

ANNUAL REPORT

FY 2022-23



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Note from the CEO

Dear Friends of Madhi,

It is with great pleasure and deep gratitude that I present to you our annual report for 2022-23. I am incredibly humbled by the unwavering support and dedication you have shown towards our mission over the years of putting foundational learning first so every child can thrive.

Over the past year, we have witnessed the transformative power of our collective efforts. We have grown from a team of 5 in 2016 to nearly a team of 245 today. Each one of our team members brings the same level of passion and dedication you have come to associate with Madhi. Thanks to your kindness and commitment, we have been able to make significant strides in our work with the Tamilnadu government and Department of School Education. Through our programs and initiatives (Ennum Ezhuthum Mission, Communities Enabling Foundational Learning, Enjoy English) we have stayed true to our vision and persisted in the face of significant challenges and daunting setbacks.

One of the highlights of the year was the successful launch of Ennum Ezhuthum by the Hon'ble Chief Minister of Tamilnadu, Thiru. M.K. Stalin. This was many years in the making and culminated in a meaningful launch and state-wide rollout of the programme. This accomplishment would not have been possible without your belief in our cause and your willingness to stand by us every step of the way over the past 6 years of Madhi's existence.

"

We hope you will continue to support us and also hold us accountable to the highest standards of integrity and intent for years to come. However, we recognise that our work is far from over. The challenges we face are complex and require ongoing dedication and collaboration. We understand the importance of adapting and evolving to meet the changing needs of the systems and communities we serve and hope to impact for the better. As we move forward, we will continue to listen, learn, and innovate to maximise our impact and ensure that our efforts are sustainable and effective.

None of this would be possible without the incredible support of our donors, team, and partners. Your belief in our mission and your tireless efforts have been the driving force behind our success. It is because of your compassion and commitment that we have been able to make a meaningful difference in the lives of those who need it the most.

As we look to the future, we remain steadfast in our dedication to our mission. Together, let us continue to build a more compassionate, just, and equitable world where no child gets left behind because of a weak educational foundation. Your continued support will enable us to expand our reach, amplify our impact, and bring about lasting change in the lives of those we have committed to work for, and work with.

We hope you will continue to support us and also hold us accountable to the highest standards of integrity and intent for years to come.

