

# We're One Big Community

Every child needs a village  
and all of us belong there.

**Sethu's Annual Report  
2024—2025**



## OUR VISION

An inclusive world that nurtures and celebrates every child.



## THE HIGHLIGHTS

### Families First

Family-Centred Care isn't just something we do—it's who we are. This year, we deepened our commitment to seeing families as partners, not just participants.

### Spotlighting Strengths

We continued to shift the focus from "what's wrong?" to "what's strong?", celebrating the unique abilities of every child and family.

### Theory of Change in Action

Since shaping our Theory of Change in 2023, we've woven its five powerful pathways into everything—making our services more inclusive, our training sharper, our advocacy louder, and our research more purposeful.

### Social Change Marketing

Suman Shrivastava (author of *Don't Beg. Inspire*), opened our eyes to behaviour change communication, the importance of Sethu's brand and why stories of how we are making a difference are so compelling.

### Brick by Brick

We've almost completed the grey structure of Sethu's new building.



## OUR MISSION

To be a centre of excellence in child development, family-centred care and inclusion through interdisciplinary services, training, advocacy and research.

## THE STRUGGLES

### We truly miss Dean Menezes - our trustee and guardian angel!

His wisdom and kindness are irreplaceable.

### Fewer Registrations

Accessibility issues, staffing changes, and gaps in client tracking led to a drop in families supported this year.

### A Tough Tech Shift

Moving to a new Electronic Health Record (EHR) system has been slower than expected, with data migration still in progress.

### Funding Pressures

Despite a severe financial crunch that impacted hiring for key positions, the existing Sethu staff members worked harder to maintain the high standards of family-centred services.

### Building Bumps

Construction delays and rising costs tested our timelines, but the vision remains strong, and we're getting closer every day.

# THANK YOU FOR WALKING WITH US

**As Sethu nears 20 years, my heart is full of gratitude**—for the families, professionals, and supporters who've shaped our journey.

This year reaffirmed our belief that every child thrives within a strong, caring 'village'. From group programmes that connect families, to outreach in underserved areas, and the creation of our new inclusive space in Guirim, our focus remains rooted in connection, collaboration, and care.

What makes this journey truly meaningful is the trust families place in us. Together, we're not just delivering services—we're building a movement that centres children, celebrates differences, and grows stronger from within.

Thank you for being part of our Sethu family.

■ Peter Pinto, Managing Trustee



## DEAN MENEZES: A LIGHT THAT GUIDES US STILL

A year has passed. On July 1, 2024, we lost someone irreplaceable. Dean Menezes, our youngest trustee, left this world with the same quiet strength he brought to it. Long before he joined the Board of Trustees, Dean believed in us. He stood in the wings, watching Sethu grow, and when we needed him, he was there. From 2016, he funded our mental health programme. In 2020, when the world stood still, he stood by us, raising funds to ensure Sethu's services continued uninterrupted.

In 2022, Dean became a trustee, bringing fresh perspectives, a focus on solutions, and direction always based on our values. His calmness was the perfect foil to my emotional intensity. To walk with Dean was to walk beside dignity, grace and greatness. He didn't seek the spotlight. He simply lit the way. Even in illness, he never stepped away. He showed up, every time, with courage in his voice and care in his heart. His belief in Sethu never wavered.

We miss him dearly. But above all, we have deep, abiding gratitude—for having known him, leaned on him and learned from him. Noble, kind Dean—your journey here may be done, but your spirit walks with us. We will carry your torch, we will honour your hope, and we will build the future you dreamed of—for every child, every family, and for generations to come.

