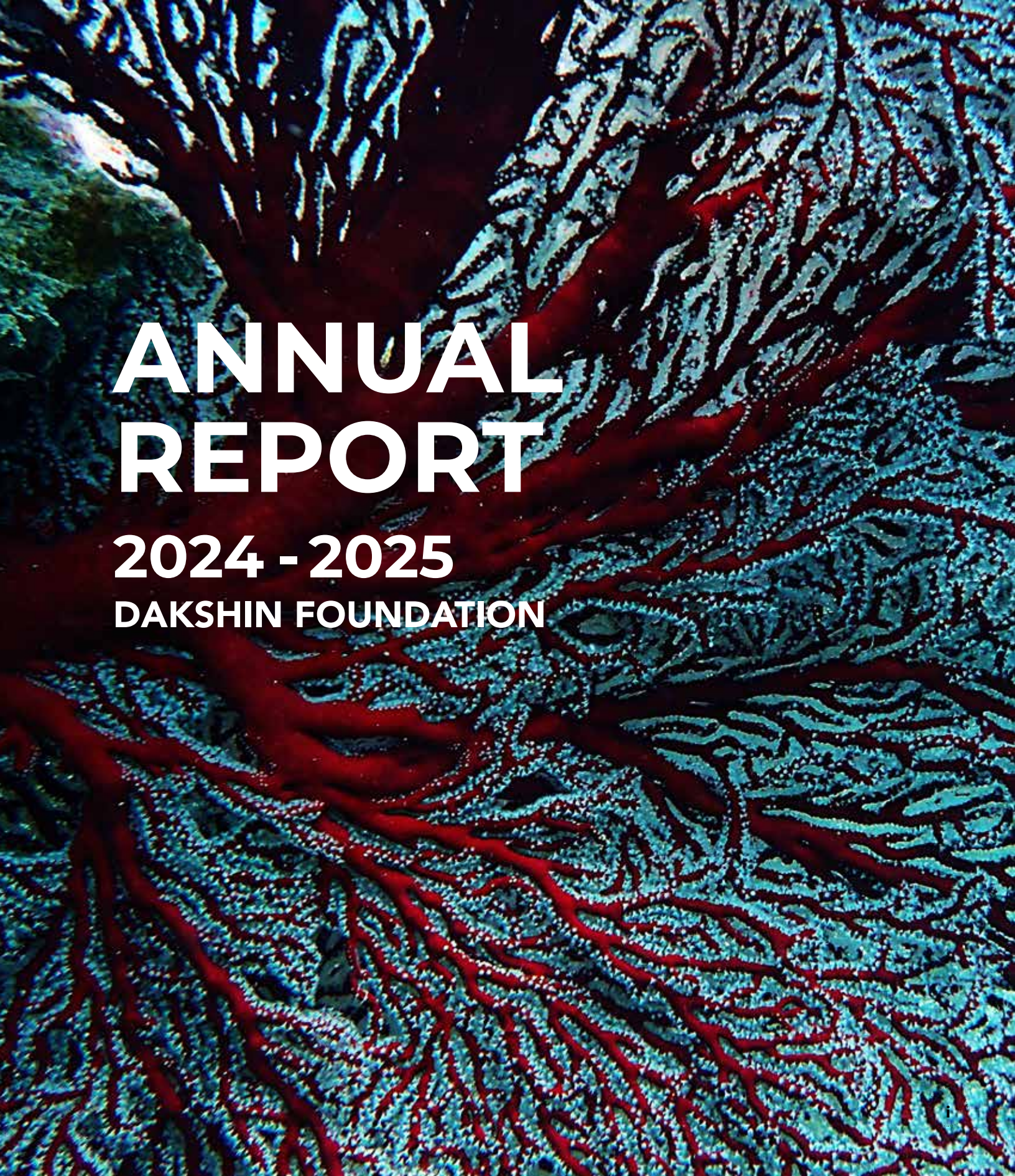




ANNUAL REPORT

2024 - 2025

DAKSHIN FOUNDATION

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DAKSHIN FOUNDATION

ANNUAL REPORT 2024 - 2025

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1.1 Governing Board

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Founder Trustee, Dakshin Foundation

Kartik Shanker

Founder Trustee, Dakshin Foundation

Professor, Centre for Ecological Sciences, Indian Institute of Science, Bengaluru

Meera Anna Oommen

Founder Trustee, Dakshin Foundation

Naveen Namboothri

Founder Trustee, Dakshin Foundation

Rosemary Viswanath

Managing Trustee, Group Relations India

1.2 Director's Note

Dakshin's approach to conservation has always centred around community ownership and leadership building. By allowing community values and cultures to shape interventions, we are able to incorporate local nuances and embrace people's lived realities. In the last year, this commitment has been further strengthened by the launch of targeted fellowships aimed at building leadership among women and youth from marine fishing communities. Fellows have carried out critical research and action that lay the foundation for strengthening fisheries management and improving social and ecological resilience. Additionally, events like the Lagoon Fest in Lakshadweep and the #KhaneKeLiyeBachao campaign provided a platform for local and virtual communities to celebrate the varied relationships between humans and the sea and spark conversations around socially just conservation practices.

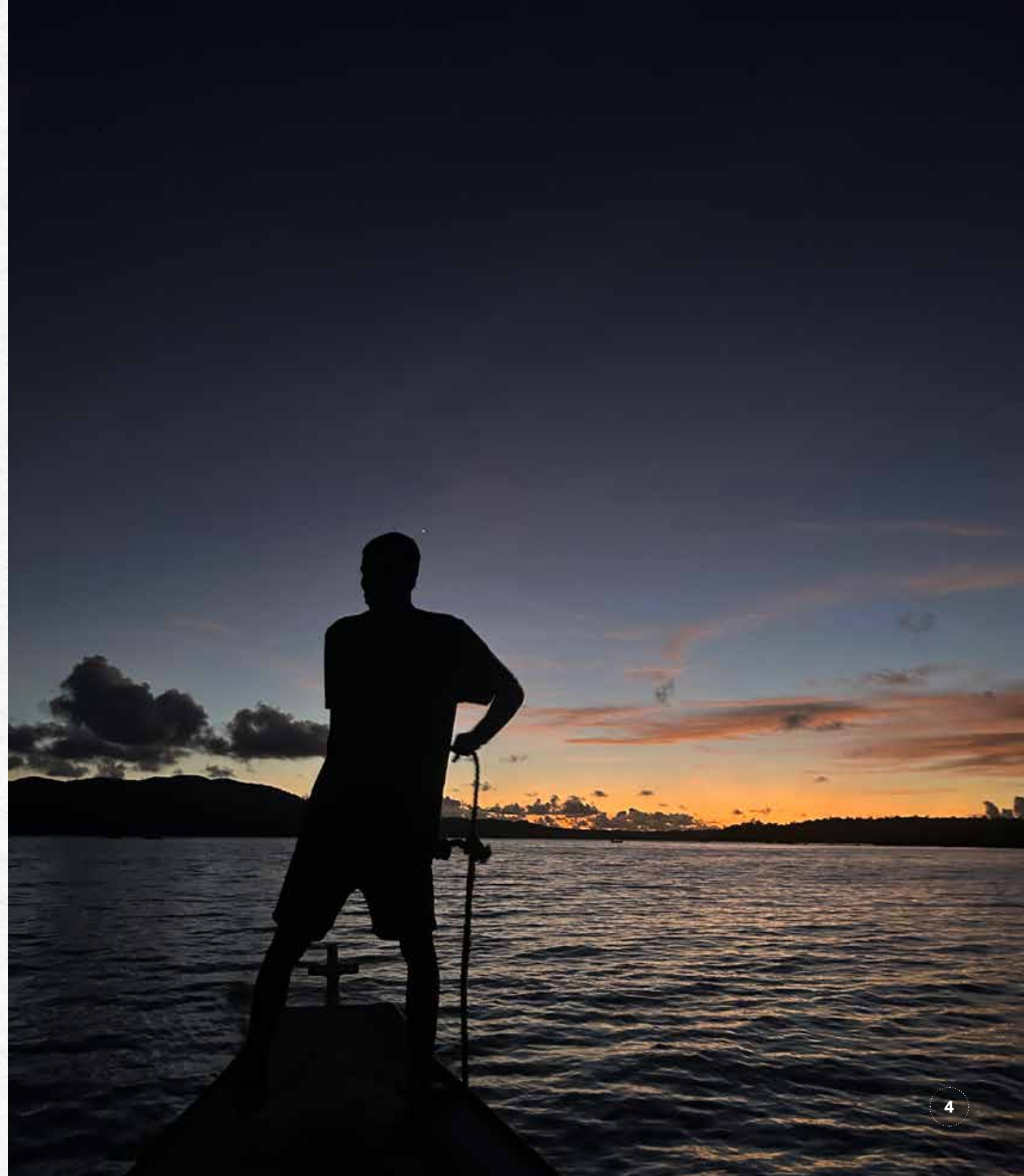
From the coasts of Odisha to the coral atolls of Lakshadweep and the rocky outcrops of Maharashtra, this annual report highlights the ripple effects created in 2024-2025 through our diverse programmes. It highlights how Dakshin's integrated SeaChange approach — grounded in science, equity, and collaboration — continues to shape healthier ecosystems and more resilient coastal communities. It describes the interlinked efforts in Odisha, the Andaman and Nicobar Islands and Tamil Nadu which are addressing complex challenges such as declining

fisheries, climate change, and social inequity. We are delighted to share and showcase, across our sites of intervention, the ways in which small-scale fishers are emerging as stewards of their ecosystems as well as their ways of life.

We present to you Dakshin's growing contributions to global dialogues on climate and ocean sustainability, with highlights from Climate Week NYC, the Dasra Philanthropy Forum, and our pioneering efforts towards developing a science-based and balanced approach to blue carbon and blue growth for India. We are also excited to share updates on our plans for the year ahead. From launching pilots that will create supplementary livelihoods for women in small-scale fishing communities to strengthening our thematic contributions towards climate action, our plans for the coming year will bring us closer to our goal of healthy ecosystems and thriving fishing communities.

As we reflect on the past year, we are grateful to our donors, partners, and community collaborators for their continued trust and engagement. Their support has been critical in enabling us to pursue evidence-based, community-led interventions that strengthen both ecosystems and community wellbeing. We look forward to deepening these partnerships as we continue to work towards a sustainable and equitable future for India's coasts and communities

– Marianne Manuel



1.3 Dakshin's mission

Dakshin Foundation (DF)'s mission is to inform and catalyse conservation and natural resource management, while promoting and supporting sustainable livelihoods, social development and environmental justice.

OUR APPROACH

Dakshin carries out applied environmental research and standalone, cross-sectoral interventions to achieve positive outcomes for both people and the ocean. Our approach to change is based on an integrated philosophy, combining subject expertise from multiple disciplines. This allows us to address environmental and livelihood challenges through adaptable models. These models, which are flexible across scales, are implemented in partnership with local communities, government departments, and other civil society organisations. By integrating traditional knowledge, researcher contributions, and appropriate technologies, these models generate impacts that are ecologically and economically sustainable, as well as culturally acceptable. Our ultimate goal is to achieve a new equilibrium for coastal India with healthy ecosystems and thriving coastal communities.

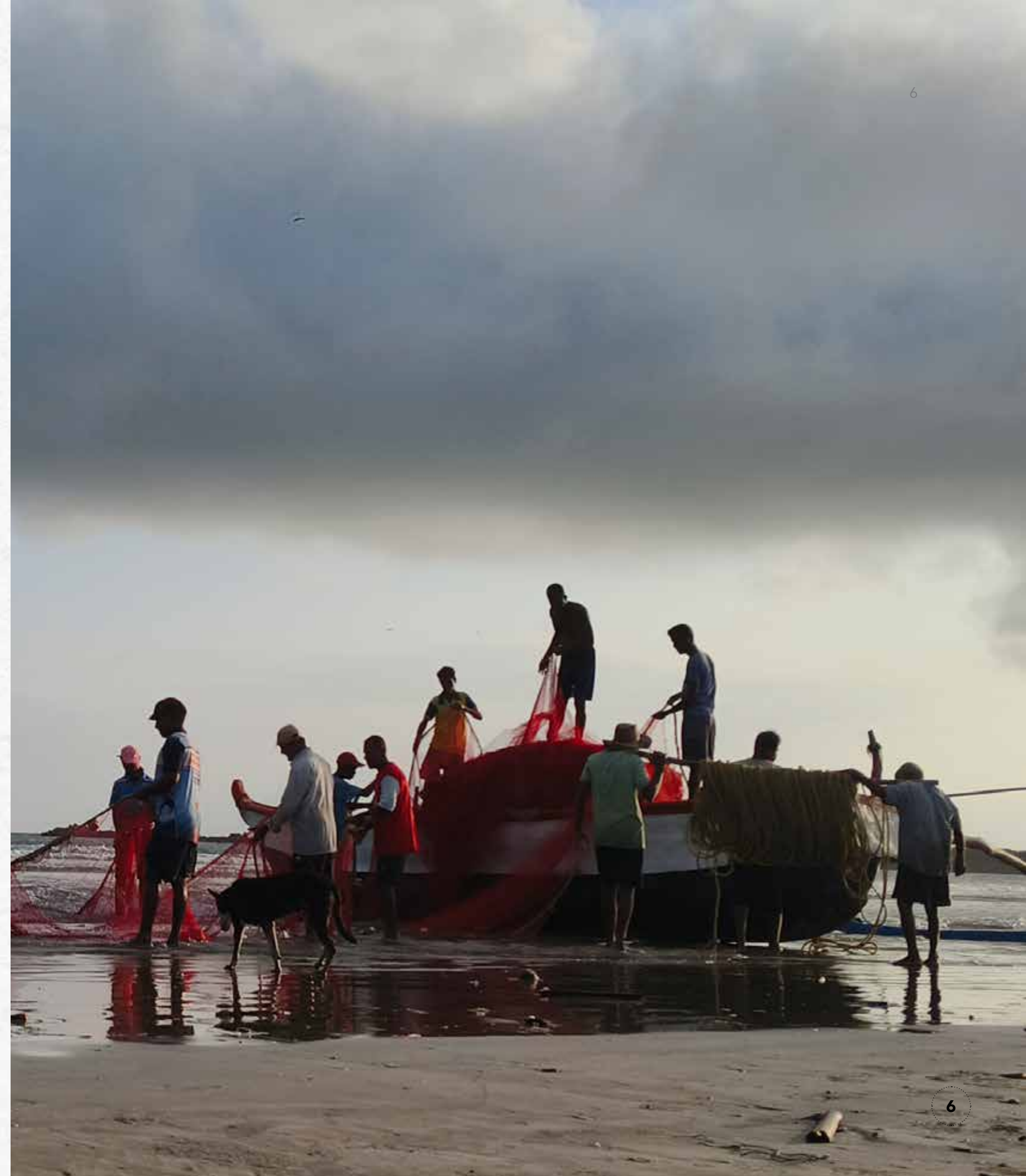
PROGRAMMATIC STRUCTURE

Dakshin works with coastal communities across several target locations in India, which are connected by a common thread of marine resource dependence. Among these groups, local communities dependent on fisheries form a primary target group, and many of the organisation's interventions are aimed at working with these communities to achieve holistic, sustainability-focused outcomes. Dakshin's research and interventions are organised to address several overlapping themes that form the pillars of support for its

organisational goals. Dakshin builds grassroots capacities, skills, and practices to secure ecosystems and collective rights and engages in conservation and environmental decision-making through participatory action.

SeaChange (SC) is Dakshin's intersectoral approach to intervention for system-level change. It aims to address complex socio-ecological crises faced by small-scale fisher (SSF) communities, such as fish-catch declines, climate change, biocultural diversity loss, and conservation conflict. Based on systems thinking, SeaChange prioritises landscapes as units of intervention and is scalable yet culturally nuanced – key criteria for what constitutes a SeaChange action. SeaChange is emphatically intersectoral, addressing five critical interlinked themes: conservation, fisheries management, coastal livelihoods, resource governance, community health and sports. It is innovative in using a range of approaches to engage with different stakeholders in the community across gender and age classes. The SeaChange model involves collaborating with SSF communities across India, relevant government bodies, experts, and industry actors. These collaborations lead to customised interventions that meet the key SeaChange criteria.

The key programmes at Dakshin include Marine Flagships; Sustainable Fisheries; Communities and Resource Governance; Community Wellbeing and Environment, and Conservation CrossRoads. We also support two sub-programmes on Sports and Livelihoods, currently nested under the Community Wellbeing and Environment programme and Sustainable Fisheries programme, respectively.





MARINE FLAGSHIPS (MF)

aims to fill critical gaps in our current knowledge of the oceans through long-term and collaborative monitoring of select ecosystems and marine species. It uses flagship species (e.g., sea turtles, sharks, and sea snakes) as central themes for garnering support in addressing issues related to fisheries, coastal development, and global change.



SUSTAINABLE FISHERIES (SF)

focuses on improving the governance and management of fisheries by decentralising knowledge to empower stakeholder communities and ensure their direct involvement in decision-making. It leverages the untapped potential of local communities in the design and implementation of integrated monitoring programmes for the sustainability of marine fisheries along the Indian coastline. We have initiated a sub-programme on the theme of 'livelihoods' to specifically cater to the systems-level needs of improving economic returns from fisheries and blue economies.



COMMUNITIES AND RESOURCE GOVERNANCE (CRG)

works across scales to strengthen formal and informal legal frameworks, practices, and institutions governing marine and coastal areas. At the grassroots level, the programme emphasises empowering communities for effective engagement with formal decision-making over coastal and marine spaces. The programme promotes community participation in coastal planning and resource management at various scales.



