



WELCOME TO THE ECO LEADERS GUIDE!

In the following pages, you'll find the **'Introduction and Background'** chapter of the Eco Leaders Guide. Use the hyperlinks below to quickly navigate to specific sections or pages you're looking for.

INTRODUCTION & BACKGROUND

Changemaker Self-Assessment

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Eco Leaders Guide

WWF's Environmental Education and Youth Advocacy Toolkit for the Mekong Region



Disclaimer:

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INTRODUCTION & BACKGROUND

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to your first step towards becoming a powerful voice for the environment! This toolkit is designed specifically for young advocates like you, who are passionate about safeguarding our planet and eager to make a significant impact. Within these pages, you will find a collection of carefully curated tools, insights, and strategies to help you navigate the complex landscape

of environmental advocacy. From understanding the basics of environmental issues in the Greater Mekong Subregion (GMS), to mastering the art of mobilizing your peers and influencing decision-makers, this toolkit is your go-to resource for turning your environmental concerns into actionable change. Let's embark on this journey together to foster a sustainable future, one step at a time!



ABOUT USAID-WWF MEKONG FOR THE FUTURE

The USAID-WWF Mekong for the Future (MFF) program, led by WWF, is all about enhancing how natural resources are managed in the Lower Mekong region, which includes Cambodia, Laos PDR, Myanmar, Thailand and Viet Nam. The goal is to get more community groups, including youth, included in the governance of these resources, working together across borders, and making sure everyone—from local communities to governments and experts—can work together.

The project focuses on a few main areas: boosting the power of civil society throughout the region to help shape environmental policies; pushing for more transparency in the management of natural resources; and tackling major issues like renewable energy, climate resilience for rivers, large-scale infrastructure projects; and ensuring civil society can participate in governance.

In particular, maintaining healthy rivers, streams, wetlands, and lakes is a big part of the MFF program. This is crucial not just for the environment but also for the millions of people in the region who rely on these water systems for their food, jobs, and overall well-being.

WHAT IS THE 'ECO LEADERS GUIDE: WWF'S ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION AND YOUTH ADVOCACY TOOLKIT FOR THE MEKONG REGION' ALL ABOUT?

This "Eco Leaders Guide" was created specifically for youth aged 18 to 25 from the GMS. This cool toolkit isn't just a bunch of facts; it's your guide to making real environmental change where you live. The toolkit's information, activities and tools will help you and your friends to dive into key issues like sustainable freshwater ecosystem management and conservation, climate change, and renewable energy, gaining the know-how to effectively take leadership in advocating with different types of people and groups the importance of protecting and sustaining the natural environment and resources of the GMS. Plus, you're not alone in this journey! The toolkit was shaped by youth leaders from Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, and Thailand, ensuring it speaks directly to your needs and empowers you to expand your influence and rally others in safeguarding your region's environment, culture, and future livelihoods.

WHAT'S INSIDE?

Dive into this toolkit and discover a treasure trove of resources designed just for you, the young changemakers of the GMS. This dynamic resource is more than just a bunch of dry info; it's packed with essential information, engaging activities, and practical tools tailored for young people like yourself who care about the environment and want to do something. This toolkit is designed to deepen your understanding of the crucial environmental and climate challenges shaping the future of the GMS, equipping you with the knowledge to inspire and empower action. Learn how to inspire your peers, raise awareness, and spearhead initiatives that protect vital freshwater resources and advocate for sustainable energy solutions. With this guide, you're not just absorbing information; you're stepping up to lead real change. Get ready to turn your passion into impactful action and make a significant difference in your community.



HOW TO EFFECTIVELY USE THIS TOOLKIT

This toolkit is designed to guide you through a transformative process, to advocate about the issues affecting freshwater ecosystem management, climate change, and renewable energy.

The youth environmental advocacy journey has five important stages. First is “Understanding the Issue”, where young advocates learn about environmental problems. Next is “Developing a Position”, where you form your own opinions and ideas about these issues. The third stage, “Engaging Stakeholders”, is about identifying and getting support and building relationships with people and groups who can help. In the fourth stage, “Developing Your Advocacy Plan”, you create a detailed plan of action. Finally, in the “Implementing Your Plan”, you put your plan into practice to make a real difference. See Figure 1: The 5 Stages of the Youth Environmental Advocacy Journey.

The toolkit is divided into five sequential chapters based on these five journey stages. Each chapter will equip you with the knowledge, strategies, and tools necessary to effectively engage stakeholders, collaborate with allies, and plan for and execute impactful advocacy campaigns.

Whether you're tackling this challenge as an individual or as part of a team, this guide will help you deepen your understanding, refine your approach, and lead successful initiatives that make a real difference. Let's get started on turning your passion for the environment into effective action!

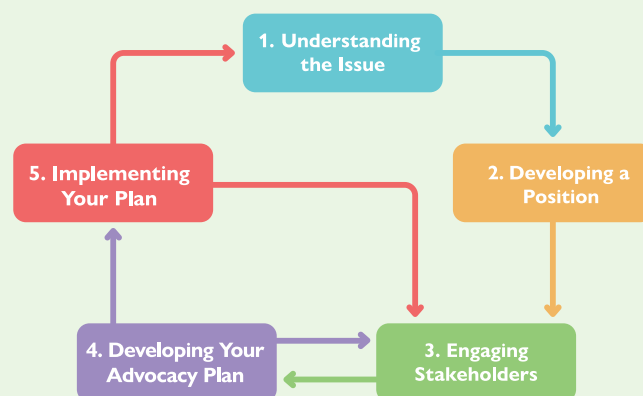


Figure 1. The 5 Stages of the Youth Environmental Advocacy Journey

THE STRUCTURE AND CONTENT OF THIS TOOLKIT



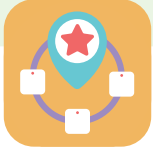
INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

Kick off your adventure in this introduction chapter! Here, you'll be introduced to what this toolkit is all about and discover how you can use it to spark real change on three key environmental issues. We'll guide you through who this toolkit is perfect for and the best ways to use it to make an impact. Plus, we break down what “advocacy” really means in the world of environmental action. Get ready to be inspired by stories and achievements of youth advocates from around the globe and locally in GMS who are making waves in conservation. This chapter is your first step towards becoming a champion for the planet!



