

Environmental Radio Workshop

Introduction

Climate change, global warming, deforestation, loss of biodiversity, water pollution, air pollution, etc. have today become usual topics of discussion in today's world. It has become increasingly clear that protection of the environment should not only be the concern of an environmentalist but has to be a top priority for everyone, especially students who are capable of efficiently carrying the message of environmental protection forward.

As part of the Climate EduXchange, an initiative of TERI (The Energy and Resources Institute) and Dell Computers, an Environmental Radio Workshop was organized from 23rd to 25th February 2010 for the students of Bangalore and Chennai at the Southern Regional Centre of TERI located in Bangalore. Climate EduXchange provides a web-based platform to reach out to students, teachers and the community on the key issue of climate change.

Communication is the key word, and the idea of a Radio Workshop was to help students develop communication skills essential for spreading awareness on environment with a special focus on climate change. The Environmental Radio Workshop aimed to engage the students in a non-formal medium of communication and use activity based learning to discuss climate change issues.

All the student participants and teachers were welcomed by Ms Avanti Roy Basu of TERI. Following a brief round of introduction by participants, the outlines and activities of Project Climate EduXchange were discussed. Ms Haripriya Madhavan and Ms K N Shruti were the resource persons for the workshop. Both are International Climate Champions - winners of a youth oriented programme of the British Council and TERI that aims to inspire young people and work with them towards spreading the word on climate change and its effects.

Ms Haripriya and Ms Shruti discussed the objectives of the three-day workshop, which are as follows:

- ◆ To help students learn on how to work as a team;
- ◆ To facilitate students to come up with a 10-minute Radio production of their own; and
- ◆ To assist them to develop their own newsletter.

A total of 28 students and 7 teachers from the following seven schools of Chennai and Bangalore participated in the three-day workshop:

- ✚ Ryan International School (Yelahanka), Bangalore
- ✚ SSVS People's Trust, Bangalore
- ✚ National Centre for Excellence, Bangalore
- ✚ Navachetana High School, Bangalore
- ✚ Rashtrottana Vidya Kendra, Bangalore
- ✚ Sevalaya's Mahakavi Bharathiyar Higher Secondary School, Chennai
- ✚ Angel Matriculation Higher Secondary School, Chennai

The students were divided into five teams, with each team having representation from various schools (of Bangalore and Chennai). As given in Annexure I, a comprehensive agenda was designed for the three-day workshop.

Day 1: February 23, 2010

Session I: Importance of writing and speaking out environmental issues, News selection and Reporting

The main focus of the first session was to learn about the skills of writing and speaking on environmental issues, News selection and Reporting.

The students were first asked to come up with a name for their team: The objective behind this exercise was to make them interact and know their fellow team mates better because they had to work in teams for the next three days.

The next question put forward to the students was 'How many of you read Newspapers?' and students were also asked if they read newspaper articles related to environment?': This question was posed to students to:

- ✚ To know exactly what they read in the newspaper; and
- ✚ To know how much emphasis is given to articles related to environment.

Through this activity, the importance of writing an interesting article was emphasized. It was mentioned that any news article is incomplete without the presence of 5 W's (where, when, who, why, what) and 1 H (How). The need to include authenticated facts in the article was also highlighted. This activity was mainly to motivate the students to come up with their own article prepared out of their own efforts and hard work for the next day's session.

The students were asked to collect newspaper and journal articles related to climate change, and bring along with them on the second day of the workshop.

Session II: Making a Radio Show

It was emphasized that while making a Radio programme, three points should be kept in mind: a) It should be informative; b) Target audience should be appropriately known; and c) Proper research orientation is required while collecting information (this is because the information shared should be precise and accurate).

Theme/Topic: The students were asked to select one theme/topic related to environment so that they can come up with their own Radio Show based on the topic chosen by them. The students came up with the following topics:

- ✚ Air Pollution
- ✚ Deforestation
- ✚ Recycle
- ✚ Climate Change
- ✚ Water Pollution

Target Audience: Schools friends and illiterate children were chosen as the target audience who will be listening to their radio show.

