

2021 - 2022

Our Year 2021-22

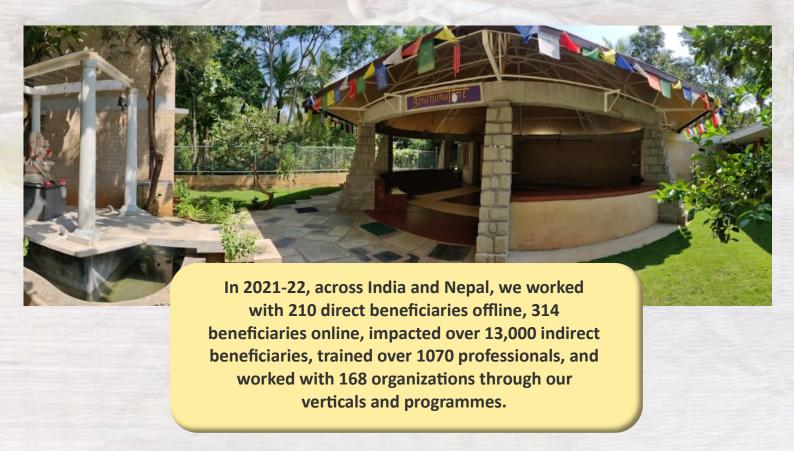
In Ikigai: The Japanese Secret to a Long and Happy Life, authors Hector Garcia and Francesc Miralles write: "Okinawans live by the principle of ichariba chode, a local expression that means 'treat everyone like a brother, even if you've never met them before.' It turns out that one of the secrets to happiness of Ogimi's residents is feeling like part of a community."

Snehadhara Foundation by that theory is indeed one of the happiest places to be.

Gratitude is at the heart of empathy, the bedrock of living mindfully. If 2020 was unprecedented in the struggles it threw our way, then 2021 gave us a chance to regroup, be better prepared for any eventuality and learn from the lessons of a tough prior year. Although the threat of a lockdown loomed, our experience with 2020 gave us much strength to anticipate sudden changes and the courage to effectively execute them.

In many ways it also gave us a chance to rebuild our connections, reexamine our priorities and realise the importance of responding empathetically to the world around us. Empowered by experience and hindsight, we used the year to launch new programmes to include more beneficiaries in our circle of therapeutic learning. Rooted in gratitude, we experimented with ideas and concepts to create a model of learning that strikes a balance between the heart and the mind.

From taking our sessions to different cities in India and Nepal to engaging with corporates and organisations on inclusive practices, this annual report will shed light on how we took our learnings from a tough year and converted it into our version of paying it forward.



### Direct Care Campus

Our Direct Care children resumed campus learning with full gusto as they went on a thematic exploration of Indian states. The Artists in Residence programme brought performers to stay and interact with our children while Sangam saw children from across the city to bond with our Direct Care students. Parent interaction sessions brought much cheer as we got to exchange perspectives. The Campus, along with its work with various groups of children/adults, also offered itself to groups for training and intimate events.

#### Life on Campus

The cheer of being on campus is truly unmatched. Given the uncertainties of partial and full lockdowns, illnesses and other difficulties that 2021 threw our way, our children once again drew from their inner strength to readjust to the various schedule permutations. Campus life has grown and evolved as we experimented with timings, trying different combinations to find the best schedule that balances relaxation and learning. On any given day, one can find groups engaged in creative activity during sessions; cooking delicious food, hopping around and playing games in the hall, writing post session documentations, trying to find snacks and even running after children who are running away from their hostel duties!

The children have become an integral part of the space that functions with and for them. In the sessions, the children have been engaging with materials in creative and ingenious ways, enterprising on their outdoor activities and making the utmost use of their time in the space. States of India continued to be a theme as the children explored landscapes and culture in the form of food, clothing, jewellery, music, dance and so on. As the terms went by, combined sessions were introduced as our children travelled from Meghalaya to Tamil Nadu, and Jammu and Kashmir to Kerala! The Vigyaana Vihaara sessions on campus continued to heighten our children's interest in everyday science.

