

# Understanding Communication Approaches for Engaging Youth on Climate Change and Environmental Sustainability (CCES)

## SYNTHESIS REPORT

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Submitted to



by



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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The study titled **Understanding Communication Approaches for Engaging Youth on Climate Change and Environmental Sustainability (CCES)** was carried out to understand the perceptions on CCES among varied stakeholders and how existing programs and other institutional mechanisms have been communicated or engaged with youth in climate actions. Further, the study analyses and recommends communication strategies to engage youth in taking positive actions for a sustainable environment.

The main objectives for this study were:

## APPROACH & METHODOLOGY



1 Understand policy and institutional level mechanisms for driving Communication for Behaviour Change on CCES issues, especially relevant for youth involvement and engagement.



2 To understand the perceptions related to climate change and environmental sustainability (CCES) among youth, and key stake holders engaged in CCES planning and implementation, especially in rural areas.



3 To recommend communication and engagement strategies for greater inclusion and empowerment of youth in taking positive actions for environment sustainability.

To cover the objectives of this study, a varied mix of methodologies and approaches was used. The following main activities were carried out to gather perspectives from varied stakeholders at different levels:

Activity	Objective	Scope
1 Secondary Review	Review similar/relevant studies, efforts, policies and programs	Literature & Policy Review on youth engagement in CCES issues.
2 Qualitative Study	Understand youth interest and engagement in CCES issues	16 FGD with Youth, 89 IDI with Officials, Teachers, Vulnerable community members, Community leaders in four study states Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Bihar & Rajasthan.
3 Consultations with GOI Officials	Interest/experience of youth engagement in government schemes, programs and plans	Relevant line ministries of GOI
4 Online Survey with Experts	Understand Communication and conservation experts' experience of working with youth	38 Experts/ IUCN CEC Members in India
5 Case studies with Youth Crusaders	Document and understand the motivation/challenges of youth crusaders	10 Case studies of young crusaders in India
6 Consultations with Industry on CCES programs	Understand Industry interest/experience of youth engagement	Review of corporate CCES programs and consultation on youth engagement
7 Good Practices Analysis	Document good experiences/practices of youth engagement / involvement in Indian CCES programs/ campaigns	Analysis of four different programs/strategies
8 Global Lessons & Good Practices (International Case Studies)	Document good experiences / practices of youth engagement / involvement in global CCES programs/ campaigns	13 global mechanisms with examples
9 Synthesis Report and Recommendations	Overall synthesis of all findings to draw recommendations for communication and engagement strategies for Youth in CCES	Synthesis of findings and recommendations
10 Sharing & Dissemination	Share study findings and discuss implications	Discuss findings and develop recommendations with relevant program and policy makers.

This study uses these diverse methods to provide a comprehensive understanding perceptions of various stakeholders on climate change and environmental sustainability issues, learnings from national and global best practices and an outline of the existing policies and institutional mechanisms for communicating and engaging with youth.

The combination of all these methods provides local and global perspectives for developing recommendations on communication and engagement strategies to inspire youth in activities and solutions related to climate change and environmental sustainability.

Although this study's scope includes more general CCES (climate change and environment sustainability) challenges, the emphasis was also given to particular Mission LiFE themes, as the goal of this mission is to develop a social movement for climate change while focusing on behaviour modification.

## HIGHLIGHTS OF THE STUDY

### Policy Scan & Literature Review

- The policies<sup>1</sup> reviewed mention Youth as important stakeholders along with others- mostly for and to create awareness. However, they are not specifically addressed but are covered along with other stakeholders.
- Some of the policies that have specific sections for youth are the National Biodiversity Action Plan (2014), National Youth Policy (2021), and Environment Education Awareness Program (EEAP, MOEFCC)
- State Action Plans for Climate Change are being updated in all states and is a good opportunity for incorporating youth-related strategies and plans

### Civil Society Initiatives

- There are varied CCES initiatives, programs, campaigns led by national, state and local organizations, academic institutes, government organizations, communities, and even individuals.
- The focus is primarily on raising awareness, engagement and participation through cleanliness drives, plantations and events.
- There are few platforms for giving voice to Youth and very few initiatives focusing on behavior / practice transformations at individual / household or community level.

### Corporate

- Significant interest by Corporate in CCES, especially awareness, education, and skills related efforts among Youth.
- A number of them go beyond compliance and are committed to environmental sustainability as a mission. There are a number of networks and associations on CCES issues, like, the Indian Business and Biodiversity Initiative (IBBI); FICCI Centre for Sustainability Leadership; IUCN Leaders for Nature program, etc.
- Review of major CSR efforts highlights more interest and investment in Youth (education and skill development)

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<sup>1</sup> For example, National Action Plan on Climate Change (2009), The Biological Diversity Act (2002), National Water Policy (2012)

## Secondary Research

- Studies reviewed (including those from India) highlight youth awareness and concern about CCES issues they also revealed that youth are Interested in taking action
- Studies also demonstrate the emergence of young people as agents of change in the global climate change arena and the urgency of engaging them in climate change governance and policymaking

## Youth Perceptions on CCES from Qualitative Study<sup>2</sup>

- Significant information and knowledge on climate change among youth (urban & rural)
- They can relate and explain climate changes happening in their community and how it is impacting their education
- Youth have Interest and enthusiasm for contributing to Climate Action
- They are aware of the impact of deforestation, pollution, and the need for waste management and cleanliness so they are more willing to take actions

## Participation and Engagement

- In this study, youth reported their participation in plantation, cleanliness drive, reducing single use of plastic, and water harvesting across the states. Some of the programs reported were Jal Jeevan Hariyali (Bihar) Eco Clubs; (AP) Clean and Green India; (Bihar), and in Nal Jal Yojana, (Rajasthan).
- Under Swatch Bharat, there is a high level of youth participation in cleanliness drives in communities (Bihar, Assam, A.P, Rajasthan).
- Youth like to participate in outdoor activities, like, clean and Green India (Bihar), Van Utsav (Forest Fair), Vigyan Mela (Science Fair).



## Information Sources

- The study brings out that Youth gather information on CCES from a variety of sources: television news channels, digital platforms like social media (WhatsApp, Facebook & Instagram), and mobile apps
- Educational institutions, particularly schools, teachers, and textbooks were also cited as their sources of information.

