interactions



Story Telling



## ***Overall impact observed***

- 40% of children who had irregular attendance in school have started attending school regularly
- Improved Vocabulary: Many children started understanding a few English words and using them
- Children, especially boys, have reduced use of rude and offensive language
- Impulsive fights that would break out amongst children have decreased because of anger management techniques
- Through activities children have begun to express themselves hence creating that space and appropriate learning environment worked well
- Still there is a need to bring discipline and behaviour changes among children as the exposure they have is not appropriate for their development

## ***Impact of the program***

To understand children's learning and to check how they are absorbing the content and applying what they learnt we used two strategies:

- I) Observations and feedback from volunteer mentors
- II) Internal Assessment - We created an internal assessment tool to get quantitative data from the program. We used a questionnaire prepared by taking reference of IDELA assessment and conducted a random sampling assessment of the average number of the students from each age group we worked with



## ***Impact testimonials of children***

**Student's Name:** Sumasri

**Age:** 10

**School:** Government Public School

**Siblings:** 1 younger sister

### **Context:**

When Sumasri joined our SEL program, she would never concentrate on the class and often looked distracted. She would sit in the class yet not pay attention to anything that was being taught. She would mostly be seen alone not talking to her classmates or friends and just look distracted all the time. Shwetha (Volunteer mentor) took the initiative to take a one-on-one session with Sumasri. She started to open up as she had attended many sessions by then and she felt she could confide in me.

Once we got to know about the reasons as to why she was behaving a certain way which was mostly due to domestic violence at home and even though she was interested in studies due to the struggles at home she could not overcome the stress and trauma .We had approached the parents to have a conversation with empathy and expressed how violence at home could impact her future. We encouraged sumasri by giving examples as to how school was a safe environment and education could pave so many ways in which she could decide her future. She took a leap of faith and trusted us. Then she started attending the sessions regularly and showed so much interest and passion towards learning anything and everything.



## Observations

In the span of three months, Sumasri looked like a completely transformed student. She had started attending school and was able to get the required support from her family from not being interested in the classes to now being a regular one to bombarding us with so many questions with such enthusiasm in her eyes she has evolved into a new person. From sitting alone in the classes to now attending all the classes with her friends, she has made a change in her personal life and has encouraged even her younger sibling about education.



## Impact

Sumasri's transformation has been truly inspiring. She went from being disinterested and being distracted to becoming a cheerful and responsible kid. Her ability to motivate her siblings and friends is impressive. It's wonderful to see her enthusiasm and commitment to the program. She is now an inspiration to her younger sibling who has now started to realize the value of education through her own actions.





**Student's Name:** Sowmya

**Age:** 10

**School:** Government Public School

**Siblings:** 2 younger sisters

### **Context**

When Sowmya first joined our SEL program, she was easily bored and often disengaged from activities. She would leave the group and join other groups, taking her friends with her.

This caused disruptions as the entire group would shift from one team to another during sessions.

### **Experience and growth in the program**

Throughout the program, we tailored our approach to meet Sowmya's needs.

We encouraged her to take on responsibilities, such as helping to get all the kids ready for the session, assisting volunteers in conducting activities, and organizing the sessions.

### **Observation**

In just six months, we have seen a remarkable change in Sowmya. She now arrives early to organize the place for the session, brings her friends and younger sisters to attend, and ensures that other children follow the volunteers' instructions. Her leadership and engagement have positively influenced the entire group.

### **Impact**

Sowmya's transformation has been truly inspiring. She went from being easily bored and disengaged to becoming a proactive and responsible leader.



Her ability to organize and motivate her peers is impressive, and she has become a role model for the other children. It's wonderful to see her enthusiasm and commitment to the program.

**Student's Name:** Dhanush

**Age:** 9

**School:** Government Public School

**Siblings:** 1 younger brother and 1 younger sister

### **Context**

Dhanush is a 9-year-old who has been struggling with self-esteem. He often feels overwhelmed by his emotions and finds it challenging to connect with people.

That is one of the reasons why he's always getting into fights and arguments with his peers. It was really difficult for him to adjust to our classroom setting in the beginning. But as time passed he was eager to know if we would be conducting more classes especially during their summer break as he believed that these classes helped him shape into the best version of him.

### **Observation**

Over the time participating in the SEL program, Dhanush's self esteem grew, he now is a confident boy and has learnt to express his emotions through dance. From using swear words to hitting his peers and not respecting the girls, he started to empathize with his peers and even made friends on the way. He still picks fights with his friends every now and then but they're mostly friendly. His academic performance so improved as he became more engaged in the classes.



