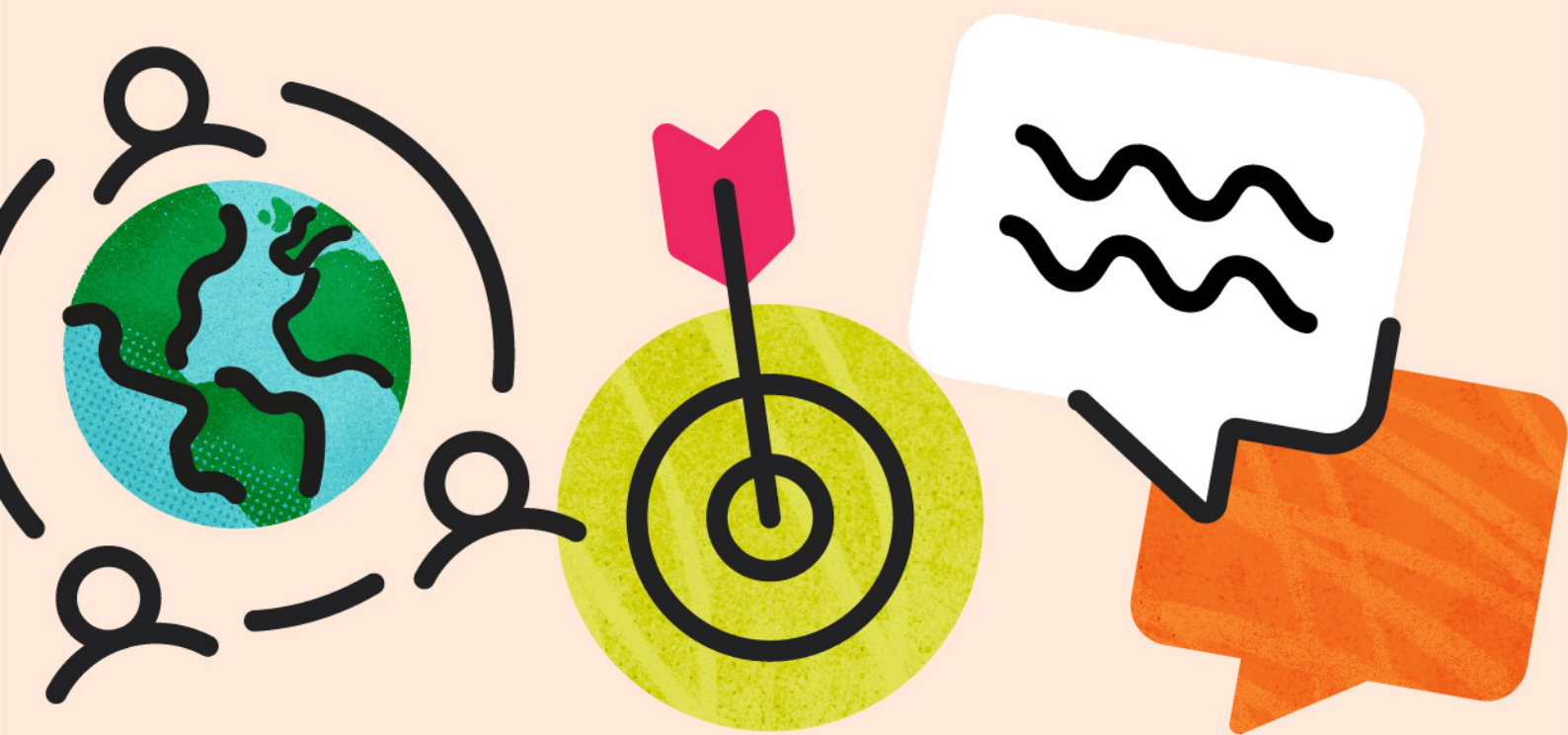


## Chapter 3:

# Who can help you take action?

Who makes climate decisions and how you can reach them



**Youth Leadership in Climate Policy: Turning knowledge and skills into action for climate empowerment**

Plan International & Unbounded Associates

## Who are stakeholders in climate decision making?



Achieving the goals of the Paris Agreement requires people and groups to work together. The climate change actions needed to save the planet will need people to change their ways of living and working. Some people will need to change more than others. Every climate change decision made in your country will affect people and groups differently. That's why the Paris Agreement tells leaders to pay attention to fairness, equity, and justice when they are writing and taking action on their NDCs. Although climate change affects everyone, we have seen

in previous Chapters how the effects of climate change and climate decision making are different for different people and can sometimes be unfair. So, it's extra important to consider who will benefit or be advantaged by specific climate actions and decisions and who will potentially be harmed or disadvantaged.

