

A SAVE THE CHILDREN ESSAY COLLECTION

**THE FUTURE IS**

**NOW**

**GLOBAL PERSPECTIVES ON TACKLING  
CLIMATE CHANGE AND INEQUALITY**



**Save the  
Children**

# Ratana

Ratana, 12, pictured on the cover, lives in a floating village on Tonle Sap Lake, Cambodia, shown here.

Every morning, Ratana sets off from her home by boat. She's heading for a floating school supported by Save the Children – but she's got a vital job to do before she gets there.

As she rows she picks up friends along the way – and together they work to clear the rubbish that litters the lake. “When we row the boat to school we pick up the trash and put it in our boat,” says Ratana.

She and her friends care passionately about cleaning up the lake because of the eco lessons we've helped introduce to the school's curriculum. “I have learned about pollution, deforestation, and garbage,” she explains. “I've learned how to clean the environment.”

She is also spreading the word to her community about climate change and protecting the environment. “The elderly and adults should listen to children because we are now aware of the environment,” Ratana says.

It is children like Ratana and her friends that are this fishing community's best hope of saving their lake and livelihood. It is her generation that is leading the fightback against climate change across the world.



An aerial photograph of a floating village, likely in Southeast Asia, showing numerous colorful houses built on boats and rafts along a river. The houses are painted in various colors like blue, green, and white, and many have corrugated metal roofs. Some houses have solar panels installed on their roofs. The water is a murky brown color. In the background, there are green fields and distant mountains under a cloudy sky. The text 'THE FUTURE IS' is overlaid on a red rectangular background in the upper left, and 'NOW' is overlaid on a yellow rectangular background in the upper right. Below these, the subtitle 'GLOBAL PERSPECTIVES ON TACKLING CLIMATE CHANGE AND INEQUALITY' is centered in a white box with black text.

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Published by  
Save the Children  
1 St John's Lane  
London EC1M 4AR  
UK  
+44 (0)20 7012 6400  
savethechildren.org.uk

First published 2023

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Designed by GrasshopperDesign.net  
Printed by Impress Print Services Ltd.



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# Introduction

The link between the climate crisis and children's lives has never been clearer to see, or more difficult to witness. In countries around the world, children from the poorest and most disadvantaged communities are being hit hardest.

In this essay collection Save the Children brings together inspiring voices from the UK and around the world to analyse the intersecting challenges of accelerating climate change and growing inequality, to propose solutions and catalyse political action.

From international climate finance and a just transition to indigenous rights, protecting nature and the impact of climate change on family finances in the UK, these essays reflect the scale and breadth of the issues facing children today.

As we reach the half-way mark to the UN's Sustainable Development Goals, now is the moment for politicians in the UK to act and help build a greener and fairer world for all. This set of essays points the way forward.



**"Climate Crisis – a hopeful future".** An illustration commissioned to show the future we could leave for children if we limit global warming to 1.5 degrees.

# Foreword

## Emily and Will

Save the Children UK Youth Advisory Board members



As Save the Children UK's Youth Advisory Board, we are committed to fighting for our futures, for children's rights, and for fairness. We are united in our belief that the climate crisis is a child rights crisis.

The evidence seems clear: the climate emergency threatens the safety and stability of how we live, our health, and our natural world. As young people, we want our leaders to listen, learn, update and adapt. We deserve to be heard and to have our futures protected and we need to be part of these conversations. As the issue will affect today's youth more than our parents and grandparents, it is only natural that we prioritise climate change as an issue, which is why many of us will consider parties' track records and commitments on climate when we are able to vote.

In Save the Children's survey of 3,000 children, 60% identified that climate change and inequality negatively impact their mental health. 75% said they want government to take stronger action. Yet, we continue to see targets being delayed and derailed. We should not have to suffer "climate anxiety" and "climate grief" whilst we helplessly watch world leaders gamble with our futures.

Climate change is already taking its toll on the natural world and is impacting both human and animal habitats across the globe. As young people, we witness injustices and suffering induced by climate change and are determined to act, as we know the consequences will continue into the future.



**Youth Advisory Board Summer Meeting 2022.** Photo: Jordan Woodgate/Save the Children

Climate change will impact everyone, regardless of where they are in the world – but we know it will impact those in the Global South, with the least resources to cope, the worst. Whether it be food shortages or droughts caused by irregular weather patterns, or seeing the impacts of climate induced migration, we will all have to change our lifestyles to adapt to these new planetary conditions. Climate change is only aggravating many humanitarian disasters currently ongoing, and more will no doubt arise in the future if we fail to act.

By acting now, the Government can prioritise the futures of our generation, granting us the right to live our lives as we deserve to live them. We should not have to capitulate on our future ambitions because the leaders of our childhoods chose to ignore the warnings.

