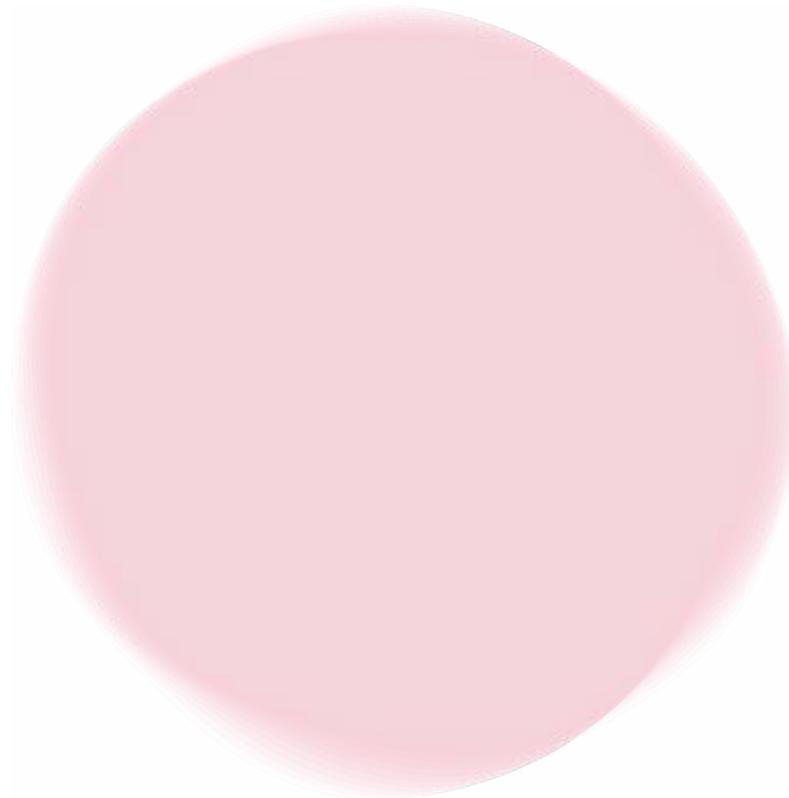
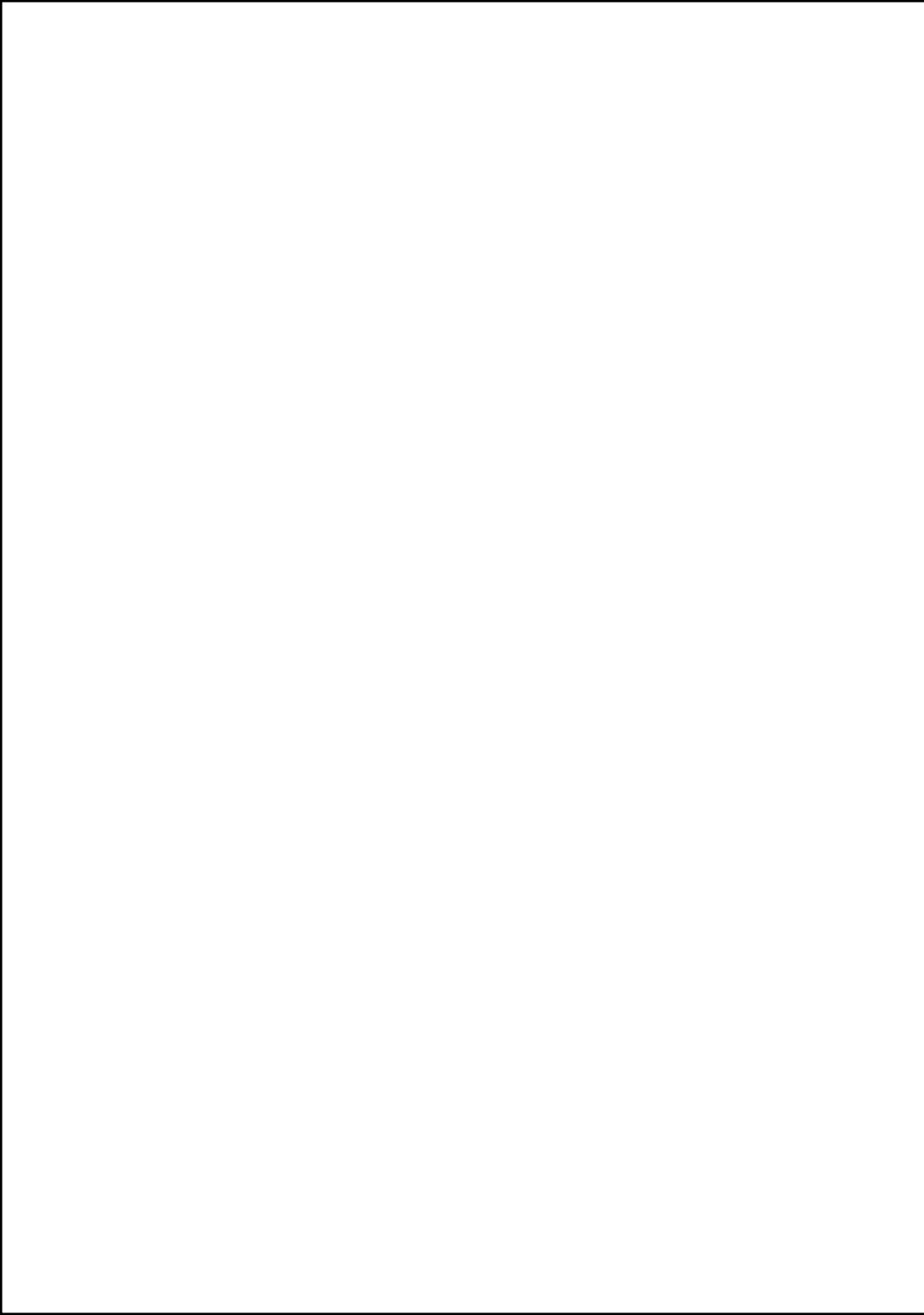


aruvu collaboratory



Compendium of Place-based Engagements

2025



aruvu collaboratory

A Compendium of Place-based Engagements

2025

அருவு | aruvu

(noun)

the act of observing; attention; regard; heed;
cognizance; notice.

Aruvu Collaboratory: A compendium of Place-based Engagements 2025

First Edition

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Published by:

LLN Press

226, SFS 407, KHB Colony, 4th Phase
Yelahanka New Town, Bengaluru - 560064

Typesetting & Layout: Archit Dhiman, Adhavan Sivaraj & Shreyas Srivatsa

Book title: Anek Latin, 48pt; Verso: Anek Latin, 11pt;
Section name: Anek Latin, 72pt; Work Package name:
Anek Latin, 48pt; Engagement name: Anek Latin,
48pt; Project code: Anek Latin, 40pt; Project name:
Anek Latin, 32pt; People name: Anek Latin, 48pt;
People role: Anek Latin, 20pt; Body Text: Anek
Latin, 12pt; Anek Kannada, 12pt
Cormorant Garamund (LLN Press imprint).
Illustrations: contextual citations in the book



LLN Press

Printed at:
Yelahanka Nodal Centre

Download e-copy on this link:
[https://aruvu.org/publications/
aruvu_compendium_2025jan.pdf](https://aruvu.org/publications/aruvu_compendium_2025jan.pdf)



Cite this work as:

R, Eshwari, Sangeeta R, Archit Dhiman, Shreyas Srivatsa, Adhavan Sivaraj, and Naveen Bagalkot. Aruvu Collaboratory: A Compendium of Place-Based Engagements 2025. First. Aruvu Compendium 01. Yelahanka: LLN Press, 2025.

99

Aruvu Collaboratory is a networked organisation to create an ecosystem for place-based collectives to collaborate for the wellbeing of their places through long-term engagements and infra-structuring. Our collaborations are under five work packages of community-led actions; incubation of local enterprises; Community owned infrastructures; Learning programs and design; and Research & Development. These collaborations take the shape of projects, local enterprises, producer organisations, resource centers, observatory, archives, labs, maker spaces, and so on, co-envisioned and co-managed with our allied collectives and their place-based networks.

Our place-based network originates from our allied collectives already embedded in Bidar (Living Labs Network- Team YUVAA) and in Channapatna (Channapatna Health Library-Manesiri Women-led producer collective). We are in formative stage of embedding our practice in Kundapura region through a long-term collaborative engagement.

We value the lived knowledge and the possibilities to co-create infrastructures that enhances the agency of people to reimagine plausible futures. This makes our work at the intersection of collaborative research, creative practices, community-owned technology, incubating local enterprises, care-based pedagogies, advocacy and governance.

axiom

work
packages

engager

S

projects

people

nents

axioms

Our axioms are the guiding principles that help us in framing the engagements, structuring them in a way that is sensitive to the differential realities of social and ecological systems belonging to a place. We have adopted the axioms co-developed by Living Labs Network and Team YUVAA through their reflective practice over the last decade.

These axioms direct us to situate our practices in a grounded manner through careful collaborations.

001

Knowledge production from Living Practice

Everyday living and practice is a space for knowledge production. Our endeavor is to bring these multi-modal ways of knowledge production into processes of co-creation in our network.

002

Place-based actions

The idea of a place encompasses many things, where the process of knowledge production is a result of 'living'. We have found value in repeatedly engaging long-term in a place-based manner.

003

Learning from below

Disciplines and practices have reached a stage where problems and issues only find partial responses. We believe communities have a tacit understanding of problems, challenges and constraints that are experiential. We see our platform as a space for co-learning and learning from below.

004

Support over Solve

Our world has several problem solvers who focus on isolating a problem and finding an opportunity to 'solve' it through various means. We want to instead build support systems, (infra)structures or objects.

005

Culture as a catalyst

Communities and their micro-contexts are sites for cultural production. We want to use culture as a catalyst to build relationships within our network.

work
packages

Aruvu is an organization with over a decade of experience working alongside grassroots communities, applying creative and critical place-based approaches to address pressing social, environmental, and technological challenges. Aruvu works to support and strengthen individuals, communities, civil society organizations (CSOs), and public institutions through collaboration, co-creation, and participatory research. At the heart of our efforts is a commitment to addressing shared challenges that impact well-being, equity, and sustainability. By working closely with communities, Aruvu ensures that their voices and lived experiences are central to shaping programmes that are not only practical but deeply rooted in the contexts they emerge from. Driven by a commitment to inclusivity and learning, Aruvu structures its body of work through Work Packages (WPs) that reflect its axioms and core principles and evolve with the needs of the communities it serves. A work package includes a broader context, stakeholders involved, our ongoing efforts, future directions, and contributors, ensuring focus and alignment with its goals.

100

Community Led Research



Community-led research is one of Aruvu's foundational work packages, centred on the belief that research must first and foremost benefit the communities whose knowledge and experiences inform it. The methods that the organization uses in this pursuit come from a participatory methodology including co-creating tools, sharing knowledge, and fostering sustainable practices. By placing community voices at the heart of the research process, this work package challenges traditional top-down approaches and enables locally relevant, actionable solutions. One key principle of community-led research is recognizing the community as active producers of knowledge rather than passive subjects of study. This work package focuses on collaboration, inclusivity, and long-term engagement through mapping traditional practices, exploring climate resilience, and building localized health frameworks.

Besides, people of Aruvu have collaborated closely with women farmer producers in Pudukkottai, Tamil Nadu, to develop projects that tackle environmental and agricultural issues. In an effort to create local digital infrastructures that will bridge the digital divide, the organization has also investigated the possibilities of resilient community networks, collaborating with the International Telecommunications Union and others.

200

Incubate Local Enterprises

We firmly believe that local businesses play a crucial role in fostering economic resilience and strengthening community ties. Our work with various communities has encouraged us to explore how networks and resources can support grassroots enterprises. One such



example is in Channapatna, where women began envisioning and experimenting with producing homemade nutritional food to sell within their communities through the collaborative development of the Channapatna Health Library. This initiative, aimed at increasing their income and financial stability, has been under expansion since August 2023 and is on the verge of being formalized as a Women-led Producer Organization.

Aruvu helps businesses by closely working with the concerns and creating new possibilities. This includes logistics and back-end support, policymaking guidance, market studies, design and production assistance, seed funding, and financial planning. By strengthening women and local communities, Aruvu fosters the creation of sustainable products and income opportunities, improving livelihoods and strengthening the local economy. Through these multifaceted efforts, Manesiri stands as an evolving initiative that builds on local solutions to create meaningful and ongoing effects.

300

Community owned Infra

Aruvu envisions a future where communities feel motivated and prepared with the tools to take control of their own knowledge and economic systems. It is essential to cultivate a sense of agency that allows everyone to thrive and shape their own futures. This vision emphasizes reducing reliance on corporate networks and proprietary data infrastructures, delegating local populations to develop autonomy over their resources and narratives. Central to this vision is our Community-Led Infrastructure work package, which seeks to foster and sustain digital ecosystems that allow local communities to document, share, and maintain their unique knowledge practices.

A significant endeavour under this framework was executed in Bidar, North Karnataka, by Living Labs Network and Forum, Team YUVAA, and Janastu. Together, we pioneered the creation of a community mesh network designed particularly as an intranet for everyday archives.



This local digital infrastructure was instrumental in documenting and creatively engaging with the rich oral traditions and cultural practices inherent to Bidar's diverse communities, with a special focus on the invaluable contributions of women. By bridging the gap for those who were previously unconnected, this imaginative network recast into a dynamic medium for preserving not just folklore and songs, but also the diverse oral histories that illustrate the region's cultural space. Moreover, it enabled collaboration and encouraged mutual annotation of diverse knowledge practices among community members.

Our project uncovered the intricate duality inherent in technology, stressing both its constraints and its distinctive potential to act as a catalyst for cultural collaboration and community resilience. As the mesh network grew, it flourished into a vibrant digital space for storytelling. Individuals transformed into storytellers, archivists, and guides, passionately working to preserve and share Bidar's rich heritage. This collaborative process also introduced critical roles such as translator-weavers, who skilfully interspersed ideas, practices, and connections between individuals, and maintainer-repairers, who ensured the ongoing functionality and efficiency of the network.

Building upon the stable groundwork laid in Bidar, Aruvu is persistently expanding its efforts to develop community-led digital infrastructures. With crucial support from partners such as the Association of Progressive Communication and the Numun Fund, we have expanded this practice to new projects, such as the Channapatna Health Library. This initiative encourages the Health Navigators from Channapatna, Karnataka to document and communicate health-related knowledge, promoting public health literacy in the region. Our commitment extends beyond merely providing infrastructure; we recognise a strong focus on facilitating communities to co-imagine, design, and maintain these systems themselves.

Another instance is of Hara. Hara is a small tribal settlement characterised by its unique geography and dynamic community life, yet it encounters significant infrastructural challenges. Limited road access, poor network connectivity, and an unstable relationship with the local Gram Panchayat (GP) Idur Kunjyadi have created burdens in accessing necessary resources and services. The settlement only received electricity about a decade ago and continues to struggle with water shortages, particularly during the summer months. Public transport is minimal, and locals often feel neglected in terms of development compared to larger nearby settlements like Hosur.



Our conversations with Hara began with the objective of addressing some of these challenges by collaboratively exploring ways to connect the community through technology and shared knowledge. Poor phone connectivity initially made our outreach difficult, but through local connections, we gathered these residents at the Bobbariya Temple, a central space within the settlement, to initiate discussions. These conversations emphasised the community's priorities, including better road access, awareness of government schemes, and access to basic amenities like water and public transport. Hara residents shared their frustrations with repeated but unsuccessful attempts to engage the Panchayat for development, as well as their experiences filing RTIs to acquire information about infrastructure needs.

Identifying the importance of creating keys from the ground up, we proposed the idea of a community network—a wireless mesh network designed with and for the people of Hara. This network would not rely on external internet access but would instead operate as a hyper-local digital infrastructure to enable knowledge sharing, communication, and local resource management. The community network would include tools and spaces for exchanging information, creating media, and documenting experiences.

The imagination for this network extended beyond connectivity to include public terminals for various uses. These terminals could house a repository of local recipes and family photographs, provide access to tools for making digital media, and even support small-scale local e-commerce initiatives. The purpose was to create a network that reflects the identity of Hara and its people while improving their capability to connect with one another and engage with broader systems.

Through this involvement, we worked to introduce a collaborative approach to infrastructure building. While the implementation of the network is still underway, the discussions in Hara have already sparked a shared interest in imagining what such a system could look like and how it might serve their needs. For the people of Hara, the process underlined their potential to take an active role in developing resolutions for their community. For us, it underlined the significance of localized approaches to technology, where solutions are built in partnership with the people they are meant to serve.

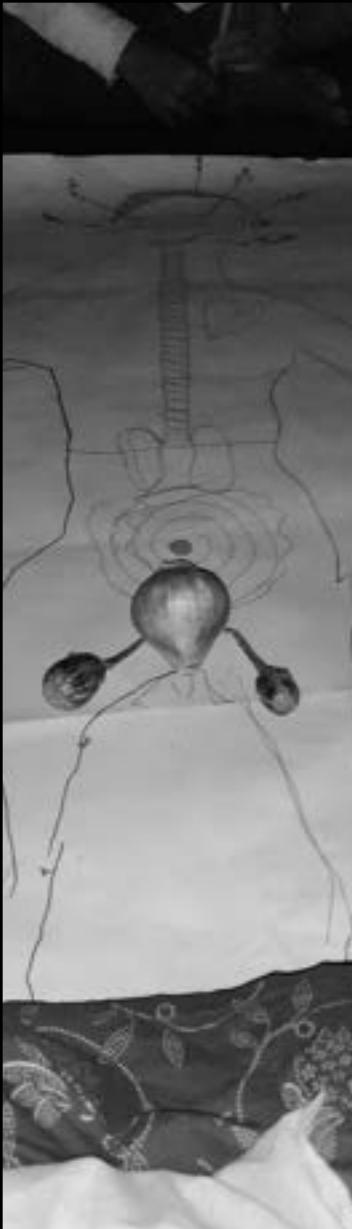
This participatory approach not only cultivates a sense of ownership within the community but also improves their technical abilities, ensuring both the sustainability and independence of these vital digital systems.

Our time with these reaffirmed the value of designing with care and collaboration, ensuring that the outcomes are practical, meaningful, and grounded in the community's lived realities. Through our Community Owned Infrastructure initiatives, we desire to make a way for a future wherein local learning and knowledge networks grow, communities take the right of their own narratives. Technology functions not just as a tool but as a bridge to collaboration and a broader participatory democracy.

400

Learning Programs and Design

At Aruvu, learning is deeply embedded in place and community, focusing on the confluence between people, practices, and their environments. This work package seeks to design and deliver accessible learning programs that foster creativity, build technical skills, and



enable participants to immerse themselves and work meaningfully with local micro-contexts. A micro context is a small situation or setting where specific activities or interactions happen. It focuses on the immediate surroundings and circumstances that affect local details and differences, showing how things occur at that moment. Aruvu has over ten years of experience in education, mentoring, and facilitation, focusing on making creative learning accessible and impactful in community spaces. A prime example of this work is Creative Urban Practice, which explores the dynamic relationship between urban environments and creative practices.

The outcomes of these projects are as varied as the contexts they explore, encompassing research articles, case studies, podcasts, blogs, and visual storytelling pieces. For instance, the repository from Bidar includes handcrafted resources and digital archives on ecological conservation and oral traditions, which serve both as educational tools and as records of community knowledge. Through these learning programs, Aruvu nurtures settings where participants can connect with their surroundings, collaborate across disciplines, and help build a growing collection of local knowledge.

