

YouthXchange

UNEP and UNESCO started the YouthXchange (YXC) Initiative in 2001 to promote sustainable lifestyles among young people through education, dialogue, awareness raising and capacity-building.

YXC works with young people aged 15-24 as well as educators, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), trainers and youth leaders around the world.

YXC reaches young people through a network of national partners in 45 countries.

At the national and local level, YXC training and capacity-building activities is secured through a diverse network of partners, with the support of a printed training kit (translated into 25 languages) and a website.

The YXC training kit provides information, ideas, tips and good practices on topics such as sustainable consumption, lifestyles, mobility, waste reduction, energy and resource efficiency, smart and responsible shopping and so forth.

Climate change and lifestyles

is the first in a series of guidebooks supporting the UNESCO/UNEP YouthXchange (YXC) Initiative. The series is being produced for young people and people working with young people, educators, teachers, trainers and youth leaders in both developed and developing countries.

Aims

- Explore the links between lifestyles and climate change;
- Help young people consider the actions they might take towards more sustainable lifestyles;
- Support courses and projects that promote greater understanding of climate change and youth lifestyles among youth.

The guidebook

- Considers the causes and effects of climate change and its human impacts and responses, while connecting them to lifestyle choices and the technical structures that support a society, such as roads, power grids and telecoms;
- Provides scientific, political, economic, social, ethical and cultural perspectives on climate change;
- Explains complex issues in accessible language supported by facts, graphics, images, case studies and resource links;
- Develops the critical skills young people need to make personal choices to address the challenges of climate change.



Listening Eye Images



Flickr/Matthew McDermott



Flickr/Christiana Care

About the guidebook

The power of youth

Young people have immense power to determine the future of our planet.

They are major consumers of clothes, food, gadgets, travel and entertainment. Advertising and peer pressure encourage young people into consumption patterns that are unsustainable and carried, often subconsciously, into adult life. This trend is driven by globalisation with increased media, travel, communications and trade influencing ever greater numbers of young people.

There is another side to this story however. Young people can be catalysts for change, using their power as consumers and voters to demand alternative approaches; to question entrenched habits; to embrace the possibilities of new technologies; and to find solidarity in more just and sustainable lifestyles. From across the world, there are examples of young people leading for change and finding solutions to the challenges laid before them.

As educators, trainers, and leaders, this guidebook will help engage young people in these difficult and complex discussions and support them in translating the power of youth from potential to a force for positive change.

Young people encounter climate change headlines on a regular basis. But how often do they engage with the scientific, economic, social and cultural dimensions behind these headlines? Do they connect these headlines to their everyday lifestyle choices? The YouthXchange guidebook on climate change and lifestyles is designed to do just that. It will empower young people to critically engage with the complexity and uncertainties of climate change debates, to form their own opinions, and to determine their own lifestyle responses.

With over half the world's population under 20 years of age (most of them living in developing countries), engaging young people in these issues will be decisive in shaping our collective future. It is also a considerable challenge for which young people will need support and guidance from educators, trainers, and their own peer leaders.

This YouthXchange guidebook on climate change and lifestyles provides well-researched insights into the current debates concerning climate change and the lifestyle choices facing young people. It has been written to provide a mix of essential background information, perspectives on the key debates, appropriate examples from around the world, and suggested starting points for engagement and action with young people.

The guidebook is structured around themes with six inter-related principles necessary for exploring climate change and youth lifestyles:

Engaging complexity

Dealing with uncertainty

Developing critical skills

Learning through action

Participation and democracy

Leadership and change



“There is no doubt that young people today are more aware of environmental problems than my generation ever was. As this new generation comes of age, it faces the enormous challenge of solving global warming. ... in order to fix this crisis, everyone needs to be involved. I have faith that young people have both the ability and the enthusiasm to put a stop to global warming.”

Al Gore, Former U.S. Vice-President and Nobel Peace Prize winner

Guidebook themes

The guidebook is structured around 12 themed sections supported by an introduction to the challenges for young people and a resources section.

The 12 sections are:

Learning as change

How can we create learning opportunities that explore the skills and values young people need to engage with discussions about climate change and personal choice?

Changing climates

This covers the necessary scientific background, key causes and effects, and the relationships to people and societies. What are the certainties, risks and responsibilities?

Lifestyle choices

We make lifestyle choices whenever we plug in a computer, climb into a car, buy food or take a shower. How conscious are we of how these choices connect to climate change?

Good life

Responding to climate change is sometimes associated with giving up the things we enjoy. How might we shift towards a more sustainable low carbon lifestyle, but still enjoy a good life?

Food and drink

How does what we eat and drink relate to climate change, and what choices can we make to reduce our impact on the planet and its resources?

Energy control

Our world is dependent on energy, but do we have to use so much of it, and are there energy choices we can make to reduce our contributions to climate change?

Travel and transport

Mobility is an essential part of modern life and brings many benefits, but it often comes at a cost to the climate. What are our options for making local and international travel more sustainable?

Leisure and entertainment

We all want to enjoy life, but are there ways we can do so that also reduce our impact on the planet and its resources?

Shopping for stuff

Shopping has become a way of life for many young people. We all need some things, but is buying them always the best way? What alternatives might there be?

Money and jobs

Choices about the jobs we do and the way we spend or invest our earnings can have a big impact on climate change. How can our choices help to build low-carbon economies?

Connecting with others

Young people communicate all the time, by text, email or social networking. What is the impact of connecting with others and how can we use these connections as a force for change?

Taking action

The challenges of climate change may seem daunting, but we can all make lifestyle choices that are about taking action and beginning a journey towards low-carbon living.



UNEP - United Nations Environment Programme

The United Nations Environment Programme was created in 1972 as the voice for the environment within the UN system. Its mission is to provide leadership and encourage partnership in caring for the environment by inspiring, informing, and enabling nations and peoples to improve their quality of life without compromising that of future generations.



UNESCO - United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) was founded on November 16, 1945. This specialized United Nations agency's mission is to contribute to the building of peace, the eradication of poverty, sustainable development and intercultural dialogue through education, the sciences, culture, communication and information.

United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (DESD)

In December 2002, the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) adopted resolution 57/254 to put in place a United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (DESD), spanning from 2005 to 2014, and designated UNESCO to lead the Decade. The United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development seeks to integrate the principles, values, and practices of sustainable development into all aspects of education and learning, in order to address the social, economic, cultural and environmental problems we face in the 21st century. <http://www.unesco.org/education/desd>

"I am convinced that climate change, and what we do about it, will define us, our era, and ultimately the global legacy we leave for future generations. We hold the future in our hands. Together, we must ensure that our grand children will not have to ask why we failed to do the right thing, and let them suffer the consequences."

Ban Ki-Moon

Secretary-General of the United Nations



The **Climate change and lifestyles** guidebook will be available from February 2011. It will be available in print from the contacts below or to download from www.youthxchange.net

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UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development

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