With profound appreciation, **Merlia Shaukath**



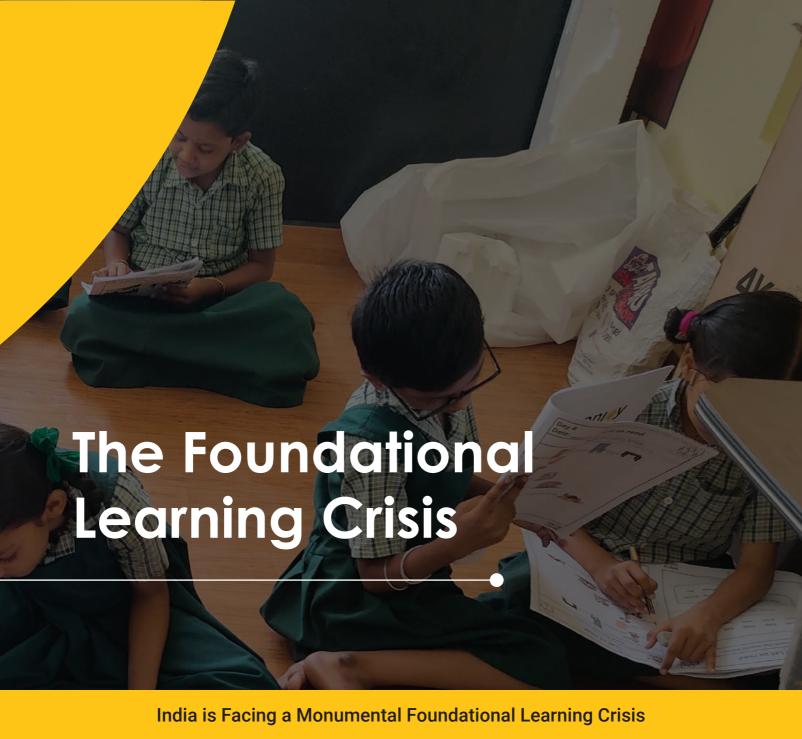


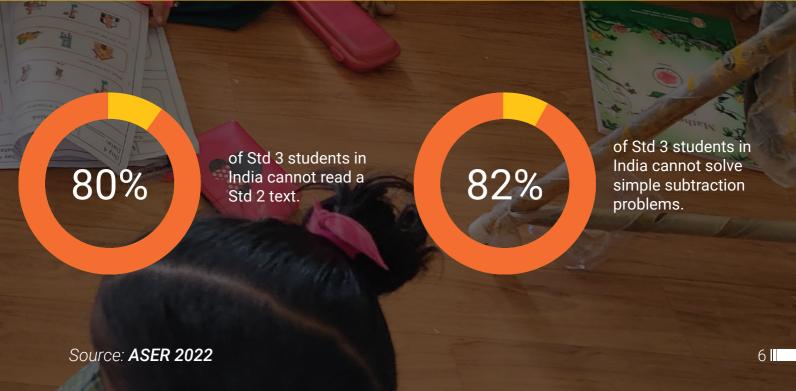


Whom do we Impact?



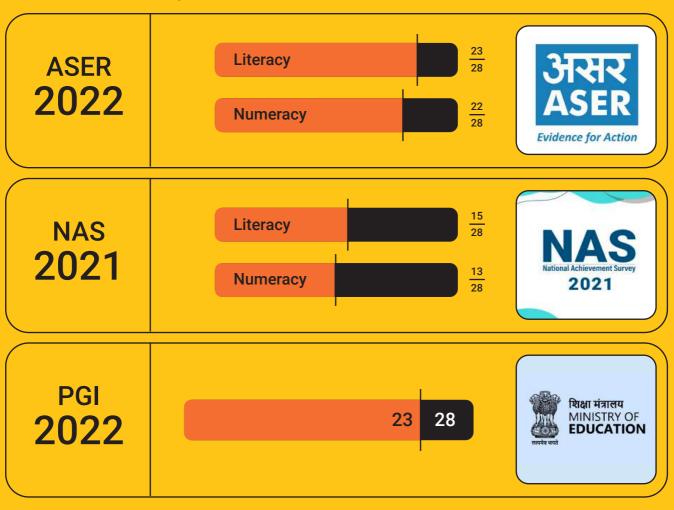






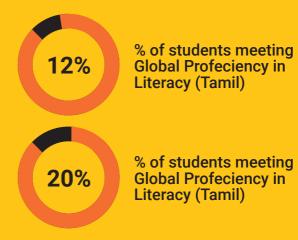
Shockingly, Tamil Nadu has fallen to the bottom of the state rankings

In Foundational Learning Outcomes, Tamil Nadu ranks:





FLS
2022
STD 3: Learning levels:







'Foundational Learning is about hope. Hope for a better start in schooling & life.'

"

We often joke within the team that we were working on Foundational Learning before it was called Foundational Learning! So, when I think about writing about the mission of our organisation, I am filled with pride in how far we've come, wonder- about all that lies ahead, and curiosity- about what we have yet to explore.

Foundational Learning is about hope. Hope for a better start in schooling & life. A memory close to my heart is about a boy I taught in a government school in my very first year as a teacher. Rony* was transferred from a Tamil medium to an English medium classroom and quickly lost interest in classroom learning. Who wouldn't?

But over time, what was more worrying for me was that he had lost interest in himself. He started believing that he was "good for nothing", "rabble-rouser", and above all, "a bad boy" - things that he heard most about himself. One day, I was spending time with the kids after school, and that's when I learned that Rony was struggling with the basics of language and comprehension. Rony, his friends, my colleagues and I quickly started working together. The plan was to help Rony learn all he should have learned over three years in 6-9 months. And we did just that! Rony not only improved his command of language and comprehension but also became the school prefect. For Rony, Foundational Learning meant more than academics; it meant hope – hope that he could become all he wanted to be. Since then, I've never looked back, and it's been an exhilarating journey over the last five years.

