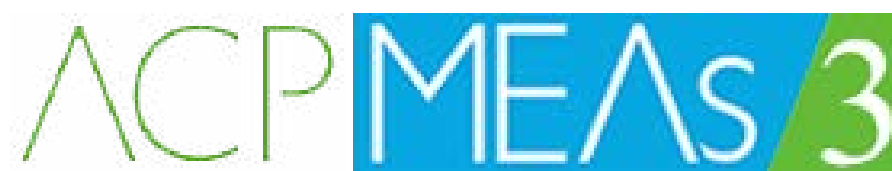




# Toolkit on Pro-Environmental Youth Engagement in Africa



Prepared by the ACP MEAs 3 Programme of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), June 2023

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### **Disclaimer**

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### **The ACP MEAs 3 Programme**

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This toolkit has been adapted to the African context from the Toolkit on Pro-Environmental Youth Engagement developed under UNEP under the ACP MEAs 3 Youth Empowerment and Training Initiative (YETI) to inspire young people across Africa and provide guidance on how to engage in pro-environmental change on four different levels: an individual, local & national, international, and social-media level.

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# Introduction

Are you a young person living in Africa and want to take action contributing to a pro-environmental change? You are unsure what to do best due to the complexity of the environmental crisis and the multiplicity of options?

**This Toolkit is for you - developed by young environmental leaders and activists across Africa! In this toolkit, you find information and guidance on how you can engage and lead pro-environmental change on four different levels (without necessarily requiring a lot of resources or time): an individual, local & national, international, and social-media communication level.**

One of the major challenges our society currently faces is the triple planetary crisis, referring to the three interlinked issues: **climate change, pollution, and biodiversity loss**. The COVID-19 pandemic has proven the dramatic health risk, environmental destruction and biodiversity loss can cause, given the high interconnectedness between environmental and health emergencies (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, 2018). In the aftermath of this pandemic, we must not fall back to business as usual but rethink habits and structures causing this environmental crisis and actively engage in pro-environmental change. In 2015, 192 countries signed the Paris Agreement in 2015, a legally binding international treaty to limit global heating to 1.5 - 2°C compared to pre-industrial levels. Unfortuna-

tely, current commitments are not enough to reach these Paris targets.

**A high inequality can be observed across countries in their contribution and suffering in relation to the environmental crisis.** Many high-income countries produce more global ecological damage than low-income countries (Ritchie, 2018). Nonetheless, it is often low-income countries which are disproportionately impacted by climate change. You can read more on how the environmental crisis affects our lives in Africa in Info Box 1.

**We in Africa, the largest young population in the world** (over 400 million young people aged between 15 and 35) have the power to contribute to pro-environmental change and shape the future we will be living in. The Global Environmental Outlook for Youth - Africa makes clear that Africa's sustainable future can be bright if we all work together hard on a sustainable change. While science is clear that the environmental crisis is irreversible, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) report shows that there are at least 8 reasons to remain hopeful and take action! Many political leaders have already acknowledged that we have many essential skills to protect the environment: We have the energy, idealism, creativity to transform the ingrained societal structures

imperative for innovation and we have not (yet) been shackled to the comfort of habits and systems.

## **What to find in the Toolkit and where?**

**In Chapter 1**, you will find a range of inspiration on how you can engage in more pro-environmental behaviour at home. We refer to pro-environmental behaviour as "behaviour that consciously seeks to minimise the negative impact of one's actions on the natural and built world" (Kollmuss & Agyeman, 2002, p. 240).

**Chapter 2** provides you with tips and ideas for actions you can take to promote sustainable behavioural change in your community (neighbourhood, school, college, or university) and country. It also informs on the UN Initiative: Green Jobs for Youth Pact.

**In Chapter 3** you can find guidance on how to contribute to sustainable change at the African regional and international level such as in the UN system or in Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs).

**In Chapter 4**, we provide step-by-step guides on how to effectively use different social media platforms to raise environmental awareness.

We can only tackle this environmental crisis in time if we work all together - We hope this toolkit provides you with inspiration and guidance to engage in pro-environmental change starting today. The number of engagement options listed in the toolkit might seem overwhelming, but the toolkit is designed for you to pick suitable actions that lie within your capacity and take them step by step from there!

## Who are we and why did we create this Toolkit?

We are a group of more than 40 young passionate environmental activists, entrepreneurs and changemakers from across Africa who created this toolkit for you(th) to inspire and empower youth-led environmental change.

Growing up in different African regions, we have experienced that many of us and our peers have the ambition to take environmental actions but often lack guidance or information on “how” to do this effectively. Consequently, driven by the shared objective to inform and inspire other young people across the continent to become influencers of pro-environmental change, we decided to join forces to adapt the Toolkit on Pro-Environmental Youth Engagement, published in 2022, to the context of the African region. The original Toolkit was developed by and for European youth under the [ACP MEAs 3 Youth Empowerment and Training Initiative \(YETI\)](#) and can be accessed [here](#).

We thank the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the YETI Alumni and all the experts involved in the creation process of this Toolkit for their support and guidance.



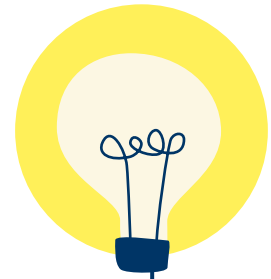
### Info Box 1

We in Africa, can already feel the effects of the triple planetary crisis in our daily lives. The biggest threats to Africa’s environmental challenges are deforestation, land degradation, air and water pollution, biodiversity destruction and increasing vulnerability to climate change. The state of the environment is deteriorating fast, causing an increase in the frequency and intensity of natural disasters such as droughts or storms. The 6th Assessment Report of the IPCC points out that with an additional increase in global mean temperature, Africa will continue to experience more climate-induced disasters, deeply affecting African livelihoods. Immediate action is required to reverse and slow down the current environmental crisis. If we do not take action for change, we will keep facing increasing food shortages, water scarcity, diseases, conflicts, migration and poverty. All of this could culminate in the destabilisation of economies. It is estimated that between January 2021 and September 2022, approximately 54 million people in Africa were impacted by environmental disasters linked to droughts, floods, landslides, storms and wildfires. Africa’s current population is likely to double by 2050, putting even higher pressure on the continent’s biodiversity and ecosystems. Did you know that up to 65 per cent of productive African land is already degraded due to pollution and overexploitation? Nonetheless, more than three million hectares of natural habitat are converted every year for other uses in Africa, contributing to the overall decline of biodiversity and losses of species.

### Did you realise how the environmental crisis is increasingly affecting our lives across Africa?

Africa faces serious environmental challenges, including land degradation, deforestation, biodiversity loss and extreme vulnerability to climate change (UNEP). Many temperature variations and hot extremes have emerged above natural variability, in all land regions in Africa between 1850 to 1900. There has been an observed increase in extreme hot temperatures (including heatwaves) and decreases in cold extremes (including cold waves) are projected to continue throughout the 21st century with additional global warming. Relative sea level rise has increased at a higher rate than the global mean sea level around Africa over the last 3 decades. Relative sea level rise is predicted to continue around Africa, contributing to increases in the frequency and severity of coastal flooding in low-lying areas and to coastal erosion along most sandy coasts (IPCC Sixth Assessment Report).

Environmental pollution also poses a dangerous health risk to the African population (e.g., increasing the risk of pneumonia, heart disease, chronic lung disease and lung cancer). In 2019, ambient air pollution was responsible for an estimated 383,419 deaths across Africa. Meanwhile, though household air pollution is declining, it still accounts for 60% of all air pollution-related deaths (1.1 million) across Africa where polluting fuels such as charcoal and kerosene are prevalent. We, as a society, require clean air, safe water, adequate food, tolerable temperatures, stable climate and biodiversity conservation (WHO, 1995; IPCC, 2007). Globally, climate change is expected to alter temperature, air movement and precipitation in various ways and to varying degrees across Africa with conse-



quences on human health. With the strong connection between a population's health, and economic and environmental health, the impact of climate change on each is one of the major ways in which climate change may impede the development of the African continent (IPCC, 2001; Sperling, 2003; Stern, 2006).

As per a new analysis conducted by the WHO, climate-related health emergencies are on the rise in Africa, accounting for more than half of public health events recorded in the region over the past two decades. "Climate change is one of the greatest threats to humanity. The entire foundation of good health is in jeopardy with increasingly severe climatic events. In Africa, frequent floods, and water- and vector-borne diseases are deepening health crises. Although the continent contributes the least to global warming, it bears the full consequences," said Dr Matshidiso Moeti, WHO Regional Director for Africa.

### Loss of biodiversity in Africa and its effects

Biodiversity in Africa is at risk! Africa's nature is threatened by unsustainable farming, climate change, illegal trade in wildlife, increasing urbanisation and pollution.

- **Biodiversity and agriculture:** Agriculture activities are one of the main causes of biodiversity loss in the African continent. The most threatened by these activities are natural forests and their wildlife (e.g., pollinators). An extensive part of Africa relies on rain-fed agriculture. As

a result, it is highly vulnerable to changes in climate variability, seasonal shifts, and precipitation patterns. Any amount of warming will result in increased water stress. Roughly 70 per cent of the population lives by farming, and 40 per cent of all exports are agricultural products. One-third of the income in Africa is generated by agriculture. Crop production and livestock farming account for about half of the household income. The poorest members of society are the ones most dependent on agriculture for jobs and income (Odingo 1990; FAO 1999).

- **Biodiversity and climate change:** The African continent is rich in one-fifth of the global land surface and contains about one-fifth of all known species of plants, mammals, and birds in the world, as well as one-sixth of amphibians and reptiles (Siegfried 1989). Faces the climate change crisis which has already affected the marine animals of Africa. Coral reefs in the Indian Ocean experienced massive coral bleaching, with high percentages of mortality in some regions. Damage to coral reef systems has far-reaching implications for fisheries, food security, tourism, and overall marine biodiversity. On land, savannas and tropical forests in Africa concentrate the vast majority of the animal biodiversity. Loss or alterations of terrestrial habitats by climate change will likely impact these species.
- **Biodiversity and invasive species:** Invasive species pose an immense global threat, both in terms of biodiversity and cost to economic activities such as agriculture, trade, tourism, and development. Invasive species disproportionately affect communities in poor rural areas - people dependent on natural resources and healthy ecosystems to make a living. For example, invasive insect pests and diseases may significantly affect agricultural productivity and production. An invasive weed may take over farming land, where it will outcompete food and feed crops for

limited resources. Invasive species may also harm the health of people in infected areas. Those components might lead to direct (allergies, interaction with disease vectors) and indirect (reduced agricultural productivity) repercussions.

- **Biodiversity and overexploitation:** Overexploitation and unsustainable use of natural resources pose a further threat to biodiversity in Africa. An immeasurable number of resources does not have enough time to recover, resulting in continuous drops of their stocks that might not be able to recover again (e.g., fish stocks).

### You want to know more about the current state of the environment?

- **Read the latest Global Environmental Outlook (GEO)** providing you with an assessment of the state of the environment, the effectiveness of environmental policymaking, and possible pathways to achieve a variety of environmental goals.
- **Read the GEO-6 Regional Assessment for Africa**

### Eco-anxiety

There is a lot to be concerned about, often resulting in eco-anxiety and climate doom. But this is the last thing we want you to feel. When hopelessness takes over, apathy rises, inhibiting people from acting. Read the positive environmental stories by Euronews and UN News hopefully reducing your feeling of climate anxiety and showing you that there are enough reasons to not give up but to take action! How to turn climate anxiety into action? Watch this inspiring TedTalk here.

# 1 Tips for Behavioural Changes towards a more Sustainable Lifestyle at Home

## Introduction

Your daily choices at home and individual (consumer) behaviour matter! While the private sector and governments share a high environmental responsibility, shifting individual behaviour towards a more sustainable direction is also imperative to reduce overall global emissions. The role of pro-environmental behaviour in preventing and mitigating environmental challenges is widely recognised. Research has proven that making everyday choices in our lives can have a significant sustainable impact. Overall, wealthy people across the world are disproportionately more responsible for the world's CO<sub>2</sub> emissions due to their large carbon footprints.

Sustainable consumption and production have the potential to enhance poverty alleviation and the shift towards green and low-carbon economies. Living more sustainably is often assumed to be expensive, time costly and hard. But this does not have to be necessarily the case - it is more about re-considering, changing habits, and consuming less, which will also save you some money! In chapter 1, you can find useful tips for a more sustainable lifestyle and how you can make small sustainable changes in your behaviour in every room of your home, step by step.



# Bathroom

## Save electricity (and money)

- **Avoid using a tumble dryer.** One tumble dryer cycle can use twice as much energy as an average washing machine cycle.
- **Use a cold water setting** when doing your laundry.

**i** → You can find further information on how to save electricity [here](#).

## Save water

There is a serious water crisis in Africa, so there is a need to manage our water usage smartly.

- **Have a shower, not a bath.** A five-minute shower uses approximately 38 to 95 litres of water while a full bathtub requires about 260 litres. You can also use a bath tray instead of a bathtub.
- **Shut off the tap** while soaping your body in the shower or brushing your teeth at the sink.
- **Save water on the toilet.** Put a bin in the bathroom to avoid paper and towelettes stopping up the bowl and creating the need to flush unnecessarily. In addition, modern toilets let you reduce consumption by choosing a half- or full-flush - push the half-flush button whenever possible.
- **Check and repair** any leaks in taps or toilet tanks to save thousands of litres by year.

