

THANK YOU



An Initiative

*Touch Your Soul*



Touch your  
Soul

# ANNUAL REPORT 2021-22

[WWW.AITYS.IN](http://WWW.AITYS.IN)

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# Foreword from the Managing Trustee



We are grateful and humbled to all those who supported our cause and our initiatives during 2020 and 2021 in helping the people of Uttarakhand during these unprecedented tough times. The Covid-19 pandemic affected all of us equally across the rural-urban landscapes. While medical aid in the urban areas was a struggle, the situation in these remote villages was much worse.

AITYS had to re-strategize last year thanks to its dedicated team and supportive stakeholders and make some ground rules. With students missing from school due to several lockdowns throughout 2021, AITYS used this as an opportunity to visit all the schools and do a diagnostic field assessment of requirements for each school. It also paved the way for detailed interactions with the Principals and teachers for a better understanding of limitations and possible areas of improvement.

From the discussions, what emerged was one single area that AITYS needed to concentrate on, which was "Infrastructure." Whether it meant adding new infrastructure or repairing existing ones, it was clear that these schools needed a helping hand to be able to create a basic environment that doesn't leak or house reptiles and crawlies and is safe as well as hygienic for students to sit and enjoy their school time.

With this new path ahead for us for seva, I take this opportunity to wish you all a very healthy, abundant, and safe year ahead!

Once again, I extend my heartfelt gratitude to our sponsors, the AITYS team, and the people of Uttarakhand who, together, continue to give strength and trust in our work.

**Madhu Chowdhry**  
**Founder & Managing Trustee**

# About An Initiative Touch Your Soul

An Initiative Touch Your Soul (AITYS) is an all-volunteer charitable trust, helping the underprivileged and works towards providing them with a better life. AITYS was founded by Madhu Chowdhry in 2012, with the belief that “No one should be deprived of education and basic healthcare facilities because of poverty.” The intended aim is (but is not limited) to provide education sponsorship for children, infrastructure support for schools, and free medical camps for the villagers.

Over the years, AITYS has grown organically and gained success in all its initiatives. Since its inception, AITYS has conducted 68 medical camps across 337 villages, treated more than 15788 people in the region (no medical camps were conducted in 2020-2021 due to the Covid-19 Pandemic) and completed 5160 annual education sponsorships for students.

The reach of our initiatives is primarily focused in the area of Pauri Garhwal, Uttarakhand state, epicenter being between Devprayag and Pauri. AITYS today supports 40% of higher secondary schools in this region.

## Vision

No child should be deprived of Education due to poverty.

## Mission

To inspire hope and help the underprivileged living in the rural areas of Uttarakhand achieve their true potential.

## Objective

To enable completion of secondary education by all school children, upgrade school infrastructure with modern amenities and provide preventive healthcare for all students and the local population of the area ensuring the rural urban divide is bridged

# AITYS goals & objectives

The goals and objectives of the specific project fall within the purview of the larger objectives of AITYS. The goal is to aim for an equitable approach towards all students, the school and the local community at large through various elements in our initiatives.

The specific objectives of the project are:

- To promote completion of secondary education for countering the dropout rate in schools
- To help weaker and marginalized students in school through scholarship opportunities
- To promote preventive health care to all students and the local population of the area
- To provide necessary support to students during the Covid-19 Pandemic ensuring that their education remains unaffected
- To upgrade school infrastructure with modern amenities to help bridge the gap between the urban and the rural opportunities in education

