

# STARS Forum Annual Report 2023-24



## Vision and Mission

Our Motto is to bring all likeminded NGO's on one platform to share ideas, experiences and concerns and explore the possibilities to evolve a supportive network within and across state boundaries, for the larger common purpose of imparting vocational and marketable skills training to those who need it most.

Our Mission is to serve as a collaborative body for mutual support of those engaged in vocational skills training, facilitate advance in this field and promote innovative approaches to reach larger needy populations

### Our Goals

1. Serve as a resource for mutual benefit of individuals and NGOs working in the field of vocational knowledge transfer.
2. Provide a platform for dialogue, share ideas, outcomes and best practices
3. Facilitate networking within the rural skills and livelihoods sector
4. Promote connectivity to relevant information.
5. Encourage and support younger workers to emerge as future leaders
6. Advocacy on curriculum, minimum standards, certification and accreditation of training programs with the Government as necessary.

## Inception and History

STARS ("Skills Training for Advancement in Rural Societies") Forum was established in 2010 with the objective of constituting a common platform for NGOs and individuals working in the area of knowledge-transfer of relevant marketable/vocational skills in rural and tribal populations and also among the urban poor anywhere in India, for mutual support and to advance this field by providing a forum to dialog, problem solve, and facilitate sharing and evolution of best practices & innovative approaches so as to reach as many needy people as possible through practical, relevant and cost effective ways. Started as an informal group, the activities of the Forum witnessed sustained participation from NGOs, indicating that the platform was not only sustaining but also growing. The STARS Forum was registered as a public trust in 2014 in order to give further impetus to its mission.

## Report on activities during 2023-24.

During 2023-24 the STARS Forum executed the following programs:

1. Running the “Introduction to Basic Technology” program in several rural schools in Maharashtra in partnership with Vigyan Ashram.
2. Scaling up and running “Learning By Doing” program in 60+ schools in Uttar Pradesh, sponsored by UNICEF.
3. Creation of a Digital Distant Learning library containing courses on skills that are valuable and of importance in the rural and semi-rural context. The website [www.TheSkillsGuru.in](http://www.TheSkillsGuru.in) was launched with an initial set of courses.
4. Co-hosting 2 days regional conference at Sidhbari (H.P.) on the topic “Agro-Entrepreneurship Development in Natural Farming: Possibilities, Challenges and Way Forward”
5. STARS 14<sup>th</sup> Annual conference at Lucknow, on “Building Scalable and Sustainable Social Enterprises” in partnership with The Goat Trust.
6. Partnered with AFARM (Pune) to conducted training on Crowdfunding for their two batches of NGOs undergoing organizational development training.

Details of the above are shared below:

### 1. “Introduction to Basic Technology” and “Learning By Doing” programs in Maharashtra and Uttar Pradesh

The Introduction to Basic Technology (IBT) program is being implemented in 77 schools in Maharashtra and Uttar Pradesh. The program is supported by SCHAEFFLER India Ltd. in 10 schools, Tata Technologies in 6 schools and 1 school by AFCON in Maharashtra and by UNICEF in 60 schools in the state of Uttar Pradesh.

The IBT program has benefited 7000+ students across 77 schools. The program has also provided part time job opportunities to 120 local entrepreneurs, craftsman, technicians, etc. as instructors at the IBT labs. This has not only increased the self-esteem of these instructors but also enabled them to transfer their skills and knowledge to the school children, earning their respect and admiration.





#### Key achievements:

- Successfully completing 2 years of the IBT program in 60 schools from 15 districts of UP. Now, the Govt. and UNICEF is planning to scale up the program in around 2000 schools in the next 1 year.
- Uttar Pradesh became the first state in India to implement vocational education under the New Education Policy (NEP). STARS Forum & Vigyan Ashram, Pabal in collaboration with UNICEF and Department of Education (Uttar Pradesh) has written vocational education book, "LEARNING by DOING" for class 6 to 8. The book was published by Hon'ble Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on 19th July 2023. Thanks to the success of the pilot program, he also announced that the 'Learning by Doing' program will now be made available in around 2000 schools in Uttar Pradesh. Secondary Education Minister Smt. Gulab Devi Ji, Primary Education Minister Sandeep Singh, Women Child Development Minister Baby Rani Maurya, Chief Secretary Durga Shankar Mishra, Upper Chief Secretary Deepak Kumar Samachar Shiksha Director General Vijay Kiran and STARS Forum Program Managers Sharad Jadhav and Prashant Dubey were present for this program.



UNICEF Goodwill ambassador Australian cricketer Pat Cummins and the Australian international cricket team visited Composite Vidyalay, Lucknow where the Learning By Doing program is going on.

The team interacted with the students and learned about LBD program conducted by STARS Forum in the school. During the visit, the team engaged with our students, discussing their ongoing projects, and gaining insight into the

program's activities.

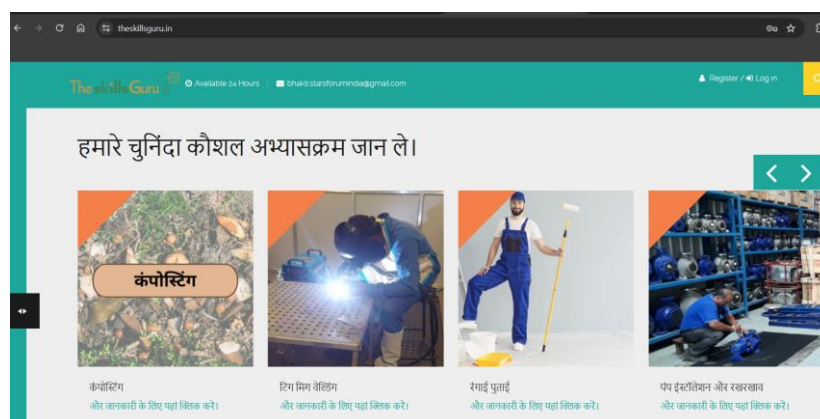
Furthermore, Patrick shared his personal experiences with the students, revealing his proficiency with carpentry tools and his passion for hands-on work. It was fantastic to see a prominent figure like Patrick Cummins taking an interest in our mission and encouraging skill development. This visit has inspired the students as well as all the instructors, teachers and all the members working on the IBT Program.

