



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



The Editorial Team

Prof Anjal Prakash
Research Director,
Bharti Institute of Public Policy,
Indian School of Business

Sahil Sharma
Sr. Manager,
Communication & Influence,
Water For People

Dr. Shakuntala Pratihary
Writer and Founder,
Center for Research and
Community Action Trust

Tript Kaur
Education Officer,
UNICEF Odisha

Soumyadip Dewanji
Design Team Lead,
Youth4Water Plus



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Message from Youth4Water Plus

Dear Youth4Water Plus community,

During the last three months of 2024, the Youth4Water Plus campaign witnessed a remarkable surge in youth-led initiatives, uniting countless individuals, communities, and institutions in our shared mission to reach our sustainability and climate action goals. From the onset of the "Swachhata Hi Seva" campaign on Gandhi Jayanti (October 2), we embarked on a month-long journey filled with impactful activities that exemplified the power of community-driven environmental action.

Hundreds of passionate youth volunteers participated in various initiatives, including nature trails, plogging drives, and large-scale clean-up efforts at iconic events like Baliyatra and Suravi Mela. These activities emphasized the crucial link between fitness and environmental consciousness while raising community awareness about the need for cleaner environmental surroundings and sustainable ecological practices. The integration of workshops on transforming waste into climate solutions showcased the ingenuity and resourcefulness of young minds, demonstrating that sustainability can be achieved through innovation and creativity. Adding to these diverse environmental efforts was the inspiring visit of Mr. Shombi Sharp, UN Resident Coordinator in India, who engaged with Youth4Water Plus youth leaders, celebrating their transformative initiatives in climate action, water conservation, and sustainability.

The celebration of hygienic practices took center stage with global initiatives like Global Handwashing Day, where creative campaigns incorporating radio jingles and interactive sessions reached thousands across schools and communities to promote health and hygiene. As we moved towards Diwali celebrations, we emphasized eco-friendly practices through activities like diya painting and campaigns that supported local community artisans. These efforts celebrated tradition and aligned with our mission to reduce the environmental impact of festive celebrations.

Our ongoing Nature Trail at Anandabana and workshops on waste transformation keep inspiring youth to connect with nature and adopt sustainable practices. These activities reinforced the importance of biodiversity and climate resilience, encouraging young people to take proactive steps for a healthier planet. As we reflect on these transformative efforts, it is clear that the power of collaborative action is the key to addressing the current environmental challenges. We are steadily advancing towards a more sustainable future through education, engagement, and innovation. Let us carry this encouraging momentum forward and make our collective aspirations a reality in the coming year!

We sincerely thank all the youth volunteers for their tireless contributions, which continue to fuel the success of our initiatives. A special thanks to Sagarika Srivastava, for her dedicated efforts in refining this newsletter edition and ensuring it effectively captures the spirit of our collective journey toward a cleaner, greener future.

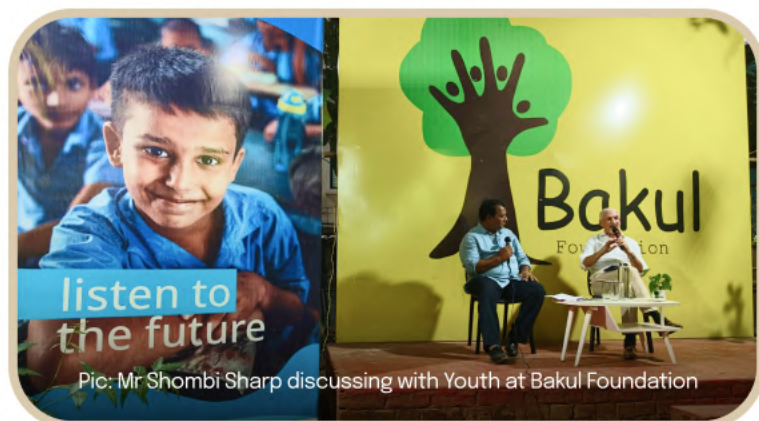
Here's to continuing the journey of change, one action at a time.

