



youthXchange

Climate Change and Lifestyles Guidebook



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youthXchange

Guidebook Series

Climate Change and Lifestyles



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The *YouthXchange Guidebook on Climate Change and Lifestyles*, which focuses on the challenges, opportunities and good practices of climate change, is the first in a series of thematic guidebooks. This series is produced for young people and people working with young people, educators, teachers, trainers and youth leaders around the world.

Since its launch in 2001, the YouthXchange Initiative has been working with national partners in 45 countries to adapt and translate the YouthXchange training kit on responsible consumption. Now translated into more than 20 languages and distributed worldwide through partnerships with national governments and local organizations, the guidebook has reached more than 400,000 young people worldwide.

For more information on the YouthXchange Initiative: www.youthxchange.net



Foreword

Every day, young people are exposed to numerous images and messages that promote models of unbridled consumption as the key to happy and fulfilling lives. In reality, however, the impacts of this unsustainable consumption are extremely harmful, contributing to climate change and other environmental challenges, such as rising sea levels, water shortages and food insecurity.

The world's youth will have a significant role to play if we are to bring about the widespread behavioural change needed to shift towards more sustainable lifestyles and consumption habits. It is important for young people to understand that behind over-consumption lies increased exploitation of resources, rising poverty, widening inequalities and persistent conflicts, all of which will worsen with climate change and eventually will minimize their opportunities for a better and sustainable future. The poorest of the poor, those who cannot consume enough to meet their basic needs, are the worst hit by climate change. Most of these are young people under 24, who make up nearly half of the world's population, with most living in developing countries.

But young people are determined, creative and have high hopes. They have the energy and willpower to help make their communities and the world better places and are constantly looking for the best opportunities for their future. Many of them are concerned about climate change and are ready to take action and to look for ideas and guidance on how to change and adapt their lifestyles towards more sustainable ones. Information and education are essential in empowering them and helping them to better understand not only the science of climate change and what is at stake, but also the way it relates to their daily lives and local environments, as well as to the choices they make, especially as consumers. Most young people have already heard about climate change, but many of them still perceive it as an abstract threat, too complex and too big while in fact its consequences are concrete, like the solutions and behaviours that can be developed to adapt to or mitigate them.

UNEP and UNESCO's *YouthXchange Guidebook on Climate Change and Lifestyles* aims to answer the questions that young people aged from 15 to 24 may have, and to inspire them in their daily lives. It explores the interrelationship between climate change and lifestyles through a scientific, political, economic, social, ethical and cultural angle and identifies actions young people might take towards more sustainable lifestyles. It channels the relevant information related to climate change in a less abstract and frightening manner, helping young people develop alternate visions and set goals towards improving their future. This guidebook provides information, case studies and useful tips around topics relevant to young people and their everyday lives, such as food and drink, travel and transport, leisure and entertainment.

At a time when the Earth's resources are being depleted faster than they can be replenished, adopting and promoting more sustainable ways of living that are in harmony with our communities and nature has never been more crucial. This guidebook supports young people to become advocates and agents of change for sustainable lifestyles in their respective communities around the world.



Ms Sylvie Lemmet

Director

Division of Technology, Industry and Economics
UNEP



Mr Qian Tang

Assistant Director-General
for Education,
UNESCO



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1. YXC Guidebook Series

Climate Change and Lifestyles is the first in a series of guidebooks supporting the UNESCO/ UNEP YouthXchange (YXC) Initiative, which was created in 2001 to promote sustainable lifestyles among youth (15-24 years) through education, dialogue, awareness raising and capacity building. The series is being produced for young people and people working with youth, such as educators, teachers, trainers and youth leaders in both developed and developing countries.

Almost half of the world's population is under the age of 25, and nearly 90 per cent of them live in developing countries. Youth is a critical stakeholder in the global economy and will be the main actor and motor for change in the near future. Thus, the energy, motivation and creativity of youth are essential assets to stimulating change.

Aims of the YXC Guidebook on Climate Change and Lifestyles:

- Explore the links between lifestyles and climate change;

- Help young people consider the actions they should take towards more sustainable lifestyles;

- Support courses and actions that promote greater understanding of climate change and lifestyles among youth.



The guidebook:

- Considers the causes and effects of climate change and its human impacts and responses, while connecting them to lifestyle choices and the technical and social infrastructures of a society;

- Provides scientific, political, economic, social, ethical and cultural perspectives on climate change;

- Explains complex issues in accessible language supported by facts, graphics, images, examples and web links;

- Develops the critical skills young people need to make personal choices to address the challenges of climate change.

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

(Ban Ki-Moon, Secretary-General of the United Nations)

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