



HOPE FOR CHILDREN

ANNUAL REPORT (NOVEMBER 2023 TO OCTOBER 2024)



AMAN & VIMARSH

Hope for Children

The **Hope for Children project**, launched in November 2023, embarked on a journey to uplift the lives of children from marginalized families across nine remote villages in Almora and Nainital districts—namely, Pankote, Bajgal, Rikhe, Vadla, Chauna, Unchakot Talla, Bajedi, Khairali, and Unchakot Malla. This initiative is more than just an education project; it is a comprehensive effort to address the educational, healthcare, and basic needs of these underserved communities. With a deep commitment to bringing about meaningful change, the project seeks to offer not only academic guidance but also essential health services and a network of support that can nurture children's growth and potential.

In its inaugural year, the "Hope for Children" project focused on establishing essential support structures for learning and development. This included the setup of education support centers and a sustained emphasis on community engagement to create a supportive environment for children's education. Recognizing the power of community-based intervention, the project team engaged in dialogues with village service providers, including Gram Pradhans (Village Panchayat Heads), Anganwadi Center (AWC) workers, and health workers, building partnerships to support the children's holistic needs.

During the first year, AMAN and VIMARSH, the implementing organizations, organized multiple activities aimed at both immediate and long-term impacts. These efforts led to the following outcomes:

Increased School Attendance and Retention Rates: The establishment of education support centers led to a increase in regular school attendance among children from these villages. Through targeted support and after-school learning sessions, children developed more confidence in their studies, resulting in fewer dropouts and stronger engagement in academic activities.

Enhanced Community Awareness and Participation: Workshops and community meetings brought together over 250 parents and community members, raising awareness of the importance of education and its long-term benefits. This engagement has begun to shift attitudes, as more parents are now actively encouraging their children, especially girls, to pursue regular schooling.

Strengthened Local Service Provider Networks: Collaborative efforts with Gram Pradhans, AWCs, and health workers have fostered a coordinated approach to child development within these communities. These networks are now better prepared to address children's needs, making services more accessible and responsive to the community's requirements.

Improved Learning Outcomes and Access to Learning Resources: The project distributed educational materials, including books and stationery, to over 74 children, ensuring they have the tools needed for effective learning. Early assessments indicate significant progress in foundational skills among children attending the support centers, with reading and basic math, Hindi and English competencies improving.

Community Support and Teacher Encouragement: Teachers have observed positive behavioral changes in students involved in support centers, and community members are increasingly supportive of children's education.

Health and Menstrual Management Awareness: Adolescent girls now have a better understanding of menstrual health and management. Through awareness campaigns, they are starting to openly discuss menstrual hygiene with their families and communities, breaking taboos and promoting healthier practices.

Technical Education Access: 46 youth enrolled in local computer centers, gaining valuable skills for their futures.

Youth Empowerment: Children in youth groups now openly discuss their issues and address social challenges, engaging with local leaders and supporting school continuation efforts.

This year the following activities were carried out

Education support and learning centers for children

During this period, education support centers cum learning centers have been successfully established in the nine projected villages, Pankot, Bajgal, Rikhe, Vadla, Chauna, Unchakot Talla, Bajedi, with the primary aim of assisting children with their education and holistic development. A total of 226 children have enrolled across these centers, receiving structured learning support and resources that are otherwise limited in these remote villages.

The centers provided tutoring across various subjects, focusing on addressing the specific academic challenges faced by these 226 children according to their grade levels. Facilitators at the centers worked closely with each student to identify and resolve difficulties in subjects such as science, mathematics and language, providing tailored support that has led to noticeable improvement in their understanding and performance.

In addition to academic support, children received education on important social and health topics, including child rights, cleanliness, and personal health. These sessions equipped the children with knowledge to make healthier choices in their lives and helped them understand and advocate for their rights within their communities.

Events were organized on special occasions such as Children’s Day, World Environment Day, and other cultural and national days, encouraging community involvement. These celebrations provided an opportunity for the 226 enrolled children to participate in group activities, enhancing their sense of community and reinforcing the importance of education.

