



*Review 2017*



# THE JOURNEY



*“Finally I was able to see that if I had a contribution I wanted to make, I must do it, despite what others said.*

*That I was OK the way I was.*

*That it was all right to be strong.”*

— Wangari Maathai

I reach out to Wangari’s words often - it is all right to be strong. It is also all right to be vulnerable. In my vulnerabilities this year, I found strength, confusion, clarity, learnings and the realisation that you can’t do it alone - and I embraced that. This embracing forms the foundation of the values we have chosen to nurture for our individual selves and for Alaap, the organisation.

The following pages talk about our pilot projects in 2017, our work with the district administration, the contribution of our partner organisations, our approach to the forestry issues in Uttarakhand and our plans for 2018. This is also an invitation for sharing and coming together.

Community is everything. Let’s co-create it.

sheeba

13 July 2017  
Satkhol



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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Just as 2016 was spent in understanding the 'forestry conundrum of Uttarakhand', 2017 marked the beginning of experimenting with ideas and innovating sustainable and scalable solutions.

The question we chose to address was: how do we bring back our original, authentic native forests? Anthropogenic pressure on forests, current development policies, climate change and public apathy was hugely impacting the stability of Uttarakhand's ecology. It was clear that protection alone wasn't enough.

Conventional Plantation method in Uttarakhand was known to yield at best 40-60% survival rates with restricted bio-diversity. We needed to address the key issues of long gestation periods, low survival rates and bio-diversity loss to increase stakeholder investment and show measurable impact. We needed to look beyond just growing trees and perhaps look at growing 'natural forests'?

In August we created a pilot native forest using Miyawaki Method, a method tried and tested through out the world to bring back native forests, by PNV scientist Dr. Akira Miyawaki. The results were staggering, with a survival rate of over 90% and an average growth rate of a meter annually. We planted a dense forest of 700 trees over 200 m<sup>2</sup> comprising of 27 species.

Four months later, we were invited by the district administration of Champawat in Kumaon to initiate an innovation project which creates a more holistic definition of the development paradigm in the state, one that addresses the triple bottom line of planet, people and profit. It would be the start of an extensive, ambitious 5-year project.

In keeping with our mission, we also experimented with the theme of 'Inner and Outer Ecology' through a workshop with young people in Kumaon, with the aim of facilitating oneness with nature for better ecological and personal outcomes. Our work with Van Panchayat Sangathans in 3 districts of Kumaon continued to strengthen community leadership with the aim of catalysing active community investment in creating native forests in their own backyards and for better governance of Van Panchayats.

Financially, we sustained this year through generous individual donations and volunteer inputs. We curated 'Forest Creation Workshops' to attract participants from the world over to generate income for the organisation. Going forward, this hybrid model of income will define our organisation growth.

Next year we shall invest in research of native species of India and deepen our understanding of how trees grow and form associations. We will invest in the communities we work with on themes of 'oneness with nature', inner and outer ecology and skilling individuals in the Miyawaki Method. We will explore opportunities in other states too to test our proof of concept. In doing all this, sustainable forestry based enterprise promotion will form the bedrock of our approach. Organisationally, we'll primarily invest in our 'people', creating opportunities for holistic, personal and professional growth for every team member.

We can bring back our native forests, simply by creating them.

**Sheeba Sen**  
Founder and CEO





## ABOUT US

Alaap is a social enterprise working in native forest creation and eco-leadership.

We work with governments, rural and urban communities and businesses to create native forests and advocate for more equitable forest rights securing livelihoods and creating opportunities for eco-entrepreneurship.

We envision a world where nature and communities *thrive* in harmony.

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Alaap's mission is to bring back our native forests,  
by creating them through community action.

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## WHERE WE WORK



## OUR MODEL

We believe that it is possible to meet the challenges of climate change, promoting and reviving natural and cultural heritage as well as creating livelihoods through

### Native Forest Creation



Our triple bottom line is to meet the needs of people and planet together, while ensuring the financial sustainability of our interventions.



