

GREEN GUARDIANS

YOUTH LEADERSHIP PROGRAMME

CURRICULUM OVERVIEW

A Story-Based Leadership, Sustainability and Community Action Curriculum

One Million Leaders Academy (OMLA) • NELIS

Current Curriculum Structure and Learning Journey

September 2026

1. About the Green Guardians Curriculum

Green Guardians is a youth leadership and sustainability curriculum developed by One Million Leaders Academy (OMLA), an initiative of One Million Leaders Africa. It uses stories, facilitated discussion, reflection and practical leadership experiences to help young people understand real community challenges and develop the confidence and skills to contribute to solutions.

The curriculum is designed as a connected learning journey. The 30 stories are not intended to function as 30 unrelated environmental stories. Together, they progressively develop a student's ability to observe problems, understand root causes, engage with others, design responses, take responsible action and contribute to lasting change.

30 stories. 3 toolboxes. One leadership journey.

The current Green Guardians Toolbox used in school implementation contains the storybooks and the Facilitator Guide. The wider programme vision includes additional learning and engagement resources that can strengthen the curriculum as implementation develops. This overview therefore describes the curriculum that is already established through the existing stories, programme structure and facilitation approach, while keeping future supporting resources distinct from the current core toolbox.

2. Target Learners and Programme Context

Element	Green Guardians
Primary target group	Junior Secondary School 2 (JSS 2) students
Delivery setting	Participating secondary schools through Green Guardians learning sessions / club activities
Facilitators	Teachers and trained programme facilitators
Current core materials	Green Guardians storybooks and Facilitator Guide
Learning approach	Story-based, participatory, reflective and action-oriented
Broader purpose	Youth leadership, sustainability awareness, problem-solving and community action

3. What the Curriculum Seeks to Develop

Green Guardians is designed to develop young people who can look at their surroundings with curiosity, understand problems beyond their surface appearance, work with others, imagine practical possibilities and take responsible action.

Across the programme, students are expected to develop the ability to:

- Notice challenges and opportunities in their environment.
- Ask questions and investigate why problems exist.
- Understand how problems affect people, communities and the environment.
- Listen to different perspectives and communicate clearly.
- Work with others to explore and address challenges.
- Imagine creative and practical solutions.
- Take responsibility for agreed actions.
- Reflect on their experiences and decisions.
- Connect learning from stories to real situations around them.
- Recognise that young people can contribute to positive change.

4. The Green Guardians Leadership Journey

Every Green Guardians story follows the programme's core leadership arc. The same arc provides the underlying logic for the wider curriculum.

Stage	What the learner develops	Guiding question
OBSERVE	Attention to problems, opportunities and changes around them.	What is happening?
UNDERSTAND	Questioning, investigation and awareness of causes and effects.	Why is this happening?
ENGAGE	Listening, communication, participation and collaboration.	Who is involved and who can help?
DESIGN	Creative and practical solution thinking.	What could we do?
ACT	Responsibility, teamwork and implementation.	What can we do now?
SUSTAIN	Reflection, improvement and ownership of change.	How can the change continue?

5. The Three-Toolbox Curriculum

The three toolboxes provide a deliberate progression in the student's frame of reference. Students begin by looking closely at their own communities, then discover innovation across Africa, and finally learn from examples around the world before bringing ideas back to their own context.

Toolbox	Core question	Learning emphasis	Student movement
1. Community Roots	What is happening around me?	Awareness, observation, empathy and understanding local problems.	I SEE and begin to UNDERSTAND.
2. Innovation Across the Continent	Who is solving problems like this?	African innovation, possibility, comparison and solution thinking.	I IMAGINE and begin to DESIGN.
3. Learning from the World	What can I learn and adapt?	Global learning, adaptation, application and leadership.	I ADAPT, ACT and LEAD.

6. Toolbox 1: Community Roots

Core question: “What is happening around me?”

Community Roots begins with issues students can recognise in their own environment. The purpose is to help students slow down, observe, ask questions, understand different experiences and recognise their own capacity to contribute.

#	Story Title	Theme
1	Roots of Change	Illegal Logging
2	The Plastic Problem	Waste Pollution
3	Water Warriors	Clean Water Access
4	The Honest Market	Corruption Awareness
5	The School Without Books	Education Inequality
6	The Flooded Street	Drainage and Urban Planning
7	Seeds of Change	Community Farming
8	The Broken Bridge	Infrastructure Advocacy
9	The Night Without Lights	Energy Access
10	The Youth Forum	Youth Voice in Governance

Primary learner development: observation, empathy, critical thinking, questioning, environmental and civic responsibility, and confidence to recognise that young people have a voice.

