



MICROLAND<sup>®</sup>  
FOUNDATION

TOGETHER FOR A BETTER TOMORROW

# Annual Report

2023-2024

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A CSR initiative of Microland



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## From the Chairman's Desk

### BUILDING CULTURE OF GIVING

At Microland, our commitment to Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) is a deeply embedded value that fuels genuine change. In our pursuit of extending digital benefits and providing unconditional support to CSR initiatives, we are exploring the use of appropriate technologies to enhance the efficiency and impact of our projects. Our staff volunteer their expertise in our CSR projects, tackling specific challenges faced by communities through technology. This approach aligns with our belief in leveraging technological proficiency for the greater good.

Recognizing the importance of fostering a culture of giving within our organization, we have taken a significant step by forming a dedicated CSR committee. This committee includes passionate leaders from

within our ranks and plays a pivotal role in integrating the values of philanthropy and community engagement into our corporate culture. By involving leadership, we aim to ensure that giving back becomes an integral part of who we are as Microlanders.

As a conscious corporate, we're not merely building quick solutions; we're cultivating ecosystems of change. We understand the challenges of the journey, and with each step, we move closer to a future where everyone, regardless of circumstance, has the opportunity to contribute, to connect, and feel the power of collective impact. This is the essence of the legacy we strive to leave behind.

**Pradeep Kar**  
Founder, Chairman and Managing Director

### Employee Speak

“

**With Microland Foundation, I use over 20 years of technology experience to serve communities - I finally feel like I'm making an impact. That gratitude drives me every day.**

**Prabhakar Sastry Peddinti**

Associate Director (Technology) seconded to Microland Foundation

”



# A Year of Growth and Impact

As I reflect on the past year at the Microland Foundation (MLF), I'm filled with deep pride and gratitude for the journey we've had. It's been a year of focused growth, collaborative learning, and witnessing the impact of our efforts unfold in our communities of action. This year, we made a conscious decision to sharpen our focus on specific initiatives that have continued to show promise.

Our flagship projects, particularly the **Fellowship models**, have been instrumental in showcasing the transformative power of changemakers within and beyond communities. The fellowship model, rooted in our commitment to nurturing these leaders, has become the cornerstone of our approach to driving social transformation. I'd like to specially acknowledge the accomplishments of our inaugural cohort of the Digipreneur Fellowship on their graduation. Notably, two from this cohort, Digipreneurs Arpitha G.R. and Santhosh Kumar, have earned national acclaim by receiving the prestigious Sochnapreneur Award in March 2023, serving as a compelling testament to the far-reaching impact of our fellowship initiatives.

Building on this, we prioritized **collaboration and capacity building** with our implementation partners. We spent time understanding their needs, providing mentorship, and leveraging technology to create impactful dashboards and track progress. We developed **partner incubation** as a model, through which we have implemented several education and employability focused projects. It has been incredibly rewarding to witness and support our partners as they scale new heights.

One region where we saw this impact unfold particularly well was the Nilgiris. Our focused initiatives there, centered on digital enabled

empowerment and applied learning development, have contributed significantly to building sustainable communities with an improved quality of life.

Be it a mother whose eyes shine with pride watching her daughter speak English fluently, or a child who is able to exercise agency by standing up against alcoholism - these stories of change fuel our commitment to continue our work in these communities. These stories are not just testaments to our success; they are powerful reminders of the ripple effect our collaborative efforts can create.

I would like to express our sincere gratitude to the CSR Committee for their unwavering support through the year. Their commitment to social impact has been instrumental in enabling us to make a meaningful difference in the lives of many. I also extend my deep appreciation to the entire MLF team for their passion in driving the success of our initiatives. We are also grateful to our partners for their dedication and collaborative spirit. Their deep understanding of the local context and their commitment to building sustainable change have been invaluable assets in our journey.

As we look ahead, we carry the learnings and successes of this year with us. We remain committed to sharpening our focus, strengthening our partnerships, and amplifying the impact of our work.

I invite you to join us on this journey of collective action.

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**Kalpana Kar**  
**Trustee, Microland Foundation**



# Where We Began 2023

## Education - Empowering Children for a Brighter Tomorrow

MLF is transforming education with collaborative programs that equip children with future skills and contextual knowledge.



### Building language skills

Interactive programs boost English proficiency and communication skills, fostering confidence and inclusion.



### Sparking scientific curiosity

Hands-on learning ignites passion for science and technology, preparing children for future opportunities.



### Climate warriors in the making

Contextually relevant curricula empower children to understand and address local climate challenges, building them to be responsible citizens.



### Nurturing well-being

Holistic education where students participate in nature based, collaborative and sports activities supports children from diverse backgrounds, including those in foster care, addressing mental and physical well-being.

## Projects and Impact

English Proficiency	Keystone Foundation and State Governments	Earth Trust	Life Skills Through Sports	STEAM Learning
Learning Matters and State Governments	Keystone Foundation and State Governments	Earth Trust	Reaching Hands and Bangalore Youth Football League	Learning Links Foundation
18 Schools 2419 Students	10 Schools 1059 Students	30 Students digitally trained	86 students	515 Students receive access to STEAM Studio

## Employability - Cultivating Sustainable Livelihoods

MLF partners with organizations like SAWF IN and TIDE to train community members as "fellows" who bring sustainable change to their communities using their digital skills.



### Experimentation and ownership

The MLF fellowship model encourages community members to incubate diverse ideas, fostering local ownership and best practices.



### Skills and connections

Fellows gain expertise, build networks, and develop leadership skills through mentorship, peer-to-peer learning, and personalized training.



### Traditional knowledge, modern solutions

MLF supports projects like Astitva which empowers tribal communities by connecting their traditional knowledge with income generating activities.



### Self-reliance and inclusivity

Initiatives like Mitti-Cafe provide opportunities for people with disabilities to become self-employed while partnerships like Biswa Gouri Charitable Trust and Kinder Trust offer contextual skills training for the differently abled.

## Projects and Impact

Digipreneurs	Sheroes to Ecopreneurs	Inclusive Ecosystem for People with Disabilities	Self Reliant Tribal Communities
TIDE	SAWF IN	Biswa Gouri Charitable Trust, Mitti Cafe, Kinder Trust	Astitva Project
20 Fellows serving 20000 households	5 Fellows served 217 Direct	400 Applications for digital training	70000 Income generated by tribal women's collective per year
80% Fellows cleared the common service center exam	5450 Indirect beneficiaries	50 Differently abled persons trained for Mitti Café outlets	

## Health - Bringing Quality Healthcare to Communities

MLF is strengthening public healthcare system in the Nilgiris and ensuring affordability by improving access through Public-Private Partnership.



### Focus on marginalized communities

Upgrades infrastructure in government hospitals and provides critical life saving equipment.



### Technology for inclusivity

State-of-the-art, tech-enabled OPD, dialysis machines, and a cardio neuro ambulance serve over 15,000 villagers, connecting health centers in the area seamlessly.



### Public-private partnerships

Builds long term partnerships with institutions and communities in the region to upgrade and link health facilities for better access.

## Projects and Impact

### Lawley Hospital Upgradation

#### Rotary Club and Government of Tamil Nadu

- **134** Bed hospital
- First referral unit for **6** Primary Healthcare Centers
- Dialysis unit serving **150 km** radius
- Outpatients increased from **200 to 600/** day

### Cardio Neuro Ambulance

#### KMF Hospital

- Serving **41** villages
- Accessed by **358** people
- **40** Critical patients
- **107** Outreach trips
- **149** Free trips

## Environment - Collaborating for a Waste Free Environment

The MLF collaborative model has created a promising solution for sustainable waste management in the Nilgiris. Going beyond collection and management, MLF leverages advocacy and clean up drives and awareness campaigns to create a culture of waste reduction and segregation.



### Stakeholder engagement

MLF partners with municipal administration, officials, private agencies, NGOs, waste collectors, and community members in the Nilgiris to develop models of sustainable waste management.



### Holistic approach

Solutions to address waste collection, recycling, composting, and disposal are developed in an integrated manner.



### Continuous improvement

MLF emphasizes on continuous learning and adaptation, to improve its approach and address evolving challenges.



### Human-centric design

MLF supports community-led solutions to address environmental challenges.

