

STARS Forum Annual Report

Financial Year 2024-25



Vision and Mission

Our Motto is to bring all likeminded development sector organisations 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 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 and registered in 2014 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.

Report on activities during 2024-25.

During 2024-25 the STARS Forum executed the following programs:

1. Running the “Introduction to Basic Technology” (IBT) program in several rural schools in Maharashtra in partnership with Vigyan Ashram.
2. Under New Education Policy (NEP 2020), Government of India is implementing a vocational training program in schools from 6th to 10th standards. STARS Forum has partnered with Vigyan Ashram to scale up its innovative pedagogy approach and advocate them at government level so as to become part of the stream. As a result of this partnership, Learning-By-Doing (LBD) and STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) education programs are two important programs run by STARS forum in 3 states.
 - A. “Learning By Doing” (LBD) program in 24 schools in Uttar Pradesh, sponsored by UNICEF.

- B. Running STEM program in 100 schools of Murshidabad (West Bengal) and tribal residential girl schools in Jharkhand
3. Train the Trainer program was conducted in Lucknow to train school teachers. We trained teachers from 1172 schools from Uttar Pradesh for the LBD program. This program will enable the Education department to scale up the program further to many more schools in Uttar Pradesh.
 4. Promotion of a Digital Distant Learning library containing courses on skills that are valuable and of importance in the rural and semi-rural context.
 5. STARS 15th Annual conference at Pune, on “AI for NGO Leaders” in partnership with BAIF Pune.
 6. Conducted sessions at the NGO meet organized by Muni Seva Ashram in Goraj (Gujarat).

Details of the above are shared below:

1. “Introduction to Basic Technology” in rural schools of Maharashtra

The Introduction to Basic Technology (IBT) program is being implemented in 22 schools in Maharashtra. The program is supported by SCHAEFFLER India Ltd. in 10 schools, Tata Technologies in 10 schools, EmpowHer Foundation (1 school) and AFCONS Infrastructure (1 school) in Maharashtra. The IBT program has benefited 2000 students across 22 schools.

There are four sections of IBT-

- Agriculture and Animal Husbandry
- Engineering
- Energy and Environment
- Home and Health

In each school, we develop a well equipped lab that includes engineering, agriculture, foodlab tools. Under these sections we run many activities in the schools throughout the year. For example, learning parallel and series circuit using paper circuits, preparing Kitchen garden, Shoe rack making etc.



The program has also provided part time job opportunities to 30+ 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.

2. A: “Learning By Doing” (LBD) program in Uttar Pradesh

The IBT program in Maharashtra is scaled up in Uttar Pradesh as “Learning By Doing Program”. This program is sponsored by UNICEF. LBD program was conducted in 24 schools from 5 districts of Uttar Pradesh from June 2024 to Dec 2024. This program is very successful in UP and has reduced school dropout rate. With this program, we could teach more than 5000 school children from Uttar Pradesh govt. schools.



B. Promoting STEM Program in middle schools at West Bengal and Jharkhand

STARS Forum and Vigyan Ashram have partnered with UNICEF to implement a STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering Mathematics) program in Murshidabad, West Bengal and Jharkhand. Now, STARS Forum in partnership with UNICEF is running a STEM program in 100 madarsha schools from Murshidabad district of West Bengal. With this around 30,000 girl students are benefited. STARS forum started this program in West Bengal in Sept. 2024 and will last for one year.

80 Schools from 7 districts of Jharkhand were selected for the STEM program. This program started in Nov 24 for one year.

The main components of the program are:

- Activity-based content for STEM learning linked to curriculum concepts developed along with inspiring stories related to women scientists and mathematicians.
- STARS Forum has designed approx. 10 activities in each subject. There are 30 activities per class.
- STARS Forum has developed an instruction manual for these activities in Hindi.



3. Train The Trainer program in Uttar Pradesh

STARS Forum has implemented LBD program in many schools. After evaluation of its impact, the Govt. of Uttar Pradesh decided to scale up the program. STARS Forum conducted 46 training programs from Dec 24 to March 25 for 1772 schools. In all, 2151 teachers were trained for pre-vocational syllabus from all over Uttar Pradesh and this will be part of the UP government's implementation of the New Education Policy.

