



Teleperformance and UNICEF's Collaboration to Transform Education for Children

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Cover Photo: 14 – years – old Malikanu Gopal took life skill training, and learned the importance of inclusion, participation, empathy, and communication
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Expression of Thanks

UNICEF India's work is funded entirely through the voluntary support of millions of people around the world and our partners in government, civil society, and the private sector. Voluntary contributions enable UNICEF India to deliver on its mandate to protect children's rights, to help meet their basic needs, and to expand their opportunities to reach their full potential. We take this opportunity to thank Teleperformance for their commitment and trust in UNICEF India.

We are grateful that Teleperformance prioritized education that would have had an equally detrimental impact if left unaddressed. Without access to education, children, especially girls, are more vulnerable and unprotected as they experience shocks— including loss of life, health impacts and loss of livelihoods. Thanks to your generous contribution, education became lifesaving for India's most vulnerable children. Not only did it provide safety and protection, but importantly, it also instilled hope for a brighter future. Continuing education through alternative learning pathways, must also remain a top priority right now, to ensure the interruption of education is as limited as possible.

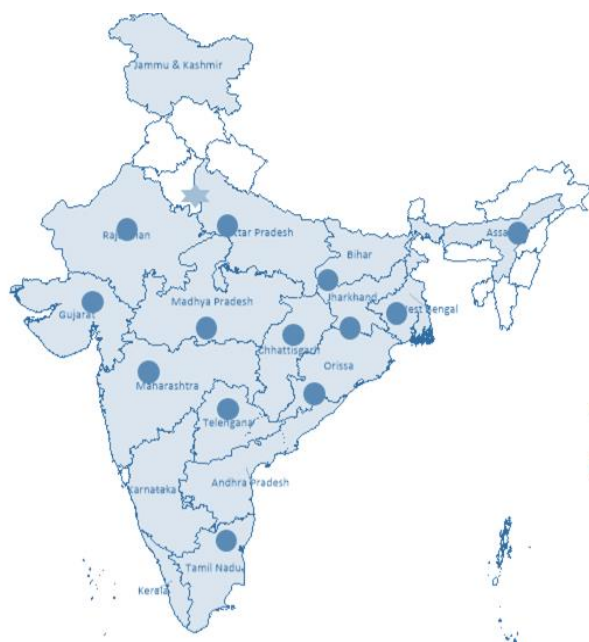
Thanks to Teleperformance's support, UNICEF continued its mission to meet the needs and support the fulfillment of the right to education of the most vulnerable children, their families and communities under UNICEF Global Education Strategy 'Every Child Learns' and in alignment with the Government of India national development agenda and the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, the India UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) and the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4.

Your crucial contribution enabled us to respond to the needs of the most vulnerable children, particularly in emergencies and the dynamic socio-political development context in which UNICEF India works.

We once again, take this opportunity to thank Teleperformance for their commitment and trust in UNICEF India.

Background and strategic context for education in India

Although India has a rich policy environment with the Right to Education (RTE) Act 2009, the National Early Childhood Care and Education Policy (NECCEP) 2013, and the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, its implementation has been challenged by social norms, financing, and capacities of the system to fully enable access to and the delivery of quality education (learning and skills) services from pre-primary to upper secondary, particularly during the pandemic. Public spending in India on education remains below recommended levels of the NEP 2020, which states the need for public investment in education to be 6% of Gross Domestic Product (GDP).



UNICEF Field Offices in India

While the NEP 2020 recognizes the crucial role of teachers in fulfilling a child's right to quality education, more efforts are needed to address quality, accountability, and governance within the sector. The workforce of teacher has a deficit of over 1 million teachers¹ and the shortage of qualified and subject-specialized teachers is a key factor hampering the learning of children and their transition to secondary education². On the other hand, the curriculum lacks relevance and diversity, needs to address gender and diversity responsiveness, as well as life skills and climate change.

The pandemic heightened the learning crisis with most children at primary level having lost or forgotten basic math and language skills³. The lingering impact of even five months of school closure results in an immediate loss of 0.6 years (about 7 months) of schooling adjusted for quality, bringing the effective learning that a student can achieve down from 7.9 years to 7.3 years⁴.

