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Our goals in Dharamshala targeted specific groups with behavioural change initiatives for the adoption of best practices for solid waste management (SWM). Our programs – Model Wards, Clean Business, Swachh Yatra, & Swachhta Ki Pathshala – included community engagement & activation, waste awareness & segregation interventions, facilitating municipal collection systems, promoting responsible disposal and composting, and training on best SWM practices. We engaged residents & commercial establishments, tourists & tourism businesses, transport operators & staff, students and school admin and municipal staff & waste workers.

Our integrated approach to address Dharamshala's SWM gaps included:
- Direct community engagement (residents, businesses, schools, tourists) to change behaviour on source segregation to mitigate quantum of waste being sent to landfill.
- Livelihood development and upliftment support for waste workers to establish trust, develop skills, and promote segregated collection.
- To build partnerships with key municipal and govt. bodies to gain support for our initiatives and to coordinate awareness campaigns, catalyse public SWM disposal and collection infrastructure, and promote waste worker development.

Major Stakeholders:
1. Dharamshala Municipal Corporation
2. Dharamshala Smart City Ltd
3. Himachal Tourism
4. HP Forest Department
5. HP Department of Transport

Beneficiaries:
1. Households & Businesses
2. Tourists & Tourism Sector
3. School Children & Admin
4. Waste Workers
5. Transport Operators & Staff

Key Outcomes
- 580+ HH Engaged & trained through DTD IEC
- 815 placards Distributed under Swachh Yatra Program
- 30 businesses Enrolled under Clean Business Program
- 15.5 MT Waste collected from cleanups & our public-use dustbins
- 21 cleanups Conducted with community support across Dharamshala

On Waste Management:
1. From near to 0%, segregation reached 51% in participating residents, reducing burden of mixed waste on ward waste collection.
2. Businesses are adopting SWM best practices, using alternatives, and giving segregated waste for collection.
3. Built strong govt. partnerships that promoted waste collection, transformation projects, and area interventions.

On Waste Workers:
1. Regular trainings helped waste workers understand the importance of hygiene and sanitation, especially during COVID.
2. Direct purchase of segregated dry waste from workers of Model Ward motivate them to collect segregated waste, gives them additional source of income, and reduces waste quantum sent to landfill.

Key Challenges:
1. COVID restrictions limited movement, delayed approvals, and slowed program implementation.
2. Tourism industry's loss from lockdown prevented acceptance of our interventions till Q3.
3. Non-cooperation of the DMC’s contracted waste hauler prevented effective segregated collection.
4. Closed schools and lack of technology access amongst teachers and students led to major loss in participation in waste education program.

Way Forward:
1. Expand Model Ward Program’s IEC activities into an entire zone consisting of 5 wards, in collaboration with the DMC.
2. Empower and uplift waste workers through periodic trainings and holistic sessions.
3. Incentivizing collection of low-grade dry waste from the Model Wards into our upcoming Material Recovery Facility, in partnership with DMC and Smart City.
The past year has shown that Dharamshala is taking steps towards better waste management. The city achieved a jump in the last Swachh Survekshan rankings, from 956 in 2019 to 629 in 2020. Himachal Pradesh is celebrating 50 years of statehood and their year-long celebration, Swarnim Himachal, has waste management and source segregation playing a crucial role. The Dharamshala Smart City Pvt Ltd has a major component for waste management through technology and innovation interventions, under which the agency has allocated land to our team to construct and operate Dharamshala’s first Material Recovery Facility for solid waste.

Additionally, the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs had a monthly Swachhta Sankalp promoting waste management best practices. Such growing state and national movements around waste management, enables our team to better align our programs with government agencies and to collaborate on and support city-level administrative efforts to implement and promote waste management campaigns. In the spirit of partnership, we continue to report successes and challenges to major stakeholders to share the responsibility of monitoring and enforcing existing policies and regulations.