7. Toolbox 2: Innovation Across the Continent

Core question: “Who is solving problems like this?”

Innovation Across the Continent expands the student's perspective from their immediate community to other African contexts. Students encounter examples of communities and young people responding creatively to challenges.

#	Story	Theme / Location
11	Solar Village	Kenya: Renewable Energy
12	Recycling Revolution	Rwanda: Plastic Recycling
13	Smart Farmers	Ghana: Agricultural Innovation
14	Digital Classrooms	Nigeria: Education Technology
15	Water from the Sky	Namibia: Rainwater Harvesting
16	Desert Gardens	Morocco: Sustainable Irrigation
17	Youth Radio	Uganda: Community Media
18	Safe Streets Project	South Africa: Urban Safety
19	Green Transport	Ethiopia: Public Mobility
20	African Youth Innovation Expo	Sharing Innovations

Primary learner development: imagination, innovation, collaboration, comparison, resourcefulness and the confidence to see Africa as a source of ideas and solutions.

8. Toolbox 3: Learning from the World

Core question: “What can I learn and adapt?”

Learning from the World introduces students to approaches from different countries and communities. The purpose is to encourage curiosity and comparative learning while helping students think about what could be adapted to their own context.

#	Story	Theme / Location
21	Bridges of Change	Denmark Visit
22	Smart Cities	Netherlands: Urban Planning
23	Recycling Nation	Sweden: Waste Systems
24	Forest Schools	Finland: Outdoor Learning
25	Innovation Garage	Germany: Youth Tech Labs
26	Community Energy	Scotland: Local Power Grids
27	Water City	Singapore: Water Management
28	City of Bicycles	Denmark: Sustainable Transport
29	Youth Parliament	Canada: Civic Leadership
30	Bringing Ideas Home	Applying Lessons in Africa

Primary learner development: openness to learning, adaptation, systems thinking, civic leadership, design and the ability to translate learning from other contexts into locally relevant thinking.

9. Core Green Guardians Competencies

The curriculum develops a consistent set of leadership competencies across the three toolboxes. Different stories provide different opportunities to practise these competencies.

Competency	What it looks like in Green Guardians
Critical Thinking	Questions assumptions, examines causes and consequences, and considers different perspectives.
Communication	Expresses ideas clearly, listens to others and communicates findings or proposed solutions.
Collaboration	Works respectfully with peers and other stakeholders toward a shared goal.
Innovation	Generates creative, practical and context-appropriate ideas.
Accountability	Takes responsibility for commitments, decisions and actions.
Civic & Environmental Responsibility	Recognises personal and collective responsibility for community and environmental wellbeing.
Sustainability	Identifies environmental problems and takes practical action that creates lasting change.

10. How Learning Happens

The Facilitator Guide supports the delivery of the stories, but the curriculum is designed to move beyond simply reading and explaining. The facilitator uses the story to create a learning experience in which students think, discuss, reflect and connect the issue to their own reality.

Learning moment	Purpose
Story	Introduce a real-world situation, problem, choice or possibility.
Question	Help students examine what happened and why.
Discussion	Allow students to hear and consider different perspectives.
Reflection	Connect the story to personal thinking and experience.
Local connection	Ask students where they see similar issues around them.
Leadership lens	Identify the leadership behaviour or competency being developed.
Action / challenge	Give students an appropriate opportunity to apply learning.
Reflection after action	Help students consider what happened, what changed and what they learned.

The facilitator's role is to create the conditions for students to think, question, reflect and act.

11. Student Reflection and Learning Record

Students are encouraged to maintain a dedicated notebook as a record of their Green Guardians journey. This creates a simple way for students to capture observations, ideas and reflections while also providing evidence of learning over time.

- I noticed...
- I wonder...
- I learned...
- The problem exists because...
- This problem affects...
- A possible solution could be...
- People we could involve are...
- I can contribute by...

- What happened when we acted?
- What would I do differently next time?

A formal Green Guardians Leadership Journal can later be developed from this structure. The current notebook approach allows implementation to begin without making the availability of a separate journal a condition for participation.

12. From Learning to Leadership in Action

Green Guardians is designed to move students beyond awareness. The programme creates a pathway through which learning can become ownership, innovation and action.

