



**PUBLIC SPACES/
URBAN PLANNING**

WATER

BIODIVERSITY

How can we build a sustainable Bengaluru?

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TRANSPORT

COMMUNITY

ENERGY

WASTE

Annual Report 2025-2026



**BENGALURU
SUSTAINABILITY
FORUM**

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The ***Bengaluru Sustainability Forum*** is a

multi-institutional initiative

working to bring together researchers, practitioners, artists, advocates and citizens - to share, learn, explore and solve for different challenges faced in **urban and peri-urban Bengaluru** around

Air | Biodiversity | Climate Change | Planning | Waste | Water

through different

collaborative engagements like

**Panel Discussions | Webinars | Retreats | Podcasts | Workshops
| Film Festivals | Exhibitions | Quizzes | Mobile Games | Reading Series**

OUR PARTNER INSTITUTIONS:



FROM THE TEAM DESK

Every year, as we start putting together the Annual Report, it offers us a moment not just to reflect on the year that has gone by, but also to check in with ourselves about the path that we are on.

BSF started with a felt need to create a space for conversations – a place that enables an exchange of ideas, knowledge and experiences, and encourages a coming together of people to collectively work towards Bangalore's sustainable future. Some of these ideas have become more mainstream as the years have passed. There is now a greater and more widely held belief in the importance and power of a collective approach to the sticky issues that the city faces. With that welcome change, what then is the role that BSF plays and can play in the city?

At BSF we try to engage not as a singular actor, but as an ecosystem player – one that is intentional about how and why we engage. Our role is not to lead every initiative, but to enable many. To catalyse. To co-create value. To strengthen what already exists. To bring people, ideas, and resources into meaningful conversation with one another.

What makes BSF distinct is this very approach: we do not begin with fixed outcomes, but with openness. Every collaboration starts as a conversation. Whoever approaches us, or is approached by us – whether an individual, a collective, or an institution – is met with a willingness to explore what could be possible together. These conversations are guided by a few core principles: inclusivity, accessibility, and the potential to deepen impact by widening participation. We constantly ask questions like, 'Who else can be a part of this? How can this reach further? What existing efforts can this build upon, rather than duplicate?' The process is as important as the final destination.

Over time, this has led to a diversity of collaborations. In some, we play the role of curator – shaping ideas, framing dialogues, and bringing the right voices into the room. In others, we step into an enabling role – supporting implementation, connecting partners, or contributing specific resources.

FROM THE TEAM DESK

Often, we are simply facilitators helping collaborations find their own rhythm and direction. These roles are fluid, and defined through ongoing dialogue and mutual clarity, especially where responsibilities and commitments intersect.

What drives us, above all, is a shared belief that meaningful change in cities emerges from collective effort. From unlikely partnerships. From patient, sometimes messy, but always hopeful collaboration.

As a small team anchoring this work, we are constantly energised by the network that surrounds us. BSF is defined by the many individuals and organisations who choose to engage, contribute, and build together. And it is this that gives us hope in a world that feels increasingly unstable, be it economically, politically, or environmentally.

Over the coming year, we will keep working towards a more liveable, sustainable Bengaluru.

Stay connected!

Vinita & Manasi
April 2026



THE YEAR THAT WAS

Over 2025–26, BSF played multiple, evolving roles. We convened diverse stakeholders, supported grassroots projects, curated public conversations, and remained active participants in the city's wider sustainability ecosystem.

Convened

Bringing people together across expertise and backgrounds — from bilingual roundtables to educator deliberations.

Curated

Shaping public conversations through the Climate Charche Podcast, panel at Manotsava, and more.

Supported

Backing locally rooted, collaborative initiatives through the Small Grants Programme, and strengthening exchanges within this community of practitioners.

Participated

Staying connected to the city's evolving conversations and contributing our learnings across the ecosystem.

We rethought formats and approaches — through the podcast, city events, supporting the distribution of Kannada field guides to panchayat libraries and field visits with the Small Grants Programme project teams. Across all of these, certain threads consistently emerged: around intersectionality, governance, funding realities, and the importance of holding space for complex, often unresolved questions.

