



**SAME  
OBJECTIVES**

**NEW  
PATHS**

Usthi Foundation  
Annual Report 2021



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# EDITORIAL

## DEAR READER

Access to education is not only a fundamental right, but also central to healthy human development and to a society based on responsible participation and active sharing. In the same way, a good education is key to breaking the poverty cycle and opening doors to a better future.

For many children, the significance of attending school goes far beyond learning. At school, they receive a meal, have a safe place to play and study, and are supported in developing their talents and pursuing their dreams.

The corona virus has turned people's lives upside down all over the world and led to school closures in heretofore unimaginable and unprecedented proportions. Worldwide, the pandemic threatens to create an educational gap which will have a devastating effect, especially on children from poorer and educationally disadvantaged families. This raises the question: what type of educational system do we need in order to address the longer-term impact of the pandemic on society? How can we ensure that disadvantaged children and young people are not left behind and have better opportunities for a good education?

For 45 years, the Usthi Foundation has been working to ensure equitable access to education and health care. In 2021, together with our partner organisations in India and Nepal, we have adapted the projects to fit the new reality defined by the virus, to turn challenges into opportunities. Our vision of a world in which all children grow up with dignity and become self-reliant and independent remains unchanged.

We wish to continue on this path together with you and invite you to read on and immerse yourself in our work. On behalf of the children, the many young women and men in our projects, we once again sincerely wish to thank you for all your generous donations and your valuable support, on which we have been able to count for so many years.



Felix Senn  
*President, Board of Trustees*



Alessandra Grosse  
*Executive Director*

## BOARD OF TRUSTEES

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**Stefan Schumacher**, Graphic Design,  
since 2017

**Tim Dean**, Translation, since 2015

# AT A GLANCE

## REVIEW 2021

For over 45 years, Usthi has been committed to empowering young people in India and Nepal. From year to year, new projects have been added or existing projects further developed. From the South of India up to Nepal, our work covers the areas of education, health and the prevention of human trafficking. From the very beginning, our projects have supported children and young people, regardless of gender, race, nationality, religion or language, in building a self-determined and dignified future. This was also our primary goal in 2021 - only under changed circumstances.

Once again, the Covid-19 pandemic has dominated and impacted project activities at all levels: Schools and professional skills training centres were temporarily closed. The overwhelming second wave brought the Indian health system to its limits. The virus has left many women without their husbands and a secure source of income; countless children have been deprived of parental care. At the same time, during lockdown and quarantine, the risk of violence and abuse increased. In the ensuing economic collapse, many people slipped further into poverty. Previous successes in battling poverty have been wiped out by the corona crisis.

Many problems, already shaping life in India and Nepal before the pandemic, have been exacerbated by the Covid-19 crisis. The importance of education and health has been highlighted and unemployment has increased the urgency to alert people to the dangers of human trafficking and provide a way out for those affected.

Excellent cooperation with our local partner organisations has enabled Usthi to provide support despite the immense

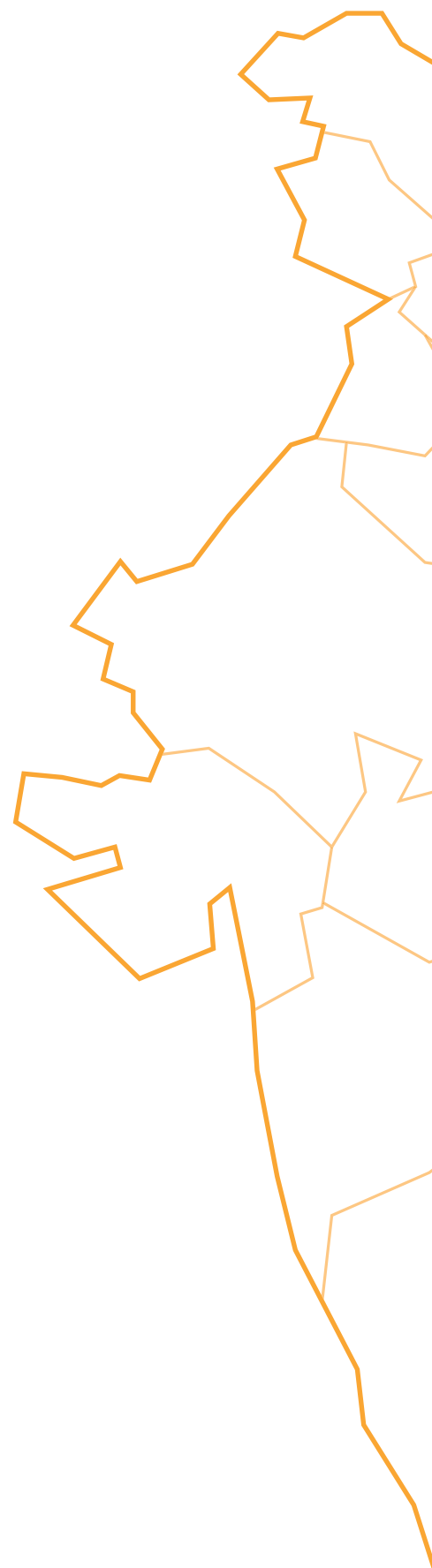
challenges. With great commitment and impressive flexibility, local employees organised the distribution of food and protective materials as part of the relief operation. Distance learning continued at the schools and within the health projects our staff have assisted in the identification of Covid-19 cases. Instead of expanding our range of activities, our focus has not only been on improving the quality of the projects, but also on getting the people in and around the projects through these difficult times and continually adapting to changing circumstances.