He now feels more connected to his peers and develops healthier relationships both at school and at home. His mother expressed gratitude during one of our sessions and told how he started to help her in the house with most of the chores and how she was happy about the changes in his life.

## Impact

Dhanush's journey exemplifies the transformative power of the Social and Emotional Learning programs in supporting children's emotional well-being, building social skills, and fostering academic success. I believe by providing support, schools can empower students like Dhanush to thrive both inside and outside the classroom.







**Student's Name:** Yasmeen

**Age:** 9

### **Context**

Yasmeen was very shy about 9 years of age and was very active among her friends. She used to hesitate to take part in activities and had very low confidence.

### **Impact**

We have seen a lot of changes, especially in the activities. She now takes part in all the activities, like she readily participated for a skit in the Carnival celebrations and is not afraid to stand in front of everyone and talk or perform. I (volunteer mentor) have seen her become more responsive and able to grasp things much faster. She has also been encouraged by her elder sibling who also attends our SEL sessions regularly.







**Student's Name:** Naini

**Age:** 4

### **Context**

Naini is a shy, introverted girl. She attended the sessions regularly but was always hesitant, scared and calm and wasn't involved in activities much. She was not open to any other kids or volunteers. Observation: After a few months in our program, Naini developed a bond with her program volunteer. With her help, Naini started engaging in activities and showed improvement in her literacy skills. She started talking without fear.

### **Impact**

There was a significant change in Naini's behavior. Her parents were happy to see her showing interest in writing and drawing. She became more open and willing to participate in various activities.





**Student Name:** Lucky

**Age:** 5

**Siblings:** Vicky (elder brother) and Princy (younger sister)

### **Context**

Initially Lucky didn't speak to volunteers and used to feel shy. In the beginning he was not interested in activities but as the time passed developed interest.

### **Impact**

He is one child in whom we have witnessed so many changes over the months. He never said a single word with the volunteers and children during the sessions for 6 months. He started opening up after that and started participating in all the activities and learned so many things.





**Student's Name:** Nishanth

**Age:** 5

**Siblings:** Nishashvitha (elder sister)

### **Context**

Nishanth is a hyperactive kid, full of energy, and actively participates in all the activities.

However, he needed constant attention to manage his energy and ensure the class remained orderly.

### **Observation**

He used to be aggressive - with other children.

"During the sessions, our program volunteers either engaged him in specific activities or had a volunteer sit with him and a few other kids.

With the help of our volunteers and team-building activities, Nishanth began to calm down and engage more cooperatively with other children."

### **Impact**

In a few months time, we observed good changes in Nishanth.

He became more focused during activities and interacted more harmoniously with his peers.

His ability to channel his energy positively has greatly improved.



## ***Impact volunteers testimonies***

### ***Rushika Gundu***

It's been 1 year and 8 months since I joined Youngistaan and being a part of SEL and working with children has been immensely fulfilling.

During the time I have learnt many skills that impacted my personal and professional life.

Working with great team who are very friendly and supportive has been a great help in the project. Being under great mentors has helped me leveraged my social and emotional skills and helped in putting them into action.

### ***Shreya S.***

As a volunteer in the SEL program, my journey has been incredibly fulfilling. I've learned a lot about communication, empathy, and teamwork while also understanding more about social and emotional learning.

Seeing how SEL positively affects the children has been inspiring and strengthened my belief in emotional intelligence.

This journey has not only let me give back to the community but has also made a lasting impact on my personal growth, highlighting the importance of compassion and connection in building a better society.





### ***Swetha Sankaran***

My journey as a SEL Volunteer and Community leader began with a desire to make a positive difference in the lives of kids and contribute to supportive environments. From the moment I stepped into the role, I was greeted with warmth and enthusiasm by both community kids and fellow volunteers, which contributed in meaningful connections.

One of the most rewarding aspects of my experience has been the opportunity to connect with individuals from diverse backgrounds and age groups. Whether working with younger children or teenagers, I have been struck by many emotions and the importance of cultivating empathy, understanding, and compassion in our interactions. I have also experienced significant personal growth and learning.

Each interaction, each challenge, and each success has deepened my own understanding of emotions and relationships.

### ***Sonu Bhushan***

My experience in SEL program since one year, it's been a very heartwarming journey with Volunteers and mentors where I got to know so many things about life which weren't talked about in the school or any work place as per my experience from my life.

