

Training Adult Advisers for Teens for Planet Earth in Bangladesh

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Background: Teens for Planet Earth (TPE) is an International initiative of the Wildlife Conservation Society, New York to involve both girls and boys from around the world in environmental service learning projects. Teams of teens, with the support of the Adult Advisers, design and execute meaningful conservation-based service learning projects in their communities. Bangladesh is an overpopulated country and the fate of the country's biological diversity and environmental health depends on making our people aware that individual responsibility is crucial to the quality of life of all. Teens can play an instrumental role with respect to environmental conservation as natural custodians if empowered by training to do so.

Keeping this in mind, WTB organized a day-long workshop on Friday June 8, 2007 at COSMOS Centre (WTB's conference room). Briefing materials were distributed to all participants which consisted of 25 persons from WTBs network of educators, primarily urban school teachers and zoo personnel from Dhaka, Chittagong and Rangpur. The objective was to train a group of Adult Advisers/teachers to motivate teens and generate individual environment related programmes.

At the end of this training workshop the adult advisers had learned about environmental service learning, about the Teens for Planet Earth; how to start a Teens for Planet Earth Team; how to implement the workshop knowledge; how to spark the Teens' enthusiasm; and how to maintain the level of Teens' enthusiasm.

Activities

Ice Breaker "Cross the Line": Participants stood in a circle facing one another, reading aloud different statements such as Cross the line "if you were in the Sundarbans before" "are you from Zoo" etc? If the answer was "yes" individuals returned to the circle took time for self-reflection. Finally the participants were asked to cross the line if they were confident to continue this work with WTB. All agreed and returned to seats.

Power point presentations were used to explain the major concepts such as :

TPE, Service Learning, Environmental Service Learning explained the Teens for Planet Earth, a new international initiative for WCS to involve both girls and boys from around the world in environmental service-learning projects. Local examples from the text books of the educators were explained to make the participants easy with the new term 'Service Learning', 'Environmental Service Learning'.

Environmental Service-Learning Projects: Participants came to know the features of environmental service

learning, how they would be able to start an environmental service learning project by involving the teen's teams.

TPE- Activity: Participants were requested to link up **Environmental Service Learning** according to their profession, schoolteacher, zoo, etc. They shared their experiences to work with the teenagers. Zoo personnel showed their interests to come up with various environmental service learning projects involving teens.

Ecological footprinting analysis: EF is an indicator of environmental sustainability. Participants learned how to assess the impact/environmental footprints we make on earth by approximating the amount of ecologically productive land and sea area required to sustain a population, manufacture a product, or undertake certain activities, by accounting the use of energy, food, water, building material and other consumables. It is a way of determining relative consumption for the purpose of educating people about their resource use and, sometimes, triggering them to alter their consumption. At the end of the event, participants came up with ideas how they could make this event more attractive and meaningful to the young learners.

Other topics and activities were The Challenge of Working with the Teens: think, pair and share; building a dynamic team; first step: motivating teens; choosing a conservation project; guiding teens in preparing action plans; don't forget to reflect and celebrate; why media attention goes hand in hand, and the role of adult advisers.

Participants made a pledge to take a few actions including forming individual teen group and sharing their experience in the next meeting. At the end of the training workshop all the participants were very much confident to implement the knowledge in their respective fields. The Chief Executive of the Wildlife Trust of Bangladesh discussed how they were going to remain in "a network within a network". He discussed about the environmental service learning project fair (TEEN FAIR) to be held in December, 2007 where the participants would come up with their teens to present the projects. The participants came to know that the best 10 projects would be selected by judges on the basis of sustainability and utility. A brochure will be based on activities of successful projects developed and will be used as a future guideline. Participants expressed their good feelings about the training workshop and talked about their future plans after presentation of workshop certificates.

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