

What is Pragati India?

Pragati India is a culturally immersive and academically meaningful service-learning travel experience that connects students with communities, peers, and real-world perspectives across Gujarat and Rajasthan.

Over the course of 15 days in India, your young adult will live and learn within communities in Gujarat and Rajasthan that most visitors, including many Indians, do not experience. They will engage directly with NEF Scholars: first-generation college students who are pursuing degrees in medicine, engineering, and education. These interactions will include visiting scholars in their family homes and at their campuses or internships, gaining insight into their everyday lives. Students will also engage with community-based organizations, including those that serve seniors, children, and other vulnerable populations.

The itinerary is carefully structured to balance immersive community engagement with culturally rich yet manageable urban experiences. Students will travel through Ahmedabad, Udaipur, and Jaipur, cities known for their history and cultural depth without the chaos of more overwhelming urban centers like Mumbai or Delhi. This design supports both safety and a more reflective, intentional experience.

Who participates in Pragati India?

Each cohort is made up of a small group (generally less than 10) of carefully selected students, allowing for close supervision, individualized attention, and a more thoughtful, immersive experience. The group moves together, shares meals, reflects together, and builds a sense of community that feels more like a family than a traditional program. This structure not only enhances safety, but also deepens engagement and lifelong connections with like-minded peers.

Is there an educational component to the program?

Beyond the experience itself, this program is designed to contribute meaningfully to your child's educational trajectory. Led by an Indian American professor with deep ties to Gujarat and extensive experience in community-engaged research and education, the program offers both cultural depth and academic rigor. Students develop cross-cultural competence, engage in experiential learning, and gain a deeper understanding of global inequality, social systems, and community-based solutions. Your student's experiences in India can be meaningfully articulated in graduate school applications and strengthens critical thinking, empathy, and leadership skills. More importantly, it shapes how students understand opportunity, responsibility, and their role in a global context.

Students seeking course credit are encouraged to propose the program as an independent study with a professor at their college or university. A syllabus and suggested assignments will be provided.

Who runs Pragati India?

Pragati India is a program of the Nanubhai Education Foundation (NEF) and is offered in partnership with Dr. Rupal Parekh. NEF, a 501(c)3 organization, traces its roots to a young Indian American's visit to his father's rural village in southern Gujarat where he witnessed the true transformative power of education. Today, NEF sponsors a college scholarship program across three regions in India and has supported over 1,400 young women in earning their college degrees.

Dr. Rupal Parekh and her husband, Mohit Bhansali, lead Pragati India cohorts through India. Dr. Parekh, who developed the Pragati curriculum, is an Assistant Professor in the College of Social Work at the University of Connecticut. She considers Surat, Gujarat, to be her "home town" and is passionate about guiding students to through experiencing the beauty of India and understanding its complexities.

Mohit Bhansali maintains a close connection with his home state of Rajasthan. A first generation Indian American, Mr. Bhansali is an entrepreneur, investor, and professional creative. A passionate advocate for women's education and India's development, he has been a member of NEF's Board of Directors since 2012.

What are the program logistics?

Every aspect of the experience, including housing, meals, transportation, programming, and supervision, is fully coordinated. Your child will be supported at all times and will not be navigating unfamiliar environments independently.

Students are expected to arrive in Surat on December 27th, 2026. They will spend roughly the first week in the greater Surat region before shifting to Udaipur for the second week, with a brief stop in Ahmedabad between. The program culminates in Jaipur where the cohort will have a few days to decompress and reflect on the experience before starting the return journey. The program formally concludes on January 11th with the expectation that students will depart on the 12th.

The total program cost is \$2,950. This covers your student's full in-country experience, including all meals, accommodations, transportation, programming (both educational and cultural), and supervision from dedicated guides. Students are strongly encouraged to participate in both segments of the program but if they are only able to join for one leg, the price is as follows: Gujarat leg (December 27-January 3: \$1,225), Rajasthan leg (January 4-11: \$1,725). A portion of the cost is tax-deductible.

International airfare is not included. Starting in the fall of 2026, the Surat airport (Gujarat) will offer direct flights to and from Mumbai. This will allow students to connect through the international airport but avoid having to independently navigate the city. The program cost also does not cover visa costs or travel insurance, both of which will be required.

Who can I contact if I have additional questions?

Please email Pragati@nanubhai.org with any additional questions. There is also additional information on our web page, nanubhai.org/pragati.