# Changelooms

# **Youth Leaders in Climate Action**

# 2024 Winter Cohort



**Changeloomers' Profiles** 



















Youth leader Name: Aijaz Ahmad Wani

Trans person, 24

Location: Srinagar, Kashmir Email: ajazw7425@gmail.com

About the youth leader: Aijaz hails from a village called Badgaum in Srinagar. Being a trans person, he has faced marginalisation within his community but he persevered. College for him was a turning point because he got the freedom to become confident and comfortable in his own skin. This is why he believes that education has the power to change society. With his deep-seated desire to create a social impact and leave a better place for the world, he entered the space of gender, health, and climate change. In a short span, of 2-3 years, he has engaged with multi-level stakeholders like the municipal department, forest department, etc. which positioned him as a youth leader and inspiring influencer within his community. His vision for the future is "Green City, Green Village."



Youth leader Name: Monuwara Begum

Female, 23

Location: Guwahati, Assam

Email: monuwarabegum391@gmail.com

About the youth leader: Monuwara originates from Guwahati, Assam. She harbors a profound passion for instigating change within her community, embodying confidence, empathy, hopefulness, and determination to contribute to any transformative efforts. Since completing her graduation, she has been actively engaged with communities in Guwahati through her involvement with YUVA. Additionally, she is eager to immerse herself in the realm of climate action. Monuwara firmly advocates for the extensive promotion of solar energy initiatives in Guwahati.

**Ecosystem** 















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Youth leader Name: Shivam Kumar

Male, 27

Location: Rohtas, Bihar

Email: shivamkumarpooja@gmail.com

About the vouth leader: Shivam completed his BSc in Mathematics and was on the verge of pursuing a banking career. However, upon witnessing the cruelty and neglect inflicted upon animals, he made a life-altering decision to devote himself to the conservation of wildlife and biodiversity. A profoundly passionate individual, Shivam has collaborated with various organisations and departments such as Van Vibhag, Nehru Yuva Kendra, and Kamur Wildlife Sanctuary. In these roles, he has undertaken tasks such as rescuing snakes, raising awareness about reptiles, dispelling myths among community members, and revitalising ecosystems by inspecting and planting specific trees. Additionally, he has been instrumental in spreading awareness about endangered bird species. His overarching goal is to foster harmony between

humanity and nature while delving deeply into the realm of climate action. Although he aspires to establish his own organization in the future, his current focus is on reshaping the mindset of his community members regarding wildlife and biodiversity.



Youth leader Name: Nikita Sahu

Female, 23

Location: Rajgarh, Madhya Pradesh Email: nikkysahu66448@gmail.com

# **About the youth leader:**

Nikita Sahu, a 22-year-old woman, hails from Raigarh, Madhya Pradesh. Her father earns a livelihood as a street fruit vendor, while her mother is a homemaker. Nikita has dedicated the past 1.5 years to volunteering with Ahimsa. Additionally, she has pursued work as a mehendi artist and has contributed to short-term projects with other NGOs such as Shrishti in Delhi. Nikita has actively engaged in promoting constitutional values and advocating for child rights in rural areas of Raigarh. She holds a deep-seated passion for advancing girls' education and

















striving for gender equality.



Youth leader Name: Shraddha Soni

Female, 26

Location: Seoni, Madhya Pradesh Email: shraddhasoni17111998@gmail.com

About the youth leader: Shraddha had dreams of attending a reputable college but wasn't allowed as she became the sole earning member and had to look after 6 sisters. From being a child whose decisions were often made for her, she has slowly found the courage to make decisions for the family and pursue her passion for climate action. She taught science at Agrini School and within the education space, she has held awareness workshops for her students on reptile conservation and curated bird and jungle walks. Her goal is to foster harmonious coexistence between humans and nature. She has a keen interest in working in the area of biodiversity and wildlife conservation.



Youth leader Name: Sneha Chauhan

Female, 23

Location: Sheopur, Madhya Pradesh Email: snehachauhan796175@gmail.com

About the youth leader: Sneha belongs to a remote village in Sheopru district, MP. She hails from a farming family. From her college days, she has been living independently and supported her education by doing part-time jobs. From being an active member of the NSS during her college days to working with organisations like Ajeevika Mission and Parhit Samaj Seva Sanstha, she has rich experience in the field of creating women SHGs and linking them to livelihood opportunities, organic farming, etc. Sneha demonstrates solid leadership abilities and has mobilised people on the ground to conduct rallies and campaigns. Extremely confident, articulate, and assertive. She is passionate about forest conservation, river

conservation, organic farming, and kitchen gardens.



















