



NON-PROFIT ORGANISATION


# MRIDA

**MRIDA EDUCATION & WELFARE SOCIETY**

NURTURING EXCELLENCE IN TRIBAL CHILDREN THROUGH ACADEMICS, SPORTS & TECHNOLOGY.

## ANNUAL REPORT 2023-24



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# MRIDA

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**Vision:** Our vision is to end poverty in tribal belts of rural India

**Mission:** Creating a platform for excellence and employment for the region

## THE OBJECTIVE

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Mrida exists to fulfill the education dream and career aspirations of tribal children from remote rural areas in Madhya Pradesh, India. Formed in April 2016, our vision is to end poverty in tribal belts of rural India. We work to develop career, vocational and skills training to empower middle grade and high school students to build a better future for themselves, their families, and their communities. Above all, our work exists to serve the neediest children of the region - 10% of all our children come from single parent households with 2% being orphans, living with their guardians who usually happen to be old grandparents, unable to care for a child.



# FOUNDER'S NOTE



As I look around, I see Rameshwari still tending to her infected hand and the girl who scored for Madhya Pradesh playing in a torn boot, hoping it will last another month. We have new teachers and children, setting things right from the ground up. Here in Mohgaon, the starting point often feels like it's below zero—there's so much to do before we can even talk about education.

Eight years have passed since we began this journey with Mrida Education and Welfare Society, yet it feels like we started just yesterday. We still face how much we don't know and how often we fail. But these weren't failures; they were simply curves on our path, lifting us up individually and as an organization, allowing Mrida to grow.

Our days and nights are consumed by the struggles, failures, and successes of the children we serve. This year, we celebrated those who have worked with us for over five years—from teachers to the Amma who has cooked for the children since the days when the kitchen was a tin shed with wooden planks.

I see the football coach who has devoted over 10,000 hours, even on a field that turns into a muddy plot during the monsoon and a dusty arena in the summer. In a world driven by numbers, I see my co-founder working tirelessly—not just to keep things running but to ensure our work truly makes an impact, lifting both economic poverty and self-esteem.

This past year has showcased the commitment and sacrifice of Mrida's team. Despite frustration and anguish, their dedication always prevails. And then, I see the children clearing their exams, whether in the classroom or on the field, practicing harder, smiling all the while. I remember the first local football tournament we took the children to. Though they lost in the senior category, the winning team's coach said, "These children are going to make you very proud." Today, that pride is becoming evident.

I've never seen a lotus bloom in muddy water, but I imagine it's like what I see with Mrida today—growing from the mud yet so distinctly different from the environment it's rooted in. But there is so much more to do. Your support is like the air we breathe—we cannot exist without it. Our hearts are filled with gratitude and deep love for your kindness.

I don't know how big an impact we will ultimately make, but I assure you the team at Mrida will give their all, every single time. Reflecting on their dedication, I bow my head in humility and strive to do better—perhaps in the coming year.

*Thank you for your unwavering support.*

**Digvijay Singh, Founder & Priya Nadkarni, Co-Founder | Mrida**



# MEET OUR BOARD MEMBERS

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**1. Abhishek Pachori, Vice President:** Abhishek has extensive work experience with PRADAN, having worked in the Mandla region for 11 years. He is closely involved in liaisoning with the Government and institution building for PRADAN-promoted women SHG Federation and Farmer Producer Companies. Abhishek holds an MBA from XIDAS, Jabalpur.

**2. Neha Gupta, Member:** Neha is the MP lead at Transform Rural India, contributing in implementing the vision, strategy and development activities in collaborative engagement with all the stakeholders in Madhya Pradesh. She has been a Prime Minister Rural Development Fellow (PMRDF) in Ministry of Rural Development, working closely with district administration and line departments. She has also worked in PRADAN for almost 6 years, where she was directly engaged with community mobilization processes; promotion and nurturing of women SHGs and its apex institutions; planning and implementation of livelihood activities. Neha holds a B. Tech (Agricultural Engineering) from College of Agricultural Engineering, JNKVV.