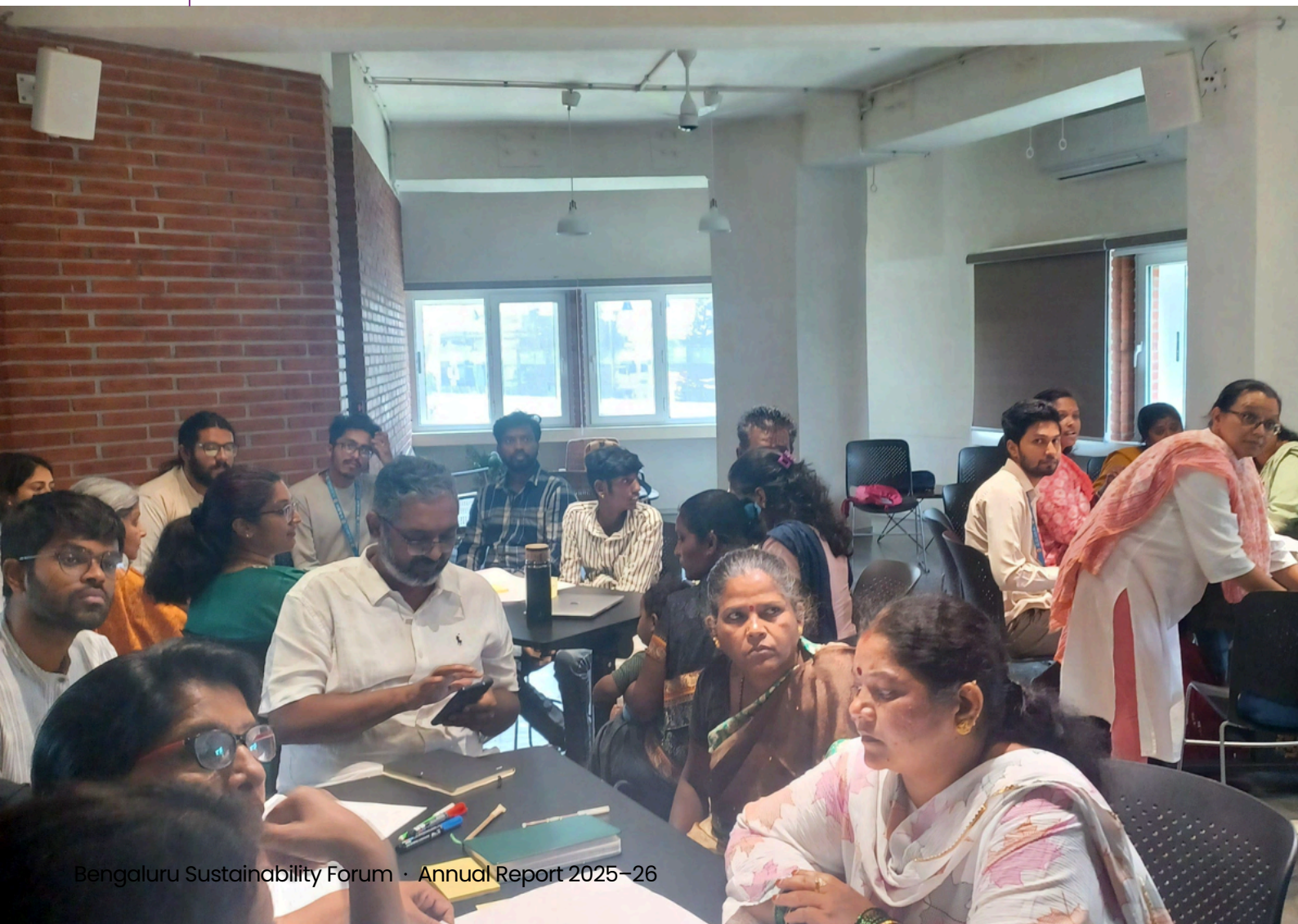
The following pages offer deeper reflections on BSF's year—what we did, the challenges we navigated, and the questions and learnings that emerged through these engagements.



CONVENED

One of the key roles BSF plays is that of **bringing people together** across different expertise and backgrounds, **for an exchange of knowledge, ideas and experiences**. It reflects our belief that meaningful and sustainable change begins with developing a shared understanding of the different dimensions of a challenge.

Over time, these convenings have become **spaces for open exchange** where diverse voices, disciplines, and perspectives intersect to spark dialogue, build insights, and nurture collaboration. From small, focused discussions to larger gatherings, each convening is an opportunity to **connect across silos and an attempt to catalyse collective action...**



Climate Charche FGD Roundtable

In the second half of 2024, BSF and the Socratus Collective Wisdom Corporation had co-designed and facilitated a series of focus group discussions with vulnerable communities – Pourakarmikas, Asha workers, Gig workers, migrant workers, domestic workers and others – to understand their lived experience of climate change in the city.

In April 2025, we organised a bilingual Roundtable to share and discuss these learnings. The experience highlighted the complexity of designing discussions that work for diverse participants with varying levels of language comfort, pointing to the trade-offs inherent in making such spaces truly accessible.

There were some interesting ideas that emerged at the RoundTable - some that could build on existing work by the participants, while others that looked to explore new possibilities.

The FGD report was also shared with the participating fellows of Bengaluru Climate Action Cell, before they initiated the ward level action plan in the city.



April 2025
29 participants
with
**Socratus Collective
Wisdom Corporation &
Samagata Foundation**
(venue)

**Read the
RoundTable report**

English 

Kannada 



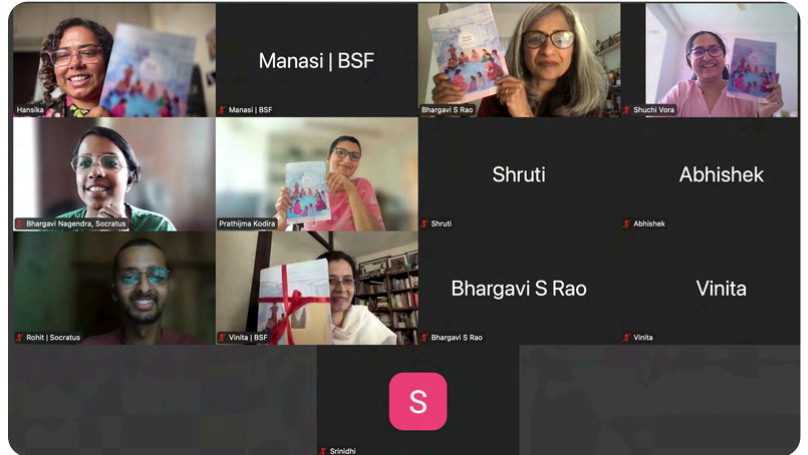
Climate Charche FGD Report Launch

July 2025

100+ participants

online webinar with

**Socratus Collective
Wisdom Corporation**



The FGD report was formally launched via a public webinar in July 2025, with keynote speaker Bhargavi S Rao alongside Shuchi Vora (GRP) and Prathijna Poonacha Kodira (IIHS). The report centres the voices of vulnerable communities on the urban water–climate nexus*.

Some key takeaways were:

- Local governance involvement is essential to build climate resilience at the ward level.
- The impacts of climate change are not felt equally – inclusive development and participatory planning are critical.
- Arts-based approaches enrich grassroots knowledge and connect across lived experiences.



