

VAHDAM®
INDIA

Feel Alive

IMPACT REPORT 2023
WITH ESG INITIATIVES



*From decadent Darjeeling to enigmatic Earl Grey,
From tantalizing Turmeric to mesmerizing Matcha,
From zingy Ginger to heavenly Hibiscus,*

*Every cup of tea
Every pinch of spice
is more than the leaf or the root or the seed,*

At VAHDAM®

*It is passion and pride
It is joy and happiness
It is emotion and empathy*

*Every cup of tea and every pinch of spice is a
passionate, joyful and emotional celebration of
this minor adventure we call life...*

VAHDAM®
INDIA

Feel Alive



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SCOPE, APPROACH AND FRAMEWORKS FOR ESG

2023 saw us continuing our ESG journey that began in 2021 with small steps. This is our second Impact Report with ESG initiatives. During 2022, we further defined the scope and framework of our ESG interventions, following the roadmap using the ESG dashboard that we had created with clearly benchmarked goals, vision and ambitions.

In this Impact Report 2022-23, we showcase our progress and actions on each of the ESG pillars. Our disclosures mirror our intent of total and voluntary transparency in our reporting practices and address the growing interest and expectations of our global stakeholders across environmental, social and governance domains.





SCOPE AND REPORTING APPROACH

Our ESG reporting has been prepared in accordance with the GRI Standards (comprehensive) option. The reporting scope and boundary for our disclosures, unless otherwise stated, cover the operations of VAHDAM® Teas Private Limited and its subsidiaries. The reporting period is the financial year 2022-23.

As a Direct-to-Consumer (D2C) business operating in the Consumer Packaged Goods (CPG) space, our products, our packaging, our production practices and our people form the core of all our physical activities and assets. We constantly endeavor to become progressively sustainable in each of these, by changing not only methods, but also mindsets as we believe that a cup of tea from VAHDAM® India is also a cup of change.

We engage with multiple stakeholders to improve our product and packaging, engage with the tea industry and NGOs to empower children through education and scholarships, and remain net-zero in our carbon and plastic usage.

“
**At VAHDAM® India,
every cup of tea and
every box of spice is
a celebration of life
to feel alive.**





ESG GOVERNANCE FRAMEWORK

Our ESG Governance Framework emanates from the ESG Vision & Ambitions for 2030 which we launched in 2021. This, in turn, is driven by VAHDAM® India's commitment to people and the planet, TEACH ME™ and Sustainability. Key priorities are the expansion of TEACH ME™ - our flagship CSR program to more tea estates and schools as well as spice and herbs growing regions of India, a happy and healthy workplace for our employees, and becoming more sustainable in our products and packaging through responsible procurement and supply chain.



Key ESG Topics

This report is designed to provide our investors and other stakeholders with information about how VAHDAM® India manages relevant ESG topics. Our ESG management and reporting approach centres on six key principles:

1. Engaging with Stakeholders

We proactively and regularly engage with our key stakeholders to identify and address their concerns and communicate the long-term value opportunities associated with our business plans. We incorporate stakeholder feedback into our reporting and actions. Our efforts are meant to address what matters most to our stakeholders.

2. Material Topics

We focus our reporting on the ESG topics representing the key material risks and opportunities for our business. Materiality is used in a sustainability context for this report and refers to our ESG priorities as determined within the frameworks used and with input from our stakeholders.

3. Risk Management

We evaluate how strategic, operational, business and industry risks can impact our success as a

company. We are in the process of formalizing a comprehensive Risk Management under the leadership of the Chief Supply Chain Officer to identify, evaluate and mitigate sourcing and supply chain risks.

As an international company working in a globalized industry, we are informed and responsive to environmental and social trends, as this is a key part of our risk management process and necessary to achieve our long-term vision.

4. Implementing ESG Reporting Best Practices

We aim to accelerate our ESG journey by adopting and implementing the best practices in ESG reporting. We are continuously working towards transparency and full disclosure to all our investors and stakeholders, and aspire to industry-leading standards in corporate reporting.



5. ESG Committee

Our Board instituted an ESG Committee to discharge its oversight responsibility on matters related to organization-wide ESG initiatives, priorities, and leading ESG practices.



The ESG Committee



Bala Sarda
Founder and Chief
Executive Officer



Amlan Mukherjee
Chief Supply Chain
Officer



Sneha Beriwal
Chief Marketing
Officer



Ketan Desai
Chief Sustainability
Officer



Reemsha Reen
Fireside Venture
(by invitation)



Kabir Sethi
Dalberg India
(by invitation)

The ESG Committee meets periodically and guides the Board in discharging its responsibilities.





6. Approach to Materiality

Materiality Assessment continues to be an important tool underpinning our larger business strategy. It also helps in analysing priorities according to their importance for external and internal stakeholders as well as their impact on our business success. While deciding on the priorities for the company, we were guided by the GRI Standard principles of materiality, stakeholder inclusiveness, sustainability context and completeness. We continuously refine our disclosures in line with the standard.

The results of the process were reviewed and discussed comprehensively by our Corporate Responsibility Governance Committee as well as the Board of Directors.

Acknowledgements

VAHDAM® India is grateful to all its stakeholders for their valued guidance, understanding and support as we navigated through yet another challenging year. In particular, we would like to acknowledge the team at Fireside Venture and PwC for evaluating our ESG initiatives and suggesting crucial inputs that have proven to be immensely helpful.

Statutory Disclosures / Forward-Looking

This Report may contain, without limitation, certain statements that include words such as "believes," "expects," "anticipates" and words of similar connotation, which would constitute forward-looking statements. Forward-looking statements are not guarantees of future performance and involve risks and uncertainties that may cause actual performance or results to be materially different from those anticipated in these forward-looking statements. VAHDAM® India is under no obligation to update any forward-looking statements contained herein should material facts change due to new information, future events or otherwise.



FROM THE FOUNDER'S DESK

OVERVIEW OF THE YEAR

After two dreadful and traumatizing years, the menace of COVID-19 finally left us in 2022. Life began to cautiously return to normalcy, and by the latter half of the year, everything had so much returned to pre-covid days, that Covid-19 appeared to be a frightening nightmare.

As lockdowns ceased and workplaces reopened, businesses and all other activities quickly started regaining momentum. With personal interactions and collaborations, new vistas opened up as we left the world of virtual meetings and video calls. For all of us at VAHDAM® India, this meant that we could now finally accelerate our ESG journey with renewed speed and vigor, and accelerate our commitment to **DO GOOD BY DOING GOOD.**

DO GOOD BY DOING GOOD

Ever since I started the VAHDAM® journey in 2015, I wanted to do my bit to alleviate the situation of tea workers. I have always believed that business can and should be forces for good, and this belief led me to **DO GOOD BY DOING GOOD.**

Every cup of tea and every pinch of spice at VAHDAM® is more than the leaf or the root or the stem - it is an experience of joy and a celebration of life. Every VAHDAM® product is an emotion and feeling - **Feel Alive.**

Our holistic ESG focus aims to leverage this unique connection and correlation - product and packaging to people and planet - to define our purpose. As a purpose-led brand, we want to make a long-term and sustainable impact, underpinned and underlined by our Commitment to people and the planet.



HIGHLIGHTS OF THE YEAR

TEACH ME™, our flagship CSR program was started in 2017-18 to empower the children of tea-estate workers with quality education. This year, we refreshed the visual identity and purpose of TEACH ME™ in alignment with VAHDAM India's tagline—Feel Alive. This strategic revamp of TEACH ME™ reflects the larger commitment of TEACH ME™ to create a social impact through digital education beyond tea to spices and herbs. It also mirrors the impact that TEACH ME™ creates in the life of every child—providing the crucial support To Learn, Live and Dream.

As you are all aware, a minimum 1% of our revenue is earmarked for TEACH ME™. I am humbled to say that today, TEACH ME™ has impacted the lives of nearly 14,000 in around 68 tea estates, schools and community centers across West Bengal, Assam and the Nilgiris.

During the year, we shifted the model of

TEACH ME™ to align with the post-covid reality of schools reopening. Throughout 2022-23, we deployed a hybrid model where we worked to build the digital learning capability and capacity of schools with installations of BYJU Smart TVs and Android Boxes. A total of 42 BYJU TVs were installed at 22 locations that are impacting the lives of over 8,000 children.

2022-23 also saw us expand the TEACH ME™ family. Two new NGOs, namely, Terres des Hommes from Switzerland and IDH - The Sustainable Trade Initiative based in the Netherlands, joined the TEACH ME™ family. We also piloted a social empowerment project with Haqdarshak at an estate in South India.

As more colleges resumed and an increasing number of young people rejoined colleges, 24 fresh VAHDAM® India Scholarships for Higher Education were also granted, bringing the total number of scholarships to 48.

Our ongoing partnerships with CRY, CINI and Broadleaf (USA), continued to impact the lives of school children in the tea estates of Darjeeling, while our Child Activity Centres (CAC) at Rohini and Goomtee tea estates are now an integral part of the local community, with deep appreciation by local and state governments as well as parents and estate management.



Environmental & Sustainability Initiatives

Our net-zero aim for both emissions and plastics continued with the renewal of climate neutral and plastic neutral certifications. This is the third year in a row that we have been climate and plastic neutral, ensuring that the net effect to the environment from our carbon footprint and plastic footprint is zero.

As early members of the India Plastics Pact, we worked with the government and other industry partners to develop and enable solutions to eliminate the plastic waste problem in India and bring innovation to the way plastic is designed, used and reused. In Europe, we renewed our EPR in France and Germany.

During the year, we continued exploring new packing and packaging materials and technologies to reduce/replace plastics with recycled/recyclable or sustainable materials. All our pyramid tea bags are now made with 100% Non-GMO cornstarch called PLA (Poly Lactic Acid) that industrially de-composts within four days and home-composts within 22- 44 months.

In 2022-23, we launched the ESG Policy Framework which encapsulates of long-term ESG vision. We also launched the VAHDAM® India Environment & Sustainability Policy as well as our Statement of Purpose (SOP) on Climate Change. Our B Corporation certification process completed the evaluation stage and is now in the verification stage. We are expecting to become a B-certified corporation this year.

Other Initiatives

In February 2023, we were officially certified as a GREAT PLACE TO WORK by Great Place to Work Institute, India. This makes us one for the few mid-sized organizations, particularly among start-ups, to get this certification.

In the month of March 2023, we also initiated our maiden Social Impact Evaluation Assessment conducted by Consultivo. This is the first time that the long-term social impact of TEACH ME™ has been monitored and evaluated by an independent third-party agency. After the snapshot analysis, the agency will dive deeper into the TEACH ME™ program through a combination of physical and digital engagements with the

children. The final report from the agency will be presented in an annual report in March 2024.

With a sharper focus on hastening the ESG journey, a dedicated ESG Committee was formed during the year. Besides senior management from VAHDAM® India, the ESG Committee has a representative of Fireside Ventures, by invitation. The ESG Committee meets on a quarterly basis and updates the Board on the progress made on the ESG journey of the company.





Lastly, while we won many awards for our marketing and products, we are proud to have been nominated this year again for DIGIDAY Greater Good Awards (for education). Last year, we won this award. Our Chief Sustainability Officer was also invited by the Digiday team as a jury member for two Digiday awards.

Under the leadership of our young and dynamic Chief Human Resource Officer, numerous employee engagement events were conducted during the year. A new quarterly performance management system was also introduced with clearly defined KPIs and their linkages to yearly performance-based incentives. Training, workshops and refresher courses were held with key employee groups throughout the year to ensure every employee is both aware and abreast of the latest developments within the company as well as within their functional fields.





While 2022-23 brought with it a new set of challenges, particularly on the macro-front, I am happy that as a team and as a company, we navigated these successfully. In the post-covid world, we will have to recalibrate and rethink our business strategies in sync with the new realities - that is part and parcel of evolution and growth - but what remains firm and fixed is our commitment and determination to DO GOOD BY DOING GOOD. Because every cup is an opportunity; every cup is a cup of change.

I express my heartfelt gratitude to all the stakeholders, well-wishers and mentors of VAHDAM® India for their trust and faith in this amazing and incredible journey. I am grateful for your invaluable guidance and support provided at every stage of the journey. Thank you.

Bala Sarda
Founder & CEO.





OUR VISION

To bring India's finest offerings to the world



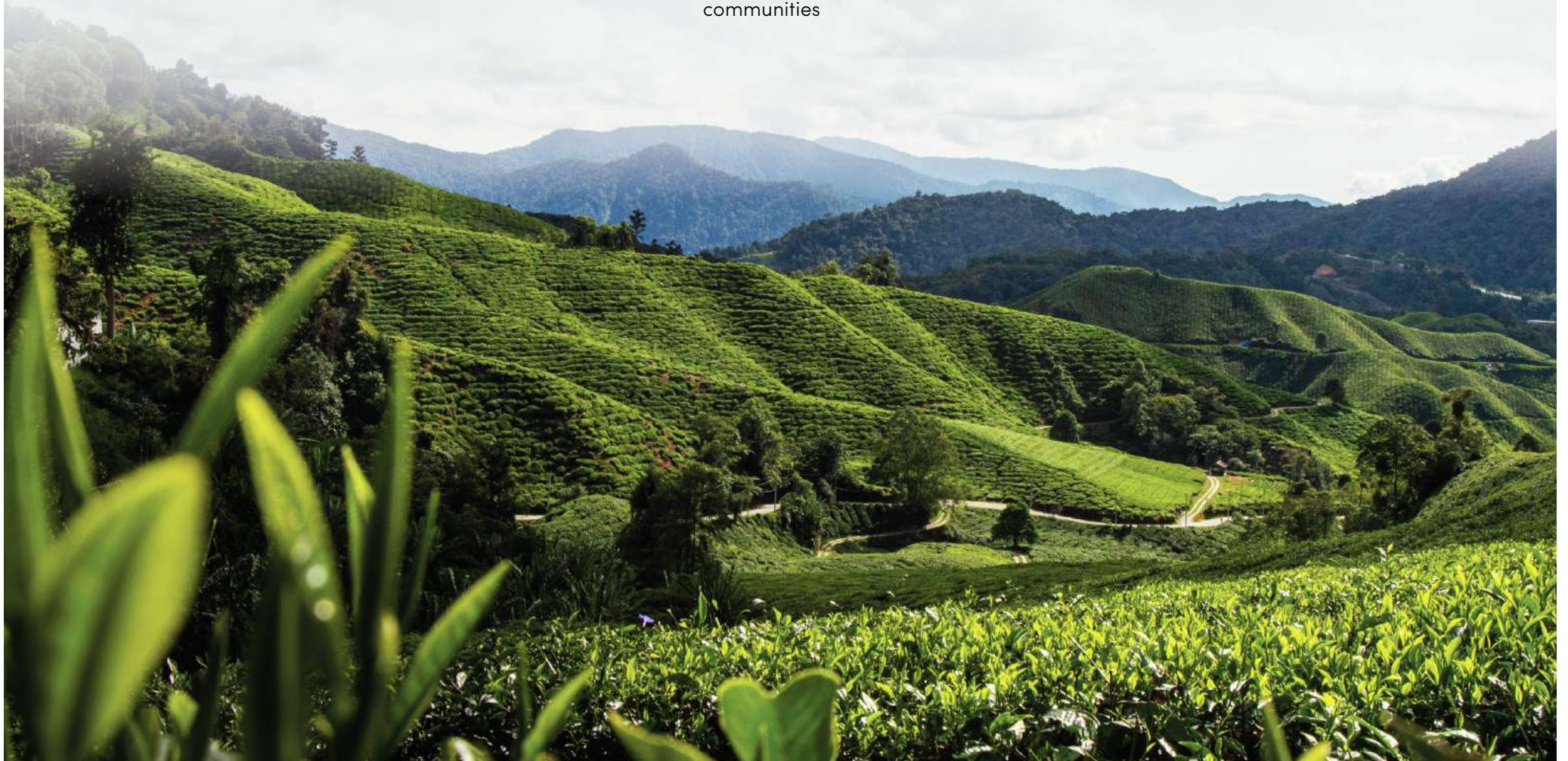
OUR MISSION

To build a globally recognized Indian brand that re-imagines products, re-invents customer experiences, and re-integrates communities



OUR PURPOSE

'Do Good By Doing Good' - this is what truly defines us





Obsessed With Quality

We are obsessed with quality. We strive to achieve the highest standards in product & service. Keeping the feasibility of operations in mind, we streamline our efforts, to never compromise on quality.



Frugality

We have inculcated and imbibed a culture where we have deep respect for resources. Being mindfully frugal, we are very conscious of every resource that we utilize and every expense that we incur. We aim to do more with less, which enables us to redirect and invest more resources into our products & people.

Core Values





Feasible Innovation

Desirability, Viability, and Feasibility: We believe that 'Innovation' is a combination of these three. A Desire to create. The Feasibility of creation. And, the Viability of expanding our business.



Respect, Integrity & Professionalism

Respect, Integrity, and Professionalism nurture a symbiotic and synergistic workplace. We have a zero-tolerance policy towards negativity, disrespect, and any sort of prejudice based on caste, religion, gender, and race. We have fostered a culture of cohesive collaboration that collectively celebrates successes.



