



**GREEN GEN**  
**GUIDEBOOK**  
**Sustainable Actions Against**  
**Environmental Pollution**  
**A YCP PROJECT**



“

**When young  
people from  
different  
countries come  
together, a  
solution is apt.** ”

- Calvin Shikuku

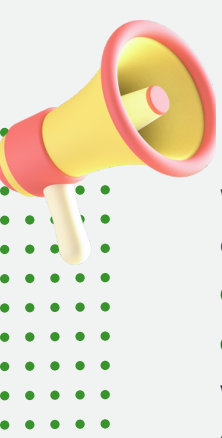


**GREENGEN**  
A YCP PROJECT

**Welcome to the Green Gen Guidebook** – your introduction to sustainable actions against environmental pollution. This guidebook invites you to **explore, learn, and take action** in tackling pollution in Canada and Kenya. You will find remarkable insights that will **inspire you to act for a greener future.**







# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We are grateful for the support we received on our public engagement project, Green Gen. We want to acknowledge the **Inter Council Network (ICN)**, **Spur Change's Youth Champions Program**, **CMETrust**, and the amazing **stakeholders and youth activists** we interviewed. We would also like to thank Canadian youth who participated in our survey and call for artists. **Thanks to these individuals and organizations, we were able to create this Guidebook:**

## 2023 Youth Champions Program (YCP)



**Spur Change hosts the 2023 Youth Champions Program cohort**, a diverse group of young individuals from across Canada and beyond. These youth demonstrate remarkable skills in public engagement, aligning with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and advocating for gender equality in their communities. Their participation reflects a dedication to collaboration, underpinning the 5-year initiative facilitated by the Inter-council Network (ICN), generously supported by Global Affairs Canada (GAC). **The ICN, a collaborative coalition of eight independent Provincial and Regional Councils for International Cooperation**, amplifies the voices of over 350 civil society organizations, striving for global social justice and change.



## Canada-Mathare Education (CME) Trust

**CMETrust is a Canadian charity run by volunteers in Canada and Kenya.** They collaborate with members of the Mathare community, especially their scholars and families. They see the impact of their work every day in the power of educated young people to change their lives and their communities.



## Interviewees:

- Heather Arnold
- Titus Kuria
- Calvin Shikuku
- Lian Marie Sayno
- MJ Torres
- Jordan Lin



## Contributing Artists:

Julie Payet, Stephen Juma, Ronald Jecton Oketch

## Guidebook Design:

**Rabia Ali**

**Priscilla Ojumu**

*Illustrations from Canva*





# WELCOME TO GREEN GEN

Green Gen's mission is to **empower youth** with **information**, foster **international cooperation**, and **celebrate existing and emerging sustainable solutions** to addressing environmental pollution and its associated issues.





## WHY GREEN GEN?

Today, **young people are playing a crucial role in shaping the future.** It is essential for youth to understand the challenges posed by environmental pollution in order to become informed and responsible citizens. Whether you are a student, a professional or simply someone who cares about the environment, the Green Gen Guidebook provides essential information to **help you initiate environmental change.**

**Green Gen is created by Youth for Youth!**

- Green Gen Team



# MEET THE GREEN GEN TEAM

## YOUTH CHAMPION

### PRISCILLA OJOMU

Alberta, Canada



*Having seen the firsthand effects of inequalities, I am most passionate about SDG 5: Gender Equality, SDG 10: Reduced Inequalities, and SDG 16: Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions.*



## YOUTH CHAMPION

### JECINTA AKOTH OCHIENG

Mathare, Nairobi, Kenya



*I am a Gender equality ambassador, and I am passionate about women's and girls' empowerment (SDG 5). I envision a world where girls' rights are protected, respected, and heard.*



## YOUTH CHAMPION

### TINUOLA OLOWOJEUNJEJE

Manitoba, Canada



*I am passionate about the empowerment of women and girls. This made me start the Totalgirls Empowerment Foundation, which benefits over 3,000 women and girls.*





## MEET THE INTERVIEWEES

# POLICY ADVISOR

## HEATHER ARNOLD

*Ontario, Canada*



Heather is a **founding member of the Board and the President of CMETrust**. She became involved in CMETrust after returning from Nairobi, where she worked at the United Nations Environment Programme. She has held various positions in **civil society and government that focus on environmental sustainability, environmental education, freshwater quality, and international environmental policy**. **Heather works at Environment and Climate Change Canada as a Senior Policy Advisor.**



# ENTREPRENEUR

## CALVIN SHIKUKU ODHIAMBO

*Mathare, Nairobi, Kenya*



Calvin is a **25-year-old green entrepreneur, environmental activist, and youth advocate from Nairobi, Kenya**. As the **Co-founder and CEO of Motobrix Limited**, Calvin engages unemployed youth in creating renewable energy in the form of organic briquettes from waste in the environment. He has been featured in both local and international media. Calvin **represented the voices of young Kenyan innovations helping the planet at COP27 in Egypt**, where he joined other young people in advocating for change in all aspects.

