



THE EKA FELLOWSHIP

ANNUAL IMPACT REPORT

2024- 2025

www.ekafellowship.org



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A WORD FROM THE TEAM



It's been an eventful year for us at Eka, one that saw us going from being a single-cohort program to now having **3 cohorts with almost 90 Fellows!**

From our residential summer boot camps in April (very kindly hosted by The Valley School), to monthly workshops (very kindly hosted by WeWork) and weekly virtual classes, we are pleased with the quality and impact of learning delivered this year.

We are also happy to report that the benefits of our holistic and longitudinal support model are beginning to visibly compound. Our Fellows are head-and-shoulders above their peers in confidence and exposure. Also, the program is now the **phone-a-friend hotline for both our Fellows and their parents on a range of issues from career / college selection, to health emergencies, to matters of the heart!**

We strengthened our team this year, with Ambalika joining us as our **third full-time member**. A former Teach For India Fellow with deep frontline experience with students, Ambalika has very quickly become the heart of our academic curriculum, going above and beyond to make sure our Fellows learn English, and that Cohort 1 especially felt prepared for the SSLC. We're also very proud that **Veeran Singh, our co-founder, is now a certified career counsellor** and has taken the lead in helping our Fellows select pathways!

On that note, we're delighted to inform you that **Cohort 1 performed exceptionally well in their Board exams**. Out of 27 Fellows, 8 have scored over 90% and another 6 have scored above 80%. One Fellow has also been admitted into the prestigious United World College in Italy. Sadly, one Fellow has not passed the Board exams – we are working with him to craft the optimal path ahead.

Cohort 2 has settled in really well, and has demonstrated massive improvements in English, confidence, and career awareness. With this, we are now confident that our 9th Standard curriculum is well-tested. As this cohort begins the 10th Standard, we have shifted focus to helping them score in their board exams, make post-10th grade choices, and gain self-mastery.

Cohort 3 is our largest yet, with 38 Fellows commencing. We hope to build on the valuable lessons of the past 2 years, accelerating their pace of learning and sense of belonging. We can't wait to get started!

The Eka Fellowship moves into its 3rd year with renewed focus. We've road-tested our 9th Standard and 10th Standard curriculums, and are excited by the 11th Standard curriculum being rolled out this year (including practicing entrepreneurship, understanding our role in society, and planning for undergraduate admissions).

OVERVIEW OF THE EKA FELLOWSHIP



The Eka Fellowship is a long-term, high-touch program that supports driven students from underserved communities from Class 9 until they secure their first jobs - whether in fields like engineering, law, education, research, entrepreneurship, or in the vocational or social sectors. Our focus is on enabling students to access and thrive in careers of choice that offer dignity, growth, and leadership opportunities. The program enables our Fellows to achieve quantum outcomes in career and life through long term, tailored and holistic support. The **program is offered free of cost to our Fellows**, except for transportation costs to our physical workshops and communication costs for virtual interactions.

The program is designed around five principles:

1. **Long-term**: We engage deeply with each Fellow for 7-8 years, and across key educational transitions, from high school to junior college and undergraduate university to employment.
2. **Holistic**: We recognize that academic accomplishment is critical but insufficient. Navigating today's world demands a broader skill set. The Fellowship fosters well-rounded individuals by developing crucial life skills (e.g., confident English speaking, general awareness, collaboration) through dynamic experiences of Theatre, Yoga and Reading.
3. **Tailored**: Each person has their own destiny, tied to their own interests and aptitude. We work with each Fellow to chart a course according to their own aspirations, needs and strengths.
4. **Diverse**: Our Fellowship is a mini-India, representing a cross-section of society.
5. **Networked**: In addition to developing lifelong bonds with each other, Fellows develop a life-long network of relevant mentors and subject matter experts.

