



WASTE WARRIORS
REDUCE RE-USE RECYCLE

**SOLVING
THE WASTE CRISIS
IN THE INDIAN HIMALAYAS
Q3 Report FY 2025-26**

In Loving Memory (1969 - 2026)

Sundas ji, the First Warrior of Doni, Uttarkashi

Sundas ji was a Green Worker (Safai Saathi) with us for nearly five years, serving the remote village of Doni inside the Govind Wildlife Sanctuary.

Every day, he carried 50-60 kilograms of waste across steep, unforgiving terrain. His work ensured that waste was collected and managed, instead of being burnt or dumped in the village. His work quietly protected forests, water sources, and the dignity of his community.

In December 2025, Sundas ji passed away suddenly, leaving behind his wife and five young children. His loss is immeasurable.

We remember Sundas ji not only for the work he did, but for the responsibility he carried, often unseen, often unacknowledged. This quarterly report is dedicated to his loving memory.



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Recent snow may make headlines, but this season across the Himalayas, snow has been increasingly delayed and erratic. Snowless winters are becoming the new normal. It is a stark sign of growing pressure on fragile mountain systems - where waste, tourism, and climate impacts collide.”

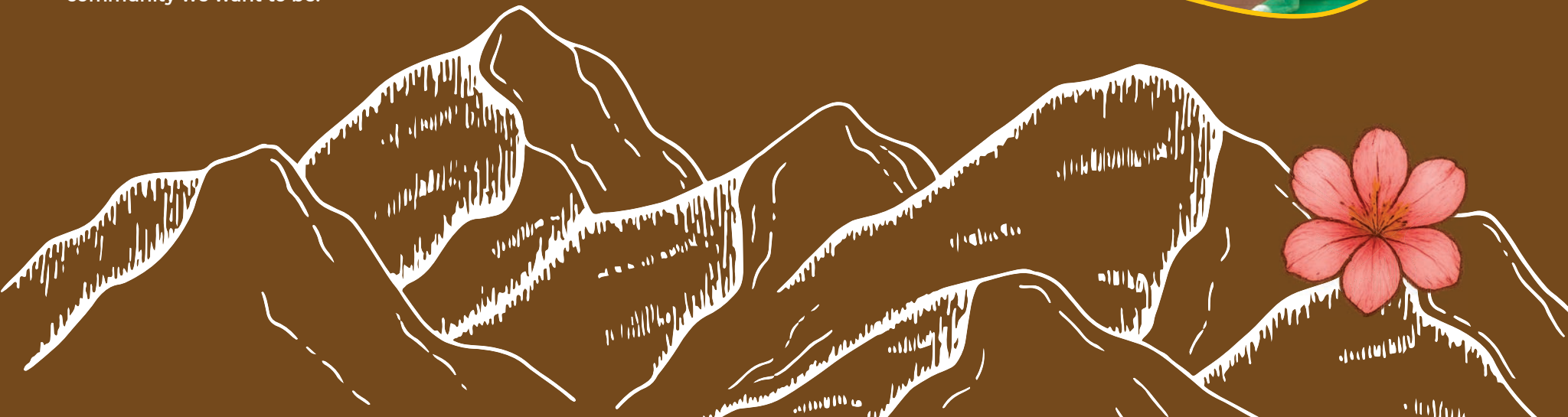
Source: BBC

The strongest people are not those who show strength in front of us but those who win battles we know nothing about
- Jonathan Harnisch

FOREWORD

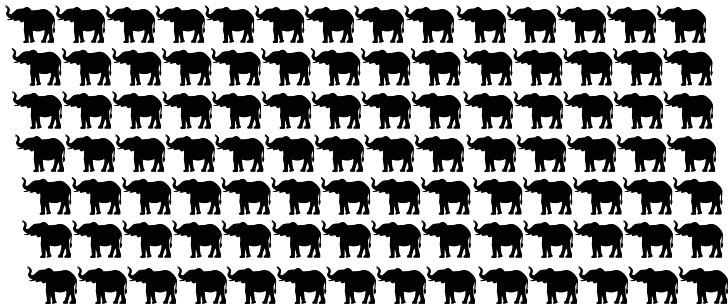
My name is Suraj, and I began my journey with Waste Warriors as a Green Worker in Dharamshala. Following in my grandmother's footsteps, I learned waste collection and segregation street by street. Over time, this work changed how I see myself and my role in the community. In recent months, I have taken on the role of an Executive, guiding others and supporting residents to manage waste at home. This transition was not easy. In the beginning, I was quiet and unsure of myself, and it took courage to start speaking to people. With the support of my team, I learned to lead conversations, take responsibility, and grow into this role.

This quarter, it gives me purpose to see my community become more aware and caring toward our mountains. Respecting frontline workers and keeping our city clean for future generations are small, everyday actions, but together, they help us become the kind of community we want to be.



