



The Futures of ACE

Joint Action for Climate Empowerment (ACE) Policy Paper on the Midterm Review of the Glasgow Work Programme and the new ACE Action Plan

Joint Action for Climate Empowerment (ACE) Submission

In response to FCCC/SBI/2022/L.23, paragraph 8, and FCCC/SBI/2025/L.9, paragraph 4 and 5, we are pleased to share our inputs and views towards the midterm review of the Glasgow Work Programme on ACE and its Action Plan to be conducted via technical workshops as well as for the 2026 ACE Dialogues.

Recalling the previous Dialogues and Action Plan, we appreciate the important attention that has been dedicated to the intergenerational and youth inclusion components of the current Action Plan. The Glasgow Work Programme emphasizes the important role of "*acknowledging the growing interest and engagement of [add: children] youth in climate action and their critical role as agents of change*" and "*calls for further enhancement of youth participation in climate change processes*". As complemented by paragraph 14 of the Glasgow Work Programme, we encourage Parties to continue supporting the focus and integration of intergenerational collaboration in the next iteration of the ACE Action Plan.

We emphasize that ACE plays a fundamental role in empowering every community member to implement climate solutions. It offers a supportive mechanism for achieving adaptation, mitigation, and loss and damage, serving as a vehicle for mobilizing and scaling solutions. It also facilitates knowledge exchange that is critical to cementing change in the long-term and at the time scales of which the Paris Agreement and Convention adhere to.

Meaningful, long-term climate action begins with equipping all children and young people with the knowledge, agency, and competencies to shape resilient and just futures. This requires financing that matches claimed ambition, education systems that do not overlook the intersection of intergenerational justice and gender equality, Indigenous Peoples Rights, peoples with disabilities, and marginalized communities.

A fully implemented ACE Work Programme would enable community members in all their diversities and policymakers to act together, strengthen climate-literate workforces, build adaptive communities, and foster a more conscious, empathetic society capable of making holistic decisions. Delivering this vision demands collaboration across sectors and a commitment to ensuring no child or young person is left behind in the transition to a climate-resilient world.

In service of co-creation, we undertook a visioning exercise with 200 children and youth around the world to understand their image of an ACE Work Programme that meets their needs and inform the content of this submission. We invite you to explore their ideas as part of the Annex.

Though we recognize that some parties may feel there is an out-sized role of intergenerational collaboration as part of ACE implementation, we maintain that such collaboration and commitments are fundamental to ensuring climate action is forward-looking and grounded in the realities of those most impacted by the outcomes.

It is in this context that we offer the following inputs towards the review of the Work Programme, negotiations for the new ACE Action Plan and the upcoming technical workshops.

Revising the ACE Work Programme

The Glasgow Work Programme, complemented by its complementary Action Plan, acknowledges the role of (children and) young people as agents of change. Further, as supported by the ACE Dialogues, numerous examples and best practices have been shared towards this outcome. However, children and young people are still ill-equipped with the long-term thinking, agency skills, and supportive systems needed to equally participate in decision-making and shape meaningful change in their communities. This gap is compounded by the lack of institutionalized child and youth-sensitive protocols, as well as age-appropriate participation mechanisms.

A persistent challenge lies in the area of tools and support, particularly the ongoing gap in climate finance for ACE. This gap was reflected once again in the COP28 outcome, underscoring the need for more robust and predictable resourcing. The Glasgow Work Programme offers strategies to help address this deficit, and Parties could draw inspiration from other processes, such as the Belém Gender Action Plan which includes stronger hooks for financing and implementation, to reinforce ACE's financial foundations.

There also is the question of how climate science could be more effectively integrated into ACE and its mandates. Given the increasing politicisation and attacks on climate science across political landscapes and negotiation spaces, strengthening its role within the ACE framework could help reinforce evidence-based decision-making, accessibility of the latest available science and build public trust. Embedding climate science literacy may offer pathways on this.

To enhance coordination and coherence across the UNFCCC, Parties may revisit the proposal for ACE Youth Focal Points, which could serve as structured interfaces between national processes and child- and youth organisations.

Additionally, cross-pillar dialogues, e.g. between ACE, adaptation, mitigation, finance and technology, could help mainstream ACE principles.

Strengthening knowledge exchange between National Gender and Climate Change Focal Points, ACE Focal Points, and the LCIPP bodies would further support this integration, building on linkages already referenced in the GAP and the ELWP.

The revised interaction of the Glasgow Work Programme should recognise all age groups equally. This also means acknowledging and referencing children as this is currently not the case e.g. in the preambular text (para 4; para 8). Preferably, it would read 'all children and youth' to ensure inclusivity.

Similarly, obligations on human rights, the right to health, the rights of Indigenous Peoples, migrants, women, children, persons with disabilities and people in vulnerable situations and the right to development, as well as gender equality, empowerment of women and intergenerational

equity must be maintained, not only as preambular but also in operational text. And accordingly, the whole Work Programme as well as the new Action Plan should always refer to “all women”, or preferably “all women and girls”, building on previously agreed language from the Paris Agreement.

Further, the COP decision on ACE shall feature expressing appreciation for the engagement of civil society organisations to ensure stronger, effective and meaningful participation of all children and youth in meetings and processes of the Framework Convention and ongoing initiatives, such as the Climate Youth Negotiators Programme and the Capacity-Building for Negotiators (CB4N) Initiative.

The ACE Action Plan

We emphasize the important role of the ACE Action Plan in empowering efforts to implement ACE, which was a glaring gap in the Doha Work Programme. We emphasize the importance of revising and adopting the new ACE Action Plan to enable continued implementation efforts and encourage Parties to adopt an inclusive protocol that enables participation of all, with a special focus on children and youth and age-appropriate methods, such as through additional technical workshops, for delivery of an ambitious and implementable Action Plan at COP31.

Inputs for the Workshop at SB64 & Annual ACE Dialogue

The ACE pillar is known for being inclusive and collaborative between Party and non-party stakeholders. In particular, the design of the workshops to inform the ACE Action Plan, which utilized a World Cafe and knowledge exchange between Parties and non-party stakeholders, should be repeated. Further, the opportunity to contribute for online participants, such as through virtually facilitated sessions using Miro Boards alongside ZOOM platform should be explored to ensure equitable access to those who are not able to attend the SBs in person (often due to visa restrictions).

