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# OUR GREEN FUTURES

Children's Voices in the Green Transition

# Acknowledgements

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The booklet, which captures children’s perspectives on the just green transition, was commissioned by UNICEF and developed by the [Samuel Hall](#) team, led by Nassim Majidi, Irina Mosel, Marta Rocha, Kiran, Devyani Nighoskar, and Mwara Namelok, with graphic design by Titus Gitau. It builds on contributions and inputs from numerous UNICEF colleagues from Headquarters, Regional Offices and the Pakistan and Kenya Country Offices. The team extends special thanks to Parvaiz Akhtar at Sangh Preet, a community- based organization, and to the UNICEF Lahore office.

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# Foreword

“I propose that we hold a meeting with both representatives from the Wind Power Project and the government, so we have the chance to discuss and voice our concerns. Community members should not dismiss us as if we are little children who cannot speak up. People often assume that because we are young, we cannot contribute to anything.”

**Benson, 14 year old**  
**Sarima village, Kenya**

Children do not speak in policy terms like ‘green transition’ or ‘climate resilience.’ But they experience these realities directly — when the rains fall, when power cuts disrupt school, when families are forced to move, or when new projects reshape their neighbourhoods. They understand what is happening, and they have something to say.

Between April and July 2025, UNICEF and Samuel Hall worked with children and youth in Kenya and Pakistan to understand what the global shift to greener, cleaner energy means for their lives. This brief is one part of that broader research.<sup>1</sup>

We listened to children in Kenya and Pakistan by using creative tools that let them show the world they live in and the world they imagine — their realities as well as their hopes for the future. Children took photos, drew pictures, and spoke in group discussions about their lives, challenges, and hopes. Some spoke about how solar panels brought light into classrooms. Others pointed to land being fenced, spaces being lost, and promises not being kept. Across both countries, children asked for one thing: to have a voice. For some, this meant being heard and having their experiences recognised. For others it meant taking part in decisions and helping shape the actions that affect their lives.

We also held conversations with parents, teachers, and community leaders, and spoke to government and energy actors to understand the wider picture. A review of national and global policies helped us connect their stories to

the bigger decisions shaping our shared future. Their insights speak not just to Kenya or Pakistan, but to a global conversation. As countries around the world commit to climate goals, from Conference of the Parties (COP) pledges to net-zero roadmaps, children are among those most affected, yet least consulted and protected.

The Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) guarantees every child the right to be heard in matters that affect them. This is a right further clarified by General Comment No. 26, which emphasises that children must be meaningfully involved in environmental and climate-related decisions. This right is not only about participation; it is also about justice and well-being. Yet too often, decisions about the green transition are made without their voices, even though it is their present and their future that hangs in the balance.

This brief is our effort to carry their voices forward and enable them to inform decisions affecting their future.

It is written with children and youth, intended for adults who make decisions about their lives: governments, businesses, educators, and communities.

A green transition cannot just be fast.  
It must also be fair.  
It must also be human.  
And it must include children.

The Lundy Model<sup>2</sup> helps explain what real participation means for children. It says that children should have a safe space to share their thoughts, a chance to speak, people who really listen, and the power to make a difference. When these things happen, children feel stronger, more confident, and ready to shape their own futures.

<sup>1</sup> Footnote to explain that Pakistan and Kenya were selected following desk research conducted between August and October 2024, specifically because of the gaps in understanding the child rights impacts linked to the green transition.

<sup>2</sup> Kennan, Danielle, Bernadine Brady, and Cormac Forkan. “Space, voice, audience and influence: The Lundy model of participation (2007) in child welfare practice.” Practice 31, no. 3 (2019): 205-218.

# Chapter 1

## What Is A Just Green Transition

Around the world, countries are shifting how they produce energy, moving away from fossil fuels like coal and oil, and towards renewable sources like solar, wind, water, and geothermal. This is known as the **green transition**. It is a response to the climate crisis, one that aims to reduce emissions and limit the rise in global temperatures.

For this to be a just transition to sustainable energy systems, it must protect people's rights, reduce inequalities, and improve lives. This means ensuring that communities affected by energy projects as well as mining, transport, and infrastructure projects are included, protected, and supported. It also means ensuring that workers have access to decent, green jobs, and that children's survival, development, and protection are not compromised but strengthened.

It means asking: who benefits, who is harmed, and who is heard? A just green transition puts people and their rights, especially the most impacted, at the heart of climate action.

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### What Does a Just Transition Involve?

A just transition is not only about switching to renewable energy, but also about how this shift is planned and implemented. It involves two key climate strategies:

- **Mitigation measures**, which aim to reduce the causes of climate change by cutting greenhouse gas emissions. Examples include expanding renewable energy, improving energy efficiency, and reducing pollution from industries and transport as well as air pollution within households.
- **Adaptation measures**, which help people adjust to the impacts of climate change that are already happening, such as building flood-resilient schools, improving access to clean water, or restoring forests and ecosystems.

