

26 SCHOOLS
850+ EDUCATORS
14,000 STUDENTS
5,100 ALUMNI



TABLE OF CONTENTS

<u>About Akanksha</u>	2
<u>Our Vision and Mission</u>	3
<u>Needs Being Met</u>	4
<u>Our Programs</u>	5
<i><u>The School Project</u></i>	6
<i><u>The Alumni Program</u></i>	7
<i><u>Project Setu</u></i>	8
<u>Akanksha's Approach</u>	9
<u>What Sets Us Apart</u>	10
<u>Our Impact</u>	11
<u>Ecosystem Impact</u>	14
<u>Strategic Growth Plan</u>	15



ABOUT AKANKSHA

[Akanksha Education Fund \(AEF\)](#) is a 501(c)(3) publicly supported not-for-profit organization in the U.S. that supports initiatives to improve access to high quality education for underserved children in India. The Fund leverages generous donations of individuals, foundations and corporations in the U.S. who see education as the key factor in ending the cycle of poverty. With the help of U.S. donors, the AEF raises funds to help [The Akanksha Foundation, India \(TAF\)](#).

TAF currently runs a network of 26 innovative schools in partnership with local municipal corporations to provide free, high-quality, holistic education to children from low-income communities in Pune, Mumbai, and Nagpur. We currently serve 14,000+ students and 5,100 alumni through our 850+ educators. We build a 20-year partnership with the children, their parents, and community, and create pathways out of poverty through transformative education. It costs \$650 a year to educate a child. That's \$13,000 over 20 years to transform the life of a child and their family. Please watch this [short intro video](#) to learn more.

Akanksha is also strengthening the public school education system and empowering students through academics, life skills and community engagement. Aided by the funds and support from Akanksha Education Fund, The Akanksha Foundation continues to expand its innovative education programs and opportunities for the students we serve.

OUR VISION

To equip all children with the knowledge, skills, and values they need to lead empowered lives.

OUR MISSION

To build a network of high-performing and innovative schools to empower children/young adults from underserved communities to maximize their potential and to influence the ecosystem.



NEEDS BEING MET



The Akanksha Foundation is significantly enhancing the existing educational system in response to concerning trends highlighted by the Annual Survey of Education Report (ASER) in India. This report found that over half of Grade 5 students struggle with basic reading and less than half of Grade 8 students can solve simple math problems. Contributing factors include high teacher absenteeism, outdated teaching methods, low classroom engagement, and inadequate teacher training. These issues lead to student disinterest and high dropout rates, particularly in public schools where less than 20% of teachers receive proper training.

Economic disparities further aggravate these challenges, as families from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds often rely on under-resourced public schools. In Mumbai, despite an investment of INR 100,000 per child, the system saw a significant reduction of nearly 100,000 students over 7-8 years, with only 40% of children who start kindergarten completing Grade 10.

The Akanksha Foundation has pioneered the creation of high-performing public schools through a public-private partnership model. This approach proves that quality education is accessible to economically weaker sections of society. In the 2018-19 academic year, 99% of Akanksha students passed secondary school, a stark contrast to the 54% pass rate in traditional public schools and 80% in private schools in Mumbai. Our educational model not only demonstrates the feasibility of delivering superior education at lower costs but also emphasizes innovative pedagogy. Remarkably, 99.8% of our students complete Grade 10, 90% finish Grade 12, and 80% pursue higher education in degree colleges—rates that are 2.5 times higher than the state average.

These successes underscore the critical need for a tripartite partnership involving the government, corporate sponsors, and organizations like Akanksha. Such collaborations are essential to equip all children with the knowledge and skills necessary to thrive in the 21st century, thereby transforming the landscape of education and offering hope and opportunities to those who need them most.

OUR PROGRAMS

At Akanksha, we are accelerating progress towards many of the [United Nations Sustainable Development Goals \(SDGs\)](#) through education. Our work in education, mental well-being, and livelihood allows us to support these objectives:

- **SDG 1:** No Poverty
- **SDG 3:** Good Health and Well-Being
- **SDG 4:** Quality Education
- **SDG 5:** Gender Equality