Here in Ambedkar Nagar when I came on field I use to relate to the training and teaching kids with reference from my weekly training session which help me and the kids as well.



I almost covered everything thing what we got trained, but on field but few things we missed out either time or the kids situations doesn't completely use to respond in the beginning few months but, it actually worked after three to four months where me and the community kids established a proper connection through weekly activities.

Now that we had a long term connection with kids the activities moulded them into very sharp and they started to respond and react with weekly activities in between carnival was a huge festival mood enhanced the kids experience. Finally I continued to Volunteering kids as I look at them the beneficiaries that's all I can understand since one year. I truly thank the foundation for giving me an opportunity to volunteer here.

### ***Kesav Anirudh***

Being part of the SEL Program at Youngistaan has been a transformative and impactful experience. Every weekend, I have the privilege of learning something new alongside some of the brightest and most curious minds in the city. The training sessions conducted are so vital as they directly reflect on the principles of the SEL Program and the sessions have significantly contributed to my development in community activities.

Surrounded by such bright minds, I continually explore myself by evaluating my strengths and improving upon my weaknesses. I feel privileged to be involved in the SEL Program within an organization dedicated to the genuine welfare of others. I am excited to extend my efforts and contribute even more



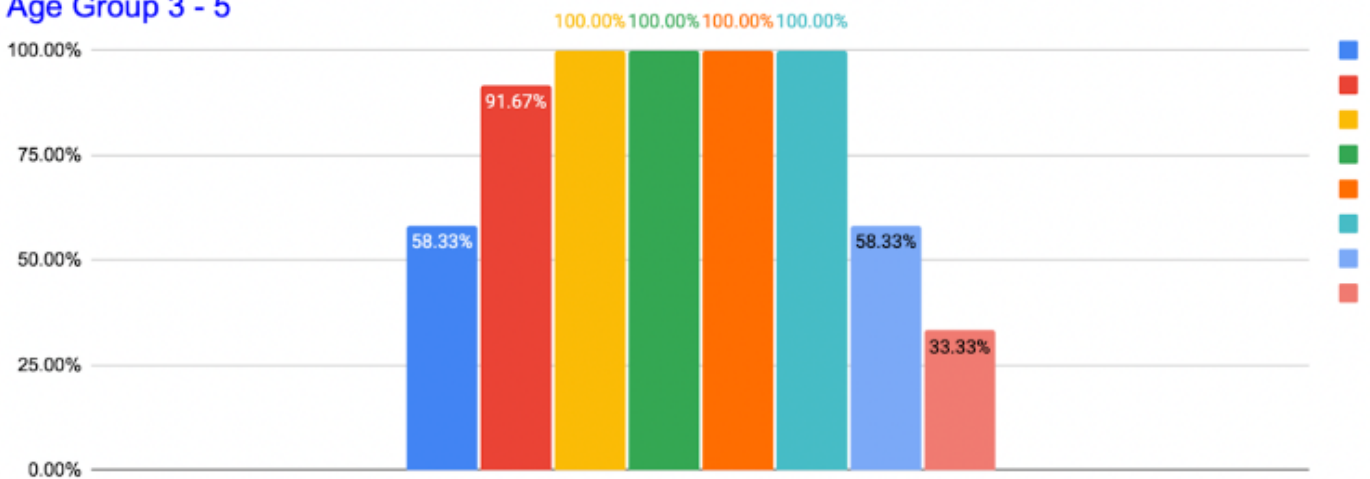
## Assessment

We conducted a simple annual assessment developed inhouse by the team, to analyze the learning gaps so that we can revise specific objectives in the coming year of our SEL program and understand the progress and get an idea if what we are doing is efficient.

### Age group assessed

3- 5 age ( pre- schoolers) through a random sampling method:

Age Group 3 - 5





## Summary of graph

The above data represents the assessment of children of Age group 3 - 5 conducted to understand their learnings on a few basic concepts that were taught to the children.

