

One World Youth Project

Goal 7: Ensure Environmental Sustainability

“Goal 7 aims to improve the way we manage the environment so that the natural resources people need to survive will be available to future generations. There is a strong link between poverty and the environment. The achievement of Goals 1-6 is dependent on whether we use the earth’s resources in ways that are sustainable over a long period of time. The key issue is how can we support human development while at the same time preserve the capacity of the Earth to provide natural resources for future generations? Steps need to be taken to manage the environment better so that the environment will not be a contributing factor to poverty and that the Earth’s resources will be available to future generations”

Source: United Nations Cyber School Bus Millennium Development Campaign

SEE

What are the streams, rivers, lakes, or oceans that pass through or have a connection to your community?

Rate your waterways using a scale of 1 to 10 (1 being very polluted and 10 being crystal clear).

Where does your drinking water come from?

What are the main landforms in your area (mountains, hills, plains, deserts, mountains)?

Are there sources/signs of pollution in the land of your community? Is litter a problem in your community?

Have you noticed air pollution in your area? Does the air ever appear hazy or do you have trouble breathing?

Are the plants in your community affected at all by human or animal activity? How? Is the effect positive or negative?

Are there any non-native plant species that humans have brought to your community? Are these plants helping or harming the local environment?

Are there any rare, threatened or endangered animals or plants in your community?

How do animals and humans in your community interact? Is the interaction positive or negative?

How do business/industry and the environment interact in your community? Is the interaction positive or negative? Is the relationship symbiotic or abusive?

In your everyday life how do you interact with nature? How would you characterize this interaction?

What does sustainability mean?

Parts of this survey are excerpts from the Jane Goodall Institute's *Lessons For Hope* Students' Journal exercise. To learn more about Lessons for Hope and view the complete community survey visit: www.lessonsforhope.org/student/unit3/kn_comm_eval.asp

REFLECT

Look at the answers to your questions above. Based on your responses, what do you feel is the environmental sustainability of your community? Is there still work to be done? Why or why not?

ACT

How could you help achieve UN Millennium Development Goal 7? What could you do to help improve the environmental sustainability of your community?

Can you think of a project you and your peers might be able to design and implement in your community in order to help reach Goal 7?

INSPIRE

During Sierra Leone's civil war, many terrified rural villagers fled to hastily constructed refugee camps outside its capital, Freetown. Such camps often have no water or sanitation facilities. In the "Mandela" camp, only seven toilets served over a thousand people. Sewers ran down the 'streets', creating a major health hazard and appalling smell. John Kamara, age 17, hated living in such poor conditions, and understood poor hygiene can cause fatal disease outbreaks. John got a grant from Peace Child to rid his street and the camp of the degrading sight and smell of human waste all around. He bought construction materials to build clean functioning toilets and burying the open sewer in a pipe underground. A cleaner, healthier place to live made a huge difference, lifting the refugees' spirits. Camps can be depressing, distressing places to live, and John helped restore dignity to Mandela's residents. He is now learning to read and write.

YouthCaN is a youth run organization that uses technology to inspire, connect and educate people worldwide about environmental issues. Through a network of conferences, activities and events youth in different countries are able to exchange ideas about the environment and empower others to make a difference in their own communities. Every spring, YouthCaN welcomes over 1,000 environmental students and educators from around the world to present and participate in educational workshops and activities at the American Museum of Natural History in New York City, USA. Here is one ongoing project that was presented at this year's YouthCaN.

In 2002, young people on Cape Cod, Massachusetts, USA founded a youth-led organization called the Cape Youth Council on Sustainability in an effort to make their local community more sustainable. Their group now includes students from 10 different middle and high schools. They have tackled community-wide initiatives and formed inter-generational connections. Their most recent projects include the development of Sustainability Starter Kits, which were passed out for free to the public at town meetings, and the planting of a large-scale sustainable garden on the land of the Massachusetts Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children. Council members have also held a Sustainability Youth Action Summit where they drafted an eleven page Action Plan describing how their community could achieve sustainability.

Source of first two inspirational stories: United Nations Cyber School Bus Millennium Development Campaign