## Projects and Impact

### Waste Management

#### Clean Coonoor and Municipal Corporation Coonoor

Resource recovery unit capacity increased from **4 to 5.7 tonnes**

Wet waste unit capacity increased from **6 to 11.2 tonnes**

Consistent Grade A compost from the wet waste processing unit, generating over **₹8 lakh** income for the unit



# EDUCATION



“ We now accept the fact that learning is a lifelong process of keeping abreast of change. And the most pressing task is to teach people how to learn. ”

Peter Drucker

Every child, regardless of their background, deserves the opportunity to learn, grow, and become a part of a future where they can contribute meaningfully to the world. MLF's mission is to equip marginalized children and youth with the 21st century skills they need to thrive in the world of the future. MLF has been engaging with partners to incubate projects which support a child not just in learning better but also in living better. With digital inclusion at the core of the projects, MLF continues to support its vision by progressively engaging with the larger learning ecosystem.

## 01 Learning for the Real World

MLF believes that children who inherit the world must be prepared with future skills that allow them to tackle complex issues in their environments through contextual innovation. The focus of these projects are in building a spirit of enquiry, skills of research and approach of problem solving and critical thinking. For instance, students in the STEAM studio engage with real-world issues like domestic gas leakage detection and energy generation with windmills; allowing them to apply their learnings in their own communities.

## 02 Fostering Well-Rounded Growth

MLF recognizes the significance of developing cognitive well-being as a crucial skill of the 21st-century. By intertwining physical fitness with cognitive development, the Kreedashala project aims to instill essential life skills like resilience, teamwork, problem-solving, and effective communication among students.

## 03 Engaging the Ecosystem

Recognizing the critical role of parents and caregivers in a child's learning and development, MLF's vision is for parents and communities to champion initiatives, ensuring long-lasting impact of these projects. For teachers and facilitators, training in technology integration, pedagogy, and child development are offered periodically. At a broader level, MLF facilitates projects to engage with subject matter experts and the education department, ensuring support and enabling scalability and replication of initiatives.



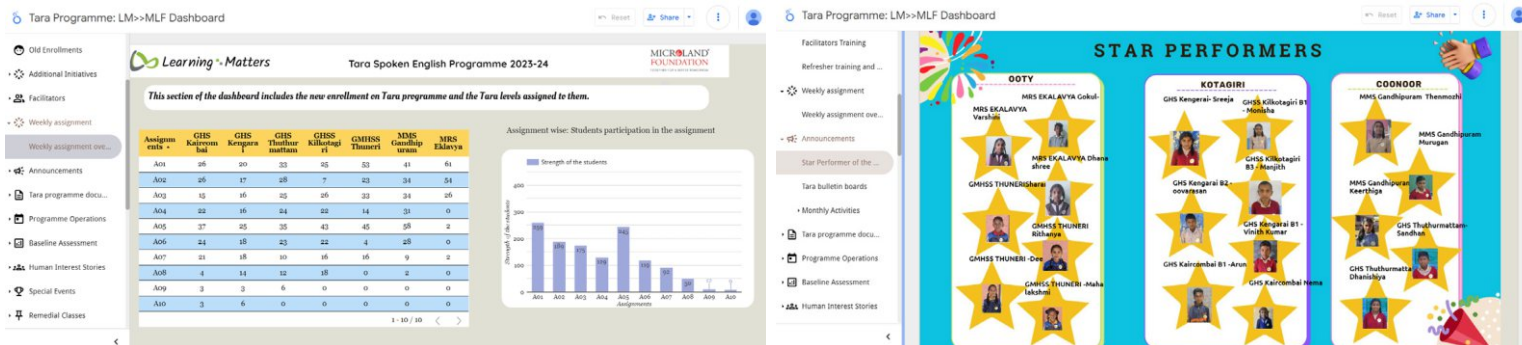
K.M. Sarayu, I.A.S. District Collector Krishnagiri, along with Kalpana Kar Trustee, Microland Foundation reviewing data driven solutions pioneered by children.



Celebrating the Kreedashala girls Kabaddi team on their win.

## DATA-DRIVEN INSIGHTS FOR DEEPER UNDERSTANDING

MLF's projects are monitored for progress and performance through digital dashboards built on project based assessment frameworks. This data-driven approach provides deeper insights into the effectiveness of programs and ensures that no child is left behind. The Tara Project serves as a prime example, where comprehensive dashboards track student engagement, learning outcomes, and teacher training effectiveness, enabling the partner to tailor the program based on real-time data.



Tara dashboard for impact monitoring.



Providing access to education for children in remote tribal villages.

### Tara Project

Building English proficiency in rural Nilgiris

#### Duration

March 2022 - present

#### Partners

Learning Matters

### STEAM Smart Project

Solving real life problems with STEAM innovation

#### Duration

January 2023 - Present

#### Partners

Learning Links Foundation

### Kreedashala

Fostering holistic development through sports

#### Duration

March 2023 - Present

#### Partners

Reaching Hands, Lighthouse International Academy, Bangalore Youth Football League

### Project Aakam

Transportation facility for students from remote tribal communities

#### Duration

February 2024

#### Partners

Samatvam Trust, United Ways of Chennai, District Education Department



# Tara Project

Tara supports students to build proficiency in English language among rural students in the Nilgiris, allowing them to learn at their own pace through repeated interactive exercises. The Tara Project emphasizes the four essential components of language learning—listening, speaking, reading, and writing (LSRW). Established in the year 2022-23, the effectiveness of Tara has increased through project evaluations; milestone assessments; activity based learning; development of a project dashboard and through training for parents and facilitators, this year.

The program is currently reaching 435 students across the Nilgiris.



This year, 75% of the students enrolled in the Tara Project are achieving the ideal state for their levels.

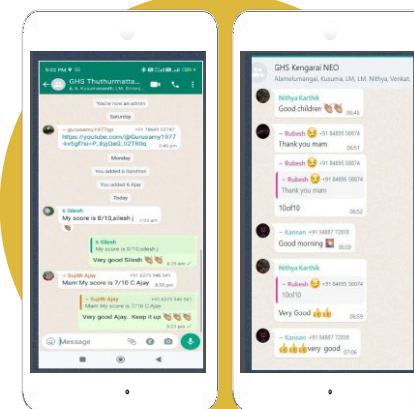
MLF has incubated the Tara Project over two years, resulting in a replicable, scalable, and sustainable model for English language learning. The model incorporates assessment frameworks, facilitator training, and parent outreach as integral components of its comprehensive learning support system.



## Unique Features

### 01 Increased Parental Involvement

- Parent-Teacher Meetings (PTMs) are actively promoted through phone calls, videos, and student interactions.
- Informative videos equip parents with basic English vocabulary.



### 02 Building Community Connections

- Community meetings are held to raise awareness about the program and its benefits.
- Tara classes are planned on Sundays in several areas, expanding access for students.

### 03 Motivating Students

- "Star Performer" badges recognize students excelling in the program, encouraging them to become learning ambassadors for their peers.
- Weekly assignments and monthly activities keep students engaged.



# From Stars to Constellations: Tara Creates Ecosystems of Change

01



## Shruthi's Dream

Shruthi studies in a remote village school in the Nilgiris, and excitedly waits for her sessions with Tara, the AI tutor in her classroom. She enjoys doing the interactive assignments she receives on her mother's phone. She takes pride in finishing her assignments and receiving stars for her work. She is especially happy to display her proficiency to her friends and neighbors at her mother's shop.

## Ms. Anandi's Challenge

Anandi, a dedicated teacher in GHS Kaircombai, faces the challenge of engaging students with limited resources. Tara Project has empowered her by training her and providing her tools to integrate the Tara curriculum into her lessons. The growing language proficiency among her students has led her to champion the project at the primary school level.



02

03



## A Family Effort

Lalitha watches with pride as her son, Ajay, speaks fluent English with the extended family members. Lalitha attends Tara workshops at school and regularly receives English vocabulary messages herself keeping her involved in her son's journey.

## Classroom to Community

A group of village students and elders attend Sunday classes offered by Tara in their community center. They are fascinated by the AI assistant and are curious to learn more. Tara offers an opportunity to community members interested in learning English even if they do not have formal education.



04

## Project Impact



When the Block Resource Coordinator observed our Tara children, she was happy to see the improvement in their English reading skills. They were also able to perform better in all other subjects, thanks to this program.

