



# CONNECTING THE THEMES

## INTRODUCTORY ACTIVITY

### Climate Change Connections

**Objective:** To discuss issues facing children in the world today, and to discover how climate change can intensify these issues. This activity is intended to introduce students to all the themes presented in the guide—natural disasters, food security, energy, health and water. Climate change has evolved from an ‘environmental’ issue into one that requires collective expertise in sustainable development, energy security, and the health and well-being of children. The themes in this guide have been chosen because they reflect the far-reaching and interconnected nature of this global climate crisis. See Appendix D: How Climate Change Affects Children for a visual representation of these connections.

**Time:** 60 minutes

#### Materials

- Coloured marker for each student
- Reused paper for each student (personal white boards or laptops)
- Student Handout #2: Climate Change and Children
- Appendix D: How Climate Change Affects Children (page 138)

#### Burkina Faso, 2012

Fati Bikinga works in her onion patch while carrying her 18-month-old

- Clip #1: Climate Change and Children:  
[http://globalclassroom.unicef.ca/en/resources/resource\\_guide.htm](http://globalclassroom.unicef.ca/en/resources/resource_guide.htm)
- Flip chart and markers
- Photocopies of testimonials

## ACTIVITY

1. Ask students to consider what is the most important issue facing children in the world today. Examples may include poverty, hunger, mortality rates, drinkable water and climate change.
2. Instruct each student to record his or her answer on paper, in large writing, using only one or two words for the answer.
3. Ask students to circulate the room and read what everyone has written. This is to be done in silence.
4. Ask everyone to pair up and discuss his or her respective issues.
5. Stop the class, and ask student pairs to choose only one issue with which to go forward, and to be prepared to talk about it with a larger group. Ask pairs to hold the one piece of paper between them and circulate the room and form a larger, like-minded group with another pair of students. Ask groups to discuss the commonalities in their larger group.
6. Explain that in some countries, climate change is visible and has affected the way many people – including children – live. Explain that they will now read *testimonials/case studies on three different countries produced by young Climate Ambassadors (explain what Climate Ambassadors are – see box below and refer to the specific section on this in the Student’s Handout)*.
7. Form three (or six, depending on the size of your group) small groups and distribute a story to each group/person. Give them a few minutes to read the content individually (*or, depending on your class’s reading skills, you can choose to nominate one reader per group*).
8. Ask each group to identify, discuss and note down the following elements in their texts (write down the three questions on the flipchart so that they are visible):
  - a. Effects of climate change. (What has changed in these countries because of climate change? Ex. weather, poverty, etc.)
  - b. Specific impacts/consequences of climate change for children living in these countries.
  - c. How people in these countries are reacting to this.
9. Give participants some time to discuss this internally and then invite each group to report back to the class as a whole by (1) presenting their stories to the others, and (2) explaining their findings for questions a, b and c. Note those down on the flipchart and complete with what is missing. (*Solutions are appended to this activity.*)
10. Show the clip Climate Change and Children on the UNICEF Canada site:  
<http://www.unicef.ca/en/teachers/article/climate-change-and-children%E2%80%99s-rights>, a UNICEF video that details how the effects of climate change are affecting children in developing countries. Ask students to share what they learned about the connection of climate change to

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children.

11. After viewing the clip, ask students to complete Student Handout #2: Climate Change and Children.

### **Keep the discussion going**

Review the connections between the topics discussed today. For example, how does poverty affect the health of children? How do natural disasters affect the water supply for children? You may want to record all issues discovered in class on the board, or distribute Appendix D: How Climate Change Affects Children (page 138), so the students have a visual of the issues.

Was there group consensus as to what is the most pressing issue facing children today? Why or why not?

What global stories about children affected your decision?

What can Canadians do to help children in developing countries?

## Climate Change and Child Rights

**Objectives:** By the end of the activity participants will be able to:

- Explain why and how child rights are affected by climate change
- List (at least) five child rights that can be undermined by climate change

**Time:** 30 minutes

**Materials:**

- Sets of CRC cards (*see Handout #3*)
- Flipchart and markers
- Scissors

### ACTIVITY

1. Begin the activity by brainstorming about child rights to determine how familiar the group is with the CRC and/or reminding them of what they may previously have learned about child rights.
2. Form small groups of three or four and distribute a set of cards to each group. Invite them to go through the cards and select the rights that are affected because of climate change. Give them about 10 minutes.
3. Ask one of the groups to present *one* right identified and explain why they chose it and how it relates to climate change. Then ask another group to present and explain another one, and so on. Continue until there are no further suggestions. Note down all the rights on the flipchart. Complete if any are missing.