**In this Chapter of the Workbook, we will think through how climate change affects stakeholders differently.**

### **Box 5. What and who are climate change stakeholders?**

*Climate change stakeholders* are any group of people, formal or informal, who have an interest in climate decision making because it affects them in some way. This includes country leaders, policy makers, government officials, city and town councils, private and public organizations and companies, and groups based on age, ethnicity, religion, gender, race, class, caste, ability, job, location, or any other identity.

**Stakeholders also include groups formed by and for young people!** Examples of two formal stakeholder youth groups for climate action are the [UNFCCC group of Youth Non-Governmental Organizations \(YOUNGO\)](#) and the [UN Major Group for Children and Youth \(UNMGCY\)](#).

Examples of informal youth stakeholders include Indigenous young people, youth with disabilities, and youth climate refugees. Young people from many different stakeholder groups are engaging with climate policy and taking action. One example is [Fridays for Future](#), an international movement of young people protesting for action on climate change.

## Who influences climate decision making in your country?



There are many ways to think about the stakeholders in your country. We are going to use two methods to help you consider who holds power, makes decisions, and who influences those decisions. The first method will be for reflecting on which stakeholders are affected by climate change and/or influence climate decision making. The second method will be for thinking about stakeholders who make decisions about climate change in your country.

Starting with the stakeholders in your country affected by climate change in both negative and positive ways, you can consider their connection to climate decision making occurring along two *continuum*s: one of vulnerability and one of power.

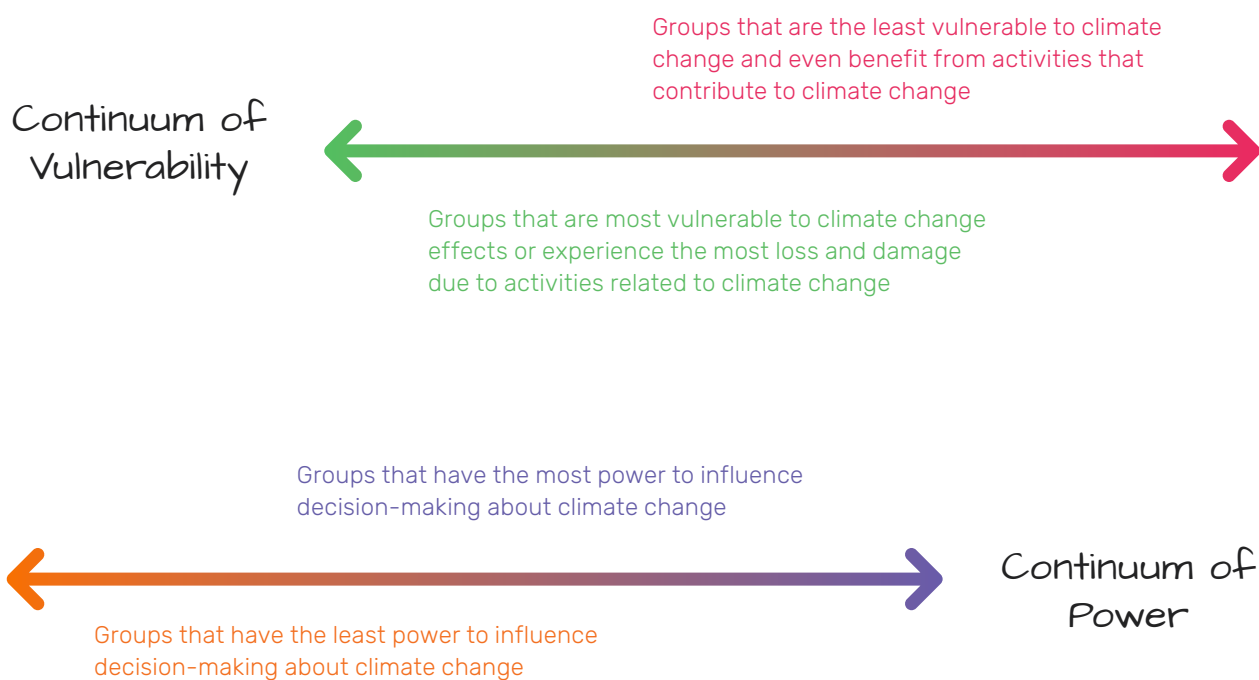
### Box 6. What's a *continuum*?

