



WASTE WARRIORS
REDUCE RE-USE RECYCLE

SOLVING THE WASTE CRISIS IN THE INDIAN HIMALAYAS

Q2 Report FY 2025-26



***“The world breaks everyone, and afterward,
many are strong at the broken places.”***

- Ernest Hemingway

FOREWORD

My name is Mukta Pawar, and I am a *Paryavaran Sakhi*, (friend of the environment) from Sahastradhara, Dehradun. The changing state of nature, and the immense loss we've seen in the past three months - cloudbursts, damaged homes and roads bring deep pain to my heart. It hurts even more to realize that the very nature which has given us everything, is the one we continue to harm, forgetting that the greatest suffering we are causing is to ourselves. How can I bear to see the same nature, in whose lap I spent my childhood, in such a state?

As Paryavaran Sakhis, we are doing our duty to serve nature. But in this long struggle, when weariness sets in... will you stand with us?

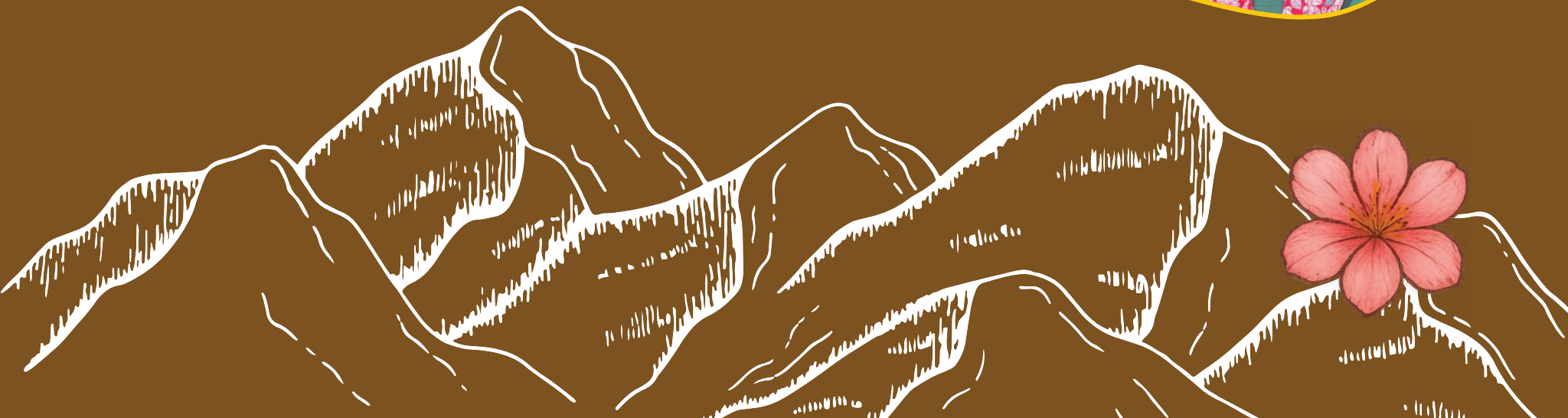


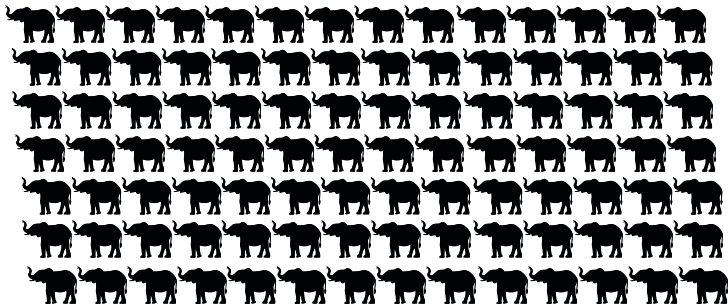
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Our project location, Sahastradhara, was faced by a cloud burst leaving many residents without homes and livelihoods. [See page 21 to see how you can help.](#)

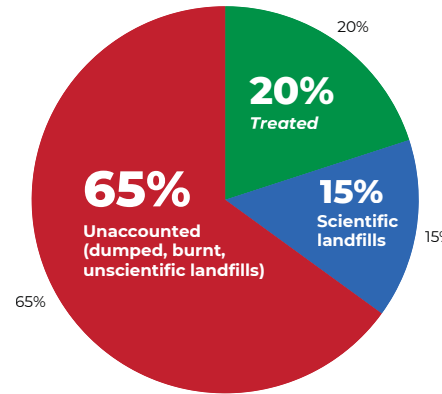
THE PROBLEM

The IHR produces over **1.9 million tonnes*** of waste per year. Imagine that's the size of **9,00,000 Asian elephants.**



*CPCB Annual Report

WHERE DOES THE WASTE GO?*



Microplastics in soil, waterways, wildlife zones

20% global methane emissions from unmanaged wet waste

GHG and black carbon from open burning of waste

*Independent studies



THE COST OF RESPONSIBLE WASTE MANAGEMENT...



- **60-70%** of waste collected is **reject or low value.**
- Low sale of recyclables and **high cost of operations.**
- **Challenging terrain** for collection/transportation and **low land availability** for storage.
- **Insufficient government funds** for holistic waste management

IMPACT ON MOUNTAIN COMMUNITIES...



Open dumps and waste burning trigger respiratory and gut infections.



Plastic-clogged drains and streams contribute to severe flash floods.



IHR warming 1.5x faster than global average leading to irreversible glacial melt.

Over 2 billion people depend on the Himalayas for water, food, and life itself. Every piece of waste dumped or burnt in the Himalayas affects the air we breathe, the food we eat, and the water we drink.

DID YOU KNOW?

“Waste is Wealth” - or is it?

