

1<sup>st</sup> Prize Winner

**MOTHER NATURE'S UN SDG GOALS**

By Yeira William Xavier, aged 9 (India)

Once upon a time, Mother Nature gathered all her children - the trees, the rivers, the animals, and even us humans. She had a very important task for everyone. She wanted to achieve the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (UN SDGs). These are a set of 17 goals that aim to make our world a better place.

The first two goals are- No Poverty and Zero Hunger. Mother Nature explained how the fruits from trees and crops from farms can help us fight hunger and poverty. If we take care of nature, it will provide us with food and resources.

Next, she talked about Good Health and Well-being. Clean air from trees and clean water from rivers are essential for our health. In many ways, nature is our best doctor!

Mother Nature also emphasized the importance of Quality Education. She pointed out that nature is our best teacher! It provides us with knowledge about different plants, animals, weather patterns, and so much more.

When it came to Climate Action, Mother Nature highlighted the role of trees. They absorb harmful carbon dioxide and give us oxygen, helping us fight climate change.

Finally, she discussed Life below Water and Life on Land. Healthy forests, oceans, and rivers are home to millions of species. By protecting them, we help protect biodiversity.

Mother Nature reminded us that every little action counts. Whether it's planting a tree, cleaning a beach, or even saving water at home - it all makes a big difference. She said, "Remember, my dear children, we are all connected. If you help me achieve these goals, you are also helping yourselves and each other."

So, let's all lend a hand to Mother Nature and work together to achieve the UN SDGs!

2nd Prize

**How can nature help us achieve the UN SDGs in my community?**

By Ameen Shakur, aged 10 (UK)

The United Nations has set 17 goals for Sustainable development which were set up in 2015 for the 2030 plan of action. These goals were set up to help us understand the most important problems and urgent issues facing the world. These include climate action, zero hunger, good health, wellbeing and life on land. All of these require nature as a vital part to develop local communities like my own. Here are examples of how nature can support some of these sustainable development goals in local communities like mine:

**Climate Action:** Having trees and wild areas of land near our homes allows us to preserve and expand natural carbon sinks like forests, which plays a vital role in reversing climate change. Natural woodlands and using natural products for housing allows for sustainable practices that reduce carbon emissions and promote climate change combating methods.

**Zero Hunger:** By using sustainable farming practices to maintain soil health and biodiversity and having community gardens we can improve local food production and so reduce our carbon footprint and improve food for all to have and we can share to all in our community.

**Good Health and Well-being:** Having green spaces for leisure promotes physical and mental health by lowering depression and anxiety. Giving access to natural environments is important to have a positive impact on community health. It is important to be outside during the day when we are at school for our wellbeing and to connect with nature on our school campus.

**Life on Land:** Through community conserving, protecting and restoring schemes our natural habitats, such as forests and ecosystems we can conserve biodiversity and combat deforestation and improve animal ecosystems. Planting trees in our local community is important and we have planted lots in our school.

**Quality Education:** Having natural environments as outdoor classrooms where possible allows students and communities to connect with nature making us aware of our environment. We also have developed local community educational programs that promote ecological sustainability and conservation. Our school supported our twin school in Sri Lanka to build an outdoor classroom which is used a lot!

Through working in local communities, businesses, and charities we can all work towards common environmental goals. This is really important for the future of our planet, and I believe we all need to act as soon as possible in our local communities. We can also support businesses which are eco-friendly and have sustainable practices, which create jobs such as eco-tourism. By recognizing and using the benefits of nature in my community I can make significant strides toward achieving the UN SDGs, promoting resilience, environmental stewardship, and community well-being.

Joint 3<sup>rd</sup> Prize

**How can nature help us achieve the UN SDGs in my community?**

By Dao Binh Minh, aged 9 (Vietnam)

As the Prime Minister of Vietnam, it is a great chance to share my enthusiasm for the 2030 Agenda. Vietnam ranks 16th out of the countries which have the richest biodiversity in the world, which has contributed to achieve SDGs 2030. Let me focus on SDG1 - No Poverty, SDG2 - Zero Hunger and SDG7 - Affordable and Clean Energy to convince how nature helps us to achieve these Goals.

Firstly, nature helps us to eradicate poverty and hunger. In Vietnam, it is estimated that the overall poverty rate nationwide is 4.03%. Many forest planting projects have been implemented nationwide which have brought great results to increase local people's income, especially in the mountainous areas. With a coastline of over 3,000 kilometers, Vietnam has a rich biodiversity of marine species, therefore fish exploitation is the main income in the coastal areas. Especially, with beautiful landscapes, local people can increase their earnings through tourism activities. Meanwhile, we have also participated in the Zero Hunger Campaign, which helps us to eliminate hunger and ensure food security. Based on natural resources, we have promoted agriculture development which provides vital sources of food and improves the community's livelihood. Therefore, it is the fact that nature contributes to achieve national targets on No Poverty and Zero Hunger in 2030.