## Go green when doing laundry

- **Fill up your washing machine**, and do not wash if you only have a few items.
- **Choose the lowest suitable temperature.** These days, detergents are so efficient that they fully clean most clothes at low temperatures.

- **Skip the pre-wash cycle** or use a short cycle if your clothes are not very dirty.
- **Use eco-friendly detergents or make your own.** Many detergents include liquid, microplastics or harmful chemicals when released in the water cycle. As they can be hard to filter out, it notably impacts microorganisms and natural processes.
- **Line dry your clothes** instead of using a dryer to reduce your electricity consumption.
- **Invest in an eco-friendly washing machine** if you need a new washing machine.
- **Choose sustainable fabric care products** and protect your clothes from damage in the wash.

**i** → Find more information on this in the following section [here](#).

## Consume less and protect ecosystems and your health

We can easily find many articles in our bathrooms (make-up remover cotton, tampons, cotton bud, ...) that are non-reusable and contain dangerous substances (e.g., microplastic) that are seriously impacting us and the environment.

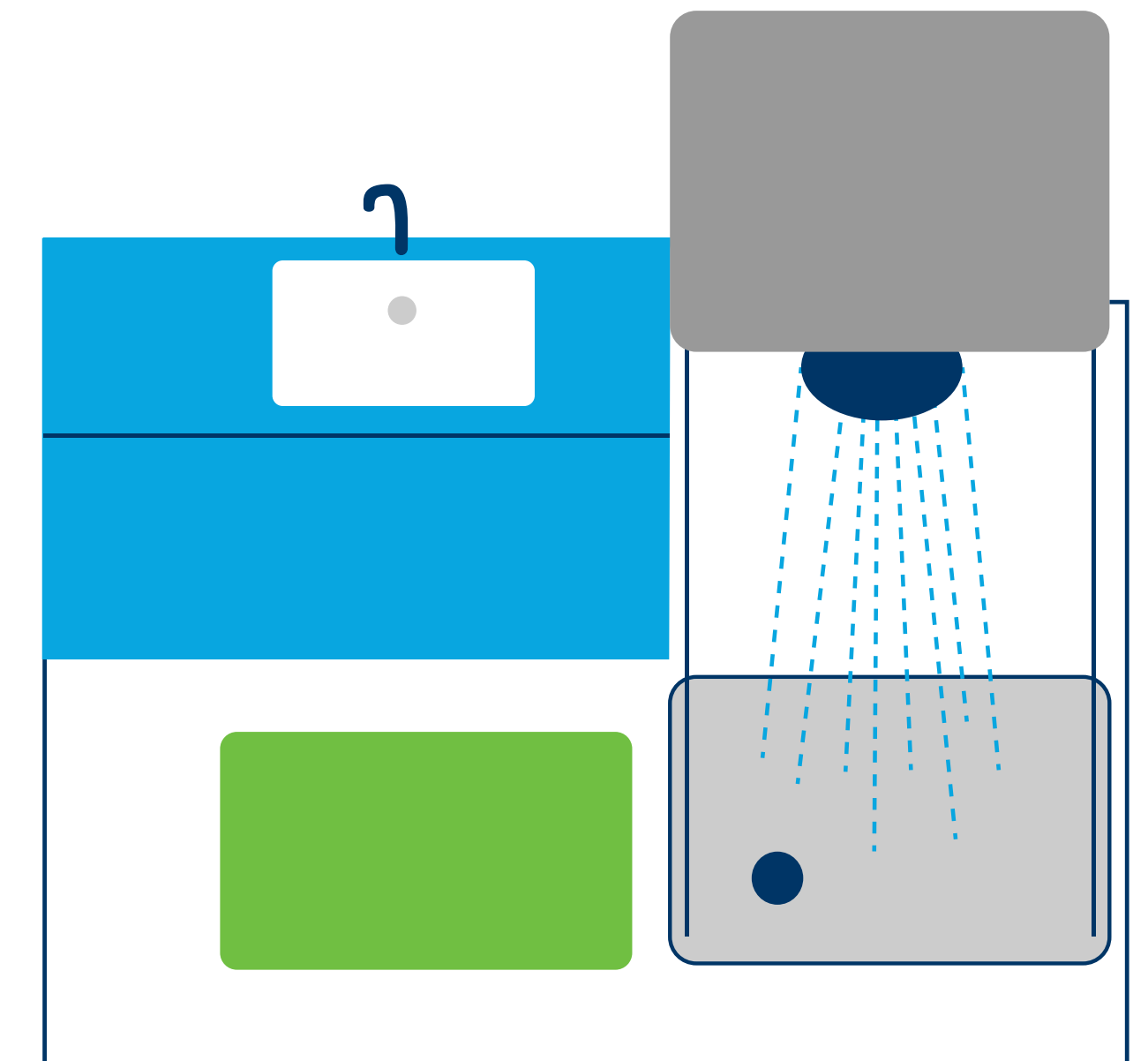
- **Use reusable hygiene articles** instead of single-use ones (e.g. razor with a changeable head or menstruation cups). [Here](#) you find some examples of products. Learn how to use menstrual cups [here](#).
- **Prefer paraben-free products** to protect aquatic ecosystems and your health.
- **Use respectful sunscreen.** You can find sunscreen examples [here](#).
- **Avoid plastic - even the invisible one!** Several bathroom packaging products use plastic. **Buy paper-wrapped toilet paper and other toiletries.** Use bar

soaps instead of liquid soaps. **Avoid** products such as shampoos in single-use plastic packaging that are hard to reuse - Refillable bottles are highly recommended.

**Note:** Many self-care and cosmetic products contain microbeads and microplastics hardly visible to the naked eye (e.g. shampoo, shower gel, deodorant, mascara, insect repellent, shaving cream). Some of these products are fabricated with more than 90% plastic).

**i** → Find more information on microplastics in self-care products [here](#).

**i** → Check your products for microplastics [here](#) and find microplastic-free products [here](#).

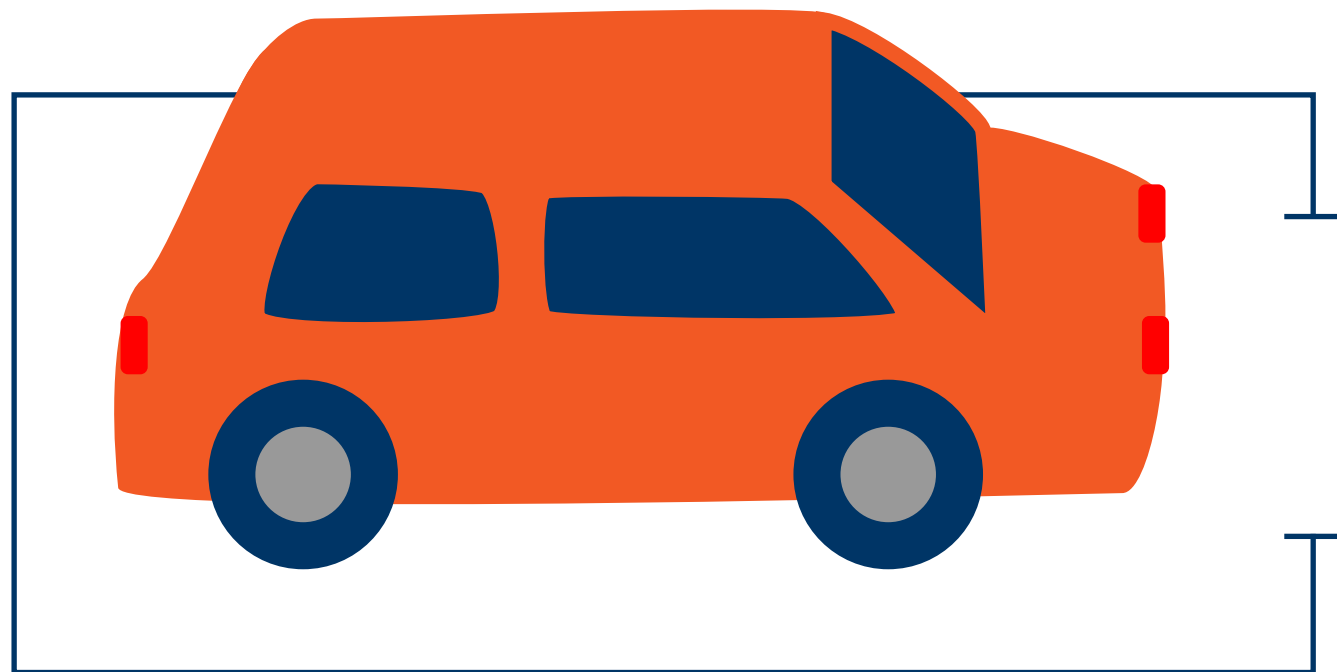




# Mobility and Transport

## Consciously choose your mode of daily commuting

- **Walk or use the bike when you can.** If needed, use public transportation.
- **Owning a car is not a dream.** We experienced that many of our young generation in Africa think owning a car is a dream or a symbol of social status, but in fact, it is not. Instead of working hard to have a car to drive alone and destroy our beautiful and pure environment in Africa, try out carpooling with friends or colleagues. Find more tips on how you can reduce pollution from your car usage [here](#).
- **Fuel or hybrid/electric car?** The [debate between fuel and hybrid/electric cars](#) does not permit us to have a perfect answer for now. While the emissions caused and the resources used during the production of



an electric engine are still too high to be considered the greener choice, an electric car generates fewer greenhouse gases during its lifetime. Read more on Rwanda's ambitious plans in relation to electric vehicles [here](#). You can also decide which car you want to use after reading this [article!](#)

## Travel consciously

- Africa is a beautiful and diverse continent to explore. Instead of booking your next plane ticket to another continent, **plan your next trip within Africa** with environmentally conscious and cheap travel options by bus and train (Each African country has its own train system. You can discover them [here](#)).
- **Choose to travel by bus and train**, if possible, rather than by car, aeroplane, or cruise ship. Flying is among the largest contributors to an [individual's carbon footprint](#), and you can significantly decrease it by choosing one transportation form over another. If there is no other option than taking the car, consider using [JRNEY](#). Our tip: Calculate and compare the environmental impact of your next trip by car, train, and plane [here](#).

- **WWOOF around.** [Wwoofing](#) is an exciting way to travel at a low cost, experience ecological farming and local life in other countries, and get to know inspiring people.
- Travel the world for a fraction of its costs by working on an **environmentally conscious project or restaurant** and connecting with like-minded people with [Workaway Travel](#).
- **Take an adventure and go on a hiking or cycling trip.** Do you want to discover some African countries by bicycle? It is a zero-emission, cheap, and exciting mode of exploring another part of your country. You can find more tips on travelling by bike [here](#).
- **Book environmentally conscious accommodations.** You can find several environmentally conscious hostel and eco-lodge options, such as [Salty's Kitesurf Village](#), [Distant Relatives Ecolodge](#) on [Hostelworld.com](#), or [Rocky Eco Lodge](#).

**i Small remark:** *Voluntourism can also have negative effects on the local environment, even without your intention. So critically inform yourself about the projects before committing to engage!* You can check the good and the bad effects of [voluntourism](#).

# Kitchen

## Consume Sustainable Food

- **Cut your consumption of meat, and dairy products to have a more plant-based diet when possible.** Cutting meat and other dairy products (e.g., milk, cheese) from your diet can significantly decrease your individual emissions contribution by 66% (Poore & Nemecek, 2018). A plant-based diet does not have to be boring. Get inspired by the variety of plant-based recipes online [here](#), in this [blog](#) and on Instagram [here](#).
- **Buy local and seasonal products** to reduce the emissions caused by the transport of your food. (In cities there are even delivery services providing these products like [Greenspoon](#)).
- **Buy products with eco-labels.** Find more information on the different eco-labels in the [eco-label index](#).

