



Building Integral Ecologies

*Reflections and Recommendations from
our Time at Madhuban*

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Carleton College: Globalization and Local Responses in India

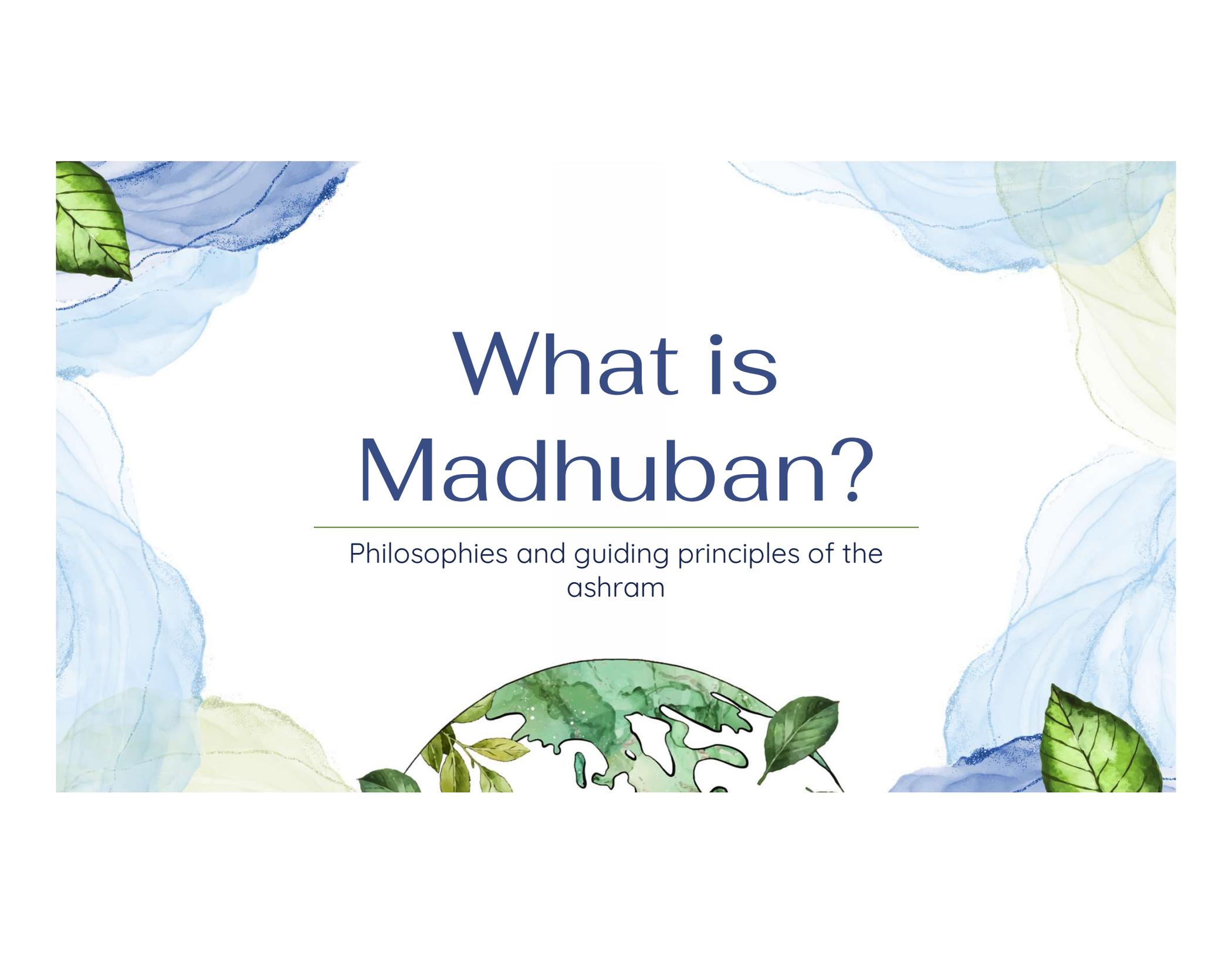


ROADMAP



INTRODUCTION TO MADHUBAN	What is Madhuban?: Philosophies and guiding principles of the ashram
RESEARCH METHODS	Participant observation, transect walks, and collaboration
INTEGRAL ECOLOGY	Interlinkages between Madhuban programs; holistic development
RECOMMENDATIONS	Civil rights education, recruitment and retention, aspirations of Khushali & youth
BRINGING THIS HOME	Connections to our own research and education





What is Madhuban?