# WHAT WE DO



## Native forest creation

Creating native forests  
using Miyawaki Method



## Eco-leadership

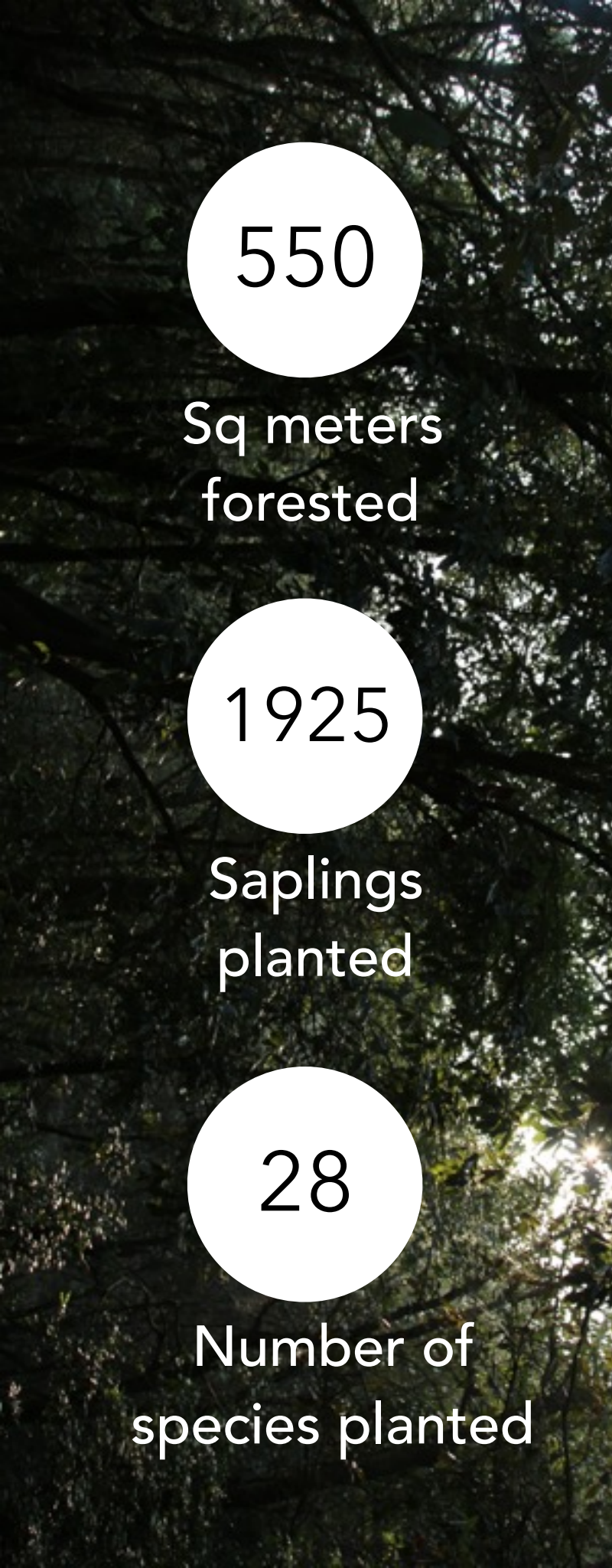
Strengthening  
community by creating  
eco-leaders



## Research and advocacy

In-house research, building  
legal awareness and making  
policy recommendations





550

Sq meters  
forested

1925

Saplings  
planted

28

Number of  
species planted

## YEAR AT A GLANCE

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2017 was a year of experiments to assess “proof of concept” and scalability of our interventions.

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Much of the year was spent doing pilots of all kinds - testing, refining and then scaling them. These included:

- ❖ Uttarakhand’s very first Miyawaki forest
- ❖ Legal awareness workshops with community
- ❖ Launch of our community newsletter ~ Van Jagriti
- ❖ Exploring Inner & Outer Ecology as means for co-creating communities
- ❖ Start of a new project with District Administration, Champawat



# MILESTONES

Uttarakhand's very first Miyawaki forest is planted in collaboration with Afforestt!