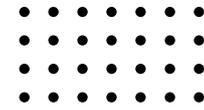
While our curriculum is tailored to each year of the fellowship, the program itself is delivered through multiple modes:

- Each year begins with a **residential bootcamp**. The objective of the bootcamp is to set objectives for the coming year, foster our culture of Fellowship, and boost skills in an intense learning environment
- We conduct **full-day monthly in-person workshops** that include in-depth career exploration sessions and experiential learning, life skills development through the medium of theatre, and academic support sessions.
- Each Fellow needs to attend **one or two online weekly virtual sessions** focused on English, academics, career exposure, and skill-building.
- In addition to group sessions, we provide regular **one-on-one counselling** with each Fellow (and their parents) to guide them through critical transitions (e.g., PUC College selection) and life issues. We also provide help in college admissions (including for example intense coaching to apply to the United World Colleges when Fellows are in the 10th Standard)
- We **regularly visit schools** and **meet with the parents** to ensure we are aligned, share updates and learnings and receive feedback and to further build their support systems.

In the coming year, as some Cohort 1 Fellows go to residential schools outside Bangalore, we will further tailor our approach to their needs.



A WORD FROM OUR FELLOWS



Three **interns from The Valley School** (Naamya Sriram, Urvi Goel, and Nayonika Prathap) joined us this summer for a 2-week internship.

We asked them to interview our Cohort 1 Fellows and assess the program's impact. This video documents their findings.

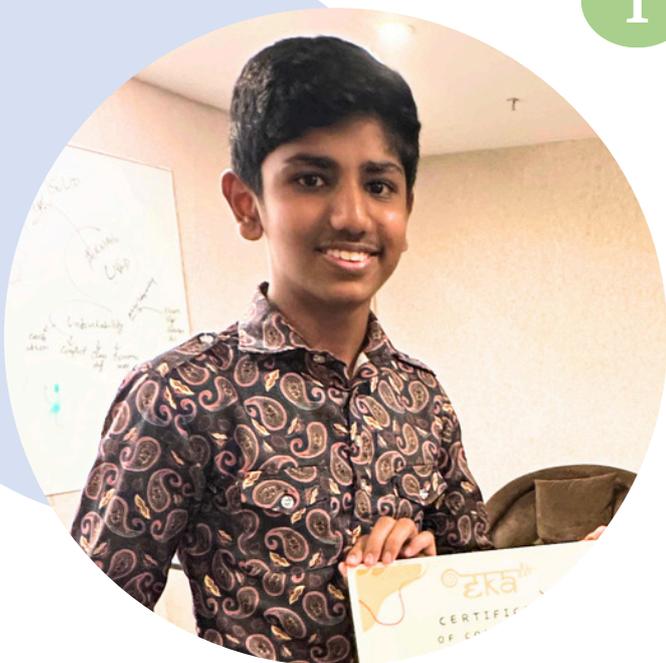
[You can watch it here.](#)



IN FOCUS: FELLOW STORIES

1

When Khwaja (Cohort 1) joined in 2023, he had big dreams but wasn't sure how to shape them. He often repeated the lofty goals he had heard from teachers, but there wasn't a clear sense of direction. Through his time with us, Khwaja found more than just academic growth. He found a sense of purpose. With steady support, including mentoring, English sessions, and personal reflection, Khwaja now has a clear vision for his future and the perseverance to stay the course. He dreams of pursuing engineering, and he articulates that dream with confidence. The shift from uncertainty to clarity has been remarkable, and we are so excited to continue walking alongside him as he moves forward in his journey.



2

Nirmala's (Cohort 1) story is one of perseverance and incredible growth. Though she joined the Fellowship a year later than her peers, she quickly caught up. Coming from a humble background, Nirmala's journey wasn't always easy, but her determination and focus never wavered. Her hard work paid off with outstanding SSLC results. Nirmala's story is a powerful reminder that with support, resilience, and hard work, no goal is out of reach. We are so proud of how far she has come and can't wait to see where her journey takes her.



3

Dilipan (Cohort 1) came to the Fellowship as a quiet student, unsure of himself, especially when it came to speaking English. Over time, with the help of our supportive environment, his confidence began to grow. Dilipan's true transformation shone through when he was chosen as his class monitor, a role that encouraged him to step up and take responsibility. A key turning point came during a sales activity where students had to sell razors on the street. What started as a nervous challenge soon became an opportunity for Dilipan to truly shine. He engaged with customers, showed great skill in persuasion, and in that moment, we all knew: Dilipan has a natural talent for sales. This quiet, reserved young man has emerged as a confident leader, ready to take on whatever comes next. Dilipan does not enjoy academics, and will therefore likely take the Diploma route to achieve his dreams!



