Power of People and Participation
‘Power of People and Participation ’ is a book published by Digital Empowerment Foundation, under its Social Media for Empowerment Award platform, to explore and share how some of the best social media initiatives from South Asia are leveraging the power of social media to reach out to a wider global audience and initiate a change.

Year of Publication: 2022-23
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Statistics: Satya Prakash

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Published & Distributed by Digital Empowerment Foundation

You can read the online version at:
https://www.defindia.org/publications/#booksandjournals
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Hashtag Generation
Shiksha Na Ruke
The Better India
The Stories of Change

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Gurkirrat Sachdeva
Shobitha Kedlaya
Mithila
Japleen

PARTNERS

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Institutional Partner: World Summit Award (WSA)
CHAIRMAN’S NOTE

Osama Manzar
Founder-Director
Digital Empowerment
Foundation

Celebrating Social Media Milestones

We at the Digital Empowerment Foundation have been striving towards eradicating information poverty in India for the last 20 years. Over the years we have been recognising ICT solutions for underserved communities through our awards. It is with the same endeavor that this year we are continuing with the Social Media for Empowerment Awards that we launched in 2013.

Social media today has become the most promising tool for development and empowerment to promote vision, purpose and activities; spread news; build support; attract volunteers and donors and engage with interested segments of the population. Social Media has become an equalizer, providing an equal platform to all those with an innovative idea or solution. Along with providing everyone a platform to express
their ideas, it has also provided citizens with a voice to reach out to those accountable to them. It has reached the interiors of the country and given birth to citizen journalists at the last mile. As with other excluded groups, social media has also given an opportunity to women to voice their opinions and issues.

Over the last three years, the pandemic has proved to be a catalyst to digital innovations and social media has responded the same way. It has played a pivotal role in digitally enabling communities. As we move into the post-COVID world, we continue to see innovations that are transforming the way we look at social media and the digital world.

Lastly, I extend my gratitude to all the Jurors for going through a rigorous online process to select the best among the best for Social Media for Empowerment Awards. And, I would like to congratulate all the Winners for contributing towards a better connected and a better informed society.
A Path to a Better and More Inclusive Tomorrow

As a juror at the Grand Jury, I was truly inspired by the diverse range of social initiatives that were nominated. From the stories of empowering women, transforming education, advocating for digital rights, and promoting youth empowerment, to the work being done in the areas of sexual health, social justice, and so much more. It was remarkable to see how each initiative was using social media in a creative and effective manner to achieve their goals, whether it was to mobilize funds, gather support, spread awareness, or challenge dominant narratives.

The passion and commitment displayed by each nominee was truly contagious and left me feeling empowered and hopeful. I was particularly struck by how these initiatives were making an impact on the ground. DEF’s SM4e Awards are providing a vital boost to particularly small, yet impactful social organizations by creating a supportive environment for them and giving them the recognition they deserve. DEF is helping to inspire and encourage others to join the fight for a better world and empowering small organizations to continue their important work. I am grateful for the opportunity to learn more about the inspiring work being done by these social change-makers. I would like to express my deep admiration and my sincere desire to collaborate with the finalists in the future. I am confident that each of these initiatives will continue to make a positive impact, and I am honored to have been a part of their recognition and celebration.
As a juror for the SM4E Awards, I congratulate DEF for its dedication to discover ICT solutions for underserved themes in order to create a more equitable and inclusive South Asia. The objectives of the SM4E Awards align with the importance of promoting innovative and good practices in using social media for empowerment, inclusion, and development in South Asia. Additionally, the focus on building and strengthening knowledge banks and resources around social media practices is commendable as it is crucial for policy and program relevance. Social media has become an integral part of our daily lives and has the potential to be a powerful tool for positive change and empowerment. With the reach and accessibility of social media platforms, it has become easier for communities to connect, share information, fact check information and mobilize support. It has provided a platform for survivors, young people and marginalized communities to share their stories and advocate for their rights and create communities of joy and camaraderie.

I am happy to bring Protsahan’s learnings around digital advocacy, awareness campaigns, and mobilization for social justice to the participants of the SM4E awards.

