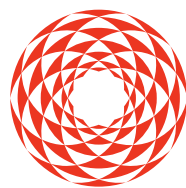




2020-21



ashoka
UNIVERSITY



Ashish Dhawan

Founder & Chairman, Board of Trustees

Commitment to Inclusion & Diversity

Inclusion and diversity are central to Ashoka's vision of creating a holistic and nurturing environment. Academic excellence and inclusion are co-dependent. To discover the next breakthrough in science or solve complex social problems, we need to harness the potential of students from different backgrounds.

Since the last academic year, many significant steps have been taken to enhance diversity across the University. And while much work still remains, celebrating every milestone is important to us. These have been highlighted in this report.

Inclusion & Diversity Timeline

All 57 students of the first YIF batch are on full scholarship.

2011

Amit Chandra institutes the Mother Teresa Fellowship. It supports YIF in social sector enterprises through financial mentoring and networking support.

Financial aid amounting to Rs 3.6 crore (USD 0.49 million) is given to students.

2012

2013

2014

Resident Assistant (RA) Programme is initiated. The Office of Student Affairs creates an RA programme for a trained peer-support system towards an inclusive environment.

2015

- ▶ Ashoka gets its first visually impaired student.
- ▶ The Centre for Studies in Gender and Sexuality is established.

2016

- ▶ Ashoka gets its first student with hearing impairment.
- ▶ International students now form five per cent of the student body.

- ▶ Ashoka's Indo-International Cultural Exchange Festival, Ubuntu, is initiated.
- ▶ Academic Bridge Programme is launched.

2018

2019

- ▶ Over 100 need-based full scholarships awarded.
- ▶ OLS becomes a founding member of the Inclusive Universities Alliance.

2017

2020

- ▶ 15 International enrolments in the undergraduate programme; 108 students on full aid.
- ▶ Beyond the Classroom, a virtual seminar series conducted by Ashoka faculty, presents research in Indian languages and English.
- ▶ The Office of Learning Support (OLS) is launched.
- ▶ Support systems are implemented for students with specific learning disabilities, such as Dysgraphia, Dyscalculia, and Dyslexia.
- ▶ Ashoka Centre for Well-Being, India's first one-of-a-kind centre to address mental health issues, is launched.
- ▶ Chief Minister's Good Governance Associates is launched.



Diversity in 2020-21

Ashoka is committed to making high-quality education accessible to deserving students, irrespective of their socio-economic backgrounds, ethnicity, gender, gender identity, or disability.

In the last 10 years, we have provided need-based financial aid of Rs 257 crore (USD 34.2 million) to 3,326 students. This year we awarded Rs 63 crore (USD 8.4 million) in aid.

Rs 63 crore

Awarded in
financial aid

56%

Women students

27

Countries

50%

Students on
need-based aid

229

Cities

18

Languages
spoken on
campus

Towards a More Inclusive Campus

Initiatives planned for Academic Year (AY) 2020-21

Targeted outreach to exceed 50 lower-income schools across the country.

To enhance inclusion, the Office of Admissions has omitted the gender dropdown from its application form. Students are free to describe their gender.

Greater focus will be given to conducting bi-lingual interviews during the admission process.

Major infrastructural improvements are underway for the seamless mobility of students with physical disabilities.

International Students Cultural Orientation held prior to the commencement of the academic session.

Undergraduate (UG) Diversity

In the undergraduate class of 2023, 6.5 per cent students have a family income of under Rs 2 lakh (USD 2,800) per annum. Thirty-four students are first-generation college goers.



Class of

	2021	2022	2023
Class Size	460	600	580
% of Women	58	56	57
Countries	15	18	12
Indian Cities	98	105	106
Schools Represented	342	342	312

Young India Fellowship (YIF) Over the Years

Fifty-seven per cent of the class of 2021 Fellows come from non-metro cities,* compared to 67 per cent in the previous year. Forty per cent students have family incomes of less than Rs 12 lakh (USD 16,000) per annum.



