

# 2021-22 ANNUAL REPORT



# About Clothes Box Foundation



For almost a decade, the Clothes Box Foundation has strived with the mission to repurpose clothing into something meaningful. We have helped the underprivileged with wearable and spread warmth among them through seasonal adversities. Today, not only do we make clean clothes accessible to all but also repurpose discarded clothes and textiles into utilities. We strive to become a pioneer in the up cycling sector and create a green impact. After being listed in Forbes Under 30, Asia in 2019 and winning the National Youth Award in 2017, the organization has steadily been walking towards its purpose to serve the humanity and the planet. We have

created a chain that utilizes clothes/fabric to the last mile and impacts lives at every step of the way. Together With India distributes wearable in the most inaccessible terrains of our country and helps people fight seasonal adversities. There are regions in our country where two men share one pair of pants and two women share one sari. Our country has places that are engulfed in darkness half of the year, with no facilities for medicine, education, clothing, clean water, food, etc. These places and people who dwell here belong to a part of humanity that has been isolated for ages. We have reached 3.7 million such people, living across 124 villages in our country.

# A note from the Founder



Sajan Veerr Abrol  
*Founder and  
Chairman Trustee*

“We face challenges at every turn: a dynamic environment, unprecedented regulatory actions, and volatile recovery. Resilience, however, has still been the defining force for humanity. While the turmoil did have severe implications for our organization and the industry, the impact has been far more grave on other sections of our society with disruption in the global order.

Looking through the tunnel, the non-profit industry has thrived with institutions and individuals contributing more towards the social impact projects and answering the call to millions in need during the pandemic. However, peripheral ramifications have been disruptive, from work order shifting to online completely and social distancing stopping us from performing the ground-level activities, almost in the entire first half. However, on the bright side, the pandemic also allowed us to put aside our differences, offer services and work with hundreds across the country to save lives.

The second half of the year was redefined entirely with new energy from my long-bred brainchild – Refresh. Clothes Box Foundation started with a simple mission to make clean clothes accessible. What motivated me as a founder back then was the need people were in during natural disasters. I wanted to alleviate some of their sufferings, and clothes seemed a simple way. One year into building the organization, I realized how our mission meant so much more. Going on distribution drives and interacting with beneficiaries shaped a part of my personality that I can never let go of. The idea was simple, but the impact was extraordinary. And when we started with Refresh, it was a turning point. The entire concept of sustainability and recycling propelled me even more. Over a few months, I met people passionate about green impact, vocal about climate change and how real it was. Travelling has made me witness firsthand what our civilization has been doing to our planet.

I feel grateful to be able to undo some part of it. Today, I believe my work is not only a manifestation of my personality as a giver but a way to be a part of something bigger than myself. I am working towards a cause, a cause that can do a lot of good for us as a community and the planet, and I believe that's a privilege not many of us get.

Looking at the year gone, it has been an incredible journey that was made possible only by the continued trust, support, and encouragement of our partners and our team, who worked day and night with the motive to make a lasting impact in the world. There have been challenges, and

there have been achievements, there have been setbacks, and there have been milestones. But the change continues to unfold every year. And with each passing year, with renewed energy, we feel recommitted to the mission and vision we started. This annual report will give you a glimpse into our last year's journey and highlight some of the most inspiring stories from the ground that became our motivation on the way."

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# Highlights: Activities through 2021-22

**1.2 million**

Lives impacted through clothes distribution

**56 women**

Achieved sustainable livelihood through Refresh

**35 women**

Placed in factories of large global brands

**89 tons**

Fabric recycled into blankets and bags for needy

**200 tons**

Carbon Footprint saved through recycling and distribution

**20 companies**

Partnered with to achieve carbon neutrality

**20 thousand**

Happy Donors who contributed to our cause



# Tackling Covid-19

As the second wave of Covid-19 swept the country, the Clothes Box Foundation took the ground to help the needy. From taking care of the families of marginalized women trainees in their center to distributing ration across the country, the organization left no stone unturned to support the poor.

## 5.5 million disbursed towards Covid-19 Relief Activities



Clothes Box Foundation distributed rations and other relief items - PPE Kits, Pulse Oximeter, Hand Gloves, Mask (N95), Portable Beds, Sanitizer in the most underserved places across India. Our target group was mainly poor families in rural India including daily-wage earners, migrant workers who had no other source of income. We collaborated with Delhi police, Indian Army, several NGOs and hospitals for such distributions.