The age group (3-5):

Physical and Motor Development	Observed 90% children participate actively during playtime. 100% children enjoy <u>colouring</u> with crayons
Sensory, Perceptual and Cognitive Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 58.33% of them able to identify the <u>colours</u> of the objects</li><li>• 91.6% of the children were able to sort and identify 3 fruits and name them</li><li>• 100 % of the children were able to sort and identify 3 vegetables and name them</li><li>• 100% of the children were able to understand words like in, out,short, tall,big and small and can comprehend they are opposites.</li><li>• 33.3% of the children were able to identify shapes and name them.</li></ul>
Language, literacy	80% of children enjoy singing rhymes and can follow simple instructions. <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 100% of the children are able to comprehend and show head,eyes,ears, nose,hands and legs ( 45% children in english and 55% in telugu language)</li></ul>
Social and Emotional Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 100% of the children were able to identify two feelings/emotions of the person in the pictures shown to them.</li><li>• 58.33 of the children were able to recognize the feeling/emotion they felt in a given scenario and were able to express it verbally.</li></ul>





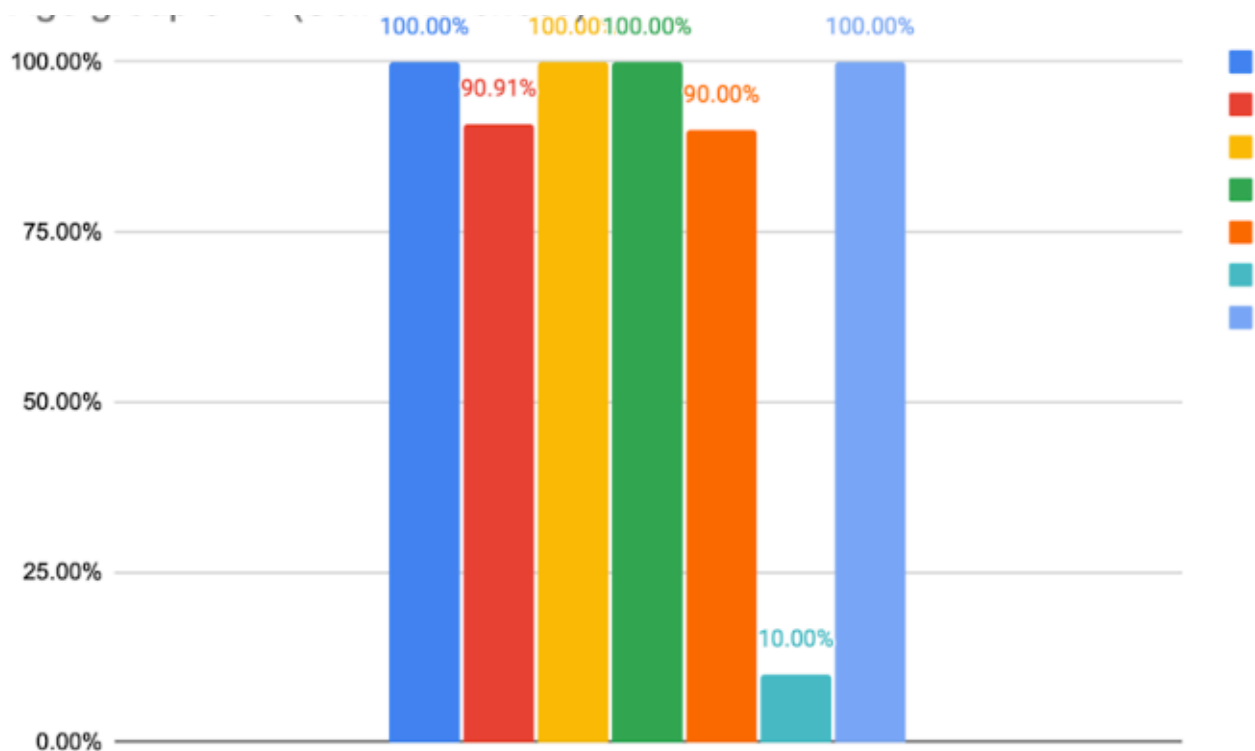
## ***Key takeaways***

- We were able to create a safe, friendly space for children to express and activity based learning experiences
- There has been significant change in the understanding of certain concepts which children were not aware of which was observed at the beginning of our intervention with this age group
- We are able to see few school readiness competencies in children but there is a need to create a regular learning environment as the above data is only weekly once intervention results
- The data point out the fact that basic learning levels of children need significant improvement
- These early learners need much focussed attention and regular attention with continuous support - on 5 Developmental domains: Physical development, Speech and Language Development, Social Development, Emotional Development and cognitive development
- A Lot of Teaching learning material can be developed creatively using low cost materials to meet the objectives of sessions



