

education
nature
nexus

GLOBAL
CHILD
BIODIVERSITY
DECLARATION

UNITED
FOR
NATURE

2024

Centre for Global Education

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EducationNatureNexus (#enn) is a school-based program that uses virtual technology to connect children worldwide in learning, dialogue, and action on the natural environment.



We know that high-quality environmental education and skill building is essential to realize global goals and commitments in biodiversity. Children, especially adolescents, are critical partners in implementing these environmental policy goals.



5 Continents



25+ Countries



1000s of Students



20 In-Person Child Delegates

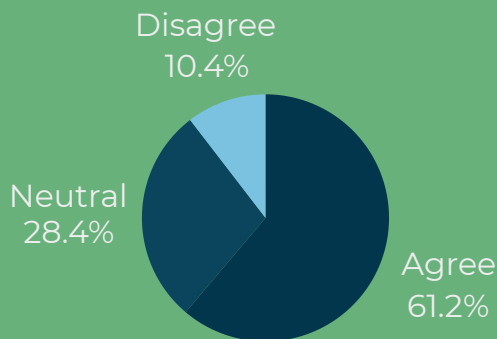


In preparation for the writing of this document, children around the world collected the thoughts of their peers in a **Global Student Environment Survey**. Ages 6-18 were asked about their personal experiences with nature, environmental education, government policies and more. At the time of the declaration writing, we had over 600 responses from children around the world. Data from this survey is referenced and represented throughout the Declaration.

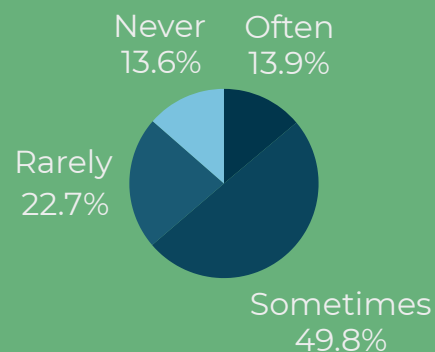
Introduction

As children, we stand at the forefront of a changing world where our collective future depends on the health of our environment. It is essential that every young person, no matter their background has the chance to learn the importance of global biodiversity. We are raising our voices on a global stage to connect with decision-makers and to highlight the importance of education, policies, Indigenous perspectives, community engagement, adequate funding, and a shift in awareness methods in the global fight for biodiversity conservation. Our connection to nature is a vital part of our identity, as shown by the Global Survey, where 87% of children reported feeling "very connected" to all living things and the Earth. Naomi, a 15-year-old from Canada says, "Students can better understand and appreciate biodiversity through actual immersion in nature rather than just words." However, alongside this connection, nearly 80% of students also experience eco-anxiety about the state of our planet. Together, we can create a more informed, fair, and sustainable future that honours our relationship with the environment.

I feel very connected to nature.



I experience "environmental & climate anxiety."

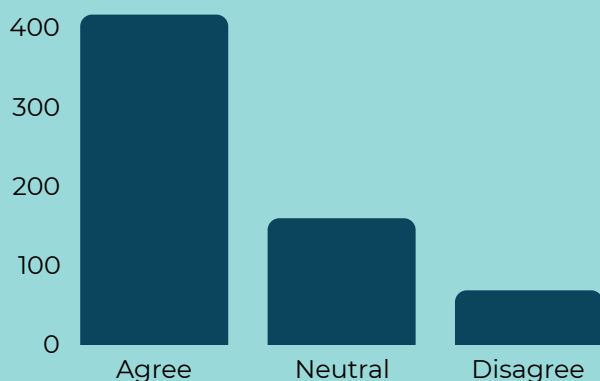


Government Policies

We urge governments to join the Global Plan of Action for Biodiversity Education and commit to strong environmental education in their National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs) ensuring a legal right for all children everywhere to receive high-quality environmental education.