We recommend that the ACE Dialogues and Review of the Work Programme begin with a visioning exercise to set the tone and the opportunity for the future the next 5 years of ACE can help create.

As it relates to youth delegates, we appreciate the contributions and opportunities for young people as facilitated by the ACE Youth Exchange. We acknowledge that many participants in this program are not supported to participate in the duration of the SBs beyond their role in the Exchange. Given the technical training provided to participants and the knowledge they bring to the Youth Hub, we encourage the Secretariat and those funding their participation to shift the guidelines and enable their participation in the ACE Dialogues, technical workshops, and Work Programme review. Further, we emphasize the importance of bringing in additional child and youth experts from non-party stakeholder organizations, including those represented here, to offer guidance, mentorship, and support for these delegates in order to create a cycle and follow-up mechanism that enables their long-term engagement beyond the Hub.

Here we emphasise on the importance of meaningful inclusion throughout the processes and exchanges beyond tokenistic representation. Examples for methods and best practices could be

drawn e.g. from UNICEF’s Resources for Meaningful Youth Engagement¹ and UNDP’s Guide ‘Aiming Higher: Elevating Meaningful Youth Engagement for Climate Action’.²

With regards to the badges for the ACE Youth Hub and ACE Dialogue: Currently there are only 2 categories of spots: international youth and youth from North Rhine-Westphalia (NRW). Thus, other German youth would fall under ‘international’, or can’t be represented. This enhances disproportionate engagement, next to an overwhelming representation of Germans, especially from one region, as evidently youth from NRW is very present already in the UNFCCC processes, whereas children and youth from Eastern Germany are much less likely to engage in (international) climate policy. To combat this and enhance public participation of all, we suggest introducing a quota specific for children and youth from the new federal states of Germany (proposal: 10 NRW spots + 10 East Germany spots) in addition to the 25 international spots. Additionally, we suggest that the outreach about this participation format is spread through all school forms (in NRW), with particular focus on immigrant communities, girls, and people with disabilities.

Finally, given the overlap with National Gender and Climate Change Focal Points (NGCCFPs) and National ACE Focal Points, we emphasize the significance of ensuring there is no overlap between the negotiation tracks at the SBs and provision of sizable rooms to allow for the participation of observers including children and youth delegates.

As it relates to proposed questions and format, we offer the following proposed speakers or facilitators as well as a list of guiding questions for running the workshops:

Proposed Speakers and/or Facilitators

- UNFPA Representative;
- Representatives from Care About Climate;
- Representative of the Youth Negotiator Academy (<https://www.youthnegotiators.org/>);
- Representatives of PUSH Sverige;
- Representatives from the disability caucus.

List of Guiding Visioning Questions

- What does intergenerational collaboration look like for your community and/or government?
- What skills, capacities, or resources do you believe children and young people need to lead the transition away from fossil fuels and adaptation initiatives?
- What does a community that is well-informed on climate action and risks look like? What does that enable you to do?
- What changes in education, media, or community spaces would improve public climate awareness and action?

¹ <https://www.unicef.org/youthledaction/resources-meaningful-youth-engagement>

² <https://www.undp.org/publications/aiming-higher-elevating-meaningful-youth-engagement-climate-action>

List of Guiding Dialogue and Workshop Questions

- Children and young people are recognized as agents of change in the ACE track. What is needed to elevate and enhance their participation as part of the next ACE Work Programme?
 - Which institutions or systems (legal, economic, social, educational, political) limit or promote public participation? And, how can the ACE Work Programme serve as a lever for breaking barriers to public participation?
 - Where do you see examples of meaningful participation or effective climate communication? How can this be translated into the Work Programme?
 - Which gaps, challenges and resource constraints (financial, technical, human) have Parties, stakeholders and relevant actors encountered in implementing the Glasgow Work Programme and its ACE Action Plan?
 - Which components, activities or deliverables have been most effective in driving implementation at national and regional levels?
 - How effectively have the annual dialogues, workshops, and reporting processes contributed to progress?
 - Are there specific ACE elements that remain under-addressed or unevenly implemented?
 - What new or evolving needs have emerged due to changing climate realities, technological developments, or social contexts?
 - How well does the current programme support vulnerable groups that are disproportionately impacted by climate change, including children, youth, Indigenous Peoples, women, and people with disabilities?
 - What additional tools, guidance, capacity building or similar resources would help Parties to implement ACE more effectively?
 - What opportunities exist to align ACE efforts with broader UNFCCC processes, inter alia the Global Stocktake, NDCs, NAPs, or the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)?
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JOINT ACTION FOR CLIMATE EMPOWERMENT POLICY PAPER

In accordance with CP.26/Decision 18 paragraph 11 (g) and CP.30/ Decision 3b and FCCC/SBI/2025/L.9 paragraphs 4 and 5. We are pleased to offer the below policy paper to inform the review of the ACE Work Programme and its ACE Action Plan.

Around the world, children and youth shoulder the consequences of the climate crisis without being equipped with the long-term thinking, agency skills and supportive systems needed to equally participate in decision-making and shape meaningful change in their communities. We appreciate the focus of multiple ACE Dialogues on the importance of intergenerational collaboration and we hope many Parties have gathered best practices from them.

At the same time, while we are seeing a growing awareness of the importance of intergenerational collaboration, this has been primarily limited to consultations without sustained funding to support implementation and often a lack of consideration for multidimensional factors, such as children and youth with disabilities, Indigenous children and youth, and disproportionate gendered impact on girls and adolescents.

A future in which climate education, training, public participation, awareness-raising, access to information and international cooperation is ambitious, inclusive, accessible, and properly resourced would look very different from the future we are on the path towards today. All community members as well as policymakers would have the tools to tackle the climate crisis together. Systems would become more flexible and resilient, capable of adapting to emerging issues and ensuring a just transition. Children and youth would feel empowered rather than helpless, able to equally participate in shaping the climate-resilient societies they will inherit.

