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#DECARBONIZE

GLOBAL CHILD CLIMATE MANIFESTO



CGE
THE CENTRE FOR GLOBAL EDUCATION

INTRODUCTION

In 2023, the #Decarbonize Global Child Climate Manifesto was **co-authored by 146 lead students across 42 countries**. Based on virtual classroom and shared dialogue, it represents the thoughts, opinions, fears, needs, feelings, and aspirations of **tens of thousands of global children**. It addresses the environment with social, cultural, and economic aspects, and has a local and global orientation that embraces a broad range of lived experiences. The #Decarbonize Global Child Manifesto is the **world's largest child-authored synthesis of student education, opinion, and action on climate change**.

What is #Decarbonize?

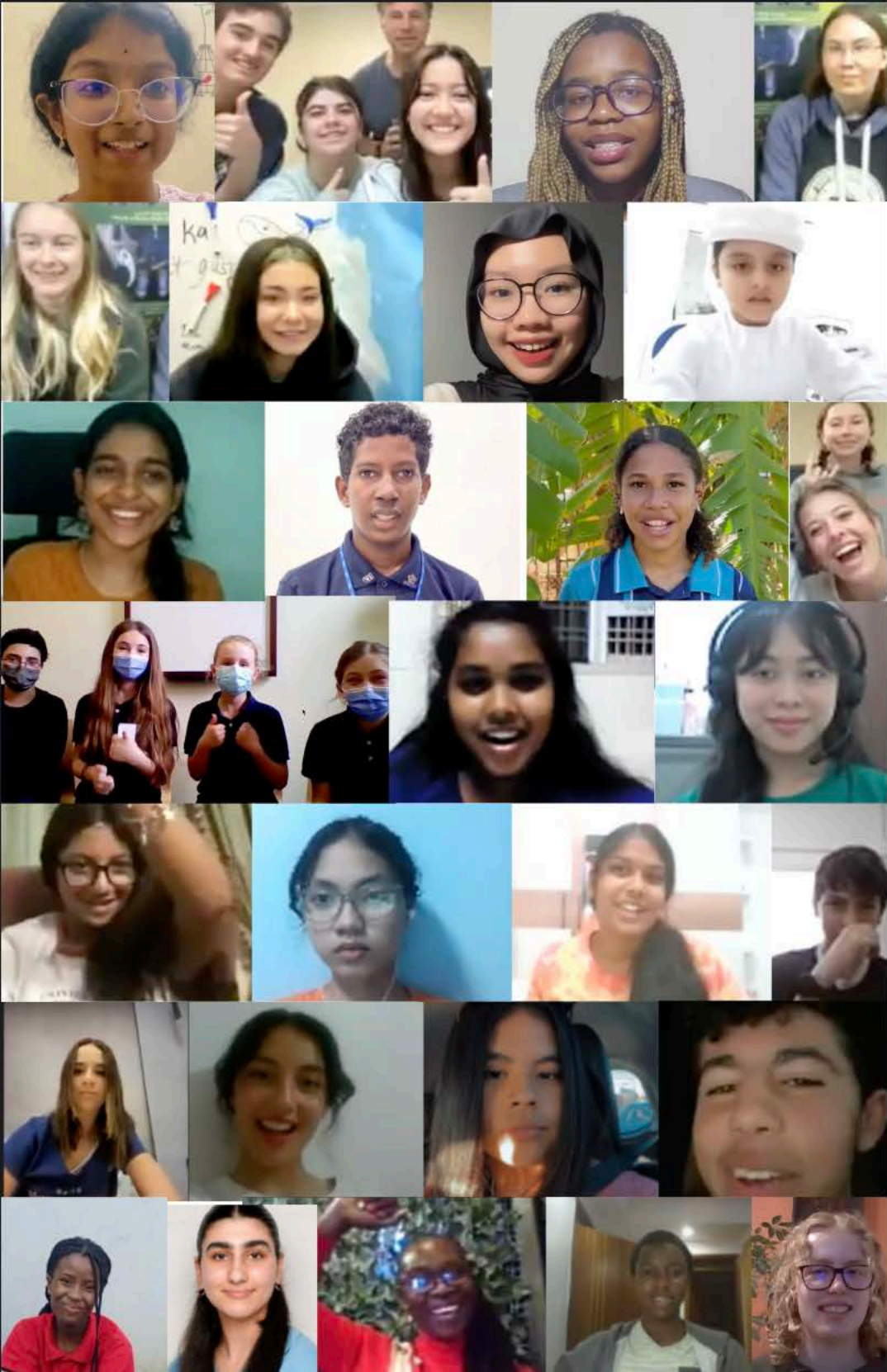
The #Decarbonize Global Child Climate Program is an award-winning, multilingual, school-based program led by the **Centre for Global Education**. Using information and communications technology, #Decarbonize brings together tens of thousands of primary and secondary students in over 70 countries for hands-on, project-based experiences.