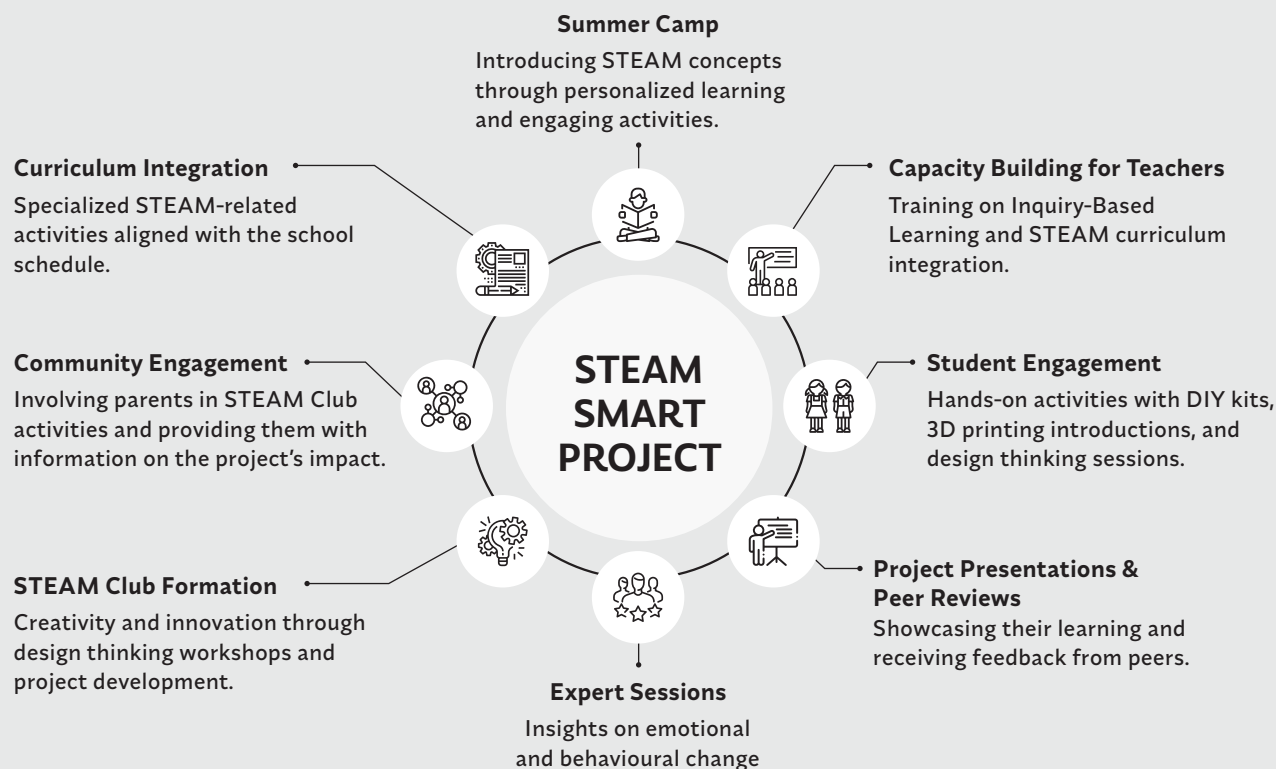
Anandi, Government School Teacher





# STEAM Smart Project

MLF, in partnership with the Learning Links Foundation, is enabling experiential, application oriented learning in the field of Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Mathematics (STEAM) through the STEAM Smart Project at the Government Girls Higher Secondary School, Rayakottai. Designed for students in grades 6, 7 and 8, the project aims to transform school into an interactive learning lab. The STEAM studios, which were set up last year, motivates students to move beyond textbooks and into real-world applications through hands-on experimentation & tinkering involving electronics, robotics, rapid prototyping. The project encourages community-based problem-solving and fosters civic responsibility, critical thinking, and creativity. This is further aided by teacher training sessions to ensure effective education delivery. It also includes exclusive sessions on career guidance, interaction with STEAM experts, and exposure visits to inspire students. Additionally, the project aims to train capable youth to become teachers, contributing to sustainability within the educational framework.



# Kreedashala

In collaboration with Reaching Hand and Bangalore Youth Football League (BYFL), MLF has continued to support the Kreedashala project at Lighthouse International Academy (LIA), a foster educational institution. LIA caters to the diverse needs of 134 foster care children with a focus on holistic development. The Kreedashala intervention focuses on physical and mental well-being through sports. By engaging in team sports, students develop leadership qualities and the ability to learn from failures, inculcating practical skills applicable to academics, careers, relationships, and community engagement.

Kreedashala includes students from grades 1 to 10 and builds a culture of physical training and activity. Additionally students are selected to be part of school football, athletics, kabaddi and cricket teams where they are trained to participate at inter-school sports meets. This builds a level of professionalism as well as exposure for the players.

Kreedashala recognizes that a holistic and responsive approach, encompassing various interventions, are crucial for the development of children into well rounded and healthy individuals.

## Project Kreedashala Empowering students through sports

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Implemented by:  
REACHING HAND®  
BYFL



Lighthouse International Academy

## Stories of Impact: Beyond Education

By engaging children with real-world problems, the STEAM Smart and Kreedashala projects provide tools to empower children like Monalshree and Moses to feel a sense of agency in confronting and engaging with difficult circumstances.

Monalshree comes from a house where she experienced daily violence from an alcoholic father. The situation made her feel helpless and withdrawn.

The STEAM Smart Studio in her school gave her an opportunity to finally share her story and find a support system. Together with her classmates, Joshna and Habeebha, they conceived an idea for an alcohol detection system – a wearable device designed to sound an alarm when alcohol was detected. They used their explorations of coding and sensors to transform basic materials into a potential lifeline. It was a chance to turn her personal struggles into a tool to empower herself and others.

Monalshree feels a sense of agency over her difficult circumstances. She proudly wears her invention on her wrist. She has understood the power of her own voice and feels supported by her friends in the STEAM studio who also facilitate change.



Students explaining the Alcohol Level Monitoring System prototype to K.M. Sarayu, I.A.S. District Collector Krishnagiri, along with Kalpana Kar, Trustee, Microland Foundation and Vedavalli S AVP, Finance (Company Secretary), Microland.



Ronaldo in the making? Moses is an inspiration.

Moses is a soft-spoken shy natured boy. Unfortunately, he lost his parents as a young boy and was brought up by his grandmother. He stays at a shelter home. His difficult past created challenges for his teachers to engage the disinterested boy.

However his participation with the Kreedashala football team allowed Moses to bloom into a confident player. The team has allowed him to feel a sense of belonging to his school. He also trains his friends during his free hours encouraging them to partake in Kreedashala and sports. Moses now represents the school at inter-school competitions. "Kick for cause" is one such platform where his talent was recognized and he was awarded an annual scholarship by PUMA. He is now training professionally in football. The sport has empowered Moses to interact with his world from a place of self confidence.



# EMPLOYABILITY



“ The future belongs to those who learn more skills and combine them in creative ways. ”  
Robin Sharma

## 01 Sustainable Livelihoods Through Fellowships

Microland Foundation (MLF) advances sustainable livelihood opportunities through fellowship models. Our collaboration with implementation partners and subject matter experts nurtures fellows as community champions by enhancing their capacities in entrepreneurship, digital and vocational skills, and community engagement. This sustained approach not only ensures the acquisition of skills for livelihood generation but also nurtures the development of leadership qualities, enabling the formation of community collectives, thereby amplifying the impact potential of each individual within their communities.

## 02 Incubating Impactful Models

MLF strengthens the project ecosystem and the capacity of key stakeholders to design scalable and sustainable initiatives, ensuring long term success. This incubation approach involves a thorough assessment of the community needs, partner organization capabilities, SME (Subject Matter Expert) consultations, strategic planning, and implementation of targeted interventions with a robust impact assessment framework.

## 03 Emphasis on Leadership Development

MLF's livelihood projects prioritize the holistic development of individuals by placing a strong emphasis on soft skills and future skills training. This approach recognizes the importance of interpersonal and future-oriented skills for well-rounded professional growth.

## 04 Inclusive Opportunities

MLF's employment initiatives aim to bridge gaps and promote inclusivity by creating opportunities for diverse groups. These livelihood projects contribute to economic empowerment, creating a ripple effect that positively influences individuals, families, and communities.