CHAPTER 1: EXPLORING THE ISSUES OF THE GMS

Chapter 1 gives you a comprehensive yet detailed look at the major environmental challenges currently impacting the GMS. You then dig deeper into the three pivotal issues at the core of this toolkit: sustainable management of freshwater ecosystems, addressing climate change, and the shift towards a renewable energy future. You'll see how these challenges affect the four countries of Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, and Thailand, and explore their efforts to meet international and regional agreements and frameworks through multilateral institutions such as the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and the Mekong River Commission (MRC). To boost your understanding on these issues, the chapter includes interactive environmental education activities and a resource library packed with additional information and external links.



CHAPTER 2: **DEVELOPING YOUR ADVOCACY POSITION**

Picking an issue to champion is a choice that hits close to home. It's about what you're passionate about, your own experiences, what you know, and your drive to make a difference. Chapter 2 is all about helping you find that one issue that fires you up. We'll take you through how to dig deeper into your chosen cause using a set of clever systems thinking and research tools. These tools are designed to give you a broader perspective and sharper insights, enabling you to carry out effective research and zero in on where you and your team can have the biggest impact. Get ready to dive in, explore thoroughly, and set the stage for real change!



CHAPTER 3: **CONSULTING WITH DIFFERENT STAKEHOLDERS AND POINTS OF VIEW**

Engaging with stakeholders is crucial because it helps you gather a variety of perspectives, manage expectations, prevent potential conflicts, and build collaborative relationships. These efforts make your advocacy more sustainable and effective. Chapter 3 highlights the advantages of connecting with key stakeholders and equips you with tools to identify the right people and groups to consult for a deeper understanding of local issues. It also provides strategies for planning and conducting these important consultations. At the end of the chapter, you'll find a resource library packed with additional tools and links to further your advocacy efforts.



CHAPTER 4: **DEVELOPING YOUR ADVOCACY PLAN**

Good planning is the backbone of any successful advocacy campaign. In Chapter 4, we guide you through crafting an effective advocacy plan, beginning with setting Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, and Timely (SMART) goals and strategizing the best ways to influence key groups, especially decision-makers. Your campaign should integrate a strategic mix of communication, relationship-building, and evidence-based persuasion techniques. This chapter offers a wealth of tips, techniques, and tools to help you prepare a compelling advocacy strategy and craft persuasive messages. You'll learn how to develop robust indicators and a monitoring approach, find links to potential funding sources, and access a guide for writing successful funding proposals. This comprehensive support will equip you with everything you need to launch and sustain your advocacy efforts.



CHAPTER 5: **IMPLEMENTING YOUR ADVOCACY CAMPAIGN AND MAKING CHANGE**

Chapter 5 is all about rallying your dream team for advocacy that really resonates. Here, you'll discover how to connect with people on a deep, emotional level, aligning with their values, concerns, and hopes. This chapter delves into the core focus of your advocacy campaign, exploring effective strategies for making an impact in both policy change and public awareness. You'll be introduced to a variety of advocacy methods and activities, helping you find the perfect fit for your team's strengths and the unique needs of your community and country. Additionally, this chapter offers practical tips on using international agreements, treaties, and frameworks to bolster your efforts—especially useful when you're looking to sway national policies or corporate behaviors. As influencing policy and decision-makers is often the pinnacle of advocacy, we provide a clear breakdown of how public opinion and policy interact. You'll get guidance on engaging with policymakers, mastering negotiation techniques, and a handy tool to organize your communication strategies for maximum impact.



WHY IS YOUTH PARTICIPATION IN ENVIRONMENTAL CHANGE SO IMPORTANT?

Due to concern for the planet's future, today's youth are at the forefront of the global environmental movement. These days, young people possess significant awareness and positive attitudes towards environmental issues, and their involvement in decision-making processes and environmental conservation efforts has led to transformative changes in countries around the world. Young people understand that mitigating climate change, protecting biodiversity, and addressing other crucial environmental challenges requires urgent individual and collective action. Young environmental leaders and changemakers are influencing the conversation and demanding accountability from governments, businesses, and society by organizing public actions and using social media as a platform for awareness and advocacy. Youth-led grassroots initiatives have proven to be crucial in accelerating impactful and beneficial environmental change. Millions of young people have taken part in climate strikes and other activities as part of the "[Fridays for Future](#)" campaign started by Greta Thunberg and her fellow school strikers.

Importantly, digital savvy teen activists are turning social media into a powerhouse for change. Platforms like Instagram, Facebook, YouTube,

etc. aren't just for scrolling; they're tools for mobilizing support, spreading awareness, and sparking collective action on environmental issues. Through compelling posts, informative videos, and viral campaigns, they're making everyone sit up and take notice. More impressively, young people these days are redefining environmental activism, taking it far beyond street protests and hashtag campaigns. They're at the heart of innovation, pushing for sustainable practices across various sectors. From ramping up waste reduction efforts to backing the principles of a circular economy, advocating for sustainable farming, and spearheading the shift to clean energy, their actions are shaping a greener future.