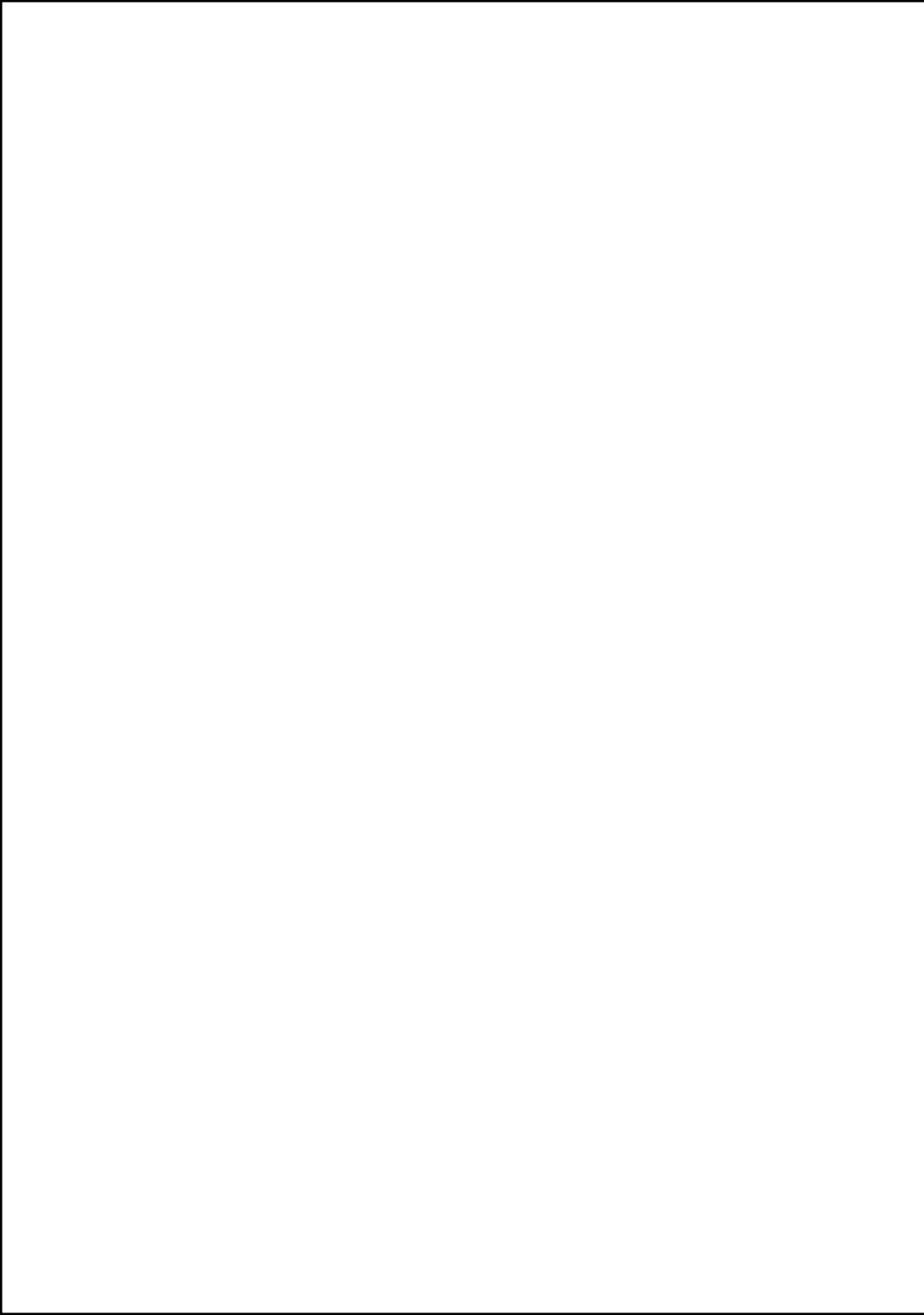
500

Research & Development



The R & D: Products and Services work package brings together Aruvu's diverse conversations to explore, design, and execute innovative archives implanted in community contexts. This package focuses on co-creating tools, technologies, and methodologies that emerge from sustained collaboration across cultures, disciplines, and geographies. By integrating participatory research, localized experimentation, and creative practices, this work package aims to develop products and services that are valuable and aligned with the lived realities of the residents we co-create with.

Each engagement represents a unique approach to co-developing ideas and practices while contributing to the overarching goal of creating actionable, community-centred artefacts. These initiatives illustrate how research and experimentation can lead to the expansion of sustainable services and tools devised for local needs.



engagements

Places hold complex relationships and multiple realities that require continuous and sustained involvement to appreciate, learn, and build relationships essential for collaborative actions. We believe in continuous and sustained involvement. They go through different stages of learning, experimentation, collaboration and infrastructuring. Each of our engagements are structured to evolve both organically and organised manner.

We began our journey towards long-term engagement through Samagra Arogya in Kundapura. While we joined the long-term engagements nurtured and maintained by our allied collectives Living Labs Network-Team YUVAA and Channapatna Health Library in Bidar and Channapatna, respectively.

Our focus on places and long-term engagements helps us to co-envision and establish ecosystem that is centered around care for the place and its inhabitants.

Samagra Arogya

- 101 Agrarian practices
- 102 Sneha Clinics
- 103 Sanjeevini Sangha
- 104 Fish Market
- 301 Mesh-Mash in Hara
- 302 Community Palliative Care
- 401 Grama Drishti Fellowship
- 402 GP Atlas
- 501 Resource centre Make-a-thon
- 502 PGSL Recces Across All GPs

A notable project within Aruvu's scope is Samagra Arogya. It is a community-based research project aimed at improving health by focusing on the Social Determinants of Health that affect well-being. It helps local village councils (Gram Panchayats) become centres where people can come together to find and implement health solutions that work for them. Piloted in the Vandse cluster of Kundapura, Udupi district, this initiative covers seven Gram Panchayats: Vandse, Idur-Kunjadi, Hemmadi, Hakladi, Chittur, Aluru, and Keradi. With its collaborative approach, Samagra Arogya integrates community knowledge, public health expertise, and panchayat leadership to create a decentralized and sustainable healthcare model.

The project is anchored by key collaborators: the Karnataka Health Promotion Trust (KHPT), Aruvu Collaboratory LLP, the Rural Development and Panchayat Raj (RDPR) Department of Karnataka, and academic partners such as Manipal Academy of Higher Education (MAHE).



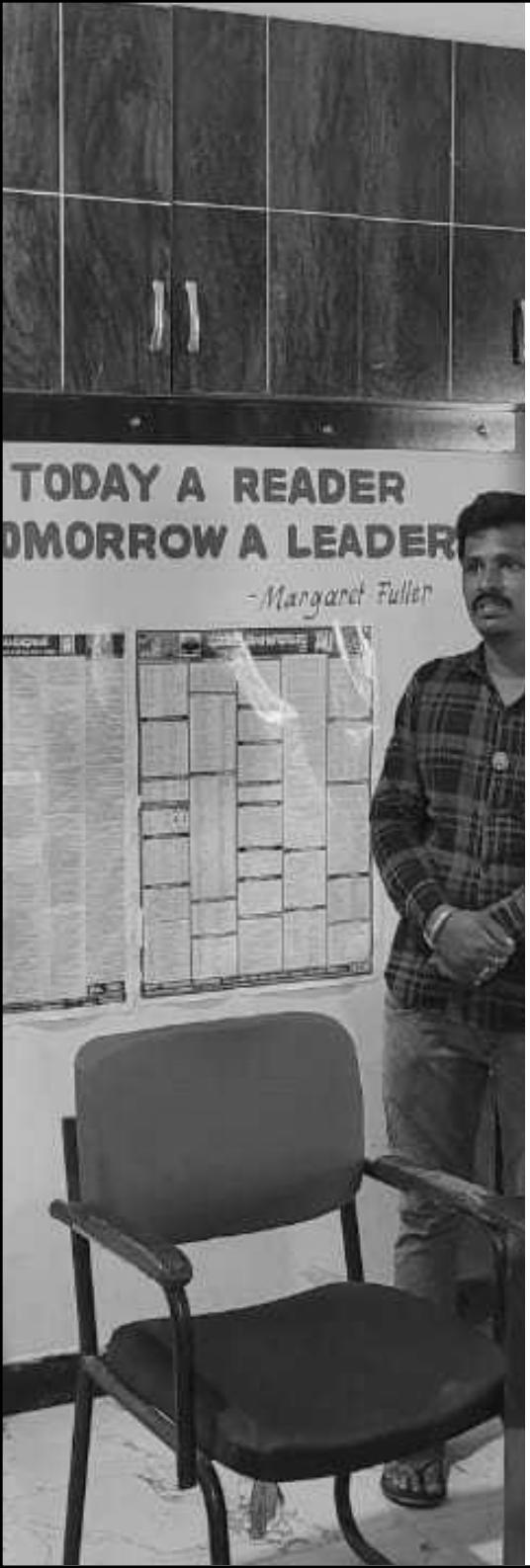
KHPT provides technical expertise in health systems strengthening and participatory research, while Aruvu Collaboratory facilitates the planning, design, and synthesis of community-centric interventions. The RDPR ensures policy alignment and operational support, making the Gram Panchayats central to the initiative's governance and implementation.

At its essence, Samagra Arogya aspires to provide holistic healthcare through an emphasis on palliative and geriatric care for marginalized groups, including elderly populations, individuals with disabilities, and those suffering from terminal illnesses. Recognizing that health is shaped by diverse social, economic, political, and environmental factors, the initiative adopts a comprehensive perspective. Its objectives include providing decentralized medical care, addressing emotional and mental well-being, promoting nutritional health, and integrating livelihood opportunities into the health framework.



Key engagements under Samagra Arogya span a spectrum of interconnected activities:

- Healthcare Delivery: Multidisciplinary teams of medical professionals, community health navigators, and local actors provide comprehensive care, including symptom management and emotional support, customised to individual and family needs.
- Community Participation: Local residents and panchayat leaders are central to the planning and execution of interventions, encouraging a sense of ownership and ensuring that initiatives are responsive to community needs.
- Knowledge Production: Research is co-produced with the community, using inclusive community engagement strategies to document lived experiences, consider conditions, and develop context-specific keys.
- Capacity Building: The initiative includes training programs such as fellowships for students from the Gram Panchayats, community volunteers, and healthcare providers, equipping them with the tools and knowledge to sustain and expand interventions.



Samagra Arogya stands out because of its integrated approach, combining data-driven insights with culturally sensitive practices. For example, community-led needs assessments have revealed critical gaps in palliative care and informed the creation of customized service protocols. Collaborative micro-planning guarantees that GPs can allocate resources effectively, addressing priorities such as water accessibility, livelihood support, and geriatric care. These engagements can additionally inform policy advocacy, aiming to scale the initiative to other GPs across Karnataka.

The hope of Samagra Arogya lies in its focus on working together. KHPT brings two decades of expertise in public health and research, while Aruvu Collaboratory fosters grassroots engagement and participatory design. Partnerships with MAHE introduce academic rigour and foster community-academic exchanges, bridging the gap between theory and practice. One of the initiative's remarkable advancements is the integration of a Decision Support System (DSS).

This tool aggregates health data from Primary Health Centres and Gram Panchayat-level screenings, enabling data-driven planning and policy formulation. By digitizing health records and linking them to community-level interventions, the DSS enhances transparency and accountability.

Operating in a dynamic socio-cultural landscape, Samagra Arogya addresses challenges such as migratory labour patterns, resource allocation disparities, and fragmented healthcare delivery systems. The initiative's adaptive approach, disclosed by participatory action research, entitles it to navigate this complexity while remaining grounded. The vision of Samagra Arogya extends beyond health service delivery. By centring community voices in research and action, it redefines the role of local governance in health, making Gram Panchayats catalysts for sustainable and equitable development. It imagines a future where health is not just the absence of disease, but a holistic state of well-being rooted in community agency and solidarity. Samagra Arogya shows how community-led research can effectively tackle complicated health issues.

By blending local involvement with expert knowledge, it creates a healthcare model that is inclusive, responsive, and sustainable. As it grows, Samagra Arogya encourages a new understanding and practice of health in local communities, providing a blueprint for similar programs.

CHL

(Channapatna Health Library)

- 105 Healthy Dialouges: Co-Creating Local Health Narratives
- 106 Learning Together: Mapping Techniques for knowledge sharing
- 107 Illustrated Remedies: Co-Creating a Community Health Guide
- 108 Local Knowledge Library: Collecting and Curating Stories Together
- 201 Manesiri

One of Aruvu's milestone projects under this WP is the Channapatna Health Library (CHL). Beginning with the recruitment and training of 15 HNs, the initiative focused on building a local mesh network that connects people within the same area directly, without relying on global internet infrastructure; to facilitate the sharing of health knowledge and co-creating a Data Collection Book, which provided structured guidelines for effective data gathering and interviewing. Developed in partnership with MAYA, Design Beku, and Janastu, CHL emerged as a platform for women Health Navigators (HNs) to address crucial health issues within their communities. CHL is focused on collecting diverse community health knowledge, including traditional remedies using local



herbs, practices around pregnancy and maternal health, nutrition, chronic illness management such as high-blood pressure and diabetes, and personal health journeys. HNs and their families contributed to expanding the library's knowledge base, creating a sustainable content generation system. Since April 2024, CHL has been incubated by the Aruvu Collaboratory in partnership with Manesiri, a women-led producer organization.

Beyond Channapatna, Aruvu's commitment to community-led research extends to multiple geographies and contexts. In Bidar, North Karnataka, the organization has collaborated with the Living Labs Network and Team YUVAA. LLN is operating as an innovative, place-based organization that facilitates collaboration and creative practice along with Bidar's various communities. Complementing this, YUVAA is a youth-focused organization dedicated to driving positive changes in the development sector through a place-based approach.

By blending local involvement with expert knowledge, it creates a healthcare model that is inclusive, responsive, and sustainable. As it grows, Samagra Arogya encourages a new understanding and practice of health in local communities, providing a blueprint for similar programs.

CRC (Climate Resource Center)

109 Preserving Agricultural
Culture

110 Mapping Step Wells and Lakes
for Water Security

111 Participatory Climate Research
with Local Farmers

Together, we have worked to integrate heritage conservation with climate resilience through projects such as the Climate Resource Center. The Climate Resource Center is a local hub to access tools and resources to tackle climate challenges through education, and collaborative solutions focused on sustainability and the mapping of step wells and lakes for water security infrastructure. CRC in Bidar District is also an action-research initiative that places everyday agricultural practices at the core of climate adaptation measures. Unlike conventional research approaches that rely laboriously on expert-led viewpoints, the CRC seeks to centre the lived experiences, observations, and practices of Bidar's farmers. This non-digital network operates



as a medium for farmers, their families, and partners to document, share, and expand their learning of farming practices and responses to climate challenges. Through this process, the project aims to inform hyper-local climate adaptation and encourage consequential, community-driven strategies.

Bidar is in the North Transition Zone of Karnataka. This area has laterite and black soils and receives an average rainfall of 800 to 900 mm each year. The region supports both Kharif and Rabi crops, alongside pastoralist communities who maintain livestock and create value-added products from farm produce. However, Bidar's agricultural landscape has long been shaped by unpredictable climate conditions. Despite these, generations of farmers have relied on local knowledge passed down orally through folklore, rituals, and songs, observing their relationship to the land and their stability in the face of environmental changes.



The CRC project identifies these agro-cultural practices and growing knowledge systems as essential to understanding and addressing climate change. For instance, local farmers often conceptualize climate change through the idea of ಪ್ರಕೃತಿ ನಿಯಮ — law of the nature; the recognition that nature is in continuous change, directing farming practices to adapt continuously. This stance contests mainstream climate discourses by emphasising the dynamic relationship between communities and their environment. One notable example of innovation comes from Karibasappa, a farmer in Bidar who sought to protect his Red Gram crop from erratic rainfall. Using affordable plastic cups, he created a simple irrigation system by digging the cups into the soil around saplings and making small holes to allow rainwater to seep gradually into the roots. By sowing his seeds earlier than usual, Karibasappa's crop flourished, growing two feet tall while others were just beginning to sow. Another local-agro practice being adapted is ಮಳೆ ನಕ್ಷತ್ರ — rain star; which uses star positions to predict rainfall patterns.



Farmers are now reinterpreting this method to adjust their sowing and harvesting schedules in response to shifting rainfall patterns.

Through these examples, the CRC recognizes everyday practices not just as survival strategies but as spaces of valuable knowledge production. The Centre works to build spaces where these understandings can be documented, shared, and expanded upon, moving away from the notion of communities as passive subjects of research. Instead, it sets them as active knowledge producers and innovators, capable of informing and revising conventional climate research.

The CRC further provides an outlet for farmers and their partners to connect and exchange ideas, nurturing solidarity and collective action. By creating opportunities for collaborative learning and community-led research, the project aims to co-produce locally-driven climate actions and envision adaptation futures that prioritize care, equity, and sustainability. The Climate Resource Centre is more than a warehouse of agricultural practices; it is a vibrant network where farmers' voices take centre stage, as opposed to predominant narratives, and shaping climate action from the ground up.

Manesiri

women-led producer collective

- 203 Incubation of women-led producer company
- 204 Design and marketing
- 205 Compliance with FSSAI
- 206 Product Catalog and Pricing
- 403 Manesiri/CHL Fellowship

The Manesiri initiative emerged as a locally-led effort to address community health and nutritional needs while promoting collective ownership and sustainability. Driven by Health Navigators (HNs) from Channapatna and supported by Design Beku, Manesiri incorporates local knowledge, health advocacy, and community-led business.



It serves as a vital step toward leveraging shared resources and collective action to promote holistic health and financial stability, demonstrating how small, community-driven efforts can develop into transformative projects. The journey of Manesiri began in May 2023 with a simple yet impactful idea: collective ownership through shared contributions. During a team discussion, the group decided to pool personal contributions of 500 INR per member each month to create a shared fund. Within three months, the group had enough funds to venture into an experiment in a local enterprise, using millets as the foundation.

The first experiment involved sourcing, packaging, and selling locally grown millet in the community. The initial offering was straightforward—raw millet packs in half and one-kilogram sizes. However, this effort quickly revealed the initiative's potential. As the HNs distributed the products, they gathered insights into community needs and priorities, which helped shape Manesiri's offerings, particularly addressing the challenge of incorporating millet into daily diets.

CUP

Creative Urban Practice

404 Capstone projects for students of Srishti Manipal Institute

405 DRP: Creative Urban Practice: Practicing with Place

406 Foundation Cohort from SMI students

This program has involved participants in interdisciplinary projects such as mapping ecological hotspots, crafting illustrated activity maps of grasslands, and documenting oral histories of local culinary traditions. Each of these activities combines hands-on engagement with rigorous exploration, allowing learners to develop insights about the places. For instance, one of the projects focused on mapping Bidar's ecological and cultural landscape. Participants co-created visual and narrative resources that not only reflected the region's rich biodiversity but also emphasised its social and cultural histories, such as traditional health practices and step well systems.

Our approach is guided by four key pillars:

1. Collaborative Curriculum Design: Learning modules are collaboratively crafted alongside participants, allowing the curriculum to resonate with their personal interests and address the unique requirements of their community. An instance of this approach can be seen in the CRC, Bidar which presented a collaborative curriculum design by



co-creating learning tools with farmers, drawing from their traditional practices, lived experiences, and innovative responses to climate challenges. This initiative incorporates cultural inheritance, like rituals and oral traditions, with practical solutions, such as low-cost irrigation methods, to develop dynamic, community-driven learning modules. By involving farmers as contributors and co-creators, the CRC ensures that its curriculum remains relevant, participatory, and grounded in the local context. This engagement highlights how collaborative curriculum design can bridge traditional and modern knowledge systems, fostering influential instruction that talks about real-world problems.

2. Digital Learning Tools: Digital media operates as a vital element of our programs, offering a range of open-source platforms that enable design, storytelling, and documentation. These innovative tools delegate participants to transform local narratives into engaging creative outputs, including immersive podcasts, visually compelling stories, and dynamic community radio programs. The work with the Hara



community to establish a wireless mesh network is a strong example of Digital Learning Tools in action. It focused on introducing hyper-local digital infrastructure that allows the community to explore and create digital content while handling their unique issues with connectivity. By setting up nodes and public terminals, the initiative provided access to tools for media creation, local e-commerce, and archiving family and community memories. These digital tools were co-designed with the community, ensuring that they resonated with their needs and priorities. Through workshops and participatory processes, Hara residents will learn to use open-source software packages and explore the prospect of a locally built network. This endeavour demonstrates how digital learning tools promote knowledge sharing and independence while enhancing digital skills.

3. Skill-Building for Technical Capabilities: People with Aruvu are engrossed in hands-on workshops that cover a range of topics, from coding to graphic design, allowing them to acquire valuable practical skills. A notable example of this is the Channapatna Health Library



project, where Health Navigators received specialized training in utilizing digital tools. This training enabled them to effectively organize, annotate, and share health data, enhancing their ability to manage and distribute vital health information within their communities. They invested these resources with their own lived experiences, confirming that the content is not only relevant but also deeply reflective of the community's collective efforts and aspirations. This integration of personal narratives creates a powerful framework for learning that recognises and promotes the participants' voices.

