



# Annual Report 2010



**CHINTAN**  
ENVIRONMENTAL RESEARCH  
AND ACTION GROUP

# Thoughts on 2009-'10

It would be an exaggeration to call the time from April 2009 to March 2010 a good year. It simply wasn't. Our funding base emerged much weaker, and many of our plans remained unimplemented. The things we had hoped to do seemed out of reach for the year-things like computer laboratories for our wastepicker children or a training centre for the Scavengers to Managers programme.

So why didn't Chintan curl up in a corner and wither away? Simply, because most of our still-motivated team carried on. They too faced hardships-the head of programmers (called co-coordinator at Chintan) who was available only part time, a packed office space and very tight budgets. But they were on their toes, enjoying their work, they said, because the waste recyclers kept them motivated. "Don't worry," a wastepicker once said to me reassuringly, "We'll manage even without much money-we've always managed." Our informal sector partners in the electronic waste sector suffered much more disappointments as their dream projects fell through on account of legalities. "No wonder we stay informal," one of them remarked in frustration. We are now working with them to ensure this time they get the clearances they need.

If programmatic work was cash strapped, our minds were still fertile. We used the opportunity to upgrade Chintan's systems and quality of work. Our personnel systems were upgraded consultatively and an entirely new system of data handling and monitoring was put into place. The excellent interns we had this summer, who helped us get substantial initiatives off the ground, also supplemented our work. A back of the envelope calculation showed that the interns of the summer of 2009 put in the equivalent of one and a half year's time of a full staff member.

The thing the non-profit sector is that we look ahead. We don't weep at the past, we plan for the future. In fact, we can't afford to do anything else but move on, stronger, faster, higher. In the coming year, it isn't only raising funds which is a priority. We are training ourselves to become a more efficient organization so that we are able to create more social wealth and equity for every step we take. At the time of writing this, we are making a strategic plan for the next three years, and identifying exactly what we should be doing to meet our vision of equitable, sustainable, inclusive growth for all.

This brief report sums up the main activities within our 4 programmes-Voice for Waste, No Child in Trash, Scavengers to Managers and Knowledge Power. We hope you want to join hands with us after you learn more about our work.

Bharati Chaturvedi  
Director

# Acknowledgements

The Team at Chintan would like to thank the following persons and organizations for their support, financial and otherwise, for 2009-2010:

Arjun Sharma, MD, Le Passage to India  
The entire Health Department at the New Delhi Municipal Council  
Witness, New York  
Video Volunteers, Goa  
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Centre for Advanced Studies of India, University of Pennsylvania  
The International Development Studies School, School for Advanced International Studies,  
Johns Hopkins University  
Enrico Fabian  
The Department of Environment, Government of NCT, Delhi  
Commissioner, Food & Supply, Mrs. Jaishree  
Food and Supply Officer, Mr. O.P. Gupta  
Food Inspector, Food & Supply, Mr. Indra Kumar  
Senior Manager- Operations, Procam International, Mr. Ankur Bhatnagar  
Director, IMAK, Mr. Arjun Bhagat  
SSP, Ghaziabad, Mr. Akhil Kumar  
Spice Jet  
Global Fund For Children  
German Technical Corporation (GTZ), ASEM  
Global Green Grant Fund  
Asha For Education  
Grassroots International  
Lika Shing Shantou University, Hong Kong  
Association For India's Development  
University Of Pennsylvania Institute For The Advanced Study  
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Alka Batra  
Vikram Raghavan  
Maitreyi Das  
Shakeb Afsah  
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Iris A Miller  
Martin Auerbach  
Fawzi Bayan  
James L Albin  
Gopal Das Varma  
MD. Tamer  
Sharvesh Bhardwaj  
Rakesh Mehrotra  
Debra Karmal

## Section I : A Voice For Waste

The last one year has been an excellent year for Chintan, because of the strengthening of the Voice for Waste Programme.

The programme runs as a capacity building and advocacy initiative, where Chintan backstops and facilitates waste recyclers to meet their goals. In particular, livelihood security and children's education were identified as they key issues.