The energy and passion of young people are transforming the landscape of environmental activism and advocacy. They're not just participants; they're leaders calling for policy changes and putting innovative solutions into action. By encouraging their ideas, promoting partnerships across generations, and ensuring they have a seat at the decision-making table, WWF is seeking to empower these young environment champions to lead the charge towards a sustainable and thriving planet.

WHAT IS ADVOCACY AND WHAT MAKES AN EFFECTIVE CHANGEMAKER?

Advocacy is all about standing up and giving your voice to what you believe in. Whether it's pushing for policy changes, spreading the word, or rallying support for taking action, advocacy is about making a positive impact. It's not just about holding up signs and reposting memes and photos—it can mean anything from launching an online viral awareness campaign to sitting down with policy and decision-makers to get them to listen and enlists their support. The endgame? To make real change happen, shaping how people think and act, and boosting the well-being of communities and society as a whole.

Ready to make some noise and shake things up? That's what advocacy is all about!

STAND UP!

PROMOTING A CAUSE

Focusing on championing a specific cause or issue, such as human rights, environmental sustainability or social justice.

ADVOCACY

MOBILIZING SUPPORT

Mobilizing individuals, communities, and organizations to actively contribute to and promote the desired change.

IMPLEMENTING SOLUTIONS

Strives to bring tangible solutions and positive change. Propose and implement practical initiatives or policies that address the root causes of the issue.

RAISING AWARENESS

Increase public understanding of the issues. Often involves educating people about the root causes, consequences, and potential solutions related to the cause.

ENGAGING IN DIALOGUE

With various stakeholders including decision-makers, public and other organizations. This helps build understanding, address concerns and foster collaboration.

INFLUENCING DECISION MAKERS

Advocacy seeks to influence those in positions of power, which can lead to the adoption of policies, laws, or practices that align with the advocated cause.

Advocacy isn't just about speaking up—it's about speaking smart. To really make a difference, you need a mix of skills: think killer communication, savvy negotiation, sharp strategic thinking, and solid relationship-building. When you're advocating for change, you're not going it alone. You'll team up with allies, engage with decision-makers, and collaborate with stakeholders to push your agenda forward and score some real wins. At its core, advocacy is a powerhouse tool for influencing public policy, driving social change, and tackling issues that matter to people and communities around the globe and also closer to home.



Some key attributes that characterize an effective youth leader and advocate include:



- ♦ **Motivation and Inspiration:** Motivation and inspiration are contagious. A motivated and inspired young leader can effectively engage and energize others. This is essential for building community support and fostering collective action, which are often necessary for environmental campaigns to succeed.
- ♦ **Passion and Commitment:** The best advocates are those who are not just interested, but obsessed with their cause. It's this fire inside that keeps them pushing forward, no matter the hurdles.
- ♦ **Empathy and Understanding:** Having a solid knack for getting where people are coming from and what they're going through is key. This lets advocates genuinely connect with and fight for the needs and rights of others.
- ♦ **Good Communication Skills:** Whether they're making a speech, drafting an email, or negotiating a deal, advocates need to get their point across effectively and move people to action.
- ♦ **Strategic Thinking:** Smart advocacy isn't just about having passion; it's about playing it smart. This means sizing up complex issues, thinking a few steps ahead, and crafting plans that make goals a reality.
- ♦ **Knowledge and Expertise:** True advocates aren't just passionate; they're experts. They dive deep into the laws, policies, and big-picture issues they're fighting for, understanding everything from the nitty-gritty details to the wider societal impacts.
- ♦ **Adaptability and Resilience:** The road to change is full of bumps and detours. Top advocates roll with the punches, adapting their game plan and bouncing back from setbacks stronger than before.
- ♦ **Networking and Relationship-Building Skills:** Change isn't a solo sport. It's about who you know and how well you connect. Effective advocates are pros at forging alliances and cultivating relationships that can turn the tide.
- ♦ **Ethical Integrity:** Advocacy is built on trust. To lead, you've got to live out your values, ensuring everything you do is marked by honesty, transparency, and ethical action. In other words, you've got to walk your talk to truly lead and inspire.
- ♦ **Persistence and Determination:** Real change doesn't happen overnight. It takes grit and guts. The best advocates stick to their mission, pushing through barriers and bouncing back from setbacks, no matter how tough things get.
- ♦ **Cultural Competence:** In a world rich with diversity, top-notch advocates embrace and understand the varied backgrounds and viewpoints of the people they stand for. They skillfully navigate the cultural complexities of the communities they interact with, ensuring everyone feels respected and included.

Where are you right now in terms of being an effective environment advocate and changemaker?

Follow this link to the [Sustainability Changemaker Self-Assessment](#).

TOOL: CHANGEMAKER SELF-ASSESSMENT		
<small>Instructions: The following are a list of skills and capacities that are either fundamental, or highly desirable, for successful changemaker leaders in the context of environmental advocacy and leadership. Use a "1-5" rating scale, where 1 is "not strong" and 5 is "mastery" (full confidence that you are operating at top professional capacity). Check your assessment with someone else you trust, who knows you and your work well.</small>		
SCORE 1-5	TOPIC & CRITERIA	REMARKS FOR YOURSELF
	Mastery of knowledge base	
	I have sufficient knowledge of environment issues and topics of focus in the GMS-related to my topic of interest (i.e. freshwater ecosystem management, climate change and renewable energy: concepts and information sources).	

Important Message About Advocacy

Know your rights and keep yourself safe! In many countries the rights to free assembly are limited in certain circumstances. Make sure you have read up on your rights and evaluate the risks carefully before engaging in more high-risk forms of advocacy such as protesting.