4. Place-Based In-Situ Learning: Grounded in the view of gaining knowledge through deep engagement with one's surroundings and circumstances, this practice invites participants to dive deeper into the intricacy of local ecosystems, governance structures, and cultural traditions. This immersive approach makes learning an experiential journey, where individuals not only absorb knowledge, but also vigorously interact with their surroundings, cultivating an awareness and appreciation of the interconnectedness of natural and



human systems. The Local Techno Futures project is a precise embodiment of Place-Based In-Situ Learning, as it centres on co-experimenting with creative practitioners and young adults across Bidar, Channapatna, and Kundapura to visualise future worlds embedded in their lived contexts. This initiative focuses on hyperlocal engagements, contradicting globalized, universal technological frameworks in favour of visions grounded in regional histories, current practices, and specific local contexts. Through residencies, workshop series, and a living archive, people here will explore how their creative, health, and educational practices intersect with technology, building tools and prototypes that reflect their environments. This project helps people focus on long-term attention and learn from their experiences. It turns everyday life into a place for exploration.

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Local Techno Futures

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The Local Techno Futures initiative is an ongoing exercise in imagining and rethinking the association between people, practices, and technology. It contests the predominant global narratives, which often centre Euro-American perspectives, by asking what technology might look like when its imaginations and implementations are rooted in local contexts. Working with the communities in Bidar, Channapatna, and Kundapura, the endeavour builds on the everyday experiences and creative practices of people often excluded from mainstream technological innovation. By highlighting the voices of creative practitioners and young adults, Local Techno Futures aims to co-develop tools, systems, and ideas that reflect the lived realities of these communities.

The program operates through three interconnected approaches. Residencies bring together fixed groups of participants over three months, encouraging deep collaboration around their practices. During this period, participants work on prototyping tools and create speculative artefacts that merge traditional methods with new possibilities. Workshop series, on the



other hand, offers a more flexible structure, inviting a rotating set of participants to collectively imagine and build futures for their work through iterative learning. A living archive, curated by young archivists from the community, captures oral histories, narratives, and artifacts, creating a resource that reflects the evolution of local practices and their intersection with technology. Together, these approaches assure nurtured involvement and enable a space where learning and creativity flourish.

A fundamental strength of Local Techno Futures is its hyperlocal focus. The initiative prioritizes localized visions of technological futures, confirming they emerge from the specific geographies, histories, and practices of the communities involved. The contextual nature of the project ensures that each experiment is grounded in the lived experiences of the participants. Creative practitioners and young adults bring their distinctive perspectives, drawing from local histories and past attempts to shape the future. For instance, the work of Ruksana Nazneen in archiving Urdu creative writing captures the evolution of writing tools and



techniques, while Anjali Swamy's ecological photography documents Bidar's biodiversity, linking nature and community through visual storytelling. In Raksal, the weaving techniques of Dhanraj Kurba are studied to understand how traditional crafts adapt to modern challenges, preserving both the skill and its cultural significance.



Creative visioning is the foremost pillar of Local Techno Futures, emphasizing the need to learn from specific pasts, observe the present, and build futures that are deeply localized and inclusive. This visioning process comprises local and regional histories, practitioners' lived experiences, and prolonged attention to ensure that the tools and systems created are significant and appropriate. Collaborative prototyping, whether it involves weaving tools, speculative objects, or media-making platforms, allows participants to actively shape the artefacts and ideas that define their futures.



The initiative shows how technology can be combined with local traditions. For instance, Lambani embroidery evolves through technological innovations, while oral

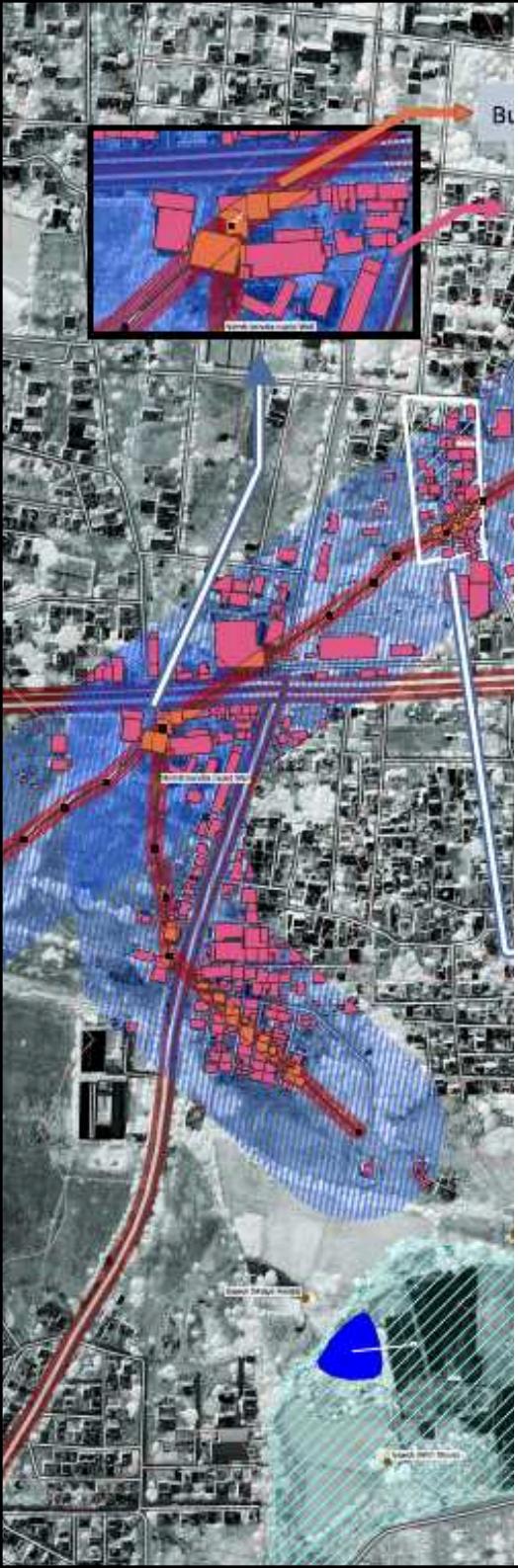
histories of Bhooteru performers in Bidar capture the socio-cultural shifts in their art. These artistic practices are not just preserved, but are actively reshaped through technology, presenting a view of cultural continuity and adaptation. At its heart, Local Techno Futures embodies our adherence to not just technology, but to the stories of the communities and individuals it impacts. It's about celebrating and amplifying the voices of those we work with, ensuring that creation is embedded in understanding their needs and aspirations.

PGSL

Participatory GeoSpatial Lab

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The Participatory Geospatial Lab (PGSL) is a dynamic space envisioned as a nucleus for collaborative mapping, storytelling, and spatial discovery. Entrenched in the idea that the stories, rhythms, and cultures of a place are shaped by its people, Mandala counters conventional notions of mapping, which are often dominated by state-led or top-down approaches. Rather, the Lab seeks to build tools and methods that allow communities to represent their knowledge, histories, and landscapes in ways that resonate with their lived experiences.



Maps are frequently sensed as definitive indications of a place, yet they are naturally selective, reflecting the preferences and perspectives of their designers. In the context of Mandala, mapping becomes a participatory process that allows communities to document their environments while advocating for equitable policies and development. For instance, in Bidar and Channapatna, Mandala is working to create accessible tools that document diverse identities and experiences, such as how caste and class determine housing or how developmental neglect impacts marginalized areas. By making maps in local languages and including community narratives, Mandala seeks to disrupt the exclusivity of traditional cartography and make spatial knowledge more inclusive and actionable.

Mandala also operates as a repository for interdisciplinary projects and collections, gathering information from different sources and situations. For instance, in the Climate Resource Centre (CRC) initiative, Mandala connects insights about grasslands, biodiversity, water harvesting, and agriculture, presenting an interactive platform

where tangible and intangible aspects of the work are documented. Likewise, the work on Bidar's Karez system—a historic water management structure—emphasises the developmental neglect of heritage sites and provides an advocacy tool for influencing policy. These endeavours indicate how mapping can transcend documentation to become a tool for political action and cultural preservation.

In Kundapura, Mandala explores how different demographics engage with space and place. Youth in this region interact with their surroundings in ways distinct from adults, often influenced by technology and mobility. Mandala's engagement in Kundapura investigates these dynamics through three primary modes: scaffolding documentation, enabling local discovery, and building local ability. Through documentation, Mandala captures stories about agriculture, seed conservation, and the impacts of policies like the Kasturi Rangan Report. For local discovery, it focuses on mapping ward boundaries, biodiversity registers, and community landmarks, fostering a deeper understanding of the neighbourhood. As a scaffold for local

ability, Mandala works on empowering communities to create their own maps, bridging the gap between people and formal governance systems.

One such example is working with Hara, where we conducted participatory mapping exercises to better understand Hara's layout, resources, and community dynamics. This process involved residents in identifying key features of the settlement, such as homes, fields, and green spaces, and documenting their relationships with the surrounding geography. This mapping exercise also revealed the unique circular layout of Hara, with homes positioned along the periphery and agricultural spaces at the centre. The participatory mapping effort provided valuable data and presented a possibility for the community to articulate their spatial experiences and preferences.

Mandala is not just a technical exercise but a political one. It seeks to counter narratives that marginalize communities by creating tools that enable them to document their realities. Mandala uses oral histories, traditional knowledge, and modern mapping tools so

communities can rethink and imagine their future.

Aruvu demonstrates the transformative potential of collaborative, place-based research through these and other projects. The organisation continues to work with individuals and groups to understand them while creating sustainable, equitable tomorrows by emphasising local knowledge, encouraging co-creation, and tailoring to the particular needs of each community.

projects

In Aruvu we have several long-term engagements across places. By virtue of it all our engagements are generative in nature leading us to co-imagine projects aligned to our work packages situated in respective places. You can refer to the engagement where projects are listed with codes. In this section we share descriptions of curated projects linked to engagements and places.

Agrarian practices

Place: Vandse cluster, Kundapura

Engagement: Samagra Arogya

Intersection: Livelihood; Climate Change; Gender



The "Agrarian Practices" project works with the evolving agricultural landscape in the Vandse cluster, where farmers tussle with declining yields, depleting soil health, and water scarcity. This endeavour explores sustainable solutions by bridging traditional wisdom and contemporary practices, seeking to co-learn from small and large-scale farmers in the region. The project's basis lies in understanding the lived experiences of farmers across seven gram panchayats, reflecting the interplay of social, environmental, and economic factors shaping cultivation patterns.

Farmers in the region primarily grow areca nut, coconut, and paddy, while smaller farmers cultivate vegetables like ivy gourd, brinjal, and flowers such as jasmine. However, the excessive reliance on Green Revolution technologies has resulted in soil erosion, rising costs, and diminished returns. While some farmers are interested in natural farming, apprehensions regarding its economic viability and the challenges of transitioning away from chemical fertilizers remain significant barriers. Through a collaborative engagement with Krishi Sakhis, local agricultural experts, and community members, the project introduces accessible methods for soil testing, rainfall monitoring, and organic fertilization techniques like Nimmastra and Brahmastra to rejuvenate the soil.

This project also investigates the socio-environmental impact of monoculture farming, where areca nut and coconut have increasingly replaced paddy due to labour shortages, water challenges, and market demands. Stories like that of Rajeeva Shetty highlight the adaptive yet cautious approach of farmers, combining natural fertilization with pragmatic experimentation. Meanwhile, human-wildlife conflict, worsened by deforestation, adds another layer of complexity, with monkeys and wild boars frequently raiding crops.

By documenting oral narratives, creating visual journey maps, and designing farmer-centric tools, Agrarian Practices foster a participatory platform for knowledge exchange. It emphasizes collaborative learning and sustainable solutions, imagining agriculture as a community-driven operation that respects local ecology while considering systemic challenges.

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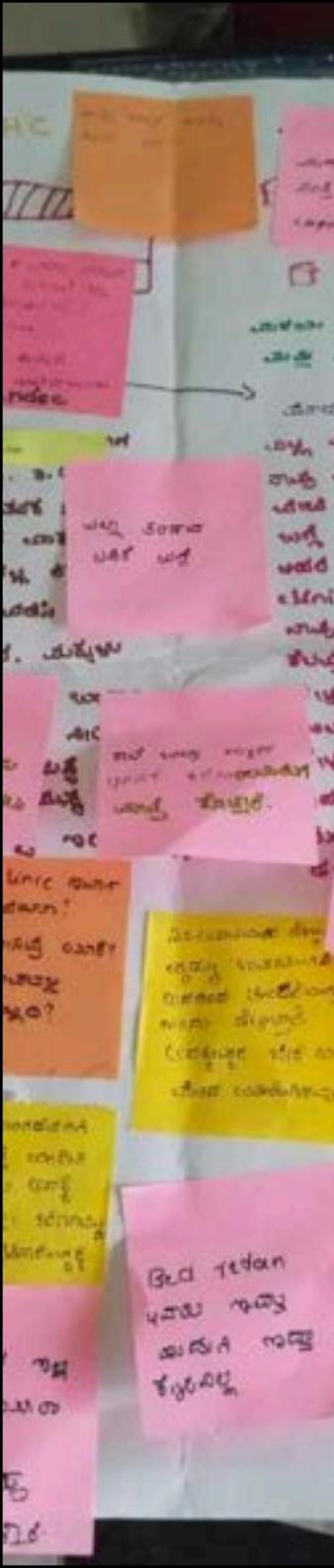
Sneha Clinics

Place: Vandse cluster, Kundapura

Engagement: Samagra Arogya

Intersection: Infrastructure; Adolescent Health; Gender

Sneha Clinics, part of the National Health Mission (NHM), function as Adolescent-Friendly Health Clinics (AFHCs) across India. They aim to provide holistic health services to adolescents aged 10-19 years, addressing critical issues such as menstrual hygiene, anaemia, mental health, and substance abuse. Services generally include counselling, health check-ups, distribution of



sanitary pads, iron supplements, and educational sessions on nutrition and sexual health. In Karnataka, these clinics operate in Public Health Centres (PHCs) and schools, cultivating awareness and care for adolescents navigating physical and emotional changes. Despite their promise, challenges like underutilization, insufficient infrastructure, and staffing issues have affected their efficacy.

In the context of the Vandse cluster, the Sneha Clinics face unique challenges. Conversations with Asha workers, Community Health Officers (CHOs), and school authorities indicate a lapse in regular operations, often attributed to logistical constraints like timing conflicts with school hours. Adolescents, especially girls, remain underserved due to limited outreach, cultural taboos, and fragmented services. For instance, while the CHO in Hemmadi conducts Saturday school visits, services such as sanitary pad distribution and counselling have dwindled over the years. The Vandse PHC board indicates a functional clinic for adolescents, yet irregular timings and the absence of dedicated counsellors hinder its full potential.

This project seeks to address these gaps by reimaging Sneha Clinics as vibrant hubs of adolescent health and education. The initiative focuses on creating inclusive spaces where adolescents feel safe discussing sensitive issues. We partner with stakeholders like Asha workers, Anganwadi teachers, and local schools to design culturally sensitive interventions. Meena Clubs,

currently underutilized, is to be restructured to include health awareness activities. For accessible health education, regular school visits by medical professionals provide gender-sensitive counselling and distribute essential health supplies such as iron tablets and sanitary pads. Documenting narratives from women who have navigated adolescent challenges has offered us valuable insights to shape better actions. These narratives highlight intergenerational changes in health awareness and practices. This reimaged approach imagines Sneha Clinics as more than just a service provider—they become a platform for encouraging dialogue, reducing stigma, and close understanding of adolescents. By integrating institutional support with community-driven initiatives, the project creates a sustainable model for adolescent health and a more informed future for adolescents in the region.

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Sanjeevini Sangha

Place: Vandse cluster, Kundapura

Engagement: Samagra Arogya

Intersection: Livelihood; Gender; Local Market

Sanjeevini Sanghas, established as women's self-help groups (SHGs) under the National Rural Livelihood Mission (NRLM), strives to enable entrepreneurship and self-reliance among rural women. Operating across multiple gram panchayats in the Vandse cluster, these groups include a diverse membership: from Scheduled Castes and differently-abled individuals to transgender members, reflecting a commitment to inclusivity.

However, their journey has been fraught with challenges, specifically in accomplishing the primary goal of economic empowerment through self-employment and sustainable businesses.

A critical focus of the project is to explore the barriers that hinder the success of entrepreneurial ventures within these sanghas. Many women continue to rely on loans not for enterprise but for personal needs, and attempts at collective businesses have often sputtered due to a lack of leadership, business understanding, and marketing infrastructure. For instance, a tailoring unit set up during the COVID-19 pandemic was initially marked as a success but later collapsed under financial strain and poor planning. Women lacked essential knowledge, such as procuring fabric at wholesale prices, resulting in unsold stock and significant debt. The experience left many members hesitant to take risks or pursue new ventures without external guidance and support.

The project engages deeply with the Sangha members to document their experiences and reimagine pathways toward sustainable self-employment. Women share aspirations for initiatives like areca plate production and homemade culinary products, but logistical hurdles and limited confidence pose significant barriers. By facilitating co-design sessions and mapping the local market landscape, the project tries to bridge these gaps. Actions include facilitating women with training tailored to local contexts, nurturing a sense of community within

the sanghas, and advocating for systemic support in areas such as marketing and procurement. Beyond economic goals, this project emphasises the cultural and social dimensions of women's conditions. Many members express a preference for male leadership in businesses, reflecting deeply entrenched gender norms. By having open conversations on these dynamics and promoting confidence among women, the project imagines a future where sanghas are not just financial instruments but a space for a holistic franchise.

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Fish Market

Place: Vandse cluster, Kundapura

Engagement: Samagra Arogya

Intersection: Livelihood; Gender; Climate Change

The Fish Market project explores the dynamic socio-economic conditions of the fishing communities in Gangolli. Focused on capturing the intricacies of the fishing process, it documents the livelihoods of those engaged in various aspects of the fishing industry, from fish loaders and sellers to boat operators and women engaged in fish trading. The project provides a vivid account of the fishing season, boat types, and daily routines of the community, offering a nuanced understanding of their challenges and resilience.

Field visits to Gangolli demonstrated the rhythms of life at the fish market, where large Persian boats, 370-engine boats, and smaller fishing



boats operate. The fishing season, spanning October to March, sees the harvest of popular fish varieties like Bangda, Boothayi, and Koduvai. Workers, including women, play vital roles in unloading and selling fish, showcasing the community's reliance on this seasonal livelihood. The use of advanced tools like fish finders shows the blend of traditional practices and modern technology in the fishing industry.

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Through immersive observations, the project emphasises the cultural and economic significance of the fishing industry for the region. It captures how the fish market acts as a hub of movement, enabling social connections and serving as a critical source of income for many families. By documenting these experiences, the project brings visibility to the fishing community's contributions and highlights the importance of sustainable practices in preserving their livelihoods.

Healthy Dialouges: Co-Creating Local Health Narratives

Place: Channapatna

Engagement: Channapatna Health Library

Intersection: Community Health; Gender; Local knowledge

The “Healthy Dialouges” project is a collaborative endeavour that seeks to have conversations and co-creating narratives around health and well-being in the community. Identifying the possibility of dialogue and storytelling, this project engages community members in speculative discussions about health issues, encouraging them to imagine possible futures and practices grounded in their lived experiences.

Workshops and informal gatherings form the spine of this initiative, where participants reflect on healthcare challenges and imaginable explanations. These sessions leverage accessible technologies like audio recorders and mobile apps to document personal and collective stories. The narratives often focused on traditional health practices and local innovations, are curated into forms such as podcasts and community series. These creations are then distributed through community networks making them widely accessible while encouraging local ownership of the knowledge produced.



This project emphasizes co-learning, where participants and facilitators collectively explore the nuances of health narratives. Creating space for shared reflection and exploration, "Healthy Dialogues" ensures that the process and outputs are deeply rooted in the community's cultural and social contexts. The outcome is an active repository of health-related content that serves as a shared resource for dialogue, learning, and action.

106

Learning Together: Mapping Techniques for knowledge sharing

Place: Channapatna

Engagement: Channapatna Health Library

Intersection: Community Health; Narrative-based learning;
Gender

Learning together is a participatory exploration of how communities learn, adapt, and share knowledge. This project seeks to document the diverse methods we use to acquire skills and pass on the knowledge, highlights the role of collaborative and contextual learning processes. Through interactive sessions, the project locates patterns such as hands-on training, peer mentoring, and narrative-based learning. Workshops focus on identifying strengths in these approaches while experimenting with tools and digital platforms to support broader knowledge sharing.

