

**Ishk  
Tolaram**  
FOUNDATION

**Annual Report 2019-2020**



1A International Business Park, #13-01, Singapore 609933

Ishk Tolaram Foundation Ltd. is a company limited by guarantee and governed by a constitution, a board charter, a conflict of interest policy, the Companies Act and the Charities Act.

Incorporated: October 2016

Operationalised: February 2017

Registered under the Commissioner of Charities in Singapore: September 2017

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Activities reported: October 2019 - December 2020

Financials reported: FY 2019

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It is part of our  
*duty*  
to give back.

To use money for  
good, to do even  
*more good*

**Mohan K. Vaswani**  
Founder



A note from  
*the Executive Director*

We knew 2020 would be a year of growth for Ishk. We spent our first three years piloting initiatives, building capacity, and cementing who we want to be as an impact-oriented organisation. With our new Chief Operating Officer Divya Patel on board from late 2019, we began the exercise of visioning the next five years in Ishk's journey.

We, like others, did not expect to have to adjust these plans so quickly against a global pandemic that was reversing years of progress towards reducing poverty. Impact was always our purpose as a philanthropic organisation, but what did this mean in a time of unprecedented crisis?

Ensuring the safety of our teams in Indonesia, Nigeria and Singapore was the first step. For a time, this meant pausing our core work, while maintaining open communication channels, and checking in with each other to respond to the situation as it unfolded. Their safety meant they could focus attention on the individuals we wanted to continue to serve.

To enable this, we simultaneously rerouted funding toward a COVID response and sought out partners who were responding to those in need. From April to June, we addressed immediate needs such as food, other essentials, and medical equipment and training. As lockdown measures eased, we shifted our focus to intermediate and long-term recovery - rebuilding through education, healthcare and skills training, our core areas of work.

Through the uncertainty, our team has continued to be guided by their compassion and anchored, even more so, by an unwavering sense of responsibility. We have remained committed to our existing relationships and built new ones. We have engaged in dialogue to learn about evolving realities and adapted our processes to be more agile in responding to them. Above all, 2020 has given us an opportunity to reaffirm our purpose to invest in a better world and a renewed commitment to our most important stakeholders: the individuals at the centre of our work.

As the year draws to a close, we continue to keep our longer-term goals in mind, and look forward to realising our five-year plan, embracing more progressive models of giving, newer technologies and stronger partnerships as we do so.

Thank you for journeying with us.



**Sumitra Aswani**



# OUR TEAM

## Board of Directors

### Mohan Vaswani

Chairman  
Since Oct 2016

**Occupation:**  
Chairman of Tolaram Group

### Raj Vaswani

Director  
Since Oct 2016

**Occupation:**  
Director of Maitri Asset Management

### Shahul Hameed

Director  
Since Aug 2018

**Occupation:**  
Dentist

### Sumitra Aswani

Director  
Since Jan 2017

**Occupation:**  
Executive Director of Ishk Tolaram  
Foundation

## Subcommittees

### Audit Committee

Shahul Hameed  
Chairperson

Raj Vaswani  
Sumitra Aswani

### Finance and Investment Committee

Raj Vaswani  
Chairperson

Mohan Vaswani  
Sumitra Aswani

### Programs and Grants Committee

Mohan Vaswani  
Chairperson

Sumitra Aswani  
Divya Patel



# OUR TEAM

## Executive Leadership

**Sumitra Aswani**  
Executive Director  
*Since Mar 2017*

**Divya Patel**  
Chief Operating Officer  
*Since Dec 2019*

## Program Directors

**Mimu Nanwani**  
Indonesia  
**Neha Mehra**  
Nigeria  
**Sandhya Aswani**  
Singapore

## Program Officers

**Rahmat Setiawan**  
Indonesia  
**Laura Temituoyo Ede**  
Nigeria  
**Audrey Odogu\***  
Nigeria

## Communications

**Madhurya Manohar**

## Advisory Board, Nigeria

**Adesuwa Ladoja**  
**Dinesh Rathi**  
**Porus Doctor**  
**Sagar Dixit**  
**Topsy Kola-Oyeneyin**

## Administrative Team

**Victoria Anuoluwapo**  
**Onaneye Eliakim Adewale**  
**Angel Agustien**  
**Sherley Pitrus**



## OUR TEAM

### **Ishk Limb Centre, Nigeria**

Chandrakant Walavalkar  
Jaiprakash Bidlan  
Idowu Owolabi Kayode  
Michael Jackson Abayomi  
Ishola Yusuf Temitope  
Olaonigbagbe Saheed  
Akingboye Johnson Segun  
Napoleon Williams Aleruchi  
Dekaa Aondofa Wilfred

### **Administrative Staff, Nigeria**

Dabiri Kemi Afolashade  
Nyege Nelly Brown  
Adelaja Omotoyosi Adewole

### **Ishk Skills Hub, Nigeria**

Balogun Aramide Ganiyat

### **Support staff, Nigeria**

Afolabi Ezekiel  
Shittu Ladi Lukman  
Kareem Hakeen Emiiya  
Emmanuel Onyechere  
Daniel Okwoche

