

Climate and Environmental Action





ChildFund Alliance is a global network of 11 child-focused development and humanitarian organizations reaching more than 32 million children and their family members in 70 countries.

Our members work to end violence and exploitation against children; provide expertise in emergencies and disasters to ease the harmful impact on children and their communities; and engage children, families and communities to create lasting change.

Our commitment, resources, innovation and expertise serve as a powerful force to transform the lives of children around the world.

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Cover image: Galgallo, age 4, Kenya

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Mariselda and her children in Guatemala plant a medicinal species which reduces erosion while also providing an inexpensive treatment for many ailments



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Introduction

ChildFund Alliance members are committed to working together as climate change and environmental degradation pose devastating consequences for the world's population.

We bring our expertise, humility, curiosity and our commitment to serving the needs and interests of the more than 32 million children and families we support in the 70 countries where we operate.

We have adopted a child rights perspective in alignment with our approach to our work, which also highlights the pressing nature of the climate and environmental emergency we face.

A child rights approach reminds us that children's agency and voice are critical to any result we aim for, and that the quality of the process is as important as reaching the goal.

Our proposed actions are understood through the 'ecosystem of a child' – e.g., addressing children as individuals, but also within families,

communities, regions and countries impacted by global policies, standards and practices.

We take a do-no-harm and safeguarding approach to meaningfully address the intersectionality of rights and vulnerabilities, particularly those of gender, disability, and identity discrimination. We also are mindful and careful of the appreciation that each country, context, region, and environmental habitat is different and specific.

Further, as a global network of international organizations, we are committed to using our access to multiple levels of government and civil society (local to global) to support and facilitate best results.

This brief reflects input from across ChildFund Alliance members. Case studies within the brief offer insights into this complex issue, in addition to recommendations for potential development of joint projects among Alliance members and country offices.



Aerial view of the drought-affected town of Maikona in Marsabit County, Kenya

ChildFund's Engagement in Climate and Environmental Action

The climate and environmental crisis is a child rights problem, because it not only constitutes a great threat to their future, but also a threat to their right to live their life to their fullest.

Yet as children and youth have noted, the way the 'adult world' is dealing with this crisis frequently overlooks their right to be involved.¹ Although recent times have seen a greater inclusion of children and young people, they could argue it is a result of their actions as much as governments' acceptance of their role.²

The time for meaningful climate action is now. We have talked and discussed; we know what needs to be done and the solutions are there. It is now time to act. We need your help and likewise, you need our help. We must do this together."

Girl, 15, Trinidad and Tobago³

We are in a revolutionary situation that turns around our traditional expectations of progress and development. Parents from all cultures and countries have been driven for centuries by the hope to make the world a better place for their children, and we honor the dividends in health, education, science and technology made through collective efforts.

However, this is the first generation where the reverse is true, and we will see regression in achievements, not in centuries or decades, but within years and lifetimes.

Child and youth activists we work with describe their sadness at losing their childhood 'early' partially because many 'grown ups' are insufficiently 'grown up' in facing the problem.⁴

As collaborating youth activist Therese Hartman Liungman⁵ puts it when discussing youth and child participation: "The reality is that we youth are getting used to the fact that our future may not be anything like what our parents experienced, and it's frustrating."

This has economic, political and psychosocial consequences for children. Decisions taken

today affect children *directly* and yet children and young people often remain excluded from the political and economic decisions that will impact their lives.

Children and young people have been among the most active participants in forcing governments to address environmental concerns, leading to backlash and even reversals of their rights to voice and action by some state and non-state actors.

We urgently need to mobilize resources, our existing expertise, and emerging evidence to support children and young people to ensure their rights to a promising, though albeit, a challenging future. Young people believe it is possible. So should we.

