2026 YOUTH CLIMATE CONVENING

Post Event Report

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Introduction

In February 2026, thirty-four young people representing various campaigns, organisations, collectives and indigenous youth groups came together for the fourth iteration of the Youth Climate Convening in Bengaluru, India. Over the course of four days, the participants listened to each other's journeys, shared circles, and community baithaks to build trust, meaningful friendships, and solidarity.

This year, young leaders stepped up to create alternative support systems, acknowledging that we are interdependent just like a mycelium network. The young leaders leveraged the space to listen and reflect deeply, co-exist slowly, acknowledge our diversity and challenges. Processes and strategies were put in place to strengthen our collective needs and desires. Most importantly, they let their imaginations go wild to reimagine systems of care and governance. Participants entered the space with energy to learn, collaborate, create, rest, dance and share.

Young climate leaders in India often work in isolation due to the country's vast geography and limited access to resources. This lack of support leads to burnout, financial insecurity, and challenges in sustaining their work. These barriers persist because young people challenging the status quo have little institutional support.

YCC seeks to bridge this gap by fostering a strong support system for youth-led climate justice groups, ensuring they have the resources, networks, and care needed to sustain and amplify their impact.

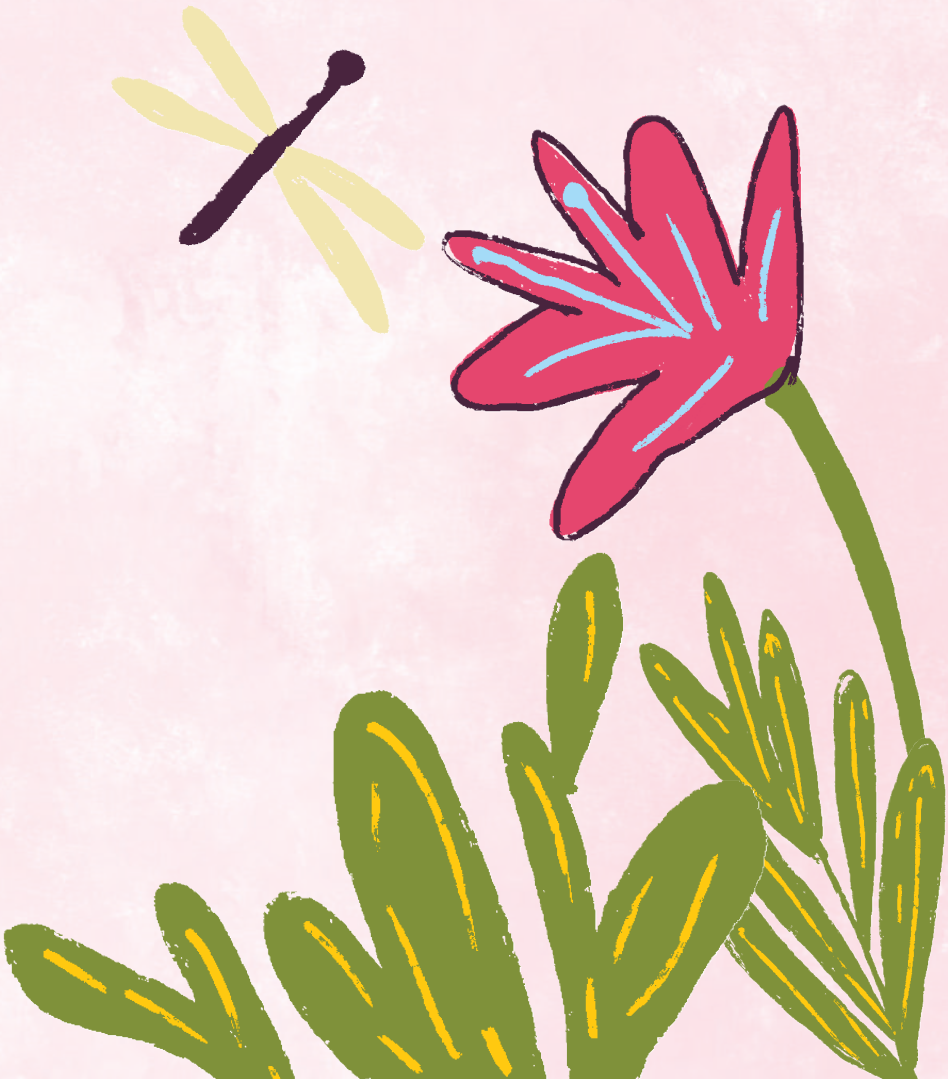
Through YCC, we are building a space of solidarity, ensuring young leaders are not alone in their fight for a just and sustainable world.

YCC provides a space where young people, especially those who have never had a platform, can assert their agency, build collective power, and access the resources they need to sustain their work.

What makes YCC truly unique is its ethos of care and collaboration in a world that often pits young people against each other in competition for limited opportunities; YCC fosters solidarity, love, and community care.

It is a space where young climate leaders find a home – a place where they belong, where their concerns are heard, and where their leadership is nurtured.

> **“ Main ghar se, ghar ko hote hue, ghar (YCC) ko aagayi hoon. ”**
>
> **- A participant after their long journey**



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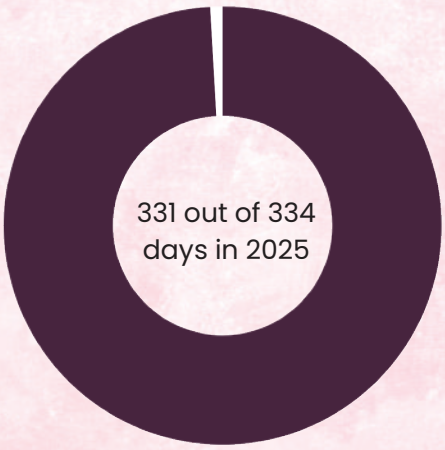
Our Collective Hope and Resilience



In 2025, India recorded extreme weather events on 331 of 334 days between January and November 2025 — up from 295 days in 2024 and 292 in 2022.

These events claimed at least

4,419
lives

affected
17.4 M hectares
of cropped land

destroyed at least
181,459
houses

killed apporximately
77,189
animals

Climate-driven displacement hit a critical peak in 2025, with 5.4 million internal displacements, the highest since 2013. These figures are likely to be underestimated. Communities on the front lines are hit the hardest with the least support.

Amidst the looming climate crisis, our civic spaces have shrunk, and safety has become precarious.

We sit with questions, deep in our hearts. Who has to be resilient? Who has to be hopeful all the time? Who has to inspire hope in the face of great despair? Why are our hopes different from each other? What do we do in hopeless times?

Participants shared visuals and stories of climate disasters, their aftermaths, and the desire to build parallel governance systems to minimise loss, mobilise support, and enable rapid response. The participants expressed their desire to build a movement that is functional, regional, deeply collaborative, well-funded, independent, and respected. While these desires require labour and love to become reality, socio-political realities hinder these efforts, leading to burnout and hopelessness. Resilience, though it has been built across communities, has often been built not as an intentional practice but as a necessity.

Hope is difficult to come by in times of despair. It is often described as a discipline and practice. It looks different for people because of the individual and systemic challenges that they face in their work and personal lives. Different levels and kinds of hope come from different access to spaces, resources and opportunities.

