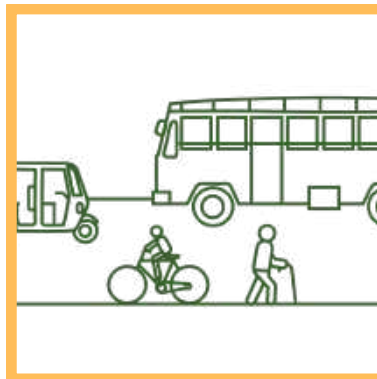




BENGALURU
SUSTAINABILITY
FORUM

Annual Report 2024 -25



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Driving Sustainability Conversations and Collaborations in Bangalore

Over the past year, we have been deeply engaged in fostering meaningful conversations, collaborations, and actions towards a more sustainable future for Bangalore. As a forum dedicated to Bengaluru's sustainable future, we have worked with a diverse community of citizens and organisations to address the pressing challenges our city faces.

Resilience has been a central theme through all that we have done, with our journey being marked by a variety of initiatives that encouraged both learning and action.

Through the Climate Charche series, we facilitated rich engagements on the intersection of climate change, urban planning, and sustainability. Our Library Exhibition on Urban Ecology brought to light the critical importance of our natural surroundings and the urgent need for urban spaces to coexist harmoniously with nature.

From film screenings, to participation in outreach events, all designed to highlight environmental issues, systemic challenges and sustainable solutions, we sparked conversations and inspired action. Additionally, our Small Grants Programme continued to empower local communities and organisations to implement innovative, community-driven projects that made a tangible impact on the ground. Together, these engagements have not only raised awareness but also catalysed collaborations between citizens, organisations, and environmental experts.

As we reflect on the milestones we've achieved, we are reminded of the incredible potential of collective action in tackling issues and building a more resilient and sustainable Bangalore.

This report captures the essence of our efforts over the past year, highlighting the initiatives, learnings, and partnerships that are propelling our city towards a sustainable future. We hope it serves as both a testament to our shared commitment and a call to continue the journey together.

Let's keep pushing forward – the path to sustainability begins with every action we take together.

With gratitude and optimism,
The BSF Team

April 2025

ಕೇಂದ್ರದ ಸಮಾಲೋಚನೆಗಳು

ಸಾರಾಂಶ

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CLIMATE CHARCHE

LECTURE SERIES
CMR UNIVERSITY
School of Architecture

Is a Sustainable City a Smart City?
Mona Iyer
Professor, Faculty of Planning, CMR University

Make us a local resident - designing for sustainable and smart in a global warming world
Vishwanath S
Professor & Director, School of Environmental Studies

The Bird and the Worm: are they both smart? Navigating the top-down & the ground-up in Planning and Design
Anjali Mohan
Professor, Independent Design

The Beauty of Small Densities
Chitra Vishwanath
Professor & Director, School of Architecture, CMR University

Are we alone in the city?
Karthikayan S
Chief Architect, Jagat Architects, Bengaluru

Can Architecture be designed to revolutionize Climate Resilience?
Vidya Ramesh
Associate Professor, School of Architecture, CMR University

8th AUG - 21st SEPT 24
Senior Hall

Climate Charche

Ec Reels

Climate Charche Edition
10 - 13 January, 2025
10 am - 4 pm
Bengaluru

4 Days | 23 Films | 4 Venues

10 January | Mount Carmel College, Vasanth Nagar
11 January | JAIN (Deemed to be University), JC Road
12 January | Gandhi Bhavan, Kumara Krupa Road
13 January | CHRIST (Deemed to be University), Hosur Road

Partners: CMR University, JAIN, CHRIST, etc.

HEAT IN CITIES
Addressing Increasing Heat Stress in Urban India

webinar
4th October
6:30 pm IST

Speakers: Dr. Anurag Kulkarni, Dr. Anurag Kulkarni, Dr. Anurag Kulkarni

Register here

MODELLING FOR CLIMATE AND SUSTAINABILITY
A SYSTEMS THINKING APPROACH

THURSDAY, 27th JUNE 2024
10 am - 5 pm
Rajajinagar, CMR University (In person workshop)

Scan to register

apply by June 16th

If you work in the urban space with an interest in sustainability and are new to systems thinking, then this workshop is for you!

NAVIGATING SUSTAINABILITY WITH LIFE CYCLE ASSESSMENT

Learn about life cycle assessment (LCA) and how it helps evaluate the environmental impact of products, guiding effective sustainability and climate strategies

Who can apply?
Mid-career researchers studying, working, or interested in the fields of sustainability, circular economy, and sustainable development

Date: 27th September 2024 | Timing: 9:30am-5pm
Venue: IIS Bengaluru City Campus, Sadashiva Nagar

Register here

What is in your city's air?
Understanding air quality for community-based solutions

QR code to register

Decoding urban climate with geospatial techniques

Join us for an engaging workshop that delves into the realm of geospatial technology and its transformative impact on urban mapping. Discover how these GEE open-source tools can help us monitor and assess urban characteristics through a climate lens, with a special focus on the dynamic landscape of Bengaluru.

In person workshop

SEED STORIES
FILM SCREENING FOLLOWED BY A PANEL DISCUSSION

Venue - LHI, NCBS
Date - 5th August 2024
Time - 5-7pm

Agriculture for Sustainability and Food & Nutrition Security: Challenges and Solutions

Panelists: Chiranjit Choudhury, Aniket Ag, Sangita Sharma, L.S. Shashidhar, etc.

ENJOY THE BOOK AT ABILITEST

"THESE POTTING TUBS" FACILITATED BY KANISHA SAGAR

10 days | 1:00 pm | 1hr

ENJOY THE BOOK AT ABILITEST

"THE LOST BOOK" FACILITATED BY KANISHA SAGAR

10 days | 2:30 pm | 1hr

URBAN ECOLOGY
A NEW LENS ON BIODIVERSITY

3 OCT - 24 DEC 2024 | IIS, BENGALURU CITY CAMPUS

LIBRARY EXHIBITION

Urban ecology is an emerging field, examining the intricate relationships between cities and biodiversity. Traditionally, ecological research has focused on 'wild' environments with minimal human impact. To study biodiversity, however, the world's most pressing environmental and urbanization challenges must be addressed. Urban ecology addresses these challenges by studying biodiversity in, and for, the city.

Through a series of engaging activities focused on urban biodiversity, the exhibition is curated to introduce a broader audience to the fascinating world of urban ecology.

The library and the exhibition are open to the public. Write to library@iisbnu.in to know more.

