



# Indian Schools Debating Society (ISDS)

*The start of a journey:*

## **2 visionaries, 5 schools:**

To unleash young India's debating potential and make India a global leader in debate

### **How it all began:**

The Indian Schools Debating Society (ISDS) is a not-for-profit organization that began when five schools were brought together by Mr. and Mrs. Raja in Chennai in 2008. Sponsored by the Ramco Group of Companies, with the aim of putting India on the global debating map, ISDS brought trainers from abroad to start India out on its debating journey internationally. Since then, ISDS has expanded nation-wide and established itself as a leading academy for debate education.

### **Our vision and priorities:**

We want to transform young students across India from diverse backgrounds through debate to think critically, communicate effectively, and lead with courage. In view of this, our core focus is to

- (i) scale student engagement to take training to the millions of students in India
- (ii) increase inclusion among students who otherwise lack access to debating, and
- (iii) aspire for excellence within the domestic and international debating circuit

### **What we do:**

To sustainably integrate competitive debating within Indian schools at scale, ISDS partners with like-minded organizations and relentlessly builds capacity. ISDS conducts workshops for students, hosts leagues and tournaments, and trains teachers to judge debates and use debate in classrooms. ISDS then taps into this potential to select and train the National Debating Squad, whose students excel at the international stage, act as role models, and return to the organization as coaches.

## ISDS at a glance

<b>13 years</b> Representation of India at WSDC	<b>1700+</b> Students reached directly each year	<b>13</b> Number of debating championships ISDS has won
<b>50+</b> Number of teams trained to attend domestic and international competitions	<b>Champions</b> ISDS-trained Team India's best performance at WSDC* and ICYD*	<b>6</b> No. of times ISDS speakers were the 'Best Speaker' across WSDC and ICYD

\*The World Schools Debating Championship (WSDC) is the most prestigious debating tournament for school students in the world, where students represent their countries

\*The International Competition for Young Debaters (ICYD) is the largest, most prestigious under 15 debating tournament hosted by the Cambridge and Oxford Unions

# To realise our vision, we spread high quality debate programming, develop a competition ecosystem, and coach the Indian Debate Squad

1

## Spread high quality debate programmes among Indian school students

- Workshops, courses, and Masterclasses
- ISDS Access Programme

2

## Develop a competition ecosystem

- National Championships
- Knowledge, design, and capacity support for partners

3

## Select and coach the Indian Debate Squad for international competitions

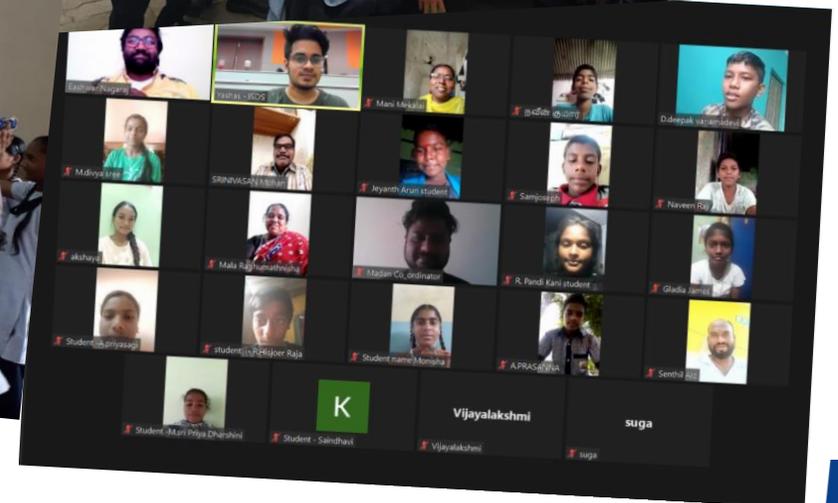
- Regional Selections
- National Selection Camp
- ICYD India Regional Selections

# Year-round, we host a full suite of events for middle and high school students that introduce them to structured debate, or elevate their existing skills