	Class of		
	2019	2020	2021
Class Size	289	301	190
% of Women	57	61	54
Indian Cities	92	122	92
Colleges Represented	184	192	137

**All cities excluding Delhi-NCR, Bengaluru, Chennai, Kolkata, Pune, Hyderabad, and Mumbai.*

Academic Bridge Programme

The Academic Bridge Programme is a three-week mandatory programme for the incoming class of UG students. It comprises preparatory classes for chosen students requiring English language support.

Forty-two students, including six international students, participated this year.



Sharon Patole

UG 2023

Sharon is from Pune. Her father is an electrician and her mother a housewife. She is the first in her family to attend college.

” The programme has taught me to think critically. It has also taught me to read with more perspective, which helps me to engage better with my texts. Giving critical feedback to others, and examining our own work, was what I enjoyed the most in the programme.



Mercia Prince

Deputy Director, Office of Admissions

” The Office of Admissions envisioned and launched the Academic Bridge Programme in 2018 for select incoming students. The aim was to help bridge the English language barrier and offer academic reading and writing support to supplement their prior academic experiences.

Every year we co-host and execute this programme in collaboration with other Ashoka teams,



Socio-economic Diversity



Socio-economic Diversity

SBI Life Insurance Company Scholar

Anushka's father is a daily wage worker and her mother a tailor. She completed her higher secondary education from a charity-run school in Palakkad, Kerala. Despite being a passionate learner, she doubted whether she would ever attend college.



What students like me lack is enough financial support to get into a good university. My school teachers introduced me to Ashoka. Had it not been for them, I would not have been able to realise my dream of studying in college. For me getting a scholarship and pursuing higher education is nothing less than a dream come true.



UTI Asset Management Company Ltd

Scholarship Donor



Imtaiyazur Rahman

CEO, UTI Asset Management Company Ltd

Ashoka's inclusive culture and high-quality education complements UTI's mission of promoting inclusiveness in the country and our coming together enables meritorious students to access the education they deserve.

The University's multidisciplinary, hands-on approach prepares students not just for the job market, but to lead from the front. Through our association with Ashoka, we hope we can make significant strides in fulfilling our social obligations in the field of education.



Socio-economic Diversity

DS Group Scholar

Anand belongs to Ghazipur district in Uttar Pradesh. His parents are farmers and do not earn enough to support their children's education. Though he is a meritorious student, he was unsure if Ashoka would accept him. He feared his limited exposure to extra-curricular activities would hold him back.



Anand Chauhan

UG 2023

For my parents, me going to college was beyond their imagination. I have completed my schooling on scholarship and always wanted to go to a good university. Getting into Ashoka is not so easy, but I am thankful that I have been admitted. I am sure that the dynamic faculty here will be able to help me achieve my goals.



HDFC ERGO General Insurance Company Ltd

Scholarship Donor



Samir Shah

ED & CFO, HDFC ERGO General Insurance Company Ltd

At HDFC ERGO we firmly believe that an inclusive culture is the bedrock of development and progress and is instrumental in grooming the new generation, capable of shaping a better future. Education is the fundamental right of every individual and by offering scholarships to make education available to students, we hope to contribute to the noble cause undertaken by Ashoka.

We are proud of our association with Ashoka and to be a part of their efforts in making education available to deserving students, irrespective of their background.



Gender Diversity



Gender at Ashoka

In addition to a vibrant student body, Ashoka continually strives to improve its overall gender representation. The Centre for Studies in Gender and Sexuality conducts workshops for Ashoka students and beyond to discuss issues that fall within the larger spectrum of sexuality and gender.

75%
Women-led
student societies

40%
Women in
the faculty

46%
Women in the
workforce

30%
Women in leadership
positions



Gender Diversity

HDFC ERGO General Insurance Company Scholar

Asha comes from Hutup, a small village in Jharkhand. Her father does not live with the family, but supports them with a monthly contribution of Rs 2,000 (USD 27).

Defying the odds stacked against her, Asha is amongst the first in her village to attend college in a different city. She is also a football player and has competed internationally.



Asha Kumari

UG 2023

'Don't educate your girls, and never send them out.' This is what most women hear in my village. Education is low priority for everyone; the only goal is to get daughters married as soon as they come of age. I am proud to say I have had the courage to follow my dream.

I attend a prestigious college and am very happy with the facilities I have here. I am certain that Ashoka will help me become the person I want to be.