CLIMATE CHARCHE

The past year saw us focus on the Climate Charche series - a curated set of engagements on the interlinkages between different aspects of climate change and city systems.

ಕ್ಲೈಮೇಟ್
Climate
Charche
ಚರ್ಚೆ



Objectives of the Climate Charche Series

- To facilitate an understanding on the impact of climate change on the life and livelihoods of the city's populations and its interconnections with existing city systems.
- To look at how communities and groups are adapting to local climate challenges and draw learnings for a wider audience.
- To understand how the city level climate plans lend themselves to strengthening climate adaptation and resilience, at the community level.

The Climate Charche series drew from our learnings following the 2023 BSF Retreat on Urban climate resilience as well as the increasing frequency and intensity of climate disasters, indicating how different city systems cannot be viewed in isolation and that their interlinkages need to be taken into account to inform climate resilience and adaptation strategies.

These engagements for dialogue, deliberation and learning were facilitated across different audience groups in the city, with an aim to exchange knowledge, and identify the role of city level plans in addressing some of the key challenges faced.

In keeping with the interdisciplinary & collaborative approach integral to BSF, collaborations were initiated with domain experts and institutions aligned to the objectives and approach for specific programme elements in the Climate Charche series.





Bengaluru is one of three cities in the country to have a city level **Climate Action Plan**. At the same time, its rapid rate of urbanisation coupled with a warming climate, erratic monsoon, urban flooding and frequent extreme weather events are exacerbating the challenges faced by the urban poor. Existing inequalities increase the exposure and risk for these vulnerable groups, further reducing their ability to cope and recover.

The Climate Charche Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) sought to highlight the intersectionality of climate change and understand the *disproportionate burden of climate challenges faced by the city's vulnerable communities*.

The FGDs offered us a nuanced understanding of the increased vulnerability, due to the impacts of extreme weather events, in the specific context of the community's location and/or occupation.

We also spoke with city-based experts on their perspectives and thoughts on the coping and resilience strategies that can be deployed around these challenges.

105
individuals

8
groups

Climate Charche Focus Group Discussions

Aug 24 - Feb 25

► The larger objective of the FGD process has been to create opportunities for broader discussions on local adaptation and resilience strategies, and their implications for city plans and policy.

► Socratus Collective Wisdom Corporation has been a key knowledge partner and collaborator throughout the process, while other partner organisations—Jan Sahas, CFAR, Stree Jagruti Samithi, SAMA Foundation, AICCTU, and AIDYO—supported the coordination and organisation of discussions with vulnerable groups in the city.



Groups we spoke with:
ASHA workers • Domestic workers
Flood-affected communities
Gig workers • Migrant workers
Pourakarmikas • Street vendors
Women from low-income areas

Scan
for more





Climate Charcha Lecture Series

Aug - Sept 2024

It is increasingly evident that a climate and sustainability lens needs to inform everyone's work and worldview, beyond the confines of only those working in these specific sectors. Additionally, *some professions can have a greater and concerted impact either in the way of contributing to the problems or being a part of the response to creating a resilient society.* One such group we identified to be - architects and urban planners, who can play an integral role in designing better cities and systems. With this in mind we wanted to engage with final year students of architecture who are on the cusp of starting their own professional journeys.

55
students

6
sessions

In collaboration with the faculty of CMR University School of Architecture and Arathi Hanumanthappa, we conceived a 6 part lecture series by resource persons who were domain experts on different aspects of sustainability in the urban space, sensitised students to the interlinkages between various city systems and highlighted the impact of sustainable choices in their chosen profession.

- Students analysed the interaction between the built environment and natural elements, considering factors like climate, wildlife, & human interventions.
- The series ended with an exhibition that presented this curated mapping over the 6 weeks, and a panel discussion with the resource persons.



Through the series, the students mapped a designated area near their college, addressing climate response, water usage, local biodiversity, adaptability and interconnections, as shared with them at the lectures.

Scan
for more





The Climate Charche Open Series was designed to equip different audience groups with essential tools, vocabulary, skills, and resources for climate adaptation and resilience, with a goal to build capacity, share knowledge, and foster discussions on climate change and urban systems among a wide range of stakeholders.



3
workshops

2
webinars

80
participants

Climate Charche Open Series

June - Dec 2024

► The enthusiastic response to the capacity building workshops on Geospatial Decoding, Systems Thinking Modelling, and Life Cycle Assessment—organised in collaboration with CSTEP—underscored a critical skill-gap among working professionals working on different aspects of sustainability and climate change.

► This strong interest highlights the urgent need for opportunities to access new knowledge and tools, enabling professionals to deepen their understanding and enhance their effectiveness in their work.

These engagements took the form of workshops, film screenings and webinars, that explored different facets of climate change and sustainability, in the urban context.

Scan
for more





Conversations on climate and the environment can often seem overwhelming, yet it is important that these discussions become more commonplace in society. *How do we encourage people, especially the youth, to engage with these issues, understand multiple perspectives and listen to the voices which often go unheard?* Films can be a powerful tool in this process, one that can reach minds and hearts!

We partnered with Kriti Film Club to bring their Eco Reels film festival to Bengaluru, adding a climate lens to issues of environment and sustainable development. The goal was to showcase impactful films, spark critical conversations, and encourage college students to think deeply about climate challenges and environmental issues.

The in-person festival was followed by an online edition, making the films and discussion videos accessible to an even wider audience.

800+
attendees

24
films

4
venues

online
&
in-person

Eco Reels Film Festival - the Climate Charche edition

10-13 Jan 2025

➤ The in-person festival took place at four venues across the city, including Mount Carmel College, JAIN University, CHRIST University, and Gandhi Bhavan, ensuring accessibility to diverse audiences—from students to professionals and residents—across different areas of Bengaluru.

➤ The screenings were complemented by interactive discussions, where the audience engaged with invited filmmakers, researchers, practitioners, and community representatives from across the city.



The festival featured national and international films—documentaries, fiction, shorts, and animations—on themes of Nature, People & Power, The Changing Planet, Flora, Fauna & Habitats, and Community Resilience.

YouTube
recording
of discussions



Climate Charche - Learnings & Next steps

Our Climate Charche series of engagements over the last year have reinforced our belief that there is a pressing need for greater clarity and conversation on climate change. While there is currently a lot of discourse around climate, we found it is increasingly important to deconstruct and deliberate on what is being caused by climate change and dissociate what is in fact the result of poor planning and infrastructure.

With the Focus Group Discussions, it became evident that there is a lot more to be done to build the resilience of vulnerable communities, and this involves, primarily, addressing some of the essential services due to them. In the light of climate change, the absence of these basic needs and services disproportionately increases their risk and vulnerabilities.

