# EARTHDAY.ORG



#### Letter From the President

The last few years have produced great anxiety and distress worldwide, not just as the result of a pandemic but also from the realization that the devasting impacts of climate change, climate migration, biodiversity loss, deforestation, and the deluge of plastics in our environment are not in the future but are here and now. The recent Glasgow climate meeting produced few tangible and verifiable results, with loopholes swallowing even modest advancements. Calls for climate financing for countries that bear the least responsibility for climate change were met with silence, and governments gave themselves almost a decade to slow deforestation. Scientists issued even more dire predictions, even as climate-related events have grown in size and ferocity. Old industries continued to dig in, and investments in the green economy slowed.

Yet despite these obstacles, there are reasons to be hopeful, even optimistic at the close of 2021. We recognized that our community's tactics—presenting the solid science, indisputable facts, and dire warnings—were not changing minds as fast as the relentless march of climate change required. Therefore, in 2021 we began to change our strategy and return to the creative power of collective action that defined the first Earth Day.

The good news grows. Our movement, impacted by the isolation of the pandemic, has rebounded with even more resolve. After years of fighting for action on plastic pollution, governments are deliberating the first ever plastics treaty. EARTHDAY.ORG's (EDO) work to create more transparency, accountability, and civil society participation in multilateral institutions and governments is showing results. On the biodiversity front, EDO entered into Endangered Species litigation to stop the slaughter of wolves in the United States. Our forestry projects around the world, particularly across Africa and East Asia, are building the skills and incomes of local communities. Our climate literacy campaign, now embraced by over 450 million people, teachers, trade unions,

faith groups, and economists, has made great strides, achieving one of the few agreements at the Glasgow COP while more and more countries are slowly adopting climate education as a key component to building their own green economies.

Despite a global restriction on movement and community action, 2021 was a year of great expansion and success for EDO. We shared more accessible and relevant environmental resources to our ever-growing network and brought the world together on key global issues through major events streamed online on Earth Day 2021 and throughout the year. Keeping momentum was a key strategy during 2021.

On the global front, the green economy is growing slowly but surely, and the ledger of triple bottom line companies continues to grow. Innovators, inventors, and investors are seeing their investments pay off. EDO's upcoming 2022 theme is the result of our interest in using our considerable communications capacity to fuel a sense of optimism that if governments, organizations, people and the business community work together we can accelerate the green economy exponentially and equitably.

As the world opens, the need for our on the ground work will expand. From restoring fisheries along miles of coastlines through mangrove reforestation efforts; accelerating the adoption of climate literacy, civic skill building, and jobs training; redirecting more of the world's political capital on emerging issues such as regenerative agriculture; and educating the public about the fashion industry's climate impacts—these are some of our most important campaigns. And as EDO draws on the expertise of our diverse global staff along with more than 200,000 EDO network partners, we will continue to propel action to restore our planet. That is good news for all of us.

For our future,

Kathleen Rogers President, EARTHDAY.ORG

### **Our Mission**

EARTHDAY.ORG's mission is to diversify, educate, and activate the environmental movement worldwide. Growing out of the first Earth Day in 1970, EDO is the world's largest recruiter to the environmental movement, working with more than 150,000 partners in over 190 countries to drive positive action for our planet through education, outreach, advocacy, and climate action.



#### Earth Day 2021

#### **Full Report Here**

In addition to our global staff, EDO enlisted governments, corporations, hundreds of thousands of NGOs and community organizations, major social and traditional media partnerships, diverse faith groups, as well as millions of teachers, professors, students, seniors, youth groups, and others to help broaden the movement and get individuals around the world involved in climate action. Some fast fact about April 2021:

- EDO Staff worked on every continent (aside from Antarctica)
- EDO media had a potential audience of 5.8 billion people
- EDO's website had more than 4.5 million pageviews on EARTHDAY.ORG
- Over 5.4 million people tuned in for the second annual Earth Day Live digital event
- #EarthDay reached 584.6 million Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, Linkedin, and Pinterest users



