



ANNUAL REPORT 2024-2025

MODERN ARCHITECTS FOR RURAL INDIA



*"There is nothing more
beautiful than someone who
goes out of their way to make
life beautiful for others."*



— *Mandy Hale*

INDEX

Foreword

Natural Resources Management & Agriculture	01
Project 1 - Chinnalaxmapur Watershed Development	02
Project 2 - Mekalagattu Watershed Climate Proofing	06
Project 3 - eFARM – Empowering Farmers with Agency, Resilience, and Markets	09
Project 4 - Better Cotton: 2024–25 Promoting Sustainable Cotton Production in Andhra Pradesh	12
Preventive Health	15
Project 5 - Targeted Intervention to prevent HIV/AIDS in Warangal	16
Project 6 - Targeted Intervention to prevent HIV/AIDS in Bhupalpally	19
Social Development	21
Project 7 - Basti Vikas	22
Project 8 - EDUCATE project	26
Project 9 - Enhancing Access to Sustainable Educational Facilities for Children of Marginalized and Vulnerable Communities in Telangana	28
Project 10 - Livelihood interventions in Watersheds	30
Project 11 - Age with Grace - Social Inclusion and Health Care for Elderly Slum Dwellers	34

INDEX

Social Development

Project 12 - Safe Protective Enabling Environment and Dignity (SPEED) for Vulnerable Sections 37

Project 13 - Promoting Sustainable Livelihoods through Skill Enhancement and Infrastructure Development for the Brass Craft Community in Rangasaipet, Warangal District, Telangana 40

Project 14 - Assistance to Urban Refugees 43

WASH Sector 45

Project 15 - Strengthening of WASH infrastructure in schools 46

Project 16 - Promotion of iJal centers 49

Project 17 - Wellbeing Out of Waste (WOW) 52

Project 18 - Rising for the Rights (R4R) 54

Project 19 - Other Small Initiatives 57

Project 20 - Sanitation and Water for All (SWA) 58

Our Bankers 59

Our Donors 60

EC Members 61

FOREWORD

It is my privilege to present the Annual Report of Modern Architects for Rural India (MARI) for 2024–25. This year, we remained unwavering in our mission to empower vulnerable communities to overcome poverty, injustice, and environmental degradation, while promoting pathways to sustainable and dignified livelihoods.

Through diverse initiatives—from strengthening slum dwellers' access to rights and entitlements in Hyderabad, to advancing climate-resilient agriculture, watershed development, WASH programs in schools, and farmer producer organizations.

WE REACHED NEARLY:

8.2 LAKH
PEOPLE ACROSS

372
VILLAGES IN

14
DISTRICTS

OF TELANGANA AND
ANDHRA PRADESH

These results were possible because of the robust systems we have built, the trust of our donors and partners, and above all, the committed efforts of our dedicated staff, whose sincerity, commitment and passion drives our work forward.

The year also brought challenges, including sudden changes in global aid priorities, resulting in reduction in receipt of Foreign Funds. Yet, MARI's credibility and strong foundation have opened doors to new collaborations and opportunities with Indian Donors. As we look ahead, we recognize that much more remains to be done. With renewed energy, we will continue to strive for a just, equitable, and sustainable future—because every step forward brings us closer to the society we envision.

– **Ramisetty Murali**
Executive Director



NATURAL RESOURCES MANAGEMENT AND AGRICULTURE

Chinnalaxmapur Watershed Development Project

Overview

The Chinnalaxmapur Watershed Development Project is a collaborative initiative by MARI and NABARD aimed at sustainably enhancing the living conditions of rural populations in Telangana, specifically in the Jangaon and Yadhadri Bhongir districts. The project focuses on improving natural resource management through watershed development, climate-resilient interventions, and promotion of Farmers Producer Companies. These efforts collectively seek to address environmental degradation, water scarcity, and farmer livelihoods by leveraging local resources and community participation.

Funding and Utilization

The project has been supported with financial assistance from NABARD. The Village Watershed Development Committee (VWDC) received a grant of Rs. 100.01 lakhs towards implementation costs and MARI was allocated with Rs. 20 lakhs towards management and implementation costs. The first phase – Full Implementation Phase – of the project has been successfully completed, and activities under the second phase are currently going on.

Implemented Activities

The watershed development efforts have emphasized soil and moisture conservation employing multiple techniques such as seed dibbling and the sowing of grass seeds to promote ground cover and prevent erosion. Other technical interventions include Trench Catchment Bunds (TCB), Water Absorption Trenches (WAT), Staggered Contour Trenches (SCT), Sunken Ponds (SP), Dug Out Ponds (DOPs), as well as structural measures like loose boulder structures, stone gully plugs, and gabion works. These interventions improve the drainage system to facilitate enhance water harvesting capacity, contributing to groundwater recharge and soil moisture retention.

The Following are the important physical works taken up in the watershed during the 2024-25 FY.

PHYSICAL WORKS		PLANTATION	
Water Absorption Trenches (WAT)	600 Running Meters	Dribbling of grass seeds	2 Quintals
Trench cum Bunds (TCBs)	2800 Running Meters	Pongamia plantation	3500
Staggered Contour Trenches (SCTs)	71 Running Meters	Agro Horticulture (mango/mixed)	6 acres

PHYSICAL WORKS		PLANTATION
Gabian Structures (GBs)	3	
Sunken Pits (SPs)	47	
Dug Out Ponds (DOPs)	14	
Stone Gully Plugs (SGPs)	60	

Livelihood Development Works:

During the year 10 women from landless or marginal farming category were helped to take up following income generation activities as part of the project activities with a total amount of Rs. 4.25 Lakhs:

1. Animal Husbandry – 6 persons
2. Petty Trades – 2 persons
3. Agriculture support: – 2 persons

Records Maintained:

Totally 28 types of records are being maintained at VWDC level of which following are the important ones:

#	TYPE OF RECORD	#	TYPE OF RECORD
01	VWDC Minutes Book	02	Measurements Book
03	Labor Attendance Register	04	Cash Book
05	Ledger	06	Voucher Files
07	Audit Reports	08	Livelihood Register
09	Crop Diversification Register	10	Well Inventory (to gauge increase ground water levels periodically)

Capacity Building and Exposure Visits:

Understanding the value of knowledge sharing and community empowerment, the project facilitated exposure visits to such successful projects and understand the importance of these water harvesting structures. Twenty-five laborers from the watershed area visited the renowned Ralegaon Siddhi watershed in Maharashtra, an exemplary model of successful watershed management, to observe post-project sustainability and community involvement in watershed management. Additionally, a group of thirty women farmers visited the LEDP project site in Thadikonda village, supported by NABARD funding, to learn modern fish cultivation using circulatory aquaculture techniques. This exposure has equipped them with new skills and insights to diversify and increase their farm incomes.

Major capacity building activities include Training to VWDC members on their roles and responsibilities, Training to Supervisors on quality parameters of the technical structures and their role in sticking to the same, labour mobilization techniques, identification of seasonally appropriate activities, important books they must maintain daily, etc. MARI technical staff also ensured that they are given hand holding support to work efficiently.

Success of Bund Plantation:

CASE STUDY

One of the most significant successes of the project has been the plantation effort to strengthen the bunds (embankments) and increase their life span. During the first phase (FIP-1), the VWDC planted over 3,500 saplings of native forest species such as Kanuga (Pongamia), Seematangedu (Senna auriculata), and Vepa (Neem) in the Peddagutta area. A critical factor in this success was the community's social fencing initiative, where villagers collectively agreed to protect the plantations and restrict cattle grazing on these lands. This social fencing ensured a remarkable 95% survival rate of the plants.

The plantation has had multiple positive environmental impacts: it has facilitated natural regeneration of local flora, improved soil stability, enriched local biodiversity, and contributed to enhancing the microclimate. These ecological benefits translated into tangible livelihood improvements; despite drought conditions in surrounding villages last year, Chinnalaxmapur received good rainfall, helping maintain water availability for irrigation, drinking, and livestock needs. This contrast highlighted the project's localized climate resilience benefits, directly supporting farmers' agricultural productivity and water security.

Collective Water Management:

Another vital outcome of the watershed work has been improved groundwater recharge and increased well yields across the intervention area. Traditionally, competitive extraction of groundwater by individual farmers could lead to over-exploitation; however, the watershed community demonstrated emerging collective water management practices. One family's voluntary sharing of borewell water with a neighboring farmer was positively highlighted and discussed during community reflection meetings. These discussions emphasized the need for formal initiatives to prevent uncontrolled groundwater extraction and to encourage sharing, promoting sustainable water use across the watershed.

Inter-Departmental Collaboration:

The project maintains close coordination with key government line departments, including Animal Husbandry, Agriculture, Groundwater, and Horticulture. This integrated approach ensures that watershed interventions dovetail with complementary schemes and technical support, maximizing the project's benefits for the target villages and farming communities.

Summary:

The Chinnalaxmapur Watershed Development Project under MARI and NABARD is a landmark intervention improving rural livelihoods through scientific watershed management. Its multi-pronged approach combines technical, ecological, and social strategies to build climate resilience and sustainable agricultural productivity. Key achievements include successful soil and moisture conservation works, high-survival plantation efforts, exposure visits that build community capacity, and emerging collective water management practices. The project's integration with government departments ensures broad institutional support, making it a replicable model for sustainable rural development in Telangana.



Mekalagattu Watershed Climate Proofing Project

Overview

The Mekalagattu Watershed Climate Proofing Project is a targeted initiative under the joint collaboration between MARI and NABARD aimed at enhancing the livelihoods and resilience of rural communities living in Jangaon and Yadhadri Bhongir districts, Telangana. These communities predominantly depend on watershed resources for agriculture and allied activities. The project addresses the challenges posed by climate variability through a multi-dimensional approach involving natural resource management, climate adaptation, livelihood diversification, and technological innovations. The primary goal is to create a sustainable impact by improving the socio-economic conditions of small and marginal farmers through intelligent adaptation measures and strengthening climate resilience at the watershed level.

Objectives

The project is designed with multiple specific objectives:

- To improve adaptation to climate variability and long-term climate change by adopting better management and maintenance practices for soil and water regimes. This aims to enhance crop and pastureland productivity and thereby increase small and marginal farmers' incomes.
- To conserve and protect critical natural resources such as soil, moisture, and vegetation cover to reduce the adverse effects of climate variability and degradation.
- To diversify agricultural livelihoods, moving beyond paddy monoculture towards horticultural crops, vegetables, and integrated farming systems that ensure better income security and nutritional outcomes for farming households.
- To promote water-use efficiency by introducing solar-powered pumping systems targeted at vulnerable crops which demand optimized irrigation.
- To develop resource materials, monitoring tools, and frameworks to track and measure climate change adaptation and mitigation co-benefits, contributing to knowledge generation and replication of successful models.

Major Achievements & Impact Highlights

A) Soil and Water conservation: The construction of five (5) farm ponds (FPs) and Sunken Ponds (SPs) in strategic locations, such as the Gorre Bodu Marrikunta area, has significantly improved groundwater recharge. Farmers like Gaddameedi Suresha and Kalkuri Ramesh observed noticeable improvements in water yields from wells and bore wells located downstream of these structures. This enhanced water availability is expected to increase further with time as aquifers replenish, securing water resources for irrigation, livestock, and household use.

B) Soil Health Improvement And Productivity Enhancement: Several soil health improvement strategies have been successfully implemented:

- * Deep ploughing, facilitated in fifty (50) acres with a depth of 45-50 cms, modifies the soil structure and moisture retention capacity, which helps trap moisture for longer periods, benefiting crop growth during dry spells.
- Green manure cultivation with crops such as daincha in twenty (20) acres is practiced ahead of the main cropping season. These leguminous crops improve soil fertility by fixing atmospheric nitrogen and enhancing organic matter content in the soil.
- Application of tank silt, rich in nutrients, transported from the tank beds of nearby water tanks to farmers' fields in 50 acres, has been particularly beneficial to small and marginal farmers. This practice replenishes soil fertility naturally, thereby reducing the need for chemical fertilizers and enhancing sustainable production

C) Promotion of Sustainable Natural Resource Management (NRM), Climate Change Adaptation (CCA) Farming Practices, and Food Security:

- To intensify vegetable production and support diversified cropping, pandal-based vegetable cultivation has been promoted with farmers in 20 acres. Pandal structures, supported by stone poles and GI wire mats, provide a conducive environment for growing creeper vegetables by protecting crops from extreme weather conditions, reducing pest incidences, and enabling efficient space utilization.
- Integrated Farming Systems (IFS) practices have been widely adopted among CPP farmers in 20 acres. This includes growing multiple vegetable crops such as ladies' fingers, brinjal, tomato, chili, and leafy vegetables. Livestock components include backyard poultry to 20 households (around 12 birds per household), goat rearing by 20 households, and plantation of approximately 15 fruit plants per farm mango, lemon, and pomegranate being common species in 20 households also taken up as part of project interventions. These diversified practices not only improve household food security but also create multiple income sources, enhancing resilience to market and climate shocks.

