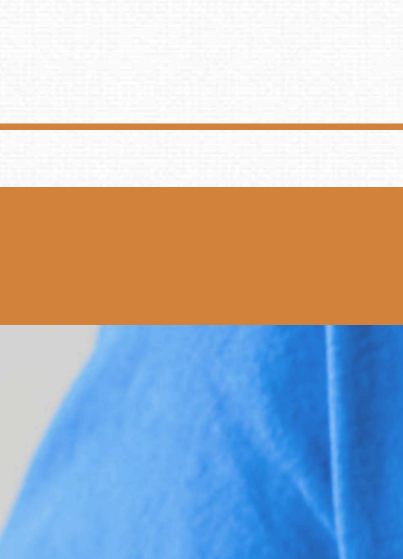


MESSAGE FROM THE FOUNDER



Founder
Anshu Gupta

Over the years, one thing has become very clear to me — doing good is a collective effort. In urban India, across many cities, we partner with people and organisations from all walks of life to nurture and grow a culture of mindful and sustainable living and giving. Volunteers are crucial stakeholders in building a bridge of strength, sustenance, and dignity between urban and rural communities.

I congratulate the team for this wonderful initiative of sharing the stories behind the scenes. May it inspire many more to step forward and take ownership of collective development.

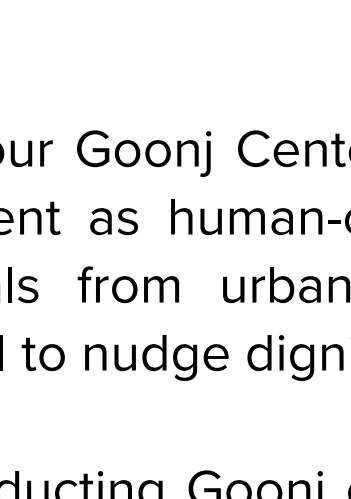
Lage Raho..
Anshu Gupta

NEWSLETTER CONTRIBUTORS

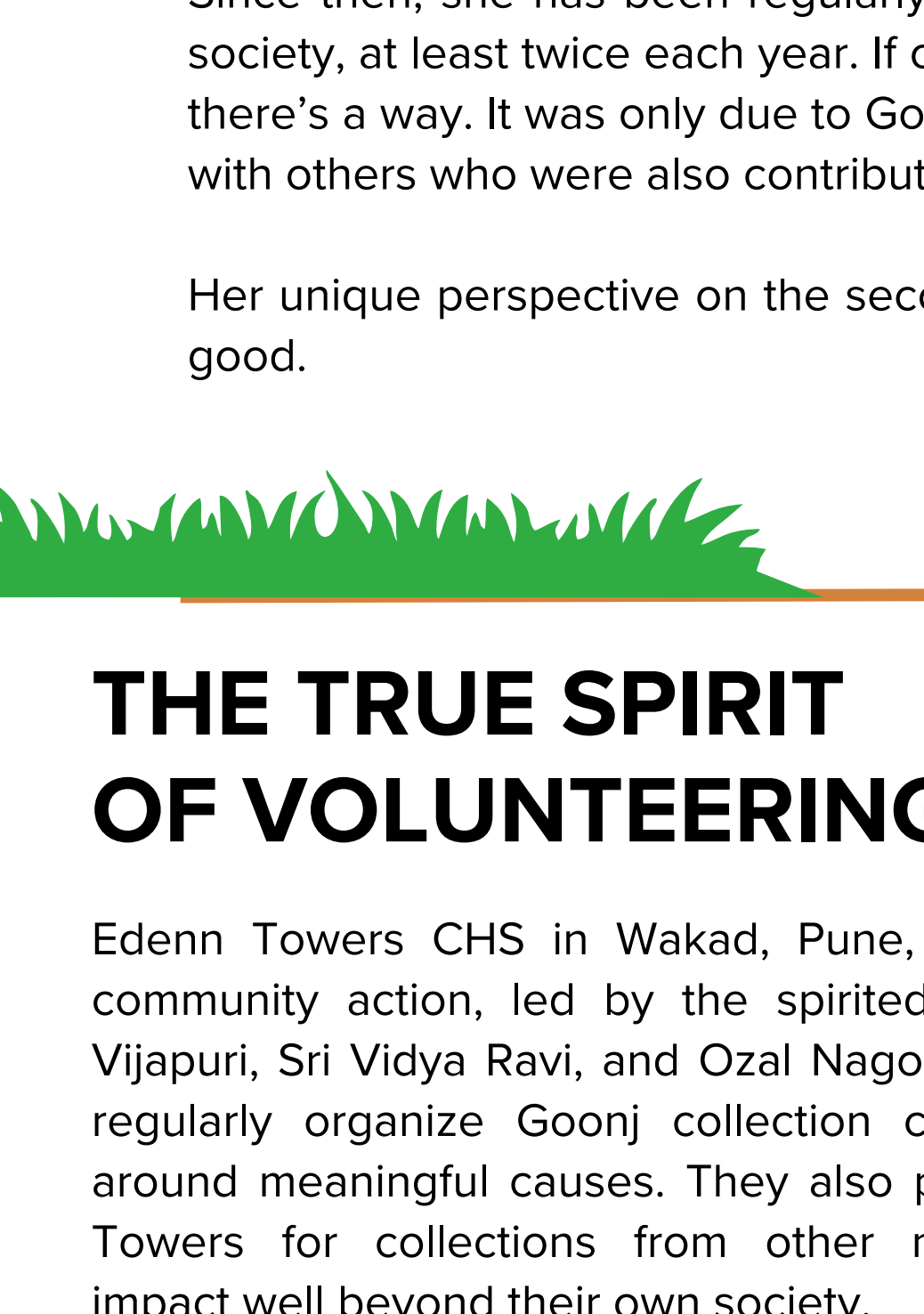
Editorial - Nikhat Tyagi, Jagriti Yadav, Sunil Anand

VOLUNTEER

Designers - Aman Chauhan and Devika Mehta



SECOND INNINGS



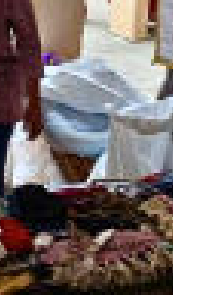
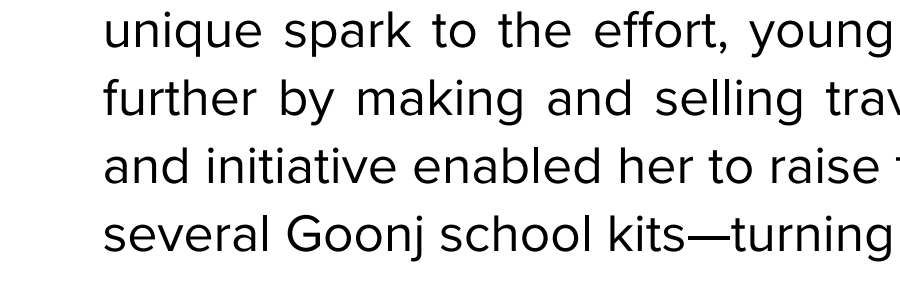
One of our 70-year-old volunteers, Mrs. Gouri Chatterjee—a veteran scientist who spent many years researching breast cancer in the US —lost her husband in 2015, and later her mother. This had a significant impact on her outlook on life. She no longer wanted to focus solely on her research job. She wanted to engage in a cause that would bring about positive change in society. When she came from the US to visit her family in Kolkata, she was looking for such an opportunity. In 2018, she started collaborating with a blind school in Kolkata.

