

# FAST FACTS

United Nations  
Development Programme



Empowered lives.  
Resilient nations.

## Youth and climate change

Today's youth has a unique stake in the global dialogue on climate change: within their generation's lifetime, our planet's climate will cease to be what we know it to be. Climate change is a threat to development, the stability of countries and economies, and the health of the planet. Extreme weather has a cost of trillions of dollars and endangers lives and livelihoods around the world. Few societies are untouched by the effects of climate change: adaptation and mitigation are the central approaches in the international climate change process.

Young men and women are playing an active role in protecting the environment and finding innovative solutions to climate change. After crisis, youth often play a pivotal role in adopting and promoting environmentally-friendly practices at home and in the community. Young women are contributing as managers of natural resources in rural economies and this in turn impacts both diagnostics and solutions towards resilience building.

Supporting young men and women in formal processes and platforms where they can advocate for sustainable utilization of environmental resources reinforces national efforts for reducing the environmental carbon footprint while continuing to grow and deliver goods, services and jobs to their populations.

### MATTERS OF FACT

- **UNDP maintains a US\$2.3 billion portfolio in climate change adaptation and is well-positioned to support over 140 partner countries in post-COP21 implementation.**
- **Close to half a million youth around the world have taken action on climate change through SGP projects in their homes, schools and communities.**
- **In 2014-2015, 446 SGP projects included a youth leadership and / or participation component ranging from environmental education and awareness raising, piloting and testing new technologies, sustainable livelihoods and waste management, reforestation and afforestation.**

### UNDP's approach

As outlined in its Youth Strategy for 2014-2017 ([www.undp.org/youth](http://www.undp.org/youth)), UNDP works with young people as a positive force for transformational change, strengthening youth engagement in the development and implementation of green solutions to the challenges they face such as unemployment and marginalization. Strategic entry points which focus on empowering and mobilizing youth within – and beyond – their communities include:

- Facilitate inter-generational knowledge transfer, including through projects with an environmental education component.



Eco-club Members in Nepal cultivate Wild Himalayan Cherry trees, which provide natural options for controlling land degradation and ecosystem restoration.  
© Andrea Egan, EbA/DoF/UNDP Nepal, and Tine Rossing.

- Support adaptation and mitigation actions and enhance effective participation of youth in climate change policy decision-making processes, providing a conduit for innovative perspectives and solutions.
- Identify local capacities, engage and build on them, recognizing the contributions and potential of young people in emergency response, community renewal, reconstruction and development, particularly in environmentally vulnerable locations.
- Engage and promote young women as managers of natural resources in rural economies, providing skills-focused training where necessary.
- Support advocacy efforts on issues of high interest to young men and women, including sustainability and climate change, the role of youth as active agents for social transformation, employability and entrepreneurship.
- In partnership with governments, introduce and support national policies that address the full needs of young people, strengthening youth participation in governance including through legislative reviews, youth advisory councils and the production of youth sensitive reporting.
- Support existing – and facilitate new – exchanges amongst youth and youth organizations on a regional and global level to create synergy, share knowledge and enhance impact, for example through youth networks.

## UNDP in action

**Small Grants Programme:** Through the GEF Small Grants Programme (SGP), funded by the Global Environment Facility (GEF), UNDP implements projects designed to support experimentation, promote innovation and develop models for potential replication and scaling up. SGP empowers young people at the grassroots level by providing seed funding and technical support to youth organizations.

**Arab States:** The YES Green Project is a multi-country initiative covering Algeria, Egypt, Libya, Morocco and Tunisia, which links youth employability and green entrepreneurship. In Morocco, for example, UNDP supported the creation of five youth-led start-up companies, particularly in the field of photovoltaics, waste management and waste oil recycling.

**Jamaica:** UNDP, in partnership with Jamaica's Ministry of Water, Land, Environment and Climate Change, sponsored a

competition to design the new logo of the Climate Change Division. The logo was selected from designs created by young people from across the island. UNDP presented prizes of a 1000 gallon water tank for rainwater harvesting to the school with the most entries.

**Kazakhstan:** In Akmola, school-based NGOs developed an umbrella project to introduce Energy Efficiency (EE) technologies to the schools in the region. The 19 best projects, identified through the 2014 Central Asian Competition to prepare for the EXPO-2017 to be held in Astana, won grants and are now being implemented by the youth and contribute to the improvement of 15 schools and colleges through the use of LED lighting systems, including energy-saving control systems, solar water heaters, wind turbines and energy-efficient woodworking machines.

**Namibia:** Inspired by UNDP's Youth Strategy, UNDP Namibia launched its first "Youth Development Fund" in 2014. Given the growing tourism sector and the intrinsic link between tourism and the environment, capacity building efforts have focused on supporting training opportunities for youth to develop the necessary skills and knowledge to seek employment in these sectors. Most are trained to become certified field/tour guides who can secure employment at various national parks and private nature reserves.

**Nepal:** The Mountain Ecosystem-based Adaptation (EbA) Programme, led by the Department of Forests and UNDP Nepal, is supporting the Chihandanda Community Forest User Groups to transform barren land into healthy agroforestry plantations to combat land degradation and unemployment. An integral part of this transformation has been the creation of a local school-based Eco-club which engages youth in building the knowledge and momentum to lead these communities towards low carbon, climate resilient futures.

### For more information, visit:

[www.undp.org/youth](http://www.undp.org/youth)  
[www.sgp.undp.org](http://www.sgp.undp.org)  
[youth@undp.org](mailto:youth@undp.org)  
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