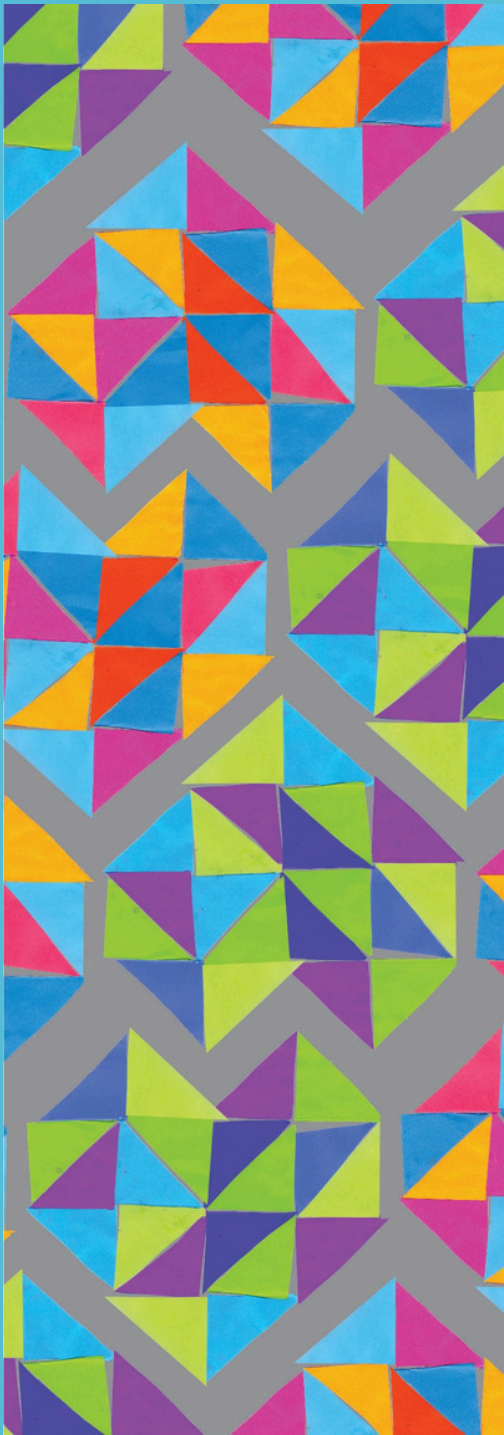
Akanksha schools are working towards empowering underserved children & their communities through support systems that extend beyond the four walls of a classroom.

The School Project

Akanksha provides free school education from kindergarten to grade 10 for over 14,000 children through the School Project, a unique public-private partnership in collaboration with five municipal corporations within Mumbai, Pune and Nagpur. This partnership model enables Akanksha to run the operations & staffing of the school while the local government provides the school premise and supports infrastructural needs such as electricity & water. In a way, Akanksha adopts a school structurally supported by the local government and redesigns systems to enable a holistic and rich learning environment. By overseeing everything right from recruitment & training of teachers, to instruction and curriculum and even working with the parents on community issues, Akanksha is committed to delivering a high quality education to underserved children.

The parents of Akanksha students are typically domestic workers, vegetable vendors, and sanitation workers for whom the family income supports five or more members. A school education for a child from an underserved family is much more than foundational numeracy and language skills. At Akanksha, it means access to a wide range of socio-emotional well-being networks such as peers & school teachers, a school management committee, and a dedicated school counselor & social worker who work closely with a family to address grievances & concerns. The model is grounded in our experience in education and the micro innovations taking place across our network.

The Alumni Program



The learning and growth of an Akanksha student continues even after they graduate from school. The practical challenges and life problems begin after the student steps out of school to face the real world. Our aim is to guide and support our students through their journey while in school and after school through The Alumni Support and Engagement Program. We are aware that a graduation degree enables students with various opportunities, but that alone does not equip a student to face life's challenges. Further, since most of our students are the first in their families to attend college, it's essential that we provide continuous support to ensure their successful transition from school to college and then to their professional careers.

Through our alumni support program we hope to pave a path for our students to embark on their journey through college and help them to make informed life choices and lead empowered lives. This ongoing support plays a pivotal role in shaping their journey from academia to professional life. Our alumni have access to mentors, cultural support/host families for those studying internationally, and frequent contact with Akanksha supporters. Currently the program covers over 5100 alumni and each year we add approximately 500 students to this program.

Akanksha alumni are enrolled in reputed colleges in India and worldwide. These include: United World College (UWC), Singapore, University of Rochester, University of Oklahoma, St. Olaf College, Minnesota, USA UWC Robert Bosch, Germany UWC Adriatic, Italy, Ashoka University, New Delhi, Azim Premji University, Bengaluru and IIT.

Project Setu

Over 50 million elementary grade students in India lack foundational literacy and numeracy skills, hindering their educational progress. The Education Report of 2018 revealed alarming statistics, with 49% of grade 3 students unable to read grade 1 level texts and 28% struggling with basic number recognition. The New Education Policy (NEP) 2020 aims to address these gaps by prioritizing early childhood care and education, reducing dropouts, empowering teachers, adopting effective pedagogical practices, and integrating technology in education. To support NEP's goals, Akanksha launched "City as a Unit of Change," leveraging successful models like Akanksha's schools and partnerships with organizations like Leadership for Equity.

Project Setu was launched in Nagpur Municipal Corporation (NMC) and Pimpri-Chinchwad Municipal Corporation (PCMC), and currently impacts **60,000+ students and 825 educators**. Currently operating in over 190 public schools, with plans to expand to 500+ schools over the next five years, the focus areas include driving school readiness, teacher development, capacity building for field officers and supervisors, and improving English language education.





AKANKSHA'S APPROACH

All Akanksha programs, particularly the School Project, encompass three foundational pillars that are interwoven throughout.

Academic Achievement

Akanksha schools set rigorous learning standards - the multidisciplinary curriculum is reflected in the daily timetable with subjects ranging from Information and Computer Technology, Integration of the Arts in Mathematics and Science, to Music, Physical Education (PE) & Sports to even Library/Reading. Above all, all Akanksha schools ensure the inclusion of technology and use of digital learning techniques in the day-to-day activities of the classroom. The long term vision for our schools is to enable blended, or hybrid learning where students can both learn online using school-provided digital tablets and attend physical in-person classes.

