



**children in
a changing
climate**



www.childreninachangingclimate.org

Children in a changing climate

Securing children's influence on tackling climate change – from their communities to the UN

Children in a Changing Climate (CCC) is a global action-research, advocacy and learning programme that aims to secure children's influence in preventing and adapting to climate change at every level – from their families and communities to the United Nations climate change negotiations.

CCC links child-centred development, disaster risk reduction and approaches concerning adapting to and mitigation of climate change by bringing together leading research and development organizations. Each organization has a commitment to:

- share knowledge
- coordinate activities
- work with children as protagonists with a voice needing to be heard

Why is it crucial to consider children in a changing climate?

- Children in developing countries have contributed least to the causes of climate change but are the worst affected by it
 - children globally are being affected by climate shocks, particularly in drought, flood and cyclone-prone rural areas and urban slums
 - the prospects of increasing poverty, hunger, diseases and reduced access to education mean that children's futures are more uncertain than ever before
 - children's experiences of climate change and disasters are different to those of adults, yet this is rarely considered
- Children are effective communicators of risk and drivers of change in their communities
- Children's participation in climate change adaptation debates are limited and children's rights to adaptation assistance are poorly understood
- Investment in children's education about how to adapt to climate change is an investment for future generations



Children hold back mudslides: Children in El Salvador take the lead in tackling climate hazards

In El Salvador, where mudslides have killed thousands of people, destroying homes and livelihoods and where disease remains rife, youth groups are taking steps to minimise the worst effects of disasters.

Rampant deforestation and changes in climate have caused huge flooding during the hurricane season. Young people are forming groups and working with local government and community members to tackle the direct threats to life from floods and mudslides exacerbated by climate change.

Monica, 17, is a leading light of the youth group in her village of Las Grenadillas. She works with younger children, organising and teaching them how to reduce the risk of disaster in their village, which are vulnerable to mudslides during the rainy season. Children have been key to helping prevent the mudslides due to flooding by planting a spiky grass called vetiver on the slopes of hills. The plant's deep tangle of roots burrows metres into the ground, locking the soil into place and preventing further mudslides.

This work by children is making a generation aware of the link between climate change, their environment and the safety of their communities. This example shows that children are able to bring about change. What is needed is for children to be given greater spaces to do so.



What can be done: Children claiming a voice

Children's unique experiences of climate change impacts and their specific insights and priorities need to be recognised. Furthermore, there is a huge gap between what children know and understand and their opportunities to participate in policy debates. Children's voices on adaptation have been largely absent from United Nations climate change

negotiations. Yet, children have the right to be heard and to expect the successor to the Kyoto Protocol to meet their needs. They are key advocates in tackling climate change – after all it is their future, and it is their knowledge on the issues and their participation from an early age that will lead to a greener generation of decision makers.

CCC is helping children claim their right to a voice in international policy-making, building on the successful participation of children at the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) 13th Conference of Parties (COP13) in Bali in December 2007, continuing to and beyond COP15 in Copenhagen in 2009.

How it all began

Children in a Changing Climate has its foundations in collaborative action-research with children in the Philippines and El Salvador, where the participation and voice of children in policy making on disasters and climate change was investigated and supported. This initial research led to the conception of a more extensive research programme on children and climate change. Quickly recognising the importance and urgency of collaborative working to fill gaps in institutional knowledge, the research dimension expanded to three other areas: action, policy and learning.

How CCC is organised

Each area comprises a body of work and selection of projects that seek to understand and support children's engagement.

children in a changing climate research

ccc-research is leading a programme of innovative action-research. This will provide the evidence to enable practitioners, policy-makers and children themselves to take action to adapt to our changing climate. ccc-research is organised around five thematic areas:

- **Voice and Participation** investigates the opportunities for children and young people's voices to be heard in climate change policy discussions and how they can express their voices.
- **Perceptions and Knowledge** examines how children and young people's knowledge of climate change differs from older generations, what causes these differences and the implications this has for autonomous and top-down climate adaptation strategies.
- **Risk Communication** explores how children and young people perceive and communicate climate and disaster risk and how this influences their households and communities.
- **Rights and Governance** considers how children's rights to adaptation should be constituted and the implications of pursuing an advocacy and operational strategy for a 'rights-based' governance approach to adaptation.
- **Children's Futures** investigates what impact climate change will have on young people's employment and career choices, their likelihood to migrate, their health and their chances of becoming involved in conflicts over resources.

children in a changing climate **action**

ccc-action is creating opportunities for children to take action on climate change, both through organised initiatives and autonomous action. Child-centred development agencies are already engaging with children on climate adaptation.

ccc-action collates and documents child-led initiatives around the world to demonstrate to adults and decision-makers that children are not passive subjects of climate change policy-making. ccc-action supports communication, run by children for children, to discuss and debate climate change and stimulate further action.

children in a changing climate **policy**

ccc-policy is facilitating children's advocacy campaigns at local, national and international level, ensuring they are informed on the issues, understand how policy is decided, and have the necessary resources to engage. ccc-policy supports innovative ideas from children on communicating their views and influencing change amongst stakeholders from teachers and village elders to development aid donors.

ccc-policy is working to embed children's voices into major climate change policy forums leading up to Copenhagen in December 2009 and beyond.

children in a changing climate **learning**

ccc-learning is increasing children's understanding and knowledge about climate change science – focusing on adaptation and the processes involved in climate change policy negotiation. Innovative work includes global competitions, linking schemes and sharing personal testimonies from those worse affected.

ccc-learning is helping to foster change in behaviour and global citizenship in young people. ccc-learning provides a hub and a gateway for learning resources and activities to provide insight and inspire action in the global justice debate on preventing and adapting to climate change.

CCC guiding principles

1. Urgent attention, support and action is needed to address the issues faced by children worldwide as a result of increasing climate shocks and stresses.
2. Children are effective leaders of change. Opportunities for their learning, action and influence on climate change policy should be maximised.
3. Children in a Changing Climate is a multi-agency collaborative effort. All partners are committed to working together to avoid duplication and redundancy, and to present a coherent voice and strategy in a critical period for securing children's futures.



Seeking Programme Partners

The Children in a Changing Climate programme invites all interested agencies and children to get involved.

CCC offers an opportunity for people to think big and take action to strengthen children's role in tackling climate change and ensure that assistance for adaptation is delivered urgently and appropriately.

Levels of partnership can vary depending on the size, experience and resources of your agency. Options include:

- developing a new initiative under one of the programme areas,
- showcasing your existing relevant work through one of the web platforms,
- donating core funds to the programme or one of its programme areas.

For more information or to get involved please contact:

info@childreninachangingclimate.org

Programme partners include: ActionAid, Institute of Development Studies, National Children's Bureau, Plan International and Save the Children

children in a changing climate

www.childreninachangingclimate.org