Gender Diversity

IDFC First Bank Scholar

Madhukar comes from a village in Telangana. His father is a farmer and weaver. Being at Ashoka has offered him many possibilities, amongst which studying subjects like *Art Appreciation* and *Women and Society* have been new and deeply rewarding. After completing his fellowship, he hopes to apply himself more critically in all his endeavours.



I have a bachelor's degree in economics and a master's in development studies. I am excited to be a part of a rigorous programme like the YIF, which so far has been an eye opener. I am amazed at new ideas and the plurality of opinions that I have been exposed to.

Ashoka has a growing community of queer and trans students.



Bittu (Kaveri Rajaraman Indira)

Associate Professor, Biology and Psychology



As a trans faculty member, Ashoka has provided me, other staff members, and students a gender-affirming space, where we can safely live and work and flourish. From gender-neutral bathrooms to gender-affirming identities respected in campus records, I have felt safe enough to publish my scientific work in my chosen name for the first time.

Anonymous



Ashoka is by far one of the most queer-friendly universities in India. The administration has been very accommodating from the start, and campus culture is relatively sensitive and accepting. Being at Ashoka has helped me find community and a safe space to be myself. I unequivocally recommend Ashoka for any queer student who wants to pursue their studies in India.



Geographical and Cultural Diversity



National Diversity

Prakash C Arora Scholar

Tenzin's family migrated from Tibet to India. In their new home in Dharamshala, his father learned tailoring, while his mother ran a small restaurant. However, a few years later, an accident left her with serious injuries and the restaurant had to be closed. Due to financial difficulties, his sister discontinued her university education.

Tenzin Namsey

UG 2023

I wish to major in physics and I believe Ashoka University will foster a lifelong learning experience and provide me a space to grow both intellectually and emotionally. I am thankful to Ashoka not just for the scholarship, but also for giving me the opportunity to participate in its culture. I look forward to contributing positive energies to its dynamic and vibrant community.

International Diversity

Ashoka has 142 international students on campus. The University received 145 applications from 37 countries for our undergraduate programme this year, a four per cent increase from last year.



Kinzang Dema

UG 2022, Bhutan

**The Nunnelly-Dupre-Chandra
International Scholar**



Vladyslava Savytska

YIF 2021, Ukraine

“ I am from Bhutan and am majoring in sociology and anthropology. When I first came to Ashoka, I felt everything was unfamiliar. It was a completely new life. However, everyone was welcoming and I adapted quickly to this new way of life. I am thankful to the Ashoka community for making me feel at home.

“ As a child I developed an interest in Asian cultures; I always felt the desire to learn more. Not just literature, but culture, language, economics, and politics.

I heard about the Fellowship from a YIF Fellow I met in Kazakhstan. At that moment I understood that this is exactly what I was looking for all this while – an exciting, dynamic programme that equips you with global, multidisciplinary perspectives and the highest quality of education.



Faculty Diversity

Ashoka faculty comes from 15 countries and 14 Indian states. Forty per cent are women.

Mali is from the United States. She earned her PhD in classical literature and philology from Princeton University.



Mali Skotheim
Assistant Professor, English

The diverse backgrounds, skills, and experiences of life and literature that students at Ashoka bring to the classroom make discussions rich and multi-faceted.

I am also deeply impressed by how the students include each other – listening to and encouraging one another, working together, and accommodating multiple viewpoints.



Additional Learning Support



Office of Learning Support (OLS)

Since its inception in 2016, the office has worked with students who have learning disabilities and sensory impairments. This year the focus has been on raising awareness through workshops, including the summer-long campaign, Understanding Neurodiversity. A series of webinars have been conducted to sensitise students and create an inclusive culture.



Reena Gupta

Director, Office of Learning Support

We have come a long way in building a more inclusive community for neurodiverse learners not just in Ashoka, but also beyond the University. Having co-founded an Inclusive Universities Alliance, we now have a blueprint ready for other universities in India to emulate.

Besides training students in technology to be independent in their learning process, we have worked closely with the faculty and staff to implement a framework for Ashoka's diverse learners.