<sup>2</sup> Qualitative study conducted in Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Bihar & Rajasthan

## Views of different stakeholders

### Teachers' point of view:

- Creative mediums, competitions, and external activities like drives/campaigns are more engaging and popular with students.
- Activities like debates, street plays, exhibitions, essay competitions, drawings, and speech/debate competitions are effective strategies to promote knowledge and understanding of climate change among students.

### Officials and Experts point of view:

- Youth are involved in some government programs as audience or participants
- Youth are very important stakeholders, catalysts of change and there is a need for guidance & mentoring

### Community Suggests:

- Youth need to be inspired to take action

## RECOMMENDATIONS

### Challenges

- Concerns among rural and urban Youth on Climate Crises – also anxiety linked to climate change and its impact on livelihood in rural areas.
- Qualitative study findings indicate intent to act among Youth. However, limited activities, outlets, directions, and options to act
  - Limited access to resources and platforms on CCES issues to rural youth (*Teachers, Experts, Youth*)
  - Many experts and young conservationists feel that there is a lack of mentorship and support available to help them in their efforts. This can make it difficult for them to effectively address the challenges facing our planet and its ecosystems. (*Experts, Youth Crusaders*)
- The study brings out that there is diversity in the types and quality of environmental education provided to youth in the formal education system in India. However, there is a clear consensus that more work and improvement is required to enhance this component in the curriculum in schools and colleges. (*Teachers, Experts, Youth*)
- Insufficient institutional involvement, coordination, and funding pose barriers. (*State officials, teachers, Experts, Youth Crusaders*)

### Indian Good Practices

- A few good practices that engage youth in different ways (Environment Education in school children, Skill Development, Research Fellowships and youth action initiatives) were analysed.
- The good examples of youth engagement that present solutions and strategies from India for active participation in long run. These programs show how youth can be involved at various levels like schools, and universities, and ensure proper support and approach to build their capacities and strengthen skill development.

### International Case Studies

- Each of the 13 mechanisms activates youth in different ways, although many provoke engagement through more than one approach. Several, such as wildlife clubs and environmental education engage through academic, learning, and education formats.
- Others, for example, youth parliaments, ambassadors, and networks utilize processes whereby youth work together, usually in an intergenerational format, to learn, network, advocate, and build new capacities.
- Youth-led projects are important in that they encourage a "learning by doing" methodology - that also usually has direct environmental benefits.
- Both creative and entertaining entry points, such as films and sports, are important for engaging new audiences and building the environmental movement.

## Opportunities:

- Empowering Young People to Advocate for Climate Action:
  - Youth seek reliable sources of information and platforms to support their cause.
  - Youth are drawn to innovative eco-startups that use technology to tackle climate change
  - Youth interested to mobilize and inspire community-based behavior change programs and initiatives.
  - Youth utilize social media for advocacy and to spread awareness among peers.
  - Intergenerational dialogue and learning / mentoring

## Suggested Engagement Strategies

- Creative and action-based communication approaches on CCES popular with youth
  - Practical activities, Competitions, and Field (exposure) Visits preferable
- Strengthening Voice and Agency of Youth to advocate and act on CCES issues
  - Encourage and appreciate Youth work & achievements in CCES areas
- Leverage and expand existing mechanisms and initiatives (government, corporate & civil society) to reach and engage youth in rural and urban settings on CCES issues
- Mechanisms for youth involvement and representation in policy decisions, planning and implementation (a few examples listed in the International Case Studies)
- Improve hands-on CCES learning & education
  - Deeper integration of CCES issues into the curriculum/formal education systems
  - Hands-on training and green skills development
  - Youth engagement on more field-based activities, workshops, festivals, etc.

## Study Partners



United Nations International Children’s Emergency Fund (**UNICEF**) is an agency of the United Nations responsible for providing humanitarian and developmental aid to children worldwide. Across more than 190 countries and territories, they do whatever it takes to help children survive, thrive, and fulfil their potential, from early childhood through adolescence. [www.unicef.org](http://www.unicef.org)



The International Union for Conservation of Nature (**IUCN**) is a membership Union uniquely composed of both government and civil society organisations. By harnessing the experience, resources, and reach of its more than 1,400 Member organisations and the input of some 15,000 experts, IUCN is the global authority on the status of the natural world and the measures needed to safeguard it. [www.iucn.org](http://www.iucn.org)



**IUCN CEC** is one of the seven expert commissions of IUCN, that has a wide network of professionals dedicated/working using creative communication and education tools and approaches to raise awareness and inspire action to conserve nature. Commission on Education & Communication (**CEC**) has been leading the Youth Engagement strategy for IUCN and has numerous programs engaged on the same, including #NatureForAll. <https://www.iucn.org/our-union/commissions/commission-education-and-communication>



Centre for Media Studies (**CMS**) is a reputed multi-disciplinary, research-based think tank in India, since 1991. It has extensive expertise and experience in conducting various research and evaluations (in social and environmental sectors) along with undertaking numerous advocacy and capacity-strengthening endeavours, [www.cmsindia.org](http://www.cmsindia.org)

# A. STUDY SCOPE & METHODOLOGIES





Climate action requires mobilisation of people at the ground level, moving beyond environmental awareness and advocacy. It requires concerted efforts and targeted strategies designed to motivate people for action to ensure safe climate future for themselves and the society. The most influential population group in this regard is the younger generation who can become the behaviour change models for the future. Today there are 'over 1.8 billion young people in the world, and 1.2 billion of them live in lower-middle income countries'. India currently has its largest ever adolescent and youth population, and by 2025, its median age will be just 28 years<sup>3</sup>. This youth demographic possesses the power to steer the Indian economy towards a low-carbon, green economy, and need to be equipped with the information and resources to do so.

The IUCN Youth Strategy (2022-2030) offers a framework for effective youth involvement by uniting generations to work together to stop biodiversity loss, preserve nature, and sustainably manage natural resources.

IUCN in collaboration with CMS & IUCN CEC has undertaken a study titled **Understanding Effective Communication Approaches of Engaging Youth for Climate Change and Environmental Sustainability (CCES)**.

The **main objectives** for this study were:

- **Understand policy and institutional level mechanisms for driving Communication for Behaviour Change on CCES issues, especially relevant for youth involvement and engagement.**
- **To understand the perceptions related to climate change and environmental sustainability (CCES) among youth, and key stake holders engaged in CCES planning and implementation, especially in rural areas.**
- **To recommend communication and engagement strategies for greater inclusion and empowerment of youth in taking positive actions for environment sustainability.**

This extensive study aimed to understand the perceptions of the climate change among varied stakeholders involved in the CCES and how existing programs and other institutional mechanisms have been communicated to the youth population to engage them in climate actions. Further, this study also analyses and will recommend the future communication strategies to evolve youths in taking positive actions for sustainable environment. To cover the objectives of this study, a varied mix of methodologies and approaches are being used.