Examples of Inspiring Global and GMS Youth Advocates & Changemakers

International Environmental Youth Advocates and Changemakers



Greta Thunberg (Sweden): Greta Thunberg (b.2003) is best known as a global environment and climate change activist for her efforts to raise awareness about climate change and advocate for urgent action to address the climate crisis. In August 2018, at the age of 15, Thunberg started the “School Strike for Climate” movement by skipping school to protest outside the Swedish Parliament. She demanded stronger action from politicians to reduce carbon emissions and combat climate change. Greta’s activism gained widespread attention through social media and international news coverage. Her speeches at global forums, including the United Nations Climate Change Conference in Poland and the United Nations Climate Action Summit in New York, garnered significant media attention. Her activism has had a profound impact on the global conversation around climate change, sparking widespread debate and mobilizing public support for climate action. She has been recognized with numerous awards and honors for her courage and leadership, including Time magazine’s Person of the Year in 2019. Thunberg lives a low-carbon lifestyle, eschewing air travel and adopting a plant-based diet to reduce her carbon footprint.

Click the link below to see the video about Greta Thunberg



[How Greta Thunberg Ignited Climate Strikes Around the World | One Small Step](#)



[Greta Thunberg wins 'alternative Nobel' for environmental work](#)



Melati Wijsen (Indonesia): At the age of 12, along with her younger sister, Isabel Wijsen, Melati (b.2000) co-founded Bye Bye Plastic Bags, a youth-led environmental organization dedicated to raising awareness about plastic pollution and advocating for its reduction. The organization aims to eliminate the use of plastic bags on the island of Bali. Melati and Isabel started their activism by organizing beach cleanups and educational workshops to engage the local community on the island. They also launched a petition calling on the Balinese local government to ban plastic, which garnered thousands of signatures, resulting in the Bali provincial government committing to banning single-use plastic bags by 2018. Melati’s activism has had a global impact, inspiring young people around the world to take action against plastic pollution. She has spoken at international forums, including the United Nations and the World Economic Forum, advocating for sustainable solutions to environmental challenges.

Click the link below to see the video about Melati Wijsen



[Our campaign to ban plastic bags in Bali - Melati and Isabel Wijsen](#)



[Melati Wijsen: A roadmap for young changemakers | TED Countdown](#)



Xiuhtezcatl Martinez (United States): Xiuhtezcatl Martinez (b.2000) is a youth climate activist and hip-hop artist who co-founded the organization Earth Guardians at the age of 6. In 2015, Xiuhtezcatl, along with 20 other young plaintiffs, [filed a lawsuit against the U.S. government](#) (Juliana et al v. United States et al), alleging that the government's actions and policies regarding climate change violated their constitutional rights to life, liberty, and property. In addition to his activism, Xiuhtezcatl is also a talented hip-hop artist, using music as a platform to spread messages of environmental consciousness, social justice, and youth empowerment. He has released several albums and music videos addressing environmental issues. Xiuhtezcatl's work has inspired young people around the world to get involved in environmental activism and climate action. He has spoken at major international events, including the United Nations Climate Change Conference in Paris in 2015 and the World Economic Forum, advocating for urgent measures to address the climate crisis.

Click to see the video about Xiuhtezcatl Martinez



[Xiuhtezcatl Martinez - Youth Leadership | Bioneers](#)



Autumn Peltier (Canada): Autumn Peltier (b.2004) is an Indigenous youth activist from the Wiikwemkoong First Nation in Canada. Autumn gained international recognition for her advocacy work, particularly focusing on the importance of clean water access and protection. She has been a vocal advocate for indigenous rights and environmental sustainability. Autumn first addressed the United Nations at the age of 13, speaking at the General Assembly on World Water Day in 2018. She has since spoken multiple times at the United Nations, calling for action to protect water sources and uphold indigenous rights. Her advocacy work is deeply rooted in her indigenous heritage and the traditional teachings of her community. She emphasizes the importance of indigenous knowledge and stewardship in protecting the environment and addressing climate change.

Click the link below to see the video about Autumn Peltier



[The teen fighting to protect Canada's water — meet Autumn Peltier](#)

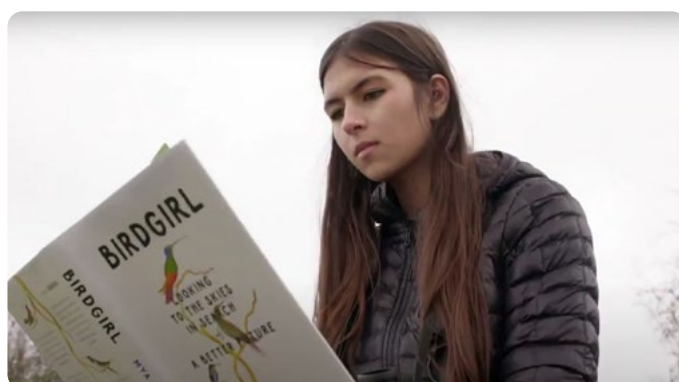


[Autumn Peltier Talks Pipelines | APTN News](#)



Mya-Rose Craig (UK-Bangladesh): Mya-Rose Craig (b.2002), also known as “Birdgirl”, is a British-Bangladeshi birder and conservationist, and has been an active advocate for various environmental campaigns and initiatives, raising awareness about the importance of protecting rivers and their biodiversity. She uses her platform to advocate for sustainable water management practices, the conservation of freshwater habitats, and the preservation of river ecosystems. Mya-Rose is also actively involved in engaging and empowering young people to become environmental advocates and conservation leaders. She organizes workshops, talks, and events to motivate the next generation of environmental stewards. Through her activism, Mya-Rose has inspired young people around the world to take action to protect rivers and freshwater environments. She uses social media, public speaking engagements, and community outreach to amplify her message and mobilize support for environmental conservation efforts.