Learning and Next Steps:

The project has seen a positive scaling-up of existing physical watershed management activities aligned with climate change adaptation objectives. Farmers continue to adopt sustainable agricultural practices like drip irrigation, mulching, and pandal-based cultivation ensuring year-round income generation. Particular households have taken the initiative to engage entire family units in these integrated livelihood activities, maximizing labor efficiency and farm productivity.

Looking ahead, the focus will be on strengthening community-based water management to sustain groundwater recharge, expanding solar irrigation systems in vulnerable zones, and developing robust metrics for climate adaptation monitoring to document and replicate best practices across the region.

Partners and Stakeholder Engagement:

The project enjoys strong collaboration with state government line departments, including Animal Husbandry, Agriculture, Groundwater, and Horticulture. This partnership provides technical expertise, resource support, and aligns government schemes with grassroots watershed activities, ensuring comprehensive support to beneficiary communities.

Conclusion:

The Mekalagattu Watershed Climate Proofing Project exemplifies a holistic approach to addressing climate variability challenges in rural Telangana through integrated natural resource management, diversified agriculture, and community empowerment. The project's successes in improving water availability, soil health, crop diversification, and livelihood security demonstrate its potential as a scalable model for sustainable rural development. The continued involvement of multiple stakeholders and the proactive adaptation of farmers showcase a promising pathway for long-term resilience and enhanced quality of life in the project villages.



eFARM – Empowering Farmers with Agency, Resilience, and Markets

Overview

The eFARM Project, in collaboration with Digital Green, is designed to strengthen Farmer Producer Organizations (FPOs), enabling them to digitize member profiles, apply data-driven decision-making, and enhance market engagement. By integrating technology through the eFARM mobile app and Farmer.Chat platform, the project empowers smallholder farmers to access timely advisories, improve crop management, track input/output procurement, and boost incomes through informed decisions. The project directly works with three FPOs—Vayuputra, Chilpur, and Navavikasa—in Telangana, fostering digital adoption, leadership training, and governance integration.

Scope and Approach:

- **App & Dashboard Testing**

Digitized farmer records, created input/output orders, published FPO product catalogues, and developed dashboards for data-based decision-making.

- **Capacity Building**

Trained **FPO staff, Board of Directors (BoD), and master trainers** on digital tools, record-keeping, business planning, governance, and market-driven strategies.

- **Farmer.Chat Orientation & Adoption**

Introduced Farmer.Chat app to farmers, installed on smartphones, and trained them in regional languages for:

- Crop management (growth, irrigation scheduling, pest & disease management).
- Weather forecasting for better activity planning.
- Real-time agricultural market prices.
- Advisory services for soil health and productivity.

- **Hands-on Training:**

- Farmers engaged in interactive sessions using smartphones, resolving queries, and troubleshooting common technical issues like connectivity or language settings.

Progress in Strengthening FPOs:

- Vayuputra FPO: Established in 2018; grew from 120 farmers to 550 members (328 women, 222 men).
- Chilpur FPO: Established in 2018; increased to 530 farmers (520 men, 10 women).
- Navavikasa FPO: Established in 2016; scaled up to 568 farmers (310 men, 258 women).

Each FPO now has a 10-member Board of Directors and is actively using the app to strengthen farmer transactions and decision-making.

Farmer Adoption:

CASE STUDY

Guguloth Ravi, a paddy farmer from Fatehpur village, Chilpur Mandal, recalls his shift from dependency on private fertilizer sellers to digital advisories:

"Earlier, I bought fertilizers and pesticides recommended by shopkeepers, spending heavily without results. Since installing Farmer.Chat during MARI's Digital Greens Conference, I get instant, reliable, and cost-effective suggestions. The app has reduced my costs, improved crop output, and given me confidence. I thank MARI and Digital Green for bringing this valuable service."

This success illustrates how digital platforms bridge knowledge gaps, reduce input costs, and strengthen farmer resilience.

Impact Snapshot

- **Farmer Meetings:** Conducted 23 meetings in 3 FPOs on the progress achieved, record farmers' experiences, address their needs through the App and enable them to fully utilize the App.
- **Farmers/FPOs onboarded onto Farmer.Chat:** Onboarded 494 (167 female, 327 male participants) based on the availability of smart phones with farmers.
- **Exposure Visits Organized:** Conducted two exposure visits conducted for BODs to enable FPOs whether they can take up any income generating activities for FPOs by taking up urban organic waste into organic/compost manure and ensuring local market. This will in turn help farmers to reduce dependence on high value chemical fertilizers and pesticides.

Project Learnings

1. **High acceptance of Farmer.Chat:** Farmers are increasingly enquiring about the advisory services which has been enabling them to take appropriate decisions instead of depending on the fertilizers/pesticides' vendors.
2. **Women farmer participation:** Particularly noticeable in Vayuputra and Navavikasa FPOs with 72 women farmers, showing potential to enhance gender equity in agri-digital platforms.
3. **BoD engagement:** Conducted two (2) trainings in identified FPOs to improve operational skills of the BODs on use of the APP and how to use the same in serving the farmers in a professional manner.
4. **App helps overcome location barriers:** Timely advisories on weather/pest management save crops and lower costs saving their time and resources to travel to experts and search for options to save their crops, weather status and market prices.

Next Steps

- **Scale soil testing initiatives** in all three FPOs to strengthen crop productivity.
- **Organize more exposure visits** for cross-learning from successful agri-value chains.
- **Document success stories through video testimonials** to promote Farmer.Chat adoption.
- **FPO-led input and output market business planning**, ensuring sustainability.
- **Expand farmer training modules** on digital record-keeping and online sales.
- **Foster continuous interaction and motivation** for farmers to increase daily app use (minimum 3 queries per farmer encouraged).
- Encourage BoDs to lead **pilot digital interventions** and track outcomes.



Better Cotton: 2024–25 Promoting Sustainable Cotton Production in Andhra Pradesh

Overview & Goals

The Better Cotton Initiative (BCI) Project was implemented to promote sustainable cotton cultivation practices, improve fiber quality, and enhance the livelihoods of smallholder cotton farmers and farm workers. The project focused on adopting integrated pest management, improving soil health, and promoting climate-resilient practices, including piloting biochar applications and constructing farm ponds for rainwater harvesting. It also emphasized clean cotton-picking methods, along with safe storage and transportation practices to maintain cotton quality.

Women's empowerment and the promotion of decent working conditions were central to the project's approach. Strong collaboration was fostered among government agencies, private sector stakeholders, and producer organizations to ensure effective implementation and long-term sustainability. The project directly benefited more than 15,000 farmers and over 35,000 farm workers, with significant participation from women.

During this period, MARI undertook structured and sustained efforts to actively engage farmers in Better Cotton production. Over 16500 farmers were mobilized into 497 Learning Groups across 93 villages. These Learning Groups were supported by 52 Field Facilitators operating under four (4) Production Units, each led by a Production Unit Manager. In addition, project-level technical experts provided guidance, supervision, and monitoring to ensure quality implementation and adherence to the Better Cotton Initiative's Principles, Criteria, and Standards, as outlined below:

Major Achievements and Impact Highlights:

- Making farmers aware of timely Crop Protection practices, which, if followed, reduce dependence on highly toxic pesticides and excessive use of chemical fertilizers. This reduction automatically lowered the cultivation cost and enabled the achievement of other criteria for Better Cotton production. To facilitate this, 125 awareness programs were conducted with the 3511 farmers participation. 200 demonstration plots were facilitated with 200 lead farmers, and these demo plots were visited by 882 farmers to adopt similar practices in their own fields.
- Making farmers aware of proper soil health improvement practices, which, if followed, ensure better plant growth, improve the resistance capacity of plants to withstand pest attacks, and better yields. 122 awareness programs were organized for 2171 farmers. 500 Soil Tests were conducted with 500 farmers. They were also given soil health cards, based on which soil enrichment measures can be taken up by them. On a pilot basis, 25 biochar production units were established to enhance soil fertility and climate resilience in cotton cultivation plots.
- Making farmers aware of proper irrigation practices to conserve water and ensure that there is enough water underground. 247 LG awareness programs were organized for 8166 farmers in this regard. To make water available during scarcity for critical irrigation, 11 farm ponds were facilitated on a pilot basis with 50% cost sharing by concerned farmers and the project, so that similar strategies can be adopted by farmers. Practices such as alternative row irrigation were also introduced, which had wide application by farmers.

- MARI also made farmers aware of the importance of biodiversity in their fields and in their localities. MARI made farmers observe an increased presence of farmer-friendly insects. Very soon, the number of friendly insects overtakes the pests, which brings balance in the environment.
- MARI took all practical steps to ensure gender equity through 122 awareness programs for 200 men and 1000 women, prevention of child labor in cotton picking tasks through coordination with schools, Anganwadi workers, etc. There are about 20% (2825) women farmers and nearly 50% (16647) women farm workers who were made aware of their rights, such as equal wages for equal work, safe workplaces, etc. All 122 villages have Gender and Child Labor Committees that ensure that the decisions made in these programs are implemented with community monitoring strategies. 50% (35) of the project staff are women, to resemble similar practice in the MARI project also.
- Keeping in mind the Better Cotton's Decent Work principles, MARI ensured that children below 18 years are not employed in agricultural works, workers between the ages of 18 and 21 years are not given the dangerous or hard tasks such as pesticide spraying or lifting of heavy burdens such as fertilizer bags, etc.
- MARI facilitated clean cotton-picking practices through 14 awareness programs to 420 farmers and 420 farm workers. On an experimental basis, 127 farm workers were provided with the Personal Protection Equipment consisting of ergonomic aprons and protective caps, and farmers were provided with reusable cloth bags to ensure fiber quality by reducing fiber contamination and ensuring hygiene during harvest.

Worker Protection:

CASE STUDY

Sravani, a 28-year-old migrant cotton picker from Anantapur working in Guntur district, lived in poor conditions and suffered health challenges during pregnancy. With MARI's support, she registered at a local Anganwadi center under ICDS and began receiving nutritious food supplements. This intervention improved her health and highlighted how project training on decent work effectively connected vulnerable women workers with critical government entitlements.

Project Learnings and Next Steps:

Simple, low-cost innovations like cotton-picking kits and farmer-led demonstration plots proved highly effective in driving quality improvement and technology adoption among farmers. Women's active participation emerged as a decisive factor in community-wide change. Pilots of biochar units and farm ponds demonstrated promising impacts on climate resilience and water security, warranting further expansion.

Going forward, MARI plans to deepen collaboration with NABARD, CIRCOT, local research and training institutions, and government schemes. Expansion of biochar production, water-harvesting infrastructure, and strengthening of farmers' collective institutions will be prioritized to sustain fiber quality, improve livelihoods, and promote gender inclusion.