**Keep the Discussion Going:**

Refer back to the flipchart with causes, consequences, impacts and rights to make sure that all the participants have understood all the connections.

Ask participants what they learned in this activity. Are they surprised?

### CRC articles that are linked to climate change

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child outlines the rights that children everywhere have: the right to survival; the right to develop to the fullest; the right to protection from harm, neglect and exploitation; and the right to participate fully in family, cultural and social life. These rights are universal (all children have them); interdependent and indivisible (one right cannot be upheld without, or at the expense of other rights); inalienable (they cannot be taken away); and non-discriminatory (they cannot be denied based on factors such as religion, age, etc.). However, when exploring climate change, the articles listed below may be particularly helpful in making the impact of climate change clearer to your students.

You can also refer to the part of the Introduction section that refers to the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

**Article 6: Right to life** (survival and development)

Climate change can have an impact on food and clean water availability, and undermine the chances of development and survival of affected children.

**Article 12: Respect for the opinions of the child**

Children have the right to express their opinions on all matters affecting them. As climate change is clearly affecting their present and future lives, they should have their say.

**Article 22: Refugee children**

Climate change creates climate refugees—people and families who have to leave their homes because they cannot survive there any longer (drought-affected zones, coastal areas affected by rise in sea levels, etc.).

**Article 24: Right to health and health care**

Consequences of climate change such as drought, flooding, increase of diseases, etc., have a direct impact on the health of children.

**Article 28: Right to a free education**

When natural disasters such as flooding, hurricanes and other extreme events occur, schools can remain closed for a long time, either because they have been destroyed or because children are kept at home to help with the reconstruction work.

**Article 38: War and armed conflict**

Climate change can cause conflicts over resources that have become rarer because of changes in the environment (such as drought, rising sea levels, etc.).

***There are many other articles of the CRC that can be linked to climate change and its consequences on children. We are sure that you and your group will come up with many more!***

**Here are some ideas:**

- Article 11 (protection from international kidnapping)
- Article 16 (right to privacy)
- Article 21 (adoption)
- Article 27 (right to adequate standard of living)
- Article 31 (right to leisure, play and culture)
- Article 34 (protection from sexual exploitation)
- Article 35 (protection from abduction, sale and trafficking)
- Article 36 (protection from other forms of exploitation)

## Student Handout #1

### TESTIMONIALS BY CLIMATE AMBASSADORS

#### Laoniman (boy), 17 years old, from Kiribati

Kiribati (pronounced Kiribas) is an independent republic within the Commonwealth of Nations, located in the central Pacific Ocean about 4,000 km (about 2,500 miles) southwest of Hawaii. It is part of the division of the Pacific islands known as Micronesia. Kiribati consists of 33 coral islands, 21 of which are inhabited. The majority of the atolls are barely more than 6 metres (20 feet) above sea level.<sup>4</sup>

Climate change has many visible effects in my country. The one that affects us most is the rise of sea level, which causes coastal erosion and the contamination of well water<sup>5</sup>. Since the well water is contaminated, we must rely more on rain as a source of water, but it is raining less and less, which means that we don't have much clean water for our daily living. Also, many plants in my country die because of the change in rainy seasons.

Since the sea is covering our lands, the soil is becoming infertile and it is becoming very difficult to grow crops and other plants. Moreover, we mostly rely on the sea as a source of living: we get food from the sea and fish is a source of income for many families. But fish is becoming scarce...

As a consequence, some families in Kiribati, and especially in the capital island Tarawa, were forced to move out of their houses, which were close to the coast. The sea was getting too close to their homes and even ruined some of them. Some families, who are concerned about losing their land, are building sea walls at their own costs. This is very expensive and some families don't have any money left. As a consequence, many fathers become depressed because they cannot support their families; some of them leave and some others waste the little money left on alcohol.

All this seriously affects children. Some of them cannot go to school anymore because the family has no money to pay for the fees and material. Young girls get married very early just to get away from their family's problems. Teenage pregnancy and family corruption is common. Also, more and more children can be seen begging for loose change or food in the streets.

Since the effects of climate change are becoming more visible, the population is aware of what is happening, but they don't understand why it is happening to them since they are not responsible for the causes. The government is putting up projects to fight all these problems. Right now they are building pipes that transport water to the whole capital island and are working on more projects that will benefit our country. But, still, we need more assistance from other countries because we lack resources.

<sup>4</sup> Source: Kiribati national tourism organization

<sup>5</sup> A **water well** is an excavation or structure created in the ground by digging, driving, boring or drilling to access groundwater in underground aquifers.

