Chapter 4:

Turning your knowledge into action

Create your personal climate policy action plan



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

Plan International & Unbounded Associates



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How are young people taking individual and collective climate action?



By now, you have learned about the Paris Agreement, ACE, NDCs, and the key concepts of climate justice and climate empowerment. You have considered the importance of the Paris Agreement in your country and analyzed the effects climate decision making has on different stakeholders. Through writing an NDC for your country and learning about climate change stakeholders, you have seen how power and vulnerability affect how different climate stakeholders influence and make decisions in your country. You have also seen how climate change decision making requires international cooperation between countries. The Paris Agreement says that all countries must act to address climate change. It also understands that different countries will take different actions based on their capacity and resources. We can't expect countries with less money and resources to take action in the same way richer countries should and must. This is especially true because rich countries have produced a lot more greenhouse gases than countries with less money in the past 100 years, another example of climate injustice. Still, even countries that haven't contributed as much to climate change in the past must also do everything they can now. This is the basis of the idea of common but differentiated responsibilities (CBDR) which is included in the Paris Agreement.



Box 10. What are common but differentiated responsibilities (CBDR)? Let's break it down.

Responsibilities are something that you must do, such as our collective responsibility to address climate change.

Common responsibilities means that many groups, or countries, must all do something to address the same responsibility.

Differentiated responsibilities means that different groups, or countries, must do different things based on their ability to address a responsibility. A country's ability to address its climate change responsibility depends on its access to money, time, resources, and knowledge.

Common but differentiated

responsibilities means that countries all have a responsibility to address climate change, but they must do it in different ways according to their own capacity and resources.

Example of CBDR: In Activity 2.3 of Chapter 2, you learned about conditionality and the need for countries to include in their NDCs what goals they can achieve on their own and what goals they will need help from other countries to achieve. Common but differentiated responsibilities means that some countries will have more conditional NDC goals than others, meaning they will need more help from other countries. The Paris Agreement says this is both okay and expected because some countries have more resources and ability to address climate change than others. CBDR states that those countries that have more resources and ability to address climate change should help other countries that have less resources, increasing everyone's ability to address climate change.

The Paris Agreement is the result of countries working together to address the global responsibility of climate change. No single country could have written the Paris Agreement, and no single individual can make the changes needed to stop climate change. By calling for climate justice and climate empowerment for all, the Paris Agreement promotes the development of not just *individual* voices for change, but a *collective* call to action. Collective action is when many people come together to do something they all care about, something bigger than themselves. Collective action is powerful and can push country leaders to prioritize climate change on their national agendas and in international decisionmaking spaces.

Check out some examples of young people who embraced the Paris Agreement's call to action and created opportunities for collective, international action to influence climate decision making.



Activity 4.1 How have young people started collective climate action?



Example	What they did	The International Impact
Mock COP	COP26 in Glasgow, Scotland was postponed in 2020 due to the Coronavirus pandemic. Not wanting to miss out on important climate decision making, a group of more than 300 young people from over 140 countries stepped up to organize their own inclusive, online <u>Mock COP</u> . They called out governments for not providing their citizens with enough climate education and training, opportunities for youth participation in climate decision making, or accessible climate-related information.	The young people who participated ir Mock COP drafted a Global Declaratio This document listed 18 policy demands for global leaders to addres at the "real" COP. They have also been working to get their Declaration adopted by as many governments as possible by supporting young people to run campaigns in their countries to engage their national leaders.
Fridays for Future	Inspired by <u>Greta Thunberg</u> 's school strike for climate action outside the Swedish Parliament, young people around the world have been organizing climate strikes outside their own local government buildings. Together, they have created a global climate strike movement, connected by the social media hashtag <u>#FridaysForFuture</u> . They strike to put "moral pressure" on leaders and policymakers to take more ambitious action on climate change.	As of 2021, the Fridays for Future movement have organized over 14 million young people to strike in 7500 cities across all continents since Greta's first strike in August 2018.

These two examples show young people's ability to build collective movements to address the global problem of climate change.

Although no single person can stop climate change, it takes every person, including young people like you, to stand up and call for action. Every day, young people around the world are influencing climate decision making, addressing climate change, and embracing the principles of climate justice and climate empowerment in unique and personal ways. Their stories can serve as powerful examples and reminders of the potential every young person has to stand up for their rights to a livable planet, sustainable livelihood, and bright future.



