

Children for Climate Action

Voices from Tanzania



Context

In light of the disproportionate impact of climate change on people and the planet, children are more vulnerable to climate and environmental shocks than adults for a number of reasons, including physical and physiological vulnerability. The UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, General Comment no. 26 on Children's Rights and the Environment with a Special Focus on Climate Change emphasizes the urgent need to address the adverse effects of environmental degradation, with a special focus on climate change, on the enjoyment of children's rights, and promotes a holistic understanding of children's rights as they apply to environmental protection. Globally, over a billion children currently face elevated climate risks, with 4.2 billion projected to do so in the next three decades. In Tanzania, children make half of the population. As the country's economic development depends highly on natural resources, climate change places children and their families at risk and impacts their future. Therefore, it is crucial to involve children and young people in climate action to raise awareness and address the link between climate change and children's rights.

Number of children globally, at risk of facing the negative impacts of climate change:



2023:
1 billion+
children



By 2053:
4.2 billion
children estimated

It is important for children and young people to develop the ability to adapt to a world affected by climate change. Education and improvement in green skills play a key role in helping them prepare for the future. UNICEF's report '[Time to Act: African Children in the Climate Change Spotlight](#)' highlights that climate projects often overlook children and young people as active participants and agents of change. Their active involvement is vital to ensure that their needs and rights shape the urgent actions taken to address climate change.

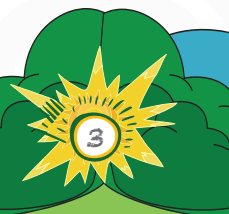




In July 2023, over 12,000 young people participated in a **U-Report survey**, gathering their views and experiences with climate change. In October 2023, UNICEF Tanzania, in collaboration with the Vice President's Office (VPO) and the Ministry of Community Development, Gender, Women and Special Groups (MOCDGWSG), organized Children for Climate Action consultations in three regions: Kigoma, Mbeya, Zanzibar, and a concluding workshop in Dar es Salaam. Over 150 children and young people shared their views on the impact of climate change. Based on this, and together with the insights from the U-Report survey, they then compiled actionable steps and solutions for climate adaptation for key decision-makers.

The Children for Climate Action consultations adopted a comprehensive and participatory approach, involving various stakeholders, such as U-Report, Femina Hip, and various schools and young people networks supported by UNICEF. The consultations were intentionally inclusive, representing diverse demographic profiles from Kigoma, Mbeya, and Zanzibar regions, including boys and girls, in-school and out-of-school children, and those with disabilities.

The in-person consultations, combined with the national view gained through the 12,000 U-Reporters, provided diversity for rich insights into children's concerns about the impact of climate change.

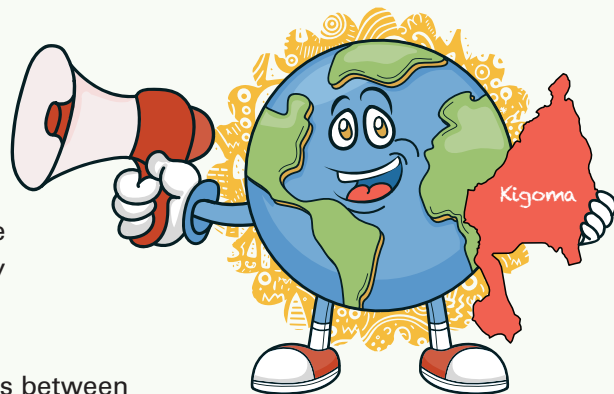


Children's perspectives on key issues

Climate change poses a significant threat to children's rights in Tanzania, affecting their survival, development, protection, and participation on decisions affecting their lives. The climate action consultations shed light on the challenges faced by children in Tanzania due to climate change.