While most children are enrolled in pre-primary and primary schooling (3-10 years), net enrolment rates drop after grade 5 and grade 8 reaching only 52.5% (52.4% girls) at the secondary level and to 34.7% (35.6% girls) at the higher secondary level.⁵

¹ U-DISE+, 2020-21.

² UNESCO. No Teacher, No Class. State of the Education Report for India, 2021 <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000379115>.

³ Azim Premji University. Loss of Learning during the Pandemic. February 2021

[Field Studies Loss of Learning during the Pandemic.f1622994202.pdf \(azimpremjiuniversity.edu.in\)](https://www.azimpremjiuniversity.edu.in/Field-Studies-Loss-of-Learning-during-the-Pandemic.f1622994202.pdf)

⁴ World Bank: Press release 18 June 2020 [COVID-19 Could Lead to Permanent Loss in Learning and Trillions of Dollars in Lost Earnings \(worldbank.org\)](https://www.worldbank.org/press/2020/06/18/covid-19-could-lead-to-permanent-loss-in-learning-and-trillions-of-dollars-in-lost-earnings)

⁵ U-DISE +, 2020-21 (NER).

Only 51% of children (51% girls) entering grade 1 have pre-school education. With regards to their pre-school education, 34.5% (33.7% girls) transitioned from school-based pre-school whereas 16.6% (17.3% girls) from early childhood development centres.⁶

Poor learning and skill development contribute to children and adolescent unprepared for life. Only 45.9% of graduates were found employable, a steady decline from 47.4% in 2019 with less employable women than men⁷. Youth aged 15-24 years not in employment and education or training is 29.7% with girls increasing to 5%⁸.

In an effort to respond to the challenges caused by the disruption of learning and to continue to address more systemic bottlenecks hampering quality of learning in India, UNICEF India provided technical support at the national and state level to the government and other partners to achieve results for children including adolescents and continue to address bottlenecks compounding the inequities in educational access and learning with a continuous focus on shaping policy and practice.

Overall, UNICEF engaged in system strengthening, leveraging its position at the state and national level and its convening power to bring together diverse stakeholders and invest in partnership and alliance building to better enable the delivery of equitable and quality education services to all children including adolescents especially from the most vulnerable communities and addressing the issues and challenges faced by them especially linked to the impact on education due to the pandemic.

In 2023 UNICEF started a new programme cycle 2023-2027 in agreement with the Ministry of Education. Thanks to the contribution of Teleperformance, UNICEF could contribute to close the old and initiate the new Country Programme to expedite quality of education delivery in the following areas:

1. Foundational Literacy and Numeracy (FLN)

- Getting children ready for school – focusing on pre-literacy and numeracy skills to ensure ‘school readiness’, access and retention for foundational literacy and numeracy (FLN) in early grades

2. Investing in Girls’ STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) and Digital Skills

3. Digital learning

4. Coding and Creativity: Future-ready skills for girls

- Improving adolescents’ future-ready skills through career guidance, a digital portal initiative across India (including STEM opportunities)
- Activate and operationalize Whole School Safety programme to support children, adolescents and community’s knowledge and skills to build a safe learning environment in schools

⁶ U-DISE+, 2020-21.

⁷ India Skills Report 2021 ISR_Report_2021.pdf (wheebox.com).

⁸ ILO Research Brief: Young persons not in employment and education (NEET) in India: 2000-2019. March 2021.

Results, achievements, and interventions in the prioritized areas:

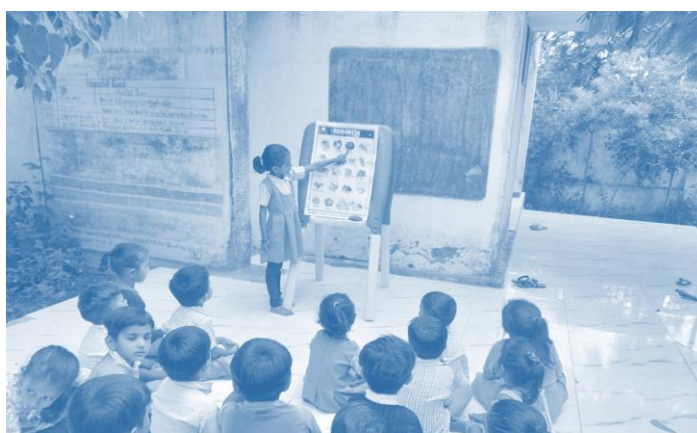
By leveraging its strategic presence and nurturing a solid and sustainable partnership with the government for decades, UNICEF' successfully expedited its support to the government and its response to ensure quality learning post-COVID crisis in India. Teleperformance was a champion in supporting UNICEF to address children's readiness and retention in safe schools and adolescents' skilling and guidance for transitioning to life after school. Results covering activities under these areas from October 2022 till March 2023 are outlined as follows:

- **Getting children ready for school – focusing on pre-literacy and numeracy skills to ensure 'school readiness' for foundational literacy and numeracy (FLN) in early grades to facilitate access and retention to and through early grades**

Due to COVID-19, students enrolled in grade 1 came with no previous pre-school experience. In collaboration with Gujarat government, UNICEF designed and scaled up the state government initiative Pa Pa Pagli programme to strengthen pre-school education services in early childhood development (ECD) centres. Through this initiative the state government has so far appointed 449 (80% women) dedicated pre-school teachers and supervisors across the State. UNICEF designed a five-day capacity building programme for these teachers and supervisors which has been implemented through the leveraging of government funds. Approximately 1.6 million girls and boys aged 3-6 years are benefiting from the programme to get school ready by augmenting the quality of preschool education. A learning kit for each child, namely Bal Potli, was developed with technical inputs from UNICEF, comprising of one drawing book, a set of 12 crayons and a set of four shapes for lacing activity and provided to 1.6 million children (50% girls) attending early childhood centres in Gujarat.

To strengthen the programme UNICEF designed guidelines and technical materials for roll-out of Pa Pa Pagli programme, including the curriculum, Bhulka Mela, Bal Potli, and the training modules for capacity building. Around 500 audio-video resources were developed by the WCD department (Department of Women and Child Development) with technical support from UNICEF and disseminated to ECD workers in ECD centres.

UNICEF also supported the state government to develop digital calendars as guidance for parents to support learning at home. These resources were disseminated to parents through existing WhatsApp groups. The calendars are housed at State ICDS website, and have been visited by 100 000 people, in addition to these are being disseminated to parents through 34,000 WhatsApp groups. Messages on positive parenting



Pre-school children in ECD centre- learning names of fruits and vegetables ©UNICEF/Gujarat

focusing on child safety have also been included. UNICEF's advocacy with the Department of Women and Child Development on enhancing enrolment and establish continuum of early learning from ECD centers to primary schools led to a government order to all district officials to celebrate enrolment campaign for ECD centres and schools. Panchayat members actively engaged in planning of activities to generate awareness and get support of community and parents at the village level. More than 250,000 children (50% girls) were enrolled in ECD centres for pre-school during the enrolment drive, and 500,000 children (50% girls) enrolled in Grade 1 from ECD centres.

UNICEF has supported the Gujarat state government to develop a mobile phone application to track children's developmental trajectories. Also included in the app is a checklist of 58 indicators for grading of anganwadi/ECD centres. 449 Pa Pa Pagli pre-school workers are being oriented to use this app to monitor the quality of the pre-school programme being delivered in the ECD centres. Currently the app is being piloted in 2,500 ECD centres based on the feedback there may be further changes made to the application as well scale it across the state.

ICDS expanded the reach of developmentally appropriate ECCE through building capacity of parents and other caregivers to support learning at home. With technical support from UNICEF, digital calendars were developed and disseminated amongst parents to promote responsive parenting and support learning at home. The digital calendars also have embedded audio and video clippings to guide parents in conducting child-centered activities. Furthermore,



Pre-school children on a nature walk- learning to take care of their environment ©UNICEF/Gujarat

ICDS, with technical support Under the Pa Pa Pagli project, The Department now proposes to undertake digital transformation of pre-school education PSE, including through implementation of digital curriculum at ECD centers. Going forward, it will be critical to engage with Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) to ensure developmental appropriateness and sustainability of such a model.