During this time, she searched for NGOs to engage with. After reading about Goonj and its mission, she decided to visit the Goonj Center of Circularity in Kolkata to understand our work better.

Gouri ji shares that her experience at our Goonj Center of Circularity enabled her to understand how important it is to reimagine development as human-centric and centred on dignity through circular solutions—where underutilised materials from urban areas are channelised to communities with restricted means, using material as a tool to nudge dignified rural development.

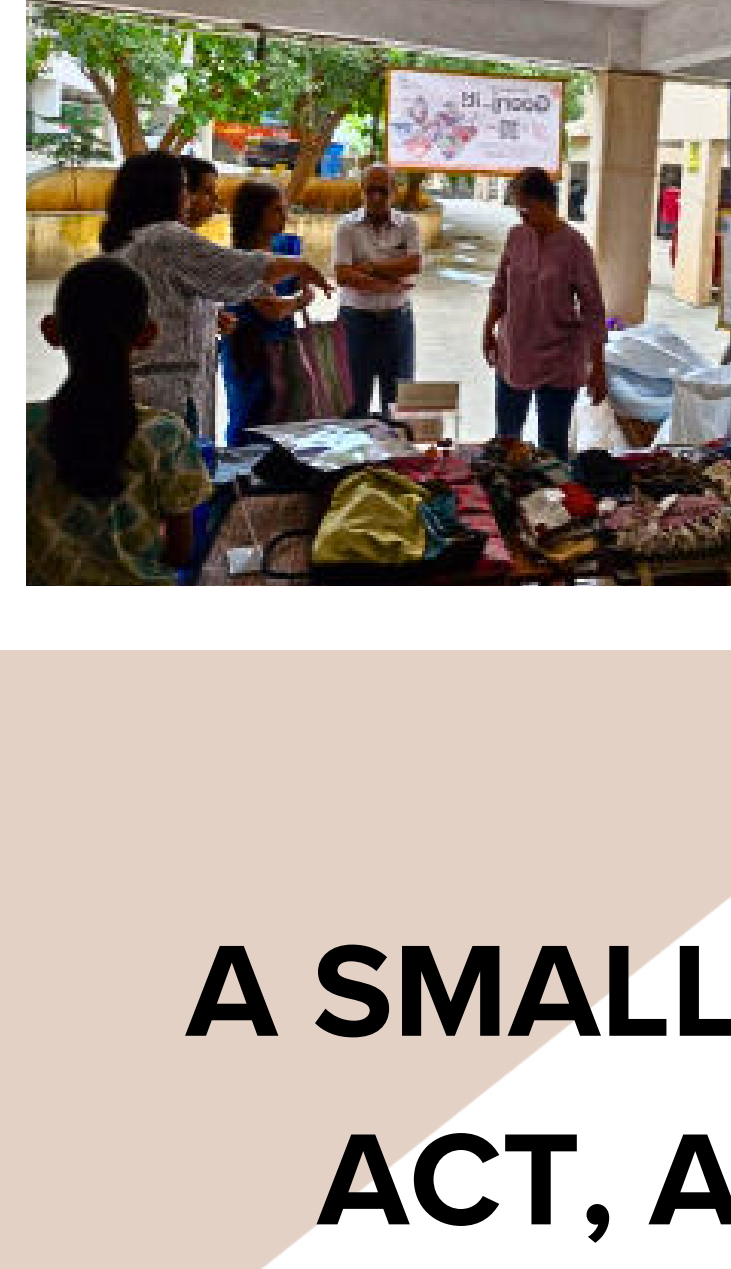
Since then, she has been regularly conducting Goonj collection cum awareness building camps in her society, at least twice each year. If one reflects on this journey, it becomes clear that where there's a will, there's a way. It was only due to Gouri ji's strong resolve to work for society that she was able to connect with others who were also contributing to making the world a better place.

Her unique perspective on the second innings of life inspires many others to take action for community good.



THE TRUE SPIRIT OF VOLUNTEERING!

Edenn Towers CHS in Wakad, Pune, has become a vibrant hub of community action, led by the spirited efforts of volunteers Manisha Vijapur, Sri Vidya Ravi, and Ozal Nagose. These committed individuals regularly organize Goonj collection camps, driving their community around meaningful causes. They also provide storage space at Edenn Towers for collections from other neighborhoods—extending their impact well beyond their own society.

