



# JNANA PRABODHINI FOUNDATION

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## From the President's Desk

Namaste JPF Family,

**JPF turned 7** this August, and we are deeply grateful for your support throughout this journey. To add to our joy, this quarter, our fundraising efforts reached a cumulative total of **\$2 million**, supporting thousands of students and women in rural India over the past seven years. We couldn't be more grateful to each one of you. A huge thank-you to all!

This September, our team participated in events surrounding the 81st **United Nations General Assembly** in New York, meeting policymakers and civil society representatives from around the world. Through three high-level meetings and 15 other events, our team shared insights about education, women's leadership, and rural development with global leaders. Through these efforts, we remain committed to bridging communities for sustainable futures.

In this issue, you will also read about our **skill development** efforts for rural women in Pune and the **School of Joy** in Dharashiv. Also, check out how two of our volunteer-led programs, namely, **Beyond Language Barriers** and **Prerana Setu**, are breaking language barriers and connecting Indian students with experts across the globe. As we approach the end of this year, stay tuned for the Annual General Body Meeting announcement, where we will review the year and celebrate recent milestones.

In community,  
Aakash Chowkase  
President

Jnana Prabodhini Foundation

# JPF at the United Nations General Assembly

*Bringing JPF's work and perspectives to the global stage*

In September, 11 volunteers represented JPF at the 81st United Nations General Assembly events in New York. As an organization with UN ECOSOC Special Consultative Status, this was a milestone opportunity to bring our grassroots perspective on education, women's health, and rural development to the global stage. Our team participated in

- 3 High-Level UN Meetings,
- 3 UNGA Debates,
- a SDG Moment event, and
- 11 diverse side events and Goals Lounge discussions.

Through these events, we connected with policymakers and civil society organizations working toward common goals. At the High-Level meeting on Pandemic Prevention, Preparedness and Response, we also submitted a written statement highlighting our analytics work during the pandemic.

The entire experience was a valuable learning opportunity as it offered a glimpse into the breadth of humanitarian work happening around the world. Being at the UN during this global gathering, surrounded by its weight and legacy was moving.

We saw how the UN serves as a platform for global collaboration during a challenging period of growing divisions. We look forward to building on these new connections as we continue our mission of bridging communities for sustainable futures.



# JPF-Supported Project Updates

## Skill Development

The Skill Development Project aims to create sustainable self-employment and livelihood opportunities for women in rural communities near Pune. From July to September 2026, the project conducted 13 training programmes such as candle making, stitching car covers, jam and pickle making, benefiting 69 women and helping them develop income-generating skills. The project is creating meaningful self-employment opportunities for women from

villages including Nasrapur, Shivapur, and Velhe. During these three months, the total revenue generated from the sale of products such as snacks/food items, decorative items, purses, and car covers amounted to ₹1,67,325. The project has emerged as a significant catalyst for economic support and self-reliance among rural women.



Candle Making training for women

## School of Joy

School of Joy is a project that serves students from 1st to 7th grade, residing in remote villages near Harali village in Dharashiv. Facilitators, who speak the same local dialects as the students from nomadic tribes, teach them in portable classrooms. This initiative supports a total of about 800 students, and the skills include fundamental literacy and numeracy, thinking skills, language skills, creativity development, and other academic

support. From July to September 2026, many cultural activities, including drama and music, took place during the Ganesh festival. Additionally, activities like reading marathons and math marathons were also conducted, resulting in students reading books to each other, solving mathematical problems, and helping each other. Experimental Design Thinking classes for Grades 3 and 4 are engaging students and strengthening their problem-solving skills through novel approaches.



Kids engaged in an interactive learning activity

## Volunteer-Led Programs Beyond Language Barriers (BLB)

Helping students and teachers in India to  
build their English communication skills

### Continuing to build on six years of impact

BLB entered its 6th year in June, continuing its mission of helping students build confidence and proficiency in English. BLB has now reached 200+ middle school students, with volunteers playing a key role in designing and delivering its learning experience.

