GREENSPEAK

GREENPEACE

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BY SAMIT AICH, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, GREENPEACE INDIA

The entire Greenpeace India family is thankful to our incredible volunteers that make our campaigns stronger, bigger and more fun. Our volunteers are, beyond doubt, the silent heroes that help us bring about a change. It’s not just the time that our volunteers put in the work they do, it’s the heart that truly matters. The effect of every individual in this movement to save our environment is indeed incalculable. Only youth can challenge the old and obsolete. Thus, active participation of youth in transforming the world is critical and moreover, inevitable.

Thank you to these shining stars. The year 2014 proved to be an amazing and a memorable one. Our fight against climate change was stronger than ever; We took on the challenge to stop the energy industries from destroying our forests for coal; Launched and won the Clean Chai Now campaign, where 4 major Indian tea brands came on board with Greenpeace to cultivate chemical-free tea; and we’ve also been courageously fighting the consequences of a fallacious IB report. As Nelson Mandela rightly said, "It always seems impossible until it’s done".

With that conviction, we can make everything possible. Let’s continue inspiring one another and look forward to a new year full of more victories and more hope! Greenpeace India volunteer crew is truly a fantastic bunch of change makers!
WHAT HAS YOUR LOCAL GROUP BEEN UPTO?

PUNE
Volunteers in Pune organised a marathon on December 21 - the Green Warrior Run. When the environment comes calling, how fast will you run?

DELHI
Mahan Sangharsh Samiti and volunteers from Delhi participated in the massive rally in Delhi to demand people's rights over natural resources. More than 30,000 people from different struggles were a part of it. Abki baar, humara adhikaar!
WHAT HAS YOUR LOCAL GROUP BEEN UPTO?

By Anjali Barboza, MUMBAI

We are students from Symbiosis Institute of Media and Communication, Bangalore who are interning at the Greenpeace office in Mumbai. Tanushree, Maitheli & Rashmi started the day at 8 45 by standing on the road and trying to spot those who spit. Saurav and Anjali started the same at the different location.

Once spotted, we walked up to them and asked them the reason behind spitting on the road and not the dustbin which the BMC seems to have put up on every turn.

One man argued about the fact that if you have cough, you need to get rid of it and that's why you spit. He asked us to even inspect the spit to check if it has phlegm or paan in it.

A crowd of at least 25 people gathered to check the commotion. Another person began to side the person who spat and when Maitheli and I told him to pay up the Rs.500 legally mandated fine, he walked away.

We then appreciated those paanwalas that followed BMC's instructions and kept a dustbin at their shops just for spitting.

We even asked a Policeman to not spit on the road when he was chewing on paan. He appreciated our effort and promised us he wouldn't spit on the road.

Saurav and Anjali went around to different paanwalas asking them to keep a dustbin and encourage people to only spit in it. They also asked the shopkeeper to keep their surrounding clean.

Change begins with awareness. All in all, this Abhiyan was so much fun and spreading awareness about cleanliness is just so liberating!

Orissa Environment Congress, BHUVRANESHWAR
SAVE THE WORLD WITH YOUR FORK!

With the advent of 2015, we found people adopting green resolutions like resolving to go vegetarian/ vegan. Find yourself sitting on the fence? Dr. Chaitanya Koduri, Science Policy Adviser, PETA India will help you decide!

The In 2007, when I became interested in researching cancer and decided to further my studies, I learned how a plant-based instead of a meat-based diet can help prevent certain forms of cancer or other ailments like heart disease. I realized at this point, that just with the power of the fork, I can help save so many lives.

I now work with the vegan advocacy group PETA India. When I first joined them, I already knew choosing not to eat animals was best for animals and for my own health, but now I know it’s also best for the planet.

Animal-based food products like meat, milk, and eggs are highly resource-intensive, inefficient and polluting. To put it simply, it is far more efficient to eat plants and to drink water directly than to channel huge amounts of it through animals deliberately bred for meat, milk or eggs first over their shortened lifetimes.

According to the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), a shocking over 70% of the global freshwater consumption is used in animal farming. And as the world’s appetite for meat increases, countries across the globe are bulldozing huge swaths of land to make room for more animals and the crops that feed them. Animal agriculture is also the single largest use of land. It occupies 31.5 million km² of land, about 45% of global surface area.

But that’s not all. The production of meat and other animal products is also a major contributor of the greenhouse gasses that cause climate change. According to a report published by the Worldwatch Institute, an estimated 51 per cent of worldwide greenhouse gas emissions are attributable to agriculture, specifically cattle, buffalo, sheep, goats, camels, pigs and poultry deliberately bred to be killed and used for food!

And a report from UNEP’s international panel of sustainable resource management released in 2010 said a global shift towards a vegan diet is vital to save the world from hunger, fuel poverty and the worst impacts of climate change.