■ Dr Nandita de Souza, Director - Sethu



# OUR REACH

2024—25

## Our Programmes

Child Development | Mental Health | Inclusive Education |  
AATISH (Autism, Advocacy, Training, Intervention, Support and Hope)

**879** children and families  
received services at Sethu



**430** New Registrations

**449** Follow-up Clients

## Neurodiversity Rocks!

- Autism (ASD) (62%)
- Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) (25%)
- Intellectual Disability (ID) (3%)
- Specific Learning Disorder (SLD) (7%)
- Developmental Language Disorder (DLD) (2%)

## Outreach (Gnyandep)

Capacity building of **1262** Anganwadi teachers across **12** Talukas

Infrastructure support provided to **419** Anganwadi centres, across **4** Talukas

**68** children with developmental delay identified by the Anganwadi teachers

**49** children diagnosed by Team Sethu and referred to government disability services



## Workshops & Webinars

**907** participants  
**29** online and in-person programmes

# TOGETHER IS BETTER

At Sethu, group programmes build connection and confidence. Whether it's splashing joyfully in our **aqua therapy** session or learning upper and lowercase letters in our interactive **handwriting groups**, children and families grow through shared experiences. These programmes not only support skill development but also create a sense of community—where families find strength, encouragement, and belonging.

“ Your Beautiful Brain programme feels like an angel's touch... I've learned so much about my daughter's neurodiversity, and in doing so, I've learned so much more about myself. ”  
■ Parent participant, Beautiful Brain programme

**The Activity Club** is a new initiative designed to bridge the gap in social opportunities for autistic children. Honouring their unique ways of engaging with the world, the Club creates safe, joyful spaces where children can build friendships, connect with peers, and participate in social, recreational, and cultural activities.

**Beautiful Brain** is a six-session online programme designed for parents of children with ADHD. It focuses on positive behaviour support and strengthening executive functioning skills through interactive activities, group discussions, and real-life examples.

“ The sessions have been very encouraging and supportive for our daughter... They provided a joyful atmosphere to mingle, play, and do activities under the guidance of a kind and understanding instructor. ”  
■ Parent of a 6-year-old Club member



## PARENT TO PARENT: PEER SUPPORT FROM THOSE WHO'VE BEEN THERE

This year, 25 trained **parent buddies** walked alongside families of children with autism, offering both guidance and encouragement. Drawing from their own experiences, they shared practical strategies, such as how ADHD medication supported their child's progress or how visual tools transformed daily routines, helping families navigate challenges with greater confidence.

**Agle Kadam**, our monthly multilingual webinar series, reached 77 families of newly diagnosed neurodivergent children. Facilitated by our Family Advisor, a parent of a neurodivergent child, the sessions helped families take their first steps with confidence.

# GROWING CAPACITY TO SUPPORT CHILDREN

This year we conducted **14 webinars** and **16 in-person workshops and presentations** for families, teachers, students, and professionals. Covering topics such as sexuality education, ADHD, inclusive education, and supporting children with challenging behaviour, these sessions combined expertise with lived experiences of parents, making them both practical and relatable.



Teacher training programme at Green Meadows School, Saligao

## Our three most attended webinars were

- Ask Me Anything about ADHD
- Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC)
- Challenging Behaviour – Understanding and Supporting your Autistic Child with Compassion and Respect

We also delivered training in childhood sexuality education, equipping professionals and caregivers to support children with disabilities, in ways that are safe, inclusive, and respectful of their dignity. Together, these efforts are strengthening the capacity of families and professionals to create environments where every child is seen, understood, and embraced.

## LITTLE PEOPLE, BIG LOVE

Sethu kids tell us about their families, and the many ways they feel supported by them.

“ My parents always do their best. Somehow, they always make things better for me...never worse! ”

■ Aarav, 9, future artist

“ Mumma makes clay things and wiggly toys. Papa builds robots and he's my best Lego partner! ”

■ Rumi, 7, machine explorer and question-asker

“ They encourage me to keep going. They take me to activities and new places so I can try different things. ”

■ Gaurav, 11, baker and gymnast-in-the-making

“ I love when Mumma tells funny stories. Papa shares cool facts that make me curious. ”

■ Niya, 8, cyclist on land, fish in water

# BUILDING INCLUSIVE FUTURES WITH COMMUNITIES

**Gnyandeep** continues to strengthen its presence across Goa, collaborating with 1,262 Anganwadi workers (AWWs) across 12 talukas, along with families, Mukhya Sevikas, and Child Development Project Officers. With support from **Cipla Foundation**, the programme scaled its efforts this year by distributing 419 assessment kits, conducting 110 onsite visits, hosting five webinars, and providing 50 gas stoves across five talukas to improve Anganwadi infrastructure.

