



HELLO FROM DOST

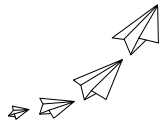
This quarter has been filled with momentum, learning, and deep engagement as we continue to strengthen Dost's impact. While refining our strategy, we've also leaned into something fundamental—human connection—all while using technology in thoughtful, judicious ways as an enabler.

I began the quarter by meeting our incredible team in person and spending time with Sneha, our amazing co-founder, reflecting on our journey, strengths, and the opportunities ahead. These conversations, filled with passion and commitment, reminded me why Dost's work truly matters.

Beyond connecting with our core team, I had the privilege of meeting some of our wonderful supporters in San Francisco and joining the Fast Forward Alumni Retreat. It was an incredible space to engage with brilliant ed-tech leaders from around the world—I returned with valuable insights, fresh perspectives, and some great new friendships.



-Richa



Highlights of the Quarter

This quarter, we've begun operationalizing our strategy, refining products and program approach internally, while actively engaging in Early Childhood Development (ECD) conversations externally.

- **Advancing the "Talk, Care, Play" Model:** Strengthened our approach to early language development and shared caregiving by integrating storytelling, responsive routines, and playful problem-solving into accessible content for families.
- **New Audio Content & Chatbot Enhancements:** Tested new phone casts in a slice-of-life format featuring fathers as active caregivers; expanding on WhatsApp chatbot with bite-sized storytelling and learning experiences.
- **Tech & Product Innovations:** Experimenting with group-based caregiver onboarding and launching digital campaigns for improved engagement.
- **Sector Engagement & Thought Leadership:** Contributed to key discussions at UNICEF ECCE Roundtable, Mobile Creches Roundtable, Dasra Philanthropy Week, and Bachpan Manao by Ek Step.

Lives Impacted (Q1)



**43,649
Children**



**21,438
Families**



**773
Frontline
Workers**



What We've Been Building

Advancing the "Talk, Care, Play" Learning Model



Following insights from our RCT (Randomised Control Trial) and internal reflections, we worked on evolving the **Talk, Care, Play framework** to sharpen our focus on **shared caregiving** and early language development—core to our Talk, Care, Play approach. The updated framework now explicitly supports caregivers to build language-rich and emotionally responsive home environments that also nurture children's executive function. We're scaffolding everyday strategies—like storytelling, responsive routines, and playful problem-solving—to be more accessible and inclusive for families. This refined direction is guiding our content design, community engagement, and the development of key indicators we're now tracking through a revised results framework.

Our **Content team** is busy developing new phone casts based on formative testing with our key audience, aiming to make them more conversational and reflective of real-life interactions between caregivers (mother, father, and child) in a slice-of-life format.

Fathers are featured as active participants, role-modeling behaviors in our 1-minute audio phone casts to emphasize the importance of shared caregiving. Meanwhile, our WhatsApp chatbot continues to evolve, offering practical, bite-sized storytelling and learning opportunities.

We've culminated our testing and pilot of Bol Saathi (WhatsApp Chat Bot) in collaboration with Talk Together at Oxford; we are now building on our learnings by adding more modules. Adding to the excitement, our stories now feature **Chi Chi Chidiya**, a new and lovable character who helps young children develop language and essential life skills through engaging narratives.



Strengthening State & System Partnerships

- **Operations Team** is working tirelessly, preparing to roll out our integrated strategy, expanding Dost's footprint while strengthening partnerships with state systems. We are proud to be a state partner in the "**Poshan Bhi Padhai Bhi**" (PBPB) training in Uttarakhand, supporting early learning at scale.