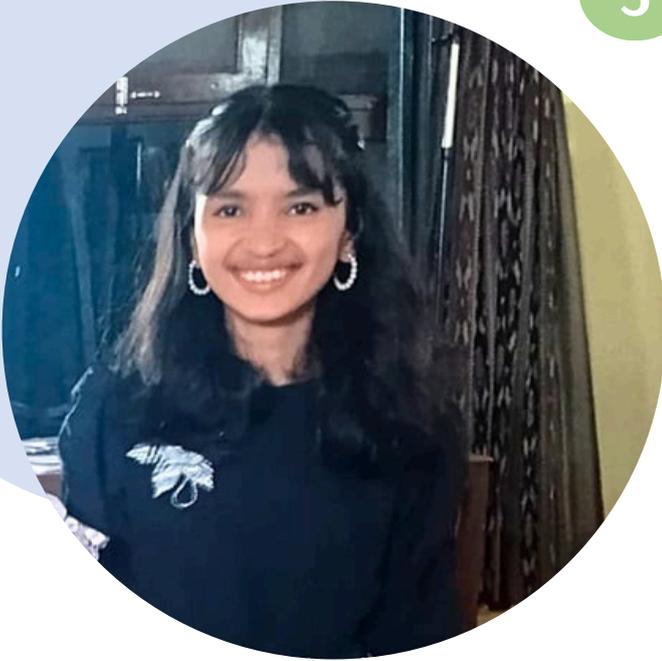
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Neha (Cohort 1) joined Eka as a quiet student who often kept to herself. At first, she wasn't sure what she wanted from the Fellowship, but she was open to learning. Through our sessions, especially theatre exercises, Neha slowly began to discover her voice. The biggest shift came during the entrepreneurship session, where she began to explore the idea of starting her own business. That spark of inspiration has now grown into a full-fledged aspiration—Neha wants to become a businesswoman. We can't wait to see her take the steps towards her entrepreneurial dreams, even as she has cracked her SSLC and joined a leading PUC college in Bangalore!



5

Shreya A's (Cohort 2) growth has been nothing short of inspiring. She found confidence through our theatre sessions, where she learned not just to express herself, but to lead others and to have tough conversations. As Shreya's self-assurance grew, so did her willingness to step into leadership roles. She became more vocal, took on new responsibilities, and was soon recognized for her maturity and leadership skills. One of her proudest moments came when she was selected for the KER (Kids Education Revolution) program, where she had the opportunity to travel to Pune and be part of an exciting new initiative. We are thrilled to see her take on these new opportunities and look forward to the amazing things she will achieve.

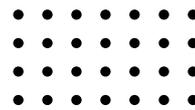


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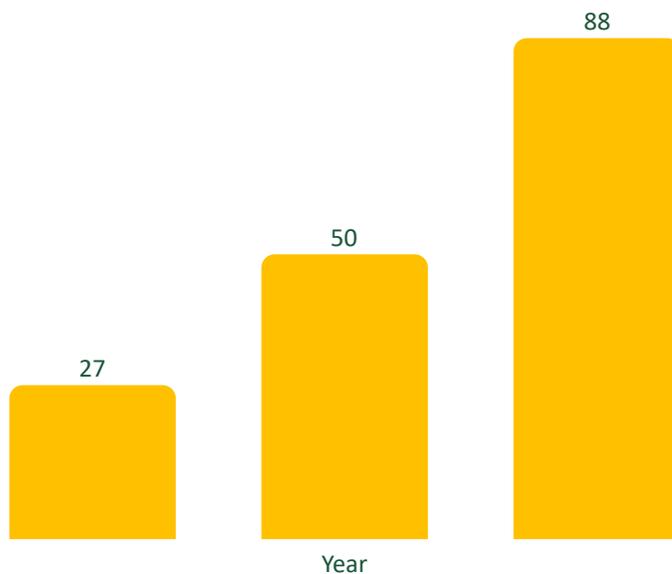
Shiva's (Cohort 2) journey with Eka Fellowship is a story of resilience, hard work, and transformation. Coming from a single-mother household where his mother works as a domestic worker, Shiva is the first in his family to dream of pursuing an education beyond the basics. English was a barrier for him at first, but Shiva's determination to improve never faltered. With one-on-one support, he slowly built his English skills and gained the confidence to participate more in class. Now, Shiva has become a much more confident student, taking on leadership roles within the group and standing up for what he believes in. We are incredibly proud of the progress Shiva has made and excited to see him continue to grow.