### **Interns**

Dorothy Dagogo-Ibiam  
Chiamaka Ibeleme  
Meenakshi Coondiah  
Geerija Aggarwal  
Sana Vasi



## **MISSION**

Ishk Tolaram Foundation provides access to quality education, healthcare and skills training for underserved individuals within our core geographies\*

## **VISION**

To enable individuals to improve their quality of life

## **VALUES**

Compassion, Responsibility, Humility

*\*Indonesia, Nigeria, Singapore and Estonia*



# COVID RELIEF



# 8,984



LIVES  
IMPACTED



300,000 +  
meals

37,000 +  
items of PPE



79

hospitals



16,000 +

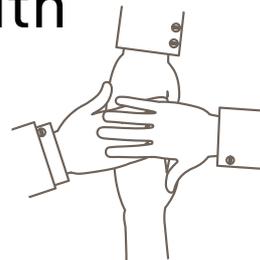


cloth masks  
produced\*

achieved with

13

partners



\*Read about how our Ishk Skills Hub students gave back to the community on Page 25



# COVID RELIEF INDONESIA



## YAYASAN CARE PEDULI

Established the production of masks as a source of income for **79** garment workers

CARE is a leading international humanitarian organisation fighting poverty globally and reaching millions of people in 95 countries. Yayasan Care Peduli has been active in Indonesia since 1967 and now has extensive programs focusing on disaster management and youth and women economic empowerment.

## YAYASAN PROJECT INDONESIA

Provided **37,000** items of PPE to **59** hospitals

Yayasan Project Indonesia focuses on education, health and economic welfare. As the COVID-19 pandemic emerged in Indonesia, the organisation was among the first to coordinate the supply of affordable and high-quality Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) to frontline medical professionals in health facilities across the country.



## YAYASAN RUMAH RACHEL

Provided food relief and hygiene kits for **35** families and PPE items for **14** home-based staff

Yayasan Rumah Rachel supports and provides palliative care to children from minority groups in Indonesia living with serious and life-limiting illnesses such as cancer, HIV and AIDS.

## YAYASAN TEMAN BAIK

Provided food relief and hygiene kits to **279** families and trained **36** agents to raise awareness about COVID

Yayasan Teman Baik focuses on supporting marginalised families in Jakarta such as those living in slum areas, beggars, homeless people and street children. They provide social services and counseling to their beneficiaries, support youth to get appropriate jobs or set up microenterprises, and train community members as agents to prevent child abuse.





# COVID RELIEF NIGERIA



## DRASA HEALTH TRUST

Trained **101** healthcare workers in Infection Prevention and Control (IPC)

DRASA Health Trust works to promote adequate sanitation and hygiene, reduce and prevent the spread of infectious diseases and strengthen Nigeria's health security and emergency preparedness. To achieve this, the organisation works with government, local and international partners, community leaders, students and health workers

## HEALTH EMERGENCY INITIATIVE

Provided PPE to **20** hospitals

Health Emergency Initiative (HEI) provides emergency medical assistance to vulnerable individuals in public hospitals and communities by paying hospital admission fees for road accident victims to ensure they are attended to when they reach the hospital; training citizens to become first responders who can immediately attend to accident victims until they can access advanced care and covering basic healthcare costs for persons living below the poverty level.



## PROJECT ARK

Provided food relief to **1,800** individuals

Project Ark was initiated by a group of non-profit leaders and philanthropists after Lagos first went under lockdown due to the COVID-19 outbreak. Their mission is to distribute food relief to individuals and households in vulnerable communities.



# COVID RELIEF NIGERIA



## PROJECT ENABLE AFRICA

Provided food relief to **1,988** individuals with disabilities

Project Enable is a community development initiative that advocates for the rights and empowerment of individuals with disabilities in Nigeria. They train these individuals in Information Communication Technology (ICT) skills and sensitise the community on the need to reduce discrimination and stigmatisation. Project Enable wants individuals with disabilities to live a fulfilled life while contributing to the progress of their communities

## RAJASTHANI SAMAJ NIGERIA

Provided food relief to **1,712** individuals

9ja Relief is an initiative launched by Rajasthani Samaj in Nigeria. The organisation has previously supported local communities with blood donation camps, prosthetic limb projects and eye care-related activities. 9ja Relief worked to provide food relief to vulnerable families whose livelihoods had been impacted by the lockdown, including artisans, widows and single mothers.



## SICKLE CELL AID FOUNDATION

Provided food relief to **514** individuals living with sickle cell anemia

The Sickle Cell Aid Foundation works to increase awareness on Sickle Cell Anemia and ensure that those living with this disorder in Nigeria have access to the quality healthcare they deserve. Since 2010, SCAF has provided free genotype testing and counseling, paired low-income patients with individual donors who fund their healthcare and welfare, organised conferences and crowdfunded for patients with complications requiring surgery, among other programs.



# COVID RELIEF SINGAPORE

## COMMUNITY FOUNDATION SINGAPORE



Provided financial assistance for meals to **335** youth

Sayang Sayang Fund is a community impact fund by the Community Foundation of Singapore (CFS) that supported frontline healthcare workers, charities and non-profit organisations and provided emergency response funds to enable immediate and short-term relief to those adversely affected by the COVID-19 situation. Among their initiatives, the Recess@Home program provided youth from low-income families access to the meals they can no longer receive from school due to the lockdown.

