

Report

Creating Global Sustainability Champions



Date: 21 – 27 March, 2022

Time of three sessions: 5.30 PM to 7.30 PM IST

Venue: Online webinar (Zoom Platform)



Disclaimer

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Background

In memory of late Dadasaheb Rege, founder of Balmohan Vidyamandir (BMVM), Mumbai, India, Ekonnect Knowledge Foundation conducted a virtual one-week program called 'Global Sustainability Champions'. The program was conducted from 21st March to 27th March, 2022. Being an alumnus of Balmohan school, Dr. Prasad Modak conceived and mentored the program.

Objectives of the program

The aim of the program was to introduce sustainability to school children, belonging to standards 8 to 11, focusing on sustainable neighborhoods. Blending 'theory or principles' with 'action or engagement' was the idea of the program design.

Student Profiling

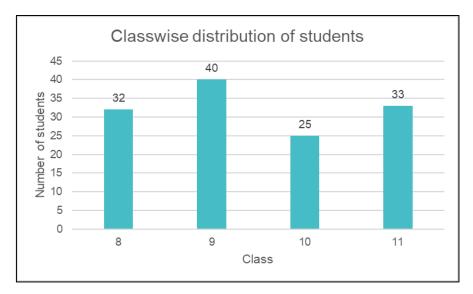
A total of 130 participants from 30 cities in India and 6 countries expressed their interest in the program.

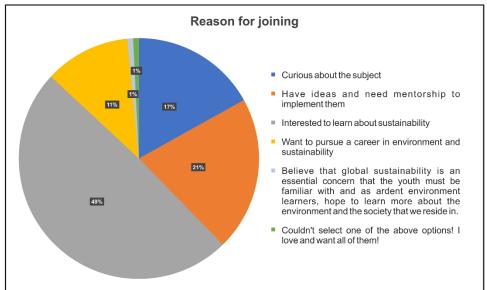
Participants Overview











The program was conducted over a span of seven days that included three days of virtual sessions of 2 hours duration on Zoom platform. These sessions were held on Monday, Wednesday and on Sunday between 5:30 to 7:30 pm. In addition, two assignments were given that on Monday and Wednesday that had to be completed by Saturday by 12 pm.

Google drive was used for sharing presentations, resources, reading material, recordings of the sessions and assignments with the participants. Aha slides (https://ahaslides.com/) was used to make the sessions interactive where participants answered some questions live, at the beginning and end of each session.



Summary of the Sessions

Monday, March 21, 2022

Interactive Session

Vishwa Trivedi
Assistant Vice President, Ekonnect Knowledge Foundation
Associate Vice President, Environmental Management Centre LLP

An interactive session was conducted live with the help of Aha Slides where students were asked to answer some questions displayed on the screen such as criteria for choosing a sustainability role model, definition of sustainability, and definition of a green product. The students were also asked to click a photo of a green product/solution in their home and upload it on Instagram.

About BMVM and Dadasaheb Rege

Dr. Prasad Modak
Director, Ekonnect Knowledge Foundation
Executive President, Environmental Management Centre LLP

Dr. Modak gave opening remarks and spoke about Balmohan Vidyamandir school and the reason for conducting this program as it was to celebrate 100 years in memory of the late school principal Dadasaheb Rege.

Let us Understand Sustainability

Dr. Prasad Modak

Director, Ekonnect Knowledge Foundation

Executive President, Environmental Management Centre LLP

Dr. Modak spoke about the everyday challenges we face today. He explained the students what sustainability is all about followed by the role of youth in sustainability and inspiring examples such as Afforestt- Shubhendu Sharma, Compost Queen- Vaani Murthy, Bare Necessities- Sahar Mansoor, Spiti Ecosphere- Ishita, Geeli Mitti- Shagun Singh, Green Humor- Rohan Chakraborty and Mumbai Beach Cleanup- Afroz Shah.

Ownership to steer positive changes in our community

Manvel Alur

CEO & Founder of ENSYDE

Ms. Manvel spoke about her organization 'ENSYDE' whose vision is to see all urban citizens in India become environmentally conscious and participate actively in reducing their environmental footprint. She also spoke about significant impacts they have created such as more than 1,00,000 kgs of waste managed responsibly, more than 3,600 saplings planted creating urban mini-forests, etc. She explained how every child can lead the way and the importance of mobilization. She also spoke about PLANETEERS- an experimental environmental education initiative.