In autumn, the situation in the project regions slowly eased. School children gradually returned to the classroom and the prevention campaign took off again. The improvement of the situation also allowed the Usthi team to visit the project locations.

In Switzerland, the team and the Board of Trustees have intensively engaged in the strategic development of the Foundation. During a strategy meeting, projects were reviewed in detail, processes were discussed as were the bases for strategic orientation in our future collaborations.

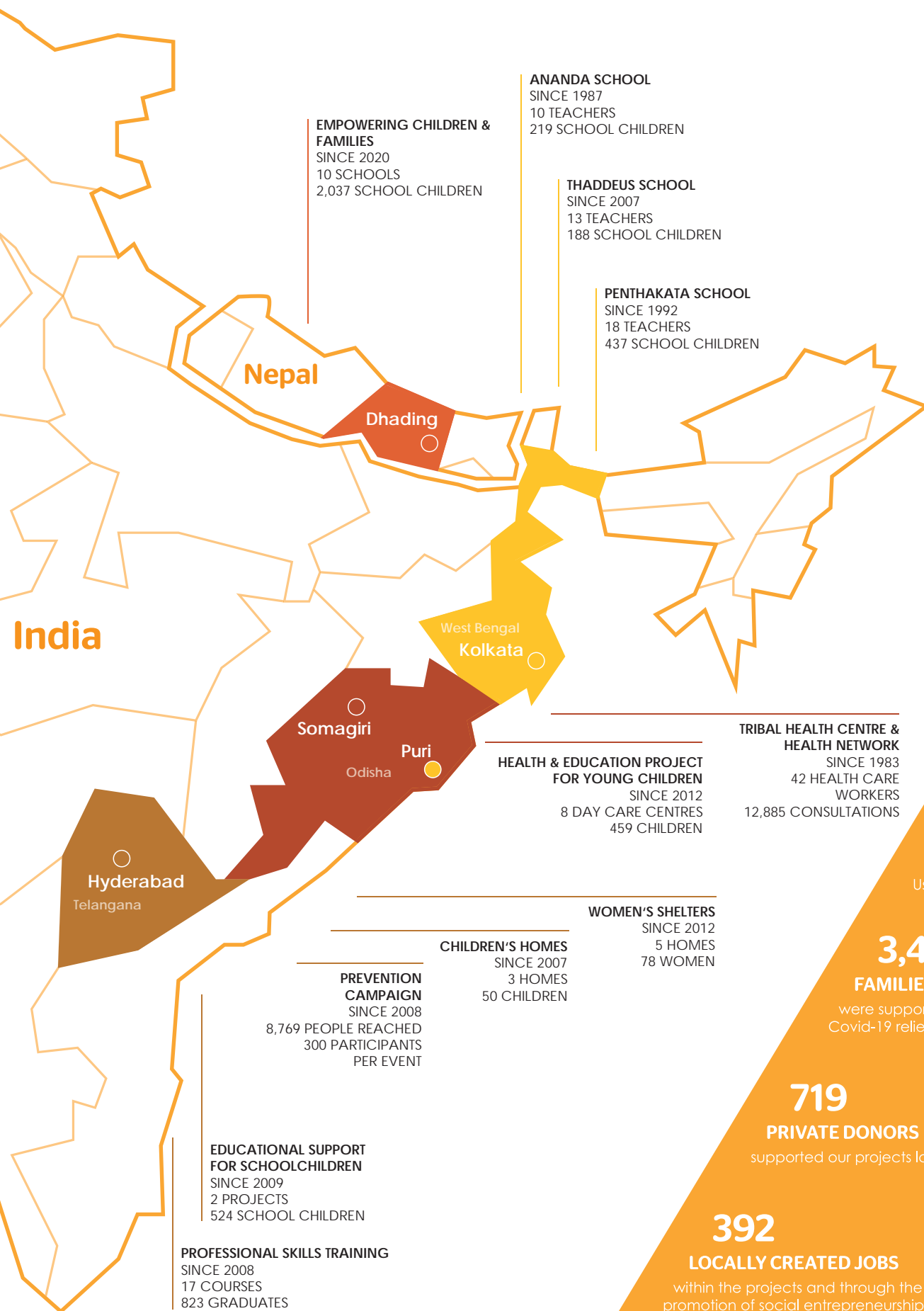
Usthi has welcomed a new member to the Board of Trustees: Christa Vollrath, MD, an eye specialist, brings extensive medical experience to the Board. In summer, we bade farewell, with thanks, to Olga Egli, who handed over her responsibility for public relations to Tiana Glatt.

