



Youth4Water *Plus*

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"Those who contemplate the beauty of the earth find reserves of strength that will endure as long as life lasts." ~ Rachel Carson



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Message from Youth4Water Plus

Dear Youth4Water Plus community,

We are thrilled to share yet another invigorating edition of our newsletter. We are ever grateful for your enthusiastic and active participation in our journey. We remain committed to improving the lives of youth by ensuring that their voices and efforts are recognized as we negotiate the complexities of climate change.

One of our standout events in the last three months has been the Odisha Conference of Youth (OCOY) 2.0, held at KT Global School, where 150 enthusiastic youths from 30 districts of Odisha participated and presented their recommendations to the key representatives and stakeholders. OCOY 2.0 platformed the young leaders of Odisha to share their concerns and propose solutions on climate change impacts. The engagement from our youth participants was remarkable and demonstrated our community's strong commitment to fostering sustainable practices. The key recommendations which were presented during this conference will be pivotal in guiding future initiatives and policies to mitigate climate change effects in our region.

In line with our mission, a major focus over these three months has been on plantation drives. Collaborating with partners and the Government of Odisha's NSS Bureau, we have successfully organized awareness campaigns that emphasize the importance of reforestation and biodiversity conservation. These initiatives contribute to enhancing green cover and serve as educational opportunities for participants about the ecological significance of trees in combating climate change.

The observance of Vana Mahotsav during this period further emphasized our commitment to environmental awareness. These annual tree-planting activities provided an excellent opportunity for community involvement, allowing individuals from diverse backgrounds to come together for a common cause—restoring and protecting our natural environment.

Recognizing the need for structured approaches in our different initiatives, Youth4Water Plus has developed a Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for plantation activities. This SOP outlines best practices for planting trees effectively and sustainably while ensuring that all staff members have the necessary knowledge and tools for their implementation. By circulating this SOP among our team, we aim to standardize the efforts across different locations and maximize the impact of our plantation drives.

As we reflect on our recent activities, it is increasingly clear that youth engagement remains the cornerstone of addressing climate change challenges in Odisha.

The passion of youth during the Odisha Conference of Youth and plantation drives exemplifies the growing awareness among young people about their role in fostering environmental sustainability.

We encourage all our readers to continue supporting us and these initiatives and participate actively in future events.

Sincerely,
Team Youth4Water Plus

Making a Splash: Empowering Youth for Climate Action at the Odisha Conference of Youth 2.0



Pic: Plogging at Barunei Hills, Khordha by OCOY 2024 delegates

From August 9 to 11, 2024, the 2nd edition of the Odisha Conference of Youth (OCOY) took place at the K. T. Global School, Bhubaneswar, bringing together 150 dynamic youths from 30 Districts of Odisha.

This 3-day residential conference provided a vital platform for young people to engage with local leaders, policymakers, and experts on pressing climate change issues, develop actionable plans, and contribute to National climate dialogues. OCOY serves as Odisha's regional version of the National Youth Climate Conference, setting the stage for impactful youth engagement ahead of the global UN Climate Change Conference (COP).



Pic: A Glimpse of OCOY 2.0 Day 1

Trailblazing the Future of Sustainability: Inauguration and Inspirational Opening

The conference started with an inspiring inauguration ceremony hosted by Mr. Avinash Samal, Head of HR Training and Development at TCS, Bhubaneswar. The event began with the lighting of lamps, symbolizing the illumination of ideas and commitment to climate action. Students from K. T. Global School performed Bande Utkal Janani- The State Song of Odisha.

Mr Sourav Bhattacharjee, OIC-Chief of UNICEF, welcomed the delegates and emphasized the important role played by today's youth in addressing climate challenges. Quoting Dr. A. P. J. Abdul Kalam, he highlighted the potential of young minds to drive national progress. Mr Bhattacharjee urged the participants to connect, express themselves, and develop leadership skills to tackle climate change impacts on health, well-being, and future prospects.

Tell a Story, Save the Environment: Keynote Addresses and Expert Insights

Ms. Karina Malczewska, an environmental engineer and advocate, delivered the keynote address emphasizing the critical role of youth in climate action. She highlighted UNICEF's commitment to amplifying young voices in policy discussions and fostering youth-led initiatives.

Shri Sudhanshu Sekhar Khora, IFS, RCCF of the Department of Environment, Forest, and Climate Change, Govt of Odisha, also addressed the conference, acknowledging Odisha's severe vulnerability to climate change as a coastal state. He stressed the importance of youth involvement in shaping a sustainable future and praised the participants' energy, innovation, and passion for environmental stewardship.