Tamil Nadu has the privilege of being a non-BIMARU (Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh) state. In most popular narratives, Tamil Nadu has always been the front-runner and a model for education quality and has a reputation for implementing bold quality reforms for the benefit of children. However, the recent Foundational Learning Study conducted by the National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) in 2022 reveals that only 12% of children in Tamil Nadu meet the minimum proficiency in Tamil. Moreover, as per National Achievement Survey (NAS) 2021, Tamil Nadu ranks 15th in literacy and 13th in Mathematics, which is in stark contrast to the rank (top 5) it enjoyed back in NAS 2014. Tamil Nadu has an excellent public service delivery system that guarantees basic necessities like textbooks, school bags, uniforms, and more. However, foundational learning is not about access; it's about quality and by all local and global benchmarks, Tamil Nadu is struggling.

Solving a complex problem is no different from peeling the many layers of an onion. Many factors contribute to the deplorable state of foundational learning outcomes in the region. Firstly, 92% of teachers in Tamil Nadu have to simultaneously teach Grades 1, 2, and 3 using three different textbooks. Among them, 28% have to teach both Tamil and English mediums in the same classroom, which amounts to six textbooks per subject. Secondly, all teachers receive training based on project-based funding allocations rather than their specific needs. For example, many teachers express that they don't see the purpose of training sessions as they can't implement the recommendations, which don't align with their classroom priorities. Lastly, all policies on paper may seem like excellent interventions, but the real test lies in the quality of implementation. It is essential to establish sustainable systems and processes to help the system improve incrementally and provide high-quality education at scale.

Through consistent advocacy & implementation over the last five years, we have built our understanding of what it takes to solve the problem. Our aim is to improve the design and delivery of quality education and ensure that our curriculum is contextual, training is relevant, and governance is periodic and habitual.

As we look ahead, we commit to improving the quality of teaching and learning for all teachers and students we work with to help us inch closer to achieving our mission. Today, we have an excellent platform to showcase our work to the country and the world, demonstrating how large-scale system reform projects can drive positive outcomes. We hope to serve as a beacon of hope to all our partners working in different states and countries, with the shared goal of ensuring that all children master Foundational Literacy and Numeracy skills by age 8.



Srivathsan Ramaswamy

Co-founder and Chief Programme Officer





For learning outcomes to improve there needs to be supply of quality education, and awareness of how to demand for it when lacking







High quality supply of foundational education

Strengthened demand for good foundational education

Strong foundational learning outcomes

Madhi' programmes in TN





Systemic transformation of Tamil Nadu's primary education system through partnership with the State



Communities Enabling Foundational Learning (CEFL):