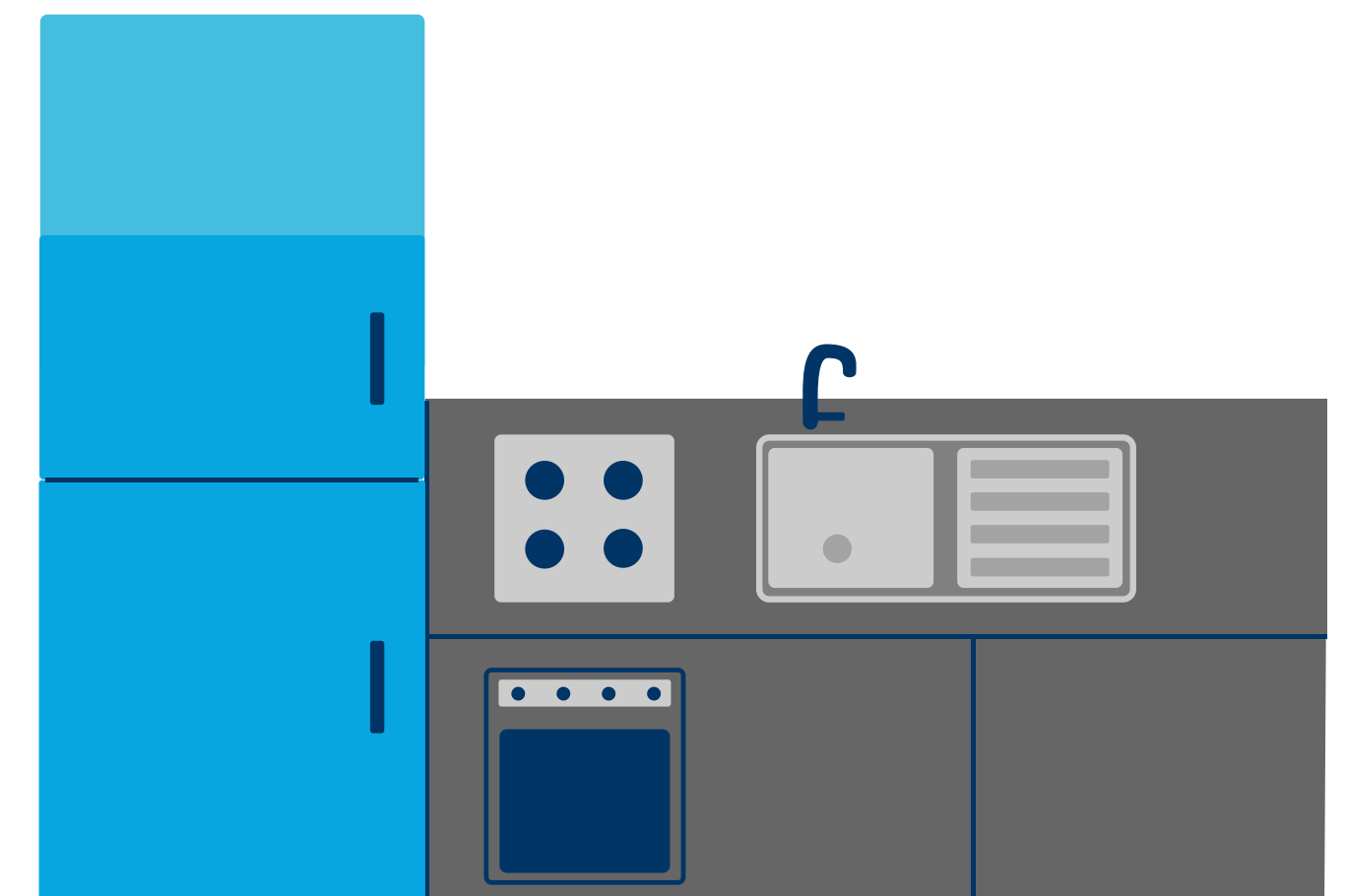
## Reduce waste and food loss

Did you know that if waste and food loss were a country, it would be the third-largest emitting country after China and the United States? Reducing waste and food loss would not only help reduce the negative environmental impact but also feed more people using the same land area. With waste reduction, we have the potential to reach a sustainable food future for Africa and around the world!

- **Buy less and only what you need** (making a grocery list helps!).
- **Avoid products with plastic packaging** while trying to reuse packaging. Use your own reusable boxes and cotton bags instead of plastic bags to purchase your food at local markets and even in the supermarket. At the time of disposal, you can use bread bags instead of plastic bags.
  - i → Did you know you could swallow an amount of plastic equivalent to a credit card a week?
- **Waste less food.** Cook only the amount you plan to eat, and get creative with using leftovers. You can find accessible, low-waste recipes by [Max La Manna](#) or [here](#).
- **Reduce Reuse and Recycle.** [Get informed](#) about correct waste separation in your country as it helps in the recycling process, reduces the removal of raw materials from nature, saves water, and decreases waste in dumps.
- **Compost** to keep part of your waste out of dumps. Did you know that approximately 25% of the items in your trash could potentially be cut out from the waste and composted in your backyard?
- **Make step-by-step changes towards a zero-waste lifestyle.** Get some tips from this college student living a zero-waste lifestyle [here](#).

## Save energy

- **Avoid peak demand times.** If you have a washing machine, turn it on outside these peak times, whereby you might even save some money e.g., by night.
- **Buy energy-efficient appliances if you need new ones.** Check for products that carry the “Energy saver” label. The ranking ranges from A+++ (most efficient) to G (least efficient).
- *Example:* An A+++ dishwasher uses half the energy of a D-ranked one.
- If you need a new oven, check if it is properly sealed and go for an A-rated model. It could also save you some money over its lifetime.
  - i → Find a guide on energy labels in (South) Africa [here](#).



- **Use either your gas stove or electric stove sustainably.** Factors such as the electricity source and ventilation determine the sustainability of the stove. This **i** article can guide your stove choice.
  - Find more information on how to save electricity [here](#).

## Bedroom and Living Room

### Reduce your clothes consumption, upcycle, re-wear and purchase sustainable clothes

We should all be aware that all our consumption can be driven by moral values and environmental priorities! Also, when it comes to clothes consumption, we should reconsider impulsive purchases while shifting towards more **sustainable options**.

- **Re-wear your clothes.** We can mix and match our existing wardrobe to create new looks or wear the same outfit in different ways. It not only saves money but also reduces the environmental impact of our clothes.
- **Upcycle or maintain products as long as possible.** Upcycling refers to transforming old or unused clothing into something new and useful. You can find some upcycling inspiration [here](#).
- **Buy second-hand clothes** at thrift stores. It is a great way to save money and reduce your environmental footprint by helping to reduce the amount of clothing that goes to waste, and the resources needed to produce new clothing.
- **Buy clothes with sustainable fabric and production.** By choosing sustainable clothing, we can support [companies](#) working towards a more sustainable future. You can find more info on the impact of each fabric [here](#).

**i** → **Did you know that many of our clothes are made out of plastic** and that 35% of the microplastic pollution in all oceans comes from our textiles in the form

of synthetic microfibers? Microfibres are a type of microplastic that gets released when we wash our clothes made out of synthetics, such as [polyester and acrylic](#).

### Save electricity

- **Turn off the lights** in a room when you do not need them.
- **Are you a gamer?** Check out offers by the [Play For The Planet Alliance](#) and [Play For The Planet](#).
- **Replace all your light bulbs with energy-efficient LED bulbs.** They are [cost-effective](#) and can be [rechargeable for electricity off hours](#).

### Green Finance

- **Green finance is a vital tool for promoting sustainable development in Africa.** By consciously choosing where we put our money and starting a green bank account, we can ensure that our financial resources support environmentally friendly initiatives.
- **Investing in green bonds** is another great way to support sustainable development while earning a return on our investments.
- **Invest in Green Exchange Traded Funds** that support environmentally and socially conscious business practices and policies.



#### Info Box

#### Find further tips and information on sustainable food consumption here:

- [Future Learn](#)
- Food Unfolded: [Website](#), [Series](#), [YouTube channel](#)
- [HealthyFoodAfrica](#)
- [Food Fight Podcast](#)
- Find inspiration in this [article](#) on what kind of impact you can have by changing your diet.
- EIT Food: [Website](#), [YouTube channel](#)
- [Regenerative agriculture](#) revolution, an impactful way to offset CO<sub>2</sub> emissions.
- Try out the game "[Zombie Attack](#)" and educate yourself on balanced nutrition playfully.
- [11 mind-blowing movies](#) around food to inform and inspire.



## Info Box

### General recommendations to live more sustainably at home applicable to all rooms

#### Save energy:

- [Embrace solar power](#).
- Buy energy-efficient appliances e.g. automatic light sensors, smart systems or [eco-friendly appliances](#). Be informed and measure your energy consumption with a measuring device in your home.
- [Avoid peak demand times](#) which could save you even some money. Especially in the mornings and evenings, there is a high demand for energy where suppliers often use fossil fuels to provide sufficient energy. – You can find more practical tips to save energy [here](#).
- **Join the Race To Zero!** You can discover how you can enter the Race to Zero [here](#).
- **Take [advantage of rainwater](#).**
- **Do not get fooled by [greenwashing](#)! We talk of [greenwashing](#) when companies make misleading claims and marketing campaigns pretending that they are more environmentally friendly than they actually are.**
- **Review product labels** and trace the whole production journey back to the origin of the raw material. Does the raw material in question have an ecologi-

cal certificate? If you do not find any information associated with an ecological production system, email the manufacturer, and ask. It signals producers of the interest and demand, potentially motivating more pro-environmental consideration for their future production.

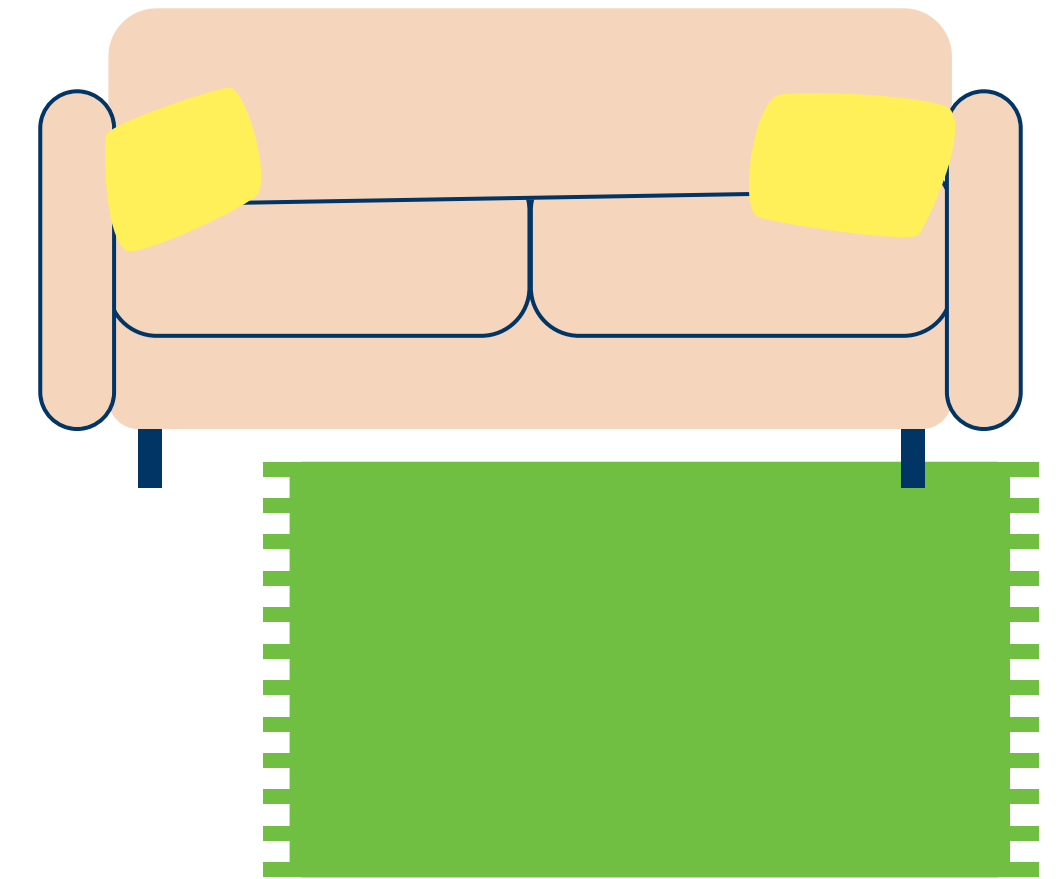
- **Do you want to engage in tackling plastic pollution?** The [Tide Turners Plastic Challenge](#) is a good way to start. Check local green initiatives with a focus on plastic pollution [here](#).

#### Useful apps enhancing your pro-environmental behaviour at home:

- [List of apps](#) enhancing your sustainable lifestyle.
- [ActNow](#) - The UN Campaign for Individual Action.
- [SDGs in Action](#).
- [SDG Impact Assessment Tool](#).

#### Further useful sources with tips for environmental engagement on a household level:

- [Anatomy of Action](#)
- [GEO-6 for Youth Africa](#)



# 2

# How to Take Sustainable Actions on a Local and National Level



## Introduction

We want to start off this chapter by reminding you to not underestimate the positive impact your own voice and actions can have on a local or national level. By raising awareness and taking action within your circle of friends and family, fellow students, or neighbours, you can become an inspiration and ambassador for pro-environmental change for others. To inspire your surroundings to live more sustainably, it is important to make people understand how the environmental crisis affects all our lives and how our daily behaviour can negatively affect or protect the environment.

You are wondering now: how can I create awareness, take action, and influence change in my community, school, university or even in the whole country?

In this chapter, you can find tips and guidance on how you can get engaged on environmental issues in your community and neighbourhood, schools, universities and across your country.

# Communities and Neighbourhoods

Working together with other people or groups on a pro-environmental project in your community can be highly motivating and inspiring. The possibilities to engage on a community level vary from one region to the other across Africa. There are different resources available and necessary laid-down guidelines to tackle environmental issues effectively at the community level. Nevertheless, you can and should do something for the environment everywhere!

## In what environmental projects could you engage in different African countries?

There are a variety of inspiring local projects existing across the continent for and by youth aiming to tackle environmental issues. To explore different community-based projects, check out [this article](#) and [these POP projects](#). Get inspired by projects from [other countries](#) and conduct your research on whether something similar already exists in your country - if not, it might be time to create it in your country or community!

## Our tips on how to start your own local project

### 1. Define your project's topic and goal:

What is the objective of your project? What do you want to achieve?

- **Take the 5-steps of the [Design Thinking Process](#)** helping you understand the major problem affecting your community and the best possible project to launch and address such a need. Being informed

on the context of your project is key to ensuring that it fits the local needs and cultural context: What are environmental problems, where do these problems stem from, what measures are required, and what resources are available to tackle the issue?