With this vision in mind, [Alana Institute](#), [Care About Climate](#), [Global Youth Coalition](#), [PUSH Sverige](#), [UNFPA](#), [UNICEF](#) and [YES-Europe](#) have come together ahead of the development of the new Action Plan under the Glasgow Work Programme on Action for Climate Empowerment (ACE), to imagine the futures of education, training, participation and awareness. A youth-led effort to envision the power of ACE and advocate for an ambitious yet implementable Action Plan. We emphasize that meaningful, long-term climate action begins with equipping all children and young people with the knowledge, agency, and competencies to shape resilient and just futures. This requires financing that matches claimed ambition, education systems that do not overlook girls, women, Indigenous Peoples, peoples with disabilities or marginalized communities, and governance models that treat people in all their diversities, especially also children and youth, as equal partners rather than purely as beneficiaries.

The 2022–2026 ACE Action Plan provided a strong foundation for advancing ACE. Building on this progress, we offer the following recommendations for the enhancement of the next ACE Action Plan and acknowledge the important role the Action Plan has played in enabling implementation following the end of the Doha Work Programme.

Recommendations for Implementation of the ACE Elements

The ACE Work Programme offers recommendations for the implementation of the ACE elements. Given the priority areas don't necessarily elevate the specific elements, we offer the following recommendations to build upon ACE implementation efforts in a way that centers intergenerational collaboration and co-creation.

Education

Education is a cornerstone of a climate-resilient society. When climate education is embedded in formal schooling, vocational training, and community learning, citizens gain the skills to anticipate climate risks, contribute to activities that reduce emissions by 51.48 gigatonnes by 2050 as suggested by a 2024 World Bank report³, adopt sustainable practices, and innovate locally. It is essential that education systems are equipped and financed adequately.

Thus, education should strengthen curricula and competences to foster inclusive and resilient societies. Education systems must go beyond knowledge transmission to foster critical thinking, socio-emotional skills, future literacy and systems thinking. Democracy and peace education remain essential for inclusive governance and social cohesion. Interdisciplinary climate education should be integrated into national curricula, alongside strategic public awareness efforts and climate journalism training to promote informed engagement, behavioural change and accountability of all age groups.

Children and young people must be engaged in curriculum design through participatory, age-appropriate methods. When students feel ownership over what they learn, they are more empowered to apply their knowledge in their communities. The contents of climate education must also evolve with society, latest scientific findings, emerging technologies and skills needed in a rapidly changing world. This requires updating both theoretical and practical components of education, ensuring that hands-on learning is relevant, accessible and grounded in reality.

Training

Effective climate action and achieving just transitions demand a profound transformation in how societies learn, teach, and build capacity. Training systems, whether formal, informal, or community-based, must evolve to equip all people with the knowledge, skills, and confidence to navigate climate risks, drive adaptation, and accelerate mitigation. This includes strengthening awareness of local vulnerabilities, interpreting climate information, and addressing systemic drivers of the crisis, from colonial legacies to the psychological impacts of climate change.

Traditional ecological knowledge, developed with and respecting the rights of Indigenous Peoples, is essential for resilience. Activities under ACE must acknowledge the diverse cultural values and knowledge systems of Indigenous Peoples, offering opportunities for co-creation and paying tribute to their cultural memory and stewardship. It is important that intergenerational knowledge-sharing and training integrate the perspectives, needs, lived realities and interests of

³ Sabarwal S, Venegas Marin S, Spivack M, et al. 2024. Choosing Our Future: Education for Climate. Quoted via FCCC/SBI/2025/14, https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/resource/sbi2025_14E.pdf

Indigenous Peoples. It should also inform climate policies and their implementation on national, regional and international level from ACE to e.g. adaptation, mitigation, technology and finance.

Training must help build a more proactive society, one that anticipates risks rather than reacts to them. This involves cultivating futures literacy, the ability to imagine futures that do not yet exist and work backwards to design pathways toward them. It also requires strengthening leadership at the community level and developing soft skills that enhance dialogue, cooperation, and community cohesion. Child- and youth-led efforts have a critical role in shaping these training systems, ensuring that they reflect the diverse experiences and needs of all children and young people.

People must also be prepared for the growing green economy. Training should cover technical skills for renewable energy, sustainable agriculture, circular practices, new technologies, climate-resilient infrastructure, and financial literacy. Many effective programmes already exist, often youth-led, but lack stable funding. Reform does not always require new systems; sometimes it simply requires sustained financial support for those already doing the work. Funders must also back intergenerational learning, recognising that climate education is strongest when entire communities learn together. This applies importantly to local organisations, especially those operating in conflict-affected, high-risk or disaster-affected areas, which require support to safely deliver climate education and training. This includes tailored grants, safety measures, and training in proposal writing, grant management, and reporting. Because accessing funding is a major barrier, practical guidance on securing resources is essential.

Public Awareness

The Work Programme must underscore the importance of elevating public awareness through approaches that reflect the interconnectedness and intersectionality of the climate crisis and its consequences. It is key that all ministries adopt a genuinely multi-sector approach, particularly those responsible for social sectors that shape children’s and youth’s lives. The climate crisis is not a siloed environmental issue, it is deeply cross-cutting and children, youth, Indigenous Peoples, women, girls and people with disabilities sit at the intersection of many of its impacts. This calls for coordinated action across the following sectors: education, health, social protection, environment, gender, and beyond.

Awareness alone is not enough. Behavioral change, incentivizing and encouraging society and businesses to shift norms, habits and expectations in ways that supports long-term climate resilience is important. This could look like raising awareness and expanding training to those who advise the private sector and high-wealth individuals with climate risks training, including accountants, lawyers, and other professions. The ACE Team of the Secretariat has hosted a few preliminary-related efforts, which could be expanded under the Action Plan.

Public Access to Information

Strengthening this ACE element requires not only expanding the availability of information but ensuring that it is accessible, inclusive, evidence-based, science-based, and responsive to the needs of diverse populations, especially children, youth, women and people with disabilities.