Warm regards,
Youth4Water Plus Team

Empowering the **future**: Mr Shombi Sharp's Inspiring Visit to Odisha & Interaction with Youths from Youth4Water Plus

Odisha witnessed a momentous occasion on November 20, 2024, as Mr Shombi Sharp, UN Resident Coordinator in India, engaged with youth change-makers of the Youth4Water Plus campaign in Bhubaneswar. His visit underscored the vital role of young leaders in addressing pressing global issues like climate change, biodiversity loss, and water conservation.

Hosted at the Bakul Foundation, the event was part of the World Children's Day celebrations. This year's theme, "Listen to the Future," resonated deeply with the ethos of the Youth4Water Plus campaign, a UNICEF Odisha-led initiative empowering over 500,000 young individuals across the state.



Pic: Mr Shombi Sharp discussing with Youth at Bakul Foundation

Exploring Climate Solutions: A Journey of Inspiration

The day began with Mr Sharp visiting the Youth4Water Plus Climate Stall, exploring the campaign's impactful initiatives. The stall showcased a range of projects hosted by Youth4Water Plus, ranging from water body conservation to social entrepreneurship ventures and plantation drives. Highlights included the innovative "best out of waste" creations, where youth transformed discarded materials into functional art. Mr. Sharp praised creativity and commitment of these young leaders, emphasizing the importance of blending sustainability with innovation.

"I am inspired by how Odisha's youth are transforming the challenges into opportunities," he remarked.

"The efforts I see here, reflect a determination to protect the planet while building stronger, more resilient communities."

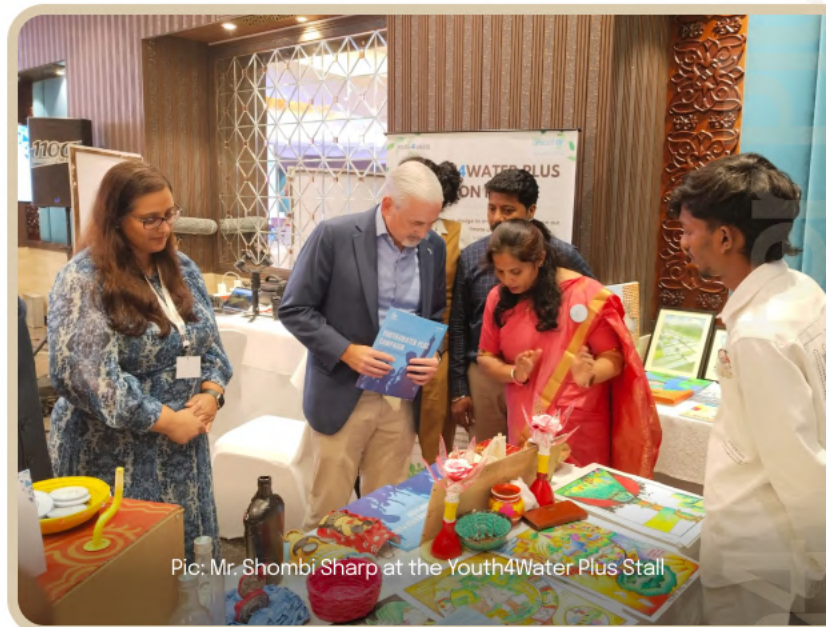
- Mr Shombi Sharp on Odisha's Youth.

Innovating for Climate Action and Environmental Sustainability in Schools

Mr. Sharp also visited IRC Village School in Bhubaneswar and interacted with students about the 'Jigyansa' or 'Curiosity' initiative. Students presented their innovative solutions for rainwater harvesting, preserving indigenous varieties of seeds, tracking the impact of climate change on the lives of flora and fauna, and solutions for 5Rs. Mr. Sharp also greatly appreciated the engaging activities led by schools statewide as part of the Jigyansa aspirational curriculum in grades IX and X, as well as the sustained efforts for quality WASH services in school. Led by the School Cabinet student leaders, the visit concluded with an enjoyable game of football, establishing a warm rapport with students who were deeply inspired by the visit to continue their efforts for sustainability.

A Fireside Chat with Odisha's Future Leaders

The heart of the visit was a fireside chat with children and youth from across Odisha, providing an intimate platform for dialogue. The session opened with warm introductions by representatives from the Bakul Foundation and UNICEF. During the engaging 50-minute discussion, young participants posed thought-provoking environmental questions to Mr Sharp, showcasing their deep concern for the planet. When asked about his favorite childhood memory, Mr Sharp recounted his adventures exploring nature, a passion that continues to shape his commitment to environmental preservation. Mr Sharp emphasized the critical role of youth in climate action, urging them to think globally while acting locally. He shared success stories from other countries, highlighting how grassroots movements have driven significant policy changes. *"Your energy and ideas are the catalysts for meaningful change. Collaborate, innovate, and let your voices be heard!"* he encouraged.