### Sochnapreneur Awards 2024

In recognition of their outstanding work, Digipreneurs Santhosh Kumar and Arpitha G.R. were honored with the prestigious Sochnapreneur Awards in March 2024, in the category of Best Sustainable Digital Changemaker and Best Sustainability Model respectively. Selected amongst a pool of 2000 applications, they were applauded for their grassroots leadership, particularly in information dissemination and community empowerment by leveraging their digital skills. This recognition serves as a testament to the success of our Digipreneur program and its impact on communities.



Santhosh Kumar



Arpitha GR

## MAKING DIGITAL HAPPEN

MLF leverages expertise in digital tools and platforms to enhance the reach and effectiveness of livelihood programs, ensuring marginalized communities actively participate in the digital economy. In the Digipreneur program, for instance, fellows navigate digital platforms, enabling the community to access Digital India benefits. People with Disabilities are trained on digital skills to access inclusive livelihood opportunities. Additionally, across projects, MLF embeds appropriate technology and process driven monitoring to enhance the impact of the programs.



Digipreneurs undergoing training for Digital India schemes.

### Digipreneur Fellowship Program

Training Fellows to provide Digital India Services to their Communities

#### Duration

March 2022 - present

#### Partners

Technology Informatics Design Endeavour, TIDE

### Economic and Environmental Justice Fellowship

Intersectional Fellows building sustainable enterprises

#### Duration

March 2021 - May 2024

#### Partners

South Asian Women Foundation India, SAWF IN

### Employment Led Training

Skilling program for people with disabilities

#### Duration

January 2024 - March 2024

#### Partners

Association for People with Disability

### TARVI

Computer training for people with visual disabilities

#### Duration

March 2023 - March 2024

#### Partners

Kinder Trust

### Pragati - Towards Livelihoods

A capabilities and market assessment

#### Duration

April 2023 to September 2023

#### Partners

Biswa Gouri Charitable Trust

### Mitti Cafe

Setting up a cafe employing people with disabilities

#### Duration

June 2023

#### Partners

Mitti Social Initiatives Foundation



# Digipreneur Fellowship

The Digipreneur Fellowship, a collaboration between Microland Foundation (MLF) and Technology Informatics Design Endeavour (TIDE), reflects our joint commitment to building a resilient, digital India. TIDE, anchored in Tumkur with a deep understanding of the local community, establishes an inclusive approach to digital information services.

Identifying community change agents, the Digipreneur Fellowship provides 18 months of training and knowledge support. During this period, Fellows acquire digital and soft skills, along with entrepreneurship support, establishing digitally enabled kiosks which assist communities in accessing 750+ government schemes. 80% of the Digipreneur Fellows successfully cleared the Common Service Centre (CSC) exams, ensuring access to central government benefits. The fellowship not only helped the fellows to increase their average income from ₹6,000 to ₹20,000 per month within 18 months but also enabled the community to unlock the benefit of government schemes and services.

This marks the conclusion of the 18-month Digipreneur Fellowship, showcasing transformative results in improved incomes and expanded community services. The Fellows have enabled over 20,000 people to directly avail government identification, schemes and benefits in their own communities.



The first cohort of 20 fellows graduated after the 18 month fellowship period in the presence of the senior government officials, Microland Foundation & TIDE team.

## Who is a Digipreneur?

Digipreneur are selected individuals from rural areas equipped with necessary information and technology to serve the community needs and sustain their livelihood.



### 01 Knowledge Bridges

Digipreneurs bridge the knowledge and information gap between people and government schemes, offering access to over 750 schemes from central and state governments. They also guide community members through the process of applying for and availing government welfare benefits.

Digipreneur Bhagyamma is a knowledge resource person who not only operates the digital kiosk in her community but also has a background working as a Local Community Resource person for the National Rural Livelihood Mission. She is closely connected with the community and over 20 Self Help Groups and is able to recommend benefits tailored to specific needs of her clients. Bhagyamma has been recognized as a 'Community Champion' for her stellar performance.



Looking for information? Digipreneur Bhagyamma has you covered!

### 02 Digitally Skilled

Digipreneurs are agents of change and flag bearers of Digital India. They possess the know-how to connect people on ground with the digital world and navigate online government services.

Digipreneur Santhosh who worked in Bangalore, returned to his village in Dabbagunte during the COVID-19 pandemic. Using his digital skills, developed through the Digipreneur Program, he offers digital services to his community. The impact of his work is enhanced by his high quality service delivery, patience, communication skills and his inherent helpful nature. Santhosh has been recognized as a 'Star Digipreneur' earning a monthly income of ₹40,000.



Digipreneur Santhosh - Connecting his community to the digital world.



### 03 Independent and Self Sufficient

Digipreneurs are independent and self-sufficient individuals with monthly earnings and the potential to boost it further. They are not just recipients of benefits; they are active contributors to their community's economic development.

Digipreneur Salma started her fellowship journey with no prior job experience of digital knowledge. Through her patience and passion she was able to use the fellowship to set up her own digital kiosk, earning a monthly income of ₹5000. This has fostered a sense of independence and self confidence in her.



Digipreneur Salma's contribution is being applauded for strengthening her community in the presence of T.R Raghunandan former I.A.S., Joint Secretary, Govt. of India, Ministry of Panchayati Raj, Gautam Lahiri, Executive Director TIDE and Kalpana Kar, Trustee, Microland Foundation.

### 04 Entrepreneurs

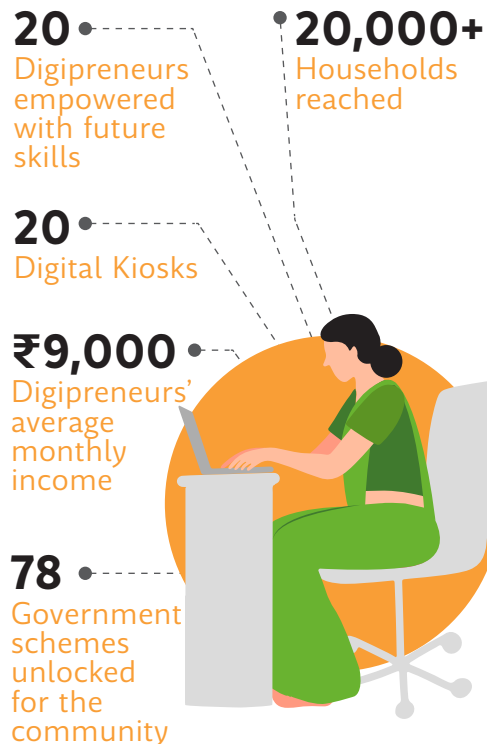
Digipreneurs are driven by a spirit of entrepreneurship. They deeply engage with the Digipreneur fellowship program to seek new opportunities, whether it's acquiring new digital skills, becoming change agents, or exploring multiple income streams through auxiliary services to the community. Supported by the fellowship, they strive for growth both individually and for their communities.

Arpitha used to work as a computer teacher in a private school. She joined the Digipreneur fellowship after she lost her job during the COVID-19 pandemic. Since then, Arpitha has established a Digital Kiosk in Kodinagenahalli, offering digital India schemes to her community. She liaised with the government departments to help unlock government benefits for her community. The training provided on auxiliary services during the fellowship helped her expand her business and today she is catering to most of the digital needs of her village. Her strong communication skills and work ethic have helped her become a successful business woman and a dynamic performer.

### 05 Community Leaders

Digipreneurs are leaders, paving the way for others to follow in their footsteps of entrepreneurship and community service. They provide valuable feedback for future cohorts, enabling the program to build upon their successes and learnings. They also actively participate in widening the reach of the Digipreneur program, ensuring its impact continues to spread.

## Impact of the Program



## The Future of the Initiative

- Sustainable Communities**  
with Digipreneurs paving the way to access vital government schemes, contributing to the village's welfare and enabling a Digital India
- Wider Reach**  
with a new cohort of Digipreneurs, fostering a broader impact and greater community outreach
- Strengthened Livelihoods**  
with a focus on boosting the Digipreneurs' earning potential
- Buddy Digipreneurs**  
playing a catalyst role for improved income and community resilience
- Technology for Impact**  
enabling every step of the process for improved efficiency and accessibility

## Changemakers Talk



“

It was exhausting to make even a minor change to my Aadhar card through the government centers. They would ask me to come multiple times for a single change. Determined to overcome this challenge in my village, I sought opportunities to provide these services myself. That is when I discovered the MLF Digipreneur program, offering hope and empowerment to individuals like me. Today, I proudly operate my digital kiosk, serving my village and surrounding areas. I have witnessed the impact of my work first-hand, as people no longer have to face the difficulties I once encountered.