## IT'S RAINING RAINCOATS

Provided weekly snacks to **900** workers in a dormitory for sustenance between meals during the lockdown

It's Raining Raincoats is a volunteer-driven initiative that aims to improve the lives of migrant workers in Singapore and build bridges to strengthen their integration into the broader community. They do this through raising awareness about their rights, celebrating festivals, providing them with food products, recycled clothes and data cards, and fundraising for families of workers who have lost their lives.



## SOUTH CENTRAL COMMUNITY FAMILY SERVICE CENTRE (SCCFSC)

Supported **249** individuals with essential items during the lockdown

South Central Community Family Service Centre provides support to low-income and vulnerable families within their community. The organisation adopts an inclusive approach that encourages community self-help and cooperation to empower these families and equip the next generation for transformative change.



# GRANTS





# GRANTS SINGAPORE

## AGAPE CONNECTING PEOPLE



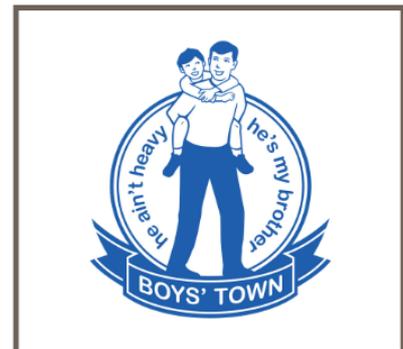
Supported **10** vulnerable women with laptops to work from home

Agape is a contact centre set up to provide employment for those who are disadvantaged and want to turn their lives around. This includes inmates, physically challenged individuals, single mothers and ex-offenders. Their work can benefit even those who cannot commute to them, including visually impaired individuals. Since November 2018, Agape has been able to reach out to Changi Women's prison and displaced civilians via home-based work.

## BOYS' TOWN

Supported **29** students through Boys' Town Learning

Boys' Town equips children and youth who may have faced hardship and come from disadvantaged and disengaged families with skills to become socially integrated, responsible and contributing members of society. Boys' Town Learning aims to close the gap for school drop-outs and youths who cannot proceed further along education pathways or those who have been temporarily taken out of their school environments due to suspension or other reasons.



## CURIOS THOUGHTS AT SOUTH CENTRAL COMMUNITY FAMILY SERVICE CENTRE

Supported **20** students through early literacy classes

CuriousTime@VWOs is a community initiative by Curious Thoughts Giving that seeks to empower children who are beneficiaries of Voluntary Welfare Organisations through literacy. The initiative uses a child-centred, multi-sensory methodology known as Jolly Phonics to teach underprivileged children how to read and write.



# GRANTS SINGAPORE

## DYSLEXIA ASSOCIATION OF SINGAPORE



Supported **78** students through Preschool Early Literacy Programme (PELP)

Dyslexia Association of Singapore (DAS) helps dyslexic people and those with specific learning differences in Singapore achieve. The DAS PELP follows a research-based, structured and multi-sensory approach to literacy that is designed around a student's individual learning needs. The objective of the programme is to help preschoolers who are potentially at risk of having dyslexia or developmental delay in early literacy, develop skills and strategies to become confident achievers when they enter primary school.

## HALOGEN FOUNDATION

Supported **25** students with financial assistance and mentorship

Halogen Foundation focuses on building young leaders and entrepreneurs through quality leadership and entrepreneurship education available to all young people, particularly those who are disadvantaged, come from challenging family backgrounds and/or are in need of financial assistance. The NFTE Graduate Student Scholarship provides financial assistance to selected students who drop out of school due to financial challenges and the NFTE Graduate Mentorship Program supports selected young graduates from the NFTE program to chart and achieve their personal and schooling goals.



## SHINE CHILDREN AND YOUTH SERVICES

Supporting **30** students through The Scaffold Program

SHINE Children and Youth Services was established in 1976 to support students who have the potential to do well but struggle in school due to situational challenges. The Scaffold Program offered by SHINE is an early intervention programme that works with Secondary One and Two Normal Academic students from mainstream schools and their social ecosystems to achieve improved school outcomes, parent-child relationships, and school-student attachments and reduced referrals to downstream programmes





## GRANTS SINGAPORE



### ISHK TOLARAM SCHOLARSHIP

Supported **10** students with financial assistance and mentorship

The Ishk Tolaram Scholarship enables students from different backgrounds and abilities to achieve their educational and personal goals. As part of this, students engage with peer, mentor and school support to overcome challenges and bring aspirations to life. This year's scholars include students from Changkat Changi Secondary School and Eunost Primary School.



## GRANTS NIGERIA

### TULSI CHANRAI FOUNDATION

Supported **150** eye surgeries

Tulsi Chanrai Foundation (TCF Nigeria), with the vision to ensure a healthy Nigeria, has played an instrumental role in enhancing the availability, accessibility, affordability and effectiveness of healthcare services in remote areas of Nigeria. TCF's focus areas are restoring sight, providing access to primary health care and providing safe drinking water.





