Youth Leadership Development for SDGs and Climate Action in the context of COVID-19 | Impacts of Climate Change and COVID-19 on Coastal Areas

1. What are the broad aims that need to be achieved?

- Institutionalize environmental education, specifically experiential learning, youth mentorship, and training programs on behavior change and climate action efforts starting from school. This will build the capacity of youth and equip them as they engage in grassroots initiatives through local synergies and amplify advocacy creating a groundswell.
- Opportunities to be created for inclusive action and strong connections and networks between different stakeholders, specifically bringing in knowledge and practices of the indigenous and coastal communities and strategies to mitigate and reduce risks based on local expertise.
- Community-led initiatives (by and for community interventions) and community-level leadership will propel bottom-up structural interventions and models in the protection of coastal zones.
- Managing disaster risks by involving communities are important to mitigate, manage, and adapt to these risks in a sustainable manner.

2. What opportunities, resources, strategies, policies and approaches have been identified to achieve these aims?

- Opportunities: the opportunities identified include the following.
    1. As a wake-up call, the pandemic has revealed mankind's evident fragility and vulnerability, necessitating that society develop not just resilience, but to move beyond merely building resilience towards achieving a state of **"anti-fragility"**.
    2. The novel Coronavirus has transcended geographical boundaries compelling us to think local and act global.
    3. Possibilities exist to initiate virtual conversations between youth, policy makers and scientists, as youth are leaders of today.
    4. The pandemic has opened up many opportunities to redevelop tourism in a sustainable manner.
    5. Public-private partnerships and investments in innovative technologies for coastal and marine conservation are plenty.

- Resources: available resources include the following.
    1. Leverage the use of digital technology to reach large populations.
    2. Social media has created opportunities for grassroots leaders and innovators to share their work with friends and peers through online advocacy.

3. Online entertainment tools (specifically for children) can incorporate environmental education as a form of edutainment.

- Strategies: we may explore a range of strategies including the ones below.
    1. Create networks of people leading grassroots initiatives in order for them to share projects and ideas. And, furthermore, involve global leaders and other stakeholders in these networks to facilitate dialogue and amplify grassroots voices and actions.
    2. Tailor environmental education in a way that primarily promotes behavior and lifestyle changes through step-by-step indications. This will encourage advocacy for behavior change.
    3. As a form of experiential learning, schools and institutions can conduct climate camps/field trips, so that children experience nature and learn about the importance of resources in the coastal and marine areas.
    4. Written examinations as a form of grading needs to be scrapped in environmental studies and students should be encouraged to think beyond the curriculum and engage in practical projects and activities.
    5. Scientists should interact with the local communities by engaging in research and monitoring, and keep the flow of information, so that communities can be empowered to understand their own sustainability, take more responsibility and control their actions in a sustainable manner at the local level.

- Policies: It is suggested that policies and policy formulation may embrace the following.
    1. Educational policies should incorporate indigenous knowledge in environmental education.
    2. There is a need to advocate for the necessary change in environmental legislation that would attract marine-related investment and new technologies.
    3. Periodic assessment of existing climate-related policies to establish their efficacy and relevance.
    4. Policies should be drafted with a full understanding of the resources and raw materials consumed by industry, including by-industry carbon emissions.

- Approaches: Several approaches including the following are recommended.
    1. Schools and institutions should make environmental education interactive and sensitize people in a way that they feel connected and can make a real, tangible difference. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) reports and other materials on climate science should be recreated in simplified, consumable language for education and advocacy (for example the IPCC's synthesis reports).
    2. Self-accountability, as a characteristic of youth leadership should be promoted.
    3. Bottom-up approaches - promoting youth involvement from all walks of life, community-level leadership, and synergies between different groups at the community level would be key.
    4. Youth-led protests, product bans, and petitions against major emitters can make them phase out emission of harmful substances and choose workable alternatives.

5. Focus community efforts in Small Island States that allow them to develop resilience and face the risks of sea level rise and hurricanes, among others.

3. What examples have been cited to support the feasibility and efficacy of catalytic initiatives?

1. Even during the pandemic period, grassroots initiatives have been independently thriving with active engagement from young people.
2. Opportunities and platforms, as provided by WAAS and the POP Movement, where young people genuinely engage, contribute and lead are essential.
3. Organizations like IPCC can create action materials that youth can take forward.
4. "Old people have the knowledge, and young people have the energy. Getting between that is key." - *Avanthikaa, participant* (Identifying means to indicate sustainability problems and emphasizing specific "actions" for youth will be essential)

Strategy proposed by the POP Movement: Support for capacity building activities dialogue-based, participatory workshops and initiatives with youth and communities; and scholarships for student-led grassroots projects and pilot initiatives can appreciate and encourage youth-led actions and innovations.

4. Who among the participants are prepared and willing to contribute to the complete formulation of strategies?

- The POP (Protect Our Planet) Movement
- Youth globally engaged with the POP Movement

5. What documents may be useful to the project teams working on these issues?

- Fact sheets from IPCC reports
- Business Corporate Social Responsibility reports
- Database of various networks working at grassroot-level
- Database of various awareness campaigns running on social media