Research: Students were asked to collect articles related to environment which could be helpful for them during their radio show.

It was explained that **Radio Format** is required to convey a message through verbal communication taking the aid of drama, skit, mimicry, slogans, story telling and character talk.

Games and activities for team-building and radio programme

The students were made to play three games.

In the first one, they were asked to form an outward circle and hold hands, a team member in the middle was asked to free fall with closed eyes, the other team member should hold their hands in such a way that the person falling between them does not fall down. This game was played mainly to find out if the person in the middle trusts his/her team members.

In the second game, the students were asked to cross a rope without stepping down the rope. The main objective of this game was to increase the concentration of the students.

The third game was to make the students use different emotions to convey a sentence, in order to bring out emotions like happiness, sadness and anger, and to make them aware of the importance of bringing in the emotions on the radio show. Proper display of emotions is very important for keeping the listeners hooked to the show, because voice is the only means of communicating through radio.

Session III: Radio Scripting and Introduction to 'Envirotisement'

The students learnt about the main aspects of a Radio Show:

- **Segment:** A segment (in association with a radio show) is generally the larger part of the show, which includes drama, skit, poem, slogans, facts, tips for people to follow, 'Character-Talk', Do-it-yourself crafts, story telling, interview, Quiz, envirotisements (advertisements on environment)
- **Link:** Links are the one that connects the two segments - it includes quiz, slogans etc.
- **Envirotisement:** Students were asked to decide on the advertisement related to environment (that they would like to present) and were asked to focus on the following:
 - ✚ The product they come up with must be eco-friendly;
 - ✚ They should name their product;
 - ✚ They should list the advantage of the product;
 - ✚ They should decide a price/cost of the product; and
 - ✚ They should also fix a discount for the product they come up with.

Day 2: February 24, 2010

The second day's session began by asking the students to come up with their own 'Green Mantra': tips to lead an eco-friendly life for you and others. A list of 'My Green Mantra' is given in Annexure II. The resource persons helped the participants to recapitulate the learnings of the previous day.

Interaction with British Council International Climate Champions from Bangalore

In order to sensitize students about the present-day environment and to share the initiatives taken by the International Climate Champions, a special session was organized to make them understand on how and what youth do to bring about the desired positive change in our living environment.

Three International Climate Champions namely Mr Supreeth, Ms Hita and Ms Varshitha interacted with the students in this session.

Mr Supreeth- This cyclist from Bangalore addressed the students on the advantages of cycling. He mentioned that he goes to offices and asks people to cycle to office. He has taken up this initiative to encourage people to save energy. He also told that in Basavanagudi (Bangalore), they have demarcated the roads (especially for school children) so that the children can safely cycle to school everyday. Among the participants, it was understood that very few students cycle to their school.

Ms Varshitha - is a B.Com student, and she spoke about plastic perils. She spoke about the dangers associated with the usage of plastic - the harm it causes by forming a layer in the soil making it impossible for the plants to survive, and also preventing the percolation of water. She gave simple solutions to students which they can adapt themselves, and also insist their family members and neighbors to avoid using plastic, and always carry a cloth bag while going for shopping.

Ms Hita - is a teacher by profession and is working on the lost lakes of Bangalore. She spoke about the history of the lakes in Bangalore, and discussed the reasons behind the deteriorating condition of the lakes - disappearance of old lakes and pollution in the existing ones. As part of the Indian Youth Climate Network, she has planted trees along the boundary of the important lakes to improve its biodiversity, and have encouraged the residents around the lake to nurture them. She also mentioned that the students actually can become environment-conscious and responsible by collecting water samples of the lakes in the vicinity of their school/house and analyse the quality of the water sample to understand the condition of the lake better. She advised the students to keep track of neighbourhood lakes, and think of ways to conserve them.

