



**ANTHILL**  
CREATIONS

**ANNUAL REPORT**

**2022-2023**

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# Founders' Note

-Pooja Rai, Souradeep Paul, Vishesh Gupta

Dear friends and supporters,

With a heart filled with gratitude, nostalgia, and excitement, we are thrilled to announce that Anthill has completed six remarkable years. This milestone stands as a testament to the unwavering dedication of our team and the incredible support of our community.

Our year began with an annual retreat at Auroville in April, where we had the chance to revisit one of the earliest playgrounds we built in 2016. Witnessing the playground still standing strong brought a flood of memories, reminding us of the hours spent brainstorming with children, ensuring their voices shaped their play spaces. During the retreat, we came together as a team to reflect on the years that have passed and chart a course for the future. The deep love our team shares for the communities we serve and for one another was palpable, filling us with a profound sense of purpose and determination.

We want to take a moment to recognize the remarkable growth of Anthill under the leadership of Swetha and the team. Together, we have successfully completed over 372 playgrounds. This year, we also ventured into new territories, extending our impact to the beautiful northeastern states of Tripura and Meghalaya. By creating our first playgrounds in these regions, we have opened doors to joy, laughter, and endless possibilities for countless children. The potential for positive change is immense, and we are only scratching the surface of what lies ahead.

Looking forward, the future holds great promise and an urgent need for our work. The yearning to create safe and stimulating environments for children remains a pressing issue worldwide. As we embark on the next phase of Anthill's journey, we want to express our deepest gratitude to each and every one of you for your unwavering belief in our mission and continued support.

To our dedicated team, tireless volunteers, passionate partners, generous donors, and the communities we serve—thank you. Together, we have laid the foundation for a brighter future where every child can thrive, dream, and build a better world.

# Scaling new heights

A note from our Business and Design Head,  
Swetha Manivannan

It was when I spent an impromptu 20 minutes on a seesaw with 5 children piling on the other end that my sense of joy playtime could bring with it on a daily basis was strengthened multifold. Fast forward to 2 years later, our observations and interactions with children in schools would bring to the surface, the power of play in breaking gender barriers that are often reinforced in classrooms. At Anthill, we consider ourselves play ambassadors and in the past year, we have stretched and challenged ourselves in different aspects of making play accessible to all. 'What does a child need and how to make it fun?' is a question that is etched in our approach and this led to kickstarting the year with a cluster of anganwadis in Tamilnadu where small pockets of 300-800 sq ft were transformed into colorful playscapes. We dove into creating safe, inclusive playscapes for children with visual impairment and brought to life play experiences rooted in sensory development and one that would build confidence in physical navigation. The team has taken play to different geographies from the tribal districts in Maharashtra to Meghalaya and Tripura where we celebrate a very special milestone. A playscape in Charbatapara, Meghalaya is the first playground in the entire village and it was welcomed by children, teachers, and parents alike.

Through these experiences, we have collected stories that speak on inclusivity, the increase in enrollment, attendance rates across geographies, the long hours spent outdoors, and healthy interactions between children. This, we believe, is our treasure. I would also like to highlight a wonderful partnership that heightens making play accessible- By children, For children where pre-university students spent 5 days with us to build playscapes for young under-served children. Three playscapes were built across Bangalore and we are glad to have more hands join us in our mission and also spread the message of environmental sustainability.

As we step into the 7th year with a focus to scale our impact, we channel our efforts through initiatives that will take play to children in remote regions, and aspirational districts in the northeast of India, upcycle large quantities of tyres, and also explore the possibilities of phygital play experiences.

Every child deserves a wholesome childhood. One filled with joy, exploration, nurturing, and curiosity. At our forefront is to create spaces that enable children to do this and much more.



# Vision

At Anthill Creations, we envision a world where every child in India has access to play.

# Mission

We work towards making play accessible to all through interactive, sustainable outdoor playscapes and indoor play solutions that enable holistic development in children.



## Aligning Our Mission with Global Progress



# Let's take a look around

**275000**

tyres are discarded in India every day\*

- 49%** Burnt for fuel
- 11%** Dumped in landfills
- 14%** Repurposed / Retreated
- 26%** Blended use

India runs the risk of being a dumpyard for global waste.



**62%**

of Govt. Schools in India do not have playgrounds\*

Research has shown that a lack of play inhibits the growth of nerve cells in the cerebellum, a critical region for development, potentially impacting children's overall growth and brain development.