Every year, children ages 4-18 learn about, dialogue on, and build collective consensus around climate issues, interwoven with concepts of global citizenship that acknowledge and explore how gender, ethnicity, race, place of residence, and socioeconomic status, continue to shape the climate impacts that children face locally. Students spend months engaging in storytelling, blog posts, video production, art creation, interactive videoconference exchanges, and climate action.

The #Decarbonize program empowers students of all ages with the skills and knowledge necessary to address climate change and natural resource conservation challenges and to become effective leaders who can best serve their schools and communities. The #Decarbonize program culminates in a child-authored Global Climate Child Manifesto presented at the UN Climate Conference (COP) by a diverse delegation of child leaders drawn from every continent.

Participating Schools





2023 PRIORITY AREAS

EDUCATION

- 01 National Climate Curricula**
We believe that countries need to involve educators, scientists, non-governmental organizations and youth to collaboratively develop age-appropriate, accurate, and engaging national learning outcomes.
- 02 Environmental Education Included in NDCs**
We believe that governments must commit to implementing climate change education in all schools as a part of their NDCs.
- 03 Education about NDCs**
We believe that the integration of Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) within educational curricula is crucial for the advancement of our global climate action.
- 04 School Spaces & Sustainable Infrastructure**
We believe that implementing renewable energy resources in schools can work to reduce energy costs while also serving as an educational tool for students to learn about sustainable energy practices.
- 05 Extracurriculars**
We believe that climate-focused extracurricular activities such as sustainability clubs must be available at all age levels and supported by government funding.

POLICY

- 06 Public Awareness of NDCs**
We believe that raising public awareness about Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) is a critical step in the global fight against climate change.
- 07 Youth Engagement through Committees & Councils**
We believe that it is necessary to have child and youth-government initiatives where we can represent the voices of our peers to larger government bodies and advocate our climate concerns.

YOUTH ACTION

- 08 Climate Strikes & Youth Collective Movement**
We believe that it is through large-scale child & youth demonstrations, social media campaigns and advocacy efforts, we can raise public awareness about climate change and hold governments accountable.
- 09 Social Media**
We believe that it is through social media that we can create a platform for educating the public (including other children & youth) and engaging the government, ultimately fostering a collective commitment to sustainable practices and climate action.

CLIMATE EDUCATION

National Climate Curricula

We believe that countries need to involve educators, scientists, non-governmental organizations and youth to collaboratively develop age-appropriate, accurate, and engaging national learning outcomes. The facts will evolve as climate changes, but with the engagement of multiple perspectives in designing the overall outcomes, we will know how to tackle climate challenges and develop necessary solutions. With the climate crisis at the forefront of global concerns, it is paramount that educational institutions worldwide take proactive steps to ensure that we, as students, are well-informed and passionate about environmental issues. This allows students to have a place within climate change knowledge and, in turn, advocacy for action. We are also advocating for the involvement of Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and students in creating national curricula. Curriculum written by students for students allows us to make a real impact in our world and communities.

Further, governments must prioritize funding for climate change training for educators so that it is a national priority. Teachers will be the site through which national curricula take on local issues and problems to propose local solutions. We need to make real-world positive change, not just learn about it. We need sustainability to become a part of who we are and how we act, just like learning study skills or working in groups, and then all kids will grow up with sustainable practices as a part of who we are, not something we do. We need to be empowered to become active agents of change.