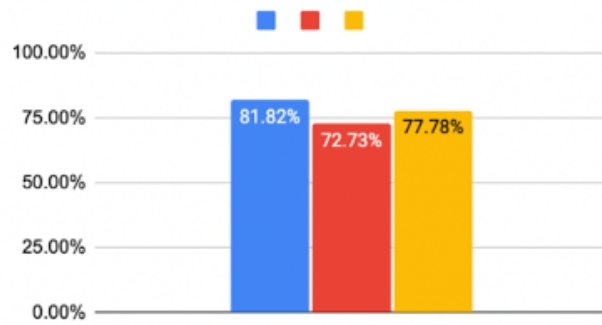
## ***Self awareness and self regulation competency***

Age group assessed: (6 - 9) through a random sampling method:

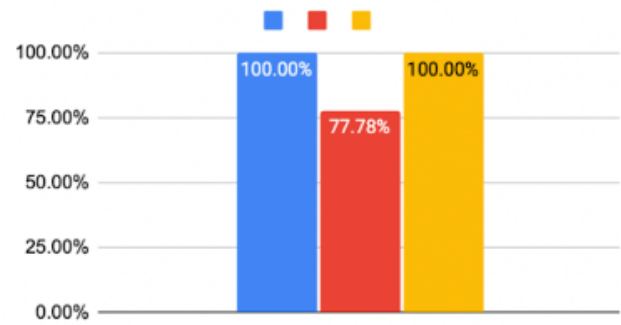




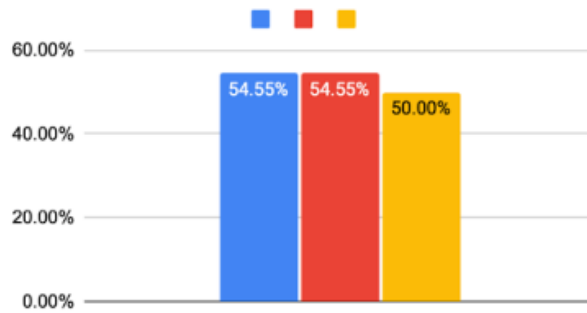
Age Group 6 - 9 (Sad)



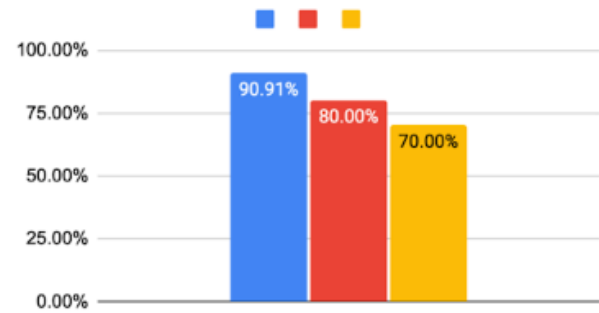
Age Group 6 - 9 (Happy)



Age Group 6 - 9 (Anger)

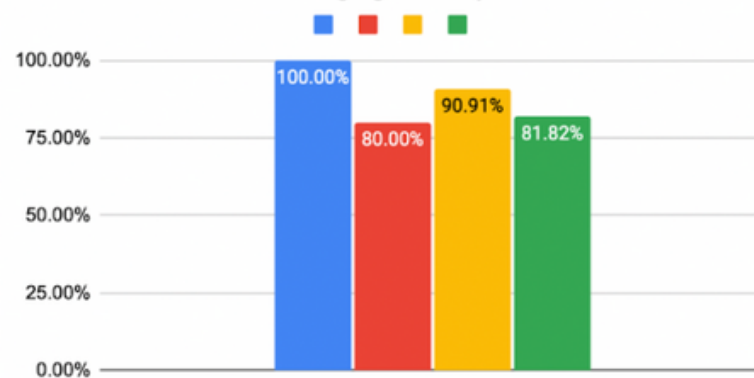


Age Group 6 - 9 (Empathy)



Relationship building and problem solving competencies:

Age Group 6 - 9 (Solving conflict, Persistence/engagement)





The above data represents the assessment of children of the age group 6 - 9 conducted to understand their basic learning Self Awareness and self regulation competency that were taught to the children.

An average number of children were assessed through random sampling and we observed that:

### **Graph 1 - Self awareness**

- About 90 - 100% of the participants/children have the ability to perceive basic understanding of who they are as an individual and express verbally
- Only 10% of children were able to say the state and country name

### **Graphs 2 and3 - Self awareness and self regulation**

#### **Sad**

- 81.82% of the children were able to identify emotion sadness
- 72.73% of the children able to comprehend and connect to the sad emotion
- 77.78% of children are able to understand how to cope/regulate or show their sadness

#### **Happy**

- 100% of the children were able to identify the emotion of happiness.
- 77.78% of the children able to comprehend and connect to the happy emotion
- 100% of children are able to understand how to cope/regulate or show their happiness.





