
VEDITUM INDIA FOUNDATION

ACTIVITY REPORT 2023 - 2024



PUBLISHING INFORMATION

Date of publishing of report - 30th July 2024

Cover image by Siddharth Agarwal; Back cover image by Madhuri Sharma (Moving Upstream Fellow)

Report design created by Mehuli Das (Summer 2023 intern), guided by Siddharth Agarwal

People currently at Veditum:

- Aishani Goswami (Associate)
- Mohit M Rao (Moving Upstream Luni Fellowship co-lead)
- Pawan Kumar Agarwal (Accounts & Book Keeping)
- Priyans Murarka (Volunteer: 1+ day per week)
- Rhea Lopez (Associate)
- Siddharth Agarwal (Founder Director)

To checkout our earlier activity reports, head to this link: <https://veditum.org/veditum-activity-reports/>

500+

KILOMETRES WALKED ALONG RIVERS

70+

VOLUNTEERS ENGAGED

5

NEW PARTNER ORGANISATIONS

18

NEW PEOPLE
INTERNS | FELLOWS | FULL TIME

300+

APPLICATIONS
TO WORK WITH VEDITUM

>50%

APPLICATIONS FROM WOMEN

7

FEATURES & AWARDS

11

PUBLICATIONS

**THE YEAR
IN NUMBERS**

8000+

TOTAL FOLLOWERS
ACROSS PLATFORMS

~2000

REPORTS ON INDIA SAND WATCH

60000+

VIEWS ON
WEBSITES & NEWSLETTER

36

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENTS
EVENTS | SCREENINGS | WORKSHOPS | LECTURES

6,00,000+

IMPRESSIONS ON
SOCIAL PLATFORMS

4500+

DOCUMENTARY VIEWS

**THE YEAR
IN NUMBERS**

Dear reader,

Thank you for your interest in our work at Veditum. The past year (April 2023 - March 2024) has seen some long term ideas taking firm shape at Veditum.

The India Sand Watch project went public, we expanded the Moving Upstream Fellowship through a wonderful collaboration with the School of Public Policy at IIT Delhi, undertook more walks along rivers, the team went on a field trip together while organising in-person events, we continue to re-imagine & strengthen our position in India's environmental governance & education landscape, and most importantly we furthered & expanded engagements with a wide variety of actors - community members, CSOs, academia, lawyers, technologists, officials, policy makers, judges & more!

We were also winners at the D4GX 2023 competition by Dasra, Bloomberg, Societal Thinking & Stanford PACS!

With your interest and support, we hope to continue doing meaningful work. Do enjoy reading the report!

Siddharth Agarwal
Founder, Veditum India Foundation
asid@veditum.org

TABLE OF CONTENTS



TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. ACCOUNTS & ADMINISTRATION
2. MOVING UPSTREAM
3. MOVING UPSTREAM FELLOWSHIP
4. MOVING UPSTREAM: GANGA
5. INDIA SAND WATCH
6. EVENTS & PUBLIC SPEAKING
7. RECOGNITION OF OUR WORK
8. INTERVIEWS & FEATURES
9. PUBLICATIONS & COLLABORATIONS
10. INTERNSHIPS AT VEDITUM
11. OUR WORK IS SUPPORTED BY
12. PARTNER ORGANISATIONS
13. OUR APPEAL



ACCOUNTS & ADMINISTRATION



INDIVIDUAL DONORS

In the Financial Year 2023 - 2024, we saw a marginal increase in funds raised through individual donors & hope to improve on it this year. This is important for us as our work expands, allowing us to have some amount of fiscal freedom for exploring new ideas.

We invite you to become a recurring donor to Veditum, committing a certain amount annually towards our work. You can donate directly at this link - <https://rzp.io/l/VIF-AR-23-24> - or see the next few pages to support via our fundraiser!

INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT

Rainmatter Foundation (by Zerodha) has been supporting Veditum for the past couple of years, and we are now trying to bring more institutional supporters on board.

If you have any leads towards institutional support, please do let us know.

VEDITUM INDIA FOUNDATION

fundraiser: early 2024

TARGET AMOUNT: INR 2,50,000

Do you care for India's Rivers?

Support action driven grassroots documentation and awareness work for our rivers.

VISIT THIS LINK TO DONATE
veditum.org/CIFCE24

or

SCAN THE QR CODE



campaign ends: 18th February 2024



Crowdfunding Campaign Poster

ACCOUNTS & ADMINISTRATION

ANNUAL FUNDRAISING CAMPAIGN - PAST YEAR

We ran our annual public fundraising campaign for FY 2022-2023 for Veditum in January 2023

While a little late in the year, we were able to raise **INR 1,15,201** through the campaign, giving us a boost with resources and outreach.

We are announcing this year's campaign early, along with the launch of this report. The campaign will be live through August 2024, and if you would you like to donate, see the next slide for details!



Crowdfunding campaign poster for FY 2024 - 2025

ACCOUNTS & ADMINISTRATION

ANNUAL FUNDRAISING CAMPAIGN - CURRENT YEAR

Excited to share with you Veditum’s annual public fundraising campaign for FY 2024-2025

Our target amount for this year’s campaign is **INR 5,00,000**. We invite you to contribute to the fundraiser and also share this in your networks!

The poster for the fundraiser is available on the left, and here’s the link to donate:

veditum.org/VFC24-25

Thank you for your support!

ACCOUNTS & ADMINISTRATION

TEAM MEMBERS

We recruited 2 new team members in the past year and are excited to have Aishani and Rhea join our team.

Combined together, they have brought with them years of experience in working in India's development & wildlife sectors, and a wealth of knowledge on water management & ecology.

New energy and imaginations from them are now inspiring future action and directions at Veditum!



AISHANI GOSWAMI



RHEA LOPEZ



Late Manoj Misra

ACCOUNTS & ADMINISTRATION

LOSS OF A MENTOR

In June 2023 we lost probably the most loved mentor to Veditum - Manoj Misra.

His wisdom combined with his incredible depth of knowledge and his humility made him shine amidst any crowd.