Every Task Has Value

Our work and workplace is like a giant jigsaw puzzle, where every piece is equally important in putting together the whole picture. Our equitable and egalitarian culture inculcates and imbibes reciprocity - understanding and appreciating the value of every person and task in the value chain. Every task has value. No work is beneath or above any of us.



Effective Time Management

Effective time management is essential to productivity. Being astute and aware in utilizing time ensures we optimize efforts, personally and collectively. Prudent and pragmatic utilization of time cultivates a culture of efficiency, efficacy, and excellence.



Taking Ownership

Taking Ownership encompasses an overall sense of belongingness. It then translates into taking unequivocal responsibility and undeniable accountability of every task, every project, and every goal at work. Simply put, taking responsibility means ensuring things get done. There is no place for dodge, duck, and divert; nor is there any place to deride, degrade, or discredit others.



Taking Initiative

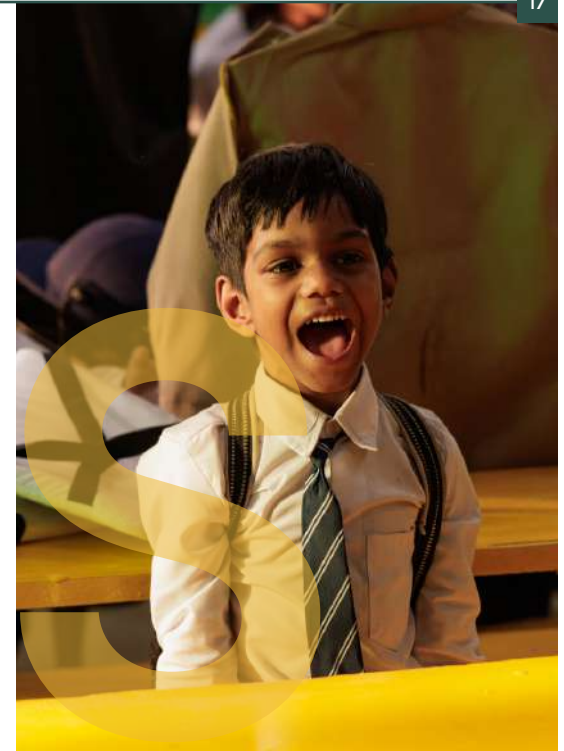
We encourage and celebrate the spirit of enterprise - going above and beyond the ordinary, every day, to accomplish incredible feats. We celebrate people who observe what needs to be done in a situation, decide to take charge and get the job done.



ESG VISION & AMBITION 2030 AND DASHBOARD

In 2021-22, we launched The VAHDAM® India ESG Vision & Ambition 2030. This frames our ESG responsibilities and commitments towards people and the planet, as well as all our stakeholders encompassing our core philosophy of Do Good By Doing Good.

Using the ESG Vision & Ambition 2030, we create various ESG Dashboards to plot a structured roadmap on an annual basis.



Environment

Vision: Consciously caring for people by creating Sustainable positive social impact through education to marginalised, opportunities through higher education and career progression through learning and development.



Climate Change

Draft, launch and implement a Climate Change Policy integrating:

- Responsible and Sustainable Supply Chain with Sustainable Sourcing
- Energy Efficient Operations and Manufacturing
- Progressively reduce Plastic Footprint and endeavour to become Plastic Free in packaging
- Maintain Climate Neutrality
- Maintain Plastic Neutrality
- Deeper Engagement with Vendors and Suppliers
- Explore possibilities of Renewable Energy (under Scope 2 of GHG Emissions)
- Support local schools and community development

Water

- Reduce water usage
- Repurpose water from RO and AC plants
- Engage with the producer community for higher awareness of Water Efficiency

Wastage

- Reduce, reuse and recycle waste from operations
- Reduce and recycle e-waste
- Aim for zero waste to landfill

IPP

- Alignment with IPP's Four Targets



Social

Vision: Consciously caring for people by creating Sustainable positive social impact through education to marginalised, opportunities through higher education and career progression through learning and development



Community and Social Development

Evolve TEACH ME™ as the primary and strategic platform for driving change and impact.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

- Diverse and Inclusive workplace providing gender equality and equal opportunities
- At least 30% women on Board and Leadership positions

TEACH ME™

- Enable 100,000 children with top-quality digital learning and education via partnership.
- Create an in-house team to monitor, measure and report progress with pre-determined KPIs
- Expand outreach of TEACH ME™ to more producers of tea, spices, herbs and coffee.
- Increase direct partnership with TEACH ME™ and tea growers.
- Build Digital Teaching capability of schools.
- Use school outreach to add non-academic skills training to students who want to opt for alternative careers like photography, creative arts, RJ, DJ and so on.
- Support local schools and community development

Scholarships

- Empower 1000 young children of tea-growing areas to pursue their dream of higher education
- Monitor and track progress post higher education to ensure better opportunities

Workplace

Create Responsible, Responsive and Rewarding workplace - safe and secure, happy and healthy

Learning & Development and Engagement

- Continuous Learning and Development
- Best in class people policies with prompt and fair grievance mechanism for any issues
- Provide employees opportunities for volunteering at local schools and communities

Workplace Safety

- Regular Employee Engagement
- Ensure rewarding and fulfilling careers
- Zero Serious Injury and Fatality ("SIF") incidents annually
- Expand safety coaching into performance conversations for all employees by 2022



Governance

Vision: Consciously caring for all stakeholders through total transparency in reporting, compliance and engagement leading to maximisation of stakeholder value.



ESG Policy

- Create, launch and implement a detailed ESG Policy Framework and KPI's

Corporate Governance

- Ensure total transparency in reporting of financial and non-financial aspects with an aim to gain their trust
- Go beyond statutory to lead voluntary disclosures and set industry benchmark
- Safeguard interests of all stakeholders through regular engagement and feedback
- Ensure robust compliance of laws and integrity in practices
- Active and involved Board to review ESG progress on a regular basis

Materiality

- Yearly identification of Materiality factors and their impact of business and stakeholders

Risk Management

- Create a detailed Risk Management framework identifying financial, operational, supply-chain, ESG and other business risks, their mitigation and impact on business

Integrity

- All employees, directors and officers complete mandatory Code of Ethics training annually
- Zero-tolerance policy for corruption and bribery as well as anti-competitive practices"

Data and Digital Safety

- Ensure safety of digital data of all stakeholders
- Create robust IT systems to ensure privacy of data



ENVIRONMENTAL INITIATIVES

VAHDAM® India has successfully renewed its Climate Neutral and Plastic Neutral certifications, showcasing its commitment to environmental sustainability. As part of the company's efforts, we have also converted the entire line of Pyramid teabags from food-grade nylon to plant-based PLA material, which is more environmentally friendly. Additionally, the company has introduced recyclable pouches for tea and spices and redesigned various packaging to be more sustainable.

To further strengthen its sustainability initiatives, the company has formed a 6-member ESG Committee with two external members. VAHDAM® India has also launched an Environment & Sustainability and a Climate Change Statement of Purpose and Processes. Finally, we signed an agreement with an external agency for the responsible disposal of hazardous waste, demonstrating its dedication to environmental stewardship.



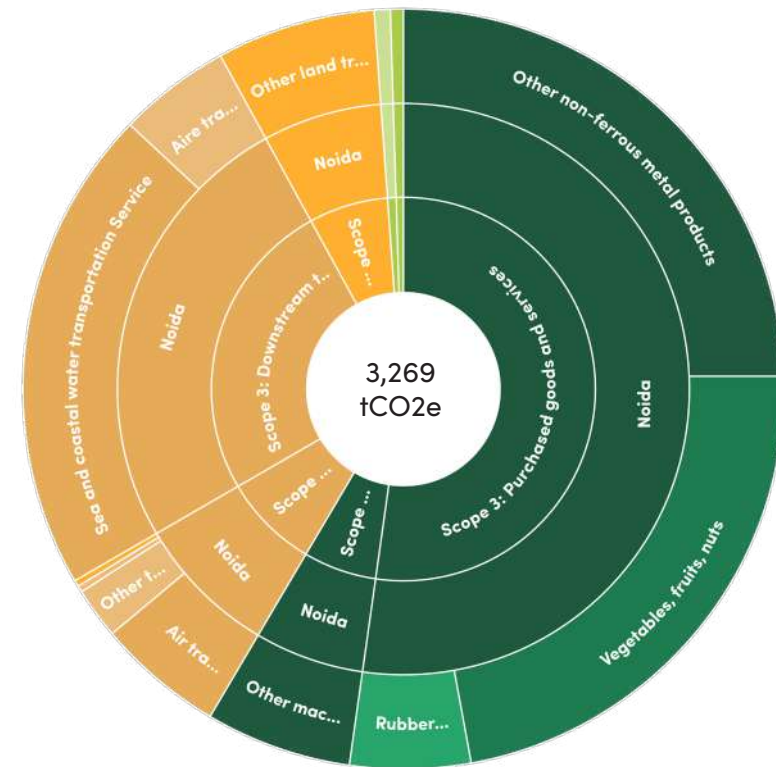
CLIMATE NEUTRAL

As part of our overarching goal to become and remain a net-zero emissions organization, we have been measuring and offsetting our carbon emissions since the year 2019.

We work with CarbonNeutral.org (CN) - a US-based non-profit organization working to eliminate carbon emissions. CN has been working with over 300 brands and has offset over 800,000 tonnes of carbon since its inception.

From 2022, CN has allowed us to shift our renewal from the beginning of the year to mid of year. Accordingly, our renewal process will begin in the month of April/May 2023, and our climate neutral certification will be renewed in the month of May/June 2023.

Our total carbon footprint for the year 2021 was 3,269 tCO2e.



“Our Carbon footprint per unit of revenue decreased by over 21% in the last 3 years.”

In line with our focus on process optimization, we expect that for the year 2022 too, we will continue with this trend of decreasing our carbon footprint per USD 1 million of revenue. Our dedicated factory and production teams initiated several local-level innovations that have resulted in small but significant savings in energy and costs. All these add up to a remarkable reduction in our energy consumption and a lower carbon footprint.



Carbon Offset

Over the last three years, we have been offsetting our carbon footprint by purchasing verified carbon credits from Gold Standard Foundation, Switzerland.

About GoldStandard.Org

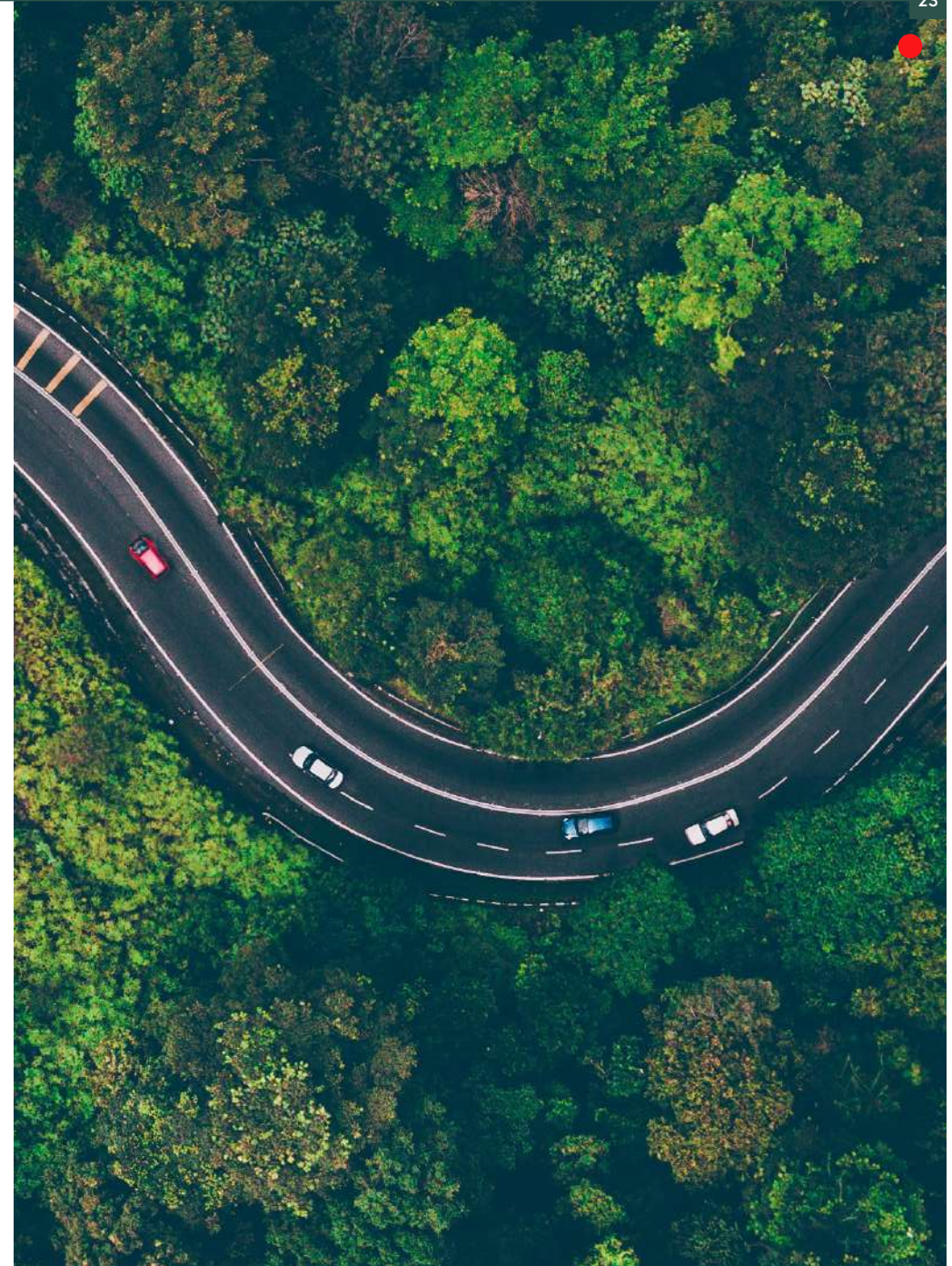
Gold Standard was established in 2003 by WWF and other international NGOs as a best practice standard to ensure projects that reduced carbon emissions featured the highest levels of environmental integrity and contributed to sustainable development. All Gold Standard-certified projects and programs accelerate progress toward the Net-Zero ambition of the Paris Climate Agreement while catalyzing impact toward the broader Sustainable Development Goals, helping the world #GrowToZero.

Gold Standard allows climate and development initiatives to quantify, certify and maximize their impacts toward climate security and sustainable development. Certification against the standard provides the confidence that these results are measured and verified, enabling credible impact reporting.

Supporting Green Projects In India

While purchasing carbon credits, VAHDAM® India always looks at supporting green energy projects that are based in India. Over the last three years, we have supported projects generating clean and renewable energy, particularly wind and solar power.

For the year 2023, we will continue to support renewable energy projects in India by purchasing carbon credits to offset our carbon footprint. Details of specific projects will be showcased in our next year's Impact Report.



Reduction

As a responsible brand, VAHDAM® India has constantly endeavored to improve processes and optimize operations to reduce our carbon footprint and become more energy efficient. Our logistics, including upstream and downstream shipping, form a major part of our carbon footprint. We have been progressively working to reduce shipments by air and use the more energy-efficient sea mode of shipment. Another priority area for us has been reducing business travel. We have made overseas business travel allowable only if it is 'absolutely' necessary. Also, we have clubbed multiple meetings/trips to ensure there is maximum utilization of the travel.

PLASTIC NEUTRAL

As a consumer packaged goods business (CPG), products and packaging form the core of all our activities. Our products are natural and agricultural - tea, spices and herbs. All these are extremely sensitive and hygroscopic, and therefore, packaging plays a critical role in ensuring the quality and safety of our products, necessitating the use of plastic for its water-proofing, moisture and odor barrier properties.

