Background

Alaap works at the intersection of forest degradation and poverty. It creates income opportunities through creating forests. Using the Miyawaki technique, it plants dense forests of native species of trees which grow faster and are more resilient against adverse local conditions, such as forest fires, droughts, and floods. Alaap Climate Action Fellowship is an immersive three-month program from May to July for young, aspiring Indian youth to understand, innovate, and take action towards finding solutions to global issues like deforestation and climate change. The thematic area is Livelihoods Generation and Biodiversity Conservation. My primary role was to work on this program, help them decide on deliverables and prepare necessary documents.

My Project

My role was to act as a coordinator between the 7 Alaap Climate Action Fellows and the Alaap team. I also spoke to village Panchayat members and district administration for various legal and bureaucratic assistance that was needed. I helped them plan events, and managed logistics for workshops and homestays during this time.

Sustainable Development Goals linked to the project

- No Poverty
- Climate Action
- Life on Land

My Project:

- Festival on World Environment Day
- Forest walks for change leaders
- Miyawaki workshop
- Coordination and support to Alaap Climate Action Fellowship
- Booklet on history of forestry in Uttarakhand
- Coordinating and supporting Alaap Climate Action Fellowship

Originally from Muzaffarnagar, Uttar Pradesh, Aayush currently resides with his family in Sahibabad, close to the East of Delhi. He completed a postgraduate degree in Social Entrepreneurship from Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai. During his studies, he has worked with organizations like Stanford University, Teach India, Snehalya, and Global Giving. Aayush loves to learn languages, do programming and read about the social and economic issues pertaining to the development organizations and their work in India. When he’s free, he loves to spend time with his friends and family.
Background

Snow Leopard Conservancy, India Trust serves rural communities in Ladakh in many capacities, such as local livelihood enhancement, responsible eco-tourism, livestock protection, and wildlife research and I primarily served their educational program. My work involved revamping experiential, locally relevant, ecosystem curriculum to be facilitated in rural schools. I also designed and integrated a biodiversity park and medicinal garden into this curriculum.

My Project

My project took the form of a sustainable partnership between SLC-IT and the Government High School at Matho. I designed an interactive, educational biodiversity park which will continue to develop with the investment of school faculty, students, and SLC-IT. I collaborated with my colleagues to conduct monthly, thematic, experiential workshops with Matho students, covering topics about Ladakh’s ecosystem. I also created a comprehensive booklet of experiential, place-based lesson plans and activities, as well as illustrated handouts about Ladakh’s biodiversity. The theme of my project was inspired by Ladakh’s magnificent biodiversity, with the elusive snow leopard, affectionately nicknamed the “Ghost of the Mountains,” as the apex.

Sustainable Development Goals linked to the project

Alexandra Barteldt
Snow Leopard Conservancy, India Trust
Jammu and Kashmir
EDUCATION

Alexandra is from Mooresville, North Carolina. Alexandra volunteered at a home for survivors of domestic violence in Jaipur, interned at an artist colony for at-risk youth of Dakar, facilitated asset-based community development in rural Kenya, volunteered in a mental health hospital in Guatemala, and was the Resident Director for the National Security Language Initiative for Youth in Pune. She is eager to continue to inspire people to take better care of our environment.
Background

Quest Alliance works to address critical gaps between education and skill training, by equipping youth with 21st century skills and enabling self-learning. Their Anandshala program creates a joyful learning environment in government schools to ensure that students stay in school, are engaged in activities, and learn. Working in collaboration with students and teachers, Anandshala builds ownership of the local community for their school. My area of work was to capture emerging ideas and good practices of students, teachers, and education functionaries in the school. My responsibility also included developing a communication strategy to share these stories with different stakeholders and a larger audience through social media, digital media, and physical storytelling platforms.

My Project

I created a digital repository of stories, where the team could share new stories and also see existing ones. I have used social media spaces to regularize the process of sharing. I encouraged the community to tell their stories of change, by showing them various videos which displayed storytelling as a methodology. As a result, students and teachers were motivated to share their success at different forums. I also came up with a storybook on Bal Sansad, the elected students’ parliament of government middle school in Samastipur, Bihar. We called this “Stories of School-Going Change Makers”.