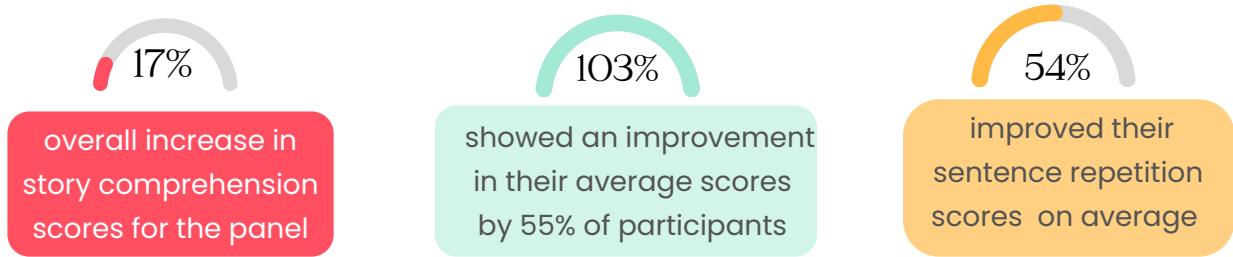
- In Bihar, the ICDS (Integrated Child Development Service) department has expressed strong interest in a statewide rollout of our audio phone casts, signalling a significant opportunity to reach even more families with accessible, engaging early learning support.

Learning, Listening & Refining for Impact

- Monitoring & Evaluation Team has been developing our [monitoring and results framework for the integrated model](#) to ensure alignment with the overall theory of change and educational framework.

• Bol Saathi Pilot Findings (WhatsApp-based storytelling chatbot)

The team synthesized the learnings from the final iteration of the Bol Saathi 1 pilot, to inform further content development. The final findings were shared with the Talk Together team at Oxford. Here is snap snapshot of our findings on the two indicators we were tracking:



• Endline Study by Sambodhi (2022–2024)

We concluded the monitoring study (endline) conducted by Sambodhi (2022–2024) on Dost's phonecast program for caregivers of children aged 0–6 in Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand.

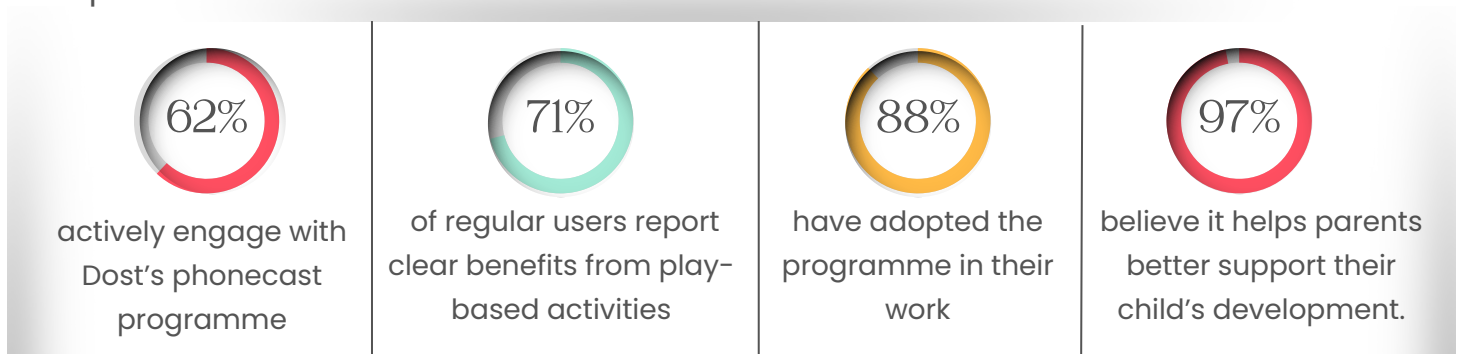
Key Findings

- The study showed significant improvements in caregiver knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors (KAB) across responsive caregiving, play-based learning, and emotional bonding.
- Compared to baseline 24% more caregivers at the endline utilised household items for teaching simple concepts, indicating improved understanding of learning materials.

Read here the [final report](#)

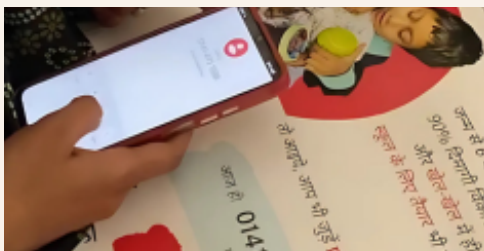
• Insights from Our Stakeholder Survey (AWW)

We surveyed 379 Anganwadi workers across Uttarakhand and Rajasthan to understand their experience with Dost. The results highlight strong engagement and impact:



Read here the [final report](#)