## GRANTS INDONESIA



### BHAKTI LUHUR FOUNDATION

Supporting essential food supplies for **500** children

Bhakti Luhur Foundation provides a nurturing home-like environment for the physically and mentally challenged, the poor and orphans and children displaced by man-made or natural disasters in Indonesia. This grant was adopted by Ishk as a legacy project of our Founder.

### THOUSAND DAYS FUND INDONESIA AND BETTER INVESTMENT FOR STUNTING ALLEVIATION

Ishk is an anchor donor of the Thousand Days Fund, a pooled philanthropic fund established by the Asia Philanthropy Circle to partner with the Power of Nutrition and other funders on the Better Investment for Stunting Alleviation (BISA) program in Indonesia.

Now at the end of its first year, BISA is a USD 10 million, 5-year program designed to improve nutrition among adolescent girls and during the first 1000 days of a child's life to prevent the irreversible effects of stunting. The program is a partnership between Asia Philanthropy Circle, the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs, Save the Children, Nutrition International and the Power of Nutrition.



### YAYASAN TEMAN BAIK

Supported **4,667** individuals through education, skills training and emergency support

Yayasan Teman Baik focuses on supporting marginalised families in Jakarta such as those living in slum areas, beggars, homeless people and street children. They provide social services and counseling to their beneficiaries, support youth to get appropriate jobs or set up microenterprises, and train community members as agents to prevent child abuse.

## 2020 GRANT PARTNERS

We launched Pass-it-On in 2019 to support members of Tolaram in implementing projects that positively impact the communities around them. As the effects of the pandemic unfolded in 2020, we adapted Pass-it-On to focus specifically on COVID relief for vulnerable communities. While applications are ongoing, here are our first grant partners for 2020.



### DREAMS FROM THE SLUM | NIGERIA

**Tolaram team: Modupe Famaiye and Toyin Bolaji**

Provided food relief to **470** individuals in Ajegunle

Dreams from the Slum Empowerment Initiative (DTS) is a registered non-profit organisation, committed to making the dreams of people living in the slum to become a reality through Empowerment, Mentorship and Education.

### ESTONIA PSYCHOSOCIAL REHABILITATION ASSOCIATION | ESTONIA

**Tolaram team: Julia Tuts and Irina Zubets**

Provided mental health counseling to **5** families of children with special needs

The Estonian Psychosocial Rehabilitation Association contributes to developing medical care and treatment services and creating a network of support groups for mental health services in Estonia.



### LAGOS FOOD BANK | NIGERIA

**Tolaram team: Peace Chibueze and Joshua Majin**

Provided food relief to **875** individuals

Lagos Food Bank Initiative is a non-profit, privately driven organisation that provides food intervention for indigent and vulnerable people in Lagos. The organisation is committed to fighting malnutrition and hunger, reducing food waste and providing emergency services and self-sustenance programs to the underserved.



## 2019 GRANT PARTNERS

2020 marked year 2 of 3 for our 2019 Pass-it-On grant partners. While the nationwide lockdown in Nigeria paused their programs, our partners continued to reach out to their communities through COVID relief initiatives and since August, have resumed activities.



### ANCHOR HERITAGE INITIATIVE | NIGERIA

**Tolaram team: Ololade Oladipupo**

Trained **50** inmates, released **19** inmates through legal aid and supported **5** inmates in an aftercare initiative

Anchor Heritage Initiative provides free legal representation and access to justice to individuals who have been unjustly incarcerated. The organisation also runs vocational training workshops for prison inmates to improve their chances of integrating into society once they are released.

### HACEY HEALTH INITIATIVE | NIGERIA

**Tolaram team: Olawale Olabisi and Jamiu Shobajo**

Distributed **4,900** insecticide nets and **1,500** birthing kits and trained **30** health workers in positive maternal and child health practices

HACEY Health Initiative works to improve the quality of maternal and child health by addressing the leading causes of maternal and child mortality: malaria and a lack of proper sanitation and hygiene. The team also delivers life-saving health information and commodities such as mosquito nets and birthing kits, and works to strengthen the local primary health care system.

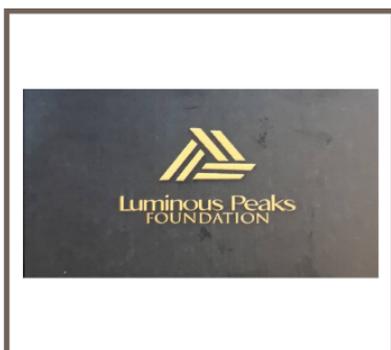


### LUMINOUS PEAKS FOUNDATION | NIGERIA

**Tolaram team: Olajide Williams and Monye Ngozi**

Trained **40** underserved youth in fine arts

Luminous Peaks Foundation nurtures the artistic talents of underprivileged youth as a means to tackle poverty within the Ibeju-Lekki area in Lagos, Nigeria through the development of a fine arts school. In addition to coaching on the theory and application of modern art, students are equipped with business skills to exhibit and sell their work, and are exposed to opportunities to strengthen their network and build their brand.





# **CORE PROGRAMS**





Ishk Limb Centre provides free, custom-made prosthetic limbs to those in need across Nigeria. Since 2009, we have fitted over **16,000** limbs through our walk-in clinics and mobile camps.