Overall, we are looking back on an eventful year. Despite last year's many hurdles, the 12 projects reached more than 26,000 young people. Behind every statistic are individual personalities, meaningful encounters and new opportunities which motivate us year on year to commit ourselves fully to working for the children and young people in India and Nepal.





More about our projects



26,472

INDIVIDUALS

benefitted from Usthi's work in 2021.

3,420

FAMILIES

were supported by the Covid-19 relief campaign.

719

PRIVATE DONORS

supported our projects last year.

392

LOCALLY CREATED JOBS

within the projects and through the promotion of social entrepreneurship.



Watch the video



# COVID-19 IN THE SPOTLIGHT

## BRIDGING TIMES OF NEED

The second wave in spring 2021 hit India particularly hard. Like everywhere else in the world, the health system was severely challenged and struggled to provide care for all patients. There was a shortage of staff, hospital beds and oxygen equipment.

Nepal was not spared from the second wave either. Again, a lockdown was imposed almost nationwide. Especially in rural areas, there was a lack of medical care and vaccines were in short supply throughout the country.

« Patients are waiting 3-4 days for treatment. They are desperate to get help. »

Local Partner

The high infection rate brought grave consequences. Countless young people lost family members and were left to fend for themselves. All of them now have to find new ways to care for themselves, their siblings or children.

Given the high numbers of cases, schools and professional skills training centres had to remain closed. While children had normally received a hot mid-day meal at their schools, this was no longer available due to the school closures – another challenge, especially for financially disadvantaged families.

In spring 2021, in order to support people in this difficult time, Usthi again called for donations for the emergency relief campaign. In co-operation with local partners, a total of 3,420 food packages were distributed. Initially, distribution had only been planned for



Emergency Relief, Hudaarait

Hyderabad, but thanks to the exceptionally generous support, Usthi was able to expand the campaign to three more locations.

One food package covered the needs of a small family of 4-5 people for about one week. The packages contained rice, flour, oil, lentils and sugar. In addition, they included protective masks and soap. 2,100 food parcels were distributed in the metropolitan city of Hyderabad, in central India, to families of the Usthi education projects, daily wage-earners, migrant workers and needy people from the communities. A total of 450 packages of food and protective materials were distributed to the families of Usthi school children at the Penthakata School in the state of Odisha. In addition, 100 families of lifeguards and rickshaw drivers from within the vicinity of the school were included to compensate their lack of income from the distressed tourism sector. 270 families were also supported at the Ananda School near Kolkata. In Nepal, with the help of our partner organisation and volunteers, 500 packages were distributed to families in the project region in Dhading, west of the Kathmandu Valley. All our local partners showed extraordinary dedication in this difficult situation. Staff from the partner organisations were involved in the distribution of food packages and necessary permits were obtained from local authorities and the police. The campaign took place over several days to avoid crowding and to comply with hygiene measures and safety distancing.

Thanks to the emergency relief campaign, we were able to support people in acute need within our projects. In order to contribute to sustained improvement in this situation, our projects in the fields of education and health focus on enabling people to stand on their own feet in the long term.

**« We want to focus on providing food for single mothers and migrant workers. Otherwise, we will lose so many people to hunger. »**

Local Partner

# EDUCATION UNDERGOING CHANGE

## OVERCOMING CHALLENGES

A high-quality school education not only forms the basis for the children's future, it also critically favours their development. Interaction with peers fosters social development and enables children to grow up in a child friendly environment. In addition, the routine of everyday school life gives children stability and protects them from child labour and human trafficking. Since the beginning, Usthi has been working to educate young people from socially and economically disadvantaged families. Delivering distance schooling in this context has presented quite some challenges: families lack the financial resources to provide the technology necessary to receive digital teaching. At the same time, many of the parents did not have access to formal education themselves and therefore do not have the necessary knowledge to support their children in home schooling. In addition, school children, especially in the

**« Our teachers faced the challenges of the pandemic with unmitigated zeal and great personal commitment. »**

Direktor Principle of the Penthakata School

lower classes, are often not mature enough to teach themselves and to learn the course material through self-study.

The staff of the three schools, Ananda, Penthakata and Thaddeus, showed great commitment in addressing the problems. When the situation allowed, children were organised into small learning groups to optimise access to smartphones and promote

peer learning. Where possible, the progress and well-being of the children were personally checked by teachers during home visits. Within the education project in Nepal, teachers met with the children in the village squares, where safe distancing could be maintained.

## RESPONDING TO CHANGE

The tutors of the professional skills trainings in Hyderabad reacted with the same flexibility to the situation. Last year, some of the courses were shortened so that graduates could finish before the approaching second wave.

In response to the increased demand for medical staff due to the Corona pandemic, two new courses in the field of medicine were under development from September 2021 onwards. Young men and women can now be trained to become multipurpose health workers or medical lab technicians.