### Refreshing the learning experience

This year, we revamped the session materials to keep them relevant and effective. This effort marks a continued investment in improving students' learning experience and equipping volunteers with updated resources.

### Encouraging learning beyond the classroom

Recognizing that English proficiency develops through practice beyond structured sessions, we built a book collection students can borrow through their school library, creating new opportunities to engage with English at own pace, build reading habits, and develop their English skills beyond BLB. This was piloted at Jnana Prabodhini Navanagar Vidyalaya this year with potential to expand to other schools.

### A volunteer's perspective on BLB's impact

Our volunteer Anvita, a high school student in USA, met her students in person. Sharing her experience in a trip report, she wrote:



*"It was especially rewarding to hear from the 9th graders about what they enjoyed most about BLB and how the program had impacted them. Students spoke about how BLB helped improve their English skills and gave them more confidence in speaking English. They also appreciated the wide range of activities and discussion topics, along with the flexibility that BLB volunteers brought to each class. ... It was also heartening to hear that they wished BLB continued into 9th grade."*

The volunteers also learned about the Jnana Prabodhini's work and vision from the director, Dr. Girish Bapat.

## Prerana Setu

*A joint JPF and JP EARC program that brings field experts into Indian schools through interactive online learning.*

### Prerana Setu Enters Year Seven

Prerana Setu is now in its 7th year of connecting students across India with speakers from different fields. This year, it reaches 75+ students and 14 teachers across 14 schools in six states: Maharashtra, Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Jharkhand, and Goa.

### Different themes, different perspectives

Exposure to different fields remains one of our main goals. In the first half of the year, students learned storytelling from artists, saw how digital products get built from technologists, and heard from entrepreneurs about what it takes to start something of their own.

### A new monthly format

This year, we also set out to make every session more interactive and useful. We want students to leave with something they can act on.

Each month now has thematic sessions:

- Two speaker sessions with experts from different fields, in the regular format.
- A skill session focusing on practical learning tied to the theme.
- An open-format session run by our team to try new ways of getting students to think, including debates, Q&As, discussions about recent sessions, and live coding.



Anita Kulkarni, an artist and an architect, guiding students on a career in performing arts



Amruta Kulkarni and Amita Bramhe led a skill session on storytelling, one of this year's most popular formats.

### Looking Forward

After a short break, Prerana Setu returns with new themes for the second half of the year. We plan to keep trying new methods to engage students, to help make the platform a place where they don't just discover new fields but also build skills that help them grow.

***Want to connect with students across India?***

*Spend an hour online sharing your work with curious students across India. Reach out at [prernasetu@jnanaprabodhinifoundation.org](mailto:prernasetu@jnanaprabodhinifoundation.org)*

## Jnana Prabodhini Global Network

This quarter focused on strengthening regional connections through local meetups, bringing together more than 155 members across the JPF network.

The quarter began with Vidya Hardikar-Sapre's visit to India, where she connected with several JPF volunteers, well-wishers, and donors. These interactions provided an opportunity to strengthen relationships, exchange ideas, and reconnect with the people who contribute to JPF's mission and initiatives.

In July, Aakash Chowkase visited Chicago and organized several small meetups, creating opportunities for members to connect in person.

Independence Day brought another opportunity for members to come together, with meetups organized in Connecticut and Austin, Texas. The Connecticut gathering saw participation from 12 members, while 6 members joined the Austin meetup. These smaller, locally organized gatherings continue to strengthen JPF's regional networks.

In August, JPF organized a special event in the Bay Area in collaboration with the East Bay Marathi Mandal. Avinash Dharmadhikari delivered a lecture titled, *India, America, and the World*, discussing recent developments and their broader implications. The session offered attendees an opportunity to reflect on current events and gain a wider perspective on India's place in an evolving global landscape.



Connecticut Independence Day Meetup



Austin Independence Day Meetup



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