Socio-Emotional Well-Being

Socio-emotional development is a core aspect of the learning of every Akanksha student. This philosophy is grounded in the idea that success in the 21st century requires each child to go beyond just academics and develop professional skills for life-long learning and growth. All Akanksha schools implement Socio Emotional and Ethical (SEE) learning practices as part of their daily timetable. SEE is a creative and pragmatic learning tool aimed at providing socio-emotional support while honing fundamental development skills developed by Emory University in partnership with the Dalai Lama Trust.

Parent Community Engagement and Development

At Akanksha, parents are our partners in the learning journey, and we provide intensive support to empower our parents in the areas of community health, economic resilience and as learning facilitators. Parents actively engage in the process of their child's development through programs such as the School Management Committee, parent literacy classes, parent volunteerism and community-wide efforts to address key issues such as women's empowerment, substance abuse, physical violence and others. Parents are also kept informed about what their children are learning, and how to provide support in the home. Outside the classroom, community initiatives are guided by our social workers and counselors who have formed strong ties with students' families and the local community.



WHAT SETS US APART

- Our schools are free to attend with a lottery-based admission process to **ensure equitable access** to an Akanksha education for ALL children, irrespective of their socio-economic backgrounds.
- We **receive 2.4 times the number of applications every year** versus the number of seats available. We also have a lower drop-out rate than Government schools.
- Akanksha enrolls students in kindergarten and tracks them until the time they graduate college and begin to work, building a **20-year partnership** with them, their parents, and their community.
- Akanksha provides a **holistic learning experience** that encompasses academic learning using digital tools, socio- emotional well-being, and helps every child achieve their full potential.
- Akanksha's parent engagement program involves **parents as partners** in the learning journey of their children. Parents are part of the School Management Committee (SMC) and wholeheartedly participate in the functioning of the school.
- **Top industries employing our students** include banking, finance and accounting, hospitality, IT/telecom, and the NGO sector.

OUR IMPACT

69%

Akanksha students graduate high school with **better performance** [first class or distinction] than state or national average

Gross enrollment of alumni in undergraduate programs, surpassing national averages in India

75%

Akanksha alumni contribute over

40%

of their **income to their households**

Akanksha alumni's **average monthly income** is more than double the national average for individuals aged between 25-30

2X

35%

Alumni are contributing and volunteering towards **social causes** and giving back to the community

of our alumni are **employed full-time**

74%



OUR IMPACT

Akanksha alumni scored 15% higher in **professional skills** such as communication, decision-making, and problem-solving skills than their peers

15%

50

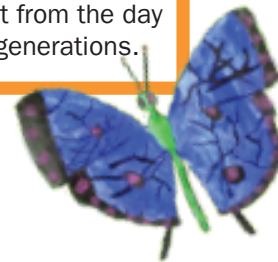
Akanksha alumni have been admitted to **prestigious national and international institutions**, and 30% colleges in Mumbai and Pune

Preferences for sciences/**STEM fields** have risen 7% due to academic and financial support. Business, liberal arts, and IT are also popular fields of study.

↑ 7%

29%

Alumni who are employed (compared to peers at 18%) and contribute to household income. These young adults' employment (IT, finance, etc) is quite different from the day labor of earlier generations.



[Learn more about Akanksha's impact here.](#)

ECOSYSTEM IMPACT

Currently, 80% of the government school teachers (in 190 school partners that have 46,000 children enrolled in total) are actively implementing Akanksha's methods to teach fundamental English language skills. This initiative directly contributes to bridging language barriers and expanding educational opportunities for our students.

Over 70% of stakeholders have reported that Akanksha's training content significantly enhances their effectiveness in schools, with an impressive average engagement score of 3.4 out of 4. This underscores the tangible impact of our programs on the quality of education.

Our School Gap Analysis initiative has empowered the Pimpri-Chinchwad Municipal Corporation (PCMC) to make informed, data-driven decisions. As a result, we have successfully established classroom libraries in 50 schools, directly enhancing access to educational resources for countless students.





STRATEGIC GROWTH PLAN

Over the next three years, the organization plans to embark on a comprehensive growth strategy, with these areas of focus:

Redesign: We aim to revamp the existing 26 schools, catering to 14,000 children, by incorporating new competencies such as digital skills, vocational training, and entrepreneurship into the curriculum.

Facilitation: Provide pathways for over 5,100 alumni to lead empowered lives, thereby breaking the cycle of generational poverty.

Expansion: With government funding support, we aim to establish 5-8 new schools in 1-2 new locations, expanding our reach and impact.

Strengthening: Enhance the quality of education in approximately 200 government schools in Nagpur & Pimpri Chinchwad, improving holistic learning outcomes, including proficiency in English, for 46,000 children.

Building: Lastly, we aim to develop an agile organization through initiatives such as knowledge management, capacity building, and the integration of technology to support our growth and sustainability objectives.



Aspire. Achieve. Be the Change.



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