

Youth making a move
on climate change.

THE YOUNG
HUMANITARIAN'S GUIDE
TO MAKING A MOVE
ON THE IMPACTS
OF CLIMATE CHANGE

YOUTH ON THE MOVE

Have you
taken up
the climate change
challenge?



**FACT: WEATHER RELATED
DISASTERS HAVE DOUBLED IN
THE PAST 20 YEARS!**

*Centre for Research on the Epi-
demiology of Disasters*

Why this guide now?

National Societies around the world have been looking at the question of climate change through the **4 Step “Preparedness for Climate Change” Programme**. Many National Societies have found that young people want to get involved in the issue and have asked for materials. This short guide presents examples from around the world.

What’s going on?

Cars, planes, buses, factories, the felling of trees, even cows all release gases that spread around the earth’s atmosphere. These gases act like a blanket around the earth letting less heat escape into space. They are called ‘greenhouse gases’ because they act just like a greenhouse, a structure used in cold climates to trap the sun’s heat and grow vegetables in. Greenhouse gases cause our earth to gradually warm up and this is known as ‘global warming’.

It, in turn, causes our weather and climate to change in many different ways – hence the term ‘climate change’.

Changes in our climate are already happening. Speaking to community elders or grandparents may highlight their personal experiences of a changing climate. Scientists around the world have measured that glaciers are melting, the sea level is rising, rainfall patterns are changing and that there have been increases in the number of droughts, floods and heatwaves.

The planet has warmed by over 0.7 degrees Celsius (33.26 degrees Fahrenheit) in the past hundred years. This doesn’t sound like much but think of a patient with a fever – a slightly higher temperature shows that something is very wrong! And this is just a taste of things to come.

EXAMPLES OF WHAT YOU CAN DO:

Learn more about climate change in your country • Raise awareness about climate change • Volunteer to get youth voices heard • Get together in a group to discuss climate change and create a project to address its impacts in your community

“ In February 2007 it was the first time my community also get the flooding. It never happened before. I think the weather is changing”

*Suvina Nita Yohana,
Indonesian Red Cross*

Why does the Red Cross Red Crescent care?

Climate change directly affects the Red Cross and Red Crescent's core work: assistance to the most vulnerable. We are concerned about climate change because it will make us more vulnerable to disasters and health problems and those that are already poor and vulnerable are most at risk. People in the poorest communities will be hit hardest by the negative impacts of climate change, while they contribute the least to the problem. The more gases in the atmosphere, the more problems we will face. The worst long term affects can still be avoided if greenhouse gases are reduced globally and international efforts are underway. But we have committed ourselves to another 30-40 years of warming because the gases we have already emitted stay around for a long time. So we need to get active to prepare for the impacts!

The Red Cross and Red Crescent – particularly National Societies in developed countries – can do their share in limiting global emissions, for instance by promoting energy efficiency in their offices. But our main responsibility is clear: with climate change we must address the humanitarian consequences. For example we must respond to increasing risks of disasters and changes to when and where diseases are found. Being prepared for disasters by learning first aid and volunteering for your National Society is a great way to tackle the impacts of climate change.

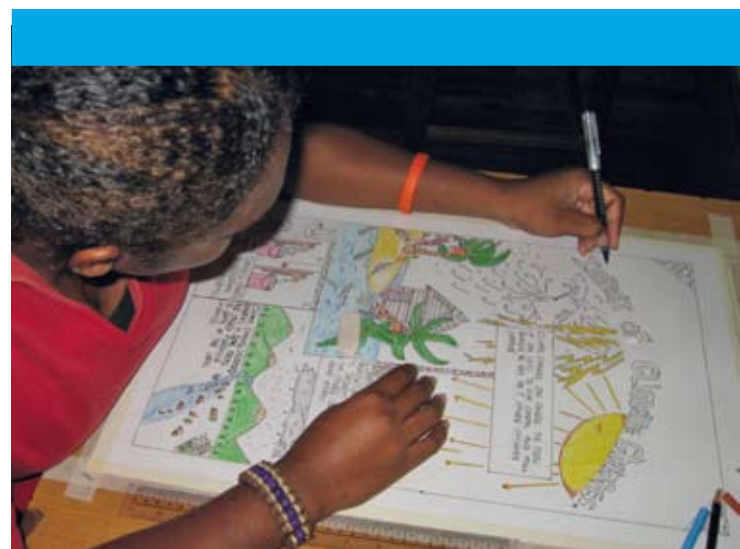
Identify actions that could be taken to reduce the impact of disasters before they happen. Examples include clearing rubbish from drains in flood prone areas, making sure loose objects are cleared before the cyclone season, educating people about understanding early warnings, making sure children know how to swim as a precaution against flooding and promoting wise water use in drought prone areas. See the next section for more examples!