- **Specify and define your goals SMART** with the help of [this guide](#). Start small and increase the scale of your project once your project is running!
- **Exchange with others:** What are key challenges, lessons learnt and main tips by others working in the field? Is something similar already happening in your neighbourhood or in the country? If so, great - you can join forces, exchange ideas, and learn from each other.
- **Our tip: Identify your activity in relation to the [Sustainable Development Goals](#) (SDGs).** In this case, you review all the 17 SDGs in relation to your project and work and select the SDGs you can work on. Helpful tools for this are the [Impact Assessment Tool](#) (or for companies: [UN Global Compact Self Assessment Tool](#)).
- Get inspired by already [existing projects](#) and [local actions](#).

### 2. Join forces and start implementing your fantastic ideas:

It may require you to have a small team before you start your project. In some cases, it is even advised to form a team prior to figuring out the project so that [you all own it](#) and join forces to implement it.

When searching for others to join your project, make sure to be clear on what your project is all about and always carry out extensive research on the issues you seek to address. Only if you are well-informed yourself can you convince others!

Raise awareness about your project...

- ...through social media platforms (In [Chapter 4](#) you find more information and tips around environmental engagement through social media).
- ...by collaborating with other youth projects or events and thereby introducing your project and likewise employing best practices learned from other projects.
- ...by organising your own local event in the neighbourhood to attract peoples' attention related to the project topic, theme, goal, and objective. Example: An art installation (e.g., out of plastic), sanitation, tree planting, a sustainable cooking event, an educational webinar or open film show, an info stand at the local farmers market or a flash-mop.
- ...by hanging information posters on info boards in schools, universities, or cafes.

**i** → More information on how to raise awareness on the community level can be found [here](#) and [here](#).

### 3. Figure out the resources and skills you need

- **Make a list of all the resources and skills** you need and that are available for your initiative (e.g., printing, Wi-Fi, transportation, meeting space, social media outreach). Be creative and make the best out of the resources that are accessible.
- **Team and partnerships:** identifying the key resources and skills you need will also help you figure out what other people or organisations to partner with. Example: If your project aims to provide training (e.g., waste and swamp management), you might need a physical space for the meet-up and organisation. You might also need to look for team members who have skills in graphics, websites, writing, project management and mentoring.
- **Funding:** [In this list](#), you can find some useful funds and websites related to this.

### 4. Implement your project

- Implementation refers to the execution of all the planned activities of the project in their order and by the assigned team players. When the plan is clear and each team member understands his or her role, the implementation should not be a challenge. Do you remember the guiding tool called [design thinking](#) that we introduced? It encourages us to: firstly, implement the project in its simplest form possible, secondly get feedback from people and the project itself, and thirdly keep enlarging and improving.

- The implementation process of a project largely varies, and extensive guidance is beyond the scope of this toolkit. You can find useful tips on this in Chapter 2 of the [decadeonrestoration](#) toolkit. The toolkit is intended for founding ecosystem restoration projects like [the Great Green Wall Initiative](#), but the recommendations provided can be applied to other projects as well.
- You can inspire and empower other young people to also start their projects by sharing a photo or video showcasing your project with [#MyClimateAction](#) and [UNFCCC](#) (In [Chapter 4](#) you can find more tips on pro-environmental social media usage).



#### Info Box

**Further information on how you can get engaged in your community and neighbourhood and launch your own project.**

- Five [steps](#) to help you start your [environmental project here](#).
- 10 useful tips for your [environmental project here](#).
- [Documentary Tomorrow](#). A globe-trotting documentary focusing on pro-environmental solutions rather than problems by providing insights into the projects of activists, local communities, and everyday citizens.
- [Tide Turners Plastic Challenge Badge](#) is an insightful toolkit providing insight and guidance on how you can start reducing your plastic consumption today.
- Fundraising: [In this list](#), you can find different available funds or websites where you can find more information on funding for (youth-led or youth-related) projects.

## Examples of environmental projects you can easily start or get engaged in:

- I. **Tree planting.** Tree planting doesn't necessarily have to be on your land, but you could lead and push for tree-planting on community or government-owned land. There are many tree planting projects in Africa. See some [here](#), [here](#), and [here](#).
- II. **Reducing, reusing, recycling, sorting waste.** Our cities are full of waste that is washed into water, food, land, and everywhere causing pollution. Start an initiative to reduce, sort, dispose or recycle waste. You could start or participate in community clean-ups and mobilise your neighbourhood to participate. There are many waste-focused projects in Africa. Examples are [Ecobrix](#) in Uganda, [BD waste](#) in Ghana.  
**Our Tip:** [Get informed](#) about correct waste separation in your country as it helps in the recycling process, reduces the removal of raw materials from nature, saves water, and decreases waste in dumps.
- III. **Community compost.** Start to compost across your community to keep part of your waste [out of dumps](#). Did you know that approximately 25% of the items in your trash could potentially be cut out from the waste and [composted in your backyard](#)?
- IV. **Education, training and awareness programs.** [Evidence](#) shows that climate change literacy levels are not that great in most African countries. An awareness or education program could help (e.g. by focusing on waste or water) improve the capacity of young people to help their community tackle environmental threats. There are many resources that can help you like this Toolkit or materials by [Earth School](#). There are many

education-focused programs in Africa, for example, the [Nairobi Summer School](#) (Kenya).

- V. **Food and agriculture:** Start initiatives to educate and promote [sustainable, local food](#) and agriculture systems offering health and environmental benefits.
- VI. **Capture rainwater.** Find more information [here](#) on how you can collect rainwater in your community.

**i** → Reminder: You do not necessarily have to start a new project or organisation. Simply search and find existing ones you can engage in or collaborate with!

### Traditional Knowledge Treasures

To learn about eco-friendly practices you often do not have to search far: Knowledge and practices by [indigenous and local communities](#) across Africa are important to protect nature. Traditional, often millennia-old techniques for growing food, controlling wildfires and conserving endangered species provide solutions to many environmental challenges we face.

**Our tip** for your next initiative: Start an initiative to capture “traditional knowledge treasures” from local and indigenous communities (including elders and women). Team up with them to learn about their local environmentally conscious knowledge, practices and experiences (e.g., through a publication or photos) to ensure this knowledge will not get lost and inspires other communities and generations. This will also provide you with an opportunity to talk and sit with elders to strengthen your own local and cultural knowledge!

### Get inspired:

- [Intangible Cultural Heritage: Seven East African case studies](#) on living heritage and climate change published by UNESCO that can inspire you to research, document and implement Traditional Knowledge linked to biodiversity conservation, climate change mitigation and adaptation as well as disaster risk reduction in your community.
- [The Local Biodiversity Outlooks 2](#): presents the contributions of indigenous peoples and local communities to the implementation of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011–2020 and to renewing nature and cultures
- [ICCA Territories of Life 2021 Report](#): Regional and global analyses of territories and areas conserved by Indigenous peoples and local communities. The findings show that ‘Indigenous peoples and local communities are key actors in the governance, conservation and sustainable use of the world’s biodiversity and nature: They actively protect and conserve the diversity of globally relevant species, habitats, and ecosystems. ‘Their actions provide the basis for clean water and air, healthy food, and livelihoods for people far beyond their boundaries’.



## Pro-environmental Engagement in Schools

Schools are an important institution shaping youths' awareness related to the environmental crisis and pro-environmental behaviour. Research shows that if only 16% of students in high and middle-income countries could receive climate change education, we could realise a '19 gigaton reduction of carbon dioxide by 2050' ([Centeno & Todd, 2020](#), read [here](#) if you are not familiar with research papers). The United Nations on Climate (or UNFCCC) [affirms this](#) and encourages us to take environmental action in and outside classrooms. In sum: Environmental education in schools is imperative, to prepare youth for the environmental challenges and opportunities we face while empowering our peers to become agents of sustainable change.

Different possibilities to get involved in your school:

- **Join or start an environmental club in your school:** This will help you to work together with other students passionate about the environment and organise environment-related activities in your school, shifting the mindsets of thousands of students and staff.

- **Carry out an environment-focused educational activity and take it to schools** ([school outreaches](#)). Here, you and your team plan a topic and write a letter to the school's administration requesting for time with their students (see an example of a letter to a school [here](#)). You can repeat the procedure with more than one school, making it a long-term environmental program that involves visiting schools with sustainability topics and initiatives.
- **Plan a [tree planting](#) or waste cleaning or care for those impacted by climate activity with schools and students.** For example, you could organise distributing mosquito nets, water tools, or food items to neighbouring communities with students. Students can have the opportunity to interact with communities, see how climate change effects really affects daily life, and share with you the fulfilment of enabling communities to cope.
- **Promote sustainable behaviour in your school:** Find inspiration and information on how you can spark sustainable behaviour on your school campus in this section here.

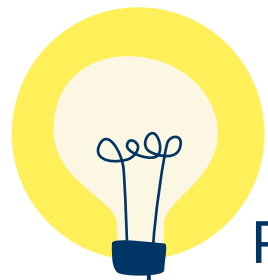
*Examples:*

- o **Reduce & Reuse Campaign.** Donate your old textbooks and novels that are not in use to juniors in your school, or kids in your neighbourhood or across the country to children with little access to educational resources.

- o **Recycling Campaign:** Push for good recycling systems in your school and reduce the removal of raw materials from nature, saving water, and decreasing waste in dumps. To implement this effectively, [get informed](#) about correct waste separation in your country.
- o **Create school compost** to keep part of the school's waste [out of dumps](#). Did you know that approximately 25% of the items in your trash could potentially be cut out from the waste and [composted in the school's backyard](#)?

**i** *Searching for inspiration?* Here you find a list of different projects and tips for you to successfully organise activities and campaigns in (your) school around the environment:

- [Earth School](#)
- [Girls Go Circular](#)
- [Africa SDG School](#)
- [See and eat](#)
- [The diet - Food a Fact Of Life](#)
- [Sustainable Schools - Project ideas](#)
- [A Glance At Top 10 Eco-Friendly School Projects](#)
- [Miklah School Outreaches](#)
- You can find further inspiration on how you can educate and raise awareness on the environment [in this toolkit section](#).



### Info Box

Péter Kovács, the Youth Delegate of Hungary to the United Nations, recently founded a project where rubbish cans are painted in schools to promote recycling (To find more information about these projects, click here).

**He shared with us his key recommendations important to keep in mind when starting such a school project:**

1. **Know the stakeholders** (e.g., teachers, school leaders, the state, parents, the school children, the rubbish company) you want to involve in the project and be clear on who in the school will be your main contact person to help you implement your project.

- Which stakeholder is important to get approval from and what happens if they say no? What do I need from these stakeholders? Do I have enough support with(out) them?

2. **Know your surroundings and think about who is already within your network.**

- Who empties these rubbish cans at the end of the day? Who is your mentor?
- Why do you want to give cleaning staff more work with recycling with no salary in-

crease? Explain to them why it is important and explore together their opinions and resources in relation to recycling.

3. **Involve a big and diverse group** (of students) from different (friend)groups.

4. **Ensure that the projects will continue** (if relevant) even if you are not there.

5. **Consider whether you need a pilot project** to win stakeholders over and know where to position your project.

6. **Make an evaluation of your impact**, during and after the project. How is the project working? Do you need to adapt/change anything to make the project/initiative more effective?

- Know the community surrounding your project and involve them throughout the process. Example: create a survey and share it around to ask people within the school about their views on the project.
- You can use the Impact Assessment Tool to evaluate your project's impact in relation to the Sustainable Development Goals.

## Pro-Environmental Engagement in

# Universities and Colleges

Higher education institutions provide an important space to empower and prepare the young generations for the environmental challenges and possibilities we face as a society. By raising awareness and making the university campus an ecologically friendly place we can shape the values and habits of Africa's young society and leaders of the present and the future. It will increase environmental consciousness, re-thinking habits and the adoption of sustainable behaviour by students and staff that they hopefully maintain in the future.

**How you can promote environmental education and behavioural change at your university or college:**

1. **Help your campus become more sustainable** by using [UNEP's Sustainable University Framework](#). Using this framework enables your university to identify where it currently stands to create its unique pathway to become sustainable.
2. **Raise awareness and educate other students and staff by organising:**
  - **Movie screenings** possibly followed by a (panel) discussion with stakeholders in the field. You could even collaborate with cinemas in your city to organise it there. Check [this website](#) for good environment-related movies and the open environmental streaming service [WaterBear](#).
  - **The creation of a short film.** *Example:* Create a short film providing tips to reduce the environmental impact as a student, to publish on social media or the university's webpage.