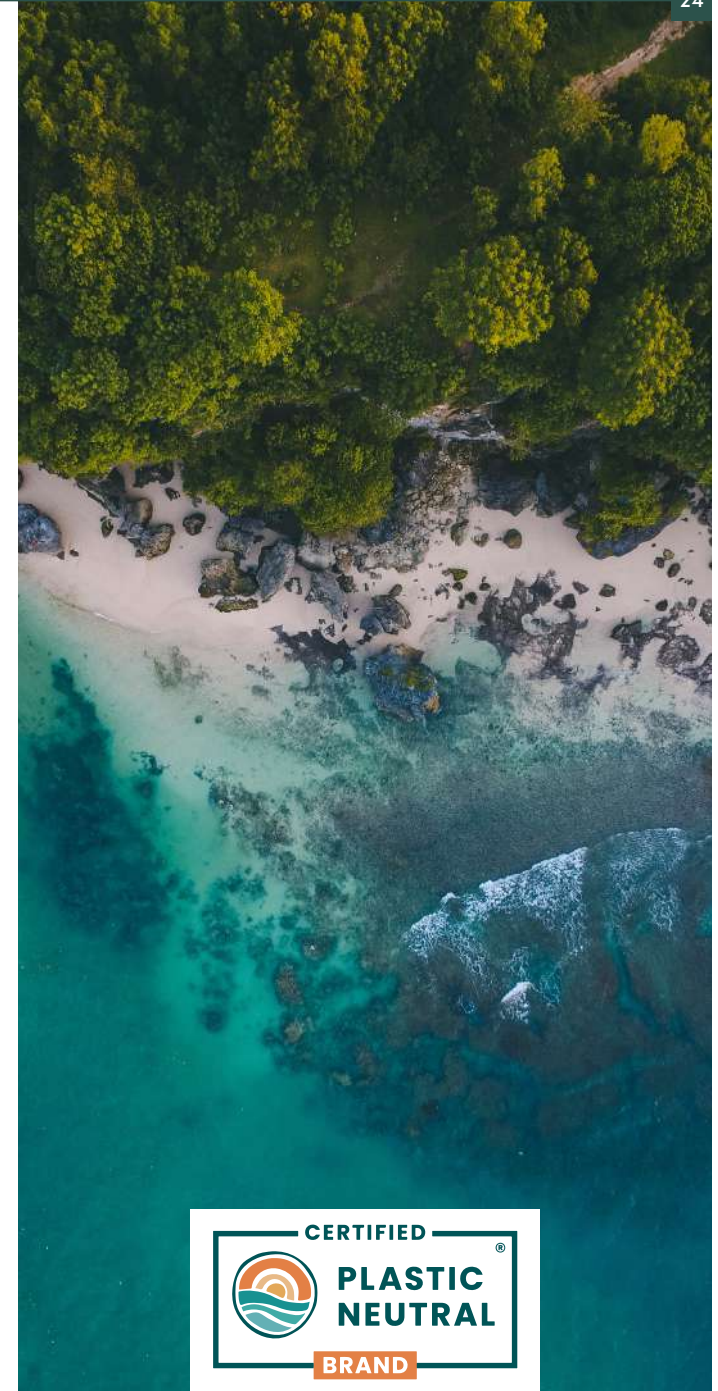
Over the last four years now, we have been a net-zero plastic footprint brand. We have measured and offset our plastic usage by investing in project Neela Sagar in Hyderabad in India - a first-of-its-kind project working at recovery and processing of low-value, single-use plastic waste MLP to stem its flow into our natural ecosystem.

VAHDAM® India's Plastic Footprint

We work with rePurpose Global - among the world's leading Plastic Action Platforms dedicated to reducing waste, reviving lives, and restoring nature's balance. rePurpose helps brands and companies calculate, reduce, and offset their plastic footprint while empowering grassroots innovators on the cutting edge of solving for our planet's future.

For the year 2022, our total plastic footprint was 32,191kgs against 50,640kgs in the previous year. This notable reduction in our plastic usage has resulted from numerous initiatives in packing and packaging. One major shift in our packaging has been to replace all our food-grade nylon-based pyramid tea bags with tea bags made from plant-based fibers like Poly Lactic Acid (PLA). These tea bags are industrially compostable.

A lot of our packing material is now made from recyclable materials. Our packaging team is working on new materials and designs that will make our packaging using lesser plastic, a higher proportion of recyclable plastic as well as use materials that are environmentally friendly and sustainable.

















More Sustainable Every Year

We are constantly working to improve our packing and packaging as part of our commitment to the planet. Reducing our plastic footprint is an integral part of the packaging and procurement team, who work diligently with our suppliers to progressively reduce plastic in our packaging.




OUR SUSTAINABLE PACKAGING BREAKDOWN

| PACKAGING FORMAT |  Tea Bags |  Envelopes |  Carton |  Soft Pack |  Boxes |  Tin Caddies |  Vacuum Sealed |
|------------------|--|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Made-Up From | PLA | Multi Layer Laminate | Paper Board | Single Layer Zip-per Pouch LDPE | Paper Board | Tin Plate | Multi-layer Laminate |
| Recycling Guide |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |

 Not Recyclable

 Biodegradable/Recyclable

 100% Recyclable



Project Neela Sagar

Through rePurpose, VAHDAM® India has been supporting Project Neela Sagar as part of its plastic neutral initiative. Project Neela Sagar has partnered with waste management pioneer Waste Ventures India, to create a new model of waste collection. This project directly catalyzes the ethical collection and permanent disposal of hazardous MLP waste.

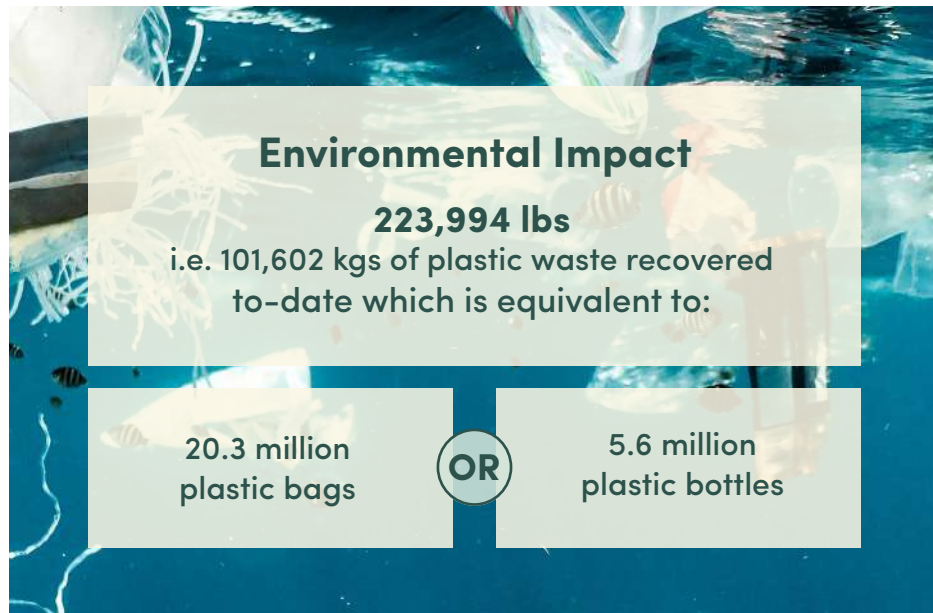
The collective of Waste Ventures India have not only been working in the collection and segregation of plastic, but are also taking a step

ahead towards awareness and Impact through various programs to bring in a tide of change within the communities residing there.

Waste workers at Project Neela Sagar have taken up the following:

- Child/Forced Labour Awareness Sessions
- Code of Ethics & Business Conduct & Sexual Harassment Prevention Policy Session.

VAHDAM® India's Impact





“We’re thrilled to partner with VAHDAM® India in their commitment to creating environmental impact. We’re excited to join them on this journey and hope this is a springboard propelling them to achieve many more sustainability goals and see their brand, and the planet flourish.”

Peter Hjemdahl
Co-Founder and Chief Advocacy Officer



India Plastics Pact

The India Plastics Pact (IPP) is a collaboration between the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) and WWF India. Within CII, the initiative is anchored at the CII-ITC Centre of Excellence for Sustainable Development (CESD). The initiative is supported by WRAP, a global NGO based in the UK. WRAP is providing operational and technical support to many other Plastics Pacts, as well as running the UK Plastics Pact.

The India Plastics Pact aims to promote public-private collaborations that enable solutions to eliminate the plastic waste problem in India and bring innovation to the way plastic is designed, used and reused.

The vision, targets and ambition of the India Plastics Pact are aligned with the principles of the Ellen MacArthur Foundation’s Plastics Initiative towards a circular economy.

IPP envisions a world where plastic is valued and doesn’t pollute the environment.

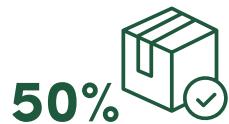
The Pact focuses on addressing the barriers to circularity in the plastic packaging sector through four ambitious time-bound targets.



Define a list of unnecessary or problematic plastic packaging and items and take measures to address them through redesigning and innovation



100% of plastic packaging to be reusable, recyclable or compostable*



50% of plastic packaging to be effectively recycled



25% average recycled content across all plastic packaging



VAHDAM® India has been an early member of the IPP since September 2021. VAHDAM® is also an active participant of Collaborative Action Group 1 (CAG1). CAG1 engages multiple stakeholders in the first target - defining list of problematic plastic items.

CAG1 is working on developing a list of unnecessary or problematic plastic packaging items which the Pact’s members will address through redesign and innovation. Towards this end, the CAG members have defined the criteria for ‘problematic and unnecessary’ plastics and are reviewing a draft list of target items and components for agreement and prioritization. Once finalized, Pact Members will take action on these items across their supply chains.



Other Initiatives

Doing More With Less

The operations and production team continuously looks at local-level innovations and improvements to do more with less. This has the dual benefit of reducing our energy/environment impact as well as significant savings in costs. Some of these initiatives this year include:

- Reduce water usage and wastage by the installation of an automatic shut-off mechanism
- Conversion of submersible pump operation to auto-mode to stop water overflow
- Usage of RO waste water for toilet and feet-wash
- Changing over 600 lights to LED
- Savings in electricity with pneumatic Air CFM consumption using air flow regulators and pressure switches
- Wastage Disposal - all In-process waste and hazardous material (including waste oil, filters, paper and plastic, and e-waste) disposed of through a certified agency for authentically recycling

EPR Compliance in Germany and France

Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) is a policy approach under which producers are made responsible for the treatment or disposal of post-consumer products. EPR places the responsibility of a producer for the

environmentally sound management of the product until the end of its life.

VAHDAM® had become EPR compliant in Germany and France in 2022. This year, we renewed our EPR compliance for these two countries and are now registered with LUCID and LEKO, respectively (both of them are national platforms on which registration of the brand is necessary).

Launch of ESG Policy Framework

We launched our ESG Policy Framework, outlining our larger and long-term ESG vision and strategy.

Detailed Environment & Sustainability Policy

We started work on drafting our detailed environmental and sustainability policy last year. With inputs and feedback from both internal and external stakeholders, we are now in the final stages of reviewing this.

The final draft will be proposed and presented by the ESG Committee to the Board of Directors. Once approved by the Board of Directors, the Environment & Sustainability Policy will be officially launched, published & internalised.



Statement of Purpose on Climate Change

Climate Change is one of the most pressing issues that is facing the world today. As a responsible corporate citizen, VAHDAM® has always been cognizant of both its responsibility and obligation to this imminent and immediate challenge.

We began work on a comprehensive Statement of Purpose on Climate Change in 2022. This statement outlines our larger vision and long-term focus as a responsible and sustainable brand that is determined to preserve and safeguard the world by diligent use of resources and ensuring a better world for future generations.

The final draft of our Statement of Purpose on Climate Change will be presented to the Board of Directors. Once approved, this will be formally launched, published & internalised.



SOCIAL INITIATIVES

COMMUNITY INITIATIVES

VAHDAM® India was able to make significant progress for social in 2022-2023. Our flagship TEACH ME™ program has made an impact on over 13,000 children across more than 60 locations. Recently, Terres des Hommes, IDH India, and Haqdarshak have become the latest NGOs to join the TEACH ME™ family.

In March 2023, Consultivo completed the first independent social impact evaluation of the

program. In addition, BYJU TV installations have reached 23 locations, benefiting over 8,500 children, and 6 new schools have been covered. A new social empowerment project with Haqdarshak, was started which is expected to help 235 families. We are also proud to share that the TEACH ME™ program has been nominated for the Greater Good Awards for the second year in a row. We have doubled VAHDAM® India Scholarships for Higher Education during the year, covering over 48 youths. These achievements are a testament to the success and positive impact of TEACH ME™.



WORKPLACE INITIATIVES

In January 2023, VAHDAM® India achieved the certification of being a Great Place to Work. This recognition reflects the company's commitment to providing a positive work environment for its employees. As part of its efforts to promote employee satisfaction and recognition, VAHDAM® India launched an Employee Recognition Scheme and the VAHDAM® India Wall of Fame. The company also continued its Happiness Index Survey, which measures employee satisfaction and well-being.

In an effort to promote gender equality, VAHDAM® India launched a Women's Leadership Program and a Women Empowerment Program. The company also launched a Maternity Support Program to provide support to new mothers.

Additionally, VAHDAM® India started 'Your Beautiful Life', an Employee Wellness Initiative, and the Employee Family & Scholarship Fund to support employees and their families. The company continued its commitment to giving back to the community through its Volunteering program, which included new subjects.

Throughout the year, numerous Employee Engagement activities were conducted to promote team building and a positive work culture.





From a humble mission that started in 2017 to improve the lives of the children of tea-estate workers through quality education, TEACH ME™ is today VAHDAM® India's globally recognized and rewarded CSR program that has won the hearts of millions of customers across the world.

A minimum of 1% of VAHDAM® India's revenue is earmarked for TEACH ME™, and is deployed through an elaborate ecosystem of NGO partners and VAHDAM®'s direct tea-procurement partners to provide high-quality digital education to the children of tea estate workers in Assam, Darjeeling, the Dooars and the Nilgiris. The content is provided by BYJU's - the world's leading ed-tech company, under its Education For All CSR program.

Under TEACH ME™, both the BYJU Learning App as well as BYJU Smart TV are provided totally free of charge to the children of tea estate workers. With the COVID-19 pandemic receding in 2023, schools started resuming and the classroom mode of education restarted.

At TEACH ME™, re-aligned to a hybrid strategy with a focus on capacity building for digital education for schools. Using the existing school infrastructure and teachers, we created VAHDAM® TEACH ME™ Digital Learning Centres at schools, where primary education would be supplemented by digital education on BYJU Smart TVs.

With Digital Learning Centres, the same classroom with BYJU TV can be used to teach children of all classes, exponentially increasing the social impact.



Increasing the TEACH ME™ Outreach with New NGO Partners

During the year, two new NGOs joined the TEACH ME™ family. These are Terres des Hommes of Switzerland and IDH India - which is part of IDH, the Netherlands.

IDH India

IDH India is part of IDH - The Sustainable Trade Initiative based in the Netherlands. IDH drives the joint design of economically viable approaches to realise green and inclusive growth at scale. Collaborating with over 500 public and private partner organisations, IDH is active in 12 commodity programs and 12 landscape programs in over 50 countries.

In India, IDH is working in 12 states on approximately 40 projects, which have cross-cutting themes aligned to one or more UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). These programmes have allowed IDH to streamline learnings across these projects and create change in the areas that need it most - sector governance, business practices and field-level sustainability.

Terre des Hommes

Terres des Hommes (TdH) works with government schools and Support Education centres in the tea growing regions of North Bengal. In a major development, TEACH ME™ and TdH signed an MOU to support digital education at eight locations in North Bengal through installations of BYJU Smart TVs as well as sharing the costs of resources for these centres.

Over 5,000 children are benefitting under this joint initiative of TEACH ME™ and Terres des Hommes at five government schools and five support education centres in North Bengal.



IDH in Tea

IDH is the convenor and co-funder of the trustea program, a locally developed initiative to transform the domestic Indian tea industry. The program supports smallholders and estates in improving the competitiveness of tea gardens by stimulating continuous improvement and improving the livelihoods of smallholders and estate workers. trustea was launched by the Tea Board of India in 2013 and is currently jointly funded by IDH, Hindustan Unilever Limited (HUL), Tata Global Beverages Limited (TGBL) and Wagh Bakri (the 3 packers together account for nearly 60% of the packed tea market in India). The governance of the program is truly multistakeholder: comprising of the four funders as well as producer organizations like the Indian Tea Association (ITA), United Plantations Association of South India (UPASI), Consultative Committee of Plantation Associations (CCPI), smallholder representatives; technical advisory of other standards like Rainforest Alliance, and civil society partners, Solidaridad and Ethical Tea Partnership.

VAHDAM® India signed an MOU with IDH India to support the 22,000 small tea growers by providing free digital education, which is aligned to IDH India's larger focus on improving wages and disposable incomes for the community over the next decade.

The long-term partnership commenced in the latter half of the year with free BYJU App being provided for the pilot set of children and teachers of small tea growers in Assam and North Bengal.

The plan to progressively expand the outreach using the local level presence of agri-entrepreneurs of IDH to more clusters in Assam, Darjeeling, North Bengal and the Nilgiris over the next three years.

Haqdarshak

Though not strictly an educational project, VAHDAM® India engaged with Haqdarshak for a pilot project in the area of social empowerment. Haqdarshak works on the crucial 'last mile delivery' of government welfare and financial services through awareness, assistance and access.

The pilot project on behalf of VAHDAM® India is being implemented at Billimalai tea estate in the Nilgiris in South India, where the project has been working with around 235 families of tea estate workers.



Increasing Direct Interventions with Tea-Estates and Schools

Amalgamated Plantation P. Ltd.

TEACH ME™ has been working with the Amalgamated Plantations P. Ltd. (APPL) for installation of BYJU TVs at their estates. In May 2022, we piloted BYJU TV at digital classrooms in Nowera Nuddy and Dam Dim tea estates in the Dooars (West Bengal). After evaluating the impact and response, we added Chubwa and Teok tea estates (Assam) to the program in December 2022.

Encouraged by the positive response, five more estates were planned to be added to the TEACH ME™ program in the month of March 2023. These are Achabam, Nahorkutia, Borhat and Namroop tea estates in Assam, and the Rungamuttee tea estate in the Dooars (West Bengal).