As a juror, I have thoroughly enjoyed reviewing the submissions. I am so hopeful in the potential of young people that made excellent presentations and I see them as present and future drivers of systemic change using the power of communications embedded in values of social justice, feminist principles and intersectionality.
As someone who entered the world of work as a digital campaigner, life has come full circle today being on the jury for the 8th Social Media for Empowerment (SM4E) Awards. The entire process has been nothing short of inspiring, and reinforces my faith in the power of content in bringing together citizens to impact change both on ground and online. The passion and commitment with which the presentations were made truly made me feel hopeful and recharged! More power to DEF for providing a stage to such remarkable initiatives - both new and old, and all the luck to the nominees who are working against all odds to build a just and equitable world.
As a jury member of the SM4E awards, it was heartening to see many committed individuals working in areas where a significant amount of work is needed. In a world where inequalities, discrimination, hate, oppression and destruction exists, a few people take on the mantle of responsibility and create a powerful pull towards restoring balance. The stories presented by various organisations were inspiring and soul-stirring.

DEF has created a powerful platform to acknowledge, share and broadcast information about such organisations and their activities through the SM4E awards. The platform invited contenders from beyond India, showing that the needs and struggles of human life are similar, no matter where one comes from.

It was wonderful to hear about the efforts to reduce hatred and misinformation by helping people voice their truth as a step in the right direction.

We lost track of time as we heard stories of how brave women were taking on aggressive voices while giving a voice to the oppressed and the meek. The work done by creating women entrepreneurs and empowering them was mind-blowing.

Judging the work of these presenters was extremely tough as the work of each was in such diverse areas, each rich in its own merit and deserving of accolades. However, some of them stood out because of the heart and the passion, the reach and benefit to many through the work done. Kudos to DEF for its efforts in creating an inclusive, informed and balanced society.
As a juror for the SM4E Awards this year, I am grateful to be part of this event hosted by DEF; with a dynamic and diverse group of individuals passionate about using digital technology to empower communities. The shortlisted projects have been impressive and a testament to the positive impact of digital technology, from promoting literacy to supporting social justice. It has been truly inspiring to see with these initiatives how digital technology is being leveraged to tackle some of the most pressing challenges we face. These initiatives are not only making a difference in people’s lives, but also setting an example and demonstrating the potential for technology to be a force for good.

The finalists are trying to improve the lives of individuals and helping to build stronger and more connected communities. Additionally, it was heartening to see how passionate those representing their organizations were; how driven they were to ensure the focus of impact these projects were having on communities. It was admirable to see presenters brilliantly weave implementation, innovation, and inclusion as part of their digital innovations.

In the face of the pandemic, we took note of the pace of change and were aware that it would be fast paced and driven by the use of technology. In this context, social justice should be one of the prime objectives. Given this understanding, there is a need to create collaborative platforms to find innovative solutions to make the world a more accessible and equitable place. DEF creatively getting all these ingenious ideas together is a step forward in the right direction.
1. Citizen and Community Media
2. Disaster & Crisis Management
3. Education, Health, and Well-being
4. Rights, Advocacy and Community Mobilisation
5. Social Inclusion
6. Business, Commerce and Enterprise
7. Culture, Heritage and Travel
WINNERS

- Initiative: Vrinda
  Organisation: Aaina,

- Initiative: Chalchitra Abhiyan

- Initiative: Feminism in India Hindi
  Organisation: Feminism in India

- Initiative: ALM Emergency COVID-19 Relief for Adivasis Particularly Vulnerable Tribal grounds (PVTG)
  Organisation: Adivasi Lives Matter

- Initiative: Sadhna- A Social Initiative

SPECIAL MENTIONS

- Initiative: Life at Lahore
  By: Kashf Shah, Punjab, Pakistan

- Initiative: #DontBeASharent
  Organisation: Assam Police, Assam, India

- Initiative: The Safe Abortions Campaign
  Organisation: YP Foundation, Uttar Pradesh, India
FINALISTS

- **Initiative: @inapurupriate**  
  By: Apurupa Vatsalya, Karnataka, India

- **Initiative: Khayal Apna, Khayal Apno Ka**  
  Organisation: Sesame Workshop India, Delhi, India

