The ‘greening' of urban youth in Africa

While moving to the cities holds promise of greater wealth and improved learning opportunities, the influx of millions of people into these concentrated areas has changed the fabric of society. Throughout Africa, there has been a massive urbanisation movement, steering rural communities towards more economically active cities.



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Lagos in Nigeria for example is the 14th largest urban area in the world, but unfortunately for some cities, it’s become a life of poverty, overcrowding in central bustling markets and surrounding areas.

Youth feel sense of loss in urban cities

As millions of families fight through traffic every day and strive to survive in the concrete jungles of urban life, they are starved of their natural environments. This has recently been described as ‘Nature Deficit Disorder’ by author Richard Louv.

Amidst daily pollution and grime, the youth feel a deep sense of desire to reconnect with nature and live a ‘greener’ lifestyle. This was highlighted in a recent Youth Dynamix Trax study, when 90% of teens and young adults agreed that it’s important to save the earth.

But what exactly does ‘greener’ mean to the youth..?

- **A healthier diet:** Although junk-food is still unfortunately more affordable than healthy food, there is a definitive move away from processed foods and sugar-laden fizzy drinks towards earth-grown farmer food.
- **Cosmetics:** Natural ingredients are becoming more appealing in cosmetics.
- **Work-life balance:** The youth favour flexi-time over rigid schedules, the option to work-from-home as well as a balanced work routine. Time off is filled with family and friends, as well as relaxing in ‘green’ environments or travelling to nature-rich destinations.
- **Less is more and local is better:** The youth are becoming less materialistic globally and waste less. They also look for local alternatives when making purchasing decisions, and are inclined to support smaller agricultural and other community initiatives rather than mega-brands.
- **Environmentally conscience:** The youth play an influential role in their families by encouraging eco-friendly activities like recycling, turning off the lights when not in use, walking or cycling to nearby destinations and saving

water.

Brand management

What does this mean for brand managers that target the youth? Youth Dynamix advised making your brand more appealing to the youth by:

- Creating a ‘greener’ work environment with a lighter carbon footprint by recycling and turning off lights in the office at night, etc.
- Applying responsible manufacturing practices.
- Support local suppliers and small businesses.
- Offer healthier alternatives if you’re in the food or cosmetic industries.

Don’t be fooled into thinking that as long as your products tick the boxes for functionality and aesthetics that they will be the superior choice for the youth of today… Win the youth over by adopting a transparent, environmentally-conscious and value-add brand, reports Youth Dynamix.

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