The total number of beneficiaries is over 2,768 children at these nine tea estates. In the coming months, we aim to do a progressive rollout to more tea estates of APPL, with a plan to cover all the tea estates.

Ananda Siksha Niketan, Murshidabad

TEACH ME™ is also proud to be associated with Ananda Siksha Niketan, Murshidabad (West Bengal). Ananda Siksha Niketan was founded in 2002 by Mr. Babar Ali when he himself was in class V. The BBC declared Babar Ali as the youngest headmaster in the world in 2009. Today, Ananda Siksha Niketan provides free education to all the children, besides uniforms,

learning kits and daily tiffin. The school is recognised by the West Bengal Board of Secondary Education and covers classes 1 to 10. The school is funded by numerous donors and well-wishers that include Tata Trust and the Indian Chamber of Commerce.

VAHDAM® has set up a TEACH ME™ Digital Learning Centre at Anand Siksha Niketan in March 2023.

Increasing Outreach with Existing NGO Partners

Child Rights And You (CRY) and Child In Need Institute (CINI) have been working with TEACH ME™ since 2020. The first two years of this partnership, namely 2020 and 2021, were marred by the Covid-19 disruptions. During these two years, both these NGOs did notable work in reaching out to the children in Darjeeling and ensuring continuity of education, in spite of the lockdowns and closure of schools.

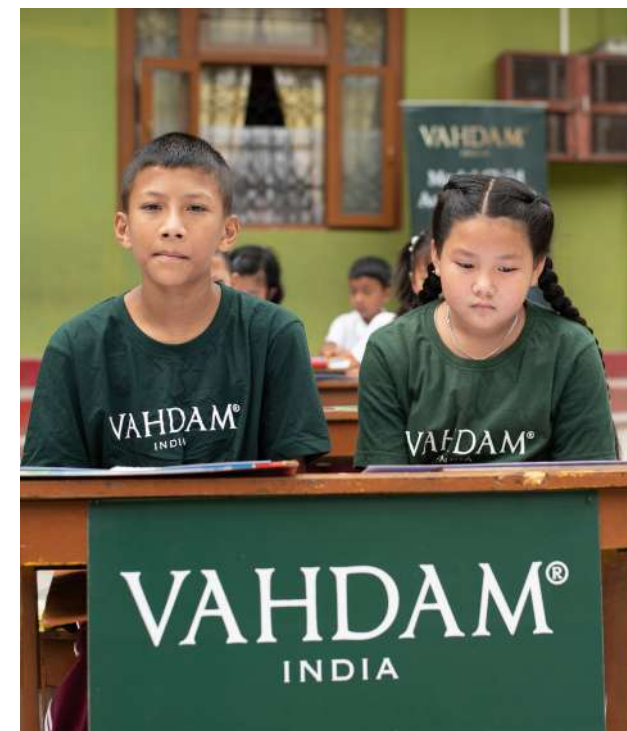
In 2022, with COVID-19 ebbing and schools reopening, both CRY and CINI expanded their outreach to cover more children in and around the tea estates where they were active since the last two years. The result was a significant increase in the number of beneficiaries that were impacted in 2022 by CRY and CINI.

CRY now reaches out to 2,000 children compared to 600 during the pandemic years, while CINI has increased its reach to cover 3,000 children from

1,600 children during the pandemic.

TEACH ME™ was a finalist in the 2022 Digiday Greater Goods Award. This is the second year in a row that TEACH ME™ has made it to the final round of these prestigious awards. TEACH ME™ has won the Greater Good Award for 2021.

VAHDAM®'s Chief Educator & Sustainability Officer was part of the global judging panel of not just the Digiday Greater Goods Award 2022, but also Future Leader Award for 2023 by Digiday.



“Our collaboration with Vahdam Teas’ TEACH ME™ Program makes me incredibly proud. With the help of Vahdam Teas, we were able to deliver free premium digital learning content via the BYJU’S Education For All to children from rural communities in Assam, West Bengal, and the Nilgiris regions. The initiative has especially benefited children of tea estate workers for whom this was the only source of education through the pandemic. In the coming years, with mission driven partners like Vahdam Teas, our goal is to scale up and ensure more children have access to equitable education digitally.”

Divya Gokulath
Co-Founder BYJU’S



TEACH ME™ in 2022 at a Glance



VISION

At TEACH ME™, our VISION is to democratise education with the best edutech platform and scholarships enable the children and youth of tea, coffee and spice plantation workers to join the mainstream through our flagship TEACH ME™ Program where a minimum 1% of our Revenue is directed towards the education of plantation workers' children in India.



MISSION

TEACH ME™ is creating a unique ecosystem of India's top edutech provider, reputed NGOs and producers to propagate and facilitate access to high-quality digital education and scholarships that is scalable and sustainable with a clearly measurable social impact on the society and community.





LAUNCH
2017-18



CONTENT PARTNER



PARTNER NGOs



NO. OF LOCATIONS
~68+ tea-estates and school



CURRENT OUTREACH
13,615

PARTNER TEA-PRODUCERS



CHILD ACTIVITY CENTRE
Rohini and Goomtee TE



VAHDAM SCHOLARSHIPS
48

PARTNER SCHOOLS

- Shaheed Bhagat Singh Inter College, Noida
 - Shree Raj Educational Centre, Khopoli
 - Anand Siksha Niketan, Murshidabad, West Bengal
- ...and many more schools in Darjeeling, the Dooars and the Nilgiris through our NGO partners



TEACH ME™ – The Road Ahead

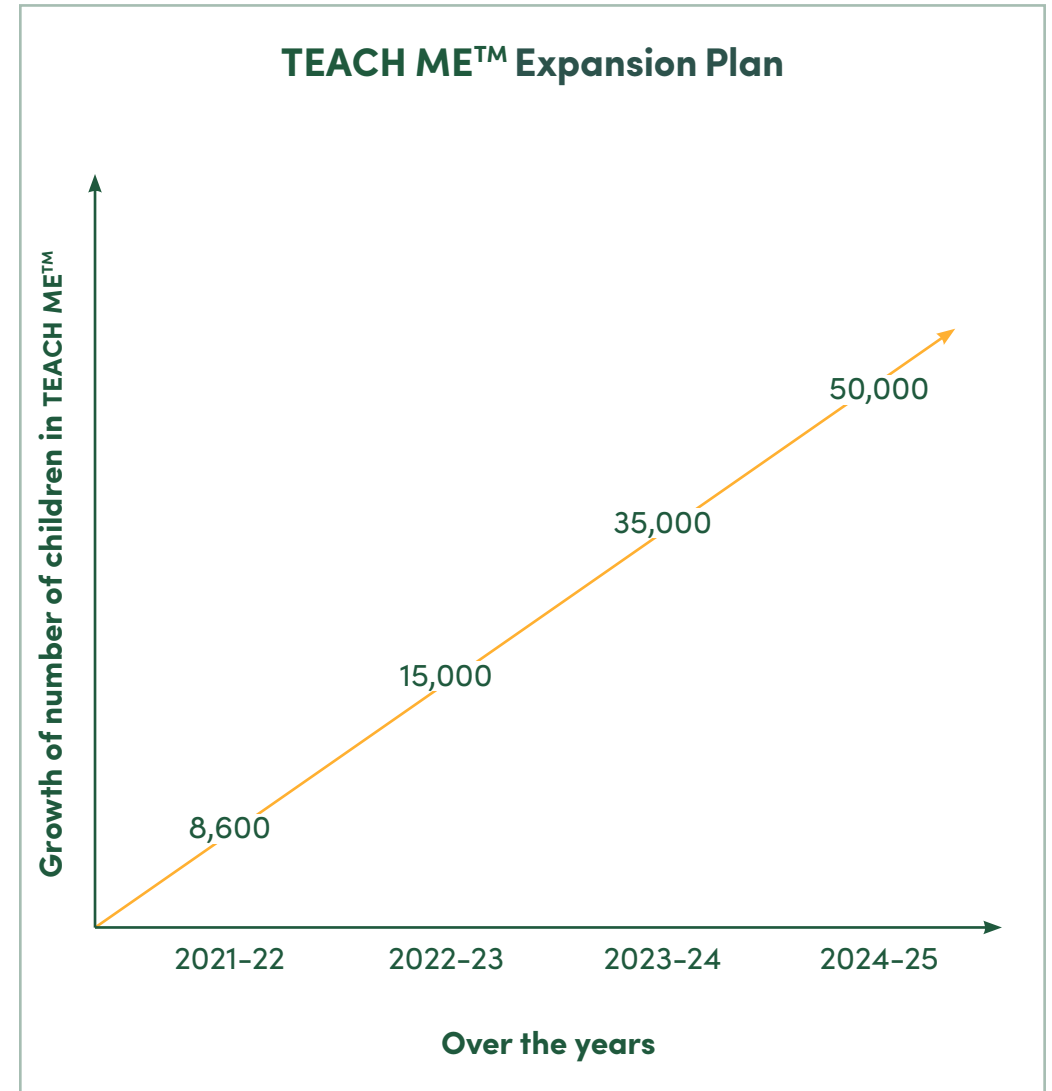
The TEACH ME™ program has today emerged as one of the leading education-empowerment initiatives in the tea-industry aimed at creating a long-term and sustainable impact.

We believe that in the last three years, including two years of Covid-19 disruption, TEACH ME™ has today reached a significant size and scale, both in terms of number of beneficiaries as well as geographical presence.

With the Covid-19 pandemic behind us, our clear focus TEACH ME™'s road ahead is a hybrid model that builds digital capacity at school by providing support in the form of infrastructure and free content from BYJU Smart TV. Complementing the academic subjects, TEACH ME™ will also work with schools to bring in alternative career development options for children who are looking at non-academic careers like creative arts - music, photography, coding, animation, social media, etc.

During 2023, TEACH ME™ has partnered with three more NGOs - Terres des Hommes, IDH India and Haqdarshak for a faster ramp up of the program. These NGO, in addition to CRY, CINI and Broadleaf, have a local level presence and network in the tea-growing regions, and are hence, ideal for multiplying the impact of TEACH ME™ through partnerships.

Over the next few years, we plan to leverage both direct partnerships with tea-estates as well as NGOs to achieve our goal of impacting 50,000 children by the year 2024-25.



Direct School Interventions

Direct interventions with schools form an integral part of TEACH ME™'s expansion and outreach. During 2020 and 2021, when schools were closed as part of Covid-19 preventive lockdowns, we had to work directly with school children of various tea estates. However, with the reopening of schools in the latter half of 2022, we have recalibrated the TEACH ME™ model to focus more on direct school interventions and build their digital education capability for the long-term.

Currently, we are working directly with three schools

- Shaheed Bhagat Singh Inter College
- Shree Raj Education Centre and
- Ananda Siksha Niketan - which became part of the TEACH ME™ family in the month of March 2023.



Ananda Siksha Niketan

The school Founded by “The Youngest Headmaster in the World”

Ananda Siksha Niketan was started in 2002 by Babar Ali, when he was in the 5th standard. Deeply agonised by the fact that many of his friends were unable to attend school due to abject poverty, the then 9-year old Babar decided to share his education with his friends in a hut in the backyard of his home at Beldanga in Murshidabad, West Bengal. From these humble beginnings of teaching students of classes 1 and 2, the school today is a full-fledged school recognised by the government of West Bengal, and is supported by grants and donations from many well-wishers including Tata Trust and the Kolkata Gives Foundation, besides many others.

TEACH ME™ has supported digital education at Ananda Sikhsa Niketan through the installation of BYJU Smart TV in March 2023. A separate Digital Learning Classroom has been created where students can experience immersive learning through BYJU's interactive videos of the subjects they have completed in their classrooms. The same teachers who teach them the academic subjects in normal classrooms also take their digital classes, ensuring the concept and topic is further ingrained through interesting audio-visual means.

Currently, around 300 children and ten teachers benefit from the TEACH ME™ digital learning classrooms at Ananda Siksha Niketan.





The Youngest Headmaster In The World

Murshidabad district in West Bengal is amongst the poorest regions in India. A direct consequence of this is the low education levels, where most children cannot afford even basic free education as they do not have the means either to travel to school or get basic books. Most of them are forced by their families instead to work to support the meagre family incomes.

It was these appalling conditions that inspired the 9-year old Babar Ali to start a school in a ramshackle hut in his home backyard in 2002. He was then in class 5. He began by teaching to the downtrodden children of neighbouring villages subjects of classes 1 and 2. Since then, Babar Ali has not looked back.

In 2009, the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) declared him to be the “Youngest Headmaster in the World”. Babar Ali has also been honoured with many prestigious awards that include Indian of the Year by NDTV (2010) and Hero of the Nation Award by Nisha Foundation, Ministry of Women & Child Development, Government of India. He has also featured in Amir Khan’s Satyamev Jayate (2012) and Forbes 30 under 30 (2016), and his inspirational biography is part of syllabi of many school boards.



Shaheed Bhagat Singh Inter College, Noida

This was the first school where the TEACH ME™ initiative was launched directly by VAHDAM® in February 2022. Shaheed Bhagat Singh Inter College is a local community school supported by the government. It is located at a close proximity to the VAHDAM® corporate HQ, being just 7kms away in Sector 163 of Noida.

In the last one year, over 1,000 students, of which around 600 students are from Classes 6-12, have benefitted from the digital learning classroom. This particular classroom was in a derelict condition when VAHDAM® decided to take it over and convert it into a state-of-the-art digital classroom, complete with a large screen TV and audio systems. The classroom was refurbished and repainted. Today, this digital learning classroom holds regular digital learning classes with BYJU Smart TV.

Shree Raj Educational Centre, Khopoli

Located at Khopoli, the Shree Raj Education Centre (SREC) has been teaching the children of local societies and communities as part of their larger service mission. In the month of December 2022, TEACH ME™ supported SREC by providing them with BYJU TV content licences absolutely free of cost. SREC has installed BYJU Smart TV in 19 classrooms and benefits more than 600 children with high-quality digital learning.

VAHDAM® Volunteering Program

We launched VAHDAM® Volunteering Program at Shaheed Bhagat Singh Inter College during the year. The inaugural volunteering classes were taken up by the founder, Bala Sarda in July 2022. During these Saturdays, Bala shared many inspirational insights from the VAHDAM® story with the children.

The volunteering classes at the school continued throughout the year. Our Chief Human Resources Officer, Kalpesh Tiwari regularly conducted weekly classes on English Grammar to help the children improve their english language proficiency. From the month of February 2023, Mayank Kaushik from the HR team conducted open-air yoga sessions with the children of the school.



Direct Partnership with Tea Producers



The outreach of TEACH ME™ has expanded widely through VAHDAM®'s direct partnerships with tea producers. Due to VAHDAM®'s Direct Sourcing Model of tea buying, VAHDAM® has strong connections with the tea producers - large and small - all across Darjeeling, Assam and the Nilgiris.

On its part, the tea industry has welcomed VAHDAM®'s TEACH ME™ initiative with open arms and provided whole-hearted support. From the largest producer groups to individual, family-owned tea estates, TEACH ME™ has been appreciated and implemented by a diverse range of tea producers across North and South India.

In fact, during the two pandemic years of 2020 and 2021, the BYJU Learning App provided by TEACH ME™ to the children of tea estates proved to be a crucial resource in continuing Education and learning. It was only by following the syllabus at home on the BYJU app using their personal mobile devices that the children continued to be in touch with learning and ensured that even during the strict conditions, their education did not lag behind.



Amalgamated Plantations Private Limited (APPL)

APPL is the second largest tea producer of tea in India producing almost 40 million kgs. of tea annually. APPL is the emergent entity from the divestment of the plantation business of Tata Tea Limited. APPL today owns 25 tea estates in Assam (21) and the Dooars in West Bengal (4). The group has a partnership with over 100,000 small tea growers and employs more than 31,000 people.

During 2022-23, TEACH ME™ partnered with APPL to extend digital education through BYJU Smart TV progressively to the estates of the group. In the month of May 2022, TEACH ME™ was launched at two tea estates of the group, namely, Nowera Nuddy TE and Dam Dim TE in the Dooars in West Bengal, followed by Teok TE and Chubwa TE in the month of September 2022.

In March 2023, a further five tea estates in Assam (Achabam, Nahorkutia, Namroop, Borhat and Rungamattee) started the process to become part of TEACH ME™ with an additional 1,620 beneficiaries.

A total of over 2,767 children from nine tea estates of APPL are now part of TEACH ME™, with plans to include more estates in the coming year.

TEACH ME™ Workshop at Dam Dim TE

The first TEACH ME™ workshop was organised at Dam Dim TE in March 2023. This was a one day workshop that was organised in association with all the stakeholders namely, the producers (APPL), the content providers (BYJU's) as well as the on-ground education facilitators and students. During the workshop, diverse aspects like training and technical were discussed. The BYJU's team addressed all technical queries. There was also a networking session key persons from the VAHDAM®, tea estate management and BYJU's exchanged learning and feedback about the program and their experience, which will be extremely useful when TEACH ME™ is expanded to more tea estates in 2023-24.

The TEACH ME™ Program has been running in Dam Dim and Nowera Nuddy Tea Estates in North Bengal since June 2022. The classes have an average of 70% attendance every day and students find the course content very interesting. They have also said that the program has made it easy for them to understand complicated concepts in maths and science, which was generally a cause for worry among them.

