

CASE STUDY

TOPIC: Education for Sustainable Development and Climate Change

SUBJECT: The impact of a climate justice and environmental sustainability program in 20 schools in the South-East region of Senegal.

1) Introduction

The Climate Justice and Environmental Sustainability Program emphasized climate justice, youth-led climate action, environmental sustainability, and ultimately addressed the multifaceted consequences of environmental degradation. Ashoka has launched an eighteen-month program that will activate a network of young people as well as stakeholders from the education sector. The project combines community knowledge to engage in decision-making processes, become better leaders and communicators, and play an active role in environmental protection efforts in West Africa. It is a School Program for Young Changemakers for the Environment.

In collaboration with the Ford Foundation and the Ministry of National Education, Ashoka launched this Climate Justice and Environmental Sustainability Program. The initiative's first phase aims to empower education stakeholders and establish a network of changemakers in the environmental field. In this phase, twenty schools were selected, including Diouloulou High school, Niaguiss High school, Kénia High school, Djinabo High school, Thionck Essyl High school, Mpack Junior High school, Elinkine Junior High school, Boucotte Sud Junior High school, Kénia Junior High school, Boutoute Junior High school, Tamba Commune 1 Junior High school, Goumbayel Junior High school, Bloc Village High school, Balla Moussa Daffé High school, Ibou Diallo High school, Amadou Maphathé Diagne Junior High school, Faoune Junior High school, Djinany Junior High school, Koussy Junior High school, and Diende Junior High school.

The objective of the project is to identify, activate, empower, and support youth to become changemakers for climate action, climate justice, and environmental sustainability in their communities.

2) Program Background: Climate Justice and Environmental Sustainability

This project is based in West Africa, with implementation in Nigeria and, particularly, in Senegal. According to Senegal's 2016 Constitution, the country's natural resources belong to its people. If managed well, these resources have the potential to transform the economy. Unfortunately, the wealth generated from resource extraction does not reach the Senegalese population. A 2014 report from the State Inspector General (IGE) of Senegal showed that over a 15-year period, the government collected less than 1 billion CFA francs in tax revenue from resource extraction. More recent data indicates that in 2020, extractive activities accounted for less than 6% of government revenue. Additionally, these activities have had a negative environmental impact; in 2021, 8.7 million of the 13.6 million tons of CO₂ emissions recorded came from the oil sector.

Overcoming these challenges requires a movement that delivers solutions to systemic cross-cutting problems—natural resource management, climate change, climate justice, economic sustainability, education, health, and civic engagement. The Climate Justice and Environmental Sustainability Program is part of Ashoka's Youth and Education initiative. Based on our work with social entrepreneurs, Ashoka has redefined its vision: *everyone is a changemaker*. We believe that bringing

about systemic change is essential to addressing inequalities in climate and environmental justice so that the number of solutions can outpace the number of problems and citizens are equipped to act.

Ashoka Young Changemakers embodies and empowers schools and teachers to be part of the solution through this program.

3) Problem Statement

Africa faces a crucial environmental challenge, despite having significant natural resources that could make it a leader in the global green economy. The impact of climate change in the region is not widely acknowledged, as many Africans are still unaware of the harmful effects of pollution, deforestation, and environmental degradation. It should also be noted that although at least 70% of the population depends on waterways, rich forests, and woodlands for their livelihoods, these resources are used unsustainably and are often subject to illegal activities such as unregulated mining, logging, and fishing. This has led to continued loss of natural resources and environmental degradation.

Environmental challenges in Africa have dire consequences for marginalized and vulnerable communities due to a combination of persistently poor infrastructure and self-serving industrial actions that directly harm the environment. Environmental issues are at the heart of education and youth development. By focusing on adaptation and mitigation, loss and damage, reparation, and climate justice, there is an urgent need to integrate—or even redesign—environmental education to foster the development of skills and attitudes that support ecological transition, resilience, and biodiversity.

Education, training, and awareness-raising play a crucial role in preparing individuals for careers compatible with low-carbon development and climate resilience. However, it is widely acknowledged that the potential of education as a driver of change remains underutilized in many countries.