COMMUNITY WELLBEING AND ENVIRONMENT (CWE)

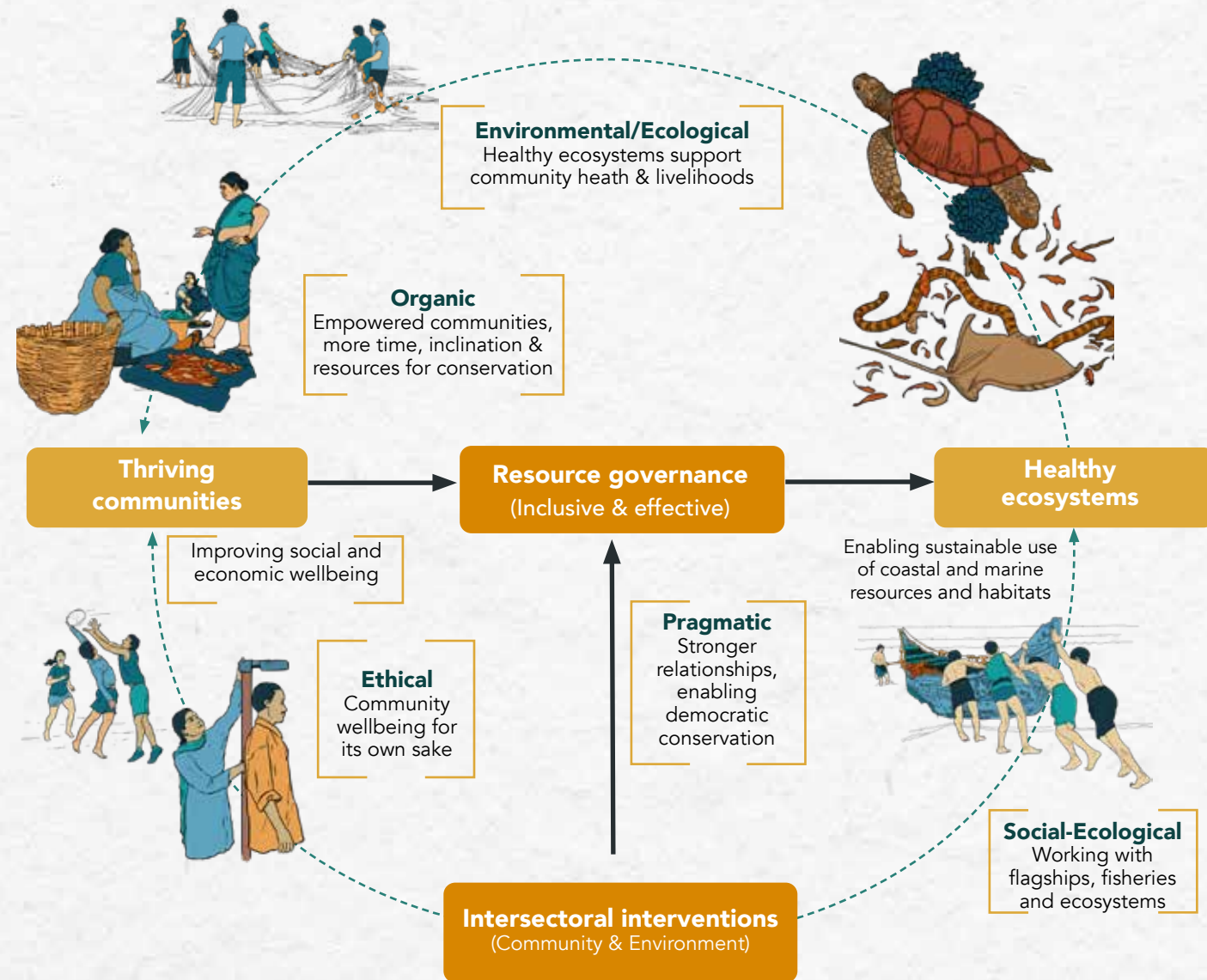
aims to improve the wellbeing of coastal communities while empowering them to build resilient communities and ecosystems. This programme focuses on holistic approaches that enhance community health, including utilising novel tools such as sports to engage with both youth and adults in these communities.



CONSERVATION CROSSROADS (CCR)

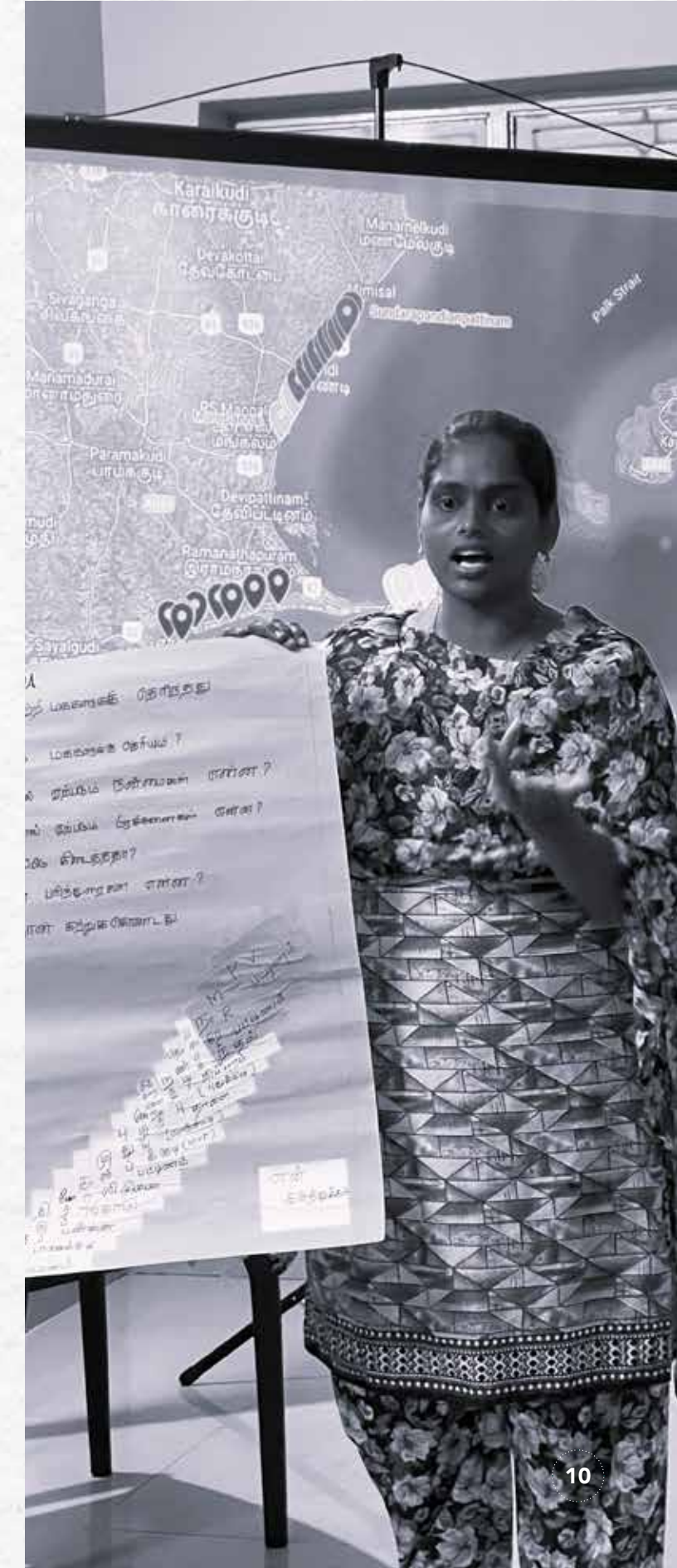
addresses emerging challenges that are critical to conservation success and environmental sustainability in the new millennium. The rationale behind its initiation has been to provide an academic platform at Dakshin to address contemporary crises, such as conflict (especially in the context of marine and terrestrial flagship species that are involved in negative interactions with local communities), that can be classified under the label of 'wicked' or 'messy' problems.

1.4 Our Theory of Change



Our theory of change is centred on the idea that marine conservation is best achieved by working with communities that use or depend on ocean resources for their livelihoods.

1. First, we believe in contributing to the wellbeing of our stakeholders for **ethical** reasons, towards social justice, and not merely as instruments of change.
2. Second, resource-dependent coastal communities, such as fishers and fish workers, who are empowered to manage these ecosystems sustainably and incentivised appropriately, will be better equipped to address local food insecurity, health and livelihood concerns, and poverty in the long term.
3. Ultimately, this will **organically** lead to healthier ecosystems and greater resilience against external shocks, as healthy and empowered communities will have the time, resources, and opportunities to contribute to resource management and biodiversity conservation.
4. To this end, by building strong, **pragmatic** relationships with local communities, Dakshin is able to engage in dialogue and work with them to plan actions that have positive human and environmental outcomes.
5. Finally, healthy ecosystems provide better services and functions to communities through ecological and environmental pathways.



2. KEY HIGHLIGHTS 2024-2025



2.1

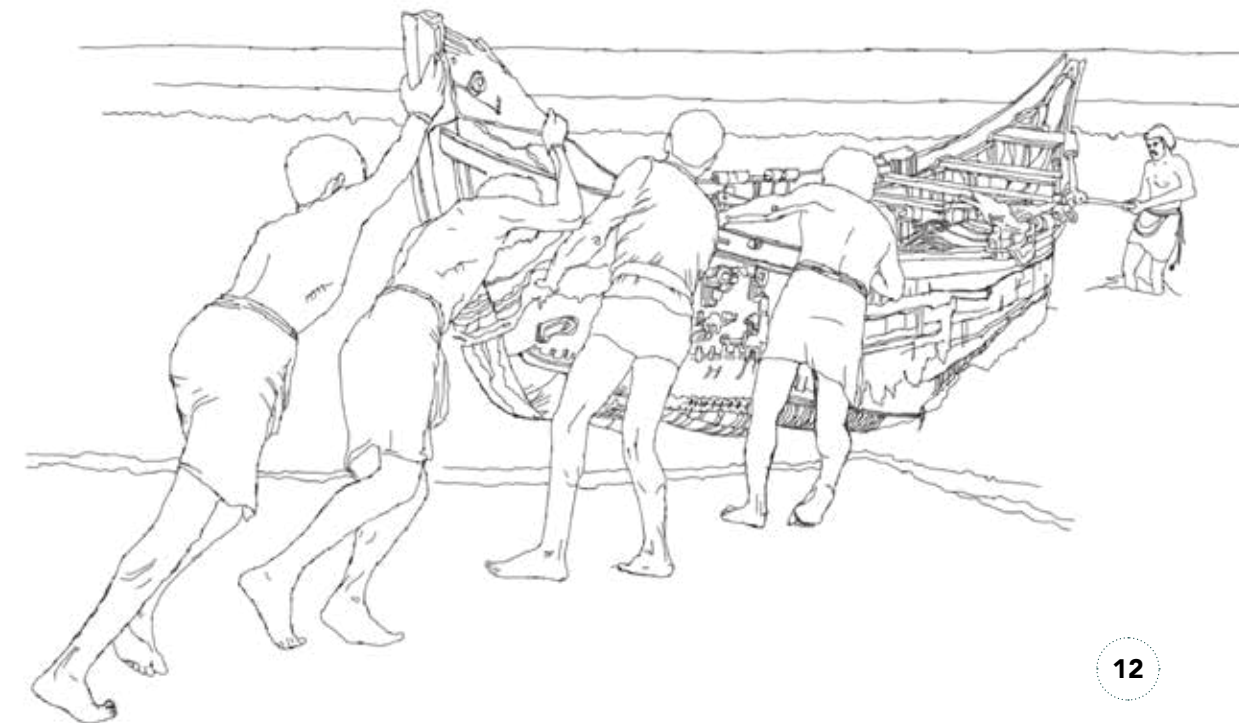
SeaChange for healthy ecosystems and thriving communities

Continuing our SeaChange efforts in the previous years, the year 2024-2025 marked a significant step forward as we completed system-level mapping at key additional sites, followed by strategic intervention planning based on interconnected issues identified through this process. A key focus was on deepening community engagement and leadership through site-specific community stewardship programmes, actively involving women and youth in planning and leading the efforts on-ground. In the year 2024-25, we continued strengthening existing partnerships while exploring new ones across SeaChange sites, particularly with government departments, civil society organisations, experts, and relevant industry actors to enhance collaboration and impact.

With the continued support of long-term funders like the Rainmatter Foundation and LGT-VP, we have been

able to design and implement strategic, site-specific interventions. This has involved hiring essential human resources, building organisational capacity to improve planning and execution of activities on the ground.

These efforts brought us closer to our ambitious goal of reaching a thousand hamlets and making a positive impact in over half of India's fishing villages and coastal ecosystems. Various sections of this report provide detailed insights into our SeaChange operations over the past year in Odisha, the Andaman Islands, and Tamil Nadu. Looking ahead, we will continue deepening our site-specific interventions while scaling the model to new villages within existing sites, strengthening our systems-based, integrated approach across these three critical landscapes.



#KhaneKeLiyeBachao - where culture meets conservation!



of food and resources and emphasises that effective marine conservation requires meaningful collaboration with coastal communities, whose livelihoods are deeply connected to ocean resources. Unlike traditional conservation models that often promote exclusionary measures like bans on animal consumption or fishing restrictions, *#KKLB* embraces diversity and coexistence as key aspects of our relationship with nature. The campaign highlights the urgent need to preserve these ecosystems for our survival and encourages readers to pursue environmental sustainability that is just, equitable, and sustainable.

Launched through digital platforms including emailers and social media, *#KKLB* has already reached over 5,000 individuals, sparking public engagement around the future of India's fisheries. Anchored by Machi Man, our virtual mascot, the campaign shared nine powerful insights drawn from 16 years of close collaboration with fisherfolk and engagement with the challenges facing marine ecosystems and coastal communities. These insights highlighted practical pathways for building a more inclusive and sustainable future for India's fisheries and coasts.

More than a campaign, *#KKLB* is emerging as a powerful metaphor to influence how we think about marine conservation - one that centres the knowledge, rights, and wellbeing of coastal communities. Looking ahead, Dakshin aims to deepen this work by expanding its reach, exploring new storytelling formats, and building strategic partnerships that can amplify its message. With the right support, *#KhaneKeLiyeBachao* can spark critical conversations nationwide, helping shift public narratives and policymaking towards more inclusive, community-centred approaches to marine conservation and fisheries in India.

Humanity has consistently relied on natural resources for both functional and cultural needs. This dependence on nature not only sustains our physical existence but also shapes our identities and well-being, both individually and collectively. Dakshin Foundation launched an institutional campaign called "*#KhaneKeLiyeBachao*" (*#KKLB*) that recognises and celebrates this profound connection with nature, through the lens of food.

#KhaneKeLiyeBachao embodies Dakshin Foundation's conservation philosophy, which views ecosystems as vital sources

Ocean Solutions - towards a Blue Carbon Atlas

Last year, we intensified our efforts towards Ocean Solutions, recognising the need for innovative, integrated approaches to address the interlinked challenges of blue growth, blue carbon, and climate change. As interest in harnessing Indian Ocean resources for economic growth grows, safeguarding against overexploitation while ensuring sustainable and equitable carbon pathways remains crucial. Dakshin aims to develop interdisciplinary, solutions-based work that identifies local challenges and opportunities across operational geographies through dynamic mapping and monitoring of India's blue carbon habitats, developing sustainable, ocean-based blue economy enterprise solutions, and promoting equitable, carbon-neutral development pathways.

During this year, the focus was on climate and coasts. This included putting together a comprehensive review to design a Blue Carbon Atlas for India, examining academic literature and databases on blue carbon in India. This assessment details the extent, quality, and potential of blue carbon ecosystems for sequestration and climate change mitigation. A state-wise blue carbon stock assessment and a geospatial database mapping carbon stocks are being developed in the form of an assessment report. This is supplemented by capacity building and training modules on climate for coastal communities. These initiatives strengthen our efforts to integrate climate resilience with ocean conservation and community wellbeing.





2.4

Climate Week NYC and Dasra Philanthropy Forum

Climate Week NYC, held annually alongside the United Nations General Assembly, is a global platform that brings together leaders, businesses, policymakers, and advocates to accelerate climate action and drive sustainable solutions. From September 22 to 29, 2024, this landmark event explored transformative strategies to address the climate crisis under the theme “It’s Time.” With over 600 activities, the week underscored the importance of collaboration and innovation in tackling environmental challenges.

Coinciding with Climate Week, the Dasra Philanthropy Forum (DPF) 2024 took place in New York, celebrating 25 years of impactful work. DPF is a premier U.S.-based platform fostering meaningful dialogues and collective action for positive change. The forum aligned its discussions with global sustainability efforts under the theme “Thriving Through Equity,” emphasising the importance of advancing equity and inclusion. The event recognised that true development can only be achieved when all communities

thrive. More than 250 changemakers, including philanthropists, civil society leaders, and experts, gathered to explore how equity and inclusion can drive sustainable development.

Dakshin was among 14 change makers supported by the Motwani Jadeja Impact Fellows to highlight their work in India at the Dasra Philanthropy Forum. These social impact leaders hailed from diverse sectors, and had an opportunity to engage in impactful discussions on scaling transformative solutions for India’s most pressing challenges. The fellows showcased India’s innovative solutions to global challenges across sectors such as climate action, education, healthcare, and youth leadership.

During the panel discussions, Dakshin’s team showcased its work in marine conservation, sustainable fisheries, and the management of coastal ecosystems.

2.5

Marine conservation through Ocean Stewards

Dakshin Foundation’s Ocean Stewards initiative aims to foster community-led stewardship for marine conservation by providing youth from small-scale fishing communities the right capacities and tools to play a pivotal role in managing local marine resources. The Ocean Stewards actively engage in supporting Dakshin’s conservation efforts by combining their local ecological knowledge with contemporary conservation tools and techniques to strengthen local resource management capacities.

Towards this, Ocean Stewards received targeted training from our teams on community-based natural resource management, with a specific focus on monitoring resource use, documenting local biodiversity, monitoring ecosystem changes, survey methodologies, scientific data collection, visual documentation, and study design. These training sessions deepened their understanding of coastal and marine ecosystems and equipped them with the right capacities needed to improve conservation outcomes while addressing local livelihood needs.

Multiple dialogues and discussions with Dakshin’s staff facilitate Ocean Stewards to pursue their interests on threats to local biodiversity, the interconnectedness between human and ecosystem health, marine resource use and abuse, coastal changes, and the role of communities in stewarding marine resources. Aside from leading Dakshin’s work on the ground, each Ocean Steward was encouraged to develop an individual research project on a locally relevant topic, develop their study design, collect data in various forms and document their progress in the vernacular. These projects have facilitated their ability to think critically, understand the value of documentation and evidence building and generated valuable insights into the various social and ecological challenges facing natural resource management.

Through our ongoing initiatives in the Palk Bay and Malvan, the Ocean Stewards continue to strengthen community resilience, foster environmental stewardship, and promote the sustainable use of coastal and marine resources.



3. DAKSHIN'S PROJECTS



3.1 ODISHA



SeaChange in Odisha

The Odisha coastline continues to be a key intervention site under Dakshin's SeaChange initiative, addressing interconnected challenges in fisheries management, fisher rights, community health, governance, livelihoods and wellbeing.

Over the past year, the focus has been on key themes such as governance, community wellbeing, and climate resilience. Governance efforts were aimed at identifying institutional gaps, strengthening fisher rights, and enhancing regulatory engagement. A key development was the three consultation meetings with coastal communities where leaders from the Ganjam landscape discussed fisheries management for small-scale fishers. Participants engaged with the newly drafted Odisha Marine Fishing Regulation Act (OMFRA) 2024, which had been opened for public comments, and deliberated on key issues affecting small-scale fishers in the region. Efforts on community well-being were through health screenings, awareness campaigns, while sports and youth engagement served as important mediums for improving social cohesion within the community. Climate change discussions and capacity-building workshops for field staff were conducted to equip communities with critical knowledge and initiate discussions on possible community-based solutions to navigate environmental shifts.