- **Initiative: Let’s Know Our Rivers**  
  Organisation: Tarun Bharat Sangh, Rajasthan, India

- **Initiative: e-Thaksalawa**  
  Organisation: Ministry of Education, Western Province, Sri Lanka

- **Initiative: Empathy Through Photos**  
  By: Rohit Jain, Uttar Pradesh, India

- **Initiative: Hashtag Generation**  
  Organisation: Crisis Response Unit, Western Province, Sri Lanka

- **Initiative: Shiksha Na Ruke**  
  Organisation: Smile Foundation, Delhi, India

- **Initiative: The Better India, Karnataka, India**

- **Initiative: The Stories of Change, Uttarakhand, India**
Aaina is an initiative that uses visual storytelling to encourage reflection on the experience of education. It is in educational spaces that they read, write, think, feel and understand the relationship between them and the society. Aaina probes these memories and experiences, to nurture critical literacy – the capacity to examine how our educational experience is linked to questions of society, history and culture. The core issue they deal with is inequalities in education – particularly, based on caste, class, gender, religious identity, ethnicity and disability. Through their comics, they make academic research on education more accessible and easy to engage with. They re-imagine how education can be empowering and transformative for all, not just a privileged few.

They bridge the gap between lived experience and theory: their comics are set in spaces that often feel familiar to the audience, and characters explore complex ideological positions through conversations. Along with documenting student experiences, they pay attention to the emotions, experiences and challenges of teachers, which often go unheard. This way, their comics also model candid conversations that may not currently be happening. They are also an independent platform, not associated with any corporation or institution.
How do we address the social and emotional needs of disabled students?

In everyday conversations

Hey, do you need any help? I can drop you till your hostel...

I wish she saw me more than just a ‘blind person’ who needs help, but someone she could get to know, maybe go on a date with...

No, I can manage, thanks
ChalChitra Abhiyan produces a range of video formats like documentary films, news features, interviews and live broadcasts. They try to bring to the fore local issues that concern different marginalised communities in their own voices. Issues that are often glossed over by the mainstream media because of corporate control, the stranglehold of strong political parties or caste, class, religious and gender biases. They extensively use social media to circulate their stories.

Part of their endeavor, and a very important aspect of ChalChitra Abhiyaan's work, is to train people from local communities to tell their own stories through videos. These stories are evolving into a movement to challenge the propaganda machinery that's constantly dividing communities.

They not only spread their work through social media, but they also organise film screenings. At the screenings they screen their own films but also a range of films on different socio-political issues. There is a treasure of such incredible films, both documentaries and fiction, but they rarely make it beyond select circles. In trying to build such spaces, ChalChitra Abhiyaan seeks to contribute to a larger progressive cultural movement.

They see themselves as not just a media organisation but also as a film collective and a cultural collective. For them, ‘Counter culture is people's culture.'
Intersectional feminism, desi style!

Feminism in India (FII) Hindi was created with a vision of disseminating knowledge and information related to gender, feminism, sexuality, intersectionality etc in a language that can be accessible to the common masses. There is a lot of existing content and resources on these topics in India, but mostly all of it is available in the English language and hence it becomes inaccessible to a large chunk of the Indian population.

FII amplifies the stories from the hinterlands of Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, and Chhattisgarh using digital storytelling techniques of new media, in formats that have the maximum reach and impact on social media. Most of the stories are written by writers coming from Northern Hindi-speaking states like UP, MP, Bihar, Rajasthan, Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh, Delhi etc.

Till date, they have published over 2100+ stories in Hindi. They also use audio, video and visual formats to spread the message of feminism. They have separate Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Youtube and Telegram channels which they use to promote their intersectional feminist content in Hindi.