Community Health Navigators and facilitators work together to document these practices, creating resources that are vital to effective learning strategies and also carries cultural significance. The project also involves co-creating learning aids and resources that are context-specific and practical. HNs contribute their knowledge and insights, ensuring that the outputs reflect local realities and are accessible to all. By cultivating this collaborative process, Learning Together builds a basis for sustained knowledge exchange within and beyond the community.

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Illustrated Remedies: Co-Creating a Community Health Guide

Place: Channapatna

Engagement: Channapatna Health Library

Intersection: Community Health; Health Guide; Remedies

Illustrated Remedies is a collaborative project designed to create a visually rich health resource featuring home remedies rooted in local traditions. Guided by inputs from community members, the project uses generational knowledge with accessible visual aids, making traditional health practices relevant and usable across diverse groups.

Conversations with health navigators and local residents will identify common remedies and

practices. The resulting booklet is distributed alongside discussions and training on its use, ensuring it integrates seamlessly into everyday health practices. The project reflects a co-learning process where facilitators and community members contribute equally to the creation of the guide. It not only preserves traditional knowledge but also creates a shared space for exploring its contemporary applications. By emphasizing collaborative storytelling and shared ownership, "Illustrated Remedies" becomes more than a guide — it serves as a living document of community health practices.

108



Local Knowledge Library: Collecting and Curating Stories Together

Place: Channapatna

Engagement: Channapatna Health Library

Intersection: Documentation; Learning Artefact; Renarration

The Local Knowledge Library is a collaborative effort to document, curate, and share local knowledge across multiple domains. This project build on a participatory and speculative methodologies to create a repository of content that spans health, environment, and cultural practices, serving as a shared resource for education, advocacy, and reflection.

The project employs tools such as PAPAD, a

hypermedia annotation system, enabling HNs to create multimedia narratives that highlight local insights and experiences. By working together to co-create content, facilitators and community members ensure that the repository is meaningful and relevant to the place. This will also enable them to manage and expand the repository, to foster sustainability. Through this process, the project incorporates together diverse perspectives, illustrating the interconnectedness of local knowledge and community understanding to deepen learning and collaborative documentation.

109

Preserving Agricultural Culture: Documenting Traditional Practices and Folk Narratives

Place: Bidar

Engagement: Climate Resource Center

Intersection: Ecology; Local Knowledge System: Climate Change
This project is a comprehensive effort to document traditional agricultural practices and folk narratives that have sustained farming communities in Bidar for generations. Farmers in this region have counted on oral traditions — to communicate critical knowledge about farming techniques, seasonal changes, and ecological balance. These narratives are more than cultural



artefacts; they are warehouses of strategies that have helped communities adapt to environmental uncertainties.

Through participatory documentation, the CRC collaborates with farmers to record these practices and narratives, ensuring that they are preserved and accessible. For instance, practices associated with sowing and harvesting are carefully documented, demonstrating insights into soil fertility and crop rotation practices. Farmers also share songs that encode weather predictions, passed down through generations, offering a glimpse into indigenous climate knowledge.

The project does not stop at documentation but explores ways to adapt these practices to current needs. One notable adaptation is the reinterpretation of ମୁଣ୍ଡ ନେଷ୍ଟର୍ (Rain Star), a method of predicting rainfall based on star positions. Farmers are altering this approach to align sowing schedules with shifting rainfall patterns. The project ensures that traditional knowledge continues to serve as a living, evolving resource.

By recognizing the value of these narratives and practices, this initiative facilitates a continued appreciation for local heritage while co-working with communities to navigate modern climate challenges. It backs the importance of co-learning and collaboration, ensuring that traditional wisdom is blended into contemporary resilience strategies.

Mapping Step Wells and Lakes for Water Security

Place: Bidar

Engagement: Climate Resource Center

Intersection: Ecology; Local Knowledge System: Water Systems

This project demonstrates the critical challenge of water scarcity in Bidar by focusing on traditional water systems. Step wells and lakes, once the lifeline of the region, represent a deep understanding of local hydrology and community-led water management. However, these structures have been neglected in modern water infrastructure planning, leaving them underutilized despite their potential for addressing current water challenges.

This project undertakes a participatory mapping approach, involving farmers, community leaders, and local organizations in identifying, documenting, and studying these water bodies. Field visits and oral histories reveal the historical significance and functionality of these systems, including their role in sustaining agriculture during periods of low rainfall. Farmers share insights into how step wells were used for irrigation and drinking water, offering practical strategies for their revival.



The mapping process also assesses the current state of these water bodies, highlighting issues like siltation, encroachment, and pollution. By co-creating a detailed inventory, the project provides a basis for restoration efforts. These efforts include advocating for integrating traditional water systems into contemporary water management plans and exploring ways to link step wells and lakes to modern irrigation technologies.

The project's collaborative nature ensures that the community remains central to its outcomes. Farmers actively contribute to mapping and discussions, ensuring that their knowledge and priorities shape the project's direction.

111

Participatory Climate Research with Local Farmers

Place: Bidar

Engagement: Climate Resource Center

Intersection: Lived Knowledge; Agrarian Practice: Climate research

The Participatory Climate Research with Local Farmers project emphasizes co-learning and collaborative documentation to document the impacts of climate variability on agriculture. Unlike top-down research models, this project places farmers' lived experiences and observations at the centre, building a nuanced

understanding of climate change that is deeply rooted in local realities.

Farmers in Bidar share experiences and histories to document agro-climatic changes through field observations. These narratives provide invaluable insights into shifting rainfall patterns, temperature fluctuations, and their impacts on crop cycles. For instance, farmers recount how erratic monsoon rains have disrupted traditional sowing times, prompting innovations like early planting or mixed cropping. Such practices are documented and shared, creating a repository of adaptive strategies.

Workshops and discussions will be planned to further facilitate knowledge exchange between farmers and researchers to learn from each other. This participatory approach challenges conventional research paradigms, presenting farmers as active collaborators rather than passive subjects. By incorporating their observations into broader climate studies, the project highlights the value of local knowledge in shaping effective and sustainable adaptation measures.

Looking ahead, the CRC aims to establish a Farmer-Led Action Research Hub, host Collaborative Learning Sessions on Environmental Adaptation, and engage in Policy Advocacy Using Community-Generated Climate Data. These planned initiatives build on existing work to deepen collaboration and amplify community voices in shaping climate resilience strategies.

Collaborative learning sessions will bring together farmers, researchers, and policymakers to explore strategies for addressing climate challenges collectively. The CRC envisions leveraging community-generated data for advocacy, influencing policies to prioritize localized, equitable climate actions.

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Local Artist Residencies

Place: Bidar

Engagement: Local Techno Futures

Intersection: Lived Knowledge; Techno futures: Creative Practice

The artist/practitioner residencies in Bidar, part of the Local Techno Futures, celebrate craft and art as living knowledge practices. They provide a collaborative space where artisans, performers, and creative practitioners, engage in co-creative processes. These residencies foster meaningful exchanges that weave together cultural narratives, technical expertise, and creative visions, shaping innovative pathways for material and speculative futures.

Through these residencies, practitioners are invited to bring their unique perspectives and expertise to co-create with us. The emphasis is on shared engagement—where thinking, making, and imagining unfold as collective processes, informed by the lived realities and creative labour of the participants. This approach values and integrates diverse forms of knowledge,



ensuring that the outcomes resonate deeply with the local context.

113

Book of Futures

Place: Bidar

Engagement: Local Techno Futures

Intersection: Learning Artifact; Techno futures; Co-creation

Book of Futures is a living, mixed-media artifact born from the explorations of Inclusive AI. This mixed-media artifact documents the processes of envisioning and creating futures. Anchored in the tradition of South Asian futurisms, such as Talisman-e-Hoshruba, the project is grounded in collaborative, hyperlocal processes. As a repository of diverse technological imaginaries and material artefacts, it redefines how technology is imagined and created. Through co-creation workshops and residencies with artists and practitioners in Bidar, Book of Futures aims to record the alternative worlds of its contributors.

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Manesiri

Place: Channapatna

Engagement: Manesiri

Intersection: Gender; Knowledge production; Producer collective

Manesiri represents our effort to create a localized digital health knowledge repository. Co-created with twelve Health Navigators and supported by organizations like MAYA and Janastu, this project integrates a community-driven approach to collecting, curating, and sharing health knowledge that reflects the experiences and needs of the place.

The library operates through three core components: a mesh network for affordable internet access, a feminist server running co-designed tools for multimedia documentation, and the Health Navigators as knowledge curators. Together, these components enable the collection of stories about traditional remedies, healthcare navigation strategies, and community health experiences. With a repository of over 70 curated artefacts, the library serves 3,000 households, making it a valuable resource for health advocacy.

Further, the first experiment under Manesiri involved sourcing, packaging, and selling locally grown millet in the community in simple half- and one-kilogram packs. This move highlighted the potential of such initiatives and allowed Health Navigators to gather insights into



community needs, shaping Manesiri's focus on integrating millet into daily diets. The Channapatna Health Library (CHL) served as the foundation for Manesiri, as its participatory methods of collecting and curating local knowledge highlighted the importance of addressing broader food and health systems. More details about Manesiri's evolution and long-term engagement can be found in the section dedicated to it.

202

Craft-maker Ecosystem

Place: Chamarajnagar

Engagement: Weavers Pride

Intersection: Gender; Knowledge production; Producer ecosystem

The Craft-Maker Ecosystem is an initiative to establish, sustain, and run a decentralized production ecosystem led by Lambadi weavers in Chamarajanagar and Bidar. This project centers the lived knowledge and artistry of Lambadi communities, creating a framework that empowers them to take ownership of the design, production, and distribution processes. By leveraging their traditional weaving practices and adapting them for contemporary markets, the ecosystem supports economic self-reliance while preserving cultural heritage.

Focusing on collaboration and shared resources,

the Craft-Maker Ecosystem reimagines production as a community-led effort, ensuring sustainable livelihoods for artisans and fostering the transmission of indigenous craft traditions to future generations.

203

Incubation of women-led producer company

Place: Channapatna

Engagement: Manesiri

Intersection: Gender; Incubation; Producer ecosystem



Manesiri is a women-led collective based in Channapatna who produce food and nutrition products informed by the local community health knowledge they have been gathering over a decade. These women have many years of experience as community care workers, appropriating technologies, community-driven and participatory ways of collectivising to envision alternative systems that are grounded in theirs and communities' lived realities. The women are also part of the Channapatna Health Library and now the women-led collective is in the process of registering as a formal producer organization.

Design and marketing

Place: Channapatna

Engagement: Manesiri

Intersection: Producer ecosystem; Strategic support; System design

We developed a marketing strategy and tested in and around Channapatna, outlining specific sales channels such as door-to-door marketing through the HN network, WhatsApp marketing and sales, and partnerships with shops and supermarkets in Channapatna, Ramanagara, and Bidadi. The Manesiri logo was designed collaboratively, incorporating iterative feedback from the women involved. Additionally, labels, branding, and taglines were created for three flagship products which are Manesiri Siridhanya Powder, Manesiri Cookies, and Manesiri Upsaru Khare ensuring cohesive and appealing product presentation to support the marketing efforts.



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Compliance with FSSAI

Place: Channapatna

Engagement: Manesiri

Intersection: Producer ecosystem; Strategic support;
Compliances

We reviewed Food Safety Standards Authority of India(FSSAI) guidelines and facilitated the registration of Manesiri for six products, working closely with the maintainer of Channapatna to complete the process and secure the FSSAI license. Product experimentation and nutrition evaluation were conducted for Manesiri Siridhanya Powder, Manesiri Cookies, and Manesiri Upsaru Khara. Nutrition analyses for these three products were carried out at an FSSAI-approved lab, and the results were used to inform branding and label design. Additionally, pricing for trial sales of these products was finalized, considering production costs, nutritional value, and market positioning.

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Product Catalog and Pricing

Place: Channapatna

Engagement: Manesiri

Intersection: Producer ecosystem; Strategic support;
Product experimentation

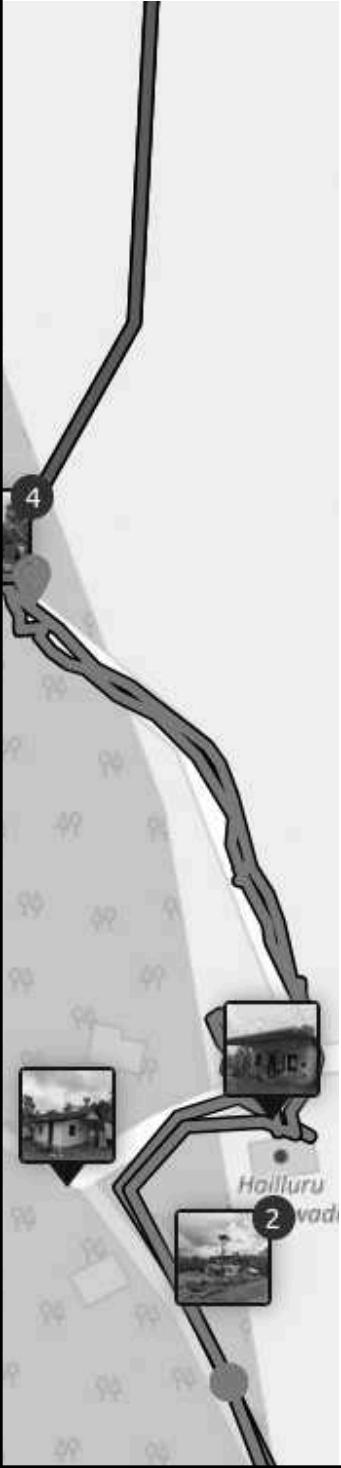
A product catalog was developed for Manesiri products, detailing essential information such as product descriptions, ingredients, nutritional benefits, various usage methods, and packaging specifics. Pricing for trial sales was carefully determined, factoring in procurement costs, production expenses, packaging, company margins, and dedicated margins for women producers. Additionally, efforts were made to design labels, establish branding, and create a tagline for the flagship product, Upsar Khara, to enhance its market appeal and identity.

Community Mesh Network in Hara

Place: Idur-Kunjadi, Kundapura

Engagement: Samagra Arogya

Intersection: Community-based; Community network; Tribal Settlement



Hara, a small tribal settlement known for its distinct geography and vibrant community life, faces significant infrastructural deficits. Poor road access, unreliable network connectivity, and a strained relationship with the local Gram Panchayat, Idur Kunjyadi, have left the community underserved. Despite receiving electricity only a decade ago, water shortages persist, and limited public transport exacerbates a sense of neglect compared to larger nearby settlements like Hosur. These challenges have fueled frustration among residents, who have made repeated but largely unproductive attempts to engage with local governance and file RTIs for basic amenities.

The Mesh project emerged from a desire to collaboratively address these issues by connecting Hara through locally rooted technology solutions. Conversations with the community, held at the Bobbariya Temple, revealed a strong interest in improving infrastructure, accessing government schemes, and fostering connectivity within and beyond the settlement. From these discussions, the idea of a community-driven wireless mesh network took

shape. Designed as hyper-local digital infrastructure, this network would enable residents to share knowledge, communicate, and manage local resources without reliance on external internet access. Public terminals could serve as repositories for local recipes, family archives, digital media creation, and even small-scale e-commerce, reflecting Hara's unique identity while also considering practical needs.

This participatory approach stresses the importance of community ownership in infrastructure building. Engaging residents as co-creators, the project encourages technical skill development and ensures the sustainability of the network. Discussions in Hara have already sparked collective imagination around what such systems might look like and how they could serve the settlement's evolving needs. The process strengthens local capacities and highlights the possibility of technology as a bridge to participatory democracy, allowing communities to take charge of their narratives.

Through this project, we seek to build a model of community-owned infrastructure that redefines technology as a tool for collaboration. This initiative aspires to imagine a future where localized learning networks grow organically, rooted in the lived realities of the people they serve.

Community Palliative Care

ପ୍ରକାଶକ

ಮೊದಲ ಬಾರಿಗೆ ಪಾಲಿಯೇಟಿವ್



卷之三

第三章 中国古典音乐的流派

ବ୍ୟାପକ ଉପରେ
ଏହା ଦେଖିଲୁମା
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Place: Vandse cluster, Kundapura

Engagement: Samagra Arogya

Intersection: Community-based; Palliative Care; Social Determinants

The Community Palliative Care (CPC) project under Samagra Arogya represents a collaborative and inclusive approach to healthcare delivery. It is designed to provide holistic, patient-entered care to individuals facing life-limiting conditions in rural and semi-urban communities. By integrating medical, emotional, and social support, this initiative addresses critical gaps in healthcare, ensuring that vulnerable populations receive compassionate care.

The CPC project operates at the cluster level, encompassing seven gram panchayats to optimize resources and enhance coordination. Key services include home-based care and support, delivered through a network of healthcare professionals, community volunteers, and Asha workers. A unique feature is its emphasis on training volunteers and caregivers, enabling them to perform essential medical and psychological care tasks. Digital tools like the "My Grapes" app ensure streamlined patient records and real-time updates, improving efficiency and accountability.

This project also integrates with local governance

and healthcare systems to maximize impact. Panchayats allocate a portion of their budgets for palliative care, supported by government health grants and community contributions. Link centres act as connection points between patients and care providers, and regular home visits ensure accessibility for bedridden or isolated individuals. The CPC project embodies a pioneering model of community-led healthcare. Its participatory approach, focus on capacity building, and integration with local systems ensure sustainability and scalability. By addressing the medical, psychological, and social dimensions of palliative care, the project fosters a culture of empathy and collective responsibility.

303

Co-creating Local Knowledge Network

Place: Bidar

Engagement: Local Techno Futures

Intersection: Folk practices; Community-based archiving



Co-creating local knowledge networks (CLKN) was a catalytic intervention project undertaken as a collaboration between Living Labs Network and Forum (LLNaF) and Janastu/Servelots. The focus of this project was to explore community-owned Wi-Fi mesh as decentralised and locative network infrastructure to enable us to co-design frameworks that support archiving at the grassroots in Bidar, India. This story is a curated mosaic of thoughts, voices, experiences, discoveries, and ethos illustrated largely through various encounters with the Bhooteya community and their practice.

304

Channapatna Health Library Mesh

Place: Channapatna

Engagement: Channapatna Health Library

Intersection: Community health; Community network; Data Ownership

The Channapatna Health Library (CHL) operates on a local mesh network designed to support the decentralized creation, storage, and sharing of audio-video recordings on health and wellbeing knowledge. This mesh network, established using open-source routers, ensures that community Health Navigators (HNs) can collect, document, and exchange health knowledge without relying on traditional internet infrastructure.

This locally tailored infrastructure facilitates the preservation and dissemination of lived health knowledge that is often overlooked in mainstream public health narratives. It also supports a sustainable model of community-led health information exchange. Looking ahead, there are plans to expand the mesh network into densely populated neighborhoods and a local public school in Channapatna. These expansions aim to enhance access to this digital repository while fostering the production and exchange of hyperlocal knowledge in a collaborative and participatory manner.

Gramा Drishti Fellowship

Place: Vandse cluster, Kundapura

Engagement: Samagra Arogya

Intersection: Place-based learning; agency & Local Governance; Observatory

The Gramा Drishti Fellowship is a transformative project aimed at equipping young individuals from the Samagra Arogya cluster with the skills and knowledge to address the social determinants of health (SDoH) in their local contexts. This fellowship encourages a practice-driven, place-based learning approach, emphasizing the co-production of knowledge and promoting creative confidence. Fellows actively understand local governance and collaborate with stakeholders to identify and tackle pressing community challenges, using innovative tools and participatory methods.

The fellowship operates on key principles such as co-learning, care-in-practice, and cultural sensitivity. Participants engage with the unique socio-cultural dynamics of their regions while exploring creative practices like data visualization, storytelling, and artefact creation. Youth fellows (ages 18-22) and adolescent fellows (ages 14-18) dedicate time weekly to learn through activities such as primers, study groups, and hands-on practicums. These structured learning modules cultivate critical skills like advocacy, mobilization,



and the ability to take informed positions on local issues.

By emphasizing long-term place-based engagement, the fellowship ensures that participants not only develop individual capabilities but also strengthen collective responses to challenges. Graduating fellows emerge as agents of change, capable of advocating for their communities and fostering inclusive growth. The Grama Drishti Fellowship stands as a vital step toward building resilient local ecosystems that prioritize community well-being through participatory action.

