



DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

# ANNUAL REPORT

2024-25





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# FOREWORD

This year has been one of transformation, learning, and renewed purpose for all of us at Project KHEL. Looking back, we are filled with gratitude — for the trust our partners continue to place in us, for the resilience and adaptability of our team, and most of all, for the children and young people whose energy and curiosity remind us, every day, why we do what we do.

This year, our work deepened in multiple ways. Through programs like Made in Maidaan, FrisB(arabar), and a series of Workshops and Training-of-Trainers (ToTs), we directly reached over 3,400 children and young people across seven states, creating joyful, safe, and inclusive learning spaces that went beyond sport or classroom instruction. The diversity of our engagements — from menstrual hygiene conversations under Red Spot, to comprehensive sex education in Teen Talks and gamification workshops with partner organisations — reaffirmed our belief that play is not a pause from learning; it is the most powerful form of it.

Yet, like every meaningful journey, this year was not without its challenges. Staff transitions and the constant balancing act between implementation and institutional strengthening tested our capacities. Finding the right people — those who align not just in skill but in spirit — remains an ongoing process. But even through these shifts, what stood out was our team's courage to adapt, to step up for each other, and to keep the work grounded in empathy and purpose.

Amidst these transitions, we also witnessed remarkable growth — both within our team and among the communities we work with. From young facilitators designing their own games around gender and life skills, to our youth coaches representing India on international platforms, each story reaffirmed that when young people are trusted and supported, they rise with creativity and leadership that exceeds all expectations.

Our partnerships too have been a source of strength and inspiration. Collaborations with EMpower, Rohini Nilekani Philanthropies, Greencliffe Foundation, and other partners enabled us to expand our reach and refine our methods. Engagements with Ultimate Peace and Girls Not Brides opened new opportunities for cross-learning and global feminist dialogue — culminating in our participation at the AWID Forum 2024 and the groundwork



for future projects with the Girl First Fund.

As we reflect on this year, what stays with us most is not the scale of our numbers, but the depth of transformation we witnessed — in children finding their voice, in girls taking the lead, in communities learning to play and question together. These quiet shifts are the real indicators of change.

To every child, partner, team member, supporter, and friend — thank you for being part of this journey. Together, we continue to hold space for play, for questioning, for joy — and for the kind of learning that builds not just knowledge, but humanity.

With gratitude,

Akshai

Founder-Director, Project KHEL



**At Project KHEL, we believe that play is both a language and a learning space — one that helps children express, explore, question, and grow in ways that conventional classrooms often don't allow.**

## **MISSION**

to create joyful learning experiences by leveraging the principles of 'safe spaces' and 'gender sensitivity' for the holistic development of children.

## **VISION**

To create a generation of secure individuals who are gender inclusive in their purpose, gender-neutral in their spiel and gender-integrated in their actions.







# METHODOLOGY & APPROACH

## **PLAY AS PEDAGOGY:**

In our design, “play” is not just recreation — it is a deliberate learning medium. Activities are contextual, experiential, and co-created so that children become active learners.

## **FACILITATORS, NOT TEACHERS:**

Instead of a top-down model, our team of facilitators guide, reflect, listen, and co-learn with participants. The sessions are spaces of trust, expression, and experimentation.

## **REFLECTION & FEEDBACK:**

We use structured debriefs and continuous reflection to adjust and improve our methods, ensuring learning flows both ways — from children to facilitators, and back.

## **GENDER LENS & INCLUSIVE DESIGN:**

Every activity, every word, every interaction is designed to overcome biases. We train facilitators to practice gender-neutral language, integrated play, and active disruption of stereotypes.



# EMPOWERING YOUNG VOICES, BUILDING SAFE SPACES

The year 2024–25 marked a significant leap in our outreach and impact. Through a range of creative and participatory initiatives—Made in Maidan, FrisB(arabar), and a series of Workshops and Training-of-Trainers—we continued to create inclusive, gender-equitable, and safe spaces for learning, play, and expression.

