THE POWER OF YOUTH

GCCA+
THE GLOBAL CLIMATE CHANGE ALLIANCE PLUS INITIATIVE
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Editor: Francesca Predazzi

Equipping tomorrow's workforce today

Jane Wilkinson

"Ambitious climate action could prevent 700 000 premature deaths from air pollution and create 65 million new low-carbon jobs"

As we edge toward the fifth anniversary of the Paris Agreement's adoption, our collective climate (in)action is tracking toward a 3.2 °C temperature rise (UNEP 2019). This is despite growing evidence that sustainable development and tackling climate change are mutually beneficial. Ambitious climate action enabled by carefully balanced social, environmental and economic policies could, by 2030, add USD 26 trillion in global economic benefits, prevent 700 000 premature deaths from air pollution, and create 65 million new low-carbon jobs, an additional USD 2.8 trillion in government revenues, and increased female labour-force participation.

The current COVID pandemic exemplifies how a global systemic catastrophe, such as climate change, can impact every sector of every country and decimate the global economy. Unlike recovery from COVID-19, the loss of marine and terrestrial habitats and mass extinctions from climate change impacts will be irreversible.

Millions of the world's youth are adding their voice to calls for responsible leadership, more resilient low-carbon solutions, better education, and investor accountability. Already focus is shifting to the 'next 1.31 billion', today's 5–15 years olds who by 2030 will join the global work force – one which will likely be in the process of deep transformation. For these kids, climate change education can foster the appetite for long-term behavioural shifts while equipping them with the cultural, technical and digital skills to thrive in a climate-changed future. Without such know-how, sustainable development will remain elusive.

In Cambodia, the Cambodia Climate Change Alliance supported by the GCCA+ is mainstreaming climate-focused education in secondary schools. 50 % of Cambodia's 16.7 million people are under 22 and 3 million children will enter the workforce over the next decade. Under curricula to be introduced this year,

"Today's 5–15 years olds by 2030 will join the global work force, one in the process of deep transformation"

"In Cambodia 500 000 students from grades 10 to 12 will learn about climate change"

500 000 students from grades 10 to 12 will learn about climate change, the vulnerability profile of their country, and possible policies, measures and technologies that could be applied to build resilience and reduce emissions.

The approach builds partly on an Eco-Schools pilot that has successfully engaged more than 7 000 young people and education officials in environmental and climate change issues. Students and teachers worked on resilience projects such as tree planting and climate-smart agriculture and on the circular economy.

This type of practical approach, already adopted in many countries, should be further scaled up and more systematically adopted to help build skills that will be integral to tomorrow's workforce.

With suitable education and engagement, today's students will build demand for more resilient, low-carbon solutions and shape investment decisions from both the private and public sectors. Only political will is needed to leverage the potential of the next generation for the transition to a more resilient, low-carbon economy.

Eco-schools across Cambodia

Over 7 000 students have learned climate change adaptation and mitigation practices in Cambodia. Initially, the subject of climate change adaptation and mitigation was not included in the national education curriculum in Cambodia. In order to change this situation, the project Mainstreaming Climate Change in Education, supported by the European Union-funded Cambodia Climate Change Alliance, improved the capacities of secondary-school teachers and students to build their knowledge of climate change through the integration of a climate-change subject into the national education curriculum. Students are involved in Eco-Clubs, working on activities such as bio-gardens, resilient farming, water containers, renovating toilets, growing trees, creating a small forest demo, and transforming waste into other objects.

Climate forward

Nigeria's youth: an asset or a consumer time bomb?

"Most adults today still value more highly the immediate benefit than future wellbeing"

"The problem of climate-change inequality is increasingly seen as a problem of intergenerational inequity"

"43% of Nigerians are below 14. Without climate change education, this is a ticking consumer time bomb"

In the nineties and noughties, advocates of climate justice were often dismissed as civil-society quacks whose views were easily disregarded as impossible to implement. Fast forward to 2020: Climate justice is now a cornerstone of climate policy. The phrase 'just transition' underpins the European Green Deal's plan to achieve a climate-neutral economy by 2050. What has changed?

