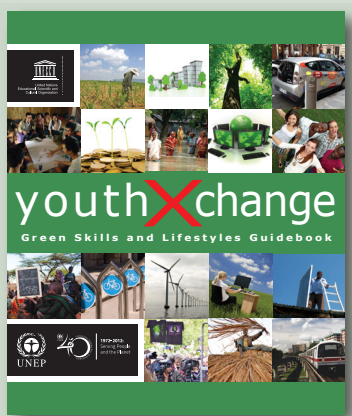


# YouthXchange Guidebook Series

## Green Skills and Lifestyles

### UNEP/UNESCO YouthXchange Green Skills and Lifestyles Guidebook

The YouthXchange *Green Skills and Lifestyles Guidebook* is the second in a series of thematic guidebooks supporting the UNEP/UNESCO YouthXchange (YXC) Initiative. The Guidebook is designed to help young people familiarize themselves with the green economy, the skills needed for a green economy (such as how to engage in social innovation and green entrepreneurship), and how to make their jobs greener (which also involves adopting more sustainable ways of living). It aims to better prepare young people for green jobs by envisioning future jobs and the required skills, rethinking the role of different stakeholders and looking at the life skills for the future of sustainable societies.



### Towards a Green Economy

Young people are exposed to messages promoting increased consumption, amidst a stalling world economy, where jobs are difficult to find. It is estimated that we are using the resources of 1.5 planets to maintain our current lifestyles. If we continue this way, with current population and consumption trends, by the 2030s we will need the equivalent of two Earths to support us. It is now up to us to take a different path - one that will include a transition to a green economy and deliver solutions to the global challenges of sustainable development and poverty. A green economy improves human well-being and social equity, while significantly reducing environmental risks and ecological scarcities; it is also low carbon, resource efficient and socially inclusive. This transition involves all of us, governments, industries, communities and young people; we all have a part to play in making this possible through our daily lives, our skills and jobs and so forth.

*“Over the past two years, the Green Economy has gone from theory into practice... The inherent logic offers, perhaps for the first time, a sustainable growth paradigm that is as much a developing country agenda as it is a developed economy one.”*

**Achim Steiner**  
UN Under-Secretary-General and Executive Director of UNEP



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### Young People and the Green Economy

Today’s generation of young people is the largest in history. Half of the world’s population is under the age of 25, most living in developing countries; it is this generation that will drive the green economy. Considering that approximately 33,000 young people are expected to enter the job market daily between now and 2050, how this generation is integrated into the active work force will be a determining factor in the success of this transition to a green economy. Although today’s young people are the most educated generation ever, they face difficulties entering and remaining in the labour market. Young people are three times more likely to be unemployed than adults, with nearly 75 million unemployed young people around the world. Opportunities for young people to find a job are bound to the economic and employment situation in the respective countries, and are dependent on the education and skills young people possess. Adequate education and training are crucial for young people to participate actively in the labour market, by increasing their productivity and employability.



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*“Green economies must include everyone. No society, no man or woman can be left behind. We must all protect the planet for the future we want.”*

**Irina Bokova**  
Director-General of UNESCO

# About the Guidebook

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## What is a Green Economy?

It is one that results in improved human well-being and social equity, while significantly reducing environmental risks and ecological scarcities. A green economy is an integral part of a society with zero carbon emissions and one where our ecological footprint is smaller. It should maintain, enhance, and rebuild natural capital as a critical asset and source of public benefits. The UNEP Green Economy Report includes ideas for developing and encouraging a more sustainable economy that is inclusive, building on existing knowledge, traditional knowledge and new ideas and technologies, using ten sectors that frame a green economy. This Guidebook provides case studies illustrating the implementation in a local context. Considering natural capital such as agriculture, fisheries and forests, this section explores how green economy concepts relate to sustainable lifestyles and communities. It illustrates how young people are contributing through practical ways to create a green economy and sustainable society.