Robust, disaggregated data is essential for shaping climate policies that reflect the realities of those most affected. Children face unique and disproportionate risks from climate impacts, yet data specific to their experiences particularly in conflict-affected or climate-crisis regions remains limited. Improving public access to child-focused climate data enables governments, educators, and civil society to design targeted interventions, monitor vulnerabilities, and ensure that children’s rights and needs are fully integrated into climate action.

As AI becomes increasingly integrated into information systems, it must be trained to accurately recognize environmental and climate-related content and avoid amplifying dis/misinformation. But it also has to respect the rights and dignity of all people. Regulations must be put in place to ensure a responsible use of AI, especially the need for clear consent, control over one’s image and protection against misuse. Integrating these principles into climate-focused AI systems strengthens their integrity. When AI tools are built to deliver reliable climate information and to uphold individuals’ rights to their likeness and data, they help safeguard public understanding while reinforcing trust in the broader digital information ecosystem.

Public Participation

Public participation must evolve into a genuinely democratic whole-of-society process where all generations are fully informed and empowered to shape climate policies and budgets. Children and youth are no longer only future leaders, but equal partners whose equal inclusion helps move participation beyond tokenism. A powerful way to do this is through exhilarating the appointment of youth negotiators as equal members of the national delegations, as many Parties are already doing, and extending this to national implementation, such as through the appointment of Youth ACE Focal Points and Climate Councils.

As especially in villages awareness of climate processes remains low, similar to their engagement, it is crucial to strengthen the role of local governments and local communities. Strengthening co-governance structures, along with training that enables people of all ages to participate meaningfully in decision-making, creates the conditions for shared responsibility and long-term accountability. Embedding these approaches across whole-of-government systems ensures that climate action reflects lived realities, not just negotiated text, and that communities can actively shape the decisions that determine their future.

International Cooperation

International cooperation is essential for advancing ACE. Developing countries as well as grassroots, Indigenous, women, child and youth climate advocates, particularly those most affected by the climate crisis, face significant challenges in accessing financial support. International funds exist to launch climate projects, but the structure of grants often reflects colonial legacies: They are difficult to access, overly bureaucratic, and rarely designed with grassroots communities in mind. Decolonizing grant-making is therefore essential. Grant-based

(public) funding must be accessible, flexible, and responsive to the realities of grassroots actors who are already driving climate solutions on the ground.

At the same time, ACE implementation must guard against greenwashing and disinformation. As more actors become involved, transparency and accountability are essential to ensure that international cooperation genuinely advances climate empowerment rather than diluting it. Meaningful child and youth inclusion in global governance and decision making spaces is critical to maintaining integrity and ensuring policies remain grounded in intergenerational equity, gender justice and lived experiences.

Timeline and Modalities of the ACE Action Plan

The new ACE Action Plan must embrace a 5-year vision that elevates climate education, public participation, access to information, training, awareness-raising and international cooperation to the level of urgency the global climate context demands. ACE has a reputation for an inclusive, constructive approach, and we hope this will continue to be the case this year. We recommend a continued focus on inclusive workshops, visioning exercises, and collaborative design. Further, given the significant time spent on identifying the core priority areas, we emphasize the importance of maintaining the priorities under the Action Plan and the Work Programme.

Proposed Activities to Enhance the ACE Action Plan

Over the last three years, each of the ACE Annual Reports identified gaps, opportunities to strengthen our collective work, and best practices. Our proposed recommendations for the strengthening of ACE and its role as a lever for change towards keeping 1.5 degrees within reach build upon these outcomes. Further, we encourage Parties to look to the reports for inspiration and guidance in developing the next phase of ACE activities.

Policy Coherence

The ACE Action Plan promotes the mainstreaming of ACE across the UNFCCC. The next ACE Action Plan should continue to bring together constituted bodies and could expand its efforts to offer training on the integration of ACE elements in the context of their work as well as to co-facilitators, ensuring efforts to engage with ACE are reflected in both directions. Parties should also be encouraged to submit ACE-related inputs into UNFCCC constituted body processes, including the Standing Committee on Finance.

Parties should be encouraged to strengthen national- and local-level coherence on ACE across governance and ACE-implementing organizations. This could be supported by the development of ACE-related guidelines for NDCs, NAPs, reporting on national communications, and other relevant commitments, the implementation of analyses and assessments that map key sectors and institutions critical to ACE implementation.

Further, though many parties are implementing ACE activities, participation remains fragmented and information integrity challenges are complicating effective implementation. Enhancing commitments to raising awareness of scientific climate action and adaptation solutions within and beyond government representatives is essential for coherent climate policy design.

Coordinated Action

Coordinated action is required to inform parties about the disproportionate impacts of climate change on children and youth, girls and women, Indigenous Peoples as well as persons with disabilities, to ensure effective multi-level and multi-stakeholder collaboration, and to set strong national baselines for inclusive implementation of ACE. The ACE Action Plan can support the coordinated collection of disaggregated global age-, disability- and gender-disaggregated data, ensure information integrity, and inform NDCs and NAPs about the socioeconomic impacts of climate crisis and action specifically on different age groups, and especially children and youth.

The ACE Action Plan must also strengthen coordination between governments, educational institutions, the private sector, NGOs, community leaders and children and youth networks to ensure immediate and effective action. Mutual partnerships between the private sector and civil society can strengthen coordinated action with financial resources stemming from companies, while NGOs provide their expertise, community capacity and outreach to ignite change. These could emerge as part of renewed commitments to National ACE Action Plans that enable partnership, reduce fragmentation and duplication, and support non-party stakeholders who often take on a bulk of ACE-implementation in meaningful coordination. Meaning, private sector and green industries must co-invest in education and training pipelines. Though we are seeing a shift towards climate change education worldwide, we are also seeing increased efforts to roll back climate education. The ACE Action Plan has the opportunity to enable recommitments to climate education and expand its role in the just transition, potentially through dialogues or knowledge exchanges between rights-holders, Parties, and other relevant stakeholders on the future of education, especially considering nature based education.

The 2022-2026 ACE Action Plan commits to "*Meaningfully including youth in and engaging with them on climate action at all levels and facilitating the inclusive participation of, inter alia, children.*" There is an opportunity to move from engagement to decision-making by establishing and appointing Youth ACE Focal Points and/or encouraging parties to establish Children and Youth Climate Councils composed of child- and youth-led organizations that can help collect data, drive implementation of ACE to all types of community members, and ensure climate education and training meets the needs of the upcoming generations.

