



ANNUAL REPORT 2019

*Striving for excellence in the
heartland of rural India*



At Mrida, we believe that education must be for achieving excellence. This will come if intensive effort is made in areas that children from this region are likely to excel in, backed by the cultural capital of the region. We have identified these two areas as sports and robotics for now.

79% of our children are from farming families and the rest have family members running small-time shops, businesses and jobs. All the children from our community shelter home come from impoverished farming families that belong to Gond and Baiga tribes. Malnutrition among these families is as high 90%. Average annual household income is Rs. 30,000.

Cover Page: Jayanti Wate made it to the nationals in wushu under- 56 kg, a first for the girl of this region.



VISION

To bring about a revolutionary transformation in the lives of underprivileged children in the Mahakaushal area.

MISSION

Mrida, as the name suggests, stands for both soil and joy in Sanskrit. We will provide the platform for all such children to excel, realizing their full potential in a joyful way.

Above: Class 6 and 7 children from Government middle school, Sagar won the best robot design award at IIT-Indore after 6 months of intensive effort

MEET THE TEAM

Since our early days, Priya, Digvijay and Chandra shekhar have helped Mrida build a strong foundation to serve maximum children in this region. They have realised that greatest of human achievements and joy is in serving the poor with a combination of heart and mind. Satyajit and Kailash joined the founding team later to help build robotics and sports as areas of excellence within Mrida.



Priya engaging in a classroom session

Priya Nadkarni

Founder - Fundraising, Finance, School

After graduating from Mumbai's St. Xavier's College, she studied journalism in Chennai. At that time, she traveled to different parts of rural India writing on various issues. She worked with Business Standard in Mumbai for 2 years before embarking upon her MBA at the Indian School of Business in Hyderabad. Soon after, she worked in the impact investment sector at Unitus Capital in Bangalore. She quit in 2012 to work for PRADAN on an employability program in Mandla district in Madhya Pradesh. She realized that skilling was a band aid solution to the problems of the region, and traveled to different schools in South India to explore effective schooling models. In 2016, she

started Mrida along with Digvijay with the dream of developing excellence in the region through education.

Digvijay Singh

Co-founder - Operations

Digvijay worked with PRADAN before founding Mrida, where he was responsible for starting and scaling PRADAN's employability program and starting the Mohgaon-based women's self-help group Federation with 1000+ women members. Prior to PRADAN, Digvijay completed a degree in rural management from XIM Bhubaneswar and is a graduate of Hindu College, Delhi University.



Digvijay Singh at a presentation by students of Sagar Govt School to State Finance Minister Tarun Bhanot

Chandra shekhar Rao

Co-founder - HR & Academics

Chandra shekhar is a self made man who has fended for himself since Class ten. He was working with women self-help groups (SHGs), gender, technology and youth at PRADAN. However, he always wanted to work on exploring ways to make education more relevant to the needs of the children here. What started off informally, led Chandra shekhar to join Mrida. He holds a B.Tech from the Dibrugarh University Institute of Technology and is an avid robotics, technology and sports enthusiast.



Chandrashekhar on an excursion with students



Satyajit Sen in a Robotics Workshop at Mrida

Satyajit Sen

Program Head - Robotics

Satyajit was working as a robotics engineer in Sirena Technologies in Bangalore. However, he felt that robotics and technology could be harnessed to solve problems in rural India. He joined Mrida in August 2018 where he leads the robotics program design and execution. Satyajit holds a B.Tech and M.Tech from Vel-Tech University

Kailash Raj Bhatta

Program Head - Sports

Kailash has worked with several non-profits in rehabilitation and education in Nepal. He has played football and basketball at various levels in Nepal and is in charge of developing the on-ground engagement in sports for children as well as working with the coaches. Kailash holds an MA in Sociology from Tribhuvan University, Nepal.