Read the FGD report

[English](#)

[Kannada](#)

[Watch the webinar on YouTube](#)

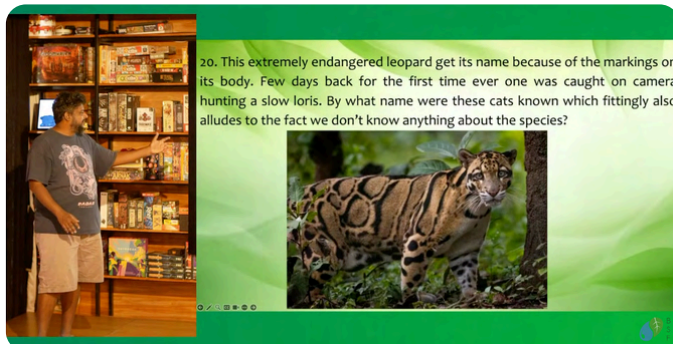
*The visual storytelling part of the report was supported by 'Art4Resilience: Knowledge into use' grant to Socratus by Global Resilience Partnership.

World Environment Day Quiz

June 2025
19 participants
in person with
Berty Ashley
venue) **Underline Centre**



In what has now become an annual feature for BSF, we invited quiz master Berty Ashley to host a quiz on World Environment Day. After 2 years of doing it online, this year we tried an in-person version at the Underline Centre. In his inimitable style, Berty ensured that all the participants had a fun and interesting morning, learning about all things Bengaluru and sustainability.



[Catch the session on YouTube](#)



- We really appreciated the bilingual format—it helped everyone feel more comfortable and included in the conversation. The discussions sparked a lot of ideas, and we're excited about the possibility of working together to address climate issues in urban slums.

Ramanathan
Sama Foundation

- I thought it was very well-organized, and certainly useful and insightful. Keeping it bilingual, while it took a little more time and effort, is certainly a good idea for better engagement/ participation.

Thanks also for sharing the comprehensive 'next steps' suggestions. There are certainly some possibilities to build on - we will discuss with our team and get back soon. However, do please write to Ms. Gehlot for the meeting and we will also nudge/support from our side.

Radha Chanchani
Senior Manager, Sustainable Cities & Transport, World Resources Institute

■ Post webinar survey (Anonymous)

What part of the webinar resonated most with you?

- Inclusivity - data from the marginalised groups
- Art and focus group discussions to understand how the communities are impacted. Water as an entry point.
- The knowledge that the speakers had.
- I like the way art and research were brought together in the report and also sharing the methodologies for the research conducted to put this report together. Lovely!
- Discussion on climate change and response of the academia and research to it.
- I loved the ground level conversations revealing key issues faced by the low income households, vulnerable to both sides of the water spectrum- scarcity during summers and flooding during the monsoons
- Climate change impacts on vulnerable communities in our cities

- The event was instrumental in bringing experts from different domains of knowledge to think and work on a common agenda of Sustainability. It provided an opportunity for us to understand different perspectives on sustainability and helped us in networking.

Dr. B. S. Prabhakar
Associate Professor, Department of Environmental Science
St Joseph's University, Bengaluru

- The interactive quiz was engaging and insightful, offering glimpses of treasurable, wondrous, awe-evoking aspects of the environment while underlying the power of the collective, which when misused, can carry out careless carnage, but if harnessed towards betterment of the planet, bring about phenomenal, inspiring changes. This was well-woven with slices and facets of daily life and re-kindled a sense of curiosity about exploring hitherto unknown aspects of the environment, and the symbiotic, mutually beneficial relationships we can rebuild with nature. Diverse themes and interests were integrated to invite variety interests and questions, making the interaction a rich one.

Anupama
Participant, World Environment Day Quiz

CURATED

Curation, for us, is about **thoughtfully shaping conversations** and creating spaces where **ideas can be explored in meaningful ways**. Whether through panels, festivals, or thematic engagements, this role allows us to bring together diverse perspectives and frame discussions that often remain fragmented.

Over the past year, BSF contributed to curated public programming such as Manotsava, the Climate Charche Podcast, and even a social media campaign with Roundglass Sustain - **situating sustainability within lived experiences** including the mental health impacts of Bengaluru's urban transformation and the intersections between city systems and climate. Working within these spaces also highlighted challenges — translating complex ideas in an accessible manner, navigating format constraints, and ensuring diversity of voices.

Going forward, we aim to deepen interdisciplinary engagement, experiment with new formats, and continue bringing under-represented perspectives into sustainability conversations in the city.



The Climate Charche Podcast

November 2025 to
April 2026

11 episodes

Hosted by Vishwanath S. (Biome Environmental Trust),
In collaboration with Dept of Media Studies, CHRIST (Deemed to be University)
End to end production :
ReRooted.Films Location Partner:
Samagata.



The Climate Charche Podcast was a deep-dive into the intersection of city-systems and climate change. Through 11 episodes the series explored how different urban systems are shaped by – and in turn shape – climate dynamics in the city. By intentionally including community voices while remaining bilingual, the podcast attempted to open up conversations beyond the English-speaking Bengalurean.

The Climate Charche Podcast is now live on YouTube and Spotify. The series has already reached the largest audience we've engaged through any of our initiatives. The response has been encouraging, with listeners describing the conversations as both insightful and relevant.

The common threads which emerged across episodes were:

- the interconnectedness of systems and impacts,
- the role of thoughtful design and planning, and
- the possibilities presented by shifts in the city's governance landscape.



Catch the episodes on BSF's
[YouTube channel](#)



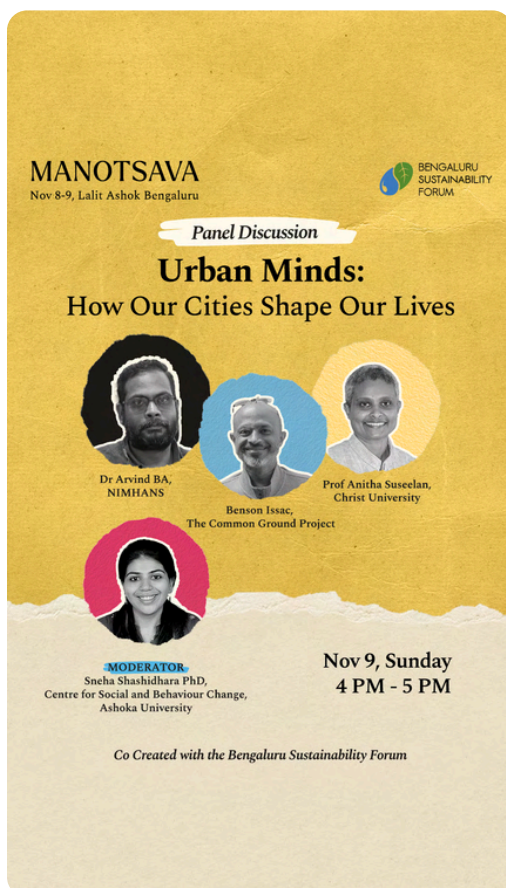
Panel at Manotsava 2025

Urbanisation affects mental health in complex ways. Over 57% of the global population resides in cities. Urban stressors such as environmental degradation, human density and isolation are on the rise.