"National Basic Education curriculum will have long-term benefits to the students and environment itself. They will be environmentally conscious and that will result in a better and improved environment by doing sustainable practices."

Maylen Santiago, 17, Philippines

"With National Basic Education about climate change, awareness about the reality of our environment undoubtedly starts with learning it at school."

Jasmine, 18, Philippines

"We can enforce the need to protect our land from a young age by having climate change as part of their curriculum. As these children are the future, they need to know what's to come, how they are impacting the climate, and what they can do as individuals to help decrease climate change."

Ashritha, 16, India

"The first step in reversing our damage is education. You can't fight climate change without knowing anything about it."

Adelaide, 17, Ghana

CLIMATE EDUCATION

Environmental Education Included in NDCs

We believe that governments must commit to implementing climate change education in all schools as a part of their Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs). "Everyone has the right to education" states the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. We, children of the world, have come together to say that we believe a quality education must include climate education.

Climate education needs to start in early childhood and continue into high school, where skills in research, critical thinking, and global collaboration will empower us as the next generation of leaders. For children to meaningfully engage in addressing the climate crisis, education must be accessible to all of us so that we may know what exactly we are dealing with, and grow innovative problem-solving skills relevant to the climate crisis. There should be no barriers preventing a student from climate education as it is an issue that will affect them throughout their life. Every student must have the opportunity to learn how to take action.

Several countries have already recognized the importance of this approach. For instance, a comprehensive research study conducted by the National Environmental Education Foundation found that students exposed to environmental education at a young age were more likely to engage in eco-friendly behaviours throughout their lives. In the United States, the state of New Jersey now mandates environmental and climate education from kindergarten through high school. Moreover, the success of youth-led initiatives, like Greta Thunberg's "Fridays for Future" movement, and Xiye Bastida's "ReEarth Initiative" exemplifies the passion and commitment of children and young people to address climate issues.

"NDCs enable teenagers to see, in a precise format, the goals that their country has set as an outline to lower their emissions. Once teenagers have understood and recognized these targets it will be easier for them to understand the fact that they play a part and contribute to the achievement of these goals."

Abiha, 16, UAE

"I've never heard about NDCs before, and I think that speaks for itself. We often hear about climate change, recycling, and maybe renewable energy. But, if you don't investigate by yourself, or join any climate change mitigation group, you will not learn anything deep about it. My school talks about climate change more than any normal school in our country, and even my classmates can't tell you the definition of GHG. Education is the first step towards saving our planet."

Amparo, 15, Argentina

CLIMATE EDUCATION

Education about NDCs

We believe that the integration of Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) within educational curricula is crucial for the advancement of our global climate action. NDCs are pivotal instruments for achieving the goals of international climate agreements. Therefore, actively disseminating information about NDCs is essential, enabling a broad understanding of these commitments and their role in fostering ongoing climate mitigation. By introducing the NDCs into educational programs, we create a foundation for informed decision-making and proactive citizen-level engagement in global climate commitments. We also strongly believe that targets for climate education need to be mandatory in every country's NDCs. Integrating education into NDCs underscores the importance of collective education for a sustainable planet, fostering a more sustainably conscious global community.

"I think that raising awareness about Climate change at school will give students the chance to take responsibility. But this is still not enough, the introduction of in-depth study of the NDCs will succeed in putting an end to this if it is still possible. Currently most teenagers in Madagascar don't even know what this means. But I believe that one day teenagers will make their decisions to make the world better again."

NY Felam-Panantenana Mitia, 15, Madagascar

"Education fosters awareness of the connection between climate change and other global challenges, motivating them to become agents of change."

Raia, 15, Indonesia

"Education undoubtedly allows the youth to be aware & knowledgeable enough to perceive the reality of climate change they are facing. Education helps teenagers open their eyes, stand up, and initiate an individual effort that eventually becomes a collective movement. All these empower them to have a purpose as a youth, to have a voice, and to act now."

Jasmine, 18, Philippines

"Teaching NDCs in school isn't just about learning facts; it's about empowering a generation to rewrite the future. When we integrate NDCs into our curriculum, we're not just studying climate change; we're learning how to be 'the change'."

