

A half page A4 summary of what your project has achieved, in PDF or DOC format.

In India's financial capital, Mumbai, a city built on the backs of the working class - people living in informal settlements have been struggling for absolute basic human needs. The struggle is doubled if one is a woman. Roshani Ki Udaan (meaning The Flight Of Light) started with listening - to my mother, my sisters and the women of my community about the most urgent yet solvable issues faced daily - issues of sanitation and safety. The four week long project was conducted in a locality within Mumbai - overlooked almost entirely by the authorities and party workers. We started off with organising ourselves into a powerful women's union to start dialogues and take actions. Taboo topics like menstruation, female hygiene, violence and safety were discussed openly amongst us. We unanimously decided on 3 key locations where risk persisted the most and thus setting up solar streetlights in these areas. After this, we struggled through bureaucratic obstacles to build a public toilet in a safe spot. The union elected a manager for the toilet who would collect revenue and look after the upkeep which ensures sustainability of the project even after I have resumed college. Towards the end of 4 weeks, hygiene kits containing sanitary pads, toothpaste, soap, disinfectant were distributed to women in need.

Then no more than 2 sides of A4 giving an overview and detail including:

- How you think you made a difference

The solar streetlights did more than eradicate danger, something I had not expected happened - small independent businesses began with the setting up of solar streetlights, operating safely after sunset. The public toilet, despite bureaucratic obstruction, is now cooperatively owned and managed by the very women who fought for it. The women's union, an enduring affinity group, continues to meet as a living space for solidarity.

- What you have achieved

I have birthed hope in my community, we have discovered a liberating truth: when the state fails, we can and will take matters into our own hands. This project proved that direct action is possible.

- What you are proud of

I am proud of the fact that I got to interact and learn from and with the many stakeholders in my community ranging from teenage girls just like me to party workers and authorities.

- What the enduring successes of the project have been

The fact that the public toilet is now cooperatively owned and an elected representative responsible for the management and upkeep of it, the women union continuing to meet even after the end of the project since it has transformed into a self-help affinity group, these make sure that long after the project has been carried out, the ripple effect goes on.

– Where the money was spent

The funds were used to buy materials for the hygiene kit, construction of the public toilet, solar streetlights and labour.

– What lessons you have learned from the project

This project has shown me the truth of the Edward Abbey quote: “Sentiment without action is the ruin of the soul.” I have been angry at injustice for years; now I have learnt to channel that rage into structures that can resist and endure.