### Safai Sena Comes Into Its Own

The waste recyclers have organized themselves as a registered association, Safai Sena. Chintan's relationship with Safai Sena is to help incubate it so waste recyclers learn to run it as per legal requirements and help it build the leadership and capacity to self-represent. The means by which this was done was through local meetings, discussions and workshops in various parts of Delhi and Uttar Pradesh. The following meetings took place

S.No	Location	No. of Meetings
1	Lajpat Nagar	1
2	Sihani Chungi	2
3	Bhopura	20
4	Gazipur	18
5	Seemapuri	20
6	Bhalswa	20
7	Pilanj	20
8	Nizammudin	21
9	R.K. Puram	18
10	Zakhira	10
11	Madanpur Khadar	10
12	Lodhi Garden/Mandi House	24

The Delhi Government announced a special social security scheme for the urban poor. In order for the scheme to kick off, the poor including wastepickers,

had to be registered with local Gender Resource Cells. We undertook 3 months of training on

Mission Convergence. In each area we

began the work with gathering documents from our members. We

invited people from the Gender Resource Cells (GRCs) to meet

with our members to explain the requirements and the

benefits of the scheme. The manager of the program also

delivered a lecture to all the GRCs in Delhi to ensure inclusion

of 'ragpickers' in their surveys.

This and other efforts have led to more than 36,000 wastepickers being included in the surveys conducted by GRCs till the



Safai Sena meeting in Chintan's office

second phase. One more phase is underway. Those included in the surveys are expected to receive social security as it is released.

The schemes that are currently being offered include “widow pension”, “ladli yojana” (benefits for the girl child), “disability benefits”. However, of the 45 schemes only about 9 are currently being offered by Mission Convergence. These schemes have been made available to all eligible Safai Sena members, although there is little interest in these currently as they are not able to help secure livelihoods.

After its registration on 20th April 2009, the first formal Safai Sena meeting was organised on 23rd July, 2009 in the Chintan office.

20 waste pickers leaders from Seemapuri, Bhopura, Sihani Chungi, Gazipur, and Pilanji attended the meeting to discuss the future of Safai Sena and how to take it forward. Key issues identified were green livelihoods and education of wastepicker children.



*Safai Sena meeting in Chintan's office*



*Safai Sena meeting in Sihani Chungi, Ghaziabad*



*Second Safai Sena meeting was organised in Sihani Chungi on 10<sup>th</sup> September, 2009. Two hundred waste pickers from Sihani Chungi, Bhopura, Seemapuri attended the meeting.*



*Meeting in Sihani Chungi,  
Ghaziabad  
with Safai Sena members*

*Third Safai Sena meeting  
was organised in Sihani Chungi  
on 22nd January, 2010.  
150 wastepickers  
from Sihani Chungi,  
Bhopura, Seemapuri,  
and Ghazipur  
attended this meeting.*



## **Ghaziabad : The City that Never Stops Demanding Bribes**

Ghaziabad has been one of the longest and most challenging struggles for Chintan. The Ghaziabad region of NCR is home to about 15,000 waste pickers. Since 2008, many of them have been forced to pay an illegal amount of Rs. 600 to a contractor, in exchange for being allowed to pick waste. This illegal collection of money was sanctioned by the Ghaziabad Municipal Corporation. The monthly collections by extortion were as high as 20 lakh rupees, given that several thousand waste pickers worked in that area. However, the practice was stopped after the Municipal Commissioner agreed this was a gross malpractice. But this was not the end. In April 2009, fresh complaints of similar extortion from waste pickers emerged in another area (Sihani Chungi, City Zone). The extortions stopped only in September of that year, when an FIR was lodged with the Sihani Chungi police.

To put an end to this, on 29<sup>th</sup> December, 2009 Safai Sena, jointly with Chintan, organized a demonstration at Ghaziabad Nagar Nigam office 600 waste pickers were participated over there. They speak up against the contract given by the Ghaziabad Nagar Nigam to a private contractor, who also took money from the waste pickers in that area illegally.

