HCLFoundation

CEE
Centre for Environment Education

GENeration for Climate ActioN

Compendium - Edition II

From Classrooms to Communities: Inspiring Journeys of Student-Led Climate Action Across India

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Acknowledgements

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Disclaimer: This publication has been compiled using case studies submitted by schools participating in the GenCAN programme. The content reflects documentation, reports, and field visit observations provided by the respective schools. All information, findings, and insights presented herein are based on data shared by these institutions. The views and analyses expressed in this publication are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the positions or perspectives of HCLFoundation.

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FOREWORD

Climate change is no longer a distant threat—it is an urgent reality that calls for immediate, collective, and meaningful action. At HCLFoundation, we believe that young people are not just the leaders of tomorrow - they are the changemakers of today. Through the Generation for Climate Action (GenCAN) programme, we strive to empower school communities to undertake real, measurable climate action, fostering a generation that is informed, responsible and inspired to protect the planet.

This second edition of the GenCAN Compendium brings together inspiring stories from ten remarkable schools across diverse geographies of India. Each school's journey is a testament to what becomes possible when climate literacy meets student leadership, supported by dedicated teachers and a nurturing ecosystem. From reducing carbon footprints to promoting circular practices and reviving traditional water wisdom, these schools have embraced innovation and collaboration to lead by example.

This edition also highlights the critical role of mentor teachers in integrating GenCAN with the school curriculum and extending its impact to the whole-school and whole-community level. Additionally, ten outstanding students have been recognized as Climate Action Leaders for demonstrating exceptional leadership and driving action beyond school boundaries.

These stories reflect not only the creativity and commitment of young minds, but also the strength of a structured, action-oriented approach that emphasizes learning by doing. We hope these journeys will inspire students, educators, and communities across the country to join the movement for a climate-resilient future.

Let these stories spark new ideas, deepen engagement, and encourage many more to flip the script – for our future.

Dr. Nidhi Pundhir
SVP, Global CSR, HCLTech &
Director, HCLFoundation

PREFACE

Young people today are growing up in a world shaped by climate change, biodiversity loss, and resource challenges. How we prepare them to understand, respond to, and lead climate action will define the future—not just for their communities, but for the planet as a whole. The Generation for Climate Action (GenCAN) programme is a timely and innovative initiative that positions schools as hubs of climate learning and action.

This second edition of the GenCAN Compendium presents inspiring stories from ten schools across different states of India. These are stories of young learners taking responsibility, of mentor teachers linking climate action to curriculum, and of communities coming together for sustainable change. Whether through reducing waste, conserving water, promoting circular practices, or reviving traditional knowledge, each initiative reflects the spirit of learning by doing.

The approach aligns well with India's National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, which emphasizes experiential learning, environmental awareness, and education for sustainable development. It also contributes meaningfully to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and supports global efforts such as UNESCO's Greening Education Partnership, which aims to transform education systems to respond to climate change and sustainability challenges.

CEE is proud to collaborate with HCLFoundation on this journey. We hope this Compendium inspires many more educators and students to become leaders in creating a climate-resilient, equitable, and sustainable future.

Kartikeya Sarabhai
Director
Centre for Environment Education (CEE)

INTRODUCTION

Humanity stands at a critical crossroads. The world today is grappling with what the United Nations calls the Triple Planetary Crisis—a convergence of three urgent threats: climate change, biodiversity loss, and pollution. Each of these crises is intensifying—driving us closer to environmental tipping points. Recent scientific assessments have confirmed that six of the nine Planetary Boundaries—the limits within which humanity can safely operate—have already been crossed. These include climate regulation, freshwater use, land system change, and biochemical flows. In simpler terms, we are exceeding the Earth's capacity to regenerate and stabilize itself.

The Call to Act

While the consequences are alarming, the message is clear: action must begin now. Around the world, children and youth are stepping forward—not just as future leaders, but as present-day changemakers. Their questions, choices, and courage are leading a new wave of hope.

GenCAN Building Climate-Ready Schools

The Generation for Climate ActioN (GenCAN) initiative was launched on 22nd April 2023, with the belief that every child has the potential to be a climate leader—when empowered with knowledge, voice, and opportunity. GenCAN helps schools transform into climate-smart institutions, where learning translates into action. Through the GenCAN, students are invited to explore, audit, and act across four key domains that directly impact the planet.