How are young people taking climate action in their own communities?

Name, Country	Their Story
Loukina Tille Switzerland	When the Swiss government announced it would host youth workshops to help write its national climate action plan, teenager Loukina Tille felt nervous to participate. So, she spoke to scientists about what they thought Switzerland needed to do to achieve the goals of the Paris Agreement and asked regular people on the street what they wanted the government to do. At the youth workshop, Loukina realized she had done more work than the government officials had, and that she knew more about what to do for climate change than the adults in the room.
Sarah Jehaan Khan Pakistan	Sarah Jehaan Khan uses her filmmaking to tell <u>powerful stories</u> about climate change from the eyes of those experiencing its worst effects in her home country of Pakistan. In this way, she uses popular media to educate others about climate change and its human causes and effects.
Xiuhtezcatl Martinez United States, Mexico	Xiuhtezcatl Martinez (whose first name is pronounced Shoe-Tez- Caht) grew up between the United States and Mexico, watching the forests he loved to play in as a child disappear and his family's access to clean water grow less and less. He made his first public speech on climate change when he was 6 years old and has been part of multiple lawsuits against the US government for inaction on climate change. He has also spoken at the UN several times. He uses hip hop music to express his climate activism, addressing the topics of racial injustice, climate change, police brutality, and Indigenous rights through his lyrics. Xiuhtezcatl helped found <u>Earth Guardians</u> , an international environmental protection organization that works to train and inspire young people to become leaders in the climate justice movement.





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Activity 4.2	
Name, Country	Their Story
Renata Koch Alvarenga Brazil	Renata Koch Alvarenga learned about climate change by researching online. Through her research, she found opportunities to speak at international climate conferences about gender equality and climate justice as a youth representative. As a college student, she founded <u>EmpoderaClima</u> to empower youth in the Global South to consider the importance of gender equality in climate solutions and climate activism.
Vanessa Nakate Uganda	Concerned with her government's inaction on the climate crisis, <u>Vanessa Nakate</u> began striking alone outside the Parliament of Uganda when she was a teenager. After months of protesting alone, Vanessa's action gained followers and she became the face of a collective movement in Uganda promoting climate action. She eventually started the Green Schools Project, launching a <u>GoFundMe</u> campaign to raise money and bring international attention to climate action in Uganda. The Green Schools Project helps to replace wood- fueled stoves with clean cookstoves, reducing the amount of firewood used by schools. This helps improve air quality, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and supports tree planting and re-growing forests.
Marinel Ubaldo Philippines	After experiencing the terrible impacts of Super Typhoon Haiyan in her home country of the Philippines, <u>Marinel Ubaldo</u> began to campaign for climate justice issues affecting her community. She was part of a <u>collective effort</u> to hold companies who contribute to climate change in the Philippines accountable for their actions. The result of this collective effort made history. It was decided that companies play a clear role in contributing to climate change and could be legally responsible for harming people through the negative impacts of climate change.
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Many of these young people are active on social media. If you use social media, such as Twitter, LinkedIn, Instagram, TikTok, or Facebook, consider searching for them or following them! This is a great way to learn more through their posts and expand your network of young people who care about climate change. You can also see if climate youth groups are active in your community, region, or country to learn more about issues affecting your home and connect with other young people who are taking action to address climate change.



"If getting involved with national or international decision making on climate change sounds scary to you, you're not alone."

> If getting involved with national or international decision making on climate change sounds scary to you, you're not alone. Feelings of fear are normal when considering something that's new. The young people you have read about in this Workbook are able to accomplish their climate action goals because they're not alone; they have a collective group of people helping them, as well as role models, support systems, and resources. We hope that this Workbook can be a resource and support system for you, too.



What are barriers to participation in climate change action?



Just like the actions taken by the young people you read about in Activity 4.2, there are likely efforts in your country to include young people in climate decision making. The challenge is finding and connecting with them. Spaces for citizens, especially for young people, to engage in climate decision making can be difficult to access.

Most of the time, the people who design these decision making spaces must take intentional steps to be more inclusive. Sometimes though, even the steps people take to be inclusive are not enough.

This can become **tokenism**.

Box 11. What does tokenism look like?

Not all efforts to be inclusive are the same. Sometimes, the actions leaders take to make things more inclusive are actually not as good as they seem. For example, leaders can invite a small group or even a single individual who represents a group to join an activity, making it look like inclusion. This is called **tokenism**.