402

GP Atlas

Place: Vandse cluster, Kundapura

Engagement: Samagra Arogya

Intersection: Learning & Adaptation; Decision Support; Observatory

The GP Atlas project is a comprehensive initiative that maps the socio-economic and cultural landscapes of seven gram panchayats in the Samagra Arogya cluster. Through extensive fieldwork and collaboration with Panchayat Development Officers (PDOs) and Village Accountants (VAs), the project captures critical data on demographics, public infrastructure, agricultural practices, industries, and cultural landmarks. This participatory mapping process offers a granular view of each gram panchayat, highlighting their unique challenges and opportunities.

The data collection process revealed insightful details about the panchayats' diversity. For instance, Hemmadi has a significant population of agricultural labourers and fishermen, while Vandse and Hakladi boast small-scale industries such as rice and cashew processing. The documentation also sheds light on local governance structures, ward-level demographic details, and the cultural richness of these regions, including temples, mosques, and churches. These insights are valuable for community planning and action.

The atlas serves as both a decision-making tool and a resource for facilitating community awareness. By making this information accessible, the GP Atlas supports evidence-based planning, improves governance transparency, and encourages greater community participation in local development efforts.

403

Manesiri/CHL Fellowship

Place: Channapatna

Engagement: Channapatna Health Library

Intersection: Place-based learning; Community Health; Local Knowledge

In September 2024, as part of the CHL/Manesiri a Fellowship was inaugurated and sessions were conducted for fellows in understanding digital archiving and annotation tools. The fellowship, supported by Manesiri, focuses on Women's

reproductive health and their lived experiences. The fellows are an all women group from the age of 18 to 22 who are natives of Channapatna.

The fellows were introduced to the CHL platform, learning techniques to upload, annotate data and archiving. This initiative also facilitated the establishment of a fully operational computer network at the New Channapatna Nodal Centre, ensuring the local community has access to essential digital infrastructure. Each fellow collected 6-7 audio interviews, focusing on health perceptions, pregnancy experiences, and conversations with ASHA and Anganwadi workers about services for pregnant women and vaccination programs.

We revisited the learning objectives and conducted an exercise to deepen the understanding of metadata. As part of the activity, each participant documents the metadata for one of the audio interviews they had recorded.

404

Capstone projects for students of Srishti Manipal Institute

Place: Bidar

Engagement: Creative Urban Practice

Intersection: Public pedagogy; Community collaboration;
Southern Practices

Place as Archive: Archive as Learning Artefact' serves as the focus for the graduation project of final year students, reimagining the concept of an archive as a dynamic and evolving entity. This track will directly contribute to the Bidar Heritage Centre Archives, part of our long-term infrastructuring efforts. Students explore the interwoven relationships of the place through 'creative urban practice,' a practice-based research approach that emphasizes co-learning and co-creating artefacts with communities. These communities bring a wealth of knowledge and scholarship shaped by their lived and shared experiences, enriching the archival process and its outcomes.

The student projects have explored diverse themes across key areas: Cultural Practices, including Bidri art, traditional construction methods, congregation spaces, and public engagement in learning; Lost Narratives, such as



reviving and mapping Sufism's cultural impact on Bidar city and uncovering forgotten local histories related to public historic figures; Local Identities, focusing on the relationship between art and artisans, material and construction knowledge, architectural styles, spatial planning, and built forms; and Shared Memories, examining public spaces, daily routines, the significance of spatial markers in people's lives, the role of Bidri craft within the community, and the enduring presence of Sufi practices.

405



DRP: Creative Urban Practice: Practicing with Place

Place: Bidar

Engagement: Creative Urban Practice

Intersection: Public pedagogy; Community collaboration; Southern Practices

Rooted in the territorial context of the 'Dakhani' region, we encourage teams to experiment, explore, and respond creatively to their chosen contexts. Through the Design Research Project (DRP) jointly facilitated with Centre for Environment Planning and Technology, the network fosters a collective effort to reflect on and contribute to the past, present, and future of cities and regions. The initiative promotes co-learning and co-creation, contributing to place-based knowledge observatories such as the

LLNaF in Bidar. It emphasizes critical understanding of place-based relationships, fostering outputs ranging from illustrated books and VR/AR applications to participatory games, spatial designs, and community archives. These outputs aim to regenerate and document local knowledge, with learners encouraged to explore diverse mediums and innovate collaboratively.

The process nurtures the ability of students to appreciate habitat complexities, challenge personal perspectives, and develop regenerative approaches for addressing the interdependencies of human settlements and ecosystems. We are currently in our fourth edition of DRP.

406

Foundation Cohort from SMI students

Place: Bidar

Engagement: Creative Urban Practice

Intersection: Mapping; Water systems; Local knowledge systems

First-year students from Srishti Manipal Institute undertook their Social Ecology interim to Bidar as part of their foundation trip. During the 7-day journey, they explored the karez water systems, step wells, and culturally significant sites such as the Bidar Fort, Mahmud Gawan Madrasa, Guru Nanak Jhira Sahib Gurdwara, Ashtoorn, and Basavakalyan.



The cohort was facilitated using physical satellite maps, which served as a tool to help students understand the social and geographical features of Bidar, providing a comprehensive perspective on the region's interconnected ecology and cultural heritage. The students documented their learning in the forms of journals, annotated maps, sketches and photographs. The documentation resulted in an interactive exhibit in their institute campus.

501

Resource centre Make-a-thon

Place: Vandse cluster, Kundapura

Engagement: Samagra Arogya

Intersection: Observatory; Place-based knowledge; Learning Infrastructure

The Make-a-thon is an intensive, collaborative event focused on co-producing artefacts for the Samagra Arogya Resource Center in Vandse. Over three days, participants from diverse backgrounds work in pairs to create multimedia archives, interactive engagement cards, maps, and mock-ups for the resource centre. This initiative aims to synthesize and display the worth of knowledge gathered from various engagements under the Samagra Arogya engagement, providing a tangible and interactive repository of the region's experiences and insights.

The process involves designing artefacts that reflect the cultural and contextual richness of Kundapura. These include banners, inventory systems, and interactive exhibits showcasing the community's history, health interventions, and environmental practices. We also prototype how the resource centre will look physically, ensuring that it meets the needs of local stakeholders and aligns with the community's expectations.

The Make-a-thon embodies a participatory ethos, allowing us to actively shape stories and how knowledge is represented. The resulting resource centre will serve as a space for knowledge sharing, and learning, bridging the gap between community experiences and broader goals.

502

PGSL Discovery Across All GPs

Place: Vandse cluster, Kundapura

Engagement: Samagra Arogya

Intersection: Spatial Resources; Learning Expedition;
Common Infrastructure

The PGSL (Participatory Geo-Spatial Lab) project focuses on exploring how communities interact with their environments and utilize spatial resources. Recces conducted across the gram panchayats in the cluster provide critical insights into ward-level boundaries, biodiversity registers, and key community landmarks. This initiative emphasizes local discovery, empowering communities to map their surroundings and better engage with governance systems.

Field visits conducted during key cultural periods, such as Navaratri, allowed the team to document community interactions with space, particularly in agricultural and policy contexts. Observations included the impacts of initiatives like the Kasturi Rangan Report and the preservation of

biodiversity. These findings contribute to a localized understanding of environmental and cultural dynamics, shaping how the PGSL will facilitate ongoing community participation.

By working with communities with mapping tools and facilitating skills for spatial analysis, the project aims to bridge the gap between people and formal technological systems. The PGSL seeks to create possibilities for communities to influence decision-making processes by producing accurate and locally relevant data, strengthening their agency in planning and development efforts.

503

Foundation of the PGSL in Samagra Arogya Cluster

Place: Vandse cluster, Kundapura

Engagement: Samagra Arogya

Intersection: Spatial Resources; Participatory mapping; Common Infrastructure

The PGSL Recce is a foundational activity that involves field-based explorations of spatial dynamics in regions of the Samagra Arogya Cluster. This project is deeply participatory, drawing insights from community members and local contexts to document the relationships between people, their environment, and governance structures.

In Hara, participatory mapping exercises engaged residents in documenting their settlement's unique layout and resources. The exercise revealed critical spatial features, such as the circular arrangement of homes around agricultural spaces. By involving community members in identifying key landmarks and their connections to the surrounding geography, the process generated both tangible data and intangible outcomes, such as a heightened understanding of spatial relationships and collective preferences.

In the Samagra Arogya Cluster, the PGSL focused on observing spatial interdependencies related to health, agriculture, and water systems. These activities emphasized participatory documentation, where local residents contributed to mapping ward boundaries, water resources, and ecological landmarks. These insights help inform community-led planning and strengthen the link between spatial data and decision-making.

504

PGSL Repository: Building a Public Archive of Maps

Place: Bidar, Channapatna, Kundapura & Chennai

Engagement: Several

Intersection: Spatial Resources; Participatory mapping;
Common Infrastructure

A key aspiration of the PGSL is to develop a publicly accessible repository of maps that archives and integrates spatial data from our ongoing and future engagements. This repository will consolidate maps produced by the Lab and its network, providing a medium for community members, researchers, and policymakers to access spatial insights.

The repository aims to be user-friendly and adaptable, featuring maps that highlight diverse aspects of a place, from socio-political boundaries to environmental landmarks. It will also include narrative elements, such as oral histories and traditional ecological knowledge, to ensure that the archive reflects the multidimensional nature of lived experiences. As a planned initiative, the PGSL Repository represents a critical step toward democratizing access to spatial knowledge and amplifying community voices in broader decision-making processes.



505

Mapping as a Community: Collaborative Data Collection

Place: Chennai

Engagement: Ennore Community Mapping Initiative

Intersection: Settlement study; Ecological degradation;

Public Commons

The Mapping as a Community initiative encourages collective spatial exploration by bringing together participants to document their environments on platforms like OpenStreetMap. Through events like mapping parties, the Lab encourages collaborative data gathering based on the specific needs of a place and its people.

One recent example is the mapping party held in Chennai, where community members worked together to create detailed maps of local neighbourhoods. Participants documented landmarks, street lamps, places of worship, and community facilities in Netaji Nagar, Annai Sivakami Nagar and Bharathiyan Nagar, Ernavur, generating actionable spatial data for local planning. By engaging individuals from diverse backgrounds, the initiative fosters a shared understanding of place and promotes co-learning. This initiative highlights how



participatory mapping can serve as both a technical and social tool, strengthening community bonds while producing valuable spatial knowledge.

506

Story Map of Naubad Karez

Place: Bidar

Engagement: Climate Resource Center

Intersection: Karez restoration; Sensitive ecology; Water Security

The Story Map of Naubad Karez is a project dedicated to documenting and narrating the history and current state of Bidar's historic water management system. The Karez, a traditional subterranean aqueduct, has long been a vital part of Bidar's hydrological and cultural landscape but faces neglect and degradation.

Through participatory fieldwork, oral histories, and spatial mapping, the project captures the tangible and intangible aspects of the Karez system. The resulting story map not only serves as an educational tool but also advocates for the restoration and preservation of this heritage structure. By highlighting the developmental neglect and the system's potential for contemporary water management, the project aims to inform both community actions and policy decisions.

507

Local Discoveries Using Every Door

Place: Vandse cluster, Kundapura

Engagement: Samagra Arogya

Intersection: Spatial Resources; Public Infrastructure; GP cluster commons

The Local Discoveries Using Every Door initiative leverages digital tools to enable community members to document and explore their immediate surroundings. Using platforms like "Every Door," participants map local landmarks, trails, and features that are often overlooked in conventional cartography.

In Kundapura, this approach has been particularly effective in bridging the gap between local discovery and governance systems. For instance, participants mapped ward boundaries and biodiversity registers, gaining insights into administrative structures and ecological resources. These maps facilitate a deeper understanding of local systems while encouraging community-driven interactions. By blending knowledge with modern tools, the initiative enhances the local capacity for spatial awareness and advocacy, ensuring that mapping becomes a shared, inclusive activity.

Place: Channapatna & Bidar

Engagement: Local Techno Futures

Intersection: Reimagining AI; Lived realities; Global South

This project is an exercise in participatory and speculative making. A core objective is to democratize the imagination and materialization of technological futures. These approaches engage creative practitioners from Bidar to collaboratively envision and co-create alternative futures through their living knowledge practices and the production of technological artefacts. This process explores co-creative making as a means to materialise alternative and plural visions. The process also emphasizes practices rooted in the lived realities of the people who create and use these technologies.

Through co-creation workshops and local artist/practitioner residencies in Bidar, the project fosters technological futures that are co-experimental, hyperlocal, and deeply contextual. It emphasizes creative visioning that is grounded in the everyday practices and cultural narratives of communities, ensuring these futures are sustained and relevant. The initiative seeks to shift the locus of technological innovation, creating systems and artefacts that emerge from the people and places where they will be used.

By anchoring these efforts in the lived experiences and collective wisdom of local practitioners, the project critiques and challenges existing paradigms of technological production. It moves beyond speculative design as a conceptual exercise to focus on grounding specific futures in specific pasts.

509

Papad.alternative

Place: Kundapura, Channapatna & Bidar

Engagement: Local Techno Futures

Intersection: Archive; Lived knowledge; participatory platform

Papad.Alternative is an initiative to develop a comprehensive toolkit for annotating and archiving multimedia repositories, particularly non-English, non-textual lived experiences. Building on Papad, an open-source oral archiving tool by Janastu Servelots, this project enhances multimedia documentation by enabling participatory annotations across various media formats, such as images annotated with audio, maps with videos, and audios with text.

The toolkit aims to support collaborative exploration of large multimedia archives through features like tagging, contextual annotations, and search. By integrating Papad's API with other open-source annotation libraries, it extends the capabilities of multimedia archiving to include fragment annotations, dynamic collections, and interconnected narratives, ensuring rich, accessible, and investigative archiving for diverse research needs.

511

AI mediated reproductive health

Place: Channapatna & Bidar

Engagement: Local Techno Futures

Intersection: SRHR; Indigenous knowledge; Gender

The primary goal of this research is to co-design culturally appropriate AI-mediated infographic tools for reproductive care in the Global South. By leveraging local knowledge and indigenous visual communication techniques, the project aims to address the stigma associated with reproductive health and improve women's well-being.

people

Our work thrives on the diverse skills and passions of people contributing to our collaborative projects. This section offers a glimpse into the individual journeys of those who make our work possible. Each profile highlights a brief bio, research interests, practices, academic backgrounds, and professional experiences, reflecting the contexts, skills, and perspectives that drive our initiatives. Whether involved in research, creative endeavours, or community engagement, everyone here brings their expertise and enthusiasm, shaping the active and inclusive core of our collective.

Vinay Malge

Maintainer



My work draws from more than 12 years of experience as a Social worker, communication skills trainer, and public pedagogy practitioner across various aspects in Bidar city and the district.

Work Experience

I have co-founded a Volunteer-based NGO in Bidar, Team YUVAA, that won the prestigious Karnataka Rajyotsava Award in 2016.

My interest in Communication skill training in corporate environments and in coaching centres has enabled many youngsters to become critical thinkers and communicators.

I have voluntarily supported the initiation, planning, execution and monitoring of several Public works in Bidar, mainly around the issue of water bodies and restoration of the Historically important Karez system in Naubad (Bidar), to mention a few.

My engagement as a public pedagogy practitioner has led to collaborations with institutes such as Srishti Manipal Institute of Art, Design & Technology (Bangalore),

Govt First Grade degree College (Bidar & Humnabad), CEPT Ahmedabad and University at Buffalo (New York).

Apart from these my work has helped to establish a strong network that includes writers, scholars, researchers, craftsmen, folk artists, activists, politicians, journalists, government officials and so on across Bidar District and the surrounding districts in Hyderabad-Karnataka Region.

Education

I completed my Secondary School Leaving Certificate (SSLC) from Seventh Day Adventist High School, Bidar, in 1997, followed by a Pre-University Certificate from National PU College, Bidar, in 1999.

Research Practice

My research integrates academic inquiry with hands-on community engagement, focusing on public history, environmental preservation, and socio-cultural resilience. I have combined teaching, facilitation, and project-based research to address complex societal issues. One of my

key initiatives was the People's Archive project in 2018, where I worked as a Research Associate to document oral histories, cultural practices, and collective memory in Bidar. This project, supported by the Hyderabad-Karnataka Region Development Board, established an archive that captures the essence of the community's socio-cultural heritage. It also became a foundation for teaching cultural documentation techniques to students.

Since 2016, I have collaborated with Srishti Institute of Art, Design & Technology on various interdisciplinary studios. These include cultural landscape mapping, where I guided undergraduate students in documenting Bidar's socio-cultural and ecological environment, as well as thesis studios exploring themes such as "Cultures of Resilience" and "Curating the City," combining academic research with field-based insights.

Additionally, I led learning expeditions for first-year students to immerse them in the socio-ecological dynamics of Bidar.

In the Karez Rejuvenation Project, I led efforts to restore Bidar's historic Karez water system through

Research Practice

mapping, desilting, and community outreach programs. These initiatives were paired with educational sessions for both students and community members, emphasizing the role of heritage preservation in sustainable development.

Between 2012 and 2017, I also conducted heritage walks and runs in collaboration with Go UNESCO Heritage Run, teaching participants about the historical and cultural significance of Bidar's sites. This work was integrated into studio teaching, helping students connect theory with practical heritage preservation.

In environmental campaigns, from 2015 onward, I have monitored groundwater replenishment and supervised plantation drives across Bidar, contributing to the planting of over 116,000 saplings. These initiatives were complemented by awareness programs on rainwater harvesting and environmental sustainability, teaching students and community members actionable solutions.

I also served as a facilitator for international collaborations in 2018, guiding University at Buffalo students in mapping socio-cultural practices of Bidar. This experience bridged academic research with local knowledge systems, enriching students' understanding of public history and cultural diversity.

I have also delivered communication skills workshops since 2013 in corporate offices and coaching centers to build effective communication and critical thinking skills. This teaching aligns with my broader research focus on empowering individuals to articulate community narratives and engage in socio-cultural resilience efforts.

Through these initiatives, I have blended teaching with research, fostering participatory learning environments.

Committees and co-ordination

In terms of committee and coordination efforts, I have played a pivotal role in initiating, planning, and executing community-driven projects in education, health, and cultural preservation. These efforts often involved collaboration with governmental and non-governmental organizations to address local challenges.

As a co-founder of Team YUVAA, I led numerous impactful projects, including the rejuvenation of water bodies, heritage conservation, and environmental campaigns. For these efforts, Team YUVAA received the Karnataka Rajyotsava Award in 2016, recognizing its exceptional contribution to community development.

My work in public engagement includes organizing heritage events, such as walks and runs in collaboration with Go UNESCO, which highlighted Bidar's cultural and historical significance. I have also

been involved in leading sanitation campaigns and plantation drives, which earned me the Outstanding Social Worker Award in 2017 from Zilla Kannada Sahitya Parishad. As a Thought Leader at TEDx Salon Hyderabad in 2017, I shared insights on civic responsibility, emphasizing the importance of collective action in transforming communities.

Throughout all my coordination efforts, I have helped build strong networks involving activists, scholars, government officials, and community leaders, ensuring that the outcomes of these projects are both sustainable and inclusive.



Vidya H P

Junior Fellow
Community Led Action



Working with the community and people was something that always interested me. My interest and dream blossomed when I selected social work as my academic study.

Since then, I have started working with marginalized sections of the community, particularly with women, tribal people, and children. Having become a professional social worker, I have remained committed and dedicated to

serving the community in various sectors, including community health, juvenile justice, and protections. Additionally, I have been involved in rescue missions of trafficking, prostitution, and child labor.

Work Experience

My career spans various roles in social work, focusing on marginalized communities, child protection, and public health. Currently, I am working as a Junior Fellow in Community-Led Action (2024–present), where I facilitate community-driven initiatives aimed at improving socio-economic conditions and addressing public health challenges.

From 2016 to 2021, I served as the State Public-Private Mix

Coordinator for the Revised National TB Control Program under the Health & Family Welfare Department, Government of Karnataka. In this role, I strengthened partnerships between public and private sectors, working to implement effective tuberculosis control strategies.

Earlier, I worked as a Social Worker with BOSCO from 2012 to 2014, contributing to child protection projects such as Child Line 1098 and the Special Juvenile Police Unit (SJPU). My work focused on ensuring the safety and well-being of children in vulnerable situations.

Education

I hold a Master of Social Work (MSW) degree from Milagres College, Kallianpur, Udupi (2010–2012) and a Bachelor of Social Work (BSW) degree from SRSMNGFG College, Barkur, Udupi (2008–2010). Additionally, I earned a Master Diploma in Human Resource Management from The Phoenix School of Management Studies, Mangalore (2010–2011).