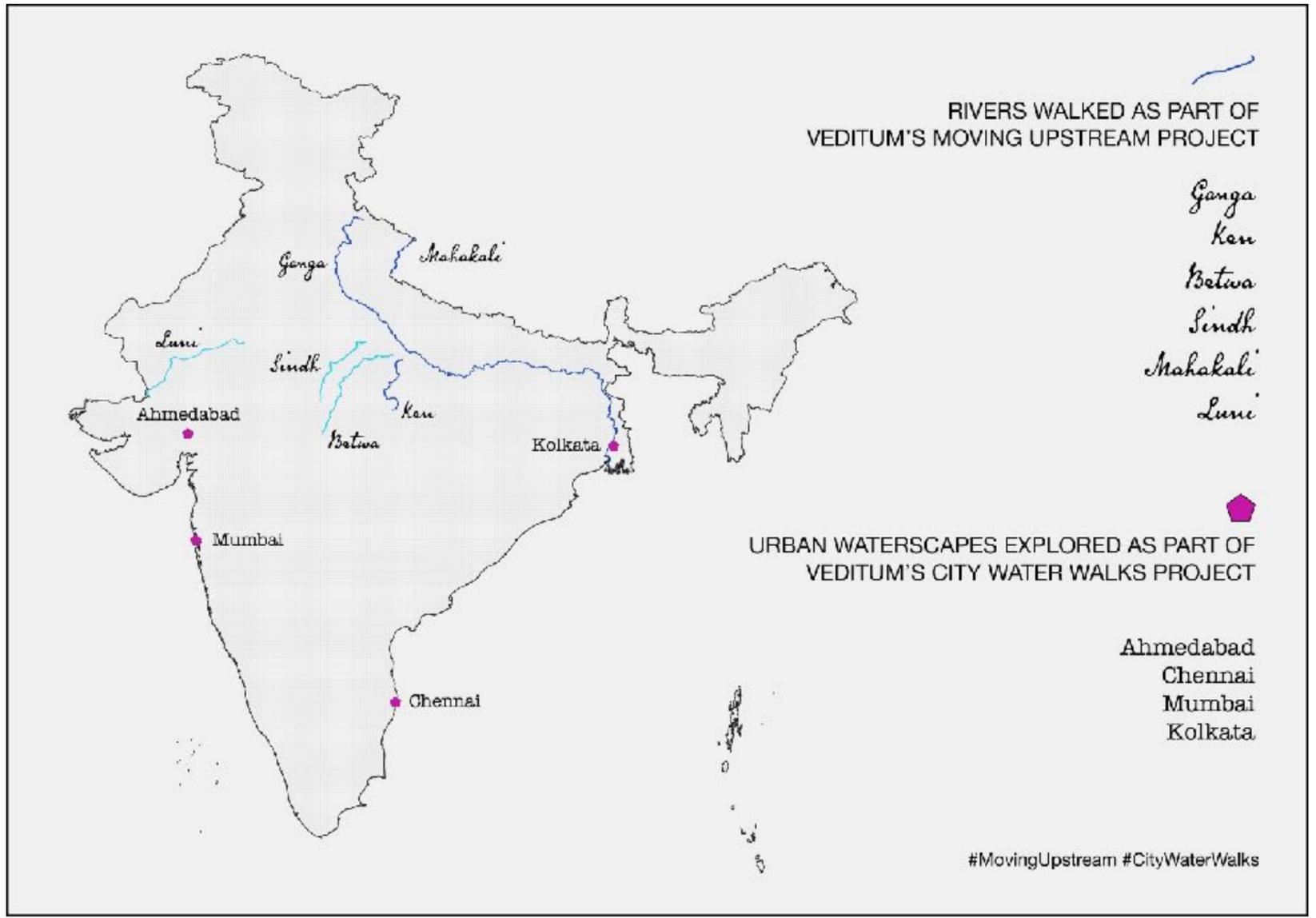
We enjoyed special privileges of learning directly from his endless bounty of knowledge over the years, and miss him dearly.

In Manoj ji, we have lost not just a mentor, but a champion of our work, and most of all - a friend of our rivers.

Our truthful dedication to conserve our rivers is Veditum's honest tribute to Manoj Misra.

MOVING UPSTREAM





Map showing rivers walked as part of the Moving Upstream project & urban waterscape explored as part of our City Water Walks project

MOVING UPSTREAM

MOVING UPSTREAM

Map showing the rivers walked as part of our Moving Upstream project and fellowship program.

Rivers Ganga, River Ken, and now River Mahakali are part of our Moving Upstream program.

Rivers Betwa, Sindh and Luni have been walked as part of our Moving Upstream Fellowship program that we co-host with the Out of Eden Walk & School of Public Policy, IIT Delhi.

The fellowship program is a subset of the project.

MOVING UPSTREAM FELLOWSHIP

Co-hosted with the Out of Eden Walk & School of Public Policy, IIT Delhi



SCHOOL OF PUBLIC POLICY
Indian Institute of Technology Delhi

OUT OF EDEN WALK





Poster announcing fellows selected for the Moving Upstream: Luni Fellowship

MOVING UPSTREAM FELLOWSHIP

MOVING UPSTREAM: LUNI FELLOWSHIP

This year we partnered with the **School of Public Policy at IIT Delhi** to conduct the Moving Upstream Fellowship along **River Luni**, with support from **Out of Eden Walk & A4Store**

We selected 8 fellows (see poster) from 96 applicants.

The fellows underwent a training process in preparation for the walk. Between January & March 2024, they walked **500+ kms** along River Luni.

Mohit M Rao from our Moving Upstream: Betwa fellowship has helped us run the Luni Fellowship program.

PUBLISHING FROM THE FELLOWSHIP

- **'A walk along the River Betwa' | Radhika Singh & Shail Joshi | Urbanisation Journal, IIHS (Vol.8, Issue 1)**
<https://doi.org/10.1177/24557471231168717>
- **Walking River Luni: the salty lifeline of Rajasthan | Mohit M Rao & Siddharth Agarwal | Veditum**
<https://veditum.org/2024/06/22/moving-upstream-luni-intro/>
- **The joy and tragedies of River Luni | Saurav Vaishnav & Vandita Sariya | Veditum**
<https://veditum.org/2024/07/11/the-joy-and-tragedies-of-river-luni-samdhari-pichiyak/>

OTHER FEATURES OF THE FELLOWSHIP



Thumbnail of the video created with friends at Agami

In partnership with the wonderful people at **Agami**, a video about the Moving Upstream: Luni Fellowship, using audio-visuals and inputs from the fellows was created.

Watch it here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Aj3yBdl2Jz0>

It will transport you to the 500km journey, along with insights from each of our fellows!

MOVING UPSTREAM GANGA





Release announcement poster!

MOVING UPSTREAM: GANGA

MOVING UPSTREAM: GANGA - RELEASE

As part of this project, Siddharth walked 3000km along the River Ganga in the years 2016-2017

Our documentary from this walk - '**Moving Upstream: Ganga**', was made open access via YouTube on 3rd April 2024

Watch it here: <https://youtu.be/stG5BbMSCkE>

The documentary continues to be shown at various festivals and institutions across the world, and at community screenings.