Beyond the political headaches of dividing carbon budgets between countries, the problem of climate-change inequality is increasingly seen as a problem of intergenerational inequity. And from this angle, it resonates with all youth everywhere. Put simply: most adults today, given the choice, still value more highly the immediate benefit of, say, an air conditioned, uncrowded car ride over a hot bus, train or walk, or eating favourite vegetables all year around no matter their origin, or paying relatively less for fossil-fuelled electricity, than they value the future wellbeing of their children and grandchildren. With less than 10 years in which to turn around the most damaging climate change impacts, such attitudes have passed their use-by date for millions of youth who accuse today's leaders of stealing their futures.

Consider Nigeria, Africa's largest country and richest economy. Despite being flush with gas and oil resources, Nigeria, for multiple reasons, is still a lower-income country. Nigeria's population of 208 million is projected to double by 2050, and its capital, Lagos, will swell to an unbelievable 100 million by 2100.

Today, more than 60 % of Nigerians are under the age of 25, and a staggering 43 % are below 14. This massive youth population is a huge potential asset – providing education and training transmits the skills they need to become climate-conscious income generators in a fast-growing and modernising economy. Without climate change and new skills being embedded in their education, this asset is instead a ticking consumer time bomb.

At the political level, a long-awaited climate change bill has languished for more than two years. International partnerships such as the UN Economic Commission for Africa run programmes training university graduates, including women, to become influential policy advocates. But across the board, insufficient education funding leaves climate change training to civil society.

Youth organisations such as the International Climate Change Development Initiative Africa (ICCDIA), are taking the lead at grass-roots levels, for example, developing the Teach Recycling Early Manual about waste management, one of Nigeria's most pressing urban problems. More funding from domestic and international sources could help to scale up practical training across Nigeria, building demand for deeper changes at the national policy level as teens become adults. As ICCDIA says, 'teens are the future of our world and we depend on them to survive'.

Jane Wilkinson

Interview

Youth taking the lead on climate action in the Pacific

Filipe Veisa is a particularly active Youth Ambassador on Climate Change in the Pacific Region. How do you manage this role?

A leadership role in supporting climate change is very challenging but at the same time very rewarding. It requires commitment and support from all walks of life, including at the grass-roots level. I am thankful to our Pacific Region that we are taking action now. Fiji, where I am from, for example, was the COP23 president. With my current role at the centre, preaching and walking the talk on issues related to climate change is pivotal. One of my main roles here at the University of the South Pacific (USP) is to promote the programmes and courses that are available at USP PaCE-SD for youths, graduates and practitioners who have completed their first-degree studies and wish to pursue their career pathways in the area of climate change. This in turn will then assist them to go back to their countries, communities and apply what they have learnt in combating climate change impacts. Outside work, I also have talks with our youth groups in church on the importance of understanding climate change issues. This has also led to the initiation of one of our programmes just being developed, called the 'Initiative Youth Program', which involves activities such as mangrove planting, foreshore cleaning and home gardening as means to be food secure.

What actions are you taking at the local level to raise awareness of climate issues among young people specifically?

There is quite a lot of awareness on climate change issues happening in our local communities and our youths are taking the lead role in making this happen. Apart from the 'Initiative Youth Program', we also offer massive open online courses (MOOCs) on climate change, and most youth in the regions take this opportunity to understand climate change issues and their impacts.

Do you have any inspiring message for the youth in your Region and other ACP countries, on how they can concretely contribute to climate resilience?

Youth, we are the future! We have to start nurturing our planet now before it's too late. Climate change is real and is happening right now. If we think globally and work locally, we will be able to stay below the 1.5°C. Climate resilience starts at the individual level and for that to happen, education is key! We need to educate our youth on the reality of climate change and methods we can use to mitigate and adapt to it and to become more resilient.

Interviewed by Jean-Rémy Daue
Communication and KM Expert Intra-ACP

GCCA+ Masters in climate change in the Pacific

The European Union-funded PACRES project has announced the names of five students who will benefit from a full-time scholarship programme in climate change and food security.
The University of the South Pacific (USP) is implementing selected components of two European Union GCCA+ projects – GCCA+ Scaling up Pacific Adaptations (SUPA) and the Intra-ACP GCCA+ Pacific Adaptation to Climate Change and Resilience Building (PACRES).