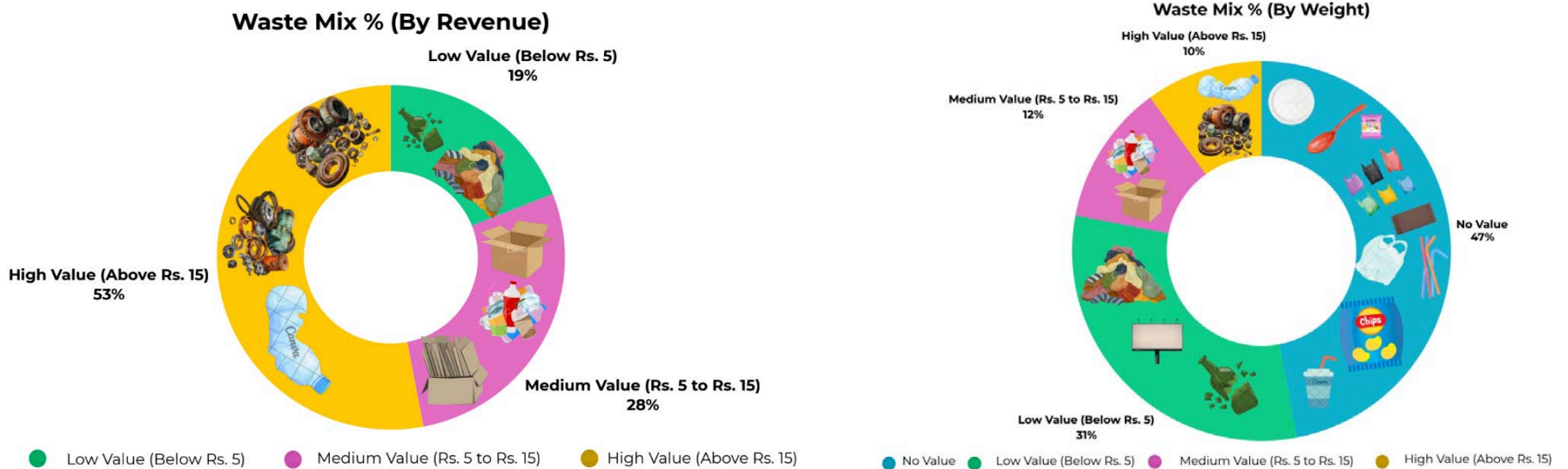
A year-long study across 5,000 households in Himachal Pradesh challenges a common belief, that waste always pays for itself. Conducted in difficult mountain terrains, the study found that despite strong systems and community participation, the economics of waste recovery often don't add up.

The Reality:

- 78% of waste collected was low or no-value, contributing only 19% of total recycling revenue.
- Income from recyclables covered just 46% of operational costs, leaving a 54% funding gap.
- For every ₹8 spent to collect 1 kg of dry waste, only ₹5 was earned (37% deficient); processing cost about ₹11 while earning ₹4. (66% deficient)

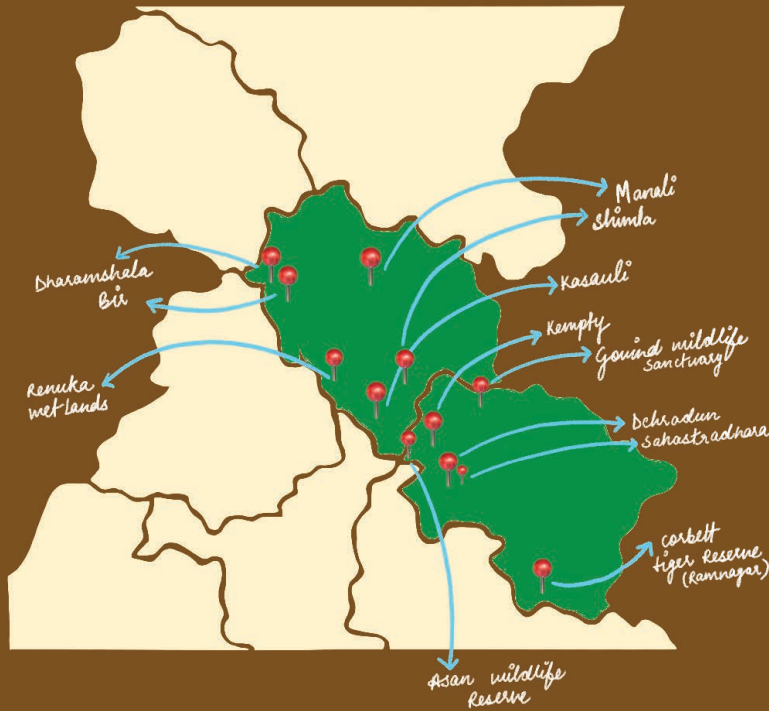
The Insight:

In remote Himalayan regions, “waste isn't wealth” on its own. True sustainability depends on steady financing, resilient local markets, and recognition of the human effort behind every kilogram recovered.



Find this interesting? Read more in our article, [“Waste is Not Wealth: Lessons from the Indian Himalayan Region”](#) featured in IDR (India Development Review).

OUR FOOTPRINT & WORK



12

Locations across Himachal Pradesh and Uttarkhand

200+

Warriors from across India solving the waste crisis in the IHR

10,000+

Metric tonnes of waste diverted from the environment to scientific processing since 2012

Empowering Communities

Enhancing Infrastructure

Strengthening Governance

Promoting Local Entrepreneurship

Overcoming Social Stigma

Scaling Through Partnerships

Our Models

Paryavaran Sakhi Model

Empowering local women to lead waste collection and processing while earning dignified livelihoods.

Ecodaan Model

Promoting responsible tourism by connecting travelers with local waste management and climate initiatives.

Local Entrepreneurship Model

Enabling community members to run decentralized waste systems and earn income through waste collection and processing.

Hub and Spoke Model

Core offices serve as hubs, extending rapid expertise and support to nearby locations (spokes) for timely, community-linked interventions without permanent setups.

YUWA Model

Engaging youth to drive local climate actions and address civic issues through community-led movements.

Protected Zones

A conservation-focused approach to waste management in ecologically sensitive areas, including national parks, sanctuaries, and wildlife reserves.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Q2 posed significant challenges due to heavy monsoon rains in Manali, Uttarkashi, and Sahastradhara, which damaged roads, worksites, and infrastructure including two Uttarkashi Waste Banks. Despite these setbacks, our teams methodically rebuilt operations, supported affected staff and communities, and continued driving meaningful participation, underscoring that lasting behavioral change requires patience and trust. Low-value plastics continued to fetch minimal returns, highlighting ongoing financial sustainability challenges.

Key Highlights

Financial Sustainability

- Overall, our projects **recovered 71% of the cost of running waste operations**, showing that communities and local systems are increasingly able to support themselves.
- In Dehradun's Model Ward, strong household trust in the service led to a **record ₹2.2 lakh collected in user fees** in August.
- In Renuka Ji, household participation in **waste collection increased 4x (37 to 200 households)**, driven by door-to-door outreach and consistent follow-ups.
- In Bir Panchayat, regular community engagement and meetings with the Panchayat led to **user fees being revised from ₹50 to ₹100 per household**, helping bring the system closer to the real cost of services.
- In Kempty, the project **covered 78% of the cost of operations** through the sale of recyclables and sending non-recyclable waste for co-processing in cement plants – moving the area closer to a zero-landfill model.

