

SPOTLIGHT ACTIVITY 7: CLIMATE CHANGE THEATRE

AIM: Young people consider how climate change can affect a child's right to learn. Using their own experiences of having their education disrupted during the coronavirus pandemic, young people consider how countries and schools could be better prepared to ensure children have an education even during times of crisis.

Preparation:

- Review [Unicef Q&A Video for World Environment Day](#)

Facilitator Materials & Resources

- [Unicef Q&A Video for World Environment Day](#)
- [Making our education systems future proof](#)
- [How to Write a 10 Minute Play](#)
- Activity PowerPoint 7: Climate Change Theatre

Participant Materials

- Paper and pen
- Props to use for their play
- Smart phone or camera to record play

FACILITATOR INTRODUCTION

As climate change impacts communities, another important right that becomes threatened is a child's right to education (UNCRC Article 28). When climate causes drought in places like Ethiopia, children (especially girls) often lose their opportunity to learn as helping with family water collection becomes a more immediate need. When extreme weather events, like flooding in Bangladesh or cyclones in Madagascar, destroy school buildings, children's education is disrupted. When climate circumstances become bad enough to force migration or displacement many children lose their opportunity to be educated – or at best go for a time without access to schooling.

In this activity, young people reflect on their own experiences from the coronavirus pandemic to consider how it felt/feels to have their usual education disrupted. Be aware that reflecting on recent experiences might touch on difficult topics for some young people.



Vanessa, 17, stands in the dried up dam where her family usually fetches water in Zimbabwe.
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Part 1: Climate links to the right to education

1. Building on the learning from the migration mapping in Activity PowerPoint 6, ask the young people to discuss how they think that a child's right to education might be impacted for each of the climate impacts they've considered (drought, flooding, sea level rise, cyclone/extreme weather, pollution, ice melting, and wildfires). Can they think of any ideas for how this right could be protected for children in the face of these types of climate impacts?

2. As an example of climate change activism, share the story of 18-year-old Thompson Manda, a climate ambassador in the southern African country of Zambia.



Climate Ambassador Thompson from Zambia. © Unicef/Maseko

Part 2: Personal Reflection

1. Ask young people to reflect on how they feel that their own rights, and particularly their right to education, has been impacted by the coronavirus pandemic. What was it like to no longer be able to go to school? How did you feel? Does this make you relate to the children in the stories that we've explored? In what way? How do you think governments could learn from this experience to help reduce the risks of other children not being able to go to school?

2. To prompt thinking around the connection between the coronavirus pandemic and the climate crisis, share the Unicef Q&A Video for World Environment Day.

3. Use the 4Cs to guide discussion around the video and the linkage between the coronavirus pandemic and climate.

- **Connection:** What connections do you draw between the stories of young people who cannot go to school because of climate impacts and your own life?
- **Challenge:** Are there any ideas or assumptions being made that you disagree with?
- **Concepts:** What concepts or ideas presented are most important?
- **Changes:** What changes in attitude, thinking or action could you take, or think duty-bearers have the responsibility to take?

Part 3: Climate Change Theatre

1. Split the participants into small working groups of 3-4 to write and present their own 5-10 minute play around the topic: "What could education look like if your school goes away?"

2. Encourage the small groups to explore the topic creatively, using the stories they've heard around climate change and their own personal reflections as inspiration. The play could be about their own context – how could school be rebuilt better, or present a creative solution to a climate problem that keeps children out of school.

3. Give young people a period of time to work together (at least several hours over one to two weeks) to create their idea, draft their script and perform and record their play (if social distancing permits in-person gathering). For inspiration, refer young people to [How to Write a 10 Minute Play](#).

As an alternative to a play, young people could create a different type of theatrical performance around the issue.

See [UCAR Center for Science Education's website](#) for an example.