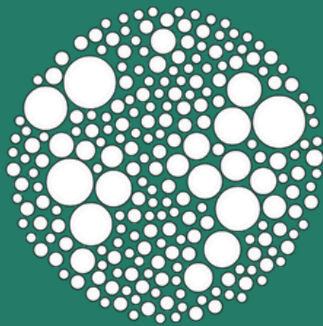


#DECARBONIZE

GLOBAL CHILD CLIMATE MANIFESTO



CGE

CENTRE FOR GLOBAL EDUCATION



2024

CENTRE FOR
GLOBAL
EDUCATION

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INTRODUCTION

Climate change is one of the biggest challenges children face today. This Global Child Climate Manifesto presents our demands to create a world that is no longer being impacted by the devastation of a changing climate. Our collaborative proposals highlight our unique thoughts and solutions to combating the adverse effects of climate change. Our diverse viewpoints and creative ideas have the power to motivate significant action if heard, especially in the areas of government policies, education, community engagement, and communication. **This is our message to decision-makers of all levels, as the present and future of the planet: we demand change now to secure our future.**



“Children have a profound clarity about climate change; they see it not just as a distant threat but as a looming crisis they will face head-on. Their voices carry a wisdom beyond their years, a sense of urgency that is often lost in political bureaucracy.”

**JANINA | 17 |
COSTA RICA**

GOVERNMENT POLICY

1

WE DEMAND THAT COUNTRIES EXPLICITLY INCLUDE AND FUND COMMITMENTS TO CLIMATE EDUCATION IN THEIR NATIONALLY DETERMINED CONTRIBUTIONS (NDCS).

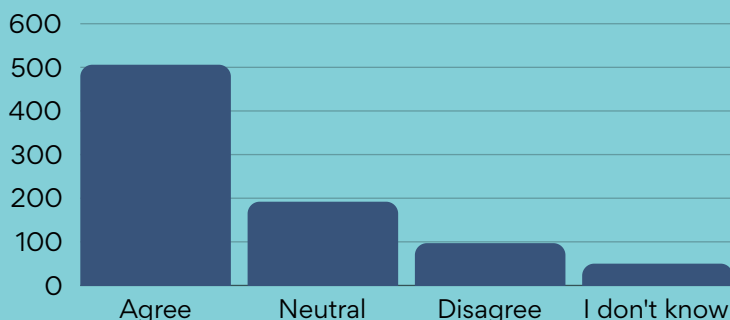
This will ensure young people are equipped with the knowledge and skills necessary to understand and tackle climate challenges. In our global survey the call for action is clear - over half of the children stated that their country must make climate action the highest priority in new policies. We believe that every country could be improved through the implementation of policies focused on climate education and action. A report from Education International states that “40 NDCs out of 133 (less than a third) mention climate change education and none are calling for compulsory climate change education as a strategy to achieve countries’ climate mitigation and adaptation targets.” It is necessary to make climate action a top priority and education is the first step in understanding the causes and impacts of climate change. Payton, a 16-year-old from Treaty 6 in Canada explains that “we need to see the government try harder to include and educate us in a way that we understand so that they can get more input from us and use our knowledge and perspective.” We call for countries to commit to climate education as a foundational part of national policies, equipping young people with the knowledge and skills to drive lasting change.

2

WE CALL FOR COUNTRIES' TO SHARE THEIR NATIONALLY DETERMINED CONTRIBUTIONS (NDCS) IN UNIVERSALLY ACCESSIBLE FORMATS.

It's crucial to simplify language and data about climate change so that all people can understand and engage with these important policies. Governments must recognize the immediate need to increase public engagement. Research from Cambridge Core shows that direct, community-led engagement can help information flow between government and citizens, and can ensure better implementation of environmental policies. We are ready to step up and make a difference when it comes to climate change. “Countries can improve transparency by making NDCs easier to read with clear info in local languages. Hosting forums to discuss these plans and ask questions would help us feel involved. Young people want to know how climate policies affect us directly.” says Vince, 18, Philippines. It's clear that to address this problem, we need a collective approach where everyone is involved, but the need for policies to be available in languages that are more accessible and easier to understand is hindering this process. We urge countries to introduce NDCs in multiple languages and accessible vocabulary to bridge the gap between authorities and children.

