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## Engaging with children about the climate crisis and violence against children: A rights and resilience-based approach



## Impressum

This document was written by Kristen Hope and Weihui Wang (Terre des hommes). It was reviewed and improved by Ehsan Ul Islam Chowdhury, Isabel Zbinden, Lamine Doucoure, Leila Fasseaux, Lourdes Carrasco Colom, Maria Bray and Roy Tjan (Terre des hommes).

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The information and views in this document are the sole responsibility of Terre des hommes.

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## FORWARD BY TDH DIRECTOR GENERAL, BARBARA HINTERMANN



“The climate crisis is the greatest existential threat of our times, and threatens our mission to prevent and protect children from harm. We are convinced that together we are stronger, and that by acting together we will be more successful in fulfilling our common ambitions to catalyse positive changes for children worldwide.”

I am very concerned about the effects of global warming on children. In some regions in the world, like for example the Sahel, children’s lives are already tremendously impacted by armed conflicts. In addition to facing violence, the effects of climate change are causing droughts and floods that destroy their fields and food and can create malnutrition and affect their health. This also children being displaced, increasing the risk of being exposed to different forms of abuse and exploitation.

Children have a right to a healthy environment. Climate change negatively impacts all children. But children who face adversity, such as the millions of children that we as members of the global child rights community serve every year, are disproportionately affected.

In our everyday programming across the globe, we can plainly see that the kind of world that children are growing up in today is increasingly characterised by climate-induced harms: examples of working children in Burkina Faso facing the brunt of a global hunger crisis, children displaced by floods in south Asia, children deprived of liberty in harsh detention conditions suffering heatwaves across the Middle East. In particular, my colleagues working in Terre des hommes country offices across the globe witness every day the impact of climate change – or I should say Climate crisis – on children’s health and lives. That is why I believe we have to strongly link climate crisis with child protection. There is no *OR*, there is only *AND*: child protection *AND* environmental protection.

Meanwhile, the views and perspectives of children living on the frontlines of climate degradation are largely absent from public discourse : their daily struggles for survival often foreclose the possibility of engaging in climate activism.

At the same time, we are witnessing increasing amount of data and evidence becoming available to larger audiences, including children, about the climate crisis. Every day, more information comes to light about how climate change causes particular harm to children. For example, [a new publication](#) from the United Nations Special Representative to the Secretary General on Violence Against Children, with its beautifully illustrated [child-friendly version](#), highlights new knowledge and insights in this regard.

But what are the impacts on children of accessing this information, particularly for those who are already facing adversity? Is this new knowledge a burden that dampens children’s hopes for their future? Does it impact on their mental health, contributing to ‘eco-anxiety’ that is often discussed on social media platforms; itself another layer of worry in an era defined by compounding crises?

Children have a right to information, but adults also have a responsibility to seriously reflect on their ethical responsibilities around 'do no harm'.

Our discussions about these questions have led to this very publication. We have created this resource for adult practitioners to engage with children, with a focus on children who face adversity, on the topics of climate change and violence against children in a way that creates as a safe and supportive space for them to explore the topic and their emotions around the topic. It promotes both a rights-based and resilience-based approach to children's mental health and psychosocial well-being by encouraging them to formulate their key messages and recommendations to duty-bearers.

In line with our institutional values of participation and empowerment, this resource was created in consultation with children and young people to be a common good for the global child rights community.

Reflecting our institutional values of partnership and collaboration, our intention in creating this resource is that it can be owned and used by child protection actors across the world, especially from a wide range of civil society organisations operating in development and humanitarian contexts. This is why we are proud to welcome the support of ten endorsing organisations and coalitions from across the child-focused community of practice, and we welcome their efforts in disseminating this resource widely to practitioners in order to reach the greatest number of children possible.

The climate crisis is the greatest existential threat of our times, and threatens our mission to prevent and protect children from harm. We are convinced that together we are stronger, and that by acting together, we will be more successful in fulfilling our common ambitions to catalyse positive changes for children worldwide.

To reverse the effects of the climate crisis on children requires a strong commitment and concrete action from all of us, starting today.

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## Part I : Introduction

# 1. Background: Children, the climate crisis and the right to information in a context of eco-anxiety

Shifting weather patterns, rising sea levels, droughts and extreme climate-related phenomena affects the lives of billions of people. According to the [World Bank](#), climate change could push over 130 million people into poverty by 2030. [UNICEF estimates](#) that 1 billion children live in countries that are extreme high risk of climate-related events.

Children are claiming human rights for all, including rights enshrined in international instruments. Child human rights defenders and young environmental activists have recognised the dangers of environmental crises beyond climate and have been advocating for multilateral commitments to keep the rise in mean global temperature at 1.5 degrees Celsius. In order to protect the children most vulnerable to the devastation of environmental degradation now, and to ensure the intergenerational equity of future generations, a holistic and precautionary approach to the protection of a healthy environment is necessary.<sup>1</sup>

Increasing evidence is available about the ways in which climate change harms to children, and to specific groups of children in particular. According to Najat Maalla M'jid, the United Nations Special Representative of the Secretary General on Violence Against Children's (SRSV-VAC), in her [report to the 2022 General Assembly](#):

*“As the climate crisis overlaps with other crises, intersects with other vulnerabilities and exacerbates major risk factors, it is magnifying the threat of violence against children, including gender-based violence, child marriage, child labour, abduction, trafficking, sexual violence and recruitment into criminal, armed and/or violent extremist groups” (para 62).*

The SRSV-VAC's report highlights global and regional policy frameworks and normative standards that address different aspects of the climate crisis, as well as national responses from climate constitutionalism, education and awareness raising and mitigation strategies. It highlights examples of child- and youth-led activism to tackle the climate crisis. Nevertheless, the report does note that *“more needs to be done to make responses to the climate crisis child-sensitive.”* (para 72), and goes on to outline numerous recommendations for how child-centred, collaborative action between all stakeholders can take shape.