In the past 12 months, we:

- Fitted **944** prosthetic limbs, despite pausing operations for four months during the lockdown
- Held **3** mobile camps across Nigeria in partnership with state governments and non-profit organisations
- Developed a flexible joint to improve the functionality of our free above-knee prosthetic limbs
- Became an Ambassador of the Ellen Meadows Prosthetic Hand Foundation (or LN4 Foundation)

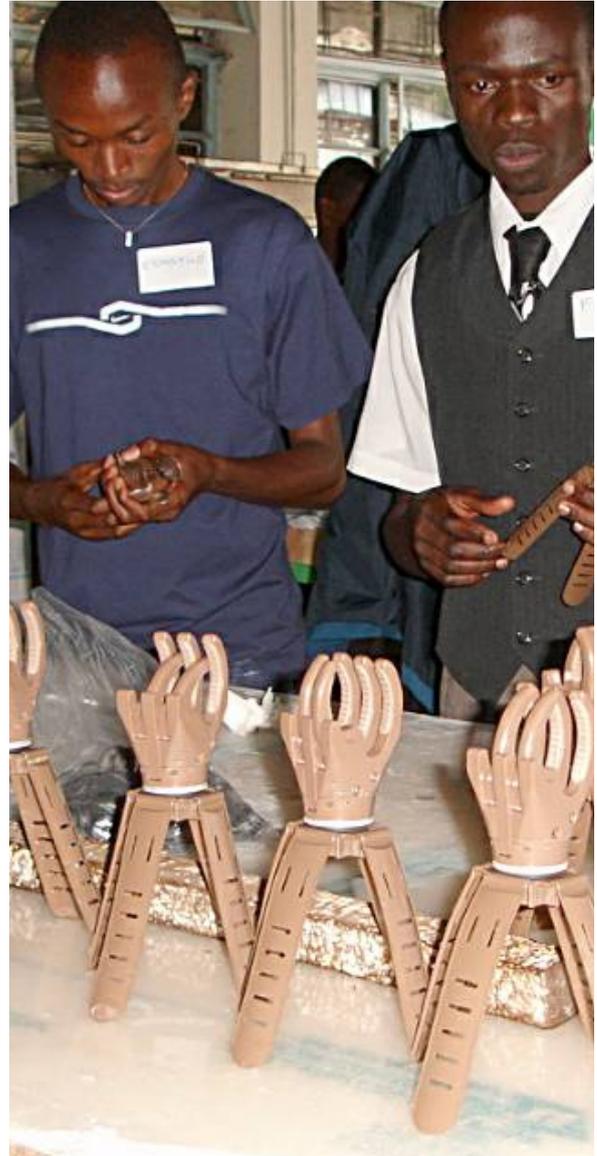


# LN4 Foundation Ambassador

## LAGOS, NIGERIA

The LN-4 prosthetic hand is a low-cost, light, durable and functional prosthetic hand designed and engineered by a small team. Among them, was Ernie Meadows who wanted to honor his late daughter, Ellen, with this project. The mission of The Ellen Meadows Prosthetic Hand Foundation is to provide a prosthetic hand to anyone who needs one, regardless of their socioeconomic status or ability to pay.

As an Ambassador or Ambassador Organization, individuals and/or organisations commit to finding recipients for the prosthetic hands, fitting the hands, and expanding the Foundation's reach, through connecting with other Ambassadors or relevant organizations and ensuring more people receive prosthetic hands in the future.



Description provided by the **Ellen Meadows Prosthetic Hand Foundation**



**944**

---

limbs fitted in 2020

**16,910**

---

limbs fitted since 2009



# **IshK Skills Hub**

IshK Skills Hub (ISH) addresses youth unemployment in Nigeria. The program provides students a foundation in life skills, training in a vocational skill and access to employment through our partners, enabling them to earn a livelihood to support themselves and their families.

In the past 12 months, we:

- Enrolled **19** new students in the program to train in skills such as tailoring, cooking and baking and electrical work
- Placed **20** students in jobs and supported **52** students in becoming entrepreneurs, with **12** students receiving start up kits as well
- Hosted **19** interactive online and offline sessions for our alumni on a variety of topics
- Collaborated with **17** tailoring students to produce and distribute more than **16,000** cloth face masks to vulnerable communities



# Ishk Skills Hub Graduation Ceremony

**LAGOS, NIGERIA**

In November 2019, we held a graduation ceremony to celebrate students from our April, May, June and July batches who completed their skills training.

Students led on different elements of the event, applying the skills they trained in.

While Makeup and Hairdressing students helmed the beauty booth to style graduates before the event, Graphic Design students worked on the event's physical branding i.e. banners and souvenir bags. Tailoring students produced beautiful mufflers and brooches for their peers to wear and table cloths for guest tables; Cooking and Baking students organised food and drinks; and the Entrepreneurial Training students managed the event as coordinators.

The event also included an inspiring keynote speech by Sharif O. Gbadamosi, founder of management consultancy firm JPiN Consult, speeches by student representatives of each batch and a presentation of certificates by our partners.