Place: Kigoma

Concerns voiced by children and young people



Drought-prone locations, intense heat, and deforestation, intensify water scarcity



Water and land resource disputes between farmers and herders are worsened by drought



Most herders in rural areas are children, who can face verbal abuse, intimidation, and, in severe cases, physical abuse or kidnapping due to disputes over depleting natural resources



Improper waste disposal also contaminates water sources, raising the risk of waterborne diseases for children, particularly girls, who must travel long distances to fetch clean water



Place: Mbeya

Climate challenges confronted by children



There is heavy reliance on firewood and charcoal due to the lack of alternative energy sources



Excess use of firewood leading to deforestation and water scarcity, impacts children's living standards and health



In areas where alternative energy options exist, limited awareness and education, alongside economic constraints, hinder their adoption as most families cannot afford alternatives to firewood and charcoal on their daily living wages



Poor agricultural practices and waste dumping can contaminate and affect water sources, limiting access to safe and clean drinking water, affecting children's health and wellbeing



Place: Zanzibar

Issues faced by children and young people



They are struggling to comprehend the blue economy concept, which the World Bank defines as the 'sustainable use of ocean resources to benefit economies, livelihoods, and ocean ecosystem health'



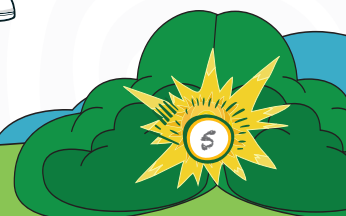
The knowledge gap hinders their access to essential information



Unpredictable heavy rainfall causes disruptive flooding, which disrupts education, endangers children by exposing them to waterborne diseases such as malaria, dengue fever, cholera, and worsens water scarcity



Deforestation, attributed to tree cutting for domestic and industrial use, compounds the problem of water scarcity, with communities relying on distant wells, increasing children's vulnerability to abuse whilst walking long distances to collect water



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Nationally, the U-Report survey highlighted a concern raised by almost 60 per cent of respondents not learning enough about the climate crisis in school, and 80 per cent seeing that learning about climate change is crucial for securing their future. While positively, 70 per cent believed their actions can impact climate policy in Tanzania.



Highlights from the U-Report Survey:

- 60% respondents raised concerns for not learning enough about climate crisis in school
- 80% respondents realized that learning about climate change is crucial to a secure future
- 70% respondents believed their actions can impact Tanzania's climate policy



Voices of children

Over 12,000 U-Reporters from across the country join hands with 150 children and young people from Kigoma, Mbeya, and Zanzibar to **call on the Government of Tanzania** to provide for a safer, sustainable place of living, grounded in their awareness of their rights under the CRC.



Children ASK for:

Over 12,000 U-Reporters from across the country join hands with 150 children and young people from Kigoma, Mbeya, and Zanzibar to **call on the Government of Tanzania** to provide for a safer, sustainable place of living, grounded in their awareness of their rights under the CRC.

“**The government should consider establishing various clubs in primary and secondary schools and in communities to promote environmental conservation.**”

- Agnes, 16, Mbeya

Climate education in schools: Children and young people seek practical climate change education as part of their education curriculum. They want to integrate topics on climate into arts-based learning, such as climate action songs, to raise daily awareness about environmental responsibility. This will enhance their understanding of climate challenges, encourage behavioural changes, and promote collective climate action.



Responsible: Ministry of Education Science and Technology, Tanzanian environmental agency, central government, local government authorities



CRC: Right to environmental education, right to education, right to access information



“Famous artists should compose songs that educate the public about the use of clean energy sources and encourage them to move away from energy sources like wood and charcoal.”

- Kefasi, 21,
Zanzibar

Engaging climate education campaigns: Children and young people call for engaging educational campaigns and mainstream media coverage on climate change. Leveraging popular culture mediums such as songs, TV programmes, cartoons, and digital campaigns, children want to raise awareness and understanding of climate issues. They specifically request support and engagement from influential people like famous musicians to compose songs on the impact of climate change.



Responsible: Ministry of Information, Ministry of Environment, media, performing artists, religious leaders



CRC: Right to be informed, right to education, right to protection

Support for children- and young people-led environmental conservation: Children and young people ask for more support and empowerment from local government authorities in community-level environmental engagements and youth-led activities. They aim to create awareness and build local understanding of climate change through activities like beach clean-ups and youth-led environmental clubs.



Responsible: Local government authorities, environmental organizations, local communities



CRC: Right to a safe environment, right to participate





Children seek support to scale their own ACTIONS of:

“My community should embrace responsible waste management by establishing proper waste disposal sites or strategically locate a landfill site away from where we play and study”

- Fadesi, 19, Mbeya

“Parents and guardians should encourage the use of pit latrines and should also learn about proper waste disposal.”

