



HEALING HIMALAYAS FOUNDATION ANNUAL REPORT 2025



Table of Contents

03

Message from the Founder

04

2026 in Perspective

05

Core Strategic Pillars

09

Outcomes & Measurable Impact

10

Key Learnings and The Road Ahead

11

Acknowledgement

Message from the Founder



The year 2025 marked a structural shift in our journey. What began years ago as high-altitude clean-up missions has now evolved into a deliberate effort to build circular waste systems tailored for the Himalayas.

From the remote landscapes of Kinnaur and Spiti Valley to expanding tourism corridors across Himachal and Uttarakhand, the scale of waste entering fragile ecosystems continues to grow. Seasonal tourism, limited infrastructure, and complex mountain logistics make waste management in these regions uniquely challenging.

We expanded critical infrastructure by establishing Material Recovery Facilities at Kedarnath Top, Powari in Kinnaur, and Barshaini, demonstrating that decentralized waste management is possible even in the most challenging geographies. These facilities are more than sorting units; they are economic anchors that improve traceability, enable recycling linkages, and reduce open dumping.

Our engagement extended beyond infrastructure. Through grassroots awareness, school programs, and collaboration with panchayats, we strengthened local accountability. Policy engagement advanced significantly this year. In collaboration with the Himachal government and key stakeholders, we implemented a Deposit Refund System (DRS) pilot during the Manimahesh Lake Yatra, introducing structured accountability within a high-footfall pilgrimage corridor.

In 2025, we expanded our ecological focus beyond the Himalayas through Project GEM at Elephanta Island, applying our systems-based model within a coastal biodiversity landscape. We also initiated zero-waste community programs in Baddi and parts of Delhi, extending our circular approach into urban regions. Our volunteers, community partners, funders, and local administrations continue to make this work possible. Their sustained support enables us to transition from reactive clean-ups to resilient circular systems designed specifically for mountain realities.

As we move forward, our objective remains clear: strengthen decentralized waste ecosystems, build economic value within recycling chains, formalize policy foundations, and position the Himalayan circular model as a globally relevant mountain waste framework.



Pradeep Sangwan
Founder
Healing Himalayas Foundation

2025 in Perspective

2025 marked a year of measurable expansion, operational depth, and institutional strengthening. The focus moved beyond collection volumes toward accountability, infrastructure, and long-term behavioral change.

Operational Highlights

- **200+ tonnes** of non-biodegradable waste collected
- **25+ clean-up** drives across critical mountain landscapes
- **500+** volunteers mobilized
- Intensive legacy waste removal along pilgrimage routes including the **Manimahesh Yatra**
- On-ground implementation partner for the global campaign **Climb2Change**



Infrastructure & Systems Strengthening

- **3 new** Material Recovery Facilities (MRFs) established
- Digitalization of MRF operations with a centralized dashboard for transparency and real-time tracking
- Strengthened implementation of **Deposit Return Scheme (DRS)** mechanisms
- Structured downstream recycling linkages

Community Engagement & Behavioral Change

- Intensive IEC sessions in **15+ schools**
- Exposure visits to MRFs for students and community members
- Door-to-door surveys across **5000+** households and commercial establishments to assess waste generation patterns
- Engagement and formal integration of **35+ green workers**



The goal shifted from awareness to measurable participation.

2025 introduced targeted initiatives to deepen ownership:

- **Winter Healers** – focused winter-season clean-ups in snow-bound regions
- **Zero Waste Society** – a community-driven framework promoting segregation and responsible consumption

Resilient Circular Waste Systems for the Himalayas

During **2025–26**, significant progress was made in strengthening decentralized waste infrastructure across mountain regions. **Over 200+ tonnes of non-biodegradable waste** were collected through door to door collection and **25+ structured clean-up drives**, with a focused effort on clearing legacy waste from ecologically sensitive and high-footfall zones, including the Manimahesh Yatra route. **Three new Material Recovery Facilities (MRFs)** were established, expanding processing capacity in remote terrains. **Existing MRF operations were digitalized** through a centralized dashboard to enhance transparency, enable real-time waste tracking, and improve recovery efficiency. **The on-ground implementation of the Deposit Return System (DRS)** further strengthened structured plastic recovery and reduced environmental leakage.



Strengthened Ownership and Accountability in the Himalayas

Community engagement advanced from awareness-based outreach to structured, measurable participation across communities. **Intensive IEC sessions were conducted across households, commercial establishments, and 15+ schools**, strengthening understanding of segregation, responsible disposal, and circular waste systems. **Exposure visits to operational MRFs** provided practical insight into waste processing, reinforcing transparency and accountability. **A comprehensive door-to-door survey covering 5000+** households and commercial establishments generated baseline data on waste generation patterns, enabling targeted and localized interventions.

More than 500 volunteers supported clean-up and awareness drives, while **35+ green workers** were formally integrated into operations, strengthening decentralized waste management capacity and ensuring dignified livelihoods. **The Winter Healers initiative** introduced structured winter-season monitoring and clean-up mechanisms, ensuring continuity of waste accountability even during snow-bound months when dumping risks increase. **The Zero Waste Society** platform further institutionalized citizen participation and peer accountability within communities.