By embedding localised yet scalable models, Odisha's SeaChange programme will continue on cross-sectoral collaboration, participatory governance, and adaptive learning. These efforts ensure long-term sustainability and inclusive development, positioning SeaChange as a transformative approach to marine conservation and coastal resilience.



Building partnerships in Odisha

The coastal fishing communities of Odisha face complex socio-environmental challenges, requiring multi-stakeholder engagement across government, civil society, and the private sectors. Dakshin's SeaChange programme has fostered partnerships to address key issues in health, governance, fisheries management, and community resilience. Partnerships were built at the community level as well as at translocal levels through engagements at national and regional platforms.

Our health initiatives have strengthened collaboration with ASHA workers, ANMs, and Community Health Officers, leading to village-level screenings, awareness sessions, and occupational health programmes targeting fishers. In governance, a Panchayat Raj Institute study covering 20

panchayats identified gaps in fisher entitlements, guiding advocacy efforts with local governance bodies. Fisheries-related rights and entitlements were assessed through a scoping exercise in 27 villages, engaging block-level officials and traditional fish worker unions.

Civil society collaborations have expanded efforts in climate resilience and food security. Dakshin's participation in the Right to Food Convention in Odisha and the Climate and Ecology Justice Convention has helped align grassroots perspectives with larger policy frameworks. Partnerships at these two levels have helped set the ground for system-level change in Odisha on priority issues, namely strengthening livelihoods of the poor, improving people's participation, health and taking appropriate climate action.



Transforming lives by strengthening the dried fish sector in Odisha

The dried fish sector holds immense potential for transforming SSF wellbeing in the coastal districts of Odisha, particularly for fisherwomen. Compared to fresh fish, the dried fish sector has a lower ecological footprint, is gender inclusive, supports the SSF sector, and acts as an affordable source of protein and critical nutrients to millions of poor, marginalised communities living far away from the coast. Recognising this, Dakshin aims to strengthen the dried fish sector in Odisha to foster socio-economic resilience amongst small-scale fishing communities across Ganjam, Puri, and Jagatsinghpur districts. We have undertaken an end-to-end value chain analysis to map market linkages, understand the various market actors, pricing, product flow, value addition, human resources, and skill requirements. These were followed by focused surveys and interviews with different actors - from producers to retailers - to understand patterns in income and expenditure, the role of institutions and collectives, identify risks (occupational health risks, debt traps, external drivers, diversion of fish and so on), and technological gaps.

The lack of collaborative action amongst women producers, limited access to markets, control of prices by middlemen, poor connectivity, misconceptions associated with dried fish consumption, unhygienic preparation, lack of customised infrastructure and technological support, and decreasing

fish availability were identified as the major issues facing the dried fish sector in Odisha. As a pilot intervention, Dakshin aims to set up an Ocean Solutions Centre in Ganjam that will support an informal producer group involving 60 dried fish producers from 20 self-help groups in Ganjam district. Dakshin will help build direct linkages between the producers and retailers, thereby reducing price markups across the various nodes of the supply chain and ensuring maximum benefits for the producers.

In addition, Dakshin is addressing multiple interconnected issues in the dried fish sector. To strengthen our pilot dried fish-based enterprise, we incorporated feedback from various stakeholders, including Noliya community women, Anganwadi workers, and ASHA workers across five villages in the Puri and Ganjam districts. The study aimed to explore the connection between occupational health and livelihoods and identify key health challenges faced by actors in the dried fish sector.

Our surveys of the Humma dried fish market, one of the largest wholesale dried fish markets in India, led to the identification of poor waste management, lack of proper bathroom facilities, ill-designed infrastructure, and limited access to drinking water as major issues facing the women who use the market.





Monitoring olive ridleys - marine flagships in Odisha

Since 2008, Dakshin Foundation and the Indian Institute of Science (IISc), Bengaluru, in collaboration with the Odisha Forest Department, have been conducting long-term monitoring of olive ridley turtles in Rushikulya, Ganjam, Odisha. This effort, India's longest-running sea turtle monitoring programme, continues to track annual nesting numbers, offshore congregations, and habitat changes. The 2024-25 season builds on the long-term data, monitoring additional parameters to assess population trends and climate change impacts on hatchling fitness and sex ratios.

During the past year, our research included detailed beach mapping, increased spatial extent for offshore monitoring, and temperature monitoring along the nesting beach to understand how fine-scale temperature variation can influence hatchling quality. Offshore boat surveys provided critical data on turtle densities, while sand and

nest temperature data helped refine our understanding of hatchling sex ratio patterns. Our monitoring of solitary and mass nesting provides critical insights into population trends. Two large arribadas occurred in Rushikulya in 2025, with about half a million turtles nesting during the first arribada in February. Our findings underscore the growing threats of climate change and habitat degradation to these vulnerable populations.

In addition to research, Dakshin continued its capacity-building initiatives by training Odisha Forest Department personnel, local NGOs, and fishing community members in scientific monitoring techniques. These workshops covered arribada census methods, hatchery management, and community-based conservation strategies. Through outreach and training, we aim to foster conservation models that integrate local communities, ensuring the long-term protection of olive ridleys along Odisha's coast.





Promoting health and wellbeing in Ganjam

The SeaChange initiative in Odisha prioritised preventive community health and wellbeing as a key area of building resilience in coastal communities. Community health screenings for early non-communicable disease detection reached around 150 individuals in villages like Purnabandha, Podampetta, and Arjyapalli, through coordinated efforts with Accredited Social Health Activists (ASHA) workers, Community Health Officers (CHOs), and Auxiliary Nurse and Midwife (ANM). We also conducted NCD screening in collaboration with the Forest Department, where over 120 forest guards and community members of Purunabandha, Podampetta, and Gokurkuda were screened. This camp was done in association with key peripheral health systems like the Rashtriya Bal Swasthya Karyakram (RBSK) team from Khandadeuli. Additionally, discussions were held with women's groups to understand the occupational impact of dry fish processing on health. These meetings led to organising specific health screening camps for the women in the dry fish sector at an aggregator level at the Humma dry fish market, with over 52 participants.

As part of our ongoing initiatives with children and youth, we continue to have interactive sessions on various topics like mental health, adolescent health and life skills sessions with over 420 participants. A visualisation activity on Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH) was conducted in the villages of Nuagaon and Podampeta,

with the participation of 11 adolescents and 18 adults, to understand how community members envision their village waste-management system. In 2024, Menstrual Hygiene Management Day was observed in collaboration with VIEWS and UNICEF at Bhubaneswar and Ganjam on the theme of "Together for a #PeriodFriendlyWorld". The event saw active participation from 260 community members, including over 100 adolescent girls from various fishing villages.

As part of the Training of Trainers meetings for community catalysts, we initiated a training on the Community Scorecard activity, held by Mr Gouranga Mohapatra, health consultant, and State Convener, Jan Swasthya Abhiyan. This was to initiate community accountability for record-keeping and quality of health services across villages. A 2-day workshop with over 20 participants was organised on nutrition for community catalysts and key peripheral health staff, led by Kiruthika Selvaraj, Assistant Professor from the Indian Institute of Public Health, Bhubaneswar.

In Odisha, our approach is actively strengthening community-led health initiatives, enhancing resilience, and deepening engagement with local health systems, enabling coastal communities to claim their health rights and access essential services with greater confidence and continuity.

Strengthening the community through youth and sports

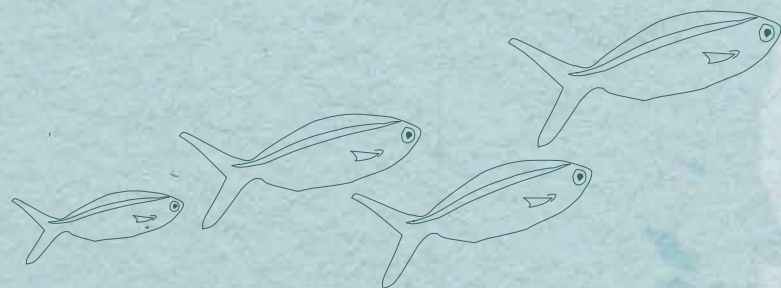
Sports interventions have emerged as powerful means for fostering leadership, resilience, and social cohesion among youth. Over the past year, Dakshin has actively engaged young boys and girls in structured sports programmes to promote holistic development in Odisha's coastal communities. Through initiatives like Ultimate Frisbee coach training camps, mixed-gender football sessions, and regular village-level sports activities, young participants have gained valuable teamwork, communication, and problem-solving skills.

Multiple sports sessions were conducted across three villages by introducing Ultimate Frisbee training in Podampetta, Nuagaon, and Purnabandha. So far, we have engaged with 70 children, providing them with a platform to learn, compete, and develop essential life skills. Additionally,

awareness sessions on gender stereotypes and related social issues were conducted with over 100 children (aged 12-13) in Nuagaon, Arjyapalli, Purnabandha, Podampeta, and Gokhurkhuda, enhancing community understanding and cohesion. Seven girls from across Podampeta and Nolia Nuagaon, along with Dakshin staff, attended a six-day all-women Ultimate Frisbee coaches' training camp in Hyderabad, focusing on game skills, leadership, and overcoming challenges faced by women in the sport. These efforts not only encourage gender inclusivity in sports but also serve as a medium to address broader issues like health, wellbeing, and youth empowerment. As sports continue to bridge gaps and strengthen community ties, they play a crucial role in building a resilient and motivated younger generation.



ANDAMAN AND NICOBAR ISLANDS



SeaChange in Andamans

The Andaman and Nicobar Islands (ANI) continue to be a focal region for Dakshin's integrated systems-based SeaChange interventions. In 2024-25, our work remained rooted in strengthening community-led governance, sustainable resource management, and social well-being through targeted engagements in South Andaman.

A key initiative has been the training of the first cohort of eight Youth Ambassadors (YAs) from Wandoor. These young leaders have taken active roles in improving solid waste management (SWM), promoting governance awareness, and advocating for sustainable menstrual health practices at the village level. Their efforts have led to impactful ground-level activities, including community awareness sessions, beach clean-ups, and household sessions promoting sustainable menstrual practices.

Dakshin has facilitated multi-stakeholder consultations towards improving SWM in the islands, bringing together the representatives from different administrative departments, including the Rural Development Department, Forest Department, Information, Publicity & Tourism Department, experts from technical institutes, local governance bodies, and community representatives to build action plans for addressing challenges in waste management in the islands. The cluster-level fisheries consultations with stakeholders from seven clusters of fishing villages have helped identify priority challenges, such as declining fish catch and limited departmental support, use of banned fishing gears and practices, leading to actionable plans for community-driven solutions.

The SeaChange model emphasises collaborative governance, and this year saw strengthened institutional partnerships. The Wandoor Panchayat and Dakshin secured technical assistance from DBRAIT, successfully repairing a baling machine. Meetings with the Assistant Commissioner (AC) of the Havelock Islands explored expanding Dakshin's SWM approach to new island clusters. At the same time,

discussions with the Director of Rural Development focused on hiring sanitation workers and improving user fee collection for long-term sustainability.

Community engagement remained central to our approach, with Youth Ambassadors (YAs) leading on-ground action to bring in behavioural change across Wandoor Gram Panchayat. Eight trained young women led door-to-door awareness campaigns, household surveys covering 784 homes, and community sessions on source segregation and user-fee compliance. As part of the 'Swachhata Hi Seva' campaign and beyond, they organised 17 clean-up drives across beaches and waste hotspots, mobilising over 480 residents. To reach a large section of the community and maintain community-sustained engagement on waste management, YAs adopted innovative tools such including street plays, IEC posters, SWM-based games, etc. Collaborating with sanitation workers and ward members, they mapped problem areas, identified expansion zones for collection, and supported monitoring of user behaviour. The YAs also initiated sustainable menstruation awareness in the community through sessions that resulted in enabling 127 community women to transition to menstrual cups, reducing 228.6 kg of annual sanitary waste. YAs also partnered with local youth clubs, Gram Panchayat and government institutions such as the Coast Guards to conduct clean-up drives in Wandoor.

The holistic approach of SeaChange extends to mental health, with dedicated sessions for adolescent girls in Junglighat, and to sports-based youth development, with football coaching sessions in Wandoor to enhance community cohesion.

As the initiative progresses, the focus remains on enabling community leadership in sustainable governance, fostering institutional linkages, and ensuring resilient, community-driven environmental stewardship in the ANI region.



Enhancing health and wellbeing of coastal communities

The coastal communities of the Andaman and Nicobar Islands continue to face challenges in accessing essential health services due to their geographical remoteness. To address key health concerns and improve community wellbeing, several targeted initiatives have been undertaken, fostering local leadership and promoting collective action. In 2024-25, the work on community health and wellbeing expanded with a focus on adolescent health and mental health.

In Junglighat and Wandoor, screening camps were organised with over 80 participants for early detection of non-communicable diseases in association with the primary healthcare centre and the medical college. A Training of Trainers (ToT) session was conducted in April for a total of ten participants on sexual health and mental health. Another ToT was organised with peripheral health workers, like Anganwadi workers, on health behaviour change communication that had 19 participants.

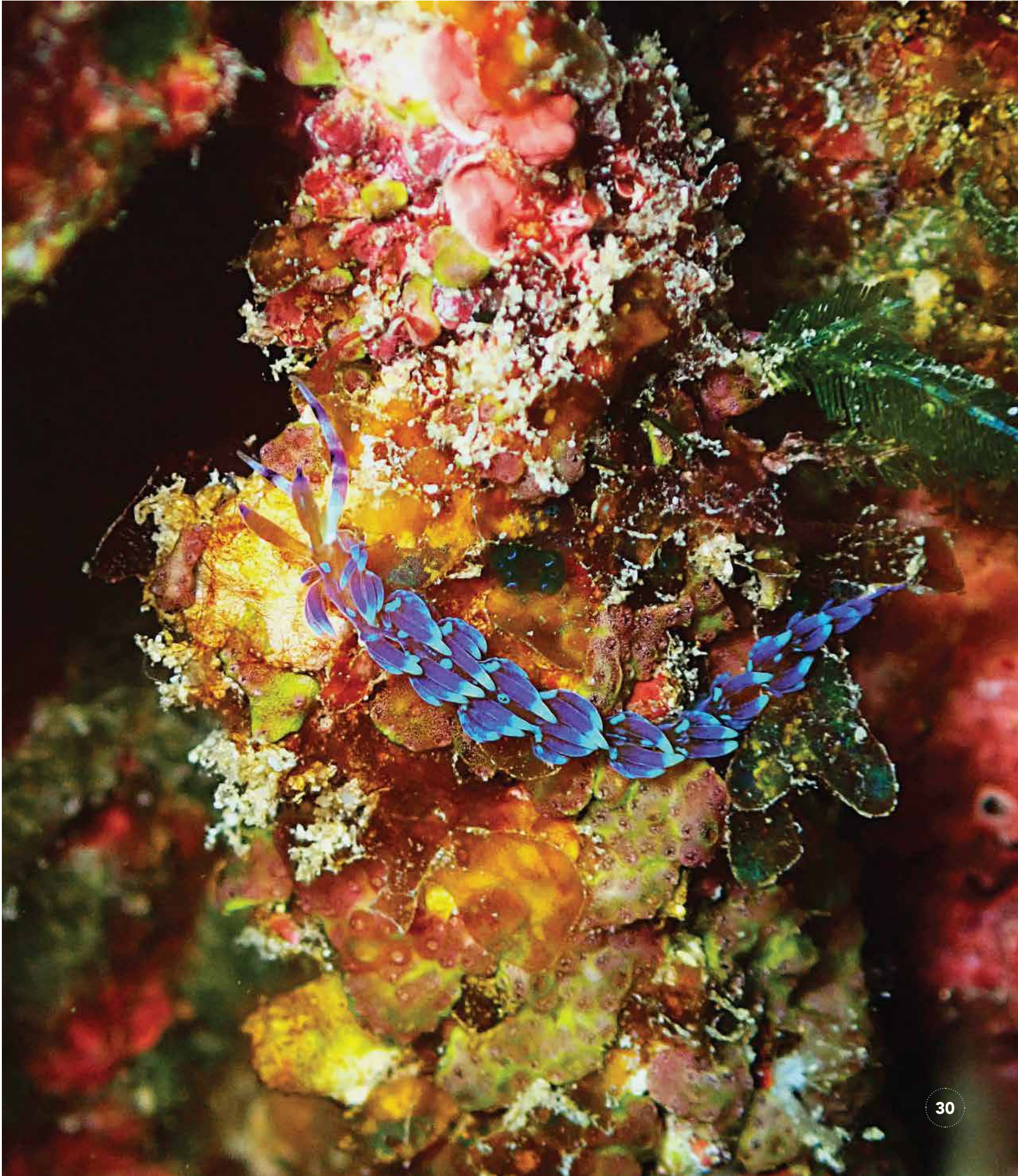
Mental health sessions aimed at enhancing emotional regulation were conducted in Junglighat, reaching 35 children. Alongside this, sessions on adolescent and sexual health were held in both Junglighat and Wandoor, engaging around 80 children. These sessions created safe spaces to discuss health concerns, promote emotional wellbeing, and raise awareness around adolescent health. To strengthen engagement, health initiatives were integrated with sports activities, drawing in more youth. This continued through 38 indoor sessions combined with outdoor football sessions engaging 80 children from Junglighat in discussions around environment, mental health, nutrition, identity, climate change, waste, and adolescent wellbeing. The year concluded with a football tournament organised in Wandoor as part of the ‘IslandActive’ initiative, which included a one-day event at the Wandoor Panchayat and school ground, consisting of football matches, the inauguration of a Community Library and Youth Resource Centre in Wandoor, as well as interactive stalls themed on waste management, environment and health. The football tournament resulted in the participation of six Senior Men’s teams from Dakshin’s football coaching programme in Wandoor and five external teams from different parts of Port Blair.

These initiatives, grounded in community-led action and participatory decision-making, contribute toward bridging gaps in healthcare access and fostering healthier communities in the islands.