Finally, the Annual Reports identified a critical gap in commitments to ensure climate information meets those most vulnerable to climate change. Building connections between ACE and the implementation of early warning systems, such as through including ACE representatives on the Adaptation Committee, promoting knowledge-exchanges, co-creation or within the framework for advancing early warning systems, is essential to ensure those most in need have access to the information. Further, specific commitments to awareness-raising, translating material and providing child-friendly versions could enhance the effectiveness of ACE implementation, especially as it relates to information regarding climate risks and adaptation solutions.

Tools and Support

The new Action Plan must provide effective and well resourced tools and support to strengthen ACE implementation from grassroots to international levels. Here, women, children, youth, and

Indigenous Peoples should continue to be recognised as rightsholders and agents of change, ensuring equitable access to climate benefits and meaningful public engagement in climate policies and action. It requires multi-stakeholder partnerships and explicit recognition of all children, youth, Indigenous Peoples and women in all their diversities as key actors whose participation is essential for equitable climate benefits and meaningful public engagement. These actors, especially from developing countries, also need consistent support, long-term financial investments and multilateral platforms for sharing knowledge so that ACE elements become integral to national development strategies and environmental agreements, rather than an afterthought. Training tools should build practical skills for climate resilience, including risk assessment, adaptation, mitigation, and community-based collaboration. Climate literacy and systems thinking should be introduced early so learners understand how environmental, social, economic and political systems interact and how today's decisions shape future outcomes. Accordingly, interdisciplinary, multi-sectoral climate education must be embedded in national curricula so that all people understand how the climate crisis affects their lives and communities. Education systems should also equip them with skills relevant to emerging green jobs. Further, to build climate leadership requires ongoing professional development for engaging with updated climate science, digital technology and modern teaching methods, and sustained investments in climate-smart education systems for educators and administrators.

An important tool to enhance public awareness and accountability is engagement of media. Networks of journalists should be trained in climate reporting and recognizing climate dis/misinformation. Building on this, strategic campaigns and accessible forms of coverage, including but not limited to multilingual materials and content tailored to different levels of literacy and age groups, could help translate climate science into information all people can understand and act upon. Together, these efforts support a coordinated media awareness initiative designed to capture broad public attention and shift public discourse toward constructive climate actions.

Monitoring, Evaluation, and Reporting

There is a growing need for comprehensive data on the effectiveness of the Work Programme and its Action Plan as well as on its implementation. Under the current Action Plan annual reports are mandated, however, just a concerningly small number of Parties reports on their progress of implementation. Here, we suggest additional capacity building and awareness around monitoring, evaluation and reporting techniques. This process should especially include evaluation of climate education, training initiatives and meaningful participation, and publication of according results. It is imperative that the data collected is as disaggregated as possible, especially by age, gender, race and existence of disability in order to ensure that the most vulnerable are being prioritized in ACE related action. Public access to such evidence supports better programme design, strengthens accountability, and demonstrates the value of investing in climate literacy. Continued research, particularly on pedagogical approaches, learning outcomes, and long-term impacts, is required to support Parties and non-state actors to refine their strategies and scale successful models.

Proposed text for a new 5-year ACE Action Plan under the Glasgow Work Programme

Priority Area A: Policy Coherence				
Activities	Responsible	Timeline	Deliverable	Level
<p><i>[Maintain]</i> A.1 Strengthening coordination of ACE work under the UNFCCC.</p>	Secretariat	Ongoing	<i>[Maintain]</i> Identifying good practices for integrating the six ACE elements into the work of the UNFCCC constituted bodies and reporting thereon in the annual summary report under the Glasgow Work Programme.	International
	<p>Leading: Constituted bodies</p> <p>Contributing: Secretariat</p>	Ongoing	[New] ACE-related inputs are submitted to UNFCCC constituted body processes, including the Standing Committee on Finance	International
	<p>Leading: Constituted bodies, Parties</p>	Ongoing	[New] Constituted bodies ensure ACE expertise among members, expert groups and observers, and include information on this in their regular reports taking into account relevant milestones, reporting and communication cycles.	International
	<p>Leading: Secretariat</p>	Ongoing	[New] As part of their induction, all new members of constituted bodies and Chairs or facilitators overseeing work programmes are introduced to the importance of ACE in the context of their work and capacity-building is provided on request and subject to the availability of resources.	International
<p>[New] Strengthen institutional and individual capacity within national and sub-national governments for planning, mainstreaming, implementing, monitoring, reporting and evaluating ACE activities in national climate</p>	<p>Secretariat</p> <p>Contributing: Parties, relevant organisations</p>	2031	Technical workshop on best practices, learnings and implementation gaps of ACE activities.	International
	Secretariat	Ongoing	Development of guidelines for mainstreaming ACE elements into climate policies, NDCs,	International, national

change policies, plans, strategies and action.	Contributing: relevant organisation, UN agencies		NAPs, and other relevant UNFCCC processes as well as national plans, strategies and activities.	
[New] Enhance capacity-building for governments, including but not limited to members of parliament and Ministers, and other relevant stakeholders, on collection and use of age-, disability-, and gender- disaggregated and intersectional data to inform gender-responsive climate policies, plans, strategies and action that address the multidimensional vulnerabilities of girls, young people and persons with disabilities shaped by social, cultural, racial, economic and environmental factors, tailored to national and local contexts.	Leading: Secretariat Contributing: Parties, relevant organisations	Ongoing	Establishing a centralized, easily accessible knowledge-sharing platform, next to national evidence-base, where Parties, civil society, and ACE focal points can exchange best practices on inclusive climate action.	
	Leading: ACE FPs Contributing: relevant organisations, incl. grassroots	Ongoing	Establish capacity building on the creation and usage of disaggregated data in policy making.	Regional, national
	Leading: Secretariat Contributing: Parties, relevant organisations, including grassroots	2028	Global report on the status of age-, disability-, and gender-disaggregated data in climate policy, especially ACE, implementation and its impact on social, cultural, racial, economic and environmental outcomes.	International, national
[New] Ensure systematic integration of ACE considerations with special focus on child-sensitivity and intergenerational collaboration into policies, plans, strategies and actions, including in national and sectoral plans.	Parties	Ongoing	Invites Parties to include such information in regular reports and communications under the UNFCCC process.	International, national
	Parties	2030	Submissions on the implementation of ACE elements in national policies, plans and actions, including but not limited to NAPs and NDCs.	International
	Secretariat	2031	Report on the submissions	International
Priority Area B: Coordinated Action				
Activities	Responsible	Timeline	Deliverable	Level
[Maintain with adjustments] B.2 Promoting the development of regional and local networks and platforms that	Leading: secretariat Contributing: Parties,	Ongoing	[Maintain] Increased peer-to-peer exchange among national ACE focal points about ACE activities carried out at the national level	International, regional

