

GENERATION GREEN: HOW TODAY'S YOUTH ARE ADVANCING SUSTAINABILITY PERSPECTIVES FROM COP28 PANELS



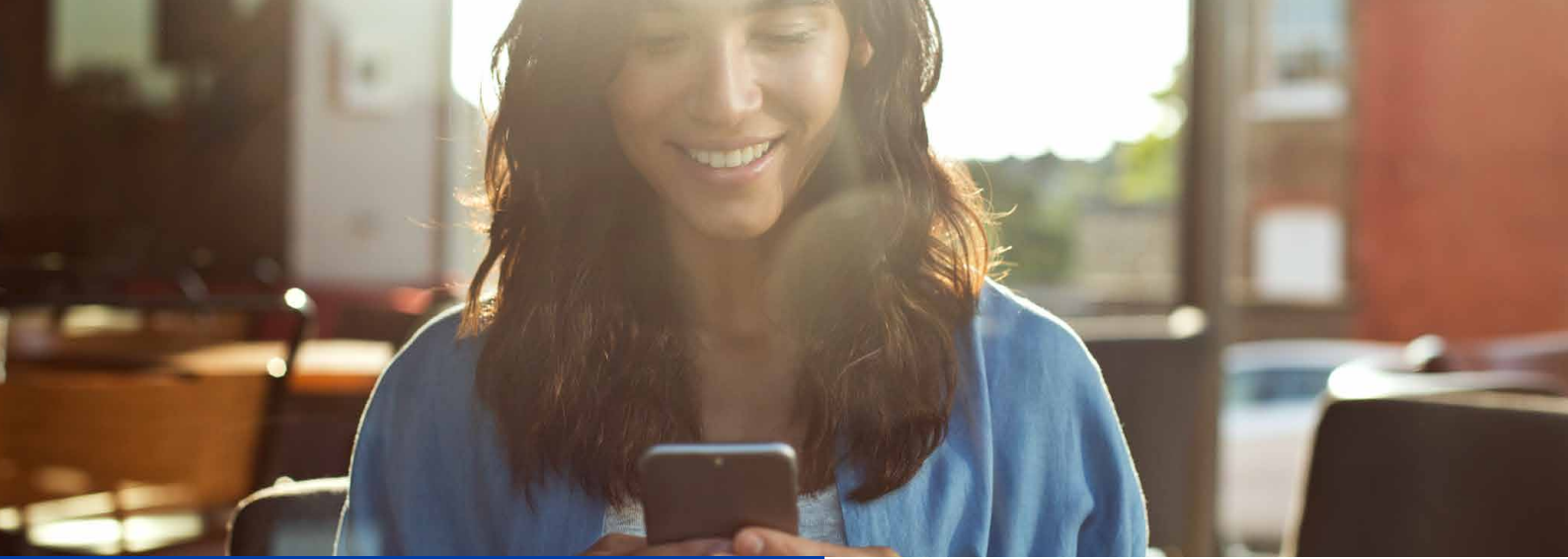
COP28
UAE

بنك أبوظبي الأول

FAB
First Abu Dhabi Bank

Strategic Pathway Partner

The series of COP28 outcome papers represent the key insights and discussions from FAB's hosted panels and roundtables during COP28. They are not intended to provide a comprehensive overview of the topics covered.



CONTEXT

The 28th Conference of the Parties (COP28) has, in its quest for diversity, opened the space for youth. Indeed, today's youth are not just the leaders of tomorrow but crucial ambassadors of change in today's climate narrative.

This generation, adept at merging technology with a deep-seated concern for the planet, is redefining the boundaries of environmental activism and sustainable development, mostly driven by the notion of having to bear the price and impacts of climate change that were not caused by their decisions.