Shri Ajay Singh remarked that the inaugural session set the tone for thought-provoking discussions and presentations. Dr. Arun Prakash, Chairman of K.T. Global, thanked the guests for their valuable contributions, enriching the conference experience for all delegates.

Ms. KC Shreya, Policy Advisor for Clean Energy in Nepal, highlighted the urgency of climate action, citing the tangible impacts of climate change. Mrs. Usharani Behera emphasized the power of storytelling in driving climate action and fostering empathy and understanding.

Shri Sambit Tripathy, CEO of Livelihood Alternatives, discussed Odisha's climate challenges, including extreme weather events and their effects on agriculture and biodiversity. He commended government initiatives while acknowledging the need for increased awareness and capacity-building through events like OCOY.



Throwing the Seeds of Change: Field Visits and Practical Insights

A significant component of OCOY was the participants' field visit to Barunei Hills, guided by Mr Vineet Vohra from Give Me Trees Trust. Taking what had been theoretical discussions so far into on-ground action, the nature trail offered participants a firsthand look at climate change impacts, such as deforestation and soil erosion. Activities like plogging and seed ball throwing helped participants to understand the importance of biodiversity and ecosystem services, deepening their commitment to climate action.

The conference concluded with motivating addresses from various dignitaries. Smt. Pravati Parida, Honourable Deputy Chief Minister, praised the youth as architects of resilience and urged them to carry their learnings into their communities. She emphasized that OCOY 2024 should act as a catalyst for ongoing climate action.

Ms. Bhoomika Das, an Ollywood Actress, spoke about her commitment to environmental advocacy and encouraged youth to continue their efforts in sustainability. Smt. Santoshi Sahoo, OAS, Registrar of Odisha Health University, expressed pride in the participants' growth and urged them to embrace future challenges with determination.

Shri Sambit Tripathy highlighted the conference's success in empowering communities and the innovative approaches adopted by Livelihood Alternatives. He expressed gratitude to all involved and conveyed optimism for the future.



Driving Change: WASH & Climate Advocacy

Jigyasa Clubs: Catalysts for Change in Odisha



Under the aegis of Jigyasa clubs, environmental education and awareness have been championed by conducting school programmes like rallies, padayatras, cleanliness drives, gardening and more. During the sessions, resource persons from BGVS-Odisha and teachers of the involved schools facilitated discussions on biodiversity conservation concerning Jigyasa Module. The five schools involved were from the Khordha District of Odisha, namely: P. N. Govt Boys High School, NDRC High School, Retang Colony, Govt. Girls High School Jatani and Jatani, Hindi School.

A total of 278 adolescents and young individuals have been empowered and supported within eco-clubs and Jigyasa clubs to increase their awareness of environmental issues, capacity building, and participate in initiatives on challenges about water security, climate change, safe water, sanitation, hygiene, and key child protection issues.

Volunteers from different parts of Odisha came together to tackle the emerging issues leading to environmental pollution. Volunteers with a strong determination engaged in plogging activities without any hesitation and obstacles. The beach cleaning drives were more than just physical clean-ups; they were integral to an awareness campaign to educate the public on the detrimental effects of pollution at various places at home, community and public places. By directly engaging with visitors and community members, the volunteers highlighted the urgent need to address plastic waste and littering issues. Their efforts helped illuminate the connection between everyday actions and their broader environmental impact, encouraging individuals to adopt more sustainable practices.

The Youth4Water Plus and Sattvic Soul Foundation with a mission to carry out the spirit of these drives in a massive way. By taking small steps towards reducing waste, supporting clean-up efforts, and advocating for sustainable practices, the organisation aims at contributing to a healthier planet. The dedication of the volunteers is a powerful reminder that every action counts and that together, we can make a significant impact on the world around us.

Planting Trees, Honoring Mothers: The 'Ek Ped Maa Ki Naam' Movement

Youth4Water Plus Campaign, in collaboration with its many partner organisations, engaged in plantation drives to encourage afforestation and raise awareness about the importance of trees in maintaining ecological balance. The programme started on 1st July and continued until the end of September.

The partner organizations involved included BGVS, Bakul, ADARSA, Sattvic Soul, Centurion University, PECUC, MIHU, Nature's Club, NYP, VIEWS, YAR, Atmashakti Trust, PANTISS, CYSD and Radio Bulbul.