**निगम आफिस पर प्रदर्शन**

गाजियाबाद: डेम्कॉ की कार्यवाही में गंभीर सैफाई कृषकों को नुकसान हो रहा है। इन लोगों ने नगर निगम के कार्यालय पर प्रदर्शन किया। इन लोगों ने नगर निगम के कार्यालय के सामने बसों को रोक दिया। डेम्कॉ का डोर टूट जाने की भी शिकायतें आई हैं। नगर निगम के कार्यालय के सामने डेम्कॉ का डोर टूट जाने की भी शिकायतें आई हैं। नगर निगम के कार्यालय के सामने डेम्कॉ का डोर टूट जाने की भी शिकायतें आई हैं।

दूरभाष (मिटर)	2824416
दूरभाष (सिटी)	2824411
दूरभाष (नगर)	2827916
दूरभाष (ग्रामीण)	2821365



Demonstration by Safai Sena members in front of Ghaziabad Nagar Nigam against taking money by contractor

**कार्यालय नगर स्वास्थ्य अधिकारी, गाजियाबाद नगर निगम।**

पत्रांक: /स्वा/११-८८९

दिनांक-२१/१२/८९

1. कोई भी सुपरवाइजर एवं प्राइवेट ठेकेदार किसी भी कबाड़ी को तंग न करें और न ही किसी प्रकार की कोई वसूली की जायेगी।
2. प्रत्येक कालोनी की सूची चिन्तन एवं सफाई सेना द्वारा तैयार कर नगर निगम को प्रस्तुत की जायेगी ताकि गाजियाबाद नगर निगम को प्रत्येक सेक्टरों में डोर टूट डोर कूड़ा कलेक्शन करने वालों के सम्बन्ध में कोई आपत्ति न हो सके। जिससे इसकी जानकारी गाजियाबाद नगर निगम को हो सके।
3. चिन्तन एवं सफाई सेना द्वारा डोर टूट डोर कूड़ा कलेक्शन में नगर निगम को कोई आपत्ति नहीं है।
4. नगर निगम द्वारा प्रत्येक माह में समस्त सफाई एवं खाद्य निरीक्षण, चिन्तन एवं सफाई सेना की बैठक आहूत की जायेगी। जिसमें समस्त का समाधान प्राथमिकता के आधार पर किया जायेगा।
5. चिन्तन एवं सफाई सेना के डोर टूट डोर एवं कबाड़ियों के लिए कूड़ा निस्तारण/ उसकी छटाई के लिए गाजियाबाद नगर निगम निर्धारित/प्राप्त स्थान चिन्हित कर उपलब्ध करा देगी।

**नगर स्वास्थ्य अधिकारी,**  
गाजियाबाद नगर निगम

प्रतिलिपि:-- माननीय महापौर महोदय, को सूचनार्थ प्रेषित।

2. नगर आयुक्त महोदय, को सूचनार्थ प्रेषित।

**नगर स्वास्थ्य अधिकारी,**  
गाजियाबाद नगर निगम

Copy of contract passed by Chief Medical Officer after protesting in front of Ghaziabad Nagar Nigam

To,  
The SSP,  
Ghaziabad U.P.,  
Shri Akhil Kumar

Date: 12/08/09

Chintan is an NGO which works with waste pickers in Delhi, Haryana and Uttar Pradesh. We help to organize them and work in safer conditions. We would like to incorporate them into a formal mechanism so that they pick waste from the door steps and do not send their children to collect waste.

I am writing on the issue of extortion mechanism used by persons with the name of Chand Peheewan, Chand Babu, Zahid Khurashid Asraf in the Siyan Chungi area, which falls under Thana Kofwasi Ghantaghar.

They have been forcefully asking for money up to Rs.600 per wastepicker per month so that he or she can collect waste. The matter has become worse and they have assumed life-threatening proportions.

The issue is even worse because the Darna Gate Police chowki refused to lodge an FIR. The waste pickers have gone on 26th July 09, on 8th Aug 09, but the officer on duty refused to lodge an FIR without giving any specific reason.