A continuum is like a road between 2 destinations: destination A and destination B. Destinations A and B are far apart and very different from each other. When you leave destination A and start travelling towards destination B, you might not notice any differences along the way. But, as you gradually get closer to destination B, the landscape and surroundings start to change. Eventually, you're in a totally new place.

A continuum works the same way; it is a gradually changing connection between two opposite ends.

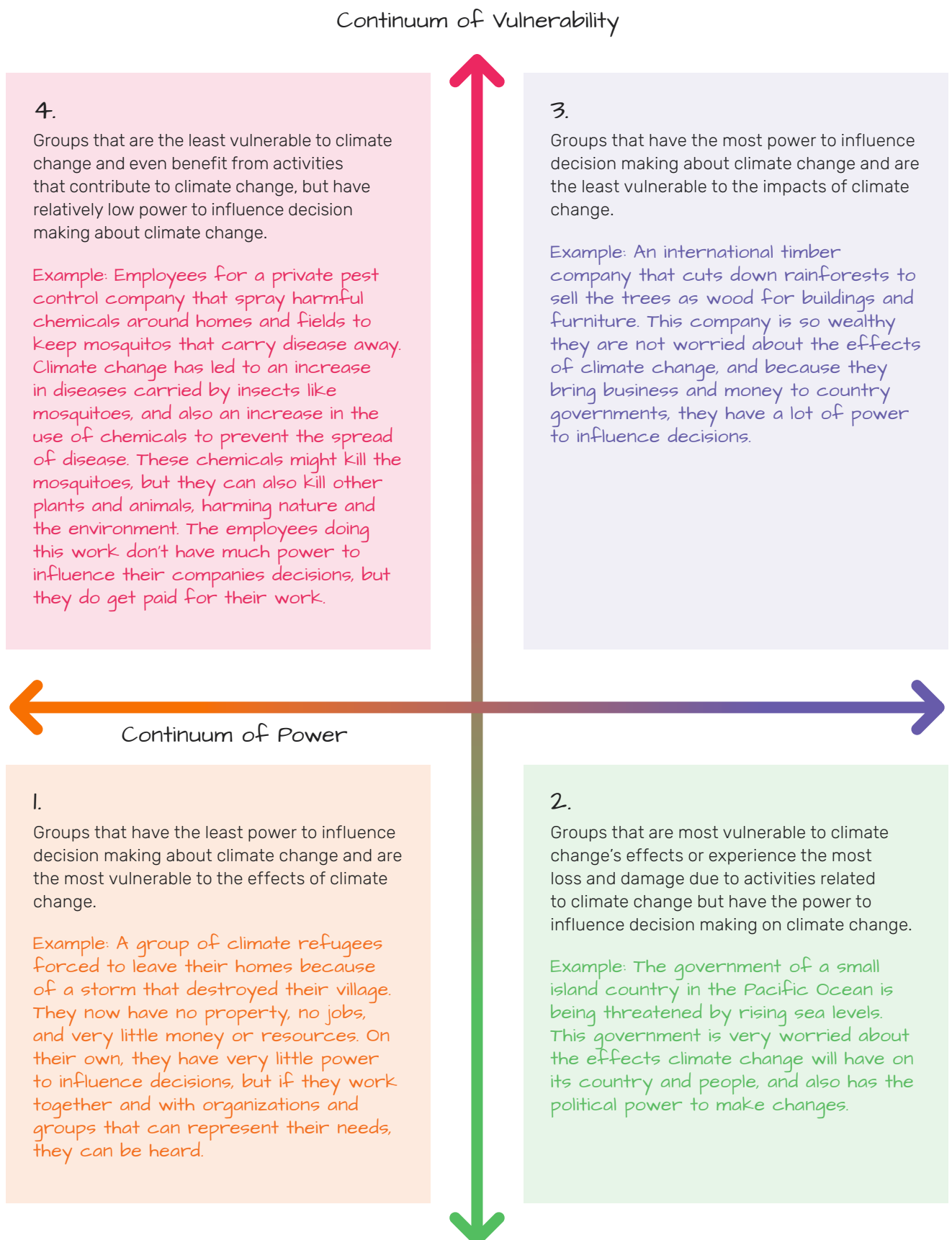
The first continuum is about vulnerability. On one end are groups who are the **most** vulnerable to climate change's effects and experience the most loss and damage because of activities related to climate change. For example, a group of Indigenous people whose way of life is damaged by forest fires and droughts and who play a key role in protecting the environment.