EKA'S GROWTH IN NUMBERS



Number of Fellows



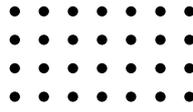
We have tripled our impact over the last 3 years!

As of March 2025 the Fellowship supports **88 Fellows** across three cohorts, selected from 18 government and low-cost private schools in Bangalore:

- Cohort 1: The cohort started the year with **31 Fellows** attending bootcamp. This included 9 new Fellows selected to 'top up' the cohort. Unfortunately, 5 of our 9 top-up Fellows dropped out during the year due to inconsistency in their commitment to the program. One Fellow was removed due to behavioral issues. We therefore **end the year with 27 Fellows** in this cohort. One learning from this experience is not to top-up cohorts going forward.
- Cohort 2: The year began with **30 Fellows** attending bootcamp. Sadly, we have had to remove or suspend three Fellows from one particular school for behavioural issues. Another Fellow dropped out to prioritize her exceptional talent in classical dance, while another had to exit the program due to family constraints, as her conservative family does not support her pursuit of higher education. We therefore **end the year with 23 Fellows**
- Cohort 3 (onboarded in March 25): 38 Fellows

We expect the number of Fellows in Bangalore to grow at approximately **30 per year for the next 3 years**, even as we explore opportunities to establish new Eka Fellowship chapters, across other cities in India.

IMPACT HIGHLIGHTS



Cohort 1 SSLC Board Results

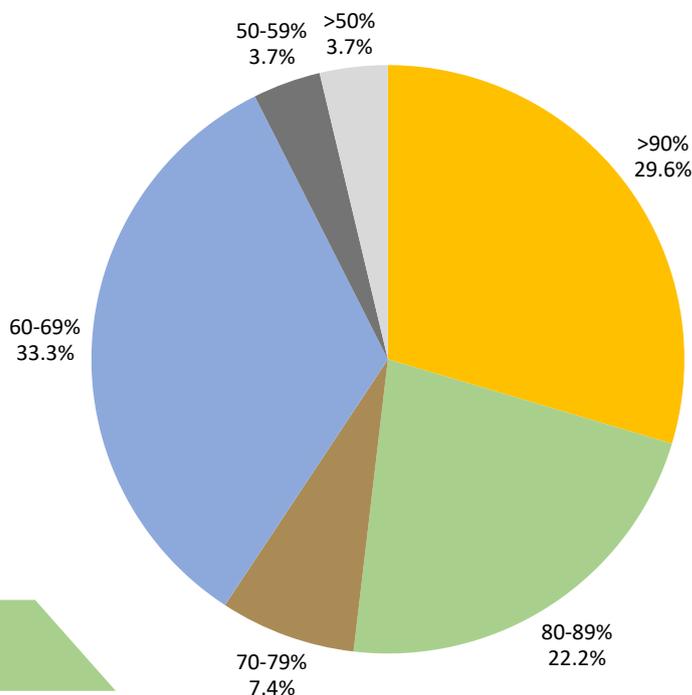
We are proud that our first cohort of Eka Fellows has successfully completed their SSLC (Class 10) board examinations. **Out of 27 Fellows, 8 students scored above 90%, and 6 students secured above 80%**

This performance is a testament to their hard work, discipline, and consistent effort over the past year. It also reflects the strength of the Fellowship's integrated academic support system, which included:

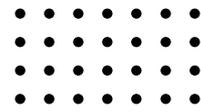
- Regular subject-specific doubt-clearing sessions
- Weekly virtual English sessions
- Monthly workshops focused on academic strategy and study skills (which includes exam paper pattern, marking system and time management).
- Emotional well-being sessions to support exam readiness, time management and relaxation and de-stressing.

