



Annual Report

2025-26





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FROM THE FOUNDER

We have been running our community sport programme in Raigarh for the past four and a half years. It was only last year that we rented a space in the community to set up our office. We also hired five new team members. Some came and went, while others decided to stay and become part of the journey.

For the first time, the programme started to feel like an organisation.

We also decided to change our name from Monkey Sports to KhelMel, a name that feels more relevant to our work and more connected to the communities we work with.

We are seeing increasing acceptance of our work within the community. **This year, the community itself contributed close to ₹7,000 from over 80-100 families to support the sport programme.** For us, this is more than a financial contribution; it is a sign of ownership and belief in what we are trying to build together.

But we also failed. A lot.

Living and working closely within a community has taught us that many issues are difficult to foresee from the outside. Last year, for example, we discovered that teachers at the school attended by children in our programme were making them wash dishes used by teachers. It was a straightforward issue of dignity, but it also pointed towards deeper caste hierarchies and discrimination.

We tried to address it. We submitted formal complaints and reached out to the Labour Department, the Women and Child Development Office, the Child Protection Office, and the Collector's Office. We also confronted the school teachers directly. Despite all these efforts, we could not make the change we had hoped for.

There are many such stories of things we tried, things that worked, and things that didn't.

But considering our collective attention span these days, an Annual Report can only share the highlights and a few numbers. If you are genuinely interested in learning about the things that did not work, please reach out. I would be happy to share with you the many ways in which we failed last year, and what those failures taught us.

I know you probably won't. But if you have made it this far, thank you for reading.



**Kushal Agarwal, Founder
KhelMel**

ABOUT KHEL MEL

KhelMel (previously Monkey Sports) is a rural-based social impact organisation working with children aged 6 to 17 years from marginalised communities. The name KhelMel combines two Hindi words: Khel, meaning play or sport, and Mel, meaning social connectedness.

We use sport not just as physical activity or competition, but as a safe and nurturing space where children experience a sense of belonging, build strong relationships, and develop ownership in their community.

MISSION

Empowering children through sport.

VISION

Children empowered to pursue their aspirations with the confidence, opportunities, and support to thrive in life.

Khel
खेल

“Khel”, meaning play or sports

“Mel”, meaning social connectedness

Mel
मेल



THE BARRIERS & OUR RESPONSE

Children in many rural communities face barriers that limit their participation in sport, and these barriers compound each other over a child's growing years. KhelMel addresses these barriers through a holistic Sport for Development approach, built around five pillars that run through every community we work in.

Challenges	Our Response
Limited Sports Infrastructure Few communities have safe play spaces, equipment, or organised coaching.	Investing in Infrastructure Developing and levelling grounds; marking playing areas for kho-kho and other sports.
Gender Norms & Discrimination Social restrictions limit girls' access to sports, leadership, and public spaces.	Hiring & Training Local Youth Training local women as coaches and role models to boost girls' participation.
Limited Awareness Parents and communities underestimate sport's physical, emotional, and social benefits.	Raising Awareness Reducing screen time; building confidence, focus, and discipline; promoting activity around menstrual health.
Bullying & Teasing Discourages children, especially girls, from participating.	Safe Spaces Setting behaviour agreements with children; integrating SEL during play to address bullying.
Lack of Regular Opportunities Children rarely access structured sporting pathways.	Creating Pathways Exposure to high-performance training and opportunities at state/national tournaments.



THE YEAR IN PERSPECTIVE

This year, KhelMel's core community-based sports program continued to grow, reaching children across three communities in Raigarh, Chhattisgarh.



155

Children reached



208

Sessions conducted



3

Communities



84%

Session completion rate

Beyond our own communities, KhelMel also works through NGO partnerships in **Bihar and Assam**, where our role is to train and mentor local facilitators rather than run sessions directly. This year, that partnership work meant training **75+ facilitators**, who in turn carried safe, sport-based learning to close to **5,000 children** across the two states.