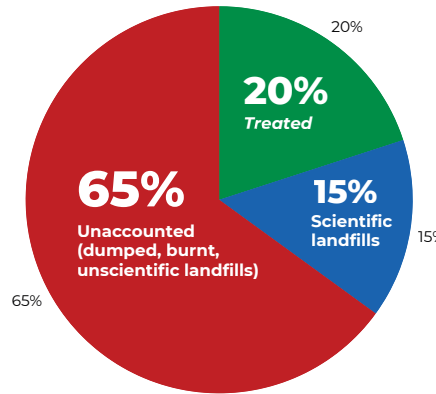
THE PROBLEM

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.**



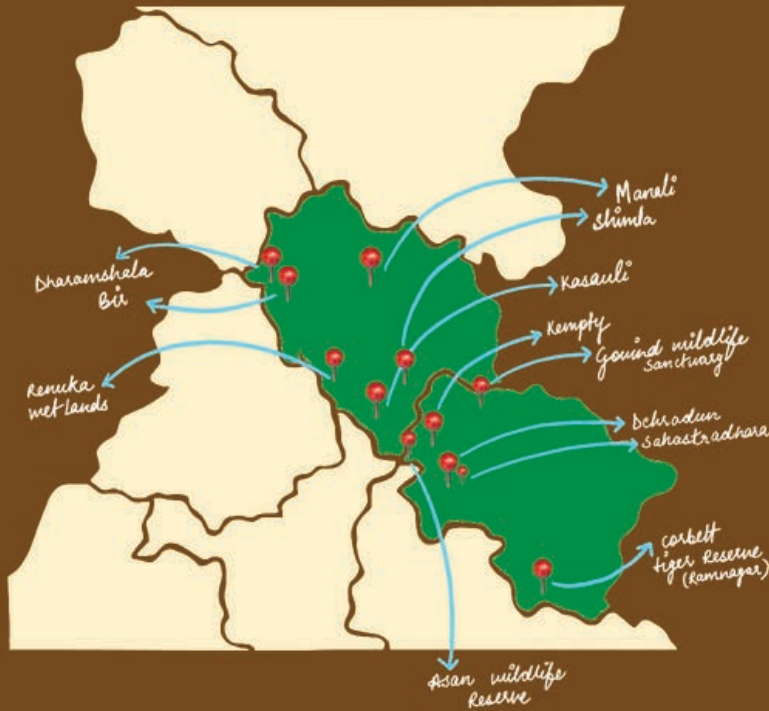
Plastic-clogged drains and streams contribute to **severe flash floods.**



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.

OUR FOOTPRINT & WORK



12

Locations across Himachal Pradesh and Uttarkhand

230+

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

As tourism rebounded and post-monsoon operations stabilised, Q3 focused on moving from participation to resilient, community-owned waste management systems. While mountain waste management often faces awareness fatigue and dependence on external facilitation, this quarter marked a clear shift toward local ownership and self-sufficiency. Across several locations, Panchayats, youth groups, and community institutions independently led operations, enforcement, and engagement. At the same time, the quarter highlighted the need to scale and stabilise these local gains, as rising tourism, climate variability, and funding fluctuations continue to test system durability.

Key Highlights

Financial Sustainability

- In Sheela Butehad Panchayat, Dharamshala, decentralised operations reached a key milestone as the Panchayat independently managed the system, **achieving 100% user fee collection** with technical support from the team.
- Across multiple Panchayats, replacing Ecopreneur supervisors with local **Community Resource Persons improved fee collection**, reporting accuracy, and financial oversight.
- In Kempton, extension of the Panchayat MoU with a 10% increase in tender value and receipt of the **first RDF disposal certification (22 MT)** strengthened cost recovery and regulatory compliance.
- The onboarding of Vardhman Industries **converted multi-layered plastic (MLP) from a freight cost into a ₹5/kg revenue stream**, addressing a long-standing economic challenge in low-value plastics at Material Recovery Facility, Harrawala.
- In Dehradun, Waste Warriors collected **8,740 Kg of cloth and trained SHGs to transform some of it into upcycled products** that generated ₹12,000 in sales.

Operational Efficiency

- In Shahstradhara following flood-related disruptions, **operations were restored to 459 active units, achieving 8% growth in December alone**, reflecting improved system resilience.
- Nearly **519 MT of waste was diverted** during the quarter through improved segregation, restored collection routes, and strengthened MRF linkages.
- At the Dharamshala Urban MRF, **184.16 MT of dry waste was processed, including 30.67 MT co-processed in cement plants**, ensuring non-recyclable waste remained out of landfills.
- Wet waste processing capacity expanded through new shredders and composting systems supported, producing nearly **3,000 kg of organic compost** and reducing landfill dependency. Along with this novel solutions like our **“Gau Seva Campaign” in Kasauli and Bir** have supported the collection and management of wet waste.

Community Engagement & Governance

- In Bir, community members and the Pradhan independently identified a littering violation and imposed a ₹2,000 fine, reflecting **growing local accountability without NGO intervention**.
- In Solang Village, the **Mahila Mandal led village-level waste advocacy**, storage improvements, and community mobilisation, shifting from participation to ownership.
- In Govind Wildlife Sanctuary, **30 trekking companies committed to bringing back trail waste**, moving from reactive clean-ups to preventive, shared responsibility models.
- Through Project YUWA, **over 1,850 students from 60+ schools and colleges led waste and climate actions**, marking a shift from participation to leadership.
- Programs functioned as youth leadership pipelines, identifying **100+ motivated changemakers in Dehradun** for deeper movement-building.
- Student-led initiatives such as **EcoRiwayaat in Dharamshala (an annual youth fest) planned and executed by 40 students**, demonstrated growing youth ownership.
- New initiatives like **Green Jobs Round-ups and NextGen Talks engaged 250+ youth**, reframing sustainability as an aspirational career pathway.