My country must make climate action the highest priority in new policies.



Jasmin, 16, Canada | #ART4ACTION

3

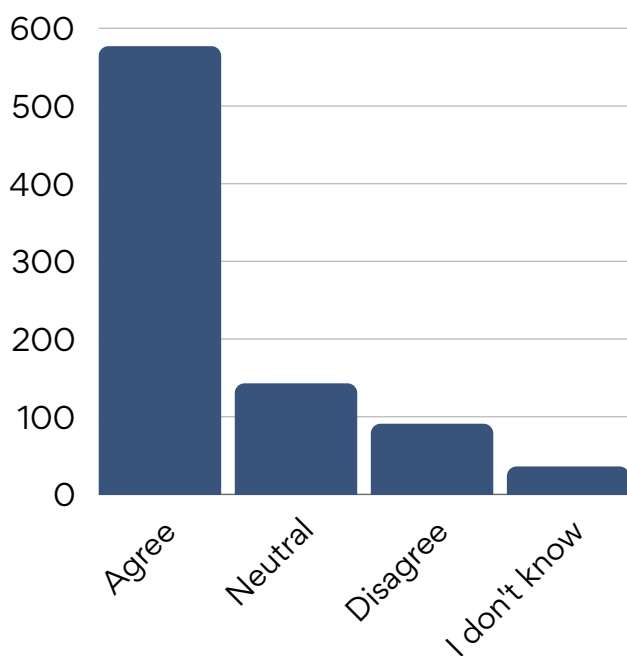
GOVERNMENT POLICY

3

WE URGE GOVERNMENTS TO ESTABLISH STRUCTURED PLATFORMS THAT FACILITATE THE MEANINGFUL INVOLVEMENT OF CHILDREN IN CLIMATE POLICY DISCUSSIONS.

This will enable us to express our concerns, provide input on NDC progress, and actively participate in shaping future strategies. According to our global survey, 68% of students agree that collaboration with children and young people is essential for effective climate initiatives to be created. As citizens of a nation, we deserve to be a part of its legislative and policy-making process. Online, government-based forums for children or internships in policy-making bodies for students can help achieve this. This sentiment is shared by Nomena, a 15-year-old from Madagascar who says that “countries can share the information on websites, on TV, and in schools so everyone can see it. They should also talk to young people and ask us what we think.” According to the UNDP, 75% of Climate Promise countries prioritize children in developing their NDCs, primarily through consultations, raising awareness and advocacy campaigns. Involving children in climate-related legislative decisions can greatly benefit a country's climate action plan. Our time, energy, and passion for environmental issues inspire us to be part of the solution. We are profoundly impacted by climate change and our viewpoints differ compared to adults. The creation of these platforms would catch innovative and unique ideas from young people providing countries with a more ambitious plan for the future.

My country must work with children and young people around climate decisions.



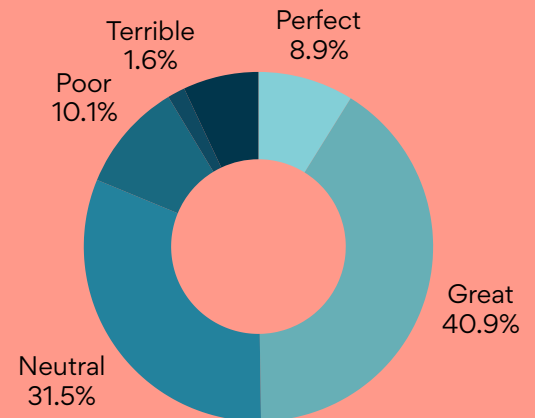
“Countries can improve transparency by making NDCs easier to read with clear info in local languages. Hosting forums to discuss these plans and ask questions would help us feel involved. Young people want to know how climate policies affect us directly.”

VINCE | 18 | PHILIPPINES

EDUCATION



How would you describe the climate education you have received in school?



4

WE PUSH FOR HANDS-ON AND EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES TO BE INCORPORATED INTO CLIMATE EDUCATION AT ALL GRADES.