A truly just transition that explicitly respects and support children's rights combines both mitigation and adaptation while ensuring fairness and inclusion. This involves:

- **Delivering better services**, making clean water, health care, quality education, and water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) facilities a priority – accessible in all locations, for all levels of household income and able to withstand climate shocks.
- **Preventing harm and protecting children** from displacement and exclusion, exploitation and violence while prioritizing their physical and mental health, especially for those in vulnerable communities.
- **Listening to children and youth**, recognizing them as participants, not simply bystanders including by equipping them with education, skills, and opportunities to become environmental champions.
- **Investing in resilient communities**, by strengthening the resilience of communities where children live, ensuring they can recover from and withstand future shocks.



© Lisa via Canva

# Just Green Transition With Children and Youth

In practice, green transition is already changing the way children and youth live, from the schools they go to, to the air they breathe, to the jobs their families rely on, and the opportunities they will have to learn, work, and thrive in the future.

However, children and youth are often missing from the conversation. Even though they are among the most affected, their needs and ideas are rarely considered and rarely inform the design of laws, policies or projects that directly impact them.

This gap has been recognised by the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, which in 2023 called on governments to make sure children's rights and realities are reflected in all climate and energy decisions.<sup>3</sup>

Experiences across the world also show why this matters:

- **In South Africa**, the focus has been on helping families who depend on jobs in coal and other high-emission sectors. This is a mitigation-linked strategy. A fair transition means protecting these families and the children who are part of them as economies shift to cleaner energy.<sup>4</sup>
- **In India**, large solar parks are helping expand access to clean energy. But they've also raised questions about land use and whether the benefits truly reach the children and communities living nearby.<sup>5</sup>

- **In the European Union**, the Just Transition Mechanism provides funding to support regions most affected by the energy shift, a concrete example of how fairness and inclusion can be built into national climate plans.<sup>6</sup>
- **In Fiji**, solar energy has allowed remote communities that were not connected to the main power grid more consistent access to electricity. This is an adaptation and inclusion measure. Children from these communities have been able to continue studying at night or socialise with friends. More consistent access to solar energy has also increased social interactions between communities. However, solarisation has been uneven across communities. This at times has also created conflict and rivalry between those who do and those who do not have access to electricity through renewable energy.<sup>7</sup>
- **In Brazil**, Indigenous Peoples are central to the country's green transition by offering climate solutions through traditional knowledge and demanding their rights be upheld in the process. Their participation is critical, as they advocate for forests and their lands to be recognized and protected, and for a just transition that avoids environmental racism and further marginalization. Still, the intensifying demand for critical minerals and the severe threats posed by the mining sector through illegal mining activities are endangering indigenous childhood.<sup>8</sup>



*Photovoice activity with adolescent boys in Cholistan, Pakistan. Samuel Hall, 2025*

<sup>3</sup> United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child, General Comment No. 26, CRC/C/GC/26, 2023.

<sup>4</sup> South Africa, Just Energy Transition Investment Plan 2023-2027, Government of South Africa, 'Protect Vulnerable Communities' section, accessed October 9, 2025.

<sup>5</sup> Sinha, M., 'Decentralized renewable energy can accelerate India's path to Net Zero by 2050,' March 2024.

<sup>6</sup> Council of the European Union, 'Council adopts recommendation to stimulate learning for the green transition and sustainable development,' June 2022.

<sup>7</sup> Global key informant interview with youth activist, Fiji, 8th of May 2025, remote.

<sup>8</sup> UNICEF Brazil (2025). Infância e Juventude Yanomami: O que significa ser criança e os desafios urgentes na Terra Indígena Yanomami. Available at: <https://www.unicef.org/brazil/relatorios/infancia-e-juventude-yanomami>

# Zooming In: Listening to Children in Kenya and Pakistan

Stories from various countries teach us lessons that matter not just at home, but in many other places too.

In Kenya, the government has made a lot of progress: about 93% of the country's electricity already comes from renewable energy.<sup>9</sup> But many families still cook with firewood and this affects children's health and time at school, particularly for girls who often collect the wood.

The Lake Turkana Wind Power (LTPW) Project brought jobs, roads, and better access to water in Marsabit County.<sup>10</sup> But it also raised concerns. Children told us their village was fenced in without their input. They lost places to play. Even with good intentions, the project did not always protect their rights or include their voices.

In Pakistan, the government has made bold climate promises to cut pollution in half by 2030 and shift to 60% clean electricity.<sup>11</sup> One of the largest efforts is in Punjab, where the Quaid-e-Azam Solar Park was built in Bahawalpur.<sup>12</sup> Other solar projects are helping too. For example, a school solar programme supported by the Asian Development Bank has helped over 10,000 schools in Punjab switch to solar power.<sup>13</sup> This means more schools now have electricity, helping children study, stay cool, and feel safe.

It also meant that children and youth in Pakistan had a better understanding of terms related to climate and green transition, when compared to Kenya. Why? Because children are in contact with concepts such as solar power since they are very young, in schools.

But children in Pakistan said they often were not part of the conversation. In some areas, benefits from energy projects were not shared equally, and youth had few opportunities to learn about green jobs or the future of work.