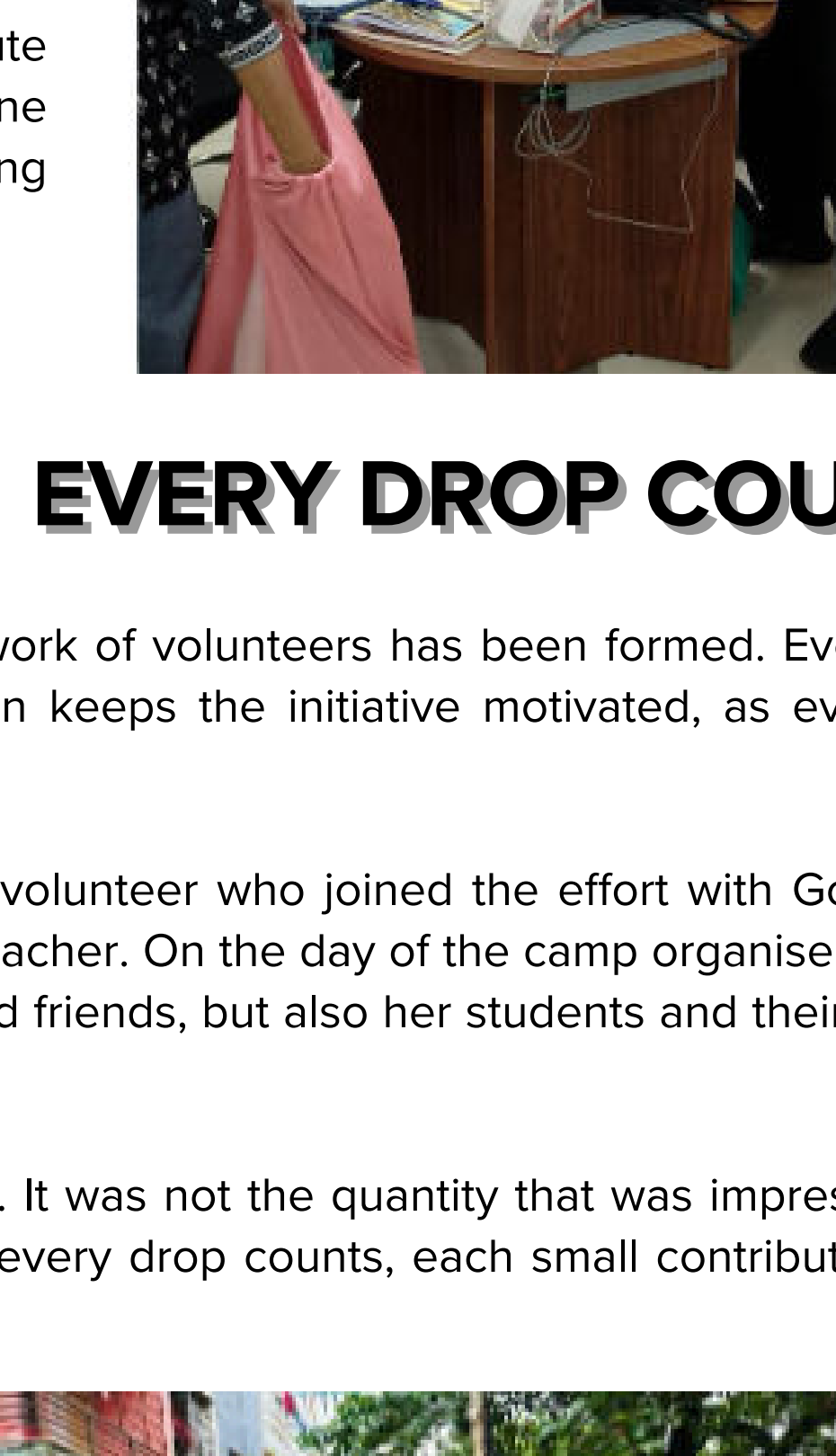
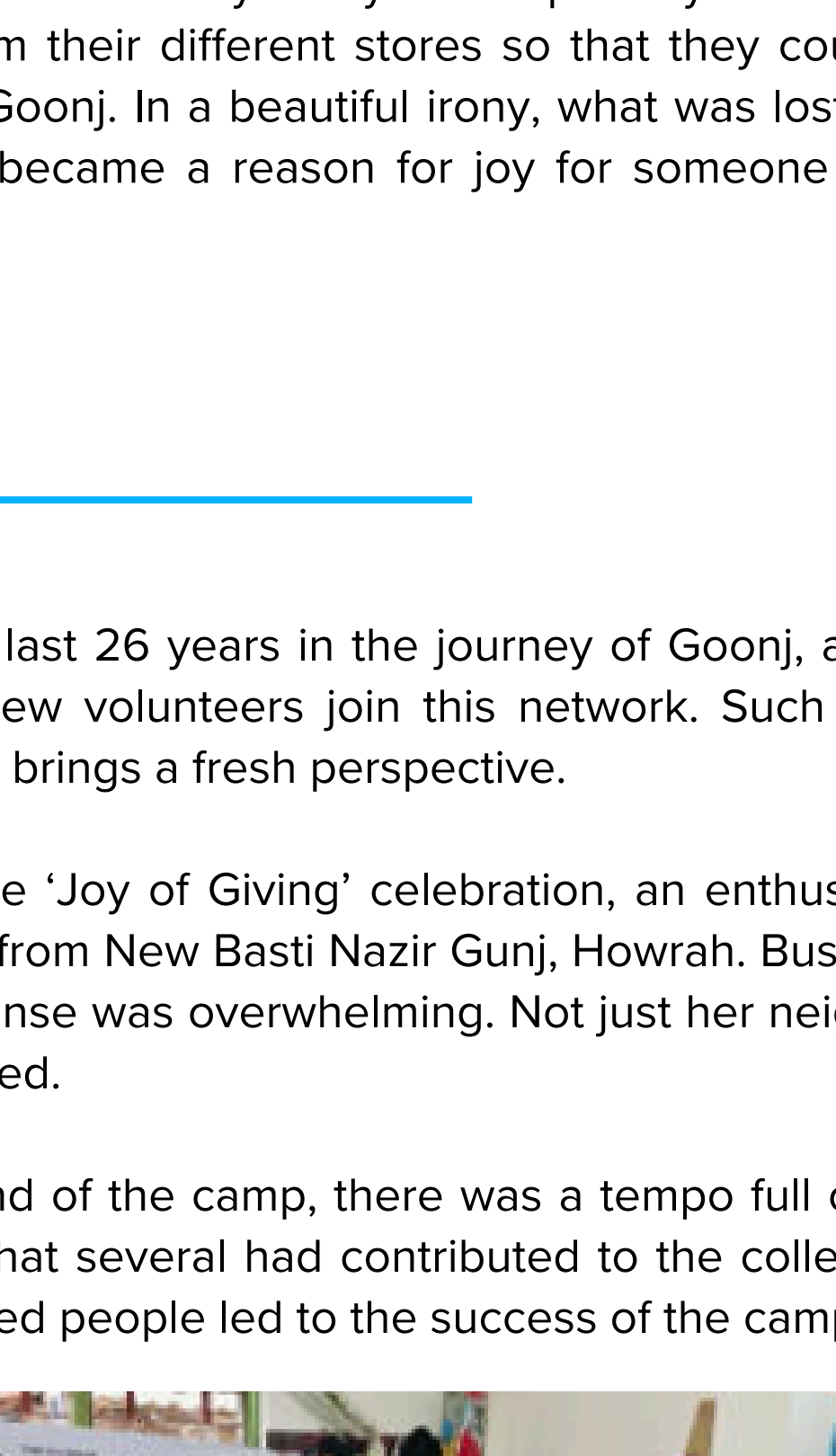
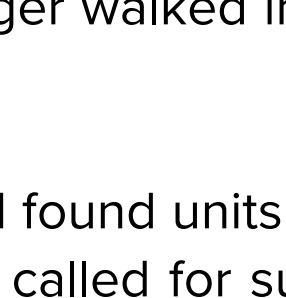


Driven by the idea of making small, thoughtful contributions, the volunteers encouraged residents to contribute the equivalent of two meters of cotton cloth each. Over 50 women responded with heartwarming generosity, coming together to contribute a total of 125 meters of cloth for Goonj's Not Just A Piece Of Cloth (NJPC) advocating for menstruation as a human issue, not just a women's issue. Adding a unique spark to the effort, young volunteer Ozal Nagose took it a step further by making and selling travel-friendly soap tablets. Her creativity and initiative enabled her to raise funds to channelise school supplies for several Goonj school kits—turning a simple idea into meaningful change.



A SMALL ACT, A BIG HEART

A public collection camp was held at Saraswati Vihar in Delhi, organized by long-time volunteer Anita Gupta. During the camp, Anita ji went above and beyond to help an elderly gentleman who was short on funds to purchase a Green By Goonj (GBG) bag. Green by Goonj is a product label, under which women use their basic sewing skills and creativity to create a wide range of exclusive lifestyle products, promoting sustainable consumption and living. Without hesitation, she covered the remaining amount, embodying the spirit of Goonj and the true essence of the 'Joy of Giving'. She also offered to pay for the transport expenses herself, further extending her warmth and generosity. Volunteers like Anita ji remind us of the quiet, powerful ways kindness can change moments—and lives.

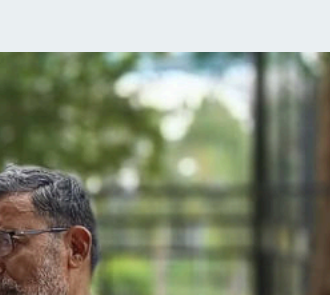
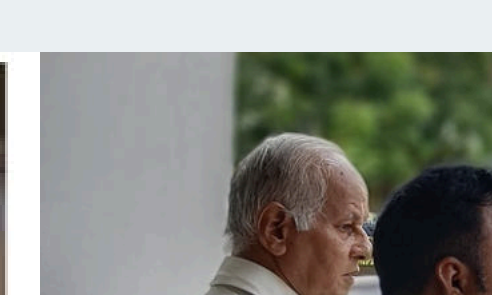


THE CYCLE OF JOY

"Sharing is caring" — We were taught this by our parents and teachers as kids. But we all remember how difficult it was to share something dear to us—be it our toys, clothes, or books.

At a collection camp during the 'Joy of Giving' celebration in October 2024 at Natural City, Kolkata, a young boy faced this very challenge when asked to part with his beloved bicycle. What happened next was truly heartwarming. The boy, around 6 years old, visited the nearby Goonj collection camp with his parents, riding a bicycle he had clearly outgrown. While his mother completed the registration process after depositing her contributions, he waited patiently beside her on his bicycle. Then she turned to him and gently asked, "Should we give them your cycle as well? It's too small for you now anyway." The boy was taken aback. His mother reasoned that he was now a big boy and should have a bicycle more suited to his age. Still, he wasn't convinced. Not giving up, she tried another approach—explaining that if he gave up his cycle, another child like him would be happy. The boy fell silent, thinking for a minute. Then, he smiled and asked, "Can I ride my cycle one last time before giving it away?" His mother was overjoyed. He rode the bicycle for the next half hour before happily handing it over to the Goonj volunteers.