Research Practice

My research practice emphasizes community-led initiatives and interdisciplinary approaches to address socio-economic challenges, health disparities, and marginalized communities. My work integrates hands-on community engagement, academic research, and public pedagogy to create sustainable and impactful solutions.

I am currently involved in the Samagra Arogya initiative, a long-term project that focuses on understanding and addressing the social determinants of health at the Gram Panchayat level. This initiative encourages collaboration with local communities to identify health challenges and co-create strategies for well-being, blending traditional knowledge systems with modern health interventions.

I have also led studies on the socio-economic conditions of marginalized communities. In one project, I conducted research on the Koraga community in Kundapur, focusing on the challenges they face in terms of socio-economic development.

Additionally, I led research on the socio-economic dynamics of the Handadi rural community in Udupi, identifying areas for targeted interventions.

During my placement with Swami Vivekananda Youth Movement in Mysore, I worked with the tribal communities of the Sargur region, focusing on improving education, health, and livelihood opportunities. In Kundapur, as part of Spoorthi Dham, I managed projects that addressed adoption, education for children living with HIV, and elder care. These efforts were complemented by counseling and capacity-building programs for marginalized groups.

I have also participated in social auditing and training for the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS) in collaboration with Manipal University and Udupi Zilla Panchayat. This experience enhanced my understanding of governance, public accountability, and the importance of citizen participation in development initiatives.

Furthermore, I have been involved in child-centric advocacy and training. I

acted as a resource person, empowering children to understand their rights, juvenile justice, and the importance of education while raising awareness about issues such as child marriage and child labor. I organized workshops to equip children with knowledge to navigate systemic challenges and advocate for their rights.

Across these projects, I have engaged with various stakeholders, including governmental bodies, non-governmental organizations, and community leaders. My practice is grounded in building trust and creating platforms where communities can co-develop solutions.



Supriya Nandgouli

Fellow
Community Led Action



A dedicated and community-focused researcher, educator, and advocacy practitioner, with a strong commitment to empowering women, especially within underrepresented communities. My work centers around teaching, designing, cultural preservation, particularly for local communities in Bidar and Kalyan Karnataka.

Work Experience

In 2024, I began my role as a Fellow Researcher in Community-led Actions, focusing on empowering local communities through participatory research and sustainable development practices. I am also the founder of EVA – Women for Women, a women's network dedicated to promoting health, wellness, and providing consultancy for local communities in Bidar.

From 2020 to the present, I have been serving as the Director of Living Labs Network & Forum (LLNaF), where I contribute to creating a local knowledge network focused on community-driven solutions.

roles, I have extensive teaching experience. I have been a Mathematics and Science high school teacher since 2012, teaching both CBSE and State Board students. I worked as an In-charge and Mathematics teacher at Branch Moon Public School from 2014 to 2015. From 2016 to 2024, I served as the Headmistress and Mathematics and Science teacher at Lily Rose High School.

Research Practice

My research practice spans various fields, with a focus on women's health and wellness, digital and financial literacy, and community development.

I have been particularly involved in projects related to the digitization and documentation of local cultural artifacts, oral histories, and traditional food and cultural practices.

I have worked on reproductive health education initiatives aimed at raising awareness and providing resources to women in underrepresented communities.

Through my work with organizations like EVA – Women for Women and Aruvu Collaboratory LLP, I explore community knowledge, document lived experiences, and contribute to the development of educational materials and health programs designed to empower and uplift local communities.

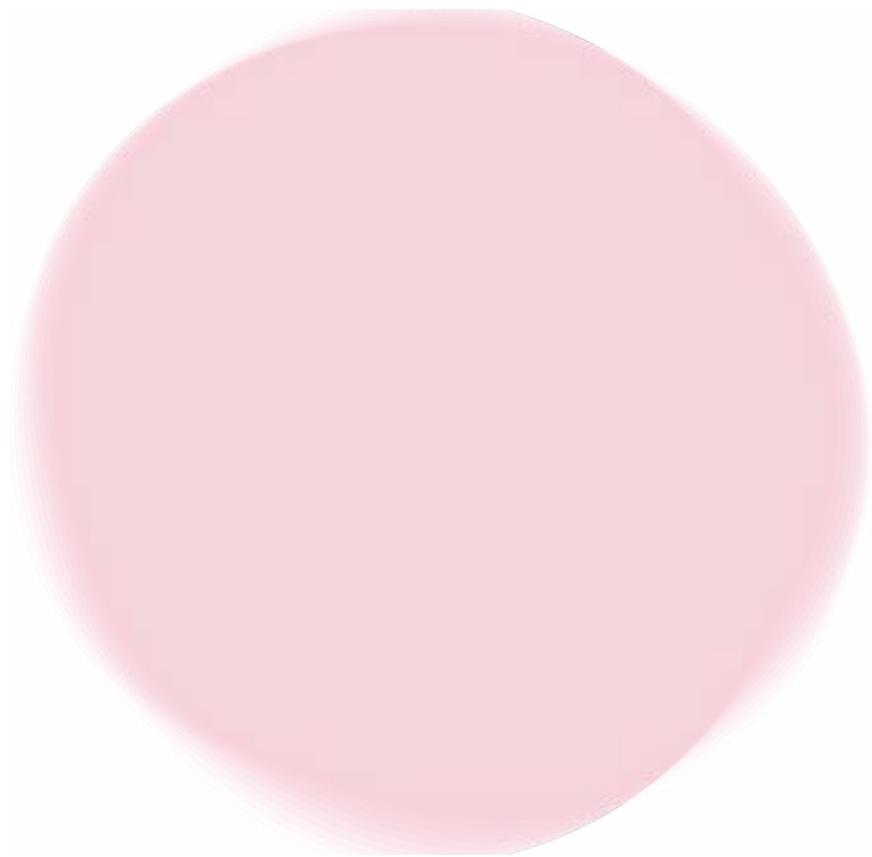
Education

I am currently enrolled in a Data Science program with Eduonix (2024). I hold a Master of Science (M.Sc.) in Mathematics from Karnataka Arts, Science and Commerce College, Bidar (Gulbarga University). Additionally, I have completed a Bachelor of Education (B.Ed.) from Guru Nanak College of Education and a Bachelor of Science (B.Sc.) in Computer Science from Karnataka Arts, Science and Commerce College, Bidar.

Committees and co- ordination

In my capacity as Joint Secretary of Team YUVAA, a Bidar-based development NGO, I have contributed to a variety of initiatives related to regional development, environmental conservation, water conservation, agriculture, and heritage conservation.

My work with Team YUVAA has focused on raising awareness and creating actionable plans for the improvement of these areas, ensuring that local communities benefit from sustainable development practices.



Shruthi Naik

Junior Fellow
Community Led Action



I have a keen interest in community-based practice. My work with the co-operatives and grassroots organisation has helped me to grow an extensive social network in and around Byndoor. I collaborate with interdisciplinary teams with my knowledge about the place and culture.

Work Experience

I have gained experience across multiple organizations. At Grameena Seva Trust, I worked for one year, managing office books, forming groups, writing reports for events and meetings, and creating awareness about the trust in various locations. This role gave me a strong foundation in administrative tasks and community engagement.

I then worked for 1.5 years at a Cooperative Society, where I focused on group formation, preparing loan documents, maintaining group books, and supporting branch operations. This experience helped me develop an understanding of financial operations and cooperative management.

Currently, I am a Junior Fellow at Aruvu Collaboratory, working on the Samagra Arogya initiative in the Kundapura Vandse Cluster. In this role, I engage with local communities, experts, and government stakeholders to address the social determinants of health and improve governance at the grassroots level. Through these diverse roles, I have developed a strong interdisciplinary skill set, integrating community engagement, organizational management, and health-related research.

Research Practice

I started my practice by working at the Rural Service Trust. In this role, I had several responsibilities such as maintaining records and book-keeping, forming and organizing groups, and other forms of collectivizing, public communication, and to travel to various places and provide information about our trust, encouraging people to join us.

Education

I completed my SSLC from Sri Mookambika Temple High School, Are Shiruru, in 2008-2009. I pursued my PUC at Junior College, Byndoar, in 2010-2011 and completed a computer course in 2012.

Later, I worked at a Cooperative Society for one and a half years, where I continued to work on collectivizing people through forming groups and supporting their establishment. I also handled legal and financial documents required for micro-loans, and continued my work of records and book-keeping.

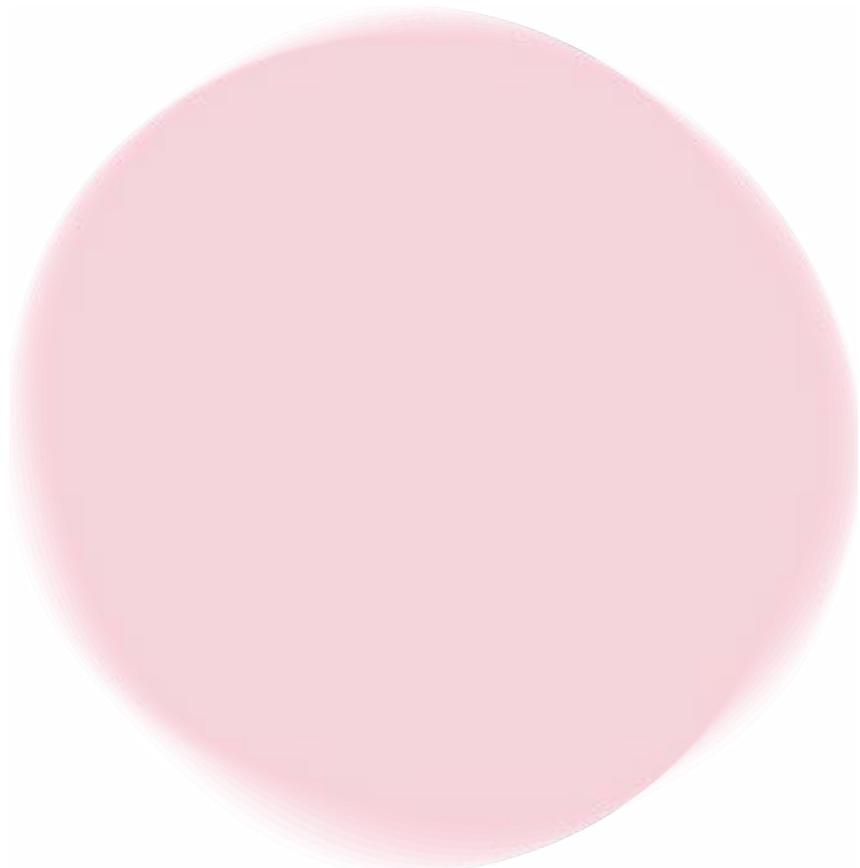
I helped coordinate with other branches to spread information and assist in group formation.

Now, I am part of the Samagra Arogya engagement at Aruvu, working in the Vandse Cluster in Kundapur as a Junior Fellow. My work focuses on engaging with the community members and other

frontline workers and representatives of the Grama Panchayat to help understand how Social Determinants of health are taking shape in the localities, and offer coordination, collectivizing and logistic support for the projects under the engagement.

Committees and co- ordination

I have experience serving as a secretary for various organizations, contributing to the planning, coordination, and execution of group activities. My coordination work has involved organizing meetings, facilitating communication, and supporting community programs to drive sustainable development.



Shreyas Srivatsa



My work draws from two decades of experience as a researcher, practitioner and academic across multiple disciplines carrying out studies based in various cities in India. Qualified as an architect with an advanced training in areas related to human settlements, my work is at the intersections of - settlement studies; southern urbanism; critical heritage studies;

climate change and adaptation; urban livelihoods; and development studies.

Work Experience

I have over two decades of experience spanning academia, research, and practice. Currently, I serve as the Director and Network Coordinator at the Living Labs Network and Forum, an organization I co-founded, focusing on collaborative development paradigms. I am also a Senior Fellow and Partner at Aruvu Collaboratory LLP. Previously, I was a faculty member and Head of Studies at Srishti Manipal Institute, where I designed and managed postgraduate programs and curriculum. My experience includes roles as a consultant for various

organizations like the World Resources Institute, Indian Institute for Human Settlements, and Design Café, contributing to urban research, policy reviews, and strategic design. I've also practiced as an architect, managing projects across residential, commercial, and conservation domains.

heritage, climate adaptation, and development studies. This approach combines academic rigor with actionable, place-based research.

One of the key research initiatives I have been involved in is Samagra Arogya (2023–2025), a collaborative, long-term engagement designed to investigate and address the social determinants of health at the Gram Panchayat level. This project integrates local knowledge systems with global health strategies to create sustainable community health models.

Another significant project is Community-led Reimagination of Automation (2024–ongoing), which explores automated futures through the lived realities of folk and indigenous practitioners in the Global South.

Education

I completed my Bachelor's in Architecture (B.Arch) from B.M.S. College of Engineering, Bangalore, in 2005. Subsequently, I pursued a Master of Human Settlements at Katholieke Universiteit Leuven, Belgium, focusing on spatial planning and urbanism, although I did not complete my dissertation. My foundational education was at Kola Perumal Chetty Vaishnav Senior Secondary School, Chennai.

Research Practice

My research practice is rooted in interdisciplinary exploration, community engagement, and a deep commitment to addressing societal challenges through innovative frameworks. I draw on settlement studies, southern urbanism, critical

Research Practice

This initiative fosters co-imagining processes that challenge conventional narratives of automation and technological progress.

I am also involved in the AI-mediated Reproductive Care project (2024-2025), which aims at bridging cultural practices and locative knowledge systems with AI-based approaches to enhance reproductive healthcare.

In 2021-2022, I facilitated the establishment of a Climate Resource Centre in Bidar District, as part of a transdisciplinary initiative. This center integrates scientific and local knowledge to create actionable frameworks for localized climate resilience and adaptation strategies.

Additionally, I worked on the Catalytic Interventions Grant in 2019, focusing on establishing ICT-based community networks. This six-month project centered on women-centric approaches to knowledge sharing, utilizing local cultural forms like music, folklore, and dance.

Through a grant from the Aga Khan Trust for Culture in 2018, I co-designed a Culture of Resilience workshop, emphasizing creative collaborations to explore resilience through cultural lenses. This effort linked heritage, urban development, and community narratives to foster sustainable solutions.

As a faculty member at Srishti Manipal Institute, I was also involved in designing and facilitating place-based learning programs. These programs incorporated research-by-practice approaches to investigate cultural heritage, climate change, traditional economies, and urbanization, connecting students with real-world challenges.

I have authored and co-authored numerous papers, reports, and case studies focusing on resilience, heritage, and urban development. My publications include "Design Beku: Toward Decolonizing Design and Technology through Collaborative and Situated Care-in-Practices" (2021), which explores decolonized approaches to design and technology; "Techno-Futures from Bidar" (2021), which investigates community-centric technological imaginaries in rural India; and "Culture of Resilience: Resilience of Culture" (2018), which

discusses urban resilience and cultural heritage integration.

As co-founder of the Living Labs Network & Forum, I have cultivated platforms for collaborative research in the Dakkhani region of India. This work emphasizes the co-production of knowledge with communities and institutions, focusing on local contexts and lived experiences to shape sustainable futures.

My research ethos is centered on blending academic inquiry with practical interventions to create impactful and contextually relevant outcomes.

Committees and co-ordination

I currently serve as an advisory committee member for the upcoming Women's Museum in Karnataka. I have also been part of initiatives like co-creating local knowledge networks through cultural mediums and facilitating collaborations between academia and communities. My coordination efforts extend to setting up archives and fostering transdisciplinary networks to address pressing societal challenges.

Sangeetha Rajapandian

Fellow
Community Led Action



Exploring the intersections of society and its system -- I am a Social Sciences researcher specializing in qualitative research methodology, with a focus on urban and rural studies. Experienced in managing projects and documentation. I have extensively traveled through Tamil Nadu and Karnataka, capturing invaluable community research experiences. Proficient bilingual translator (Tamil to English) ensuring seamless communication.

Work Experience

Since 2024, I have been working as a Fellow in Community Led Action at Aruvu Collaboratory in Bengaluru, where I engage with communities to facilitate research that is led by the people themselves. This role allows me to use participatory creative approaches to document and address issues that affect these communities.

In 2023-2024, I served as an Institutional Fellow at Design Beku, Bengaluru, where I managed a collaborative project in Pudukkottai with Vrutti Impact and IT for Change. This project culminated in a speculative workshop with women from the farmer producer company. I was also involved in institutional policy framing and

supporting the organization's strategic goals.

During the same year, I worked as a Research Consultant for The Other Media in Chennai, where I conducted immersive fieldwork in Ennore and converted in-depth interviews into narratives in both Tamil and English for the "Reimagining the Good City from the Ennore Creek" project, funded by The British Academy.

Earlier, I worked as a Freelance Researcher for Thinai Foundation in Chennai (2022-2023), where I developed questionnaires and led the "Calendar of Tamil Nadu" research project, documenting the experiences of local weavers in Bhavani, Tamil Nadu. In 2022, I contributed to historical research at the Roja Muthiah Research Library in Chennai, including drafting reports, translating handbooks, and managing the 'Hero Stone Exhibition' in collaboration with Tamil Nadu's Archaeology Department.

Additionally, I supported research on urban child care as a Research Assistant for a PhD Scholar at Brown University between 2020 and 2022, where I managed data collection and conducted interviews and focus groups.

My earlier roles include working as a Research Consultant for the Foundation for Agrarian Studies in Bengaluru, where I assisted with interviews and report drafting on rural education in Tamil Nadu (2020), and as a Research Intern in the same organization, conducting household surveys in rural Tamil Nadu villages (2019).

Education

I completed my Master of Arts in Development Management from the Madras School of Social Work in 2019. Prior to that, I earned my Bachelor of Science in Visual Communication from Women's Christian College, Chennai in 2017.

Research Practice

My research practice focuses on gender politics, caste intersectionality, urbanization, climate change, and migration in India.

I have explored these themes through immersive fieldwork and participatory research methods. My Master's thesis, titled "A Study on People's Perception of Metro Rail and Depot in Assisi Nagar, Madhavaram, Chennai," was submitted in 2019.

In the same year, I conducted research on sustainable menstruation practices for menstruators in Chennai, focusing on sensitization within local communities.

My ongoing research projects include work on eco-restoration and environmental concerns in Chennai's Ennore Wetlands and rapid assessments of migration patterns and environmental issues in rural India.

Committees and co-ordination

I have actively participated in various movements and campaigns. Between 2020 and 2022, I was a part of the Alt Study Circle in Chennai, which organized movie screenings, discussions, and campaigns. In 2018, I contributed to organizing the "March for Secularism," a month-long road show in Tamil Nadu that aimed to counter fascism in India.



Naveen Bagalkot

Senior Fellow and Partner



I am a design researcher, educator, and facilitator broadly working at the intersections of human-computer interaction (HCI) design, participatory design, science and technology studies (STS) and community-based care. In my research practice I focus on facilitating collaborative design and critical making for and with grassroots community collectives and organizations such as MAYA Health, KHPT, etc.

Work Experience

I have 20 years of work experience, starting as an Architectural Intern with Architecture Paradigm and Junior Architect with Inform Architects Pvt Ltd in Bangalore in 2004-05. After completing my Master's in 2007, I worked for six months as a Research Associate under Prof. Anirudha Joshi at IIT-Bombay. During this time, I was part of a team exploring how low-literate, non-urban populations used mobile phones.

In 2008, I joined Honeywell Technology Solutions Ltd in Bangalore. I contributed to various projects, including designing thermostats for the Dubai market, understanding infection monitoring in hospitals, infrastructure

monitoring for cell towers, interface design for remote monitoring systems, and pitch deck creation for a self-driving car.

Following my PhD (2009-2012), I joined Srishti Labs at the Srishti Institute of Art, Design, and Technology. There, I worked on research initiatives with grassroots organizations like MAYA, focusing on technology for community health.

In 2015, I became a full-time faculty member at Srishti, where I, alongside colleagues, designed and managed postgraduate and undergraduate programs at the intersection of interaction design, humanities, and technology. I continue to teach across undergraduate, postgraduate, and PhD programs at Srishti.

In 2021, I co-founded Design Beku with Padmini Ray Murray, Paul Anthony, and Shreyas Srivatsa. By 2022, I worked on a range of collaborative research projects with organizations like Enable India, IT4Change, and KHPT.

In 2024, I joined Aruvu Collaboratory LLP as a senior fellow partner. At Aruvu, I collaborate with grassroots organizations such as ManeSiri, Team Yuva, and Living Lab Network

to co-create community-owned socio-technical infrastructures, enabling community-led research, collaborative learning, and place-based actions for change.