Kenya and Pakistan have both signed the CRC,<sup>14</sup> promising to protect children's right to health, education, protection, and participation, even in times of crisis and change. These commitments must apply to activities related to the green transition, too.

This brief reminds us that unless children's rights, like access to participation, education and clean water, are part of this shift, the transition will not be fair or sustainable. A fair green transition means children should be part of the decisions, not just recipients of the results.

## Did you know?



**Fact:** The LTWP Project consulted the community (Kenya)

**Problem:** These consultations were limited to community elders, who requested, for example, the construction of a fence around Sarima village. While well-intentioned - so as to protect the community from wild animals but also against theft of cattle, this decision created challenges for children — restricting their playground space and confining families and livestock within the same fenced area.

**Children's perspective:** Children say they want to be consulted by the LTWP Project. They question why decisions that affect their lives are made without them. They ask for the removal of the fence, and for safe spaces to play and move freely.

**Fact:** Children see both benefits and drawbacks of solar panels and the green transition. (Pakistan)

**Problem:** They enjoy fans, water pumps, and lights during power cuts at home and in schools. But they also notice the trade-offs: fewer trees, rising artificial heat as panels absorb the sun, and plants dying because the shade and cooling from trees are gone.

**Children's perspective:** Children call for more trees and better care for the environment to balance this transition. They ask: "Why don't adults ask us about these changes when their decisions affect our lives? We have ideas about what we want and what we don't."

9 Energy Capital & Power, Kenya Special Report - Invest in the energy sector of Kenya, 2020, p.2.

10 Business Daily Africa, "Lake Turkana Wind Farm Opens Up Dry Marsabit", Business Daily, September, 2020`

11 Government of Pakistan, 'Updated Nationally Determined Contributions 2021', 2021.

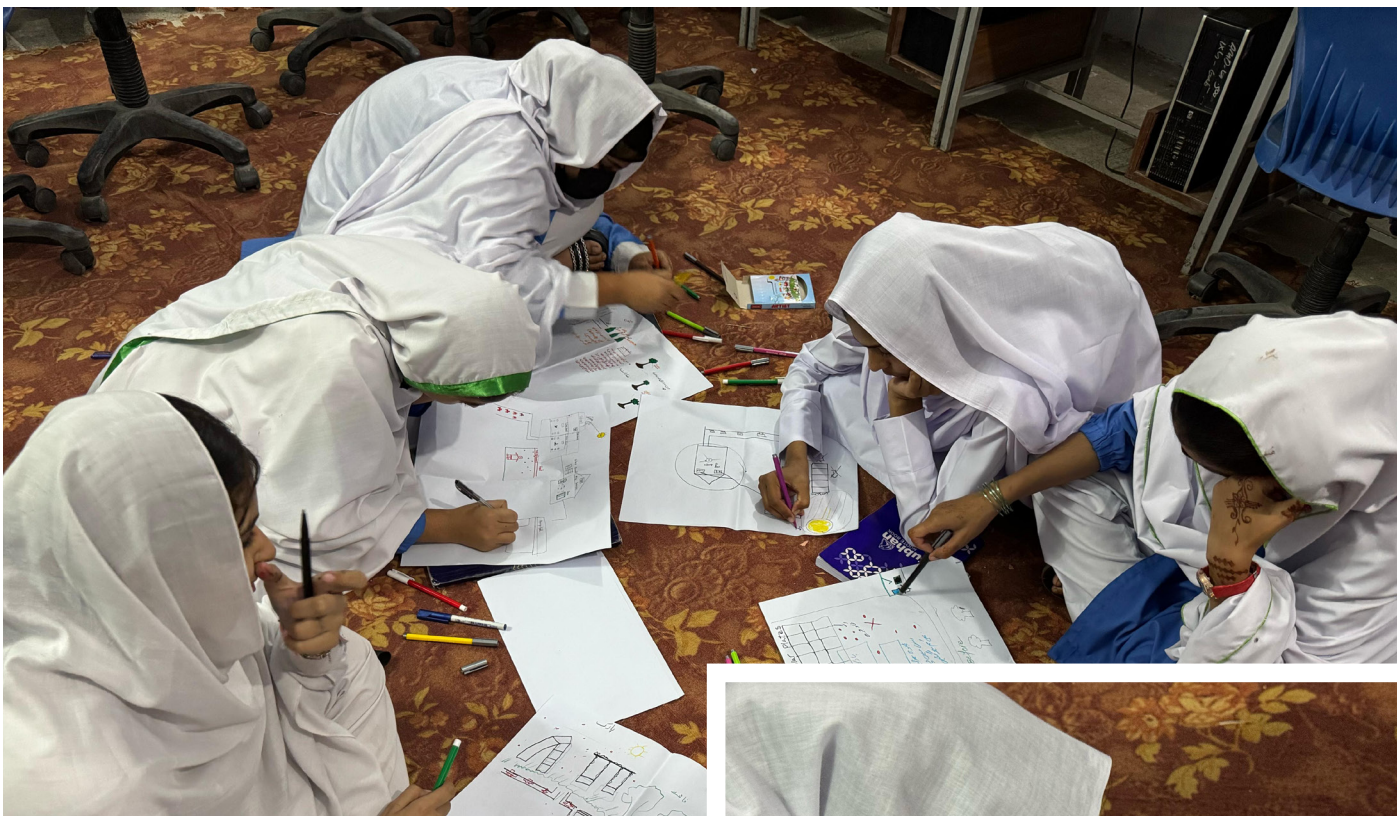
12 Zofeen T. Ebrahim, 'World's Largest Solar Park to Light up Pakistan's Future', DAWN, 8 September 2015.

