

YFU Strengthens Its Commitment to Sustainable Development in a Changing World

In a time marked by global uncertainty, environmental challenges, and growing social inequalities, the need for collective assumption of responsibility has never been more pressing. At Youth For Understanding (YFU), we recognize that educating and empowering young people must go hand in hand with a sincere and actionable commitment to sustainability.

That's why, in 2025, YFU is proud to introduce a binding **network-wide Sustainable Development Policy**, aligning our work with the [United Nations Sustainable Development Goals \(SDGs\)](#). This policy marks a significant milestone in our actions as a global youth exchange organization, ensuring that each member of the YFU network integrates sustainable practices into all areas of their activities.

With 45+ member organizations across 6 continents, YFU forms a truly global network united by a collective commitment to the SDGs. This global reach enables us to amplify our impact: local actions in diverse contexts add up to meaningful, coordinated progress toward global goals.

Sustainability has been a guiding principle across YFU for decades, whether in promoting intercultural understanding, striving for inclusion, or supporting local and global action. Now, we are reinforcing that commitment with concrete, binding actions. By aligning with the UN SDGs, we ensure that our efforts address shared challenges and prepare individuals to support a more collaborative and inclusive world.

Specifically, as part of our **Commitment to Sustainable Development in YFU**, we are:

1. Refreshing our **educational offer** for exchange students and host families to foster inclusive, peaceful, and just societies (SDGs 4, 10 and 16). We aim to cultivate democratic values, promote social inclusion, and enhance conflict resolution skills by empowering individuals with knowledge on democratic competences, human rights, and constructive communication.
2. Strengthening our **volunteers' capacity for Intercultural understanding and civic responsibility** by equipping them with the skills and knowledge to understand global challenges such as inequality, climate change, and threats to democracy. We encourage them to take action, both locally and globally, to promote fairness, inclusion, and sustainability (SDGs 4, 10 and 16).
3. Embedding **social responsibility as a foundation of sustainable development** to ensure that our global network of staff and volunteers thrives in a culture of respect, equity, and ethical conduct thus creating a workplace and community that reflects the inclusive, ethical, and people-centered future we strive to build (SDGs 3, 5, 8).
4. Enhancing **environmental sustainability** by committing to minimizing our environmental impact in all aspects of our operations, including through the introduction of a travel-related carbon offsetting program and a Green Champion initiative (SDGs 12, 13).
5. Establishing **local and global partnerships** focusing on Sustainable Development to complement and amplify our impact (SDG 17).

This new policy brings a common framework to our international community, strengthening our efforts to operate responsibly, reduce our environmental impact, and contribute meaningfully and measurably to reaching the global UN SDGs. It also empowers our people – students, host families, volunteers and staff - to make contributions to a brighter and more connected future. You can find more details about our commitment to sustainable development on our [homepage](#).

YFU invites like-minded organizations, institutions, and individuals to join us in championing the SDGs and shaping a more sustainable future for all. Together, we can ensure that youth mobility and intercultural learning are not only relevant in today's world - but essential to building a better tomorrow.

Youth For Understanding – Building Bridges, Sustaining the Future