

Alumnus of the Month

Currently pursuing PhD at University of Witwatersrand, the Coordinator for Asia Region at the Global Alliance of Waste Pickers - Kabir Arora has been involved with the Alliance of Indian Waste-pickers, Bangalore even before joining the MPP programme at NLSIU. He has a Post Graduate Diploma in Urban Environmental Management and Urban Law, a course provided by WWF and NLU-Delhi, and a Bachelor of Arts (Hons.) Geography from Jamia Millia Islamia. Kabir was also a part of the Gandhi Fellowship from 2010 to 2012 and Programme for Working Professional in Urban Development, later renamed as Urban Fellows of Indian Institute for Human Settlements from 2012 to 2013.

NLSIU's strong orientation with Labour Laws was a key factor in Kabir's decision to join the MPP programme. The programme became more favourable to him as it allowed him to continue working on his engagement with the Alliance of Indian Waste-pickers. As a student of MPP at NLS, Kabir enjoyed working together with his cohort in seminar courses where there was ample space for co-learning and co-production of knowledge. The Seminar courses were spaces where he and his batchmates viewed migration, urbanization through the lens of public policy, using mediums such as films, songs and readings to nuance their understanding. He particularly remembers the Leadership course taught by Professor Pradeep Ramawath where everyone was asked to create profiles of leaders they like or look up to. The experience gained from the field visit to Kodagu for conducting a survey on Forest Rights Act, the classes on Research Methodology, concepts of macroeconomics are a few things that he highlights as immense value additions to understanding the society and its behaviour.

After MPP, Kabir continued his engagement in the Alliance of Indian Waste-pickers. In addition, within the Global Alliance of Wastepickers he along with his colleagues, waste-pickers, participated in the United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA) 5.2 where they were able to pursue member states to include waste-pickers in the prospective International Plastics Treaty. The resolution passed in UNEA 5.2 recognised waste-pickers as important actors and mandated that they should be a part of the discussion on the prospective Plastics Treaty. This has led to an international agreement that 6 waste pickers from different regions of the world should participate in every meeting till the plastics treaty is negotiated at the global level. Also, Global Alliance of Waste Pickers decision body has mandated Kabir to coordinate waste-pickers representation and meaningful participation in the plastics treaty process.

In addition to following Plastics Treaty Negotiations and coordinating the Alliance of Indian Waste-pickers, Kabir looks after the Asian outreach of Global Alliance of Waste-pickers, with waste-pickers' organizations from Indonesia, Nepal, Bangladesh and India participating in the discussions regularly. His future plans include mapping of waste-pickers organizing status and challenges in other countries of Asia such as China, Taiwan, Philippines and Fiji.



“As a discipline, It is the time of public policy, when you see how states take decisions, you need to have those actors who do the due diligence when the decisions are being taken.”



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