


Bringing Life Back to **Our Lifeline**





Bringing Life Back to Our Lifeline

An underwater photograph of a riverbed. The water is a deep, clear blue. Sunlight filters down from the surface, creating bright, shimmering patterns on the sandy riverbed. The texture of the sand is visible, and there are some small, dark spots scattered across it. The overall atmosphere is serene and natural.

The precious sources of fresh water, rivers are vital to a thriving environment.

The burbling sounds of these waterways offer the precious gift from Mother Nature - the gift of fertile soil, biological diversity, and prosperous human civilisation.


Facing decades of neglect, our rivers can no more embrace the toxins of plastic litter. They need to be protected and nurtured, for a happy present and flourishing future.

Development Alternatives (DA) has made a long-term commitment to combat increasing plastic litter- to help our rivers breathe again.

Recreating healthy rivers
could be our greatest gift to
future generations...



Ganga is not just a river, it's an emotion.



For centuries, Ganga has captivated the interest and faith of people across India. The river majestically nurtures life, including the precious forests, endangered wildlife and aquatic species. The vast Ganges basin is one of the most densely populated and fertile basins in the world. With a high rate of oxygen retention and self-purifying properties, Ganga is nature's magnificent gift to the human race.

2525 km long

Constitutes **more than 25%** of country's landmass and water resources

Decomposes organic waste **15 to 25 times faster** than any other river

It is heartbreaking to witness a river of such prime importance, rapidly losing its sheen due to the high amounts of pollutants – plastic being one of them.

Ganga is among the top 10 rivers of Asia to carry 93% of plastic litter into the oceans.

Studies claim it has the highest concentration of microplastics, the most harmful debris found in water bodies.



Image credit: The Ocean Cleanup



the
perils of
plastic...

...can threaten us forever.

Plastic, which was once considered a convenient replacement to natural materials, has now become one of the most hazardous items for the environment. It is appalling how this toxic polymer has gradually leached into our waterways, creating an irreparable damage to the ecosystem.

Experts say that by 2050, there will be more plastic than fish in the oceans.

Average life cycle of plastics



Plastic bag
20 years



Coffee cup
30 years



Plastic straw
200 years



6-pack plastic rings
400 years



Plastic water bottle
450 years



Plastic cup
450 years



Plastic toothbrush
500 years



Coffee pod
500 years



Disposable diaper
500 years

There is an urgent need for continued intervention to remove marine plastic litter. People should be made aware of, and encouraged to take responsibility for combating this challenge.

That's what we resolved to do...



... in Haridwar and Prayagraj.



The unique amalgamation of faith, religion and culture make Haridwar and Prayagraj enticing for visitors.

However, high influx of tourists brings its own set of repercussions. The indiscriminate use of plastic in religious ceremonies, as well as in the local markets is a common sight. Often this plastic is casually dumped into the Ganga, due to lack of awareness and sheer callousness.

Haridwar and Prayagraj are fast losing the pristine waters of the Ganga to the toxic cocktail of plastic litter.

Haridwar

Area **12.3** Sq Km

Average tourist influx **2** crore

Major public event Kumbha, Ardha Kumbha

Plastic generated

23-25 tonnes per day

Prayagraj

Area **365** Sq Km

Average tourist influx **24** crore (in Kumbh Mela, 2019)

Major public event Kumbha, Magh Mela

Plastic generated

26 tonnes per day





“ After performing the religious ceremonies at the banks of Ganga, people leave behind their clothes, their shoes and other materials. People feel they are just leaving clothes, without realising that a huge part of it is now plastic. And this will not be decomposed in the river and stay there for a very long time. People need to be made aware of this. ”

Zeenat Niazi
Sr. Vice President, Chief Knowledge Officer
Development Alternatives Group

Multidimensional approach was adopted...

Development Alternatives began working in Haridwar and Prayagraj with the support of United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and aimed to mitigate plastic leakage in Ganga by fostering collaboration and motivating behaviour change.

A multidimensional approach to sensitise and engage communities through our tailor-made activities was adopted.



