



# Calcutta Kids

## Annual Report

### 2023

Letter from the Directors .....	2
Key Indicators .....	4
Achievements .....	5
Challenges .....	8
Financial Stewardship.....	9
Board of Directors .....	10



**CALCUTTA  
KIDS**

Healthy mothers. Healthy children. Families that thrive.

# Letter from the Directors

Dear friends of Calcutta Kids,

The December graduation ceremony of Ashayein, the Calcutta Kids Adolescent Girls Program, was a true celebration. Ashayein means hope, and at this event honoring the first cohort to graduate, the sense of hope was palpable. At the end of the ceremony, graduates danced and sang “Ashayein,” our program’s theme song, borrowed from a famous Hindi movie. We’re so lucky we could be there in person to share in the joy.

The ceremony signaled the power these young women hold and the promise of what lies ahead. For some, like Tanisha, this event also marked how far they’ve come.

When Tanisha was born in 2007, postpartum depression and a breast complication left Tanisha’s mother with little breast milk for her baby. The family supplemented with infant formula but only had unclean water to mix it with, and Tanisha got a diarrhea infection. She lost so much weight that she became severely emaciated. Her family feared she might be cursed.



Baby Tanisha, October 2007  
(pre-intervention)



Baby Tanisha, December 2007 (post-intervention)

Tanisha’s parents brought her to Calcutta Kids, where our medical team took emergency action to save her life and coached her family on how to support her nutrition and growth. With our intervention, Tanisha quickly transformed into a healthy baby.

Did we perform miracles? No. We provided a few simple things: basic medical care, nutrition counseling, supplements. But, in Fakir Bagan, that’s often all you need to save a life.



Tanisha at her Ashayein graduation with CK Co-Director Evangeline Ambat and CK health worker Munki Das, who has known Tanisha since she was a baby

So yes, when Tanisha graduated from our adolescent girls program, we got a little emotional. She's now a thriving teenager, excited to pursue a career as a police officer.

As always, we loved getting time in person with colleagues and beneficiaries during our trip. We're also delighted that more and more friends, old and new, are choosing to visit Fakir Bagan to see Calcutta Kids in action. Our brilliant, committed local team takes great pride in showing visitors what we do and the impact our programs have.

We hope you'll consider visiting Fakir Bagan, too. In the meantime, you're there in spirit — strengthening Calcutta Kids and improving the lives of so many.

With gratitude,

Evangeline Ambat & Noah Levinson  
Co-Directors, Calcutta Kids

# Key Indicators

Our [Maternal Health Program](#) and [Child Health Program](#) (also known as the Maternal and Young Child Health Initiative or MYCHI) provides women and children with essential health and counseling services.

These services are critical to:

- Reduce maternal morbidity and mortality
- Empower women with knowledge and skills to help themselves and their families thrive
- Reduce child morbidity and mortality
- Improve birth weights
- Ensure normal growth among children from birth to 3 years old (the window when 80% of brain development occurs)

The key indicators below show our core services at work.

## Beneficiaries served in 2023

- Children **903 (including 241 new enrollments in 2023)**
- Pregnant women **258**
- Adolescent girls **68**

## Key indicators in 2023

- Community health worker visits (virtual and in-person) **18,714**
- Medical consultations (virtual and in-person) **3,943**
- Children with up-to-date immunizations **94%**
- Children with severe malnutrition **4%**
- Children with moderate malnutrition **10%**
- Babies born **126**
- Babies born with normal birth weights **79.5%**
- Hospital births **99%**

# Achievements

The key indicators we track are more than just numbers; they reflect our greatest achievements. Over the years, our interventions have yielded a staggering drop in child malnutrition and a dramatic rise in child immunizations, birth weight, and safe hospital births. We are immensely proud not only to have made these strides, but also to sustain them nearly 20 years later.

## Documenting data trends and EHR benefits

Analyzing Calcutta Kids' impact has been a focus for our intern Dr. Mondira Ray, a Fulbright Scholar who dove deep into our data last year. We showcased some of Mondira's work in the [November 2023 solicitation letter](#).

Mondira also wrote a journal article that describes the results of her analysis and our home-grown electronic health record (EHR) system, which makes Calcutta Kids' data collection, monitoring, and evaluation possible. The article, which has been submitted to several journals for publication, concludes that our system stands to benefit other public health initiatives operating in resource-constrained settings.

## Teaching Spoken English to adolescent girls

In 2023, Calcutta Kids also welcomed intern John Masla, an educator and data analyst in the fields of early education and literacy (who also happens to be Mondira's husband). John has spent years teaching English Language Arts at the middle school level in U.S. public schools.

During his time with us, John taught a spoken English course to the first cohort of our [Adolescent Girls Program \(Ashayein\)](#). John also trained our staff so they can continue this course after his departure. The girls were extremely happy because the course gave them an important skill they will need for job interviews or when pursuing higher education.