Partners and Stakeholder Recognition:

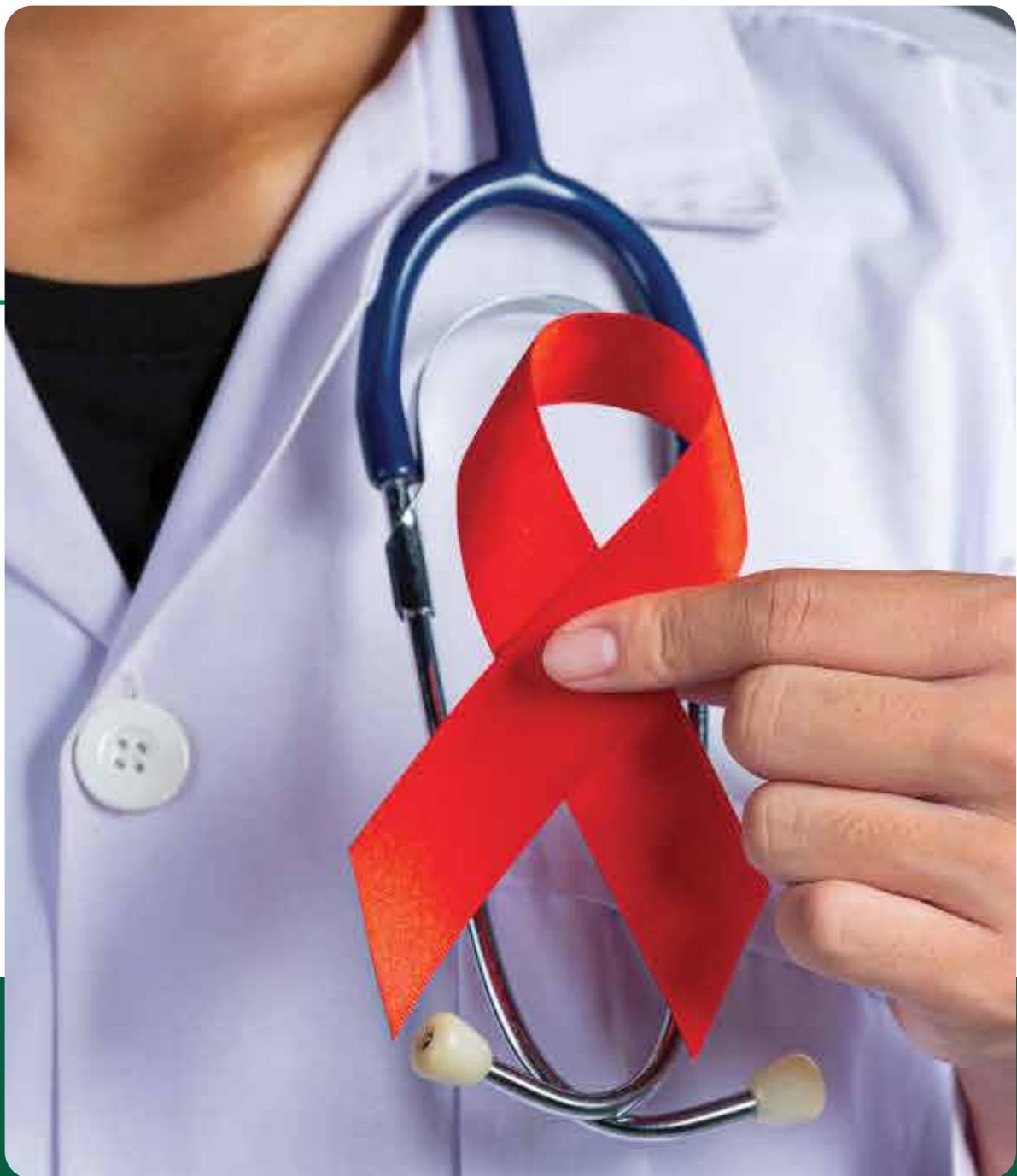
Gratitude is extended to the Global Innovation Fund (GIF) for financial support and Better Cotton for partnership guidance. NABARD's catalytic funding and CIRCOT's fiber quality expertise were instrumental. Regional research stations, including RARS Guntur and KVK Bananas, provided critical training inputs. The unwavering support of the Government of Andhra Pradesh and commitment of MARI's field teams were pivotal in achieving collective impact.

Voice from the grassroots:

"Wearing the cotton shirt and cap made my long hours in the field bearable—no more itching, sweating, or burning under the sun. Please make these kits available for all women like me. We need safety and comfort, along with our wages."

— Chandramma, K. Nagalapuram
Kodumur, January 10, 2025.





PREVENTIVE HEALTH

Targeted Intervention (TI) to prevent HIV/AIDS Project

Overview & Goals

The project is part of the comprehensive effort to combat the HIV/AIDS epidemic, focusing on substantially reducing new HIV infections and AIDS-related deaths by 80% since the 2010 baseline. The project targets key outcomes, including the elimination of vertical transmission of HIV and syphilis to prevent mother-to-child transmission, the eradication of stigma and discrimination related to HIV/AIDS, and the extensive promotion of universal access to quality services for sexually transmitted infections (STIs) and reproductive tract infections (RTIs).

Aligned with the ambitious UNAIDS 95:95:95 strategy, the project aims for:

- 95% of targeted people at the highest risk of acquiring HIV to use comprehensive prevention services.
- 95% of HIV-positive individuals know their HIV status.
- 95% of those who know their status to be linked to antiretroviral therapy (ART).
- 95% of individuals on ART achieve viral load suppression, thereby reducing HIV transmission and improving health outcomes.

Major Achievements and Impact Highlights:

Against the target of 95% at all levels of 2763 high risk population following are the achievement:

#	DESCRIPTION	TARGET
01	Regular (Quarterly) Medical Checkup Target (Annual target of 11050)	2763
02	Actual RMC Achieved (annual achievement 10288 (93%)	2572
03	ICTC (Integrated Counselling and Testing Centre) Target	2749
04	Actual ICTC Achieved	2744 (99%)
05	Rapid Plasma Region (Half-yearly RPR Target)	2749
06	RPR Achieved	2744 (99%)

- 1-1 Contacts to keep reminding safe sex practices, need for regular medical checkup, and if found HIV/AIDS positive, to achieve timely treatment through fortnightly meetings. Cumulative achievement in the year 2024-25 is - 29082 (95%)
- Condom Demand is calculated as one condom per day, making the target 934560
- Actual Condom Distribution - 770569 (89%)

Last year, MARI conducted 5106 diagnostic tests in which 36HIV positives were identified and they were linked to ART.

A cornerstone achievement was the Community-Based Screening (CBS) camp held on December 12, 2024, at Kaataram village in Bhupalapally district. The camp screened 87 individuals from the general community, revealing the vital role of localized outreach in early detection and linkage to care.

One illustrative case involved Langari Shekar, a 30-year-old tractor driver who was initially found to be single test reactive for HIV. Given his occupation requiring night driving near brothel areas, he had repeated unsafe sexual encounters, increasing his risk of infection. After his preliminary screening, a field worker accompanied him to the Integrated Counselling and Testing Centre (ICTC) at Parkal, where his HIV positive status was confirmed.

Understanding the gravity of the situation, especially with his young family — a 3-year-old son and a 5-year-old daughter — the project staff swiftly arranged for his wife to be screened at the camp. She too tested reactive and, during counseling, disclosed ongoing symptoms of lower abdominal pain for months. Before the couple could personally visit ICTC for confirmation and treatment, the District Project Manager (DPM) and the District AIDS Prevention and Control Unit (DAPCU) facilitated transit passes to expedite their access to medical facilities.

Both individuals were confirmed HIV positive and immediately linked to ART services, strengthening early treatment initiation—a critical factor in patient outcomes. The wife was also referred to the nearest Designated STI/RTI Clinic (DSRC) for appropriate diagnosis and treatment of the lower abdominal pain, which was confirmed to be sexually transmitted infection (STI). Their children's testing remains a priority.

This case stands as a testament to the program's effective community mobilization, timely intervention, and follow-up care, which collectively contribute to saving lives and preventing further transmission.

Project Learnings:

The program's field experience underlines the importance of expanding outreach beyond conventional Targeted Intervention (TI) areas to include hidden high-risk populations (HRGs). These individuals can often remain outside formal health service coverage due to geographic, social, or behavioral barriers.

The eligibility criteria emphasize registering HRGs above 18 years of age who have not previously engaged with TI programs and are involved in high-risk behaviors. Identifying new hotspots through sustained mapping and multisectoral collaboration allows the program to tailor interventions effectively.

Next Steps and Strategic Approach:

The strategic focus is now on strengthening outreach activities to saturate coverage, especially targeting unreached populations in new and emerging hotspots. This will involve coordinated community-based screening efforts, using counselling and education to facilitate TI registration, and prompt ART initiation and treatment linkages.

The eligibility criteria emphasize registering HRGs above 18 years of age who have not previously engaged with TI programs and are involved in high-risk behaviors. Identifying new hotspots through sustained mapping and multisectoral collaboration allows the program to tailor interventions effectively.

Robust monitoring frameworks will track critical indicators, including the number of HRGs and partners tested, positivity rates, ART registration and retention, and viral load suppression achievement. A particular focus is placed on retrieving lost-to-follow-up (LFU) cases to maintain treatment continuity and reduce default rates.

These comprehensive, data-driven, and community-empowered initiatives are expected to bring the Bhupalapally district closer to meeting national HIV control goals and improving the health and social well-being of vulnerable populations.



Targeted Intervention to Prevent HIV/AIDS Project – Warangal

Overview & Goals

The project aims to empower and enable vulnerable communities in Warangal, Hanamkonda, and Jangaon districts to protect themselves against sexually transmitted infections (STIs), HIV, and AIDS. The project currently serves a core target population of 2,248 people comprising 608 Female Sex Workers (FSWs), 1,432 Men who have Sex with Men (MSM), and 208 Transgender (TG) individuals.

The project aligns with the UNAIDS 95:95:95 targets to be achieved by 2026, focusing on ensuring that 95% of people living with HIV are aware of their status; 95% of those diagnosed are linked to sustained antiretroviral therapy (ART); and 95% of those on ART achieve viral suppression, which reduces transmission risk and improves quality of life.

To meet these goals, MARI Warangal implements community-based screening (CBS) camps in high-risk areas, including Thandas (tribal hamlets), lodges, slums, and hotspots identified through social networks. The project emphasizes identifying previously unreach high-risk groups (HRGs), motivating them to access HIV testing, and providing sustained follow-up support for ART adherence.

Major Achievements and Impact Highlights:

Between recent screening efforts, MARI Warangal identified 284 new HRGs and diagnosed 38 new HIV-positive individuals. These screenings covered vulnerable settings such as slums, lodges, and Thandas, where marginalized populations often have limited access to health services. The project also facilitated partner and spouse testing, further extending the reach of preventive and diagnostic services.

A flagship initiative, the Sampoorna Suraksha HIV/AIDS Awareness Campaign (SSHAAC), has been conducted extensively in schools and colleges within the target districts. The campaign focuses on reducing annual new HIV infections by 80%, eliminating vertical transmission of HIV and syphilis, dismantling stigma and discrimination, and promoting comprehensive access to quality STI/RTI services. These efforts have received recognition, with MARI Warangal awarded the Best TI NGO for 2024, highlighting its strong community footprint and impact.

The program's effectiveness is underscored by real-life challenges faced by peer educators working at the frontline. For example, Buchamma, a committed peer educator, was mistakenly arrested during routine outreach at a hotspot. Through proactive intervention by the Project Director and liaison with law enforcement, the charges were dismissed, enabling her to resume vital services. This incident exemplifies the challenging and sometimes hostile environments in which the program operates and the importance of institutional support for frontline workers.

Project Learnings and Capacity Building:

Comprehensive evaluations conducted in 2023-24 and 2024-25 found that program staff and peer educators possess deep knowledge of HIV/AIDS prevention and care, attributed largely to community-based recruitment practices. Outreach and peer educators drawn directly from the community bolster trust, accessibility, and program effectiveness.

Nonetheless, the evaluations revealed areas requiring improvement, which are actively being addressed to optimize service delivery.

With HIV positivity rates declining among key populations but rising slightly in the general population, the project has adapted its strategy to focus on expanded door-to-door awareness campaigns, intensified testing, and educational efforts in colleges and schools to curb emerging risks.

Next Steps and Strategic Focus:

The project aim is to maintain and increase community-based screening efforts, focusing on high-risk venues such as lodges, Thandas, dhabas, and slum areas to identify undiagnosed cases (first 95). Rapid linkage to ART and sustained follow-up aim to ensure treatment adherence and viral suppression (second and third 95).

Innovative outreach includes social network-based identification of HRGs, virtual engagement, and use of mobile applications to disseminate prevention messages and testing alerts. The 1097 toll-free helpline supports confidential counselling and information dissemination. Monitoring frameworks will focus on registration and service uptake metrics, ART retention, viral suppression, and retrieval of lost-to-follow-up cases, ensuring continuous improvement and data accountability.