The centers integrated a variety of sports and recreational activities to promote overall growth. Through structured games and activities, the children developed social skills, teamwork, and physical fitness, all of which contribute to their personal and social development.

Details of the centers are provided below

SN	Name of the Centers	Children details			Name of the facilitator
		Male	Female	Total	
1	Pankot	14	14	28	Priyanka Bisht
2	Bajgal	10	5	15	Nirmala Sinari
3	Rikhe	7	7	14	Shalini Taragi
4	Vadla	16	19	35	Roshani Tewari
5	Chauna	11	11	22	Tanuja
6	Unchakot Talla	20	14	34	Muskan
7	Bajedi	11	14	25	Sumiran

8	Khairali	7	11	18	Kiran
9	Unchakot Malla	16	19	35	Rashmi Kandpal
		112	114	226	

Introducing Quarterly Education Enhancement Sessions for Parents

Both organizations arranged quarterly meetings with parents. These gatherings served as platforms to provide updates on the available educational support and learning centers, including computer education support facilities. The primary objectives were to inspire guardians to consider enrolling their children in these valuable educational resources and to introduce them to the impactful initiatives of the Hope for Children Project.

Digital Skill for children and women

During this time, a computer course for children and women spread its wings, Providing digital literacy to 45 children and 1 woman, teaching them new things.

In Hawalbag Block, the computer training program successfully provided digital literacy to **32** participants from rural areas, **including 8 boys, 23 girls, and 1 woman**. This group represented diverse backgrounds, with 11 participants from the Scheduled Castes (SC) category, including 9 girls and 2 boys, and 2 girls from the Other Backward Classes (OBC) category. The remaining 19 participants belonged to the General category, indicating the program's appeal across social groups. Many participants travelled from surrounding villages like Odlā, Dangikhola, Chauna, and others, highlighting the program's ability to reach and attract students from remote areas. To optimize learning, the program was conducted in two batches, with 15 participants in the first batch and 17 in the second, allowing for personalized attention and guidance. Each batch received both theoretical and practical sessions to ensure students could confidently apply their skills. their training, with results showing clear progress and effective skill acquisition.

In Betalghat Block the computer training programme successfully provided digital literacy to **14 children (Male-6 and Female-8)**

The training curriculum was designed to cover essential computer skills such as basic computer operations, MS Word, MS Excel, email setup and management, and typing in both Hindi and English. This program has contributed significantly to bridging the digital divide in rural areas, making digital literacy accessible to youth and women who may not have otherwise had this opportunity. The high number of female participants also reflects the program's commitment to promoting gender inclusivity in technology training

Education for All – Children Fellowship Programme-

This initiative is incredibly important for children who are unable to bear any education-related expenses, as financial barriers are often a major reason why children hesitate to attend school. By addressing these challenges, the fellowship program helps ensure that these children have the necessary tools to continue their education, removing one of the key obstacles that prevent them from pursuing academic opportunities.

Through this program, AMAN has provided fellowships that include notebooks, stationery, and learning materials to 50 children from economically disadvantaged backgrounds.

24 adolescent girls from economically disadvantaged families in Vimarsh's project area, who were at risk of dropping out, were selected and provided with educational materials suited to their needs to support their continued education.

Village Gender Education Resource Centers

This period saw the successful establishment of two Village Gender Education Resource Centers (VGERCs) in Betalghat and Hawalbag Blocks. Each center is led by a counsellor dedicated to empowering local women and children, linking them to critical government resources, and providing essential gender-based counselling and awareness programs. Key achievements include:

Linking Women and Girls to Government Schemes

Through VGERCs, AMAN connected women and adolescent girls to key social security programs, including pension schemes, vaccination drives, and the Gaura Devi Kanya Dhan Yojana, which supports girls in completing 12th grade to encourage higher education. **AMAN linked 11 girls to this program, and 7 farmers to the Prime Minister Farmer Fund, also assisting 20 farmers in obtaining land certificates and income certificate.**

Gender Awareness and Education

The centers conducted targeted gender sensitization sessions for women, children, and youth, led by trained counsellors. These sessions aimed to build understanding of gender equality and promote inclusivity within the community.

