

FEB
2025



Strengthening Livelihoods, Conservation, and Community Rights

Weaving Resilient Futures

Western Himalaya Vikalp Sangam

February 21st and 24th, 2025 | Devalsari, Uttarakhand



A WHVS Initiative

thehimalayacollective.com



Executive Summary

The Uttarakhand Mini Regional Sangam of the West Himalayan Vikalp Sangam (WHVS) was held over 4 days from 21-24 February 2025 at the Deodar Ecotourism and Research Centre, Devalsari, Tehri Garhwal District, Uttarakhand. Thirty-two participants from twenty-five organizations from Uttarakhand, along with a few participants from Kashmir, Ladakh, Himachal Pradesh and other parts of India, attended the event. The gathering was organized by the Devalsari Paryavaryan Sanrakshan evam Tekniki Vikas Samiti, with support from Titli Trust and the WHVS team. The theme of the Uttarakhand Mini Regional Sangam was “Weaving Resilient Futures” focused on Strengthening Livelihoods, Conservation and Community Rights.

The theme “Weaving Resilient Futures: Strengthening Livelihoods, Conservation, and Community Rights” was chosen to address the unique challenges faced by communities in Uttarakhand and the Western Himalayas. This region is characterized by its rich biodiversity and cultural heritage, yet it faces significant pressures from environmental degradation and socio-economic vulnerabilities. By focusing on sustainable livelihoods, conservation efforts, and the reinforcement of community rights, this gathering aims to explore holistic approaches that promote ecological integrity and socio-economic well-being, ensuring a resilient future for the region.

A key activity involved engaging with the "Flower of Transformation," a framework developed through the national Vikalp Sangam process. This tool facilitated the evaluation of initiatives across critical areas like ecological integrity and social well-being, encouraging deeper dialogue and understanding of interconnected themes.

The gathering provided a platform for participants and organizations to reflect on shared values and explore pathways for collective transformation. Collaborative initiatives included drafting a people’s charter, planning a Vikalp Yatra, planning for Vikalp Grams, facilitating cross-learning opportunities, documenting success stories, and addressing regional gaps. This report offers further insights into the discussions, activities, and collaborative outcomes that emerged from this meaningful gathering.

Background

The Uttarakhand Mini Regional Sangam followed a series of events by the WHVS which included a core team meeting at Delhi in March 2024, a State Sangam at Ladakh in July 2024 and a Regional Sangam at Kashmir in October 2024. The design of the Uttarakhand Mini Regional Sangam leveraged lessons learnt and feedback from the previous Sangams. One of the key elements of the Devalsari sangam was to diversify participation and include newer like-minded organizations. In this regard, 12 new organisations from Uttarakhand participated in the VS process for the first time at Devalsari. A key change in program design, based on feedback and learnings from the Kashmir Sangam, introduced in the Devalsari Sangam involved a full day's discussion and deep dive on a few crucial issues faced by the state of Uttarakhand. The event addressed regional challenges and explored collaborative solutions focused on learning, sustainability, and community development.



Day Wise Overview

Day 1: 21 February 2025

Participants arrived in time for lunch and settled in, followed by an introduction to the Devalsari society, an overview and background of the Vikalp Sangam process, the genesis of WHVS, a presentation on the Flower of Transformation, the Alternative Framework, and the history of Vikalp Sangam, and finally detailed participant and organisation introductions, concluding with dinner.

Day 2: 22 February 2025

The second day began with a morning bird watching trail at Devalsari. The day's discussions began with reflections since WHVS began in 2014 and a review of the first year of the Royal Enfield-funded WHVS program. The key takeaways and challenges from the sangams held in 2024 in Ladakh and Kashmir were reflected upon. Breakout sessions amongst the participants were held to detail out Year 2 strategy on key issues: WHVS charter, Vikalp Yatra, Vikalp Gram & Cross learning. Finally, the WHHS media team conducted a storytelling and art session, along with sharing the work done in the past year.

Day 3: 23 February 2025

The third day began with another morning birdwatching trail. The participants then undertook a deep dive discussion on thematic groups through a breakout session and reported back on their deep dive with a summary of actionable items and involvement by team members. Finally, a discussion followed on the divisiveness in society & what we can do about it.