Shaanvi Karri, 14, India

"I feel that the very first step to tackling climate change and making a difference globally as youth is simply education."

Nami, 16, Canada

CLIMATE EDUCATION

School Spaces & Sustainable Infrastructure

We believe that implementing renewable energy resources in schools can work to reduce energy costs while also serving as an educational tool for students to learn about sustainable energy practices. Sustainable infrastructure designs that maximize natural light, heating, and cooling can help schools lower their energy consumption and create a healthier learning environment. Such designs can educate students about the importance of architectural choices in minimizing energy use and enhancing comfort, ultimately integrating sustainability into their daily lives.

- The installation of solar panels not only provides a clean source of electricity but also serves as a practical educational tool. Students can learn about solar technology, energy production, and conservation, while schools can reduce their energy bills and lower their carbon footprint.
- Wind turbines on school grounds offer opportunities for students to explore the principles of wind power generation and sustainability. It also contributes to a greener energy mix, helping schools reduce their reliance on fossil fuels and promote clean energy practices.
- Geothermal energy or a climate battery in a school's greenhouse can significantly improve energy efficiency and reduce fossil fuel use. This technology allows students to understand the geothermal heat exchange process and experience firsthand the benefits of renewable, low-impact heating and cooling systems.

Incorporating these renewable energy sources and sustainable infrastructure practices into schools not only reduces operational costs but also instills a culture of sustainability in students, fostering their understanding of and commitment to renewable energy practices. The reduced energy costs would mean that the funds saved could be used for educating the youth and training the teacher faculty on the issues of climate change.

We believe that our school buildings can become models of what sustainable living, working, and learning look like. Research has indicated that hands-on experiences, such as gardening, composting, and aquaponics, promote problem-solving skills, critical thinking, and a stronger connection to the environment. As well, the American Heart Association reports that school gardens not only teach students about where their food comes from but also promote healthier eating habits. Beyond this, many schools have successfully implemented composting programs, which serve as a practical lesson in waste reduction and soil enrichment. Through these programs, our fellow students can become more aware of the impact waste has on the environment, learn to create energy in renewable ways (solar panels on school roofs), and embed sustainable architecture in their expectations of what learning environments look like for all.

"Acquiring knowledge and applying it in practical contexts offers young individuals the opportunity to grasp the interdependent relationship between local initiatives, national policies, and their collective impact on a progressively global scale in our venture towards a greener environment."

JB, 18, Philippines

"The best way to help combat climate change as a student body is by having more interactive, hands-on experiences in class other than the book knowledge they gain through the subjects they are learning in school."

Ashritika, 16, India

"It is necessary that the education is given in such a way that it is interactive and fun. It should create a sense of responsibility in students and foster a learning environment that will make them want to take action."

Greeshma, 13, India

Extracurriculars

We believe that climate-focused extracurricular activities such as sustainability clubs must be available at all age levels and supported by government funding. These clubs can provide students with diverse opportunities to learn about current climate issues and solutions in their communities, as well as get involved in outdoor activities and nature experiences. Students can share their ideas and knowledge of renewable energy resources, develop renewable projects, and incorporate trips to energy plants or factories. Here the students will learn more about renewable energy use, and why a transition away from fossil fuels such as coal, oil, and natural gas is not only necessary but achievable in our lifetime. Experts in this field can visit schools to share their diverse knowledge in areas of current climate research. Now imagine, if such a thing was able to happen in all of our schools, don't you think the perspectives of others would change too?

"My school's sustainability club has been the perfect way for me to educate myself on environmentalism while still taking action in my community on a local scale."

Robin, 17, Canada



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LOCAL, NATIONAL & GLOBAL POLICY

Public Awareness of the NDCs

We believe that raising public awareness about Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) is a critical step in the global fight against climate change. For a long-term culture of environmental awareness, we must establish a clear, comprehensive and multifaceted approach to communicate NDCs. Furthermore, active government engagement is critical in the process of formulating more effective, long-term sustainable policies. This collaborative approach is crucial in ensuring that the broader population is well-informed about NDCs, leading to informed decision-making.