We created an oxygen concentrator bank that supplied oxygen to covid victims in the NCR on a need basis. There was an acute shortage in the supply of oxygen and oxygen cylinders were not sufficient to meet such a huge demand. Therefore, we procured oxygen concentrators to help patients with a recurring supply of oxygen. An oxygen concentrator delivers air that is up to 95% oxygen and hence reduces the dependence on exhaustible cylinders. The facility helped hundreds during the turmoil.



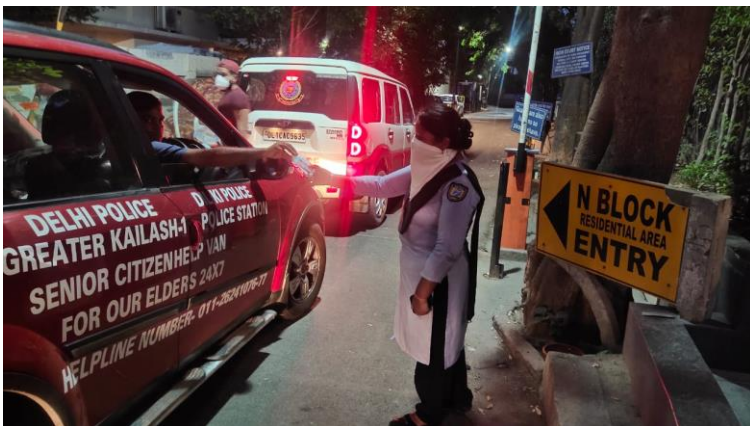




Glimpses of ration distribution in Rajasthan and meals in Andhra Pradesh.

Hundreds of police personnel were infected by the Covid-19 while performing their duties during the pandemic. Due to the lack of a dedicated hospital for the treatment of affected police officers, the community

remained at a very high risk of losing their lives. Besides, their family members were also facing the risk of acquiring the infection. Clothes Box Foundation helped 50 such policemen through amenities.



# Refresh: Skill Development and Recycling Program



“Refresh” - is our skill-development program which gives sustainable livelihood to marginalized women. Our program provides these women a chance to step out of their houses and create a different life for themselves, not restricted to their families. We employ women from marginalized families (4-5 members) with single earning members and a monthly income as low as INR 10,000. They belong to villages, communities where women don't step out of their houses due to patriarchal norms and have been denied access to education and employment opportunities. Many have been victims of domestic violence, child marriage, family abuse, and extra-marital affairs that led to divorce. Some are trying to support their families by serving as maids, field workers, daily wage laborers, or garbage pickers. For them

undertaking this training, where they are not only learning but being paid, is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. The training transforms them into skilled SMOs, like those hired by large factories. Theory sessions on fabric, trim, quality, etc., help them understand the cloth as raw material and its impact on the environment. Practical sessions allow them to master the machinery techniques and accommodate speed. Capacity-building sessions by industry professionals on personality development, personal finance, and digital literacy familiarize them with the requisites of the urban world. Before placement, multiple visits are organized into large factories, which allow our trainees to experience a real-world setup. Such experiences help them visualize what is expected of them at the end of the training.



# Starting with 6 machines at the beginning of the year, we expanded to 13 mid-year.



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placement, multiple visits are organized into large factories, which allow our trainees to experience a real-world setup. Such experiences help them visualize what is expected of them at the end of the training. The women are trained in batches at our facility in Gurugram, Haryana - one batch comprises 30 women under the supervision of a certified, experienced Program Trainer. The trainees are paid regular compensation, which makes our program a training-cum-job for them.

## 4 Batches Trained Graduated Placed



Trainees recycle waste/surplus fabric into utilities like blankets, bags, pet beds, *potlies*, cushions etc. In the last month of the program, they are prepared for tests and interviews with recruiters from factories of global brands. Our placement rate was 50% this year with a starting salary of INR 11000 per month, whereas some trainees went to start their micro-stitching units.



**100% increase in Annual Family Income  
with 35 women being placed with a  
starting salary of INR 11000 p.m.**



# Changing Lives Building Dreams Empowering Women



Our trainees working in the factory of a global brand after placement.