**3. Sumendera Punia, Treasurer:** Sumendera is a senior program executive at PRADAN and is the team in-charge for the Mohgaon team. He has worked in the development sector in this region for 10 years. Sumendera holds an MBA in Rural Management from XIM Bhubaneswar.

**4. Richa Pachori, Joint Secretary:** Richa is a trained teacher who has taught various classes for many years. She holds a B.Ed from Jabalpur.

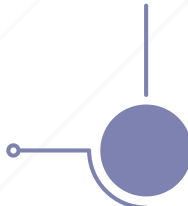
**5. Shruti Dubey, Member:** Shruti is a program executive with the Narayanganj team at PRADAN. She has a total work experience of over 10 years working on livelihood and agriculture projects in the Mandla region. Shruti holds a B.Sc in Biotechnology and a B.Ed from Jabalpur

# MILESTONES

\*since Inception in 2016



**3** Players in India's  
Top Football Clubs



Villages reached  
in 2 districts **73**



**368** children  
enrolled



Know python **5.9%**



**37** Children  
represented MP  
in Junior, Sub-  
junior and  
Senior  
Categories in  
Football



Meals  
served in  
2023-24 **192k+**



**1060** Children  
participated in  
sports and  
tobacco  
awareness  
activities



# PROBLEM STATEMENT

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Mandla district in **Eastern Madhya Pradesh**, a predominantly tribal region, faces significant educational and socio-economic challenges. In the 2021-22 academic year, the district had 212,235 school-going children pre-dominantly from tribal communities such as Gond, Baiga and Panikas.

Most families in Mandla are involved in seasonal activities such as agriculture, collecting tendu leaves, and gathering mahua flowers, with an average annual household **income of approximately ₹30,000–40,000**. Coupled with limited employment opportunities, this has contributed to endemic issues such as malnutrition, alcoholism, and seasonal migration.

A critical factor exacerbating these challenges is the lack of permanent teachers in government schools, leading to poor attendance and learning outcomes among first-generation learners, who are the primary students in these schools. With the absence of local role models who have succeeded through education, parents send their children to school with little expectation of improved outcomes, further perpetuating a cycle of poverty and educational neglect.

There is an urgent need to develop a holistic education model from pre-primary education to livelihood opportunities, equipping tribal first-generation learners with the skills and knowledge required to achieve self-sufficiency and positively impact their communities.





**PROJECT  
HIGHLIGHTS: 2023-24'**

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# SPORTS

## Narmada Valley Football Academy

Our award-winning and highly effective excellence program is the only residential program with a focus on training both girls and boys in playing and coaching, providing them competitive opportunities as well as representation in district and state teams without compromising on education and a holistic development for all children.



SUMMARY	GIRLS	BOYS
TOTAL MATCHES PLAYED	25	24
WINNING PERCENTAGE	92%	75%
AVG. GOALS SCORED PER MATCH	7.68 goals	4.79 goals
Footballing Hours achieved	<b>900 Hours</b>	

### Achievements

- Subroto Cup National Level Participation for the second consecutive year.
- Khelo MP Youth Games - Winner and Runner-Up.
- U17 Boys selected for SGFI Nationals.
- Khelo India U-17 Girls League, Delhi - Runner-up





**BUILDING  
COMMUNITIES  
AROUND  
FOOTBALL**



**Reliance**  
Foundation



# BUILDING COMMUNITIES AROUND FOOTBALL



Started in 2020-21 with 308 children, the program expanded to 1060 children from 43 villages and 2 districts in 2023-24.

The success of Mrida's girls' football team and the fact that the program has happened consistently each year, have translated to improvement in participation of girls in the league. From 50 girls participating in the first edition, 2023-24 saw 273 girls in the U-10 age group, the highest so far.