Click to see the video about Mya-Rose Craig



['Birdgirl' author on leading the flock of environmental activism](#)

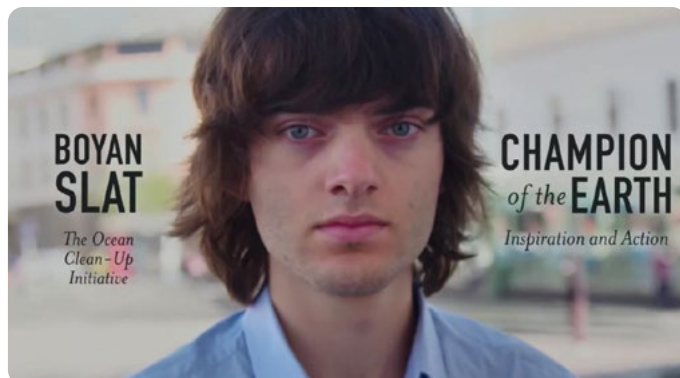


Boyan Slat (Netherlands): Boyan Slat (b.1994) is a Dutch inventor and entrepreneur, passionate about creating megaprojects to address planetary problems. He is the founder and CEO of The Ocean Cleanup; a non-profit organization developing and scaling technologies to rid the world's oceans of plastic. While on vacation in Greece at 16 years old, Boyan was scuba diving and saw more plastic bags than fish in the sea, which left him thinking “Why can't we just clean this up?” He started looking into the problem and possible technology solutions, dedicating a school project to developing his idea further. He presented his ideas at a TEDx Conference in late 2012. In February 2013, the TEDx video suddenly went viral, and the momentum that followed allowed Boyan to drop out of his Aerospace Engineering degree to officially found The Ocean Cleanup. Today, The Ocean Cleanup is actively cleaning up the Great Pacific Garbage Patch and has deployed interceptors in some of the world's most polluting rivers (including Thailand's Chao Phraya River) to prevent plastic reaching the ocean in the first place.

Click the link below to see the video about Boyan Slat



[Boyan Slat: the man who went out to clean the oceans](#)



[Dutch ocean crusader Boyan Slat awarded top global environmental prize for Inspiration and Action](#)



© Young Eco Ambassador Cambodia

GMS Environmental Youth Advocacy Champions

Across the vibrant tapestry of the Greater Mekong Sub-region, young leaders are stepping up as catalysts of change, steering a bold environmental revolution. From nature-dependent rural communities to the bustling cities of the region, youth are not just participants, but are driving conversations and action towards sustainability.

In Laos, young activists are orchestrating large-scale recycling and tree planting campaigns, turning the tide against plastic pollution and climate change at the same time. In Cambodia, dynamic youth groups champion biodiversity, merging environmental education with viral social media campaigns that not only spread awareness but also inspire tangible action across communities. In Myanmar, young leaders are channeling their energy and creativity into both raising awareness and taking direct action to combat climate change and environmental degradation. Thailand's young visionaries are pioneering urban agriculture initiatives, transforming rooftops and empty lots into verdant gardens that challenge the conventional food supply chains, reducing carbon footprints and promoting local produce.

The energy and enthusiasm of these young leaders is palpable as they organize workshops, seminars, and take direct action, educating their peers on the urgency of climate action, biodiversity conservation and sustainable living. They are not waiting for permission to make a difference; they are rewriting the rules, fostering a culture of innovation and resilience that is essential for the environmental challenges ahead. This groundswell of youth-led activism in the GMS isn't just about making noise; it's about crafting solutions, demonstrating that when young people lead, they bring fresh perspectives and unyielding energy that can reshape the world.

We are highlighting here four leading young environmental advocate champions from the four countries of focus in this toolkit: leaders and changemakers who are showing the current youth generation that with greater awareness, critical mass and focused energy, things can rapidly change for the better.



© Young Eco

CAMBODIA: Puthealy Vin

Puthealy's work at [YoungEco](#) in Cambodia has been pivotal in raising environmental awareness among young people in the country. As a project coordinator, she found her passion in environmental education—believing it to be essential for global biodiversity conservation, especially in developing nations like Cambodia. Puthealy has been actively organizing diverse campaigns and educational initiatives since 2019, including the Wonders of the Mekong campaign with USAID, a photography camp with KampumEra, and the biodiversity outreach program in Siem Pang Wildlife Sanctuary with Rising Phoenix. Her commitment to environmental education continues to inspire young people through various communication and outreach programs, making her a dedicated advocate for the protection of Cambodia's rich natural heritage.

See Puthealy's keynote presentation at the Asia Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development, [Youth Keynote Session on Youth Engagement in Biodiversity](#) - Day 1 Regional Dialogue 2023.



LAOS: Souksaveuy Keotiamchanh

Souksaveuy is the trailblazing founder of [Zero Waste Laos](#), the first youth-led environmental organization officially recognized as a civil society organization (CSO) in Laos. Not only did she clinch the Women of the Future Award for Southeast Asia in 2022 in the Environment, Social and Governance (ESG) category, but she's also on a relentless mission to steer Laos towards a greener and more sustainable future. Leading a vibrant team of 80 young changemakers, Souksaveuy has inspired over 10,000 young people to participate in Zero Waste Laos's initiatives over the past four years. Her efforts are not just about tackling waste management at both the practical and policy levels; she's equally passionate about climate action, youth empowerment, gender equality, and championing the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) among the next generation. Recently, under the Youth Climate Action Program in Laos, Souksaveuy spearheaded an ambitious project, planting 28,000 trees across 550 schools in 11 provinces, weaving a network of partnerships spanning government bodies, the private sector, development agencies, and NGOs to fuel this youth-led environmental movement.

Listen to Souksaveuy talk about being a young woman environmental leader in Laos at the [Women of the Future South East Asia Award in Singapore](#) in 2023.



