We Rise, We Learn, We Grow
I will never forget the year 2021.

For many people around the world, the COVID-19 pandemic’s second wave in India and the devastation it left in its wake were terrifying headlines. People prayed for us and sent help.

For me and my loved ones, it was different. We saw the pandemic unfold in front of us. We felt in our bodies the grief caused by the rising infection cases and the casualties. It is a type of grief that leaves a mark that may never go away fully.

I graduated from the Shadhika Scholarship Program in 2019 and became a dietician. At the onset of the pandemic, my father’s work shut down for two months and I was the sole breadwinner for my family. Because of the lockdown orders, I had to shift to working from home. It was a big adjustment for my patients but also for me because I was sharing a room with my sister, and I didn’t have a dedicated space to work. Luckily, this brought my sister and me closer together.

As I watched millions of children locked out of their classrooms, with little access to online learning, I felt fortunate that I had completed my studies before the coronavirus pandemic. National reports now say that there is significant loss in foundational knowledge and in basic learning habits.

For many children, especially girls, their dreams are now on hold indefinitely, for some of them, forever. In 2021, 10 million girls were at risk of dropping out of school in India alone. This is an especially scary number to me. It’s more than the current population in London or in New York City.
And yet I am hopeful and confident gxrls will fight back and that we will regain the progress we have lost over the last two years.

As a member of the Shadhika Alum Network’s steering committee, I continue to be involved in some program activities for Shadhika Scholars and I see so much strength in them. Despite the depressing state of gxrls’ education in India right now, 100% of Shadhika Scholars scheduled to graduate in 2021 did complete their degree on time. They overcame the financial and emotional hardship in their homes, as well as the complexities of remote learning, to persevere in their studies and pass their exams. I’m in awe of their determination and I hope you enjoy reading more about their accomplishments in this report.

In 2022, Shadhika celebrates 30 years of pursuing gender justice. During that time, Shadhika has given more than $2 million in grants to local partners and Scholars to reach almost 14,000 gxrls and young womxn—and I am one of them.

Today, I serve as a member of Shadhika’s newly established Advisory Council. So, in addition to mentoring upcoming Scholars, I am proud to continue Shadhika’s legacy by guiding the organization’s feminist vision into the future.

To serving 14,000 more gxrls!

In Solidarity,
Priya, Shadhika Alum
Shadhika founder Juthica Stangl describes the origin of her journey as a “natural” extension of her upbringing and the values her parents had instilled in her. In a seminal visit to a prison in Kolkata as part of her work with the local YWCA, 21-year old Juthica was perplexed by the circumstances of some women she visited. “I was told not to ask how they got [in] there” Juthica says, “[but] I could not stop. I had to find out.”

Women were kicked out of their in-laws’ homes after their husbands passed away. They were forced to beg on the streets before being sent to these prisons. After multiple attempts to find a better living situation for these women, Juthica met Dr. Joyce Siromoni and together they founded Paripurnata, a transition home for these women.

Right from the outset, Juthica knew no solution could be sustainable nor effective without vital partnerships with local organizations that are embedded in the communities they serve. She recognized the complexity of the Indian context but also understood how widespread the issues she observed in Kolkata were throughout the country. So she expanded Shadhika’s reach beyond the transition home in West Bengal to organizations that provide wraparound services and education support to girls and young women in other states.

Over the last 30 years, Shadhika has given more than $2 million in grant funding, including nearly $500,000 in college scholarships. Since 2004, Shadhika has reached 13,822 estimated girls, providing them with rights education, skills building, and academic tutoring.

While many things have changed over the years, Shadhika has remained true to its roots with Juthica: the pursuit of gender justice and the commitment to grassroots leadership. A photo of Juthica still hangs on the wall of Shadhika’s office as a constant reminder of the transformative power of the individual girl.
30 YEARS OF MAKING HERSTORY

Current partner organizations
- Vikalp
- Doosra Dashak

Former partner organizations
- STOP, India
- Sahiyar
- Vacha
- Baale Maane
- Sakhi Trust

Partner organizations not shown on the map:
- Hope School
- Asia Women’s and Children’s Center

Legend:
- Current partner organizations
- Former partner organizations
The journey to achieve gender justice is a long and challenging one. When I set out to help women in Kolkata 30 years ago, I never expected it to be an easy path and a lot has happened since. But the spirit of generosity and service my parents instilled in me has always motivated me to carry on. I am humbled and in awe to witness how far Shadhika has come and how much further it is bound to go.