 **AUG 2017**

 **SEPT 2017**



Alaap holds the first Himalayan workshop to teach the Miyawaki Method



 **OCT 2017**



Our newsletter Van Jagriti is launched to spread awareness on legal issues and advocacy for Van Panchayats.



**NOV 2017**



We partner with Bhoomi College to pilot our eco leadership work with youth on inner and outer ecology.



**FEB 2018**



First workshop for Champawat youth and community members held in Satoli



**JAN 2018**



We start our work in Champawat. New district, new challenges and new learnings!



Indicates native forest creation



# THE YEAR IN REVIEW: NATIVE FOREST CREATION

In August, we planted a pilot Miyawaki forest in village Satkhol, at the back of our office. This would help us test out the methodology for the Himalayan region.

The pilot involved creating two 100 m<sup>2</sup> patches of mixed natural forest. We adopted a methodology by the Japanese scientist, Dr. Akira Miyawaki. The reasoning behind conducting the pilot was two-fold:

- ▶ Was there a better way of growing trees than the conventional plantation methods being used in Uttarakhand?
- ▶ Could fast growing, dense, natural and wild forests catch the interest of critical stakeholders: local community, government departments and investors, through a creation vs. protection approach?

This was also a step towards developing an 'Eco-Restoration' agenda in Alaap as opposed to just a 'Community Forestry' centric approach, which concentrated essentially on protection and management of existing forests.

Watch the video of our workshop explaining the method [here](#).





# NATIVE FOREST CREATION

## The Miyawaki Method

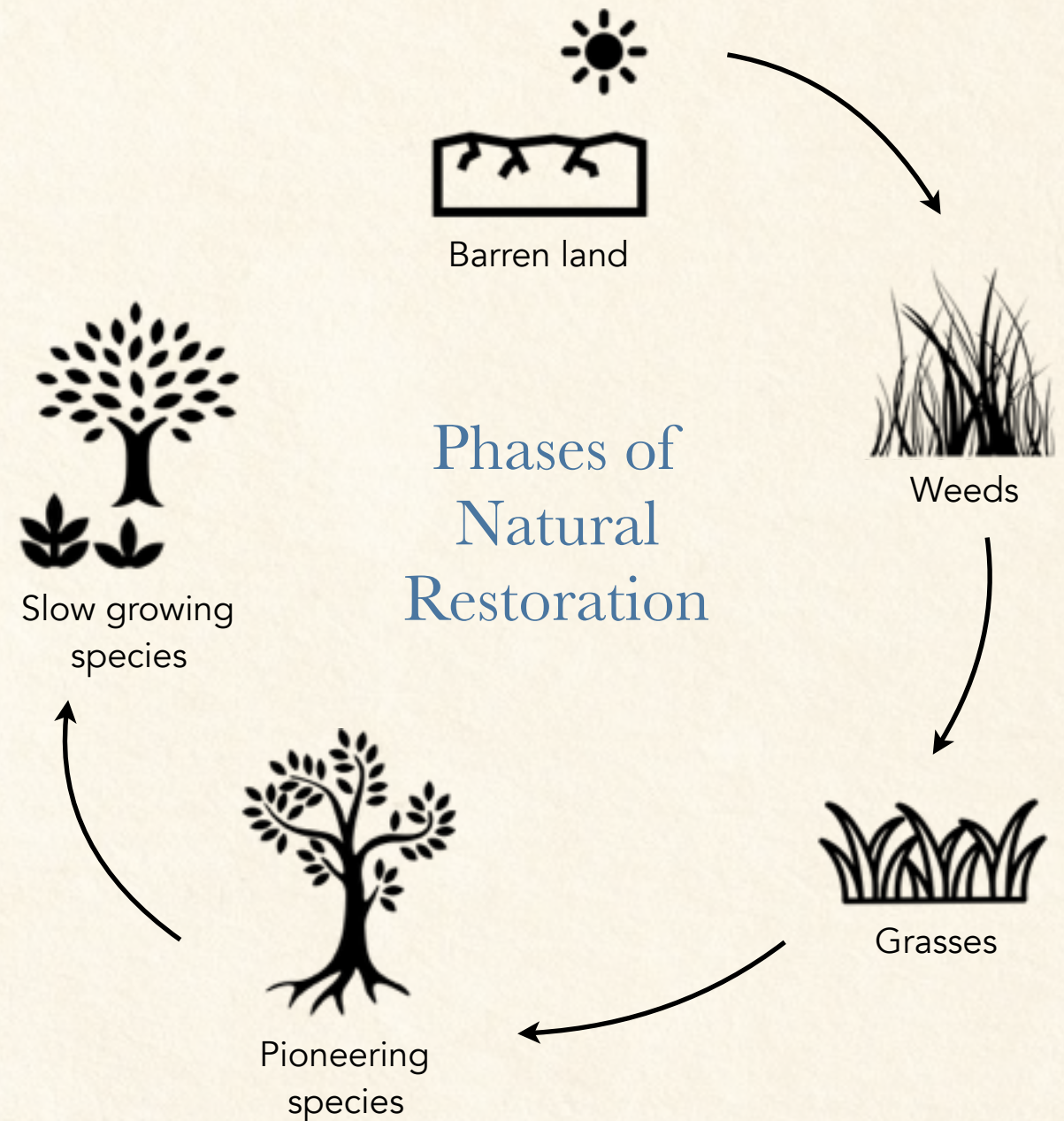
Named after the Japanese scientist Dr. Akira Miyawaki, this methodology has been extremely successful with over 17 million trees planted in 1700 locations.

