



WILDROOTS' YOUTH CLIMATE & CONSERVATION FELLOWSHIP PROGRAMME (YCCFP) COHORT 3.0 - FOSTERING ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Balipara, Assam, India May 4th, 2024 – The third cohort of the Youth Climate & Conservation Fellowship Programme (YCCFP) was conducted successfully from April 16th -20th, 2024, marking another milestone in the journey towards nurturing environmentally conscious leaders of tomorrow. Held in the serene rural surroundings of Chengelimari Village, Garogaon, Balipara, Assam, the program saw thirty five enthusiastic student participants from Indian Schools - D.P.S, Raipur, D.P.S - South Bangalore, Gokuldham High School and Yashodham High School & Junior College from Mumbai, accompanied by dedicated teachers and mentors.

Under the visionary leadership of Dr. Biswajit De, Founder President of Wildroots-India, funded by the IUCN Commission on Education & Communication (CEC), and in collaboration with Assam Investment Advisory Society (AIAS) as the Experiential Partner, the YCCFP Cohort 3.0 aimed to inspire a deeper connection with nature and foster a sense of environmental stewardship among the youth. Drawing inspiration from IUCN'S global initiative #NatureForAll, the program was meticulously crafted to provide participants with immersive Conservation Educational Modules, Nature-based Design & a plethora of learning experiences. YCCFP Cohort 3.0 began with an inspiring video message from Mr. Sean Southey, Chair of the IUCN CEC and encouraging words from Mr. Nitu Kumar Kalita, Executive Operating Officer, AIAS.

Throughout the four-day program, participants engaged in a series of workshops, fun activities, and community engagement initiatives. Highlights of the event included

interactive sessions on Climate Policies, Sustainable Development, and Nature Conservation led by Dr. De and Mr. Gautam Gupta, (an expert in Aquatic Ecosystem & Conservation) and hands-on workshops on natural dye and soap making conducted by local community leaders from Garogaon.

The YCCFP, Cohort 3.0 was like a mini Community Festival. The cultural immersion experience was enriched by ethnic ramp walks and captivating traditional & folk dance performances, offering participants a glimpse into the rich traditions of North East India. Moreover, participants had the opportunity to support the craft of local artisans through the sale of locally crafted handicrafts felicitated by another local NGO - Mahila Shakti Kendra(MASK).

Inviting Regional Partners is a part of our own strategies for 'Weaving Communities'.

One of the defining moments of the program was the engagement with Forest Fringe School Students (an initiative by the Assam Investment Advisory Society (AIAS) supported by MASK) which facilitated mutual understanding and collaboration between participants from the Urban Schools and the Rural Local Community. Additionally, activities such as bird-watching sessions and botanic trails allowed participants to immerse themselves in the natural beauty of Garogaon, Balipara, Assam, while fostering an appreciation for biodiversity.

Reflecting on their learning experiences, participants had the chance to present their reflections in creative and diverse formats, consolidating their understanding and sharing it with their peers. The program concluded with a heartfelt farewell, as participants bid adieu carrying with them a wealth of knowledge and fond memories. Dr. De, expressed his gratitude to all partners, mentors, teachers, and participants for their unwavering commitment to environmental conservation and youth empowerment. He emphasized the importance of fostering a deeper connection with nature and empowering youth through collaborative connection, to become 'Agents of Change' in their communities. The success of YCCFP Cohort 3.0 underscores the significance of youth-led initiatives in addressing pressing environmental challenges and emphasizes on the importance of collaborative efforts of regional organizations, in building a sustainable future for generations to come.

IUCN CEC gave us a little bit of support and #NatureForAll, inspiration and direction. It was only our responsibility to transform those into the most unique Youth Climate Empowerment Programme of India.