Sustainable Development Goals linked to the project

- Quality Education (4)
- Gender Equality (5)

- 45 stories for digital repository
- 1 story booklet on Bal Sansad
- 6 short videos created

Ananya Saha

Quest Alliance
Bihar
EDUCATION

Ananya hails from Bolpur (Santiniketan), West Bengal. She has worked for education, nutrition, and food security of tribal people, and also campaigns for universalization of maternity entitlement of women. She believes in storytelling as a medium of change. The AIF Clinton Fellowship has provided a fit platform for her creative skills and ideas.
Background

Avani’s enterprise is divided into two parts: Kumaon Earthcraft Self-Reliant Cooperative (or Earthcraft), which produces Avani’s textiles, natural dyes, and lifestyle products; and Avani Bio-Energy. My work predominantly focused on the Earthcraft enterprise, which hires locals in the Kumaon region, and provides them with livelihood opportunities in this isolated area of Kumaon. Through social media and marketing, I helped Avani increase its engagement and outreach. I also helped plan the logistical information for two international exhibitions and helped them write their grants, awards, and proposals.

Sustainable Development Goals linked to the project

1. Quality Education
2. Decent Work and Economic Growth
3. Reduced Inequalities

My Project

At Avani, I was a teacher on some days, and on others, I was a social media and marketing expert, photographer, lead writer, or logistical expert. But on most days, I was all five. I completed the application for the International Folk Art Exhibition taking place in Santa Fe, New Mexico – this was my most challenging yet rewarding project.

Application for the International Folk Art Exhibition held at Sante Fe, New Mexico

Avani received the Craft Brand of the Year Award, through my application

In 2017, Anecia, originally from Shoreline, Washington, first travelled to India where she attended her spring semester at the University of Hyderabad. During her time here, the issue of farmers’ suicides in India touched her deeply. Anecia is passionate about uplifting women and girls, and was the co-President of a mentorship program for young girls called TeenAngel Society Inc.

Uttarakhand is ranked as one of the top states for rural migration. The main reasons for migration, is a desire for better livelihood/employment, education and medical facilities. Avani has helped combat these issues by providing locals with an economic incentive to remain in their villages. My work helped contribute to this mission by using various forms of communication to share their work with different outlets.
My Project

When I arrived, the Alternative Child Care program was completing its 5th year. As such, they were looking to scale up their project to more districts while also improving upon and implementing new practices in their current intervention sites. I conducted a desk review of legalization in India concerning alternative forms of child care with an emphasis on identifying gaps in legislation, policies, and government scheme. This resulted in a paper comparing the UN Guidelines for Alternative Care, MoWCD Model Guidelines for Foster Career 2016, and The Jharkhand Guidelines for Foster Care. I also worked with the team to develop the concept note, study design and questionnaires to assess community perceptions of alternative care. The final deliverable was looking at other countries’ approach to foster care and kinship with an emphasis on exportable practices to the Indian context. I was also required to work on bonded labour, sexual and reproductive rights, and food security initiatives.

Background

Srijan Foundation works in Jharkhand with women and children, struggling with poverty, social exclusion and gender injustice. I was primarily in a research and supportive role for the Alternative Child Care program. I was tasked with using a comparative approach to evaluate the Alternative Child Care program and offer best practices drawn from a myriad of contexts. These were to be evaluated and then implemented with an emphasis on aftercare programs and family strengthening. I was also tasked with designing a study to understand community perceptions of different forms of alternative care which would then be incorporated as Srijan’s attempts to scale up and extend its Alternative Child Care program.
Background

Last July, the Government of Delhi launched the Happiness Curriculum, an initiative aimed at instilling within government schools a new educational paradigm based on life skills development and moral introspection. Its goal is to foster a happier, more self-reliant generation of students inheriting the India of tomorrow. Dream a Dream, my host organization, became its partner and anchor. I was invited to dive headlong into the curriculum as it unfolded in classrooms and households across New Delhi to direct, produce, shoot, and edit a film that explores, interprets, and conveys stories of positive impact mushrooming throughout the city.