	Seminars (Online)	Short-term Workshops (Online/Offline)	Long-term Courses (Online)
10-12 years old Grades 5-7		<b>Budding Speakers Launchpad:</b> Three-day, introductory public speaking workshop that teaches cross applicable concepts to public speaking and debate	
12-14 years old Grades 7-9	<b>ISDS Skill and Knowledge Masterclasses</b> 1.5-2 hour classes hosted by experts in the field that focus on a specific debate skill, or a debate-related general knowledge area	<b>Junior Academy (WSDC, BP):</b> A 4-day, introductory debate workshop to launch students into the World Schools Debating Championship format, or the British Parliamentary format.	<b>Certification Course (beginner)</b> An intensive 12-session course teaching WSDC debate skills and holistically evaluates a student's performance through the course
15-18 years old Grades 10-12		<b>Crash Course:</b> An intensive, 2-day WSDC debating workshop for students taught at the intermediate level.	<b>Certification Course (intermediate)</b> An intensive 12-session course teaching WSDC debate skills and holistically evaluates a student's performance through the course

# In addition, we work with partners to reach underreached communities and spread debate at subsidised costs or for free

We worked with Aid India, Sana Model School, and The Akanksha Foundation to take debating to their students in Mumbai, Pune, and Chennai



# To develop a competition ecosystem in India, we host multiple national championships and support various partner organisations in conducting debate competitions

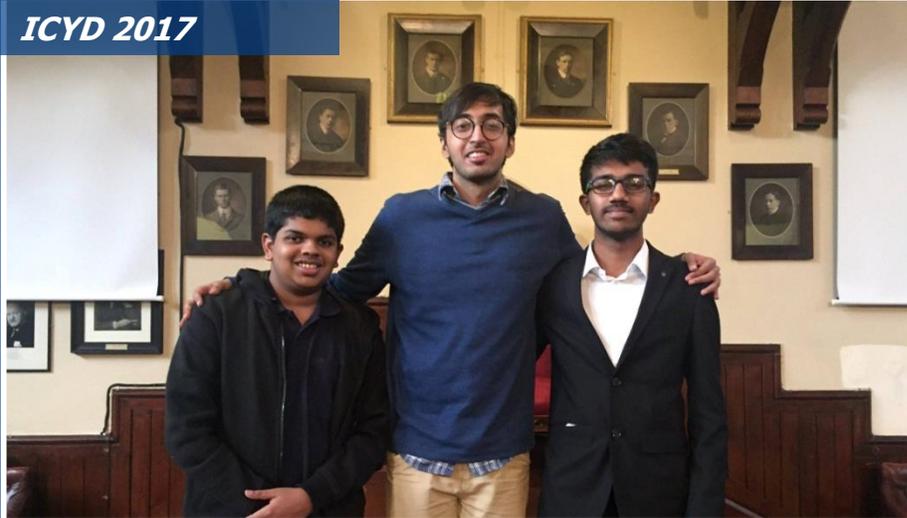
**Indian Schools Debating Championship**



**ISDS Iron Person Triathlon**



# Each year, ISDS trains the Indian National Debate Squad to compete at various prestigious international competitions



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ICYD 2021 & 2022



ICYD 2023



WSDC 2023 VIETNAM WORLD SCHOOLS DEBATING CHAMPIONSHIPS HANOI, 2023

# Among these, the World Schools Debating Championships (WSDC) is the largest, most prestigious international platform for debate

The World Schools Debating Championships (WSDC) is the World Cup of competitive school debating, where high schoolers have the unique opportunity to represent their countries and compete against other national teams to be crowned the World Champions.

