

What is the UNEP/UNESCO YouthXchange Initiative?

In 2001, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) created the YouthXchange Initiative to promote sustainable lifestyles among youth (aged 15-24) through education, dialogue, awareness-raising and capacity-building. YouthXchange works with young people, governments, educators, non-governmental organizations, trainers, and youth leaders in more than 50 countries around the world. At the national and local levels, YouthXchange capacity-building activities are secured through a diverse network of partners, and supported by printed YouthXchange publications, such as the flagship *YouthXchange Training Kit on Responsible Consumption* (translated into more than 20 languages) publication and a bilingual YouthXchange website. In 2011, UNEP and UNESCO started to develop thematic YouthXchange guidebooks, which enable young people to better understand how global issues are connected to their everyday lifestyle choices, as well as regional YouthXchange guidebooks, which are adapted to the realities of the lifestyles of specific regions, with a particular focus on developing and emerging regions.

YouthXchange publications are train-the-trainer tools that provide direction on how to explain sustainable lifestyles to a young audience. The publications explain complex issues in accessible language, supported by practical tips, suggested activities, and relevant case studies showcasing sustainable lifestyles in action.



Why youth matter?

Today's generation of young people is the largest in history. The world's youth have a significant role to play if we are to bring about the widespread behavioural change needed to shift towards more sustainable lifestyles and consumption habits. Young people must understand that behind over-consumption lies increased exploitation of resources, rising poverty, widening inequalities, all of which will worsen with environmental challenges like climate change. Young people today constitute an important group within our consumer societies and the habits they develop now will play a decisive role in future consumption patterns. Young people deserve special attention in efforts to change wasteful consumption patterns into ones that are more attuned to sustainable development.

The YouthXchange Initiative supports youth to become advocates and agents of change for sustainable lifestyles in their respective communities around the world. The YouthXchange Initiative, which supports a vision of education for sustainable development strongly cemented in the day-to-day choices made to satisfy basic needs, is at the heart of the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development.

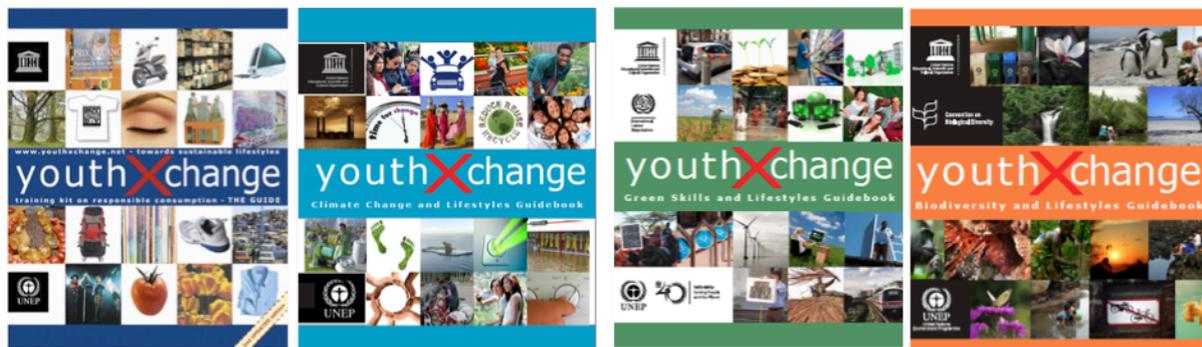
"Let us acknowledge and celebrate what youth can do to build a safer, more just world. Let us strengthen our efforts to include young people in policies, programmes and decision-making processes that benefit their futures and ours."

Ban Ki-moon, Secretary-General of the United Nations

43%
of the world's
population are people
under the age of 25

youthXchange

YouthXchange publications help youth and people who work with youth (teachers, trainers, NGOs, youth groups) from developed and developing countries to raise awareness about sustainable consumption and lifestyles and empower youth to put theory into practice. The fundamental message of YouthXchange publications and capacity-building activities is that it is possible to translate our aspirations for a better, sustainable world into everyday actions. The YouthXchange Initiative needs national/local and culturally relevant implementation! UNEP and UNESCO are inviting governments, organizations, businesses and youth groups to join the YouthXchange Initiative, adapt and translate YouthXchange publications to their specific contexts and languages and conduct capacity-building activities on sustainable lifestyles.



The **YouthXchange Training Kit on Responsible Consumption** provides statistics, case studies, games, examples of real companies going more sustainable, and guidance on how to explain sustainable lifestyles to a young audience. The topics are tackled under youth-oriented headings: clothing, leisure, travels, underground culture, experiences of other young people etc. This training kit has been translated into more than 20 languages worldwide.

In 2015, the **YouthXchange Training Kit on Responsible Consumption for Africa** will be published – the first ever YouthXchange regional adaptation!

Thematic YouthXchange Publications connect the dots between global issues to daily lifestyles.

- **YouthXchange Climate Change and Lifestyles (2011)** explores the links between climate change and lifestyles by providing the scientific, political, economic, social and cultural perspectives of climate change.
- **YouthXchange Green Skills and Lifestyles (2014)** helps young people familiarize themselves with the green economy and the skills needed for a green economy and how to make their jobs greener.
- **YouthXchange Biodiversity and Lifestyles (2014)** addresses the interrelatedness of our lifestyle choices and biodiversity, which underpins the health of our planet and has a direct impact on our lives.

Join the UNEP/UNESCO YouthXchange Initiative

The success of the UNEP/UNESCO YouthXchange Initiative results from an impressive collaborative effort involving an international network of more than 50 partner organizations that conduct YouthXchange training and leadership workshops, adapt and translate YouthXchange publications and implement communication campaigns on sustainable lifestyles.

For more information and to join the YouthXchange Initiative, please contact UNEP:

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The UNEP/UNESCO YouthXchange Initiative is a contribution to

- The Global Action Programme on Education for Sustainable Development (Follow-up to the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development after 2014)
- The 10-Year Framework of Programmes on Sustainable Consumption and Production

