

**ANNUAL ACTIVITY REPORT  
2017-2018**

## **ABOUT SWECHHA**

Swechha is an organization dedicated to enabling ourselves and others around us to 'Be the Change', in making a visible difference to the Environment- both Physical and Social. *Our mission is to inspire, create and support - a just, equitable and sustainable society, for everyone and forever.*

Our genesis lay in the year 2000 as 'We for Yamuna' campaign, a collective response towards growing apathy towards one of the most polluted rivers of the world. Since then the organization has gathered popular and powerful voices for the support of this cause and has emerged as the loudest and strongest voice in India on the matter. Apart from this campaign, Swechha has grown over the decade to work on other issues of sustainable development and social change and has had considerable impact locally, nationally as well as internationally.

In the numerous things we do at Swechha, there are three key Focus Areas we address: (i) Environment and Citizenship; (ii) Education and Governance; and (iii) Empowerment and Enterprises.

## **GOVERNING BODY**

1. Rajeev Singh, President
2. Vimlendu Jha, Secretary
3. Sunny Verma, Treasurer
4. Aruna Pandey, Member
5. Farhad Vania, Member
6. Lopamudra Sanyal, Member
7. Shilpi Singh, Member
8. Kuriakose Verghese, Member
9. Navin Joshua, Member
10. Deeksha Bhatia, Member

## **PROGRAMMES AND ACTIVITIES**

This report consists of Swechha's programmes and **Activities** over the last one year (2017-18), detailed under the following heads –

- Environment and Citizenship
- Education and Governance
- Empowerment and Enterprises

### **Environment and Citizenship**

We strongly believe that all of us need to Wake up and Act on the criminal ways in which our needs and growing wants are damaging and affecting the Environment, both Physical and Social. Whether it is a drying Yamuna, an overflowing Landfill, or a fast depleting green cover of the city, there is an urgent need for all of us to Know, Lean and Act on these concerns. Climate Change is a cumulative impact of several local and global environmental inactions or irresponsible actions. Given below are the details of the **Activities** conducted under this head in 2017-18.

### **YAMUNA YATRA**

#### **About the project**

The Yamuna is 1370 km in length and caters to the needs of approximately 60 million people along its course. The entire Yamuna flows through 7 different states till it merges with the Ganges River in Allahabad. In addition to its ecological value, the Yamuna has significant religious importance.

Despite its significance, the Yamuna has become a highly polluted river as it passes through cities downstream, particularly in and around Delhi. As states compete for limited water resources and water scarcity and quality become serious problems, the issues facing the Yamuna need immediate attention.

The Yamuna Yatra is a 12-day journey along the length of the river Yamuna exploring the ecological, social, and political dimensions of the river.

## **Objectives**

Educational in nature, there are five main **Objectives** of the Yatra:

- Learn the science of a river.

- Promote understanding of the riparian states and cities/towns.

  - Inculcate environmental stewardship and build leadership capacities of the future caretakers of our planet.

- Exercise leadership qualities by conducting public awareness campaigns.

## **Activities**

The Yatris engage in a variety of interactive **Activities** to complement and nurture their learning and experience along the journey. These include:

- Endless folklore and tales told by the locals

  - Interactions with communities along the banks, many of which are ancient hill tribes

  - Workshops on Culture, Ecology, Identity

  - Village Assessment Studies

  - Environmental Audits and Action Projects

  - Film Screenings

  - Concerts and cultural celebrations by the river

  - Yoga, meditation, dips in the pristine river

  - Camping, Cook-Your-Own-Meal

  - Treks, hikes, walks, swims

## **Outreach and Outcome**

Swechha has been conducting Yatras since 2004 with schools like Vasant Valley, German School and other youth groups. The Vasant Valley School has acknowledged the effectiveness of a travel based learning programme like the Yamuna Yatra and has made it a part of their curriculum for Grade XI. The Yatra serves as an eye-opener for children from urban situations on the river's effect on our lives and vice versa. It also helps them integrate all their theoretical learning about the reality of the river and the people who live along the river. It is a life-changing experience for most young people as it helps them question and stretch beyond their comfort zones while connecting with a larger world.