I would like us to be able to think about the future and not see destruction [and] crisis, but rather see, based on our actions, a prosperous future where life is something fundamental and that leads the care of this house, the earth, above all things. I would like us to see a future where citizens value a plant as much as they do with money. I am faithful to believe in a utopia where no one throws a piece of paper, where no one wastes water and [where we] take care of the planet, a utopia where environmental leaders are considered heroes and non-incendiary and where [we], above all things, lead the love, respect and sustainability of society [that works] in favour of a future in peace with the planet.

Young person, 16, Armenia

ChildFund's View of the Problem

Fostering a child rights-based approach to climate and environmental action: principles to action

ChildFund Alliance members are responding to the climate crisis through our child rights lens. We listen to children, their communities, and the partners with whom we work, as well as what scientists and researchers tell us.

We recognize the most important way to have impact on the climate and environmental crisis is to support children and young people so they can build the concepts, capacity, capability, connections, and confidence to become transformation champions, so they can fulfill their right to act upon the issues they face.

Agency is not only a child's right but it is also critical to fighting despair, and to acting in response to the accelerating degradation of children's immediate environment.

As child rights supporters, we believe child participation is an integral right as well as a means to achieving better outcomes for children themselves and also for the world they live in. It's clear that children and young people are facing challenges not in a hypothetical future, but right now.

In addition to addressing threats to children and young people's capacity and agency, ChildFund Alliance members know that their protection is also key. The linkages between climate changes and environmental degradation on the levels of violence and abuse of children and young people are well-evidenced.⁶ Children and young people need protection to ensure safety and security throughout



Rosilla, age 11, collects river water due to ongoing scarcity in Kenya

increased disasters and extreme weather events, as well as the knock-on impact of increased conflicts, forced migration, and diminished livelihoods generated by environmental changes.

The cost to families' resilience of this impact is also profound – leading to increases in domestic violence, negative coping mechanisms (including child marriage, child labor and substance abuse), as well as forced migration and exploitation. We are responding by building on our shared experience in strengthening protection systems and combating violence to integrate the impact of climate change and environmental degradation on our work in the future.

We have characterized children and young people's experiences through three basic time perspectives on the future (see table on p. 7). The timeframe terms refer to the "climate" due to the many time-bound international policy commitments linked to climate change. However, as we improve our understanding

of the impact of the loss of biodiversity and increased environmental degradation, these scenarios may change radically and are not only linked to climate change and carbon levels.

Children and young people need new adaptive life skills for their immediate future, but also for their future livelihoods. Their location and home habitat, gender, disability, ethnicity, language, and many other vulnerability factors will also seriously impact their chances of a sustainable livelihood, and possibly reverse many of the developmental gains that their parents worked so hard to achieve. We recognize that the skills and mindsets of our own staff and organizations may also need support to adapt to the rapid changes we collectively face.

As the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) Committee summarizes in their Draft General Comment on Children's Rights and the Environment with a Special Focus on Climate Change (General Comment No. 26): "As children mature, they increasingly act as agents of change with the potential to contribute positively to their families, communities and countries.

Globally, children make significant contributions towards environmental sustainability and climate justice. They should have access to adequate environmental information and education focusing on respect for the natural environment, sustainable lifestyles and leading a responsible life in a free society."

Goal: Children and young people are transformation champions in addressing climate change and environmental issues as it affects their rights (local, national, and global levels)



Children and young people have a right to information about the issues to protect, prepare and act on them. *CRC Articles 13, 17, 28, 29, 30, 31*



Climate and environmental awareness and education to help build knowledge, skills, and behavior change to address the climate crisis.



Children and young people have a right to space, tools, resources, and networks to act upon that knowledge. They hold duty bearers to account to act on their future. *CRC Articles 12, 14, 15*



Meaningful child participation to take actions to address the issues in their immediate surroundings as well as with duty bearers.



Children and young people have a right to be prepared for a changed and unpredictable environment. *CRC Articles 6, 24, 27, 32*



Skills development and preparedness for immediate and future impacts of climate change and environmental degradation.

