

Xplore, Xcite, Xtend

Half the earth's people are under 20 years old. Our voice matters - and now we have a new forum to make it heard.

UNEP and UNESCO have set up the youthXchange (YXC) project - www.youthxchange.net - to enable us to get involved and contribute to the global drive for sustainability, towards a world with 'some, for all, forever'.

The project connects young people with the social and environmental issues that touch daily life. From food to fashion, health to hobbies, YXC provides facts, figures and ideas to move towards more sustainable living.

Want to be in the know? Check out the interactive atlas for what's going on and where. Like to shop? Visit the Sustainable Department Store to make informed decisions when you buy. Interested in spreading the word to your friends? Try the trainer's room for the tools you'll want.

YXC isn't a step-by-step guide on how to live; it's a resource jam packed with the information needed to make smart and

sane choices. The printed guide, website and live chat forums can help us look beyond our own backyards and discover what's happening in the world.

Adults and governments are starting to recognize what we knew all along: we're part of the solution, not a problem. Many of us can't wait to share our ideas and participate in the dialogues and debates, since we are to inherit this earth and care deeply about what is happening to it. And we've got the time, talents and enthusiasm to make a difference.

Young people are poised to make or break history. The opportunity to bring real change is at our fingertips. Let's use the resources available and take the planet by storm. Together, we can Xplore, Xcite, Xtend and Xercise choice - raising the bar for our peers and the generations ahead.



Xpanding

We in West Asia are trying to help young people become more aware of the need for sustainable consumption and empower them to act as responsible citizens and consumers.

We held an Environmental Global Youth Gathering in Dubai in 2004, which recognized the need to create youth awareness about sustainable lifestyles in the region, as its economy is consumer-oriented and largely based around tourism. We are working through the UNEP/UNESCO youthXchange project, which is beginning to be introduced in West Asia through the Emirates Diving Association, with financial help from the Government of Dubai - Dubai

Immigration. The Emirates Diving Association will address dissemination of the project in the region - for example through translation, cultural adaptation and networking, seminars and training organizations - in close cooperation with UNEP.

Five thousand surveys have already been conducted in universities and schools around Jordan and we are anxiously awaiting the results. We hope that this will provide us with a snapshot of young people's consumer and environmental awareness, of their concern for the environment, of their thoughts about sustainable consumption and of whether they feel empowered and able to make a difference.

Lara El Saad, Tunza Youth Advisor, West Asia

Just asking...

In 2001, UNEP and UNESCO scoured college campuses, shopping malls, markets and cinemas around the world in search of young people willing to have a chat.

They wanted to understand what makes young consumers tick - to discover what runs through their minds as they make hundreds of lifestyle decisions, both big and small, each day. So they asked 10,000 youth in 24 countries around the world: 'Is the future yours?'


Conversations focused on sustainable living and its connections to other aspects of development. What do you think about the economy, the environment and respect for human and labour rights? Do you consider these issues when you shop? Do you think you as an individual can make a difference?


Some 75 per cent of those surveyed identified reducing environmental pollution, improving human health and increasing respect for human rights as the biggest global challenges ahead. Nearly half agreed that ordinary people could and should do something to help.

On the whole, the young people interviewed felt they had real power to change the world - that the future was indeed theirs to shape for the better.



It's our party!

 Many songs encourage us to attend parties: few mention the clean-up afterwards.

Most of us would rather not think about the overflowing bins that usually follow good times. 

But students at the Autonomous University of Barcelona have tackled the problem of trash after the bash.

Partygoers arriving at the university's annual celebration are offered colourful, plastic cups for 1 euro (just over a dollar). They can choose to take these 'party mugs' home to reuse at future events, or return them at the end of the night and get their money back.

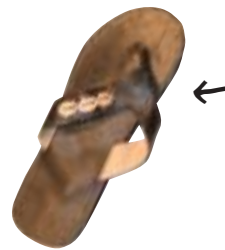
As a result, waste has dropped by 0.3 kg per person - that's 3 square metres of compacted plastic for the entire gathering.

Whatever your party style, there are plenty of ideas for making it green. For more ideas see the youthXchange website.



Re-tread!

In the famous 'Street of the Tyre-recyclers' in Marrakech, Morocco, shoppers can find creative solutions of all kinds - from shoes to flower pots, storage chests and even picture frames - to the problem of rubber waste. Skilled craftsmen often adapt the tyre treads to simulate beautiful Islamic decorations.



Beautiful sandals from Korogocho, Kenya are making wearers across the world feel good from sole to soul. Crafted from recycled tyre treads and leather, they're both eco-friendly and trendy - and all profits return to the local community to benefit the people there.

photo: Ecosandals

Writers everywhere can scribble sustainably in these stylish notebooks from Canada. Each book sports a durable cover made from tyre rubber and contains only recycled paper.



photo: Impression

Check out the facts

UNEP's new **Resource Kit on Sustainable Consumption and Production** is a set of 12 fact sheets covering advertising, eco-design, energy, food, housing, leisure, lifestyles, mobility, new information and communications technologies, textiles, tourism and water. Each one analyses the environmental impacts of related activities and features examples of good practices around the world. And each has tips to help you put sound environmental principles into practice.

Take a look at <http://www.uneptie.org/pc/pc/library.htm>