Pic: Mr. Shombi Sharp at the Youth4Water Plus Stall

One participant inquired about ways to ensure that children's voices influence policies. Mr Sharp stressed the importance of advocacy and groundbreaking participatory platforms like Youth4Water Plus, which bridge the gap between young voices and decision-makers. He lauded the campaign as a model initiative which successfully integrates climate resilience, WASH practices, and social entrepreneurship into actionable programs.

World Children's Day: A Call to Action

World Children's Day served as a poignant backdrop for the interaction. The theme, "Listen to the Future," was particularly relevant as participants discussed how climate change disproportionately impacts children and their futures. With Odisha's frequent natural disasters, the stakes in preserving its ecological balance are high. Cyclones, floods, and rising temperatures disrupt education, health, and livelihoods, placing children among the most vulnerable populations in the state.

Mr. Sharp emphasized that involving children and youth in climate resilience planning is beneficial and crucial. *"You bring fresh perspectives, creativity, and energy—qualities the world desperately needs to combat the climate crisis,"* he stated.

Moments to Remember: Networking & Reflection

The event concluded with heartfelt closing remarks from Mr Sharp, who reiterated his admiration for the young participants' dedication. A representative from UNICEF extended a vote of thanks, recognizing Mr. Sharp's support and the tireless efforts of the Youth4Water Plus team.

During the high tea and networking session, participants exchanged ideas and reflected on the discussions. For many, the interaction with Mr. Sharp was a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to connect with a global leader who genuinely valued their aspirations and ideas.



Driving **Change: WASH & CLimate Advocacy**

Cleaning the Coastline: Mega Plogging at Dhabaleswar Beach



Date: 26th September 2024

Location: Dhabaleswar Beach, Berhampur

Over 500 enthusiastic volunteers, including NCC cadets and members of the Sattvic Soul Foundation, converged on Dhabaleswar Beach in Ganjam district for a massive plogging drive under the Swachhata Hi Seva campaign. This collaborative effort resulted in the removal of over 300 kilograms of trash, significantly restoring the natural beauty of this coastal area.

The activity aimed to drive the beach's cleanliness while educating participants about the dangers of marine pollution. Volunteers shared eco-friendly tips and emphasized reducing single-use plastics to protect aquatic ecosystems. The event also included interactive sessions where environmental experts highlighted the critical role of collective action and advocacy in combating coastal degradation.

The activity concluded with an awareness campaign targeting local visitors, urging them to contribute to maintaining the beach's natural pristine state. This initiative showcased the power of community-driven action in preserving natural resources and inspired participants to continue advocating for sustainability in their communities.



Navigating Nature: Celebrating Biodiversity with Children

Date: 17th November 2024 **Location:** Anandbana

To mark the event of World Children's Week, SOS Village, Sai Prakriti, Sattvic Soul Foundation, and Centurion University organized a Nature Trail at Anandbana for more than 80 young participants. This really immersive experience aimed to showcase the wonders of nature to children while fostering a deep understanding of biodiversity and its significance in the young minds.

Through guided walks, children learned about native plants, the role of biodiversity in ecological balance, and how they could become "Green Warriors" in their own lives. Experts led discussions on different pressing environmental issues, thus empowering the participants to take a proactive role in conservation.



The event concluded with children pledging to adopt sustainable practices, including planting trees, reducing waste, and spreading awareness about protecting natural habitats. This trail deepened the participants' appreciation for the environment and inspired them to lead change within their communities.

Celebrating the Global Handwashing Day 2024 in Odisha

Date: 15th January 2025; **Location:** Multiple locations in the State



On 15th January 2025, Youth4Water Plus and its partners celebrated Global Handwashing Day with dynamic participatory events across Odisha, highlighting the critical importance of hand hygiene in preventing diseases and promoting public health. The campaign reached thousands through engaging activities, empowering children and communities with the knowledge to protect themselves and others.

