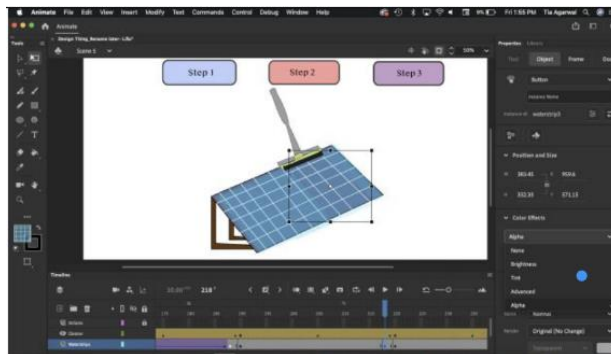


The Light Bulb by Change and Co



With the money we'd fundraised last year, our first plan of action was to buy the solar panels with a focus on SDG 13 and 7. Through a connection of ours, we found three potential solar panel companies and began discussing them. We had to connect the company to site managers, and ground keepers so they could figure out the necessity. We got three potential offers, 1.5L-1.75L for 2kWh from Solar Rays Power, a company based in Mumbai (which reduced to 1.3kWh for 1.5kWh). 1.2L for 1kWh from Helios Power (Mumbai) and an estimate from a third party that we didn't discuss more with. Finally, after much consideration within our group regarding budget constraints and money saving and quality, we discussed with an external party and chose Solar Rays Company as our final offer. As of now, after sending in 10% we have begun the MSC permissions procedure, which takes 2-3 months. This permission is essential for all renewable energy installers in India. From this venture, we learned how to deal with external contacts while remaining professional and forthright with everyone to achieve the best price and solution.

At some point in our journey this year, our group decided that the scope of action which could be taken to help students in the school was much more than just the installation of solar panels. Progress in that end was far slower due to the many challenges faced (mentioned below) this year, so our group felt that we could use the remaining time and resources to do more on our project. We had heard from our GSL advisor that our school had a large amount of science lab equipment which was not being used in classes anymore after renovations had been done and had plans to donate it to other schools which may lack such facilities if an opportunity ever arose. We decided that our group could take on this role, to act as the middle party to complete the donation of science lab equipment from our school to the school in need, where we had also planned to install the solar panels. Even more than just donating the lab equipment, our group also brainstormed ways in which we could educate the faculty and students at the school on how they could properly use the equipment to avoid damage. This would contribute to SDG 9 (Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure).



We thought that it would be easier for a group of people to understand how to maintain the solar panel and use the science equipment if they saw it. We created two interactive animations with simple visual explanations on how to do those different things and gave animated demonstrations as well.

There are many challenges our group has faced in this edition of the Global Social Leaders project which may have hampered the extent to which our intended action could have been taken. The first was the lack of communication between our group and the school we wished to install the solar panels in. We only visited the school once, which did not give us enough time to collect ample data about the installation of the panel, such as the location, connections to the classrooms, and logistics of maintenance after installation. The main reason this challenge was faced is because of the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic, which restricted our group from making any visits to the school for fear of spreading the virus to their students or contracting it ourselves. Even after cases lowered, we were unable to get official approval from our school to perform a visit. Another challenge, though comparatively minor, faced by our group was internal communication. One of our members was in a different time zone, and the rest were unable to meet each other because of the Covid-19 pandemic. We also had the negligence to schedule regular meetings with our advisor, who may have given us faster and more feasible solutions to some of the problems we faced on this journey if meetings were held more often.

We'll say it honestly... we are a work in progress this year. There were challenges, mostly due to the lack of communication with the school we wished to install the solar panels in. This year itself, we were forced to change school thrice, as the coordinators of the previous 2 schools were unreachable. These circumstances pushed back our logistical planning, as it was necessary to know, and then tell the solar panel company about the design of the roof of the school, what material it is made up of, and a picture. A physical inspection by the solar panel company of the school was also required, but none of these were able to happen in the first half of the year. When we finally decided to change schools, it took us a couple of weeks to find an appropriate one. Even the second school was not operable, and time kept running out there too. Finally, we chose the NGO Doorstep and a subsequent Labour Camp School in Phase III Hinjewadi, on the outskirts of the city and near our school. This school teaches children of the labour working in a nearby construction site. The challenge we face here is, this school is a mobile school, meaning it's only running while construction is going on. We are not yet sure for how many years they will use the solar panel.

The next steps for the group include keeping communication with the school to which we will be donating solar panels and science equipment. In order to do this, we need to gain an MSC license, which will take 2 months, and after that, we will commence the installation process in which we will partner with Solar Rays Power (Mumbai) which has already given us an offer of 1.3L for 1.5kWh including inverter and installation. There is some doubt of having less money than required, which is why we will be holding events in our school and communities to gain awareness of our initiative to gain more donations. On a people's note, we've learned a lot about perseverance this year. We'll continue to support each other and better our communication. We're back at school and things are opening in the city... we'll keep working to set and achieve all goals for the Labour Camp School!