Climate now: in the next 5 years

This timeframe addresses the impact that young people already see in their lives such as droughts, wildfires, or extreme weather events (e.g., heatwaves, high winds, lightening, flooding, etc.). This could also include the current impact of waste and pollution on children's immediate environment.

Climate soon: 5-10 years

Children and young people and their communities face rapid changes in their near future including: displacement, challenges in maintaining access to basic services such as education, and planning for basic livelihoods, food and water access. They may also see rapid losses in biodiversity with impact on food, farming and diseases.⁷

Climate future: up to 30 years

Children and young people face massive changes to their experience of life as it is today (e.g., 2023). They must plan today for a radically different future. Future governments and individuals need to plan for climate changes in every aspect of life including reduced dependency on non-renewable energy, sustainable travel, more sustainable life and business practices, and different economies driven by new solutions and technologies. We also need to drastically enhance and protect biodiversity to transform environmental protection for long-term sustainability.

Priority 1: Addressing Children’s Right to Information

The challenge: As the CRC committee’s Draft comment notes: “Education is one of the cornerstones of a child rights-based approach to the environment”.

It continues: “Children highlighted that education is instrumental in protecting children’s rights and the environment and in increasing their awareness and preparedness for environmental damage, while the right to education is highly vulnerable to the impact of environmental harm, described by children as school closures and disruptions, dropouts from school, and destruction of schools and places to play.”⁸

Unfortunately, education systems globally show significant gaps in addressing environmental issues despite being both:

- a) a child right, and
- b) one of the best ways to help build knowledge, skills and behavior change to address the climate crisis and environmental degradation.

Children are hungry for information:
 “I would often hear from news about the intensifying climate crisis, and how all of us, especially children were at extremely high risk due to the impacts of climate change. At that time, I could not understand what climate change was or how to respond to it.” Laxmi, 12, India

A 2021 UNESCO study⁹ of over 46 countries’ curricula highlighted that: “45% of national education documents studied made little-to-no reference to environmental themes.”

In addition, the study found there was much greater focus on ‘environment’ than on ‘climate change’ or ‘biodiversity’, with 83% of the documents analyzed mentioning ‘environment’ at least once and 69% mentioning ‘sustainability’, whereas ‘climate change’ and ‘biodiversity’ were mentioned in only 47% and 19% of documents respectively.

Although there is evidence that children and youth are encouraged to participate in environmental activities

beyond formal education, there is little integration across disciplines.

Environmental education is not always consistent over the learning age cycle, with piecemeal attention at early childhood or primary level and limited attention at secondary level.

In addition, it also appears that indigenous learning is not always included or valued, at least at a systemic level. It is an ongoing challenge to link children and young people’s direct experience of environmental degradation to larger global climate and environmental issues as well as connecting them to contextually relevant information and evidence over time.¹⁰



Ferina, age 26, (foreground) leads a Youth Circle in Indonesia that has been successful in addressing local environmental issues, including water access

Programming examples

ChildFund Alliance members have been investing in young people's environmental education.

In Haiti, Groupement d'Action Francophone sur l'Environnement (a Haitian non-governmental organization and partner of Alliance member Un Enfant par la Main) has been working on environmental education with 59 partner schools for six years. The project seeks to build environmentally responsible behaviors in students as well as in their local community through a dynamic learning approach.

This includes developing children's knowledge and skills through implementation of their own micro projects and encouragement through discovery visits to other projects to gather new ideas.

Grow Green to Protect the (G2P) Bangladesh

In Barguna, Satkira and Shariatpur districts of coastal Bangladesh, ChildFund Alliance member Educo worked on the G2P project. It targeted 95 adolescents and youth participants (12-24 years) through youth groups to learn about the environment and climate change using a research-based approach. After learning about the issues (the effects of which they see daily in their region) the young people conducted research and risks mapping.

This included talking to farmers, local businesses, and government officials to learn about adaptation plans. They also organized a wide range of awareness-raising activities with family, schools, and at the community level, often incorporating drama.