My Project

My film has been used to explain life skills to future government partners, and will premiere at the one-year anniversary of the launch of the Happiness Curriculum. It will mark one year of imparting life skills education to cultivate happier, more self-sustaining young people. My film is a mirror for the curriculum, a reflection of its impact and achievements. Its structure stems from the framework of the curriculum itself: each chapter of the film explores a component of the curriculum through the story of a young person whose life has changed in some way as a result of their participation and engagement. My main focus was ensuring that every chapter in be filmed and presented in a way that maintains the dignity of those involved, including placing the camera at the eye level of the children and using their voices to structure the narrative.

Christopher, originally from Salt Lake City, Utah, graduated magna-cum-laude from the University of Southern California, earning degrees in Film & Television Production and Cognitive Science, and a Minor in Advertising. He believes in the partnership between film technologies and social advocacy to create positive change. He has led service projects in Thailand, conducted research in China, produced media in Las Vegas, studied in the Czech Republic, and developed advocacy campaigns in Japan.
Background

Video Volunteers empowers marginalized people to tell their stories and create change campaigns. VV advocates for thousands of voices to unite and to raise a cry for justice. My project at VV involved capacity-building in three major areas: impact mapping, advocacy, and strategic partnerships. My work in data analysis and impact mapping helped the organization to better quantify and explain how it has created change in its target communities. In the area of advocacy, I contributed action-oriented research for our media campaigns on forced evictions and the Right to Education (RtE) Act, as well as provided occasional analysis for our field survey program. I also managed content-sharing partnerships between VV and two external organizations.

My Project

I spent the largest part of my time at Video Volunteers developing internal reports on the impacts achieved by my organization’s network of citizen-journalists, known as community correspondents. Over the course of the Fellowship, I created six comprehensive impact reports on issues ranging from water and education to human trafficking and forced evictions, as well as a full report on all impacts achieved in West Bengal and Jharkhand over a three-year period. The second part of my project involved advocacy-driven research for VV’s thematic campaigns. My work in this area primarily addressed forced evictions, one of VV’s target areas. Third, I helped manage VV’s relationships with two external organizations - Act4Goa an initiative that seeks to promote citizens’ empowerment in Goa; Land Conflict Watch, a Delhi-based data journalism project that documents land disputes, property rights violations, and forced evictions.

Connor Staggs

Video Volunteers
Goa
LIVELIHOODS

Connor is from Birmingham, Alabama. He is a graduate of Princeton University with a degree in Politics and a minor in South Asian Studies, and has worked as an intern at the Center for Experimental Social Sciences in Pune. Connor is eager to serve full-time in the social development field in India. After the Fellowship, he hopes to attend graduate school to pursue a career in research and international development.
Background

I worked with Nizamuddin Urban Renewal Initiative in Delhi’s historically rich Nizamuddin Basti to design and field test an alternative, locally-relevant and heritage-focused curriculum for primary school students. As a public-private partnership between the Aga Khan Trust for Culture and a variety of government bodies in Delhi, the Nizamuddin Urban Renewal Initiative utilizes the conservation of built heritage like Humayun’s Tomb as well as intangible heritage like art, food and religious traditions to promote widespread development in the fields of infrastructure, public health, livelihoods, sanitation, and education. I utilized these conservation projects and the Nizamuddin region’s heritage to design lessons that cultivate the students’ understanding of these projects and respect for their community. Simultaneously, these lessons have ensured that the students also learn about and practice nationally prescribed subjects like Math, Hindi and Environmental Science.

My Project

I researched the Nizamuddin community and the many conservation projects and community initiatives that my organization spearheaded. By talking to community members, attending site visits, and working with anyone from community health workers to conservation architects, I was able to identify the prominent learning opportunities for students in the community. As a result, I have compiled a final curriculum document that future teachers in Nizamuddin and other communities can continue to utilize. I also created interactive worksheets and lessons for young visitors to Sunder Nursery (one of my organization’s major conservation projects) so that they can independently learn about and explore the Nursery as well as the Nizamuddin region’s heritage. Lastly, I created lessons and taught English as a second language to community workers from my organization who were interested in learning English.