I will be grateful if you could help in facilitating and ensuring that an FIR is lodged and these unfair practices are not followed and the waste picker is allowed his right to waste as is also mandated by the Supreme Court.

Thanking you,

Sincerely,  
Arun Kumar  
Coordinator,  
Chintan Environment and Waste Management Society

*Letter given to the SSP, Ghaziabad about the extortion of waste recyclers by several private contractors*

To,  
Shri Ajay Shanker Pandey  
Municipal Commissioner, Ghaziabad  
Ghaziabad, UP  
6<sup>th</sup> August 2009

Dear Shri Pandey,

Chintan is a NGO which works with waste pickers in Delhi, Haryana and Uttar Pradesh. We work with them to organize them and help them work in safer conditions. We work to help them work in more formal conditions so that they pick waste from the door steps and do not send their children to collect waste.

I am writing in continuation to our earlier letter to you on the issue of extortion mechanism used by persons with the name of Chand Peheewan, Chand Babu and Asraf in the Gazipur area. They have been forcefully asking for money to the amount of Rs. 500 to Rs. 600 per waste picker per month so that the waste picker can collect waste. The matters have become worse and they have assumed life-threatening proportions.

Our earlier communication with you on the issue had resulted in some relief to the waste pickers, but subsequently the issue has gone back to where it was. A list of harassed waste pickers and the details of the same is attached for your perusal and reference.

I will be grateful if you could help in ensuring that these unfair practices are not followed and the waste picker is allowed his right to waste as is also mandated by the Supreme Court.

Thanking you,

Sincerely,  
Bharati Chaturvedi  
Director

CHINTAN ENVIRONMENT AND WASTE MANAGEMENT SOCIETY  
RESEARCH AND ACTION GROUP  
11006, Sector 28, Phase 1, Indraprastha, New Delhi - 110028

*Letter given to the Municipal Commissioner, Ghaziabad on taking some strict steps to stop the unfair practices in waste picking.*



## Chintan at Copenhagen

Chintan has been working on climate change issues with a focus on the mitigative impact of waste recyclers and on the greenhouse generation potential of solid waste in India. A landmark study, *Cooling Agents*, released in November 2009 with Safai Sena and the Advocacy Project, was the result of this work. Following this, as part of its active links with the Association of Indian Wastepickers, Chintan and Safai Sena both participated in the Conference of Parties (COP) 15, represented respectively by Malati Gadgil and Jai Prakash Choudhury (Santu). The main focus of their visit, along with that of several wastepickers from across the world, was to demand recognition for their work and to campaign against waste to energy that would likely cause them to lose their livelihoods.



*Santu, a waste recycler from Safai Sena, discusses his experiences at Copenhagen with the Times of India upon his return. His work was featured in a series, 'City of Angels.'*

## Working as an Alliance

Chintan believes that effective change can come from the strength of a strong network. For this reason, we have been actively a part of the Alliance for India Wastepickers. Although the AIW is still relatively informal and unstructured, it has been able to effectively work with various groups across India through its various members. Amongst the work the AIW has been able to undertake is advocacy. Several meetings were held in various cities and many more telephonic discussions were held to discuss meetings with policy makers and key political persons. Chintan was specifically involved with key policy and strategy discussions and working on specific inputs within these.

### *Public meeting of waste recycling workers from 20 cities*

On March 25<sup>th</sup>, 2010, over 2000 waste pickers from Delhi/NCR, Mumbai, Pune, Bangalore, Ahmadabad and Madhya Pradesh presented the reality in their cities on the ground at a public hearing at Delhi's Parliament Street. The wastepickers' invitation read, "This is to invite you to lend your support and solidarity in our struggle for recognition of the contribution we make in keeping the cities clean, lowering the carbon emissions and supplying raw material to India's robust recycling industry. We are GREEN workers! We Recycle Resources for the good of everyone!"