For many of these students, this was the first time anyone in their families appeared for a board examination. Their success stands not just as an academic achievement but as a powerful indicator of possibility - for themselves, their families, and their communities.

We celebrate their achievements and look forward to supporting them in their transition into Pre-University College and the next phase of the Fellowship.



**10th Grade SSLC
Results 2025**



Onboarding Cohort 2

On the academic front, consistent English classes helped Fellows improve their comprehension, vocabulary, and spoken fluency. Many have become more confident expressing themselves, both in classrooms and group discussions. This is clear in the results of their reading comprehension assessments, where the average reading level of the cohort has gone up by 0.5 levels in the last year, with several Fellows jumping two levels within the year!

One of the most notable shifts has been in group dynamics and peer leadership. Fellows are moving to active engagement — asking questions, contributing ideas, and taking responsibility within group tasks. There's growing awareness of individual roles in team settings and a deepening sense of collective ownership.

We see in this cohort not just students, but a growing community of learners, ready to support one another and rise together.

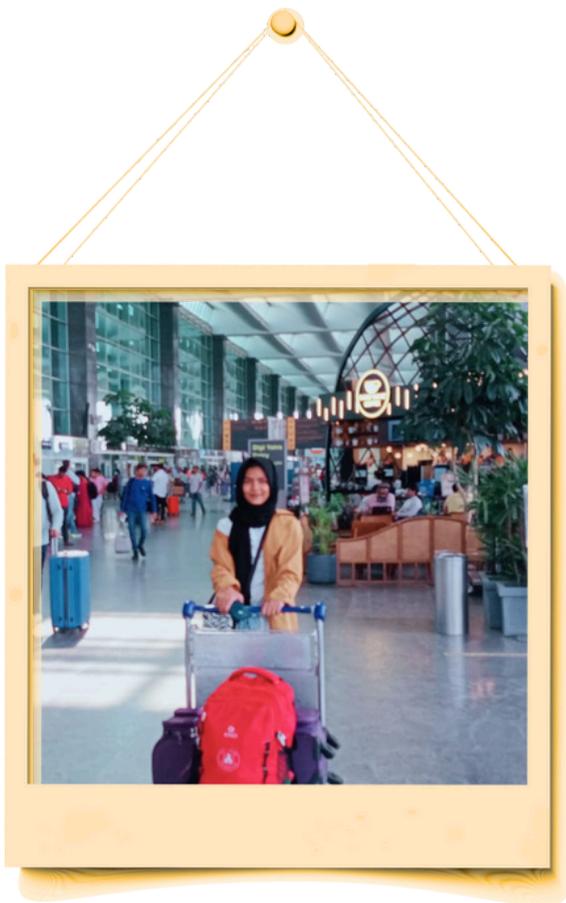


COHORT 1

Suman was selected for the prestigious **United World Colleges (UWC) program** and will begin school at **UWC Italy** later this year, following a highly competitive, multi-round selection process.

Keerthana also **made it to the final shortlist for UWC India**, a commendable feat in itself!

Swaleha participated in **Fellows of the Future (Teach For India)** and spent a month in Pune working on civic action and youth leadership.



INDIVIDUAL FELLOW ACHIEVEMENTS

Many Fellows have been selected for competitive national-level programs, reflecting their growth, drive, and exposure.

These opportunities have helped our Fellows expand their networks, challenge themselves, and gain exposure to new environments.

COHORT 2

Shreya A and Durga were selected to attend the **Kids Education Revolution (KER) Summit** in Mumbai, a national convening of student changemakers.



ACTIVITIES FOR THE YEAR



SUMMER CAMP 2024

In April 2024, we organized our **second residential summer camp** for Cohort 1 and Cohort 2 Fellows. This was held at **Valley School in Bangalore**.

