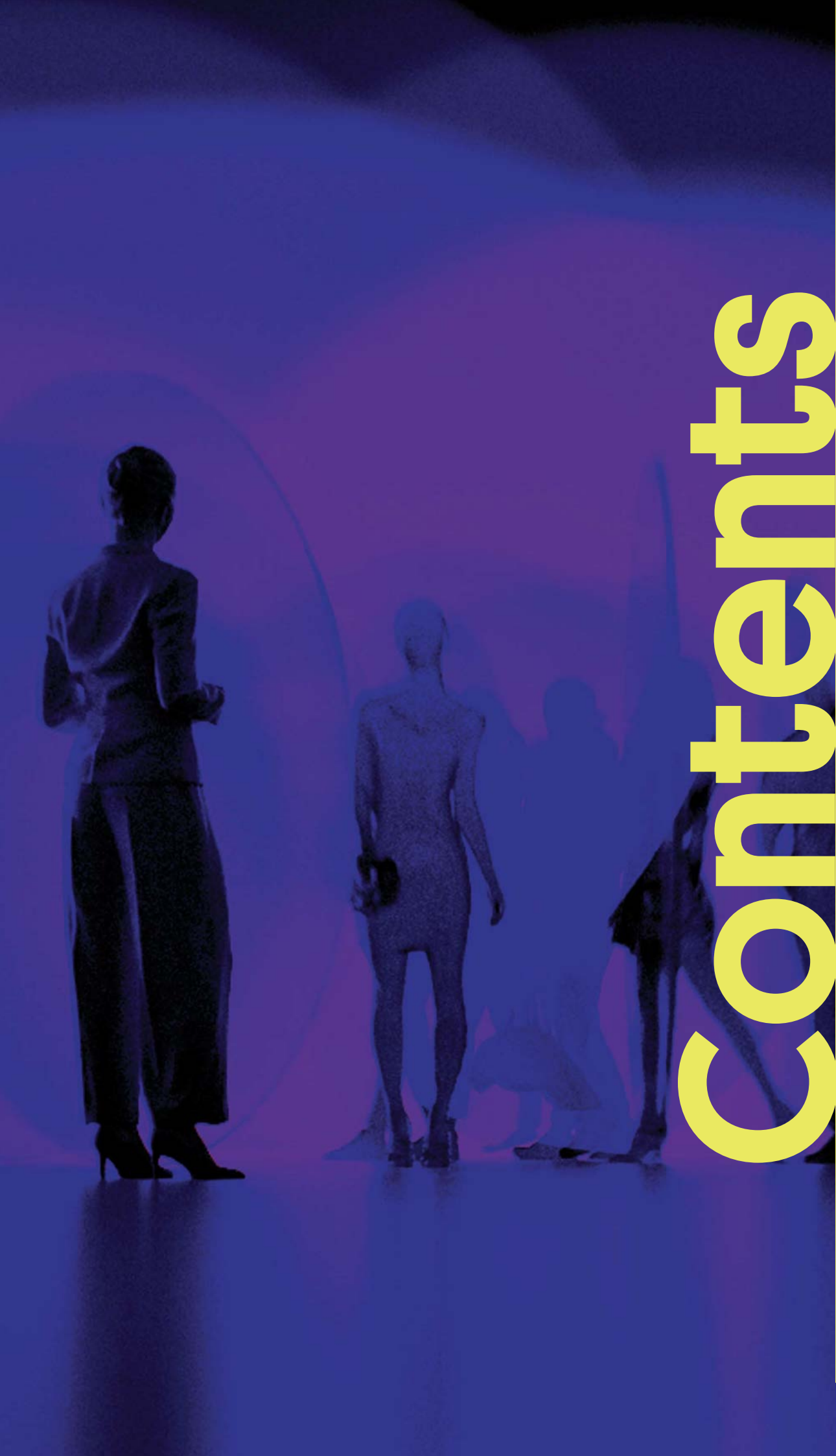




British Council Annual Report

April 2025–March 2026





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Foreword

Our 2025–26 report celebrates yet another year of vibrant cultural exchange and educational collaboration, and I'm so proud of what we have achieved with our partners in India and the UK, reaching 26 million people through our face-to-face and digital programmes and partnerships.

This was a landmark year in fact. In July 2025 our Prime Ministers adopted the India–UK Vision 2035, an ambitious and future-focused agreement which sets out five priority areas of collaboration. As one of the five flagship pillars, education underpins and is central to our work. With this, and the Programme of Cultural Cooperation Agreement signed between our two Culture Ministers in May 2025, and the British Council's Ambition 2030, we have a strong framework to guide our work in education, skills, culture and the creative industries over the coming years.

A few initiatives stand out for me this year.

The UK Education Hub was launched by our Former Deputy Prime Minister David Lammy, the UK's International Education Champion Sir Steve Smith, and British High Commissioner to India, Lindy Cameron, to help the UK and India deliver our shared education vision objectives. The Hub will enable further engagement, collaboration and alignment between our two education systems through the establishment of a single, structured platform between UK universities, Indian government ministries, regulators, and sector bodies.

India's National Education Policy and the UK's International Education Strategy place greater emphasis on internationalisation through transnational education, research partnerships and collaboration, and two-way mobility. The opening of the University of Southampton's Delhi campus, the first to open under the University Grants Commission regulations, and Queens University Belfast in GIFT City, Gujarat, brought UK higher education closer to Indian learners. I look forward to celebrating the openings of four more UK universities in late 2026: the University of Liverpool in Bengaluru, and in Mumbai, the Universities of Bristol, York and Aberdeen, with more to follow. Our UK Universities in India Members Programme provides a unique platform for collaboration and knowledge sharing as they deepen their engagement in India.

Transnational education provides more choice to Indian students and a potential new pathway for British students already exploring opportunities in India under the Study in India programme. We continued to welcome Indian students to UK institutions, with over 166,000* now studying in our world-class universities – one of the largest contingents of overseas students in the UK in 2025–26.

The UK is India's third-largest research partner, and our research partnership continues to expand, helping us to advance knowledge and address shared global challenges through joint innovation and academic exchange.

The creative economy in the UK is growing faster than any other sector, and India's creative sector is one of the largest sectors in the world valued at around \$30 billion# and set to triple in the next decade. This year marked the launch of our new creative economy platform, Creative Convergence: Growth Reimagined. Designed in response to our commitment in the Vision to host creative economy weeks, it brought together 54 speakers and 1000 creative professionals, generated new India–UK institutional partnerships, enabled knowledge exchange and supported capacity building in the sectors of documentary filmmaking, museum exchange, sustainable fashion, and creative and digital technologies. I was particularly impressed by OP Jindal University students who confidently shared their research on the creative economy and the opportunities it presents for mutual growth. I'm already looking forward to this year's events planned for Mumbai and Kolkata culminating in a national event in Delhi in February 2027.

Overall, 12 million people experienced cultural events, exhibitions and collaborations through 134 partners across 27 cities India and the UK. We supported UK artists and organisations to collaborate and participate in festivals like the Serendipity Arts Festival in Goa, the Hornbill Festival in Nagaland, Kochi Biennale, Jodhpur Art Week, India Art Fair, and many more. UK authors enthralled audiences at leading literary festivals, including the Kolkata Literary Meet, Jaipur Literature Festival and the Kerala Literature Festival. These partnerships are enabling artists and organisations from India and the UK to connect with new audiences, build international networks, and co-create work that reflects the diversity and dynamism of our shared cultural landscape.