In **Malawi**, 15 high school students from Lilongwe became Red Cross volunteers and made a film with the assistance of a film student. The film explained the climate change problem and steps people can take to adapt to a changing climate, such as tree planting to protect waterways from flood erosion. The students interviewed people in both rural and urban areas to compare their situations, and got local experts to talk about climate change.

In a severe Cholera outbreak in **Zimbabwe** in 2008, hundreds of youth volunteers learned about hygiene, sanitation and how to manage sick people and delivered education programmes to reduce the impact of further outbreaks. Cholera spreads in dirty water and during heavy rainfall it will spread more. There will be more heavy rainfall with climate change. Actions like these can be part of the toolkit to address a worsening climate.

Youth volunteers of **Mediterranean** National Societies come together for an annual camp, Atlantis. A 2008 camp workshop focused on climate change and preparing communities by educating people at the grassroots level on how to adapt to its impact. In 2009, the camp will again focus on climate change, teaching young people how to make simple videos.



What are youth doing?

Red Cross and Red Crescent youth from around the world are taking on the climate change challenge!

In **Indonesia**, International Youth Day 2008 was used to promote the global theme 'Youth and climate change: a time for action'. Red Cross youth members encouraged school children to perform drama, poetry, song and music that promoted risk reduction measures in the face of a changing climate. Messages have included advice on destroying mosquito breeding sites and clearing drains of rubbish to reduce the impact of flooding.

During Red Cross/Red Crescent Day in **Pakistan**, the Red Crescent also used drama to educate young people on the impact climate change will have on their lives.



In **Australia**, youth voices reached Red Cross board level. A group of youth volunteers from Adelaide developed a climate change framework that led to the development of a national climate change strategy and policy. The recent edition of their youth e-magazine focuses on the humanitarian impacts of climate change.

ASIA



PACIFIC



In the **Solomon Islands**, over 70 youth gathered for a national youth forum on climate change. Participants learnt about the problems and then the skills to deal with them, such as mapping community strengths and weaknesses to identify flood preparedness projects, and interviewing elders to understand changes in seasons. A Red Cross volunteer group also organized a poster competition for high school students and radio programmes in partnership with the national disaster management office.

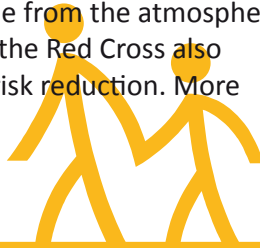




In **Guatemala**, young Red Cross volunteers are involved in planting trees which both protect communities from landslides and absorb carbon dioxide from the atmosphere. With several partner organizations, the Red Cross also held a painting contest focused on risk reduction. More than 2,500 children took part.

Elsewhere in the Americas, the **Costa Rica** Red Cross has engaged young people in clean-up campaigns, and has created a manual to foster environmental awareness and care for precious water resources. The **Colombia** Red Cross has used a puppet show to deliver important messages.

AMERICAS



EUROPE

A team at **British** Red Cross created a disaster masters toolkit that takes its participants through a three-hour role play on the theme of climate change and disasters using a flooding scenario from the small island nation of Tuvalu. The scenario is an excellent way to raise awareness of the increase in weather-related disasters and the challenges this poses to communities around the world.

In **The Netherlands**, a Red Cross education campaign took climate change to elementary schools with such things as quizzes and drawing contests. Children in one area combined the course with direct action on heatwave awareness. They visited retirement homes to inform the elderly about health risks and dos and don'ts during heatwaves. An increase in heatwaves is but one consequence of a rapidly changing planet.



Climate change is a global issue and it requires a global effort. Youth can play a very important role in their communities, their country and their region. They will be the ones facing the impacts of climate change now and into the future so its important that they know the issue now"

*George Baragamu,
Solomon Islands Red Cross*



Youth on the Move:

“We, the millions of Red Cross Red Crescent youth, can take action to reduce the impact of climate change by preparing our communities to deal with the consequences.”

The actions you and your group take will be determined by:

- The challenges your community faces;
- The concerns and ideas of your group members;
- The skills your group already has and what you have to work with.

What can we do?

