



YOUTH 4 WATER
PLUS



ODISHA
CONFERENCE
OF 9-11 AUG 2023
AIC NALANDA
BHUBANESWAR

ODISHA

CONFERENCE OF YOUTH
ON CLIMATE & ENVIRONMENT

2023



**A PATH TO
YOUTH-LED
ENVIRONMENTAL
ACTION**

**DATE: 9TH TO 11TH
AUGUST, 2023**



CLIMATE ACTION NOW



ODISHA
CONFERENCE
OF 9-11 AUG 2023
YOUTH AIC NALANDA
BHUBANESWAR





Youth4water Plus successfully organized the 3-day Odisha Conference of Youth 2023 (OCOY), bringing together 150 young individuals from Odisha, India, in collaboration with partners like the Ministry of Environment, UNICEF, Y20, G20, and international organizations like the Animal Climate Health Save Movement . The conference focused on climate and environmental concerns, emphasizing a unique vegan lifestyle approach, a first for the state. A youth statement was crafted based on three-day deliberations.

Partners in the conference include Rotary club of Eco Bhubaneswar, ClimAct, PANTISS Foundation, Sattvic Soul Foundation, FORCE, AIC-NITF, Sant Nirankari Charitable Foundation, Odisha Live, IFI, Youth for Sustainability, Asja, Antaranga Foundation, Prelude, Mycitylinks and BPE. What sets this conference apart is its unique focus on a vegan lifestyle, making it the first of its kind in the State. A youth statement was crafted, encapsulating the insights and resolutions drawn from the three-day deliberations.

The conference was attended by UNICEF Odisha Chief, William Hanlon Jr. Dr. Lenin Mohanty, Chairperson of OTDC, who served as the Chief Guest. The keynote address was delivered by District General Rtn. Jayashree Mohanty. Prominent Ollywood celebrities Anu Choudhury, Naina Das, and Pritiraj Satapathy were present. Anmol Sovit, Chair of Y20, graced the occasion with his presence. The closing ceremony of the conference was truly a momentous occasion as it was graced by the esteemed presence of Chief Guest Dr. Amar Patnaik, Member of Parliament, Rajya Sabha, and Guest of Honour Akash Das Nayak, Mo College Chairperson.

EVENT HIGHLIGHTS

DAY 1 - 9TH
AUGUST
2023

Inauguration and Engagements

On the inaugural day, the schedule comprised panel deliberations involving young climate advocates, who explored diverse facets of climate and the environment. The day's standout moment came with the presentation of the acclaimed documentary "Maa Ka Doodh," crafted by Dr. Harsha Atmakuri, which illuminated pressing environmental concerns. Archana Soreng, a past participant in the United Nations Secretary General's Youth Advisory Group on Climate Change, conducted a session on Indigenous youth perspectives and their understanding of climate change effects

Chief Guest: Dr. Lenin Mohanty, Chairperson of Odisha Tourism Development Corporation (OTDC)

Keynote Speaker: District General Jayashree Mohanty

Special Appearances: Ollywood celebrities Anu Choudhury, Naina Das, and Pritiraj Satapathy

Y20 Chair: Anmol Sovit.

Archana Soreng marked the 'International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples' by celebrating nature through song. Her talk highlighted Odisha's Kondhs, Santals, and Juang tribes, showcasing their deep ecological knowledge and how climate change impacts their lives. Agriculture and traditions are disrupted by changing rainfall and forest patterns. Coastal tribes face migration due to rising seas and storms, eroding traditions. Indigenous youth witness diminishing flora and fauna, challenging their ancestral wisdom.



Storytelling for Change

Leveraging the Power of Youth Narratives to Influence Policy and Action in Odisha

In Odisha's heartland, tradition and innovation converge as youth reshape their future. Usharani Behera and Satyabrata Samal lead OCOY 2023, fusing ancient wisdom with modern storytelling. Their narratives inspire unity and action across generations, driven by heritage and technology, bridging divides from oral traditions to social media.

