

# Bridging Gaps, Building Bridges

STRATEGY 2025 – 2028



# DHWANI FOUNDATION

## WHAT WE DO

- **Strengthen** small/medium and rural **Grassroots NGOs** through our Organisational Change Management Programs
- **Partner** with social sector Federations to **make policy work**
- **Nurture** Grassroots Ecosystem by
  - Engaging with Donors/CSRs towards **impactful funding**
  - Engaging with Alumni for **continuous learning** and networking
- **Collaborate** and Co-create through partnerships - **adding value**
- **Bringing** Technology solutions for the social sector

## VISION

A Vibrant and Credible Social Sector

## MISSION

- To gain consensus across stakeholders for common professional standards
- Enhance Visibility, Transparency, Accountability and Efficiency through better use of process and technology in the social sector
- Enlarge quality resource pool for social sector

## OUR GUIDING PRINCIPLES

- Mutual respect for all is the cornerstone of our interactions
- We will expose ourselves to scrutiny from all stakeholders
- We will be outcome driven without compromising on ethics
- Our positions will be based on sound research and a professional approach

DF works in Change Management for the under 3Cr (annual budget) Grassroots NGOs, covering 175 Parameters across 8 Domains— Compliance, Governance, Leadership & Strategy, Human Resource, Program Management, MIS & Technology, Fundraising & Marketing, Finance & Accounts.

## MANAGING TRUSTEE NOTE

This is Dhwani Foundation's third effort at putting together a 3-year strategic plan. As we start the preparation of each new plan, we take pause to review what we have achieved and ask ourselves what we could have done differently or better. We also make it a point to talk to a wide range of people connected to the social sector—NGO leaders, Government officials, consultants, NGO board members, our employees, our alumni and the donor community of CSRs and Foundations.

In every conversation, we ask the same questions:

- How is the world around us changing?
- What should Dhwani Foundation focus on in the coming years?
- How do we become more adept at what we do?

The last strategy cycle (2022-2025) has been quite 'interesting', to say the least. COVID and its aftermath had a harsh effect on rural communities and the NGOs who serve them. The Government's reliance on NGOs for last-mile delivery of social services significantly increased. Given the gravity and scale of the crisis, NGOs had to quickly become more process-driven to meet the growing demands. This is where Dhwani's focus on systems, processes, and technology proved to be timely and highly relevant. Post COVID, Government, Donors and NGOs had to realign themselves to programs which had been neglected for over two years. Despite these many 'distractions', Dhwani managed to successfully complete most of the tasks set out for this time frame.

We still have a lot of work to do in our constant strive for seeing a **'vibrant and credible social sector'**. As we continue to evolve, we aim to be more than enablers—we want to be a strong voice for the Grassroots. By bringing insights, advocating for better funding practices, and influencing policies that shape the ecosystem, we will work to see that the needs of Grassroots NGOs are recognised and prioritised.

We will therefore continue to

- Support Grassroots NGOs in becoming more capable in their work with a focus on marginalised and vulnerable communities while also working further with donors and help bridge the gaps between them and the Grassroots NGOs.
- Work with Government in streamlining operations of social services delivery.
- Work with federations to strengthen their voice for their communities.

An important aspect of Dhwani is innovations for the social sector.

We will always keep trying new things: piloting new models and digital tools that serve Grassroots realities—practical, accessible, and impactful.

We thank the many people who gave us time to help us make this strategic plan and hope we will deliver what we are setting out to do.



Manju Kuchhal

# TERMINOLOGY

**DF** Dhwani Foundation

**OD** Organisational Development

**OCM** Organisational Change Management

**BOT** Build-Operate-Transfer

**Niranthara** Flagship OCM Program for small and medium Grassroots NGOs.

**Niranthara Classic** A 24-month engagement: 16-month OCM program followed by 8-month monitoring, support & training.

**Niranthara Lite** An 8-month engagement purposefully designed for small and emerging NGOs

**Niranthara Lite Level 2** A 6-month advanced program in fundraising, program planning and strategy.

**Niranthara Sahayak** A Shared Services Program for NGOs to access specialised service providers in Compliance, Finance and HR

**Niranthara Online** An e-learning platform in OCM

**DrishtE** Collaboration with NGO Partners to promote OCM awareness.

**VOICE** A Program that engages Federations/NGO Networks to make policy work.

**Federations** Network of NGOs

**Goonjan** MIS software for the social sector

**SAT** Self assessment tool to evaluate the maturity of NGOs

**Updeshak** Governance Program to build a pool of independent board members for NGOs

**Sahayog** Program to create Staff Revolving Fund (HR) for our Partner NGOs

**Shikshak** BOT Model to create DF replicas

**Grants+** A donor engagement initiative to bridge the gap between Donor and Grassroots NGO worlds



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# RETROSPECTIVE 2022-25

## Geographical Expansion

OCM reach to underserved regions, focussing on the Northeast and Eastern India.

- Odisha & Jharkhand: currently supporting 4 cohorts with 124 NGO partners
- Northeast - Assam & Manipur: currently supporting 1 cohort with 34 NGO partners.

**Capacity Building:** Niranthara OCM programs supported 440 NGOs, enabling them to on their journey of growth, resilience and sustainability.

## Sector Strengthening:

- 6 Registered Federations (360+ members): established secretariat, published member directory, enabled research based status report on domain specific issue; initiated member services.

**Collaboration and Co-creation:** Through several collaborations we strengthened NGOs

- 1NGO: supported 276 NGOs to build Websites and Social Media
- PurpleClips: supported 214 NGOs to create Films
- Asteya and Jeevika: co-created a shared service model for the sector. Supported NGOs in Compliance, Finance & Accounts.
- Sensei: developed Goonjan MIS for social sector
- Dasra Rebuild Initiative: Connected 29 NGOs to receive capacity building grant of Rs 14.5 Cr
- Caring Friends: facilitated Staff Revolving Fund of Rs 1.73 Cr for 50 NGOs through Sahayog

## Donor Engagement:

- Grants+ launched as a platform to bring together both Grassroots and Donor perspectives. Under this, 2 initiatives were launched: Webinar Series and the CSR Roundtable Discussions
- Fundraising: Facilitated Rs. 78 Cr in new funding for Grassroots

## MIS and Tech

- Goonjan upgraded for better efficiency; adopted by 95 new NGOs; 4.58 lakh beneficiary data added
- SAT, a self-assessment system with 205 parameters, was used by 280+ partners to evaluate their operational maturity
- Internal tracking has improved over time

## Internal Capacity

- DF grew in size. We are 52 people across 5 States.
- We opened 4 new offices—Odisha, Jharkhand, TN, and Assam.
- Built 2nd line leadership.

## DF Compliance and Governance

- Amended Trust Bylaws
- Obtained FCRA
- Introduced Gratuity Fund, registered the Trust and GST.
- Changes in the board – 3 stepped down and 4 inducted

Set Goals	Status - End of 2025
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ OCM for Small &amp; Medium NGOs in Rural India – Different models to suit size</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Ensured high focus only on Small &amp; Medium NGOs (95%)</li> <li>◆ Expanded from 2 to 6 States–More rural and vulnerable locations (Odisha, Jharkhand, Northeast, AP added)</li> <li>◆ 2 to 4 Models (Lite &amp; Sahayak added)</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Introduce 'Domain' by building a network of resource organisations/experts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ No progress, decision to have this as 'year 2 goal'.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Influence – Networks, Govt, Donors, Academia &amp; larger NGOs towards addressing Policy, Standards, Human Resource &amp; Funding issues of social sector</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Federations as influencing groups in South India</li> <li>◆ Donor engagement – Webinar &amp; CSR Round table initiatives</li> <li>◆ Fundraising Modules revised and seeing better results</li> <li>◆ No progress with Academia &amp; Large NGOs</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Approaches to Partnerships <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Criteria-based Enrolments</li> <li>• Short to Medium Term interventions in OCM</li> <li>• 'No Free Service but No Denial' if financially incapability</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ All programs moved under selection criteria, including panel interviews, SMT visits etc. resulted in 97% retention</li> <li>◆ 6 months to 28 months term interventions developed</li> <li>◆ Except DrishtE, all programs have partners contribution close to 12%; 3% partners exempted from full partner contribution</li> </ul>