- **Debates.** Partnership with your university's debate club (if there is none, it is easy to create one!) to organise debates on environmental challenges.
  - **Our tip:** choose a topic that allows for constructive dialogue while remaining fun.
  - **Talks and Panel Discussions.** Invite experts (e.g., students, professors or external (youth) experts) to have insightful and engaging panel discussions.
  - **(Pub) Quiz on the planetary crisis.** When creating the quiz think of questions on environmental issues, which allows participants to learn and raise concerns while having fun.
3. **Join a student association** or create your own to work together around the common goal of implementing pro-environmental changes within your university.  
*Example:* [Kenya Inter-University Environmental Students Association \(KIUESA\)](#) which is an umbrella association for all environmental clubs in tertiary institutions in Kenya.
    - **Our tip:** **Join UNEP's Youth and Education Alliance** with your student association, a global network of university and student sustainability networks committed to transforming higher education to empower future generations for the opportunities and environmental challenges we face. You can find more information [here](#).
  4. **Join a student movement:** They are taking place all over Africa.
    - » *Example 1:* [Fridays for Future](#) is an international, student-led global strike movement demanding action on the climate crisis, initiated by [Greta Thunberg](#), which also has branches across Africa. Find the movement closest to you and join [here](#).
    - » *Example 2:* [Climate Students Movement](#): Join forces with other students across the world to push higher education institutions [to act on climate science](#) and stop their greenhouse gas emissions where possible. If you are in Kenya, Africa, you can join Climate Students Movement-Kenya (Connect with them on [Twitter](#)).
    - » *Example 2:* [All-Africa Students Union](#). One of their key strategic priorities is Environment & Climate Action.
    - » *Example 4:* [Rise Up Movement](#) is another students and youth-led movement founded in Uganda by a known climate activist, Vanessa Nakate.
  5. **Joining the Africa Model United Nations (MUN).** [African World MUN](#) is the United Nations Simulation Conference serving as a platform for students to exchange ideas and tackle the most challenging global issues including the environmental crisis. There are also existing regional Model United Nations (e.g. [East African Model United Nations](#), [South African United Nations](#) etc.). Find more information on how you can become a young diplomat [here](#).
  6. **Join the Network of Nature Positive Universities** founded by UNEP and the University of Oxford in partnership with the [UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration](#). The Network consists of a growing number of people from over 500 higher education institutions across the world, working together to promote the prioritization of nature and its restoration within the higher education sector, supply chains, campuses and the cities where they operate.
    - o [Sign up](#) for the Nature Positive Universities Alliance by making a pledge [here](#).
    - o Sign up to be a [Student Ambassador](#) and check out this website for more information.
    - o Reach out to the team via email ([coordinator@naturepositiveuniversities.net](mailto:coordinator@naturepositiveuniversities.net)) if you have any questions about how to get involved in the initiative.
    - o The African Great Green Wall Youth Advisory Board has also been constituted to lead youth work in delivering Africa's most ambitious land restoration initiative and will work with youth from universities to grassroots in realising this dream.
  7. **Join the Race to Zero for Universities and Colleges today**  
Race to Zero is a global campaign mobilising support and leadership from all sectors to achieve net zero emissions by 2050 at the very latest (powered by UNEP, Second Nature and EAUC).  
→ Motivate your university or college to join the race today. How this works you can find out [here](#).

## 8. Spark Sustainable Behavior on Campus

Create green nudges to encourage sustainable behaviour on campus. You can find quick guidance on this alongside ideas for actions in the [Little Book of Green Nudges](#) (available in different languages).

**What is nudging?** Green nudges refer to “positive and gentle persuasion to encourage sustainable behaviour on higher education campuses and to instil environmental values that can last a lifetime (United Nations Environment Programme and GRID- Arendal, 2020). For example, when a university offers plant-based food as a standard dish, it nudges students towards more sustainable diets. And when it introduces bikes on the campus, it nudges us to ride instead of drive within the campus as well as do exercise. [Read how Makerere University](#) in Kampala, Uganda, recently introduced bicycles at the campus.

*Examples of nudges (or positive persuasion for sustainable living)*

*Many nudges can work in various situations and are designed by different people. Examples are:*

- **Recycling and composting campaign:** Push for good recycling systems in your university reducing the removal of raw materials from nature, saving water, and decreasing waste in dumps. To implement this effectively, [get informed](#) about correct waste separation in your country.
- **Promote creative upcycling** by setting up collection points and organizing DIY workshops on how to up-cycle objects. You can find more information on up-cycling at [ethical.net](#).
- **Encouraging students** to bring their refillable food containers and bottles.

**Our Tip:** Do not shy away from organising a forum for discussion with different stakeholders and the administration of your university. They might be eager to hear your ideas to make the university more pro-environmental and energy-efficient and might help you implement the projects.

- You can find relevant information and resources for you and your university [here](#).
- Sign up for the UNEP [Youth and Education Alliance Monthly Newsletter](#) to stay up to date on developments in environmental education and behavioural change in higher education.



## Pro-Environmental Engagement at the National Level

Youth engagement at the national level provides an important opportunity to influence decisions and policies for the entire country to build resilience and reduce and prevent harmful environmental impacts caused by human activities.

Engaging at the national level means that you make use of your voice, engage in country-wide initiatives or get directly involved in environmental decision-making processes in your country. In this part of the toolkit, you find a variety of examples of how you can engage on environmental issues on a national level. If you are interested in one of the initiatives existing in other countries, check if a similar one already exists in your country and join, or get together with others and initiate it in your country!

### Examples of pro-environmental activities at the national level

**Stakeholder Engagement:** Meaningful high-level stakeholder engagement has proven to be one of the bedrocks in effecting change from the national down to the grassroots which involves attending national conferences, and participating in capacity-building workshops and seminars, among others.

**National Project:** This involves carrying out national projects that cut across the geopolitical regions of your country which involves collaborating with other organisations such as climate education, and tree planting projects. For example, a good way would be to have your local project join the [Youth Coalition for SDGs](#), which works within the Office of the Prime Minister, thereby joining fellow organisations ready for national-level actions.

**Become a youth delegate:** You can become a Youth Delegate to represent the voice of their generation in national and inter-national meetings. Youth Delegates are often chosen by their youth council or young people of their country and their role and mandate varies between countries. Some countries have youth delegates for climate joining the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) meetings and/or youth delegates for biodiversity joining the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) meetings. You can find more information on this [here](#).

→ Read [this report](#) developed by Youth Delegates listing information about the work and role of Youth Delegates in different countries.

*Our tips on how to become a Youth Delegate:*

- Investigate whether your country already has a Youth Delegate program (usually created through a youth council) and familiarise yourself with the application process of your country.
- If no such program exists, contact [YOUNGO](#) or the [Global Youth Biodiversity Network](#) and ask for tips on how to advocate for a youth delegate program.
- Read this [short UN Youth Delegate Report](#) listing information about the work and role of Youth Delegates in different countries



**Collaboration:** Through collaboration, you can be involved in some of the national pro-environmental

programs of your country including having an influencing role in drafting policies that promote sustainable environmental standards.

### Green Job Opportunities

#### Green Jobs For Youth Pact

Did you know that investments in solutions limiting global warming to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels provide significant green job opportunities? Green policy measures can create 8.4 million jobs for young people by 2030 (ILO, 2022). To support a just transition and boost decent jobs for youth in a sustainable economy, the United Nations Environment Programme,(UNEP), the International Labour Organization (ILO) and the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) are working together with various stakeholders including young experts via the [Youth Advisory Group](#) towards:

- Creating 1 million new green jobs with existing employers
- Assisting in the greening of 1 million existing jobs
- Enabling 10,000 young green entrepreneurs to start a sustainable business.

The Green Jobs for Youth Pact increases commitment and action toward green job creation focused on youth, particularly from the most disadvantaged and climate-vulnerable groups. The Pact focuses on high-impact and climate-vulnerable sectors. It supports enabling policy frameworks for youth employment and sustainable economic growth, advances the greening of businesses, and provides knowledge and skills necessary for green jobs and a better future. The outcomes of the pact are:

- **Youth employment and green entrepreneurship:** Employers are supported in green, circular, and sustainable business models that reduce waste, pollu-

tion, and resource use while increasing the demand for skills for green jobs.

- **Education and training for green skills:** Universities and knowledge institutions equip young people with employable skills for green jobs.
- **Empowerment and youth engagement:** Youth are capacitated and trained in policy advocacy and the social dimension of climate change.

You can find more information on this youth pact [here](#).

### Youth-Led Green Businesses Across Africa

**How to become an eco-friendly entrepreneur and earn money with green business?** Get inspired by the [stories of these young Africans](#) who created successful green businesses or explore [Sacred Entrepreneurship](#), a program by [Miklah Life](#) that focuses on creating entrepreneurs for people and the planet.

### Some grant opportunities for green entrepreneurs:

1. **The Global EbA Fund:** grants ranging from USD 50,000 to USD 250,000, with an encouraged duration of up to 24 months.
2. **The Land Accelerator- WRFI:** Private investors have pledged \$2.9 billion to fund forest and landscape restoration in Africa through AFR100 and in Latin America through Initiative 20x20. The [Land Accelerator](#) trains and supports entrepreneurs whose companies restore degraded land.
3. **The Rural Prosperity Bond:** Financing and capacity-building for restoration enterprises that are too small for commercial banks and too large for microfinance.

# Engaging in Pro-Environmental Change Across Africa and on an International Level



## Introduction

The diversity of culture and ideas brought to life in international engagements and discussions, make holistic and inclusive pro-environmental change possible. Together, we are growing stronger than ever. International organisations like UNEP are convinced that “Youth is central in achieving a more sustainable and healthier planet”. Throughout the past years we have received the legitima-

cy to speak up, our words were added to international resolutions and received places in international summits.

By engaging internationally in initiatives, and organizational agendas, youth mobilisation can have significant positive impacts in sustainably managing our environment. In the following chapter, we provide you with guidance on how you can engage with the UN System, across African Regions and in Non-governmental organisations operating in Africa.

## Engagement Opportunities in the United Nations System

The [Youth2030](#) strategy is the first United Nations (UN) system-wide strategy on youth. This strategy guides all UN action with and for young people around the world. In the UN system, there are different opportunities and ways for young individuals to engage in and raise their voices on issues related to the triple planetary crisis in conferences, workshops, initiatives, and assemblies. We listed some possibilities you can engage in here:

### Major Group for Children and Youth - MGCY

The Major Group for Children and Youth is the UN General Assembly-mandated and self-organised mechanism for young people to meaningfully engage in certain UN processes. The youth network acts as a bridge between young people and the UN system to ensure that their right to meaningful participation is realised. This is done through the engagement of both formal and informal communities of young people, in the design, implementation, monitoring, follow-up, and review of sustainable development policies at all levels. MGCY areas of work include policy advocacy, capacity building, and taking action through evidence-based knowledge and dissemination.

*How to engage?* Stay up to date on upcoming engagement possibilities by signing up on the [website of MGCY](#) and joining the [Youth Environment Telegram](#) Broadcast channel. You can find more information on different engagement possibilities [here](#).

### UNEP Youth Programmes and Initiatives

UNEP is the leading global environmental authority, setting the environmental governance agenda, promoting the implementation of sustainable development in relation to the environment within the UN system and serving as an authoritative environmental advocate. UNEP initiates programs, platforms and initiatives enabling meaningful youth participation in environmental issues. One of the youth programs organised by UNEP is the [Youth Empowerment Training Initiative \(YETI\)](#). It aims to increase youth engagement and empower youth through long-term mentoring and capacity building. Many of us, the youth authors, are YETI Alumni, who participated in the initiative. A number of activities on strengthening youth voices in future environmental governance issues and providing them with an opportunity to be the influencers of change form the core of YETI. YETI's activities offer flexible, transformative and responsive opportunities for the youth.

*How to engage?* Check out the programmes and initiatives and find more details on the possibilities for you to engage in each of them on the [UNEP Youth Website](#).

**Our tip if you want to engage at the UN level:** Be curious, be opportunistic, and constantly look for opportunities from UNEP that are popping up from time to time. Also, make sure to sign up for updates on the UNEP Youth Website.

### The Global Youth Environment Assembly

The [Global Youth Environment Assembly](#) enables youth participation in the processes of environmental governance in the UN system. In different working groups, youth develop and propose effective solutions to different environmental issues. As a young leader, you can enhance your knowledge, viewpoints, and exchange ideas.

### Initiatives by the Office of the Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth

The current UN Secretary-General António Guterres appointed Jayathma Wickramanayake of Sri Lanka as his next [Envoy on Youth](#). The Envoy on Youth addresses the rights and needs of young people and empowers them as agents of change and rights-holders. The office of the Envoy on Youth organises different initiatives and possibilities for you to get involved in sustainable Development.

*How to engage?* You can find further information on different possibilities [here](#).

*Example:* Young Leader for the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

The office of the Envoy on Youth is looking on a biennial basis for 17 Young Leaders for SDGs from different backgrounds. The objective of Young Leaders is to advocate for SDGs, engage peers and their audience in the advocacy and implementation of the [2030 Agenda](#) and contribute to SDGs-related initiatives by the UN and its partners.

*How to engage?* You can find more information on the application process [here](#).

### **UN Youth Task Force**

You can engage in Youth Task Forces responsible for youth engagement in specific international meeting processes and programmes. Current examples are the [Stockholm+50 Youth Task Force](#), which facilitates youth engagement in the Stockholm+50 meeting processes, and the [UN Decade of Ecosystem Restoration Youth Task Force](#), responsible for youth engagement in the [UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration](#) context. Despite engaging as a member of a Youth Task Force you can also only participate in one of the [activities](#) organised by these task forces or provide your inputs in youth policy papers and open consultations.



### *Info Box*

Alphonse is an environmental scientist, a member of the UNEP MGCY and a YETI Alumni from Kenya. He shared his experience of engaging with the UN system providing an example of what is possible to achieve as a young person: Serving in the UNEP Youth Constituency [global steering committee](#) (the official youth engagement mechanism to UNEP) for a second term as the facilitator of the UNEP host country, Alphonse has championed for improved meaningful youth participation in UNEP processes. In the steering committee, he has been part of the pioneers of the [youth engagement framework to the Stockholm+50](#) and the [UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration processes](#). Part of his highlights in the UNEP Youth Constituency were the following: Leading on-ground coordinator of the first Global Youth Environment Assembly on the Sidelines of [UNEA 5.2](#) bringing to Nairobi youth from various parts of the world to come up with their inputs to UNEA. He also played a leading role in the delegation of 40+ Kenyan youth to the Stockholm+50 International meeting in Stockholm, Sweden. After this international meeting, he decided together with Kenyan members of the Stockholm+50 global youth task force to bring the outcomes of the international meeting to the ground in their communities through the Stockholm+50 youth legacy projects.