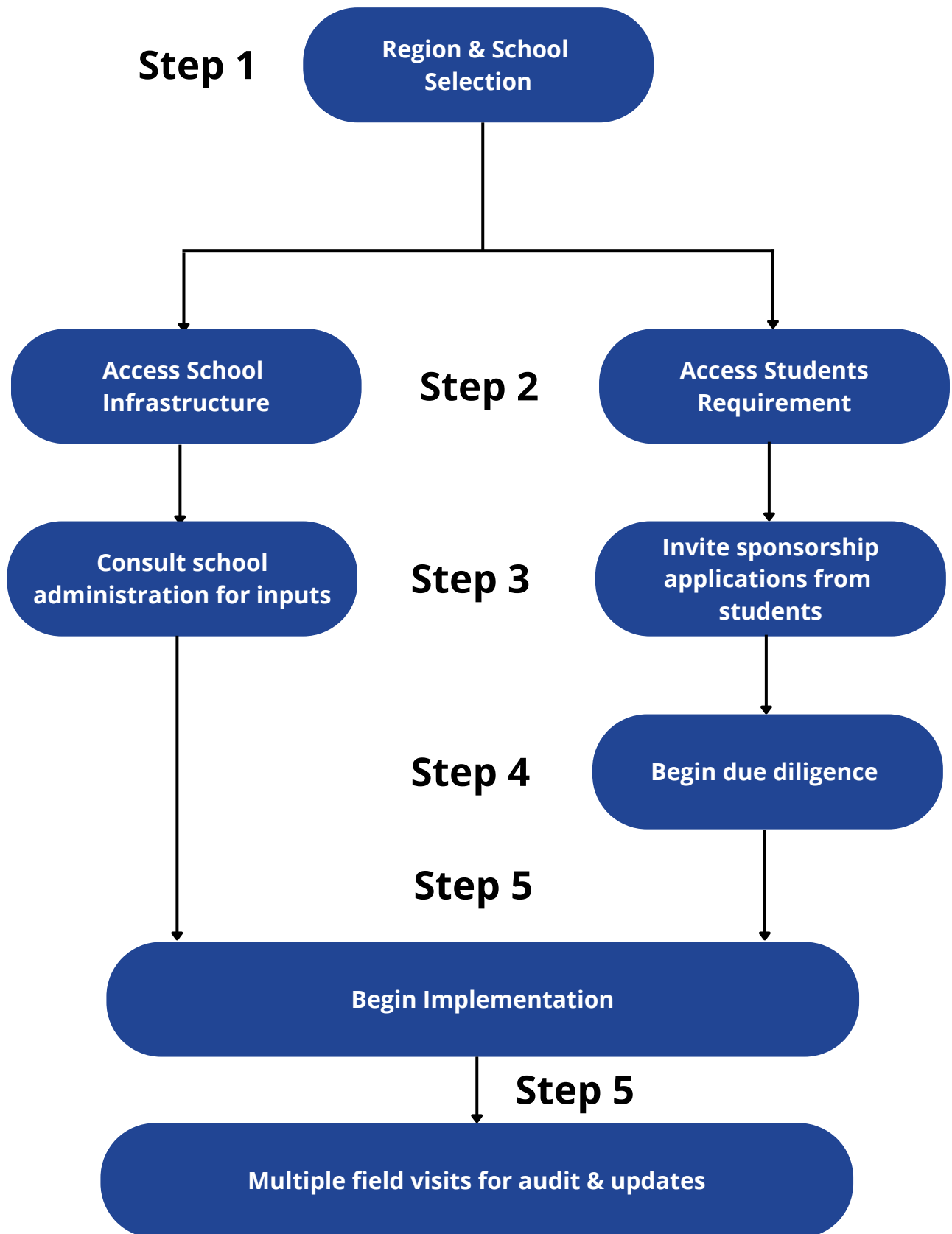
# Background and Premise of our Initiative

AITYS exists as an all-volunteer-driven charitable trust with the ambition to provide quality to the lives of underprivileged Indians. Our approach has been flexible and adaptive to the specific needs and demands of people based on ethnographic site visits. This has allowed us to engage with a 360-degree vision of challenges faced by the people of particular regions of Uttarakhand. The aid we provide is strategically designed for sustainability and the supply chain networks we use are optimized to the particular area of operations.

In 2013, a massive cloud burst happened in Kedarnath. While all of us living in cities saw the news in the comfort of our homes, several families suffered economically, health-wise, losing the bread earner, etc. That year when we went to Rishikesh for the free medical camps that we had started a couple of years ago, a few villagers approached us for help with the education of their children since a lot of them had lost their jobs and could not support their children's education.