Monitoring marine ecosystems and species through LTEO

Coastal and island ecosystems, such as those in the Andaman Islands, are particularly sensitive to environmental changes caused by both natural and human-induced factors. With increasing pressures, these remarkably resilient systems are undergoing changes that can severely undermine their functions and services. Dakshin Foundation is committed to long-term research and monitoring of these ecosystems, focusing on species that function as ecosystem engineers and play a vital role in sustaining island communities. One of Dakshin’s key initiatives is the Long Term Ecological Observatories (LTEO) programme, a nationwide, multi-institutional effort launched by the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEF&CC) to enhance scientific understanding of marine ecosystems and their response to climate change. This project, conducted in collaboration with the Indian Institute of Science (IISc) and Nature Conservation Foundation (NCF), aims to understand the impact of climate change on coral reefs, seagrass meadows and sea turtles in the Andaman Islands.

As part of this work, between November 2023 and February 2024, Dakshin conducted coral reef surveys at ten permanent sites in the Mahatma Gandhi Marine National Park (MGMNP) as a continuation of existing reef monitoring efforts. Further, given the increasing recognition of sediments as a major stressor on coral reefs, the team deployed SedPods and TurfPods (locally fabricated modules that replicate reef surfaces) at these sites to assess sediment accumulation on coral and turf algae surfaces. Additionally, a project funded by the Rufford Foundation supported the development of a submersible electronic vacuum to collect sediment samples from four reef sites.



To further investigate ecosystem dynamics, the team used underwater video surveys at twelve sites to document herbivorous fish feeding behaviour, an important contributor to reef health, in relation to sediment and turf conditions.important contributor to reef health, in relation to sediment and turf conditions. In May 2024, during the fourth global mass bleaching event, rapid surveys at eight sites in the MGMNP confirmed the onset of bleaching, closely linked to rising sea temperatures. These efforts provide crucial data for informing conservation strategies and mitigating future environmental threats.

Addressing human-crocodile conflict

Human-crocodile conflict remains a significant conservation challenge in the Andaman Islands, with increasing interactions resulting in injuries, loss of life, and threats to livelihoods. In collaboration with the Madras Crocodile Bank Trust (MCBT), the Indian Institute of Science (IISc), and independent experts, Dakshin is

working on innovative strategies to reduce these conflicts while ensuring both human safety and ecological outcomes. Over the years, our efforts have included conflict incident surveys, the creation of risk maps, the development of best-practice guidelines to deal with conflict, and various studies on the causes and patterns of conflict.

Our long-term goal is to develop an Intelligent Decision Support System (IDSS) to aid in conservation conflict resolution across the Andaman Islands. Additionally, Dakshin has compiled detailed data on crocodile attacks, analysing the circumstances of each incident through survivor interviews and discussions with victims’ families. We are also leveraging AI-based modelling to develop predictive tools that enhance our understanding of human-crocodile interactions and support informed decision-making. By integrating research, technology, and community engagement, this project aims to establish a scalable conflict mitigation model that balances conservation goals with the needs of local communities.

Solid waste management through youth-led actions and institutional partnerships

Solid Waste Management (SWM) emerged as a critical entry point under Dakshin’s SeaChange initiative in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands during 2024-25. Building on previous groundwork, efforts of this year focused on deepening community engagement, institutional collaboration, and strengthening waste management in the South Andaman region. Eight Youth Ambassadors (YAs) from Wandoor underwent focused training on sustainable menstruation products and were equipped with practical skills in participatory resource mapping, data collection, interviewing, documentation, street plays, and digital tools such as Microsoft Word, Microsoft Excel, KoboCollect, and Canva. Field visits and hands-on waste segregation activities further enhanced their learning, and they undertook a range of activities including organising household awareness campaigns, conducting household surveys to understand waste management practices, and leading clean-up drives across in collaboration with the Gram Panchayat and community members. Their work not only enhanced community awareness on proper waste segregation and disposal practices but also focused on enhancing the behavioural aspect of the community on user fees. They used different methods like games, street plays and quizzes to sensitise community members and children. As part of their engagement, the YAs conducted awareness sessions on sustainable menstrual products for women at the village and household levels. Over the past year, 370 women have been introduced to sustainable menstrual products. The efforts of our Youth Ambassadors have led to 127 women adopting menstrual cups and 113 women switching to alternative, eco-friendly products. These efforts aim to normalise conversations on menstrual hygiene while promoting sustainable alternatives.

Dakshin continued to strengthen its partnerships with local governance institutions and technical bodies to work on the waste processing issue at Material Recovery Centres. For instance, on issues related to the baling machine, which was a major bottleneck for processing of solid waste in Wandoor Gram Panchayat, Dakshin collaborated with Dr B.R. Ambedkar Institute of Technology (DBRAIT) for technical assistance and also facilitated the supply of spare parts.



The SeaChange model also emphasises collaborative governance, and this year saw strengthened institutional partnerships. Meetings with the Directorate of Rural Development and Panchayat Raj (RDPRI) focused on addressing crucial operational challenges in SWM centres, such as equipment maintenance and repair, improving human and financial resources available for SWM and dealing with difficult waste streams like glass, while the Assistant Commissioner of Havelock requested Dakshin to replicate the SWM model in new panchayats. The annual ‘Swachhata Hi Seva’ campaign served as a platform to reinforce community-wide participation, with YAs leading awareness events. Additionally, Dakshin is working with entities such as the Forest Department to regularise clean-ups of critical coastal zones, further strengthening cross-sector collaboration. These collaborations have helped Dakshin bring together a wide range of stakeholders on a common platform, such as multi-stakeholder consultation on SWM and initiate dialogue over shared responsibilities.

As we move ahead, Dakshin remains committed to SWM within a broader framework of participatory governance and environmental resilience, with empowered youth and strong local institutions.



Monitoring elasmobranchs in ANI

The long-term monitoring project of elasmobranchs in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands aims to document crucial long-term elasmobranch fisheries data in the region. Ongoing sampling efforts are focused on recording species diversity, abundance, detailed biological data and fishing effort.

Since November 2024, the second season of monitoring has been carried out at Junglighat. Dedicated training was provided to field assistants in species identification, data collection, and measurement techniques. Efforts are underway to compile an identification guide tailored specifically to the Junglighat landings, further enhancing data accuracy and aiding outreach initiatives. This project continues to provide critical insights essential for the effective management of elasmobranch populations, contributing to sustainable fisheries practices in the region.

Assessment of the conservation status of seahorses

The project ‘Assessment of the conservation status of seahorses of Andaman and Nicobar Islands through underwater surveys and local ecological knowledge’ commenced in September 2023. Supported by The Rufford Foundation,

the study employed a combination of semi-structured interviews with local fishers and SCUBA divers, alongside detailed underwater surveys. Local Ecological Knowledge (LEK) provided by these key stakeholders offered crucial insights into population trends, habitat preferences, and potential threats to seahorses in the region.

Preliminary findings indicate that seahorses are frequently found in degraded habitats, including rubble, dead coral, broken sponges, and even anthropogenic debris. Reports from fishers highlight the impact of trawling activities, which may have significantly contributed to the decline in seahorse populations. While many fishers report releasing accidentally caught seahorses back into the sea, concerns remain about their survival post-release.

As part of community engagement, we have initiated sessions designed to inform local communities, fishermen, and divers about the ecological roles seahorses play and the necessity of sustainable practices. As the project nears completion, the findings will contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of seahorse conservation needs in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands. As part of our outreach efforts, we produced a poster titled ‘Seahorses of India,’ which describes essential details about this group, including their habitat, reproductive biology, and the various species found in Indian waters.



Centre for Island Sustainability

The Centre for Island Sustainability (CIS) continues its mission to support and facilitate island-based research and outreach programmes from the Andaman Nicobar Environment Team (ANET) field base. CIS engages with researchers interested in exploring the multidisciplinary nature of island systems and aids in data collection to enrich both researchers’ and institutional knowledge. Over the last four decades, the Andaman Islands have faced repeated and intensifying climatic disturbances and increasing anthropogenic pressures. These issues have critically affected the islands’ ecosystems, such as coral reefs, mangroves and littoral rainforests. In response, CIS has initiated the Sentinels Project, which aims to build grassroots capacities for understanding, monitoring, and conserving ecosystems from the reef to rainforest in the Andaman Islands.

The Sentinels Project emphasises democratising scientific practice by creating accessible data collection methodologies and actively involving local communities in the monitoring and management of marine resources. By integrating local participation, CIS enhances the capacity for sustained conservation and environmental management, ensuring the islands’ resilience and sustainability. CIS remains dedicated to educational and outreach initiatives, aiming to inspire students, local youth, and communities by providing opportunities to engage with relevant environmental and developmental issues, particularly emphasising a holistic systems-thinking approach. The Centre for Island Sustainability continues to be primarily funded through the generous support of Sundaram Finance Limited.

Monitoring leatherback turtles in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands

Leatherback turtle (*Dermochelys coriacea*), the largest species of sea turtle in the world, nests in India only along the beaches of the Andaman and Nicobar Islands (ANI). Since 2008, Dakshin Foundation, along with the Andaman and Nicobar Forest Department, Andaman Nicobar Environment Team (ANET), and Centre for Ecological Sciences (CES), Indian Institute of Science (IISc), has been part of a long-term monitoring programme in Little Andaman. This initiative, which uses conventional tagging, satellite telemetry, and genetic studies, also contributes to the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change’s Long Term Ecological Observatories (LTEO) programme.

Between April and December 2024, efforts focused on outreach and institutional engagement. Over 950 students across 15 schools and colleges participated in awareness sessions covering various aspects of sea turtle biology and conservation. These sessions included documentary screenings in Little Andaman, interactive Q&A segments, and the distribution of various outreach materials. In late 2024, Dakshin also conducted a capacity-building programme for the frontline Forest Department staff in Betapur and Karmatang ranges, supported by the Mayabunder Divisional Forest Officer.

Field surveys resumed in March 2025. A daytime survey in West Bay recorded 117 leatherback and 54 olive ridley nests, with signs of predation observed in 110 leatherback nests. At South Bay, 56 leatherback nests were recorded, of which 42 were impacted by predators such as monitor lizards and wild boars.

This remains the longest-running leatherback monitoring initiative in the Northern Indian Ocean. The programme’s integrated approach, combining field research, capacity-building, and education, continues to support the long-term conservation of these endangered turtles and the island habitats they depend on.



Promoting sports for coastal communities in ANI

The Sports and Community Wellbeing team continues to engage youth from coastal communities in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands through football, creating safe and inclusive spaces that foster physical skills, teamwork, and leadership. Building on past successes, we have expanded our initiatives in Wandoor and Junglighat, providing structured opportunities for young people to participate in sports and community activities.

This year, our football programme in Wandoor has seen increased participation, with regular coaching sessions aimed at improving technical skills and teamwork. A total of about 100 coaching sessions were conducted, focusing on skill-building, game strategy and teamwork. So far, around 200 children have been engaged through outdoor football sessions across Wandoor and Junglighat. Recently, we had our under-17 boys team participate in their first externally organised local football tournament in Port Blair.

They drew widespread appreciation from the audience for their performance.

Beyond structured training, we collaborated with partners to integrate sports with environmental awareness and community building. A session was organised for children and youth in Wandoor, where 32 children participated in a screening of “Coral Reefs” by RoundGlass Sustain, followed by an interactive discussion on marine ecosystems. A community tournament was organised along with the opening of the Community Library, which drew over 200 children from Wandoor and Port Blair to participate in football matches and storytelling sessions.

Through these interventions, sports continue to serve as a powerful medium for fostering leadership, teamwork, and community engagement among the youth of the Andaman and Nicobar Islands.



Fisheries management in ANI

During 2024-25, Dakshin’s SeaChange initiative deepened its engagement with fishing communities across the South Andaman region, with a strong focus on participatory fisheries governance. A series of cluster-level consultation meetings was held in key fishing villages, including Wandoor, Hopetown, Collinpur, Mithakhari, Beodnabad, and Shoal Bay, where fishers from 3-4 neighbouring fishing villages assembled. These meetings served as critical platforms for fishers to collectively identify challenges such as declining fish catch, use of harmful fishing gears, lack of access to government schemes, and pressing issues around safety and sanitation. The collaborative discussions led to the formulation of preliminary action plans, with an emphasis on strengthening local leadership through fisher welfare committees. Consultations with fishers from 24 fishing villages of South Andaman were conducted through these meetings, and an issue compilation was undertaken based on the minutes from each cluster meeting.

These efforts continued in the form of follow-up meetings after cluster-level consultations. In Mithakhali and Burmanallah, Dakshin facilitated discussions on the formation and registration of fishers’ welfare societies and the support required for legal processes. In Wandoor, a detailed inquiry into the dissolution of past fisheries societies helped identify gaps in institutional continuity, while fishers expressed renewed interest in reviving a functional collective. On the policy front, Dakshin facilitated discussion of the ‘Draft Policy on Comprehensive Development of Fisheries of A&N Islands’ and submitted formal policy recommendations to the Directorate of Fisheries. Dakshin also submitted comments on the ‘Draft Mariculture Policy for Andaman & Nicobar Islands 2025’.

TAMIL NADU



Tamil Nadu - moving towards SeaChange

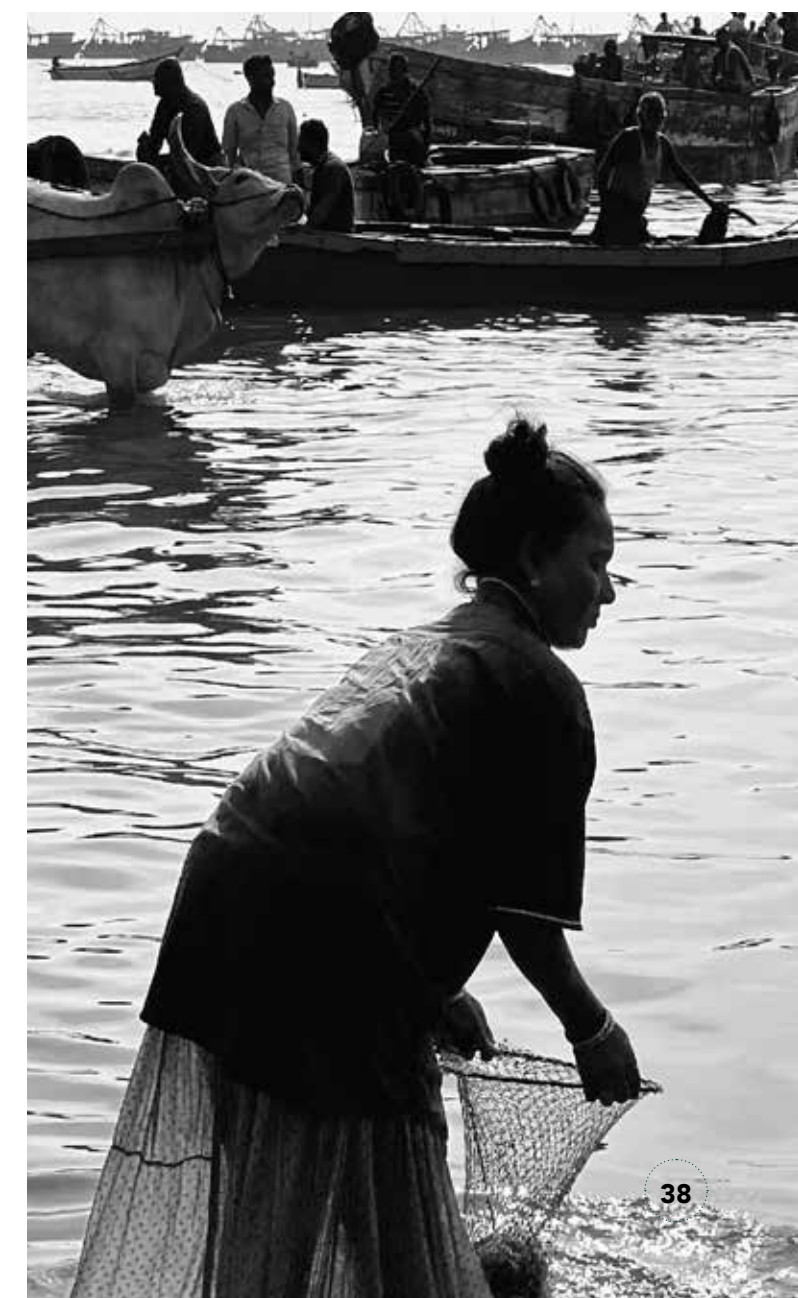
In 2024-25, Dakshin Foundation continued its engagement in the Palk Bay region, focusing on strengthening partnerships with government authorities, local communities, and civil society organisations. One of the key events included the conclusion of the 2nd cohort of Coastal Grassroots Fellowship (CGF). The closure of the fellowship was celebrated to mark the impact of the initiative, which was attended by senior officials from the Ramanathapuram District Collector's office. The guests included Tmt. Prabhavathi, Deputy Director, Fisheries and Fishermen Welfare Department, Ramanathapuram, Mr Abdulkader Jailani, Assistant Director, Fisheries and Fishermen Welfare Department, Rameswaram, and Mrs Thenmozhi, District Social Welfare Officer, along with several panchayat leaders and other fisher leaders from Rameshwaram Island. In 2023-2024, Dakshin collaborated with the District Collector's office to improve community welfare and strengthen coastal governance and brought into action the Neithal Convergence Unit (NCU). To further this collaboration, an NCU coordinator, embedded in the collectorate and who works in close coordination with the District Administration, District Department of Fisheries and other district-level government officials, has been assigned. Efforts are being made in consultation with the National Informatics Centre (NIC) officer and the Fisheries Department to launch the NCU dashboard on the government website to integrate real-time data and improve decision-making.

As a part of this collaboration, efforts are being made in consultation with the National Informatics Centre (NIC) Officer and the Fisheries Department to launch the NCU dashboard on the government website to integrate real-time data and improve decision-making. Another key collaboration was with Saahas Zero Waste to conduct a scoping study on plastics in Palk Bay. As a result of this study, we are engaging with Panchayat Presidents in Morepannai and Kadalur to initiate waste management initiatives, including establishing dry waste collection points.

Dakshin continues to build local capacity by conducting skill-building workshops for Ocean Stewards and surveyors on data visualisation, fisheries monitoring, and blue swimmer crab co-management.

As a part of its efforts towards expanding its work, Dakshin engaged nine women from the fishing villages of Palk Bay and the Gulf of Mannar to undertake two surveys on penalties and compensation under conservation laws and on barriers to access schemes and entitlements by SSF.

Partnerships with educational institutions such as schools and ALT EFF continued to bring in community awareness through film screenings. These combined efforts reflect Dakshin's commitment to sustainable coastal livelihoods, environmental stewardship, and inclusive governance in the Palk Bay region.