Interactive handwashing demonstrations were organized at various locations, teaching children the six essential steps for proper handwashing. At K-6, BDA Park, Kalinga Vihar, Bhubaneswar, UNICEF Consultant M.S. Khan led a memorable demonstration emphasizing the health benefits of clean hands. Swachhata Saathi workers participated in these sessions, gaining practical knowledge and receiving educational materials and soaps to help spread hygiene practices within their communities.

Radio Bulbul played a key role in amplifying the event's message by broadcasting jingles and slogans that reached a broad audience across the state. The radio station also organized art and quiz competitions at DISHA English Medium School and Nathasahi School, Bhadrak, where over 140 children used their creativity to express the importance of hygiene and environmental responsibility.

At Saraswati Sishu Vidya Mandir, Bhubaneswar, experts, in collaboration with the Nayapalli Yoga Association, UDYAMA, and BGVS, demonstrated handwashing techniques and engaged 50 students in thought-provoking discussions around the theme "Why are clean hands still important?" Students actively participated by sharing slogans and spreading awareness about hygiene in their communities.

This month-long initiative reached diverse groups, from urban schools to rural communities, fostering a collective and wide-ranging commitment to hygiene and health. Through education, hands-on demonstrations, and media outreach, Youth4Water Plus and its partners continue to create lasting change in Odisha, one clean hand at a time.

