



DUF'S GREEN GUIDE

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Preface

Youth consider the human-caused climate crisis to be one of today's greatest challenges. If we fail to combat the climate crisis, global warming will likely lead to the collapse of ecosystems, lack of freshwater and increased food insecurity, worsening poverty, and longtime conflicts.


The climate crisis makes other problems worse and is also called a "threat multiplier". It is often a key driver behind development issues affecting children and youth. Therefore, the message is clear: we must solve the climate crisis.

As youth and youth organizations, we play an essential role in the fight for climate action. We are organizing climate marches to push for climate action, and we are speaking up and holding decision-makers accountable for their climate commitments. We are also on the ground tackling the climate crisis in local communities through youth-led projects that enhance the resilience of children and youth to mitigate and adapt to climate change.

In DUF – The Danish Youth Council, we believe it is crucial to involve and empower children and youth. Not only at the table, when decisions are made about future solutions, but also when those solutions are implemented in the real world. Through youth-to-youth-led climate action projects and partnerships, we foster global solidarity and equip young people with the skills, knowledge and competencies needed to mitigate and adapt to climate change and to meaningfully advocate for solutions that include the rights of children and youth.

You can use this DUF's Green Guide as an inspiration on how you can contribute to combatting the climate crisis within your organization and international partnerships and projects. We hope to inspire and motivate children and youth to become climate champions and take climate action now.

Happy reading – and action!
Christine Rayn Lund, Chairwoman of DUF



Climate change is part of a global 'polycrisis' where multiple ongoing crises influence and reinforce each other, for example the biodiversity crisis, the refugee crisis, and wars and conflicts.



The consequences of the climate crisis on children and youth

Children and youth are particularly vulnerable to the effects of climate change. For instance, children miss school when the road to school is flooded, or the roof of the classroom has been torn off by a storm. Lack of rain often means that girls and young women must walk longer distances to collect water which can expose them to higher risks of sexual assaults. This section introduces how children and youth's education, health and livelihoods are affected by climate change.

Health

Climate change impacts the physical and mental health and well-being of children and youth and is a multiplier of existing health vulnerabilities.

Rising temperatures increase the risk of physical health problems like respiratory infections and heat stress, especially in tropical regions. Extreme weather events, such as wildfires, floods, and droughts, threaten children's safety and heighten the risk of malnutrition and hunger, stunting, and vector-borne diseases, such as malaria and dengue. Access to safe drinking water and sanitation can be jeopardized by floods that destroy sewage and drainage systems and hygiene facilities.

Climate change also affects children and youth's mental health. The existential threat posed by climate change has shown to be a source of poor mental health among youth. Especially, anxiety and post-traumatic stress disorder are linked to children and youth's fears of or already lived experiences with climate disasters.

When a climate-related disaster strikes, youth's access to life-saving commodities and sexual reproductive health services including contraception becomes difficult. Stress, scarcity and insecurity about the future can trigger gender-based violence and domestic violence, and families can feel forced to marry their girl child away.




Education

Climate change impacts children and youth's right to education.

Rising temperatures expose children and youth to more regular heatwaves and droughts, increasing the risk of heat stress. This impacts children's and youth's school attendance and negatively affect their learning, resulting in lower educational outcomes.

Heavy rains, floods and cyclones can also destroy schools and local infrastructure and interrupt education. Often schools outside the immediate disaster area are used as evacuation shelters, which means that more children and youth are forced out of school.

Climate change also has an indirect impact on education, as children and youth risk missing school because they must spend more time on family chores. In some cases, children are taken out of school to work and contribute to the household income. Again, it is often the girl who is first withdrawn from school to help the family.



Inspiration from a partnership

The National Union of Students in Denmark (DSF) and their partner the Zimbabwean National Student Union (ZINASU) have integrated considerations about the climate crisis and its impact on the lives of youth in Zimbabwe into their project, RUVIMBO.

Their aim is to investigate key barriers to student movements in Zimbabwe, such as restricted access to education, gender discrimination, shrinking civic space, and threats to student activists, amidst global crises such as climate change, food insecurity, and rising inequality.