Ripple effects of the Coastal Grassroots Fellowship

Dakshin’s Coastal Grassroots Fellowship (CGF), incubated by the Communities and Resource Governance Programme, continues to create lasting impact in this landscape. The CGF was designed to harness the leadership potential among women from SSF communities by strengthening leadership skills, narrative building and representational skills. It also provided safe spaces and structured opportunities for women to widen and deepen their understanding of local governance, coastal commons and livelihoods that are central to SSF ways of living. In 2024-25, the fellowship’s ripple effect was evident through the on-ground work done by the fellows and their continued engagement with Dakshin’s initiatives. This took many forms, including representing Ramanathapuram’s fishing communities’ issues at regional meetings for women-in-fisheries, by participating in public meetings and consultations held by government officials, as well as by quasi-governmental bodies. Several local impacts are visible from the work of the CGFs, such as facilitating community access to schemes, participating in coastal commons actions and supporting livelihood and waste management awareness activities in the region.

The fellowship concluded with a closure event in May 2024, which was attended by the Deputy Director and

Assistant Director of Fisheries, where certificates of completion were distributed, and community concerns were addressed. Dakshin also organised an exposure visit for fellows from Nagapattinam (Tamil Nadu), Ramanathapuram (Tamil Nadu), and Ganjam (Odisha). During this visit, the fellows engaged with organisations and people’s collectives such as Neelam Books, Herstories, Coastal Resource Centre and Thannatchi, expanding their understanding of social impact initiatives. Additionally, photographs captured by fellows from Ganjam and Nagapattinam were exhibited at Lalit Kala Academy, where the fellows shared their experiences of documenting coastal life during the exhibition’s inaugural function.

In Odisha, four fellows are now working with Dakshin as community resource persons helping Dakshin expand the efforts on-ground in areas of health, livelihood and governance, significantly contributing to community awareness and community participation by engaging with fisherfolk, youth groups, SHGs, and children, village committees, community health workers, and Anganwadi workers. In Tamil Nadu, the four Grassroot Fellows are now working with Dakshin as Ocean Stewards, helping in community engagement on the co-management of fisheries resources.



Bringing system transformation through NCU

Significant progress has been made in advancing the Neithal Convergence Unit (NCU) initiative in Palk Bay. Using the publicly available CMFRI census data of 2010 and 2016, we are developing a dashboard to support data-driven decision-making and host comprehensive socioeconomic data at the village level. This dashboard will present 20-30 key development and demographic indicators in an interactive format. The larger objective of the dashboard is to have a dedicated webpage, integrating additional data sets such as uptake of schemes and subsidies, disaggregated fish landing data collected by the Sagarmित्रas and real-time market prices of fish.

In addition to data visualisation, the NCU aims to streamline grievance redressal by enabling zonal officers to collect and track complaints in a structured format. Currently, Dakshin has access to 400 registered grievances at the District Collector’s office, and key issues registered through grievances are being analysed. By expanding access to grievance data from the past 2-3 years, the NCU will help identify regional and temporal trends and prioritise support where needed.

Following a recent meeting with the NIC Officer, technical refinements are underway to improve dashboard functionality and ensure seamless integration with Tableau visualisations. Once finalised, the dashboard will be hosted on a publicly accessible platform, providing key insights to multiple stakeholders.

Assessing interconnectedness of plastics and livelihoods

Continuing on the scoping study that was carried out in 2023, Dakshin’s focus in 2024 was more towards working collaboratively with panchayats and government departments on recommendations to address the identified issues. Findings from the study identified gaps in waste collection systems, particularly for low-value plastics like MLP, which often end up in dumpsites or are burned. Key recommendations included establishing dry waste



pre-processing units covering eight panchayats, setting up dedicated collection points for fishing nets, and reviving inactive aggregation centres to improve plastic waste recovery. Engaging local communities through education and behaviour change campaigns to promote better waste management practices was also recommended. The study further advised leveraging Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) funds and introducing user fees to sustain waste collection and processing efforts. Last year, Dakshin staff discussed these findings internally and presented the scoping study report to the panchayat presidents of Morepannai and Kadalur Panchayat and the municipal officers of the Rameswaram Municipality to discuss the study’s findings. Some of the recommendations that have been discussed in consultation with panchayat presidents include establishing a collection point, creating a dry waste pre-processing unit with eight panchayats, and promoting better SWM practices through education and behaviour change campaigns. Currently, these action points to address the plastic issue are being documented and will be presented to the District Collectorate to take intervention forward.



Ocean Stewards in action

In 2024-25, Ocean Stewards in Palk Bay played a pivotal role in strengthening community-led marine resource management. To build their capacity, Dakshin conducted an orientation workshop introducing the Ocean Stewards to resource monitoring, co-management concepts, and practical approaches for data collection. Seven Ocean Stewards, along with a community intern and two Community Resource Persons, attended these sessions, which concluded with a roadmap outlining their roles and planned activities for the year.

Following the workshop, Ocean Stewards participated in field visits focused on reduction fisheries, where they observed the flow of catch from boats to traders and improved their skills in species identification- a crucial aspect of marine resource monitoring. Additionally, an interactive workshop introduced the stewards to monitoring of elasmobranchs, reduction fisheries, and

blue swimmer crabs. The workshop also highlighted the objectives of Dakshin's upcoming 'Transform Bottom Trawling' project and participatory mapping methods.

To enhance their documentation skills, a photography workshop was conducted, featuring the screening of 'Fishing Palk Bay' to highlight the importance of visual storytelling. The stewards used these skills to reflect on their progress and plan individual projects for the next six months.

Ocean Stewards also played a key role in knowledge exchange during World Fisheries Day 2024, sharing their field experiences with Dakshin's survey team working on government schemes and subsidies. This ongoing collaboration continues to empower Ocean Stewards as community leaders and custodians of marine resources.

Understanding the reduction fisheries in the Palk Bay

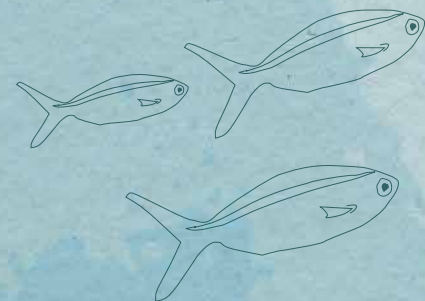
The Palk Bay is a shallow stretch of sea between Tamil Nadu and Sri Lanka. The presence of vast seagrass meadows is a vital fishing zone known for its marine biodiversity and traditional fisheries that sustain thousands of small-scale fishers. However, mechanised trawling, introduced in the 1970s, has significantly degraded marine habitats and disrupted livelihoods, intensifying competition and resource conflicts. A recent concerning trend is the increasing diversion of bycatch, previously discarded, toward reduction fisheries for fish meal and fish oil (FMFO) production. This shift from species-specific fishing to biomass extraction undermines local food security, as fish once consumed by coastal communities are now processed for aquaculture and poultry feed.

In response, Dakshin Foundation has initiated research to better understand the reduction fisheries and the dynamics of trawl fishing in Palk Bay. Studies revealed that 69% of nutrient-rich, low-value fish from midwater trawlers are now redirected to FMFO production, bypassing local consumption.

As part of this effort, we have conducted participatory mapping to identify trawl fishing grounds and assess their ecological impacts. Trophic level analyses are underway to evaluate the effects of trawl fishing on marine food webs and ecological communities. Additionally, Dakshin is working closely with Ocean Stewards from local communities to document the challenges posed by trawl fishing and capture stakeholder perspectives to explore sustainable pathways. Other ongoing activities include low-value bycatch monitoring at the Mandapam fish landing centre, co-developing training modules, and conducting workshops on skills such as sampling protocols, data management, documentation, and communication. The project will culminate in a handbook and a video documentary to raise awareness and promote sustainable fisheries practices, fostering resilience among coastal communities in the Palk Bay.



LAKSHADWEEP



Participatory governance of Lakshadweep's fisheries

Dakshin has been committed to promoting participatory fisheries governance in the Lakshadweep Islands for over a decade. While on-ground activities were limited this year, our long-term efforts continue to support community-based fisheries management through engagement with local fishers, the Lakshadweep Fisheries Department, and fisheries cooperatives.

Our Community-Based Fisheries Monitoring (CBFM) initiative remains a cornerstone of our work in the region. Despite challenges in sustained data collection, created by shifts in fisheries economies, we are working towards reactivating voluntary monitoring efforts with pole-and-line (P&L) fishers to track key fisheries indicators. These efforts are critical for strengthening community networks and informing fisheries management strategies.

Recognising the ecological significance of baitfish in P&L fisheries, we continue to build on our

earlier initiatives, including participatory resource mapping and the development of a long-term baitfish monitoring strategy in collaboration with local divers. The maps created in previous years remain accessible to the community at key locations, such as jetties and marketplaces, ensuring ongoing knowledge sharing.

Additionally, our work on Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK) in Minicoy underscores the erosion of customary fisheries practices and highlights the need for their integration into contemporary fisheries governance. We aim to expand this documentation and facilitate discussions on incorporating traditional management practices into policy dialogues.

Despite limited field activities this year, we remain committed to advancing community-led, science-based fisheries management in Lakshadweep. Looking ahead, we aim to reinvigorate our initiatives, strengthen stakeholder collaborations, and continue adapting to the evolving socio-ecological landscape of the region.



Lagoon Fest 2024

In 2024, Dakshin Foundation, in collaboration with local communities, government departments, and tourism operators, organised the Lagoon Fest on Agatti Island, Lakshadweep - a three-day initiative that celebrated the interdependence of island cultures and fragile marine ecosystems. While Lakshadweep's coral atolls, lagoons, and beaches are well-recognised for their natural beauty, the festival foregrounded the lived experiences of the islanders who serve as their primary custodians. Activities included a large-scale reef clean-up that removed over 800 kilograms of waste under the "Use Bins Save Billam" campaign, community-led recreational events, a lagoon-themed painting competition for children, and a food festival that showcased the nutritional and cultural connections between the sea and island life. A panel discussion with senior fishers further underscored the local and traditional knowledge of the community, while cultural performances concluded the programme with strong community participation. Beyond the celebrations, the Lagoon Fest was a platform for dialogue, intergenerational learning, and collective action. Bringing the various communities of the islands together, the Lagoon Fest helped revitalise the connections between the people and the sea, and celebrate Dakshin's efforts to strengthen participatory action.

Monitoring green turtles and seagrass

Green sea turtles are vital herbivores that forage and nest in Lakshadweep's lagoons. A population surge in the 1990s, likely due to conservation efforts and other factors, led to overgrazing and the depletion of key seagrass species like *Thalassia hemprichii* and *Cymodocea rotundata*. This habitat loss impacted local fisheries, reducing baitfish abundance and creating conflicts with fishers who blamed declining catches on turtles.

Dakshin Foundation's long-term monitoring project, in collaboration with the Department of Environment and Forests, Lakshadweep, has tracked turtle and seagrass dynamics since 2012. Findings show that turtles deplete meadows in one lagoon before moving to the next, resulting

in fragmented seagrass habitats dominated by fast-growing species.

To complement the in-water surveys and better understand green turtle foraging movements, Dakshin launched a photo-identification (Photo-ID) study with local scuba divers, capturing unique facial scute patterns for individual identification. Additionally, Dakshin partnered with Arcturus Inc. to test an indigenous GPS LoRa radio telemetry system for tracking turtles.

Data from 2018 to 2024 revealed that the green turtle densities in Lakshadweep showed notable spatial and temporal variations. Peaks in turtle abundance corresponded with seagrass availability, though competitive feeding phases led turtles to consume entire plants, fragmenting the meadows. Dakshin's use of photo-identification and telemetry systems has provided valuable insights into turtle movements, underscoring the need for continued research to support conservation strategies.



3.5 MAHARASHTRA



Understanding reduction fisheries in Malvan

In 2024-25, Dakshin continued its work on the reduction fisheries in Malvan by strengthening local capacity through the onboarding and training of two Ocean Stewards. As pre-preparation, training modules were developed for training Ocean Stewards, tailored to the needs and socioeconomic realities of the Malvan land-seascape. The Ocean Stewards underwent orientation training where they were introduced to practical concepts and philosophies related to conservation and sustainable governance of coastal and marine resources. They went through a series of training, including workshops on data collection, identification of common fishes and elasmobranchs, data entry, post-hoc analysis, and basics of data curation. Discussions on the ethics of data collection, interviews, and photography further informed them about responsible research practices and introduced them to qualitative tools for data collection. With support from LGT-VP, Dakshin has developed and

standardised data entry protocols using Kobo Toolbox, enabling the capture of detailed information, including specimen photos, fishing effort, and fishing operation data. The Ocean Stewards are now conducting regular sampling and interviews with fishers, contributing to our long-term monitoring efforts in Malvan.

As part of our Marine Flagships outreach, Dakshin collaborated with All Living Things Environmental Film Festival (ALT EFF) 2024 to screen '*Echoes of the Swiftlets*' for 60 seventh-grade students in a Malvan school, followed by a lively quiz session. Ocean Stewards assisted the programmatic team in facilitating the screening. Going forward, we envision Ocean Stewards supporting a detailed community needs assessment exercise as we prepare to extend the SeaChange model to Malvan.





Monitoring elasmobranchs in Malvan

From September 2024 onward, bycatch monitoring continued in Malvan, Maharashtra. The sampling followed an alternate-month protocol, which spanned four months. This phase expanded efforts by actively engaging with local fishers to record elasmobranch species caught in gillnets, trawlers, and shore seines. Until now, we have sampled a total of 220 landings and documented 619 individual elasmobranchs belonging to 22 species (9 shark species and 13 batoid species). Notably, 3 new species of rays - Javanese cownose ray (*Rhinoptera javanica*), short-tail whipray (*Maculabatis bineeshi*), and Pakistan whipray (*Maculabatis arabica*) were identified in the region for the first time by Dakshin Foundation.

Additionally, a project funded by the Inlaks Shivdasani Foundation supported the initiation of a fisheries-independent technique to locate potential elasmobranch nursery sites. We noted the point location of 26 young-of-the-year (YOY) individuals from five species, which were tagged and released: spadenose shark, scaly whipray, spotted eagle ray, widenose guitarfish, and blue-spotted maskray. To further assess species abundance, widenose guitarfish populations were monitored using beach tideline surveys, revealing an average of 24 ± 6 individuals during the peak season. Parallel studies were also conducted by Master's students working with IISc, Bengaluru, to analyse microplastics and heavy metals in elasmobranchs by examining tissue samples.

This monitoring provides information about species composition and seasonal trends, informing conservation and area-based fisheries management. As part of our outreach efforts, we have developed two bilingual booklets in English and Marathi. '*Elasmobranch Monitoring Protocol for Maharashtra*' provides a concise overview of fisheries-dependent monitoring methodology, while '*Sharks and Rays of Malvan*' serves as a comprehensive field guide for identifying elasmobranch species in the region. They will be used to increase our engagement with the stakeholders at various sites across Maharashtra.

OTHER SITES



REGIONAL

REEFLOG

Marine conservation efforts often face challenges due to limited data and the lack of continuous monitoring of marine species. ReefLog, a marine citizen science initiative, seeks to enhance ocean literacy, monitor marine species populations, and encourage responsible tourist behaviour. In collaboration with Scuba Schools International (SSI)- India, a dive certification agency, and the dive tourism sector, ReefLog actively engages recreational scuba divers in surveying marine ecosystems across India.

Dakshin developed a detailed [training manual](#) and underwater survey [slates](#) to help divers monitor fish and invertebrate species in the Andaman Islands and along India's east coast, with plans underway for similar slates for the west coast. The [ReefLog website](#) now offers a user-friendly portal for data collection and information sharing. As part of relaunching ReefLog in the Andaman Islands, orientation sessions were held with dive instructors, emphasising the programme's importance for biodiversity monitoring. Dive shops were also provided with training materials and slates to encourage greater customer involvement in conservation efforts during dives.

COMMON GROUND

Established in 2022, Common Ground is a multi-organisational initiative strengthening environmental governance and rural livelihoods across India, with a focus on empowering women, Scheduled Castes, and Scheduled Tribes. It works to strengthen grassroots capacities, align policies, and foster inclusive economies to drive systemic change for ecological security and resilient rural livelihoods in India. In 2024-25, Common Ground expanded its impact through strategic partnerships, knowledge-sharing platforms, and targeted interventions. The initiative now includes 22 participating organisations, including Dakshin Foundation, and continues to strengthen collaborations between Panchayati Raj institutions, community organisations, civil society, government agencies, and private sector stakeholders. As a member, Dakshin's efforts are centred around the themes of human-wildlife conflict resolution, tenure security, and systems thinking for social and environmental transformation.



CO-EXISTENCE CONSORTIUM

The Coexistence Consortium, founded in 2021, is a network of conservation researchers and practitioners working to promote human–wildlife coexistence through inclusive and just approaches to nature conservation. With Dakshin Foundation and the University of Trans-disciplinary Health Science and Technology serving as its Secretariat, and guidance from the Working Group, the Consortium advances initiatives that centre both ecological and community wellbeing. A key programme is the Coexistence Fellowship, launched in 2022, which trains fellows in culturally grounded coexistence practices through mentorship and field-based learning. The Consortium also facilitates wider dialogue through online talks, newsletters, blogs, and social media.

INCLUSIVE CETACEAN RESEARCH IN THE ARABIAN SEA

Marine megafauna, including whales, dolphins, sharks, and turtles, remain key indicators of the health, productivity, and biodiversity of marine ecosystems. As umbrella species, they drive conservation efforts and are integral to artisanal fishing communities, whose livelihoods and cultural practices often intersect with these species. However, increasing pressures

from fisheries interactions and habitat loss continue to threaten cetaceans and other marine megafauna, with the risk of disrupting entire ecosystems.

Dakshin Foundation, with support from the Pew Charitable Trusts, is expanding its research and conservation initiatives in the southeastern Arabian Sea (SEAS) and refining approaches for greater community involvement. A primary focus is to strengthen the network of local fisher communities, enabling them to report cetacean sightings and strandings and contribute valuable ecological data. These participatory networks are vital in addressing data gaps and understanding cetacean distribution patterns, which can shift in response to environmental changes.

The research team is deepening its exploration of the spatial and temporal dynamics of cetacean populations in SEAS, with a focus on how oceanographic conditions affect their movement and habitat use. By integrating these findings, Dakshin aims to support the development of effective conservation strategies. The Alternatives for Conservation programme remains central to our efforts, promoting knowledge exchange and providing fishers with tools to reduce bycatch and mitigate the consumption of cetaceans, supporting more sustainable fishing practices that benefit both the communities and the marine ecosystem.



A SOUTHERN COLLECTIVE FOR THE NORTHERN INDIAN OCEAN

Established in 2020, the *Southern Collective* is a collaboratory uniting researchers, practitioners, artists, journalists, educators, and coastal community leaders to address coastal and marine challenges in the Indian Ocean region while fostering South-South collaborations. Our mission is to build and sustain partnerships that democratise knowledge production about marine worlds. Initially reliant on digital communications, the Collective has developed web platforms curating knowledge on the Arabian Sea, Bay of Bengal, and Andaman Seas.