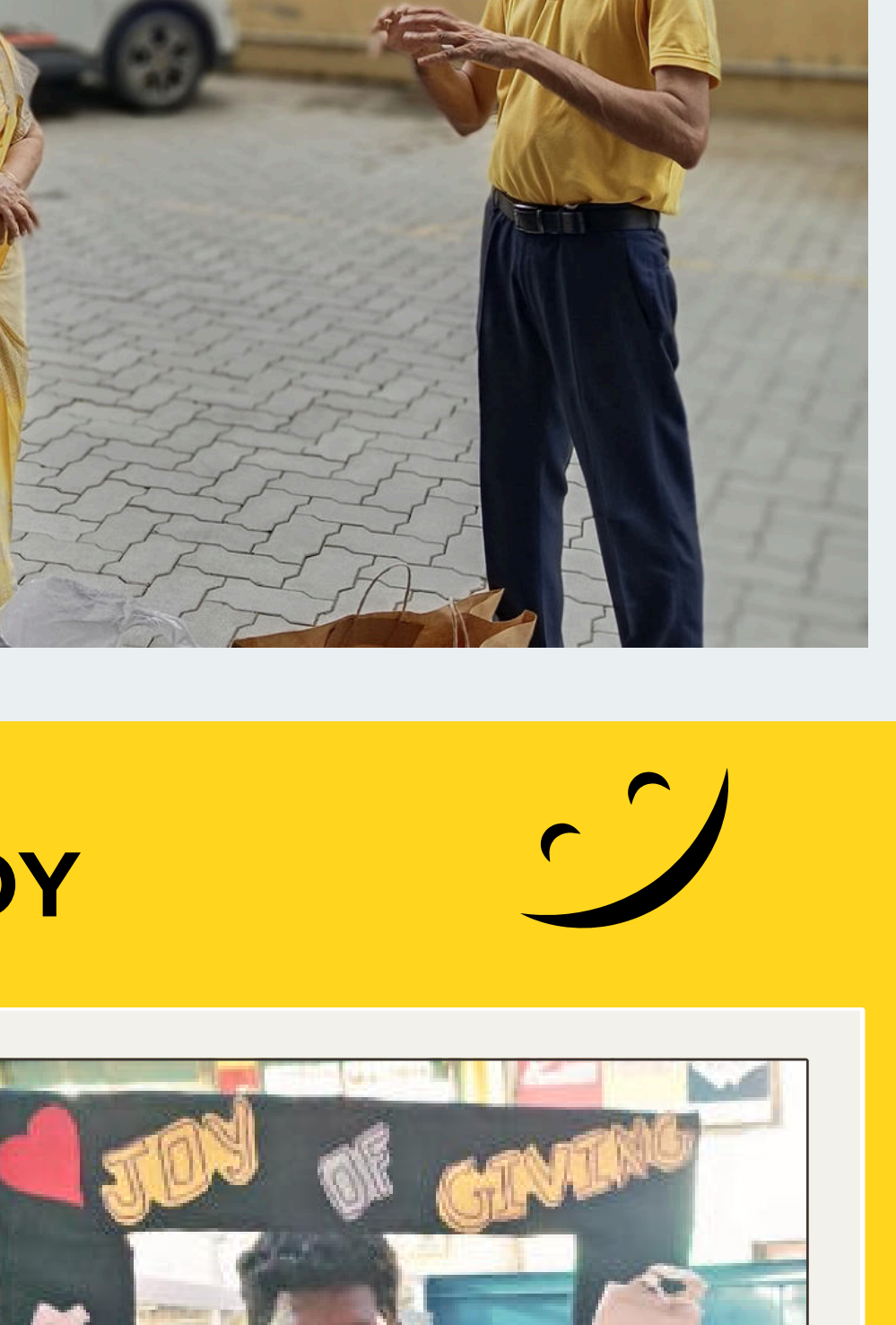
His mother set a beautiful example of teaching a child the true meaning of sharing. She could have simply promised him a new bicycle, but instead, she patiently helped him understand the deeper value of mindful giving.



LOST & FOUND

When the collection camp organised at the Max Fashion, Srijan Corporate Park office in Salt Lake City, Kolkata, was about to end, something very unexpected happened, which made it a little different from other camps. The manager walked in with a box filled with material to contribute.

The items in the box were from the lost and found units at their stores across the city. They had especially called for such lost items from their different stores so that they could contribute them to Goonj. In a beautiful irony, what was lost by someone in a city became a reason for joy for someone in a far-flung village!