Business Initiatives in Fostering Urban Sustainability

Anagha Paranjape-Purohit Trustee of Sustainability Initiatives, Pune

Mrs. Anagha emphasized the importance of making cities sustainable since our everyday life revolves around cities. She spoke about urban sustainability which involves urban economics, urban environment, and urban society. She explained how to balance the three together for business opportunities. She highlighted the urgent need of making a shift in thinking from linear to circular.

Interactive Session

Vishwa Trivedi

Assistant Vice President, Ekonnect Knowledge Foundation
Associate Vice President, Environmental Management Centre LLP

The participants asked relevant and intriguing questions to the above speakers and an interesting discussion took place.

Instructions for Assignment I

Sakshi Gore

Program Coordinator Ekonnect Knowledge Foundation

The participants were explained about the assignment where they had to write about their sustainability role models, problems addressed by these models, impact created by these models, etc.

Feedback

The participants were asked to mention what they learnt by writing words that inspired them during the session. Also, they were asked to rate the session using Aha slides.

Wednesday, March 23, 2022

Activity

The participants had to write a 3-page profile on one of India's Sustainability Heroes. They had to answer questions such as naming their sustainability role model, problems they are solving, highlights of activities conducted by their role model, the impact created, and references used. On-line submissions had to be done through Google Doc.

Interactive session

Vishwa Trivedi

Assistant Vice President, Ekonnect Knowledge Foundation
Associate Vice President, Environmental Management Centre LLP

An interactive live session was conducted using Aha slides where the participants were asked if they were aware about their own neighbourhood, if they have participated in any neighbourhood activities in the past, the average daily per capita waste generation in their country, source of garbage in their



school, three appliances that use the most energy in their house, tracing back their source of food, sources of water pollution and main sources of indoor air pollution. The participants were also asked if they are aware about Air Quality Index and if they have downloaded the SAFAR-Air app.

What are sustainable neighborhoods? Examples

Dr. Prasad Modak
Director, Ekonnect Knowledge Foundation
Executive President, Environmental Management Centre LLP

Dr. Modak explained the students about the concept of sustainable neighbourhoods which is a place where people can easily meet their daily needs while feeling safe. The components of a sustainable neighbourhood such as waste management, water management, biodiversity, energy management, infrastructure and mobility were highlighted. He also spoke about the challenges, solutions and stakeholders involved. Dr. Modak delivered some inspiring case studies such as Auroville (Puducherry), Govardhan Ecovillage (Maharashtra), Trichy- Zero Waste City (Tamil Nadu), Ambikapur (Chhatisgarh), etc.

How to create an action plan for Sustainable Neighborhood?

Sakshi Gore

Program Coordinator, Ekonnect Knowledge Foundation

The students were explained the procedure for creating a sustainable neighbourhood action plan: Mapping the area, identifying good practices and challenges faced by people in your neighbourhood, finding solutions that can be implemented, identifying people who can help you with the implementation, making your neighbourhood sustainability action plan and your role in implementation.

About KidPower

Robert Wood

Member of the Advisory Council on Sustainable Education, Stag Vets Inc. Member of Board, Kid Power

Mr. Wood spoke about building sustainability in schools with the Kid Power Program which is a youth development non-profit in Washington D.C. He spoke about the Kid Power Veggie Time Program where students study an original environmental and nutritional science curriculum and then apply the lessons to their school gardens, healthy cooking classes, etc. to improve the health of their schools and communities. These models are chosen to provide exposure to students, hands-on application and inspiration. Kid Power sets forth initiatives that drive action on ground-level. These actions line-up in accordance with Global Initiatives from the UN.

Instructions for Assignment II

Sakshi Gore

Program Coordinator, Ekonnect Knowledge Foundation

The students were explained about the second assignment where they had to prepare a sustainable neighbourhood action plan.



Feedback

The participants were asked to write words that inspired them during the session and they were asked to give a rating to the session using Aha slides.