Such forests are multi-layered forests and mimic the densest parts of native undisturbed forests. Since the methodology rests on providing the best possible start to the forest, such forests can grow upto

>> 10x faster   >> 30x denser   >> 100x bio-diverse.

The simplest definition of the Miyawaki method is random and dense plantation of native species. The core scientific principles on which the method is based are:

1. **Potential Natural Vegetation or PNV:** PNV is vegetation that grows on a patch of land when left undisturbed by human intervention for a long period of time.
2. **Natural Restoration:** When a barren piece of land is left undisturbed, it evolves through several vegetation phases.



When these two ideas are implemented in optimum soil conditions nature is able to create a resilient forest in a short period of time.



# NATIVE FOREST CREATION



Soil Survey



Sapling preparation/  
procurement



Forest creation  
with community

Native species and Biomass  
Survey



Prepare soil  
and mound



Maintenance and  
Monitoring





# NATIVE FOREST CREATION

	Date of Plantation	Saplings Planted	Species Planted	Cost per Sapling	Times Watered	Survival Rate*
Site #1	03/08/17	350	27	213	2	95.6%
Site #2	06/08/17	350	27	213	2	92.3%
Site #3	03/10/17	525	27	107	3	95.1%
Site #4	09/02/18	350	21	107	3	91.0%
Site #5	19/02/18	350	21	107	3	92.1%

\*As of March 2018



# NATIVE FOREST CREATION

## OUTCOME

The District Administration of Champawat invited Alaap to study how a forest creation project encompassing youth empowerment and eco-entrepreneurship could be initiated in the region.

A 5 year MOU was signed to establish district Champawat as the innovation hub for enterprise driven eco-restoration, bringing back the native forests of the region.

Van Panchayat of Village Satoli, District Nainital, decided to adopt the method and develop parts of their community forest into mixed native forests using the Miyawaki Method. In July 2018, Satoli Van Panchayat in collaboration with Alaap will create a pilot native forest of 600 trees.

## YEAR AHEAD

- In 2018, we shall start the process of creating a robust 'proof of concept' of our forest creation methodology and design.
- We will invest resources on native species research, on documenting and understanding what species associations are formed in undisturbed forests and then mimic those in our forest creations.
- We will aim to set up 3 innovative native species nurseries in Champawat with local individual famers and Van Panchayats. The focus will be on growing native species of the region, generating zero plastic waste and rain water harvesting.
- We will focus on projects that also allow us to experiment with scale and topographies other than the Kumaon Himalayas, which will mean we will work beyond the mountains too.