Shyla Kumari, Digipreneur

”

# Economic and Environmental Justice Fellowship

MLF collaborates with the South Asia Women Foundation India (SAWF IN) to empower changemakers in their community projects, focusing on marginalized women and transgender individuals.

The Economic and Environmental Justice (EEJ) Fellowship has been a three year project that prioritizes intersectionality, acknowledging the potential of generating livelihood through ecological sustainable practices. This program offers targeted training, supporting Fellows to establish sustainable businesses benefiting both themselves and their communities. MLF-SAWF IN has backed Fellows from different parts of India, addressing issues like solid waste management, vermicomposting, kitchen gardening, natural farming, animal-rearing practices, and cultural preservation.

A significant outcome of the Fellowship is that Fellows have launched their businesses, providing sustainable livelihoods. They've also formed women's groups, generating job opportunities. Some projects, like Kirti's Dhavleri Parishad, are even developing a second layer of leadership, ensuring a more sustained impact.

Cumulatively, the fellowship has reached 11,200 people, fostering stronger community relationships. 2023-24 is the concluding year of the fellowship and building strategies for sustainability is the focus. Regular discussions with Subject Matter Experts, organized by MLF, to reflect on the fellowship model and individual fellow plans is enabling the fellows to receive the necessary guidance even beyond the fellowship period.



Design workshop with subject matter experts, Srilatha Batliwala and Dr. Soma Kishore Parthasarathy to reflect and guide on impact outcomes of the 3-year EEJ Fellowship program.

## Kirti's Canvas

### 01 Weaving Tradition, Empowerment, and Sustainability

Imagine a world where reviving ancient traditions brings not just cultural pride, but also economic independence and environmental responsibility. This isn't a fantasy – it's the inspiring reality unfolding in Maharashtra's Palghar district, thanks to Kirti Vartha, a young champion of economic and environmental justice.

Kirti's mission? To empower Dhavleri women from tribal Warli communities by reviving their traditional wedding practices. Traditionally, Warli weddings were facilitated by Dhavleri widows, but the practice all but vanished in recent times. By creating awareness in the community of this cultural past, 91 widows now proudly officiate at traditional Warli weddings. These ceremonies, once forgotten, are back in full swing, becoming a source of income for the Dhavleri women. Each eight-month-long wedding season, they earn between ₹3000 to ₹5000 a month – a significant boost to their financial independence.



Kirti felicitating the Dhavleri women.



## 02 Art Meets Income

Kirti has also trained these women to express themselves through “Chalk painting,” creating stunning artworks that adorn wedding ceremonies and other events. These vibrant pieces not only earn them an additional income, but also showcase their rich cultural heritage.



*Dhavleri collective creating Warli art.*

## 03 Sustainability Woven into Tradition

Warli weddings, unlike their conventional counterparts, are minimalistic, relying on locally sourced materials. She has instilled a belief in sustainable practices within the community. They use mud backgrounds for their paintings, a clever way to avoid harmful chemicals. However, challenges remain. Natural Colours, like rice flour, attract pesky ants, threatening the artwork's longevity. Kirti is constantly innovating, seeking solutions that preserve both tradition and the environment. Kirti's story is more than just an economic success. It's a testament to the power of community-driven initiatives that weave together tradition, empowerment, and sustainability.



*A Warli wedding officiated by Dhavleri women.*



*Kalpana Kar, Trustee, Microland Foundation, MLF Team members (Somya Trivedi and Sanu Mathew) during their visit to Kirti's project.*

5 •  
women/transgender  
Fellows

223 •  
women and trans persons  
directly enabled through  
Fellow enterprises

16 •  
mentoring sessions

11 •  
training workshops

Average additional  
monthly income for  
each women in the  
collective is  
**₹2600**





## Empowering People with Disabilities

MLF has a special focus in creating opportunities for people with disabilities to thrive in the workforce. In partnership with Association for People with Disability (APD), Kinder Trust, and Mitti Cafe, MLF has played a pivotal role in providing skill development, vocational training, and employment opportunities for individuals with visual, physical, intellectual, and psychiatric disabilities. From offering computer training and English language skills to facilitating cafe management and culinary services, MLF's initiatives aim to equip individuals with disabilities with the necessary skills and resources to succeed in the professional world.

### Mitti Cafe

Mitti Cafe is a chain of cafes in India that are entirely managed by adults with physical, intellectual, and psychiatric disabilities. MLF has facilitated the opening of a Mitti Cafe at RMZ Ecoworld, Bangalore, not just through facilitation of space and funding, but also through training of the cafe personnel. In 2023, MLF facilitated the training of 50 individuals with disabilities, equipping them with essential skills in customer service, cafeteria management, food and beverage production, and culinary services for employment at Mitti Cafe.



Mrs. Revathi Ashok, Member of Board, Microland with Microlanders and the MLF and Mitti Cafe team.

## Pragati Towards Livelihood - A Capabilities and Market Assessment

Pragati Towards Livelihood is a skill training center in Bengaluru, run by the Biswa Gouri Charitable Trust (BGCT) which equips young adults with Autism and Intellectual Disabilities with vocational and job readiness skills.

As part of MLF's partner incubation approach, a capabilities and market assessment project was initiated for BGCT's Pragati project. The intervention supported the development of a strategic plan that separates the training of students from the production unit, ensuring a sustainable workflow managed by young adults with autism. The study involved collaboration with Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) to develop strategies for workflow enhancement and scale.

## Employment Led Training for People with Disabilities

MLF and the Association for People with Disabilities (APD) have partnered to empower People with Disabilities (PwDs) from marginalized communities in Tumkur. The primary objective is to equip these individuals, aged 18 to 35, with essential life skills and job-specific competencies, fostering their independence and preparing them for gainful employment.

The program focuses on a comprehensive curriculum, addressing fundamental skills like Basic and Advanced English, Digital Skills, Career Skills, Life Skills, and Job Readiness. Additionally, specialized courses in Retail & Customer Interaction and Exploring Job Sectors provide participants with insights into potential career paths.

Under the aegis of this initiative, 50 PwDs are enrolled into an intensive 45-day skill training program. Conducted in collaboration with NGO partners and community involvement, the project aims to create a more inclusive society. The training, currently underway, includes sectors such as retail, ITES, and e-commerce, aligning with the varied skills and capabilities of the participants.

The project places a microlens on the holistic development of People with Disabilities (PwDs), extending its impact to PwD candidates, their families, and the broader community. The ultimate goal is to facilitate vocational training and suitable employment for individuals with disabilities, thus bridging the employment gap. Collaboration with employers and alumni ensures sustained social impact and the creation of more opportunities for PwDs in the region.

The project envisions a positive transformation in the lives of the participants, providing them with the tools and skills necessary for a more empowered and independent future.



The District Disability Officer, addressing the trainees, emphasized the significance of inclusivity and dignity in society.

## Project TARVI, Training and Resource Centre for Visually Impaired

TARVI is an initiative by Kinder Trust and supported by MLF. Launched on April 1, 2023, TARVI resource center aims to create skill and livelihood opportunities for the visually impaired, with a primary focus on computer training. The learning curriculum has been developed and curated by National Association of Blind (NAB), who are knowledge partners for the project.

The objective is to equip visually impaired persons with essential digital skills that pave the way for meaningful employment and socio-economic inclusion. The center uses non-visual desktop access (NVDA), a free screen reading software that opens the world of computers to individuals with blindness. The two graduating batches of TARVI, comprising visually impaired trainees, demonstrated remarkable success, with 100% trainees completing the training and an impressive 80% securing placements. The applications for the third batch is pouring in, showcasing the effectiveness of the initiative.

The collaboration between MLF and Kinder Trust in the TARVI project speaks to the power of partnerships and technology which have allowed us to create better opportunities for the visually impaired.



TARVI student receiving graduation certificate from MLF Team members (Teena Clotilda and Susan Puthenveedu) and Diana Cyrus Bharucha, Trustee, Kinder Trust.