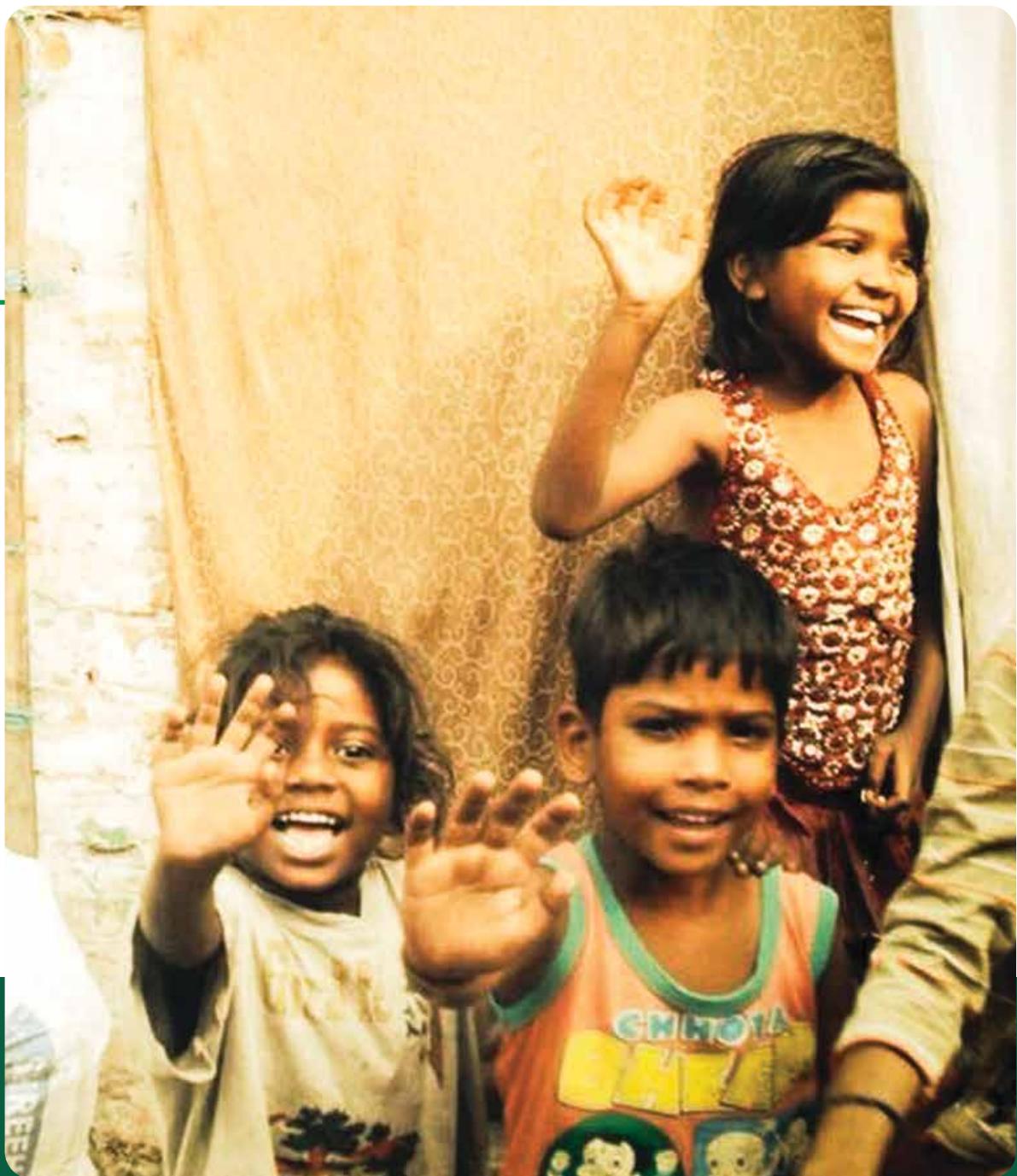
Partners and Stakeholder Engagement:

MARI Warangal strengthens collaboration with government health agencies, including program referrals through district hospitals and Primary Health Centers (PHCs). Recognizing transport and access barriers faced by HRGs, the program successfully advocated with the District AIDS Prevention and Control Unit (DAPCU) for provision of ART and related services closer to patients' homes via nearby PHCs.

The project also facilitates legal and socioeconomic empowerment by collaborating with Legal Service Authorities to provide entitlements such as dry ration supplies, labor cards, and voter IDs to HRGs and their families. These social support services enhance community wellbeing and reduce vulnerabilities that may exacerbate HIV risk.

Strong partnerships with local government agencies, health service providers, legal authorities, and community organizations enable a comprehensive approach to HIV prevention, care, and social empowerment within the Warangal TI program area, ensuring a sustainable and holistic response to the epidemic.





SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Basti Vikas Project

Overview & Goals

The Basti Vikas Project aims to strengthen community-led action across twenty-eight (28) slums in Hyderabad while providing humanitarian support to highly vulnerable populations in Balapur. The initiative focuses on nurturing local leadership, enabling access to essential documents and government schemes, improving civic amenities, and promoting child development and women's health.

During the reporting period, the project reached a total of 10,127 families (35,652 individuals) across 28 slums, along with 1,094 refugee families residing in 32 camps

Key Achievements

- **Establishing Community Cadres:**

- Trained and placed twenty-five (25) people drawn from the selected slums or from nearby areas such as Basti Mitras (BMs). They are effectively trained in enabling the local communities to get all the documents they are eligible for, apply for benefits from the welfare and development schemes launched from time to time by the government, lodge grievances through apps, and make their surroundings worthy of living in.
- Formed and strengthened 28 Basti Vikas Manchs (BVMs) with 225 members, 85% being women leaders. This community set-up ensures all the deserving families avail the services rendered by the project staff from MARI.

- **Access to Documents:**

- During 2024–25, a total of 17,437 applications were submitted, resulting in 10,595 individuals successfully obtaining valid identity and entitlement documents, including Aadhaar, voter ID, PAN, and ration cards. This intervention enabled applicants to save an estimated ₹1.15 crore by eliminating the need to pay unauthorized fees to local intermediaries. While it is mandatory for the applicants to pay the prescribed fee and charges to government departments and local bodies, the saving is a result of doing away with some local agents who make money unauthorizedly.
- Regular documentation camps were organized in slum settlements in collaboration with government line departments, where project staff and Basti Vikas Manch representatives jointly facilitated applications for families lacking required documents.
- Project staff also conducted direct online follow-ups and verified with applicants to confirm receipt of the correct documents.

- **Social Entitlements:**

- Facilitated 3,084 eligible applicants to apply for welfare and/or development schemes, resulting in 237 individuals receiving benefits amounting to ₹11.5 lakh.
- Supported 147 children in securing admissions to quality government residential schools—such as Navodaya, KGBV, and Social/Tribal/Minority Gurukulams—leading to an estimated ₹1.2 lakh in educational benefits through savings on food, uniforms, accommodation, books, and stationery for one year.

- **Urban Development & Civic Amenities:**

- Prepared micro-plans for six model slums to improve their basic amenities such as drinking water, drainage connections, internal roads, streetlights, which make their lives more dignified, safe, and comfortable.
- Raised 554 online grievances via government apps (My GHMC, TGSPDCL, HMWSSB), with 41 resolved. This has actually empowered the communities to approach the service agencies from their homes.
- Filed 22 written representations for roads, drainage, Anganwadi, and health centers.

- **Humanitarian Assistance for Refugees:**

- Improved living conditions for 1,094 Refugee families in 32 camps.
- Repaired five (5) drainage lines and five (5) community toilets, which ensured that the targeted and other local communities live in hygienic conditions in a dignified manner. This has actually reduced tensions between the refugee and local communities.
- Installed/repaired four (4) borewells, benefiting over 600 families, which ensured availability of water for their daily usage, while they continue to drink water delivered by HMWSSB through public taps or the commercial treated water that is available locally.
- Running three (3) Child-Friendly Learning Spaces (CFLS) for 130 children (ages 3–6), which provides a safe place for them while their parents go out for their daily wage tasks and start recognizing the local language and learn to read and write.
- Daily nutritious food supply to 300 children through a community kitchen to improve their nutritional status.

- **Health & Emergency Support:**

- Extended emergency medical and travel support to 220 women and children, enabling timely access to critical healthcare services at government health facilities and private hospitals.
- Strengthened community awareness on WASH practices, contributing to improved hygiene behaviors and a reduction in water-borne diseases.

Saraiah's Family

CASE STUDY

In Vikalangula Colony, a family of seven dependent on daily wages lived without essential identity and entitlement documents, leaving their children out of school and the household without access to food security schemes. Basti Mitra Ms. Revathi intervened and systematically facilitated the issuance of Aadhaar, PAN, voter IDs, birth certificates, ration cards, ABHA, and E-Shram registrations for every family member. Within five months, the entire household secured seven critical documents. As a result, the children are now enrolled in school, the family receives free rations, and they can look ahead with renewed hope. Reflecting on the change, Ms. Rekha shared, *"Our lives had no light of hope. Now I can dream of a good future for my children. It feels like a miracle."*

Innovations and Systems Strengthened:

- Developed a live Management Information System (MIS) capturing project progress, outreach, document/scheme status, BVM leadership assessments, children's attendance, and nutrition monitoring.
- Built strong working rapport with government departments through interface meetings and collaborative initiatives.
- Adopted a hybrid approach of demand-driven services and saturation models for documents and entitlements, achieving.
- Aadhaar saturation in 7 slums, voter ID in 24, death certificates in 15, pensions in 10, and 1 each slum for other targeted schemes such as Telangana Gruha Lakshmi and Jyothi.

BASTI VIKAS PROJECT AT A GLANCE

No of Staff	55
No of Slums	28
No of Documents Applied	17437
No of Schemes Applied	3084
No of Children Joined in better govt. educational Institution	147
No of Greivances raised in 28 slums	554
Monitory Value in Rupees Benefited to the Community	1,30,89,022
No of Camps	3084
No of Child Frinedly Learnig Spaces/No of Children	147
No of repairworks- borewell, drainage, toilet	3084
No of women got emergency health benefits and refel service support	147

Partnerships and Acknowledgements:

Supported by the Azim Premji Foundation and Solon India Pvt. Ltd., the project has effectively demonstrated strong collaborative relationships with key line departments and agencies, including Municipalities, GHMC, MeeSeva centers, Mandal Revenue Offices, Civil Supplies, Education, and Electricity departments. The project also benefited from active community participation through local leaders, elected representatives, and Basti Vikas Manch members. MARI extends its sincere gratitude to all stakeholders for their valuable contributions in making this initiative a success



Educate Project

Overview & Objectives

The project aims to provide quality early childhood education and care to disadvantaged children from communities such as garbage collectors, daily wage laborers, and domestic workers. Through well-structured Child Care Centers, the project fosters holistic development in health, nutrition, and education. It creates a safe, nurturing environment and emphasizes community participation with strong parental support, local leaders, and voluntary organizations. The ultimate goals include improving school readiness, reducing dropout rates, and providing equal education opportunities. This initiative is supported by Care to Action, Italy, and implemented across three slums within the Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation (GHMC) limits and the Peerzadiguda Municipal Corporation.

Present Strength and Scope

As of June 2025, the centers cater to 115 children (65 boys and 50 girls) across three locations—Sai Nagar, Rahul Gandhi Nagar, and Bhagath Singh Nagar. In addition to the children enrolled in the Child Care Centers, evening tuition support is provided to 100 primary and secondary school students to enhance their academic performance.

Major Achievements and Key Highlights:

- Maintained an average attendance rate of 85% through sustained parent-teacher engagement and collaboration.
- Provided regular nutritious meals to 100 children, including rice, dal, vegetables, and eggs, contributing to reduced malnutrition, improved weight and height, and enhanced concentration levels.
- Distributed two sets of uniforms to every child at no cost, promoting dignity and a sense of equality.
- Installed three new air coolers with community contributions to enhance comfort and the learning environment for children.
- Organized three health camps reaching 325 community members (102 children and 223 adults) for early detection and treatment of illnesses and disabilities.
- Conducted door-to-door outreach across 440 households to motivate parents and raise awareness on hygiene, childcare, safety, and strategies to address malnutrition.
- Facilitated the admission of 50 children into government and private schools, with continued follow-up to prevent dropouts.
- Strengthened academic performance and parent-school communication through evening tuition centers and active participation in Parent-Teacher Meetings.
- Conducted follow-ups with 84 beneficiaries of livelihood development initiatives, enabling them to earn additional income and ensure their children attend school rather than engage in income-generating activities.
- Ensured access to safe drinking water in schools by installing water filters in the childcare centers.