One of the objectives of the program is to make living in the village more enjoyable for children and adults. 10 mini-grounds (inclusive play spaces) were established in collaboration with village Panchayats. Committees comprising village youth have been trained and tasked with ensuring that the space is utilized for inclusive sports activities.

Over 700 children were educated on the dangers of tobacco consumption, common among children in the region along side the league.

35 community coaches were developed with 5 being female coaches who completed the AIFF entry level licensing program.

Mrida's efforts have not only strengthened community bonds but have also paved the way for future growth and development through sports.

# TRANSFORMING THE SCHOOL BUILDING



In a dazzling transformation, our school building embraced a new look, courtesy of **Infosys Foundation's grant provided to Dr. Shrikant Jichkar Foundation for School beautification.** Through this initiative, academic concepts have been explained through wall paintings. 'Prayaas..Ek Koshish,' the CSR initiative of **Infosys Nagpur,** shines as the guiding light behind this remarkable makeover.

**Before**



**After**



# FORMAL SCHOOLING



Mrida's work continued to expand and deepen this year as we began **2023-24** with a total of **309 students** with **140 being hostel students** and **169 being day scholars**. Of these, **138 were girls** while **171 were boys**.

## Results for Academic year 2023-24

This year, our students have delivered impressive academic results, with some standout achievements alongside areas for growth.

### Class 12

Harshita Wate scored 86% in the Agriculture group, earning the second-highest score in the Mohgaon block. Her achievement is a testament to her hard work and the quality of education at Mrida.

### Class 10

Our second Class 10 batch achieved a 93% pass rate. Faria Anjum topped both the school and Mohgaon block with 90.4%, a remarkable achievement that highlights the strength of our academic program.

### Class 8

All Class 8 students passed the board exams with the top five positions secured by girls, each scoring above 80%, including two standout footballers.

### Class 5

Class 5 faced challenges, with 9 of 29 students requiring supplementary exams. These students joined Mrida only this year and were behind grade level. With focused summer support, all students passed the supplementary exams, conducted in June.



Harshita Wate

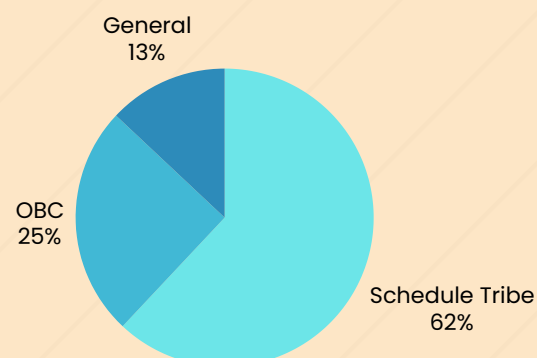
## Student Demography

58

New students enrolled in 2023-24

33

Total Staff Strength including teachers, wardens, cooks, coaches and support staff



# CARE UNDER MRIDA



## Focusing on physical and emotional well-being

In 2023-24, our hostel served a total of 140 students with 60 girls and 80 boys. The hostel underpins all our other work as nutrition, education and sports outcomes improve significantly for residential students. From the time children enter, the Mrida hostel follows a dedicated time-table, daily processes such as prayer and yoga in the morning, checking on every child's physical well-being, celebrating festivals with special meals, dedicated playing, study and computer time as well as outings for exposure.

### Impact:

- 1. Anemia-free hostel** - Every child who comes to our hostel is anemic. Through careful dietary interventions, regular testing and medications (for extreme cases), our hostel became anemia-free this year. Over 60% women in reproductive age group in Mandla are anemic - children born to them are born with physical and cognitive deficiencies.
- 2. From underweight to normal BMI** - 98% of our students are in the normal BMI range with 2% still underweight, demonstrating the benefits of a healthy routine and diet.
- 3. Increase in local farmer incomes** - We use locally grown millets such as kodo and finger millet as well as vegetables, generating local demand for these products from farmers and FPOs.