Day 4: 24 February 2025

A heritage walk to the Mahadev Shiv Mandir at Devalsari was conducted. Reflections on the Devalsari sangam were held, followed by a meeting with the local community to discuss conservation challenges in Devalsari. The WHVS ended with village visits to Moldhar and Teva, along with community engagement, and a visit to the Sridev Suman Titli Park, a proposed Biodiversity Heritage Site at Devalsari.

The following pages offer a closer look at the sessions held each day.



Day 1

Arun Prasad, Director, Devalsari Paryavaryan Sanrakshan evam Tekniki Vikas Samiti, welcomed the participants to the sangam and to Devalsari. He showed a short film about the work of the society at Devalsari.

Sanjay Sondhi and Shaheena Parveen provided an overview of the Vikalp Sangam process, how and why WHVS was formed, and the activities it had undertaken since it began in 2014. A brief summary of all the events that had happened since WHVS was formed as a collective was provided. They also briefed the group on the agenda for the 4 day meeting at Devalsari.

Ashish Kothari from Kalpavriksh joined the meeting from Pune via a Zoom call and briefed the gathering on the origins and principles of Vikalp Sangam, as well as the “Flower of Transformation”. Some of the points that were touched upon during this discussion: collective voices and support...crucial for Sangam success, the strength of collective for activism and advocacy, the VS providing a space of discussion and sharing of success stories and the need to get masses to get involved. Some questions that we raised: Are we too rational? We should be emotional also. Why are we always looking for impact?

Participant and Organisation Introductions

All the participants shared their journeys, experiences, expertise, and the impactful work they are doing in their respective fields. The list of participants and their organisations is listed in Annexure 1.

Day 2

Birdwatching

Many participants went birdwatching toward Untad village on the morning of the second day. About 20 bird species were sighted on the trail.

Reflection from Year 1 and Previous Sangams: Key Takeaways & Challenges (Shaheena and Sanjay)

Sanjay Sondhi kickstarted the session with sharing about the history of WHVS and collective gatherings that have happened covering the WHVS initiation (2014), the first gathering at Jagori (2016), a follow up sangam at Ladakh and creation of the Charter (2019),

Kalpavriksh suggested WHVS towards greater independence (2021), engagement with Royal Enfield/Eicher Group Foundation on funding the WHVS and submission of the first proposal (2022) and its approval (2023).



Shaheena Parveen reflected on all the events and work that had happened in the past year, (FY 2024-25), since Royal Enfield/Eicher Group Foundation agreed to provide funding support to the WHVS process. She briefed the gathering on the discussions of core team meeting at Delhi on 15-16 March 2024, the State Sangam at Ladakh on 7-8 July 2024 and the Regional Sangam at Kashmir from 27-30 October 2024.

15-16 March 2024, Delhi: WHVS core group meeting

In March 2024, the WHVS core group (Titli, MOOL, Margshala, SLC, Jagori, Kalpavriksh, amongst others), met in Delhi over 2 days to understand plan of action of different activities to be conducted as part of the RE/EGF project. This was also a good space for renewal of relationships with other organisations.

Key discussion points in core team meeting

- Try to reactivate the network of participating organisations. How do we meet? What do we talk about? Enrich the exchange?
- The state sangams in Ladakh and Uttarakhand and the regional sangam in Kashmir were discussed in detail.
- It was decided to have bimonthly core group meetings (online) to reflect on activities, understand progress, and discuss next steps.
- SLC was to take the lead to do the Wellbeing Index. The plan of action for the Wellbeing Index was discussed. The idea of the Wellbeing Index: To highlight gaps in general notion of development versus what local communities consider wellbeing and development, with focus on youth & women as participants.



7-8 July 2024, Ladakh: State sangam

The Ladakh state theme was on tourism, celebrating and reflecting on 50 years of tourism in Ladakh and its impacts. Discussions in Ladakh included how tourism affects the ecology, people's lives and sustainability. The report from the Ladakh sangam is available online on the Himalaya Collective Website at www.thehimalayacollective.com.