An orientation programme was conducted along with a plantation drive with the Programme Officers of NSS Bureau, Higher Secondary Education at Jayadev Bhawan on 15th July 2024. Youth4Water Plus Campaign Office developed Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for the plantation drives, circulated to all the 30 districts of Odisha.

Youth4Water Plus and collaborators carried out plantation drives in the districts of Khordha, Puri, Cuttack, Jajpur, Bhardak, Balasore, Angul, Sambalpur, Rayagada, Gajapati, Boudh, Nuapada, Ganjam, Mayurbhanj, Koraput, and Malkangiri.



Altogether, a total of 25,000 fruit trees and medicinal plants were planted. Various activities were undertaken during this period, including plantation activities in schools and colleges, seminars, discussions, and educational programs to spread awareness about the importance of forests for biodiversity and climate change. People were encouraged to take responsibility for nurturing the trees they plant, fostering a sense of ownership and long-term commitment to forest conservation. Plantation drives were conducted under "Ek ped Maa ki Naam". Organisations like Bakul Foundation used innovative approaches to spread awareness of the importance of tree plantation in human life. This was done by gifting a tree in the name of a newborn baby at the hospital, on birthdays and other social events.

Youth4Water Plus and Sattvic Soul Foundation lead Cleanliness Drives

Youth4Water Plus in collaboration with the Sattvic Soul Foundation conducted monsoon trekking, plogging and nature trail in different locations of Odisha. The campaigns centered around environmental stewardship and community engagement, these initiatives underscored the importance of maintaining clean and healthy coastal environments.

Waves of Progress: The Ripple Effect of Transformation

Youth4Water Plus uses *Nukkad Nataks* to drive Environmental Awareness in Odisha

Youth4Water Plus Campaign in collaboration with BGVS conducted awareness drives through different visual communication aids. While dealing with different pressing environmental issues, Youth4Water Plus team took an innovative and culturally resonant approach to connect with local communities in Odisha. Instead of sticking to conventional outreach methods, they brought their message onto the streets, using *Nukkad Nataks* (street plays) as their stage. These street performances allowed them to connect directly with the communities' narratives around water conservation, sanitation, & climate action. *Nukkad Nataks* are an integral part of Indian culture, often used to highlight social issues.



The street plays, performed in various places, i.e. markets, parks, and community spaces, drew in curious onlookers, many of whom may not have otherwise engaged with these critical issues. These performances presented relatable, real-world scenarios, often incorporating local dialects, humour, and strong emotions, which struck a chord with audiences. Characters in these plays personified the environment, polluted rivers, or careless citizens, creating a palpable sense of urgency about the need to act now. The plays effectively conveyed how daily actions, even seemingly insignificant, contribute to the larger issue of environmental degradation.

The combination of *Nukkad Nataks* and community radio formed a dual-pronged approach, allowing Youth4Water Plus to meet people where they are—both in physical spaces and through media they already consumed. This strategy not only engaged young people, inspiring them to take action but also created ripple effects throughout their communities. By blending traditional storytelling with modern communication techniques, Youth4Water Plus ensured that their messages on water conservation, sanitation, and climate action resonated deeply, fostering an enduring commitment to environmental awareness.



Prakriti ke Bol An Awareness program on Plastic pollution

In a joint effort to address the pressing issues of climate change and plastic pollution, the Department of Humanities and Social Science at NIT Rourkela collaborated with the UNICEF-Youth4Water Plus Campaign. The event aimed to raise awareness about environmental challenges and ignite a conversation on how individuals and communities can contribute to positive change. It attracted a diverse group of students, faculty members, and local youth passionate about environmental sustainability and eager to discuss practical solutions.

Around 500 students participated in a walkathon, using microphones as a unique platform to engage directly with their peers and encourage them to voice their thoughts on climate change and plastic pollution. This open forum became a space where creativity, activism, and concern for the environment converged. Students enthusiastically approached the microphone, sharing their perspectives, stories, and ideas for combating these global crises at the local level.

One student noted, "Awareness is the first step, but what we do with that awareness will determine our future." Many emphasized the importance of moving beyond mere conversations to adopting concrete, measurable actions in their daily lives. Discussions covered many topics, from the need to reduce single-use plastics to the importance of sustainable consumption and effective waste management practices.



Some students shared creative solutions to reduce plastic usage on campus, such as organizing plastic-free events and promoting reusable materials in cafeterias and hostels. Others proposed starting local clean-up drives and awareness campaigns to engage the wider community. Many spoke about the need for educational initiatives, emphasizing the role that institutions like NIT Rourkela can play in fostering a culture of environmental consciousness among future engineers and leaders.