Sustainable Development Goals linked to the project

4 QUALITY EDUCATION

Disseminated curriculum to educators and schools, as a model for heritage-focused methods

Designed and implemented a curriculum document for a local primary school

Originally from Bedford, New Hampshire, Daniel completed an undergraduate degree in international relations and Asian studies from Saint Joseph’s University, Pennsylvania. In between semesters, he studied politics, economics and Hindi in Pune and Jaipur, India. In addition, he worked to assist the resettlement of refugees in the greater Boston area. He also prepared youth in under-resourced middle schools for the Model United Nations conferences in Philadelphia. The AIF Clinton Fellowship helped Daniel expand his knowledge of South Asian languages and Indian society, and gain more experience working with youth.
Background

Broadleaf Health and Education Alliance, an international NGO, has a mission to empower disadvantaged and vulnerable rural communities in the Darjeeling district by providing access to health knowledge and educational opportunities. To deliver access to high-quality healthcare and education, Broadleaf created the Comprehensive Health and Hygiene Improvement Program (CHHIP). CHHIP is a community-led innovative approach where School Health Activists (SHAs) deliver school health for rural primary schools.

My Project

My project focused on conducting Community Needs Assessments in CHHIP. My role was to create a set of questionnaires, work collaboratively with SHAs to execute the needs assessments, collect data, and determine the key findings. Through collaboration with the SHAs and community members such as teachers, farmers, village leaders, shop keepers, and parents, we were able to identify the strengths, resources, and challenges rural communities face in improving community health and education.

The primary outcome of my project was a detailed analysis of the community's assets and resources to further understand the needs of six CHHIP partnering communities. Community integration was crucial to the success of my project, and field work for me was more than having candid conversations over tea with community members. It consisted of working alongside the local farmers, attending weddings, religious events, and even playing football with the youth. Community integration and learning the language allowed me to build strong relationships and become a member of the community. Understanding the language enhanced my experience as community members felt more comfortable being able to communicate in their native language. Co-facilitating with the SHAs to execute the questionnaires and assessments allowed us to have meaningful conversations about the community's assets and challenges.

Sustainable Development Goals

linked to the project

1. Good Health and Well-Being
2. Quality Education

Diana Noemi Chavez

Broadleaf Health and Education Alliance
West Bengal
PUBLIC HEALTH

“The Power of Community Integration”

“Diana has empowered me to use my voice to speak up for the needs of my students and community members.”
Nima Choden Tamang, School Health Activist

Developed a detailed analysis of assets, resources, and challenges of 6 communities
Built capacities of three School Health Activists

Diana hails from Chicago, Illinois. After graduating in BA, Sociology with a concentration in Law, Crime and Criminology, and a minor in Psychology, she served in Thailand as a United States Peace Corps volunteer. She has also interned for an NGO in Chicago’s jail, and helped incarcerated students to obtain their General Equivalency Diploma by improving their academic skills. Through the AIF Clinton Fellowship, Diana was able to use her previous experiences to bring about a change in the communities she served.
Background

BEMPU Health works with the vision for all children to live full and healthy lives. To achieve this, it provides innovative, life-saving healthcare products to children in low-resource areas. At BEMPU, I was a part of the public health/clinical affairs team. My project involved developing the monthly BEMPU newsletter to share with our supporters and leads, so that they can be aware of latest news and impact of BEMPU on neonatal health globally. Another aspect of my project was developing a framework for BEMPU’s impact assessment. I also created surveys to assess knowledge, attitudes, and practices on topics related to neonatal hypothermia. I supported publication efforts of BEMPU clinical studies by drafting, editing, and submitting manuscripts to public health journals and conducted data analysis of ongoing studies in addition to helping design upcoming studies.

My Project

With the help of product designers, the CEO, and the clinical team, I developed the monthly BEMPU newsletter. These were sent through Mailchimp to about 2,500 supporters per month and I made 6 newsletters in total. As BEMPU currently has 4 devices in the market with varying health outcomes, indicators and measures are necessary to assess their impact. Using such indicators, we either created or adapted formulae to determine lives saved, lives improved, number of babies reached, and number of facilities, etc. using BEMPU products. I was able to compile impact metrics for the months of January through May 2019. For the publication efforts, I conducted literature reviews related to neonatal hypothermia to include in manuscripts, in addition to editing the manuscripts for intellectual content. With the help of the public health team and the clinical lead at BEMPU, we decided which medical journals are most appropriate to submit the manuscripts to and five manuscripts were sent out for publication during my fellowship.