Philosophies and guiding principles of the
ashram

What is Madhuban?

- Sri Aurobindo and The Mother
 - Philosophies and programs
- Main goal working with youth for integral education, holistically developing an individual
- Spread the idea of integral living to other outreach points
- Targeting communities within 5km of the ashram



Contextualizing Integral Education

NEP 2020



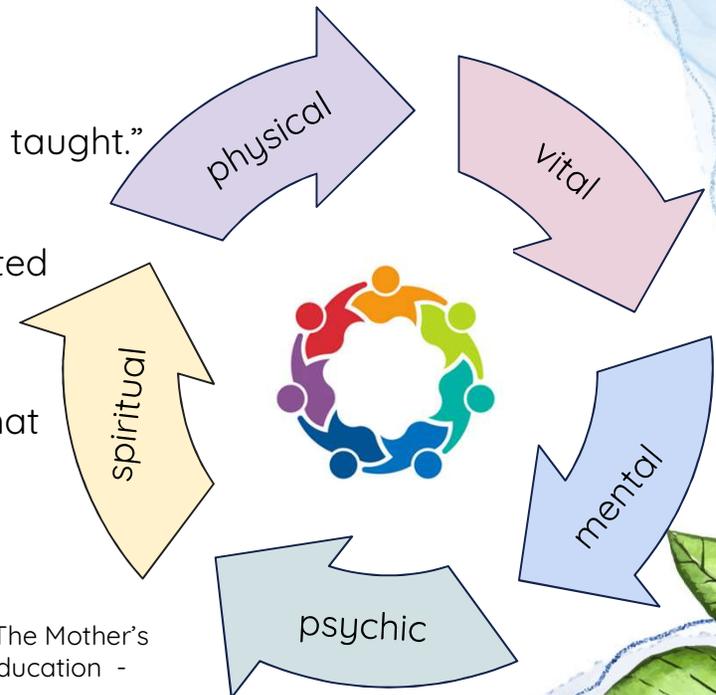
- Transform individual into global citizen



Integral Education

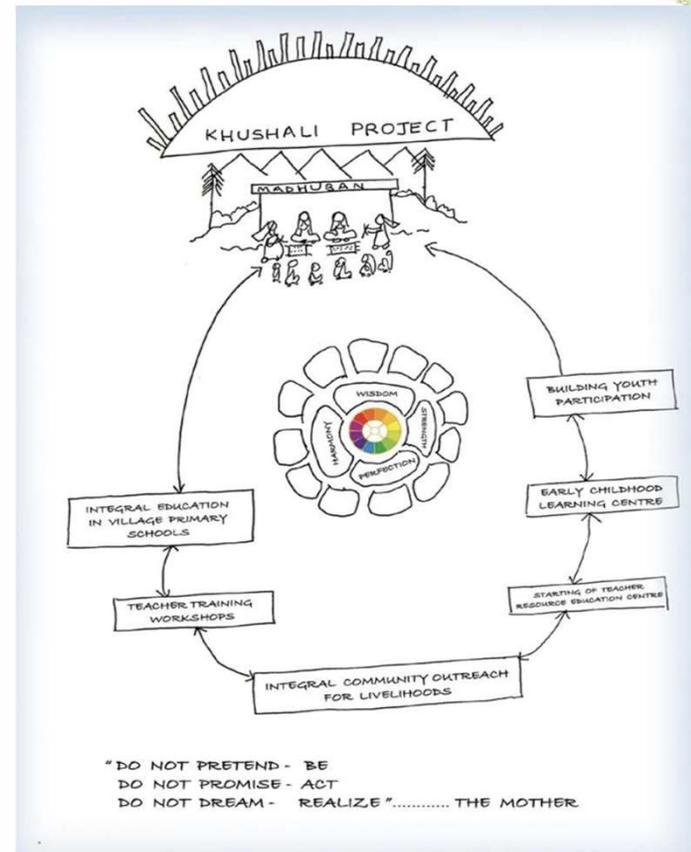
- “Nothing can be taught.”
- “Mind must be consulted in its growth.”
- “Take the mind from what is near to what is far...”