## Some failures — Some lessons learned

### *Limited progress – early steps taken, significant work ahead*

- Government interface
- Donor engagement
- Partners visibility with Donors

### *Challenges persist – rethink & refine strategy*

- Updeshak – though started well, finding the right person is a challenge
- Sahayak – not much success with service providers; dropout rate of NGOs high
- Goonjan – low usage and high dropout even though geographical reach expanded
- DrishtE – large enrolment numbers but program needs clarity and purpose

### *Stated objectives of last strategy unmet - revisit and reassess*

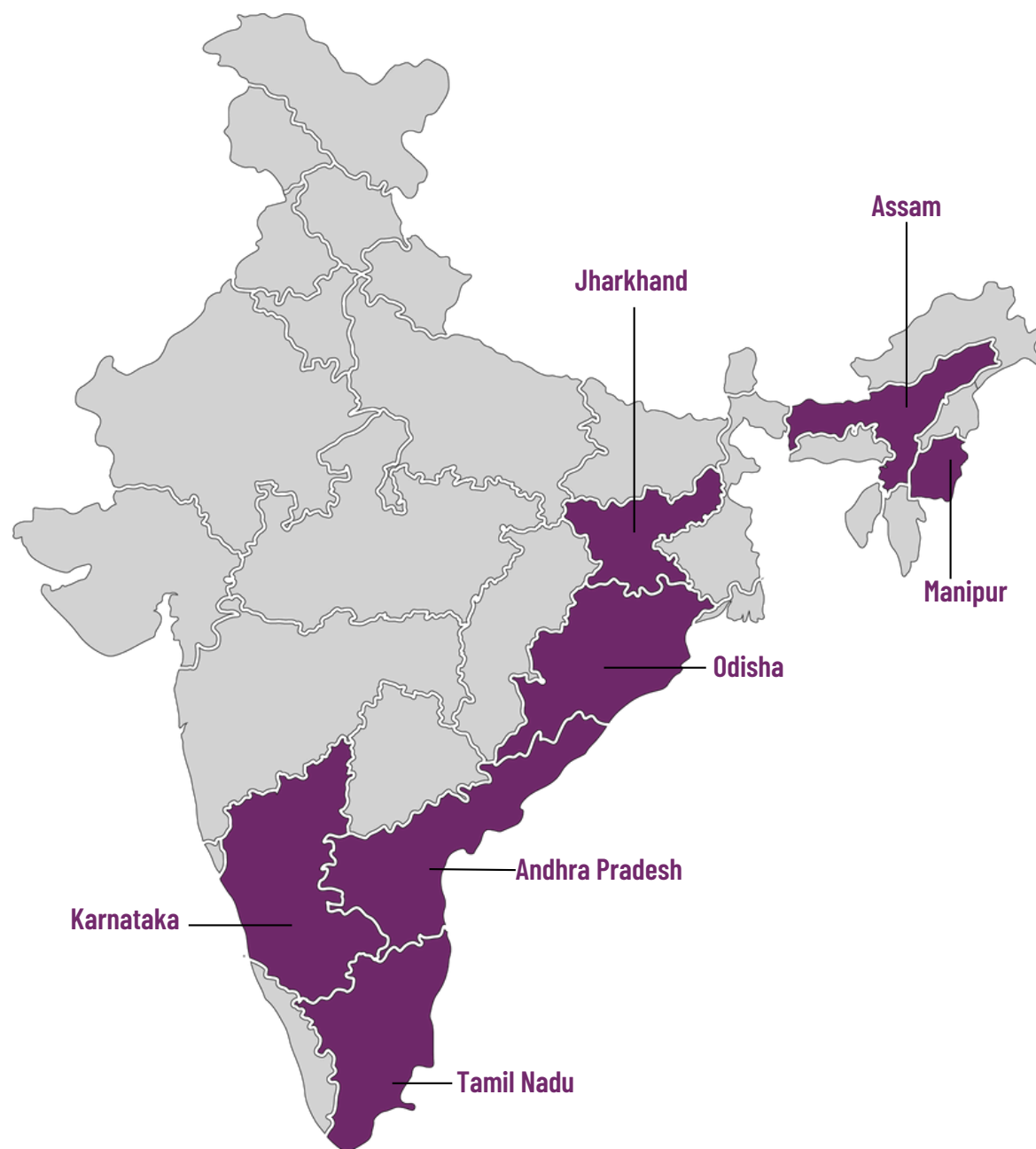
- Working with Academia – decision to drop this
- Domain support to Partners – no movement here but important to try this
- Shikshak BOT model for OCM - no movement here but important to try this

## RETROSPECTIVE SUMMARY

We have grown 2.5x since the last strategy period  
reaching more NGOs (1,212 to 3,090) and  
handling a larger budget (Rs 13.66 to 25 Cr)

Key Areas	Targeted 2022-25	Actuals End 2025
OCM support to Grassroots NGOs	4290	3096
No of Board Members trained	2100	802
No of Updeshak Fellows introduced	250	45
Support Federations / Research Institute for influencing role	11	8
Engagement with Govt. Depts	6	3
Donor Engagement	200	60+
Fundraising (20 DF + 30 Cr to Partners)	50 Cr	94 Cr
Partners to Benefit with DF's fundraising efforts	200 Partners	122 Partners

2022-25 Targeted Key Numbers vs Actuals



- ◆ **6 Federations** in 5 States, collectively having over 360 NGO members
- ◆ 124 Niranthara Partner NGOs currently in **Odisha and Jharkhand**
  - have an average of 25 years of experience
  - 21% are women led (26 NGOs)
  - operate in 41 districts of (76% geographical reach)
  - collectively work with 12.5 lakh households
- ◆ **Aspirational Blocks/Districts our Partner NGOs work in**  
In Tamil Nadu 87%; In Odisha 68%
- ◆ Niranthara **Northeast Launch** in March '25 for 34 NGOs amidst difficult climate in Manipur, and Assam
- ◆ Niranthara Lite piloted in **Karnataka** - 131 small NGOs strengthened  
Entered **Andhra Pradesh** with Niranthara Sahayak pilot
- ◆ Goonjan beneficiaries grew 2.4x across 23 States

# A SECTOR IN TRANSITION

## The Changing Landscape of India's Social Sector

India's social sector is a dynamic landscape, characterised by a diverse array of NGOs addressing critical issues across the country. At the heart of India's social development are Grassroots NGOs, with an intrinsic understanding of local contexts and challenges. Their close relationships with communities enable them to implement tailored interventions that address specific needs effectively.

There has been a paradigm shift in the last decade in the social sector space. **Some key shifts** are driving the sector to explore innovation, diversity and pushing towards increased accountability, transparency, and impactful social change.

1. **Governments** - State and Central - are increasing compliances and promoting effective governance structures.
2. **Regulatory bodies** removed permanent/one-time certification system and brought in renewal at different frequencies. Eg: FCRA, 12AA, 80G to be renewed every five years; many states are introducing annual renewal of NGOs registered as Society, and many more. This is to ensure systems and processes are intact.
3. **A larger pool of human resources** is available to the sector and this is a positive move. More universities offer courses in social sciences; as well as several interesting Fellowship Schemes such as SBI, Gandhi Fellowship, Mercy Mission Fellowship, Fund Raising Managers from DF etc are allowing a young generation to explore the Sector.
4. **Courses to build independent board members** such as Women on Board of ISDM, Updeshak of DF, Board members course of ILSS are promoting interested individuals to join the advisory or board of NGOs

Several organisations like Dasra, Sattva, Bridgespan and ATE, are conducting in-depth **research to analyse the sector's current state and future prospects**. By engaging with multiple stakeholders, they help organisations better understand emerging trends and strategically position themselves.

**Technology** and other services and platforms are another emerging trend in the sector. Goonjan MIS and Sahayak, a Shared Services Program by DF, India Partners Network of Sattva, Technology solutions of Dhvani RIS, Tech4good are few examples of this.