To measure outcomes, follow-up surveys were conducted with 305 AWWs, capturing how training and ongoing support have influenced the wellbeing of children in their care. Project Officers encouraged AWWs to take on developmental screening responsibilities, significantly boosting their confidence and capacity.

The programme's impact is evident in the trust it has fostered. Cipla Foundation's Aryadev joined the team on field visits, underscoring the partnership's commitment. Mukhya Sevikas and AWWs themselves sought guidance for their own families and extended hospitality during visits, clear indicators of the goodwill built through consistent collaboration.

Today, trained AWWs are emerging as champions for early childhood development, identifying developmental delays, supporting parents, and advocating for timely interventions.



“ The assessment kits from the Gnyandeep team were very helpful. The children love threading the beads and playing with the smiley ball. It's really helped them learn shapes and colours! ”

■ An AWW's experience using the assessment kit, Pernem, North Goa

“ The Sethu team has given us so much respect. We are often told to just work, work, work, but no one appreciates us. Sethu not only recognises us, but through their trainings, we've also learned how to teach our children so much more.”

■ Expressed by an AWW, Canacona, South Goa

# CELEBRATING NEURODIVERSITY

We marked the year with events that reminded us that inclusion is not a one-time goal—it's something we celebrate, nurture, and build together.

## World Autism Month

Sixteen families came together for a Fun Day packed with obstacle courses, dancing, a magic show, and plenty of smiles. Each family left with memories and a Polaroid keepsake.



## ADHD Fun Day

Children, parents, and allies came together for a joyful day of self-expression and connection. Highlights included superhero-themed art that celebrated each child's unique strengths, and a well-being session for parents that honoured individuality and resilience. As one child summed it up: "Everyone is special in their own way."



## World Disability Day

Celebrated under the theme "Enthusiasms and Interests – A Door to Endless Possibilities," 18 children explored passion-based zones, from LEGO and art to clay and sensory play. These creative, inclusive spaces celebrated each child's interests and opened pathways to joy, expression, and belonging.



## Children's Day

Painting with natural materials and playful games brought out imagination and laughter among 18 children and their families.



## Different Abilities, One Community

In partnership with the Office of the Disability Commissioner, Dynanvardhini Divyang Training College, and the Down Syndrome Federation of India, we hosted a statewide poster contest with 100 entries from 89 schools. The finale was a vibrant showcase of games, dance, and talent, highlighting the abilities of individuals with Down syndrome.



## Play, Connect, and Thrive

Fourteen families enjoyed an afternoon of shared games, crafts, and relaxed conversation. As one parent said: "I loved the uninterrupted time with my daughter."

# CHAMPIONING FAMILY-CENTERED CARE

This year, our message of family partnership reached wider audiences.

An article co-authored by Dr Nandita de Souza and Andre Velho was featured in **India Development Review (IDR)**, Asia's leading platform on social impact. Titled "Why families are key to supporting children with neurodiversity", the piece showcased Sethu's Family-Centred Care (FCC) approach and offered practical guidance for professionals.

The article reached over 88,000 people and was republished by Times of India Blogs. It was widely shared and discussed, reaching readers in 29 Indian states and 34 countries worldwide, including key decision-makers, funders, and policymakers.



The good news about the power of FCC was shared by Dr. Nandita at **Goa Pedicon 2024** – the annual conference of the Goa State Chapter of the Indian Academy of Paediatrics (IAP), reaching over 50 paediatricians.

