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(Re)Imagining 2030

When the SDGs are expected to be a reality, more or less

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Pangolins are not your medicine.

Stop believing in unscientific remedies that kill our wildlife.
Put an end to wildlife trafficking.



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A UN Global Compact report warns that 'with 10 years to go, the world is not on track to achieve the SDGs. We need a Decade of Action to reverse this predicament.' With this as the backdrop, Team CB sought out the views of industry leaders on two points:

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New corporate social responsibility (CSR) laws helped strengthen the case for integrating SRoI in impact assessments, as a definitive indicator of value creation for all stakeholders. At its heart, though, is documenting of the story of change that is the end goal of all social and environmental projects.



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Starting with an empty house made available by one villager, to the local police patil providing a mat for children to sit on, with yet others contributing to repainting the house to make it safe and clean, Babu Munghate, a government school teacher, fashioned a makeshift school in Mahawada village, a remote area of Gadchiroli in eastern Maharashtra.

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Edited, printed and published by Saucepan Media Pvt. Ltd
H 1541, CR Park, New Delhi-110019

Website: www.causebecause.com

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We aren't talking much about the environment



Except on Environment Day, that is.

Sounds as cynical as it gets, I know. Hopefully it is also actually as cynical as I mean it to be. Just the other day, at Delhi's Lodhi Garden – child and I were doing some reading outdoors – we saw a man on a nearby bench throwing off a wrapper like it wasn't even a thing—a thing to be considered, that is. Because, you know, one just throws wrappers wherever one happens to be at the moment the last edibles in the wrappers have been gobbled down.

Now, normally I make it a point to put on my kindest face and point out to offender-strangers—strange offenders will do too—that they may have 'unwittingly' or 'unintentionally' littered. (My theory is that telling them off rudely will make them litter with a vengeance.) In my last outing though, I felt a sense of disillusionment and kept the silence, minus the peace. Because I was not feeling any kindness or politeness; all that I wanted to do was ask the bugger to buzz off.

That way, children are lucky to be relatively free of the trappings of niceties that don't let most of us adults speak our mind. While we are going berserk dealing with our conflicts, some real and some in our mind, the little ones will just say whatever it is they have to say and get on with the rest of their day.

Take this Environment Day day, for example. Going by some of the press releases and the 'quotes' that are released by companies, one does wonder how much of it is tokenism – and how much is a genuine summing-up of things big and small that they have been doing with consistency and commitment as their 'bit' to heal the planet. I say this because the spurt of activities and avowals of commitment to Mother Earth seem to be, in many cases, programmed towards achieving maximum mileage and print/digital space.

Then I read my 11-year-old's post on her blog that starts like this: 'World Environment Day is not important. I'm not saying you shouldn't do anything for it. However, why isn't everyday World Environment Day? We should be environment-friendly every day. We should be saving the world every day. I should not be sitting here writing this. You should not be sitting wherever you are reading this. We should be out there, saving the world!'

As simple as that, right? Sitting in our cocoons and insulated worlds, we talk about being environment champions when we may not bother about being energy-economical in our own homes.

The thing is, we have reached a situation where we need to look at alternatives to everything we use – our energy utilisation, our clothes and cars, our food (packaged and processed food even more so), our appliances. You name it, and we need an alternative.

However, to reach that alternative space is an uphill task like no other. Especially because the majority of us are not even thinking along those terms. We are still in a 'use and dump' state of mind, instead of taking the 'use and reuse' option with much seriousness. Why? Because it's easier and has been the way we do things. Reusing needs a certain bent of mind, it demands discipline, some thought goes into the process, and it is an act of responsibility. Dumping is irresponsible but also nobody gets penalised for that.

There is no dearth of information—gyaan, if you may—about the repercussions of fooling around with nature, or about what actions are needed at every level to halt the deterioration right now and here. The extreme weather events this year shouldn't surprise us, considering that experts have been crying hoarse about the possibility of this very thing for years now. We are surviving (may I say barely?) in a world that's already warmed 1.2 degrees Celsius from pre-industrial times. It will get warmer of course.

In the meantime, let's not turn a blind eye to irresponsible actions, whether by individuals or by corporations. Individuals throwing away their used packets are as detrimental to the planet's health as corporations not having a clue about what happens to the packets they bring into existence in the first place. Companies burning coal; individuals using coal energy. Too bad, both.

I do have the mind to tell those buggers to buzz off, to do something good, real and meaningful. I will someday.

Padma Pegu



In the last nine years, we have planted over 2.9 million (mostly) fruit trees that have rejuvenated the country's lungs and at the same time helped alleviate hunger and poverty. From Sundarbans in West Bengal to the plains of Haryana and the mountains of Uttarakhand, spanning 12 states in all, our green footprint has been increasing steadily.

In the process, SGI has also created sustainable livelihood opportunities for thousands of women and small farmers from marginalised and indigenous communities.

This is a journey that has been tremendously fulfilling and enriching, and we have been fortunate to have had the unstinting support of various organizations, who made it all possible.

Our gratitude to

Hero MotoCorp | Indigo | L&T | IndusInd Bank | Ola Cabs | NIIT Technologies
Max India Foundation | Earth Day Network | One Tree Planted | Ecosia

www.greening.in | trees@greening.in



World Environment Day 2021 (5th of June) press releases **Worthy mentions**

Amrita University | Blue Dart | Canon India | HDFC Bank | Ramky Enviro | VAHDAM India

▶ Amrita University's Coimbatore campus now has 1.75 lakh trees of more than 200 species

The carbon-positive Coimbatore campus of Amrita University, one of India's leading multi-campus, multi-disciplinary teaching and research institutions, located in a sprawling 450 acres land has crossed the milestone of adding one lakh trees to its green cover of over 7 lakh square metres.

With the survival rate of the saplings at 95%, the planting drive is set to increase the green cover of the campus incrementally. The university is also taking up planting projects in its other campuses to replicate the success of the Coimbatore campus.

Once a barren and deserted land in 1998, when the university acquired it, the area at the foothills of Western Ghats now boasts thick vegetation, rich in biodiversity with trees and medicinal plants of over 200 species. A result of 18 years of hard work by a dedicated team of environmental scientists, landscape artists, gardeners, and the staff and students, apparently the green cover has brought down the average temperature of the campus by around 3 degree Celsius (from about 28 degree Celsius, the average for the city during summer months). The extensive rainwater-harvesting initiatives have also increased the groundwater table.

Regarding the green mission of the university, Dr M Aravindakshan, Coordinator, Environmental Studies, Amrita University – Coimbatore, says, 'The green initiatives, which also include rainwater harvesting, solar power, biogas plants, and other sustainability projects, are taken up with participation of students and staff. On average we roll out 50+ projects a year, providing opportunities for our staff and students to contribute to the environment. Another unique aspect is that environment management and sustainability is a mandatory subject for all our students, irrespective of what engineering or management courses they have enrolled in.'

The university has a policy of not cutting trees to make way for buildings. It draws water for irrigation from its wastewater-recycling systems, comprising four sewage-treatment plants with a combined capacity of 8 lakh litres per day, and freshwater from its rainwater-harvesting facilities which include 16 check dams and 12 storage tanks.

The university is spread across six campuses in three states—Kerala, Tamil Nadu, and Karnataka—with headquarters at Coimbatore.

Note: The statements, claims and numbers are as per the press releases shared with CauseBecause.

▶ **Blue Dart embraces paperless technology**

Blue Dart, part of the Deutsche Post DHL Group (DPDHL), has announced paperless transactions on their new digital portal for all its vendor partners.

Manufacturing paper is energy-intensive – one A4 sheet requires approximately 50 watt-hours. Going paperless will help conserve energy, reduce CO2 emissions, avoid deforestation, protect the natural habitat, and strengthen forest-based livelihood opportunities for the surrounding communities. Through this initiative, Blue Dart will not only protect the environment but also commits to planting a significant number of trees every year. Currently, Blue Dart plants 111,000 trees every year, in order to offset 2,220,000 kg carbon per year on maturity.

The company aims to make all their owned or leased facilities operate at net zero carbon by 2025, drive



increased efficiency and use cleaner fuels within their fleet of 6 Boeing 757 freighters, support customers with sustainable and optimised packaging solutions, and design greener products and services through their comprehensive solutions.

▶ **HDFC Bank commits to becoming carbon-neutral by 2031–32**

The bank is looking at reducing its emissions and energy and water consumption, while continuing to incorporate and scale up the use of renewable energy in its operations. As part of its ESG strategy, the bank will also focus on offering loans for green products like electric vehicles at lower interest rates and incorporating ESG scores in its credit decisions. The bank is also working on a framework for issuing green bonds.

This announcement is a part of the bank's overall commitment to embed ESG principles in its business. The bank has a three-pronged strategy to achieve its objective to become carbon neutral: reduce consumption, transition to renewable energy, and offset carbon footprint. As a part of this strategy, it is planning the following initiatives, amongst others:

- Decrease absolute emissions and energy consumed, from current level of 315,583 MT CO2 emissions
- Increase rooftop solar capacity in large offices
- Convert 50% of our total sourced electricity to renewable energy
- Create single-use plastic-free corporate offices
- Plant 25 lakh trees
- Reduce water consumption by 30%



▶ **Canon India's 'Green Environment Together' – 20,000 trees in 2 years**

Canon India announced the successful planting of the 20,000th tree as part of its 'Green Environment Together' (GET) initiative. As part of the initiative,

Canon India plants a tree on the purchase of every laser copier/multi-function device (MFD) on behalf of its direct customers.

▶ **VAHDAM India releases its 2020–21 sustainability impact report**



In 2020, VAHDAM India became one of the first tea brands in Asia to get a Climate Neutral certification in line with its long-term goal of aligning with the UN SDGs by 2030. The same year, VAHDAM India worked with 'rePurpose Global' to measure and offset its plastic usage, and became one of the first tea brands to get the Plastic Neutral certification too.

In 2020, VAHDAM India took its first steps to measure its carbon footprint by measuring emissions under Scopes 1, 2 and 3 as per the Greenhouse Gas Protocol for the year 2019.

- Scope 1 – covers direct emissions from owned or controlled sources
- Scope 2 – covers indirect emissions from the generation of purchased electricity, steam, heating and cooling consumed by the company
- Scope 3 – includes all other indirect emissions that occur in a company's value chain

Post measurement and verification of its carbon footprints by Climate Neutral USA, the brand shortlisted projects for its carbon credits, from platforms verified by a global carbon-credit platform (such as Gold Standard, Switzerland). It purchased credits in projects that work at reducing, removing, or avoiding emissions or carbon from traditional fossil fuels.

The brand's carbon footprint for the year 2020 was 2,954 tCO₂e under the 3 scopes mentioned above and was offset in the following projects:

- Biomass power project at Godawari Power and Ispat Limited, Chhattisgarh
Credits purchased: 954
- Wind power project in Madhya Pradesh, India
Credits purchased: 1100
- Improved wood stoves in Udaipur
Credits purchased: 900

▶ **Ramky Enviro announces end-of-life vehicle-recycling facilities**

An integrated player in the waste management and recycling space, Ramky Enviro's (REEL) nationwide network of end-of-life vehicle (ELV) facilities supports this year's World Environment theme #GenerationRestoration, as per their official statement.

As per industry reports, by 2025 India will have over two crore vehicles nearing the end of their lives. Over the past 15–20 years, a significant amount of research and development has enhanced the recycling rate of ELVs, including enhancing dismantling techniques and improving remanufacturing operations. Recycling of automotive materials can have a very positive sustainability impact via conservation of materials, lower energy use, and lower greenhouse gas emissions.

REEL's nation-wide network of ELV facilities can accelerate fleet renewal based on cleaner fuels, newer technologies and zero-emission alternatives such as electric vehicles; this protects the environment and public health on one hand and ensure sustainable resource and material recovery on the other. These facilities will deploy automated technologies towards dismantling, depolluting and shredding to maximise recycling and resource recovery.

In the first phase, these recycling facilities are being developed at locations near Delhi-NCR, Mumbai, Bengaluru, Hyderabad, Adityapur and Chennai. In the next phase, the network will expand to over 25 locations across India. REEL will also partner with leading automotive companies in both passenger and commercial vehicles segments as part of this initiative.



BNHS and TCF welcome SC order on Great Indian Bustards Saving them a priority

The Supreme Court judgement (dated 19 April 2021) directs for power lines to be taken underground in Great Indian Bustard (GIB) habitats.

Welcoming the order, Kedar Gore, director, The Corbett Foundation (TCF), says that while new renewable-energy parks have been planned in Gujarat, Rajasthan, Maharashtra and other states, the hope is that 'the companies involved have taken appropriate measures in their planning stages to create infrastructure as mandated by the SC order on the power lines in GIB habitat.' Seconding this, Dr Bivash Pandav, director, Bombay Natural History Society (BNHS), says 'no stone should be left unturned in safeguarding the remaining Bustard habitats in the Thar desert.'

