

Work for Equality Annual Report

2024-2025

The organization *Work for Equality* has been working since 2010 to develop leadership among girls so that they can stand up for their rights. I am involved in a school-based girls' improvement program.

The year 2024–2025 is particularly significant because we decided to make the *Minshakti Program* more active both qualitatively and quantitatively. This program, which began in 16 villages in the Khed area, has now helped us reach schools and communities and make direct contact with girls and their families.

Based on our previous experience, we strengthened the program further by making the monitoring and evaluation process more effective. We developed different methods such as pre- and post-data collection forms, feedback mechanisms, and tools to measure how the girls' confidence is growing. Written documentation of these processes was prepared.

In addition, the *Girls' Voices Curriculum* was developed in three participatory training modules and made open for training and use by all. The main program is run with the support of *Cummins India Foundation*. However, to make the program even stronger, we also sought external support for components like monitoring, evaluation, and program expansion, and effectively utilized that assistance.

Through the support of *Tarachand Ramnath Seva Trust*, we received seed funding, which we utilized to explore ways to expand our work to four partner organizations in the three districts of Nanded, Parbhani, and Nagpur. With their help, we aimed to reach girls living in extremely remote areas and strengthen their collectives.

Under this project, we invited applications from rural organizations and, after the scrutiny process, four organizations were selected:

1. *Vanchit Vikas* – Nanded
2. *Lok Vikas Kendra* – Parbhani
3. *Gyanadeep Sevabhavi Sanstha* – Parbhani
4. *Urja Bahuuddeshiya Samajik Sanstha* – Nagpur



A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed with each organization. Following the MoU, each organization's head and two field workers participated in a four-day *Minshakti Girls Empowerment Program*. This training included sessions on the importance of forming girls' groups, the skills required for that, understanding key issues affecting girls, establishing girls' clubs, and the concept of advocacy. These sessions helped strengthen the capacities of the field workers on various important issues.

After this training, each local organization planned to implement similar activities in their respective districts, covering at least five villages where they would work directly with adolescent girls. The *Work for Equality* organization provided full financial support for both levels of training.

Through this process, the four organizations across three districts successfully conducted consecutive three-day training programs and prepared around 100 young girl leaders.

All the trainings were conducted under the guidance of the *Work for Equality* organization. The organization's head, Prabha Vilas, was present for every training session and personally guided the girls throughout.

Afterward, the local partner organizations attempted to continue the program for six months to a year using their own resources. They planned to run the Girls' Leadership Program across 20 villages in the three districts and, with the support of *Work for Equality*, also made efforts to raise additional funds for sustainability.

However, despite having a clear written plan, the program could not continue as expected because the local organizations requested financial assistance, which *Work for Equality* did not have provisions for at that time.

Still, the process provided valuable learnings:

1. The *Minshakti* program is extremely beneficial for girls in remote areas who do not have an organized platform to voice and address their issues. The program enabled girls to express their concerns confidently and collectively.
2. Many older organizations working on women's empowerment lack systematic methods, resulting in weak or unsustainable outcomes. The structured *Minshakti Girls' Leadership Program* proved highly useful to strengthen their work.
3. Every program requires at least some financial support for effective and sustained implementation.



With the support of *Tarachand Ramnath Seva Trust*, we also created a documentary film on the *Minshakti Girls' Leadership Program* to effectively communicate its outcomes and impact to a wider audience.

Through this entire process, we gained the opportunity to demonstrate the *Minshakti Girls' Leadership Program* effectively.

In the Khed and Phaltan blocks, the team received monthly guidance sessions throughout the year. A training session was organized every month to help them learn how to engage and organize girls at the village level. Continuous mentoring focused on group formation, identifying fundamental issues faced by girls, environmental awareness, and building advocacy skills for campaign activities

Skill Program for Girls: With the aim of providing skills to adolescent girls, we organized skill training for girls from 16 villages. Local resource persons were invited for this purpose. The girls were taught various durable skills such as Zula making, mehendi, rangoli, and other crafts that are long-lasting.



The organization *Work for Equality* has been working since 2010 to develop leadership among girls so that they can stand up for their rights. I am involved in a school-based girls' improvement program.