This will let us engage with environmental problems directly, leading to a deeper understanding of issues and the actions needed to solve them. Understanding the local impacts of climate change grows our connection to nature, and creates a sense of responsibility. Education is the first step in the climate fight. If we are not educated about nature, how can we learn to value and prioritize it? Climate education needs to feel close to home. In order to understand climate change real-life experiences are required. Kandelaria, a 15-year-old from Colombia suggests “Using interactive formats—like workshops, community projects, and school visits—to encourage young people to shift from passive listeners to active participants in climate conversations.” Hands-on learning opportunities and being actively involved in our communities make climate change real and impactful.

5

WE DEMAND THAT CLIMATE EDUCATION BE INTEGRATED ACROSS ALL SUBJECTS TO FOSTER A HOLISTIC UNDERSTANDING OF ENVIRONMENTAL CHALLENGES.

This interdisciplinary approach will allow us to see climate issues from different angles and how they intersect across areas - not just science. Only 10% of students in our global survey described their climate education as “perfect”. This means that students felt they might have learned about education briefly, but it was not sufficient with the severity of the issues going on globally. This is why we need to include sustainability education within all subjects to maximize students' learning outcomes. Ahmed, a 16-year-old from the UAE explains that “We need more hands-on activities, like planting trees and participating in community clean-ups, to foster a strong sense of responsibility towards our environment. Understanding local ecosystems must be a priority, as it directly impacts our daily lives.” This shows that climate change issues and solutions are area-specific. It is an economic, medical, and food issue that we need to learn about in a variety of ways. For UNESCO, education is a key factor in helping to curb climate change. Specifically, the organization says that “education encourages changes in young people's attitudes and behaviour and helps them to adapt to climate change-related trends.” By incorporating climate education in all subjects, we can understand the complex impacts of climate change in all areas.

EDUCATION

6

WE ADVOCATE FOR ESTABLISHING EMOTIONAL CONNECTIONS TO THE CLIMATE CRISIS, THROUGH ART AND STORYTELLING, TO FOSTER A DEEPER APPRECIATION FOR CLIMATE ACTION.

Empathy for nature in climate education helps us understand the value of the environment, inspiring us to act. We are bound to act when we are passionate. From our global survey, over 50% of participants agreed that biodiversity impacts their everyday lives, exemplifying the need to protect the environment and contribute to these efforts. “When we learn about climate change at school, it just stays as words. To bring empathy, to make us feel the need to change things, we should arrange nature trips. The first step should be to re-discover our love for nature.” explains Defne, a 16-year-old from Türkiye. This shows that engaging us emotionally with nature through relatable content and highlighting the personal impact of climate change can foster a deeper understanding and inspire action. We must take young people on the side of empathy and find the connection they feel for the planet to get emotionally involved with the planet and realize that we have to start with personal change so that this triggers the good actions of others.

7

WE PROPOSE THAT SCHOOLS CAPITALIZE ON TECHNOLOGY-BASED, MULTIMEDIA LEARNING TOOLS THAT CHILDREN ARE ALREADY FAMILIAR WITH IN THE CLASSROOM.

Adopting technology in the classroom will have a great impact on students' understanding of climate change. Technology provides students with easy-to-access information about climate change, policy, etc. “To make climate education engaging, teachers can use technology, like virtual reality, to show us the effects of climate change. This would make learning more fun and impactful,” explains Isaac, a 15-year-old from Trinidad and Tobago. Technology is a great opportunity for teachers to differentiate instruction for their students and tailor education to individual students' accessibility needs. We believe that we must shift our focus from traditional teaching methods to immersive experiences that resonate with students' lives. By embracing technology in climate education, we can empower students to actively engage with environmental issues and become proactive advocates for a sustainable future.

“When we learn about climate change at school, it just stays as words. To bring empathy, to make us feel the need to change things, we should arrange nature trips. The first step should be to re-discover our love for nature.”

