



## THE NAZ FOUNDATION (INDIA) TRUST

# ANNUAL REPORT

FY 2022–23 (April 2022 – March 2023)



*A Health and Wellbeing Focused Report on Naz India's Care, Community and Career Pathways Programmes*

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## About The Naz Foundation (India) Trust

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The Naz Foundation (India) Trust is a health and social welfare organisation founded in 1994 by social sector leader Anjali Gopalan. Since its inception, Naz India has worked to improve the health, wellbeing, opportunities and quality of life of individuals from socially and economically excluded communities.

Naz India's programmes serve marginalised young women, the LGBTQIA+ community, and people living with HIV and AIDS. Across all its initiatives, the organisation's approach centres on physical health, mental wellbeing, and holistic, person-centred care, delivered through residential support, community health spaces, counselling services, and skill-building programmes.

This report brings together the year's work across three areas: residential health and educational care at the Naz Care Home, community health and wellbeing support through the LGBTQIA+ Initiative, and economic and psychosocial empowerment through the Young People's Initiative and its Aath Kadam Career Pathways programme.

## Naz Care Home

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FY 2022–23 was a period of returning to routine life after two years of disruption caused by the pandemic. Children at the Care Home returned to in-person schooling after an extended stretch of online learning, and the year saw steady academic progress and continued attention to health and wellbeing across the Home.

At present, the Care Home is home to 15 children: 7 in the 7–18 years age group, and 8 young adults aged 18 and above. Children performed well in their annual examinations and were promoted to the next class, and distance learners also progressed well, supported by continued access to tuition facilities.

### Education and Life Skills

The transition back to in-person classes took time, following an extended period of online schooling for both school studies and tuition support between April and June. Individual milestones from the year include a resident completing her Bachelor Honours degree in Hindi at a Delhi University college and proceeding to post-graduate study; a young person who trained in commercial art and Corel Draw continuing on as a paid intern at the same organisation; and a graduate of the Delhi Paramedical Management Institute's veterinary care diploma now working at All Creatures Great and Small, a shelter for animals in distress.

Two children with additional support needs attend regular sessions at Action for Ability Development and Inclusion (AADI), and one child receives ongoing support at Potentials, a centre supporting children with social communication needs. Life-skills sessions and career-exposure inputs continue for all children, including mentoring for some through Naz India's Aath Kadam programme, and professional training opportunities in fields such as hospitality and graphic design.

### Health Care

Naz India remains committed to quality health care for children at the Care Home. The Home's medical officer conducts regular health check-ups, and consistent measures are in place for the prevention of opportunistic infections. Adherence to ART and regular follow-up remain a central area of focus, supported by referrals to AIIMS and other specialised health facilities as needed.

Mental health is supported through regular counselling at the Care Home, with additional support from Dr Kushal Jain and his team at the Centre for Behavioural Science, as well as the Psychiatry and Psychology departments at AIIMS.

### **Community Life and Wellbeing Activities**

Alongside academics and health care, children at the Home marked festivals and birthdays, and took part in national observances throughout the year. Several sessions and events supported both health awareness and community life:

- A session on positive living and a full health check-up conducted by HIV/AIDS specialist Dr Alok Vashishtha on 9 December 2022.
- A dental health camp organised by the Centre for Dental Education and Research, AIIMS, on 29 September 2022, including oral health screening and guidance on preventive dental hygiene.
- A group activity and hands-on workshop on makeup and hairstyling led by 18 volunteers from MAC Cosmetics on 10 December 2022, alongside games and storytelling.
- Participation in Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav, including an input session on the freedom struggle by NIPCCD facilitators, a quiz competition on the freedom movement, and the flag hoisting and singing of the national anthem on 15 August 2022, followed by a cultural programme.

### **Continued Support to Young Adults**

Naz India also continues to support young adults who have moved out of the Care Home to live independently. Several faced continued financial strain in the aftermath of the pandemic, including job loss and delayed wages, and Naz stepped in with shelter support, ration, and help accessing medicines where needed.

## LGBTQIA+ Health and Wellbeing Initiative

Naz India's LGBTQIA+ Initiative is focused on improving health access, mental wellbeing and social inclusion for community members. A significant development this year has been the planned transformation of the organisation's basement space into Delhi's first dedicated LGBTQIA+ Community Centre, envisioned as a safe space offering a health clinic, counselling services, an education centre, vocational classes, support groups, QueerTalk sessions, outreach activities and training workshops.

### Community Wellbeing Spaces:

#### Support Groups: Queerkhana, Be the Change and Trans Milan

**Queerkhana** and **Trans Milan** are two initiatives that provide safe, regular spaces for LGBTQIA+ individuals to come together, share experiences, and receive support, with referrals into other Naz India services where needed. Queerkhana is open to all LGBTQIA+ people and meets monthly, on the last Saturday of the month, with past sessions covering personal safety, mental health and community pride. The December session marked a new year celebration attended by 95 people.