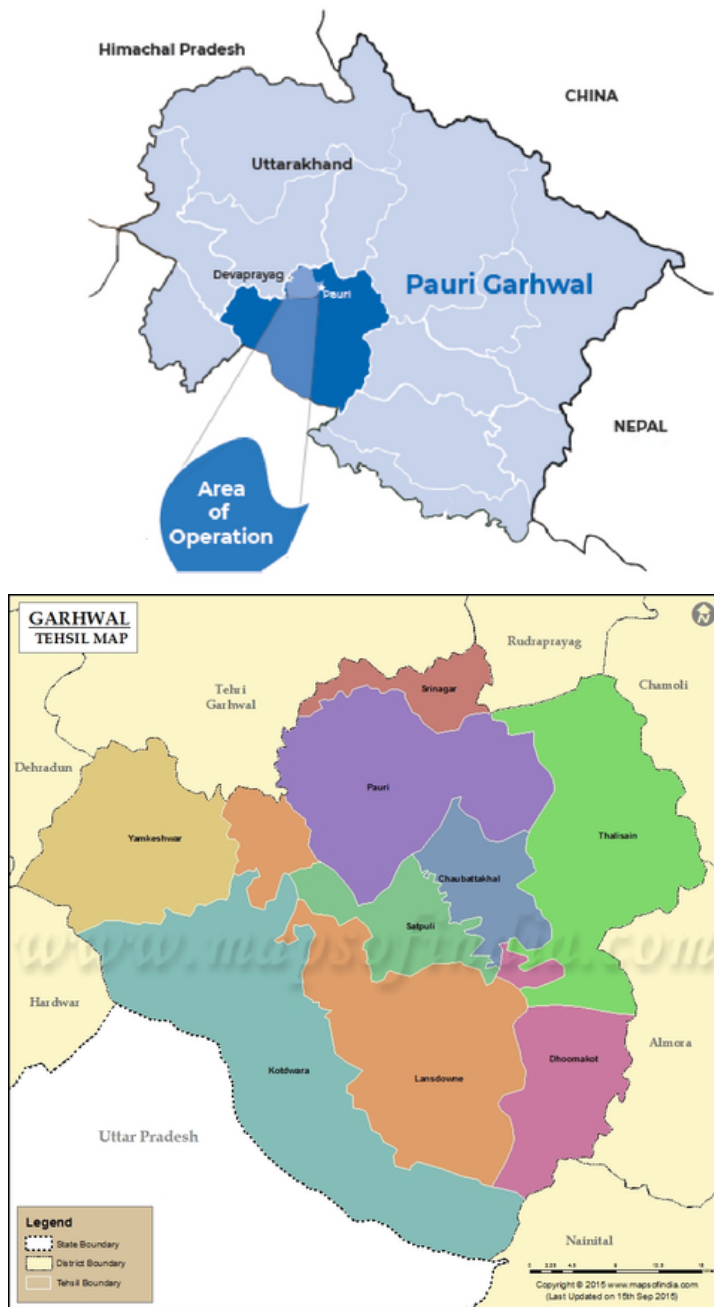
Education is the only way to uplift not only the children but the entire family and community. Keeping this substantial value in our mind, we gathered funds, and in 2013 we were able to sponsor 63 children in Rishikesh. Word spread fast, and we got more requests from the interiors of the Pauri Garhwal region to help more children who had the capability but had to drop out because of financial reasons. We decided to dig deeper and visited some of the Government schools in this region to judge the situation on facts. At this time, we learned that the government provides free education till class 8th only, after which the children had to either fund their own education or drop out. Most children especially girls, would drop out after class 8th to help in the house, and for boys, it would be to help in the household income. This was just not acceptable for us to see competent children not getting a chance to complete basic education, and we decided to help these children and their families.

Understanding these substantial gaps and in line with our vision, AITYS, therefore, chose to invest in three primary initiatives of Health, Education, and Education Infrastructure to boost the retention of children in schools through their secondary education years. Thus, AITYS places emphasis in building the child's character and perspective to weave the fabric of a stronger, healthier society for tomorrow.





# Area of Operation



AITYS' area of operation has its epicenter in the area between Devprayag and Pauri. Located partly in the Gangetic plain and partly in the northern Himalayas, Pauri Garhwal district encompasses an area of 5,230 square kilometers while Almora is spread across 3,082 square kilometers in the northern state of Uttarakhand, India

Pauri Garhwal has been AITYS' core focus area since inception and we continue to work along our teams and stakeholders in these regions to understand the needs and requirements of schools in these areas. Even during pandemic, we ensured that the necessary and promised education, ancillary support and monetary aid reached our young learners in Almora.