On the other end are groups who are the **least** vulnerable to climate change, and who might even benefit from activities that contribute to climate change. This could include oil and gas companies who pollute and damage the land or lumber companies who cut down forests to sell wood.



The second continuum is about power. On one end are groups with the **least** power to influence decision making about climate change, and on the other end are groups with the most power to influence decision making about climate change. Power can mean a lot of different things – it can be physical power like the strength of a country's military, or it can be cultural power like the influence of pop stars. For this activity, **power means having the resources, status, or opportunities to access climate decision making spaces**. A group with little power might be a community of rural farmers who do not have the time or ability to go to your government and ask for help. A group with a lot of power might be a large oil company that makes a lot of money for your government and therefore has the ability to ask for things that benefit them.

Combining these two continuums, we have four groups:



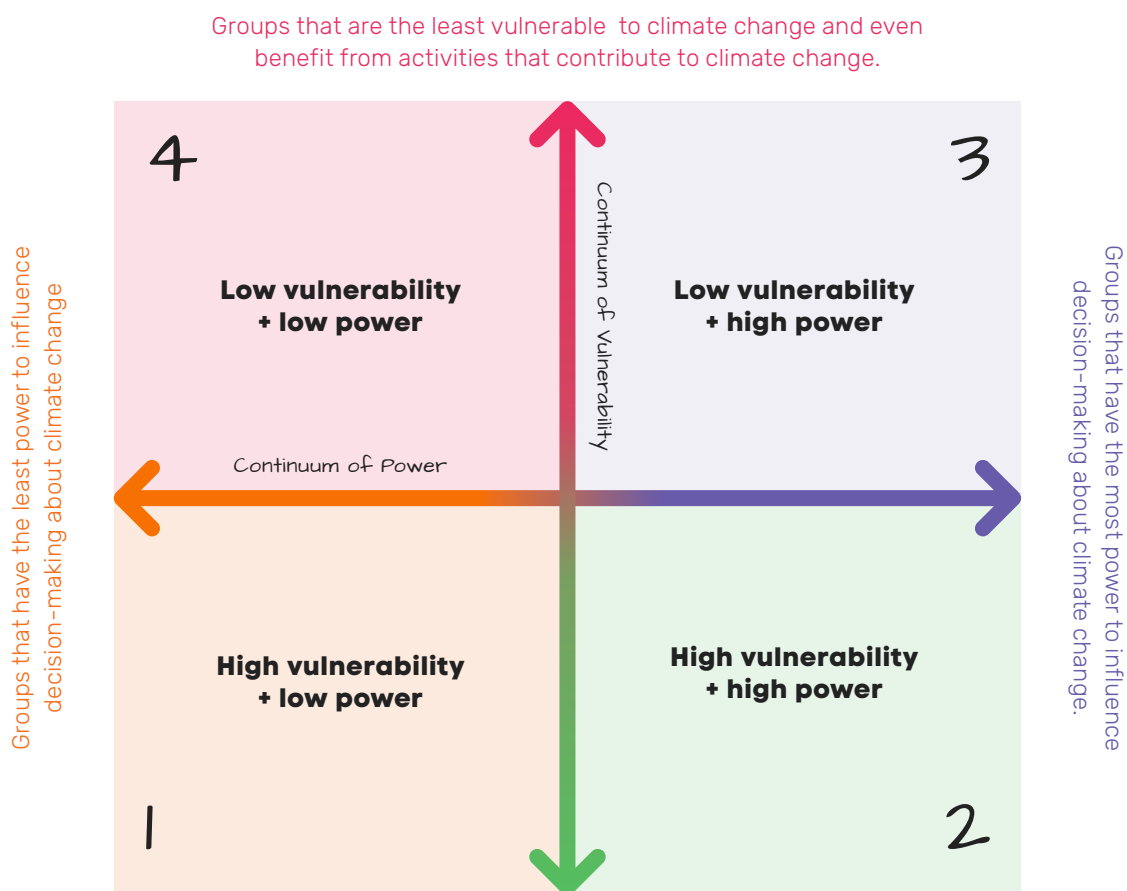
In the diagram below, you can see these four groups created by the intersection of the continuum of vulnerability and the continuum of power. Quadrant 1, shaded orange at the bottom left, represents groups who are both vulnerable to climate change and have the least power to influence climate decision making. The Paris Agreement and other international frameworks help protect groups from Quadrant 1. Other frameworks include the [Rights of Indigenous Peoples](#) and the [Rights of Children](#) by the United Nations, and the [Gender Action Plan](#) and the [Escazu Agreement](#) (which protects people's rights to defend the environment) by the UNFCCC.