**Diverse funding patterns** has been an interesting development. Though FCRA and other traditional funds have reduced drastically, larger avenues such as CSR grants, Philanthropist-led Foundations such as APF, RNF, ATE Chandra, Shiv Nadar Foundation; and UHNI/HNI contributions are making a significant impact to the sector.

**Enhancing capacity building of the NGOs** is another important aspect emerging in India. Donors such as APF, Dasra, Ford Foundation, DF, Edgewise, Axis Bank Foundation and others are significantly increasing grants for this. Organisations such as ATMA, NFI, Roots, DF have come up with exclusive capacity building models.

These trends are gradually shaping the sector's future, and predictions suggest they will only intensify in the next decade.

However, despite the good news around the sector, the **opportunities are largely concentrated in urban cities** and accessible to those who are well-connected. Rural India, which requires significant focus and investment, remains distanced from these emerging prospects.

#### Reports highlight that grassroots work in rural India is neglected:

- Only 2.15% of CSR funds reach aspirational districts; low-GDP, high-population states are largely ignored.
- Minimal resources are allocated for capacity building but is actually important for enabling NGO resilience and sustainability.
- Over 80% of trained professionals prefer urban roles, often in research and desk jobs, rather than direct program implementation on the ground.
- There's a disconnect between rural NGOs and resource-rich emerging players, posing a major hurdle.

Dhwani Foundation's '**Strategy 2025-2028**' aims to **deepen its engagement with small and rural Grassroots NGOs & NGO Networks** to further enhance their capabilities. At the same time, the strategy focuses on **collaborating with key stakeholders**—governments, donors, corporates, aggregators, media, academia, and individuals interested in the social sector—to connect these players and explore opportunities for bringing positive change to the most vulnerable communities.

Creating change is a shared responsibility—no single entity has all the answers. The sector must grow by using data, sharing knowledge and resources to strengthen grassroots. Moving forward will require collaboration, innovation, and a commitment to building a sustainable and impactful future that stays connected to community needs.

Dhwani will continue to focus on **Bridging Gaps & Building Bridges**.

#### Diverse donor contributions for NGOs in Funding

	Odisha Cohort of 32 NGOs Aug '24 to Feb '25 (7 Months)		Tamil Nadu Cohort of 28 NGOs Oct '24 to Feb '25 (5 Months)	
Donor Type	% Donation by Donor Type	NGOs receiving funds	% Donation by Donor Type	NGOs receiving funds
Individual / Digital Funds	1%	7	16%	5
HNIs	0%	0	3%	3
CSRs	3%	3	46%	10
Associations	0.38%	3	0%	1
Foundations	19%	12	8%	4
Government	35%	12	6%	4
Foreign Contribution	42%	11	21%	8

Select data referenced from  
India Philanthropy Report 2025 co-authored by Dasra and Bain & Company.  
The State of CSR in India Report – 2014-22 – Data Guide 2023, SATTVA.  
Building Strong, Resilient NGOs in India: Time for New Funding Practices, The Bridgespan Group.



FROM THE FIELD



F O R   A   V I B R A N T   A N D







# C R E D I B L E   S O C I A L   S E C T O R



We acknowledge the communities featured in these images, reflecting the work of our NGO Partners through DF's Niranthara Program.



# CONSULTATIONS



Please continue your work with the smaller NGOs...as we would like to support the smaller NGOs too. Does Dhvani reach out to philanthropies who struggle find the right NGOs to fund? There are small ones who need support.

**Anupama Shetty**—Mission Director, *BIOCON Foundation*

Focus on OD is needed; need process orientation and adherence in NGOs, particularly for transparency...then raising funds is not a challenge.

**Bhaskar Enaganti**—Founder & CEO, *SociallyGood*

DF should keep its focus on smaller organisations...explore more online methods...spend time on how to showcase NGOs to donors. Similarly, how do we spend more effort with donors to get them to understand... make them not see funding small NGOs as a 'risk'.

**Deval Sanghavi**—Co-founder-Partner, *Dasra*

People who have lived experiences of problems we are trying to solve are not included in the decision-making process – people creating narratives don't have the lived experiences.

**Ingrid Srinath**—Director, *Centre for Social Impact & Philanthropy, Ashoka University*

Do you work with multiple small NGOs, or do you want to cultivate some larger NGOs which can make significant effort in a shorter period – either way, capacity development is required all around.

**Murugan Vasudevan**—CEO, *Veddis (ex-Cisco CSR (Head))*

Many donors don't support early stage organisations...but practically, it is the early stage NGOs that need to be supported. Large donors connect to Grassroots or community is poor – Dhvani should create this awareness amongst donors.

**Rajkishore**—State Head Odisha, *Azim Premji Foundation*

We need like-minded persons, who believe strongly in Grassroots sector, to come together and start socialising 'inclusive development' to philanthropies... There is space for it, and a big need for it.

**Ravi Sreedharan**—Founder & Director, *ISDM*

Can't see too many mature philanthropists who are looking beyond a quick ROI...As a donor, they have challenges finding the right partner...can this change

**Subir Hari Singh**—Former Additional Chief Secretary, *Govt. of Karnataka*.

When we raise our children, we focus on right inputs for many many years and let it flow, so why do we obsess with output when we are trying to make similar difference to the society...measurement has to be quantitative yes, but qualitative too.

**Subroto Bagchi**—Entrepreneur, Author, Public servant

NGOs are under threat, this is not good for society...DF should not shy away, as long as you focus on capacity building.

**Rishikesha Krishnan**—Director, *IIMB*

Lot of positive signs in the social sector...This next five years is very crucial to shape up the sector - lots of money combined with people's interest - but has to be channelised...DF can play a role here.

**Saleem Khan**—Senior Director, *BridgeSpan*

Best thing Dhvani does is building talent at Grassroots, that should continue, don't worry about people leaving Partners or Dhvani, they all will enhance the sector ...You are creating an ecosystem and that should be all our jobs, it will yield results.

**Vivek Sharma**—Founding Director, *Gandhi Fellowship*



# REFLECTIONS-THE SHIFT

Through our consultations, there was a clear message – **"Stay Rooted in Grassroots"**. While our core remains unchanged, the need for a strategic shift is undeniable. These insights shaped the 2025-28 strategy—deepening grassroots engagement while evolving our approach for greater effectiveness.

## Deepening engagement with Grassroots NGOs

- Re-igniting focus on small/medium and rural NGOs
- Challenging Dhwani Process capability & OCM depth

## Making Policy Work

- Involving federations – influencing policy
- Working with Government - 'Smart Voice'
- Sustainability of federations

## FOR A VIBRANT AND CREDIBLE SOCIAL SECTOR

## Influencing Stakeholders

- Shaping decisions
- Donor Practices
- Ecosystem

## Building Our/Sector Capabilities

- Second Line Leadership
- Incubation
- Shared Service
- BOT
- Technology

# STRATEGIC SHIFT 2025-28

## Building Deeper, Stronger, and More Effective Support

### Niranthara Lite – Building Strong Foundations for Small Rural NGOs

- A leaner avatar, designed to re-focus our efforts in the Rs 10-50L segment of NGOs, the 8-month Niranthara Lite journey will equip 660 NGOs in compliance, finance, governance, program planning, fundraising, communication, and technology—to create a solid foundation for their growth.
- An experiment that challenges the current Classic methods and cost.

### Niranthara Lite Level 2 – From Stability to Growth

- For 390 NGOs graduating from Lite, we go deeper. This 6-month advanced program sharpens fundraising, strategy, and program planning—helping these NGOs move from survival mode to strategic growth.

### Niranthara Classic – Strengthening Mid-Sized NGOs

- A 24-month deep-dive for 190 NGOs with annual budgets of 50L-3Cr
- Will delve deeper into Outcomes and Impact; It's about institutional transformation—working directly with leadership, board members, and senior team.
- Hands-on training for finance and fundraising teams, along with a dedicated helpdesk for real-time implementation support.

### MIS & Technology

- Expand Goonjan and integrate new NGO tech solutions to improve data management, beneficiary tracking, and operational efficiency, ensuring data-driven decision-making.