# The Stakeholders of Our Initiatives

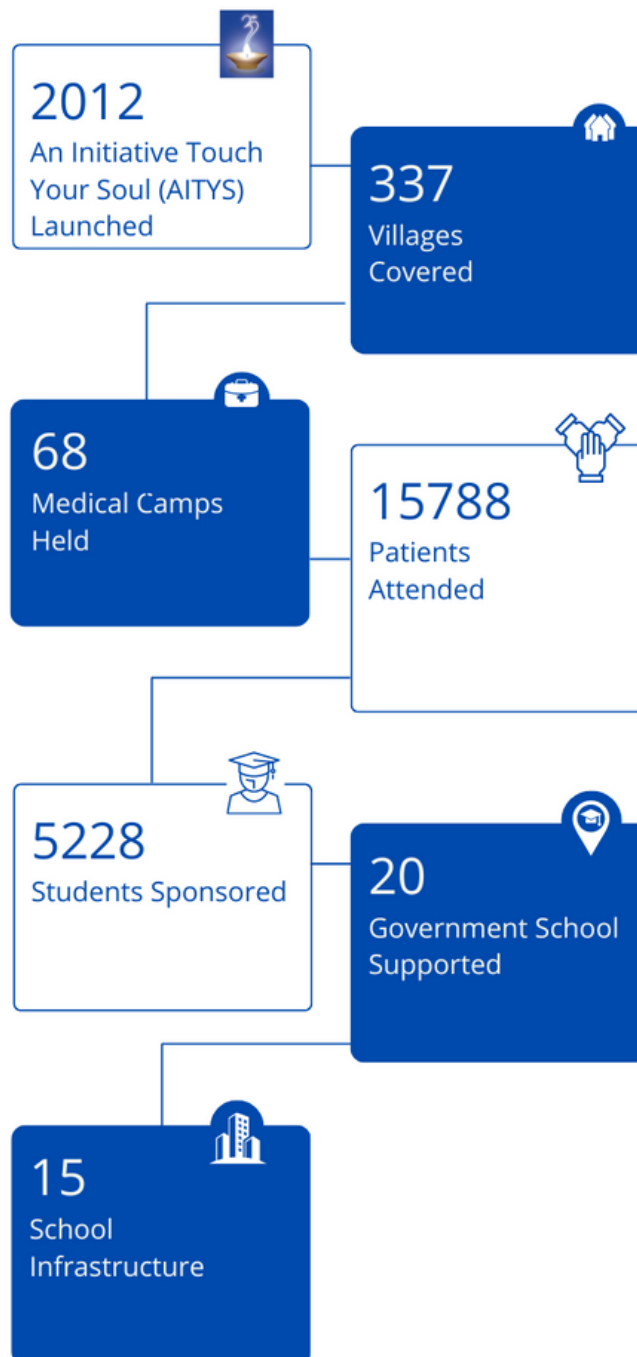
**Schools as Partners:** Government schools are the primary hub for facilitating interaction with students and their parents, enabling reach to villagers from all adjoining areas. Through 17 schools, AITYS reaches out to 337 villages in Pauri, Uttarakhand. The proactive school teachers and/or village representatives coordinate with students & their families to reach villagers & collect forms & conduct spot checks before submitting them to AITYS. They are also integral to helping to spread the word about the prescheduled free medical camps to ensure that the maximum number of villagers visit and benefit from them.

**AITYS as Facilitator for Students:** The AITYS team visits the schools & advises staff on documentation, process, and timelines for application submission for every biannual requirement. Coordination begins over the phone to ensure that the applications come through. While the task may seem simple but lacks network connectivity, differing school schedules and variable availability of volunteers and school officials are challenging. Shipping logistics are planned almost ten months ahead for sponsored goods (T-shirts, shorts, socks, shoes, tracksuits, etc.). The infrastructure team of AITYS ascertains sizing and quantity requirements for each school. Items are procured from various sources, organized, labeled, packed, transported and delivered to each school.

**Preventive Healthcare for Village Population:** Professionally qualified doctors have been core volunteers at AITYS medical camps since its inception and across 68 visits. AITYS notifies the village representatives (Pradhans etc.) about the dates for medical camps ahead of schedule. Posters and word of mouth help ensure maximum participation. On the designated day, the doctors give free consultations to each visitor along with non-prescription medicines. These medicines are also free of cost to each villager. It's the consistent presence of a dedicated doctor that has enabled AITYS to build a powerful understanding of the continued medical needs of the entire region and then stock medicines for subsequent visits. Time has proven our consistency, and via the goodwill of our initiatives, an increasing number of families have reached out for support from remote areas for help. Thus, each year, applications for school sponsorship and attendance of medical camps increase.

**Donors and Sponsors as Enablers:** Funds through friends and family have helped till now. However, looking at the enormity of support needed, AITYS has been able to fund these initiatives with the help of Individual and Corporate Donors in the last three years in order to benefit a larger number.