Educo's Grow Green project is building agency among Bangladeshi youth

Several government agencies dealing with agriculture, fisheries, and livestock were engaged as well, and they oriented 200 farmers on new climate adapted technologies and livelihood activities, which led to the implementation of 18 demonstration plots.

Outcomes included increased awareness and identification of adaptation and mitigation measures to face increased salinity, flooding, and droughts. The project developed the confidence and agency of the young people to act on their climate learning.

A proposed follow up project will build on the initial pilot to increase skills, capacity, and connection of adolescents and youth to promote behavior change, increase advocacy to local authorities, and support their communities to develop climate smart and eco-friendly solutions to hazards they face.

Child-friendly, Climate-ready Schools project in India

The Child-friendly, Climate-ready Schools (CCS) project in Rajasthan, India supported by ChildFund India and Alliance member Barnfonden, took its School Safety initiative a step

further, linking the existing framework's¹¹ all-hazards, all-risks approach to protecting children and education with climate change awareness.

A multi-topic climate learning module pilot was developed using examples of climate change impacts and mitigation efforts relevant to the local area. It helped children, teachers, school management, and associated authorities in 20 communities to understand climate change issues and how they contribute to the increased frequency and intensity of disaster events, which directly affect school safety.

As a result, 20 child-led task forces completed climate risk and vulnerability assessments, which they incorporated into their school safety plans. The district-level Education Department issued an order for all schools in the area to include school safety in their development plans and stressed the need to be more climate responsive.

A simple example from the CCS project involved tree planting to improve shade in the school grounds in anticipation of increased heat stress in future years.

Priority 2: Advancing Children's Right to Take Action



The challenge: Children and young people know the world is in crisis; they also need to know that they can have a role in improving the world and have agency over their future.

Adults, in turn, need to listen and act. It is important for those actions to set clear goals and targets and that monitoring and accountability systems inform the implementation. Children and young people have been clear: they want to act¹² and they are deeply frustrated with adult and government hesitation.¹³

Children and young people have also identified multiple barriers to taking action, which include: access to governance structures; access and opportunity to spaces for protest;¹⁴ so called 'child or youth washing' (e.g., token participation where views are not really heard and responded to); as well as the challenges to get information, connect with other young activists and the essential personal confidence and belief that their actions will make a difference.¹⁵

If children and young people come from indigenous communities they find those

challenges increase,¹⁶ and barriers based on gender,¹⁷ ethnicity, disability and other multiple intersecting forms of discrimination only serve to distance them further from decision makers.

As well as changing climate and environmental outcomes, exercising rights to action are essential to combat the very real threat of eco-anxiety. As a study in *The Lancet* of 10,000 young people (16-25 years) in 11 countries noted, almost 60% of respondents felt "very" or "extremely" worried about climate change (mean score of 3.7 on a scale from 1 to 5 [SD 1.7]). More than 45% said their feelings on climate change negatively affected their daily lives.

As agencies focused on child protection, we understand the very real risks that depression and disillusionment can present for young people vulnerable to abuse and exploitation, and we take their mental health very seriously. Evidence also shows that acting on concerns can assist mental health.

As the *Lancet* study says: "Factors known to protect against mental health problems include psychosocial resources,

and coping skills, and agency to address and mitigate stressors. In the context of eco-anxiety, this protection would come in the form of having one's feelings and views heard, validated, respected, and acted upon, particularly by those in positions of power and upon whom we are dependent, accompanied by collective pro-environmental actions."

Children and young people can also be effective actors to influence climate and environmental policies and practices. From children and youth taking actions in their community to change attitudes and protect their environment, to campaigns, legal actions and high-profile interventions, researchers note that young people have been changing the dialogue on the climate and environmental crisis.¹⁸

Young people need and want to act, and a failure to recognize this is not only a failure of governments to meet child rights obligations, it's a risk and a waste of a resource that actively wishes to contribute to positive change.