SCHAEFFLER India Ltd supported implementation of the advanced IBT program in 10 schools in Maharashtra. Last year they had supported 6 schools. These schools are equipped with advance electronics tools and equipment to undertake sensor-based projects and robotic activities.

## 2. Distant Learning Project

We all know that skill development is a key component of economic development and productivity improvement, especially for the Indians working in the rural, informal, and unorganized sector. Traditionally skills training has been done at physical centres, which require the candidates physical presence. These can be challenging to many who find this to be inconvenient, a potential loss of income, an additional cost burden etc. To overcome this, and also to leverage the benefits from online learning as well as wide availability of Internet connected smartphones, STARS Forum has conceived of a Distant Learning Project. This project will enlist experts and create high quality skills training videos and also provide mechanisms for checking the learning levels of the candidates.

The Distant learning project started with the support of **LA Fondation- Dassault Systemes** in December 2021. We are in the process of creating e-learning content for youth especially from the village areas. We have created 9 skills videos till now. We intend to create a video library for many topics from different skill sectors, e.g. TIG MIG welding, Painting, Domestic and Agriculture Pump installation and maintenance, Paver Block manufacturing unit, Biofloc fish farming etc.



We have launched these video sets on a dedicated website: <https://www.theskillsguru.in/> with a strong Learning management System for easy navigation and smooth flow of course. One course consists of 5-6 modules (videos).

A Student has to enroll for the course and pay a nominal fee. He/she can complete the online course within stipulated time. She/he has to clear an online exam to avail e-certificate.

## 3. Regional Conference at Sidhbari, Himachal Pradesh

The two-day workshop was jointly organized by CORD and STARS Forum on “Agro-Entrepreneurship Development in Natural Farming: Possibilities, Challenges and Way Forward” in association with Vishwa Yuvak Kendra on 24<sup>th</sup>-25<sup>th</sup> June, 2023 at CORD Training center. The workshop was inaugurated by by *Honorable Chief guest Dr. Rajeshwar Singh Chandel*, Vice Chancellor, Dr. Yashwant Singh Parmar University, *Padam Mr. Dr. Kshama Metre -Didi (National Director, CORD)*, *Padam. Mr. Nek Ram Sharma (District Mandi, H.P.)*, *Dr. Shashi Pal Attri (Project Director ATMA foundation)*, *Mrs. Bhakti Talwelkar (STARS Forum, Pune)*, *Mr. Majnu Nath (Vishwa Yuvak Kendra, Delhi)*, and *Mr. Narender Paul (CEO, CORD)*.

In the 2 days workshop, speakers from states of different background and weather conditions talked about natural farming in their area, millets that they grow, fodder for the animals, online marketing for agro products etc.

Chief Guest, Mr.

Nek Ram Sharmaji, introduced audience to rare millets that are available in Himachal Pradesh area. Few Farmer Produce Companies showcased their products such as red rice, unpolished lentils, millets etc.



#### 4. STARS Forum's 14<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference in Lucknow

STARS Forum's flagship event – its Annual Conference was held in Lucknow, hosted by The Goat Trust. The Conference was held in an online + in-person mode. The theme of the conference was "Building Scalable and Sustainable Social Enterprises". Founders and leaders from various social enterprises of different sizes were invited to share their experiences. The detailed report of the Conference is separately available.

#### 5. Training on Crowdfunding at AFARM (Pune)

AFARM conducts organizational development programs for several small NGOs across Maharashtra. One important component of this program is enabling these NGOs to do better fund raising for their projects. With a growing interest in Internet based philanthropy, AFARM wanted to expose these NGOs to crowdfunding techniques and invited STARS Forum to support this requirement. Chaitanya Nadkarny, Trustee of STARS Forum, was previously with RangDe.in and had also helped STARS Forum with raising funds on the internet. He was deputed to run 3 hour training sessions for the AFARM batches.

## People at STARS Forum

### Board of Trustees:

Chairman of the Board: Shri. Ashok Kalbag

Treasurer: Shri. Chaitanya Nadkarny

Members: Shri. BR Venkatesh, Shri. Narender Paul, Shri. Ranajeet Shanbhag

### Board of Advisors:

Dr. Sudhir Prabhu, Dr. Kshama Metre, Dr. Yogesh Kulkarni, Dr. ReghuRama Das, Ms. Rita Sengupta, Shri. Ashish Chavan

### Identity:

Trust Registration No. : E-7042/P (Charity Commissioner, Pune)

PAN Number: AAPTS6149F

80G Certification Number: AAPTS6149FF20206

12A Certification Number: AAPTS6149FE20206

MCA CSR Registration: CSR00019778

## Name and address of Bankers

Bank: ICICI Bank

Branch: Bandal Spaces, Paud Road, Near PMT Bus Depot, Kothrud, Pune - 411038, India

Account number: 649305050737

IFSC Code: ICIC0006493

Bank: State Bank of India

Branch: Bandal Spaces, Paud Road, Near PMT Bus Depot, Kothrud, Pune - 411038, India

Account number: 40298781358

IFSC Code: SBIN0030456

Tax Deductible Donation to STARS Forum: <https://razorpay.me/@starsforum>