Panel Discussion: Integrating Youth Action for Climate Empowerment into Nationally Determined Contributions

In a dynamic panel discussion, experts, youth leaders, policymakers, and activists convene to merge youth efforts with Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) for impactful global climate action. The importance of NDCs is stressed, along with involving passionate and innovative youth urgently. Diverse panelists showcase youth-driven successes, innovative solutions, and grassroots movements. Strategies for integrating youth into NDC processes are explored, fostering an enabling environment. Urgency in climate action is underlined, inviting collaboration to ensure a sustainable future through NDC-aligned youth contributions



Panellist: Adv. Ankita Ganga Deb, Associate, Y20; Gokul Rajendran, CEO, Govardhan App; Prof. Vinayak Salunkhe, Assistant Manager Outreach, Earth Day Network India; Moderated by Shreya KC, Advisor for Nepalese Youth for Climate Action

NOURISHING BONDS

Maa Ka Doodh - A Documentary



'Maa Ka Doodh: Uncovering A Nation's Dairy Disaster' is a comprehensive documentary exploring India's dairy industry from history to today. It navigates ethical, cultural, and environmental dimensions, addressing resource use, emissions, and livelihoods. Embraced by OCOY 2023, it raises awareness and presents pathways for a sustainable and ethical dairy sector. The film examines ancient traditions alongside modern practices, highlighting potential negative impacts on cattle and health. Solutions proposed include humane treatment, organic farming, and innovative production methods.



"I call upon you to be the change you wish to see in the world. Embrace the Youth4Water Plus campaign, let your voices be heard, and let your actions speak louder than words. Together, we can create a world where water is protected, and our planet is cherished. Together, we can be the catalysts for a global movement towards climate action and a sustainable future", said William Hanlon, Chief of Field Office, UNICEF Odisha.



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Shri. Lenin Mohanty, OTDC Chairperson, Govt. of Odisha, delivered an inspiring opening speech. Youth-led projects are driving sustainability discussions, as evident in the Youth4Water Plus Odisha Conference. Our youth aren't just concerned about climate change; they're actively combating it.

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Sustainability is a duty, not a choice. Our actions today shape the world for generations ahead. The Odisha Conference unites us with knowledge, creativity, and a commitment to safeguarding the planet. Let's go beyond words, crafting solutions that resonate beyond these walls." - Bishal Mohanty, 21, OCOY Youth Delegate.



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As we engage in Odisha Conference's discussions and workshops, recall our boundless power to enact change. Challenges propel us to redefine possibilities. These youth delegates aren't just participants; they're a potent natural force, armed with zeal, wisdom, and unwavering belief in our transformative impact." - Shreya KC, Nepalese Youth for Climate Action Advisor.



Field Visit and Real-world Insights

DAY 2

10th August 2023

Participants were taken on a field visit to Astaranga in the Puri district of Odisha. The aim was to provide them with a firsthand experience of climate-related challenges, adaptations, and mitigation strategies. The field visit aimed to enhance participants' understanding of the real-world implications of environmental issues.

Odisha's Astaranga Beach, named "colorful sunset," is a stunning destination. Winter hosts Olive Ridley turtle breeding. The 1999 Super Cyclone ruined it, wiping out 30,000 Casuarina trees and Gundalba village. Trees shielded the coast. Post-cyclone, salty rainwater harmed soil, affecting water and soil quality. Rising salinity harmed fishing output as well.



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- Experiencing climate change firsthand fosters a lasting perspective on environmental challenges and responsible behaviour.
- Educated youth drive climate action and sustainability within families and communities.
- Educational efforts unify and inspire idea-sharing for effective adaptation.
- Climate knowledge motivates youth towards renewable energy and innovative solutions



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Casuarina Trees: Cure or Cause of concern?

Casuarina trees, brought from Australia and Southeast Asia, act as a protective shield against salt winds. They saved Gundalba from salinity and improved crop resilience post-tsunami. Economist Saudamini Das found weak casuarina trees break early in storms, reducing impact only infrastructure. Casuarina leaves, if not cleared, delay water percolation, affecting soil alkalinity.



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At Odisha Conference, we're torchbearers for change. Despite challenges, we act. Trees we plant, practices we adopt, and voices we raise shape our future. Our generation drives real change."
- Manisha Sahoo, 22, OCOY Youth Delegate.