75+

Facilitators trained
(Bihar + Assam)



75

Villages/communities
(Bihar + Assam)



4,651

Children reached by
trained facilitators

PROGRAM SNAPSHOTS

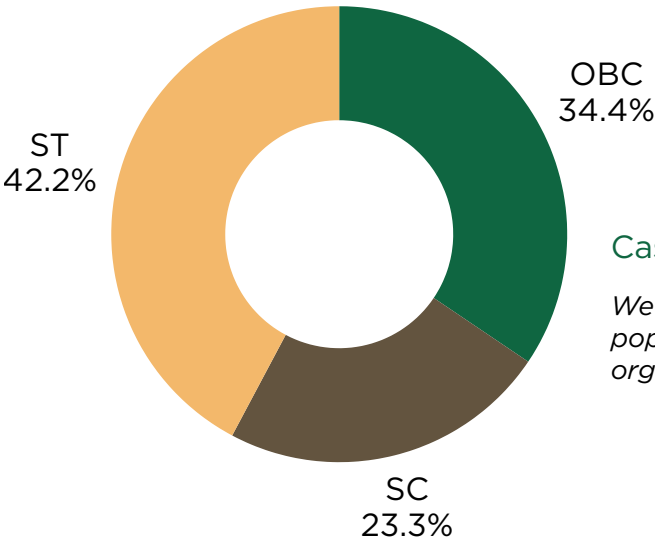
Over the past 4.5 years, KhelMel’s community-based sports program in Raigarh, Chhattisgarh has grown from 95 children in FY 2024-25 to 155 children this year.



155 children reached — 84 girls (54%)
and 71 boys (46%)



OBC SC ST



Caste breakdown of children in our program

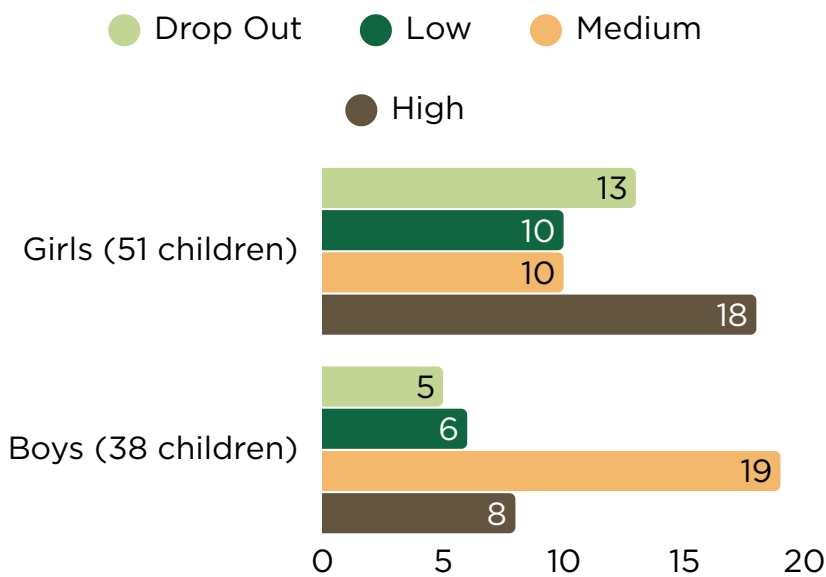
We work in rural communities with predominantly tribal populations, where children often have limited access to organised sports.

Dimension	FY 2025-26 (approx.)
Planned vs Actual sessions	204 of 248 (84%)
Total visits (home + community)	154
Parents / guardians engaged	80+
Gender-focused visits (participation, safety, dropout)	25+
Tournament & participation mobilisation visits	10+
New community collaborations (Anganwadi, SHG, PHC)	3

OUTCOMES: TRENDS & LEARNINGS

PARTICIPATION & ENGAGEMENT LEVELS

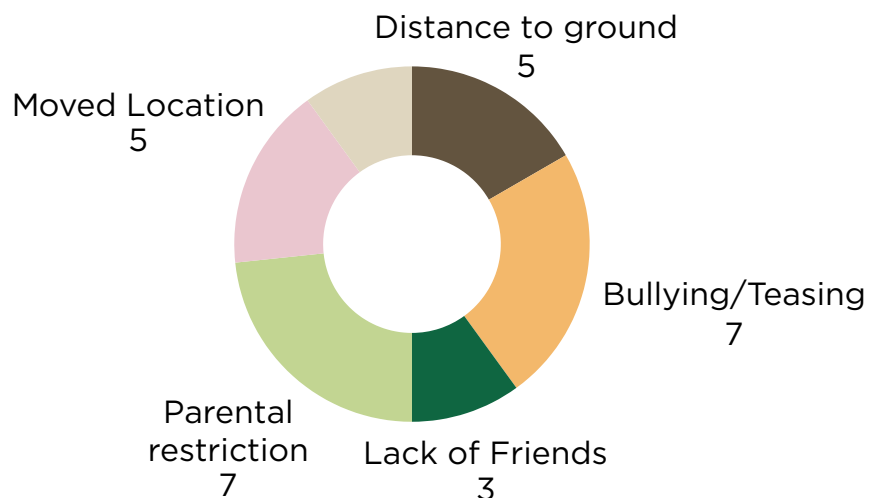
KhelMel grouped attendance into four bands: Drop Out (under 25% attendance), Low (25–50%), Medium (50–75%), and High (75–100%).