Discussion on “How to talk on radio – The style and points to remember” by Sreeja Mohandas, RJ, FM Rainbow, Bangalore

Ms Sreeja Mohandas, Radio Jockey of FM Rainbow 104, handled the session on radio talking skills. This session was particularly important because the students had to come up with a radio workshop of their own on the last day of the workshop. Ms Mohandas spoke about the skills on “how to talk on a radio”. The students noted the main points to remember and consider while talking on radio. The summary of the discussion is as follows:

1. It is a challenge for any person to keep the attention of his/her listeners in the radio because it is the medium which is purely based on audio communication.
2. She mainly spoke to students about voice modulation, and the impact and importance of pitch, volume and tempo on speech.
3. The show must always start with a punching introduction, using short and light sentences.

4. It is important to talk in a language he/she is comfortable in, and also use the language of the target audience (to whom it is broadcasted). A good speaker must pursue all of the following:
 - ✚ The person talking on radio must have a well-written script that must be entertaining, and at the same time informative.
 - ✚ S/he must be able to manage timing in between the talk, and conversation is essential.
 - ✚ S/he must articulate his voice, and clarity is essential.
 - ✚ S/he must be humorous, because the listeners will always make it a point to listen, if you make them laugh. It is an added advantage.
 - ✚ S/he must have a good pronunciation, good timing, and presence of mind; most importantly he must be smiling.
 - ✚ For all these he must have a lot of practice.

At the end of the session, Ms Mohandas called upon three students, and asked them to enact as radio jockey, each one enacting three different moods: a) Interacting in happy mood; b) Interacting in an angry mood; and c) Interacting in a serious mood.

Envirotisement: Preparation and Presentation

After the session, the students were asked to come up with their radio script for the next day's radio show. The students prepared their envirotisement of a product/s that is eco-friendly in nature. The students were asked to name their product, write the advantages of the product, (so that the customers can buy their products), fix a price for their product and also give a small discount on it to make it attractive and sellable. They came up with advertisements of various products related to their respective topics.

The topic chosen by the first group was air pollution. Because the refrigerators are generators of CFCs, and also because of the increase in nitrogen level in the atmosphere, the students came up with an idea of a Nitrogen Refrigerator. They fixed the price as Rs.10,000/- with a discount of 25 per cent. The advantage is that it is a less polluting device.

The topic selected by the second group was climate change. As trees are cut down for manufacturing papers, students came up with an eco-friendly recycled paper called "Maria Delight" priced Rs.10/-, that comes with a free recyclable pen. The idea behind this concept was that persistence of tree population in the environment is very important, because trees help to keep a watch on the changing climate.

The topic chosen by the third group was water pollution. Students came up with the advertisement of an edible water bottle, saying "take a bite and have a sip" saying that the price of the bottle is just Rs.20/- and it does not cause litter because it is edible and at the same time can store water, and the quality of the water is also excellent. They brought about a comparison between the other water bottles available in the market and argued that the water in their bottle is of premium quality.

The other two groups made presentations on different topics like deforestation and recycling.

Day 3: February 26, 2010

The last day of the workshop began with a short presentation by students of SSVS People's Trust School (Bangalore). The students gave a brief presentation of the environmental protection activities they carry out at their school level. According to them, their school has four separate bins for collecting wastes like: a) paper, b) left out food wastes, c) plastic, and d) trash metals wastes (like batteries). The paper and plastic wastes collected are sent for recycling. Students also follow and practice the 3 R's: Reduce, Reuse, and Recycle. Students have made decorative items using the worn out bulbs.

Thereafter, a short movie on climate change was screened for the participants.

The participants discussed about their respective script for their 10 minute radio workshop. In the last segment of the workshop, all the five participating groups presented a 10-minute Radio Show based on their respective topics: air pollution, deforestation, recycling, climate change, and water pollution. The audio recordings of the five radio scripts was made, and a CD have been prepared with the presentation of the five radio scripts, that will be shared with all the participating schools.