The year 2024–2025 is particularly significant because we decided to make the *Mi shakti Program* more active both qualitatively and quantitatively. This program, which began in 16 villages in the Khed area, has now helped us reach schools and communities and make direct contact with girls and their families.

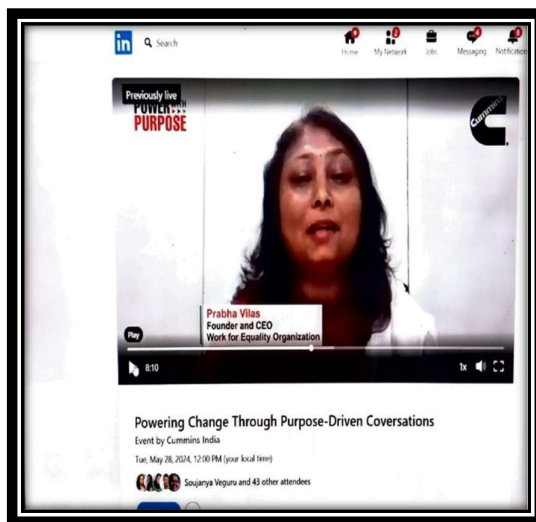
Based on our previous experience, we strengthened the program further by making the monitoring and evaluation process more effective. We developed different methods such as pre- and post-data collection forms, feedback mechanisms, and tools to measure how the girls' confidence is growing. Written documentation of these processes was prepared.

In addition, the *Girls' Voices Curriculum* was developed in three participatory training modules and made open for training and use by all. The main program is run with the support of *Cummins India Foundation*. However, to make the program even stronger, we also

sought external support for components like monitoring, evaluation, and program expansion, and effectively utilized that assistance.

On the occasion of *Menstrual Hygiene Day* (28th May), *Cummins* published an online podcast and invited *Work for Equality* to participate. In this session, the organization discussed the work being done on menstrual hygiene with the support of *Cummins*, highlighting its benefits as well as the challenges faced during implementation.

Work for Equality also took part in the *Best Practices for Menstrual Hygiene Management Program* held to mark Menstrual Hygiene Day. One key outcome of this program was that UNICEF developed a book documenting the *Minshakti Program* model in written form, making it easier to share and replicate the program widely. This event was organized by the *All India Institute of Local Government* in collaboration with UNICEF, which had invited nominations from several organizations. Out of these, 8–9 were selected, including *Work for Equality*.



Join us in celebrating

Menstrual Hygiene Day 2024!

You are cordially invited by the
Maharashtra Urban WASH-ES Coalition,
an initiative of RCUES of AILSG Mumbai and UNICEF Maharashtra to
Join the commemorative webinar marking the 10th year of MH Day
and .

**Unveiling of the Compendium of Good Practices on
MHM Value Chain for a #PeriodFriendlyMaharashtra!**

Here are the details:
DATE: 28TH MAY, TUESDAY 2024
TIME: 4PM TO 5:30PM
WEBINAR: ZOOM - THE LINK TO CONNECT WILL BE
PROVIDED UPON REGISTRATION.

Scan Here to Register: 

Experience firsthand the inspiring stories of notable organizations
featured in our compendium through their special presentations.

During the 2024–2025 financial year, *Work for Equality* had the opportunity to collaborate with the *Women and Child Welfare District Council* in Pune to conduct training sessions for 1,396 girls across 26 schools in the Maval block. The sessions covered topics on gender, law, and health. These included discussions on how adolescent girls can speak out against discrimination, scientific knowledge about menstrual hygiene and health, awareness of laws related to girls, and information about support systems and mechanisms.

Through this initiative, adolescent girls were able to access important knowledge and practical tools to protect and assert their rights. All participating schools expressed that such training programs were valuable and requested similar sessions to be conducted regularly in the future.