Impact Story:

A notable case is Master V. Likvith from Sai Nagar, who overcame a serious urinary tract defect through free treatment under the state Arogya Sri program, supported by MARI staff throughout the process. He is now attending private school with confidence, a testament to the project's holistic support system.

Mothers Committee Meetings To Facilitate community Involvement And Sustainability:

Mothers' Committees have been formed in each slum and meet monthly to discuss child development and the role of parents in nurturing and care. Parents also make financial contributions toward amenities such as water coolers, demonstrating strong community ownership of the centers. In addition, regular household visits have led to improved hygiene practices and better childcare within families.

Challenges and Learnings:

Addressing seasonal diseases and malnutrition requires continuous awareness and follow-through at the household level. Sustaining attendance and academic performance among children demands ongoing community engagement and support.

Next Steps and Future Plans:

- Capacity building for teachers through training and action plans to facilitate quality learning by the children.
- Expand community participation and resource contributions to serve the children effectively and improve the infrastructure in the childcare centers.
- Strengthen evening tuition via continuous assessments and targeted support to improve learning outcomes with child centered approach.
- Explore partnerships for enhanced health and nutrition services.
- Ensure zero school dropouts by monitoring their school attendance, participation in the Parent Teacher meetings, and organization of government and private schools.

Acknowledgments and Partnerships:

The success of the project is attributed to the active support from partners, local leaders, voluntary organizations, government bodies, and the community. The collaboration between MARI and Care to Action is essential in promoting inclusive, equitable, and quality education for all children.



Enhancing Access to Sustainable Educational Facilities for Children of Marginalized and Vulnerable Communities in Telangana

Overview

With the support of **IDRF**, MARI took up focused interventions to improve access to quality education for 254 children from socio-economically disadvantaged families across **15 villages in Suryapet District, Telangana**. This project prioritizes **quality education, infrastructure development, teacher training, and holistic child well-being**. By reducing barriers such as lack of transport, nutrition, and supportive learning spaces, the initiative ensures that children not only remain in school but also thrive in an engaging, safe, and inclusive environment.

Key Achievements :

- Enhanced teaching quality through employing experts on a part time basis who supported the teachers in achieving improved **professional capacities to 22 teachers**.
- Strengthened infrastructure, ensuring **safe classrooms, transport facilities, adequate toilets, and eco-friendly spaces**.
- Supplementary **nutrition support, uniforms, and transport** provided to all the 254 students, improving student attendance and overall well-being.
- Fostered academic success: **100% students passed their annual exams** and promoted to the next grade.
- Strengthened community ownership through activities like **Swachh Bharat drives, Badi Bata campaigns, eco-friendly celebrations, and health monitoring**.

Direct Interventions:

- Renovated and improved school infrastructure, including gates, sanitation facilities, and playground safety.
- Provision of school bus services to improve access and reduce dropout rates.
- Inclusive infrastructure facilities (ramps, gender-sensitive toilets, safe classrooms) by ensuring proper maintenance and cleanliness in the school.

Students and Staff Profile

STUDENTS		STAFF	
GIRLS	BOYS	TEACHING	NON-TEACHING
119	135	22	07

Socio-occupational profile of students' families

#	DESCRIPTION	NO.OF FAMILIES
01	Agriculture and allied activities	90
02	Labourers/Construction workers	107
03	Small business families	19
04	Private employees:	30
05	Government employees	08

- **Educational Outcomes:** All Class 10 students successfully passed their annual examinations, and all other children were promoted to the next higher grade, reflecting the project's combined efforts in providing sustained academic and supportive interventions.
- **Health Outcomes:** Supplementary nutrition is provided daily at 3:00 PM, along with regular monitoring, to support children's health and enable them to focus better on learning.
- **Community Outcomes:** MARI has provided fuel assistance to the buses used for pick up and drop off children from their homes to school and back, which has considerably reduced the burden on parents.

Next Steps:

- Expand digital infrastructure to enhance concept clarity and improve the overall quality of learning.
- Upgrade science laboratories and vocational training centers to enable students to gain practical, future-ready skills.
- Conduct regular refresher trainings for teachers to promote the adoption of innovative and learner-centric methodologies.
- Sustain and strengthen environmental initiatives with solar energy, clean drinking water systems, and rainwater harvesting.
- Strengthen parent and community engagement in school development and improvement initiatives.



Watersheds Livelihoods

Overview

The Watersheds Livelihoods Project, supported by MARI & NABARD, aims to strengthen the resilience, income security, and overall well-being of rural communities by expanding sustainable livelihood opportunities. Through an integrated approach that combines farm and non-farm activities, promotes financial inclusion, and strengthens community-led institutions, the project empowers marginalized households—especially women and youth—to diversify income sources, reduce vulnerabilities, and adopt eco-friendly practices.

The project emphasizes economic growth, skills development, and social transformation by promoting Joint Liability Groups (JLGs), Farmer-Producer Organizations (FPOs), and cooperatives. These collective institutions enable access to credit, training, and market linkages—paving the way for sustainable community development.

Economic Growth	Employment & Skills	Social & Community Development
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Increase household income through diversified activities (farming, allied enterprises, small businesses).2. Reduce dependence on single income sources.3. Enhance productivity and profitability in farming and enterprises.4. Improve access to credit, savings, and financial services.	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Develop soft entrepreneurial skills to improve the quality of the livelihood activities chosen by them.2. Create wage and self-employment opportunities.3. Strengthen inclusion of women and youth in livelihood initiatives by providing loans only to women who take full responsibility to implement and ensure repayment in time.	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Build capacities of SHGs, cooperatives, and FPOs.2. Promote gender equity and empower marginalized groups.3. Use JLG platforms to prioritize access to quality nutritious food, health, education, and housing through increased family income.

Achievements & Impact

#	Name of the Watershed	No. of Total Loans Given
1	Orugallu Watershed	169
2	Mekalagattu Watershed	89
3	R C Gudem Watershed	76
4	G B Thanda Watershed	26
5	Fathepur watershed	117
6	Sri Venkateshwara	66
7	Thimmampeta	25
8	Bharath watershed	59
9	Goparajupally	74
10	Kakatiya watershed	79
Grand Total		779

- The loan amount ranges from Rs. 35,000 to Rs. 45,000, with a minimum own contribution of Rs. 5,000 along with payment of the required membership fee.
- Loan applications are reviewed during VWDC meetings, where beneficiaries are identified, livelihood activities are finalized, and the loan amount is determined in consultation with the applicants.
- A total of 156 JLGs were formed, covering 779 loan beneficiaries, with watershed committees entrusted with monitoring responsibilities to ensure inclusive and equitable participation.
- Supported non-farm livelihood activities such as tailoring, petty trade, and service-based enterprises, enabling women to secure stable incomes.
- Facilitated large-scale loan disbursement through JLGs, FPOs, and revolving funds to support agriculture, retail, and skill-based livelihood activities.
- Strengthened community leadership by building the decision-making capacities of JLGs and watershed committees.
- Promoted collective farming and improved market linkages through FPOs, enhancing access to inputs and enabling better price negotiation.
- Enhanced financial literacy and inclusion by linking households with **banks, MFIs, and NABARD-supported schemes.**

Uma Devi's Empowerment

CASE STUDY

Uma Devi, a widow from Fatehpur village, Chilpur mandal, faced enormous struggles in raising her three children. With limited income from daily wage labor, she could not meet household expenses or pay for her children's education.

Through the Watershed Project, supported by MARI and NABARD, Uma Devi received a loan of ₹50,000. She invested in sewing machines and small-scale farming inputs. Today, she earns steadily from tailoring while maintaining her farm and repays her loan through monthly instalments of ₹2,000 each.

Her increased income has enabled her to support her children's education and build a more secure future for her family. Reflecting on her journey, she shared that, *"With the support of MARI and NABARD, I am able to manage my household and provide a better life for my children. I feel proud to be self-reliant."* Her story demonstrates the transformative impact of access to credit and diversified livelihood opportunities.

Project Learnings:

- **Community Participation:** Women and marginalized families actively engage when supported through SHGs and peer learning.
- **Capacity Building:** Skills training in tailoring, agriculture, and small enterprises boosted confidence and employability.
- **Financial Inclusion:** Access to timely credit and revolving funds motivated households to initiate new business activities and ensured loan repayment.
- **Strong Networks:** Collective action through cooperatives and FPOs improved market access, input procurement, and price bargaining.

Next Steps:

1. **Institutional Strengthening:** Build leadership within JLGs/FPOs for long-term sustainability.
2. **Loan Monitoring:** Strengthen follow-up systems to address defaults through peer group support.
3. **Financial Sustainability:** Expand revolving funds and strengthen linkages with formal financial institutions.
4. **Skill Upgradation:** Provide advanced training in value addition, branding, and marketing.
5. **Exposure & Marketing:** Organize exposure visits for successful enterprise models and

Partners & Stakeholders:

- **Community Institutions:** SHGs mobilized women and promoted savings. FPOs and cooperatives ensured collective bargaining. Watershed Committees led equitable resource planning.
- **Government Departments:** Agriculture & Horticulture for extension services, and Animal Husbandry & Fisheries for allied livelihoods.
- **Financial Institutions:** Banks, MFIs, NABARD, and other development agencies supported credit, insurance, and capacity building.

Beneficiary Financial Reach:

The project disbursed cumulative support exceeding **₹1.8 crore** in livelihood loans and credit facilitation across 182 households engaged in farming, animal husbandry, tailoring, and small businesses. This financial base fostered resilience, reduced vulnerability, and enhanced village-level prosperity.



Age with Grace – Social Inclusion and Health Care for Elderly Slum Dwellers

Overview

The Age with Grace Project, supported by MARI and Solon India Pvt. Ltd., addresses the urgent health and social needs of elderly and specially challenged residents in urban slums. The initiative focuses on health access, dignity, and social inclusion by organizing regular health camps, distributing supportive devices, and offering essential medicines to improve their quality of life.

The project recognizes that elderly people in slum communities remain one of the most neglected segments — lacking access to affordable healthcare, mobility support, and meaningful engagement. Through health services, community care, and plans for day-care centres, the project seeks to enable aged persons to live healthier and more dignified lives.

Major Achievements in 2024–25

- **Health Camps:** Conducted 8 health camps in collaboration with the Red Cross Society, reaching 520 people (355 women and 165 men). Basic ailments were diagnosed and treated, with patients receiving free medicines and follow-up care.
- **Supportive Devices:** Distributed 64 mobility and supportive aids to specially challenged people in seven slums:

Wheelchairs	39
Walkers	10
Walking Sticks	14
Toilet Seat	01

- **Beneficiary Coverage:**

Vikalangula Colony	43
BJR Nagar	10
Shanti Nagar	05
Malkaram	03
Devendar Nagar, Venkateshwara Nagar Sevalal Tanda	01 in each colony

Ms. Sathemma (80 years old, Urban Slum Resident)

CASE STUDY 1

Suffering with severe stomach pain, Sathemma attended one of our health camps. She was diagnosed, given medicines, and received follow-up support. She expressed heartfelt gratitude, not only for the medical relief but also for the team's kindness, which gave her a sense of comfort and belonging.

Ms. Malasri (Visually Challenged, Vikalangula Colony)

CASE STUDY 2

Living with blindness, Malasri struggled daily to walk independently. MARI provided her with a walking stick, restoring her confidence and mobility. She shared heartfelt thanks to MARI and Solon India for extending help in her community, enabling her to live with more dignity.

Project Learnings:

- **Community Engagement is Critical:** Elderly and vulnerable populations require accessible healthcare at their doorstep. Local partnerships improve outreach.
- **Mobility Support Gives Independence:** Mobility aids immediately improve confidence and reduce dependency, particularly for the disabled and aged.
- **Holistic Service Needed:** Support should go beyond health camps—providing recreation, nutrition, and community belonging for elderly people.