- #RestoreOurEarth reached 58.4 million, #Climate Literacy reached 17 million, and #EarthDayLive reached 65.2 million
- 5 million viewers tuned in for Earth Day! The Musical! co-produced with Facebook Watch
- Multiple Earth Day events occurred in every country in the world
- Great Global Cleanups took place in 104 countries, picking up millions of pounds of trash
- EDO's Climate Literacy Campaign amassed over 540 global organizational signatories representing 101 countries and 100's of millions of individuals
- The My Future My Voice campaign reached 150 youth leaders in around 70 countries across the globe
- The EARTHDAY.ORG Volunteer Corps grew to over 14,401 volunteers in 168 countries worldwide during April 2021

### **Communications Team**

EDO's ongoing digital impact and communications reached across the globe in 2021 on a wide variety of platforms supporting our programs, advocacy work, and movement building.

EDO's social media following expanded to over 600,000 dedicated and engaged followers on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube, Twitch, and others, while www.earthday.org attracted nearly 9 million annual page views to our website resources, toolkits, and signups. EDO regularly published blogs, stories, advocacy outreach and petitions supported by millions, sent over 16 million individual emails to our proprietary list, and presented ongoing digital and in-person events including the Earth Day Live webinar series and live events from our COP26 pavilion in Glasgow which collectively reached nearly 1.5 million viewers/attendees in 2021.

# EDO @ COP26

As an Official Observer and Participant to the UNFCCC and Blue Zone pavilion partner, EARTHDAY.ORG was proud to rally governments, NGOs, corporations, unions, and youth in support of our demands for universal climate literacy, climate restoration, innovative technology solutions, and groundbreaking citizen science, as well as our calls for accelerating progress on other pressing environmental issues.

We helped create and promote the youth-driven declaration for climate education which was formerly presented to Roberto Cingolani, Italy's Minister for Ecological Transition. The EDO African Youth Initiative on Climate Change brought together ministers from Uganda, Kenya, Zimbabwe, and Nigeria, as they collectively pushed for their aspirations around climate literacy and education in the region during an intergenerational dialogue at our pavilion.

In addition to the formal climate education commitments made by the United Kingdom and Gibraltar that were announced at COP26, EARTHDAY.ORG saw the direct influence of its two-year Climate Literacy Campaign on the official Conclusions of the Education and Environment Ministers Summit at COP26.

In support of the demands of the next generation EARTHDAY.ORG staffers, led by President Kathleen Rogers, participated in both the 100,000-person-strong "Global Day of Action for Climate Justice" march, as well as the COP26 Youth March which took place on Youth Empowerment and Education Day on November 5th. EARTHDAY.ORG hosted several of the march's leaders at the Nature+Zone pavilion later that afternoon for a discussion on youth climate advocacy and climate literacy.

#### Read our report from COP26.



#### Climate Literacy & Green Schools

On any given school day, there are over 1 billion children and teachers in our world's schools, more than any time in human history. EDO has long believed that if you want to create a diverse and active environmental movement and a global green economy, environmental and climate literacy is the key. In 2020, we began to build a global coalition that would focus on bringing climate education, civic skill building and jobs training directly into every school's curriculum rather than focus on non-formal education. It was daunting, given that our World Bank-supported climate literacy study produced such dismal findings. No country was engaged in creating a climate literacy project has exceeded even our highest expectations. Now more than 450 million people, teachers and other unions, and individuals have joined our efforts as well as corporate leaders, including the President of Microsoft, Brad Smith.

Our main objective in 2021 was to make significant progress at the Glasgow COP, <u>asking governments to pledge to include climate literacy</u> as part of their overall Paris Agreement commitment. We surpassed our goal when the parties to the Climate Agreement produced a major <u>proclamation on climate literacy</u> and individual countries pledged their own commitments. Additionally, over 100 youth leaders, including Fridays for the Future, <u>made climate literacy a top demand</u> from global leaders. This constituted another major step forward.