The camp for **Cohort 2** was attended by **30 Fellows** and focused on:

- Understanding the diverse **world of careers**, and beginning to learn about their own professional interests through **hands-on activities**
- Building **communication, confidence, and critical thinking** through theatre and storytelling
- Academic assessments to establish baseline proficiency levels for each Fellow, allowing the team to tailor **academic support** and monitor individual progress over the course of the year
- Sports and physical fitness activities to build **resilience and teamwork**

For many Fellows, this was their first time away from home in a learning-focused, creative space. The camp significantly strengthened peer bonds and sparked confidence.



The camp for Cohort 1 was attended by 31 Fellows and focused on:

- Building **knowledge and skills to do well in board exams**, including sessions on how papers are set and corrected, **time management**, and how to format an answer paper. We also conducted in-person sessions with SSLC examiners and past students.
- Introductions to Khan Academy as a resource to **deepen academic concepts**.
- Helping each Fellow **identify which stream they should pick for Junior College**, based on their learnings about careers over the previous year.
- Using **body, breath and mind alignment** to manage anxiety and stress.
- Sports and physical fitness activities to build **resilience and teamwork**





MONTHLY WORKSHOPS

We conducted **10 in-person workshops** at WeWork Infantry Road in Bangalore from May 2024 - February 2025.

The key elements for Cohort 1 were:

- **Preparation for Board exams**, including mock tests to assess neatness and formatting of answer sheets, help with **memorization techniques**, doubt clearing sessions, and **tips from experienced SSLC teachers**. The curriculum included:
 - Interactive sessions with SSLC board evaluators to demystify the marking scheme, understand what makes for high-scoring answers, and clarify common errors to avoid.
 - **Timetable planning and time management** workshops that helped Fellows build personalized study schedules, balancing school, Fellowship, and home responsibilities.
 - **Peer-led sessions with former students** who had recently completed the SSLC exam, offering practical strategies, memory techniques, subject-specific hacks, and motivation from near-peers.
 - **Mindset strategy sessions** to set intention/sankalpa, identify actionable steps and follow up on them intermittently.
- **Junior College counselling**: Continuing to explore new careers while getting very tactical in identifying their interests, PUC college and stream options. We also helped each Fellow set goals for Boards and select aspirational colleges and backups. We also ran an intense stream to help five Fellows apply to the United World Colleges.
- **Continued practice with aligning body, breath and mind** to improve self leadership and manage stress over the year.



The key elements for Cohort 2 were:

- Enhanced career awareness: Speakers from **14 different professions** addressed our Fellows over the year, with practical insights into a day in the life of each profession, and details of pathways to get there. Some of our speakers included:
 - Lalitha Shivaprasad, an expert in **Marketing**.
 - Aninda Bhattacharya, a seasoned **Engineering** professional.
 - Colonel Uthaiyah, a distinguished retired leader from the **Armed Forces**.
 - Mr Nadadur, a retired **IAS officer** from the Karnataka cadre.
 - Shantanu Deshpande, an **entrepreneur** with a proven track record in driving business growth and innovation.
 - Rajesh Kharidehal, an accomplished expert in **Finance**, with years of experience in the financial sector.
 - Talha Salaria, a seasoned **Law** professional, bringing years of legal practice and industry knowledge to our fellows.
- Speaker sessions were augmented by **hands-on activities** where Fellows got to experience key work skills (e.g., sales, building a product, producing a newsletter, curating an event) and ponder on what they find exciting. This was augmented by periodic structured reflection sessions.
- **Increased self-awareness**: Bangalore Little Theatre conducted sessions to enhance **confidence, improve communication, enhance body language**, and drive better emotional moderation.
- **English and critical thinking**: Our English classes combine both theory and practice, helping our Fellows dramatically improve their spoken English.



VIRTUAL CLASSES

From May 2024 to February 2025, we conducted weekly virtual classes for both cohorts of Eka Fellows. Cohort 2 focused on building foundational English skills, while Cohort 1 received support in academic doubt-clearing, tailored to their evolving academic needs.

We have delivered around 40 hours of virtual instruction to each Fellow through the year.