Our team has focused greatly on strengthening existing relationships and partnerships and building new ones to tackle the incredible problem of solid waste that exists in Dharamshala. Our team is extremely thankful to HT Parekh Foundation for their continued support.
Our Objectives

- **Model Ward Program:** To raise awareness in at least two municipal wards and set up solid waste management practices amongst households, schools, and businesses along with ensuring collection, segregation (sorting/grading), and processing of recyclables.
- **Swachhta Ki Pathshala:** To maximise awareness in schools through our education program in addition to ensuring a streamlined solid waste management setup and proper collection on a regular basis.
- **Zero Waste Destination:** To transform two heavily touristed areas in the city, mainly Bhagsu and Triund, into zero-waste destinations by raising awareness in commercial entities about best practices of waste management and promoting sustainable tourism.

Our Strategies

- To encourage, train, and promote segregation at source from all participating community members and individual households as a part of our Model Ward Program, in order to reduce the amount of mixed waste going to the municipal landfill.
- To advocate and partner with local authorities to support and implement our initiatives effectively, in line with the SWM Rules 2016.
- To partner with relevant Urban Local Bodies (ULBs) to bridge existing infrastructural gaps in Dharamshala in order to divert dry waste away from the municipal landfill and improve the waste value-chain within the city.
- Adopted during COVID Lockdown:
  - To align our projects with directives from government bodies on precautions and measures to be taken on hygiene, sanitation and waste management during COVID-19.
  - To continue with our community engagement activities on virtual and social media platforms by conducting virtual workshops, trainings and competitions.

Our Office Staff

- **Shomita**
  - Project Manager
- **Etosha**
  - Manager, O&P
- **Nidhi**
  - Assoc. Manager, O&P and Education
- **Mitali (till Oct ‘19)**
  - Assoc. Manager, O&P
- **Vinay**
  - Assoc. Manager, Operations
- **Vikas**
  - Project Assistant

Our Green Workers

- **Laddu Kumar**
- **Sonu Gond**
- **Raj Kumar**
- **Md. Giyasuddin**
- **Shiv Balak**
Communities such as waste pickers and daily wage earners rely heavily on the sale of recyclables. To help these low-income communities in Dharamshala during the Covid-19 lockdown, we collaborated with the District Collectorate to provide dry rations kits.

From April to June our ground operations switched to procuring and distributing dry rations and relief kits to waste pickers and daily wage earners.

Our Relief Fund with GiveIndia

Raised Rs.13+ lakhs
From 487 donors
To Help 696 People in D’shala

One Relief Kit Contains:

- 3 kg Rice
- 5 kg Flour
- 1 kg Pulses
- 1 kg Sugar
- 1 kg Salt
- 1 Ltr. Oil
- 3 pkts Spices
At the start of the 2020 lockdown, we engaged a total of 143 residents in Ward 7, educating them on the importance of source segregation and home composting. These virtual workshops and community-level competitions were carried out digitally using Google Meet and WhatsApp.

Once the lockdown was lifted, we resumed door-to-door awareness and conducted regular Mohalla Meetings. A total of 23 community-based workshops were organized, mobilized 15 active citizens, and conducted 9 monthly trainings for door-to-door workers in Ward 7 and Ward 8. Two Young Warriors clubs were formed with children in Ward 7, who helped spread the message of anti-littering and importance of source segregation in their neighborhoods.

51% of households in Ward 7 have started segregating waste due to our outreach programs and community based programs. Our continued advocacy led to installing partitions for wet and dry waste in the Nagar Nigam vehicles.

We were assisted by Ward 7 active citizens in partnering with local entities such as Nehru Yuva Kendra, Rotary Club, and Inner Wheel Clubs, which also helped increase community participation and boosted our space transformation efforts.

We successfully on-boarded 30 businesses to our Clean Business Program, an initiative to incentivize sustainable business practices by implementing effective waste management systems. We conduct weekly trainings and workshops to help establishments meet the Clean Business Standards set by us, which are in line with SWM Rules 2016 and certified by Himachal Tourism and Dharamshala Municipal Corporation.