John and Mondira teaching English

## Celebrating the first cohort of Ashayein graduates

In December, 26 girls from the first cohort of the three-year Ashayein program graduated. During the graduation ceremony, girls spoke about all that the program has given them: a sense of hope, more confidence in managing their lives and futures, exposure to so many new ideas and career options, and enduring relationships with the trusted Calcutta Kids program leaders (whom the girls call "didi," meaning older sister.)



For this first cohort, the Ashayein community will live on. We created a group in Whatsapp, a platform the girls already use, so that they can continue to connect with each other, stay in touch with the Calcutta Kids didis, and hear about new Ashayein learning opportunities.

Given continued interest and engagement in Ashayein, we started a second cohort of the program in 2023. Many girls in the new cohort attended the graduation ceremony and were able to see what the first cohort has learned and accomplished.



The first cohort of Ashayein at their graduation ceremony

## Ashayein: Education and Skills-Building

Ashayein has prepared these girls to:

- **Take ownership of their life path**  
Girls learned about higher education, career goals, and navigating conversations about delaying marriage
- **Envision themselves as professionals**  
Girls heard firsthand from women across a range of careers, including police officers, flight attendants, doctors, nurses, teachers, and computer engineers
- **Manage their health and well-being**  
Girls received regular health checkups and learned about adolescent health, nutrition, and looking ahead to pregnancy
- **Move through the world more safely and easily**  
Girls learned karate, spoken English, and other life skills

## **Recovering a sold child**

The Calcutta Kids team values building relationships with local stakeholders. Over the years, our managing director, Kalyan Kumar Roy, has cultivated a strong rapport and close working relationship with the Fakir Bagan police. They stay in regular touch, and last year the female police officer from the local station spoke to our adolescent girls program for one of the career exploration sessions.

This special relationship is what enabled the Calcutta Kids team to help recover a child who had been sold. The child's parents, who earned little and were already raising four daughters, had been unsure how they would support a fifth daughter (and afford a fifth dowry). When the child missed a series of Calcutta Kids medical checkups, the team became suspicious and worked with the police to find the child.

Once reunited, Calcutta Kids worked closely with the family: providing mental and emotional support, counseling the family on the value of the female child, facilitating a tubal ligation so they would not face this situation again, and providing infant formula and healthy food, all at no cost. The baby remains a special member of the Calcutta Kids family, loved dearly and carefully monitored by all our team members.

# Challenges

For years, the Indian Academy of Pediatrics (IAP) had a standard child immunization schedule. All vaccines were available through government clinics but generic versions were also sold inexpensively through pharmacies.

The low cost and widespread availability of these vaccines made it possible for Calcutta Kids to administer and cover child immunizations for all of our beneficiaries. This convenient, free offering has been enormously valuable for community members, who otherwise might wait in line all day at a government clinic only to be told the supply has run out.

That paradigm is now shifting. The IAP has revised its child immunization schedule, adding new vaccines still under patent. Though these vaccines are promising, they are also incredibly expensive: The cost to fully immunize a child will now be ten times what it used to be.

Priority number one is figuring out how to maintain our track record of child immunizations, which are so critical to protecting the health of community members in childhood and into adulthood. We are thinking creatively about solutions that we can sustain long-term.



# Financial Stewardship

## The value of each donation

Calcutta Kids is funded entirely through the generosity of individual donors. We know you have many, many philanthropies knocking on your door, and we take seriously our responsibility to extract the most value out of your financial support.

**All services that Calcutta Kids provides are completely free for beneficiaries.**

Thank you for your support. We couldn't do it without you.

To make a donation to Calcutta Kids, please visit <https://www.calcuttakids.org/donate/>.

## Budget and financials

**Total budget: \$132,639.24**

On-the-ground India expenses (field team, clinic, medical supplies, etc.)	<b>\$92,003.70</b>
Administration, fundraising, oversight, and travel	<b>\$40,635.54</b>

# Board of Directors

We appreciate the dedication and contributions of our Board and Advisory Committee members.

## India Board

The India Board provides programmatic support and oversees financial and administrative operations.

John Ambat (Trustee)  
Kalyan Kumar Roy (Managing Trustee)  
Sudipta Sinha Roy (Trustee)  
Sriya Srikrishnan (Trustee)

## U.S. Board

The U.S. Board primarily supports fundraising efforts and provides high-level public health and nutrition expertise.

Evangeline Ambat (Co-Director)  
Alan Berg  
James Levinson  
Noah Levinson (Co-Director)  
Pranav Reddy

## Advisory committee

The Advisory Committee provides high-level expertise on public health and nutrition.

Denish Moorthy  
Jon Rohde

For details about our Board and Advisory Committee members, please visit <https://www.calcuttakids.org/board/>.



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