Additionally, this year Naz India began hosting a monthly support group for LGBTQIA+ community members living with HIV/AIDS, providing a safe, ongoing space to discuss HIV treatment, mental health, and related wellbeing topics called **Be the Change**.

**Trans Milan**, launched in November, is a space specifically for trans individuals, offering a forum to discuss topics such as gender-affirming healthcare and surgery, identity documentation, and hormone replacement therapy. It meets on the second Saturday of every month.

### Training and Sensitisation

During 2022–23, Naz India conducted corporate training and sensitisation sessions with organisations including Gartner and Willis Towers Watson and delivered repeated training sessions at the Delhi Police training facility in New Rajender Nagar. These sessions build basic understanding among participants of LGBTQIA+ health needs, wellbeing and inclusion, and have led to valuable ongoing partnerships and greater awareness among institutional partners.

### Community Workshops

Additional workshops are planned in partnership with organisations such as MAC Cosmetics, EGON Zehnder and Karma Care, covering subjects ranging from mental health to professional networking.

### Naz Dost Helpline and Peer Counselling

The Naz Dost Helpline saw a steady rise in the number of individuals reached over the course of the year, starting at 50–60 callers per month and rising into the 80s by year end. This growth reflects increased social media outreach and a rise in cross-referrals from Queerkhana and Trans Milan. Over the course of FY 2022–23, the helpline provided peer and emotional support to close to 400 individuals, offering a confidential, judgement-free space for people to reach out during moments of distress or uncertainty. Looking ahead to 2023, Naz India plans to expand outreach further and develop new approaches to reach economically marginalised callers.

## **Mental Health Initiative**

Complementing the helpline's peer-support model, Naz India has been strengthening a more structured mental health initiative for the LGBTQIA+ community, aimed at bridging the gap between informal peer conversations and professional mental health care. This includes psychoeducation on common mental health concerns, referral pathways to qualified mental health professionals for individuals who need more sustained support, and a continued focus on the specific stressors, such as minority stress and family or social rejection, that can affect the mental wellbeing of LGBTQIA+ individuals. The initiative is designed to build resilience and a sense of community alongside individual care, and Naz India intends to grow this work in the coming year through additional trained counselling capacity and closer integration with the helpline and community centre spaces.

## Young People's Initiative: Aath Kadam Career Pathways Programme

### Meenu's Story

The contrast between the busy alleys of the shanty town where Meenu lives and the glittering showrooms filled with gold where she works at Tanishq is stark. Meenu is a graduate with a Bachelor of Commerce degree, but like many young adults in an environment of high unemployment, she had little hope of finding work other than low-paid, unskilled work. Through a friend, she learned about Naz India's Aath Kadam programme. After her training, Tanishq offered her an internship, with a stipend greater than her father's wage. She is now employed full-time by Titan, is fluent and confident with customers, and has strong technical knowledge of diamonds and gold. In a few years, she hopes to start her own enterprise: a training centre in communication and design aimed specifically at married women.

### Background

In 2006, Naz India launched the Young People's Initiative (YPI), previously known as the Goal Programme, with a focus on preventing the spread of HIV/AIDS. The YPI centred on a sports-for-development model aimed at adolescent girls and young women, using sport as a medium to deliver life-skills education on topics including communication, menstrual health, sexual and reproductive health, gender sensitisation, personal safety, and financial literacy.

At the start of 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic meant the Goal Programme could no longer operate in its usual form. When India entered its first lockdown, the YPI responded quickly with relief activities, including distribution of dry ration, support in accessing medical treatment, linkages to government hospitals, and referrals to other organisations for food and essential supplies.

As the environment shifted, Naz India adapted its programming accordingly. As a component of the Young People's Initiative, Naz India introduced the Aath Kadam programme, focused on the economic and psychosocial wellbeing of young marginalised women in the Delhi area, including alumni of the YPI.



*A group discussion session with participants of the Aath Kadam programme.*

The Aath Kadam programme trains young women in both soft and hard skills and provides direct work experience, while also identifying and addressing the barriers that can prevent them from entering and remaining in the workforce. Through the programme, participants are encouraged to set their own goals and take ownership of their learning and decision-making. The programme also involves parents, to help build



family support for participants' daughters, and works with industry partners to create more inclusive opportunities for young women from disadvantaged backgrounds.

### Aath Kadam Today: A Year of Growth and Transition

Over the past year, Aath Kadam has continued to support young marginalised women and help them build towards financial independence. This has been a year of growth and transition for the programme, as restructuring following COVID-19 took shape. The career pathways programme has been an overall success, with over 120 young women having participated to date. Through short-term, intensive programming, these women have been prepared for careers across fields including financial services, logistics, human resources, and hospitality.

In addition to specialised, field-specific skills, participants receive holistic programming that supports confidence-building and broader life skills. Naz India also provides monthly stipends to participants, helping to offset travel costs and lost wages from other potential work, while increasing family buy-in. Beyond job connections and required training, the career pathways programme aims to build sustainable, lasting connections that support greater independence and autonomy for participants over time.