## Anger

- 54.55% of the children were able to identify the emotion of anger
- 54.55% of children able to comprehend and connect to the anger emotion
- 50% of the children are able to understand how to cope/regulate or show their anger

## Empathy

- 90.91% of the children are able to identify the feeling the other person is experiencing.
- 80% of the children from the sample are able to understand and connect with others emotions.
- 70% of the children able to express how they can support others with coping mechanism

## Graph 4 - Relationship building and problem solving competencies

### Solving conflict/persistence/engagement

- 100% of children were able to identify there is conflict
- 80% of the children were able to say at least one simple solution to the conflict in the given scenario
- 90.91% of children were able to stay focused or concentrated on the task and did not get distracted
- 81.82% of the children were motivated to complete the task or solve the problem



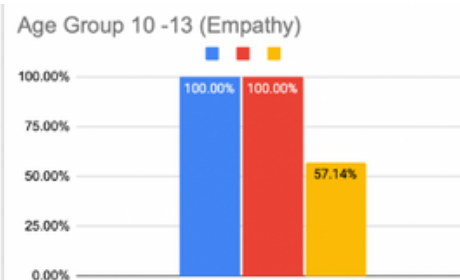
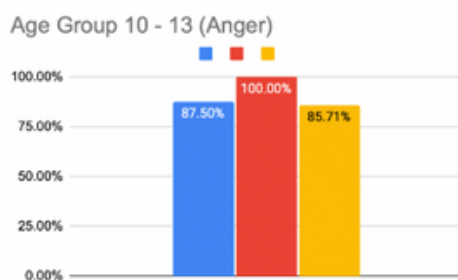
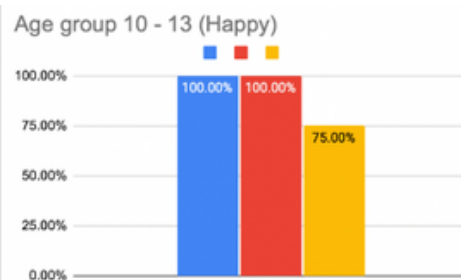
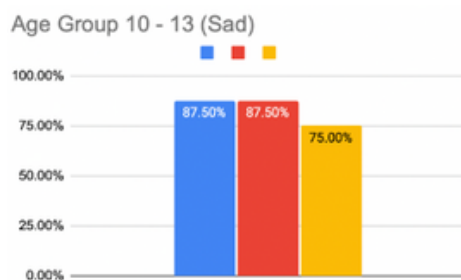
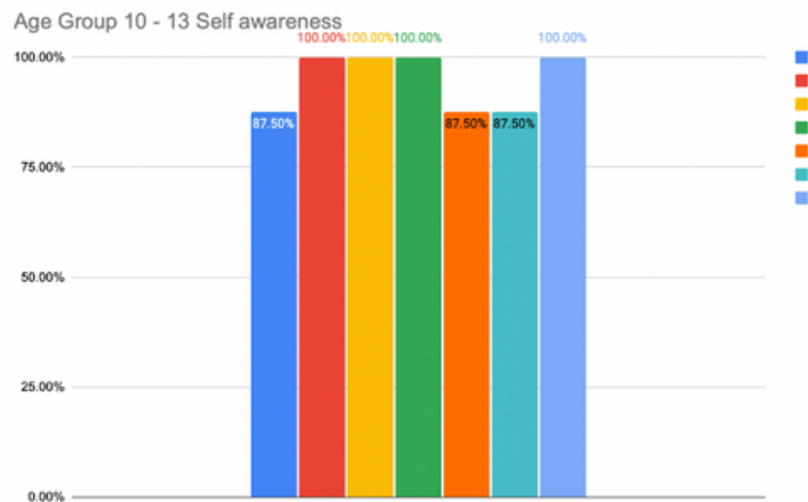
### **Key takeaway of age group 6 - 9:**