Next Steps:

1. **Establish Day-Care Centers:** Two centers will be set up in slums to benefit around 60 elderly persons with:
 - Supplementary nutritious food
 - Recreational activities
 - Peer sharing and community learning
 - Services aimed at dignity in old age
2. **Sustainability of Health Camps:** Expand frequency of health camps with consistent Red Cross and local doctor collaboration.
3. **Welfare Expansion:** Link elderly people with government entitlements such as pensions, senior citizen ID, and health insurance.
4. **Employment Opportunities:** Explore possibilities of involving elderly and specially challenged individuals in light community income activities.

Stakeholder Recognition

Community leaders and partners recognized the positive impact of the initiative. As Saraswati Madam remarked: "Excellent work of MARI with urban community aged people."

Entrepreneurs and households welcomed water and health linkages, highlighting how small interventions restore trust, dignity, and hope for aged citizens.

Impact at a Glance

- **8 health camps** conducted, reaching 520 elderly people.
- **64 supportive devices distributed** to specially challenged people across 7 slums.
- **355 women and 165** men benefited from health services.
- Partnerships with **Red Cross and Solon India** strengthened healthcare access.
- Future focus: **2 Day-Care Centers** for 60 elderly beneficiaries.



Safe Protective Enabling Environment and Dignity (SPEED) for Vulnerable Sections

Overview & Goals

The SPEED project was conceived to provide a safe, protective, and dignified environment for approximately 9,000 highly vulnerable individuals residing in Jalpally and surrounding areas of Hyderabad. The program's vision focused on holistic community empowerment, focusing on delivering essential services that address immediate needs and foster long-term resilience.

The core objectives included:

- Providing life skills education to children, empowering them with knowledge about personal safety, hygienic behaviours, and social integration.
- Delivering language and vocational training to adults to enhance communication skills, livelihood opportunities, and community inclusion.
- Offering psycho-social support for families confronting hardship and trauma.
- Developing sustainable livelihoods through revolving funds and entrepreneurship support.
- Strengthening community-based protection mechanisms and social structures that promote collective safety, dignity, and wellbeing.

Major Achievements and Impact Highlights:

• Education and Child Protection:

The project reached 797 children and youth with life skills education, emphasizing critical topics such as recognizing safe versus unsafe touch and building protective behaviours. Through targeted parent-teacher engagement and enrolment drives, 112 children were successfully integrated into mainstream schools, marking a significant step towards their future empowerment and social inclusion.

Community-wide events, including a community day with tree plantation activities, fostered experiential education and strengthened community bonds among children and their families.

• Community Mobilization and Capacity Building:

SPEED delivered language training to 118 adults to improve their ability to interact effectively within the host community, particularly facilitating daily wage earners' social and economic participation.

The project conducted 25 positive parenting sessions involving 302 parents, facilitating awareness on nurturing child development and fostering supportive home environments.

In partnership with the Schizophrenia Research Foundation (SCARF), community volunteers received advanced training on identifying psychological disorders, equipping them to provide critical mental health support at the grassroots level.

- **Essential Support and Services:**

To address basic needs, the project distributed 819 essential food kits and 1,700 dignity kits to menstruating women from vulnerable families, ensuring dignity and hygiene.

Couple counseling and peaceful masculinity sessions were instrumental in addressing domestic conflicts and strengthening community organization's roles in safeguarding women's safety and fostering harmonious family lives.

In response to community safety concerns, especially for women and children during nighttime, the project initiated "safety walks" and implemented Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH) interventions. The efforts enjoyed enthusiastic community participation and included building and maintaining safe and hygienic community toilets.

The formation and capacity-building of 16 WASH committees empowered community members to take ownership of sanitation and hygiene infrastructure, ensuring sustainability through active participation.

The project also pioneered livelihood promotion by creating a corpus fund of Rs. 3 Lakhs, which operates as a revolving fund to assist 36 community members in establishing or expanding micro-enterprises. This fund is managed collaboratively by MARI facilitators and community representatives, exemplifying participatory development.

Family Strengthening

CASE STUDY

Amanullah and Afreen's story illustrates SPEED's profound impact on family wellbeing. Afreen suffered escalating physical and emotional abuse from her partner, risking family breakdown. Intervention by the project counselling team offered a safe and non-judgmental space for dialogue. Multiple counselling sessions identified financial stress and mistrust as core issues. Subsequent behavioural change and renewed commitment from both partners toward respectful communication and mutual support underscored the project's role in fostering safer, healthier family dynamics.

Project Learnings and Future Directions:

One of the critical lessons from SPEED is the vital role of coordination between diverse stakeholders such as police forces, SHE and Sakhi teams, Public Health Centres, and local leaders. This integrated model minimized the duplication of services and enhanced the comprehensiveness and effectiveness of community response efforts.

Unfortunately, the project's progress was abruptly halted in January 2025 when the United States government froze and terminated USAID funding globally. This drastic policy decision led to the cessation of nearly all USAID-supported programs, including SPEED. Consequently, all activities ended abruptly, with no immediate plans for continuation or replacement, leaving a significant gap in services for this vulnerable community.

Project Learnings and Future Directions:

- MARI has established working relations with government line departments like Public Health Centres, Women and Child Welfare Department, HMWSSB, Police and conducted several interface meetings between community representatives and line department officials so that the communities live in harmony with the law and local host communities.
- Organized informal Community Leaders groups to support highly vulnerable families to take up livelihood activities to lead a comfortable, safe and dignified life.
- Identified 50 competent community youth and improved their capacities to keep on supporting their own communities to properly utilize the services of line departments and improve their living standards.
- Formed a 12 member Livelihood Management Committee with community representatives to identify, support, provide critical resources including monetary support through the revolving fund to expand their petty trades so that they can earn income to meet their family needs.



Promoting Sustainable Livelihoods through Skill Enhancement and Infrastructure Development for the Brass Craft Community in Rangasaipet, Warangal District, Telangana

Overview & Goals

The project was initiated to revive the traditional brass craft of Rangasaipet in Warangal district, with the dual objective of preserving a centuries-old cultural heritage and ensuring sustainable livelihoods for the local artisan community. Supported by NABARD and implemented by MARI, the project was designed as a structured 12-month program to enhance artisans' technical capacities, with a specific focus on semi-embossing skills and preparation for advanced high-embossing techniques required for intricate brass craftsmanship.

In addition to technical skill development, the program emphasized financial literacy to strengthen artisans' ability to manage finances and access wider markets, including digital platforms. Twenty-five artisans were selected as beneficiaries, with strong representation of women and members from marginalized communities. The initiative also incorporated health and well-being measures, such as free eye check-ups, and provided modern tools and machinery to improve productivity and product quality.

The overarching goal is threefold: to preserve the brass craft tradition, elevate artisans' income levels through improved craftsmanship and market penetration, and foster a community of skilled artisans capable of competing in evolving markets.

Major Achievements and Impact Highlights:

- Skill Development:** All 25 artisans completed comprehensive training in semi-embossing and design drawing, with ongoing preparation for mastering high-embossing techniques. This expanded their creative capabilities and technical precision, enabling them to produce more refined and market-appealing products.
- Monitoring and Validation:** NABARD officials conducted three review visits to monitor and validate the progress of training sessions, confirming not only the rigor of the program but also its positive impact on artisan productivity and quality output.
- Resource Provision:** Every trainee received full access to essential materials and toolkits, ensuring hands-on learning and the ability to practice new techniques immediately. Modern machinery was introduced to mechanize routine tasks, which enhanced efficiency without compromising artisanal quality.
- Health and Well-being:** The project organized a free eye check-up camp that benefited the artisans, addressing occupational health issues common in craftwork, resulting in improved overall well-being and enabling sustained work capacity.

- **Capacity Building:** Financial literacy sessions acquainted artisans with money management, record-keeping, and marketing fundamentals. Marketing workshops introduced strategies to reach wider clientele, including digital marketing training designed to leverage e-commerce and social media platforms.
- **Community and Economic Impact:** These combined efforts have rekindled artisans confidence in their craft, enhanced their recognition within and beyond the locality, and positioned them to access greater market opportunities, paving the way for income growth and livelihood sustainability.

Artisan Success Story

CASE STUDY

Ragi Aruna, a 40-year-old artisan from Shambhunipet, epitomizes the transformative impact of the project. Having labored in brass craftsmanship for over twenty years amidst economic precarity, Aruna and her family faced recurrent financial uncertainty. Previously dependent largely on the local Lepakshi sales market, her income was inconsistent.

Following the project's training in both semi and high embossing and an introduction to digital marketing, Aruna's work evolved to include intricate temple motifs and elaborate designs. The enhanced skill set enabled her to accept diverse commissions with confidence and extend her reach through online platforms. Aruna's declaration, "Now we can secure our livelihood with dignity," reflects the empowerment derived from the project and her role in the cultural preservation of Warangal's brass artistry.

Project Learnings & Next Phase :

The initiative has demonstrated that a combination of structured technical training, proactive health interventions, and ongoing mentorship significantly elevates artisans' capabilities and livelihood security.

Next Steps Include:

- Provision of targeted business development training aimed at entrepreneurial skill enhancement and sustainable market engagement.
- Creation of a dedicated website and product catalogue to showcase artisans' creations, enhancing visibility and customer access.
- A planned exposure visit to the renowned Tanjavur artisanal collective to learn advanced techniques, cooperative management, and marketing strategies.
- Preparation and submission of a second-phase proposal focusing on project scaling, incorporating geotagging for product authenticity and marketing, and expanding reach to more artisans.

Partners and Stakeholder Feedback:

Feedback from beneficiaries and trainers underscores the project's success:

- Trainees such as Thota Krishna Murthy and Ragi Aruna express optimism, emphasizing that the training has sharpened their skills and provided avenues for securing better business opportunities.
- Master Trainer Ragi Veera Brahma Chary praises the dedication and ethical commitment of the artisan trainees, underscoring the program's value for community upliftment.
- NABARD's Deputy Director of Marketing, Chaitanya Ravi, reiterated NABARD's ongoing commitment to supporting brass artisans through continued technical training and market development initiatives, recognizing the importance of integrating traditional crafts with contemporary market dynamics.



Protection and Assistance to Urban Refugees in Telangana

Objectives:

- Provide protection and assistance services to urban refugees and asylum seekers in Telangana.
- Facilitate access to basic services, resolve issues, and promote dignified living.
- Enhance resilience through legal aid, health services, women and child protection, education, and livelihood opportunities.
- Collaborate with government departments and stakeholders for improved access to services and resources.

Scope:

The project worked with 10,000+ refugees and asylum seekers across Hyderabad and Ranga Reddy districts, focusing on documentation, legal support, women and child protection, self-reliance, economic inclusion, education, and health access.

Key Achievements:

• Protection Services:

- 6,792 members accessed protection support through community engagement and frontline services.
- 333 women and children received lifesaving interventions such as safe shelter, crisis support, and security planning.
- 228 families availed legal assistance through police, FRRO, and District Legal Services Authority (DLSA).
- A **Free Legal Aid Cell** was established by DLSA Ranga Reddy for both refugee and host communities.
- 208 unaccompanied/separated children supported with psychosocial care.

• Health Services:

- Access to **12 government health facilities** across 7 major specialties (cancer, TB, pediatrics, ENT, etc.).
- 243 members underwent free surgeries worth **₹18 lakhs**.
- 909 individuals referred to government health services.
- Achieved **98% immunization coverage for newborns**, and 58% of women opted for institutional deliveries.

• Education:

- 310 children secured admissions in 14 government schools with permanent education numbers assigned.
- Operated **6 Child Friendly Learning Spaces (CFLS)** preparing 200 younger children for mainstream integration.
- 7 students qualified Duolingo, paving the way for higher education in third countries.

- **Livelihoods & Skill Development:**

- 273 women trained in tailoring for income generation.
- Skilling initiatives in 8 different trades supported refugees' livelihoods.
- 523 rag-pickers trained in best practices of waste segregation and safe collection.
- 749 individuals mobilized into **community action groups** to strengthen self-reliance.
- 4 community-driven projects completed and 4 ongoing.

Yasmin's Journey of Resilience

CASE STUDY

Yasmin, a 41-year-old refugee mother of five, faced poverty and the burden of an ill husband. Daily survival seemed impossible until MARI-UNHCR provided her a sewing machine. With this, she began earning income to feed her family and send her children to school. Her son Siraj later secured a scholarship through Duolingo, opening opportunities abroad for higher education. *"I feared I would never feed and educate my children. Now, I see hope and a future for them,"* Yasmin shared. Her story illustrates how timely support transforms despair into resilience and dignity.