Last year, in addition, 90 Corona widows and youths, who had lost their parents, were supported in completing a professional skills training. Access to the courses is intended to enable them to lead a self-determined and independent life.

Although Covid-19 intermittently prevented the courses from taking place, 823 young women and men were able to complete a professional skills training course in 2021.

**« Because my father needs the family's only mobile phone at work, I cannot attend distance learning regularly. »**

School children of the Penthakata School







More about  
the health projects



## HEALTH IN FOCUS

The last two years have shown each of us how precious and vulnerable our health is. The Covid-19 pandemic continued to keep the world on tenterhooks. From one wave to the next, lockdowns were imposed, prevention measures were tightened and then relaxed again. In almost no country in the world were there as many infections with the coronavirus as in India. During the second wave, which peaked in early May 2021, it became a major challenge to provide medical care. Due to vaccine shortage, the national vaccination campaign was only able to progress slowly. Problems in distributing the available doses of

vaccine led to major delays, especially in rural areas.

### ENSURING PRIMARY CARE

Among those affected was the indigenous region of Somagiri in the state of Odisha, where Usthi's health programme, comprising two interacting projects, is located. The rural region is considered one of the poorest in India and the indigenous peoples living there still face discrimination and marginalisation. The pandemic has hit the poorest in society particularly hard. For families who earn their living from farm labour, the consequences of infection are severe. Not being able to

work means neither being able to provide meals for the family, nor to pay for children's schooling.

Raising awareness amongst the local population and informing them about possible protective measures was, therefore, crucial. The hospital, run by Usthi since the 1980s, provided information and distributed protective masks. The network of health workers also played an important role in raising awareness among the communities in the surrounding 133 villages. The high level of trust in the Usthi-trained health workers, who themselves are all from the region, helped to overcome fears and resolve uncertainties about the virus.



Health and Education Project, Somagiri

In addition, the health workers supported the identification of Covid-19 cases.

Despite this unfamiliar and challenging situation, local staff were able to react quickly and flexibly to the constantly changing conditions. While Covid-19 cases were referred to the next largest state hospital, basic health care for all other patients was assured.

#### **PROTECTING THE SMALLEST**

Due to restrictions and to protect children from infection, the Usthi day care centres had to remain closed for several months. At times, the centres' social workers were allowed to visit the children at home to ensure their well-being. At the request of the

local community leaders, staff organised the supply of meals for the children.

The Health and Education Project provides a framework for young children to learn through play and nurtures them in their physical development. In addition to fostering cognitive and motor skills, early exposure to an external childcare setting also helps these children towards enrolment in state schools.

**« We advised pregnant women and mothers of newborns to be particularly careful about hygiene to protect their health and that of their children. »**

Social Worker  
of the Health and Education Project

# HUMAN TRAFFICKING ON THE RISE

It has long been known that big city streets in India are not a safe place for young people. Every year, countless children and young women fall victim to

**« Every week we came across young people who had lost their parents to Covid. Defenceless, they were very vulnerable to traffickers or were being abused in their workplace. »**

Team Member of the Prevention Campaign

human trafficking and are forced into degrading work. Girls and young women, in particular, are also often at risk of abuse and violence in their private environment. The pandemic has significantly intensi-

fied these problems. Domestic and sexual violence, exploitation as well as child labour and child marriages have all increased dramatically worldwide. Committed action against human trafficking and the support of victims has, therefore, become all the more important.