### Paradigm shift in Training and Helpdesk Support

- Digital-first learning: trainer-led to trainer-facilitated with DrishtE videos as the backbone of all programs. Videos will be mandatory for trainers and partners, front-loaded in every program, and integrated into the helpdesk for post-training support—ensuring a consistent, efficient learning experience.

## Collaborations & Strengthening Social Sector Ecosystem

### Federations – Power in Collective Action

- Bringing NGOs together to influence systemic change. Support five new federations, advocate for policy shifts, and integrate digital tools to elevate governance and compliance standards.

### Government Collaboration – Making Policy Work

### Sector Capability Building - Expanding OCM Through Partnerships

### Shared Services

- Onboard new regional service provider, support 100 NGOs

### Sahayog – A Financial Safety Net for NGO Staff

- Grow Sahayog Staff Revolving Fund that provides NGO employees with 2X their salary as a zero-interest loan

### Donor Engagement

- Facilitate Rs 200 Cr funds to small grassroots NGOs
- More meaningful CSR Roundtables

**Innovation drives DF**—we operate as a lab, embracing experimentation to find better solutions for the grassroots challenges.

DF 2025-28 strategy **introduces five key initiatives**, each designed to strengthen grassroots leadership, expand reach, and ensure long-term sustainability. These initiatives directly address critical gaps in the NGO ecosystem, fostering resilience and lasting impact.



### Niranthara Online

Develop a simple online program to help small and young NGOs implement key organisational parameters



### Shikshak

Develop a partnership model with NGOs in select states to implement DF's OCM programs effectively. Develop and onboard at least two Shikshaks (OCM capacity-building partners), reach 100 NGOs in new geographies.



### Domain Expertise

Specialised training and mentorship for NGOs to develop deep sectoral expertise in key thematic areas, enhancing their program effectiveness.



### 2nd line Leadership

Preparing grassroots NGOs for leadership transitions, ensuring long-term sustainability through structured succession planning frameworks

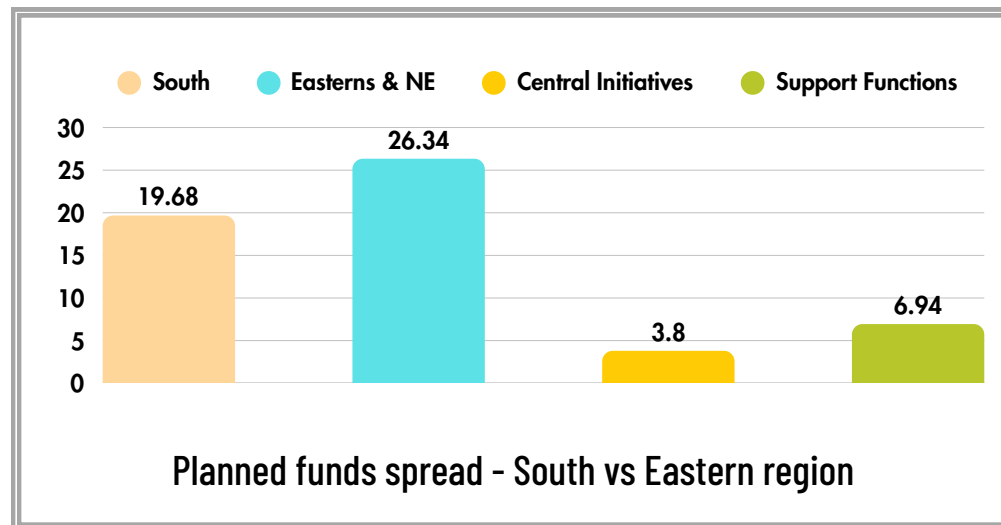
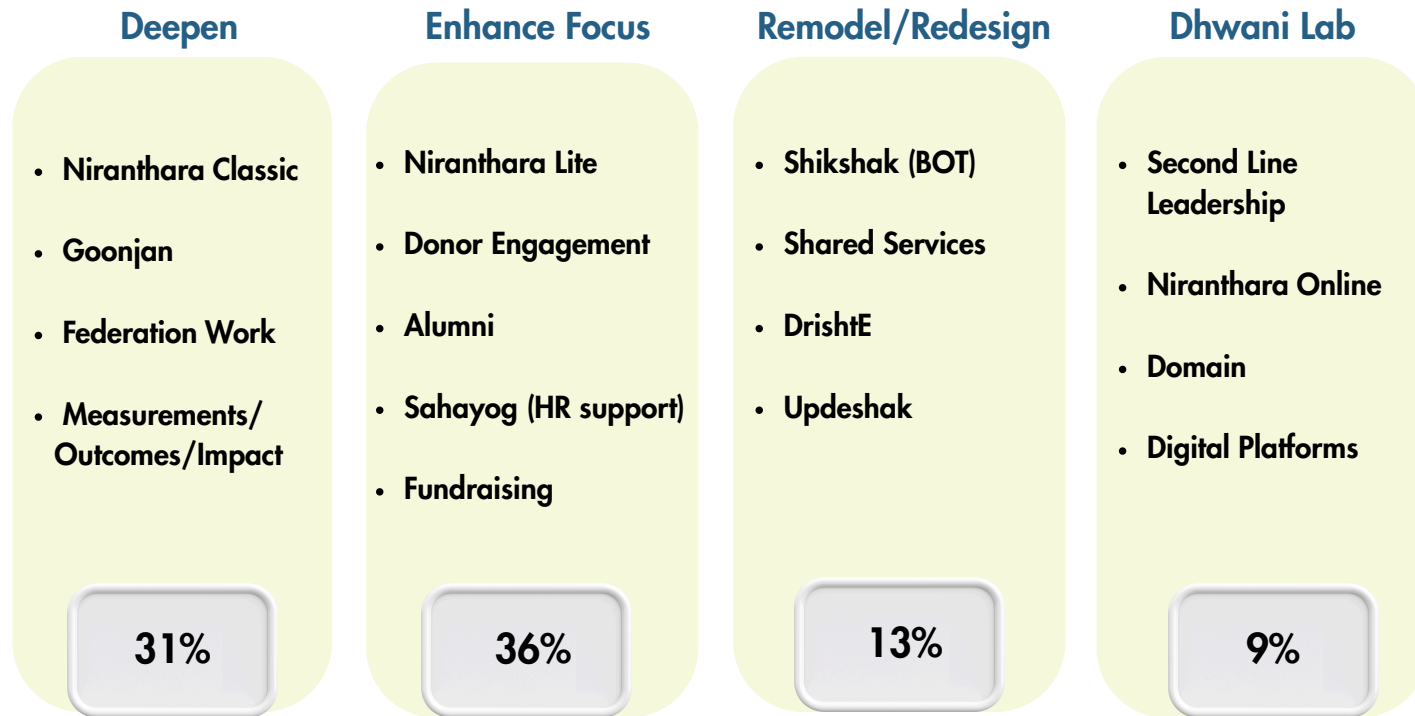


### Alumni Network

Establishing a structured alumni community to keep past partners engaged, offer continued learning, and enable peer collaboration.