Language lies at the heart of learning and drives international engagement, mobility, and employability. A staggering 7.4 million teachers accessed professional development resources and events through our TeachingEnglish website. In partnership with state governments, we have provided free online professional development to 137,000 English teachers with an estimated 80% of these coming from rural areas. With Microsoft we've enabled 29,000 young people to improve their English, digital and AI skills through a free bespoke online programme supported by peer learning club. I had the chance to see this in action in an engineering college in Bengaluru and was so impressed by the confidence and drive of the peer facilitator and students.

People continue to be at the heart of what we do and through the year I've loved meeting extraordinary achievers from across the country. Pavan Kumar Sriram, this year's Study UK Alumni Award winner for Social Action, has supported more than 1,100 students secure scholarships worth over £28 million and contributed to research projects across the UK and EU. I was equally struck by students from universities across the city, including a group visiting from the UK, whose probing questions to the UK's AI Minister reflected a deep curiosity about the future of AI and our increasingly digital world.

You will read many inspiring stories like this in the following pages!

This report offers a snapshot of our work this year – capturing the voices of those we've partnered with, highlighting key achievements, and setting our priorities for the year ahead. We look forward to continuing this journey together.

This is my third year in India as Country Director of the British Council, and I remain deeply grateful for the endless opportunities for cross-cultural learning and friendship. I'm also amazed every day by my expert British Council colleagues who work so hard to ensure the opportunities we create for young people are meaningful and sustained.

Thank you to all our partners and friends for your continued support. The possibilities between India and the UK are truly limitless!

Alison Barrett MBE

Country Director India
British Council



University of Southampton Delhi campus

* Source (Oct 2025):
https://www.hindustantimes.com/education/indian-students-among-uks-brightest-and-best-says-envoy-101761821740090.html?utm_source=chatgpt.com

Source (Nov 2024):
<https://newsonair.gov.in/indias-creative-economy-emerges-as-30-billion-dollar-industry-says-union-minister-ashwini-vaishnaw/>

Introduction

Strengthening India–UK partnerships for a shared future

For nearly eight decades, the British Council has been at the heart of the India–UK relationship, building trust, connection, and opportunities between our two countries. Today, that relationship is entering a new phase, defined by scale, ambition and deeper collaboration than ever before.

Across education, the arts, and the English language, we are working with partners in India and the UK to unlock opportunities at scale. Together, we are not only responding to change, but shaping a more connected, inclusive, and future-ready partnership that supports young people to thrive in a global world.

In 2025–26, our work reached over 26 million people. Behind these numbers is a deeper shift, from enabling new models of transnational

education and strengthening institutional capacity, to expanding access to skills and supporting creative exchange. Increasingly, our focus is on long-term impact and systemic change.

This year has seen stronger partnerships, new platforms for collaboration, and closer alignment with national priorities such as India’s National Education Policy 2020 and the UK’s international ambitions. Together, these efforts are helping to build a more connected ecosystem, foster innovation, and deepen people-to-people links.

At the heart of this work are young people. By connecting them to opportunities, ideas and each other, we are supporting a new generation to shape shared futures between India, the UK, and beyond.

Education



Education remains central to the India–UK partnership and a key pillar of the India–UK Vision 2035. We support India’s ambition to build a globally connected, high-quality higher education system by advancing internationalisation, transnational education, and institutional collaboration.

Working closely with governments, regulators, universities and research institutions, we enable new models of delivery, strengthen research partnerships, and support the expansion of UK institutions in India.

English & schools



We support partnerships between UK and Indian schools to build skills for a future-ready generation. Our work strengthens English teaching in multilingual classrooms, while also developing critical thinking, communication, and collaboration skills among young people.

Aligned with India’s National Education Policy 2020, we work with governments, educators and partners to improve classroom practice, teacher development, and learning outcomes at scale.

Arts



Through arts and culture, we build deeper connections between the UK and India, fostering creativity, collaboration, and shared understanding. Our programmes support artists and creative professionals, strengthen institutional partnerships, and contribute to the growth of the creative economy.

Aligned with the India–UK Programme of Cultural Cooperation, we work with government and industry partners to enable exchange, build skills, and generate insights that support inclusive and sustainable creative sectors.



Over **1,590** higher education leaders and **3,650** researchers engaged, with nine UK universities progressing plans to establish campuses in India.



Over **9** million teachers supported, enabling more inclusive and effective learning across diverse classrooms.



Reached **12** million people through 134 partnerships across 27 cities, engaging over 1,200 artists and cultural leaders.

2025–26: Impact at a glance



Reaching audiences at scale

26m
people reached globally

14m
reached online

3.2m
reached face-to-face, representing **115%** year-on-year growth



Building partnerships and cultural exchange

225
partnerships across India and the UK

1,218
artists, arts leaders, and community practitioners involved through cultural exchange initiatives



Strengthening education and research networks

1,590
higher education leaders engaged
309% year-on-year increase

3,650
researchers connected

2,700
teacher educators and trainers supported



Supporting learners and educators

1.5m
students reached in India and the UK

9m
teachers supported,
20% year-on-year increase

379k
people supported with guidance on studying in the UK

Advancing India–UK higher education partnerships and mobility



The launch of the UK Education Hub at the British Council in Delhi

2025–26 marks a significant step forward in India–UK education collaboration, as the partnership moves from enabling opportunities to delivering them at scale. Building on recent policy reforms and growing institutional interest, the focus this year has been on accelerating transnational education, strengthening institutional capacity, and deepening long-term collaboration.

Momentum around UK campuses in India has continued to grow, with the opening of the University of Southampton's Delhi campus and a strong pipeline of UK universities progressing plans to establish a presence in the country. Engagement at the highest levels, including meetings between UK and Indian leadership and university partners, has further reinforced the strategic importance of this agenda.

At the same time, domestic demand for higher education in India continues to rise, with an estimated need for millions of additional places

over the coming decade. In response, the British Council is supporting new models of delivery through transnational education, enabling UK institutions to partner with Indian counterparts, expand access, and contribute to a more globally connected higher education system.

Programmes such as Going Global Partnerships continue to play a key role in enabling collaboration across teaching, research, and innovation. Alongside this, our work is increasingly focused on strengthening institutional capability, supporting universities to internationalise, build partnerships, and respond to emerging global opportunities.

Increasing two-way mobility also remains a priority. By supporting students, researchers, and institutions to engage more deeply with each other, we are helping to strengthen long-term connections and reinforce the role of education as a cornerstone of the India–UK relationship.

Our partners

Students | Alumni | Agents and counsellors | Scholars | Education leaders | Institutions in India and the UK | Government partners



Alignment with India's strategic goals

The British Council's work in education is closely aligned with the evolving priorities of both India and the UK, supporting a shared ambition to build a more connected, innovative and future-ready education system.

In India, the National Education Policy 2020 has accelerated the drive towards internationalisation, institutional capacity building, and expanded access to high-quality higher education. In parallel, the UK's international education ambitions continue to focus on strengthening global partnerships and increasing opportunities for collaboration and mobility.

Our work sits at the intersection of these priorities. By supporting the growth of transnational education, enabling joint degrees and institutional partnerships, and strengthening research and

innovation links, we are helping translate policy into practice.