Felipe Veisa

is student coordinator for the climate change programme at the Pacific Centre for Environment and Sustainable Development, University of the South Pacific, one of the main partners of the **Intra-ACP GCCA+ Programme** in the Pacific.

Story

DRC: protecting the forest from an early age

"Let's protect our forests and plant trees – has become the new favourite song for children in Yangambi"

"The project has created over 600 direct jobs, trained over 220 postgraduate students, restored around 300 hectares of land, and planted 300 000 trees"

"The programme is part of an ambitious endeavour to transform the landscape of Yangambi – the Biosphere Reserve"

'Batela zamba, tokobatela zamba, toloni nzete, tokobatela zamba' – let's protect our forests and plant trees – has become the new favourite song for children in Yangambi.

It is National Tree Day, an observance established in 1986 to commemorate the importance of trees for DRC's economy, society and environment. A special day to remind all citizens that the country's future is tied to the biodiversity and vitality of its forests.

Children and youth in Yangambi, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), learn to protect the forest and take care of the environment at school. An innovative environmental education programme, supported by the European Union through GCCA+, helps students in forest communities to understand the importance of using natural resources sustainably and encourages them to take action from young age.

'Environmental education should be part of the standard curriculum,' said Joelle Grandjean, who is responsible for the environmental education programme. 'From a young age, it is important for children to understand the relations between the forests and the livelihoods of their families and communities, and how to ensure that the generations to come can also benefit from all the resources that forests provide.'

The Center for International Forestry Research (CIFOR) has organised a dynamic workshop where the children learn to protect the forest and to take care of the environment. 'I love doing this. Children have so much energy and they are so eager to learn,' said Eric Basosila, one of the workshop facilitators and a recent graduate in sustainable forest management from DRC's University of Kisangani (UNIKIS). 'It gives me an opportunity to use what I learned in university to make a real change in communities,' he added.

'We have an environmental education team, formed by people who know the communities, forest experts and pedagogy specialists,' explains Jules Mayaux, the activity leader. This programme is part of an ambitious endeavour to transform the landscape of Yangambi – the Biosphere Reserve and its surroundings – into a place where forest conservation and scientific research contribute to improving the living conditions of the local populations. Financed by the European Union, the projects FORETS (Formation, Recherche, et Environnement dans la Tshopo) and YPS (Yangambi Pole Scientifique) have, since 2017, created over 600 direct jobs, trained over 220 postgraduate students, restored around 300 hectares of land, and planted 300 000 trees.

Ahtziri Gonzalez

Story

In Madagascar schools are teaching students to teach their parents

"Around 2 000 school students in Vakinankaratra province have benefited from a new climate-smart agriculture project"

"We introduced agro-ecology into the school programme to give children experience of sustainable farming from an early age"

"After visiting our test plots, the farmers have been convinced"

A field in the central highland region of Madagascar is hardly a conventional classroom, but the students working up to their knees in rice plants are learning valuable lessons about sustainable agriculture – lessons they will pass on to local farmers. As an old Malagasy proverb says, 'education is the most beautiful heritage.'

Around 2 000 students from 12 Collège d'Enseignement Général (CEG) schools in Vakinankaratra province have benefited from a new climate-smart agriculture project known as Manitatra 2, funded by the European Union's flagship climate change programme GCCA+. 'We introduced agro-ecology into the school programme to give children experience of sustainable farming from an early age,' says Rivosoa Vero Dina Ramanankihantana, a teacher at the CEG in the remote community of Ambohimandroso.

More than 3.5 million hectares of forest has been destroyed by slash-and-burn farming in the past two decades, while heavy rain causes soil erosion and flash flooding. Highland farmers traditionally grow irrigated rice, but suitable land is scarce and the rice paddies handed down between generations are becoming increasingly inadequate. Rain-fed rice varieties, which can grow on the steep hillsides, could be one solution.