Building Policy Foundations for Circular Mountain Waste Management

The year saw strengthened engagement with governance mechanisms to **align on-ground systems with regulatory frameworks**. Structured waste management protocols were implemented along pilgrimage routes and high-tourism zones. **The pilot implementation of Deposit Refund Scheme** at the local level demonstrated practical policy integration within mountain contexts. **Data collected** through surveys and digital MRF systems contributed to more evidence-based planning and reporting, enabling stronger coordination with district authorities and reinforcing compliance with solid waste management norms.

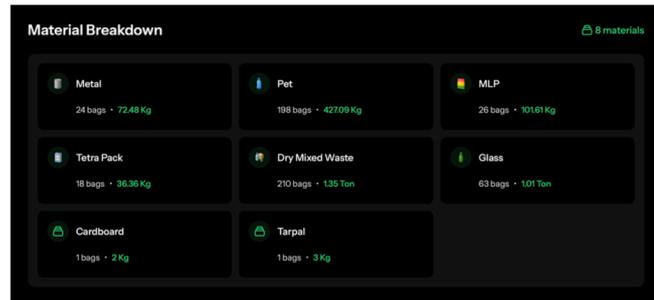


Green Livelihoods, Innovation and Global Impact for a Circular Himalayan Future

Waste management efforts during the year were positioned as structural economic and governance transitions rather than isolated environmental activities. The engagement of **35+ green workers strengthened decentralized waste operations** while generating dignified livelihoods in remote mountain regions.

Material Recovery Facilities (MRFs) were further strengthened through digitalization and the introduction of a centralized dashboard to track waste volumes, material categories, and recovery rates. This improved operational efficiency, minimized leakages, enhanced transparency, and enabled data-backed reporting for institutional stakeholders.

The organization also served as the **on-ground implementation partner for the global climate campaign Climb2Change**, positioning Himalayan waste systems within international climate and circular economy discourse. Collectively, these interventions advanced a scalable circular mountain waste model integrating environmental protection, livelihood generation, technological accountability, and global collaboration.



Outcomes & Measurable Impact

Waste Diverted from Landfills

- **200+ tonnes** of waste collected and processed through strengthened MRF systems
- **Improved** recycler linkages and **DRS implementation**
- **Impact:** Higher material recovery and reduced landfill dependency

Reduction in Open Dumping

- **Legacy waste** cleared from key routes including the **Manimahesh Yatra**
- Winter monitoring through **Winter Healers Initiative**
- **Impact:** Decline in informal dumping hotspots

Increase in Segregation

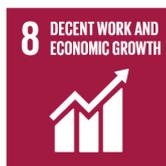
- **5000+** households surveyed
- IEC in **15+ schools** and communities
- **Impact:** Improved source segregation and processing efficiency

Community Participation

- **500+** volunteers engaged
- **35+** green workers integrated
- Zero Waste Society launched
- **Impact:** Strengthened local ownership and accountability

Ecological Indicators

- **Cleaner** pilgrimage and trekking routes
- **Reduced waste leakage** into forests and water streams
- **Impact:** Improved ecosystem health and visual landscape quality



Key Learnings and The Road Ahead

Key Learnings

- **Infrastructure must precede scale.** Clean-ups without processing capacity create downstream bottlenecks. Localized MRF strengthening is essential.
- **Policy implementation gaps persist.** Mechanisms such as DRS require stronger enforcement, monitoring, and institutional ownership at district levels.
- **Terrain dictates design.** High-altitude logistics, snowfall, and seasonal tourism demand adaptive waste systems rather than uniform models.
- **Data improves accountability.** Digital tracking and household-level surveys significantly enhance planning, transparency, and reporting accuracy.
- **Behavior change requires continuity.** IEC efforts must be sustained and reinforced through exposure visits, community platforms, and structured monitoring.
- **Livelihood integration strengthens sustainability.** Formal engagement of green workers improves operational efficiency and long-term system stability.

Way Forward

- **Expand decentralized processing capacity** in additional mountain clusters to reduce transport dependency and improve recovery rates.
- **Establish centralised recycling facilities.**
- **Strengthen digital waste governance.**
- Institutionalize mountain-specific waste protocols, particularly for pilgrimage routes and seasonal tourism surges.
- Deepen community accountability frameworks through structured citizen platforms and winter monitoring initiatives.
- Scale green livelihoods programs, building technical capacity for waste workers and local entrepreneurs.
- Position the circular mountain waste model nationally and globally as a replicable framework for fragile ecosystems.

Acknowledgement

The progress achieved during 2025 was made possible through the collective commitment of communities, institutions, and partners who share a common vision of protecting fragile mountain ecosystems.

We extend our sincere gratitude to our funders and institutional supporters whose continued trust enabled infrastructure expansion, digital innovation, and policy-aligned implementation. Their support strengthened decentralized waste systems and ensured operational continuity in challenging terrains.

We acknowledge the collaboration of district administrations and local governance bodies for facilitating policy integration, enabling on-ground implementation of DRS mechanisms, and supporting structured waste management across pilgrimage and tourism zones. Our appreciation extends to our community members, schools, households, and commercial establishments who actively participated in surveys, segregation initiatives, and accountability programs.

This collective effort reinforces that circular mountain waste management is achievable through shared responsibility and sustained commitment.





Contact

Healing Himalayas Foundation
B-24, Anarkali Garden, Jagatpuri, Delhi
110051
Healinghimalayas.org
connect@healinghimalayas.org