



DAY-2: Special Thematic Session 13

Part I

September 20, 2023 (Wednesday); Time: 14:00-15:00 hrs (GMT +5:30)

Theme: Empowering Conservation Through Citizen Science: Engaging Communities for a Sustainable Future

Venue: India Habitat Centre, Silver Oak 1

Background:

In our fast-changing world, taking care of the environment is everyone's responsibility, whether it is educators, education boards, parents, students, or citizens. Citizen science offers individuals, who are non-specialists, the opportunity to connect with, explore, and learn from nature, while also contributing to scientific research led by scientists. By collecting species observations and other data, citizens can support scientists in data collection and aid in conservation. Citizen science, in turn, engages young people with nature, improves their scientific knowledge, and makes them more responsible for the environment.

About the Session:

This session aims to delve into the significance of citizen science within the purview of conservation. It will explore how citizen science has revolutionized data collection, research, and community engagement. Using WWF-India's citizen science initiatives as examples, the session will showcase the impact of citizen science on conservation outcomes, how citizen science empowers individuals to actively protect their natural surroundings, and the opportunities available for people to engage in citizen science projects.

Session Objectives:

1. **Understanding Citizen Science:** Explore what citizen science is and how it has evolved over time. Learn why it matters for safeguarding nature and how it is used in conservation work.

2. **Getting Involved:** Explain how everyday people help by collecting important information and adding to what we know about nature. Explore how various conservation organizations, scientists, and local communities can work together to protect nature in a complete way.
3. **Examples of Success:** Showcase examples of successful citizen science projects, such as the Dragonfly Festival and biomonitoring surveys.

4. **Existing Citizen Science Tools:** Discover citizen science websites like eBird and India Biodiversity Portal. Understand how these tools have been used to report on local environmental issues and suggest practical solutions.

Outcomes:

By the end of the session, participants should be able to:

1. Explain the concept of citizen science in the realm of conservation and envision the role of empowered citizens in shaping the direction of environmental conservation.
2. Recognize the transformative potential of involving citizens in data collection and analysis.
3. Understand how citizen science projects can lead to informed decision-making and policy change.
4. Feel motivated to initiate or participate in citizen science projects within their own organizations or communities.

Key Speakers/Panelists

1. Ms. Shonali Chenzira, Senior Manager, Environment Education
2. Ambreen, Lead, Youth and Citizen Engagement programmes , WWF-India

Part II

September 20, 2023 (Wednesday); Time: 15:00-15:30 hrs (GMT +5:30)

Theme: Impact Assessment for Environment Education Programmes

Venue: India Habitat Centre, Silver Oak 1

Background

The Living Planet Report, WWF's flagship publication published every two years, shares alarming findings in its 2022 edition. There has been an average decline of 69% in species populations since 1970. This data spotlights starkly the interlinked double emergencies—human-induced climate change and biodiversity loss—that threaten the wellbeing of our planet and its people. Our planet is in a state of emergency, and we urgently need to shift gears to turn things around. Environment Education (EE) has emerged as one of many solutions that

can contribute to turning the tide of climate change. Since 1991, in India, the Supreme Court mandated that EE be included at all levels of education. The Indian government incorporated EE in the school syllabus from 2004-05. Since then, many Environment Education programmes and interventions have been conceptualised and executed. The major goal of Environment Education is to inculcate knowledge, skills, behaviour, attitude and environmental values in children alongside fulfilling the goals of mainstream education that mostly focuses on literacy and numeracy skills. There are not yet enough data and studies available to clarify the impact that environment education programmes have as attitude and values are usually abstract in nature and long-term.

About the Session

Impact Assessment is an important component of any programme as it helps to enhance accountability and guide programme designs and policy decisions. But the big question is—how can we study the impact of any environment education intervention, given the complexities around its measurement? It is important to have documented evidence—reports, to back the study of the programme’s impact on stakeholders with respect to its quality, efficiency, and effectiveness.

At WWF-India, recognizing the role of children and youth as major stakeholders and to design and reinvent the Environment Education programme, a robust M&E strategy was included as an integrated part of all WWF-India’s programmes and interventions. This session will cover different metrics of evaluation for assessing EE programs, tools used to cover both qualitative and quantitative data, and modes of evaluation, showcasing the results of some of our EE programmes and the challenges faced while conducting evaluations.

Session Objectives

- Highlighting the importance of impact assessment for EE Programs through qualitative and quantitative study.
- Describing the methodology of monitoring, measuring, and evaluating EE impacts through case studies, measurement indicators, metrics and developing effective tools of evaluation.
- Uncovering the challenges of evaluating EE programmes in the context of the diversity of Indian audiences, and how we can mitigate these challenges.

Key Speakers/Panelists

1. Neha Raghav, Head, Environment Education
2. Priyanka Singh, Manager, PMEL Education

