

# NEWS UPDATE

NOVEMBER 2021



“Alone we can do so little; together we can do so much.”

— HELEN KELLER



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# INTRODUCTION

## HISTORY OF M S INTERNATIONAL, INC.

Manu and Rika Shah founded MSI in 1975, in the basement of their home in Ft. Wayne, Indiana. MSI is now the largest importer and distributor in the world of Premium Surfaces including granite, marble, porcelain and ceramic tiles, slate, travertine, limestone and other natural stone products from 37 countries. Most notably, MSI provided the granite for the Vietnam Memorial in DC.

Manu and Rika Shah established Sarva Mangal Family Trust (Sarva Mangal means 'let all be happy' in Sanskrit) over 20 years ago with compassion as their driving force for philanthropy. Manu's vision for SMFT is to act as a catalyst, challenge status quo, nurture passionate change-makers and support leapfrogging ideas that are scalable and sustainable. Today, all members from the Shah family are involved in social impact initiatives that are undertaken by SMFT. Manu supports VOSAP – Voice of Specially Abled People, which has created over 10,000 change makers and rated over 18,000 buildings rated for accessibility. He also supports Lend a hand India, which provides digital vocational training to over 300,000 students in 20,000 schools.

In 2007, Mr. Manu Shah was named Ernst & Young's national "Entrepreneur of the Year" in the distribution, manufacturing, and security category.

## ABOUT SARVA MANGAL FAMILY TRUST

Established in 1994 by the Founders of M S International, Inc. The mission of the Sarva Mangal Family Trust is to improve and strengthen the health, education and wellness of communities and help them prepare for global jobs of the 21st century. Sarva Mangal is a Sanskrit word which means "Goodness to All."

To advance this mission, the Sarva Mangal Family Trust has donated to and is continuing to work with various organizations and programs in health promotion and prevention, assisting victims of domestic violence, empowering seniors, entrepreneurship, technological literacy, community activism, and children's education.

## MONTHLY HIGHLIGHTS



### RELIEF EFFORTS DURING THE GLOBAL COVID-19 PANDEMIC

The Covid-19 pandemic negatively impacted many lives, and SMFT looked for ways to make an overall positive global impact. Over **18 million lives** were positively impacted through SMFT's Covid-19 relief efforts. **16.8 million people** received Covid-19 related health awareness. SMFT funded over **100,000 vaccination dosages** which were administered to the most vulnerable communities including persons with disabilities, indigenous groups, sex workers, women working in unorganized sectors and migrant worker.

## PHILANTHROPY IN NOVEMBER'21

### TUSTIN PUBLIC SCHOOLS FOUNDATION



SMFT started providing academic scholarships to college-bound, high-school seniors who excel academically, exhibit exceptional leadership potential, participate in community service activities, & demonstrate financial need. The scholarships were granted to high school students from Tustin Public Schools Foundation in Southern California. The students who received the scholarships are on their way to the universities of Portland and Southern California, for their undergraduate studies. The scholarships were provided as a result of a rigorous vetting process, where the applicants shared their academic/career goals, and their inspiration to pursue education and create an impact in their communities.



### GIRLS INC.



Girls Inc. of Orange County has been a respected member of the non-profit community since 1954. The mission of Girls Inc. is to inspire all girls to be strong, smart, and bold. They put their mission into practice through the Girls Inc. experience that equips girls to navigate gender, economic, and social barriers and grow into healthy, educated and independent adults. Health, education and independence are the three main areas that surround their program curricula. The organization provides programs in communities with priority given to those areas where the need is greatest. SMFT donated laptops to girls at Girls Inc. to help them transition to online learning during COVID-19.



# PHILANTHROPY IN NOVEMBER'21

## ANAHEIM HEALTH FAIR



SMFT donated to the Anaheim Health Fair to provide free health care services to over 3,000 people comprised of children, college students, senior citizens, recent immigrants, and homeless individuals programming in Anaheim and Orange County. The health fair features free medical, dental and vision services for the community. To have access to healthcare can be challenging, which is why more than 150 doctors, healthcare professionals and community members join together to make this event possible. Free health services include: dental extractions and fillings, vision services, Covid – 19 vaccines, flu shots, EKG, physicals, hearing tests, chiropractor, acupuncture, bone density assessment, diabetes, cholesterol, hemoglobin testing, mammograms, pap smears and specialist consultation.



## PRETEND CITY

## CHILDREN'S MUSEUM



SMFT donated to Pretend City Children's Museum which is "the world in a nut-shell", designed for children to learn how the real world works while engaging their curiosities and imaginations. The museum is a child-size interconnected city built to balance rich educational intention with boundless fun, where children can assume various real-world roles and let their creativity rule. Through interactive exhibits and activities facilitated by trained professional staff, children learn foundational math, reading and science skills while fostering curiosity, creativity, critical thinking, problem-solving, and teamwork. They see how academic concepts have real-life application by learning in a unique, hands-on environment.