MYANMAR: Shar Thae Hoy

Shar is a dynamic climate advocate from Myanmar who focuses on designing impactful climate action projects for marginalized communities, specifically supporting young leaders and promoting accessible climate technologies. As the leader of [Climate Action Lab Myanmar \(CALM\)](#), she scales up initiatives to nurture the next generation of climate champions and enhance community resilience during crises. Shar has delivered over 20 climate-related public talks, furthering awareness on environmental and social challenges in Myanmar, and has played a crucial role in youth-focused programs across Myanmar and South Asia. Her efforts extend to pioneering green-stem schools and initiatives aimed at children in climate-vulnerable areas, enhancing their access to climate technology and education. Recognized for her contributions, Shar was named the 2023 Falling Walls Lab Myanmar Winner and recently became an Advisory Board Member in 2024.

See Shar speak at [Breaking the Wall of Inaccessible Climate Tech](#), at the Falling Walls Science Summit in Berlin in 2023.



THAILAND: Jareerath Petsom (Baitong)

[Baitong](#) is a dynamic environmental activist from south Thailand, known for her multifaceted roles as a scriptwriter, model, TV host, and beauty pageant titleholder. Her dedication to environmental conservation began in 2005 and has since evolved into global advocacy. Crowned Miss Earth Thailand 2021 and Miss Earth Fire 2021, Baitong serves as an Environmental Ambassador for the Green World Foundation and a Sustainable Ocean Ambassador for the United Nations. She founded the [Baan Baan page on Instagram](#), promoting a sustainable lifestyle and eco-friendly living.

Baitong's media work includes producing travel programs with conservation messages. Her commitment to protecting forests and marine environments is reflected in her belief in the power of small, intentional actions. She encourages collective efforts to embrace sustainable living, emphasizing that even the smallest steps can ignite hope and create lasting change.

YOUTH-LED ENVIRONMENTAL ADVOCACY ORGANIZATIONS IN THE GMS

These are some examples of advocacy organizations working on various initiatives, including tree planting, waste management, renewable energy promotion, and advocacy for stronger climate policies. They play a crucial role in raising awareness about climate change and empowering young people to take action for a sustainable future.

If you would like to add or correct any information of the listed organizations, or suggest more organizations like this, please let us know by emailing info-asiapacific@wwfint.org.

CAMBODIA



Young Eco Ambassador Cambodia

focuses on raising awareness about environmental issues and empowering youth to take action on climate change through education and advocacy.

[Young Eco Ambassador Cambodia | Facebook](#)



Young Eco's missions are to 1) Empower Locals to Protect Local Biodiversity, 2) Provide Career Support for Environment Lovers and 3) Activate Eco-Businesses to Take Off.

young.eco

mekongwonders.org



Cambodian Youth Action (CYA)'s

goals are to promote education, sustainable development, and environmental preservation and protection. CYA is dedicated and committed to inspiring, engaging, and empowering global citizens to take action toward peace and sustainability, striving to make a tangible difference in communities through international voluntary service.

cyacambodia.com



Cambodian Youth Climate Change Program (CYCC)

empowers youth to be environmental leaders.

[CYCC Program | Facebook](#)



United Nations Youth Advisory Panel Cambodia (UNYAP)

is a youth advisory body of the United Nations Country Team, coordinated by the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) in Cambodia. UNYAP is involved in activities that allow young Cambodians to contribute their perspectives and ideas to the United Nations' work in the country.

[UN Youth Advisory Panel Cambodia - UNYAP | Facebook](#)



Youth Action for Green Environment (YouthAGE)

creates opportunity for all youth to acquire knowledge and skills in environmental conservation and climate action through education, advocacy, and community projects.

[YouthAGE | Facebook](#)



LAO PDR



Hubbo was established with a vision of promoting civic engagement to Lao people by being a bridge connecting volunteers to volunteering opportunity. Huboo supports Lao Youth through experiential learning in soft skills and engaging youth participation.

[Hubbo | Facebook](#)



Social Environmental Education and Development (SEED) is a volunteer group focused on raising awareness about environmental and sustainable development issues. They work within educational settings such as universities and schools, both in urban and remote areas of Laos. SEED is involved in activities that promote understanding and engagement with sustainable development and environmental conservation among students and the broader community.

[Social Environmental Education and Development - SEED | Facebook](#)



Zero Waste Laos (ZWL) is a non-profit organization that focuses on promoting waste reduction and sustainable waste management practices and climate action. The organization works to raise awareness about the environmental and social impacts of waste and climate change, and to inspire individuals, businesses, and communities to adopt zero waste principles and planting trees to help mitigate climate change impacts.

zerowastelaos.org

[Zero Waste Laos | Facebook](#)



Your partner in environmental conservation and sustainability

Econox Lao makes environment solutions inclusive for everyone. Econox's aim is to embrace innovative ideas for shaping a synergy between environmental conservation and development.

econoxlaos.com

[Econox Lao | Facebook](#)



Lone Buffalo is a free English tuition and youth development project committed to improving the lives of young people living in Laos. Lone Buffalo extends its initiatives with a program called "Green Buffalo," fostering student-led projects aimed at raising awareness of environmental concerns in rural Laos.

lonebuffalo.org

[Green Buffalo | Facebook](#)



© Mint Images

MYANMAR



Climate Action Lab Myanmar (CALM) is a Myanmar-based initiative focused on educating children and youth about climate science and advocating for social and cultural innovation to enhance community-led climate action projects. CALM emphasizes raising awareness among young people about climate change issues in Myanmar, promoting technological and knowledge-based solutions, and encouraging collaborative efforts to address these challenges.