Thursday, Friday and Saturday, March 24, 25 and 26, 2022

Activity

The participants had to prepare a Sustainability Action Plan for their neighborhood using Eco-mapping and stakeholder consultation. The students were allowed to work in groups according to their preference. The students had to name their team members, post images of challenges and solutions identified in their neighborhood. They had to state the challenges identified, solutions proposed, budget estimated, time estimated and stakeholders involved. Further, the students were required to discuss the action plan with three members of the community (teachers/parents/senior citizens/government authorities), share their feedback and mention the changes suggested by them. The students had to write their role in implementation of the Sustainable Neighborhood Action Plan and upload an image of the Eco-Map created for their neighborhood. On-line submissions were taken through Google Doc.

Sunday, March 27, 2022

Interactive Session

Vishwa Trivedi
Assistant Vice President, Ekonnect Knowledge Foundation
Associate Vice President, Environmental Management Centre LLP

An interactive live session was conducted using Aha slides where participants answered questions regarding any challenges faced while completing their assignments, new things learnt about their neighbourhoods, whether the program inspired any action that they may continue, immediate action that they will take after the program, suggestions to improve the program and if they would like such a program to be exclusively conducted for their school.

Experience Sharing by Participants

A discussion was held on the assignments submitted by the students. The participants shared their experiences and learnings from the sessions as well as their assignments with the help of presentations and discussions. The participants also gave their feedback for the entire program as well as challenges faced and suggestions for improvement.

Jury's comments

Improvements that could be done in the assignments were communicated to the participants.



Announcing Top Three Sustainability Champions

Dr. Prasad Modak
Director, Ekonnect Knowledge Foundation
Executive President, Environmental Management Centre LLP

The top three winners of the 'Global Sustainability Champions' program were announced. Prizes were given in the form of books related to environment and sustainability.

Zero Waste Living

Sahar Mansoor

Founder and CEO at Bare Necessities (BN)

Ms. Mansoor spoke about her entire zero-waste journey. She spoke about the importance of reducing your waste as much as possible followed by reusing and recycling your waste. She gave the students a sneak peak into her everyday life. She highlighted that zero-waste lifestyle has always been a part of the DNA of our Indian ancestors. She also gave an example about the famous Mumbai dabbawalas who deliver home-cooked food in steel containers without generating any waste. She suggested many solutions to get one-step closer to living sustainably, such as, using a bamboo toothbrush, neem comb, making your own personal care products, making bio-enzyme, composting, avoiding packaged foods, buying local based products, donating clothes, zero-waste gifting, etc.

CEE's Initiatives on Engaging with School Children on Sustainability

Kartikeya Sarabhai

Founder and Director of the Centre for Environment Education

Mr. Sarabhai highlighted that India was the first country in the world to have environmental education as a mandatory subject in schools and colleges. He explained that CEE works with different stakeholders on issues of immediate concern and is committed to ensuring that due recognition is given to the role of environmental education. He spoke about CEE's school programmes which focuses on 'Learning by Doing' by exploring, discovering, thinking, acting, and sharing. He spoke about the concept of 'Hand Print' which is a positive action towards sustainability contrary to the concept of 'Foot Print' which measures the total amount of greenhouse gases that are generated by our actions. He also spoke about 'Paryavaran Mitra', a nation-wide initiative to create a network of young leaders from schools across the country, with awareness, knowledge, commitment and potential to meet the challenges of environmental sustainability in their own spheres of influence. The idea of the program was how to get children to act. The program focuses on water and sanitation, waste management, biodiversity and greening, energy and culture and heritage. He mentioned about the Eco-Schools Program which is an international sustainable campus program comprising of 85+ schools.

Closing Remarks

The participants were asked to write words that inspired them during the session using Aha slides and give a rating to the session. A final discussion was held discussing about how the participants felt about the overall program.