Over the years, my admiration has grown for the perseverance and strength of the young women and girls Shadhika serves and I am so grateful to everyone who has had a hand in moving Shadhika forward. Together, we have built a legacy that we can all be proud of: A groundswell of change that starts with each individual girl.

- JUTHICA STANGL
SHADHIKA FOUNDER
SHADHIKA'S THEORY OF CHANGE

Shadhika intends to abate gender-based discrimination and violence in the social systems surrounding each person by focusing on three core areas of intervention:

**Investing in the transformative power inherent in each person**

Shadhika understands that the gender of a child in India may determine critical moments throughout their teenage years and young adulthood during which they are vulnerable to threats that will affect the course of their life permanently. With the local accompaniment by our partners and the financial support of comprehensive education funds, each young person can build self-confidence, acquire the tools, and achieve the financial independence necessary to control their own bodies and determine their own goals. By overcoming the threats of gender-based violence and discrimination, each person sets an example for someone else to walk in their footsteps. They become powerful agents of change and replication by lifting up a generation beside them and behind them.

**Investing in the wisdom and innovation of grassroots leadership to create local solutions**

Shadhika believes that the root causes of gender-based violence and discrimination are complex and entrenched in the local context, and that systemic change requires long funding horizons. Our local partners are uniquely equipped with the knowledge, the relationships, and the tools to challenge traditional gender norms. Shadhika provides multi-year, unrestricted funding to give these grassroots leaders the security, the time, and the resources to identify determining factors of vulnerability and incubate community-centric, sustainable solutions.

**Cultivating allyship to address power and resource imbalances locally**

Shadhika operates with a mindset of abundance that defines feminism at its core: lifting up all genders expands everyone’s welfare and dignity. To advance this paradigm shift, Shadhika funds initiatives that engage men and boys—and other power holders—to champion gender justice and recalibrate power structures in their own communities. Shadhika also supports convenings for its partners, Scholars and Alum, and its Advisory Council to learn and co-create together, ensuring local voices are central to effecting change in India.
WE LEARN

SHADHIKA PROGRAMS & IMPACT
71 Scholarships awarded in 2021

100% Scholars graduated in 2021

60% Women reported physical violence stopped in their homes

96% Scholars reported an increase in confidence

100% Scholars have computer and internet access

76% Scholars opened individual bank accounts

$260,000 Grant funds disbursed in 2021

99% Scholars remained in school

Image credit: Baale Maane
Support for Success provides long-term, unrestricted grants to local, women-led organizations to carry out after-school programming for girls from the ages of 10 to 18, including academic tutoring, rights education, and skills building (e.g. self advocacy, emotional self-care).

In 2021-2022, the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on girls and their education have been well documented worldwide, ranging from the loss of household income leading to increased incidents of domestic violence and forced marriage to the high dropout rate and the loss of basic learning skills for girls. Ten million girls in India could drop out of secondary school due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Last year, Shadhika unrestricted 100% of Support for Success funding (including $2,500 of emergency COVID relief funding per partner), deciding to trust the wisdom and strategy of those closest to these communities. This change was a pivotal moment to ensure rapid and appropriate response to the crises at hand—and this course of action paid dividends in safeguarding Shadhika’s impact in the field.

While the death toll in India reached over 1,700 fatalities daily at the height of the second surge of COVID-19 in the spring of 2021, the unrestricted funds allowed local partners to sustain their staff and their infrastructure, and pivot their activities to provide food packages and basic health services, including vaccination drives and welfare checks.

These actions resulted in keeping teenage girls safe from physical, emotional, and sexual harm while in lockdown at home. The ongoing monitoring of the environment in their homes kept these students in school. 100% of students reached by Support for Success-funded programs passed their 10 and 12 grade exams. This impact is on par with pre-pandemic numbers and is an extraordinary success.

86%
Girls delayed early marriage during the pandemic

92%
Girls reported a positive change in their own perception of gender equity

Image credit: Hady9nyah/Getty
SUPPORT FOR SUCCESS

Girls reported changing attitudes to delaying marriage in their community

29%

Girls led community service projects

80%

In 2021, 10 million additional girls were at risk of child marriage due to COVID-19 worldwide according to UNICEF. Approximately, a 50% rise in child marriages was reported by Indian law enforcement in 2020.

While UN Women warns of the effect of the “shadow pandemic,” or the deterioration of gender equity and safety indicators worldwide, 86% of female students reached by Support for Success-funded activities were able to delay their marriage to pursue their secondary education.

