



Briefing and Input

SB60 & the Expert Dialogue on Children and Climate Change
Submitted by IUCN CEC with EARTHDAY.ORG

Submitted by:

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Nature-based Education and Climate Education are whole-of-society policy solutions that address the disproportionate impacts of climate change on children

Other Parties and nongovernmental organizations have elaborated why and how to use a lens of childrens' experiences when considering adaptation, the just transition, loss and damage, climate finance, and health.

This briefing will focus on **education as a policy solution** to promote equity and environmental justice and address the impacts of climate change on children's health, mental health, future opportunities, and societal-level climate change mitigation and adaptation. The following draws from IUCN CEC's COP28 Technical Brief: [Nature-based Education for Planetary Health](#) and from EARTHDAY.ORG's [Case for Climate Education](#), [NDC Guide to Climate Education](#), and [Climate Education vs. the Climate Crisis](#).

- 1. Connecting children to nature as part of their everyday lives in meaningful ways tends to be a precursor to their growing up as adults with passion and commitment to work actively in support of conservation of the environment and natural resources:** IUCN Resolution [WCC-2012-Res-101-EN Child's right to connect with nature and to a healthy environment](#) observes that there is a significant decline in the quality and quantity of children's direct experience with the natural world as a result of global developments such as urbanization (already 50% of the world population lives in cities, 70% in 2050 according to predictions of the United Nations), biodiversity loss, deforestation, industrialization and environmental degradation. IUCN endorses the child's right to nature and a healthy development as part of the rights-based approach to conservation. Our education systems are a whole-of-society entry point to establishing and nurturing this connection to nature for children.

2. **Academic institutions play a central role in raising this awareness and engaging children and youth around environmental issues, and investments in high-quality Nature-based Education and Climate Education should be prioritized as a climate solution:** IUCN Resolution [WCC-2020-Res-062-EN Role of children and youth in nature conservation](#) acknowledges “the need for children and youth to be aware of environmental issues, to care about and understand them, and to take action” and recognizes the “central role that academic institutions, such as primary schools, secondary schools, colleges, universities and scientific facilities play in raising this awareness and engaging children and youth around environmental issues”, encouraging Members to integrate environmental education into formal curricula and to “increase people's contact with nature and as a strategy to promote knowledge of biodiversity and the physical and mental health of city dwellers, particularly children and youth.”
3. **Climate Education is essential to prepare children for the green economy of the future:** The rising demand for green skills requires governments and schools to act now to ensure green jobs will be filled in the future to help the world achieve net zero by 2050. Children start to make decisions about potential career paths at a young age. To ensure equity, we need to provide all young people with the knowledge and skills they need to benefit from this economic revolution. The transition to a net zero emissions environment by 2050 will create new industries worth \$10.3 trillion to the global economy creating a massive market for green goods and services. According to the World Economic Forum, employers estimate that four in ten workers will need to be reskilled for the green jobs of the future. ([The Case for Climate Education, EARTHDAY.ORG, 2023](#))
4. **Climate education can address the mental health challenges that burden children in an era of climate crisis:** [Students are increasingly anxious](#) about the state of the planet and many are suffering from climate anxiety. By engaging with the topic and using social emotional learning techniques, teachers can play an important role in alleviating this anxiety to support their students' well-being. [A survey of young people](#) ages 16 to 25 from 10 countries, found that more than half felt sadness, anxiety, anger, and guilt about climate change. Directly discussing climate change and using Social Emotional Learning to explore coping strategies can help young people increase positive emotions on the subject. Comprehensive climate education will expand a student's understanding of climate justice and equity through an analysis of how climate change disproportionately impacts women, marginalized communities, and indigenous people.
5. **Greening school grounds is a climate mitigation and adaptation solution for children and communities:** IUCN Resolution [WCC-2016-Res-084-EN Environmental education and how to naturalise the spaces in educational centres](#) urges Members to promote curriculum development that brings learners as close as possible to natural environments, and to restore and create natural settings as places for learning, and calls on State members to make children's day-to-day environment, especially schools, as natural as possible in order to promote connection with nature, particularly in urban areas, so that children grow up in contact with nature, aware of the benefits that nature and its conservation provide them with as part of their personal development. Green school grounds and learning in, with, from nature supports children's connection to the natural world, safeguarding of nature and uptake of Nature-based

solutions. Green school grounds also serve to promote climate resiliency in communities and cities, as urban green space promotes cleaner and cooler air and the return of local biodiversity. [The Greening School Grounds and Outdoor Learning International Partnership](#), of which IUCN CEC is a part, consolidates and promotes evidence and resources for school greening.

6. **Nature-based Education is an integral and multi-beneficial way to address climate change, biodiversity loss, and social inequities:** Nature-based Education has proven benefits for learning outcomes, human health, and planetary health ([Children & Nature Network](#)). Formal education systems that include nature-based education also benefit from increased graduation rates and improved academic outcomes. It is an approach that bridges climate and biodiversity education as well as a living systems and relational approach to learning with nature at the core.
7. **Integrating Climate Education into NDCs is imperative for the full implementation of Article 12 and will support long-term national strategies towards carbon neutrality, including preparing students for the green jobs of the future:** Updating NDCs prior to COP30 to include Climate Education demonstrates a commitment to providing young people with access to quality climate education to address the impacts of the climate crisis on children. Climate education NDCs ([Climate Education NDC Guide](#)) provide a framework for countries to incorporate climate education into their formal curriculum, increase teacher capacity, and provide the possibility of organizational support and resources to reach program objectives.

Background of the SB60 Expert Dialogue on Children and Climate Change

The Chair of the Subsidiary Body for Implementation (SBI) of the UNFCCC has been tasked with holding an Expert Dialogue on Children and Climate Change at the [UNFCCC Bonn Climate Change Conference in June 2024 \(SB 60\)](#). This Dialogue will be historic, as the first such dialogue in the 30 year history of the UNFCCC.

The SBI Chair has invited Parties, relevant United Nations entities, international and non-governmental organizations to share their experience in, and examples of, the disproportionate impacts of climate change on children and relevant policy solutions, as early as possible, and no later than three weeks before the dialogue. Inputs should be submitted to the SBI chair by email through the secretariat to mnavi@unfccc.int.

IUCN Commission on Education and Communication

- [The International Union for Conservation of Nature \(IUCN\)](#) is a membership Union uniquely composed of both government and civil society organisations. By harnessing the experience, resources and reach of its more than 1,400 Member organisations and the input of 16,000 Commission experts, IUCN is the global authority on the status of the natural world and the measures needed to safeguard it.
- [IUCN's Commission on Education and Communication \(CEC\)](#) is a voluntary network of 1,500 experts around the world that uses creative communication and education tools and approaches to raise awareness and inspire action to conserve nature.

EARTHDAY.ORG

- [EARTHDAY.ORG's](#) mission is to diversify, educate and activate the environmental movement worldwide. Growing out of the first Earth Day in 1970, EARTHDAY.ORG is the world's largest recruiter to the environmental movement, working with more than 150,000 partners in over 192 countries to drive positive action for our planet. EARTHDAY.ORG is an IUCN Member organization based in Washington, D.C.