

# CLIMATE CHANGE, CHILDREN AND YOUTH

**Local Connections  
to Global Issues**

Teacher Resource Guide  
Grades 9 to 12

unicef   
canada



## COVER PHOTOS

© UNICEF/PAKA2010-00472/Ramoned

### **Pakistan, 2010**

A woman holds on to a boy and carries a baby as they cross a flooded road in Baseera, in the flood-affected province of Punjab.

© UNICEF/NYHQ2012-0191/Asselin

### **Niger, 2012**

Tsahara Saidou holds her two-year-old son, Moctar, who is suffering from severe acute malnutrition, as they return to their home village of Garin Kouroun, Maradi Region. They have just visited the UNICEF-supported health centre in the village of Sarkin Yamma Saboua, approximately six kilometres from Garin Kouroun, in Madarounfa Department.

© UNICEF/NYHQ2012-1795/Sokol

### **Mongolia, 2012**

A girl fetches water from a frozen stream in the 'soum' (district) of Renchinlumbe, in the northern Khövsgöl 'Aimag' (province).

© UNICEF/ZIMA2011-00011/Pirozzi

### **Zimbabwe, 2011**

Children watering bean plants in a nutrition garden at Shirichena Primary School, Mhondoro district about 60km south of Harare. The school is supported by UNICEF through the Child Friendly Schools Initiative.

# CONTENTS

|   |     |
|---|-----|
| <b>INTRODUCTION</b> .....   | 5   |
| UNICEF Canada’s GLOBAL CLASSROOM PROGRAM .....  | 7   |
| UNITED NATIONS CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD .....  | 8   |
| UNICEF Canada TACKLES CLIMATE CHANGE .....  | 9   |
| RIGHTS RESPECTING SCHOOLS .....   | 10  |
| CANADA’S RESPONSIBILITY TO DEVELOPING NATIONS.....  | 10  |
| CRITICAL HOPE: AN APPROACH TO TEACHING ABOUT CLIMATE CHANGE .....                                 | 11  |
| CLIMATE CHANGE CONNECTIONS .....  | 13  |
| YOUTH PARTICIPATORY EDUCATION .....   | 14  |
| GUIDE OVERVIEW.....   | 15  |
| EDUCATORS: LET’S GO GREEN! .....  | 17  |
| <b>THEMES</b> .....   | 18  |
| CONNECTING THE THEMES.....  | 19  |
| FOOD SECURITY.....  | 31  |
| HEALTH.....   | 48  |
| NATURAL DISASTERS .....   | 60  |
| NATURAL ENVIRONMENTS .....  | 73  |
| WATER .....   | 89  |
| ENERGY.....   | 104 |
| Further Resources .....   | 129 |
| Appendix A: Glossary .....  | 132 |
| Appendix B: The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child in Child-Friendly Language.....          | 135 |
| Appendix C: Assessment: Culminating Task Rubric .....   | 137 |
| Appendix D: How Climate Change affects Children .....   | 138 |
| Appendix E: Reflect and Act Student Handout .....   | 139 |
| Appendix F: Millennium Development Goals .....  | 140 |
| Appendix G: Curriculum Links for British Columbia .....   | 142 |
| Appendix H: Curriculum Links for Ontario .....  | 146 |
| Appendix I: Curriculum Links for Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Quebec and Atlantic Canada..... | 156 |

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This guide was developed and revised in collaboration with teachers across Canada, UNICEF Canada, Skye Consulting, Eco-Integration, and GreenLearning Canada. The UNICEF UK's Climate Change Report 2008: *Our climate, Our children, Our Responsibility* provided the inspiration for this guide. The 2013 revision has been inspired and influenced by the UNICEF guide: Education Kit on Climate Change and Child Rights (2011).

UNICEF Canada would like to give particular thanks to Fiona Zawadzki and Diana Klein (<http://www.greenbricks.ca>), for their development of this resource. They work with British Columbia youth and teachers, exploring sustainable land use and development through curriculum-linked outreach programs.

UNICEF Canada would like to sincerely thank the many teachers and interns who took the time to review this resource and provide us with comments that have informed our writing and revisions. They have provided invaluable comments, suggestions, links to amazing resources and videos online, and in many cases created new activities for this guide. We appreciate their knowledge and commitment to exploring these issues with their students.

## Teacher review committee, first edition

- Bogna Haddad (Ontario Catholic District School Board/Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation Science Subject Council Co-Chair);
- Jennifer Mahon (School District 5, Southeast Kootenay);
- David Weightman (Peel District School Board);
- Demetra Kotsalis (School District No. 40, New Westminster);
- the team at Projecting Views of Youth (former UNICEF Junior 8 team)

## Teacher review committee, second edition

- Julia Malcolm, Branksome Hall;
- Jennifer Mahon, School District 5, Southeast Kootenay;
- [Fiona Zawadzki, Skye Consulting](#);
- Keren Bromberg, Toronto Region Conservation Authority;
- Jen Budden, UNICEF Canada Rights Respecting Schools Intern;
- Jessica Loughridge, University of Toronto, Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (UNICEF Intern)
- Samina Rehmani, Agincourt Collegiate/Toronto;
- Sylvia Welke, Ottawa Carleton-District School Board;
- Trevor Rodie, Peel District School Board;
- Jessica Loughridge, University of Toronto/OISE;