In order to recover livelihoods for waste pickers and small junk dealers hit by privatization of waste collection and transportation, Chintan and Safai Sena have been jointly campaigning for an end to privatization in new zones and inclusion of waste pickers in doorstep collection in such zones where privatization had already taken place. As part of this campaign, we worked with Witness, an organization that helps grassroots groups work with video for enabling human rights, to create a DVD, *Counter Balance*. Chintan staff shot the film, in Hindi and English, after intense training. The film was shown to both receptive and skeptic audiences as a tool of advocacy and is being used to help policy makers and the public better understand the issues and its solution. Video Volunteers provided additional training and studio support was provided by IMAK. Since the event was in Delhi, Safai Sena was additionally involved in the video release on anti-privatization, our 50 members from R.K. Puram created the visual icon, a waste man, Chintan anchored the press conference and our film partner, IMAK, was able to film the event for archival purposes.

The main issues that wastepickers brought up were the right to work, for which they required legal rights to collect waste from the doorstep, to own waste and space for segregation.



## Safai Sena at the Airtel Marathon

Safai Sena took part in Airtel Delhi half Marathon on 1<sup>st</sup> November 2009. Sixty Safai Sena waste pickers picked up 30000 pet bottles, 100 kg cardboard from Central Civil Services Cultural and Sports Board Ground Chanakyapuri and marathon running routes. The revenue from these was distributed amongst the workers.



The photo captures the aftermath of the half marathon at the Central Civil Services Cultural and Sports Board ground at Chanakyapuri.

# Litter-athon, was it?

**NOISE AND SENSE** Participants leave behind food packets, empty bottles on the ground

**30,000** PET BOTTLES AND 100 KG CARDBOARD PICKED UP BY SAFAI SENA MEMBERS DURING MARATHON

**7:10 am** MARATHON STARTS AT CHANAKYAPURI

**11:00 am** MARATHON ENDS AT CHANAKYAPURI

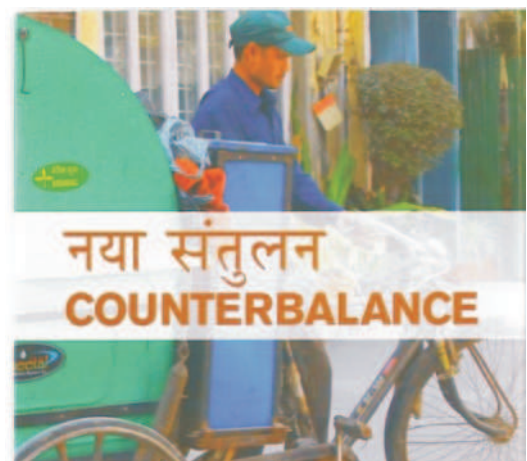
**21 kms** MARATHON ROUTE

**4 kms** SAFAI SENA ROUTE

Collection of waste by Safai Sena members during marathon held at Chanakyapuri and other routes

## A Green Job of One's Own

In order to recover livelihoods for wastepickers and small junk dealers hit by privatization of waste collection and transportation, Chintan and Safai Sena have been jointly campaigning for an end to privatization in new zones and inclusion of wastepickers in doorstep collection in such zones where privatization had already taken place. As part of this campaign, we worked with Witness, an organization that helps grassroots groups work with video for enabling human rights, to create a DVD, Counter Balance. Chintan staff shot the film, in Hindi and English, after intense



training. The film was shown to both receptive and skeptic audiences as a tool of advocacy and is being used to help policy makers and the public better understand the issue and its solution. Video Volunteers provided additional training and studio support was provided by IMAK.

## Safai Sena Outreach

Safai Sena was able to talk to several people-both students and otherwise and help them understand how useful wastepickers were to them. These events included working with the Tehelka Foundation and helping children understand waste at the Ghazipur landfill site, guiding school children through the landfill and helping the media understand the reality at the ground. A large number of visitors were shown around Delhi's various recycling spots, the challenges associated with these and possible solutions.