Education

I graduated with a Bachelors in Architecture from Visvesvaraya Technological University in 2004, and a Masters in Design, Industrial Design, from the Industrial Design Center, IIT-Bombay in 2007. In December 2012, I successfully defended my PhD in Interaction Design at the IT University of Copenhagen, with the thesis titled "Embodied Self-Monitoring: Embracing the Emerging Context for Compliance in the Design of Pervasive Self-Monitoring Technology".

Research Practice

Over the past 20 years, my work has focused on community-driven research and creative practices. I have primarily worked with the Health Navigators (HNs) of Channapatna, supported by MAYA. Since 2016, I have been involved in collaborative infrastructuring for community care, creating spaces for

Research Practice

learning and experimentation around community health, digital technologies, and livelihoods.

In 2021, we launched the Channapatna Health Library, a community-owned digital repository designed to enhance local health knowledge. This ongoing project, supported by a Community Mesh Network, is backed by grants from the Association of Progressive Communication, ITU, and the Numun Fund. Between 2018 and 2020, I worked as a co-investigator with Cardiff University and other national and international collaborators to improve the healthcare experiences of pregnant women and their families.

From 2023, I contributed to the conceptualization and implementation of Samagra Arogya, a decentralized framework for addressing social determinants of health at the Gram Panchayat level in Karnataka.

I have also explored speculative design and futures thinking in

community-specific and culturally-rooted contexts. Through Local Techno Futures I have worked on projects examining the futures of local archives and co-creating the future of the Channapatna Health Library. I am also co-creating a local knowledge repository on reproductive health across communities in Bidar, under the AI-mediated Reproductive Care Tools project.

I am involved in a collaborative project with the University of Cape Town, focused on reimagining chatbots and voice-based automation for marginalized communities. This project draws on South Asian Futurism and the histories of technology and cybernetics in India.

My community-centered work is intertwined with my teaching practice. Channapatna has served as a learning ground for students, offering opportunities to co-learn about service-system design, participatory design, digital interaction, and speculative design.

I am currently collaborating with colleagues to conceptualize place-based learning fellowships in Bidar, Channapatna, and Kundapura. These fellowships aim to engage young

people in community-driven
research and action and fostering
collaborative learning

Committees and co- ordination

I am the member of the board of
directors for Movement for
Alternatives and Youth Awareness
(MAYA) since 2020.

I have been an active member of the
Association of Computing Machinery
(ACM) and Special Interest Group in
Computer- Human Interaction
(SIGCHI), along with volunteering my
academic review services for a range
of journals and conferences,
including Participatory Design
Conference. Recently I had the
pleasure of representing Manesiri
and Channapatna Health Library in
the Community Led Selection
Committee for the Numun Fund
2024.

Micah Alex

Fellow
Research and Development



I am interested in spheres of work revolving around community technology, archives, novel interfaces etc. I prefer to work as a generalist but have some experience with field research, writing, graphic designing and teaching/facilitating. I dabble in code and art, sometimes. At Aruvu, I help with writing pieces, designing collateral, hiring practices, curating the literature and theory on working topics,

Work Experience

rural storytelling. I also spearheaded media literacy workshops, managed events like Anthillhacks 2020, and co-authored proposals for open-tech initiatives.

During the same period, I contributed to Design Beku by co-designing collaborative initiatives such as a town hall with over 90 participants to shape the organization's charter. I facilitated workshops on digital privacy for immigrant communities and hosted a Design Baithak exploring the political impact of live-streaming. My efforts also included developing COVID-19 educational resources and creating knowledge infrastructure for individuals with disabilities in partnership with Enable India.

From 2019 to 2022, I worked with Living Labs and Network Forum, where I coordinated community-centered research, writing, and network-building initiatives. My work included developing a data visualization observatory of 300+ students and 100+ local coordinators, which culminated in a thesis on care networks and collaboration.

I also co-authored publications, facilitated workshops, translated Urdu works, and led projects on agrarian practices and creative economies.

In 2019, as an Impact and Partnership Intern at Habba, I redesigned the website using Figma, sourced handicrafts, identified partnership opportunities, and enhanced the brand with new services like Habba Bowl and Habba Juices.

From 2017 to 2019, I worked as an editor at True Editors, refining manuscripts, academic documents, and whitepapers.

In 2024, I illustrated maps using GIS tools and developed a web experience for the Tamil Nadu Government Sustainable Habitats

program at the Indian Institute of Human Settlements, which included interactive chat navigation and data visualizations.

Education

I hold a Master's degree in Design, specializing in Design-Led Innovation, from the Srishti Manipal Institute of Art, Design, and Technology, completed in 2020. I earned my Bachelor's degree in Electronics and Telecommunication Engineering from Rajarshi Shahu College of Engineering in 2018.

Research Practice

My research-practice interests lie in digital histories, archives, decentralized technology, and organizational care practices. In 2021, I contributed to the Lived Experience Knowledge Archive, a collaborative project between Enable India and Design Beku. I orchestrated workshops with Disability NGO Alliance Coordinators across Karnataka, developed a metadata schema, and created a Notion-based

repository integrated with a WhatsApp bot for accessibility. Key deliverables included toolkits, starter kits, and frameworks for asset generation, which were disseminated nationally.

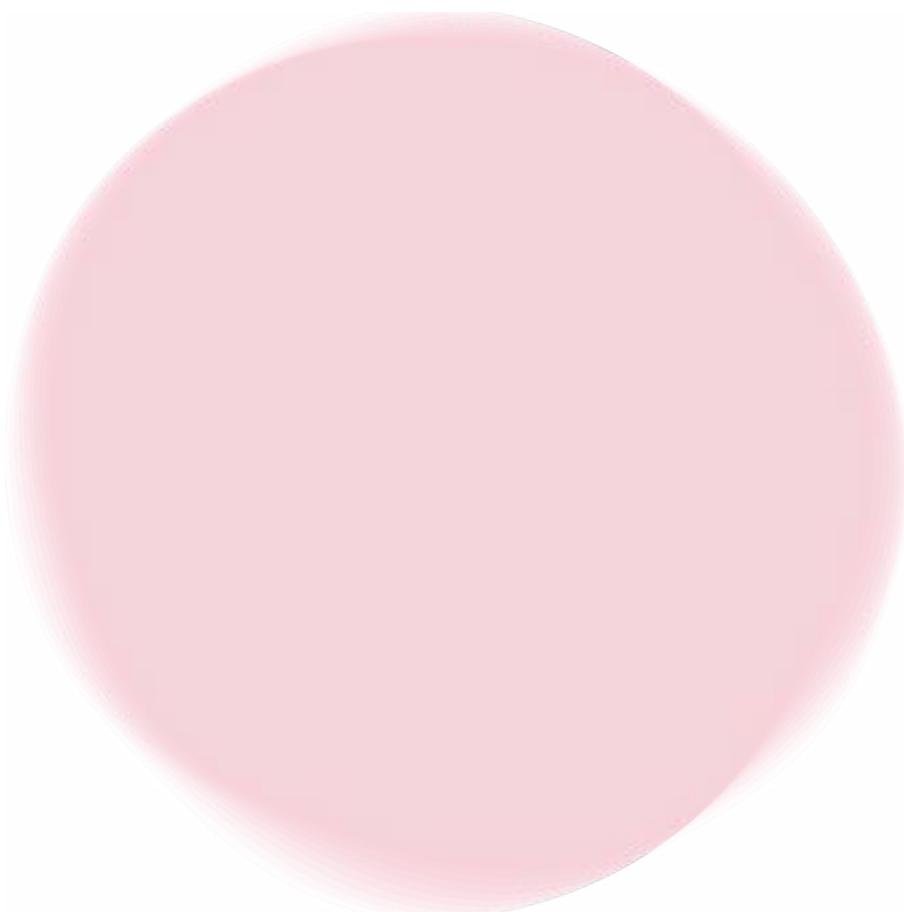
In 2020, I worked on the Climate Resource Center, where I interviewed farmers, seed distributors, and agrarian scientists to document local practices and heuristics for environmental care.

During the same year, I facilitated media literacy classes as part of the Kishori Film Festival, empowering young women in rural Uttar Pradesh with tools for digital storytelling using open-source devices.

In 2023, I initiated the South Asian Digital History project, curating content that explored the interplay of technology and sociocultural phenomena in South Asia. I also participated in the Dalit Literature Wikipedia Editathon, significantly expanding the article with contributions on regional movements and feminist literary works.

My work on the Milli Project in 2021 involved designing a democratic archival platform using the W3C Web

Annotation Standard. Similarly, in 2022, I led the design of Papad, an audio-visual publishing platform tailored for low-literacy users, addressing community needs in rural knowledge-sharing contexts. In 2024, I worked on Local Techno Futures, an action research project with Aruvu to explore imaginations of technology from peripheral perspectives, including AI and mapping technologies.



Harshawardhan Rathod

Junior Fellow
Community Led Action



My work draws from four years of experience as a researcher, practitioner and educator across multiple disciplines carrying out studies based in various cities in Karnataka. Qualified as an agriculturist with an advanced training in areas related to soil science and agriculture, my work is at the intersections of - soil; water; farmer practices; climate change and adaptation; participatory research; and case studies.

Work Experience

As a Junior Fellow for Community Led Actions at Aruvu Collaboratory, I am co-developing a Climate Resource Centre. This community-led research project involves engaging with farmers and agricultural practitioners to document and map climate response practices, socio-ecological cultures, and traditional knowledge systems.

Additionally, I liaise with experts and government stakeholders on policy-making and local administrative decisions.

I have been a voluntary member of Team YUVAA (Youth United for Vigilance, Awareness & Action) since 2021. My focus here is on regional

development, environment, water conservation, agriculture, and heritage conservation. I am also the Maintainer & Network Co-Ordinator of the Living Labs Network and Forum.

In 2021-2022, I worked as a Technical Manager at Krishi Unnati Resource Private Ltd, advising on organic-based agricultural products and engaging with farmers in Bidar, Kalaburgi (Gulbarga), and Yadgir districts to co-develop organic and natural agricultural practices.

In 2018, I completed the RAWE (Rural Area Work Experience) project as part of my studies at the University of Agricultural Sciences, Raichur. I worked directly with agricultural practitioners in integrated farming systems, crop production, market linkage development, and post-harvest management. During the same year, I participated in an industrial placement at the South Region Farm Machinery Training and Testing Institute, Ananthpur, where I gained experience in farm machinery and production testing. I also underwent training at the Agriculture Extension Education Unit at the University of Agricultural Sciences, Dharwad,

I have co-facilitated multiple place-based design and research projects at the Srishti Manipal Institute for Art, Design & Technology, Bengaluru.

In 2023, I co-facilitated projects on regional development in the Dakkhani region and in Bangalore. From 2021 to 2024, I was a co-facilitator for transdisciplinary research projects with post-graduate students.

Since 2021, I have been serving as a co-guide at the Centre for Environmental Planning and Technology (CEPT) University in Ahmedabad, where I train and provide guidance for place-based research projects.

In 2023-2024, I mentored history students at Karnataka Arts and Science College, Bidar, providing project planning and guidance. Additionally, I facilitated heritage-based educational visits at Vidyaranya High School in Hyderabad.

Education

I completed my Master of Science in Agriculture with a specialization in Soil Science and Agricultural Chemistry from the Department of Soil Science and Agricultural Chemistry, University of Agricultural Sciences, Raichur. My thesis was titled "Assessment of Spatial and Temporal Changes in Salinity and Alkalinity of Natural Streams/Nala Water in the TBP (Tungabhadra Project) Command Area," and was conducted from 2018 to 2021. I also hold a Bachelor of Science in Agriculture from the College of Agriculture, Kalaburgi, University of Agricultural Sciences, Raichur (2014-2018).

practitioners based on lived realities in the Global South (2024-25).

I am also collaborating on the "AI-mediated Reproductive Care" project, which explores cultural practices related to reproductive health (2024-25).

Since 2023, I have been engaged in "Samagra Arogya," a long-term collaborative initiative focused on understanding and responding to the social determinants of health at the Gram Panchayat level.

Additionally, I am leading a climate action research initiative, Climate Resource Centre to 'situate' a Trans-Disciplinary Action Network for Localised Climate Action in Bidar District, aimed at integrating local knowledge practices into climate research and action.

Research Practice

My current research includes several ongoing community-led projects. One such project is the "Community-led Reimagination of Automation Through Experimental Southern Futures," which aims to co-imagine automated futures with indigenous

Committees and co-ordination

I have been actively involved in several campaigns and movements, particularly those focusing on regional development, social justice, and political activism.

As a coordinator for Eedina Digital Media House, I organized citizen journalism workshops and public-media engagement campaigns. I also facilitated regional social movements such as Jagrutha (Alert) Karnataka and Yedellu (Awakened) Karnataka, aimed at raising awareness on political issues and election campaigns.

Additionally, I have been involved with the Kalyana Karnataka Horata Samithi, Bidar, advocating for regional justice movements and the proper implementation of constitutional provisions under Article 371J of the Indian Constitution.

My work with the Karanja Mulugade Santrashara Hitarakshana Samiti involved mobilizing protests for farmers affected by the Karanja

Dam project. I also facilitated campaigns advocating for the basic rights of marginalized nomadic groups, specifically Alemari, in the region.

Eshwari

Junior Fellow
Creative Writing and
Public Engagement



I'm a word wrangler in an attempt to make sense of narratives — some days writing to stay grounded, other days to get wonderfully lost. A happy chai drinker and part-time blog sleuth, I'm curious about films and women. Drawn to work around education and community engagement, I believe storytelling can breathe life into both. When I'm not putting words together, I'm looking for cats.

Work Experience

I have worked across multiple domains, including education, community engagement, creative writing, and content development. Currently, I serve as a Junior Fellow in Creative Writing and Public Engagement at Aruvu. In this role, I co-anchor community-led actions and collaborate with local members to gather, synthesize, and represent community knowledge through creative documentation and public engagement initiatives.

In 2024, I volunteered as a Narrative Consultant with Neralu, where I transcribed interviews with union members to document community voices and personal experiences. I also created "story of change" narratives that

highlighted the resilience and challenges of marginalized groups, including gender-based violence, low wages, and lack of labor protections.

Previously, from 2020 to 2021, I worked as a Content Creator for Do With Lit. During this time, I contributed poetry and prose to their social media platforms, served as the Creative Head for various projects, and delivered content for The Brown Box Magazine, an in-house publication. In 2020, I co-edited stories for Dream A Dream's #WhatIf series.

My earliest professional experiences include a role as a Marketing Trainee at Target Integration in 2019. Here, I assisted customers in navigating the organization's online purchase platform and authored software blogs to help prospective customers make informed decisions.

From June 2021 to December 2022, I worked as a Teaching Fellow at Teach For India. In this role, I facilitated educational sessions for 120 students in a low-budget private school, tailoring instructional methods to meet diverse learning needs. I collaborated with urban stakeholders, including community centers, schools, and parent-leaders,

to mobilize resources and create an inclusive environment that prioritized girls' education. I also led a community-driven initiative titled Spaces: As I See It, which aimed to challenge gender-based misconceptions and establish safe, equitable spaces for young girls.

In May 2022, I interned at Dream A Dream, conducting discussions with youth from diverse backgrounds to inform a scholarship program. I supported data collection efforts and derived insights to improve program outcomes, while also engaging with local communities to raise awareness and drive participation in the initiative.

Education

I completed my Master's in Linguistics in 2024, following a Bachelor's degree in Communicative English, Economics, and Political Science in 2021. My academic journey has allowed me to explore the intersections of language, culture, and society, laying the groundwork for my work in creative expression, public engagement, and pedagogical practices.

Research Practice

My research interests span sociolinguistics, creative expression, and pedagogical practices. In 2024, I conducted a project titled "Mapping the Interactions of Dakhni and Kannada: A Linguistic Analysis," which examined the dynamic interplay between these two languages. Earlier, in 2021, I led Spaces: As I See It, a project exploring the role of storytelling and creative expression in challenging gender norms within local communities.

Committees and co-ordination

I currently serve on the Alumni Board of Dream A Dream, where I mentored two adolescent girls, focusing on their emotional well-being and academic progress. In addition, I volunteer in program and event management, organizing alumni networking, knowledge-sharing, and community outreach events.



Archit Dhiman

Junior Fellow Visual Media Artist



Interdependent and undisciplinary, I want to design playgrounds, festivals and fictional world maps. With an academic background in design, my practice revolves around making environments, technologies or mediums for information, experiences and sometimes, dreams.

I am deeply encouraged and inspired by learning ways of designing and

worldmaking outside institutional spaces and cultural hegemonies. As a professional, I deeply value autonomous and community-led spaces of practice. I am interested in developing participative, distributed and collaborative ways of practicing design, building tools and resources that support open-ended and undisciplinary processes and contributing to networks and communities that help sustain such practices.

Education

I hold a Bachelor's degree in Design (Graphic Design) from The Design Village, where I studied from 2017 to 2021. I completed a course titled Solidarity Infrastructures at the School for Poetic Computation, in 2024

Work Experience

Since 2024, I have been serving as a Junior Fellow (Visual Media Artist) at Aruvu Collaboratory, where I facilitate community-led research projects through participatory and creative approaches.

In addition to my role at Aruvu, I am engaged in a freelance project with the Lepcha community in Gnon-Samdong, Sikkim, where I am working on imagining and building a living community memory housed within Sungsa Lee (House of Stories). This ongoing project allows me to explore digital and participative design in a community context. I am also an India Fellow.

Between 2022 and 2023, I worked as a visual identity designer for Yashraj Bharati Samman, where I coordinated the design and production of a visual identity for an award aimed at supporting grassroots organizations.

Prior to that, I worked as a full-time Visual Designer with Masque in Mumbai, where I was responsible for visual design and brand building for fine-dining restaurants and retail food outlets.

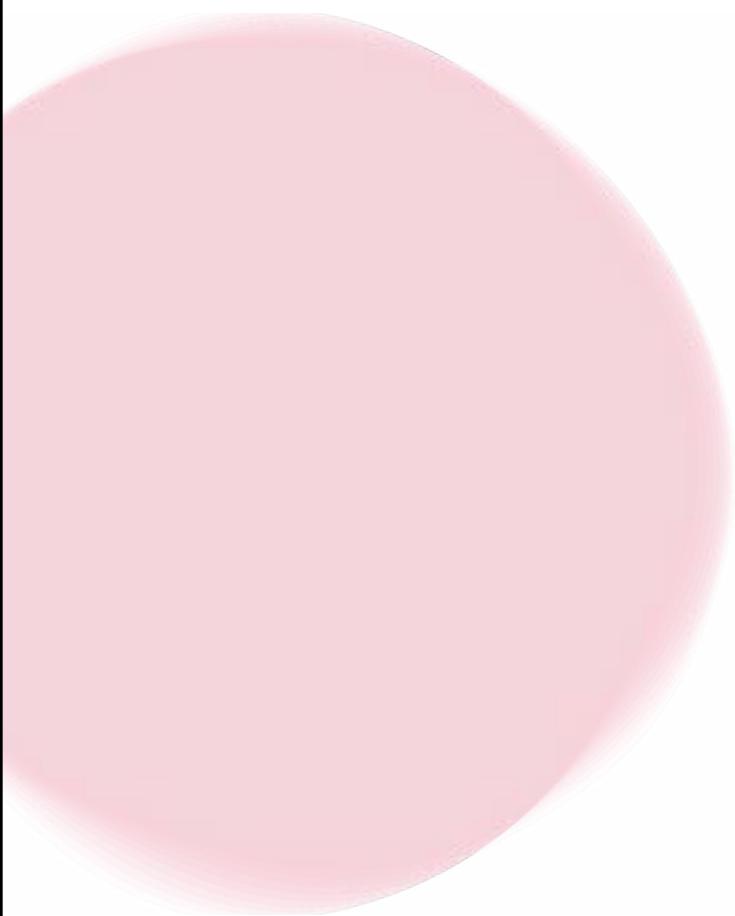
I worked on publication design with the Center for Communication Studies in 2021, designing "Fundamental Writes," a publication that archived creative writings, drawings, and scribblings from a short online course.

As a facilitator at The Design Village from 2022 to 2024, I co-facilitated several courses, including "Ways of Reading Context - 1" which focused on mapmaking and ethnographic fieldwork. I also facilitated the elective "Weaving the Web," where I guided students in experimenting with handmade websites, and "In-between 0 and 1," a course that introduced learners to creative coding and generative art. Additionally, I taught typography.