Additionally, in 2021 80% of Support for Success program participants either participated in and/or led community-based projects. While the devastation of the global COVID-19 pandemic is undeniable and is still to be fully measured, the crisis produced a powerful proof of concept for Shadhika’s model: women and girls are at the forefront of catalyzing change, and investing in the transformative power of the individual girl will lift up the wellbeing of an entire community.

However, Shadhika noted a downward trend in attitude towards delaying marriage and the age of marriage in 2021, with only 29% of Support for Success program participants reporting favorable attitudes in their families and communities from 55% in 2020. While this decrease is in line with global and national trends due to the pandemic, it also reflects a demographic change in the communities served by local partners becoming majoritarily rural; an indication of the unique challenges in changing attitudes and behaviors towards gender equity in rural communities.
The Shadhika Scholarship Program provides full financial support for young women associated with Support for Success partners to pursue post-secondary education until completion. Since the inception of the program in 2015, more Shadhika Scholars are pursuing STEM career paths that are traditionally dominated by men in India.

Despite the downward spiral defining the current trends of women’s education in India with dropout rates as high as 57% for high school girls, 99% of Scholars remained in college and 100% of Scholars scheduled to graduate in 2021 did obtain their degrees on time. 64% of Scholars point to ongoing wraparound support from and advocacy by their local partner as the key factors in their success in remaining in and completing college.

COVID-19 engendered many obstacles for young women to continue their studies in India and achieve financial independence. The massive rate of unemployment is presenting more challenges for Shadhika Alum to find a job (only 63% have found paid work or an internship as of 2021), leading fewer families to seeing value in delaying marriage and investing in their daughters’ education.

Also, in 2021, the Shadhika Scholars are reporting more restrictions on their freedom of movement. 69% of Shadhika Scholars felt free to move unsupervised outside of their home in 2020, while only 29% reported having the same freedom in 2021. The fear of COVID-19 infection, local lockdown orders, and school delays have had an undeniable effect on families’ sense of safety and security for their daughters.

During such a challenging year, Shadhika received a record number of Scholarship applications and met the demand by doubling the cohort of Scholars to 71; the most Scholars Shadhika has ever had in any given year.
Additionally, Shadhika offered comprehensive technology packages to ensure each Scholar would have access to remote learning. As a result, 90% of Shadhika Scholars received a technology package and 100% had access to their remote classes through cellular network or Internet.

Shadhika Scholars faced their own challenges, including pressure from their families to drop out of school to find paid work or get married. Yet, several Scholars reported spending their time tutoring younger children in their communities so they would not fall behind in their learning levels nor drop out of school themselves.

In addition to their own community work, Scholars remained involved with local partners, assisting in running health camps and vaccine campaigns. These activities enabled Scholars to maintain their own support network and to take an active role in promoting the health and safety of their families and their communities against the coronavirus.

In 2021, while the Ready for Work Initiative was put on hold, Shadhika pursued opportunities to provide professional experience for Scholars and Alum. Through a grant from the Obama Foundation’s Girls Opportunity Alliance, Shadhika Alum and Shadhika Advisory Council Member Priya Chotalal (see page 1) was part of a three-person panel discussion moderated by Valerie Jarrett. With funding from the Posner Center for International Development, 5 Scholars received an internship to learn about climate change and conduct a community project remedying a local climate change problem of their choice.
In 2019, Shadhika started the Initiative to End Gender-Based Violence (GBV) funded by DAWN. This initiative works with “gatekeepers” to prevent and combat gender-based violence and discrimination in rural communities of Uttar Pradesh. The local partners embedded in these communities promote gender-sensitive behaviors and attitudes in men and boys through rights education and community-based sensitization campaigns.

In Year 1 of the GBV Initiative, one priority was to reach as many individuals as possible. However, the attrition rate was high due to a number of factors, including resistance to new gender norms, fear of retribution, and the prioritization of domestic chores, work, and school responsibilities. The global pandemic only exacerbated the need for the participants to prioritize their time elsewhere.

Therefore in Year 2, our two local partners Asian Bridge India (ABI) and Gramin Punarnirman Sansthan (GPS) decided to focus on strengthening the influence of a core group of community change leaders through accountability pairs and intergenerational family-centric interventions. Despite significant delays in implementation due to lockdowns, the results of these activities are significant. Among the participants, 60% of women participants reported their domestic partners stopped physical violence. This is a noteworthy trend that stands in stark contrast with the fact that 1 in 2 women reported that they or a woman they know have experienced violence since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, as reported by the UN.