Counselling and Support for Victims of Violence

VIMARSH provided counselling to five victims of violence, offering both mental health and legal support. This included assistance in one case of sexual harassment of a minor, while AMAN provided similar support for two additional child victims of sexual harassment. **In total, eight victims received timely, effective support through VGERC intervention.**

Curriculum Development on Reproductive Health and Hygiene

AMAN organized a two-day workshop with adolescent girls focused on reproductive health and hygiene. This session contributed to the development of a specialized curriculum, with a forthcoming booklet designed to further educate and empower young women on these vital topics.

The Village Gender Education Resource Centers (VGERCs) have become instrumental in linking women and children to government resources, enhancing gender education, providing victim support, and advancing health education. The initiative reflects a commitment to fostering safe, informed, and supportive environments for women and children in the project area.

Bal Mela

AMAN and VIMARSH organized Bal Mela events with the theme "Safe Places for Children," drawing 198 participants across two communities—128 on 8th September in AMAN's event and 70 on 20th October in VIMARSH's. The events featured engaging activities like games, drawing, speech and poetry competitions, skits, and cultural performances, each reinforcing the message of creating safe, inclusive spaces for children and girls. Through these activities, children were encouraged to express their views on safety, while the events fostered a community-wide dialogue on the importance of supportive environments for youth empowerment and gender inclusivity.

Community Awareness Programme

The project launch commenced with community-wide meetings. During the community meetings, all stakeholders presented, and the Hope for Children team also met with the Head of Local self-governance and village and District Panchayat Members. In all the community meetings and one to one discussions information of the Hope for Children Project was delivered to the community. The community was encouraged to participate in implementing the project within their villages. Their enthusiastic initiative was apparent, accompanied by commitments to provide all feasible support from their side.

Facilitators were chosen in collaboration with women's groups. Subsequently, three distinct community groups were formed in each village: women's group, children's group, and adolescent girls' group. Monthly meetings with these groups began, concentrating on creating awareness of the importance of organization building, Education, child rights, child safety issues, Cyber Crime, Domestic Violence, government schemes, village cleanliness, nutrition, fundamental rights, and MNEGRA etc.

Additionally, dialogue sessions were initiated with the children and girls groups to address personal hygiene issues, including the delivery of menstrual hygiene, cybercrime, adolescent health, the National Adolescent Health Programme, and reproductive health.

During this period collective programmes were also organised with women and children's groups. VIMARSH organised the adolescent girls' exposure with a visit to a police station and the PHC and increased their information on legal rights and health issues. While AMAN organised the dialogue sessions with children on good touch and bad touch and prepared the children newspaper regarding this issue.

Celebration of International Women's Day

In Almora district, AMAN celebrated International Women's Day in Govindpur. Drawing together 116 women, including representatives from the Hope for Children and Voice of Children project areas, the event served as a platform for discussions on women's rights and digital crimes against women and children. Notably, the Voice of Children representatives shared their accomplishments and personal narratives, fostering a sense of empowerment and solidarity among participants. The event fostered an exchange of achievements and experiences, invigorating attendees with renewed determination to combat violence against women.

Meanwhile, across in Nainital district, VIMARSH celebrated International Women's Day with an engaging and thought-provoking dialogue centred around the often overlooked topic of mental health and well-being, particularly focusing on women and adolescent girls. Through interactive sessions and open conversations, participants were encouraged to explore various aspects of mental wellness, including stress management, self-care practices, and the importance of seeking support when needed.

Collective Meeting with Children Day-Both organizations facilitated collaborative meetings with Children's Groups within their communities during various celebratory occasions. These occasions included Children's Day, Red Hand Day, Constitutional Day, Water Day, Earth Day, and the National Day against Child Labor. These gatherings ignited engaging dialogues, interactive sessions, and open conversations, utilizing various imaginative methods to involve the children effectively.

Capacity Building of Staff

On June 1st and 2nd, VIMARSH organized a staff capacity-building training program in Almora District, bringing together education center facilitators, computer center facilitators, counsellors, and community workers. The two-day training was led by AMAN's Director, Mr. Raghu Tewari, and Executive Coordinator, Ms. Nilima Bhatt. The program provided an orientation for project staff and facilitators on project objectives, activities, outcomes, results, and anticipated impacts. Both organizations shared their experiences and discussed challenges faced during implementation. Together, with Hope for Children, they developed strategies and plans to ensure the program's smooth and effective rollout.