Students on the field with Kailash

Testing robots ahead of IIITDM event



Wushu Practice



Under-14 football trials to represent Mandla



Karadi Class



Learning to Solder



First girls' football team in the region



EDUCATION EXCELLENCE

Sports

We started football and wushu programs for all our residential school and Government school children in 2 villages. This year, we had 150 children who were introduced to football and wushu for the very first time.

- 3 participants selected for the national football camp held in Mandla - 2 of these players played in the nationals
- 9 girls competed in the state level wushu tournament held in Ujjain - 1 of them - Jayanti Wate played in the under-56 kg weight category in the nationals at Jalandhar



*Left: Jayanti Wate made it to the nationals in wushu under- 56 kg, a first for the girl of this region.
Right: Ankit, Devendra and Vinod from our program who were selected for the under-14 national camp*

Technology Application

Robotics program is our application of technology to solve problems that we feel the tribals hold special engineering capabilities. As an example, the tribal communities here make their own houses with mud and kothi to keep their crops secure. They make these from mud and logs of strong wood from the forest and most of them practice repair and maintenance work once every 5 years. We are using this cultural capital in the field of mechatronics with a focused four year course that covers manual robotics, wireless robotics, app designing and artificial intelligence.

Teams from Riverside and Government Middle School, Phulsagar where we piloted this program won the best robot design award at IIT-Indore's Techfest.

It is our endeavour to keep finding more such departments of excellence with children in the coming years where a little focused effort can yield excellent results.



Children from the communities here build toy cars with the maneuvering rods with locally available materials.



Using the existing cultural capital, we are taking children towards mechatronics and they are now building robots

SECURING LIVELIHOOD

We realized that Computer and English are two key programs that can provide a reasonably secure livelihood along with agriculture that is the backbone of this region. Thus, we have ensured that our children from Class 1 onwards are well-versed in these skills.

We continue to work on basic schooling through a learning by doing approach. Majority of our teachers are local and we work hard to train them on a day to day basis.

For English, we have used the Karadi Path English program, which has helped our teacher improve her skills, and thus, in turn, aided her to teach effectively.

In the field of Computer Science, we are teaching Scratch programming to children – eventually these children will learn coding. We are also conducting agriculture courses in collaboration with local farmers.



OVERALL WELL BEING

At Mrida, we are focusing on the inner and external well-being of each child. Recognizing that malnutrition was a terrible scourge in this region, we started the community shelter home last year where we accommodated and fed 40 children. These children are participants of our sports programs and/or study at Riverside. Parents of these children provide food grain and we supplement the diet with vegetables, eggs and fish.

For inner well-being, we are drawing inspiration from our own traditional culture of yoga. We have introduced upa yoga from Class 1 onwards that is part of daily practice for the children and teachers.

Every year, we dedicate one month to celebrations that involve music, dance and theatre. Children sing bhajans, sufi songs and other devotional songs in the school every day.



From top left: Children meditating and doing upa yoga at the start of the day | Students having lunch in groups | Diwali celebrations

Students from Government Middle School, Sagar with Mandla Zilla Panchayat CEO, SS Rawat



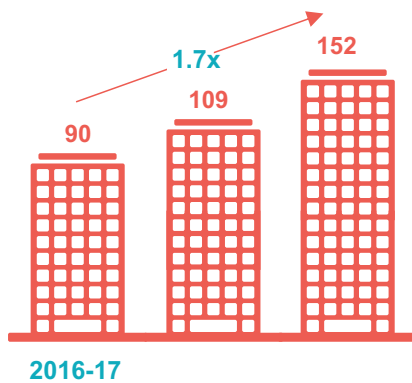
New faces at our village football camps



OVERALL OUTREACH

The last two years saw us expand by leaps and bounds

Number of Children in school



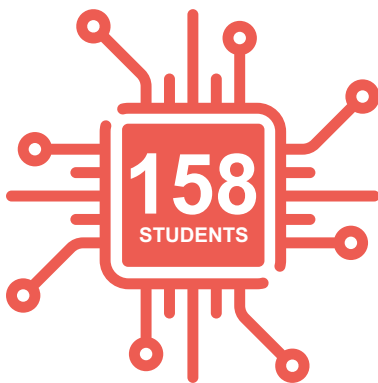
Number of Children in community shelter home



