



Rise Up For Africa!

Vanessa Nakate, The Rise Up Movement,
Fridays For Future Uganda, Uganda

☀ Call to Action

Join Vanessa & other youth climate activists around the world in fighting for climate action now.

Follow on Twitter:

@vanessa_vash @RiseupMovement1 & listen to the “Why Climate Activism?” podcast

☀ Values

- Tenacious
- Integrity
- Resourceful
- Self-Confident
- Self-Respect

☀ Lessons Learned

Representation from all countries and regions—and recognition of those who are doing the work—is important, especially when it comes to fighting the effects of climate change.

Vanessa turned a personally hurtful and disrespectful incident into an opportunity to use her voice to speak up for millions for African people. We all must stand up for each other.

Standing up for what you believe in all can blossom - like for Vanessa, into a national movement.

When Vanessa Nakate was cropped out of a photo with Greta Thunberg and other white climate change activists, she said, “You didn’t just erase a photo. You erased a continent. But I am stronger than ever.”

With these words, Vanessa made an important point about the global fight against climate change: representation — of all colors, creeds, and continents — is critical. For years, Vanessa has felt that African countries have been left out of the picture when it comes to climate change activism. Her goal is to change the narrative.

At Davos, online, and in her home country of Uganda, she has made it her mission to shine a light on African activists who are making a difference. After months of solo protests in front of Uganda’s parliament, she founded the Rise Up Africa Movement with Fridays for Future International. Vanessa is not waiting to make her voice heard: she’s lifting it up now.

☀ Language Arts

Using Vanessa’s life story for inspiration, write a fable that deals with reaching her specific goals. Choose another climate change activist, and write a poem about their cause. Choose a third, and write down ten questions you’d like to ask them.

Write a five-paragraph research essay explaining the major threats the African continent is facing because of climate change.

Create a graphic novel-style narrative of Vanessa’s story.

STEM Activities

Following Vanessa's example, organize a climate strike in your school. This will take much planning: you will have to mobilize other students to engage and co-lead; promote your event; organize the logistics of the strike (e.g., timing and location); and coordinate the artistic elements of producing signs, street theatre, and presentations. If your numbers are small in the beginning, don't be discouraged: as Vanessa has shown us, even a strike of just one person can grow into a large movement.

Write a proposal for your school to convert to more efficient lighting, or to install solar panels on your school's rooftop.

Calculate how much energy these changes would save or generate. How much would the initial investment be? How quickly would the investment pay for itself and start saving money for the school? Bonus: Calculate how much CO₂ would be saved (factoring in the initial ecological costs of lighting or solar panels).

Sustainability Innovations

Many organizations in Africa have made it their mission to attack climate change and improve sustainability efforts throughout the continent. Here are some organizations that are making positive changes:

[Climate Change Institute Uganda](#)¹: This institute was founded in 2017 to target the issue of climate change by tackling policy changes; reducing fossil fuel usage; and proper waste management.

[African Wildlife Foundation](#)²: This foundation has focused its efforts on climate-smart agriculture, access to secure water resources, protecting forests, and many other important issues.

[Advocates Coalition for Development and Environment](#)³: ACODE is a public policy research and advocacy think tank based in Uganda. Their projects include enabling policy conditions for the inclusion of a green economy, gender-responsive budgeting, and supporting business opportunities for rural women.

Sustainability Career Pathways

Climate Activist. Now, and in the years to come, there will be a growing need for individuals dedicated to building the political commitment to stabilize Earth's climate. This is an activity you can join in with now. Organize a [Friday climate strike](#)⁴ at your town hall; or pressure your school to divest from fossil fuel stocks, or invest in renewable energy. As Vanessa has shown, it only takes one person to start a movement. The best way to enter this field and make a difference is to get active now! Visit [Idealist.org](#)⁵ to explore thousands of jobs, internships, and volunteer opportunities for activists.

Community Organizer. Engaging one's community around important environmental and social challenges is an important career path and community service. There are many programs that teach how to organize, from online courses such as [this one](#)⁶, to one-year environmental organizing field schools like [Green Corps](#)⁷.

Storyteller. Storytelling is powerful. Stories inspire, inform, and mobilize others to take action. Vanessa's initiative, [1 Million Activist Stories](#)⁸, is one effort to chronicle and share the stories of activists who are working to make a difference. Becoming a journalist (including in your school paper), blogger, novelist, or other type of communicator can be a way for you to channel your storytelling skills into making a difference in the world.

National and International Governance. The United Nations and national governments are playing (or at least should be playing) a key role in negotiating and mapping out the pathway to a zero-carbon future. Perhaps your career lies in helping to negotiate climate commitments? Or creating ways to incentivize our transition to a sustainable future? Explore this booklet on international relations-focused government jobs in the [United States](#)⁹ or this [introduction to working at the United Nations](#)¹⁰.

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- 1 <https://www.climateinstituteug.org/#:~:text=Climate%20Change%20Institute%20Uganda%20is,on%20climate%20change%20in%20Uganda>
 - 2 <https://www.awf.org/land-protection/climate-change>
 - 3 <https://www.acode-u.org/green-economy>
 - 4 <https://fridaysforfuture.org/>
 - 5 <https://www.idealists.org/>
 - 6 <https://www.coursera.org/learn/community-organizing>
 - 7 <https://greencorps.org/>
 - 8 <https://www.riseupmovementafrica.org/>
 - 9 <https://successworks.wisc.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/39/2017/06/Making-Global-Impact.pdf>
 - 10 <https://careers.un.org/lbw/Home.aspxf>