The Climate Charche Lecture series clearly demonstrated the need for introducing and integrating this perspective on climate, environment, issues of equity, and resource allocation, for students who are at the cusp of starting their professional careers and decision-making. In fact, it is perhaps critical that a sustainability and climate lens & understanding be foregrounded in everyone's mind, even if their chosen profession does not seem directly linked with the issue.

The diverse set of professionals and researchers who attended the Open series reflected the growing demand among individuals working in this and allied sectors to develop their skills with new tools and knowledge; and the imperative to bridge this gap, for greater impact of their work.

The EcoReels Climate Charche film festival attempted to offer a space to reflect, share, deliberate and assimilate some of the larger issues and interlinkages around climate, environment and sustainability. We found that while everyone today has access to a lot of information on climate change, there isn't always adequate conversation and discussion around making the connection to our own lives.

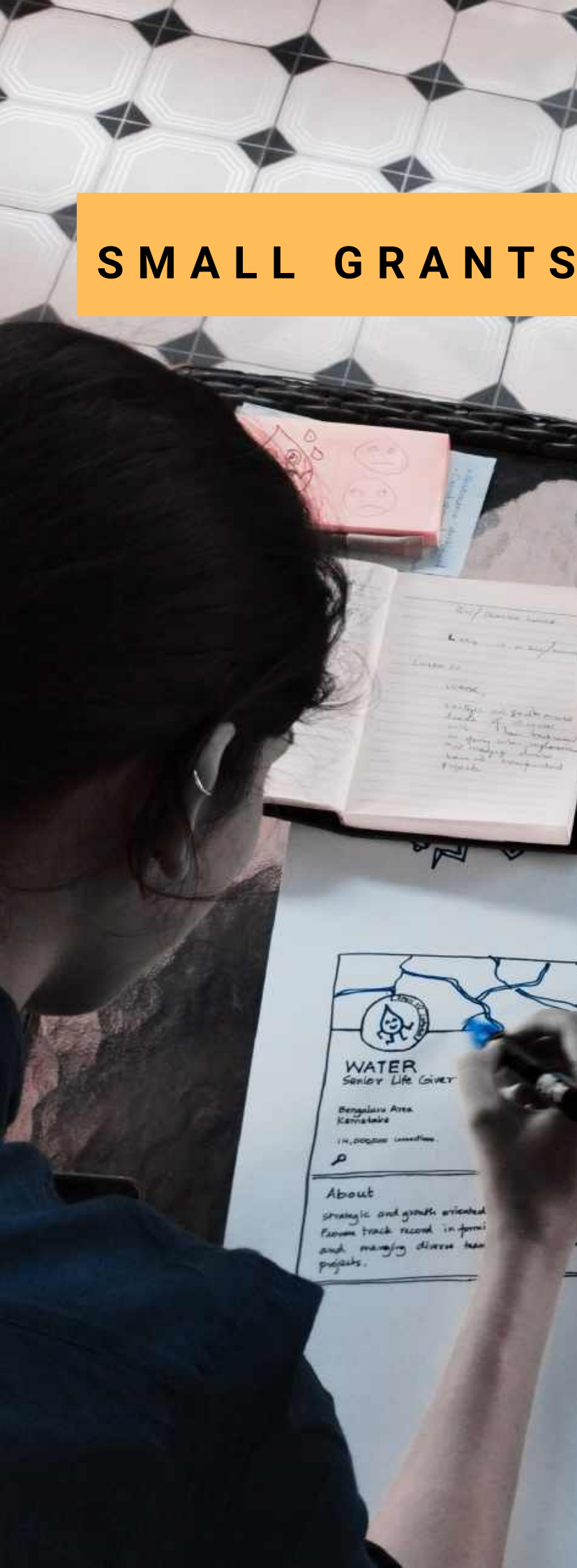
Having piloted these ideas and seen proof of concept for the need for such interventions, we intend to organise convenings and consultations with other groups, individuals and organisations to share and discuss how this could feed into and build on their ongoing work - to take it forward. That would be a key step in the coming year, and we stay committed to holding these conversations together and supporting more detailed exchanges on all these various aspects - to see where and how they can translate on the ground.

SMALL GRANTS PROGRAMME

BSF's Small Grants Programme was started with an aim to enable hyperlocal, innovative, collaborative, on-ground interventions in Bengaluru. Over 6 cohorts and about 40 projects, the SGP now occupies a unique space in Bengaluru, via its micro-focussed and distributed problem-solving approach.

Read on for field updates from the SGP grantees.

The project titles in the upcoming pages are hyperlinked to the respective project pages on our website. For details of all other projects, click [here](#).



Vanasuma

Project Start Date: October 2024

Contact: wcg.bnp@gmail.com



Collaborators:
Wildlife Conservation Group
Dr TPN Hariprasad

VANASUMA is a book, also a field guide in Kannada about the diversity of wild flowering trees in and around Bannerghatta National Park highlighting the importance of trees and inculcating passion and responsibility about the natural environment especially among children, efforts leading to conservation of trees and nature.

The project began in Oct 2024 and since then, significant efforts were made to plan and collect essential data, establishing a strong foundation for the fieldwork. Following the appointment of a Research Assistant and a Technical Assistant, all necessary materials were assembled to compile a comprehensive tree checklist. Data collection commenced, beginning with the systematic marking of trees in the study area.

With February–March being the peak flowering season, we conducted extensive fieldwork with the support of research assistants, technical experts, WCG members, and volunteers. Our primary focus was marking trees along designated transects and collecting data on their characteristics, particularly their flowers.



Key Findings So Far:

- GPS-marked trees: 80
- Photographed flowers: 20
- Overall target: 150

In the coming months, we plan to continue fieldwork while simultaneously working on documentation, utilising the time available after the spring season.



Erythrina subrosa



Greens on Wheels



Project Start Date: November 2024

Contact: greens-on-wheels@plus-spaces.com, rganesan@atree.org

Collaborators:
**ATREE
PLUS**

This project aims to transform Bengaluru's urban green spaces by promoting sustainable gardening practices centered around native plant species. Through public outreach, policy advocacy, and educational tools, we seek to foster a deeper connection between the city's residents and its unique biogeographic heritage.

After the project began in Oct 2024, significant progress has been made. The project will promote plant species from the Dry Deccan landscape around Bangalore city with a focus on pollinator-friendly plant species. The tabulation of all potential native plant species has been completed based on key criteria, including cultural significance, aesthetic value, role as a food plant, support for pollinators and birds, and availability in local nurseries. The process of narrowing this list down to 25 species that best align with the project's goals is currently underway.