We are now working in 25 countries, promoting the adoption of climate literacy and standards for educating tomorrow's leaders. We are also focused on the next Climate COP in 2022, where we expect to increase the number of countries' pledges along with commitments for climate education as well as civic skill building. Significant barriers remain, including funding for the Global South which struggles to provide even basic textbooks and other classroom materials. And many countries, including the United States, drag their feet on climate action and face political obstacles to implementing national strategies to build the next generation of climate leaders, entrepreneurs, and green consumers.

EDO has also played a role in promoting green school buildings to level the playing field for all children attending schools. Research amply demonstrates that green school buildings promote learning, confidence, better test scores, energy costs, teacher retention, and graduation rates, while reducing the impacts of poverty for poor children. Investments in both climate literacy and green buildings remain on low on most countries' top priorities and EDO continues to promote both as central to solving the climate crises.

# **Connecting Food and the Environment**

The food we choose to eat, how we produce it and what we waste has a profound impact on the health of our environment and its people. Any global solution to climate change is not possible without addressing the impact of agriculture which contributes upwards of one third of the global greenhouse gas emissions from human activities. Animal agriculture is also a leading cause of deforestation, water and air pollution and biodiversity loss. And sadly, one third of food produced is lost or wasted, with almost half of all fruits and vegetables produced wasted. Food waste not only has significant and negative impacts on the environment, but also harms food businesses due to rising food costs.

Our Food and Environment Campaign, now in its third year, is promoting the adoption of a more plant-based diet, supporting policies to aid the transition to regenerative agriculture, and reducing food waste. Building on the findings from our groundbreaking survey conducted in partnership with the Yale Program on Climate Change Communication, <u>Climate Change and American Diet Report</u>, EDO expanded the plant-based diet movement by using our Earth Day communications platforms, celebrity influencers and educational toolkits.

In 2021 we launched our worldwide campaign to build a powerful grassroots movement in support of regenerative agriculture. Practitioners of regenerative farming are developing solutions that can transform tomorrow's farmers into heroes by improving soil health, sequestering carbon, and reducing pollution and erosion. A new generation of regenerative farmers is also looking at healing many of the equity and systemic racial issues associated with the brutal history of farming in the US.

Today's farmers face numerous challenges to adopting or taking regenerative agriculture practices to scale. Currently, the transition to regenerative agricultural practices may increase costs of production. However, since the public is not familiar with the benefits of regenerative agriculture, farmers cannot charge a premium for their products, nor is there public financing to subsidize the additional costs or a government recognized labelling system to support increased prices.



We are raising awareness, educating, and activating the public to support regenerative agriculture as green consumers, activists, voters, and business leaders. This year our globally livestreamed Earth Day event and several Earth Day Live Webinars featuring the voices of farmers, business leaders, technology innovators, policy advocates, and influencers educated millions on the pressing need for regenerative agriculture and the roadmap for achieving this goal.

One of most effective programs was piloted in India. Farmers for Earth, our free, information-sharing platform for small and medium-sized farmers, promoted regenerative agriculture practices to rehabilitate and enhance farm ecosystems, focusing on soil health, water management, beneficial cropping patterns, non-use of chemicals and other best practices. It allows farmers to connect with sustainable agriculture practitioners and subject experts, receive information on existent avenues for funds, and establishes dialogues with other growers across the country on best practices for using limited water for irrigation and other techniques of climate-resistant farming. We also engage in dialogues to promote tried and tested benefits of multi-crops in fields, the efficacy of collective seed banks, ways to preserve post-harvest produce, the benefits of a switch to solar-powered pump systems and market linkages that offer the most competitive prices. We expect to replicate this practice in other parts of India and other countries.

EDO also created a series of webinars for farmers across multiple states in India that reached over 100 Farmer Producer Organisations and NGOs to develop a train-thetrainer model that reached 500,000 farmers, all of whom now have access to the common platform.

