

# On this World Environment Day let's become Generation Restoration by adopting Nature Based Solutions



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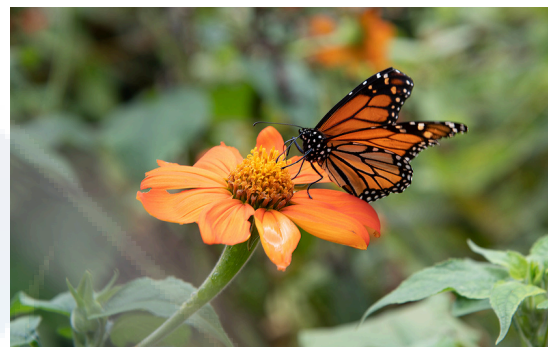
RESEARCH ANALYST-CLIMATE CHANGE

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The globe is confronting a triple planetary crisis which refers to interconnected crisis of climate change biodiversity loss, and pollution. These are not distant threats instead unfortunately they have become our reality and most of us are carrying on with the business as usual. Our daily practices are deteriorating the situation.

Starting with climate change which refers to long term shifts in temperature and weather patterns. It includes an increase in temperature, changes in precipitation patterns including hail, storm, rain and snowfall. Dictionary definition it is but it is how it is. On one end, these changing conditions of atmosphere result in floods due to uncontrolled access water and on other extreme end leads to extreme events like droughts. Not only that but there is an increase in intensity and occurrence of other hazards like heatwaves, storm surges, and wildfires.

Moving on to biodiversity that is the variety and array of all life forms on earth. The flora and fauna yes! Today the extinction rates of both plant, animal species is much higher than in the past times. That too on an alarming rate. And when biodiversity loss occurs so are ecosystem services disrupted, and the negative effect goes onto effecting food chains and sometimes entire webs.



Lastly pollution. Oh do we even need to talk that this is an ongoing problem? Ranging from plastic pollution of oceans, seas and waters, soils, to noise and air pollution.



In a nut shell several sectors are affected as a consequence of all the above three problems such as health, food and nutrition security, life on land life below water, gender disparities etc.

Having said that the adoption of Nature based solutions (Nbs) is one approach to combat these issues. In simple terms nature based solutions utilize natural processes and nature to combat the above mentioned challenges. They make sure that the people and environment both benefit from it. They are sustainable, and encourage us to work with nature rather than against nature. They can be implemented in various settings and across various sectors. Now is the time to mainstream Nbs in national policies and strategic plans and day to day lives.



Various nature based solutions have been implemented across the globe but still the planet demands more devotion.





**Biodegradable alternatives** are one such example. They provide ecofriendly options to one of the major devils contributing to pollution; plastic! Natural materials like bamboo, jute, and plant starch should be used to replace plastic for instance in day to day cutlery, and sanitary items. The advantage is that these materials decompose safely in the environment, thus helping in combating pollution



**Green infrastructure** development is another avenue. It refers to the use of natural design strategies. Green roofs are one example. Plantation on top of buildings must be encouraged. They can range from planting wind resistant woody plants on high rise buildings to herbaceous plants on low rise buildings. Promotion of urban forestry is another example. Urban heat island is a common phenomenon observed around dense concrete structures. In order to manage the micro climates within cities urban forestry initiatives will prove beneficial. Moreover, it is ideal to make sure that indigenous and native plant species are planted so they can bear the changing climatic pressures. These initiatives will ensure improved biodiversity, cooler and cleaner air, and better mental and physical health benefits as they serve as recreation spots for humans.



**Blue infrastructure** promotion will also serve as a means to combat negatives introduced by the grey infrastructure. It refers to natural and engineered water based systems including natural rivers, artificial retention ponds and lakes. They play a significant role in recharging ground water supplies in turn helping in combating the ongoing water security issues. Moreover, they also help fight food and nutrition insecurity if fish and other organisms are reared into them. Not just that but if specialized systems like greenhouses having aquaponics- which is the combination of aquaculture i.e. fish farming and hydroponics i.e. cultivation of plants without soil and in water- is employed in urban settings the benefits will be manifold. In such systems several other species like fungus for instance mushroom cultivation, beekeeping etc. can be introduced making it agro-biodiverse thus helping restore the ecosystem.





**Community led environment restoration** should also not be sidelined while talking about nature based solutions. These practices are meant to involve the local masses as the primary stakeholders. Under community led approach the local people take charge of safeguarding their environment. From maintenance of plantations, to minimizing plastic use, to bringing about a behavioral change of not throwing trash in the water bodies, to knowledge sharing, all lie under this heading. These grassroots efforts not only help revive the ecosystem, and create green employment opportunities but also help in building community resilience and coping capacities.



If we take one step at a time and start our journeys on these sustainable and restorative practices, we are bound to achieve the sustainable development goals of the United Nations. And the good news is that by adopting nature based solutions we are not just targeting one goal at a time but instead we embark on a magical journey where multiple goals are addressed under one project. So this World Environment Day let's pledge to rethink how we produce, consume, and dispose. And let's switch to more sustainable practices. Switch single use plastic cutlery and engulf food with bamboo spoons. Shine up your teeth with cane and bamboo toothbrushes. Try on decoupage art on plastic water bottles and plant money plant in them. Buy terracotta pots and plant different species in them and put on rooftops. Take part in community afforestation projects. Install rain water harvesting units in your homes. And educate your friends and family about the crisis the planet is suffering from. The Earth is our shared home. Reclaim your roles in owning your environment and ecosystem and become the #GenerationRestoration.