## KEY IMPACT AT A GLANCE

| PROGRAMME                          | MALE         | FEMALE        | TOTAL |
|------------------------------------|--------------|---------------|-------|
| MADE IN MAIDAAN                    | 400          | 340           | 740   |
| FrisB(arabar)                      | 230          | 130           | 360   |
| WORKSHOPS AND TRAINING OF TRAINERS | 133          | 2207          | 2340  |
| TOTAL REACH                        | 763<br>(22%) | 2677<br>(78%) | 3440  |



# IMPACT – MADE IN MAIDAAN

**760**

hours of play-based learning

**740**

children reached

**11**

centers run

**11**

PLAYducators engaged



# STORIES OF CHANGE

## NITIN: FROM BULLY TO LEADER: NITIN'S JOURNEY OF CHANGE

When Nitin first joined our program, facilitators found him challenging—quick-witted, disruptive, and often using his influence to derail sessions. His assertive identity and polarizing behaviour made it difficult to connect. But instead of reacting with resistance, our team responded with warmth and inclusion, showing him that his energy could belong without division.

We shifted our approach—from seeing Nitin as a troublemaker to understanding him as a child seeking connection. Consistency became our anchor: we set boundaries, recognized positive behaviour through our “Good Bachcha” system, and ensured Nitin felt valued even when disciplined.

Eighteen months later, a breakthrough came when Nitin publicly owned up to his team's mistake—a first act of accountability. We celebrated him as a “Good Bachcha,” and for the first time, his peers admired him for kindness, not mischief. From then on, Nitin began using his voice to support and motivate others.

By the end of two years, the boy once known for disruption became a symbol of fairness and team spirit. His classmates noticed the change, too—“Now he explains things to us,” one said. Nitin shared, “I realized I can be the bigger person by being better, not by being a bully.”

His story is proof that empathy, consistency, and belief in every child's potential can transform resistance into leadership.





## FROM ALOOF TO EMPATHETIC: RESHMA'S JOURNEY OF BELONGING

When Reshma first joined our sessions, she kept her distance—confident yet detached, often walking out when things didn't go her way. Coming from a slightly better-off family in a community of rag pickers, she stood apart in appearance and attitude. Her mother's initial hostility towards our facilitators only deepened that divide.

But we stayed consistent—offering every greeting, every invitation, and every smile without judgment or special treatment. Slowly, something shifted. Reshma began sitting with the group, clapping for others, and helping clean up. What started as reluctant participation grew into quiet engagement and genuine care.

The turning point came when she was paired with Malika, a younger child who often arrived unkempt. One day, Reshma took her home, helped her get ready and brought her back to the session. That simple act marked a transformation—from separation to solidarity.

Today, Reshma leads through empathy—clearing the play area so no one gets hurt, helping peers, and cheering for others before herself. Even her mother, once resistant, now supports her wholeheartedly.

Reshma's journey shows how steady, non-judgmental connection can bridge divides. Through Project KHEL's consistent care and belief, she discovered that true confidence comes not from standing apart—but from standing with others.





# IMPACT – FrisB(arabar)

**1200+** coaching sessions

**360** young athletes reached

**17** coaching centers run

**16** Youth Coaches engaged

**7** outstation tournaments participated in

**2** local tournaments participated in



# TOURNAMENT RESULTS:

## PODIUM FINISHES:

Chilly-O, Lucknow, Aug-24

- Udta Kebabs - Tournament Champions (Gold)
- Udta Kebabs - 2nd in Spirit (Silver)

North Regionals, Delhi, Sep '24

- Awadh Pilot - 2nd in Spirit (Silver)
- Flying Nawabs - 3rd in spirit (Bronze)

Beach Nationals, Chennai, Oct '24

- Udta Kebabs - 1st in Spirit (Gold)

North Regionals (Open), Delhi, Jan '25

- Udta Kebabs - Tournament Champions (Gold)
- Udta Kebabs - 2nd in Spirit (Silver)

North Regionals (Open), Delhi, Jan '25

- Itaunja Pilots - 1st in Spirit (Gold)

Womens Nationals, Bangalore, Mar '25

- Udta Kebabs - 2nd in Tournament (Silver)