We also believe that individual countries need to make real progress toward implementing policies outlined in their Nationally Determined Contributions. Although non-renewable energy is a cheap and reliable source, its benefits cost our environment an immense amount of damage. According to the United Nations, "Fossil fuels – coal, oil and gas – are by far the largest contributor to global climate change, accounting for over 75 percent of global greenhouse gas emissions" and nearly 90 percent of all carbon dioxide emissions. While we acknowledge that the use of fossil fuels can differ in each country, goals must be set by governments and policy-makers to ensure that the usage of fossil fuels does not damage our environment in a way that will be detrimental in the future. It is not enough to simply set and state these goals publicly, governments must be held accountable for these policies and face consequences for inaction.

Around the world, we can see that governments, organizations, and industries are taking action to engage communities in raising awareness and taking action against climate change. In Georgia, a region increasingly vulnerable to the effects of climate change, the Climathon plays a crucial role in fostering climate awareness, with civil society organizations taking the lead in developing and implementing innovative solutions that address the specific challenges faced by local communities. In Kenya, the National Tree Growing and Restoration Campaign unites individuals in a collective effort to achieve climate goals. Meanwhile, in Peru, the Ministry of Environment drives citizen awareness of carbon footprint reduction. Clear and comprehensible communication between these stakeholders, with targeted outreach to children, is essential. When children become aware of this information, it empowers them to take small actions that contribute to global efforts.

"Canada is a wealthy country with a small population, it should not be within the top ten world emitters surpassing countries that do not have the resources to take climate action. Some of our reduction strategies such as the carbon tax are nowhere near ambitious enough to have an environmental impact, let alone to reduce emissions below 2005 levels."

Shelby, 17, Canada

"As not many people in Kenya are educated about how they can improve their livestock farming, it encourages the release of toxic gases such as methane, which is harmful. As a result, it promotes serious damage to the environment and the health of the local people, especially the vulnerable like the young and old."

Emmanuel, 16, Kenya

"Our country needs to transition faster into adoption of sustainable practices. This, however, will be a highly challenging job because of the high population and high levels of poverty. We currently rank 2nd in using coal for energy and this affects our people in more than one way, from the possibility of child labour to the devastating effects of the climate crisis."

Nitya, 16, India

"I think to stop climate change, we should increase the use of renewable energy sources such as solar energy, wind power hydroelectric power, hydrogen gas to make our country grow healthy."

Dine Chukwemeka, 13, Nigeria



Ashritha | 12 | India



Megan Trixie | 7 | Philippines

LOCAL, NATIONAL & GLOBAL POLICY

Youth Engagement through Committees & Councils

We believe that it is necessary to have youth-government initiatives where we can represent the voices of our peers to larger government bodies and advocate our climate concerns. This would be a pivotal step in holding our governments accountable for addressing climate change. By utilizing youth councils as a platform, we can effectively advocate our needs and concerns, providing a voice for ourselves while creating a direct line of communication with government officials. While youth voices can be powerful, the ultimate decisions related to climate change occur through policy-making and politics.

Youth councils give power to young people to create the change they envision through various initiatives. Student-led sustainability committees or councils should create a set of sustainable goals for their schools, communities, regions, or nations that make tackling climate change more manageable. These goals should be an amalgamation of what the leadership wants to achieve and what they think is realistic, but also what children and youth want. The benefits for the youth involved, in terms of having their voices heard, and the larger community, in terms of becoming more sustainable, are mind-blowing. Aside from improving sustainability, these student-led environment committees encourage collaboration, critical thinking skills, and communication skills among students.

By organizing youth councils we can and have pressured lawmakers to take children's climate demands into account when making decisions that affect our future. We will not only hold our leaders accountable but also ensure that the urgency of the climate crisis remains at the forefront of political agendas.

"Young people are the future, and their voices are impactful. We must make governments aware of this by having our voices heard."

Elifnaz, 17, Turkey

"As the next generation, it is us, the current generation who will face the consequences of the policies the government chooses to make."

Chine, 15, Nigeria

"I am deeply concerned about the limited awareness and understanding of these crucial issues among children."

Valeria, 16, Peru

"Our determination and fresh perspectives make us powerful change agents in the global fight against climate change."