Programming examples

Awa, age 20, is a member of a ChildFund-supported Youth Club in Senegal, which runs neighborhood cleanup and recycling programs



ChildFund Alliance members have a long history of working with children and young people to fulfill their rights to participate. We have looked at adapting successful methodologies to help children and young people address environmental issues specifically, alongside other issues they are passionate about. Some examples of this include:

Youth Voice Now – Indonesia

This youth empowerment project targeting 500 youth (15-24 years), in Sikka District, East Nusa Tenggara is overseen by ChildFund Indonesia and capitalizes on existing children and youth led networks. It adapts previously used capacity development methodologies to address environmental issues and uses online training tools and networking resources.

Young people from this initiative provided inputs into placards for the Stockholm 50+ and Gothenburg Book Fair events, and contributed feedback for the draft General Comment on Children's Rights and the Environment with a Special Focus on Climate Change (General Comment No. 26) through engagement with Barnfonden in Sweden.

#ClimateofChange consortium project

ChildFund Alliance member WeWorld has a history of supporting youth advocacy. This EU-funded consortium project is being implemented across 13 countries in Europe, coordinated by WeWorld, and

highlights the interest and engagement of young people to become better informed, to take action in raising awareness campaigning, and lobby governments to address climate issues.

In the WeWorld Index 2021,¹⁹ young people eloquently explain their challenges to understand the depth and complexity of environmental issues.

Bolivia Research

Alliance member EDUCO in Bolivia partnered with two local academic institutions to study the relationship between the environment, and the rights and well-being of children, adolescents and youth in urban areas (4 cities) in Bolivia.

The study targeted urban children and young people (ages 7-24), through mixed research methods including an online survey with 2,384 respondents and focus groups and interviews using a well-being framework to direct research questions.

Amongst a wealth of information, the research demonstrated the importance of taking a holistic view of environmental issues. It also highlighted the need to map out and understand what children and young people are concerned about in their immediate environment/habitat, and then linking that to wider environmental and climate issues.

It demonstrated that young children are very committed to environmental issues (slightly more than adolescents), although this could also be linked to the disillusionment expressed by adolescents and their preoccupation with their own immediate futures.

The recommendations from the research and the research framework could be applicable for other countries/contexts too. The research has already generated a pilot project in urban centers that includes capacity building, advocacy on waste management, and young people looking at future income generating opportunities from recycling waste.

Child-friendly Accountability

Lastly, the Child-friendly Accountability approach²⁰ developed by ChildFund Alliance has been successfully used to address violence against children and could easily be adapted to address more climate change and environmental degradation specific topics.

Priority 3: Supporting Children's Right to Be Prepared

The challenge: Through their work with communities and local partners, ChildFund Alliance members are very aware of the immediate and current impacts of climate change and ongoing environmental degradation.

However, considering the major changes children and young people face in their near future, we also need to provide them with the adaptive skills that will help them navigate those changes in their changing environment with future orientated sustainable jobs (across all sectors) and society.

The International Labour Organization (ILO) says regarding the future of work,²¹ "without decisive action we will be sleepwalking into a world that widens existing inequalities and uncertainties." The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) also highlight how tackling climate change and environmental degradation are critical to meeting 2030 aspirations.

Twelve of the 17 SDGs directly involve taking action on climate change – in addition to climate change having its own goal (SDG 13).²² There are also new intergovernmental treaties addressing biodiversity and protection of oceans, demonstrating growing concern over the intersection and impact of different environmental issues.

We know a child born now will be transitioning towards leaving home in the mid-2040s. What will the world look like then? To the extent we can plan, we need to

consider how to support children and young people as they adapt to climate change and environmental degradation: now, soon (5-10 years) and in a radically different environmental future (30 years +).

Depending on the gender of that child, the future looks even more complex as we know girls and young women face multiple threats triggered or exacerbated by environmental disasters. Those challenges can be even greater when the child has disabilities or is from an indigenous community. We need to identify skills and solutions that address gender-based discrimination and that do not increase harm.