These frameworks recognize that Indigenous people, girls and women, children, and environmental activists often have less economic, political, and decision making power, and are also more vulnerable to things like climate change, violence, and human rights abuses. Therefore, governments must protect and promote the rights of groups from Quadrant 1 to participate in decision making.

Using the diagram below, fill in each quadrant with groups from your country. As you do, you can reflect on your own climate risks, vulnerabilities, and opportunities for action.

### Activity 3.1

Who are stakeholders that influence climate decision making in your country?



Groups that are most vulnerable to climate change effects or experience the most loss and damage due to activities related to climate change.

# Who makes decisions about climate change policy in your country?



Now, we are going to think about the people and groups in your country who make decisions about climate change. To help you organize these stakeholders, you can think about them working at four different organizational levels in your country: town/village, city, national, and international. To learn more about these levels, read the diagram on the next page.

## Box 7. What is an ACE Focal Point?

Remember Action for *Climate Empowerment (ACE)* from Chapter 1? ACE is part of Article 12 of the Paris Agreement, and highlights the importance of including all people in a country's actions to address climate change. Before ACE was added to the Paris Agreement in 2015, it was included in Article 6 of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) in 2012.

This happened at COP18, which was held in Doha, Qatar, in 2012. At COP18, countries came together to decide on a system for carrying out ACE, and they called this the *Doha Work Programme*. Later in 2021, at COP26 in Glasgow, Scotland, they renewed this work programme and as such it changed name

to the *Glasgow Work Programme on ACE*. This is a 10 year Work Programme which will have an accompanying action plan that outlines the concrete actions countries need to take to achieve the aims of the Glasgow Work Programme. According to this Work Programme, each country should have one or more people assigned to manage and report on ACE activities in their country with support from their government. This job is called the **ACE Focal Point**. **If your country has appointed an ACE Focal Point, this is an important decision making stakeholder for you to know about.** Your ACE Focal Point is responsible for coordinating activities within your country related to climate empowerment and working together with other countries and focal points to exchange ideas, resources, and technical and financial support. You can visit the [UNFCCC's website](https://unfccc.int/ace) to see if your country has an ACE Focal Point already.





## Activity 3.2



Who are the stakeholders that make climate decisions in your country?

### International Decision Makers

What international organisations, frameworks, or structures guide decision making in your country? This includes international organizations like the United Nations, structures like COP and the NDCs, and frameworks like the UNFCCC and the Paris Agreement.