Learnings and Next Steps

The refugee context is volatile and demands adaptive, immediate interventions. Protection issues remain pressing, requiring the project team's everyday presence at ground level. Key learnings and next directions include:

- Addressing misconceptions among external stakeholders and building inclusive attitudes.
- Strengthening refugee access to government services in health, education, and welfare.
- Expanding community-led initiatives for ownership and accountability.
- Continuing collaborations for legal awareness, protection, and resource mobilization.
- Scaling livelihood opportunities to ensure sustainable income and social integration.

Partnerships and Recognition

This year, **2,079 community members** directly benefited from collaborations with Child Line, Women's Helpline, Bharosa, Sakhi Centers, Police, Child Welfare Committees, Juvenile Justice Boards, Labour Dept, FRRO, DLSA, NIOS, Telangana Health & Family Welfare Dept, and DME.

Support also came from civil society through Helping **Hand Foundation, Help Hyderabad, My Choices, APPI, CRS (MARI), SAFA, and COVA**, providing in-kind contributions and cost-sharing. These partnerships, combined with the commitment of a **30-member project team**, were vital in ensuring protection, survival, and dignity for refugee families in Telangana.





WASH SECTOR

Strengthening and Sustaining Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH) Initiatives in Government Schools of Hyderabad

Supported by HCL Foundation

Project Period: April 1, 2024 – March 31, 2025

Overview & Goals:

The fourth phase of the WASH project implemented by MARI focuses on enhancing and sustaining water, sanitation, and hygiene infrastructure and practices across eleven (11) government high schools across Hyderabad. Building on previous phases that established essential WASH facilities, this phase places a strong emphasis on behavioral change among students, teachers, and community stakeholders. The project aims to promote:

- Facilitate Proper use and maintenance of school WASH Infrastructure by all stakeholders
- Hygienic use of toilets,
- Regular and proper handwashing habits,
- Promotion of Menstrual Hygiene Practices and
- Promotion of awareness on effective Solid Waste Management at student and school level.

It also seeks to institutionalize sustainable management by creating self-monitoring mechanisms and increasing stakeholders' ownership and technical capacity to maintain WASH infrastructure reliably. The ultimate objective is to facilitate an environment conducive to health, dignity, and educational attainment for students, especially girls.

Major Achievements and Impact Highlights:

- **Behavioural Change and Outreach:**

Through targeted Behaviour change communication (BCC) sessions, 3,019 students were sensitized about improved hygiene, sanitation, and menstrual hygiene practices. These sessions were inclusive, engaging both boys (1,410) and girls (1,609), with 465 girls specifically trained on menstrual hygiene and safe management practices. Students also participated in school exhibitions and activities that encouraged innovation and peer learning on WASH topics.

- **Infrastructure Enhancements:**

The project successfully completed critical infrastructure upgrades including the installation of handwashing station sheds, plumbing improvements, and repairs in six schools, directly benefiting 2,313 students. Hygiene corners were established in two schools, providing designated spaces for health and hygiene needs. Dustbins for solid waste collection were deployed in all 11 schools to promote cleanliness and responsible disposal behaviour. Further, sanitary napkin incinerators were installed in five schools to address menstrual waste management safely and hygienically.

- **Capacity Building:**

Teacher training sessions focused on enabling educators to sustain and promote WASH-related behaviors and infrastructure management. A total of 27 teachers participated, building their competence to guide students and manage facilities. WASH clubs comprising 200 motivated students were trained on routine maintenance and promotion of good hygiene. These clubs embarked on exposure visits and workshops engaging over 80 students and 20 teachers, broadening community participation and ownership.

- **Community Engagement:**

Parental and community involvement was enhanced through short workshops attended by 677 parents (500 women and 177 men), sensitizing them on the importance of hygiene practices and reinforcing home-school linkage for behavioural change. Wall paintings promoting sustainable WASH behaviours in school premises reached over 3,500 students, making health messaging visually impactful on a long-term basis.

- **Special Interventions and Events:**

The integration of key WASH-related global observances—like World Toilet Day and World Water Day—into project activities helped reinforce awareness and motivation. MARI also led unique initiatives, such as a clay idol-making workshop on solid waste management at the HCLTech campus, involving 80 corporate volunteers, fostering wider public engagement.

Bardaya Santu Pariyar

CASE STUDY

An eighth-grade student at Government High School Golconda, reflects the transformative impact of the project. Initially, menstrual hygiene was poorly understood, and girls resorted to unsafe practices and improper sanitary pad disposal, leading to discomfort, absenteeism, and health risks. The MARI team's regular behavioural change sessions on menstrual hygiene management transformed attitudes and behaviours. Girls, including Bardaya, adopted hygienic practices, maintained cleanliness in washrooms, and used designated waste bins for sanitary pads disposal. This significantly improved their confidence, health, and school attendance, underscoring the project's critical role in empowering adolescent girls. MARI is proud to report that this is a significant achievement as these children are also acting as change agents to promote hygienic WASH habits in their homes as well.

Learnings and Next Steps:

The project learned that sustainability hinges on continuous capacity building, school-community engagement, and infrastructural upkeep. For FY 2025-26, planned activities include:

- Operation, maintenance, and renovation of WASH infrastructure focused on sustained functionality and hygiene in all 11 schools.
- Continued behavioural change communication through teacher training, parent workshops, and regular WASH club activities.
- Expanding hygiene promotion by strengthening hygiene corners, conducting exhibitions, and organizing exposure visits.
- Collaborating intensively with each school to develop detailed WASH action plans, ensuring context-specific interventions.
- Celebrating international WASH-related days to amplify engagement and sustain motivation.

Partners and Stakeholder Recognition:

MARI acknowledges the sustained support of the HCL Foundation, whose funding and partnership have been pivotal in achieving the project's objectives and outcome. The Cooperation and facilitation extended by the District Educational Officer, her team and the Headmasters of the participating schools significantly strengthened project implementation and acted as a booster for achieving planned results.

These collaborative efforts have reinforced the collective commitment to inclusive, equitable, and quality education by improving WASH facilities and creating safer, more enabling school environments that promote learning and gender equity. MARI, together with the HCL Foundation, remains committed to advancing these goals through transparency, accountability, and strong community ownership.



Safe Water Network India (SWN) Promotion of Small Water Kiosks in Villages – iJal Stations

Overview & Objectives

The **Safe Water Network India (SWN)** initiative, implemented by MARI in Telangana, aims to provide **affordable, reliable, and safe drinking water** through locally operated iJal Stations. These stations produce and serve safe drinking water in fluoride and contamination-affected rural communities and demonstrate the potential for **replication across the state**.

As of **31st March 2025**, the project operates **171 iJal stations in 79 blocks of 13 districts**, reaching a cumulative **92,606 families**. Beyond health benefits, the initiative creates employment, reduces dependence on high cost bottled water the quality of which is not systematically ensured. This effectively contributes to promoting sustainable community-driven drinking water solutions.

Project Activities & Achievements:

• New Stations & Outreach

- 11 new stations established in FY 24–25.
- 30 promotional activities conducted, reaching 1,600 households aimed at increasing the coverage of consumers.
- Expanded network now serves 2,624 additional households beyond existing users taking the total families served to about 1,00,000 families.

• Sustainability & Station Maintenance

- **25 stations achieved full sustainability**, repaying loans and maintaining systems effectively. They continue to adopt the quality and maintenance systems and parameters established MARI and SWN.
- **2,052 audits** carried out across 170 stations during 2024–25, ensuring water quality, operational efficiency, and governance standards.
- **Water testing completed twice** across all 171 stations (chemical & biological parameters).

• Capacity Building & Inclusion

- **26 women trained** in water quality testing through India Water Partnership (IWP); 2 secured employments.
- Training enhanced technical confidence, enabling women to serve as **community technicians**.
- RO systems installed in **6 KGBVs & government schools**, reaching 1,150 students.

• Community Engagement

- Celebrated Water World Day in schools with 102 students.
- Conducted health impact assessments in 43 villages (498 households) which has brought out the fact that the availability of safe drinking water has resulted in improved health and living standards.
- Surveyed 10 villages for lifting sites; engaged 200 village leaders and understood the need for establishing safe water stations.

- **Employment Generated**
 - **416 local jobs** created: 171 entrepreneurs, 171 operators, and 74 auto drivers for water distribution.
 - Local leaders and communities ensure ownership and accountability.
- **Brand Identity & Compliance**
 - **15 stations refurbished** with new branding.
 - Safe water produced in these stations is not only of high standards but also done under the Trade licenses issued renewed in the villages by approved authorities.

Empowering Women through Vocational Training

CASE STUDY

In 2024, **26 women were trained in water testing** with the support of India Water Program. Among them, five emerged as **certified technicians**, making this not just a skill development program but also a livelihood opportunity. This also acts as a empowering tool to the whole of local communities to test the water (irrespective of its source) for its quality and understand whether it is potable. Equipped with water quality testing kits, they are now expanding water quality checks across **50 underserved communities**.

This initiative demonstrates how safe water access can combine with **women's empowerment, employment creation, and long-term sustainability**.

Health, Environmental & Social Impact

- **24/7 access to potable water** through Automated Water Vending (ATW) systems.
- Improved health indicators due to reduced water-borne diseases.
- Strengthened **community confidence in public water systems**.
- Inclusive involvement of **local entrepreneurs, women, and community leaders in water governance**.

Project Learnings & Next Steps

- Consumer acceptance and demand for safe and high-quality drinking water have increased, and this can be tapped to improve the economically viable functioning of iJal stations.
- The strategy was adopted to increase new household enrolments before plant launches through intensive community mobilization and awareness promotion activities.
- Maintain strict zero downtime through proactive audits and on-time service to bring down the technical failures and repairs nearer to zero downtime for machinery or the availability of basic chemicals.
- Community involvement in testing water before their eyes ensures quality assurance and also acts as an effective sustainability strategy.
- Establish stronger job linkages for trained women in water sector services.
- Target 25 more iJal stations for sustainability by next year.

Voices from the Field

- ***"Happy to provide safe drinking water round the clock gives me satisfaction."***
– K. Srikanth, Entrepreneur, Dornakal
- ***"We provide quality water to customers, and the income from this plant sustains our family. We never stopped operations."***
– K. Sinduja, Entrepreneur, Bank Colony



The Safe Water Network Project in partnership with MARI is redefining community water access in Telangana by combining health, sustainability, employment, and gender empowerment. With its scalable model, the program serves as a blueprint for other regions to adopt safe, affordable, and sustainable water solutions.

Wellbeing Out of Waste (WOW)

Overview & Objectives

The Wellbeing Out of Waste (WOW) project is one of the key initiatives by MARI and supported by ITC Limited under its Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) program, is a leading effort to champion a circular economy. The primary objective is to promote environmental sustainability by raising awareness and inculcating the habit of waste segregation and recycling. The project's strategy focuses on engaging students and communities in and around Hyderabad.

Major achievements (2024-25)

The WOW project has made remarkable progress, highlighted by the following key accomplishments:

- **Recycling Championship in Schools:**

The program successfully engaged 482 schools, directly benefiting over 400,000 students. This created a ripple effect, raising awareness about the importance of waste segregation at the source, the benefits of recycling, and the role of students in protecting the environment.

- **Awareness Programs through Community Engagement:**

Through the efforts of students and volunteers, awareness campaigns reached over 140,000 households across six municipalities: Gundlapochampally, Nalgonda, Nizampet, Peddha Amberpet, Thumkunta, and Thukkuguda. The project successfully covered 124 wards, educating 127,061 households on different waste types and the importance of source segregation.

- **State of the art facility:**

A state-of-the-art Central Recycling Park was established at the Peerzadiguda Municipal Corporation. This facility, equipped with a 100 TPD baling machine and a 25 TPD sorting machine, will help municipalities streamline waste management, reduce transportation costs, and move towards a zero-waste model. The CRP was inaugurated by Hon'ble Minister Smt. Dhanasari Anasuya (Seethakka) in January 2025, with several key dignitaries in attendance, including Shri Chamakura Malla Reddy, Peerzadiguda Mayor Amar Singh, and ITC CSR Head, Mr. Shubh Shankar Bhandopadhyay.