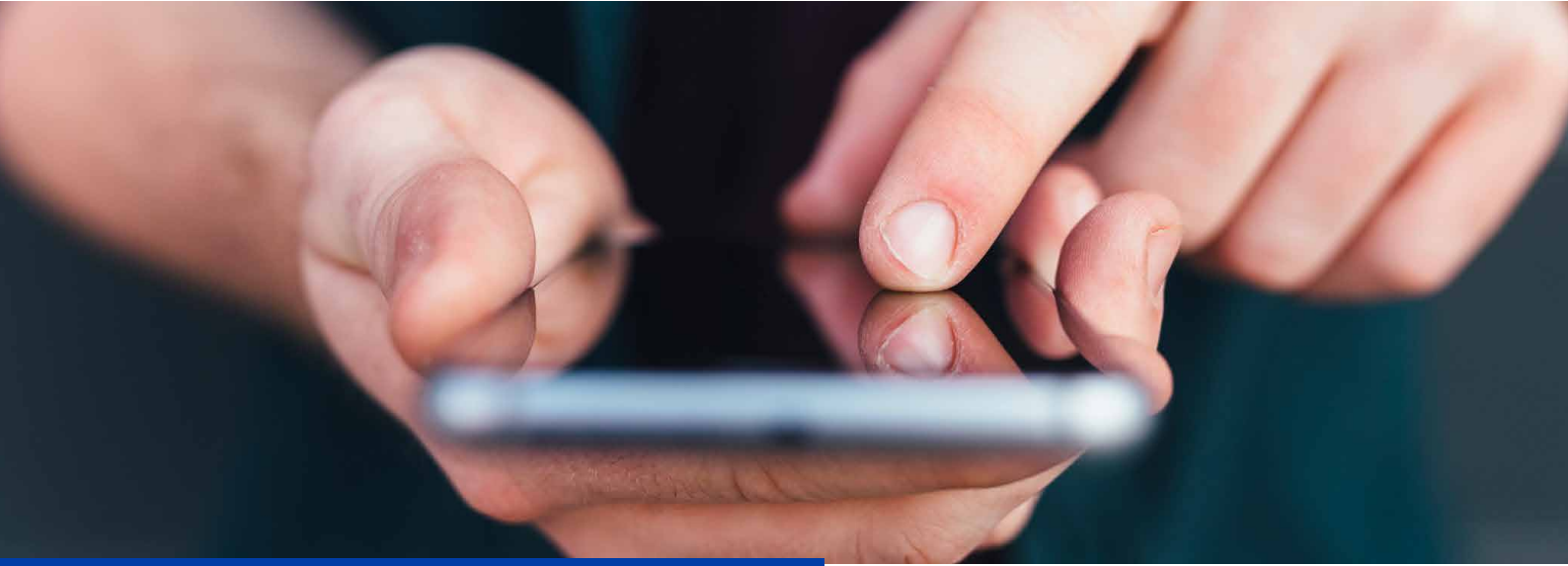
THE ROLE OF YOUTH IN SUSTAINABILITY

Youth engagement is more than just a buzzword at COP28. Young minds are at the epicentre of innovative approaches to tackling climate change. Their involvement spans various domains from technology-driven solutions to creative arts, and from influential social media platforms to sporting arenas, each offering unique avenues to promote sustainability.

Art and culture: Art has emerged as a powerful medium for youth to express their concerns and hopes regarding climate change. It serves as a bridge connecting diverse cultures and ideas, fostering a collective consciousness about environmental issues. In the UAE, where COP28 was held, there is a resurgence in connecting traditional sustainable practices with contemporary art, thereby reinforcing cultural preservation amid climate challenges.

Sports as a catalyst: Sports, too, play a pivotal role. The UAE Team Emirates, crowned as the UCI World Best Team in 2023, exemplifies this connection. Their ambition goes beyond sporting achievements, as evidenced by their Carbon Neutral status and goal of being net zero by 2030. Such initiatives in sports not only raise awareness but also inspire action among a broad audience, particularly youth.

The power of social media: Social media platforms like TikTok have revolutionised how young people engage with and understand climate change. These platforms have become arenas for sharing experiences, spreading knowledge, and mobilising collective action. The impact of climate change on diverse cultures and the importance of sustainable practices are themes that resonate strongly on these digital platforms.



KEY CHALLENGES TO FURTHER ENABLE YOUTH ACTION

One of the primary challenges lies in the existing **educational curricula**. Often, these curricula are not aligned with the current environmental challenges and **lack practical, real-world applicability**. Providing practical opportunities for youth to engage in environmental actions is essential. This includes internships, volunteer programmes, and community projects that allow young people to apply their knowledge and skills in real-world settings. There is a pressing need for educational reforms that incorporate sustainability and environmental studies as core components of the learning process.

Disparities in access to quality education, especially in underprivileged regions, can hinder the ability of young people to engage meaningfully in sustainability efforts.

Ensuring equitable access to education that includes sustainability as a key subject is crucial.

There were promising examples of youth platforms during COP28. These platforms were driven by youth and sponsored by governments/private sector institutions. For example, the COP28 UAE Presidency sponsored an International Youth Climate Delegate Program, supporting youth from Least-Developed Countries and Small Island Developing States. Many schools sponsored field trips to the green zone, which gave students an opportunity to explore the different perspectives on climate action.



PRIORITIES AND NEXT STEPS

Emphasising interdisciplinary education: Educational systems need to be reformed to include comprehensive sustainability curricula focusing on both theoretical knowledge and practical applications. This should also involve training educators to impart this knowledge effectively.

Leveraging technology and social media: Encourage youth to use their tech-savviness for sustainability, utilising platforms like TikTok to raise global awareness.

Involving youth in policy-making: Actively involve young people in decision-making processes at international climate bodies to ensure that their voices and ideas shape future policies.

Fostering collaborations: Encourage collaborations among educational institutions, governments, and environmental organisations to provide platforms for youth engagement in sustainability initiatives. These collaborations can offer resources, mentorship, and opportunities for young people to participate actively in environmental actions.



COP28 PERSPECTIVES

- Announcement of the Federal Youth Authority's second UAE Youth Climate Delegation Program, the largest ever, supporting 100 young leaders globally
- Nations to include climate education in their plans
- Launch of the Youth Stocktake report, an analysis of youth engagement in the UNFCCC process and a map to enhance youth inclusion
- The second-ever mandated Youth Climate Dialogue
- The largest-ever platform for giving youth civil society direct engagement with country negotiators
- Announcement by the UAE of a funding package for Africa to help to drive better health outcomes for youth
- Commitment to launch a global framework for youth, peace and climate security in 2024
- Green Jobs Fair for youth hosted by Generation Unlimited, LinkedIn and Pupilar UAE

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