## BEYOND THE PODIUM FINISH:

- Udta Kebabs finished 7th at Sakkath, Coimbatore (Jul-24)
- Awadh Pilots placed 6th at the Elite Nationals, Surat (Nov-24)
- Awadh KHELadis placed 7th at the Beach Nationals, Chennai (Oct-24)
- Awadh Pilots finished 4th and Flying Nawabs came 6th at the NCS North Regionals, Delhi (Sep-24)
- 29 new players made their debut at the YU Invitational, New Delhi (Feb-25)
- Udta Kebabs placed 7th at the Opens Nationals, Bangalore (Mar-25)





# CHILLY-O

## MAKING TOURNAMENTS ACCESSIBLE

### **CHILLY-O 2024: A TRIBUTE THAT BECAME A MOVEMENT**

Two years after losing our dear friend and teammate Arun, Chilly-O 2024 emerged as more than just a sports event—it became a celebration of spirit, inclusion, and community. Named after Arun’s favorite cheer, Chilly-O captures his joyful energy and love for the game.

What began as a memorial tournament in 2023 evolved this year into India’s first Ultimate Frisbee tournament designed for the development sector, ensuring that cost and access would never limit participation. Thanks to the support of our funders, teams paid no registration or accommodation fees, and enjoyed sponsored meals, transport, refreshments, and gifts—creating a truly level playing field.

In 2024, 14 teams from 4 states and 5 NGOs, alongside Project KHEL’s own teams, took the field for 39 spirited matches involving over 230 players. Every match carried forward Arun’s values of fairness, camaraderie, and joy.

The Chilly-O Scholarship, established in Arun’s memory, continues to honour young leaders who embody empathy and integrity. This year, two boys from our life-skills program received bicycles to help them pursue education, work, and sport—turning opportunity into mobility.

As the cheers faded, what remained was a renewed belief in the power of play to build connection and compassion.

Here’s to Arun—and to keeping his spirit alive through every throw, every laugh, and every “Chilly-O!”



# WORKSHOPS CONDUCTED

| PROGRAMME                                   | NO. OF SESSIONS | STATES COVERED                                                     |
|---------------------------------------------|-----------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------|
| AB BAS! (CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE AWARENESS)      | 8               | UTTAR PRADESH                                                      |
| TEEN TALKS (COMPREHENSIVE SEX EDUCATION)    | 3               | UTTAR PRADESH                                                      |
| RED SPOT (MENSTRUAL HYGIENE AND BODY IMAGE) | 5               | UTTAR PRADESH, JHARKHAND, ASSAM, MEGHALAYA, TELANGANA, WEST BENGAL |
| LIFE SKILLS WORKSHOPS AND TOT               | 2               | UTTAR PRADESH, JHARKHAND                                           |
| GAMIFICATION & GENDER SENSITIZATION TOT     | 2               | UTTAR PRADESH, JHARKHAND, ASSAM, MEGHALAYA, TELANGANA, WEST BENGAL |
| TOTAL WORKSHOPS & TOT                       | 20              | 7 STATES                                                           |



# VOICES FROM THE GROUND



**"Saw my team create theme-based games and activities within 2 days of training"**

Priyanka, savera foundation, ToT participant on our workshop on gamification.

**"When you want to convey a message or teach something to your society, if you give a lecture, people will forget it by the time they get home. However, if we teach them the same thing during a game, it will take much longer for them to forget, or if they ever see that game again, they will always remember, "oh, this is why this happens"."**

Neha, Fellow, KickOff Solutions





# GROWTH OPPORTUNITIES FOR TEAM

This year was marked by continued growth, learning, and leadership within our team. Members not only strengthened their professional and personal capacities but also represented the organization across diverse local, national, and international platforms.

1

## **LEADERSHIP AND REPRESENTATION IN ULTIMATE FRISBEE**

Two of our senior frisbee athletes, Manju and Roshni, served as selectors for the State Ultimate Frisbee Team of Delhi, showcasing leadership, expertise, and recognition within the broader sports community.