Older children and girls drop out more than younger children and boys. But the pattern is more layered than it first appears: girls also show the highest rate of High engagement (35%, against 21% for boys). Together, this suggests girls' participation is more polarised: the girls who stay tend to be highly regular, while getting girls to stay in the first place remains the harder problem. It is largely the same core group of girls returning session after session consistently.

The primary reasons for children dropping out of the programme are parental restrictions and bullying or teasing by peers.

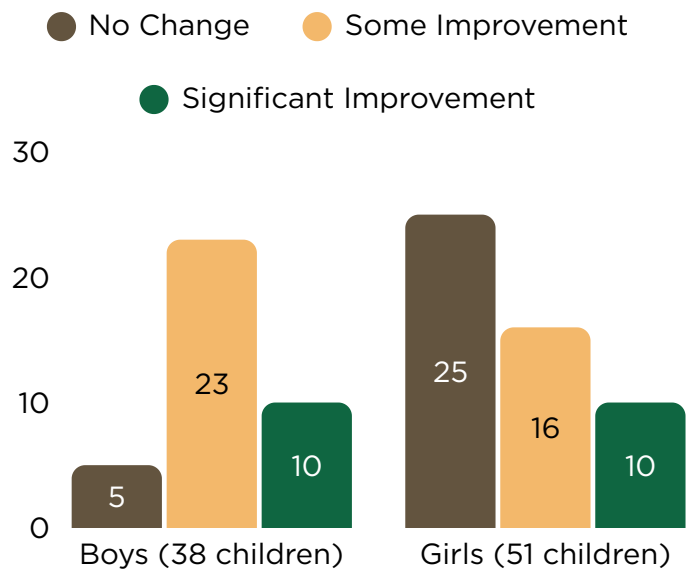
In addition, distance from the playing ground is a major barrier to regular participation, particularly for children who must travel farther to attend sessions.



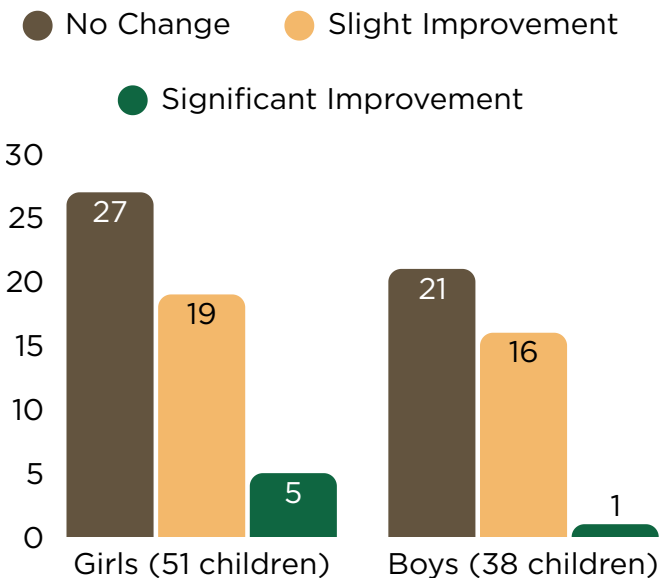
Reasons for Dropout

SPORTING SKILLS

Nearly half of girls showed no measurable improvement in sports skills, compared to 13% of boys. Part of this gap reflects a deliberate design choice this year: our girls-only sessions were built around getting girls to come, feel safe, and enjoy play, not around sporting-skill development. That goal was met, but it means skill-building for girls was not the primary focus it was for boys' sessions. Going forward, this tells us where to invest: bringing the same intentional skill-coaching we give boys into girls-only spaces, once participation itself feels secure.