## BUILDING BRIDGES ACROSS INDIA

Sethu's strengths based, neurodiversity affirming, FCC approach resounds in everything we do. On completion of the IAP Fellowship in Developmental and Behavioural Paediatrics at Sethu in October 2024, **Dr Nilanjan Majumdar** from Tripura became the first official developmental paediatrician in his state.

Sethu's IAP Fellow for 2024-25, **Dr Rucha Mehta** from Jamnagar is developing an innovative child-friendly interview and planning tool based on the F-words of childhood disability to strengthen self awareness and collaborative decision making in young children with disabilities.

Ummeed Child Development Centre, Mumbai partnered with Sethu for the **4th ECHO ADHD programme**, training 130 doctors across India. The **CDC Thiruvananthapuram** online programme empowered 17 health care professionals with knowledge and skills in child sexuality development, safety and autonomy.

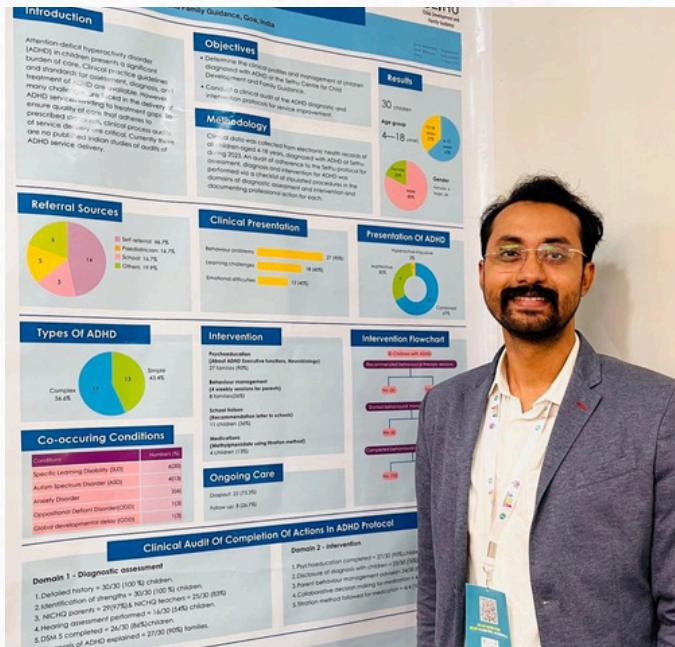
# CULTURE OF LEARNING

Learning never stops at Sethu, whether it's building skills, questioning old habits, or deepening understanding.

Our Speech and Language Pathologist, Anjali Barretto, is among Goa's first officially certified therapists for the **Avaz AAC** (Augmentative and Alternative Communication) app. Over the year, 21 children were supported through 84 AAC sessions, and the tool was also integrated into therapy for children developing verbal language. Every non-speaking child in her sessions experienced the power of AAC—finding new ways to express themselves, connect, and participate.

This year also saw team members applying the **ADDIE** (Analysis, Design, Development, Implementation, and Evaluation) model to design training modules for our Childhood Sexuality and Beautiful Brain programmes.

Dr. Nilanjan Majumder (Paediatrician, IAP Fellow) presented a poster on "**The clinical patterns and service delivery processes for attention deficit hyperactivity disorder in children referred to a community-based child development & family guidance facility in Goa**" at the 21st National Conference of IAP chapter of Neurodevelopmental Paediatrics in Bangalore.



We also launched a team **Book Club** to deepen reflective practice and spark meaningful change. Uniquely Human by Barry Prizant served as a powerful foundation, expanding our understanding of neurodiversity-affirming, strengths-based approaches. It transformed not just our knowledge, but also our attitudes—strengthening the way we connect with children and families.