Not only the children, but the course coordinators in the two locations enjoy teaching the classes. When they see children travelling from far just to attend these classes, it gives them a sense of accomplishment. The success of the program in Dam Dim and Nowera Nuddy also generated demand for it in Rungamattee Tea Estate, where the Learning Centre will begin from April '23, and will serve to educate 200 students.



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Amitava Sen

Secretary Trustee, APPL Foundation



NGO PARTNERS

NGOs form an integral part of the TEACH ME™ ecosystem. TEACH ME™ first partnered with CRY and CINI in October 2020 for a pilot program to launch the BYJU's App in select tea estates of Darjeeling. A key reason why TEACH ME™ partnered with these two NGOs was their deep reach and wide experience resulting in a strong community-connect. This was critical as we were in the midst of the Covid-19 pandemic, and travelling was not possible. Leveraging their local presence, even during the height of lockdown, TEACH ME™ was able to offer the BYJU Learning App to around 2000 students in Darjeeling. Strictly following social distancing norms, these NGOs also organised numerous community-level Covid-19 relief camps and initiatives.

In 2022-23, as the Covid-19 pandemic was finally tamed, VAHDAM® expanded the TEACH ME™ outreach by partnering with three new NGO partners - Terres Des Hommes, IDH India and Haqdarshak.

Today, the total outreach of TEACH ME™ through NGO partnerships covers over 3,000 beneficiaries.

Child Rights And You (CRY)

TEACH ME™ has been running two Child Activity Centres (CAC) in partnership with CRY since October 2020. These CACs are located at Goomee TE and Rohini TE. The owners of both these estates have been extremely kind in providing free infrastructure in the form of classroom and electricity, as well as other basic amenities.

At these CACs, the children are given the BYJU Learning App totally free of cost. Additionally, the education facilitators at these centres conduct weekly classes to help children with understanding interface or navigation issues or any other sort of handholding.

These CACs have become the showcase examples of how all partners of the tea industry can come together to create a long-term social impact through education. Such has been the success of these two CACs that over the last two years, they have been regularly featured in media and have been visited by numerous dignitaries.

849 + 200

children directly & through peer mode

375 Girls | **474** Boys

1200+

members through community awareness programs



Visit of His Excellency, Mr. Nick Low, British Deputy High Commissioner to India to Child Activity Centre at Goomtee Tea Estate in January 2023

In January 2023, the CAC at Goomtee TE was visited by His Excellency, Mr. Nick Low, the British Deputy High Commissioner to India. Mr. Low spent half a day interacting with the children of Goomtee tea estate workers. For these children, it was a memorable experience as they performed songs and dances, and also demonstrated their martial arts skills. A special publication was also released on this occasion highlighting the children of CACs and how TEACH ME™ has impacted their lives over the last two years.

In addition to these two CACs, CRY also engages with children of communities and schools in Darjeeling.

Besides helping the children of these schools with the academic studies, CRY also organised regular workshops and events that cover a wide range of relevant topics like Child Labour, Digital Safety, Child Sexual Abuse and Health and Hygiene, among others.

In August 2022, a distribution of BYJU books was organised. Ms. Roshni Sikri, Inspector of Schools, Kurseong Division, visited our centre and interacted with the children. She told the students about the importance of education and how online education can be an added supplement to their overall learning opportunity.

In September 2022, a Learning Camp was organised at both the centres. Around 270 children participated for 5 days in both the locations. The objective was to assess the learning of the students and the usage of BYJU'S app.

All major festivals and national days like Independence Day, Diwali and Christmas are celebrated by the children at these centres.



At tea garden, kids share moment with UK official

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
KURSEONG, 12 JANUARY

Around 200 children shared their experiences with British Deputy High Commissioner, East and North-East India, Nick Low, and a special event at the Child Activity Centre at Goomtee Tea Garden near Kurseong, today.

The children are part of the TEACH Me initiative, a flagship educational programme of Vahdam India. The TEACH Me intervention started in Goomtee and Rohini Tea gardens in October 2020, in partnership with CRY-Child Rights and You, and BYJU'S.

Ajitha Menon, Political Economy Adviser, British Deputy High Commission, Kolkata, also attended the event, along with Ketan Desai, the Chief Educator and Sustainability Officer, Vahdam India. Pranam Basally, Executive, Sahasrad, Gokhaland



Territorial Administration, also attended the programme. An anthology documenting the success stories of children in the two tea gardens was released on the occasion.

"The highlight was a heart-warming interaction between His Excellency Mr Low and the children, who seemed eager to know about his best friends in schools, favourite subjects



and ambition in life, how he coped with studies and so on. Mr Low answered all the questions patiently, much to the delight of all present. His inspirational words struck a chord with the audience especially the children," a CRY office bearer said.

"You should complete your studies and fulfill your dreams. Never give up," Mr Low told



the children. "We wanted to do our bit to alleviate hardships of the people during the Covid times. With the help of CRY, we reached out to these wonderful kids. I am glad they have been benefited by our initiative," Mr Desai, on the other hand, said.

The children, meanwhile, staged a dance and demonstrated their karate skills,

while around 100 parents enjoyed every bit of their kids' performance.

Welcoming the guests, Trina Chakrabarti, Regional Director, CRY, Kolkata, looked back at how the journey had begun and expressed hope that many more success stories of children were waiting to be unravelled in the days and months to come.



“Very occasionally, I have a day that I will remember for the rest of my life. My visit to TEACH ME™ at the Child Activity Centre at Goomtee Tea Garden on Thursday 12 January was such a day. One thing that I encourage my own children to do is “surround yourself with good people”. And I was surrounded by very, very good people – from VAHDAM® India, TEACH ME™’s staff and volunteers, and the children and young people whose life chances TEACH ME™ immeasurably improves. I left energised, uplifted and full of optimism. Thank you TEACH ME™ – you are big people doing big things”

Mr. Nick Low

British Deputy High Commissioner to India



Child In Need Institute - CINI

TEACH ME™ has been working with CINI since October 2020 to help children of tea estate workers in Darjeeling get high-quality digital education using the BYJU Learning App. Like CRY, CINI was part of the first co-partnering model of TEACH ME™ that started with a three-month pilot from October to December 2020. Since then, the partnership has continued and has expanded the outreach of TEACH ME™ to more children in schools and tea estates of Darjeeling.

CINI engages with the children in and around the communities of tea estates, using both the BYJU's Learning App and classes at community centres and anganwadis. A unique feature of CINI is that it also works with children of classes 1-4 which are not supported by the BYJU's Learning App.

The thirteen estates where CINI creates impact through education are:

- | | |
|------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1) Soom Tea garden | 8) Singtom Tea garden |
| 2) Tukvar Tea garden | 9) Pishok Tea garden |
| 3) Badamtam Tea garden | 10) Risheehat Tea garden |
| 4) Ging Tea garden | 11) Arya Tea garden |
| 5) Rongli Tea garden | 12) Longview Tea garden |
| 6) Teesta Valley | 13) Badapatabung Tea garden |
| 7) Singla Tea garden | |

Reach

As of March 2023, a total of 2, 211 children are reached through the learning centres in these thirteen tea estates.



Details of the Project

There are two verticals of the project. Children of classes I to V are attending the learning centres situated in the tea gardens in spaces provided by the school/Anganwadi/local club/community hall. The Education Facilitators provide accelerated education support to the children along with promoting value education and extra-curricular activities like- age-appropriate life skills education, drawing, singing, dancing, sports, yoga etc. The children of classes V to X have been given BYJU's Learning App (premium version) which gives them access to top-quality digital education. In addition to the BYJU Learning App, these children are also provided help for traditional academic education.



TEACH ME™ Learning Centres

Education Facilitators recruited and trained by CINI run learning centres (LC) in each intervention tea garden with school going children of classes I to IV. These children are assessed first to understand their academic competency level and then taught as per their age appropriate requirement to enhance their numerical and language skill. At present, one learning centre is functional in each of the thirteen tea estates. The children attend the centres 5 days a week and are provided with education support for a minimum two hours. The Education facilitators (EFs) use multi-grade multi-level teaching methodology with low cost joyful teaching learning materials and participatory activities for teaching children of different academic levels. Quarterly assessments are taken to understand academic progress of the children.

Teachers also use suitable content from BYJU's Learning App for teaching the children, which may not match their grade wise curriculum but are related to the academic competency for their age.

As per the last assessment in January 2023, out of 496 children 414 children were assessed to track their academic level progress. 82 children have been enrolled in the centre in January and February 2023 only. The details of children's academic level progress is as follows –

| Previous level | No. of children | No. of children promoted to next level | Percentage of promoted children |
|----------------|-----------------|--|---------------------------------|
| Pre primary | 124 | 107 | 86% |
| Level 1 | 98 | 89 | 91% |
| Level 2 | 104 | 97 | 93% |
| Level 3 | 88 | 79 | 90% |

Facilitating Education BYJU's Learning App

At present there are 1,715 children of classes V to XII who are using the BYJU's Learning App of BYJU's at free of cost. The children using BYJU's app come to the learning centre at least 4 days a month. The (EFs) help them in understanding the subject wise chapters in case of any query or confusion. The EFs share the weekly lesson plan with these children through WhatsApp and track their use of the app over phone and WhatsApp.

Community Engagement

In addition to educational support, CINI works closely with the local communities, engaging with them on a regular basis. Some of these community engagement activities include:

- Monthly meeting with the mothers
- Community meetings
- Children group meetings
- School teachers and EF meetings
- Refresher courses and training workshops
- Celebration of major festivals and national holidays

Future Plans

In the coming year, CINI is planning to expand the TEACH ME™ digital learning through BYJU Smart TV by approaching local schools and enabling them with digital education by installation of BYJU TV.



Success Stories



Yangdolma Ghissing,

9 years old, Class II,

Longview Tea Garden

Date of joining the learning centre: January 2021

I am a student of the learning centre in Longview Tea garden and my teacher is Miss Bhagya Rai. I am studying here from class I.

I love to study here as the teacher never scolds us and teaches us through playing games and drawing beautiful pictures and cards. I love to play with my friends here. We also learn to dance, sing, acting etc. from our teacher in the centre. As soon as I go to class V, my parents have promised me to give them a smart phone so that I can use BYJU's learning app.

I am very thankful to VAHDAM® TEACH ME™ and CINI for giving me this opportunity.



Naina Rai,

11 years old, Class V,

Risheehat Tea Garden

Date of joining the learning centre: February 2021

I am Naina Rai from Risheehat Tea Garden studying in class V. I regularly attend the learning centre of CINI and VAHDAM® TEACH ME™ in Risheehat Tea Garden. I have been studying in the centre for the last 2 years. I never liked studying before joining this centre. But I love to attend the centre as the teacher teaches us through various educational games and videos. Here I have many friends. Along with studying we also learn to sing, dance and make handicrafts from our teacher. After joining here my parents said that my academic performance has improved and I can speak in English fluently. I would like to thank my teacher Roshni Didi who helps me in my studies and co-curricular activities.



Aahana Pradhan,

10 Years old, Class IV

Little Angel School Jungpana-Mahanad

Date of joining the learning centre: February 2021

While doing the CHHIP classes I learned so much about health and hygiene. I learned how to stay clean, how to look after my teeth, how to clean my ears and nose and how to wash my hands. I really enjoy attending CHHIP classes and I follow all the things I learned at home and I tell my friends.



Broadleaf USA

Broadleaf Health And Education Alliance (Broadleaf HEA) was started in 2007 by Dr Michael Matteredgia and his wife, Denna, when they were on a short trip to Darjeeling. Moved by the appalling condition of the children of the region, they decided to work towards improving the health and hygiene of the children in and around the tea estates.

Broadleaf HEA introduced Comprehensive Health and Hygiene Improvement Program(CHHIP) - a health education and improvement program with three interrelated components, created for implementation in rural primary schools in the Darjeeling District of West Bengal, India.

CHHIP is an evidence-based program designed to improve communities from the ground up by delivering health and education services to children in primary school. Members from the community are trained as School Health Activists (SHAs) to implement and deliver the program.

VAHDAM®'s TEACH ME™ initiative has partnered with Broadleaf HEA since 2021 for the implementation of CHHIP in and around four clusters covering five schools and three tea estates.

The total number of children covered by Broadleaf HEA is 524 this year.

Reach & Coverage

A detailed break-up is as under:

| COMMUNITY | SCHOOL | No. of Students |
|---------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------|
| Gopaldhara | Brindavan Boarding School | 377 |
| Jungpana - Mahanadi | Cambridge Academy | 23 |
| | Little Angel English School | 77 |
| | Oxford English School | 22 |
| Mahalderam | Village Montessori School | 25 |

Partnerships:

Broadleaf HEA signed an MOU with the following partnering schools for the year 2022-2023.

1. BrindavanBoardingSchool-Gopaldhara
2. VillageMontessoriSchool-Mahalderam
3. OxfordEnglishSchool
4. LittleAngelEnglishSchool
5. CambridgeAcademy-Mahanadi

Training of School Health Activists

School Health Activists (SHA) are an integral part of CHHIP. During the year, several SHA trainings were organised:

- CHHIP Educator Level 1 Teacher Training
- Basic Training on RED CAP
- Advance Training on RED CAP
- Lesson Observation
- Refresher Training on
 - Vision Screening
 - Iron Supplementation
 - Deworming
 - Preventive Health Screening & Wellness Promotion Exam
 - Epilepsy Screening
 - Leadership Training Part 1 & 2

Currently, there are seven SHA under CHHIP of which three are directly supported by TEACH ME™.



Preventative Health Screening

A total of 11 preventive health screenings were conducted at the schools covering 524 children. The majority of the students were found to have tooth cavities and a few with urine infection, eye problem and skin diseases such as scabies and ring worms. CHHIP students requiring referral were referred to the Public Health Center in where they were provided with medicines and some health related advice.

Epilepsy Screening

A total of 7 epilepsy screenings were conducted by SHAs at partner schools. Thankfully, this year no further students were identified with epilepsy or seizures. This is important given that epilepsy has an estimated prevalence of 0.5-1%, the relatively small size, and prior evaluated cases - a screening program which resulted in no further cases remains clinically and statistically valid.

Vision Screening

A total of 12 screenings were conducted in 2022-23 for vision related problems. Those children who had issues were referred to primary health centres and clinics.

Distribution of Deworming Tablets and Iron Supplements

SHAs along with the community workers and

project officers distributed deworming tablets and iron supplement syrup and tables to the students of partner schools. The total number of children impacted by this were 508 in both cases.

In addition to the above, one to one sessions and focus group discussion on motivational interviewing were organised health workers of the communities in all clusters.

Tracking Improvement

A regular data-driven pre-test and post-test exercise is conducted to track the improvement in children through CHHIP.

Here are the highlights:

- Pre-test was conducted at the beginning of the session with 456 students of the five partner schools from KG to class IV. Based on questions asked, the mean score achieved in pre-test was 41.7%.
- The same set of students were then given post-test questions at the end of the session. The mean score achieved in post-tests was 65.9% reflecting the remarkable improvement.

In addition to CHHIP interventions, numerous non-academic activities were also conducted by the children of the five partner schools in association with Broadleaf HEA. These included:



- Awareness on Sustainable Menstruation Hygiene Management and cloth pad distribution
- Distribution of Masks
- CHHIP Exercise Day
- Student Eye Camp
- Plastic Freedom Challenge
- Nutrition Week



As students in the Darjeeling Himalayas made the transition from virtual learning back into the classrooms, schools and teachers faced new challenges related to children's social and emotional wellbeing and mental health. VAHDAM®'s support through the TEACH ME™ initiative was crucial to our ability to support communities and schools through this transition.

The CHHIP School Health Activists worked tirelessly this past year to build close relationships with children and to promote inclusive, positive school environments that fosters academic learning and positive physical and mental health.

On behalf of the communities, schools and families with whom we work we would like to extend our sincere thanks to Vahdam and their customers for your ongoing support and partnership.

Michael Matergia, MD

Executive Director, Broadleaf Health and Education Alliance



Terres Des Hommes Suisse

Terre des Hommes Suisse (TdH Suisse) is an independent, non profit, non-governmental organisation that has been committed to children and solidarity-based development for nearly 62 years. With its headquarters in Geneva, TdH Suisse carries out its actions in Switzerland and in nine other countries.

In India, TdH Suisse operates through the National Coordination Office based in Kolkata and has been functioning since the 1990s. TdH Suisse received the status of Liaison Office in 2007 from Reserve Bank of India and Government of India. TdH Suisse supports six projects on Education, Child Protection and promotion of participation and citizenship in four states namely Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Odisha and West Bengal. Rural Aid is a partner supported by TdH Suisse from 2021 to promote education and protection for vulnerable children across five tea estates in Alipurduar district, West Bengal.

VAHDAM® entered into a partnership with TdH Suisse to extend the outreach of its TEACH ME™ program to the children of the five tea estates in Alipurduar where TdH Suisse has a strong presence. The program was launched in October 2022 in two phases, covering five Support Education Centres and five government schools. The initial goal of the program was to cover a total of around 3,300 children across these locations.

