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March 3, 2022

Published at: <https://oxfamapps.org/fp2p/a-climate-plea-an-ipcc-special-report-on-children/>

Whether you have one or not, impacts on children often invoke the strongest feelings in times of crisis, be it the recent flood victims of Madagascar or the civilian casualties of the Russian invasion of Ukraine. But another thing we know about children is that they can be powerful drivers of change, from Malala Yousafzai to Greta Thunberg. Given children's enormous stake in the climate crisis – and their powerful voice – surely the IPCC should be able to tell us more about the impacts on and potential actions for and by under 18s. No? Why not?

The [latest IPCC climate report](#) was released this week and its findings reveal that impacts are not even. Children are being impacted now and over their lifetimes – especially girls, those with disabilities, indigenous children and those living in lower-income communities and countries. This is both worrying and evocative, but despite the report's encouraging synthesis of efforts to adapt to climate change, it says little about the successes or potential of engaging children in these responses.

“where a choice has to be made between which of two school-going children would miss school to queue for aid, it is always the girl child who does the queuing because normally they have responsibility for cooking and general household duties.” Quote from [research by adolescent girls](#) from Chiredzi, Zimbabwe

Let's imagine what would happen if we actually asked kids to help decide on the backdrop to the rest of their lives – we doubt that many would choose contexts of unmanageable extreme

weather or mass extinctions. The youth climate movement has become a powerful voice for climate justice, and this is inextricably linked to children's rights, including their rights to participate meaningfully in decisions that affect them.

So why doesn't the IPCC have so much to say on the children as agents of change? Three reasons and areas for action:

Researchers have to take some of the blame: the IPCC doesn't **do** research –they summarise the findings of other scientific evidence. Are we researching and publishing enough reports focusing on children – from impacts to adaptation with a child-centred lens? The results of a recent [literature review](#) suggests that plenty has been published, but also that there are major research gaps. Funders should be turning their attention to this challenge and the [adaptation research community](#) needs to promote action research that engages under 18s and adolescents [as researchers rather than research subjects](#).

Or is there not enough priority given to child-centred climate action? A 2021 UNICEF [discussion paper](#) showed that although 72% of national climate plans include child-sensitive words, only 12% mention that the process of developing them actually involved children. We need more recognition that children are a key stakeholder in climate action. . Doing so means breaking down the [barriers to participation](#) that children and young people themselves identify, both their own capacities and the enabling environment to listen and take on board their views. These decisions are about the next 60+ years of *their* lives – they have a right to participate in how we prevent climate change, how we adapt and how we tackle the losses that we can't adapt to.

we call on the national governments that direct the IPCC to recognise the importance of children and future generations by commissioning an IPCC Special Report on Children and Climate Change

'Please listen to us and give additional importance to our voice. We promise you to become part of the solution.' Diya 16-year-old girl Bangladesh

Finally, the IPCC process itself can wake up to the needs and voices of children. The 3675 pages of the new report is daunting to experts, but are the cornerstone of evidence-based decision making. . IPCC should consider how they might involve children in the framing and dissemination of reports. Specifically, we call on the national governments that direct the IPCC to recognise the importance of children and future generations by commissioning an IPCC Special Report on Children and Climate Change. This can synthesise not only the evidence of impacts on children, but also evidence of their agency to understand and take action on climate change.

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