



Inspiring Futures

**CHILDREN'S ENVIRONMENT CONGRESS
ON
WATER, SANITATION AND HYGIENE (WASH)
IN THE CONTEXT OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS (SDGS)**

21st & 22nd December 2016, Xavier University, Bhubaneswar



Invoking Sustainability. Inspiring Futures



"Children are the living messages we send to a time we will not see." John F. Kennedy. The School of Sustainability, Xavier University, Bhubaneswar hosted the CHILDREN'S ENVIRONMENT CONGRESS 2016 on Water, Sanitation & Hygiene (WASH) in the context of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) on 21st December 2016 in Xavier University, Bhubaneswar, Kurki campus. This was an offshoot of Odisha Environment Congress and was organised in partnership with Human Development Foundation (HDF), Odisha State Water & Sanitation Mission (OSWSM), Rural Development Department, Govt. of Odisha and many other agencies working in the area of WASH. 400 children from 30 districts of Odisha participated in the event. Children being the hope of a nation, their role in mainstreaming the mission of WASH deserves greater attention and appreciation. To take the environment issues in general and WASH in particular to the domain of young minds specific activities were planned among school and college students across the state at district levels, which had culminated in Children's Environment Congress on 21st & 22nd of December 2016 at Xavier University, Bhubaneswar. The objective was to enable the children to learn and share their experiences in being agents of change in WASH and gain different perspectives on WASH through the lens of Sustainability and Sustainable Development Goals. Each participating student will form a network of ten more students in their respective schools to spread the light of sustainable development. It created a platform at Xavier University, Bhubaneswar for the young minds to share their ideas and actions to advance sustainability.

The Inaugural ceremony was graced by **Shri Sudarshan Das, Organising Secretary, Odisha Environment Congress; Prof. Dr. Fr. Paul Fernandes, S.J Former Vice Chancellor, Xavier University, Bhubaneswar & Former Director, XIMB; Sri Prakash Kumar Barik, Zonal Programme Associate, Education Programme, UNICEF; Fr. E.A. Augustine, S.J., Registrar, Xavier University, Bhubaneswar; Er. Bhagaban Sahoo, EIC, RWSS, Govt. of Odisha, Prof. Dr. S. Peppin, Dean, School of Sustainability and Dr. Sutapa Pati, School of Sustainability.** The participants from various districts assembled for group photo session in the beautiful campus. This was followed by a debate competition on the topic "Equitable Access for Sanitation Systems" conducted in odia and English where 94 students participated.



There was an open gallery exhibition where all the winning paintings and posters from all the districts were displayed. The participants along with their guardians and mentors had a glimpse of Xavier University, Bhubaneswar where they were introduced to various schools of Xavier University, Bhubaneswar: School of Commerce, School of Communication and School of Sustainability. The participants were also introduced to the WIPRO Earthian competition by the students of Xavier School of sustainability who won the WIPRO Earthian Award in 2015 in Bangalore.

The post lunch session started with a briefing about 'Children and Sustainable Development Goals' which was facilitated by Sri Prakash Ku. Barik, Zonal Associate Programme, Education UNICEF. The children were grouped according to the 17 Sustainable Development Goals and had a few group activities. They were asked to discuss and present the ways in which they could contribute to the society as an individual and as an organization. Two short films on WASH were also shown.

The valedictory Ceremony was graced by Sri M.S Padhi, IAS, Principal Secretary, Rural Development Department, Govt. of Odisha, Fr. E.A. Augustine, S.J., Registrar, Xavier University, Bhubaneswar and Prof. Dr. S. Peppin, Dean, School of Sustainability. Certificates were presented to the winners of various competitions ie. essay, debate, painting and posters competition held at the district levels. Certificates were also issued to the participants of the debate competition held in Xavier University, Bhubaneswar.

The Children's Environment Congress was concluded by a cultural programme in the evening named "TARANG". Tarang of life, hope & Joy! Young talented artists from various districts along with the students of Xavier School of Sustainability performed events like songs on sustainability, srota chanting, recitation of poem, odissi and folk dance. The programme was wrapped up by a ramp walk where in 17 faculty, staff & students of Xavier University, Bhubaneswar walked the stage spreading the message of 17 Sustainable Development Goals.

Fr. Arokya Das, S.J, Asst Registrar, Xavier University, Bhubaneswar shared his Christmas Message with the gathering. Cakes and chocolates were distributed to all the participants and students.

The Children's Environment Congress provided a unique opportunity to academicians, researchers, scientists, planners, policy makers, students and practitioners for learning and interaction and also provided a forum for dissemination of innovations in the theme area.