- The above data represents the assessment of children of Age group 6 - 9 conducted to understand their basic learning and progress of Self Awareness and self regulation, relationship building and problem solving competencies in children.
- Self Awareness: Assessment was conducted to analyze the progress and monitor developmental progress of the competency of self awareness. Simple level 1 questions about their identity like name, age, gender, name of caretaker (immediate family name and their relationship) and place and country they reside.
- Self awareness about 90 - 100% of the participants have the ability to perceive basic understanding of who they are as an individual and express verbally.
- Only 10% of children were able to say the state and country name.
- Self Regulation: Assessment was conducted to see if children are able to identify basic emotions, understand the feelings of others and have any coping mechanisms.
- The data point out the fact that the basic learning levels of children there is significant improvement and they were able to score well in standard 1 of identification of emotions.
- The rigor of activities can be increased and implemented in the coming year.
- Create more opportunities to explore and understand their strengths, values and design activities to achieve outcomes of making children more confident and efficient.
- Children are able to identify the basic emotions but still need to be aware of the influence on their behaviour and respond/cope positively
- One of the difficult emotions in this age group is anger. Shows why there is impulsive behaviour in children which leads to fights and hitting each other. There is need for more self regulation activities



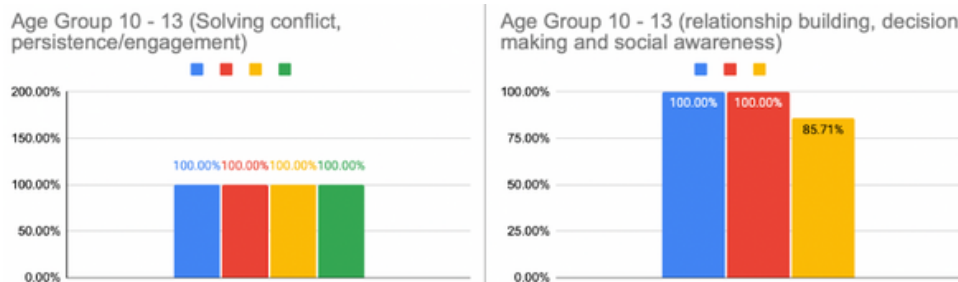
## Self Awareness and Self Regulation

Age group assessed (10 - 13) through a random sampling method:





## Problem solving, relationship building and social awareness



The above data represents the assessment of children of the age group 10 - 13 conducted to understand their basic learning Self Awareness and self regulation competency that were taught to the children.

An Average number of children were assessed through random sampling and we observed that:

### Summary of Graphs (age group 10 - 13)

#### Graph 1 - Self Awareness

- About 90 % of the participants have the ability to perceive basic understanding of who they are as an individual and express verbally.
- 87 % of children were able to say the name of the locality, state and country name.





## Graphs 2 and 3 - Self awareness and self regulation

### Sad

- 87.50% of the children were able to identify emotion sadness
- 87.50% of the children are able to comprehend and connect to the sad emotion
- 75% of children are able to understand how to cope/regulate or show their sadness

### Happy

- 100% of the children were able to identify the emotion of happiness
- 100% of the children able to comprehend and connect to the happy emotion
- 75% of children are able to understand how to cope/regulate or show their happiness

### Anger

- 87.50% of the children were able to identify the emotion of anger
- 100% of children able to comprehend and connect to the anger emotion
- 75% of the children are able to understand how to cope/regulate or show their anger

### Empathy

- 100% of the children are able to identify the feeling the other person is experiencing
- 100% of the children from the sample are able to understand and connect with others emotions
- About 57.14% of the children able to express how they can support others with coping mechanism



## **Graph 4 - Relationship building and problem solving competencies**

### **Solving conflict/persistence/engagement**

- 100% of children were able to identify there is conflict.
- 100% of the children were able to say at least one simple solution to the conflict in the given scenario
- 100% of children were able to stay focused or concentrated on the task and did not get distracted
- 100% of the children were motivated to complete the task or solve the problem

### **Relationship building, decision making and social awareness**

- 100% of the children are able to identify and differentiate good and bad choices
- 100% of the children showed the idea of helping nature and how they can think of a solution
- 85.71% of the children were aware of at least one social problem existing within their community and named it

### **Key takeaway of age group 10 - 13:**

- The data shows that children have done well with learning standard 1 or level 1 we can say of identifying emotions but there is a need to dig deeper into the learnings in building their personal strengths, and encourage or build their capacities to face challenges, and start with thinking solution oriented mindset and in turn enhance their behavior.
- This is a crucial age group where their lives can be molded well hence more focussed outcomes we need to work with this age group.