27-30 October 2024, Ganderbal, Kashmir: Regional Sangam

The Regional Sangam at Ganderbal, Kashmir was co-hosted by MOOL, at Sagg Eco-village over 4 days with a total of 35 participating orgs (local + from other western Himalayan regions). The Sagg Eco-village is a space that reflects the idea of the Sangam, a representation of an alternative.

Key discussion points in the Kashmir Regional Sangam

- Discussed multiple topics, without really deep diving into any one in particular.
- Met the fisher community in Wular. It was a good conversation and learning exchange on livelihoods, challenges, sociology and environment.
- Attended by Kashmiri poet Zareef Ahmed Zareef who talked about Kashmir through his words, in his own way.
- Discussion also entailed what the learning of different organisations has been, including their challenges and how to take things forward.
- Two members from North East Himalayas attended (Affected Citizens of Teesta and North East Network) who shared about their work. The idea was to bring together Western and Eastern Himalayas through exchange programs and cross-learning.
- The gathering put together the action plan for 2025. Focus on “action-oriented solutioning”, now that the network has been activated.
- Realisation and decision: have fewer Sangams in a year for better utilization of resources and a deeper dive into crucial issues.

In addition to the sangams, the gathering was briefed on what were the achievements of the WHVS in the last year.

- People came together. Shaheena shared how regional divide is a barrier, yet people from different regions, cities, towns and villages came together
- Cross-learning. Informal exchange of learnings, ideas took place through interactions among a diverse group
- Webinars. On different themes & ideas led by the media team, and a space for orgs to talk about their work
- Himalaya Collective website - up and running.
- WHVS banner hand painted during the Kashmir Sangam, a creative representation of the variety that the WHVS encompasses, with no boundaries.
- A reinforcement that “We're still going strong”.

Project Planning: Year 2 Strategy (WHVS charter, Vikalp Yatra, Vikalp Gram and Cross Learning)

In the second part of Day 2 discussion, the project planning for the key actions for the second year were discussed in detail. Four groups did breakout sessions on four key subjects: WHVS charter, Vikalp Yatra, Vikalp Gram and Cross Learning.

Group 1: Vikalp Gram	Group 2: Vikalp Yatra	Group 3: Preparation of WHVS Charter	Group 4: Cross learning
MOOL and SLC Pradeep, Siddarth, Deepak, Shaheena, Arunima, Shiwank	Preparations Rajendra, Arun, Anita, Taukeer, Asif, Ram, Santosh, Gokul, Trilok	Ajay, Ruchira, Ruth, Ashish	Anchal, Abhishek, Naveen, Neha, Lucky, Alex, Gulfam, Ira, Raman, Skalzang

Process followed as below (Each group):

- Review of Planned Activity. Why are we doing what we are doing?
- Brainstorm all the different things than can be done to deliver on each of these. List organisations within the WHVS/outside who could get involved.
- What are the actions needed to deliver on each of these over the next 12 months? For Uttarakhand, identify who would like to get involved in which initiative.
- Write down summary of discussion for presentation
- Plenary Discussion & Synthesis (All)