Hope and resilience emerged through sharing stories in the baithaks; Mahila Mandali was one such place. Women, queer and allies sat at night to share their experiences, stories and wisdom. The mandali talked about their experiences with harassment, solidarity, grief and having to be strong in the face of great challenges. They shared that even in progressive spaces, solidarity, comfort and support are difficult to come by.

As women and queer leaders, the burden of carrying hope and the labour of care often falls on their shoulders. When support from their own spaces falls short, the friendships bring warmth, comfort, solidarity, resilience and hope. Resilience and hope do not exist in isolation; they rest on the shoulders of our people, who stand with us, who hold us and who fight with us. It rests within a collective which is ready to hold itself.

The baithak and the convening acted as a stepping stone for people who were meeting for the first time to talk about hope and resilience, how it does not come easy, how they wish things were better, but which hope do they hold onto, how solidarity seems bleak if it is just words and not actions. Amidst these questions, there were some answers and commitments. “When you are out of hope, we will step up. We will extend our hands and hearts. We will be a call away!”

Check-ins and Breaking the Ice

The Youth Climate Convening 2026 reaffirmed that a collective of people steers social justice forward, and well-being rooted in community will always be a pillar of hope.

The first day of the convening was a slow day for settling in and entering the space mindfully. After a long day of travel, participants were checked in and warmly welcomed by eager dogs and a slow and serene campus. The Welcoming team bestowed the participants with the convening merch.

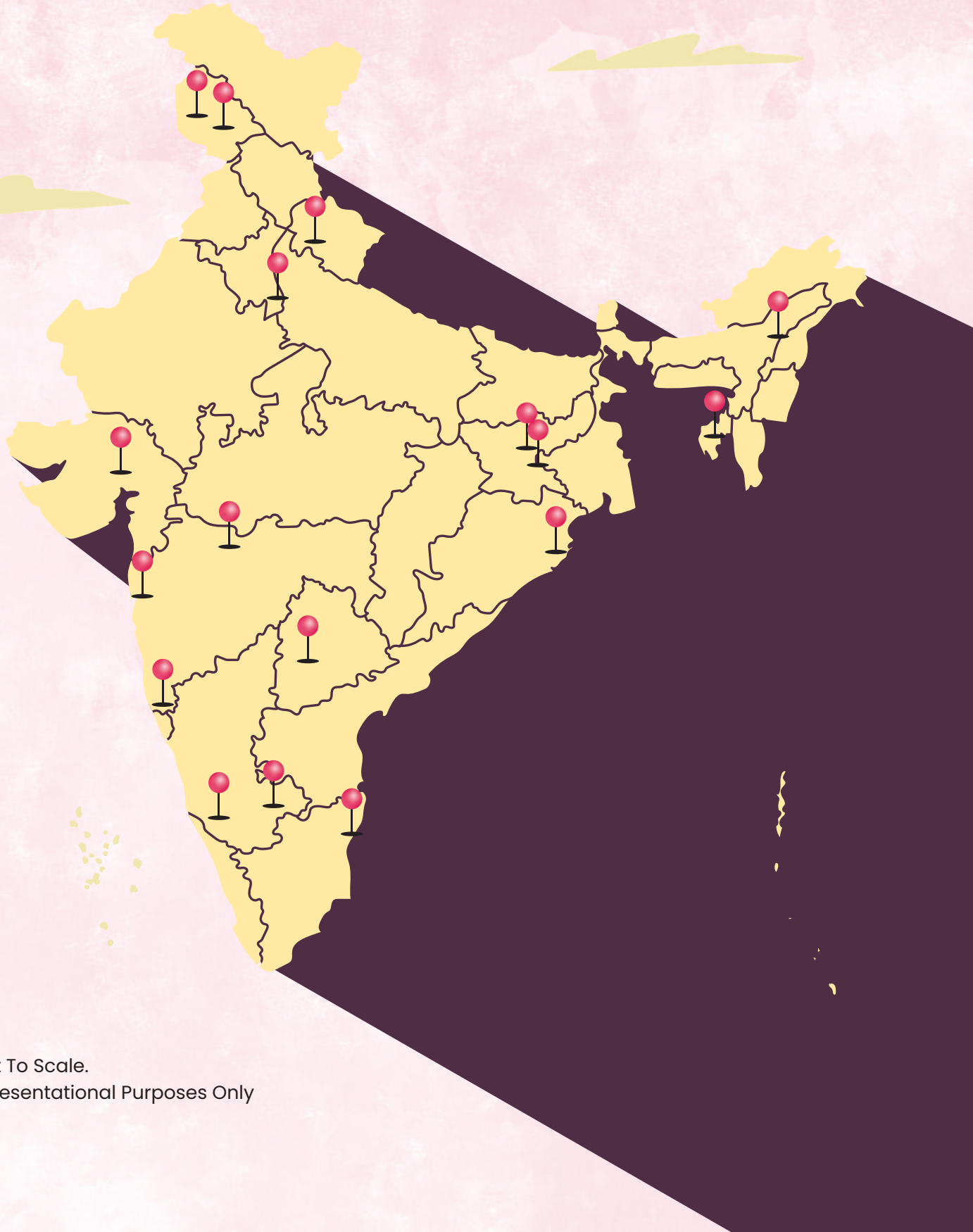
In the evening, participants gathered to get to know each other – our names, places, and our connection to nature. Trees, rivers, dawn, leaves, grass, mountains, wildlife and many more parts of nature resonated with everyone. It was rightly pointed out that humans are not separate from nature, giving participants a chance to reflect and connect more profoundly and lovingly throughout the convening.

The next few days brought joy and laughter through various activities, energising the group with a jolt of energy and friendship. The room was echoing with mimicking sounds while the participants passed an imaginary ball around. Singing and dancing to 'Gaon Chodab Nahi' brought the participants closer to our cause of Climate Justice. Quick Gun Murugun was a crowd favourite, having been played at least thrice during the convening.

You have to be present, on your toes, speak right away and bend down when you are called upon. If you don't, you join the band of people dancing and giggling shoulder to shoulder.

Diversity at YCC

Here's a map highlighting the wide reach of YCC participants across India - based on where they and their campaigns are rooted.



Map Not To Scale.
For Representational Purposes Only

Participating Groups

ASMITA

Chennai Climate Action Group

Circle Of Care

Climate Front India

Climate Front Telangana

India Indigenous Youth Network (IIYN)

Indian Hawkers Alliance

LEAD - Legal Empowerment, Advocacy and Defence

Let India Breathe

Pudhe Chala

Queer-e-Junglers

Stand For Kashmiri Youth (SKY) Trust

There Is No Earth B

Transmen Collective

Youngo Energy Working Group

Youth Organisation for Green India (Y.O.G.I)

Zibon Collective

Community Agreements

Before diving into the sessions, the participants were invited to co-create community agreements, a collective framework of values and norms to ensure a smooth, respectful and meaningful convening experience. Participants reflected on the values that would help everyone feel safe, heard and supported.

The agreements were designed to be living guidelines, revisited and revised each morning. It set clear boundaries, trigger warnings, dos and don'ts, and served as a source of guidance throughout the convening, keeping checks and balances in place to ensure respect, love, and solidarity.