# KEY FOCUS 2025-28

% Budget Allocation for New Strategy



## Year and State wise Calendar for OCM Initiatives 2025-28

States	Sahayak	Classic				Lite				Lite Level 2 (Lab)				Shikshak (Lab)				Niranthara Online (Lab)				Overall
	Y1	Y1	Y2	Y3	Total	Y1	Y2	Y3	Total	Y1	Y2	Y3	Total	Y1	Y2	Y3	Total	Y1	Y2	Y3	Total	
TN	1	0	1	0	1	1	2	1	4	1	1	2	4	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	11
Odisha		2	0	0	2	2	2	2	6	1	1	1	3	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	2	13
JHK		1	1	0	2	1	1	1	3	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	2	8
AP	1	0	0	1	1	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3
Telangana		0	0	0	0	1	1	1	3	0	1	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	5
NE		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	2	5	0	0	0	0	5
KA		0	0	0	0	2	1	2	5	1	1	1	3	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	9
New State		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	1
Total	2	3	2	1	6	7	8	7	22	3	4	6	13	1	2	3	6	2	2	2	6	55

Indicates ongoing  
7 cohorts

- 48 new cohorts planned. Avg of 30 NGOs per cohort
- Additionally, 11 new Federations planned
- Goonjan & Dhvani Lab are all additional numbers

## KEY GOALS 2025-28

1. **1500 NGOs Institutional capacities are built** resulting Growth, Resilience and Sustainability.
2. Play a significant role of '**influencing change in the social sector**' in **9 states** by working with stakeholders such as NGOs, Federations, Donors & Government.
3. Facilitate minimum **200 Cr new funds** through multiple donors to reach Dhwani Partner NGOs.
4. Invest in Capacity Building & Supporting the efforts of Social Sector Federations to regain its momentum in India, resulting in rebuilding a space for federations in **influencing Policy Change**.
5. Invest in Donor Engagement - **minimum 100 donors** to drive their focus and funding to Grassroots NGOs and OCM initiatives.
6. **Build Operate Transfer** - Shikshak, Shared Services, and Alumni Models for better leverage for Grassroots NGOs.
7. Invest / Introduce **New Initiatives**: 2nd Line Leadership Development, Online Capacity Building, Fellowships for emerging organisations, Domain expertise program and Digital Platforms for the future growth of the Social Sector.
8. Expand Dhwani footprint as a '**Thought Leader**' in the OCM space.



## PROGRAM NUMBERS BUDGETS

2025 - 28	NGO Unique Count				NGO Count - Continued Effort*				Effort (NGOs)	Budgets (Amts in Lakhs)			
Program Initiatives	3-yrs	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	3-yrs	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	3-yrs	3-yrs	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28
DrishtE + Niranthara Online	180	60	60	60	180	60	60	60	-	123	22	51	50
Niranthara Lite Level 1	660	210	240	210	930	210	390	330	-	1495	389	540	565
Niranthara Lite Level 2	-	-	-	-	390	90	120	180	-	-	-	-	-
Niranthara Classic	186	90	64	32	346	90	128	128	-	982	397	235	350
Niranthara Shikshak	184	34	60	90	214	34	60	120	-	586	137	222	226
Niranthara Sahayak	53	53	-	-	83	53	-	30	-	41	41	-	-
Sahayak (Shared Service)	100	30	35	35	195	30	65	100	400	39	12	13	13
Updeshak	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	150	99	30	34	36
Federation	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	323	149	85	89
MIS & Technology (Goonjan)	200	60	70	70	1890	560	630	700	-	247	101	73	74
Alumni	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1000	87	21	32	34
Donor Engagement	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	218	63	75	80
Sahayog	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	90	300	100	100	100
Domain	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	224	45	15	15	15
2 <sup>nd</sup> Line Leadership	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	60	200	32	129	40
Central Function	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	891	236	317	338
Grand Total	1563	537	529	497	4228	1127	1453	1648	1924	5676	1746	1920	2011

- NGO Count - Continued Effort
  - Spillover beyond a year based on duration of program
  - MIS & Technology - Goonjan is continued support to the enrolled NGOs across years

# STRATEGIC GOALS & OUTCOMES

NIRANTHARA	Goals	Outcomes
	Develop organisational capacities of 1500 new NGOs to become well governed, credible, impactful and sustainable organisations	NGOs demonstrate improved organisational capacity by adopting and implementing 50 to 175 Niranthara OCM parameters within 6 to 24 months, through one of five program variants based on their size and context.
	Enable NGOs to build active, diverse, and independent boards that provide effective strategic oversight.	Board composition has improved with greater diversity, inclusion, and alignment to the NGO's mission, reflected through increased independent expertise, community representation, and evidence of stronger governance practices.
	Enhance the capabilities and confidence of NGOs to design effective fundraising strategies, diversify donor sources, and secure increased and sustainable funding.	NGOs build stronger fundraising systems, attract more donors, and grow their funding from the baseline during the program.
	Strengthen leadership capabilities and ensure NGOs have clear strategic plans, empowered second-line leadership, and effective decision-making systems.	Over the three years, most partner organisations will demonstrate stronger resilience, long-term sustainability in their operations and adapt their work independently
	Support NGOs in building strong planning, monitoring and evaluation systems and processes that use clear outcomes, indicators, and regular program reviews.	Weighted average cost/spend and direct participation by DF across all Niranthara variants will reduce
	Enable NGOs adopt digital tools for data tracking, reporting, and communication to enhance operational efficiency and effectiveness.	Digital self-learning becomes embedded in NGO culture by using online tools to review, implement, and monitor organisational development milestones.

FEDERATIONS	Goals	Outcomes
	Strengthen the role of active federations to influence key policy changes and expand their reach through increased and engaged membership.	Each active federation influenced key policy changes, resulting in wider sector impact and expanded their membership.
	Enable federations in South India to develop sustainable financial models that support long-term operations and sector-wide influence.	Federations from South India secured funding through sustainable financial models, ensuring long-term viability.
	Foster collaboration among alumni NGOs to launch joint initiatives that address shared challenges and amplify sectoral impact.	Alumni NGOs actively collaborate on joint initiatives, leveraging each other's strengths to address sectoral challenges and increase collective impact
	Establish a dynamic alumni network that drives continuous learning, knowledge exchange, and peer support on organisational Development and sector issues.	The Alumni Network serves as a vibrant knowledge-sharing platform, enabling continuous learning and peer support on organisational Development and sector trends.
	Empower alumni members to engage in policy dialogue and influence improved practices through active participation in regional and national platforms.	Alumni members advocate for improved policies and practices in the social sector by participating in forums, consultations, and influencing regional/state-level platforms.
	Promote a culture of mentorship within the alumni network by encouraging alumni organisations to guide and support new NGOs joining the Niranthara program.	Alumni organisations mentor newly enrolled NGOs in the Niranthara program, promoting a culture of giving back and strengthening the OCM.

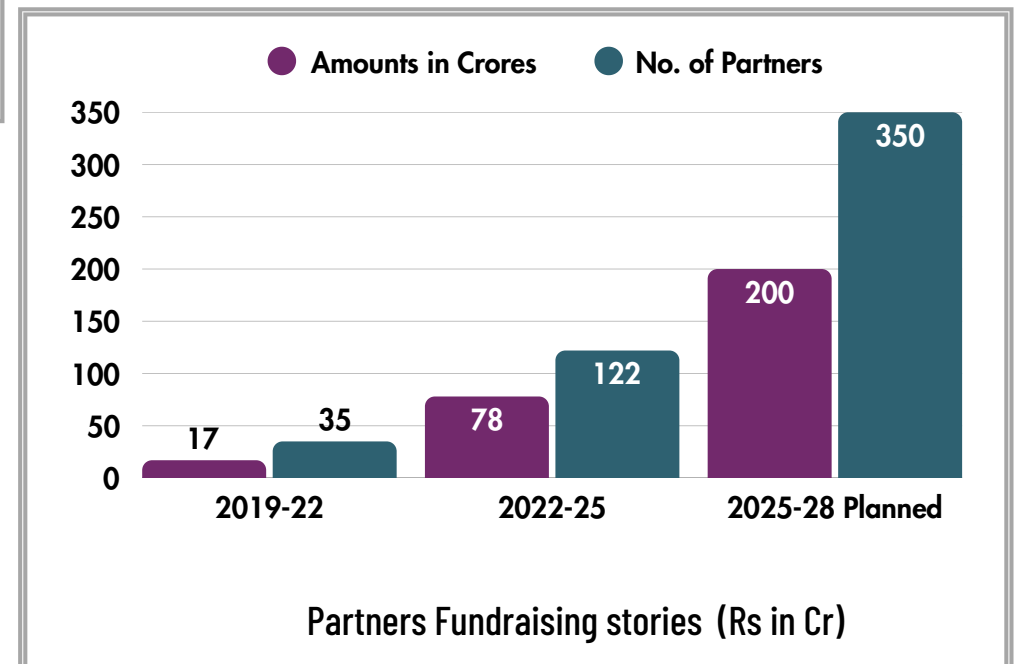
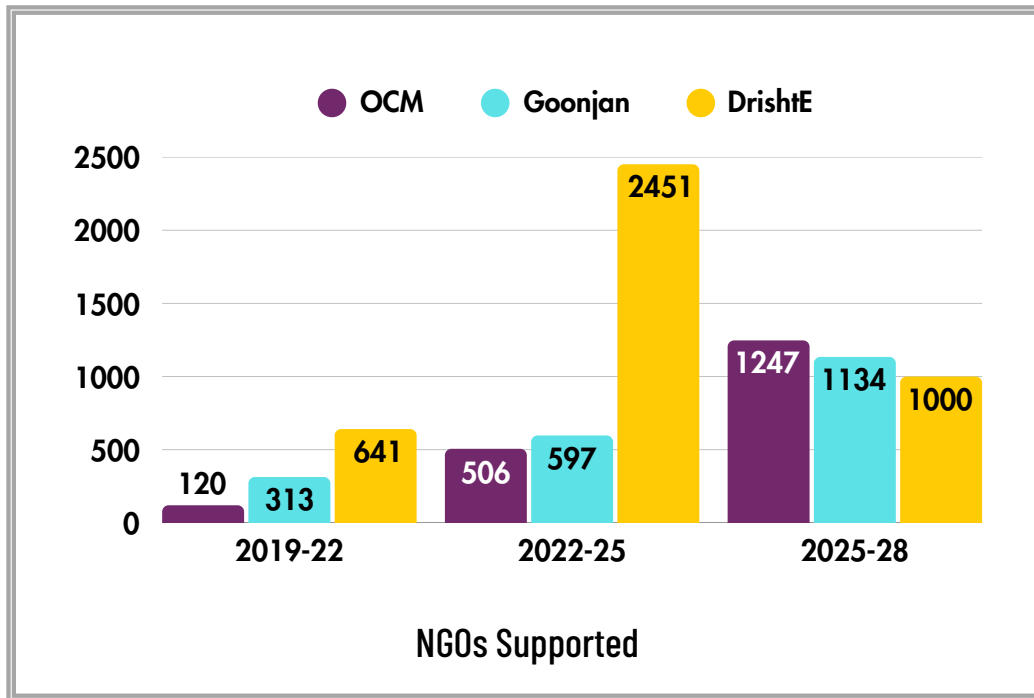
ALUMNI