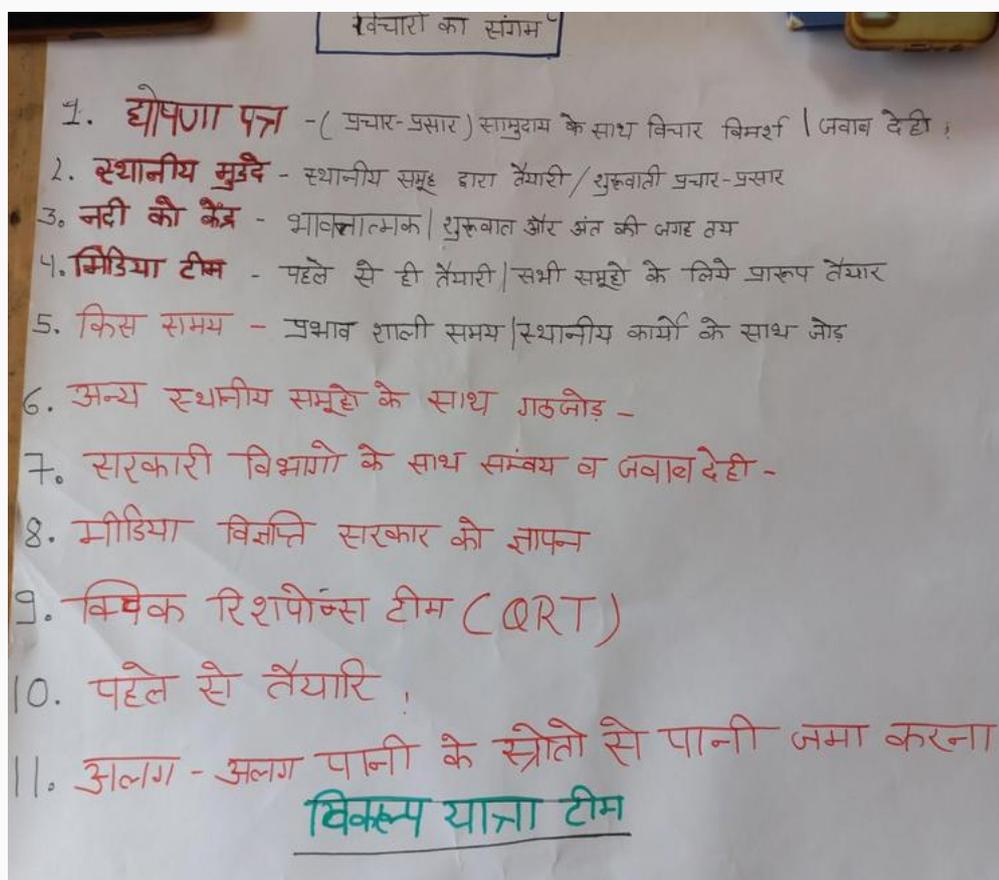
Each of the team deliberated the above actions in detail, and presented their views in the plenary session with a detailed action plan.



Group 1/Vikalp Gram: The group discussed in detail about the significance of integrating practices for Vikalp Grams and how it is different from existing models. The group identified this as an opportunity to create a replicable model and demonstrate alternative development. They also presented a four step roadmap of activities for the next 12 months and also pointed out that choosing any village will also depend on the scope of alternative outcomes in the village. The working group decided on conducting monthly meetings and the initial meetings will focus on researching other models and ideas as well interacting with experts. The group focused on revisiting laws from an alternative lens and coming up with a model or framework which is easy to implement.

<p>Step 1</p> <p>Needs assessment based on conversations with diverse stakeholders in the village. Resource mapping will be needed as well as a well-be</p>	<p>Output: Create a village profile.</p>
<p>Step 2</p> <p>Connect with the village leaders/pradhan. Understand the decision-making process in the village - whether it is inclusive or exclusive, democratic or autocratic. Connect them to experts in various fields.</p>	
<p>Step 3</p> <p>Define the scope of various livelihood options to receive alternative modelling.</p>	<p>Identify ways to connect industries. Idea: Organise festivals to boost pride in tradition and culture. The focus is for villagers to be able to consume the resultant benefits of their efforts, for instance, for farmers and other families to consume organically grown food before they consider marketing outside the villages.</p> <p>Developing healthy, locally produced alternatives for snacks, sweets, materials, etc and encourage bartering.</p> <p>Create a community space which is vibrant and active with social gatherings and storytelling.</p> <p>Can livelihoods be created through natural resource management and agriculture? For this, we will need to connect the village residents to their rights.</p>
<p>Step 4</p> <p>Identify neighbouring villages in a 100 km radius as an ecosystem for meeting food, education, banking, health and other needs adequately and satisfactorily.</p>	<p>Mool and SLC will need support from other organisations.</p>