### National Decision Makers

In your country, what positions, ministries, offices, or departments of the government decide on and implement policies, laws, or regulations related to climate change? Does your government have a dedicated office or official who works on climate change issues, such as an ACE Focal Point?



### City Decision Makers

Beyond your local community, who makes decisions about climate change and implements policies at the city or district level? This could be a city government official, elected representative, or member of law enforcement.



### Town / Village Decision Makers

Who works at your local or community level to make decisions about climate change and implement policies related to climate change? This could be individuals like a village leader, or groups like a community or town council. It could also include any other decision making group that decides on policies in your community.







When you are ready, fill out the empty diagram below with the names of decision makers who are working at each level to make decisions about climate change in your country. As you do, you can reflect on how the stakeholders at each level work with one another and if some of the stakeholders have more or less power than others.

What decision making stakeholders are related to climate change at each level in your country? If you're not sure where to start, you can ask a teacher, friend, or family member or go online to see if your town, city, or country governments have any information about climate change on their websites.

### International



### National



### City



### Town / Village





## **What would stakeholders think of your NDC?**

Now that you've thought about some of the stakeholders in your country related to climate change, you can consider what they might think about the NDC you prepared in Chapter 2. Imagine your NDC is being shared with different stakeholders at a national meeting to decide your country's climate change priorities. Which stakeholders would accept your NDC, which would reject it, and why? For this activity, you will select three Decision Making Stakeholders (we are going to skip International decision making stakeholders this time) and four Influencing Stakeholders. In Activity 3.3 you will prepare arguments for each of them about how they benefit and/or are disadvantaged by your NDC's priorities and why they would ultimately support or reject your NDC.



## Activity 3.3

What would stakeholders think of your NDC?



### Decision Making Stakeholders:



#### Town/Village level:

Example: Village Council

How do they benefit or are advantaged by your NDC priorities?

Example: My NDC will protect lands and waters that are needed for the village to survive.

How are they harmed or disadvantaged by your NDC priorities?

Example: My NDC will require some of the lands near the village to be used for building windmills to make energy, using up land that was once for farming and raising animals.

Would they ultimately support or reject your NDC version? Why?

Example: They would ultimately accept the NDC because it protects their way of life and prevents more damage to their community.



#### City level:

How do they benefit or are advantaged by your NDC priorities?

How are they harmed or disadvantaged by your NDC priorities?

Would they ultimately support or reject your NDC version? Why?



#### National level:

How do they benefit or are advantaged by your NDC priorities?

How are they harmed or disadvantaged by your NDC priorities?

Would they ultimately support or reject your NDC version? Why?



Activity 3.3



Influencing Stakeholders:

**Stakeholder from Quadrant 1:**

(High vulnerability + low power)

How do they benefit or are advantaged by your NDC priorities?

How are they harmed or disadvantaged by your NDC priorities?

Would they ultimately support or reject your NDC version? Why?

**Stakeholder from Quadrant 2:**

(High vulnerability + high power)

How do they benefit or are advantaged by your NDC priorities?

How are they harmed or disadvantaged by your NDC priorities?

Would they ultimately support or reject your NDC version? Why?



### Activity 3.3



#### Influencing Stakeholders:

##### Stakeholder from Quadrant 3:

(Low vulnerability + high power)

How do they benefit or are advantaged by your NDC priorities?

How are they harmed or disadvantaged by your NDC priorities?

Would they ultimately support or reject your NDC version? Why?

##### Stakeholder from Quadrant 4

(Low vulnerability + low power)

How do they benefit or are advantaged by your NDC priorities?

How are they harmed or disadvantaged by your NDC priorities?

Would they ultimately support or reject your NDC version? Why?

### How can you connect with stakeholders in your country?



You have thought about climate change stakeholders in your country and what they might think about your NDC ideas. Great work! Now, how can you connect with climate change stakeholders in real life? There are many different ways to reach out to stakeholders, and it often depends on who you want to connect with. These days, most formal stakeholders, such as groups, organizations, companies, or individuals well-known in society, have a website or social media page where you can find information on how to contact them. Informal stakeholders, such as rural farmers, climate refugees, migrant workers, or Indigenous women, are often more difficult to contact. This makes it even more important to make sure these kinds of stakeholders are being reached, and their opinions are being heard. One way to get in touch with more informal stakeholders is to see if there are any organizations in your country that represent those groups.