Based on this, to address the issue of the impact of the Climate Justice and Environmental Sustainability Program in the 20 schools in the South-East zone of Senegal, we put forward two initial hypotheses:

4) Methodology and Approach

After identifying the schools, a selection committee composed of an Ashoka Fellow, an academic inspector, and two partner organizations, one in the field of education and the other in the environmental sector—was set up to select the schools that would participate in this program. Out of approximately forty schools, 20 were selected based on criteria such as innovation, learning, the school's educational and environmental vision, and the influence the school has in the community.

On **November 15, 2023**, we officially launched the program at the Ashoka Sahel offices in the presence of the Academic Inspector of Dakar, representatives from the Ministry of Education, Ashoka’s strategic partners, and social innovators. The launch was an opportunity to present the program—its objectives, the rationale behind the choice of implementation area, the expected impact on communities, and the program’s key phases. This presentation was followed by an expert panel consisting of the Academic Inspector of Dakar, the Director of JVE (Young Volunteers for the Environment), and the Regional Director of Ashoka Sahel. We concluded the launch ceremony with a press conference and a networking session.



On **November 25 and 26, 2024**, we organized a workshop on climate justice and environmental sustainability. The capacity-building sessions took place in two regions in the south of Senegal. On **November 25**, in **Ziguinchor**, the first group of selected schools was trained on three key themes: **EACH (Everyone a Changemaker), Changemaking, and Climate Justice**. On this first day of the workshop, 12 schools participated, each represented by 3 teachers, 3 students, and the school leadership. In

total, **36 teachers, 36 students, and 12 principals or school heads—84 education stakeholders** from middle and high schools—took part in this initial session.



The first session focused on **EACH (Everyone a Changemaker)**, highlighting Ashoka’s work and its vision of a world where every individual is a changemaker, equipped with the skills and abilities to create positive impact in their community for the good of all.

Next, participants split into parallel sessions, dividing teachers and students into two groups. The students worked with **Ashoka Fellow Cherif Ndiaye**, an expert in educational issues and founder of [*Écoles au Sénégal*](#), who trained them in **21st-century skills**—specifically, the key competencies young people need to become environmental changemakers. This was an in-depth session centered on Ashoka’s first two pillars: ensuring every child masters empathy and that every young person becomes a changemaker.

While the students were with Cherif, the **teachers and school leaders** were with **Ashoka Fellow Karima Grant**, a specialist in learning through play and founder of [ImagiNation Africa](#). She trained the educators on the essential skills they must acquire to thrive in 21st-century education.

The third and final session brought all participants back together for a discussion on **climate justice and environmental sustainability**. The goal of this session was to raise awareness among participants about environmental and climate issues, to help them understand the causes and consequences, and, most importantly, to encourage them to propose solutions in the form of school-based projects.

On **November 26**, the sessions followed the same format as the previous day and took place in **Sédhiou**, another region in southern Senegal. This time, **8 schools** participated, each represented by 3 teachers, 3 students, and a school leader—totaling **24 teachers, 24 students, and 8 principals or school heads**, for a total of **56 education stakeholders**.



On **November 27**, back in **Ziguinchor**, the Ashoka team held a series of meetings with key stakeholders, including the Governor of the Ziguinchor region, the Academic Inspector of Ziguinchor, and seven organizations active in the environmental and climate ecosystem. The purpose of these meetings was to present the framework of the program and discuss collaboration with these key ecosystem actors for the implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of the program.

Data Collection

5) School survey – Climate Justice Program

To evaluate the impact of the Climate Justice and Environmental Sustainability program within the participating schools, we developed a questionnaire to collect information on the number of people impacted by this initiative in the beneficiary schools. The data collected helps estimate the number of students trained in changemaking, the EACH (Everyone a Changemaker) philosophy, and climate justice and environmental sustainability.