Key Takeaways from the activity for youth
Astaranga beach plogging raised teen awareness on trash impact and spending habits.
5 quintals of trash were collected by youth and collected by garbage service.
Casuarina tree benefits and drawbacks for climate change learned.
Youth acknowledge community's role in addressing climate disasters.

ADVOCACY, COLLABORATION, YOUTH-LED SOLUTIONS AND FUTURE IMPLICATIONS

Day 3

11th August, 2023

Parallel workshops led by experts:

- Film Making by Dr Harsha Atmakuri: Craft narratives and visuals for impactful stories.
- Climate-Friendly Cooking by Jayalaxmi Rai, Animal Climate & Health Save Foundation: Sustainable ingredients, waste reduction, local produce.
- Effective Social Media Use by Avishek Jagdev, social media influencer & Punyasloka Panda: Shape online identity, storytelling, engagement, analytics. Participants explored creative expression, gastronomy, and digital communication, transcending the workshop's scope.

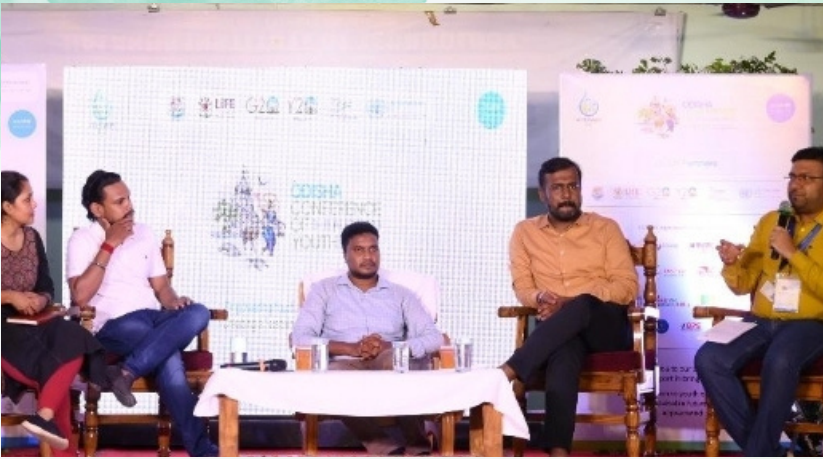


Panel Discussion: UN/Government Processes on Climate Action - Global Context on Youth and Climate Action and Roadmap to COP

Panellist: Shivani Mehta, Climate Change & Sustainability Expert, Majhi Vasundhara, DoEF&CC, Govt. of Maharashtra; Srishti Singh, Consultant, Climate and Youth Engagement, UNICEF; Moderated by Heeta Lakhani, Founder & Director, ClimAct Foundation & Co-Founder, Youth Negotiators Academy

Youth-driven climate action takes center stage, influencing UN and government policies. This panel unites academics, activists, politicians, and youth leaders to explore global youth engagement. Emphasis on youth participation in international climate protocols, showcasing campaigns' impact, and guiding COP decisions. The discussion covers overcoming obstacles, harnessing youth energy, and sustaining engagement. The goal: intergenerational cooperation for effective climate action.





PANEL DISCUSSION: GREEN JOBS AND SKILLING - CLIMATE CHANGE POLICIES AT THE NATIONAL LEVEL

Panellist- Omm Priyadarshi Chhotaray, Treasurer, G20 Youth; Neelima Mishra, Founder, Ceiba Green Solutions; Deepan Digal, COO, PANTISS; Puranjay Sahu, Change Leader, TATA STRIVE; Siddharth Bhat, CEO, Karkhana; Moderated by Stalin Nayak, CEO PANTISS Foundation.-

Linking green jobs, climate policy, and skilled labor, a diverse panel discusses sustainable development. Renewable energy, sustainable agriculture, and more fields offer greener employment. Emphasis on upskilling, diversity, and youth-led initiatives. Green jobs' transformative power for a sustainable future is highlighted, urging integration into national policies for economic growth and environmental preservation

Thematic Group Discussions: Exploring Extreme Climate Events, Biodiversity Conservation, and Water Scarcity

The day was dedicated to collaborative group work on three themes -Extreme Weather Event, Biodiversity Conservation, and Water Scarcity.