"Beautiful spaces create beautiful minds"
-Heidi Ketvertis







#### Artists in Residence

The Artists in Residence series was conceptualised to have artists come and reside with children on campus, share their stories, teach their art forms, and engage with everyone on a holistic level. It gave the children fascinating material to interact with and they thoroughly enjoyed meeting our guests: singer Bindhumalini Narayanswamy and danseuse Dr Prachi Jariwala.

Dr. Prachi performed at our Nelamangala campus but went beyond that in leaving an indelible impression on our children's minds and hearts, teaching us to communicate using dance. Bindhumalini's presence on campus was a visceral form of learning for the children and for Bindhu herself. During her sessions with the children and during assemblies, she sang with the group often joining in unison.







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#### Sangam

Snehadhara Foundation has been very vocal in its endeavours to bring multiple groups together to simply connect on a heart and mind level by using various art forms to forge lasting associations and learning experiences. A varied group of over 100 children as young as five as well as young adults in the spectrum, congregated at our Nelamangala campus to participate in these day-long exploration of social interactions, and engagements with the arts as they formed lasting friendships and connections.



#### Parent Interaction

Parent interactions, while customary, have become one of the most exciting calendar events for the Snehadhara family. This year, over three interactions, the parents shared with each other the joys of living in a community. The meetings had parents roaring with laughter and being misty-eyed too as they listened to their children's experiences on campus and shared their own from home. Experiential sessions planned for the parents included the Patta Kunitha dance and Veera Natyam, to playing Monkey in the Middle with balloons and having a nature inspired treasure hunt.



#### Space for the Soul

Our Nelamangala campus has been frequently complimented for being a space of serenity and calm, nestled in the lap of nature. After many enquiries and requests, we opened up this Space for the Soul, for outsiders to partake in its creative magic. Recognising how ideal it is for training, conferences and artistic retreats, we've hosted many personal gatherings. The team from Actors Collective stayed at the Nelamangala campus for a 3-day theatre retreat that saw the coming together of ideas and inspirations, creativity and collaboration. The space was also witness to a charming intimate wedding ceremony as the campus was adorned in festive floral arrangements.

## Direct Care Outreach

Along with working with beneficiaries in the campus, we expanded our work through projects to other spaces. Through Snehasangiti, our flagship inclusion projects, we aim to integrate the children we work with in mainstream environments, enabling them to find their voice amongst peers. This year, our three major projects focused on interactions with members of an old age home, children from a government school and children from Arjunabettahalli.

#### Arjunabettahalli

As part of our community outreach programmes, we have been working with 30 children at Arjunabettahalli, Nelamangala to create a space for learning, expression and interaction. The children have taken to sessions with music, dance and movement with great enthusiasm and look forward to these sessions, going so far as to quiz Anna and Akka if there is a week without a session!



It's not how much we give but how much love with put into giving.

-Mother Teresa

#### **NSHPP Government School**

Our work began with the NSHPP Government school in Nelamangala this year, as we commenced sessions using the arts with 32 7th standard children. The NSHPP school had two of our Direct Care children for the first time, step into a school, sit in a classroom along with others and attend an English class. From the group being tentative in the beginning with the many questions that arose, to the group trying to help the children, it was indeed a wholesome experience. We came back with so many learnings: the children continue to have questions on how people are different, they have promised to work on their spellings and continue to tell us that we can ally with each other with any task.



#### Old Age Home

This academic year we also extended our idea of inclusion by forging relationships between our children and Sri Sadguru Sai Old Age Home. Housing 25 senior citizens and 5 young children in their residence in Dasanapura, the old age home welcomed us and embraced our arts-based sessions with them from August 2021, to promote psychosocial and emotional wellbeing, and promoting group cohesion. Children from our Direct Care space were also a part of the sessions, and it was wonderful to see how they were welcomed into the space beautifully by all! It was a mark of true inclusion through the arts!







While we were the frontrunners in adapting to the online space for children with special needs in 2020, last year we elevated our performance to capitalise on the vast chasm that exists between disabilities and virtual learning. The success of our work brought many more institutions to collaborate with us, giving us a chance to share our best practices in the virtual space across Kolkata, Delhi, Alwar and Bengaluru in India. The Internet, they say, brings the world closer. We've directly experienced that as we got a chance to reach out to 314 beneficiaries across India and Nepal

#### A Year-Long Programme

In the course of the year, four Intermediate level batches of 3 months each were run under our école allam programme, the online school based on arts practices for learning.