[Climate Action Lab Myanmar-CALM | Facebook](#)



Myanmar Youth Initiative (MYI) is a nonprofit organization established in 2013 by young professionals inspired by global education. It aims to enhance youth participation in development sectors across Myanmar, filling gaps in capacity building through educational, entrepreneurial, and civic engagement events.

[Myanmar Youth Initiative | Facebook](#)



SLC Advocates - Advocates for Sustainable Lifestyle and Culture is a project founded by a group of students aimed at promoting sustainable lifestyles and culture in Myanmar.

[SLC Advocates - Advocates for Sustainable Lifestyle and Culture | Facebook](#)



Myanmar Climate Action Network (M-CAN) was established in 2023 under the Myanmar Climate Change Alliance (MCCA) Program by UN-Habitat and funded by the European Union. It comprises over 100 non-state climate actors committed to advancing climate action beyond discourse. Through strategic partnerships and advocacy, M-CAN focuses on catalyzing local climate action—particularly for vulnerable communities—using a collaborative approach to address multifaceted vulnerabilities and prioritize sustainable and resilient development.

[Myanmar Climate Action Network - M-CAN | Facebook](#)



Young Water Professionals Network Myanmar is supported by the National Water Resources Committee and Advisory Group and aims to develop competent young water professionals. This eleven-month program provides young graduates and government staff with technical training and on-the-job experience through the Ayeyarwady Integrated River Basin Management Project. Participants receive mentoring and training from local and international water experts, covering various aspects of water projects.

[Young Water Professionals Network \(Myanmar\) | Facebook](#)



THAILAND



Youth of Mekong serves to stimulate interests and inspire youth who will shape the future of the GMS. The Youth of Mekong forum encourages young people's active participation in the sub-region's development across various roles and dimensions, which will eventually contribute to sustained and strengthened sub-regional integration.

[Youth of Mekong | Facebook](#)



Global Youth Biodiversity Network (GYBN) Thailand is part of the Global Youth Biodiversity Network, which aims to connect and empower youth globally in biodiversity conservation efforts. They work under the Convention on Biological Diversity to raise awareness and build a coalition for biodiversity loss prevention. For more detailed activities and initiatives by GYBN Thailand, their YouTube channel offers insights into their specific projects.

[GYBN Thailand | Facebook](#)

[Global Youth Biodiversity Network | YouTube](#)



Rakkaochamao Group is a community initiative based in Rayong, Thailand. It focuses on cultivating a deep appreciation and pride among youth for their local heritage and environment. The group operates in a learning center amidst nature, created through community efforts, to nurture young individuals with knowledge, skills, and a sense of belonging to their birthplace. Their activities aim to foster community cooperation and sustainable development aligned with global concerns.

[Rakkaochamao Group | Facebook](#)



Baimai is a leading conservation organization working around Thailand to protect ecologically important lands, waters and animals for nature and people. It is formed by a group of passionate volunteers who aim to bring the beauty and goodness of nature to the public through experiencing wild walking, bird watching, and nature games from environmental education.

[Baimai | Facebook](#)

baimai.org



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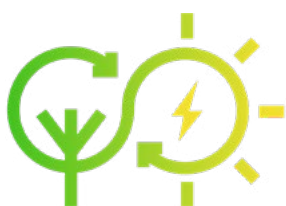
REGIONAL ORGANIZATIONS (GMS – ASEAN)



EcoCupid's Mission is to build a social platform that connects environmentalist individuals and initiatives in the ASEAN region; create multilingual written, video, and graphic media content that educate audiences on protecting the environment.

[EcoCupid | Facebook](#)

ecocupid-asean.com



Youth for Energy Southeast Asia (Y4E-SEA)

is a youth-led organization aimed at driving the energy transition in Southeast Asia. Y4E-SEA focuses on increasing awareness and representation of Southeast Asia's energy transition among young people aged 15-35 at both regional and international levels. The organization supports career building for youths in clean energy and energy transition-related fields through thematic workshops, capacity building, and training programs. Additionally, it collaborates and amplifies the impact of actions, activities, and events with like-minded organizations worldwide to achieve similar clean energy goals.

youthenergysea.com



The Sustainable Mekong Research Network (SUMERNET)

is an initiative for research and policy engagement bringing together research partners working on sustainable development in the countries of the Mekong Region: Cambodia, China, Laos, Myanmar, Thailand and Viet Nam.

[SUMERNET Young Professionals | Facebook](#)

sumernet.org

SUMERNET is a regional network made up of partners from the Mekong that are committed to sustainable development, poverty alleviation, gender and social equality and the incorporation of a rights-based approach in natural resource management. During this phase of SUMERNET, the network will engage with other Southeast Asian countries beyond the Mekong Region to promote greater regional collaboration and knowledge exchange.