# TECHNOLOGY HIGHLIGHTS

## Narmada Valley Avishkar Labs



Our students are actively engaged in learning programming, typically during the evenings:

- **Beginner Level:** 41% of students are learning Scratch, a block-based programming language.
- **Mid-Level:** 23% of students are learning HTML and Python.
- **Advanced Level:** 36% of students are progressing in advanced Scratch and basic Python.

All of these students are first-generation learners who had no prior access to computers before joining us.

**Future Focus:** We're exploring career opportunities for students in emerging fields like coding, AI, and drone technology.





# PARTNERSHIPS

## Simply Sports Foundation

Mrida's Partnership with SSF translated to better access to playing opportunities in Delhi for the children as they facilitated accommodation support for the U17 Girls team. With support from SSF, our student athletes got access to sports science support that included dedicated psychology and nutrition sessions as well as help with designing a fitness and conditioning regimen.

## Feeding India by Zomato

In its second year, our partnership with Feeding India has helped us provide more than 2,30,000+ meals to 230 children in 2023-24. Feeding India, a Zomato giveback, is a not for profit organization, designing interventions to reduce hunger among underserved communities in India.

## Lotus Petal Foundation

This Partnership helps us provide classes in Math and English for students of Class 3 to 9 that are conducted by well-trained teachers, through a two way live teaching process. This has allowed us to maintain quality and consistency of classes, particularly since teacher attrition is very high in this region.





# PARTNER TESTIMONIALS

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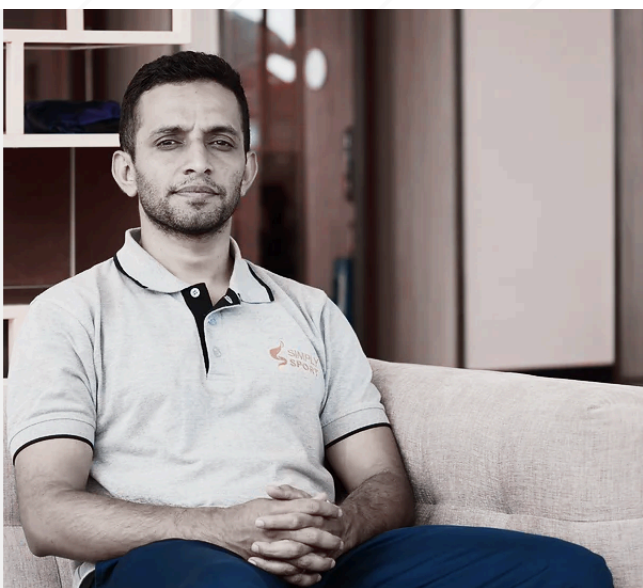
## VISHAL KUMAR – HEAD, FEEDING INDIA BY ZOMATO:



“Feeding India is proud to partner with MRIDA, an organization committed to improving child health and education in the challenging terrains of Madhya Pradesh.

Mrida has been an exemplary partner to Feeding India. Their dedication to transparency, efficiency, and timely reporting has been essential to the success of our joint initiatives. We look forward to strengthening our partnership and creating a greater impact on the lives of these children.”

## Darshan NK– HEAD OF PROGRAMS, SIMPLY SPORTS:



“We have been working with Mrida' team for the past 3 years and as one of our old partner's Mrida has shown tremendous growth in sports and education. We have closely worked together not just providing sporting interventions but also offering scholarships and training on female health. The team led by Priya and Digvijay have shown commendable professionalism and communication throughout the engagement. It is really good to know the progress made by Mrida's girl's Team in the last couple of years by going to uncharted territories and breaking barriers. Looking forward to working closely in the coming years.”



# IMPACT STORIES



Hemlata Uikey

**Hemlata**, a 24-year-old from Jhandatola village, was raised in a rural agricultural family with limited opportunities. Before joining Mrida, she faced challenges in accessing quality education and had no clear hopes for her future. Through Mrida's support, she discovered football and received assistance in education, training, and health. Hemlata gained valuable life skills, improved her health, and developed confidence. She now envisions a bright future, where she aims to pursue higher education and help other children access quality learning. Football has empowered her to break barriers, and she is proud of her growth in both academics and life. Hemlata is now a school teacher & girls' warden with Mrida. She is earning enough to support her sister's education, get medical treatment for her mother and has built a pucca house for the family.

