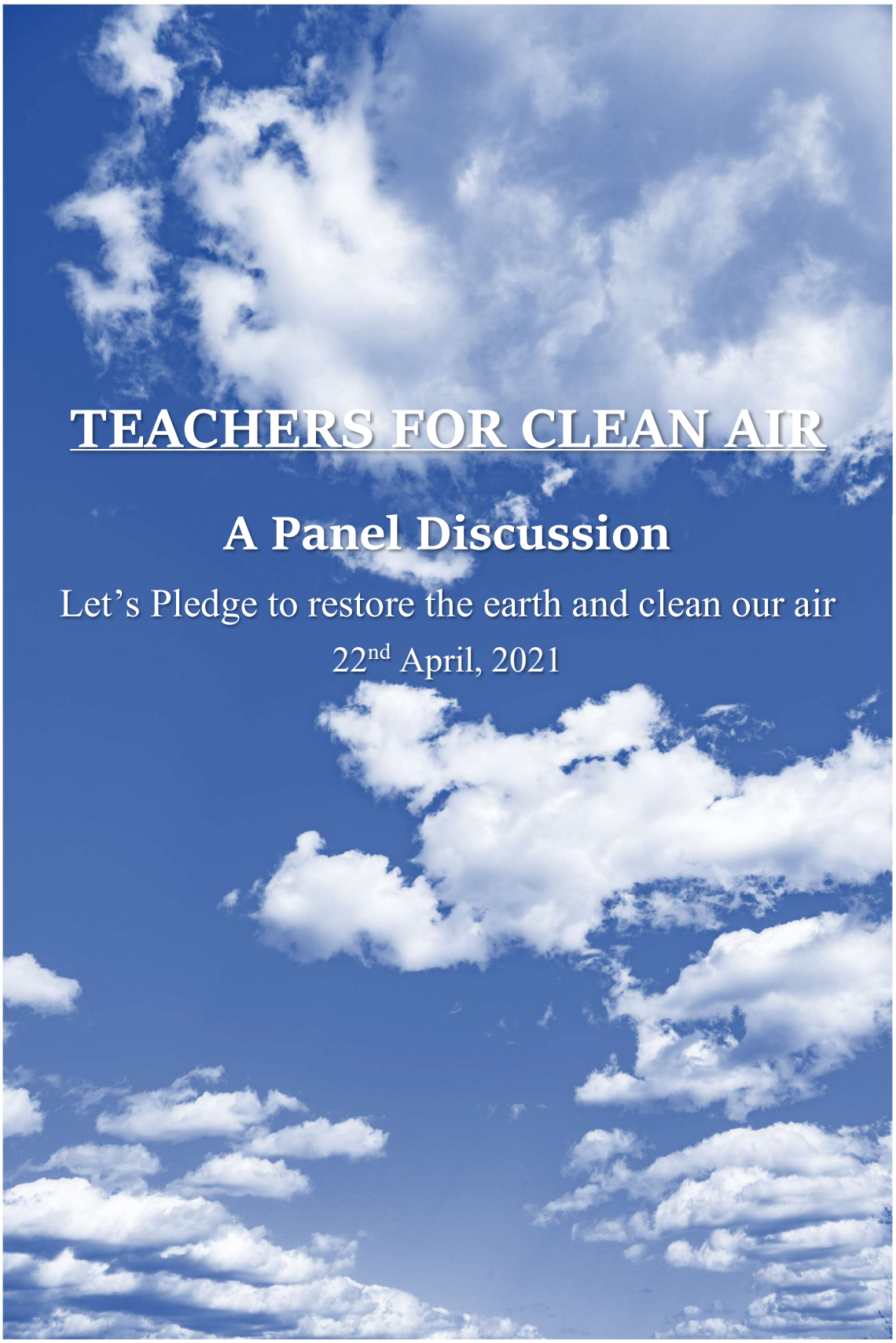

TEACHERS FOR CLEAN AIR
A Panel Discussion
Let's Pledge to restore the earth and clean our air
22nd April, 2021

© 2021 Clean Air Asia

All Rights Reserved

The publication may be reproduced in whole or in part in any form for educational or non- profit purposes without special permission from the copyright holder, provided acknowledgment of the source is made. Clean Air Asia would appreciate receiving a copy of any publication that uses this document as a source. No use of this document as a source may be made for resale or for any other commercial purpose whatsoever, without prior permission in writing from Clean Air Asia.