# HEALTH



“Of all the forms of inequality, injustice in health is the most shocking and inhumane.”  
Martin Luther King Jr.

## Bringing Home Healthcare in Tribal Communities

For many living in tribal communities in the Nilgiris, basic healthcare needs can feel like a distant dream. Limited facilities, transportation issues, and the lack of trained personnel are just some of the hurdles they face. At MLF, we believe that healthcare is a right, not a privilege. We have therefore joined hands with the government and civil society in a Public-Private Partnership (PPP) model to continue to create stories of hope and healing.

**MLF's multi-pronged approach revolves around five strategic actions**

### 01 Upgrading Medical Facilities

MLF is investing in health infrastructure by transforming existing healthcare centers into modern, tech-enabled hubs of care. For example, in collaboration with Lawley Hospital and Kotagiri Medical Fellowship (KMF) hospital, MLF is bringing cutting-edge medical technology to the Nilgiris. The dialysis unit at Lawley Hospital alone has delivered over 7,500 dialysis sessions.

Thrive is addressing anaemia through medication and nutritional plans, offering medical camps and awareness sessions. ASHWINI Hospital is deploying mobile diagnostics and screening, enabling doorstep delivery of healthcare for tribal communities in remote areas. KMF's Palliative care program is being offered at home to those in need, providing holistic, compassionate help to patients.

### 02 Enabling Accessible Care

MLF understands that distance and accessibility are major barriers to accessing timely healthcare. We have established partnerships with community healthcare providers, programs and hospitals like Astitva, ASHWINI, and KMF to bridge this gap. In partnership with MLF, Astitva's Project

### 03 Empowering Local Heroes

MLF firmly believes that the power to change lies within the community itself. With its healthcare partners (like Astitva, KMF & ASHWINI hospitals) community members are trained to become skilled caregivers, equipped to address everyday health needs right where they live. The services they provide include, general medical screenings, administering medication,

door-to-door awareness and follow-ups to enrolled community members, procuring and distributing necessary resources, etc. The trained community healthcare team also engages in mobilization, organizing and managing health related events, in coordination with healthcare professionals and other frontline health workers. These initiatives enable provision of point-of-care testing and clinical examination of patients from the tribal areas of Kotagiri, Burliyar and Gudalur in the Nilgiris.

### 04 Reaching the Most Vulnerable

Inclusion is at the heart of all initiatives at MLF. The special emphasis to enable quality healthcare for the Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs) in the Nilgiris is one such example. Young women and adults (above 30 years), and children (under the age of 5) are of special consideration under this initiative. Enabling healthcare at their doorstep helps address health and wellbeing concerns in a timely manner.

### 05 Fostering Health Education

Good health in communities is achieved when they make informed choices about their well-being. In collaboration with Astitva, and KMF and ASHWINI hospitals, health workers, and nursing professionals, MLF organizes awareness sessions for tribal communities. These sessions cover relevant health topics, enabling informed decision-making and proactive engagement of healthy practices by community members.





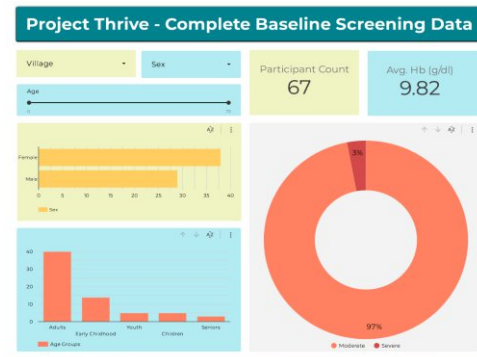
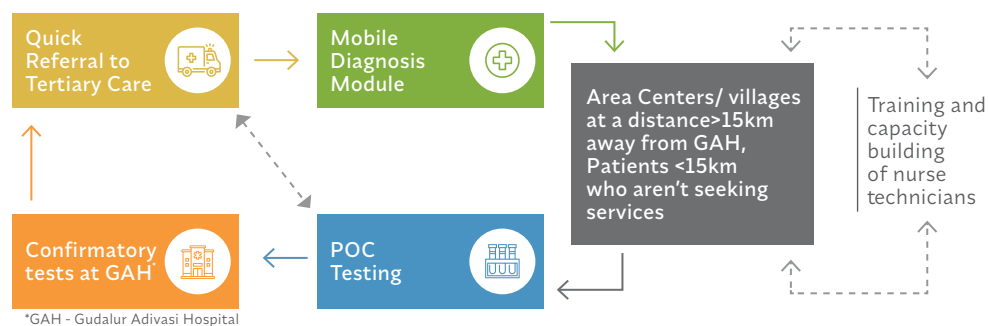
## BUILDING A TECH-ENABLED ECOSYSTEM OF CARE

MLF's innovative approach to healthcare access takes a layered approach to include the entire service chain from diagnosis to end-of-life care. This comprehensive strategy goes beyond providing generic medical and diagnostic services, and considers locally relevant health complications like diabetes mellitus, hypertension, alcohol addiction and anaemia, concentrating on education, nutrition, medication and doorstep delivery of services for holistic health. Technology and digital solutions often add additional value by streamlining processes and creating systems of monitoring. MLF's health care approach works on holistic well-being that addresses not just the disease, but also its social and emotional aspects.

### Tech integration in diagnostics and early detection

ASHWINI Point-of-care Diagnostics

Tech integration - mobile diagnostics kits, electronic health record of patient data, dashboard for patterns, training for collecting and managing data.



Dashboard to monitor Haemoglobin levels in patients.



Nutrition kit distribution to anaemic patients.



Regular training of caregivers by skilled nurses.

## Government Lawley Hospital and Dialysis Center

Upgradation of the out patient department and dialysis center

### Duration

February 2022–  
Ongoing

### Partners

Lawley Hospital  
and Rotary Club

## Palliative Care Program

Home-based care for palliative patients

### Duration

October 2023 -  
Ongoing

### Partners

KMF Hospital

## Project Thrive

Addressing the issue of anaemia in tribal communities

### Duration

October 2023 -  
March 2024

### Partners

Astitva, KMF

## Point-of-Care (POC) Testing

Promoting healthcare with mobile diagnostic kits, point-of-care testing and health awareness for tribal communities in remote areas

### Duration

January 2024 -  
Ongoing

### Partners

ASHWINI  
Hospital

## Partner Speak



The project is an impactful collaborative effort of Astitva and Microland Foundation to tackle critical issue of anaemia among the tribal communities. The community was initially hesitant to participate in medical camps and avail medical facilities. Just 10-15 people would show up initially. However, with continuous visits, dedicated door-to-door outreach, and relationship building with the community, we have won their trust and this number has now significantly increased to 60-70 people. This sustained support has now resulted in a positive shift, with the tribal community showing improvement in hemoglobin results.

Dr. Koshy George (MD Pediatrics), leading the KMF Hospital engagement



## Palliative care program

Recognizing the need for palliative care in the remote communities in the Nilgiris, MLF and the medical fraternity at KMF Hospital are building a patient-centered program tailored to address physical discomfort and emotional distress customized to the needs and preferences of the patients and their caregivers. The World Health Organization emphasizes that palliative care is about improving the quality of life for patients and families facing serious illness, relieving their suffering through pain management, physical, emotional, and spiritual support.

The program is a seamless continuum of care, reaching patients where they are most comfortable – at home. Home-based care, medication, nutritional support, access to medical devices, even home modifications when needed, are provided by caregivers who are trained by skilled nurses.

Currently, this program serves 150 patients within a 20-kilometer radius, offering home visits, telephonic follow-up, hospitalization when needed, and even oral morphine for pain relief. We see our impact in the expressions of relief among patients and their families who know that they are not alone in their moment of need. The stories of transformation, in the face of illness, from one of fear and loneliness to one of dignity and compassion strengthens our commitment to this initiative.

## Point-of-Care (POC) Testing

Common illnesses turn fatal due to late diagnoses and critical conditions like diabetes or hypertension also often go undetected stressing on the importance of timely interventions in healthcare. It remains our focus with the communities in Gudalur and Pandalur taluks combined with creating awareness about lifestyle diseases. MLF has partnered with ASHWINI hospital to pioneer a community-led approach to healthcare, armed with a powerful tool: Point-of-Care (POC) testing. This technology brings diagnostic testing directly to people's doorsteps, allowing for early identification of life-threatening conditions like diabetes, hypertension, alcohol addiction, and protecting people from preventable diseases.