MEL (SOCIAL & EMOTIONAL SKILLS)



We assess MEL through three lenses: whether a child shares their emotions openly in group discussion, whether they are making new friends, and the strength of their relationship with their coach. Because our core program has been running in these communities for several years, two of these three are already strong: most children have built real friendships through KhelMel, and trust with coaches runs deep. The persistent, ongoing gap is the first one. Getting children, especially older children, to actually say how they feel in front of the group remains hard, and it is where most of this year's MEL score sits.

MEL sessions, anchored by tools like the Mood Meter Game, gave children a structured space to talk, listen, and reflect. Facilitators observed that junior children of both genders spoke comfortably regardless of attendance; senior girls were more vocal in girls-only groups; and senior boys were consistently the least vocal participants across formats, a pattern that will directly shape our gender-session design going forward.

STORIES OF CHANGE

Alongside the quantitative data on sports skills, competencies, and engagement levels, KhelMel also collects qualitative data through home visits, facilitator observations, and conversations with children and their families.

These accounts are drawn directly from that process. They capture the texture of change that a score or percentage cannot: what shifts in a child's confidence, voice, and relationships actually look like, session by session, at the individual level.

FINDING CONFIDENCE THROUGH SPORT

Gajanand, 14, has been coming to KhelMel since Class 5, despite his parents' early reluctance. Once a boy who rarely spoke to girls and kept his thoughts to himself, he now shares his ideas confidently with everyone around him. He has learned to process a loss, discussing what went wrong with his teammates instead of simply moving on. As team captain, he coaches younger players through their mistakes rather than criticising them.

Gajanand's dream has shifted too, from becoming a police officer to becoming a Kho-Kho player. He is clear that KhelMel did not change his dream so much as give him a path to pursue it with confidence.

[Read full case study here](#)



GAJANAND MEHER

FROM SELF-DOUBT TO SELF-BELIEF

Dharna used to be teased for her play and blamed herself whenever her team lost, attending sessions only once or twice a month as a result. Regular practice and consistent support from coaches slowly rebuilt her confidence. The same children who once teased her now tell her she has become one of the strongest players in the group.

“When I got Arun Bhaiya out, I felt very happy because most children could not do it.”
— Dharna

[Read full case study here](#)



FINDING HER VOICE THROUGH PLAY

Sujata used to watch other children play from the edge of the field, too afraid to join in. She has since made close friends through KhelMel and learned to speak openly, including telling her mother the truth after accidentally tearing another child's clothes during a game, rather than hiding it.

“When Sujata received the 'Sugghar Laika Award', I felt very proud. Seeing my daughter receive an award in front of so many people was one of the happiest moments for me.”

— Sujata's mother

[Read full case study here](#)

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN A CHILD IS GIVEN A CHANCE

Mayank's parents initially discouraged him from attending sessions, worried about his studies and safety on an uneven playground. He kept coming anyway, watching and learning from his teammates until his confidence grew. Today he shares his thoughts openly with coaches, friends, and family, and is learning to process disappointment in healthier ways. His dream is to join the Indian Army.

Mayank's story is a reminder of what this programme is really for: sometimes all a child needs is someone who believes in them before they learn to believe in themselves.

[Read full case study here](#)



FINDING HER VOICE THROUGH PLAY

Durga's family was not won over immediately. Her uncle and grandfather initially discouraged her from going to play, worried it would pull her away from her responsibilities at home. It was her aunt who spoke to the rest of the family, pointing to the visible, positive changes in Durga as proof that this was worth supporting. Once they saw it too, the family gave her their full permission.

“Earlier, Durga could not share her feelings or thoughts at home. Now she openly shares everything with us. When she received the ‘Sugghar Laika’ award, I felt very proud, and watching her play in the tournament was one of the happiest moments for our family. I never stop her from going to play now. I only support her, because I love the changes I have seen in her.”

— Pooja Yadav, Durga's aunt

[Read full case study here](#)

ANNUAL EVENT 2025

I feel very happy that the children I have taught are playing in the Kho-Kho team. I can't believe they play so well. I believe they can play at the national level, and I give them my blessings that they play for India and win the Gold Medal.

