

What we are doing

Nobel Laureate Wangari Maathai recently exhorted delegates to UNEP's Governing Council to 'go home, and do what you can'. Here are some examples of what the world's young people are doing. Join us?

Welcome to Kijana

In Zimbabwe, teenage siblings Alexandra and Saunsuray Govere founded the Kijana project to help AIDS orphans in their village. It gives the children financial help, and tackles a major source of the problem - the lack of credible information about the disease - by sending young people into their local communities to make presentations on the issue to their peers.

Hit the road

Nguyen Thi Tuyet Mai, 23, spent 80 days on a 'journey towards a better future' in Viet Nam. Travelling by bus and train from Hanoi to Ho Chi Minh City, she updated small groups of young people about their nation's progress towards the Millennium Development Goals.

Urban RAPsody

Every year, thousands gather in Lowell, United States, on the banks of the Merrimack River, for a traditional Southeast Asian water festival, which uses ancient river celebrations as a basis for discussing water-related and other environmental issues. Local young people formed the Southeast Asian River Ambassadors Programme (RAPs) to organize volunteering for the festival and river clean-ups. Their activities now include community outreach through a cable television show, and songs and essays about environmental justice and urban ecology.

A permanent solution?

By **Lilian Sánchez**, National Co-ordinator of GEO Juvenil Uruguay

Many young people in Latin America care deeply about environmental issues, but lack the training and opportunities to get involved. At GEO Juvenil Uruguay, we want to include youth across the country in our work, as respected partners who have their say in our activities.

We found a possible answer to the difficulties faced by young people in Rosario, Colonia through permaculture - a holistic, self-sustaining system of food production that works with nature. We saw we could create a place where young people could get training in permaculture techniques, express themselves, generate ideas and initiatives, and interact with other members of the community.

Our project aims to contribute to the achievement of the MDGs, specifically Goal 7 ensuring environmental sustainability. It also hopes to generate responsible and united behaviour to promote values like respect, honesty, equality and inclusion, and so improve the community's quality of life.

Streams in the desert

Students and teachers at Ibn Abi Sofra Primary School in Marrakech, Morocco, have turned once desiccated fields into gardens and olive groves. They are providing water to parched ground for the first time in more than 20 years, thanks to urban horticultural classes and generous private funding for a pump and well. The school's cafeteria now serves the fruits and vegetables they grow.



photo: UNEP

¿Qué mundo queremos?

By **Elena Palacios**

At Fundación Ecológica Universal we have worked for more than ten years to promote environmental sustainability through awareness raising, training for young people and teachers, political involvement and international summits on development.

We publicize poverty alleviation and environmental sustainability projects through GEO Juvenil Argentina to numerous youth groups (mostly volunteers) throughout the country, who then adopt the projects in their communities.

We've also produced a paper entitled '¿Qué mundo queremos?' (What sort of world do we want?) and a guide for teachers and group coordinators, which provide frameworks for political action and education towards the MDGs.

The MDGs represent the possibility of a better quality of life in the near future for young people growing up in less developed countries. For their sake, let's do our best to aid global efforts to build a more equitable and sustainable world for 2015.

photo: www.globaldiversity.org