Raia, 15, Indonesia

CHILD & YOUTH MOVEMENTS

Climate Strikes & Youth Collective Movement

We believe that it is through large-scale youth demonstrations, social media campaigns and advocacy efforts, we can raise public awareness about climate change and hold governments accountable. By bringing young individuals together who are all passionate about fighting for the future, we form a united force for positive change. Moreover, the empowerment of youth ensures that we are well-prepared to gain leadership and responsibility in our future. Our passion, determination, and informed perspectives will drive sustainable practices and climate action. Ultimately, the involvement of today's youth is not just beneficial; they are imperative steps in the journey to create a healthier, more sustainable future for the generations to come. We can influence global behavioural change by having productive conversations about climate change and raising awareness in an open and honest forum.

Every child must be allowed to express their concerns, opinions and thoughts on climate change to their community, decision-makers, and the larger public. Providing us with the right resources, developing our research, reasoning, and critical thinking skills, and teaching us how to collaborate will help generate productive citizens able to address environmental challenges now and in the future. Fostering an open and welcoming atmosphere where people can express their opinions and hear from others is a great way to learn about the impacts of climate change and devise ideas for solutions. Since people throughout the globe deal with climate change differently, knowing their perspectives and experiences can improve decision-making and solutions to climate change. Examples of improved decision-making include taking actions in your community like creating eco-friendly products, installing trash cans around your neighbourhood, and going to protests. Spreading awareness and educating the people around you is a crucial part of taking the initiative to stop climate change.

"Individually, we are drops of rain. Together, we are a mighty river shaping the course of history."

Amani, 15, Kenya

"From empowerment stems accountability, accountability to make a change and accountability to act for a better climate."

Damian, 17, Australia

"Everyone always says that we are the "future". We know we are. However, we are the present as well, and we can only be responsible, innovative, transformative, and hopeful leaders of society in the future if we are empowered today."

Isaiah, 17, Trinidad

CHILD & YOUTH MOVEMENTS

Social Media

We believe that it is through social media that we can create a platform for educating the public (including other children & youth) and engaging the government, ultimately fostering a collective commitment to sustainable practices and climate action. This approach not only disseminates current scientific facts but also fosters a sense of environmental responsibility. In addition, channels, blogs or articles can help to educate people, especially those who are unable to access information from where they are. Students can be inspired to actively contribute to reducing the effects of climate change as a result. An example of a youth-led climate activist organization, The Sunrise Movement, utilized platforms like Twitter and Instagram to mobilize and engage young activists and supporters across the United States. This organization's remarkable growth and impact underscores the potential of social media to rally public sentiment. Social media's influence has also drawn government officials' attention and has led to increased public awareness and pressure on policy-makers to take meaningful action.

Social media platforms can play a vital role by disseminating information and key points on how individuals can work together to combat climate change. By making the reality of climate change tangible, people can critique and compare their country's NDCs, fostering a sense of shared responsibility. At the end of each year, sharing the results and outcomes of NDCs highlights what each country has achieved and strengthens international cooperation.

"I believe that youth holds the power and capacity to be the agents of change in the battle against climate change."

Haya, 16, Egypt

"No one of us can fix climate change on our own, but all of us, together, have the power to make a difference."

Tanushri, 16, India

"We have to prove to our system leaders that we want to reap positive change by implementing projects in our wider circles, our communities."

Ian, 17, Kenya

"The youth has the power, the influence, and the voice, and we ought to utilize everything we have to make a change."

Jasmine, 18, Philippines

"We need campaigns that effectively reach citizens."

Thomas, 16, Colombia

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Centre for Global Education (CGE) seeks to educate, engage, and empower students across Canada and around the world as global citizens and changemakers. Using online technology to facilitate project-based, transformative learning, CGE breaks down traditional classroom barriers, directly connecting students to the people, places, and issues they are learning about in their classrooms. CGE works with schools, community partners, governments, and other organizations to provide enriched, project-based and inclusive programs that support students in understanding, development, sharing, and dialogue around the world's greatest challenges. CGE is the largest provider of real-time school-based collaborative programming in Canada.

We thank the following sponsors and partners for their continued support in our efforts to contribute to child and youth leadership and empowerment in climate education.



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