From the screening at Bangalore International Centre

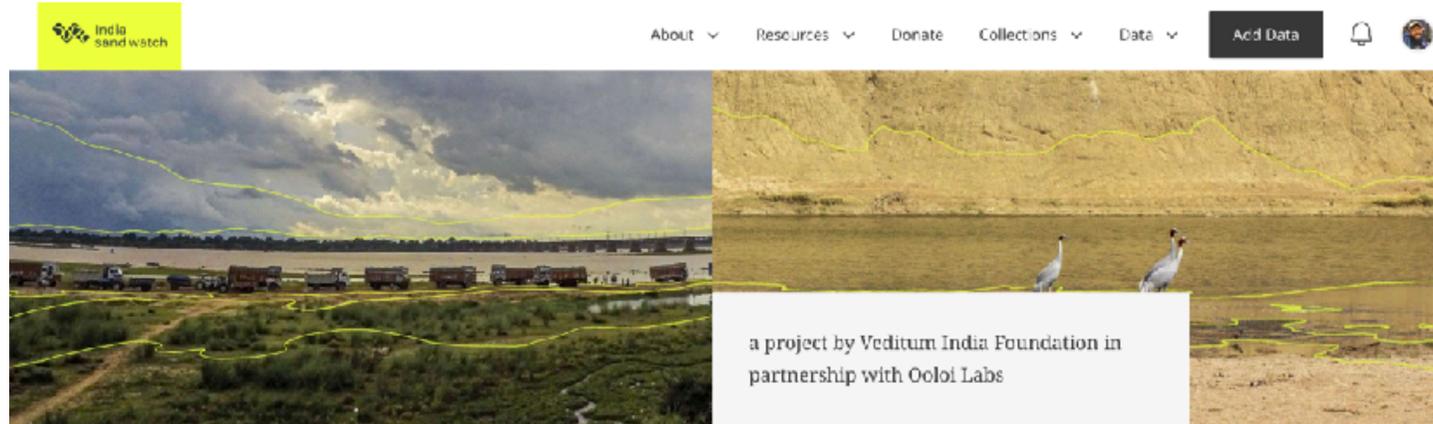
MOVING UPSTREAM: GANGA

MOVING UPSTREAM: GANGA - SCREENINGS

- **Rainmatter Foundation** organised a screening on **World Environment Day 2023** at **Bangalore International Centre**
- June 2023: screened at the **Goa Environmental Film Festival**
- Some media from the project was showcased as part of the '**Water Pressure**' show at **MK&G, Hamburg**
- Screened at **Nadi Utsav 2023** at **The Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts (IGNCA)**
- Sept 2023: Screened at the **Indian Documentary Film Festival of Bhubaneswar**

INDIA SAND WATCH





Total Reports	News Reports	Tender Documents	Survey Reports	Court Documents	Case Reports	Guidelines
1,954	1,599	123	83	16	64	69

After water, sand is the second most extracted natural resource on earth. We get this resource by strip mining our rivers and beaches, often illegally and unsustainably. These actions are leading to serious ecological, social and economic impacts. All of this while the sector has little to no accountability.

India Sand Watch is an open data project enabling collection, annotation & archiving of data related to sand mining in India. Here's a look at the data available on the platform, mapped spatially onto India's states.

Checkout which states have data available, news reporting etc and where data is missing. (please note that this data is not exhaustive, and will contain reporting and interest bias).

Preview of the India Sand Watch website

INDIA SAND WATCH

INDIA SAND WATCH

India Sand Watch is an environmental accountability project by Veditum with an open-data platform at its heart.

This initiative is supported by the Rainmatter Foundation and the platform built in partnership with Ooloi Labs.

Checkout the platform: <http://sandwatch.in>





Poster inviting people to the public launch of India Sand Watch

INDIA SAND WATCH

INDIA SAND WATCH LAUNCH

In the making for several years, we finally had a public launch of the platform in August 2023.

Over the past year, we have introduced the project to people through innovative outreach events like data sprints, sediment stories and publications.

We're excited about the possibilities for environmental, social and economic justice emerging from this project!