Assessment

capturing people's perception and level of engagement



Awareness

generating interest through relevant information and hard facts



Action

ensuring participation and build a sense of responsibility



Advocacy

instilling collaboration and share best practices to scale-up the work

From Assessment to Action...



Diverse set of stakeholders...

The issue of marine plastic litter is multifaceted, and can be resolved only with long-term and consistent efforts involving multiple stakeholders. There was collaboration with individuals (residents/tourists), volunteer groups, faith leaders, institutions, government departments and local administration.



From Awareness to Advocacy...



Behaviour change is
a challenging task...

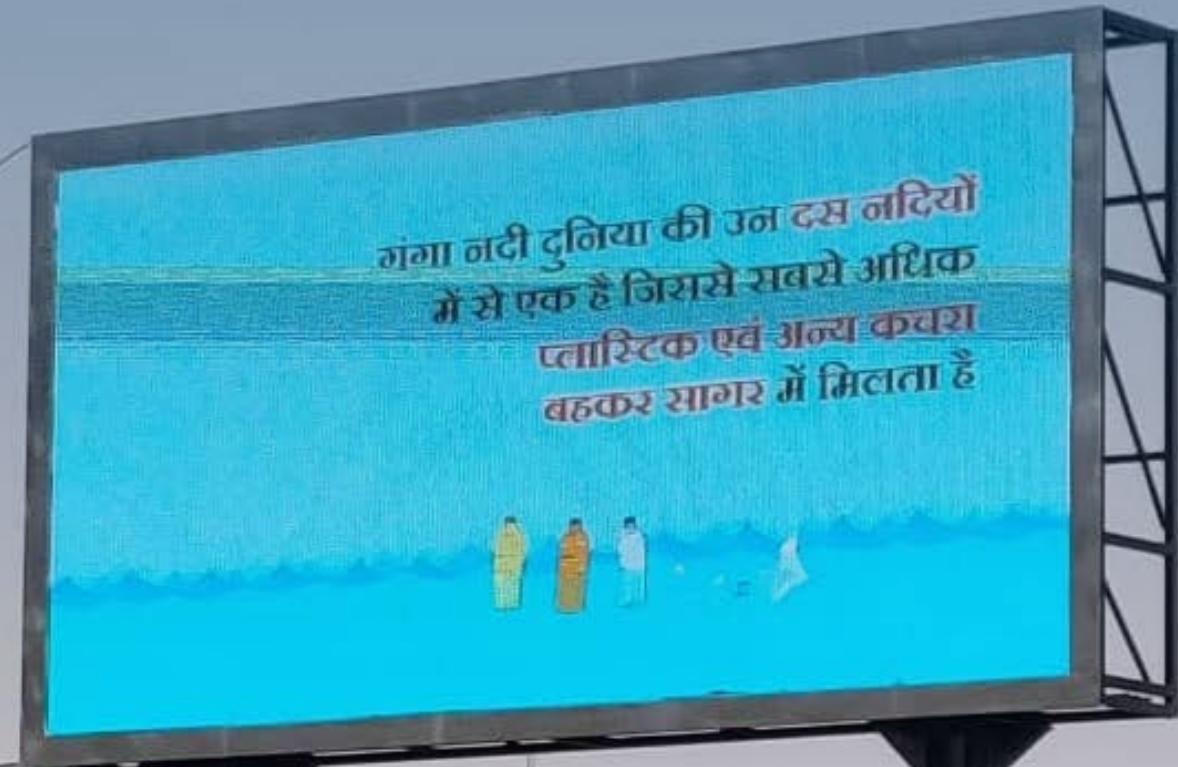
Informative

Interactive

...and hence a
360-degree communication strategy
was adopted.

Engaging

Support from stakeholders...



"It is our responsibility to keep Ganga clean and safe. And we will provide all our support to continue with the cleanliness initiatives."

- Shri Shri 1008 Acharya Mahamandaleshwar Swami Kailashanand Giriji, Niranjani Akhada



"Shri Ganga Sabha has collaborated with the UNEP and DA to organise awareness campaigns, rallies and seminars. During the daily aarti held at Harki Paudi, we are asking pilgrims and tourist to take pledge that they will not pollute mother Ganges and cause the river any harm."