Enabling Systems for Scale

- **Insight reports and structured review discussions were introduced**, linking behavioural indicators (segregation, fee payment) with operational and financial performance.
- The effectiveness of the decentralised **MRF model was demonstrated to 24 Junior Engineers from the Urban Development Department**, supporting replication potential.
- **Rural sustainability roadmaps for Sahastradhara and Dharamshala Rural projects** helped teams assess long-term risks, system readiness, and pathways to scale.
- Digital systems and process standardisation **strengthened data-backed planning, transparency, and organisational readiness for growth.**

Capturing the Reduced GHG Emissions Through Improved Solid Waste Management

On December 9, 2025, in collaboration with the ClimateRISE Alliance, we hosted a webinar titled “Capturing Reduced GHG Emissions Through Improved Solid Waste Management”, which brought together 130 participants from across sectors. Drawing from our FY 2024–25 interventions, we highlighted a major gap that most global carbon-counting tools are not designed to address. While efforts such as composting and recycling are doing significant good for the environment, their true impact often goes unrecorded because existing measurement systems are poorly suited to contextual challenges, especially the unique realities of India and its remote mountain regions.

Experts from CSIR-NEERI and the FSWP called for a shift toward India-specific frameworks. It was a vital, solutions-oriented conversation about ensuring that the efforts on ground finally shows up in our global climate goals.

WASTE WARRIORS
REDUCE RE-USE RECYCLE

Webinar on

In Collaboration with **climateRISE alliance**

Capturing the Reduced GHG Emissions through Improved Solid Waste Management

Insights from our work in the Indian Himalayan Region (IHR)

Speakers: Corinne Trommsdorff, Paloma Gengoux, Dr. Sunil Kumar, Ajish Kapil | WWS, Diksha Rana, Nihar Bhatia | WWS

Click on the image or scan the QR to watch the webinar.



From Dump to Climate Action
The Waste Transformation Journey with Waste Warriors

Reducing GHG emissions through improved waste management

Unmanaged Waste
• Dumping • Burning • Littering
• High GHG Emissions • Pollution
• Resource Loss

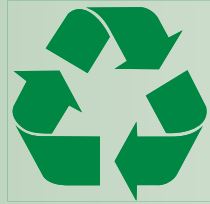
Managed Waste
• Cleaner systems • Lower emissions
• Healthier planet

Waste Warriors enabled diversion of **1,854* MT of solid waste** from unscientific open dumping & burning in Himachal Pradesh & Uttarakhand


*Measurement period: Apr 2024 to Mar 2025 (FY 2024-25)


OUR IMPACT

Environmental Impact



519+ MT
waste diverted
in Q3 FY 2025-26


36 MT
carbon
emissions
reduced


14 MT
methane
emissions
reduced


1323
trees
saved


13
hectares of
landfill saved

Social Impact



93,000+
people engaged to
adopt responsible
waste management
practices


10,761
days of dignified
livelihood


714
active
citizens


39,216
environment-positive
climate actions

Governance Impact



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


5
material recovery
facilities
operational


23
waste
banks
operational


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

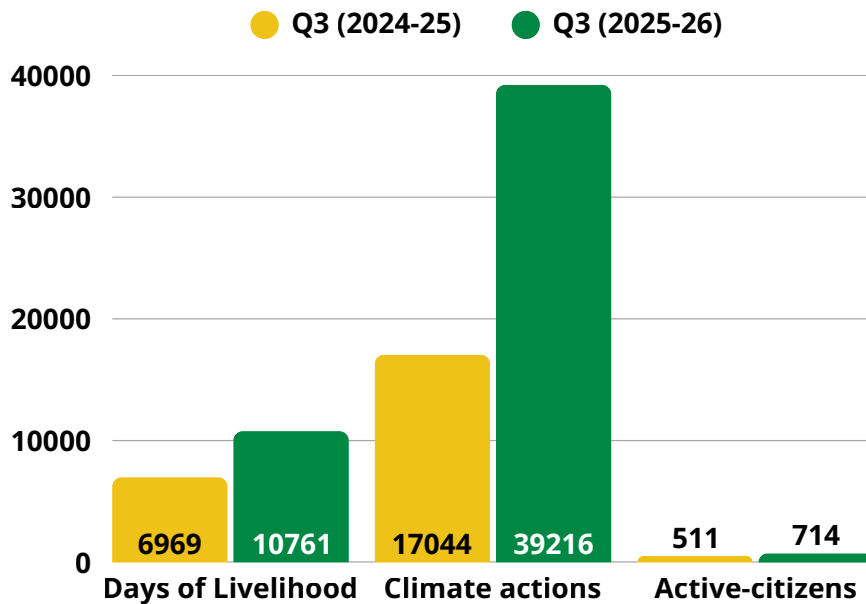


Women green workers transport waste sacks across the steep and narrow terrains of Uttarkashi.

Q3 Growth Trends (FY '24-'25 vs FY '25-'26)

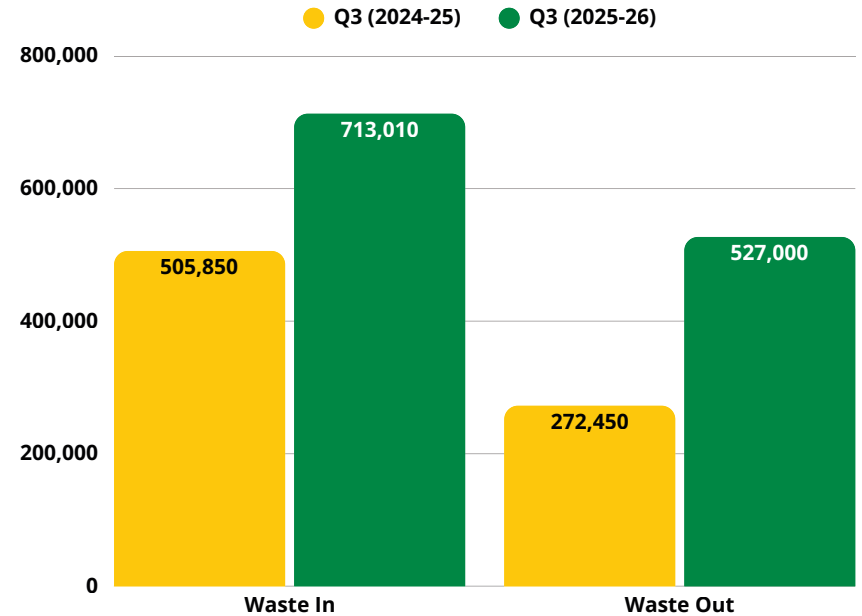
Growth in Livelihood Days, Climate actions, and Active Citizens