- Ester, 11, Mbeya

Engagement in environmental action and groups:

Children and young people actively engage in youth-led movements, advocating for climate action through activities like tree planting and beach cleaning. They involve their peers as climate action champions. These initiatives can be integrated into schools and communities with the support of local authorities, teachers, and international organizations. These actions promote community education and contribute to a cleaner, safer environment.



Responsible: Local government authorities, citizens, youth, environmental stakeholders, donors



CRC: Right to a clean environment

Stopping irresponsible littering: Children and young people take responsibility for maintaining clean and safe communities, pledging to refrain from littering and improper waste disposal. They act as advocates for responsible waste management, educating their communities on the importance of cleanliness.



Responsible: Communities, youth climate activists



CRC: Right to a clean and safe environment, right to play



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“ I think we need some help from the government to teach people about afforestation and reforestation. It's important to learn how to plant trees so we can reduce harm caused by climate change. ”

- Shalimila,
20, Kigoma

Conducting peer-to-peer environmental awareness building: Children and young people want to bridge the education gap by sharing their knowledge about climate change within their communities. They encourage their peers to become advocates for positive social change in climate action.



Responsible: Youth, children, parents and guardians, teachers and educators



CRC: Right to access information





Children ADVOCATE for the Government, private sector and donors to:

“The government should limit industries on the amount of waste that is disposed in the environment, especially in water.”

- Joyce, 14, Kigoma

Strengthen environmental protection laws: Children and young people urge the Government to enforce legislation that safeguards Tanzania’s natural resources and environment. This includes promoting sustainable agricultural practices and ensuring clean food and water sources. Halting illegal and hazardous waste dumping and promoting environmentally-friendly materials can create a cleaner and safer environment.



Responsible: Government



CRC: Right to a clean environment, right to health

Combat illegal ocean fishing: Children and young people call for an end to illegal fishing practices, such as dynamite fishing, to preserve marine ecosystems and biodiversity. They understand the importance of protecting nature and future livelihoods.



Responsible: Fishermen, Ministry of Fisheries



CRC: Right to health

Regulate tree cutting and promote tree planting: Children and young people request that tree cutting be minimized, with tree planting initiatives to replace any felled trees. This sustainable approach supports environmental balance, particularly in rural areas.



Responsible: Government



CRC: Right to an adequate standard of living



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“Subsidies for renewable energy, like gas, solar, and electricity, can make clean energy more affordable and accessible, benefiting all citizens and reducing deforestation.”

- Obedi, 21,
Zanzibar

Empower rural communities with clean energy: Children and young people emphasize the need to educate rural areas about cleaner and affordable energy sources. This would reduce the health risks and educational disruptions children face while collecting firewood.



Responsible: Government, environmental organizations, donors



CRC: Right to live, learn, and play

Improve rural water supply: Children and young people call for shorter distances when fetching clean water to protect them from physical abuse and harassment.



Responsible: Government, donors



CRC: Right to be protected

Build climate-resilient infrastructure: Children and young people stress the importance of planning climate-resilient infrastructure in major towns and cities. This includes schools, hospitals, and vital community places to ensure citizens' health and wellbeing amid climate change.



Responsible: Government, donors, construction companies, investors



CRC: Right to education, right to health



“ In Kigoma there is a lot of ongoing construction of roads and buildings. The government should make sure all of them are climate friendly which means checking where they get their materials from like wood, soil, water. ”

- Vicky,
19, Kigoma

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Responsible: Government, environmental organizations, donors



CRC: Right to live, learn, and play

Reduce harmful chemicals in agriculture: Children and young people request the restriction of harmful chemicals in farming to create safer play environments and protect natural life and ecosystems. Encouraging the use of natural products like biodegradable waste as fertilizers is essential.



Responsible: Farmers, Ministry of Agriculture, local government authorities



CRC: Right to play, right to health



Monitor and regulate water and marine pollution:

Children and young people passionately ask the Government to hold corporations accountable for dumping hazardous waste in water sources, impacting livelihoods, natural life, and ecosystems. This regulation ensures clean water and food supplies.



Responsible: Central government, Tanzanian environmental agency (NEMC)



CRC: Right to a clean environment, right to adequate nutrition

Introduce efficient waste management and processing:

Children and young people advocate for improved waste management education and action. They emphasize the need for efficient waste disposal and separation systems, and they promote investment in waste processing industries to reduce disease spread and ensure sustainable waste management.



Responsible: Government, private sector, parents/guardians, communities



CRC: Right to a clean environment, right to health, right to play



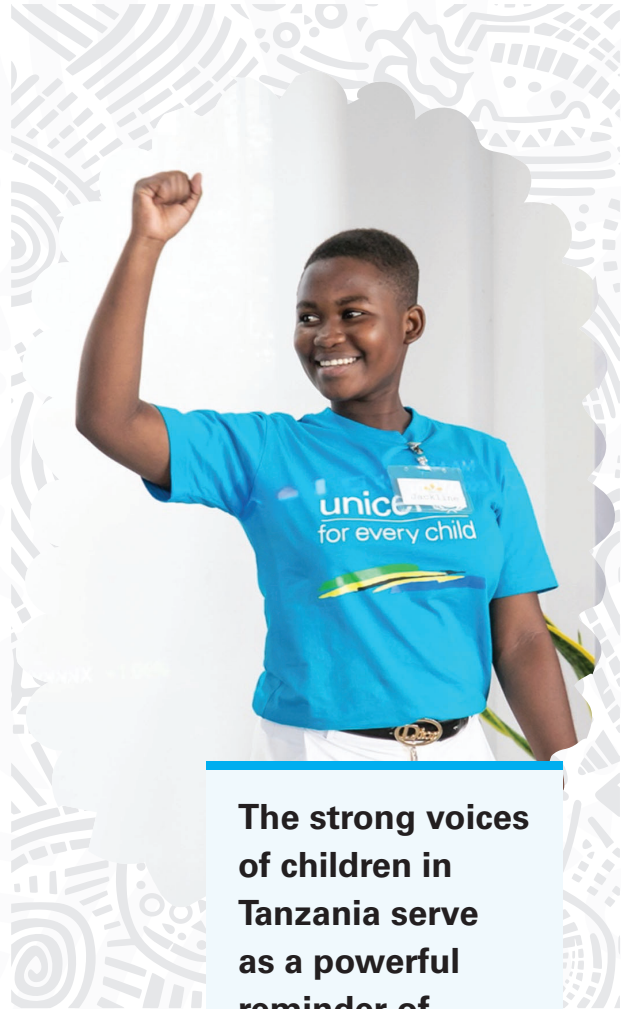
Conclusion

Climate change poses challenges to children's rights in Tanzania, impacting education, health, safety, and economic stability. A comprehensive response is required, encompassing climate education, improved water and sanitation infrastructure, sustainable resource management, and community support for climate adaptation – all crucial requests from Tanzania's children. These measures are essential to mitigate the effects of climate change and secure a future that aligns with the CRC-protected rights of Tanzanian children. They call on us to listen and act when children speak.

Through their insightful Asks, Actions, and Advocacy, the climate champions articulate a compelling vision for a better Tanzania.

Ahead of COP28¹, the key asks and recommendations will be presented by the children to decision-makers during World Children's Day which will be commemorated with the theme: **"Children for Climate Action: Building a Resilient Tomorrow"** emphasizing the vital role of children and young people as active agents in climate action.

In addition to advocating for the issues affecting children and young people and their solutions on climate action to be included in the Tanzania position paper for COP28, children who were part of the consultations, will join the Tanzania COP28 National Delegation with support from UNICEF. They will take part in the Youth Day at the conference and other sessions to share the voices of children and young people they represent.



The strong voices of children in Tanzania serve as a powerful reminder of our shared responsibility to uphold the rights of our children, safeguard their future, and ensure their well-being in Tanzania.

¹The 28th United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, Conference of the Parties, to be held from 30 November until 12 December 2023, in Dubai, United Arab Emirates



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This report was compiled on behalf of the children and young people who participated
in the U-Report survey and the Climate Action Consultations