Breaking Barriers

Preet has 25 to 30 per cent vision. His partial sight makes studying difficult. He needs constant assistance with reading. To help him meet his academic demands, in addition to assistance from peers, he has an encrypted screen reader which translates the written word into audio.

Preet Kudiya

UG 2022

OLS has helped me since my admission process began. They guided me through every step and held Skype sessions as well. Once I came to college, my seniors helped me with coursework and even took me around the campus. My assignments require extensive reading. This is where I struggle the most, and this is the biggest help I receive from OLS.



Centre for Writing and Communication (CWC)

The CWC works closely with the University's academic community to develop critical thinking, writing, and communication skills. CWC's interactions with the students are both in-class and through lectures and one-on-one sessions. The centre also offers course-specific workshops and English language classes.



Kanika Singh

Director, Centre for Writing and Communication

Inclusion and diversity in teaching-learning practices are the keywords that drive CWC's intellectual work. These are implemented in terms of engaging with discipline-based curricular work, exploring the use of different Indian languages, and in devising learning support. Our English Language Teaching programme is especially designed to equip students with academic writing and critical thinking skills.



Centre for Writing and Communication

Padmaja is from Pune. Her father is a driver and her mother a homemaker. As a student she discovered that her writing seldom reflected what she wanted to say. She was introduced to CWC by her language instructor in the Academic Bridge Programme.



CWC has helped me become more confident in communicating. It has helped me understand the errors I was making and has taught me to use words correctly. Speaking activities, like building stories verbally, asking questions, and debating, have helped me a lot in thinking and communicating effectively.



Breaking Barriers

Kriti has dyslexia. This makes reading and writing difficult for her. No matter how brief a passage, Kriti takes longer than her peers to finish the assigned reading. She uses apps to convert text to audio sources.



Growing up with dyslexia is challenging. It affects every person differently and has varied traits. Because of dyslexia, I am a slow reader. My professors have been very understanding, and OLS has been a constant guiding force.

Dyslexia can seem overwhelming at times, but with practice and different techniques, the problem can be mitigated. A little determination and lot of support helped me overcome my difficulties.



The Ashoka Centre for Well-Being (ACWB)

The ACWB is a non-aligned centre that offers counselling and psychological support for students, staff, and faculty at Ashoka. The centre operates by focusing its impact on preventive, clinical, and promotional factors. It seeks to combat the onset of mental health problems by promoting informed behaviour change.



Arvinder J Singh

Director, Ashoka Centre for Well-Being

I believe it is important to create diverse spaces for acceptance, particularly by having conversations around mental health. Usually, this diversity often assumes a certain level of 'normalcy' and excludes neuro-atypical individuals which is something our centre at Ashoka tries to combat. I believe there is the opportunity to offer help outside of the clinician's office as well.

Peer Support

Peer support plays a significant role towards inclusion on campus. Student societies are an integral part of student life and help foster a sense of belonging. There are over 40 registered student-run societies that host regular events on key issues, ranging from mental health to gender and sexuality.

Gender and Sexuality



The Feminist Collective

The Feminist Collective aims to create a safe, inclusive, feminist space on campus. It is committed to raising awareness on issues of gender and representation.

Ashoka University Queer Collective

Ashoka University Queer Collective fosters community engagement and enables conversations about gender and sexuality, while celebrating queerness. The aim is to develop solidarity and visibility for and amongst the queers on campus.

Mental Health



Kintsugi

Kintsugi is a student-led initiative that aims to create more off-classroom engagement on topics of mental health and well-being. This year, the campaigns were organised in collaboration with other groups like the Northeast Collective. A session with a music therapist was also organised.

Peer Support

Language

Sandhi

Sandhi fosters engagement with various languages spoken on campus. Its goal is to be more inclusive by focusing on the ontological and socio-cultural aspects of language.

Lang-up

Lang-up is a community for all language-learning enthusiasts. It seeks to unite students to learn new languages and enhance already-known ones.

Hindvi

Hindvi advances the culture and appreciation of Hindustani language on campus.

Community Building

Ashoka University International Students Association (AUISA)

The AUISA promotes global engagement and multicultural learning. It seeks to enhance a sense of community, and works towards the welfare of international students on campus.