# YOUTH CHAMPION

## LIAN SAYNO

*Ontario, Canada*



Lian is an **experienced development professional and a passionate advocate of environmental sustainability**. She has over seven years of experience in community engagement and project management and has led efforts to combat poverty and promote gender equality. Her most recent project, **the Youth Leaf Project**, illustrates her commitment to **encouraging the youth to be environmental stewards, particularly in reducing food waste.**



## MEET THE INTERVIEWEES

# YOUTH CHAMPION

**MJ TORRES**

*Ontario, Canada*



**MJ is a youth and climate justice advocate. She currently works at WWF Canada.** She was born in Colombia and, moved to Canada 6 years ago. She is a board member for OEN and Green Career Centre. Despite facing challenges as an immigrant and a person with a mild disability, she has been able to work both locally and internationally on environmental projects. Her main focus is **illustrating the disproportional effects of climate change in certain regions and communities.**



# EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



**TITUS KURIA**

*Mathare, Nairobi, Kenya*



**Titus helps young people from Nairobi's underserved communities achieve their greatest potential.** He was raised in Mathare, the 2nd largest informal settlement in Nairobi, Kenya, and he is the **Executive Director and co-founder of Canada-Mathare Education Trust (CMETrust).** Through his more than 25 years of various associations with football teams, youth groups and organizations, Titus has led **community clean-ups, tree-planting exercises and environmental awareness campaigns in Mathare and most recently at the UN Headquarters offices.**

# ENERGY CONSULTANT

**JORDAN LIN**

*Ontario, Canada*



**Jordan works in Toronto as an Energy and Sustainability Consultant with the global engineering consulting firm Arup.** He develops sustainability strategies and decarbonization plans for projects ranging from buildings to airports to railways. Jordan is a **co-founder of ReImagine17, a non-profit which empowers youth across Canada to think and act on sustainable development.** He has participated in forums at the United Nations, worked for a solar research and development institute in Tanzania, and worked at his university's sustainability office.







# UNDERSTANDING ENVIRONMENTAL CHALLENGES



**WHAT IS ENVIRONMENTAL POLLUTION?**

**TYPES OF ENVIRONMENTAL POLLUTION**

**PROMINENT ENVIRONMENTAL POLLUTION CHALLENGES**

**IMPACT ON PRESENT AND FUTURE GENERATIONS**



# WHAT IS ENVIRONMENTAL POLLUTION?

Environmental pollution refers to the **introduction of harmful substances or contaminants** into the natural environment, which can adversely affect the delicate balance of **ecosystems** and harm the health and well-being of **living organisms**, including humans.

In this guidebook, we will be **exploring environmental pollution in Canada and Kenya**, acknowledging the shared global concern and the variations in the types and sources of pollution in each region. The guidebook will draw on insights from interviewed stakeholders, subject experts, and the general public in both countries to **provide a comprehensive view of environmental pollution and recommended actions against it.**





# WHAT IS ENVIRONMENTAL POLLUTION?

## CANADA



This complex issue has profound implications for Canada, a country known for its **vast and diverse landscapes**. Environmental pollution in Canada is a matter of concern, especially since its pristine natural beauty and biodiversity are integral to its identity. Pollution can impact the health of Canadians, leading to **respiratory problems** and other health issues. It can also **harm native wildlife and disrupt delicate ecosystems**, ultimately affecting the balance of nature.

## KENYA



Meanwhile, the Kenyan landscape, **rich in natural beauty and biodiversity**, faces its unique set of environmental challenges. There is an increased prevalence of harmful substances or contaminants in Kenya's natural environment. This includes the **release of pollutants** into the air, water bodies, and soil, which has **detrimental effects on ecosystems and the health** of both the environment and its inhabitants.