We need to reduce the scale of existing climate- and environmental related impacts while accounting for the extent to which specific events such as storms, fires, floods or droughts will become more damaging in the next few years. We need to consider how we will live in a future with more climate-change induced movement of people²³ and potentially greater conflict, in addition to differences incurred by technological shifts.

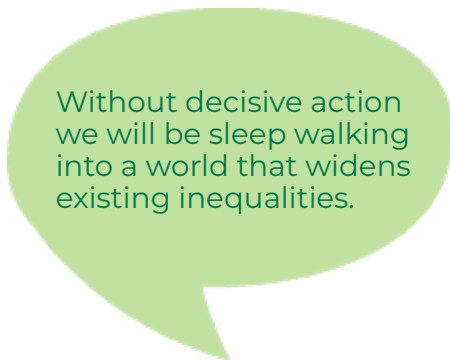
As environmental protection is taken seriously, we will see a need to change lifestyles and economies with actions to promote biodiversity.

We need to support global efforts to reduce carbon emissions to halt global warming and biodiversity loss, while still facilitating development improvements

and allowing young people to achieve their future dreams in a clean and safe environment.

In the following pages, we have outlined some of the ways children and young people can be prepared with these adaptive skills, and how they can put them to use for the immediate, medium, and long-term changes they face.

We believe that to adapt to the emerging reality of the climate and environmental crisis, children and young people need skills that allow for research, monitoring, and critical evaluation of data and results. They need skills to reflect, reject and innovate new practices, or reinvigorate indigenous ones.



The reality is that the situation is also evolving quickly, despite the decades of warnings that governments and the public have received. ChildFund Alliance members are also learning to adapt fast, and we have highlighted some of our current programs that are addressing these challenges.

We commit to working with children and young people, scientists and experts, and partners to learn more and to achieve more.

Skills for Climate Now: Programming Examples

ChildFund Alliance members have been involved in disaster risk reduction and preparedness for many years and it is an important entry point for engaging communities.

Communities are already seeing the impact on their environment of climate and environmental changes and are acting on the basis of their knowledge, experience, and access to resources. Making the link between immediate disaster effects and the longer-term impacts of climate change and environmental degradation is a particular skills gap that our teams in Ethiopia have been addressing.

Ethiopia: Climate Now Programming to End Child Labor

Recurrent droughts in the Oromia region in Ethiopia were identified as a cause of increased child labor. In fact, 45% of children in the targeted area were engaged in work. ChildFund Ethiopia, local partner DCFCO, and Barnfonden worked with community members on a solution using a multi-level approach involving children, their families, child protection services, and government. The solution involved education on climate change (and its impact on child labor as a result of household stress) across different levels – at school, through household visits, to religious leaders and elders, and to police, business, and government.

It also involved strengthening child protection services to identify climate-related trigger points that lead to increases in child labor. Being aware of these trigger points, and having response plans that kick-in when a disaster is imminent, are now actions that can significantly curb incidences of child labor, which are increased by climate stress.

In Ethiopia, rates of child labor increase during periods of climate stress



What children and young people need to address the climate and environmental issues of today

- ▷ Acquiring appropriate education and life skills to understand and reflect upon climate changes and environmental degradation.
- ▷ Skills to engage in improved disaster risk reduction and preparedness for children and young people so they can remain safe in their schools, homes, and communities.
- ▷ Skills and knowledge to improve their immediate natural environment, through initiatives such as tree planting, waste management, pollution management, improved biodiversity, soil conservation, water conservation, and air quality improvements.
- ▷ Knowledge, skills and behavior change so that children and young people are prepared by increasing their own agency as well as engaging in active participation and advocacy to duty bearers (within their family, community and country) to help them to mitigate and adapt to climate change, and to actively protect and improve their environment.

Skills for Climate Soon: Programming Examples

Youth Led Climate Action Pilot Program in India²⁴

Children Believe India worked to support 78 communities in Tamil Nadu, and 32 communities in Andhra Pradesh to: build youth leadership, influence youth towards a low-carbon-lifestyle and climate-resilience, and increase carbon-reduction through increased tree/forest-cover.