Here's a quick recap of the community agreements shaped by the group:

1. CREATE A NON-JUDGEMENTAL & SAFE SPACE

Approach conversations with openness. Avoid assumptions and ask before guessing. Balance genuineness with mindfulness so that honesty does not translate into harm. Recognise that everyone is here for a shared purpose.

2. RESPECT PERSONAL BOUNDARIES

Be mindful of emotional, social and physical capacities. Keep in mind that people engage differently. Seek consent before posting pictures of others. If disagreements arise, use "I" statements and agree to disagree where necessary.

3. STEP IN, STEP BACK

Ensure there is space for everyone to speak. Do not interrupt. Let the person finish their thought. Listen with intention. If you tend to speak more, step back. If you tend to hold back, step in.

4. PRIORITISE WELLBEING

Give trigger warnings before discussing potentially heavy topics. If you feel triggered or overwhelmed, inform someone and step out to regulate emotions. Wellbeing coordinators are available for support. Take care of yourself — and each other — as many have travelled far to be here.

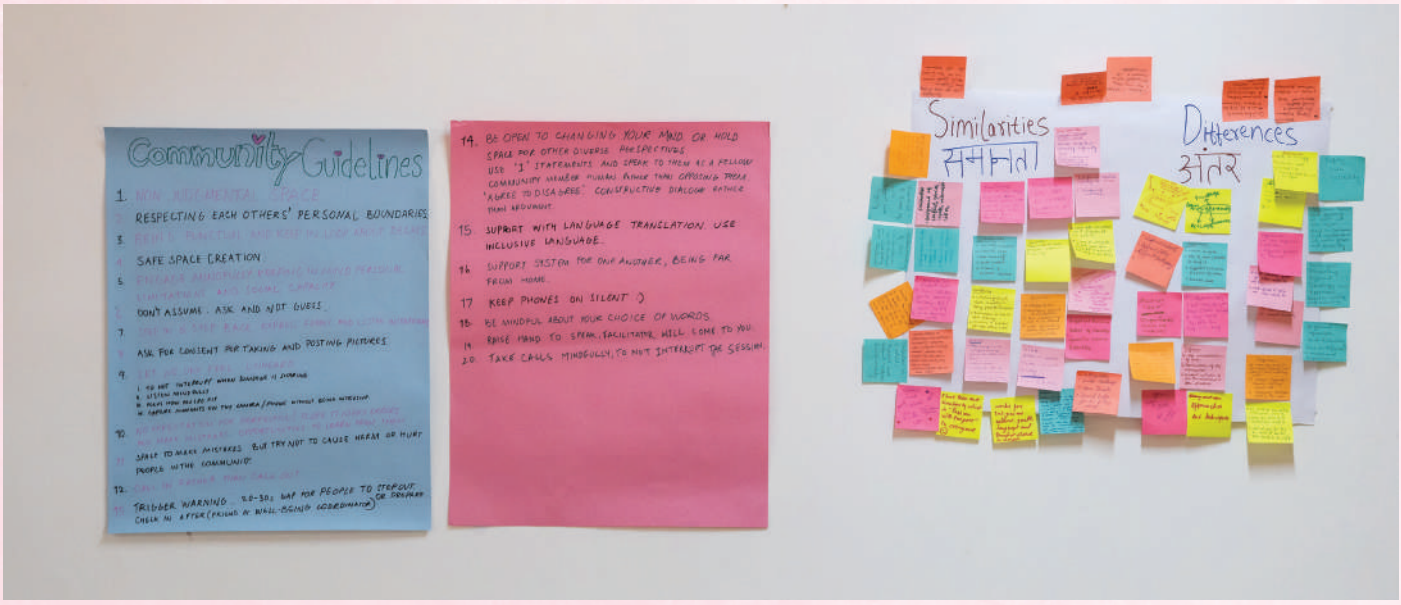
5. ALLOW ROOM FOR IMPERFECTION

Show up as you are; perfection is not the expectation. There is space for errors, provided we remain accountable and conscious not to cause harm. Community norms may feel restrictive at times, but they are rooted in coexistence and collective care.

6. PRACTICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Be punctual and respect the shared schedule. Keep phones on silent. Translate where needed to include peers. Avoid letting arguments escalate unnecessarily.

The agreements were displayed visibly in the room and intended to be revisited during the second half and each following day. This served as a reminder that community is not something fixed, but something that is continuously shaped, nurtured, and upheld together.



Safety, Well-being and Inclusion

Day two of the convening opened with a grounding and reflective session facilitated by Sex Education India, setting the tone for collective safety and accountability within the convening space. Acknowledging that conversations around harassment and gender can feel heavy, participants were reminded that they were free to step out and regulate if needed. The session positioned the convening as a shared workspace — a diverse gathering of people working toward a common goal, and therefore a space that must be rooted in mutual respect and consent.

The workshop began by exploring why it is important to address harassment and boundary-setting within movements and youth-led organisations. Themes of human decency, awareness, self-respect, and collective responsibility emerged strongly.

Participants reflected that while the outside world may often feel unsafe, community spaces must actively strive to be safer. The onus, it was emphasised, should never fall on the person who has been harmed.

The session introduced the **F.R.I.E.S. framework of consent** :

- F - Freely Given
- R - Reversible
- I - Informed
- E - Enthusiastic
- S - Specific

Through an interactive activity with volunteers, participants unpacked how consent is expressed differently by different people. The exercise demonstrated that tone, body language, enthusiasm and discomfort vary widely, and that absence of resistance does not automatically mean consent.

Discussions also clarified what may appear like consent but is not, including convinced consent (being pestered into agreement), deceptive consent, biological arousal, and quid pro quo harassment rooted in power dynamics.

The conversation expanded into understanding gender, sex, and societal influences, including the legal definition of transgender persons in India and protections against discrimination. Participants discussed everyday accountability, such as how to respond if one misgenders someone (apologise briefly, correct yourself, and move forward without shifting emotional labour onto the other person).

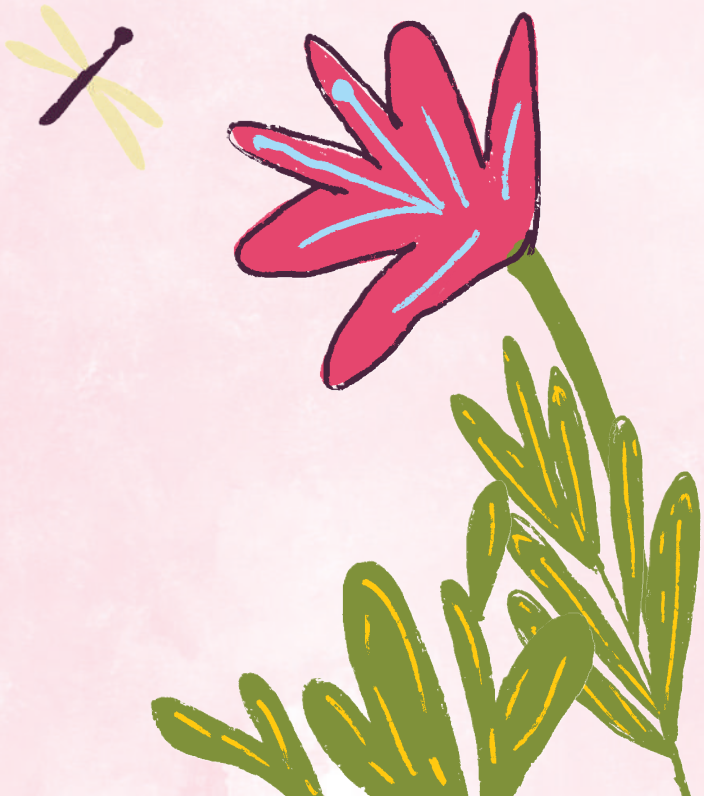
To contextualise harassment within movement spaces, delegates identified behaviours that may be normalised but can be harmful — including unsolicited advice, excessive pursuit, commenting on appearance or food choices, gossiping, pushing opinions, asking invasive personal questions, and using work as a pretext to pursue romantic interest. The importance of confidentiality and respecting diverse bodies of work was reiterated.