Transforming *Waste* into *Wonders* Creative Workshop at Jharpada

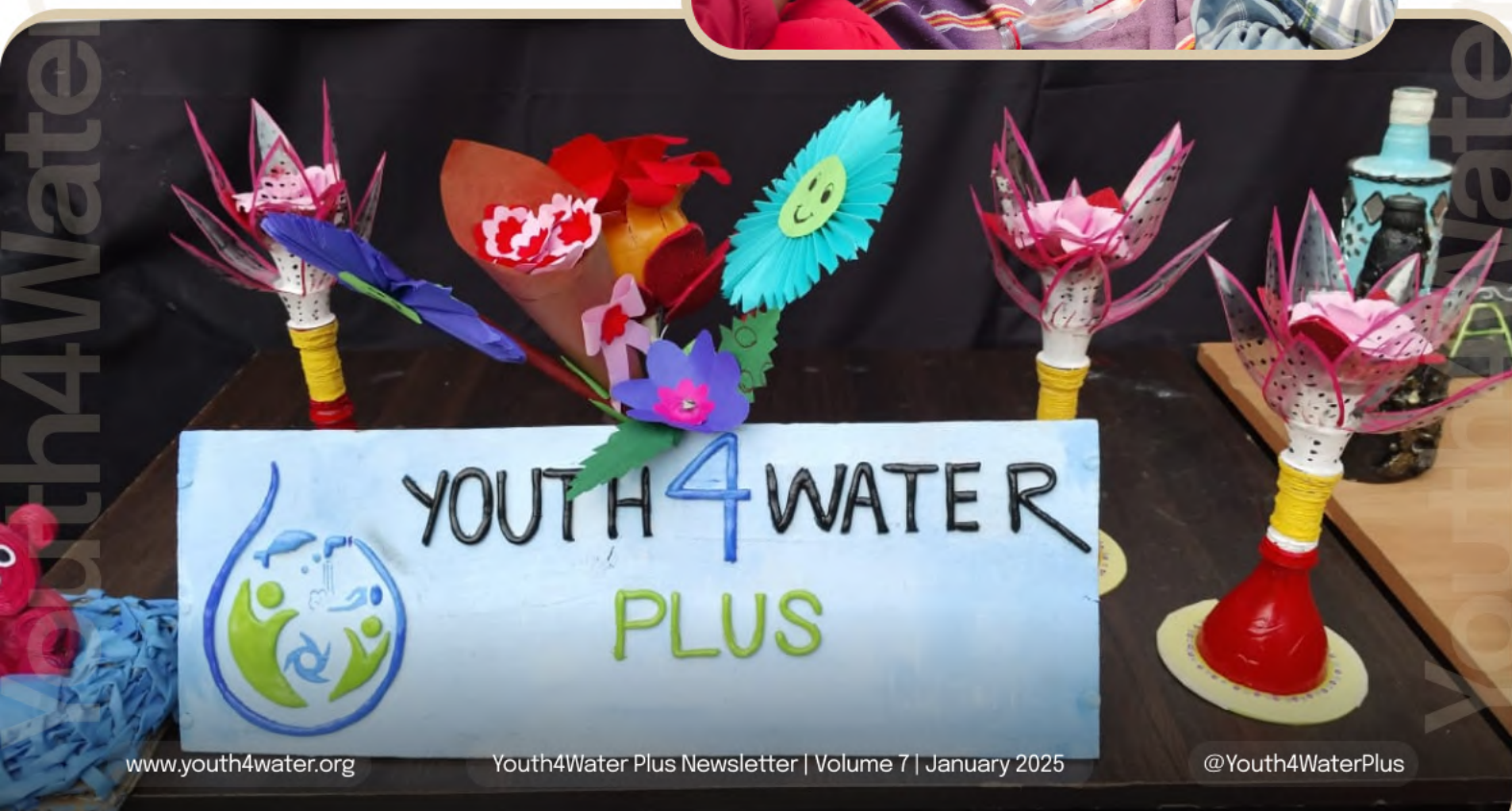
Date: 17th November 2024

Location: Jharpada Jail Road, Bhubaneswar

Creativity and sustainability came together at a workshop led by Ashayein NGO. Around 60 children worked in groups to craft usable items from waste materials like plastic bottles, paper, and clay. The session aimed to demonstrate practical solutions for reducing waste while fostering innovation.

Adding depth to the workshop was a moving Nukkad Natak performed by the former jail inmates. The play highlighted the transformative power of rehabilitation for former inmates, drawing parallels to giving waste a second life. Through powerful storytelling, the actors addressed themes of overcoming addiction and choosing sustainable paths forward.

The children left the workshop with their innovative creations and a renewed sense of purpose and responsibility toward environmental conservation and sustainable human futures.



Waves of Progress: The Ripple Effect of Transformation

Sparkling Conversations: Talk Show on Hygiene and Resilience



Date: 18th November 2024; **Location:** Radio Bulbul & Radio Namaskar Radio Station

To amplify the messages of disaster resilience and hygiene, Radio Bulbul & Radio Namaskar hosted special talk shows featuring key youth delegates. The conversations revolved around the importance of hygiene, youth involvement in disaster recovery, and fostering resilient communities in the face of adversities. Listeners were encouraged to engage in the discussion, with many sharing their stories of positive change. The program reached thousands of audience members, underscoring the power of radio in influencing grassroots behavior and building collective resilience.

On World Toilet Day, Radio Bulbul hosted narrowcasting sessions at two schools, where sanitation and hygiene messages reached hundreds of students. These sessions combined interactive discussions, educational skits, and practical demonstrations to emphasize the importance of clean toilets and hygiene practices. The program creatively highlighted the link between sanitation and health to its young audience, empowering students to become community hygiene ambassadors.

Inspiring Young Leaders: Dharitri Conclave Green Heroes Speak

Date: 23rd November 2024;

Location: Press Club, Bhubaneswar

The Dharitri Conclave brought together 113 environmental champions from across Odisha to share their journeys of activism. The Youth4Water Plus team was prominently highlighted for its impactful work in WASH and climate action. The Green Heroes Speak session highlighted the team's achievements, including mobilizing over 500,000 youth and launching sustainable initiatives.

This platform allowed the team to connect with like-minded individuals and gain insights from other heroes. More than 400 attendees engaged in discussions on environmental sustainability and youth-led solutions, making it a vibrant exchange of ideas. The event showcased the power of collective action and inspired attendees to amplify their efforts toward ecological conservation.



Plogging with Pride: Mega Drive at Baliyatra

Date: 10th November 2024; **Location:** Baliyatra Field, Cuttack

The sprawling grounds of Cuttack's iconic Baliyatra festival witnessed a transformative event as Sattvic Soul and students from KIIT School of Electronics and Biotechnology joined hands for a mega plogging drive on November 10, 2024. Armed with gloves and trash bags, more than 150 participants collected 90 kilograms of waste in a spirited effort to clean the festival grounds.

This activity not only revitalized the fairgrounds but also educated visitors about the significance of maintaining cleanliness at cultural heritage sites. Volunteers distributed pamphlets on reducing plastic use and adopting sustainable waste management practices. By combining action with awareness, the drive left a lasting impact on participants and attendees alike, showcasing how small collective efforts can protect and preserve heritage.