— Sri Aurobindo & The Mother’s Integral Model of Education - trec book



“Genesis” of the Khushali Project

- **Problem:** integral education was originally accepted for its core spirit but *rejected* as parents felt that literacy and the top down method they were used to was not being applied in their curriculums.
- **Solution:** include parents in the process of building a learning village environment so they could understand the importance of this integral education and its relationship to livelihood.



Original diagram
credit: TREC
book

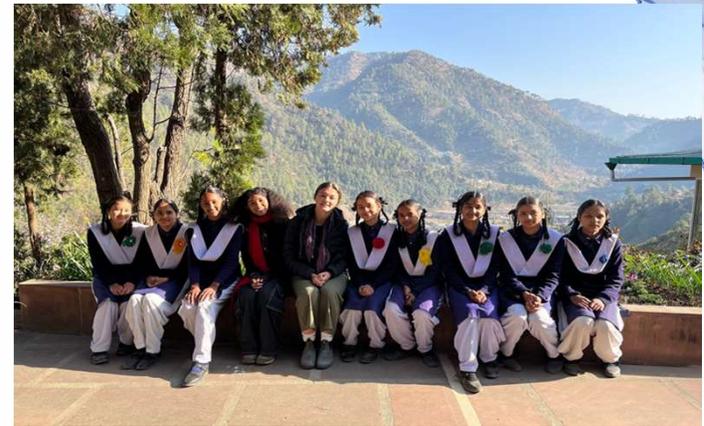
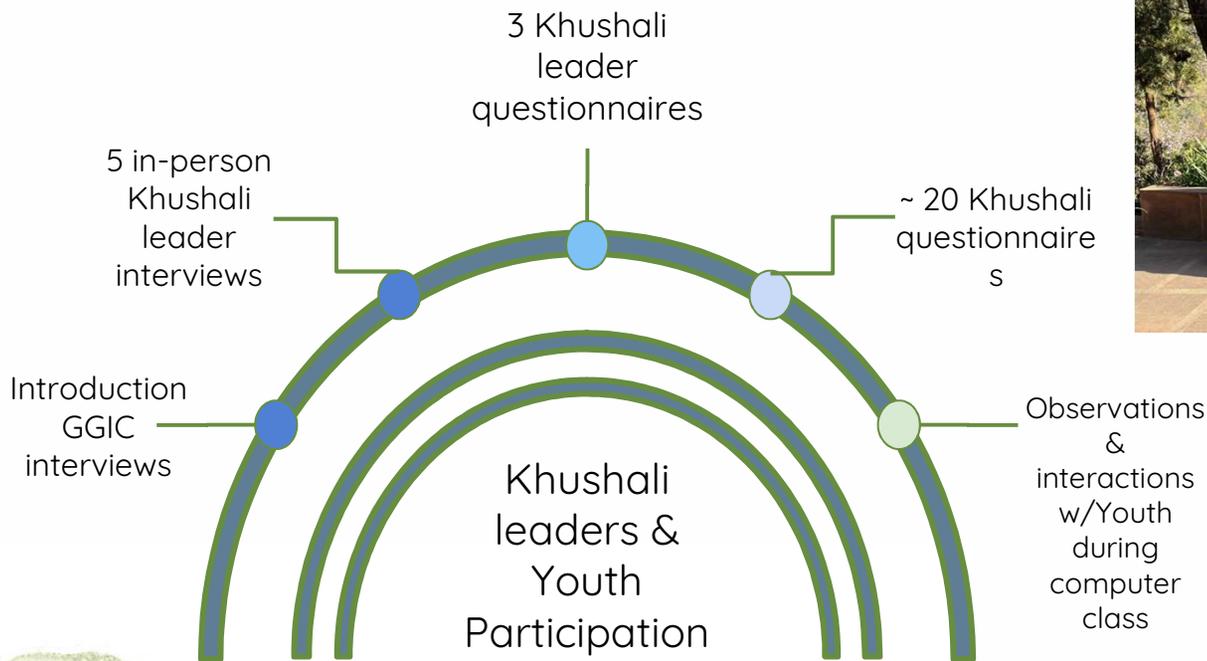


Research Methods

Where is our data coming from?