- **Dry waste diverted from landfills to recycling:**

The project has collected 2,208 metric tons (MT) of dry waste from participating schools, successfully diverting a significant volume of recyclable materials from landfills – saving land from degradation and forest for producing paper by recycling.

- **Skill development and livelihoods to the project stakeholders:**

The project provided training and three-month wage-earning work to 176 municipal resource persons for conducting door-to-door awareness programs. Additionally, 52 college student volunteers actively participated, gaining valuable soft skills and field experience. The initiative also enhanced the regular income of waste collectors by ensuring the direct transport of segregated waste to municipal Dry Resource Collection Centres.

- **Stakeholder engagement from state to the communities:**

The project's success is rooted in strong partnerships. The School Education Department issued a circular to District Education Officers (DEOs) to support the program. The team also coordinated with district administrations, CDMA, municipalities, colleges, and corporates to ensure widespread participation.

Major achievements (2024-25)

The WOW project's success is measured not only in metrics but also in its profound environmental and social benefits:

- **Carbon Footprint Reduction:** By diverting waste from landfills, the project has reduced CO2 emissions by 554 MT.
- **Resource Conservation:** The initiative has conserved 3,230,000 kiloliters of water and 184,539 units of energy, which would have been used to produce new materials.
- **Landfill Space Saved:** A total of 347.66 cubic meters of landfill space was saved apart from extending the lifespan of existing landfills.
- **Fostering Sustainable Habits:** The project's long-term goal is to establish the habit of segregation of waste at source by all, including children. This behavioral change is critical for a sustainable future.
- **Community Empowerment:** The project has successfully mobilized and empowered local communities, as evidenced by the establishment of the new recycling facility and the participation of 5,000 students in a "Har Ghar Tiranga" rally.

True Ambassadors Of Environmental Responsibility

CASE STUDY

P. Deekshitha, a student from PM Shri TG Model School, was like many kids—unfamiliar with recycling. But the WOW Project changed everything. "The project changed how I think and act," she says.

Now, Deekshitha is a leader, promoting waste segregation at school and at home. She's not just a student; she's a champion of change. Her story proves that our work goes beyond the classroom, turning knowledge into tangible and sustained action.

Deekshitha also highlights a crucial point that recycling not only protects the environment but also provides "sustainable livelihoods to unorganized sector, especially the waste collectors and recyclers." It demonstrates her profound understanding of the project's broader social impact.

Her journey is a testament to the project's core mission by empowering students to become true ambassadors of environmental responsibility.

Rising for the Rights (R4R) Strengthening CSO Network in South Asia for Achieving SDG 6

Overview

The Rising for the Rights (R4R) Project, supported by the Huairou Commission Women, Homes Community, is a collaborative regional initiative that strengthens civil society organizations (CSOs) across South Asia to advance **Citywide Inclusive Sanitation (CWIS)**. With a strong focus on **marginalized groups and vulnerable communities, including women, sanitation workers, and LGBTIQA+ groups**, the project promotes equitable access to safe and sustainable **WASH services** through research-based advocacy, policy engagement, capacity building, and multi-stakeholder collaboration.

MARI is a key implementing partner in India and has played a central role in **inclusive WASH leadership, cross-country learning exchanges, and amplifying grassroots voices** at national, regional, and global platforms.

Key Highlights of the Year

- **Regional Event on Inclusive WASH**

In September 2024, MARI and VYK co-hosted a four-day regional conclave in New Delhi with **150+ stakeholders** including policymakers, youth champions, sanitation workers, government officials, community leaders, academic representatives, and LGBTIQA+ activists. This event:

- Recognised **Youth and Community WASH Champions**.
- Facilitated experience-sharing from Bhutan, Nepal, Bhutan's *Youth4WASH*, and Odisha's women-led waste models.
- Catalyzed new networks for cross-border partnerships and policy influence.

- **Policy Advocacy & Engagement**

- Facilitated the **15th Finance Commission Study** and dialogues with MPs across nine states to integrate WASH financing priorities into governance.
- Strengthened advocacy on accountability and pushed for deeper commitments in WASH investment ahead of the **16th Finance Commission** deliberations.

- **Cross-Country Knowledge Exchange**

- Supported Sri Lanka (SL) to evolve into a sustainable **advocacy network** for WASH.
- Partnered with **Odisha Urban Academy** to host a Bhutanese delegation for exposure visits on solid and liquid waste management systems, offering replication models

- **Global Amplification**

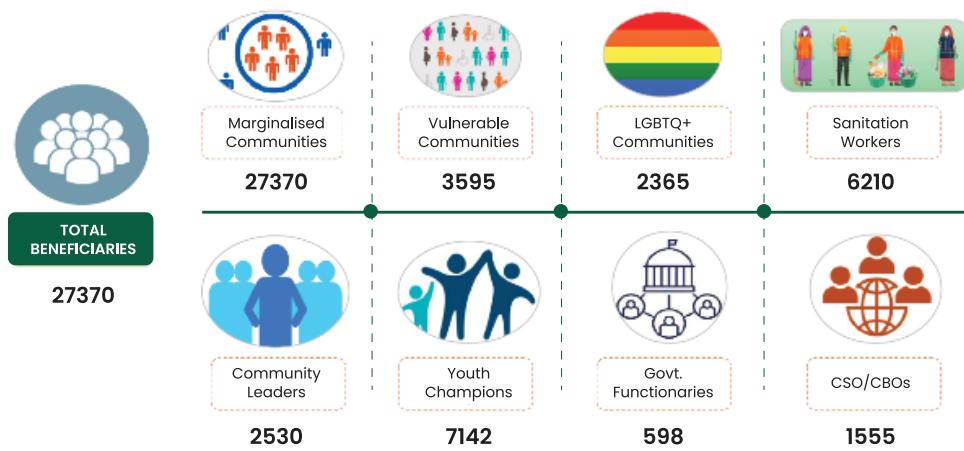
MARI, representing the South Asia network, shared learnings at global forums such as the **World Urban Forum (Odisha & Cairo)**, the Global Sanitation Summit (Kathmandu), and the **Asia-Pacific meetings (Manila)**. These platforms positioned South Asian CSOs as thought leaders driving inclusive WASH.

Cross-Border Leadership in WASH

CASE STUDY

The WASH Conclave, co-led by MARI and VYK, brought together youth and community leaders from across South Asia to share transformational experiences. Stories like Bhutan's Youth4WASH initiative and Odisha's women-led solid waste management co-ops demonstrated community-driven approaches to sanitation. The event empowered grassroots leaders with actionable strategies and built solidarity to replicate successful inclusive WASH interventions across borders. By showcasing tangible solutions, the conclave reinforced the role of local leadership in advancing SDG 6 and inspired wider regional collaboration.

Reach and Impact



Note: The details include both direct and indirect beneficiaries

Project Learnings & Next Steps

Over the past year, the R4R project positioned MARI as a **key CSO voice in WASH** with deep engagement across twelve (12) Indian states and connections to 350+ grassroots partner organizations. By amplifying marginalized voices, the network contributed to influencing implementation and discussions around **Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM)** and **Swachh Bharat Mission (SBM)**.

• Learnings:

- Multi-stakeholder collaboration with governments, CSOs, academia, and communities results in stronger service delivery.
- Cross-country exposure visits enhance practical application of inclusive WASH strategies.
- Investing in women's and youth leadership accelerates accountability and sustainability in sanitation services.

• Next Steps:

- Strengthen advocacy and visibility of the CSO network at state, national, and regional levels.
- Expand collaboration with strategic institutions including **ADB, World Bank, UN agencies**.
- Mobilize resources and diversify financing to ensure long-term sustainability.
- Continue influencing policy frameworks for equity and accountability in WASH programs.

Partners and Acknowledgements

The project's progress owes its strength to the Huairou Commission Women, Homes Community/Gates foundation, MARI's core team, and national CSO chapters across South Asia. We also acknowledge regional stakeholders, academic partners, and networks who enabled advocacy and technical support. Together, their efforts built stronger WASH platforms, promoted inclusive development, and advanced progress toward SDG 6.



Other Small Initiatives: Promotion of Water Conservation

Overview & Goals:

This initiative focused on promoting awareness and responsible practices for water conservation among residents and communities in Hyderabad's twin cities. Conducted in collaboration with the Hyderabad Metropolitan Water Supply and Sewerage Board (HMWSSB), the project aimed to sensitize the public on the proper use of piped water, the importance and maintenance of rainwater harvesting systems, and broader efforts toward sustainable water security.

Major Achievements and Impact Highlights:

Over a one-month rigorous campaign, MARI engaged 28 colonies within HMWSSB's jurisdiction to implement multiple awareness and action-driven activities:

- Conducted awareness sessions promoting water conservation and proper use of HMWSSB piped water, targeting women across various community groups. Specifically, 147 women participated in 14 sessions held within six Residents Welfare Associations, four Slum Level Federations, and two Cluster Level SHG Federations.
- Door-to-door visits spanning 10 days reached 223 households, emphasizing the critical message to avoid water misuse such as cleaning roads and automobiles with drinking water supplies, fostering behavior change at household levels.
- Educational engagement involved 1,007 students across five local schools. These students pledged to commit to water conservation efforts within their homes and communities, creating a ripple effect of awareness among younger generations.
- The celebration of World Water Day under the theme "Water for Peace and Water and Sanitation for All by 2030" was integrated within the awareness campaign, reinforcing global water conservation commitments at the local level.
- In a key partnership with HMWSSB, MARI conducted a comprehensive survey of rainwater harvesting (RWH) systems in 2,420 apartment complexes. Survey results revealed that 1,810 apartments had RWH structures, with 410 pits found to be in good working condition. Additionally, 840 pits were renovated through resident contributions supported by technical guidance from MARI and HMWSSB. All data were reported online to augment transparency and tracking.

Impact Summary:

These efforts have substantially contributed to raising community understanding and participation in water conservation and rainwater harvesting maintenance. The project established a foundation for sustained communal stewardship of water resources, enhancing water security across Hyderabad and Secunderabad.

MARI takes pride in its role in fostering water sustainability and promoting environmentally responsible behaviours in the rapidly urbanizing twin cities.

Sanitation and Water for All (SWA)

Overview & Goals:

Sanitation and Water for All (SWA) is a global partnership that brings together governments, civil society, development agencies, research institutions, and the private sector to achieve Sustainable Development Goal 6 (SDG 6)—ensuring availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all. The initiative emphasizes collaborative efforts to improve water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) governance, financing, and policy across diverse regions.

Major Achievements and Impact Highlights:

Over a one-month rigorous campaign, MARI engaged 28 colonies within HMWSSB's jurisdiction to implement multiple awareness and action-driven activities:

- **Nepal – Head of State Engagement:** MARI successfully facilitated the drafting and submission of a formal policy note to the Prime Minister's Office. This milestone institutionalizes the Head of State involvement in WASH initiatives, reflecting high-level political commitment toward improved water and sanitation governance.
- **Bangladesh – Multi-Stakeholder Dialogue:** MARI coordinated a landmark multi-stakeholder meeting involving civil society organizations, UNICEF, the World Bank, and the Asian Development Bank. Key thematic areas for the Head of State engagement were identified and consolidated into priority actions, which were formally presented to the Chief Advisor's Office. This process enhanced government ownership and commitment to advancing WASH goals in Bangladesh.
- **Regional Government Engagement:** MARI has provided guidance and technical support to multi-stakeholder platforms in 15 Asia-Pacific countries, fostering stronger collaboration and policy coherence among ministries responsible for water, health, and finance. This engagement has promoted integrated governance approaches critical to implementing SDG 6 commitments.
- **Policy and Financing Advocacy:** In Fiji, MARI contributed to advancing national dialogues on financing mechanisms, governance structures, and climate resilience linkages within WASH programs, helping align Fiji's commitments with global SDG 6 targets.

Project Learnings and Next Steps:

The experience of convening high-level government officials alongside civil society and community representatives across Asia-Pacific countries has been invaluable. Facilitating interaction among diverse stakeholders and crafting evidence-based policy recommendations represents a significant achievement for MARI at the international level. Moving forward, continued advocacy, stakeholder engagement, and policy support are essential to sustain momentum and realize universal access to safe water and sanitation.

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