## EVENT – HALLOWEEN PARTY FOR EMPLOYEES AND FAMILIES



**October, 2021 - MSI in Orange County** organized a Halloween Party for employees and their family members. Over 500 MSI employees attended the party along with their family members, dressed as their favorite super heroes, paranormal entities, and in some cases their preferred food dishes. All in all, an event of such scale and splendor clearly underscored M S International's community building efforts, and their motto of having fun while making dream surfaces attainable.



## NGO IN FOCUS FOR NOVEMBER'21 – PRATHAM



Pratham is an innovative learning organization created to improve the quality of education in India. As one of the largest non-governmental organizations in the country, Pratham focuses on high-quality, low-cost, and replicable interventions to address gaps in the education system. Established in 1995 to provide education to children in the slums of Mumbai, Pratham has grown both in scope and geographical coverage.

PraDigi is Pratham's digital Initiative to create an open learning mechanism to help children and youth prepare for school, work and life. They create content, build technology, drive research and design programs that can encourage and support self-organized learning for groups and individuals, through many interactive

methods in 11 regional languages and age groups across 3-18+.

### Updates and Achievements:

- **Programs**

- a. Hybrid Learning: Pratham's community-based hybrid learning initiative reaches over 50000 children aged 10-14 years across 1000 communities in Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, Karnataka and Maharashtra. Built on 2 principles - 1) it takes a village to educate a child, and 2) children are naturally inclined to learn - the program utilizes digital infrastructure, community structures and interactive digital content to create a digital learning environment for children and youth. The model has been recognized by the World [Economic forum](#) as a School of the Future and by [Observer Research Foundation](#) as a successful model that can be replicated in East Africa.
- b. YouthNet: YouthNet is a remote learning program aimed to equip learners between the ages of 14 to 25 with vocational and life skills that prepares them for work and life. The program leverages existing digital infrastructure within rural communities combined with an online learning portal to create an ecosystem of collaborative and experiential learning for more than 60,000 youth across 10,000 communities.
- c. Karona Apni Suraksha: Pratham's covid response to tackle the widespread misinformation surrounding the pandemic. Informative content was created and disseminated through a variety of mediums such as videos, SMS, audios, posters, WhatsApp messages, and discussion platforms, in 11 regional languages, reaching 20,000 communities across the country. Additionally, a Covid-19 Health Champion course was also designed to enable village youth to become community-level health champions

## NGO IN FOCUS FOR NOVEMBER'21 – PRATHAM (Cont.)

- **Research:** PraDigi is actively involved in research to leverage machine learning to focus on problems unique to creating learning experiences. Some examples include automated speech recognition to aid early reading improvements, automated assessment of free-text answers, presented at [IEEE](#). They recently also presented a study on [Leveraging Facebook Groups to Upskill Youth in Rural India](#) at UKFEIT.
- **Technology:** PraDigi focuses on building technology products that cater to learners in low-resource settings. In addition to interactive [learning applications](#), PraDigi has developed low-tech tools such as a [WhatsApp bot](#) for creative learning. They also develop custom apps for specific needs such as a tool to merge audio recording and text to generate an interactive story reading tool.
- **Content:** To encourage and support self-learning, project-based learning and experiential learning for groups and individuals - PraDigi includes a [repository](#) of more than 7000+ resources in 13 languages and designed with 90+ partners. The content focuses on learning for school, work and life and is disseminated through multiple channels and is hosted on 12+ [youtube channels](#). Recently, PraDigi is also creating and curating a repository of 1000 stories, in a variety of formats and languages, along with highlighted reading versions to ensure better engagement.
- **Creat-Ed Africa:** Based on our learnings in India, PraDigi recently conducted an EdTech masterclass series, where each session tackled a specific issue of EdTech adoption in low-tech conditions to strengthen development practitioners' capacity to address it.
- **HundrED Global Collection:** PraDigi Open Learning was recently selected as one of the most impactful and scalable innovations in the world by global education non-profit HundrED.org for the HundrED 2022 Global Collection. Read more here: <https://bit.ly/3weArQk>
- **Education South Asia:** Pratham Code Club was recently spotlighted at the Education South Asia Conference 2021 hosted by the University of Oxford. View the feature with Raspberry Pi Foundation [here](#), and read the abstract [here](#).

The Pratham Shah PraDigi Innovation centre has been established to build upon the investment made by Sarva Mangal Family Trust over the past 5 years. This is an effort to accelerate digital transformation of Pratham and bring innovative low-tech EdTech solutions for rural India and the world.