Livelihoods

Climate change affects the livelihoods of youth across the globe. Many stand to lose their jobs or income, but the need for transitions towards sustainable societies can also provide new opportunities.

Many youths live in rural areas and rely on agriculture for their livelihoods. With the changing climate, farmers are extremely vulnerable and face severe threats, such as declining crop yields, heat-stressed livestock, new pests and diseases, and shrinking agricultural lands. These changes harm food security and family incomes. Youth can feel pressured to leave families and migrate to cities to seek better opportunities. Scarcity of natural resources like fertile soil and water will also increase competition which can escalate into conflicts, involving young men and boys in wars and forcing families to flee.

In the transition away from fossil fuels and towards renewable energy sources, some fossil fuel-dependent industries, like charcoal production, may be entirely banned, and workers in this sector may face unemployment. However, the green transition will also increase demands for raw materials, such as lithium and copper, which are used in solar panels and electric vehicles. While this can create new job opportunities, it will also put pressure on the extractive sector, increasing the risk of an unjust and inequal transition. Working conditions of miners may worsen and indigenous peoples are at risk of being forced to relocate by governments and companies for mining purposes without their consent.



Growing Green Businesses

The Danish Association for Business Students (Landssammenslutningen af Handelsskoleelever, LH) and the Zimbabwe Students Association (ZSA) will implement a pilot project called *GreenFuture Business Bootcamp*. The project will address the critical need for sustainable business practices in Zimbabwe by educating and empowering university students on green business models.

The main activity of the project is a bootcamp which will contain workshops on how to integrate environmental sustainability into business operations and equip participants with skills to become leaders in the green business movement.

The bootcamp is designed for business students, aspiring entrepreneurs, and other college students who are committed to making a positive change towards environmental stewardship in their industries. The youth who attend the bootcamp will not only be able to bring this forward to the workforce but will also disseminate their knowledge and skills by training peers in sustainable business practices.

The partners

LH is a national association in Denmark representing all student councils at upper secondary business schools in Denmark. LH works to improve the life of business students.

ZSA is committed to improving education and enhance social awareness among Zimbabwean students.

#GreenBusiness #ClimateChangeEducation #StudentsRights

What is Climate Justice?

The climate crisis affects us all, but poor and marginalized communities are disproportionately affected and exposed. The impacts of the climate crisis are unequally and unjustly shared between rich and poor, girls and boys, and older and younger generations. Climate justice looks at the climate crisis through a human rights and intersectionality lens, highlighting how vulnerable groups - who have contributed far less to the crisis - are the ones most affected by natural hazards, such as droughts and cyclones.

The global climate justice movement demands climate action now and that rich, polluting countries with historically high greenhouse gas emissions be held accountable. These countries must not only provide climate finance to the loss and damages suffered by the affected countries but also share know-how and technological advances to support efforts to adapt to a changing climate and transition to green, sustainable societies.

"Climate change is happening now and to all of us. No country or community is immune, and, as is always the case, the poor and vulnerable are the first to suffer and the worst hit."

UN Secretary-General António Guterres, 2019.



What is Historical Greenhouse Gas Emissions?

The historical greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions are the global GHG emissions over time. In terms of who is responsible for the historical GHG, North America, Europe and Asia account for more than 80% of the historical GHG emissions. The US alone is responsible for 25% of those emissions and is the world's biggest polluter. China comes in second, responsible for about 14% due to its extreme economic development since the early 2000s.

At the other end of the spectrum, regions such as Africa and South America account for only 3% of historical GHG emissions each. Eastern Europe and the Middle East typically fall somewhere in between; countries such as Iran and Ukraine have high per capita emissions, while others have lower emissions associated with lower income levels.²

¹ DUFs Klimapolitik 2019, opdateret august 2024

² <https://youthtoolkit.gca.org/modules/module-1-understanding-climate-change/#warm-up>

In DUF, we recognize that we have a *common but differentiated responsibility* to combat the climate crisis, and we believe that the polluting countries should take responsibility for their emissions and pay their fair share of climate finance. We are committed to the polluters pay principle¹.