In March 2017, 76 students of Vasant Valley School travelled with Swechha for this exciting journey.

## **MONSOON WOODING CAMPAIGN**

### **About the project**

Monsoon Wooding is Swachha's annual environmental campaign which aims at expansion of green spaces in the city through youth volunteers. This action-oriented campaign encourages communities to plant, protect and promote trees and to take onus of creating and maintaining green spaces. The sapling distribution and plantation that happens as a part of Monsoon Wooding is seasonal in nature but its impact is indeed perennial. It has been implemented every year since 2011.

### **Objectives**

- To protect and promote the green spaces in the city
- To mobilize communities to work together towards the protection of the environment
- To inculcate the spirit of environmental responsibility among the young people and the civil society

### **Activities**

- Green walks with experts
  - Community identification and Awareness raising and cleanliness drives in communities across Delhi and NCR
- Sapling distribution in public spaces and events
  - Large scale plantation drives across communities in Delhi and NCR
  - Institutional collaborations with local partner organizations

### **Outcome and Outreach**

- Over the past three years, more than 5000 saplings have been distributed and planted across communities in Delhi and NCR
- More than 1000 volunteers have worked with community members to ensure access to greener spaces
- Large scale awareness and cleanliness drives organized across communities
- Garnered support from schools, colleges, NGOs, RWAs, media and corporate houses
- Creation of Delhi's first urban mini forest using native species at St Mary's School, Dwarka.

The forest was created over an area of 1000 sq ft using 300 saplings of 32 native species. The initiative was appreciated and covered by several national dailies

Monsoon Wooding 2017 saw the plantation of over 3000 saplings across Delhi-NCR. 4 food forests and 3 butterfly and herb gardens with over 3000 saplings in total were planted and created across different schools and other organisations/institutions in Delhi/NCR.

With the engagement of over 200 volunteers from different institutions and organizations, Monsoon Wooding Campaign 2017 was supported by prominent corporate houses such as KHD, IHS Markit and S & P Capital IQ.

Monsoon Wooding has been covered by prominent national media. Some of the links are given below-

<http://www.thehindu.com/sci-tech/energy-and-environment/and-a-forest-is-born/article4974036.ece>

<http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/delhi/Mini-forest-in-backyard/articleshow/21667418.cms>

## GREEN CREEPS

### **About the project**

Green Creeps is our Urban Farming enterprise that was set up in May 2015 and focuses on increasing the number of urban gardens in communities and decreasing the time, knowledge, and confidence barriers that prevent people from growing their own food. Creating herb gardens for kitchens, edible food-scapes for terraces, urban fruit forests for backyards, vertical wall gardens & living desktops for offices, is our passion and purpose. We aspire to bring jungles back to the cities! And in our effort to do so, we invite volunteers to plant with us, and experience how 'everything grows and everyone can grow'.

### **Objectives**

To equip the masses with the knowledge and skill to grow their own plants.

To increase awareness about the various native plants and herbs that can be grown by people.

To constructively engage the children and the adults and bridge the gap between them and their environment.

To counter the pollution, both outdoor and indoor and improve the quality of air

### **Activities**

Green workshops with individuals, corporates and schools

Walks and talks with students and youth

Setting up of balcony and terrace gardens

Creation of upcycled planters for indoor spaces

### **Outcome and Outreach**

Since its inception in May 2015 until March 2017, Green Creeps directly worked with more than 200 children and youth through urban gardening workshops

Innovative Green workshops were attended by over 150 employees of prominent corporate houses such as PwC, CRISIL, KHD, and Google

Engaged over 100 individuals from different parts of the city in urban gardening workshops

Fostered collaborations with organizations and institutions such as I Say Organic, Vedica Scholars, S & P Capital IQ through workshops and corporate gifting engaging over 100 individuals directly

