



Call to action!

Strengthen inclusive education for sustainable development using the Child and Youth Agency Framework

Part 2

How to apply the Child and Youth Agency Framework (CYAF) to enrich the quality of education for sustainable development

Support to integrate UN General Comment 26: Child Rights, Environment and Climate Change into your routine climate change teaching and learning, and support learners make a submission by 14 February 2023



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Save the Children

FutureLife-Now!



Part 2:

How to use the CYAF to enrich the curriculum to develop agency to address climate change

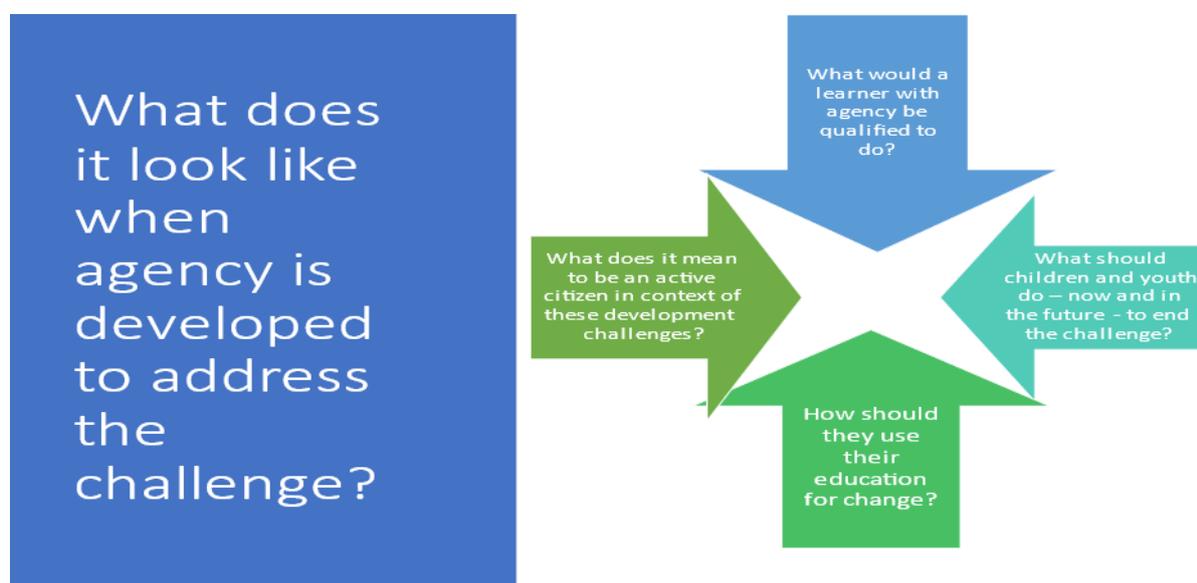
Climate change is one of the most pressing development challenges that has been created by human behaviour and can only be addressed by changing the behaviour of all individuals, families, communities and businesses and governments.

Achieving this transformation will only be possible if every child is empowered to change their behaviour, advocate for and ensure changes in decisions and behaviour of their peers, families, schools, communities, businesses and governments.

The education sector is responsible for developing the agency of every child to address climate change through their individual and collective actions, now and in the future. It is required to do so by providing climate change education that will develop learner agency to bring about change.

But, to what end, what should that climate change education look like and what outcomes should be achieved?