## TESTIMONIALS BY CLIMATE AMBASSADORS

### Ndeye (girl), 16 years old, from Senegal

**Senegal** is a country in western Africa. It is externally bound by the Atlantic Ocean to the west, Mauritania to the north, Mali to the east, and Guinea and Guinea-Bissau to the south; internally it almost completely surrounds the Gambia, namely on the north, east and south, exempting Gambia's short Atlantic Ocean coastline. The climate is tropical with two seasons: the dry season and the rainy season.

Climate change has numerous visible effects in my country, Senegal. The most important are flooding, drought, spread of the Sahara Desert, the increase of temperatures and coastal erosion due to the rise of sea levels (for instance, a fishermen village called Djiffer, located in the Saloum Delta, is disappearing).

I would like to talk about recent heavy rainfalls, which caused flooding. Many families lost their houses and have nowhere to live. Some children haven't gone back to school after the flooding, because the school buildings were not repaired. Also, some children caught malaria because stagnant water multiplied the mosquitoes. Other vector-borne diseases that spread are bilharzias<sup>6</sup> and cholera<sup>7</sup>.

Unfortunately, people are generally not worried about climate change. But, together with other Climate Ambassadors, I am going to organize campaigns and other projects to raise awareness among the population. The Senegalese government is also initiating projects, for instance one together with other African countries called "Great Green Wall", whose goal is to plant 7,000 km (4,350 miles) of trees, in a line from Dakar to Djibouti, to halt desert spread.

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<sup>6</sup> Bilharzia is a human disease caused by parasitic worms called Schistosomes.

<sup>7</sup> Cholera is an infectious gastroenteritis. Transmission to humans occurs through eating food or drinking water contaminated by other cholera patients.

## TESTIMONIALS BY CLIMATE AMBASSADORS

### Sabrina (girl), 16 years old, from Canada

**Canada** is a country in North America. It is bordered by the Atlantic Ocean in the east, the Pacific Ocean in the west, the Arctic Ocean in the north and the United States in the south. Canada's climate is not as cold all year long as some may believe. In the winter, temperatures fall below the freezing point throughout most of Canada, but the southwestern coast has a relatively mild climate. During the summer months the southern provinces often experience high levels of humidity and temperatures that can surpass 30 degrees Celsius (86 degrees Fahrenheit) regularly. Western and southeastern Canada experience high rainfall, but the Prairies are dry.

Climate change has had a variety of effects in my country. First of all, the permafrost in the North is melting at a dazzling speed due to the increasing temperature of the Earth. In the northern towns, houses built directly on the ground are collapsing and families then have to move to other places. Also, while winters are getting warmer and wetter, summers in southern Canada are getting warmer than the global average and drier. These changes dramatically affect the ecozones and the natural environment across Canada. The recent increases of climatic and extreme weather phenomena have caused significant losses of forests by fires, floods, detachment of ice platforms from the Antarctic Peninsula and an increased frequency of strong winter storms and hurricanes. Climate change in Canada is also affecting children and their lives, especially those who live in the northern part of the country where climate change strikes most.

Over the last few years, people have changed their minds about the environment and have started to recycle and do some gestures to show that they care about it. Now, I can say that young Canadians and Canadians in general are aware of what is going on all around the world; while our government still doesn't want to face the problem, the population is ready to commit. The climate change issue is actually a hot topic in Canada. It is even being discussed on television, radio and in newspapers!

As usual, young people are much more aware about this international issue than older citizens. Therefore, we must not only act by ourselves, we also need to empower the people around us to go out and make a change. On the other hand, we must not forget that there is still a lot of sensitization work in the population to do, even on an international scale.