## **Education and Governance**

Swachha believes that education needs to be holistic, contextual and empowering. Apart from the basic belief of 'Education for All', which remains one of the core campaigns of Swachha and its communities, we look at quality of education, capacity of educators and socio-political significance of educational institutions. We work with children (in-school, out of school), Teachers (Government as well as Pvt Institutions) and Managements on the issue. Education is one of the core prerequisites for active governance. Some of the **Activities** conducted under this theme in 2017-18 are listed below-

### **PAGDANDI**

Pagdandi is a community based non-formal alternative learning program for children and adolescents of Jagdamba Camp, a slum in south Delhi. Since its inception in 2009, Pagdandi's vision has been to supplement the formal education of these children, help them become socially empowered and increase their employability by developing their knowledge, skills, abilities and attitude. The initiative is largely led by volunteers and experts. It has been partially supported by KHD Humboldt Wedag and donations from individuals and institutions.

#### **Aim**

The aim of Pagdandi is to develop and create young community leaders in Jagdamba Camp, through meaningful and interactive learning opportunities for education, empowerment and employability.

#### **Objectives**

To ensure access to education for all children and youth in Jagdamba Camp

To empower children with life skills and values that are required to lead fulfilling and responsible lives

To nurture creativity as a skill and innovation as an approach amongst the children To inculcate environmental stewardship and active citizenship amongst young people

To build the capacities of adolescents and youth towards further education and employment

To engage, motivate and inspire citizens, students and young adults towards civic responsibility and community action in the development process through volunteerism

In order to achieve these **Objectives**, three broad themes have evolved for Pagdandi-

Education

Empowerment

Employability

Key **Activities** conducted during 2017-18 are detailed below-

Given below is a detailed description of all the **Activities** carried out from January 2017-December 2017-

Access to Education Campaign

1. Back to Education Activities –

Literacy / Remedial Classes- 14 children out of these 40 students were provided basic literacy classes by youth volunteers and older children of the community as and when the need arose.

Admissions in school or Open School on a case-to-case basis- In January 2017.

## 2. Support to School Activities –

Remedial classes- Since March 2017, more than 50 remedial classes for Maths, Science, Political Science, Sociology and English have been conducted on a weekly basis for 15 children by volunteers. These classes are mostly one-to-one in nature. During the exams, the nature of these remedial classes was more one-to-one to ensure doubt clearing and better understanding of the students.

Kitaab Ghar- For the past few years, Kitaab Ghar (library) has been the center of Swechha's presence and **Activities** in Jagdamba Camp. Considering the growing scope of programme and the need of the children, a new Kitaab Ghar was launched in March 2015. The children of Pagdandi helped in the setting up of this new space. The Kitaab Ghar now has about 400 books and 50 magazines and tabloids for the children. Storytelling, reading and activity sessions are carried out thrice a week in the Kitaab Ghar by volunteers and older kids to engage the younger children creatively.

Reading Day- Since its inception, Reading Days have been widely appreciated and enjoyed by the members of the community and the children. 10 Reading Days have been carried out in Jagdamba Camp since January 2017 directly engaging over 580 kids and 55 volunteers. Approximately 700 books have been distributed in the community for reading as a part of the Reading Days.

Newspaper boards- 2 newspaper boards installed in the community by Swechha have been regularly receiving the newspapers and being read by the community members.

### 3. Leadership and Life skills development

Workshops and film screenings - Workshops and film screenings on different themes are regularly organized for Pagdandi. These workshops are facilitated by staff or domain experts and assisted by volunteers. 4 workshops and film screenings on Science, gender and employability and environment were conducted for 40 kids aged 10-18.

Exposure trips and outings - This year, 3 exposure trips were organized for over 85 kids were organized in April 2017, July 2017 and October 2017. While one of the exposure trips was a carnival and was more fun based in nature, the second exposure trip was an opportunity for the children to watch a kabbadi match live in Thygraj Stadium as a part of a collaboration with Delhi Dabang Kabaddi Club and the third one was an educational visit to Bal Bhawan. Over 20 volunteers were engaged in the planning and execution of the event. These exposure helped the children gain confidence and interact effectively with the outside world.