Climate Action

Did you know that it is possible to apply for climate compensation in your project budget? See DUFs guidelines for the International Pool.



You do not have to be an expert on climate to integrate considerations about climate change into your project and partnership. But it is good to understand the most common distinctions within the overall climate action approaches: *mitigation* and *adaptation*.

Mitigation...

aims to stop the problem from getting worse i.e. tackling the problem at its roots. In reference to combatting the climate crisis, it means to reduce or cut the emission of greenhouse gases in your project activities or organizational practices.

Want to get smarter about climate action? At the end of this guide, you'll find a list of climate lingo that will take you to expert level.



Adaptation...

helps people or communities adjust to the changing climate to reduce the negative impact of it. Closely related to adaptation is the term *resilience*. By strengthening the resilience of people, they become more resistant to shocks and better able to recover afterwards. You can talk about resilience to many negative phenomena, but in relation to climate change it is often used to talk about how people can better cope with extreme weather events. An example could be to train young farmers in climate smart agriculture techniques, such as using drought and heat-resistant crops or optimizing irrigation systems.

Climate Action and the Change Triangle

The change triangle is a key framework to structure your international project. This section presents how climate change activities, such as mitigation and adaptation actions, 'fit' under the three corners of the triangle.



Carry out impactful climate action activities

Designing your project with climate activities is a good first step to engage with climate action. It will build your experience with climate action activities.

It will strengthen your and your partner's organizational capacity for climate action and increase your credibility to engage in climate advocacy. Climate activities can include both mitigation and adaptation actions.

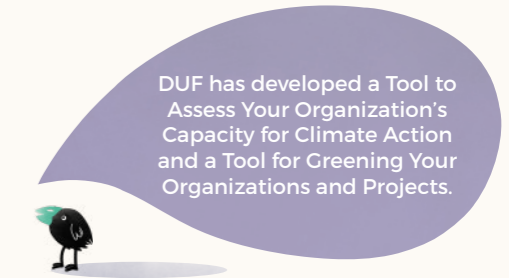
Here are some examples of how to integrate climate action into your project activities:

- Raise school children's awareness about climate change by working in school vegetable gardens, or planting fruit trees.
- Organize a waste clean-up campaign i.e. collect plastic that can be sold for recycling and generate income for the organization.
- Build 'climate literacy' among university students so that they can influence their faculties to bring climate change into curricula.

DUF has developed a Climate Context Analysis Tool which you can use to assess how you can address climate change in your project activities.

- Arrange a training or bootcamp on climate change awareness, critical thinking and problem solving to help children and youth adapt to the challenges posed by climate change.
- Train youth in green skills such as how to maintain solar panels, make biomass briquettes for selling, biodigester installation, etc.
- Train community volunteers to introduce climate-smart agricultural techniques to farmers who struggle with late rains and drought.
- Produce community radio talk shows for youth to share their experiences with climate adaptation.
- Train youth in local disaster risk planning to reduce the impact of natural disasters.

Build your organization's capacity for climate action



By developing your organization with knowledge, skills and resources on climate action, you will be better positioned to plan and implement quality climate action activities for children and youth. It will also increase your legitimacy to raise awareness about the climate crisis and carry out climate advocacy.

Here are some examples of how to integrate climate action into organizational capacity building efforts:

- Strengthen knowledge and skills of volunteers and staff on the effects of climate change on children and youth in the local context.
- Build strategic partnerships and alliances with like-minded stakeholders to strengthen the organization's climate position.
- Integrate climate change awareness into training programs, for instance in your training of leaders and volunteers.
- Make the organization's practices and projects greener, i.e. recycle waste, introduce renewable energy sources, reduce GHG-emissions from transport and power consumption, reduce food waste, etc.



Promoting democratic dialogue through sustainable agriculture

Danish 4H and Rural Enterprise Trust of **Zimbabwe** (RETZ) are implementing a pilot project called *Co-creating Green Safe Space: Tackling Polarization through Youth-led Sustainable Food Production*. The project is implemented in a rural area in Zimbabwe, where they train youth in climate-smart agriculture and engaging in constructive dialogue.

