



# Green Rising

Mobilising Millions of Young People to Protect  
their Communities from the Climate Crisis



**GENERATION  
UNLIMITED**

unicef 

for every child



---

**Temperatures are rising.**

**Sea levels are rising.**

**Young people are rising too.**

**Rising to take action.**

**To protect themselves and their  
communities.**

**Challenging governments and  
corporations to follow their lead.**

**Protecting what they love from a  
climate crisis that is here - NOW.**



We are taking  
Care  
of our future

# Introduction

The world is experiencing a triple planetary crisis: climate change, pollution, and biodiversity loss. In 2022 alone, millions of people were displaced or died as a result of droughts, heatwaves, floods, cyclones, hurricanes, wildfires, and other extreme weather events. UNICEF’s 2022 heatwave report shows that 559 million children are exposed to high heatwave frequency and by 2050, virtually every child on earth – over 2 billion children – will face more frequent heatwaves. Last year has deepened the worst drought on record in the Horn of Africa, bringing communities to the brink of famine. Severe floods affected 19 countries across West Africa and plunged one-third of Pakistan underwater. Children are being left behind in developing the foundational skills and green skills they need to adapt to the new realities of climate change and that would enable them to power the green transition. For young people, and especially for marginalised girls, the climate crisis threatens their future livelihoods and survival. **Urgent action is needed NOW to make education systems climate resilient and to engage children and youth in meaningful climate action.** The world’s children and youth bear the least responsibility for the climate crisis, but they are suffering its greatest consequences.

Today’s governments and leaders are responsible for tackling the greatest existential threat facing humanity.

The UN Secretary-General has openly acknowledged the failure of governments, businesses, and international organisations to protect the planet with a direct appeal to young people:

“My generation has largely failed until now to preserve both justice in the world and to preserve the planet. It is your generation that must make us be accountable to make sure that we don’t betray the future of humankind.”



— António Guterres, Secretary-General, United Nations

“Small acts when multiplied by millions can change the world.”



— Ugandan climate justice advocate- Vanessa Nakate

## Young people are ready to ACT NOW:

- to **lead climate-smart and gender-transformative** community projects that build resilience at local level, engaging schools and local leaders
- to **learn green and digital skills** – specially marginalized girls and youth with disabilities, contributing to achieving a **just green transition.**
- to **protect ecosystems** by preserving water sources and forests, using cleaner energy and turning waste into energy
- to mobilise their communities, especially using gender-transformative approaches, **to adapt and prepare for the next climate event** that may strike
- to take up **sustainable lifestyles** and mobilize their communities, offline and online, to do the same
- to **advocate with government and corporates** to enact green policies and practices that lead to **greater gender equality and enhanced funding for local adaptation**



# #GreenRising

10 million young people  
taking action to protect  
local communities  
against the climate crisis

While young people are not responsible for the climate crisis, they cannot afford to wait, and in many communities taking action now is a matter of survival. Over the next three years (2023-2025) UNICEF, Generation Unlimited and their ecosystem of public, private and youth partners will support the global mobilisation of millions of young people – at a grassroots level - to take concrete green actions to protect and adapt to the devastating impact that climate change is exacting on their families, neighbours, villages, towns, and cities.

**Green Rising commits to contribute to a just green transition in which the most vulnerable youth are empowered with the education, skills and opportunities to be champions for the planet.**

**We will support 10 million young people to take action by 2025.**

With a presence in more than 190 countries and territories around the world, UNICEF and Generation Unlimited's ecosystem of partners are uniquely positioned to mobilise youth in all corners of the globe, within their local context. **#GreenRising is rooted in gender-transformative action and climate justice**, leveraging the power of young people to build a more equal, peaceful, and sustainable world.

We will help ignite youth-led actions at scale, while supporting the expansion of actions young people are already taking. **#GreenRising** will allow us to amplify their work, giving it the impetus that will inspire even more participation. The initiative will include metrics and tools that will help young people track and communicate the impact of their activities to a wider audience, browse through other creative ideas for their projects or find inspiration from a community of like-minded, action-oriented young people.

We'll also support youth on their journeys of change-making with mentorship and guidance, providing additional resources, trainings, and other incentives to inspire them to sign up, show up, and continue along a trajectory of leadership and impact. Depending on the level of financial support, we hope to also provide funding to scale their projects.

The initiative will bring together civil society organisations, youth-led organisations, foundations, tech platforms (e.g. Goodwall, U-Report, YOMA, Learning Passport), governments, and private sector partners in support of young people.