Operational Efficiency

- The Dharamshala Material Recovery Facility (MRF) processed its **highest-ever volume of low-value plastic packaging** (such as chips and biscuit packets) - **17,000 kg in this quarter** alone, keeping difficult-to-manage waste out of eco-sensitive zones.
- At Harrawala MRF, we **expanded composting to handle 1,200 kg of wet waste per day**, using a mix of compost pits and a composting machine. This provides a practical model for villages and small towns dealing with large amounts of organic waste.
- In Sahastradhara, trained Paryavaran Sakhis supported households to better manage their wet waste, contributing to an estimated **15% reduction in waste going to the dumping site**.

Community Engagement & Governance

- In Dharamshala Rural, the number of households regularly paying for **waste services increased from 33% to 39%**, and **241 new households were onboarded** in Barwala - a sign that trust in the system is growing.
- In Renuka Ji, door-to-door waste collection expanded to two panchayats, supported by **two dedicated storage sites**, making the system more reliable for residents.
- In Kasauli, **tripartite agreements between the three Panchayats**, Waste Warriors, and the service provider helped formalise and stabilise door-to-door collection.
- In Dharamshala Rural and Bir, street plays and Chai pe Charchas (informal tea-time discussions) were used to talk about source segregation and user fee payment in a way that felt inviting, and relatable.
- **Community-led clean-ups** in Renuka Ji and Kempty showed increasing citizen and Panchayat ownership of public spaces.
- Through Project YUWA, **engaged 900+ students, enabled 2500+ climate actions, and diverted more than 2,500 kg of cloth waste** away from dumping and burning.

Enabling Systems for Scale

- **Monitoring & Evaluation:** Eight months of data from five rural projects were analysed to create **insight reports that link behaviour change (such as segregation and fee payment) with financial trends**. These insights will guide future decisions and replication.
- **Digital Transformation:** Wati.io is being used for **automated community messaging**, helping us stay in touch with residents at scale. Zoho Bigin, our fundraising CRM, is being used by the fundraising team to **gauge donor intelligence** more systematically. Work has started on Saral, our in-house system for procurement and inventory, to make **backend operations more efficient and transparent**.
- **Learning & Development:** Team members participated in **exposure visits to Delhi and Udupi, and represented Waste Warriors at the South Asia Consultation in Nepal and the Behaviour Change Communication (BCC) Summit in Delhi**, bringing back ideas and practices that can be adapted to our Himalayan context.
- **Partnerships & Preparedness:** HDFC Bank signed a **3-year collaboration in Shimla**, strengthening the long-term foundation for our work there. Project YUWA was recognised among the **Top 10 nominees for the ESD Okayama Award 2025**, putting our youth-led climate action work on a global platform. A **₹25 lakh disaster-response fund** was launched, and 75% of the funds required to restore the Uttarkashi Waste Bank have been raised, improving our ability to respond quickly in times of crisis.

OUR IMPACT

Environmental Impact



441 MT
waste diverted
in Q2 FY 2025-26



31 MT
carbon
emissions
reduced



12 MT
methane
emissions
reduced

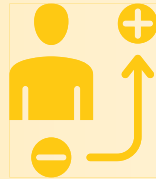


1124
trees
saved



11
hectares of
landfill saved

Social Impact



50,000
people engaged to
adopt responsible
waste management
practices



7985
days of dignified
livelihood



697
active
citizens



28,571
environment-positive
climate actions

Governance Impact



6.17 lakh
in government funds
(INR) unlocked for
setting up solid waste
management systems



5
material recovery
facilities
operational



23
waste
banks
operational



13.37 lakh
user fees collected (INR)
from communities for
enabling operations

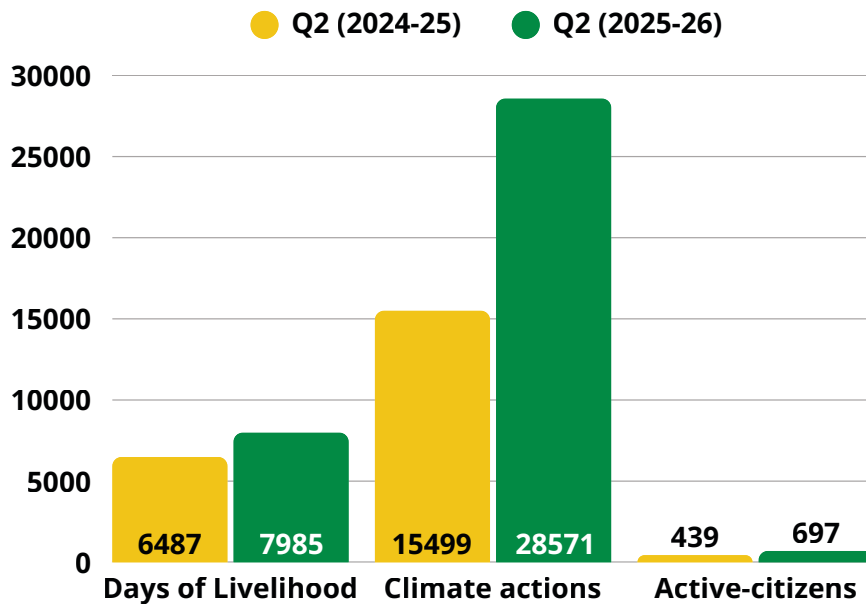


Women green workers transport waste sacks across the steep and narrow terrains of Uttarkashi.

Q2 Growth Trends (FY '24-'25 vs FY '25-'26)

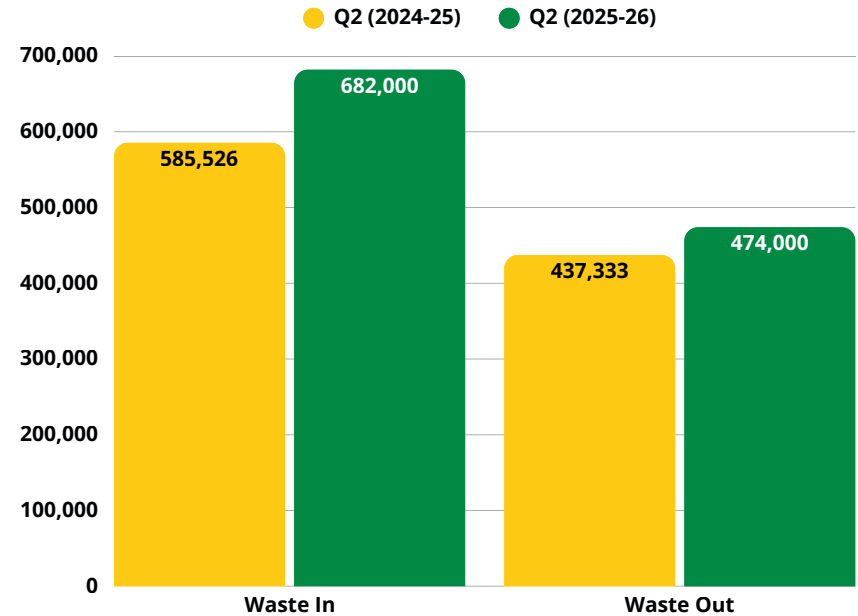
Growth in Livelihood Days, Climate actions, and Active Citizens