They have acquired a demonstration plot where young farmers are taught sustainable farming techniques and are given a theoretical understanding of climate-smart sustainable food systems. Youth also participate in workshops on entrepreneurship and advocacy to gain skills to effectively disseminate the knowledge within their peer groups and neighboring communities.

A central part of the project is to establish a youth center around the plot to create a safe and inclusive space to discuss community issues. Here, they can speak open and freely about topics such as polarization and community building, engage in constructive dialogues and collectively amplify their voices.

The partners

4H in Denmark organizes children's clubs and farm activities focused on food, animals, gardening, and nature.

Rural Enterprise Trust of Zimbabwe (RETZ) aims to empower rural communities, focusing on women youth and smallholder farmers, through inclusive businesses to improve production, income, and food security.

[#climatesmartagriculture](#) [#safespace](#) [#democraticdialogue](#) [#tacklingpolarization](#)



Green Ambassadors in Kenya

Activista Kenya and the Danish ICYE is launching a 'Green Ambassadors' project in Kenya to increase youth's knowledge on climate change and strengthen volunteerism in Activista Kenya.

Through the support to youth education on climate change with a focus on co-production of knowledge and tools, the partnership aims to empower youth to use their voice on climate change and become 'Green Ambassadors' in their local communities.

They are planning a two-stage project: the first stage is the training of trainers on climate change and advocacy. The second stage is the development of contextualized trainings to fit their local communities through fun and interactive workshops. So far, the partnership has conducted a preparatory study to clarify how climate change impacts the everyday life of youth and children in Kenya, to examine norms of volunteerism, and to identify and recruit volunteers to become Green Ambassadors.

The partners

Danish ICYE is an exchange organization that gives youth the opportunity to travel abroad and experience new cultures.

Activista Kenya aims to promote and protect the right of youth in Kenya and empower youth through civic education, advocacy for social justice, and accountability in governance.

[#climatechangeeducation](#) [#climateadvocacy](#) [#agentsofchange](#)
[#sustainablevolunteerism](#)

Amplify your voice through climate advocacy



The climate crisis has been labelled the ‘most significant intergenerational injustice of our time.

This intergenerational injustice is a driving force behind many youths’ involvement in climate campaigns.

If you wish to engage in climate advocacy, see these examples:

- Lobby for youth’s active and meaningful inclusion in policy-making locally, nationally, and internationally.
- Engage in dialogue with policymakers and influential stakeholders aimed at gaining support and understanding for climate action.
- Monitor how climate commitments made by local authorities and/or national governments are implemented in practice at the community level.
- Pursue climate litigation and take legal action against policymakers who are unable to deliver on their climate commitments.
- Carry out climate justice activism, such as demonstrations and marches.
- Raise awareness on the consequences of the climate crisis by celebrating international climate days or organizing art exhibitions.



What is Loss and Damage?

Natural disasters are destroying entire communities and make returning to normal life difficult. Some places are simply becoming too hot, too dry, or too frequently flooded for people to continue living there, like the Tuvalu islands in the Pacific Ocean that are slowly sinking due to sea level rise. Such issues are addressed in the loss and damage discussion at the UN climate conferences. The key controversy is how the parts of the world affected by *loss* and *damages* can be compensated – and by whom.

What is Intergenerational Equity?

In DUF, we find it unfair that older generations manage their influence over the global community in a way that puts future generations at a disadvantage. This is why DUF advocates intergenerational equity: Youth must be involved in making decisions that will have a crucial impact on our future.



From Waste to Green Gold

Ungdomsringen (UNGR) and the Youth Livelihoods Development Company (YLDC) have implemented 'Project Y' in Uganda. The project focused on the empowerment of Ugandan youth to take on leadership to end teenage pregnancy.

They empowered youth-led community-based organizations to manage their organization in an progressive and sustainable manner. The project involved training volunteers in health and lifestyle, and economic empowerment.

Some of the activities in the project were the valorization of various waste. In the town of Busia, young mothers collected and recycled discarded plastic bottles and scrap metals from waste to earn money.