### 3 Pillars of Action

1

**Volunteerism:** Young volunteers take action on a wide variety of environmental issues – ranging from planting trees and monitoring air pollution levels to conserving water, reducing waste, and recycling

2

**Advocacy:** Young people run campaigns to leverage their collective voices to drive change in their communities, their countries and in the world: from local school boards and district councils all the way to COP28 and the United Nations

3

**Skills, Jobs & Entrepreneurship:** Young people help power the net zero transition - developing green skills via formal or informal trainings and curricula; take jobs in the green economy; innovate and create green ventures. Upskilling girls unlocks women's leadership for climate action and powers a just green transition.



# What Youth Action looks like

---



## Nigeria

Youth tackle environmental issues through the Green Challenge



## Mongolia

Measuring air quality and alerting community members when it is unsafe outside



## Egypt

Created organic fertilizer made from recycled sugarcane waste decrease water usage in farming



## Burkina Faso

Learning about solar energy and installing solar panels



## Kazakhstan

Challenging friends to stop using single use plastic for a month



## Lebanon

Setting up systems to turn biowaste into fuel



## South Africa

Collecting water quality data on local streams and providing an early warning system where action needed



## Chad

Planting of trees in Gassi, at the primary school of Digo



## Armenia

Making public art with recycled material to raise awareness on over-consumption



## Kenya

Engaging local youth groups to create renewable energy from environmental waste





# Youth Climate Action Examples

## **Mongolia**

Young volunteers spread out across the country with monitoring devices that capture & measure air pollution levels, especially in Ulaanbaatar & the other major cities in the country where air pollution has been defined as the worst in the world. The volunteers use the data to run awareness and advocacy campaigns in their communities — alerting people when air toxicity levels are especially high, identifying areas of most risk, and providing communities with cleaner alternatives for heating their homes.

## **Burundi**

1,000 young people are building cleaner energy stoves for cooking and water purification, reducing wood utilization, reducing indoor pollution that affects mainly women and girls and generating earnings to finance their studies. Participating girls have developed green and STEM skills and are now inspired to get involved in other development projects to protect their communities from the impacts of climate change.

## **Kyrgyzstan**

Nearly 1,000 young people have been trained in Disaster Risk Reduction to go to schools in their villages, running simulations in areas that are prone to earthquakes and hard for the government or any one organization to reach. The programme has reached close to 250,000 school students (60% girls) and 248 children with disabilities, as well as 14,362 school administration staff, benefited from emergency skills development through DRR training and simulation exercise. The young volunteers train students & teachers what to do in times of an earthquake and verify that each school has the tools in place to respond in case of an extreme weather event.



### Malaysia

Youth have engaged in climate/environmental action that is framed in localized narratives, sensitive to local needs, and ensuring that diverse groups are represented in terms of location, ability, gender, and ethnicity. Youth-led environmental groups are using local & indigenous knowledge to protect the environment and created a national platform for knowledge exchange and collaboration to build projects that respond to local climate impacts. 70 local environmental organizations, 39 youth-led enterprises, 11 academic institutions and 16 government entities are now part of this youth-led network.

### U-Report Climate Action

Responding to demand from children and young people to learn more about climate change and what they can do about it, UNICEF's U-Report platform developed a Climate Action Chatbot. Over 12,000 young people used the bot to get a variety of information such as climate facts – from causes, to impacts, to solutions. It also piloted a new 'Act' feature, which coached users on how to create their own advocacy campaign, be it petitioning for solar panels on the roof of their school or lowering air pollution in their city. This new feature acts like a mini advocacy workshop on your phone by asking users six simple questions that help to produce a campaign plan.

### Viet Nam, Nigeria, Côte d'Ivoire, Honduras, UAE, India, Indonesia, Saint Vincent & Grenadines and Anguilla

UNICEF is supporting Ministries of Education to prepare children and young people with knowledge, attitudes and skills for engaging in effective climate action — ensuring children learn and gain awareness of climate change in schools through the formal education curriculum, developing climate action frameworks for K-12 education, and upskilling the teaching workforce in climate literacy. As more students learn about climate change and are equipped with skills to respond to the crisis, we'll see more young people stepping up to take action as well.