The Great Indian Bustard is a critically endangered bird with its last viable breeding population in India. About 100 of these magnificent grassland birds remain in the world. Though habitat loss and degradation have been responsible for this bird's decline in the past few decades, their deaths due to collision with overhead power lines are today the biggest direct threat.

The GIB needs grasslands and semi-arid areas to survive. Most of these areas are unfortunately categorised as 'revenue wastelands' in governmental records, and therefore given away for solar and wind energy projects in India. Large renewable-energy projects across GIB habitats, mainly in Rajasthan and Gujarat, have put these already threatened species at the grave risk of extinction. The Wildlife Institute of India (WII) estimates that 18 of these birds die each year due to collision with power lines.

In light of the conservation needs of this critically endangered species, the Supreme Court's direction in *MK Ranjitsinh vs Union of India*, dated 19 April 2021, is significant as it gives specific binding directions that have to be mandatorily followed in GIB habitat. It makes it mandatory for all power lines in both 'potential' and 'priority' habitats of the GIB to be laid underground in future.

The court has directed that lines be taken underground immediately, stressing that irrespective of the cost factor the priority shall be to save the near-extinct birds. Until the lines are made underground, bird diverters are to be installed on all lines. Only for those high-voltage power lines where technical feasibility issues are found in undergrounding, the SC has constituted a three-member expert committee to examine the feasibility.



Significantly, the court has also given specific direction to protect the nesting sites of the GIB.

For the under grounding of power lines, the Supreme Court has given a time limit of one year from the date of the order within which the under grounding is supposed to be completed. It is important to note that renewable-energy units already existing in the area have not been asked to move from sites or stop work in Rajasthan or Gujarat. Instead, they have been asked to take their lines underground and, till then, install bird diverters.

These are important steps to conserve – and prevent the extinction of – a bird that is named after India, and was once spread all over West India and the Deccan plateau. Today, the GIB's regular breeding sites are only in Thar desert landscape (Rajasthan) and Kutch landscape (Gujarat). A few birds are found in Pakistan, moving between the two countries. For this reason, India recently proposed a Concerted Action Plan for the GIB under the aegis of the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS). This was approved by the CMS in the last CMS Conference of Parties meeting, held in Gujarat in February 2020. Even in this plan, emphasis has been given on minimising collisions by relocating, realigning, or redesigning the infrastructures of power lines, windmills and solar panels, and bringing renewable-energy projects under the umbrella of strict environmental impact assessment (EIA).

In order to fulfil its commitments towards the GIB, India has pioneered a Conservation Breeding Program in Rajasthan. This has been successfully implemented by the Wildlife Institute of India (WII) in collaboration with Rajasthan Forest Department, and several chicks are currently being raised at this centre. These chicks eventually have to be released in GIB habitats not only in Rajasthan but in all its former range as well. For this to happen, it is essential that large swathes of safe and secured habitat is made available to GIB in future.



Mondelez India: Trying to make multilayered plastic useful

The company has announced a grant to the NGO Hasiru Dala, who will recycle multilayered plastic (MLP) waste to create sustainable furniture boards for creating tables and benches as well as for other uses. The pilot project aims to convert ~600 tonnes of MLP waste per annum into WoW Boards.

On the initiative, Deepak Iyer, President – India, Mondelez International, says: 'One of the key challenges in India is recycling of multilayered plastics, given the infrastructure constraints. While on the one hand we continue to work with the government to support collection, segregation and recycling, we felt it was critical to experiment with and support enterprising technologies and initiatives that could recycle multilayered plastics at scale to address the issues of waste management. This one-of-a-kind pilot project recycles multilayered plastics to create WoW Boards that are highly durable and a sustainable plywood alternative for building, construction, furniture, and other end uses. We have made a grant to Hasiru Dala that will convert waste to wealth, generate employment, and create a viable business model while addressing the challenges of MLP in a sustainable manner. The success of this project and its learnings will create a model for companies in India to replicate for MLP recycling at scale.'

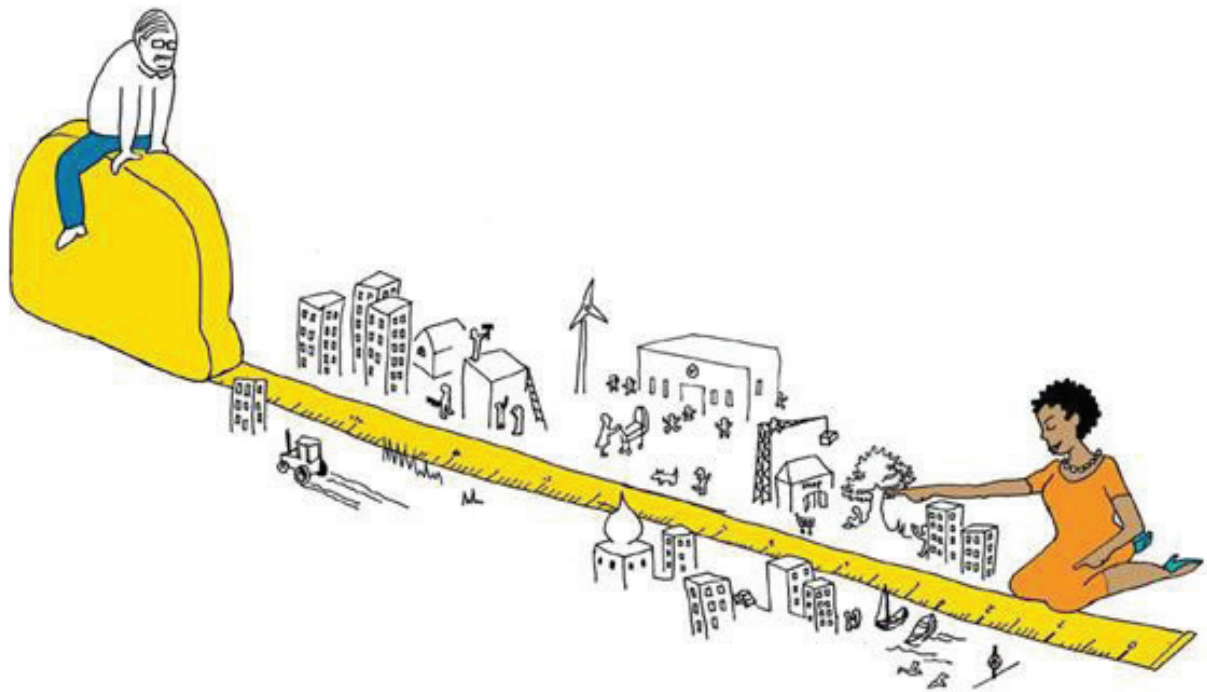
MLP waste will be collected by Hasiru Dala's wide network of waste-collection units and then

processed and converted at a special unit set up in Bengaluru. The technology solution, provided by TrashCon, a waste-recycling equipment manufacturer, will create durable WoW Boards that can be used for a variety of purposes, both industrial and consumer. The initiative is expected to begin commercial production in July 2021.

'Hasiru Dala has been working with the local government in Bengaluru to manage inorganic waste for several years by creating entrepreneurs out of waste pickers. We have always been looking for solutions to multilayered and low-value plastic. A study in 2018 showed that more than 80 per cent of plastic waste collected is low value but bring almost nothing in terms of income to the centres. They typically end up at landfills or in co-processing in cement kilns. The WoW Boards will help bring income to the waste pickers and will have applications particularly in replacing wood-based sheets in construction and furnishings,' Nalini Shekar, co-founder, Hasiru Dala, informs.

As part of Mondelez International's commitment to reducing its environmental impact, it is addressing the biggest sustainability challenges relevant to its business, which includes plastics pollution. Over 97% of Mondelez India's packaging is currently designed to be recyclable. In 2019–2020 and in 2020–21, the company claims to have achieved 100% extended producer responsibility targets in India.

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Tetra Pak: It's time to manage those used carton packs

Food processing and packaging solutions company Tetra Pak has tied up with Finish Society, a solid-waste management NGO, to increase collection of used carton packages in Udaipur. The NGO will be working closely with the Municipal Corporation of Udaipur to recover used packs of juice/milk, etc., from the corporation's sorting centres. The used cartons collected through this initiative will be sent to the nearest recycler, Khatema Fibres Ltd.

With this new partnership, Rajasthan has become the 22nd state/union territory covered by Tetra Pak's collection network. This network covers 38 cities and 14 Indian Army contingents, supported by over 26 collection and awareness partners, across 22 states and union territories.

Tetra Pak and Finish Society will also focus on raising awareness among the waste-picker community about the value they can derive from collecting used beverage cartons and selling them to a recycler.



Dabur: Starting to say no to paper cartons

As a first major step in this direction, the company is removing outer paper cartons from its flagship Ayurvedic toothpaste brand Dabur Red Paste. The carton-free, ecofriendly packaging is being rolled out in key modern trade outlets in a joint initiative with Reliance Retail.

In addition, the company is also rolling out an outer paper carton-free low unit price (LUP) pack, specially created for rural markets. The paper saved by removing the outer cartons will be repurposed to create notebooks for underserved children supported by Child Rights and You (CRY).

'As part of this initiative, Dabur Red Paste has also launched a campaign called "Give up the Carton, Give me a Future" in association with CRY, under which the paper saved from removing the outer cartons will be used to make notebooks that will be distributed among more than 120,000 underserved children. We expect that these initiatives will help us to repurpose approximately 150 tons of paper,' Harkawal Singh, marketing head-Oral Care, Dabur India Ltd, informs in an official release.

HSBC India

Supporting Mumbai's dabbawalas

HSBC India has pledged financial assistance to the tune of INR 15 crore to support the dabbawalas of Mumbai. This support will be provided in association with United Way Mumbai and is aimed at providing relief to dabbawalas who have been adversely impacted due to the pandemic and subsequent lockdowns.

The donation will be utilised for a range of interventions to address the loss of income and livelihood of Mumbai's renowned dabbawalas, broadly covering food security, life insurance, education support, and livelihood support. Each dabbawala will be provided ration and hygiene material supplies for three months. Financial protection in the form of life-insurance cover will be provided through tie-ups with insurance providers. Educational tabs and access to digital resources will be provided to school-aged children/grandchildren of dabbawalas whose education has been impacted due to a lack of smartphones at home, to facilitate online learning. With schools likely to continue classes virtually for a few more months, this support will be crucial in bridging the learning gap. Lastly, the dabbawalas will also be provided cycles, their primary mode of transport, for them to resume services.

Referring to the dabbawalas as an integral part of Mumbai's workforce and community, Hitendra Dave, interim CEO, HSBC India, said that the support being extended to them 'is in line with our endeavour of supporting the communities where we operate.'

Throwing light on the dabbawalas' struggle, Ulhas Muke, president, Nutan Mumbai Tiffin Box Suppliers Charity Trust, said, 'The dabbawala service has never been shut in the past 130 years. But since March 2020 it has come to a total standstill. With no earnings over the past 14 months, dabbawalas are in a financial crisis and it has been difficult for them to feed their families. Many of them had to return to their villages as survival in Mumbai is tough. Many have taken up temporary livelihoods such as selling vegetables and working as drivers.' Acknowledging HSBC India's initiative, he said this will help the families cope with these very difficult times.

Cisco and Social Alpha

Putting a grant of Rs 2 crore behind five agritech startups

The grant is part of a programme called Krishi Mangal that will support startups working on solutions for smallholder farmers. The five startups selected for the programme have developed agritech innovations across supply-chain traceability powered by blockchain, data analytics for crop management, energy-efficient cold-storage units, sustainable aquaculture solutions, and e-commerce solutions for livestock management. The objectives of these startups are focused on income increase, creating jobs, and promoting micro-entrepreneurship along agriculture and its allied value chain.

Take a look:

- **TraceX Technologies** is organising the food and agriculture supply chains using blockchain technology to enable transparency, trust and traceability across the ecosystem. Trace X will work with 1,000 farmers in Belgaum, Karnataka, on maize value chain; increasing their income by 25%.

- **Jalkeevika Infotech** is focusing on creating sustainable livelihood options by bringing accessibility and affordability in aquaculture. Jaljeevika will train 500 farmers in fisheries in pond-management practices and deploy IoT sensors in Yavatmal, Maharashtra.

- **Pashu Bazaar** is building a transparent, objective and efficient livestock product market and promoting micro-entrepreneurship for livestock farmers via e-commerce. The startup will train over 1,000 livestock farmers on commercial goat farming, credit planning and livestock financial services in Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh, and Deoghar, Jharkhand.

- **Tango** is decentralising the cold chain for storage and transportation for last-mile delivery through their proprietary Phase Change Material based cold-storage solutions. They will deploy portable cold-storage boxes for fisheries in 11 districts of Andhra Pradesh and Telangana, impacting 5,000 farmers.

- **Satyukt** is providing farm-specific dynamic crop advisory and early warning of risks (flood, drought, pest, diseases) via a mobile application at an affordable cost for marginal farmers. Satyukt will work with 7,000 farmers in Karnataka, UP, Telangana and Maharashtra in using the mobile app to increase crop yield in a sustainable manner.