As demand for higher education continues to grow, transnational education is emerging as a critical pathway for expanding access while maintaining quality. By working with governments, regulators, and institutions in both countries, we are supporting the development of models that are scalable, sustainable, and globally relevant.

More broadly, our focus on institutional collaboration, research partnerships, and skills development is contributing to shared goals of inclusive growth, global competitiveness, and long-term resilience. This alignment ensures that India-UK education partnerships are not only expanding in scale but also delivering meaningful and lasting impact.

“India is at the forefront of global education transformation, and the UK is proud to be a partner in this journey. At the British Council, we are strengthening international collaboration, improving access and quality, and equipping young people with future-ready skills.”

Scott McDonald
Chief Executive,
British Council

“The National Education Policy 2020 (NEP) was framed and approved by the Government of India to transform and improve the quality of education in the country. One of the key aspects of NEP 2020 is “Internationalisation of Education”, which aims to promote and share best academic and research practices through interactions among diverse education systems.

I appreciate the effort put in by the British Council to promote enhanced understanding of recent foreign collaboration regulations in India among UK universities. I hope this will enable and encourage more UK universities to establish their campuses in India.”

Vineet Joshi
Former Secretary, Department of Higher Education,
Ministry of Education, Government of India

Expanding reach for UK education

- We significantly expanded our outreach footprint this year, connecting with students and stakeholders across India through large-scale engagement platforms.
- **135+** events across GREAT and Alumni UK reached over **19,500** participants.
- High-footfall exhibitions and fairs in Delhi, Chennai and Kolkata engaged **379,000+** people, strengthening awareness and demand for UK education.

Our education impact



Transnational education

We expanded transnational education partnerships, supporting new models of collaboration between UK and Indian institutions, and strengthening capacity for international engagement at scale.

- **18** partnership grants awarded between **12** UK and **16** Indian institutions through the Going Global Partnerships programme.
- Launched the Internationalisation Capacity Building Framework, supporting **69** universities to strengthen global engagement strategies.

Building on sustained investment through Going Global Partnerships in India, to date the programme has supported collaborations between **65** UK and **118** Indian institutions, with a total investment of **£3.47** million strengthening long-term research and education partnerships.



Study UK

Through the Study UK campaign, we strengthened awareness of UK education opportunities and supported students to make informed choices, while deepening engagement with alumni and intermediaries across India.

- Reached **630** education agents and counsellors across seven cities; engagement now extends to a network of over **11,000** agents across India through the British Council's Agents and Counsellors platform.
- **32** GREAT Scholarships awarded to Indian postgraduate students.
- Strengthened alumni engagement across India, building a growing network of over **8,000** members on the Alumni UK platform, the third largest globally.



Education partnerships

We strengthened partnerships across institutions, industry, and government, with a growing focus on skills, sustainability, and interdisciplinary collaboration.

- Created a pool of **278** climate educators, with over **270** facilitators trained through the HSBC climate programme.
- Partnered with Whistling Woods International, engaging **38** schools nationwide through the Study UK Create to Connect competition.

Year's defining moments

This year has seen the British Council play a pivotal role in shaping the next phase of the India-UK education partnership, not only by enabling collaboration but by creating the platforms, partnerships, and systems that make it possible at

scale. As a trusted partner across both countries, we bring together governments, institutions, and stakeholders to translate shared ambition into sustained impact.

UK Education Hub: Enabling collaboration at scale

Aligned with the India-UK Vision 2035 partnership, the UK Education Hub is a flagship platform to accelerate India-UK higher education collaboration. Its launch marks a significant step in strengthening India-UK education ties. Designed as a structured platform for engagement, the Hub brings together universities, policymakers, and sector partners to support the expansion of UK institutions in India and deepen bilateral collaboration.

At its core is the UK Universities in India Members Programme, which supports institutions in identifying partners, navigating regulatory frameworks, and building meaningful, long-term partnerships. Together, these initiatives are helping move from individual collaborations to a more coordinated and scalable approach to transnational education.

“To build a better future, we must invest in the next generation. Expanding access to education will be critical to driving long-term change. By bringing together governments, universities and institutions, the UK Education Hub in New Delhi will deepen UK-India collaboration, spark innovation, and create new opportunities for students and institutions in both countries, while supporting the growth of our economies. This reflects our shared ambition to turn the India-UK Vision 2035 into a reality.”

David Lammy
Former UK Deputy PM



Former UK Deputy Prime Minister, David Lammy, launched the UK Education Hub in Delhi, creating a flagship platform to accelerate India-UK higher education partnerships and the expansion of UK universities in India

Internationalisation of Higher Education: Building institutional capacity



The British Council's Internationalisation of Higher Education programme in Delhi, Guwahati and Tamil Nadu, engaging **69 universities and 109 international officers**

India's ambition to internationalise its higher education system requires not just partnerships, but institutions that are equipped to engage globally. The British Council's Internationalisation of Higher Education programme addresses this by strengthening the capacity of universities across India to develop and implement international strategies.

Delivered in partnership with government bodies and state departments, the programme brings together UK expertise and local context through practical, outcomes-driven training. In 2025-26, the programme was delivered across Delhi, Guwahati and Tamil Nadu, engaging **69 universities and 109 international officers**, who gained the skills and confidence to build sustainable global partnerships and strengthen institutional internationalisation efforts.

“The British Council's Internationalisation of Higher Education programme has significantly strengthened the capacity of our institutions. Through collaborative training, international officers have gained practical skills and confidence to advance internationalisation. We would welcome expanding this programme to more states, as it is enhancing readiness for global engagement and enabling meaningful international partnerships.”

Dr B Chandrasekar
Executive Director, EdCIL



Climate and green skills

As part of our work in education, we are strengthening opportunities for young people to develop the skills needed to respond to climate challenges and contribute to sustainable solutions. Delivered in partnership with HSBC and leading institutions, the Climate Skills programme combines learning with real-world action, enabling young people to translate knowledge into meaningful community impact.

The programme has engaged over 2,000 young people across 20+ states, working with 260+ institutions to build a nationally diverse network of climate-skilled youth. Through more than 150 youth-led social action projects, participants are addressing challenges such as biodiversity, renewable energy, sustainable agriculture, and waste management in their local contexts.

For many participants, the experience has been transformational. One participant, Hemant, reflected that the programme pushed him beyond academic learning into action, from exploring climate concepts in the classroom to designing local interventions and engaging communities through workshops and awareness initiatives. As he noted, “the programme pushed me out of my comfort zone... I realised climate change isn’t just something to study, it’s something you act on.”

Delivered in partnership with HSBC, The Energy and Resources Institute (TERI), and institutions including the University of Mumbai and HSNC University, the programme brings together expertise across academia and industry.

Collaborating for change

Through the Climate Skills Global Collaboration Grants, new India–UK partnerships are supporting innovation and skills development in sustainability.

University of Warwick:

TERI supporting young people to develop green entrepreneurial skills and prototype solutions to real-world sustainability challenges

University of Bristol:

University of Mumbai enabling young people to co-design community-led approaches to climate adaptation in India and the UK



‘Karnataka has placed a strong emphasis on internationalisation as part of strengthening the quality and global relevance of its higher education system. Through its partnership with the British Council, our universities have built the skills, confidence, and strategic outlook needed to engage more effectively at a global level. This has translated into tangible outcomes, with more than 15 of our public universities progressing new and strengthened collaborations with institutions in the UK, including Wales, across priority areas such as climate, artificial intelligence, and skills development. These partnerships reflect our commitment to creating global opportunities for our students and institutions, and to building a more connected and internationally engaged higher education ecosystem.’