Actual Impact

The actual impact of the TEACH ME™ program in partnership with TdH Suisse covers a total of 5,193 children as under:

| Government Schools | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|--------------------|--|----------------|---------------------|-------|-------|-------|--------|-------|---------|-------|-------|-------|------|-------|
| Sl.No | Name of Government School | Total Students | Class wise break up | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | | | CL-V | | CL-VI | | CL-VII | | CL-VIII | | CL-XI | | CL-X | |
| | | | Boys | Girls | Boys | Girls | Boys | Girls | Boys | Girls | Boys | Girls | Boys | Girls |
| 1 | Toorsha Jr. School (Middle School-upto STD VIII) | 218 | Nil | Nil | 33 | 29 | 29 | 43 | 38 | 46 | | | | |
| 2 | Dalsingpara Sri Ganesh High School | 1506 | 15 | 26 | 54 | 60 | 68 | 76 | 71 | 69 | 248 | 236 | 285 | 298 |
| 3 | Malangi Hindi High School | 1689 | 54 | 62 | 120 | 120 | 125 | 114 | 126 | 123 | 195 | 227 | 182 | 241 |
| 4 | Malangi Bangla High School | 804 | 37 | 51 | 41 | 59 | 48 | 71 | 56 | 78 | 104 | 79 | 123 | 57 |
| 5 | Madhu High School | 343 | 25 | 21 | 20 | 22 | 30 | 27 | 29 | 20 | 40 | 41 | 35 | 33 |
| | Total | 4560 | | | | | | | | | | | | |

| Support Education Centers | | | | | | | | | | |
|---------------------------|-----------------------|----------------|---------------------|------|-------|--------|---------|-------|------|--|
| SL.No | Name of center | Total Children | Class wise break-up | | | | | | | |
| | | | CL-IV | CL-V | CL-VI | CL-VII | CL-VIII | CL-IX | CL-X | |
| 1 | Toorsa TG Center | 116 | 19 | 14 | 20 | 19 | 21 | 11 | 12 | |
| 2 | Dalsingpara TG Center | 152 | 30 | 21 | 20 | 22 | 28 | 20 | 11 | |
| 3 | Bharnobari TG Center | 139 | 19 | 20 | 20 | 18 | 23 | 30 | 9 | |
| 4 | Malangi TG Center | 110 | 12 | 12 | 20 | 20 | 26 | 14 | 6 | |
| 5 | Madhu TG Center | 116 | 17 | 15 | 18 | 25 | 21 | 12 | 8 | |
| | Total | 633 | 97 | 82 | 98 | 104 | 119 | 87 | 46 | |

Model

The TEACH ME™ program implemented by TdH covers:

- Physical Classes
- Digital Classes
- Non-academic sessions that include:
 - Life-skills sessions
 - Celebration of days and events of National/International importance



Physical Classes

Physical classes are conducted in batches across all the Support Centres based on weekly rosters. Children are taught subjects as per their academic syllabus by our nine educators. These educators are trained on interactive pedagogy and follow contextualised teaching (a constructive methodology that introduces any topic to children as per their local situation and help them to learn through actions) to train the children. To make education more engaging and impactful, the educators also conducted sessions on developing Teaching and Learning Materials (TLM).

TLM are developed by using normal materials available at home or items discarded to develop building aids which makes it easy for children to learn and retain their knowledge such as weather charts, season-based characteristics, solar system, plant organs, human body etc.

Other modes of physical classes/engagement include:

- Open-air Classes
- Community Vigilance Groups
- Peer to Peer Learning
- Mobile Science Laboratory
- Community Transmission
- Assessments

Additionally, each of our Support Education Center has a Child Club in place that offer child rights education and empower the children to understand and be equipped with their 4 basic rights-

- Right to Survival
- Right to Development
- Right to Protection
- Right to Participation

Digital Classes

Since October 2022, BYJU Smart TV and Android boxes have been installed at these locations as part of the TEACH ME™ program. Teething troubles and initial challenges notwithstanding, a total of 256 digital classes have been conducted in this short span of six months with a total attendance of almost 14,000 children. This included phases when digital classes were not held due to either exams of winter holidays.

Training of Teachers

Regular training of teachers (TOT) is organised by TdH Suisse. A centralised TOT was conducted in the month of November 2022 followed by a refresher TOT in the month of February, 2023. A total of nine Support Education Centre educators and seven government school teachers participated.

NON-ACADEMIC ACTIVITIES

Life Skills Training

Life Skills are essential skills that children require to develop abilities for adaptive and positive behaviours, that help them to cope with life situations. The program has a strong focus on career driven workshops, particularly for children who want to explore non-academic careers.

As part of TEACH ME™'s evolving focus to complement academic learning with career-based skill support, TdH Suisse conducted a variant of creative arts workshops for the children. These were:

- Creative Dance
- Street Theatre
- Education for Sustainable Development (ESD)
- Environment Protection actions
- Photography



Children Education Camp

TdH Suisse organised a residential Children Education Camp at Kolkata where all the project partners were invited to participate along with select children and educators to gain a hands-on practical on different science, maths and social studies subjects. This will help them to gain clarity and utilise such skills to train the children. Enriching fun-filled sessions on Origami, Leaf Zoo craft, science practical, star gazing, biology experiments were conducted over the period of 3 days for the children. From Rural Aid, 2 educators and 4 children participated at the event and carried back the learnings for our children at tea gardens.

Celebrations

All national holidays and festivals were celebrated at these centres by the children. Some additional celebrations included International Literacy Day, Global Hand Washing Day, International Day of Mother Tongue and National Science Day.



Impact Monitoring

To measure the impact of the program, a Rapid Participatory Diagnosis (PRD) was combined with Focus Group Discussion (FGD). The Change Thermometer Technique was implemented to obtain the perception of children about the changes across education and participation. Some key findings were:

- Introduction of SMART TV and Byju's App at Schools as well as SECs have made an impact on the education support and access to education services.
- Children are able to reinforce and recall their knowledge as they receive audio-visual lessons.
- Physical classes and digital sessions are jointly helping children (especially many of the slow learners) to gain subject clarity and develop better understanding of the subjects.
- Parents feel that their children have improved in terms of their focus, attention, and engagement.
- Children are happier to attend classes.
- Even the different activities and community actions have helped them to develop better teamwork, communication and interpersonal skills.



Case Studies - Stories of Change

Akriti Kharia

I joined Bharnobari Support Education Center (SEC) in June 2021 and have been a slow learner. I had a lot of difficulty in understanding subjects such as mathematics, that include calculation of percentage and division. At school, I was unable to learn the topics as there were a large number of students in a class and the teacher did not have enough time during periods to explain the subject or give individual attention to candidates like me. My teachers at Support Education Centers have been helping me in coping up with such problems and it was at that juncture, when in August 2022, TEACH ME™ program was introduced at our SEC. Digital classes with simple audio-visual sessions helped me to understand mathematics problems such as calculations, division, percentage. The visual sessions with examples made it easy for me to understand the topic and gain confidence. The exercise questions at the end of each topic session helps us to recapitulate our lessons and reinforce the learning.

I wish to be a teacher someday and offer free education to many needy children in my tea garden areas.

Kushal Lohar

My name is Kushal Lohar. I am 14 years old and study in class 9 at the tea garden of Malangi in the district of Alipurduar. English and Mathematics are two subjects that scare me the most. I am always afraid of these subjects in my studies. I find it most difficult to understand formulas and how to use them, in fact many times I forget the formulas. Same is the case when I try to write complete sentences or paragraphs in English. Introduction of digital classes through the TEACH ME™ program and the mobile based BYJU's App made it easy for me to understand English and mathematics. The story examples and sessions helped me to relate to topics and easily comprehend the subjects.

I come from a poor plantation worker family of Malangi Tea Garden where my father Dashrath Lohar works as a tea garden worker. My parents did not have the resources to send me for tuitions, so the classes at Malangi Support Education Center, delivered by teachers with care and BYJU's mobile app at home helped me a lot to clear my doubts, overcome fear on Maths & English and prepare for the school exams. Recently, I participated at the Education Science Camp at Kolkata organised by TdH Suisse, where we learnt different subjects through hands-on practical sessions and live experiments (such as leaf zoo, nature study, origami, star watching etc.) I aspire to pass my Board exams with flying colours and am keen to support my family financially post completion of my studies.





“This collaboration is a very good example of a corporate-NGO partnership, between VAHDAM India and Terre des Hommes Suisse, joining forces and allowing to make a concrete step toward the achievement of the sustainable development goals.”

Christophe Roduit

Secretary General, Terre des Hommes Suisse





IDH - The Sustainable Trade Initiative

About IDH

IDH convenes, co-creates, and co-finances inclusive and sustainable market-driven solutions that create value for people and the planet. To catalyze change at scale, IDH empowers people within businesses, the global financial sector, and governments. Headquartered in the Netherlands, IDH has around 380 employees globally, operating in 20 landscapes and 12 commodities and sourcing regions with over 1,000 public and private partners. In 14 years of operation, IDH has catalyzed over 390 M in private sector investment and support for new business models that create better jobs, better incomes, a better environment, and gender equity for all.

IDH India has been running the Small Tea Growers Sustainability Platform (STGSP) since 2019. This program engages with the sector around the topic of income improvement for Small Tea Growers ("STGs") in North India, focusing on Assam and West Bengal. STGSP aims to improve the income of 30,000 STGs by 20% by 2025 by closing the living income gap, improving environmental sustainability and diversifying economic opportunities for small tea growers in Assam, India.

VAHDAM® IDH Partnership

VAHDAM® India and IDH India signed an agreement of Commitment Towards Smallholder Farmer's Livelihood in August 2022. Under this long-term partnership, VAHDAM® India, through its flagship TEACH ME™ program, will collaborate with IDH India by extending digital learning to the 22,000 small tea growers families currently with IDH. The partnership will see the BYJU's Learning App and BYJU Smart TV being leveraged across the presence of IDH India through its network of agri-entrepreneurs. In addition to digital learning, VAHDAM® India will also provide its VAHDAM® India Scholarships for Higher Education to the young adults of the small tea growers with IDH India.

Pilot Project

A pilot project comprising around 450 children of small tea growers is now under way. The aim of this pilot is to monitor, evaluate and learn from the various implementation issues and challenges. The children in this pilot program are from six districts in Assam and four districts in North Bengal.





Based on the learning of this pilot, the partnership will fine-tune the model for a mass roll-out in 2023-24. An interesting development has been to include BYJU TVs and extend this to the local schools in and around communities where of the small tea growers.



Haqdarshak

Haqdarshak (HQ) is a social enterprise working to make welfare schemes more accessible to citizens by providing the last-mile support to discover and apply for government and private welfare schemes. This is done via a multi-state, multilingual mobile app that is used by a trained cadre of community agents.

VAHDAM® partnered with HQ in the latter half of 2022 to pilot a social empowerment project at Billimalai tea estate in the Nilgiris in the state of Tamil Nadu. This pilot project primarily aims to facilitate last-mile service delivery of government welfare schemes to the workers of Billimalai tea estate in Coonoor, with a focus on healthcare, insurance, livelihood, Direct benefit transfer and other essential documents. The project focussed on the tea plantation workers by addressing the information gaps, increasing awareness and access to their entitlements and increasing their social security status. The final outcome of the project was directed towards achieving improved socio-economic outcomes and elevating the standard of living of the workers.

| Key Highlight of the Project | | |
|---|--------------------------------|-------------|
|  | No. of Citizens Services | 161 |
|  | Applications Opened | 235 |
|  | Application Submitted | 235 |
|  | Benefits Received Applications | 234 |
| Total Benefit Value | | ₹ 49,80,590 |



Impact

Under the pilot project, HQ helped the workers of Billimalai tea estate access schemes like the Chief Minister Comprehensive Health Insurance Scheme (PMJAY, PM-Jan Arogya Yojana, e-KYC) as well as aided with update and essential documents such as PAN Card, Digital Health-ID card, Voter ID card etc. The project focussed on health and insurance schemes in higher numbers because of the demand and need of the workers. A total benefit value of ₹4,980,590 has been achieved till now.

Highlights of the Impact:

| Top Schemes / Documents | | | |
|-------------------------|---|---|----------------------------------|
| Sr. No | Scheme Name | Scheme description | Applications in Benefit Received |
| 1 | Digital Health ID Card TN (Scheme) | The digital health ID card, is a digital identification card having identifying data (such as health records) about the cardholder. The health ID card is utilised for a hassle-free procedure to digitally access and share the cardholder's health records. | 195 |
| 2 | PMJAY EKYC update_TN | PM-JAY provides cashless cover of up to INR5,00,000 to each eligible family per annum for listed secondary and tertiary care conditions in both public and private empaneled hospitals. PMJAY EKYC update will help in verifying the beneficiary's credentials so that they can avail the services of the scheme. | 81 |
| 3 | Aadhar Linking to Pan card TN | The government has made it mandatory for all the citizens to link PAN-Aadhaar in order to make the tax payment system seamless and to avoid tax evasion. | 59 |

| Document / Scheme Facilitated | | | | | |
|--|------------|------------|------------------|----------------------|--------------------------|
| Document/ Scheme | Open | Submitted | Benefit Received | Scheme Benefit Value | Benefit Valued Delivered |
| Aadhar Linking to Pan Card_ TN | 59 | 59 | 59 | 50 | ₹ 2,950 |
| Aadhar update/correction scheme_TN | 7 | 7 | 7 | 50 | ₹ 350 |
| Chief Minister Comprehensive Health Insurance Scheme (PMJAY)_TN | 26 | 26 | 26 | 68550 | ₹ 1,782,300 |
| Digital Health ID card_TN (Scheme) | 195 | 195 | 195 | 50 | ₹ 9,750 |
| E-Shram Card_TN | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1900 | ₹ 1,900 |
| EPFO KYC Update and Correction_TN | 35 | 35 | 35 | 100 | ₹ 3,500 |
| PMJAY EKYC update_TN | 81 | 81 | 81 | 68550 | ₹ 5,552,550 |
| TN-Pan Card | 14 | 14 | 14 | 200 | ₹ 2,800 |
| TN-Ration Card | 1 | 1 | 0 | 25560 | ₹ 0 |
| TN-Ration card update/correction | 6 | 6 | 6 | 25560 | ₹ 1,53,360 |
| TN-Voter ID | 4 | 4 | 4 | 50 | ₹ 200 |
| TOTAL | 429 | 429 | 428 | 50 | ₹ 7,509,660 |



Impact Story

Name: **Budai Oroan,**

Age: 25

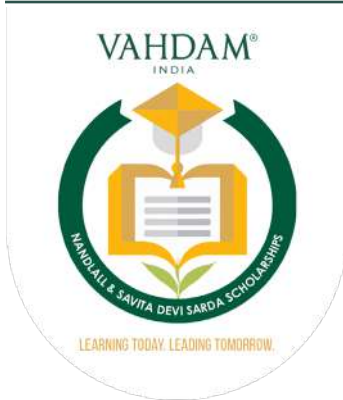
Location: Billimalai Tea Estate, Coonoor, Ooty

Scheme/document received: E-shram card

The central government has developed the eSHRAM portal, which will be a centralised database of unorganised workers seeded with Aadhaar. In future, all the social security benefits of unorganised workers will be delivered through this portal.

Through the Haqdarshak|VAHDAM® intervention, an awareness camp was organised to generate awareness about various welfare schemes. Budai was initially not aware of the E-shram card. He became interested in getting enrolled once HQ explained about its benefits. HQ helped in availing the E-shram card within a short span of time.





VAHDAM® India Scholarships for Higher Education

VAHDAM® India Scholarship for Higher Education was launched in 2020 with a clear aim of supporting the youth of tea estates who wanted to continue their higher education, but could not do so due to financial constraints.

The scholarships are named after the grandparents of the founder, and are formally called Nand Lal and Savita Devi Sarada Scholarships for Higher Education.

The purpose and philosophy of the program is clearly articulated in its motto - Learning Today. Leading Tomorrow. These scholarships complement TEACH ME™ - VAHDAM®'s flagship CSR program that works specifically with children's education.

VAHDAM® Scholarships for Higher Education - Key Differentiating Features

- Preference for the youth of tea-estate and children of tea-estate workers
- Wide stream of higher education courses covered
- Need-based scholarships based on passion and commitment of the youth
- Strong reference based applications from tea-estate management
- Financial support covers academic fee
- Minimal documentation requirement
- Internal committee at VAHDAM® India for quick appraisal and approval

At the beginning of this year, VAHDAM® Scholarships for Higher Education were granted to 24 young adults. With colleges opening up in 2022-23, we saw a significant interest in these scholarships, and received a large number of applications all through the year. Eventually, after verification and evaluation, the internal committee approved 24 applications.

These new members to the VAHDAM® Scholarships family come from 16 tea estates.

As of date, the total number of VAHDAM® Scholarships for Higher Education is 48.



SOCIAL IMPACT EVALUATION

Over the last three years, TEACH ME™ has grown and expanded to touch the lives of almost 14,000 children over 68 locations that include tea estates, government schools and community centres in Darjeeling, the Dooars, Assam and the Nilgiris.