A special thanks goes to Gordon Harrison and Stephen MacKinnon at GreenLearning Canada, for providing the amazing online platform on which the latest version of this resource was piloted and reviewed: COOL 2.0 (<http://cool.greenlearning.ca/>). GreenLearning Canada is a non-profit organization with the mission to create educational resources and experiences that empower young Canadians to effect environmental and social change. This resource is available on the GreenLearning site/COOL 2.0 and also on the UNICEF site at [globalclassroom.unicef.ca](http://globalclassroom.unicef.ca)

# INTRODUCTION

Thank you for inviting UNICEF Canada into your classroom. This guide has been created to support secondary school educators in their efforts to work with youth to take action on climate change. Through the thought-provoking activities contained here, students will have the opportunity to nurture their compassion and discover how climate change is affecting children around the world, especially children in developing countries. We aim to provide you with tools that will support your students in their efforts to affect meaningful and lasting change, and inspire them to take action at a local level.

Educators can provide youth with the knowledge of the issues facing their future, the tools to explore solutions, and a sense of awareness that they have the capacity to make a difference. The goal of this guide is to inspire both teachers and students to connect local issues to global concerns and develop the attitudes needed to change our world for the better. It is essential that children and young people have a voice, and are given the opportunity and environment in which they can work to effect change.

Here's what educators are saying about this guide:

"This guide will help teachers reach the goal of making our students educated, global citizens."  
(Jennifer Mahon)

"This guide is a key resource for any social action-oriented educator." (Bogna Haddad)

"It is evident that the preparation of this resource was extensive. The links, specifically multimedia, are superb." (David Weightman)

"Included are great project ideas that students can personalize for their own needs and community." (Demetra Kotsalis)

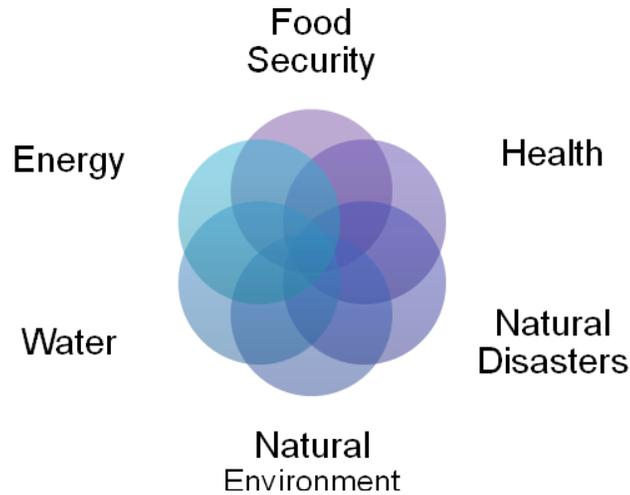
This second edition of the guide contains interactive activities and support documents, and updated lessons and approaches to youth engagement. However, we have chosen to keep most of the activities, which include facts and references to proven and respected resources from the first edition. Feel free to research new sites and find new resources online to supplement and adapt these activities. The Internet is always changing, so feel free to view these lessons as a framework, and you and your students can then be plugging in the updated statistics and new websites.

The guide is framed around the six interconnected themes as presented in the UNICEF UK's Climate Change Report 2008: *Our climate, our children, our responsibility*. This report details how the issues threatening the survival of children in developing countries link with the impacts of climate change. There are of course many new and relevant reports and resources that have been produced since then, and we have made efforts to reference some of our favourites in this teacher resource. We have also adapted some of the activities from the UNICEF Education Kit on Climate Change and Child Rights, which is available in its entirety on [globalclassroom.ca](http://globalclassroom.ca)

"Over the past decade, changes in the Earth's environment and its natural systems have emerged as a matter of increasingly urgent concern around the world. While the issues are complex and diverse, there is a shared and universal recognition that solutions will arise only through committed action on a global, national, regional, local, and individual scale. Schools have a vital role to play in preparing our young people to take their place as informed, engaged, and empowered citizens who will be pivotal in shaping the future of our communities, our province, our country, and our global environment."

– Ontario Ministry of Education

The themes in this resource can stand alone, or be delivered in combination. Also provided is an introductory activity (page 19) to connect all the themes. The themes are identified as:



This guide is designed for Grade 9 to 12 educators across Canada in order to fulfill curriculum expectations (including the revised 2008 Ontario curriculum) in the following subjects:

| Province         | Curriculum Connections   |
|------------------|--|
| Alberta          | Science 9; Science 10, 20, 14, 24, 30; Biology 20; Social Studies 20; and Environmental and Outdoor Education Junior High  |
| British Columbia | Science 9 and 10; Sustainable Resources 11 and 12; Civics 11 ; Geography 12 (for additional courses, see Appendix G)   |
| Saskatchewan     | History 11 ; World Issues 11 ; Biology 11 ; Physics 12   |
| Manitoba         | World Geography 12; Biology 12; Science 10; World Issues 10; World Geography 12; Global Issues 12  |
| Ontario          | Science 9 Academic & Applied; Science 10 Applied; Biology 11 ; Chemistry 11 ; and Environmental Science 11, HIF10 & HIF20; HPW3C Grade 11; HIR3C Grade 11; HF4AM Grade 12; ADA20 Grade 10; ASM2O Grade 10; ADA3M Grade 11; BBI10/BBI2O Grades 10 & 11; BDP3O Grade 11; BDV4C Grade 12; CGF3M Grade 11 (list is not exhaustive, please refer to Appendix H) |
| Quebec           | Social Sciences: Geography, History and Citizenship Education, and Contemporary Economic Environment; Secondary English Language Arts  |
| Atlantic Canada  | Atlantic Canada in the Global Community 9, Science 9, Science 10, Biology 11, Physics 11, Global Geography 12, Global History 12   |

This guide was initially created to support Ontario and British Columbia curriculum connections, but we have added connections across Canada, which can be found in Appendix I.