Facilitated by experts, discussions covered:

- Causes of extreme climate events, climate change's role, and mitigation.
- Biodiversity hotspots, human impact, conservation strategies, indigenous knowledge.
- Water scarcity causes, impacts, sustainable management, governance, and community-led solutions.

Discussion 1: Extreme Climate Events - Understanding, Mitigating, and Adapting

**Joint Discussion and Presentation by
Participants: Exploring Environmental
Challenges**

Diverse groups discussed climatic events, water scarcity, and biodiversity solutions interactively. Shivani Mehta emphasized interconnection and cross-cutting solutions. The seminar concluded with collaborative action for sustainability and OCOY Statement, fostering resilience and cooperation



Three days of engaging discussions, panels, and collaborations shaped a comprehensive youth statement. It incorporates participants' views, concerns, and solutions, aiming to inspire action and drive change

OCOY YOUTH STATEMENT 11TH AUGUST 2023

WE

Odisha's youth, join to address urgent climate challenges impacting our planet and future. We propose actions to the government:

Climate Disaster Readiness:

- Enhanced facilities in cyclone shelters
- Youth mental health training for post-disaster support
- Integration of Apada Mitra scheme with NYKS
- Market regulation and cold storage during disasters
- Promoting disaster insurance awareness



Water Security:

- Native species plantation
- Groundwater regulation and policy implementation
- Rainwater harvesting awareness and mandate
- Collaboration with local communities on water conservation
- Check dams and bamboo-based drip irrigation

Biodiversity Conservation:

- Ecosystem restoration through joint forest management
- Scaling nature-based solutions like Casuarina and mangrove cultivation
- Strengthening youth-led plastic reduction initiatives
- Creating green corridors for wildlife
- Promoting local and sustainable food systems
- We seek government partnership and platforms to amplify our efforts in fighting the climate crisis.





Session with Youth: Conversations on Youth Engagement and Leadership



An interactive Q&A session spotlights youth engaging with influential leaders in governance and empowerment. Moderated by Sujit Mahapatra of Bakul Foundation, the discussion delves into youth's policy shaping, leadership growth, and Odisha's future.

Youth interact with leaders on education, climate, and more. Panelists, including Akash Dasnayak, *Chairperson, Mo College, Government of Odisha*, and Dr. Amar Patnaik, *Member of Parliament, Rajya Sabha*, and William Hanlon Jr, Chief of Field Office, UNICEF Odisha. share insights on youth leadership, education, entrepreneurship, policy, and climate action. The intergenerational dialogue explores bridging age gaps.

The session's message: teamwork, empowerment, and shared responsibility, driving positive change in Odisha and beyond.

CONCLUSION

The successful Youth4Water Plus Odisha Conference united youth to discuss pressing climate and environmental issues. The event showcased youth passion, innovative ideas, and partnership collaboration. With dignitaries' support, it initiated impactful conversations and actions, laying the foundation for future environmental awareness and reform efforts. The youth statement will be read in various national and international conferences like LCOY, COP 28, Bangkok youth conference, World Food forum among others. This will highlight the issues and solutions from Odisha, India.



Mo College Chairperson Akash Das Nayak said, Education is essential for raising eco-conscious people. Policy and grassroots activities must work together, according to this conference. Together, we can make a difference."



"We defy climate change's hold on our future. Challenges won't deter us; we'll innovate, collaborate, and adapt. Let's turn ideas into action, educate, and unite for sustainability. The Odisha Conference inspires us to safeguard our world's future." - Hrushikesh Pradhan, 27, Founder of Antaranga Foundation.



Dr. Amar Patnaik, Rajya Sabha MP, gave an inspiring valedictory talk. It's encouraging to see youth leading climate and environmental efforts. The Youth4Water Plus Odisha Conference of Youth shows that our youth are not merely worried about climate change; they are fighting it."



Odisha Conference embodies unity, youth, and purpose. Our commitment to sustainability drives us. Together, we strive for climate policy, biodiversity preservation, zero-waste living, and resilient food systems, as change agents shaping tomorrow's world. - Heeta Lakhani, ClimAct Foundation Founder & Director, Youth Negotiators Academy Co-Founder.

OUR ESTEEMED PARTNERS

OCOY wouldn't have been possible without the contributions of our esteemed partners



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