If this interests you, write to sandwatch@veditum.org



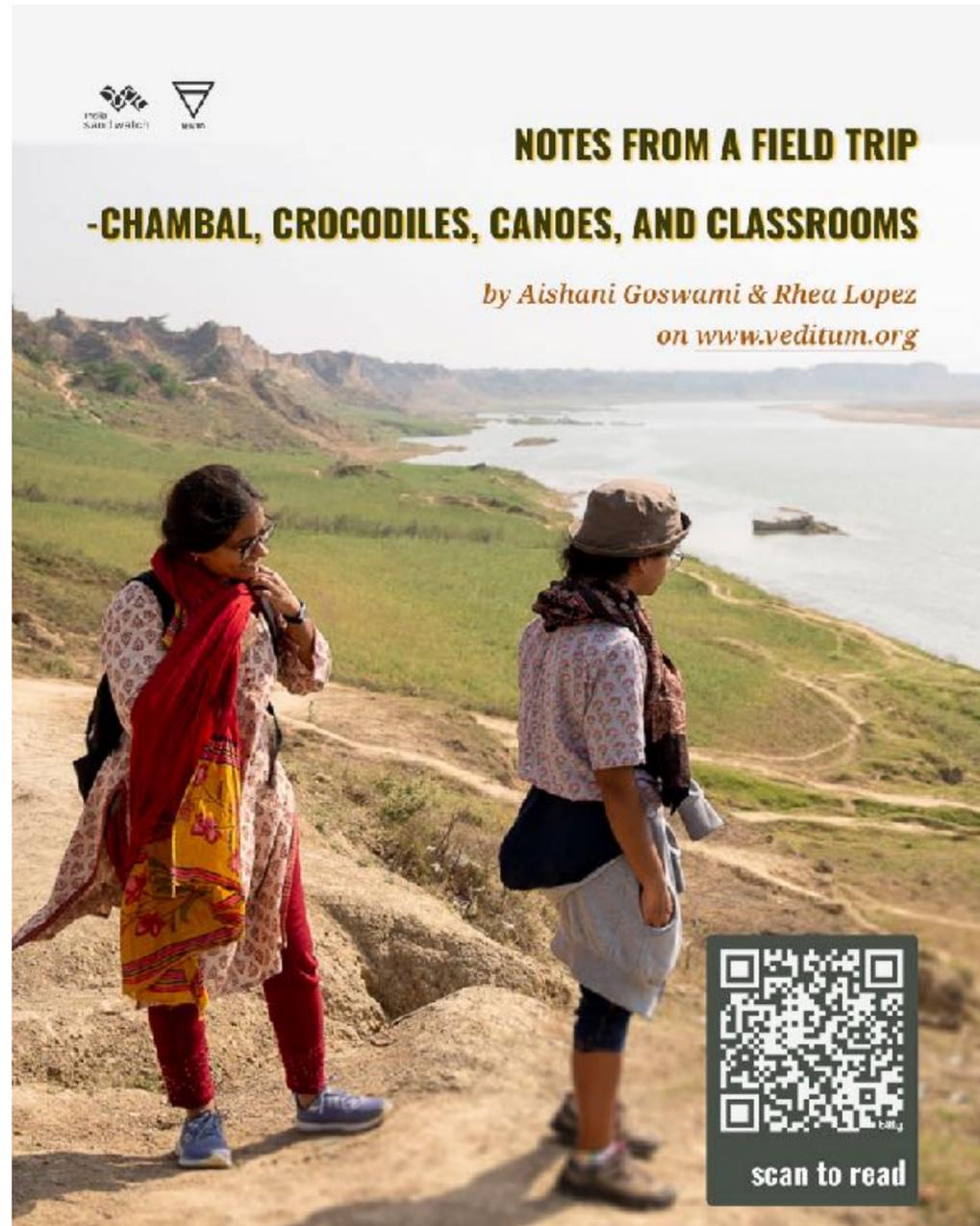
India Sand Watch Partner Organisations

INDIA SAND WATCH

PARTNERS

In the past 1 year we've brought on board partners from different backgrounds who we're collaborating with to advance on varied fronts:

- With the Berkeley School of Information we're building predictive capabilities to identify sand mining activity at scale using publicly available geospatial data
- With Wildlife Conservation Trust we're building capacity to address challenges to biodiversity
- With Youth Ki Awaaz we're working on the communications front!



Poster sharing notes from our field trip in March 2024

INDIA SAND WATCH

TEAM FIELD TRIP - CHAMBAL & DELHI

In March 2024 the Veditum team got together in Delhi and headed out on a field trip to the River Chambal

We were hosted by our partners at the Wildlife Conservation Trust (WCT) and Tarun Nair - an old friend of Veditum & lead at WCT's Project Makara - helped us see the riverscape from his own lens.

We saw crocodiles, gharials, turtles, terns, storks, and more! Our partners - Ando & Suraj from the Berkeley School of Information were also with us on the trip!

Read Aishani & Rhea's notes from the field trip at this link: [***Notes from a field trip***](#)

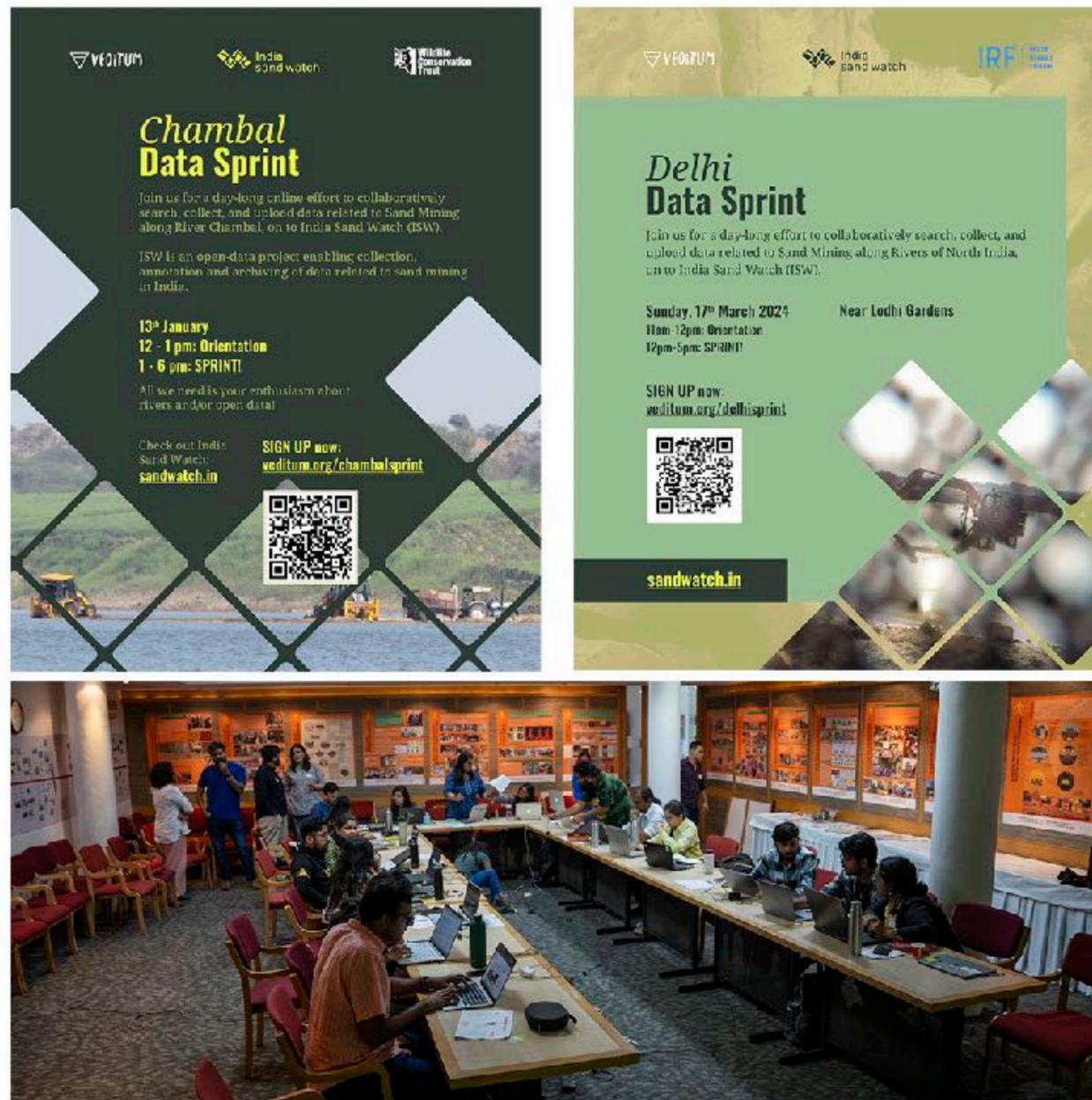


Our social media poster talking about crossing 1000 news reports on India Sand Watch