## Annual Events

5. Summer School- The month of June 2017 saw 50 children aged 10-17 engage themselves in a month long summer school that culminated into a showcase at the end. These students were divided into two batches of 10-12 and 13-17 year olds. While the younger kids learnt the skills such as dance, art and craft and urban gardening, the older kids worked together towards learning theatre, crochet, jewellery making, photography and film making. These sessions were conducted by domain experts. A total of 12 volunteers were engaged in the overall planning, management documentation and implementation of the summer school.

A creative showcase was organized at the end of the summer school to celebrate the learning of the children during one month. The showcase attended by representative from KHD, old volunteers, children, Swechha staff and volunteers and the parents of the children.

6. Pagdandi Annual festival- The annual festival of Pagdandi was scheduled towards the end of December 2017. The festival this year was designed to be different in nature. Rather than inviting the residents of the community witness the festival, we took the festival to the community. The festival was a 2 days celebration that

engaged not only the children and the youth but also the older members of the community. Over the 2 days during the festival, a series of workshops, performances and competitions were carried out in and around the community. These performances, workshops and competitions were conducted by experts and youth volunteers.



## **BRIDGE THE GAP**

### **About the project**

Our current education system and parenting focuses on consumption-based upbringing as a result of which development and larger issues of social responsibility and active citizenship have taken a back seat. The education imparted in schools today, often qualifies us for a good job but it fails to inculcate sensitivity towards issues that do not affect us directly. In addition, it does not impart the intelligence to understand and reflect upon the consequences of our actions on the poorest of the poor, the marginalized and the unheard sections of our society.

Against this backdrop, Swechha designed Bridge the Gap (BTG) - a unique curriculum that aims at narrowing the increasing gap between the children and the realities of the world around them. The curriculum aims at enabling young people to strike a connection with and between the natural world and the man-made world by equipping them with the necessary outlook and the skills needed to make this connection.

### **Objectives**

This curriculum aims to –

- Have a better understanding of the self and the ‘other’

  - Establish the relation between the local and the global - social, political, cultural and ecological - environment

  - To have an understanding of the consequences of human actions on the environment

- To understand the needs and rights of present and future generations

  - To develop self as well as social responsibility towards environmental issues To develop citizenship, stewardship and civic sense.

## Approach

An unconventional approach that stands on the pillars of exploration, experience and exposure is adopted by us. This can be seen in the process given below -

### ORIENTATION

Gaining an overview of and a perspective to Environment and Development



### KNOWLEDGE

Building an individual perspective and a strong understanding of the problems and their long-term solutions



### DISCOVERY

Learning by experience and case studies



### ACTION

Taking action based on new learning; locally within the school and globally

## Activities

The non-textbook approach focuses more on experiential learning as the course uses films, multimedia presentations, flash cards, journals and field trips as methods of teaching. The specific **Activities** are described below –

**Classroom workshops** – Interactive and activity-based these classroom sessions help the students develop an understanding of environmental and developmental issues in a simple yet structured manner. Innovative games, discussions and worksheets engage the children and inspire them to action.

**Film screenings** – Short films made by Swechha and other civil society organizations like Jijivisha, Wasted, Dilli are screened in the school to create an awareness on developmental issues like water and waste. These films stimulate discussions on the issues and help the students raise questions and challenge beliefs and practices.

Eco-walks - Swechha's Eco walks take students out of their classrooms and bring them face-to-face with the problem. These half day excursions ensure that the children see themselves as a part of our fast-changing social and environmental landscape. The walks that are conducted by Swechha include the Yamuna Walk, the Landfill Walk and others.

Action Campaigns – Modules end with an action plan or an action campaign which outlines steps that the students are taking to create awareness within the school community and inspire large-scale intervention and change. These campaigns allow for creative expression like street plays, posters, exhibitions and presentations. Students are also encouraged to participate in city-level campaigns on social or developmental issues.

Skill School – In order to integrate creative and vocational skills into the BTG, a weekend skill school was conceptualized to teach new skills to the young learners with help from experts and volunteers from colleges and corporates. Skills like computers, dance, art and theatre were a part of this school.