The training transforms them into strong, confident and independent women.



# Stories of Change



**“I am earning almost four times of what I used to...” - Rajni**

“Being a daily wager, my husband couldn't earn enough to sustain a family of four. Problems increased during the covid as laborers were laid off. Earlier, I used to walk 16 km daily for work and earned INR 1500 per month, but even that was rendered unworkable during the lockdown. But through Refresh, my problems have been solved to a great extent. I don't have to worry about covid as I travel in an auto hired by Clothes Box Foundation. I'm earning almost four times what I used to, and working with other ladies and interacting has helped me develop confidence.”



**“...during the second wave, I enrolled myself in Refresh, which helped me sustain my family of five.” - Komal**

“My husband was rendered completely jobless when the first wave of Covid hit the country. The first year was a complete struggle, with my mother-in-law's pension being the only source of income. The village I live in – Banwari, is a highly underdeveloped area. There is not much scope for employment, and my husband was reluctant to leave the place as we had an ancestral home there. That saved us rent. So, the struggle continued even when the curbs were removed. We had no work. But during the second wave, I enrolled myself in Refresh, which helped me sustain my family of five. Not only was I earning money, but we were also supported with rations during the pandemic. It was like a new ray of hope in all our lives.”

# Together With India

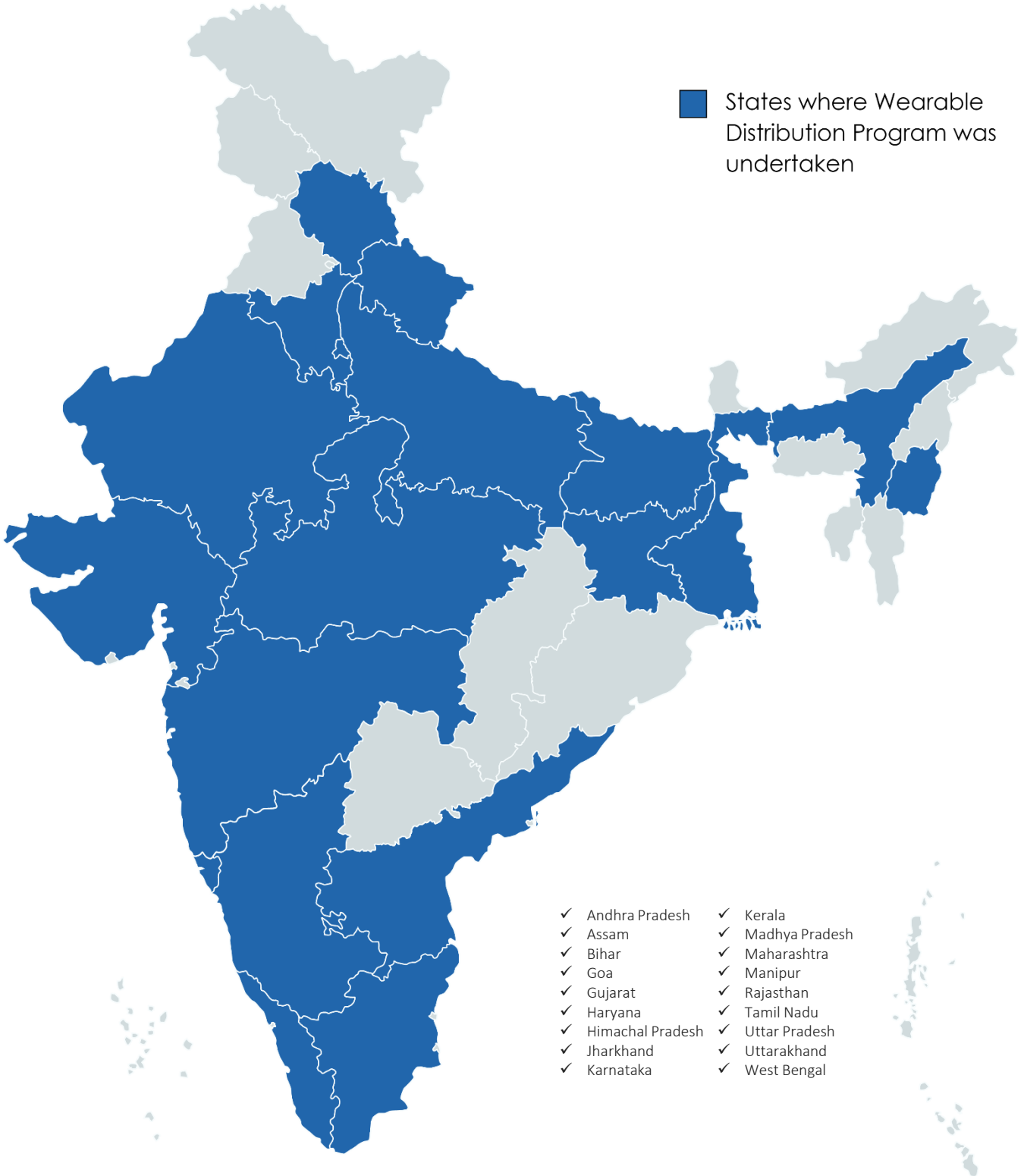
As we travelled to distribute wearables and shoes among the most underserved areas of the country, we collected stories of commoners and their everyday lives. The following pages will take you through glimpses of our distribution drives across the country.