If you are hoping to connect with more formal stakeholders, especially those with the power to make or influence decisions in your country, you will need to think about the best way to reach them. **What are the common ways people have their opinions, ideas, and demands heard by decision makers in your country?** Consider the examples in **Box 8** of actions you could take to connect with different stakeholders.

#### **Box 8. How can you connect with climate change stakeholders in your country? Here are a few examples.**

- Attending a community meeting of elders and/or village leaders to share your concerns and calls to action.
- Writing a letter to an elected official at your town/village, city, or national level with a clear message of what is needed to address climate change in your country.
- Writing an article or essay to be published in a newspaper, magazine, or online website that will be read throughout your country to help others understand the issues.
- Joining a group of others to protest safely outside government buildings to put pressure on country leaders to take action on climate change.
- Creating and sharing messages through your social media, a website you create, or existing spaces online to draw attention to climate change in your country and the need for action now.
- Going online or asking around to find youth groups in your country committed to climate action that you can join to get connected with more stakeholders.

Whatever way you choose to connect with climate change stakeholders, make sure you are considering the laws and rules in your country to protect your safety and the safety of others. You also want to think about the cultural practices and traditional ways of doing things in your country that might guide how you connect with stakeholders. For example, it is not that easy to talk directly to political leaders in some countries, especially for young people, because these kinds of connections are not prioritized. But young people still have a right to be heard and are finding unique ways to do so. For example, young people are using social media more and more to get their messages heard.



### Box 9. How did young people in Pakistan use social media to connect with their government?

In Pakistan, it is considered disrespectful for young people to openly disagree with adults. But online, the expectations are different. By using social media, young people can grow support for causes they care about and influence decisions that matter to them. In 2018, young people used social media to call for changes in the Pakistan government and an end to corruption. By holding past leaders accountable on social media, young people directly inspired support for a new government that would work to end corruption and take important causes like climate change seriously. They used hashtags like #NayaPakistan ("New Pakistan") that became popular on social media to help elect a new prime minister. Now, the current government often uses social media to directly connect with the people. Without the young people who spoke out on social media, who knows if these important changes would have happened in Pakistan? This is an example of how young people can be clever and creative to have their voices heard by decision makers, even when it's not traditional or easy for youth to speak out.

Thinking about what message you want to share with climate decision makers can be hard. How do you decide what to say? You want to create a message that is true to who you are, what you believe in, and why you believe it. You also want to clearly state what actions you are asking others to take. You can think of your message as needing four key things: **Who** you are, **Why** you care, **What** you care about, and **What** actions you want others to take. We call this the **Who, Why and Double What** of your climate change message. On the following page you can read some examples of young people who have clear climate change messages that include the Who, Why, and Double What.



## Activity 3.4

What are young people's climate change messages?



Hakim Evans

**20 years old when he gave this message.  
From the east coast of the United States.**

"I became a climate activist in 2015 after learning more about how climate change and environmental damage were affecting public health, and I wanted to do more in my community.

It's important for young people to be engaged in this movement because the catastrophic impacts of climate change will be most devastating to us and the generations to follow. But we need everyone to take some form of action for the betterment of the environment. We need everyone to call on their elected officials to speak to the corporations that they're affiliated with and hold those people in power accountable.

I strike because it's important for young people to be involved in the climate movement—especially since the impacts are happening to us.

My generation has the most to gain or lose. And we have the right to a livable future."



Kevin Patel

**18 years old when he gave this message.  
From the west coast of the United States.**

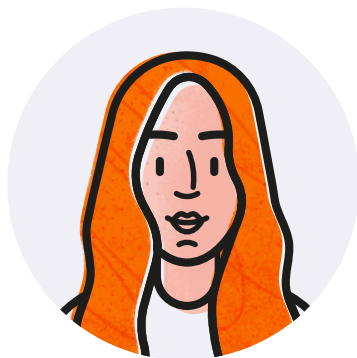
"I organize, protest and strike not just for future generations but for my generation as well.