## SUCCESS STORY – PRATHAM



**Name:** Roman

**Program:** Hybrid Learning

**Location:** Ghuripur, Sakran, Sitapur, Uttar Pradesh

"Good evening ma'am," said a group of 20 children sitting on a cot and a few on the mat in a front yard. They had books, tablets, and beautifully-made models in front of them. As they started showing us their work, "do you study here every day?" I asked. "Yes, every day from 4 - 5 pm," said everyone unanimously. "Roman bhaiya helps us with our studies!" - A voice came from the background that caught my interest and immediately I asked for him.

A confused and startled 18-year old, Roman Choudhary, stepped outside his door to find a huge crowd standing in front of his house. Roman was a part of the hybrid learning program and now is a coach. He is pursuing his interest and has chosen biology, physics, and chemistry as his subjects. "Do you teach children out of your own interest?" I questioned, not expecting where the conversation would take us. "I used to teach children using chalk and would write on the wall. In March 2020, the principal of the nearest government primary school happened to be walking through our area and noticed me teaching children. He was impressed and invited me to come by the school the next day to pick up board and chalks and teach children properly. Sir asked me to support the school by educating children throughout the pandemic so that their academics don't get affected," he said, with a sense of content and accomplishment in his voice. When asked if he wants to be a teacher, he replied, "I don't know. All I know is that the children will study if we will study. We will remember the principles and concepts better if we will teach them, and will acquire teaching experience as well. It's a win-win situation for both parties!"

Again, a voice chipped in from behind, saying, "Ma'am, he makes innovative models, ask him to show you" prompting Roman to smile shyly. Roman's journey began when he first watched a video on the 'air rocket (vaayu wala rocket)' on the tablet, which inspired him to build a ship based on the same concept using a mobile battery and thermocol. When I asked him if he tested his model somewhere, he replied with excitement, "In a puddle (pokhar) near our village and it reached the other side!" He even built a model of his village using cardboard and thermocol, comprising a temple, school, community well, hand pump, a few houses, and multi-story buildings. "I settled the whole village within that model! (poora gaon basa diye the hum uss model mei)," said Roman light-heartedly, lifting up everyone's mood.

## SUCCESS STORY – PRATHAM (Cont.)

Power outages are common in Ghuripur village, which disrupts children's' studies. In search of a solution, Roman decided to seek inspiration from Edison and create a light bulb that would provide him with enough battery backup to study at night. He visited the far-away market to procure the material required to build it. A few failed attempts later, he created a bulb using a mobile battery with a backup of 5-hours and a function to control its brightness. "Even when I'm disappointed, I always take the failure in stride," Roman added, holding up his light bulb that shone a spotlight on his face.

Roman played Bollywood songs on a Bluetooth speaker that he fashioned out of waste material from his surroundings. When I inquired if he had watched any videos for reference, he lowered the volume to respond, "No, I had an old speaker at home owned by my brother. One day, I decided to open it up and understand how it functioned. After four unsuccessful attempts, I completed this one in two days using cardboard."

When I asked about his aspirations, he went silent. After a long pause, he hesitantly said, "Ma'am, my financial condition is not well. I don't want to dream and then feel disheartened if it doesn't come true." After another few seconds of silence, Roman realized that children were looking at him, and he further added, "One thing I know is that whatever I do, I will do to serve my country and my village so that they shine just as bright as this bulb."



## SUCCESS STORY – AMERICAN INDIA FOUNDATION



**Name: Mahesh N**

**Project: Market Aligned Skills Training**

**Location: Mysore, Karnataka**

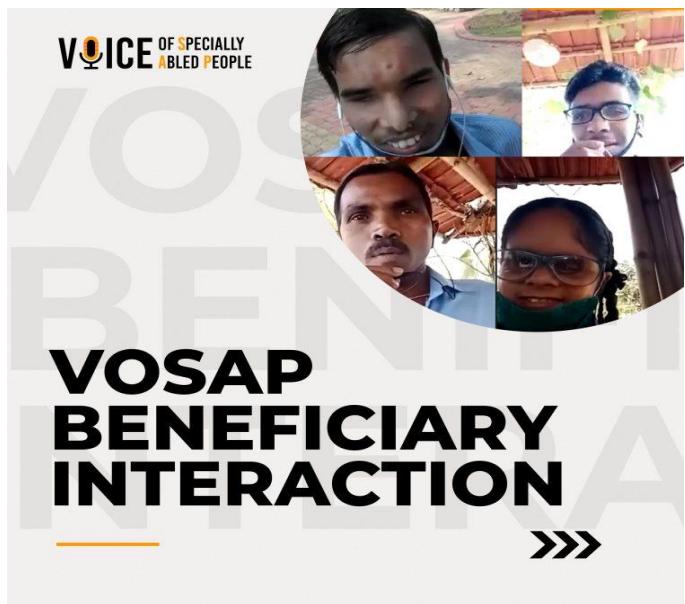
Mahesh's family includes 3 members comprising of his mother, father and himself. After completing 10th grade he joined ITI fitter trade but unfortunately, he was unable to continue his studies because of financial crisis in the family. His father who is a daily wage earner by profession lost his job due to pandemic and mother is a homemaker. Mahesh got very disappointed because he

had to discontinue his studies and could not do anything to improve the financial situation of his family.