Days of Livelihood rose by 35% with new projects, additional Green Workers, improved safety. Climate actions increased by 56% due to expanded interventions and projects, while active citizens grew 28% through focused community engagement and word-of-mouth trust-building.



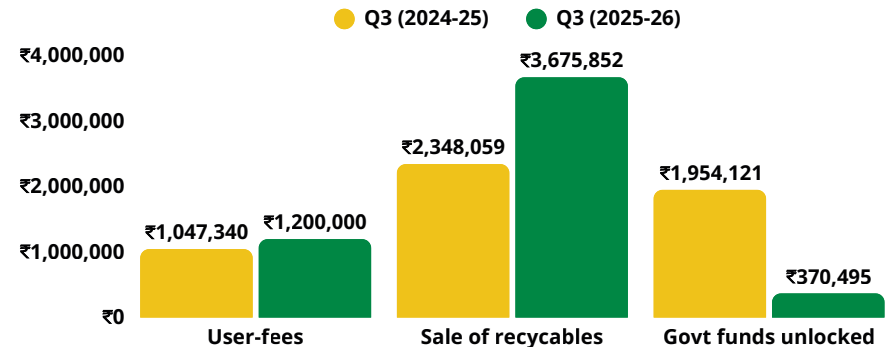
Growth in Waste Collection and Recycling Efficiency

Waste collected rose by 29% due to new and expanded projects (e.g., Corbett, Sahastadhara), while waste sent to recyclers increased by 48% thanks to better segregation efficiency and more waste workers.



Revenue Trends and Fund Flow: Q2 Insights

User-fee collection rose 13% 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 36%, due to better SOR rates and new vendor identification. There was a 81% 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

New Panchayat onboarded · SWM at Almora Lit. Festival · Community exposure visits to MRF

This quarter in Corbett, the focus shifted toward deepening community ownership alongside steady expansion. The Paryavaran Sakhi model entered a new Gram Panchayat, Lachampur Theri, extending door-to-door waste collection to more households. What made this expansion distinct was that the baseline survey was led by Paryavaran Sakhis themselves, who initiated patient conversations with residents, shared experiences from neighbouring villages, and built early trust around organised waste collection. Beyond village systems, partnerships expanded into the Kumaon region, with Waste Warriors managing waste at the Almora Literature Festival alongside Green Hills Trust. Community engagement also grew through exposure visits, as residents visited the Ringora Waste Bank and Himmatpur Dotiyal MRF, seeing first-hand how collective effort keeps waste out of rivers and forests.



Paryavaran Sakhis with a newly onboarded household in the new panchayat



At the Almora Lit Fest, the team sparked conversations and awareness with patrons

Story of Change

***“When was the last time you appeared for a written exam?”
“Bachpan ki yaad aa gai,” Indu ji smiled after completing her
written exam at the Waste Warriors Corbett office.***

For years, the Paryavaran Sakhi Model has created change through everyday work in villages around Corbett. This time, the change was quieter and more personal. When invited to step forward as potential leaders, seven Sakhis chose to try. They wrote exams, faced interviews, and confronted fears many had carried since childhood. The process did more than identify future leaders - it shifted how these women saw themselves, building confidence to lead others and carry this work forward.



Sahastradhara, Dehradun

On-site composting introduced · New Sakhis onboarded · Post-flood recovery with growth

In Dhanoula, the absence of a wet waste solution had kept shops and hotels outside the system. With support from the Gram Panchayat, the installation of an in-vessel composter changed that. Paryavaran Sakhis now process all wet waste into chemical-free compost, producing nearly 3,000 kg and strengthening source segregation. Alongside operational gains, exposure visits encouraged women from Self-Help Groups to step forward, leading to the onboarding of four new Sakhis and expansion into a new Panchayat. After floods disrupted operations earlier in the quarter, Sakhis played a key role in rebuilding trust and restoring services. By December, 85 units were newly onboarded or reactivated, signalling recovery driven by local ownership.



Sakhis and the community proudly display their bag after onboarding 85 units in December alone.



A Sakhi proudly showcases her composting process.



Story of Change

Parmeshwari Devi moved to Dehradun eight years ago and was troubled by the growing tourist waste littering roads and riverbanks. Motivated to act, she joined Waste Warriors as a Paryavaran Sakhi after being introduced to the work by her husband and seeing the e-loader operations at the centre.

Within a month, she learned to operate the compactor, producing four to five bales of plastic each day while segregating 60–65 kg of waste. Her dedication quickly earned recognition from her family and community. Cheerful and collaborative by nature, Parmeshwari inspires her peers and now plans to learn four-wheeler driving to expand her role—showing how opportunity, skill, and determination can transform livelihoods and strengthen community-led environmental change.