Students graduate from Ishk Skills Hub with a *community of peers* to continue their journey with



# Face Mask Project

## LAGOS, NIGERIA

In July, as part of our COVID response, we launched the Face Mask Project under Ishk Skills Hub.

With the pandemic's strain on livelihoods, the project enabled 17 tailoring students to earn an income by producing cloth masks to distribute for free to vulnerable individuals to protect themselves against the virus.

Once students volunteered for the project, House of Kush, a partner, held an online session to train students in applying their skills and producing quality face mask samples.

Across 3 months, students produced more than 16,000 masks, of which at least 5,000 have been distributed through our COVID grant partners and select schools or purchased by entities, including Tolaram businesses.



By producing face masks, students were able to apply their new skills, earn an income and *give back to the community*

**62**

---

students graduated

**52**

---

students  
started a business

**20**

---

students employed

**12**

---

startup kits provided



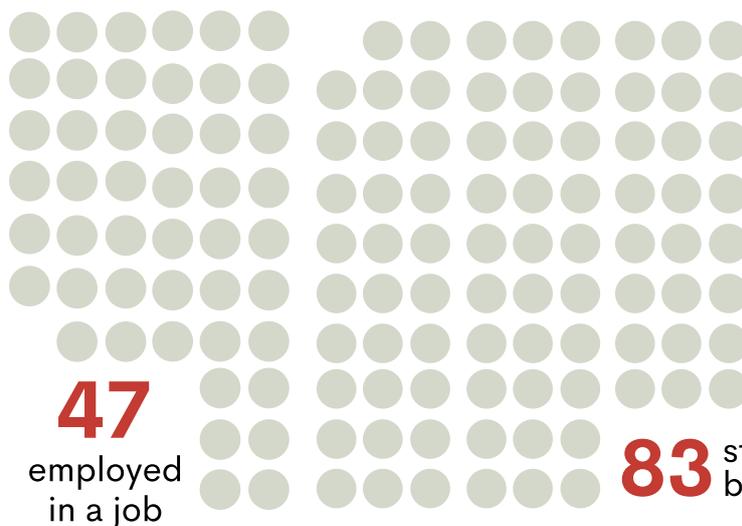
Ishk Skills Hub was launched in 2019 to enable unemployed Nigerian youth to become work-ready, earn a livelihood and support themselves and their families.

Since then, we have grown a community of students who have trained in various skills, started businesses or their own professional careers, and who continue their journey with us as alumni.

This year, we assessed our students' experiences at the Hub to understand the program's impact so far. Below are some snapshots of our study.

**191** students enrolled

**167** students graduated



**18** continued their education

**24** currently in training

**19** awaiting employment



Based on a survey of 102 students\*



**6 out of 10**

felt equipped to start a new business after their training



**7 out of 10**

currently run a profitable business



**9 out of 10**

use digital marketing tools to drive visibility and sales



**8 out of 10**

have increased income after the training



**4 out of 10**

earn above the monthly minimum wage of USD 78



**5 out of 10**

are able to support themselves and their families

*\*Of this, 51 started their own business and 18 were employed in jobs*



Ishk Peduli Anak Indonesia (IPAI) addresses the quality of early childhood education (ECE) through building teacher capacity. Since inception, 200 early childhood educators in Batu, East Java have participated in a multi-level training in child-centered pedagogy, co-created by Ishk, the government of Kota Batu and SINAU Teacher Training Centre. To positively shift the mindset around ECE within the wider community, parents and school leaders have also been trained in supportive practices.

In 2019, IPAI was evaluated by an independent consultant to understand its impact on teacher competency, child development outcomes and the quality of their learning environment. Below are some key highlights from the study.

## IMPACT OF TRAINING ON TEACHERS

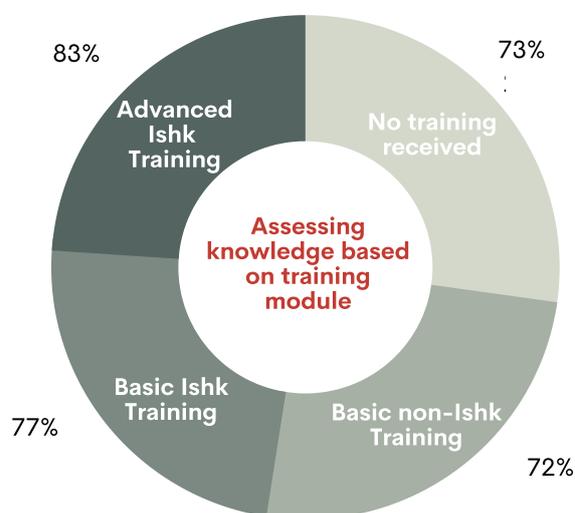


Figure 1 shows the percentage of teachers with correct answers on the assessment

Competency was assessed based on teaching practices, knowledge and retention of topics from the Basic Training module.

Teachers in the Advanced Ishk Training group showed a deeper retention *and* understanding of ECE concepts than teachers in the other groups.

This is because the Advanced Ishk Training expands on concepts from the Basic and Intermediate Training modules, allowing teachers to strengthen their foundations of early childhood pedagogy. Additionally, Ishk's training also uses active learning to enhance retention.