13 Economic Impact and UNICEF, 'Powering Progress: Measuring the Benefits of Investing in Energy Resilience for Healthcare, Education and Water'.

14 United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child, General Comment No. 26, CRC/C/GC/26, 2023.

# Chapter 2

## Making 'Our' Voice Count:



Focus Group Discussion activity with Adolescent girls in Bahawalpur, Pakistan. Credit: Samuel Hall, 2025

Through our words, pictures, and ideas, you will walk with us into our homes, our schools, and our dreams for the future. We show you what is changing around us: the floods, heat, and pollution that make life harder.

We also show you what is getting better: in some places, roads have made it easier to reach school. Solar panels and clean water pumps have brought light and health to our homes.

We share what school feels like and how learning about green jobs can open new doors. We talk about the challenges that children like us face every day, and we tell leaders what we hope they will do to make things better.

Each photo, each quote, and each story is a window into our world and a message about the kind of future we want to grow in.



## Kenya: When Green Projects Reshape Children’s Lives - An Analysis

The quotes and stories shared in this section are drawn from Samuel Hall’s research study with UNICEF, which explored how children and youth experience and respond to green transition in their communities. The study used a participatory methodology involving Photovoice, Mapping Exercises, and Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) with children and adolescents.

As Kenya moves ahead with its clean energy goals, green projects are already making an impact, notably the Lake Turkana Wind Power project in Sarima village, Loiyangalani District, Marsabit County. Sarima village, is the closest community to the wind farm. This was one of the main research sites for this study. Through conversations with children and young people in Sarima, we learned that the project has brought both positive changes and serious challenges to their daily lives.

On the positive side, the project helped build new infrastructure, roads, a health centre, water boreholes, and a school. The new boreholes, for example, meant girls did not have to walk long distances to collect water from unsafe sources. Many girls told us they now arrive at school on time and have more time to study.

The new school also marked a turning point in gender equality. At first, local elders wanted the school to admit only boys. But project staff stood firm: the school would only be built if girls could attend too. This firm stance led to a shift in attitudes, and today, girls in Sarima are going to school alongside boys.

However, the project also revealed key gaps in community engagement, especially with children and adolescents. Most consultations were held with community elders, meaning children’s voices were excluded.

As a result, some decisions had unintended consequences. The decision to fence the village, for instance, restricted children’s freedom to move and play. During the construction phase, the presence of outside workers was linked to reports of early pregnancies and the exploitation of adolescent girls while young boys were being exposed to drugs and alcohol, pointing to serious gaps in child protection.

## What Kenyan Children Said:

**Benson, 14, Sarima Village says,**

“The Wind Power project built boreholes for us, so we no longer use salty water, and it also built a classroom. But before LTWP, we lived in an open area with freedom to move. When the project started, we were relocated and fenced in. Because of the fence, children have no space to play. We are confined and congested, and when the rains come, the lowland floods and sweeps away people’s houses.”

**Robert, 17, from Sarima Village says,**

“During construction of the company there were issues like pregnancies and our young sisters became victims of deceits from the company employees who had seduced them with money and impregnated them.”

**Lago, 17 from Sarima Village says,**

“Sarima used to be good grazing land for our animals, but the turbines have disrupted our grazing patterns and the corridors leading to water points.”

**Lucy, 17 from Sarima Village Says,**

“There are many good things that have come with these changes — the dispensary, the borehole, the roads, and the classroom. We also appreciate that some of our parents have jobs there. But as a girl, I don’t feel the Lake Turkana Wind Power Project cares about us. Few girls or women are employed, and they have never asked how we are doing or sent female workers to talk to us.”



*Photovoice activity, adolescents girls, Marsabit, 2025*

## Analysis from Pakistan: New Infrastructure, New Risks

The quotes and stories shared in this section are drawn from Samuel Hall's research study with UNICEF, which explored how children experience and respond to the green transition in their communities. Just like in Kenya, the study in Pakistan used a participatory methodology involving Photovoice, Mapping Exercises, and Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) with children and adolescents.

In Pakistan, the shift to clean energy is taking shape through large-scale solar projects, especially in areas that have long lacked reliable electricity. One major example is the Quaid-e-Azam Solar Park in Bahawalpur, located on the edge of the Cholistan Desert. As part of our research, we spoke with children living in nearby communities to understand how these changes are affecting their everyday lives.