This study used diverse methods to provide a comprehensive understanding perceptions of various stakeholders on climate change and environmental sustainability issues, learnings from national and global best practices and an outline of the existing policies and institutional mechanisms for communicating and engaging with youth.

To cover the objectives of this study, a varied mix of methodologies and approaches was used. The following main activities were carried out to gather perspectives from varied stakeholders at different levels:

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/resource-pdf/One%20pager%20on%20youth%20demographics%20GF.pdf>

## # 1 Secondary Review

Literature & Policy Review on youth engagement in CCES issues.

Relevant global frameworks (6) and national policies (11) were reviewed.

Related studies, efforts, policies and programs. (This review was limited by the inclusion of only English-language journals.) In all, 24 articles/reports were reviewed (11 studies are based on research in India). In addition 11 documentation of programs / campaign engaging youth were reviewed for this study.

## # 2 Qualitative Study

CMS undertook the data collection in 4 states selected on the basis of the Vulnerability Score Index and representative Biogeographic Zones.

Focused group discussions (FGDs) and In-depth interviews (IDIs) were deployed for data collection. While data through FGDs was collected from two set of youth group based on their age 15-18 and 19-24 years old. The IDIs were conducted with Teachers, vulnerable community members, community leaders/ activists, and Government officials.

Overall, in 4 states 170 youth were approached in two set of age group 15-18 years and another 19-24 years through 16 FGDs, in both urban and rural locations.

The other set of CCES stakeholders covered in this study are those involved in either teaching CCES or implementing environmental or climate change schemes/initiatives. To get the perspective of teachers, Vulnerable Community members and community activists 64 IDIs were conducted in 4 target states.

In addition, 25 senior state, district and block level official of environment and allied departments were also contacted for face-to-face interviews. All responses were coded and analysed for insights on a pre designed questions and parameters.

States and Districts covered	
States	Districts
Assam	Kamrup
	Goalpara
Rajasthan	Jaipur
	Jaisalmer
Andhra Pradesh	Guntur
	Vishakapatnam
Bihar	Patna
	Sitamarhi

## # 3 Consultations with GOI Officials

Relevant line ministries of GOI (8) were contacted for interviews with concerned Officials to understand Interest/experience of youth engagement in government schemes, programs and plans.

## # 4 Online Survey with Experts

IUCN CEC Members in India (around 150 communication professionals working in conservation sector) were surveyed to understand their experience of working with youth. In all, 38 experts responded to this online survey.

## # 5 Case studies with Youth Crusaders

Selected 10 Case studies of young crusaders in India were documented to understand the motivation/challenges of youth crusaders/leaders.

## # 6 Consultations with Industry on CCES programs

Corporate CCES programs were reviewed and an consultation was conducted to understand Industry interest/experience of youth engagement on CCES issues. A mapping exercise was carried out for the private sector engagement in India encompassing youth engagement and CCES activities in India. A total of 29 companies (including 16 companies from the IUCN Business and Biodiversity Engagement Unit and IUCN Leaders for Nature Network) were shortlisted and reviewed under the theme “youth engagement”.

The roundtable discussion (Online on July 14, 2023) witnessed active participation from over 36 personnel representing corporate sustainability and site teams of leading 10 private sector players of India

## # 7 Good Practices Analysis

Analysis of four different programs/strategies were conducted as good practices of youth engagement / involvement in Indian CCES programs/ campaigns.

## # 8 Global Lessons & Good Practices (International Case Studies)

Global mechanisms with examples (13) are documented to showcase good experiences / practices of youth engagement / involvement in global CCES programs/ campaigns.

## # 9 Synthesis Report and Recommendations

Overall synthesis of all findings (this report) to draw recommendations for communication and engagement strategies for Youth in CCES. It draws on all activities’ findings to summarize the outcomes and recommendations from this study.

## # 10 Sharing & Dissemination

To discuss findings and develop recommendations with relevant program and policy makers. the study findings were discussed in a strategic workshop organised on August 25, 2023.

### **Note: -1**

**Detailed findings of each of these activities mentioned above are provided in reports submitted and available on the link -**

<https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1i3JfyMmfykqwnW5deha7Yr2OIuyA6Wmr>

It is important to note that this study is a qualitative in nature and provide directions / insights for further strategies of communication/ engagement with youth. This study does try to get viewpoints from most stakeholders involved in undertaking planning, designing and implementation of policies and programs on CCES and with youth. However, it does not claim to be comprehensive and should not be considered representative for whole of India.

## B. OVERALL KEY STUDY FINDINGS




## 1. Youth in Government Policies and Programs

- Youth are not specifically addressed/covered in important CCES policies in our country. For example, they are not called out in the National Action Plan on Climate Change (2009), The Biological Diversity Act (2002), and National Water Policy (2012). Most CCES policies mention Youth as important stakeholders along with others- mostly for and to create awareness. There are very few direct Youth & CCES relevant policies. For example, National Biodiversity Action Plan (2014), National Youth Policy (2021) and Environment Education Awareness Program (EEAP, MOEFCC).

In government led programs, youth (school and college students) are usually captive audience in CCES related events and programs, not agents of change.

- The Global Biodiversity Framework 2021-22 provides leverage for government policies review and incorporating new mechanisms for youth related strategies in CCES planning and implementation. As a signatory to the framework, India played a significant role at the COP in placing the principles of equity and historical emissions at the forefront of this framework. Advocating for the Resource Mobilization Mechanism and support for developing nations and supplanting the 30x30 country-based/area-based target with the 30x30 global action and target. India also underscored the interconnections between biodiversity loss and climate change and emphasised the need to use an “integrated ecosystem-based approach” for protecting biodiversity.
- India’s commitment to climate actions through its Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), long-term low-emission development strategies (LT-LEDS), net zero goal, various national- and state-level policies on climate change, and significant domestic and foreign investments flowing into the climate change sector. Our NDC to UNCCC has included Mission LiFE as our committed medium for CCES Action. This sets the context for India to build on these policy commitments through which various stakeholders like the youth, communities, civil society and the private sector are involved and can contribute towards national objectives.