Organisation: Feminism in India

ifihindi
fiihindi
Twitter: FIIHindia
feminisminindia
Feminism in India Hindi
www.feminisminindia.com
ALM Emergency COVID-19 Relief for Adivasis- Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Grounds (PVTG)

Amplifying the Adivasi and Tribal voices of India

ALM is a platform that works towards amplifying the Adivasi and Tribal voices of India. Through the campaign titled “Emergency COVID Relief for the Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs)”, they were able to create COVID-19 safety protocol posters in more than 10 languages in 2020, as well as vaccination awareness videos in about one dozen Adivasi languages in 2021, through the creators that they trained over the past two years. In Chhattisgarh, their content creators traveled more than 2980 km to spread COVID-19 vaccination awareness among 40,000 indigenous community members with presentations and audio messages recorded in indigenous languages. These communities are seldom served by the government and the government guidelines and directions in popular national languages are almost never translated into Adivasi languages.

Their efforts to translate COVID-19 safety protocols as well as vaccination awareness were appreciated by the State Governments as well as by International Organizations like the Endangered Languages Project headquartered in Canada. These posters and videos were shared on social media and among WhatsApp groups of several nonprofits and like-minded networks.
Sadhna is a Women’s Handicraft Enterprise that achieved registration under the Mutual Benefit Trust Act after years of consistent effort. This artisan group was formed in 1988 in response to a devastating drought in Mewar as an income generation program of Seva Mandir, a leading NGO from Rajasthan, India. This small initiative with 15 participants expanded over three decades into a family of over 700 trained women artisans in the Udaipur and Rajsamand Districts of Southern Rajasthan. Patchwork, Appliqué and Tanka embroidery skills became the foundation for a strong women’s collective of rural, tribal and urban artisans. The demand for work-from-home continues to be met by Sadhna’s top-notch artisan training system & professional management staff. Sadhna artisans have been stitching some of the finest traditional hand-embroidered products for three decades. Every Sadhna product is handmade and fair trade certified. Sadhna is an enterprise committed to empowering women, both economically and socially as well as enhancing their self-esteem. Our goal is to make artisan members self-reliant, increase their control of and access to social resources, and improve their status within their families and society.
SPECIAL MENTIONS
Citizens of Lahore have come together in Covid to initiate a city-wide movement by the name of #LifeatLahore. LAL aims to collectively rebuild the diverse social and cultural fabric of the cultural capital of Pakistan ie. Lahore, by providing a platform to individuals committed to promoting socio-cultural activities and campaigns as vehicles for peacebuilding through arts, culture, sports and dialogue.

The Life at Lahore initiative aims to reclaim public spaces promoting social and cultural activities in Lahore that encourage the positive exchange of ideas, dialogies, sports, arts, theater, music, heritage preservation etc. They aim to revive existing public spaces and cultural institutions for greater inclusion and engagement and create a common platform to enhance synergy and collaboration.

With the aim of enhancing awareness about the importance of physical, social and intellectual public spaces for a vibrant and tolerant city, and promoting and supporting arts, sports, culture, literature, dialogue by engaging all stakeholders in the city, LAL is increasing public entitlement and access to public spaces in the city while preserving existing public spaces, and creating new ones.
#DontBeASharent focuses on the need of times to sensitize parents on the perils of oversharin online

Assam Police’s campaign on Sharenting- #DontBeASharent focusses on the need of times to sensitize parents on the perils of over sharing photos, videos, and sensitive details of their children on social media, as this can lead to identity theft, future discrimination, bullying and violation of the privacy of children. It’s one of the first of its kind campaigns by any organization in South Asia. Assam Police initiated the conversation around Child’s right and safety on an important issue, which was earlier not even talked about. There’s very limited awareness about the term ‘Sharenting’ and people were not even aware of its existence. This campaign highlights the importance of Digital Hygiene in modern day parenting and sensitizes parents on correct online behavior.

As we went on to introduce a new vocabulary in Child Safety through our campaign #DontBeASharent, we used pop culture, memes, humor, modern day idioms and multimedia to highlight a key aspects of child rights and safety in the digital age, which was earlier completely overlooked. In order to augment and support our efforts on Social Media, they simultaneously ran offline campaigns, organized workshops in partnership with UNICEF, Truecaller, Meta (Facebook), Traditional Media, in English, Hindi and in other languages.