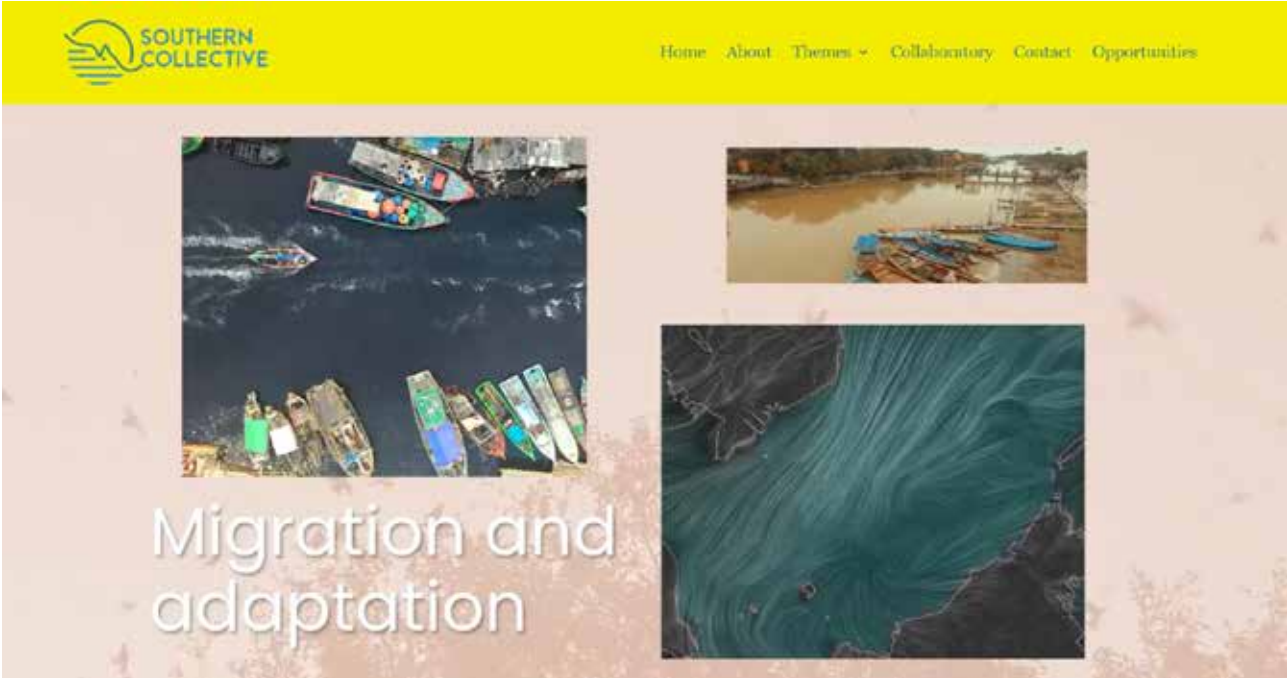
Key initiatives include *Migration Diaries*, curating stories of coastal migrants beyond narratives of tragedy and resilience to contextualise their experiences within academic, policy, and public discourses on distress migration; *Sea Lexicon*, a collaborative endeavour co-creating a transregional lexicon of ocean-related terms that animate the lives of coastal communities; and *Asian Bestiary*, a pedagogic project exploring human-nonhuman relationships through a participatory educational tool, featuring the *Imagining ‘Asian’ Nonhumans* exhibition, supported by the National University of Singapore and in collaboration with Université de Paris and the French Agence Nationale de la Recherche.

Since 2021, Dakshin has led the Collective’s coordination. This year, the Collective has focused on deepening critical dialogues, fostering new partnerships, and strengthening interdisciplinary collaborations to expand the reach and impact of its initiatives. We have worked toward integrating



Illustration by Deepika Nandan

diverse knowledge systems, encouraging transregional conversations, and envisioning new frameworks for studying oceanic connections. The Collective remains committed to strengthening networks, amplifying marginalised voices, and innovating approaches to regional challenges.



4. COMMUNICATIONS AND OUTREACH



Our communications strategy

The communications team at Dakshin made dynamic and strategic progress through 2024-25, guided by three interlinked objectives: raising awareness about coastal and marine ecosystems, strengthening communications networks and partnerships, and enhancing thematic outreach. Our work focused on building visibility, deepening engagement, and amplifying the voices of coastal communities through inclusive, creative, and data-driven storytelling.

Our quarterly newsletter, *Out of the Blue*, reached nearly 2,000 subscribers with content that was visually engaging and rooted in the voices of our field community. On social media, Dakshin saw consistent growth: Instagram followers increased by 21% through more creative visual storytelling; LinkedIn grew by 37%, and YouTube by 13%, in line with global usage trends. Most of Dakshin's digital content continues to find its strongest footing on Instagram. With over 15,000 accounts reached in the last quarter, nearly half of whom were non-followers, our visibility among new audiences continues to grow. There were instances of a single post - featuring thousands of olive ridley turtles arriving at Rushikulya, Odisha, for one of the largest mass nesting events in two decades - reaching over 21,000 viewers. With monitoring teams reporting a healthy and growing turtle population, the post shows how digital platforms can spark public interest while also serving as a channel for sharing reliable, science-based information. With 1,100+ meaningful interactions, our content is not only reaching new audiences but also prompting deeper engagement. Our content strategy included initiatives such as observance day campaigns, meme contests, and field updates, along with 10+ in-depth blog posts. This storytelling approach, tailored to diverse audience interests, showcased Dakshin's work in relatable and accessible ways.

To build communication networks and partner support systems, Dakshin collaborated with the ALT Environmental Film Festival, hosting thematic screenings and panel discussions in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands, Tamil Nadu, and Maharashtra. These events engaged around 200 students and community members in conversations on marine issues and community participation. We also partnered with platforms such as the Student Conference

on Conservation Science (SCCS), Bengaluru, and the Indian Wildlife Ecology Conference (IWEC) at NCBS, Bengaluru, to broaden our outreach. In early 2025, Dakshin joined 22 other organisations as part of the Collective Conservation Communications Campaign (C4), which explored how institutions working in nature, biodiversity, and conservation could come together to deliver a unified message to the public. The campaign encouraged collaborative as well as participatory actions and allowed the sector to reach new audiences with a collective voice.

In recent years, SeaChange emerged as a distinctive and recognisable identity within Dakshin's efforts. The communications team played a supporting role in shaping its outreach by developing a cohesive suite of posters, brochures, and visual assets that were used across field sites, community meetings, and both national and international events. These materials not only communicated key messages but also fostered greater engagement with coastal communities and partners. Hence, by supporting events, visual storytelling, and stakeholder communication, the team helped position SeaChange as a strategic and visible arm of Dakshin's goals towards thriving ecosystems and healthy communities.

Another major milestone was the launch of *#KhaneKeLiyeBachao* (KKLB), a digital campaign rooted in 16 years of Dakshin's work with fisherfolk. Through Machi Man, the virtual mascot of #KKLB, we shared nine powerful insights on sustainable and inclusive fisheries, reaching over 5000 individuals via email campaigns and social media channels.

The team also supported numerous events and exhibitions, including *Chronicles of the Tides*, a photo exhibit in Chennai showcasing stories of fisherwomen from Nagapattinam and Ganjam, Odisha. These women, mentored by photographer Palanikumar under a Dakshin-SNEHA fellowship, shared narratives of migration, conflict, and climate. For the annual ANET Open Day, the Communications and Programme Outreach teams led the design and production of over 30 original posters and illustrations that showcased Dakshin's diverse fieldwork and research across the islands.

This large-scale visual effort transformed complex programme insights into an engaging storytelling experience for visitors, deepening their connection with the communities and ecosystems we work alongside. Communications also supported the programme team for Mannotsava, the National Mental Health Festival hosted by RNP, NCBS, and NIMHANS, through outreach efforts focused on nature, wellbeing, and ecological resilience. Our work also focused on nurturing community connections through events like ‘EcoSocial’ - an informal gathering of the conservation community in Bengaluru that Dakshin’s Communications team helped co-organise one of the gatherings during the year. These spaces fostered networking, cross-generational dialogue, and a sense of community belonging.

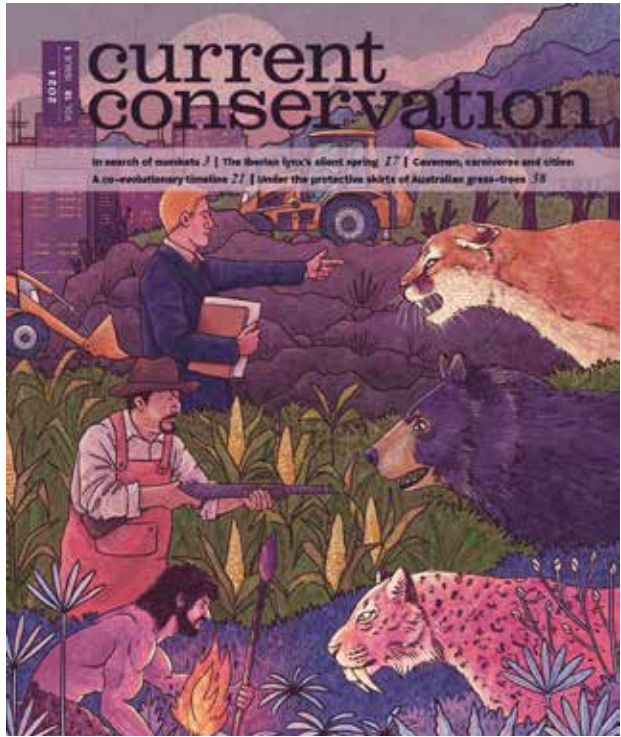
The team also played a key role in amplifying research outputs by providing editorial and design support for

reports, papers, and publications, and led outreach for launches via email and social media. As part of our climate communications work, we developed an AI-art assisted booklet - *Turning the Tide* to capture a glimpse into Dakshin’s work across climate action themes, spotlighting our initiatives on the *Blue Carbon Atlas*, *Ocean Solutions* and *Ocean Sentinels*.

Internally, the Communications team enabled knowledge sharing through regular team meetings, the internal newsletter *Daak-shin*, and activities during the annual retreat. Regular capacity-building sessions and quarterly review meetings helped track progress and set new goals. In the coming years, the team is poised to scale its efforts further - strengthening systems, deepening collaboration across programmes, and continuing its trajectory as a strategic and creative force both within Dakshin and in the wider conservation communications space.

4.2

Current Conservation



[Current Conservation](#) (CC) is an open-access quarterly print and online magazine that brings the latest research from the social and natural science facets of conservation to a general audience. Last year, CC reached nearly 60,000 readers across 197 countries, with India, the United States, the United Kingdom, Australia, Canada, and Indonesia accounting for 75% of the readership.

In 2024-25, CC continued to strengthen its role as a creative and accessible platform for science communication, using both words and art to engage diverse audiences. In October 2024, CC conducted an in-person workshop titled ‘*Art meets Science: A collaborative workshop*’ at the SCCS -Bengaluru. Designed for students and early-career researchers, the workshop brought together four CC artists -Aditi Rajan, Deepika Nandan, Labonie Roy, and Shivangi Pant- to co-create visual interpretations of popular science articles from the magazine along with the participants. This hands-on session aimed to foster interdisciplinary collaborations and explore how art and design can translate

Illustration by Rohan Dahotre for Current Conservation issue 18.1



Illustration by Jacqueline Williams for Current Conservation issue 18.2

scientific content into accessible, engaging communication materials.

That same month, CC co-hosted a webinar titled ‘*Art for Conservation*’ with the Society for Conservation Biology. Featuring artists Nirupa Rao and Sofiya Shukhova, the session delved into how artistic practices can help amplify conservation messaging and bring new perspectives to urgent environmental issues.

In November 2024, CC Kids Editor Caitlin Kight spoke at the Institute of Physics (IOP) Communicators Conference in London, UK, presenting a talk titled ‘*Emerging Voices: Science Writing By and For Children*.’ The talk spotlighted the Emerging Voices category, launched in 2022, which encourages children and young writers to express their curiosity about nature and conservation through writing. This initiative continues to nurture a new generation of science communicators by creating space for their stories and perspectives.

ART FOR CONSERVATION WEBINAR

SPEAKERS

Nirupa Rao
Sofiya Shukhova

Register with the link

29TH OCTOBER

9-10 AM EST
1-2 PM GMT
6:30-7:30 PM IST

current conservation

SPEAKERS

Sofiya (she/her) is an environmental artist and conservationist with an MSc in Conservation and International Wildlife Trade. Her work, focusing on lesser-known conservation topics, has been exhibited in Singapore, the US, UK, Russia, and Indonesia.

Nirupa (she/her) is a botanical artist from India, known for her illustrated books on South Indian flora and a National Geographic-supported animated film. She was also featured in Kew Garden's Indian Botanical Art book and was a 2022 artist-in-residence at Harvard's Dumbarton Oaks.

Outreach for Flagships

Sea Turtles of India

[Sea Turtles of India \(SToI\)](#) is an online repository of sea turtle-related content in the form of research papers, popular articles, blogs, and outreach material. It contains information about different research and conservation projects relating to sea turtles across the country, and stories and accounts from the people working on different species.

The website also hosts a [data portal](#) that provides a platform for individuals and NGOs across India to store and manage long-term data. In 2024, a monitoring handbook was developed for researchers and frontline staff to be used as a reference during on-field monitoring. The handbook was also translated into Hindi, Odia and Tamil. Additionally, we designed posters and pamphlets in Hindi, Tamil, English, Odia, and Kannada, providing information on sea turtles, their habitat, distribution, and guidelines on what to do when encountering turtles or their nests. These materials have been distributed to key stakeholders, including researchers, field staff, and local NGO partners.

A comprehensive report documenting our work from 2008 to 2024 on three sea turtle species - green turtle (*Chelonia mydas*), olive ridley turtle (*Lepidochelys olivacea*), and leatherback turtle (*Dermochelys coriacea*) - has been published. This report highlights long-term monitoring efforts, nesting trends, post-nesting migration patterns, offshore aggregations, and habitat status across key sites.

To engage wider audiences, we also published a coffee table book, 'Ten Turtle Tales', showcasing compelling narratives and insights into sea turtle conservation. These outreach materials are being utilised in community engagement programmes, workshops, and training sessions, reinforcing our commitment to marine conservation.

Sharks and Rays of India

[Sharks and Rays of India](#) is an outreach platform focused on the research and conservation of sharks and rays in Indian waters. The website provides information on species

distribution along the Indian coast using data from landing centre surveys, literature reviews, and scientific publications. It serves as a resource for researchers, conservation practitioners, policymakers, and the public.

Over the past year, outreach and social media platforms have continued to be an important way to share information on newly documented species, habitat details, and conservation status. These efforts aim to keep audiences informed about ongoing research and developments in shark and ray conservation. Moving forward, the focus remains on strengthening research, collaborations, and educational initiatives to support conservation efforts and to raise awareness about the immense elasmobranch diversity of Indian waters. In future updates, we plan to include a dedicated data contribution section where researchers, collaborators and citizen scientists can share their records to support open-access science and conservation efforts.

Sharks and Rays of India continues to expand its outreach efforts to promote shark and ray conservation across Indian waters. This year, an outreach session was conducted in Malvan in collaboration with ALT-EFF, featuring a movie screening to engage local communities on the importance of marine conservation. Additionally, a school outreach session in March introduced students to the ecological significance of sharks and rays, emphasising the need for their conservation. The session also highlighted ongoing studies on microplastics and heavy metals found in these species, raising awareness about pollution and its impact on marine life. To support

these initiatives, [outreach materials and handbooks](#) were developed and used as educational materials in talks and workshops at schools. These resources provided detailed insights into elasmobranch conservation, their habitats, and threats, helping to create awareness among young audiences.

Not Just Soup

[‘Not Just Soup: Shark stories, turtle tales, and more’](#), our newsletter for Marine Flagships, continues to grow as a vibrant platform for marine storytelling, weaving together ecological science, cultural narratives, and artistic interpretation. True to its name, the newsletter reflects our balanced approach, acknowledging both the consumptive use of marine life and the ecological and cultural significance of these species.

Between April 2024 and March 2025, we published three more issues, each exploring distinct yet interconnected themes: from whalesong and indigenous oceanic traditions to jellyfish blooms, marine folklore, and frontline conservation stories from Lakshadweep and the Andamans. Catering to a diverse audience, including marine professionals, students, enthusiasts, and nature lovers, Not Just Soup features interviews with young marine researchers, visual storytelling, trivia, and updates on outreach and field initiatives.

Looking ahead, we remain committed to expanding our reach and impact as an engaging platform for marine awareness and public engagement.



General outreach and Turtle Action Group (TAG)

The Marine Flagships team continued its outreach efforts in 2024-25, engaging diverse audiences in marine conservation through various events and initiatives. At the Student Conference on Conservation Science (SCCS), Bengaluru, the team set up a booth showcasing publications, posters, and materials from all Dakshin programmes. The conference provided an excellent platform to interact with students and aspiring researchers, with over a thousand attendees engaging in discussions on marine conservation and research, sustainable fisheries, policy, and livelihoods.

The Turtle Action Group (TAG) is a network of NGOs and community-based organisations working towards coastal and sea turtle conservation across India, including the Andaman & Nicobar and Lakshadweep Islands. Established in 2009, TAG serves as a platform for collaboration, knowledge exchange, and capacity building among its members. The network supports grassroots conservation efforts, facilitates training programmes,

and promotes engagement with research institutions and government agencies to strengthen conservation initiatives.

Dakshin Foundation has played a key role in supporting TAG by providing technical guidance, facilitating capacity-building programs, and strengthening coordination among member organisations. The foundation continues to assist in knowledge sharing, policy engagement, and community-based conservation strategies to enhance the effectiveness of TAG's initiatives. Moving forward, TAG will continue to support its member organisations, encourage research-based conservation actions, and promote sustainable practices for managing sea turtle populations and their habitats along India's coastline.

In Odisha, we collaborated with the Odisha Paryavaran Sanrakshan Abhiyan (OPSA) Trust, the Puri Wildlife Division, Gobinda Tripathy Smruti Parishad, and Jungle Lore Foundation to organise an outreach event at Pir



Jahania Beach from November 15th to 17th. The event coincided with the Jahania Bali Yatra, an annual local festival that draws nearly 30,000 visitors. Through interactive games and informative displays, our team interacted with local communities, emphasising the importance of coastal biodiversity and olive ridley turtle conservation. Outreach materials highlighting responsible practices during turtle encounters were distributed to the public.