It was in this context that BSF submitted a proposal for a panel on the **Mental Health Toll of Bengaluru's Urban Transformation**. It was one of the 22 proposals accepted from about 700 proposals received by the Manotsava team.

Panelists: Dr. Arvind BA (NIMHANS), Dr Anitha Suseelan (CHRIST University), and Benson Issac. The conversation was moderated by Dr. Sneha Shashidhara (Centre for Social and Behaviour Change, Ashoka University).

The panel reflected on how urbanisation shapes mental health—through access to public spaces, lived experiences of the city, and the challenge of building just environments. It also underscored the tension between cities as sites of opportunity and their roots in systemic inequities.



- I just want to say I love all of these podcasts and outputs you all are coming out with through the small grants program - this podcast itself has been so key for my PhD! Just wanted to appreciate you and Mansi for such thoughtful content and the meaningful ways of putting these out.
Kranthi Vysyaraju,
IPH
- It was really an enriching experience being part of this panel. I enjoyed the disciplinary diversity but common ground that we found around a structural exploration of problems and possibilities of engaging with the city. It was not a narrow issue based exploration but a deeper lens that we were able to bring together. Thanks Sneha for moderating the panel. And keeping us coherent and together. Thanks Mansi, Vinita and everyone at BSF and Mannotsava for all the hard labour that went into making this happen.
Benson.

SUPPORTED

The work we support is often where **ideas meet action**. Through the **Small Grants Programme (SGP)**, BSF backs innovative, interdisciplinary, grounded initiatives that respond to the city's sustainability challenges in diverse and creative ways. These projects are not just about outcomes, but about processes — experimentation, learning, and adaptation in real-world contexts.

In the last cohort, BSF supported a diverse range of projects spanning urban biodiversity, climate change and water. These projects engaged with multiple forms of knowledge creation and dissemination, often **combining research with creative formats to reach wider audiences**. Alongside project support, we also invested in strengthening the SGP community itself. Field visits to ongoing and past projects, in addition to gatherings to bring the community together, created spaces for reflection, peer learning and exchange across cohorts.

Such engagements brought into focus **recurring challenges** — navigating relationships with government systems, the influence of funding structures, sustaining community engagement, systemic overhaul versus band-aid solutions and bridging the gap between knowledge and implementation.

Moving forward, we see the SGP not just as a funding mechanism, but as a **platform for sustained engagement and learning**, with deeper cross-learning, stronger ecosystem connections, and pathways to influence larger systems.

In this section, you can read details of the projects that were either initiated or completed in the last year. For all the other projects, please visit the SGP page on our website.



Conversations with Trees

This is an interdisciplinary, immersive audio theatre project that is sensory, participatory, and deeply experiential. It invites students and the wider campus community to co-create audio narratives that explore the ecological roles and cultural significance of urban trees, particularly in the context of climate change. Rooted in Participatory Action Research (PAR) and place-based environmental education, the project sits at the intersection of Citizen Science, experimental theatre, and collaborative research practice.



At its core, the project aims to strengthen community climate resilience in Bengaluru through audio theatre experiences that transform phenological observations into emotionally compelling narratives. By combining science, education, storytelling, and participation, it seeks to build long-term capacity for environmental stewardship and collective climate action.

The project recently began with its first workshop for educators. Over the coming year, it will focus on identifying schools, champion teachers, and community volunteers; facilitating sessions and developing toolkits; and co-creating curriculum and resources in line with its broader vision.

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INSTITUTE OF ART, DESIGN
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MANIPAL
ACADEMY OF HIGHER EDUCATION
BENGALURU CAMPUS
(Institution of Excellence Awarded by the Government)



Janet Orlene, Upstream Ecology Foundation
Sayee Giridha, SeasonWatch, Nature Conservation Foundation
Arun Kumar, TransDisciplinary University
Yash Bhandari, Srishti Manipal Institute, MAHE BLR



Responsible Ecotourism in Hesaraghatta

This project is a course to train local youth in Hesaraghatta grasslands as ecopreneurs. It is set in Bengaluru's last remaining open grassland at Hesaraghatta, a peri-urban area in the north-west fringes of the city of Bangalore.



In the initial phase of the project, a series of outreach and awareness activities were conducted to engage local communities, institutions, and stakeholders. A total of 15 participants were selected for the programme, ensuring a mixed group of women and men; representation from local communities and their high motivation and commitment towards conservation and learning. Following the completion of the training sessions, participants appeared for the Skill India Assessment and have now been officially certified and are now recognised as Certified Nature Guides (CNG) - Hesaraghatta Grassland. Their achievement was celebrated at a Valedictory Ceremony with Dr. Meenakshi Negi (PCCF & HoFF) as the Chief Guest. These trained youth are now working as professional Grassland Guides™ — possibly the first such group in India focused on grassland ecosystems.

The key objectives:

- to combine conservation with community empowerment and climate resilience by training local youth as professional nature guides through certified courses, fostering green livelihoods, and building environmental stewardship.
- to enhance ecotourism ethics, infrastructure, and urban engagement, positioning Hesaraghatta as a living lab for sustainable development and a scalable model for other vulnerable habitats.



The youth from this region already share a strong connection with the grasslands and lake ecosystem, which makes them ideal ambassadors for conservation. The initiative has also received appreciation and encouragement from many well-wishers.