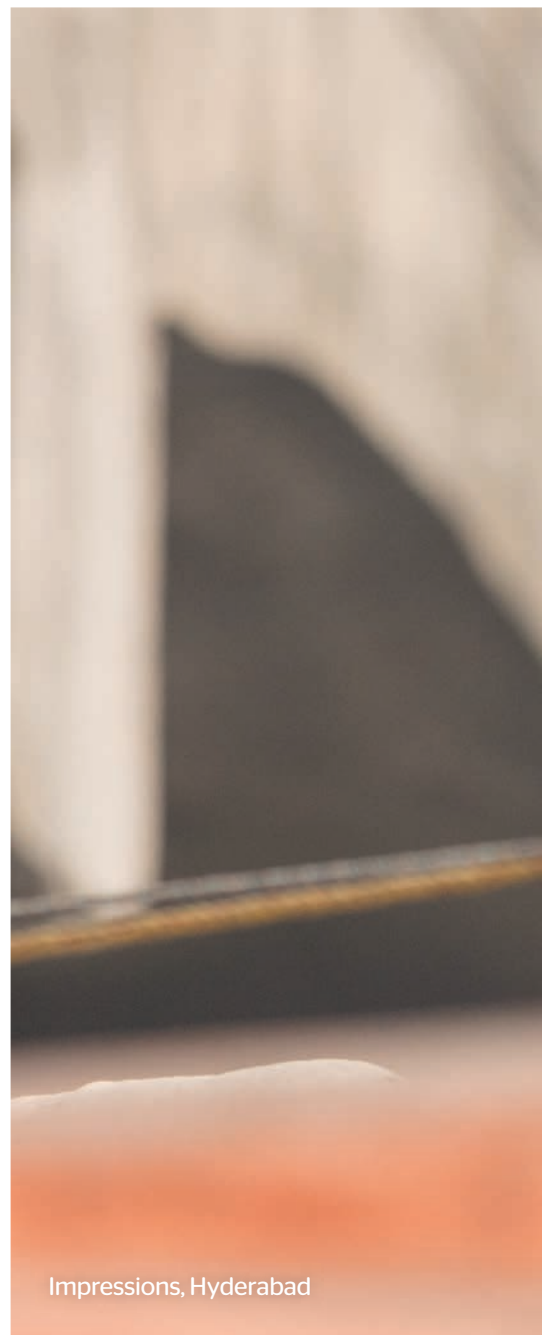
## STRENGTHENING AWARENESS

The megacity of Hyderabad is one of the centres of human trafficking in India. Through the prevention campaign, Usthi sensitises people in the suburbs about the dangers and how to protect themselves. Self-help groups and local organisations help to identify victims. As public meetings were not allowed during the spring lockdown, the prevention team focused on workshops on human trafficking prevention for self-help group members as well as Asha and Anganwadi Workers (government community health workers and child carers). Once the campaign could be relaunched in autumn 2021, staff have again become active and events are held regularly. Since the start of anti-trafficking activities

in 2013, the campaign has been able to reach more than 100,000 people.

## CREATING OPPORTUNITIES

Worldwide research shows that women in particular have suffered disproportionately from job and income loss due to the pandemic (source: International Labour Organization ILO). Also India's labour market was shaken by measures taken to contain the virus. As in 2020, the eco-



conomic downturn again cost countless people their jobs. While the economy is recovering, the informal sector has been hit all the harder. Families from financially vulnerable backgrounds rely on informal work to make ends meet. Desperation, arising from this situation, can drive them into the hands of human traffickers or into prostitution.

The women's shelters run by Usthi offer victims a way out of their precarious situation. The women are cared for and given access to professional skills training over several months, subsequently enabling them to find decent work and become financially independent. Last year, 78 young women were provided with a

safe space in these women's shelters.

The pandemic has also left many children deprived of parental care. Without support, they are often left with no other option than child labour to feed themselves. In the Usthi children's homes, children grow up in a safe environment and can attend school. They are supported in their studies and can develop in a child-friendly surrounding among their peers. Despite Covid-19 changing conditions last year, 3 children from these homes - alternating between digital and physical classes - were able to successfully complete their schooling. Demand for the children's homes is high and these vacancies were immediately filled.



More about the projects

# HOW WE WORK

## PURSUING OBJECTIVES

Our project objectives are in line with the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals. Within the framework of a high-quality educational programme, young people earn school certificates and acquire professional skills which increase their chances of finding decent work. Financial independence reduces hunger and poverty. Special focus is placed on supporting girls and young women as well as families of marginalised communities. The projects thereby contribute to gender equality and help to overcome unequal access to resources and prospects. Within the projects and through professional skills training, Usthi creates fair employment and fosters economic growth, whilst health projects ensure the health and well-being of the local population.

## ACTING SUSTAINABLY

Usthi's objectives are to implement projects sustainably and to realise quantifiable, positive results. Working with Indian and Nepali partner organisations ensures that our projects are locally well embedded as well as the long-term impact of our involvement. By hiring and training local staff and teachers, we help to build and pass on local knowledge and skills. Long-standing partnerships and the trust that has been built up over years, have proven their worth particularly during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Our partners, who are all experienced in the education and health sectors, have a profound understanding of and extensive networks in the local context. Co-ordination and partnerships with relevant members of civil society, government or the private sector are crucial. For Usthi, one thing is clear: only strong local ownership leads to sustainable development.

## FOSTERING INDEPENDENCE

Financial sustainability is of particular importance to Usthi. We promote local social entrepreneurship and income opportunities for those supported through our projects, in order to reduce dependency on donations in the long-term and to work towards self-sufficiency. Two local initiatives are currently contributing to the self-financing of our projects: In Odisha, the local partner operates a modern hospital which provides medical care for the capital city, Bhubaneswar. In Hyderabad,

a garment factory produces goods including school uniforms. Part of the income these initiatives generate goes towards the educational projects. Overall, this contribution amounts to around 10% of project costs and is to be expanded in the future. The further development of our partnerships in the area of self-sustainability is extremely valuable in order to foster local financial independence.

## CONTINUOUSLY IMPROVING

Continuous communication with our local partners throughout the year and the visit to the projects in India in autumn 2021 by the Executive Director Alessandra Grosse, Programme Coordinator Mirjam Hirzel and Founder of Usthi Kurt Bürki, enabled us to assess, evaluate and discuss the situation on the ground as well as the status and impact of the Usthi projects. Based on the outcome, the further development of the projects was planned for the coming year. The current situation requires to be able to react flexibly and to constantly adapt activities to new circumstances.