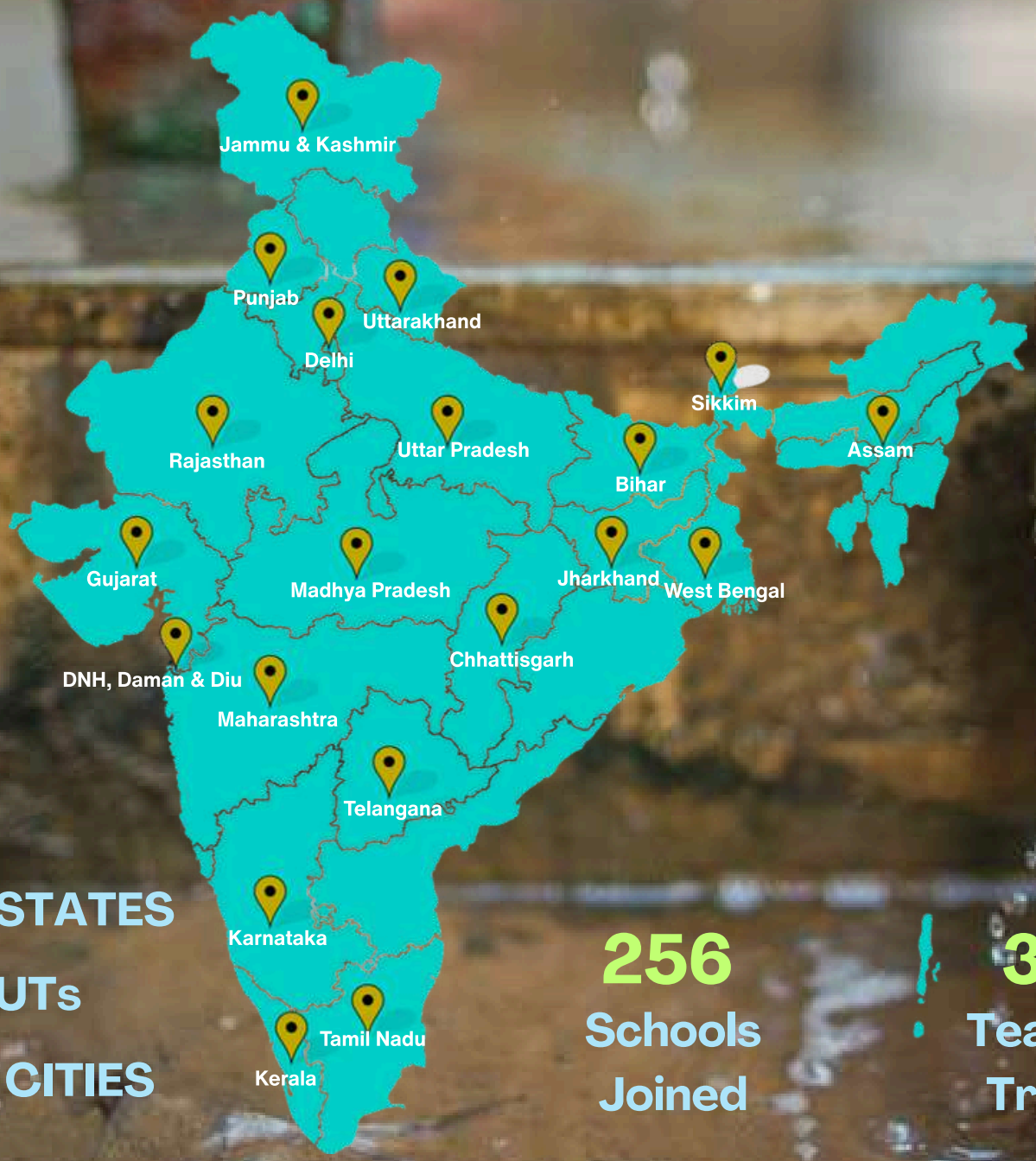
Greening Education Partnership

LiFE Lifestyle for Environment

HANDPRINT Action Towards Sustainability

Climate Action Leadership Challenge

GenCAN is a flagship initiative of HCLFoundation and the CEE, aimed at transforming schools into hubs of climate leadership. It empowers students and teachers to become informed, responsible, and action-oriented climate champions—starting right in their classrooms and extending into their communities. To support this transformation, trainings conducted to build deeper understanding of climate science and strategies to guide student action. This journey is structured around four purposeful challenges, designed to build capacity, catalyze change, and encourage storytelling. Each step is a gateway for students to learn, act, and inspire. In year 2024-25, programme was scaled up.



17 STATES

3 UTs

123 CITIES

256
Schools Joined

331
Teachers Trained

2147
Students Oriented

Challenge 1 Climate Literate

It begins with building foundational knowledge, attitudes, and values related to climate change. Students explore the science behind global warming, its causes, and local impacts. After gaining conceptual clarity, they participate in the Climate Literacy Quiz to assess and celebrate their learning.

But the learning doesn't stop there. Equipped with new knowledge, students become peer educators—sharing insights with classmates through posters, discussions, and school assemblies. Many even take this knowledge further—engaging with the local community through rallies, street plays, and door-to-door campaigns. Through this step, students move from being climate learners to climate communicators.

121890 Climate Awareness Outreach

Challenge 2 Climate Detective

Young investigators conduct a school carbon footprint audit, examining electricity, water, waste, and transportation. This detective work helps identify hotspots where action is most needed.

14,281 tonnes Total estimated school carbon footprint

Challenge 3 Climate Hero

Armed with audit findings, students design and implement a climate action plan. Whether it's recycling paper, saving water, switching to LEDs, or promoting alternative transport —students lead practical change.

1634 tonnes Total carbon emission reduced

Challenge 4 Climate Reporter

The final step is storytelling and sharing—students document their initiatives creatively through reports, videos, presentations, and social media. They emerge as climate leaders, inspiring others.

Real Change through Student Leadership

This compendium brings together stories from schools across India—tribal, rural, hill, and urban—that have embraced the GenCAN journey. Whether building compost pits in rocky Sikkim, recycling paper into certificates, installing hydroponic gardens, or channeling wastewater to local farms—these young hero-teams are turning insights into impact. The planet is in crisis, but in their hands lies the power to heal it—one challenge at a time.

1 A Village School's Climate Ripple

Government Model School
Nayagram Block, Jhargram, West Bengal

Nestled in the Sal forests of Baranigui village, this school serves tribal and forest-dwelling communities, many of whom are first-generation learners. Established under West Bengal's Model School Scheme, it stands as a beacon of inclusive education in a remote corner of Jhargram district.

Year of establishment: 2014

Students Enrolled (2024-25): 238

Climate Action Leader Team

Climate Action Journey

Guided by a mentor teacher, six student Climate Action Leaders began by understanding key climate change concepts and challenge activities. This foundational learning led them to design school-wide and community outreach initiatives. Notably, they organized a **street drama and rally during the local weekly market**, spotlighting climate impacts and sustainable living—an effort that resonated deeply with community members.

Student leaders mobilized their peers to extend climate consciousness beyond the campus. Their performances sparked community conversations and inspired changes in daily habits. During an electricity audit, curiosity about the school's solar panels led to a successful advocacy campaign with the support from the principal and School Management Committee—for **net meter installation**. This effort drew a ₹20,000 contribution from West Bengal Green Energy Ltd., marking a landmark **school-community climate partnership**.

To embed sustainability in daily routines, students placed conservation reminder stickers across classrooms and led the setup of a **pilot rainwater harvesting system** and aerobic composting pit for mid-day meal waste. They also promoted bike pooling among staff through dialogue and examples. From inquiry to impact, the students' journey reflects how climate education, when deeply rooted in real-world practice, can ripple outward into lasting environmental stewardship.

Whole-School Commitment to Climate Action

At Government Model School, sustainability is a collective pursuit. Non-teaching staff like Dayalhari Das set the tone by planting over 250 saplings, while mid-day meal in-charge Sajal Mahata ensures daily waste segregation and composting. The mentor teacher integrated climate concepts into geography, translated resources into Bengali, and rallied fellow educators—making GenCAN a school-wide movement. Inspired by this shared effort, students bring climate action home: they harvest rainwater, walk or cycle short distances, and actively conserve water and electricity, embedding sustainability into everyday life.

SCHOOL CLIMATE ACTION

SAVING ELECTRICITY

- Installed solar panel net meter to know offset value.
- Adopted switching off lights and fans for an hour.
- Signages on switching off placed in all classrooms.

TRANSPORT CHANGE

- Adopted walking by 124 and cycling by 114 students.
- All 10 staffs now come by bike pooling.

WATER CONSERVATION

- Installed RWH system as pilot project (5000L tank).

WASTE MANAGEMENT

- Recycled 36 kg/yr of plastic waste.
- Recycled 60 kg/yr paper waste.
- Started aerobic composting pit.
- Prepared compost 660 kg/yr.