# THE YEAR IN REVIEW: ECO-LEADERSHIP

In November 2017, we conducted a pilot workshop for youth in collaboration with Bhoomi College, Bangalore.

This 4-day pilot invited 10 young people - a mix of local rural and city urban participants ranging from 18- 32 years. We wanted to test our assumptions:

- ▶ How connected to nature are the youth of today, both rural and urban?
- ▶ Can they transition to becoming eco-leaders who take the lead to implement holistic solutions for their communities, keeping nature in mind?

The workshop was designed on the theme of 'Inner and Outer Ecology' where we touched upon the ecological issues facing the Himalayan region today, in parallel with triggers for self-level introspective work. The running narrative was of oneness with nature based on the belief that when we navigate through the complexities of our 'inner' world, we will connect more deeply with our outer world, and vice versa. It is this deep connection with nature that can give birth to an Eco-Entrepreneur, an Eco-Activist, a Conservationist or a Nature Lover.





# ECO-LEADERSHIP



After an intense four-day workshop, we were able to see visible transformations in the motivation and attitudes of our young participants. Learn more about the workshop and the participants [here](#).



*“Before this workshop, I would be very hesitant about speaking up. This workshop has helped me deal with that anxiety. I feel I can speak my mind and nothing can stop me now.”*

— Kamal (Danya village, Almora)



*“In this workshop, I’ve done so many activities related to forests. Even though we’ve known these forests all our lives, I feel like I have experienced them for the first time in this workshop.”*

— Pushkar (Ramgarh village, Nainital)



*In this workshop I've learnt the importance of patience, experienced a forest closely and learnt about Kumaoni culture.”*

— Tanuj (Dehradun)



# ECO-LEADERSHIP

## OUTCOME

The workshop was a success in validating our concept.

In just 4 days, we experienced tender transformations in the young participants.

Local youth was most receptive to a more personal investment in them and exhibited the love and concern they harbour for their forests and the frustrations of not being able to do much.

It was decided that we pilot a year- long intervention with young people in 2018. The design has been well underway.

## YEAR AHEAD

- In 2018, we shall aim to pilot an 'Eco Leadership Work Experience Program' where we will select a mix of rural and urban young people to form part of Alaap's team for 12 months.
- The crux of the Program will involve them getting involved in our day-to-day work and learn what all is involved in implementing projects on the ground, working with different stakeholders and learning the science and philosophy behind the creation of native forests.



# THE YEAR IN REVIEW: RESEARCH AND ADVOCACY

As our other verticals were taking shape, we understood that Van Panchayats (community-based organisations) will play a critical role in any eco-restoration movement in the region, especially since this time our context was rural. Our focus would be on strengthening the institutions by building collectives that would be mobilised to be pressure groups for legal advocacy and sensitising them of the growing ecological crisis emerging in Uttarakhand and its consequences. We would build community leadership through Van Panchayat Sangathans.

In partnership with Lok Prabandh Vikas Sanstha (LPVS) we held 12 meetings with 3 Van Panchayat Sangathans in districts Nainital (Block Dhari), Almora (Block Takula) and Bageshwar (Block Bageshwar).





# RESEARCH AND ADVOCACY



*“The community forestry leader has no support. He is given no financial support by the government, or anyone else for the time he spends working for his village.”*

— Kundan (Sarpanch, Chakhuta village)

Meetings held with Van Panchayat Sangathans as a collaboration between Alaap and LPVS.  
Watch the videos [here](#).