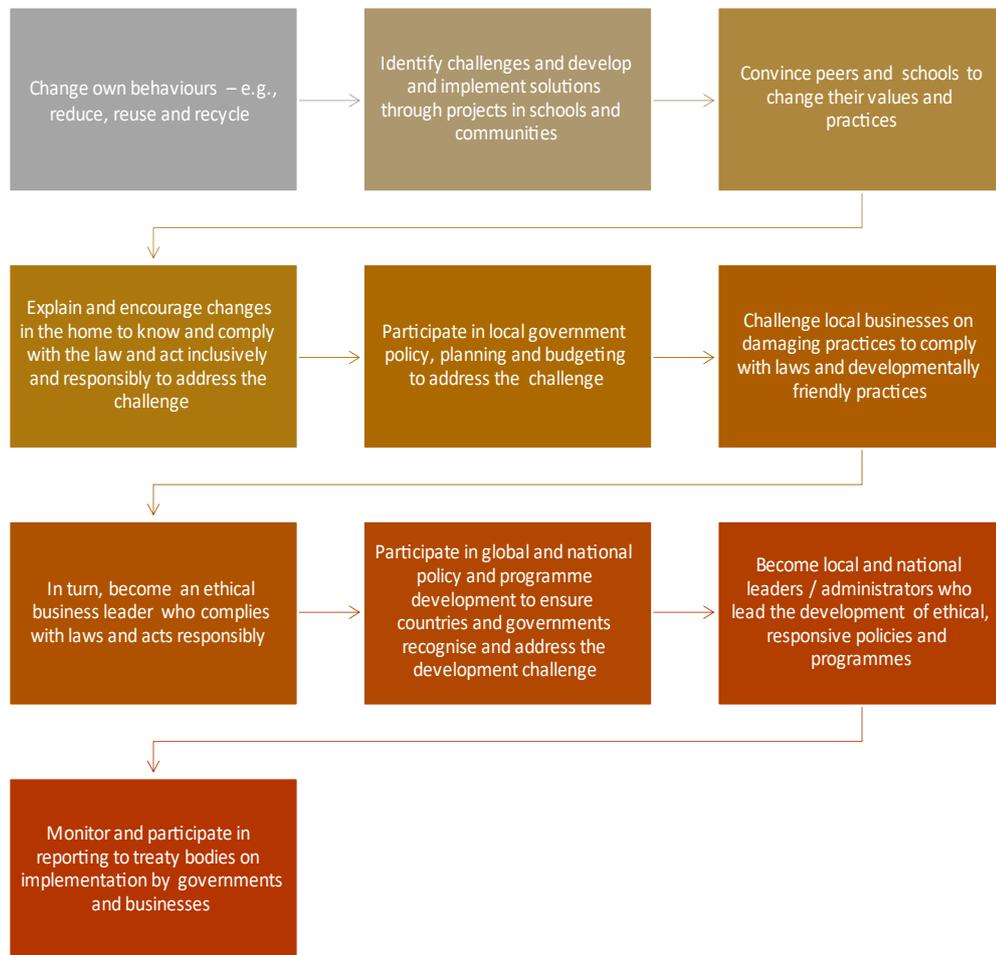
What do we mean by *developing agency for addressing climate change*?



- What are the educational outcomes that must be achieved to develop agency for climate change?
- What must the education sector prepare children to do?

The answer depends on what we expect children to do with their climate change education: *what do we mean when we talk of children as agents of change?* Because this is what education for sustainable development must prepare them for.

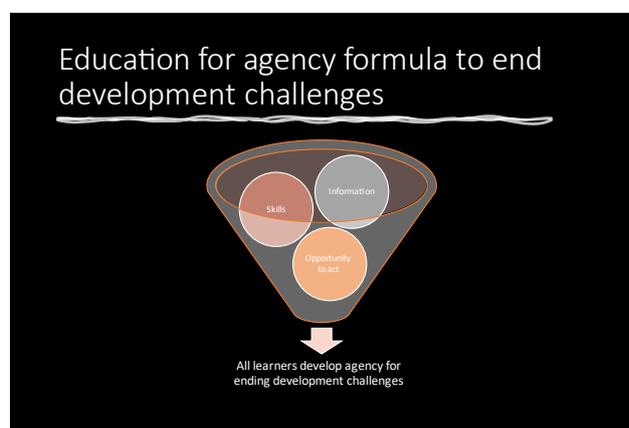
By *children as agents of change*, we mean children now and as future adults who will:



How to strengthen the quality of education to develop agency for climate change?

To ensure every child learns and graduates with the knowledge, skills and competencies to be agents of change in all these capacities, *all schools should provide quality climate change teaching and learning that includes:*

1. *Information, not just on the science of climate change, but all information necessary to enable them to act*



across the transformational continuum, including:

- The science of climate change.
 - The causes of climate change and the intersecting risks that make climate change especially challenging for marginalised children and communities (e.g. the intersecting risks of poverty, gender inequality, economic, civic and political exclusion and climate change).
 - Consequences of climate change for people, countries and the region.
 - Evidence of what works to address the causes.
 - Policies and laws governing environmental rights and responsibilities.
 - The rights and responsibilities of all, including children, schools, communities, businesses and government agencies to engage in environmentally sustainable practices.
 - Processes and platforms that are available for participating in the development policies, laws and programmes at school, community, national, regional and global levels.
 - Platforms and processes for monitoring, reporting and holding role-players accountable.
2. *The development of their competencies, capacities and skills to use information for change, including:*
- Research, analysis and evidence-based writing to support a position.
 - Evidence based planning and monitoring and documenting changes.
 - Communicating for change at an individual, policy, and political levels.
 - Debating skills.
 - Project management.
 - Leadership skills.
 - Advocacy capacity.
 - Self-confidence.
 - Computer and technology skills.
 - Conflict resolution.
3. *Application through the identification and integration of opportunities to use information and skills to bring about change into teaching and learning, for example:*
- Integrating opportunities to make a change into routine subject content and projects, for instance:
 - Develop an environmentally sustainable business plan as part of business management studies.
 - Develop environmentally friendly infrastructure as a science project.
 - As a civic education assignment, draft a submission to government on what a policy should include.
 - Draft a submission to the African Union or the United Nations (UN) on government and business compliance with responsibilities.

- Enabling the exercise of agency by establishing extra-curricular programmes, such as debating clubs, climate change peer groups or climate change projects.
- Including children in school governance and planning for environmentally sustainable policies and practices.

Current opportunity to develop and exercise agency: Children’s participation in development of UN General Comment 26

The UN is currently developing General Comment (GC) 26 on Children’s Rights and the Environment with a Special Focus on Climate Change.

GC 26 will provide authoritative guidance to governments and other role-players on how children’s rights are impacted by the environmental crisis. It will provide a statement of what governments must do to protect children’s rights through effective policies, laws, programmes, budgets and other measures to address climate change. Governments and their partners (business, development agencies and civil society) will have to take these measures and report on implementation and improvements in addressing climate change and protecting children’s rights.

The UN has established a process to ensure children are meaningfully and sustainably involved in the development of GC 26.

Integrate the GC 26 process into teaching and learning

This is a key example of an opportunity that could be integrated into the routine teaching and learning at every school in the SADC Region to develop and enable the exercise of agency by children to address climate change.

What is the GC 26 process and how can it be integrated into teaching and learning—the process, deadlines and steps?

The United Nations Committee of Experts on the Rights of the Child has created a participatory process for children to share their views and co-develop GC 26. For more information about the process, see: <https://childrightsenvironment.org/consultation/>

The first round of consultations took place in 2022. Children were invited to share their views on the challenges and responses required of countries to address climate change and protect their rights by completing a simple set of questions online. MIET AFRICA and its partner within SADC shared the process and information in an online webinar in 2022.

After receiving children’s inputs, a draft General Comment was developed. **The draft GC 26 has been published, the full draft of which can be viewed at:**

https://childrightsenvironment.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/First-Draft_General-Comment-No.-26_November-2022.pdf

A child-friendly version can also be viewed here: https://childrightsenvironment.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/Child-Friendly-Version_First-Draft-General-Comment-No.-26.pdf

The Committee has invited all children and development partners to comment on the draft by 14 February 2023.

All children should read and comment on the draft GC 26 to learn about this important platform and process and as a way of developing and exercising their agency to address climate change and protect their rights.

Children are invited to review and comment on the draft GC by answering several questions using the online platform made available for this purpose. They can complete the questions as an individual, or as a group.

The questionnaire for individual children's submission and online submission form can be found at:

<https://l4cqlef9g5g.typeform.com/children?typeform-source=childrightsenvironment.org>

Reaching all children: An education for sustainable development imperative

The Committee recognises that many children do not have access to technology, but their voices are also important.

To reach all children, the Committee has called on children, educators, civil society and others to work together to hold workshops with children, teach them about the UN, what a General Comment is, what GC 26 is and why it is important, and invite them to review the draft GC and share their views, which can then be shared online by the workshop organisers who have access to the online platform.

The committee developed a toolkit and a collective online submission form to support children, schools and civil society host consultation workshops and make collective submissions.

The toolkit and collective submission forms can be viewed here:

Toolkit: <https://childrightsenvironment.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/Childrens-Second-Consultation-Toolkit.pdf>

Collective submission form: <https://l4cqlef9g5g.typeform.com/childrentoolkit?typeform-source=childrightsenvironment.org>

Invitation to all schools to integrate GC 26 process into your teaching and learning programme and submit children's inputs by 14 February 2023

This process offers a perfect opportunity to enrich the quality of applied teaching and learning to nurture the agency of every child for addressing climate change.