Alongside the standard UN format, the key contents of the report have been published in a colourful, illustrated [child-friendly version in multiple languages](#). As the second set of child-friendly versions of the SRSV-VAC's report to UN official bodies, these accessible materials seek to not only equip children with key information about issues that affect their lives, well-being, protection and fulfilment of their rights; they also constitute a compelling example of how United Nations officials can be more accountable to children about their work. In addition, they form a basis for engaging in more meaningful conversations with children about these issues and supporting children to be

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<sup>1</sup> Morgera, E., Sweeney, M. and Shields, S. 'SDG14 and Children's Human Rights.' One Ocean Hub, August 2022. <https://oneoceanhub.org/publications/sdg-14-and-childrens-human-rights/>

recognised as rights-holders and stakeholders in contributing to positive changes to end violence against children.

To complement the SRS-G-VAC's child-friendly report on the climate crisis and violence against children, Terre des hommes and partners have also developed a [short video](#) to support the dissemination of the information in the report to the widest audiences of children possible. The video was developed in close consultation with children and young people in order to ensure that the language was clear and understandable even to younger children, and that the narrative arc of the script achieved a balance between, on one hand, information about ways that the climate crisis is increasingly harming children and, on the other hand, information about actions taken by children and adults to prevent and respond to the climate emergency.

The development of accessible, child-friendly materials is squarely aligned with Article 17 of the [Convention on the Rights of the Child](#) (CRC) about the right to information.

Children's rights are indivisible, and all Articles of the convention are mutually reinforcing. The right to access information underpins other Articles of the Convention, including the right to be heard (Article 12), the right to freedom of expression (Article 13), the right to freedom of association and peaceful assembly (Article 15), and the right to the highest attainable standard of health (Article 24) and the right to education (Article 28). It is, therefore, of critical importance that adult duty-bearers find ways of informing children about the climate crisis in a way that is appropriate for their age, level of cognitive development and context.

Meanwhile, the proliferation of all types of information about the climate crisis, whether designated as 'child-friendly' or not, filters down to children across conventional and social media channels. Over a decade ago, the term 'eco-anxiety' began to be used to refer to "the distress caused by climate change where people are becoming anxious about their future".<sup>2</sup> Research suggests that children are more vulnerable to climate change's mental health effects, and that women and those in younger age groups were more distressed overall about climate change.

According to a [blog in the British Medical Journal](#), another study, deemed the "largest and most international" survey of climate anxiety in young people aged 16 to 25 to date, showed that "the psychological (emotional, cognitive, social, and functional) burdens of climate change are 'profoundly affecting huge numbers of these young people round the world.'"<sup>3</sup>

The literature suggests that concept of eco-anxiety is linked to a whole subset of emotions such as anger, fear, grief, guilt and hopelessness.

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<sup>2</sup> Coffey, Y., Bhullar, N., Durkin, J., Shahidul Islam, M., Usher, K. "Understanding Eco-anxiety: A Systematic Scoping Review of Current Literature and Identified Knowledge Gaps", *The Journal of Climate Change and Health*, Volume 3, 2021. Available [online here](#).

<sup>3</sup> Marks E, Hickman C, Pihkala P, et al. Young people's voices on climate anxiety, government betrayal and moral injury: a global phenomenon. <https://ssrn.com/abstract=3918955> or 10.2139/ssrn.3918955



- They feel that this topic may not be relevant to children's immediate concerns, such as their basic needs.
- They are worried that the information may cause them further distress and anxiety about their lives.
- They are concerned that it is unrealistic to assume that children who face adversity have options available to them to engage in climate-related activism.
- They doubt that families and communities are adequately informed about or receptive to initiatives focusing on preventing or responding to climate change, and therefore may not react positively to children raising these issues.
- They are working in contexts where the political situation or the prevailing social norms may make it unsafe for children to speak out and raise issues of concern with authority figures.

In order to respond to these concerns, this resource :

- 1) Presents an overview of children's rights and psychosocial resilience.
- 2) Suggests how adopting an approach that combines rights and resilience supports children to engage on the topic of the climate crisis and children.
- 3) Provides a concrete tool (workshop methodology) to put this approach into practice. The workshop has the following specific objectives:
  - a) Inform children about how climate change affects violence against children.
  - b) Explore children's reactions, feelings and understanding to the content of the report through the lens of their experience.
  - c) Reinforce children's well-being and psychosocial resilience by supporting children to formulate recommendations and calls to action.
  - d) Collate children's views and recommendations to share them with decision-makers, including through civil society reports and United Nations Treaty Bodies.
  - e) Where possible, for children who wish to further engage in climate activism, signpost them to relevant opportunities and resources.