Organisation: Assam Police

- [police.assam](https://www.police.assam)
- [assampolice](https://www.assampolice)
- [www.slprbassam.in](https://www.slprbassam.in)

#DontbeaSharent focuses on the need of times to sensitize parents on the perils of oversharin online

#DontbeaSharent

powerofpeopleandparticipation
DANGERS OF SHARENTING

Oversharing pictures and information about your kids could lead to:

- Cyberbullying
- Digital Kidnapping – Identity theft that targets kids
- Privacy Violation
- Pedophilia
- Stalking

Draw the line between Sharing and Oversharing today!

#DontBeASharent
The YP Foundation (TYPF) is a youth-led organisation that facilitates young people’s feminist and rights-based leadership on issues of health equity, gender justice, sexuality rights, and social justice. TYPF ensures that young people have the information, capacity, and opportunities to inform and lead the development and implementation of programmes and policies that impact their lives and are recognised as skilled and aware leaders of social change.

TYPF’s vision is a world where all young people’s human rights are realised and they are recognised as equal stakeholders and transformative leaders. They empower young people by increasing their access to information, services, and leadership opportunities, thereby enabling them to understand and realise their rights. Their mission is to build and influence young people’s leadership, collectives, and ecosystems to achieve social equity, justice, and rights through their meaningful participation in decision making.
FINALISTS
At the intersections of gender, sexuality, safety, body neutrality, disability and identity, and their interplay with emotional well-being and social justice.

Apurupa (she/they) is a gender justice lawyer-turned-sexuality educator and prevention of sexual harassment trainer from India. They are an openly trans* nonbinary person, an intersectional neuroqueer feminist and Sexual and Reproductive Health, Rights and Justice (SRHRJ) programmer. They are currently leading the perspective shift of 5000 adolescents, young people, their parents and educators across three states of India, namely Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and Delhi-NCR through their work at The YP Foundation. They have been researching, creating modules and teaching CSE workshops, in addition to conceptualising and facilitating courses addressing themes of pleasure activism for women and gender diverse folks for over five years. They have worked directly with 100 people living with Vaginismus to enable them to become pleasure practitioners. They run the Instagram project @inapurupriate (which is a play on the word ‘inappropriate’ as most of the themes they foreground are considered just that in South Asian cultures and their name, Apurupa), through which they tackle the stigma around open conversations on sex, sexuality and safety. Their work is at the intersections of gender, sexuality, safety, body neutrality, disability and identity, and their interplay with emotional well-being and social justice.
SOCIAl PRESENTS SATRANGI MELA
A DAY LONG QUEER FEST

PLEASURE AS A FORM OF SELF CARE

WORKSHOP

APURUPA

SUPPORTED BY TILT

CURATED BY METAFAIR
AND MITALI BHASIN

INDIRANAGAR SOCIAL
10 APR | 12:00 PM - 10:00 PM
Khayal Apna, Khayal Apno Ka

Caring for each other and supporting the social, emotional and mental wellbeing needs of India’s families and children.

Khayal Apna, Khayal Apno ka, an Indian adaptation of Sesame Workshop’s global initiative ‘Caring for Each Other’ which was rolled out during the pandemic to address critical needs of children and families. The initiative continues to be implemented online. At the onset of the pandemic, to support the social, emotional and mental well-being needs of families and children, Sesame Workshop India distributed educational resources online via its website, social media platforms and its YouTube channel. The resources were also distributed free of cost to on-ground partners like UNICEF. The materials were launched in 11 languages in India with a deep focus to help caregivers & young children identify & manage tough situations and big feelings like fear, stress because of a socially distant environment, new responsibilities and routines, responding to children using positive parenting techniques like open communication in an age-appropriate way. The initiative continues to engage caregivers on how to communicate about changes and uncertainty to children, mitigate parental stress amidst personal loss and economic strains, normalize seeking assistance for mental wellbeing and more.

Organisation: Sesame Workshop

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बच्चे अपने आस-पास होने वाली हर चीज़ पर नज़र रखते हैं। बच्चे जो पहले से जानते हैं उससे शुरुआत करें और फिर बात आगे बढ़ाएं।
Aao Nadi Ko Jaanein

Tarun Bharat Sangh is a non-profit organization working in the arid and semi-arid regions of India for water and environmental conservation, education, health and community welfare. TBS is led by Waterman Rajendra Singh. Over 46 years of working TBS has helped more than 1,000 villages to build more than 13,000 rainwater harvesting structures at strategic points impacting around 10,00,000 lives. In this process, 13 small rivers have been rejuvenated and restored with community participation.

