

# Ahvaan: A Call to Action – National Conference on Aftercare Services

Category: Business

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“Ahvaan: A Call to Action: National Conference on Aftercare Services” was a groundbreaking event aimed at uniting a diverse group of stakeholders involved in the aftercare ecosystem. Hosted by **Catalysts for Social Action (CSA)**, in partnership with A Future for Every Child (AFEC) and UNICEF, the conference gathered government agencies, NGOs, skill development institutions, and corporate partners for a collaborative exchange of knowledge and ideas. The national conference was attended by over 130 stakeholders including 6 government representatives and participants from 13 states to have a meaningful discussion on the state of Aftercare in India.



**Ahvaan Conference, hosted by CSA, AFEC, and UNICEF, sparks collaboration to bridge the aftercare gap to empower care leavers with the support they need for a successful future**

Aftercare services play a vital role in supporting young people who age out of institutional care at 18 (called '**care leavers**'), offering resources like higher education, vocational training, mentorship, psychosocial support, housing, and life skills training. However, it is estimated that two-thirds of care leavers are unaware of these services, and only a small fraction access comprehensive aftercare programs. Without such support, they face risks including poverty, unemployment, and homelessness.

This conference marks the first time that four key NGOs-CSA, AFEC, Udayan Care, and Sevalaya-have come together under a shared theory of change to address the aftercare gap. CSA's Aftercare Program with over 2500 Care Leavers is one of the largest in the country and is running in five states and 60+ districts. Through years of implementation on the ground the program has incorporated learnings on how to make it effective

in terms of measurable outcomes. It also leverages technology, HR processes and partnerships to make the program scalable.

**Vipul Jain, Co-founder of CSA**, stated, *"We have been working on our Aftercare Program for the last five years and believe it is the largest program in the country with an annual enrolment of 600+. It is also cost efficient, effective and scalable. We are co-hosting this conference to share our program design, implementation methodology, and learnings with all stakeholders. We hope that this will spark more conversations about the cause of Aftercare Services and kickstart collective and collaborative action."*

By fostering knowledge exchange and partnerships between government bodies, NGOs, skill development institutions, and corporate partners, the conference was an attempt to create a unified approach to aftercare. It is only through such collaborations that scalable solutions can be developed to ensure every care leaver receives the support they deserve.

Key highlights of the event included a UNICEF representative discussing policy frameworks and challenges in aftercare services. **Sanjay Singh, Chief of Field Office, UNICEF Maharashtra**, said, *"UNICEF India's commitment to its #3Cs4EveryChild approach – Convene, Converge and Catalyse, particularly in aftercare, is focused on empowering care leavers as they transition into adulthood. Through Convening, UNICEF India brings together diverse stakeholders-governments, NGOs, youth networks, and the private sector-to create a supportive ecosystem for care leavers. Converging efforts across sectors, aligns key actors to ensure coordinated action on critical issues like education, skill development, and mental health for these vulnerable youth. By catalysing policy dialogue and directly engaging care leavers, UNICEF sparks awareness and drives collective action to support their transition, ensuring they are equipped with the opportunities and resources to thrive independently."*

The conference also featured three panel discussions: *Voice of Care Leavers*, focusing on the challenges faced by care leavers and the need for improved awareness and access to aftercare services; *Convergence and Partnerships – Building an Effective Aftercare Ecosystem*, exploring how collaboration among stakeholders can create a robust support system; *Experiences and Perspectives of Government Functionaries* from Karnataka, Chhattisgarh, Odisha, Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra was a key panel to learn from; and *Mission 2030 – Scaling Aftercare Services to Reach All Care Leavers*, addressing the scaling of aftercare services nationwide to all care leavers. Additionally, two key papers were released: *Effective, Scalable Aftercare Models* by Gita Gopal, Co-Founder of AFEC, and *From Strategy to Implementation* by CSA, providing critical insights into the Aftercare Program that CSA has been implementing.

**Gita Gopal, Co-founder of AFEC**, shared, “*We are at a pivotal moment where collaborative efforts can create a lasting impact on the lives of care leavers. Through collective action, we can build an effective, sustainable and scalable aftercare system that ensures no young adult is left behind.*”

### **About Catalysts for Social Action**

Catalysts for Social Action (CSA) is an Indian NGO that works towards addressing the unique needs of children in the Juvenile Justice system. Positioned at various stages in the continuum of care-whether it is family-based alternative care, institutional care, or Aftercare-CSA is committed to ensuring that every child or young adult has the opportunity to find a loving family or get family-like care. The organisation envisions a future where every vulnerable child can develop into a confident individual, lead a fulfilling life and be a contributing member of society.

CSA has been working for over 20+ years, and is active in 5 states – Maharashtra, Orissa, Madhya Pradesh, Karnataka and

Goa. It supports 110 Child Care Institutions to create better outcomes in terms of health, nutrition, education and life skills for over 5000 children living in these homes. CSA's Aftercare Program is probably the largest in the country with over 2500+ Care Leavers. CSA also does research, training, advisory and policy implementation in all aspects of the Child Protection space.

### **About A Future for Every Child**

[A Future for Every Child](#) (AFEC) is a US-based non-profit founded in 2019 by adoptive parents Gita and Madan Gopal. With a mission to support the journey of orphaned and vulnerable youth to adulthood, AFEC has been unwavering in its focus on assisting care leavers-youth aging out of institutional care-to transition successfully to independence.

Since its inception, AFEC has emerged as a thought leader, defining an effective and scalable aftercare program for care leavers and pioneering comprehensive data collection to drive continuous program improvement. Collaborating with trusted partners to implement the program across India, AFEC has supported approximately 1,500 care leavers over the past five years.

Guided by the vision of empowering every care leaver to build a brighter future, AFEC remains committed to expanding its reach and impact in the years to come.