Just with the power of the fork, we can also choose to save the planet.
The training was initiated with short extempore speech demonstrations by all the four volunteers selected for the training (i.e. Amitesh, Ishita, Piyusha and myself). These speeches were based on unusual facts known to the participants and the funny part was that none of us got to speak on our own known facts! I met with this kind of experience for the first time and I failed miserably during demonstrations.

During the feedback session that followed, I learned a lot and it changed my understanding on public speaking to a great extent. As Sanchita (the trainer) and other participants unfolded their observations on my errors, I got a lens to see myself speaking, through the audiences’ eyes. Such a perspective made me realise that how small things under broad categories like our body language, voice, structure of content and lastly the engagement strategies for audiences decides whether we are going to be accepted as a good speaker or not. It made me ponder on our tendency to like or listen to some speakers with interest while lose interest in others. The feedback had a demystifying impact on me about how our overlooked small habits that includes body language like pacing around while speaking can be very distracting for the audience.

Sessions that followed included tips on identification of audience and techniques of adaptation in accordance to it. Knowing the motivation of audience is important and skills can be groomed to master the same. We gave another demonstration for which each one of us had to assume different audiences and adapt accordingly. Feedback was overwhelming and I had improved a lot on my skills like rest of us. Self-realisation exercise had led to our cautious and deliberate efforts to minimise errors.

For me, the training was more than an enriching experience with participants from different backgrounds including law, designing, communications and engineering. One can find a great deal of enthusiasm, energy, humour and devotion in these people. Also Sanchita knows how to become a part of group and facilitate the learning from one another. The training lasted for the whole day and she kept us involved in activities that were aimed at participatory learning. I am thankful to all of them. I look forward to be a part of Green Speakers team conducting sessions around the city and the team work aiming at recruiting large number of volunteers in the coming months.
HOW IT ALL BEGAN

Vidhya Lakshmi, our Volunteer Leader and Online Volunteer in Coimbatore, explains how the group of volunteers in the city began their journey with us.

Greenpeace has been close to my heart for years now. But standing up to “Free the Arctic 30” meant that I was on a mission, a very meaningful one. I had to wake my city to bring it on its heels for a cause. This could mean the initiation of the Coimbatore Chapter.

Environmental creation or destruction always is a cycle or circle of events, one would perturb the other. The Arctic was no different. The oil companies aimed at acquiring the fuels besides the environmental destruction, which meant oil spill, global warming, climate change, disturbance in the food chain, disasters. It was not Greenpeace versus Gasprom or Shell but People versus Sense and Justice.

There existed this population who ended up calling the activists as “hooligans”. I didn’t know if we had to laugh at the mere foolishness of that population or weep for the activists who headed off to “Save the Arctic”. Instead, we started putting some sense into the people and getting together the ones who already had them.

It has been an awesome experience to organize an event in our city which made such a huge impact. So, now here we are "Volunteers of Greenpeace Coimbatore". We also received loads of support from the Coimbatore crowd who stand out to be the pillars of support for the event. GREENPEACE COIMBATORE, thus, EMERGED!
HOW TO CONDUCT YOUR OWN TWEETATHON

1. Figure out WHY you are doing this!

Be clear about what the objective of the marathon is - to create awareness, to get sign ups or participation for an event. This is important because it’ll help you prepare and communicate the details of the event much better.

2. Freeze on the CORRECT TIME to run the event!

Weekends are great days to run a Twitter event because people are free! Also, evenings are a good time during the week. But if you have the event for too long, then people will get bored. So keep it for 1-2 hours. Inform participants well in advance about the event.

3. Ensure you have relevant INFORMATION for the marathon

It’s always best to be well prepared for Twitter marathons. If it’s for an event, keep the details ready in tweets; if a petition, then a trackable URL of petition so that you know people have signed because of your tweets, etc. Also, have sample tweets ready so that even lazy or busy people can participate!

4. Be REACTIVE during the event.

Space out your tweets. RT others’ tweets and reply to questions you get. Don’t just blindly send out tweets into the Twitterverse! Start conversations, engage in healthy debates, and try to convert people into actual interested supporters! This will give you a good following and will make you feel fantastic about yourself!

For more details on how to pull off a stunner of a Twitter event, check out this useful guide created by the social media team in Greenpeace India.

VOL. OF FAME

CHAITTANYA KUMAR

The first to start a conversation on the online volunteer Whatsapp group... and the last to end it! Chaittanya, or Chai (for his contribution to the #CleanChai campaign), is an energy machine who is always available to stir up fun and work! He will address every comment, every joke, and every question. How can anyone not want to have him around in the group?!

He started out as an active online volunteer. And his introduction to the offline group in Pune didn’t reduce his participation any bit! He now does a great balancing act between the two - helping organize offline events and doing online promotions for the same. He’s also been featured a lot in the Greenpeace online channels - posing as a chai walla for the pesticides campaign, in GP International’s page for the #Cofrentes17 activity - and is always a part of every selfie and photo that the Pune group takes!

Chaittanya is the kind of volunteer every coordinator dreams to work with! Keep up the star work, Chai!