**“Let clothing not be a privilege or sustainability an afterthought”**



# 1.2 million beneficiaries across **18 Indian States**





“We love to enact our mother during our play time.” - A group of local girls in Assam



“Schools have been a struggle so far but new shirts make us want to come here again.”



“When I was born, my father taught me how to read. I started with local newspapers. I learned that our town was part of a country. Then I moved on to books. And I learned that there was an entire world around our hill and tea plantations. I’ve always awaited books, so they do not surprise me. But this piece of cloth did. I feel happy!” - Nazma





A mother and son duo!  
- From Uttarakhand



"I'm forty years old, and she still can't fall asleep unless I'm home safe at night."



"We are but one large family. It's incomplete even with one missing!"  
- From Gujarat, Gir Forests





“I want to be an astronaut. There’s another world out there. And I want to go there. I will work hard and will accomplish my dreams someday. Life gets tough sometimes on us but I believe ‘when life gets tough , the tough gets going’. On tough days like these , sweet surprises like a new shirt brings a smile on my face.” - Mala from Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh



“When things were becoming difficult to manage our expenses, we struggled to continue our son’s education. I want to do everything to support my husband and not let poverty impact my son’s life. Now, I want to excel in stitching, something I’ve been passionate about all along, and secure a better life devoid of poverty for my child.”





It's never too late to have a  
happy childhood.