ONE-ON-ONE COLLEGE COUNSELLING

Veeran Singh, our co-Founder and now a qualified career counsellor, conducted between 2 and 3 sessions with each Cohort 1 Fellow (and their parents) to narrow down their professional interests and finalise which stream they should focus on going forward based on their experiences and reflections from multiple career sessions, attractions to specific work environments / skills, and career aspirations.

COMMUNITY AND SCHOOL ENGAGEMENT

Community engagement remains a critical pillar of the Fellowship's work this year, ensuring that Fellows are supported not only by the program team but also by their families, schools, and broader networks.



School-Based Career Sessions

In the months leading up to the Batch 3 selection process, the Eka team conducted career awareness sessions in 5 government and low-cost private schools across Bangalore. These sessions aimed to:

- Introduce students to diverse career pathways
- Spark curiosity about future possibilities
- Provide practical information on subjects, colleges, and entrance exams
- Encourage students—many of whom are first-generation learners—to begin imagining ambitious futures

These sessions also served as a vital touchpoint to build trust with school leaders and teachers. In many schools, the sessions were the first structured exposure students had to aspirational careers such as law, engineering, medical and allied health science. The enthusiasm and curiosity shown by students reinforced the value of early, contextualised career guidance in low-income school settings. Some of our learning tools are available on our [Youtube Channel here](#).

Parent Engagement

Through the year, the team conducted quarterly in-person and virtual parent check-ins and meetings. These interactions allowed for open conversations about student progress, family dynamics, and the support needed to sustain Fellow engagement.

In several schools, parents self-organised - coordinating transport, sharing responsibilities, and actively advocating the program to other families.

Such high levels of family and community ownership have played a key role in maintaining Fellow retention and ensuring that the Fellowship is seen not just as a student intervention, but a family- and community-level investment.



TESTIMONIALS

"The growth in confidence, initiative, and leadership stands out about every Eka Fellow I interact with."

– Manish Shetty, Teach for India



"When I first joined, I was very shy and unsure about what I wanted to do. But after hearing professionals speak and getting support, I feel confident about my future and my career choices."

– Eka Fellow



"One Fellow was struggling with reading comprehension when he started, but he's now at the highest level and guiding his peers."

– Nitika Gupta, Teach for India



"He used to hesitate to speak in front of groups and the opposite gender, but I've seen a complete shift in his body language and speaking style."

– Shruti M, Dream a Dream



"I've learned to express myself better. Earlier, I struggled to speak in front of others, but now I feel more comfortable sharing my ideas and asking questions."

– Eka Fellow

LOOKING AHEAD

As we close out the second year of the Eka Fellowship, we are energized by the impact we have witnessed and excited for the journey ahead. Key areas of focus for 2025–26 include:



Supporting Cohort 1 in their **transition to Class 11, including PU college admissions** and continued mentoring, providing early guidance to shape long-term academic and career trajectories. We will also **introduce the cohort to entrepreneurial thinking and active citizenship**, so that Fellows prepare not only for meaningful careers but also grow as problem-solvers and engaged individuals.



Deepening academic and skill support for Cohort 2 as they enter Class 10 because strong performance in the board exams is crucial for accessing quality post-secondary options and building academic confidence.



Designing a **strong foundation year for Cohort 3**, focused on awareness about different careers, spoken English and self-confidence, thereby equipping our newest Fellows with the essential skills and mindset needed to make the most of the Fellowship journey ahead.



Formalizing an **inter-cohort support plan to provide continuity, guidance, and networked support** as Fellows begin navigating higher education, internships, and early career steps.



THANK YOU!

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to all our supporters, collaborators, and well-wishers who have stood by the Eka Fellowship in its mission to enable young people from underserved communities to thrive.

This year's progress would not have been possible without the steadfast support of partner organisations, educational institutions, faculty members, interns, parents, and the communities we work with. Your encouragement, time, and trust have empowered our Fellows to dream bigger, act with courage, and grow into the leaders of tomorrow.

Thank you for believing in the power of long-term investment in young people - together, we are building pathways to possibility and lasting change.