

PROJECT CURA

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PROJECT CREATION

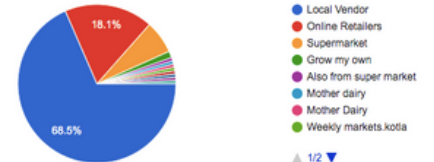
Project Cura is a social initiative that aims to create job opportunities for impoverished women, while promoting alternatives to single-use plastic bags

To get a deeper understanding of the problems that our project aims to subdue, we conducted a survey to gain insights into the mentality of plastic consumers. On compiling the responses of 150 people, we noticed that people continue to indulge in the use of plastic because of the lack of access to more sustainable packaging. We also interviewed 5 fruit and vegetable cart-pullers and noticed a similar pattern in their answers.

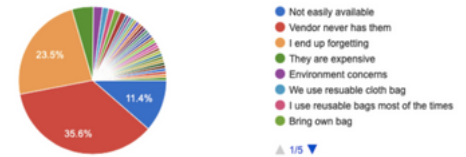
To know more about gender inequality and the importance of women empowerment, we conducted an interview with Dr. Mridula Tandon, the founder of Sakshi, a non-profit organisation that aims to uplift women and children. She explained the correlation between empowerment and financial independence, describing the latter as a feeling of security.

Only once we generated awareness within ourselves did we work on our project plan to pass on this knowledge to others and build a sustainable world.

Where do you usually purchase fruits/vegetables from?
 149 responses



If you are not using reusable bags, what prevents you from doing so?
 149 responses



PROJECT CONDUCTION

Collection of Cloth

We have partnered up with 3 export houses of New Delhi and procured 1000+ metres of unwanted fabric that would otherwise have gone to landfills.



Stitching of Bags

The cloth is then transported to Sakshi NGO where 24 impoverished women from the slums of Delhi earn a living by stitching bags out of the procured cloth.



Funding

These women are compensated for their work through funds sourced from an online fundraiser that we set up. We also help remote small Indian businesses by printing their logo on our bags in exchange for financial sponsorship. So far, we have collaborated with 6 such businesses and raised over INR 70,000 in funds.



Distribution

We are working with the Residents Welfare Association of Defence Colony, a residential area in New Delhi. 10 fruit and vegetable vendors of this locality are supplied with our bags, free of cost, to give out to their customers in place of plastic packaging.



Recollection of Bags

Since a lot of energy and resources are depleted in producing cloth, it is essential that our bags are used to their full potential. Thus, we encourage residents of the locality to reuse our bags, return them to their respective vendors after use or deposit them in a drop-off box installed by us within the locality.



Redistribution of Bags

The deposited bags are collected by us, washed, and distributed, along with a new set of bags, to the vendors. Thus, another cycle of distribution, collection and sanitisation begins.



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FEEDBACK SURVEY

We maintain a record of the quantity of cloth and bags in circulation. The accumulation of this data shows an indisputable rise in the number of cloth bags used overall, and demonstrates great involvement of the people in the project. Apart from this, we have also sent out two feedback forms amongst the residents of Defence Colony, both of which have received positive responses. 100% of the people said that Project Cura made their switch to reusable bags easier. All of them collected at least 2 bags, and returned at least 1 bag, proving that the residents were actively participating in the system, and found the collection-distribution cycle fairly convenient to follow. We have also spoken to the vendors under our system, all of whom are happy with the quality of the bags, and are playing a part in encouraging their customers to return the bags they take. Finally, the women employed at Sakshi NGO are receiving fair wages for their work, and have actively been involved with the project since its initiation 2 months ago.

PERSONAL REFLECTIONS

Working on this project has not only pushed us to acquire new knowledge, but it has also added to our personalities, and changed the way we function in our daily lives. We built this project from the ground up all by ourselves, and it has given us an entirely new perspective on things. From solution planning and finance management to on-field implementation and writing reports, we have been actively involved in everything, and learnt skills we never dreamt of acquiring.

Although we have divided the work into multiple 'departments', each of which is overseen by one of us, we are all involved in every aspect of the project, regardless of our personal interests and inclinations. Defining clear roles and establishing a sense of trust in each other has allowed us to strike a balance between working cohesively as a team, and making use of our individual areas of expertise.

Lastly, this project has taught us the crucial step of considering the multi-faceted social, economic and environmental effects of a situation, and then balancing them in order to come to a universally benefitting solution. Looking at something from all the diverse points of view, while striving to not leave anyone out from the solution is perhaps one of the most important lessons we learnt through this endeavour.

FUTURE OF THE PROJECT

We realise that in order to bring about tangible changes, we need to implement this project on a larger-scale. In order to expand our project, we wish to acquire more cloth donations, employ more women, and contact as many export houses as we can to achieve this. At the same time, we don't want to immediately and abruptly expand our project and overwhelm the system.

Coming on to the distant future of the project, our goal is to make this system a self-sustaining cycle, which completely or almost eradicates the need of a central body of administration. We hope to collaborate with passionate teenagers like us who can implement this cycle in their own localities. The ultimate plan for acquiring financial support is through Corporate Social Responsibility Funds, for which we are working towards perfecting the logistics of our system and providing it a strong foundation for it.