Days of Livelihood rose by 23% with new projects, additional Green Workers, improved safety. Climate actions increased by 84% due to expanded interventions and projects, while active citizens grew 45% through focused community engagement and word-of-mouth trust-building.



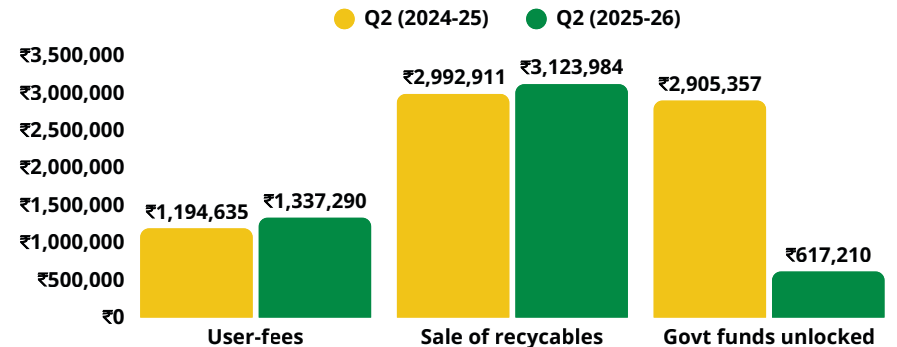
Growth in Waste Collection and Recycling Efficiency

Waste collected rose by 16% due to new and expanded projects (e.g., Corbett, Sahastradhara), while waste sent to recyclers increased by 8.39% thanks to better segregation efficiency and more waste workers.



Revenue Trends and Fund Flow: Q2 Insights

User-fee collection rose by 12% from last quarter, slowed down by 'Kooda bhi do, paisa bhi do' mindset, the transition of users from free services to paid services. Sales of recyclables increased by 4.5%, mainly due to pilferage of high-value plastics, and the maximum proportion of low-value plastics in the collected waste. There was a 79% dip in Government funds unlocked, following the completion of high-budget government-funded projects in March; capex funds are expected to be unlocked next quarter.



Ramnagar, Corbett Tiger Reserve

First-aid training for 30 Sakhis • MoU with Taj Hotel & Resort • AI-based “Kooda Khabri” launched

This quarter in Corbett, the focus remained on equipping Paryavaran Sakhis to lead with skill and confidence. After completing a Red Cross first-aid training, the women felt better prepared to handle emergencies. That preparation proved invaluable when one Sakhi used CPR to save a child's life, a moment that redefined courage and capability. Alongside this, the team introduced “Kooda Khabri,” an AI-driven character delivering updates on waste collection and compliance. By making progress visible, it built trust and has increased user-fee recovery across the project area. Partnerships also deepened: the newly signed MoU with Taj Hotels & Resorts extended collaboration on awareness drives and clean-up events. In a gesture of solidarity, the hotel donated warm clothing and footwear for Sakhis and Green Workers.



Corbett Sakhis attend a first-aid training workshop.



Sakhi Janki Devi with her newly received jacket.

Story of Courage

“We can’t even afford ghee anymore,” she said with a faint smile. “But this work makes me feel part of something good.”

At Sawaldeh village in Ramnagar, while looking for stories that could inspire others, the team met Vimla Devi. Sitting outside her mud house, she said quietly, “I want to help with waste collection, please let me join you.” Eight months earlier, her elder son had been killed by a tiger while collecting firewood. Since then, she has cared for her ill husband, daughter-in-law, and three grandchildren on meagre means. Yet every month, she still gives her segregated waste to the Paryavaran Sakhis and pays ₹30 for the service.



Sahastradhara, Dehradun

In-vessel composter stabilized • Up to 15% landfill reduction • Cloudburst damaged households

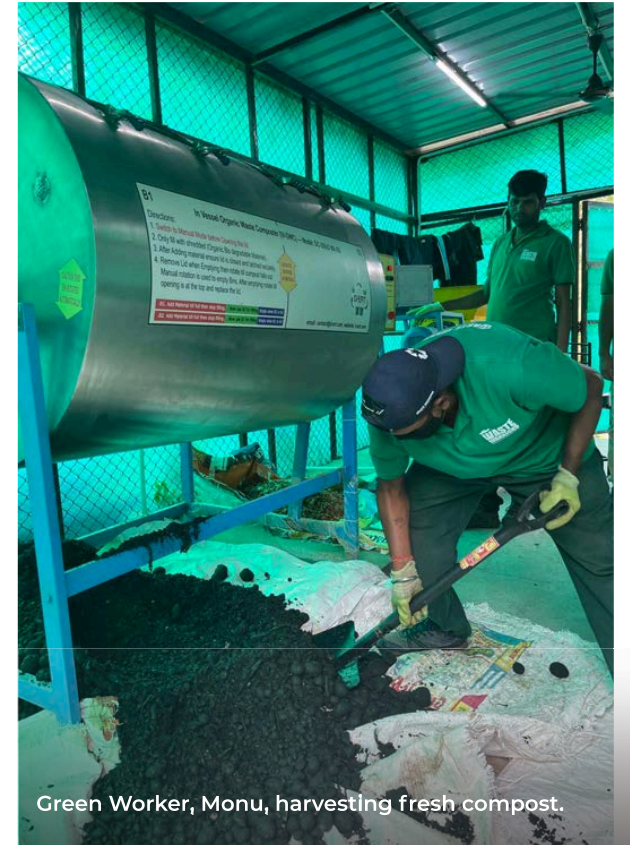
A sudden cloudburst in Mazhada tested the system, damaging roads and even the homes of team members and Sakhis. Yet within days, operations resumed, proof of how embedded local ownership has become. At the Dhanola Plastic Waste Management Unit, trained *Paryavaran Sakhis* and Green Workers kept composting food waste through the in-vessel machine, reducing landfill dependency by 15 percent and preparing nutrient-rich compost soon to be sold to supplement incomes. The work didn't pause elsewhere either: 27 women in Soda Saroli joined menstrual-health workshops, 29 students in Sera created a *Nanhe Sitare* cleanliness cabinet, and in Asthal, volunteers cleared 327 waste units, planted trees, and installed a 30-foot anti-litter mesh.