**Anjeshwar**, 23, from the rural village of Kharrachapar, struggled with limited educational resources and poor economic conditions. He had little hope of improving his family's situation until he joined Mrida through his brother's recommendation. Football became a turning point for him, as he not only learned the sport but also gained skills in hostel management and leadership. With Mrida's help, Anjeshwar became a football coach, a hostel warden, and even earned a football license. Now, he dreams of continuing his learning while supporting his community by promoting education and healthy living. He is earning enough to buy back his family land that was pawned by his parents to buy alcohol.



Anjeshwar Poosam



# IMPACT STORIES



**Tejaswini Maravi**, hailing from Umardhi village in Mandla district, joined the Mrida program in 2016 as a bright and passionate football player. Despite her humble beginnings in a Scheduled Tribe (ST) family, Tejaswini has participated in high-profile tournaments such as Khelo MP and the Subroto Mukherjee Tournament, showcasing her dedication and talent.

Balancing both her education and sports, she has become an inspiring role model among her peers. Her journey highlights the holistic approach of the Mrida program, which empowers students to excel academically and athletically. With the strong support of her parents and community, Tejaswini dreams of playing football at the national level, determined to represent her state and country, proving the life-changing impact of sports and education on tribal youth.





# AWARDS & RECOGNITION



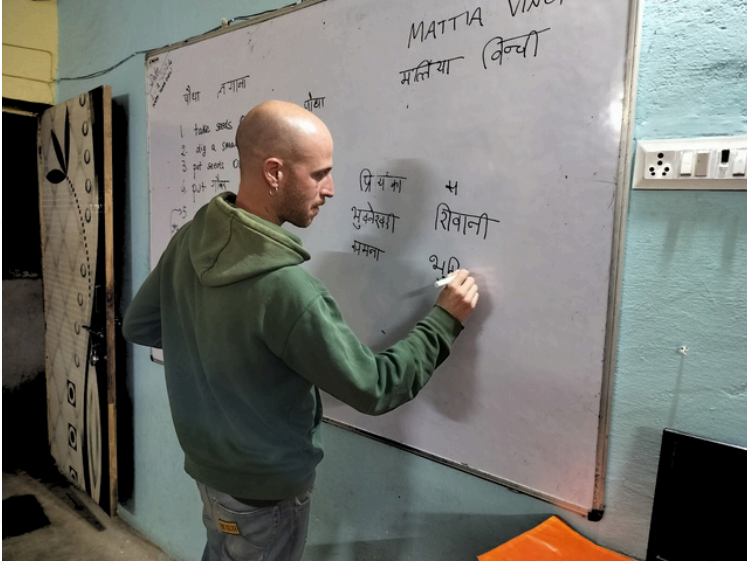
**Shri Sathya Sai Award for Human Excellence  
in Yoga and Sports**



**Nominee for the AIFF Grassroots Football Awards 2023  
for Best Rural Development Program.**

# VOLUNTEERS

Friends of Mrida



At Mrida, we are incredibly fortunate to be supported by passionate volunteers from all walks of life. Our volunteers bring diverse skills, energy, and commitment, helping us make a tangible impact in the communities we serve.

From the youngest contributors, like Ojas—a 9th grader from Bangalore’s Kumaran’s Academy, who raised funds through an online fundraising initiative to international volunteers like Mattia Vinci and Alessandro - each brings a unique perspective to our mission.

Mattia, a self-taught coder from Italy, traveled across India to teach coding and other subjects to rural students, while Alessandro beautifully documented his experience, offering a heartfelt glimpse into life at Mrida.