# TYPES OF ENVIRONMENTAL POLLUTION

Types of environmental pollution observed in both Canada and Kenya include **air pollution** from industrial and vehicular emissions, **water pollution** resulting from agricultural runoff and inadequate waste management, and **soil contamination** due to the improper disposal of hazardous substances.

## CANADA



### Air, Water & Soil Pollution



**Industrial discharges and vehicle emissions** contribute to air pollution, leading to smog, acid rain, and respiratory issues. Simultaneously, water bodies face contamination from **industrial effluents and agricultural runoff** compromising aquatic ecosystems and drinking water quality. **Soil pollution**, stemming from industrial practices and the use of agrochemicals, poses risks to biodiversity and human health.

### Forest Fires & Wildfires



Forest fires and wildfires in Canada are **recurrent natural disasters**, often **worsened by climatic conditions**. The combustion of vegetation releases **large amounts** of particulate matter, carbon monoxide, and other pollutants into the air, **contributing significantly to air pollution**.

## Biodiversity Loss



Biodiversity loss in Canada, considered a form of environmental pollution, results from various human activities such as **habitat destruction, deforestation,** and pollution. These actions contribute to the **decline of diverse plant and animal species**, disrupting ecosystems and diminishing overall biological variety.

## Removal of Wetlands



Wetlands play a crucial role in water filtration, flood control, and providing habitat for diverse plant and animal species. Human activities such as **urban development, agriculture, and resource extraction** contribute to the drainage and removal of wetlands, disrupting these vital functions.

## Plastic & Industrial Pollution



Improper disposal of plastic waste and industrial discharges introduce **harmful chemicals and pollutants into waterways and soil**. Plastic pollution, in particular, has negative effects on marine life, with numerous reports of **wildlife entanglement and ingestion**.

## Leakage of Chemicals from Landfills



As landfills receive various types of waste, including **hazardous materials**, the potential for chemical seepage into the surrounding soil and groundwater is a **serious concern**. The long-term effects include **soil degradation** and the introduction of **harmful substances into the food chain**.

# DID YOU KNOW



## Shipping of Waste Overseas

Did you know that Canada exported a significant amount of its plastic waste overseas for recycling? Historically, a considerable portion of Canadian plastic waste was shipped to other countries, especially in Southeast Asia.



**Waste smuggling**, also known as illegal or illicit waste trafficking, refers to the **unauthorized and often unlawful transportation**, disposal, or trade of waste materials across national borders.



## Indigenous Water Crisis

Did you know that many Indigenous communities in Canada face significant challenges in accessing clean and safe drinking water? A concerning number of Indigenous communities, particularly those in remote or northern areas, experience water insecurity.

Explore the map of lifted and remaining long-term drinking water advisories on public systems on reserves across Canada.





# DID YOU KNOW



## Oil & Tar Sands

Did you know that **Canada is home to one of the largest reserves of oil/tar sands, concentrated in Alberta?**

The production of oil from tar sands involves energy-intensive processes and can result in elevated greenhouse gas emissions, deforestation, and habitat disruption.



**Canada is a global mining powerhouse, benefiting the economy.** However, the industry requires substantial water usage, leading to concerns about water scarcity and contamination of water sources. Mining activities can also cause human-induced disruptions to land systems, impacting ecosystems and biodiversity.

## Microplastics

Did you know that **microplastics, tiny particles often less than 5mm in size, have become a big environmental issue in Canada?** They pose a threat to aquatic life and can enter the food chain, raising concerns about their impact on human health.



**Learn more about the Government of Canada's efforts to reduce plastic pollution and the new research on microplastics.**



# KENYA



## Air, Water & Soil Pollution

**Air pollution** is rampant, particularly in urban areas like Nairobi, with high levels of pollutants from vehicular emissions and industrial activities. Limited access to electricity in informal settlements, such as Mathare, leads to the use of polluting alternatives like kerosene and charcoal.

**Water pollution** is exacerbated by sewage leakage and improper waste disposal, introducing heavy metals like lead and copper into water sources.

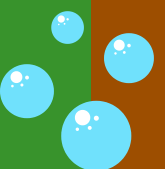
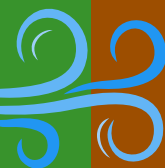
**Soil pollution** compounds the issue, rendering products from areas like Mathare unsuitable for consumption due to agricultural reliance on pesticides and lack of governmental control on farming practices.