In Switzerland, we continued to work with the Swiss Academy for Development, Co-operaid, the Menschen für Menschen Foundation and the University of Teacher Education Zug (Pädagogische Hochschule Zug) as part of the Alliance "Education and Livelihood Security" to reflect on and improve our work.





Snapshot, Hyderabad

# REFLECTIONS FROM THE FOUNDER

*In recent years, I have tended to speak out about values which regulate interpersonal behaviour in society and are accepted as standard. The desire for a little more humility is still valid. Even though moral norms and values need to be constantly called into question, I should like to concentrate from a broader perspective on my perception of world events in 2021. 80 years on this stage, should, I believe, allow me to express my thoughts here.*

*Due to Covid-19 and the social lockdown, 2021 started out on the back burner. However, what happened on the political stage was a completely different story!*

*On the 6th of January, I read in a London newspaper article: The count for and confirmation of the election of the new US president by the Electoral College was abruptly interrupted because a protest mob of supporters of the still-incumbent US president Donald Trump violently entered the Capitol. Five people died. (Source: Evening Standard). Today this*

*event makes me more than pensive... didn't this already happen in the middle of the last century? The following months in 2021 brought us further questionable decisions within global political dignitaries' and elected representatives' power games. What does the future hold for us? Usthi has been committed to promoting meaningful purpose in the lives of young people for 45 years. Our work is specifically and predominantly for the benefit of girls and women. This long-standing success for more dignity has been trampled on by an elected representative: On the night of 20th of March, a decree by Recep Tayyip Erdoğan was published in the official journal, withdrawing Turkey, with immediate effect, from the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combatting Violence against Women. (Source: ZDF)*

*What an act against human dignity and a slap in the face for half of the world's population. We are called on not to rest*

*on our laurels. We must continue to work persistently and determinedly for our objectives in the future.*

*Usthi is well set up for this. We are addressing future challenges with a qualified and motivated team and the support of a competent and committed Board of Trustees. In order to achieve our objectives, we are able to count on the support and solidarity of a long-standing community of donors. It is only thanks to you, dear readers, that Usthi can successfully work for more justice and less discrimination. Thank you for your valuable support and best regards,*



*Bürki*

Kurt Bürki  
Founder

# FINANCES

## LETTING FIGURES SPEAK FOR THEMSELVES

In 2021, Usthi was able to count on the unwavering support and solidarity of private individuals and institutions. We generated revenue of CHF 951,290 (2020: CHF 782,704). Expenditure amounted to CHF 846,831 (2020: CHF 695,556). The increased revenue enabled Usthi's highly motivated team in Switzerland to invest more into the projects in close cooperation with our partner organisations. The investments went into qualitative improvement of the project activities.

The expenses for project activities increased by 22% to CHF 700,472 (2020: CHF 573,008). The remaining CHF 146,359 was used for public relations, fundraising and administrative expenses in Switzerland (2020: CHF 121,748). Out of every CHF 100 donated in 2021, CHF 83 benefitted the children and young people in India and Nepal.

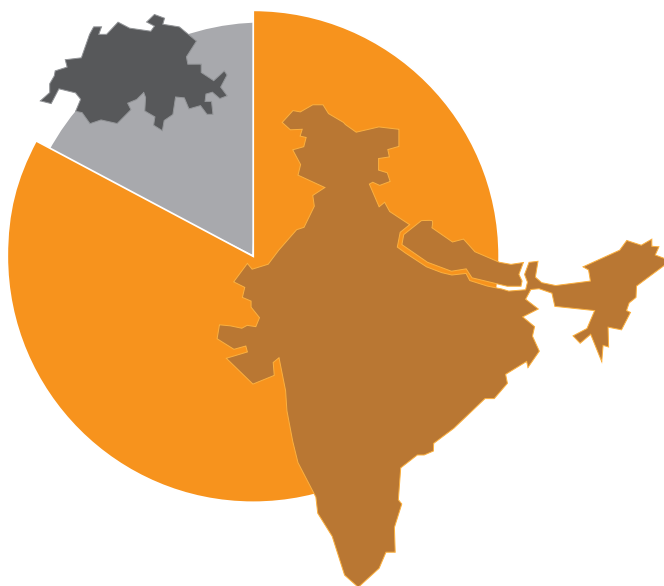
The increase in donations also made it possible to slightly increase reserves which had declined in recent years. Organisational capital is important to be able to compensate fluctuations in donation income and to ensure the continuation of projects at any given moment.

## COMMUNICATING TRANSPARENTLY

The annual financial statement 2021 was prepared in accordance with Swiss GAAP FER and the ZEWO principles. Usthi has carried the ZEWO quality seal since 2013, which certifies the meticulous and trustworthy handling of donations. BDO AG has audited the 2021 accounts and found them to be correct. The detailed annual accounts and the auditors' report can be obtained from Usthi or downloaded from our website: [www.usthi.ch](http://www.usthi.ch).

