

REPORT ON NATURE CAMP

ZERO WASTE NATURE CAMP: NATURE TRAIL WHERE YOUTH MEET NATURE

Executive Summary:

Location: Kuldhia Wildlife Sanctuary, Nilagiri Region, Balasore District

No of Participants: 24 youth and 6 Youth Leaders Council Members

Experts: 3 experts (Mr Manoranjan Das, *Bird Protector Kuldhia Region* Ms Bhagyashree Dwivedy, *Ranger Panchalingeswar Region* & Mr Mirza Arif, *Wildlife Rescuer*)

Agenda: Attached Annexure 1

Camp Duration: 2 days 8th Dec 2023 to 10th Dec 2023

OVERVIEW

"Nature's symphony where the whispers of the trees and the melodies of the wilderness await your soul's awakening." With the awakening spirit Youth4Water Plus, a UNICEF-led youth-driven campaign, collaborates in an inspiring community partnership with FORCE, Bikash Saathi, Sattvic Soul Foundation, Suze Power Craft and hospitality partner Sai Iswari Hill View Resort. Together, organized a fun learning initiative- the "zero waste Nature Camp: Nature Trail Where Youth Meet Nature."

The fun led immersive camp unfolded from the 8th of December to the 10th of December 2023 brought together over 30 enthusiastic learners from different districts of Odisha. Set against the picturesque backdrop of Kuldhia Wildlife Sanctuary in Balasore District.

Under the sanctuary's canopy, youth embarked on an inspiring journey, treading lightly and embracing a "leave no trace" ethos. Through nature walk, engaging expert talk, and heartfelt conversations with indigenous tribal people discovered collective actions, to weave a narrative of positive change for a greener tomorrow.



En route to Wildlife Sanctuary, there was a quick stop at the village oldest sun temple near Shergada. By night youth reached their destination and camp started with discussion around dinner table and inauguration with giving respect to Mother Earth by lighting of Sky Lantern and worshipping of Nature. Followed by informal meet and greet, day 1 ended with addressing about Youth4Water Plus Campaign & briefing session about 2 days Nature Camp Stay at Kuldhia Sanctuary by Youth Leaders Council Member Dr Biswajeet Panda.



On the camp's second day, the dawn broke with rejuvenating yoga and energizing exercises. Against the backdrop of Kuldhia Wildlife Sanctuary's scenic beauty, participants embraced holistic wellness, engaging in activities that invigorated both body and spirit. This refreshing start set the stage for a day brimming with immersive experiences, fostering a deeper connection between the nature and the natural world.



Followed by energizing exercise, Nature Walk followed by walking through the woods of Panchalingeswar youth studied the biodiversity and the role of different flora and fauna in maintaining ecological balance. Walking approx. 1 km inside the sanctuary, they saw nature in all its glory and harmony. Innumerable varieties of flora and fauna, lakes, streams were seen. Dr Biswajeet Panda led the walk and through his animated commentary and practical demonstrations, brought out the interlinkages between them.



Plogging in the sanctuary and making a section free of plastic waste. Under the expert guidance of youth council member Nirakar Bisoyi and Sattvic Soul Foundation volunteer Suvendu Behera the youth collected more than 25 kg of plastic waste from less than 1 km stretch of the forest and made it clean. Youth were shocked to see this quantity of waste from a protected sanctuary and pledged to minimise their own personal use of plastic.



Butterfly species count and identification field training was done under the guidance of Dr Biswajeet. A total of 26 varieties of butterflies were found in the sort 1 km stretch. He also informed the youth about butterfly behaviours and the crucial role they play as pollinators of the forest.



Identifying indicator species – Dr Biswajeet pointed out small insects such as dragon fly and damsel fly etc and explained how these species act as indicators of the health of the ecosystem.



Role of Elephant as creators of the forest. The forest had some patches which showed clear evidence of elephant activity such as their droppings and tracks through the land made by them. Dr Biswajit explained how the elephant acts as the carrier of seeds, fertilizer and thereby creates the forest.



Later, with a short recreational break youth had session on talk with Ornithologist Mr Manoranjan Das. Session on 'Rare Birds of Kuldhia Sanctuary' by Bird Man of Balasore 'Manoranjan Das'. A self-made, passionate environmentalist and a local resident, Manoranjan has documented over 250 rare species of aquatic (*Ducks, Cormorant, king fisher*) and terrestrial (*Plum headed Parakite, Hill myna, Drongo kuko*) birds in the sanctuary. With the



continuous process to protect the glorified reptiles(birds) so community participation is the fundamental thing as this insitu sites has been occupied by indigenous community. He has monitored their growth, re-

established their habitats and worked with local populations to prevent their hunting. He told the youth about his conservation efforts and apart from the information about birds, also gave useful tips about how to engage communities in conservation efforts.



After the session on Rare species of Birds, youth had an interesting session on handling of Wildlife Animals by Mr Mira Arif, Wildlife (Reptiles) rescuer. The expert gave details insight about herpetofauna (Serpents). Traditionally people used to have more superstitious belief regarding snakes handling which has caused more death cases due snake bite. Later, with the practical insight the team learnt about instruments (tongue, gloves, bag & hook) required for handling. Of particular interest to the youth was his segment on venomous snakes, types of venom and what to do after a snake bite. This session gave the youth a newfound appreciation for the role of snakes in the biodiversity preservation and an understanding of how to serve their community in case of a snake bite.