Head teacher Franc Coeur Sousoukou hopes that new farming methods pioneered by the students – including the use of natural mulch made from maize or beans – will lead to a dramatic increase in rice yields. 'We covered the first plot in mucuna beans and estimate we could get around 5.5 tonnes per hectare – that's a significant increase.'

Half an hour's drive away in Antsoatany, teacher Harson Andrianiaina teaches conservation agriculture theory and practice to 5th-grade students. 'After visiting our test plots, the farmers have been convinced,' says Harson. 'Some of them have already replanted their fields and sown mucuna seeds. One of them who lives only a few hundred metres from the school has sown mucuna on half a hectare of land.'

Local farmer Lalaina Eric Arthur Vonjisoa says he has learned a lot from the experimental plots planted by school students. 'Even if it is uncultivated land, as soon as rain-fed rice has been planted and fertilised by mucuna, the harvest has been impressive. Passers-by who have seen the rain-fed rice notice that the yield is better compared to irrigated rice fields nearby.'

Rakotondramanana says one of the main benefits of the schools programme is that students are more open to new ways of farming. 'They are really enthusiastic. They discover that what they are learning is different to the way their parents work. That means they can influence their parents. For the most part, these students are the sons of peasants, and there is a good chance that most of them will go on to become farmers after their studies, so they need to know about preventing soil degradation.'

Martin Atkin

Story

Young forest rangers safeguard the Amazon forest in Suriname

"The forest rangers are young men and women trained by the Amazon Conservation Team"

"Before leaving the village to go into the forest, the rangers make a stop at the local school"

"The rangers inspect, measure and record the trees cleared"

Hovering above the immense canopy of Suriname's Amazon forest, a drone captures bird's-eye images of a group of young people as they prepare to enter the trees. Domitsio, Fransje, Fernando and Priscilla have all grown up in the nearby village of Pusugrunu on the Saramacca river, and they know this area well.

Now the four friends – who have all been trained as Amazon conservation rangers – are using their local knowledge to help protect the rainforest. Today they will spend their time inspecting, measuring and collecting data on logging in the forest. Johan, their trainer, gives them last details before they drive into the forest using the skills and the equipment they have acquired during their training.

The forest rangers are young men and women trained by the Amazon Conservation Team (ACT) as part of an European Union-funded programme, aiming to establish a conservation rangers programme across the Matawai Maroon territory to improve local monitoring and data collection.

Before leaving the village to go into the forest, the rangers make a stop at the local school where Fransje shows the students a documentary film about the traditions and lands of the Matawai people. The Matawai Maroons of Suriname, descendants of formerly enslaved Africans who fled into the rain forest, have lived in their ancestral territory for hundreds of years.