Alessandro’s talent also shines through the stunning photographs he captured for this year’s Annual Report, giving everyone a vibrant window into our journey. These incredible individuals are the heart and soul of Mrida’s volunteer community, driving our mission forward with their dedication and passion.



# IMPLEMENTING ROBUST SYSTEMS



## Impact Monitoring

Mrida uses Twimo, a cloud-based Management Information System (MIS), that plays a pivotal role in enhancing the efficiency and impact of our work. Specifically designed for non-profits, the cloud-based software provides an integrated platform to streamline program management, enhance communication, and demonstrate measurable outcomes to donors and stakeholders.

### Leveraging data for impact -

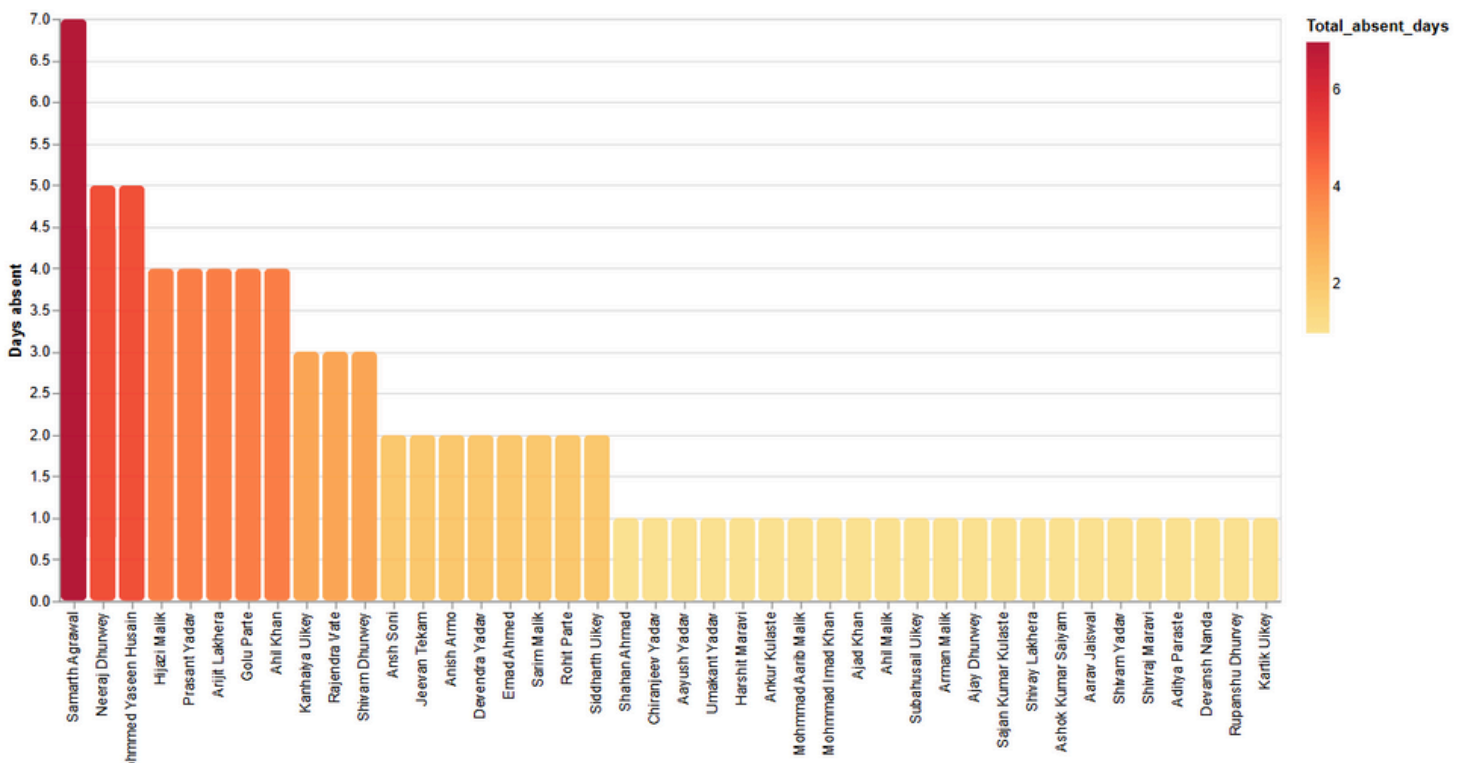
Students from our first batch who have been part of the Technology program, helped us in collecting, managing and entering the data. This helps us understand trends in sickness, absenteeism at school as well as fundraising, making us an impactful and responsive organization.