Community reform to set up parents as enablers of foundational learning

Supply Side Intervention

Demand Side Intervention

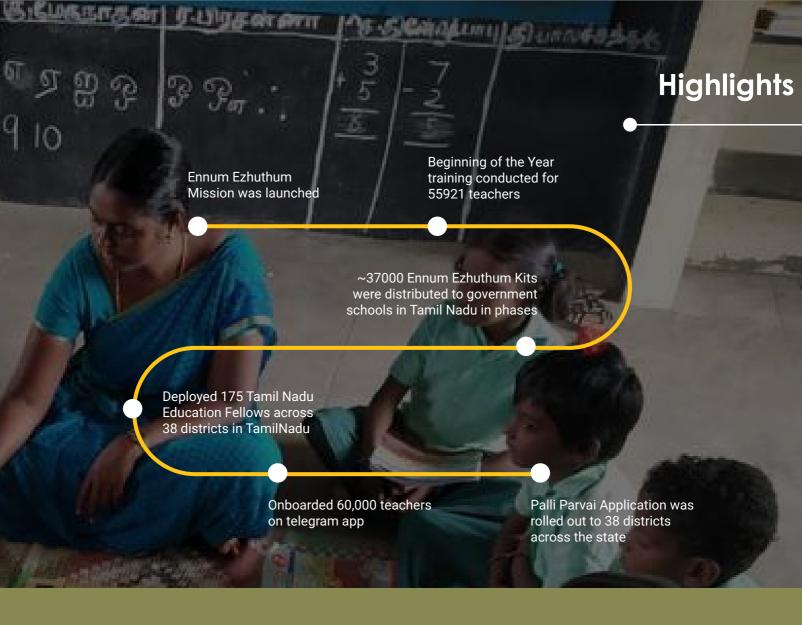
Ennum Ezhuthum Mission



Overview

Mission Ennum Ezhuthum is a path breaking initiative by the Tamil Nadu government that advocates for a radically different approach to teaching and learning. Moving away from the traditional grade and textbook-based approach, Ennum Ezhuthum will train teachers to assess a child for their learning levels in language and mathematics and deliver instruction and lessons based on the child's baseline learning levels. It does not assume a one-size -fits- all approach and leverages learnings from national and international research that provides robust evidence in support of such an approach.

Ennum Ezhuthum adopts a multi-stakeholder approach, recognising the importance of administrators, teachers, parents, and the entire ecosystem surrounding the child in the Mission's success.



(%)

Students: 27,00,000

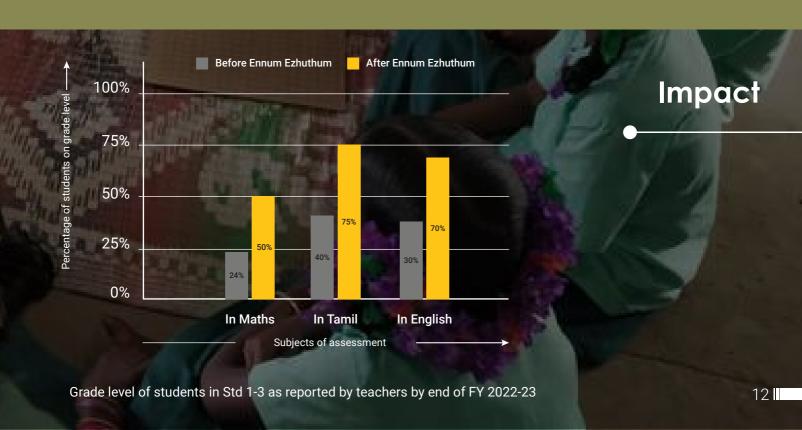


Teachers: 1,00,000



Administrators: 45,000

Reach



Way Forward

- Madhi will support the state to continue to improve the quality of level based teaching learning for classes 1,2 and 3 through collaboratively working with the state on content creation and review, design termwise quality questions for summative and formative assessments, and conduct term wise cascade training while ensuring quality in monthly cluster training across all 38 districts.
- Madhi is also committed to improving governance and data integrity by developing the Ennum Ezhuthum Dashboard. This dashboard will provide real-time data to support state leadership in making informed decisions.
- In collaboration with the state, Madhi will implement communication campaigns and community mobilisation programs to raise awareness about the importance of foundational literacy and numeracy and to increase parental investment.



Sandbox Schools

Project "Sandbox" aims to create exemplary Ennum Ezhuthum classrooms and role model an educational ecosystem that accelerates Ennum Ezhuthum teacher and student outcomes. Through "Sandbox" classrooms and schools, we aim to incubate ideas towards improving student and teacher outcomes that can be tested and validated in a controlled sandbox environment before recommending for scaled delivery. The project will also offer a unique research platform to understand the levers that drive teacher motivation, teacher beliefs and practices, school leader administrative support and other aspects of educational policy interventions. Furthermore, these research outputs will also drive policy reforms through the Ennum Ezhuthum Mission.



Communities Enabling Foundational Learning

Overview

Communities Enabling Foundational Learning has been conceived to unite a community of parents and caregivers in Tamil Nadu with the goal of raising awareness about the importance of Foundational Learning. It aims to strengthen their agency by providing them with knowledge, skills, and mindsets to advocate for their children's right to equitable quality foundational education.

Madhi will offer curated, context-specific tools that parents can use to support their children at home. Furthermore, Madhi will equip parents with the knowledge, skills, and tools necessary to understand the quality of foundational education their children should receive. This, in turn, empowers them to advocate for improved education quality. Madhi will also assist parents in forming peer groups and networks to support each other in educating their children and collectively advocating for better education.