Questions asked by students during the sessions

- 1) Sustainability is a necessity, but people like to choose easy way. How can we convince people to choose right over easy?
- 2) As young students, how can we make sure people take us seriously when we are creating awareness?
- 3) We know that cars have created a lot of pollution, so can we convince people to use public transport to reduce air pollution?
- 4) Can sugarcane pulp be a good alternative to paper and plastic?
- 5) What is a short-term and long-term policy we must adapt to combat climate change?
- 6) Certainly, sustainability can be very helpful to environment and indirectly the society. But sustainability is also more expensive than the conventional methods. For example, renewable energy is more expensive than non-renewable energy; not only is it comparatively expensive to us individuals, but it may also be more expensive to some third world countries to adopt, which, obviously is not feasible. So, what can we do to make sustainability more affordable to everyone?
- 7) While trying to convince people to take ownership for the environment, some people are taking the meaning of "ownership" as "my place, so I'd do as I please". Convincing everyone is not possible, so how can we carry on even though some people are opposed to practices of sustainability?
- 8) In my neighborhood, we have a small stream running through. There is a highway nearby and the stream runs under it. Now there is a construction of an over bridge and due to it the stream was blocked resulting in a small trickle of water on our side and frequent floods on the other. Letters were written to the municipality multiple times but to no vain. Is there any other way we can tackle it?
- 9) Another issue is recycling. Many people today put their waste in recycle bins. But most of the times, there are reports that the waste is not recycled, but just dumped or downcycled. So, in such cases, what can us individuals do to make sure that my waste is not polluting, but it is being recycled?
- 10) Do you believe that a techno-centric approach is more useful than an eco-centric or an anthropo-centric approach?
- 11) Today businesses are encouraged to be sustainable or ethical. But obviously that is not very affordable to small time businesses or startups. And sadly, there are not many government policies/loans available for ethical development of a business, and hence, this may discourage entrepreneurs from sustainable development. So how can we urge the government to take action like introduce policies?

Outcome of the program

As a part of their learning, the students were given assignments where they had to write a 3-page profile on their sustainability heroes and prepare a neighborhood sustainability action plan using tools such as eco-mapping and conducting stakeholder consultation.



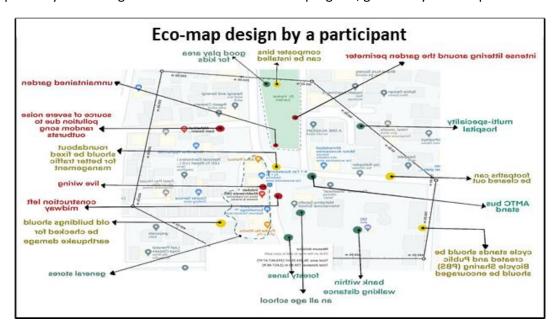
Some of the sustainability role models identified by the participants included Abdul Kareem, Aldo Leopold, Christina Zenato, D. Saravanan, Dia Mirza, Dr Rajwat singh, Emma Watson, Greta Thunberg, Jadav Payeng, Kamlesh D. Patel, Lauren Singer, Paul Polman, Sadhguru and Sneha Shahi.

The eco-maps and action plans created through stakeholder consultations were simply amazing. It showed the maturity of the students in capturing the level of details and come up with innovative solutions. Top 3 action plans were given awards in the form of books related to environment and sustainability.

The ratings given by the participants were: First Session- 7.8/10, Second Session- 8.4/10 and Third Session- 8.9/10. The selected neighborhood sustainability action plans with eco-maps will be compiled to make an e-publication which will be released shortly.

Overall, it was a great experience of mentoring the students and witnessing their sensitivity, understanding and commitment towards sustainability of their neighborhoods.

The positivity felt through the three-session-one-week program, gave everyone a hope for the future.





| Action Plan by a participant | | | | |
|--|--|--|-------------------|--|
| Challenges identified | Solutions proposed | Budget estimated | Time estimated | Stakeholders involved |
| carbon waste generation due to unused and donatable goods | <u>Donation</u> <u>drive</u> | <u>Rs 0</u> | 1-2 weeks | RWA Committee members And Society members |
| High electricity generation cost | Can install solar panels to generate electricity at a cheaper price | Rs 40,000- 30,000 | 3 weeks | RWA and committee members |
| Broken footpaths right outside the society | Inform Municipal party | Rs 0 | 1- 2 months | RWA with the collective society members |
| Sewage system | Monthly maintenance | Included in the monthly salary of the social workers | | RWA and committee members |

Challenges

When asked about the challenges faced by participants during the sessions and assignments, the participants mentioned a few challenges such as:

- 1) Lack of time to complete the assignments due to school exams.
- 2) Challenge in getting information while researching for the assignments.
- 3) Challenge in getting stakeholder responses while preparing the Sustainability Action Plan for their neighborhood.
- 4) Difficulty in attending the sessions due to the time differences in different countries.

