

Community Impact Case Study FY20

## Teach For India Delhi



### I. Case Overview

*Nineteen million people call India's sprawling capital home. The city includes nearly 4,700 schools and serves 4.4 million children. In partnership with the government and other stakeholders, Teach For India - Delhi alumni and staff are developing local proof points of progress to change the conversation about what is possible for Delhi's 4.4 million children while expanding its influence on the region.*

**Launch Year** 2011**Participants** 250**Alumni** 800+ alumni

Alumni have started and grown various NGOs to address gaps in child development and education; advanced systemic change through policy, governance, and advocacy; and lead schools and classrooms.

#### Student progress

- Since the landmark national Right to Education Act (RTE) in 2009, access to primary education has become nearly universal throughout India
- 72% of students from Delhi government schools passed the Central Board of Secondary Education exam in 2019-2020, an increase from previous years.
- Teach For India-Delhi students often outperformed their peers in government schools on state tests; in 2019-2020, they outperformed their peers in private schools.

## II. Community Story



Recently, Delhi has experienced pollution, social and political unrest surrounding controversial citizenship laws, and deepening inequities by gender, religion, socioeconomic status and other markers. Delhi's population has also increased by four million over the last few years, complicating these challenges further. Children in Delhi are often at the center of these challenges. In Delhi's schools, only 30% of schools go up to 10th grade in Delhi, a major infrastructure challenge. 38% of teaching positions are vacant. 75% of students in grades 6-9 can't read a grade 2 text.

However, shifts in state government and widespread protests inspire hope. The recently elected Delhi government allocated 33% of its budget to education, an increase from previous years. Eleven thousand new classrooms have been built over the last four years, a valued investment in infrastructure

and in the future. The women-led, non-violent Shaheen Bagh Protests in 2020 demanded social and political progress related to citizenship, anti-discrimination, and labor rights. The fights for environmental change and gender non-violence and equality are strong, with children often at the forefront demanding and creating a better future.

Across the city, children, community members, government leaders, advocates, and other education leaders are using these building blocks to improve education for children.

## III. Growth of Collective Leadership

Proof points of students' holistic development and excellence are showing Delhi what's possible. Academic achievement results are improving for Teach For India - Delhi students. After relaying with TFI fellows for nearly ten years, about 1,000 TFI - Delhi students recently appeared for the national 10th grade exams and 87% of them passed (compared to 72% of students in Delhi government schools). TFI-Delhi students had performed better than their peers in government schools. However, last year was the first time 10th graders outperformed their private school peers, showing the city what is possible.

Exams are important, but they are not everything. "What a year Delhi has had," says Mansi Joshi, the City Director of TFI-Delhi. "A year of pollution. Of protests. Of violence. Of COVID. And yet they showed up for board exams. We need to celebrate the results, but it's also important to celebrate the courage, perseverance, and grit of our students and families." Student leaders like Abbas and other exemplify this courage: he stood up to violence and abuse happening in his school, and partnered with an official at the Delhi Commission for the Protection of Child Rights and TFI alum to stop corporal punishment.



**Can Sania and Uma be in the same class?**



Grassroots and grasstops efforts by TFI alumni, fellows, staff, students, and partners have made the ecosystem stronger, resulting in better outcomes for students. There are six alumni serving in significant government positions, writing and shaping policies that improve student welfare. Indus Action, an advocacy organization working with families to know their rights vis a vis the Right to Education Act. Indus Action's community mobilization efforts have resulted in nearly a quarter million children gaining access to private schools. Dozens of alumni work at NGOs serving the cradle to career continuum, tackling issues ranging from early childhood education to health and sanitation to college readiness.



Leadership is getting stronger across the system as TFI influences the government in Delhi. Having alumni in high-level positions in government has been a game-changer. Anurag Kundu is at the Secretary level in Delhi's Commission for Protection of Child Rights strengthening policies and regulations. Alumni with the Delhi Commission of Child Rights and Directorate of Education have been leading efforts to improve teacher training and address school grievance. TFI has been called upon by the government to lead or share expertise around state-run fellowships and provide examples of successful implementation of the government's Happiness Curriculum, a curriculum rooted in mindfulness and storytelling. TFI is currently co-designing a national curriculum on individual (self) and collective (community) alongside three other highly respected NGOs.

Alumni partner with the government to expand access and support for children and families. Alohomora, an alumni-led initiative, TFI, and the Delhi government are working together on an entrepreneurship curriculum for 11th and 12th graders to get 2,000 children college-ready. Meraki, another alumni-led social enterprise, and the Delhi government have collaborated to enable parental support for children's education during COVID-19. Alumni lead at the influential Central Square Foundation, advising the government and public on issues such as education policy, research, and technology.

TFI staff and alumni are able to make faster progress as a result of government partnerships. "Now," says Joshi, "they know us and want to partner with us. The conversation has moved beyond permission - now, it's: 'how can we support TFI?'" The biggest reason there is traction is there are alumni in influential leadership positions. "We know each other," says Joshi. "It's all about relationships." As the team has deepened relationships across government (beyond TFI alumni), they are building momentum. "It took 3-4 months to really build a connection with them as individuals. I spent time getting to know them, understand their goals, and find where there is common ground. Once we knew each other as people, we could do more together." The team works with the government and will often offer time and resources to support shared goals.

## IV. Teach For India Delhi's Approach

Teach For India - Delhi is playing an important role in creating proof points and collaborating across the ecosystem to catalyze systemic change. Drivers include:

### Proof points of academic and holistic excellence

TFI doesn't stop at emphasizing academic success. The team has long emphasized holistic growth such as mindsets and beliefs, exposure and access, and other 21st century skills and enablers. TFI prioritizes significant and

intensive student leadership initiatives, which often embrace the arts and other “non-core” subjects. The team catalyzes both academic success and holistic development. This idea is the heart of the program, and it is what catalyzes the alumni movement and shapes their influence on the system.

### Depth of impact through community mobilization

The team is entrepreneurial in its efforts to break silos across alumni to support collaboration. They created “Community Aggregator” roles within each community to drive collaboration and action among different local stakeholders. This strategy has now evolved to 20-member “tribes” where they place fellows (led by fellows, staff, and students). The concept comes from the book Tribal Leadership, which finds that it takes 20-150 people to build a tribe of changemakers. Regardless of strategy, the core goal has continuously been to build deep relationships and knowledge locally and work together to drive change for students and families.

### Alumni and staff leading policy and governance

Situated in the nation’s capital, staff, fellows and alumni, and students have prioritized political engagement, organizing, and action to expand democracy and improve educational access and outcomes. With alumni in high-level leadership positions and a focus on relationships, TFI’s influence as a key institutional partner has expanded and deepened in recent years.

### Committed, vision-oriented staff

Leaders at Teach For India - Delhi have served on staff for close to a decade, and the average staff tenure is over 4 years. The relatively long tenures have helped to make TFI connected to communities and viewed as respected, influential, and connected sources on education issues in the city.

## V. Looking Ahead

In the coming year, the team will continue to build leadership across students, fellows, and alumni and build out the “Tribe” strategy to build community power. They are also prioritizing three aspects of systemic change among alumni: policy and governance, holistic curriculum and assessment, and stakeholder engagement. The team is pursuing this work through a strategy where fellows cultivate a diverse set of partners to be advocates for the Delhi regional movement and setting aside time for periodic individual and collective reflection on their 2022 vision. Learn more from their latest [strategy](#) document.

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