2

## **INTERNATIONAL EXPOSURE AND YOUTH LEADERSHIP**

Our senior frisbee athlete and PLAYducator, Kajal, represented India at the Ultimate Peace Camp in New Jersey, USA, exemplifying global youth exchange and cross-cultural learning through sport.

3

## **YOUTH ADVOCACY AND CAPACITY BUILDING**

Our Youth Coach, Roshni, was selected to serve on the Girl Advisory Committee for EMpower, India. Through this platform, she participated in multiple capacity-building workshops on mental health, budgeting, proposal review, and organizational visits — and contributed as a speaker in several panel discussions.



4

#### **LEARNING AND SHARING KNOWLEDGE**

Team members participated in EMpower's Learning Journey (Delhi), gaining exposure to innovative practices in youth development. Roshni also represented our organization as one of the presenters, sharing insights from our field experiences.

5

#### **GLOBAL FEMINIST PERSPECTIVES**

Our Executive Director, Angana, attended the AWID Forum 2024 in Bangkok, engaging with global peers on feminist leadership and movement building, and bringing valuable insights back to strengthen our work at home.

6

#### **EXPANDING GRASSROOTS SPORTS AND YOUTH LEADERSHIP**

Through our grassroots sports initiatives in 2024–25, we engaged over 360 young players (230 male and 130 female) across 17 community centers, facilitated 6 local and 11 outstation tournaments, and supported 14 youth coaches in leadership roles. These experiences not only built athletic skills but also fostered teamwork, discipline, and confidence among youth from diverse age groups.

7

#### **A SABBATICAL FOR OUR FOUNDER-DIRECTOR**

Our Founder-Director, Akshai, was awarded a Cocoon Initiative Sabbatical Grant, a fellowship that supports civil-society leaders to pause, recharge, and return with renewed purpose. Through this opportunity, they will step back from daily responsibilities to rest, reflect, and explore new ideas that can strengthen our work with young people and communities.

The sabbatical represents not just a personal milestone, but also an investment in sustainable, compassionate leadership—ensuring our organization continues to grow with clarity, care, and creativity.









# PARTNERSHIPS & SUPPORT

This year reaffirmed our belief that meaningful change is never achieved alone. Our journey was supported by dedicated partners, funders, volunteers, and institutions who believed in the potential of young people and communities. Their trust and collaboration enabled us to expand our programs, deepen our impact, and continue learning together.

## DONORS

We are deeply grateful to **EMpower—the emerging markets foundation** and the **Rohini Nilekani Philanthropies** for their continued partnership in strengthening our work on the ground. Through their support, we conducted leadership workshops, and community-driven initiatives that fostered life skills, gender equity, and wellbeing.

We are also grateful to **the Greycliffe Foundation** who joined us as our newest funder.

Together, these partnerships made it possible to reach new communities, build stronger systems of support, and nurture young leaders who continue to inspire change.



## INSTITUTIONAL COLLABORATIONS

Engagements with initiatives like **Ultimate Peace** (India and USA) facilitated through the **Ultimate Players Association of India**, helped us use sport as a bridge across communities, promoting inclusion, cooperation, and peacebuilding.

Our association with the **Girls Not Brides** alliance, both as member and facilitation partner, brought to us the opportunity to participate at the **AWID forum** in Thailand. This opportunity translated to a partnership with the Girl First Fund, with whom we shall be implementing a project in 2025–26.

Our gratitude to the other institutions that we partnered with for various programmes –

- Community Welfare School
- Indian Public Inter College
- Prayaas
- Vardaan International Academy
- Bal Bharti School
- Pramodini Junior High School
- Moral Way Public School
- Angel Carmel School
- Rajakiya Bal Griha
- La Martiniere Girls College
- Vigyaan Foundation
- Kickoff Solutions
- Savera Foundation