The Northeast Collective

The Northeast Collective aims to provide a space for members of the Ashoka community who are from the Northeast or have roots there. It seeks to promote awareness about the various aspects of the Northeast, be it its culture, history, or socio-political realities.



Social Impact



Centre for Social Impact and Philanthropy (CSIP)

The CSIP is India's first academic centre focused on enabling strategic and robust philanthropy for greater social impact.

In 2020, the centre welcomed eight Ashoka graduates to its 18-month Mother Teresa Fellowship. Furthermore, its response to the impact of the pandemic on India's NGOs resulted in a three-day workshop. This was held in partnership with Harvard Business School. Speakers representing a range of demographics and perspectives attended the event.

Impacting Communities

Student initiatives have been central in driving impactful engagement efforts in Ashoka's neighbouring communities. A few of these have been mentioned below.



Neev

Neev is a community engagement club. It strives to bridge the gap between Ashoka and Asawarpur, a neighbouring village, through mutual engagement.

This year, Project Potpourri was initiated to expand reach within Ashoka.

Ruhi

Ruhi teaches English to the University's support staff. The team has designed a syllabus using many different sources, including feedback from members.

It also addresses workers' grievances on campus and conducts workshops on menstrual health and hygiene.

Enactus, Ashoka University

Enactus, Ashoka University, is an international non-profit organisation that provides students the opportunity to engage in community development projects.

Net Impact Ashoka

Net Impact Ashoka is an international non-profit membership organisation for students across disciplines.

It seeks to channel business and leadership skills in supporting various social and environmental causes.



Change Leaders

Sang started as a short-term initiative to serve communities worst hit by the lockdown. With its base in Delhi-NCR, the group designs interventions and models to provide sustainable livelihood opportunities, especially to women. Beyond providing relief measures, it also connects individuals seeking employment with employers.

The group has raised over than Rs 34 lakh (USD 46,000) and has impacted more than 24,000 individuals.



Saloni Goel

YIF 2020, Co-founder, Sang

Sang is a testament to the power of collective action. In a sense, it is an extension of YIF. Over half the team joining the programme are faculty, Fellows, and alumni. The Ashoka community continues to guide us, and on looking back, I can say that the Fellowship never really ends.



Change Leaders

Established last year, Bijak is an agricultural commodity trading platform that seeks to unite suppliers and buyers. The enterprise enhances price transparency and ensures a seamless, hassle-free experience for farmers and traders.

The company has customers across 25 Indian states and over 500 regions. Till date, it has raised over Rs 110 crore (USD 15 million) from investors.

Mahesh Jakhota

YIF 2012, Co-founder, Bijak

YIF helped me filter out the true signal from noise by bolstering my 'first-principles thinking'. A liberal arts course gave me the foundational tools to analyse problems and people from different perspectives. As an entrepreneur, I extensively use this approach for identifying and solving problems.

Additionally, being surrounded by a stellar faculty helped me build a game-changing mindset. I remain deeply indebted to YIF for the lovely support and ecosystem.



Chief Minister's Good Governance Associates (CMGGA) Programme

The CMGGA is a strategic collaboration between Ashoka and the Government of Haryana. The objective is to create mass impact on ground while improving governance in the state of Haryana. Each year, 25 individuals are recruited across 22 districts to work closely with the Chief Minister's Office.

Alina worked with Hisar's Swachh Survekshan and Saksham programme. While working in the districts of Karnal and Rohtak, she learnt how sanitation can be improved.



Alina Masoodi

CMGGA Associate 2019, Hisar

I am from Lucknow and pursued my undergraduate degree from Delhi. Transitioning to a rural setting in Haryana, and being a young woman often amongst a room full of men, was challenging at times.

This is where Ashoka helped me through the training it provided. I felt so confident in my content that gender did not matter. The CMGGA programme has helped me understand the critical distinction between good governance and government.

Thank you for your support

We are grateful to all our Founders and Donors, both individuals and companies, for their support in building the University. Additionally, we extend our deep gratitude to those whose grants have supported scholarships as well as our inclusion and diversity initiatives. Your faith in Ashoka has left a deep impact on several lives, and will continue to do so for years to come.

Scholarship Donors

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Suncity Realtors

Yash Enterprises

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