Name and surname of the school administrator	Name of the school	Number of classrooms	Number of students	Number of girls	Number of boys	Number of male teachers	Number of female teachers
Djouna DIATTA	Thionck -Essyl High school	16	520	264	256	29	29
Madiou DIALLO	DJINANY Junior High school	10 Salles dont 1 labo et 1 salle informatique	453	239 filles	214 garçons	10	00
SALIMATA COLY	TAMBA COMMUNE1 Junior High school	17	1146	637	509	24	9
Omar BADJI	GOUMBAYEL Junior High school	07	195	72	123	08	00
FRANCOIS POUSSY	BOUCOTTE SUD Junior High school	24	1939	1081	858	32	10
Djibril Badji	Balla Moussa D'affection High school of Sédhiou	22	771	335	436	33	6
FATOU DIATTA	MPACK Junior High school	10	360	154	206	10	2
ALIOUNE BA	BLOC VILLAGE High school	14	684	351	333	21	4
Mbemba SAGNA	Djignabo Bassène High school of Ziguinchor	66	3300	1760	1540	130	34
Mame Amadou Yatma kholle	Faoune Junior High school	10	494	244	250	11	3
Bienvenu SENGHOR	ELINKINE Junior High school	07	296	154	142	11	01
Urbain DIEDHIOU	KENIA Junior High school of Ziguinchor	23	1695	968	731	33	09
Mamadou	MANE	33	901	531	370	44	3
Léopold SAGNA	DILOULOU High school ZIGUINCHOR	16	1007	475	532	25	06

Édith Manga	Diendé Junior High school	10	375	185	190	11	4
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6) Survey Questionnaire

The data collected also comes from the two-day workshops held in Ziguinchor and Sédhiou. After the capacity-building sessions, the 60 students and 60 teachers, supported by their ambassadors (local organizations working on environmental, climate, and education issues), began organizing awareness campaigns on climate change problems and proposed sustainable solutions to be implemented in their respective schools.

Out of the 20 schools, 9 shared reports on awareness or climate action activities carried out locally by students and teachers. These include: CEM Diende (6 environmental activities), Kénia (3), Boutoute (1), Elinkine (2), Goumbayel (4), Tamba Commune 1 (3), Djinany (2), and the high schools of Kénia (1) and Niaguiss (1).

Among the 20 schools, 12 are supported by local organizations in the strategic, technical, and operational implementation of their environmental projects. These schools include: Lycées Djinabo Basséne, Thionck Essyl, Diouloulou, Kénia, and Balla Moussa Daffé; and the CEMs of Kénia, Diende, Boucotte Sud, Amadou Maphathé Diagne, Goumbayel, Djinany, and Tamba Commune 1.

7) Review of School Activity Monitoring Reports

In collaboration with leaders of the EACH movement (government, media, Ministry of Education, parent-teacher associations, partner schools, faith-based organizations, publishers, young Ashoka members, and changemakers in education and youth development), we co-create and implement the EACH movement. We develop strategies to activate change among young people and encourage them to engage in sustainable development projects within the education and youth development sectors.

We also equip them with the skills necessary to creatively solve education-related problems, build collaborative teams, set community-conscious goals, and contribute to changing the world. As co-creators of the EACH movement (Everyone a Changemaker), young people and adult allies are transforming societal values, placing empathy, innovation, equity, and power-sharing at the heart of the movement.

Following the capacity-building sessions led by our Ashoka Fellows and strategic partners (JVE, DECLIC, and the Ministry of Education), the 20 schools are now encouraged to positively influence their surrounding communities by adopting changemaker behaviors toward nature and addressing issues such as illegal logging, deforestation, and plastic waste. As such, the students and teachers in these schools are becoming environmental changemakers.

8) Program Relevance

The Ford Foundation and Ashoka have partnered to launch a transformative program aimed at empowering young leaders in Nigeria and Senegal to spearhead initiatives in climate justice and environmental sustainability. This initiative focuses on three key areas: activating young changemakers, managing knowledge through summits and webinars, advancing climate justice engagement with affected communities, and promoting community involvement.