I decided to become an activist because I saw that my community wasn't getting healthy options. I don't have a choice. I don't have a choice to not be in this fight because this issue directly impacts me. I have to fight for the community and my community.

That's what motivates me—seeing that communities are being impacted around the world by the same problems I'm seeing at home. But my biggest fear about the climate crisis is that it's too late to reverse the damage that we have caused.

That's why we need people to act. We have the solutions already."

For more examples of messages from young people like you who care about climate change, explore more of [Patagonia's Activism web page](#).



Loukina Tille

**18 years old when she gave this message.  
From Switzerland.**

"I became a climate activist in 2015 after learning more about how climate change and environmental damage were affecting public health, and I wanted to do more in my community.

It's important for young people to be engaged in this movement because the catastrophic impacts of climate change will be most devastating to us and the generations to follow. But we need everyone to take some form of action for the betterment of the environment.

We need everyone to call on their elected officials to speak to the corporations that they're affiliated with and hold those people in power accountable.

I strike because it's important for young people to be involved in the climate movement—especially since the impacts are happening to us. My generation has the most to gain or lose. And we have the right to a livable future."



Xiuhtezcatl Martinez

**19 years old when he gave this message.  
From the United States and Mexico.**

"Living my whole life between Colorado and Mexico, I saw the forests that I grew up in and loved disappear because of the changing climate. I saw my family's access to clean water become more and more scarce in Mexico. This built a different kind of connection to the crisis because it affects my home, my ceremonial places and the places I go with my family. I organize in honour of my ancestors, for those who fought for the world we live in today and for future generations who will inherit the planet we are leaving behind. Everything to be afraid of about the climate crisis is already here—the destruction and displacement of peoples off their land, the death and the violence, and the imbalance. My biggest fear is for that to spread to the rest of the world and inflict more suffering.

I believe in the power my generation has to shape our future. We are at the most pivotal moment where our existence, our reality, our futures and our present are all at stake. It's not a matter of choice for us to be involved—these are our lives on the line. And it's a heavy burden, but it's also a beautiful responsibility. We need to set aside the barriers that have separated our movements and our people and recognize that the only way we're going to make it out of this is together. This is one of the most challenging times humanity's ever going to face, and with that, it's one of the most unifying moments we have ever experienced. It is calling on humanity. It's calling on each and every one of us to step up and play our part—as artists, as teachers, as students, as entrepreneurs, as dreamers."

Now that you have read some examples of young people's climate change messages, you can start writing your own. You can start creating your message now and continue adding to it and changing it as you learn more about climate change and yourself.

The message you start writing now can help you prepare clear, specific, and simple messages for connecting with stakeholders in the future.

### Activity 3.5

#### What's your climate change message?

Who I am:



Why I care about climate change:

What I have to say about it:

What I am asking you to do:

### Chapter 3 Reflection



With so many stakeholders in a country, let alone the whole world, it is very difficult to consider everyone's needs. This is why equity, fairness, and justice must be prioritized in all decision making. It can be overwhelming trying to address the wants, needs, and vulnerabilities of every stakeholder for every decision. Increasing your awareness of the equity, fairness, and justice issues connected to specific climate decisions will help you prioritize the people and groups who require the most protection.

There will always be more to learn and experience in climate decision making. We must all grow from the lessons we learn and recognize and accept the mistakes we might make. Taking this perspective, the principles of equity, fairness, and justice are not meant to make you feel bad when you make mistakes. Instead, they can help guide you in your process of learning to be more aware and thoughtful. Based on the work you have done in this Chapter; you can return to the original NDC you made in Activity 2.5 of Chapter 2. Reading it again, are there any parts you would change or add to? As you continue to learn about climate decision making, you can keep returning to the work you've done in this Workbook to add and change things. This reflects the ongoing process of engaging with climate decision making as we grow and change ourselves.

For your final reflection activity of Chapter 3, return to the **Recurring Reflection Activity** at the end of the Overview and follow the directions for the Chapter 3 reflection.