The Governments of the Yukon, Nunavut, the Northwest Territories, Saskatchewan, Alberta, British Columbia, and Manitoba are all members of the Western and Northern Canadian Protocol (WNCP). This protocol supports the development of common curriculum frameworks for Western and Northern Canada. These frameworks allow for the adaptation and implementation of the provincial curricula in the northern territories. In accordance with WNCP the Northwest Territories follows Alberta standards, the Yukon follows the programming of British Columbia, and Nunavut adopts curriculum and resources from various jurisdictions. For more information visit: <https://www.wncp.ca/english/wncphome.aspx>.

## UNICEF CANADA'S GLOBAL CLASSROOM PROGRAM

UNICEF Canada's mission is to mobilize and empower Canadians to invest in the positive transformation of every child's future. UNICEF Canada's Global Classroom program is a partnership with Canadian teachers and their students to inspire, educate and promote action on social justice, humanitarian issues and human rights - especially the rights of all children. This acclaimed program provides educators with classroom-ready resources and engagement tools, including:

- Bilingual elementary and secondary resources
- The Rights Respecting Schools initiative, which brings together our partners across Canada, the Friends of Rights Respecting Schools, with educators, parents and students, to discover the transformative nature of this engaging and hands-on program grounded in children's rights,

You can learn how UNICEF is supporting youth around the world as they continue to advocate for action on climate change on our Voices of Youth site at <http://voicesofyouth.org/>

Designed to foster global citizenship and understanding, these approaches demonstrate how each of us can create a better world for all children and the communities in which they live.

### Impetus for the creation of this guide

The Global Classroom team at UNICEF Canada was inspired to create this guide to support Canadian teachers during the lead up to UNICEF's involvement at the United Nations Climate Change Conference, which took place in Copenhagen, Denmark in December 2009. This conference, also known as COP15, brought together close to 20,000 delegates from around the world for a historic high-level meeting on climate change. On this occasion, the City of Copenhagen and UNICEF organized a Children's Climate Forum to give children from both developing and industrialized countries a voice in this debate, and a chance to influence the important discussions at COP15.

The young people attending met with other young activists from around the world, and were offered an incredible opportunity to connect with and influence the world leaders who continue to make historic decisions regarding the future of our world.

The lessons learned at the Children's Climate Forum will help today's children adapt and respond to rapidly changing environments — and contribute to meaningful and sustainable change. Together, we can support young people in addressing these challenges.

## UNITED NATIONS CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD (UNCRC)

UNICEF was created by the UN General Assembly on December 1, 1946 as a temporary organization called the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund, to respond to the suffering of children in European countries devastated by World War II.

In 1953, UNICEF was made a permanent arm of the UN to address the light of children in Asia, Africa, the Middle East and Latin America. Its name was changed to the United Nations Children's Fund although the acronym (UNICEF) did not change.

UNICEF is funded entirely by voluntary contributions from individuals, businesses, foundations, schools, associations and governments. The world's largest provider of vaccines for developing countries, UNICEF supports child health and nutrition, safe water and sanitation, quality basic education and the protection of children from violence, exploitation and HIV and AIDS.

UNICEF's work with children around the world is not just a moral assertion, it is codified in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)—the world's most widely ratified human rights treaty, adopted by 193 countries, including Canada. The CRC states that children have the absolute right to live in a decent environment with all that implies: living and growing in safety, enjoying good health and attending school.

There are 54 articles that comprise the UNCRC, all interrelated. What follows are the key articles relating to climate change, as outlined in the UNICEF UK Climate Change Report 2008:

**Article 6:** Children have the right to live. Governments should ensure that children survive and develop healthily.

**Article 12:** When adults are making decisions that affect children, children have the right to say what they think should happen and have their opinions taken into account.

**Article 22:** Children have the right to special protection and help if they are refugees (if they have been forced to leave their home and live in another country).

**Article 24:** Children have the right to good quality health care—the best health care possible—to safe drinking water, nutritious food, a clean and safe environment, and information to help them stay healthy. Rich countries should help poorer countries achieve this.

**Article 28:** All children have the right to a primary education, which should be free. Wealthy countries should help poorer countries achieve this right.

**Article 38:** Governments must do everything they can to protect and care for children affected by war.<sup>1</sup>

For details on all 54 articles, refer to Appendix B: The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child in Child-Friendly Language.