-Shiv Kumari Madam, Teacher



On December 28, 2025, KhelMel's annual sports event brought together more than 120 children for a day of competition, celebration, and community. The centrepiece was a Kho-Kho tournament with 10 teams (4 junior, 6 senior), including 2-3 visiting teams from the neighbouring village of Pussor, fostering healthy inter-village sportsmanship.

An estimated 100-150 community members attended, many contributing funds and logistical support for tents and arrangements. The event was honoured by the presence of the local Councillor (Parshad) as Chief Guest, alongside other distinguished guests, and organised by a dedicated team of 10-11 volunteers who ensured every child was fed, safe, and celebrated.

NGO PARTNERSHIP PROGRAMME

Through our experience of implementing Sport for Development programs, we have developed key processes and tools that strengthen our approach and enable effective partnerships with other NGOs.



No. of organisations worked with : **3**



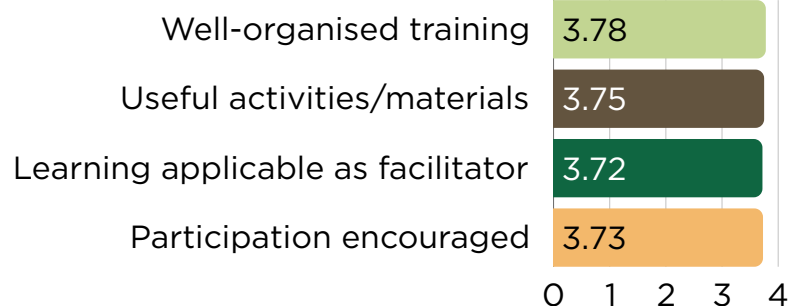
Total No. of Training Days: **14 days**



Total number of facilitators : **25(bihar) + 50 (Assam)**

Total Children Impacted: **4500+**

Training feedback responses (189 participants) for over 6 trainings.



I have been associated with the BDSSS organisation for the last eight months. I work as a Khelo Facilitator.

Earlier, I used to struggle to share my views in front of others, and I felt very scared to talk to people. The trainers from the KhelMel team supported me. When I started working in the community with children, I realised that if I am not able to speak, how will the children learn to share their views? Understanding this about myself, I started speaking up more and working on improving myself.

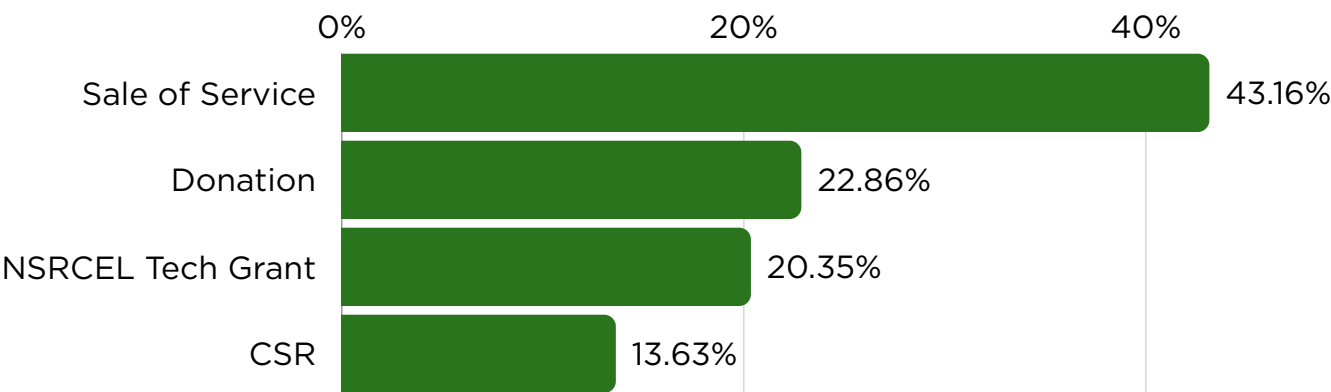
Vikash Kumar, Facilitator, BDSSS

FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS (UNAUDITED)