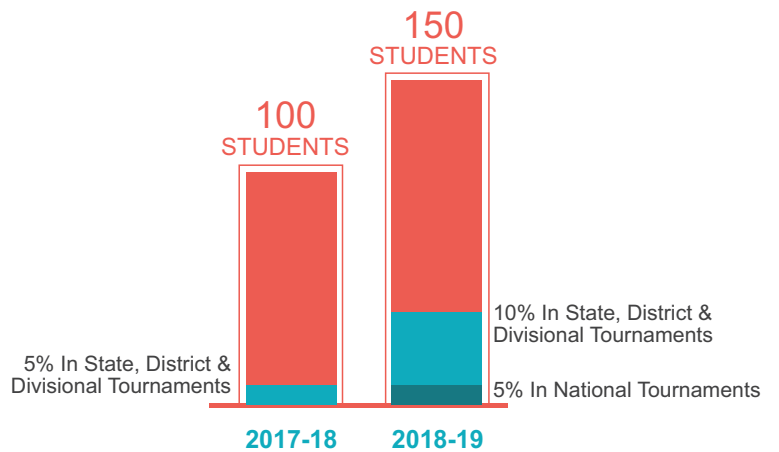
These students are participants of football/wushu programs and/or school

Students of Sports and Robotics make us proud

Number of Students in Robotics and Tinkering



Students participating in Football and Wushu





Above: Devendra Bhavedi (jersey no. 5) from our community shelter home played central defense in the MP under-14 team after 1 year of coaching
Below: Students performing at the Annual Day Function

SPECIAL EVENTS

U-14 Inter-district Football Tournament & State Camp



We organized the first ever inter-district football selection tournament in Mandla in collaboration with district football association. This has given a great fillip to sports in the district. This tournament had 24 district teams across MP participation & culminated in a national camp that we organized. The camp saw selection of 3 participants of our football program to the national camp – 2 of them selected to represent Madhya Pradesh

Annual Day Function



Annual Day celebrations at the School in February 2019 saw the children preparing some unique acts: a mime performance on Oscar Wilde's The Selfish Giant that saw some really expressive performances by students, the Krishna Act saw a well-synced performance by students.

Robotics at Republic Day Parade



Teams from the Government Middle School, Sagar had the unique opportunity of showcasing their robotics skills and learnings. They created a robotics tableau for Republic Day parade in Mandla that was showcased to Madhya Pradesh Finance Minister Tarun Bhanot as well as other eminent Government officials.

Inter Village Quiz Competition



A quiz competition was organized in the school and many teams, comprising students of varied ages, from 15 nearby villages participated in this quiz. Team from Khisi won the quiz competition. It was our first step in exposing our students to healthy competition.

VOLUNTEERS



Jessica Grieco and Claudia Petrolini of Italy who spent 3 weeks in February 2018 and helped us with football coaching and inspiring the children of Boda Silli village work hard every day



Tilly Upton who spent 2 weeks in April 2018 and helped train teachers



Shraddha Jha who spent 2 weeks in September 2017 and showed teachers new approaches of engaging with language in the classroom

TESTIMONIALS

“

My brief volunteer experience at Riverside Natural School was not only enriching but truly inspiring. The visionary founders are cognizant of the needs of the world and striving to provide holistic education. However at the same time they are ensuring that there is no disconnect with the background of the children they are catering to and are preparing them to address real life challenges prevalent in their context. The commitment of the founders and dedication of the teachers and staff are contagious.

- Shraddha Jha ”

“

The school is amazing, here children can discover and express all their potentiality; the football program is enlightening.