Collective programs organised by AMAN and VIMARSH

- AMAN organized programs for Earth Day, World Water Day, World Environment Day, a plantation drive, Anti-Child Labor Day, and Youth Day, involving over 250 children and youth in activities centred on environmental awareness, sustainability, and social responsibility.
- VIMARSH celebrated World Environment Day and International Girls' Day to emphasize ecological preservation and gender equality.
- Both organizations conducted meetings with Anganwadi workers, ASHA workers, and Village Panchayat representatives, fostering a supportive environment for effective project implementation and community collaboration.

Seeds of Change, Stories of Hope

Some inspiring success stories from the project:

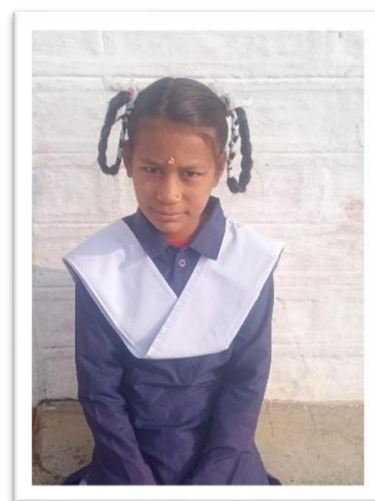
Bandari is a young girl from the village of Vajgal in Almora district. Currently studying in class 8th at the Government Inter College, she belongs to a poor family of five members, which includes her parents, two sisters, and a brother. Her father Mr. Rajendra Singh Bhandari does labour-based work, while her mother Mrs. Shanti Bhandari is engaged in agricultural work to support their family. Despite their efforts, the family's economic condition remains fragile.

Every morning, when Babita's parents left for work, one of the children had to stay back to manage household chores. This routine made Babita accustomed to staying at home, leading her to avoid school frequently. As a result, her academic progress suffered, and she felt disconnected from her studies because she was not able to relate with this.

In a significant turn of events, an education center was established in her village under the Hope for Children program. Initially, Babita was reluctant to attend. However, after a worker from the center spoke to her and her parents about the benefits, she decided to give it a try. Gradually, her siblings also started attending the center.

At the education center, Babita found a welcoming and engaging environment. She began attending regularly, participating in various activities, and showing a keen interest in her studies. Her enthusiasm and active participation did not go unnoticed, and she was soon elected as the president of a children's group in her village.

Babita now attends school daily with renewed interest and continues to be actively involved at the education center. She serves as an inspiration to other children in her village, showing that with the right support and environment, anyone can overcome their challenges and achieve great things.



Dipanshu is a young boy from the village of Vadla, currently studying in class 4th. His family consists of six members, including his father, a farmer, and his mother, a homemaker. Dipanshu was initially a very shy and introverted child, finding it difficult to engage in activities or socialize.

In November 2023, under the Hope for Children program, a study center was established, which many children, including Dipanshu, joined. However, he soon stopped attending regularly. When brought to the center, he often remained aloof, preferring to sit alone and avoiding group activities. He would easily get irritated by jokes and sometimes ended up crying or getting into fights with other children.



Continuously positive efforts were made to encourage Dipanshu's regular attendance at the center. In the center, all the children used to play his favourite games and gradually, he began to come more regularly. Over time, he started participating in various activities, including games and dance and has now become a proficient dancer.

When Dipanshu first joined the center, he struggled with learning tables, but he has since mastered them. His performance in school has improved, he has started making friends, and he actively participates in school activities.

The familiar and child-friendly environment of the center has helped transform Dipanshu from an introverted child into an active and engaged participant, both at school and at the education center. His journey is a testament to the power of supportive and nurturing environments in fostering personal growth and development.

Govindi was born and married into a poor family of Silani village in the Hawalbagh block of Almora district. She is a dedicated homemaker and has always been driven by the desire to learn and grow. Despite her challenging financial circumstances, she has emerged as an inspiring figure in her community.