Krishi Mangal will follow a two-pronged approach. Along with the accelerator programme, it will also promote India's first digital agri collective to enable ecosystem-level collaboration and co-creation of solutions while helping startups navigate the ecosystem and accelerate their work in agriculture and allied sectors. In Krishi Mangal's one-year scale-up accelerator, the five startups will each receive a grant of Rs 42.5 lakh to implement their solutions in a new geography or customer segment. Additionally, they will receive support in market access, sales and distribution, and fundraising.

In a press release shared with CauseBecause, Harish Krishnan, managing director, Public Affairs & Strategic Engagements, Cisco India, said, 'With the Internet of Things (IoT) and digital technologies connecting devices and data, innovative ideas now have the ability to make a difference more quickly than ever before – and we're here to help. While the prize money will help accelerate the adoption of breakthrough technology, products, and services that drive economic development and solve social or environmental problems, engagement with Cisco mentors during the course of the programme will mean that organisations and entrepreneurs can leverage great domain expertise and strong market knowledge.'

Manoj Kumar, founder and CEO, Social Alpha, said, 'Small and marginal farmers already face numerous risks to agricultural production, and climate change is making their livelihoods even more precarious. At Social Alpha, we have chosen to address these vulnerabilities and are constantly scouting for startups that are working on breakthrough technologies for large-scale impact. Social Alpha's partnership with Cisco will help us scale high-impact solutions to reduce risk and increase the income of smallholder farmers.'

The Logitech mouse: Comes with 'carbon impact' label

Back in June of 2020, Logitech had announced its decision to include detailed carbon impact transparency labelling on all product packaging across their portfolio—much like nutrition labels on food packaging. As stated by the company, consumers should be informed about the impact of their purchasing decisions.

The first product from the brand to feature the new 'carbon impact' label is the Logitech G PRO wireless gaming mouse and it is now available in stores. One of six gaming products with carbon impact labels rolling out in this quarter, the mouse features a number at the top of the label that indicates the product's full lifecycle carbon footprint in kilograms of carbon dioxide equivalent (kg CO₂e) taking a typical two-year use period. For the Logitech gaming mouse the measurement is 7.84 kg CO₂e, which is equivalent to a gallon of gas approximately.

For the carbon label, every last detail of the product's journey has been scrutinised, including the sourcing of raw materials, manufacture and transport of the product, energy used during the product's lifetime, and eventual end-of-life management of the product such as recycling at its end of life.



Over the last few years, the company has been working to develop their life cycle analysis (LCA) capability. With LCA, they were able to quantify the carbon footprint of the product, from sourcing of raw materials, through to manufacturing, distribution, consumer use and product end of life. This analysis and approach is third-party-certified across all products.

Logitech is offering its entire product carbon-impact methodology and measurement processes, as well as the resulting transparency-label process, for others in the consumer electronics industry to use.

Número Uno: Doing denim with 'one glass water'

The company claims that it is 'using 1 glass of water to create 1 pair of jeans', having achieved this feat through improvised processes and technology. To put this in some perspective, traditionally a pair of jeans requires 70 litres of water to complete the washing and finishing process.

One of India's first indigenously manufactured denim labels, Número Uno has over the years been investing in environment-friendly processes – examples being installation of laser machines to replace sand blasting; employing G2/Ozone process and ECO wash/Nano bubble tech to reduce the use of water and harmful chemicals; and switching to using more and more blended fabrics (instead of 100% cotton), using fabrics made from recycled and post-consumer waste yarns, as well as Tencel & hemp blends, etc. The laundry has an ETP plant as well as zero-discharge technology wherein the entire water discharged is recycled and reused after getting treated. The design team works closely with Jeanologia, a global leader in sustainable and efficient finishing technologies for textiles, to create collections that have reduced impact on the environment.

On the launch of 'One glass water denims' collection, Número Uno's CMD Narinder Singh says: 'We believe that we can create attractive-looking denims and protect our natural resources at the same time. This collection is actually an initiative to address the harmful impact of industrial wash processes of making jeans.'

Priced at Rs 1,899 onwards, the collection is available at <https://www.numerounojeanswear.com/> and Número Uno stores, as also on online fashion stores like Mynta.



(Re)Imagining



When the SDGs are expected to be a reality, more or less

Let's hope it's more rather than less. Because there's no exaggerating what's at stake here, but also because the year 2030 has become a milestone that the world is collectively moving towards, some more enthusiastically and seriously than others but these sentiments hopefully will become more widespread as we inch closer towards that all-important date. There's a pace that is building up and holding on to it to create our own momentum is the need of the hour – scientists have identified this timeframe as the last chance to prevent catastrophic climate change. Corporations everywhere are proclaiming their 2030 goals and that's a good thing – signs of businesses aligning their visions, missions, strategies, operations, supply chain and lifecycle management with sustainability goals are here, there and everywhere. That's nowhere near enough right now, but action on that front will most certainly pick up.

2021's World Environment Day – June 5 – has kicked off the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration, a global mission to revive billions of hectares, from forests to farmlands, from the top of mountains to the depth of the sea. It is a rallying call for the protection and revival of ecosystems all around the world, for the benefit of people and nature. Only with thriving ecosystems can we enhance people's livelihoods, counteract climate change, and stop the collapse of biodiversity.

The term 'ecosystem restoration' is as complicated or simple as you will make of it, but what's clear is that it will have to be a global undertaking with unflinching commitment from each and every stakeholder, which is each one of us. Because it means repairing billions of hectares of land so that people have access to food, clean water and jobs; it means bringing back plants and animals from the brink of extinction; and it also means that the many small actions

Ecosystem restoration, in essence, means that we go from exploiting nature to healing it, which will need us to prevent, halt and reverse the damage that we have caused to the planet's ecosystems, its forests and wetlands and coral reefs and coasts and what may you. By the way, ecosystems take into account the interaction between living organisms – us human beings, plants, animals – and their physical environment. This includes nature, but also human-made systems such as cities or farms.

that everyone can take every day – growing trees, greening our cities, cleaning up trash alongside rivers and coasts – will have a huge cumulative impact.

A decade of action

The year 2030, which will mark the culmination of the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration, is significant for another reason as well – we are expected to have met the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by then. These are the 17 'global goals' that have the potential to make it a better world every which way, because if achieved, these will end poverty and hunger, reduce inequalities, and give us a fighting chance at addressing climate change.

With just about a decade left in which to get our act together, this year's World Environment Day and its theme 'ecosystem restoration' is certainly a timely reminder for businesses, governments, civil society and people everywhere to take stock. Especially so because a UN Global Compact report warns that 'with 10 years to go, the world is not on track to achieve the SDGs. We need a Decade of Action to reverse this predicament.'

With this as the backdrop, Team CB sought out the views of industry leaders on two points:

- a) **How does 2030 'actually' look like – the optimistic scenario vis-à-vis the pessimist's scepticism, both being important**
- b) **Ecosystem restoration**



Gayle Schueller
*Senior Vice President and Chief
Sustainability Officer, 3M*

On 2030

The UN Sustainable Development Goals have been instrumental in creating global alignment on the challenges we face and propelling action by corporations, governments, and civil society. The world has made significant progress towards these 17 goals, but many of their sub-bullets are extremely challenging and may be difficult to achieve by the 2030 deadline.

I am encouraged by the fact that several recent challenges—from widespread use of electric vehicles and advancing renewable energy to fighting the Covid-19 pandemic—seemed insurmountable until science and emerging technologies created new solutions on relatively short timescales. My personal confidence for achieving the SDGs continues to build and I think we are at a pivotal inflection point due to mounting global awareness, accelerating technology developments, and momentum for change. Regardless of the progress made by the stated deadline, I think the SDGs represent areas where we can—and should—continue to strive for improvement beyond 2030.

On ecosystem restoration

At 3M, the success of our business is inextricably linked with the health of our planet. We support the UN's vision of recovering vital ecosystems that have been degraded or destroyed, and conserving those that are still intact. Although our link to ecosystem restoration may not appear as direct as it is for entities in the agricultural or food and beverage industries, as a global manufacturer with a diverse product portfolio, we know that we impact the environment in many ways. For example, because we incorporate pulp and paper into many 3M products and packaging materials, we have been working to map our supply chain from the mills to the source of harvest since 2015. We also partner with NGOs such as the Earthworm Foundation – a global non-profit with expertise in implementing responsible sourcing policies and improving forest-management practices across global supply chains – to support us through policy implementation.

Another way 3M is working to drive positive impact is by increasing the use of recycled and plant-based content when a product's life-cycle analysis indicates this is appropriate, which also works to build greater market demand for these materials. These efforts are bolstered by the April announcement that 3M will reduce dependence on virgin fossil-based plastic by 125M pounds (nearly 56,700 metric tons) by the end of 2025.



Sudhindra Holla
*Director, Axis Communications,
India & SAARC*

On 2030

Contributing to the UN's Agenda 2030 and upholding the 17 goals deeply resonate with our culture at Axis Communications. We have adopted various measures to ensure that all our products, practices and processes contribute to a safer and smarter world. One way we are trying to give back to the ecosystem is to phase out PVC and hazardous substances from our manufacturing processes. We are also making products that are 95%–97% recyclable and with 50% less energy consumption. Our conscious effort has been to make our camera designs greener and ecofriendly over the years. It's been our mantra to instill a sense of responsibility amongst our suppliers to reduce environmental impact, energy and water consumption, emissions and waste. We are optimistic about achieving our sustainable development goals by 2030 in an approach that encompasses people, partners and end-users.



Ketan Kulkarni
CMO and Head - Business
Development, Blue Dart

On 2030

Blue Dart's sustainability roadmap is aligned with the SDGs in that it calls for clean operations for climate protection, a great company to work at, and building a highly trusted company. We have launched many initiatives to aid the world in its battle against climate change and global warming. We aim to operate all our facilities at net zero carbon by 2025, drive increased efficiency and use cleaner fuels for our fleet of 6 Boeing 757-200 aircraft, support customers with sustainable and optimised packaging solutions, and design greener products and services through comprehensive solutions.

At Blue Dart, we are working towards achieving zero carbon emissions by 2050 under DPDHL Goal 'Mission 2050'. The goal is to limit global warming to less than 2 °C and drive the business towards zero emissions logistics, thus setting the standard for the future of the logistics sector. Under the Mission 2050 initiative, for over four years Blue Dart has contributed to over 10% of DPDHL Group's global target of planting 1 million trees every year. In addition to this, in December 2011, Blue Dart announced India's first end-to-end GoGreen Carbon Neutral Services across international and domestic markets. This service has been subscribed to by over 2,871 environmentally responsible customers till 2020.

Under the credo 'Connecting People, Improving Lives', Blue Dart also undertakes GoGreen initiatives like usage of LED lamps in offices, having lights off for an hour every last Saturday of the month across all offices, installation of water-sensor taps, and route-optimisation techniques.

Staying ahead of the curve, Blue Dart has deployed the Smart Truck technology designed to provide solutions to urban logistics challenges, stopped using goods receipts, and minimised the use of air waybills (AWB). We use bar codes or thermal stickers in the transportation of goods. Based on our electricity consumption during the year, Blue Dart also purchases green electricity through IREC (international Renewable Electricity Certificates).

On ecosystem restoration

The increasing number of forest fires in the Amazon and Uttarakhand, or the recent Tauktae cyclone are alarming signs calling for a desperate need to restore our ecosystem.

Blue Dart is a purpose-driven organisation and has over the years mapped various ESG (environmental, social and governance) strategies to create value for the triple bottom line – profit, people and planet. With collaborative efforts, efficient risk-mitigation strategies and sustainable use of resources, ecosystem restoration is expected to create tremendous business opportunities complying with ESG parameters.



Since 2017, Blue Dart has been planting 111,000 trees every year. Towards the end of 2021 monsoons, Blue Dart will complete the planting of over 5 lakh trees which will offset approximately 9,100,000 kg of carbon per year, on maturity. This World Environment Day, Blue Dart announced paperless transactions on the new digital portal for all vendor partners.

Under the Group's new sustainability roadmap, Blue Dart has made significant investments in developing future-ready technology that can protect the environment and at the same time deliver excellence in a sustainable way.



Amar Kaul

Chairman and Managing
Director, Ingersoll Rand India
Limited

On 2030

At Ingersoll Rand, we are focusing on addressing climate change, assessing climate risk, and determining ways to find solutions as a business. The company's goals underscore strategic priority to operate sustainably across key areas of the business where we can make a powerful and lasting impact. The commitments further unite our 16,000 employees through a shared sense of responsibility and purpose, bring value to our customers through product innovation and stewardship, and make a positive difference towards protecting our communities and the world.

We prioritise the integration of sustainability principles into every business, including a robust governance model and a focus on fostering social and environmental improvement in our communities and throughout the world.

On ecosystem restoration

We are operating at a time when course-correcting the impact we have on the environment is an imperative and our collective responsibility. At Ingersoll Rand, our pursuit of sustainability continues to be bold and transparent. On a daily basis, Ingersoll Rand employees around the world live our purpose of 'making life better', and with a strong culture centred on employee ownership, we stand ready to accelerate our environmental actions.