The curriculum inculcates a combination of themes and **Activities** based on the participant group and their requirements. It could hence be designed to fit into the school curriculum over the academic year.

#### Outreach and Outcome

Given below is a table which summarises outreach of the programme –

Date	Schools	Intervention	Outreach
2017 -18	German School	Modules on socio-environmental issues (waste, water and development) for Grade X.	35 students
2017 -2018	German School American Embassy School	Modules on socio-developmental Leadership camp with elected leaders of the school	100 students 50 students

The programme has hence, had a direct impact on more than 500 students and teachers over the last two years. The indirect impact is however much more as each group of participants then initiates awareness and action in their school and reaches out to the entire school.

The Bridge the Gap programme helps to -

Nurture empathy and social responsibility towards the other

Link young people as active citizens to local and global socio-developmental issues

Inculcate leadership as a value and a skill to practice in the schools and communities

Build sensitive and pro-active school communities

## **GRAM ANUBHAV**

### **About the Project**

Gram Anubhav is a 4-5 day exposure trip to Rural Areas for students, for them to Learn from and connect with the Bharat that lies undiscovered for most of us. Gram Anubhav helps urban youth reach out to an aspect of India and its development that most of us ignore or overlook, students not only 'Visit' a village but also give a little symbol of their interaction through a Shramdaan.

### **Objectives**

The aim of Gram Anubhav is to expose young minds to the realities of rural India so that these future policy makers of the country become active and responsible citizens today.

To explore the kaleidoscope of rural India

To understand this kaleidoscope with an interdisciplinary approach To reflect on the self vis a vis the other

To challenge existing perceptions and discover potential within the self To act on these influences and be the change

## Approach

The Gram Anubhav is a journey which creates experiences and challenges young people to realize, learn and do. It is a balanced mix of fun, adventure and learning keeping in mind that the participants are young school-going students. The key elements of this journey are:

Exploration of the self and the rural context of India.

Reflection on the self in the context of social responsibility and action.

Action as an extension of and a result of the learning that has happened on the journey.

## Activities

Learning is facilitated through the creation of opportunities and the use of tools like -

1. Village walks and mapping – Village walks and maps are effective tools which use observation, interaction and analysis to understand a rural community.
2. Home visits/stays – Interactions and experiences such as these are instrumental in challenging perceptions and stereotypes.
3. Interactions with practitioners – Understanding developmental work that happens in rural areas through interactions and visits is a crucial part of this exploration.
4. Workshops on life skills – Interactive games, **Activities** and exercises help to develop skills and inculcate leadership in the young participants.
5. Introspection on the self and identification of the self as an actor of change.
6. Perspective building and assimilation of learning through creative presentations and sharing.

Action is inspired at three levels in the following ways -

1. At an Individual level – By imbibing what is learnt and making small changes in one's own approach to life.
2. At a group level – By coming together as a group and influencing the learning of the group.
3. At a Community level – By physically doing something tangible for the community the students have been a part of in their journey.

## Duration and location

A 4-day trip, Gram Anubhav takes children to partner organizations in the regions of Uttarakhand or Rajasthan. Gram Anubhav partners with committed and established NGOs in the rural communities we visit to help organize and facilitate the experience. In the past we have partnered with –

1. Bodh Shiksha Samiti– Jaipur, Rajasthan
2. Foundation for Ecological Security (FES) – Udaipur, Rajasthan
3. Society for Integrated Development of Himalayas (SIDH) – Mussoorie, Uttarakhand
4. HESCO, Uttarakhand

## Outreach and Impact

Since 2006, more than 1,000 school and college students have experienced rural Rajasthan and Uttarakhand through Gram Anubhavs.

Students from Shri Ram School, Modern School , German School, Delhi University, Jawaharlal Nehru University, Jadavpur University (Kolkata), St. Xavier’s College (Kolkata) and Jamia Milia Islamia, have participated in the past Gram Anubhavs.

Several remote rural communities have been visited as part of Gram Anubhavs. These include the Bhil tribe of Karech village in Rajasthan, Kraska village in the core area of the Sariska Tiger Reserve and the Bhutia community of Lata village in Uttarakhand.