DISCLAIMER

The views expressed in this publication are of Clean Air Asia staff, consultants, and management, and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Board of Trustees of Clean Air Asia. Clean Air Asia does not guarantee the accuracy of the data included in this publication and does not accept the responsibility for the consequences of its use.

CITATION

This publication may be cited as: Clean Air Asia India Office 2021, Teachers for Clean Air- A Panel Discussion- Let's Pledge to restore the earth and clean our air, 22nd April, 2021.

CREDITS

Project Direction: Prarthana Borah

Project Coordination: Prerna Sharma

Team: Prerna Sharma, Shilpa Biswas

Report writing: Shilpa Biswas

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

This virtual event was held on the occasion of World Earth Day on 22nd April, 2021 as a part of Clean Air Asia's Youth Clean Air Network (YCAN) for Indian cities work towards betterment of air quality focusing on the role of teachers and youth in combating air pollution.

We would also like to extend our thanks to our Panelists; Mrs. Ira Vishwakarma, Vice Principal, Vidya Bharati School, Rohini, Sec-15, Delhi; Dr. Jabrinder Singh, Asst. Professor, DIT University, Dehradun; Dr. Shvetambri, Asst. Professor, Bhaskaracharya College of Applied Sciences, University of Delhi and Mr. Sachin Verma a TGT Physics Teacher N.K.Bagrodia Public School, Dwarka. for their support on World Earth Day.

A special thanks to our youth Panellists and our YCAN Members Vivek Singh and Rishta Jedi for being a part of the event.

Last but not the least, a big thanks to all participants for joining in the event.

ABOUT CLEAN AIR ASIA

Clean Air Asia was established in 2001 by the Asian Development Bank, the World Bank, and USAID. Today, we are registered as an international non-governmental organization that leads the regional mission for better air quality and healthier, more liveable cities in Asia. We aim to reduce air pollution and greenhouse gas emissions in 1000+ cities in Asia through policies and programs that cover air quality, transport, industrial emissions, and energy use. We work with ministries (energy, urban development, environment, health, and transport), cities in Asia, the private sector and development agencies to provide leadership and technical knowledge for Air Quality Management. Clean Air Asia is headquartered in Manila and has offices in Beijing and New Delhi.

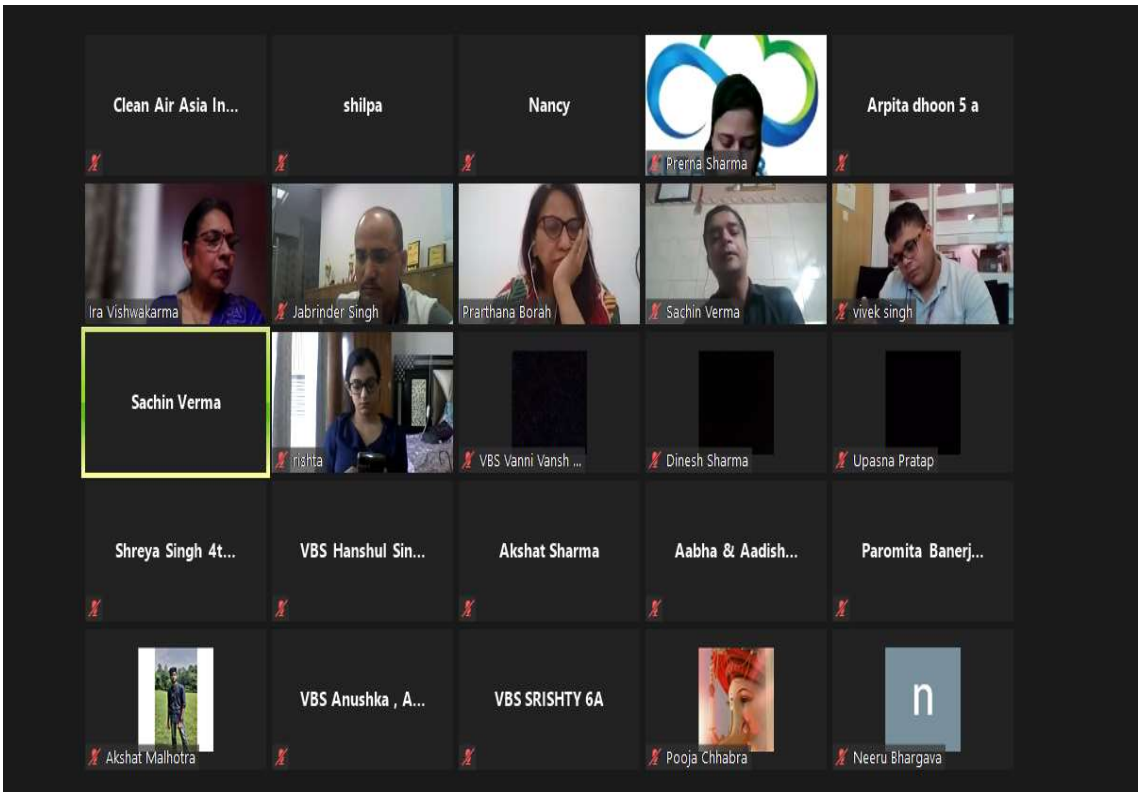
Clean Air Asia (CAA)'s work in India involves engaging with Indian cities for better air quality management (AQM). This aligns with the overall CAA work program on broad air quality (AQ) interventions. Our expertise lies in providing scientific inputs to city governments for better air quality management, sustainable transport, low emissions, urban development, and education/communication for clean air in India. The focus of our work in India is in cities with high impact potential, as well as potential for leveraging wider change.