WSDC at a glance:

**64**

Participating nations

**500+**

Debaters and judges

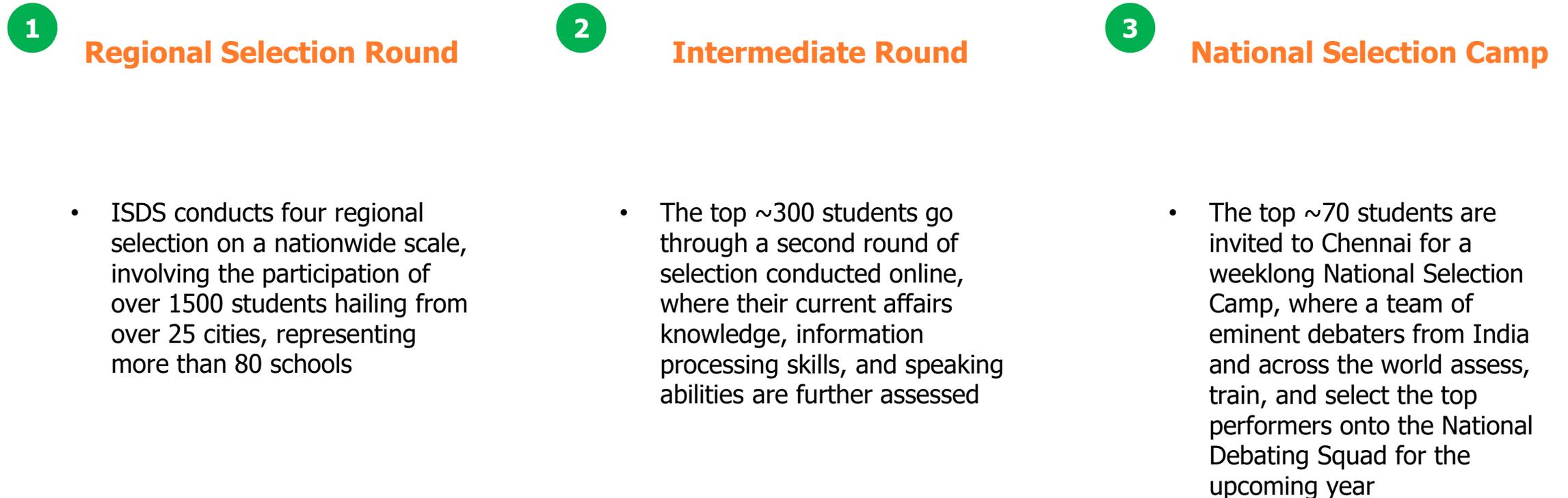
**32**

Championships hosted

**24**

Host nations

# To select the team that attends these championships, ISDS conducts an expansive hybrid national selection



# Selected students are trained intensively from January to July across content, style, and strategy

## Content

### Objective:

To increase the team's overall knowledge base in the context of debates, so they can apply this to any debates

### Activities:

- Detailed research tasks on topics ranging from international politics to pop culture
- Content primers delivered by experts on particular subjects
- Periodic online quizzes that test them on their research through fact-based and argument-based questions

## Strategy

### Objective:

To sharpen the debating skill of each student on the team, and structure prep time to maximize the team's strengths

### Activities:

- Prep observations and feedback for multiple debates
- One-to-one sessions tailored to specific speaker positions and student development areas
- Games that increase student capacity to think on their feet, e.g.: blind oppositions, rebuttal tennis

## Style

### Objective:

To develop each member's unique style, and strengthen the team's phrasing and persuasiveness

### Activities:

- Speech viewings of a diverse set of celebrated public speakers
- Phrasing practice and feedback after every debate
- Style-based games, e.g.: "1-10", "Apples and oranges"
- Speech deconstruction and rewriting

Practice debates against ISDS Alumni, international former and current best speakers, Indian University debaters, etc.

*"Over January to July, we did about 148 debates against our trainers, and probably won four of them"*

**- Tejas, Team India 2019**



# The Indian Schools Debating Society (ISDS) has represented India at WSDC since 2008, with an inspiring growth trajectory





# The International Competition for Young Debaters (ICYD) is the most prestigious competition for under 15 students in the world

The International Competition for Young Debaters (ICYD) hosted by the Cambridge and Oxford Unions every alternate years is the largest competition for U-15 debaters. International regional rounds are held across Europe, Asia, and the Americas, and the best teams are selected to a Finals day.