Leading this initiative are trusted tribal Auxilliary Nurses and Midwife (ANM) nurses, armed with diagnostic skills and improved clinical knowledge. Their enhanced skills enable timely screening, more efficient diagnosis and the availability of a mobile testing center equipped to handle more complex cases ensures the communities in these taluks receive specialized care closer to home.

The advantage of POC testing lies not just in early diagnosis, but also in the data it generates. Overtime, we hope availability of this data can provide critical information to identify seasonal patterns and disease clusters, allowing for more targeted interventions and improved focus on prevention of disease.

## Project Thrive

In response to the pressing need for improved healthcare for tribal communities like those in Burliyar, Nilgiris district, MLF has partnered with the Astitva to focus on anaemia prevention.

The project covers four hamlets, home to Kurumba and Irula tribal communities, with the aim to

reduce anaemia prevalence by	increase medication adherence by	and increase the intake of nutrient-rich foods among anemic participants by at least
20% ↓	80% ↑	50% ↑

To accomplish these objectives, a multifaceted strategy is employed involving Community Health Ambassadors (CHAs), monthly medical camps, food distribution programs, and awareness events. Monthly medical camps are instrumental in creating a rhythm and trust in the engagement and increasing awareness. Working with CHAs trained in using diagnostic devices is a key success factor in reaching and collecting complete hemoglobin data for all women in the four hamlets. These local champions are the backbone of the program, trained in data collection, health screening, medication administration, and health education. They conduct daily door-to-door follow-ups, distributing necessary resources, mobilizing people for substantial participation, organizing events and transportation, and coordinating with healthcare professionals and other stakeholders ensuring that no one falls through the cracks.

The project has successfully reduced the number of moderate and mild anaemia cases by 40% within the 100-day intervention period, demonstrating the need for this initiative and a potential to scale it to other communities.



# A Day in the Life of a Community Health Ambassador (CHA)

In the four tribal hamlets, everyday heroes who we call the Community Health Ambassadors (CHAs) are quietly at work. A glimpse into their everyday routine highlights the small but powerful strides they are making towards building healthier communities. Despite family responsibilities, this group of women takes a proactive approach doing their rounds in the morning and the evening to ensure nobody misses their medication.

## 01 Morning Rounds

Everyday, the CHAs embark on a mission to ensure that every anaemic participant receives their prescribed medications without fail. Despite the challenges of varying schedules, CHAs adapt creatively, often waking up early or staying out late to accommodate participants' needs.



## 02 Connecting Through Care

With tablets in hand, the CHAs make their way from home to home, ensuring every participant receives their medication. But it's not just about distributing pills, they serve as empathetic listeners, welcoming feedback from participants regarding their medication experience and creating a safe space for participants to share their concerns and observations. By sharing their own experiences with participants, they also encourage them to continue their treatment journey.



## 03 Supporting Healthy Habits

Mid-day finds them engaging in discussions with community about healthy eating habits. Armed with knowledge about the importance of iron-rich foods, they share simple recipes and cooking tips, making it easier for participants to make nutritious choices.



## 04 Evening Check-ins

Their evening rounds focus on ensuring that the patients have taken their medication offering friendly reminders and constant support.



## 05 Guiding Towards Further Care

In moments of uncertainty, the CHAs guide participants through the complexities of healthcare access. Whether it's explaining the importance of follow-up check-ups or accompanying patients to KMF Hospital, they provide reassurance and support at every step.



## 06 A Source of Comfort

The CHAs are a source of comfort for those nervous about hospital visits. The emotional support they offer to the patients goes a long way in ensuring continuity of care.



## 07 Screening for Progress

Armed with hemoglobin (Hb) meters and other diagnostic devices, the CHAs undertake the crucial task of screening participants for Hb levels throughout the program. Despite the scheduling challenges, they ensure that every participant is screened accurately tracking progress and providing valuable insights into the effectiveness of the intervention.



## 08 End-of-Day Documentation

They document their findings at the end of the day to ensure that data collection is accurate for further reference on patient progress. The efforts of CHAs Kavi Priya, Meena, Sundari and Nagamma are at the centre of ensuring the success of healthcare access to the most vulnerable sections of society.





# ENVIRONMENT



“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it’s the only thing that ever has.”  
Margaret Mead

## Weaving a Web of Well-being: MLF’s Multi-Pronged Approach to Environmental Sustainability

At MLF, we believe environmental stewardship is not just a responsibility, but a pathway towards a flourishing future. Our forays into collaborative and co-creative initiatives aim to create a lasting positive impact on the region’s environment and communities. MLF is engaging with the communities in Nilgiris through three primary approaches

### 01 Community Driven Sustainability

The Clean Coonoor Waste Management Center of Excellence is evolving as a beacon of innovation. This project not only demonstrates efficient waste management practices, but also serves as an incubator for building replicable and scalable models of environmental action through community engagement. By empowering them to adopt community led waste management systems, MLF aims to create a ripple effect of positive environmental change in the whole region.

### 02 Nurturing Environmental Literacy using Tech and Experiential Learning

Planting the seeds of environmental action early, MLF is using technology and hands-on nature experiences to empower children to champion their local environment. With YouCAN and Earth Trust, MLF is co-creating curriculums and spaces that strengthen the environmental connection fostering a spirit of conservation.

### 03 Building Multi-Stakeholder Relationships

Recognising the need for an ecosystem approach and bringing together stakeholders – from communities and NGOs to governments and businesses, MLF has been supporting actions and events that provide a platform for these diverse voices from the Nilgiris. These platforms like the NilgiriScapes conference and Ooty Literary Festival foster thought leadership and co-creation, paving the way towards sustainability in the region.

This holistic approach strengthens connection to place, encourages positive environmental action and creates a roadmap for replicable solutions towards sustainability.



Students exploring Nature trails at Nature Quest.



Volunteers collecting waste from forests.



Three-day NilgiriScapes event enabling intersectoral discussions on conserving the bio-cultural diversity of the Nilgiris.

## Convening the Nilgiri Ecosystem

To solidify its ecosystem-based approach in the Nilgiris, MLF has been supporting events and conferences that bring diverse voices from the Nilgiris in dialogue for the future of the region and that nurture its relationship with the communities and organizations in the region. Two of these events in the past year were the NilgiriScapes conference and the Ooty's Bicentennial celebration with the Ooty Literary Festival.

**NilgiriScapes** served as a platform for diverse voices – citizen forums, tribal leaders, NGOs, scientists, policymakers, local communities, etc. Shifting the focus from exploration to action, the conference aims to build a consensual understanding on the approach to tackle crucial issues like human-wildlife conflict, deforestation, and waste management. The NilgiriScapes Conference aims to be a catalyst, a space for sparking collective exploration on the possibilities of shaping a brighter future for this irreplaceable biosphere.

The **Ooty Literary Festival** hosted live interaction with nature conservationists alongside intellectual discussions, cultural expressions and artistic performances celebrating the spirit of the region. With programs that invited youngsters to engage with the natural world, a visual journey of the evolving ecological and cultural landscape of the Nilgiris and immersive cultural experiences, the festival offered participants a space to connect with each other and the environment.

By supporting such events, MLF aims to bridge the gaps between the different actors and stakeholders in the region to support its living lab approach for long term sustainable collaborations and innovation.



Kalpana Kar, Trustee, Microland Foundation, Lighting the Lamp at NilgiriScapes.



Kalpana Kar, Trustee, Microland Foundation, along with Pradeep Kar, Chairman and Managing Director, Microland and Sudha Murthy at Ooty Literary Festival.

### Resource Recovery and Wet Waste Processing Center

A center of excellence for waste management in the Nilgiris

#### Duration

February 2022 - present

#### Partners

Clean Coonoor, Coonoor Municipality

### NilgiriScapes

A conference for the Nilgiris, in the Nilgiris

#### Duration

August 2023

#### Partners

Various

### Ooty Literary Festival

Enriching assembly of students, academia, civil society and citizens

#### Duration

October 2023

#### Partners

Various

### Technology meets Nature

Computer literacy through nature-based learning

#### Duration

July 2023 - March 2024

#### Partners

Earth Trust

### Nature Quest and Planet & You

Experiential programs for nature-based learning

#### Duration

January 2024 - Present

#### Partners

Youth Conservation Action Network (YouCAN)



# Nurture Through Nature

One significant challenge in education is the lack of knowledge tailored to students' immediate surroundings, limiting their understanding of their local environment. By integrating place-based education amplified by technology and experiential learning, MLF is supporting eco-literacy among young learners.