American India Foundation's Skill Development Centre Team at Mysore visited ITI College where Mahesh used to study and collected students' database from the college. With the help of the data base they got in touch with Mahesh and explained about the Skill Development Centre. Initially Mahesh, because he had lost all hopes refused to join the course but then the Centre team visited his house, counselled him and explained the benefits of the Domestic and Home Appliance Repair course. He with an ambition to become a good electrician made up his mind and decided to join the course.

During the training he gained interest in electrical appliances. After completing the Domestic and Home Appliance Repair course he started as a freelancer and did door to door service of home appliances repairing with which he manages to earn Rs 2000 - 3000 every month. In the evening he works in a battery service repair Centre as an assistant electrician and earns around Rs 6000 - 7000 per month. He is now able to repair all types of domestic electrical appliances like mixer, grinder, iron box, geyser etc. and also does domestic wiring installation. At present, he is earning around Rs 8000 - 9000 per month. He feels his confidence level has improved after joining the Skill Development Centre and his decision to join the Centre has changed his life for the better.

## SUCCESS STORY – VOICE OF SPECIALLY ABLED PEOPLE



**Story:** Meeting Of VOSAP Leadership Team

**With Students From Dang**

**Project:** Individual Enablement with  
Assistive Devices

**Location:** Dang, Gujarat

VOSAP hosted a meeting with students of Andhajan Shala, Shivalimal, in Dang district. 37 Visually Impaired students of this School received Daisy Player (Angel Device) and Samsung Galaxy A10 Smartphones from

VOSAP. This call was hosted to know the progress of the students and how the use of Smartphones and Angel Device has helped them to do better in their lives.

The program began with the General Introduction of the School by Principal, Sureshji and its efforts to provide a good education and better life to 173 resident students with disabilities. Key to learn was that even though remote in the tribal area of Dang district, school has bold goals to digitize and offer courses, hire computer experts as teachers etc. Parents of these beneficiaries are workers in farms and these students live in the hostel. Pranav Desaiji addressed beneficiaries of VOSAP (students of grade 8 to 12) and asked them about their aspirations and dreams.

Here are some inspiring stories of students' conversations:

**Venilal Maldharya** received an Angel Device from VOSAP. He uses an Angel device to record lectures and listen to them later. He has installed audio books in SD Card and uses it for his studies.

Several volunteers of VOSAP from the US joined the zoom call and talked to students, inspiring them and learning more about opportunities to extend help to further improve their lives.

The conversation with these students was pleasant and inspiring.

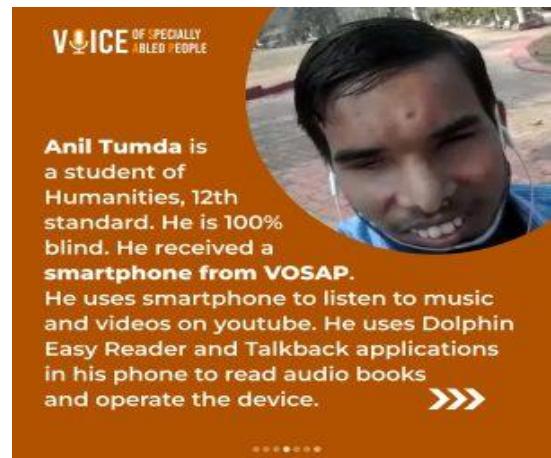
## SUCCESS STORY – VOICE OF SPECIALLY ABLED PEOPLE (Cont.)

**Palak Desai** is a 11th grade Humanities student and is 100% blind. She received a smartphone from Voice of Specially Abled People. She aims to become a Historian. She uses smartphone to listen to audio books, download study materials from an online library. She has also learnt how to operate computers and typewriters. She is also helping other students to use smartphones, computers etc.



**Palak Desai** is a student of Humanities, 11th Standard and is 100% blind. She received a **smartphone from VOSAP**. She aims to become Historian. She uses smartphone to listen to audio books, download study materials from an online library. She has also learnt how to operate computers and typewriters. She is also helping other students with how to use smartphones, computers etc. ➤➤➤

**Anil Tumda** is a 12th grade Humanities student and is 100% blind. He received a smartphone from Voice of Specially Abled People. He uses smartphone to listen to music and videos on YouTube. He uses Dolphin Easy Reader and Talkback applications in his phone to read audio books and operate the device.



Link: [https://youtu.be/\\_IrdIC2clzk](https://youtu.be/_IrdIC2clzk)

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