DEFNE | 16 | TÜRKIYE

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COMMUNITY ACTION

8

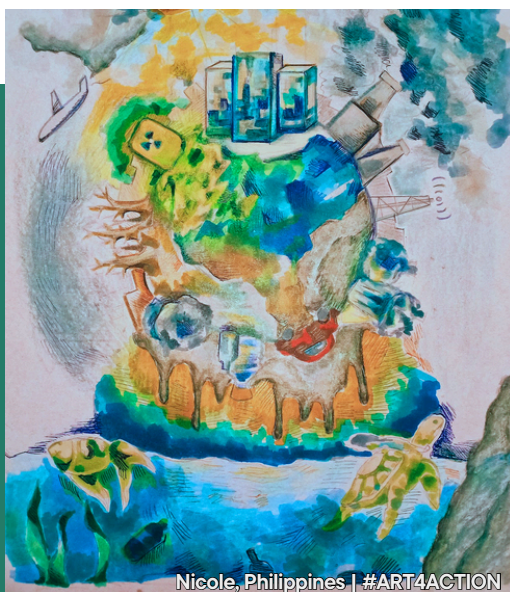
WE REQUEST THAT COMMUNITIES PLAY AN ACTIVE ROLE IN EDUCATING YOUNG PEOPLE ABOUT SUSTAINABLE PRACTICES THROUGH HANDS-ON PROJECTS.

Initiatives like community gardens and shore clean-ups show real-life sustainability in action, bridging the worlds of science, knowledge and government policy. “Local communities can educate young people about sustainable living through workshops that demonstrate practical skills. For example, initiatives that teach us how to compost or create Indigenous plant gardens show us how to apply knowledge to real-life situations,” explains Naomi, a 17-year-old from Canada. To attain these goals, these groups require funding, resources, and mentorship to effectively develop and implement sustainability programs. Support from local governments and organizations can enable projects that engage children, ensuring these programs have the tools needed to drive impactful action with children. Nearly 60% of children in our global survey agree that our countries need to focus on the climate curriculum in K-12 schools. By working with schools, community groups can share knowledge, resources and successful practices, growing a new and fresh network of support for climate ideas and initiatives.

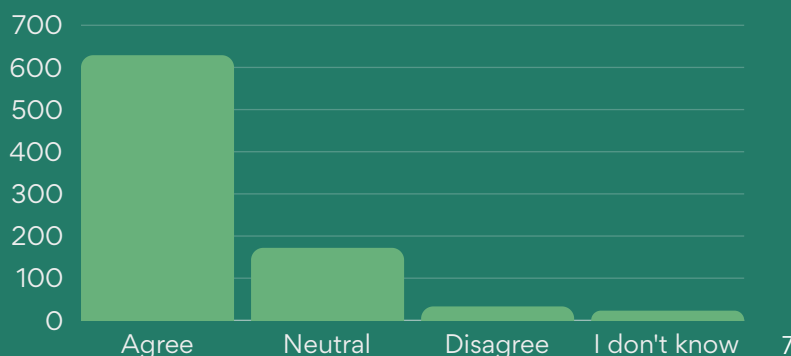
9

WE ADVOCATE FOR CHILDREN’S VOICES IN CLIMATE INITIATIVES THROUGH MENTORSHIP AND INTERACTIVE LEARNING WORKSHOPS.

This would provide the resources and support needed to empower children and inspire us to take ownership of our role in climate action. Approximately three quarters of children in our survey agree with the statement “children can make a difference in global climate change.” However, the UNCC study highlights a gap between this enthusiasm and the actual roles available for children, noting that a lack of guidance and mentorship limits their participation. To bridge this gap, we should implement mentorship programs that connect children with experienced leaders while offering interactive workshops that promote hands-on learning and citizen science. These initiatives can encourage collaboration between local organizations, schools, and governments. Nyla, a 17-year-old from the UK explains that “engaging us in these efforts builds leadership skills, confidence, and a sense of responsibility, so we feel empowered to contribute to our environment in meaningful ways.” By nurturing a culture of collaboration and empowerment, we can become not just environmental stewards but passionate advocates for a sustainable future.



I believe that children can make a difference global climate change.