Our products and services provide a unique opportunity to contribute to solving many of the environmental issues facing our world. We are proud to share our 2030 and 2050 environmental goals, focused on improvements in water, air and land quality.

Water

- 17% water-use reduction in operations by 2030
- By 2030, eliminate, reduce or recycle >1 billion gallons of water annually in our customers' processes and applications through the use of our products

Air

- Realise net-zero greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions in our operations by 2050
- 100% renewable energy by 2050
- Reduce GHG emissions by 60% in our operations by 2030
- Reduce customer GHG impacts >15% from IR products by 2030

Land

- Achieve zero waste to landfill at >50% of current sites by 2030





Rajiv Williams
Corporate head, CSR
Jindal Stainless Ltd

This year's World Environment Day marks the formal launch of the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration (2021–2030), giving support to the preamble of the 2030 Agenda, wherein world leaders have affirmed their commitment to 'protect the planet from degradation'. I feel we need to pause and think on this commitment, go beyond the statement, and measure the 'where' and 'what' of things that need to be done to achieve the goals set out at COP 21, consolidated in the Paris Accord. After all, it is the comity of nations under the UN umbrella that has established the Conference of Parties (COP) and has an important role to play in protecting the environment as projected by the apex decision-making body of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).

As of now, the scenario on the targets seems to be rather farfetched with only limited action plans in place on a host of climate indicators and limited resources being allocated towards achieving the goals. What I see most corporations doing is carrying out massive tree-planting drives with the purpose of supposedly becoming carbon-neutral by the year 2030. In my view, in focusing only on tree planting they are neglecting other major challenges with regard to the ecosystem-restoration agenda, and are not directly assisting in recovery of ecosystems degraded or destroyed.

It is time for corporations to reduce pressure on the existing environment, especially in this globalised economy, by respecting 'nature' and protecting it from being degraded. While ambition drives businesses to extract the maximum to increase their profit margins, yet from the business-responsibilities standpoint, they need to plough back a fair share of their profits to make the world sustainable and place adequate emphasis on responsible sourcing and responsible consumption.

At Jindal Stainless Limited Group of Companies, sustainability is increasingly a top priority with increased investments in production processes, primarily towards reducing carbon emissions. These have resulted in reducing the energy-consumption load and increasing the use of alternate sources of energy. Among other things, the company has invested in rooftop solar energy and firmed up plans to enhance its solar utilities by installing floating solar panels on the water reservoir co-located inside the plant premises. Efforts towards this end started with carrying out an energy audit of all facilities.

In addition, the company is making efforts to optimally utilise other biofuels like saw dust, rice husk, bagasse, rice straw and coconut shell. This shift in policy has resulted in reducing not only its greenhouse gas emissions but also its hydrocarbon and carbon dioxide life-cycle emissions. The atmospheric fluidised bed combustion (AFBC) boiler offers efficient, cost-effective and reliable steam generation, which further underlines the company's commitment to protect the environment.

I am of the firm belief that we must periodically monitor and evaluate the outcomes. At JSL, all environment-related activities are being monitored by BEE-certified energy auditors and managers as per ISO 50001 standard.

To sum up, I feel we need to go beyond our closed operational areas and support the WED theme of 'ecosystem restoration'. We also need to move beyond rhetoric by demonstrating our resolve through a well-coordinated 'action plan'.





Chulamas Jitpatima

Country Director, MQDC India

On 2030

Achieving the 2030 goal is heavily dependent on developing dynamic partnerships and recognising and implementing tactical strategies keeping in view the 17 goals. There is a lot of distance to be covered not only when it comes to collaborations between the various government bodies but also in terms of commitments by citizens and businesses to attain improved outcomes. The collective intent must be to protect the planet from degradation through sustainable consumption and production, sustainably managing our natural resources, and taking urgent action on climate change, so that it can support the needs of the present and future generations. The challenge here is to embed these practices in our daily lives.

On ecosystem restoration

'Ecosystem restoration' is about reinstating the lost parts of our Earth and natural resources. Over the past decades, the world has moved at a breakneck speed, accelerating developmental activities that are exhausting our resources at a blinding speed, impacting the natural order of replenishment. The responsibility falls on us as businesses, governments, and citizens of the planet to revise our approach towards the use of resources and work towards systematic strategies to allow plenty of time for the same to replenish. We will need to simultaneously develop and explore alternate and renewable sources of energy to reduce the pressure on finite natural resources. Such a structured and planned approach will not only conserve these resources for our future generations but also help in the survival of related species.

MQDC, under its credo 'For All Well-Being', is committed to the wellness and sustainability of all living beings. We invest in extensive research to create environment-friendly property developments.

MQDC's 'sustainnovation' approach draws on the work of its in-house Research & Innovation for Sustainability Center (RISC), which has helped develop a rigorous set of standards and guidelines that ensure well-being in every facet of MQDC projects, from unit layouts to lighting, air conditioning and air quality. RISC focuses on several aspects such as indoor/outdoor materials, air quality, construction methods, and controlling pollution. There is also the FutureTales Lab which is a research centre for future solutions planning and proactive advocacy. The lab focuses on finding future solutions and exploring possible scenarios in habitat and well-being. Our research-based approach can be seen in elements such as 'universal design', 'smart home automation', and eco-materials.





Raju B Ketkale
Deputy Managing Director-
Manufacturing, Toyota Kirloskar
Motor

At TKM, our initiatives are conceptualised and designed to meet our objectives of lowering our environmental impact and living in harmony with nature. The need to protect the environment in the face of human impact has been widely discussed for decades. To push that human impact into a more positive space, Toyota has aligned its initiatives with environmental sustainability and reduced resource consumption. At TKM, we have set a challenge for ourselves to go beyond the comfort zone and embrace sustainability in all our initiatives, with a goal of creating a net positive impact by 2050.

In 2015, Toyota globally had announced the Toyota Environmental Challenge 2050. It comprises six challenges that are directly or indirectly linked to the Global SDGs.

Challenge 1 – linked to SDGs 7 (affordable and clean energy) and 13 (climate action)

Toyota is working towards zero vehicle CO₂ emissions by developing sustainable mobility solutions and introducing hybrid electric vehicles, including hydrogen-based fuel-cell electric vehicles. We intend to achieve 40% CO₂ reduction in all our new vehicles by 2030. By 2050, we hope to be able to reduce 90% of emissions from our products.

Challenge 2 – linked to SDGs 7, 9 (industry, innovation and infrastructure) and 13

We are expanding our best practices in energy reduction and also promoting renewable energy among our value-chain partners (suppliers, logistics, dealers). We are aiming to bring down CO₂ reduction across life cycle to zero by 2050, and have a mid-term target of reducing the same by 32% by 2030.

Challenge 3 – linked to SDGs 12 (responsible consumption and production) and 13

Toyota has been continuously and rapidly shifting from non-renewable to renewable sources of energy across its business operations, with one of the main focus areas being electricity consumption. We are harnessing solar energy and also purchasing renewable energy. We have 8.2MW solar power installed inside TKM premises and 18MW offsite installation, which is exclusive for TKM. During FY 2020–21, we met 94% of our total energy requirement through renewable sources.

Challenge 4 – Linked to SDG 6 (clean water and sanitation for all)

We reduced 90% of freshwater intake for manufacturing processes in FY 2020–21. The target is to reach zero freshwater usage for production purpose by the year 2030.

Challenge 5 – linked to SDGs 9 and 12

Steel is an essential raw material for the passenger-car industry, constituting up to 23 per cent of the weight of the final finished product. Steel consumption has an impact on both business operations and the environment as it involves large CO₂ emissions throughout its life cycle, right from mining to its scrapping and reutilisation. At Toyota, we are taking steps to maximise the steel yield and minimise wastage by identifying and implementing kaizens.

Likewise, we have adopted various initiatives in waste management. For example, approximately 45% of the plastic packaging at TKM has been reduced and this in turn has contributed in reducing CO₂ by 70 tons. Hazardous sludge disposal has been reduced through co-processing, wherein cumulative from FY 2014 to 2020, we have reduced 150,627 tons CO₂ emissions.

Challenge 6 – linked to SDGs 3 (good health and well-being) and 11 (sustainable cities and communities)

We aim to conserve biodiversity, create awareness, and promote environmental education through collaboration with our internal and external stakeholders.

Understanding SRoI It's not just economic analysis of social projects

By Ranjan Rayna



'Simplicity is the ultimate sophistication.' ~ Leonardo Da Vinci

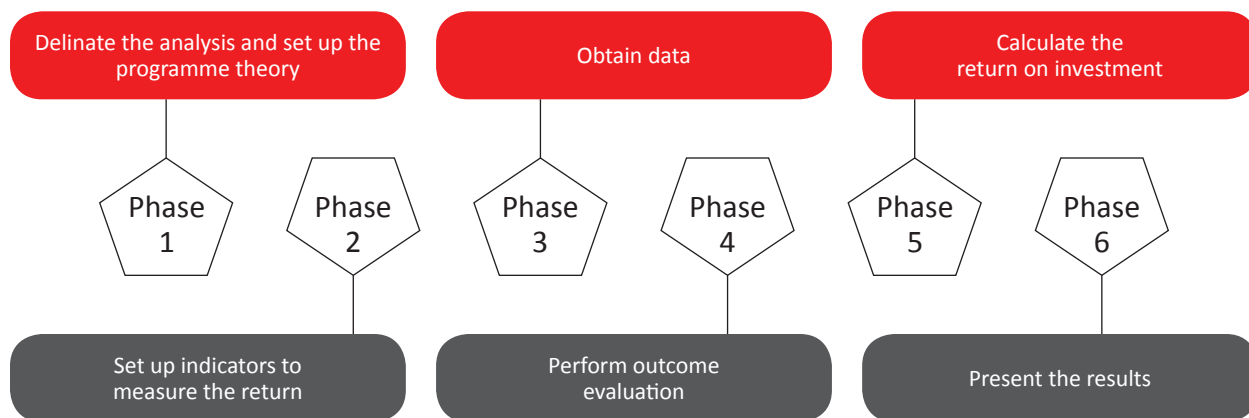
In India, social return on investment (SRoI) was a little-explored domain until a few years ago. It came into prominence as value-driven organisations started to look for new ways to understand, measure and foster awareness of their impacts. New corporate social responsibility (CSR) laws helped strengthen the case for integrating SRoI in impact assessments, as a definitive indicator of value creation for all stakeholders. At its heart, though, is documenting of the story of change that is the end goal of all social and environmental projects.

Organisations that have already had their social programmes evaluated will agree that SRoI translates social and environmental outcomes into tangible monetary values, helping them in getting a fuller picture of the benefits that flow from their investment of time, money and other resources in implementing them. A thoroughly conducted study enables all stakeholders of social change to thoughtfully weigh the resources they put in and the outcomes they get out of

those resources. SRoI has its origin in the term return on investment (RoI), but it has the prefix 'social' which makes it completely different from simply measuring monetary successes. SRoI relates more to the value gained by the society at large from the investments. However, this value is given an approximate (or hypothetical) monetary value. According to the New Economics Foundation, SRoI 'captures social value by translating outcomes into financial values.'

SRol stages

It is important for social-sector professionals including CSR decision makers to understand that SRol metrics vary from programme to programme in ways that are relevant to the people and their experience as well as expectations of the organisation investing in those programmes. It is a 'supposed' measure of how change is being created by giving 'monetary proxies' to all elements that are bringing about that change. It is a story about change, on which to base decisions, and includes case studies and qualitative, quantitative and financial information. An SRol analysis can take many different forms. It can encompass the social value generated by an entire organisation, or focus on just one specific aspect or a particular intervention/project of the organisation.



Proving and improving – SRol benefits

An SRol study enables decision makers to demonstrate the social value of their investments. It also helps organisations, especially social sector investors and donors, to see how much, and where, social value is being created and how.

SRol, when conducted by an independent entity, lets investors and implementing organisations take a step back and look at their work from a fresh perspective. The insights that an SRol report generates can help in shaping future decisions and improving the outcomes – the value – that the project creates.

Some of the benefits underlined in CB Impact SRol Framework include:

- It lends credence to the theory of change in terms of real numbers as well as real stories that support those numbers.
- Indicators of effectiveness (or ineffectiveness) of resources are clearly presented in the SRol report. One can see what input (resource) is churning out what output.
- **The actual impact vis-à-vis benchmarks:** The framework not only measures the actual impact but also juxtaposes the same against the benchmarked impact and outcomes of similar interventions by other entities.
- **Future SRol calculation:** Where projects become self-sustaining, the SRol received after completion of the same generally becomes better.

- The outcomes from an SRol study make for a realistic reference point in chalking out a roadmap to maximise social returns in the future.