In the city of Kasese and in the slum of Kamwokya in the capital, youth have made flower vases, home décor, and artwork from waste materials like plastic, bottles, old tires, and much more that they have been selling. In this way, they contributed to reducing the environmental impact while generating an income from their crafts.

The partnership also carried out a smaller project on the production of biogas from food waste. The food waste was collected in a container and left for a period to generate gas. The gas was then tapped from the container and used as cooking energy – a cheaper and much healthier type of cooking fuel compared to typical wood fuel.

The partners

UNGR in Denmark focuses on youth clubs, youth schools, and networks, aiming to empower young people to take ownership of their lives, create meaningful relationships, and build healthy communities. UNGR's international project group promotes democratic awareness, gender equality, sexual and reproductive health, and income-generating activities abroad.

YLDC aims to empower youth to make informed decisions about their well-being through capacity building and youth empowerment in the areas of health and lifestyle.

#EndTeenagePregnancy #SRHR #GreenLivelihoods #UpcyclingforIGAs



Lingo for powerful climate advocacy

United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)

The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change is the original climate convention from 1992. The UNFCCC is supported by a secretariat under the United Nations. The secretariat organizes the annual COP meetings and other events related to the climate convention.

COP

‘The COP’ refers to the UN annual international negotiation meeting that fleshes out actions and decisions under the climate convention (see above). COP stands for Conference of Parties, where ‘parties’ are the countries that have signed on the climate convention.

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC)

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change is the United Nations body for assessing scientific knowledge on climate change. The IPCC reviews scientific data on climate change and publishes annual assessment reports.

Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC)

The Nationally Determined Contributions are reports about how a country intends to address climate change mitigation and adaptation. The NDCs are submitted to the UNFCCC, which adds them up in so-called stocktaking during COP meetings. The NDCs must be updated and submitted every five years.

National Adaptation Plan (NAP)

The country-based National Adaptation Plan process analyses current and future impacts and sets out plans and strategies for adapting to them. The focus is on the medium and long term.

Common But Differentiated Responsibilities (CBDR)

Common But Differentiated Responsibilities is a core principle that was formalized in the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. The CBDR principle acknowledges that all states have shared obligation to address environmental destruction but denies equal responsibility of all states regarding environmental protection because some states industrialized earlier and have more resources. It is like the ‘polluter-pays principle’.

Loss and damages

Loss and damages refer to the negative effects of climate change that occur despite mitigation and adaptation efforts. This could be negative economic impacts such as damage to infrastructure or reduced crop yields but non-economic impacts such as loss of culture, displacement and way of life. These tend to be more irreparable and irreversible (UNEP). Examples of non-economic losses are the loss of indigenous cultures and national identity when small island states are destroyed by sea level rise and storms.

Climate justice

Climate justice recognizes that although global warming is a global crisis, its effects are not felt evenly around the world. Climate justice seeks an equitable distribution of the burdens of climate change and the efforts to mitigate them.

Just transition

A just transition means greening the economy in a way that is as fair and inclusive as possible to everyone concerned, creating decent work opportunities and leaving no one behind (ILO, 2024).

Lingo for strengthening climate adaptation

Vulnerability

Climate vulnerability of people or ecosystems describes how strongly people or ecosystems are likely to be affected by climate change. For people and communities, their vulnerability depends on a long range of factors including age, gender, mobility, socioeconomic status, assets, knowledge, etc.

Exposure

The degree to which a community or other actor is exposed to climate hazards for instance through its location. Many Pacific Island states are highly exposed to extreme weather events because they are the low-lying islands in open ocean waters.

Climate hazard

Climate hazards are natural hazards such as extreme weather events that can cause loss of life, injury or other health impacts, property damage, loss of livelihoods and services, social and economic disruption, or environmental damage. However, its impact also depends on vulnerability and exposure.

Extreme weather event

Extreme weather is unexpected, unusual, severe, or unseasonal weather that falls at the extremes of 'normal' climate variability. Climate variability is defined by the historical distribution of weather phenomena, i.e., the range that has been seen in the past.