Through group discussions and creative methods like photovoice, children described clear improvements. New roads have made it safer and easier to get to school. Electricity in mosques now allows for evening study and Quran memorisation, bringing more children into these shared learning spaces. In schools, solar-powered water pumps and hygiene clubs have helped reduce illness, allowing students to focus better in class. Both, boys and girls, agreed that these recent improvements have had a notably greater impact on girls and women than on boys and men. The children interviewed highlighted that water fetching time has been reduced from one hour to just five minutes, freeing up valuable time for children, particularly girls, to focus on their studies. In addition, the Solar Park has also contributed by constructing and equipping girls' schools with science labs, washrooms, and furniture, which narrows gender disparities in education.

Some children also spoke about how their families have benefitted. With new jobs created around the solar park, especially in construction and maintenance, household incomes have improved. One girl shared how her friend's father got work through the project and how this has helped the family afford stable electricity, making it easier for her friend to study at home.

But not all children are seeing these benefits equally. In Cholistan, children told us they still lack basic infrastructure. Water pumps remain limited to just a few locations. Others raised concerns about the safety of solar panels, especially those installed at low heights, and about changes to the environment that could affect their health like increased dust or heat around the solar sites. These reflections show how green projects can support children's learning, well-being, and family stability, but only if they are planned with children in mind.

## What Pakistani Children Said:

Mohamamd, 13, from Bahawalpur says,

"Before, there was no proper road and it was very hard to reach school. Many accidents happened on the rough path. After the solar park was built, a new road was made. Now it's easier and safer to travel, and our parents feel relieved. Everyone in the village is happy with this road."

Bibi, 14, from Cholistan says,

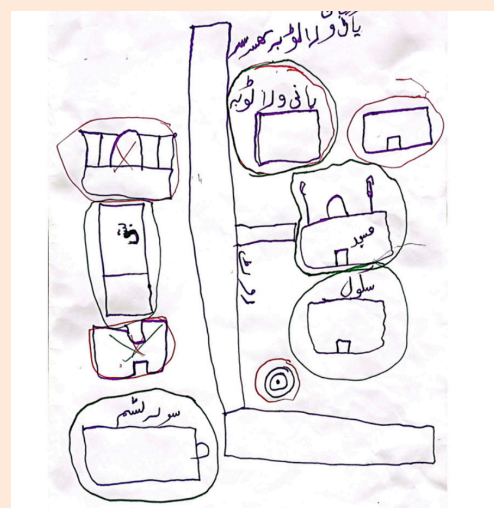
"There is one problem — the solar panels are installed too low. When it rains, water causes electric current to leak into the ground. Children can get electrocuted. A few days ago, my little lamb died. It was running around in the rain, got shocked, and died."

Akash, 13, from Bahawalpur says,

"Since the solar park was built, the heat has become stronger and hot winds blow. This makes us sick with problems like asthma, fever, coughs, and headaches."

Sheeba, 15 from Cholistan Says,

"I took a picture of the solar-powered water pump because before, we drank dirty water and often got sick. Even my livestock died from the contamination, since people and animals used the same source. Now there are separate areas, and both we and the animals have clean water. It's much easier — before it took an hour and a half just to fetch water. I only wish there were more pumps. For us it is convenient, but people in nearby villages still have to travel far. If more pumps are built, it will be easier for them too."



Photovoice activity, adolescents girls, Pakistan. Samuel Hall



*This image captures the positive change in the mosque after the installation of the solar plant. Previously, the mosque had no electricity, and as a result, children couldn't come to study or memorize the Quran. However, with the introduction of solar power, the situation has improved significantly. Now, more children come in the evenings to study and engage in Quran memorization. Additionally, a larger number of people now attend prayers at the mosque. The solar plant has made it possible for the mosque to function more effectively. Samuel Hall, 2025.*

## Our Schools and Learning: New Energy, New Lessons

**Benson, 14, Sarima Village says,**

"The wind project built roads and brought water to the village. Before, we had to go far to fetch water, but now it's here. We are no longer late for school."

**Vivian, 15 says**

"We used to go far to fetch salty water for home and school. Now we can easily get clean water in the village. But we have to pay for it, and we don't know where the money goes."

**Riji, 16 from Bahawalpur says,**

My friend's father was unemployed. Because of solar panels (Park), he got a job. Now he earns well, and my friend has started liking studying because at her home light and everything is available. There has been a change in her—she has become good in studies.



*Photovoice activity with adolescents boys in Marsabit, Kenya. Samuel Hall, 2025*

# Chapter 3

## Learning from Green Transition

Across the world, countries are moving faster towards clean energy. Solar panels, wind farms, and electric transport are becoming more common as part of urgent efforts to tackle climate change. This chapter explores how lessons from different parts of the world, beyond Kenya and Pakistan can help shape a green transition that better supports children's needs, protects their rights, and includes their voices.



*(From left to right): Sarima Village, Kenya and a photovoice activity with an adolescent girl in Bahawalpur, Pakistan respectively. Samuel Hall, 2025*

## Building What Children Need

In many places, green projects have already improved children's lives. For example, in Malawi, schools and clinics with **solar-powered water systems** have seen fewer illnesses, better menstrual hygiene for girls, and lower school absenteeism.<sup>15</sup> In Fiji, off-grid solar power helps children in remote areas study at night and spend more time with their friends.<sup>16</sup>

These examples show that when clean energy projects are connected to services that matter to children, like water, schools, or healthcare, the benefits go far beyond electricity. They improve children's well-being, reduce the time spent on chores, and help families build more stable routines.