Our communities in

- Baalu Adda
- Baba Kabaadi
- Itaunja
- Gwari village

## Acknowledgement

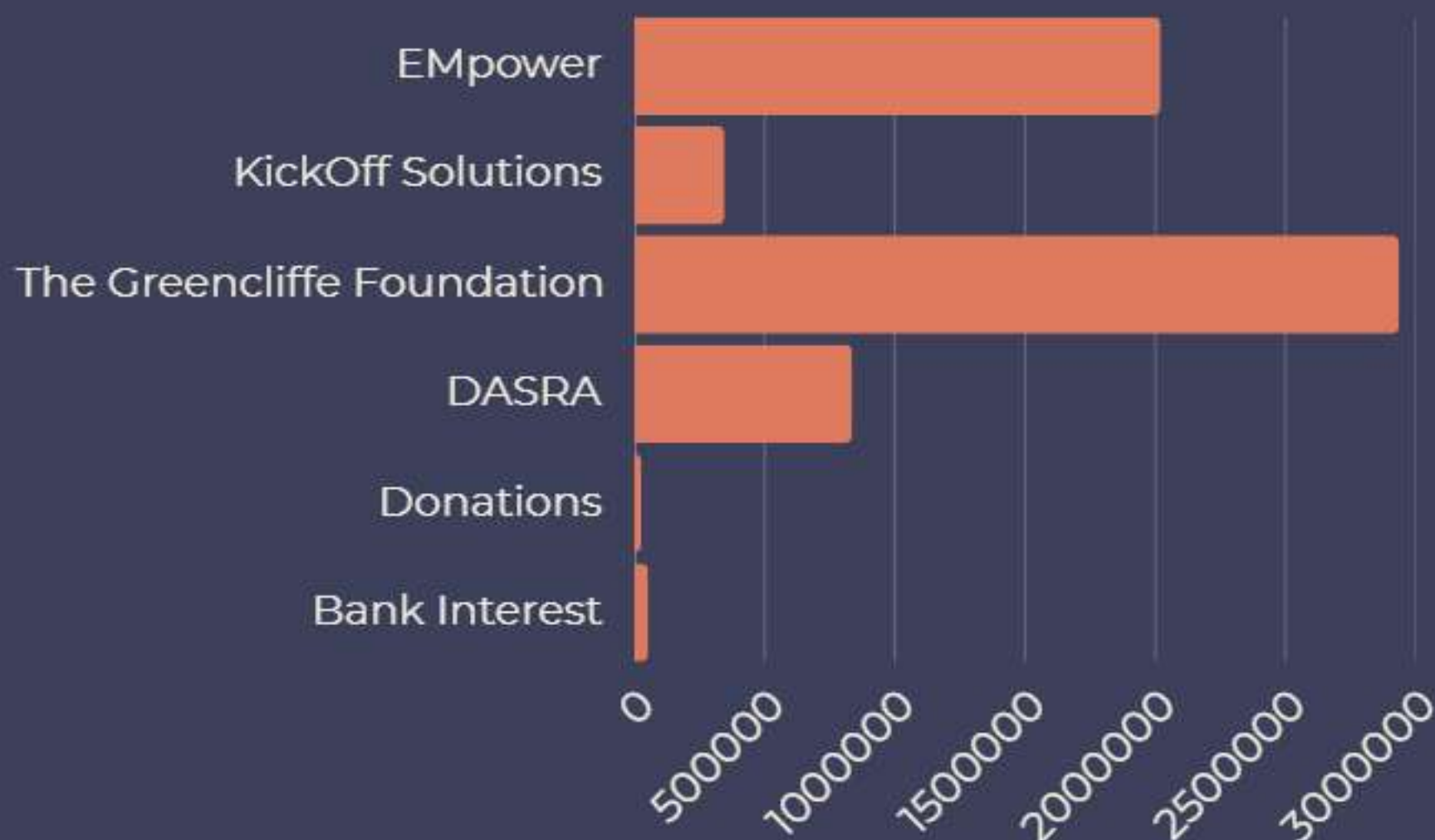
To every donor, partner, mentor, volunteer, and friend — thank you for believing in our mission. Your support continues to inspire us to dream bigger, work harder, and stay rooted in community. Together, we are nurturing movements of care, leadership, and change.