After the first professional walk conducted by them on Women’s Day, the guides have started leading nature walks at Hesaraghatta Lake and grasslands.

In the months ahead, regular weekly walks will be announced. The process of job placements for the participants will begin. The participants will be supported to work as freelance guides and/or ecopreneurs. Efforts will also be made to initiate the set up ecotourism practices at Hesaraghatta.

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Bird Board Game

This interdisciplinary project focused on designing, developing, and producing *Birds in the City: Bengaluru Edition*, an educational board game that engages people in understanding how urban landscapes influence the bird life around them, through play.



Priti Bangal, this board game offers a window into the world



The game context and narrative was informed by research on patterns of urban development and expansion in Bengaluru over the last two decades. The development process included consultations with birding enthusiasts and ornithologists based in Bengaluru and an iterative design process involving multiple rounds of online and in-person playtesting. Alongside the game, a companion booklet with rules, descriptions and prompts was also created.

Birds in the City was showcased and played at gaming, research and public events such as the UK Games Expo in Birmingham, Unboxed Games Festival in Ahmedabad, Games Transformed games club in London, Your Science Voices Workshop at NYU Abu Dhabi, Arab Forum of Science Media and Communication (AFSMC) and the Public Communication of Science and Technology (PCST) Symposium in Sharjah, York Festival of Ideas, York Environmental Festival, UnboxingBLR and Science Gallery Bengaluru. A project website was also created and maintained to share updates from the design journey (<https://www.playinnature.in/game>). The same was reimagined on instagram for further outreach (<https://www.instagram.com/playinnature.in/>).

With additional financial support from funding agencies and donors, 540 copies of the game were produced — part of these were distributed free to schools and nature education programmes, while the rest are available for purchase at subsidised rates through the Nature Conservation Foundation's online store.

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Buy the Game

<https://ncf-store.zohocommerce.in/products/birds-in-the-city/163862700003529019>



Greens on Wheels

Green on Wheels is conceived of as a mobile nursery and travelling exhibition that brings native plants into the urban landscape, making them accessible to practitioners and the public.

Designed as a pop-up platform, it showcases species suited to Bengaluru’s urban conditions while demonstrating their ecological functions and cultural relevance. Built on a curated selection of plants from indigenous landscapes around the region, the initiative draws from research developed by PLUS and ATREE, which foregrounds the ecological and cultural value of native plants.



The key objectives:

- Raise awareness about the ecological and cultural value of native plants
- Promote context-sensitive, resilient urban planting practices
- Develop practical tools such as curated plant lists and “planting recipes”
- Strengthen availability and supply chains for native species
- Enable public engagement through mobile and site-based interventions

The initiative is grounded in extensive nursery surveys across Bengaluru, mapping existing plant stock and identifying gaps in the availability of native species. 25 native “champion species” have been shortlisted for propagation and outreach. The initial costing and planning for a central stock nursery have been completed, and nursery managers and trainers have been identified. Branding and website development are currently underway.

The next phase will focus on establishing a network of satellite nurseries, supported by seed collection during site visits and propagation of selected species. In parallel, the design of the mobile nursery kiosk will be initiated to expand public engagement.

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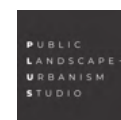
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<https://www.atree.org/>

Site visits to collect seeds for propagation



Vanasuma

VANASUMA is a Kannada field guide and educational book that showcases the rich diversity of wild flowering trees in and around Banerghatta National Park. It is aimed primarily at school and college students. By presenting this knowledge in Kannada—the local language—the project seeks to make learning more relatable and impactful.



The project team has conducted extensive fieldwork over the past year, to demarcate and study the tree species along with recording tree phenology, biodiversity, and photographic documentation, along with literature review of the recorded species. To extend its outreach, the team has also created a social media account to highlight the tree species. Brainstorming sessions regarding the format of the book were organised, and the template for individual tree species has been finalised.

Over the next few months, the team will continue with ongoing field studies and literature review, while carefully organising and integrating the collected data into the book's content. The publication design is currently underway in consultation with book designers.

The key objectives:

- To serve as both a botanical reference and a tool to inspire environmental awareness.
- To instil curiosity, compassion, and responsibility toward trees and nature. A comprehensive field investigation was conducted, involving observation and data collection on tree phenology, biodiversity and photographic documentation, complemented by literature review and meticulous tree marking exercise.

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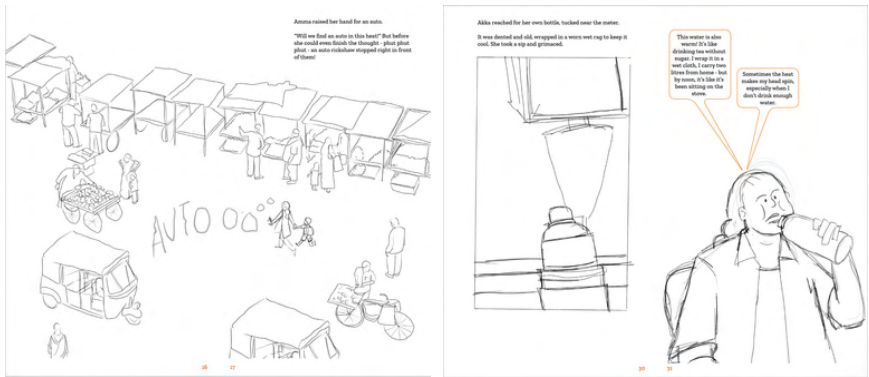


Dr. TPN Hariprasad



Auto Akka and the Hot Seat

This project tackles Bangalore city’s urban heat challenge by creating a bilingual children’s storybook featuring an auto-rickshaw driver, explaining heat’s causes and consequences. It offers an interesting approach to climate education by combining visual storytelling, grounded community narratives, and direct public engagement.



The project started in September 2025, and since then, the team has engaged with several auto drivers and unions through group discussions, site visits, personal interviews and focussed workshops. They have developed an interactive game for auto drivers, adapting an existing game from the Heat.in.Bangalore project.