Going beyond economic and financial analysis

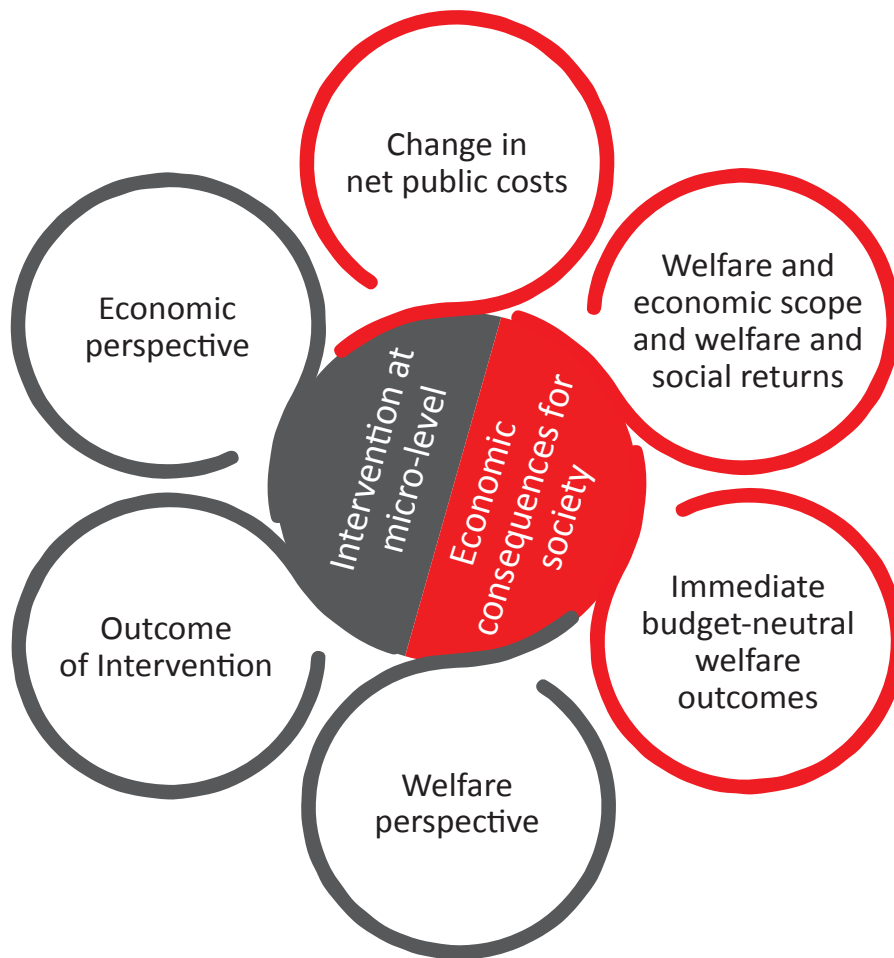
Several methodologies and frameworks are being followed to measure social return on investment. However, they all share some common elements and use cross-disciplinary mechanisms that also borrow from various social-science disciplines.

SRol process*

While some entities have put forth complex measurement mechanisms for SRol, in simple – and meaningful – terms the process involves:

- Interacting with all stakeholders to identify what – in the context of the relevant project/ intervention – the 'social value' means to them
- Finding out how the intervention is creating that value
- Identifying all indicators that justify the value of change that has been created
- Giving financial proxies to all those identified indicators
- Doing comparative analysis of the financial value of the change and the actual financial inputs that went into effectuating the change

**Extracted from CB Impact SRol Framework*



For example, the primary method that was developed at Harvard Business School (which constitutes the base of CB Impact SROI Framework) is inspired by an economic approach that calculates outcomes in quantitative terms – numbers justify the outcomes of the intervention. The approach does a classical cost-benefit analysis, which sets up a number of project-related and operational costs against a series of societal benefits or the impacting outcomes (measured through impact assessment) of the project

So, does that mean any given SROI method is just a mathematical calculation? Certainly not.

The calculations in an SROI study are always combined with soft welfare outcomes. For example, in projects focused on poor, marginalised and vulnerable sections of the



Limits of a financial proxy in SROI
Examples from CB Impact studies

Healthcare projects

In 2018, a doctor onboard a mobile medical van, being run with the support of a popular two-wheeler brand, helped diagnose a woman in a remote village near Dharuhera (Rewari district of Haryana) during the early stages of breast cancer. The doctor made consistent efforts to get her treated and eventually cured.

While assessing the SROI of a programme run by a prominent eye-care institute, the evaluators had to rack their brains about assigning financial proxies to cases where patients who had lost more than 80 per cent of their vision (or were on the verge of losing vision) had regained their eyesight after surgical interventions.

Fact is that in a geography where a basic public health centre (PHC) is not accessible, a life saved from a fatal disease or vision retrieval for a near-blind person is an extraordinary outcome. How do SROI evaluators assign financial/monetary proxies in such cases?

Well, they don't. Yes, they can (and in some cases they do) try and evaluate the economic loss that the entire household could have suffered after losing an important member of their family. In general, however, when assessing such cases these are technically

reported as 'social' outcomes that do not necessarily have to be measured along economic terms.

Education

A boy from a remote government school in Almora district of Uttarakhand, where an international foundation had implemented multiple projects (starting from infrastructure development to soft interventions including digital classrooms to enhance academic performances), became the first student from the area to be amongst the toppers of Joint Entrance Examination (JEE) and obtained a scholarship to a well-known engineering institute.

Does one such case alter the SROI outcomes? What if a similar project being implemented at a different remote school has similar overall outcomes, but not an exceptional outcome or a story like that of the Almora boy? Will the SROI outcomes be different?

Well, no. Such exceptional instances are either mentioned as additional outcomes or shared as case stories; they do not necessarily alter/impact the general SROI outcomes measured in economic terms.

Curious about the SROI of your social intervention? Reach out to Team CB Impact to understand the methodology that will best suit your project as also the probable SROI outcomes that you may get.

Here's where: info@causebecause.com

society, the soft outcomes may be livelihood opportunities, improved health, confidence and self-respect, and a sense of security. In simple terms, the overall objective of an SROI analysis is to measure 'social' return on investment by documenting and evaluating the effects of social changes.

This concerns the economic effects (when a client is, for instance, assisted with transitioning from passive welfare benefits to a job) as well as the welfare outcomes such as increased quality of life and greater motivation. Even though the welfare outcomes cannot be immediately identified in economic terms, they often manifest themselves as economic benefits in the longer term.

In this context, the return on investment is a measure of how much we get for each rupee invested. Adding social to this equation emphasises the focus on creating value for society and its citizens. This also underlines how SROI is different from, and far more than, an economic analysis since it also includes such dimensions as welfare and social returns. ■



About CB Impact

CB Impact, the research, evaluations and strategic consulting arm of CauseBecause, has steadily expanded over the past decade. The team engages with corporate groups, non-profit entities as well as government departments to conduct research studies including baseline and need assessment surveys, midline and endline impact assessments, and project evaluations, and lends strategic support in the conceptualisation of large-scale social programmes.

In addition, CB Impact has been instrumental in the materialisation of government, corporate and NGO partnerships, and also engages in advocacy to influence policy. Last and certainly not the least, CB Impact engages in knowledge sharing with the objective of enhancing the impact of initiatives focused on the overall development of society and our precious environment.

Services

- ▶ **Formative evaluations**
- ▶ **Monitoring and midline evaluations**
- ▶ **Endline evaluations and impact assessment**
- ▶ **Social return on investment (SRoI)**
- ▶ **Partners' credentials and validation**
- ▶ **Partnership support**
- ▶ **Communication collateral**
- ▶ **Domain consultancy**



Our Reach

17
States

48
Districts

300+
Partners

Areas of Impact

Education | Livelihoods | Environment | Gender parity | Skills | Sports | Health & hygiene



Our capacity

As our research engagements continue to expand, so does our capacity to evaluate and assess the impact of large-scale projects. In the past few years, the team has been involved in the evaluation of more than a 100 high-investment projects.

Rs 700+ crore

Cumulative value of evaluated projects

130+

No. of programmes evaluated

60+

No. of organisations engaged with

375+

Network of on-ground associates

The community

The CauseBecause community – individuals who support and participate at our events, contribute towards and read and share our newsletters and magazine, and engage in talks with us to exchange ideas, insights and experiences – continues to grow organically. Alongside, the network of Thought Leaders who have been felicitated at Coffee for Cause (since the first edition in the year 2015) has grown as well.

Now, with the inclusion of information and features on sustainable products, services and alternatives, a bunch of conscious consumers – whose numbers can only go up – have also become a part of the CauseBecause community. All said and done, in its 12th year, CauseBecause is poised to take its next momentous leap on the strength of this community that will make all the difference in the way we understand, perceive, practise, and propagate sustainability.



For partnership queries, write to info@causebecause.com



Dr Shroff's Charity Eye Hospital (SCEH) Holding up the right to sight and doing the cross-subsidy model right

The right to sight, if you think about it, is embedded within Article 21 of the Constitution of India guaranteeing one's fundamental right to 'life and personal liberty'. The expression 'life' in Article 21 means a life with dignity and not mere survival or animal existence – in essence, a life that has the means to earn a living and access to basic necessities (right to health, to a healthy environment, to shelter, to food, and suchlike).

Recognising the right to sight is integral to enabling people to live with independence and dignity. It is important to note that about 80 per cent of blindness is avoidable, that it can be prevented with timely diagnosis and treatment. Unfortunately, the treatment of avoidable blindness remains a huge gap in India's healthcare ecosystem.

The problem

India is home to more than 20 per cent of the world's blind. Most of these cases of blindness could have been prevented through treatment and care.

About 40 million people in India, including 1.6 million children, are blind or visually impaired due to uncorrected refractive error. Many people – and more so those from among disadvantaged and impoverished communities – are unaware that this is correctable. As per World Health Organization (WHO), a vast majority of these people live in villages and smaller towns where they have minimal access to essential eye care – more than 70 per cent of ophthalmologists are in urban areas. This neglected rural lot is quite vulnerable to losing their eyesight and reports the highest number of cases of blindness as well as financial distress caused either by loss of sight or due to cost of treatment and surgeries. Although primary eye care is within the domain of primary health centres of the government, eye health does not figure as a major vertical in these centres and one of the major reasons is the shortage of ophthalmic personnel.

Given the situation, an integrated healthcare system with cost-effective eye care is needed for the prevention and control of blindness among the underprivileged rural population.

A Model Project ▶

The proposed integrated eye-care system means development of a model that addresses multiple issues including the following –

- a) shortfall of qualified doctors (ophthalmologists) in suburban and rural India
- b) creation of a workforce of eye-care technicians and ophthalmic paramedics
- c) developing adequate infrastructure with advanced gadgets, equipment and information technology at par with the urban hospitals.

While the government of India is doing its bit (in pieces) to address these issues, there are a handful of hospitals and organisations going about filling in the vital gaps. In this context, what Dr Shroff's Charity Eye Hospital (SCEH) has been doing over the years is not only laudable but worth emulating in its entirety. It goes without saying that scaling up their reach and capacity is extremely crucial under the circumstances.

While the SCEH model is currently active in select pockets of northern India, its impact as well as the tried-and-tested sustainability quotient makes it a model that needs to be propagated, supported and replicated across India. Here's our chance to increase the pace of our fight against preventable blindness and help communities get their 'right to sight'.

SCEH's working model – an idea and a solution

For about 107 years now, SCEH has been at the forefront of India's fight against blindness. The organisation has been relentlessly providing 'quality' eye care to impoverished citizens at the bottom of the pyramid. What began as a not-quite-fancy one-room clinic in Delhi is today making eye care accessible to millions across northern India through one full-fledged eye-care institution in Delhi, 6 secondary centres in tier 2 cities, and 37 vision centres in towns.

SCEH's success, however, is not to be measured in terms of its increased revenue or the scale of its areas of operation, but through the depth of its work in rural India – the number of people from underprivileged, poor, marginalised and other vulnerable sections of society whose lives have been transformed.

▶ **Ophthalmologists in rural, for rural**

Through its steadily expanding network of secondary/tertiary centres and vision centres, SCEH has been able to create a conducive environment for eye-care trainings and treatments in the rural. The organisation runs fellowship programmes wherein ophthalmologists are recruited and sent for trainings

A legacy of hope and humanity

In 1914, Dr Sorabji P Shroff, who had just returned from England after completing his Fellowship of the Royal College of Surgeons (FRCS), set up his one-room clinic in the walled city of Delhi. The uppermost thought in the 36-year-old enthusiast's mind was to serve his impoverished countrymen, with the driving idea being ensuring 'quality eye care for everyone'.

The clinic filled a long-felt gap for the poor and received such an overwhelming response from the community that Dr Shroff became convinced about starting a hospital. Haji Mohammed Ishaq allowed him to use one storey of his newly constructed building on Burn Bastion Road. Very soon, even this space was not enough. People from all corners of India and present-day Pakistan thronged the hospital for the free care.

As the consequence of a series of representations, in 1924 the British Administration made land available in Daryaganj. The current building of the hospital was completed in 1927 and was inaugurated on 23 March by Lady Irwin, the then vicereine of India.