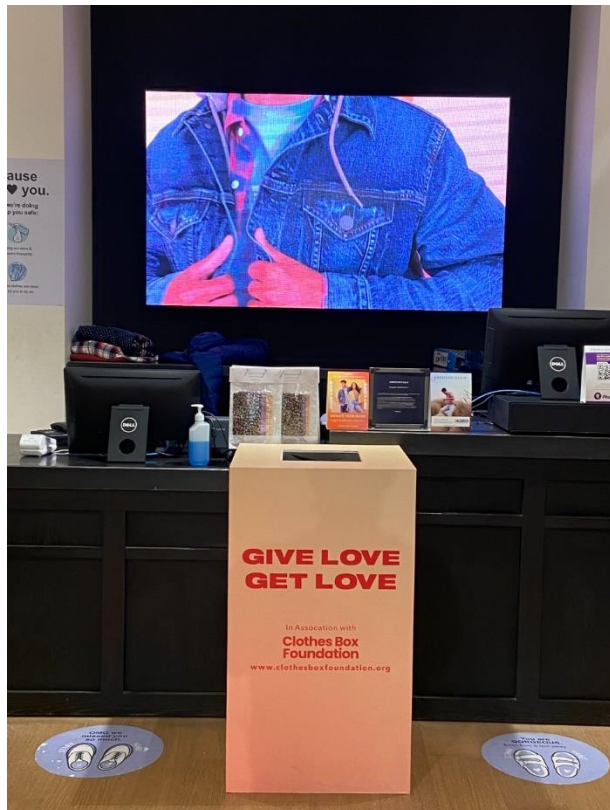


# Brands who joined our family in 2021-22

AMERICAN EAGLE GROZ-BECKERT®



Our Partners shape the activities we undertake throughout the year and help us achieve the new and stepping milestones. Last year, our collaborations with diverse brands allowed us to host a range of campaigns ranging from clothes collection and distribution to recycling and up cycling. While Bunai and Uniqlo donated over 13,000 garments from their stores to be distributed among the underprivileged, Campus Activewear provided shoes that relieved the feet of over 8,000 people across the country. We conducted distribution drives at various destinations in North India for Hyatt, Larsen, and Toubro. Indian Terrain, American Eagle, and Blue Tokai Coffee Roasters organized campaigns in exclusive partnership with Clothes Box Foundation to collect old clothes from customers across the country. The customers who dropped the clothes were allowed to avail of special discounts and offers. The campaigns helped us collect over 10,000 dresses in 3 months. The Leela Palaces Hotels and Resorts provided funds for our Covid-Relief Activities, while Hyve Group supported our Skill Development Training for marginalized women. Groz Beckert was signed as the sponsorer of needles required in training throughout the year.



We collaborated with American Eagle to organize a clothes collection campaign. The customers could drop their old clothes in the stores across India and avail exclusive offers and discount to purchase brand new denims. We collected over 6000 clothes in only 2 months.



We collaborated with Blue Tokai Coffee Roasters who gave us the jute bags in which they import coffee beans. Our Refresh trainees recycled these bags into bori-beds (pet beds) for dogs by filling them with the last-mile fabric waste (katran).



Blue Tokai Coffee Roasters also hosted a clothes collection campaign for us.



# Sustainability: The Road Ahead

Clothes Box Foundation since inception has been striving to provide a solution to the fashion industry's make and dispose model – a significant contributor to the textile pollution. Garments serve as an everyday essential, but fast fashion led by modern consumerism is a compounding threat. It has been found that every second, the equivalent of one garbage truck of textiles is landfilled or burnt. The apparel industry contributes to 8% of global negative environmental impact.

Fabrics can take years to biodegrade. For example, leather takes around 30 to 40 years; polyester takes about 100 years. When these fabrics are discarded directly into the landfills, they release methane and other greenhouse gases into the environment and cause groundwater pollution due to the absorption of toxic chemicals present in fabrics.

We solve all these problems by providing a platform for textile manufacturers to use their discarded fabric to make marketable products and adopt responsible consumption as a practice in line with UN SDG 12 - Ensure Sustainable Consumption and Production Patterns.



Last year, we recycled waste fabric into various products ranging from blankets, plate covers to scrunchies and cup sleeves. Bori beds for animals used last mile waste fabric (*katran*).

We live in a world where consumption possesses centrality, whereas ideas like sustainability and green impact are still an afterthought. Even the greatest of businesses do not have the facilities and infrastructure to ensure sustainability and environmental friendliness in all their operations. Although fast fashion market leaders are focusing on sustainable clothing, the approach remains congested to a very narrow set of organizations, primarily those with ample resources at their disposal.

So, besides the livelihood creation, our purpose for the next two years and those to follow is accelerating towards creating a green impact through recycling. We strive to become a pioneer in the upcycling and recycling industry and make the world cleaner and greener. Our current revenue stream is through B2B sales of products made out of waste material. However, there is a lot on the front and backend that can be developed to make ourselves one hundred percent in line with our goal.



Cup Sleeves

In the past few years, we have been approached by some of the largest brands for our solutions which makes us believe that the need for an industry that manages and takes care of the negative environmental impact created by organizations is now more than ever. Besides, the incentives given by governments across the globe to businesses adopting environmental practices will drive more and more corporations to the solutions that we provide. Our purpose is to capture the momentum created by all these factors working in synergy.



Tote bags and Potli bag (from the left)



## **Legal**

Clothes Box Foundation is a Trust registered with Sub-Registrar, Gurgaon at Sr. No. 742 dated Book No. 1, Binder No. 13072 under the Indian Trusts Act, 1882.

Clothes Box Foundation is approved for tax exemptions u/s 12AA of Income Tax Act 1961.

All donations are exempt under section 80G of the I.T. Act 1961.

## **Registration number**

AABTC6258RF20213

## **Training Centre, Upcycling Unit and Office**

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## **Contact Us**

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## **Social Media**

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**Instagram:** @clothesboxfoundation

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