The trainings were conducted under 'Samagra Shiksha' abhiyan at Lucknow. Training details are:

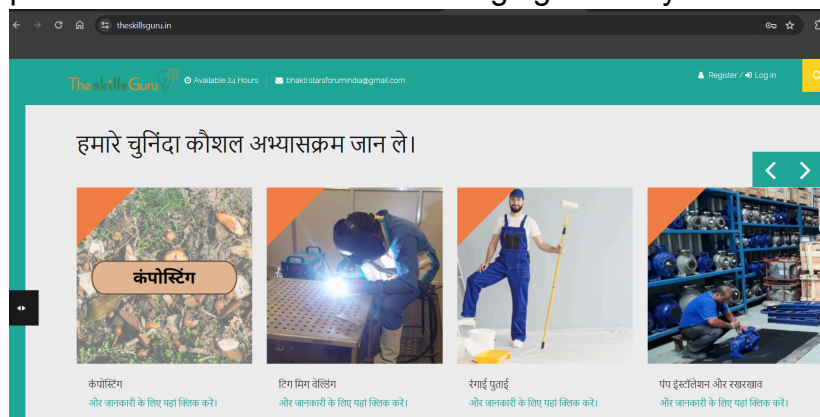
Sr. No	Date	Participant teachers	Location
1	22-Oct 24 to 3 Feb 25	1112	SIRD, Lucknow
2	6 Dec 24 to 21 Mar 25	1039	IED, Lucknow



4. Distant Learning Project

STARS Forum created an on-line platform implementing the Distant Learning concept.

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. CCTV installation, 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. Till date 62 students have completed the course. The details are as follows:

Sr. No.	Topic	Attended	Certified
1	Solar Water Installation and maintenance	30	11
2	Domestic Pump installation and maintenance	22	18

3	Paver Block	15	10
4	Composting	14	10
5	Tlg Mig Welding	34	10
6	Painting	19	2
8	Bio Floc Fish Farming	2	1
	Total	136	62

5. STARS Forum's 15th annual conference at Pune on 'AI for NGO leaders' at Pune co-hosted by BAIF.

STARS Forum in partnership with BAIF organised its 15th Annual conference on 6 & 7 Dec 2024. The Conference was hosted by BAIF Development Research Foundation, Warje, Pune.

The theme of the 2 day event was Artificial Intelligence and the Development Sector. Senior leaders and professionals from many institutions and organizations were invited to participate. Nearly 60 participants attended the Conference in person and 20 participants attended via Zoom. The Concept note and the Conference Schedule are available as annexures to this report.

The three main objectives of the conference were -

- Gain conceptual clarity and understanding of Artificial Intelligence (AI) so that misconceptions, partial knowledge, myths as well as hype are addressed.
- Enable all participants to use commonly available AI tools viz. ChatGPT, DALL-E, NotebookLM. Understand and develop "prompt engineering" skills to get better results from AI tools. See how these tools can help improve our day-to-day productivity, efficiency and effectiveness.
- Engage in "blue sky" thinking to explore the possibilities of AI in our developmental areas.



6. Knowledge sharing with NGOs at Muni Seva Ashram in Goraj (Gujarat).

The Muni Seva Ashram in Goraj near Vadodara, organizes an annual meet of local NGOs, many of which work in the healthcare needs of rural Gujarat. STARS Forum was invited to participate in this year's conference that took place in January 2025. Chaitanya Nadkarny, representing STARS Forum, participated in the meetup. Looking at the needs of the NGOs and their leadership, we decided that we should conduct sessions and discussions on two crucial topics – one on how these NGOs should leverage internet platforms for crowd-funding their projects, and the other on introducing them to use AI tools in their daily work. Both sessions were highly appreciated by the participating members, who were the top leadership of these NGOs. The meeting also enabled STARS Forum to connect with many NGOs, explore how to collaborate with them in different areas of skill training, vocational education and entrepreneurship development.

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PAN Number: APTS6149F

MCA CSR Registration: CSR00019778

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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

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