In 2020 and 2021 it was not possible to travel due to Covid-19 restrictions, and hence, evaluating the impact of TEACH ME™ was difficult. Also, the focus on VAHDAM® was to ensure there was some form of continuity of education for the children of tea estate workers during these trying times, rather than measure the impact of the initiative. However, with things normalising in 2022, and with further expansion of outreach of TEACH ME™, we felt that a proper evaluation of the social impact of TEACH ME™ done by a professional agency would greatly help us monitor, evaluate and learn.

DALBERG India's Kind Gesture

We would like to share our sincere appreciation for DALBERG India. The team from Dalberg guided us in framing the social impact evaluation framework, sharing invaluable insights and suggestions. It was on the basis of Dalberg's interventions that we shortlisted the evaluation agency as well as created the first impact evaluation framework for TEACH ME™.

Dalberg India has also been kind enough to accept invitation to join the ESG Committee of VAHDAM® and are now helping VAHDAM® with strategic inputs on ESG Ambition and Goals.



CONSULTIVO – The Social Impact Evaluation Agency

The first independent impact evaluation of TEACH ME™ was conducted in the last quarter of 2022-23 by Consultivo Business Solutions Pvt Ltd (Consultivo). Consultivo is a management advisory and consulting firm helping global businesses in the areas of ESG, Sustainability, Business Excellence and Risk Management – both at the strategic and operational levels.

Consultivo conducted an independent survey in the months of February and March 2023 covering a cross-section of students, parents, teachers and tea-estate management staff to evaluate the impact TEACH ME™ using key indicators that map input, output and outcome inter-linkages. A crucial feature of this survey was also to create a learning loop that highlighted challenges in implementation, as well as a set of recommendations that enable higher impact of TEACH ME™.

Scope of the Review

Period : 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023

- Review of the key interventions and alignment of the impact indicators of the project
- Capturing the perception of impact through online stakeholder discussions and engagements

Methodology & Sampling

A cross-section of children were selected from the following tea estates and schools for the purpose of this survey :



| Tea Estate | Location | Implementing Partner | No. of Beneficiaries |
|---------------------------------|------------|----------------------|----------------------|
| Rohini (Child Activity Centre) | Darjeeling | CRY | 300 |
| Goomtee (Child Activity Centre) | Darjeeling | CRY | 300 |
| Risheehat | Darjeeling | CINI | 95 |
| Peshok | Darjeeling | CINI | 55 |
| Nowera Nuddy | Dooars(WB) | APPL Foundation | 137 |
| Dam Dim | Dooars(WB) | APPL Foundation | 79 |

The review included both primary and secondary research. It was executed by online interviewing the beneficiaries of the project to gauge an overall understanding of the output, outcomes and impact. The assessment included online discussions with stakeholders to document their perceptions and feedback on the program.

Impact Indicators

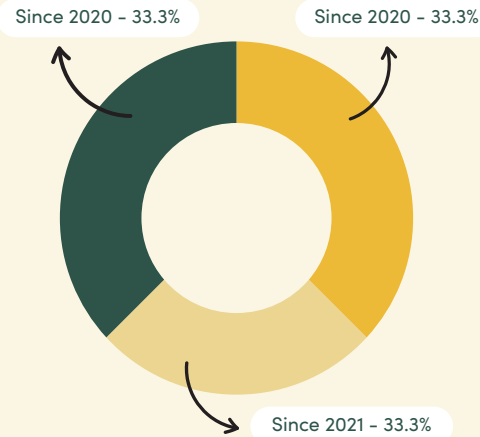
- Access to education and digital learning device
- Digital Equity
- Equal opportunity for all
- Digital literacy among teachers and students
- Improvement in the retention capacity
- Access to relevant content for upskilling
- Enabling better learning outcomes
- Improvement in the learning results
- Reduction in the school dropouts
- Diversity and inclusion
- Linguistic diversity
- Enabling upward socio-economic mobility



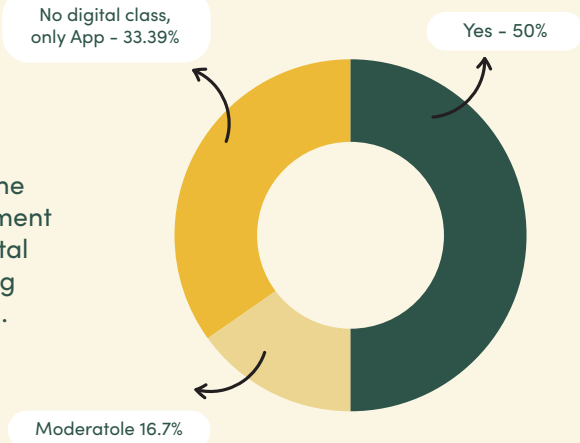
KEY HIGHLIGHTS

Around **85%** of the students are using BYJU's Android TV or App daily for more than 2 hours.

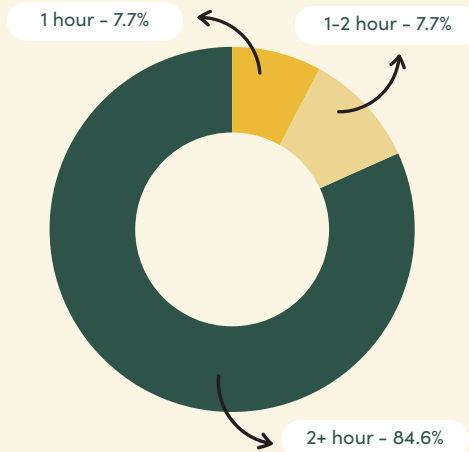
Since when are the teachers using digital technology for teaching?
All the teachers have expressed that they are using BYJU's Android TV or BYJU's Application for teaching.



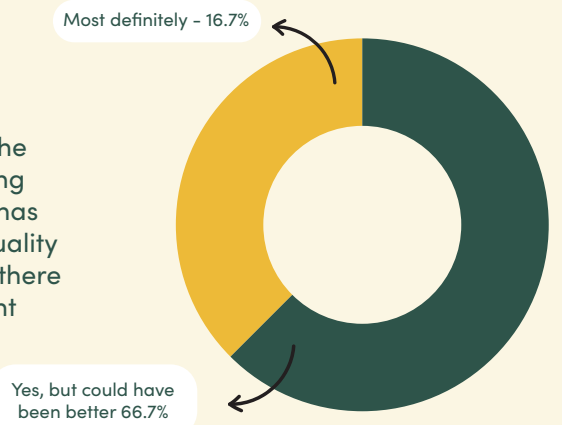
However, only around 50% of the estate management shared that digital classes are being properly utilised.



Percentage of students spending time daily in BYJU's digital classroom/ app.

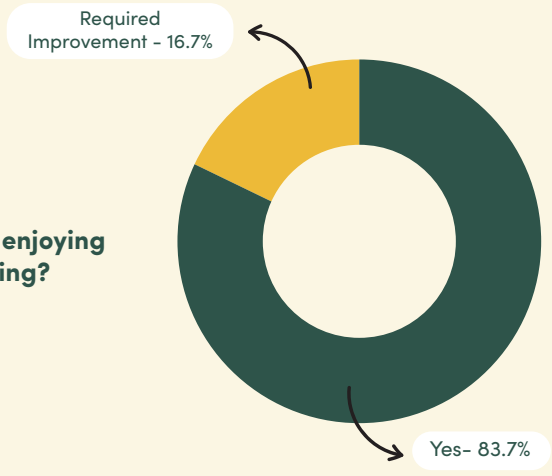


The tea estate management expresses that the computer training of the teachers has improved the quality of teaching but there are improvement points.



Parental Response & Participation

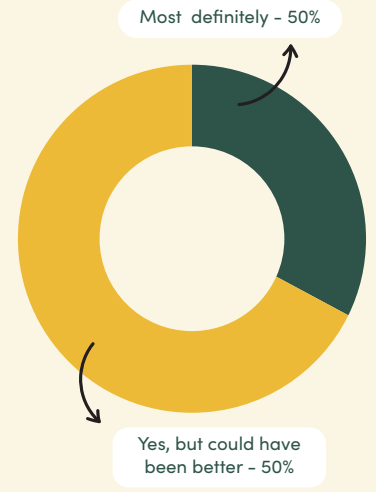
Is your child enjoying digital learning?



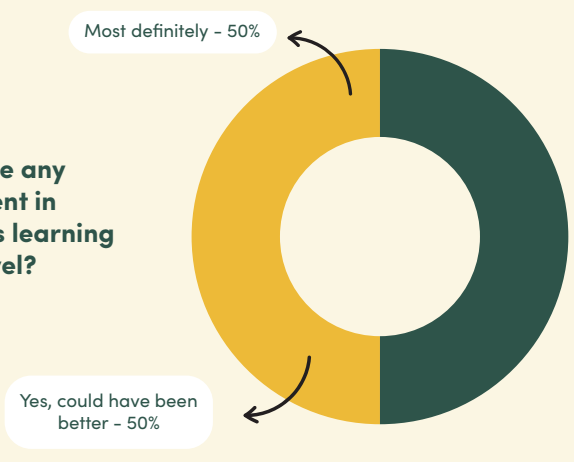
Empowering Communities

Occupation of the parents

About 66.7% of the children under TEACH ME™ come from families whose parents work in tea gardens. Most of these children are first-generation learners. This project aims in breaking out of the cycle of poverty that often plaques these communities through access to digital education.

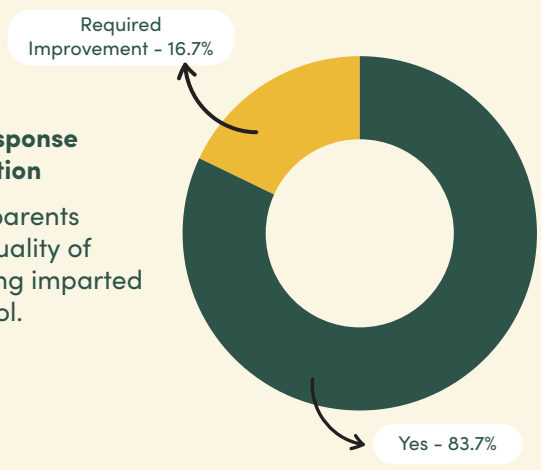


Can you see any improvement in your child's learning interest level?



Parental response and perception

Opinion of parents about the quality of training being imparted by this school.



Recommendations

- Improved internet connectivity and facilitating the extension of internet services are required. Students have expressed the challenges such as poor internet connectivity and frequent power cuts that hinder consistent learning.
- Completion of the installation of smart TV at the learning centres on priority.
- Strengthening the capacity of teachers and relevant education personnel using digital technology - teachers' pedagogical training using smart devices is required.
- The students, teachers and the estate management feel the need of adding the subject "English" to the app for achieving better learning objectives.
- Prioritize marginalized learners by adding more translational languages to the app for promoting multilingual learning.
- Increasing the digital library collection in different languages and topics for the students.





This is to certify that Vahdam India has successfully completed the assessment conducted by Great Place to Work® Institute, India, and is certified as a great workplace.
Category: Mid-Size Organizations

This certificate is valid from Feb 2023 to Feb 2024.

Yeshasvini Ramaswamy
Chief Executive Officer
Great Place to Work® Institute, India

Note: This certificate is valid subject to the terms and conditions agreed to by the Organization.

WORKPLACE INITIATIVES

Workplace

Our people are truly our most valuable resource and asset. The VAHDAM® Corporate HQ in Noida is a vibrant and happy workplace, where we have always endeavored to provide our employees a safe, secure and inclusive environment. Bonded by a culture of efficiency and excellence, and glued together by VAHDAM® Values, the VAHDAM® Corporate HQ is a reflection of the brand - lively and cheerful, premium and rewarding, but above all, a place for growth and development.

Great Place to Work

In January 2023, under the leadership of our young CHRO, VAHDAM® India was certified as a Great Place to Work by the Great Place to Work India Institute. After a detailed and in depth survey that consisted of anonymous questions, VAHDAM® India came out with flying colours and became a certified Great Place to Work.

VAHDAM® India Happiness Index

We launched the VAHDAM® India Happiness (VHI) Index last year. This year, we have continued to add more features to this - Employee Recognition and Employee Net Promoter Score, being the chief ones.

Employee Recognition

We initiated the Employee Recognition (EP) program as part of our continuous efforts to increase engagement with the employees and ensure their work is both appreciated and recognised.

VAHDAM® India's recognition framework comprises:

- 1.Appreciation (budget dependent and driven through manager)
- 2.Gratitude
- 3.Recognition

Various levels of awards have been instituted under each of the above three categories which are ascertained by managers and/or CXOs. In addition to these individual recognition and awards, two team awards are also given out on a half-yearly basis.



Employee Net Promoter Scores

Employee net promoter score (ENPS) is a quantitative measure of how employees feel in any organisation. At VAHDAM®, a survey is conducted once a quarter where almost 100 percent of employees participate .

ENPS is a very simple and quick measure of people's engagement and commitment. The numerical representation makes it easy to refer and compare. It is also familiar to the majority, and is presentable to the stakeholders without much introduction. Our objective is to drive and maintain a score that helps us create a workplace where people apply themselves well and feel a sense of pride

How do we use this at VAHDAM®:

Action plan

The ENPS action plan has been created in partnership with each and every employee of our organisation and involves:

1. AN HR facilitator
2. An external expert
3. People of the organisation

The HR team reaches out to all employees and conducts a survey. The results are then transparently shared directly with all employees. Employees also share active suggestions and action points for the HR team.

Action plan involves group discussion where the HR representative explains the survey and its insights . The HR Facilitator then invites the RCA brainstorming session which is conducted by a subject matter expert. This year all quarter brainstorming was done in partnership with a global organisation behaviour expert. The Action plan was instrumental in rolling out various policies ranging from inclusive leave policy, scholarship policy, fitness kitchen creation and wellness policy.

Performance Management System

VAHDAM® launched a comprehensive Performance Management System (PMS) that is commensurate with the business and its future growth plans. PMS reflects the nature of our business - digital in the fast changing Consumer Packaged Goods (CPG) space with a high proportion of young people.

At the heart of this PMS is the quarterly evaluation of employees based on their OKRs. At the beginning of each year, every employee charts their goals/objectives as well as their measurable (key results). Every team, leader, manager and employee here at VAHDAM® carries an OKR to fulfil. The defined framework includes a number of rules which help employees prioritize, align, focus and measure the outcome of the work they do. This helps us communicate and translate strategy to employees in an actionable, measurable way. Collectively, we have moved from an output to an outcome-based approach to work.

Each quarter, employees do a self-evaluation, which is then appraised by their managers. A score of 1-5 is assigned to each employee. The entire process is online as well as confidential. In addition to the online evaluation, managers also have a one-to-one review with their subordinates, appraising them about their performance and their improvement areas.

What makes our PMS different is:

- Result Orientation
- Accountability
- Focus on North Star
- Not a one-time event
- No results without action

The PMS is closely linked to productivity and reward mechanisms.



Launch of New Policies

Women at our Workplace

For years, female executives have come away from women-only leadership programs empowered to do so and asked for valuing the opportunity to examine their strengths and shortcomings as a springboard for personal development.

The often overlooked benefit of women leadership programs is that they hold up a mirror to the organisation. When women scrutinise their own leadership traits and experiences, they reveal important details about the day-to-day environment in which they operate. Here, at VAHDAM® we foster an environment in which everyone can bring their best self to work. We embark on the women leading programs as stated below:

Women's Leadership Program (WLP)

At VAHDAM®, we try to maintain leadership teams that are made up of women. This is a conscious inclusion program to understand the situation and urgency of achieving gender balance. The share of women at VAHDAM® has been raised from 13% to 68% and leading teams on board from 17% to 46%. We have an internal goal that the top three levels of organisations have at least 20% women. We ensured that at least two out of six CXOs and four out of eight direct reportees of CEO are women.

Women's Empowerment Program (WEP)

At VAHDAM®, we ensure that the hiring and promotions are fair and transparent. Establishing a clear evaluation criterion right from recruiting to identifying women's achievement has helped us identify the potential. The goal of this program is to empower women and help them advance. Specific to recruitment any rejection in the final round of female candidates is taken very seriously and discussed by leaders. We ensure right from entry-level – campus – we hire at least 50% female students. Last year, 46% of our hires were women.

VAHDAM Maternity Support Program

We make no compromise when it comes to supporting women in the most important phase of their lives. First things first – the day they inform the organisation about maternity, the clock-in and clock-out system gets disabled, all leaves become unlimited – the employee can take as much as leave- casual and sick. Earned leaves of the employee remain protected.

The program comes with a permanent work-from-home – with only one requirement of HOD of a hospital's recommendation. Female employees can take up to three months to work from home post-maternity as well. After women return to office to work post maternity – their flexibility to work from office or home remains intact for next six months.



Other Policies

Overall Flexibility

Flexibility at work for women is one of the key priorities for the organisation. At VAHDAM®, we give our women the option to decide the roster for themselves with a minimum one day at office schedule. Our portal functionality allows our women to decide their work hours – office and home, on any 24 hours basis. We believe women have to manage their time in a more complicated way that we know.