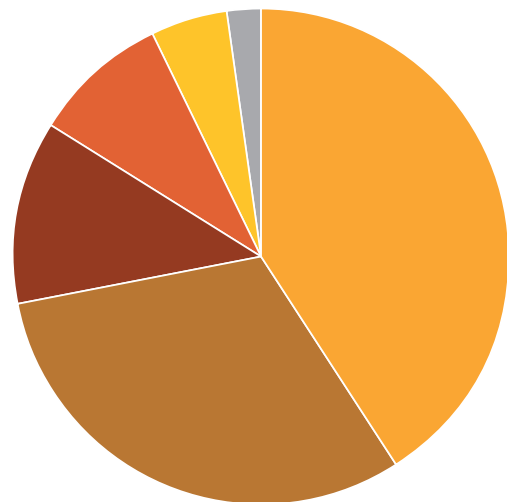
We also regularly publish updates on our website for donors, supporters and other interested parties on current developments in our work. Usthi is committed to communicating transparently about its projects and operations in Switzerland. It is important to us to share the successes, the impact and the lessons learned from our investment in education and health in India and Nepal.

**EXPENDITURE**



- 83% Project Expenditure
- 17% Expenditure in Switzerland

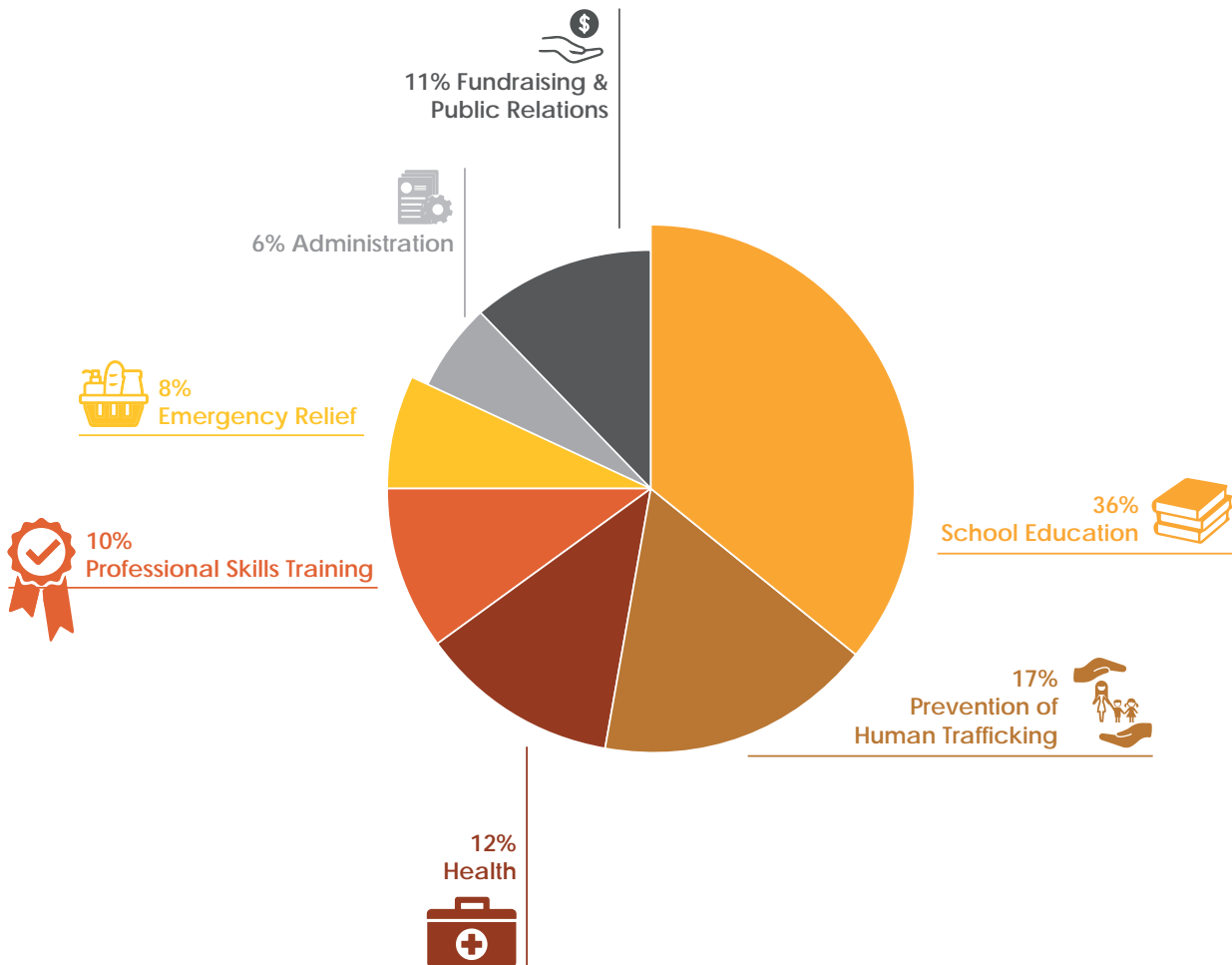
**REVENUE**



- 41% Private Donors
- 31% Foundations
- 12% Public Sector
- 9% Private Sector
- 5% Church Parishes
- 2% Associations & Service Clubs