Kempty, Mussoorie

MoU extended • First RDF certification • Segregation awareness and tourist pledges

The MoU for waste collection and processing in Siya and Banglow Ki Kandi Panchayats was extended for one year, with a 10% increase in tender value, strengthening financial stability and government support. This quarter, the project received its first RDF disposal certificate, with 22 MT of waste processed over two months, marking a key step toward zero dumping and improved regulatory compliance. Alongside these operational milestones, the Dustbin Mascot campaign strengthened awareness around segregation, kitchen waste, and cleanliness, while tourists were encouraged to take an anti-littering pledge, reinforcing responsible tourism alongside system strengthening.

Sustained on-ground impact by Waste Warriors led the Zilla Panchayat, Tehri Garhwal, to initiate district-level monitoring of all Plastic Waste Management Units (PWMUs), strengthening institutional accountability.

Govind Wildlife Sanctuary, Uttarkashi

30 trekking firms onboarded • 275 students engaged • Waste transport scaled

As the trekking season began in Govind, the Trek and Trails campaign marked a shift from reactive clean-ups to preventive action. Around 30 trekking companies committed to bringing trail waste back to the Dehradun MRF, sharing responsibility for protecting fragile mountain landscapes. Youth engagement complemented these efforts, with 75 students in Naitwar participating in sustainable menstrual health sessions and 200 students joining a district-led clean-up in Sankri with support from the Forest Department. Operational strength also improved as segregated dry waste from the Saur Waste Bank was transported to Dehradun, with each trip carrying nearly three tonnes, strengthening continuity in scientific processing.



Our Dustbin Mascot captures the curiosity of tourists and shopkeepers at Kempty Falls.

Story of Change

“Maine yeh kaam liya hai, toh ise poora karke dikhaunga.”

When Banglow ki Kandi Panchayat introduced a user fee system, Banarsi ji initially lacked confidence. Entrusted by the Panchayat to collect monthly user fees, he was hesitant to approach households in the early days. With guidance from Waste Warriors and the trust placed in him by the Swachhta Samiti, he slowly grew into the role. Today, Banarsi ji collects and submits fees regularly, even through changes in Panchayat leadership. His consistency and accountability have helped stabilise the system, demonstrating how individual ownership can sustain decentralised waste management over time.



Kasauli

336 tourists pledge against littering • Innovative wet waste campaign • Eco-art battle

In Kasauli, there was strong demand for wet waste collection, while consistent segregation at source remained a challenge. To address this, the team designed the Gau Seva Campaign, which linked kitchen waste segregation to food donations for cows. This innovative approach created a spiritual and emotional connection that improved participation among residents for the campaign. Alongside this, 336 tourists signed anti-littering pledges, and students from Classes VIII to XII participated in a segregation-focused eco-art competition, reinforcing shared responsibility across households, youth, and visitors.



Student paintings from the Eco-art Battle.



Wet waste no more via the Gau Seva Campaign.

Manali

95% segregation achieved • Waste Bank operational • 110 women adopt reusable sanitary pads

In Solang, the quarter focused on health-led behaviour change and recovery after floods. Through two menstrual hygiene workshops involving an Anganwadi worker, 74% of 143 households shifted from disposable sanitary pads to reusable alternatives. Tourist engagement was also reimagined, with static stalls replaced by mela-inspired game zones that encouraged playful but meaningful conversations on segregation and sustainable choices. And for the first time, 51 IIM Sirmour students and 3 faculty members engaged in on-trail waste awareness, culminating in a visit to the newly-operational Waste Bank where waste was analysed, and the Manali model was explored through a field-based learning experience.



Menstrual hygiene workshop with residents.

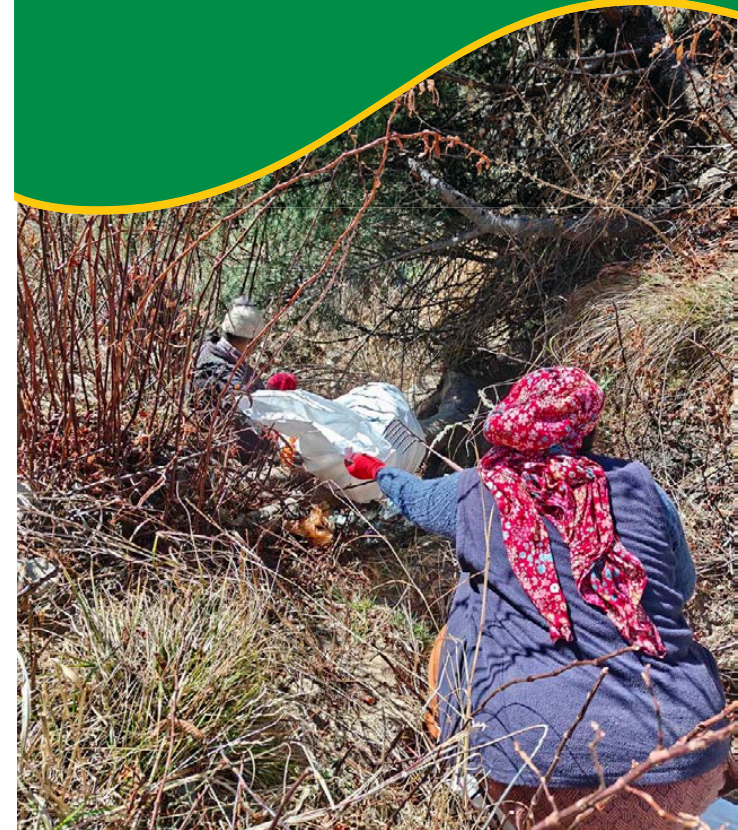


Tourist awareness through waste-themed games.

Story of Change

“We didn’t even know there was a dumpsite or the harm it does to our village.”

