

## BMCT "Greening Udaipur" Zero Waste Campaign Launch

Gallery I - Utsav Ambience | Gallery II - Garbage Geurrillas | Gallery III - BMCT Booth Works

### GREENING COMMUNITY CONSCIOUSNESS WITH PRACTICAL WORK ON THE GROUND

**The Challenge:** Introduce "Green Udaipur" thinking, zero waste concepts, and the city's first garbage segregation experiment at Shilpgram Utsav, the West Zone Cultural Centre's wildly popular and heavily attended December folk craft and culture fair

**The Location:** Shilpgram is a living ethnographic museum depicting the lifestyle, traditions, customs and folk arts of the rural and tribal people of the states of Rajasthan, Maharashtra, Gujarat, Goa, Daman and others in the so-called West Zone. Spread out over 55 acres, the village includes a score of distinctive traditional dwellings, a terracotta museum, a museum of masks, sculptures & musical instruments, and an amphitheatre.

**The Event:** 'Shilpgram Utsav' is the region's most famous folk craft and culture fair that takes place annually in the last ten days of December, and attracts nearly a hundred thousand domestic and foreign visitors. The West Zone Culture Centre devised the Utsav to bring the creations of hundreds of talented craftsmen within reach of the common man, eliminate middlemen, and help sustain age-old artistic traditions in an increasingly globalized and homogenized world. More than 400 craftspeople set up stalls in a classical Haat Bazaar environment where they create, exhibit and sell their extraordinary wares. The days and evenings are also electrified with the riotous colors and rhythms of countless dancers, singers and performance troupes from all across the country.

#### The Project:

- Establish a BMCT "Greening Udaipur" booth at the Utsav that attracts, educates and connects thousands of citizens concerned about the city's health and future;
- Present a variety of edifying materials, videos and programs that address the environmental concerns of the old & young, city dwellers & villagers, and citizens concerned with cultural heritage as well as natural ecology;
- Create, label and distribute a hundred segregated trash containers to encourage Udaipurites to separate their compostable and non-compostable garbage for the first time in a public space;
- Engage fair artisans to create iron tipped bamboo trash spears that make collecting plastic detritus more a game than a chore;
- Enlist the local media, the Shilpgram staff and local youth groups to promote and participate in this effort and entrench the practice in other events and neighborhoods as well.

**The Result:** Remarkable! Thousands of inquiries, new mailing lists, great media coverage, collaborative offers from a dozen other NGOs and citizen groups, and a commitment to embed the zero waste ethic in all future Utsav's by the West Zone Culture Centre staff. Read a brief interim report by Premilla Dixit, the project's chief visualizer, below.

**The Credit:** The Big Medicine Charitable Trust, mothership of the Greening Udaipur and Greening Indian Education projects, wishes to express its deepest gratitude to West Zone Culture Centre director, Sri CP Singh for his vision and shared enthusiasm, to Mr. Diwaker Gautam of Sunberg Limited for his generous sponsorship, to Jagran Jan Vikas Samithi and Shikshantar for their guidance, wisdom and solidarity, to Navdanya and the Centre for Science & Environment for sharing their wonderful educational materials, to the local and regional media for their extensive coverage and support, to Raju Kabra-bhai for his tireless technical magic, and to the many Udaipur volunteers who made the long 12-hr days both inspiring and fun.

Specifically and especially we would like to extend our sincerest thanks to:

West Zone Culture Center Directors & Staff

\* Dr. Mantri, Assistant Director of the West Zone Culture Center (WZCC) for inviting our participation in the 20th Anniversary Shilpgram Utsav.

\* WZCC's new Director, Sri Shailendra Dashora, Director of Shilpgram Sri C.P.Singh., and Sri Vilas Janve, curator of the

brilliant arts & performance programs at Shilpgram for their encouragement and assistance.

#### Municipal Commissioner

\* Municipal Commissioner Sri. Bal Mukund Asawa for expediting the delivery of two dumpsters at a very short notice for our waste management efforts at the Utsav.

#### Donors

\* Sunberg Limited. London, Diwakar Gautam, for their rapid response and substantial support of our effort.

\* Shri P.S. Talesra Pyro-Tech Unit 2, Udaipur, Sri P.S. Murdia Foundation, Udaipur, and Ms. Neel Kamal (artist), Udaipur, for their essential contributions.

#### Big Medicine Charitable Trust Trustees

\* Trustees Kusum Meghwal and Kiran Murdia for their invaluable support with fundraising, booth management, printing our zero-waste messages, and offering invaluable domestic support.

#### Advisors

\* Udaipur Forest Department Forest Range officer Dr. Satish Sharma for his advice on southern Rajasthan bio-diversity for the Utsav.

#### Collaborating Organizations

\* Dr. V.N. Joshi, Dean of the Agriculture College, Udaipur and Dr. R.D. Dubey head of the Agriculture College Medicinal and Aromatic Plant Garden for our crowd-drawing exhibit of medicinal plants

\* Dr. Satya Prakash Mehra of the Rajputana Society of Natural History and wild life photographer Sri Dinesh Pagaria for our excellent display of photographs of the essential and endangered species of fauna in the biodiversity of Southern Rajasthan.