# Achievements since 2012



As on 31st March 2021

# Projects Undertaken

## COVID-19 Zero-Hour Campaign



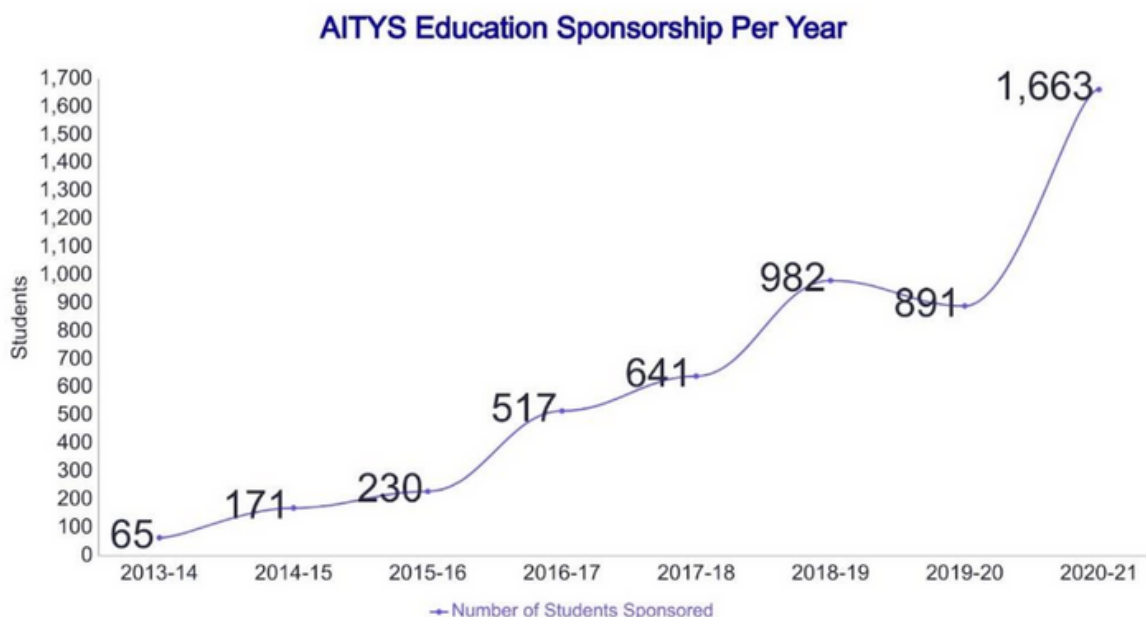
India experienced its first wave of the COVID-19 pandemic starting in March 2020 and the domino effect of the widespread pandemic lasted until late November 2020. By March 2021 Uttarakhand state had 95000+ cases (Source: <http://www.mohfw.gov.in>)

Rural schools remained closed in the first wave of the pandemic. The lack of infrastructure meant no support for online education, further disrupting the already abysmal state of education in the remote villages. Around November 2020, when the schools reopened, the attendance was negligible, as was also reported by the Secretary of State and Additional Secretary of Education of State (Source: Hindustan Times). The task was tough, and families did not have meals on their plates let alone smartphones to access online learning during COVID-19 Zero Hour.

This is when AITYS stepped in to support the schools in Pauri and Almora so that the education of students remains unaffected. From 891 cheques handed out in 2019-2020, in 2020-21 we had been successful in supporting 1663 students with sponsorship cheques. Many of the students utilized this money to invest in smartphones and were able to attend classes and seek guidance from their teachers throughout later lockdowns. The children, parents, and teachers were very grateful for this support which would not have been possible without our generous donors.

It also brought forth learning for AITYS team, that schools were ready to truly take up the challenge of bridging the rural-urban gap of “smart learning”. It was a common request from principals of these schools to provide a tablet to each child so that they are able to continue their education irrespective of the pandemic, weather, other hardships etc.

Overall, due to the restriction on travel, medical camps could not be conducted during 2020 -21 however, AITYS teams ensured that students and schools in areas like Pauri and Almora continued to get necessary educational support through the Covid Zero Hour Campaign. The campaign resulted in 1663 families being supported with 84 Lakhs of relief funds.