Warriors Vishal (CEO) and Aslam assess the damage from the cloudburst in Sahastradhara.



Rescue operations underway in disaster-hit Sahastradhara.



Green Worker, Monu, harvesting fresh compost.



Story of Change

In Dhanola Panchayat of Raipur Block, the idea of community ownership has taken root in unexpected ways. What began as a few residents cleaning a dumping spot near the river has grown into the Sathi Foundation - a small but determined collective led by local shopkeeper Anil Negi. Every month, Anil and a group of shopkeepers, students, and Paryavaran Sakhis walk through forest edges and stream banks, gathering plastic and wrappers left behind by picnickers. Waste Warriors supports them with gloves, bags, and transport, but the effort is entirely their own.

The group now meets on the first Sunday of every month, treating the clean-up as a social ritual rather than a duty. Everyone helps load the collected waste onto the Sakhi collection vehicle. The litter that once scarred the riverside now returns to the Dhanola unit for proper segregation and recycling.

Kempty, Mussoorie

78% operational cost recovery • ₹1.4 lakh recyclables revenue • Zero-landfill operations achieved

Tricky terrains and tourist-season surges tested the Kempty system, but the team's commitment to ensuring the waste is diverted to the right place remained firm. This quarter, the project achieved 78% OPEX recovery, a record for our high-volume tourist areas, primarily through improved segregation and recyclable value. Recyclables generated ₹1.4 lakh in revenue, while Refuse-Derived Fuel (RDF) certification ensured that all reject waste was co-processed in paper mills rather than dumped. With fencing and site work advancing at Siya Panchayat's PWMU and approvals secured for Dhar Gaon, the project is steadily moving towards a zero-landfill status.

“Earlier, we used to worry about where the leftover waste went. Now, knowing it's being used for energy instead of polluting our hills makes us feel proud of our clean Kempty.” — Roma Nautiyal, Member, Panchayat Siya.

Govind Wildlife Sanctuary, Uttarkashi

₹4.5 lakh raised for Waste Bank repair • 5 Panchayats onboarded • Advance user fee support

Amid landslides and blocked roads, Safai Sathis in Uttarkashi kept collection systems running across five panchayats, an admirable feat in one of the state's most challenging terrains. The Uttarkashi Waste Bank Restoration campaign raised ₹4.5 lakh of its ₹6 lakh goal to rebuild damaged infrastructure. Despite difficult conditions, user-fee compliance improved in Gaichwan Panchayat, where some households prepaid the fee for 10–12 months to keep operations running. A meeting with Cabinet Minister Ganesh Joshi opened dialogue on establishing a Plastic Waste Management Unit in Mori Block, marking a critical step towards permanent waste management infrastructure.



Story of Change

Villagers in Dangan have started reusing polybags from their apple orchards, used for pollination.

Inspired by our work in neighboring areas, Dangan village has committed to building its own waste management system, aspiring to become a model village. And the change has begun with individual action, local youth have formed the Prakriti Punar Jagaran Samiti, conducting regular clean-up and plantation drives, and sending collected waste to the Gaichwan waste bank for proper processing. [For more stories of resilience from Uttarkashi, check out our Uttarkashi case study, Shoonya, on page 19.](#)



Kasauli

Door-to-door collection launched • 10,894 kg plastic sent for recycling • Triparty MoUs signed

Across Kasauli, Gulhadi and Garkhal-Sanawar Panchayats, we formally launched door-to-door collection this quarter, onboarding 288 households with regular user-fee participation. To build confidence in the system, the team introduced separate collection streams for wet and sanitary waste, reducing reluctance. Triparty MoUs were signed with Dharampur, Garkhal Sanawar, and Gulhadi Panchayats, setting a foundation for shared accountability. Despite monsoon challenges, nearly 10,894 kg of low-value plastic from four panchayats was sent to the Harrawala MRF for recycling, linking Kasauli directly into the broader circular network.



Ward members participate in UID distribution in Dharampur, Kasauli.



Waste collection in Garkhal Kasauli.

Shimla

Four new Panchayat by-laws passed • 76.4% segregation success • 808 kg waste diverted

This quarter, Shimla's Gram Panchayats made measurable progress towards structured waste governance. Chamyana Panchayat's waste unit, once treated as a dump, was upgraded with CCTV and shutters through the BDO's office, improving monitoring and transparency. Community awareness drives led to 458 kg of dry waste diverted to the Plastic Waste Management Unit with a 76.4% segregation success. Four Panchayats passed new by-laws establishing user-fees, penalties for improper disposal, and accountability frameworks. The team also initiated dialogues with the NRLM network to integrate women's self-help groups into waste management, linking livelihood creation with environmental stewardship.

Manali

95% segregation achieved • Waste Bank operational • Flood recovery underway

Heavy monsoon floods cut off access to several panchayats this quarter, but the newly built Waste Bank facility in Manali still processed 1,855 kg of waste in July, marking its first full month of operations. Despite disrupted transport routes, the team resumed services, reinforcing local trust in the system. Two Menstrual Hygiene Management workshops reached 80 women, promoting reusable sanitary kits and sparking conversations around menstrual health and waste. With a 95% segregation rate, community awareness and participation have reached record levels. The team's next focus: strengthening operations once roads reopen and linking the model to nearby hospitality units for better cost recovery.

Story of Change

Early one morning, Warrior Rohit set out with his colleague Sanju to check segregation practices in Chamyana, Shimla. Most households were still giving mixed waste. Without gloves, Rohit still decided to inspect a bag by hand, and felt a bone inside.

"I don't even touch onion or garlic," he said, "but that day, I held a bone. For a moment, I regretted it, then I told myself, I'm doing this for my community."

He continued the inspection, determined to understand and solve the problem. That moment, he says, changed how he saw his work, not just as waste management, but as an act of sincerity and purpose.