Optimizing Our Product for Caregiver Engagement& Refining for Impact

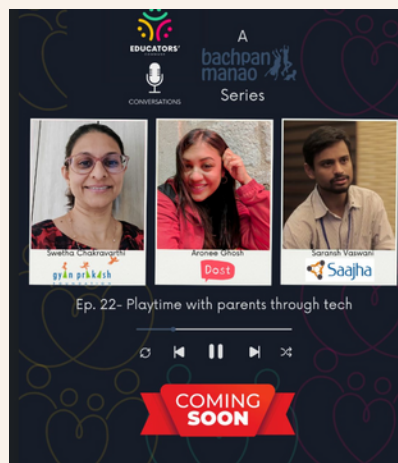


On the tech and product side, we've been experimenting with group-based caregiver onboarding and new tools to streamline the process. We're designing digital onboarding campaigns to make the experience more seamless, scalable, and impactful.

Engaging in Sector-Wide Conversations

Dost has been actively participating in shaping conversations on early childhood learning. This quarter, we participated in:

- **UNICEF ECCE Roundtable:** We participated in discussions focused on building strong foundations for early learning, contributing to the global dialogue on early childhood care and education (ECCE).
- **Mobile Creches Roundtable & Event:** Our team joined a roundtable on childcare provisioning in India and attended an event celebrating generations of support for caregivers. During this, we met Joan Lombardi, who presented her findings on the evolving ECD ecosystem.
- **Dasra Philanthropy Week:** Dost participated in LGT facilitated ECD event, exploring ways to transform early childhood development in India and beyond.
- **Bachpan Manao by Ek Step:** We collaborated with NDTV to highlight Talk, Care, and Play-based learning on the Bachpan Manao Resources page, while **Aronee** represented Dost in a podcast discussing how technology can engage parents in early learning.
- **Tech4Dev Event:** We participated in this gathering, which provided a crucial space to discuss challenges in the nonprofit sector and explore how technology can bridge gaps, drive innovation, and scale impact through collaboration.
- **India ECD Collective:** Our team played an active role in shaping the collective's initiatives, leading the Narrative Building Subgroup and contributing to the WIT (Whatever It Takes) leadership group, furthering our commitment to advancing early childhood education across the country.



What's Next? The Road Ahead (April - June)

We're excited to:

- Finalize our impact framework and establish a baseline in collaboration with our evaluation partners
- Complete a formative assessment on father engagement in our key geographies
- Launch our integrated model in Uttarakhand
- Grow through new and existing government and ngo partnerships and gathering authentic stories of change from the field
- Revamp our website to better reflect who we are and where we're headed
- Welcome to two new board members who bring invaluable expertise and energy to the Dost family
- Start preparing and planning for the Play Conference scheduled for September 2025 on National ECCE Day

What We're Reading

[Scaling Early Childhood Development](#)
[Early Childhood Matters](#)



MESSAGE FROM SNEHA

Our main word for the first quarter has been **Building**—building toward key program design changes while keeping Dost's mission at the center. More than ever, we feel the need to redefine impact for ourselves. Every child is different, every family context is unique, and behavior change is deeply relational. Our programs must be adaptive and responsive to the environments they serve—while still remaining affordable and scalable.

In a time of volatility, our conviction in supporting families has only deepened. We remain focused on creating "Talk, Care, and Play" moments that bring more support to moms and families. As we refine our approach, we're reflecting on the balance between technology and human touch in delivering meaningful support. It's similar to our own experience as a team—mostly remote, but when we gather in person, magic happens. Vulnerability is unlocked. Connections are created. Ideas click, and theory turns into practice. That's the same magic we aim to harness in our programs by integrating new opportunities for in-person connection for families.

In line with these thoughts, **I'm proud to share that we've launched a new three-year collaboration with Echidna Giving. This funding partnership will help us deepen our work in supporting fathers as caregivers and refine our program design to drive greater impact for children.** Through this multi-year commitment, we're eager to explore what it takes to strengthen the gender responsiveness of our programs.

Finally, a sincere thank you to all our supporters, advisors, and champions. Your commitment makes our work possible, and we're grateful to have you alongside us in this journey.



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