Over the past year, we have also maintained consistent engagement with our audience through infographics, interactive posts, meme contests, and updates on our various outreach events, via the Marine Flagships of India [Instagram page](#). Our followers have increased to 2.7K, demonstrating sustained interest in marine conservation. Looking ahead,

we aim to further expand our outreach and engagement strategies to enhance awareness and participation in marine conservation efforts.

Indian Ocean Turtle Newsletter (IOTN)

The Indian Ocean Turtle Newsletter (IOTN) continues to be a vital platform for sharing knowledge on sea turtle research, conservation efforts, policies, and related topics across the Indian subcontinent, Indian Ocean region, and South/Southeast Asia. Published biannually, IOTN highlights critical work being conducted in these regions, fostering collaboration and awareness within the marine conservation community.

Publications

Popular articles

1. **Bhagawati, B.** (2024, August). [Women of the waves: A canvas of coastal fishery livelihood](#). *Dakshin Foundation Blog*.
2. **Lunia, N., & Babu, A. P.** (2025, January). [9 lessons from 16 years of groundwork in fisheries](#). *Dakshin Foundation Blog*.
3. **Oommen, M. A.** (2024, June). [KKLB – For the love of fish](#). *Dakshin Foundation Blog*.
4. **Patil, A., & Praveenkumar, C.** (2024, June). [Engaging blue carbon: A climate solution in context](#). *Dakshin Foundation Blog*.
5. **Philip, R.** (2024, November). [Sandy feet, chasing dreams!](#). *Dakshin Foundation Blog*.
6. **Sahayaraju, K.** (2024, May). [Lagoon Fest: Celebrating nature, culture and community of Lakshadweep](#). *Dakshin Foundation Blog*.
7. **Shanker, K.** (2024, April). [Snakes, Drugs And Rock ‘n’ Roll review: Whitaker’s roller-coaster ride](#). *Livemint*.
8. **Udayashankar, N.** (2024, October). [Making their mark: Coastal women and community mapping](#). *India Development Review*.
9. **Vasudevan, P.** (2024, November). [Anchoring in on hope](#). *Dakshin Foundation Blog*.

Scientific papers

1. **Abraham, A. J., Deepak, D., Khot, I., & Namboothri, N.** (2025). [Traditional systems and contemporary transitions on an oceanic island: Insights for participatory fisheries management from Minicoy Island, India](#). *Maritime Studies*, 24(1), 18.
2. **Bora, G., Dsouza, S., & Shanker, K.** (2024). [Diet composition and variation in four commonly landed and threatened shark species in Maharashtra, India](#). *Regional Studies in Marine Science*, 74, 103531.
3. **Gurugubelli, M., Abisha, C., Arundhathy, T. A., Ranjeet, K., Dahanukar, N., & Raghavan, R.** (2025). [A megafauna in distress: Unsustainable exploitation of tiger sharks in the Arabian Sea and implications for conservation](#). *Biological Conservation*, 304, 111049.
4. **Khot, I., Khan, M., Raj, A., & Namboothri, N.** (2024). [Operationalizing participatory governance in small-scale fisheries: Researcher-practitioner reflections from the Lakshadweep Islands, India](#). *Maritime Studies*, 23(4), 46.

1. **McCarthy, A. H., Steadman, D., Richardson, H., Murphy, J., Benbow, S., Brian, J. I., Namboothri, N., Sharma, A., & Mukherjee, N.** (2024). [Destructive fishing: an expert-driven definition and exploration of this quasi-concept](#). *Conservation Letters*, 17(3), e13015.
2. **Nair, N., Teerthala, M., & Ghosh, P.** (2024). [Reflections from Chilika - V2V Field School: Exploring Local Ecologies and Social-Ecological Dynamics](#) (V2V Working Paper No. 2024-03). V2V Global Partnership, University of Waterloo, Canada.
3. **Poti, M., Singh, A. R., Shanker, K., Koedam, N., Prabakaran, N., Dahdouh-Guebas, F., & Hugé, J.** (2025). [Mangrove governance, its challenges, and responses to the 2004 earthquake and tsunami in the Andaman Islands, India: A stakeholder perspective](#). *Ocean & Coastal Management*, 269, 107786.
4. **Prabakaran, N., Poti, M., Hugé, J., Koedam, N., Shanker, K., & Dahdouh-Guebas, F.** (2024). [Shifted baselines: Using the adaptive cycle to assess the post-tsunami mangrove social-ecological system recovery in the Nicobar Islands](#). *Ambio* 54, 536–55.
5. **Purathekandy, A., Oommen, M. A., Wikelski, M., & Subramani, D. N.** (2024). [An agent-based model of elephant crop raid dynamics in the Periyar–Agasthyamalai complex, India](#). *Ecological Modelling*, 496, 110843.
6. **Ramesh, M.** (2024). [The Ontological Choreography of Conservation Practice at a Marine Turtle Rookery in India](#). *Conservation and Society*, 1(11), 1–11.
7. **Ruidas, H., Bora, G., Dsouza, S., & Shanker, K.** (2025). [Assessing the impact of microplastics on gonadal health of the spadenose shark \(Scoliodon laticaudus\) on the west coast of India](#). *Marine Pollution Bulletin*, 212, 117464.
8. **Teerthala, M., Patankar, V. J., & Chatakonda, M. K.** (2024). [Assessing the ecological impact of beach tourism on crustacean abundance: a case study from West Coast of India](#). *Discover Oceans*, 1, 9.

Reports

1. Dakshin Foundation. (2024). *Navigating livelihood diversification for Small-scale Marine Fishworkers*. Dakshin Foundation, 49 pages.
2. Lunia, N., Oommen, M. A., & Sridhar, A. (2024). *Turning the tide: Dakshin Foundation's climate initiatives*. Dakshin Foundation, 56 pages.
3. Saahas Waste Management Private Limited & Dakshin Foundation. (2024). *Scoping study on plastic waste generation and the livelihoods around plastic waste in Palk Bay region*. Dakshin Foundation, 70 pages.
4. Shanker, K., A. Swaminathan, C. Pusapati, H. Ramesh, R. George and M. Manoharakrishnan. (2024). *Monitoring Sea Turtles in India, 2008 – 2024*. Dakshin Foundation, 75 pages.
5. Sharma, A., Haripriya, E., Teerthala, M., Jungi, D., & Sindura, S. B. (2024). *Investigating reduction fisheries and their implications in India: Final report*. Dakshin Foundation and WWF-India, 49 pages.

Outreach materials

1. [9 lessons from 16 years of groundwork in fisheries: brochure](#)
2. [A field guide to monitoring olive ridleys in Odisha](#)
3. [About SeaChange: brochure](#)
4. [Andaman Karen Crafts \(AKC\): poster](#)
5. [ANET and the Centre for Island Sustainability: brochure](#)
6. [ANET and Dakshin: poster](#)
7. [Autonomous Reef Monitoring Structures \(ARMS\): poster](#)
8. [Baited Remote Underwater Video Systems \(BRUVS\): poster](#)
9. [Batoids of India: poster](#)
10. [Commonly adopted measures for the prevention and management of human-crocodile conflict: poster](#)
11. [Elasmobranch landing centre monitoring protocol- Maharashtra \(English\)](#)

12. [Elasmobranch landing centre monitoring protocol- Maharashtra \(Marathi\)](#)
13. [Turning the tide: Climate initiatives of Dakshin: brochure](#)
14. [Experiential Education by Dakshin Endeavours: poster](#)
15. [Fish For the Future: poster](#)
16. [From dungis to trawlers: Transformations in ANI fisheries: poster](#)
17. [Green turtles of India: poster](#)
18. [Handling sea turtles entangled in fishing nets or found at sea: poster](#)
19. [Hawksbill turtles of India: poster](#)
20. [History of ANET: poster](#)
21. [Human Crocodile Conflict \(HCC\) in the Andaman Islands: poster](#)
22. [Leatherback turtles of India: poster](#)
23. [Long Term Ecological Observatory \(LTEO\): poster](#)
24. [Mapping for Rights: poster](#)
25. [Coral reefs of the Andaman and Nicobar Islands: poster](#)
26. [Marine biodiversity of the Andaman and Nicobar Islands: brochure](#)
27. [Mixed species groups of reef fish in the Andaman Islands: poster](#)
28. [Olive ridley turtles of India: poster](#)
29. [Pathways to healthcare in the islands: poster](#)
30. [ReefLog – Monitoring India's Marine Ecosystems: manual](#)

1. [ReefLog in India: poster](#)
2. [ReefLog Andaman Fish Slate](#)
3. [ReefLog Andaman Invertebrate Slate](#)
4. [Saltwater crocodiles: poster](#)
5. [Sea Turtles of India: poster](#)
6. [Seahorses of India: poster](#)
7. [Sea snakes of India: poster](#)
8. [Sharks of India: poster](#)
9. [Sharks and rays of Lakshadweep \(English\): field guide](#)
10. [Sharks and rays of Lakshadweep \(Malayalam\): field guide](#)
11. [Sharks and rays of Malvan \(English\): field guide](#)
12. [Sharks and rays of Malvan \(Marathi\): field guide](#)
13. [Towards SeaChange...: poster](#)
14. [Towards waste-free islands: poster](#)
15. [Unlocking dreams through sports: poster](#)
16. [Use it or lose it? Sustainable use of crocodiles in the Andaman Islands: poster](#)
17. [Where does the islands' waste go?: poster](#)



Talks and presentations

Conferences and presentations

Arjunwadkar, C., Gokhale, E., Wagh, T., & Namboothri, N. (2024, June). *Unveiling the overlooked nature of sediment-laden algal turfs and their impact on coral reef functioning in island-attached fringing reefs of Andaman*. Indian Wildlife Ecology Conference 2024, NCBS, Bengaluru.

Bora, G., Dsouza, S., & Shanker, K. (2024, June). *Diet composition and variation in four commonly landed and threatened shark species in Maharashtra, India*. Indian Wildlife Ecology Conference 2024, NCBS, Bengaluru.

Bora, G., Dsouza, S., & Shanker, K. (2024, October). *Diet composition and variation in four commonly landed and threatened shark species in Maharashtra, India*. The Student Conference on Conservation Science (SCCS), Bengaluru.

Bhawna, K. (2025, February). Livelihood-related issues in small-scale fishing communities. Ganjam Livelihood Conclave, VIEWS.

Bhawna, K., & Vasudevan, P. (2025, January). *Ee Chaapa, Samudrame maa jeevitam – The fish and the ocean are our lives*. Chaai. Kaapi and Jugaad. International Conference of Narrative Practices, Mental Health and Community Wellbeing by Narrative Practices India Collectives.

Namboothri, N., Pusapati, C., & Wagh, T. (2024, June). *The ecology and conservation of marine flagship species and critical coastal habitats of India*. Symposium organised at the Indian Wildlife Ecology Conference 2024, NCBS, Bengaluru.

Samad, I. (2024, June). *Understanding spatio-temporal drivers of elasmobranch bycatch in the east and west coasts of India*. Indian Wildlife Ecology Conference 2024, NCBS, Bengaluru.

Shanker, K. (2025, March). *The brighter horizon: balancing human and environmental needs towards marine conservation*. 43rd Annual Symposium on Sea Turtle Biology and Conservation, Accra, Ghana.

Sridhar, A. (2024, December). *Transregional Cultures of Rule: Maritime Environmentalisms of the Indian Ocean*. Intertwined Ecologies and Interconnected Histories: The Indian Ocean Rim by Africa Institute, Sharjah, UAE. [Link](#)

Udayashankar, N. (2024, December). *Between utterance and action: the shaping of social accountability in India's coastal and marine commons*. IIT Mumbai.

Vasudevan, P. (2025, January). *Kootangalil kathaigal - Stories in gatherings*. Chaai.Kaapi and Jugaad. International Conference of Narrative Practices, Mental Health and Community Well-Being by Narrative Practices India Collectives.

Wagh, T., Patankar, V., Namboothri, N., & Shanker, K. (2024, April). *Impacts of market demand and protection on reef fish communities in the Andaman Islands, India*. 2nd UN Ocean Decade Regional Conference & 11th WESTPAC International Marine Science Conference.

Lectures and talks

Bora, G. (2024, December). *Unseen sanctuaries: the role of mangroves and estuaries in shark and ray conservation*. India Sand Watch. Veditum India. [Link](#)

Khan, M. C. P. (2025, February). *Importance of promoting sustainable fishing practices*. Regional awareness programme 2024-25, Kadmat.

Kulkarni, V. (2024, August). *Tales of geckos in the Andaman and Nicobar Archipelago: a chronicle of colonisation*. The World Congress of Herpetology (WCH 10), Kuching, Malaysia.

Mondal, M. (2024, September). *Fisheries Livelihoods and Governance in India*. TISS Hyderabad.

Mondal, M. (2024, June). *Working towards a better future for the islands*. Induction Programme of New Joinees (BEOs, Panchayat Secretaries, VLW/Gram Sevikas) in Rural Development Dept, ANI.

Mondal, M. (2024, June). *Improving Solid Waste Management: A Case Study of Wandoor Gram Panchayat*. Pondicherry University.

Oommen, M. A. (2025, February). *Gendered Dimensions of Human-Wildlife Relations: Conflict, Conservation, & Sustainable Use*. M S Swaminathan Research Foundation. [Link](#)

Rao, A. (2024, September 27). *Sustainable tourism*. Andaman Association of Tour Operators.

Ravi, A., & Udayashankar, N. (2024, November 5). *Women Leadership in Resistance & Rebuilding a Progressive India*. India Fisherwomen Assembly (IFA) 2024, organised by the World Forum of Fisher Peoples (WFFP), the National Fishworkers Forum (NFF), and the Kerala Swatantra Matsyathozhilali Federation (KSMTF).

Sahayaraju, K. (2025, February). കടലോളം അറിവുകളുള്ള കടൽപ്പണിക്കാർ. Keraleeyam Web. [Link](#)

Sahayaraju, K. (2024, July). *Significance of small-scale fisheries in marine biodiversity conservation*. Department of Media Studies and Life Sciences, Christ University, Bengaluru.

Shanker, K. (2024, August). *A museum and a cradle: the Western Ghats Escarpment as a hotspot for the diversification of herpetofauna*. The World Congress of Herpetology (WCH 10), Kuching, Malaysia.

Shanker, K. (2024, June). *Finding Philautus: the evolution and biogeography of herpetofauna in the Western Ghats Escarpment of India*. SSAR Conference, Ann Arbor, Michigan. USA. [Link](#)

Shanker, K. (2024, June). *Following fish: shoaling and attendant groups of reef fish in the Lakshadweep Islands*. Indian Wildlife Ecology Conference 2024, NCBS, Bengaluru.

Shanker, K. (2024, May). *Evolution in an Escarpment: why there are so many species of frogs and reptiles in the Western Ghats*. A symposium on Species Interaction, Biogeography and Genetic Legacy. ATRIA University, Bengaluru.

Shanker, K. (2024, May). *Marine turtles*. International Centre for Environment Audit and Sustainable Development (ICED), Jaipur.

Shanker, K. (2024, April). *Balancing ecology and human wellbeing in cities*. Rotary Programme in Bengaluru 2047, Indian Institute of Science, Bengaluru.

Shanker, K. (2024, April). *Colonisation by conservation: the philosophy and practice of ecology and its impact on the global South*. CES Annual Talks (CATS), IISc, Bengaluru.

Shanker, K. (2024, April). *Balancing human wellbeing and environmental health in a changing world*. Yale University, USA.

Panels, seminars and workshops

Bhagavatula, K. (2024, September). *Climate change and health*. Workshop facilitated by Dakshin, India Institute of Human Settlement and World Resource Institute India, organised by Karnataka Health Promotion Trust.

Das, B. S. (2024, April). *Mapping of coastal commons*. State Commons Policy Workshop, Bhubaneswar, organised by Foundation for Ecological Security (FES).

Lakshman, N., Lobo, A. S., Anushiya, J., & **Namboothri, N.** (2025, February). *Strengthening India’s Coastal Resilience: From Evidence to Action*. Dasra Philanthropy Week (DPW) 2025.

Muralidharan, M. P., Thomas, K. V., Panneerselvam, P., Abdulla, M. H., **Sridhar, A.**, Ramu, C. M., & Joshi, T. (2025, March). *CPPR-AII Colloquium on Australia-India deepening maritime cooperation for a resilient Indo-Pacific*. Centre for Public Policy Research in collaboration with the Australia India Institute (AII). [Link](#)

Namboothri, N. (2024, November). *Danger Zone at Ocean Literacy Dialogues* (ODI). Jane Goodall Institute India (JGII) in collaboration with UNESCO’s Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOL), British Council and CSMVS Museum, Mumbai.

Namboothri, N. (2025, February). *Funding Pathways for Ecosystem Conservation & Restoration in India*. Dasra Philanthropy Week (DPW) 2024.

Roongta, A., Ganvir, D., **Mondal, M.**, Gupta, P., & Sarangi, S. (2024, August). *Landscape Governance Partnerships: Role of Multi-Actor Platforms*. Commons Convening, New Delhi. [Link](#)

Sridhar, A., Jyotishi, A., Mukherjee, J., Rodrigues, S., Vohra, S., Nair, T., Venugopal, & Vivekanandan, V. (2024, August). *Coastal Commons: Pathways for Coordinated Action*. Commons Convening, New Delhi. [Link](#)

Sridhar, A., & Karve, P. (2025, February). *From Grassroots to Global: Strengthening India’s Climate Advocacy*. ACCLIMATE Secretariat. [Link](#)

Udayashankar, N. (2024, October). *Participatory research methods: Why and How?* The Student Conference on Conservation Science (SCCS), Bengaluru.

Vasudevan, P., Seshadri, S. R., Gagrai, S., & Seshadri, T. (2024, August). *Aligning planetary health with human health: the one health initiative*. Commons Convening, New Delhi. [Link](#)

Vasudevan, P. (2024, October). *Nurtured Through Nature*. National Mental Health Festival- Mannotsava, organised by RNP, NIMHAS and NCBS.