Bir Billing

User fee revised to ₹100 • Hub-and-Spoke network expanded • Menstrual health workshops held

This quarter, Chaugan Panchayat took a bold step towards more sustainable waste management by revising household waste collection fees from ₹50 to ₹100, reflecting the true cost of running the system. To extend sustainable practices further, the Hub and Spoke model was expanded to support nearby institutions like Dzongsar Institute and TCV Suja. So far, six properties have joined to collaborate on managing complex waste streams responsibly. Backed by the Tibetan community, this change ensures the waste system can continue serving everyone efficiently. Additionally, three menstrual health workshops created safe spaces for around 60 women to talk openly about reproductive health through games, films, and discussions. Cloth pads were distributed to encourage eco-friendly practices while building confidence and awareness around women's health.

Dharamshala Rural

Paying units increase 33% to 39% • ₹15,000 monthly rise in revenue • 241 households reactivated

Stronger supervision and tighter coordination transformed six panchayats this quarter. Panchayat representatives began joining collection rounds, supported by two Local Entrepreneurs who ensured full coverage. Paying units rose from 33% to 39%, generating an additional ₹15,000 in monthly revenue. In Sheehla Buted, household onboarding doubled from 90 to 191, while Barwala Panchayat revived operations entirely upto 241 active units. This has led to revival of the onboarding rate from 17% in June 2025 to 47% in October 2025. To build local trust, 32 women participated in an exposure visit tracing the journey of waste from collection to recycling. Partnerships also strengthened as Hotel D'Polo came on board, contributing ₹17,000 per month, the project's highest commercial partnership yet. To strengthen awareness, the team staged a street play, "Koodo Ki Duniya," at a Government School, reaching 97 students and sparking household conversations on segregation and shared responsibility.



Warriors use theatre to improve awareness levels.



Story of Change

“Change doesn't come from one person cleaning up. It comes when the whole village decides that cleanliness is part of who we are.”

In Bangohdu village under Gram Panchayat Gunehar, garbage was piling behind homes as residents waited for someone else to clean it. The Waste Warriors team began with clean-ups and segregation drives, but participation soon faded. Realising the need for stronger ownership, they turned to the Panchayat and Sanitation Committee, who personally visited all 39 households. This shift in community accountability transformed attitudes and villagers started segregating waste and paying user fees regularly. Today, Gunehar stands as proof that change sticks when the community leads it.

Dharamshala Urban MRF

17,000 kg multi-layered plastic recovered • New mural installed • Consent-to-Establish secured

Operational efficiency reached new highs at the Dharamshala MRF, with over 17,000 kg of multi-layered plastic responsibly recycled, the highest total yet. A team visit to IPCA Patiala refined waste recovery processes and built staff capacity. The facility also achieved a regulatory milestone by resolving technical hurdles and securing its Consent-to-Establish. This formal compliance step now enables us to move from preparatory work to legally authorized operations, a key achievement that builds on the groundwork laid in previous quarters. A new wall mural now maps the waste journey, turning the MRF into both a learning space and a visual testament to transformation.

Dehradun Model Ward Program and MRF

User fee collections ↑ 18 % since last quarter • MRF processing capacity expanded to 1,200 kg/day

In Q2, the Harrawala Material Recovery Facility (MRF) introduced pit composting to expand its wet waste processing capacity and assess its effectiveness. The facility now processes 1,000 kg of waste daily using the in-vessel machine and an additional 200 kg through pit composting. In July, Indian Forest Service (IFS) officers from various states visited the MRF for a guided tour and orientation session on sustainable waste management. They observed segregation processes and learned how different waste streams are managed responsibly, gaining practical insights into circular economy practices. The newly elected Mayor of Dehradun Municipal Corporation, Mr. Saurabh Thapliyal, also visited the MRF at Harrawala Ward, appreciated the work being done, and assured continued support for future operations.



Dehradun Mayor Saurabh Thapliyal at the MRF.

Story of Change

“I never imagined that picking waste could lead to a respected job,” he says. “Now I lead others and help keep Dharamshala clean. I feel proud and hopeful for the future.”

For years, Papu worked as an informal waste picker in Dharamshala, facing unstable income, unsafe conditions, and little recognition. Through training in segregation, safety, and material recovery at the Urban MRF, his skills and confidence grew. Mentorship under Local Ecopreneur Rajkumar helped him take on greater responsibility. Today, Papu leads a team of Green Workers as a Supervisor, ensuring smooth daily operations and a growing confidence in his own aspirations.



Renuka Wetlands

440 % increase in household onboarding • 2 waste-storage sites operational

This quarter, Renuka Ji saw household participation in waste management rise from 37 to 200 households, with each paying a ₹100 user fee, supported through engagement with local government stakeholders. Growing demand led to the allocation of a dedicated waste storage space in Dadahu, with an additional site near Khala Kiyar Panchayat provided by the Wildlife Department. To expand the hub-and-spoke model and address population data gaps, students from Government Degree College Dadahu conducted a baseline survey mapping households and waste patterns. Engagement was strengthened through clean-ups at Bedon village and event waste management at Sheetla Panchayat, while a Journey of Waste video improved transparency, reducing waste drop-off hesitancy by 10–20% and helping onboard 30 new households.

Upcycling Textile Waste, Dehradun

28 women trained • ₹2,000 first sales

This quarter, two upcycling workshops were held in August and September, training 28–30 women over 4–5 days. Despite challenges due to household responsibilities, linking the workshops to livelihood opportunities encouraged active participation. Participants learned to create upcycled fabric products, earning ₹ 2,000 at one of their first events on World Tourism Day, while gaining the skills and support needed to explore income-generating opportunities.

Swachhata Hi Seva, Dehradun

16-day campaign • 285 kg waste recycled • 400 cloth bags distributed

As part of our special project initiatives, we recently concluded a 16-day Swachhta Hi Seva campaign in Dehradun, focused on cleanliness, responsible consumption, and community participation. The city came alive with clean-up drives, awareness sessions, and creative outreach activities, engaging residents, students, waste workers, and community groups. Highlights included cloth bag distributions, water station installations, essay and painting competitions, and interactive street performances on waste segregation. Over the course of the campaign, 285 kg of waste was collected for responsible recycling, 400 cloth bags were distributed, and 150 waste picker families benefited through the “Plastic Lao, Ration Pao” initiative.

Tetra Pak Dehradun

18,000 kg UBCs recycled • 6 benches installed

Over 18,000 kg of used beverage cartons were collected and recycled into functional assets, including six benches installed at public spaces and two awareness signboards explaining the recycling process. On World Tourism Day, a recycled bench was handed over to the Tourism Department in the presence of Shri Abhishek Rohilla, Additional CEO, Tourism Development Board, Uttarakhand.