Group 2/Vikalp Yatra: The Vikalp Yatra discussion focused on planning a grassroots movement to revive community engagement, address local issues, and advocate for environmental awareness. The Yatra aims to reconnect people with the WHVS Charter, fostering dialogue on local concerns while creating a platform for collective action. Given the lack of a unifying issue among different groups, the river and watershed were identified as a symbolic and practical focal point for the Yatra's route. Participants emphasized the need for local groups to take ownership of planning their region's participation, raising awareness, and preparing communities ahead of the official Yatra. Additionally, media coordination, collaboration with local organizations, and strategic government engagement were highlighted as crucial for ensuring the Yatra's impact and sustainability. To operationalize the Yatra, the group proposed a structured approach involving advance logistical planning, targeted outreach, and active documentation of local narratives. A Quick Response Team (QRT) will be set up to address urgent issues, while alliances with government agencies will help ensure transparency and accountability. Media teams will work on standardized formats to streamline communication and raise awareness. The collection of water samples from various sources was suggested as both a symbolic and analytical exercise to highlight water-related concerns. The Yatra will also integrate traditional festivals and cultural events to maximize participation. With implementation planned for 2026, the focus remains on strategic scheduling, mobilization, and re-establishing traditional routes to reinforce historical connections between people and their environment.



Group 3/ WHVS Charter: The group discussion focused on the preparation of the WHVS Charter to outline key demands on critical issues such as land ownership, forest rights, water, infrastructure projects, health, education, agriculture, employment, migration, tourism, disasters, urbanization, religious harmony, and social justice. The group presented their understanding of the Charter that while it is primarily an advocacy tool for the government, it is also intended to guide WHVS members and engage the local population. The discussion highlighted the need for sustained lobbying efforts rather than expecting immediate political action. Members shared insights from similar initiatives, emphasizing the importance of maintaining a neutral stance while strategically applying pressure on policymakers.

The group also reflected on the legacy of past movements, such as the Chipko Andolan, and the broader question of Uttarakhand's progress over the last 25 years. To ensure the charter's effectiveness, the group proposed a structured approach beginning with a visioning exercise for all WHVS organizations, leading to the creation of a vision document in 2025-26. Based on this, the first draft of the charter will be developed for different states, with a specific focus on Uttarakhand, ahead of its statehood anniversary on November 9, 2025. In 2026-27, the draft will be taken to the public through Vikalp Yatra and consultations to incorporate wider input before finalization. To facilitate this, a core group representing different WHVS states, SC/ST communities, and diverse gender identities will be formed, along with state-specific teams working on localized charters. The group also stressed the importance of collaboration with like-minded organizations, mobilizing civil society and youth, and exploring advocacy strategies, including potential pressure tactics. Recognizing that drafting the charter is just the beginning, members agreed that continuous follow-ups and campaign efforts are essential to drive meaningful change.



Group 4/Cross learning: Group 4 discussed the importance of cross-learning for organizations to share expertise, collaborate, and bridge knowledge gaps, particularly between academic institutions and grassroots communities. It was seen as a way to engage youth, strengthen partnerships, and foster inter-regional connections beyond the Western Himalayas, including the Northeast. A key goal that was identified by the group of cross learning activity is to map available expertise within the network, utilize existing learning modules, and create structured opportunities for knowledge-sharing.

To achieve this, the group proposed listing fellowships from partner organizations, forming thematic expertise-based teams, and maintaining a shared calendar for events and learning exchanges. They also suggested an annual collaborative festival focused on nature, indigenous traditions, and conservation, along with in-person workshops, webinars, and exposure visits. With secured funding for cross-learning in the next financial year, these initiatives can begin soon. The group likened this effort to a river, where different streams of knowledge converge through collective contributions.

Storytelling and Art Session

The day ended with Rijuta sharing all the work that had happened through the media team of WHVS (hosted at Margshala). She also presented how we can tell our stories more effectively.



Day 3

The third day involved a deep dive by the participants on crucial issues facing the state of Uttarakhand. Two thematic areas were selected Sustainable Livelihoods & Tourism and Conservation, Wildlife & Community Rights.

- Thematic Area 1: Sustainable Livelihoods & Tourism (waste management, responsible tourism, traditional livelihoods)
- Thematic Area 2: Conservation, Wildlife & Community Rights (forest and wildlife, FRA, Land laws, human wildlife conflict).

The teams were briefed that the main purpose of the deep dive discussions was to:

1. Update the 2019 Manifesto to turn it into the 2025 'Charter'
2. Identify specific actions by the collective/project activities for the next 1 year.

Process followed

The teams formed were asked to deliberate in the following manner.