Youth leader Name: Ashutosh Singh

Male, 26

Location: Mumbai, Maharashtra

Email: atharvtheeducationhub@gmail.com

About the youth leader: Ashutosh is a young community leader from Mumbai who has been working in his community as a change leader for over 8 years now. He passionately believes in the issue of Climate Change and has been engaged in community action with the Magic Bus Foundation. He has built a strong trust and influence in his community. After winning the Water Hero Academy competition, he was invited to Manchester City to collect it. He has demonstrated strong entrepreneurial, active citizenship, and mobilising skills through his work over the years. He wants to deepen his work in his community and is looking at Changelooms as a great platform for learning and growth.



Youth leader Name: Pratap Kumar Deo

Male, 26

Location: Jujumora, Odisha Email: pratapkudeo@gmail.com

About the youth leader: Pratap hails from a tribal-dominated rural area of Sambalpur district in Odisha. An enthusiastic young man with a passion for working for the community, especially in the realm of climate change/sustainability. Deep active citizenship experience through Patang and has been working on the ground for many years with active mentorship from Patang. A self-starter, committed, grounded, and hopeful person. Learns through experiences and embraces and takes responsibility for the context he belongs to. He shares deep relationships with members of the community.























Youth leader Name: Suneel Sagar

Male, 24

Location: Sambalpur, Odisha

Email: Sunilsagarsbp2000@gmail.com

About the youth leader: Over the years, Suneel has experienced poverty and marginalisation but has been resourceful, passionate, and determined. Suneel is self-taught, continued his education with scholarships, and has done part-time jobs to financially support his family since class 8th. He has volunteered with an organisation called ABCD (Any Body Can Develop) and ran free tuition classes for children in his slum. Deeply passionate about working with communities on climate change and has relevant on-ground experience and a deep, intersectional understanding. "Zameen pe sota hu, aur zameen se juda hua hun."- Suneel



Youth leader Name: Manish Saini

Male, 25

Location: Jaipur, Rajasthan

Email: sainimanishvirat@gmail.com

About the youth leader: Manish belongs to the rural community in Jaipur. He has over 5 years of work experience in the social sector. He has worked on different themes - SRHR, life skills, and climate change (specifically mobilising farmers to construct water harvesting structures, and building poly houses) with different stakeholders. Manish believes that for youth, livelihood is the major issue. Inspired by his father's work in the social sector, he moved into the same from an early age. He has participated in GP meetings with his father from class 11. He has worked part-time at Indian Grameen Service and plans to pursue a PhD in rural development. Manish

states that his community faces a shortage of water, there is a general lack of awareness and education, a lack of teachers in govt schools, high-school girl dropouts, early marriage, and no scope for youth. He is keen on finding solutions for the above-mentioned challenges.

**Ecosystem** 

















Youth Initiative: Wild

Themes: Climate Change, Malnutrition, and health issues due to polluted environment and food,

sustainable livelihood for rural and marginalised people.

Target Group: Farmers, marginalized and rural people, youth and children

Location: Bihar

## The motivation behind Organisation:

Born and brought up in Bokaro, Jharkhand, Shivani got to see mud houses, paddy and corn fields and many other indigenous crops in her early childhood. With time, the industrialisation of the villages- road construction, coal mining, and explosive factories became a part of the rural milieu. Because of polluted air, water, and food, many people in her village suffered from multiple diseases, like cancer, kidney failure, upset abdomen, loss of eyesight, and many more. After declining a corporate job because they were promoting commercial farming Shivani traveled across the country to learn sustainable farming practices. She started Wild where she promotes sustainable ways of farming, living, and food, along with creating livelihood for marginalized people, especially women.

Their goal is focused on creating grassroots-level leadership.



Anchor Name: Shivani Kumari

Female, 29

Location: Jamui, Bihar

Email id: shivani.wild2022@gmail.com

**About anchor:** Shivani comes from a rural conservative family in Jharkhand where she battled gender norms through sheer will. Because of polluted air, water, and food, she saw many diseases crop up in her village. She left a corporate internship because of its adverse impact on ecology as they were promoting commercial farming. After that, she traveled across the country trying to understand the traditional and indigenous farming practices and eventually started Wild Trust.