- More support and attention need to be given in building next level of these 5 competencies
- The safe, supportive environment created last year which encouraged children and through which we were able to see tiny bits of improvement has to be cultivated for the growth of socio emotional and cognitive development.
- More solid structure needs to be built within the community to see better results next year.

### **Learnings during January 2023 - April 2024 :**

- A key learning through the program was that children require regular practice and well-planned curriculum activities which are appropriate to their age groups.
- This year gave us an understanding that learning can happen anywhere provided there is access to the right tools, knowledge and structure.
- Nurturing our volunteers to understand their own strengths and values and work on themselves before they connect with children made a lot of difference in building teams' interpersonal skills.
- Frequent observations, feedback and coaching for volunteer mentors is needed to implement the program effectively.
- We promoted learning organically which showed improvement not only in children but also in volunteer mentors.
- Volunteer commitment and consistency plays a key role in children's behaviour and learning.
- Giving opportunities for new volunteers to shadow senior volunteers and work with different age groups made it easy for them to adapt and learn.
- We implemented various tools and resources that promote effective learning strategies.



- Inclusion of scenarios/examples made it easier to explain concepts to students
- Ensured volunteers are aware of what they were and what they are doing and how to use these strategies inside the class
- Group activities made a lot of difference in building bonds and working in teams among the children
- Assigning two volunteers per age group has been a good working model we used
- Volunteers have been open about sharing problems in lesson execution and have displayed ownership by reaching out for help and implementing suggestions in their reflections after every session
- Weekly pictures and feedback after sessions helped in modifying and cater to specific needs of the group session







## ***Sustainability***

- Long-term SEL intervention that will be implemented phase-wise over the next 3 years in these communities
- Building capacities of adolescents and community leaders in communities, teachers in schools, and caretakers in childcare centres to carry forward the program
- Create student-run well being clubs that give a voice and as safe space to children to express themselves and transform into future leaders of the program



- Family and community involvement - the inclusion of families will not only facilitate positive change in the home environment but also reinforce learned SEL skills and attitudes till they become second nature to the child.
- Reflect each year, understand gaps and work towards achieving the outcomes



## ***Future Goals***



## ***Highlights of the year***

### **Experiential Trips**

Experiential learning helps children connect with concepts by experiencing them firsthand, which includes hands-on activities and field visits. In December on a grand scale we organized a carnival for all the children whom we work with and celebrated children together as one big family. It was a safe space where they could be themselves playing, having fun and showing their talents through skits, mine, songs, dance, music and storytelling, creative workshops, activities, games and delicious food. The festive spirit with joy rides, bouncy castles, cotton candy and yummy food created one of a kind memory in their hearts.



## Summer Camp

In the month of May 2023 we organized Summer camp at 4 child care centers and 1 underserved community. It was a month filled with exciting activities for children where they learned many things through play and fun activities like outdoor games, storytelling, arts & crafts , music , competitions. We had the culmination of summer camp with a grand finale where children displayed what they have learnt and we appreciated them with gifts and medals. We invited parents too who appreciated the work we are carrying out and gave positive feedback about the program and the behaviour changes they are seeing in the children. Watch our reel here!







## ***Review meets / awards and recognitions***

Every quarter we had review and evaluation meetings with the volunteer mentors and core team where we assessed the progress of the program, discussed challenges, way forward and as well appreciated the volunteers with awards and recognition.





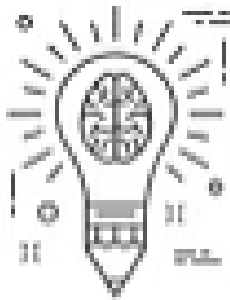


## ***Our Partnerships***



### **Capacity-Building Partner**

Extending our longstanding relationship with Wipro, this year Youngistaan Foundation became an Education Partner with Wipro Foundation and was onboarded to their 3-year Capacity-Building Program for civil society organisations.



**THINGS  
EDUCATION**

### **Curriculum Partner (Early Learning Program)**

Bangalore-based enterprise, Things Education empowers educators and schools with their educational research and evidence-backed curriculum, resources, and professional development courses. YF is currently using their Early Years curriculum as part of our Early Learning Program.



## Contact us

If you want to contact Youngistaan Foundation regarding the Education Program:

**Phone:** 98853 42224

**Email:** [arun@youngistaanfoundation.org](mailto:arun@youngistaanfoundation.org)

**Website:** [www.youngistaanfoundation.org](http://www.youngistaanfoundation.org)