## Improper Waste Management

Inefficient waste disposal practices, including **open dumping and burning of waste**, release harmful pollutants into the air, soil, and water. This contamination negatively impacts both **human health and biodiversity**, as toxic substances from improperly managed waste can leach into water sources, contaminate soil, and contribute to air pollution. This leads to **Urban Environmental Degradation**: the deterioration of the environment in and around urban centers, often associated with factors such as **pollution, deforestation, inadequate waste management, and overexploitation of resources**.

## Flooding & Extreme Weather

Intense rainfall and flooding lead to the **runoff of pollutants, including chemicals, fertilizers, and debris**, from urban and agricultural areas into water bodies. The aftermath of flooding often involves the spread of contaminants and increased risks to human health and biodiversity.



# DID YOU KNOW



## Nairobi River, Kenya

Did you know that the Nairobi River in Kenya, once a vital water source, has severe pollution challenges? According to the United Nations Environment Programme, the Nairobi River is one of the most polluted rivers in the region, with **high levels of toxins and pollutants.**



In Nairobi, nearly half of the population, particularly in informal settlements like Mathare, needs more efficient waste collection systems. **With limited government intervention, household waste often ends up in landfills and rivers, contributing significantly to the pollution of the Nairobi River.**



## Lack of Green Spaces

Did you know that Kenya faces a significant challenge with the scarcity of green spaces, especially in urban areas? Rapid urbanization and population growth have led to the expansion of concrete landscapes, leaving little room for parks and greenery.

Learn more about CMETrust's School Break programs, where Kenyan youth engage in community clean-ups and tree-planting.





# Artwork Spotlight: Environmental Pollution



The work is about how the rivers are mostly polluted, causing drainage. In most cases, the water we drink is recycled from the river, and as you can see, when most plastics are disposed of in one place, they form heaps like a mountain of garbage. This may **cause health hazards like cholera outbreaks** and other diseases, making our environment unsafe...

PHOTOGRAPH BY  
Stephen Juma  
Mathare, Kenya



# Artwork Spotlight: Environmental Pollution



... My work shows environmental pollution in that **river pollution is very common in slums**. The river water is recycled for drinking, making it unsafe since **the pollution, i.e. plastics, do not break down even after a long time.**

PHOTOGRAPH BY  
Stephen Juma  
Mathare, Kenya



# Artwork Spotlight: Environmental Pollution



I am from Mathare, and I am passionate about art. I feel that **through my lens, I can help solve problems** and speak for many people in the community.



PHOTOGRAPH BY

**Stephen Juma**  
Mathare, Kenya

# PROMINENT ENVIRONMENTAL POLLUTION CHALLENGES



Environmental pollution poses significant threats to the health and well-being of our planet and its inhabitants. One of the most prominent challenges in addressing this critical issue is the **lack of adequate governmental intervention and support**. This challenge is not limited to Canada and Kenya, as it is a global concern affecting nations worldwide.

**Inadequate governmental intervention and support manifest in several ways:**



### **Lax Regulations and Enforcement:**

**Governments often struggle to establish and enforce strict environmental regulations** that hold industries and individuals accountable for their pollution. Weak regulations can lead to irresponsible practices and a lack of incentives for environmentally friendly alternatives.



### **Insufficient Funding for Environmental Initiatives:**

**Environmental protection efforts often require substantial financial resources.** Governments that allocate limited budgets to environmental agencies and initiatives may struggle to address pollution problems adequately. These agencies are often underfunded, making it difficult to conduct research, monitor pollution, and implement corrective measures.





### Short-Term Focus:

Many governments prioritize **short-term economic and political interests over long-term environmental sustainability**. This can result in policies that prioritize economic growth at the expense of environmental protection. Without a longer-term perspective, pollution problems persist and exacerbate over time.

### Political Interference:

In some cases, political interests, lobbying, and corporate influence can obstruct effective environmental policies and regulations. This interference produces **policies that favour industry over the environment and public health**.

### International Cooperation:

Pollution often transcends national borders, requiring international cooperation. **When governments fail to engage in collaborative efforts to address pollution across borders**, the problem becomes increasingly challenging to tackle.



WE CAN  
DO IT!!