Celebrating Mangrove Ecosystem Conservation with Youth4Water Plus!



Youth4Water Plus, in collaboration with its partners and the Department of Forest & Environment, marked International Day for the Conservation of the Mangrove Ecosystem along the coasts of Puri and Jagatsinghpur. This important event aimed to highlight the vital role that mangrove ecosystems play in coastal protection, biodiversity, and the livelihoods of local communities, while also encouraging greater community involvement in conservation efforts.

Mangrove ecosystems safeguard coastal areas from erosion, storm surges, and rising sea levels. They provide a natural barrier against disasters and support a rich biodiversity, serving as habitats for various marine species, including fish, crabs, and mollusks that are crucial for the livelihoods of coastal families. Unfortunately, these ecosystems face increasing threats from deforestation, pollution, and unsustainable development. Recognizing these challenges, Youth4Water Plus and local partners focused on educating the community about the significance of mangroves and empowering them to take an active role in their conservation.

The observance of this important day included a series of community programs in Puri and Jagatsinghpur, bringing together fishermen, farmers, youth, and environmental advocates. Participants engaged in workshops, educational sessions, and discussions on mangrove conservation. Experts from the Forest & Environment Department provided insights into how mangroves are critical for environmental balance and sustaining local livelihoods. Attendees learned about the various threats facing mangroves, such as illegal logging and climate change, and explored potential solutions to protect these ecosystems.

One of the key messages emphasized during the event was the interdependence between healthy mangrove ecosystems and the well-being of local communities. Mangroves provide essential services and support industries like fishing, agriculture, and tourism that many families rely on for their income. Strengthening mangrove conservation directly contributes to enhancing the resilience of local livelihoods.



Eco Guardians Chronicle

Youth4Water Plus Volunteers celebrate Friendship Day by Strengthening Bond with Nature



In an inspiring celebration of Friendship Day, Youth4Water Plus volunteers took an innovative approach, honouring the essence of friendship by focusing on a unique and meaningful relationship—one between humans and plants. The event was organized during plantation drives conducted in Ohala village of Satyabhamapur, Jajpur district, Odisha.

Around 100 participants gathered and tied up bands and took the oath for caring for fruit and medicinal plants. The event served as a powerful reminder that plants, much like friendships, thrive when given the care, attention, and respect they deserve!

At the same time, youth volunteers of NYP promised to beautify their community & contribute positively to the environment. The event was more than just an opportunity to engage with the environment; it was a reminder of nature's vital role in our lives. By planting trees, the volunteers developed a deeper connection with the natural world, understanding the amount of patience, dedication, and nurturing required for plants and friendships to thrive. In doing so, they cultivated a sense of responsibility for the earth and embraced the role of environmental stewards in their community.

In addition to promoting environmental awareness, the Friendship Day event highlighted the importance of the community involvement and teamwork. The young volunteers not only worked together but inspired others in the community to participate and take pride in their shared green space. By celebrating Friendship Day in such a meaningful way, they beautified their surroundings and planted the seeds for a future built on sustainability, unity, and respect for the planet.

Empowering Youth for Biodiversity: Training Program on Conservation & Traditional Seed Preservation in Brahmagiri

During August 6th to 8th, 2024, the Multipurpose Association for Reciprocal Service (MARS) conducted a noteworthy training program at their Training Center in SAMPARKA VIHAR, Palanka, Brahmagiri. This initiative focused on promoting biodiversity conservation, building youth cadres, and raising awareness about the importance of traditional seed varieties.

The training aimed to enhance participants' understanding of biodiversity conservation, the impact of biodiversity degradation on climate change, and the promotion of traditional seed varieties. The program was designed to equip the youth with the knowledge and skills necessary to contribute to biodiversity conservation efforts in their communities actively.

The training programme successfully formed a tree planting commitment among participants, where each participant committed to planting at least two trees during the current session, thereby reflecting their dedication to environmental stewardship. Participants were also guided by the Block Agriculture Office to cultivate traditional paddy varieties, promoting the preservation of indigenous crops. Finally, the youth cadres created a village biodiversity register, enabling communities to document and monitor local biodiversity.



The training program successfully engaged and motivated youth to take proactive steps in biodiversity conservation and traditional seed preservation, fostering a greater sense of responsibility towards the environment.