## WHY IS UNICEF TACKLING CLIMATE CHANGE?

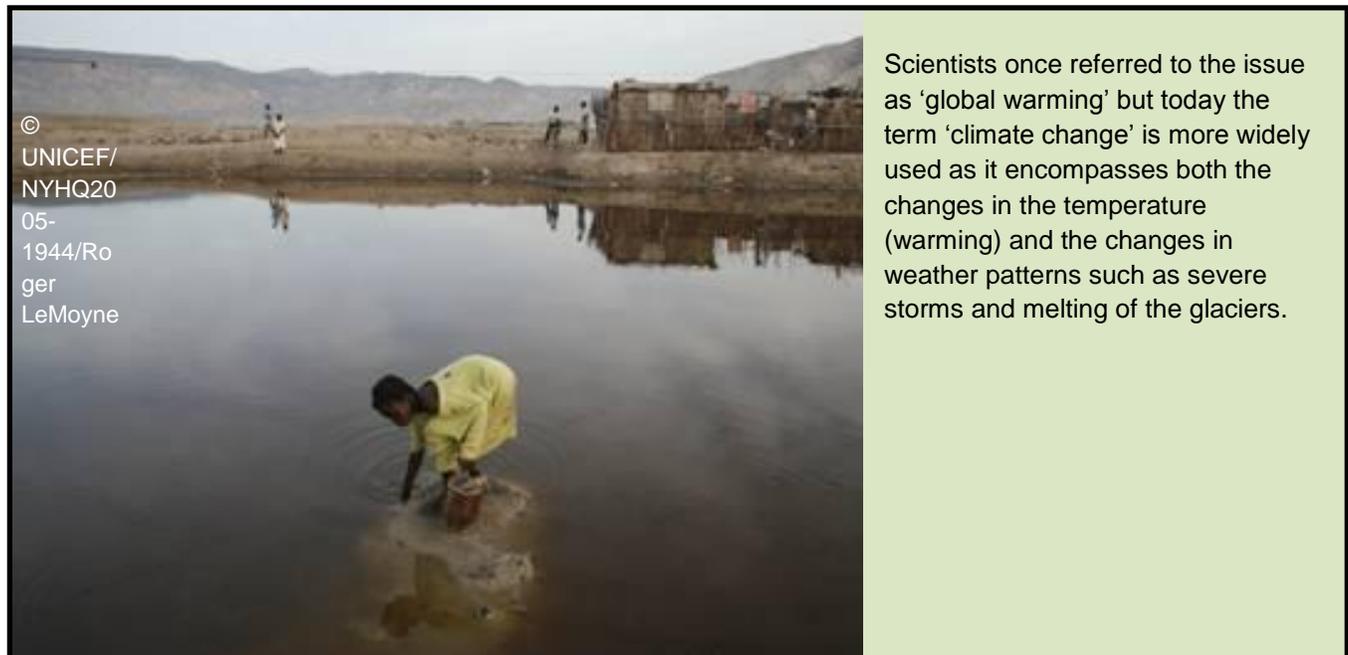
UNICEF is mandated by the United Nations General Assembly to advocate for the protection of children's rights, to help meet their basic needs and to expand their opportunities to reach their full potential, and so it has joined the fight to protect our children from the impacts of climate change.

Children in developing countries will be the hardest hit by climate change. Because climate change reduces the availability of food in developing countries, children will not have the food they need to sustain their growth and maintain a healthy disposition. Already children in developing countries suffer from poverty, poor water and sanitation, lack of water and poor health. The effects of climate change exacerbate these issues. In addition, developing countries do not have the resources to quickly and safely adapt to the effects of climate change alterations in weather patterns, droughts, floods and the increase in the number and severity of natural disasters.

To further explore the science of climate change in your classroom, UNICEF Canada has posted online resources and lesson plans at <http://globalclassroom.unicef.ca/>

However, children are also a strong voice in the fight against climate change. According to a UNICEF Innocent Research Centre report called *Climate Change and Children: A Human Security Challenge*, children are among the greatest victims of climate change. But they can also act as vehicles for change, as children from developed nations can work with the adults in their lives to bring about meaningful and sustainable change. Therefore, we need to educate today's youth to be "proactive and prepared citizens empowered to adapt and respond to rapidly changing environments. An education, which will prompt young citizens to question and modify existing conditions and structures moving toward enhanced development objectives and disaster risk reduction and preparedness activities."<sup>2</sup>

Visit UNICEF's Press Centre at <http://www.unicef.org/media/>. These pages are updated daily with the latest news from UNICEF around the world and will keep you posted on UNICEF's commitment to the environment.



©  
UNICEF/  
NYHQ20  
05-  
1944/Ro  
ger  
LeMoyne

Scientists once referred to the issue as 'global warming' but today the term 'climate change' is more widely used as it encompasses both the changes in the temperature (warming) and the changes in weather patterns such as severe storms and melting of the glaciers.

## RIGHTS RESPECTING SCHOOLS

The Child-Friendly School (CFS) model is a signature UNICEF approach to promote quality education for every child. The model is a simple one at heart: schools should operate in the best interests of the child. Child Friendly Schools, in 80 countries around the world, provide educational environments that are safe, healthy and protective. They have trained teachers, adequate resources and appropriate physical, emotional and social conditions for learning. These school communities protect children's rights and ensure that children's voices are heard. They promote inclusiveness, gender-sensitivity, tolerance, and personal responsibility.