Tokenism happens when a small group of people create the appearance of equality or inclusivity when in reality, the groups they represent are still left out. Tokenism can be intentional or accidental, but its negative effects are the same no matter what. An example of intentional tokenism might be an international coal mining company inviting a young, Indigenous girl to join their event on TV so everyone in your country can see her being "included," but then the company still decides to cut down the forests where her community lives.



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Real inclusion – not tokenism – in climate decision making is a question of climate justice. No matter their background, circumstance, or identity, everyone should be able to truly have a say in decisions that affect their lives, especially the people who climate change affects the most. If you choose to get involved in climate decision making in your country, think about the spaces and groups you're joining and if there are opportunities to make them more inclusive. Below, there are four opportunities for climate action that four different people could participate in. Based on the description of the opportunity and the person, consider what barriers each person might face in accessing and participating in each opportunity. Write down your ideas for barriers to each opportunity in the table below:

Activity 4.3 What are barriers to participating in climate decision making?



Opportunity 1

The United Nations is hosting a global youth summit on climate change to help write a youth climate declaration. In an effort to be inclusive, each country is allowed to send one youth participant. To select the young person from your country, there is an online application process. It requires a 2-page personal message in English, a letter from a teacher about why you should be chosen, and an interview in English in the capital city.

Opportunity 2

Your national government is hosting a competition to send two young people to the next international climate negotiations. You must be able to speak English. Every school will choose two students to travel to the capital and compete in the national competition. In each school, head teachers of each grade will nominate two students, and the principal and vice principal will select two students to represent their school in the national competition.

Opportunity 3

An international organisation has created a website for youth around the world to share their demands for climate action with global leaders. The online website includes a form where youth can type and submit their message to global leaders. Youth of any age and from any country can participate, but they must type their message in less than 100 words. The organisation will show the messages submitted by youth on a screen at the next international climate conference.

Opportunity 4

The Ministry of Climate from your country is hosting meetings with youth around the country to get feedback on their updated NDC. At the beginning of the meeting, ministry officials pass around printed copies of the updated NDC, written in your country's national language. Someone then presents the NDC, also in your country's national language. After, youth are asked questions and told to write their responses on chalkboard at the front of the room.









Opportunity 1

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From the perspective of: Me

What are barriers to accessing this opportunity?



Example: I might not be able to access this opportunity because I don't have access to the internet to write my application, or I don't have a teacher who I can ask to write a letter for me. What are barriers to participating in this opportunity?



Example: I might not be able to participate in this opportunity because my family won't let me travel to another country by myself, or because the language used at the youth summit is English and I am not confident in my English skills. How can you make the opportunity more inclusive?



Example: Access - The application process could accept mailed-in applications and calls from teachers instead of letters.

Participation - At the summit, there could be translators for different languages so youth could speak in their chosen language.







Opportunity 2

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From the perspective of: Indigenous girl









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From the perspective of: Out of school, immigrant boy working in the capital city in your country









Opportunity 4

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From the perspective of: Girl who is deaf and from a small village in your country





What matters to you, and what will you do?

Bringing together everything we have covered in this Workbook; it is now your turn to decide where you go from here.

- Combining the components of ACE and the principles of climate justice and climate empowerment with the climate change problems and solutions you brainstormed in Chapter 1;
- Adding the key characteristics of your country and NDC priorities you wrote in Chapter 2;
- Connecting your knowledge of the stakeholders who make decisions, influence decisions, and are influenced by decisions from Chapter 3;
- And viewing it all with an awareness of the barriers and challenges to engaging all people in climate action from your work in Chapter 4;
- You are ready to create your **Climate Policy Action Plan.**

The Climate Policy Action Plan you make is yours to share and include others in the process. Your Plan should be relevant and reasonable for your current situation, but also ambitious because you are capable of more than you think! As you have seen from the many examples of young people who turned their plans into action, so much is possible when you combine passion with strategic planning, teamwork, and awareness of the issues that matter.

