Climate change and children context
Why focus on children in climate change research?
Children are more vulnerable

• Physiological: more affected by all direct impacts (i.e. extreme weather events, increased diarrheal and respiratory disease and changing ranges of vector-borne diseases) as well as more gradual impacts like undernutrition and malnourishment
  • Children are also more likely to be injured or killed during a disaster (and most disasters are climate-linked)

• Psychological: less able to cope with trauma associated with climate change impacts

• Exclusion: not involved in key decision-making forums that determine future climate pathways
Geography matters
Context matters

Multidimensional Poverty

Percentage of the population that is multidimensionally poor, adjusted by the intensity of the deprivations:
- ≥75%
- 50 to below 75%
- 25 to below 50%
- < 25%
- no data

Basemap: Cartogram of the population living on up to $2 a day
“We already face the effects of climate change. Our communities are deprived of clean drinking water, denied access to education and vulnerable to disease every time it floods. Our plates are empty due to drought. Our future is at risk, and we demand that something be done. The youth in the world are ready to take action, and we request the same of governments worldwide.”

Youth delegates, UNICEF children’s climate forum
Copenhagen, 2009
1. There are no wrong areas of research focus around children and climate change

2. Talk to children when identifying research priorities and determining methodologies

3. Start from the ground and work up to ensure policy recommendations reflect actual needs

4. Don’t start from a deficit model

5. Find the balance between homogenising and recognising key differences
Which non-child-centred adaptation actions have the most significant impact in building children’s resilience?
What policy settings do we need in order to ensure national and local adaptation actions effectively build children’s resilience?
Does focusing on child participation have a measurable impact on adaptation outcomes?
‘What has child rights got to do with climate change?’

*Climate change policymakers, Kenya*

‘Of course we can talk about children and climate change, just like we talk about gender and climate change, but what does it mean in practice?’

*Government representative, Cambodia Climate Change Office*

“Adults do not listen to what we say”

*Child from Mozambique*
“In our municipality, the youth don’t just sit back and wait for what adults will say, instead we really do something for the environment and we participate actively in issues affecting young people and our community, especially in reducing damages inflicted by disasters.”

*Child from the Philippines*

“As adolescents, we face a common opponent: greenhouse gases. In order to prevail, we must come together to help others, employ alternative energy sources and create laws to protect our planet and its people.”

*Child from Pakistan*

“If we know about climate change and we know how to preserve our environment, then as we grow, as we become the leaders of tomorrow, it will be much easier to find lasting solutions.”

*Child from Zambia*