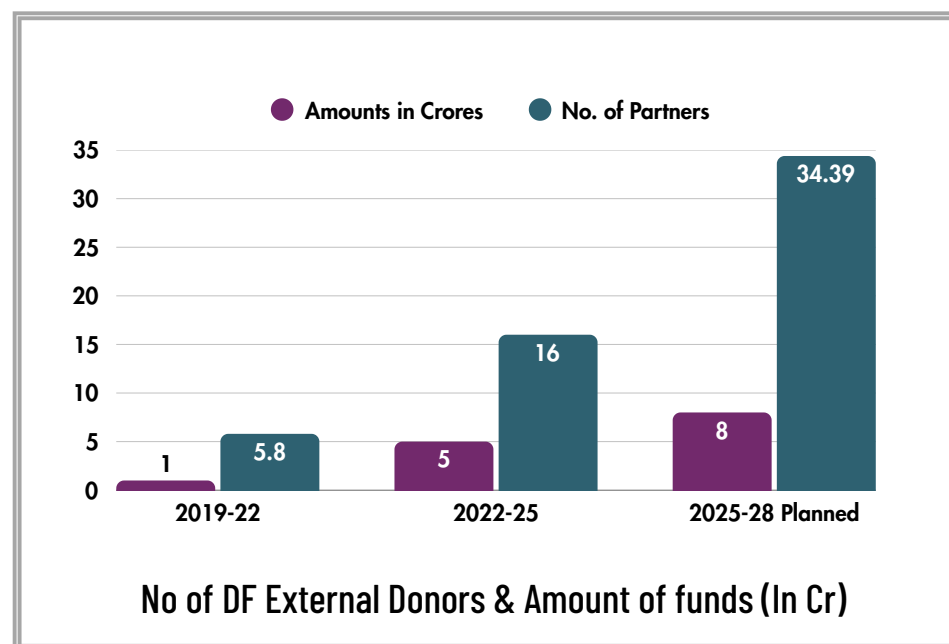
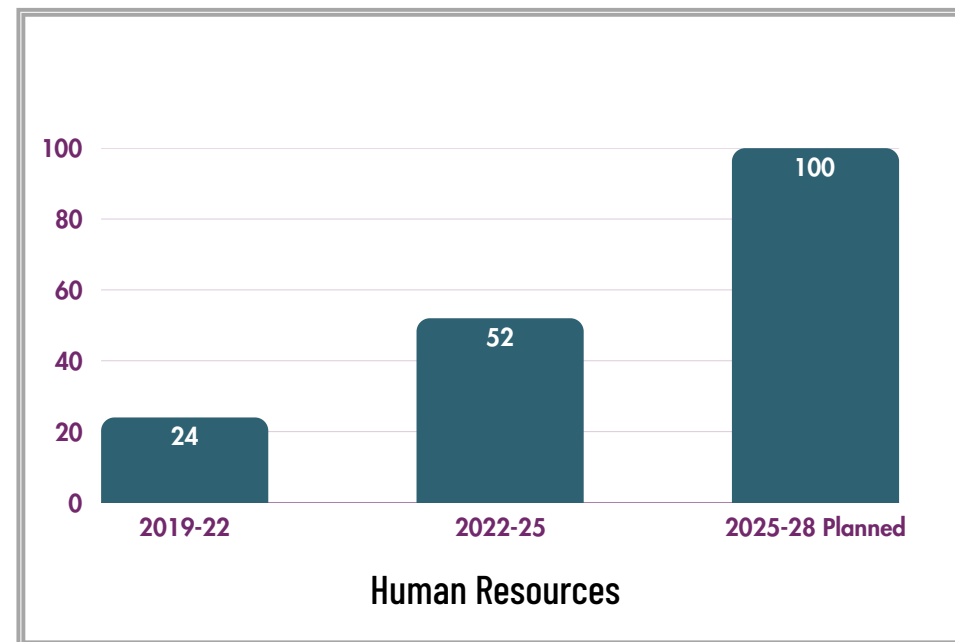
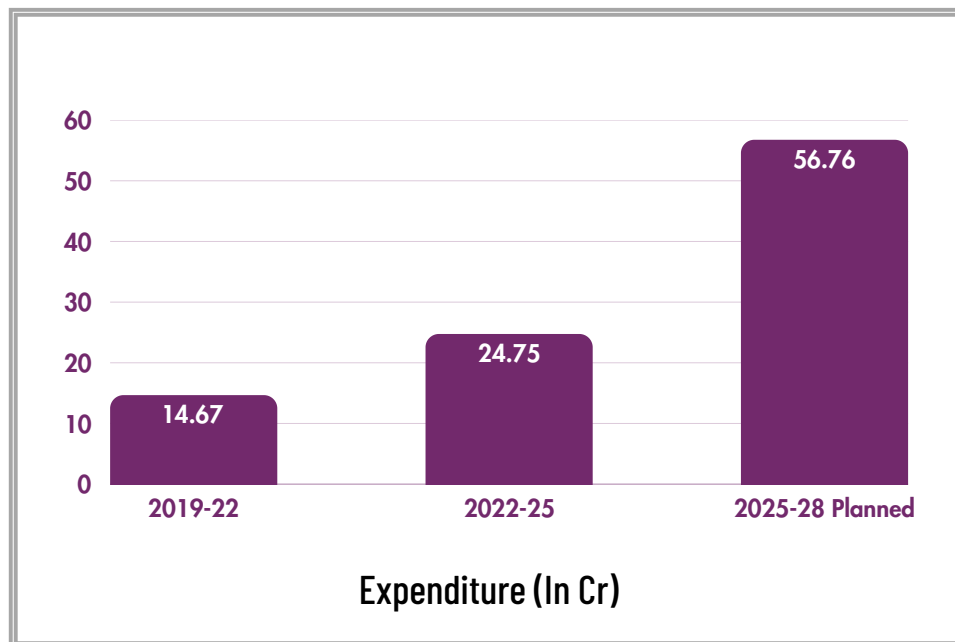
## STRATEGIC GOALS & OUTCOMES