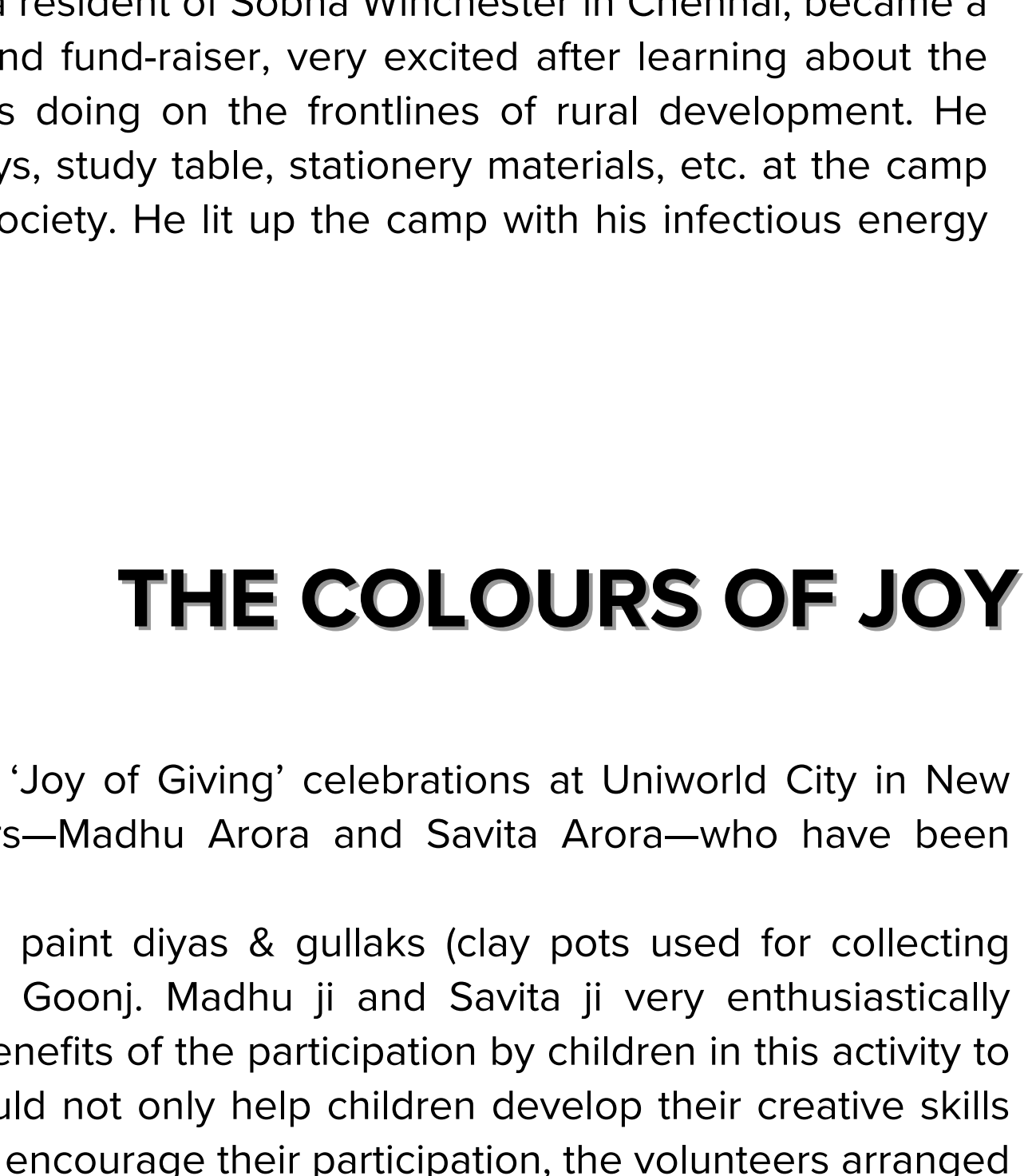
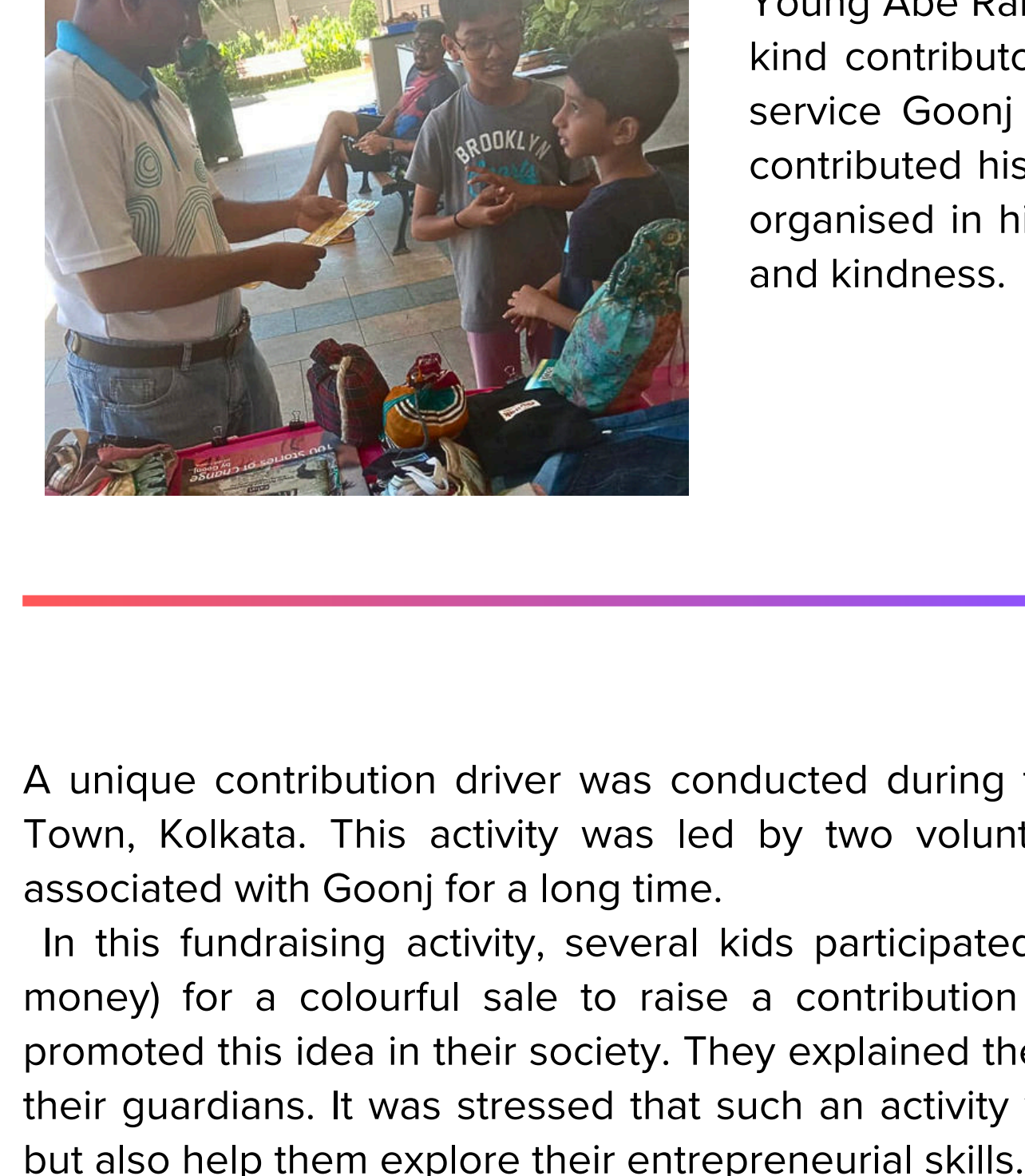


EVERY DROP COUNTS

Over the last 26 years in the journey of Goonj, a large network of volunteers has been formed. Every year, several new volunteers join this network. Such participation keeps the initiative motivated, as every new volunteer brings a fresh perspective.

During the 'Joy of Giving' celebration, an enthusiastic new volunteer who joined the effort with Goonj was Bushra ji from New Basti Nazir Gunj, Howrah. Bushra ji is a teacher. On the day of the camp organised by her, the response was overwhelming. Not just her neighbours and friends, but also her students and their families participated.

By the end of the camp, there was a tempo full of materials. It was not the quantity that was impressive but the fact that several had contributed to the collection. Like every drop counts, each small contribution from like-minded people led to the success of the camp.

