



2013

# Global Outreach



Govardhan Eco Village

2/4/2013



## Purpose

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It is aim of GEV to not only develop in self but also to create a model which can be replicated in scale across the globe. We started with outreach to our immediate neighboring farmers and tribes, who have gradually acknowledged the benefits of farming over migration to urban areas for jobs.

The next aim was to interact with a variety of demography from the urban areas, to give them the experience of this rural setup. This way we can be contributors to green development by sharing our know-how. There is a saying that the taste of pudding is in the eating. We aim to inspire the youth to think green, deepen ties with educational institutes for joint researches, convince corporate bodies about inclusive growth and in this make allies in sustainability on a global level.

## Link to core concept

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Govardhan Eco Village (GEV) is a humble attempt to highlight the importance of living in harmony with nature and using the gifts that Nature and God have bestowed upon us to serve the society by setting up a model farm community. Our aim is to develop farm communities as they present the only sustainable way of leading a life which is physically, mentally, socially, economically, spiritually and environmentally friendly.

By highlighting the success in our various initiatives we hope there will be more leaders who take up this initiative and create a second wave of Green Revolution.

## The Process

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The visits are centered around importance of natural living consisting of appreciation, respect for and cooperation with nature, flora-fauna and our own self, we at GEV conduct educational and recreational trips with an underlying theme of experiencing living a sustainable lifestyle. Following are events that we conduct -

- 1) School trips (Educational trips for children)
- 2) Santulan (A retreat for Balanced lives)



- 3) Health retreats
- 4) Agricultural training (Government Officials and farmers)
- 5) Eco-friendly living seminars to students and guests.
- 6) Artha Conclave (Corporates)
- 7) Global strides

### School Trips

Students situated in an urban setup usually are at a practical disconnect from natural questions like to where is our food produced? Where do the vegetables come from?

Where does the milk we drink come from?

Here at GEV, school children come from Mumbai and surrounding areas to feel, experience and get enthralled by nature. Every one of them goes back with memories of being connected with nature, land and filled with respect and gratitude for what they are receiving from cows and land.



They are involved in a host of activities including apart from the core community activities. Some of the activities include –

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|-------------------------|---------------------|---|
| ✦ Gardening             | ✦ Playing with Cows | ✦ Boating                                 |
| ✦ Nature Trails         | ✦ Treasure Hunt     | ✦ Swimming                                |
| ✦ Art & Craft           | ✦ Yoga              | ✦ Waarli painting                         |
| ✦ Traditional Adventure | ✦ Mountain Trekking | ✦ Cooking                                 |
| ✦ Sports                | ✦ Rangoli Making    | ✦ Carvings and other decorations in homes |
| ✦ Village tours         | ✦ Vedic Maths       |   |

Apart from theoretical learning they also participate in many activities at GEV. There's even a play area setup challenging children in different kind of rural outdoor sports. Within the last 6 months, approximately **11000 students** have visited GEV and been part of educational tours.



### Santulan (A Retreat for a balanced life)

Santulan is a 3 day retreat for adults. Main idea behind this retreat is to give holistic idea on living with nature, experiencing land, cows, alternative life styles along with seminars that stir the basic thought process,



personality development skills, and stress management etc., blended with pleasure trips, soothing cultural activities and organic meals.

This event is conducted every month. Within span 8 months around 600 registrants have participated. Typical daily Santulan schedule is as follows:

<b>8:00 – 9:00 am:</b> Arrival and Breakfast	<b>9:30– 11.00 am:</b> SESSION 1
<b>11.00 – 11.30 am:</b> Refreshments	<b>11.30 – 1.00 pm:</b> SESSION 2
<b>1.00 – 3.00 pm:</b> LUNCH & BREAK	<b>3.00 – 4.30 pm:</b> SESSION 3
<b>4.30 – 6.30 pm:</b> FREE TIME	Participants can do any the following in the free time (if interested) – Swimming, Adventure sports, Nursery visits & Ayurvedic Massage
<b>7.00 – 8.00 pm:</b> Slideshow on folklore night time activities	<b>8:00 pm:</b> Dinner and Rest

### Health Retreats

Govardhan Ashram offers rejuvenating health retreat packages for a range of visitors that include men, women, college students and corporates. These retreats are conducted both on weekends and during the weekdays. The highlights of the health retreats at Govardhan Ashram are the following:

Typical schedule for a weekend Health retreat at Govardhan Ashram

Saturday	Sunday
8:00-8:30 am: Breakfast	6.00-7.30 am: Yoga session 2
8:30-10:30 am: Welcome address & GEV tour	7.30-8:00 am: Breakfast
10.30-11.30 pm: Seminar 1 – Basics of Yoga, Pranayama & Patanjali yoga sutras.	8.00-10.00am: Seminar
11:30-12:30 pm: Practical asanas & Pranayama workshop	10.30-12 pm – Seminar 3 – Health benefits of Organic products
1:00-3:00 pm: Lunch & rest	12.00 – 1.00pm – Yoga session 3
3:00-4:30 pm: Seminar 2 – Know your body type	1.00-3:00 pm: Lunch & rest
4:30-6:00 pm: Boating / Swimming, Health Games for gents, Goseva for ladies	3:00-4:30 pm: Vedic cooking seminar
7:00-7.30 pm: Mantra meditation	4:30-5:30 pm: Goseva
7.30-8:00 pm: Dinner	5:30-6:30 pm: Games
8:00 pm: Multimedia show on simple health practices	6:30-7.00 pm: Concluding session and take home message
	7 pm – Dinner and return journey

## Agricultural training (Government Officials and farmers)

At GEV we not only hosts students and inquisitive guests but also like minded officials, researchers and hands on farmers who want to revert to traditional farming techniques.

### Government Officials

Maharashtra agriculture department employees conduct their training sessions at GEV and use implementations of GEV as practical demonstration for their employees. Around 350 employees have participated in training camps last year.



### Sustainability skills for Farmers

The farmers learnt the utility of biomass and *gobar* (cow dung slurry) as a fertilizer. The farmers also learnt about other organic farming practices used at GEV like the use of raised beds, natural pesticides, fermone traps etc. As a positive step towards organic farming more than 80% of them agreed to start organic farming individually in 1 acre of their plot. In an endeavor to promote organic farming, GEV has agreed to offer any needed guidance and technical support to these budding organic farmers.

### Eco-friendly living seminars for students and guests

It was a unique learning experience for the students who got to know various benefits of protecting cows - like obtaining cow products, biogas generation etc. The students were also educated in the pitfalls of chemical based farming and witnessed the vast organic fields at GEV. The visit concluded with the GEV team giving a presentation on the topic - "Modern Lifestyle Hazards" which was an eye opener for many of the students

Last 6 months around **500 students** have visited and voluntarily participated in various learning activities, appreciated hands on experience of working close with nature. Many of them became alert to the needs of spreading awareness of this alternative lifestyle.

## Artha Conclave

Artha Conclave is a unique event conducted in Govardhan Eco Village where top industrialists from India and across world assembled to exchange ideas & their business experience with leaders of GEV, who spoke of inculcating a sense of balance in daily chores and business lives. This was a 2-day seminar held on 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> December 2012.



The delegates appreciated the learning from ancient scriptures, in context of natural living, shared by speakers. Some of the topics included "Expressing care in relationships", concern for nature as a fulfillment package that can make their business life more complete,

balanced and fruitful to self and others.

Other speakers at the two-day event included Hrishikesh Mafatlal, N.D. Desai of Apar Industries, Rashmi Kamdar with business interests in Russia and South America, Naveen Kumar of Nityo Infotech, and Rajesh Talwar of Basil Partners.

Some of the guests of honour included: Atul Goel of Goel Ganga Group, R.K. Behera and Ratikant Behera of RSB Group, Ajitkumar Jindal of Tata Motors, Ramesh Talwalkar of Premier Engineering and Rahul Dhoot of Dhoot Techno-projects.

Around **65 industrialists** from different sectors and areas of management **attended** the 2-day seminar. Everyone appreciated integrated natural living model developed here at GEV based on cows, land based on deep and enlightening principles.

## Global strides

A tourist group from the United States of America was in India for a cultural tour, with specific interest in yoga. We have a *Yoga shala* – an open area with a shed used for practicing yoga, and invited them for Yoga sessions. However, we took them on a tour which they expressed appreciation for. Based on this we plan to invite more such groups to increase the green footprint globally.





# Impact and Sustainability

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## Highlights

- ✦ A total of **11,000** students visited GEV in the academic year starting from **June 2012** and still counting. Next year we plan to host 20000 students.
- ✦ Youth who have stayed in the camp have taken up voluntary service to propagate
- ✦ Our visitor facilities are occupied to capacity around the year. All this only by word of mouth publicity.
- ✦ Some feedback from the Artha Conclave –

"Love the conference + the farm. Its been a great transformative experience. Hope to return soon. Namaste!"

- **Lisa M. Kustra , founder and CEO of Plan4Demand**

"Excellent arrangements. Very friendly people. Very good rooms. Good lectures and panel discussions. Felt very happy and going back with very happy feelings and experience. Moreover I got many advises to resolve wordly problems."

- **Bijoy Sahoo , (President HR, Retail & 4G Infotel, Reliance Industries LTD)**

"It has been a sheer bliss for me . I thank the organisers and Basil Partners for organizing such a wonderful, enlightening event. Collection of such positive souls and the atmosphere. The place has such positive energy. This place is undoubtedly the finest soul purifying and nourishing place in earth. Thanks for everything."

- **Anil Biyani, Director PIL Industries Ltd.**

## Innovation in method

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Visitors find enough recreation in the normal activities in the farm. Hence the only and most vital investment for the success of this activity is a guest reception team, volunteered by our community residents. The daily schedule is planned to alternate between an educative & entertaining experience.