Khushboo Goel Chowdhary IAS

Secretary Higher Education Department, Government of Karnataka



Climate Skills India Young participants (TERI)

Digital Engagement: Shaping brighter futures

Watch the Climate Skills India impact film:



Platform: YouTube

In this short film, hear directly from young leaders and educators. See how collaboration with partners is turning learning into real-world climate action.

Alumni story: Expanding opportunity through lived experience

Pavan Kumar Sriram, a social entrepreneur and founder of Kohort and The Growth Collective, was named the **Study UK Alumni Award winner for Social Action (2025–26)**. A graduate of Swansea University and an Erasmus Mundus and Dorothy Hodgkin Scholar, he is working to expand access to higher education and leadership opportunities for underserved communities.

Through his work, Pavan has supported more than **1,100 students** in securing fully funded scholarships worth over **£28 million**, while also contributing to **£100 million+ in research and innovation projects** across the UK and EU. His work is shaped by his lived experience as a first-generation learner and survivor, which he has transformed into pathways for inclusion and opportunity, including for queer youth in India.

“I entered this award because I have rarely seen people like me, a first-generation learner from a low-income background, a survivor, queer, represented in these spaces. Winning the Study UK India Social Action Award means that visibility is no longer something I have to fight for alone. It tells everyone who has ever felt excluded that their story is not a personal failure; it is the very foundation on which change is built.”

Pavan Kumar Sriram
A social entrepreneur and founder of Kohort and The Growth Collective



Study UK Alumni Award winner for Social Action (2025–26)

Study UK Alumni Awards

The Study UK Alumni Awards celebrate the global impact of UK-educated alumni, recognising leaders who are driving change across their communities, industries, and countries. Categories include Science and Sustainability, Culture and Creativity, Social Action, and Business and Innovation, highlighting the breadth of impact created by UK alumni worldwide.

Looking ahead

Building on the progress achieved this year, the India–UK education partnership is entering a phase of deeper collaboration and delivery at scale. With strong momentum across internationalisation, transnational education, and institutional partnerships, the focus now is on sustaining and expanding this progress to create long-term impact.

The UK Education Hub will play a central role in this next phase, providing a structured platform to support universities, strengthen partnerships, and enable the expansion of UK institutions in India. It will also support the Annual Ministerial India–UK Education Dialogue, reinforcing strategic alignment and enabling new areas of collaboration across the partnership.

At the same time, strengthening two-way mobility and people-to-people connections will remain critical. By creating more opportunities for students, researchers, and alumni to engage across both countries, we will continue to build a more connected, future-facing partnership that supports the next generation of global talent.



English and School Education

Strengthening school partnerships and educational exchange



As India advances its education reform agenda, equipping young people with strong communication, critical thinking, and global connections is becoming increasingly important. While the National Education Policy 2020 promotes multilingual education, English continues to play a key role in enabling access to higher education, research, and employment opportunities.

Working across public and private education systems, the British Council supports the

strengthening of teaching and learning in schools, with a focus on English, digital capability, and knowledge. Our work brings together policymakers, educators, and partners to improve classroom practice, build teacher confidence, and enhance learning outcomes at scale.

This year, our programmes have reached millions of teachers, learners, and education leaders across India, contributing to stronger classroom practice, expanded access to skills, and more inclusive and effective education systems.

Our partners

Central and state governments | Multilateral institutions | Industry and CSR partners | Teachers and teacher educators | Learners

Building stronger education systems

- We strengthen school education systems by improving teaching quality, supporting school leadership, and enabling more effective curriculum and assessment practices.
- Through our work, educators and institutions are better equipped to deliver inclusive, high-quality learning in multilingual classrooms, improving outcomes for learners at scale.

Alignment with India's strategic goals

We support effective English language teaching in multilingual classrooms through India-UK research collaborations that generate practical insights into pedagogy, assessment, and the use of classroom resources. These efforts strengthen teaching practices and improve student learning across diverse contexts.

Working in partnership with central and state governments, we also contribute to shaping approaches to multilingual education through sustained policy engagement. This includes our work with the National Consortium for Multilingual Education in India (NCMLEI), supporting the development of inclusive and contextually relevant learning environments.



Advancing multilingual classrooms in India

- ❖ In collaboration with Cambridge University Press and Assessment, we generated practical insights into multilingual teaching and learning, covering pedagogy, classroom practice, assessment, and teacher resources.
- ❖ These insights are supporting a shift towards more inclusive and effective approaches to English language teaching in India, aligned with the National Education Policy 2020 and the growing emphasis on multilingual education.

Our English and schools' impact



Teacher development and classroom impact at scale

- ❖ Reached **7.4 million** English language professionals in India through the TeachingEnglish programme.
- ❖ In partnership with state governments, provided free professional development to **137,000 English teachers**, with around **80%** from rural areas.
- ❖ Delivered large-scale digital engagement through platforms such as West Bengal's Ujjiban Charcha, reaching over **1 million students** across government schools.



Strengthening youth skills and learning

- ❖ Enabled **29,000 young people** to improve their English, digital, and AI skills through a bespoke online programme with Microsoft CSR, supported by peer learning clubs.
- ❖ Partnered with **Formula 1**, and UK and Indian institutions, to engage **130+ schools** across **57 cities** in **22 states**, promoting STEM learning and skills development.



Shaping systems and policy

- ❖ Contributed to UNESCO's State of Education Report 2025: Bhasha Matters, supporting national discourse on multilingual education.
- ❖ Hosted the Global Coalition for Foundation Learning in India, convening over **140 policymakers, practioners, and partners** to advance evidence-based approaches to foundational literacy and numeracy.
- ❖ Worked with the University of Lincoln to align Grades **6–12 science assessments** with **NCF 2023**, delivering scalable digital training for **500 teachers**.



Building leadership, research, and institutional capacity

- ❖ Awarded scholarships to **10 government-school teachers** to study Applied Linguistics and TESOL at University of Portsmouth and University of Stirling.
- ❖ Delivered a **60-hour** leadership programme with AlphaPlus UK, strengthening assessment, psychometrics, and data analysis capabilities among senior education leaders.
- ❖ Built on the Action Research Mentoring Scheme delivered in 2024–25, teacher-led research initiatives across Assam, Telangana, and Tamil Nadu supported **54 teachers**, guided by **16 mentors**, to explore classroom practices in multilingual education. Insights from this work were consolidated into a published collection of **17 research studies**, contributing to ongoing improvement in teaching and learning.

Year's defining moments

Sporting partnerships driving learning and life skills

This year saw the culmination of the British Council's partnership with the Premier League, strengthening the role of sport in education and skills development across India. In Karnataka, the rollout of the Premier League Primary Stars programme, delivered in partnership with the Department of School Education, equipped teachers with new approaches to integrate sport

into learning and build students' confidence, teamwork, and leadership skills.

Through long-standing initiatives such as Premier Skills and Primary Stars, the partnership has reached scale across 18 states, strengthening physical education and coaching quality while supporting young people's personal development.