Drawing inspiration from the success of the CFS model, UNICEF Canada is working with schools and delivery partners across Canada on a new initiative for Canadian schools that uses the Convention as a basis for enhancing an inclusive, participatory and respectful school culture. Children learn about their rights and the responsibilities that accompany them. This creates a more positive and peaceful school climate, leading to higher rates of student achievement, lower absenteeism and higher rates of teacher satisfaction.

The Rights Respecting Schools model is not an 'add-on' for schools, as it has been designed to support existing ministry and board mandated programs and initiatives.

This guide can support teachers working in Rights Respecting Schools. It provides teachers with rights-based information, resources and activities that work well within the Rights Respecting Schools framework. As students learn about the importance of rights and the responsibilities that accompany them, this climate change resource gives students the chance to apply that rights-based approach to the issue of climate change. Schools that embed children's rights into their everyday culture have a strong understanding of the importance of making the link between children's rights in their own country, and the importance of advocating for children's rights in all countries, especially as they relate to climate change and sustainability.

- For more information about Rights Respecting Schools, please visit [rightsrespectingschools.ca](https://rightsrespectingschools.ca)
- For more information about Child-Friendly Schools, including a "Climate Change and Environmental Education Module", please visit [unicef.org/cfs/index\\_121.htm](https://unicef.org/cfs/index_121.htm)

## CANADA'S RESPONSIBILITY TO DEVELOPING NATIONS

In 1987, the World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED) published a report commonly referred to as the Brundtland Report. This groundbreaking work detailed guiding principles for sustainable development and continues to act as the road map for sustainability today. This report defines sustainable development as "development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs."<sup>3</sup>

A key concept of the Brundtland Report that is now commonly accepted is that of the three pillars of sustainability. Simply stated, sustainability cannot be understood as just the environment, there are three factors or pillars that also need to be considered:

- Environment
- Economics
- Society: adults and children.

Our children's future depends on a balance between the three pillars. We need to nurture and preserve our planet, have the resources (money and labour) to make this happen and ensure global human needs

are met.

As developed nations are fortunate to have in place the resources to balance the three pillars, it is the responsibility of nations like Canada to support developing countries in their struggles with climate change, as stated in Article 24 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child:

***Children have the right to good quality health care — the best health care possible — to safe drinking water, nutritious food, a clean and safe environment, and information to help them stay healthy. Rich countries should help poorer countries achieve this.***

The reality is that citizens of developed nations continue to have the greatest impact on climate change; we are dependent on fossil fuels and overall consumerism to sustain our current standard of living. We need to do our part in restoring the balance of our world and help children in developing countries affected by our actions. We need to educate our youth on solutions, inspire them to take action and lead by example. As we adapt to ending the dependency on fossil fuels and appreciate the value of our natural treasures, we will learn what makes us strong as a global community — the human spirit.

## CRITICAL HOPE: AN APPROACH TO TEACHING ABOUT CLIMATE CHANGE

Critical Hope is an approach to teaching a subject like climate change where students—and teachers—can feel overwhelmed and discouraged by the immensity of the problem.

At GreenLearning, we work with classroom teachers who are struggling to do a good job teaching about climate change. They tell us about the everyday challenges they face: science teachers feel out of their depth linking the science of climate change to critical social and economic issues; they note the lack of good resources and of relevant Canadian data; they wonder about how best to address the climate-deniers. But the number one challenge, the one we hear over and over again, is how teachers can reach students who are feeling scared and overwhelmed by our changing climate and who may believe that there is little they can do to make a difference.

An interesting footnote here is that it's not just students and teachers who are feeling overwhelmed—it's everyone. In his research, Glenn Albrecht, an Australian philosopher, says that besides being concerned about the impacts of climate change on the environment and on society, we should also be concerned about the huge toll it will inflict on our mental health. In short, it's making us sad.

How can we as teachers help young people address feelings of hopelessness, move beyond any despair to a more constructive, positive place? Keren Bromberg and Rebecca Niblett Rebecca, in their ***Critical Hope, An Approach to Environmental Education*** offer some practical activities for addressing this challenge, activities that complement the activities in ***Climate Change: Children and Youth***. The next few paragraphs provide a brief, very brief, overview of Critical Hope in teaching a subject like climate change, ending with a few selected activities...

The Oxford English Dictionary says that hope is the “expectation of something desired; desire combined with expectation...” Margaret Somerville stretches and plays with the definition of hope and says, “sometimes courage is necessary if we are to find hope.” Hope requires a sense of connection to the future, and if it is linked to the future, then hope is linked to potentiality and possibility. Somerville also says “...we must make a maximum effort to expel despair, thus keeping our human spirit ‘optimally inflated’ and opening up space within ourselves so that hope can flow in.”

