



## HELLO FROM DOST

*Hello from Dost!*

*This quarter, we've been hard at work laying the foundation for our new chapter - launching our refreshed programme in July. And it's all anchored in one simple belief: every moment of **Talk, Care, and Play** is a chance for a child to grow.*

*We also introduced our new brand identity - "**The world is my classroom**" - a reminder that learning lives beyond walls, in stories, chores, and everyday connections. Here is our revised introduction deck.*

*July also marks a special milestone-10 years of Dost. We're incredibly proud of how far we've come and energized by what lies ahead.*

*Here's a deep-dive into what we have been up to!*

-Richa 



## Highlights of the Quarter

This quarter, we continued expanding our programme reach and engaging in conversations on 'Talk, Care, Play', with our Dosts (friends) inside and outside Dost!

- **Understanding Gender Roles in Caregiving:** Dost team conducted Focused Group Discussions (FGDs) to understand caregiving practices and how prevalent gender roles and stereotypes influence them.
- **Programme Expansion in Jharkhand:** The Parvarish programme was launched and expanded in two districts of Jharkhand - Khunti and Simdega.
- **Sector Engagement:** Dost was at the State Institute for Empowering and Transforming Uttarakhand (SETU) Aayog state-level workshop on 26th May, continuing to be an active member of the working group focused on strengthening Self-Help Groups (SHGs) and launching Rural Smart Village Centres to enhance grassroots service delivery.
- **LEGO Social Responsibility Strategy Partnership:** Dost partnered with LEGO to implement a measurement tool with 66 participants.
- **Summer Retreat:** The team stepped out of their virtual office spaces to meet each other and strengthen the team spirit!

## Lives Impacted (Q2)



**60,009  
Children**



**28,502  
Families**



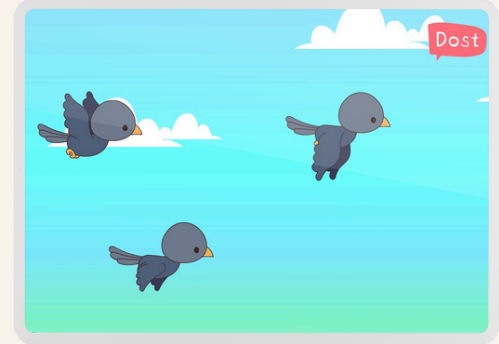
**3,005  
Frontline  
Workers**

# What We've Been Building

## Advancing the "Talk, Care, Play" Learning Model

This quarter, our ideas truly took flight — from upgraded Phonecasts moving swiftly through scripting and production to our beloved Bol Sathi character coming to life just as we envisioned.

We also developed practical content for mothers' and fathers' meetings to foster peer support, alongside robust onboarding and facilitator guides. From big-picture visioning to the smallest script tweaks, every detail has helped shape the heart of our refreshed programme — now launch-ready for July.



A shot from our Bol Sathi story series

## Strengthening State & System Partnerships

- **Bal Kauthik in Uttarakhand:** 90 parents and 20 children came together to celebrate play and playful caregiving, exchanging ideas and joy in this local event.
- **'Poshan Bhi Padhai Bhi' in Bihar:** Partnering with the government, we trained frontline workers on integrating nutrition and early learning.
- **Father Engagement:** Our field teams piloted Fathers' Meetings in Uttarakhand, which were full of learnings.



We were especially heartened to receive formal appreciation from government stakeholders, acknowledging the impact of our efforts on the ground.



Sharing here a certificate of appreciation received from the District Project Officer (DPO), Tehri Garhwal, for our work with the ICDS in creating awareness on early education and responsive caregiving.

## Learning, Listening & Refining for Impact

Partnering with LEGO as part of their Social Responsibility strategy, we tested a new measurement tool with 66 caregivers and educators. The study gave us rich insights into how communities understand and value learning through play - validating our approach while helping refine our strategies.



Our M&E team revamped Dost's MEL framework to track how phonecasts, WhatsApp content, and community events together support children's language development.

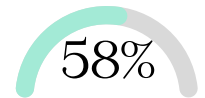
We also conducted a needs assessment in Uttarakhand to understand parental attitudes especially fathers' towards childcare and tech-based tools. Key takeaways:

- **Fathers cited work pressure, financial stress, and fatigue** as key barriers to childcare, often spending just 1-2 hours daily compared to mothers' 3-8 hours.
- Fathers tend to **trust institutional figures like doctors** for parenting advice, while mothers rely more on peer networks.
- Both parents expressed strong **openness to using simple tech tools** - like phone messages or story videos - to support their children's learning.