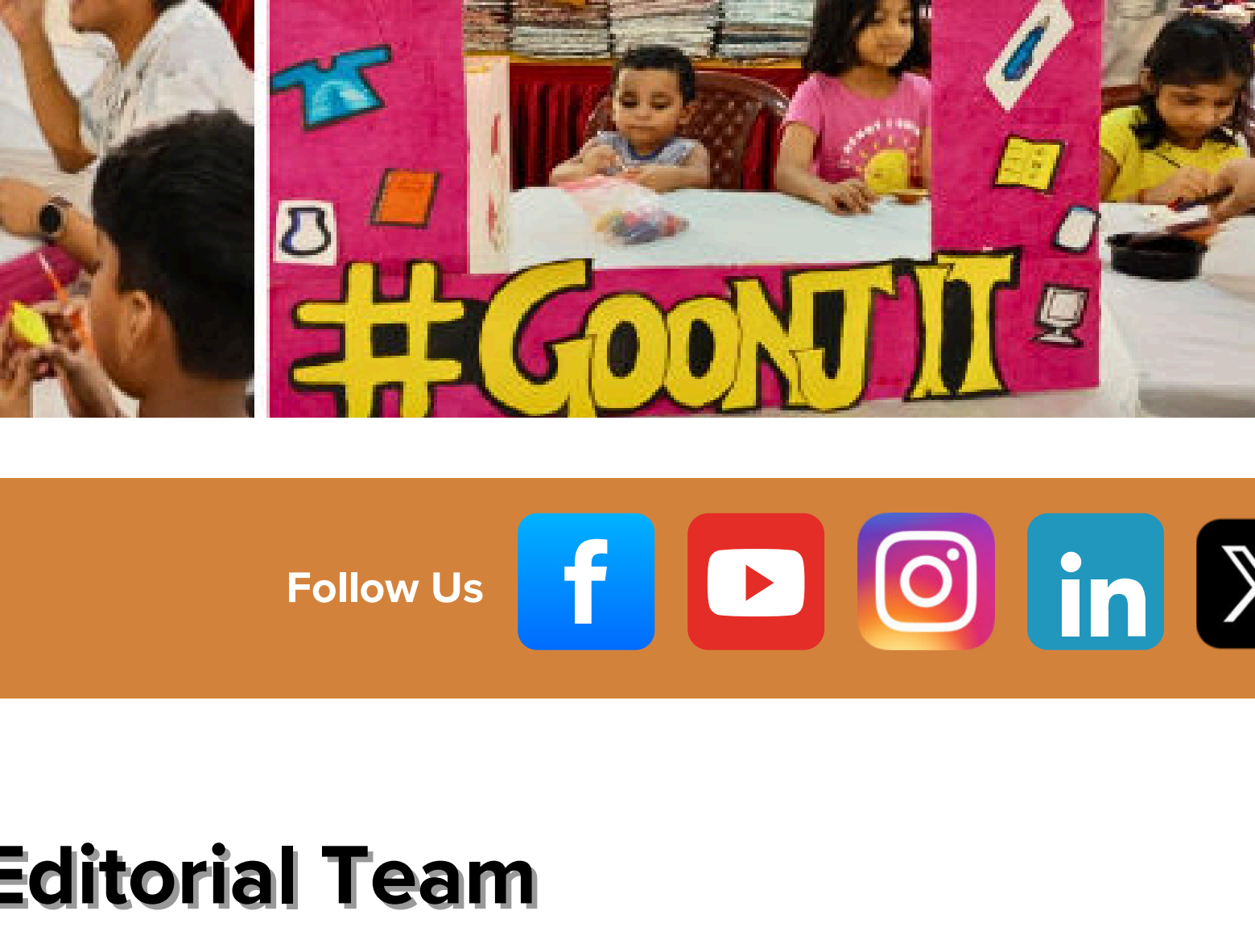
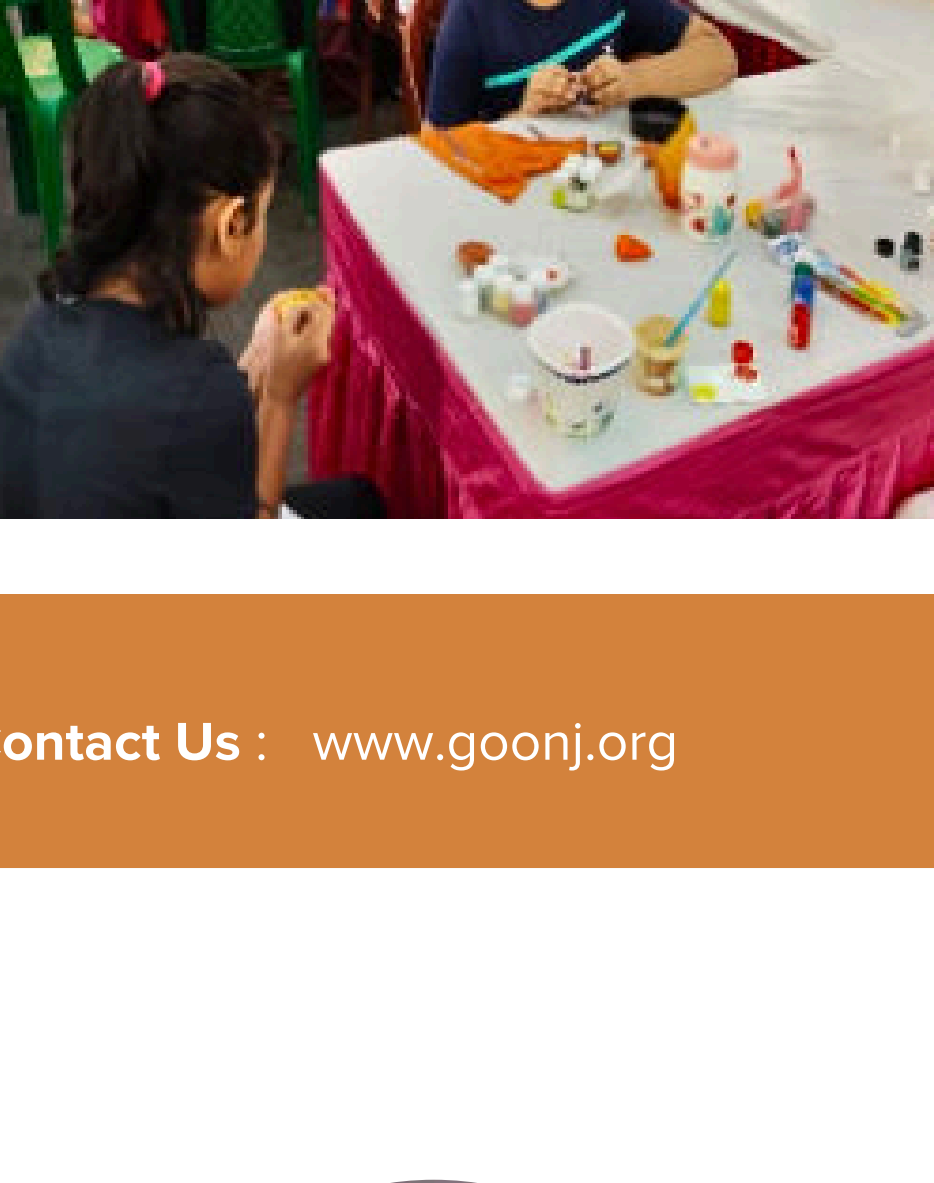
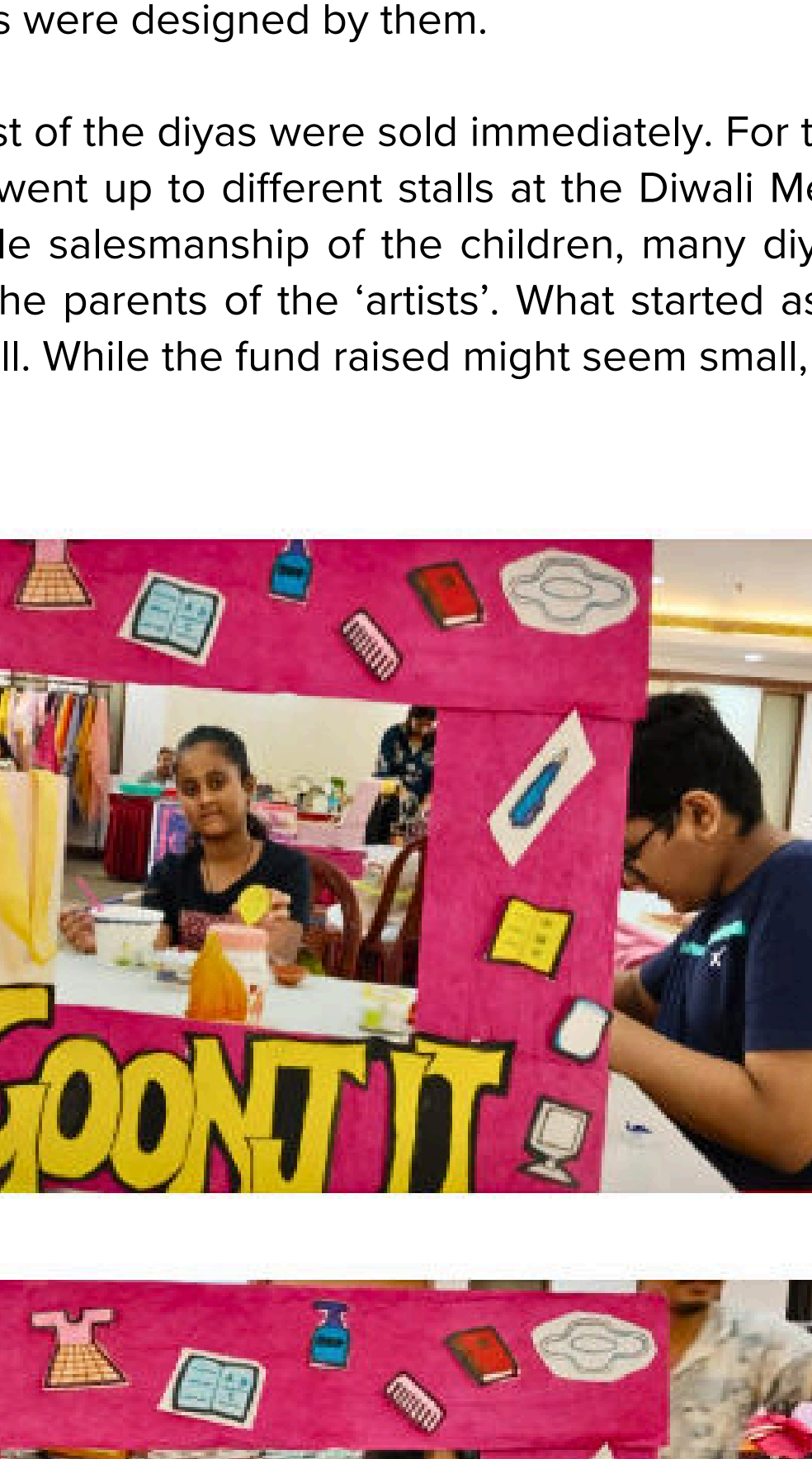