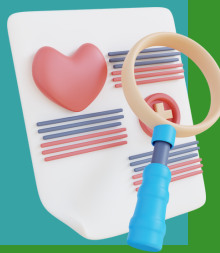


# IMPACT ON PRESENT AND FUTURE GENERATIONS

Environmental pollution has far-reaching and often underestimated consequences that affect not only the current generation but also cast a shadow of uncertainty over the future. The impact of pollution on present and future generations is a **critical concern that calls for immediate attention** and proactive measures to mitigate its harmful effects.

## ✔ **Health Implications:**

One of the most immediate and tangible impacts of environmental pollution is on human health. Poor air quality, contaminated water sources, and exposure to hazardous chemicals can lead to a **wide range of health problems, including respiratory diseases, cancers,** developmental issues in children, and even premature death.



## ✔ **Economic Burden:**

Healthcare costs associated with pollution-related illnesses are significant, and productivity losses due to health issues can hinder economic growth. Moreover, **cleaning up polluted environments and restoring ecosystems is an expensive endeavour** which often falls on the shoulders of future generations.





## Environmental Degradation:

Environmental pollution disrupts ecosystems, resulting in habitat loss, species extinction, and diminished biodiversity. These changes can have cascading effects on the availability of natural resources, such as clean water and food.



## Climate Change:

Greenhouse gas emissions, a form of environmental pollution, contribute to climate change. The consequences of a warming planet, including more frequent and severe natural disasters, rising sea levels, and extreme weather events, pose significant challenges for current and future generations. These changes can lead to displacement, food insecurity, and economic instability.



## Social Inequities:

Pollution often disproportionately affects marginalized communities and vulnerable populations. This leads to **social inequities and a cycle of environmental injustice that can persist for generations**. Future generations inherit these disparities, making it harder for them to achieve a fair and sustainable quality of life.



## Technological and Innovation Gaps:

Solving pollution-related challenges requires technological advancements and innovation. If these issues persist, they can **impede technological progress**, limiting the ability of future generations to find sustainable solutions to environmental problems.







# INTERSECTIONS AND COMPLEXITIES



**INTERSECTIONS WITH  
SOCIAL ISSUES**

**IMPACT ON  
MARGINALIZED GROUPS**

**DEBUNKING MYTHS AND  
MISCONCEPTIONS**



# INTERSECTIONS

## WITH SOCIAL ISSUES



### INTERSECTION WITH EDUCATION

**Education plays a pivotal role in fostering environmental awareness, sustainable practices, and proactive solutions. Formal and informal education equips individuals with the understanding needed to make informed choices in their daily lives.** Education is a catalyst for advocacy, empowering communities to demand and implement environmentally friendly policies. **Through education, individuals gain the tools to analyze the root causes of pollution critically.**

Ensuring equal access to education, particularly for women and girls, addresses gender disparities and promotes environmental solutions. Education allows us to understand the varying impacts of environmental challenges on different communities and create appropriate solutions.

### INTERSECTION WITH SOCIOECONOMIC STATUS

**Socioeconomic status can worsen the impacts of environmental issues,** with marginalized communities often facing more significant vulnerabilities. The aftermath of ecological crises, such as pollution, disproportionately affects lower-income populations, who may lack resources for adequate recovery and resilience. There is a need for more **comprehensive support systems and targeted interventions** to address the challenges faced by economically disadvantaged communities experiencing the effects of environmental pollution.



# DID YOU KNOW



## Barriers to Relocation

Did you know that relocating to escape environmental pollution in Canada isn't a straightforward solution? Employment opportunities and livelihoods often tether individuals and families to specific areas.



**Many people rely on local industries or specific jobs for their livelihoods. Social support can enable communities to switch livelihoods.** For marginalized communities, making changes without proper support can be challenging.



## Climate Migration

Did you know that climate migration is becoming an increasingly pressing issue, even in Canada?

Communities across the country are experiencing shifts in weather patterns and extreme events like wildfires. This has led to climate-induced displacement.