“Through the youth network of NYKs and NSS, activities carried out frequently in all states and districts. We connect through the 12.5 lakh Youth clubs (50 lakhs youth) network with communication mediums of WhatsApp, email and social media. They volunteer for the causes of health, education, DRM, women safety, etc.”  
--Official from Ministry of Youth & Sport Affairs (Activity # 3)

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## 2. CCES Panorama

- There are multi- stakeholders found working at different levels (Government; local, state, national & international agencies; Corporate; Academic Institutions; Media, Individuals, etc.) on diverse CCES issues in various geographical areas. Number of them with or for Youth.
- There is increasing Corporate interest in investing on Youth Education and Skill Development (most not currently linked to CCES areas)
- Most efforts and initiatives with Youth are focussed on better knowledge and awareness on CCES issues – less on providing voice and agency to Youth
- **In the qualitative study in four states (Activity #2), officials shared that there is need for strategic involvement of community-based organizations, village-level spokespersons, and participatory approaches to engage rural youth and advocate for climate change awareness. Collaborations with NGOs help in addressing social issues and promoting environmental conservation. Local based NGOs involvement in working at the village level ensures that climate change schemes are effectively communicated and implemented.**

Official from Toyota (during interaction in activity # 10) outlined two approaches. One is top-down driven approach as in 2015 they globally committed to net zero approach and created positive impact. She also mentioned that in India, there are several voluntary programs that are conducted through the employees which touch many nearby community and schools on various environmental issues. She also shared the establishment of an Ecozone, an experiential learning centre near Bangalore. The centre focuses on environmental and sustainability education, with 17 theme parks catering to students from class 6th to 9th. The students are introduced to various problems, their causes, and potential solutions, allowing them to make informed decisions. Stakeholders and the supply chain are also engaged in this initiative.



**Word Cloud from the Private sector responses**

Several youth-led organizations and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in India are dedicated to environmental and climate activism. These groups provide platforms for young people to collaborate, share ideas, and work on impactful projects to combat climate change. They engage in advocacy, research, and community outreach to influence policy and promote sustainable practices.

The good practice cases of youth engagement represents solutions and strategies from India for active participation in long run. These studies and programs shows how youth can be involved at various levels like schools, universities, and ensuring a proper support and approach to build their capacities and strengthen skill development.

Each of the practices engage youth in different ways (Environment Education in school children, Skill Development, Research Fellowships and youth action initiatives).

- **CSE- Green School Programme** enhances environmental education in school children and engage them through academic, outdoor learning, and activities surrounding the school. <https://www.greenschoolsprogramme.org/>
- The need of uplifting green skills among youth in India and their engagement in environmental sustainability programs conceptualised the **Green Skill Development Programme (GSDP)** by the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEF&CC) which is an Indian government lead initiative. Some of the courses enable the candidates to become self-employed for green jobs. <http://www.gsdp-envis.gov.in/>
- **Research Fellowships and implementing projects-** by providing platform for Environmental and Climate Research. Youth active involvement in climate research and academia contributes to scientific studies and engage in academic discussions on various aspects of climate change. Their contributions strengthen the scientific understanding of environmental and climate issues and inform evidence-based policies/actions. **SBI Youth Fellowship** has different thematic especially focusing in rural areas for implementation, which also include Environmental themes. <https://youthforindia.org/programe>
- **Engaging youth through action in conservation** and grassroots environmental initiatives: Indian youth are actively engaged in grassroots environmental initiatives and local conservation efforts. Through community-level action, young people contribute to improving the environment and creating sustainable practices within their neighbourhoods. **Youth4Water Campaign** is one such example that has been described in the study. By empowering others with knowledge, they inspire greater collective action. <https://youth4water.org/>

### 3. Youth Perceptions

Studies also show increasing levels of knowledge and awareness about CCES issues among Youth. Findings of Qualitative study (Activity #2) in four states also show there is awareness on CCES issues. Young people in the study could relate and understand the term Climate change and its impact.

- a. Psychological distance of CCES with Youth was found less, as they could relate Climate Change to issues around them, like pollution, loss of forests, ground water access, changing cropping patterns, etc.
- b. There is concern and even anxiety (especially in rural areas on loss of livelihood options)
- c. Many have participated in community and institutional led drives, programs and events on CCES (mostly cleaning drives, plantations and rallies)
- d. There is intent to act, but not sure what and how to contribute. Missing mentorship and guidance

*“Due to high usage of pesticides, our expenditure has been increased, and our family income has reduced”-*

**Student (Rural Bihar)**

*“Climate change has contributed to the spread of vector-borne diseases such as malaria and dengue in Assam. Changes in temperature and rainfall patterns create favorable conditions for disease-carrying vectors, putting the population at greater risk”*

**Student (Rural Assam)**

Most teachers covered interviewed in this study also feel that students know about climate change and environmental sustainability as they learn these subjects at different levels in school and college. They also reflected that majority of the students are worried about climate change as they understand that it has a harmful effect upon their lives. Youth also **believe that climate change is a reality** and want to **learn more about it**, expressed the teachers.

Officials covered in this study observed that youth are concerned about the climate change and also recognized their participation in various activities like **plantation drives (all states), beach cleaning (Andhra Pradesh), and raising awareness on global warming**. Some **specific youth groups, like Fridays for Future in Assam, are mentioned as actively engaged in spreading awareness about climate change**.

Youth participation and activism are increasing on environmental issues in India, but not sufficiently nurtured and guided. Studies also demonstrate the emergence of young people as agents of change in the global climate change arena and the urgency of engaging them in climate change governance and policymaking.