### **YOUNGO**

Is the official children and youth constituency of the [United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change \(UNFCCC\)](#). YOUNGO is a vibrant, global network of children and youth activists (up to 35 years) as well as youth NGOs, who contribute to shaping the intergovernmental climate change policies and strive to empower youth to formally bring their voices to the UNFCCC.

*How to engage?* Read more on their work and how to engage on the [YOUNGO Website](#).

### **African Youth Mobilization for COP (AYM4COP)**

On May 20, 2022, YOUNGO launched the AYM4COP (African Youth Mobilization for COP). This initiative was driven by a group of African youths, with a focus on mobilising the African youths within YOUNGO for better cooperation and coordination in participating in international climate policies. This campaign is made up of five different Partnerships and Fundraising, Communications, Research Education and Training (RET), Regional Conference of Youth (RCOY) Africa, and the Africa Youth Climate Action Plan (AYCAP) to tackle funding, training, and capacity building for youth negotiators and to provide a concrete youth action plan that is centred on African Youth.

*How to engage?* For more information kindly visit this [YOUNGO | UNFCCC](#) website and their [LinkedIn](#).



## African Youth Initiative on Climate Change

AYICC is an umbrella initiative of all youth organisations in Africa working on climate change. It was launched during the International Conference of Youth prior to the UNFCCC. Find more information on this initiative [here](#).

## Global Youth Biodiversity Network

The Global Youth Biodiversity Network (GYBN) is an international network of youth organisations and individuals from all over the world who work together to prevent the loss of biodiversity.

Recognized and supported by the [Convention on Biological Diversity \(CBD\)](#) Secretariat, GYBN represents the voice of global youth in the negotiations under the CBD, raises awareness among young people of the values of biodiversity, and connects individuals and youth organisations in order to build a global coalition to halt the loss of biodiversity.

Within GYBN, there is also **GYBN Africa**. Africa is immensely rich in biodiversity and many mineral resources - but biodiversity, and in the end humanity, is at risk due to human activity, unprecedented rates of population growth, urbanisation, and agricultural development. To this end, GYBN Africa aims to bring the voice of young Africans to biodiversity policy arenas, empower African youth and raise awareness among African people on the value of biodiversity.

*How to engage?* Learn about GYBN and how you can get involved by visiting [GYBN's website](#) and GYBN's Facebook page. To join the GYBN Africa visit [GYBN | GYBN Africa | African Youth Biodiversity Network](#).

## UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration Youth Task Force

In December 2020, the UN Decade Coordination Group approved the establishment of a UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration Youth Task Force, as an advisory and consultative youth mechanism for the UN Decade on matters related to youth. The Youth Task Force was launched to be as self-organised as possible, in line with the 'New Power' approach of the UN Decade strategy. These Terms of Reference, therefore, build upon views and perspectives shared by youth groups across different parts of the world on how they envision a fit-for-purpose structure to enable meaningful participation and engagement of the younger generation, in line with the principles of with and for young people of the United Nations Youth Strategy and specifically its cross-cutting theme of Climate and Environmental Action.

*How to engage?* To join the Youth Task Force and learn more about engagement opportunities click [here](#).

## Engaging across

# African Regions

The African Union (AU) was officially launched in July 2002 in Durban (South Africa) to create a new continental organisation to build on its work, following a decision in September 1999 by its predecessor, the Organization of African Unity (OAU). The decision for this re-launch was the outcome of a consensus among African leaders that there was a need to refocus attention from the fight for decolonization and ridding the continent of apartheid, which had been the focus of the OAU, towards increased cooperation and integration of African states to drive Africa's growth and economic development. (Read more on the African Union ([au.int](#)) [here](#)).

Africa has the largest youth population in the world with over 400 million young people aged between 15 and 35, which provides a series of opportunities for the continent and for the youth population itself. This has resulted in various youth empowerment programs and operational agendas targeted at engaging the youth population in African countries. [The Youth Decade Plan of Action](#) and the Malabo Decision on Youth Empowerment, both of which are implemented through various AU Agenda 2063 programs, practically define the AU policies opening up youth engagement opportunities. (see [Youth Development | African Union \(au.int\)](#))

## The African Union Youth Envoy

The African Union Youth Envoy is the African Union Commission's dedicated special envoy for youth empowerment, mobilisation, and engagement, as well as youth inclusive participation in the development and implementation of the [African Youth Charter](#) and other related policy goals for the empowerment of African youth. The Youth Envoy gives a global voice to youth inclusion and participation in the actualization of the African Union agenda on environmental sustainability. Read more on this [here](#).

## African Youth Initiative on Climate Change

The African Youth Initiative on Climate Change was conceived in 2006 in Nairobi Kenya, during the second International Conference of Youth preceding the UNFCCC, COP 12, to ensure the inclusion, and active participation of youth voices from the global south, including from Africa, in the international climate change negotiations. Get involved [here](#).

## Ecosystem-Based Adaptation for Food Security Assembly (EBAFOSA)

[EBAFOSA](#) is the first inclusive pan-African policy framework and implementation platform, a solutions space that brings together key stakeholders along the entire [EBA-driven agriculture](#) value chain. EBA considers environmental conservation and climate adaptation while also looking into solving food insecurity and the high rate of unemployment (especially affecting young people). EBAFOSA will provide you with a place to make mutually beneficial partnerships using innovative volunteerism, which many youth constituencies are part of (see [EBAFOSA](#)).

## Engagement Possibilities in

# Non-Governmental Organizations

Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) work independently of the government and are mostly nonprofit entities organised on community, national or international levels to serve socio-political goals. Due to their independence, they often enjoy a high level of trust in society. There are various NGOs engaging on environmental issues including and empowering African young people in their work. In this chapter, we listed some of these NGOs you can engage in as a young person.

## Global Citizen

[Global Citizen](#) is a community and movement of positive change to improve the world. The objective is to amplify collective voices to demand commitments from leaders by connecting people concerned about various issues and ready to take action (e.g., signing petitions, joining campaigns and completing pro-environmental challenges e.g. green bootcamp, zero plastic for a week, sustainability in your home). This movement makes taking action accessible, fast, and easy by securing real and effective outcomes for the world.

*How to engage?* People from all over the world can sign up via this [website](#) or [app](#).

## Connect4Climate

[Connect4Climate](#) is a global partnership program launched by the World Bank Group and the Italian Ministry of Environment and joined by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development. It promotes solutions for climate change and empowers people to act on an international level. You can share [your stories](#) about your experience in environmental engagement or directly [participate in the program](#). This partnership provides many [programmes](#), [information](#), and opportunities. Young people from this organisation advocated at [the COP26](#) in Glasgow.

*How to engage?* You find the latest news and engagement possibilities on their Instagram and their [Website](#).

## Global Landscape Forum

The Global Landscapes Forum (GLF) is the world's largest knowledge-led platform on integrated land use, dedicated to creating sustainable landscapes that are productive, prosperous, equitable and resilient. It primarily focuses on five themes: food and livelihoods, landscape restoration, rights, finance and measuring progress. Youth can get engaged by joining the [Youth In Landscape initiative](#), which is a growing global network and movement of over 60,000 young people working and studying in landscapes around the world. Today, YIL has become a global movement of young people committed to living and breathing the landscape's philosophy: collaboration, diversity, and collective action.

*How to engage?* You can find more information on this [here](#). Also check out their [Landscape Academy](#), offering you a range of different online courses and learning materials.

### **Commonwealth Youth Climate Network**

This Network provides a platform for the voices of young people from Commonwealth countries in Africa, Asia, the Caribbean and Americas, Europe, and the Pacific to be heard. Contributors aged 15-29 exchange perspectives on events affecting young people happening in their country, community or the world, such as poverty or climate change. Find out more about our current Commonwealth Correspondents and read their articles online. Learn more about the [Commonwealth Youth Programme](#).

*How to engage?* Learn more about the many ways you can contribute [here](#).

### **GEF Small Grants Programme**

The [GEF Small Grants Programme](#) (SGP) is a corporate program of the Global Environment Facility (GEF) that provides financial and technical support to local civil society and community-based organisations to develop and implement innovative local actions that address global environmental issues, while also improving livelihoods and reducing poverty.

*How to engage?* You can find the latest news and engagement possibilities on their [Website](#).

### **Darwin Initiative**

The Darwin Initiative is a UK government grants scheme that helps protect biodiversity, the environment and the local communities that live alongside it in developing countries. Most projects include one or more of the following components: building environmental knowledge, capacity building, research, and implementing international biodiversity agreements. Since 1992, the Darwin Initiative has awarded over £164m to more than 1,143 projects across 159 countries.

You can find more information to apply [here](#).

### **Aspire Grant Program**

The Aspire Grant Program provides competitive research grants for African graduate students and early career professionals working in the areas of biodiversity, conservation, and environmental sustainability in the Congo Basin region. The Aspire Grant Program aims to encourage young African scientists to conduct novel conservation research and management activities that address the critical challenges facing wildlife, biodiversity, and ecosystem health in the Congo Basin. These small grants help build the foundation for young African researchers to become independent, providing “bridge funding” that allows them to conduct research in their native countries while competing in larger international arenas.

*How to engage?* You can apply [here](#).

**Small remark:** There are a number of similar other small Grant Programs where you can apply for funding such as the [Rufford Small Grant](#) by the [Rufford Foundation](#). While a provision of an exhaustive list would go beyond the scope of this toolkit, we highly encourage you to do your research on what applicable grants exist within your field and region and apply.

### **Pan African Climate Justice Alliance**

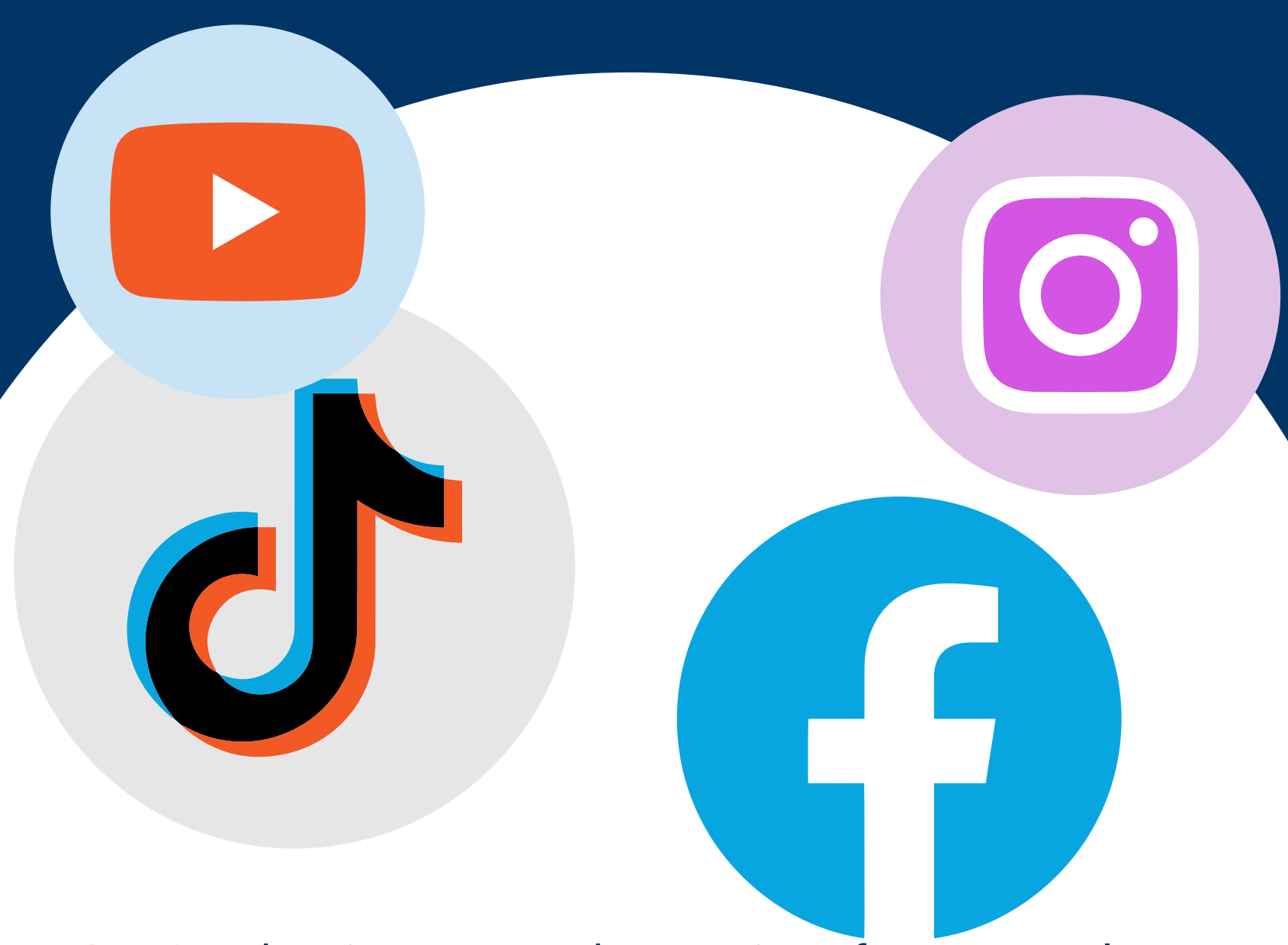
You can join the [Nairobi summer school on climate justice](#), organized by the [Pan African Climate Justice Alliance \(PACJA\)](#) enabling you to spend two weeks engaging with experts, researchers, and academicians while gaining practical knowledge on green initiatives in field visits. African Wildlife Foundation

The African Wildlife Foundation (AWF) is determined to engage Africa’s young generation of conservation practitioners and leaders to ensure that they voice their interest in biodiversity conservation and step up to champion conservation on the continent.