Years	Villages Covered	Medical Camps	Patients Attended	Students Sponsored	Government Schools	School Infrastructure
2015-2016	117	40	7918	466	5	
2016-2017	165	49	9867	983	10	
2017-2018	210	53	10705	1621	14	
2018-2019	219	62	13330	2606	19	
2019-2020	337	68	15788	3497	20	
2020-2021	337	68	15788	5160	20	
2021-2022	337	68	15788	5228	20	15

From 891 cheques handed out in 2019-2020, in 2020-21 AITYS was successful in supporting 1663 students with sponsorship cheques and in 2021-22 AITYS supported the education for 68 students. A large part of the funds was used towards the infrastructure of various schools impacting the larger well-being of the students.

## **Scaling Up the Toilettiquette Project**

By June 2021, once COVID-19 had tapered down, AITYS visited 20 schools and found the infrastructure was in a dilapidated state with leaking windows, negligible furniture, broken floors etc. and the state of the toilets was an eye opener. The expectation was so low in the community around privacy, infrastructure and cleanliness for the male students especially that their bathrooms were missing altogether with the idea that they could just go outdoors to answer nature's calls.

This was when AITYS incepted the idea of proper bathrooms for both male and female students. Bathroom units with upto three urinals, wash basins, seating area, exhaust fans, and water closets were envisioned for these schools, with the driving ideals of cleanliness, privacy and empowerment.

Separate fundraising campaigns were promptly launched for both boys' and girls' toilets on GIVEIndia.

## **Building Temples of Learning: Gindwara, A Story of True Dedication**

In two schools, the decision was made to build classrooms after it was observed that students were studying in tents. In this manner, schools began contacting us with requests to repair classrooms, bathrooms, roofs, and flooring. In this experiment, it was discovered that a school in Ghindwara needed labs for senior classes.

In a spectacular feat of dedication and self-motivation, the teachers of Gindwara themselves took up the building of these Physics, Chemistry, and Biology labs and repaired the toilets. Under the able leadership of their principal, the teachers even converted a dilapidated old room into a staff room on the premises without the involvement of a contractor.

In all, 12 schools were given infrastructure sponsorship. AITYS paid another visit in February 2022 to ascertain the progress at these sites.

Construction of boy's toilets in G.I.C Puriyadang and significant reconstruction work for four classroom blocks in G.I.C. Ujyari has been completed, and construction in nine schools is underway.



## Education Sponsorships & Monetary Aid

By November 2021, the COVID-19 situation improved and relief cheques that were being distributed earlier were no longer required to help the students. As the government schools promoted their students irrespective of merit due to the pandemic, educational sponsorships were not a priority and were given only in extreme cases to ensure no child was deprived of education due to poverty. Thus, 68 more students were sponsored this year, bringing us to a total of 5228 students sponsored to date.

## Teachers as Activists: The Scaling Up of Gift A Pad

Every trip to these remote villages in Uttarakhand is like a research mission as well. With the AITYS volunteers ensuring the consistent and smooth execution of the campaigns and drives on the ground, the community has learned to trust our presence. This trust opens the gates to more profound and clearer communication of the unique challenges that the villagers face, and with this communication, comes insight.

In July 2021, the school teachers approached AITYS volunteers with a rather unexpected request. They quietly told us how their female students were struggling to manage their periods without access to hygienic and effective sanitary pads. Given the taboo around women's periods in such back of beyond areas, this story is a common, underlying theme across schools. **Despite struggling to access pads for themselves, teachers were in fact, pooling in their personal resources to ensure that they could supply pads to the students who would need them during the school day.**

With the demand for the pads being so clear and urgent, AITYS decided to take action with a systematic design intervention approach in mind.

## Challenges Faced

Experiments were initially conducted with the cloth from existing NGOs that make recycled and reusable cloth pads. When these pads were tested, it was found that they were not very effective as the cloth pads were not put together with absorbent cotton material but with different types of cloth tatters that had variable absorbency.

Another obstacle to the use of reusable cloth pads in these areas was the lack of water that would make it difficult for the girls to wash the sanitary napkins. This, coupled with the general taboo around periods also meant that the girls could not easily dry their pads in open areas, which would actually lead to other issues like fungal infections and instead exacerbate the problem. We also faced the matter of waste disposal. We did not want the supply of sanitary pads to lead to careless disposal resulting in piles of plastic waste hence, the idea of incinerators was introduced into the discussion.

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## The Outcome

In October 2021, in collaboration with Nirali Udaan Foundation, we did a pilot project with GIC Sajwankhanda and GIC Maharjali, supplying 640 and 560 sanitary napkins packets, respectively to these two schools. Seeing the success of this project in March 2022, we partnered with the Versatile Group of Ludhiana to supply 840 packs to 8 more schools.