Curriculum movement	Student experience
LEARNING	I encounter a problem, idea or leadership situation through a story.
OWNERSHIP	I recognise a related issue or opportunity in my environment.
INNOVATION	I think about possible responses and work with others to improve an idea.
ACTION	I participate in a practical school or community response.
IMPACT	I reflect on what changed and what could happen next.
SUSTAINABILITY	I develop ways to keep the solution a lasting one

The goal is not for students simply to finish 30 stories. The goal is for the 30-story journey to change how students see problems, understand their responsibility and approach opportunities to lead.

13. Evidence of Student Learning

Assessment within Green Guardians is primarily formative and evidence-based. Students demonstrate learning through participation, discussion, reflection, problem identification, solution thinking and action rather than through a traditional examination alone.

Area	Evidence of learning
Understanding	Student can explain the issue, situation or leadership lesson from a story.
Critical Thinking	Student can ask relevant questions and identify causes, effects or perspectives.
Communication	Student can explain an observation, idea or proposed solution.
Collaboration	Student contributes constructively to group tasks.
Innovation	Student generates or improves a practical response.
Action	Student participates responsibly in an agreed activity or project.
Reflection	Student can describe what they learned and what they would do next.
Leadership	Student demonstrates initiative, responsibility, participation or voice.

14. Student Progression

The curriculum provides a natural progression through the three toolboxes. The existing programme concept also establishes three recognition levels.

Level	Journey	Broad outcome
Green Guardians Explorer	Toolbox 1	Student develops awareness of community issues and begins to observe, question and reflect.

Green Guardians Innovator	Toolboxes 1 + 2	Student expands their perspective, learns from African examples and develops solution-thinking.
Green Guardians Leader	All 3 Toolboxes + project	Student connects learning across contexts and demonstrates leadership through practical action.

Certification and recognition should ultimately be based not only on exposure to the stories but also on evidence of participation, reflection and leadership in action, in line with the programme's intended progression.

15. Current Core Learning Resources

The Green Guardians curriculum is currently delivered through two core resources:

Resource	Role in the curriculum
Green Guardians Storybooks	Provide the narrative learning experiences through which students encounter community, African and global issues.
Green Guardians Facilitator Guide	Supports teachers and facilitators in guiding discussion, activities, reflection and leadership learning around the stories.

16. The Green Guardians Learning Promise

A student completing the Green Guardians journey should not only know more about environmental and community issues. The student should increasingly be able to see problems with greater awareness, ask better questions, listen to others, imagine possibilities, work collaboratively and take responsible steps toward change.

**SEE THE PROBLEM → UNDERSTAND IT → LEARN FROM OTHERS → IMAGINE
POSSIBILITIES → DESIGN A RESPONSE → ACT → LEAD CHANGE**

17. Curriculum in One View

Curriculum Layer	Green Guardians
Purpose	Develop young people who can understand challenges and contribute to positive change.
Learner	JSS 2 student in the current school implementation.
Core medium	Story-based learning.
Architecture	3 toolboxes / 30 stories.
Leadership journey	Observe → Understand → Engage → Design → Act → Sustain.
Toolbox progression	Local community → Africa → World → Bring ideas home.
Core competencies	Critical Thinking, Communication, Collaboration, Innovation, Accountability, Civic & Environmental Responsibility.
Learning approach	Story → Question → Discussion → Reflection → Local Connection → Leadership Lens → Action → Reflection.
Current core resources	Stories + Facilitator Guide.
Intended outcome	Students who can think, collaborate, create and act as responsible young leaders.

18. Programme Positioning

Green Guardians sits at the intersection of leadership education, sustainability education and experiential learning. It uses issues such as waste, water, energy, education, infrastructure, governance, transport and community development as contexts for developing leadership.

The curriculum is therefore broader than environmental awareness. It is a youth leadership journey in which sustainability and community challenges provide real situations for students to practise thinking, communication, collaboration, innovation, responsibility and action.

19. Conclusion

Green Guardians already has a clear curriculum foundation in its 30 stories, three-toolbox structure, leadership arc and Facilitator Guide. The curriculum brings these elements together into one coherent student journey.

The strength of the model is the progression: students first learn to look closely at their own communities, then discover African examples of innovation, then learn from the wider world and return to their own context with new possibilities. Throughout that journey, stories are used not simply to transfer information but to create opportunities for young people to think, question, reflect, collaborate and act.

Green Guardians uses stories to teach leadership, and action to make leadership visible.