In parallel, the development of educational booklets tailored for a mix of stakeholders (policymakers, architects, nursery owners, and general public), has begun. These materials will present information on the ecological and cultural importance of the selected species, along with practical planting and maintenance guidelines.



The team has also been participating and presenting the project at different venues, showcasing the native plant species and educating the public about their benefits.

- The Ecological Restoration Alliance (ERA) conference at Panchgani, Maharashtra
- Placemaking India Week 2025 event at Bangalore Design Centre
- At the 2025 Bangalore Design Week (BDW) organised by the Association of Designers of India (ADI) Bangalore chapter.



Jeevajala Jeevanaadi



Project Start Date: October 2024

Contact: mysuruwaterforum@gmail.com

Collaborators:
Water Forum Mysuru,
Aranya Outreach Trust
& Mysuru School of Architecture

The Jeevajala Jeevanaadi project focuses on reclaiming and repurposing a defunct Rajakaluve (Punaiah Nala) for climate resilience.

The preliminary phase of the project focussed upon site studies, analysis and community engagement and outreach.

Hydrological studies and analysis of Kukkarahalli kere & its feeder canal (Purnaiah nala) were undertaken through field visits, analysing maps and other data relevant to the study.

A landuse map and a stakeholder map were important outcomes of the urbanisation study undertaken during this period.

Over 120 citizens across different stakeholder groups participated in 14 Weekend Nala walks, which offered an immersive experience in history and sustainability.

The Madhagalli Lake clean-up on World Wetland Day on 2nd February 2025 saw many enthusiastic citizens show up and participate. The event also enabled forging partnerships with the local Pattana Panchayat office and nearby resident welfare societies. the former even helping with safe disposal of the waste collected.

In association with the Mahalingeshwara Temple committee, informative posters in Kannada about Madhagalli lake environs and its historical significance and ecological status were displayed on Shivaratri, reaching out to more than 20,000 largely local visitors.

For the preliminary biodiversity assessment survey, the entire stretch of the nala was walked on foot and transects were marked.



These were also verified with maps on the Dishank App. The species documented so far include 127 species of avifauna, 12 species of mammals and 5 species of reptiles.

The resources developed so far under the project include:

- Information pamphlet – Purnaiah Nala, nala walk
- Posters
- Maps – landuse and stakeholders, hydrological study
- Checklist (Avifauna, Mammals, Reptiles)
- Website
- Social Media handles



Pop Culture for Environmental Awareness



Collaborators:
Oorvani Foundation
St. Joseph's University

Project Start Date: November 2024

Contact: foundation@oorvani.in



This is a collaborative project by Oorvani Foundation and St. Joseph's University (SJU) aimed at helping young Bengalureans understand the city's environmental and sustainability challenges.

As part of this initiative, Bengaluru Environment Unplugged—a one-credit guided internship—was designed for students of Journalism, Optional English, International Relations, and Public Policy. Experts and practitioners from diverse fields, including waste management, water, and urban planning, guided students through critical environmental issues affecting Bengaluru.

Key sessions included:

- *Journey of Waste* – Highlighted the importance of waste segregation, challenges in recycling, and the role of waste pickers in creating a sustainable economy.
- *Water in Bengaluru* – Explored the city's water sources, lake networks, sewage treatment, rainwater harvesting, and causes of urban flooding.
- *Transport and Mobility* – Examined how Bengaluru's commuting patterns shape city planning and environmental impact.
- *Pop Culture X Social Impact* – Focused on storytelling techniques, research methods, and the power of content creation in driving environmental awareness.



The sessions have enabled students to use various storytelling formats—memes, cartoons, graphics, and videos—to create Instagram content on Bengaluru's environmental challenges. Check out their work at [@blr.env](https://www.instagram.com/blr.env).



Tubers & Sustainability



**edible
issues**

Project Start Date: January 2025

Contact: sumeet@spudnikfarms.com,
edibleissues@gmail.com

Collaborators:
Spudnik Farms
Edible Issues

This is a project to curate a platform for city dwellers, farmers, scientists, educators, and conservationists to engage in meaningful conversations about food security, biodiversity, and climate resilience in Urban Bengaluru. It aims to raise awareness and cultivate interest in indigenous tuber crops, encouraging their inclusion in everyday urban diets.

Spudnik Farms hosted the third edition of the Rooting for Tubers (RfT) Festival, on Dec 1st, 2024 in Bangalore. With participation from 8 tuber-growing communities across India, 5 chefs, and 10 farmer-producer groups, the event showcased 45+ tuber varieties and 35+ innovative dishes. From traditional recipes to modern culinary creations, the festival aimed to bridge the gap between small-scale farmers and urban consumers while promoting sustainable food systems. Through interactive tastings, workshops, and cultural performances, it celebrated the diversity and potential of climate resilient tuber crops. It also facilitated new research and supply chain partnerships, paving the way for increased market access and value addition for tuber farmers.

As Spudnik Farms continues its work in advocacy and innovation, the RfT festival's impact extends beyond a single event; building year-round networks, agritourism opportunities, and stronger connections between chefs, consumers, and indigenous food systems.



In Feb 2025, the team brought AltCarb 2050 to Namma Oota, at Science Gallery Bengaluru. This interactive installation designed by Bharath Haridas invited participants to step into a speculative future where carbohydrates and carbon emissions are deeply intertwined. It explored how staple food choices impact both human health and the environment.

The team also organised a Tuber Awareness Workshop at SWAD Market hosted by Dept of Hotel Management, CHRIST (Deemed to be University). With a footfall of over 18,000 students, this was an opportunity to engage with a new audience around the cultural, nutritional and ecological significance of tubers.



The Kaluve Promenade



Project Start Date: January 2025

Contact: studio@compartments4.com

Collaborators:
Compartment S4
BBMP

This project integrates green infrastructure, active mobility, and biodiversity to create a resilient and inclusive public space.

The project aims to reclaim public space, enhance green cover, support biodiversity, and promote sustainable water management.

By integrating a bio-swale system for groundwater recharge, bird-friendly vegetation, and a continuous walking and cycling path with pause points, the design fosters both ecological and social well-being. Thoughtful zoning includes recreational areas, nature-based play spaces, and organised utilities to create a safe, accessible, and vibrant community hub. This neighbourhood intervention will serve as a dynamic and inclusive public space that balances environmental resilience with community engagement. Work undertaken so far includes:

Underground utilities laid (Storm water pipe, Electrical pipes, HDPE chambers, Feeder Pillars)

- Road white topping (East side completed, West side in Progress)
- Footpath formation: East side (kerb laying in progress) West side formation
- Rajakaluve side walking and cycling track: Levelling and formation
- Bio swale: laying connections for irrigation of plants in progress
- Bridges: Soil tests conducted, structural drawings in progress.
- Weekly site inspections conducted from Feb 1st.
- Stakeholder meeting conducted.