INDIA SAND WATCH

MILESTONES & NUMBERS

- 200 registrations for the launch event
- 20+ introductory sessions for the platform
- 160+ users / contributors of the platform
- In February 2024 we crossed 1000 news reports archived on India Sand Watch
- In August 2024 we're set to cross 2000 total reports on the India Sand Watch platform
- Our methods of outreach and community activation is inspiring other data projects to re-imagine how they approach their strategy

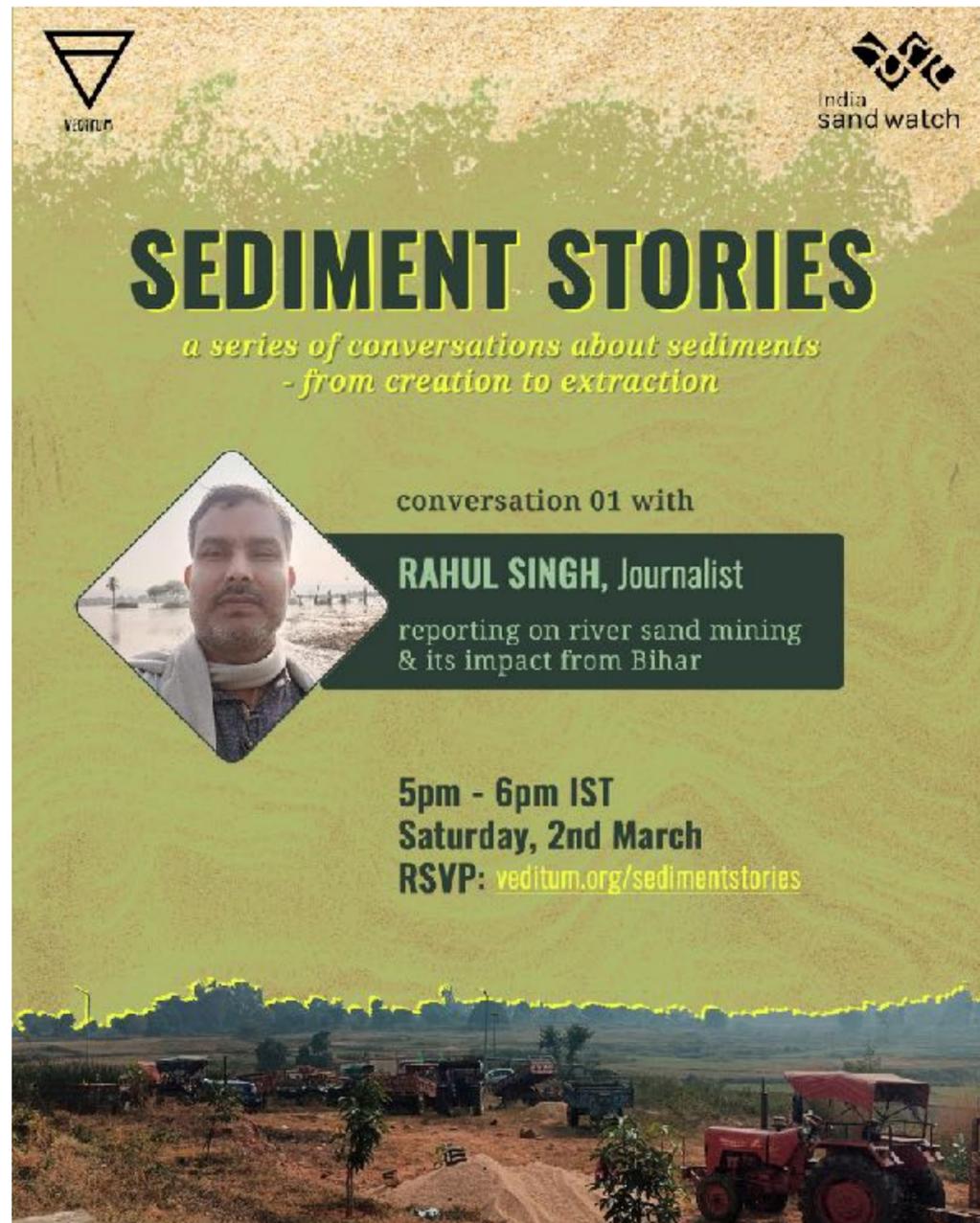


Top - posters for the data sprints. Bottom - Snapshot from the Delhi Data Sprint

INDIA SAND WATCH

OUTREACH & AWARENESS - DATA SPRINTS

- India Sand Watch Data Sprints bring together communities of open-data enthusiasts, and people concerned about rivers - particularly about the issue of river sand mining, to participate in a collective, day-long, intensive data digitisation effort.
- We conducted 1 online and 1 in-person sprint
- Focus areas: River Chambal | Rivers of North India
- In the 2 sprints, 65 participants archived 236 reports - 3851 data points from 8 states!
- You can checkout detailed reports & visualisations here: veditum.org/datasprints



Poster of the first Sediment Stories discussion

INDIA SAND WATCH

OUTREACH & AWARENESS - SEDIMENT STORIES

- We launched a new conversation series - **'Sediment Stories'** - to explore a new way of looking at sediments from creation to extraction.
- We plan to engage with people - geologists, biologists, hydrologists, journalists, activists, administrators - about their work around sediments and sand mining in India.
- Our first Sediment Stories was with independent journalist Rahul Singh, where we discussed about ground reporting on this issue
- Checkout all Sediment Stories discussions here: veditum.org/sedimentstories

MINOR MINERAL, MAJOR MENACE: DECODING THE SOCIO-POLITICAL LANDSCAPE OF SAND MINING IN ANDHRA PRADESH

Status report from June 2023 by *India Sand Watch*
Author: *Mehuli Das*



Looking at a few key learnings / observations from this report.

Swipe right ->

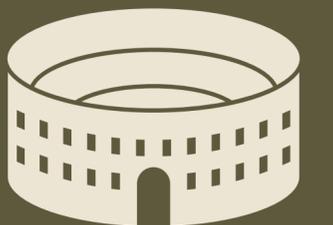
Cover image of our social media collateral sharing Mehuli's report

INDIA SAND WATCH

PUBLISHING

- Mehuli Das, our intern from summer of 2023 published the results of her research on the state of sand mining in Andhra Pradesh.
- Click [here](#) to read her report.
- Along with our media partners at Youth ki Awaaz, we mentored young journalists, and published two in-depth articles on sand mining in India:
 - M. Huzaifa reported on illegal sand mining in Saharanpur, Uttar Pradesh ([read here](#))
 - Ritu Satya-Rekha discusses Maharashtra's new sand mining policy, and its links to unchecked infrastructure development ([read here](#)).