We are supporting Indian cities in improving air quality management through capacity building and direct support to preparing air action plans. We have also launched the Clean Air Knowledge Network (cities4cleanair.com), a forum that connects AQ experts and practitioners from across India and city officials with an objective to promote knowledge sharing across cities on AQ issues and share best practices. A major component of our India Program is education for better air quality. Our Youth Clean Air Network (YCAN) is volunteer program in which youth can passionately work together for better air quality.

In past, the Indian team has worked on green freight and sustainable mobility projects, conducting walkability studies in Indian cities, developing the Walkability App, the National Bus Fuel Efficiency Framework, the Green Trucks Toolkits for India, and an online freight brokerage platform.

EVENT SUMMARY

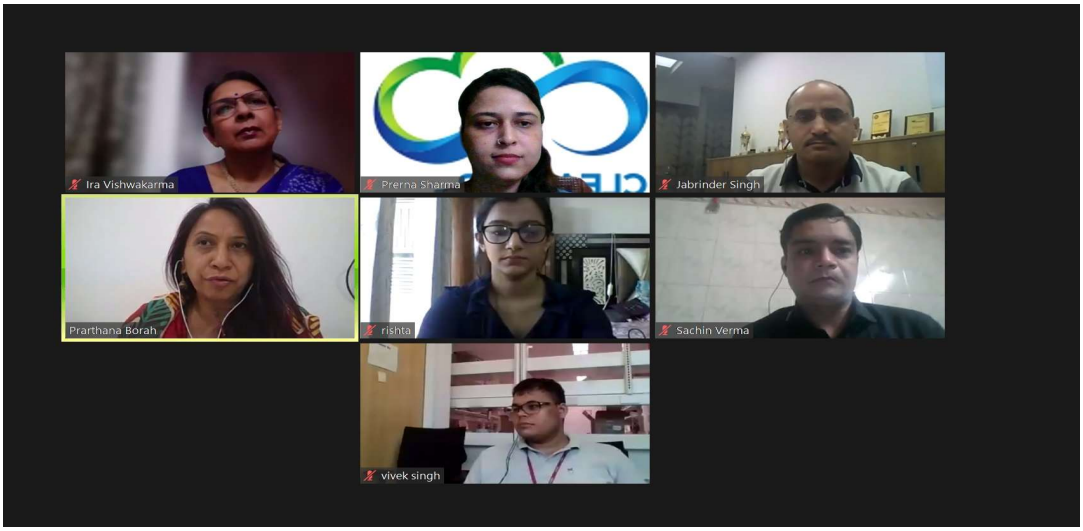
On World Earth Day i.e. 22nd June, 2021 Clean Air Asia India organised an online Panel Discussion- Teachers for Clean Air. This virtual panel consisted of Teachers and Professors from different schools and colleges from the country along with some youth panellist from our YCAN Network who wished to come forward and take charge. The event was attended by a huge audience of school students, primarily comprising of the senior level i.e. from class 6th onwards.