- Round 1 (Identifying Core Challenges and Gaps)
- Round 2 (Best Practices and Emerging Models)
- Round 3 (Actionable Solutions and Project Activities)
- Group Presentations and Recommendations

The following teams were formed

Group 1: Waste management	Group 2: Sustainable livelihoods	Group 3: Forest and Wildlife (including HWC)	Group 4: Responsible tourism
Naveen, Shiwank, Arunima, Lucky, Raman	Arun, Abhishek, Rajendra, Anita, Siddarth, Shaheena	Ajay, Ruchira, Ruth, Ashish	Anchal, Abhishek, Naveen, Neha, Lucky, Alex, Gulfam, Ira, Raman, Skalzang

Each of the team deliberated the above actions in detail, and presented their views in the plenary session with a detailed action plan.



Group 2/Sustainable Livelihoods

Discussion Points

1. Bees Conservation (Presented by Anup): The decline in bee populations was highlighted as a significant issue, particularly in relation to climate change. The group agreed to include bee conservation as a key focus in future strategies for sustainable livelihoods.
2. Creating Nutrition Gardens & Seed Exchange (Presented by Sidharth): The idea of establishing nutrition gardens within local communities was proposed, focusing on growing nutrient-dense foods and promoting sustainable practices. A seed exchange program, particularly focusing on growing millets, was suggested to promote biodiversity and support nutrition security.
3. Sustainable Livelihood Cycle and Long-Term Vision (Presented by Ravinder): The importance of creating a continuous cycle of sustainable livelihoods was discussed, ensuring year-round employment and economic opportunities, contributing to community resilience and long-term stability.
4. Targeting Youth (Presented by Shaheena): Engaging the youth was seen as crucial. Organizing webinars aimed at educating young people about sustainable livelihoods, fostering awareness, and inspiring action was proposed.

The group presented a clear understanding of the importance of sustainable livelihoods and the need for collective action to achieve this goal. The proposed initiatives, including bees conservation, nutrition gardens, and youth engagement, will be crucial in promoting sustainable livelihoods and contributing to the long-term stability of the community.

Recommendations

- Implement the proposed initiatives, including bees conservation, nutrition gardens, and youth engagement.
- Sustainable Livelihood Products Rates: To be decided by SHG women, as proposed by Anita.
- Develop a comprehensive plan for creating a continuous cycle of sustainable livelihoods.
- Organize webinars and hands-on training programs to equip youth with the necessary skills for sustainable livelihoods.

Group 3/Forest and Wildlife

This group discussed the challenges surrounding community rights, land laws, and the implementation of the Forest Rights Act (FRA) in Uttarakhand. Despite the presence of Van Panchayats as traditional forest governance institutions, their autonomy has been significantly eroded over time, weakening community rights. The Forest Department’s resistance, lack of awareness among communities and policymakers, and increasing commercialization of forest resources further complicate FRA implementation. Additionally, evolving land laws have created uncertainty, favoring wealthy buyers while restricting local communities. The Van Gujjar community has faced persistent challenges in securing their rights, although some successes in obtaining Community Forest Resource (CFR) rights were noted. Carbon credit projects were also flagged as a concern due to their lack of transparency and negative impact on local forest ecosystems.

To address these challenges, the group proposed a three-pronged approach focusing on policy advocacy, awareness-building, and implementation support. Key recommendations included forming a legal cell for policy analysis and training, sensitizing government agencies, engaging media for wider outreach, and fostering collaboration between Van Panchayat groups, NGOs, and community-based organizations. Practical solutions involved strengthening local governance mechanisms like Gram Sabhas, documenting best practices, promoting native species conservation, and piloting a Model Gram Van for sustainable land use planning. The discussion also underscored the importance of celebrating traditional festivals to reinforce cultural ties to land and forests. The group’s insights were further supported by case studies from Uttarkashi and Maharashtra, highlighting successful community-led forest governance models

Challenges and Actionable Solutions

Weak Implementation of FRA & Opposition from FD	Raise awareness, provide legal aid, and engage civil society in advocacy and policy discussions.
Van Panchayat Autonomy Loss & Governance Conflicts	Strengthen community rights through advocacy, clarify governance roles, and push for policy reforms.
Land Laws & Encroachment Issues	Conduct legal analysis, advocate for fair policies, and establish community monitoring for land and forest protection.
Carbon Credits & Commercial Exploitation	Promote sustainable land use, oppose harmful schemes, and encourage native species conservation.
Van Gujjar Community Struggles	Support FRA claims, document success stories, and provide legal and policy assistance.
Lack of Coordination & Awareness	Strengthen partnerships, conduct training for communities and NGOs, and document best practices for knowledge sharing.

Group 4/ Responsible Tourism

Group 4 discussed the challenges and gaps in responsible tourism, emphasizing issues such as mass tourism, unregulated resource consumption, waste management, lack of local ownership, and insufficient awareness among stakeholders. Other concerns included weak enforcement of state policies, the corporatization of tourism, and its impact on wildlife and local communities, including nomadic tribes. The group highlighted the need for sustainable ecotourism models, ethical tourism practices, and better integration of visitor experience with landscape conservation. A major challenge remains the absence of cohesive planning, community-driven tourism initiatives, and success stories that could serve as models for responsible tourism.

To address these gaps, the group proposed community-led tourism models, ethical homestays, and immersive experiences combining nature, culture, and cuisine. They stressed the importance of breaking social barriers through tourism and fostering nature education in schools. Notable destinations like Devalsari, Munsiri, Pawalgarh, and Kyari were identified as emerging examples of responsible tourism. Key action points included mapping and documenting success stories, developing new destinations through community collectives, training nature guides, and raising awareness about government schemes for homestays. They also recommended integrating responsible tourism into school curricula, advocating for landscape-level pilots in collaboration with the administration, and establishing certification mechanisms. Special attention was given to women's participation and enabling tribal communities to run homestays on forest land through discussions with government agencies.

Actionable items

The gathering concluded the 3rd day, summarizing the key actions emerging from the discussion on the 2nd and the 3rd day. The following emerged from the discussions.

- Vikalp Gram - MOOL and SLC, Namgail le, Shaheena, Jagori (?), Malika/Maati (?), Akanksha/Siddarth
- Vikalp Yatra -Arun, Zahid, Naseer, Hamza, Akanksha, Santosh
- Preparation of WHVS Charter Lead: Biju ji, Ajay, Ruth, Ashish
- Cross learning- Titli Trust, MOOL, Akanksha
- Sustainable Livelihoods: Abhishek, Arun, Rajendra, Siddarth, Shaheena, Arunima, Rijuta, Anita, Akanksha
- Forest and wildlife conservation (including HWC): Shramyog, Sanjay, Akanksha
- Responsible Tourism: Sanjay, Shiwank, Taukeer
- Waste management: Naveen, Shiwank, Arunima, Rijuta, Akanksha, NSI
- Community rights, land laws and FRA: Pradeep, Ram, Ruchira, Asif, Gulfam, Akanksha



Leads to present a plan and timeline with budgets in the next 1 month.

Collaborative funding opportunities: Lucky/Rijuta
Leads to present plan and timeline with budgets in the next 1-3 months.

Collaborative funding opportunities: Lucky/Rijuta

The third day ended with a discussion on a question posed by Taukeer. How should we deal with the divisiveness present in society today? One of the key points to emerge from this discussion: no one in the WHVS should feel alone, and the team would stand by one another, and present a united front in dealing with divisiveness.

Day 4

A heritage walk to the Mahadev Shiv Mandir at Devalsari was conducted.

Reflections on the Devalsari sangam

All the participants shared their views on the sangam. Some of the key points that emerged were:

Previously, many people felt overwhelmed and alone. Now feeling a sense of hope, togetherness and strengthened by the collective. Feeling part of something bigger. A platform to present issues and solutions in WHVS, in a collaborative manner. Collaboration. Connection. Role models. Experiences. All these enriched the sangam.

Meeting with local community to discuss conservation challenges in Devalsari

The local youth group presented challenges on the proposed road through the reserved forest at Devalsari and its downsides. The proposed Biodiversity Heritage Site at Devalsari was discussed. WHVS team expressed that we were with them in this struggle. The WHVS ended with village visits to Moldhar and Teva, along with community engagement, and a visit to the Sridev Suman Titli Park, a proposed Biodiversity Heritage Site at Devalsari.