However, Joanna Macy says “despair cannot be banished by injections of optimism or sermons of “positive thinking.” Like grief, despair must be acknowledged and worked through. This means it must be named and validated as a healthy, normal human response to the situation we find ourselves in.” Macy’s work encourages positive environmental connection and identity by recognizing and facing despair

in order to move towards hope. Thus, Macy’s alternative view of the world demonstrates how emotions like hope and despair connect us with the world.<sup>1</sup>

Another important idea in fostering hope comes from Popular Educator, Paulo Freire. He says that “...hope is necessary, but it is not enough...We need critical hope the way a fish needs unpolluted water. In this way, combining *popular education*<sup>2</sup> with *despair work* may be one technique in which to overcome dilemmas faced by environmentalists. While *popular education* illustrates *hegemonic* forces that prevent change while encourages action, *despair work* does this while recognizing the importance of interconnectedness in our world, and thus, we can use both methods, applying them to a wide range of environmental issues for a wide range of people.”<sup>3</sup>

As you use ***Climate Change: Children and Youth*** with your class, you may become aware of your students feeling anxious or hopeless; the activities in ***Critical Hope, An Approach to Environmental Education*** can help you and your students work through this. The entire Manual is in the COOL 2.0 Database; the following selected activities—also found in the COOL 2.0 database—are good starting points:

**Critical Hope: An Approach to Environmental Education:**

<http://cool.greenlearning.ca/database/view.html?ItemID=1857>

Critical Hope: Group Introductions: <http://cool.greenlearning.ca/database/view.html?ItemID=1849>

Critical Hope: Widening Circle: <http://cool.greenlearning.ca/database/view.html?ItemID=1851>

Critical Hope: Open Sentences: <http://cool.greenlearning.ca/database/view.html?ItemID=1853>

Critical Hope: I Don’t Care: <http://cool.greenlearning.ca/database/view.html?ItemID=1855>

---

<sup>1</sup> *Teaching Hope for Action: A Facilitator’s Guide to Creating Action in Environmental Education*, page 8

<sup>2</sup> Popular education is a concept grounded in social transformation and change. It is an educational practice that started in South America and is influenced by Brazilian literacy educator Paulo Freire. It’s education based on several principals including the idea that students come with their own knowledge and ideas, and that teachers/educators should start with those ideas. Popular education is particularly apt for dealing with an issue like climate change and how it will affect the ordinary person—or student.

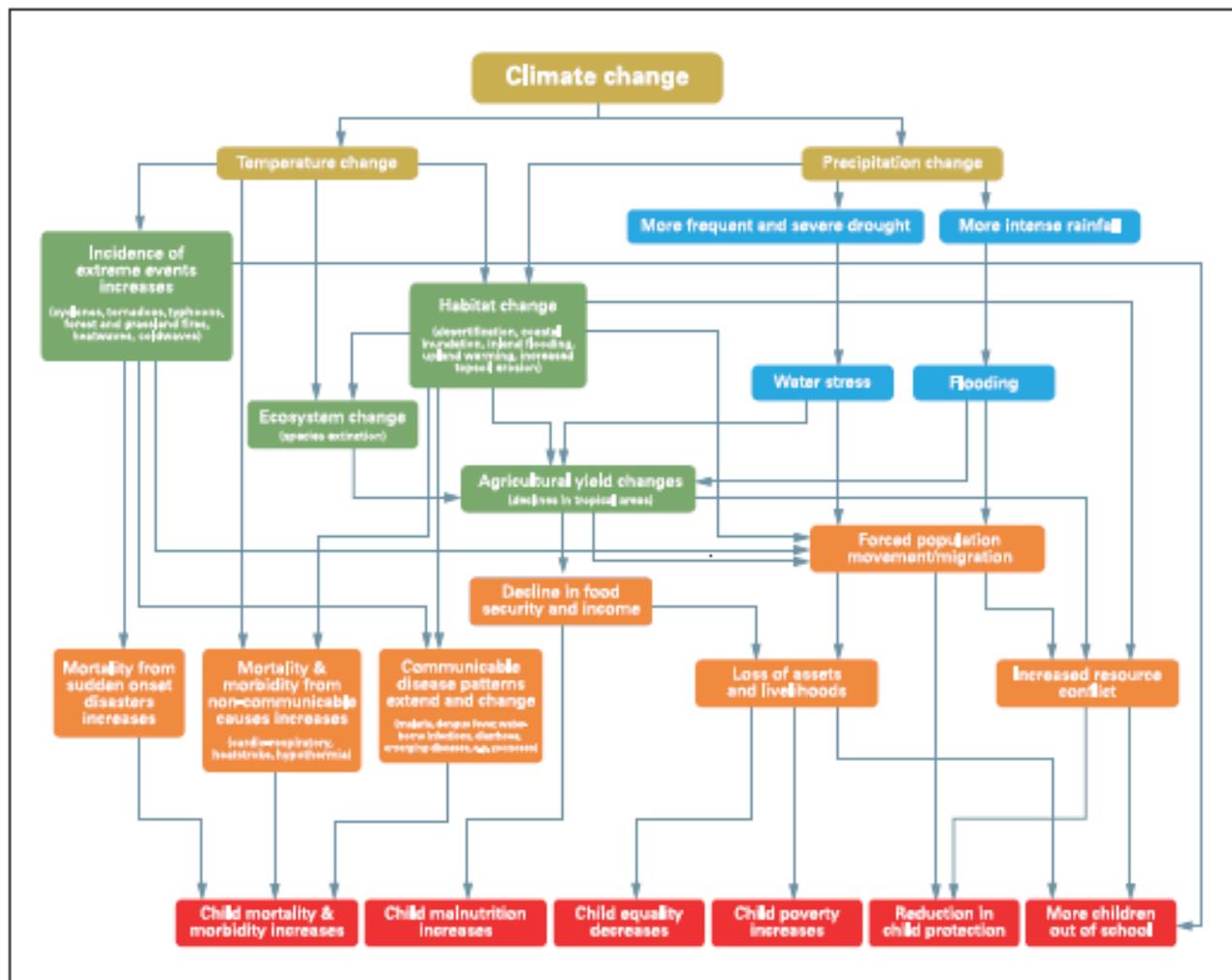
<sup>3</sup> *Teaching Hope for Action: A Facilitator’s Guide to Creating Action in Environmental Education*, page 8