To spread the water literacy among communities, Tarun Bharat Sangh designed a self-paced course, “Let’s know Our Rivers (Aao Nadi Ko Jaanein)” for river basin organisations, regional or national governments involved in planning, water resources, forestry, agricultural, non-governmental organisations, companies, or universities, professionals involved in river basin management, youth, social activists, or a child who is allowed to use the internet. The course was launched 15th January 2022. “Aao Nadi ko Jaanein” is an experimental journey for learners which help them to know about river rejuvenation and it’s 4 modules are the holistic package of knowledge which consist of pre-recorded sessions, animations, virtual field visits, documentaries, quizzes, online certificate and weekend chat shows even after completion of the course.

Organisation: Tarun Bharat Sangh

watermanrajendrasingh
watermanofindia
watermanofindia
tarun-bharat-sangh
mauliksisodia
www.tarunbharatsangh.in
SOCIAL MEDIA FOR EMPOWERMENT AWARDS

LET’S KNOW OUR RIVERS
Online Certificate Course

ARE YOU A DEVELOPMENT JOURNALIST?
Boost your skills through:
- Virtual field visits on River Basin,
- Live case studies on River Revival,
- Role of women in water conservation,
- Watch documentaries on River Rejuvenation,
- Community participation in rural watersheds &
- Online resource material.

For more info: academy@tarunbharatsangh

Let’s know Our Rivers

JOIN NOW
A VIRTUAL JOURNEY OF REVIVING RIVERS
CREATING LIVELIHOODS AND STRENGTHENING COMMUNITIES
e-Thaksalawa

Official learning management system of the General Education Systems in Sri Lanka

e-thaksalawa is the official learning management system of the General Education System in Sri Lanka. e-thaksalawa consists of resources developed aligned to grade 1 to 13 curriculums such as creative lessons, all learning resources including past papers, term papers, questions, syllabuses, text books, teacher instruction manuals. This is a continuous development process with an intention of handing over the international standard learning management system to the nation. The future expectation of the Distance Learning Promotions Branch Ministry of Education on e-thaksalawa is to expand the e-thaksalawa as a knowledge based and establish teachers’ team to provide solutions for students’ questions through online, provide special resources for backward students and establish communication mechanism to share the knowledge and ideas between students and teachers. It is a project initiated by the Distance Learning Promotions Branch Ministry of Education, Sri Lanka. It has been developed by the skillful teachers of the government schools in the country with the guidance of the Subject Directors of the Ministry of Education and also the patronage of the Department of Education Publication, Department of Examinations and Sri Lanka Rupavahini Corporation.

This Learning Management System is offered by the Ministry of Education free of charge for those who are in search of knowledge. e-thaksalawa is the official learning management system of the General Education System in Sri Lanka.

Organisation: Ministry of Education

ethaksalawa.moe

www.e-thaksalawa.moe.gov.lk
e-තක්‍ෂණ

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Empathy Through Photos

What urban people can learn from the community and the nature’s way

‘Empathy Through Photos’ is a way of reigniting the empathy in people through photos and stories. When we know the stories of others they would not hate them. Each story has its own struggle, pain, happiness and hope.

Its sole motive is to realise empathy as well as nurture the vibrant minds of the youth and older people by telling their stories.

‘Empathy Through Photos’ mainly bridges the gap between the urban people and the people who are living in rural India and in interior India close to nature. Its purpose is what urban people can learn from the community, minimalist, naturalistic way of life of tribals and what they can contribute to the natives.

It’s an individual initiative which started after receiving support and engagement from social media platforms. The creator of this campaign, Rohit J, is a low-key person who is shy, under-confident, and hesitant, but the kind of support he gets each day through social media is overwhelming and keeps him going.