Premier Skills Training in Karnataka

Reaching scale through sport and education

Through initiatives such as Premier Skills and Premier League Primary Stars, **over 7,500 teachers** and coaches have been trained across **18 states** from **2019 to 2025 (7 years)**, reaching **more than 180,000 children** and young people and strengthening the integration of sport into learning and life skills development.



“It is a matter of pride that Physical Education teachers are now equipped with the skills to promote leadership, teamwork, and gender equality among students. This aligns with the Government of Karnataka's vision of creating quality, equality and accessibility in school education.”

Shri Madhu Bangarappa
Minister for School
Education and Literacy,
Government of Karnataka

Multilingual classrooms in practice: Building confidence through connection

Sumathi Nataraj, a teacher at a government high school in Tirupur, Tamil Nadu, understands first-hand the challenges of learning in a second language. Having moved from Tamil-medium to English-medium education herself, she saw how a lack of conceptual clarity and confidence can hold students back.

In her classroom, she chose a different approach. Using Tamil as a bridge, she introduced bilingual teaching methods that helped students connect new ideas with familiar language. Through storytelling, music, and simple memory techniques, lessons became more accessible and engaging.

Her participation in the Action Research Mentoring Scheme enabled her to deepen this approach, drawing on research and reflection to refine how she supports multilingual learners.

The impact has been clear. Students now demonstrate stronger understanding, better retention, and greater confidence in using English. Over time, they begin to move beyond translation, expressing their ideas more independently, even with limited vocabulary.

Sumathi's work shows how multilingual approaches, grounded in everyday classroom practice, can transform learning and unlock confidence for students navigating multiple languages.



“Using Tamil as a bridge helped my students find their voice in English.”

Sumathi Nataraj



Action Research and Mentoring Scheme (ARMS) 2025

Expanding opportunities through English Skills for Youth

The English Skills for Youth programme, delivered in partnership with Microsoft, expanded significantly, strengthening pathways to employment for young people across India. A new agreement with the Government of Karnataka enabled the programme to scale rapidly across the state, reaching over 35,416 students across government colleges and polytechnics.

Focused on building workplace communication, digital skills, and confidence, the programme is equipping young people, particularly women from underserved communities, to transition more effectively into employment and participate more effectively in a changing economy.



English Skills for Youth Project

“I think this is going to be a big game changer and this is going to have a long term impact on the jobs created, wherever the opportunities are there, it is going to be easier for the students to grab the opportunities which are there before them...So I think this is a wonderful event or rather I would say that this is an initiative which is going to last for long and see a drastic transformative change in the field of higher education in the state of Karnataka.”

Dr MC Sudhakar
Minister for Higher Education,
Government of Karnataka

“For me, the programme was not only about learning English. It became my first real experience of leadership, facilitation, and peer mentoring.”

Asfiya Jalees
Student English Practice
Club Leader, Government
Engineering College,
Gangavathy

Advancing women's economic participation at scale

Through the SPARK 100K Collective, the British Council is contributing to a large-scale, multi-stakeholder effort to strengthen women's economic participation in India. Formalised through partnerships with the Women's Collective Forum and the Alliance for Global Good, the initiative will support 100,000 women entrepreneurs across 300 locations.

By strengthening practical English communication, digital capability, and peer learning, the programme is enabling women-led enterprises to engage more confidently with markets, customers, and networks, supporting long-term business growth and resilience.

“British Council makes English learning distinct. The fact that it is backed by the efforts of the UK government also gives it that importance in communities and especially in business circles where women aspire to a greater financial ambition.”

Smriti Irani
Founder, Alliance for Global Good – Gender Equity and Equality



British Council signed an MoU with the Women's Collective Forum and the Alliance for Global Good – Gender Equity and Equality, to formalise its partnership in the multi partner consortium project, SPARK – The 100K Collective

Connecting classrooms through global STEM collaboration

The Learning Sectors programme, in collaboration with Formula 1, is strengthening STEM learning through international collaboration and real-world problem solving. This year, 130 schools from 57 cities across 22 states partnered with schools in the UK, working together on Formula 1-inspired challenges that encouraged students to apply scientific thinking and teamwork in practical contexts.

By connecting classrooms across geographies, the programme is helping students develop critical skills in research, collaboration, and communication, while gaining exposure to global perspectives. Learning becomes more engaging, relevant, and future-focused as students work together to solve real-world challenges.

“Students became more engaged, improved their teamwork, and applied STEM skills more confidently. Their learning became more meaningful and globally focused.”

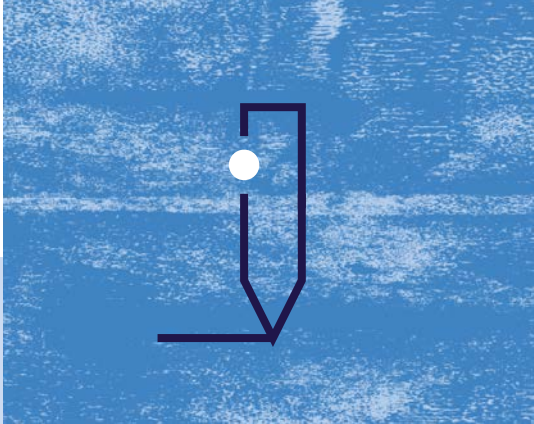
Jaya Sharma
Academic Coordinator,
MVN Senior Secondary School,
Faridabad

“This collaboration has strengthened my students’ research skills and confidence in evaluating information. It has made them more thoughtful, creative, and analytical learners.”

Shilpa Vuba
Science Facilitator,
AIMEE International School,
Vijayawada



The Learning Sectors programme, in collaboration with Formula 1



Looking ahead

Building on the scale and momentum achieved this year, the British Council’s work in English and school education will focus on deepening impact across systems, institutions, and classrooms. The next phase will see greater emphasis on strengthening foundational learning, advancing multilingual education, and expanding access to English and employability skills at scale.

Working closely with partners across India and the UK, we will continue to support the implementation of the National Education Policy 2020 by enabling collaboration, sharing expertise, and developing approaches that are grounded in local contexts. This includes expanding successful models across states, strengthening teacher capacity, and supporting more inclusive and effective classroom practices.

At the same time, our focus will be on building leadership and institutional capability to ensure that these efforts are sustainable, scalable, and embedded within education systems, enabling long-term impact for learners.



Expanding cultural exchange and creative collaboration

Arts



Lisa Nandy, the UK's Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, and India's Culture and Tourism Minister, Gajendra Singh Shekhawat, at the NHM Wildlife Photographer of the Year exhibition at the British Council in Delhi in May 2025

The British Council's work in the arts strengthens the India-UK partnership by fostering cultural exchange, creative collaboration, and the growth of the creative economy. Bringing together artists, institutions, and industry partners, we enable new ideas, perspectives, and practices to be shared across both countries.

Our programmes support collaboration and co-creation across disciplines, connecting creative practitioners with opportunities for learning, exchange, and international exposure. Through partnerships, research, and showcasing

at major cultural platforms, we help expand creative practice, build professional networks, and open pathways to new markets.

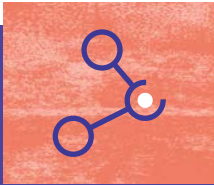
Working closely with governments, cultural organisations, and industry, we contribute to the development of more connected and resilient creative ecosystems. The Programme of Cultural Cooperation (PoCC) and the India-UK Vision 2035 reaffirm the central role of cultural exchange in strengthening bilateral relations and advancing collaboration across the creative sectors.