Collection of dry waste has started from 20 major businesses on a regular basis, further adding to our efforts to boost the recyclable waste value chain that we are working to improve in Dharamshala through such collaborations.
We helped a local group called “Green Friends” made up of active citizens to mobilize people and local businesses to conduct their own clean-up drives in Bhagsunag.

CHANGE was installed at the Bhagsunag Waterfall, completing the series THINK, CARE and CHANGE. The iconic Dalai Lama Mural was also repainted on the Bhagsu McLeod Ganj highway along with other renovations that included dustbins, signboards and art installations.

An action plan was submitted to HP Forest Department to promote the ‘Do Your Own Cleanup’ campaign in Bhagsu Waterfall and Triund.

**Community Engagement & Clean-Up Drives**

Our Swachh Yatra program was realigned to meet COVID protocols and standards as per the directives from DC Kangra and Regional Transportation Office. We sensitized and trained all transport staff members on hygiene, sanitation and waste management. We achieved this by partnering with the Chief Medical Officer and the Indian Red Cross Society, Kangra.

We installed Swachh Yatra placards in local buses with necessary precautionary messages for travellers. These placards were also installed in 23 private volvo buses in Dharamshala, with training given to the drivers and conductors.

We installed three awareness signboards and billboards in the Inter State Bus Terminal and Auto Union Office with the help of HP Dept. of Transport, Himachal Road Transport Corporation (HRTC) and the Auto Operators Union in McLeod Ganj.

We also continued our awareness on anti-littering by distributing placards to certain auto and taxi unions across Dharamshala.

**Public Dustbins**

Waste was diverted from 108 public dustbins from Upper to Lower Dharamshala.

**Community Clean-ups**

Waste collected from 10 community clean up drives in Zero Waste Destination.

**Swachh Yatra: Promoting Responsible Travel**

Bus staff trained on COVID, cleanliness, and hygiene, as per the DC Kangra and RTO mandate.

**Placard Installation**

Awareness raising materials installed in 26 buses of 9 unique bus operators in Dharamshala.
When a major local scrap dealer was looking for someone to takeover his business, with existing waste stock in his inventory and a baler and shredder already on site, we decided to take on that opportunity to scale up for the first time.

With this center, we’re now collecting dry waste from 20 bulk generators and 60 government offices, using the pickup truck procured this year. We now receive ~500 kgs of dry waste per day, and our Green Workers sort dry waste into 18 categories, including 6 types of plastics.

After further segregation and processing at our center, our truck sends packed dry waste categories to end-recyclers outside Dharamshala.
Our project was allocated land by Dharamshala Smart City Limited for the construction of Dharamshala’s first Material Recovery Facility, approved by Nagar Nigam and supported by Bestseller Foundation.

As part of our Clean Business and Model Ward Program, we have established relationships with businesses and households to not only boost waste segregation but also collect dry recyclable waste, which will be channelized to our MRF.
Schools in the city were closed not only for the entire lockdown but also beyond 2020. This greatly impacted the school education system, as well as our Swachhta ki Pathshala program for students. Our strong relationship with our teachers helped us find alternative ways to reach out to students stuck at home. We switched to online learning sessions and began assigning fun and creative activities to students remotely.

We worked with 9 schools and engaged with 250+ students. A total of 16 administrative staff and faculty members were involved in helping us with our virtual sessions. In total, we conducted 9 online sessions and produced 3 videos highlighting student participation.

We also partnered with the HP Department of Language Art & Culture to develop a Kangri language adaptation of our Young Warriors Workbook, promoting both a regional language and the basics of waste management. We intend for Kangri version of our workbook to be distributed to schools across Dharamshala and Kangra.

Swachhta ki Pathshala Goes Virtual

After the lockdown lifted, we began conducting training sessions for all waste workers in Dharamshala in line with the COVID-19 notification from the Dharamshala Municipal Corporation. We also re-trained our Green Workers on using safety gear such as clean gloves and masks and washing their hands more diligently.

We organized 4 macro-level trainings for the Municipal Corporation’s on-foot workers and vehicle drivers and assistants, on special request from the Additional Municipal Commissioner on Gandhi Jayanti and Swachhta Sankalp which was part of their efforts towards the Swachh Bharat Mission in the city.