\*As estimated by the National Green Tribunal.

\*\*As reported by The All-India School Education Survey (2016)

# What happens in an Anthill playscape?

An Anthill playscape is many things. Sometimes, it's a huge dinosaur that Arun can climb or a musical world that Shilpa can immerse herself in, or even a quest world that Rakesh can visit every day. Our playscapes empower a childhood while protecting the environment!



**COGNITIVE SKILLS**  
assessing the risk of next step in an activity

**786 kgs**  
CO<sub>2</sub> emission prevented

**SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL SKILLS**  
handling a playmate's emotion

**PHYSICAL MOTOR SKILLS**  
engaging limbs and the core to climb up

**150 cft**  
space saved in landfills

**300+ kgs**  
of upcycled tyres

# Noteworthy moments of 2022 - 2023



## CHILDREN'S CHAMPION AWARD 2023: DELHI COMMISSION FOR THE PROTECTION OF CHILD'S RIGHTS

We are honored to receive the Children's Champion Award 2023 in the sports category from the Delhi Commission for the Protection of Child's Rights. Out of 1100 nominees across various categories, this recognition reaffirms our commitment to providing children with safe and nurturing environments to learn, explore, and express themselves.



## SPOTLIGHTED IN GLOBAL CASE STUDY BY CHILDREN AND NATURE NETWORK

Our work at Anthill was featured in a case study published by the Children and Nature Network under the category of health and well-being, alongside 12 other inspiring case studies across the globe. We are glad to present our work as a case study as part of the Global Lessons on Greening School Grounds & Outdoor Learning Project.





## ONE FOR CHANGE: A NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC CHANGEMAKER POOJA RAI

We are proud to announce that our founder and CEO, Pooja Rai, has been featured as a changemaker by National Geographic. In this captivating episode, we delve into our journey, starting from our very first playground, and reveal the intricate process behind each of our innovative creations. Don't miss this inspiring episode, now available for streaming on Disney+Hotstar. Join us as we continue to make a lasting impact through our play spaces.



## FICCI SMART URBAN INNOVATION AWARD

We are thrilled to announce that our playscape at Jakkur Lake in Bangalore has been awarded the prestigious Jury Mention at the 3rd FICCI Smart Urban Innovation Awards in the Smart Infrastructure Category. This recognition showcases our commitment to creating innovative and sustainable solutions that enhance urban spaces. The playscape at Jakkur Lake is a testament to our dedication to providing engaging and inclusive recreational spaces for the community.



## WASH INNOVATION HUB: INK@WASH IN GOA

We were invited as one of the shortlisted innovators to showcase our innovation under the waste management sector at Ink@Wash in Goa, following the successful edition hosted by Wash Innovation Hub (WIH) in Hyderabad last year.

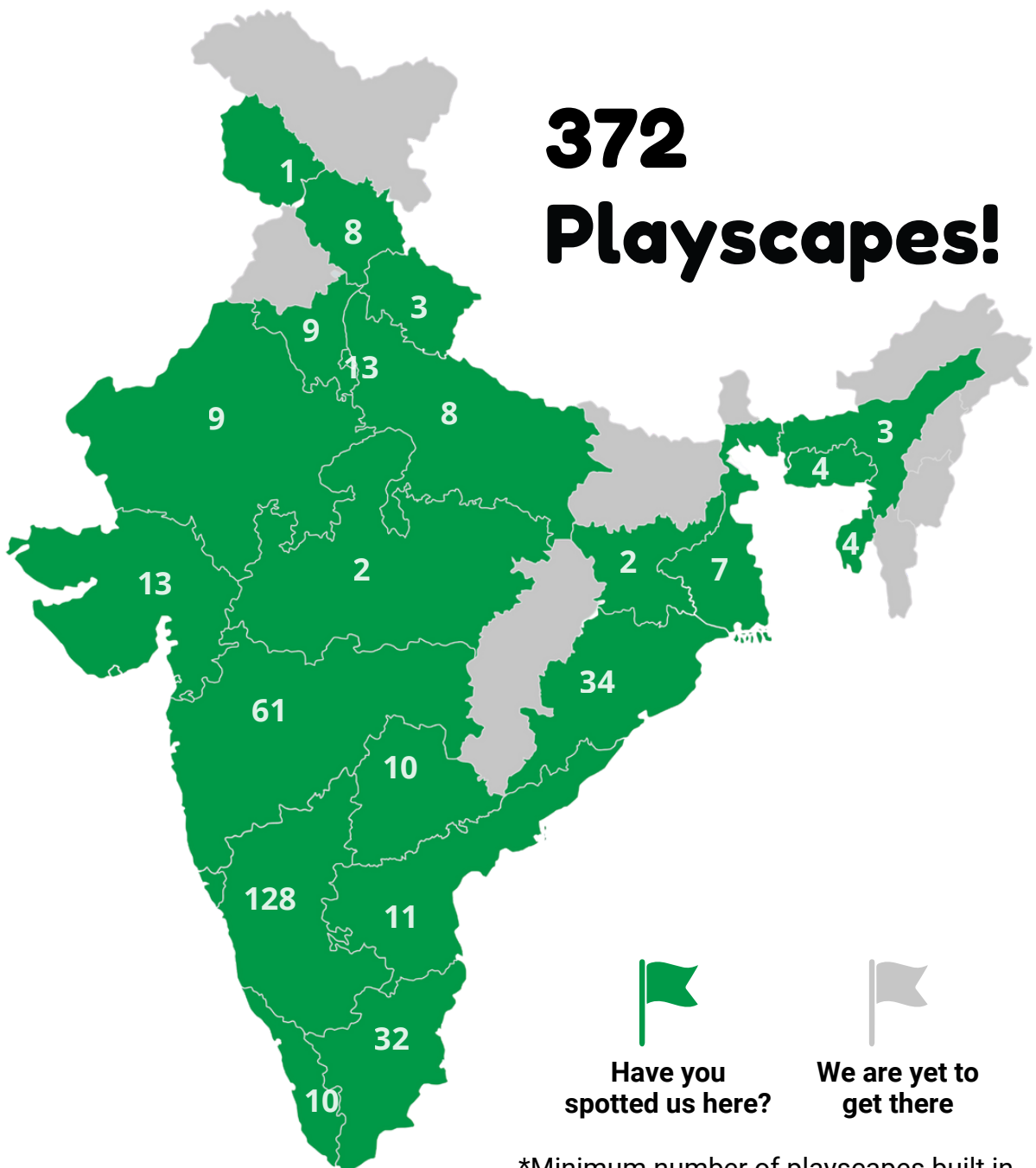
# Year in numbers



# Our play footprint

When we set out to make play accessible to all, we envisioned ourselves as ambassadors cruising across the country building playgrounds on the go. 6 years later, this is where we are!

## 372 Playscapes!



  
Have you spotted us here?

  
We are yet to get there

\*Minimum number of playscapes built in each state.

# What keeps us going...

## Mr. Arghya Saha, SDM Dharmanagar says,

When this proposal came to me from Anthill Creations, I realised that it could be a great addition to the development of schools under the 'Vidyajyoti- mission 100' initiative of the state government. In all 4 Vidyajyoti schools Dharmanagar sub-division in consultation with the principal of each school, the project was undertaken. I am happy that the playground is now functional and the children are happily using it."

## Ms. Neha Soneji, Program Director - Child Development, Tech Mahindra Foundation

Tech Mahindra Foundation has installed two sensory parks with the help of Anthill Creations - one in Mumbai and one in Kolkata. The special thing about these parks is that they have been created and designed for children with visual impairment. The joy on their faces is unparalleled when they sit on swings or see-saws which are safe for them. We are grateful to the team at Anthill Creations

and we would like to congratulate them on embarking on this journey with us of empowering children with disabilities. Looking forward to working together in the future for making play accessible for ALL children.

**"The playscape has increased attendance and enrollment as well by 100 percent!"**



Mr Gughre, Principal,  
ZPUP Nagari

## Mr. Gughre, Principal ZPUP Nagari says,

Through the courtesy of NPCI and Anthill Creations, our school has been provided with good upcycled play instruments and for this, I'd like to thank them on behalf of all our students and teachers. These play

elements are of very good quality and timely importance. These are learning-based elements through which the students enhance their physical capabilities as well as their intellectual capabilities. The playscape has increased attendance and enrollment as well by 100 percent!

"This has helped in increasing the attendance of the kids at school".



Mr. Chafle, BEO,  
Gadchiroli, Maharashtra

### Mr Chafle, Block Education Officer (BEO), Wadsa says,

The elements built on our school playground by NPCI and Anthill, made of tires have been done very well. This has helped in **increasing the attendance of the kids** at school. Also, particularly about the 1st-grade students who find a playground very attractive and it helps them **stay in school and not choose to drop out**. The variety of games where the kids have to climb, slide, balance, and use their creativity in playing helps with their physical, and mental growth, which is very important. We request that Anthill build such playgrounds in all our Zilla parishad schools. These are important element to any school.

"Due to this, the attendance of students at school has increased and students take timely benefit of this playscape".



Tarachand Dhomle,  
Teacher,  
ZPUP Amgaon

### Mr. Tarachand Dhomle, Teacher, ZPUPAmgaon says,

My students at the school here are being benefited due to these elements. We send our kids to the playscape area during a dedicated play period along with a teacher. Whichever class or grade students go to play, their class teacher is present with them on the playscape. Due to this, the attendance of students at school has increased and students take timely benefit of this playscape.

# Stories on ground

Stories are everywhere, we just have to listen to them! Read on to live through the experiences of children, communities and our team.



## PLAY INCLUDES EVERYONE

When we got the opportunity to build inclusive playscapes for children with visual impairment, we took a step back to understand the lack of such inclusive spaces for specially abled children. Through the two playscapes in Badlapur, Maharashtra and Kolkata, West Bengal, we explored sensory play elements that engaged children in sound, touch, feel and through materiality. The designs also focused on building confidence in physical navigation. Braille was also used to add text through welding. The word 'Anthill' was written on one of our sensory rollers with help from the Principal.



## IS BUILDING A PLAYSCAPE ALWAYS FUN? A PROJECT MANAGER'S VIEW

I joined Anthill recently in Feb to explore the work and potential of architecture and design in the social sector, putting to use my skills and experience for the most underserved in our communities and the larger society. In this short time, I've already had the opportunity to work on as many as eight projects with varying degrees of involvement, two of which I executed wholly. The journey of a playscape is a fun and

exciting one right from the planning stage to the final execution with its fair share of ups and downs, each a valuable learning experience. The rush of the 7-8 days on-site during the execution can be excruciating, but very rewarding at the end when the playscape is completed. It is really heartening to see how the children, mostly from government schools, largely deprived of functional playscapes, really take to these Anthill playscapes with sheer joy, enthusiasm and gusto! Photographing these moments has been truly fulfilling. *"We play here every day and love coming to school now"* - is a sentence I will remember, said by a student from a remote school in the interiors of the Gadchiroli district.

**- Joshua Fernandes, Project Manager**



## BRINGING PLAY TO TRIBAL DISTRICTS

Rina walks to her school every morning. She walks past forest with distant wildlife, tall trees on a narrow path until she reaches a clearing in which her school is nestled. In remote tribal districts in India, many children like Rina are familiar of a school that is made up of a couple of classrooms and an empty ground.

One day, in a village called Charbatapara in the West Garo hills of Meghalaya, the empty ground had got a new identity. Colourful structures that children could climb over, crawl through, swing from and balance themselves on occupied the ground. The principal at Charbatapara



Lower Primary School says, "**The kids are enjoying the playground very much and they are very happy to see it as it is the 1st playground of the village.**" About 1350 kilometers away in the tribal district of Gadchiroli, Maharashtra, the Block Education Officer of Wadsa observes that children are excited to come to school and attendance rates are increasing. A school is an important part of a childhood, it is a place to learn, develop key skills and one's personality. A school is also a place where children explore their creativity, where they are introduced to different social interactions, where they learn collaboration, conflict resolution and more. A playscape has the power to provide the necessary space for a child to explore these aspects in their own pace. A playscape is thus an extension of the classroom, a necessary aspect of every school.

With increasing awareness and support from different stakeholders at the grassroots and policy level, we can make playspace equity a reality.

India is blessed with a diverse cultural landscape with tribal districts scattered across various states including Maharashtra, Meghalaya, Jharkhand, Odisha, Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat, and Rajasthan, among others. Children in these aspirational districts have a right to play and thrive in a childhood that will enable their physical and mental well-being. Through our work at Anthill, we wish to take our climbers, playstations, swings and more to every child in India, even if the concept of a playground is unknown to them. Let's show them a different way to explore the world and themselves!

## A DREAM COME TRUE

Having the 1st Anthill playground in Tripura is an accomplishment I hold close to my heart. My dream to build a playground in my home state started right when I joined Anthill Creations (approx. 4 years ago) and my wish for the same is finally fulfilled now with this project with NPCI.