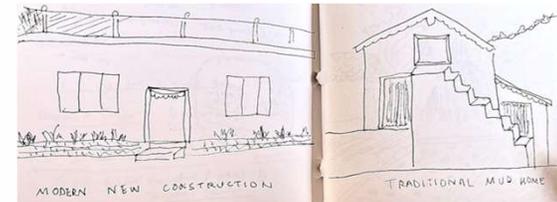
Where is our data coming from?

Interviews/Questionnaires/Observations



Where is our data coming from? (cont.)

Artwork credit: Anjali Capila



Transect walks



Home Visits

Environment

Schools



Manju's Home

Geeta's Home

Cloudburst /River

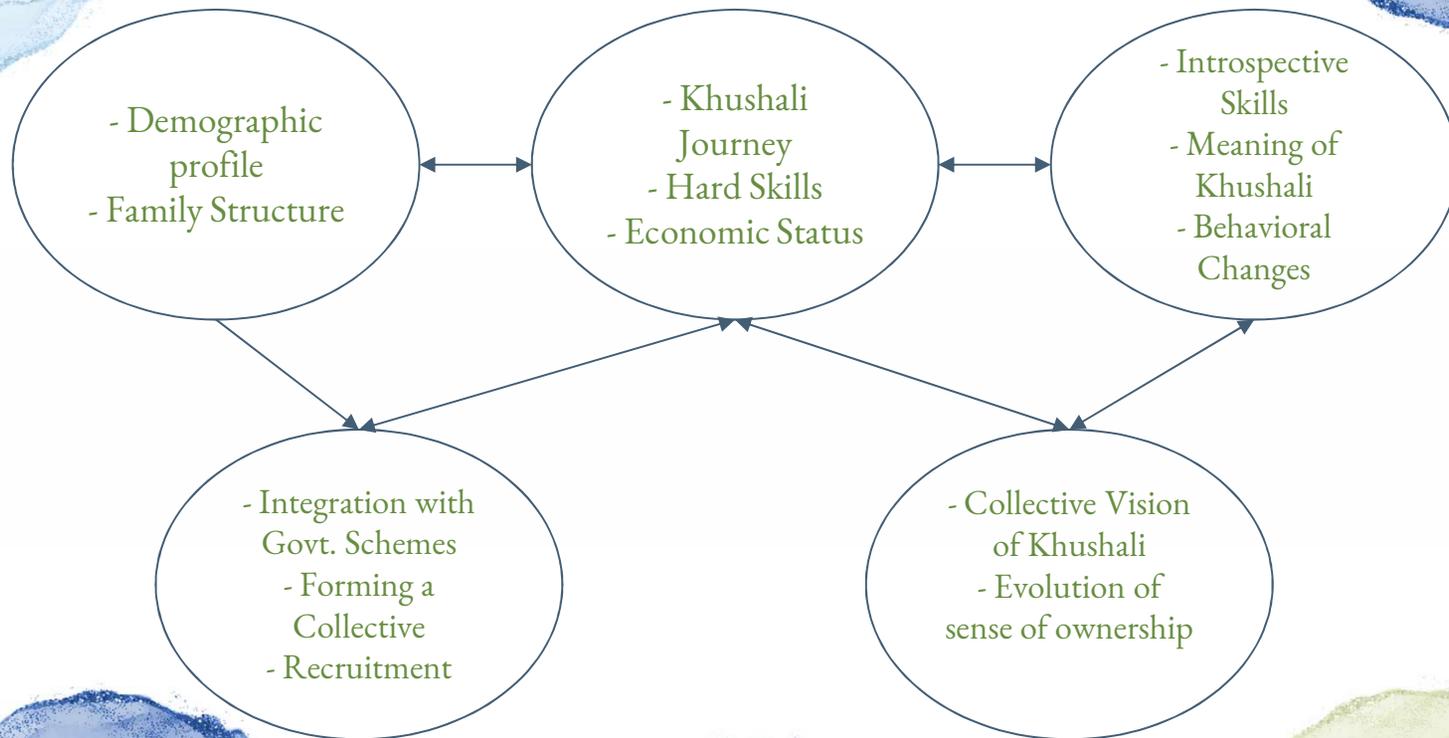
Infrastructures

GIC/ GGIC

Sunrise Private School



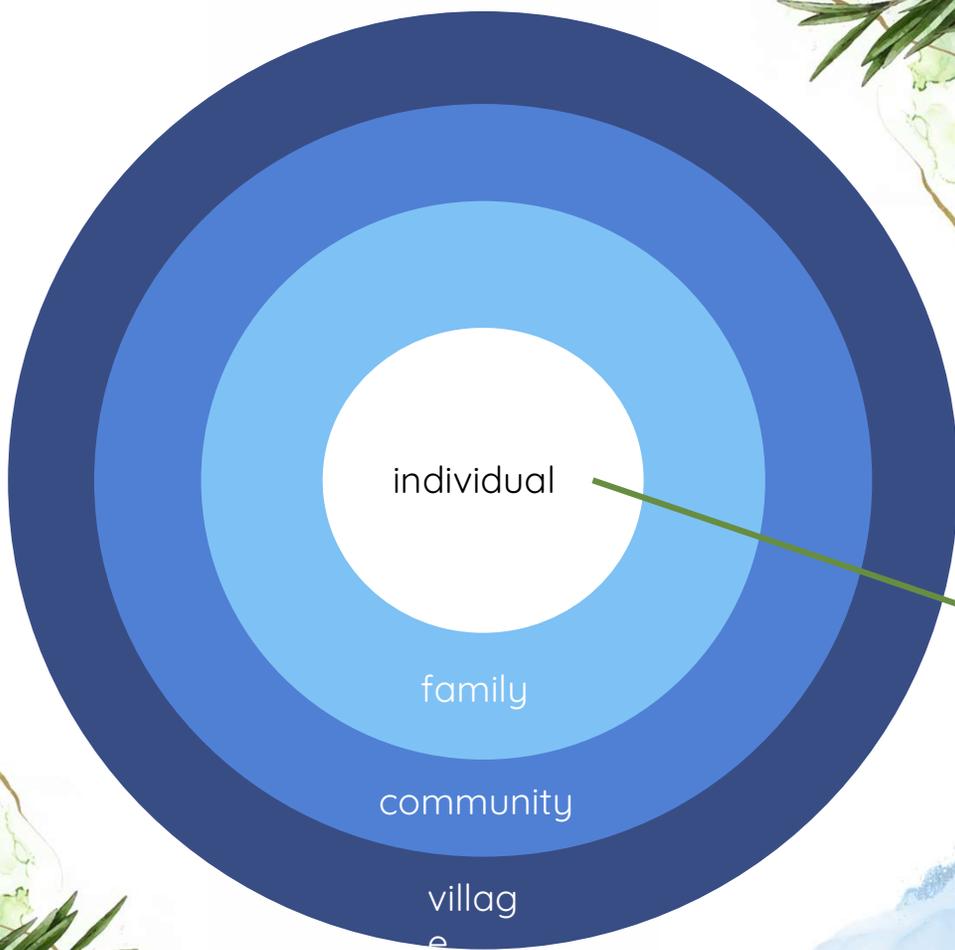
Emerging Themes





Integral Ecologies

Interlinkages between Madhuban programs



Government schemes and programs

Diagram credit - Integral education - "from near to far"

Livelihood

- Livelihood = growth of skill + self-growth
 - More sustainable, development-oriented
- Empowering women and families, restructuring gendered societal relationships
- Interpersonal connections develop into integral ecologies
- Preservation of indigenous craft knowledge and an ability to generate livelihood from it



Education

How does the village view education?

- most women's perceptions of gender equality was being stabilized by education
- TREC mission is to leverage this into their program to mitigate urban migration and decrease school dropout rates

How is khushali impacting their children's education?

- The skills from khushali are entering homes
 - Geeta's son making marigold
- Sugandha and Chitra's intervention with primary wing of government schools
- Impacting dreams & aspiration of youth

How is the youth participation program impacting their education and self?