EVENTS & PUBLIC SPEAKING



EVENTS & PUBLIC SPEAKING

DESIGN DIALOGUES - YDI

“From Climate Anxiety to Climate Action” was a session hosted by the group - Young Designers India as part of their Design Dialogues

Siddharth from Veditum spoke about the need for designers to engage in the Climate Movement & how to go from Climate Anxiety to Climate Action



WINTER SCHOOL - NID Ahmedabad

We joined our friends Arjun Kamdar & Tejaswini Nagesh at NID Ahmedabad, where they were teaching an elective on using speculative design to imagine water ecosystems.

We discussed walking as a way of understanding the world, our work at Veditum, and encouraging imaginations for a better future.

AGAMI SUMMIT

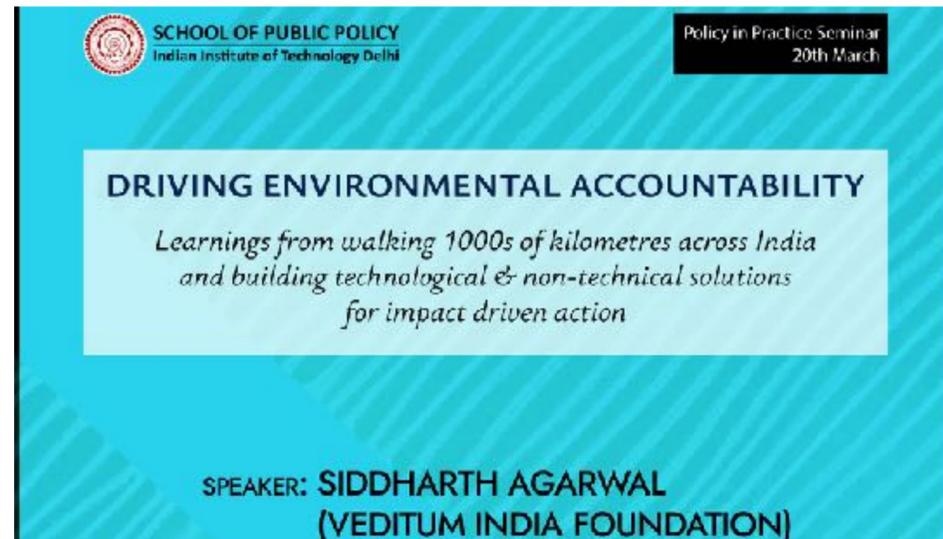
We introduced the attendees to India Sand Watch at the Innovation Mela, alongside legal-tech & justice-tech startups demonstrating their innovative solutions and prototypes.

Our work was appreciated by many, including sitting judges of the Karnataka High Court and members of the Department of Justice, Govt. of India, both of whom mentioned the need for such tools and to push government departments to also equip themselves similarly.

Siddharth also conducted an exercise on 'Desire Paths' during the summit which was appreciated by all participants.



Siddharth explaining the India Sand Watch platform to attendees at Agami Summit



EVENTS & PUBLIC SPEAKING

SCHOOL OF PUBLIC POLICY, IIT DELHI

Siddharth delivered a seminar talk hosted by the School of Public Policy at IIT Delhi. This was co-ordinated thanks to our wonderful collaborator Prof. Pooja Prasad

This was followed by a classroom interaction with students, discussing policy interactions of Veditum's work and the importance of inclusive knowledge when proposing policy interventions.



TERI SCHOOL OF ADVANCED STUDIES

We visited the TERI-SAS campus to speak with students about sand mining in India, and the role India Sand Watch plays in creating accountability in the sand mining sector.

Siddharth and Aishani from our team spoke about our work and the ways in which students can get involved, and our partners from UC-Berkeley also presented their work.

RECOGNITION OF OUR WORK



INDIA SAND WATCH IS A WINNER OF THE D4GX 2023 INDIA EMPOWERMENT CHALLENGE by Dasra in partnership with Bloomberg, Societal Thinking, and Stanford PACS



Our poster talking about India Sand Watch at D4GX 2023

RECOGNITION

WINNERS AT D4GX 2023 by DASRA

India Sand Watch was one of 3 winners in the Climate & Sustainability category at the D4GX2023 India Empowerment Challenge

This is hosted by Dasra, in partnership with Bloomberg, Societal Thinking, and Stanford PACs.

The challenge seeks to drive positive change by promoting data and community-driven decision-making in India's development efforts.

You can see the entire list of winners [here](#).

INTERVIEWS & FEATURES



New platform unites tech and activism to monitor sand mining in India

As illegal sand mines continue to harm river ecosystems and communities in India, a non-profit initiative launching this month empowers journalists, activists and concerned citizens with data



Feature in Dialogue Earth

INTERVIEWS & FEATURES

DIALOGUE EARTH (THE THIRD POLE)

Soon after the India Sand Watch launch event in August 2023, the platform was highlighted by Dialogue Earth (earlier The Third Pole). This is a well reported piece by Shalinee Kumari following deep conversations with our team.

[Click here](#) to read it.

THE PRINT

Another feature of India Sand Watch appeared in The Print soon after the launch as well.

[Click here](#) to read it.

How new platform plans to fight illegal sand mining in India — satellite imagery, remote sensors

'India Sand Watch' aims to track sand-mining activities across India and to serve as a tool for journalists, activists, and researchers.

ANANSHA MISHRA 17 August, 2023 09:24 pm IST



Feature in ThePrint





Thumbnail of the Rainmatter Foundation film

INTERVIEWS & FEATURES

RAINMATTER FOUNDATION

Our partners at Rainmatter Foundation also celebrated 3 years of working in the environment and climate action space, with a short film showcasing the important work they support across India, including Veditum among a host of inspiring organisations!

[Click here](#) to watch.



Screenshot from the video series

INTERNATIONAL DAY OF ACTION FOR RIVERS

On the International Day of Action for Rivers in 2024, we collaborated with the Rainmatter Foundation team for a feature of Veditum's work over the years towards India's rivers.

A series of short video clips were released, along with a Call to Action to contribute to India Sand Watch.

[Click here](#) to see all the video clips.