OUR VERSATILE VOLUNTEERS

N. Ram from Chennai says, "I feel a sense of satisfaction and joy while doing these little acts of giving. And at the end of the day, it is not about how much money I make, but what difference I made."

In another story, the young son, Sanju, of one of Goonj's committed volunteers, Esther, stepped up, lending his hands and heart to the organization's mission. His involvement was not out of obligation but out of a genuine desire to make a difference, and an understanding that he served through his mother's passion for the cause. The boy contributed in several practical ways. He gathered essential materials, arranged refreshments, and even assisted with the physically demanding task of loading supplies.

Through his actions, this young contributor exemplified how the right message, when communicated meaningfully, can resonate deeply, creating a ripple effect which inspires others to join in creating a dignified impact.



THE MAN WHO PORTERED JOY

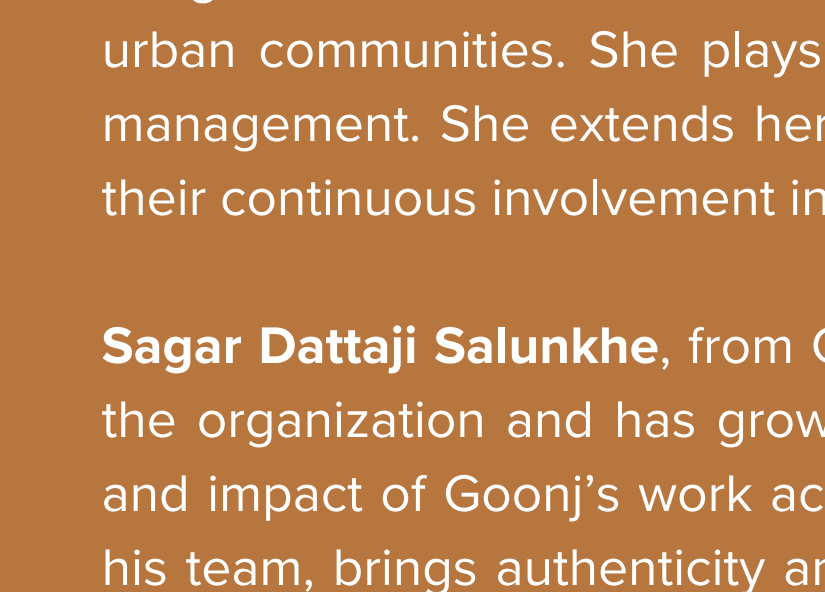


At Goonj camp in Chennai, Mariappan Anna (brother) was inspired by the spirit of the work he witnessed and decided to get involved himself. Moved by what he saw, he single-handedly arranged all the contributed material at the camp into an 8 ft transport vehicle. After reaching the Goonj office and seeing the Akkas (sisters) working hard, he went on to unload the entire material by himself as well.

Once the work was done, he simply had some water, collected his payment, smiled warmly at the Goonj team, said thank you, and left — having experienced firsthand the quiet contentment and "Joy of giving".



THE JOYFUL KID



Young Abe Ram, a resident of Sobha Winchester in Chennai, became a kind contributor and fund-raiser, very excited after learning about the service Goonj was doing on the frontlines of rural development. He contributed his toys, study table, stationery materials, etc. at the camp organised in his society. He lit up the camp with his infectious energy and kindness.

THE COLOURS OF JOY

A unique contribution driver was conducted during the 'Joy of Giving' celebrations at Uniworld City in New Town, Kolkata. This activity was led by two volunteers—Madhu Arora and Savita Arora—who have been associated with Goonj for a long time.

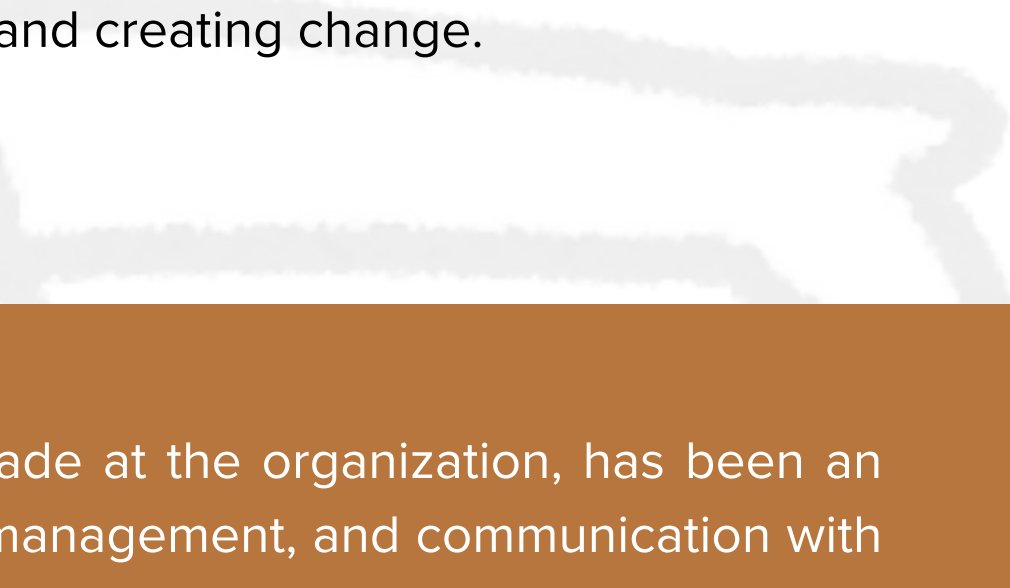
In this fundraising activity, several kids participated to paint diyas & gullaks (clay pots used for collecting money) for a colourful sale to raise a contribution for Goonj. Madhu ji and Savita ji very enthusiastically promoted this idea in their society. They explained the benefits of the participation by children in this activity to their guardians. It was stressed that such an activity would not only help children develop their creative skills but also help them explore their entrepreneurial skills. To encourage their participation, the volunteers arranged to provide digital certificates from their side to the young participants.