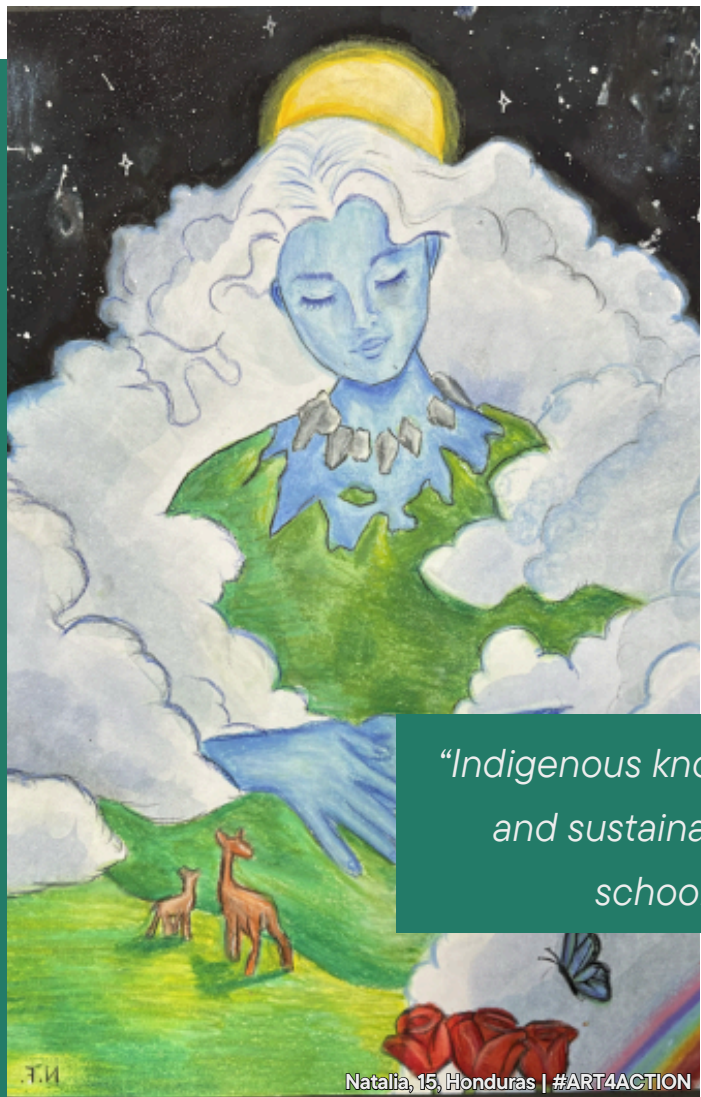


COMMUNITY ACTION

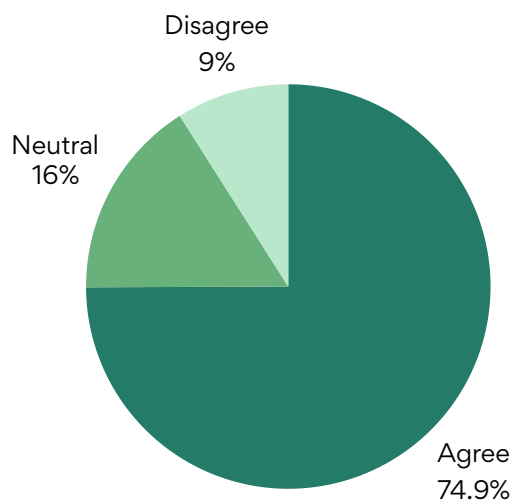
10

WE CALL FOR THE INTEGRATION OF INDIGENOUS PERSPECTIVES AND TRADITIONAL ECOLOGICAL KNOWLEDGE INTO CLIMATE EDUCATION

Indigenous people have lived on their land far longer than anyone else and their practices are based on sustainability and a peaceful balance with the earth. It is important that we learn how to be good stewards from those who have been practicing that for decades. In our survey, the vast majority of students agreed that we should work with Indigenous governments, organizations and local communities in the battle against climate change. The unique knowledge systems, innovations, and practices of Indigenous peoples have been successfully passed down through generations. An example of this knowledge comes from Lucas, a 16-year-old from Brazil, who states that “Indigenous knowledge about the Amazon's medicinal plants and sustainable agricultural practices should be taught in schools as valuable content, not just as anecdotes.” These time-honoured practices offer invaluable insights crafted over generations, emphasizing the need to collaborate with Indigenous communities. By working with Indigenous community members, we can learn how to better care for our planet and ensure Mother Earth is sustained and honoured.