## CLIMATE CHANGE CONNECTIONS

Climate change is defined as the increase in Earth's temperature due to human impact by way of greenhouse gas emissions. Gases, such as carbon dioxide, build in the atmosphere and form a barrier. This gaseous wall lets the heat from the sun into our atmosphere but does not let it escape, resulting in the warming of the planet. The increase in global temperature means alterations in the world's weather patterns and rising sea levels.

The effects of climate change cannot be viewed in isolation; they are all connected. For example, as the water cycle intensifies both drought and flooding increase. This affects agriculture, increases the likelihood of waterborne disease, and can negatively affect what was once a fertile land rich with resources.<sup>5</sup>

The citizens most vulnerable to climate change and its many connections are children. Since children have developing immune systems and rely on proper nutrition and clean water to progress into adulthood, they are less likely than adults to weather the effects of climate change. A summary of the key impacts of climate change on children is presented schematically below.<sup>6</sup>



## YOUTH PARTICIPATORY EDUCATION

Article 12 of the Conventions on the Right of the Child states that children have the right to give their opinion, and for adults to listen and take it seriously. In the working paper, “*The Participation Rights of Adolescents*,” UNICEF identifies 8 positive outcomes from youth participation in social and global issues. Examples of these benefits are outlined below:

- 1) Participation is critical to self-development
- 2) Participation builds effectiveness and sustainability
- 3) Participation fosters learning, builds life skills, and enables self protection
- 4) Participation is integral to the democratic ethos
- 5) Young people’s participation builds civil society<sup>7</sup>

Youth participation involves giving children meaningful opportunities to voice opinions, to participate fully in all aspects of their schooling, to be a valued and genuine participant in decision-making that affects them, and to contribute to resolving obstacles to teaching, learning and well-being. Participatory teaching includes methods such as brainstorming, problem-solving, role-playing, debating and cooperative learning.

This approach sees students as active citizens who are capable of participating in making decisions on issues that affect them, and capable of thinking critically about how their attitudes and behaviours impact the rights of children around the world.

Empowering youth provides them with a voice, the confidence to make a difference, and most importantly, awareness to the reality, that change is necessary.<sup>8</sup>

This guide offers students a chance to engage in global climate change issues, and understand their role in contributing to existing conditions, as well as opportunities for change. Students are encouraged to consider taking action on a personal, school, and community level, as well as at a global scale.



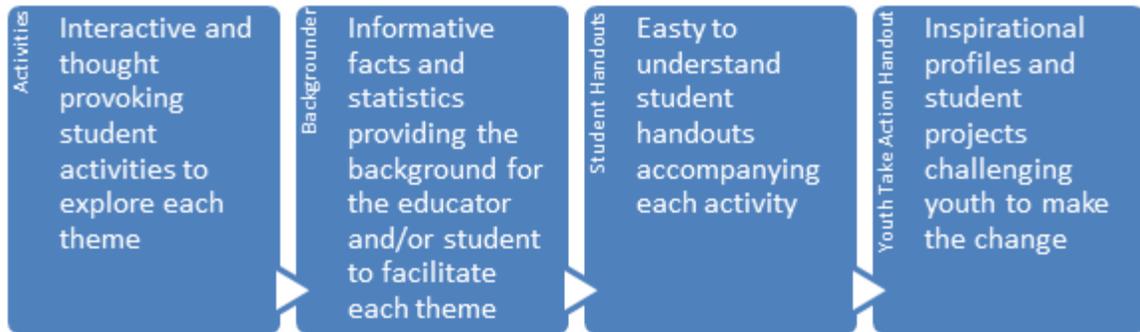
Our “Youth Take Action” handouts are truly the essence of empowering students to be the change. Each handout offers a selection of projects upon which students can mobilize. Students will have the opportunity to engage in a project after each theme. Project ideas can be adapted to fit various subject specific curriculum expectations. Projects ideas for each theme enable themes to be started and completed as separate units, enabling the Climate Change manual to be used at various points in the school year, rather than requiring that the entire package be implemented at once.

A rubric to evaluate student projects is provided in Appendix C, “Culminating Task Rubric”

## YOUTH TAKE ACTION COMPONENT

## GUIDE OVERVIEW

This guide contains a series of activities with accompanying handouts connected to the six themes: natural disasters, food security, health, natural environments, water and energy. Each theme includes the following sections:



Distribute the handout found on page 139 (Appendix E: Reflect and Act). This handout will allow students to journal lessons learned throughout each theme, or can be used to summarize lessons learned from the entire unit.

The glossary (addressing the underlined words in the guide) and other appendices (including the curriculum expectations/outcomes, United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, and a culminating task rubric), can be found in Appendix A.