- **Improving adolescents' future-ready skills through career guidance and a digital portal initiative across India (including STEM opportunities)**

UNICEF ICO (India Country Office) is investing in a *21st Century Skills Programme* to equip young people with the skills they need to succeed in the modern world. The programme focuses on *life skills related to self-development* and helps to navigate the challenges and opportunities of everyday life with skills such as critical thinking, problem-solving, decision-making, communication, and interpersonal skills; *digital skills* to help children thrive in a digital world such as digital literacy, online safety, and the ability to use digital tools and platforms effectively and *career and employability skills* needed to succeed in the workforce such as entrepreneurship, financial literacy, teamwork, and leadership.

During the reporting period, thanks to Teleperformance's contribution, UNICEF continued to support the activation of a career guidance programme including a portal together with governments in 15 states with UNICEF

Generation Unlimited India-YuWaah and in partnership with Aasman Foundation. Career guidance portals have been launched across 15 states (Rajasthan, Bihar, Jharkhand, Andhra Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Jammu & Kashmir, Maharashtra, Assam, Gujarat, Odisha, Telangana, Kerala, West Bengal Karnataka and Uttar Pradesh). Thanks to



Students accessing career portals in school computer labs in Gujarat ©UNICEF/UN0693286/

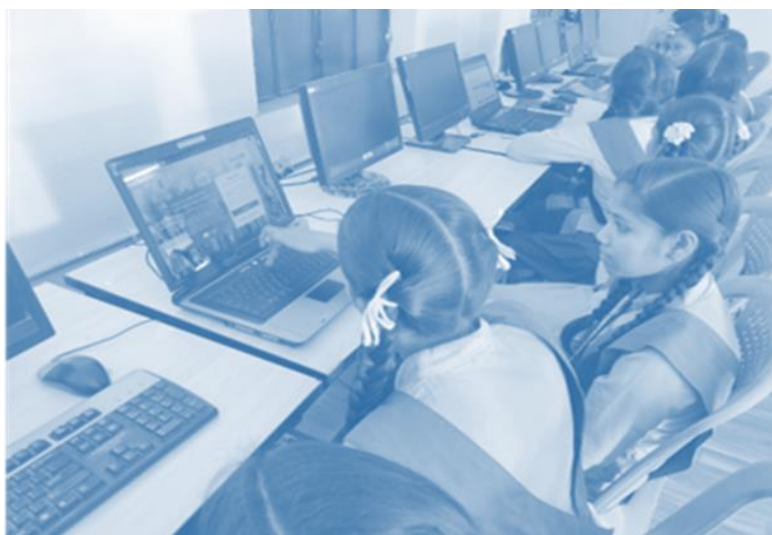
Teleperformance contribution, UNICEF reached **4.6 million students** (46 per cent girls) and trained **114,500 teachers** (42 per cent female) to support students on career guidance.

The activities on the portal are also complemented by a series of face-to-face initiatives in schools and communities to encourage students' development in basic skills like self-awareness, research skills, goal setting, decision making and communication skills and networking.

The sessions and support from accessing the portal are key to encourage the adolescents to explore their interests, values, personality, and strengths to identify potential career paths that align with their unique traits and preferences. Adolescents are supported to acquire skills to research different career options, including the required education and skills, job outlook, salary, and potential career paths. This can help them make informed decisions about their future.

Focus has been given to establish realistic and achievable career goals and how these are aligned to their values, priorities to sustain their decision-making process and navigate complex career choices and make informed decisions about their future.

By developing these skills, adolescents can be better prepared to make informed career choices and achieve success in their chosen field.



Girls oriented on 21st century skills and career guidance in Rajasthan © UNICEF/UN0693303

UNICEF Career Guidance portal – support to career pathways

- It provides comprehensive **information on possible careers, colleges, vocational institutions, entrance examinations and scholarships for students in grades 9–12**. This dynamic portal provides content on 550+ both professional and vocational career areas (including a synoptic overview, pay-scale, entry pathways, cost, job opportunities, and successful people in that fields).
- The College Directory covers **280,000 courses offered by over 25,000 colleges** and vocational institutes across India and 15 other countries that are listed down state/city wise.
- The portal gives access to a **Scholarship Directory** (1,200) and also **Exams Directory** (1,500 entry exams) in India and abroad supporting in the application process, general information, exam centers, process to apply, and exam dates. This also includes school level competitions and fellowship opportunities.
- Information on the portal is available in **multiple languages** such as English, Hindi, Telugu, Gujarati, Odia, Marathi, Malayalam, Kannada, Assamese and Punjabi.
- The portal is **updated regularly** with current information on career pathways, colleges, entrance exams and scholarships.