*"I have been associated with Chintan for many years. Thanks to their work many waste pickers have been given permission to collect waste from households. The Chintan identity cards have been especially useful when it comes to negotiating with Municipal Corporation of Delhi and the Police"*

Harprasad, Wastepicker, R.K Puram

## Section II: Scavengers to Managers

It would have been ideal if the work of recyclers in India could be classified as green jobs. It can't, because while they offer invaluable recycling services to the city, they have few rights and poor working conditions.

Chintan addresses this by helping build green businesses at the bottom of the pyramid. We acknowledge that waste recyclers of all types are skilled entrepreneurs without the social capital that would help them break out of informality and exploitation. Some examples of this are waste collection from the doorstep, composting, primary treatment of PET plastics, and dismantling complex electronic wastes.

### Doorstep Collection

In 2009-2010, Chintan was given permission to expand its doorstep collection programme in the New Delhi Municipal Council Area. Similarly, it was also able to get permission to do the same in the Ghaziabad Municipal Corporation. In both cases, the objective was to create a win-win for the municipality and the wastepickers.

In all, twin bins were distributed to over 3800 households (while nearly 2700 other houses refused these) and either direct or indirect doorstep collection facilities were offered to all but 111 out of 6567 households. The average earning for a wastepicker for doorstep collection from 8 am to 11 am, Monday to Saturday, is Rs. 3570 per month. The project is run on service fees, which pays for the project. It does not pay for the management costs of the project, which are subsidized by Chintan through other fundraising. In the coming year, our plan is to ensure this is also met by expansion and better fees collection, as well as by reducing free riding. In particular, we expect Members of Parliament to start paying for waste collection.

In Ghaziabad, another model is being worked out. Here, given the lack of available funds, Chintan is training the wastepickers to pick up the waste, collect the payment and segregate the waste optimally to generate optimal revenues. In this case, it is Safai Sena that is taking the lead in implementing the programme and their own leadership is supervising. No reports are being made, and each collector is keeping the revenues earned, either from waste or otherwise.

A total of 200 wastepickers are being trained up for this purpose and some are collecting waste already. Chintan's role in this case is restricted to training workers and supervisors. The staff working in the NDMC area is helping in this case. There will be no monetary exchange due to the costs of transaction.

### Electronic Waste

In the last year and a half, Chintan had partnered with e-waste dismantlers from East Delhi to help them set up an association, called 4R. In September 2009, 4R decided to set up a dismantling unit, after a business plan had been created. Three members of 4R attended a hands-on training programme in Germany, organized by GTZ.

A site, Mandoli, was picked up and the DPCC verbally asked if this was formally an industrial site. 4R understood that the site was being upgraded to improve facilities to improve its infrastructure and that it was an official site. After a unit had been set up, the DPCC informed us that this was not yet an industrial area. They showed us a list of approved industrial areas and 4R picked Bawana. After hiring a plot, the DPCC informed us that since this was a relocation site for industry owners, only original owners could operate any industry here. This exceptional information was not on their website. Finally, 4R explored options in NOIDA and Greater NOIDA in February and March 2010.

In all, the following trips were made:

1. Mandoli: 23
2. Bawana: 12
3. NOIDA and Greater NOIDA: 10

Total trips before any unit was established: 45, amounting to nearly 60 days of work and preparation. An estimate is that this implied traveling nearly 1770 kilometers, the cost of which is Rs. 7080 in fuel alone. It



also implies lost workdays, amounting to nearly 2.5 months of lost income, counting Fridays and Sundays as holidays.



*Setting up the dismantling unit (above and below)*



Given these numbers, it is clear that it becomes expensive for the informal sector to undertake formalization because of hidden costs such as this. It is therefore very important to be able to procure a gap fund of at least the cost of travel, time, capital costs and rentals for the first 6 months.

Currently, 4R is working to raise funds so that it may start its work to set up a collection and dismantling plant of its own in the near future.