## USE OF FUNDS



## BALANCE SHEET

Assets	31.12.2021	31.12.2020
	CHF	CHF
Liquid assets	533,627	405,007
Deferred assets	15,158	17,790
<b>Current assets</b>	<b>548,785</b>	<b>422,797</b>
Office rental deposit A/C	4,211	4,211
IT Equipment	1	1
<b>Fixed assets</b>	<b>4,212</b>	<b>4,212</b>
	<b>552,997</b>	<b>427,009</b>
Liabilities	31.12.2021	31.12.2020
	CHF	CHF
Accrued liabilities	75,916	53,567
<b>Liabilities</b>	<b>75,916</b>	<b>53,567</b>
Project fund Women,s Shelters	0	12,182
Project fund Tribal Health Centre	0	4,698
Project fund Professional Skills Training	13,343	0
Project fund Thaddeus School	16,957	0
Project fund Emergency Relief	5,990	0
<b>Restricted fund capital</b>	<b>36,290</b>	<b>16,880</b>
Foundation capital	530,709	530,709
Accumulated loss	-89,918	-174,146
<b>Organisational capital</b>	<b>440,791</b>	<b>356,563</b>
	<b>552,997</b>	<b>427,009</b>

## OPERATIONAL STATEMENT

	2021	2020
	CHF	CHF
Undesignated donations	358,038	427,792
Designated donations	593,252	354,912
<b>Fundraising income</b>	<b>951,290</b>	<b>782,704</b>
Project expenditure	-700,472	-573,808
Administrative expenditure	-47,660	-53,721
Fundraising expenditure	-98,699	-68,027
<b>Operating result</b>	<b>104,459</b>	<b>87,148</b>
Financial income	836	28
Financial expenditure	-1,657	-2,311
<b>Result before changes to fund capital</b>	<b>103,638</b>	<b>84,865</b>
Allocation to project funds	-593,252	-354,913
Liquidation of project funds	573,842	341,206
<b>Change in fund capital</b>	<b>-19,410</b>	<b>-13,707</b>
Result after allocation to fund capital	84,228	71,158
<b>Annual result after allocation of organisational capital</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>



School children, Hyderabad

# OUTLOOK AND THANKS

## LOOKING AHEAD

As the implementation of projects in India and Nepal has proven extremely resilient even in these turbulent times, project activities will increasingly be adapted to the new circumstances. Targeted initiatives, such as the launch of new skills training courses, are designed to help overcome problems exacerbated by the pandemic. Such challenges can also be used as an opportunity to develop our projects in the area of digitalisation. The Usthi team in Switzerland is working on optimising the measurement of our impact. With the help of analyses and evaluations we aim at illustrating the outcomes of the invested resources to an even greater extent. The commitment of the four part-time employees (270 full time positions) enables a close coordination of the projects and the personal management of donor relations. The team is actively supported by volunteers and the Board of Trustees. The stabilisation of the Foundation's finances remains a focus. In all areas of our work, attention is paid to the economical and sustainable use of resources.

For the upcoming year Usthi will also strive to host an event in order to get together with the Foundation's supporters after a long time without personal contact. It is very important for us to exchange with our donors and to thank them personally for their support. The implementation of our projects is only possible with your contributions. As has been the case since the beginning of Usthi's activities in 1976, we always welcome the opportunity to build new partnerships with institutions and indi-

viduals who wish to engage in social commitment and assume responsibility in society. Collaboration and co-operation are crucial to the further development of our work in the areas of education, health and prevention of human trafficking.

## SAYING THANK YOU

A sincere thank you to all private donors who form the solid foundation for our work. Their solidarity and commitment make our engagement for children and young people possible. Special thanks to:

- Our volunteers Donatella Suter, Stefan Schumacher und Tim Dean, who have worked with Usthi for many years.
- Rotary and the regional Rotary Clubs who have consistently supported Usthi's activities for over 30 years.
- Thaddeus Getzmann and his family and friends for their continuing support of the Thaddeus School.
- Dr. Thomas Fischer for his long-standing solidarity and recurrent support.
- The Dorftheater Utzenstorf for their charity event in favour of our projects.
- Regine S. Weber and the participants at the Yoga Charity Event.
- Our project partners and employees in India and Nepal, who do the impossible every day and even more so in view of the current challenges.

Thank you for the trust you have placed in us - it is a privilege to be able to count on you!



**FOR SUPPORTING OUR WOMEN'S SHELTERS AND CHILDREN'S HOMES**

Canton of Schaffhausen  
 Cath. Parish of Meilen  
 Evangel. - reformed Parish Bülach  
 Municipality of Maur  
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