This event was organised with the objective to create awareness among the youth regarding environment problems particularly air pollution as the main focus and its impact through interaction with teachers. It was aimed to bring out the role of Youth in becoming a more conscious community and spreading awareness about air pollution amongst the masses and teachers in educating the youth about the Air Pollution problem in India. Through this event, we also looked at Innovative, simple and practical solutions (technological and otherwise) and creative and innovative ideas in battling air pollution.

The theme for **Earth Day 2021** was **"Restore Our Earth"** which focuses on natural processes, emerging green technologies, and innovative thinking that can restore the world's ecosystems. This year Clean Air Asia focuses on Environmental Literacy in accordance to its theme i.e. Clean Air for Cities/ betterment of Air Quality. It focuses on the role of teachers and youth in combating Air Pollution.

The session began by a welcome address by **Ms. Prerna Sharma, Education & Outreach Coordinator, Clean Air Asia India.** Ms. Sharma welcomed all the students and panellists in to the event.



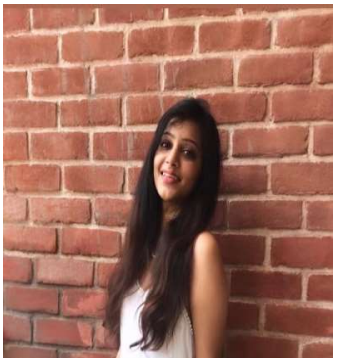
The session was moderated by **Ms. Prarthana Borah, India Director, Clean Air Asia.** She began by addressing the importance and highlighting the need for these kind of discussions in current situation in order to restore the earth and once again welcomed all the panellist to start the discussion.

The discussion began with our first panellist **Mrs. Ira Vishwakarma, Vice Principal, Vidya Bharati School, Rohini** sharing her experience of working in a school and being a Vice Principal and also, as an Eco club teacher how it has provided her with ample chances in bringing environment related efforts, implement government policies on environment at a school level. Mrs. Ira shared a number of examples of the eco-friendly practices adopted by their school in which the students are involved. For example, waste segregating, recycling, minimizing waste, planting air purifying plants etc. She highlighted the problem of vehicular pollution in Delhi and spoke about how the children in their school as well as their parents are encouraged to take part in awareness drives related to the issue of air pollution.

The next speaker, **Mr. Sachin Verma, TGT Physics Teacher, N.K.Bagrodia Public School, Dwarka** who also handled the Atal Innovation Lab in his school talked about the initiatives like waste segregation, green area in school, the policy of 3R, the importance of alternative fuels and the choice one can make while deciding on which fuels to use.

Our **YCAN** Member **Vivek Singh** shared great insights from his own experience at his work. He highlighted the importance of small and sustainable practices at basic school level and a number of simple practices that school children can follow. He talked about simple practices like waste management at school level, use of steel bottles in school, saving energy at home as effective steps in restoring the earth and doing our bit as youth. According to Vivek, discussions like these are an important step in addressing the issue of air pollution, but effective implementation is the key towards solving it.

Dr. Jabrinder Singh from DIT University continued the discussion, mentioning that change can begin at the grass-root level itself if institutes and university engage with the local communities in the respective areas. He emphasized that Regeneration of resources is the need of the hour at the local level. He discussed a case study of Rispana River in Dehradun. This perennial river has been degraded by the urbanisation process, encroachment and human activities leading it to initially becoming a seasonal river and further turning into a waste water body. He explained ways in which this river can be rejuvenated to its original form, by collaborating with the local communities and the steps that the government has planned for reviving the Rispana River. He talked about the problems that arise due to Air pollution and what planting trees can do to help with this problem. He urged all the students to get involved and initiate campaigns towards restoring the earth in their school, colleges, university and organisations.