It is imperative that every child and young person, at every level of schooling, learns the importance of biodiversity, as climate change becomes more common in our lives. Article 6 of the Convention highlights the need for countries to create plans of action, and that youth voices are part of these important conversations. By giving young people the tools we need - through classroom learning, nature experiences, and community programs - you're helping us learn what changes are needed to protect our planet from climate change, biodiversity loss, and pollution. Our passion and dedication towards conservation efforts should be supported by governments, especially since we bring fresh perspectives and solutions. Gerson, a 16-year-old from Peru says that "Governments should prioritize the integration of environmental education into national educational plans, focusing on biodiversity and climate change. By including young people in decision-making and supporting initiatives that promote hands-on experiences in nature, not only will future generations be empowered to advocate for sustainable policies, but a long-term approach to conservation will also be ensured." Policies made in collaboration with children reach beyond the classroom. The inclusion of children in global policy development allows us to become effective advocates for environmental stewardship.

My government should make climate action the highest priority.



“Education systems need to integrate environmental education into the curriculum, emphasizing hands-on, place-based learning that connects students to local ecosystems.

Natalia, 16, Colombia”

School Curricula

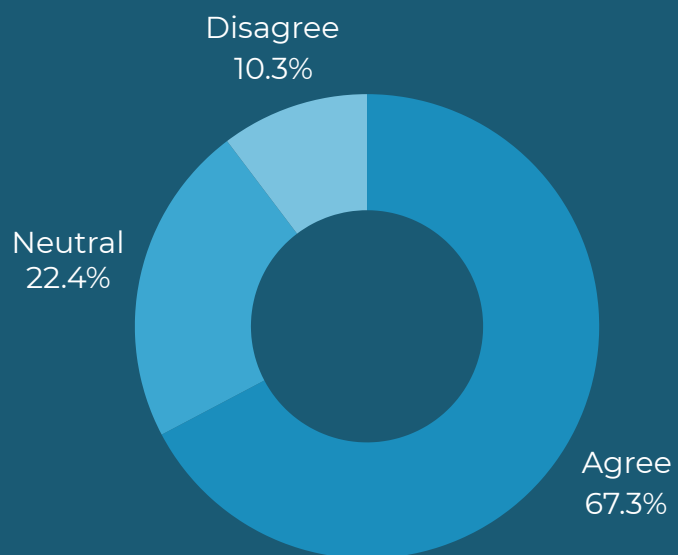
We call for a transformation in education that prioritizes hands-on experiences that connect us to nature.

Environmental education isn't just about talking in classrooms, it's about getting outside and actually experiencing nature. By stepping out of traditional classroom settings and exploring the wonders of the natural world, we can have meaningful discussions and inspire real change to protect our planet. Hejin, a 16-year-old from Canada states that "It is very difficult to have meaningful conversations surrounding the environment we live in when you are locked in a classroom with very little stimulation. By getting rid of the traditional classroom setting and showing students the wonders of nature firsthand, meaningful conversations can be held, and change can be created to protect our planet." From an early age, students should be immersed in the outdoors to truly understand biodiversity. We need to learn about biodiversity in group settings so that we can tackle the environmental challenges we face together. Activities like nature walks, gardening, and interactive outdoor explorations help build a sense of community and deepen our connection to the environment.

My country must focus on climate curriculum in K-12 schools.

“Education is one of the ways to spread mindfulness for our environment - a catalyst for initiative. Showing children how they can have an impact will help raise a generation of more aware and environmentally conscious adults than the generation before them.

Armina, 17, Philippines

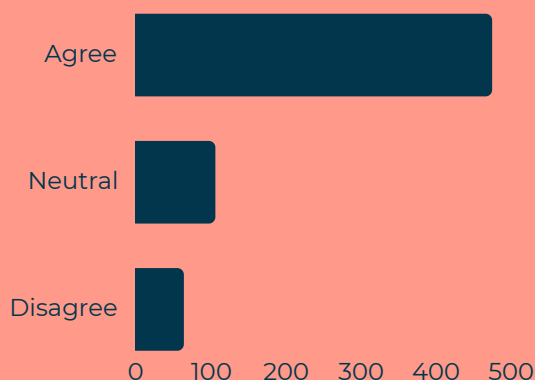


Indigenous Perspectives

We advocate for the combination of scientific knowledge and traditional Indigenous wisdom to create more effective ways of protecting our environment and ensuring thriving global biodiversity for the future.