Next Steps

The following solutions could be implemented to overcome the challenges mentioned by the participants:

- 1) Longer time could be given to the participants for research and completing the assignments.
- 2) Instead of preparing one single model which can be attended by anyone globally, separate models for 'Global Sustainability Champions' could be prepared catering to a specific region eg: South Asia, or a particular city eg: Mumbai, or a particular country eg: India. This would ease the problem of different time zones in different countries.
- 3) Financing of these models could be done with the help of the Municipality of that area or the model could be undertaken as a part of a CSR project of a company.

Some suggestions given by the participants also could be implemented as a part of the program:

- 1) Including quizzes in the interactive sessions.
- 2) Increasing the duration of the program to learn better and giving more time to do better research before submitting the assignments.
- 3) A 'bait' could be used to attract more students.



- 4) An advanced programme for students who would like to dive deeper and take actions.
- 5) Implement a system to make the programme a continuous process to take action and form a group or a club for participants who are interesting in continuing the journey.
- 6) Introduction of this programme at an early stage in school to encourage students towards sustainability.
- 7) Expand outreach of the programme to more schools.
- 8) Inculcate the concept of 'Hand Print' in students, which is a positive action towards sustainability.

Annexure

Annex 1: The Final Agenda

| Creating Global Sustainability Champions 21-27 March, 2022 | | | | | |
|--|--|------------------------------|--|--|--|
| Indian Time | Program Outline Topic | Speaker | | | |
| maian rime | 21st March 2022, Monday | | | | |
| 5:35 pm | Interactive Session | Vishwa Trivedi | | | |
| 5:45 pm | About BMVM and Dadasaheb Rege | Dr Prasad Modak | | | |
| 5:50 pm | Let us Understand Sustainability | Dr Prasad Modak | | | |
| 6:25 pm | Ownership to steer positive changes in our community | Manvel Alur | | | |
| 6:45 pm | Business Initiatives in Fostering Urban Sustainability | Anagha Paranjape- Purohit | | | |
| 7:05 pm | Interactive Session | Vishwa Trivedi | | | |
| 7:20 pm | Instructions for Assignment I | Sakshi Gore | | | |
| 7:28 pm | Feedback | | | | |
| 7:30 pm | Close | | | | |
| | 23 rd March 2022, Wednesday | | | | |
| Activity Write 3-page profile on one of India's Sustainability Heroes On-line submissions through Google Doc | | | | | |



| 5:30 pm | Interactive session | Vishwa Trivedi |
|---------|--|-----------------|
| 6:00 pm | What are sustainable neighborhoods? Examples | Dr Prasad Modak |
| 6:30 pm | How to create an action plan for Sustainable Neighborhood? | Sakshi Gore |
| 7:00 pm | About KidPower | Robert Wood |
| 7:15 pm | Instructions for Assignment II | Sakshi Gore |
| 7:30 pm | Close | |

24th, 25th & 26th March 2022, Thursday, Friday & Saturday

Activity

Prepare a Sustainability Action Plan for your neighborhood using Eco-mapping and stakeholder consultation.

Students may work in groups if they prefer.
On-line submissions through Google Doc.

| 27 th March 2022, Sunday | | |
|-------------------------------------|---|--------------------|
| 5:30 pm | Interactive Session | Vishwa Trivedi |
| 5:45 pm | Experience Sharing by Participants | |
| 6:00 pm | Jury's comments | |
| 6:15 pm | Announcing Top Three Sustainability Champions | Dr Prasad Modak |
| 6:20 pm | Zero Waste Living | Sahar Mansoor |
| 6:45 pm | CEE's Initiatives on Engaging with School Children on Sustainability | Kartikeya Sarabhai |
| 7:15 pm | Closing Remarks | |



Annex 2: Prizes for Winners

1st Prize was won by Mahi Shah, Isha Lokre, and Bindu Pullarkot from Mahatma Gandhi International School, Ahmedabad.