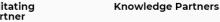
Co-anchor name: Sangam Kumari

Female, 22

Location: Jamui, Bihar

Email id: <a href="mailto:sangamkumarisingh677@gmail.com">sangamkumarisingh677@gmail.com</a>

**About co-anchor:** Sangam comes from a farming family with a deep knowledge of the local ecology. She comes from a place called Simultala, which was known as mini Shimla. Over time she has seen the effect of climate change in Simultala. The place is now known for















heatwaves and pollution, because of industrialisation. She is deeply passionate about changing the narrative of development.

Youth Initiative: Gepo Ali

Themes: Delocalisation of indigenous food crops and its impact on culture and tradition.

Target Group: 25 and above, diabetic people, Farmers especially women Farmers (especially Adi Tribe)

Location: Arunachal Pradesh

## The motivation behind the Organisation:

There were three major motivations behind starting the organisation.

- First, the delocalisation of food crops leads to the loss of symbolic meaning that is associated with the particular food. This further leads to the loss of disappearance of specific tastes and material culture associated with the food.
- Second, the local autonomy of energy resources gets compromised which is a major cause of the
  dissipation of traditional farming practices and agro biodiversity. This compromised system
  restrains the indigenous knowledge system. The social-ecological memory and health fail to
  strike a balance with all the changes.
- Third, the region lags a supportive ecosystem for women farmers to grow and help them with the right market reach.

They did a pilot with 75 Kgs of millets. In 2023, they introduced the seed of adlay millet to the local women farmers of Dambuk for the first time. They procured harvested adlay millet from women farmers from the Upper Siang district and launched it in the local market in Dambuk after processing in Dambuk with a team of local women.



**Anchor Name:** Dimum Pertin

Female, 31

Location: Dambuk, Arunachal Pradesh

Email id: dimum11@gmail.com

**About anchor:** Dimum is a driven and passionate young entrepreneur who works with women of tribal communities to build a group of "Agripreneurs". She is a brilliant storyteller. She started this organisation because her grandmother in old age did not have access to healthy food that she liked. So she started working on an indigenous variety of millets.

















Co-anchor name: Omem Pertin

Female, 22

Location: Dambuk, Arunachal Pradesh

Email id: elaichepertin@gmail.com

About co-anchor: Omem herself is a farmer and comes from the very community she is working in. She has a deep understanding of local issues and the local geography. She is deeply rooted in the environment and strives to work towards creating more climate-resilient farming practices. She grew up in this region and time saw food practices change and is deeply committed to preserving traditional knowledge.

Youth Initiative: Fco Reform

Themes: How climate change is impacting Prisoners and how we can make Climate Adaptive prisons

with a human-centric approach

Target Group: Prisoners, Prison officials, Families of Prisoners

Location: New Delhi

#### The motivation behind the Organisation:

Lakshay's journey towards climate activism was spurred by a profound realisation during the winter of 2018 when they grappled with health issues attributed to air pollution, a stark consequence of climate change. This awakening catalyzed their involvement in disaster relief efforts, where they witnessed firsthand the escalating frequency and intensity of natural calamities across India. Overlooked in the broader discourse, prisons have an ecological footprint, consuming resources for energy, construction, and maintenance. Environmental upheaval driven by climate change can also escalate conflicts, potentially funnelling more individuals into the criminal justice system. Recognising these disparities, it's imperative to integrate climate justice into the conversation and to consider prison infrastructure resilience and post-release employment opportunities as vital aspects of holistic reform.

Their primary goal is the development of a comprehensive Statement of Purpose, serving as a strategic blueprint for the integration of climate-resilient infrastructure within prison facilities.

**Ecosystem** 







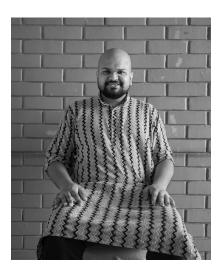












Anchor Name: Lakshay Gender non-conforming, 25

Location: New Delhi

Email id: lakshav.00009@gmail.com

**About anchor:** Lakshay is a dedicated neurodivergent professional in the realm of social impact, they channel their efforts towards addressing intersectional issues with a central focus on fostering kindness and nurturing youth leadership. They believe that urgent collective action is the answer to the Climate Crisis. He is very inspired by the global solidarity among youth, Lakshay passionately advocates for environmental stewardship, asserting the imperative of reclaiming our planet and securing a sustainable future for all beings.