Kembo Kashil
Matungulu
BEMPU Health
Karnataka
PUBLIC HEALTH

Sustainable Development Goals
linked to the project

3. Good Health and Well-being

From Rockyville, Maryland, Kembo is a recent graduate of Boston University. She has lived in Cameroon and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and these experiences fostered her passion for global health, international development and cultural diplomacy. She has contributed to causes like refugee mental health, work against gender-based violence, and for sexual and reproductive health of adolescent girls and women. In the summer of 2017, Kembo participated in her university’s service learning trip to India to learn about healthcare disparities the country faces, which drew her to pursue the AIF Clinton Fellowship.
Background

Udyogini provides skill training and related business services to rural women to promote women’s empowerment. I supported an action research project on a new homestay initiative that Udyogini is hoping to start in Rajasthan and expand to its other project areas as a livelihood option for rural women. The homestay program will give both rural communities and visitors an opportunity to learn about and understand other cultures, while promoting sustainable and ethical tourism. Following the pilot research, I helped to plan the program’s inaugural season, which is scheduled to begin later this year.

My Project

After arriving in Khandar, I started my project by researching homestay tourism’s current status in India, and its potential to serve as a sustainable livelihood for rural people. In addition to conducting a literature review, I reached out to homestay operators around India to find out more about the logistics of starting a homestay program, and to hoteliers near Khandar to learn about the area’s existing tourism context. After compiling what I learned during research, I put this information to use by working with a local family that was interested in opening a homestay. I helped the family in the process of getting their home ready to host guests and setting up an online presence. The family was able to open their homestay and host several guests, which I assisted with by designing itineraries and communicating with English speakers. We encountered various resource constraints while implementing this project, which slowed progress but provided valuable knowledge for considering future expansion. To complete the fellowship, I moved to Udyogini’s head office in Delhi, where I focused on writing a report on learnings from the research period and planning for the program’s expansion.

Sustainable Development Goals linked to the project

5 GENDER EQUALITY

10 REDUCED INEQUALITIES

Beyond Tigers: Community-Centric Tourism

Set up a pilot homestay in Khandar

16 hoteliers and homestay operators interviewed

Born and raised in New York City, Kieran has a passion for urbanism and sustainability. He graduated from Cornell University with a degree in Urban and Regional Studies. In his third year of college, Kieran studied abroad in Kotagiri, Tamil Nadu, where he researched human-gaur conflict in the rapidly urbanizing Nilgiris district. During his time there, he learned about the AIF Clinton Fellowship. The Fellowship gave him a chance to go back to India and help to bridge the divide between nature and people.
Background

Jagori focuses on building a society where there is no discrimination against people on the basis of gender, caste and religion. I worked with the health team. My main role was to help the health team set up a system to measure the change that is created by the awareness sessions conducted by Jagori and to help with documentation and reporting of the year-round activities. In order to setup a monitoring system to measure the work of the health team, I initially tried to observe and document Jagori’s activities in the health project. I also interacted with women in the villages to understand what could be the biggest factors influencing their health. Post that I decided to document health profiles of most socio-economically vulnerable women in the village and work with them on anemia awareness. I was actively involved in the school sessions on gender inequality, and sexual and reproductive health. I helped in organizing and documenting the sex education sessions organized in various government schools by Jagori.

My Project

I helped the organization develop a monitoring tool to measure awareness. Impact of awareness can be difficult to showcase, so I first established a cause and effect relation for awareness that the organization was creating. We realized that anemia is the main cause for poor health of women. Our target group was married women. Among all the women we wanted to work with, we found that almost all of them were border line anemic, and so the cause for our awareness was established (Anemia). We decided to measure the effect of awareness six months later. The health team will measure the hemoglobin levels among women and see the difference from the time when we first screened them. In the first screening, we were not able to conduct a lab test to measure anemia, but identified anemic women based on their physical characteristics.