Aileen De Souza, our Psychologist & Zamora Da Silva, our Counsellor from the Mental Health Team attended a training in Maitri - a 7 session **online parent wellness programme** based on the principles of Acceptance & Commitment Therapy (ACT). The training conducted by Centre for Child Development & Disabilities, Bangalore has equipped our clinicians to use principles of ACT in our parent well-being sessions.

## Making Information Family Friendly: Handouts and Translations

Based on feedback from user families, handouts were translated into Hindi, improving access and incorporating key aspects of FCC.



# BUILDING HOPE, BRICK BY BRICK

Goa's first community based child development centre with Universal Design takes shape.



## November 2018

Purchased a 1,300 m<sup>2</sup> plot of land in Guirim, North Goa.



## February 2023

M/s Construx appointed as prime contractor



## November 2023

80 % foundation work completed



## May 2023

Ground breaking ceremony



## August 2021

Construction licence received.



## February 2025

Grey structure completed. Interiors and finishing works commenced

## EVERY CHILD NEEDS A VILLAGE.

And you belong there.

At Sethu, we believe that no child should grow up without support, understanding, and a sense of belonging. That's why we're building our **Dream Centre in Guirim**. The walls are now up, and interior work is in progress. But we're not there yet, and to reach this dream, we need you.

**Buy a Brick. Build a Future.**

Donate **₹10,000 or more** to sponsor a brick in **Sethu's New Inclusive Building** — a space where children in Goa will grow, learn, and belong for generations to come.

**Scan the QR code to donate\*.**

\* All donations are tax exempt under Section 80G.



# FINANCIAL INFORMATION

SETHU

35 DEFENCE COLONY, ALTO-PORVORIM, GOA

CONSOLIDATED BALANCE SHEET FOR THE PERIOD ENDING ON 31-03-2025

	Particulars	Sch.	As at 31 March, 2025	As at 31 March, 2024
I	<b>SOURCES OF FUNDS</b>			
	<b>Capital Funds</b>			
	Capital Account	1	9,59,01,645.00	7,63,17,689.00
	Reserves & Surplus	2	2,63,16,523.00	2,63,42,316.00
	<b>Current Liabilities</b>	3	66,54,921.00	56,85,721.00
	<b>TOTAL:</b>		<b>12,88,73,089.00</b>	<b>10,83,45,726.00</b>
II	<b>APPLICATION OF FUNDS</b>			
	<b>Fixed Assets</b>	4		
	Gross Block		1,43,79,431.00	1,45,80,916.00
	Less: Depreciation		1,69,126.00	2,06,685.00
	Net Block		1,42,10,305.00	1,43,74,231.00
	<b>Investments</b>	5	4,54,48,808.00	4,85,32,741.00
	<b>Loans &amp; Deposits</b>	6	3,28,559.00	24,23,384.00
	<b>Other Current Assets</b>	7	5,43,40,542.00	3,64,61,758.00
	<b>Cash &amp; Bank Balances</b>	8	1,45,44,875.00	65,53,612.00
	<b>TOTAL:</b>		<b>12,88,73,089.00</b>	<b>10,83,45,726.00</b>