Nisha ji, a member of the Solang village Mahila Mandal, stood before a blackened dump site, her hands stained from clearing ash and half-melted plastic packets. For years, burning waste had felt like a hidden solution, until the health risks became impossible to ignore. That lived experience became a turning point. Nisha ji and 17 other women chose to act, determined to protect their community from further harm. As one member called out, **“Please come with us, we need to clean another dump site,”** the shift was clear. This was no longer an outsider’s project - it had become a collective responsibility, led by the community itself.



Shimla

PWMU upgraded • Baseline survey of 1807 units • 800 KG waste collected with 100% segregation

In Shimla, work this quarter focused on building strong foundations for system rollout. Baseline surveys and community engagement were conducted across Malyana, Naldhera, Baldiya, and Kufri Panchayats, covering 1,807 households. Reaching scattered settlements across steep terrain required the team to travel entirely on foot, underscoring the effort behind comprehensive data collection. Alongside surveys, household-level awareness sessions provided practical guidance on wet and dry waste segregation. The sentiment below reveals the often unseen human effort behind each data point. Field teams operate in remote areas with limited facilities, maintaining consistent household engagement and awareness-building on responsible waste management.

Between community resistance, personal fear, and at times, hunger, the field teaches us that courage and resilience are the most precious currency.

- Waste Warriors Field Member

To strengthen on-ground operations, the Plastic Waste Management Unit was upgraded through roof extensions, area expansion, floor levelling, washroom facilities, and new office and kitchen spaces- enabling smoother waste movement and higher processing capacity under one roof. In December, these efforts culminated in a shared milestone as the community achieved 100% segregation, successfully processing 800 kg of segregated waste, reflecting both community ownership and team perseverance.



Monitoring segregated waste.



Baseline survey with residents.

Story of Change

“It feels good that I am managing my household waste the right way.”

In Ward No. 5, Chamiana, one resident's decision marked a meaningful shift in how waste is managed at home. Like many households, she earlier depended on plastic bags for daily waste, a convenient habit that made consistent segregation difficult. After conversations with the Waste Warriors' monitoring team, she chose to change this routine. She invested and bought a two-compartment dustbin to separate wet and dry waste at source. This simple step made waste management easier, more organized, and sustainable for her household. Her action reflects a growing sense of responsibility in the community, showing how small, personal choices can lead to lasting habits.



Dehradun Model Ward Program and MRF

6.2 MT cloth collected • MLP monetised at ₹5/kg • Institutional confidence strengthened

This quarter in Dehradun focused on recovery, outreach, and system strengthening. A six-day cloth collection drive gathered 6.2 MT of textiles, with 500 kg redistributed to families in need. At the Harrawala MRF, a long-standing challenge with multi-layered and low-value plastics was addressed by onboarding Vardhman Industries, converting MLP from a freight cost into a ₹5/kg revenue stream. Public engagement continued through waste management at Rajpur Nature Fest, where 534 kg of waste was handled while engaging 1,250 participants, alongside an e-waste upcycling workshop with 150 students. The quarter also saw 24 Junior Engineers and Kasauli Zila Panchayat stakeholders visit the MRF, strengthening confidence in decentralised waste management systems.

Dharamshala Urban MRF

184.16 MT dry waste diverted • Low-value plastic co-processed • Financial discipline strengthened

Over the quarter, the Dharamshala Urban MRF strengthened its role in keeping waste out of landfills and recovering value from difficult waste streams. A total of 184.16 MT of dry waste was diverted, with 139.73 MT sent for recycling, 20.29 MT of multi-layered plastic processed, and 30.67 MT of non-recyclable waste responsibly co-processed in authorised cement plants. To support long-term sustainability, the project invested in a new baler machine, improving storage and operational efficiency, while the initiation of Profit & Loss analysis brought greater financial clarity and enabled more data-driven decision-making.



Managing waste and engaging visitors at Rajpur Nature Fest



Story of Change

“Cleanliness is not someone else’s job. When the community takes responsibility, real and lasting change happens.”

Mr. Trilok Pathania from Dharamkot village of Dharamshala reflects the shift toward community-led waste management. Earlier, waste management in the village depended largely on external support, with limited and inconsistent participation from residents. When Waste Warriors initiated clean-up drives, Mr. Pathania joined as a volunteer. Through regular involvement, he began encouraging friends and neighbours to take responsibility for their surroundings. Over time, he stepped into a leadership role, organising a monthly clean-up on the 30th of every month. Today, these drives are fully community-led, with Waste Warriors providing only logistical support. The result has been cleaner public spaces, sustained participation, and a growing sense of shared ownership.

Dharamshala Rural

Sheela Butehad Panchayat joins cluster • 100% user fee collected • 60% processing cost recovered

Sheela Butehad Panchayat joined the Rural Dharamshala cluster, achieving 100% user fee collection and 60% processing cost recovery - a milestone reflecting strong financial sustainability built through coordination, monitoring, and lessons from past experience. From the outset, residents took active ownership by enrolling households, managing contractors, and appointing a local supervisor to oversee operations. Wet waste management solutions were introduced across all seven Panchayats, with a rapid digester and a local piggery managing up to 300 kg daily. Replacing Ecopreneur-led supervision with two Community Resource Persons strengthened fee collection, reporting accuracy, and overall financial oversight - demonstrating that rural sustainability deepens when both operations and finances are led by the community.