Overall, the results reinforced that the higher the level of a tiered training provided to a teacher, the more competent they become.

**Full report** available on our website in January 2021

# IMPACT OF TRAINING ON CHILDREN



Children taught by graduates from Ishk’s Basic and Advanced Training scored the highest across four development domains (Fig.2). They were found to be more focused and curious, with longer attention spans and stronger critical thinking skills.

To enhance a child’s cognitive function and foundation skills, Ishk’s training emphasizes the following:

- **Inquiry-based learning** to encourage creative problem-solving by asking open-ended questions like “What would you do?”
- **Loose parts training** to repurpose available materials such as sticks, stones and bottle caps into tools to learn numeracy
- **Project-based learning** that requires a child to concentrate, think critically and justify each step in their decision-making process

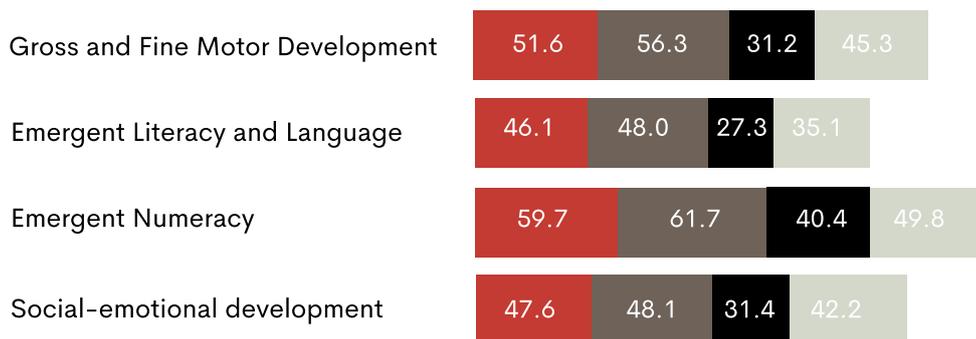


Figure 2 shows the percentage of children who performed at age-appropriate levels across the four development domains of the IDELA assessment

Advanced Ishk Training
  Basic Ishk Training
  Basic Non-Ishk Training
  No Training Received

# IMPACT OF TRAINING ON QUALITY OF LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

The quality of the learning environment is determined by two factors:

- **Structural quality:** Size of group, physical environment and availability of equipment and teaching material, etc.
- **Process quality:** Child's daily experiences within an ECED environment, including social, emotional, physical and instructional aspects of activities and how a child interacts with teachers, peers, caregivers and materials.

Findings suggest training leads to better quality learning environments, with process quality directly relating to training content.

Teachers in the Advanced Iskh Training group, who scored the highest in this domain (Fig. 3), enhanced their process quality by:

- Providing **one-to-one support** to children who required additional attention
- Designing lesson plans around **project-based activities that were cognitively stimulating**, rather than just copying shapes, writing letters and coloring
- Allocating time to children for **reflection as well as meaningful free play** that allowed them to choose what, where and how they would like to play

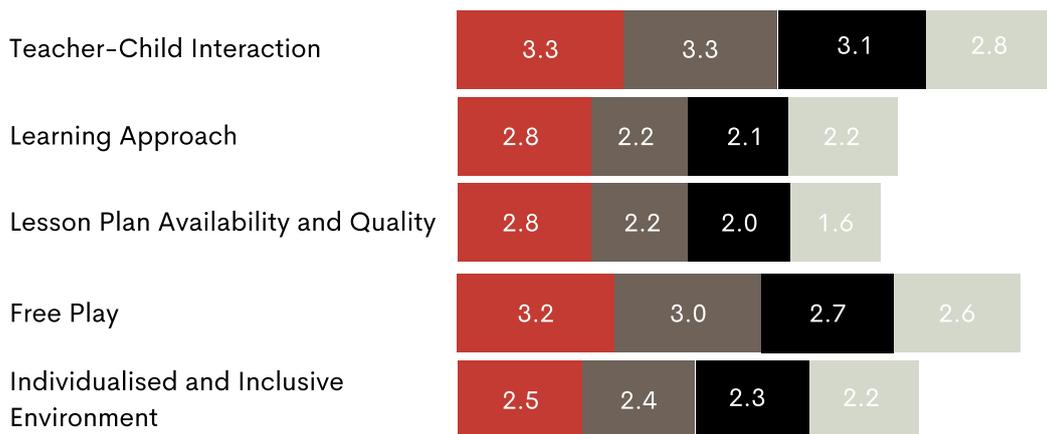


Figure 3 shows how each group performed on a range of 1–4 on process quality indicators by MELE-MELQO





# **TEAM HIGHLIGHTS**





# Opening Ceremony

## LAGOS, NIGERIA

In December 2019, we officially inaugurated our new centre at 44 Ikorodu Road.

Our Founder Mohan Vaswani, his wife Kawita, and our Board Director, Shahul Hameed, lit the ceremonial lamp to mark the occasion.

Our colleagues from Tolaram and many friends and partners of Ishk were also present and given a tour of the building, with an interactive introduction to our programs.