As per our audit report of even date attached

FOR PRASHANTH JAIN & CO.  
CHARTERED ACCOUNTANTS  
FIRM REGN. NO. 140829W

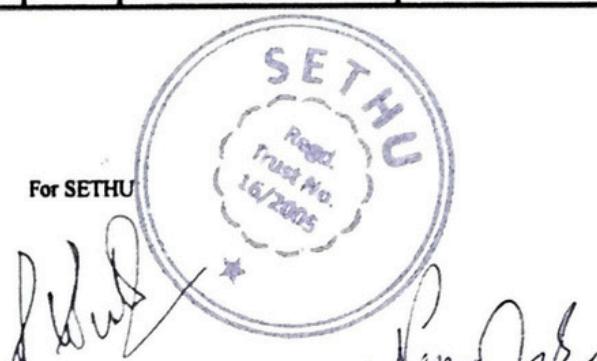
CA PRASHANTH KUMAR JAIN  
M. NO. 133883

Place : Panaji  
Date : 12/08/2025



For SETHU

Peter Keith Pinto  
Managing Trustee



Neema Jacob  
Trustee

## SETHU

## 35 DEFENCE COLONY, ALTO-PORVORIM, GOA

## INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 2025

	Particulars	Sch.	As at 31 March, 2025	As at 31 March, 2024
III	<b>INCOME</b>			
	Other Income	9	1,95,53,057.11	2,07,97,176.10
	<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>1,95,53,057.11</b>	<b>2,07,97,176.10</b>
IV	<b>EXPENDITURE</b>			
	Interest and other charges	10	16,258.08	11,547.93
	Establishment Expenses	11	1,34,55,700.60	1,49,87,219.15
	Other Expenses	12	59,38,405.72	36,61,380.42
	<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>1,94,10,364.40</b>	<b>1,86,60,147.50</b>
V	Profit before Depreciation & Taxation Less: Depreciation Profit After Depreciation & Taxation Add: Balance of profit carried forward from previous year  Balance Carried to Balance sheet		1,42,692.71 1,69,126.00 -26,433.29 19,30,343.60  <b>19,03,910.31</b>	21,37,028.60 2,06,685.00 19,30,343.60 45,32,837.24  <b>64,63,180.84</b>

As per our audit report of even date attached

FOR PRASHANTH JAIN & CO.  
CHARTERED ACCOUNTANTS  
FIRM REGN. NO. 140829W

CA PRASHANTH KUMAR JAIN  
M. NO. 133883

Place : Panaji  
Date : 12/08/2025

For SETHU



Peter Keith Pinto  
Managing Trustee



Neena Jacob  
Trustee

# A HEARTFELT THANK YOU

To our partners, volunteers, and well-wishers—thank you for being part of our extended family. Your support empowers us to keep growing, nurturing, and making a lasting impact together.

## Individuals

Abhijeet Gujar, Ago Iralu, Aileen de Souza, Akhilesh Verekar, Alisha Narvekar, Ameeta Mascarenhas, Ana Maria Marcili, Anant Surendranath, Anil Laxmikant Desai, Anjali Barreto, Anthea Barreto, Anusha Doshi, Anusha and Kapil Ranade, Andre Gomes, Andre Velho, Ashwin Mohan Ram, Avril Desouza, Blaise Costabir, Cajetan Barreto, Cassandra D'Mello, Charu Gargi, Clarence Botelho, Conrad Franco, Coreen Kumar, Drina Fernandes, Elaine & Michael Mendonsa, Fernando Da Silva, Florence Nicolas and Patrick Hughes, Gouri Pednekar, Hubert Saldanha, Iona Heredia, Imran Qazi, Jenefer Lobo, Jennifer Baumgartner, Jennifer Rodrigues, Jolly Mascarenhas, Joya Lemos, Jerald Gonsalves, Joseph Kunjoonju, Karena de Souza, Keith Lasrado, Kenneth Barreto, Kevin Cia, Kimberley Paul, Kirti Dubhashi, Laxmi Magdum, Laxmi Pillai, Leonie Saldanha, Lisa Britto, Luis De Souza, Manikarnika Lagu, Mahinder Chodankar, Marlene Franco, Merlyn and Oswaldo Velho, Mona Nalovalia, Murlidharan Srinivasan, Nandita De Souza, Naresh Kumar Dhiman, Neena Jacob, Neeraja Manoop, Nida Adil, Nirmala Naik, Nunila Eugene Almeida, Pankaj Mehra, Patricia Gonsalves, Peter Lopes, Philomena D'Souza, Poonam Dalani, Priscilla Desouza, Purva Kamat, Rajendra Chintamani, Raju Rangachar, Ralph Daniel Gomes, Renuka Mendes, Rita Nag Chowdhury, Ruhi Saith, Sandra Pereira, Sergio Freitas, Shaila Faleiro, Shalane Dias, Sharabani Roy, Shenessa Barreto, Shirley Ann D'Souza, Siona Dcosta, Smita Naik, Smruti Mirani, Soma Banerjee, Sreeja Nair, Stan and Lydia Desouza, Suman Lotlikar, Suneeta King, Supriya S, Sushila Kamat Haldonkar, Thomas Menezes, Tome Jose and Carolina de Sousa, Trisha Saldanha, Ulka Lotlikar, Usham Viviano Dias, V.R Feroze, Valerian Coelho, Vincent John Saldanha, Viraj Prabhu Desai, Violeta D'souza, Yasmin Zaveri, Yogita and Abhijit Joshi, Zamora Da Silva, Ziva and Kaylee Fernandes.