### Sample reports :

Select\_1\_Academic\_year 2023-24  
Select\_2\_Month Sep  
Select\_3\_Class All  
Select\_4\_Gender Male  
Select\_5\_Reason Sickness

#### Students by most days of absence

Click on a bar to filter students. Shift-click for multiple selection. Click on chart whitespace to select all.

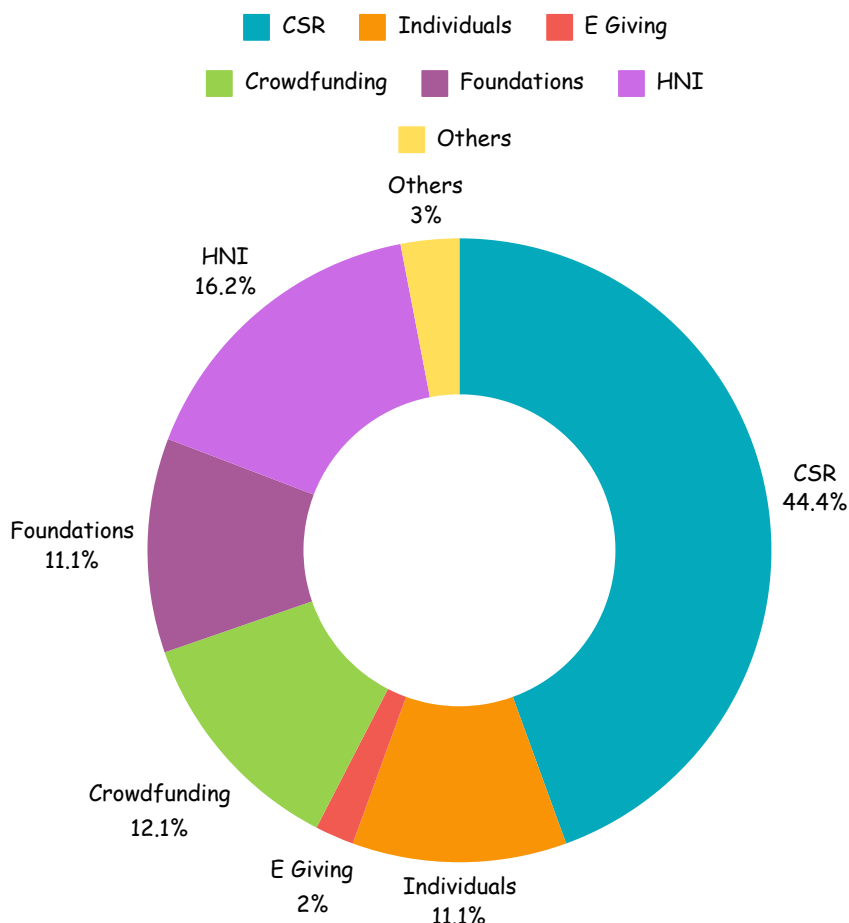


# RESOURCE MOBILIZATION



Mrida's funding was diversified across multiple categories through which we were able to impact 1400 children and supporting 33 staff members whose income primarily depends on Mrida.

Corporate CSR funding was the largest contributor, making up 44% of the total funds. This marked a shift from previous years where individual donors were the primary source of support. High Net Worth Individuals (HNIs) contributed 16%, while foundations, individual donations, and crowdfunding contributed 11%, 11%, and 12% respectively. Employee giving accounted for 2%, and other sources, including prize money, constituted 3%.