Highlights



Communities Enabling Foundational Learning has been implemented in 2 districts



243 parents have been engaged through vizhas and parent workshops



6 Community Education Workers have been onboarded from the community



20 parent workshops and 3 vizhas (melas) have been conducted

Reach



Parents - 243



Districts - 02

Output



43% more parents in the treatment group reported increase in FLN awareness in 6 month pilot period



10% more parents in the treatment group could list grade-level outcomes in 6 months during the pilot.



27% more parents from baseline to endline reported feeling more confident to engage in their child's learning in 6 months during the pilot

Way Forward

In FY 2023-24, phase 2 of the pilot will be introduced, expanding the project's scope to encompass an entire Block in Tiruvallur (rural) and an entire Zone in Chennai (urban). As we scale, our strategic priorities will include conducting community canvassing to ensure a comprehensive understanding of community dynamics before implementation. We will also focus on redesigning content, training, and parent learning frameworks. Additionally, we will establish a tech platform that will serve as a tool for member management, communication, surveys, and regular data collection. This platform will have the capability to tailor communications based on the collected data.

Enjoy English



Overview

Project 'Enjoy English' is a scalable digital classroom solution for language learning. It is an eminently replicable teaching and learning model and a product-service offering designed to address the issue of poor English literacy proficiency among early learners from low-income households, with a strong focus on oracy (speaking skills). Project 'Enjoy English' aims to bring about a radical transformation in the ecosystem of English language learning, not only in India but also beyond.

This pilot learning intervention is strategically designed to achieve the following objectives:

- Helping children overcome psychological barriers such as fear and anxiety when learning or communicating in English.
- Assisting children in mastering English literacy skills through the natural language acquisition process, which is grounded in contextual oral language development.
- Empowering educators to use technology for their own learning and teaching of English simultaneously.
- Enabling educators to implement strategies that encourage student participation, engagement, and practice within a non-threatening and safe learning environment.

Hence, we adopt a blended approach, with both tech and non-tech programmatic components, for the intervention to achieve the overarching student vision and outcome:

Students gain the confidence to converse comfortably with their peers and teachers in English. They become articulate speakers, proficient in using grade-appropriate vocabulary and sentence structures. They develop the ability to read and comprehend the language independently, utilizing oracy and reading as tools for learning other subjects. Students learn to think critically and express themselves effectively, enabling them to excel in academic and social settings.



Highlights



The Enjoy English project has simplified the use of technology for students. They were introduced to technology that was previously inaccessible to them, including smart TVs and tablets. The use of QR codes for logging in, participation in quizzes and games, and taking assessments has facilitated their adaptation to technology. This has resulted in increased confidence and proficiency in using technology, which is a valuable skill in today's digital age.



The Enjoy English project has exposed students to bilingual content through videos that incorporate both English and their native language. This approach has helped lower the affective barrier for students, leading to increased familiarity with the English language which is generally feared.



The audio-visual aids such as videos, images, and interactive games have increased students' engagement and comprehension resulting in better language acquisition and increased motivation among students making the learning process more interactive and engaging.



The Enjoy English project has also brought about dynamic changes in the learning environment. Technology and interactive activities have made the learning environment more engaging and exciting, resulting in increased student motivation and participation to learn English. This has led to a shift in students' attitudes towards learning, where they are more open to trying new things and taking risks to improve their language skills.