The results of workshops can be used by practitioners for :

- **Programming:** To capture children's views and recommendations and integrate them into future activities. For example, insights for how to better include children in community-based climate mitigation activities.
- **For advocacy and communications at local, national or global level:** To elevate the voices of children who are often invisible in the climate change arena across global platforms. For example, local awareness-raising campaigns; or to gather children's views and perspectives to be channelled around international climate events (such as COP).

### 3. Principles and conceptual framework

#### a) A rights-based approach

In the past year alone, a number of international developments have located discussions about the climate crisis squarely within a human rights discourse. In July 2022, the United Nations General Assembly voted to recognise the human right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment. Meanwhile, since September 2021, the Committee on the Rights of the Child and civil society partners have been working on [General Comment 26 on Children’s Rights and the Environment with a Specific Focus on Climate Change](#). When it is published in 2023, General Comment 26 will provide authoritative guidance on how children’s rights are impacted by the environmental crisis and what governments must do to uphold these rights. These developments are critical to ensuring that Governments are held to account for their actions to prevent and address climate change and harmful impacts on children within the framework of international human rights law.

As articulated by UNICEF, the [climate crisis is a child rights crisis](#) because it undermines the full spectrum of rights outlined in the CRC, starting with the fundamental right life, survival and development (Article 6). As seen earlier in the introduction, there is growing evidence about how the climate emergency undermines children’s right to education (Article 26), children’s right to protection (Article 19) and the right to an adequate standard of living (Article 27).

Even though specific wording around climate change is not included in the Convention, it is important to note that Article 24 on the right of the child to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of health states :

*“2) States Parties shall pursue full implementation of this right and, in particular, shall take appropriate measures [...]*

*(c) To combat disease and malnutrition, including within the framework of primary health care, through, inter alia, the application of readily available technology and through the provision of adequate nutritious foods and clean drinking-water, **taking into consideration the dangers and risks of environmental pollution**”.*

Child human rights defenders and young environmental activists have drawn attention through protest, advocacy, and legal challenge to the further causes of environmental harm which prevent the fulfilment of children’s human rights, including at the ocean-climate nexus and increases in extreme weather events, rising sea temperatures, marine pollution and toxics, and the loss of biodiversity.

Critically, children’s historic role in speaking out against injustices brought on by the climate change should be understood as children claiming a number of rights enshrined in the CRC : the right to be heard (Article 12); the right to freedom of expression (Article 13); the right to freedom of association (Article 15).

Overall, adopting an explicit rights-based lens for thinking about children’s roles in relation to climate-related actions supports practitioners to move away from more paternalistic tendencies that may foreclose opportunities for children to engage in

Moreover, adopting a rights-based approach to engaging with children about climate change requires that adults strive to uphold the nine basic principles of child participation as outlined in [General Comment 12](#), namely that child participation should be : transparent and informative; voluntary; respectful; relevant; child-friendly; inclusive; supported by training; safe and sensitive to risk; and accountable.

## b) Defining ‘psychosocial resilience’

In this document, the concept of “resilience” is understood as psychosocial resilience, as defined in the 2020 Terre des hommes operational guidance : [Towards psychosocial resilience and well-being](#).

- **Psychosocial well-being**

Psychosocial well-being is understood as a state of positive balance that contributes to mental health and social wellness. Importantly, mental health is understood as not only the absence of mental disorders, but the combination and balance of different dimensions of well-being.

This is a holistic framing that encompasses physical, emotional, social, political, economic, cultural and spiritual dimensions. Psychosocial well-being is structured across five pillars of well-being that are applicable to individual, family and community spheres.

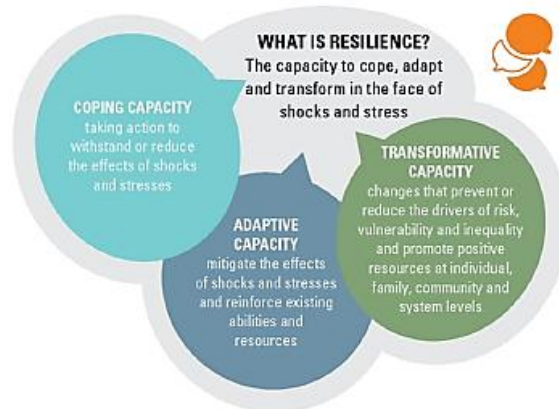
- Feeling safe, secure and stable;
- Feeling connected;
- Feeling worthy (Roles and identities);
- Feeling respected (Justice and rights);
- Feeling hopeful and finding meaning.



- **Resilience**

Resilience is defined as the ability of individuals, families, communities, organisations and institutions to face adversity and positively exist and interact within different political, social, economic and environmental contexts. In this understanding psychosocial resilience is comprised of three components :

- **The capacity to cope** : withstanding or reducing the effects of shocks and stresses.
- **The capacity to adapt** : adjusting to ongoing change and uncertainty; mitigating the effects of shocks and stresses and reinforce existing abilities and resources.
- **The capacity to transform** : preventing or reducing the drivers of vulnerability and inequality; and enhancing positive resources at individual, family, community and system levels.