Youth4Water Plus Mobilizes Volunteers for Eco-Friendly Religious Celebrations Campaign

In a significant step toward promoting environmental responsibility during religious festivals, Youth4Water Plus, alongside its dedicated partners, has launched a thoughtful campaign focused on addressing the growing issue of religious waste. The campaign, spearheaded by enthusiastic young volunteers, aims to raise awareness about the environmental impact of waste generated during festivals and celebrations, focusing on fostering sustainable practices and encouraging eco-friendly alternatives.

The campaign was especially active during Ganesh Puja, a time when the use of non-biodegradable materials, plastic, and other pollutants often reached a peak. Volunteers worked tirelessly to engage with the community, organizing awareness campaigns highlighting traditional rituals' environmental consequences.

At the heart of this initiative was distributing educational materials designed to inform festival-goers about the importance of reducing waste and choosing eco-friendly alternatives. These materials offered simple yet impactful suggestions, such as opting for clay Ganesh idols instead of those made from plaster of Paris, which can harm water bodies when immersed. They also encouraged using natural materials like leaves, flowers, and biodegradable offerings instead of synthetic items that contribute to long-lasting pollution.

The volunteers organized clean-up drives at religious sites and immersion points, where large amounts of waste accumulate after celebrations. By collecting discarded items, the youth not only cleaned up the local environment but also provided a visual reminder of the scale of the problem. These efforts were an integral part of the campaign, as they sought to bridge the gap between awareness and action, showing that even small-scale local initiatives could contribute to wider environmental sustainability.

Reviving Water Bodies: Youth4Water Plus, PANTISS, and Exnora lead Conservation Efforts in Odisha

We are excited to share the latest developments in our ongoing efforts to enhance water conservation in Odisha. Youth4Water Plus, in collaboration with PANTISS and Exnora, has embarked on a significant project to revive water bodies across the region. This initiative marks a pivotal moment in our commitment to environmental sustainability.

On July 19, 2024, the inaugural program for the deployment of excavators took place in Arahat village, Baouligada Gram Panchayat, Angul. This event witnessed the active participation of 200 enthusiastic youths who came together to raise awareness about the restoration objectives of ponds and other water bodies.

Through interactions and field visits, local communities have actively mapped and identified ponds. The project emphasizes understanding the historical significance of these water bodies and addressing the challenges they face over time. The initiative encompasses various action plans focusing on the protection, cleaning, beautification, conservation, and regeneration of ponds.

In addition to pond restoration, the project has led to the excavation of new canals in the Banarpal Gram Panchayat. Thirty youth and forty Self-Help Group (SHG) members contributed to this effort, creating canals that support agricultural needs and play a critical role in disaster management.

We look forward to seeing the positive impact of this project and are grateful to everyone who has supported and participated in this vital work. Together, let's make strides towards a more sustainable future!



Lessening Litter for Life: Plogging and Environmental Education in Jhumka Dam

On 15th September 2024, the Sambad Group, Odisha, in collaboration with the UNICEF-led Youth4Water Plus Campaign, Sattvic Soul, and SOS Village, organized a plogging event and an environmental awareness program focusing on local ecosystems, biodiversity, and water pollution. This initiative was part of the Earth Again movement under the Punascha Pruthibi initiative led by the Sambad Group. A total of 50 youths participated in the event, engaging in both plogging and educational activities about environmental preservation.

The Youth4Water Plus Campaign promotes climate action through youth leaders, encouraging them to foster environmental responsibility in their localities. According to Youth4Water Plus Campaign Manager Mr. Dharmananda Sundaray, climate change has already caused significant damage but now is the time to act and a sense of responsibility among youth towards their environment. By participating in initiatives like this, youth are inspired to take action against climate change and positively impact their communities.

Mr. Satyabrata Samal from the Sattvic Soul Foundation emphasized that plogging helps clean public spaces and serves as a platform for educating communities about waste management practices and the negative impact of littering on natural habitats. He also led an oath-taking ceremony, featuring slogans to reinforce the message of environmental responsibility among youth.

The event concluded with remarks from Mr. Pradeep Mohapatra of Udyam, who spoke about how changes in ecosystems, food chains, and people's lifestyles affect daily life. He praised the Earth Again campaign as a timely and thoughtful initiative.





"Those who contemplate the beauty of the earth find reserves of strength that will endure as long as life lasts." ~ Rachel Carson

Calling all youth champions!
Are you, or someone you know, actively working
on issues related to water, the environment, or
climate change?

We want to hear from you! Share your details with us at
youth4watercampaign@gmail.com, and you could be
featured in our next edition as a contributor!



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