The schools involved were Tulja Bhavani Vidyalaya (Somatane), Bhairavnath Madhyamik Vidyalaya (Varale), Panchkroshi Vidyalaya (Darumbre), Zilla Parishad Schools in Malwadi, Varale, Takave Bu., Nanoli, Urse, Parandwadi, Kanhe, Vahangaon, Karunj, Sudumbare, Chandkhed, Nigade, Bhoysre, and Primary Schools in Badhalwadi, Ambi, and Jambhul, Pratik Vidyalaya (Nigade), Sevadhan Trust Ashram School (Malegaon), Karmaveer Bhaurao Patil Vidyalaya (Adhale Bu.), Prakash Devle Madhyamik Vidyalaya (Shirgaon), Gramprabodhini Vidyalaya (Salumbre), Late Shri Nanasheb Balkawade Madhyamik Vidyalaya (Sate), and New English Madhyamik Vidyalaya (Bhoysre). **Total number of girls trained: 1,396**



Through these training sessions, various important questions related to women’s health and social norms were discussed with the girls — such as whether menstruation concerns only women, what “using the tricolor in diet” means, whether women should eat together with their families, and which type of utensils help retain iron in cooked food. The sessions guided the girls on these topics and emphasized that menstruation and discrimination are not just women’s issues but are relevant to society as a whole. Therefore, the participation of the entire community is essential in bringing change.

Chuppi Todo Campaign

With the support of *Electrical Engineers India Pvt. Ltd.*, the *Chuppi Todo (Break the Silence)* campaign was implemented this year across several schools and communities in the

Maval and Khed regions. To begin with, an internal team was formed to work on the issue of violence against women.

This team was trained to understand topics such as gender-based violence, its root causes, societal misconceptions, and the importance of involving both men and boys in prevention efforts. The training equipped them with knowledge and skills to address these sensitive issues effectively.

Following their capacity-building sessions, the team conducted awareness programs and workshops in schools and communities across Maval and Khed. These interactions helped students understand that violence is not caused by girls' behavior or their freedom, but is rooted in patriarchal attitudes and the social mindset toward women.



As a result, there was a visible increase in sensitivity and awareness among boys and young men regarding violence against women and girls. Many boys expressed their commitment by saying they would not tolerate violence against girls, that they would act responsibly, and that the law should be used confidently to ensure justice.

Interestingly, several boys also remarked that they now understood that they could proudly carry their mother's name along with their own — an idea that was entirely new and empowering for them.

Gender Equality through Sports in Khed Block

This program was implemented in 10 villages with the support of the organization *Terre Des Hommes*. *Work for Equality* is promoting **gender equality through sports** in 12 villages of Khed block, where **12 youth clubs** with 450 children (239 girls, 211 boys) are active. These clubs regularly meet in schools and community spaces and have conducted **373 sports sessions** and **221 weekly meetings** to build leadership and gender sensitivity among youth.

Each club elects four leaders—President, Vice President, Secretary, and Vice Secretary. Out of 12 clubs, 11 have female presidents. Elections involved 80 boys and 115 girls, resulting in 48 elected leaders. Clubs address child rights issues, including school dropout surveys, child marriage prevention, menstrual hygiene, and environmental awareness.

Major Activities and Achievements

- **School Dropout Survey:** Clubs in Kharpudi Khurd and Retawadi Takarwasti helped five children (2 boys, 3 girls) re-enroll in school and shared information about open schooling options.
- **VCPC Formation:** Child Protection Committees were formed in seven Gram Panchayats. Youth from Shirolu stopped a child marriage. Youth (4 boys, 4 girls) represent clubs in VCPCs.
- **Health and Nutrition:** Retawadi clubs organized HB checking camps with ASHA workers. Five anemia awareness sessions were held for 211 parents across villages, covering nutritious food practices.
- **Parenting and Protection Awareness:** Ten sessions held for 161 parents addressed parenting gaps and protection issues, resolving one family's mental harassment case successfully.
- **Summer Camps:** Six clubs organized camps where 14 youth trained children in art, crafts, and games.
- **Sports Infrastructure:** Four clubs secured free spaces from local panchayats for study, discussions, and sports activities.
- **Organic Holi:** Four clubs promoted eco-friendly colors using local plants; 67 youth participated.
- **Menstrual Hygiene:** Initiated installation of disposal machines in four schools; five clubs celebrated *Menstrual Hygiene Day* with awareness activities.
- **Environment Initiatives:** On *World Environment Day*, clubs met the BDO regarding Bhamu River pollution and promoted water conservation. 85 boys and 130 girls joined related projects.



River Conservation Campaign

Seven clubs studied river pollution using interviews, photography, and social reels. During the Ganpati festival, 12 villages adopted eco-friendly idol immersion, collecting 375 idols with participation from 177 children. Street plays on river pollution raised awareness among 454 students in four schools, supported by petition drives to local authorities.