Eco Guardians Chronicle



Crafting for Sustainability: Diya Painting for a Green Diwali

Date: 27th October 2024; **Location:** Subash Bose Boys Hostel, IRC Village

Youth4Water Plus and Sattvic Soul blended creativity with climate advocacy this festive season through a Diya Painting workshop. Forty hostel residents participated in the workshop, where they decorated earthen lamps sourced from local potters to promote the "Vocal for Local" cause.

The vibrant diyas were later used to celebrate Diwali in an eco-friendly way, inspiring participants to avoid firecrackers and embrace sustainable indigenous traditions. Volunteers also engaged participants in discussions on reducing waste and protecting animals during the festivities. This activity not only encouraged mindful celebrations but also highlighted the cultural and environmental significance of Diwali.

From Trash to Treasure: Youth Creativity Shines at Urja Mela

Date: 13th November 2024; **Location:** KT Global School, Bhubaneswar

The Youth4Water Plus campaign showcased its innovative spirit at the state-level Urja Mela. Over 400 children across Odisha participated in this vibrant event, celebrating sustainable practices, environmental conservation, and renewable energy.

The Youth4Water Plus team presented various products crafted from waste, such as planters made from discarded tyres and decorative items fashioned from plastic bottles. Their display caught attendees' attention and inspired them to explore upcycling possibilities in their own communities.

The event culminated in the presentation of the Urja Samman 2024, an award that recognized the campaign's dedication to promoting sustainability and youth empowerment to deserving participants. This activity underscored how innovative solutions can lead to meaningful change.

Empowering Rural Voices: UN Delegates visit Bhadrak

Date: 18th November 2024; **Location:** Sanakrushnapur Village, Basudevpur Block, Bhadrak

In the aftermath of Cyclone Dana, which struck Odisha from December 10 to 13, 2024, a collaborative response by government agencies, NGOs, and youth volunteers ensured zero casualties and effective disaster management. Youth4Water Plus, in collaboration with Radio Bulbul and the Department of NDMA, organized an event titled "Empowering Youth for a Resilient Future" in Sanakrushnapur, Basudevpur Block. The participatory event included interaction with the local villagers and UN delegates to highlight the role of local communities in disaster resilience and preparedness. The program's primary objective was to understand the early warning disaster systems in place and observe how these functioned through on-ground demonstrations.



Around 22 Youth4Water Plus volunteers participated in the event, engaging with the delegates and showcasing how local youth drive positive change during and after disasters. The volunteers demonstrated their active involvement in disaster response through Nukkad Natak (street plays) and awareness rallies to motivate disaster-affected individuals to lead positive and hopeful lives. The interaction emphasized the crucial role of youth in building resilient communities and inspiring others to act during times of crisis. The event was a powerful reminder of how youth can be key agents of change in disaster management and community recovery.



Building Bonds: Suravi Mela for Young Environmentalists

Date: 12th–14th November 2024; **Location:** Unit 3 Ground, Bhubaneswar

The Suravi Mela brought together 2000+ children from diverse backgrounds to celebrate Children's Day through joyful learning activities, including environmental education and creative activities. Youth4Water Plus partnered with BGVS and Panchasakha Sikhya Setu to host workshops on the 5Rs (Refuse, Reduce, Reuse, Repurpose, Recycle), biodiversity conservation, and sustainable consumption. Moreover, interactive exhibits showcasing a creative bioscope for the story of climate change in Odisha and the key flora and fauna species of national parks, biosphere reserves and wetlands in Odisha also built knowledge and understanding in children. Youth4Water Plus also facilitated a hands-on guidance and mentoring workshop for student socio-environmental innovators with Rtn Abhijeet Sahoo, a visionary entrepreneur from Odisha.

Interactive games like seed puzzles and fruit identification sparked curiosity among young participants, while live demonstrations showcased creative solutions for waste management.

The enriching and creatively designed activities, and passionate commitment of the BGVS and Youth4Water Plus teams enabled insightful interactions with children. The Jigyansa workshops gave children a stronger sense of environmental responsibility and actionable knowledge to implement in their daily lives.