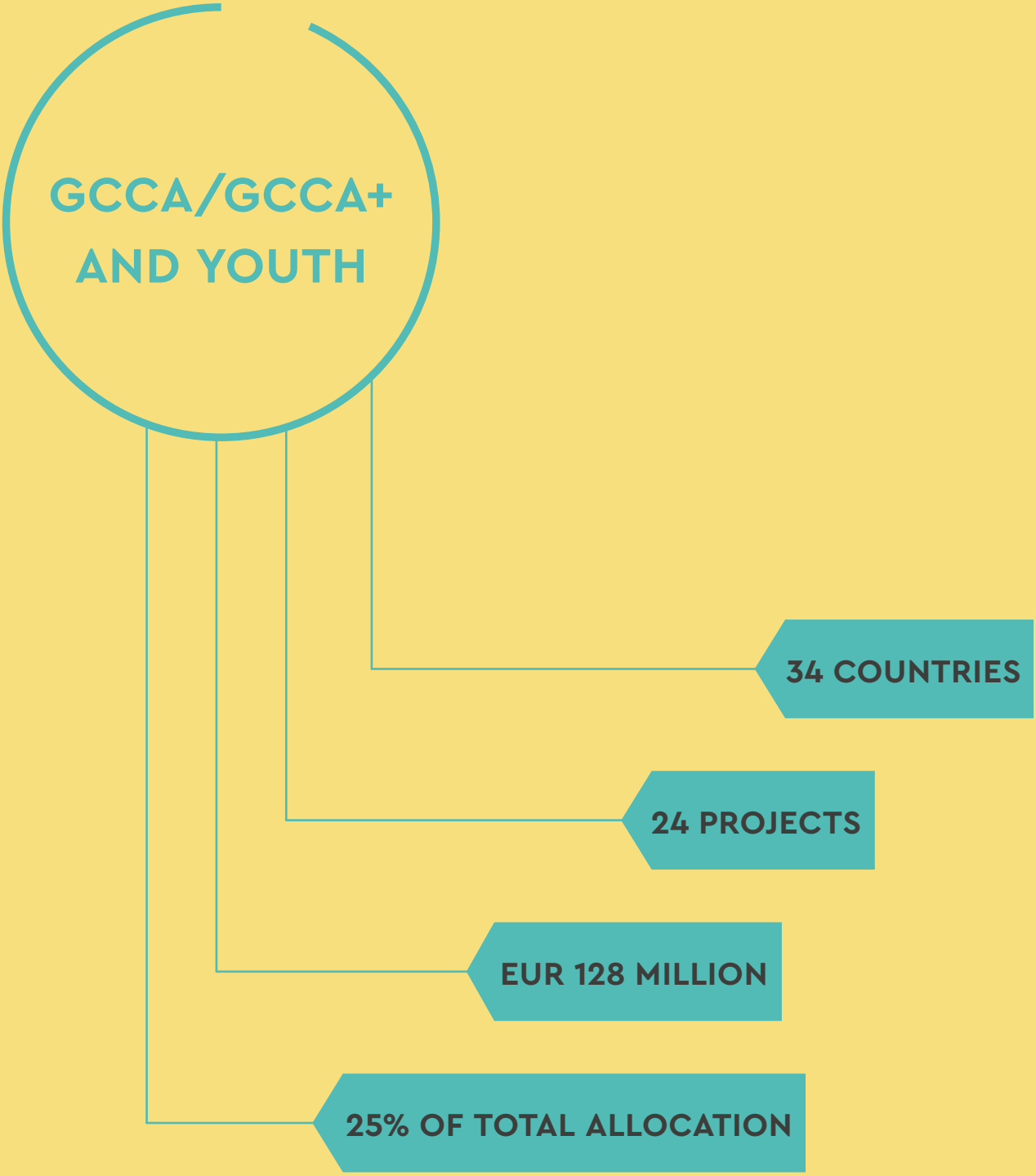
Then it's into the pickup trucks and the dense Amazon forest, where felled tree trunks can be seen on the side of the road, cut down by the logging companies working in this part of the forest. Fernando and Domitsio inspect, measure and record the trees cleared to make a new road, while Priscilla writes down the data.

The youngsters come across a tree which has been cut down and pushed to one side by a logging company to create what's known as a 'skid trail' – a temporary road to give access to new timber clearing sites. The rangers are effectively the eyes and ears of the community's leaders, helping them to act more quickly when crises arise, such as illegal incursions by miners or loggers.