**In 2017, over 150 students from Green Fields School, Delhi travelled with Swechha to Bodh Gaon in Rajasthan for the Gram Anubhav and provided extremely positive feedback.**

## Empowerment and Enterprises

### ME to WE

#### **Pagdandi Adolescent Empowerment Programme**

#### **RATIONALE**

Adolescent girls and boys are the most vulnerable section in a community, in terms of access to information, opportunity and resources – more so in marginalized communities. They are bound by patriarchal attitudes, beliefs and expectations and therefore are the last in the priority of empowerment. As a result of this, they face emotional, physical, sexual and financial discrimination, also leading sometimes to abuse.

#### **ABOUT THE PROGRAMME**

The Me to We programme grew out of a need to understand and address these problems at an individual as well as at a collective level, proposing a strong element of employability being a medium of empowerment – alongside interventions of education and life skills. The intervention is a more focused approach towards skill development and employment preparedness. It aims at working with a group of 100 adolescent girls from Jagdamba Camp community, one of the biggest slums in South Delhi.

#### **OBJECTIVES**

- 1) To create confident young adolescents in the community who have a sense of purpose and identity
- 2) To equip them with information, education and life skills needed to question and negotiate existing and constantly changing social realities while emerging as young leaders
- 3) To build and strengthen skills and capacities for employment, entrepreneurship and financial independence

#### **APPROACH**

The programme uses a participatory and process-oriented approach to achieve its **Objectives**. It builds learning along a continuum leading the individual from an understanding of the self vis-à-vis the other i.e Me to We. It empowers the individual to transform from being the target of change in their community to being a vehicle of change for their community. The program also has a bottom up approach whereby acknowledging the existing social, cultural and economic realities of these girls and therefore making collaborative efforts to solve problems, instead of conflict and confrontation.

## **ACTIVITIES AND INTERVENTIONS**

Support to school

Life-skills workshops

Leadership development

Skill development – soft skills, creative skills, vocational skills

Entrepreneurship Training

Practicum based approach to setting individual or collective enterprises

From June 2014-July 2015, 50 adolescents (20 boys and 30 girls) were engaged in a full fledged empowerment programme supported by Empower. The project focused on employability for these adolescents through active engagement on issues of identity, social efficacy and resourcefulness. 20 adolescents from the programme were placed as interns and employees with different organizations across the city.

From July 2016-2018, 30 more adolescents aged 12-18 were engaged through a life skills curriculum supported by EMpower. The curriculum uses innovative and engaging sessions, interactions with experts and industrial exposure visits to dedicatedly work on issues on identity, social efficacy and resourcefulness. During the same period, the ex Me to We participants were engaged through one-on-one interactions, events and community campaigns. This cycle also saw the journey of four community interns turned community animators for Swechha. During this cycle, two fellowships to ex participants to set up enterprises were also given out.



## YAMUNA SHRAMDAAN

### **October 2017**

Swechha began as the “We for Yamuna” campaign in August 2000 for creating and spreading awareness about the pitiable state of Yamuna in Delhi. Since its inception, the campaign has been using innovative methods to attract the attention of the government, media and citizens for the cause of the river. Today, “We for Yamuna” is globally recognized as one of the strongest youth voices on the issue of Yamuna. It continues to be an integral part of Swechha’s work through Yamuna Walks, Yamuna Yatras and events that are conducted for the river.

In the month of October 2017, a Yamuna Shramdaan was organized by Swechha in collaboration with Synopsis and Ivoluteer.

Yamuna Shramdaan 2017 aimed to and succeeded in achieving the following:

Inspire youth to volunteer: Over 100 participants from Synopsis India came together on the banks of the river for the clean up

Sensitise the youth and civil society on the issue of Yamuna and their impact on the environment:

Website – [www.swechha.in](http://www.swechha.in)

For more photos, visit us at <https://www.facebook.com/SwechhaIndia/?fref=ts>

Blog - <https://swechhablog.wordpress.com/>