Since November 2023, the program has engaged leaders from government, civil society, key industries, and local communities in both Nigeria and Senegal to move forward on climate justice and sustainability. Among the notable achievements are the involvement of more than 20 schools and the

capacity-building of 60 students and 60 teachers through training workshops—who are now activating over 800 young people and more than 120 teachers in their respective schools.

In addition, we are supporting a diverse network of over 100 changemakers, including young changemakers, key environmental sector players, educators, and public officials, who are engaging in a community of practice to share sustainable solutions. Key activities have included the development of training modules for climate clubs in selected schools, the initiation of agreements between Ministries of Education and Ashoka, and the organization of an in-person community of practice meeting. This gathering brought together energy sector stakeholders, young changemakers, and our strategic partners in energy and environmental sustainability.

Our goals include:

- Increasing the capacity of young people in the country to participate in decision-making circles related to natural resource management.
- Strengthening youth leadership skills to enable them to act as effective advocates for environmental protection.
- Enhancing collaboration between youth and other actors in environmental sustainability or climate resilience in Senegal to co-create and implement innovative environmental solutions.
- And increasing public support for climate and environmental justice initiatives in Senegal.

As a result, established networks of young environmental and climate justice leaders in Senegal are now collaborating and sharing best practices. The Climate Justice and Environmental Sustainability Program has had a direct impact on 14,136 youth in the South-East zone of Senegal, including 7,450 girls and 6,686 boys.

9) Program Sustainability

Our objectives are to highlight the common goals of stakeholders, identify existing gaps and challenges, determine the areas requiring attention and improvement, conduct a stakeholder mapping exercise, and develop a comprehensive map of the interests, priorities, and resources of all stakeholders involved.

This process is intended to bring to light current challenges and potential future bottlenecks, such as resource constraints, political obstacles, and issues related to community engagement. To address these, we will implement community engagement initiatives designed to raise awareness and actively involve local communities in environmental sustainability efforts.

By prioritizing inclusive participation and in-depth analysis, we aim to lay a strong foundation for identifying effective and sustainable solutions to the challenges encountered. The growing awareness and understanding of environmental justice issues among Senegalese youth is reflected in the increased participation of schools and students in environmental initiatives, such as reforestation projects and beach cleanup activities carried out by youth across Senegal.

Name of the school	Impact of the program	Number of engage people	Area To improve	Rating of the
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				program /5
BOUTOUTE Junior High school	Students became aware of the importance of properly maintaining their environment, particularly through school waste management. At the community level, the environmental club has been especially active in efforts to protect and restore the mangrove ecosystem.	More than 50,000	Support should be reassessed and staff motivation improved.	5
BALLA MOUSSA DAFIE High school	<p>Mobilization of students around the school garden</p> <p>Training of students in composting techniques and tree maintenance</p> <p>Support from the Municipal Youth Council</p> <p>Assistance from the School Management Committee (CGE) to supply water for the garden</p>	Over twenty	<p>Increase the number of people trained</p> <p>Multiply the number of training sessions</p> <p>Include practical, hands-on components in the training</p>	4
GOUMBAYEL Junior High school	The program has generated enthusiasm among students for the protection and maintenance of the school and community environment	Two hundred sixty-five (265) students at the school level and around one hundred (100) in the community	Support students in their school projects, if possible	5
DJINANY Junior High school	A positive impact. Several actions undertaken: reforestation with fruit and ornamental trees, establishment of a school garden, awareness day, and civic actions aimed at environmental protection	Over 400 students directly involved. About ten teachers and several parents engaged during the awareness meetings.	Strengthening waste management systems for better handling of plastic waste, leaves, and paper. Irrigation equipment. Increase the frequency of awareness meetings and civic actions for environmental protection.	5