Subjects like Environment and Social Sciences, History and Math were made relatable through engaging stories and activity sessions. Rather than learn history chronologically, the children learnt fascinating stories about the evolution of everyday objects like colours, fabrics, vegetables and more. Spanning the major landforms of the country, the children understood geography through mountainous, sandy, and coastal terrains. We also covered topics based on the Math skills that are required for everyday life: Time, Measurements, Patterns and Sequences, and Geometry. In the Vigyaana Vihaara sessions, the children enjoyed fun, hands-on experiments designed to motivate the children to think logically and encourage them to analyse and comprehend everyday concepts.





#### Maitri

Maitri: Building Our Social World is a collaborative effort by Snehadhara where the children share learning spaces with children from Ishanya India Foundation, Mirra and Big Leap. Groups came together to enhance their social development, introduce them to different facilitation styles, broaden their interactive spaces and sharpen their skill sets. 55 children from 4 organisations came together this year to learn and work with the theme "5 Elements of Nature".

#### Light Up

The Sanjay Camp basti (urban slum) in Delhi, in collaboration with Light Up-Emotions Matter Foundation brought a group of 20 children from marginalised communities to experience a fun and invigorating Snehadhara way of learning. Over the span of these sessions, the children and our facilitators worked towards building a rapport, finding the confidence to take the lead and feeling invested in the happenings of the sessions.

#### We Are The Common People

école allam collaborated with We Are The Common People, a voluntary organisation in Kolkata, that aims to bring about social change through active ground-level work. We worked with 25 adolescents and young adults from slum communities, in the age range of 14 to 30, focussing on their psychosocial and emotional growth, and promoting self-expression using the arts.

#### Association of People with Disability

Through our collaboration with APD, we conducted music, dance and movement sessions settled around the theme of water, gradually evolved into story-building, all centred around finding meaning and self-expression with 50 children from the various learning centres across Bangalore.







What germinated as a vision backed by the Millennium Alliance grant in Nepal has allowed us to train and directly engage in beneficiary work with organisations from the Himalayan country. Leveraging the online platform, we've created connections with beneficiaries in Nepal and in turn hosted them on our campus to further our bond.

#### Antardristi

The Snehadhara Foundation made new friends and explored new avenues in Antardristi, Nepal, an organisation with the aim of eliminating child sexual abuse within the country. The diverse sessions on rhythm, music, sound, theatre, games and much more, were full of infectious energy as the 12 participants were vivacious and scintillating. Ending on a zesty and—at the same time—grateful note, a celebratory dance was choreographed and the children shared their experiences reminding us of the treasured bonds formed so quickly.



#### **Autism Care Nepal Society**

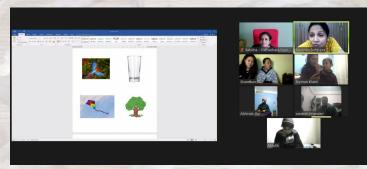
Forging our way ahead, sessions recommenced with 10 children from the Autism Care Nepal Society. If the introductory session was any indication, we knew that this experience with a new group would prove to be full of joyous learning, meaningful collaboration and expression. The group's energising responses and engagement leaves facilitators in awe and fuels this community experience.





#### Self-Help Group for Cerebral Palsy (SGCP)

The Self-Help Group for Cerebral Palsy (SGCP) is dedicated to providing support to empower individuals with Cerebral Palsy, to enhance their quality of life. This friendship beyond borders was birthed and grew with 16 children where stories became the theme for exploring emotions through song, movement and theatre. Our experience with different forms of Arts Practices opened new possibilities of collaborative learning with the social and emotional well-being tying the experience together.





"Education just doesn't make us smarter; it makes us whole"

- Jill Biden

## New Programmes

This year, we collaborated with Vasu Dixit Collective for the PADA Project to celebrate folk artists, and launched our programme Paren{T}hesis, specially designed to give support and reprieve to parent communities.