20.6
(in tonnes)

12.95
(in tonnes)

2 Turning Waste into Wonders

Government Senior Secondary School
Mamring, Pakyong, Sikkim

Climate Action Leader Team

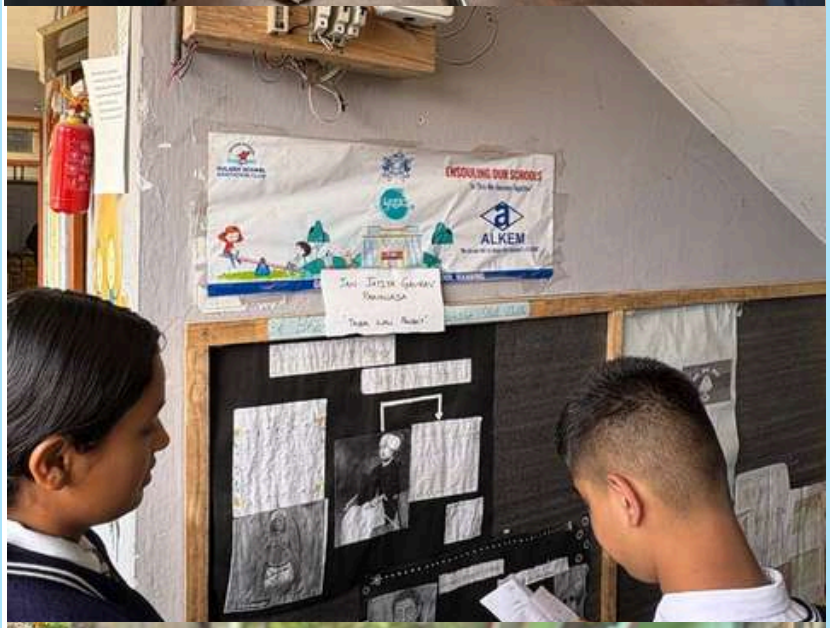
Located in the scenic but rugged terrain of Mamring in Pakyong district. This Sikkim Board government school is located on perched on a rocky slope where students travel from far and near to complete their education.

Year of establishment: 1953

Students Enrolled (2024-25): 254

129 Girls

125 Boys



Climate Action Journey

The mentor teacher took the lead in transforming climate education into tangible action. After participating in the GenCAN orientation workshop, she formed a core team of six enthusiastic students. Together, they initiated the Climate Action Leadership Challenge and actively engaged teachers from different subjects to embed climate concepts into classroom learning, data collection, and action planning.

The school's climate audit revealed paper waste as a key concern. With no formal waste disposal system in the rural area, the team innovatively **established a paper recycling unit** on campus. Used notebooks, exam sheets, and handouts were turned into handmade paper, which were later used for certificates and eco-friendly souvenirs at school events.

Despite limited space and rocky terrain, students created a small green patch and began composting kitchen waste from the Mid-Day Meal programme. **Compost bins placed** along balcony hedges now nurture potted plants and herbs.

The mentor teacher's collaborative approach and hands-on guidance enabled students to move from awareness to impact—showing how local innovation, when rooted in climate understanding, can lead to lasting change.

Community Engagement

The school's climate actions sparked wider community awareness. Students became messengers of change—sharing recycled paper with families, explaining composting practices, and planting saplings in containers at home. Their efforts promoted environmental responsibility beyond campus, encouraging households to adopt simple, sustainable habits inspired by the school's example.

SCHOOL CLIMATE ACTION

SAVING ELECTRICITY

- Adopted switching off of 34 tube lights and 24 fans for 3 and 5 hours respectively.

TRANSPORT CHANGE

- Adopted walking by 213, Bike pooling by 20, carpooling by 20 and Van by 15 students and teachers.

WATER CONSERVATION

- Repaired 4 leaking taps.

WASTE MANAGEMENT

- Recycled 36 kg/yr of plastic waste.
- Reuse 24 kg/yr paper waste for making handmade paper.
- Prepared compost 440 kg/yr through aerobic composting.

13 (in tonnes)

CO_2 reduction **0.87** (in tonnes)

3 Learning to Lead Climate Action

Lakodara Primary School
Vadodara, Gujarat

A rural school located in Lakodara village in Karjan of Vadodara district designated as School of Excellence under the Gujarat Government's initiative. The school is not only committed to academic excellence but also actively integrates climate-resilient practices into its culture.

Year of establishment: 1904

Students Enrolled (2024-25): 240

100 Girls

140 Boys

Climate Action Leader Team

Climate Action Journey

The school was nominated by the State Government to join the GenCAN initiative. After attending the training, the principal and mentor teacher took swift steps to form an enthusiastic team of eight students. Using educational resources, the teacher introduced the GenCAN student team to basic concepts of climate science.

Each student created a **personal climate action journal** to document learnings, reflections, and observations. The school initiated regular morning assemblies focused on climate change, its impacts, and solutions. Educational videos were shown class-wise to deepen understanding and spark discussions. Students took an online climate literacy quiz and planned for climate awareness activities.

A detailed survey was conducted by the team to estimate the carbon footprint of the school. As a result of the survey, students realized an urgent need to address wastage of water. The students took immediate action by **repairing leaks**, requesting to **build soak pits** to ensure water percolation, and making sure every drop counted.

But they didn't stop there. The team adopted **energy-efficient LED lights**, set up a vermicompost pit, to reduce carbon emission. Their actions weren't just solutions, they became symbols of what young people can do when empowered with knowledge and a mission.

Community Engagement

To take the climate message beyond the school walls, the student team decided to reach out to the local community through an awareness rally. The school made GenCAN t-shirts for the student team to mark their unity and participation in a national movement. Following impact was created:

- A household and a local flour mill installed solar panels.
- The gram panchayat repaired a long-standing water leakage issue in front of the school.
- Several student households reported a noticeable reduction in electricity bills.

SCHOOL CLIMATE ACTION

SAVING ELECTRICITY

- Replaced 4 CFL bulbs with LED.
- Adopted switching off lights and fans for around 3.5 hours/day.

TRANSPORT CHANGE

- Adopted walking by 200 and cycling by 40 students.

WATER CONSERVATION

- Reused 110000 litre/yr from MDM and 22000 litre/yr from RO waste water.
- Installed RWH system was made functional 5000 L tank.

WASTE MANAGEMENT

- Recycled 60 kg/yr of plastic waste.
- Recycled 120 kg/yr paper waste.
- Prepared compost 440kg/yr through vermicomposting.

2.27
(in tonnes)

6.34
(in tonnes)

4 Students Spark Change

Vasad Kanya Shala
Anand, Gujarat

Located in the semi-urban town of Vasad in Anand district, this century-old Gujarat Board school has a proud legacy of empowering girls through education. Set in a village where farming and cattle rearing are the main occupations, it plays a vital role in shaping environmentally conscious future citizens.

Year of establishment: 1923

Students Enrolled (2024-25): 331

331
Girls

Climate Action Leader Team

Climate Action Journey

After a teacher participated in the GenCAN training workshop, the message of climate action quickly spread among the school staff. Soon, a team of six students was formed and introduced to the basics of climate change and its impacts. To raise awareness within the school, they creatively performed a skit during the morning assembly—sparking discussions among students and teachers alike.

Motivated to take further action, the team conducted a carbon footprint audit, examining four key areas: waste, water, electricity, and transport. Their findings pointed to food packaging waste and electricity misuse as key concerns.

Stepping up as Climate Heroes, the students led a shift in how the school handled waste. Disturbed by the rising pile of single-use wrappers, they proposed a **ban on packaged snacks**—a move fully endorsed by the school authorities. Dustbins were introduced for waste segregation, a compost pit was constructed, and the earlier practice of **waste burning was stopped**. Cleaned plastic waste was collected and sent to a recycler, offering a practical solution while reducing landfill load.