support ACE activities at the regional, national and local level, encouraging the involvement of youth, women, academics, children, people with disabilities, traditional leaders and Indigenous peoples in developing and implementing ACE activities and providing capacity-building in this regard.	national ACE focal points, relevant organizations		through, inter alia, the ACE Dialogues, the regional climate weeks and informal virtual networking meetings organized by the secretariat.	
	Parties	Ongoing	[New] Development of national networks of ACE actors, including children and youth-led organizations, women's organisations, and other stakeholders.	National
[New] Establish multi-sectoral platforms to build awareness and capacity on the impact of climate change on people, with special focus on gender-transformative adaptation, resilience building and protection systems.	Respective UN agencies, esp. UNFPA	2028	Workshops and toolkits for sectors including climate, health, education, gender to address the intersection of climate, gender, SRHR, GBV, harmful practices and climate-resilient social services.	Regional, national
	Respective UN agencies, esp. UNFPA	2027	Workshop on adaptation and resilience building for health sector response including on relevant Belém Adaptation Indicators and aligned to the Belém Health Action Plan.	International, regional, national
	Parties	Ongoing	Raise awareness and enhance access to scientifically accurate information on climate risks, adaptation solutions, and mitigation efforts among urban, rural, and remote-communities, such as through social media, updated websites, and community outreach initiatives.	National, regional
[New] Promote intergenerational leadership by formalizing the role of youth in national climate delegations and advisory bodies, ensuring the inclusion of adolescent girls, persons with disabilities and marginalized children and youth as rightsholders.	Leading: Parties Contributing: Secretariat, national ACE focal points, relevant organizations including youth-led	Ongoing	National children and youth climate councils established with protected seats for representatives from diverse backgrounds.	National
	Parties	Ongoing	Engage youth in country delegations as negotiators and provide respective training to	National, regional

	Contributing: Secretariat, Youth Negotiators Academy and other relevant organisations		ensure meaningful engagement.	
	Parties	Ongoing	Engaging children & youth in national position building and preparing before, during and after UNFCCC conferences.	National, regional
	Parties	Ongoing	Invite parties to establish Youth ACE Focal Points in collaboration with the intergenerational network of actors that can support ACE implementation.	National
[New] Strengthen climate education across formal, non-formal, and informal learning systems by developing shared standards, expanding access to high-quality learning opportunities, and equipping all people with the knowledge and civic skills needed to participate in climate governance.	Leading: Education Ministries, Departments, Agencies Contributing: relevant organisations, educators, children, youth, pedagogist	2029	Establish a comprehensive blueprint for climate education that supports the integration of ACE elements into national curricula and lifelong learning, including the full spectrum of learning (i.e. education curriculum, training for educators, standardized assessments).	National
	Leading: Secretariat	COP33	High-level event on (climate) education	International
	Secretariat UN CC: Learn, IPCC, universities, relevant organisations	2027	Develop and promote accessible online courses, toolkits, and training modules on climate science, adaptation, mitigation, and civic engagement, while ensuring that materials are multilingual, inclusive and accessible for all.	International
	Leading: relevant organisations Contributing: ICJ, OHCHR, CSO	Ongoing	Create programs that help communities understand their rights in governance, rights to e.g. such as one to clean and healthy environment, public participation mechanisms, and pathways to influence climate policy.	National, Regional

<p>[New] Develop and implement coordinated measures to identify, prevent, and counter the spread of climate-related misinformation and disinformation. This includes strengthening regulatory frameworks for AI, supporting responsible and safe digital communication, and empowering the public to critically assess information sources.</p>	<p>Leading: Parties</p> <p>Contributing: relevant organisations, UN agencies</p>	Ongoing	<p>Ensure responsible use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and develop national or regional standards for the ethical use of AI. As well as promote transparency requirements for AI-generated content to prevent manipulation or misleading information about climate change.</p>	National, Regional, International
	<p>Leading: Parties</p> <p>Contributing: educators, journalists, CSO, children & youth</p>	Ongoing	<p>Launch awareness campaigns that explain how climate misinformation spreads and how to recognize it, including but not limited through provision of accessible education materials to strengthen media literacy across different age groups.</p>	
	<p>Leading: Parties</p> <p>Contributing: universities, relevant organisations</p>	Ongoing	<p>Encourage Parties to offer training for communicators, journalists, and public officials on identifying and addressing misinformation.</p>	National, regional
Priority Area C: Tools and Support				
Activities	Responsible	Timeline	Deliverable	Level
<p>[Maintain] C.1 Building and strengthening the capacity and skills of national ACE focal points.</p>	<p>Leading: secretariat</p> <p>Contributing: Parties, national ACE focal points, relevant organizations</p>	Ongoing	<p>[Maintain with adjustments] Providing capacity-building opportunities <u>and resources</u> for national ACE focal points, including at the ACE Dialogues and the regional climate weeks.</p>	International, regional
	<p>Secretariat, national ACE FPs, relevant organisations</p>	Annual	<p>[New] Host an annual virtual Workshop on best practices and tools to strengthen the role of new ACE FPs.</p>	International
	<p>SCF, operating entities of the Financial Mechanism and other multilateral development banks,</p>	Ongoing	<p>[New] Provision of funding for national ACE FPs to enable participation at UNFCCC conferences and relevant events/ meetings</p>	International