- Claudia Petrolini ”

“

I feel your growth plans are paced with a very well balanced approach. If I ever start a company I will definitely consider recruiting your students who are showing so much promise with creativity.

- Saravanan G ”

A Note To Our Supporters & Mentors

Thank you to everybody who has supported us financially and morally over the years. Two individuals deserve special mention: Vinayak Lohani of Parivaar, who continues to inspire us and support us. He has shown us how to work on the field in the true spirit of service. Nimesh Sumati of Caring Friends, who helped us with funds and feedback when we most needed it.

MEDIA COVERAGE

grin.news

Robotics, ‘scratch programming’ in this tribal village school in India



Grin [Follow](#)

Feb 22, 2018 · 4 min read

Can you select a spot on the banks of a river in deep into the forested tribal lands of central India and build a school for some of the poorest children in the country which teach them everything from robotics to computers and innovation and let them design creative solutions for problems in their lives? Yes, and here’s how Priya Nadkarni and Digvijay Singh did it at the Riverside Natural School at Mandla in Madhya Pradesh.

Myntra Unforgettables - An inspiring tale of young football enthusiasts

India

Updated Jan 22, 2019 | 14:15 IST | Monica Chaturvedi Charna



Myntra and Adidas have partnered with Mrida Education & Welfare Society to promote and nurture talent for football, among disadvantaged school kids in Mandla village, Madhya Pradesh. Watch the inspiring video



Mandla village in Madhya Pradesh is breaking many stereotypes and creating a unique identity for itself. Young girls in this village play football alongside boys and are even encouraged to take on the game professionally. Thanks to the unshakable support of parents and teachers, football has become the identity of more than 200 young boys and girls in this village. One such achiever, Niranjana Parte is on a journey to fulfil her father’s incomplete dream of playing professional football. Parte’s outstanding performance got her a chance to play for the Chief Minister’s Cup and the young football enthusiast is now targeting to play at the national level.

The credit for making football a culture in this small village

Kicking It up a Notch: Football Is Opening New Worlds for Tribal Kids in MP

The kids love football, and the program helps them channel their talent in the right direction.

Meet Priya Nadkarni, a biz grad who quit banking to teach tribal kids life skills

Priya Nadkarni's vision is to create a seamless education set-up for the tribal children in Mandla District so that their education will help them earn their livelihood after moving out of school



Rashmi Patil
Edex Live



THEY STRIVE TO **WORK** TOWARDS THE
UPLIFTMENT AND **BETTERMENT** OF THE
PEOPLE IN **MANDLA**.

CONTRIBUTIONS

Mrida Education and Welfare Society is a registered charity in India and all contributions fall under the Income Tax Exemptions Section 80(G) of the Income Tax Act. Contributions can be made in two ways:

Bank Transfer

Account Name: Mrida Education and Welfare Society
Bank name: Central Bank of India
Branch name: Mohgaon
Account No. 3732264642
Account Type: Savings Account
IFSC Code: CBIN0281549, **MICR:** 481016695

Cheque

To: Mrida Education and Welfare Society
Address: Riverside Natural School
Next to Central Bank of India
Mohgaon, Mandla - 481663





जब तक जीना, तब तक
नही रूको, जब
तक कि लक्ष्य न प्र
हो जाए ॥
रानी विद्या

OUR INSPIRATIONS

Our Parents
Swami Vivekananda
Sadhguru Jaggi Vasudev
Sri M
Vinayak Lohani
Sachin Tendulkar
J. Krishnamurti
Andres Iniesta
APJ Abdul Kalam
Uddhav Bharali
Sonam Wangchuk
Arvind Gupta
SS Kalbag
Vandana Prasad
Sri Aurobindo
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Homi Bhabha
Satyendranath Bose
CV Raman
Larry Page
Sergey Brin
Guido van Rossum
Linus Torvalds
Kaneez Fatima



**MRIDA EDUCATION
& WELFARE SOCIETY**

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