Based on storyline research and understanding narrative methods for children, the visual language and the storyline for the book have also been developed. Over the next few months, this will be finalised, incorporating feedback from auto drivers, practitioners and others working on heat in cities.



The primary goal of this project is to raise awareness about urban heat in Bangalore and its disproportionate impact on vulnerable communities. The specific objectives are to:

- To Create a Children's Storybook:
- To Build a Public Knowledge Repository through Social Media:
- To Foster Dialogue

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Nithya Gowda



Addressing Heat Stress among Domestic Workers in Bangalore

This project aims to document the lived experiences of domestic workers, who face rising health risks due to intensifying urban heat, and deliver practical solutions for heat resilience. The project will adopt a bottom-up approach, combining participatory research, heat-health capacity building and storytelling, to advocate for structural changes that protect domestic workers from the increasing risks of heat waves.



The project is in its core implementation phase, with heat-health training for domestic workers and stakeholder engagement with employers, RWAs, and the Bengaluru Apartments' Federation underway. A Heat Safety Charter for residential communities is under development, while findings are being synthesised into a digital repository, supported by multimedia documentation including worker narratives, shadowing, and thermal imaging.

A Heat Exposure Audit framework in collaboration with Reap Benefit, has been designed as a youth-led, skill-based initiative. Next steps for the project include

- Advancing RWA engagement through development and dissemination of a Heat Safety Charter for residential communities.
- Implementing the Heat Exposure Audit with youth volunteers and generate neighbourhood-level heat data.
- Convening a multi-stakeholder dissemination event, once the multimedia documentation is complete.
- Developing a playbook to enable adoption of the approach by other organisations and cities.
- Initiate and strengthen advocacy-oriented engagement with relevant Bengaluru government bodies and present evidence-based recommendations on heat as an occupational health risk.



The objectives of the project are:

- To document vulnerabilities by mapping the heat exposure during commutes and at work, examine income loss, the level of workload, understand health impacts, and detail coping mechanisms - through participatory research methods.
- To build the capacities of domestic workers to identify heat stress symptoms, low-cost preventive strategies, and first-aid responses.
- Engage local RWAs through storytelling-based awareness campaigns and promote heat mitigation practices.

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**HEAT
WATCH**

Dr. Archana S.



Tubers and Sustainability Programme

This is a project to curate and organise a programme for education and messaging around tuber crops & food biodiversity for Urban Bengaluru.



Over the past year, seven major activations were conducted across educational institutions, art spaces, festivals, corporate offices, and retail kitchens. These sessions had over 700 participants and reached out to more than 20000 individuals through institutional and festival platforms. These sessions offered critical insights into

- the role of tubers as climate resilient crops in the urban scenario,
- existing awareness and interest
- the need for dedicated spaces to work with climate resilient crops and
- the role of tubers as an accessible entry point into larger conversations about biodiversity, carbon footprints, resilience, and food futures.

The project component supported by BSF is now complete.

The project collaborators will be continuing their work for sustained urban engagement with climate-resilient food systems. This could include, but not be limited to, documentation and digital dissemination for scale as well as facilitating various engagements for chefs, retail partners, hospitality institutes and more.



The core objectives were to:

- Build awareness around tubers as climate-resilient crops
- Reintroduce indigenous tubers into everyday urban diets
- Connect biodiversity, farmer livelihoods, and consumer behaviour
- Create experiential learning spaces around food systems
- Test pathways from awareness to market adoption

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Jeevajala Jeevanaadi (ಜೀವಜಲ ಜೀವನಾಡಿ)

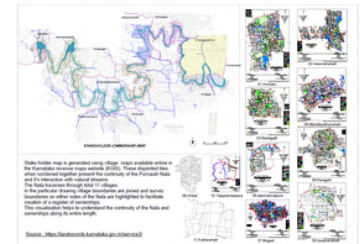
The project aims to work towards revitalising and repurposing the heritage canal - the Purnaiah Nala in Mysuru, and contribute to a sustainable future for the city. Through a series of studies, outreach activities and citizen engagement, they intend to mobilise public support for conserving the remaining parts of this natural blue-green network that runs through Mysuru city.



In the past year, the team has continued biodiversity assessments and monitoring on-site. Flora assessment has been completed and a night transect was also recently completed. Seasonal avifauna transects are continuing. Drone surveys were also initiated to understand and capture the present status of the nala more comprehensively.

Outreach through community engagement events and online presence has been central to the work in 2025. This has included several nala walks, nature journaling workshops, lake clean-ups, exhibitions etc with students, teachers, local clubs and other interested members of the public. Documentation and sharing of interviews and experiences of the project in video format have also enabled a wider reach of the work.

Following recce visits to identify the Pilot site, a design brief was prepared and a design competition announced with an open call for registrations from across the country. A total of eight Webinars were conducted as part of this competition with experts speaking on selected topics around water. On an average, 500+ have attended the webinars over the last 2.5 months. The competition submission is over and the evaluation of the entries is in progress.



The process is shaped by an urge for action through collaborative efforts of volunteers with diverse skill sets keeping in mind the following critical objectives:

- Information to Knowledge
- Engaging through Conversations
- Advocacy to Action

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Stormwater and the City /Building a Resilient Bengaluru

This is a public awareness and action campaign led by the Mod Foundation to understand and improve the city’s stormwater systems. Combining research, storytelling, and citizen engagement, the campaign works to make Bengaluru’s stormwater infrastructure visible, understandable, and accessible to the public through open data platforms, learning programmes, and collaborative citizen engagement initiatives.