## Key Partnerships for this year include the following:



- OYO's support for accommodation in Delhi for the Khelo India U-17 Girls league
- EasemyDish and Boudhik IP's support for food for the Khelo India U-17 Girls League
- Hyderabad-based RV Diya Charitable Trust's support for rice each month helps to supplement existing support from Feeding India by Zomato

# FUTURE PLANS



## CAMPUS CONSTRUCTION

- The goal is to create a secure, well-equipped environment for tribal and underprivileged children that supports holistic development through enhanced infrastructure, safe learning spaces, proper sports facilities, and improved living conditions.
- Mrida has already **impacted 1400** across 73 villages in two districts. The proposed campus will accommodate 450 students from Eastern Madhya Pradesh, providing comprehensive education to improve employability through diverse skills, academic excellence, and athletic development in football
- The initiative also aims to empower the local economy by introducing modern career opportunities like entrepreneurship and sports coaching, fostering talent development, and preparing students for a successful future. Mrida plans to replicate this model in other communities for long-term impact.



## ANTICIPATED IMPACT

- The project aims to create strong role models in Eastern Madhya Pradesh by developing quality education and sports programs, reaching over 10,000 children in the next decade.
- Key outcomes include building an ecosystem for education and sports, offering exposure opportunities, training for armed forces entrance exams, creating career pathways in coaching, addressing mental health issues through sports, and providing quality higher education and teacher training.
- The initiative also focuses on developing farming as a career pathway and supporting the region's overall rejuvenation.



# FINANCIAL & OPERATIONAL SNAPSHOT



FY Ending	2023-24	2022-23
<b>Total Income</b>	1,67,25,528	1,44,84,049
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	1,58,86,138	1,28,22,686
<b>Total Number of Children</b>	1369	477
<b>Institutional including school &amp; hostel</b>	309	273
<b>Extension</b>	1060	204
<b>Total Number of Staff</b>	33	37
<b>Average cost per beneficiary</b>	11,604	26,882

Total income saw a 15.5% rise, reaching ₹1.67 crore, while expenditure increased by 24% to ₹1.58 crore. The number of children served grew significantly from 477 to 1,369, largely due to the extension program's expansion from 204 to 1,060 children. Despite this growth, staff numbers decreased slightly from 37 to 33. The average cost per beneficiary dropped sharply from ₹26,882 to ₹11,604, likely reflecting improved operational efficiency as more children were reached.



# ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

As we look back on the year 2023-24, we are filled with profound gratitude for the generosity, belief, and commitment of our donors, friends, and supporters. In a world where progress often feels slow, your contributions continue to enable us to not only expand our reach but to deepen our impact.

From the tribal children taking their first steps into education, to the young footballers pushing boundaries on the field, your support has empowered these children to dream bigger and aim higher.

Thanks to you, our multi-serve organizational buildings have continued to be more than just places to stay—it is the school and the home where children find safety, nourishment, and a sense of belonging.

But beyond the numbers and programs, the true impact of your generosity is seen in the bright smiles of our children, the stories of personal growth, and the strength of the community we have built together.

As we move forward into another year, we are excited to continue this journey with you one goal at a time.

With heartfelt thanks,  
**The Mrida Team**

## Institutional Supporters:

- Feeding India by Zomato
- Reliance Foundation
- UC Inclusive Credit
- Boston Consulting Group
- Unitus Capital
- Ador Foundation
- Garima Global
- Bedeck Woods Private Limited
- Accel India Management LLP
- Compile India Private Limited

## Individual Supporters

- Nimesh Sumatilal Shah
- Rajesh Goradia
- Vignesh Nandakumar
- Samir V. Patel
- Pradeep & Sarika Jadhav
- Gaurav Porwal
- Abhishek Ranjan
- Many Others...





# THANK YOU

## Reach Out



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Mandla, Madhya Pradesh



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Learn more about Mrida by watching our video: [YouTube Link](#)