The team also championed energy conservation. Lights and fans were switched off for 80 minutes daily, and students took the message home—encouraging their families to replace CFLs with LEDs and adopt energy-saving habits.

Community Engagement

Determined to take their message beyond the school gates, students began collecting plastic waste from home and on their way to school. Some onlookers mocked them: “Why collect garbage? Aren’t you supposed to study?” But the students stayed focused and undeterred.

Their commitment soon inspired others. More classmates joined, and what began as a small team initiative evolved into a school-wide culture of climate responsibility—where knowledge turned into bold, visible action.

SCHOOL CLIMATE ACTION

SAVING ELECTRICITY

- Installed solar panel of 10KW supported by CSR.
- Adopted switching off of lights and fans for 80 minutes/day.
- Maintained temperature for 4 ACs at 25 degrees.

TRANSPORT CHANGE

- Adopted walking by 83 students.

WATER CONSERVATION

- Constructed soak pit of 1500 L capacity.
- Repaired 10 leaking taps.

WASTE MANAGEMENT

- Stopped burning waste.
- Recycled 180 kg/yr paper waste.
- Recycled 60 kg/yr plastic waste.
- Constructed aerobic composting pit.
- Prepared composted 540 kg/yr wet waste with MDM staff.

10.59 (in tonnes)

CO_2 reduction **16.74** (in tonnes)

5 Student's Drive Climate Solutions

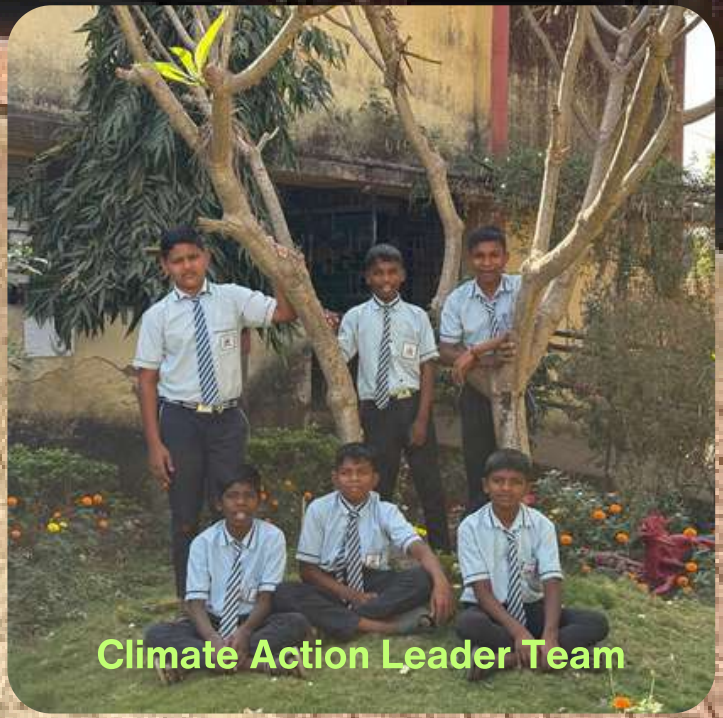
Primary Gujarati Medium School,
Luhari, Dadra & Nagar Haveli & Daman & Diu

Located in a water-scarce tribal region, the school serves a community where most parents are daily wage workers in nearby factories or involved in cattle rearing. These socio-economic conditions make access to education both challenging and transformative, offering children a critical pathway to opportunity and change.

Year of establishment: 1955

Students Enrolled (2024-25): 398

398
Boys



Climate Action Leader Team

Climate Action Journey

Before joining the GenCAN initiative, the school lacked a proper waste disposal system. Waste from classrooms and meals was dumped beyond the school boundary, causing environmental and health concerns. After participating in the GenCAN training, the mentor teacher and student team translated their learning into action. Equipped with a better understanding of the climate impacts of unmanaged waste, they approached the local municipal body. Their advocacy led to regular waste collection—a step that improved hygiene and reduced open dumping for the school and nearby community.

Water scarcity and frequent monkey damage to their vegetable patch posed further challenges. Drawing on the climate resilience mindset promoted by GenCAN, the teacher introduced **hydroponic farming**. It is a soil-free, space-efficient method ideal for water-stressed areas. Students successfully grew vegetables like cabbage and cauliflower, linking food production to sustainable practices.

Building on this success, a new kitchen garden was developed using compost and reused water. To maximize water reuse, a simple but effective channel was created in the school wall to **divert wastewater from handwashing and the mid-day meal kitchen** to a nearby farm for supporting local agriculture.

This story of this school shows how climate change education empowered the school to turn **knowledge into practical solutions** for waste, water, and food systems.

Community Engagement

What began as a simple school-based effort to manage waste has grown into a ripple of climate-conscious action. Students are now engaging their families in conversations about clean surroundings, sustainable gardening, and reusing water—carrying lessons from school to home. The school has become a local model of how climate education, when paired with creativity and collaboration, can inspire community-wide change.

SCHOOL CLIMATE ACTION

SAVING ELECTRICITY

- Adopted practice of switching off of lights and fans for two hours/day.

TRANSPORT CHANGE

- Adopted walking by 377 and cycling by 22 students.
- All 10 staff come by bike pool.

WATER CONSERVATION

- Channelized 4400 litre/yr of MDM waste water in nearby farm fields.
- Constructed one soak pit for RO waste water.

WASTE MANAGEMENT

- Stopped burning of dry waste.
- Started segregating waste.
- Sending waste to the nearest municipal centre.

11 (in tonnes)

0.03 (in tonnes)

6 Seeds of Sustainability

Government Middle School Ratesara
Kanker, Chhattisgarh

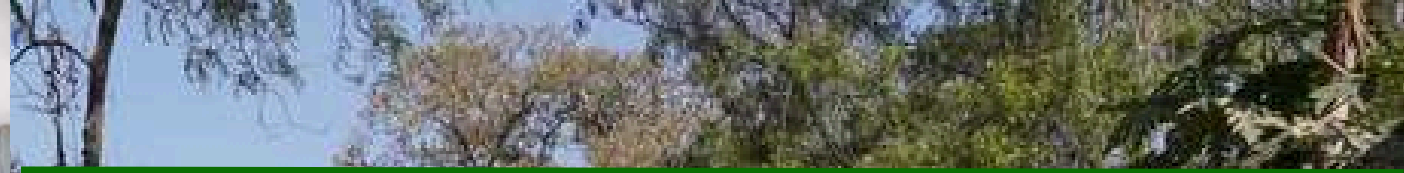
Set in a rural tribal region of Ratesara village, this small government school is making a big impact on the environment. Despite its size, the school stands out as a green model with a rainwater harvesting system, solar panel, and a lush campus.

Year of establishment: 1973

Students Enrolled (2024-25): 18

8 Girls 10 Boys

Climate Action Leader Team



Climate Action Journey

A passionate team of eight students, supported by ten enthusiastic volunteers, began their climate action journey with an online orientation and a climate literacy quiz that laid the foundation for informed action.