- Tanmay Vashisht, Secretary, Shri Ganga Sabha, Haridwar



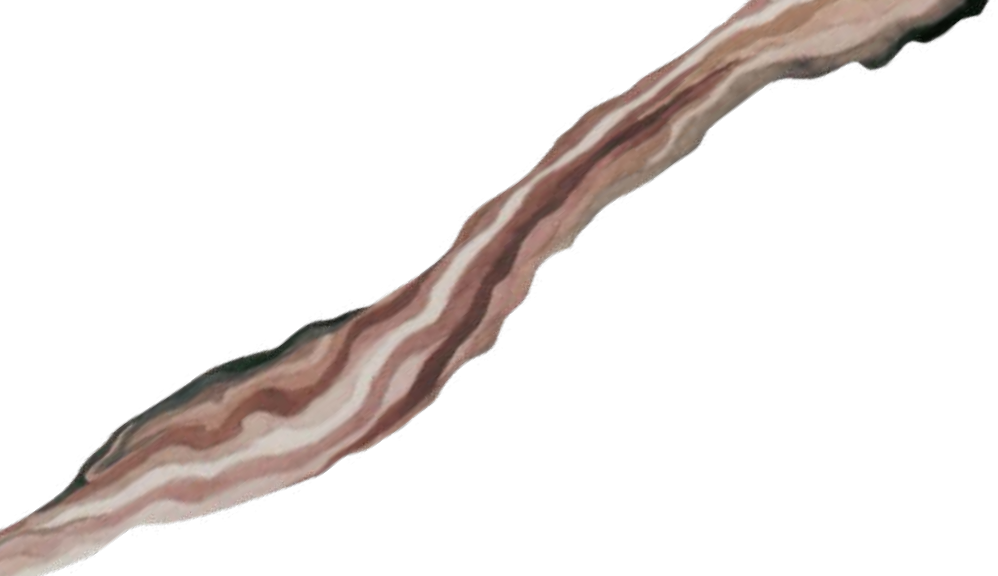
"The natural ecosystem is resilient enough to maintain itself, provided we do not disturb this equilibrium. In the cities like Haridwar, food packaging items are causing havoc to the environment, especially the river. To stop this, there is a need to enforce laws and stringent rules by the authorities."

- Prof. B D Joshi, Haridwar



"We have about 1,500 naviks in our federation who are now urging the tourists to stop throwing plastic and other such items in the river."

- Pappu Lal Nishad, Navik Sangh, Prayagraj



Development Alternatives
is committed to combat
plastic pollution. It's a huge
challenge and a lot still
needs to be done...



We bring...

- + Robust experience
- + Technology solutions
- + Innovative approaches
- + Extensive stakeholder network