But this should not be a once-off process; it should be integrated, as one of many similar opportunities, as a form of applied teaching and learning to develop agency for sustainable development by all schools in the SADC region. The GC 26 process provides a great learning opportunity for schools on how to go about identifying and integrating and opportunity to exercise agency into their teaching and learning.

How to integrate the GC 26 process into the climate change curriculum

Use the formula provided in the CYAF. Use the tools provided by the UN to design and run a workshop with children in class, in debating clubs and through peer groups.

The workshop should aim to:

- Provide children with relevant information to enable them to review the document and provide their inputs and recommendations on the draft.
- Support the development of skills to analyse information and translate children's experiences and the impact of climate change on their education and other rights, and to translate this into recommendations for strengthening GC 26.
- Enable every child in your school to contribute their views and opinions to shape GC 26, and in so doing influence the global and ultimately their national legal framework of responsibilities on government and the education sector to prevent climate change and protect their rights.

A 10-step roadmap for setting up the workshop, running it and documenting the inputs and submitting these using the online platform

Teachers should not be alarmed by the process or content. You are not expected to be experts in climate change, the UN or its processes, or the development of submissions. There are many organisations and role players that have this knowledge and skills. Identify your group of co-educators (for example, a local NGO, someone from the Department of Environment, advocacy specialists or a children's rights and participation specialist). As educators, you should be facilitating access to knowledge from a variety of sources: you do not need to be experts in all fields. As a CSTL school, you should aim to be identifying relevant co-educators and bringing them together to complement your role and provide quality, inclusive education to develop agency for addressing development challenges. *This is why a CSTL school is a coordinating hub of quality, inclusive education for transformation.*

1. As a climate change champion, any teacher, learner or youth facilitator can take the lead and champion the development, hosting, facilitating and reporting on the workshop as a form of applied teaching and learning.
2. Read up on the GC 26 process using the links provided to get more information about the UN, the GC process, the draft GC, the questions that have been posed to guide the review and submissions by children.
3. Secure school management's support for the workshop as an important process to develop agency for climate change.
4. Identify a small group of climate change champions within the school community.

This could include learners who are already studying environmental management, or who are running climate change clubs or peer groups, or teachers teaching environmental management, science, agriculture, civic education or related subjects.

5. Convene a meeting of the climate change champions, share information about the process and plan the workshop.
 - Identify a date and time, preferably during the school day, so that as many children as possible can join.
 - Identify a venue. If possible, this should be a school classroom with access to a computer and the internet so that you can share information about the process by accessing the UN and other supporting websites.
 - Identify who else needs to be part of the workshop as a co-educator to provide additional support and education, provide an overview of the draft comment, the process and facilitate discussions concerning the issues raised in the questions.
 - Invite the co-educators to be part of the workshop.
 - Develop a workshop programme using the tools provided by the UN, available through the links provided above, and agree on the roles and responsibilities of the co-educators.
6. Share the child-friendly version of the draft GC26 provided by the UN and the questions that have been asked with all children together with an invitation to the workshop. Ask them to read the draft GC and think about the questions and join the workshop to share their views.
7. Host the workshop and facilitate children's deliberations on the questions and the documentation of their replies.
8. Ask the workshop participants to share their learning experiences from the workshop, for example:
 - What new information did they learn?
 - What new skills did they develop?
 - Did they feel empowered to use information to bring about change, and if so, what change they believe they can contribute to and how they will use this information to be agents of climate change?
 - How can this kind of process be used more regularly as a form of applied learning?
9. Consolidate their inputs and use the online platform to submit their responses.

Ideally you should invite children who participated in the workshop to work with the co-educators in a submission working group to consolidate the information, document it and upload it using the electronic platform provided by the UN.
10. The same submission working group can develop a workshop report to be shared with all participants and other education role players in the country and in the SADC Region.

The report should include:

- The objectives of the workshop.
- The programme.

- The process followed in making the workshop a formal part of the applied teaching and learning process.
- The process followed to secure buy-in and participation of educators and co-educators, as well as learners.
- The number, ages, sex and special learning needs of the participants.
- A summary of the workshop proceedings.
- A summary of the workshop's outcomes, answers to the questions and recommendations.
- The process for documenting and submitting the workshop outcomes.
- The plans for following up on the process through the school as a coordinating hub of the group of co-educators that came together to support the workshop.
- The lessons learnt for strengthening teaching and learning for developing agency of children to address development challenges such as climate change.