## Section III: No Child in Trash

Over 15000 wastepickers in Delhi are children. How to address this double violation? Chintan's goal is to enable children to wean away from work and go to school. If they are above 12, we offer them other options, because they cannot fit into an age-appropriate class. Chintan runs a number of learning centres. Children from the age of 5 attend specific classes, based on non-formal learning. Apart from academic learning, they are taught to come to class at the same time everyday, look after their things, learn to dress up for school and organize their time for formal education. When they are ready, they are mainstreamed into schools. Once there, we work with them to prevent dropouts. The programme reached out to 1307 children in 2009-2010, but at least 2000 more children or their families turned to Chintan for education facilitation.

Some of the highlights of the programme were:

- Children mainstreamed into a formal system of education: 271
- Teacher Training Workshops: 36
- Meetings: 180
- Parent Teacher Meetings: 60
- Community Events (focus on health): 120

The following table shows the area wise break up of classes we ran in 2009-2010.

S.No	Area	Total Children of Chintan class	Number who additionally attend school (also came in Chintan class)	Total Children
1	Nizamuddin	130	116	246
2	Ghazipur Landfill, East Delhi	189	97	286
3	Seemapuri, East Delhi	139	221	360
4	R.K. Puram, South Delhi	115	157	272
5	Takiya Kale Khan, Central Delhi	85	58	143
6	TOTAL	658	649	1307

Apart from classes, the following events were also held:

Health Camp in Nizamuddin in Project Arman, April 19, 2009. Other camps were held in Takia Kale Khan, April 21st, 2009, April 23rd, 2009 in Ghazipur and April 22nd 2009 in Seemapuri. Over 2000 children attended.







Independence Day celebrations held in Nizamuddin on August 13<sup>th</sup>, 2009. Additional events held in Ghazipur Seemapuri, Takia Kale Khan and, R.K.Puram.



Teachers' Day was celebrated on September 5th, 2009, in all areas. On this day, children took classes as teachers and shared their knowledge.

Festivals, both Hindu and Muslim, were celebrated in every area with the objective of teaching the children about India's diversity. On September 19th, Id was celebrated with a quiz on the festival and later, in October, Diwali was celebrated by decorating Diyas. The children of Project Arman, in Nizamuddin, were additionally treated to a special Diwali party for them on November 5th 2009 in Sunder Nagar, hosted by Arjun and Jyotsna Sharma. Apart from this, Gandhi Jayanti was celebrated on October 1st, 2009, with a discussion and quiz on Gandhi. At the end of the year, each area celebrated Christmas by decorating a live tree or plant and understanding the festival further. Later, on Id, the children went out to a mosque or a park and discussed their plans for the festival. From 23rd to 25th February, the children in every class celebrated Lohri, where they learned about harvest traditions in Punjab and tasted traditional sweets like Gazak. The festival season ended with Holi on 27th February, 2010, when children of all areas were taught about Holi in class and allowed to play with colour.



Children in R.K. Puram with decorated tree, December 24<sup>th</sup>, 2009



Republic Day celebrations at Ghazipur, January 25<sup>th</sup>, 2010. Additional events held in all areas.

This is Ruby, a teacher in Chintan's No Child in Trash Programme. She is 18, and lives in South Delhi. She knows the reality of wastepicking-her father struggled to feed the family despite earning very poorly as a wastepickers. Ruby dropped out of school in Grade 8. But she is no loser. She approached the Chintan school in her area, asking for a job. After intense training, she was finally hired as a part time teacher. These days, she is studying for the 10<sup>th</sup> grade exams. She also helps her father segregate waste when he needs her help.



“Ever since I started school, my life has become more regulated. I now work half time because I have to learn reading and studying. I have also become more aware about staying neat and clean.” Noor Aalam, 9, student at Project Arman Student, Nizamuddin.

Sumit is an unusual 12 year old. He actually enjoys waking up and going to school. This is not surprising-he has struggled long and hard for this privilege. He enjoys reading so much he prefers it to watching TV. One day he hopes to don the black and white of a lawyer.

