



# MUMBAI, INDIA

BTE Success Stories

## BRIDGE TO EMPLOYMENT

Launched in 1992, Bridge to Employment (BTE) is a Johnson & Johnson initiative that prepares youth for brighter futures. For more information about BTE, visit [www.bridge2employment.org](http://www.bridge2employment.org)

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## Why BTE?

Educators, community-based organizations, and companies looking to hire were noticing a troubling trend among Mumbai’s youth. Wooed by the ready availability of jobs—most of them relatively low-paying and low-skilled—many Mumbai students were dropping out of school before achieving the basic milestones of finishing Standards X and XII. According to Prerana, a community-based organization with more than three decades of experience serving Mumbai’s youth, “Mumbai is the land where there is opportunity for everyone with a job available at every nook and corner. This...is leading to children either not focusing on education or simply dropping out of school...”

Meanwhile, young people from impoverished communities in Mumbai confronted a pervasive stereotype that studies in STEM<sup>2</sup>D (science, technology, engineering, math, manufacturing, and design) were reserved for the privileged few. The BTE program seemed tailor-made to address both the dropout problem and students’ limited STEM<sup>2</sup>D ambitions. BTE brings together employee volunteers from Johnson & Johnson companies with educators from secondary and postsecondary schools and managers from community-based organizations. Together, they build programs that combine academic enrichment, career readiness and exploration activities, and higher education preparation to increase the number of students enrolling in higher education and pursuing careers in STEM<sup>2</sup>D or health care fields.

Johnson & Johnson, India and Prerana sought out nearby schools in South Mumbai that served low- and middle-income students who lacked access to the enrichment opportunities BTE provides. Settling on John Wilson High School and the all-girls Seva Sadan School, the partners designed a BTE program to confront students’ ideas that science wasn’t for them. “The BTE program will thus aid in breaking this myth and providing [students] with the opportunity to understand science beyond the traditional science-related careers in India,” wrote Prerana, “while at the same time encouraging children to stay in school and pursue higher education by making school attractive and interesting.”

## BTE: Spurring STEM<sup>2</sup>D Ambition

The BTE-Mumbai partners first identified students at both schools with attendance rates of at least 50 percent and scores of at least 50 percent in English, math, and science courses in the seventh grade.

## SITE PROFILE

### Location

Mumbai, India

### Grant Period

2014–2017

### Sponsor

Johnson & Johnson, India

### Coordinator

Prerana

### Community Partners

John Wilson High School  
Seva Sadan Society’s Girls’ High School

### Volunteers

62 volunteers  
1,240 hours

### Students Directly Served

50

### Completion Rate

96%

Using a lottery, they randomly selected 50 students among them to participate in the BTE cohort.

The BTE-Mumbai team cast a wide net to bring their students experiences that would help them envision and prepare for possible careers. To improve students' *academic achievement*, BTE-Mumbai hosted summer camps with sessions on math and science as well as professional skills. They brought in outside experts from local companies and higher education institutions to teach monthly math and science lessons. In a move that was much appreciated by their students, BTE-Mumbai offered regular spoken-English lessons; some focused on STEM- and health care-related vocabulary, and others on everyday scenarios. "We can give better interviews now," reflected one BTE-Mumbai student. "We talk with others with confidence. Our spoken English has improved."

To help students *explore careers and develop professional skills*, BTE-Mumbai invited professionals to deliver career talks on jobs in fields as diverse as aviation, teaching, nursing, sports, and communications. BTE-Mumbai followed a policy that "even if a single student asks for information in any career, a session is arranged for all the students." Job shadowing gave students the opportunity to practice professional skills and vocabulary. BTE participants found that activity particularly effective.

To support students' *transition to further education*, BTE-Mumbai hosted students on field trips to local higher secondary schools. To help students start thinking about further education, alumni of the two secondary schools shared their experiences in higher secondary school, from the admissions process through teaching methods in classes and adjusting to new environments.

For BTE-Mumbai, serving their students also meant engaging with their families. The program offered *parent sessions* on topics like online safety and etiquette. Parents frequently asked for more involvement in BTE and at its end, parents and students alike shared that the program helped them communicate better with each other.

## Impact of BTE

Of the 50 students enrolled in BTE-Mumbai, 48 completed the program and graduated from Standard X in the Indian school system. Compared to their schoolmates, BTE-Mumbai students were far more likely to have higher secondary education plans in place at the end of high school. In fact, all the BTE-Mumbai students who graduated will continue on to higher secondary school. They were

*"We are more confident now than before. We're more polite now [and more] proactive talking, not reactive. [We] give respect to others."*

-A BTE-Mumbai student

*"Now, we have a career goal based on our interest."*

-A BTE-Mumbai student

aware of further education opportunities and confident in using their knowledge and skills to attain educational goals.

BTE motivated students to work hard in school and engage in their communities. Nine out of 10 BTE-Mumbai students performed community service. Students even became more engaged in extracurricular activities outside of BTE.

BTE-Mumbai students graduated from the program with greater clarity about careers and bigger ambitions for their own success. When BTE-Mumbai began, fewer than one-fifth of students were aware of health care careers; as the program came to a close, that figure reached 100 percent of students. Students had received information on almost 20 careers in health care and beyond. According to Prerana staff, by the end of BTE-Mumbai, students were no longer responding to questions about their career goals in a “copycat” manner. Instead, they had been able to formulate their own career goals and think about how to reach them. One student reflected on how BTE opened her eyes to new career options: “Before participating in BTE I always thought those who want to pursue medicine or engineering should take science. After attending career guidance sessions, I learned that I could take science and also pursue pharmacy, or become a pathologist, or [become] an optometrist.”

BTE-Mumbai students also grew more confident in crucial work skills like setting and reaching goals, teamwork, problem solving, and making decisions. “We believe in teamwork,” reflected a BTE-Mumbai student about the program’s influence on her future. “We can make a good presentation, and we are able to talk more in English without fear.”

Support for BTE-Mumbai students didn’t end when the program did. The BTE-Mumbai partners committed to continue mentoring BTE-Mumbai graduates for two years after the program, seeing them through their transition into higher secondary education.

## STUDENT OUTCOMES

**98%** graduated high school vs. **80%** of their classmates

**100%** who graduated high school were accepted to higher secondary school

**90%** performed community service

**85%** were confident conversing in English

**100%** were aware of health care careers

**100%** were confident in goal setting, goal planning, and reaching goals