## PAREN{T}HESIS

In Paren{t}hesis, we have created a safe haven for parents to freely discuss and analyse matters that concern them, offer them a way to prioritise not their daily duties but the larger idea of interpersonal relationships by helping them buddy up with their own children. Collaborating and working with the arts has allowed both parents and children to reassess their dynamics, giving both of them an interlude of introspection. This programme is created for parents to find support, reprieve and comfort in handling the incredible responsibilities and complexities of parenting. Going beyond our Snehadhara parents, we bring together groups of parents to experience

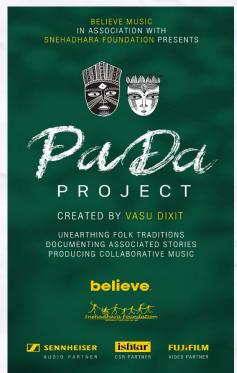
solidarity, awakening, strength in vulnerability and belonging through the arts. The programme has 4 types of offering for the participants to choose from: Bringing Up, Dosti, Picnicking and Ekjut. We're looking forward to organising our first sessions under the Paren{T}hesis section and are excitedly adding final touches to the plan.



"There's no such thing as a perfect parent.

So be a real one."

- Sue Atkins



#### PADA Project

Through our collaboration with Vasu Dixit Collective and 'Believe' (Ishtar Music Pvt Ltd), PaDa is an initiative of Snehadhara Foundation to unearth folk traditions, document associated stories, situate contexts, and produce collaborative music and has been conceptualised with the larger intent of building livelihoods for the younger generations of folk musicians, around these knowledge systems and contextualizing folk music in the present times. The project has engaged with artists from Tumkur and Madurai, and are looking forward to exploring folk music of various other states.







The second year of the Arts Practices for Inclusion offering by Prajnadhara saw the first batch of students getting certified. Two batches of students from Nepal, and the second batch from India also started off their journeys in engaging with the multi-art methodologies to create inclusive spaces with their beneficiary groups from various marginalized populations.

#### API Nepal Contact Sessions in India for Batch 2021-22:

This group of 20 trainees from Nepal are doing very meaningful work in the mountain nation. They are working with diverse groups such as Dalit women, disabled children, sexually abused survivors, blind people and underprivileged children; by giving them space to share their feelings and experiences through arts practices. The work had stopped in early 2022 owing to the COVID-19 pandemic but has slowly begun since mid-February this year.





#### API Contact Sessions for Batch 2022-23 from India and Nepal:

The first contact session for the API Batch of 2022-2023 had 18 students. 10 of these were from India while 8 were from Nepal. This is a reflective and experienced batch of people who have been doing important work in the social and mental health space in both countries.

The group came together from the start and took lessons in drama and play, dance and movement and visual art. It also learned the basics of how to plan API sessions and facilitate them. Towards the end of the week-long intensive training, all 18 participants had a chance to facilitate a short API session themselves and receive feedback from the course faculty.

Each student will be allocated a supervisor. These supervisors will oversee the field/clinic/care home and other practices of the students. The students will be facilitating up to 18 API sessions before they come back for the 2nd contact session in June 2022. They will also attend monthly supervision calls with the API faculty and supervisors. All in all, the second year of API came together well and the students seem to have gained a sound understanding of the core methods and practices of API.







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#### 1st Batch of API Practitioners Certified

Prajnadhara's debut Arts Practices for Inclusion batch received their graduation certificates in a most tranquil ceremony on 27th March 2022, giving their year-long work a fitting conclusion.

The ceremony included a ritual of washing of the students' feet by the faculty members, followed by an introduction to the work of Snehadhara Foundation and a brief showcase of the Arts Practices for Inclusion course. The API faculty members took turns to speak of the work undertaken in the course of the year and the lessons learnt by both students and teachers in the process. The students were each awarded their certificates as their classmates, friends and family cheered aloud. Mr V.S. Basavaraju, ex-State Commissioner of Disability in Karnataka, presided over the certification by handing out their certificates.

Those present were then treated to an audio-visual montage of the students' sessions with their research groups. A literary showcase of their work was then presented in the form of two books that encapsulated the essence of their research. Acclaimed musician-composer-keyboardist Rishab Nair joined the immensely talented singer and arts curator Gurupriya Atreya in a serene musical collaboration that wove traditional Indian tunes to the lilting hues of a lullaby.