We also conducted monthly trainings and workshops for workers in our Model Wards, encouraging them to sell their dry segregated waste on per Kg basis to our team, and as a result of this we observed an increase of 51% in segregated waste coming to us from sanitation workers in these wards.
### Our Efforts in 2020-21

#### Model Ward Program

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<tr>
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<th>Target</th>
<th>Achieved</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Households Engaged (Ward 7 &amp; 8)</td>
<td>1200</td>
<td>580</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Truck Procurement</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Businesses Enrolled in Clean Business Program</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Space Transformations (Ward 7)</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clean Ups Organized</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Workshops Conducted</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dry Leaf Composting Units Built</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Awareness Signboards Installed (Ward 7)</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reusable Waste Bags Distributed</td>
<td></td>
<td>259</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘I Segregate’ Stickers Distributed</td>
<td></td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Active Citizens Identified (Ward 7)</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>15</td>
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<tr>
<td>Waste Worker Training Conducted (Ward Level)</td>
<td></td>
<td>10</td>
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#### Zero Waste Destination

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<tr>
<td>Community Workshops Conducted</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clean Ups Organized</td>
<td></td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dry Leaf Composting Units Built</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Awareness Signboards Installed</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Swachh Yatra Workshops Conducted</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swachh Yatra Billboard/Banner Installed</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Swachh Yatra Awareness Placards</td>
<td>1000</td>
<td>815</td>
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### Impact of COVID On Our Field Work

The COVID lockdown and unlock phases, as well as its immediate impact on people’s perception of waste in such times, directly impacted on our fieldwork on multiple fronts.

1. **Engaging Households:** Staying at home was important but engaging with the public was very difficult in the initial months after the lockdown was lifted. This prevented us from directly engaging families and businesses in-person while we went door-to-door to raise awareness on source segregation, and distribute IEC posters and waste bags in our Model Wards. These engagements picked up much more steam after October.

2. **Delaying Installations:** Our awareness installations and signboards were delayed, but so was the entire tourist season due to COVID, which did reduce the amount of waste that is normally generated during those peak months.

3. **Postponing Training & Awareness Sessions:** Municipal restrictions on number of people at events limited the sizes of our workshops. We began to organize more community workshops but with less people, allowing us to have better engagement in smaller audiences, and also conducting a lot more than we targeted for the Model Ward program. The first two quarters of 2020-21 hit the tourism industry of Dharamshala very hard, resulting in far fewer businesses being interested in enrolling in our Clean Business Program, but once they bounced back, we engaged them again successfully.
“While living in Shimla I used to segregate my wet and dry waste. After coming to Dharamshala I got a chance to interact with Waste Warriors... It was through them that I learnt to make compost out of wet waste. I tried Matka Composting and did exactly the same as guided. After the compost was ready I felt so happy that the wet waste became useful in some way. I will continue Matka Composting for the rest of my life and encourage my neighbours to do so.”

- Usha Devi Chandla, PWD Colony

“I have been segregating my waste since past few years. I have kept separate bags for milk packets, plastic bottles and different bag for wet waste. After meeting Waste Warriors I felt hopeful and blessed that there is someone to properly guide us and are helping us understand the importance of segregation and waste generation. We are and will continue working with Waste Warriors for the good of the environment.”

- Kuldeep Sharma, Krishna Dhaba
Mr. Pradeep Thakur, Municipal Commissioner
Dharamshala Municipal Corporation

“Waste Warriors has successfully expanded their area of work and have achieved a specialization in solid waste management. The team is young, energetic, and dynamic. Through our regular interactions in the past one year, I have noticed their persistence and hard work. Waste Warriors are doing a good job in IEC in Upper Dharamshala region for the past 10 years. The Dharamshala Municipal Corporation has received the proposal for a Material Recovery Facility from Waste Warriors and are actively working towards allocating land under Dharamshala Smart City Limited. With the Waste Warriors MRF along with efforts to transform Ward 7 into an ideal ward, we can certainly make Dharamshala one of the cleanest cities.”