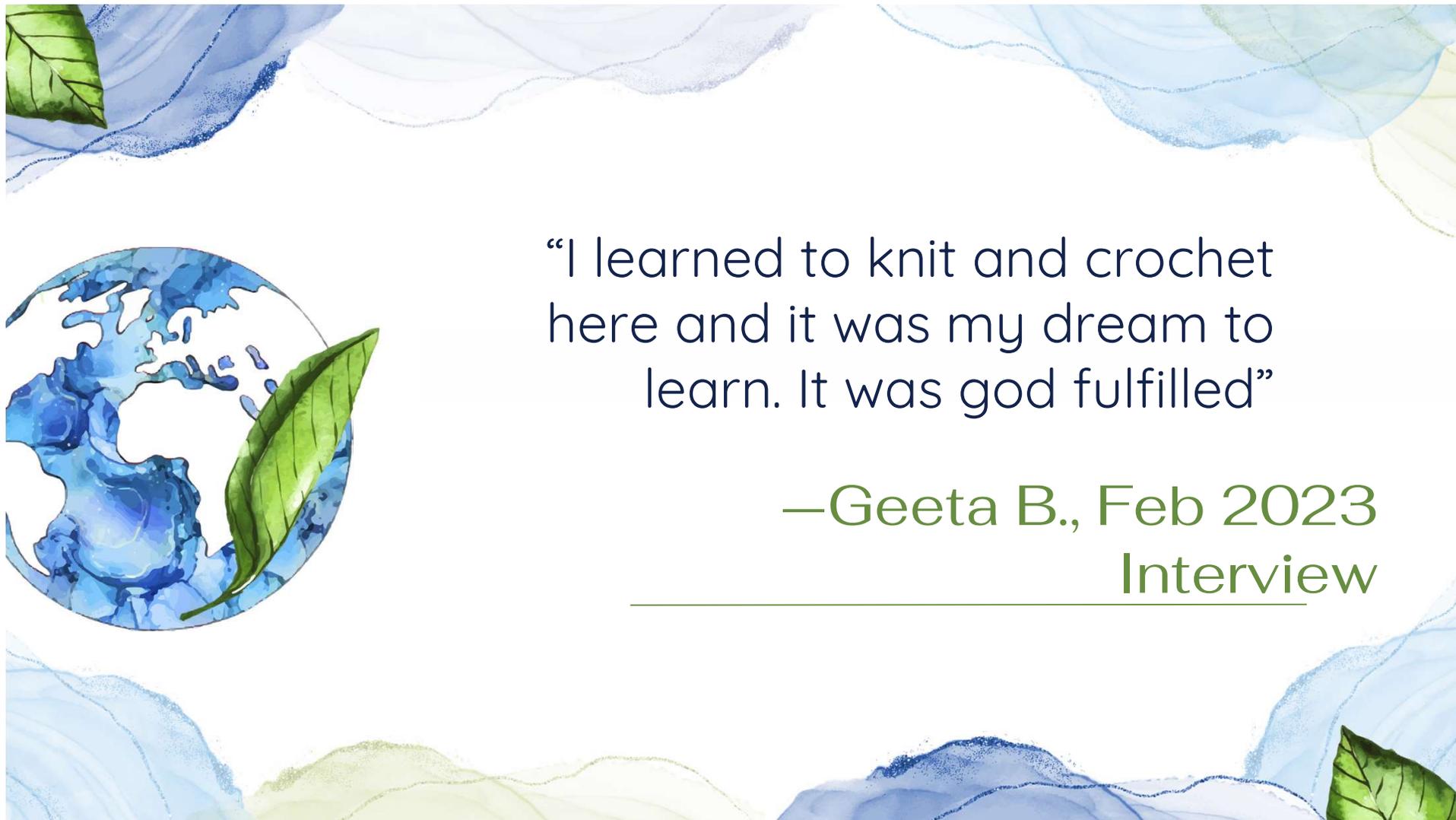
- Spirit of collaboration across different grades
- Awareness of what is 'near them'
 - Assignment of looking at the earth on their journeys from school ↔ Madhuban and homes ↔ school
 - Cloudburst narrative
- Connecting with self (sense of ownership and psychic presence in me)
 - Neha's interest in biology to learn more about how her own body functions (feminine health awareness)



Self-Development

- Self :
 - (1) Me and my inner light : becoming aware of my inner friend
 - 2) **outside societal framework :**
 - Gaining confidence in their craft and communication skills
 - In developing their hard skills, they are intrinsically building their self-growth
 - Collaboration
 - Financial independence
 - Increased respect from family members
 - Division of domestic labor is equitably distributed
 - Perceptions of themselves
 - New sense of identity
 - Sense of ownership & agency
 - Sense of poise





“I learned to knit and crochet here and it was my dream to learn. It was god fulfilled”

—Geeta B., Feb 2023
Interview

Village Community Development

- Largest scale of integral ecology
- Benefits of Khushali and education initiatives spread through community
- Redefining traditional societal structures to make room for holistic individuals



Community Development: Challenges

To begin building a strong community, it must first rest upon a strong foundation.