	financial institutions, Secretariat			
	Leading: Secretariat Contributing: Parties civil society organisations	2028	[New] Establish an institutional support system for offering technical expertise for the coordination and implementation of national ACE plans	International
	Parties, ACE FPs	Ongoing	[New] Strengthening collaboration between ACE Focal Points, relevant Ministries and civil society organisations to promote cross-sectoral action	National
[Maintain with adjustments] C.2 Meaningfully including youth in and engaging with them on climate action at all levels and facilitating the inclusive participation of, inter alia, children, women, Indigenous peoples and persons with disabilities, in climate action and policy processes, according to national circumstances.	Relevant organizations, Parties	Ongoing	[Maintain with adjustments] Providing capacity-building opportunities for children and youth with a focus on decision-making and implementing climate action at the national and international level according to national circumstances	International, regional
	Leading: secretariat, relevant organizations Contributing: children, youth and child- & youth organizations	Ongoing	[Maintain with adjustments] Providing well-resourced opportunities for children and youth to present at ACE Dialogues and regional climate weeks to highlight the leadership role that children and youth play in climate action Allowing children and youth to participate in networking sessions and capacity-building workshops for national ACE focal points.	International, regional
	Parties, Secretariat	2028	[New] Reporting on public participation and leadership, with special focus on child and youth, girls and women in all their diversities, in UNFCCC processes and national processes as well as reporting on the amount of child-sensitive, youth-inclusive and gender-responsive policies, plans and actions, in synchronisation with the GST.	International, regional, national

[New] Strengthen institutional and individual capacity to integrate child-sensitive, gender-responsive and youth-centered climate action across different sectoral, cultural and national contexts including on emerging issues such as unpaid care work, sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) and gender-based violence (GBV).	<p>Leading: Respective Ministries</p> <p>Contributing: relevant organisation, UN agencies (esp UNFPA), educators</p>	Ongoing	Multi-sectoral capacity building using guidelines and policy briefs for mainstreaming ACE into NDCs, NAPs and sectoral policies, plans, strategies and action with a focus on health and social protection systems.	National
	<p>Secretariat, Parties</p> <p>Contributing: relevant organisations, ACE FPs, NGCCFPs</p>	COP35	Dialogue on status, pathways and best practices to strengthen institutional and individual capacity to integrate child-sensitive, gender-responsive and youth-centered climate action.	International
[New] Developed countries to provide technical and financial support to developing countries for collection and consolidation of age-, disability- and gender-disaggregated data leveraging demographic intelligence and general climate science for policy-making, taking into consideration multidimensional and intersecting factors, child-sensitive and gender-responsive indicators, to better inform relevant actors on the implementation and monitoring of gender-responsive climate policies, plans, strategies and actions, including as they relate to emerging issues.	<p>Leading: Parties</p> <p>Supporting: IPCC, relevant organisations, civil society organisations</p>	Ongoing	Prioritize efforts to simplify and contextualize climate science across all public information channels, including translating scientific concepts into clear, accessible language for different levels of literacy, ages, knowledge and into different languages (incl. braille).	International, regional, national
	<p>Parties, relevant organisations</p>	Ongoing	Launch awareness campaigns around the disproportionate impacts of climate change in relation to leveraging demographic intelligence.	National, regional
	<p>Parties</p>	2030	Submission on the implementation of child-sensitive, intergenerational, gender-responsive climate policies, plans, strategies and actions, including as they relate to emerging issues.	International
[New] Provision and allocation of grant-based public finance and direct access to climate finance to advance implementation of ACE elements.	<p>Leading: Secretariat</p> <p>Contributing: Parties, SCF, GEF, GCF, operating entities of the Financial Mechanism and other multilateral</p>	Ongoing	Develop mechanisms and capacity-building initiatives on the financial support available to implement ACE elements in climate policies, plans and actions, including access to climate finance for grassroots organisations, child- and youth-led organisations, through simplified, direct access modalities	International, regional

	development banks, financial institutions, secretariat, relevant organisations			
	Secretariat Contributing: Parties, GCF, GEF, relevant organisations, philanthropies, financial institutions	2027, 2029	Organise multilingual webinars, workshops, and training sessions on how to apply for ACE-relevant grants, including step-by-step guidance on proposal development, budgeting, and reporting.	International, regional, national
	Leading: Parties Contributing: SCF, Secretariat, GEF, GCF, relevant organisations	SB 68 (2029)	Report on the available and spent climate finance on ACE-related finance under the NCQG, with data-disaggregation by age, gender, and region.	International
	Secretariat	Ongoing	Showcase ACE-related grants and a repository of technical experts on the UNFCCC ACE website.	International
[New] Developed countries to provide technical and financial support to developing countries towards the implementation of the Glasgow Work Programme and its Action Plan.	Leading: Secretariat Contributing: Parties, SCF, GEF, GCF, relevant actors, including operating entities of the Financial Mechanism and other multilateral development banks and financial institutions	2028	Hybrid dialogue on financing ACE activities, plans and strategies.	International
	Parties Contributing: GEF,	Ongoing	Create or expand micro-grant programs to support small-scale, community-driven ACE initiatives, with simplified application and	International, regional, national

	GCF, philanthropies, relevant organisations & financial institutions		reporting requirements. Prioritise direct access for youth-led, grassroots, and marginalised community organisations.	
	Presidency Contributing: Secretariat, Parties, SCF, GEF, GCF	2027	High-level event on financing of ACE activities, plans and strategies.	International
[NEW] Facilitate the exchange of views and best practices for ACE as a lever for behaviour change towards climate action.	Secretariat Contributing: Parties, relevant experts and stakeholders	2028	Workshop for engaging professional service providers in climate action, including, but not limited to, insurance providers, accountants, and lawyers.	International
Priority Area D: Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting				
Activities	Responsible	Timeline	Deliverable	Level
[Maintain] D.1 Strengthening monitoring, evaluation and reporting of the implementation of all six ACE elements.	Leading: secretariat Contributing: relevant organizations, research community	Ongoing	[Maintain] Compiling monitoring, evaluation and reporting best practices and resources and making such information available to Parties for use for their reporting on ACE activities on a voluntary basis, and reporting thereon in the annual summary report under the Glasgow work programme	International
	Secretariat	SB66 (June 2027)	[New] Capacity Building on monitoring, evaluation and reporting	International
[Maintain] D.2 Enhancing understanding of what constitutes high-quality and effective evaluation of ACE activities, according to national circumstances.	Secretariat, Parties, national ACE focal points, relevant organizations, research community	Ongoing	[Maintain with adjustments] Organizing interactive workshops at all levels with experts, national ACE focal points, child and youth leaders and other stakeholders to discuss ways of assessing the effectiveness of ACE implementation.	International, regional, national