Engagement in dialogue with diverse Indigenous groups around the world can be accomplished through a combination of actions. Awareness campaigns that highlight the importance of Indigenous perspectives on environmental issues illustrate how these teachings can profoundly impact our community and foster respect for the wisdom Indigenous peoples bring to contemporary practices. Funding for collaboration with local First Nations communities enables the development of lessons on traditional land stewardship and sustainable resource management strategies. Neisha, a 17-year-old from the Philippines explains that "Indigenous communities have protected biodiversity conservation since time immemorial, and proper funding and allocation of resources could shed more light on their efforts." Ensuring policies are developed through community consultations is vital for incorporating local voices and valuing Indigenous knowledge and perspectives. We need to integrate these perspectives into community partnerships by empowering students to understand their roles in biodiversity protection. By implementing these actions we can inspire lasting change, combining both scientific knowledge and Indigenous wisdom for effective environmental protection and a sustainable future.

My government must work with Indigenous groups.



“ *The government should allocate more of its budget to updating and implementing the NBSAP to include education programs targeting underserved and underheard communities.*

Maya, 17, Kenya

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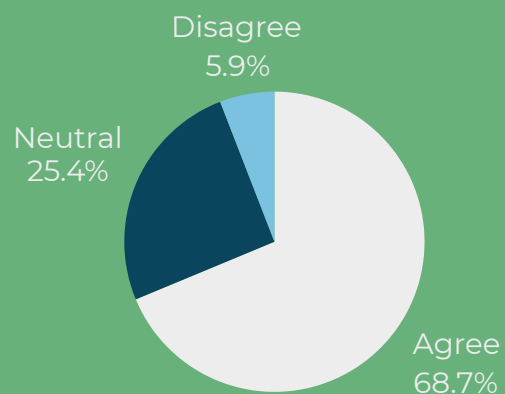
Community Engagement

We call for community collaboration that allows the sharing of knowledge and resources to make a greater impact on conservation.

By building strong partnerships between schools, businesses, NGOs, and governments, we can enhance our capacity to secure funding and other supports for community-based projects like school gardens, field trips, or wetland restoration activities. This collaborative effort is especially important for kids in underserved communities, where access to sustainable products and practices is often limited. Isaac, a 17-year-old from the Philippines, believes that "We are better off together than on our own. That's why we must band together as one community and strive for better change." We must learn to collaborate with communities across varying geographies to strengthen our understanding of our planet's diverse ecosystems, how they impact each other, and to share solutions with other countries.

Another benefit of building strong partnerships is that we can understand the jobs that are available to us in the future and start planning our conservation careers while we are still in high school.

I am worried about biodiversity loss in my country



Partnering with local businesses that depend on natural resources, such as tourism companies, could also provide financial support for these initiatives, making education more accessible to all communities."

Joshua, 17, Trinidad

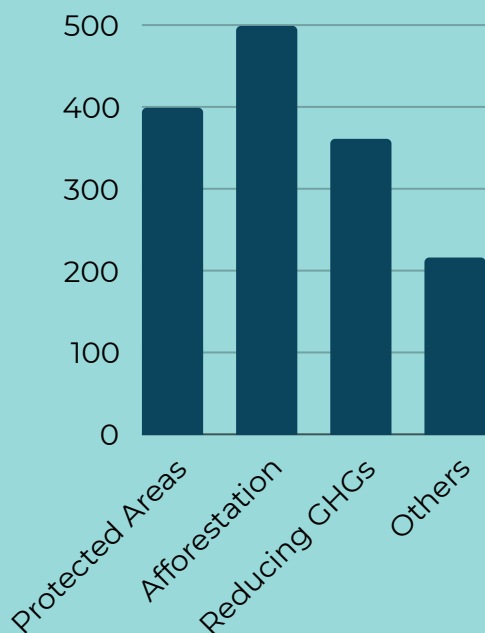


Funding Solutions

We advocate for tangible actions that will ensure funding for biodiversity education within our schools and community centers, particularly in underserved communities.

We call for increased funding for biodiversity education and conservation efforts. This needs to include opportunities for students to receive high school credit or college scholarships for participating in environmental projects and activities. Lucas, a 16-year-old from Brazil, suggests, “The government could allocate a portion of the budget specifically for biodiversity education and set up programs where universities partner with rural schools to share resources and expertise.” However, we do not want to be solely reliant on the government to secure funding. As Sierra, a 17-year-old from Canada, notes, “Local businesses and companies should be encouraged to sponsor initiatives as part of their community outreach.” This will ensure that financial resources are consistently available to support children’s involvement in conservation. By doing so, we can create a more engaged and informed generation of environmental stewards, inspired to become leaders to protect our planet.