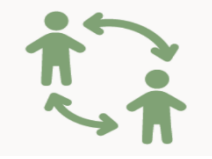





- **Psychosocial resilience**

Linking the concepts above together, psychosocial resilience articulates how the domains of mental health and psychosocial well-being intersect with resilience capacities (coping, adapting and transforming). Psychosocial resilience is considered a consequence of a dynamic set of abilities that an individual child, a family or a community express, within the scope of the circumstances that they find themselves in, which can be enabled and enhanced by strengthening the external protective factors that surround children, families and communities in their environment, as well as further developing their inner resources and strengths.

### c) Children’s psychosocial resilience in the face of eco-anxiety

The following table suggests how adopting a lens of psychosocial resilience can reinforce children’s well-being in relation to eco-anxiety; while also supporting them to cope, adapt and transform current and future shocks and stresses that they may face in the context of climate crisis.

Well-being pillars	Supporting children’s well-being and psychosocial resilience in engaging with climate crisis
<p><b>Feeling safe</b></p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Children access age-appropriate information.</li> <li>• Children are reassured that their basic needs are met with dignity.</li> <li>• Children are able to identify and analyse risks.</li> <li>• Children can practice techniques to manage fear and stress, identifying those that they can access in response to eco-anxiety.</li> <li>• By exploring positive and negative emotions in a non-judgmental environment, children have increased sense of calm or a decrease in overwhelming emotions, learning to manage eco-anxiety.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Feeling connected</b></p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Children receive information about services and opportunities for further action in relation to climate action.</li> <li>• Children have an increased sense of belonging to protective networks.</li> <li>• Peer-to-peer support reassures children that they have friends to turn to if they feel isolated, afraid or alone.</li> <li>• Increased meaningful protective networks empower children to collectively transform their contexts and communities.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Feeling worthy</b></p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Children perceive themselves as having meaningful roles within their family, peer group and community</li> <li>• Children have increased self esteem.</li> <li>• Children are agents of change in their local communities by influencing families and duty-bearers about their responsibilities to prevent and respond to the climate crisis.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Feeling respected</b></p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Children’s right to participate is upheld in both climate change prevention, mitigation and response (including humanitarian interventions)</li> <li>• Adults are accountable to children, including involving them in decision-making and feedback mechanisms</li> <li>• Children are more aware of mechanisms to seek accountability and access justice in the context of the climate crisis</li> </ul>
<p><b>Feeling hopeful</b></p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Children share a set of positive values through connecting with their peers, such as tolerance and friendship.</li> <li>• Children have a renewed sense of purpose that allows them to make sense of their lives</li> </ul>



## Part II : Facilitator preparation

# 1. Key information about the workshop

- **Workshop duration** : 2 hours (including a snack break)
- **Target number of participants** : 6-10 children per group
- **Age group of participants**: 10 to 18 children. Children should be separated based on appropriate developmental age. The recommended age groups are 10 to 13 and 14 to 18. Based on the context, separate gender groups (girls, boys, non-binary children) may be necessary and appropriate.
- **Targeting criteria**: When selecting the children for the workshop, it's important to think about how to put into practice the [nine basic principles of meaningful and ethical participation](#), as well as the concept of do no harm. Specifically :
  - Acknowledge that discussions about that climate crisis can cause anxiety and stress and that it is important to make sure children who take part to this workshop have support to process with the information shared, not just during but also after the workshop. This means reflecting on availability of follow-up through practitioner networks.
  - Give careful consideration about how the information could potentially exacerbate existing vulnerabilities. This means allowing each child to decide if the topic of climate change is of interest to him/her.
  - Consider how you are making the session as inclusive as possible, especially children with disabilities
  - Take into consideration gender balance by ensuring there is equal participation from girls, boys and non-binary children. In contexts where gender norms curtail some children's abilities to express themselves openly in front of others, then facilitators may wish to conduct separate sessions for girls, boys and non-binary children.
  - In displacement/refugee contexts, groups should consist of children from host communities, and displaced/returnee children. For groups that will take place inside camps/collective centres, it would not be possible to form mixed groups.
  - Language and ethnicity should be taken into consideration to ensure that groups of children are not left out. Always ensure that the activities will not exacerbate any existing community tensions and between groups of children.
  - In contexts where children are going to school or when targeting working children, take into consideration the timing of the workshop to ensure all children are able to attend the sessions if they chose.
- **Considerations for workshop locations**:
  - Easily accessible for all boys, girls and non-binary children, including children with disabilities
  - Allows for privacy
  - Perceived by different groups of children as a safe space
  - Access to gender segregated rooms and bathroom facilities when appropriate
  - This could be a community centre, child friendly space, and/or school.
  - Activities held online will require a different set of items to prepare in order to allow and ensure a child-friendly space.

- See resource : [Child Participation Guidelines for Online Discussions with Children](#) (Save the Children, 2021).

## 2. Workshop preparations

It will take approximately two to four hours to prepare for the workshop. This includes:

- **Reading the workshop template (Part III of this document).**
- **Reviewing the SRSGVAC's child-friendly report to the General Assembly and the animated video**

Review the report entitled '[A safe and health environment for and with all children](#)'. You can access the document in other languages (Arabic, French and Spanish) [here](#).

Then watch the animated [video here](#).

