



IUCN
WORLD PARKS
CONGRESS
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A strategy of innovative approaches and recommendations to inspire a new generation in the next decade

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A promising future

Deepening the relationship between people and nature, and strengthening support for protected areas through direct and meaningful experiences has a positive impact on every facet of society. At the Congress we learned the importance of that one special experience in nature that at an early age triggers a transformative moment, instilling in individuals a deeply personal connection to nature. Parks and protected areas are life-sustaining and enriching places that awaken wonder and inspire hope. They are the best places to offer these special experiences, particularly against the backdrop of an increasingly urbanized world.

The groundbreaking leadership of young people in Sydney speaks to a generational change in protected areas conservation that will not, and should not, be denied. Young inspired conservation professionals are taking the reins and demonstrating new ways of tackling longstanding challenges and opportunities for protected areas. Together we must remove remaining barriers to their empowerment.

For society at large, and especially the new generation, technology touches every aspect of daily life, engaging new audiences, supporting learning, and helping to share experiences across social networks. Technology should not detract from nature experiences but rather be an enabling tool that helps people engage with nature on their own terms and share their experiences widely.

We must find ways to engrain the importance of connecting people and nature across all sectors of society as fundamental to creating a maintaining a culture of stewardship with a new generation. This culture should inspire and result in a future in which people are passionate about protected areas, are aware of the values of biodiversity and the steps that can be taken to conserve and use it sustainably, and take action in its favour.

The current situation

Over the last ten years, concerns have grown about humanity's increasing disconnection from nature. From children with little opportunity to engage directly with nature; to people increasingly living in cities remote from the natural world; to young adults of the technology age for whom nature is seemingly irrelevant; to those communities most vulnerable to natural disasters; to poor people who struggle to live sustainably from nature's bounty; and to a generation who want to help protect nature but feel disempowered. All these characterize a strained relationship with the natural world and have been the seeds of a worldwide movement to transform this situation.

In Sydney we recalled Nelson Mandela's call of more than 10 years ago from the last Congress to actively engage the new generation in nature conservation and protected areas. We reviewed the progress made in the past

ten years and realized that, whilst things have happened, much still needs to be accomplished. More needs to be done to identify the baselines and to agree to targets to aim for. And more needs to be done to capture the impressive array of initiatives that are underway already.

It is clear that much has been done within those institutions already involved with protected areas; however greater focus on connecting people and nature is required and many other sectors are not yet sensitized to the cross-societal imperatives of connecting people to nature.

The Congress highlighted that many barriers still exist to effectively empowering young voices in conservation; that the technology landscape is a rapidly changing but powerful tool to support connection; and that the collective power of citizens is being harnessed to work in new and exciting ways.

The Inspiring a New Generation Stream has focused on the actions needed to better connect a new generation to nature as well as opportunities to better empower young people as tomorrow's conservation leaders. We want the WPC to start a new ground swell of youthful support for nature and protected areas. The WPC has served as the launch pad for new initiatives among leaders of all ages to move these ideas forward.

Recommendations for change

The Sydney Congress has provided a first-time opportunity to focus on inspiring a new generation to connect with, love, value, and conserve nature. Bold aspirational recommendations and actions across diverse actors are needed.

1. Through a WCPA-CEC led InterCommission Task Force (or similar mechanism) that engages partners across sectors such as health, outdoor recreation, citizen science, technology, and education, launch an integrated global programme within IUCN's Intersessional Programme 2016-2020, to connect young people to nature, thus contributing to the achievement of CBD Aichi Targets 1 & 11.
2. IUCN and at least 50 protected area management authorities, in collaboration with partners across sectors, adopt organizational policy, strategy, communication and action planning aimed at facilitating youth, urban dwellers, multi-cultural groups, and other new audiences to engage with nature and parks on their own terms, creatively and unconditionally.
3. Establish a global framework of metrics to measure and evaluate increasing youth and public engagement in protected areas and nature, including identifying baselines and gaps in knowledge on the connection between people and nature and the relationship between this connection and outcomes such as health, education, and conservation gains.
4. In partnership with the Education and Childhood Development sector and others, put in place a growing number of programmes that ensure all children have had at least one transformational experience in protected areas and nature at an early age.
5. Young people operationalise and scale up on-line platforms such as Cocomaps, CoalitionWild and NoWalls as well as social media and other mechanisms such as citizen science that showcase innovative programmes and partnerships and share the experiences and passion of a new generation connecting with nature.
6. Empower young people to be current and future leaders through their own efforts with support by IUCN, protected area agencies, NGOs and other sectors, through programmes that mentor and reward young conservation professionals ensuring real and meaningful contributions to decision-making and strategic thinking