Secondly, nature also plays an important role in achieving SDG7. Vietnam is located in a geographical area suitable for developing renewable energy: hydroelectricity, solar and wind power. We have many hydropower plants that have contributed about 40% to the total national electricity capacity. In 2023, wind and solar shared about 26% of the country's electrical generation which has met the target. Thanks to natural resources, we are in the progress of developing the most economical and clean energy sources to achieve SDG7.

Last but not least, I would like to express my sincere thanks to the international community for supporting the progress to achieve SDGs 2030. Mohith Agadi said: "Environment is no one's property to destroy; it's everyone's responsibility to protect". Let's join hands together to protect our planet for future generations.

Thank you.

Joint 3<sup>rd</sup> Prize

**How can nature help us achieve the UN SDGs in my community?**

By David Oluwafoyinsayemi Anigbajumo, aged 11 (Nigeria)

In Abuja, Nigeria, the intersection of nature and sustainable development is pivotal, aligning with the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). This essay explores how Abuja's natural resources can catalyze community development, addressing socio-economic challenges while contributing to global sustainability.

**SDG 1: No Poverty**

Abuja's fertile soil and favorable climate offer a foundation for sustainable agriculture, for farm produce like yams, millet, maize, sorghum, and beans, if well managed this can be a transformative opportunity to alleviate poverty and enhance economic prosperity.

Innovative farming techniques and cooperatives can uplift local farmers, creating a robust agricultural sector as a tool against poverty.

**SDG 2: Zero Hunger**

As stated above in SDG 1: No Poverty, the city's fertile soil is a favorable one harmonizing agriculture with Abuja's natural resources can help achieve food security. Through sustainable and ecologically conscious farming methods.

**SDG 3: Good Health and Well-being**

Preserving green spaces and natural habitats contributes to physical and mental well-being. Establishing more urban parks and recreational areas will help improve air quality and foster a healthier community.

**SDG 4: Quality Education**

Abuja has a functioning education system which can be improved by integrating environmental education into the curriculum to align with and inform the students who are kids and teenagers about the UN SDGs and by extension creation of SDGs focus clubs in our primary and secondary schools.

#### SDG 5: Gender Equality

Integrating women into school leadership, political leadership, and natural resource management fosters empowerment, breaking gender barriers. Programs in sustainable agriculture, eco-tourism, and conservation can contribute to gender equality, aligning with SDG 5.

#### SDG 6: Clean Water and Sanitation

Abuja's commitment to preserving ecosystems ensures clean water sources. Investing in watershed management safeguards water resources, contributing to SDG 6 for a reliable supply of clean water.

#### SDG 7: Affordable and Clean Energy

We use solar as an alternative energy source to commercial Abuja Electricity Distribution Company (AEDC). Abuja's abundant resources position it to explore more renewable energy sources, and this should be explored on a large scale by individuals, families, organizations, and even the government.

#### SDG 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth

Sustainable land use and eco-friendly tourism such as Jabi Lake Mall, Jabi Lake, Millennium Park, and many more generate employment, fostering economic growth aligned with SDG 8. Promoting more of this sustainable tourism and responsible land use will create a thriving economy.

#### SDG 9: Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure

Integrating nature-based solutions into infrastructure promotes resilience. Green infrastructure enhances urban resilience, contributing to sustainable industrialization in line with SDG 9.

#### SDG 10: Reduced Inequality

Sustainable agriculture practices ensure equal access to resources, reducing economic disparities and advancing SDG 10 goals. Initiatives like community-supported agriculture promote equitable benefits.

#### SDG 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities

Incorporating green spaces into urban planning enhances air quality and fosters sustainable development. Abuja can prioritize green building and sustainable transportation for an environmentally conscious city.

#### SDG 12: Responsible Consumption and Production

Promoting sustainable agriculture and responsible land use reduces environmental impact. Incentivizing sustainable farming and circular economy practices aligns with SDG 12 goals.

#### SDG 13: Climate Action:

Preserving natural habitats, especially forests, mitigates climate change effects. Abuja's commitment to afforestation and carbon sink preservation contributes to global climate action under SDG 13.

#### SDG 14: Life Below Water and 15. Life on Land

Biodiversity conservation in marine and terrestrial ecosystems reflects Abuja's commitment to sustainable resource management. Protecting marine and terrestrial life aligns with these goals.