Rapid-onset event and slow-onset event

Rapid-onset events are extreme weather events that are made worse by climate change include tropical storms, floods, and forest fires. Slow-onset events are extreme weather events that are exacerbated by climate change including droughts and desertification, acidification of the ocean, salinization of soils.

Climate risk

Climate risk can be understood as the combination of a climate hazard, vulnerability, and exposure. The same climate hazard may have very different impacts on different communities depending on how well-prepared (resilient) they are.

Risk screening

A process of analyzing the climate-induced risks to a project, a community, a country, or similar. The risk screening can be used to avoid the challenges or design activities to address them directly and build resilience for the affected communities.

Resilience

Resilience is the capacity to deal with change and continue to develop. It is often understood as the ability of communities and their members to anticipate, prepare for, reduce the impact of, cope with, and recover from the effects of climate-related shocks and stresses without compromising their long-term prospects for development.

Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR)

Disaster Risk Reduction is an approach to reduce the risk and impact of disasters by investing in preparedness, resilience, and response capacity. It is related to climate change adaptation but not exactly the same. DRR is more concerned with climate extremes leading to disasters, while climate change adaptation also looks at long-term adjustment to changes in gradually changing climatic conditions.

Lingo for accelerating climate change mitigation

Fossil fuels

A fossil fuel is a material such as coal, oil, and natural gas that has been formed naturally under the surface of the Earth from dead plants and animals. We produce energy when burning fossil fuels.

Greenhouse gases (GHG)

Greenhouse gases are the gases in the atmosphere that raise the surface temperature of the Earth. What distinguishes them from other gases is that they absorb radiation from Earth, resulting in the greenhouse effect. CO₂ is but one of many greenhouse gases.

Carbon emissions and Carbon dioxide equivalent (CO₂e)

Carbon emissions come from burning fossil fuels such as coal, oil, and natural gas. Carbon dioxide equivalent (CO₂e) is one of the most important types of greenhouse gas emissions that cause climate change.

CO₂e is a standard unit of measurement used to compare the emissions of various greenhouse gases, such as methane, based on their global warming potential. It can be expressed as kg CO₂eq per kg or litre of fuel. By using CO₂e, it becomes easier to aggregate and compare the impacts of various GHGs in terms of their contribution to climate change.

Carbon sink

A carbon sink is anything that accumulates and stores carbon for an indefinite period and removes carbon dioxide (CO₂) from the atmosphere. The most important carbon sinks are forests, the oceans and soil.

Compensation / offsetting

Carbon compensation or offsetting is a mechanism that allows entities such as governments, individuals, or businesses to compensate for (i.e. 'offset') their greenhouse gas emissions by supporting projects that reduce, avoid, or remove emissions elsewhere. This can be tree-planting or investing in renewable energy sources.

Greening

Greening refers to the process of making an organization or activity more environmentally sustainable and ecologically friendly. This often involves adopting practices that reduce environmental impact, promote conservation, and increase the use of renewable resources. In urban contexts, greening can refer to increasing green spaces, such as parks, gardens, and trees, to improve air quality, reduce pollution, and enhance biodiversity. In organizational or industrial settings, it may involve the implementation of environmentally conscious practices like energy efficiency, waste reduction, and the use of sustainable materials.

Mitigation

Mitigation measures are directed at interventions to avoid or reduce greenhouse gas emissions such as greening practices. In practice, this could be shifting from a diesel-powered generator of electricity to using a solar panel with a battery attached. It also relates to enhancing carbon sinks, for instance, to plant trees that soak up carbon from the atmosphere and store it for more than a generation.

More Inspiration

Find more information and inspiration for how to work with climate change in DUF's Climate Toolbox. The toolbox contains DUF's four climate tools and links to more resources and climate toolkits you can use in your projects and partnerships to strengthen your climate action.

The toolbox is continuously updated with climate news from DUF and with new climate partnerships funded by DUF's International Pool.



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DUF is an umbrella and interest organization, including 78 national children's and youth organizations. We work to promote young people's participation in associational life and democracy.