While reading and watching, make note of :

- Any specific information may be most sensitive to your specific target group.
- Any language or terminology issues linked to the local language that the workshop will be conducted in.
- Any modifications to the suggested wording in the workshop template based on the specific profile of your group (ex: age, disability etc).
- Your own feelings as a practitioner : if any of the content causes you to feel anxious or helpless, talk to a colleague. Self-care and seeking support are critical components to reinforcing children's psychosocial well-being.
- **Researching any local climate action groups in your community.**
- **If necessary, conducting a refresher of child participation techniques and methodologies**
  - [The Nine Basic Requirements for Meaningful and Ethical Children's Participation](#)
  - [Using focus group discussions with children and adolescents](#)
  - [Fun, safe, inclusive : A half-day training module on facilitation skills](#)
- **Ensuring that parents of child participants are informed that:**
  - The purpose of the workshop is to help us understand the views, opinions and feelings of children in regards to the climate crisis and how it harms children.
  - Participation of the children is strictly voluntary and they can withdraw at any time, including withdrawing the data collected before dissemination. Once workshop results are disseminated, it is difficult to withdraw content that has already been shared externally (especially online).
  - We invite them to provide their written informed consent for their children's participation and for any materials shared externally (ex : video recordings)

- Data and information collected will be kept in compliance with the organisation's data protection policy.
  - They will be contacted a few days in advance of the activity to remind them of the workshop.
- **Preparation beforehand**
    - Avoid wearing formal clothes when meeting with children.
    - Remember to turn your phone on silent mode so you won't be disturbed.
    - Familiarise yourself with the space and prepare a positive environment for the sessions.
    - Know that your role is to create an open and respectful environment in which the participants feel comfortable sharing.
    - Meet your co-facilitator in advance to divide out the activities and prepare how to support each other during the session.
    - Learn the content of the report and process it well.
    - If possible, try to have information about local networks or resources on how children can be more involved in climate change actions in their communities.
    - Ensure advanced coordination with the parents/guardians or other adult support needed by the children before, during, and after the workshop. Some children may not need an adult support but if a child has a disability or is the only child who was from a different community and not speaking the same language as the other children.
    - Ensure that adults providing support to the children understand their respective roles before, during, and after the workshop and that the space during the workshop is for children.
    - Ensure that the program is double-checked against the other activities and practices of children (e.g. snacks at 3PM might be a norm for most but for others, this might be a time for them to prepare for a prayer)
  - **Materials needed**
    - Device (tablet / mobile phone) to play the [animated video](#) and capture multimedia outputs (video recordings, photos etc).
    - Ensure you have the animation downloaded and ready in case there is no internet.
    - Printed or electronic copies of the [child-friendly summary](#) to distribute to participants (if relevant to the language of children in the group).
    - Pens, markers, pencils, drawing paper (A4), large flip-chart paper, multicolored post-it notes.
    - Resource materials (printed or online) on how children can be more involved if they request.
    - Refreshments for participants.

### 3. Workshop agenda

The table below presents the proposed agenda for the workshop.

Timing	Activity	Specific objective
<b>Introduction (25 mins)</b>		
10 mins	Icebreaker	For children to know each other, ease any anxiety and help them feel more comfortable
15 mins	Introduction and informed consent	Understand why they are taking part in the activity and what you plan to do with the information they provide. Obtain informed consent
<b>Activity 1 : Building trust (15 minutes)</b>		
15 mins	<b>My hopes, my worries, my strengths</b>	Children to explore feelings of being hopeful about the future, being worried about the future, and identifying positive coping mechanisms for worry.
<b>Activity 2 : Learning and reflecting together about climate change and violence against children (35 mins)</b>		
15 mins	Sharing of the report and animated video. Reflection on emotional reactions in small groups.	Understand how climate change harms children around the world. Explore emotional reactions to the content; looping back to coping mechanisms discussed previously.
20 mins	Group-reflection – what does this information mean to you and children in this community?	Reflect on the relevance/irrelevance of the finding to the their own lives Spark dialogue and reflections among participants.
<b>Snack break (10 mins)</b>		
<b>Activity 3 : Be the change you want to see! (40 mins)</b>		
20 mins	Self-reflection – Map of my hopes and changes	Reflect on the changes they wish to see for themselves and their peers
20 mins	Reporting back of self-reflection and move into group-reflection – What change do I want to see for me and my peers	Ensure that all participants have a voice in the group. Capture children’s views and perspectives in written or video format.
<b>Wrap up &amp; next steps Opportunities and Resources (5 mins)</b>		
5 mins	Summarise key points of discussion and provide initiatives in the country or online if requested	Inform children how their inputs can be used for future activities. Provide children with opportunities to be involved. Remind about self-care and seeking support.

## 4. Workshop modalities

- **Human resources**

The workshop will take place in the format of a **focus group discussion**.

The format of this workshop can be adaptable and flexible in order to accommodate and fit into existing activities planned with children. The workshop format will be face-to-face. It could potentially be adapted for virtual settings if needed.

The session should be conducted by two, trained child-focused practitioners:

- **A facilitator** : someone who has suitable experience and confidence in facilitating consultations with children, and who is skilled in communicating with children
- **A note-taker / observer** : to record content (what was said, by who) and process (such as who did most of the talking, or whether children became especially animated or angry or whether they had difficulty answering a question etc.).
  - The note-taker/observer should be introduced to the group, and their role explained. This is important so that children understand that they are not being 'marked' or assessed as this may make them feel unable to participate fully. It is helpful to explain that the note-taker/observer will not be participating and will not ask questions, although they may ask someone to repeat their answer if they did not understand.