SPOTLIGHT: Youth4Water Plus at COP 29

Youth at the Forefront: Youth4Water Plus Advocates Shine at COP 29



At COP 29, where global leaders, policy-makers, and activists converged to discuss the future of our planet, the voices of youth echoed loud and clear. Representing Youth4Water Plus, youth advocates Punyasloka Panda, Indumati Nanda, Stalin Nayak, and advisory board member Heeta Lakhani brought their unwavering commitment to climate action, water conservation, and sustainability to the world stage.

The team's participation was a powerful reminder that youth are not only the inheritors of the planet but also the driving force for positive change. Each advocate shared their experiences from grassroots initiatives and highlighted the success of Youth4Water Plus in mobilizing the impressive number of 500,000 young people across Odisha in its programmes. From awareness campaigns on water conservation to youth-led clean-up drives, the Youth4Water Plus campaign has ignited a spark of environmental activism that resonates far beyond the state's borders.

Punyasloka Panda spoke passionately about the importance of water body conservation. He emphasized how Youth4Water Plus has been actively rejuvenating local water bodies, which presents a critical issue in regions like Odisha due to rising water pollution threatening both ecosystems and local communities. Indumati Nanda shared her insights into how Youth4Water Plus equips young people with the tools to address climate-induced disasters. Stalin Nayak shed light on the intersection of climate action and social entrepreneurship. He explained how Youth4Water Plus empowers young people to commit to sustainable solutions, from waste management to renewable energy initiatives.

Heeta Lakhani, a member of the advisory board of Youth4Water Plus, spoke about the power of youth leadership and the importance of amplifying young voices in global climate negotiations. She emphasized how platforms like COP 29 must continue to prioritise and champion youth-led initiatives while ensuring that the next generation's concerns are heard at the highest levels.

Youth4Water Plus Honored at Sambad's 'Earth Again' Conference

Heartfelt congratulations to Youth4Water Plus for being recognized at the prestigious Earth Again conference, hosted by the Sambad Group! This award celebrates the campaign's unwavering dedication to empowering youth in the battle against climate change and environmental degradation.

In collaboration with 40+ partners, Youth4Water Plus organized plogging and awareness drives as part of the Earth Again movement under the Punascha Pruthibi initiative. This impactful event united 500 vibrant youth leaders in hands-on activities that included plogging to combat littering and insightful sessions on biodiversity, water pollution, and local ecosystems.

The recognition at the Earth Again conference reaffirms Youth4Water Plus's commitment to inspiring and mobilizing young champions for climate action. Together, let's continue this journey toward safeguarding our planet and ensuring a sustainable future for generations to come!



Together, these youth advocates showcased the impactful work of Youth4Water Plus and brought the perspectives of the youth who are leading the charge for a cleaner, more sustainable planet. Their participation at COP 29 marked a pivotal moment in the global conversation, reinforcing that the fight for climate justice is not just for the future – it's happening right now, with youth at the helm.



#together *we* hustle!



"I am Mr Haridas Patel, Secretary of YAR Nuapada, and it is an honor to share our journey in partnership with Youth4Water Plus. Together, we have empowered youth to become changemakers, driving impactful initiatives across Nuapada. From planting 50,000 saplings to raising awareness about forest fire prevention among SC/ST communities and ensuring water access for birds and animals during summer, our efforts reflect our commitment to sustainability. Through engaging programs like nature camps, street plays, and environmental competitions, we inspire collective action. Moving forward, we aspire to expand our outreach, promoting a healthier, greener, and empowered Nuapada district."

~ *Haridas Patel, Secretary, YAR Nuapada*



"I am Shri Pradeep Kumar Behera, Secretary of ADARSA, Sambalpur, and I take pride in our partnership with Youth4Water Plus. In 2024, we focused on Water Conservation, Biodiversity, and Responsible Consumption across Sambalpur, Jharsuguda, and Sundargarh districts. One of our most impactful initiatives has been rainwater conservation, benefiting forest dwellers, improving groundwater levels, and ensuring water availability for animals and birds during the summer. We have mobilized youth through campaigns like Swachhata Hi Seva, World Water Day, and Biodiversity Day, inspiring them to become changemakers. Together, we remain committed to empowering youth and building a sustainable, greener future for all."

~ *Pradeep Kumar Behera, Secretary, ADARSA Sambalpur*

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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