My space – My unManifesto is a journey that seeks at making politics an alternative space for youth to engage with, by claiming democracy through an extensive exercise of formulating a manifesto that carries youth-centric promises. This journey has been supported and nurtured by the United Nations Population Fund in collaboration with ComMutiny, the Youth Collective and 45 coalition partners, recognizing youth as a pivotal stakeholder in processes of democracy.

The journey has reached its final destination and has marked its presence in 20 States and 2 Union Territories with outreach of 1 lakh youth on ground and 14.5 lakh through online platforms. More than 70,000 promises have been collected from diverse groups of youth, with 45 politicians and more engaging with these promises. The tremendous impact of the journey has been felt in remote corners of the nation as well.

The unManifesto program entails with it the idea of making youth everyday politicians which is a takeoff from the concept of ‘Alice in Wonderland’ where she celebrates un-birthdays, which means she is celebrating everyday of the year. Using the same metaphor, this is an attempt to create spaces for young people where they can engage in politics all year round and not just on the day of the Election. It is time for young people to step forward and claim democratic spaces for themselves.

The main algorithm of this process is based on young people learning and first hand experiencing the democratic process across all constituencies. A genuine attempt is also being made to influence party manifestos for the upcoming Lok Sabha Elections of 2014 by reaching out to different political figures at appropriate points during the journey.

The journey has motivated young adults from different sections of the society to engage in a process that’s not only to politicize them but to also make them look at themselves as leaders of change. The programme has reached out to people in remote areas of Jharkhand and also to marginalised communities like sex workers. These promises are not lopsided and do not have vested interests, but have encompassed those who have been left out of mainstream politics.

The demands have been in all spheres - a better education system with stronger emphasis on implementation of Right to Education (RTE), amending of AFSPA in north eastern states, demanding safe public spaces for women with greater emphasis on fighting violence against women, voicing the need for good-quality 24 hour hospitals in remote rural areas, the need for decriminalisation of article 377, the requirement of passing of the 33% reservation for youth and women in the parliament, the urgency of passing of Lokpal bill to curb corruption, the dire need of providing unemployment wages for the people above the age of 21, and not just demanding legalisation of sex work but also providing sex workers with health benefits and pensions.