Mr. Kuldeep Chand, Owner
Retreat Bar and Restaurant, Clean Business Participant

“The initiatives taken by Waste Warriors to collaborate with the Dharamshala Municipal Corporation are highly commendable. Waste Warriors has been raising awareness in the community about segregation of waste into wet and dry and has been assisting with door-to-door collection in Ward 7. After transforming Ward 7, their next target should be to expand this to the entire city. The residents of Ward 7, with the help of the Waste Warriors team, have come a long way in promoting cleanliness in our society.”

Aarti
Waste Worker, Ward 7

“We have been working with Waste Warriors in raising awareness among households for source segregation of waste in Ward 7. Along with this, Waste Warriors provided us with bags for collection of dry waste twice per week which ensures its better management and helps waste workers earn extra through selling of recyclables.”

Aashna Kukreja
Community Mobilizer

“I really appreciate Waste Warriors in the way they helped me to broaden my thoughts and vision towards waste. It has been great being over here, not to forget the most supportive staff I have never seen in my life. I am blessed to get a chance to interact with our waste workers, who are important members of our society. Working as a Community mobilizer has been a life-changing experience and the changes it brought within me will always remain constant.”
1. **Model Ward Program** - We intend to expand our work to 1 zone, i.e, 5 wards in Dharamshala and support zone-level waste segregation, collection and processing. We aim to build wet-waste infrastructure through composting systems, have more Plastic Gullaks in schools and colleges, conduct monthly waste drop-off events, facilitate the allocation of secondary storage spaces for waste workers, and channelize segregated waste to our upcoming Material Recovery Facility.

2. **SWM Policy Advocacy** - We want to scale up our current programs in Dharamshala in line with the principles of an integrated solid waste management system. We aim to work extensively with the DMC and other administrative entities at a zone level as supporting partners for such a system. We also want to improve the efficiency of processing recyclable and organic waste.

3. **Waste Workers Upliftment** - We want to continue our effort to uplift and empower the DMC's door-to-door waste collectors through training programs on waste segregation, safety and hygiene. We also plan to incentivize collection of low-grade dry waste such as single-use plastics and multi-layered packaging.

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#### Our Challenges

1. **COVID** - The lockdown caused significant delays in receiving the required approvals from administrative and government entities for certain targets that required events and procurement.

2. **Community Sessions** - Project deliverables that depended on public gatherings had to be realigned to follow safety protocols and guidelines, and were mostly transitioned to online engagement till the second half of the project year.

3. **Swachhta Ki Pathshala** - Continued closure of schools and lack of access to technology and knowledge of virtual learning amongst many teachers and students caused difficulties in continuing the education program and ensuring participation.

4. **Model Ward Program** - Non-cooperation from the municipality's contracted waste hauler has been a major challenge. It has been difficult to get supervisors on board to train their workers even after receiving the required approval from the Dharamshala Municipal Corporation.
Our team won the Gold Award for 'Best Stronger Together Efforts' at the Outlook Responsible Tourism Summit and Awards, 2021 held in Odisha, for our COVID relief efforts to support waste workers and their families during the lockdown and for our efforts in tourists destinations where we work: Dharamshala, Dehradun, and around Corbett.

On Women’s Day, our women Warriors were recognized for their fierce work by Inner Wheel Club Dharamshala and Bitiya Foundation, who appreciated their efforts on community-level awareness-raising. The warriors were also felicitated by Himachal Pradesh Forest Minister Mr. Rakesh Pathania and MLA Mr. Vishal Nehria on the same day!

Waste management organisation Waste Warriors distributes I-cards to sanitation workers

The event was organized at the Kotwali Bazar Community Hall.


The event was organized at the Kotwali Bazar Community Hall. Municipal Corporation Commissioner Pradeep Thakur was the chief guest at the program. He said that a cleaning partner is very important in the waste management of Dharamshala.
Thank You To Our Local Partners & Collaborators!