

Generation Restoration: Shaping Our Future – Focusing on Climate Change, Its Causes, Effects, and Solutions

Our generation stands at a turning point in history. The Earth is crying for help, and the effects of climate change are becoming more visible than ever. The term "Generation Restoration" means we are the generation responsible for healing our planet and making sustainable choices. Climate change is no longer a distant threat, it is a present crisis. If we don't act now, the future of our children, our health, and even life itself is at risk. As United Nations Secretary-General, António Guterres said "The climate emergency is a race we are losing, but it is a race we can win."

Climate change is mainly caused by human activities. The burning of fossil fuels like coal, oil, and gas for electricity, transportation, and industry releases greenhouse gases (GHGs), especially carbon dioxide (CO₂) and methane (CH₄), into the atmosphere. Deforestation also plays a big role. Trees absorb CO₂, but when forests are cut down, more CO₂ remains in the air. Another cause is industrial pollution and poor waste management which increases harmful emissions. According to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC, 2021), over 90% of global warming is due to human actions.

The effects are serious and already happening. Global temperatures are rising, causing heatwaves, melting glaciers, and rising sea levels. This leads to flooding in coastal areas and desertification in others. In Nigeria, we experience unpredictable rainfall and drought, which affects farming and food supply. There's also an increase in diseases like malaria and cholera due to poor water conditions. Animals and plants are also suffering – some are even going extinct. As Greta Thunberg said, "Our house is on fire" – and she's right.

To tackle climate change and restore our environment, we must embrace practical and long-term solutions. One major step is tree planting through afforestation and reforestation, which helps absorb carbon dioxide from the atmosphere and restore natural ecosystems. Switching to renewable energy sources like solar, wind, and hydro power can reduce our dependence on fossil fuels that emit greenhouse gases. Proper waste management, recycling, and reducing single-use plastics are also essential to limit land and water pollution. Public awareness and environmental education can help people adopt more sustainable lifestyles, while climate-smart agriculture can improve food production and reduce environmental harm. Lastly, supporting policies that protect the environment and holding leaders accountable can drive large-scale change. Young people, in particular, can lead by example, participate in clean-up exercises, join climate action campaigns, and use their voices to demand a better future. Together, these actions can contribute significantly to restoring our planet and securing a healthy environment for generations to come. As Barack Obama said "we are the first generation to feel the impact of climate change and the last to tackle it"

The earth is our home, and it is our duty to protect it. "Generation Restoration" is more than a slogan – it is a movement. We have the tools, the knowledge, and the voice to bring change. If each of us plays our part, we can shape a better future where the environment is safe, clean, and green for all.

Climate change may be the challenge of our time but with knowledge and action we can overcome it. As the Bible reminds us in Genesis 2:15 the Lord took man and put him in the garden of Eden to work it and take care of it. It is our sacred duty to care for the earth. If we choose Restoration we choose life.

As Wangari Maathai, the Kenyan environmentalist, once said: "It's the little things citizens do. That's what will make the difference. My little thing is planting trees." What will your little thing be?

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