Community Engagement and Media

Youth actively engaged in diverse initiatives this year. They shared climate messages and river conservation experiences on Infinity Radio, while newsletters and an annual calendar reached over 1,000 youth, schools, and NGOs. Career guidance sessions by Prof. Manish Patankar benefited 60 participants celebrating academic success. Exposure visits included a blind school, a drama on mobile addiction, sports events, and an environment conference by TDH and Paryavaran Mitra. Youth leader Shruti Pawal voiced forest concerns in local media, and girls participated in national-level TDH youth programs and the Bhopal Partner Meet.



Event Observances

Youth celebrated **Children’s Day, Ambedkar Jayanti, Yoga Day, and Gandhi Jayanti**, with sessions on education rights, well-being, and non-violence. 130 children (60 boys, 70 girls) participated.

Capacity Building for Team

Staff participated in specialized trainings on Reservation & Social Equity by Baswant Bavarao, Children’s Parliament, Gender Lens by Karve Institute, Anemia & Nutrition, Child Rights & Law by Forbes Marshall and Chaitanya, Sexuality & Reproductive Health by Bindumadhav Khire, and Monitoring & Evaluation Techniques by Dr. Manali Pandit.

Additionally, the team attended sessions on **child marriage prevention** and **career guidance** by experts.



Additional Highlights

Twelve project review meetings were held for planning and evaluation. Sports like Frisbee, football, and cricket were promoted to challenge gender stereotypes, with girls' football teams forming. Nutritional snacks were provided during sessions to boost participation. These efforts fostered confidence, leadership, and social responsibility among rural youth, establishing mixed-gender play and teamwork as community norms.

Organization Development Process

In 2024–2025, *Work for Equality* established contact with the Delhi-based organization *Pravah* through a referral from *Atma Foundation*. *Pravah* specializes in guiding organizations through development processes. Two representatives from *Work for Equality*—Founder **Prabha Vilas** and second-line leader **Anita Chaudhari**—participated in this training, which was conducted both offline (in two phases) and online throughout the year. The program name was SAANSTHA

This process helped the organization identify critical gaps and areas for improvement:

- The structure of *Work for Equality* was flat, causing most of the responsibility to fall on the CEO.
- The organization needed better alignment between the *organizational vision* and the *team's vision*.
- There was a strong need to develop formal organizational policies.

Based on these insights, several policies were developed, including **welfare, HR, child safety, women's protection, and leave policies**. The entire team participated in shaping these frameworks. One major realization was the absence of *review policies*, which had hindered motivation and growth within the organization. A new review process was introduced and implemented for the first time.

An organizational structure was then developed, and necessary vacancies were created where needed. The fundraising process to support these new positions also began.

As part of this process, *Pravah* representative **Megha Sengupta** visited the organization for two days to meet the team and boost their motivation. Through her interactive sessions, she helped the team connect their *personal aspirations* with the *organization's goals*.

Discussions focused on the organization's future direction and expansion potential. The team recognized the significance of their programs and expressed a shared dream of expanding the initiatives across Maharashtra and eventually nationwide. This visit provided strong motivation to the entire team. *Amita* from the CSR team of *ATE Chandra Foundation*, a partner organization of *Pravah*, also attended the visit.



The new cohort was invited to share their experiences of how *Work for Equality* has been carried out by the organization.

14th Foundation Day Celebration

On the occasion of *Work for Equality's 14th Foundation Day*, girls' clubs across various villages celebrated through cultural programs, competitions, and other creative events led by adolescent participants.



IEC Material Development

In 2024–2025, the organization produced a *documentary on Cyber Safety*. The objective was to raise awareness among children, as many become unintentionally involved in cyber-related incidents due to a lack of knowledge. The documentary aimed to educate and sensitize children and adolescents about responsible online behavior and digital safety.

Success Story Videos

This year, *Work for Equality* produced six short videos highlighting the progress of children associated with the organization. These videos not only motivated the featured children but also inspired thousands of others who face similar challenges and lack support systems. The videos are now used on social media as motivational stories, encouraging other children to overcome their difficulties and pursue their goals.