To make this impact long-lasting, green investments should be designed with children in mind from the start, especially in places that have long been underserved.



These examples remind us that even climate-friendly projects can cause harm if they are not planned carefully. Governments and businesses must take steps to protect children and youth from new risks, make sure benefits are shared fairly, and support families through these changes.

## Putting Children's Ideas at the Centre

Children and young people have **ideas, opinions, and solutions**. Around the world, more spaces are opening up for them to get involved. Yet, at the same time, civic spaces are also shrinking in many contexts. Recognising and supporting children's participation therefore requires not only creating opportunities but also protecting the spaces where their voices can be heard.

In Denmark, schools that focus on sustainability include **outdoor classrooms, climate lessons, and student input in design**.<sup>20</sup> In Iran, a digital initiative is helping young people and women sell eco-friendly products online, combining green action with digital learning and economic opportunity.<sup>21</sup> These efforts show that the green transition can be about more than just infrastructure and can also support education, skills-building, and youth leadership and empowerment.



## Ensuring No Child Is Harmed

While there are many benefits, green transition is not always fair. In some Pacific Islands, only certain villages received solar panels, which led to **tensions between communities**.<sup>17</sup> In cities across Latin America, switching to electric buses helped clean the air, but also meant job losses for informal workers, many of whom had children to support.<sup>18</sup>

In mining areas of the Democratic Republic of Congo, the demand for minerals used in green technologies has exposed children to dangerous working conditions and environmental harm.<sup>19</sup>

In northern Sweden, the Sámi Indigenous reindeer-herding communities are experiencing conflicts with green transition projects such as wind farms and mining for minerals used in electric vehicles and batteries. These projects, being part of Sweden's push for renewable energy and green infrastructure, are entering Sámi grazing and migration lands, fragmenting pasture and affecting their livelihoods.



15 UNICEF Malawi, 'Scaling-Up Climate Resilient Sustainable Solar-Powered Systems for Institutions and Communities in Rural Malawi,' 2020.

16 Global key informant interview with youth activist, Fiji, 8th of May 2025, remote.

17 Global key informant interview with youth activist.

18 Natural Resources Division, Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), 'Lithium Extraction and Industrialization: Opportunities and Challenges for Latin America and the Caribbean', June 2023.

19 Dummet, M. "The Dark Side of Electric Cars: Exploitative Labor Practices" in Time, 28th of September 2017; and Save the Children "DRC: Cobalt Mines, Child Labour and the Green Transition". 4th of November 2024.

20 The Danish school putting sustainability on the syllabus, DW, February 19, 2020.

21 Stakeholder interviews conducted by AWR Lloyd between August and October 2024.

## Towards a Global Child Rights Agenda for the Green Transition

The experiences from different countries show that when children are included in climate and energy systems by public and private actors the results are stronger, for them, their families, and their communities.

A truly fair transition must do three things:

- **Deliver better services** – such as clean water, healthcare, and quality education.
- **Prevent harm** – protecting children from displacement, exploitation, and exclusion.
- **Listen to children’s voices** – recognising them as participants, not just bystanders.

‘It [green transition] is just a shift towards more sustainable environmental practices (...) We [youth] want to see this transition as community-centered, youth-friendly, and youth inclusive where it also features traditional knowledge and stories of our past here in the Pacific’

*(Youth, Fiji, 22)*

‘Green transition is moving away from the reliance of fossil fuel for energy production (...) personally, I do not subscribe to just that. I subscribe to this concept of a just transition (...) as we move towards green transition, we cannot leave more people behind’

*(Youth, Malaysia, 23)*

‘It is a concept or a shift that is very necessary for us to come closer to a fully sustainable society before our resources run out’

*(Youth, Vietnam, 22)*

‘A green transition is about efficiency while maintaining the green aspect of things’

*(Youth, Ethiopia, 24)*

## The Win-Win Situation That Businesses Can Unlock With Just Green Transition

Did you know that integrating children’s rights into green transition initiatives is not only a legal and ethical obligation but also a strategic business opportunity that most businesses do not take advantage of?