Cloudburst: October 2021

- Destruction of roads, bridges, homes, and farmland
- Redirection of river



The background features a watercolor-style illustration. At the bottom center, a green globe is partially visible, surrounded by several green leaves. The top and sides of the page are decorated with soft, flowing blue and light green watercolor washes that resemble waves or mist.

Recommendations

Additional steps to foster integral ecologies



Civil Rights & Duties

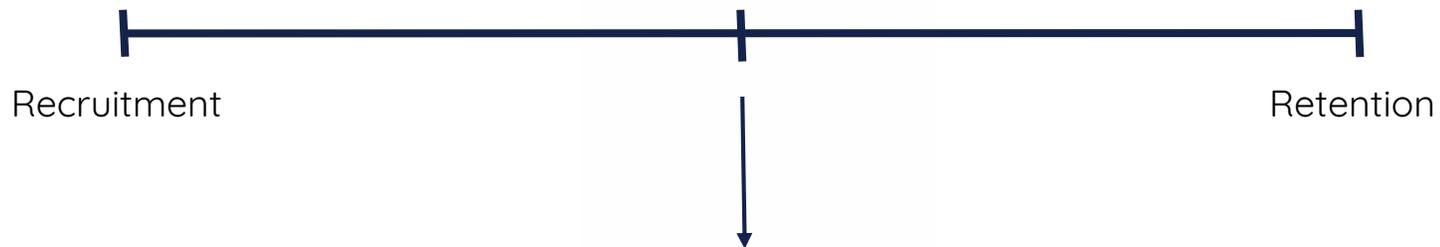
- Geeta's transect walk (informed by taresh ji)
 - Does not own her land but she tills the farm → comes with instability which impacts livelihood
 - Getting a lawyer in to look at recordkeeping and necessary documents for land ownership
 - What kind of land is the government allocating to people?
 - How can land ownership drastically impact one's livelihood?
 - What is the government process for land ownership?
- **Questions to consider in the future:**
 - In your journey of khushali, whom have you met + learnt from?
 - Are you aware of your civil rights and duties?
 - Would you be interested in learning more about your civil rights?
 - What skills would you like to learn?

Khushali's Independence

- Growth of the individual → desire for Khushali to grow
1. Aspirational and realistic goal setting
 2. Educational certificates in craft
 3. Sales and marketing workshops
 4. Targeting younger generations



Recruitment and Retention



- Fostering strong interpersonal relationships
- Focusing on craft skill expansion, areas of high demand
- Mentor program focused on roadblocks for women remaining with Khushali
 - Time management
 - Long distances
 - Expecting fast additional income