For the incinerators, we worked with Sara Equipments to obtain the Virgo Automatic Napkin Destroyer MSMAX S 200 incinerator. Currently, one incinerator has been successfully installed and pilot tested in GIC Sajwankhanda, and more incinerators will be joining its ranks in the coming year.

AITYS has since scaled up this project into a campaign of its own, "Gift a Pad, Gift a Smile", wherein more school girls will be supplied with sanitary napkins regularly, and more incinerators will be fitted into the girls' washrooms for safe disposal.

***As of June, 2.5 lakh rupees have been raised to support 425 girls across 20 schools during their menstruation days for the next four months. (Verify this information)***





*"Pads were distributed to girls in one of the school"*



*"Inauguration of toilet"*



*"A classroom under construction"*



*"A classroom under construction"*



*"On the inauguration of the classroom"*

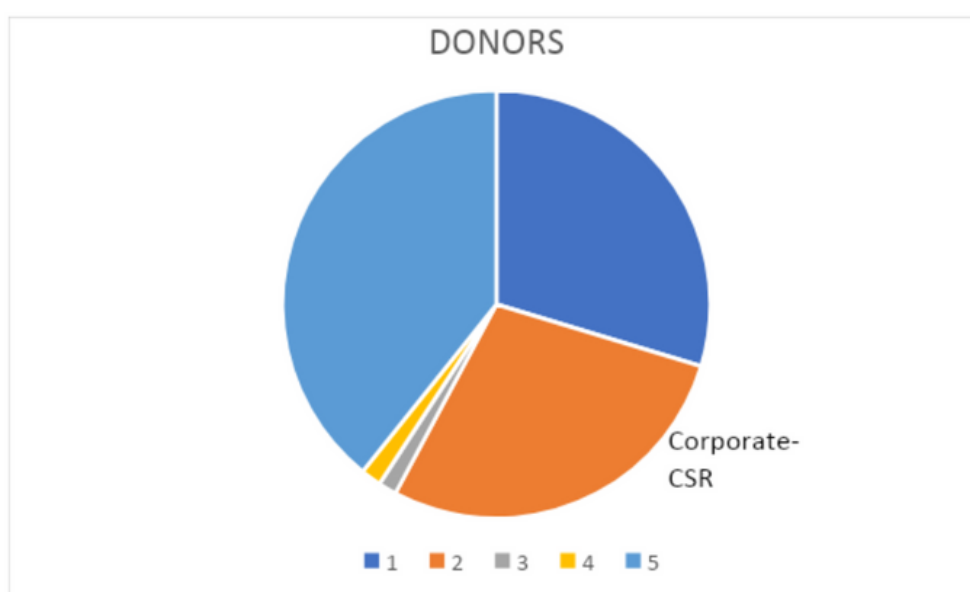
## Donors

This year the maximum funds have been received from Foreign Donors, followed by individuals in India and then Corporate CSR. This year we are working towards increasing our CSR funding to bring a positive change in the schools and the life of the children.

Having sizable “Corporate Social Responsibility” funds reflects well on AITYS and shows the trust our donors have on us for the usage of their funds. Many corporations not only believe in us but, seeing the initiatives taken by us they come forward to support us for our various projects, which are solely to benefit the children of the schools. This boosts the morale of all the AITYS team members.

We thank all our donors for coming forward with generosity and encouraging anonymity, as the basic motive is sewa and not campaigning.

Domestic Donors	Individuals	₹ 3,648,971.00
	Corporate - CSR	₹ 3,465,000.00
	Funding Agency	₹ 169,604.50
	Trustees	₹ 191,000.00
FCRA	Foreign Donors	₹ 4,828,795.00
	TOTAL	₹ 12,303,370.50



## Credibility & Transperancy

	Salary Paid	Remarks
All Board Members	NIL	NIL

AITYS BOARD MEMBERS	
Chairperson	Mrs. Madhu Chowdhry
Treasurer	Ms. Manisha Chowdhry
Secretary	Mr. Aashish Shehgal

## Reach us

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Facebook	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/aitysindia">https://www.facebook.com/aitysindia</a>
Instagram	<a href="https://www.instagram.com/aitys_india/">https://www.instagram.com/aitys_india/</a>
Twitter	<a href="https://twitter.com/aitys_in">https://twitter.com/aitys_in</a>