Warriors jump in Renuka lake to remove the trash.



Social media influencer, Sweta Kataria, buys an upcycled textile product from our stall at an event.

YUWA

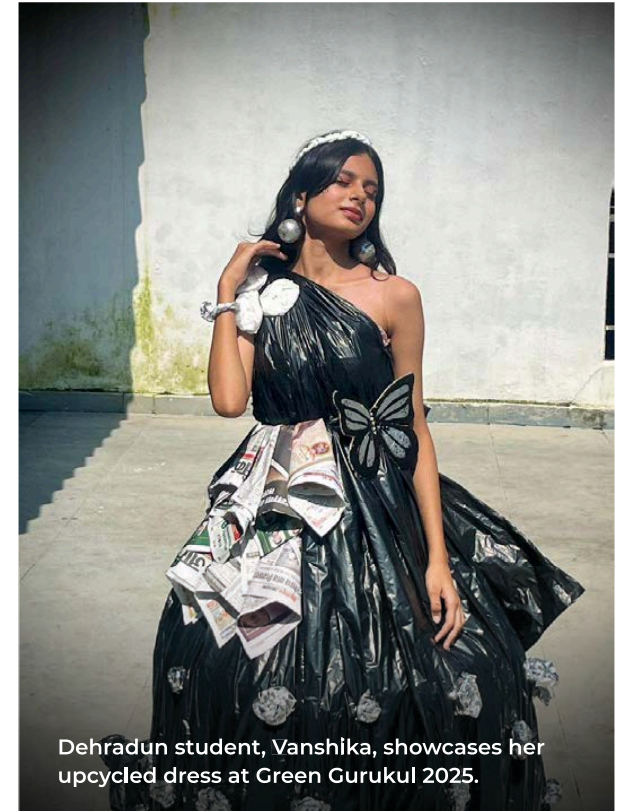
900+ students • 2,500+ climate actions • 45 schools engaged across Uttarakhand & Himachal

Across Dehradun, Rishikesh, Mussoorie, and Dharamshala, the YUWA movement continued to grow as a youth-led platform for waste and climate actions. The third edition of Green Gurukul mobilized over 900 students from 39 schools, leading to 2,500+ climate actions, from cloth drives and trashion shows to plastic “gullaks” and short films. Together, these activities diverted 275 kg of plastic and 2,500+ kg of cloth waste from landfills. Monthly Climate Chaupals became spaces for critical dialogue and creativity, drawing the highest-ever turnout of 50 youth in September.

Green Gurukul served as a valuable recap, encouraging reflection on human impact on the planet. Through interactive sessions and hands-on projects, students gained insights into pressing ecological issues. It’s a reminder that even small actions can contribute to a larger environmental impact.”

- Ms. Reena Gusain, Green Gurukul Mentor

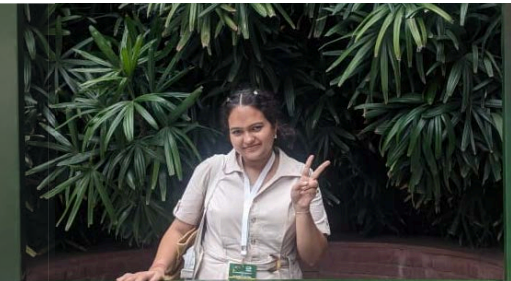
Meanwhile, in Dharamshala, the YUWA pilot expanded rapidly. Green Gurukul launched in six schools, while Ecolympics engaged 16 colleges across Kangra. Local youth led from the front, Sonia mentored students at Army Public School, Retika earned selection to the Red Action Lab Fellowship, and Sanchit hosted a Climate Chaupal on “Development vs Disaster.” Collaborations with My YUWA Bharat on Kargil Diwas, Independence Day, and Sports Day further strengthened youth participation in environmental initiatives.



Dehradun student, Vanshika, showcases her upcycled dress at Green Gurukul 2025.

Story of Change

When Saumya Rana began her journey with YUWA in 2024, she was building her foundation in the field. A year later, she mobilised 40 youth during the World’s Largest Mountain Cleanup and was selected for the ICON International Fellowship (2025–27) for her project Vriksha Mandal, which aims to restore 10 hectares of degraded land.



**7th International Conference
on
Sustainability Education**

SUSTAINABILITY EDUCATION FOR GREEN JOBS

September 17 & 18, 2025

Ecodaan, Dharamshala Urban

439 participants • 320 Climate Action pledges • 10 hostels onboarded

This quarter, Ecodaan deepened its partnerships with local tourism operators to embed sustainability into travel experiences across McLeodganj, Bhagsu, and Dharamkot. Through the “Two Activities per Month” program, five hostels signed collaboration letters, leading to 10 co-led clean-ups and awareness events, many initiated by the hostels themselves. Monthly clean-ups on the 10th, 20th, and 30th became community rituals, drawing 439 participants, with 320 travellers taking the Climate Action Pledge.

When monsoons disrupted footfall, communication stayed active, and by season’s end, partners reached out to resume activities independently, a clear sign of growing ownership. Posters redesigned for better visibility now guide visitors to waste drop-off points and encourage eco-friendly behaviour.



Upcycling workshop at a Dharamkot hostel.

The Good Guest Guidebook Launch

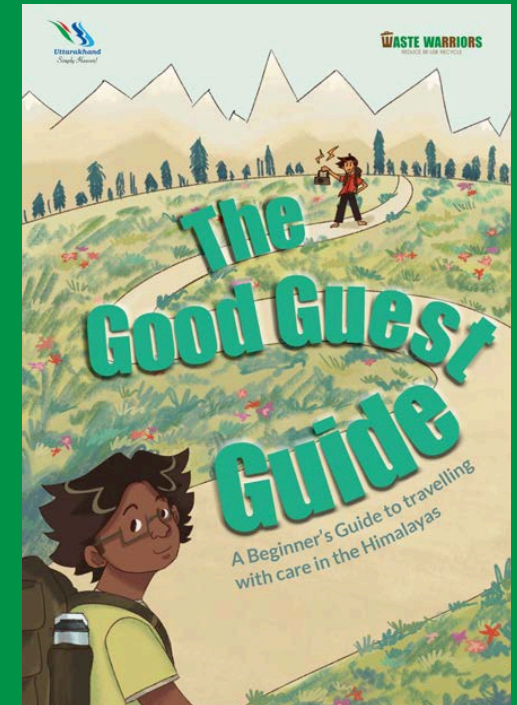
To mark World Tourism Day, Waste Warriors Society and the Uttarakhand Tourism Development Board (UTDB) launch the Good Guest Guide, a first-of-its-kind travel companion offering practical tips for reducing waste, conserving resources, and supporting local communities across Uttarakhand and Himachal Pradesh. Unveiled at a special gathering titled *Atithi Devo Bhava*, the launch was attended by Mr. Shyam Agrawal (State Minister, Government of Uttarakhand), Mr. Sameer Sinha (Head of Forest Force, Uttarakhand), Mr. Abhishek Rohilla, (Additional CEO, Uttarakhand Tourism Department Board), along with representatives from Airbnb.