The session also revisited complaint redressal mechanisms, acknowledging that many incidents go unreported and that reporting remains a personal choice. However, the collective commitment remains clear: to build stronger systems of accountability, empathy, and support.

As a shared hope, participants shared the values they hope to practice:

- Curiosity with empathy
- Mindful choice of words
- Respect for boundaries
- Recognition that everyone has limits

The session clarified the legal and interpersonal frameworks around harassment and reinforced a culture of care — reminding participants that safety, dignity and consent are foundational.



Voices of Today: Learnings from the Frontlines

Stand For Kashmiri Youth (SKY) Trust

The SKY Trust is a Kashmir-based youth initiative that began in 2011 as a youth network and later registered as a trust. Rooted in the need to create safe decision-making spaces for young people, the organisation focuses on youth leadership, climate justice, sexual health, unemployment and community dialogue.

Through fellowships (including climate and period fellowships), research initiatives, and monthly community "darbaars," The Sky Trust nurtures youth and women collectives across Jammu & Kashmir. Working in a geography with turbulent conditions presents cultural and political challenges, yet the collective prioritises relationship-building and shared values before engaging in community dialogue. Their work showcases the resilience of Muslim women. Their model highlights the importance of sustained safe spaces for long-term youth leadership and community.

Transmen Collective

The Transmen Collective (TMC) foregrounded climate justice through the lens of gender identity, caste, class and religion. Their research examines how climate stress events disproportionately affect transmen, trans masc, especially in areas such as migration, medical access, documentation, employment and mental health.

The presentation highlighted the additional vulnerabilities faced during floods and heatwaves, including the need for hormone replacement therapy and post-surgical care. The TMC worked on legal analysis to address documentation and critical policy gaps. TAMANNA fellowship is one of their flagship programs , which is first-of its kind fellowship for transmasculine youth from marginalised backgrounds and regions. TMC is actively working on Digital empowerment under which they are collaborating with local CBOs to address the Digital need and community space.

Indian Indigenous Youth Network

Born from a profound reflection on isolation and the vital need for community support, the India Indigenous Youth Network (IIYN) emerged as a space of solidarity. At its core, the organization is dedicated to mobilizing Adivasi youth, acutely addressing the systemic barriers they navigate—particularly economic precarity and the historical marginalization of Indigenous rights in India.

IIYN actively cultivates meaningful alliances across Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities. Through this work, the network fiercely champions language preservation, cultural continuity, and the restoration of collective dignity. Guided by a foundational ethos of "safety over visibility," IIYN reinforces a vital mandate: those privileged with access and opportunity bear a deep responsibility to uplift and empower their communities.

ASMITA

ASMITA is a youth-led grassroots feminist organisation from Jharkhand that works at the intersection of indigenous rights, climate governance and local democracy. Recognising that mineral-rich development often excludes local communities, ASMITA advocates for dignity,and meaningful youth participation in panchayat-level climate policy.

Their initiatives include strengthening local governance, documentation of indigenous knowledge systems, santhali language classes, and preparing women and children collectives to participate meaningfully in Gram Sabhas. Their work calls for youth to move from tokenised stakeholders to supported decision-makers.

Queer-e-Junglers

Queer-e-Junglers is a youth-led collective in Delhi and Assam that bridges the gap between queer, trans, and caste-marginalised communities and ecological justice. By reclaiming public green spaces through sunset walks, biodiversity workshops, and "Camp Curiosity", a nature education bootcamp making nature access into an act of political affirmation and healing.

The collective maintains year-round engagement, fostering a network of queer ecological leaders even during Delhi's harsh summers. Beyond education, they address the intersection of identity and environmental crises, focusing on climate displacement and supporting refugees from marginalised backgrounds. Through these initiatives, Queer-e-Junglers builds a sustainable, inclusive movement that blends conservation with a sense of community belonging across India.

Zibon Collective

Zibon collective works in Assam and surrounding regions, centring women, queer persons, caste-marginalised communities and students. Built around the three roots of Research, Resist and Reclaim, the collective addresses ecological degradation alongside dignity and justice. The word Zibon (meaning "life" in Assamese) signifies the essence of this initiative: to bring sustainable, conscious, and people-centred transformation to society.

Operating in contexts shaped by turbulent socio-political conditions and border conflicts, Zibon Collective emphasises internal care structures, storytelling, livelihoods, disaster relief and collective resilience. Their work challenges extractive research practices and foregrounds lived realities in environmental advocacy.

Climate Front India

Climate Front India shared their journey from localised resistance movements to broader youth mobilisation across urban and regional spaces. The national team works remotely and builds local campaigns and chapters across India. Their campaigns include Save Raika Forest, river protection efforts, rapid disaster response as a parallel system, and cultural resistance festivals like Adavi Bathukamma. Their relentless efforts have helped protect the Raika Forest and the Tawi River in Jammu.

Their approach integrates on-ground mobilisation with immediate digital documentation to build informed public support. The collective stressed that community energy and solidarity remain their strongest motivation.

Climate Front Telangana

Climate Front Telengana is one of the most active local chapters of Climate Front, advocating for social and climate justice through community engagement, cultural resistance, advocacy, and democratic processes. Their most prominent campaign, Save Musi, has seen exponential growth in volunteers, community consultations and engagements, and media coverage. They have also engaged with Waste-to-Energy Plants through fact-finding and postcard campaigns. They highlighted a win for the environmental movement through the protection of the Kancha Gachibowli forest in Hyderabad. They celebrate local festivals such as Adavi Bathukamma.

Circle of Care

The Circle of Care (COC) is an indigenous youth-led convening which focuses on transformative justice and community well-being. The Circle of Care screened their short film for the first time and shared the journey from last year's Youth Climate Convening to Circle of Care. They presented their decentralised model of regional climate and wellbeing circles. Having conducted six regional circles so far, the collective aims to expand across the Western Ghats, Central India, Northeast, Andaman & Nicobar Islands and the Himalayas.

Their work recognises that "those who give care also need care," integrating mental health, storytelling, sacred ecology and youth dialogue into climate organising spaces.

Indian Hawkers Alliance

The Indian Hawkers Alliance is a group with regional presence in ten Indian states. They work for the welfare, rights and dignity of Street Vendors, laying special emphasis on the implementation of the Street Vendors Act, 2014. They highlighted how heat stress and environmental pollution disproportionately impact street vendors. From installing alert charts with IMD data to advocating immediate relief measures such as ORS distribution and community water sources, the group demonstrated how climate justice must account for informal workers and urban vulnerability.