Five 'Oxygen Parks' were created with 1,500 trees selected, appropriate to the habitat. Land was allocated by the local government and maintenance was carefully considered for the parks' upkeep. All parks have geo-tags for the trees and are monitored for growth.

The project has been successful in stimulating interest from other local communities and schools about the importance of carbon capture, preservation of trees, and adaptation to a changing climate.

The youth have proven themselves as leaders with 220 youth champions connecting and inspiring 6,000 additional young people. Skills have been further developed to research and identify answers to frequently asked questions and share information digitally.

Initiatives such as these support young people to translate information into action and to start initiating projects that could provide dividends for years to come.



An aerial view of an Oxygen Park in Tamil Nadu, India

What children and young people need to adapt to climate change and environmental degradation in the near future

- ▷ Supporting young people to move to different or adapted work pathways that can include more technology-based roles and environmentally sustainable entrepreneurialism.
- ▷ Building leadership and engagement. Helping children and young people to collect and analyze information to make safe and wise decisions in their own lives, and to connect with decision-makers influencing the broader environment. This includes supporting the systems that typically provide information, such as formalized early warning systems to incorporate indigenous as well as scientific data; or to inform responses to child protection concerns.
- ▷ Identifying new livelihoods and opportunities based on protecting and improving environments and biodiversity.
- ▷ Promoting social and emotional learning and building a sense of resilience and optimism for the future.
- ▷ Educating on sexual and reproductive health and the importance of managing family size as measures to support mitigation (reducing carbon footprint) and resilience (less demand on resources).

Skills for Climate Future: Programming Examples

Climate of Change Project in Mozambique

ChildFund Alliance member WeWorld, in partnership with ICEI, Centro Terra Viva, and the National Volunteer Council developed a project that builds the skills of 300,000 youth, 50 government officials and 80 local civil society organizations.

The future-looking project will create an enabling environment for the sustainable management of natural resources and the preservation of the environment in Mozambique.

Through a strategic strengthening of key actors to develop the groundwork of awareness in

the population, as well as the capacities (and interactive spaces) to act, monitor, inform and influence government policy, a common 'environmental conscience' can be developed.

The project will develop the skills base of the youth population and their CSO networks to act and react to changes in their environment, particularly in the eight targeted coastal areas that are vulnerable to climate change and environmental degradation.

The project recognizes that to respond to the long-term future implications of climate and environment issues, the enabling environment for those responses needs to be developed.

What children and young people need for the longer-term to deal with the consequences of climate change and environmental degradation

- ▷ Ensuring all are prepared for the shifts in life: homes, schools, health facilities, and other infrastructure that will be needed for a different future (hotter, more volatile).
- ▷ Invest in education and systems development to support children and young people in adaptive skills, based on changes in information or the context of where and how they live and work in the future.
- ▷ Understanding economic system shifts that may be required as climate and technology influence our world, and understanding the need to protect and restore environments.
- ▷ Preparing for social and political shifts: increased migration, conflicts and protection problems, by ensuring people, systems and service providers recognize the future possibilities, and are prepared in advance to cope.
- ▷ Building towards a more environmentally aware and conscious world that lives within its limits and strives daily towards improvement, protection and greater care for nature.