*“We plant trees on environment day also perform a rally on that day students clean the roads and they recycle products to reuse.”- Teacher (Urban, Assam)*

*“Other than curriculum, we show documentary in smart class and organise debate and exhibitions.” –Teacher (Rural Bihar)*

*“NGC's role under different schemes is primarily focused on conducting awareness programs for school children and creating environmental sustainability awareness. They work in collaboration with state and central government schemes, implementing activities such as awareness rallies, surveys, beach cleaning drives, and temple cleaning. NGC also selects and trains green teachers, forms eco clubs, and organizes nature camps and plastic awareness programs in schools. Their goal is to engage students and promote habits like reducing plastic usage, maintaining cleanliness, and preserving greenery”- Director National Green Corps*

### Summarizing Findings on Youth and CCES

- Both among rural and urban Youth are concerned about Climate Crises. There is also anxiety linked to climate change and its impact on livelihood in rural areas.
- Qualitative study findings indicate intent to act among Youth. However, there are limited activities, outlets, directions, options and guidance to act.
  - Limited access to resources and platforms on CCES issues to rural youth (*Teachers, Experts, Youth*)
  - Many experts and young crusaders feel that there is a lack of mentorship and support available to help them in their efforts. This makes it difficult to effectively address the challenges facing our planet and its ecosystems. (*Experts, Youth Crusaders*)
- The study brings out that there is diversity in the types and quality of environmental education provided to youth in the formal education system in India. However, there is a clear consensus that more work and improvement is required to enhance this component in the curriculum in schools and colleges. (*Teachers, Experts, Youth*)
- There is insufficient institutional involvement, coordination, and funding, that pose barriers for effective and efficient engagement of Youth in CCES action. (*State officials, teachers, Experts, Youth Crusaders*)

### Main Sources of Information to Youth

The qualitative study brings out that CCES education in Schools and Colleges is the main information source for Youth – however, it is very inadequate. On CCES issues, important sources of information for Youth are digital media (social media, WhatsApp, mobile apps and online resources) and also news media

Teachers (in both urban and rural locations) also quoted plantation drives, celebration of environment days, and other environmental activities like **cleanliness drive under Swatch Bharat programs** as **means of learning** for environmental conservation. These respondent teachers noted that these activities encourage students to take action, cultivating a sense of responsibility and ownership toward the environment. Few of them also shared that participation of students in NSS or NCC camp, Eco clubs, Counselling, and speech competitions also motivate students and provide valuable insights into climate change, as these events offer an interactive learning experience, allowing students to ask questions, engage in discussions, and broaden their understanding of the subject.

Most of the teachers irrespective of location and gender expressed that **visual media like TV, Social media, and mobile phones** can be more effective mediums to create awareness among young generations. They felt that these mediums can be used to present a movie, documentary, or any advertisements to create awareness on different issues of environment among students.





# C. RECOMMENDATIONS ON YOUTH ENGAGEMENT



## Context

- India has the largest youth population in the world; around 66 percent of the total population (more than 808 million) is below the age of 35. However, Youth in India is not a monolith. Any attempts to address engage or communicate with them will necessarily need to understand their (i) **CCES concerns linked to local issues** and (ii) **aspirations and priorities**. Campaigns and programs need to map their strategies accordingly to ensure that they are linguistically oriented for effectively engaging youth from various backgrounds.
- The various feedback and inputs received in this study suggest that any engagement with youth on CCES issues needs to be **sustained over a longer period of time** for it to show any outcomes. Also, there is prudence in building or strengthening already ongoing effective programs to scale. Findings also indicate that **integrated and better coordinated efforts with Youth on CCES issues at state level** would be more efficient and effective. Many communication Experts working with youth in CCES issues opined in the Online Survey (Activity #4) that long-term engagement with youth and peer learning will be beneficial.

“Provide more localised information. Involve cultural preservation for effective environmental conservation.”- Ann Rochyne Thomas, Centre for Climate Resilience

“The major concerns related to climate change and environmental sustainability in the region include population pressure, concentration of people in certain areas, cyclones and heatwaves impacting coastal areas, Efforts are being made to raise awareness and involve youth in addressing these issues through education, capacity building, tree plantation drives, and collaborations with local bodies and religious institutions. However, there is a need for long-term strategies and changes in mindset to ensure a sustainable future. Chairman, AP State Biodiversity Board

In the Strategy Workshop (activity # 10) official from UNDP India, emphasized the need for transformative and meaningful long-term engagement with youth. He opined that it is pertinent that patient engagement for youth be adopted, through fellowships on CCES issues for sustained engagement. For example, youth and adolescence engagement can be undertaken through LiFE mission, in a sustained manner. It could be good to have a cohort LiFE fellowship for youth and continuously build active citizens taking conservation action.

## Opportunities

- Increasingly, global conventions and commitments made by our country are influencing policies and programs at various levels of governance in India. The Global Biodiversity Framework provided direct leverage to engage youth and initiate relevant communication programs in India. Also, now the complex linkages and interdependence of biodiversity with climate crises is evident and is being reflected in newer plans and programs on ground.
- **Flagship programs of Government of India, including Mission LiFE** that is explicitly being added in our NDCs are critical leverage for any youth focussed programs and campaigns. Mission LiFE is focussed on behaviour and actions (75 LiFE Actions identified) that directly contribute to CCES actions. This mission is led by Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change (MOEFCC) and Niti Ayog.

“Mission LiFE launched on 5th June and only campaigning is underway. Short-term and long-term programme goals need to be formulated” MOEFCC Official in GOI Consultations (Activity #3)

- More explicit role of youth including of formal and informal institutions within this mission needs to be clarified. More specifically, the ongoing efforts by MOEFCC and other institutions like NYK, NSS, etc. need to be more coordinated on CCES issues (they are currently focused on cleanliness and plantations). Mission LiFE (and other relevant flagship programs with youth) mechanisms at state level (can be either Climate Change Cells or Envis Centres) can also coordinate and document youth engagement on CCES action.

“Swachh Bharat was the most prominent campaign and had similar traction and outreach as G20 and Azaadi ka Amrit Mahotsav have. Mission Life should reach out to influencers/ creators as the mission transcends the government and society. Impact can be maximised only through on-ground activities.” MIB Official in Activity # 3