As the clinic grew in popularity, prominent citizens of Delhi such as Dr MA Ansari, Hakim Ajmal Khan, Rai Bahadur Lala Sultan Singh and Shri Pyare Lal became associated with it, forming a trust in 1922 with the goal of building up a dedicated eye hospital. In 1933, the British government awarded Dr Shroff the Kaiser-i-Hind, a gold medal for philanthropy, and helped with getting the hospital equipped with amenities and equipment. Meanwhile, representatives from institutions from around the globe visited SCEH to share their insights.



A Model Project ▶

at their semi-urban rural facilities which mostly cater to people from rural communities. In the course of training, which goes on for about two years, the recruited fellows serve the rural population – filling a major gap in the process. In the last five years, more than 300 ophthalmologists have been recruited and trained by SCEH.

▶ **Easy access to advanced eye-care infrastructure for rural population**

SCEH's flagship institution in Delhi as well as some of its secondary centres house some of the most advanced testing and diagnostic equipment available in the world today. The flagship centre has the latest training aids such as simulators for surgeries and it also follows remote/e-learning modules for training of ophthalmologists and paramedics – these are at par with some of the best eye-care institutions globally.

As the organisation goes about expanding its presence in tier 2 cities and smaller towns to primarily cater to the rural population, it is ensuring that it takes not only its ophthalmologists to the grassroots, but also its advanced treatment, equipment and diagnostic tools.

In keeping with the times, SCEH has deployed an electronic cloud-based record-keeping system that helps in maintaining patients' records – treatment, surgery and aftercare schedules. The system also monitors administration- and operations-related information such as indicators related to primary eye care, refraction services and surgeries. These include the number of refractions performed, number of spectacles dispensed, and number of surgeries performed as also any complications that came

up and how these were resolved. The software is accessible to management in real time and ensures centralised governance and quality control across its centres.

What sounds like a selling proposition for a sophisticated hospital in a metropolis is actually the reality of a hospital in the suburbs, serving the underserved population of rural India.

▶ **Training rural women to be ophthalmic paramedics – ensuring a dignified career within their hometown**

The education and training vertical at SCEH goes beyond facilitating expert eye care in the rural. It also trains individuals in various other streams necessary to support the steadily growing human resource needs of eye-care infrastructure in the country.

One of the most appreciated courses at the hospital's training academy is the one focused on educating young women from suburban and rural backgrounds in becoming ophthalmic paramedics. Young women with minimum education qualification of senior secondary get an opportunity to build a dignified career in healthcare after completion of their course. Most of these women get to work either at the SCEH secondary centres or at the vision centres located within or around their hometowns.

The ophthalmic paramedics courses are offered for free – these are supported under the corporate social responsibility (CSR) mandate of Standard Chartered Bank. This intervention not only addresses the problem of shortfall in paramedics in the rural, but is also a solution to the larger issue of joblessness and diminishing livelihood opportunities in rural India.



A case to note

From eye check-up camps to a vision centre to now a full-fledged secondary centre: The story of a hospital in Alwar

SCEH had started reaching out to communities in and around Alwar, Rajasthan, through its community outreach programmes wherein they would set up camps for eye check-up and refer people who needed treatments and/or surgery to hospitals.

Realising the need for regular, systematic and institutional care – the number of cases that needed treatment, surgery and after care continued to grow – a vision centre was set up in the area which was later turned into a full-fledged secondary centre with the capacity to deal with all kinds of cataract cases. The centre also has diagnostic facilities such as visual fields, fundus fluoresce in angiography, and retinal lasers. The standard clinical services are supported by regular visits of ophthalmologists across all specialities. The centre is visited by people from villages around the district of Alwar as well as neighbouring districts like Bharatpur and Dausa.

This secondary centre is supported by six vision centres spread across various points in the district as they act as the feeder centres. The majority of the support staff at the centre as well as the vision centres are locals who underwent a vision technicians' course in primary eye care at the SCEH academy.

The Alwar centre has been following the cross-subsidy model and is self-sustaining. Team SCEH is already exploring possibilities of increasing its

'Over the more than 100 years of its existence, SCEH has established a successful cross-subsidy model for sustainable operations. In this, we seek support primarily for infrastructure, human resource and operations for the formative years, and thereafter we charge a nominal fee from those patients who can pay.



Dr Umang Mathur
Executive director
SCEH

'In fact, every paid patient who gets treated at our facility is a philanthrope as they indirectly support the treatment of at least two other patients who otherwise cannot afford the same.

'Today, it is with a mix of pride, humility and immense gratitude that we say that in the history of SCEH, no one has ever been refused treatment for their inability to afford it.'

capacity, scaling up its ability to perform more surgeries to reduce the waiting time for people in the region.

SCEH is hoping to increase its network of vision centres and take them beyond Alwar, since the overarching objective is to make primary eye-care services accessible in remote regions. These vision centres along with the traditional camp-based model help in identifying and mobilising those in need of eye surgery. ■





Centre for Equity and Quality in Universal Education (CEQUE) Ensuring that teachers learn, so that children learn

Armed with around 440 masks and 5 litres of sanitiser, Bapu Munghate, a government school teacher in Mahawada village, a remote area of Gadchiroli in eastern Maharashtra, tried to convince the gram panchayat members to allow him to teach the children there, despite the school closures since 2020. There are a total of 69 houses and a population of 442 in Mahawada village, in a slum area comprising of local tribes. Bapu Munghate knew if he and teachers like him didn't push for children to continue learning, the loss would be incalculable. With some persuasion he garnered the support of the community. Starting with an empty house made available by one villager, to the local police patil providing a mat for children to sit on, with yet others contributing to repainting the house to make it safe and clean, he fashioned a makeshift school.

Bapu Munghate had joined CEQUE's Teacher Innovator Program (TIP) earlier that year. He had learnt new strategies to teach reading with comprehension and was keen to try them with his students. He received audio resources, student workbooks, and close to 20 hours of coaching to help in this journey. With the coaches he would share his frustrations and successes, personal and professional. Today, he reports with some satisfaction

that students have learnt how to make meaning of unfamiliar words, helping them take one step towards reading with comprehension.

The Teacher Innovator Program of which Bapu Munghate was a part, is a professional development programme for teachers from government, government-aided and low-income schools. Through its unique 'Learn, Do and Lead' model, the programme skills teachers to learn and implement new methods of teaching and bring an improvement in student learning.

Why?

India's children are facing learning poverty.

A term introduced by World Bank in 2019, 'learning poverty' is defined as an inability to read and understand a simple age-appropriate text by the age of 10. If children do not learn to read by the age of 10, the door to learning is most likely shut for them forever. In India, 55% children suffer from learning poverty.

The Annual Status of Education Report (ASER) states that only 44.2% of all Class V students in government schools in India are able to read a Class II text. The

A Model Project ▶

situation is worse for numeracy: only 22.7% of all Class V students in government schools are able to do division.

The situation has been exacerbated due to the pandemic. A report published by Azim Premji University in February 2021 revealed that, on an average, 92% of children have lost at least one specific language ability and 82% have lost one specific mathematical ability across all classes during the pandemic year.

CEQUE addresses this issue of learning poverty. It responds to India's learning crisis through skilling teachers with teaching methodologies to arm even the most underserved children with the 21st-century skills of enquiry, reasoning, critical thinking and collaboration.

CEQUE believes that teachers are the biggest factor in changing the quality of learning. Good teachers make a fundamental difference not just to students' outcomes in school but to their life after school as well. Academic research supports this.

Teacher skilling, therefore, is key to improving the quality of learning. However, most of the current models for professional development of teachers tend to follow a top-down hierarchical approach. Teachers get limited hours of professional development in a given year, with no year-round support to help them internalise and implement the new skills. Largely input-driven, they also remain very

dependent on the skill of the facilitator. These inputs are disconnected with the learning outcomes and do not eventually lead to a lasting behavioural change. The models fail to quickly adapt to the demands of preparing teachers to teach children in changed environments.

At CEQUE, the team is seeking to change this. They go beyond training workshops, to focus more on providing solutions that help a teacher to adapt her classroom practice and measure the change in student learning. Indeed, a teacher feels motivated to continuously learn when she sees improvement in class, much like how one is encouraged to stick to a diet plan when one inches closer to the desired weight, even if just in small amounts. Seeing improvement in student learning gives the teacher a sense of her own efficacy. To quote a teacher from CEQUE's Teacher Innovator Program: *'I gained confidence that there is something I can do to help my students improve and learn.'*

How?

Keeping student learning at the heart of the teacher capacity building, CEQUE supports teachers by working with the system. They partner with government educational bodies, coach teachers and school leaders in innovative teaching methods, impact student learning with measurable change in student learning outcomes, and sustain the change through continual support to teachers and leaders.

A key component of the Teacher Innovator Program is the curriculum. The content and learning outcomes are aligned closely with the state curriculum. Experience has also shown that for a shift in teacher practice, the teacher needs sustained support. To provide this support, coaching forms an integral part of the programme. During coaching, teachers look at student learning data, identify the gaps, and take measures to address those. They reflect on their own practice and are encouraged to find solutions to address the gaps. The innovative teaching methods that teachers learn during the programme equip them to teach better and make student learning visible in the form of exhibitions. These exhibitions serve as a powerful way to engage with the community: from parents to the gram panchayat members to government officials.

At CEQUE, the team recognises that a teacher does not work in a vacuum. They make it a point to work closely with school leaders, enabling them to provide support to teachers and thereby fostering an environment of mutual trust and respect. Specifically, right at the beginning of the programme, the school leaders are oriented to what they may expect to



ALL OF THE LEARNINGS

Sustained engagement with teachers is necessary for teachers to fully understand and implement newer methods of teaching.

Anecdotal evidence along with conversations with teachers and school leaders revealed that teachers needed continued support to sustain the skills they learn.

Providing a structured platform to showcase student learning helps build community support and bring student learning into focus.

As part of the 'learn by doing' TIP model, teachers hold exhibitions in which children show and talk about what they have learnt in math and language. These exhibitions elicit tremendous participation from the community: parents, gram panchayat members, and block and cluster education officials.

Teaching how to analyse student learning gaps helps teachers to support students better.

As part of the TIP model, teachers are supported to assess the learning levels of their students, analyse errors, and come to a granular level of understanding where the students are struggling.

Practice is essential for teachers to internalise the new methods.

Prior to using new teaching methods in class, teachers need adequate practice to understand those methods. Through assignments and peer learning, TIP facilitates this process to strengthen their understanding.

Coaching works.

Since the time TIP was conceptualised, coaching remains a core component of the programme. Coaching helps the teacher to better understand her classroom practice, bring changes in her practice, and become a reflective practitioner.

Leadership plays an important role in encouraging teachers to innovate, especially when faced with challenges such as the pandemic.

For teachers to truly make a change in their classroom practice, they need a supportive environment. TIP works with school leadership to co-opt them in the capacity building of teachers.

Given the opportunity and training, teachers are keen to share their knowledge and practice with others.



see as outcomes, what the teachers will be doing with the students, and the support they can provide. Regular progress reports are provided to co-opt the school leaders in the skill development of the teachers.

Measuring the impact

Since the initiation of the programme, CEQUE has worked with 408 teachers and impacted 8,807 children across 7 districts of Maharashtra – namely Pune, Palghar, Nashik, Thane, Mumbai, Gadchiroli and Chandrapur. The average teacher competency has improved by 32 percentage points and student performance by 17 percentage points.

To measure impact, TIP uses a 4-point scale that maps teacher competency on 5 indicators of teaching and learning. Adapted from the 5D framework of teaching and learning developed by the Center of Educational Leadership, University of Washington, Seattle, the framework measures teacher competency along 5 dimensions: purpose, student engagement, curriculum and pedagogy, student assessment, and classroom environment and culture. Baseline and endline tests are administered at the start and end of the programme to measure whether teacher skills have improved.

TIP focuses on specific student competency during the programme cycle. All strategies that teachers learn are aligned with the selected competency. Student baseline and endline tests are administered to measure if there has been an improvement in student performance in the selected competency in math and language.

TIP works closely with teachers to develop them as teacher leaders. They participate in professional learning circles where they come together to discuss issues on student learning and take the lead in sharing their understanding. This is now embedded as part of the programme. ■

Challenges in the Covid year

The pandemic and the school closures created challenges for teachers and children all over the world. In India, the digital divide was all too real and few children were learning. With low or limited access to devices or network, a vast majority of children found themselves cast out of the learning fold.

Working side by side with teachers, the team at CEQUE doubled their efforts to reach the unreached. In six districts where CEQUE's programme is being implemented, while only 35% students attended class at the start of the pandemic, today 91% are in the fold of learning.

The team's Covid response was driven by a ground-up understanding of the challenges and their potential solutions. Teachers, district officials, parents and community members came together to support their children's learning.

How did it happen? Here's the story.

▶ Identifying the challenges

Teachers are the foot soldiers who comprehend the ground realities of their student communities like no other in the education system. CEQUE engaged with 300+ teachers in their programme from six districts. The team asked them about the challenges their students faced and engaged on possible solutions to support them.