On the day of the activity, diyas were provided by the volunteers. Children brought their own paints and brushes to colour them. Using all their imagination and creativity, they painted the diyas and coded each diya with their initials, to ensure that each of them knew how many diyas were designed by them.

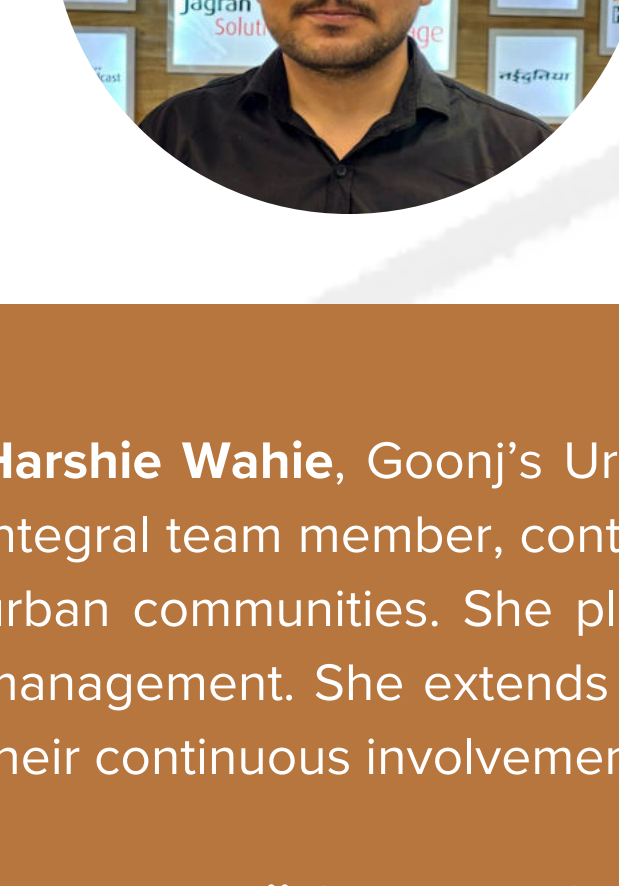
Later, the colourful diyas were put at the Green By Goonj Stall. Most of the diyas were sold immediately. For the few left, the kids took up the responsibility of selling them. They went up to different stalls at the Diwali Mela and inspired people to buy their diyas. Impressed by the adorable salesmanship of the children, many diyas were sold, and the very few remaining ones were bought by the parents of the 'artists'. What started as a simple fund-raising activity turned out to be a joyous occasion for all. While the fund raised might seem small, its worth was priceless

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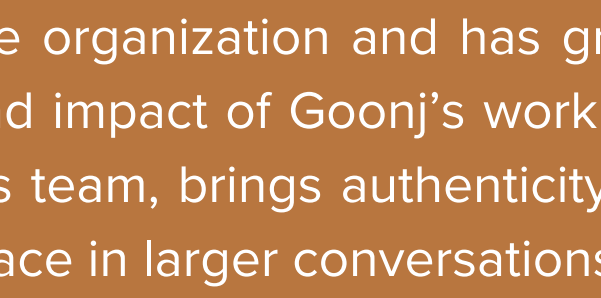
Editorial Team



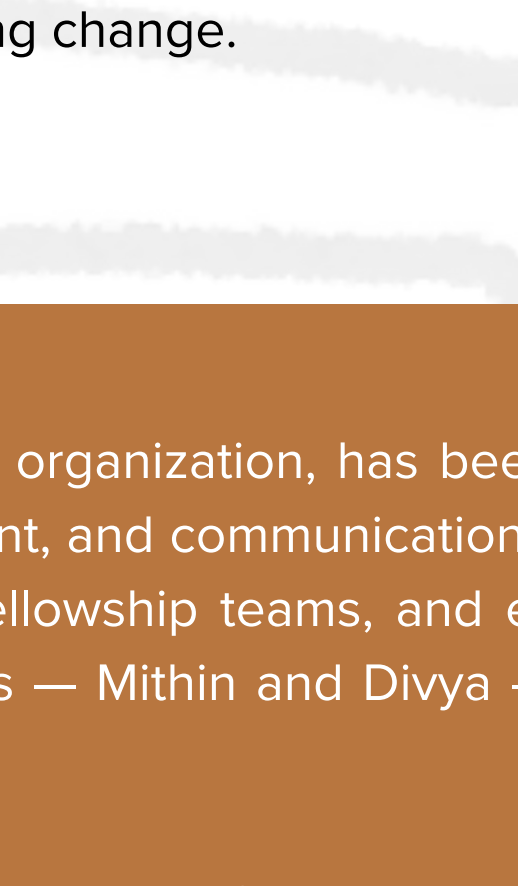
Jagriti Yadav is an IT leader with a deep passion for giving back to the community. Her journey with Goonj began as a contributor, and over the past two decades, she has remained a dedicated volunteer, actively supporting its mission in every way she can.



Dr. Nikhat Tyagi is a researcher in International Studies and Law, specializing in the Third World perspective on climate negotiations. Passionate about governance and sustainable community responses, she has been a dedicated Goonj volunteer since 2008.



Devika Mehta is a journalist and media literacy advocate dedicated to social change. She volunteers with Goonj, using storytelling to bridge urban and rural gaps, organize contribution drives, and stands for sustainable development.



Sunil Anand has been a dedicated Goonj volunteer since 2020, managing a Dropping Center in Dehradun to enable community initiatives and resource mobilization.



Aman is a Senior Analyst in Product Innovation at Jagran New Media. He volunteers with Goonj to drive grassroots impact while continuously learning and creating change.

Harshie Wahie, Goonj's Urban Relations Lead with over a decade at the organization, has been an integral team member, contributing to team building, volunteer management, and communication with urban communities. She plays a vital role in pan-India urban relations, fellowship teams, and event management. She extends her gratitude to Anjali, Anisha, and two fellows — Mithin and Divya — for their continuous involvement in streamlining content and coordination.

Sagar Dattaji Salunkhe, from Goonj's Communication Team, has over three years of experience with the organization and has grown into a key team member, weaving narratives that capture the spirit and impact of Goonj's work across India. Starting his journey as a grassroots fellow, Sagar, along with his team, brings authenticity and empathy to voices from the ground, ensuring they find their rightful place in larger conversations on development, dignity, and change.

Goonj is bartering the world’s surplus material with its peoples’ efforts, wisdom, and resources, turning the world’s material into an alternate non monetary currency for development. It's offering a new way and a parallel economic and development model that’s centering dignity and agency of people.

Stories from Goonj show how the world’s surplus material and the most marginalised people, can nudge and catalyze dignified development when mobilised as stakeholders in a better world.



Reviving Basantpur Pond: A Community-Led Water Conservation Success Story

Discover how the villagers of Basantpur Chintamani transformed a neglected pond into a thriving water source, enhancing irrigation, climate resilience, and livelihoods. A Goonj-led initiative showcasing grassroots wisdom in action!

[Read more](#)




Community-Led Road Repair | Dignity in Action

Maykot, Uttarakhand’s villagers rebuilt their damaged road through collective action. Discover how community-led resilience creates lasting change.[Read more](#)



Dhemaji, Assam: Community Rebuilds Bridge to Restore Connectivity & Livelihoods

Discover how the villagers of Cha-Bari Gaon in Dhemaji, Assam, restored their vital bamboo bridge, ensuring safe access to schools, markets, and healthcare. A powerful story of resilience under Goonj’s Cloth for Work initiative.[Read more](#)



GOONJ.. a voice, an effort

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