May 2017



September 2017



October 2017



# RESEARCH AND ADVOCACY

## OUTCOME

In October a joint meeting of three Sangathans and a common charter of advocacy points was drafted. Main points were:

- Autonomy in Van Panchayat functioning with reduced interventions from Forest Department.
- Timely elections to be held in each Van Panchayat for better governance.
- More funding opportunities for Van Panchayats.
- A quarterly meeting was decided to be held with the 3 collectives to share the strategies and activities each would do in their districts to raise awareness of the advocacy agenda.

A quarterly newsletter 'VAN JAGRITI' was launched and so far has a readership of roughly 2000. We aim to double it in 2018.

## YEAR AHEAD

- We aim to strengthen the Sangathans by building Leadership within the collectives. Our advocacy strategy will be on the lines of 'creating tangibles (small native forests) forming a circle of influence based on collaboration and innovation.
- Native Forest Creation workshops, Leadership workshops, legal awareness, non-violent communication and Inner and Outer ecology will be prominent themes for the coming year.



## WITH GRATITUDE

*"Sometimes", said Pooh, "the smallest things take up most room in your heart".*

*- Winnie the Pooh*

Our deepest gratitude goes to Robert Graf for his continued faith and trust in us. His consistent support has formed the bed rock of our high spirits this year. We thank the District Administration, Champawat for their collaborative take to initiate an innovative forestry project, a first of its kind in Uttarakhand.

Our advisory board mentored us in their individual capacities and without their guidance we wouldn't have taken the bold steps we did. We thank them for their support.

Our supporters who generously contributed, thank you for your faith in our work. Helen Hitchcock, for being our FairyGodmother-you've always come to our rescue! Gagan Bansal, who chose to support us through donating a book every month- thank you for starting our library! A big thank you to Ashish Arora of Sonapani Resorts for his generous hospitality and support in organising our workshops.

We are grateful to our partner organisations who embraced the spirit of collaboration with such grace. Afforest provided us with training in the Miyawaki method and guided us through our first project in Champawat.

SpaceMatters contributed with insightful design inputs in forest creation, while Bhoomi College, Bangalore guided us in learning processes and facilitated our youth workshop. LPVS kept the momentum on with nurturing community leadership in Van Panchayats and finally, Utsaah, which is promoting Alaap's work in the United Kingdom, building long-term funding channels and volunteering programs. We thank them all.

We thank all those who volunteered with us and cheered us along! Laith, coming all the way from Jordan to make a video for us. Shikha and Sunil - thank you for making our youth workshop a success. Jyoti Vidur for helping us with crucial documentation, we'll be always grateful to you all. Dr. Sushil, thank you for your guidance all along and Dr. Puneet for those crucial pats on our backs. We thank our Chartered Accountants - Bahuguna and Associates in Haldwani, and Jigar and Milind in Mumbai - for their sustained support and for getting us registered!

Finally, we are grateful to our families, friends and the people of Kumaon, who patiently witnessed our eccentricities, our audacity to dream, to be unreasonable and uncompromising. You are teaching us to fly!

With gratitude,

Alaap team



# THE ORGANISATION



Native forest creation



**Manvendra Singh Inaniya**

Program lead



**Bhupendra Bisht**

Site manager



**Mansingh**

Nursery manager

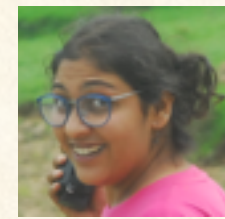


**Vicky Singh**

Transport manager



Eco-leadership



**Aadya Singh**

Program lead



Research and advocacy



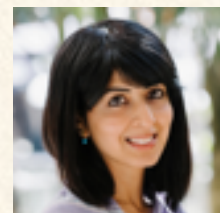
**Ishwar Joshi**

Legal advocacy (LPVS)



**Anita Kanwal**

Legal advocacy (LPVS)