Books given to Mahi Shah:

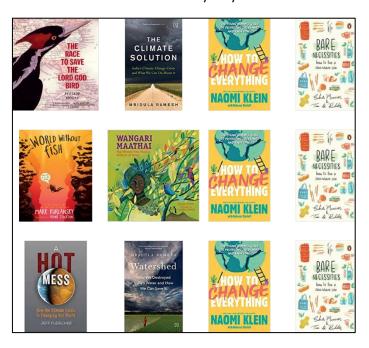
- 1) The Race to Save the Lord God Bird by Phillip Hoose
- 2) The Climate Solution: India's Climate-Change Crisis and What We Can Do About It by Mridula Ramesh
- 3) How to Change Everything: The Young Human's Guide to Protecting the Planet and Each Other by Naomi Kelin
- 4) Bare Necessities- how to live a zero-waste lifestyle by Sahar Mansoor

Books given to Isha Lokre:

- 1) The World Without Fish: How Kids Can Help Save the Oceans by Mark Kurlansky
- 2) Wangari Maathai- The Woman who planted millions of trees by Franck Prevot
- 3) How to Change Everything: The Young Human's Guide to Protecting the Planet and Each Other by Naomi Kelin
- 4) Bare Necessities- how to live a zero-waste lifestyle by Sahar Mansoor

Books given to Bindu Pullarkot:

- 1) A Hot Mess: How the Climate Crisis is Changing Our World by Jeff Fleischer
- 2) Watershed: How We Destroyed India's Water and How We Can Save It by Mridula Ramesh
- 3) How to Change Everything: The Young Human's Guide to Protecting the Planet and Each Other by Naomi Kelin
- 4) Bare Necessities- how to live a zero-waste lifestyle by Sahar Mansoor





2nd Prize was won by Suhani Guleria & Nishad Modi from Mahatma Gandhi International School, Ahmedabad.

Books given to Suhani Guleria:

- 1) A Hot Mess: How the Climate Crisis is Changing Our World by Jeff Fleischer
- 2) This Changes Everything: Capitalism vs. the Climate by Naomi Klein
- 3) Bare Necessities- how to live a zero-waste lifestyle by Sahar Mansoor

Books given to Nishad Modi:

- 1) Wangari Maathai- The Woman who planted millions of trees by Franck Prevot
- 2) The World Without Fish: How Kids Can Help Save the Oceans by Mark Kurlansky
- 3) Bare Necessities- how to live a zero-waste lifestyle by Sahar Mansoor

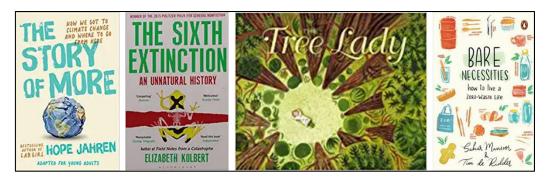


3rd Prize was won by Eesha Thakoor from MET Rishikul Vidyalay, Mumbai.

Books given Eesha Thakoor:

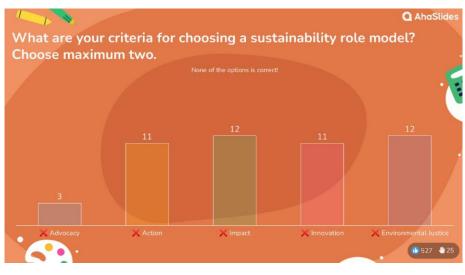
- 1) The Story of More: How We Got to Climate Change and Where to Go from Here Adapted for Young Adults by Hope Jahren
- 2) The Sixth Extinction: An Unnatural History Paperback by Elizabeth Kolbert
- 3) The Tree Lady: The True Story of How One Tree-Loving Woman Changed a City Forever by H. Joseph Hopkins
- 4) Bare Necessities- how to live a zero-waste lifestyle by Sahar Mansoor





