

Go for it: Initiatives rooted in genuine interest are more likely to sustain commitment, encourage personal growth and transform what you or others may think small efforts into meaningful progress with a lasting impact. **CONTINUED ON P. 18**

Initiatives worth trying for today's teens



Youth initiatives worth trying for today's teens

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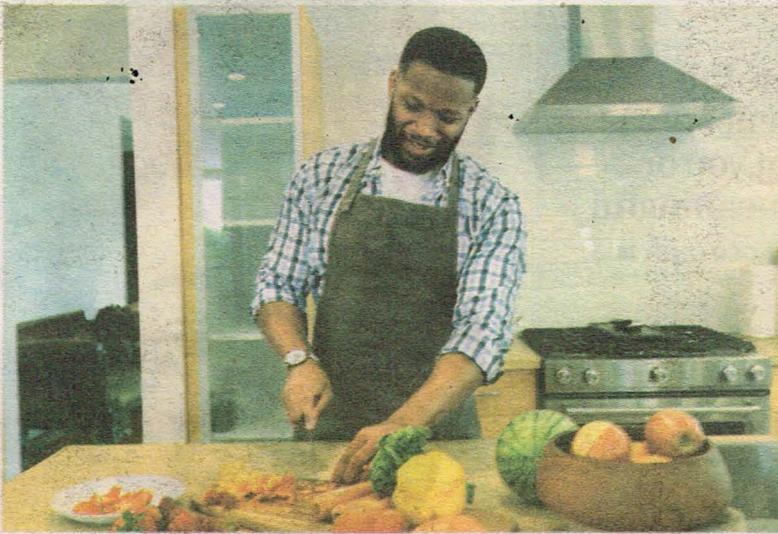
As economic and social realities continue to evolve, teens today are growing up in a world that demands more than just academic success alone. With shrinking job opportunities and rising competition, youth initiatives that nurture skills, creativity and resilience are becoming vital stepping stones for a more secure future.

However, the choice of which initiative to pursue largely depends on individual interests and long-term goals. Whether you are drawn to leadership, sports or creative pursuits, what matters most is engaging in something driven by passion rather than pressure.

Initiatives rooted in genuine interest are more likely to sustain commitment, encourage personal growth and transform what you or others may think small efforts into meaningful progress with a lasting impact. Below are some of the youth initiatives that teens can start today, many of which require little funding, but offer long-term benefits in skills development, confidence and future opportunities.

Climate and environmental projects

As environmental degradation con-



tinues in the form of deforestation, waste dumping, and pollution, the effects of climate change, ranging from global warming to unpredictable weather patterns are becoming increasingly evident. In response, a growing number of eco-champions, including young people, are stepping up at the forefront to shape sustainable solutions that protect the environment and secure a better future.

For teens, being the next generation, participating in environmental projects offers a unique opportunity to make a tangible difference while developing important skills. Activities such as tree planting, recycling drives, community clean-ups, school gardens, and composting projects allow you to understand the value of conservation, teamwork, and problem-solving.

While some climate and environmen-

tal projects are driven by personal passion and initiative, many global organisations have stepped in to provide support through grants and funding opportunities. Applying for such assistance can not only expand the reach and impact of your projects, but also gain valuable experience in project management, planning, and advocacy. Beyond the impact created, involvement in such initiatives cultivates leadership, responsibility, and a sense of purpose, qualities that will benefit you far beyond your school years.

Sports and talent development

In a world where academic performance is often emphasised, extracurricular sports and creative talents offer a complemen-

Savings and financial literacy groups
Since financial independence and responsible money management are vital skills in any stage of life, learning how to manage your money from an early age is crucial. For instance, developing habits such as budgeting, saving, and setting financial goals equips you with the tools to make informed decisions, avoid unnecessary debt, and plan for a secure future. Additionally, engaging in financial literacy activities early on not only builds discipline and accountability, but also lays the foundation for long-term financial stability and success.

ry platform for personal growth and holistic development. Activities such as football, netball, athletics, basketball, dance, drama, music, or school talent shows allow teens to explore and develop their unique abilities while fostering collaboration and healthy competition.

For instance, Allan Okello, a Uganda Cranes footballer's journey into professional football began at 17 years while at Kibuli Senior Secondary School. This demonstrates how dedication to what you love at a young age can open doors to national and international opportunities. Stories like his highlight that such pursuits not only nurtures talent but also cultivate discipline, resilience, and leadership skills, qualities that serve teens well both on and off the field.

Also, participation in sports and creative endeavours opens doors to scholarships, competitions, and potential career pathways, whether in athletics, performing arts, or coaching. For those with a passion for their craft, joining clubs, training academies, or local community groups can provide guidance, mentorship, and exposure to new opportunities, turning hobbies into meaningful pursuits that contribute to both personal growth and future prospects.

Literacy and communication activities

Strong literacy and communication skills are essential in areas such as critical thinking, research, writing, and public speaking, and they are valuable across a variety of career paths, including journalism, leadership, law, public relations, and education. Developing these skills early not only strengthens academic performance but also opens doors to countless opportunities for personal and professional growth.

You can explore these skills through a variety of activities, including book clubs that expand knowledge and comprehension, writing circles or poetry workshops that nurture creativity, and debate teams or public speaking forums that strengthen articulation and persuasion.

Depending on the activity you prefer to engage in, this boosts confidence, critical thinking and equips you with tools to express ideas clearly, advocate for causes, and influence others effectively. In other words, these empower you to make your voices heard in their schools, communities, and beyond.

Entrepreneurship and innovation

In today's fast-changing world, being either an innovator or entrepreneur is increasingly helping people achieve sustainable income and financial independence. This involves developing creative solutions, identifying opportunities, and turning ideas into tangible ventures.

Activities can range from small-scale business ventures to creative problem-solving projects. Teens can start school-based farming or gardening projects at their home backyards, sell handmade crafts, bake, or explore digital opportunities such as coding apps, creating content online, or developing social media campaigns. Innovation can also be applied to community challenges, such as designing eco-friendly solutions, creative awareness campaigns, or small inventions that address local needs.

When teens invest time in entrepreneurship and innovation, they learn how to navigate challenges, manage risks, collaborate with peers, all while creating value.