DIENDE Junior High school	This has helped us realize the importance of reforestation within our institution. The trees have grown well and are well maintained	5 people	Material support from partners could make a difference.	3
NIAGUIS High school	Positive impact as students and the community become increasingly aware of climate justice and environmental sustainability.	A hundred or so	Financement	5
Koussy Junior High school	Positive impact as students and the community become increasingly aware of climate justice and environmental sustainability	About twenty	Webinars can be challenging at times as it's difficult to follow the meetings properly due to unstable and intermittent .	4
TAMBA COMMUNE 1 Junior High school	This program has helped our community better understand the issues related to climate change, as well as the necessary attention to these issues for the future of our current and future community.	Over a hundred	Material support and follow-up are needed. Since the seminar in Ziguinchor, there has been no support or follow-up on the ground	5
KOUSSY Junior High school	After our meeting in Sefa, it is true that we already had a garden and had reforested the courtyard with the help of UNICEF and RAP. We created an environmental club that continues to carry out gardening activities.	Each class has sponsored a tree and is responsible for ensuring its survival. The School Government and the Environmental Club are committed to the school garden and the cleanliness of the institution.	We attended a training and exchange day with you, but we expect more action. If you are unable to fund the Environmental Club, please provide us with seeds and trees to plant so that we can be engaged in action rather than just virtual activities. Environmental Club Coordinator Mr. FAKS, born Abdou MANE 2	2
ELINKINE Junior High school	The climate justice program had a positive impact as students became aware of the importance of protecting nature and the	Over 30 students.	This program needs the support of organizations, as we cannot tackle such serious issues	4

	environment. This awareness extended to the village, with activities in line with this goal		without their assistance.	
Kénia Junior High school	The program allowed us to strengthen our collaboration with the climate change club at Assane Seck University and work on joint projects.	At least 150 students have been impacted.	Provide funding to institutions, as every activity requires resources.	4

10) *Analysis*

The project has led to a notable improvement in students' awareness of environmental issues. The initial assessment revealed limited knowledge of climate change and low participation in environmental actions. However, after implementing workshops, training, and practical initiatives, students' knowledge significantly increased, and their engagement in concrete actions also improved. Participating schools have not only reduced their ecological footprint (through initiatives like waste management and solar energy use) but have also created a more sustainable learning environment, which has strengthened collaboration among teachers, students, and parents. The climate justice and environmental sustainability program had an indirect impact on 51,370 people across various localities such as Kénia, Koussy, Tamba Commune 1, Elinkine, Niaguiss, Diendé, Djinnany, etc. The involvement of youth in environmental projects has strengthened awareness of climate justice, emphasizing that the most vulnerable areas to climate change are often the least responsible for the crisis. This has fostered a deeper understanding of climate inequalities, particularly in relation to developing countries and marginalized communities.

11) *Solutions and Recommendations*

- Strengthen the integration of climate justice into the school curriculum:** By integrating climate justice issues into educational programs, students can better understand the impacts of climate change on vulnerable communities and the actions they need to take.
- Support continuous teacher training:** It is essential to provide ongoing educational resources for teachers to strengthen their role as leaders in environmental education.
- Expand the project's reach to more schools:** The project can be extended to more educational institutions, with a particular focus on vulnerable areas, to maximize impact and ensure future generations are prepared to tackle environmental challenges.
- Strengthen local partnerships:** Collaborating with community organizations and local businesses can help expand available resources for school initiatives, such as donations of solar panels or the establishment of composting systems.
- Implement impact measurement tools like CMI (Changemaker Index Survey) - [The Ashoka Changemaker Index](#):** Using data and technology to track students' environmental behavior changes and the tangible impacts of the project (e.g., waste reduction, energy savings) will refine strategies and demonstrate the project's effectiveness.

Conclusion

The climate justice and environmental sustainability project in schools has shown positive results in terms of raising student awareness, promoting sustainable behaviors, and understanding the issues related to climate change. While there is still a need to strengthen certain initiatives, the project demonstrates that education is a powerful lever for shaping a responsible generation engaged in the fight against the climate crisis. The analysis of school participation, student awareness, environmental projects implemented, and community engagement provides a clear view of the successes and possible areas for improvement. The use of tools such as follow-up questionnaires ([The Ashoka Changemaker Index](#)) and sustainability statistics also helps measure long-term impact and ensures the integration of actions into the behaviors of both students and teachers. The model of this project can serve as a foundation for similar initiatives elsewhere, incorporating climate justice into the very core of school education.