Original diagram
credit: Anjali Capila,
Anju Khanna



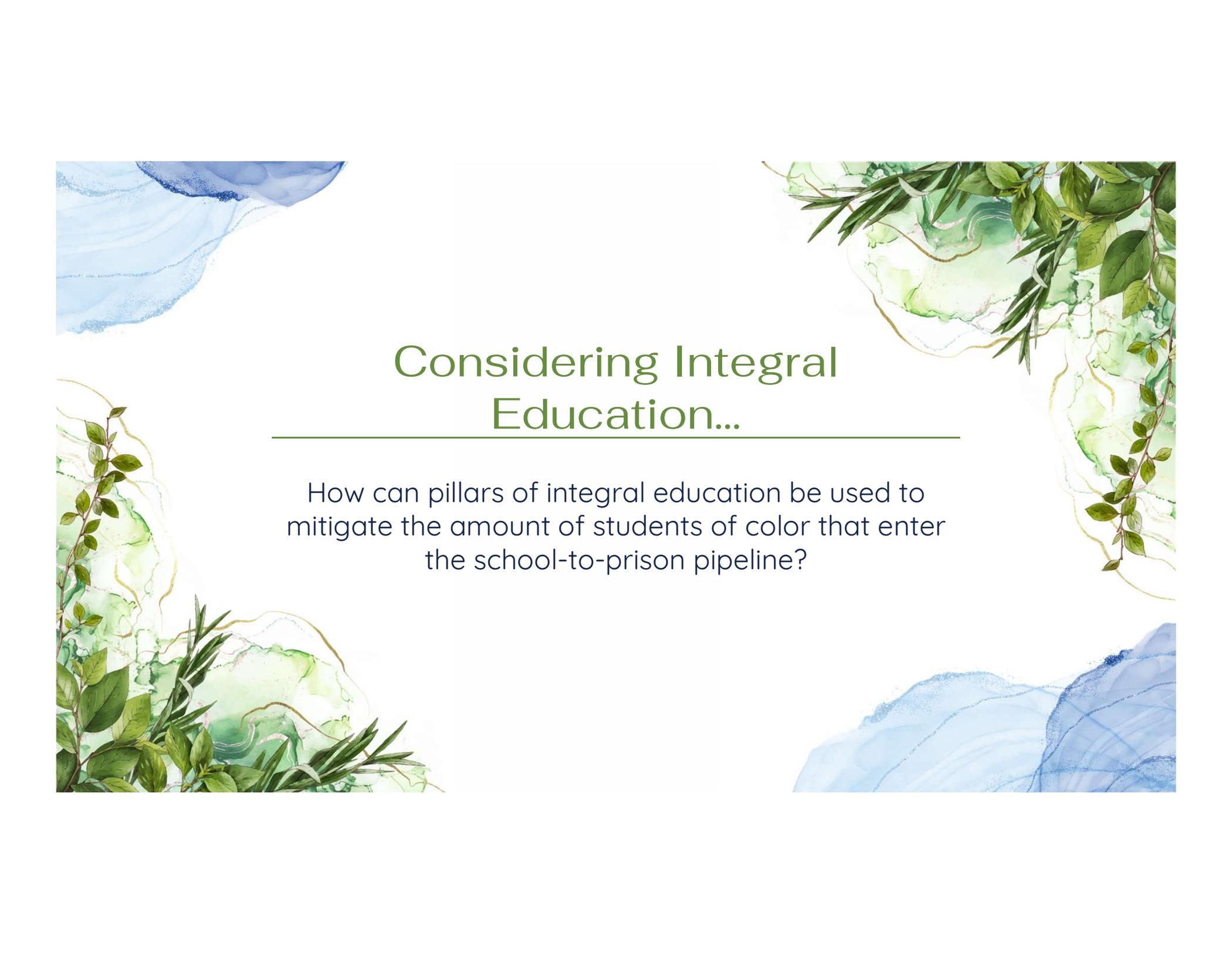
Fostering Dreams Amongst Youth

- Symbolic representation: Youth's wear and tear of shoes
 - Shows sincerity and perseverance in accessing education as a value but also the reality of the long journey they take to get education.
 - Economic barriers → seeps into their aspirations
- Questions to consider for future program planning:
 - How can we encourage student to dream within their locality?
 - How do the youth perceive volunteers?
 - How can we heal generational trauma that allow students to dream?
- Career counseling



Bringing This Home

Additional steps to foster integral ecologies



Considering Integral Education...

How can pillars of integral education be used to mitigate the amount of students of color that enter the school-to-prison pipeline?

Making Space for the Self

- Emphasis on the combination of skill and self to create the holistic individual
- Focus first on areas of access



References

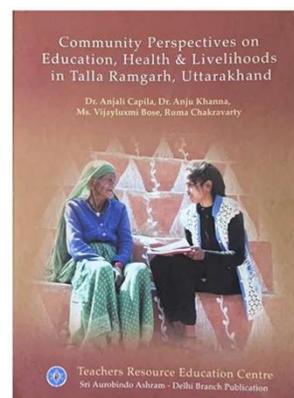
TRANSFORMING LIVES: STORIES OF CHANGE
‘KHUSHALI LIVELIHOOD PROJECT’
‘MADHUBAN’ TALLA RAMGARH DIST. NAINITAL



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