**Creative Connections** 

Through our Creative Connections programme, our impART initiatives have seen us enable companies and institutions to walk the talk of corporate governance, employee engagement and inclusion at the workplace. After all, a company's growth rests in the emotional well-being of the people who work for it and run it.

#### Vana, Dehradun

We have conducted multiple workshops with various departments of luxury wellness retreat Vana in Uttarakhand. While the deputy leadership addressed what made them good leaders and the attributes that they could aspire for, various other teams worked with the idea of distilling their own well-being to make them better employees. Through the medium of play and drama the groups got to experience and question how the relationships and the little things that happen day-to-day challenge a team's success. The sessions also helped the teams create an environment in which people were comfortable taking reasonable risks in communicating, advocating positions, taking action and leading the group





#### Accenture

On the occasion of International Day of Persons with Disabilities, the Accenture Procurement Team organized a session on "Enabling Change: The True Value of Inclusion", attended by more than 80 employees. Dr. Gitanjali Sarangan was a guest speaker at the event and spoke of the meaning and importance of inclusion, and the role played by corporates in creating inclusive environments.



#### Oracle Diverse Abilities Network

ODAN India hosted a webinar in recognition of the "International Day of Persons with Disabilities". Dr Gitanjali Sarangan addressed the need to demystify disability and shed light on the stereotypes that come in the way of genuine connection with another person. The talk not only touched upon the current situation regarding misconceptions about disability, but also illuminated the ways through which we can begin building inclusive spaces that view individuals with varied needs as being differently abled rather than disabled.



#### **HP Session**

As part of the Paren{T}hesis programme Dosti, a unique teambuilding session was conducted with the parents and children from infotech major HP. With the aim to create a space for friends and children to collaborate through arts, and creatively rediscover their interpersonal dynamics, the session achieved just that. The parents and children as they took away lessons on safety, a safe space for sharing and experienced meaningful conversations on their likes and dislikes of each other and wishes for one another and discovered new facets of each other.



Outreach

The Snehadhara Foundation has taken its best practices to reach out to communities outside its regular realm of interactions, while recognising how beneficial the hybrid format of in-person and online has been in fostering better interpersonal dynamics and community building.

#### ATTA GALATTA - LET'S PLAY WITH MIRRA!

This interactive session with young adults and their parents worked on building new relationships of understanding one another at Mirra, Chennai. These strenuous COVID times have added greater pressures on interpersonal relationships, testing even the rocksolid ones. Through Atta Galatta, we worked with young adults and their parents to alter their own perspectives in order to gain a better understanding of each other.

#### TIMBAKTU COLLECTIVE

A workshop with 30 members of the Swasakti team at Timbaktu Collective, Anantpur, created an engagement with a variety of art forms to build familiarity among the team members.





#### **HEADSTREAMS**

This collaboration with Headstreams entered its 6th year. Through the Play and Human Development Course, 76 students of Christ college, St. Joseph's, and Mount Carmel College came together this year. The group worked on visual art compositions, learnt the basics of sign language, and got deeper knowledge of the subject and themselves via storytelling and drama. These sessions were facilitated by Gitanjali Sarangan and Sumathi Ramjee.

#### **CANBRIDGE ACADEMY, CHENNAI**

This was one of the first on-ground trainings for the year, and the team of CanBridge Academy, Chennai, came together to create connections through a play, movement and rhythm session facilitated by our team. This session saw 14 participants — teachers, educators and team members. It was beautiful to witness how a group of individuals who hardly knew one another came together to experientially understand how to make inclusion and self-care a part of everyday life.

#### **BEYOND 8**

Titled "Constraints Inspire Creativity — Transformative Power of Play", this training with 15 team members looked at how diverse leaders who bring different life experiences, varying degrees of success can come together through play. It allowed the group to explore together what play has brought into our lives and how we can influence each other and achieve greatness by bringing play and creative tools into our everyday life.



#### Presence

Outside the walls of our campus, the Snehadhara Foundation has been making waves across India and in Nepal. Here, we have a collection of webinars that we have conducted, the forums and platforms we have been a part of, awards that we have won, and the research that is being conducted over at Snehadhara Foundation

#### API NEPAL WEBINAR

Continuing our Millennium Alliance Global Award-backed work in Nepal with six organisations, we hosted a webinar to reach out to more people about Arts Practices for Inclusion, to highlight the work that we've been doing with adults and children from marginalised communities.