At the start of the pandemic, teachers said that they were able to regularly reach approximately one-third of their students. With the rest, they had either sporadic or no contact because students either lacked connectivity or devices, or their families did not have the financial resources to recharge their devices.



How to reach the remaining two-third of the students seemed like an uphill task. But one thing was clear: a fresh pathway was needed to reach the unreached.

▶ Finding solutions that worked

Teachers suggested that low-tech resources and workbooks would go a long way in helping them engage with students on the other side of the digital divide.

Collaborating with them, the team at CEQUE created 120 audiovisual resources that required low bandwidth. They also created workbooks in math and language. These resources were aligned with the students' textbooks at the specific grade levels.

The audiovisual resources were made available to students on YouTube. However, the workbook distribution, particularly during the lockdown, was a huge logistical exercise.

Interestingly, the teachers took to innovative means to distribute the workbooks to students, with the support of CEQUE's staff. Some distributed them to parents at ration shops or when they came to collect food grains at school. Others took the help of galli mitras or went door to door themselves. Still others figured convenient locations where they could meet parents to hand over the books.

▶ Integrating new resources in teaching

Once the resources were in students' hands, teachers integrated them in their teaching. Children who could join online regularly continued to do so.

Teachers now had more flexibility to engage with students who faced connectivity challenges. With them, teachers were able to assign tasks on Whatsapp or through phone calls. Students were expected to complete their workbook assignments and submit their work to their teachers. Teachers then followed up with them, clearing doubts where necessary, and provided feedback.

Parents and community members played an invaluable role in this effort. Teachers convinced parents that they needed to ensure their children completed and submitted their work. At times, when children needed support and teachers were not able to reach them, teachers organised community members to teach them. At other times, where teachers were able to, they formed small groups and taught them at community-based locations organised by villagers.

Telling the Tale

So as to document the 'change' in the lives of communities – the beneficiaries of social projects of companies and non-profits

In Focus: Project Shiksha, a CSR initiative of Hero MotoCorp



Shivam, 5-year-old student at the Shiksha centre in Dharuhera in Rewari, Haryana

Shivam is a 5-year-old student at the Shiksha centre in Dharuhera in Rewari, Haryana. He lives with his family in a slum area. His father is employed as a guard and his mother works as a domestic help at houses. The challenge for the couple was to leave the young boy back at home and eventually, on a neighbour's recommendation, Shivam was admitted into the centre.

Within eight months of being enrolled, Shivam had learnt numbers, alphabets, names of animals, etc. He spent time drawing and painting while his mother was away at work. When lockdown was announced on account of Covid-19, his parents were added to a WhatsApp group by the centre, and daily tasks, reading materials, and links to educational content including YouTube videos were shared to keep the child connected and engaged with the learning process. His parents are grateful that Shivam has found access to preschool education during these difficult times.

Manoj lives in the slums of Khandsa village near Gurugram, Haryana. Both his parents are sweepers in a private company. Manoj had been at the Shiksha centre for about six months and was progressing quite well too, when the lockdown was announced. Unfortunately, he was unable to attend even the online classes which the remedial centre had started, as his parents did not have a smartphone.



Manoj, 11 years old, from a slum of Khandsa village near Gurugram, Haryana

To address the issue, which was being faced by many students from disadvantaged communities, Hero MotoCorp's partners created a step-up book that Manoj and others in similar circumstances could read every day. Students were also expected to attempt all the given tasks in the book. Any doubts that Manoj has are cleared by the teacher over a phone call. The teacher also visits his home on a regular basis to check the progress made by him as well as to guide him on lessons. In the last visit, the teacher found that Manoj was taking a keen interest in his studies and had completed the assigned tasks well before time.



Beneficiaries ▶



Jyoti Samawat,
Class 10 student at govt.
school in Jaipur

With all educational institutions being closed during the pandemic, the remedial centres run under Hero Talent Search project also had to be called off for the time being. The company's partners started online coaching classes for all beneficiary students. Jyoti Samawat, a Class 10 student at a government school in Jaipur, was among those who regularly attended the online classes and showed exceptional improvement in her academic performance.

Expressing her gratitude, Jyoti recounts: 'My parents could not afford to send me to private coaching. Hero MotoCorp's initiative to provide us coaching was a blessing for us. Moreover, the teachers made the subjects more interesting and helped me in learning many concepts.'



About Project Shiksha

Project Shiksha focuses on upgrading the education ecosystem in the country. The objective of the intervention is to create an enabling and encouraging environment for imparting quality education at government schools in rural India.

The project complements the Right to Education Act by supporting the development of necessary infrastructure and pitching in with soft interventions. The idea is to pave the way for government schools in the rural to eventually match the performance and outcomes of privately run schools.

Over the years, Hero MotoCorp has constructed or refurbished school buildings, renovated classrooms and playgrounds, and provided furniture as well as basic resources like schoolbags, stationeries and books. In some schools that experienced regular power cuts, the

company invested in installing solar-power plants for uninterrupted functioning.

As of today, many schools in the vicinity of the company's plants boast of outstanding libraries, science laboratories, auditoriums and play areas including basketball and badminton courts.

Going beyond infrastructural development, the company has deployed professional non-profit entities to engage with these schools to provide career guidance to students and conduct motivational workshops and seminars.

The focus is also on remedial classes for students who are struggling to meet the demands of the curriculum. Through remedial education centres, the team ensures that students get additional academic sessions and perform better despite whatever socio-economic challenges they may be coping with.

Telling the Tale

So as to document the 'change' in the lives of communities – the beneficiaries of social projects of companies and non-profits

In Focus: Young Instructor Leader (YIL) programme – Peer-to-Peer Teaching by Agastya International Foundation



S. Prasanna Kumar
20 years old
Pursuing B.Tech degree
in Kuppam Engineering
College

Prasanna was studying in 6th standard when he came to know about Agastya, though as a destination for a fun trip. When he told his parents about his upcoming trip, his mother was reluctant to let him go. It took his school teachers' persuasion and explaining the importance of him attending Agastya sessions for them to be convinced.

On his first experience of being at the Kuppam campus, Prasanna says: 'I was fascinated.' He particularly enjoyed visiting the chemistry lab where he worked on different chemicals and learnt the names of the elements.

Remembering another milestone occasion, he narrates: 'When I was in 8th standard, I was selected for Intel Science Fair at the national level. I enjoyed the time we spent preparing for it. My friend and I were able to work on our idea of planting Albizia lebbeck on the sidewalks of the highway. We got this idea by observing our neighbour, who used it as a bathing soap. Later, we found that these plants offered natural benefits like curbing soil erosion and wanted to plant these on the sidewalks of roads. We shared this idea with our Agastya instructors, who worked with us for six months so we could present it at the science fair.'

The experience boosted Prasanna's confidence and sealed his love for science. According to him, the Agastya sessions were a real-time learning process as every time he was taught a new topic, he also understood its relevance and applicability.

Prasanna went on to become a part of Agastya's Young Instructor Leader programme and receives Rs 3,000 a month, which he puts towards college fees and other educational expenses. The confidence that he acquired over time also put him on the path of entrepreneurship, even as he carries on with the engineering course.





Basamma H
19 years old
Pursuing mechanical
engineering in
Yelahanka, Bengaluru

'Snacks were my favourite part at Agastya during my initial days,' recalls Basamma, with a spark in her eyes, and narrates her story: 'I was in class 8 at GHS-Kodigehalli when a selection process for the YIL programme was conducted by Agastya instructors. I was among the 20 students who were selected. Little did I know back then that that was going to be a turning point in my life.'

'Agastya's YIL programme helped me to explore so many opportunities around me. One instance that vividly comes to my mind happened during 2015-16. The Agastya bus took us all to a very big campus – it was beautiful and I wondered what it was and what I was going to do there. Later they told us that it was the IIM-B campus. They taught us a lot of concepts using different activities and I gained a lot of knowledge there. Another time they took us to the TISS-Bangalore campus.'

Today, as Basamma looks back at her school life, she acknowledges that the YIL journey enhanced her leadership skills and science knowledge, along with her observation and analytical skills. She remembers: 'It was my dream to do mechanical engineering, but during my counselling session I was told not to choose or pursue the same because "it's not meant for girls". I just didn't understand why and hence never accepted their 'advice'. I told myself that I would prove them all wrong, and I did! Today, I am doing well in my studies and my family, teachers and well-wishers are very proud of it.'

Basamma, as a child, also wished to become a teacher. Agastya's sessions (hands-on learning experience) enabled her to make this a reality. Before joining the engineering college, she had some time to spare and decided to help the Class 10 students at GHS-Kodigehalli, who back then didn't have a science teacher. The Agastya sessions equipped her to not only teach biology but also help the children prepare for their internal examinations.

About the programme

From the start, it has been Agastya's mission to spark the imaginations of India's rural children, using science to kindle their creativity and inquiring habits of mind. It is a challenge to reach these children in the far-flung rural villages of south India, but geography is no obstacle for Agastya's mobile science labs, which manage to bring the low-cost experiments and hands-on learning to even the most remote communities. Meanwhile, in cities large and small, Agastya's science fairs are a rallying point for children to see science experiments and models that demonstrate lessons and principles taught by a select team of trained and motivated youngsters.

And to think that one of their first science fairs almost didn't happen. Not because interest was lacking, but because too many children wanted to attend. At that point, the organisation was just getting started, and had far fewer trained teachers who could demonstrate the science models and experiments.

It became clear that a massive crowd would be attending the science fair – a nice problem to have, but still a problem. Quick thinking saved the event: students eager to help were trained as junior teachers. These student teachers were so effective that Agastya made peer-to-peer teaching a permanent component

of its programme. The children were knowledgeable and enthusiastic, demonstrating complex scientific principles with ease, self-confidence, and obvious enjoyment. Many children took the message to heart: if other children can do this, then so can I! Thus, out of necessity – and the creative vision to recognise a good thing when they saw it – Agastya launched its Young Instructor Leader (YIL) programme.

The programme harnesses the energy and enthusiasm of children who show special interest in – and aptitude for – science, math, and other key areas of study. Special classes at Agastya challenge YILs to dig deeply into the mysteries of science and math. YILs give free rein to their imaginations and creativity. They immerse themselves in a world of cooperative learning, where questions are welcomed and everyone learns. Along the way, YILs develop leadership skills and the self-confidence to be effective peer teachers at science fairs and Agastya learning centres.

Peer-to-peer education has become a basic building block of the Agastya model. A foundational insight of this approach is that children learn more – and retain more of what they learn – when they have to explain it to others.

Making World Environment Day Meaningful

By Rayna



These days, more and more people, including children, are becoming aware of the deteriorating environment – and what we can do to save it. In June 2021, I held an art and writing contest, asking my friends/blog followers to submit artwork or writings capturing something about the earth – and World Environment Day. I received a fair number of entries, each one beautifully showing something relating to the concept.

Three top winners were chosen, as well as a couple of almost-winners. I loved all of them, but a couple were kind of off-theme, and some others just weren't chosen.

So, here are the winning entries in descending order:

Whispering Enchantments

A poem by Anushka

Resurgent chambers of flowers
With a drop of nectar which showers
A lost deep and divine essence into these magic vines
Unlocking a mood of contentment and cheerful cries.

The whispering enchantments awake
As nature makes its way
A soul combined with divine energy and power
Removing mistakes which purely are sour.

Life is an enchantment cast by God
In his hands it is just a paint brush, or maybe a sword.
The flavours of nature make a delicious recipe
Truly don't waste it with your selfish integrity.



Drawing by Bani, grade 7 student, Mumbai



Drawing by Prashansa, grade 7 student, Gurugram

Honourable mention

I, the blue planet, will heal. Will human beings too?

A poem by Shweta

*I'm the only planet they didn't name after a deity.
Was it because the humans had elevated me?
Elevated to the same pedestal that was reserved for
their many deities.
I wonder.*

*They call me the blue planet, Terra, Tellus, Gaia, Gaea,
the World, Mother Earth.*

*The blue planet!
Blue like the water that covers the majority of my
surface,
which seems to be in a losing battle with impurities.*

*My beauty was well-known and appreciated,
I was the envy of other celestial bodies,
in this galaxy and beyond.
Asteroids have been launched at me,
To mar my beautiful surface.
There have been a few hits, many near-misses, and
many that totally missed the mark!*

*But the threat from outer space pales,
in comparison to that from the one species that is
destroying me from the inside.
I nourished them, gave them everything that they could
possibly want, and more.*

*I took them in and provided shelter when all other
planets had refused.
But human greed was much more than I had ever
anticipated.*

*My moon was the only one who stayed with me,
Though she had her reservations about the humans.
The humans took advantage of all my other species,
They hunted birds, animals, fish, and others,
And they cleared forests to suit their needs.*

*I was their playground,
The one who will have to pay the price for their
thoughtless actions.
My air quality dipped,
My water was being stripped of purity,
My soil succumbed and made way for barren expanses,
My ozone layer was no longer intact.*

*All of the humans weren't heartless,
Some spoke up for me, defended my rights.
They started movements and petitions to save me.
To save me, before I was too far gone,
Before I was past the point of no return.
They protested, argued, demanded, and deliberated.*

*Eventually, a day was set aside to honour me,
A day to evaluate their actions that threatened my
survival.
It was a humble beginning to a major movement!*

*Policies, frameworks, acts, and protocols were
formulated,
To save me from the clutches of their own.
It's been so many years since they decided
that April 22 will be known as Earth Day.*

*It may be unknown to humans,
But Nature has put me under a healing spell.
The humans are now caged in traps of their own
making,
But I am healing,
Mending the wounds of overexploitation and
ingratitude.*

*There's a lesson that humans keep forgetting,
Nature and I will continue to thrive,
With or without them.
Better, without them.*

*Humans are just guests who think they can control and
manipulate us.*

*I'm the only planet they didn't name after a deity.
Was it because the humans had elevated me too,
To the same pedestal that was reserved for their many
deities?
Their actions most certainly don't make me feel like
one.*

*Tell me, humans,
Have you started realising the magnitude of your
thoughtless activities?
It's too bad the dinosaurs aren't around to warn you.*



Honourable mention

We cannot lie back and think that we have helped the earth greatly.