Sustainable Development Goals linked to the project

3 Good Health and Well-being
5 Gender Equality
10 Reduced Inequalities

Status of Anemia Among Women

- 51% Not Anemic
- 27% Severely Anemic
- 22% Border Line Anemic

Health profile prepared for 80 women

A civil engineer by education, Mahir is from Ahmedabad, Gujarat. After his Bachelor’s, he served as the National Vice President of AISEC in Nepal for a year. He also worked to strengthen government schools in remote tribal areas of Odisha. Mahir wishes to understand and work on equal access to healthcare for all.

Strong Women: Iron in Will plus Iron in Food

Mahir Bhatt

Jagori Rural Charitable Trust
Himachal Pradesh
PUBLIC HEALTH
Driving Gender-Centric Energy Access in Rural India

Molly Ann Morrison
Frontier Markets
Rajasthan
LIVELIHOODS

“Frontier Markets helps rural communities achieve ‘Saral Jeevan’, or ‘Easy Life’ by providing energy access solutions. The Frontier Markets’ model is built around women leaders because they are a bankable investment with the potential to drive deep social change.”

My Project

By bringing together the government, private sector, and non-profit sector and occupying a space that is both within and between these different sectors, Frontier Markets creates a cooperative strategy. Frontier Markets’ strategic model uses technology and smart processes to streamline feedback mechanisms, increase productivity, and reduce costs. Understanding the strategy from an operational perspective allows Frontier Markets to truly drive meaningful change. While creating an operation model manual for Frontier Markets, I had the opportunity to understand Frontier Markets’ strategy at a deep level, which has given me an insight into new opportunities for leveraging resources. My work as a Fellow helped me understand how to help Frontier Markets position itself to external stakeholders and how to better focus energy and resources on the tasks that only Frontier Markets can do.

Sustainable Development Goals linked to the project

- Gender Equality (5)
- Affordable and Clean Energy (7)
- Decent Work and Economic Growth (8)

Background

Frontier Markets is a social enterprise that mobilizes a network of women entrepreneurs to ensure rural households can access sustainable, durable, and high-value solar products. It has developed a network of 5,000 rural entrepreneurs (2,500 of whom are women), which has reached 5,00,000 households in Rajasthan. I was brought on board to help Frontier Markets document its processes in a standardized way and reflect on the model’s strengths and weaknesses. This was an exciting opportunity for me to understand the core of the organization strategy and how it leverages staff members, technology, and partnerships to reach households that other companies are not able to. I had the chance to interact with every staff member at Frontier Markets and see how their role contributes to the company’s overall mission.

Molly is from Grand Junction, Colorado. She has extensive experience in fundraising, project management, and NGO communications, acquired during her work in West Africa and East Asia. Recently, she spent three years in China, developing project proposals and managing donor reporting for Save the Children’s China Program in the areas of disaster risk reduction and inclusive education.
Background

Lokadrusti has been working since 1988 to create an enabling environment for social change. Lokadrusti’s intervention is centered around children, women, youth, and members from socially and economically disadvantaged, distress-migration affected communities in western Odisha. I worked on developing a strategy to identify and link the community Learning Resource Center (LRC) with available resources so that these LRCs continue to be a community-driven center, with optimal utilization of the limited resources. In the process of working on my project, I used a bottom-up approach to select the most appropriate strategy design. My work and nature of engagement were collaborative and had a direct and indirect relationship with various community-led institutions, stakeholders and village level institutions.

My Project

While working on my project I used various tools and techniques for research. I used interviews, field visits, and participatory rural appraisal to understand the context. The implementation part was done in close coordination and teamwork with the field staff and the community. We organized community groups and committees in different villages, partnerships and collaboration with the village institutions – Community Resource Center Management Committee, Youth Clubs, and Panchayati Raj Institution in Nuapada block. For external resource mobilization, networking and partnership with other groups are in process with close coordination with the project supervisor.