My country must work with Indigenous governments, organizations, and local communities.



“Indigenous knowledge about the Amazon's medicinal plants and sustainable agricultural practices should be taught in schools as valuable content, not just as anecdotes.”

LUCAS | 16 | BRAZIL

Natalia, 15, Honduras | #ART4ACTION

COMMUNICATION

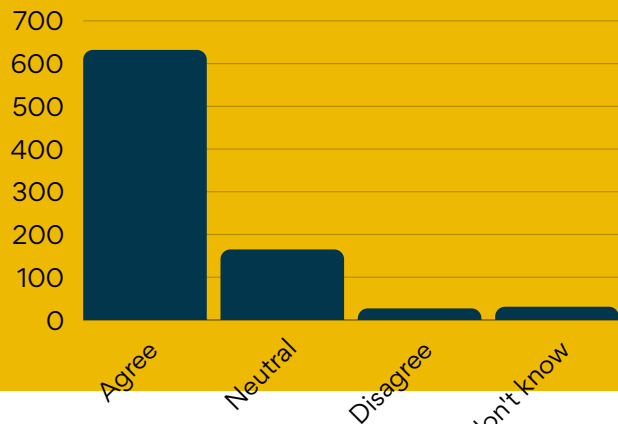
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WE URGE THE IMMEDIATE DEMYSTIFICATION OF SCIENTIFIC INFORMATION PERTAINING TO CLIMATE CHANGE TO EMPOWER AND INFORM THE PUBLIC ABOUT THE URGENT NEED FOR CLIMATE ACTION.

Simplification of climate science topics can inspire people to act. According to Wändi Bruine de Bruin, the lead author of a study on simplifying climate sciences, “Scientists need to replace jargon with everyday language to be understood by a lay audience.” Studies show that communicating climate science concepts at the level of a 12 or 13-year-old is most effective. We need to make climate information available to everyone in an easy-to-understand form, to maximize action against climate change. “Demystification of climate science is not just about informing the public; it’s about igniting a fire for action. Only by truly understanding the stakes and the solutions can people rally together with urgency, demanding the changes that will safeguard our planet,” states Janina Guevara Flores, a 17-year-old from Costa Rica. We aim to mobilize individuals and communities to take meaningful action in the face of this global crisis.



Climate change is impacting my country NOW.



12

WE PUSH FOR COLLABORATION BETWEEN THE SCIENTIFIC COMMUNITY, STUDENTS, AND COMMUNITIES TO BROADEN PERSPECTIVES AND CREATE FEASIBLE PLANS.

Many times, we are left without a voice and must rely solely on professionals to obtain their information. As Dr. Plaisance suggests, however, there is a need to “increase and enhance meaningful connections among researchers” with community members, including us. Approximately 80% of students surveyed agree that climate change is impacting our communities NOW, so accurate and current scientific data is essential in developing successful policies and actions in our communities. Students can also work with scientists through their schools as part of projects to come up with meaningful solutions. Shaanvi, a 15-year-old from India describes a way to effectively bridge the gap between scientific research and young people, “We must reimagine communication through creativity and connection. By turning research into interactive art installations or community performances, we can capture the urgency of climate change in ways that resonate deeply with us.” When scientists and students work together they can more effectively share ideas, research data, and methods and implement more effective sustainability plans worldwide.



Dorothy, 15, Philippines | #ART4ACTION

COMMUNICATION

13

WE CALL FOR STRATEGIC USE OF POPULAR SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS SUCH AS TIKTOK, INSTAGRAM, AND YOUTUBE TO CREATE SHORT, ENGAGING VIDEOS THAT MAKE CLIMATE FACTS ACCESSIBLE AND RELATABLE TO YOUNG AUDIENCES.