- **Technical guidance for video recordings**

Activity 3 of the workshop ('Be the change you want to see!') offers participants the opportunity to record short videos of participants' recommendations and calls to action that can be disseminated on external channels for advocacy and communications purposes.

- It is critical that children are informed that video recordings are voluntary, and that they can also choose to record videos without revealing their identity (ex: wearing a mask; or recording their hands writing without showing their faces).
- The recordings should be short, one-2 sentences. Between 5-10 seconds each.
- Recordings can be made using a mobile device (tablet or smartphone). It is preferable to use an organisational device, not a personal device. If a personal device is the only device that is available, then any recordings made during the session should be promptly transferred to the organisation and subsequently deleted from the personal device.
- You can record using an existing application.
- Recordings should be made in portrait mode.
- Be mindful to reduce the background noise during the recording : try to turn off any fans, projectors, air-conditioning or heaters
- Before you start recording on your smartphone, mute the device or put it in airplane mode. You don't want to interrupt your recording with the incoming phone call
- The video recording should be in the participant's **mother tongue**

- **Please don't forget to provide a written translation in English or of the audio recording.**

## 5. Ethical considerations

- **Confidentiality**
  - Participants are informed that all information shared during the session will be treated confidentially.
  - Participants are informed that their views will be noted down anonymously. We will not provide any names or identifying information.
- **Informed consent and assent**
  - Participants are provided with information on their rights in a child-friendly language.
  - Participants and their parent/caregiver are informed about the purpose of the consultation.
  - Participants are given time to ask for any clarifications.
  - Participants are asked for their informed assent to participate.
  - Parent/caregiver/other supporting adult of participants have given their informed consent for the children to participate.
  - Participants and their parent/caregiver are informed that they can withdraw their consent and assent at any time without any negative consequences.
  - Participants are provided with information about where they can go if they seek additional support.
  - Data and information including videos collected will be kept for up to two years on secure servers.
- **Being non-judgemental**
  - Remember that information should be provided in non-authoritarian, non-judgmental and neutral ways.
  - You should never impose, express or show your personal feelings to participants.
- **Do no harm and provision of support**
  - We have the responsibility to ensure that no child or young person who takes part in these sessions experiences any harm because of their participation.
  - All the provisions of the organisation's safeguarding policies should be followed.
  - We should ensure that participants are provided with information about how they can follow-up if they have any specific requests for support that emerge after the consultation takes place.



## Part III : Workshop template

# 1. Introduction & informed consent

- **Icebreaker (10 minutes)**

The objective of an icebreaker is to build familiarity within the group, for participants to get to know one another and build trust.

- **Suggested activity:** Ask the children form a circle and to find out something interesting about the person next to them.

Get a spool of string or yarn. Have each of the participant share the interesting fact about their partner when they have the string in their possession. They then hold onto the string and throw the ball/spool to another person in the group so they can answer the same question. You eventually create a web of some sort. In the end, facilitator describes *how the web is important to the group in that we all play a part in creating the web, and that if one person was gone it would look different. Likewise, it is important that we all take part to make the group what it is, unique and special.*

If any participants have impaired vision or coordination the yarn can be rolled or carried to and from them.

- **Introduction and informed consent (15 minutes)**

- **Introduce the purpose of the workshop**

Welcome the children by greeting them and sit them on the same level as you. Don't let them stand or sit on the floor on their knees if you're sitting in a chair yourself.

Introduce yourself and clearly explain your membership in a child protection organization and what your function is.

**Suggested text:** *"Hello everyone! My name is X and my name is Y, we are child protection workers / social workers / teachers working for XX organisation that works to protect children. We know some of you already from our activities here in this community. Some of you who might not know me or my colleague will have already done other activities with other colleagues from our organisation. I X am the facilitator of this session and Y is the rapporteur, that is to say that it is s/he who takes notes on the session and the ideas that you share today.*

Please also explain the topic and purpose of the workshop and why you are conducting a workshop with children.

Then explain to the children that their participation is entirely voluntary. They can decide not to participate or decide to stop participating at any time during the workshop. Children should be reminded that there are no right or wrong answers and that we are here to listen to their opinions, view, worries and aspiration so as to ensure their voices are elevated and taken into consideration in policy and programmatic decisions. Lastly inform them about the duration of the session.

**Suggested text:** " By participating in this workshop today, we would like to gather your views and opinions, and if possible share them with people who are working to fight the climate crisis. We would like to take photos of your drawings and messages, and quote your words, and if you agree, even record some of your ideas on video, to send them leaders in your country or across the world. We would do this by sharing videos on the internet and social media like Facebook. But it's entirely for you to decide if you want to be recorded or not, and if you do, it's up to you how this happens. For example, if you wish, you can show your face. Or, if you don't want to, we can find a way to record you that doesn't show your face : for example, you could make a superhero mask! Or we could record your hands writing or drawing while you speak. It's up to you to decide what you are comfortable with. And you don't have to decide now, we will ask you later.

Now, before we start our activities, there are two very important pieces of information that I want to share with you.

First, participation in this activity is completely free, at no time should you feel compelled to participate. If some of you prefer not to participate now, we will not be sad or angry, it is up to everyone to decide if you want or not want to participate in this discussion. Just let us know. This rule applies to the entire duration of the workshop. Even if you agree to start this workshop with us today, you are free to stop participating at any time of the discussion, just let us know and you can leave the workshop or sit on the side of the room and observe until we are finished.