Sustainable Development Goals linked to the project

4 QUALITY EDUCATION
10 REDUCED INEQUALITIES

“I will teach my grandmother to read and write in Odiya this new year.”
Rashmita Bag, Class VII student

Hailing from Samastipur, Bihar, Niket has completed his education from Jamia Milia Islamia, New Delhi. He is especially interested to work with marginalized communities. One of his goals is to work for an equitable and accessible public education system. His research has been published in the Journal of Innovation for Inclusive Development. Niket is also passionate about street theatre.

AIF AMERICAN INDIA FOUNDATION
Background

Bhasha combines research with ground-level intervention by providing a “voice” to adivasi and denotified nomadic tribes who have been on the margins of Indian society. Bhasha’s Adivasi Academy Library is unique for its multi-disciplinary and multi-lingual collections on issues relating to tribal, adivasi, and indigenous peoples across India. My project was to develop a five-year plan to revitalize the Adivasi Academy Library which currently contains over 50,000 books across 35 different disciplines. When the Adivasi Academy began, the library was a vibrant space with many researchers and casual visitors. Over the years, the number of people who visit has declined. This project seeks to chart a way forward for the library by creating a plan for developing outreach amongst the local community to better engage with them and improve educational outcomes, as well as identify and reach out to various institutions and researchers in India and abroad, who are interested in adivasi, tribal and indigenous issues.

My Project

While the library was established in a rural area to address the problem of ‘readers without books’, the problem that the library faces now is that of ‘books without readers’. My work involved critically analyzing the library’s existing collections and proposing a roadmap for development of the library over the coming years. This would help the library tackle not only the challenges that libraries everywhere face due to declining readership and the challenges posed by technology, but also specific challenges faced by adivasi and tribal communities of not being represented in knowledge creation and chronicling processes.

Originally from Mumbai, Maharashtra, Nishant received his L.L.M. degree from Harvard Law School. He was a founding member of Project 39-A at the National Law University, Delhi which assisted death-row inmates to secure legal representation. He has written about criminal justice issues and the impact of colonialism on tribal groups in India. The AIF Clinton Fellowship has given him a platform to work with adivasi communities, and to understand the impact of law on marginalized people.
Background

Prajwala Sangham’s background and expertise in art and theatre-based approaches provide for an interactive, engaging, and deeply-impactful learning experience that stays with the participants long after the workshop has ended. For each of the beneficiary group, Prajwala identifies the critical needs and uses the power of storytelling to explore key issues and develop leadership skills to empower the narratives of participants and to overcome limitations from within and society itself. My project overall was facilitating the creation of long-term value for Prajwala Sangham, which involved a variety of tasks.

My Project

I wrote reports for stakeholders, where I documented entire workshop processes. I composed key organizational documents, such as the employee handbook, anti-harassment policy, and child protection policy. I helped to create opportunities for the consistent growth of the organization. This included identifying potential opportunities for partnerships and funding, applying for grants, and restructuring our sales pitch for our clients to understand our work. Another huge part of my project involved strategic visioning and planning. With the main leadership, I designed a strategic plan that fitted with Prajwala’s time frame and resources. By clarifying Prajwala’s overall strategy, I helped to ensure that all the relevant team members and stakeholders were working towards common and shared objectives that align with our own core values.

Born and raised in Berkeley, California, Nithya has a double major in Public Science Health and Psychology. She, along with a research partner, conducted action research to assess the social impact of Awaaz.De, a Gujarati-based social enterprise that created a mobile communication platform for other organizations in the development sector. They travelled to three Indian states, visited over 20 communities, and conducted 55 interviews over the span of two months. As an AIF Clinton Fellow, Nithya worked with Prajwala Sangham to expand her professional competence and ate lots of Hyderabadi chicken biryani.
Background

The Chhattisgarh Social Inclusion Program (CSIP) under Samerth started in July 2017 under the aegis of Sightsavers. The CSIP works to ensure that Persons with Disabilities have an environment that is conducive for accessing their rights. The program focuses on economic empowerment as well as improving the participation of PwDs in the mainstream. The program works in Raipur and Mahasamund district of Chhattisgarh where it has identified approximately 4000 PwDs. Under my project, ‘Development of livelihood activity manual for Self Help Groups of Persons with Disabilities’, my work involved understanding the challenges and issues faced by Persons with Disabilities in their livelihood activities and the types of work each person with a different type of disability can perform. I recorded these details, and created an operational manual for livelihood activity.