### India

Over the next 3 years, 1.1 million youth will be trained in water conservation practices in Maharashtra and Karnataka - states that have been declared perennially water-stressed - and take on a variety of actions such as fixing leaks and flows of taps, encouraging people to use less water while brushing teeth / bathing / doing the laundry, and advocating for community soak pits. This network of youth volunteers is projected to reach 4.4 million community members with essential water saving and recharge actions, saving up to 40 million cubic meters of water for use.



# Theory Of Change

---

## Purpose Statement

Green Rising will drive a just green transition in which the most vulnerable children and youth are empowered with the education, skills and opportunities to take climate action and build community resilience.

## Impact Statement

By 2030, UNICEF, GenU and its partners will mobilise millions of children and young people worldwide to take concrete climate actions, using their skills to improve water and energy conservation, biodiversity protection and forest restoration, reduce pollution, and implement innovative local solutions that increase community resilience and power a just transition.

## UNICEF's Sustainability & Climate Action Plan (SCAP) Alignment

**Green Rising is a primary vehicle for delivering the SCAP's vision of a global accelerator that provides young people to be more effective champions for sustainability**

## Green Rising Outcomes

By 2026 Green Rising will catalyse the following<sup>1</sup>:

- 100 million children and young people have taken actions that helped to preserve water sources, conserve and save water, forests, and energy, utilise cleaner energy, and manage waste effectively at local and global levels to protect the environment.
- In 100 countries children and young people lead climate smart and gender transformative community projects that build resilience at local level, engaging schools and local leaders.
- In 50 countries children and young people, particularly marginalized girls and youth with disabilities, learn green, blue, and digital skills, contributing to achieving a just green transition.
- In 50 countries children and young people successfully advocate with government and corporates to enact green policies that lead to enhanced funding for climate adaptation and environmental protection.

## Social and Environmental Metrics

- **10 million young people directly mobilized, skilled, and taking actions**
- **100 million young people engaged through broader ecosystem of partners**
- 50,000 hectares of land have benefited from conservation actions such as planting trees and protection of local biodiversity
- 3 GW of electricity have been saved through young people's actions.
- 120 billion litres of water have been saved through young people's actions.
- 100,000 tons of trash/plastic have been recycled/managed through young people's actions.

## Output Statements

### Skills, Jobs, and Entrepreneurship

**Climate action in learning environments:** Children and young people develop green and blue skills through engagement in concrete environmental actions that address local climate issues in schools and communities (including formal and non-formal learning environments, universities, and training institutions).

**Climate action delivered through employment and entrepreneurship:** Young people obtain employment in the green economy or innovate and create green ventures that drive climate action and resilience.

### Volunteerism

Young volunteers have mobilised communities to engage in environmental protection efforts, promote sustainable practices, and actively participate in climate initiatives.

### Climate Action Advocacy

Young people have designed and executed awareness, behaviour change, and advocacy campaigns and provide input into climate policies, national adaptation plans and NDCs.

<sup>1</sup> The 2026 Green Rising targets are part of UNICEF's SCAP 2030 targets in particular. By 2030, 1) UNICEF and partners will aspire to touch the lives of 300 million children in 100 countries to take practical actions for the environment and 500 million children in 100 countries with sustainability and climate education. 2) UNICEF and partners will aspire to directly support 50 million children in 100 countries to take practical actions for the environment and 50 million children in 60 countries with sustainability and climate education

## Activities

**Education through climate action:** Children and youth knowledge and skills are built by gaining understanding of local climate challenges and undertaking learning activities that foster climate mitigation or drive climate adaptation actions in schools and communities (including non-formal learning environments, universities, and training institutions).

**Drive community outreach and amplification:** Children and youth capacity to mobilise communities to take climate action, actively participate in conservation initiatives and promote more resilient communities is built.

**Promote green innovations and entrepreneurship:** Youth receive training and resources to build skills to engage in ecological innovations, green projects/ventures and entrepreneurship to empower young people, particularly girls.

**Climate advocacy and campaigns:** Youth capacity to conduct campaigns, influence policy negotiation, drive advocacy and awareness, and strengthen youth movements and youth-led networks is built.

## Inputs

**Knowledge Base:** Education and training materials, courses, and other knowledge tools that support climate action are available in local languages and contextually relevant formats.

**Partnerships:** Governments, private sector entities, NGOs, youth organisations, educational institutions, and climate activists partner to leverage resources, expertise, and networks for climate action and resilience.

**Funding:** Funding to support educational programs, skill development initiatives, advocacy campaigns, seed funding for new enterprises, and community/youth-led projects is available to support actions.