Reach

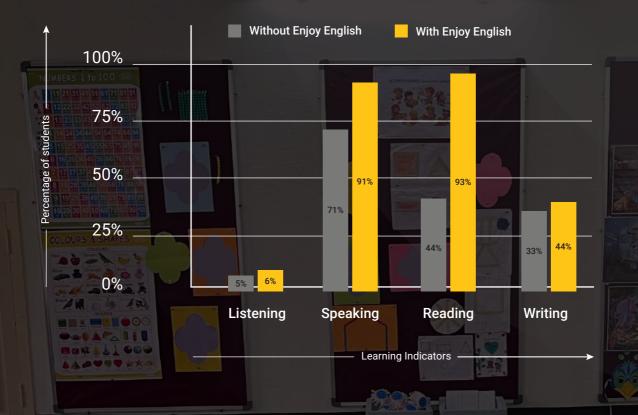


Schools - 5



Students - 335

Impact



- One of the most significant impacts of the project is on students' language skills. The endline assessment showed that the treatment group outperformed the control group in both speaking and reading.
- The control group scored 44% in speaking, while the treatment group scored 93%. Similarly, the control group scored 71% in reading, while the treatment group scored 91%. Students in the control group scored 33%, while the treatment group scored 44% on writing skills.
- However, the two groups scored similarly in listening, with the control at 5% and the treatment at 6%. This similarity could be attributed to project delivery challenges such as classroom noise levels, peer sharing of tablets, non-usage of quality earphones etc. Overall, the results demonstrate that the Enjoy English project can become a highly successful tech-enabled model in greatly improving the foundational literacy skills of students with a few changes made to the delivery model.

Way Forward

The scaling strategy for the next academic year will be explored and partnerships for a successful project launch are to be consolidated. Also, based on the pilot learnings, the flow of student learning across a day, a week and a month - aligned with the revised instructional time shall be established. The product roadmap aligned with enhancing the single-user experience will be finalized. Additional features/modules in the app towards promoting oracy skills are to be included in the successive builds of the product. Native games with a focus on an intuitive gaming experience for the students are to be developed.



Madhi Mandram

We also hosted a Madhi Mandram session in January 2023, focusing on 'Parental Involvement in Early Childhood Education and Foundational Education'. As part of this session, we partnered with three of our peer organisations – Meraki Foundation, Leadership For Equity, and Saarthi Foundation – all of whom share the commitment of improving educational outcomes and attaining quality education through community empowerment. The session was attended by more than 25 participants from the education sector, who engaged in a lively discussion with our panellists. The event was a valuable opportunity to share ideas, best practices, and insights on this critical issue, and we believe it will help inform and shape our work going forward.



click here to watch the video

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q2Vk7cP2XiU





Organisational Size

The year 2022-2023 witnessed a remarkable transformation at Madhi as our team expanded from 26 to 228 individuals, a diverse and dynamic set of individuals all driven by a shared vision to eliminate the foundational learning crisis. In order to ensure the systems and practices adopted by the organisation are in line with the culture it nurtures, several policies and processes were introduced and codified.



Competency Framework

We developed a comprehensive competency framework for Madhi in 2022-23. The competency framework is a holistic tool that encompasses skills, behaviours, and knowledge that team members should espouse for each of their respective roles. It serves as a roadmap for team members, providing an indication of valued behaviors and actions.



Performance Management System

We also designed a Performance Management System aimed at fostering a culture of excellence and growth. It helps individual team members make conscious connections to the work being done towards the success of the organisational mission. The PMS tool is intended to provide spaces for reflection, learning, and personal development of team members.



Internal movements (growth) policy

As an organisation that focuses on ensuring team members' potential is nurtured to its fullest, Madhi introduced an internal movements Policy. The policy applies to individual promotions and lateral team movements. It is aimed at fostering continuous development of team members and helping them build multi-dimensional skill that aids their professional growth.



Culture Code

We developed a Culture Code for Madhi which serves as a guiding light, enabling team members to embody the organisation's unique culture. It provides a framework with nuanced behavioural indicators that encapsulate the desired values and principles. This shared understanding of the organisation's culture, we believe will empower individuals to contribute meaningfully and collectively towards Madhi's mission.

Focus ahead:

In 2023-2024, we are focussed on introducing a Learning and Development framework at Madhi and also streamlining all new set processes and systems for providing our talented team at Madhi an environment of continuous growth and development while as an organisation we work towards our vision and mission

Meet our Co-founders



Srivathsan Ramaswamy

Co-founder and Chief Programme Officer

In his capacity as Co-founder and Chief Programme Officer Srivathsan Ramaswamy oversees project innovation, design, and delivery. He steers Madhi's partnership with the School Education Department of Tamil Nadu and spearheads Ennum Ezhuthum Mission - Tamil Nadu's pathbreaking literacy and numeracy mission envisioned to enable level-based learning for 2.7 million children from 37,000 government schools across 38 districts.