Youth Organisation for Green India (Y.O.G.I.)

The organisation focuses on river conservation, anti-sand mining campaigns, and youth political engagement. Initiatives such as Nadi Ki Paathshala, padyatras near dam sites and policy petitions have mobilised thousands. Operating largely through volunteer networks and community-funded efforts, the group emphasised deep local engagement over scale, demonstrating that region-specific resistance can create measurable governance shifts. They also engage with young people through fellowships and invite young scholars and researchers for participatory research in Jalgaon for knowledge production and sharing.

Let India Breathe

Let India Breathe (LIB) presented its campaigns on waste-to-energy projects, wetland protection, and regional resistance movements such as Deepor Beel. LIB provides structural and legal support to local groups, conducts public consultations, and runs a language lab to break accessibility barriers.

Through sustained research, media advocacy and coalition building, LIB works to present sustainable development alternatives rooted in community consultation and agency.

There Is No Earth B (T.I.N.E.B.)

There Is No Earth B focused on resisting the proposed Kukrail Night Safari project in Lucknow through letters to authorities, Twitter Storm, RTIs, media outreach, and digital mobilisation. The social media outreach highlighted the role of Kukrail forest as the green lung for Lucknow, and the significance of Kukrail Gharial Rehabilitation Centre in saving the endangered alligator species. A clean-up drive was also organised to connect with citizens on the ground. Through this campaign, the collective tried to bring awareness regarding the ecological and biodiversity risks associated with the project.

Chennai Climate Action Group

Chennai Climate Action Group works to amplify the voices of unheard communities affected by pollution, including coal ash exposure zones and waste-to-energy project sites. Through toxic tours, photography exhibitions, climate rallies and children-led storytelling projects, the organisation bridges research with public mobilisation.

Their campaigns underscore the importance of child rights, clean air advocacy and community empowerment.

LEAD - Legal Empowerment, Advocacy and Defence

Emerging from previous Youth Climate Convenings, LEAD - Legal Empowerment, Advocacy and Defence is a legal support network aiming to provide 360-degree climate justice assistance. Through legal needs mapping, LEAD seeks to build a decentralised network of empathetic, context-specific lawyers. This was highlighted in their showcase through a skit which asked people, "Humare Lawyer Kaise Ho?" (How should our lawyers be?) – opening the space for participants to reflect. The initiative aims to translate complex legal language for grassroots groups and build an intentional framework rooted in care and shared values.

Pudhe Chala

Pudhe Chala is a women- and youth-run movement centred around bringing equitable, just, accessible and inclusive mobility needs to the forefront of climate conversations. Through people's narratives, imagery, advocacy and storytelling, Pudhe Chala highlighted the impact of the deteriorating bus transit system in Mumbai in the working class that is the backbone of India's financial capital, with a special focus on how women who already bear the burden of restricted mobility are getting more and more alienated by a system that benefits everyone except the people it is supposed to serve.

YOUNGO ENERGY WORKING GROUP

YOUNGO is the official children and youth constituency of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). It is a global network of young climate leaders and NGOs aimed at empowering youth to drive climate policy and action, ensuring their voices are heard at UN climate negotiations.

It has several working groups with a focus on Just Transition, Mitigation, Energy, Arts and Heritage, Food, Adaptation, Health, Child Rights, Animal Rights, Water and Climate, Migration and so on.
In 2025, YOUNGO held a Virtual COP30 which proved that climate action can transcend borders, demonstrating how digital platforms can serve as tools for empowerment, innovation and equity.

Community Identity

After hearing the journeys of 17 youth-led organisations, the participants mapped the similarities and differences which they could identify. The mapping exercise undertaken by the participants revealed a community identity that is both **profoundly unified and profoundly diverse.**

At our core, we are a community defined by **"struggles out of and for love."** We share a foundational belief that the current system is failing, and our collective identity is rooted in an **inter-movement solidarity** that transcends geographies. Despite our differences, we recognise that the same forces of injustice shape our lives. Our identity is that of **grounded resistance**; we choose to stand strong despite social pressure and limited resources.

Strength Through Strategic Divergence

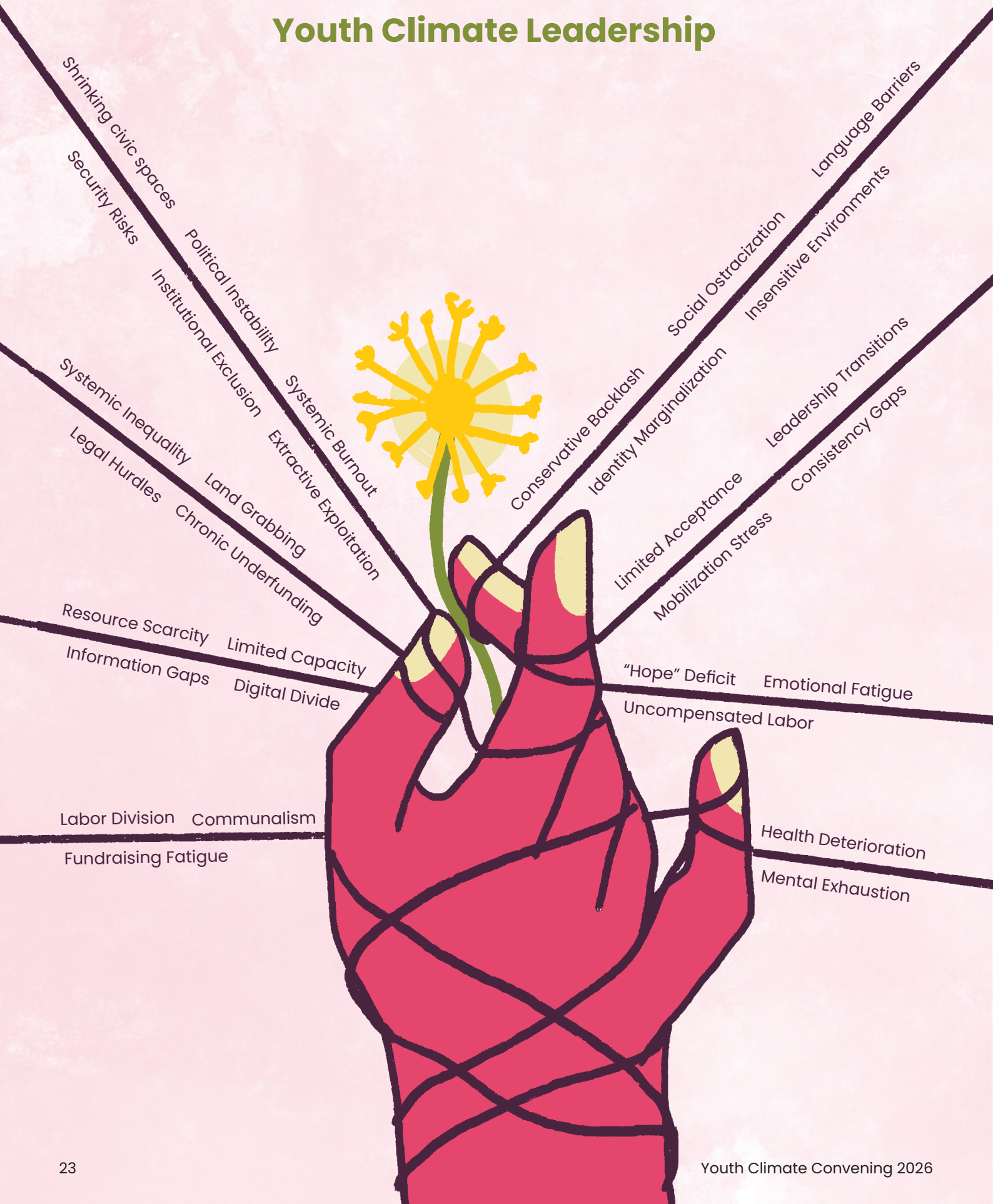
What makes this community unique is how we perceive our differences. We do not view our varying **privileges, languages, or geographies** as barriers, but as a resource for diverse strategies. Our identity is a **multi-sectoral alliance** where:

- The "Legal Lens" of one leader complements the "Strong Field Presence" of another.
- Effortless Empathy meets Methodological Rigour, creating a resilient support system.
- Gender, Religious, and Regional Diversity ensure our space is not a monolith but a representative force capable of reaching every corner of society.

Ultimately, our community identity is a living mosaic. We are a group of 34 distinct stories, skills, and backgrounds, bound together by a shared hope for a better world and a refusal to be silent when the higher forces demand it. We are a community where vulnerability is a strength and where our "fire" is our most effective tool for justice.

Our identity is not found in being identical, but in the deliberate weaving together of our "shared ferocity" and our distinct realities.

Barriers to Youth Climate Leadership



A Well of Our Collective Being

Participants represented diverse work, identities, approaches and regions they have come from. They did not just carry their stories but also the love, struggles and labour of the communities they work with.

A quiet and slow reflective session helped the participants acknowledge and know how the collective perceives itself, as individuals and organisations weaving themselves together. The participants grew a metaphorical garden with seeds (their desires), soil (their needs), water (their strengths) and also outlined the storms (challenges). This garden was placed in the centre as a community well – a symbol of our collective being. Wells across the world are a source of fresh water, keeping communities alive. Wells are also a contested resource – gatekept on the basis of caste, religion and race; often tended to, just by women and girls. Our collective well is guided by the community norms of equality, empathy and kindness and respecting each other's dignity and lives.

Highlighted themes from the mapping exercise

- Acknowledging our strengths affirmed our individual and collective capacity and confidence.
- Articulating our desires revealed our broader vision.
- Naming our challenges invited honesty.
- Expressing our needs required courage.

Strengthening Our Collective

The well of our collective being is strengthened by the unique perspectives, skills, strengths, needs and desires that everyone brings into the space. Each participant carried their share of strengths, needs, desires and challenges into smaller pod-like groups to create a mutual support structure.

Each pod had six people – most of whom had not interacted with each other before. Sharing the challenges, needs, strengths and desires built a sense of vulnerability and trust. An individual mapping was woven into a pod and grew into a network of pods with the intention to cultivate alternative support systems for care, accountability and advocacy.

The pod members shared how they can offer and seek support from one another and outlined a process for doing so. From movie recommendations to legal support, the pod mapping highlighted the importance of acknowledging our humanity and our dynamic lives. It was a solemn reminder that our structures can offer us support for our work, but also enrich our personal lives. By the end of this journey, from inspiration to identity to interdependence, the convening felt more rooted, more relational, and more strategic. It was no longer just a space to share work. It had become a community actively choosing to strengthen one another.

Participants shared that while the support structure felt like a figment of our imagination, it was important to at least set it up in our imagination. The discussions brought the importance of accountability and the implementation of our ideas.

Practicing Imagination

The zine workshop brought day two to a close. After a day spent in our pods, the peas dis-pea-rsed into new groups to find some calm by channeling their imagination and creativity with words and art. The session titled 'Imagination as a Practice' invited all participants to reflect on what safety, security, and care should feel like within community-driven advocacy spaces. The workshop was facilitated by two members of the Legal Empowerment, Advocacy, and Defence (LEAD) team. Through this exercise, we aimed to envision a scaffolding of care without which a holistic legal support system cannot be sustained.

After a quick tutorial on how to fold a zine, the groups of 5-6 participants each found a corner on the green open spaces to reflect. Centring collective care as both a need and a practice, grounded in solidarity and ambitious possibility, the zine making session brought the participants closer. Acknowledging the weight of burnout, harm, and uncertainty many carry, particularly due to the need for legal support across the range of work done by all the participants in the cohort, the session created a quiet, intentional space for expression.

However, no one could have prepared the group for the uninhibited free laughter and joy that working with crayons and paper would bring out. One of the participants shared, “I wasn’t sure where you were going with this when we started, but I cannot remember when I laughed as much as this”. Another said that she felt like a child again. Armed with scissors and glue, the sky was the limit. People played music, used henna cones to show solidarity. The zines portrayed what care means to young people – a paradise, marham (healing), iktara, mitti mandali and others.

Building a Solidarity Wall

The third day started with reflecting on the collective journey undertaken by the participants. The Community Agreements, Similarities and Differences, Strengths, Challenges, Needs, Desires, Pods and Zines were all placed at the centre of the room. It highlighted what the participants have learnt about themselves, each other and the collective. It highlighted how this collective exists – situated in different geographies and socio-political contexts, but has one larger desire for climate and social justice. While circumstances dictate challenges and needs, the commitment brings a large well of strengths to be shared within the safety and love of the community.

The participants then mapped their most important goal for this year with the intent to align and unite our efforts. These goals were collected at a place to further make a roadmap for the year 2026. The reflections and mapping filled the wall with bold ideas. The ideas were then organised into different working groups – youth movement building, resource mobilisation, legal engagement and policy, care infrastructures, research and data, and well-being.

The six working groups then dove into deep conversations to chalk out an actionable plan for the year. The plan was then presented to the larger collective with the intention that each group hold the other accountable. It created a process to extend support and solidarity.

Our Pledges to the Community

One of the key highlights of the convening was the intentional space created for resource sharing, enabling participants to exchange knowledge, tools, and strategies to strengthen the climate justice movement.

Throughout the three days, participants reflected on what resources and support they needed and what they could offer. Through interactive exercises such as pod mapping and "Similarities and Differences," participants identified shared priorities, gaps, and opportunities for collaboration. These sessions encouraged transparency, vulnerability and mutual support among groups.

Within shared interest groups, participants explored how to support one another and make resources more accessible and equitable. Discussions focused on sharing funding opportunities, strengthening platforms like YCC as spaces for collective exchange, and addressing critical needs such as mental well-being, financial security for participants, and safety within movement spaces.

Participants shared their contributions and pledges to our shared mission.

Participants shared how they will hold accountability within the groups.

There was a deep recognition that holding safe spaces, sustaining collaboration, and delivering impactful work requires emotional and institutional strength. The collective's capacity was not discussed only in technical terms, but relationally, how do we hold one another so that our work remains sustainable.