So far, this campaign has traveled to more than twenty-two states and UTs of India where it has made friends with people from various tribes and communities and connected them, personally, virtually and thoughtfully, with thousands of people from India and beyond India through social media, mainstream news, talks and awareness campaigns.

By: Rohit Jain

Instagram: photoforacause
Facebook: rohitjain217
LinkedIn: photoforacause
The moments in these photos are full of love and care. They’re inspiring and give hope. More...

The way @photoforacause captures love and care is amazing. Keep inspiring!
Hashtag Generation is an antiracist feminist movement led and run by a group of young tech-savvy Sri Lankans working towards building a society where everyone has the skills, information and tools to be active participants in making the decisions that affect their communities, technologies and bodies. The initiative titled Crisis Response Unit (CRU) started by Hashtag Generation is an ongoing initiative.

Sri Lanka is experiencing an unprecedented political and economic crisis marked by historic levels of inflation, acute food insecurity, and economic collapse. Widespread dissatisfaction over the rising costs of living and shortages of essential goods, fuel, and medicine resulted in mass non-violent people’s uprising against the ruling regime. Social media played a significant role in mobilising and popularising the people's protests. A large volume of hate speech and disinformation targeting the protests and protesters were also observed during this time period.

The CRU of Hashtag Generation was established in order to develop counter narratives to tackle the influx of dangerous speech, and to address and fact check crisis-related disinformation.

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Organisation: Crisis Response Unit

facebook: hashtaggenerations
instagram: hashtaglka
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STOP
CHILD MARRIAGE

The legal reforms in 1995 increased the minimum age of marriage to 18 years for all citizens of Sri Lanka except Muslims, the Muslim Marriage and Divorce Act does not stipulate an age of marriage.

#16daysofactivism
revealed that 56% of children did not have access to digital devices to continue learning through the online mode. Besides this, lack of proper food and nutrition, hygiene and WASH facilities, were the major gap areas that they identified. ‘Shiksha Na Ruke’ was their response to these problems, to ensure that education continues for children despite all odds. Our interventions included providing access and tools for blended learning, training of teachers, physical and mental well being sessions, and distribution of dry ration and hygiene kits.

Established in 2002, Smile Foundation is an Indian development organization, impacting the lives of over 15 lakh children and families every year. Smile Foundation works as a catalyst in the cycle of change, complementing and supplementing government efforts to achieve the SDGs. They sensitize and partner with like-minded institutions and individuals to implement high-impact programmes that enable access, enhance quality and help bring long term behavioral change at the grassroots.

‘Shiksha Na Ruke’ is Smile Foundation’s initiative to help less privileged children have continued access to education under the challenging circumstances brought on by the pandemic and in the post pandemic world. The genesis of the campaign happened when lockdown was imposed and schools shut down all over the country and a survey...
India is one of the most water-stressed countries in the world. India's Water Warriors campaign aimed to spread information on responsible water management practices, created awareness about the water crisis in India and provided recognition to the individuals contributing to the categories above. India's Water Warrior is a unique initiative as it does not only recognise the unsung individuals but also provides them a platform to share their work with the world. These individuals are people who work tirelessly for our betterment but have minimal social media reach and visibility. Hence, they are unable to receive the support and assistance they deserve for their cause. Through our articles, social media posts, videos, and newsletters, the water warriors were able to reach millions of people and get support for their work. Through India's Water Warriors campaign, they reached almost 22 million people across India educating them of the severity of the water crisis, highlighting water management practices and celebrating the contributors towards the cause. The impact was such that their participants who had no social media coverage have now received recognition and appreciation for their work. He is engaged in reviving various lakes all across Tamil Nadu. Ever since the awards, he has received enough support to expand his campaign to other regions of India. This is just one story out of many, their social media outreach, owing to this initiative, have made people talk more about water and sustainability in general.
The Better India has awarded this **CITATION** to one of the Top 6 candidates of India's Water Warriors Award

**Avani Mohan Singh**

For his contribution to solving water-related issues by providing solar-based potable water, constructing check dams and farm ponds, and renovating existing structures to help over 1,500 water-scarce villages

**Date:** 1st September 2022

*Dhimant Parekh*  
CEO, The Better India
India’s first print magazine to exclusively publish stories of social change and unique innovations and ideas.