Additionally, the UN reports the increase in household chores for women and girls during the first and second wave of COVID-19, hindering women and girls’ participation in activities outside of the home, including attending school.
Yet in the homes involved in the GBV Initiative, 52% of female participants reported boys in their families started doing chores. With a more equitable sharing of chores, the girls in these households are more likely to attend school.

In parallel, in 2021, only 22% of women participating in the GBV Initiative reported their domestic partners supported them with household chores, compared to 24% in 2020. This is most likely due to the increased need for men to find work outside of the home to sustain their families through the economic crisis related to the pandemic. The result is the further confinement of women away from accessing independent wealth, as well as resources and support in the community.

In addition to these activities in 2021, ABI and GPS engaged in extensive COVID-related campaigns in conjunction with local health authorities. The GBV partners organized health campaigns to raise awareness about the pandemic, how to prevent infection, and the urgent need to be vaccinated. These efforts prioritized reaching out to women in rural villages around Varanasi where the pandemic has been particularly devastating, resulting in 30% more women being fully vaccinated.

**2,007**
Women were successfully vaccinated

**1,543**
Men were successfully vaccinated
Our New Directors

- Menka Lamba, Board Treasurer
- Tara Risser, Board Director
- Teena Sebastian, Board Director

Our New Staff

- Harshita Pandey, Program Officer
- Sunil Gangavane, Program Officer
- Vanita Ganesh, Digital Media Coordinator

Our New Partners

- Sakhi Trust, Karnataka
- Vikalp Sansthan, Rajasthan

Please visit https://shadhika.org/about/team/ for more details.
Meet Our Advisory Council

Shadhika is excited to introduce the members of our Advisory Council who will support and affirm Shadhika’s feminist and human rights approach, and help advance the fight for gender justice.

Dipta Bhog has worked on gender and education for close to three decades. She co-founded Nirantar, a centre for gender and education in Delhi.

Priya Chotalal currently works in the health care sector as a dietician and is a Shadhika Alum from STOP, Delhi. She is looking forward to working with the Advisory Council members and sharing her opinions to help make better decisions.

Saba Rehmani, from Milaan Foundation is a new Advisory Council member. She is also a Shadhika Alum and a Climate Change intern. Saba has a Bachelor degree in Computer Applications.

Japleen Pasricha is the founder-director and editor-in-chief of Feminism in India, an award-winning digital feminist media platform.

Razia is currently an intern under Shadhika’s Girls Write Program and is a Shadhika Alum from STOP, India. Razia is looking forward to informing Shadhika’s work and help achieve gender equality.

Shipra Jha was most recently the Head of Asia Engagement at Girls Not Brides, with decades of experience in program design and coalition building to advance gender equity in India.

Manjula Pradeep was one of BBC’s 100 Women in 2021 and brings experience in community work and advocacy for the Dalit community and other underrepresented populations.

Ritambhara Mehta is an accomplished queer feminist professional with over a decade of experience in gender, sexuality, and education. She is the co-founder of Nazariya: A Queer Feminist Resource Group.

Sagar Gangurde is committed to youth development, education, and youth activism as Director of Indian Programs for Seeds of Peace.
Shadhika believes that one of its core responsibilities is to shift power by leveraging its resources in the U.S. to support grassroots innovation and change agents in India. To do so, the organization’s operational and development functions are based in the U.S. and all its program staff are now based in India. While Shadhika’s program team is nearly double the size of its management, operations, and fundraising team, the significant difference in living costs between the two countries results in higher costs for non-programmatic expenditures.

Additionally, Shadhika addressed the financial impact of the pandemic on Shadhika’s revenues in 2020 head-on by mobilizing more resources to 1) increase fundraising capacity so the organization could respond adequately to the need for more Scholarship funds and rapid emergency response grants during the deadly second coronavirus wave in India; and 2) recruit, expand, and support the Shadhika Board so it can be better equipped to steward Shadhika’s mission strategically and expertly during unprecedented times.

The increased investment of time and resources to ensure Shadhika’s financial health and astute governance was critical to navigating the economic uncertainty related to the ongoing pandemic.
### REVENUE & OTHER SUPPORT

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**TOTAL REVENUE** **$854,485**

### EXPENDITURES

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**TOTAL EXPENDITURES** **$624,446**

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### LIABILITIES & NET ASSETS

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**TOTAL LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS** **$851,847**

### ASSETS

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**TOTAL ASSETS** **$851,847**

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**Verified Accreditations**

**Financials** for January-December 2021 fiscal year.