



The flip side of Paper



"This year Goonj turns 16.. In all these years we have never bought a single sheet of paper...!! Between April 2013 and March 2014 alone some 3,46,500 one side used sheets were used for our IEC material, survey forms, annual reports, leaflets, letterheads, all printing work, notepads etc. across 10 Goonj offices pan India. We can't even begin to calculate the money we have saved on this small expense over the years..." Read the full story here..

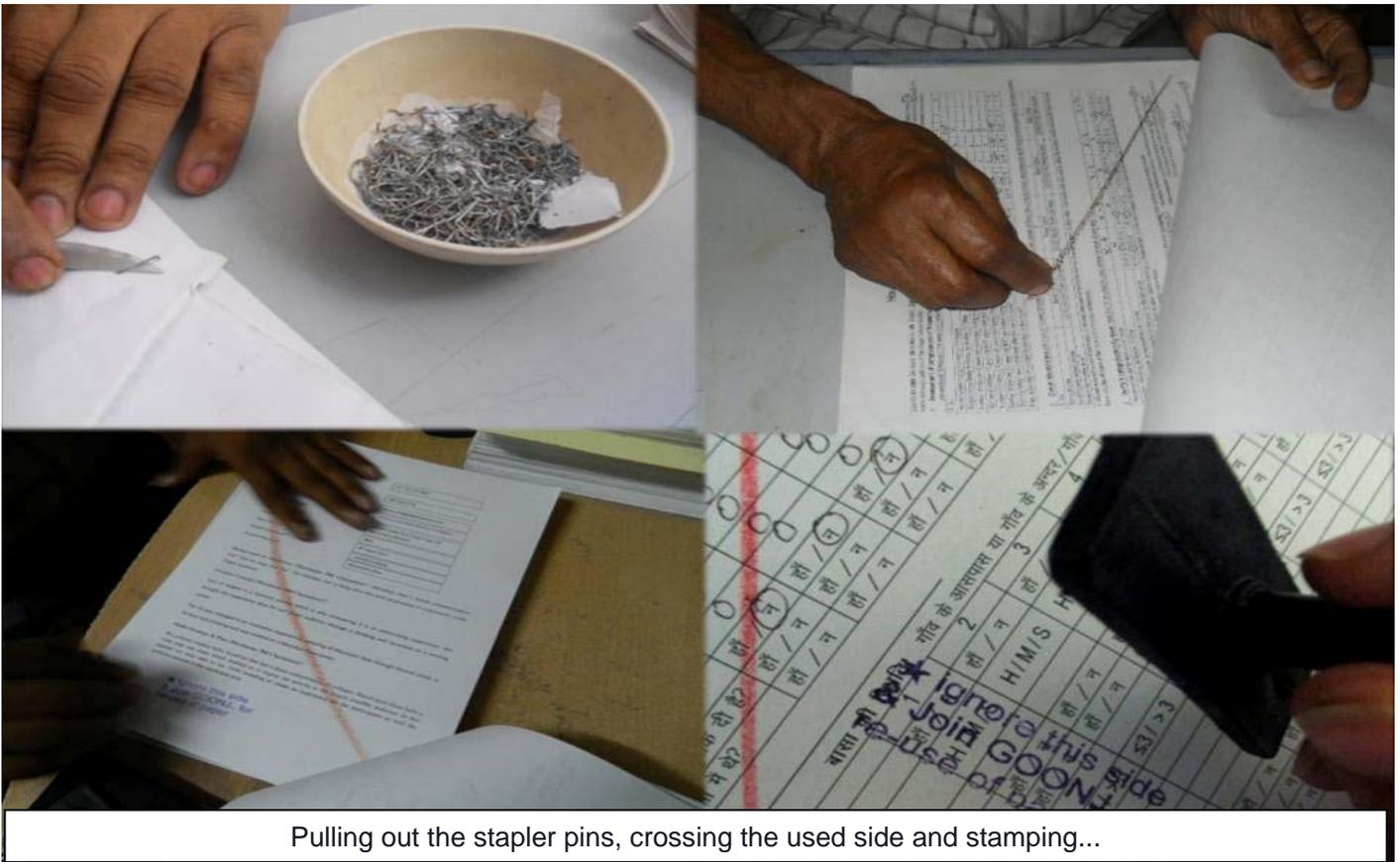
Here's a story of paper.. not the crisp A4 sheet we all casually pick up to write on or to take a print out.. but the one side used sheet, at the end of its life..

You may be wondering if this is going to be another good for environment, saves our trees kind of slogan shouting coming your way.. Not really...this story will make you think again about the smallest things around you.. But with a lot more attention..