Children and young people need to be supported as they build a world that is more environmentally-aware and able to respond to climate change challenges



Glossary

Activist	A rights activist is a person actively defending someone’s rights, e.g., rights of children, women, workers, migrants ²⁵ ; a climate activist is a person who actively campaigns to have issues of climate change recognized and addressed (Collins).
Agency	Agency is about the ability of the child to actively influence their environment
Biodiversity	Biodiversity or biological diversity is the variety and variability of life on Earth. Biodiversity is a measure of variation at the genetic, species, and ecosystem level.
Child rights lens	Using the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child as the legal and theoretical framework through which assessments and decisions are made.
Climate anxiety/ Eco-anxiety	Building towards a more environmentally aware and conscious world that lives within its limits and strives daily towards improvement, protection and greater care for nature.
Climate change (human-induced, accelerated or anthropogenic)	A change of climate which is attributed directly or indirectly to human activity that alters the composition of the global atmosphere and which is in addition to natural climate variability observed over comparable time periods. ²⁶
Climate change mitigation	Activities that reduce the risk of climate change. This primarily involves reducing greenhouse gas emissions, but also includes removing atmospheric carbon (e.g., ecosystem restoration including tree planting).
Climate crisis	Climate crisis is a term describing global warming and climate change, and their impacts. This term and the term climate emergency have been used to describe the threat of global warming to humanity and the planet, and to urge aggressive climate change mitigation. Wikipedia
Climate justice	Climate justice addresses the just division, fair sharing, and equitable distribution of the costs of adapting to, and reducing the risk of, climate change.
Disaster	Disaster ²⁷ can be defined as a serious disruption of the functioning of a community or a society at any scale due to hazardous events interacting with conditions of exposure, vulnerability and capacity, leading to one or more of the following: human, material, economic and environmental losses and impacts. ²⁸
Disaster risk reduction and preparedness	Disaster risk reduction (DRR) is the concept and practice of reducing disaster risks through systematic efforts to analyze and reduce the causal factors of disasters. Disaster risk reduction includes disciplines like disaster management, disaster mitigation and disaster preparedness, but DRR is also part of sustainable development. In order for development activities to be sustainable, they must also reduce disaster risk. (UNESCO)

Environmental degradation	The deterioration of the natural environment, including degradation of land, water, coastal and marine quality; the destruction of biodiversity; air, soil and water pollution and other negative impacts.
Environmental education	Environmental education refers to organized efforts to teach how natural environments function, and particularly, how human beings can manage behavior and ecosystems to live sustainably.
Environmental induced migration	“Environmental migrants are persons or groups of persons who, predominantly for reasons of sudden or progressive change in the environment that adversely affects their lives or living conditions, are obliged to leave their habitual homes, or choose to do so, either temporarily or permanently, and who move either within their country or abroad”. ²⁹
Environmental sustainability	Acting in a way that protects and enhances the natural environment while improving human well-being.
Indigenous learning (pedagogy)	Indigenous pedagogy is a teaching method that connects aboriginal stories as a guiding path toward knowledge, relying on the relationships between people and nature with broad, holistic interconnectedness. ³⁰
Maladaptation	Actions intended to reduce immediate climate change threats that inadvertently increase longer-term risk and vulnerability. Examples include building walls to protect against flooding that encourage more development and exposure to larger floods in future.
Rapid onset disaster	A rapid-onset disaster is a disaster that occurs rapidly without any warning and causes a destructive effect. The destruction caused by this type of disaster is so immediate that it causes major impacts. Earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, landslides, flash floods, etc.
Resilience: environmental	Resilience: The ability of a system, community or society exposed to hazards to resist, absorb, accommodate, adapt to, transform and recover from the effects of a hazard in a timely and efficient manner, including through the preservation and restoration of its essential basic structures and functions through risk management. Source: UNDRR
Resilience: social	The timely capacity of individuals and groups—family, community, country, and enterprise—to be more productive during times of stability and to adapt, reorganize, and grow in response to disruption.
Slow onset disaster	A slow-onset disaster is defined as one that emerges gradually over time. Slow-onset disasters could be associated with, e.g., drought, desertification, sea-level rise, epidemic disease.
Social and emotional learning	Social and emotional learning (SEL) is the process through which children and adults understand and manage emotions, set and achieve positive goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain positive relationships, and make responsible decisions.

Endnotes

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Samburu women in Kenya collect water from a new borehole constructed by ChildFund. Using a solar powered pump, this ensures year-round access to safe, clean water.

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