**Sheeba Sen**

Founder and CEO



## OUR PARTNERS



TECHNICAL PARTNER



SPACEMATTERS

DESIGN PARTNER



Bhoomi College,  
Bangalore

LEARNING PARTNER



NETWORKING PARTNER



Lok Prabandh Vikas Sansthan

LEGAL AWARENESS PARTNER



PROJECT PARTNER

## OUR ADVISORY BOARD

- Radha Didi, Lakshmi Ashram, Gandhi Peace Foundation, Social Activist
- Vivek Sharma, Program Director, Gandhi Fellowships, Piramal School of Leadership
- Pranay Singh, Forestry Expert and Eco Entrepreneur
- Sunny Verma, Executive Director, Afforestt
- Meeta Srivastava, Development Consultant



# FINANCES

This year we raised some funds from friends and families, generated some income through workshops and most of all received a lot of support in kind- consultancies, travel arrangements, materials for forest creation, so and so forth. What emerged for us was the learning that a hybrid financial model will be most suitable for Alaap as it grows. Parallel streams of grant funded community based projects, paid workshops and commercial consultancies will give us opportunities to weave in an element of sustainability right from the onset. Infrastructure and other administrative expenses are intended to remain lean in the coming year, with most of the in-house expenditure planned for people investment.



## 2017 Donations

(in no particular order)

Lopita Sen, K.L. Vidur, Seema Nazareth Endowment, Bhupendra Singh, Meena Harsinghani, Gina Ali Khan, Meenakshi Chauhan, Sunil Rao, Deep Joshi, Puneet Singh, Manav Panjwani, Ruth D'Costa, Kishore Ramchandran, Uma Shunmuganathan, Gowri Thiyagarajan, Siddharth, Vasim Shaikh, Sayali Tamane, Umesh Panjwani, Ayush Agarwal, Khushbu, Vijay Srinivas Vittalam, Vijayakala Rajesh, Geethanjali Mallavarapu, Tanisha Sharma, Haran, Harish, Sansuma Brahma, Sofia Samaniego, Vijayakala Vydeeswaran, Kamal Singh, Basavaraj Utnal, N Talwar, Soumitro Sarkar, Thati Vallabh, Amritha Ballal, Gagan Bansal.



# STATEMENT OF INCOME AND EXPENDITURE

Particulars	2017-18
Income	
Donations & Grants	₹ 6,76,475
Income from services	₹ 3,68,000
Total Income	₹ 10,44,475
Expenditure	
Champawat Project	₹ 1,65,390
Forest creation expenses	₹ 54,000
Salary	₹ 1,98,500
Travel	₹ 39,660
Training & Consultation	₹ 2,11,310
Workshop	₹ 91,446
Other Expenses	₹ 24,610
Registration of company fee	₹ 58,270
Total Expense	₹ 8,39,214
Balance	₹ 2,05,260





## VOLUNTEERS AND INTERNS

- Shikha Tripathi, Facilitator, Inner and Outer Ecology
- Sunil Chauhan, Facilitator, Inner and Outer Ecology
- Laith Soudani, Short documentary film on Alaap
- Puranjay Singh, Hindi Manual Translation
- Aarti Dhingra, Forest Creation

## PHOTO CREDITS

- Manvendra Singh Inaniya
- Aadya Singh
- Laith Soudani
- Navendu Sharma
- Madhuri Vijaykumar

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We love hosting volunteers who're interested in travelling to the mountains for a few days/weeks/months and working on documentation, filming, photography, research or even project management. Write to [aadya@alaap.in](mailto:aadya@alaap.in) to get the conversation started.

Alaap is registered under section 7(2) of the Companies Act, 2013 & rule 18 of the Companies (Incorporation) Rules, 2014.

CIN: U85300UR2017NPL007893

Our 80G Certification is under process.

**Invest in us :)**

Account Name: Alaap People's Foundation. Bank: State Bank of India, Almora Branch. Account no.: 36970103380; IFSC code: SBIN0000605



A black and white photograph of a hand holding a small acorn. The hand is positioned in the lower half of the frame, with the palm facing up. The acorn is resting in the center of the palm. The background is a soft, out-of-focus forest scene with trees and foliage. The lighting is natural, creating a serene and contemplative mood.

*And into the forest I go,*

*to lose my mind*

*and find my soul.*

*- John Muir*