Please note that all websites referenced in the themes were accurate at the time of printing. UNICEF Canada apologizes for any inconvenience that may be caused due to an inactive link.

## AT A GLANCE: SUGGESTED PROGRAM TIME FRAME, WITH LESSON PLAN LENGTHS

Select the lessons as they fit into your own unit plan, or adopt sections of the time frame, or complete the entire series of lessons. Some can be done to supplement another lesson, or can be used as lessons on their own, depending on length of time.

| Topic                       | Activity                          | Length of Time |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------------------|----------------|
| <b>Introduction</b>         | “Climate Change Connections”      | 1 hour         |
|                             | “Climate Change and Child Rights” | 30 minutes     |
| <b>Food Security</b>        | “Setting the Stage”               | 15 minutes     |
|                             | “Food for Thought”                | 15 minutes     |
|                             | “Is Your Food Too Warm?”          | 45 minutes     |
| <b>Health</b>               | “Setting the Stage”               | 15 minutes     |
|                             | “Healthy Planet”                  | 20 minutes     |
|                             | “Every 30 Seconds”                | 35 minutes     |
| <b>Natural Disasters</b>    | “Setting the Stage”               | 10 minutes     |
|                             | “When Disaster Strikes”           | 25 minutes     |
|                             | “Be Prepared”                     | 45 minutes     |
| <b>Natural Environments</b> | “Setting the Stage”               | 15 minutes     |
|                             | “Amazing Amazon”                  | 15 minutes     |
|                             | “Forest Fables Card Game”         | 30 minutes     |
| <b>Water</b>                | “Setting the Stage”               | 15 minutes     |
|                             | “Water Run Clean”???              | 60 minutes     |
|                             | “To stay or to go?”               | 40 minutes     |
| <b>Energy</b>               | “Setting the Stage”               | 15 minutes     |
|                             | “Solar Café”                      | 60 minutes     |
| <b>Closing lessons</b>      | “Going to Copenhagen”             | 2 days         |
|                             | “What can we do?”                 | 60 minutes     |
|                             | “Climate Superheroes”             | 1 hour         |

## EDUCATORS – LET’S GO GREEN!

Students learn by example. Challenge yourself and your colleagues to make a difference and ‘walk the talk.’ It is empowering for students to see how your small changes can make a big difference. Here are some ideas:

- walk, run, bike, train, bus or car pool to school
- have organic, fair-trade coffee and local food for staff social events
- use a reusable travel mug and water bottle
- pack waste-free lunches
- green your classroom; reuse paper, start worm compost in your classroom, recycle blue bin items
- open the blinds and turn off the lights in the classroom
- discover who is working to make a positive contribution to decrease the school's carbon footprint (good recycling habits, turns out classroom lights at the end of the day, packs a litterless lunch, etc.). Celebrate their achievements through sharing them in the school newspaper, on the announcements, or on the school website. Work with a team of students to design how you will gather this information, and to decide in a participatory manner whether to share names of those making a difference, or if it should be done anonymously.
- have students submit their favorite vegetarian and vegan recipes and compile a vegetarian cookbook for the school community
- encourage students to pack a vegetarian lunch to on “Meatless Mondays”: <http://www.meatlessmonday.com/>
- drink tap water
- organize a field trip to your local recycling plant to find out what happens to waste after it is placed in the recycling bin. Have the student's ask questions about sorting and what goes where so that they can share the information with the school when they return.
- collect batteries, printer cartridges and cell phones to donate to a reputable recycling facility that can reuse the items

At your next staff meeting, gather your colleagues and agree to challenge another school to have the greenest staff! How can you get your students involved in the solution?

### Meet amazing staff who are leading by example:

- Susan Ng Chung, a science teacher at Prince of Wales Secondary in Vancouver is leading by example. Susan commutes to school on two wheels every other day.
- Graeme Mitchell, a teacher at Stelly's Secondary School in Saanich, BC, developed a popular course called Sustainable Development for Grade 11 students. The goal is to shed light on models, tools and ideas that already exist, and, that if widely adopted, would completely change our world for the better.
- Staff at Appleby College in Oakville run a competition to encourage students not to waste food. They weigh the green bin at the end of each meal in the cafeteria to see how much wasted food remains at the end of lunch. Over the year, they aim to reduce the amount of food wasted at lunchtime and encourage students to only take what they can eat.

---

## NOTES

1. UNICEF UK, Our climate, our children, our responsibility (York: UNICEF UK, 2008), p. 12.
2. UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre, Climate Change and Children: A Human Security Challenge (Florence: UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre, 2008), p. 2.
3. World Commission on Environment and Development, The Brundtland Report, <http://www.un.org/documents/ga/res/42/ares42-187.htm> (accessed November 2009).
4. Toronto District School Board, Ecoschools: Climate Change in Grade 11 and 12 Science (Toronto: Toronto District School Board, 2004), p. 9.
5. UNICEF UK, Our climate, our children, our responsibility, p. 4.
6. Ibid., p. 3.
7. UNICEF, The Participation Right of Adolescents: A Strategic Approach. Work paper series. UNICEF, New York, 2001.
8. Citizenship Foundation UK, What is Citizenship Education? 2010. <http://www.citizenshipfoundation.org.uk/main/page.php?286>