Education Initiatives

Nai Asha Nai Disha – Program for School Dropout Children:

Through three key initiatives — *Nai Asha Nai Disha*, *Educational Support*, and *Study Guidance* — *Work for Equality* supports the education of children who have dropped out of school. Under the *Nai Asha Nai Disha* project, 138 children from Talegaon, Ghodegaon, and Parbhani centers (both boys and girls) are being assisted in completing their Grade 10 and 12 education.



These children had dropped out for 3–5 years due to reasons like poverty, gender discrimination, social exclusion, or poor academic performance. Some were working, while others stayed at home. Through counseling sessions with children, parents, and community members, they were successfully reintegrated into education. This initiative has been supported by **FM Foundation, Juris Corp, and Knorr Bremse TCI**.

For the past two years, 25 tribal students studying in Grade 8 have received educational support through **Schindler India Pvt. Ltd.** This includes financial assistance for school fees, books, and notebooks. Awareness sessions were conducted for parents and community members to promote positive attitudes toward education, along with regular follow-ups to ensure sustained progress.



Scholarship Support

With the support of **Kirloskar Oil Engines**, scholarships were provided to children from socially and economically disadvantaged backgrounds to pursue higher education.

Applications were invited from such communities through local advertisements. Each applicant's home was visited to understand their socio-economic conditions before making the final decision on scholarship allotment. A scholarship amounting to 428,798 was provided for higher education to 47



The second phase of this project focused on children from the communities and schools near the Kirloskar Company. At *Manaji Bagh*, *Indira Vasahat*, and *Bhoite Wasti*, six groups comprising 174 boys and girls aged 12 to 18 were formed and trained. Each group participated in six sessions covering key topics such as growing-up issues, gender, good touch and bad touch, prevention of sexual abuse, and cyber safety.

During these sessions, children actively asked questions about their safety—such as where to seek help and what the legal procedures are. They were informed about support systems and helplines like **1098**, the **Bharosa Cell**, the **State Women's Commission**, the **National Women's Commission**, and the **police system**, ensuring they knew where to turn in case of any danger or concern.

Food is Medicine: Health Program for Marginalized Women

Rising malnutrition rates, inadequate healthcare, and the growing dependence on market foods have severely impacted the health of rural communities in India. To respond to this challenge, Work for Equality launched the *"Nutrition is Health"* initiative in August 2021 in Savala village, located in Andar Maval block of Pune district, on the boundary of Karjat. This tribal village, home to socio-economically backward communities such as Katkari and Mahadevkoli, is one of the most marginalized in the region. The program directly engages with 150 families and 169 women, while also benefiting nearly 600 indirect beneficiaries, including children, adults, and the elderly. Nearly 90% of the participants belong to tribal communities. The initiative focuses on promoting organic kitchen gardens, reviving knowledge of traditional wild vegetables, and encouraging sustainable nutrition practices. Families have been supported to grow organic vegetables year-round, which has improved food security and reduced reliance on external food markets.



The outcomes of this program go far beyond improved health. It has fostered greater awareness about the nutritional and medicinal value of traditional vegetables, encouraged organic farming practices, and promoted the conservation of indigenous seeds. Importantly, it has also brought significant social change. Men are increasingly involved in household chores, reducing the burden on women and strengthening family relationships, particularly between mothers-in-law and daughters-in-law. Women have emerged as leaders within their families and communities, actively promoting water conservation and nutritional awareness. Several women have also turned their kitchen gardens into small businesses by selling surplus vegetables, thus enhancing their economic empowerment. This holistic approach demonstrates that food truly is medicine, and by combining traditional knowledge with sustainable farming, rural communities can tackle malnutrition, build resilience, and empower marginalized women to lead healthier, more dignified lives.

Rebuild India Fund: In the Rebuild India Fund cohort 8, Work for Equality was selected in February-March 2024. After successfully passing the due diligence process within this cohort, the organization was chosen to receive this fund. The purpose of the fund is to strengthen the organization. At the appropriate time, the organization will use the fund to address specific gaps and carry out the empowerment process. Throughout this process, the Rebuild Fund will provide complete guidance to us, including timely training and mentorship support. In this process, we have identified gaps including the need to design a website, prepare a brochure, and hire a senior person for social media and program management. Accordingly, we will proceed with these steps in the near future.