While walking through the Nilagiri Range youth had another expert session with Bhagyashree Dwibedy, Ranger Kuldhia Wildlife Range. Session on 'Challenges in Forest Conservation' and Species Count Techniques by Bhagyashree Dwibedy, Ranger Wildlife Region. As the Forester for the Kuldhia Wildlife Sanutary, she shared how difficult it was to protect the forest and wildlife from exploitation with a small force of forest guards. She shared many real-life incidents from her experience. She also gave fascinating information about the use of camera traps for taking tiger census, and the 'Transect Line 2000m' and 'Trail Count' method of taking census of the flora and fauna population of the forest. She spoke about the human-elephant conflict in the area and about how the forest department deals with emergency calls from the villages when elephants enter their fields and villages. She appreciated the offer by youth to support them in their work.



Last but not the least with the day coming to an end youth had an Night walk in semi-forest area for star watching and for in-field session on tracking wild animals through their scats, pug mark, tree markings, ground conditions and their responses to calls in the wild. The youth were thrilled with this night walk especially when Dr Biswajit showed them fresh elephant and jackal/wolf footprints near a waterbody. He also demonstrated the technique used by foresters to pick imprints of the footprints for study. The youth also saw jackal's with glittering eyes and geckos. A bit of skygazing was also done in the dark night. They spotted several constellations. Dr Biswajeet used that opportunity to give them useful tips on how to use the stars for mapping position and finding your way out if lost in the jungle.



The end of Nature Camp Youth4Water Plus youth had an spiritual connect with nature by worshipping tree inside the Panchalingeswar village beneath the graceful branches of a neem tree. The tree, adorned with vibrant flowers and lit agarbattis, became a sacred focal point as mantras *“Sarba Mangal Mangalyee sibesarbartha sadhike, sarnye traymbake Devi, prukruti Devi namastute”* resonated through the air. Through this ritualistic homage, the neem tree stood as more than a mere botanical presence—it embodied a form for our appreciation, weaving together the threads of nature's wisdom.



Later, youth had a visit to a tribal village settlement to understand and learn from their culture and lifestyle – The youth observed the tribal homes, the village, the water bodies and the farms; talked to men, women and children. They took notes, photographs and videos. After they came back, they shared their impressions of the village – including their analysis of the impact of climate change on them and the WASH and Climate gaps that needed to be filled.



As the camp draws to a close, the impact on the youth is evident. They depart with not only a newfound passion for environmental conservation but also equipped with practical skills and a network of like-minded individuals. This experience has empowered them to become advocates for positive change in their communities, inspiring others to act for a more sustainable future. Moreover, spending time in nature allowed participants to appreciate the intrinsic value of our environment and understand the crucial interdependence between water, ecosystems, and sustainable living.

ANNEXURE I

Agenda for Nature Camp:

Day 1: 8th December ,2023

Sl No	Description	Time	Responsibility
1	Travel from BBSR to Balasore station	05:30pm to 8:30pm	Smrutirupa Swain
2	Balasore station to Kuldhia Hill View Resort	8:30pm to 9:30pm	Puranjay Sahu and Dr. Biswajeet Panda
3	Dinner and briefing about Nature Camp	9:30pm to 10:30pm	Puranjay Sahu and Satyabrata Samal
DAY END			

Day 2: 9th December, 2023

Sl No	Description	Time	Responsibility
1	Fresh up, Yoga and Tea	05:00am to 06:00am	
2	Plogging at Panchalingeswar	06:00am to 08:00am	Nirakar Bisoi & Suvendu Behera
3	Breakfast at resort	08:00am to 09:00am	
4	Recreational Break	09:00am to 10:00am	
5	Expert talk by Ornithologist, <i>Topic: Avifaunal diversity of Kuldhia wildlife sanctuary special reference to migratory and resident birds of North Odisha</i> <i>Birds identification, survey and nesting site.</i>	10:00am to 12:00pm	Mr Manoranjan
6	Lunch	12:00pm to 01:00pm	
7	Session on Wildlife handling techniques <i>Topic: Herpetofauna of northern Odisha.</i> <i>Identification with safe rescue and relocation</i>	01:00pm to 03:00pm	Mr Mirza Arif and & Dr. Biswajeet panda
8	Nature walks Theme: lepidoptera Insects (butterfly and moth) identification	03:00pm to 05:30pm	
9	Tea Break	05:30pm to 06:30pm	
10	Night Treking	06:30pm to 08:30pm	Dr Biswajeet panda
11	Dinner		
Day 2 End			

Day 3: 10th December ,2023

Sl No	Description	Time	Responsibility
1	Fresh up and Tea	05:00am- 06:00am	
2	Interaction with tribal community (livelihood, forest dependency and wildlife conflict)	06:00am-09:00am	Dr. Biswajeet Panda
3	Breakfast at resort	09:00am - 10:00am	
4	Presentation	10:00am to 01:00pm	Different Groups
6	Lunch and Day 3 end	01:00pm to 02:00pm	
Day 3 End			