Sumit's father, Bir Singh, is a wastepicker. Sumit had to help him at work, and dropped out of school when his name was struck off the rolls for going to his village for an entire month. His father was happy to have another helping hand, but Sumit was upset. Fortunately, a Chintan teacher for our non-formal education identified him. Now, he attends our classes in the morning and goes to a formal, government school in the afternoon. He has not stopped working entirely-every morning, he still has to segregate the waste his father picks the previous day.

## Section IV: Knowledge Power

Knowledge Power is a programme that expects to mine out knowledge that can be used to meet Chintan's Vision and Mission.

Every year, Chintan has been able to produce knowledge products that not only help us reach closer to our goals but also enable deeper public discussions. The year of 2009-2010 has been no different.

This year, Chintan has both undertaken its own research and also been part of a larger team for a global report.

### Cooling Agents

For the last three years, Chintan has tried to quantify carbon emissions saved from recycling, and understand these in the context of wastepickers. Our biggest challenge was to devise a methodology to do this, even if it was not perfect. Fortunately, in the summer of 2009 we were able to partner with the Advocacy Project in Washington DC to research this and create a methodology ahead of the Conference of Parties 15 in Copenhagen. One of the chief researchers, Ted Mathys, of the Tufts University, Boston, explained it well as he said, "It's not perfect but it is something for everyone to build on." Cooling Agents has been used by policy makers across India and for advocacy on inclusion of wastepickers and other recyclers in formal waste management systems.

The key knowledge from Cooling Agents was that informal waste recycling sector in just Delhi alone saves over 900,000 tons of CO<sub>2</sub> equivalent, which is more than any single waste project in India eligible for carbon credits.

### Solid Waste Management in the World's Cities : Water and Sanitation in the World's Cities 2010

This year, the UNHABITAT took a look at the solid waste scenario in the world's cities. The approach was to learn from the case studies of 20 cities across the world, from Delhi to San Francisco. Chintan contributed to this UNHABITAT 2010 report in many ways. Firstly, by researching and producing the Delhi case study, as well as by producing the executive summary, offering commenting on the drafts, and editing the manuscript as it was finalized. The report points out several things. Of the informal sector, it says, "The informal sector is clearly any city's key ally. These human resources can be best deployed in the public interest through appropriate legal and institutional spaces. But that doesn't imply the informal recycling sector is a distinctly developing world phenomenon. The research here shows it exists even in San Francisco and Tomkins County, Ithaca and plays a positive role."

It also speaks to policy makers and desperate municipalities when it warningly says, "There is only one mantra here- "use what you have and build on it with an army of partners". If anything, the report warns against imagining as ideal the systems, technologies and solutions of the developed world and trying to copy them as a means of cleaning the city. It might not work if it lacks local relevance and local buy-in."

The section on Delhi brought out several aspects, perhaps for the first time. One of the lacunae, however, was that there was such little informed data to build on!

### Scrap Crash

As the whole world facing economic recession during April 2009 - December 2009 waste pickers were not spared affected. Market price of recyclable items that our informal waste picker collected highly diminished, affecting our waste pickers' daily wages.

To analyze the impact of recession on the waste picker's daily earnings in Delhi, Chintan conducted a study 'Scrap Crash,' which examined the impact of the plummeting prices of commodities that waste recyclers traded in. We worked with Safai Sena to understand the issue with some depth.

The key findings of the study were :

- The daily income of wastepickers was reduced by 43%.
- 94.3 % of respondents reported that there was about 41% decrease in selling price of recyclable items.
- 74.3 % of wastepickers had to change their food habits;
- 80% of wastepickers could not celebrate their festivals due to decreased income.
- 2.9% of wastepickers wanted to change their job.
- At the time when the report was completed, almost every child was in the same condition: they had not had a single glass of milk for the last nine months.

Although the crisis is over, we also understand from the study the need to find new ways of developing staying power during a crisis. In the coming two years, Chintan is exploring these options.

Creating Knowledge and disseminating it within the informal sector, the public and amongst policy makers-in India and internationally, has been a strength of Chintan's from the start. In the coming year, we expect to explore even more key issues, and use the answers we get to make change on the ground.