*"Aath Kadam: Girls Ready for the World" – participants at a programme event.*



*A small-group mentoring and discussion session.*

### Programme Timeline, FY 2022–23

| Period                        | Programme                               |
|-------------------------------|-----------------------------------------|
| April 2022 – Ongoing          | Aath Kadam Hospitality Programme        |
| June – August 2022            | Aath Kadam Human Resources Programme    |
| September 2022 – January 2023 | Aath Kadam Logistics Programme          |
| January – March 2023          | Aath Kadam Financial Services Programme |

### Programme Breakdown

#### Hospitality Programme

Aath Kadam has continued to support marginalised young women through the hospitality programme, delivered with partner Sattya. In this financial year, the programme enabled more than 70 participants to

take part in a three-month training covering either the food and beverage or housekeeping track. After training and mentorship, participants are placed in five-star hotels across the country.

### Human Resources Programme

56 participants were enrolled in the human resources programme, which provided specialised training and support to help members reach entry-level roles. This cohort posed particular challenges, as many participants had no prior background or skill set in HR, requiring an increased amount of mentorship and training.

### Logistics Programme

The logistics programme supported 16 young women in developing sector-specific skills, including on-site training and visits with Skyway Logistics, alongside computer skills and English-language courses provided by Naz India. Following the programme, several participants were placed with partner organisations, while others went on to secure jobs and internships at companies across Delhi.

### Financial Services Programme

Aath Kadam introduced a hybrid programming format for the financial services programme, improving accessibility for young women, many of whom were mothers or held additional responsibilities at home that limited their mobility. Participants received financial support to pursue the course, alongside mentorship and networking connections to help secure promising future roles.

## Key Elements Leading Women to Success

- **Goal Setting** – Participants determine their career goals and take part in a structured goal-setting session at the start of the programme.
- **Employability** – Participants gain access to unique networking opportunities and professional connections through Aath Kadam.
- **Education** – English and computer skills courses run throughout the programme, with Naz India supporting participants who wish to pursue further education.
- **Soft Skills** – Confidence, communication and workplace readiness are built in throughout the training.
- **Hard Skills** – Sector-specific technical training is provided for each career track.
- **Industry Exposure** – Participants gain direct exposure to potential employers through site visits, internships and mentorship.

## Programme Impact

An internal survey was conducted with participants from the Aath Kadam Career Pathways programme. When asked what they found most beneficial about their experience, respondents shared reflections including:



*“The Aath Kadam programme is great. Throughout the programme I learned a lot of things. I appreciated exposure to different communities and learning how Naz is empowering them.”*

*“The most beneficial aspect of Aath Kadam is the approach that is taken when teaching and guiding young women to future careers.”*

*“Aath Kadam supports every girl in their pursuit of independence.”*



Participants taking part in the Aath Kadam internal impact survey.

|                                                                                             |                                                                       |                                                                |                                                                             |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p><b>46%</b></p> <p>of respondents named “hardworking” among their top three qualities</p> | <p><b>72%</b></p> <p>of respondents are pursuing higher education</p> | <p><b>44%</b></p> <p>of respondents are currently employed</p> | <p><b>56%</b></p> <p>completed an internship associated with Aath Kadam</p> |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------|

The majority of participants said they would recommend the Aath Kadam programme to a friend: when asked, on a scale of 1 to 10, how likely they were to do so, over 90% of respondents gave a score above 7.

### Case Study: Soniya, Age 19



Soniya

Soniya learned about the Aath Kadam programme through a friend. She comes from a family of five; her father is a shopkeeper and her mother is a homemaker. Soniya enrolled in the programme to gain a clearer understanding of her future career prospects. With no prior work experience, and under pressure from her family to find employment, Naz India supported her through related family concerns and advised her on how to navigate them.

The programme helped her build confidence and set clear goals, and her English and computer skills improved through Naz India's courses. She went on to complete an internship with NECTECH Outsourcing, where she learned about a range of job roles and workplace practices. Soniya is now confident in her English-speaking ability and no longer hesitates to speak with others. She describes herself as more patient

and diligent than before, a change she attributes to the programme's lessons. Since completing her internship, Soniya has been employed full-time at Naz India.

### **Looking Ahead: The Future of Aath Kadam**

As Naz India continues to support marginalised young women through the career pathways programme, there are plans to expand the work further. This includes introducing dedicated programming for school-aged children, offering mentorship and career planning support at an earlier age, with the aim of strengthening young people's outlook and future prospects well before graduation. Naz India also plans to extend Aath Kadam programming to include members of the LGBTQIA+ community, who often face distinct barriers to career growth and stability. These barriers are frequently linked to social stigma in school and workplace settings and limited family support, both of which can affect long-term health and wellbeing alongside economic opportunity.