Secondly, even if you decide to participate, you are free to answer any questions you wish. You do not have to answer every question. All you have to do is tell us that you prefer not to answer. We will be keeping notes of what was said during the sessions without your names. Later we will be collecting soundbites from you too. If you are not comfortable with us taking soundbites from you, that is okay.

Is everything clear? Do you have any questions?

To let me know if you agree to participate in the workshop, can you do so by raising your hand? Those who would prefer not to participate, there are no problems, you can take your snacks and leave the workshop or sit on the side of the room and observe until we are done if the rest of the group agrees.

➤ **Inform participants about confidentiality and informed consent**

**Suggested text:** "We are here today to share some information with you about a topic that affects all of us on planet earth, which is the issue of climate change. Has anybody here ever heard the term 'climate change'? If so, can you raise your hand and share with the group what this means to you. [Pause for responses]"

Today, we are going to look together at a new report / video about how climate changes are harming children all over the world. The reason why we are sharing this information with you is because more and more information about climate change and how it hurts children is becoming available, some of you might have heard it on the radio, or some of you who use social media might also have heard about it too. It is something that is becoming more and more important to leaders around the world, because we all know that our planet is precious.

As some of you may have discussed with us before, all children have rights. Can you think of some rights that children have? [Pause for responses. If none come, mention some examples.]

Children's rights are written up in a document called the Convention on the Rights of the Child, and all governments around the world except one have signed this government. This means that decision-makers and all adults have a responsibility to make these rights real for children like you. It's true that for many children, these rights are not made real, but this is one of the reasons why organisations like ours do the work we do, to make sure that you access the rights that have been promised to you by your leaders.

A few of these rights are especially important when it comes to climate change : the right to a health environment, the right to receive information, the right to participate in decisions. For all these reasons, we think that it's important to think together about the challenges and problems that children face in their communities as a result of the changing climate, and how children can work together with adults to solve these problems.

We know that talking about this topic can be difficult, it can raise all different types of emotions. This is the same for adults as well. This is a safe space where nobody judges each other. Please know that if at any point in our session today you feel sad, or worried, you can take some time out. If you need, you can ask a friend or the facilitator to also take time out to make sure you have the support you need to stay here with us. Of course, if you don't want to continue the discussion, you can choose to sit out until the end, but we can't let you leave the room alone.

Do you have any questions ?

Our workshop will last about 2 hours but we have planned a small snack and toilet break in the middle of the workshop. "

## 2. Activity 1- My hopes, my worries, my strengths

**Suggested text:** "We're going to start with three short questions that you can discuss in small groups of two or three. You can choose who you would like to speak to. Please remember that answering questions is voluntary : you choose if you want to answer each question. If there is a question that you don't feel like answering for any reason, that is fine, you can just listen in to your peers.

**Q1 : What makes you feel hopeful for the future ?**

- Facilitator lets the small groups discuss amongst themselves for 2-3 minutes.

**Q2: What makes you feel worried about the future?**

- Facilitator lets the small groups discuss amongst themselves for 2-3 minutes.

**Q3: If you hear about a friend who feels worried about the future, what would you say to them to help them feel better?**

- Facilitator lets the small groups discuss amongst themselves for 2-3 minutes.
- Facilitator then invites children to share any of the points above with the wider group, specifically

**Facilitator sums up:** "As we have all just shared, we all have hopes for the future. The future is a bright place when we care about each other and when we work together to achieve common goals! At the same time, it's true that we do sometimes see or hear things that make us feel scared, sad or worried about the future. This is completely normal. Adults also feel sad, scared and worried too. The important thing is that whenever you feel these feelings, that you remember that there is always something you can do about them : you can talk to your friends, your family or other trusted adults. You can do things that make you feel better like [.....]facilitator gives 1-2 examples mentioned by the group].

## 3. Activity 2- Learning and reflecting together about the climate crisis and violence against children

**Suggested text:** "We are going to watch a short animation together to understand what climate change is and how it affects us.

[End of Animation]

*These problems are becoming more common and are affecting daily lives. All children are affected, and children are the least responsible*

**Suggested text:** *"First, let's take some time to think about and discuss together what we have just watched. Let's start back in your pairs or small groups for the first question :*

**Q4: How do you feel after watching that video?**

Facilitator lets the small groups discuss amongst themselves for 2-3 minutes. Facilitator then invites children to share their hopes and emotions with the wider group.