An alumnus of SRM University and the London School of Economics and Political Science, Srivathsan has worked in the education sector for almost a decade, including 2 years as a government school teacher during his fellowship with Teach for India. He has worked in the curriculum and syllabus drafting committees in Tamil Nadu and has co-authored nearly 40 books for children and teachers in Tamil Nadu.

As I step into my role as co-founder of this incredible organisation, I am overwhelmed with gratitude for the journey we have shared over the last 5 years. The transformation we are set to bring amongst the children of Tamil Nadu and beyond fills me with unwavering hope and determination. Together, we will break the barriers of privilege and pave the way for quality education to become a right for every child. With the support of our dedicated team, and their unwavering spirit, we will together bring the winds of change to empower generations to come. I embrace the next phase of my journey with Madhi, fueled by the belief that every child deserves a chance to thrive.

Vijayalakshmi Mohan

Co-founder and Chief Operations Officer

Vijayalakshmi Mohan leads the People, Culture and Operations vertical at Madhi for a team size of 245. An alumna of Takshashila Institution, Bengaluru, she has worked in the education sector for over 6 years, including 2 years as a government school teacher during her fellowship with Teach for India. She has worked extensively in training government school teachers and other administrative and academic officials in the system.



It is with deep gratitude that I reflect on my journey with Madhi over the past six years! Starting as a team member drafting lesson plans and training teachers, I was gradually entrusted with responsibilities, including project design and delivery, government relations, and fundraising over the years. Madhi has always provided a supportive learning and growth environment, and I aspire to cultivate the same culture for our team as a Co-Founder, leading the People Culture and Operations Vertical. While addressing foundational learning at scale is undoubtedly challenging, I hope we can turn this daunting task into a reality by building resilient teams committed to the last mile child.

FY 2022-23 Highlights



Merlia, Madhi's Founder-CEO, was selected as 1 of the 10 Fellows for the 2022-23 cohort of the prestigious Rainer Arnhold Fellowship by Mulago Foundation



Merlia was selected for the Ashoka Fellowship (in 2022) meant for the world's leading social entrepreneurs after a rigorous selection process.

TEACHFORINDIA

Madhi partnered with Teach For India as the technical partner for creating literacy resources for classrooms in 8 cities across India



Madhi has forayed into Africa in partnership with Kizazi as a technical partner for Foundational English to improve education quality for over 100,000 students in Sierra Leone



Merlia was selected as one of the 16 Global Finalists for the British Council Alumni Award from 2700 applications worldwide

Our **Partners**

Government Partners







Funding Partners















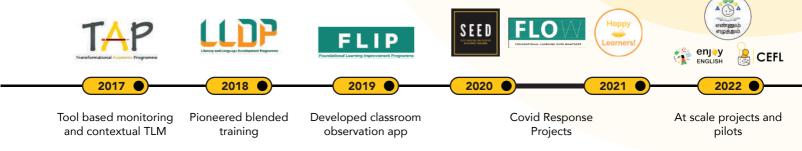


Central Square Foundation has worked with Madhi in close partnership for over 5 years. During this time, Madhi has been a great partner to work with. The team operates with a high level of openness and agility, which makes the entire process of thought partnering and collaboration seamless. It has been a privilege to engage with Madhi on their Advisory Board - opportunity to not only support but also learn from both their in-class and system reform work and own their organizational journey.

Shaveta Sharma Kukreja, Co-Managing Director, **Central Square Foundation**

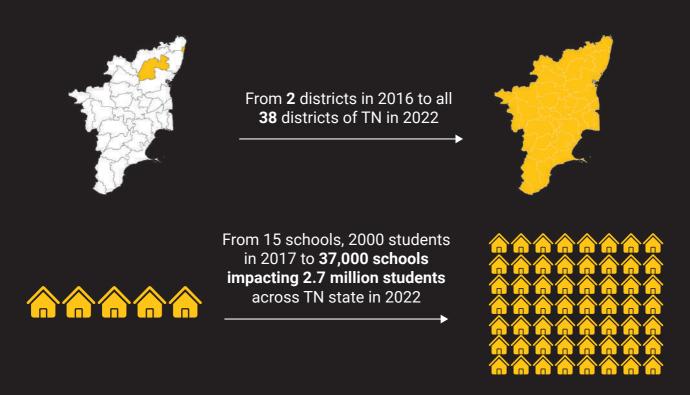
Madhi's Growth

Madhi through the years: 2016-2022



Over 5 years of designing and executing systemic interventions, our projects have evolved to be more amenable for scale, tailored to the unique context of states across India

Through our work with Tamil Nadu government schools since 2016, we have expanded the scope of our interventions to be more holistic, while growing in reach exponentially to impact every child in Tamil Nadu's government primary schools.