*“Green Economy is the code of survival for a sustainable future. Economy is a term that gains immediate attention from all sections of the society as it has a direct effect on income and expenditure of an individual. What people fail to understand is ‘Green’ in the economy is a category and not a conflict.”*

**Shruti Neelakantan**

UNEP Tunza Youth Advisory Council  
member for Asia-Pacific

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## Green Economy: making it happen

A green economy is about the transition to a low carbon economy that uses new technological and social systems of production and consumption to conserve energy and reduce greenhouse gas emissions. This requires policymakers to use “paths” that include incentives for sustainable consumption and production, greening business and market infrastructures, using tax and other financial incentives, encourage investment in new technologies and develop entrepreneurship and education or training and so forth. This section of the Guidebook examines how countries are moving towards a green economy, e.g. through engaging with UNEP’s Green Economy Initiative’s advisory services to develop green economy roadmaps, aligned with national sustainable development strategies and policies. The role of companies investing in corporate social responsibility is also highlighted through practical examples.

*“Investments in renewable energy have grown considerably with major emerging economies taking the lead. For 2010, new investment in renewable energy is estimated to have reached a record high of US\$ 211 billion, up from US\$ 160 billion in 2009. The growth is increasingly taking place in non-OECD countries, especially the large emerging economies of Brazil, China and India.”*

Towards a Green Economy: Pathways to Sustainable Development and Poverty Eradication (UNEP, 2011)

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## Green Jobs

Green jobs are “work in agricultural, manufacturing, research and development, administrative, and service activities that contribute substantially to preserving or restoring environmental quality.” According to a new Green Jobs Initiative report, a transformation to a greener economy could generate 15 to 60 million additional jobs globally over the next two decades and lift tens of millions of workers out of poverty. The Guidebook introduces the changes envisaged to jobs, such as: (i) creation of new jobs in emerging markets around technologies and services to reduce greenhouse gas emissions; (ii) elimination of some jobs without direct replacement; (iii) transformation of existing jobs (e.g. plumbers, electricians). At least half of the global workforce – the equivalent of 1.5 billion people – will be affected by the transition to a greener economy. The Guidebook examines where the opportunities for young people are in key sectors expected to be mostly affected: agriculture, forestry, fishing, energy, manufacturing, recycling, building and transport.

## Green Entrepreneurship and Social Innovation

A green entrepreneur is someone who considers the limits of resources, building on traditional or indigenous knowledge, ensuring that people get fair and decent work. Green entrepreneurship requires social innovation – new ideas that resolve existing social, cultural, economic and environmental challenges. This section asks: what role can young entrepreneurs play in promoting a green economy? It explores some of the challenges young entrepreneurs face such as not being recognised as entrepreneurs with real capacity to take on

and improve production and economic growth, and struggling with constraints caused by a lack of assets such as capital, land, experience and limited guidance in developing business projects. Access to funding can be difficult, so alternatives such as a Time Bank are examined. The key role played by individuals in encouraging change are explored through case studies such as a franchise system in Indonesia run by a young woman creating income out of rubbish.

*“Entrepreneurship training can also be used to help small firms to identify green business options and turn environmental challenges into new business opportunities.”*

Working towards sustainable development  
- Opportunities for decent work and social inclusion in a green economy (ILO, 2012)

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## Skills for a Green Economy

What are the skills needed for the future? It is not as simple as receiving training in the use of new technologies: there are also sector-specific requirements, such as the agricultural sector, where access to training is already a major constraint for rural workers people in developing countries, with around 90 percent of agricultural workers in India having had no formal training. Skills’ training is one of the most important elements in strategies for reducing poverty, enhancing productivity and promoting environmentally sustainable development with the agricultural sector. This section explores green skills for the future, as well as skills for green society including: life skills, problem solving, critical thinking, assessing and developing ideas that inform and change our actions.

