



MAITRI

Facilitating change through volunteering

MAITRI means friendship. Our logo is: Friendship with Self, Friendship with Everyone

Why MAITRI

In the decade of 1990s, nearly 1,500 child deaths were reported due to malnutrition in Melghat, a hilly and forested region home to the Korku adivasis. A group of friends and colleagues decided to visit and find out why.

Following their visit, 250+ volunteers from 14 districts of Maharashtra went in batches to live with these children to help save them. Each batch spent ten days in the village, standing guard against disease and watching over malnourished children. Sick children were immediately provided health care with the help of government health services. Volunteers immersed themselves in the village life, experiencing tribal way of living as well as the difficulties faced by the village-level government staff. Each batch would hand over charge to the next, returning to their routine life with an unforgettable experience.

Every single volunteer took care of their own expenses and needs. Those who could not go to Melghat donated or supported the campaign in other ways.

No single child was allowed to die during our watch.

This 1997 monsoon campaign which ran under the banner Melghat Mitra, was remarkably successful. It brought strangers together and proved that they could work effectively for a common cause. It also demonstrated that people can volunteer for a short time, yet collectively make a significant impact.

The participants of this campaign realized that there is a need to have a permanent structure which could respond to such emergencies. With this need, MAITRI, a trust was formed as a platform where people could come together, mobilize resources and respond to situations where people suffer due to poverty and distress.

How MAITRI works

Volunteers are at the heart of Maitri's organizational structure. Each activity is owned by a core team of volunteers, who are responsible for its planning and execution. This core group of about 50 volunteers coordinates all activities on a day-to-day basis. Most of these volunteers have been associated with Maitri for years, some since the beginning. They are supported by other volunteers who take on specific responsibilities and contribute fixed time annually.

Volunteers pay for their own expenses and raise the funds required for their programs and activities through small donations. The trustees of Maitri act as custodians of the funds and other resources and ensure that the funds are utilized optimally. They also provide legal, moral and ethical oversight to the overall work.


Over 5,000 individuals from Maharashtra and all over the world have volunteered with Maitri until today. Maitri's activities are supported by individual donors who make small but regular contributions. These 'friends of Maitri' are common citizens – students, housewives, senior managers and professionals in their personal lives. When they contribute their time in Maitri, they bring with them their skills, knowledge and professional expertise to the particular social cause they are involved in. They connect their social circle to the cause, bringing additional social as well as financial resources. Most importantly, they bring with them great passion and empathy to address the cause.

The volunteers, donors, well-wishers and supporters are Maitri's family.

Maitri volunteers meet every Tuesday at a fixed time and venue for the last 20 years. They exchange ideas, talk about common concerns, make plans and share and learn from each other's experiences.

Our Current Programs

Maitri's flagship program remains Melghat Mitra, run and supported by hundreds of volunteers. Apart from this, Maitri volunteers have initiated and completed a number of projects since its inception in 1997:

 **Melghat Mitra:** MAITRI'S community empowerment program for the Korku tribals in 40 villages in Chikhaldhara block of Melghat. It's focus is on health care and awareness, education support, governance and community empowerment. Volunteers encourage and support the Korku to avail government benefits and demand their rights by improving governance through village bodies and other committees, participating in Gram Sabhas, demanding accountability of government representatives, officers and staff. The program is run by the Korku youth, while MAITRI provides the necessary information, exposure and training. Current focus is on improving livelihoods through agriculture.

- Health care is provided and monitored with the help of Arogya Maitrin (village level health worker) who supports and guides pregnant women through their pregnancy and child birth. She provides simple treatment in the village for diarrhea, cold, fever, bruises and other injuries, etc. and ensures that difficult cases are referred to the government health center. Health education is continuously taken up along with aanganwadi sevikas and ASHA worker and the annual Dhadak Mohim, Maitri's signature monsoon campaign.