## INCOME SOURCES (DOMESTIC): RS. 29,55,772

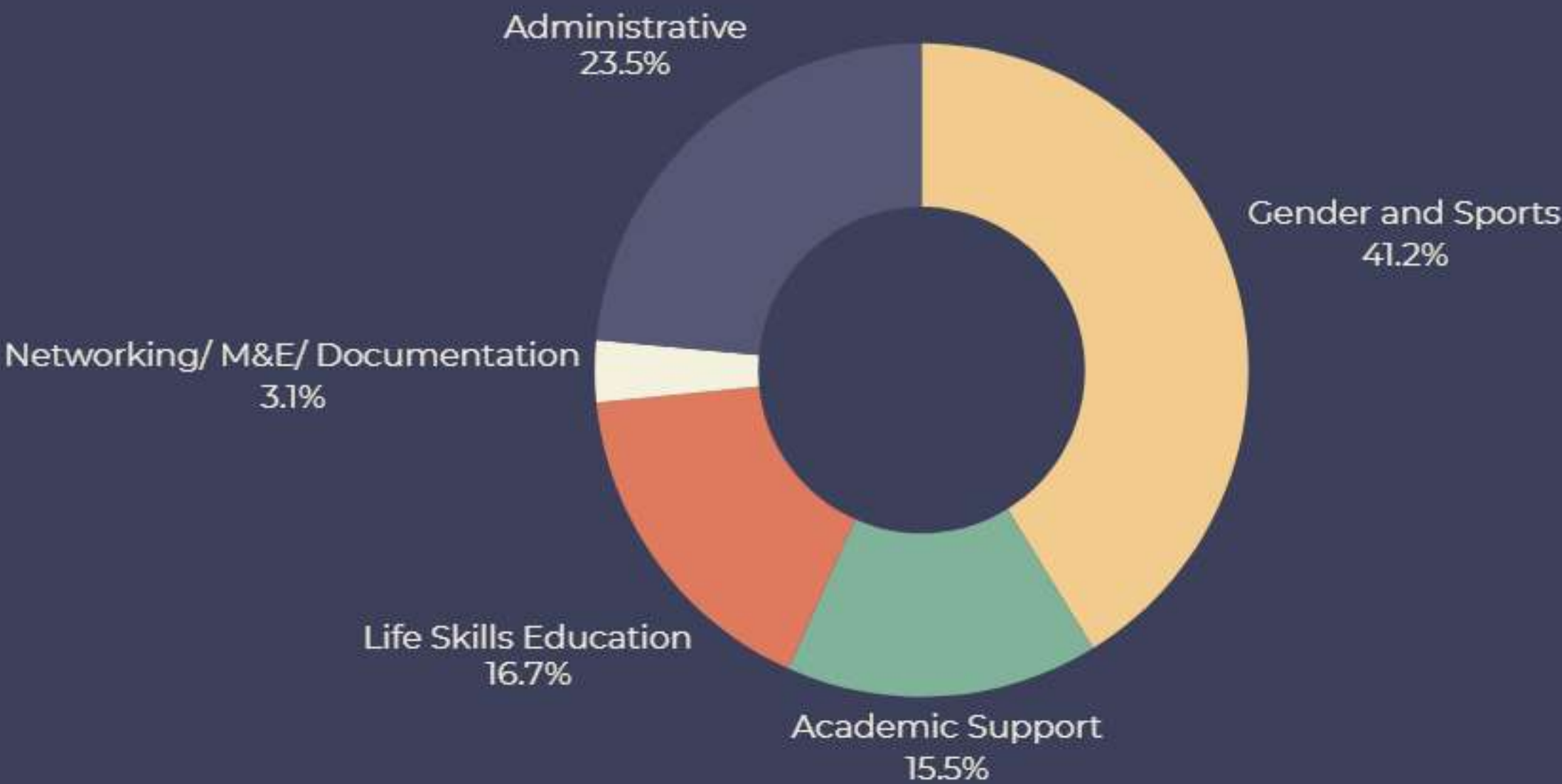


## INCOME SOURCES (FCRA): RS. 62,19,632

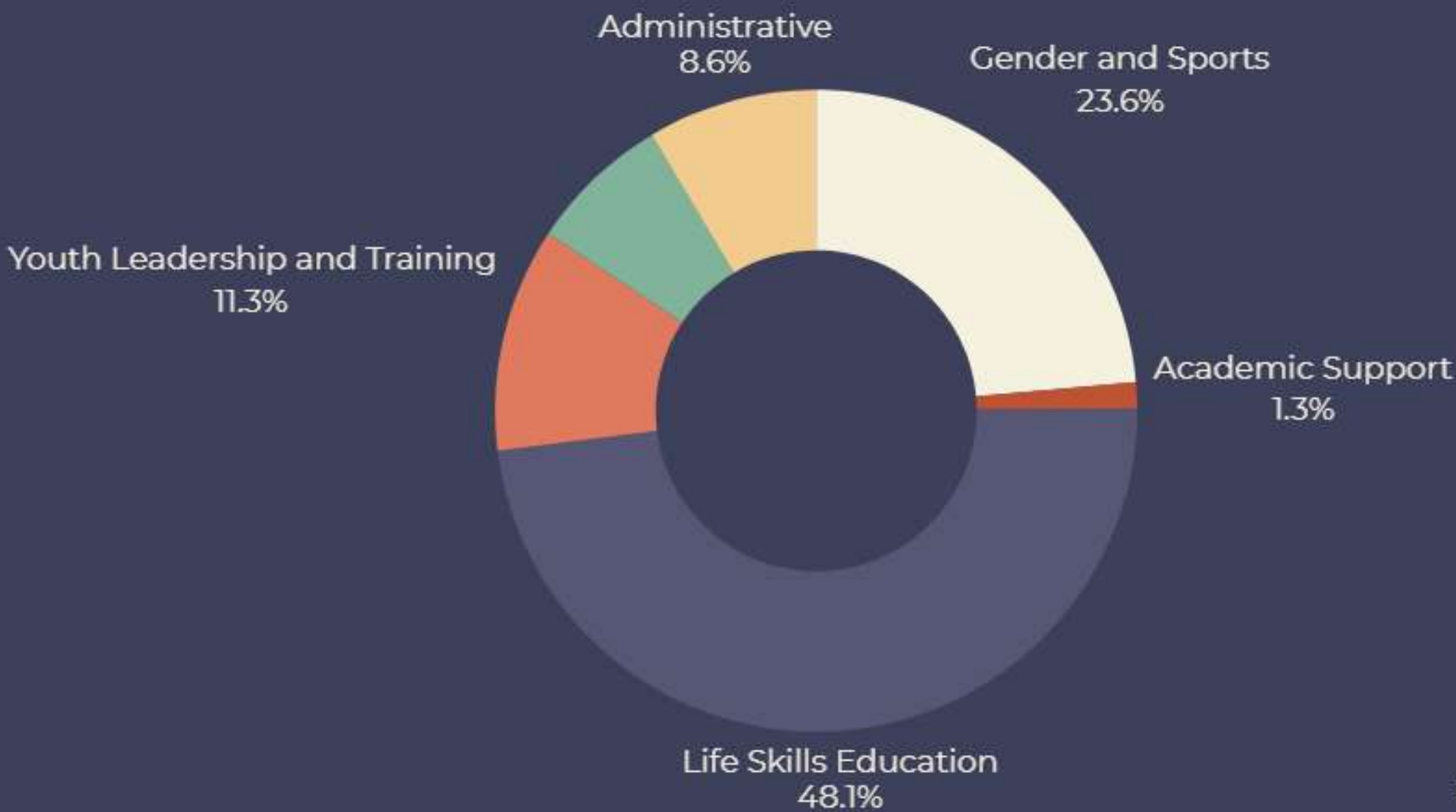




**FUNCTIONAL EXPENSES (DOMESTIC): RS. 33,67,610**



**FUNCTIONAL EXPENSES (FCRA): RS. 61,81,154**







PROJECT KHEL  
WE SPEAK PLAY!