DONOR ENGAGEMENT	Goals	Outcomes
	Build and enhance donor awareness of the social sector to enable strategic, informed and impact-driven funding decisions	Donors shift from short-term project funding to long-term for rural and grassroots NGOs.
	Improve access to credible data on Grassroot NGOs	Donors and ecosystem stakeholders have credible, updated data on grassroots NGOs, enabling informed decision-making and equitable resource allocation.
	Enable donors to commit to long-term projects and capacity focused funding models	Donors recognize the importance of organisational development in NGOs and incorporate in their funding strategies
	Facilitate experiential learning for donors	Donors engage regularly in sector learning through roundtables, exposure visits and peer networks
	Standardize donor practices - NGO selections, due diligence, impact assessment	Donors adopt standardized processes for NGO selection, proposal evaluation, and impact assessment.
	Build strategic partnerships with NGO networks to jointly promote awareness and adoption of OD practices across diverse regions.	Partnerships are established with NGO networks enabling co-designed awareness initiatives on OD practices across diverse geographies.
TECHNOLOGY	Collaborate with technology partners to design and promote user-friendly digital solutions that enhance the operational efficiency and outreach of grassroots NGOs.	Dhwani partners with technology providers to develop practical digital solutions that improve the efficiency and reach of NGOs.

SHARED SERVICES	Goals	Outcomes
	Partner with shared service providers to co-create a sustainable, cost-effective, and high-quality service model that benefits both NGOs and providers.	Dhwani partners with shared service providers to develop a stable, affordable, and value-driven service model that is sustainable for both NGOs and providers.
	Enable NGOs to strengthen their financial and compliance systems by effectively utilizing shared service solutions.	NGOs establish robust financial and compliance Systems by leveraging Shared Services.
	Expand access to reliable and efficient shared services for NGOs across the Eastern and Southern regions.	NGOs in the Eastern and Southern regions have access to quality and efficient Shared Services.
	Develop second-line leadership within NGOs to take on broader roles that contribute to organisational growth and long-term sustainability.	Second-line leaders take on expanded leadership roles, strengthening the organisation's sustainability and growth.
	Equip second-line leaders with the authority and skills needed for effective decision-making and financial management, enabling decentralized and efficient operations.	Second-line leaders are empowered with decision-making and financial approval authority, ensuring decentralized leadership and operational efficiency.
2 <sup>ND</sup> LINE LEADERSHIP		

## DF GROWTH STORY





## STRATEGY EXECUTION PLAN

- Board signed off on Strategy plan on March 27, 2025.
- Annual Plans and Budget approved for the year 2025-26.
- Half-yearly reviews on the progress will be conducted with the Board.
- New learnings and challenges will be incorporated into forthcoming annual plans and budgets.
- Any deviations will be approved only at annual reviews.
- External audit will be conducted by the end of the 3rd year.
- The Executive Director is authorised to operate independently as per the approved strategic plans and seek approvals on annual budgets from the Board every March.
- Any significant deviations, either in program plans or budgets, will need further approval from the Board.

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

**1. Amir Ullah Khan**  
Development Economist  
& Professor,  
NALSAR

**2. Amit Sawarkar**  
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**3. Anantvijay Singh**  
Manager, Rebuild India  
Dasra

**4. Anupama Shetty**  
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BIOCON Foundation

**5. Bhaskar Enaganti**  
Founder&CEO,  
SociallyGood

**6. Chetan Kapoor**  
CEO, Tech Mahindra  
Foundation

**7. Deepak Prabhu Matti**  
CEO, Cognizant  
Foundation

**8. Deval Sanghavi**  
Co-founder-Partner,  
Dasra

**9. Gayatri Nair Lobo**  
Independent Director,  
Amit Chandra  
Foundation

**10. Gururaj Potnis**  
Founder, Secretary-cum-  
Treasurer,  
1 NGO

**11. Hemanth  
Madegowda**  
(Former) Head CSR,  
BIAL

**12. Ingrid Srinath**  
Director, Centre for  
Social Impact &  
Philanthropy,  
Ashoka University

**13. Jahir Mansuri**  
Founder,  
KCJM

**14. Jayanthi**  
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Income Tax

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Natarajan**  
Co-Founder, Mindtree

**16. Linda Jacob**  
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Clearly Blue Digital

**17. Liril Gupta**  
Consultant and Ex CFO,  
Azim Premji Foundation

**18. Madhu Krishna  
Iyengar**  
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Sensei Technologies

**19. Meena Raghunathan**  
Independent CSR,  
Consultant

**20. Mohandas Pai**  
Chairman, Aarin Capital  
Former CFO & Board  
Member, Infosys

**21. Murugan Vasudevan**  
CEO, Veddix  
(ex-Cisco CSR (Head))

**22. Nandha Kumar**  
Founder,  
Purple Clip Films

**23. Narender Kande**  
Founder & Trustee,  
Pasidi Panta Foundation

**24. NE Sridhar**  
Chief Sustainability  
Officer,  
Titan Industries

**25. Rajkishore**  
State Head Odisha,  
Azim Premji Foundation

**26. Ravi Sreedharan**  
Founder&Director,  
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**27. Rishiksha Krishnan**  
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**28. Sakina Baker**  
Head-CSR,  
Bosch

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chapter, SVP

**31. Sneha Arora**  
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**32. Sourav Mukherjee**  
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IIMB

**33. Sriparna Ganguly  
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**34. Subir Hari Singh**  
Former Additional Chief  
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Govt. of Karnataka

**35. Subroto Bagchi**  
Entrepreneur, Author,  
Public Servant.  
Co-founder, Mindtree.

**36. Sudarshan Poondi**  
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Deloitte India

**37. Viswanaathan  
Radhakrishnan**  
CSR Head,  
Landmark

**38. Vivek Sharma**  
Founding Director,  
Gandhi Fellowship

**39. Yogesh Ranganath**  
(Former) Program Lead,  
Azim Premji Foundation

**320+ of our NGO  
Partners, DF Trustees &  
Advisors, All our DF  
Staff**

# Our journey so far . . .

## 2006-2016: Beginnings & Early Initiatives

- We started Dhvani Foundation (DF) in 2006 in Bangalore, with the intention and purpose of strengthening Grassroots NGOs – this was the essence of the seed idea around which Dhvani was formed.
- In the early years this meant grants to small NGOs and support for computerisation; and then an expansion of coverage of grants to more NGOs
- **Goonjan** was introduced - a cloud-based MIS platform designed and developed exclusively for the social sector
- Along the way, we widened our lens and broadened our sights and articulated our Vision: to create a '**Vibrant and Credible Social Sector**' - this would mean going beyond MIS Technology.
- We embarked on an extensive research project in 2017, surveying over 100 varied stakeholders in the social sector – NGOs, donors, government agencies, academics, think-tanks and beneficiaries & asked, '**What makes a credible NGO?**'
- 161 parameters across 8 Domains get crystallised

## 2017-2019: Proof of Concept 1st Batch, Stabilisation & New Initiatives

- Out of this, **Niranthara** was born, with a singular focus on capacity building for Grassroots NGOs. Launched in Karnataka with a 1st cohort of 23 NGOs
- **Udeshak**, a Governance Enhancement Program begins by bringing corporate professionals onto NGO boards.
- Titan CSR partnership begins
- The 8 Domains get put to test in the field and get cemented.