## TESTIMONIALS BY CLIMATE AMBASSADORS

### ANSWER KEY

Question	Laoniman (Kiribati)	Ndeye (Senegal)	Sabrina (Canada)
<b>a. Effects of Climate Change</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Rise of sea level</li> <li>- Coastal erosion</li> <li>- Contamination of well water</li> <li>- Less rain / change in rainy seasons</li> <li>- Many plants die</li> <li>- Scarcity of fish</li> </ul> <p><b>= Rise of sea level and drought</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Flooding</li> <li>- Rise of sea level</li> <li>- Coastal erosion</li> <li>- Higher temperatures</li> <li>- Spread of the Sahara Desert</li> <li>- Drought</li> </ul> <p><b>= Flooding, rise of sea level and drought</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Warmer and wetter winters</li> <li>- Increase of strong winter storms and hurricanes</li> <li>- Changes in ecozones and natural environment</li> <li>- Loss of forests by fires and floods</li> </ul> <p><i>In Northern Canada:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Permafrost melting quickly</li> <li>- Detachment of ice platforms</li> <li>- Houses collapsing</li> </ul> <p><i>In Southern Canada:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Warmer and drier summers</li> </ul> <p><b>= Melting of ice, extreme events, change in seasons</b></p>
<b>b. Consequences for people and children</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Move from houses by the coast</li> <li>- Build protection walls (expensive)</li> <li>- Poverty</li> <li>- Many fathers become alcoholic or leave</li> <li>- Girls get married earlier / pregnancy</li> <li>- Corruption</li> <li>- Children have to beg for loose change</li> </ul> <p><b>= Poverty</b></p>	<p>Because of flooding:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Many houses were destroyed</li> <li>- Many schools were destroyed</li> <li>- (As a consequence): interruption of schooling</li> <li>- Spread of waterborne diseases (malaria, bilharzias, cholera)</li> </ul> <p><b>= School dropout, spread of diseases</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Because of permafrost melting, many families in Northern Canada have to move somewhere else</li> </ul> <p><b>= Forced migration</b></p>
<b>c. Reactions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- People don't understand why this is happening to them</li> <li>- Government is building pipes to transport clean water</li> <li>- International community should help</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Population not very concerned by climate change</li> <li>- Climate ambassadors are setting up awareness-raising projects</li> <li>- Government: Great Green Wall project</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Population, esp. young people, more and more concerned, ready to commit (recycling, etc.)</li> <li>- Government does not want to face the problem</li> <li>- Climate change is discussed in the media</li> </ul>

## Student Handout #2

### CLIMATE CHANGE AND CHILDREN

#### Question and Answer

1. An action that saves the planet also helps meet the basic rights and needs of children. Explain this statement:
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
2. How does climate change threaten the basic necessities of human survival?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
3. While many of the Earth's resources are threatened by climate change, one resource remains unchanged: the power of youth to affect positive change.
  - a. List three actions you can personally take to help stop climate change, and explain how they contribute to the fight against climate change. For example, I can ride a bike instead of getting a drive.
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  - b. List three actions you can take in your community to help stop climate change, and explain how they contribute to the fight against climate change. For example, I can advocate for better waste management practices in my community.
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  - c. List three actions you can take globally to help stop climate change, and explain how they contribute to the fight against climate change. For example, I can support global organizations tasked with the job of stopping climate change.

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## Student Handout #3

### CRC CARDS

Article 1: Child = 0–18 years	Article 2: All rights for all children (non-discrimination)	Article 3: Best interests of the child
Article 4: Full enjoyment of rights	Article 5: Parental guidance ( <i>right to</i> )	Article 6: Life (survival and development) ( <i>right to</i> )
Article 7: Birth registration ( <i>right to</i> )	Article 8: Identity (name, nationality) ( <i>right to</i> )	Article 9: Keeping family ties ( <i>right to</i> )
Article 10: Family reunification ( <i>right to</i> )	Article 11: International kidnapping ( <i>protection from</i> )	Article 12: Respect for the opinions of the child
Article 13: Freedom of expression ( <i>right to</i> )	Article 14: Freedom of thought, conscience and religion ( <i>right to</i> )	Article 15: Freedom of association ( <i>right to</i> )
Article 16: Privacy ( <i>right to</i> )	Article 17: Access to child-friendly information ( <i>right to</i> )	Article 18: Parental responsibilities; state assistance
Article 19: Violence ( <i>protection from</i> )	Article 20: Alternative care ( <i>right to</i> )	Article 21: Adoption

Article 22: Refugee children	Article 23: Children with disabilities	Article 24: Health and health care ( <i>right to</i> )
Article 25: Review of treatment in care ( <i>right to</i> )	Article 26: Social security ( <i>right to</i> )	Article 27: Adequate standard of living ( <i>right to</i> )
Article 28: Free education ( <i>right to</i> )	Article 29: Goals of education	Article 30: Protection of children of minorities/indigenous groups
Article 31: Leisure, play and culture ( <i>right to</i> )	Article 32: Child labour	Article 33: Drug abuse ( <i>protection from</i> )
Article 34: Sexual exploitation ( <i>protection from</i> )	Article 35: Abduction, sale and trafficking ( <i>protection from</i> )	Article 36: Other forms of exploitation ( <i>protection from</i> )
Article 37: Detention and punishment	Article 38: War and armed conflicts	Article 39: Rehabilitation of child victims
Article 40: Children in trouble with the law	Article 41: Respect for superior national standards	Article 42: Informing about children's rights