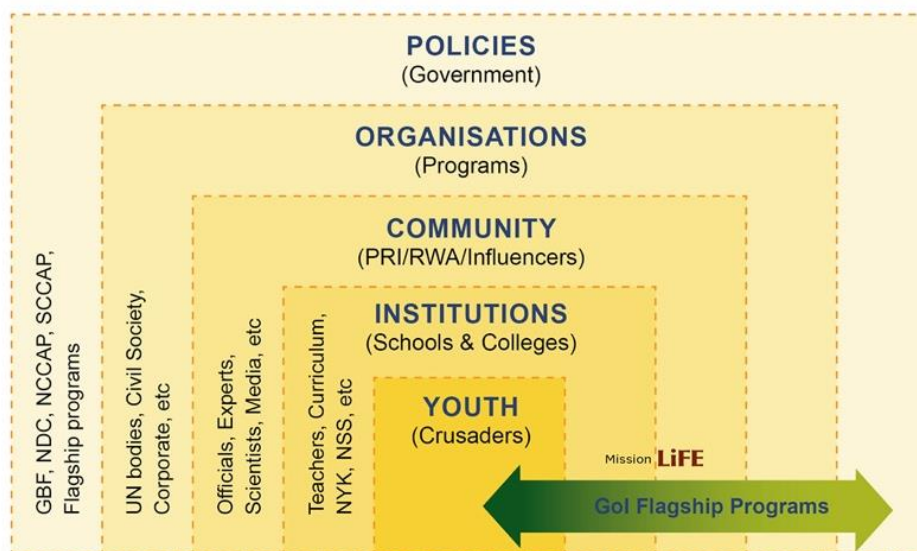
- The success of Swachh Bharat Mission campaign (SBM) has many lessons and learning for consideration. The 360-degree campaigning mode really ensured extensive reach and considerable changes in norms and behaviour. Key among these lessons was the **integration of this mission campaign in all flagship programs** of the government across various Ministries/Departments. These integrated and coordinated efforts really fructified to show large scale impact. This not only brought resources and attention, it developed into a people’s mission (Jan Bhagidari). For instance, Meri Life App reported 5.5 lakh events undertaken for taking forward environmental conservation activities. The underlying rationale is to get citizens to participate and maximize messages outreach for greater impact.

Official from NITI Ayog, emphasized the challenges of communicating behavior change both at a large scale and individual level. He believes that it is easier to change the minds of the youth and children since they are more open to change and have more decades to live.

Furthermore, he gave importance to empowering local people and youth by providing them with a platform and giving them responsibilities. He shared insights from the Swachh Bharat Mission, where students were encouraged to make paintings, write essays, and create films.

- Youth should be viewed as agents and drivers of change. It is therefore imperative to understand their perceptions and facilitate and strengthen their capacities. For instance, the engagement of youth in SBM-G Phase-I created a huge impact. Youth engagement through channels like NCC, NYKS, and schools resulted in a positive impact towards facilitating behaviour change. Using nudges like- asking about toilets during school attendance, made a huge impact in creating demands for toilets. Engaging children and youth in morning vigilance committees helped curb open defecation in the villages. Innovative ways of nudging and providing power to children and youth contributed to the success of the programs. Such platforms can be replicated to address CCES issues
- Also, another lesson is to prioritise behaviours at various levels (individual or self, family and community or institutional) in various phases (immediate, short terms and long term) of any campaign planned to showcase CCES impact on youth.

### Enabling Youth Voice & Agency in CCES Planning & Implementation



- **Environment/ Climate Change Education in Schools & Colleges** and efforts through Eco Clubs have been important sources of information to students on climate change issues. Especially activities based experiences like cleaning drives and plantations to celebrate important environment days have left lasting impressions. However, this study (through qualitative survey with students, teachers, officials and community influencers; interviews with experts, corporate consultations, GOI official consultations, etc.) reiterates the need to further strengthen this component to further engage youth in CCES action.

There is a need for more strategic intervention building in CCES issues across various subjects and across various classes. This also needs to be connected to local concerns and accompanied by support with informative resources (beyond curriculum) and more importantly, orientation / training of teachers on CCES issues and pedagogy.

MOEFCC has a mechanism for integrating the same in the NEP, this needs to be leveraged for more intensive efforts for the same.

Green Campus Awards by AICTE aims to seek engagement with all stakeholders, primarily the student community to draw their attention towards immense scope and potential that the Technology offers for abstract objectives such as cleanliness, sustainability, environment etc. The rising use of technologies especially IOT, robotics, cloud and automation have immense potential to re-model a campus in to a smart campus. Clean and Smart Campus is also expected to facilitate dialogue and sharing of ideas amongst students, faculty and administrators towards the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.

PM's PanchPraan- UGC has asked all higher educational institutions (HEIs) to work on modalities to imbibe the spirit of the 'Panch Pran' and Lifestyle for the Environment (LIFE) mission.

*“Students can actively participate in conserving water and electricity by practicing simple actions such as turning off lights and appliances when not in use. They can also encourage their families and classmates to adopt these practices. They can organize waste reduction campaigns in their schools and encourage their peers to follow sustainable waste management practices.” Private School Teacher, Urban Andhra*

## Strategies

1. There is a need to **institutionalise integration of Youth voices**, with more specific roles and agency enablers mechanisms in climate action plans at various levels, including at Village panchayat, State and even National. These need to be advocated for and slowly built into the system with clear objectives, outputs, monitoring mechanisms and outcomes. (Examples of a few such mechanisms are illustrated in global case studies)