They carried out weekly climate awareness activities within the school and neighboring villages, involving School Management Committee (SMC) members. Morning climate **assemblies, street plays, cleanliness drives, and campaigns** on the harmful effects of plastic and chemical fertilizers sparked important conversations. Regular meetings with villagers helped link climate change impacts to everyday life. In total, their outreach engaged over 150 community members.

Inspired by their mentor teacher's vision of greening the route to school, the team began **preserving seeds** in traditional earthen pots to make seed balls. These are scattered during the monsoon along roads and forest edges, turning daily walks into journeys through nature.

Their other actions included replacing seven incandescent bulbs with LEDs and constructing a soak pit near the hand pump—conserving an estimated 15,000 liters of water annually. Wet waste from the MDM kitchen is now composted for the school's nutrition garden.

Community Engagement

The school enforces a **zero-plastic policy** and encourages students to carry cloth bags. Students also collect used plastic bags from homes and hand them over to local vendors for reuse. Their regular cleanliness drives have made the weekly market cleaner, inspiring villagers to reduce plastic use. From classrooms to community corners, the GenCAN team proves that informed action leads to lasting change—one seed, one step at a time.

SCHOOL CLIMATE ACTION

SAVING ELECTRICITY

- Replaced 7 incandescent bulbs with LED bulbs.
- Practiced switching off of lights for 1 hour/day.
- Solar panel capacity increased by 1KW.

TRANSPORT CHANGE

- Adopted walking by 6 and cycling by 12 students.

WATER CONSERVATION

- Channelized 1100 litre/yr kitchen waste water to garden area.
- Constructed soak pit near handpump which conserves 15400 litre/yr.

WASTE MANAGEMENT

- Recycled 6 kg/yr plastic waste.
- Recycled 2.4 kg/yr paper waste.
- Recycled 2 kg/yr e-waste.
- Composted 400 kg/yr wet waste through aerobic composting.

2.09 (in tonnes)

2.21 (in tonnes)

7 Climate Action in Motion

Government Senior Secondary School, Hoshiarpur
Mohali, SAS Nagar, Punjab

Located on the rural outskirts of Mohali, this government school has been serving its community for decades. Since its upgrade to a secondary school in 1994, the school has steadily pursued a vision of creating a cleaner and greener environment.

Year of establishment: 1960

Students Enrolled (2024-25): 245

113 Girls

132 Boys

Climate Action Leader Team

Climate Action Journey

A powerful movement began in the school with a simple classroom discussion. Students were asked to reflect on how life and weather patterns were changing in their villages. Stories of rising temperatures, irregular rainfall, and drying water sources sparked a wave of awareness and concern. The mentor teacher built on this momentum to deepen understanding of climate change and individual responsibility. Recognizing the students' enthusiasm and capacity, a team of eight young climate leaders was formed. Over 40–50 volunteers were selected to support local-level action. Supported by their teachers, students organized climate awareness activities—including quizzes, rallies, exhibitions, role plays, and painting contests.

Each climate leader student guided a group of 8–10 peers to collect data on electricity, water, transport, and waste. They conducted surveys, documented findings with photos and videos, and developed practical solutions for both school and home. A highlight was when the school's electricity bill was projected and explained, giving students a real-world understanding of energy use and how kilowatt-hours are calculated. It turned into an eye-opening moment for all. The school created both short and long-term climate action plans. With already low emissions from transport and electricity, the focus turned to waste and water.

The short-term plan included **reducing paper waste** through page numbering, learning the skill of **stitching cloth bags** from old clothes, composting wet waste from mid-day meals and homes, and starting 20 small compost pits. Long-term goals included establishing a Miyawaki forest, building climate-resilient infrastructure, starting vermicomposting, and becoming a Zero Waste School.

Community Engagement

The climate movement spread beyond the school boundary. Students and staff brought kitchen waste from home to compost on campus. The mentor teacher and student leaders collaborated with the Gram Sarpanch, recycling companies, and ragpickers to promote waste segregation and address stubble burning. Their efforts raised community awareness on health and environmental impacts.

SCHOOL CLIMATE ACTION

SAVING ELECTRICITY

- Adopted practice of switching off lights and fans for two hours.
- Replaced 2 tube lights and 1 CFL bulb with energy efficient options.

TRANSPORT CHANGE

- Adopted walking by 139 and cycling by 74 students.
- Staff come by car/bike pooling.

WATER CONSERVATION

- Reused 3900 litre/yr waste water from MDM and RO.

WASTE MANAGEMENT

- Dug 20 small compost pits for aerobic composting.
- Composted 1100 kg/yr of wet waste collected from MDM and students' homes.

15.7 (in tonnes)

2.76 (in tonnes)

8

Turning Knowledge into Climate Action

Upper Primary School, Jamu
Sandila, Hardoi, Uttar Pradesh

Located in the remote village of Jamu in Sandila Block—often known as the industrial hub of Hardoi—this school has steadily grown through the dedicated efforts of its principal and teachers. Despite its rural setting, the school attracts students from nearby villages, many of whom travel 10 to 15 kilometers daily to attend classes.

Year of establishment: 2009

Students Enrolled (2024-25): 465

237 Girls

228 Boys

Climate Action Leader Team

Climate Action Journey

A mentor teacher from the school attended a day-long training on climate change education under the GenCAN programme. Energized by the session, she returned with a clear plan and identified eight enthusiastic student leaders—three girls and five boys—who stood out for their curiosity and leadership potential.

In the orientation sessions, students explored the basics of climate change using GenCAN booklets and videos. As their understanding deepened, so did their resolve. What began as learning soon transformed into leadership. The student team organized a climate assembly, staged a skit, led awareness rallies, and set up an eye-catching bulletin board and selfie point to promote simple climate-friendly actions. The school principal actively supported the initiative and motivated students and staff to participate fully.

Next, the team conducted a carbon footprint audit of the school, identifying areas needing improvement: **energy saving**, water conservation, and waste segregation. They began switching off unused lights and fans, repaired three leaking taps, and **constructed a compost pit** that now processes 1,100 kg of wet waste annually. Wastewater from the MDM kitchen and hand pump was redirected to irrigate a newly developed **kitchen garden**. Each section of the garden was assigned to climate leaders and volunteers, who also cared for individual saplings. The harvested vegetables were used in the school's mid-day meals.

Community Engagement

Students carried the message of climate action home, speaking with their families about saving electricity, reusing wastewater in gardens, and composting wet waste. Parents expressed pride in their children's leadership and were inspired to adopt the suggested practices in their own households.

SCHOOL CLIMATE ACTION

SAVING ELECTRICITY

- Practicing switching off light and fans when not in use.

TRANSPORT CHANGE

- Adopted walking by 375 and cycling by 85 students.
- Adopted walking by 2, car pooling by 2 and public transport by 2 staff.