Bir Billing

Community-led enforcement action • On-site composting piloted • 150 participants trained

In December 2025, a littering complaint in Ward 5 of Bir Panchayat reflected a clear shift toward community-led accountability. A tenant was identified for illegal dumping, fined ₹2,000, and enrolled in the dry waste management system. Notably, the complaint was raised by community members in coordination with the Pradhan and Panchayat, signalling growing local ownership of enforcement. Alongside this, Waste Warriors partnered with Dreamation Resort to pilot on-site wet and dry waste management. As part of a six-month trial, an 18-kg Daily Dump Composter was installed, supported by technical guidance and dry waste collection through the local entrepreneurship model, with an estimated 1.8 MT of wet waste to be processed. Community engagement continued through awareness workshops across Bir, Gunehar, Keori, and Chogan, engaging over 150 students and women on segregation, composting, and menstrual health.



Exposure visit of Sheela Butehad residents to the Material Recovery Facility

Story of Change

“Every task, when done with honesty, becomes a source of respect and pride.”

Sahil, a green worker in Dharamshala, is a quiet but powerful example of what dignity in waste management looks like. Working at our segregation center, he handles wet waste with a level of consistency and care that's hard to ignore. From day one, Sahil starts every morning the same way: showing up on time, tidying up his work area, and getting right to it. He isn't a man of many words, but his work ethic says everything. Through his steady presence and integrity, Sahil has become a silent motivator for those around him, showing that dignity in waste management is built not through recognition, but through sincerity, discipline, and showing up every day.



Renuka Fair

10.2 MT waste managed • Disposables reduced at source • Wetlands pollution prevented

During the Renuka Fair, within the eco-sensitive Renuka Wetlands, a structured waste management system was implemented across all fixed and movable stalls, covering pre-fair setup, fair days, and post-fair dismantling. Around 500 waste bags were distributed, with nightly collections ensuring consistent waste pickup from vendors. Of the 10.2 MT collected, 5.6 MT was safely processed, reducing littering and pressure on the lake. Daily follow-ups encouraged vendors to store waste responsibly, while focused IEC with students and enforcement by authorities helped reduce disposable use. Early-morning interventions at the snan ghats prevented undergarment dumping, keeping the waste in the ghat area around the Renuka Lake close to zero.

Upcycling Textile Waste, Dehradun

8.3 MT cloth diverted • ₹12,000 market earnings • SHG livelihoods strengthened

This quarter, 10 cloth collection drives diverted 8,370 kg of textile waste from landfills. To link waste recovery with livelihoods, an advanced-level workshop trained 12 selected SHG women, focusing on skill refinement and market readiness. The training was directly connected to market exposure, enabling participants to earn ₹12,000 through product sales. Continued facilitation supported confidence-building, skill application, and exploration of sustainable income opportunities from textile waste within local communities.

Trek and Trails

18 trekking agencies onboarded • 1000 Kg waste collected

During the New Year season, the Trek It Back campaign was launched in Sankri, Uttarakhand, and Dharamshala, Himachal Pradesh, to prevent trekking waste from entering sensitive mountain ecosystems. The team engaged with 40+ trekking agencies, of which 18 committed to actively collecting and safely storing waste from popular trails, including Kedarkantha. As a result, nearly 1 MT of waste was secured at the Sankri Waste Bank and will be transported to the Harrawala MRF for scientific processing.

Swachhata Express, Dehradun

197 households engaged • 22.7 MT dry waste diverted • 52% increase in onboarding

Between April and December, Swachhata Express expanded from 348 to 530 households, a 52% increase, with 197 households (163 new and 34 reactivated) joining the system, signalling growing community trust in doorstep dry waste collection. This growth translated into stronger environmental impact, with 22,701 kg of dry waste diverted, including a 96% increase in monthly collection volumes between June and October. Notably, waste capture peaked two months after the highest onboarding phase, indicating that households stabilise their disposal behaviour over time, allowing the system to absorb higher waste volumes as compliance deepens. This pattern demonstrates the elasticity and reliability of decentralised waste systems when services become a routine community utility.



Vendors switch from single use to leaf plates at the fair



Residents hand over waste to the Swachhata Express

YUWA

60 institutions • 1,800+ students • 100+ Changemakers

This quarter, Project YUWA scaled from program delivery to movement-building. Flagship initiatives such as Green Gurukul and Ecolympics engaged over 1,800 students across 60+ institutions, with young people leading climate action on their campuses. This cycle also strengthened the changemaker pipeline, identifying 100+ motivated youth now stepping into deeper leadership roles. New initiatives like Green Jobs Round-ups and NextGen Talks connected 250 youth with industry experts, shifting the narrative from short-term awareness to long-term green career pathways.

“What if one opportunity could change how you see nature, leadership, and yourself? That’s exactly what Ecolympics 2025 did for me.” - Pranjal Kumar Singh, Forest Research Institute

In Dharamshala, YUWA completed a full program cycle across 16 colleges and 6 schools, moving from implementation to consolidation. EcoRiwayaat, the annual ecofest, brought together 500+ participants, with students leading planning and execution - marking a clear transition from one-time events to sustained youth ownership and leadership.