Commonly spotted insects & spiders in the city of Bengaluru



Project Start Date: April 2020

Contact: vena.kapoor@gmail.com,
priya@naturalist.school,
vaidyanathan.r@gmail.com

Collaborators:
 Nature Conservation Foundation
 EcoEdu
 Vena Kapoor, Priya Venkatesh, Vaidya. R

An easy to use guide book for beginner naturalists and nature educators that introduces us to the commonly spotted insects and spiders of Bengaluru City.

Bengaluru city is fortunate to have a diversity of habitat types like community parks, forests, lakes, vibrant gardens and human built up spaces and is therefore home to a remarkable diversity of insects and spiders using these spaces.

Originally conceived as 50 flash cards featuring common insects and spiders of Bengaluru, the project evolved as we realised that 50 cards couldn't capture the city's rich diversity. With input from naturalists and educators, we shifted to a pocket-sized, easy-to-use book.

We designed the guidebook to be compact and portable, encouraging people to observe and appreciate the invertebrate biodiversity around them. Completed in December 2024, the open-source book introduces 22 groups of commonly spotted insects and spiders, highlighting their characteristics and behaviours. We worked with photographers who generously donated images, focusing on species in their natural habitats and typical postures for easy identification. Our goal was to showcase the fascinating natural history of these often-overlooked animals.



300 English copies were printed for educators and naturalists. The Kannada version will be available shortly. A high-resolution web version is also available for free download and use as an educational resource.



Reclaiming the commons at the fringes in peri-urban Bangalore



Collaborators:
Wildlife Conservation Group
Ramakrishna Mission, Shivanahalli

Project Start Date: February 2024

Contact: wcg.bnp@gmail.com

This project aimed to address pressing issues around urban commons by involving communities and children in the conservation and study of our ecosystems in the peri-urban areas of Bengaluru.

As economist Garrett Hardin pointed out, the fate of commons remains precarious—shared by all, but cared for by none. This reality holds true even today, especially in peri-urban areas where changing lifestyles have weakened traditional ties to these lands. This often leads to neglect or commercial exploitation by landowners, causing degradation.

Our initiative aimed to reconnect youth with their commons through camps, discussions, and awareness programs, fostering stewardship. We mapped overlooked commons in Ragihalli and Mantapa Panchayat, located in peri-urban Bangalore; and raised awareness among officials, communities, and students.

We developed various educational materials such as posters, handbooks, and study modules, introducing students to the concept of commons through interactive activities. Using ArcGIS, we demarcated the commons, analysing vegetation patterns, forest cover, and grassland distribution.

We have compiled a comprehensive report offering key insights for policymakers to develop conservation strategies, based on a



decade-long study of vegetation change which assessed land use and cover transformations and revealed the ongoing depletion of these vital landscapes.

Urban and peri-urban commons are at a critical crossroads, threatened by neglect. Expanding such studies to other regions can empower communities to recognise their roles in protecting these resources.



Whose River is it Anyway?



Collaborators:
Namrata Nerendra
Kandambari Komandur
Megha Kashyap
Paani.Earth
BET

Project Start Date: May 2023

Contact: vrishabhavatistoryproject@gmail.com

This is a collaborative storytelling endeavour presented in the form of a graphic collection of stories of Vrishabhavathi, an urban river. It consists of stories that reimagine the river through lived experiences of the communities that engage with her.

The project began with the concept of the Vrishabhavathi river as a living, independent entity, flowing with agency and voice. The book follows her journey through Bengaluru, exploring how she influences and is shaped by the city's ecosystems, communities, and infrastructure.

Divided into four main stories, the book covers:

- Livelihoods – Malleshwaram Dhobi Ghat
- Pollution & Waste Management – Industrial Areas
- Urban Flooding – Nayandahalli & Byatarayanapura
- Biodiversity – Kaveri Wildlife Sanctuary

Each theme emphasises Vrishabhavathi's plight and her right to exist. Through graphic illustrations and personal accounts, *Whose River Is It Anyway?* offers a heartfelt exploration of rivers we often overlook, questioning our relationship with, respect for, and sharing of water resources.

Over the past year, we completed illustrations and an illustrated map of the river, which were combined with the text to create a graphic collection, highlighting Vrishabhavathi as a living force connecting these stories.



The book draft was peer-reviewed by the project team and discussed at the 'Nature Writing for Children' workshop at Azim Premji University in October 2024.

The book and maps are printed, and the [website](#) is live. We are identifying organisations, schools, and educational institutes for map distribution, and exploring ways to integrate the book into local environmental science curricula and offer teacher training workshops.

If you're a teacher, organisation, or researcher interested in using the book or learning more, visit our website or get in touch.



Yeshwantpur ward-level Heat Wave Guide



BANGALORE
CREATIVE
CIRCUS



INITIATIVE FOR
CLIMATE ACTION

Project Start Date: April 2023

Contact: manan.bhan@atree.org
ujjala.krishna@gmail.com

Collaborators:

ATREE
Bangalore Creative Circus
Initiative for Climate Action

This project aimed to develop a heatwave guide for the Marappana Palya ward in North Bengaluru

The BSF Grant was the foundation of the urban heat stress work that we have done over the last year. It allowed us the focus and time needed to experiment with methods and approaches.

This was particularly important, as understanding the link between heat stress and lives and livelihoods required a patient approach—especially in a city with little memory of heat stress, where the focus is often on other climate hazards. Last summer, this misconception was shattered.

Sadly, heat stress mitigation is still not a priority for decision-makers, but this may change as the city heats up and impacts like water shortages, health issues, and lost working hours become more pronounced.

Using our ward-level approach, we were able to map the interactions that exist between different urban infrastructure systems (health, water, waste, housing) and people. Understanding these connections is the building blocks of any preparedness and response strategy.

Buoyed by our experience in this project, we were then able to take our work forward in 2 definite ways.



We developed 3 games that aimed to sensitise young children on the preparedness and response actions that they may undertake in case of climate hazards and the elements that may make up a sustainable neighbourhood.

We also organised a convening of researchers, activists and implementing agencies on what the future of heat stress mitigation may be. The convening was attended by more than 80 people from across the country, and was a resounding success.