#### **Great Global Cleanup**



The Great Global Cleanup had one of its most successful years to date through partnerships, webinar events, and organized cleanups. This year, the main on the ground focus was on planning cleanups and providing resources to organizations in underserved communities in Washington, D.C., San Antonio, Virginia Beach, Des Moines, and San Diego. Virtual resources and webinars were also put together and distributed in order to aid people globally in starting their own cleanups within their community. One of our biggest events was World Cleanup Day on September 18th in partnership with Let's Do It World, National CleanUp Day, and Keep America Beautiful. Some incredible outcomes from that event include:

- Thousands of individuals all over the world documenting their cleanups through our ArcGIS map.
- Nearly 145 million pounds of trash were collected and diverted from polluting our environment.
- 12 million people globally, including 1 million in the US, participated in cleanups during World Cleanup Day.

#### **Fashion for the Earth**

In 2021, EDO's Fashion for the Earth launched a global campaign to address the devastating impacts of fashion industry on the planet and the people who toil in factories around the world. Today the \$2.4 trillion industry manufactures 100 billion garments each year, 87% of which will end up in landfills or incinerators. The industry is responsible for 8% of all carbon emissions, and 20% of all industrial wastewater. Conventional cotton farming and wholesale clearing of forests for animal grazing for their products destroys soil, contaminates water systems and results in devastating biodiversity loss. In developing countries, garment workers – mostly women as well as children – labor in factories under the harshest circumstances with few protections and extremely low salaries.

Yet very few people are aware of fashion's impacts on the environment. The goal of Fashion for the Earth is to educate the consumer about the true cost of their purchases and to advance government regulation of the industry. Fashion for the Earth projects work in partnership with fashion leaders and organizations advancing the cause of sustainability.

EDO actively supports legislation and policies that call on governments to take immediate action. In late 2021, EDO joined the original 9-member coalition that backed the first major piece of legislation to face off with the fashion industry as a whole. Introduced into the New York State Senate and House of Representatives, The Fashion Act requires retailers with global revenue of \$100 million or more to map their supply chains, disclose environmental and social impacts, and set binding science-based targets, ensuring the fashion industry operates within the bounds of the Paris Climate Agreement. EDO also launched a petition demanding that the Biden Administration support national legislation.



Fashion for the Earth also works to educate 100s of thousands of people through our communications and education efforts, including Earth Day Live webinars and interviews and podcasts. We have developed toolkits around how to shop and care for clothing, build a sustainable capsule wardrobe, and use our fashion footprint calculator to educate consumers about practices that will reduce their individual impact. Our outreach projects include My Planet My Closet, which allows the public to show off their sustainable clothing in videos, and The Great Global Swap directed at high school and college students are designed to inspire youth to shop sustainably.

EDO is working to effect change through education and legislation that will change the trajectory of the fashion industry and its impacts on every aspect of the environment.

#### **The Canopy Project**

Since the first Earth Day, reforestation has been a major part of our agenda. From organizing large scale reforestation projects to supporting millions of tree plantings by our global network of partners during the Earth Day/Earth season each year, tree planting and reforestation are part of our DNA. In 2021, and despite Covid-19, EARTHDAY.ORG's Canopy Project continued its successful track record, directly planting close to 1.2 million trees in 10 countries, including Canada, India, Mexico, across Africa and Madagascar, and Europe, and supporting hundreds of volunteer reforestation efforts around the world in honor of Earth Day.

EARTHDAY.ORG also secured additional large-scale reforestation commitments from governments and their Forest Services or Interior Departments in connection with fulfilling their Paris Agreement Nationally Determined Commitments. These national commitments were made in twenty countries and on all continents. Large volunteer organizations, such as the World Scouts and others, agreed to commitments of over 500 million trees through 2020-2021. EARTHDAY.ORG also leverages Earth Day and our global network to catalyze the planting of 100s of millions of trees a year.