Students, Interacting with scrap dealers. - Ecolympics 2025

Story of Change

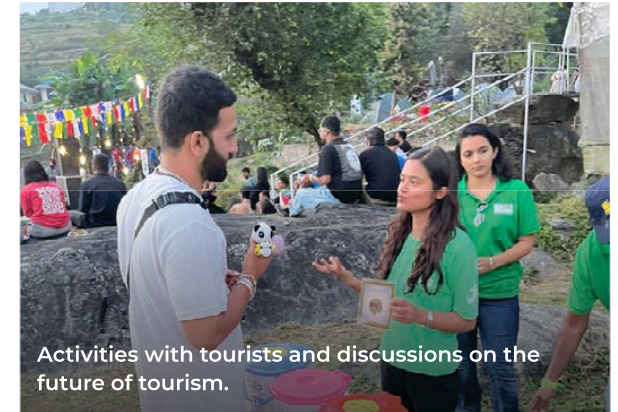
Ecolympics 2025 began with momentum, as 800 students from 24 colleges across Dehradun stepped forward with a shared commitment to environmental action. Midway through the program, a severe cloudburst disrupted the city, flooding hostels, suspending classes, and threatening to derail the effort. Instead of retreating, the YUWA team leaned in. Through consistent mentorship and regular check-ins, they supported students to stay engaged during uncertainty. The result was a powerful demonstration of resilience: participants completed over 3,000 climate actions, diverting 3.2 metric tonnes of waste despite the disruption. What emerged from the chaos a moment when climate action shifted from awareness to a sustained habit, led by youth themselves.



Ecodaan, Dharamshala Urban

344 climate actions adopted • 418 participants engaged • Responsible tourism promoted

This quarter, Ecodaan strengthened ground-level behaviour change, with 418 participants completing over 340 climate actions, signalling that sustainable habits are beginning to take root. Engagement deepened through initiatives such as the Eco Karnival and a collaboration with Tape A Tale at the 4M Event, which opened honest conversations with over 100 participants on responsible tourism and everyday sustainability. More importantly, leadership has begun to shift to the community. Residents now organise monthly clean-ups independently, and hostels have started launching their own green initiatives. As Waste Warriors steps back into a facilitating role, Ecodaan is evolving from a campaign into a local sustainability ritual, embedded in daily practice rather than driven by external intervention.



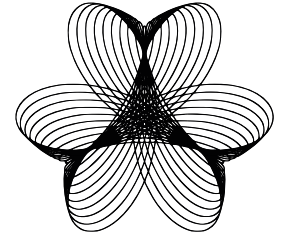
Activities with tourists and discussions on the future of tourism.



Next time you're on the Shoghi Road, keep an eye out for our new Banka Shimla installation, built from 235kg of recovered waste. It's more than just a photo op; it's a conversation starter that's helping us take sustainability onto the streets.

People & Processes

ENABLING SYSTEMS FOR SCALE



Monitoring & Evaluation - Data-driven insights for rural impact

This quarter, we strengthened evidence-based decision making by introducing Insight Reports and structured team discussions, supported by shared dashboards. We built L&D and baseline survey dashboards to track capacity building and community starting conditions. New thematic areas were integrated into systems early, GHG emissions were calculated and shared, and a data literacy program was launched. Sustainability roadmaps for Sahastradhara and Dharamshala Rural guided long-term impact planning.

Digital Transformation - Streamlining systems and strengthening impact

This quarter, digital innovation advanced operational efficiency across Waste Warriors. SARAL centralized procurement, formalizing requisitions, approvals, and tracking, making processes transparent, traceable, and audit ready. WATI streamlined WhatsApp communication for internal teams, tourists, and stakeholders, ensuring timely, consistent, system-driven messaging. SATHI 2.0 integrated guest house bookings, and vehicle management, reducing manual coordination and data silos. Alongside utilizing Zoho Bigin for donor tracking, we also launched Waste Watch app for real time reporting of dumping and burning issues. These systems strengthened internal workflows, improved campaign responsiveness, and created a scalable foundation for efficient, coordinated program management across projects.

Learning & Development - Building a culture of continuous learning

This quarter, our people practices focused on well-being, learning, and institutional understanding. Through our Foundations Day Celebrations – Working Toward Well-being, over 230 Warriors connected across sports days, cultural evenings, and reflection spaces, strengthening trust and team spirit. Select members also engaged in leadership learning through ILSS–EWLP and the NIRMAN Youth Leadership Program. Teams deepened their understanding of governance through GPDP sessions, Satat Sammelan, and the CPPF launch. Practical trainings in data literacy, circular economy, wetlands management, health and safety, and field leadership further built confidence and skills, enabling teams to collaborate better and deliver stronger community impact.

Partnerships & Preparedness - Building resilience for scale

This quarter focused on diversifying fundraising while strengthening institutional partnerships. Community-led initiatives such as Google Give, AltEff in Dehradun, and Wandertales at IHC Delhi helped reach new, values-aligned individual donors and expanded visibility beyond traditional philanthropy. Institutional support was reinforced with Publicis Groupe returning for a second year and HDFC Bank enabling expansion into Nagrota, ensuring program continuity. In parallel, conversations with The Himalayan Club, Tata Trusts, Rich Products, Let It Count, Yokohama, Diageo, and HNI champions progressed into proposal stages. Together, these efforts strengthened partner confidence, broadened the donor base sustainably.

FOUNDATIONS DAY CELEBRATIONS

On 16-17 November, Waste Warriors marked 13 years of work in the Indian Himalayan Region, reflecting on the organisation's growth and the people who have sustained it. The day brought together 230 team members, up from 153 the previous year, highlighting the scale and strength of the organisation today. With Safarnama as a children's-themed celebration for the Foundations Day, a school-style assembly brought together the Warriors, followed by friendly competitions, sports, dances, shared hobbies, and small trophies - creating space for joy, teamwork, and connection. The gathering recognised the efforts of teams working across difficult terrain and through a challenging monsoon season, while reinforcing a shared culture of care, resilience, and accountability. Rather than a celebration alone, the day served as a moment to pause, acknowledge collective effort, and reaffirm the values that continue to guide the organisation's work.



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 12 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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