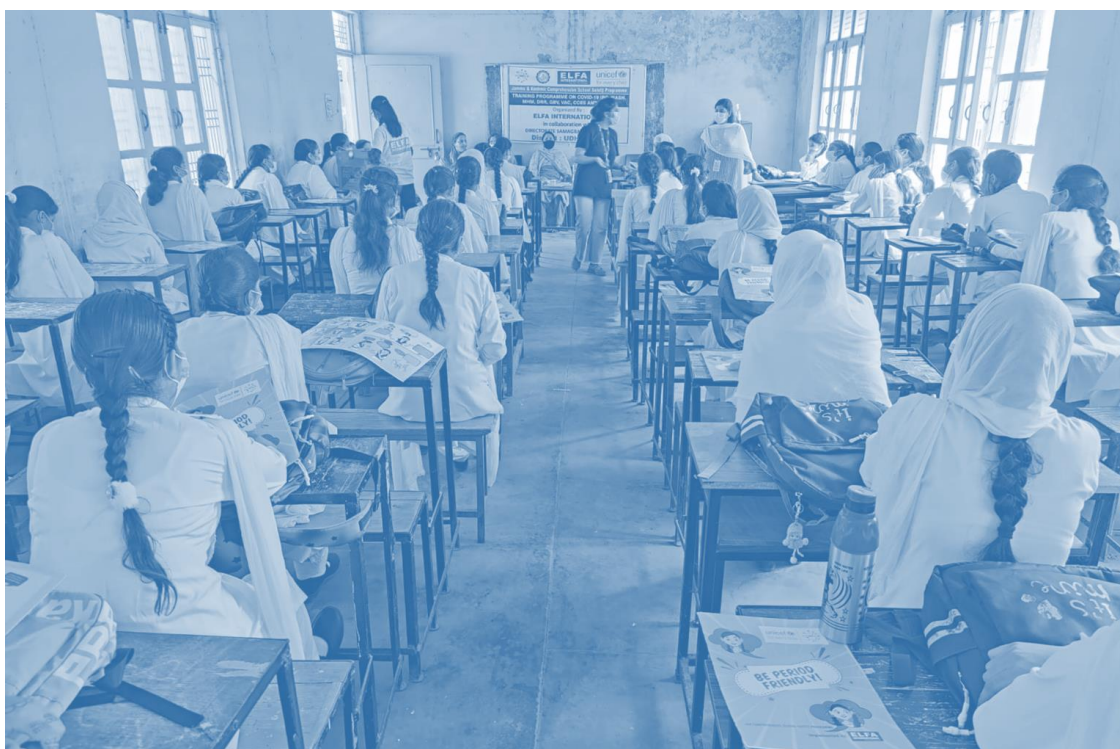
In addition to the career portal, UNICEF organized career workshops to allow learners to explore career pathways that meet their aspirations as photography, fashion designing, event management, and others. All these activities and the access to the portal helped students to expand knowledge on and access to multiple career pathways beyond traditional and stereotypical career choices due to limited exposure to occupations, lack of role models and perceptions created by socio-cultural biases.

Career webinars are being conducted for students to introduce newer and available career options. Known personalities from different fields have been called in to interact with learners on different career paths and leveraging interest on career development for learners. These interactions have generated a lot of interest among students on careers.

WhatsApp messages are being activated with small posters on careers and circulated among the teachers to support career orientation of students. Regular follow up through government administrative structures also keeps the momentum going. A certificate course for teachers have been developed to train regular teachers to provide support to students in career guidance.