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## Sustainable Lifestyles

We can lead a sustainable lifestyle by making choices and taking actions that minimize the use of natural resources, the generation of emissions, wastes and pollution. Creating a sustainable lifestyle means rethinking our ways of living, how we buy and how we organize our everyday lives. It is about transforming our societies towards more equity and living in balance with our natural environment. Today’s youth are aware that behind over-consumption lies increased exploitation of natural resources, which fuel environmental challenges. People are progressively turning towards a “shared economy,” an economic system built around the sharing of human and physical assets. This system encourages sharing or renting things you don’t have.

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## Educating for a Sustainable Future

The new Green Jobs Initiative report states that legislation needs to support the provision of adequate training and educational opportunities, in order to create skills for green jobs, with a specific emphasis on promoting gender equality, and on STEM skills (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) in the traditional sectors such as renewable energy. It is important that opportunities are available for young people to gain the right mix of skills, combining specific job-related skills with creativity, and adaptability. The Guidebook discusses how open source learning and the development of new media are increasing opportunities for young people to take education into their own hands. Potential starting points are given, including online courses already available for download. Young people can also benefit from non-formal education within projects that can introduce them to practical skills for developing communities within an environmental context.

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## Money and Earnings

The Guidebook introduces funding options for young people engaged in moving towards a green economy. Some governments are providing incentives and frameworks to support new projects and actions as well as guidance for organizations such as schools, colleges and businesses on green procurement. There are a number of markets emerging, thanks to increased public and private investments with green building, renewable energy and waste management being the leaders in the field. This section includes micro finance and development of schemes such as carbon trading, designed to encourage investments in a green economy, and examines alternative models to traditional government investment and new platforms, such as crowd funding platforms. Not-for-profit platforms for easy access by young people are outlined.

## Get Connected and Act Together

The threats to our planet and ourselves may seem daunting, but we can all take action by making sustainable lifestyle choices. This section focuses on connecting with like-minded people as a key step in building momentum for action, and provides different ways of finding them - from the Internet and social media sites, to looking in newspapers or libraries to find out what is happening locally. There are examples of how social media sites are connecting like-minded people, but also excluding people who lack connectivity opportunities. Acting together has provided different approaches to economic activities in communities, such as traditional network-building that can be enhanced by new media options, illustrated by a case study from Venezuela promoting and delivering green economy workshops in schools, colleges and universities. Green transition relies on us all making small steps and co-operating.

*“Within the context of sustainable development, the green economy should help generate decent jobs, especially for the nearly 80 million young people entering the workforce every year. We can also scale up social protection safety nets. Let me emphasize that social progress and job creation require bold action on education - the basic building block of any society.”*

**Ban Ki-moon**

Secretary-General of the United Nations

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United Nations  
Environment Programme

**UNEP** 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.



United Nations  
Educational, Scientific and  
Cultural Organization

**UNESCO** was founded on 16 November 1945. This specialized UN 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.

## UNEP/UNESCO YouthXchange (YXC) Initiative

The UNEP/UNESCO YouthXchange Initiative was created in 2001 to promote sustainable lifestyles among youth (aged 15-24) through education, dialogue, awareness raising and capacity building. YXC works with young people, educators, non-governmental organizations, trainers and youth leaders in more than 45 countries around the world. At the national and local levels, YXC capacity-building activities are secured through a diverse network of partners, and supported by a printed training kit on responsible consumption (translated into more than 20 languages) and a bilingual website. Thematic YouthXchange guidebooks enable young people to better understand how global challenges are connected to their everyday lifestyle choices. The first thematic guidebook is the *YXC Climate Change and Lifestyles Guidebook* (Sept 2011), followed by the *YXC Green Skills and Lifestyles Guidebook* (Sept 2012). These guidebooks, which explain complex issues in accessible language, supported by practical tips, suggested activities, relevant case studies/best practices, and web links for more information, are downloadable from [www.unep.org](http://www.unep.org) and [www.unesco.org](http://www.unesco.org).