Research Practice

My research practice spans visual cultures, media studies, participatory design, pluriversal design, caste and technology, and digital humanities.

I have engaged in a variety of research projects, such as "Displaced Masculinities," a colloquium paper that explored gender and identity in different contexts, and "The Game of Worlds," which focused on interactive and participatory design processes. Additionally, my graduation project, common--ground, experimented with commoning on the web, building portals and bridges between digital and physical worlds.



Adhavan Sivaraj

Junior Fellow
Research and Development



My research engages with textual and geospatial 'data' for public-spirited needs. This may take the form of archiving, designing digital interactions with the archives and developing data-methods to make these archives. My engagements with the urban through SafeYelli have largely driven my geospatial and civic research interests. They have grown to take political forms and positions.

Work Experience

While my time at Srishti, I had begun working on SafeYelli in 2021 – a street safety tracking project in Bengaluru that involved the development of the tools and technology that we were trialling on the streets.

I interned then with Janastu in 2022, a grassroots, Open Source collective situated in DD hills, Tumakuru, that makes tools to enable decentralised community owned networks in rural areas. I worked on MapTales, a map based narrative maker.

In 2023, I interned and later worked with the Urban Informatics Lab at the Indian Institute for Human Settlements on Kaagada, a collaborative tool for multimedia

research communication and participatory sense-making. We collaborated on the vision, and I designed and developed the proof-of-concept of Kaagada.

At Aruvu, I work as a Junior Fellow for Research and Development, working across the collectives' places of work, Bidar, Kundapura and Channapatna with the Participatory Geospatial Lab (PGSL). The PGSL is now collecting, co-constructing and making available archives of spatial information that has been the outcome of nearly a decade of work in Bidar. We are working with communities in Kundapura and are in the process of introducing fellowships to explore, understand and document geographies there as the fellows see them.

Research Practice

My work focuses on textual and geospatial data for public benefit, with particular emphasis on archiving and developing digital interactions with archives. My work was strongly influenced by urban engagement through SafeYelli, which has shaped my geospatial and civic research interests.

My research interests center on the right to comprehension of public data, including questions of access. I'm particularly focused on public geospatial data, sense-making methodologies, data politics, and urban studies.

At SafeYelli, I developed a street safety tracking and mapping initiative in Bengaluru that documents street-sexual harassment and engages citizens in reflecting on street accessibility. I led community mapping projects and worked on mapping street infrastructure through Open Street Map, emphasizing public accountability.

In my research on linguistic pluralism

Education

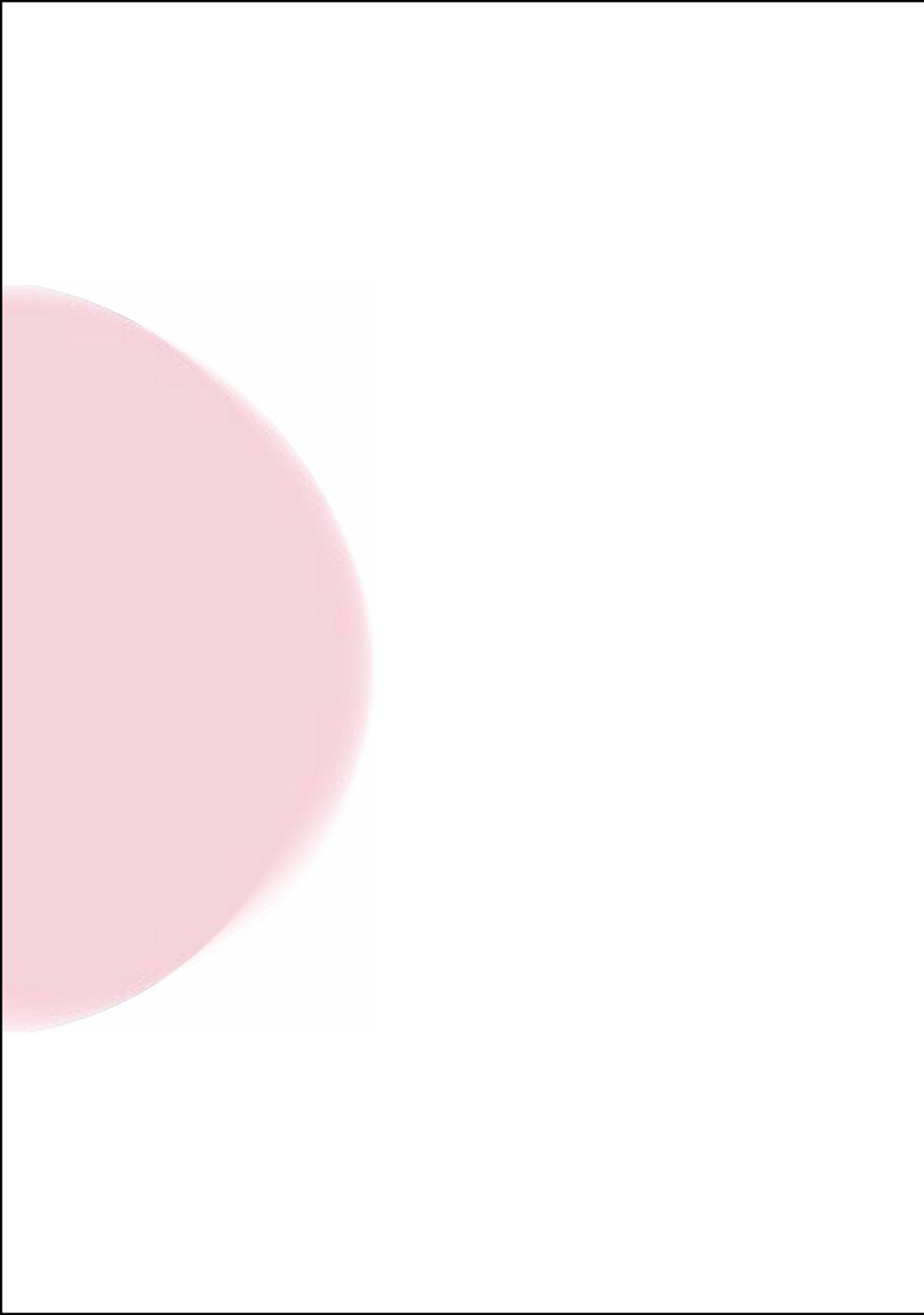
I graduated with a Bachelor's degree in Creative and Applied Computation from Srishti Manipal Institute of Art, Design and Technology, Bangalore in 2024.

in Bengaluru, I explored social inequalities using linguistic heritage as an identifier. I developed methods to analyze relationships between minority language schools and constituency demographics, building arguments for the city's plural and multilingual past through historical and present demographic data. This was grounded in the lack of formal data sources to study demographic spread at granular levels, which prompted me to look at alternative sources, like the electoral rolls of Bengaluru to develop a granular but not-so-quantitative way to understand voting demographics in the city.

Most recently, I created The Constitutional Observer, a platform that provides historical context by examining how Constitutional values have manifested in parliamentary discourse. The platform enables semantic search through Constituent Assembly debates and Lok Sabha documentation, allowing comparative study of historical arguments in both the assemblies. The Observer is accompanied by an exhibit of rhetorical questions that you can ask the Observer which has been exhibited in multiple places

Committees and co- ordination

I co-organise monthly meetups of regional OpenStreetMap Groups in Bengaluru and Chennai which often have diverse causes and contexts.



Abhiram Jois

Junior Fellow
Creative Technologist



Manic mediocre maker and alliteration admirer who finds himself in the redness of command line error logs, dark blueness of hyperlinks, yellow residue of food in the rim of a bowl and brown dog hair on clothes. I enjoy code, data, art, tech, colours, stories, films, books and long conversations.
Maneli ellarnu keldhe anthe heLi

Work Experience

I am currently working as a Junior Fellow (Creative Technologist) at Aruvu Collaboratory, Bengaluru, since June 2024. In this role, I am involved in several community-driven projects.

These include working on a community MESH network with a tribal settlement in the coastal Karnataka region, facilitating a project called Local Techno Futures with artisans to explore local interpretations of technology and AI, and developing a decision support system aimed at enhancing governance in decentralized Panchayat bodies.

Previously, I worked as a UX Intern at Design Beku from June 2022 to September 2022 and as a part-time

UX Researcher from January 2023 to March 2024. My work primarily focused on the Channapatna Health Library project, which aimed at co-creating an oral archive of lived experiences related to health in collaboration with community health workers. My role involved exploring participatory design and research, co-designing and prototyping digital tools, and deploying and maintaining a Linux-based local server. I also contributed to the establishment of a decentralized mesh network and supported workshops around data collection and consent.

Research Practice

My research practice integrates design and technology to explore issues in health, governance, and community-driven technological solutions. I have worked on several projects that use participatory design and ethnography to engage with local communities. Notably, my thesis project at the National Institute of Mental Health and Neurosciences (NIMHANS) focuses on developing an interactive kiosk for the upcoming Brain and Mind Museum. This kiosk aims to democratize access and understanding of brain-computer interfaces to foster curiosity and experimentation.

Education

I graduated with a Bachelor of Design (B.Des) in Human-Centered Design at Srishti Manipal Institute of Art Design Technology, Bengaluru. I participated in a student exchange program at the Glasgow School of Art, specializing in Interaction Design, from September 2022 to January 2023.

Another key project, titled “Pixelated Memories: Mapping Urbanization and Land Use with Communities in the Peri-Urban,” involved using OpenStreetMap and QGIS to map land use changes in the village of Gantiganahalli. I have also contributed to the development of a research article on Explainable AI for early adolescents, which was presented at the ACM CHI’23 conference.

Abhishek Patil

Collaborator
Community Research



I am an aspiring Environmental Anthropologist with specific research interests in conservation, sustainability, political ecology of offset programs, social and environmental justice. I work in the intersection of culture, society, and environment.

My experience as a researcher is mainly associated with socio-ecological interlinkages and socio-cultural studies of

communities in India. I also have a brief experience of leading projects with a development organization in Rwanda. Currently, I am working with Dakshin Foundation on themes related to Blue Economy, Blue Justice, and Blue Carbon.

With experience in research and grassroots engagement with community-based projects, I also bring a combination of technical expertise, program management skills, and a deep understanding of community dynamics.

Work Experience

Currently, I am employed at Dakshin Foundation, where I initially worked as a consultant (October 2023–April 2024) before

transitioning to the role of Programme Associate in May 2024. Dakshin Foundation is a coastal and marine conservation NGO focusing on sustainable livelihoods, social development, and environmental justice.

My role involves research and analysis of regulatory, financial, and policy instruments related to the blue economy and blue carbon sectors in India. I also contribute to developing frameworks for blue justice, with contextual applications across states and union territories.

Previously, I worked with Partners for Conservation in Rwanda (June–September 2023) as a Public Health Assistant and Project Lead. My responsibilities included planning and establishing Early Child Development (ECD) and Family Planning (FP) centers, collaborating with UNICEF and the National Child Development Agency, and implementing the School Kitchen Garden and Food Forest project.

Between 2021 and 2022, I was a Research Fellow and Consultant at the Living Labs Network and Forum. My research focused on agro-pastoralist communities, traditional agroecological practices, grassland

biodiversity, and soil regeneration in Bidar District. I utilized qualitative methods such as ethnography, oral history interviewing, and documentation. Additionally, I interned with the Gerry Martin Project in late 2020, where I assisted in Russell Viper ecological research, field data collection, reptile maintenance, and farm development.

Education

I completed my secondary and higher secondary education at Sainik School Kodagu between 2009 and 2016. From 2017 to 2020, I pursued a Bachelor of Science (BSc) degree at Karnataka University Dharwad, specializing in Anthropology, Forensic Sciences, Criminology, and Zoology.

In 2022–2023, I earned a Master of Science (MSc) degree in International Development, Social Justice, and Sustainability from the University of Bath, United Kingdom, specializing in Social and Environmental Justice, the Politics and Practice of Sustainability, and the Global Political Economy.

Research Practice

My research interests include socio-ecological interlinkages, agroecological practices, and environmental conservation.

At Aruvu Collaboratory, I am involved in projects such as the Community-led Reimagination of Automation Through Experimental Southern Futures and AI-mediated Reproductive Care, exploring automated futures and reproductive health from localized perspectives.

While at the Living Labs Network, I contributed to projects like the Climate Resource Center, which rethinks climate research through local knowledge practices, and the conservation of Karez water systems in Bidar.

These efforts focused on revitalizing ancient underground water systems built during the Bahmani rule. Additionally, I have worked on voluntary projects, including the Centre for Wildlife Studies, where I conducted surveys and interviews with farmers and tourists to

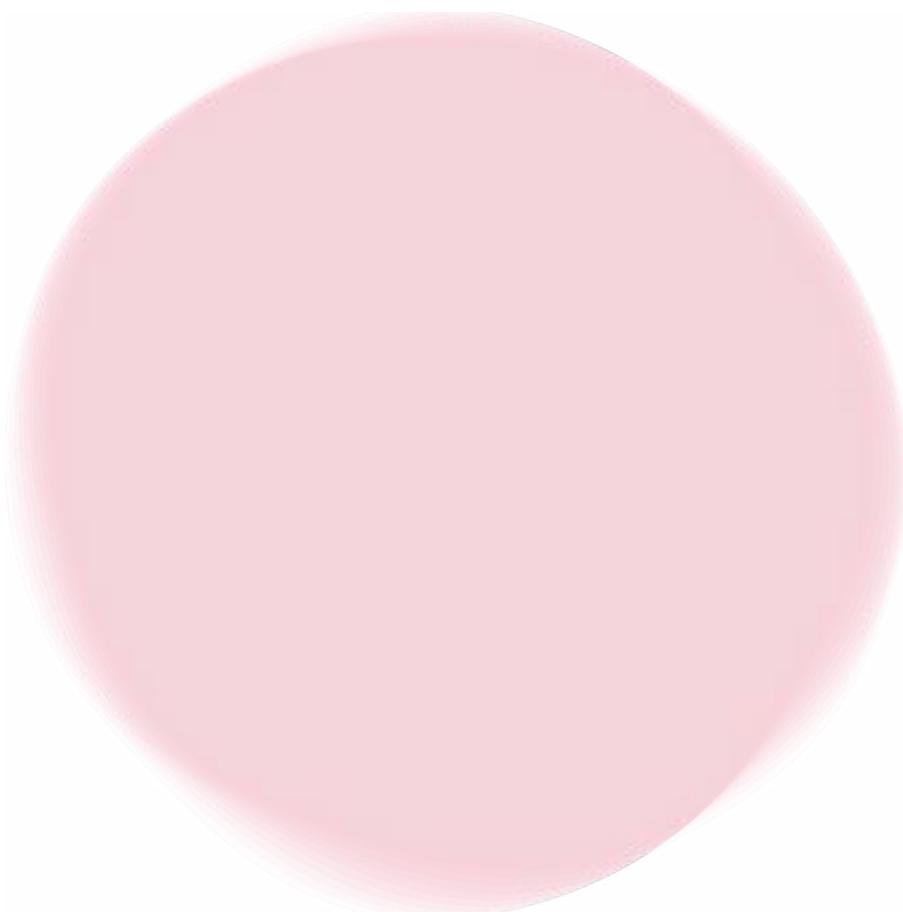
examine conservation potential and preferences around Karnataka's tiger reserves.

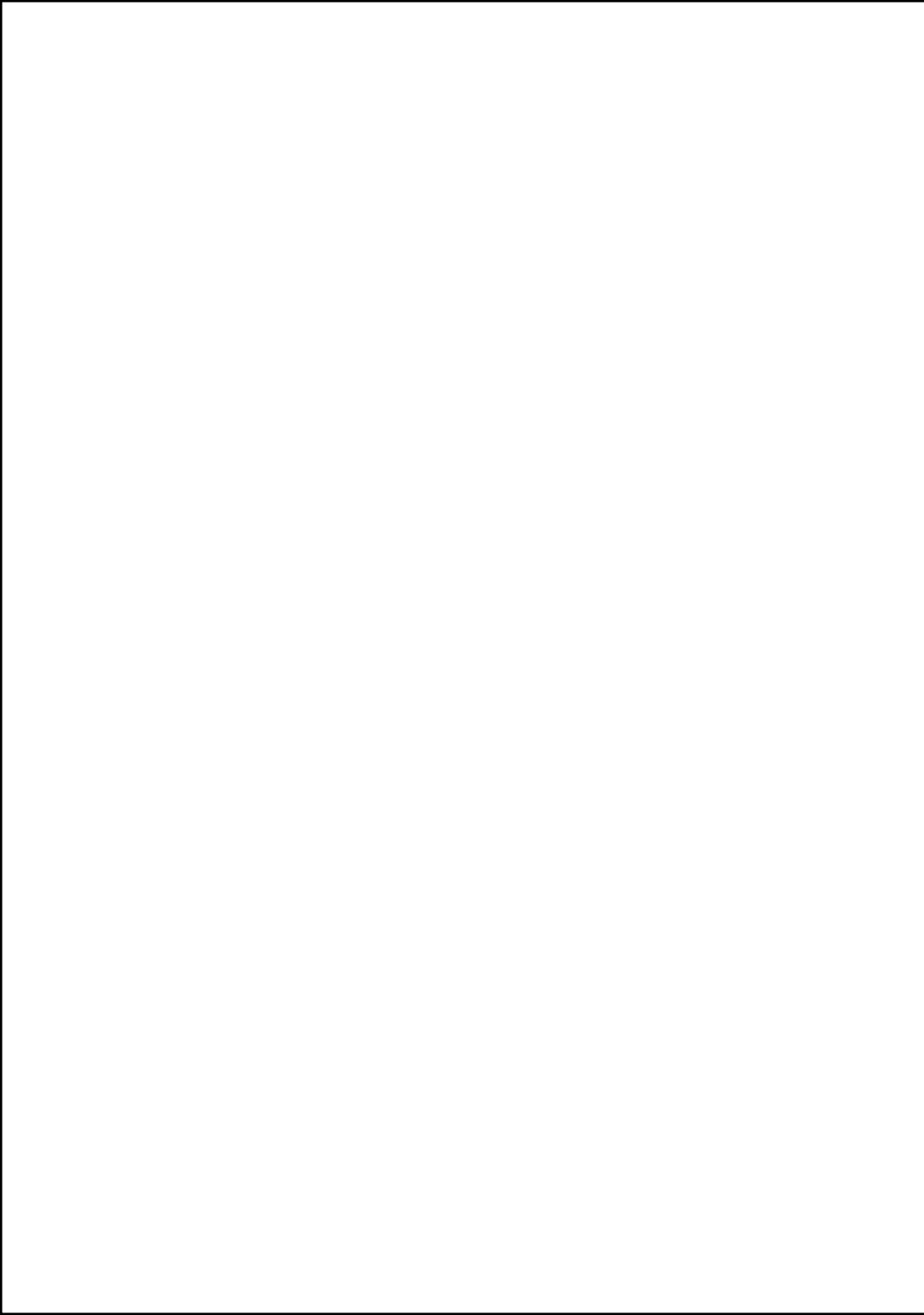
Committees and co-ordination

In my career, I have participated in various committees and coordination efforts. I have co-facilitated and mentored design studios for institutions such as the Srishti Institute of Art, Design & Technology and CEPT University, guiding projects on waterscapes, conservation, and development in Bidar.

My experience also includes organizing media literacy workshops as part of the Kishori Film Festival and mentoring student-directed research projects.

I have authored several publications, such as "Political Economy of the Climate Crisis: Distributional Impacts and Way Forward" and "Biodiversity Offsetting: A Crisis in Neoliberal Environmentalism." These works reflect my commitment to integrating academic research with actionable conservation and justice practices.





More info

Collective of Collectives

We are a collective of collectives at the intersection of collaborative research, creative practice, technology, and community engagement. Aruvu Collaboratory LLP was formed to formalise and foster our decade-long engagements and connections with grassroots organisations and collectives across multiple places in Karnataka, India. Our focus is to work towards the following core objectives



Untold.Town is our collective place-based journal. Access it at <https://untold.town>

Allied Collectives



Living Labs Network

A Kalyana-Karnataka focussed organisation built to bring forward ideas of development that are rooted in the place through collaborative creative actions.



Team YUVAA

A volunteer-led organisation born in Bidar to strengthen Bidar's institutions, civil society and cultural heritage.



Manesiri

A Farmer Producer Organisation built by Community Health Workers in Channapatna to produce, market and sell organic, nutritional foods and ingredients



Visit our
organisational
website at
<https://aruvu.org>