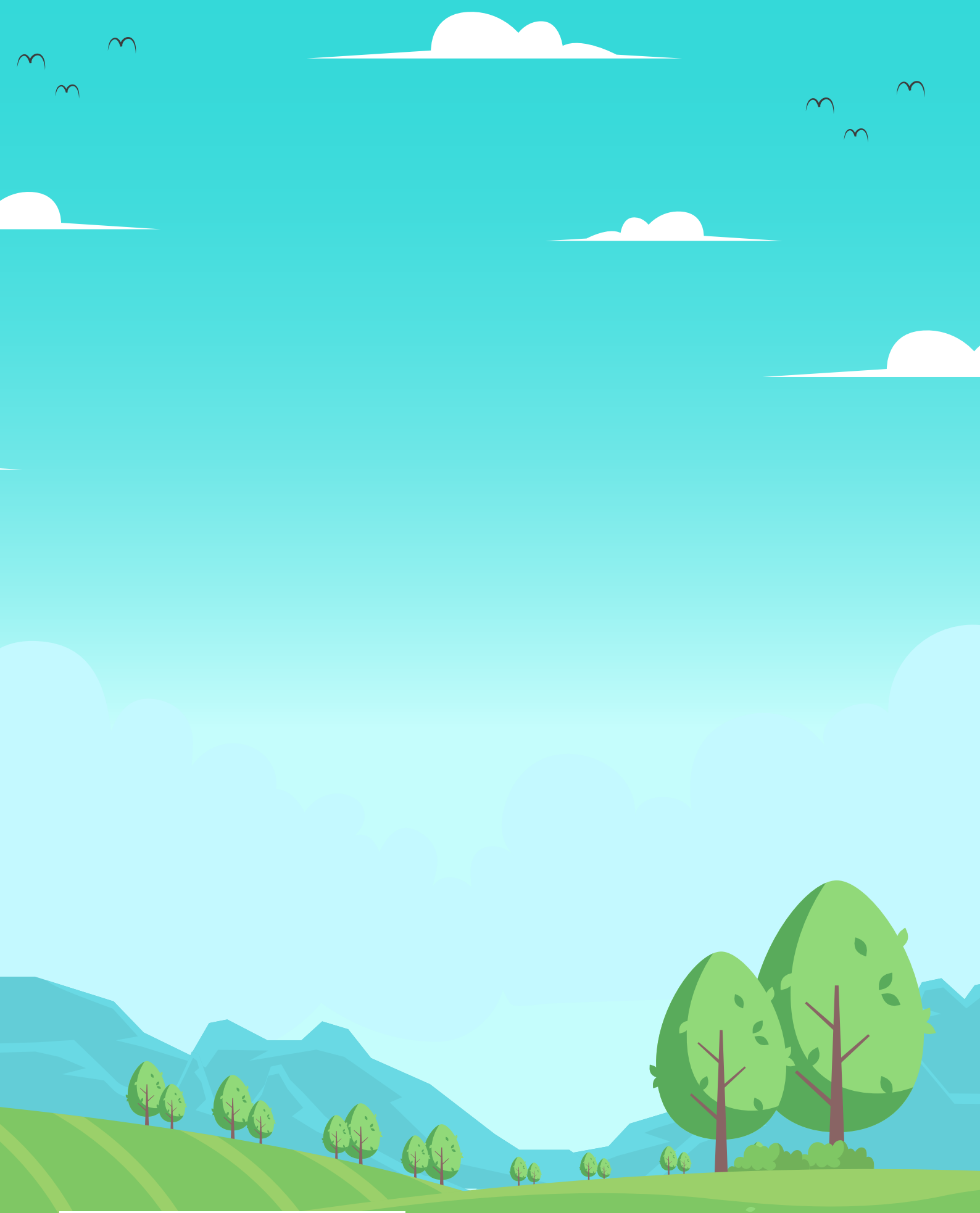
TOOL: CHANGEMAKER SELF-ASSESSMENT

Instructions: The following are a list of skills and capacities that are either fundamental, or highly desirable, for successful changemaker leaders in the context of environmental advocacy and leadership.

Use a "1-5" rating scale, where 1 is "not strong," and 5 is "mastery" (full confidence that you are operating at top professional capacity). Check your assessment with someone else you trust, who knows you and your work well.

SCORE 1 - 5	TOPIC & CRITERIA	REMARKS FOR YOURSELF
	Mastery of knowledge base	
	I have sufficient knowledge of environment issues and topics of focus in the GMS related to my topic of interest i.e. freshwater ecosystem management, climate change and renewable energy concepts and information sources.	
	I am up to date with relevant and current news and events related to GMS environment and climate change issues and trends (freshwater ecosystem management, climate change or renewable energy).	
	I feel confident to interact with topic professionals and experts.	
	Self-knowledge	
	I feel I know what my personal strengths and weaknesses are.	
	I am good at soliciting and receiving feedback from other people.	
	I am able to manage and control my anxiety and fears.	
	Listening Communications	
	I am a good active listener.	
	I can take in new information and am able to suspend my judgment to help me listen clearly for understanding.	
	I am able to communicate well (without speaking) to people I'm listening to so that they understand that they have been heard and understood by me.	
	Verbal / Speaking Communications	
	I feel confident that I can stand up in front of a group of people and talk and present my message and views	
	I am confident in speaking in front of a camera, either a computer camera (online), or a hand-held professional camera in person.	
	I am good at adjusting my voice, language level and tone according to the audience I am speaking to, and spatial situation.	

	Facilitating	
	I feel confident in facilitating meetings and forums of diverse people, backgrounds and issue perspectives.	
	I feel confident to facilitate large and small group workshops and conference size events.	
	I feel I have the ability to effectively facilitate and resolve conflict situations.	
	I am mindful and aware of my body language and facial expression projection and how it affects the energy and responsiveness of groups I facilitate.	
	Writing Communications	
	Writing ability, i.e. blogs, technical reports, press releases, etc.	
	Writing ability in terms of letters, emails, campaign messages, etc.	
	Networking	
	Networking ability: creating and maintaining social and professional networks.	
	Quality of my current network for promoting sustainability-related change.	
	Political and Power Relationship Literacy	
	Have a good understanding of dynamics of power relationships within the social, professional and political groups I am involved in.	
	Ability to interact effectively with a wide range of groups with different types of power dynamics.	
	I can successfully gain the trust of people in authority with whom I interact (especially in the context of environment issue advocacy).	
	Social Influencing	
	I have a good understanding about what motivates people and how people are likely to respond to different situations.	
	I am confident about what topics, approaches and strategies are likely to be successful in a given social context.	
	I am good at respectfully interacting with a variety of different personality types and different cultural backgrounds and perspectives.	
	I have the ability to influence and persuade people to do something new.	



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world for the benefit of people
and wildlife.

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