5. PEOPLE



Administration Team

Marianne Manuel, Director
Meera Anna Oommen, Associate Director
T.R. Gopi, Finance Manager
Martina Victoria Anandam, Assistant Director
Basavaraj Pujar, Accounts Manager
Raghavendra K Ankolekar, Accounts Manager
Narasimha M, Senior Accounts Officer
B. Haripriya, HR & Admin Assistant
Raghavendra V, Admin Officer

Programme Heads and Advisors

Aarthi Sridhar
Kartik Shanker
Meera Anna Oommen
Naveen Namboothri
Jagdeesh Rao

Programme Team

Aarthika Ravi
Abhilasha Sharma
Abhishek Chakraborty
Abhishek Patil
Abisha C.
Adhith Swaminathan
Adithya Pillai
Agnesia Dung Dung
Anand Rao
Anjali Unnithan
Anu Priya Babu
Anushka Verma
Apna Kuruvilla
Aplonia Topno
Avani S R
Ayiswarya S Varghese
Baby Lixina
Biswa Swaroop Das

CH. Praveen Kumar
Chaitanya Arjunwadkar
Chandana Pusapati
Chandru Vasan
Debangini Ray
Devathi Parashuram
E. Haripriya
F. Vences Laus
Garima Bora
Greta Ann Sam
Hariprasath R
Himshi Singh
Jessica Barman
K. Bhawna
K. Irfan Ali
Kailas Nadh P
Kiran Bhagavatula
Kumar Sahayaraju
Madhuri Mondal
Mahaboob Khan
Mariam Joe
Meelu Mohanan
Meenakshi A K
Meera P K
Meghana S Teerthala
Mohammed Serfas Khan A K
Muhammed Musthafa
N Muankimi
Namrata Lunia
Nayana Udayashankar
Velumani T
Pavithran M M
Pavitra Vasudevan
Rahul Demello
Rahul M Suresh
Rajath B
Ria Philip
Samar Ahmad
Sangeetha U
Saw John Aung Thong
Shamili Mohanakannan
Shivangi Pant
Shri Darshini P
Swapnil Jyotiram Thool

Dr. Bharath Sundaram – KREA University, Andhra Pradesh

Mr. Adithya Pillai – Dakshin Foundation, Bengaluru

Animal Research Ethics Review Committee (AREC)

Dr. Andrea Phillott – FLAME University, Pune (Chair)

Dr. Shomita Mukherjee – Salim Ali Centre for Ornithology and Natural History, Coimbatore

Dr. Maria Thaker – Centre for Ecological Sciences, Indian Institute of Science, Bengaluru

Dr. Robin Vijayan – Indian Institute of Science Education and Research, Tirupati

Ms. Chandana Pusapati – Dakshin Foundation, Bengaluru

PARTNERSHIPS

Programmes and Themes

Aaina, Bhubaneswar

Andaman Nicobar Fisheries Welfare Association

Ashoka Trust for Research in Ecology and the Environment (ATREE), Bengaluru

Asian Nature Conservation Foundation (ANCF), Bengaluru

Blue Ventures Conservation, UK

Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute, Kochi

Centre for Ecological Sciences, Indian Institute of Sciences, Bengaluru

Common Ground

Dasra, Mumbai

Department of Computational and Data Sciences, Indian Institute of Science, Bengaluru

Dr BR Ambedkar Institute of Technology (DBRAIT), Andaman and Nicobar Islands

Duleep Matthai Nature Conservation Trust

Environmental Defense Fund, United States

Fisheries Cooperative Society, Ramanathapuram, Tamil Nadu

Foundation for Ecological Security, Anand, Gujarat

Gangamatha Youth Club, Junglighthat

Indian Institute of Technology, Guwahati

Intellectap - Advisory Services Private Limited, New Delhi

Jan Swasthya Abhiyan, Odisha

Jawaharlal Nehru Rajkeeya Mahavidyalaya (JNRM) College, Port Blair

Junglighthat Bonafide Fishermen Committee, Andaman & Nicobar Islands

Kerala University of Fisheries and Ocean Studies, Kochi

Madras Crocodile Bank Trust, Tamil Nadu

National Fishworkers’ Forum

National Platform for Small Scale Fish Workers

National University of Singapore

National Youth Climate Consortium (NYCC)

Nature Conservation Foundation, Bengaluru

North and Middle Andaman Small Scale Fisheries Union, Andaman & Nicobar Islands

One All, Tamil Nadu

Odisha Traditional Fish Workers Union (OTFWU)

Padraka Foundation, Hyderabad

Pennsylvania State University, United States

Project Gamechangers

Project Solace

Ramanathapuram District Fisherman Sangam Federation , Tamil Nadu

Roundglass Sustain

Salim Ali Centre for Ornithology and Natural History, Tamil Nadu

Social Need Education and Human Awareness (SNEHA), Tamil Nadu

Subhram Youth Committee, Junglighthat

Thannatchi, Tamil Nadu

The Indian National Trust for Art and Cultural Heritage, Andaman & Nicobar Chapter

The Shola Trust, Tamil Nadu

United Artist Association, Ganjam

Voluntary Integration for Education and Welfare of Society (VIEWS), Odisha

Wildlife Conservation Trust, Maharashtra

World Wide Fund for Nature - India, New Delhi

Youth for Sustainable Development, Ganjam

Youth4Water Plus, Odisha

Private Sector

Accenture Solutions Private Limited, Mumbai

All Living Things Environmental Film Festival (ALT EFF)

Arcturus Inc.

Her Stories Publications, Tamil Nadu

Intellectap Advisory Services Pvt. Ltd, New Delhi

Kadal Osai, Tamil Nadu

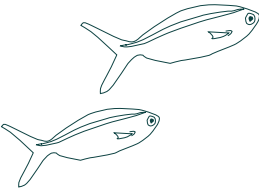
Pratham Books, Bengaluru

Saahas Zero Waste, Bengaluru

Scuba Schools International

The Good Ocean, Goa

WIPRO Foundation, Bengaluru



Government and PRI bodies

Andaman and Nicobar Islands Integrated Development Corporation Limited (ANIIDCO), Andaman and Nicobar Islands

Andaman Public Works Department (APWD), Andaman and Nicobar Islands

Block Education Officer, Department of School & Mass Education, Chatrapur, Odisha

Block Education Officer, Department of School & Mass Education, Ganjam, Odisha

Child Development Project Offices, Women & Child Development Department, Ganjam, Odisha

Child Development Project Offices, Women & Child Development Department, Chatrapur, Odisha

Coast Guard, Port Blair, Andaman and Nicobar Islands

Community Health Centre, Khandadeuli, Odisha

Community Health Centre, Municipentho, Odisha

Department of Environment and Forests – Andaman and Nicobar Islands, Goa, Karnataka, Lakshadweep Islands, Odisha, and Tamil Nadu

Department of Fisheries – Andaman and Nicobar Islands, Lakshadweep Islands, Karnataka, Kerala, Odisha, and Tamil Nadu

Department of Social Welfare, Ramanathapuram, Tamil Nadu

Directorate Of Information, Publicity and Tourism Office (IP&T), Andaman and Nicobar Islands

Directorate of Education, Andaman and Nicobar Islands

Directorate of Rural Development and Panchayati Raj, Andaman and Nicobar Islands

District Administration , Ramanathapuram, Tamil Nadu

Guptapada Gram Panchayat, Andaman and Nicobar Islands

Gulf of Mannar Biosphere Reserve Trust (GoMBRT), Tamil Nadu

Health and Wellness Centre, New Podampetta, Odisha

Health and Wellness Centre, Nuagaon, Odisha

Humfrygunj Gram Panchayat, Andaman and Nicobar Islands

Kadalur Panchayat, Ramanathapuram district, Tamil Nadu

Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEF&CC)

Morepannai Panchayat, Ramanathapuram district, Tamil Nadu

National Fisheries Development Board

National Informatics Centre

Namunaghar Panchayat, South Andaman District, Andaman and Nicobar Islands

Neithal Convergence Unit, District Collector’s Office, Ramanathapuram, Tamil Nadu

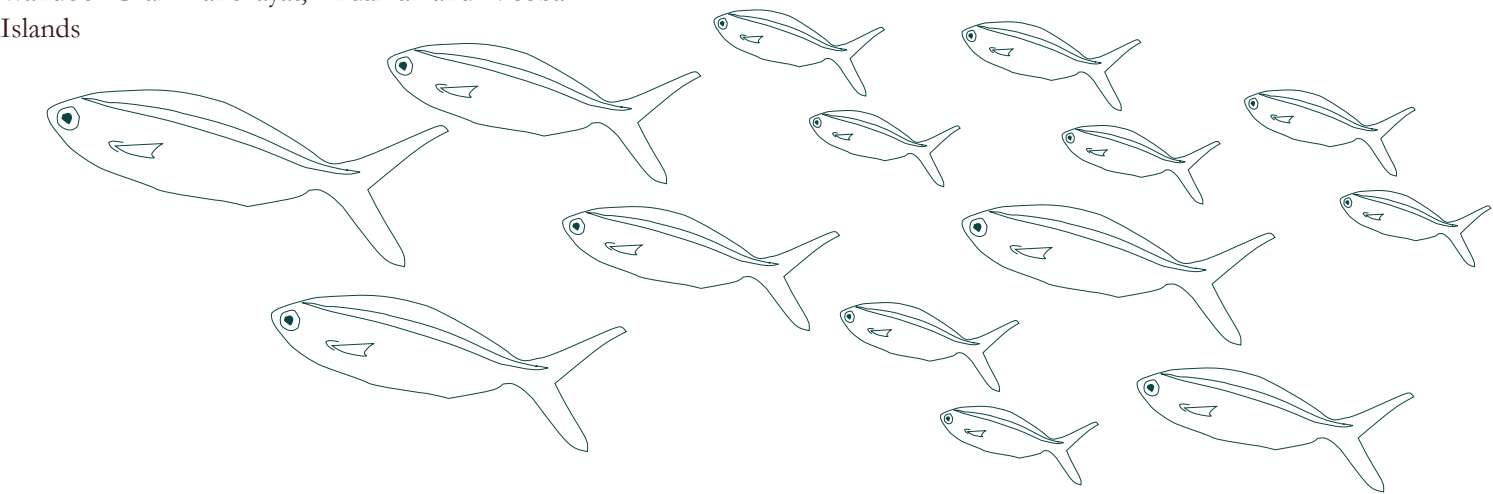
Olaikuda Gram Panchayat, Ramanathapuram district, Tamil Nadu

Rameshwaram Municipality, Ramanathapuram district, Tamil Nadu

Sub-Centre and Wellness Centre, Arjyapalli, Odisha

Sub-Centre and Wellness Centre, Pallibandha, Odisha

Wandoor Gram Panchayat, Andaman and Nicobar Islands



Institutional funding

LGT Venture Philanthropy

Rohini Nilekani Philanthropies

Rainmatter Foundation

Sundaram Finance Limited

Programmatic funding

Ashoka Trust for Research in Ecology and the Environment

Atta Galatta Books and Publishers Private Limited

Australian Consulate-General

Axis Bank Foundation

Blue Ventures Conservation

Cincinnati Zoo & Botanical Garden

Dasra

Dasra-UK

Environmental Defence Fund, Inc.

Foundation for Ecological Security

Harish and Bina Shah Foundation (HBSF)

Hemendra Kothari Foundation

International Sustainable Energy Foundation (ISEF)

Keidanren Nature Conservation Fund

Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, India

National Centre for Biological Science (NCBS)

Pearlite Liners Pvt Ltd

PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC) India Foundation

Swiss Philanthropy Foundation

The Duleep Matthai Nature Conservation Trust (DMNCT)

The Mohamed bin Zayed Species Conservation Fund

The Ocean Foundation

The Pew Charitable Trusts

The Rufford Foundation

The Skoll Foundation

The Waterloo Foundation

Turtle Foundation

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Wipro Foundation

Individual donors

Akshay Moti

Anu Chhabra

Chenthoorson

Deepak Kothari

G. Murugeshan

Harshita Borah

Jehanzeb Baldiwala

Jorge Ramos Luna

Mariam Begg

Parineeta Srivatsa

Raam Perumaal

Rohan Dahotre

Shiva Ram Raj

Shivam Thukral

Srinidhi Gurunath

Tanuj Nagpal

Thejaswi Bhandary

Vaidehi Shirsath

6. FINANCIALS

Independent Auditor's Report (FY 2024-2025)

To the Trustees of Dakshin Foundation

Report on the Audit of Financial Statements

Opinion

We have audited the financial statements of Dakshin Foundation ("Trust"), which comprise the Balance Sheet as at 31st March 2025, and the Income and Expenditure Account and the Receipts and Payments Account including a summary of significant accounting policies for the year then ended.

In our opinion, the accompanying financial statements give a true and fair view of the financial position of the Trust as at 31st March 2025, and of its financial performance for the year ended in accordance with the Accounting Standards issued by the Institute of Chartered Accountants of India (ICAI)

Basis for Opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with the Standards on Auditing (SAS) issued by the ICAI. Our responsibilities under those Standards are further described in the *Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Statements* section of our report. We are independent of the Trust in accordance with the *Code of Ethics* issued by the ICAI and we have fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with the said Code of Ethics. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

Responsibilities of Management and Those Charged with Governance for the Financial Statements

Management is responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of the financial statements that give a true and fair view of the financial position, financial performance of the Trust in accordance with the aforesaid Accounting Standards and accounting principles generally accepted in India and for such internal controls as management determines is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial statements, the Management is responsible for assessing the Trust’s ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless the Trustees either intends to liquidate the Trust or to cease operations, or has no realistic alternative but to do so.

Those charged with governance are also responsible for overseeing the Trust’s financial reporting process.

Auditor’s Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Statements

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor’s report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with SAs will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these financial statements.

A further description of our responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements is included in Annexure A of this Auditor’s Report.

Place : Bengaluru
Date: 28.10.2025

For G. Anantha & Co., Chartered
Accountants
(FRN 005160S)

Rani.N. R
Partner
Membership No. 214318
UDIN: 25214318BMIZXF1416

ANNEXURE A TO THE AUDITOR’S REPORT

As part of an audit in accordance with SAs, we exercise professional judgment and maintain professional skepticism throughout the audit. We also:

- Identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the financial statements, whether due to fraud or error, design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks, and obtain audit evidence that is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement resulting from fraud is higher than for one resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal control.
- Obtain an understanding of internal control relevant to the audit in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the Trust’s internal control.
- Evaluate the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates and related disclosures made by management.
- Conclude on the appropriateness of management’s use of the going concern basis of accounting and, based on the audit evidence obtained, whether a material uncertainty exists related to events or conditions that may cast significant doubt on the Trust’s ability to continue as a going concern. If we conclude that a material uncertainty exists, we are required to draw attention in our auditor’s report to the related disclosures in the financial statements or, if such disclosures are inadequate, to modify our opinion. Our conclusions are based on the audit evidence obtained up to the date of our auditor’s report. However, future events or conditions may cause the Trust to cease to continue as a going concern.
- Evaluate the overall presentation, structure and content of the financial statements, including the disclosures, and whether the financial statements represent the underlying transactions and events in a manner that achieves fair presentation.

We communicate with those charged with governance regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit and significant audit findings, including any significant deficiencies in internal control that we identify during our audit.

We also provide those charged with governance with a statement that we have complied with relevant ethical requirements regarding independence, and to communicate with them all relationships and other matters that may reasonably be thought to bear on our independence, and where applicable, related safeguards.

Place : Bengaluru
Date: 28.10.2025

For G. Anantha & Co., Chartered
Accountants
(FRN 005160S)

Rani.N. R
Partner
Membership No. 214318
UDIN: 25214318BMIZXF1416

Balance sheet & expenses

DAKSHIN FOUNDATION
No. 2203, 8th Main, D Block, MCECHS Layout,
Sahakar Nagar, Bengaluru - 560092

BALANCE SHEET AS ON 31-03-2025

SOURCES OF FUNDS	AS ON 31-3-2025	INR
1. Fund		
a. Corpus Fund	5000.00	
b. General Fund	1,79,31,582	
c. Utilised Fund	5,61,27,486	7,40,64,068
2. Current Liabilities		
Project Fund		5,37,23,444
Statutory Liabilities		38,929
Total		12,78,26,441
APPLICATION OF FUNDS		
1. Fixed Assets		
a. Project Assets	35,31,680	
b. Dakshin General Assets	54,52,355	
c. Land and Building	4,71,43,451	5,61,27,486
2. Current Assets , Loans & Advances and Deposits		
a.Rent and Other Deposits	13,85,000	
b. Income Tax Refund Receivable	3,40,685	
c. Loans and Advances	30,000	
d.Cash and Bank Balances	6,99,43,269	7,16,98,954

Total12,78,26,441

Place : Bengaluru

Date: 28.10.2025

TRUSTEE

As per our report of even date attached

for G. Anantha & Co., Chartered

Accountants Firm Regn No.005160S

Rani.N. R

Partner

Membership No.214318

UDIN: 25214318BMIZXF1416

DAKSHIN FOUNDATION
No. 2203, 8th Main, D Block, MCECHS Layout,
Sahakar Nagar, Bengaluru - 560092

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE

For the year ending 31st March 2025

PARTICULAR	SCHEDULE NO	AS OF 31ST MARCH 2025 (INR)
Income		
a. Project Income		11,42,84,588
b. Donation		2,94,750
c. Interest		37,02,013
d. Contribution towards Overhead		45,85,224
e. TDS refund		18,665
f. Profit on Sale of Asset		70,900
Total		12,29,56,141

EXPENDITURE

Project Expenses:

a. Advancing the conservation and protection of coastal and marine ecosystems and species across India.	5	1,99,32,744
b. Capacity building, outreach and dissemination of knowledge to improve public awareness	6	27,14,366
c. Developing sustainable fisheries and enabling healthy fishing communities	7	2,67,29,893
d. Managing the commons - improving the management of shared resources for local communities	8	2,48,40,223
e. Understanding and reducing conflict and increasing coexistence between people andnature.	9	9,29,617
f. Towards supporting resource management and wellbeing in coastal communities and protecting coastal and marine environments.	10	2,42,82,232
g. Establishment and Administrative expenses		1,88,24,167
h. Loss on sale of assets		20,336
i. Institutional Overhead transfers		63,600
j. Depreciation		33,18,006

Total Project Expenses (a)12,16,55,183

Surplus	13,00,958
---------	-----------

Place : **Bengaluru**
Date: **28.10.2025**
TRUSTEE

As per our report of even date attached
for **G. Anantha & Co., Chartered**
Accountants Firm Regn No.005160S
Rani.N. R
Partner
Membership No.214318
UDIN: 25214318BMIZXF1416



Dakshin Foundation

2203, 8th Main, MCECHS Layout, D Block, Sahakar Nagar,

Bengaluru, Karnataka 560092

Phone: +91 80 42113509

Email: dakshinfoundation.india@gmail.com

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Facebook: [dakshin.seas](https://facebook.com/dakshin.seas)

Instagram: [@dakshin_seas](https://instagram.com/@dakshin_seas)

Linkedin: [Dakshin Foundation](https://linkedin.com/Dakshin Foundation)

Youtube: [Dakshin Foundation](https://youtube.com/Dakshin Foundation)





**ANNUAL REPORT
2024 - 2025**

DAKSHIN FOUNDATION