- **Activate and operationalize Whole School Safety programme to support children, adolescents and community's knowledge and skills to build a safe learning environment in schools**

In Jammu and Kashmir, UNICEF designed and implemented the *Whole School Safety Programme* in collaboration with the Directorate of Samagra Shiksha of Jammu and Kashmir and support of the local partner ELFA International. The *Whole School Safety Programme* strives to integrate safety and security aspects into education to enable and facilitate children and adolescents 's safety in school. This programme aims at improving attendance and participatory learning and reinforcing the role of students and community in school safety by investing in knowledge and skills development of children, adolescents and community on health, physical, socio-emotional, psycho-social and cognitive aspects of school safety and security.



Girls at a school attending sessions on Menstrual Hygiene Management at a school in Udhampur ©UNICEF/ELFA/Jammu Kashmir

The programme was designed to capacitate senior government officials, train master trainers, teachers, students and community members and create peer educators on the *Whole School Safety* key components:

1. COVID 19 Infection Prevention and Control (IPC) and COVID Appropriate Behavior (CAB)

2. Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR)
3. Child Protection, with special emphasis on Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS),
4. Elimination of Violence against Children (EVAC),
5. Gender Based Violence (GBV)
6. Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH)
7. Climate Change and Environmental Sustainability (CCES)
8. Menstrual Hygiene Management (MHM)
9. School Health and Wellness Programme (SHWP)



Student peer educators helped take the message of school safety to the next level in rural Kupwara ©UNICEF/J&K/ELFA/2022

UNICEF supported the Department of School Education to develop a detailed manual on school safety for heads of schools and teachers and over 90,000 copies were printed for dissemination to all schools across Jammu and Kashmir. 33,153 students (58% females), 217 master trainers (33% females), 2,090 teachers (42% females) and 2,155 community members (52% females) received direct training and increased their knowledge and skills on all the basic components of *Whole School Safety Programme*. The programme was developed in line with the '*Whole School Safety*' approach of the Ministry of Education, Government of India.

From a longer-term perspective such intervention is crucial to equip students with the knowledge and skills to feel safe, comfortable and therefore confident in their learning environment, which in turn can lead to better academic performance.

Moreover, the programme helped to create a positive atmosphere in school that fosters a sense of community and belonging among students, staff, and parents. When everyone feels invested in the safety and well-being of the school community, it can lead to improved communication and collaboration, which can further enhance the learning environment.

Additionally, the *Whole School Safety* helps to reduce the risk of physical harm or emotional trauma, which can have long-term effects on a student's mental health and academic success. The programme broadly sets the ground for ensuring that students have a positive

and secure learning experience by prioritizing safety and well-being to help students to thrive academically, emotionally, and socially.

One of the most important aspect of the programme has been its sustainability with the government taking ownership as a result of UNICEF's advocacy, demonstration of scalable pilot models and capacity building. The government has prioritized school safety, not only in its planning and budgeting, but also implementation. The government took upon itself to print 90,000 school safety manuals and released funds for district level trainings on school safety in all 20 districts of Jammu and Kashmir.



*Mobilising community leadership and involving local officials, school management committee members take the message of school safety to a wider audience
©UNICEF/J&K/ELFA/2022*

Glimpse from the Ground

Human Interest Story. “School safety programme teaches students survival skills”, Sumayyah Qureshi

The Jammu & Kashmir *Whole School Safety Programme* was conceptualized and implemented by UNICEF in collaboration with Samagra Shiksha, Jammu & Kashmir and ELFA International in 2020. It focuses on disaster risk reduction, water sanitation hygiene, menstrual hygiene management, climate change and mental health psychosocial support to ensure safety of school children.

As part of the programme, young students from Government Girls Higher Secondary School, Nawakadal, are being trained in disaster survival skills. The training is activity based and involves playful methods to educate students. As one of the experts says ‘earthquake’ into a microphone, students immediately duck and take shelter under their benches. This is a drill exercise to teach them how to save themselves in case of an earthquake as Kashmir comes under seismic zone V, which makes it prone to earthquakes.

Students were trained and sensitized under the Jammu and Kashmir *Whole School Safety programme* targeting students of class 1-12, later rolled out in all districts of Kashmir.