In addition to planting trees, our projects also provide important financial benefits to local communities, protecting watersheds and providing habitat for threatened species. Our work in Uganda described below demonstrates many of the principles and techniques for working with local communities to plant produce bearing trees while reforesting adjacent to landscape size areas.

Our Lira Forest Garden Project in Uganda illustrates the community-based approach that ensures our reforestation projects will remain protected. EARTHDAY.ORG's staff and on the ground partners train local farmers to optimize their fields' productivity. In this project, large scale reforestation efforts are combined with smaller areas of farmland used for agro-crops, such as fruit trees. In this project farmers with land that abuts a reforestation project are recruited to participate. Intensive trainings and community building efforts precede all projects. Participants are trained to plant trees in an alleycropping system, allowing farmers to maximize growing. The project leaders also train farmers to ameliorate their soil for growing healthy fruit trees and vegetable. Because farmers can earn money from the fruit trees, the reforested areas are not cut. In addition to the farmers directly impacted, tens of thousands of other individuals indirectly benefited from the tree planting projects. Farmers are also trained to use the Internet and mobile technology, allowing them to communicate with peers and experts and research answers to their questions online. Women are trained in small scale production work, which they do while staying at home and managing their daily work, increasing the family economy. Education, digital literacy, and social forestry along with best practice agriculture and tree care empowers farming communities and allows the village community to access job opportunities and earn sustainable income. In addition, while the Lira Forest Garden Project was not implemented with the direct goal of positively impacting water resources, both the reforestation efforts and the fruit tree areas contribute to the conservation and replenishment of water resources in and around the communities supported by this project.

Obia Philip lives with his family in Kole, Uganda. With his farmland protected by living fences of fast-growing permanent forests, Obia finally feels secure feeding his family during the dry season. Previously, he grew only maize and sorghum, harvesting and selling a few times of year. Now they have income year-round while serving as guardians for their surrounding forests.



Photo: Obia Philip's family in Lira, Uganda

EDO's reforestation efforts are also playing an important role in protecting biodiversity. For more than three decades EARTHDAY.ORG has worked with one of the largest bioreserve areas in Mexico, Sierra Gorda, a million-acre reserve in the heart of Mexico that is home to many critically endangered and threatened species, such as the jaguar and the military macaw, along with thousands of villagers. The Sierra Gorda Biosphere Reserve is the seventh largest Reserve in Mexico and the most diverse in terms of ecosystems.



Map: Trees were planted in 40 communities throughout the Sierra Gorda Biosphere region



Photo: Students at Universidad Pedagógica in Jalpan de Serra plant trees

In the later part of 2021, EARTHDAY.ORG began working with partners to develop additional projects in Tanzania, India, Bangladesh, and The Gambia, focused on planting massive coastal mangrove area with more than 20 million trees. We also expect to begin to plant trees to create over 40 miles of canopy corridors to help Brazil's charismatic but critically endangered Golden Lion Tamarin.

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## **Global Staff List**

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- Muhammad Awan Awan, Earth Day Coordinator Pakistan
- Ghaamid Abdul Basat, Earth Day Coordinator
- Susan Bass, Sr. VP of Programs and Operations
- Ramit Basu, Regional Director Asia
- Kelly Beckner, Director of Corporate Sponsorships and Marketing
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- Shelley Rogers, Artists for the Earth consultant
- Jillian Semaan, Food & Environment Director
- Karuna Singh, Country Director India/Regional Director-Asia
- Rumit Walia, Assistant Manager Outreach India
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- Beatriz Woods, Email Strategist Communications

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We want to take a moment to give a sincere thank you to all of our individual, corporate, foundation, and other donors for their ongoing support of our efforts to uplift the environment and fight the effects of climate change globally. Our mission involves yearround work that is only made possible through your support. Together, we can build a sustainable and just future for our planet.

Thank you for helping to grow the environmental movement and change the future for the better.



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