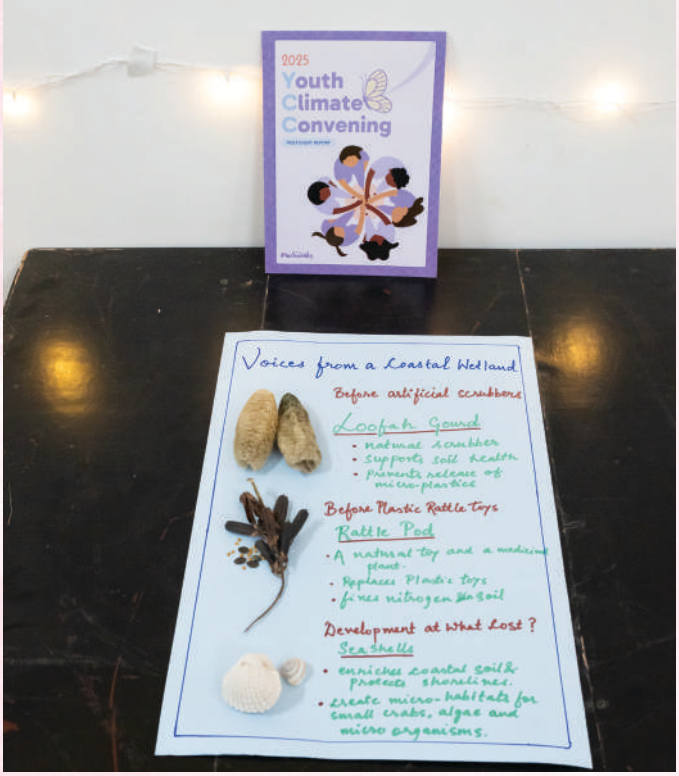
Overall, the resource-sharing and pledging process fostered solidarity, strengthened networks, and laid the foundation for sustained collaboration beyond the convening. From this awareness emerged collective and individual pledges. Participants articulated what they commit to offering the community — time, skills, mentorship, coordination, listening and also what they commit to personally with consistency and courage.

The community pledges felt grounding. They transformed vision into responsibility – to show up for each other in our own myriad ways.

Our Shared Space

The space that witnessed most structured sessions at the convening is called Manthana – it carries the sense of churning oceans of milk to obtain nectar. Amidst the quiet and serenity, the physical space witnessed the churning ocean of knowledge, stories and nuance that each person brings to strengthen the youth-led climate justice work in India. The room was adorned with trinkets, lights and intentional corners by the participants. The room was arranged for comfort, belonging and movement – making space for our high spirits and need for rest.

The room was gently held by four corners, which acted as the pillars of collective remembrance, lived realities, well-being and nourishment. The corners overflowed with love brought by participants.



The first corner – Museum of Lived Climate Realities brought together stories of people and climate injustice. The participants brought objects, parchas (pamphlets), zines, workbooks, reports, stickers, dried loofahs, nuts, handmade artefacts, books and poems. The museum was a culmination of everyday stories, struggles and fights of people to protect rivers, forests, land, and care for people's well-being and human rights.

The Remembrance Corner was curated to honour our loved ones who are no longer with us and to have them witness what we are creating. In 2024, the convening held space for friends to remember Chandra through a memorial. A takeaway from that for us was that we need to be able to have space for grief. In the Last Convening, we had a sanctuary of grief where we set up a space where people can remember people they have lost. In this world, we are all witnesses to loss and pain. With genocides, hatred and intolerance everywhere, it becomes a heavy stone we carry on our chests. It was a solemn reminder to hold onto each other a little longer in our collective grief and offer more grace.

The convening space is equally for rest as it is for work. The 'Fursat Corner' was a designated space for participants to share what brings them a sense of rest and leisure. Reading materials, crochet, arts and crafts and more were present at the convening for people to indulge in and reclaim some time for themselves. Well-being – mental and physical became an important part of discussions for the participants. Juggling social justice work along with other necessary things, such as financial sustainability, caregiving, education, etc., leads to less or no time for regeneration. Burnout amongst young leaders has become a norm.

The curation of the last corner was most awaited by the participants. The Nourishment corner had local snacks brought by the participants. This corner ensured that during sessions, participants could nourish themselves, listen to their bodies and enjoy the snacks brought by friends.

Community Baithaks

In a world where we are always on our guard, the convening delved into stillness, reflection, laughter, sharing and the joys of friendships outside of the structured sessions. Community Baithaks – a place for people to share what they're carrying in their hearts, to laugh endlessly, to cry and hold each other, to discuss the matters of money, to play board games and infamous UNO No Mercy.

The first game baithak started with catching up on the rules of UNO. Soon enough, the game had a disruptor – someone who enjoyed the game but only when they were winning. It led to loud laughter across the room. The other group played Shasn – a political strategy board game designed for an election campaign in India in 2019-20. It was a fun and fascinating framework to process a long day of conversations with environmental leaders from across India, by stepping into power. The laughter from across the UNO No Mercy table could not distract them from making witty quips to earn trust, capital, media attention, and clout to influence voters. Reportedly, they bent many rules and formed coalitions to disrupt majorities amidst much laughter.

The second night saw the emergence of a Mahila Mandali – a baithak for women, gender-diverse friends and allies. This space was solemn and filled with love. The Mandali shared about the love that is brought into their lives because of queer and women friends. Amidst this, they shared the challenges that participants have faced because of their gender identity and expression – not only in general but also in progressive spaces. The Mandali held space for each other's lived realities, fears and hopes. The night ended with tears, laughter and a warm hug.

Simultaneously, an intimate baithak kickstarted a fundraising conversation, emphasising that time management, relationship-building and alignment must precede any financial request. Recognising money as a sensitive topic in India, participants were given private space to workshop specific goals and reflect on past attempts. The session covered tactical strategies such as pipeline building and utilising LinkedIn, while acknowledging a shared struggle: the clear need for dedicated fundraising support so young leaders can focus on creating impact rather than just resource mobilisation.

The participants began each morning with birdwatching. Waking up to the sound of chirping birds created a grounding and reflective start to the day. They spotted species such as robins, many small birds like tailorbirds, greyhornbills, barbets, and sunbirds. These encounters with urban biodiversity reminded us that even within convening spaces, nature continues to thrive and offer moments of connection.

There were Red-whiskered Bulbul, White-cheeked Barbet, Indian Grey Hornbill, Purple Sunbird, Oriental Magpie Robin, Rose-ringed Parakeet, Black Drongo, Common Myna, Asian Koel, Coppersmith Barbet and many more.

Solidarity Night: Celebrating Culture, Roots, and Joy

Solidarity Night was not a performance showcase; it was a shared remembering. It was a night where culture was not presented, but lived; where joy moved freely, and where roots spoke to one another across land, forests, mountains, and memories.

The evening was gently held and anchored by an opening song from the **Khadia tribe**, carrying a simple yet profound question: Where else do we find moments like these, gathered with our brothers, sisters, and companions, in joy and togetherness? The song set the tone for the night, one rooted in belonging, gratitude, and collective warmth.

What followed unfolded organically as voices, movements, poems, and dances wove into each other. A powerful collective action song filled the room with warmth and nostalgia, reminding all present of something often forgotten in adult lives: that resistance can be joyful, and that we are allowed to return to our inner child. Poetry became a bridge to memory and land, bringing forward the essence of roots, history, culture, and lineage to ground the space deeply. Other verses carried the warmth and quiet strength of the Himalayas, offering a sense of calm, belonging, and ancestral presence.