Thoughts of Akshita

Since the beginning of the lockdown, people have been talking about how the environment has improved and how 2020 gave nature a break. Do you think it's true?

In my opinion, the pandemic has been a hindrance to ecosystem restoration. So many projects, all shut down due to the economic depression. As people are afraid to go out, there is a lack of law-enforcement officers in forest departments; poaching and deforestation are on an all-time rise. Is this the blessing everyone talked about?

Another concerning fact here is the increase in biomedical waste. Hospitals which earlier generated waste around 550 kg/day are now producing 1,000 kg/day. Lack of safe disposal is causing the waste to end up in rivers and oceans. Flora and fauna is being destroyed. Is this the break we gave to nature?



The benefits people talked about are so short-term that they will peter out once the world goes back to business. We saw that in 2020 towards the concluding months, didn't we?

We are not helping nature in any way by staying at home. Aren't we not doing more online shopping, which in turn increases the amount of plastic waste? Aren't we all using more soaps and sanitisers, all of which go into the sewage and mostly end up in the rivers untreated? Aren't we using ACs and other electronic devices more while staying at home, adding to the load of radiations and CFCs? We are.

We cannot lie back and think that we have helped the earth greatly. Among the things we can do at home is reduce our online shopping, usage of gadgets, and water wastage.

The earth has not won and is not winning. With things going back to normal, we have to work more towards restoring our home. ■

Eleven-year-old Rayna is a reader first, and writer, blogger, observer of nature and animals, painter, mechanic, guitar and harmonica player, etc., during her spare time. She also does duty as young thinker at CauseBecause, participating in brainstorming sessions and every once in a while pointing out stuff that her older colleagues miss.

She blogs at: <https://raynaweb.wordpress.com/>

ONE **ACTION** **ALLIANCE**

Launched in 2018–19, **One Action Alliance** (OAA) is a CauseBecause initiative to bring together conscious citizens, responsible corporate groups and non-profit entities to commit to **One Action** whose collective impact can bring about a needed, visible, and emphatic change.

Between 2018 and 2019, over 80 corporate groups and non-profits became signatories to the Alliance's campaign for discarding single-use plastic and have minimised the use of the same at their workplaces.



HARNESS

the **collective strength** of workforces
at corporates and non-profits.

ENGAGE

in **collective action** – just one action
that their counterparts at other entities
are also engaging with.

BELIEVE

that **you are not alone** in it,
because thousands of conscious
individuals are there with you.

CHANGE

the **status quo**.

OAA is registered at United Nations Partnerships for SDGs platform as one of the organisations driving actions towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

For partnership queries, write to info@causebecause.com



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Ecosystem restoration: Are we doing enough?

On World Environment Day, Team CauseBecause brought together thought leaders from the corporate world and civil society to converse around:

- How does 2030 'actually' look like?
- Are there ways to reconcile the seemingly clashing interests of governments, businesses, and the planet?
- Factors and influences that will inspire all of us to do our best bit ('doing our bit' is not good enough anymore, right?), and then a bit more, towards ecosystem restoration.
- Ecosystem restoration models that have worked, or are working, and the ones that, well, did not.

An abstract from the conversation is shared here.



Vivek Vishwasrao
Head - Biodiversity, Tata Power

'...we have a hydropower plant surrounded by over 36,000 acres of land in the northern part of the Western Ghats, which is a biodiversity hub. We have done multiple baseline surveys in the area... we studied the birds there, the wildlife, reptiles, the plant species as well as the aqua diversity in the region, and started initiatives to protect this rich biodiversity – by protection I mean focusing not just on a few near-extinct species, but protection of the natural habitat of all life that is present in the region. When the natural habitat is protected, life continues to thrive. We also learnt that even minimal focused interventions carried out by taking the local communities into confidence can save species that are on the verge of extinction.

'...for example, the mahseer, a species of fish found in this region, was on the verge of extinction a few years ago. The first warning call came from the local communities – they had noticed a consistent decline in the population of the mahseer, which they considered to be their god fish. The fisheries department confirmed the drastic decline in the mahseer's numbers, and attributed the same to various environmental factors. The authorities came up with a sustainable conservation and restoration plan, and we at Tata Power decided to support the same. The plan also included creation of hatcheries within the natural habitat. The intervention went on for over two decades and today the mahseer is out of the endangered species list.

'Going forward, I believe that each one of us – regardless of our affiliations with corporates, non-profits, governments – should prioritise our environmental responsibilities and do as much as we can to make more and more people conscious about the same.'



Tejashree Joshi
Head - Environment & Sustainability, Godrej & Boyce

'...In the 1940s, land that had been bought for development of an industrial township in the Vikhroli suburb of Mumba boasted this marvellous patch of mangroves. Our founder, the late Mr Sorabji Godrej, who was an environmentalist and was the first president of World Wildlife Fund in India, realised that the ecosystem of Vikhroli was quite unique and totally different from a terrestrial area. Although at that point in time, in the late '80s, it was called a wasteland and there was pressure from all sides for infrastructural development for economic progress, and so on, Mr Godrej decided to preserve the ecosystem of Vikhroli. Hence, a focused foundation was formed and the entire land was brought under the foundation, whose responsibility would be to conserve the natural ecosystem there.



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'A three-pronged approach focusing on research (to understand the ecosystem), conservation and awareness was developed. Over the years, we have realised that if we simply protect the environment, it rejuvenates itself. Our interventions were focused only at the periphery and not within the forest. The major issue in Mumbai was the pollution, the solid waste that was going into the creek... we understood that our business activities had to be conducted in a way that they did not harm the mangroves – the mangroves, in fact, became indicators of the success of our interventions...

'Fast-forward a few years – by 2014, our Vikhroli campus became a zero-waste-to-landfill campus. It is a zero-waste-discharge campus as we recycle all the water we use. We harvest much more water than we actually withdraw from the ground...

'Today, as we have established a successful model of sustainable development, we are focusing on spreading awareness. Efforts are being made to ensure that every resident of Vikhroli campus is environmentally aware. We also engage with thousands of school children, helping them find a natural connect with the environment...

'Going forward, I believe that there are practical ideas out there. Solutions do exist, and we all have great impact stories to share. However, they are not enough and we should continue to engage in conversations, spread as much awareness as possible, and strive to bring all stakeholders together to pursue restoration efforts.'



Ramji Raghavan
Founder and chairperson,
Agastya International Foundation

'...I was a student at Rishi Valley, whose founder Mr Jiddu Krishnamurti had a sort of mystical relationship with nature. For him and for us at school, nature was sacred, plants were sacred, soil was sacred... I grew up with the sense that nature was not only important for human survival and wellbeing, but in and of itself too.

'Another influence on my understanding about the environment is from a book, *The Ends of the Earth* by Robert Kaplan. He talks about the eco-suicide of Central Asia. He was quite pessimistic about the future until he visited Rishi Valley, saw the transformation of a barren land into a green valley, made possible by conscious individuals. He wrote a chapter about the valley and concluded the chapter by saying "transformation in ecology cannot be infused from outside, the solutions have to be homegrown, solutions that come from down-to-earth people..."

'Talking about Agastya, when we started the organisation, we had over 172 acres of barren wasteland in Andhra Pradesh. We came up with the idea of creating a biological reserve there. With help from ecology experts and through multiple planned interventions over the years, the place has transformed into a sort of biodiversity reserve with over 600 different species of plants, hundreds of different birds species, multiple concept gardens based on Ayurveda and Siddha... Being an education-focused foundation, we facilitate activities whereby children get to visit the campus and explore the various facets of nature – they learn about soil, medicinal value of plants, the significance of conservation, the need for regenerating the ecosystem, and so on.



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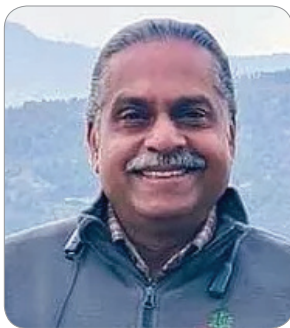


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'While this is a good programme, this alone is not going to change the world. In India, we seem to keep reacting to immediate problems; consistent, long-term plans and efforts are not visible. Be it disasters caused by climate change, issues of various kinds of pollution, water shortages, forest fires and so on, we don't make some enlightened bets and think or act ahead of the problem. We wait until the problem becomes a crisis.

'I also think there is a scarcity of donors who are interested in funding and supporting environment projects. While Agastya has been able raise more than Rs 700 crore in the last 20 years for its education-focused initiatives, we haven't been able to raise even a fraction of the same for environment projects.'



Raj Mohan

Founder, Sustainable Green Initiative

'My "restoration of the planet" journey started when I moved out of publishing business, where we used to print thousands and thousands of yellow pages, and found an opportunity to start planting trees—and maybe partially make up for the trees that were cut to produce all the paper we had consumed. It started with a target of planting and nurturing 10,000 saplings. Today, though, over 3.4 million of them are flourishing at various places across India.

'Over the years, among the most interesting realisations have been that ecological restoration has a direct correlation with the world's most pressing issues such as poverty, hunger and malnutrition, and also that planting fruit trees in areas that are accessible to poor, marginalised and vulnerable communities can to an extent address all of the three issues.

'A few years ago, we started a small experiment by planting about 50,000 fruit trees on farmland in partnership with small farmers in Ghaziabad district of Uttar Pradesh. The outcomes of that exercise were beyond expectations. What we were primarily expecting was that the fruits would help farmers get additional income and the village community too would have access to free fruits. But what also happened was that the groundwater level of the area started to rise, the nesting of birds increased, and so did the pollination that helped in increasing the green cover, the fruits' flowers attracted bees from the nearby beekeeping units and bettered the quality of honey...

'Interestingly, many business entities have started realising the potential of planting and nurturing trees and are generously allocating CSR funds towards planting activities...

'For all of that, though, our efforts are like a drop in the ocean. There's a lot more to be done. Future projections say that a few metropolitan cities like Kolkata might end up going under water, while others like Chennai may become inhabitable due to excessive rise in temperature... If we have to save ourselves from these crises, the only way forward is greenification of barren lands, rejuvenation of lost biodiversity, and restoration of the ecosystem.'

The full conversation can be watched here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LpRyL-Jyou0>



Aditya Birla Group: Making a life changing difference

We work in 7000 villages. Reach out to 9 million people. A glimpse:

HEALTHCARE

Over 100 million Polio vaccinations

5,000 Medical camps / 20 Hospitals: 1 million patients treated

Over 50 deaf and mute children moved from the world of silence to the sound of music through the cochlear implant

Reach out to over 4,000 children. Extending financial support for the chemotherapy sessions.

Encouraging them in a holistic manner to get back quickly on the road to recovery.

Engaged in prevention of cervical cancer through the administration of the HR-HPV vaccines in Maharashtra.

Over 1800 girls have been vaccinated.

More than 6,600 persons had their vision restored through the Vision Foundation of India

100,000 persons tested on 32 health parameters through HealthCubed

EDUCATION

Our 56 schools accord quality education to 46,500 students

Mid-day meals provided to 74,000 children

Solar lamps given to 4.5 lakh children in the hinterland

Foster the cause of the girl child through 40 Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalayas

SUSTAINABLE LIVELIHOODS

100,000 people trained in skill sets

45,000 women empowered through 4500 SHGs

200,000 farmers on board our agro-based training projects

And much more is being done through the Aditya Birla Centre for Community Initiatives and Rural Development, spearheaded by Mrs. Rajashree Birla. Because we care.

**NUMBERS MEAN A LOT
BUT A SMILE MEANS EVERYTHING!**



ADITYA BIRLA GROUP

Engage. Uplift. Empower



Rhinos are not your medicine.

Stop believing in unscientific remedies that kill our wildlife.
Put an end to wildlife trafficking.



TRAFFIC
the wildlife trade monitoring network