**As Canada faces wildfires and smoke, is it ready for climate migrants and refugees? Click to learn more.**





# INTERSECTIONS

## WITH SOCIAL ISSUES



### INTERSECTION WITH WOMEN & GIRLS

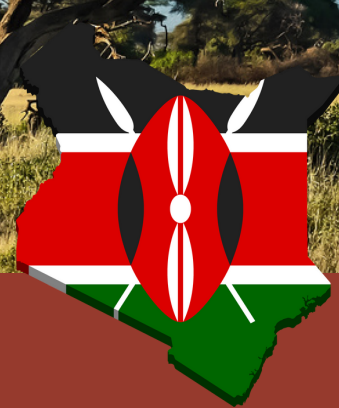
**Women often bear a disproportionate burden in dealing with the consequences of environmental pollution.** For instance, in many communities, it falls on women and girls to secure water and manage household resources. These tasks become more challenging with issues like water scarcity due to pollution. Additionally, the **adverse effects of pollution, such as food insecurity and changing environmental conditions, disproportionately affect women.** They face challenges in sustaining their families, and when resources are scarce, women often deprioritize their own needs.

**Women and girls often face a two-fold challenge:** navigating traditional gender roles while shouldering additional responsibilities from environmental changes.

### INTERSECTION WITH DISABILITY


Environmental changes due to pollution often **limit accessibility and aggravate the living conditions of disabled individuals.** For instance, in areas with poor infrastructure worsened by flooding and waste, people with mobility disabilities may struggle to navigate through inaccessible spaces, hindering their ability to navigate their environments. The impacts of environmental pollution, such as health issues and resource scarcity, disproportionately affect the disabled community, intensifying difficulties they already encounter.

# DID YOU KNOW



## Gender Mainstreaming

Did you know that gender mainstreaming is crucial for creating effective and inclusive programs? By actively involving more women and girls, initiatives become more impactful, addressing the disproportionate impact.



Despite some misconceptions about women's empowerment, **evidence-based arguments underscore the ongoing challenges.** Gender-based affirmative action, intended to address disparities, often faces resistance, **highlighting the broader issue of insufficient opportunities for everyone.**

## Water Scarcity & Flooding

Did you know that gender plays a significant role in both water scarcity and flooding issues in Kenya? Water scarcity and the rationing crisis in Kenya affect women who often bear the responsibility of water collection. Flooding also poses unique challenges for women as they are often left to clean up flooded homes after men leave for work.





# Artwork Spotlight: **Smile for the Camera**



**"Smile for the camera"** is a concept I conceived from the Mathare slum, a place where I live. The picture depicts two girls smiling at their photographer...

**ARTWORK BY**  
**Ronald Jecton Oketch**  
**Mathare, Kenya**



# Artwork Spotlight: Smile for the Camera



... I was perplexed by how, **despite all the social challenges**, these young girls still afforded to smile.

The medium is done in an **iron sheet (tin)**, locally known as **Mabati**. Tin is one of the inorganic waste we have in Mathare slums, and tin is a source of livelihood in some homes. The **intersection of environmental pollution and social issues** is also portrayed in this image.


I am an enthusiastic and self-taught artist from the Mathare slum who is interested in addressing and **advocating social and environmental issues** in Mathare.

ARTWORK BY

**Ronald Jecton Oketch**  
**Mathare, Kenya**



# IMPACT ON MARGINALIZED GROUPS



**Environmental pollution does not affect all members of society equally.** Marginalized groups, often already disadvantaged due to socioeconomic and systemic factors, bear a disproportionate burden of the harmful consequences of pollution. Efforts to reduce pollution and its consequences must prioritize the needs of these communities, involve them in decision-making processes, and ensure equitable access to clean and safe environments.

## HEALTH DISPARITIES

Marginalized communities, including racialized, low-income, and disabled populations, are more likely to live in proximity to pollution sources, such as factories, landfills, or busy highways. As a result, they face **higher exposure to air and water pollutants**, leading to increased rates of respiratory diseases, cancers, and other health issues.

**The health implications of pollution, particularly in informal settlements like Mathare,** are evident in recurrent cholera outbreaks, prompting ongoing vaccination drives. **Red health alerts persist, and the community's health status serves as a direct indicator of environmental health.** Past cholera outbreaks have spurred infrastructure improvements, such as the implementation of toilets in Mathare.



## ECONOMIC INEQUITIES

The economic impact of environmental pollution on marginalized groups is substantial. **Medical bills and increased healthcare costs strain already limited financial resources.** Pollution can also affect property values in these areas, making it harder for residents to access affordable housing.



For example, Increasing food prices due to **environmental pollution not only raises the cost of living but also contributes to poor nutrition**, leading to compromised health, which in turn hinders educational opportunities, reinforcing a cyclical pattern of poverty.