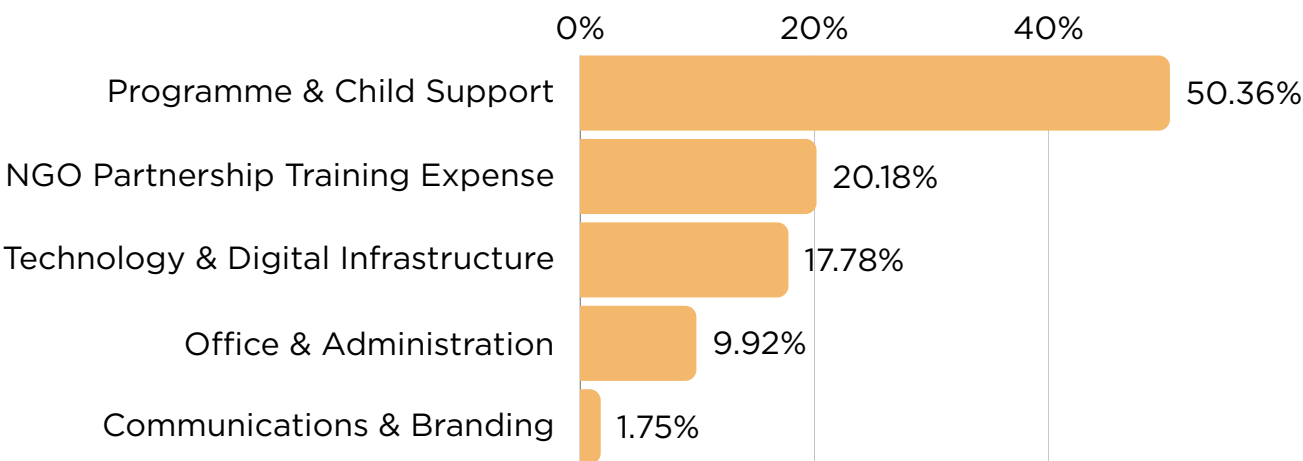
Note: This section presents a combined summary of financial activity across Monkey Sports and KhelMel Sport Development(OPC)Pvt Ltd. for FY 2025-26, for the purpose of illustrating overall scale and impact. Each entity's audited financial statements are prepared, audited, and filed independently in accordance with applicable statutory requirements. This summary is not a substitute for those audited statements, which are available separately on request.

	Monkey Sport Trust	KhelMel Sport Development(OPC) Pvt Ltd	Total
Total Revenue	1858094	346,603	2,204,697
Total Expenses	1907195	364181	2,271,376

Income breakdown by Source



Expenditure breakdown by Category



TEAM STRUCTURE

Our work is supported by a dedicated team of 5 full-time members, 2 part-time facilitators, 1 part-time finance lead, and 7 volunteers who contribute to programme delivery, operations, finance, and community engagement.

The organisation is further supported by 5 Advisory Board members, who provide strategic guidance, expertise, and mentorship to strengthen our programmes and organisational development.



Asan Lakra
Facilitator



Gauri Yadav
Facilitator



Himanshu Sinha
Program Associate



Kushal Agarwal
Founder & Director



Ripu Rabha
Project Co-ordinator



Suman Tandan
Facilitator



Tripti Yadav
Training & Monitoring Officer

LOOKING AHEAD

1

Expand outreach from 155 to nearly 250 children, reaching more children and communities through our programmes.

2

Begin work in a new village in Raigarh, Chhattisgarh, expanding our community-based programme to a new geography.

3

Strengthen the team by adding a new team member with relevant experience in Sport for Development.

4

Build long-term partnerships with organisations and institutions that can help sustain and strengthen our programmes.

5

Expand the school programme, with a stronger focus on engaging and involving teachers in the process.

6

Improve sports infrastructure in the new communities and schools where we have recently started working.

