

# The Tribune

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## Tiny hands make big endeavour to save the Aravalis

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As part of their learning expedition, Geography that Shapes Us, students of grade 6 of Heritage Xperiential Learning School, Gurugram, worked towards understanding the value of environmental stewardship. They examined the relationship of interdependence that we have with the natural communities around us, focusing on the Aravalli ranges. The students through expert interactions and the study of the local geography and geological concepts built an understanding of the natural communities of Gurugram. Gurugram performs very poorly when it comes to ecological balance and environmental conservation.

The students critically analysed the role that the Aravalis will play in the future of Gurugram either as a life-giving source of clean air and water or to satisfy the urban needs of development and progress. They studied sustainability as a concept and used case studies of sustainable cities around the globe to arrive at an understanding of Gurugram's sustainability. The endeavour of the expedition was to let students use the knowledge of local geography to study its human impact and collectively take action as custodians of the future Gurugram.

### Service-learning efforts of the learning expedition

Students were offered a choice of passion projects that they would like to work on. These projects were designed to contribute to the sustainability of natural communities in Gurugram and our very own lifeline, the Aravalis. The projects offered were composting, home gardening, segregation of waste, water conservation and joining the Aravalli Bachao movement.

Students who have chosen to work with the Aravalli Bachao Citizen Group's movement want to spread awareness about the fragility of the Aravali hills. As part of the project, they would like to reach out to the citizens of Gurugram to generate awareness on the fragility of the Aravali hills and share their understanding from their research of the dangers that the hills face. Their main asks in alignment with the Aravali Citizen Group's are:

1. Increase the forest cover in Haryana
  2. Remove Bandhwari landfill from the Aravalis and revoke permission for the proposed waste to energy plant at Bandhwari
  3. Remove illegal encroachments in Aravalis and also remove the threats to the wildlife of the Aravalis. (Illegal mining has already destroyed 31 Aravalli hills in Rajasthan and illegal felling of trees and encroachments along with dilution of protective Aravalli laws in Haryana is threatening the survival of the oldest mountain range in the world.)
- In addition to generating awareness, they will also be petitioning to the government to take action on the measures that they are suggesting.