It's true that this humble one side used paper has left an indelible mark on us.. so much so that it's a part and parcel of our values.. Here's how.

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For a moment let's go a little deeper here.. for many people who have been to our Delhi processing center, the last stop is the paper unit, where they are pointed towards an innocuous looking bowl of pulled out stapler pins, taken out of thousands of sheets of one side used paper we get from corporates, schools, colleges and individuals from all walks of life. These we sell once every month @ Rs 25 per kg.. This has been going on for many years now.. To us it's a metaphor of what we do...



Pulling out the stapler pins, crossing the used side and stamping...

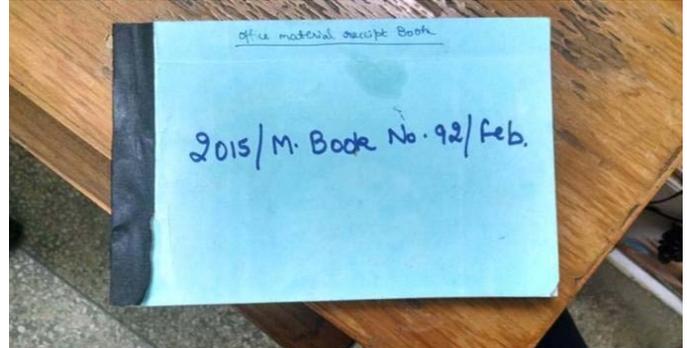
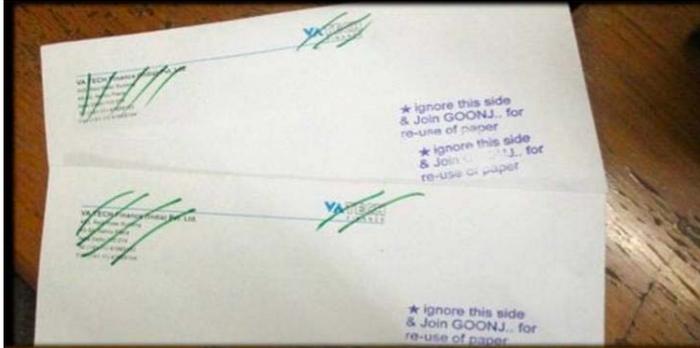
If you think that's one interesting tit bit, think thousands of old wedding cards, used envelopes, file covers.. Turn around a Goonj visiting card and you are looking at a part of a used wedding card/file cover maybe. Ever received a mail from Goonj? If you do, it will be on a used envelope which has already seen one round of the world.. 'Please use the other side', stamped across, the only reminder of its earlier journey.

Using one side used paper does have its share of interesting anecdotes. Many people are puzzled at receiving our monetary/material receipts printed on one side used paper. Given for contributions ranging from Rs ten to ten lakh or from one cloth to one truck material, these receipts conveys that all contributions are equally important to us and that we are trying to make each piece of paper count.. Still some people don't get it... A gentleman once lashed out at us- "aap to dhang ka certificate bhee nahi dey saktey..vo bhee kharab paper per diya hai..(You can't even give a proper certificate, that's also given on some trashy paper)". A reminder perhaps that there's still a lot of work to be done on this basic..

Like most other things we get, the one side used paper also gets rigorous attention.. It goes through a four step process; First, the staple pins are removed .Second; the paper is sorted as per its condition. Third, the used side is

struck off with a crayon and lastly the struck off side is stamped with a message which says "please ignore this side.. and join Goonj for the reuse of paper".

You could say this passion for one side used paper is a fad but when we started back in 1999, there was no one watching, no one talking about it. Today after years of highlighting this simple yet powerful message.. we see many organizations, who earlier gave us their paper, internalizing the campaign by using one side paper in their own day to day work. We take that as a backhanded compliment..



A Goonj visiting card made from old wedding cards, old envelopes ready to use again and stamping...

Goonj's material receipt bookstamping...

This work is made possible by the consistent support of the many entities who keep us going.. Here's acknowledgment of the numerous government, public, private sector and Non-governmental organisations who have been our regular contributors. Not to forget the countless individuals who have neat stacks ready for Goonj ever so often...



When our conference pads and file folders (made out of one side used paper and file covers) are appreciated at conferences, seminars and workshops, that's one applaud we cherish dearly..

In all these years we haven't spoken about the work we do around paper.. But we would falter again if we didn't mention the two awesome guys who have run our paper unit for more than a decade now... Next time you come to Goonj Delhi.. Don't forget to say hi to them.. They respond with the widest smiles we know of.. To us that's awesome multiplied by infinity..

"Goes without saying that Goonj needs the regular supply of this paper from individuals to organizations.."