PUBLICATIONS & COLLABORATIONS





First page of the published article - Down To Earth Magazine, 16-30 April 2023

PUBLICATIONS & COLLABORATIONS

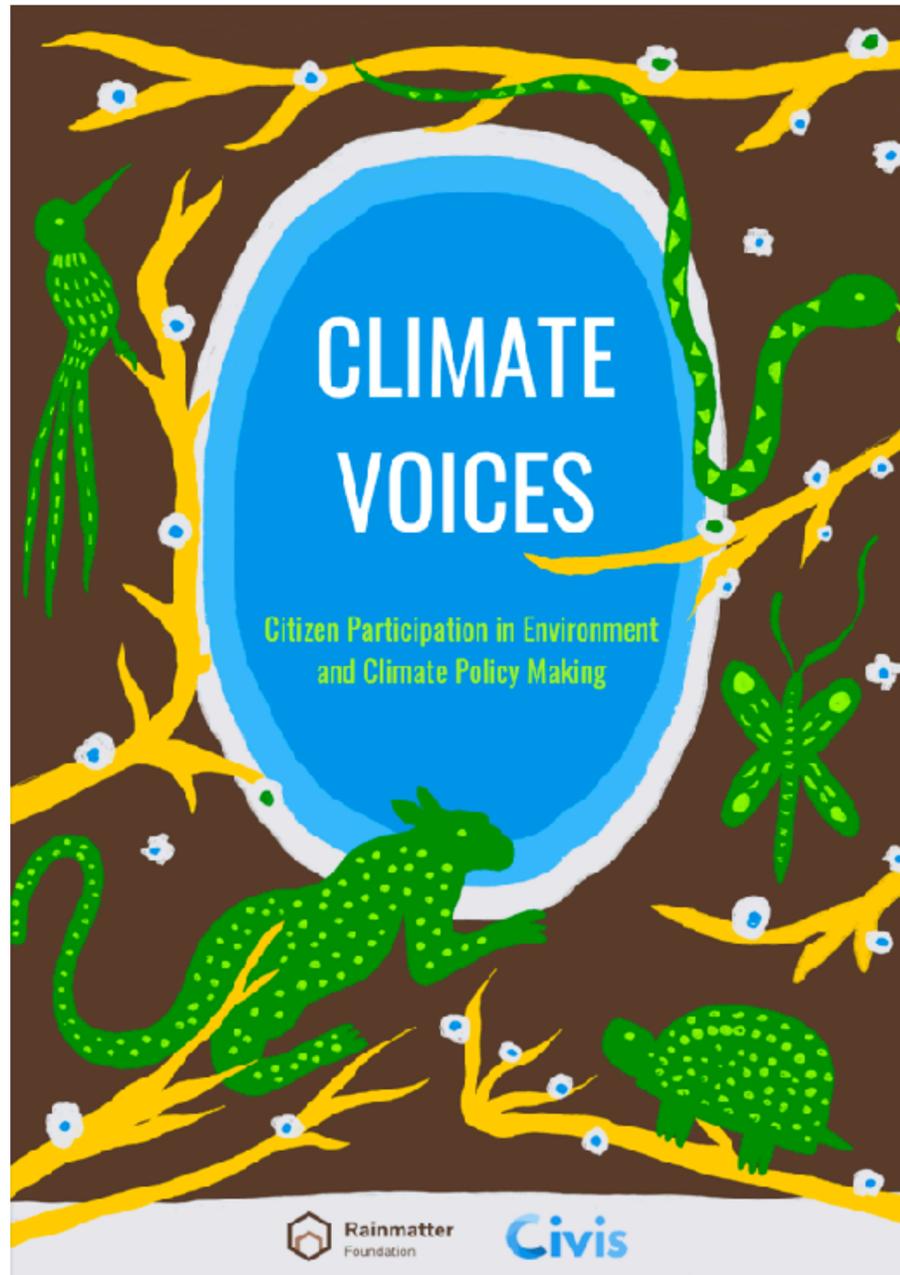
MINED TO DESTRUCTION - DOWN TO EARTH MAGAZINE

Earlier in 2023, we started sharing our work on the India Sand Watch project with our partners, while exploring collaborations.

Our team collaborated with Pulaha Roy, a data journalist from Down To Earth magazine, to tell a story about sand mining in India.

Using signals emerging from the data already added to the India Sand Watch platform, a 5 page print spread highlighted the issue in states across the country. This article was then translated into Hindi as well.

Click on the titles below to access these articles:
[Mined to Destruction \(English Version\)](#)
[Mined to Destruction \(Hindi Version\)](#)



Cover of the Climate Voices handbook by Civism & Rainmatter Foundation

PUBLICATIONS & COLLABORATIONS

CLIMATE VOICES HANDBOOK - CIVIS

We contributed to the Climate Voices handbook put together by Civism, along with different contributors.

The handbook is a guide for anyone who wants to make a difference in India's environmental law-making and play an active role shaping our climate policies.

It explores the roles and responsibilities of three stakeholders - citizens, civil society and media, in co-creating India's environmental laws by participating in public consultations on draft legislation.

[Click here](#) to download the handbook in 5 different languages.



PUBLICATIONS & COLLABORATIONS

INDIA DEVELOPMENT REVIEW

TROUBLED WATERS IN BIHAR'S FLOODPLAINS

Siddharth from Veditum wrote for the India Development Review (IDR) on the infrastructural changes and other terraformation happening across the state of Bihar, how these might be negatively affecting the flood situation in the state.

[Click here](#) to read the full piece.



India Rivers Week 2023 poster.

PUBLICATIONS & COLLABORATIONS

INDIA RIVERS WEEK 2023

WITH INDIA RIVERS FORUM

The annual event by India Rivers Forum was held in Pune in November 2023, celebrating **10 years of India Rivers Week** and focussed on **River Front Development related challenges** in India.

There was a declaration from the event asking for higher scrutiny of River Front related projects in India.

Details from the event can be found at this link: <http://indiariversforum.org/indiariversweek2023/>

Veditum India Foundation is a consortium member at the India Rivers Forum, and Siddharth is the convener.

INTERNSHIPS AT VEDITUM





Poster inviting applications for internships with India Sand Watch

INTERNSHIPS

INDIA SAND WATCH

As part of our efforts to engage young minds in environmental topics through an active lens of environmental justice and governance, we launched this year's internship program.

6 interns were selected from 150+ applications to work with us on the India Sand Watch project

Ashutosh Bajpai, Isha Shah, Laika Baig, Meghma Mitra, Rozat Rangwala & Urvashi Prasad are currently working with us to create reports on the state of sand mining for 6 different regions of India.