Focusing on innovative youth-led approaches, AWF seeks to empower and inspire youth action and grow the influence of youth networks in the conservation sector at its interface with sustainable development. Additionally, they support young professionals in conservation to implement impactful programs on the ground and help launch successful careers in the sector – from wildlife management and conservation science to policy-making and sustainable enterprise.

*How to engage?* Find all relevant information on how to get involved [here](#).

# 4 Leading Pro-Environmental Change through Effective Social Media Communication



## Introduction

Social media platforms become popular channels to raise awareness and influence pro-environmental change across society. Environmental engagement through social media can enhance social mobilisation and has been the engine of many protest movements, initiatives and even revolutions (Leong, Pan, Bahri, & Fauzi, 2019). It enables to shaping of the values, opinions and habits of others, which is key for pro-environmental behaviour change. Social media can also have a democratising influence in the media landscape as it allows more people to create content and influence the public agenda.

**A little reminder:** Activism does not have to be a full-time job, and particularly social media makes quick and effective engagement possible. Even if you perceive yourself as a “normal” person living a “normal” life, with one click or post raising awareness and showing how you take environmental action, you can reach billions of people at the same time and make a difference. Your audience might also perceive themselves as “normal” making your content an even bigger inspiration as it comes across as relatable and easy to implement.

In this chapter, we provide you with step-by-step guidance on how to engage in an effective, yet mindful way, on each of these five platforms: Instagram, Facebook, YouTube, Twitter and TikTok.

**Our tip:** when it comes to the creation of content: Rely on yourself to figure out what posts are valuable to you and what direction your content should take while keeping in mind what’s best for your audience. Remember that something that is popular may not always be good and vice versa. Make sure you create content in an inclusive, sensitive manner without hurting anyone because of their identity, gender, appearance, etc. Here you will find tips on how to ensure that your posts are inclusive. Also, keep in mind that exposure to a lot of information through the internet might be overwhelming for your audience, so keep your information brief and concise.

**Our tip:** To build a unique relationship with your audience and make them recognize you easily on social media, you should create a special social media identity. [Here](#) you can find some tips on how to build your social media identity.

Define your goals SMART with the help of this [guide](#). It will be much easier to reach your goals when they are reality-based. Last but not least: help others and share what you have learnt here with fellow environmental activists.

**Small remark:** To use most social media platforms, you need to be aged 13 and over. You are younger than 13? There are still plenty of options for you to engage on environmental issues or raise awareness other than using social media - just check the other chapters for more inspiration and guidance.

# Instagram

[Instagram](#) is a great tool to explain environmental buzzwords, share petitions, give tips on eco-friendly lifestyles and inspire actions that affect positive change. This can be done by uploading various content from photos to reels and even stories with empowering messages and certainly the appropriate hashtags and geographical tags. The content can be shared both publicly and privately with pre-approved followers.



## Step 1: Define your topic:

What issue do you want to address in relation to the current environmental crisis Africa and the world are facing (E.g., biodiversity loss, water scarcity, deforestation, famine, drought, pollution, climate change etc.)? Choose a topic that is close to your heart and make authenticity your asset. Take note that your audience does notice when you put your heart and mind into a post, and it will translate into more visibility and engagement.

## Step 2: Define your goal(s):

What do you want to achieve with your content? Do you want to raise awareness of environmental issues? Motivate and inspire to engage in pro-environmental behaviour change? Inform about initiatives and campaigns? Or maybe even start a movement on your own? Think big, but also define your goals clearly.

## Step 3: Define your strategy

Define your audience and narrative. Who do you want to reach (e.g., friends, young people from your country, youth from other African countries or even beyond)? Consider the environmental values, attitudes, and motivations of your audience to choose the narrative and content of your posts that successfully address and engage your audience. Imagine: What narrative would be most likely to cause a reaction? What issues are personally close to them and what would motivate them to engage in pro-behavioural change? Consider it as an interesting and emotionally appealing story in which you are the main character, motivating your audience to stay engaged and share your content in their own profiles.

*Examples:* [The Nature Conservancy Africa](#), [Climate Educators](#), [Climate Activists](#), [Environmental Storytellers](#).

#### Step 4: Define your content

Your content must be aligned with your defined target audience to successfully address and engage them. The visual identity of your account is crucial to interact with your audience. Successful Instagram activists use attractive artwork and design to promote their message through [artivism](#). If your visual identity is more text-based, create eye-catching content in similar designs, so your audience can easily identify your content.

Our tip: Find inspiration by following this link, or go on Instagram and search the hashtags #activism or #artivism. There are some free design tools such as Canva where you can easily create visually appealing posts. As AI generators become more popular than before, you can use them to create unique designs. [Here](#) you can find the best-fitting tool for you.

#### Step 5: Start your account

Setting up the account in the app is very intuitive, but if you are new to social media, we recommend you [watch this tutorial video](#). You can create a [personal](#), [creator](#) or [business account](#). Creators and business accounts give you valuable insight into your account's performance data and are highly recommended.

#### Step 6: Check your online safety!

Be mindful about what you share online, especially if you share personal pictures.

#### Step 7: Get your first followers

Start by following your friends and family members and let them know what you want to do with your account and how they could support you. Also, you can follow the major environmental organisations in your country and beyond (e.g. [@UNEP](#)) to stay informed on environmental issues. Remember: Engagement is key for visibility on Instagram.

#### Step 8: Your first post

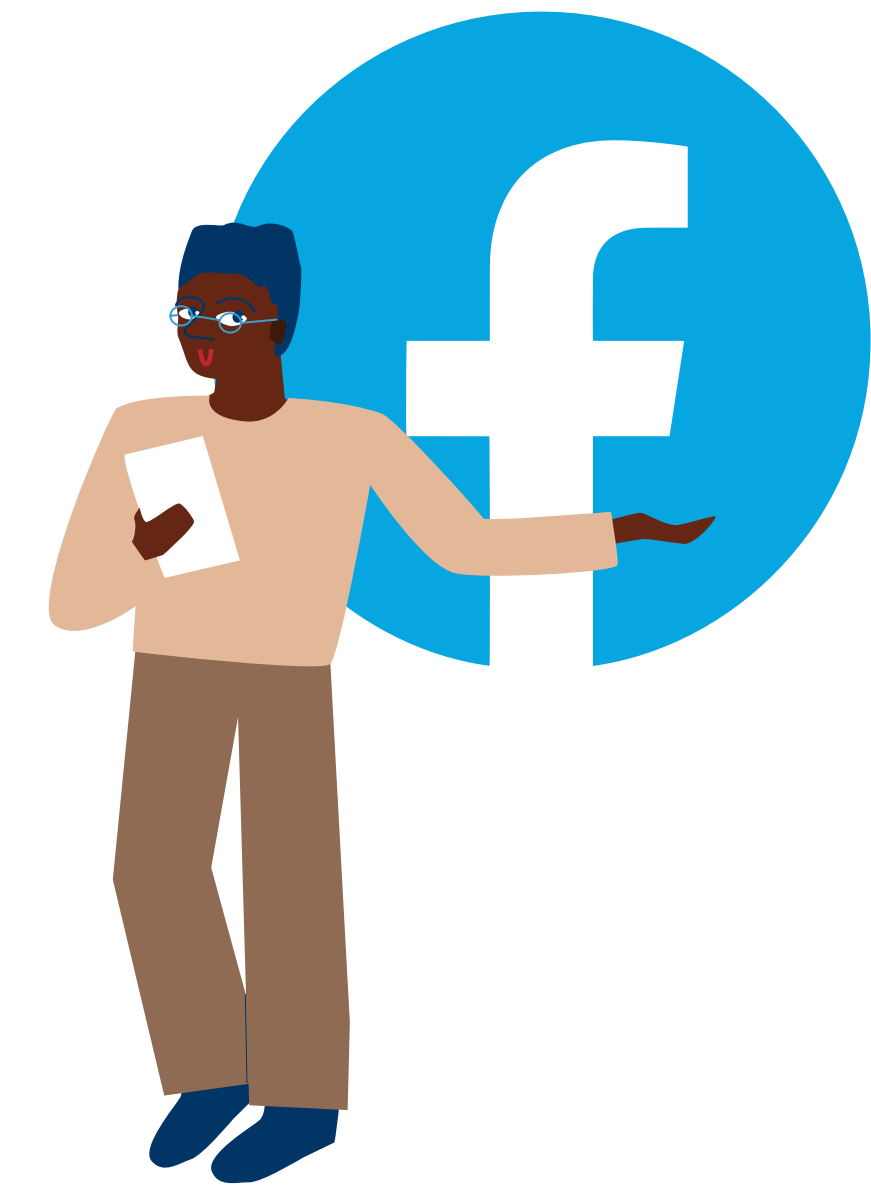
Post your first post and story, and off you go! If you do not know where to start, click [here](#) to find some Instagram inspiration. On Instagram you can upload a variety of media, it can be a picture post, a reel or a story. You could use a hashtag generator to get relevant hashtags that could boost your engagement. Click [here](#) to access one of the many hashtag generators available online. Click [here](#) to learn more about Instagram and its [algorithm](#) and follow the 10 steps to successfully start your engagement on Instagram! We recommend that you post with regularity and [during the hours of the day](#) when your users are the most active. If you are using third-party material, we recommend you read our general [Info Box](#) about third-party content.

#### Step 9: Grow!

Stay visible by posting regularly and engaging with your followers. It is often [recommended to post three times a week](#). Try out different features that Instagram has to offer and stay innovative. Expand your follower base by identifying and using common hashtags. Engage directly with similar accounts by reposting and cross-posting each other, to empower each other and grow together - maybe you can even start a collaborative campaign?

#### Step 10: Take care of yourself!

[Instagram is designed in a way to maximise online time](#) and at the same time expose you to many (hidden) advertisements. There is a [real danger of addiction](#) caused by various elements. Please read the Info Box carefully about mental health and online safety.



## Facebook

[Facebook](#) is the biggest, most established and used social media platform in the world, with more than three billion registered users. Therefore, if your goal is to reach as many people as possible, Facebook is a great choice. Facebook also allows [cross-posting from Instagram](#). So read through our 10-step guide and start your engagement on Facebook today!

#### Step 1: Define your topic

What do you want to talk about? Which topics do you already know and want to inform, inspire, or engage others about? Choose something that you personally care about (e.g., environment, zero-waste lifestyle, etc.)!

### Step 2: Define your goals

Define what you want to ideally achieve (e.g., people to care, people to vote for something, people to boycott/demonstrate etc.). How can you measure your success? Break your goals down into smaller challenges to make them more manageable and realistic.

### Step 3: Define your strategy

Clearly define your target audience. Who do you want to reach with your posts? What is needed to resolve the situation and what could your audience do about it? Be aware of the environmental values, attitudes, and motivations of your audience to choose the narrative and content of your posts (language/images) that successfully address and engage your audience. Imagine: What narrative would be most likely to cause a reaction, what issues are personally close to them, and what would motivate them to change their behaviour?

### Step 4: Define your content

You will need a preferably catchy name and visual identity (logo, colour palette) to be recognizable at first sight. Also, think about how often you are going to post and be aware: pre-paring posts can be time-consuming!

### Step 5: Start your account

It is time to start your Facebook page or even make a Facebook account and turn on professional mode! Click here you can find more information about the differences between pages, profiles, and professional mode for profiles.

### Step 6: Be careful

Anyone can get access to your page, so you might want to take the time to reflect on using a pseudonym for your page. You should ensure that your personal data is not visible to everyone.

This guide can help you with this.

### Step 7: Get your first followers

Your first followers will often be people you know and trust. Depending on whether you feel comfortable with your online friends knowing about your activism, you can either send an individual message to private friends telling them about your page or communicate more widely on your personal social media channel.

### Step 8: Create your first post

It is time to create your first post! Here are tips on how to create posts for Facebook, and here you find tips on how to maximise engagement. Find inspiration for good content to post on Facebook here. Be also mindful of the publicity of what you are writing, and critically ask yourself: would you be fine with one of your parents or a potential employer reading it?

### Step 9: Growing your page

In order to keep your follower base active, post regularly, enabling people to anticipate when they are going to see your next posts. Here are some tips from Upwork on how to expand your follower number on Facebook. If you are looking to raise funds for your organisation, make sure to include a budget for social media promotion. Advertisement and promotion are important and sometimes essential parts of growing your Facebook presence.

### Step 10: Take care of yourself!

Reflect on your work, your time investment and your feelings, do not hesitate to take a break if needed. There is a real danger of addiction, caused by various social media elements. Please read the Info Box on mental health and online safety.



#### Info Box

**Your words matter** - Choose your terminology on social media consciously.

Research has shown that small changes to language or framing can have significant effects on people's perception of the climate emergency. When you create your social media posts, we recommend you refer to "climate crisis" instead of "climate change", and "global heating" instead of "global warming". This will help to influence policy and public understanding of the environment. Experts also recommend that you use the term "climate change deniers" instead of "climate sceptics". To get more information on this in a fun way, we recommend this video.