**Monitoring and assessment tools:** Monitoring systems are designed to assess the reach and effectiveness of activities and determine environmental impact.

## Assumptions

Climate action at scale can be delivered by young people when enabling factors such as funding, government buy-in, technical and operational skills, motivation, and inclusion are in place.

Governmental stakeholders and the private sector are open to working with young leaders to design and implement policies and strategies to address the climate change crisis through a public-private-youth partnership approach.

Financial, human, and material investments from the public and private sectors can catalyse youth-led climate action and help prioritise and amplify youth voices.

Public, private and youth actors will continue to support youth-led climate action and strengthen youth's capacities to drive climate action and advocacy.

Girls and young women will be further marginalised if programming and opportunities are not explicitly designed to enable their inclusion.



“As a young person I do hope that my generation and future ones can develop the solutions needed to fight climate change” - Ahmad, 29, from Ajloun is a Youth Climate Leader and owns two projects on hydroponics to reduce water consumption on his farm.

**Green Rising is a global grassroots movement rooted in climate justice.**

COP28UAE

COP28  
LAUNCH

---

The high-visibility launch of Green Rising at COP28 further built UNICEF's credibility and influence as a climate action partner, with endorsements gained from influential voices, governments and organization.

It also set the stage for expansion of the initiative, and alliances initiated for the roadmap to COP30.

Held on the first ever COP Youth, Children, Education and Skills Day, the Green Rising launch at RewirEd Summit hosted by Dubai Cares featured the presence and perspectives from leaders across public-private-youth sectors, including government representatives Hon. **Shri Bhupender Yadav**, Minister for Environment, Forest & Climate Change, and Labour & Employment of **India**; H.E. Dr. **Rania Al Mashat** **Egypt's** Minister of International Cooperation; and Hon. Dr. **Jeanne d'Arc Mujawamariya**, Minister of the Environment of **Rwanda**.

Through the series of COP28 events on Green Rising, UNICEF and Generation Unlimited spotlighted commitments to integrate children and youth as partners, influenced policymakers toward a more youth-centred perspective, and encouraged organizations to contribute their resources and expertise.

Prominent leaders have pledged support for Green Rising in a significant crowding-in of global partners committed to this vision.

### Partnership and Expansion

The **Government of Canada** and **Capgemini** have come onboard as early partners, along with **Accenture** and **SAP**.

Long-term implementation partners like **Goodwill** and the **World Organization of Scouts Movement** are complementing existing support from partners such as **IKEA Foundation**, the **Tony Elumelu Foundation**, **Unilever** and the Government of **Netherlands** for programmes already aligned with Green Rising.

Green Rising is gaining global traction, with the launch of local and regional chapters.

- The **Green Rising India Alliance** is led by YuWaah at UNICEF, Capgemini, Children's Investment Fund Foundation, Rohini Nilekani Philanthropies, ReNew Foundation, the Rockefeller Foundation, and SAP, with a goal to empower 50 million Indian children and youth to be climate-conscious, adaptable, and resilient by 2030.
- COP30 host H.E. Helder Barbalho, Governor of Pará State in Brazil's Amazon region, emphasized **Green Rising Amazonia's** efforts to support youth-led ecological transition. Pará State has initiated an Environmental Education, Sustainability, and Climate Policy, incorporating a school curriculum component benefiting over 500,000 children and adolescents.
- The Government of Kenya launched the one million youth **Green Army**, pledging to plant 15 billion trees by 2032 and restore 10.6M hectares of land, aligning with the Green Rising movement.

Green Rising is also supported by the Green Jobs for Youth Pact, a joint effort by UNICEF, ILO, and UNEP, alongside private sector contributors, to work towards creating 1 million new green jobs, greening 1 million jobs, and supporting 10,000 green entrepreneurs by 2030.

## Traction in media

- Green Rising received extensive coverage in local, regional and business news outlets, including Indian national network Doordarshan, CNN-IBN TV (India), Gulf News (UAE), The National (UAE), India Today (India), Businessworld (India), Sada Elbalad (Egypt), Agencia Para (Brazil), Revista Cenarium (Brazil), and more
- Out of the 653 organic mentions for Green Rising at COP28, 45% came from news articles.





# Will you join #GreenRising?



Please contact

Nadi Albino: [nalbino@unicef.org](mailto:nalbino@unicef.org)

Priya Marwah: [pmarwah@unicef.org](mailto:pmarwah@unicef.org)



**GENERATION  
UNLIMITED**

**unicef**   
for every child