7. Action the WPC 2014 Young Peoples' Pact to ensure young people have an active, powerful and fully integrated voice.

Key partnerships needed

Young People [Protected area management authorities \(recognizing the IUCN & CBD four types of PA governance\)](#) [IUCN \(Members, Secretariat and Commissions\)](#) [Multilateral Environmental Agreements \(area based MEAs such as CBD, World Heritage, Ramsar, Biosphere Reserves\)](#) [Conservation NGOs \(particularly large International NGOs\)](#) [Donors \(Multilateral, Bilateral Donors, Development Banks, Foundations, Charitable Trusts etc\)](#) [Other sectors, in particular the education and childhood development, technology, sports, outdoor recreation, human health, tourism and multicultural/immigration sectors](#)

Solutions for change

We have heard literally hundreds of innovative solutions to inspiring the new generation. Here are three examples:

Bush School

Meaningful emotional connections to nature in childhood are key to environmentally responsible behavior and such connections are important to conservation. Children throughout the world are increasingly disconnected from nature in their everyday lives, with only 21% spending their free time engaged in nature exploration. Bush School in Sydney, Australia is successfully demonstrating how self-directed play by pre-school children in the wild, unmanaged play space of Centennial Parklands can foster a love of the environment and a strong sense of place.

Urban outreach (Learn to Camp)

With 50% of the world's population now living in cities, it is essential that parks and protected areas partner with municipalities, businesses, NGOs and others to create urban parks, citizen science programmes, and other gateways to nature that provide urban young people and other new audiences with meaningful and accessible opportunities to engage with nature on their own terms. Parks Canada's Learn to Camp program, which is run in partnership with the outdoor retailer Mountain Equipment Co-op and local immigrant settlement organizations, focuses on overcoming barriers to spending time in the outdoors by providing local hands-on overnight group camping experiences. Participants learn basic camping skills and are supported by experienced staff and a mobile application to plan subsequent trips.

CocoMaps Technology is a native language of today's young people, offering a means of peer-to-peer sharing on a personal and global level. CocoMaps is a youth-led online platform that empowers inspired young people to create a future in which people are connected with nature and the conservation of nature, parks and protected areas.

Interim Targets: 2016 – 2025

2016: The immediate future 2-3 years (IUCN World Conservation Congress, UN conventions):

- By 2016 IUCN Council and its Commissions support a WCC 2016 motion to establish a global programme of integrated initiatives promoting connection of young people to nature within IUCN's Intersessional Programme 2016-2020, with a view in particular to meeting CBD Aichi Targets 1 & 11 while also achieving outcomes relevant to a range of sectors (e.g., health, education, outdoor recreation, technology, citizen science)
- By 2016, IUCN establishes a global framework and baselines for measuring and evaluating progress on engaging new audiences (e.g., young people, urban dwellers, and cultural groups) with nature and protected areas, including identifying gaps in research and knowledge.
- By 2016 a newly established programme under CEC/WCPA engages non-traditional partners (e.g., private sector; public-private partnerships) to engage and build support for protected areas among young people, urban dwellers, cultural groups and other new audiences.
- By 2016 clear momentum for Inspiring a New Generation is evident within IUCN, Protected Area agencies and partners through organizational policy, strategy, communication and action planning and the marshalling of commitment and resources at events, including the 2015 Paul F Brandwein Institute's ING Summit and 2016 IUCN World Conservation Congress.
- By 2016, IUCN, Protected areas agencies, NGOs and young people ensure the post-2015 Development Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals recognise the need to connect new audiences, especially young people, with nature through meaningful experiences.
- By the 2016 COP, CBD reinforces the critical role of connecting people to nature through PAs to achieving CBD Aichi Targets, with particular emphasis on Targets 1 and 11.
- By 2016, IUCN, protected area agencies and young people operationalise on-line platforms, social media and other mechanisms to showcase case studies of innovative programmes and partnerships and share the experiences and passion of a new generation connecting with nature.
- By 2016, IUCN, Protected Area agencies, and other conservation organisations embrace diverse governance models that empower youth in strategy, organisational planning, policy development and decision making to ensure the voices of youth is heard within organisations and in external fora
- By 2016 support to all IUCN Young Professional Groups including IUCN IPS and WCPA is increased and ING recommendations and actions are incorporated within WCPA & GPAP One Programme Strategies beyond WPC and WCC 2016.
- By 2016 increasing numbers of young people have mobilized to inspire their peers to connect and engage with nature and the outdoors through a wide range of experiences, in protected areas.