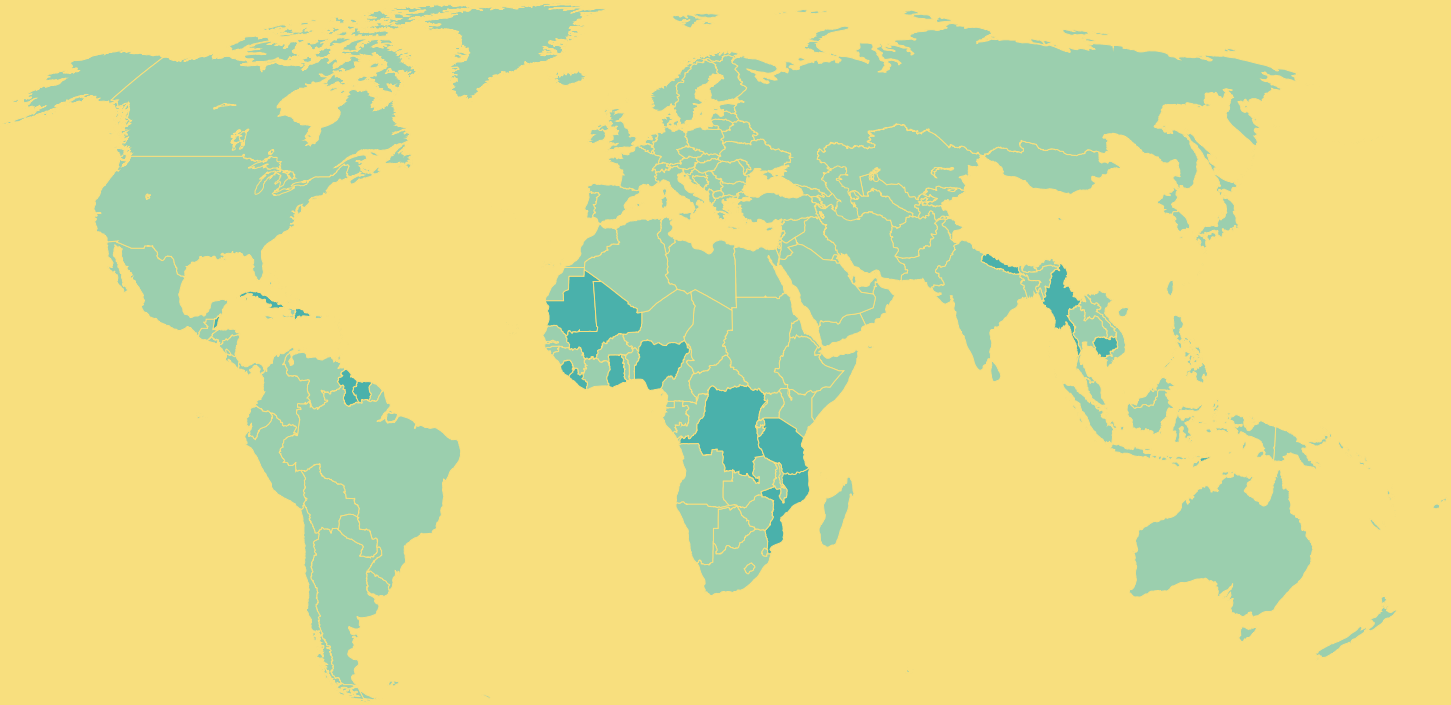
The training programme aims to strengthen the government's capacity to collect data and monitor logging on the ground, and thus protect the remaining forest landscapes. The Forest Rangers conduct regular reconnaissance and monitoring expeditions in the forest to understand reduced impact logging (RIL) principles, protect biodiversity, deter incursions, and prevent environmentally destructive practices. Training local people taps into the communities' desire for sustainable development, income generation and food security. Once the training programme is complete, at least a third of the forest rangers will be young women like Fransje and Priscilla.

Martin Atkin

THE GCCA+ BAROMETER



MAIN COUNTRIES OF INTERVENTION



BELIZE, CAMBODIA, CAPE VERDE, CONGO, CUBA, COMOROS, DOMINICAN REPUBLIC, GHANA, GUYANA, LIBERIA, MALDIVES, MALI, MAURITANIA, MOZAMBIQUE, MYANMAR, NEPAL, NIGERIA, PACIFIC, SIERRA LEONE, SURINAME, TANZANIA, TIMOR LESTE

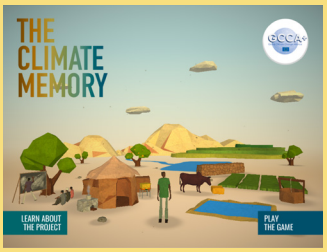
GCCA+ FACTSHEET: YOUTH FOR CLIMATE

GCCA+ ACTIVITIES INVOLVING CHILDREN OR YOUTH

Projects	ACTION	Percentage of GCCA/GCCA+ portfolio
10	SCHOOL-BASED AWARENESS RAISING ON CLIMATE CHANGE IN GENERAL	12
8	MOBILISATION OF YOUTH FOR CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION AND MITIGATION ACTIONS: TREE PLANTING, WASTE MANAGEMENT, EARLY WARNING SYSTEMS, SCHOOL GARDENS, WATER CONSERVATION, MANGROVE CONSERVATION AND COASTAL MONITORING, ESTABLISHMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL CLUBS	9
6	DEVELOPMENT AND INTRODUCTION OF SCHOOL CURRICULA ON CLIMATE CHANGE	7
3	GENERATION OF CLEAN ENERGY IN SCHOOLS (SOLAR PANELS AND BIOGAS)	3
2	DEVELOPMENT OF EDUCATIONAL MATERIALS ON CLIMATE CHANGE	2
1	CLIMATE MONITORING IN SCHOOLS (COLLECTION OF METEOROLOGICAL DATA)	1