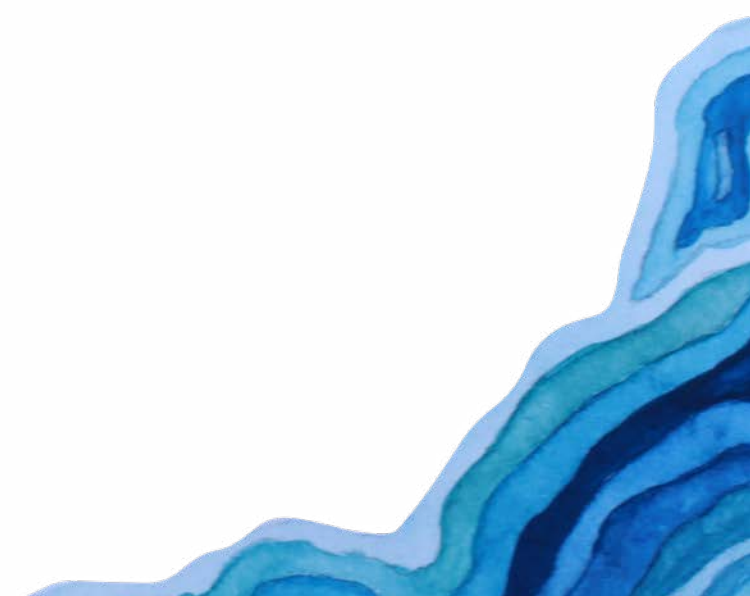




“

The arteries of our nation's lifeblood, our rivers – from the mightiest Ganga and Kaveri to the smallest local streams, are now clogged with the rapid buildup of plastic waste. These miracle materials, which gave us everyday conveniences to life-saving products, are now destroying the well-being of our communities and the very life of our ecosystems. A safer future depends on how well we limit our use of plastics, and indeed all materials, to only those applications that satisfy the criteria of full resource circularity. In the meantime, the first step is to clean up the mess we have already created. ”

Dr. Ashok Khosla, Chairman,
Development Alternatives



Let's

join hands

to help our rivers

breathe again...

...and resolve to build
a plastic-free environment.

We thank to our partner and stakeholders

United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)

Administrative Department

- + Haridwar and Prayagraj District Administrations

Media

- + Local newspapers in both the cities
- + AIR FM

CSOs

- + Adarsh Yuva Samiti, our local partner NGO in Haridwar
- + SWARG, our local partner NGO in Prayagraj
- + Vasudha Sanrakshan, Prayagraj
- + Village Development Society, NGO in Haridwar
- + Sparsh Ganga, NGO Haridwar

Institutions

- + Navik Sangh, Prayagraj
- + SRLM in Haridwar
- + Team of Swachhagrahis, Prayagraj
- + Prof. Joshi, ex- head of environment department in Gurukul Kangri University in Haridwar
- + School teachers and principal in both the cities
- + Ragpicker community in both the cities

Faith Leaders

- + Shri Shri 1008 Acharya Mahamandaleshwar Swami Kailashanand Giriji
- + Niranjani Akhada
- + Shri Ganga Sabha, Haridwar



Development Alternatives

Development Alternatives (DA) Group is a premier social enterprise working in the field of sustainable development. Established in 1983, and headquartered in New Delhi, it has built up a global presence in the fields of economic development, social empowerment and environment management. It has also built up a strong reputation as a major innovator of clean technologies and delivery systems for sustainable livelihoods in the developing world. The DA Group comprises of the Society for Development Alternatives, Technology and Action for Rural Advancement (TARA), and its affiliates.

Since its inception DA has focused on innovation, testing and refining alternative methods and models of development that rely largely on local, bottom-up, community centric planning, and implementation most suited to the people and resources of the region.

United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)

Since its inception in 1972, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) has been the global authority that sets the environmental agenda, promotes the coherent implementation of the environmental dimension of sustainable development within the United Nations system and serves as an authoritative advocate for the global environment.

UNEP's mission is to provide leadership and encourage partnership in caring for the environment by inspiring, informing, and enabling nations and peoples to improve their quality of life without compromising that of future generations.

UNEP works closely with its 193 Member States and representatives from civil society, businesses, and other major groups and stakeholders to address environmental challenges through the UN Environment Assembly, the world's highest-level decision-making body on the environment.



OUR RIVERS OF TOMORROW

Initiatives to Alleviate Marine Plastic Litter
for a Sustainable Future

©Development Alternatives, 2021

Development Alternatives

World Headquarters, B-32,
Tara Crescent, Qutub Institutional Area,
New Delhi-110016, India

Tel: +91-11-2654-4100, 2654-4200

Fax: +91-11-2685-1158

Email: mail@devalt.org

Website: www.devalt.org

Conceptualisation & book design:

One Small Design Studio / www.onesmall.in

Theme & content curation:

Nidhi Pathak / www.nidhipathak.com

Cover & inside illustrations:

Deeksha Sabharwal for One Small

Images:

Development Alternatives /

www.unsplash.com / www.pexels.com

With support from:

United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)





Development Alternatives

SOCIETY FOR DEVELOPMENT ALTERNATIVES

B-32, TARA CRESCENT, QUTUB INSTITUTIONAL AREA,
NEW DELHI 110016

www.devalt.org





Development Alternatives