As a result of Maitri's work,

- *the child mortality rate has reduced from 126 to 69;*
 - *The number of couples going in for family planning operations has increased, the number of children per family are down from 8 to 3, thus ensuring better care for the children in each family;*
 - *The number of deliveries in the PHC has increased significantly;*
 - *The number of people accessing health care centres has increased;*
 - *The marriage age for girls has improved.*
- Admission of every single child is ensured in primary schools and efforts are made to ensure that these children are retained in the education system. These efforts include running Abhyas Warga - support classes with the help of local youth or Gav Mitra, meetings with parents and follow-up of children who drop out. Coordination is maintained with the education department to ensure that schools run and absenteeism of teachers is checked. Financial support is provided for continuing college education by way of Vidya Nidhi.

As a result of Maitri's work,


- *The number of children enrolling in schools has increased and parents are taking interest in their children's education;*
- *More and more children are completing schooling and are going in for higher secondary schooling as well as degree and diploma courses;*
- *The number of girls in schools and those completing their schooling has also increased;*
- *Better education has impacted every other aspect of life for the Korku.*


- Awareness and empowerment is the backbone of Maitri's work in Melghat. Maitri encourages and supports the Korku people to avail government benefits and demand their rights. This is done by improving governance through local village bodies and other committees, participating in Gram Sabhas, demanding accountability of government representatives, officers and staff and availing of various government schemes and benefits. Towards this, Maitri provides the necessary information, exposure and training.

As a result of Maitri's work,


- *Gram Sabhas are held regularly and participation in Gram Sabhas has increased significantly;*
- *The people are better organized, quick to form groups and demand their rights or seek redress at any wrong or injustice.*


This program is run by local Korku youth, supported by Maitri's volunteers across Maharashtra and the world.


 **Dhadak Mohim** : MAITRI'S signature monsoon campaign between July to September to prevent child deaths and malnutrition. Volunteers work in coordination with government health services to save the children.


 **Science with Fun** : An activity carried out in Melghat schools to encourage students towards education and increase their curiosity and interest in Science. Basic concepts of science are demonstrated through simple experiments with materials used in day to day activities. Students themselves perform the experiments with the help of volunteers.



 **Maitri Education**: Volunteers help slow learning students of government or aided schools who are from deprived communities in Maths, Science and English. These students get no guidance from home and cannot afford to pay fees for private tuitions.

 **Radditun Saddi (Best from waste)**: An activity that enables families and societies to connect with MAITRI'S programs by contributing old newspapers, which are then sold to raise funds for the programs.

 **Maitri in Emergency**: MAITRI's well-trained and experienced team of volunteer's springs into action after a natural disaster. Maitri has successfully responded to and completed relief and rehabilitation work in 9 major national disasters. These include Gujarat earthquake (2001), Tamil Nadu tsunami (2004), Konkan floods (2005), Bihar floods (2008), Leh cloudburst (2010), Uttarakhand flash floods (2013) and Nepal earthquake (2015). MAITRI volunteers reached disaster sites in Gujarat and Tamil Nadu within 24 hours and identified and provided the needs of the affected people. Tamil Nadu government appreciated MAITRI'S work strategy and has adopted the same for its disaster management guidelines.

 **Tuesday Meetings**: MAITRI volunteers meet every Tuesday at 6.30 PM in Kamla Nehru Park in Pune since 1997. They exchange ideas, talk about common concerns, make plans and share and learn from each other's experience.

We look forward to joining hands with you.

Do visit us at www.maitripune.net for more details. Write to us at maitri1997@gmail.com or call us on 91 20 2545 0882 or drop us a letter - MAITRI, c/o "Kalyan", 32 Natraj Society, Karvenagar, Pune 411052. Maharashtra. INDIA.

You can also send us your donation.

Domestic donations:

1. MAITRI (Account No 01491450000152 in HDFC bank, Kothrud branch. IFSC Code HDFC0000149.
2. MAITRI (Account No 60008555276 in Bank of Maharashtra, Mayur Colony branch. IFSC Code MAHB0000852).

For foreign donations:

MAITRI (Account No. 01491170000017 in HDFC bank, Kothrud branch. IFSC Code HDFC0000149, SWIFT Code HDFCINBB.)