The website was launched in December 2025 and serves as the central public platform for the project. It currently hosts three tools designed to help citizens decode Bengaluru’s stormwater systems. The Interactive Map enables users to visualise the city’s stormwater network using data layers, including digital elevation models, satellite imagery, and historical tank networks. The Story Maps is another tool, which combines archival material, historical maps, and interactive visualisations to trace Bengaluru’s evolving relationship with water systems. The first chapter is currently live, with subsequent chapters under development. The third tool is the Stormwater Drain Audit Dashboard, which allows citizens to explore and analyse data collected directly by citizens conducting audits of the stormwater drain infrastructure across the city. Citizen participation is core to the project. An audit toolkit, guidebook, and training programme, including a January 2026 masterclass, prepared participants to conduct field audits. Between January and February 2026, four guided audits across Ulsoor, HSR Layout, Nagarbhavi, and Hennur engaged 55 participants. This expanded into citizen-led audits across multiple neighbourhoods, alongside academic collaborations engaging 135 students. The community has now grown to over 160 active members.

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Kaluve Promenade

This project presents a comprehensive street improvement and urban design strategy for a residential neighbourhood street, focussing on enhancing mobility, safety, public realm quality, and environmental resilience.



The project aims to reclaim public space, enhance green cover, support biodiversity, and promote sustainable water management. By integrating a bioswale 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. The project falls under the Bengaluru North City corporation. The land use along the stretch is residential. The 7m buffer zone along the rajakaluve was fenced with invasive species and unwanted vegetation growth. On the North the road connects with the Outer Ring Road and the primary stormwater drain and Chelekere lake; and on the south it leads to the Banaswadi forest.



Tree grates and leveling the Rajakaluve SWM wall

The key objectives were to:

- **Improve Road & Junction Geometry:** Rationalising carriageway widths and redesigning junctions to reduce conflict points, streamline traffic movement, and enable safer turning radii.
- **Enhance Pedestrian Safety:** Prioritising walkability through continuous footpaths, safe crossings, traffic calming measures, and universally accessible design.
- **Parking Management:** Organising on-street parking to reduce encroachments, improve street efficiency, and balance vehicular and pedestrian needs.
- **Increase Public Realm & Civic Spaces:** Creating active, inclusive spaces through seating, activity zones, and shaded areas that encourage social interaction and street vibrancy.
- **Integrate Nature-Based Solutions:** Incorporating bioswales, street trees, and permeable surfaces to improve storm water management, micro climate, and overall environmental quality.



Coordination among multiple stakeholders and agencies, along with the need for well-planned construction sequencing, proved critical to successful implementation. The learnings from implementation emphasise the importance of aligning design, policy, costing frameworks, and execution strategies for effective and scalable street development.

As on date, the core road infrastructure works have been largely completed on site, including under ground utilities, road surfacing, signage, footpaths, traffic calming elements, ramps, junction treatments, parking buffers, street lighting, and edge development along the raja kaluve.

The next phase of the project will focus on unlocking funds and implementation for public spaces through the introduction of bridges, development of the rajakaluve buffer with plazas and flooring, activity zones, bioswale landscaping, wayfinding signage, street furniture, and pavilions to create a more vibrant and user-oriented street environment

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Transforming Bengaluru's Public Spaces by leveraging CSR & Philanthropy Partnerships



BSF supported Sensing Local in organising an Open House for GBA's landmark programme, 'Revitalising Bengaluru's Public Spaces', held at Town Hall on February 6–7, and facilitated engagement with private funders to encourage their participation. The objective of the Open House was to socialise the projects and secure commitments for public-private partnerships through CSR funding and philanthropic grants.

The event featured panel discussions to platform different stakeholders; and a public exhibition of 170+ community-nominated public space projects, organised based on the City Corporations to enable focused interactions with government officials. A total of 400 people attended the event, including 15 funders.

Websites

<https://bbmp.gov.in/csr/>

<https://www.blrpublicspace-revival.in/>

sensing**local**

To extend the programme’s reach, a series of curated carousels were shared on social media. These posts distilled complex project information into accessible formats, highlighting key performance metrics, programme activities, and the foundational pillars: Design, Fund, and Collaborate. The exhibition garnered significant media attention, with coverage across major national and regional news outlets.

In the coming year, the team will continue to focus on:

- Inclusion of dedicated budgets for public space improvements in the 2026–27 plans of all corporations
- Identifying and implementing interim actions across projects, such as clean-up drives and maintenance or repair works
- Actively pursuing public–private partnerships



SGP community

Over the last year, we continued to build on our efforts to nurture the Small Grants Programme community and foster a spirit of learning and collaboration. In addition to the meetups that we have been we also organised four field trips last year to some of the project sites of past and current grantees. These visits were appreciated as natural opportunities for building better interdisciplinary understanding and connections between practitioners in the city

24 Jul 2025 | BIOME’s Treated Water Recharge Project in Devanahalli



Sep 2025 | Wildlife Conservation Group’s Adavi field site in Banerghatta National Park area.



15 Nov 2025 | Jeevajala Jeevanaadi project in Mysuru.



19 Jan 2026, | IIHS Kengeri campus as an example of extensive sustainability practices embedded in the design and functioning of a campus.



Extending access to Nature learning resources



Through our SGP, we have had the opportunity to support projects that have resulted in some incredible **nature learning resources** for children. From plant posters and the biodiversity they support, to a handy guide on commonly found insects and spiders; a bilingual publication on nature in our everyday to a fascinating book on imagining the city as a living museum...

In the work we do, we try to find opportunities to make these resources available to a wider group of children across the city.

This has found synergy with the Prakritiya Pettige initiative. This is an effort by Early Bird, in collaboration with the Karnataka Panchayat Raj Commissionerate, to bring engaging, joyful nature learning to rural children across Karnataka through Arivu Kendras - Gram Panchayat libraries.

Over the last year, BSF has supported the distribution of 1,000 sets of these (Kannada) nature learning resources that emerged from the SGP projects. These were distributed to Arivu Kendras in Kalyana Karnataka, Mysuru, Chamarajanagara, and Bengaluru districts.

In addition, copies of the Kannada field guide on Common Avenue Trees (another SGP project) were distributed to 176 Panchayat library educators in Banashankari and Nelamangala clusters. These Master trainers went through a three-phase training programme and have subsequently taken nature education to around 6,000 Arivu Kendras in their talukas.