Field Guide in Kannada on common butterflies



Project Start Date: February 2023

Contact: team@ecoedu.in

Collaborators:
EcoEdu
Karthikeyan S

The project aims to prepare a field guide in Kannada to help with the identification of common butterflies.

The project's scope entails a compilation of an easy to use Field Guide on Common Butterflies. The primary focus has been to develop the layout and design of the book with the following key objectives:

1. Maximise the pictorial and illustrative content for easy visual identification.
2. Minimise verbose descriptions.
3. Based on the authors' extensive experience, highlight the main characters to be observed to aid amateurs in the field.
4. Optimise the publication size and ensure ease of handling in the field.

A series of layout designs were developed to select the optimum size and format. As the book is more pictorial than verbose, the layout which provides the maximum image size has been selected.

The content development posed several challenges:

1. Compilation of 2 to 4 images per species and sometimes additional images of the seasonal forms
2. Limit of 30-40 words per species to maximise the layout for the photographs
3. Usage of easy to understand language style and avoiding literal translation

The content development team has closely worked with the layout team to overcome these constraints.



Initially the book planned to cover 50 species. The list has since been expanded and currently 75 species are included.

As on date, the layout has been completed for 50 species and work is ongoing for the remaining. The general section of the book has also progressed well in tandem.



Reflecting on the Small Grants Programme

Originally evolving from a discussion space that enabled interdisciplinary conversations and reflections, the BSF Small Grants Programme continues to strive towards offering a platform for hyperlocal, collaborative, on-ground interventions.

Supporting ideas, innovations, and experiments that do not fall under the usual 'acceptable' parameters of grant proposals, led by individuals and organisations committed to making a positive difference to the city's sustainable future and rooted in reality... that remains the primary driver of our Small Grants Programme.

Our attempt to bring together grantees across various cohorts from time to time over the last year, to reflect not just on their individual projects but also on larger common challenges, has been valued and appreciated by the participants.

Creating these spaces to pause, reflect and go beyond the numbers and metrics alone is an important part of what we try to do at BSF.

Going forward, we also plan to look at a synthesis and analysis of all the projects supported under the Small Grants Programme and the impact they have had on sustainability and the city - with the belief that it will provide valuable learnings for those working on Bangalore's sustainable future.

OUTREACH

BSF participated in several city events to showcase our work, and to provide opportunities for SGP projects to present their work to a diverse audience.



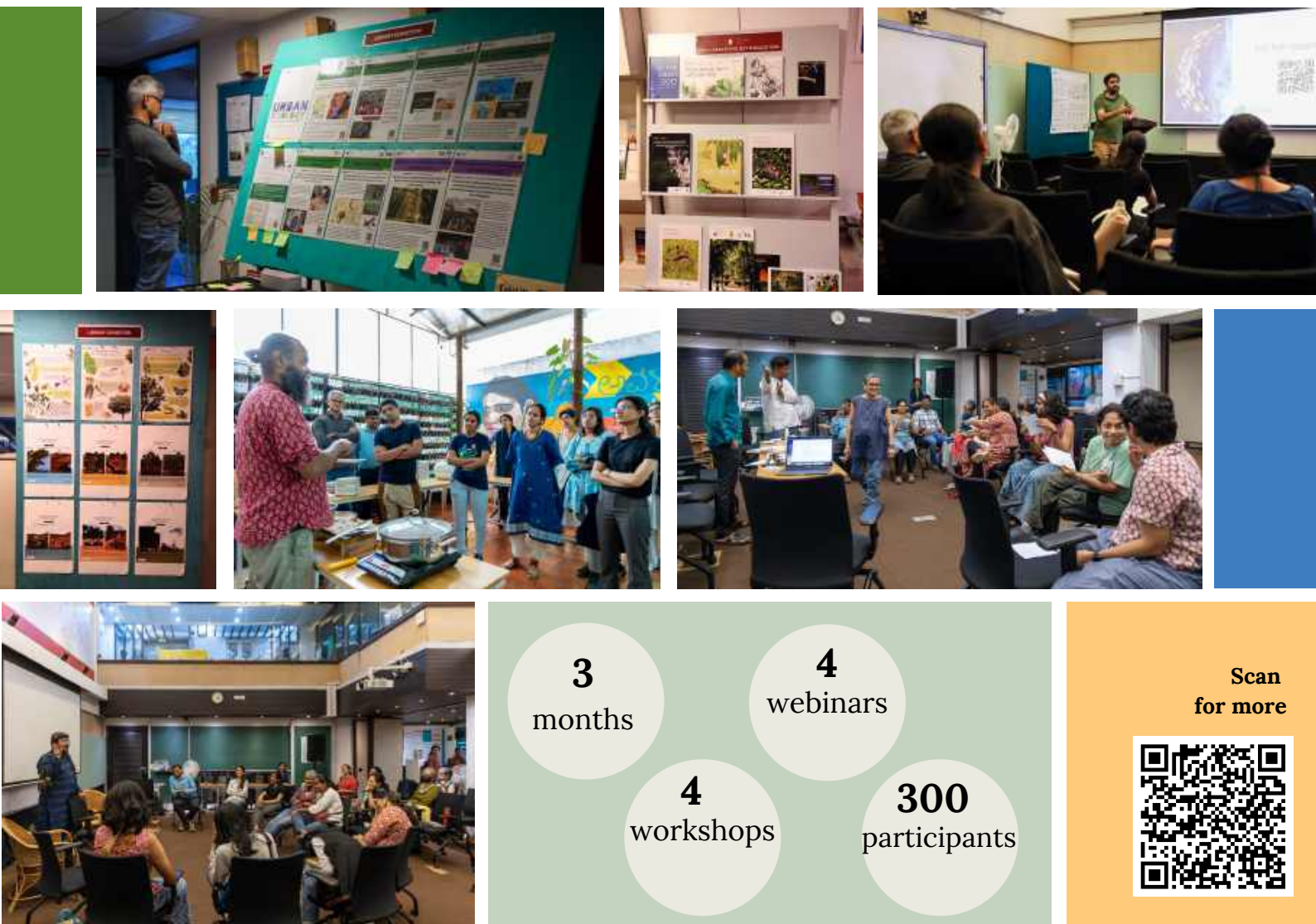
Urban Ecology Library Exhibition

Oct - Dec 2024

As we explored possibilities for widening access to publications supported under BSF's Small Grants Programme, the IIHS quarterly library exhibition came up as a potential platform. We reached out to the IIHS Library team who were very receptive. A few weeks and many interesting conversations later, the exciting idea of a collaboration for a quarterly library exhibition on Urban Ecology emerged!

We worked together on a series of engagements, focussed on India, curated to introduce a broader audience to this fascinating area of Urban Ecology research:

- a curated collection of books on Urban Ecology that included BSF supported publications from the SGP projects. The selected books were intended for researchers, practitioners and a special set for children too.
- a day-long event with four in-person sessions to explore the myriad ways our daily lives connect with urban ecology; through food, folklore, poetry and more.
- a series of 4 weekly webinars around the emerging field of urban ecology which studies ecology in, of, and for the city.

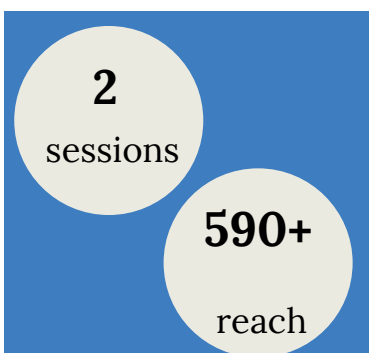


Pre Conference sessions at Mount Carmel College | Jan 2025

Mount Carmel College invited BSF as a knowledge partner for their pre-conference workshops on Biodiversity.

We organised two sessions: A workshop on field ecology by Nishant Kumar that introduced students to field research and science communication. And a screening of the recent film on the Nilgiris followed by an interesting panel discussion.

Both sessions were well received by the college and the audience.

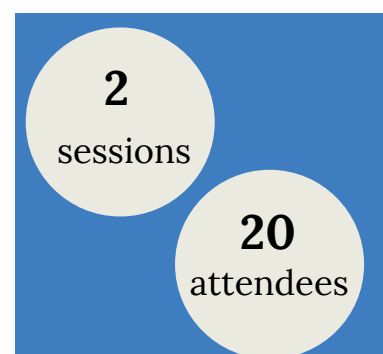


Bangalore Design Week Jan 2025

At the Bangalore Design Week and World Design Protopolis Conclave this year, in addition to a poster display of the work, two of the projects supported by BSF's Small Grants Programme project teams also got an opportunity to present their work.

Through their presentations, the ***Whose River is it Anyway*** and ***Greens on Wheels*** project teams impressed upon a mixed group of design students, faculty and professionals, on how design can support urban sustainability.

It was an interesting platform to share the work of the SGP projects to a newer and wider audience in the city.



Bangalore Literature Festival Dec 2024

On being invited to participate at the Bengaluru Literature Festival 2024, we organised two sessions for children - based on publications supported by BSF under its Small Grants Programme, and facilitated by resource persons who have been part of the SGP projects.

A book reading and art activity for the young ones and an interactive web-of-life exercise for the older children brought to life the larger concepts behind the lovely books. It was fascinating to hear the children's thoughts on how living beings are connected to each other.



2
sessions

60
children



Showcasing BSF-supported projects at events across the city



@lamOneHealth Festival, Jun 2024



@IWECC Jun 2024



@the Student Conference on Conservation Science, Oct 2024



@ACPCC Jun 2024



@NCBS Open Day, Sep 2024

Outreach- Reflections

We are increasingly aware of the significance and power of collective action - for things to really change at a systemic level.

Outreach initiatives and participation at different events in the city give us a chance to reach newer audiences, and contribute to this process in a small way. They are also an opportunity to share information about individuals, organisations and the different engagements and/or research being done in the city with support from the BSF Small Grants Programme.

Oftentimes, the outreach engagements are also a new experience for our collaborators and the outcome is something bigger than what was originally planned. The Urban Ecology library exhibition was the first collaboration of its kind for the IIHS library team, and it leveraged the strengths of both teams resulting in an engaging experience for both the teams as well as the participants .

Through all the work that we have done this past year, it has been evident that our strength is primarily people and our collaborations. We will endeavour to continue to build further on that - in newer and more impactful ways.



THE BSF STORY

It has been 7 years since the Bengaluru Sustainability Forum was formed.

Time, we felt, to reflect on the journey so far and to think about the way forward. We spoke with many of those instrumental in this process; about the why & how BSF started, the learnings along the way and the exciting opportunities ahead!

How can we support the good work happening in the city on the issue of environment, with robust research, and connect it to policy & civil society?

In 2018, Anurag Behar, CEO Azim Premji Foundation shared this thought with PS Narayan, Global Head of Sustainability at Wipro Ltd. and the Managing Trustee Wipro Foundation, and Satyajit Mayor, then Director NCBS. The idea resonated, especially with Mayor, who was also keen to see how an academic institution like NCBS could be more connected with the city.

Vishwanath S, Founder & Director BIOME Environmental Trust, a pioneer in water conservation work in the city and longtime collaborator with the Wipro Foundation then came on board.

Other members were invited - Jahnvi Phalkey of the Science Gallery Bengaluru, Uma Ramakrishnan and Mahesh Sankaran from NCBS, Harini Nagendra from Azim Premji University, Suhel Quader from NCF, Veena Srinivasan from ATREE... and the idea of BSF as an **inter-institutional collaborative for Bengaluru's sustainable future**, gradually began to come alive!



7 years on

BSF started as an experiment...

- An acknowledgement of all the good work happening on sustainability in the city
- A recognition of the need to bring together different stakeholders
- A belief in the potential of collaboration, and
- An effort to convene neutral spaces for reflection, deliberation and discussion.

“ I liked the idea that despite NCBS being a small institution we could have a role that was outsized. If we could pull this off - it was possible.
Satyajit Mayor, NCBS ”

“

What I connect well with, is the idea of convening spaces to reflect and discuss without agenda or credit.

Vishwanath S, BIOME Trust

”

“

I resonate deeply with the notion of diverse perspectives...It has a lot of value -bringing different stakeholders to the table. This was an underpinning of BSF's early vision.

PS Narayan, Wipro Foundation

”

“

BSF's working as an ecosystem player resonates well with my personal approach.

Lingaraj Dinni, Wipro Foundation

”

Innovative, hyperlocal ideas for the city slowly evolved at these Retreats...

Within the first two years itself, it became clear that these Retreats convened by BSF offered a unique space in the city, for a diverse set of individuals to come together and think about pressing issues in a neutral and enabling environment. Discussions that emerged brought up interesting and new ideas and solutions to address some of the challenges. Many of these hyperlocal ideas were considered 'experimental' and 'not mainstream enough' to access typical funding support.

Initially, we held several deep-dive discussions on the Sustainable Development Goals...

In an effort to provide a platform that integrates various perspectives, approaches and areas of expertise to examine issues of long-term urban sustainability, BSF convened its first Retreat on Urban Water in April 2018.