WATER CONSERVATION

- Repaired 3 leaking taps.
- Reused 16500 litre/yr wastewater from Handpump and MDM.
- Conserving 2000 litre/yr water through the RWH system.

WASTE MANAGEMENT

- Recycled 48 kg/yr plastic waste.
- Recycled 60 kg/yr paper waste.
- Made an aerobic composting pit.
- Composted 1100 kg/yr kitchen waste.

11.6
(in tonnes)

2.41
(in tonnes)

9 Sprouting Change

Darbari Lal DAV Model School,
Delhi

The school is a CBSE affiliated institution in North-West Delhi. Committed to holistic education, the school actively promotes environmental awareness. Through hands-on environment related initiatives, it empowers students to become responsible, sustainability-minded citizens, driving positive change within the school and the wider community.

Year of establishment: 1981

Students Enrolled (2024-25): 3899

1541 Girls

2358 Boys

Climate Action Leader Team

Climate Action Journey

The school registered for the GenCAN online training workshop on climate change education. Eight enthusiastic girls were selected as Climate Action Leaders by their teachers. Soon, the initiative came alive on campus through workshops, presentations, and practical demonstrations focusing on key themes like energy conservation, water management, and waste reduction.

Driven by creativity, the student leaders launched **Eco Tags**, a unique way to recognize and encourage sustainable behaviour. An Eco Commuter tag was awarded to students and teachers who carpooled, walked, or cycled to school. They also introduced the **EcoChamp Award** for the class demonstrating the best sustainable practices, triggering friendly competition across grades.

Hands-on activities such as composting, 'best out of waste' crafts, and saying no to plastics translated climate knowledge into real-world action. A new **leaf-litter composter** provided by school management. Students eagerly collected fallen leaves and fed them into the composter. The shift in behaviour was visible: students began turning off lights and fans, avoiding water wastage, and switching to reusable steel lunch boxes and bottles.

As a result, the school recorded noticeable **savings in electricity and water bills**. With 85 per cent of students moving away from single-use plastic, the school is steadily progressing toward becoming a plastic-free, climate-conscious campus.

Community Engagement

With strong support from mentor teachers, GenCAN evolved into a whole-school, community-driven effort. Non-teaching staff including gardeners, plumbers, electricians, and sweepers, played key roles in data collection and implementation. Parents and neighborhood families also joined in, expanding the reach of climate action. A major success was when the school canteen, inspired by student efforts, eliminated plastic utensils and adopted eco-friendly alternatives.

SCHOOL CLIMATE ACTION

SAVING ELECTRICITY

- Replaced 230 CFL bulbs and 566 fluorescent tube lights with energy efficient options.
- Adopted practice of keeping temperature at 25 degrees of 25 ACs.

TRANSPORT CHANGE

- Adopted walking by 250, cycling by 1750, bike pooling by 190 and school bus by 350 students.

WATER CONSERVATION

- Repaired 2 leaking taps.
- Reused 1300000 litre/yr wastewater from RO and 2000 litre/yr from AC in labs, washrooms, gardening, etc.

WASTE MANAGEMENT

- Composted 800 kg/yr leaf litter.
- Recycled 60 kg/yr plastic waste.
- Recycled 60 kg/yr paper waste.

175.5 (in tonnes)

64 (in tonnes)

10 Climate Action Starts Here

Karnataka Public School Bagaluru,
Bengaluru, Karnataka

Located on the outskirts of Bengaluru, this government school is surrounded by eucalyptus groves, open fields, and farmland—offering a calm and spacious setting ideal for outdoor and environmental learning. The school leverages its natural surroundings to actively engage students in eco-friendly practices. A majority of students studying here travel either by public buses or on foot.

Year of establishment: 1982

Students Enrolled (2024-25): 303

157 Girls

146 Boys

Climate Action Leader Team

Climate Action Journey

After joining the GenCAN programme, the mentor teacher selected six enthusiastic student leaders from grade six who stepped up to lead their school's climate action journey. With the guidance of their teacher, the team participated in engaging orientation sessions using videos, booklets, and green games, which deepened their understanding of climate change, global warming, greenhouse gases, and carbon footprints.

But learning didn't stop at awareness. The student team, guided by their teacher, quickly moved to action. Through an energy and water audit, they identified key areas for improvement and developed a short-term action plan focused on water conservation and waste management. A simple but effective channel was built to **redirect wastewater** from the handwash station to irrigate the school garden—conserving water while supporting greenery. During the audit, three leaking taps were also detected and fixed, thanks to the hands-on effort of student leader Tejas.

On the waste front, students introduced **segregation** of dry and wet waste. Wet waste was composted on-site, and dry waste was handed over to the gram panchayat for **recycling**. Additionally, the team launched a routine of switching off unused electrical appliances, reinforcing daily **energy-saving habits**. This journey reflects how climate knowledge can be transformed into meaningful action at the school level.

Community Engagement

A key breakthrough came when student leaders realized the school's waste wasn't being collected regularly. Applying insights from GenCAN, they approached Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) and discovered the issue stemmed from improper segregation. The students introduced waste sorting at the source, which led to daily waste collection being reinstated. This practical action reinforced their understanding of climate-friendly waste management and showcased how student-led initiatives can drive change.

SCHOOL CLIMATE ACTION

SAVING ELECTRICITY

- Practiced switching off lights and fans for 2 hours.

TRANSPORT CHANGE

- All staff come by BMTC Bus.

WATER CONSERVATION

- Paved a channel to redirect wastewater 22000 litre/yr from handwash station to plantation area.
- Students repaired 2 leaking taps.

WASTE MANAGEMENT

- Adopted segregation of dry waste.
- Recycled 40 kg/yr of paper waste through gram panchayat.
- Composted 220 kg/yr of MDM waste through aerobic composting.

7.50 (in tonnes)

0.25 (in tonnes)

Cultivating Responsibility and Action Beyond Lessons

1

Mr. Santanu Patra, Mentor Teacher

Government Model School, Nayagram, Jhargram, West Bengal

When I first learned about the GenCAN programme, I saw it not just as an academic initiative but as a powerful opportunity to inspire real-world action. I wanted my students to connect classroom learning with the pressing realities of climate change and develop solutions rooted in their local context.

Implementing the programme brought its own challenges. It quickly became clear that success would require more than teaching—it demanded mentoring, motivating, and walking alongside students on their journey. I became a facilitator, helping them explore ideas, encouraging their efforts, and supporting them through setbacks.

What followed was a remarkable transformation. Students didn't just participate—they took ownership. Their energy spread across the school and into the community. We saw teachers, staff, and even families joining the movement. Local cultural values were woven into the climate actions, making them more relatable and lasting.

From organizing street plays to initiating sustainable practices like composting, rainwater harvesting, and energy audits, students began to lead by example. The biggest reward has been witnessing how this experience shaped their attitudes and daily choices—proving that meaningful mentorship can truly empower lasting climate action.