We have also shared these resources with the Parikrma Foundation schools and other schools in the city.

Click on the title for the digital version



Plant Posters, Nature Bingo, Nature Activity Sheets,

Drop us a mail if you work with government schools or learning centres for children from vulnerable communities and are interested in getting these publications.

- Thank you BSF for organising the IIHS visit. It was such an informative walk and exposed us to so many Sustainability concepts. Look forward to many more of these. Happy I made time to join. It was worth every minute!! A day spent well.
Annapurna Kamath,
Jalaposhan

- The field trip to the Adavi Field Station, organised by the Bangalore Sustainability Forum and hosted by the Wildlife Conservation Group, gave me a whole new perspective on my own backyard – Bannerghatta National Park! I used to avoid going there with my family because it was always about the Bannerghatta Zoo. I never even looked at a map to realise it's part of a much larger national park right here in my hometown.
The WCG team was incredibly welcoming and showed such passion in sharing both their success stories and the challenges they face. It was truly inspiring. I've already started spreading the word about the space and their work to help support their vision – which includes raising awareness about the park and their ongoing efforts.
Nithya Gowda,
Urban Planner

- What I found most interesting / key learning:
The most inspiring aspect of the project was seeing how the Water Forum members are working to revive the remaining stretch of a 150-year-old water canal, with the vision of making it accessible to the public and environmentally sustainable. Their commitment to creating awareness, sensitizing residents, and involving the community in the process was truly eye-opening.
What I look forward to in the future:
I would love to stay engaged with projects like this – initiatives that inspire, bring citizens together, and offer a deep sense of purpose and fulfillment.
Looking forward to many such trips with you!!
Sohini Srinivas,
Socratus

- Interesting Session. Some of the prompts helped us to reflect back on our individual projects. Interesting to meet previous and present grantees- helps provide opportunity for integrating learnings and throws up areas we can think of venturing into. Sukhpriit, Jeevajala
This was a great event. So many ideas and offshoots from the existing projects. Sharing our project ideas was very fruitful- it would be good to maybe have presentations focussed on previous grantees work.
Really great to meet all the other grantees and we hear about the interesting work going on. I agree that break out groups + presentations can feel like a bit much. An Unstructured gathering + some way of showcasing work or future ideas may help.
Anisha,
The Living Museum SGP project

PARTICIPATED

A key part of BSF's role is remaining an **active participant** in the **city's wider sustainability ecosystem**. Over the last year, we engaged in and contributed to several external platforms and deliberations — **sharing** our learnings and **staying connected** to the conversations shaping Bengaluru.



<p>Sci Edu Teachers' Open Day</p> <p>NCBS</p>	<p>Sweat & Concrete</p> <p>People First Cities Purpose</p>
<p>Stakeholder Engagement Workshop on <u>Ecosystem-based Adaptation (EbA) Feasibility Tool</u></p> <p>CSTEP</p>	<p><u>Reimagining hyperlocal heat management solutions</u></p> <p>Socratus</p>
<p><u>Strengthening One Health</u></p> <p>BeST Cluster</p>	<p><u>Reflecting forward (Systems thinking)</u></p> <p>Socratus</p>
<p>Circular Economy</p> <p>BeST Cluster Climate KIC</p>	<p>Connectors Workshop</p> <p>Science Gallery Bengaluru Mesh</p>
<p>Convening on Water Resilience</p> <p>Socratus INDE</p>	<p><u>Nature inFocus festival</u></p> <p>Nature inFocus</p>
<p><u>Convening on SWD</u></p> <p>Jana Urban Space</p>	<p>Stakeholder Meeting - Nbs</p> <p>IIHS</p>
<p><u>Strengthening Climate Resilience for Migrants and Informal Workers</u></p> <p>MRC IIHS BCAC</p>	<p>BioConserve summit</p> <p>Infosys IIHS</p>

We also had the opportunity to host a 14-member team from UNDP and TERI, overseeing the Global Environment Facility (GEF) Small Grants Programme in India, who visited BSF to learn about our Small Grants Programme, and interact with some of the grantees. They noted the BSF-SGP focus on collaboration, interdisciplinarity, and community building as being particularly relevant to their work.

PEOPLE OF BSF

A great deal of what BSF manages to do is made possible by the people we work and collaborate with, as well as those who support our efforts—both within our partner institutes and across the city. As a small team, we remain deeply reliant on and grateful for the larger network of people who contribute their time, knowledge, and energy to this work.

Over the past year, Tejal Kanitkar stepped down from the Steering Committee, and Anushka Kawale moved on from her role in communications. We are grateful for their contributions and wish them the very best ahead.

We are pleased to welcome Vidya Ramesh to the Steering Committee as a representative of Azim Premji University.

Aparajita Dutta, a student at Srishti-Manipal College, interned with BSF and contributed a series of illustrations.



Steering Committee Members

Jahnavi Phalkey: Founding Director, Science Gallery Bengaluru.

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

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

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

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

Satyajit Mayor: Professor, National Centre for Biological Sciences, Bengaluru and Leverhulme International Professor at Centre for Mechanochemical Cell Biology, Warwick Medical School.

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

Vidya Ramesh: Coordinator, School of Climate Change and Sustainability at Azim Premji University,

Vishwanath S: Founder & Trustee BIOME Environmental Trust.

WIPRO Foundation Anchors

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

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

BSF Team

Manasi Pingle Vinita S.



With Thanks To

Every convening, publication, and project that BSF facilitates is made possible by the generosity of time, expertise, and commitment from our networks — the individuals and organisations who show up, participate, collaborate, and believe in the work of building a more sustainable Bengaluru.

We also recognise the value of the one-off exchanges we often have, either in-person or online, with those outside our immediate network, which prompt us to (re)think how people engage with sustainability in the city.

We remain grateful to the departments and teams at NCBS and Wipro for their critical support, that makes all of this work possible!

Let's Connect

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www.bengalurusustainabilityforum.org

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