Integrating children’s rights considerations into green transition strategies is increasingly recognised as part of responsible business conduct. While there are still limited legal requirements explicitly linking children’s rights in environmental context, the emerging movement toward mandatory Human Rights and Environmental Due Diligence (mHREDD).<sup>22</sup> For example, the EU’s corporate Sustainability Due Diligence Directive (CSDDD / Directive 2024/1760) which entered into force in July 2024 now obliges companies to identify, prevent, and mitigate adverse human rights and environmental impacts across their operations and value chains.<sup>23</sup>

Another mandatory human rights & environmental due diligence law is currently being drafted and expected to apply to businesses operating in Thailand.<sup>24</sup> A draft bill titled “Act on the Protection of Human Rights and the Environment for Sustainable Business Management” has been reintroduced in 2025 in South Korea; if passed it would be Asia’s first fully mandatory HRDD law.<sup>25</sup>

Today’s children and youth are tomorrow’s workforce, consumers, and decision-makers. By protecting their rights and engaging them meaningfully, companies can:

- **Build brand trust and loyalty** by showing genuine commitment to social equity alongside environmental action;
- **Strengthen social license to operate**, especially in communities affected by renewable energy, resource extraction, etc;
- **Reduce reputational and operational risks** linked to child labor, unsafe conditions, or community opposition;
- **Nurture innovation and future talent** by supporting green skills education, green jobs and youth-led solutions.

<sup>22</sup> United Nations, Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights: Implementing the United Nations “Protect, Respect and Remedy” Framework (New York and Geneva: United Nations, 2011)

<sup>23</sup> European Commission. Directive (EU) 2024/1760 of the European Parliament and of the Council on Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence (CSDDD). Official Journal of the European Union, July 5, 2024.

<sup>24</sup> Baker McKenzie, “Thailand: HREDD Bill — Mandatory Human Rights and Environmental Due Diligence in Supply Chains,” InsightPlus, 26 August 2025, [https://insightplus.bakermckenzie.com/bm/environment-climate-change\\_1/thailand-hredd-bill-mandatory-human-rights-and-environmental-due-diligence-in-supply-chains](https://insightplus.bakermckenzie.com/bm/environment-climate-change_1/thailand-hredd-bill-mandatory-human-rights-and-environmental-due-diligence-in-supply-chains)

<sup>25</sup> Ropes & Gray LLP, “South Korea Re-enters the Race for Asia’s First Mandatory Human Rights Due Diligence Law,” Lexology, June 19 2025, <https://www.lexology.com/library/detail.aspx?g=97f7142c-1512-4ba1-bd5c-8fa979cac130>

# Chapter 4

## Let Us Make Green Transition Just



*(From left to right): An electric bus charging at a station and solar farm in Cairo, Egypt. Samuel Hall, 2025*

Green projects must recognise children not only as those affected by climate and environmental changes, but also as active participants with ideas, experiences, and solutions.

When given the space to speak, children in both Kenya and Pakistan shared clear, thoughtful recommendations for local leaders — about safety, access to water, school infrastructure, and their hopes for the future. This is echoed globally: in South Korea, youth climate forums allow children to advise on environmental policies; in Denmark, green schools involve students in shaping climate education and design; and in Fiji, youth-led groups like the Pacific Climate Warriors ensure children’s voices influence climate action. These examples show that children can be meaningfully included in decision-making allowing for green transitions to become more just, sustainable, and responsive to community needs.

Based on what children shared during the research, a just green transition means:

- **Protecting children’s rights:** Green projects must not take away the right to go to school, breathe clean air, play safely, or feel protected at home.
- **Supporting families:** When parents or caregivers lose jobs during green projects, the whole family is affected. A just transition ensures that families remain safe, can earn a living, and move toward better — not harder — futures.
- **Preparing children for the future:** As countries commit to clean energy and green jobs, a just transition helps children learn about the environment and gain the skills they need for the jobs of tomorrow, ones that also help protect the planet.
- **Supporting Children’s meaningful participation:** In places like Bahawalpur and Cholistan, most children said no one asked for their views about the solar park. But children notice important things — like rising heat, safety risks, or access to water.

## Messages From Children

“For me, I suggest for us to be given the opportunity to select a female leader in the organisation (LTWP) who can talk on our behalf as girls. For now, we do not have any woman representing us in any decision and the elders and leaders are male. I personally can never tell a male elder my issues. If female leaders were involved, some of our challenges as girls would have been sorted”

**Christiane, 15, Sarima**



“I propose that we hold a meeting with both representatives from the Wind Power Project and the government, so we have the chance to discuss and voice our concerns. Community members should not dismiss us as if we are little children who cannot speak up. People often assume that because we are young, we cannot contribute to anything.”

**Benson, 15, Sarima**



“We are girls — why would anyone ask us? Even our families don’t ask for our opinions. All decisions are made by others. We didn’t know what this project was or how it would affect us; permission was given without asking us. Here, children — especially girls — are ignored and have no say, even in decisions like marriage.”

**Gulnaz, 15, Cholistan**



“We don’t have classes on pollution, climate change, or how to keep our surroundings clean. Even though the solar plant brought some good changes, students are not involved in environmental programmes like tree planting or clean-up activities.”

**Jam, 14, Cholistan**



# Chapter 5

## Your Role — How Caregivers, Teachers, Policymakers, Donors, and Businesses Can Step Up



*(From left to right): Focus Group Discussion with adolescent boys in Cholistan, Punjab, Pakistan, and Focus Group Discussion with adolescent girls in Bahawalpur, Punjab, Pakistan. Samuel Hall, 2025.*

According to UNICEF (2024), taking a child rights approach to the green transition means looking closely at how climate and energy changes affect children's rights, including how many children are affected, how serious the impacts are, how urgently action is needed, and what kind of data exists to guide decisions.