The process has been tumultuous with various rejections as well as helping hands from various government departments. Finally we could incorporate the playground into the ongoing state government initiative of "Vidyajyoti-Mission 100 schools" and present the children with such a colourful space. Wishing smiles for children all across!

**-Mayukh Deb, Business Development Manager**





# Project Highlights

## EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT THROUGH PLAY

Transforming spaces into colourful playgrounds at 9 anganwadis across Kanchipuram District in Tamilnadu.



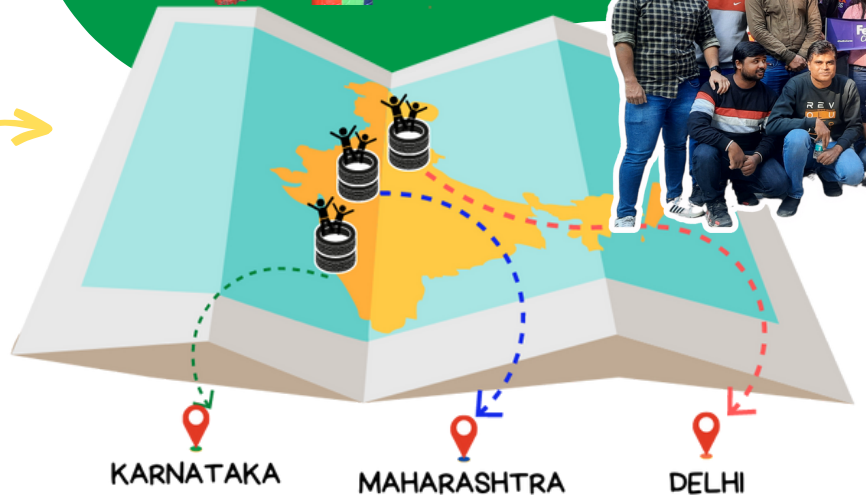
## BY CHILDREN FOR CHILDREN

Construction of 3 anthill playscapes by the students of Mallya Aditi School in Bangalore



## THREE X THREE

Trotting 3 major cities to set up 3 playscapes each in Delhi, Bangalore, and Mumbai with FEDEX.



## PLAY FOR ALL

Inclusive playgrounds for children with visual impairment, thalassemia across Badlapur, Bangalore and Calcutta

## GOVERNMENT PARTNERSHIPS

Public playgrounds in Municipalities of Rajamahendravaram, Bhongir, Yadagirigutta

## BRINGING PLAY TO NORTHEAST

Taking play to the Northeast  
8 playscapes built across Meghalaya and Tripura



# How was all that possible?

We thank each one of you for being a vital part of our mission to make playscapes a reality for children across India. You are the reason for the hundreds of happy smiles on the children's faces!



# Our journey going forward

## PLAYFUL TRAILS: EMPOWERING THE NORTHEAST THROUGH PLAY



There are over 67000 schools in the Northeast India and over 4723700 children do not have access to play. With a focus on aspirational districts, this project aims to bring play to government schools in remote regions. Playful Trails will include building upcycled playgrounds that enable physical, cognitive and socio-emotional development in children during their developmental ages.

## **TYRES TO SMILES: TRANSFORMING 100 TONS OF TYRES INTO PLAYGROUNDS**



A single playground is built by upcycling anywhere between 300 - 600kgs of tyres. Tyres to Smiles aims to convert 100 tons of tyres to interactive, colourful playgrounds across states that discard highest number of tyres, namely Karnataka, Maharashtra, Tamilnadu, Delhi and Gujarat.

## **THE GAME LAB ANTHILL X NOTABOT**

In collaboration with NotaBot. We bring forth The Game Lab where 'phygital' interactions are created using AI-powered digital games and physical tools that bring to life various math and science concepts.



# Play Champions of Anthill

Our work has been shaped by many enthusiastic individuals who have played vital roles over the years. When like-minded people come together, impact is an outcome. Here, meet the team that thinks of play every waking moment!





# ANTHILL CREATIONS

TO EVERY CHILD,

WE ARE HERE TO FULFILL YOUR FUNDAMENTAL RIGHT TO  
PLAY, AND TO DEMONSTRATE THAT PLAY IS NOT A MERE  
LUXURY, BUT AN ABSOLUTE NECESSITY.