MLF's continuing project collaboration with EarthTrust is implementing a curriculum which integrates nature documentaries, engaging theatrical performances, and vibrant art activities, serving as springboards for digital exploration. This unique program that connects ecological literacy, computer literacy and regenerative farming practices is resonating deeply with the Hubbathalai School community. The program has garnered the attention of the Nilgiris CEO, who recognized its alignment with the Tamil Nadu Government's "My School, Shining School" initiative.

Building on this, MLF has initiated a collaboration with YouCAN through two new projects- 'Nature Quest', a Green Education Lab set overlooking the lush green valley in the Western Ghats Mountains, Nilgiris and 'The Planet and You', a program drawing on nature-based learning to cultivate character among middle school students in alignment with government environmental awareness schemes such as the National Green Corps (eco-club), enhancing eco-literacy and inspiring local environmental action.

**Earth Trust: Transformation happens when technology meets nature and is fuelled by the imagination of young minds**



**PowerPoint Blossoms into Organic Gardens:** Students don't just learn PowerPoint; they utilize it to design their own organic havens, meticulously transforming their digital plans into flourishing gardens within the school's backyard.



**Wildlife Films Inspire Word Reflections:** As students delve into the captivating world of nature through captivating wildlife documentaries, their emotions and insights are carefully woven into words using Word, crafting profound reflections that blossom from their experiences.



**Excel-lent Harvests:** The joy of harvesting their gardens is amplified by the practical application of Excel. Students meticulously track their harvests, cultivating valuable data management skills that take root alongside their love for the environment.

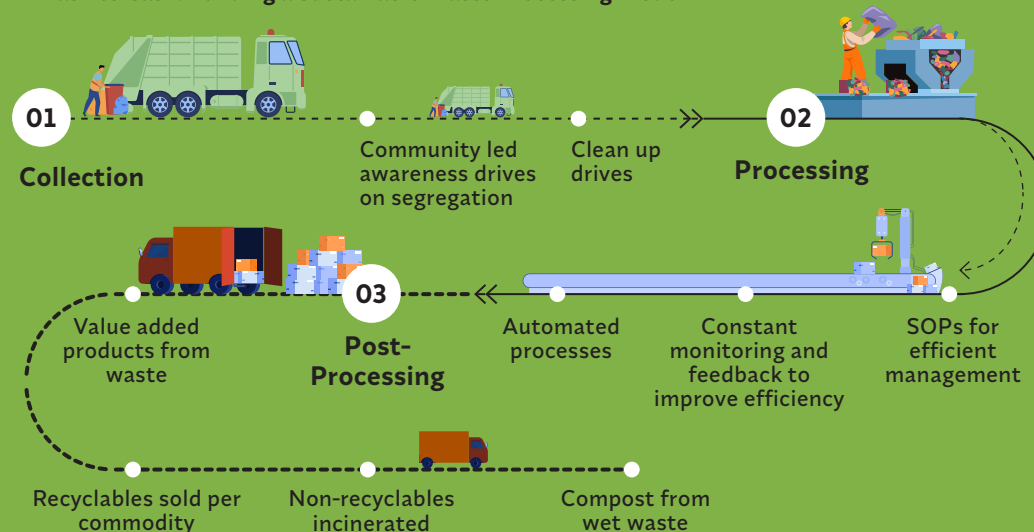
# Clean Coonoor

Identifying the need to strengthen the waste management process to build a scientific, efficient, sustainable and replicable model, MLF has been working in partnership with Clean Coonoor and the Municipality of Coonoor in a mission to turn waste into resources. Periodic augmentation of infrastructure has significantly improved waste processing capacities which saw the prevention of over 3500 tonnes ending up in landfills by Resource Recovery Center last year. Additionally, over 100 tonnes of Grade A compost was produced by the Wet Waste Processing Center. What differentiates this from other waste management infrastructures is that it isn't just cleaning up the town, it's a story of how collaboration is leading to sustainable change.

Residents actively participate in waste segregation, collection, and spreading awareness. MLF's continued engagement to upgrade facilities and equipment, create standardized procedures, monitoring and feedback systems has been instrumental in improving the efficiency of the center, positioning it as an emerging center of excellence in the region.

Extending beyond Coonoor's borders, the center has begun attracting visitors from other geographies eager to learn and replicate this unique approach.

## Trash to Cash: Building a Sustainable Waste Processing Model





# A Hub of Excellence: Clean Coonoor Resource Recovery and Wet Waste Processing Center

## 01 Efficient Waste Collection and Processing System

By engaging volunteers to raise awareness about waste segregation and organizing clean-up drives, the center has seen a significant increase in waste recovery. The processing plant is constantly improving its efficiency and capacity through regular monitoring, system refinement, and the adoption of automation. MLF plays a crucial role in supporting the center with machines, technology and creating systems, paving the way for a sustainable waste management model.

### Efficiency gains in the last year



Waste collection gap decreased  
**42% to 29%**



Recycling rates increased  
**48% to 70%**



Volunteers collect waste for a clean Coonoor.



New incinerator to improve processing capacity.

## 02 A Scalable and Replicable Model

MLF is supporting the center through the creation of Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) to improve efficiency and for easy replication. Additionally, the development of revenue streams through the sale of value-added products has been a crucial step in ensuring long term financial sustainability and scalability of the model. Collaborating with local governments, MLF is seeking suitable locations for replicating Coonoor's waste processing success, aiming to share best practices across the region's panchayats.



Documentation of SOPs for wet waste processing.



Value addition through plastic waste sale to cement factory.

## 03 A Center of Learning and Engagement

The center has internalized a continuous learning approach. By engaging with international best practices like the Norwegian experience of a fully circular waste processing system, the center is demonstrating its commitment to sustainable waste management. The center also regularly engages volunteers and government officials to visit and learn from the best practices, inspiring change in the region and beyond.



Government officials visit the center to study the waste processing model.



Volunteers tour the facility for on-ground learning.

# A PEEP INTO 2024-25

In the upcoming fiscal year of 2024-25, we at MLF are set to reinforce our commitment to sustainable community development. In keeping with our strategy, we will build on our three impact approaches

## Fellowship

One of the key thrust areas will be the expansion of fellowships in the Nilgiris. We aim to replicate and scale up successful fellowship initiatives, nurturing local talent and fostering leadership within communities. This approach is designed to empower individuals to lead initiatives and support the work we have been doing with the diverse communities at the grassroots level.

Building on the success of fellowship programs, we plan to establish a robust alumni network of Fellows. This network will serve as a platform for ongoing mentorship and leadership development, ensuring continuity of efforts even after the conclusion of CSR grants. The goal is to find innovative ways to provide sustained support, thereby guaranteeing lasting impact and sustainability.

## Incubation

Partner development remains a central focus for us, with a particular emphasis on building digital skills. We are committed to supporting our partners beyond CSR grants, recognizing the importance of long-term capacity building for sustainable impact.

In line with the commitment to community development, we will continue our efforts in project incubation. These initiatives are tailored to address specific community needs and contribute to sustainable development. By incubating projects aimed at driving positive change, we play a pivotal role in fostering self-sufficiency and resilience in them.

## Living Lab

A significant focus for the upcoming year will be the implementation of a Living Lab approach for sustainable communities. Living Labs are user-centered, open innovation ecosystems based on a co-creation approach, integrating research and innovation processes in real life communities.

The complex challenges faced by the Nilgiris region necessitate bringing citizens, research organizations, action groups, NGOs, tribal leaders, corporates, government and political leadership together for joint value creation. We aim to provide opportunities for capacity building and knowledge sharing by bringing together stakeholders with different areas of expertise and perspectives, especially in our focus areas of environment, education, employability, and health. This holistic long term strategy is geared towards gradually improving the overall quality of life.

## Our Partners



MICROLAND<sup>®</sup>  
FOUNDATION

TOGETHER FOR A BETTER TOMORROW

A CSR initiative of Microland

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