**The housing crisis exacerbates this issue, leading to the construction of dwellings in unsafe zones** like cliffs or near bodies of water. Economic disparities can influence housing choices, often forcing low-income communities to reside in unstable locations, further widening the gap in resilience to environmental challenges.

## ENVIRONMENTAL INJUSTICE

**Marginalized groups often lack a voice in decision-making processes related to pollution control and mitigation.** They may face bureaucratic and legal obstacles when advocating for their rights to clean and safe environments. This perpetuates environmental injustices and the violation of human rights.

While projects in the natural resource industry are mandated to undergo public commenting and consultation with Indigenous communities in affected areas, **this process still often neglects the voices of those most affected. There exists a significant gap between policy-making intentions and their actual implementation.**





*Introduction to*

# Myths and Misconceptions

Environmental pollution is a critical global issue with far-reaching implications for the planet's health and well-being. However, it is also a topic often shrouded in myths and misconceptions that can hinder our ability to address and combat this pressing concern effectively. In this section, we will **uncover some common myths and misconceptions surrounding environmental pollution.**

## MYTH

**Pollution is "not my business":** The belief that environmental issues are solely the responsibility of politicians or environmental organizations. This myth often stems from a sense of detachment, where individuals perceive themselves as ordinary citizens without a direct role in addressing environmental concerns. **Dismissing personal responsibility can hinder collective efforts needed for sustainable practices and policies.**

## FACT

**Overcoming this myth involves emphasizing the collective power of individual actions. Small, cumulative efforts can contribute to larger positive changes.**



## MYTH

### **Food Waste is Not an Environmental Problem in Canada:**

Contrary to the misconception, food waste is a significant environmental concern in Canada. Food decomposing in landfills emits harmful carbon emissions, contributing to climate change. For example, Canada's substantial fruit waste signifies a loss of water resources. Popular food trends, like mukbang and food challenges can also contribute to food waste by encouraging excessive consumption.

## FACT

**Understanding the environmental impact of food choices, especially in resource-intensive sectors, is essential for making informed and sustainable dietary decisions. Taking action at a personal level, such as reducing food waste and making sustainable dietary decisions, is a tangible and impactful way to contribute to environmental preservation.**



## MYTH

### **Environmental pollution only affects rural communities:**

This misconception might stem from a lack of direct experience with the immediate environmental impacts faced by urban dwellers.

## FACT

**We shouldn't underestimate the interconnectedness between urban and rural environments especially since urban environments often depend on rural areas for food, water, and other natural resources.**



## MYTH

### **Seeing Environmental Damage Leads to Swift**

**Change:** This myth assumes that witnessing environmental damage firsthand prompts immediate action. However, **change often requires more than awareness; it necessitates coordinated efforts, policies, and sustainable practices.**



## FACT

**Different geopolitical, economic, and cultural contexts contribute to varying approaches to environmental conservation and regulation. For example,** Costa Rica's president enacted policies and initiatives to regain their biodiversity, showcasing how **proactive measures can positively impact biodiversity and serve as an inspiring example for other nations.**

## MYTH

### **Despite the plastic bag ban in Canada, other plastic items are still available.**

There is a lack of awareness about the ban's intricacies, which led to many misunderstandings. The plastic ban was part of a more comprehensive policy with subsequent steps.



## FACT

**Change occurs in stages. Understanding the step-wise approach to policies and being properly informed helps individuals appreciate the complexities involved in addressing environmental challenges.**





# GLOBAL CONNECTIONS AND COLLABORATIONS

**COLLABORATIVE STRATEGIES FOR  
ENVIRONMENTAL ADVOCACY**

**INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION &  
YOUTH-LED MOVEMENTS**

**A MESSAGE FOR CANADIAN  
YOUTH FROM KENYAN YOUTH**

# COLLABORATIVE STRATEGIES FOR ENVIRONMENTAL ADVOCACY

Collaborative strategies for environmental advocacy involve recognizing the interconnectedness of global challenges and **the need for cooperation across nations and regions**. Emphasizing the shared responsibility for addressing climate change and pollution, advocates stress the importance of **collaborative efforts between the global north and south**.



**Many immigrants initially praise countries in the Global North due to the perception that they have better environmental practices. However, after immigrating and settling, we notice the environmental issues more prominently, revealing the complexities and environmental challenges faced even in countries like Canada.**

Advocates call for collaboration not only between nations but also **across various disciplines and sectors, promoting** the least intrusive practices and sustainable development. Countries in the Global North can take on a significant role through climate financing, supporting Global South regions, and **investing in development to address environmental impacts**.