This research is already shaping how we communicate and design for caregivers.



fathers engage in creative, nurturing activities



fathers in labour-intensive jobs lack energy for emotional bonding

## Optimizing Our Product for Caregiver Engagement & Refining for Impact

To strengthen impact and learning, we redesigned our MEL framework to reflect Dost's "**Tech+Touch**" approach, tracking how phonecasts, WhatsApp content, and community events together fuel language development. We're also strengthening a real-time dashboard for smarter, on-ground decision-making across teams.

To deepen insights, we've partnered with **Purple Audacity** for an independent evaluation of our new model - blending data and stories to assess how our tools and community touchpoints create change.

Together, these efforts ground our learning agenda in both evidence and empathy.

## Engaging in Sector-Wide Conversations

Dost continues to shape the national discourse on inclusion, play, and community driven ECCD. This quarter:

- At **ASTHA's State-Level Consultation** and **NDTV's "Bachpan Manao" campaign**, Richa represented Dost, spotlighting play as a right-not a privilege. Read her blog for NDTV - [Finding And Decoding Play In the Chores, Chaos And Care](#).
- At **Ahvaan's Strategy Workshop**, our parent engagement strategy sparked rich dialogue, ending with a heartfelt poem from the hosts—a moment that reaffirmed the shared values across our ecosystem.
- Dost was part of **Mobile Creches webinar, 'Kheltey Raho, Khiltey Raho'**, to celebrate the **International Day of Play**, where our CEO highlighted the importance of play for family well being.
- We celebrated the **International Day of Play** through our campaign **Khel Ki Kahaniyan – The Stories of Play**, bringing real stories of play from the ground to life. The campaign culminated in a powerful [panel](#) featuring a teacher, Child Development Project Officer (CDPO), Anganwadi worker, father, and community leader, sharing how play lives, breathes, and grows in their homes and communities.



## Dost Ho To Aisa! - Dost's Summer Retreat

In May, the Dost team left behind Zoom/G-Meet rooms for green surroundings and open-air idea exchanges at our [summer retreat in Jim Corbett](#). It was more than a break — it was a chance to realign, reimagine, and reconnect with the “why” behind our work. The retreat surfaced bold ideas, cross-team empathy, and a deeper shared purpose.



# What's Next? The Road Ahead (July - September)

As we step into the next quarter, here's what we're excited about:

- **Launching our renewed programme** in July, bringing our Tech+Touch model to new families
- Rolling out a **mixed-method impact evaluation** to assess our new tools and approach
- Gearing up for the **Play Conference**, supported by the LEGO Foundation
- Welcoming **new members to our Board**, bringing fresh energy and insights
- **Accelerating fundraising efforts** to deepen our reach and impact

Big steps ahead — grounded in the simple power of Talk, Care, and Play.

## What we are reading

*Don't miss out on these blogs from our Research Manager and Content Lead*

[Talk, Care, Play: How Parental Engagement Shapes Early Language Skills](#)

[Can Community Workers Drive Language Growth in Early Childhood? What We're Learning in India's Early Learning Space](#)

Also - [Early Learning: A Research Synthesis](#)



### MESSAGE FROM SNEHA

*At Dost, we've always believed a child's world can be their most powerful classroom - when nurtured with simple, joyful acts of Talk, Care, and Play.*

*With every home we reach and every story we hear, we're reminded there's so much more to do, to reach more families, deepen our support, and ensure no child is left behind in their earliest years.*

*This quarter, that quiet urgency was met with new momentum interest from state governments like Uttar Pradesh and Jharkhand, and recognition from Uttarakhand's ICDS department for the promise of our approach.*

*Behind every milestone whether it's a father joining his first caregiving circle or a mother feeling happy in her child's growing vocabulary is a team that shows up with integrity, creativity, and care.*

*Thank you for believing in what we're building. We carry your trust with responsibility and hope and remain in constant pursuit of doing more, reaching further, and staying grounded in what matters most: the child.*

Let us know what resonated—we always love hearing from you. Thanks for walking alongside us as we build a more joyful, connected world for young children and their families.



See you soon!

Dost