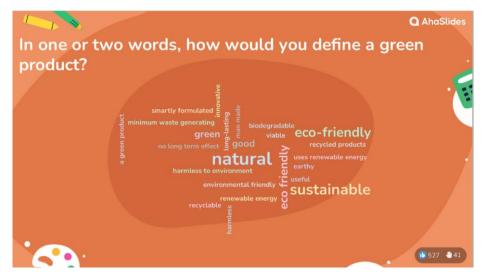
Annex 3: Interactions with Participants

Session 1











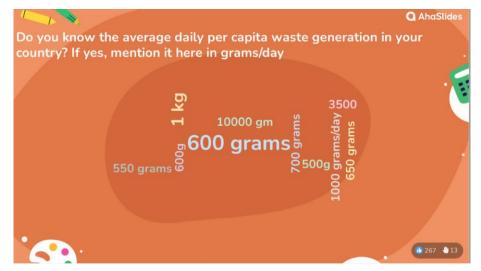
Session 2





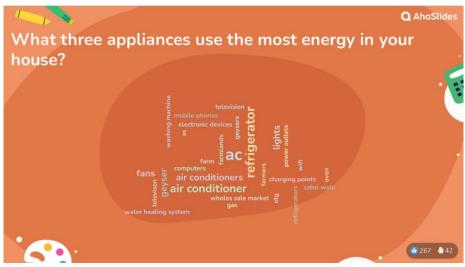






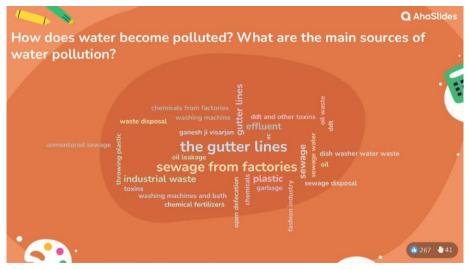


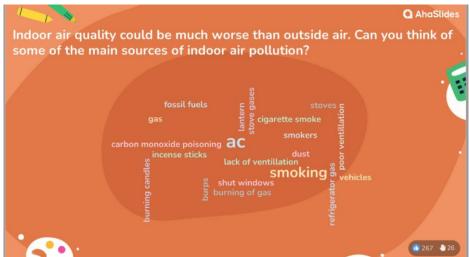


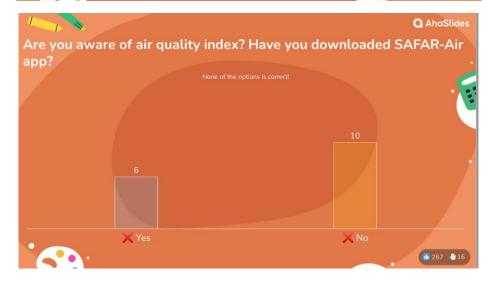








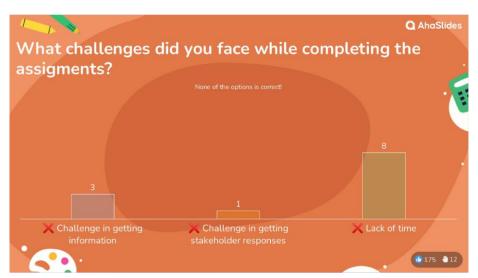








Session 3





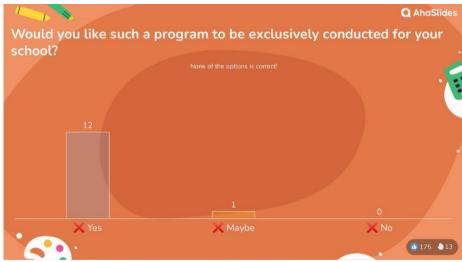
















Annex 4: Feedback from Peer Participants

"Dr Modak, Wonderful to see the entire project unfold...and the enthusiasm of the students! Excellent idea- training young minds which will remain with them for life! They will be eco sensitive citizens."

"Excellent presentation and congratulations to Dr Modak for tapping the young talents."

"Excellent initiative Dr Modak! Certainly, young mind can bring change in society as an action towards our politics!"

"Congratulations to all participants. I was very impressed by the observations made and the amazing eco plans developed. Dr Modak and team, this is such an exciting project, really very interesting approach of bringing young champions into the sustainability challenge."

For more information

Contact **Dr. Prasad Modak at** <u>prasad.modak@emcentre.com</u>