7

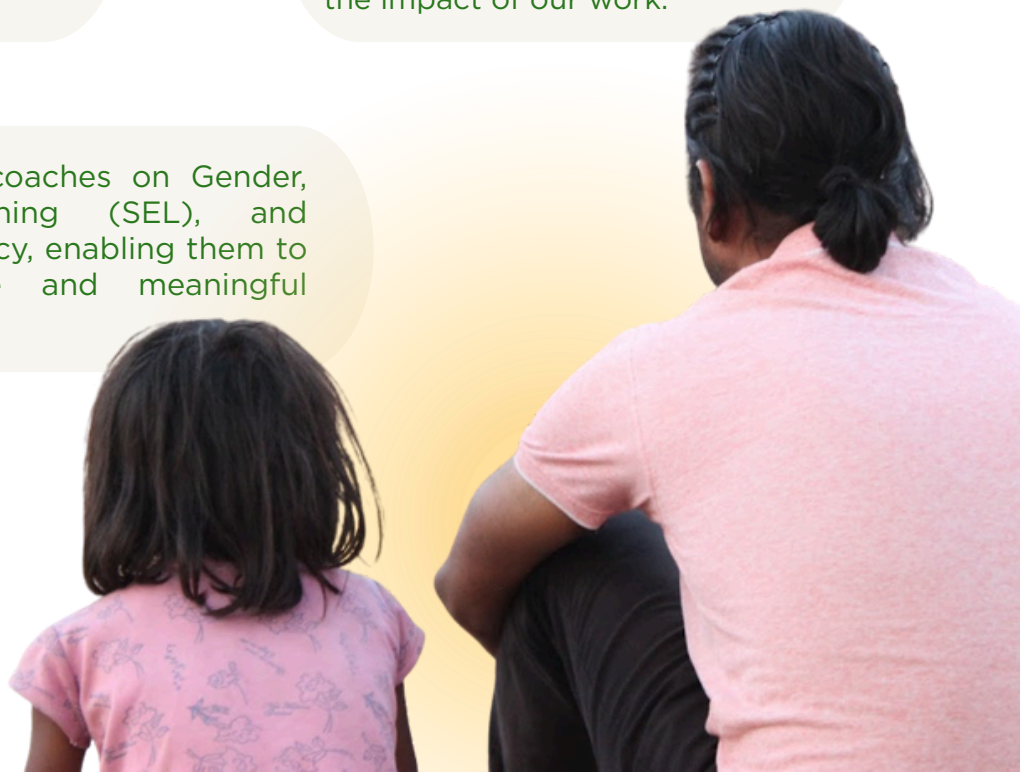
Deepen the integration of Gender and SEL in sport, making these approaches a stronger part of our regular programme delivery.

8

Strengthen monitoring, learning and programme quality to continuously improve our approach and better understand the impact of our work.

9

Build the capacity of coaches on Gender, Social-Emotional Learning (SEL), and Physical Education literacy, enabling them to create more inclusive and meaningful sporting environments.



FROM THE ARCHIVES



★ Two coaches attended a five-day training in New Delhi with Coaches Across Continent.



★ Celebrating 7 years of the Organisation with the team



★ Raising funds from the community for the event.



★ Two coaches attended a 5 day training on Gender in Classroom by Eklavya Foundation

FROM THE ARCHIVES



★ Coaches attended a 10-day High-Performance Kho-Kho training in Odisha.



★ KhelMel's girls' Kho-Kho team finished as runners-up at the district-level tournament



★ Orientation Session of the Pilot School Program



★ WIPRO Fellow Meet

FROM THE ARCHIVES



★ Helping a child getting admitted to a Hostel



★ Raised a complaint regarding government school teachers asking children to wash utensils used by teachers.



★ KhelMel Incubated at NSRCEL, IIM Bangalore



★ Facilitated a Kho-Kho Session at the Manotsava Mental Health Festival.

PARTNERS



WITH GRATITUDE TO OUR DONORS

We are deeply grateful to everyone who has supported KhelMel and helped us make sport more accessible to children in the community.

Our Donors

To all our donors who have supported the programme and believed in our work.

Krishnapur School

For allowing us to use the school ground and toilets for the past four years, providing us with a space to run our activities.

Sambalpuri School

For giving us permission to pilot our school-based sports programme.

Parshad/ Sarpanch

For supporting us with tents and local transportation, enabling children to participate in events and tournaments.

Local Businesses

Businesses such as Nirmaan TMT and Mittal Tyres for sponsoring our events.
Community Members: For their generous donations, encouragement, and continued support throughout the year.

Our Team

To every team member who continues to work passionately towards the vision of the organisation and puts in the effort every day to make sport accessible and meaningful for children.

Our Advisors

We would also like to thank our Advisory Board members: Ritesh Baid, Ankit Sultania, Nishikant Sharma, Kavya Rao, and Gayatri Kotbagi.



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Keep supporting our work.



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in KhelMel (Monkey Sports)

📺 KhelMel

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हर बच्चे के लिए।