Music moved between love and resistance through duets that held both tenderness and strength, eventually shifting into celebration as dance invited joy into the room. A collective cultural dance followed, bringing movements inspired by lands, forests, and communities, a shared rhythm of earth, memory, and pride. The floor then opened into collective joy, reimagining and experiencing the warmth of **Bailadila** together. The spirit of **Assam** rippled through the room as bodies moved in unison to the rhythms of the **Bihu dance.**

The night continued to unfold through voices sharing journeys and reflections that carried the essence of roots and lived experience. Another song was offered, this time from the **Munda tribe**, followed by a powerful cultural dance from the **Santhal tribe**. Laughter and celebration took over as the room danced to Punjabi beats, swayed to the rhythms of **Boomro from Jammu and Kashmir,** and soaked in melodious songs, an essence of experiencing culture and love with fellow brothers, sisters, and companions. Reflective and honest poetry brought the room back into stillness, serving as a felt invitation to always reach out to friends.

The night closed not with an ending, but with togetherness, a collective song of love sung by everyone, reminding the gathering why we meet, why solidarity matters, and why culture is not something we perform, but something we live. Solidarity Night became a space where roots were honored, joy was reclaimed, and community was felt deeply, gently, and truthfully.

Reflections and Feedback

The convening concluded with a session that offered space for participants to reflect on their experiences, share feedback, and offer testimonials on the journey they've undertaken together. It also served as a moment to express gratitude, acknowledge the connections made throughout the event and say goodbye.

The convening was widely experienced as a safe, warm, and intentional space rooted in trust, equality, and collective care. Participants appreciated the non-hierarchical facilitation style, participatory community guidelines, strong hosting, and the diversity of voices across regions. While the first day felt heavy with multiple presentations, the smaller group formats on subsequent days fostered deeper connection, comfort, and meaningful engagement.

Many described that they felt heard, valued, inspired, and politically strengthened. At the same time, participants offered thoughtful suggestions around deepening political organising in our conversations, enhancing safety and risk protocols, improving representation (especially from the North-East), allowing more discussion time, diversifying facilitation methods, and strengthening privacy practices around documentation.

Key Reflections

- **Safety and Trust:** Strong sense of emotional safety and collective care.
- **Equality in Structure:** Non-hierarchical, participatory facilitation was deeply valued.
- **Community Guidelines:** Appreciated as a dynamic practice which was revisited and collectively shaped.
- **Day 1 Heaviness:** Too many presentations; needed more discussion space.
- **Value of Small Groups:** Discussions in breakout rooms enabled deeper connection and comfort.
- **Political Depth:** Desire for stronger conversations on power, organising, and structural change.
- **Representation:** Need for deeper regional inclusion, especially from the North-East. It was noted that people from similar spaces and networks get access to spaces like the Convening. There is a strong need to deepen connections and roots.
- **Belonging & Inspiration:** Many participants felt restored in hope, humanity, and resilience.

> "Initially hesitant due to language barriers, I soon felt truly heard and supported. The team's presence—staying together long after sessions ended rather than dispersing, was deeply comforting. This shared commitment created a welcoming sense of community and belonging I hadn't experienced before."

Our Way Forward

The four-day Youth Climate Convening (YCC) 2026 was more than a meeting; it was an emergence of ideas, a celebration of "shared values," and a radical reclaiming of hope. As 34 young leaders return to their respective homes, from the Himalayas to the coasts, they carry with them a collective heartbeat.

Our path ahead is defined by the transition from imagination to implementation. We move forward with a commitment to ensure that no climate leader in India has to work in isolation, and that our "collective well" remains a source of sustenance for the long haul.

1. Activating the Working Groups

The Solidarity Wall transformed our shared dreams into 6 distinct engines of action. For the remainder of 2026, these working groups will serve as the primary infrastructure for our collaboration:

- **Youth Movement Building:** Fostering regional chapters and ensuring intergenerational mentorship.
- **Resource Mobilisation:** Mapping equitable funding and sharing internal resources to combat financial insecurity.
- **Legal Engagement & Policy:** Providing a "scaffolding of care" and defence for leaders navigating shrinking civic spaces.
- **Care Infrastructures & Well-being:** Operationalising the "Fursat" philosophy, tackling burnout through systemic support rather than just individual resilience.
- **Research & Data:** Building a community-led evidence base for our lived climate realities, strengthening advocacy through research.
- **Creative Expression:** Using art, zines, and storytelling to build a narrative that is youth and justice-centric, authentic, and powerful.

2. Sustaining the Pods

The "Peas in a Pod" are no longer just an exercise; they are our first line of defence and support. These smaller circles of six will continue to check in on one another, offering everything from legal advice to movie recommendations. We recognise that for our advocacy to be sustainable, our friendships must be robust.

3. From Pledges to Practice

The individual and collective pledges made on Day Three are our North Star. We move forward holding each other accountable, not through rigid bureaucracy, but through gentleness and understanding. "When you are out of hope, we will step up. We will extend our hands and hearts. We will be a call away!"

4. Expanding our Home

YCC 2026 proved that home is a space we carry with us. We aim to:

- **Refine our plans:** Look at our plans and strategies, assess our capacities to implement plans, and plan to organise local convenings to decentralise the YCC model.
- **Digital Solidarity:** Keeping the Nourishment Corner alive through digital resource sharing and regular virtual Baithaks and meet-ups.

As we disperse, we remember the echoes of the Gaon Chodab Nahi and the laughter of the zine workshop. Our Way forward is rooted in the belief that one win is a collective win, and that in the face of the climate crisis, our greatest resource is, and always will be, each other.

Dear Readers, An Invitation To You

The fight for climate and social justice is a long haul. All of us are needed and welcomed in this fight – no matter who we are. Our systems have been designed to fail us, to encourage in-fighting, to project scarcity, to keep us divided and hopeless.

We invite you to be whimsy, angry, sad and joyful with us. We invite you to walk with us to make this long haul less lonely and more powerful. While our systems fail us, we can build alternative mechanisms which serve the interests of our communities. While climate doom is the mainstream narrative, we can practice hope with each other. We invite you to be a part of this collective – contribute and use common resources and infrastructure, cheer on others, extend solidarity and work in ways which share power.

- **Educate, Agitate, Organise**
- **Map Your Community and their needs**
- **Build a Safe Space for young people**
- **Build Mutual Aid and Care Structures**
- **Translate and Breakdown jargon**
- **Build parallel governance systems**
- **Simplify Legal Filing**
- **Fund Safe Digital Infrastructure**
- **Support Participatory Research**
- **Fund Youth-led Climate Action**
- **Support Eachother**
- **Cultivate Friendships**
- **Fund people centric climate technology**
- **Advocate for Inclusive Care**
- **Commit to Following Through**
- **Hold the Collective Accountable**
- **Audit Local Systems**

YCC Recapped

Safe Space for Young People

New merch alert!

This cutie was an honorary participant of this year's convening.

Support Each Other

"एक अकेला थक जाए तो,
मिलकर बोझ उठाना"

Climbing trees was a full-time job for some participants.

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