## 2019-2020: Covid initiatives added to core DF workstreams

- Graduation ceremony of 1st cohort of **Niranthara**
- Covid hits! NGOs and Grassroots need an entirely different kind of help.
- DF becomes state nodal partner for Karnataka Govt, lends support in running shelter homes; jointly with Govt of Karnataka publishes process manual to run quarantine centres and trains all Panchayat task forces in the State
- DF publishes its second strategic plan document 2019-2022
- **Niranthara** 2nd cohort in Karnataka, 3rd cohort in Tamil Nadu supporting 62 NGOs; APF partnership begins

## 2020-2021: Goonjan and Niranthara scale up; DrishtE launches; Fundraise familiarisation

- **DrishtE** eLearning platform for OCM launched in Kannada and English
- **Niranthara** 2 cohorts continues; **Sahayak** conceived as a Capacity Building program that leverages shared services; Fundraising managers concept introduced for Grassroots NGOs
- **Goonjan** grows to the next level with over 100 NGOs usage across 13 States with a cumulative beneficiary database of 3 lakhs; introduces Programme Management module
- Covid work continues with Govt of Karnataka and NGOs

## 2021-2022: DF workstreams expand with VOICE, Sahayak; Niranthara, Goonjan and Udeshak grow; Covid collaboration deepens

- To widen our reach in bringing about sectoral level change VOICE was launched, a new initiative to work with and enable NGO federations; work begins with 2 federations in Karnataka
- OCM Programs continue to grow –
  - 2 new initiatives pilot batches begin: **Niranthara Sahayak**, a shared service for NGOs was introduced in Karnataka; **Shikshak** program in Assam expands our geographical reach to Northeast through a train-a-trainer model in collaboration with RCRC to support 14 NGOs
  - **Niranthara, Udeshak** and **DrishtE** continue to evolve and drive our strengthening efforts to Grassroots NGOs; **Goonjan** introduces Volunteer Module
- Covid Wave 2 hits – DF actively works with Govt; jointly publishes process manual for 'vaccination drive' across state; joins state review committee; takes direct responsibility for vaccination drive in 5 districts
- DF publishes its second strategic plan document 2022-2025



### 2022-2023: Multiple and simultaneous initiatives across verticals and horizontals

- **Niranthara Sahayak** becomes a full-fledged program in Karnataka and Tamil Nadu
- First cohort impact study on Niranthara published by IIM, Bangalore
- **Niranthara** cohorts 2 & 3 graduated
- **DrishtE** eLearning materials published in Tamil
- DF partners with Dasra to support Rebuild India initiative
- **Sahayog** – a new initiative for staff revolving funds for grassroots employees begins in Tamil Nadu in partnership with Caring Friends
- **Goonjan Version 2.0** initiated with sophisticated capability and features
- **SAT**, a Self-Assessment tool in OCM, our 2nd MIS initiative, introduced and implemented; 45 NGOs used this tool

### 2023 - 2024: Institutional partnerships; NGO outreach expansion; New Geographies; Lateral collaborations

- APF second phase partnership begins
- Expansion of **Niranthara Classic** to Odisha in Aug 2023 and to Jharkhand in Feb 2024
- DF hosts National Conclave on the Status of NGO Federations in India; the VOICE program reshaped and launched in partnership with 6 federations in South India
- Remodelled **Niranthara Sahayak** expands to Andhra Pradesh
- **Grants+** - Donor Engagement initiative begins – ‘Webinar’ and ‘Round Table Discussions’ begins in collaboration with CSRs in Bengaluru
- **DrishtE** eLearning materials published in Hindi and Telugu
- **Niranthara Lite** introduced - a capacity building program for small emerging NGOs
- **Sahayog** program expands to partners in Karnataka
- Dasra Rebuild India program expands to DF partners
- Groundwork for expanding OCM to Northeast begins

### Dhwani Foundation's Programs and Initiatives - reaching 2800+ Grassroots NGOs and growing

Looking ahead, we at Dhwani Foundation firmly believe in the OCM approach to building resilient and sustainable Grassroots NGOs. We hope to continue to expand our reach and help build capacity of more NGOs in existing and newer territories.

We intend to get even busier in the near future and drive our mission of ‘Organisational Change Management (OCM), to build a **‘Vibrant and Credible Social Sector.’**

## IN THEIR WORDS

“Niranthara Classic program created a network between 32 like-minded organisations from the State. It has deepened the understanding on the importance of active involvement of Board Member, importance of Updeshak. It has focussed on the compliance and updation of Policy and Strategy paper of the organisation. Also, skill developed on donor research and appraise to donor. Strengthened the social media updation. More over it has impacted on the resource mobilisation.”

**ANANGA NEGI, LEADER, RESEARCH ACADEMY FOR RURAL ENRICHMENT (RARE). NIRANTHARA CLASSIC ODISHA**

“Governance at PCT has been at the backburner until Dhvani came into our life. Having no strategy is the worst strategy when it comes to any CSO. As a founder the best thing you can do to sustain your organisation and it's impact is to have a succession plan and not to possess it forever. Thank you Dhvani.”

**SURYA PRASAD, LEADER, PADALA CHARITABLE TRUST. NIRANTHARA SAHAYAK ANDHRA PRADESH**

“Despite facing the toughest times, Gram Sathi emerged stronger, proving its resilience & capabilities. We would not have progressed in this manner without the Dhvani Foundation's Niranthara interventions, which played a crucial role in our growth and transformation.”

**DEVANAND KUMAR, LEADER, GRAM SATHI. NIRANTHARA CLASSIC JHARKHAND**

“Goonjan has brought a huge change in the way we look at donor communication, & donors getting an altogether different experience. 40 years old NGO has now embraced digital performance, with less human intervention and bringing innovative methods to add, track, sustain donor communications. Its a big change management for staff, donors, auditors, accountants, service providers and many others!”

**PATANJALI KANCHEEPURAM, VICE PRESIDENT, NAVAJEEVAN BLIND RELIEF CENTER. GOONJAN MIS ANDHRA PRADESH**

“Initially, I didn't notice an immediate impact after completing the program. But within two years, I was truly amazed by the transformation in our organisation. Our improved documentation and ability to deliver programs systematically led to greater acceptance and trust from donors. We've evolved—and the change has been for the better. Thank you, Dhvani Foundation, for being a catalyst in this journey!”

**NAGARAJ DESAI, PRESIDENT, SIRDS. NIRANTHARA CLASSIC KARNATAKA**

Engaging with Dhvani Foundation has completely transformed on how we operate. Their support has not only boosted our leadership skills but also made project management smoother and more efficient. Thanks to them, we now approach our work with greater confidence—whether it's handling compliance, managing finances, or engaging with donors. Tools like Goonjan have been a game-changer for tracking projects, and their branding guidance has taken our visibility to the next level. Most importantly, our team feels more empowered and motivated than ever. A huge thank you to the Dhvani Foundation - our voices are being heard.

**RACHEAL RAYKUMARI, LEADER, WORD. NIRANTHARA CLASSIC ODISHA**

I am a special educator at Shanthi Nilayam for 25 years. My son was born with a congenital hearing problem and depends on a hearing aid for daily life. As he grew, doctors recommended an upgrade to help him learn better and develop vital social skills. The thought of not being able to afford it kept me awake at night. Through Sahayog, I received an interest-free loan of ₹30,000 and was finally able to get the upgraded device. Today, my son is more confident, and I see noticeable progress in his studies. This support has made a world of difference to our lives.

**SAHAYA MARY, SANTHI NILAYAM. BENEFITS FROM SAHAYOG-NIRANTHARA CLASSIC TAMIL NADU**

Small organisations like us often struggle with institutional management & sustainability. Through Niranthara Classic, we have gained the knowledge and confidence to scale our efforts, enhanced our organisational systems & processes and creating lasting change in the communities we serve.

**SHAFIN ALI, LEADER, KARRA SOCIETY FOR RURAL ACTION. NIRANTHARA CLASSIC JHARKHAND**

Capacity building with Dhvani has been a tremendous advantage for our organisation. It has helped us gain the trust of donors by strengthening the way we present ourselves and our work. With improved systems and processes taught by the Dhvani team, we are now better positioned to engage with donors and represent our mission effectively across platforms.

**DAVID KUMAR A , DIRECTOR, VIBHINNA INDIA FOUNDATION. NIRANTHARA LITE KARNATAKA**

After the Dhvani classes we have improved in Accounts, Compliance, Finance, Leadership, MIS and Program frame works..We create quarterly report and quarter financial report....Before we know about the 3 years plan but not in the written format. Now we have a clear written and a proposal format for 3 years strategy planning.

**K. VENKATARAMANAN, PRINCIPAL, RITHAM SPECIAL SCHOOL. NIRANTHARA SAHAYAK TAMIL NADU**



04/2025

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