#### MITRA FOR LIFE

Dr. Gitanjali Sarangan spoke on the role and practices of the arts in building inclusive communities at the Parent Forum Meet organised by Mitra for Life. The session focussed on building a creative vocabulary of the arts, as well as speaking about the importance of self-care in the lives of caregivers.



"To make a difference in someone's life you don't have to be brilliant, beautiful or perfect.

You just have to care."

- Mandy Hale

#### API INDIA WEBINAR

We conducted a webinar on the introduction to our Arts Practices for Inclusion (API) certificate course for individuals and organisations keen to learn more about utilising the arts to create a holistic, inclusive society. Forty participants from different parts of the country joined the webinar and experienced the joy of play, drama and theatre.



## WEBINAR ON ARTS-BASED LEARNING FOR CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

We used the occasion of Teacher's Day last year to create an online congregation of educators and caregivers to focus on "Arts-Based Learning for Children with Special Needs in an Online and Blended Format". Through this webinar, we worked to find synergies to walk the path of learning together, leading to over 45 people from across the country and across Nepal to join in, listen, and share the fruits of their interactions with us.



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#### SEL pe Charcha

Dr. Gitanjali Sarangan was invited to speak at the SEL Pe Charcha Summit '21, organised by Unbottle Emotions. She spoke on the panel titled Equity in Diversity: Dismantling Barriers in Education with SEL and Inclusion where she elucidated the feats that people have reached to combat the inequity in access to education, especially experienced by girls and individuals with special needs.



#### Nation Builder Award 2021

Dr. Gitanjali Sarangan was among 12 educators to be lauded the prestigious Nation Builder Award (2021), by Rotary International for her exemplary work in fighting the odds and persevering in the face of hurdles to ensure that individuals with special needs have a space in the online format where their emotional, learning, and therapeutic goals can be achieved.

"Leadership is about inclusiveness and reaching out, not dominance and power."

Sadhguru

#### Delhi Public School Symposium

Dr. Gitanjali Sarangan was invited as a panelist to Symposium 2021, organized by Delhi Public School Bangalore North. The theme was "Road Map for an Inclusive School: Conceptualizing Inclusive Education and Contextualizing it within the NEP". She spoke on the topic of "Challenges and Opportunities to Implement Inclusive Education".

## Practice of Arts in Therapy & Inclusion by P.N. Doshi Women's College

Dr. Gitanjali Sarangan spoke at the National seminar hosted by the Department of Human Development of Smt. P.N. Doshi Women's College (Affiliated to SNDT University). The webinar had over 300 participants across 70 colleges who offer Human Development and Psychology in their undergraduate and postgraduate programmes.



#### Global Teaching Excellence Awards

Snehadhara Foundation received the award for "Best Online Education Platform" presented by the Global Teaching Excellence Awards for their superlative contribution to the education sector. For us, it is the resounding success of école @llam, our online school, which garnered us this award and praise.

"Sharing knowledge is sharing wealth"

Anonymous



Join hands with us as we work towards creating an inclusive world, a world where we are able to re-look at ourselves and are inspired to live differently and compassionately, a world where everyone belongs.

Snehadhara Foundation (SF) is a registered non-profit organisation based in Bangalore. The pioneers of Arts Practices for Inclusion, Snehadhara Foundation believes that inclusion is the bedrock of a more compassionate and empathetic society. SF advocates inclusionary spaces where arts practices form the primary methodology of teaching and learning. SF aims to create an environment which welcomes, acknowledges, affirms and celebrates the value of all learners.

The major thematic area of the organisation's work is service based, community based and policy advocacy. We directly work with the beneficiaries in our Direct Care space and also in other organisations working with children at risk. The service delivery model also trains educators, practitioners, psychologists across schools and learning spaces in the country and building lifelong partnerships by introducing corporate citizens to the goals of a socially inclusive society. We have crafted three initiatives in pursuit of this goal: Direct Care, impART and Prajnadhara.

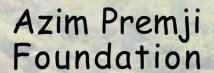














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#### **Facebook Pages**

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#### **Youtube Channel**

youtube.com/user/SnehadharaFoundation

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