Sharing of experiences with other teams, Workshop feedback, Action Plan to follow up, 'I Commit' Session and Concluding Activities

In this final wrap-up session, each participant shared his/her experience of the three-day workshop. All participants (students and teachers) gave their comments in a feedback form provided to them. They also made signatures on a white cloth. In the 'I Commit' session, they took their own individual pledge to save planet earth.

Conclusion

This workshop was unique as the students were able to come up with excellent 10-minute radio show in a span of three days (an exercise that may take almost a few months' time). The students learnt that radio is a very powerful communication medium. They also learnt that it is important for the person talking on radio to have a strong view about the environmental concepts while trying to convey a message to the audience.

Since voice is very crucial for radio, the students learnt that using one's voice effectively is one of the best ways to make the listeners aware of issues related to the environment. Students were also enlightened about the various forms of segments and links used in a radio to make the show entertaining and informative. The workshop gave them an opportunity to get along with students of different schools and of different states, and also learned to work as a team. According to the participants, the workshop was a truly rewarding experience, and they would look forward to similar programmes in the future.

ANNEXURE I

PROGRAMME SCHEDULE OF ENVIRONMENTAL RADIO WORKSHOP

February 23-25, 2010, Bangalore

23rd February

- 9.30 AM – Ice Breaker Session
- 9.50 AM – Workshop Objectives & Teams
- 10.15 AM – Session 1 – Importance of writing and speaking out environmental issues, News selection and Reporting
- 10.45 AM – Session 2 – Introduction to ‘Making a radio show’
- 11.15 AM – Games and Activities for team-building and radio
- 12.30 PM to 1.15 PM – Session 3 - Radio Scripting and Introduction to ‘Envirotisement’

24th February

- 9.00 AM – Climate Speed Dating (To discuss previous day’s learnings)
- 9.30 AM – Envirotisement Preparation and Presentation
- 10.30 AM – Interaction with Hita, Varshitha and Supreeth, British Council International Climate Champions from Bangalore
- 11.30 AM to 12.30 PM – Discussion on “How to talk on radio – The style and points to remember” by Sreeja Mohandas, RJ, FM Rainbow, Bangalore
- 12.30 AM to 1.30 PM – Recap on ‘Scripting for radio’ and Time for scripting of the radio programme

25th February

- 9.00 AM – Preparation of script
- 10.00 AM – Recap and Quick Rehearsals
- 10.30 AM – Presentation of radio programmes (Each team gets 10 mins each) and Feedback
- 11.15 AM – Screening of Movie on Climate Change
- 11.45 AM to 1.00 PM – Sharing of experiences with other teams, Workshop feedback, Action Plan to follow up, ‘I Commit’ Session and Concluding Activities

ANNEXURE II

MY GREEN MANTRA

The following are some of the small yet significant actions each one of us can take as an individual to contribute towards making our Earth greener.

- Not throwing litter in places other than the waste-bins
- Taking our own cloth bag when we go for shopping
- Print only if its necessary
- Print on both sides of the paper or Use the blank side for writing
- Using public transport to school/college/work instead of our cars
- Avoiding disposable cups and carrying our own cup
- Not wasting food – Lot of energy goes into preparing it
- Shutting down our TV and computer from the power point when not in use
- Researching information about climate change and reading the newspapers for latest studies and facts.
- Walk wherever possible, and find stores near your home to get the things you need.
- Packing lunches in reusable lunch bags and washable containers instead of plastic wrap and bags
- Cycling is fun, get used to it
- Turn off lights and fans when you leave a room because most of our electricity comes from coal which is a non-renewable source of energy
- Use air-conditioners only if its absolutely necessary
- Write to local newspapers and supplements on environmental problems in your area

So it's not just about grand, sweeping gestures, but also about little everyday things. Taking the bus or the metro instead of the car or using a bucket of water to bathe rather than turning on the shower full throttle. In the giant task of taking care of Planet Earth, these baby steps are the best way to begin and lead as an example.