“Athithi Devo Bhava conducted by Waste Warriors with support from Airbnb is a wonderful initiative to promote responsible tourism and they have launched an interesting book called The Good Guest guide which will help out tourists to know what kind of behaviour they should depict when they come to Uttarakhand and how they should become responsible tourists as well as responsible citizens.”

- Mr. Abhishek Rohilla, Additional CEO, UTDB



Read the Good Guest Guidebook here by clicking on the book!



CASE STUDIES & FILMS



Case Study: Shoonya

“Shoonya: Towards Zero Unchecked Solid Waste in the Himalayas” dives into how Waste Warriors has partnered with communities in and around the Govind Wildlife Sanctuary to confront mounting waste in a fragile alpine ecosystem. The study follows the journey from waste hotspots near trekking trails to women-led collection systems and formal waste-bank infrastructure. It showcases how rural communities are becoming part of a changing mindset towards waste and offers recommendations for community-led SWM models in such remote regions.

[Read Now](#)



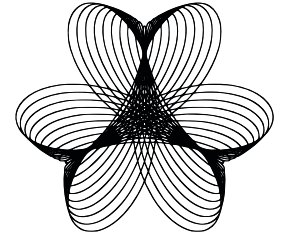
Watch Australian filmmaker, Brodie Hopkins, cover our work as part of his Protect the World series on wildlife and conservation.



Watch how Paryavaran Sakhis in Sahastradhara are leading a community effort to tackle waste mismanagement.

People & Processes

ENABLING SYSTEMS FOR SCALE



Monitoring & Evaluation - Data-driven insights for rural impact

To ensure data forms the backbone of decision-making, this quarter we prepared detailed insights reports for five rural projects - Sahastradhara, Kempty, Dharamshala Rural, Bir, and Kasauli. Over eight months of data were reviewed, combining real-time field intelligence, performance trends, and on-ground observations. These reports now serve as shared tools for reflection and action, helping project teams identify behavioural trends, improve operational efficiency, and strengthen financial sustainability across the Himalayan belt.

Digital Transformation - Streamlining systems and strengthening impact

Digital innovation continued to drive efficiency this quarter. Wati.io, a WhatsApp-based communication tool, was onboarded to enable faster campaign outreach and community engagement. Zoho Bigin, our fundraising CRM, is now helping the team track donor conversations, commitments, and outreach more systematically. Meanwhile, the rollout of Saral Phase I, our in-house procurement and inventory system, continued steadily, bringing data from multiple projects into one integrated and transparent platform. Together, these systems are strengthening how Waste Warriors manages information, improves internal coordination, and prepares to scale solutions more efficiently.

Learning & Development - Building a culture of continuous learning

Our people systems evolved this quarter with a renewed focus on growth and collaboration. A comprehensive L&D tracking dashboard was updated with Q1 and Q2 data, improving visibility into participation, completion, and feedback trends. The Skills Mapping form was relaunched with a 90% participation target, aligning learning with personal growth goals. Learning also extended beyond screens: ten team members joined exposure visits to Delhi and Udupi, while others represented the cause at the South Asia Consultation (Nepal), and BCC Summit (Delhi). Despite weather disruptions, curiosity and cross-learning continued to thrive.

Partnerships & Preparedness - Building resilience for scale

This quarter marked significant progress in partnerships and resource mobilisation. HDFC Bank Parivartan joined as a three-year partner to strengthen work in Shimla. A reconstruction campaign for Uttarkashi Waste Banks achieved 75% of its ₹6 lakh goal, while another campaign on Give was launched to raise ₹25 lakh for a dedicated Disaster Response Fund, enabling rapid action during future emergencies. Adding to these milestones, the YUWA program was recognised among the Top 10 global nominees for the ESD Okayama Award 2025, out of 346 submissions from 81 countries, reflecting global confidence in Waste Warriors' youth-led model of waste and climate action.

Disaster Relief Fund For Uttarakhand and Himachal Pradesh

Relentless rains and floods have devastated Uttarakhand and Himachal Pradesh, homes swept away, bridges broken, villages cut off. In Dehradun, Sahastradhara, Uttarkashi, and Manali, even our Waste Warriors team members have lost homes and belongings. One colleague, Rajendra, narrowly escaped when the building he stepped out of collapsed minutes later. Many families are still missing.

For over a decade, Waste Warriors has worked with these mountain communities. Now, we're standing with them, providing emergency food, clean water, medicines, and supplies to help families rebuild.

The Himalayas have given us peace and beauty; it's time we stand up for it's people.

We are setting up a Disaster Relief Fund to ensure we can swiftly mobilise our teams and resources whenever similar emergencies arise in the future. Your support will enable us to provide critical relief supplies, including (but not limited to) clothing, footwear, toiletries, medical kits, bags, mattresses, water-filtration kits, dry ration items such as roasted chana and milk powder, cooked meal distribution, sanitary kits, umbrellas, raincoats, drinking-water tanks, candles, solar lights, mosquito repellents, and batteries.

**SCAN THE QR CODE OR CLICK ON
THE BUTTON BELOW TO DONATE**

DONATE 



We are grateful to all our donors and individual funders for supporting our mission and envisioning a cleaner Himalaya together.



Alliances and Consortiums

Blessed to be a part of this community. Together, we are able to achieve much more than we ever could on our own.



Government Collaborations

Thankful to all our government stakeholders for their guidance, support and commitment!





Waste Warriors believes waste is a global problem requiring local action. Since our founding over 13 years ago, we've accelerated our mission from one location to 10 project locations across the Indian Himalayan Region. In the states of Uttarakhand and Himachal Pradesh, we are building inclusive, participatory and sustainable approaches to solving the waste crisis. We are fully committed to serving our community tirelessly, both in their daily lives and during moments of crisis. Through these efforts, we are reshaping perspectives and shaping a collective future - a future of meaningful change.

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