Co-anchor name: Karan Kumar

Male, 25

Location: New Delhi

Email id: officalkarannagar@gmail.com

**About co-anchor:** Karan is an ex-prisoner and forms the Reform part of Eco Reform. He is committed towards building a better life for prisoners. He is a prototype of the restorative justice system. He is very optimistic about the future of the world and believes that everyone needs to contribute to it through collaboration. Through sheer grit, he shows that one can learn from past mistakes and bring about a more meaningful change in the world.

Youth Initiative: Alarmo Charitable Public Trust

Themes: Building awareness and inspiring action in locals on environmental issues

Target Group: Children, youth and women

Location: Kannur, Kerala

#### The motivation behind the Organisation:

Anchor was heavily involved in the relief work during Kerala 2018 floods and saw the impact of Climate on the lives of people, this experience made her concerned about people's lack of environmental





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responsibility. A leadership training at Kanthari International Institute inspired the co-anchor to create alarmo. Alarmo is for protecting the environment for kids, and we urge the kids to become involved and take action.



Anchor Name: Akhina Mohan V K

Female, 28

Location: Kannur, Kerala

Email id: akhinamohan@alarmoindia.org

About anchor: Ahina has been in love with nature and plants since a young age and was interested in protecting the environment. This led to her master's degree in environmental science. She was facing constant struggles in inspiring locals on climate action and how to use her learnings from college in action. Supporting relief work in the August 2018 Kerala floods was a transformative experience for her. This brought her to the social sector where she started a group of young people, worked with Goonj, and started Alarmo.



Co-anchor name: Snobin Prakash K

Male, 28

Location: Kannur, Kerala

Email id: <a href="mailto:snob16snw@gmail.com">snob16snw@gmail.com</a>

About co-anchor: Snobin is a Certified Safety Engineer who has gained excellent knowledge in risk assessment and hazard prevention which are present in the workplace and the ability to implement control measures to prevent it. He left his job to work on Climate action. He has been involved with the organisation since its inception and is a strong ally in

community engagement. He also has some great photography skills



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Youth Initiative: Wild Roots

Themes: Agroforestry, Biodiversity, Rewilding, Forest-based livelihoods

Target Group: Local farmers and youth groups

Location: Seoni, MP

# The motivation behind the Organisation:

Growing up in a Police Colony, Shirish's (anchor) father had a community backyard garden. Since childhood, he has been a part of maintaining that garden and that's where his interest in Environment came from. During his time at Agrini, he was involved in plantation work. Over time area of Seoni saw a



lot of deforestation, industrialisation, building of highways, government projects, and plant cover depletion. This led to his interest in rewilding and starting this organisation.

**Anchor Name: Shirish Chouriya** 

Male, 32

Location: Seoni, MP

Email id: <a href="mailto:shirishchouriya@gmail.com">shirishchouriya@gmail.com</a>

**About anchor:** Shirish has dedicated his life to Seoni. He cares deeply about the people and the ecosystem of Seoni. He recognised the gap in the public education system of Seoni which is why he leveraged the exposure he got as a part of an international exchange program in the UK and bought that to Agrini Public School. He is passionate about the Constitution and Citizenship.



Co-anchor name: Narendra Pawar

Male, 30

Location: Seoni, MP

Email id: narendrarock966@gmail.com

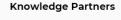
About co-anchor: Narendra has been an avid sports player throughout his life. He has taught young kids sports and dance at Agrini for the past 10 years. He is an important part of the Agrini team and has arranged many cultural programs. He has contributed to the holistic development of students at Agrini. He is also geographically very rooted and has an

extensive understanding of geography.































Youth Initiative: COHAS

Themes: Education, Art& Culture, Constitutional values and environment

Target Group: Children, Adolescents and Youth

Location: New Delhi

# The motivation behind the Organisation:

In 10th grade, Ankush (anchor) initiated a clothing drive with, where he would distribute clothes to a Pakistani refugee community, and realised that there were children in the vicinity. This prompted the thought of whether something more could be done for them. Later in his life, he came across Pravah, which opened up a new realm of possibilities. The exposure fueled his interest and provided clarity on how to progress and make a tangible impact. The transition from a simple clothing drive to actively engaging with underprivileged children on Sundays was the first step. Which later translated into COHAS. The organisation aims to address the comprehensive development of adolescents and children in the Adivasi Nehru Nagar slum through arts-based education and creative waste reuse.



Anchor Name: Ankush

Male, 20

Location: New Delhi

Email id: ankush5012004@gmail.com

About anchor: Shirish has dedicated his life to Seoni. He cares deeply about the people and the ecosystem of Seoni. He recognised the gap in the public education system of Seoni which is why he leveraged the exposure he got as a part of an international exchange program in the UK and bought that to Agrini Public School. He is passionate about the Constitution and Citizenship.



