

# Rhythms from the Riverbanks

## Executive summary

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TERI and Power System Operation Corporation (POSOCO) initiated an educational programme for college students called 'Rhythms from the Riverbanks'. This programme aimed to make them understand the culture of two of the greatest river cities of India—Delhi and Kolkata, in November 2012.

It weaves together the issues of history, culture, economy, and sustainability of these river cities with the intention of inspiring youth to work towards the appreciation, recognition, and dissemination of the rich cultural heritage of these cities. While Delhi is situated on the banks of Yamuna, Kolkata has the gentle Hooghly flowing through it. The project aimed at creating awareness amongst students about these cities, its various spaces, and historical progression. There was also an attempt to promote 'cultural leadership' amongst youth to become the custodians of the rich heritage of their cities.

### Objectives of the project

- To make young people learn, recognize, and appreciate traditions and culture of their respective cities, to become culturally more empowered citizen of the world that can embrace diversity and celebrate differences.
- To develop skills in young people to critically analyse the existing culture and lifestyle, and be able to take measures to change the paradigm, if required.
- To develop leadership qualities in young people to be active citizens capable enough to steer societies towards a culture of sustainability and coexistence.
- The project was initiated as a pilot project for six months (November 2012–April 2013). 10 colleges from each city and 100 students were selected to participate in the programme.

### Key activities of the project

- Knowledge Workshops – These workshops were conducted by TERI to sensitize students on two topics – (a) Influence of space, landscape, and popular narratives for identity construction in river cities, (b) Towards a cultural future of sustainability and coexistence. Field Visits – One field visit per city/town was organized. While Delhi students visited Mathura, Agra, and Vrindavan, students from Kolkata visited Chandan Nagar. Through these visits students gained the first-hand knowledge on the rich civilizational heritage of their region.
- Film making workshops – 20 college students from each city were part of a five-day film making workshop in each city. These workshops focussed on art, culture, and sustainability of the river town. They were also viewed a 10 minutes long documentary film on the cultural heritage of these cities.
- Action Projects – The students undertook 'Rhythm Projects' on any one art and cultural aspect of their respective cities. These projects focus on documenting art and cultural heritage of the region which have long been forgotten or are fast getting lost in the glitter of modernization. The idea behind having students do these action projects is to develop leadership skills

in them to independently undertake projects and be champions of change. These projects received a small funding amount for implementation.

- Rhythms Village—‘Rhythms from the Riverbanks’ culminated into ‘Rhythm Village’ a two-day conference organized at Miranda House, New Delhi on March 18–19, 2013. Renowned historians, sociologists, artists, and musicians were invited. This also acted as a forum for the students to present their ‘Rhythm Projects’ to a larger audience. Competitions – A photography contest was organized in each city. These pictures have been published in the form of a diary cum book.