Over the years, Retreats on Urban Biodiversity, Climate Change and Climate Resilience have been convened. Participants invited to the early retreats came from various disciplines, approaches and even other cities - to listen and help BSF craft its vision. Some of those who attended include (late) Isher Judge Ahluwalia (who also wrote about how the Retreat influenced her), Sharad Lele, Ajay Sheth and many others.

The focus was on building conversations on issues of urban sustainability. The idea was to bring in the right mix of stakeholders and perspectives at these Retreats, with the belief that what would emerge organically would guide BSF on where and how to act.



For BSF, the next logical step seemed to present itself :

Offering a seed grant for some of the ideas to take shape at a hyperlocal level. The constraining factor of a small budget also helped to identify leverage points to maximise outcomes for the issue being addressed.

Ensuring that the project was a **collaborative** effort between 2-3 individuals and institutions was a core element of this effort. This formally evolved as BSF's Small Grants Programme (SGP). Starting small, over the past 6 cohorts, BSF has supported over 40 projects in the city through its **Small Grants Programme**.

Over the years, BSF has evolved to be a city level, horizontal platform...

Alongside the Retreats and the Small Grants Programme, BSF's role in the city has widened to include convening dialogues, deliberations and strategic conversations on various aspects of Bengaluru's sustainable future.

Even through the pandemic, BSF continued to engage with different groups in the city, through new approaches.

The name Bengaluru (rather than Bangalore) Sustainability Forum has also been intentional, to bring in a more deliberate, ground-up approach in all that BSF stands for.

In the years to come BSF hopes to continue and grow its work to convene and facilitate collaborations across different stakeholders in the city, towards a more sustainable future for Bengaluru.

“BSF's Small Grants Programme offers a unique space for NCBS as an academic institution to be responsible in society and see the big picture, beyond science.”

LS Shashidhara, NCBS

“I really like that BSF is agnostic about who it informs; but rather is particular about what it informs.”

Jahnvi Phalkey, Science Gallery Bengaluru



Steering Committee Members

Jahnavi Phalkey: Founding Director of Science Gallery Bengaluru.

LS Shashidhara: Director National Centre for Biological Sciences, Bengaluru.

Jagdish Krishnaswamy: Dean, School of Environment and Sustainability at the Indian Institute for Human Settlements, Bengaluru.

Tejal Kanitkar: Associate Professor in the School of Natural Sciences and Engineering at the National Institute of Advanced Studies, Bengaluru.

PS Narayan: Head of Sustainability at Wipro Ltd and the Managing Trustee and Head of Wipro Foundation.

Uma Ramakrishnan: Molecular biologist and Professor, National Centre for Biological Sciences.

Mahesh Sankaran: Professor - Community and Ecosystems Ecology, National Centre for Biological Sciences

Vishwanath S: Founder & Trustee BIOME Environmental Trust.

Satyajit Mayor: Professor, National Centre for Biological Sciences, Bengaluru. Also former Director InSTEM and NCBS

WIPRO Foundation Anchors

Lingaraj Dinni: Senior Advisor at WIPRO Foundation; Partnerships, LVBL Accelerator

Nakul Heble: Program Manager, Urban Ecology Team, Wipro Foundation

BSF Team

Manasi Pingle: Coordinator, BSF

Anushka Kawale: Communications & Social Media Lead at BSF

Vinita Suryanarayanan: Coordinator, BSF

Partner Institutions



Read
more



I have been working in the Climate & Sustainability sector space for so many years and have never come across a session like this that brings together the different systems - it was very useful...

Richa Kanojia, environment consultant & workshop participant
Climate Charche Workshop on Systems Thinking

The kids enjoyed the documentary thoroughly as did we. It was very relatable as it is so close to us. The visuals were stunning and I realised how my experience with Ooty and the Nilgiris thus far has been so 'colonial' influenced. Thank you for sharing this with us.

Pooja
Nilgiris film screening @MCC

It was really great to have a discussion on the topic!

Also thanks to the rest of the team too for seamlessly conducting the webinar! Looking forward to working with you again as well.

Dr Purabi Deshpande, speaker
Webinar Series @Library Exhibition on Urban Ecology, IIHS

All of the films were incredibly thought-provoking. They reminded me of the urgent need for awareness, action, and sustainable development. Thank you for giving open access and sparking my brain to think more deeply about climate change.

Abhirami R V, Student
EcoReels Climate Charche Edition

At the outset, I will say that the opportunity provided to us was well-thought, and thank you. Being a botanist, I have not thought about this group working towards designs as a venue to share about plants, gardens, wildlife, conservation, urban biodiversity, etc. The group working on designs can adopt the idea of wild landscaping, plants, and animals in human-dominated landscapes or urban landscapes.

Once again I thank you for the opportunity of interacting with the experts in the Design aspects.

R.Ganesan, Professor @ATREE & SGP Grantee
BDW-WDP Conclave

It has been a truly enriching experience collaborating with BSF. From our time during Art in Transit's internship to now, we've gained a deeper appreciation for the incredible work BSF is doing for the city. It's inspiring to see such meaningful initiatives that aim to create better living environments for all. This has motivated us to design consciously and with purpose.

We're grateful for this opportunity to contribute in our small way. Once again, thank you!

Hiya Trivedi & Amit Prasad,
Design interns from SRISHTI -MAHE

The BSF grantee meet-up was quite an insightful gathering and a day well spent, talking to fellow changemakers over good food and well planned sessions. I particularly enjoyed diving deeper into questions about how to take our work to wider circles and really benefited from listening to what others think. I appreciate meet-ups of this kind where learning and intelligence sharing can happen in informal contexts and we need to cultivate more such spaces as a collective. Was quite grateful to have experienced this.

Hansika Singh, Socratus
SGP Grantee Gathering

The collaboration with BSF for EcoReels Climate Charche was immersive, holistic and introspective, a blend of team work and each of us bringing in our expertise to make it our festival. While we have had screenings with filmmakers and speakers/experts in the past, the EcoReels Climate Charche edition was much more intensive in the framing of the film, beyond conversations. We got to know and connected with so many experts in the field...It was a festival of knowledge, action and networking.

We felt empowered and motivated to replicate this model to impact collaborating partners on the one hand and filmmaker's and audience on the other.

Aanchal Kapur, Founder KRITI Film Club
EcoReels, Climate Charche Edition

It was a great programme and I would love to be a part of it in the future. I hope we can take such initiatives to more students across disciplines. These students were very receptive and as we discussed it's a great initial step in this direction. Look forward to more engagement.

Vidya Ramesh, Azim Premji University
Climate Charche Lecture Series @CMR