#### Info Box

#### **Mental health and online safety**

Social media is not an easy environment. Here is an official guide on how to use social media safely. We recommend that you reflect regularly on your work, your time investment, and your feelings. Do not hesitate to take a break from engaging with social media if you feel that you need it. You could measure or limit your screen time within the app or by an external app. Also, read this guide on how to keep your personal information safe on social media.

### Info Box

#### From raising awareness to taking action

There is a need for Africa to be more climate-ambitious and take significant action.

**Our tip:** Use your social media presence and create content that inspires people to act! The psychologist Cameron Brick suggests using the 3 R's in environmental (social media) communication to inspire action:

1. Reality: Scientists are convinced that a human-caused planetary crisis is occurring, the impacts are already happening and will get worse.
2. Risk: Our climate may get worse than we expect, and we may experience negative surprises such as abrupt climate change or impacts.
3. Response: There is much we can do and the sooner we respond, the better off we will be (Vesely, Klöckner & Brick, 2020).

### Info Box

#### How to choose a narrative to engage a large audience?

Motivating people who do not identify themselves with pro-environmental values and behaviours to change their behaviour is difficult. The Research found that communicating the co-benefits of addressing climate change provides a good way to motivate even “non-environmentalists” to engage in pro-environmental action (Co-benefits refer to benefits for society of pro-environmental behaviour, such as a reduction of diseases). So, try to put an emphasis on co-benefits in your social media posts to successfully engage a large audience, even non-environmentalists.

## YouTube

The triple planetary crisis is a very broad and complex topic, so there is an urgent need to share information and education in an understandable and accessible way.

YouTube is the biggest platform for online videos in the world and offers you just that. If you want to educate yourself, find information to share or even create content on your own, YouTube is a great place to start. In the following ten-steps strategy, we will explain the most important things you need to consider if you want to start your own YouTube channel.



#### Step 1: Define your topic

What type of videos do you want to produce and about what? Explore the variety of options provided by YouTube that can help in the process of growing a network and monetizing your content. Get inspired and informed on what is out there by checking out and analysing different accounts, communication styles and presentations by various stakeholders. *Searching for inspiration?* Check out channels such as Climate Town, Not Just Bikes, Ecosia, or Global Weirding. You can find some inspiration for your potential first video topics here!

#### Step 2: Define your goals

What interesting and important content can you add to the material that is already out there? No need to reinvent the wheel, but maybe you can put your spin on a story or combine narratives to highlight new facets. You can learn here how you can set up your goals.

#### Step 3: Define your strategy

Clearly define your target audience. Who do you want to reach out to? What is needed to resolve the environmental issue you want to address, and what could your audience do about it? Be aware of the environmental values, attitudes, and motivations of your audience to choose the narrative and content of your posts (language/images) that successfully address and engage your audience. Try to imagine what narrative would be most likely to cause a reaction, what issues are personally close to them, and what would motivate them to engage in behavioural change?

#### Step 4: Decide on a narrative

Where should your story start, and where should it end? Who will be watching your video? Choose your tone and format accordingly. The most popular duration for videos on YouTube is 7 and 15 minutes. YouTube Shorts can help you make short videos up to 60 seconds!



### Step 5: Start filming

Grab your phone or a camera and start recording yourself, your environment, or use stock footage - make it relevant to the story you are telling. [Here](#) are some practical tips for the recording process.

### Step 6: Make your content accessible

When uploading, remember to make use of tags and thumbnails. Using a lot of different tags will help promote the video while using tags that are misleading will decrease the average watching time. The first impression will get people interested, but you also want them to stay.

### Step 7: Use criticism to your advantage

After uploading your video, be open to different opinions, but do not let them deplete your motivation.

### Step 8: Collaborate!

To successfully inspire many people to engage in pro-environmental change, we need to work together. Expand your horizon and your exposure to other peoples' attention. Here you find further advice on how to identify potential collaborators and how to approach them.

### Step 9: Engagement is key

The more you interact with others through the platform, the higher your visibility will be. Here you can find YouTube tips for beginners to grow a new channel.

### Step 10: Enhancing exposure

Try to upload new content on a regular basis. Algorithms favour regularity and will be more likely to promote your content. To reach a larger audience, you can post your videos on different platforms (e.g., Instagram, Facebook etc.)

## Twitter

Many people describe [Twitter](#) as the new political arena, where the rules are different to the ones in real life. Twitter can get you in touch with many inspiring people: young environmental leaders and their organisations, pro-environmental stakeholders from around the world or opinion leaders from many sectors. It is a news and opinion platform that monitors and shapes the narrative of current events and political conversations.

### Step 1: Define your topic

What do you want to talk about? Defining this is important for your Twitter usage, as its algorithm is driven by the interests that you communicate on Twitter. Twitter brings to your timeline topics based on your account activity, you'll natively come across them in your home timeline. [Here](#) you can get more insights on how the Twitter algorithm works and how you can make it work for you. And [here](#) you can get inspired by African climate youth activists to define your first topic.

### Step 2: Define your goal(s)

What do you want to achieve on Twitter? To track your accomplishments on Twitter, clearly define your goals and divide them into the smallest, manageable steps. (e.g., goal 1: reach 10 followers within one week, goal 2: get reposted 20 times within one month etc.).

### Step 3: Define your strategy

To use Twitter most effectively, be aware of the different engagement strategies and potentially decide to follow one or two, so you can work towards your goals consistently.

- **The leader:** Make your voice heard on Twitter by sharing your opinion and getting reposted by your

followers. If your posts or the [hashtags](#) that you use start trending, they will be shown to other people browsing Twitter and looking for new topics. You can also start a discussion and invite others to join.

- **The expert:** Get in touch with other experts in similar areas and exchange knowledge, best practices and opportunities. Join existing discussions and promote a science-based approach in relation to environmental issues.
- **The mediator:** Interact with different stakeholders and create connections between actors that share a similar approach or mission. Often enough, many activists are striving for the same thing, unaware of the existence of each other. You can make an impact by connecting them with each other.
- **The supporter:** Every opinion leader needs their supporters who consistently share their content. By linking, reposting, and commenting on the posts of inspiring activists, you can help them reach a broader audience and make sure their voices are heard.

### Step 4: Define your content

Despite the new Twitter rule for the unlimited number of characters, the African region is still restricted to 280-character tweets. Keeping tweets [short and concise](#) while staying and engaging with your followers is key. Twitter is more of an open network. You can easily share external links and videos from other platforms. Always double-check the source before you post or repost something! [Here](#) is a general guide you can follow to identify credible sources.

### Step 5: Start your account

There are a few steps involved to set up your Twitter account. You can find a step-by-step guide [here](#).

### Step 6: Be careful

There is a danger of [misinformation](#), [fake news](#), [parody accounts](#), and [trolls](#) on Twitter. You will not get around to doing your own fact-checking and remaining critical of the information that you consume and share yourself.

### Step 7: Get your first followers

You can follow individual users as well as hashtags. We recommend these [climate Twitter users](#) and [hashtags](#) as a start. If you are an environmentalist, you should indicate that clearly in your profile bio and even send introduction messages to other climate activists or organisations you are following. Be conscious of parody accounts; they impersonate, mislead and distract.

### Step 8: Start posting and reposting

It is time for you to write your first post! By sharing other users' posts in your timeline, reposting gives you the chance to voice your opinion and show support for their content. People will associate you with the content and this affects how they view your individual profile. As a microblogging space where personal opinions on topics are shared, be mindful and reflect on your own [assumptions](#) and [biases](#) that you might unwisely carry into your postings.

### Step 9: Growing your Twitter Page

If you want to become and remain visible, post regularly and follow some trends to reach a wider audience. You can monitor the trending hashtags to find the ones which relate to the environment and start from there. The challenge is to find a balance between tal-

king about (new) topics that you consider to be important while being visible in already existing, trending discourses.

### Step 10: Take care of yourself

Reflect on your work, time investment and feelings. Trolls and critics exist on Twitter. Stay focused and pay more attention to productive criticism rather than the negative. As with every social media platform, [several problems](#) can occur when using Twitter, making conscious usage important. Please also carefully read the [Info Box](#) about mental health and online safety.



## TikTok

[TikTok](#) is one of the fastest-growing and most popular social media platforms to date. It relies on the visual impact of short and fun content and hosts a large community of [young people](#) that is increasingly interested in environmental preservation. Summing it up: [A climate discussion is happening on TikTok](#), and you can join it to get in touch with a global community of creators and influencers who are concerned about the planetary crisis.

**Our tip:** Watch the [TED talk](#) by climate activist Zahra Biabani on eco-friendly content on TikTok and pro-environmental change.

### Step 1: Define your topic

Do you want to talk about environment-related issues such as climate awareness, education, or sustainable and zero-waste lifestyle? It should definitely be a topic that fuels your creativity and that you care about on a personal level.

**Our tip:** Watch some content by creators from [EcoTok](#) to get some inspiration.

### Step 2: Define your goal(s)

Define your goals and break them into small steps to monitor their fulfilment and your personal progress (e.g.: goal 1: Reach 10 followers within 2 days, goal 2: receive 100 views on one Reel within a day etc.). There are many [success stories](#) and a large [EcoTok](#) community, proving a large audience is interested in environment-related content.

### Step 3: Define your strategy

By combining creative ideas, artistic work, and commitment, you can make your audience aware of the importance of environmental action and accessible engagement options. Accordingly, one strategy would be to become a “knowledge broker” of climate facts. Another strategy is to reach people on a personal level with ideas for changing their lifestyle in a more sustainable way. More [frequent exposure](#) to sustainable practices and ideas can increase accessibility and enhance behaviour change. If you want to read more into the behaviours, practices, and motivations of TikTok Social Activists, we recommend this [paper](#).

### Step 4: Define your content

Get inspired by [TikTok creators](#) and use their openly shared [resources](#) to define and create your content. Find creative ways from [African TikToker](#) and many other inspiring people to incorporate sustainability into their daily lives (e.g. [shopping more sustainably](#), [cooking with plants](#) out of nature or even their backyard or tips to achieve a [zero-waste lifestyle](#)).

### Step 5: Start your account

Download TikTok from Google Play or the App Store. Remember to set up a strong password that you do not share with anyone, and use a [two-way authentication](#) for additional safety. Consider [this guide](#) about keeping your personal information safe. Select an account name and profile picture reflecting your content and introduce yourself and the account in the bio.

### Step 6: Be careful

The [data management of TikTok](#) has been a controversial issue in the past. Be aware that you are sharing your content and your data with unknown entities.

### Step 7: Get your first followers

Start by following your personal friends, family, and people you know in real life. Afterwards, we recommend searching for users who share similar content as you, so you can support each other with likes, comments, and shares.

### Step 8: Start posting your own videos

Develop your own style and personal touch, so your audience will recognize you easily. Make sure there is some variation in your content: sometimes you might want to participate in TikTok trends, reach your niche audience, or experiment with new ideas that might resonate with a broader audience.

Develop a specific publishing plan and use the appropriate and most popular hashtags (e.g., coinciding with COP27, UNEP launched the [#ClimateAction](#) global campaign to encourage communities all over the world to join the climate conversation).

### Step 9: Growing your TikTok Page

We recommend you read [this guide](#) and watch this [YouTube video](#) on how to reach more people with your TikTok content. There are many ways to be successful on TikTok, so be open-minded and try different strategies.

Engage directly with similar accounts by reposting and cross-posting each other, to empower each other and grow together - maybe you can even start a collaborative campaign or Merger or start a Live with other accounts.

### Step 10: Take care of yourself

TikTok’s algorithms are designed to [maximise the time you spend](#) scrolling and watching videos. Please take care of yourself and carefully read the [Info Box](#) about mental health and online safety.



#### Info Box

### How to share good content in the correct way?

Always be careful to check the source you get information from before you post or repost something! Here is a [general guide](#) you can follow to identify credible sources.

Also carefully review the images or videos being borrowed to determine the conditions of use. Consider the guidelines of the respective social network. Please note that many photos with [Creative Commons licenses](#) still have restrictions on their use. It is your responsibility to make sure that you are not violating any copyright regulations. If in doubt, refrain from posting the image or video. Read [this guide](#) for more information on the correct usage of content by others.

#### Info Box

### Be aware and beware of your own biases.

We as humans are prone to different cognitive biases. One common bias is the: [confirmation bias](#), which refers to “the tendency to process information by looking for, or interpreting, information that is consistent with one’s existing beliefs”. Knowing the [most common fallacies](#) will help you to critically evaluate your own judgements, beliefs, and acquisition of information. Stay open to contradictory information and viewpoints in your engagement on social media!

## Info Box

### Basic tips for social media content creation

- Provide sources for informative content if possible (e.g., “Source: @UNEP”).
  - Use open resources and tools to enhance your social media content creation: [Unsplash](#), [Pixabay](#), [Pexels](#), [Flickr](#), [Canva](#), and [GlobalConscience.world](#) (Our tip: Carefully review the images being borrowed to determine the conditions of use).
  - Create a coherent and clear social media presence:
    - » Coherence in design (e.g., colours, font, font size).
- Our tip: Decide on certain colours, fonts etc. that represent the core vision, mission and values of your account and stick to those. Do not mix too many sizes of headings/sub-headings.
- Transfer data (to colleagues) without losing any quality (e.g., [WeTransfer](#)).

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