The Stories of Change is a publication that reports exclusive solution stories from India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Bangladesh, and Africa. They work with freelance rural reporters across South Asia to scout and publish solution stories. They write about not just successful solutions, but also those interesting ideas that might not have worked and what could have done better to make them work. Their stories have created a huge positive impact on the ground. They also saw a gradual shift in the mainstream media space which is now more accepting towards such stories.

The Stories of Change produces solution oriented stories that not just provide relevant information but also go beyond that and create further positive impact in the lives of people. This kind of storytelling is highly ignored by the mainstream media. They are creating a new beat in the news space that has potential to drive bigger social change. With the launch of its print magazine, TSOCS has become probably India’s first print magazine to exclusively publish stories of social change and unique innovations and ideas.
The Stories of Change

What Women Want


The Boss Ladies of Rural India

Challenging patriarchy through a rickshaw

April 2022
Issue 01
GRAND JURY MEMBERS
Sharada Kerkar is a development practitioner working at the intersection of arts, culture, and education. She has over 7 years of work experience in digital education, social entrepreneurship, and women's empowerment. She is the Director of Community Arts and Crafts Foundation and a Program Lead at the Museum of Goa where she specializes in organising skill development projects and the integration of art into livelihoods. She is also a freelance illustrator storytelling.

Sonal Kapoor is Founder & Board Member, Protsahan India Foundation- an organization based in New Delhi, India, that enables girls facing sexual and gender based violence regain control over their lives. Protsahan, under her leadership, has rescued over 1148 girls from violence and abuse and reaches out to more than 81,000 vulnerable adolescent girls every year in impoverished slums.

Gurkirrat Sachdeva is the Head of Programs at Youth Ki Awaaz (YKA), which is India’s largest writing platform for young people to speak up and create impact. Her expertise lies in building strategies for social good, digital media campaigns and programs to mobilize and engage young people, at scale, on critical issues. Over the last 8 years, Gurkirrat has worked across campaigns and content to establish YKA as India’s foremost digital campaigning platform.
Shobitha Kedlaya works at Digikargha Foundation, an organisation that aims at empowering artisans by digitally training, and equipping them with tools and skills that can help them live a life of pride and dignity. She is part of ProtoVillage, an intentional community built by the villagers for the villagers, to be the prototype of a resilient rural community based on principles of mutualism.

Mithila has been working as a consultant in the space of content, strategy, partnership development, and communication within polity & sustainability with a focus on digital. At KhaanaChahiye Foundation, she is working to develop a sustainable model of livelihoods focused on combating hunger in urban cities. Her work since the pandemic has been focused on creating a humane approach for crisis management with women and children at the heart of this initiative.

Japleen smashes the patriarchy for a living. She is the founder & editor-in-chief of Feminism in India, an award-winning digital bilingual feminist media platform. She is also a TEDx speaker, Rise Up Youth Champion, Swedish Institute’s alumni and a WSA Young Innovator. She has been recognised by the German, Swedish and Indian governments for her work on gender. Currently, Japleen oversees the strategic vision and growth at FII.
PARTNERS
Digital Empowerment Foundation

Founded in 2002, Digital Empowerment Foundation has been working to empower marginalised and unconnected communities living at the edge of information by enabling them with digital capacity, access and rights across the pillars of education and entertainment, livelihood and finance, health and agriculture, culture and heritage, with a special focus on digital rights for women and adolescents. With a 10,000 strong cadre of digital foot soldiers across India, DEF has interventions in 2,000 locations in 135 districts across 24 states in India.

Institutional Partner: World Summit Award (WSA)

The World Summit Award (WSA) is a global activity to select and promote the world’s best e-Content and most innovative ICT applications. It offers a worldwide platform for all who value the creative use of ICTs and who are committed to making today’s information society more inclusive.
‘Power of People and Participation’ is a book published by Digital Empowerment Foundation, under its Social Media for Empowerment Award platform, to explore and share how some of the best social media initiatives from South Asia are leveraging the power of social media to reach out to a wider global audience and initiate a change.