Leading Change Through Whole-School Participation

2

Ms. Sushma Tamang, Mentor Teacher

Government Senior Secondary School, Mamring, Pakyong, Sikkim

As I joined the GenCAN programme, I knew meaningful change couldn't be limited to one class or one teacher—it needed to involve the whole school. Convincing my colleagues wasn't easy. With their packed schedules, an additional programme felt like a burden. But I kept sharing the vision and slowly, they began to see its value. That was the first step.

Our school is in a remote area with limited resources, but we turned constraints into opportunities. We began composting using locally available materials. During one class discussion, students raised the issue of paper waste. I didn't have immediate answers, so I researched—watched videos, read articles—and found that small-scale paper recycling was possible, even in our setting.

With support from the students, we set up a mini recycling unit on campus. The joy on their faces as they created recycled paper was priceless. They weren't just learning science—they were applying it in real life. That's when I truly saw the power of action-oriented learning. GenCAN helped transform our school into a space where sustainability is not just taught but practiced every day.

3 Greening the Way: A Seed of Change

Mr. Dharmendra Kumar, Mentor Teacher
Government Middle School Ratesara, Chhattisgarh

As the GenCAN mentor teacher at our school, I had the wonderful opportunity to lead a movement that brought students, teachers, and parents together for climate action. I always dreamed of a school road lined with lush greenery—and with the GenCAN team, that vision began to take root.

Drawing on local wisdom, we started preserving native seeds in traditional earthen pots. Using these seeds, students learned to make seed balls—a simple, sustainable way to regenerate green cover. During the rainy season, these seed balls were scattered along roadsides and nearby forest patches.

What started as a classroom activity became a hands-on lesson in biodiversity, water conservation, and climate resilience. Each small step—collecting seeds, making seed balls, planting them with care—connected students to their environment and gave them a sense of ownership.

Today, we're watching that dream grow—literally—with every sprout that emerges. And the journey continues.

4 A School-Wide Climate Movement

Ms. Nidhi Kharkwal, Mentor Teacher
Delhi Public School Pune, Maharashtra

As a mentor teacher, I began this journey with a clear vision—to build climate literacy and empower students as changemakers for a sustainable future. What started as an idea soon evolved into a school-wide movement that touched every corner of our community.

With sustainability already embedded in our school's ethos, integrating GenCAN felt like a natural step forward. Students enthusiastically took on all four climate challenges, actively involving peers, teachers, support staff, and even school leadership. A key turning point was their realization that everyday actions leave a carbon footprint—and that making informed choices can reduce it.

Together, we explored practical ways to make the school more climate-resilient—from managing waste to conserving energy. What inspired me most was seeing students step beyond the classroom. Through nukkad nataks (street plays) and awareness marches, they carried their message into local residential societies, sparking real conversations around eco-friendly living. GenCAN gave our students not only knowledge, but purpose—and the confidence to act on it.

Teaching Beyond Textbooks

5

Ms Shanu Nigam, Mentor Teacher

Upper Primary School (Composite), Singolitaga, Baghpat, Uttar Pradesh

I have always believed that education goes beyond textbooks—it's about nurturing aware, responsible, and sensitive citizens. When the GenCAN programme was introduced, it felt like the perfect opportunity to turn this belief into action. We began by calculating our school's carbon footprint, and from there, the students led meaningful climate actions.

From the outset, I made a conscious choice: not to instruct from the front, but to create an open space for thinking, questioning, and creativity. I wanted students to take ownership—not just of the activities, but of the environmental challenges affecting their lives and futures.

I encouraged them to ask questions rather than wait for answers. Whether tackling school waste or involving their peers, I nudged them to explore, collaborate, and find their own solutions. Watching them plan awareness drives, lead campaigns, and make their voices heard has been deeply fulfilling.

Turning Learning into Leadership

6

Mr Nirav Patel, Mentor Teacher

Vasad Kanya Shala, Anand, Gujarat

Before joining GenCAN, I had heard about climate change, but I didn't fully understand how our daily habits contribute to it. The programme helped me connect the dots—and realize that even small steps at the school level can drive meaningful climate action.

With my student team, we took this learning beyond the classroom. We engaged with our community about the dangers of plastic and the importance of waste segregation. At school, the impact was visible. Earlier, all our waste—wet and dry—was burned. After GenCAN, we stopped the burning, began segregating waste, composted wet waste, and used plastic to make eco-bricks, which we sent for recycling. Even used paper was collected and repurposed.

To make the change sustainable, we approached local CSR partners and received support for proper waste bins. What started as training became a turning point. GenCAN didn't just help me understand climate change—it empowered me and my students to take action and inspire others.

Hina Parmar, Grade 6
Vasad Kanya Shala, Anand, Gujarat

"I Wanted to Be the One to Start the Change" – Hina Parmar's Voice

When my teacher told us about the GenCAN programme, something clicked. I felt like this was something I had to do—not just for school, but for my village too. I told my classmates, "Let's do this together," and somehow, I became the leader of our small team. We started brainstorming—what problems do we see every day? Plastic waste was the first answer.

We planned a village cleanliness drive. I still remember how people looked at us—walking with bags, picking up plastic from roadsides and fields. We brought the waste back to school, where it was sorted and sent for recycling.

At home, I shared everything I was learning with my sister and parents. At first, they just listened politely. But then I showed them how LED bulbs save energy, and we changed two of the old ones in our house. It may be a small step, but it feels big to me. Because now, they ask me what we're doing next in GenCAN.

"We Didn't Give Up" – Pratigya's Voice

When ma'am created different teams for the GenCAN programme, I was excited to be a part of it. She asked me to find out how composting works and whether we could try it on our school campus. I took that as a challenge. Along with my teammates, we started our first composting attempt behind the school building. But it didn't work. The pile wouldn't decompose properly, and animals often disturbed it. We didn't give up.

Next, we tried composting in large waste containers and placed them on the first floor—away from monkeys and safer from the rain. This time, it worked! Slowly, the waste turned into dark, crumbly manure. We were thrilled. We also collected saplings from nearby farms and began a small plantation drive on the school grounds. Seeing the plants grow from what we had nurtured felt amazing. It was a real learning journey for me. GenCAN didn't just teach me about composting—it taught me that trying, failing, and trying again is part of making change happen.

Ms. Pratigya Sapkota, Grade 8
Government Senior Sec. School, Mamring, Pakyong, Sikkim

“From Awareness to Action” – Reema’s Voice

After attending a climate change orientation, I realized the urgency of the crisis—and that action couldn't wait. That moment sparked my journey as a climate leader. I led a team of seven students to reduce our school's carbon footprint through simple, impactful steps: switching off unused appliances, conserving water, and promoting waste segregation. It also improved my leadership and communication skills.

We also organized a community meeting with the school management committee and aware them about the risk of climate change. One initiative very close to my heart was water conservation. I noticed excessive water use during lunch breaks, so my team and I began monitoring tap usage to prevent wastage. One of us stands near the tap, ensuring the judicious use of water and the tap is not left running unnecessarily.