**Co-anchor name:** Shreyansh Srivastav

Male, 22

Location: New Delhi

Email id: shreyanshsrivastav78@gmail.com

**About co-anchor:** Shreyansh's journey has just started but he has taken up different opportunities to show his dedication towards

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working for a cause. He has organised blood donation camps, and job mela (in partnership with NGO) for people with disabilities. He is passionate about the work they are doing and showed interest in embedding the climate agenda in their organisation.

Youth Initiative: Gram Chetna Andolan

Themes: Climate Crisis, Local Governance, Community Development

Target Group: Women and Adolescent Youth from marginalised community

Location: Sitamarhi, Bihar

# The motivation behind the Organisation:

Growing up in villages of India the founder and Co-founder of Gram Chetna Andolan saw development reach to the villages very late. Even then the spirit of community was intact in the villages. But with time they saw changes around them and spaces for dialogue and discussions in villages started shrinking. From 2013 to 2020 they lived in a commune in Delhi where they experimented and learned deeply about collective living. They also delved deeper into social issues like Climate Change, inequality and Gender and realised that all these things are interconnected. They realised that people living in the villages are probably the most vulnerable. So they decided to go back to their villages and start Gram Chetna Andolan to work on these issues.



**Anchor Name: Priyanka Kumari** 

Female, 28

Location: Sitamarhi, Bihar

Email id: priyamirandahouse@gmail.com

**About anchor:** Priyanka Kumari used to travel to different villages to complete her studies. In 2010, she was the first woman in her family to clear 10th-class exams. She then was inspired to join Miranda House in DU as she got to know about the culture and the freedom women get there. Her deep passion is to create a safe space for

women in her community and all her work is around that. After working in her village for a long time, she has a good influence in her community.

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ground to understand ground realities.

Co-anchor name: Alok Chandra Prakash

Male, 30

Location: Sitamarhi, Bihar

Email id: helloacprakash@gmail.com

About co-anchor: Alok is deeply interested in Rural India and understanding its cultural, political, and ecological significance. He has engaged with the local community and created a movement to assert the political existence/relevance of Panchayat and Urban local bodies. He was very inspired by the Anna Hazare Movement and decided to quit engineering and designed a learning journey for himself where he worked extensively on the

Youth Initiative: Muhaan

**Themes:** Conscious and Responsible Tourism Practices, Land Ownership and Threat of Commercial Ventures, Sustainable Livelihood Opportunities, Conservation of Traditional Knowledge and Cultural Heritage.

Target Group: Eastern Himalayan rural communities, Women from SHG groups

Location: Kalimpong Gorubathan, West Bengal

#### The motivation behind the Organisation:

In their efforts to empower remote rural communities, they prioritise initiatives aimed at retaining community land ownership, promoting responsible and community-based tourism, and conserving cultural practices and heritage. Their focus is on creating sustainable livelihoods for youths, mitigating outward migration challenges, and fostering overall community development through these integrated approaches. They aim to ensure economic sustainability for Muhaan and local communities.



Anchor Name: Arunabha Dam

Male, 33

Location: Kalimpong Gorubathan, West Bengal

Email id: frommuhaan@gmail.com

**About anchor:** Arunabha Dam, originally from Guwahati, Assam, and now residing in Samsing, Kalimpong District, West Bengal, embarked on extensive travels post-graduation, exploring secluded villages in Northeast India. Recognising the



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importance of preserving these villages' pristine nature, he co-founded the Muhaan Collective, prioritizing sustainable, community-led tourism. Together, they foster grassroots civil societies like the N.V.S.E, transforming tourism into a movement for sustainable connections between communities and tourists.



Co-anchor name: Vicky Sharma

Male, 29

Location: Kalimpong Gorubathan, West Bengal

Email id: sv449608vicky@gmail.com

About co-anchor: Vicky, a self-taught visual artist and Social Entrepreneur in Kalimpong, India, leads Muhaan, a community tourism organization in the Eastern Himalayas. As a founding member of the Neora Valley Sustainable Ecological Society, he collaborates with forest communities. Through visual storytelling, Vicky documents the lives and landscapes of Darjeeling Hills and Eastern Himalayas, sparking conversations on human-nature relationships and adaptation to change, inviting viewers to connect with embedded emotions.

