ICYD at a glance:

**12**

Regional rounds  
world over

**1000**

Participating  
students

**56**

Selected teams on the  
Final Day



# The Indian Schools Debating Society (ISDS) has represented India at ICYD since 2017, winning the championship twice





# Our core curriculum is developed by successful Team India coaches and the best debaters from around the world



## **Sayeqa Islam: Board member, former Team India coach, ISDS**

- ~20 years of debate coaching experience, with expertise in educational and leadership curriculum development
- Coach, Team India 2010, 2012-13, 2017-2020
- Director, Leadership Strategy, a large UK-based international education non-profit, Ark
- Former Coach, Team England (2015) and Team New Zealand (2004)
- Graduated from Victoria Wellington University in New Zealand



## **Amrithavarshini Venkatesh : Executive Director, ISDS**

- 8 years of experience in debate training
- Head Coach and selector of the Indian National Debate Team 2014-2018, 2021
- Chief Adjudicator, Netherlands World Schools Debating Championships, 2022
- Former Consultant, Dalberg Advisors
- Master of Arts in Development Studies, with a minor in Economics, IIT Madras



## **Dhruva Bhat: Alumni advisor, former Team India coach, ISDS**

- Coach, Team India at AWSDC 2016, 2017, Mini Worlds Chennai 2019, Oldham Cup 2019, and WSDC 2017-2019
- Rhodes Scholar, University of Oxford; Bachelors in Economics, Harvard University
- Co-Founder Lumiere Education
- Debater, Team India 2011, 2012, 2013



## **Atul RH: Head of Curriculum and Training, ISDS**

- Coach, Indian Development Squad 2021
- Quarter Finalist, Asian Championships 2020
- Grand Finalist and Winner of 10+ National Tournaments, Chief Adjudication Panelist of 5+ National University Tournaments
- Bachelor of Engineering, Information Science, M S Ramaiah Institute of Technology, Bangalore



## Our workshops are delivered by the best debaters across the country trained specifically to work with students...



### **Atul R H: Head of Curriculum and Training**

- Quarter Finalist, Asian Championships 2020
- Grand Finalist and Winner of 10+ National Tournaments, Chief Adjudication Panelist of 5+ National University Tournaments
- Coach, India Orange 2021 who were ESL Quarterfinalists at Oxford WSDC 2021



### **Adhipatya Singh: Community Manager, ISDS**

- Coach, Indian debating squad 2022
- ESL Champion, Australasians Debating Championships, 2021
- Chief Adjudicator at 8+ International and National Debates



### **Sudiksha Ravi: National Selections Manager, ISDS**

- National Selections Manager 2023
- Partial Open Double Octofinalist, United Asians Debating Championship, Monash Austral-Asia, 2020
- Grand Finalist and Winner of 10+ National Tournaments, Chief Adjudication Panelist of 5+ National University Tournaments



### **Sumana Alladi: Debate Educator, ISDS**

- UG Student at Madras School of Economics
- Founder and Coach of HLC Debating Society
- Teaching assistant, 'Learn to Speak English - 2021' programme for students in Tamil Nadu



# ...with additional support from our expert alumni and debating experts from the world over



**ISDS**

MASTERCLASS  
**ISLAM**  
JUNE 23  
5:30 PM IST

**AMEERA NATASHA MOORE**  
Graduate of Law, IUI Malaysia  
Chief Adjudication Panel, WSDC 2020  
Australians 2016 Champion  
Team Malaysia 2010

ISDS DEBATING MASTERCLASS GUEST LECTURER PROFILE



**ISDS**

MASTERCLASS  
**DEVELOPMENT ECONOMICS**  
APRIL 14/17/19  
4:30 PM IST

**DHRUVA BHAT**  
Rhodes Scholar  
PhD Student, Oxford University  
Masters in Development Studies, Oxford University  
Bachelors in Economics, Harvard University  
Team India 2011, 2012 and 2013

ISDS DEBATING MASTERCLASS TEACHER PROFILE



**ISDS**

MASTERCLASS  
**INTERNATIONAL TRADE AND ECONOMICS**  
JUNE 30  
06:30 PM IST

**HARISH NATARAJAN**  
Head of Economic Risk, AKE International  
Grand Finalist, WUDC 2016  
European Champion, 2012  
Masters in International Relations, Cambridge University  
Bachelors in Philosophy, Politics and Economics, Oxford University