2020: The endpoint of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity

- By 2020 the IUCN Commission programme established in 2016 is delivering against established baselines and targets to connect new audiences, in particular youth to nature by fostering protected area experiences, supporting learning, and strengthening nature connections and stewardship.
- By 2020 evidence indicates that Protected Area agencies have increased public experience of and engagement with protected areas using:
 - Technology (social media, technological applications, etc) as an effective tool to encourage connection to nature, share knowledge, and enrich protected area and nature experiences
 - Lessons from marketing, communications, social science and behavioural sciences to create meaningful life-long connections to nature
 - Partnerships – working with, encouraging investment and learning from other sectors, in particular the technology, sports, outdoor recreation, museums, human health (Healthy Parks /

- Healthy People), tourism, local government, urban development and multicultural/immigration sectors
- Innovation including citizen science events and programmes
 - By 2020, millions more children will have had at least one transformational experience in protected areas and nature by the age of 7 through, among other things, Protected Area agencies increasing awareness, capacity and partnerships with the education and childhood development sector and related partners.
 - By 2020 evidence against established baselines will: a) demonstrate increased action of IUCN, protected area managers, governments, NGOs; and sectoral partners to inspire a new generation and b) indicate increasing numbers of people engaging with nature in parks and protected areas.
 - By 2020 the Inspiring a New Generation initiative will be progressively integrated into other sectoral policy and action through key global events (e.g., CBD post 2015 development agenda, sport & environment, adventure travel, outdoor recreation, education, childhood development sectors).
 - By 2020, donors (e.g., multilateral, bilateral, development banks, foundations, charitable trusts, etc.): a) contribute to programmes that support ING to connect with nature; b) Develop and implement programs that reward achievement by young conservation professionals; and c) Adopt investment strategies and priorities that reflect ING principles.
 - By 2020 the Inspiring a New Generation initiative will have made a significant, attributable, and measurable impact on the achievement of Aichi Target 1 and the CBD Programme of Work on Protected Areas Goal 3.5 to strengthen communication, education and public awareness.
 - By 2020, Conservation NGOs, protected area agencies, MEAs and IUCN have implemented mentoring and scholarship programs, including partnering within higher education to support learning and reward achievement by young conservation professionals.
 - By 2020, MEAs have implemented mechanisms to include youthful perspectives into global decision-making on conservation and protected areas. For example Go4BioDiv under CBD; Youth Model Ramsar Convention, Ramsar Convention; MAB Young Scientists Awards; IUCN Intergenerational Partnership for Sustainability (IPS); WCPA Young Professionals.
 - By 2020, the international community, through MEAs and other international agreements such as the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, promotes the critical role of protected areas in connecting young people to nature, places an emphasis on the importance of nature and optimizes the use of mechanisms such as the Ramsar Youth Model Convention, MAB Young Scientists Awards, UNESCO Fellowships, World Heritage Youth Forums and CBD's Go4BioDiv.

2025: The next decade (to the next IUCN World Parks Congress) and beyond

- By 2025, the international community facilitates youth to have an active, powerful and fully integrated voice on conservation and the role of protected areas through a variety of mechanisms such as technology, social media, MEA youth forum mechanisms and IUCN youth programmes.
- Beyond 2025 all sectors of society will recognize and embrace the Inspiring a New Generation vision and commit to tangible actions at global, regional, and local levels that inspire and empower people (especially young professionals and new generations) to meaningfully connect with nature in a manner that leads to respect and stewardship, especially through the world's parks and protected areas.
- Beyond 2025 a new respectful dynamic will exist between parks, people, and planet that mainstreams nature conservation into all aspects of society, human well-being and development.