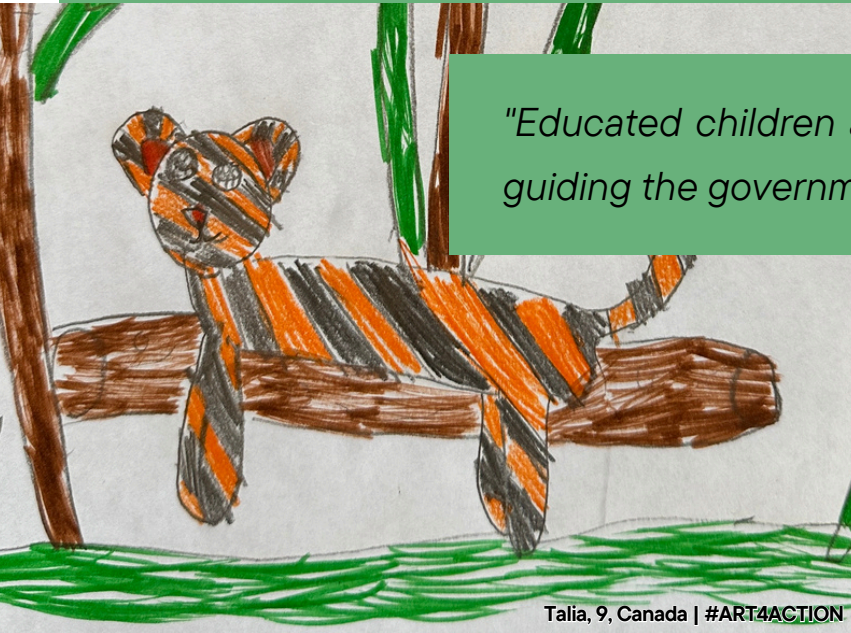
Traditional media such as newspapers may not reach our demographic effectively and using social media platforms can have a far greater impact. As Teoman, 15, from Azerbaijan, suggests, “incorporating climate change initiatives in the newspaper would not be very effective, instead utilizing platforms such as Youtube, Instagram, TikTok and perhaps even games would be much more effective in spreading word and sending a message out to people.” Our Global Student Environment Survey data supports this approach, showing that 68% of students believe that engaging young people should be a priority in climate action, with modern social media considered the best way to communicate in an interactive and discerning way. Additionally, 98% of young Australians use social media daily, averaging four platforms, highlighting the importance of meeting youth where they are most active and receptive. By harnessing the power of these platforms, we can inspire and empower the next generation to embrace sustainable practices and advocate for climate action.

“incorporating climate change initiatives in the newspaper would not be very effective, instead utilizing platforms such as Youtube, Instagram, TikTok and perhaps even games would be much more effective in spreading word and sending a message out to people.”

TEOMAN | 15 | AZERBAIJAN

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CONCLUSION



"Educated children are the people we need on the frontlines, guiding the government to combat climate change."

Talia, 9, Canada | #ART4ACTION

We are not just the leaders of tomorrow; we are the changemakers of today, and this manifesto is a testament to our commitment towards combating the climate crisis, one child's voice at a time. As the future generation and those who will face the consequences of decisions made today, we demand a change in government policies and climate education. We advocate for better community participation and inclusion with more transparent methods of communication. We urge for a powerful alliance between children and governments, to bring together a world where climate action is not a burden, but rather a shared responsibility. We stand ready to collaborate and pave the path toward a sustainable future alongside the leaders of today and eagerly anticipate learning to become the leaders of tomorrow.

Will you embrace our potential and commit to ensuring our voices are heard on this journey to the greener future we dream of?

NESTA | 15 | KENYA



Ela, 16, Turkiye | #ART4ACTION

ABOUT THE PROGRAM



Lucas, 16, Argentina | #ART4ACTION

Proudly led by
**THE CENTRE FOR
GLOBAL EDUCATION**

In today's rapidly changing landscape, fostering global citizenship is more crucial than ever. We believe that by providing students with opportunities to engage in meaningful cross-cultural experiences and develop a deep understanding of global issues, we can cultivate empathy, critical thinking, and a sense of responsibility toward creating positive change and taking local action.

Since 2008, hundreds of thousands of students in over 75 countries, have participated in our sessions, making CGE the largest provider of real-time school-based collaborative programming in Canada.

www.cgeducation.org

#Decarbonize

Global Climate Child Program

#Decarbonize uses virtual technology to bring together the voices and lived experiences of children ages 5-18, centring them in digital climate learning to increase empathy, perspective-taking, belonging, and action. #Decarbonize is the world's largest, multilingual school-based program on climate education, advocacy, art, and action.