<b>(Activity # 8) Mechanisms To Engage Youth in Climate Change and Environmental Sustainability</b>		
	<b>Mechanism</b>	<b>Examples</b>
1	<b>Nature-based and Environmental Education programs</b> equip young people with knowledge and awareness, fostering their active participation in environmental policy.	<b>Green Planet Sustainability Education Program in Hungary</b> aims to encourage students to think systemically and engage them to work together to achieve sustainable development goals. It is also a model for providing a legal framework, developing textbooks and workbooks, training and supporting teachers and working with higher education institutions to achieve pedagogical goals. <a href="https://czk-solution.eu/green-planet/">https://czk-solution.eu/green-planet/</a>
2	<b>Greening school grounds and encouraging outdoor learning</b> is a scalable intervention that has health, educational, and environmental benefits.	The Children & Nature Network, Salzburg Global Seminar, the International School Grounds Alliance, International Union for Conservation of Nature, #NatureForAll, and the National League of Cities Institute for Youth, Education, and Families have been working to scale this mechanism through the Greening School Grounds and Outdoor Learning Project. <a href="http://www.childrenandnature.org/schoolgroundgreening/">www.childrenandnature.org/schoolgroundgreening/</a>
3	<b>Wildlife Clubs and Eco Clubs</b> share knowledge and stimulate interest in wildlife, conservation of the environment, and biodiversity among youth and communities.	Wildlife Clubs of Kenya (WCK) is a charitable, nonprofit organization formed in 1968 by Kenyan students. It was the first conservation education program of its kind on the continent of Africa. It has helped educate over 1,000,000 young Kenyans and placed many of them in positions of influence. The clubs intend to ensure that this enormous membership and awareness leads to tangible conservation successes. <a href="http://wildlifeclubsofkenya.or.ke/">wildlifeclubsofkenya.or.ke/</a>
4	<b>Youth Advisory Councils</b> allow young people to have a direct voice in shaping environmental policies.	Youth Advisory Council for the Environment in Ontario, Canada <a href="http://www.ontario.ca/page/ontario-youth-environment-council">www.ontario.ca/page/ontario-youth-environment-council</a>
5	<b>Youth Parliaments</b> or assemblies provide platforms for young people to discuss and propose environmental policies.	The Scottish Youth Parliament, for instance, actively engages young people in Scotland in shaping policies related to climate change and environmental sustainability. <a href="http://syp.org.uk/">syp.org.uk/</a>
6	<b>Youth Environmental Ambassadors</b> allow youth to serve as advocates and representatives for young people in environmental policy-making is an effective mechanism.	<b>WildRoots-India's Youth Climate &amp; Conservation Fellowship Programme</b> weaves student communities in INDIA through a student fellowship & empowerment program that allows young people (from Schools & Universities) to come together from Rural & Urban Educational Sectors and design solutions to combat Climate Crises. Funded by IUCN CEC & inspired by IUCN #NatureForAll. <a href="http://www.wildrootsindia.in/main/iucn.php">http://www.wildrootsindia.in/main/iucn.php</a>
7	<b>Youth Action Networks</b> strengthen collaboration and amplify youth voices in environmental policy discussions.	The Arab Youth Climate Movement, spanning across several Arab countries, mobilizes young people to advocate for climate action and contribute to policy development. <a href="http://www.facebook.com/AYCMENA/">www.facebook.com/AYCMENA/</a>
8	<b>Youth-led Advocacy Campaigns</b> empower youth to drive change and influence environmental policy.	The Fridays for Future movement, initiated by Swedish activist Greta Thunberg, has mobilized millions of young people globally to demand urgent action on climate change. <a href="http://fridaysforfuture.org/">fridaysforfuture.org/</a>
9	<b>Youth Dialogue Spaces and Youth Sensitive Meetings</b> ensure that youth have meaningful interactions and can effectively network at local, national, and international meetings.	The #NatureForAll partnership has created over 15 dialogue spaces at numerous international meetings including the Latin America Protected Areas Congress (2019), IUCN World Conservation Congress (2021), Africa Parks Congress (2022), the Asia and Latin America Parks Congresses (2022) and the Fifth International Marine Protected Areas Congress(2023) <a href="http://www.natureforall.global">www.natureforall.global</a>
10	<b>Intergenerational Dialogues</b> provide a platform for meaningful discussions between youth and policymakers.	The European Youth Event (EYE), organized by the European Parliament, facilitates such dialogues and allows young people to share their perspectives on environmental and sustainability issues with policymakers. <a href="http://www.european-youth-event.europarl.europa.eu/en/">www.european-youth-event.europarl.europa.eu/en/</a>
11	<b>Collaborative Youth-led Projects</b> encourage youth to lead collaborative projects that address environmental challenges and foster their engagement in policy-making processes.	The Youth Eco-Entrepreneurship Development (YEED) project in Nigeria engages young people in sustainable business initiatives, empowering them to influence environmental policies and practices.

<b>(Activity # 8) Mechanisms To Engage Youth in Climate Change and Environmental Sustainability</b>		
	<b>Mechanism</b>	<b>Examples</b>
12	<b>Environmental Film Festivals</b> engage youth and children through screenings, discussions, workshops, competitions and creative activities. They partner with education institutions and other conservation allies to provide peer-to-peer learning environments and opportunities to inspire conservation interest and action among youth.	The Green Film Network (GFN) is global network of member around 30 festivals exclusively on environmental issues. Over the years, these GFN and member festivals have created a powerful platform for environmental storytelling. These festivals showcase a diverse range of impactful films that captivate audiences and inspire action on climate change and environmental sustainability. The GFN further amplifies member festivals' impact, fostering a global community of filmmakers, experts, activists, and youth dedicated to protecting our planet. GFN and its member festivals demonstrate the transformative power of film in engaging audiences, shaping public opinion, and driving positive change for a sustainable future. <a href="https://www.greenfilmnet.org/">https://www.greenfilmnet.org/</a>
13	<b>Engaging Youth in and Through Sport</b> represents an excellent approach to educating and engaging youth on the importance of environmental action.	Co-created by IUCN, the International Olympic Committee (IOC), United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), and the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), in collaboration with Sails of Change Foundation, the Sports for Nature Framework aims to deliver transformative action for nature across sports, by 2030 and beyond, enabling sports to champion nature and contribute to its protection and restoration. It provides a game plan for sports—at all levels—to accelerate and inspire others to take action for nature. <a href="http://www.iucn.org/our-work/topic/tourism-and-sport/sports-nature">www.iucn.org/our-work/topic/tourism-and-sport/sports-nature</a>



**2. Intergenerational dialogue and mentoring** have been suggested by a number of stakeholders, including youth crusaders, experts and also emerging from international case examples. Youth do need direction to manage their competing priorities and guide their career, to continue their engagement and involvement in CCES actions. Providing platforms and opportunities for both peer to peer and also intergenerational dialogues therefore is very important to sustain and take forward the youth interest in environmental conservation actions. Getting youth involved in intergenerational dialogue is crucial for adapting and increasing society's capacity to cope with changes in climate.

*“Climate change impacts are large scale, while individual behaviour change is important, I think especially encouraging the youth to advocate for change is important, especially when it comes to holding industries and other global actors accountable.”-  
Saloni Bhatia, ATREE*

### Youth crusaders



The 10 case studies documented in this study (Activity # 5) are of extraordinary efforts showcasing how young crusaders are contributing in the conservation efforts and are addressing CCES issues. They are inspiring change through their activism, innovation, and advocacy. Each of these stories are unique in their background and what inspired them to get involved in their efforts.

Their community and real events experiences in their surroundings have inspired them most to take action and make efforts to improve. The inspiration was not just to do something on their own, but to also involve their peers and communities in conservation efforts, make these young crusaders stand out. They used extensively the social media to mobilize and promote their endeavours.

Few of the common challenges they faced are include comprehension and prioritizing climate change and sustainability issues by their families, peers and communities; limited resources for their endeavours; and balancing their efforts with their education priorities. Despite these challenges, young crusaders in India are making a difference by organizing protests and mobilizing drives, conducting awareness campaigns, creating sustainable solutions, and pushing for policy changes.

