



Schooling Sustainability

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Indian Astrobiology Research Centre has introduced multiple programmes on sustainable development, including one designed for school children

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The recently concluded UN conference on sustainable development at Rio de Janeiro, has already set into motion the work towards the decided goals. Various organisations, global and grassroots alike have started work on the predefined roadmap. Taking the lead in India, Mumbai based organisation—Indian Astrobiology Research Centre (IARC), has introduced various certificate programmes, including one for schools and colleges students. Sunil Churi, head, facilitation at IARC, explains, “The programme is driven by the philosophy of the Rio conference—the

future we want and the realisation that the future we want is in our hands. We aim to take this message across India.”

Based on an international curriculum, the educational programme will lay strong emphasis on the Millennium Development Goals and the outcomes of Rio+20 summit. “The world clearly needs a workforce that is sensitive towards sustainable development and Indians will constitute a major portion of this workforce. This programme aims to orient students towards knowledge that matters,” he elaborates. Offered to students in class V to XII and degree college students, it will also focus on sustainable development, related lifestyle and careers. Students will even learn about the science, art and economics that influence decision making at highest levels. “Students, literally, comprise the “future” of the ‘future we want’ and hence need to be educated and sensitised,” adds Churi.

Jyotsna Robert, principal of Oxford Public School, speaking about her school's participation, says, “Our children have always taken proactive interest in activities that involve environmental conservation and this programme will be a step forward to introducing them to various ideas of sustainable development.” She adds, “As educators, we should empower the children and give them a strong voice.”

INDIA PROGRAMME

Rio+20 India programme extends beyond the educational programmes and corporate workshops, to include a comprehensive follow up roadmap to the Rio conference. It culminates into a series of summits to be held across the country. Dubbed as the Rio+20 India summits, they will mirror proceedings of Rio+20. “India Summits will be organised as analogous to the actual Rio+20 format. The participating schools and colleges will debate local issues with a global perspective, eventually leading to the India summit declaration, much like the Rio+20 outcome document,” explains Churi.

Students from schools, colleges and associations will drive the summit discussions that will involve talks by eminent scholars, award winning films screenings, presentations and more. “Participants will be exposed to a truly international experience and will be encouraged to make

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The Centre's proposal that education up to class V, and preferably until class VIII, be imparted in



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commitments as per the priorities identified by International Year of Sustainable Energy for All 2012," he adds.

The programme has also been listed on United Nations Rio+20 website. To join or for further details visit, www.iarc.res.in/rio

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