Use the questions in the table on the next page to help guide you in creating a Climate Policy Action Plan. Some of the questions might remind you of questions you answered before while writing your NDC. This is because they are both related to choosing climate change priorities, actions, and goals. The important difference is that your NDC plan was an exercise to help you start thinking about climate priorities in your country. This **Climate Policy Action Plan is for you to prepare to take real action in your local or national community.**

As you begin writing your Climate Policy Action Plan, you can return to the Chapters of this Workbook to help you brainstorm and remember what you've already learned. For example, you can use the Problem and Solution Trees you made in Activity 1.5 to help you think about climate change issues in your life that you want to address. You can use the key characteristics you brainstormed about your country in Activity 2.4 to help you think about climate change priorities beyond your local community. The NDC you created in Activity 2.5 can help you make sure your Climate Policy Action Plan is addressing clear climate change mitigation and adaptation goals. The stakeholder brainstorming you did in Activities 3.1 and 3.2 can help you think about who you want to involve in your plan, and how vulnerability and power will influence your engagement with different stakeholders. Finally, all the thinking you have done about climate justice throughout the Workbook, including who is left out of climate change actions and decision making, will help you create a plan that is thoughtful, inclusive, and promotes the principles of equity, justice, and fairness.

For examples of ways to get involved in climate policy and action, you can visit the websites below:

<u>Turn it Around:</u> Help design a deck of flashcards that show how climate justice can be achieved. These cards will be shared at future COP meetings!

<u>1000 Actions for Change</u>: See what actions young people from North and South America and the Caribbean are taking to address climate change.



Activity 4.4 What's next for you? Your Climate Policy Action Plan



For this final activity in the Workbook, we are not providing example responses. This is because we know you are ready to create a Climate Policy Action Plan all on your own, and you already have all the activities and information in the Workbook to help you!

What?

What climate change issue is relevant and important to you that you want to address through your Climate Policy Action Plan?

What impact will your plan have on your own life, and/or the lives of people in your community, society, or country?









How?

 How will you achieve your Climate Policy Action Plan? Think back to the six components of ACE (education, training, public awareness, public access to information, public participation and international cooperation). Which one feels most relevant and reasonable for addressing the climate change issue you've chosen? Is it a combination of more than one ACE component?

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2. What materials and money will you need for your plan? What barriers might prevent you from accessing these resources? Are there changes that need to happen in society to help you overcome these barriers?

3. What skills and knowledge will you need for your plan? What can you do to keep developing your skills and knowledge? If this plan is something you cannot accomplish alone, who can you ask to help you?



















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Activity 4.4		•
Where?		
	ne spaces, in-person or online, that you need to access to make your Climate n Plan happen and accomplish your goals? How will you access these spaces?	
	ne spaces, in-person or online, that you need to access to spread the word plan and gain support? How will you access these spaces?	
	e people that you want to involve in your plan live and work? This includes s you want to involve, people who might benefit from your plan, and people you for help.	



Activity 4.4	
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When?	
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1. When will yo	ou make your Climate Policy Action Plan happen? How does working on this plan
fit into your	r other priorities as a young person?
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	ne important dates in your country, such as national meetings on climate change
or the globa	al COP meeting, that you can use to help organize your plan?
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	ou start your plan, and how long will it take you? For example, is it a month-long
project, a 2-	-3 year program, or an ongoing set of actions?
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Chapter 4 Reflection



Making a Climate Policy Action Plan is not easy, and you will probably find answering some of the questions in the table a bit difficult. This is because participating in climate decision making and taking climate action can be complex. Don't worry; you are not expected to finish your plan all at once or take action immediately. We do hope that you will start planning the actions you want to take, even if your plans change along the way. You could write a plan for the next month, the next year, or for working on gradually throughout your whole life. Whatever action you decide to take, remember to continually reflect on why your plan is important to you and who it is affecting in both positive and potentially negative ways. This includes how it is affecting you and your physical and mental wellbeing. Taking care of yourself is the necessary first step to caring about things bigger than yourself.

For your final reflection activity of Chapter 4, return to the **Recurring Reflection Activity** at the end of the Overview and follow the directions for the Chapter 4 reflection.

Beyond this Workbook



Congratulations! You have completed our Workbook on building skills and taking action in climate decision making. You should be really proud of all the time and effort you put in. We hope that you not only learned a lot, but had some fun doing it. Your next challenge goes beyond the pages of this Workbook. It's now up to you to decide how you want to use the skills and knowledge you gained in your life. We hope that you'll keep what you learned from the Workbook in mind and even return to this Workbook when you need a resource on climate policy.