Most of the crusaders now state having forums for them, they also feel that more such platforms for engagement are required. Specially, platforms where young crusaders can engage with each other, share ideas, collaborate on projects, and amplify their voices. All of them are strongly inspired by the recognition, scholarships, grants and awards that they received for their awards and suggest further suggest programs for appreciating youth endeavours and encouraging more participation in local/national/international dialogues on environmental issues. They also suggested mentorship programs where experienced environmentalists, activists, and professionals can guide and support young crusaders. Mentors can provide valuable insights, resources, and networks to help them navigate challenges.

Few also suggested ideas for promoting innovation and entrepreneurship among young crusaders by providing incubation programs, funding opportunities, and access to networks. Encourage them to develop sustainable solutions and turn their ideas into viable projects.



### 3. Communication Approaches that emerge from this study are distinctly two:

- (i) Digital (online resources & campaigns) and
- (ii) Offline hands-on (participatory & action oriented).

Even though news channels are referred to for validation and are popular, youth are more amenable to digital mode of receiving and even engaging on CCES issues. Online resources, mobile Apps and Social media (including WhatsApp) are popular sources of information for youth on CCES. Communication campaigns on this mode are recommended along with media literacy lessons to recognise misinformation.

While the information can be reached in digital mode, youth are more interested in actually undertaking action oriented projects and activities, especially on CCES issues. Therefore, more participatory activities (with or without their schools or colleges) need to be created for their involvement. Practical activities, competitions, and field (exposure) visits are very popular with Youth and need to be encouraged in more innovative methods.

*Multiple modes of dissemination should be used like social media, applications, websites  
Gaming features can retain the interest of youth and provide instant gratification  
Message should be precise and clear, actionable and practical and no morally high-sounding values  
Ministry of Youth & Sports  
Official in Activity # 3*

*“MyGov is rapidly creating major engagements for youth”  
MIB Official in Activity # 3*

#### Empowering Young People to Advocate for Climate Action

- Youth look for reliable sources of information and platforms to support their environmental cause.
- Youth are drawn to innovative eco-start-ups that use technology to tackle climate change
- Youth are interested in institutional or community-based behaviour change programs and initiatives.
- Youth mostly utilize social media for advocacy and to spread awareness among peers.
- Creative and action-based communication approaches on CCES popular with youth
- Youth need encouragement and appreciation of their work & achievements in CCES areas
- Youth need more formal mechanisms for their involvement and representation in policy decisions, planning and implementation (a few examples listed in the International Case Studies)
- Youth want to strengthen hands-on CCES learning & education in schools and colleges.
  - Deeper integration of CCES issues into the curriculum/formal education systems
  - Youth engagement on more field-based activities, workshops, festivals, etc.
  - Hands-on training and green skills development opportunities.

#### 4. Engagement suggestions with Youth on CCES are:

- a. Participatory engagements that are also creative (mediums like art, films, painting, poems, etc.) on complex issues related to CCES resonate. Many communication Experts working with youth in CCES issues opined in the Online Survey (Activity #4) more hands-on activities, creative mediums, field visits, and interactive discussions should be incorporated into such programs for youth engagement.

*TERI official recommended that intergenerational dialogue, traditional knowledge systems, and creating more learning spaces for youth will help youth engagement.*

For example the Toyota's Ecozone, an experiential learning centre near Bangalore or MOJO workshops that teach film making skills using mobiles on various environmental issues by CMSVATAVARAN or Earthian- Paryavaran Mitra program by CEE & WIPRO or the Young Voices for the Planet by TERI.

- b. Technology is a big attraction to engage Youth. Technology based innovation and applications are challenging for Youth to be engaged. For example programs led by the Atal Innovation Mission (AIM) and UNDP, who are collaborating to spread awareness about different issues pertaining to youth, the future of work and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) through Youth Co:Lab.

*Activities under Aspirational Blocks Programme include youth training, career counseling and ensure employment opportunities through certified training. Niti Ayog Official*

- c. Youth thrive and feel really inspired by any form of appreciation and recognition. Awards and any form of incentives to youth for their efforts are very much required. Also, any efforts to develop skills and get certification relevant to their academic requirements or and for their livelihood /career, are always of interest to Youth. CCES related engagements which can also provide this are actually in demand. Community members (leaders and vulnerable members) covered in this study (Activity #2) that small incentives like kits, awards, and recognition for participation in awareness campaigns can motivate youths to participate or take some actions in engaging rural youth.

*"Competitions, showcasing in national or international events, Prize & Award, Integration of water-food-energy-biodiversity-waste resources nexus in all on campus projects."*

The Climate Entrepreneurship Hub (CEH) by Niti Ayog & UNDP aims to create an enabling environment for climate entrepreneurship and promote green innovation. Entrepreneurs are vital in addressing climate change and promoting sustainable and resilient development.

d. Credible resources and sources of both information and guidance are sought regularly (not just for curriculum based but beyond). Online and physical resources (digital spaces, interactive apps, organisations and experts on ground, etc.) are always of interest. Especially with the spread of fake news, the science and inter relations between CCES issues need to be regularly provided on credible sources.

*“Youth should be given information, they should be given incentive for doing well, which will motivate the youth to behave eco-friendly”- Community leader, Rural, Patna, Bihar*

*“Awareness about disadvantages of climate change, employment for youths involved in environmental activities. Good Activities should be shown through video.”- Community Leader, Jaipur, Rajasthan*

e. **Youth Engagement in Rural Governance** - Child-friendly panchayats, Green panchayats, and water-sufficient Panchayats themes of the GPDP (gram panchayat development plan) are crucial for implementing CCES initiatives. For example, **Baal- Sabhas** are very important mediums for children to raise their voices and create peer pressure to further translate into policies. Currently, focus is shifting towards making panchayats **carbon-neutral panchayats** and Palli, Jammu is the first Indian panchayat to be carbon-neutral. As mentioned in Episode **101 of Mann ki Baat**, young startups have been working towards water conservation. It is here that youth through their formal training and expertise in technology can come to support panchayats.

Official from Ministry of Panchayati Raj, shared the example of the Kerala Pampa River Basin floods, where youth used trackers to monitor the impact of the floods. She added that youth have more academic knowledge on climate change and should be engaged in making tangible

f. It is imperative to strengthen the enabling environment to effectively engage youth on CCES issues. This includes strengthening the enablers who support and guide youth in their CCES endeavours, especially in building their understanding of CCES issues. These important enablers are: Media; Civil society implementers; Government functionaries and Corporate / CSR professionals. Regular orientations and training of Media and Civil society/ government implementers on ground on various commitments, science and interconnections for actions / behaviour required on CCES action will directly provide Youth with better information and guidance.

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