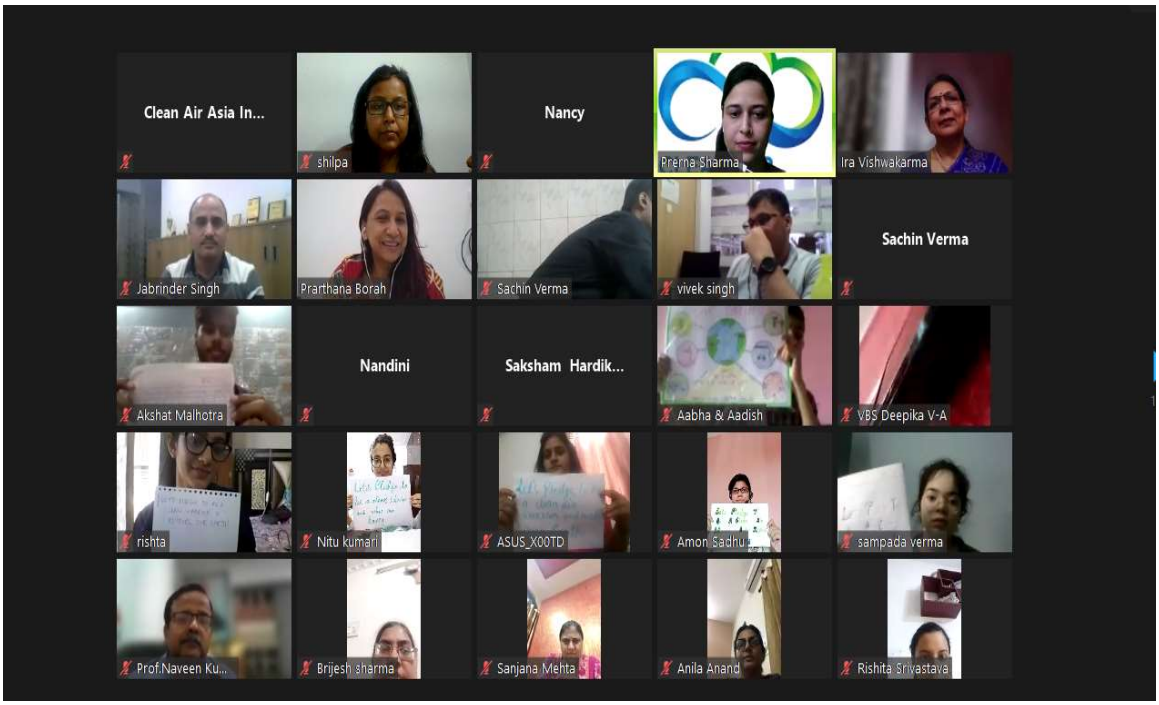


YCAN Member **Rishta Jedi** expressed her interest in environment related issues explained the connection between the environment and sociology. She talked about how Indian youth is an asset and the change that youth engagement can bring. She explained the role of primary socialization in an individual's life and how it shapes the decisions one takes in his/her future course of life. She believes that if one is sensitised towards the environment and environment issues early in life, then it can lead to better decision making with respect to the environment in the future. She emphasized that more opportunities to connect with the surrounding environment should be provided to the students and school trips to sustainable places should be a part of the curriculum. Planning sustainable events in colleges and institutes should be encouraged by the authorities so that students have an increased awareness about sustainable practices and how they can adapt them to their daily lives, along with understanding the correct meaning of terms like carbon footprint and ecological footprint.

Dr. Shvetambri from **Delhi University** explained why it is essential to maintain the ecosystem around us with respect to the current pandemic situation. She advocated that Environment Audits should be made mandatory in all educational institutions. She stated that we should minimise our personal needs to reduce pressure on the environment and fulfil our moral duties towards the environment.

Lastly, the participants were asked to write the following pledge on a piece of paper – "**Let's pledge to be a clean air warrior and restore our earth",** and take this pledge by facing the camera and holding the paper in front of them.

The event concluded with a vote of thanks by Ms. Prerna Sharma. She reiterated the core messages shared by the panellists and expressed gratitude on behalf of Clean Air Asia India to all the panellist for an interactive discussions and insightful knowledge shared by them by being a part of the event.



WAY FORWARD

The event “Teachers for Clean Air”, held on the occasion of World Earth Day on 22nd April, 2021 was an effort by Clean Air Asia India to engage more youth and teachers in its Youth Clean Air Network' (YCAN) for Indian cities to work towards betterment of air quality. Through these events, we wish to provide a platform to the youth to come forward and take charge.

This event showcased an increased participation of teachers as mentors coming forward to guide students. The event also witnessed engagement with school students in large numbers, thereby giving a positive indication towards increased youth engagement as we move forward to achieve clean air. Another important aspect of these virtual events and discussions is to assess the innovative ideas and suggestions put forward by students and try and implement them wherever possible through our work.

CLEAN AIR ASIA INDIA
Basement C-3
Green Park Extension
New Delhi 110016 India
Email: india@cleanairasia.org
Tel: +91 11 4039 5508

www.cleanairasia.org I www.youthforcleanair.com
www.cleanairhealthychildren.com