Which should be your country’s top 3 priorities?



“The government should allocate a portion of the budget specifically for biodiversity education and set up programs where universities partner with rural schools to share resources and expertise.

Lucas, 16, Brazil



Awareness Campaigns

We recognize the necessity of leveraging advocacy and awareness campaigns to engage in biodiversity discussions and to inspire environmental action.

We, children, understand the necessity of prioritizing social media, advocacy, and awareness campaigns to highlight the importance of biodiversity in education, particularly in underserved communities. Right now, social media serves as a catalyst for meaningful change in our communities, where stories from marginalized and rural communities, not covered by mainstream media, are heard. Keerthi, a 15-year-old from India explains that "The first step is to help the children understand the seriousness of the situation and raise awareness, followed by providing them with opportunities to act." With social media as an instrument, we can garner the attention of others, especially those who are lacking biodiversity knowledge and those who hold positions of power to make decisions about biodiversity policies. We must normalize caring for the environment through awareness campaigns that showcase biodiversity and climate action, such as tree planting projects, cleaning drives, and environmental talks. Ultimately, by amplifying the importance of social media to share our collective stories, we can inspire people from around the world to take action in their communities.

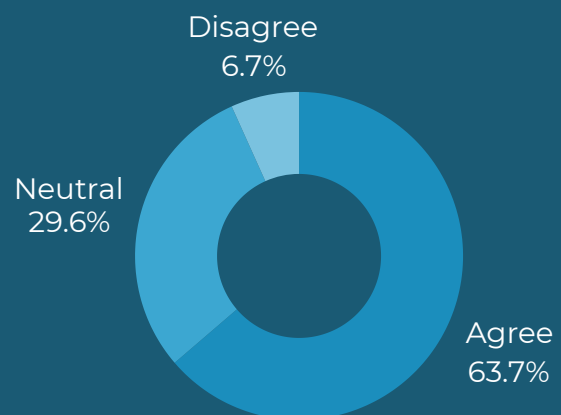


By getting media coverage, it acts like a ripple in a pond, sparking conversations about the importance of protecting our biodiversity and putting pressure on those in power to take action.

Raeesa, 17, Canada



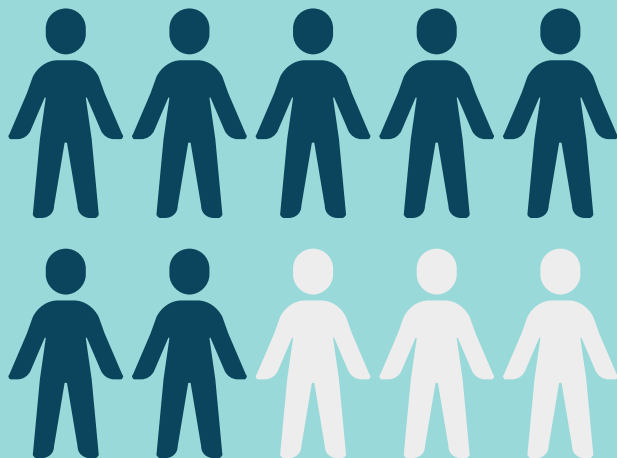
Biodiversity impacts my everyday life.



Conclusion

Our voices as children are essential in shaping a world where biodiversity education ensures that all students, regardless of their background, have the opportunity to connect with and care for the environment. As we empower each other to take action, we harness our collective strength to advocate for policies that support environmental education initiatives, ensuring that every voice, especially those from underserved communities, is heard. According to our global survey, 73% of children believe that we can make a difference at the global scale. However, in order to be effective change-makers, we need comprehensive education policies, Indigenous perspectives, community engagement, effective funding, and continuous advocacy that enables us to reach our full potential. Children will not let borders impede our collaborative efforts. Together, we can transform our passion into action, creating a movement that champions biodiversity and fosters a sustainable future for generations to come.

I believe I can make a difference on a global scale.



“ We need to motivate young people about caring and nurturing for the environment.
Isaac, 12, Trinidad and Tobago ”

Credit



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Convention on
Biological Diversity



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FOR ALL

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