Annexure 1: Participant and organization list

Arun Prasad	Devalsari Paryavaran Sanrakshan, Bangsil
Keshar Singh	Devalsari Paryavaran Sanrakshan, Moldhar
Sanjay Sondhi	Titli Trust, Dehradun
Anchal Sondhi	Titli Trust, Dehradun
Siddharth Singh Negi	Uttaranchal Youth and Rural Development Centre, Narainbagar, District Chamoli
Gulfam Kasana	Van Gujjar tribal yuva sangathan, Haridwar
Asif Ali	Van Gujjar tribal yuva sangathan, Haridwar
Raman Kumar	Nature Science Initiative, Dehradun
Neha Negi	Kalpavriksh, Pune
Pradeep Chavan	Kalpavriksh, Pune
Rajendra Singh Negi	Samudayik Radio Henvallvani, Chamba
Dr. Shaheena Parveen	MOOL Sustainability Research and Training Center, Ganderbal, Kashmir.
Lucky Neog	Dusty Foot Foundation, Delhi
Arunima Pande	Margshala Foundation, Nainital
Ruth Joanne DCosta	Margshala Foundation & HAIJALO, Champawat
Skalzang Chosphal	Snow Leopard Conservancy - India Trust, Leh, Ladakh
Rijuta Dutt	WHVS Media Team, Palampur
Gokul Mer	WHVS, Haldwani
Ruchira Talukdar	Sapna South Asian Climate Solidarity, Kolkata
Anita	Shramyog, Almora
Ajay Kumar	Shramyog, Almora
Shiwank Negi	Chakhuli, Rathuadhab
Naveen Kumar Sadana	Waste Warriors Society, Dehradun
Ramnarayan K A	Trust for India's Nature, Munsiri
Taukeer Alam	Mae, Gaidikatta, Haridwar
Ashish Kumar Raut	Mae (Jeevan Shiksha), Gaidikatta, Haridwar
Trilok Singh Rana	Himal Prakriti, Munsiri
Deepak Singh Pachhai	Himal Prakriti, Munsiri
Ira Chauhan	Citizen for Green Doon, Dehradun
Abhishek Khanna	Jagori Rural, Chamba
Alexandra Goitowski	Humanities Himalaya, Dehradun
Santosh Bhandari	Citizen for Green Doon, Dehradun & UKD

Annexure 2: Day to day agenda

Day 1

- Introduction to Devalsari Society (Arun Prasad)
- Introduction to Vikalp Sangam (Sanjay and Shaheena)
- Introduction to Vikalp Sangam and flower of transformation (Ashish Kothari)
- Participant/organization Introductions (All)

Day 2

- Birdwatching & nature trail
- Reflection from Year 1 and Previous Sangams: Key Takeaways & Challenges (Shaheena and Sanjay)
- Project Planning: Year 2 Strategy (WHVS charter, Vikalp Yatra, Vikalp Gram & Cross learning): break out session & report back
- Storytelling and art sessions

Day 3

- Birdwatching & nature trail
- Deep Dive Discussion on thematic groups. Breakout and report back.
- Summary of actionable items and involvement by team members
- Discussion on divisiveness in society & what we can do about it.

Day 4

- Heritage walk to mandir
- Reflections on the Devalsari sangam.
- Meeting with the local community to discuss conservation challenges in Devalsari.
- Village visits to Moldhar & Teva.





A WHVS Initiative

About the *Western Himalaya Vikalp Sangam*

The *Western Himalaya Vikalp Sangam (WHVS)* is a process to bring together people and organisations working on or interested in alternatives, ideologically and in practice in Jammu, Kashmir, Ladakh, Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand. WHVS is a part of the *Vikalp Sangam*, the Confluence on Alternatives, and has been active since 2016. Our initiatives include launching and maintaining The Himalaya Collective, a platform and website that curates and shares work, success stories, events, and news from the region.

thehimalayacollective.com

Stay updated through our newsletter, *Himal Herald!*