Testimonial from Thiru. K Nandakumar,

IAS Former Commissioner of School Education

To Madhi Foundation Tamil Nadu

I am writing to express my heartfelt appreciation and admiration for the remarkable efforts of Madhi Foundation in their capacity as Chief Management Partner for the Ennum Ezhuthum Mission to bring about significant transformation in government schools across Tamil Nadu. As a close observer, I have witnessed firsthand the immense positive impact Madhi has had over the years as a nonprofit organization working closely with the TN Department of School Education.

Madhi's unwavering dedication to innovate and reinvent the existing government systems to improve the quality of education delivered in government schools has translated into sustainable systemic change. The tireless efforts to work hand in hand with the government system have been instrumental in driving large-scale transformation and change across the state. It is indeed a testament to your organization's vision, expertise, and commitment.

The successful collaboration between Madhi Foundation and the Tamilnadu government system exemplifies what can be accomplished when organisations come together with a common vision and purpose. Your commitment to working within the government framework while leveraging your knowledge and resources, has resulted in a sustainable model that can be replicated across other regions, benefiting countless more students.

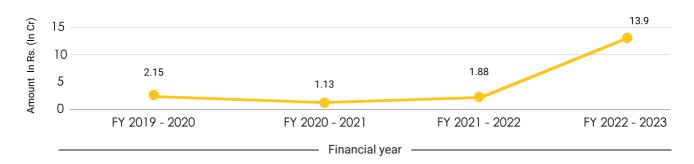
On behalf of the Tamil Nadu government, and the Department of School Education, I would like to express my heartfelt appreciation to Madhi Foundation for its outstanding contributions to the education sector. I look forward to witnessing the impact Madhi creates on the lives of many more students and teachers across the country.

With warm regards,

Thiru. K Nandakumar, IAS
Former Commissioner of School Education,
Department of School Education,
Government of Tamil Nadu

Financials

Budget



How we spend?

Where we spend?



Advisory Board



R Seshasayee
FMR. Chairman,
Board of Directors, Infosys Ltd.
FMR. MD, Ashok Leyland



Meenakshi Ramesh
CEO, United Way Chennai,
FMR Head of Accounting and
Donor Management - Pratham



Gayatri Nair Lobo
Chief Executive Officer,
ATE Chandra Foundation



Ranganath N.K
MD/CEO, Grundfos
Pumps India Pvt. Ltd.



Shaveta Sharma-Kukreja CEO, Central Square Foundation



Kavita Rajagopalan
Director,
Global Schools Forum (GSF)









The year that went by and the year that is to come

The year 2022-23 has been a momentous juncture in Madhi's journey, teeming with groundbreaking achievements that have propelled us forward. Our team witnessed unprecedented growth, surpassing the three-digit mark for the first time. We received official recognition as the chief management partner for the Ennum Ezhuthum Mission, the Tamil Nadu government's foundational learning program run across all 38 districts. This year, we began consolidating all our pilot projects, showcasing our commitment to continuous innovation towards solving the foundational learning crisis. We also embraced a new co-leadership model, aimed at fostering collaboration, clarity, and structure in the organisation's overall development.

Working alongside dedicated team members, resolute in addressing the foundational learning crisis is a true privilege. Their unwavering dedication drives us to constantly seek improved ways to do what is right by our children.

As we look ahead with hope and optimism, I am truly excited for the upcoming year. The team stands poised to chart a strategic course, emphasising direction and impact at scale. With our incredible team's unwavering support and dedication, we are confident that the year ahead will be filled with remarkable achievements. Together, we will continue to march ahead in our relentless pursuit of putting foundational learning first so every child can thrive.



Vijayalakshmi Mohan Co-founder, Chief Operating Officer



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