Empowering women through opportunity and increasing their representation in key roles and levels is a key focus area at VAHDAM®. We believe when women feel empowered at work, they stay. One of the key features in our workplace is our inclusive

approach that ensures there is a zero to negative pay gap for women. When it comes to experience and qualifications-wise benchmark, we have women employees paid higher than men employees. This gives women a sense of empowerment and a feeling that in case they perform and contribute, their contributions shall be highlighted more and further.

Menstrual Leave Policy

During the year, we have revised and updated the Menstrual Leave Policy.

VAHDAM® Homecoming Program

To encourage women to get back into the workforce after a long period of absence, they are given

adequate training and opportunities to network to help them get back to their position. In addition to improving workplace results, it helps in setting an inspiring example or a strong motivation towards building gender equality and inclusion.

Parental Support Program For All Parents Paternity Leave

A four-week paternity leave is part of our leave policy to each male team member who becomes a father to help the woman at home. The family we feel is as much as our responsibility as our people.



Employee Engagement

YOUR BEAUTIFUL LIFE - Employee Wellness Initiative

Committing ourselves to the health and wellness of people across the globe, it was imperative to provide considerable attention on the wellbeing of our people. On 21st June, 2022, we launched Your Beautiful Life to cover various facets of wellbeing for each and every member of the VAHDAM® family. The overall objective of this initiative is to equip the people with skills that can be used from the very next day to live an improved and an enhanced lifestyle.

Various sessions and workshops were conducted during the year which included:

1. Yoga Day Celebration

The first session held on Yoga Day taught us how to perform asanas and yoga practices for overall well-being along the chakras (nerve centres) in our body. This also coincided with the Launch of Chakra Tea Globally that was a harmonious blend of various herbs to purify and energise various nerve centres of the human body.

2. Sound Healing Session

The second session was a soothing 'sound healing session' with a Global sound healer - sound healer helped our team members understand the relationship between the human body and various sounds that emanate from wide range of instruments - Gong, Bells, Flue etc. This is followed

by a debrief session where each participant shared their experience of the session.

3. Healthy Cooking

The third session held on 15th July taught us about delicious tips and tricks of cooking by Mr. Zakir Khan, the Head-Chef of Inter-Continental Hotel Group. In this session, four cross-functional teams with four participants each, cooked under the guidance of the head-chef himself. The Session was a way to combine taste with health. Around 45 individuals were taught to cook - Salads, rolls and smoothies - in the most healthy way.

This session has become the property in itself and is repeated every alternate month thus covering max people and completing the 12 recipe calendar.

4. Eat, Sleep Workout

The next session held on 10th August was in association with UFC worldwide. It was titled- the ESW Module (Eat Sleep Workout).

5. The next session involved a partnership with Ted forum - where they will be sending one speaker every alternate month to help our people with perspectives on various subjects that affect our people and times. We began this session with Mr Babar Ali - India's youngest headmaster - held on 18th November 2022. It was an inspiring session around how he contributed to educating the thousands of children in a town that had no school, roads etc.



EMPLOYEE FAMILY SCHOLARSHIP FUND

This year, we also launched our Employee Family Scholarship Fund aimed to help in the education of the employee, their spouses and their dependents through financial assistance. This includes the Child Education Scholarship and also the Award of Meritocracy.



GOVERNMENT INITIATIVES

The company has been actively implementing various initiatives to ensure sustainability and responsible business practices. The formation of an ESG Committee is a significant step towards this goal. The ESG Policy framework is in the final phase of draft and launch, which will provide a framework for the company's sustainable practices.

In addition, the company has launched SAP to streamline its operations and enhance efficiency. Customer satisfaction surveys are regularly conducted to gauge customer feedback and improve service quality. The company has also started drafting a Responsible Marketing & Products Framework, which aims to promote ethical and sustainable marketing practices.

To ensure compliance and alignment with industry best practices, the company is reviewing and updating key policies. A Risk Management Framework has also been formulated to identify and mitigate potential risks that may affect the company's operations. Lastly, the Board Effectiveness Framework has been launched to promote transparency, accountability, and effective decision-making within the organization. These efforts demonstrate the company's commitment to responsible business practices and sustainability.

WE
CARE



ESG POLICY & COMMITTEE

VAHDAM® India commenced its ESG journey in the year 2021. As an investee company of Fireside Venture, one of our valued investors, VAHDAM® came out as the top-ranked company in the VALUE OF GOOD survey conducted by PwC on behalf of Fireside Ventures.

The VALUE OF GOOD survey provided excellent insights and guidance for VAHDAM® to map out its ESG roadmap. Taking cues from this survey, VAHDAM® launched its ESG Vision & Ambition Framework in 2022.

Work on a detailed and comprehensive ESG Policy was started in 2021-22 and continued throughout 2022-23 with inputs and feedback from various internal and external stakeholders. The VAHDAM® ESG Policy is now in the final stages, and is expected to be launched and internalised during the next fiscal year.

ESG COMMITTEE

During the year, the ESG Committee was also formed with four members from VAHDAM® and two external invitees.

The ESG Committee comprises:

- Bala Sarda - Founder and CEO
- Ketan Desai - Chief Sustainability Officer
- Sneha Beriwal - Global CMO
- Amlan Mukherjee - Chief Supply Chain Officer
- Reemsha Reen (by invitation) - Fireside Ventures
- Kabir Sethi (by invitation) - Dalberg India

The ESG Committee meets periodically and guides the Board in discharging its responsibilities. The Committee meets on a regular basis to update the Board about the progress made on the ESG Roadmap, as well as guide the ESG team with strategic direction.



OTHER GOVERNANCE INITIATIVES

Launch of SAP

As part of making our processes seamless and structured, and considering the future growth and expansion plans of the company, a need was felt to implement a strong enterprise resource planning system (ERP) in the company.

During 2022-23, under the direction of our Chief Supply Chain Officer, top ERP vendors were evaluated. Finally, SAP was rewarded with the mandate to implement ERP in the organisation.

Why SAP?

We had done extensive evaluation of various ERP tools available in the market. For a food manufacturing and distribution company like ours, SAP was a preferred choice. Many similar large and medium scale industries are using SAP as the ERP tool. SAP puts the data from different processes and business functions at a single centralised location. This makes sharing data and information across business

units and departments easier. Departments such as sales, inventory, finance, production and human resources can access information from different departments and efficiently communicate the needs of their department. This also helps in reducing errors and delays in communication and improves overall efficiency. Any business's success relies on effective communication and data exchange among all departments and SAP as an enterprise resource planning software enables this communication and information exchange.

Implementation of SAP

ERP tools form the backbone of organisations in a variety of industries. At VAHDAM® we are in the process of implementing the SAP S4/HANA. SAP S/4HANA Cloud Suite will provide VAHDAM® with a single integrated platform to vertically streamline all business processes, including procurement, finance, and sales. Using SAP's cutting-edge cloud technology, the company

will be able to define processes, communications, and transactions with its partners, thus scaling operations globally. Leveraging SAP's Intelligent Enterprise solutions, VAHDAM India will further accelerate its growth by managing the nuances of their production and packaging processes in a more straightforward and intuitive manner. The solutions would not only support corporate processes with real-time data, but would also help manage local statutory, financial reporting, and decision-making with embedded analytics.

Marketplace Initiatives

Customer Experience

As a direct-to-consumer wellness brand providing high-quality tea, spices and herbs to consumers in over 130 countries, providing a positive customer experience is a top priority for VAHDAM®.

Our dedicated and committed Customer Experience (CX) team works round the clock to engage and

respond to customers, helping solve any issues they might be facing at any point in their purchase journey.

Timely and specific responses are the key milestones as we continue to strive to give all our customers the best experience.

Here is how we engage with our customers and deliver a delightful experience:

- Customers can reach our CX team through email, chats and calls
- Our Target Response Time is 4 hours - and in the last quarter, we have been maintaining a response time of 2 hours
- Our Target for Average Resolution Time is 15 hours. However, since last quarter we have been maintaining it at 10 hours
- The NPS of our product reviews at D2C website (USA) is 66% for the last quarter



Customer Testimonials

Dear Priyank,

Thank you very much for your comprehensive and elaborate reply. I believe that transparency is very important for enthusiastic customers like me and helps a lot to build trust. I am extremely impressed by your explanations and it gives me a good feeling with respect to your products.



- Karin (Verified Buyer)

Dear Akshat,

Akshat was very thorough in fixing the issue of Vahdam sending the wrong item to me. Customer service is awesome and it makes me want to support Vahdam even more! Thanks again and I'm looking forward to receiving the bag of tea I originally purchased.



- Anonymous (Verified Buyer)

Responsible Marketing & Products

As a direct-to-consumer brand, it is incumbent upon VAHDAM® to follow the highest level of marketplace governance. A key and critical part of this is responsible marketing and products.

We have always been conscious and cognizant about the authenticity and integrity of all our marketing communications. This includes all our website information, social media campaigns, PR and media mentions as well as other communications. Responsible marketing is an essential component of ESG policy. As a responsible brand, we have always aimed at ensuring our marketing communications reflect our ethical and honest approach. It involves transparency in advertising, avoiding greenwashing or making false claims, and respecting customers' privacy and rights. ESG marketplace governance requires companies to create sustainable business practices. Responsible marketing aims at building trust and credibility with customers.

We are now in the process of creating a Responsible Marketing & Products Framework that outlines and defines every aspect of our marketing and product. This document will then become the bedrock of all our marketplace governance practices, aligned with our overall ESG Policy.



REVIEW AND UPDATE OF KEY POLICIES

Risk Management

We had initiated a holistic risk management policy last year. This year, we created a detailed Risk Control Matrix identifying various risks, their rating based on impact on business, control parameters, frequency of evaluation as well as key ownership of senior management for each risk identified.

The Risk Control Matrix is regularly reviewed and updated by the senior management based on various macro developments as well as any changes in key growth drivers or business critical factors.

Every risk is mapped to respective managers or CXOs based on their Risk Rating. With a focus on business continuity and growth, the risks are bucketed under:

- Operational Risks
- Financial Risks
- Reputational Risks
- Compliance Risks

Board Effectiveness

During the year, the Board of Directors met on a regular basis to review the operational and financial performance of the company, as well as provide valuable strategic guidance. The Board of Directors formally met ten times during the year, in addition to meeting for the Annual General Meeting.

The members of the Board participated either physically or virtually during these meetings. In case any member could not attend personally, they had nominated a proxy member who attended the meeting on their behalf.

Investor Grievances

Being a private limited entity, the Company has a small set of shareholders. All shareholders are actively in touch with the Founder as well as the CFO. Any grievances or issues or queries that they have are directly addressed to the CFO and/or the Founder, who promptly and effectively respond and resolve these.

As on 31st March 2023, there were no pending investor grievances.



MATERIALITY

Materiality assessment is a key part of our ESG roadmap that dovetails into the larger strategy of the company. Understanding the emerging changes and challenges in the macro environment, and its impact on both our business success and our stakeholders is critical for our sustained growth and expansion.

In 2022-23, we continued with our materiality assessment based on the same process that we had followed when we started mapping our materiality factors and their impact in 2020.

The process we continue to follow is :

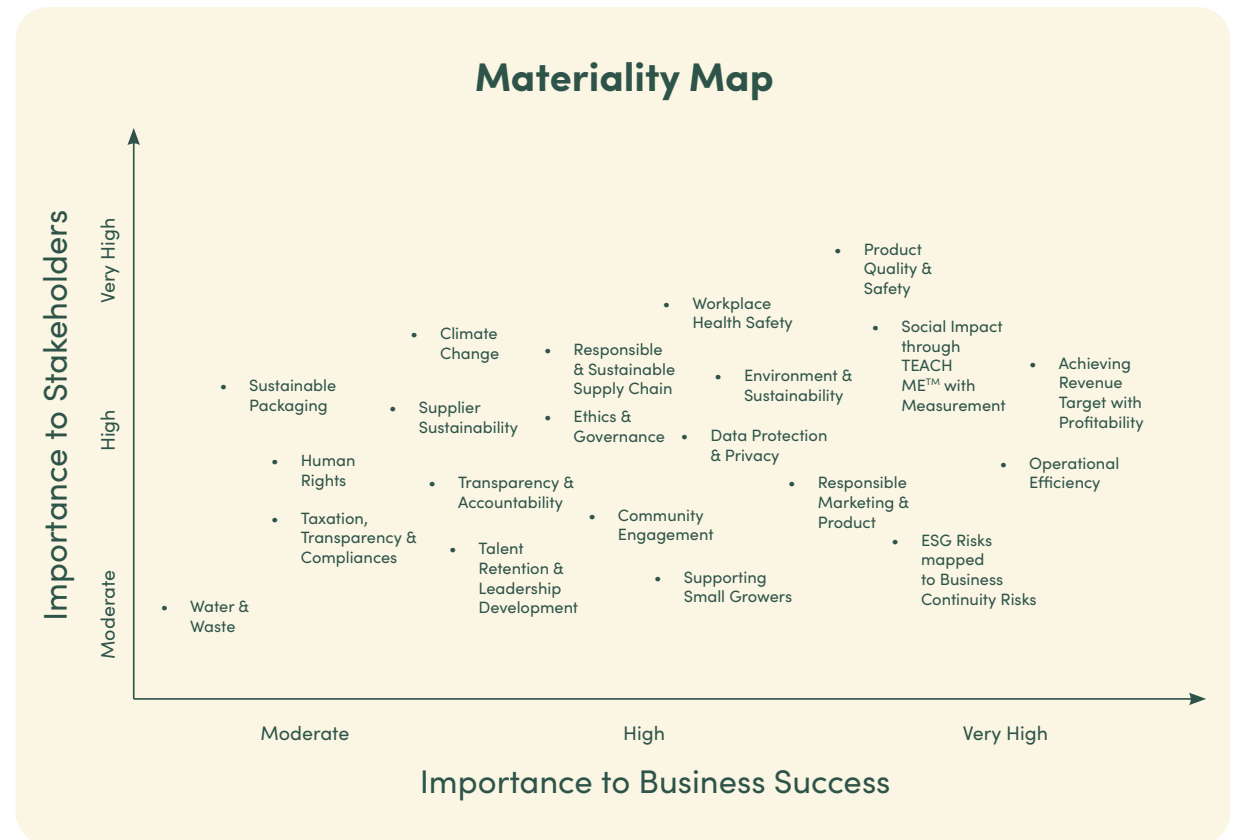
Identification of material issues: A comprehensive list of issues was identified and determined through a sector analysis, review of sustainability reporting standards and company priorities and strategies.

Determination of importance to business: In order to determine their relative importance to business, each issue was assessed according to its impact on product quality and safety, sustainability, competition and peers as well as marketplace. Key internal stakeholders provided input via in-depth interviews with our leadership.

Determination of importance to external stakeholders: In order to determine their relative importance to external stakeholders, each issue was assessed according to its importance to various

stakeholder groups: customers, business partners, communities and societies, shareholders/investors and governments/regulators.

Prioritise: We mapped and plotted each issue on the Materiality Matrix to bring out the priorities of each issue.



ENGAGING WITH OUR STAKEHOLDERS

As a direct-to-consumer (DTC) brand that procures tea, spices and herbs directly from producers and processes and packs these in state-of-the-art integrated facility, and then ships to customers in over 130 countries.

Ensuring we regularly engage with each of our stakeholder groups on a regular basis, understand and address their grievance or suggestions is paramount to the long-term success and growth of the company. We engage with our stakeholders using a variety of channels and platforms that include face-to-face interactions or using virtual modes like video conferencing.

Our key stakeholders include :

- Customers
- Farmers and Growers
- Employees
- Vendors and Suppliers
- Community & Societies
- Industry
- Government
- Shareholders and Investors

We engage with them as under :

| Stakeholders | Engagement |
|----------------------------|---|
| Customers | Dedicated Customer Experience Team, Monthly Emailers, Chief Educator Mails, Live workshops and sessions, Social Media, PR |
| Farmers and Growers | Direct Sourcing Model - higher and realisation, Fair Prices, Support in form of early/advance payment, support to small tea-growers, STGSP (part of IDH) interventions, |
| Employees | Vibrant and healthy workplace, safety and security, amenities and facilities, learning & development, best-in-class policies and career progression |
| Vendors and Suppliers | Awareness about sustainable sourcing practices, regular engagement and knowledge sharing, co-development of products, Vendor Code of Conduct |
| Communities & Societies | TEACH ME™ children education outreach, VAHDAM® Scholarships for Higher Education, Covid-19 Relief, Local school support, Employee Volunteering, |
| Industry | Industry Groups and Fora, Memberships and liaison with Tea, Coffee and Spice Boards, Sustainable and Responsible Supply Chain, |
| Government | Ministry of Commerce via various Commodity Boards, Workshops and Seminars, Buyer-Seller meets to promote Indian Tea, Working with Govt. Schools for TEACH ME™ |
| Stakeholders and Investors | Quarterly and Annual Board Meetings, Investor calls and interaction, Investor updates, emails |



Dear Readers,

Thank you for going through our Impact Report 2022-23 with ESG initiatives.

As an organisation, we are committed to transparent reporting.

Our ESG disclosures are an integral part of our multi-stakeholder approach and reporting, and assay our endeavor to create long-term impact on people and the planet.

We would grateful if you could let us know how we can continue to improve this report.

We look forward to hearing from you.



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