## Organisations

Arpan Foundation, Averina International Resorts, Azim Premji Philanthropic Inits Pvt Ltd, Beiersdorf India Pvt Ltd, Betts India Pvt Ltd, Blue Cross Laboratories, CDC Medical College-Thiruvananthapuram, Charities Aid Foundation America, Children across Borders, Cipla Foundation, CMM Logistics Pvt Ltd, Commscope, Dadabai Dosabhai Charitable Trust, Delfino's Hymart / Armacar Holdings Pvt. Ltd., Devine Computers, Divis Foundation For Gifted Children, Ecoclean Systems And Solutions, Electro system association Pvt Ltd, Epicor Software India Pvt. Ltd, Essity India Private Limited, Ektaal Children's Choir, Give Foundation, Goan Overseas Association NSW Sydney, Good Karma Treasure Shop, Greenspan Agritech Pvt. Ltd., Initiative Engineering, Janke Charitable Foundation, Kasu Assets Development Pvt. Ltd, Kulkarni Eye Clinic, Lourdes Convent School, Maus Charitable Foundation, Metalcut Engineering Tools, MSSO Toronto Chapter, NMT Shipping Pvt Ltd, Oloroso Agents Llp, One World Goa, Online Giving Foundation, Roche Diabetes Care India Pvt. Ltd., Saathire Social Impact Solutions Pvt Ltd, Self Reliant Inc, Superlative Finance & Investment Pvt Ltd., Tito Goes Proenca (Orfil)The Ardee School, The India Fitness Connect Pvt. Ltd., UK Online Giving Foundation, Unitop Chemicals Pvt. Ltd.

## Advisors and Experts

We are grateful to our advisors for their steady support and expertise. Our thanks to Adv. Filipe Cordeiro, Adv. Benedict Nazareth, Ralph D'Souza, CA Prashanth Jain, and Ram Sundaram for their guidance across legal, financial, and IT matters. We also thank Dr. Kirthika Rajaraman for her input on complex cases, Gurunandan Bhat for help with our website and Suman Shrivastav for changing our perspectives on fundraising.

# SETHU'S ROAD MAP FOR 2025—26



## Completion of our new centre

Our new centre in Guirim, North Goa, is nearly ready—and we can't wait to open its doors to many more children and families.



## Built to Last

We're strengthening Sethu's foundation with a focus on financial stability, staff retention, leadership development, and robust administrative systems—ensuring long-term growth and resilience.



## Making mental health help accessible

Strengthening resilience by bringing families together through sharing, support, and a sense of belonging.



## Further strengthening Family-Centred Care

Expanding reach through training programmes, partnerships and participation in public events like International Purple Fest 2025 in Goa, as well as scientific gatherings like the International Developmental Pediatrics Association Conference (IDPAC) 2025 in Guatemala.



# OUR TEAM



Our Trustees: Air Commodore Peter Pinto (Retd), Dr. Ameeta Mascarenhas, Michael Mendonsa, Neena Jacob

## Sethu Centre for Child Development and Family Guidance

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 Sethu

 Sethu Centre for Child Development and Family Guidance