Ms. Reema, Grade 8,
Upper Primary School, Asgarpur,
Noida, Uttar Pradesh

Mr. Tejas P, Grade 8
Karnataka Public School Bagaluru,
Bengaluru, Karnataka

“Now I feel that I can also make a difference” – Tejas’s Voice

During student orientation, I first learned about climate change and its impacts. Inspired to take action, my team and I decided to focus on reducing our school's carbon footprint. During a water audit, we discovered two leaking taps. To measure the water loss, we did an activity using a measuring cylinder and the results shocked me. I fixed the leaking taps- a skill I learnt at home. Along with my friends Jindavali, Uday and Anyudh, we cleaned the garden and channelized the waste water coming from the handwash station. We also started cultivating vegetables in our school garden. To save electricity, my team and I made it a habit to switch off lights and fans when not in use. It was a small step, but it brought meaningful change.

I never realized how small actions could lead to such a big impact, until I saw results. Segregating waste brought back the waste collection—finally! Earlier, the municipality wasn’t collecting our school’s waste due to improper segregation. Once we started separating dry and wet waste properly, the collection resumed.

Ms. Kirti Gohil, Grade 7
Lakodara Primary School, Vadodara, Gujarat

"We Felt Like a Team" – Kirti's Voice

When we got our GenCAN T-shirts, we were all so excited—it felt like we were part of something important. We worked together to make GenCAN a success and to make our teacher proud. It wasn't just an activity anymore—it became our mission.

One of the most memorable experiences was when we visited the community to talk about energy saving. We shared what we had learned about solar panels during GenCAN. It felt so good to know that two uncles from the village actually got solar panels installed after our visit. That made us feel like our words mattered. Back at school, I really enjoyed making compost in grow bags. It was new for us, but we learned by doing. Tending to different types of plants and watching them grow gave us so much energy and hope. GenCAN taught me that when we come together with purpose, we can make real change—at school, in our homes, and in our villages. I'm proud to be part of this journey and ready to take it forward.

"I could trigger change for waste management in my school" – Rishwanth's Voice

My friends and I decided to take a few actions to stop littering behaviour at our school. We started small with a waste collection drive everyday from our school grounds before heading home. We also went to every class and asking our friends not to litter. After few weeks, we noticed some classes were putting extra effort into keeping their classrooms clean, and felt they deserved recognition. So, we started the "Neat & Tidy Classroom" initiative, awarding 5 star ratings to the neatest classes of the month.

Because of this initiative, other classes and even my class wanted to get recognised and have started managing our waste well. Since the start of this initiative, our school has cut down its dry waste from 14kg per week to 7kg per week (by half!) and our school ground is now free of paper and plastic waste. I have taken my learning from GenCAN back to home. My friends and I have started segregating and recycling waste and conserving water at our homes. My message to everyone is to start generating less waste and manage waste responsibly.

Mr. Rishwanth, Grade 8
Chennai Higher Secondary School,
Kolathur, Tamil Nadu

“Every small action matters” Shaan’s Voice

Before I joined GenCAN, I didn’t know much about how my actions affected the environment. But now I notice every little thing- switching off lights, saving water, or throwing away waste and wonder how it all connects to our carbon footprint.

GenCAN has not only shaped my knowledge but also changed my attitude. I now feel confident and passionate about protecting the environment and sharing what I’ve learned with others. At school, I started making videos about the steps we’re taking to be more eco-friendly—like composting, building a soak pit, growing our own kitchen garden, and conserving electricity and water. It makes me proud to be a part of a school that’s taking real action.

I believe that if more students join in, we can make a big difference—one small action at a time!

Mr. Shaan, Grade 8
Upper Primary School, Kutubpur Labdaula, Nagal, Saharanpur, Uttar Pradesh

“Old clothes, new purpose – stitching change” – Payal’s Voice

Being part of the GenCAN inspired me to take action in my own way. I started by repurposing old and used clothes to make useful items like doormats, caps, cloth bags, pillow covers, curtains, and even ropes. I didn’t want to keep this skill to myself so I taught many other girls in my village. Seeing roadside plants dying bothered me a lot. So I decided to take care of them.

I watered them regularly, adding manure, and even built tree guards to protect them. I'm happy to say that 8 to 10 plants are now growing well again. My friends and I performed nukkad natak and rallies to raise awareness. We talked about climate action, saving water, reducing waste, and growing more trees. This program has given me confidence and shown me that even small efforts can bring big changes in our community. Earlier, the water from the RO was being wasted in our school. I discussed this with the warden and explained how we could reuse this water for irrigation. With their support, we connected a long pipe to the RO machine and redirected the water to the kitchen garden. Now, this water is helping grow vegetables and plants instead of going to waste.

Ms. Payal Pal, Grade 8
KGBV, Malihabad, Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh

Ms. Aradhya Gupta, Grade 9
Darbari Lal DAV Model School, Delhi

"Caring for Earth starts with me" Aradhya's Voice

Being part of the GenCAN initiative changed the way I look at things around me. I realised that even small steps matter, and we don't always have to do something huge to care for the Earth. What drives me is the idea that our small actions today can create a bigger impact tomorrow. I started making sure lights and fans were off when not in use, closing taps properly, and explained composting to my friends, and felt really good when they actually started doing it.

GenCAN didn't just teach me what to do, but also why it matters and the tangible difference it makes- mindset and responsibility. Now these habits feel natural to me. It's not just a school project for me anymore, it's more like a way of thinking. I've started noticing things more, like waste generation or mindless consumption.

It's made me feel more responsible. I'm really looking forward to being part of more such programmes, and even without them, I'll always keep doing my part.

"Caring for our plants and the planet" – Sangareshwari's Voice

Our teacher taught us the impacts of our everyday actions on our planet and how it is our responsibility to live sustainably. I was curious about transportation and its impacts. When I learnt that vehicles generate greenhouse gases and contribute to global warming, I immediately switched to walking and stopped travelling to school by bike. I also motivated my classmates to start cycling and walking to school.

Two of my classmates have started bikepooling since they live nearby. After learning what climate action can be adopted at school level, all 35 students in my school have started switching off unused lights and fans, segregating waste and composting in our schools and homes. We are building community awareness by sensitising our family and friends on climate action. For the plants at my house, I use vermicompost to grow plants and use neem oil to treat the plants from any diseases. My friends and I take care of the plants in our school and home.

Ms. Sangareshwari M, Grade 6
Corporation Girls High School, Manimegalai, Madurai, Tamil Nadu

ACRONYMS

CCE	Climate Change Education
CEE	Centre for Environment Education
CFL	Compact Fluorescent Lamp
EE	Environmental Education
ESD	Education for Sustainable Development
GenCAN	Generation for Climate Action
HCLF	HCLFoundation
KGBV	Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya
KWp	Kilowatt 'Peak' Power
LED	Light Emitting Diode
MDM	Mid-Day Meal
MoE	Ministry of Education
NEP	National Education Policy
NCF	National Curriculum Framework
RWH	Rainwater Harvesting
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SWM	Solid Waste Management

Young Climate Leaders in Action

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