PLAY AND LEARN

THE 5 PS GAME



THE CLIMATE MEMORY GAME

GCCA+ FUN QUIZ

The Best of Practice

Learning in a time of climate change

Youth are important players in addressing climate change as both potential actors and bearer of the greatest burden of its impact. Climate actions engaging youth should therefore be an integral part of the global and specific responses to climate change. 'It helps young people understand and address the impact of global warming, encourages changes in their attitudes and behaviour and helps them adapt to climate change-related trends', says UNESCO.

In GCCA+ two types of good practices can be distinguished:

1. Providing physical and online spaces for interaction and access to climate science and knowledge

GCCA+ has put emphasis on building a vast amount of resources and online fora targeting youth and easing their access to climate information based on science and empirical knowledge. Today, the GCCA+ is collecting and sharing success stories, tools, best practices and scientific facts.

International conferences also provide opportunities to interact with youth. As an example, the first Pacific Resilience Meeting, in 2019, themed 'Youth Futures in a Resilient Pacific' brought together over 300 participants, including students, policymakers, civil society actors, private sector representatives and scientists. A similar regional event in Trinidad and Tobago brought together young Caribbean researchers. The GCCA+ has also been sponsoring scholarships with the University of the South Pacific, based in Fiji.

2. Educate youth in climate change education (CCE) and education for sustainable development (ESD)

At the global level, the GCCA+ has developed training modules for youth and adults and relayed educational resources (e.g. MOOCs from international institutions, national educational resources). Games have also been developed for public and educational uses. In working directly with schools, three levels of integration can be considered as steps of the process:

- Sensitisation activities: ad-hoc activities and field visits, for example in Comoros, Mali, Mauritania, Myanmar, Nepal and Sierra Leone. They build on a course for teachers and the development of formal and informal educational products. Depending on countries' specificities, sectoral training curricula are developed for primary and secondary schools: health risks related to climate change in Kiribati, waste management in Liberia and Nigeria, forestry in Cabo Verde, Comoros, and mangroves in Belize.

"Youth are both potential actors and bearer of the greatest burden of the impact of climate change"

"Planting trees, home gardening, rainfall monitoring or early warning systems for students are part of GCCA+ work with schools"

"Schools contribute to raising awareness on climate change and water conservation"

Christophe Legrand

- Learning from sustainable practice and monitoring: planting trees, home gardening or rainfall monitoring in environmental clubs in Ghana, Marshall Islands and Tanzania; drought and flood early-warning systems for students and staff in Mozambique; mangrove education, including visits and youth camps, in Guyana. In Niue and Nauru, schools contribute to raising awareness on climate change and water conservation practices; in Tonga, children are involved in awareness-raising on coastal protection and monitoring; in the Marshall Islands, schools embrace tree planting and home gardening.
- Full integration in curriculum: with help from the European Union, some countries have developed their own Eco-School programmes (Seychelles). In Cambodia, through GCCA+ support, the country has worked at integrating climate change into all curricula, from primary schools to university, as well as in vocational training programmes.

Relevant links:

https://www.gcca.eu/knowledge/communicating-and-sharing-knowledge

https://www.gcca.eu/resources

https://www.gcca.eu/games

GCCA+ THE ALLIANCE FOR A CHANGING WORLD

The **Global Climate Change Alliance Plus (GCCA+)** is a flagship initiative of the European Union helping most vulnerable countries respond to climate change. It started in 2007 and has become one of the EU's major climate initiatives with a worldwide scope, with over 80 programmes in Africa, Asia, the Caribbean and Pacific region.

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