ISDS DEBATING MASTERCLASS GUEST LECTURER PROFILE



**ISDS**

MASTERCLASS  
**CHINA IN GLOBAL POLITICS**  
APRIL 04/08/13  
7:00 PM IST

**PADMAPRIYA**  
PhD Student, NYU Steinhardt  
Yenching Scholar, MA in China Studies  
MA in Development Studies, IIT Madras  
Team India 2009 and 2012

ISDS DEBATING MASTERCLASS TEACHER PROFILE



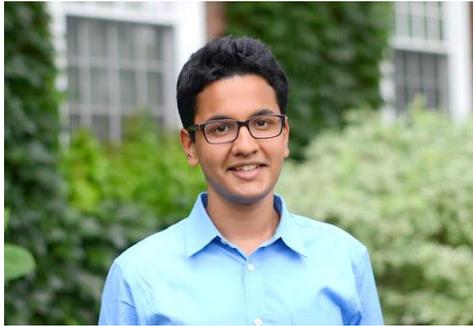
**ISDS**

MASTERCLASS  
**NUCLEAR TECHNOLOGY**  
JUNE 27  
5:30 PM IST

**AYAL HAYUT-MAN**  
Former Assistant Director, External Relations  
Israel Atomic Energy Commission  
PhD Student of Jewish Philosophy  
Masters in History and Philosophy of Science  
Bachelors in International Relations  
Tel Aviv University

ISDS GUEST LECTURER PROFILE

# ISDS alumni go to some of the best universities and workplaces globally, while continuing to support ISDS as trainers and coaches!



**Dhruva Bhat**

Director, Lumiere  
Rhodes Scholar, Oxford University  
Bachelors in Economics, Harvard



**Padmapriya Govindarajan**

PhD, Media, Culture, and  
Communication, NYU  
Yenching Scholar, Peking University



**Siddarth Shrikanth**

MPP-MBA at Harvard Kennedy  
School and Stanford Graduate  
School of Business



**Tejaswini Krishnaprasad**

Associate, Kirkland and Ellis  
LLB, Durham University



**Dhananjay Ashok**

Masters in CS, CMU  
Double Major, Economics and CS,  
University of Toronto



**Saranya Ravindran**

Pursuing a BA LLB at NALSAR  
University



**Bhavya Shah**

Bachelors in Mathematics and  
Computer Science, Stanford  
University



**Ananya Ganesh**

Incoming Freshman at Harvard  
University



# Our work with students has resulted in a number of them setting up successful extracurricular debate clubs in school

ISDS workshops and debate camps for middle and high school students introduce them to parliamentary debate...

...and encourage them to use the lessons to lead debate clubs within their schools



In 2021, Sumana from **Chennai** started the **HLC Debating Society**. They have started sessions with 20 students in what is a small school that was new to debating. Sumana has started this club based on a session she attended by ISDS on starting debate clubs in high school.

After being the **first from Jaipur to be selected to WSDC Team India in 2018**, Manya started a **WSDC debate club in Neerja Modi School**. Following this, the club now has 50+ students each year, and four students have made it to Indian squads since.



In 2018, Purvi worked with students in **Manthan International School, Hyderabad** after attending Camp. Including herself, 4 Manthan students had since been selected to the Indian squad. They also **hosted their first WSDC style competition** in September, 2020.



## Visit our pages and reach out!

Website:

**[www.indianschoolsdebatingsociety.com](http://www.indianschoolsdebatingsociety.com)**

Instagram/Twitter:

**[@TeamIndiaWSDC](#)**

Facebook:

**[ISDS: Indian Schools Debating Society](#)**

Linkedin:

**[Indian Schools Debating Society](#)**

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[ragini@indianschoolsdebatingsociety.com](mailto:ragini@indianschoolsdebatingsociety.com)

[amrithavarshini@indianschoolsdebatingsociety.com](mailto:amrithavarshini@indianschoolsdebatingsociety.com)