Our partners

Artists | Cultural institutions | National and state governments | Creative organisations and industry partners

Our arts impact

This year, our arts programmes strengthened cultural exchange, supported the creative economy, and enabled new forms of collaboration across India and the UK.



Expanding reach and cultural engagement

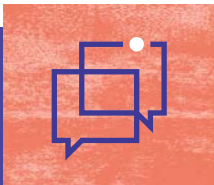
Arts programming engaged over **12 million** audiences across India and the UK, working with **134** partners across **27** cities, strengthening cultural exchange and expanding access to diverse creative experiences.



Strengthening the creative economy and leadership

In partnership with FICCI, a policy training programme supported **24** creative leaders, building the skills and knowledge needed to navigate and shape India's evolving creative economy.

Creative Convergence, Bengaluru and New Delhi brought together **580** participants, **54** experts and creative industries leaders from India and UK to deliberate on opportunities to drive growth, employability, innovation and sustainability.



Enabling international collaboration and visibility

8 UK visual artists and **5** curators showcased their work alongside Indian and international peers at major platforms including the Jodhpur Art Week, Kochi Biennale and India Art Fair, strengthening cross-border artistic exchange and professional networks.



Driving sustainability and innovation in the creative sector

The New Landscapes programme supported **6** India-UK collaborations in sustainable fashion and textiles, with work presented at key industry platforms such as Bharat Tex 2025 and Making Matters in the UK.



Cultural partnerships driving forward economic growth, supporting the UK's soft power, and helping tackle global challenges

Our projects were an integral part of high-level visits, amplifying India-UK collaboration and people-to-people links. The former deputy Prime Minister David Lammy visited Lodhi Art District where he saw the collaborative work of artists Raissa Pardini and Hanif Kureshi. He also met artists Nandan Ghiya, Sukanya Ghosh and curator Rahaab Allana, at the British Council in Delhi, where their exhibition Distortion was on display. Minister Sonia Malhotra interacted with women entrepreneurs working at the cross section of Art and Technology during her Bengaluru visit.

Year's defining moments

Amplifying diverse voices through global cultural exchange

Language is a Queer Thing (2022–2025), a spoken word poetry programme led by The Queer Muslim Project in partnership with VERVE Poetry Festival and supported by the British Council, brought together queer poets and marginalised diasporas to create and perform in mainstream cultural spaces.

The programme responded to longstanding barriers faced by queer poets working across languages and intersectional identities, including limited access to platforms, networks, and sustained professional opportunities. At the same time, it addressed gaps in how cultural institutions engage with diverse voices beyond symbolic inclusion.

Through residencies, mentorship, collaborative creation, and high visibility showcases, including major festivals and BBC platforms, the programme enabled artists to develop new work and expand their reach internationally. Its approach prioritised

community-led design, safeguarding, and collaboration, supporting sustained artistic growth rather than one-off outputs.

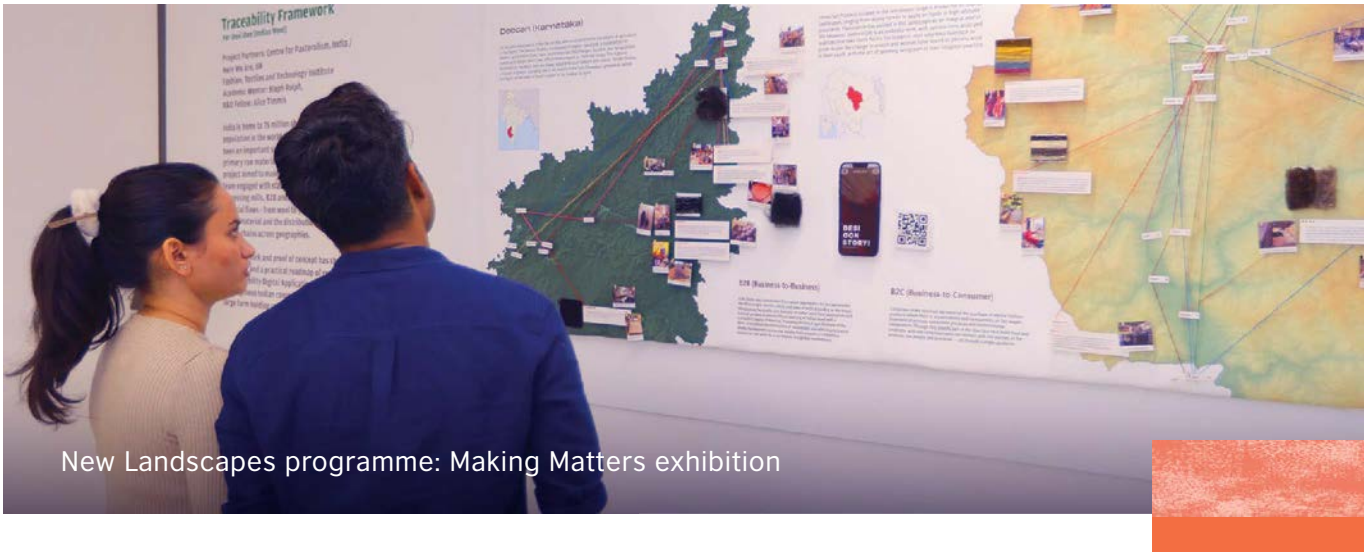
The results have been significant. All participating poets created new work and gained visibility, while over 60% performed on major stages and built cross-border collaborations. The programme reached over 2 million audiences through broadcasts and festivals, and a strong alumni network continues to sustain collaboration beyond the programme cycle.

The launch of the programme's impact report, Echoes Beyond the Stage, further captured how this initiative has strengthened artistic practice, expanded networks, and contributed to more inclusive and multilingual cultural ecosystems, with ambitions to extend its model to the Global South.



Language is a Queer Thing – advancing inclusive cultural exchange

Driving sustainable innovation through India–UK design collaboration



New Landscapes programme: Making Matters exhibition

New Landscapes, led by the University of the Arts London’s Fashion, Textiles and Technology Institute (FTTI) in collaboration with the British Council, concluded its India–UK phase by supporting six cross-border projects in sustainable fashion, textiles, and technology.

By combining research and development grants with expert mentorship and international exposure, the programme enabled early-stage designers and enterprises to develop and showcase innovative

solutions at major platforms, including Bharat Tex 2025 and Making Matters in the UK.

The programme has strengthened collaboration between designers, researchers, and industry, while demonstrating how sustainability-led partnerships can drive innovation within the creative economy. Several supported projects continue to evolve beyond the programme, reflecting the long-term value of cross-border collaboration.



New Landscapes programme: Bharat Tex 2025

“Language is a Queer Thing has grown from a poetry exchange into a platform that nurtures creative careers, expands access to international stages, and strengthens cultural exchange. As it expands across South and Southeast Asia, it continues to build pathways for emerging queer voices to shape culture, creative economies, and public imagination.”

Rafiul Alom Rahman
Director, The Queer Muslim Project

“The fear is gone.”