**Environmental concerns, especially climate change, have become polarized along political lines. Anti-environment policies hinder collaborative efforts, impeding the development and implementation of comprehensive policies necessary for effective environmental change.**



# INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION & YOUTH-LED MOVEMENTS

International cooperation and youth partnerships are crucial. We need a collective effort to achieve Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and other environmental goals and agreements. This involves simple yet impactful steps like **learning from each other, sharing knowledge, identifying mutual interests,** and establishing funding and resource mobilization initiatives.



**Collaboration between young activists and entrepreneurs globally can lead to solutions that combine advocacy with business-oriented approaches. While some issues may require government intervention and policy changes, entrepreneurship and grassroots initiatives are still important.**

We can draw inspiration from collaborative examples seen in animals and ecosystems. Actions like climate strikes originating from individual countries and spreading worldwide **exemplify the ripple effects of global collaboration on environmental issues.** Successful strategies involve understanding what is working well and supporting each other in implementing effective measures.



**The lessons learned through conversations with peers from different countries highlights the need for broader, more inclusive engagement in international cooperation and partnerships.**







# INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION & YOUTH-LED MOVEMENTS

**International cooperation is a preventive measure.** Open discussions, dialogues with global youth, and international platforms, such as COP allow us to share experiences and inspire innovative solutions. **Despite challenges, advocates stress the value of international exchanges.**



**When talking to a friend from Portugal, I learned that their childhood exposure to behaviour change for addressing climate change had a lasting impact on them even in adulthood. This made me aware of climate education. Climate education can shape future attitudes and actions. This needs to be implemented more globally.**



Youth can **ensure their voices are heard** through various channels like elections, public forums, and sustainable actions. International cooperation is essential, aligning with **Sustainable Development Goal 17.**

**17 PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS**



**Youth can commit to a professional career aligned with their advocacy efforts and continue conversations within their circles. They can actively create sustainable change by reaching a common ground and shared objectives.**



# A MESSAGE FOR CANADIAN YOUTH



## FROM KENYAN YOUTH

“Early interactions with global youth can lay the **groundwork** for future international cooperation and collaboration. **Take interactions with global youth seriously.** The interactions should not be the end but the means to an end of solving [climate] problems. **Encouraging and supporting projects that bring young people from different countries together can lead to swift solutions to shared challenges.**”

Youth can make noise on local and global platforms. It's important to have forums, but it **needs to translate into meaningful action that supports youth projects. Youth can play a role in mobilizing resources,** and it is more impactful if they are also involved in fundraising activities too. **Youth have experiences that can add value to the conversation. Youth can expand their initiatives, increase attention, and share stories to contribute more meaningfully to the global environmental discourse.**”

### Calvin Shikuku

Kenyan Youth  
Environmental Advocate





# Artwork Spotlight: Same DNA, Same Solitude



When we identify ourselves as climate activists, we often must turn our back to the mainstream culture, therefore isolating ourselves from all the trendy behaviours that are not aligned with the values we defend.

The photograph depicts a young person that is connected to nature (standing on a stump, both feet anchored to the forest), aware of the reality of environmental crises, while being cut from the mass, **alone in a vast scenery...**

PHOTOGRAPH BY  
**Ana P. Juliet**  
Québec, Canada



# Artwork Spotlight: **Same DNA, Same Solitude**



... I believe solitude is the worst barrier to youth involvement in climate action, and intended to represent that predicament without fatalism: the subject is strongly standing in the middle of the picture, looking straight forward, ready to continue their path towards action... and, hopefully, towards a welcoming community of other young activists waiting somewhere in the forest.



**I'm a poetess on Tuesdays.** I spend a lot of time questioning the world, and myself, while I refuse to believe we're doomed. I nurture the power of Action, including artistic expression as a tool to make people aware of nature's beauty and value.



PHOTOGRAPH BY  
**Ana P. Juliet**

Instagram @anapjuliet  
**Québec, Canada**

# THANK YOU FOR READING



**Thank you for reading our Green Gen Guidebook!**

**We hope you have learned a thing or two about environmental pollution in Canada and Kenya.**

**We wish you all the best as you take sustainable actions against environmental pollution.**

*Priscilla Ojumu*

*Jeyinta Ochieng*

*Tinnola Oluwojeunjeje*