INTERNSHIPS

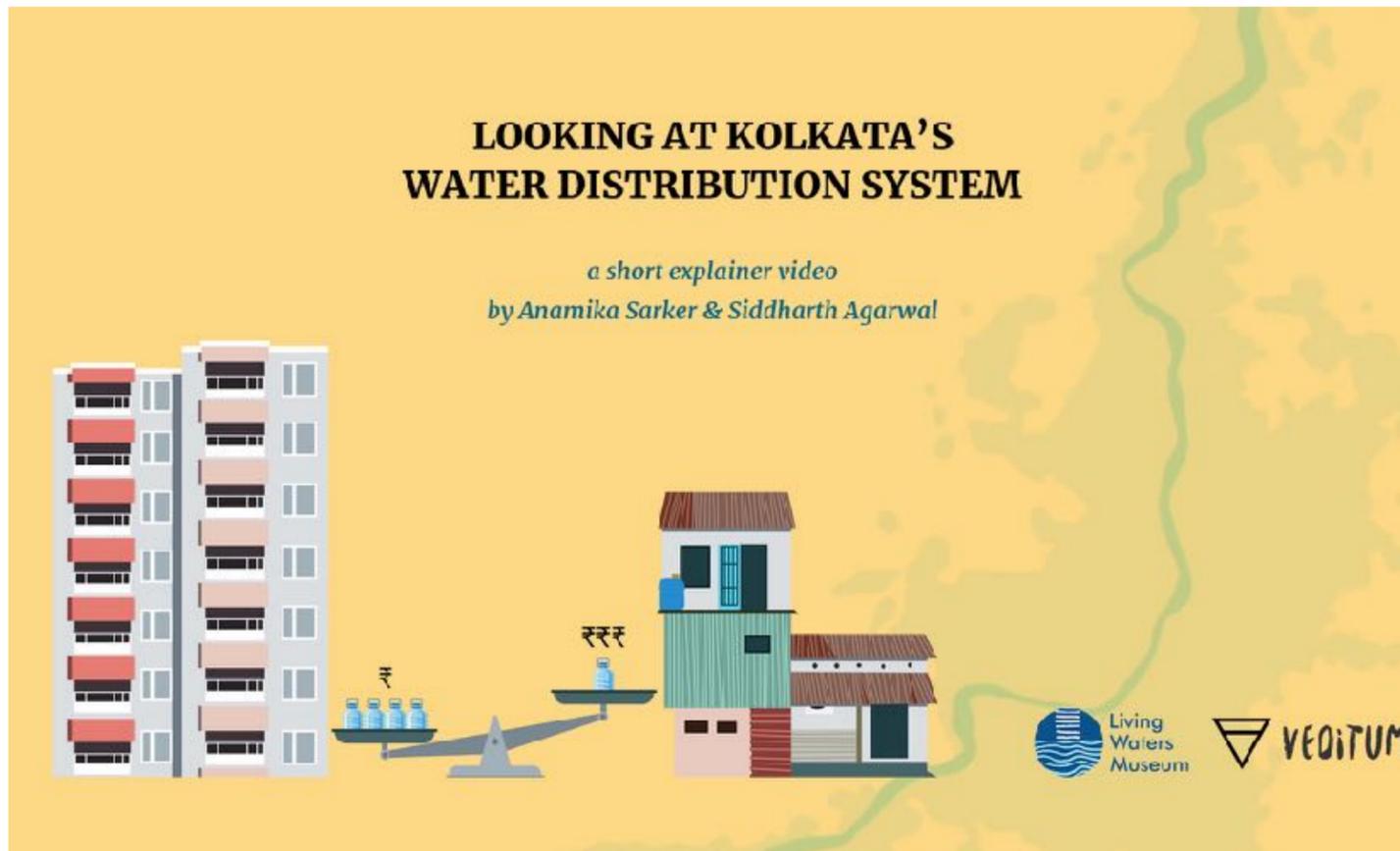
CITY WATER WALKS

In a previous year, Anamika Sarker interned with us and produced a video - ***“Where does Kolkata get its water from”***. We created this as part of our City Water Walks project focussed on Kolkata.

Recently, Anamika worked with us in producing the second video for this series - ***“Looking at Kolkata’s Water Distribution System”***.

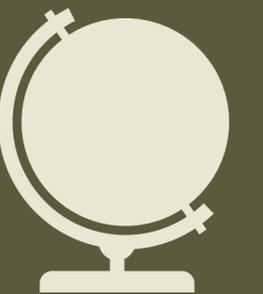
We partnered with the Living Waters Museum (LWM) to produce this, and the video was made public in Sept 2023 as part of LWM’s Kolkata Waters exhibition.

[Click here](#) to watch the video.



Thumbnail for the final video released in September 2023 as part of Living Waters Museum’s Kolkata Waters exhibition.

**OUR WORK IS
SUPPORTED BY**



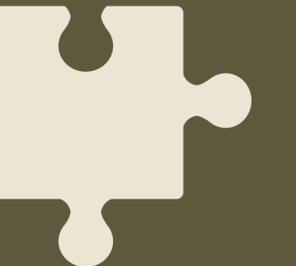


OP JAIN FOUNDATION



This is apart from the numerous individual donors who continue to be our strength

PARTNER ORGANISATIONS



Berkeley
SCHOOL OF
INFORMATION

IRF INDIA
RIVERS
FORUM

INTERNATIONAL
RIVERS
people • water • life

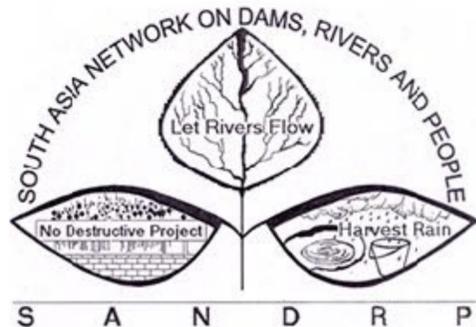
Let
India
Breathe

manthan
मंथन अध्ययन केंद्र



oioi Labs

OUT OF EDEN WALK



 **SCHOOL OF PUBLIC POLICY**
Indian Institute of Technology Delhi

 **Wildlife
Conservation
Trust**

**YOUTH
KI AWAAZ**

OUR APPEAL



I hope you enjoyed reading through the report, learnt a thing or two, and also felt happy at what your contributions have enabled us to do.

While we have managed to receive institutional support for a couple of new projects, we hope that you will continue your financial contribution towards Veditum's work. Individual donations have built the bedrock of stability on which we're continuing our work.

Indian citizens can make a tax deductible donation (under Section 80G) to Veditum via this link: <https://rzp.io/l/VIF-AR-23-24> or reach out if you'd like to use UPI / NEFT for a direct transfer.

In case you have any leads for institutional support, or any questions for us, please reach out to me at asid@veditum.org. I look forward to hearing from you.

Siddharth Agarwal

**THANK YOU FOR
WALKING ALONG WITH US**



www.veditum.org

www.movingupstream.in

www.sandwatch.in