\* Shrimati Bhanwar Dhabai & Shri Ganesh Purohit for organizing the participation of their cohorts at the Jagran Jan Vikas Samiti & the Rashtriya Guni Manch.

\* Dr. Jhalla, Dr. Ramkishore Doshniwal, and guni (traditional healer) Pratabhi Bai for sharing their much sought after medicinal herb knowledge at our booth.

\* Udaipur's premier waste management organization, Suchi Abhiyan, their Coordinator Shrimati Chitra Bhatnagar for enabling their participation, and Sri Kanhiyalal Dange for his most welcomed participation at our booth.

\* Shri Narain Lal Wadera of the Jan Chetna Sansthan for enabling the participation at our booth of Jharol's indigenous, traditional, ecological farmers.

\* Mohan Singh Mehta Memorial Trust, Shri Nand Kishore for the loan of their telling maps on the condition of Udaipur's lakes.

\* Vandana Shiva / Navdanya, New Delhi, Asish /Center For Science & Environment, New Delhi and Michel and Jude Fanton/Seed Savers, Australia for sharing their most informative literature and films.

#### Volunteers

\* Manish Golcha for his incalculable help with press, data files and personal care.

\* Vishal Dabhai, zero waste activist, for his many contributions to our work.

\* Jyotsna Jhala, principal of the Badi Elementary School for her collaboration.

\* Shikshanter volunteers Guddi Prajapat, Nirmal Prajapat and Sasha for their essential help with our waste management exercise at the Utsav.

\* Jenny, a visiting researcher at Seva Mandir and her friend for helping us label our segregated baskets.

\* Pannalal Patel, advisor Udaipur Shakti Works for hours spent at the stall

\* Renu Kabra, librarian and friend, for hours spent at the stall

\* Narain, Sheru Khan and Bunty of Classic Sofa works for helping set up the stall

\* Bhagwati Amete for keeping the home fires burning while we did our work at the Utsav.

#### Basket Makers

\* The brother sister team, Meenakshi and Ajay Gacha and their mother for making so many great Utsav baskets so very quickly.

#### Printing

\* R.K Agrawal of Agrawal Offset for printing our waste segregation and zero waste labels.

#### Mass Media

\* The editors and reporters of : Rashtadoot, Pratakhal, Rajasthan Patrika and Dainik Bhaskar for covering our press conferences and reporting on our work from the Utsav.

#### Udaipur Auto Rickshaw Drivers

\* We also warmly thank the 250~300 eager Udaipur AUTO RICKSHAW DRIVERS who volunteered to prominently display our Utsav Zero Waste messages on their auto rickshaws.

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### BMCT Co-director Premilla Dixit's interim report on the Shilpgram Utsav program

We have been busy at the Shilpgram Utsav morning noon and night. People have been walking up to our booth and telling us this is the cleanest Utsav they have ever attended. We got a local blacksmith family to make 25 trash spears (bamboo sticks with a long hand-forged nail in the end) for the 25 young guys in the garbage pick-up team. Now they can easily spear the plastics strewn about, for easy separation of compostable waste from non-compostable trash and not sweep the plastics, leaves, etc altogether into the segregated baskets.

Yesterday, SUUCHI, a local waste clean-up organization was at our booth, and they loved the low-tech, low-cost "trash spear" innovation and plan to adopt it in their own work. The Tonk blacksmith at the fair, who made the nails for us, also got quite excited about the tool, and talked about spreading it out into the villages (both expanding his business and helping clean up the ubiquitous plastic scourge). The next step will be at the Rajasthan state government level, which we plan to make after the Utsav.

We are now being approached by some local government departments to help design their cleanup operations and will report more on that once something real happens. Following the recycling success at the festival, we will be making certain Udaipur gets far more serious about its waste management.

We are getting widespread media cooperation, but their understanding of the issues is still pretty elemental. Both the Rajasthan Patrika and Dainik Bhaskar have been covering our booth, and have been helping us tell the public to segregate their waste and carry their own shopping bags.

Volunteers from cohort organizations like Jagran Jan Vikas Samithi, Shikshanter, SUUCHI, and eco-concerned individuals have been helping at our booth, attracting a lot of attention from the public and building great connections for future work. Our many registers set out to recruit and sign-up Udaipur citizens for waste clean up, organic farming & gardening, and rainwater harvesting are also doing very well. Total strangers, excited by what we are doing are stepping up to help.

A film club for ecological problem solving is forming around the city and we will soon be approaching our cohort organizations to co-ordinate showings of critical videos in their neighbourhoods to develop an informed citizenry ready for action.

All in all, we are producing rather big bangs for Sunberg Limited's generous sponsorship bucks, and have been gratified that a UK-based son of the Udaipur has looked back to his roots and cared to help.

Our resources force us to be a very small, very hardworking team but the outpouring of heartfelt cooperation we have received has been deeply gratifying. We hope our sponsors and many partners are pleased with our initial results. We certainly are.

We wish to thank our collaborators so much again for helping make all this happen, for trusting the viability of this unprecedented experiment, and for backing this effort with your time, effort and essential resources.