**Suggested text:** *"It is normal to feel worried sometimes, especially when learning new information about climate change and how this harms children. When we feel worry or scared, it's important to remember that there are always things you can do to help your worries be smaller : sharing your worries with friends or trusted adults, and focusing on the positive things like what you can change. There are also many things to be hopeful about, like the things that you spoke about at the beginning of this discussion. After watching that video, let's think about what we can do together to find solutions in our community!*

*The next question is to think about what this new information about climate change and children means to you and children here in this community. As we have just seen from the video, climate crisis is one of the major global challenges of our times. It is the long-term changes in the weather and temperature. Although the climate is always changing, this time it's different because human activities has driven temperatures to rise, causing changes in that are triggering problems like we saw in the video.*

**Q5: What are the challenges children in your community face?**

*Here are some paper and colouring pens. Please draw a child and write down a few challenges you think children in your communities face or think of a few points that children in your community would like to change. It is important that you only give information that you are comfortable sharing with the group.*

*Please only describe the information you are happy to share with the group here. When you are presenting later, we will have each problem on a separate sticky note.*

The children have 10 minutes to make their drawings, then one to two minutes each to share them with the group. Facilitators take notes on the information the children have shared in response to the questions asked, and ask the children for permission to take photos of the drawings to keep as workshop results (anonymously, without names). Facilitators to consider how the problems listed by the children are possibly related to the issue of climate change. When the climate crisis is combined with other existing factors like poverty, food insecurity, conflict and wars, and socio economic and humanitarian crisis, it can raise or worsen violence against children.

**Q6: Have children in here in the community or neighbouring communities experienced the effects of climate change? Let's take a look at our sticky notes, and think about how it may or may not be connected to the climate crisis or have been made worst because of the climate crisis?**

**TAKE A SNACK AND TOILET BREAK (10 min)**

## 4. Activity 3- Being the change I want to see!

**Suggested text:** "As we discussed in the first part of our session today, all children have the right to be protected from what may harm them. The Convention on the Rights of the Child is a document that almost every government in the world has signed to make promises to children and ensure that they can live fully and with dignity.

We have just talked about the different problems that you and the children in your community face linking to the climate crisis. Now we want to talk about solutions, and about how you can be active in supporting positive change alongside adults.

I would like you to think of how things could be different, possible solutions and what you want the adults in charge to hear. On the paper I have just given you, draw a picture of yourself in the middle and write/draw around you the following things :

**Q7: Who in your community has the responsibility to address how children are impacted by climate change in your community? \* Facilitator to consider if this question will cause harm and/or is appropriate for their context**

**Q8: Imagine you could speak to the leader (or community leaders) of your country: what message do you want to send them to encourage them to take action on climate change?**

**Q9: For younger children, consider using this instead / as well. Imagine you had a superpower to inspire others to fight climate change. What is that superpower? Describe your climate superhero!**

**Suggested text :** We would like your advice as a group. Would anyone like to share what they've drawn? Which of these hopes and solutions resonates with you? **After all the children who would like to share has finished.**

Now we would like you to think about, in your own words, **short answers of 1-2 sentences** to one of the following questions. You can choose the question that is most meaningful to you. Write them down on paper so you don't forget!

**Q10: What does 'the climate crisis' mean to you?**

**Q11: As a child / young person who is affected by the climate crisis, I would like adults to .....**

**Suggested text :** "Such brilliant ideas! Does anybody want to record a short video where you read out your words? Remember, these videos will be shared with the outside world, on the internet. There is no pressure to record a video."

If possible, you could have the participants record these videos themselves using

- Please see the technical notes on video recordings in Part II of this document.
- The video recording should be in the participant's mother tongue.
- Please don't forget to provide a written translation in English of the audio recording.

## 5. Wrap-up & next steps

**Suggested text:** “ Thank you all for your powerful messages! As we mentioned before, children have a right to be heard, and we will do our best to make sure that your messages get to people who have responsibilities to change things and make the world better for children.

*Before we end the session, I would like to hear from you if you like to be more involved in climate change?*

**Q12 : What can organisations like ours do to help you be more involved in this issue?**

*We recognise that this is an urgent issue and we all have a role to play. It is only by working in partnership with different organisations and actors that we can achieve change. We will take your ideas and, for those of you who agreed to have videos recorded, your videos to global forums and target global leaders. We want to elevate your voices to the global stage. We will take your suggestions and consider how we can integrate them into future programs.*

*If you like to be involved in local efforts, here are some ways you can be involved:*

- **Share the resources you prepared ahead of time.**
- If children speak English, French or Spanish and have access to a smart device, you can orient them towards this e-learning module : [The Right to Defend the Environment](#) (Child Rights Connect)

**Closing remarks :** *Thank you for participating in this workshop today. I hope you had a good time in this workshop.*

*Similar sessions are taking place with other children in different communities, and in the coming weeks we will gather all your contributions. Of course, any ideas and information you have shared will remain confidential and anonymous. In a few weeks, we hope to be able to share with you the results of the different workshops and present you the rest of this work. If you have any questions or ideas or concerns about what was discussed today, please contact xxxxxxxx via xxxxxx (phone /written message, in person.). Thank you again for the very precious time you have given us today!"*



## Part IV: Resources

Here are some further resources to support child participation in child rights advocacy in general, and specifically in relation to climate change.

[Children's Environmental Rights Initiative](#)

[My Planet, My Rights toolkit](#) (Child Rights Coalition Asia and Terre des hommes Germany)

[Child Human Rights Defenders E-learning Platform](#) (Child Rights Connect)

[The Right to Defend the Environment](#) E-Learning Module (Child Rights Connect)

[Y – Adapt](#) (ICRC)

[The Phoenix Consultation : Children's Right to a Healthy Environment](#) (IICRD)

[The Phoenix Manifesto : North American Consultation on Children's Right to Healthy Environment](#)

[Rainbow Healers Toolkit](#) (#CovidUnder19 and Terre des hommes Foundation)

[Child Participation Guidelines for Online Discussions with Children](#) (Save the Children)