She studied up to intermediate before her marriage, after which she took on many family responsibilities. There are four members in her family, including her husband, who previously worked in a private job but now engages in animal husbandry and agricultural work. They have two sons, with the elder in class 5th and the younger in class 3rd.



Her connection with the women's group of AMAN played a crucial role in her life. As an active member, she regularly attended meetings and training sessions, participating enthusiastically in discussions about secure futures and education. Despite her busy household schedule, she never lost sight of her educational dreams. Her dedication and awareness led her to pursue computer education, managing her time effectively between household chores and learning.

Through the women's group, she got to know about the computer classes run by AMAN for villagers. Undeterred by the 6-kilometer distance to the computer center, she joined it in June 2024 and mastering basic computer skills and Hindi and English typing.

Govindi is now a beacon of hope and motivation for other women in her village, encouraging them to value education for themselves and their children. Her family takes immense pride in her efforts and dedication. She strives tirelessly to ensure her children receive the quality education they deserve, paving the way for a brighter future.

VIMARSH operates support centers in Betalghat block, Nainital district, under the Hope for Children program. These centers serve school-going children and their communities, with four centers currently running in the district. Families like Jagdeesh's benefit from these services.

Jagdeesh struggled academically, falling behind in class and losing interest in school. His parents expressed concern that he was in class 7 but lacked knowledge at a class 2 level. He even refused to attend school due to bullying. However, after joining the support center, he began attending daily and thrived through learning activities, games, and stories. This approach helped him regain confidence and improve his studies.



The center also counselled his parents on how to support him positively. As a result, Jagdeesh started attending school regularly and performed well in his half-yearly exams. His teachers were impressed with his progress and encouraged other students to engage with the center. His parents, initially fearing he would drop out, now believe the center has changed his life.

Vishal resides in Village Simalkha with his parents, a younger sister, and a younger brother. His father is a labourer and supports the family through his earnings. Vishal is a dedicated member of the Children's Organization formed by the organization Vimarsh and has been a member of the local library for the past 6 months, regularly borrowing books.



In October, an online meeting was organized under the theme of child rights and issues related to violence against children, with participation from children from six districts of Uttarakhand. Two children from each district were selected to discuss various issues concerning child rights and violence. Vishal participated in the online meeting, where he shared his thoughts on issues like sexual violence and child participation. His presentation on these critical topics earned him first place in the competition.

Vishal was the only participant selected from his district to represent Uttarakhand at the National Action and Coordination Group & Violence against Children India forum in Delhi. He expressed that his involvement in the children's organization and library contributed significantly to his success.

Vishal's achievements have inspired many other children in his community to become more engaged in such platforms. Through his involvement in the children's organization and library, Vishal has demonstrated exceptional leadership and commitment, setting an example for his peers. His success not only highlights his personal growth but also underscores the positive influence of engaging in community initiatives. His participation in national-level forums will not only bring attention to the issues affecting children in Uttarakhand but will also encourage more children to actively engage in discussions about child rights and social change.

In the village of Betalghat Block, nestled among the hills, a horrific event shook the community. A young, innocent girl, just two years old, became the victim of a terrible crime. Her neighbour, a 70-year-old man who had once attempted to harm his daughter-in-law, took advantage of the child's innocence in an act of cruelty that left the entire village in shock.

It was the members of the local *Kishori Samuh* group who first heard about the incident and quickly reached out to Vimarsh, a community-based organization dedicated to supporting women and children. Understanding the gravity of the situation, Vimarsh immediately guided the girl's mother through the steps to ensure her child's safety and well-being. They encouraged her to call 1098, the Child Helpline, and seek medical care for her daughter to address any physical and emotional harm.

The mother followed this advice, and with the support of Vimarsh, filed a complaint that led to the registration of an FIR. Within a short time, the police acted on the complaint and arrested the elderly perpetrator, bringing a measure of justice to the family. However, this was just the beginning of the long road ahead. Vimarsh continued to provide follow-up support, ensuring that the family was not alone in their journey through the judicial proceedings that would follow.

The incident serves as a painful reminder, but also as a beacon of hope that with timely intervention and unified support, communities can stand together against child abuse and create a safer environment for every child.