Having more than half of the Ishk family under one roof made the milestone *extra special*



# Going Virtual

## INDONESIA, NIGERIA AND SINGAPORE

As a team spread across three countries, we are used to working via videoconferencing. When the global lockdown moved work home, we also moved to find new ways to bond as a team - virtually.

From April to July, we committed one hour every Thursday to check in across borders, with each team member leading a non-work related activity. Together, we played charades, had dance parties, made origami blindfolded and improvised stories.

In August, we held our annual retreat online and dedicated five full days to learning and development and aligning on the impact we want to create in the next five years.

Finally, in November, we hosted a virtual Ishk Prom! Dressed in our finest, we played games, sang karaoke, danced, and had one final team meal to close a year that, despite its many challenges, was one of immense growth for Ishk.





# Halogen Foundation Mentorship Program

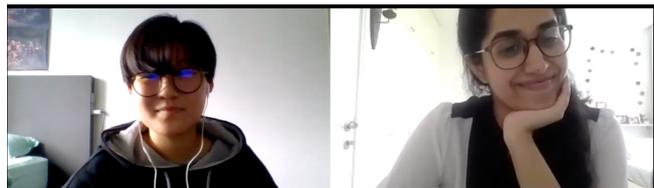
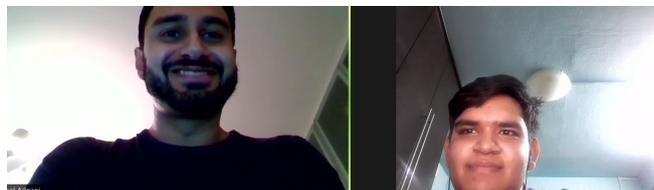
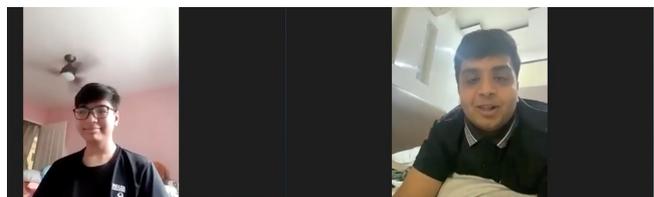
## SINGAPORE

In partnership with Halogen Foundation in Singapore, we piloted a mentorship program with our Tolaram colleagues for graduates of Halogen's Network for Teaching Entrepreneurship (NFTE) program.

As part of Halogen Foundation's vision to transform the lives of young people in Singapore through leadership and entrepreneurship development, NFTE uses an innovative, hands-on curriculum to activate the entrepreneurial mindset and build the business skills of youth from underprivileged communities.

From March to August, 3 mentors from Ishk and 4 mentors from Tolaram worked with 7 mentees on their personal and professional development, navigating topics like goal setting and defining core values.

As mentors and mentees learned from each other's experiences, the program reinforced how skills-based volunteering, through an effective partnership of the non-profit and corporate sectors, could be a force for good.





# Advocacy

## INDONESIA AND SINGAPORE

Continuous learning, research and knowledge sharing are core to our ethos as an organisation.

As this moved online globally, we participated in numerous webinars and virtual conferences to understand how the pandemic exacerbated needs in underserved communities and shifted international development and giving.

Alongside this, advocacy on our areas of expertise also moved online. Over the course of the year, our team has shared on early childhood education in Indonesia in 3 forums, including the Asian Venture Philanthropy Network (AVPN)'s annual conference. We also joined the National Volunteer and Philanthropy Centre (NVPC)'s new cross-sector initiative, Colabs, to contribute to the dialogue surrounding migrant workers and how we can co-design solutions to improve their future wellbeing in Singapore.



Mimu Nanwani, Program Director, Indonesia, speaks about the shift to home-based learning as part of a training for teachers by IGTKI Jakarta

# Closing Thoughts

from our team



We deepened our relationships with the individuals we work with, understood the new realities they faced and walked through the uncertainty with them. This will continue to be core to the way we work.

**Mimu Nanwani**  
*Program Director, Indonesia*

Through the lockdown, we stayed in touch with our Skills Hub students as they attended our virtual sessions, started their own businesses and applied their skills. They were relentless in growing and making something of themselves. This reaffirmed our own mission to enable them to do so.

**Laura Temituoyo Ede**  
*Program Officer, Nigeria*



We worked with our partners as they adapted their models to continue serving their communities. With the development sector hit hard by the lockdown, strengthening our collaborative efforts to address the needs on the ground and keeping our commitments remains key.

**Sandhya Aswani**  
*Program Director, Singapore*

Although our programs were on hold, we scaled our grant making, adapted our processes, built new relationships and changed the way we work to meet needs rapidly. Adapting and being flexible in uncertainty is critical.

**Neha Mehra**  
*Program Director, Nigeria*



The pandemic taught us that natural disasters are not the only types of disasters. Even though it has brought many threats, it has also brought opportunities. How we turn those threats into opportunities will determine how we move forward and create impact.

**Rahmat Setiawan**  
*Program Officer, Indonesia*



# 23,381

LIVES IMPACTED IN 2020\*



*Thank you*

To all our partners who  
journeyed with us this year

*\*Through our core programs, grants and COVID response*