Megha Harish
LIAQT fellow

Shaping India–UK collaboration across the creative economy



(L-R) Alison Barrett MBE, Country Director India, British Council; Lindy Cameron CB OBE, British High Commissioner to India; Vivek Aggarwal, Secretary, Ministry of Culture, Government of India; Ruth Mackenzie CBE, Former Global Director of Arts, British Council; Tim Curtis, Director and Representative, UNESCO Regional Office for South Asia

Creative Convergence has emerged as a key platform for advancing India–UK collaboration across the creative economy. Delivered in alignment with the Programme of Cultural Cooperation and Vision 2035, the initiative brings together policymakers, industry leaders, researchers, and creative practitioners to explore new opportunities for partnership and growth.

Through convenings in Bengaluru and Delhi, the programme engaged over 580 participants,

creating space for dialogue, knowledge exchange, and early-stage collaboration across sectors. By connecting diverse stakeholders, it has supported the development of new partnerships and strengthened the role of the creative economy within bilateral engagement.

As a platform, Creative Convergence is helping shape a more connected and future-facing creative ecosystem, linking policy, practice, and innovation across India and the UK.

“I look forward to a future where the UK and India, two great creative nations, continue to dream, to collaborate, and to inspire the world together. Building on this foundation, let India and the UK be the exemplars of what it means to work across national boundaries to bring people together.”

The Rt Hon Lisa Nandy MP
Secretary of State for Culture,
Media and Sport, UK Government

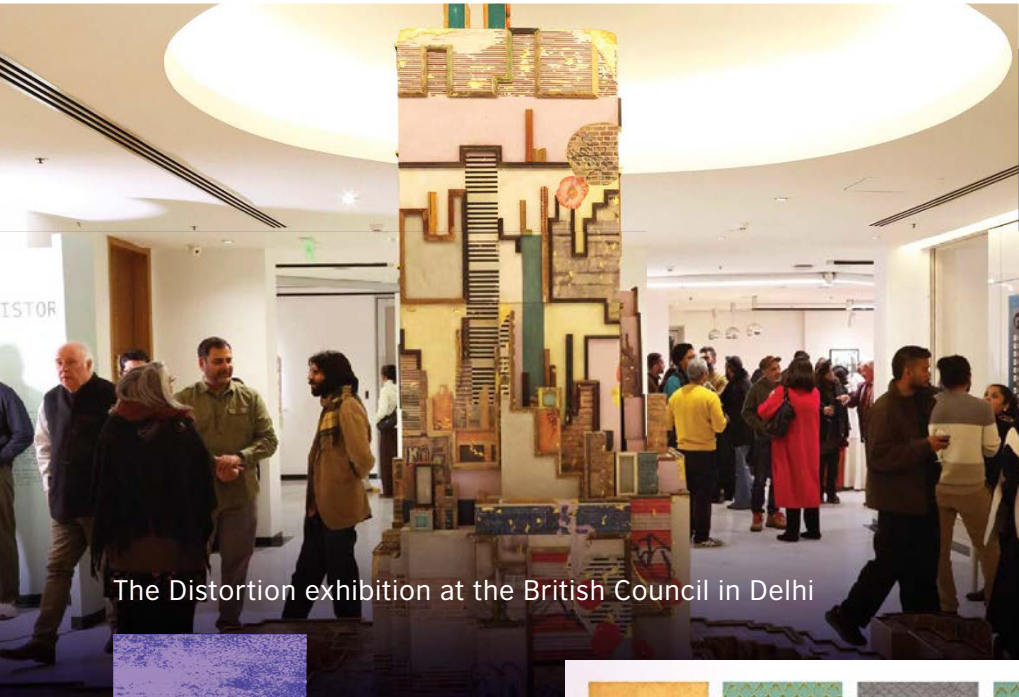
“Creative Convergence created a vital platform connecting art, science, technology and creative practice. The British Council’s ability to convene diverse sectors and translate India–UK creative economy priorities into meaningful partnerships is what makes this platform distinctive.”

Kamya Ramachandran
Founder-Director of BeFantastic,
(Curator - Creative Convergence)

“Creative Convergence opened up meaningful international opportunities for my work. The connections I made with fellow filmmakers and industry partners have broadened my perspective and created practical pathways for future collaboration.”

A participant

From cultural policy to lived experience



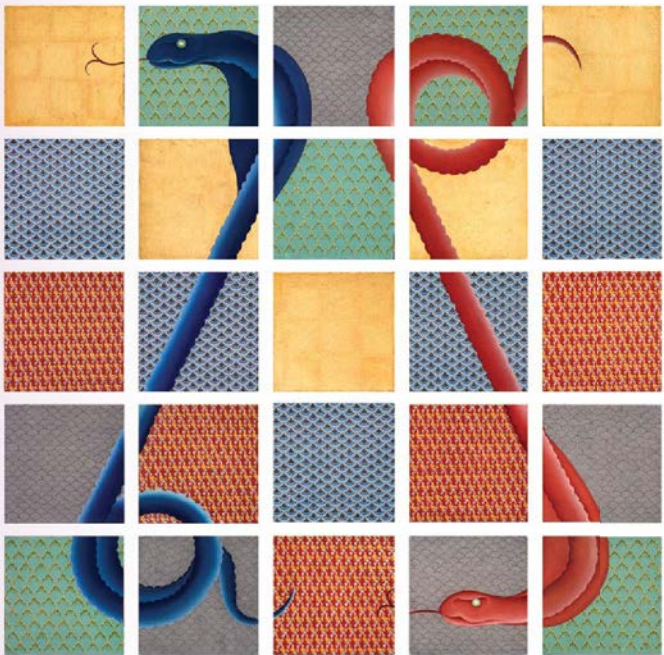
The Distortion exhibition at the British Council in Delhi

Distortion
(January 2026)

Curated by Rahaab Allana (Charles Wallace India Trust alumnus), this exhibition by artists Sukanya Ghosh and Nandan Ghiya brought together intermedia works exploring personal and archival narratives across India and the UK.

A Journey Within
(February–March 2026)

British artist Olivia Fraser’s exhibition, enriched by sound and movement collaborations with Jason Singh and Tishani Doshi, explored the intersection of UK training and Indian artistic traditions, highlighting the role of diaspora in shaping shared cultural practices.



A Journey Within saw British artist Olivia Fraser’s artwork in exhibit (Featured here: Snakes and Ladders)

“The British Council helped us connect with high-level contacts in very relevant organisations. They were thoughtful in facilitating both large and small connections, and each felt appropriate and meaningful to our work. We felt they really understood who we are and what we are trying to do, and made introductions that were not just aligned with the British Council mission but also directly relevant to Desi Oon and our objectives.”

Rahul Noble Singh
Director RangSutra

“The UK learning visit transformed my understanding of the circular economy. I returned with practical ideas, new collaborations, and a clearer vision of how to connect grassroots innovation in India with global conversations on sustainability.”

Shubham Prakash
Executive Director,
Conserve India

Looking ahead

Building on the scale and depth of our work, the British Council will continue to play a leading role in shaping cultural exchange and creative collaboration between India and the UK. Our focus will be on strengthening the ecosystems that enable artists, institutions, and creative industries to thrive in an increasingly interconnected and rapidly evolving global landscape.

We will deepen our engagement across the creative economy, bringing together policymakers, industry leaders, and practitioners to drive innovation, unlock new opportunities, and strengthen international partnerships. Through platforms such as Creative Convergence and our wider convening role, we will support dialogue, knowledge exchange, and collaboration that connects policy, practice, and research.

A strong emphasis will be placed on sustainability, inclusion, and the integration of technology across the arts. Our programmes will continue to support interdisciplinary collaboration and research-led approaches, enabling creative practitioners to respond to global challenges while expanding their reach and influence.