The following steps have been inspired by the Alliance of Youth CEO's 'Climate Change – Take Action Now' Guide to be published in 2009

1

Step

GETTING STARTED

Find out more about climate change

- Gather information about climate change (the internet, resource books, interviews with community elders or local experts, a talk to your youth group or National Society)
- Draw the problems you have discovered with young people in your community
- List all the hazards your community faces and select which are related to the weather and climate
- Map the community (strengths and weaknesses—put on your climate glasses and draw a map outlining potential impacts; think of things like flooding, sea level rise, erosion, drought, water availability, food sources) **Tip:** You can use tools from the IFRC Vulnerability and Capacity Assessment Toolkit—see link at the back of this booklet.

2

Step

IDENTIFYING the problem and linking it to current work

- Now that you have learned about the impacts of climate change on your community, identify a problem that you would like to work on. Help your group create a list of possible actions they could take to tackle it. Remember to think about the most vulnerable, in your community and further afield. You could list all the issues and then take a vote.
- Now it's time to investigate further. What is the problem? Why is it a problem? Who is affected by the problem? What has caused the problem?

Identify existing projects

It is critical to know what the community has done and is doing to address the problem so that the actions of your group are in tune with, and gain the support of, the community. Who is doing what already? What are your skills? How can these match with the problem at hand? How can you be a part of what is already underway? Which tools or trainings are used in your National Society that climate change can be added to?

Step 3

PLANNING YOUR ACTION

As a group, you now have a good idea of where you are and where you want to be going. Now you need a plan of how to get there.

Ask yourselves:

Why is your project important and why are you the best group to tackle this problem?

What do you want to achieve?

Who do you want to target?

Where is the best place to run your project?

When will you run your project, and for how long?

Who can implement the identified project?

If this is not you, how can you persuade the identified person to carry out the action?

What resources will be required (think about money, technology, people, expertise and other materials)?

What skills/knowledge are needed?

Who has the relevant skills/knowledge and how can we get them involved?

If we need **funding**, how can we get it? Carrying out your own fundraising can work well.

Can you **link** in with an existing project in your area?

Get others involved and enthused.

Communicating and involving others in the community is an important component of your group's success.

Set a time-frame

Step 4

TAKING ACTION

Now for the most important step: **implementation!**

Activity toolkit: there is much that can be done!

See examples in this booklet for some activities that fall under the headings of:

- 1. Raising awareness about climate change**
- 2. Actions to prepare for the impacts of climate change**
(How can we be proactive before a health outbreak or disaster strikes? Can you use the Vulnerability and Capacity Assessment or Community Based Health and First Aid?)
- 3. Persuading those with power to make a change (advocacy)**

Step 5

SPREADING THE WORD

Communications are so important in getting voices heard and people to listen. How will you get messages across? Drama? Community radio? Television, internet, video, artwork, photographs, word of mouth? Home-made posters?

Get a well-known person to promote for you. You could invite the media along or produce a short press release.

Learning in a fun way helps us to remember better and we saw how disaster affects whole communities".

Trudie Hamilton, England

6 Step Steps

HOW DID WE DO?

Questions for reflection.

The following questions may help your group think about the successes of their project and what could have gone better. Remember, even if you think the project didn't go overly well, reflection is a time to debrief and also learn lessons for next time.

- How did you feel about taking part in the project?
- What was successful about the project? Did it achieve its goals? Did it create any lasting changes? Were there any unexpected outcomes?
- How many people heard about your project? Who did you tell? How many people heard through the media?

- What surprised you? What do you think you have learnt? Do you think the project has changed your views on anything or your actions in the future?
- Did your project have an impact on any of the other problems that you identified in Step 2? For example: if you mapped your community for risks.
- Was anything about the project unsuccessful? Did it create any new problems?
- If you were to repeat this project what would you do differently?
- How effectively did the group work together? Did everyone have a sense of participation? Were decisions and responsibilities shared by the group?

Let people know about your success.

7 Step Steps

NEXT STEPS

Following through on your project.

Your group's action may have been short-term. However, it is possible that there are actions you need to take to sustain what you have started.

Developing your action. If your group's action was successful, how can they build on what they did? **Start again from Step 2.** Another option is to go back to the list of challenges your group created in Step 2.

Now that they've made a difference to one of these problems, they could consider choosing another challenge to work on.

Inspire others. Your group's experience, motivation and passion for change could inspire other young people to take action themselves. Challenge your group to consider which other individuals, organisations or groups they could target!

Check these useful pages out!

www.climatecentre.org Red Cross/Red Crescent Climate Centre

www.ifrc.org International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (Vulnerability & Capacity Assessment toolbox)

www.childreninachangingclimate.org Children in a changing climate initiative

www.extremeweatherheroes.org Are you an extreme weather hero?

www.unicef.org/publications/index_42166.html (UNICEF's Climate change and children publication)

www.ipcc.ch – The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC)