

April 2023

**Youth
Manifesto:
Action on
Climate Change
and Education
in Nigeria**



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The content of our youth manifesto is based on inputs from 2,168 primary and secondary school-aged students in both formal and non-formal education and 289 young people from across Nigeria. Inputs were collected via a survey designed with youth climate activists and administered by UNICEF in March 2023. The content of the manifesto also captures the responses of over 47,000 young people from across Nigeria to a U-Report poll on climate change and education administered in November 2022: <https://nigeria.ureport.in/opinion/6103/>.

This manifesto is published by UNICEF on behalf of the young people of Nigeria, with support from United Nations Nigeria, UNIC, UNESCO and UNDP.



INTRODUCTION

It is our human right to learn.

It is our human right to be healthy, safe and protected, to grow and thrive.

But climate change is increasingly preventing the realization of our rights.

Our environment is growing harsher, hotter, dryer and less safe. Rainfall patterns are shifting and the harmattan is worsening. The risks of natural disasters, flooding, desertification, pollution, poor air quality, the rising costs of living and food insecurity are becoming always more familiar.






Child labor is increasing due to climate variability.

Nigerian farmers and pastoralists are fighting over the rapidly shrinking areas on which to live, grow food and graze their animals.

Sometimes our movement is restricted. Other times, we are forced to flee.

We are losing our property and our livelihoods. Our harmony with nature and with one another is at risk.

A photograph of a flooded residential area. In the foreground, a person is wading through deep water. In the background, there are several houses with corrugated metal roofs and concrete walls. The sky is overcast with grey clouds. Two teal speech bubbles with white outlines are overlaid on the image, containing text.

**But we are the young
people of Nigeria, and
we will not stand by and
let climate change, and
collective inaction, steal
our hopes and our
dreams.**

We are the future of Nigeria. And this is our manifesto.

FULFILLING OUR RIGHT TO EDUCATION

Millions of children in Nigeria are not going to school. Poverty, exclusion and insecurity are just some of the reasons for this. Climate change already is and will continue to worsen these factors.

For those who are in school, climate change is making school buildings unreachable and classrooms unsafe.

This is directly limiting our ability to learn. Without an education, our future, our health and well-being, and our opportunities to work and contribute to our families and communities are all at risk.





WHAT WE WANT

We want to live our childhood and youth free of the worry that climate change will impact the realization of our rights or fulfilment of our basic needs.

We want a fair chance to thrive now and in our future.

We want to go to school and learn in classrooms and centers which are safe from the impacts of climate change.

We want to be able to continue learning, even if we are not able to go to school.

WHAT WE DEMAND

We demand access to education in a safe environment. We call on government at all levels to establish standards for school infrastructure that is resilient to the impacts of climate change.

We call on our leaders at the local, state and federal levels to keep us, our teachers, our headteachers, our mallams and all members of our education communities safe by taking steps now to prepare for and respond to disasters.

We stress that it is essential to take specific steps to support vulnerable individuals and communities to safely access education at all times, including when the impacts of climate change are most evident.

We call for swift, appropriate, and equitable responses when a disaster affects our communities and our schools. We demand that access to our sites of learning is restored immediately and that learning continues.

And we demand that the public and private sectors take collective action needed to curb climate change, restore our ecosystems and our ecological balance and to prioritize education. No other generation should have to fight for access to essential services.

LEARNING FOR POSITIVE CLIMATE ACTION

The education sector remains an under-utilized catalyst for positive change in our country and around the world.

There are large gaps between what we learn in formal schools and non-formal education centers and the knowledge and skills we need to lead our country to a more sustainable and life-sustaining future.

Climate change content has been added to the curriculum, yet many of us have rarely or never learned about it.





WHAT WE WANT

We want education to create awareness of climate and environmental change, sensitizing young people and empowering us to join hands to do the same in our communities. We want to learn about the climate, the environment and how to protect it.

It is essential that our education teaches us about our human rights and prepares us to take care of our health, each other and our planet. We must protect biodiversity, regenerate our ecosystems and rethink our patterns of production and consumption.

Education must teach us the knowledge and skills that we need to lead our society's decentralized, just transition to a green economy. We must abolish our dependence on fossil fuels; become resource efficient; and equitably support and include workers, girls and women, vulnerable, and local and indigenous communities.

WHAT WE DEMAND

We call on decision-makers to ensure that every child and young person in Nigeria, regardless of the educational setting or educational level, participates in comprehensive climate change and environmental education.

We demand multiple (including digital) ways to access this information and the skills needed to do so.

We call on the Federal and State Ministries of Education, its departments and agencies to ensure that teachers, headteachers, mallams, and others who facilitate our learning are themselves educated on the environment and climate so that they are empowered as positive role models and change-makers.

We need to develop skills in agriculture, environmental justice, science, research, technology, politics and decision-making to enable us to take action in our communities, contribute to nature-based solutions, work and shape the future we want.

We urge local, state and federal actors to foster partnerships among non-state actors, including young entrepreneurs, activists, local and small-scale farmers, scientists and others who are taking effective action against climate change. We call for learning networks to support our education, skills development and training through internships, exchanges and capacity-building.

We demand that our education about climate change and the environment is gender-inclusive and represents, protects and honors local and indigenous people's rights and knowledge. This is our cultural heritage and our environmental responsibility.

PARTICIPATION, DECISION- MAKING AND FUNDING

The education sector must take swift action to address these demands.

We must know whether their efforts are having a positive impact on our schools and communities.

No decision should be made which affects our future without engaging us as primary stakeholders and partners in the process.





WHAT WE WANT

We want to see tangibly that federal and state ministries and their departments and agencies are giving these issues the attention and resources that they deserve.

We want our representatives to engage us as they make decisions about our education and our environment.

We want our government officials to follow through on their commitments to ensure that we receive an education and that this education enables us to protect our planet. This means that all such commitments must be accompanied by concrete plans to achieve them.

WHAT WE DEMAND

We call for the training of policymakers on how climate change affects education and how education can be used to address it.

We call for education laws and policies to address climate change and for climate change laws and policies to address education.

We demand government representatives and institutions to involve young people in all decision-making on climate change and education.

We ask our government, international organizations, and public and private financial institutions to urgently dedicate funds to address climate change in the education sector and prevent further catastrophe.

We call on government ministries, departments and agencies to monitor progress and make the results public so that we can hold them accountable.

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