<p><i>[Maintain]</i> D.3 Supporting the consideration by the Subsidiary Body for Implementation of the annual summary report to be prepared by the secretariat on progress in implementing activities under the Glasgow work programme.</p>	<p>Secretariat</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p><i>[Maintain]</i> Holding information sessions prior to the sessions of the Conference of the Parties to present progress in implementing activities under the Glasgow work programme as reported in the annual summary report.</p>	<p>International</p>
<p>[New] Integrate gender and youth-specific and child-sensitive indicators into the monitoring and evaluation frameworks of the Glasgow Work Programme to track progress on empowerment and equity.</p>	<p>Leading: secretariat Contributing: relevant organizations, research community</p>	<p>2027</p>	<p>Technical paper on gender-responsive, child-sensitive and youth-inclusive indicators for ACE reporting.</p>	<p>International</p>
<p>[New] Enhance synergies between ACE Action plan and other relevant activities and processes (e.g. wider UN, SDGs, within UNFCCC, e.g. ELWP, JTWP, GST, NDC 4.0).</p>	<p>Secretariat, Parties, constituted bodies, CSO</p>	<p>COP32</p>	<p>Dialogue</p>	<p>International</p>
	<p>Secretariat</p>	<p>2028</p>	<p>Report on the dialogue</p>	<p>International</p>

Background

This policy paper is based on a youth-led effort to gather child and youth perceptions, ideas and demands towards the Futures of Education, Training, Public Participation and Awareness ahead of the negotiations about the new ACE Action plan and the midterm review of the Glasgow Work Programme, facilitated by YES-Europe and the IE Foresight Research Team at Global Youth Coalition, supported by UNICEF, UNFPA ESARO, Teach for all and PUSH Sverige.

Virtual global consultations that reached approximately 700 children and youth from 50+ countries were held in February 2026 which laid the foundation for the contents of this paper, along with inputs by the partners.

Methodology - Participatory Foresight

Purpose and Approach

The virtual Zoom workshop applied the Three Horizons foresight framework to collectively explore the evolution of intergenerational equity, climate education, training, and participation from the present system to a transformative future vision, while identifying practical levers for change. The methodology combines systems thinking, participatory foresight, and visual co-creation in Canva as a shared digital workspace to enable inclusive, real-time engagement across geographies.

Part 1: Horizon 3: The Future We Want on Education

Participants engage in normative visioning, imagining a future in which intergenerational equity and the ACE components of education, training and public participation respond to a vision of a desired future.

Part 2. Horizon 1: The Present System – Structural Barriers

Participants collaboratively map today’s dominant system by identifying: Structural barriers, persistent power imbalances and institutional, economic, social, and legal constraints, with a specific focus on gender and age dimensions.

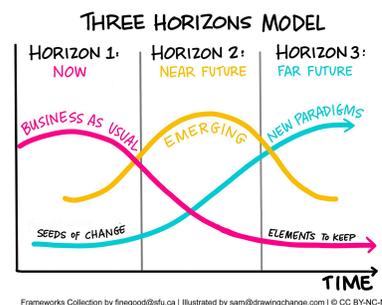
Seeds of Change: Participants identify existing initiatives, movements, norms, technologies, or practices that already reflect elements of the desired future.

Part 3. Horizon 2: Drivers of Change

Participants then identify key drivers or actions that could accelerate movement towards Horizon 3.

Part 4. Synthesis and Impact Measurement

Facilitators guide participants in collectively deciding the most critical barriers or problems to overcome; and the most promising seeds to nurture - the most powerful drivers or actions to take.



Annex 1

To inform this paper, we undertook a visioning exercise with children and youth around the world to understand their image of an ACE Action Plan that meets their needs. Here's what they said:

"I believe if we let climate education and training being fully implemented, we'd be so much better as a whole of the society since we'd all be very well aware of the consequences of our actions and empathetic which would make us look at every development project holistically and ensure that we don't do anything just for the benefit for one at the expense of the other. It would be a much more conscious society"

"If climate education and training were fully integrated into national climate and development plans, the future could look very different in several ways. People of all ages would understand climate science, impacts, and solutions, leading to smarter individual and collective choices. Industries would have workers trained in green technologies, renewable energy, sustainable agriculture, and climate adaptation. Communities would be better prepared for extreme weather events, rising sea levels, and other climate risks."

"If climate education and training were fully integrated in international climate and development plans, I think it would raise awareness for the future generations and keep them informed of what not to do to harm the environment further and how they can make an impact for the future."

"If climate education is integrated into national policies, people would be more literate on climate change inducing factors, such as national fossil fuel usage, which would force the government to implement a policy against fossil fuel usage, by reducing the fossil fuel input by government."

"It's going to be monumental; it would encourage so much participation and interest in the youth group which would again in the long run ensure one is aware of what's happening around and takes accountability for the decisions being made."

"Building climate resilience, agency, and action requires a holistic educational approach that integrates cognitive, emotional, and practical competencies. These core competencies empower individuals and communities to not only understand climate change but also to proactively manage its impacts and drive systemic transformation."

"In a real co-governance model, education would become a collaborative ecosystem. Universities, governments, and civil society would co-create climate training programs, while youth act as equal partners, not beneficiaries. This would make climate education more responsive and action-oriented."

"Incorporation of individuals who are marginalized and people of low-income. The integration of these people, after being climate education tutors themselves, would increase their income and social ladder. There are many communities who are being marginalized in India, incorporating these individuals into mainstream society would socially and economically empower them."