Murtafee Un-falah, 16, a class XI student at Government Girls Higher Secondary School, Nawakadal, who was part of the training session, said “*Every person should have this basic knowledge of what to do in case of a natural disaster and it is important. Unless we are trained on what to do in case of an earthquake, we won’t be able to quickly act in such a situation.*”

Murtafee is all ears during the session as she wants to equip herself with disaster survival skills and is actively involved in the drill. She understands the importance of mental health and listens to the experts intently during the session. She said that the session has also educated her on the various forms of abuse that people go through, life skills, menstrual hygiene and disaster preparedness.

To spread awareness among students on social issues, mental health coordinators for the school safety programme from ELFA uses 18th century folk ballad, ‘*ladishah*’. Through humour and satire, which are an essential part of the folk ballad, the coordinators pass on the message to the students regarding mental health. Mehran Khan, Chief Executive Officer of Education and Livelihood for All (ELFA) International, said the programme was started as part of the COVID-19 response which was later extended to 10 districts of Jammu and 10 districts in Kashmir. ELFA International had developed 55 model schools as part of the school safety programme and worked in the remotest of areas.

The school safety programme includes eight components which are Covid-appropriate behaviour, disaster risk reduction, gender-based violence, elimination of violence against

children, menstrual hygiene management, climate change and mental health psychosocial support.

Water points and sanitary napkin dispensers installed by ELFA International had helped students a lot during COVID-19. The programme was transferred to many homes through students and benefited many people.

As part of the programme, UNICEF and partner worked in more than 1,000 schools across Jammu and Kashmir; and under the programme, over 217 master trainers (33% females) and 2,090 teachers (42% females), 33,153 students (58% females) and 2155 community members (52% females) were trained and sensitized.

A comprehensive action plan-based school safety manual was prepared based on the 'Whole School Safety guidelines' of the Ministry of Education. It was developed in partnership with the Directorate of Samagra Shiksha, Directorate of School Education and with the technical support of UNICEF. This manual will be sent to all 23,000 schools in Jammu and Kashmir.

Human Interest Story. “I can become a journalist after graduation”, Amit Kumar

Amit shares, “the career portal has not only helped me getting information on various courses for professional careers but also has provided lots of information on scholarships and entrance exams. I used to struggle alone or with my friends in getting proper guidance on career options. There were some senior students who used to go to Agra or Jaipur for further studies were the only limited source I had for career information. Now Rajiv Gandhi Career Guidance Portal has filled this gap.”



Amit Kumar is a student of grade XI from Government Senior Secondary School, Raajarai, Village Raharai, Block Sarmathura of district Dhaulpur. He has one brother and one sister in his family and his father is a farmer. Their family is on the Government's Below Poverty List (BPL). His mother, a homemaker, helps him and motivates him in pursuing higher studies.

He said that “I opted for Arts stream with political science, geography and Hindi literature as my core subjects. Someone told me that these subjects are very low-paid subjects, and I would not get many options in life for career growth. I loved political science and geography and wanted to study further but didn't know what jobs I would be getting near my place. I wished I could get guidance from someone who helps me in getting more information about my career prospects.” When Amit was struggling with these questions, he was told about Rajiv Gandhi Career Guidance Portal by one of his teachers. The teacher told him about the career portal and demonstrated how to log in to the career portal. Amit has a smart classroom in his school, and the teacher demonstrated the portal in the room.

Amit said, “when my teacher was explaining about how to explore different career options, I

asked about career options in political science. He said that you should explore on your own and see how many career options there are in political science. You will be getting multiple pathways to get to a particular career option.” During the Covid pandemic, it was difficult to use the career portal because school was closed, and I didn’t have a mobile phone to access the career portal. After school reopened, one day Amit’s school principal informed students that Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan and UNICEF were organizing a webinar on the career portal. Amit participated in the webinar from his school smart classroom and learnt about the various pathways towards his career choice.

Amit said “I checked in the career portal and found that I can become a journalist after doing my graduation with political science, and some good colleges are close to my place in MP state. I can also opt for civil services and research in some reputed institutes in the country. Now I have multiple options in life and when I discuss these with my parents, they feel happy and confident about my life. Thanks to my teachers and school principal who guided me to the career portal.”