To make sure children and adolescents are included in these efforts, the UN's General Comment No. 26 (2023) urges governments to tackle the harmful effects of environmental damage — especially climate change — while protecting and promoting children's rights. It also reminds governments of their responsibility to make the green transition fair and inclusive for children.

UNICEF explains that real participation means giving children the chance to be heard in decisions that affect them. It is about moving beyond treating children as passive victims, and instead involving them, with the right support, as active participants in shaping decisions that impact their lives.

To guide this, Lundy (2007)<sup>26</sup> developed four key principles for meaningful child participation, helping ensure it is not only heard but truly acted upon.

1. **Space:** A child-friendly safe environment where children and youth can freely express their views, with tailored support to overcome any social or cultural barriers.
2. **Voice:** Capacitating children and youth with skills (e.g., public speaking, digital literacy, advocacy) and confidence to confidently share their views and engage with others.
3. **Audience:** Making sure that children and youth's voices reach the right people who can make decisions based on what they say.
4. **Influence:** Children and youth's voices must lead to actions, and they must be informed about the outcome of these actions - voice, agency, and participation.

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## How Can We Continue Making Children Part of Green Transition Decisions - Some Recommendations

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### For Children and Young People

You notice changes every day in your schools, homes, and play areas. Your voices matter.

- **Speak up together:** write, draw, or talk about what you see.
- **Share your views with someone you trust** — a teacher, a parent, a community leader.
- **Take small actions in your community**, like planting trees or organising clean-ups.
- **Use your creativity:** posters, plays, and stories can help adults listen.

### For Teachers

You can help children make sense of change and be their bridge to adults.

- **Bring climate and environment into everyday lessons**, through stories, debates, or mapping.
- **Give space for children to reflect** on how changes affect their lives.
- **Share what children say** with school leaders, communities, and local officials.

### For Parents and Caregivers

Children are not too young to notice change. They want to be heard and involved.

- **Listen when children talk** about heat, water, or trees.
- **Make sure girls and boys both have time to study, play, and rest.**
- **Involve children in family and community decisions**, especially when health, safety, or education is at stake.

### For Leaders and Policymakers

Children feel the impacts of projects directly, yet their voices are often missing.

- **Ask children for their views** when designing projects, not just adults - by creating children and youth-led boards.
- **Create safe, child-friendly spaces** in schools and communities where they can share openly.
- **Invest in projects that last** — schools with teachers, affordable green energy for families.

### For Businesses

The green transition is a chance to do better for children and communities.

- **Protect children:** no child labour, safe conditions, and clean environments.
- **Link green investments (like roads, water, or solar) with children's needs:** safe schooling, healthcare, and protection
- **Plan responsibly:** Consider how green transition projects — including those in your supply chains — might harm or help children's rights. Assess and address these impacts early, during the design and planning stages of your strategies and action plans.
- **Involve children and youth in shaping solutions**, and show how their ideas influence decisions.

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<sup>26</sup> Lundy, Laura. "Voice is not enough: conceptualising Article 12 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child." British educational research journal 33, no. 6 (2007): 927-942.

# Chapter 6

## Activity Corner: Create, Imagine Act



No matter who you are: a child, a parent, a teacher, a community leader, or someone working in government or business — there’s always something you can do to help shape a greener, fairer future. This section offers simple activities to help you observe your surroundings, reflect on what’s changing, imagine better futures, and take action in your own way. Whether you’re drawing, writing, talking, or organising with others, your ideas and actions matter. Here are some prompts to get you started

Prompts	Activities	Your Notes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What changes have you noticed in your environment over the past year? (Think: weather, water, energy use, farming, transport.)</li> <li>• How have these changes affected daily life — at home, at school, or at work?</li> <li>• Who in your community is most affected? Who benefits most from green changes?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Take a photo or draw something that has changed in your environment.</li> <li>• Keep a weekly “climate journal” — what do you see, hear, feel?</li> <li>• Hold a neighbourhood or school discussion circle.</li> </ul>	
<b>Imagine The Future</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What would a just and green community look like for you?</li> <li>• If you could redesign your school, market, or workplace to be greener, what would you change?</li> <li>• What does a “green” dream job look like?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Draw two pictures: “Today” and “My Future Community”</li> <li>• Create a collage from newspaper clippings showing green ideas or injustices</li> <li>• Write a short story, poem, or dialogue set in a future with fair climate action</li> </ul>	
<b>Speak Up</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What message would you send to your local leader or school principal about climate and fairness?</li> <li>• What advice would you give to a business building a green project in your community?</li> <li>• If you were in charge of a green project, what would you do differently?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Record a 30-second voice note or video to share your ideas</li> <li>• Write a letter to a policymaker, mayor, or donor</li> <li>• Host a school or community “climate ideas” assembly</li> </ul>	

- What message would you send to your local leader or school principal about climate and fairness?
- What advice would you give to a business building a green project in your community?
- If you were in charge of a green project, what would you do differently?

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Wherever he lives.

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