#### SDG 16: Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions

Community engagement in environmental conservation fosters inclusive development.

Prioritizing environmental justice and equitable distribution of benefits strengthens institutions.

SDG 17: Partnerships for the Goals

Abuja's nature-based solutions provide a common ground for collaboration. Multi-stakeholder partnerships can be fostered, aligning with objectives for global sustainable development.

In conclusion, Abuja's being the federal capital of Nigeria, and its natural wealth offer a unique opportunity for sustainable development. Integrating nature-based solutions, exemplifying the transformative power of nature in building a resilient, equitable, and sustainable future. Through a united commitment to nature-inspired development, Abuja can stand as a beacon, demonstrating how harmony with nature paves the way for a brighter future.

4<sup>th</sup> Prize

**How can nature help us achieve the UN SDGs in my community?**

By Alina Ryburn, aged 11 (UAE)

Mangroves are incredible because they can help us achieve the sustainable development goals in a number of ways. Mangroves are solutions to over half of the sustainable development goals including no poverty, life on land, decent work and economic growth, sustainable cities and communities, life below water and many more.

They can help goal 14 (life below water) by acting as a shelter for young fish. They also help by holding back sediments and nutrients that would otherwise pollute the ocean.

Mangroves can help goal 15 - life on land - by improving peoples access to safe and healthy food as well as providing a place for animals to thrive. They also help goal 13, climate change, because they remove up to five times more carbon than land forests and thus have a key role in lowering and extracting carbon from the atmosphere.

Mangroves, obviously, can help goals 13, 14 and 15 but they can also help many others in ways you wouldn't even dream about.

Mangroves are a big help to goals 6 & 8 – clean water and sanitation and decent work and economic growth - because their roots hold on to sediments which reduces erosion, supporting habitats under water. They also help by providing lots of various sources that give food so animals and humans can survive.

They can help goals 1 and 2 (no poverty and zero hunger) by producing and giving nutritious and sufficient food to communities directly by providing a habitat for many animals. This is useful because communities can get free food that is healthy and nutritious like shellfish, crabs, oysters and octopuses.

Mangroves can also help goals 11 and 3, sustainable cities and communities and good health and wellbeing, because the trunks of mangroves soak in the impact of waves, making them an excellent defence that helps to protect higher ground and by improving peoples access to safe and healthy food.

The solutions that mangroves provide are like their roots, they help lots of different sustainable development goals in many different ways that link and connect. They would also lots in the UAE, where I live, because it is costal. So far, there are 30 km<sup>2</sup> of mangrove forests in the UAE and 147000 km<sup>2</sup> of mangrove forests in the world but we need more.

5<sup>th</sup> Prize

**How can nature help us achieve the UN SDGs in my community?**

By Sarah Manglani, aged 8 (India)

Nature plays a significant role in our lives. It provides us with food, clean air and water which are the basics of human survival. It can help the United Nations achieve its goals like Zero Hunger, Good Health and Wellbeing, Saving Life Below Water, etc. But firstly, we need to understand that it is a give and take relationship. Only if we save and add to nature, it will help us in sustainability.

Collaborative efforts with the community can help us achieve the UN SDG's. Zero Hunger By planting more trees, we not only get fruits and vegetables', but we also save soil, which helps in agriculture. Good climate conditions and favourable soil can grow more food for the world. Additionally, farming creates more livelihoods in the communities. Good Health and Wellbeing By planting more trees and living in green spaces we ensure our healthy living and mental wellbeing. Natural green environment is a big source of our Indian Ayurvedic Medicine, contributing to good health care.

Life Below Water and Life on Land Rainfall helps in maintaining good water levels in our oceans, rivers, and lakes, thereby helping life below water. By saving nature - not cutting down forests, jungles, etc., we ensure saving the natural habitat of all kinds of animals. This way we prevent the extinction of endangered species of animals. Climate Action Human activities such as deforestation and burning of fuels in industries have been the main reason for global warming. Protecting our forest and practicing eco-friendly ways of life like recycling, using solar energy and water conservation will help in reversing the climate change for the better.

Lastly, I would like to add that nature-based education like we have in our British School, New Delhi, encourages a good understanding of our ecosystems. This will help us in being a responsible and environmentally aware global citizen. It will help us understand the environmental problems in our community and identifying solutions for them. My motto in life is "Save our planet", and how do we do that? If we all practice planting a tree each year on our birthday, the world would be a happier place. Plant more trees, Clean the seas, Save the endangered Species, No more plastic please. A green world is a happy world.