My Project

Prior to the creation of the manual, there were no guidelines on how work is distributed among the Persons with Disabilities members in the Self Help Group. However, with the manual, these issues were addressed to some extent and it became easier for coordinators in the organization to work with the groups. The groups also did not have a formal linkage to the market; they generated their income through selling of their products only in trade fairs. With the market linkage document, the groups now have the option to explore and link their livelihood activity to different types of market as convenient for them. Along with the manual and market linkage document, there I also created entrepreneurship guidelines for livelihood activities of these groups.
Background

In the past thirty years, the number of artisans has decreased by thirty percent and a lot of art forms are fading. There is an urgent need to re-invest in the artisans to protect our history, culture, and important sources of livelihood. The idea of the India Artisan Movement was conceived in November 2017. The key aspect of this initiative is storytelling. A filmmaker’s role drives the Indian Artisan Movement. It helps the consumers to know their own artisans and their lives. Unless one knows about the artisan’s lives and their art forms, the awareness of Fair Trade will not be very effective. As a filmmaker my role was to travel to different Fair Trade organizations across India to capture the vast art forms and cultures, and the narratives that were unheard of so far.

My Project

I AM is the Indian Artisan Movement for New India, a movement that will bring together the artisans of India on a common platform with citizens, policy makers, bureaucrats, academicians, and corporate employees. The medium of short films being one of the most effective forms of communications has a great impact on the consumers and helps them to be aware of the fair trade products’ value. Through my short films various themes of how a fair trade product is made, to how it travels till the market, to an artisan’s journey through it, were captured. I also used photo narratives to tell stories.

Sustainable Development Goals linked to the project

- Decent work and economic growth
- Reduced inequalities

Shivani Sharma
Fair Trade Forum – India
New Delhi

LIVELIHOODS

Here Lies the Heart of the Craft

Based in Mumbai, Maharashtra, Shivani Sharma is a filmmaker and visual artist. She aims for her stories to explore the human condition. During the third year of her study in B.Sc. Filmmaking from Whistling Woods International, she specialized in Direction. She directed her diploma short film “DOPDI,” an adaptation of Mahashweta Devi’s Draupadi. The film was short-listed as one of the finalists for the 2018 Ca’ Foscari International Short Film Festival in Venice and was screened at the festival in San Servolo. Shivani is also passionate about working against sex trafficking.
Background

The Kattaikkuttu Gurukulam (KKG) is a residential school with 50 students in Tamil Nadu, India. The KKG’s curriculum devotes equal time to formal education and artistic training, providing traditional education as well as training in Kattaikkuttu, a rural theater form practiced in southern India. The KKG has started a small scale on-site organic farming project, with about half of the school’s 7 acres available for food production. My project focused on utilizing the garden space as an outdoor education tool to supplement classroom teaching, allowing students to participate in hands-on learning activities, fostering an understanding of healthy living and environmental sustainability, and increasing production in a holistically sustainable manner.

My Project

By combining traditional educational methods with artistic training and outdoor education, KKG has been able to work with a section of students that is often overlooked. The garden has been used to illustrate measurements in Math class, pollination in Science class, and writing in both English and Tamil. Each student was also given a small area of land to plant themselves, allowing them to learn responsibility, practice independent and critical thinking, and gain self-confidence. In addition to the educational aspect, the garden also allowed the school to reduce its food budget, grow healthier raw products for student and staff consumption, and contribute to a sustainable environment.

Sustainable Development Goals linked to the project

2 ZERO HUNGER
4 QUALITY EDUCATION
12 RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION

From Monona, Wisconsin, Tessa is interested in sustainable food production. Studying Sustainable Development at the University of Oslo International Summer School has piqued her interest in the same – she returned to serve her community as a FoodCorps member. She has worked with children and youth, creating a love for growing and eating healthy food. She has also worked with teachers to incorporate nutrition and garden lessons into curriculum. The AIF Clinton Fellowship gave Tessa the exciting opportunity to take her experiences of outdoor education to a new setting in Southern India.