We will also advance new pathways for skills development and transnational education in the creative sectors, recognising the growing demand for professionals who can navigate both artistic practice and industry contexts. By strengthening access to networks, resources, and international platforms, we will support emerging and established talent to collaborate, co-create, and present their work globally.

At the same time, we will continue to champion inclusive cultural exchange, ensuring greater participation from underrepresented voices and communities. Through strategic partnerships across governments, cultural institutions, and industry, we will build on our role as a trusted partner and a catalyst for meaningful, long-term collaboration.

Libraries and cultural centres

Our libraries and cultural centres continue to serve as platforms for learning, cultural exchange, and engagement with UK education and culture. Through a combination of physical spaces, digital access, and partnerships, we are expanding access to resources, creating opportunities for engagement, and connecting diverse audiences with knowledge and ideas.

Our impact



Expanding access and reach

■ **3m** people engaged

through library and cultural centre programmes

■ Over

300k people engaged

through outreach initiatives including book fairs, literature festivals, and institutional engagement



Enabling learning and engagement

■ Delivered

36 online events,

■ engaging over

34k participants

■ Conducted

115 children's activities,

■ reaching over

2,000 young learners

Organised competitions and programmes engaging young audiences and fostering creative expression



Strengthening digital access

■ Digital library membership grew from

37k to 68k (India numbers),

■ expanding access to high-quality learning resources for students, educators, and professionals.



Building partnerships and institutional linkages

■ Enabled

18 UK university engagements

with students and partners

■ Supported

44 schools and HEIs,

■ reaching over

4,000 learners and educators

■ Hosted

28 book launches and panel discussions,

■ engaging over

4,000 participants

including leading authors and thought leaders



Expanding access through state partnerships

In Karnataka, our partnership with the Department of Rural Development and Panchayat Raj continues to expand access to English learning and knowledge resources in rural communities.

■ **70** Gram Panchayat Arivu Kendras

■ equipped with

3,500 English-language books

■ **5,000+** centres connected

to the British Council Digital Library

■ Enabling access to learning opportunities for

over **5** million learners



'This collaboration with the British Council is an important step in strengthening our panchayat libraries and widening access to quality learning resources. It ensures that children, youth, and adults in rural communities can access opportunities to learn, grow, and participate more confidently in an increasingly connected world.'

By bringing global knowledge into local spaces in a way that is practical and meaningful, this partnership is helping us build a more inclusive and aspirational learning ecosystem across Karnataka.'

Uma Mahadevan, IAS

Additional Chief Secretary and
Development Commissioner, Government of Karnataka



English for learners

We help learners build strong English communication skills through flexible online and face-to-face learning solutions. By combining expert teaching, practical language application, and personalised support, we enable students and exam aspirants to improve their grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, and confidence. Professionals come to us to strengthen workplace communication, enhance professional effectiveness, and drive better business outcomes. Through our integrated learning and assessment solutions, intelligent partnerships, and digitally enabled learning pathways, we empower learners to achieve their academic, personal, and career goals.



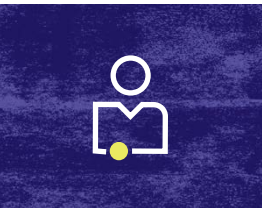
Reached over
11,700 learners in
FY 2025–26
across Adult, Young Learner, and Teacher Training programmes.



Enabled
8,200 working professionals
and university students
to strengthen employability and academic performance.



Equipped
3,543 Young
Learners
with future-ready skills through real-life scenarios and
21st-century competencies.



Trained
391 aspiring
English teachers
through Cambridge CELTA Masterclass programmes,
boosting the pipeline of qualified educators.

“The British Council English course played a key role in improving my fluency and preparing me for MBA interviews. The interactive classroom environment and group discussions helped me build confidence in speaking, while exposure to diverse perspectives strengthened my overall communication skills. The practical, learner-focused approach enabled me to apply my learning immediately. I now feel far more confident expressing myself in both academic and professional settings.”

Manan S Kapoor

Vox Populi: In love with learning

“British Council is my
favourite school”

Bheeshma
5 yr old

“My favourite thing is my
classroom and my teacher”

Gayanthika
9 yr old

“Not all heroes wear capes, some hold chalk and change lives. This is the best class
I’ve ever been to”

Kenisha
14 yr old



**We connect
young learners
worldwide**

sparkling cultural
exchange and
lasting friendships
across borders.



**We build global
learning
communities**

through free
international clubs,
helping adults practise
English and connect
with peers worldwide.



**We boost
confidence and
language skills**

for hundreds of
learners through
free CELTA practice
classes.

Through the Lens: Key moments of 2025–26



In partnership with Whistling Woods International, the British Council launched the Study UK Create to Connect competition, engaging young people across India and strengthening pathways into UK creative education.



Former UK Deputy Prime Minister David Lammy and UK Minister for Artificial Intelligence Kanishka Narayan meet with education stakeholders at the British Council, Delhi.

Former UK Prime Minister Keir Starmer interacts with children during a football showcase event organised by the English Premier League in Mumbai.



The UK delegation with Bollywood actor Ranbir Kapoor at Whistling Woods International during the launch of the Study UK Create to Connect Competition.



Author and Chef Asma Khan in conversation at the British Council in Kolkata, celebrating the launch of her latest book, 'Monsoon'.

British Council contributed to UNESCO's State of Education Report 2025, Bhasha Matters, helping shape national and global discourse on multilingual education, with state-level rollouts planned in partnership with UNESCO and UNICEF.



Amal Khalaf, Director of Cubitt and Curator at Large at the Serpentine, London speaking at the Experimenter Curator's Hub in Kolkata, which brings curators across the world to present their practice with reference to recent exhibitions curated by them. Anne Barlow, Director, Tate St Ives, was also part of the Hub.

International Booker Prize-winning translator Deepa Bhaathi leads a thought-provoking discussion at the British Council in Kolkata.



Celebrating creativity and imagination! Our collaboration with Artreach India, where children from community libraries brought their stories to life through animation, showcased at the Children's Film Festival.



The launch of 'Great Eastern Hotel' with author Ruchir Joshi in conversation with writer Mukul Kesavan. In partnership with HarperCollins India, the talk offered audiences a fascinating glimpse into this richly imagined novel set in 1940s Calcutta.

About Us

The British Council is the UK's international culture and education organisation. We support peace and prosperity by building connections, understanding and trust between people in the UK and countries worldwide.

Creating these vital connections between the people of all four nations of the UK and other countries benefits everyone. It encourages people and organisations from around the world to visit, study and partner with the UK, strengthening the UK's global reputation and influence and driving economic growth.

By connecting the UK's expertise in arts and culture, education and the English language to our global presence and unparalleled networks, we unlock potential and transform lives. We help artists to share their distinctive voices. We provide educators with the tools to shape generations. We give young people the confidence to shine.

We work with governments and our partners in the education, English language and cultural sectors to make a bigger difference, creating benefit for millions of people all over the world. At the heart of these relationships is trust which is built over time and nurtured through shared experiences.

We work with people in over 150 countries and reach over 700 million people.

For almost a century, it's been our mission to build a world where people connect across borders, and where trust is the foundation for lasting change. A world where opportunities are limitless.

For more information visit:
www.britishcouncil.in





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