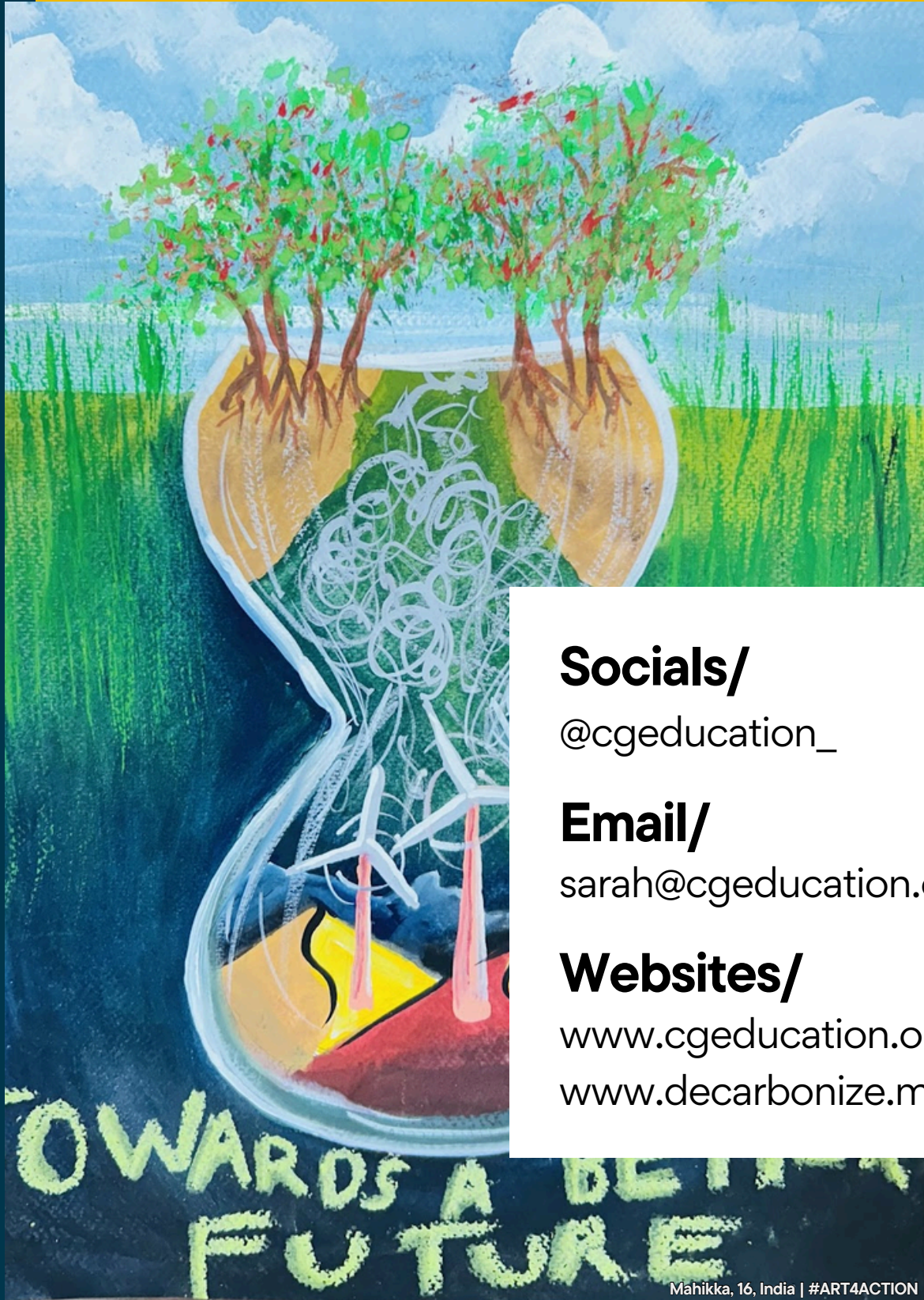
Through the lens of global citizenship we connect: 6 Continents, 75+ Countries, 100s of Schools, 10,000s of Students, 100,000s hours of collaboration

decarbonize.me



King, 14, Philippines | #ART4ACTION

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Mahikka, 16, India | #ART4ACTION