The consequences of climate change will only be exacerbated the longer the Government chooses to delay meaningful action. Climate change and its associated issues will not disappear overnight, but will take commitment, time, and resources to mitigate. This is why action must be taken now.

If politicians want to be remembered for doing something, surely, they'd want to be remembered as the people that put the world first?

# Listen to the voices of the future: It's my right as a girl to have a clean and healthy environment

## Degan\*

14-year-old youth activist from Iraq working with Save the Children International to raise awareness and push for action on climate change



Hello, my name is Degan\*, I would like to tell you about my story, a story of a 14-year-old Iraqi girl who lived through different atrocities, ISIS, Covid-19 and how it affected my life. I was born and raised in Mosul, since my early childhood, my parents discovered my talent in drawing, and they cultivated this talent, despite their limited capacity.

They started bringing me coloring pens, and drawing supplies, and I enjoyed drawing the nature around my beautiful city. Unfortunately, my happiness did not last long with my brush.

When I was only five, specifically back in 2014, IS entered my city, and destroyed it, destroying with it my dreams, they imposed their laws on all the people living in the city which restricted our freedoms, especially for women.

\* Name changed to protect identity

They made us cover even our faces, denying us the right to learn and work. I can't forget all the horrific details that I experienced, despite my young age, the impact of these details remains stuck in my head to this day.

We lived horrible days where I was denied my simple rights including my brush and my drawing book, the IS militants were brutal and they banned anything joyful, including toys. We suffered from hunger for days and days and barely had enough to not starve.

My mom couldn't get outside the house without my father accompanying her, same as all women, otherwise, she would be subjected to biting and whipping and prison with fines by the Hasba women (those who implement Shari'a law).

I remember one time, I went out with my family to the Bazar shopping center, and we had enough money just to cover our basic needs, I saw toys and candies and asked my parents to buy them for me, but they couldn't afford them, and I cried, so they told me to write what I want on a piece of paper and put it on the shelf, and when the "Wishes Lord" come and reads it, he will make these wishes come true and bring it home.

I was very happy with this, and I started writing many, many things that I wanted then, and was very happy, waiting for the Wishes Lord to knock on our door one day.

Our suffering increased day in and out, there was no electricity and fuel, and I was seeing how ISIS was cutting the trees of my city, and the forests around. I had patience because I was waiting for the Wishes Lord to come and rescue us from what we were living through while bringing us gifts too.

Those challenging times passed by very slowly, but my Mosul city was liberated on the 10th of July 2017, back then I was seven years old. I was enrolled in the school in the first elementary grade. I dreamt about this day a lot while drawing the picture of my school in my imagination.

However, I was shocked on my first day of school, a day that every child waits for, that my school was destroyed, and full of garbage, same as every spot in this city, because of the fires and bombing. IS militants burnt fuel

and oil wells to turn the sky dark, I suffocated because of the black smoke, and the environment we were in, was unlivable.

We barely made it through that nightmare of ISIS, to wake up to another nightmare in 2020 with the COVID pandemic, and here begins the second part of the story.

Education was turned online and distant, and schools and friends were taken away from us, along with our joy. We were very worried about how to protect ourselves against this pandemic, we had to avoid gatherings, and friends, and wear face masks to any place we went to.

In the end, the number of new cases dropped, people started following protective measures, and life was slowly restored, we went back to our school desks passionately, and because I love my school and friends so much, I love to see it clean, with a garden where I can breathe some fresh air, but sadly, our schools lack basic requirements for an ordinary educational experience.

The toilets are dirty, and although there is a large space that can be turned into a garden, sadly it is abandoned, I wish that my school had “Cleaning engineers” and I call them engineers and not workers because they do bring change to the polluted environment around us and turn it clean.

I see many people around me lack awareness, if only I could teach people to care for the surrounding environment.

I have a wonderful experience that I would like to share: one time I participated in the online children’s clubs that were hosted by a local organisation in my area, these clubs developed my skills and knowledge, and I enjoyed the font club, drawing club, and the English language club.

Alongside learning in these clubs, I also learned about many other things, including pollution, bullying, forgiving others, and knowing the diversity of my country, as we had children joining those clubs from all over Iraq. This experience affected me positively and grew my talent in drawing and handwriting.

I was shy to communicate and connect with others in these clubs, but my self-confidence grew larger every day and I became a good communicator, I also learned the English language along with some terminologies that I'm now working on developing. I am also encouraging my female friends to participate in these clubs.

One of the topics discussed in these clubs was the issue and challenges of climate change. At first, I didn't know what that meant, and after learning about it, now I wish to know more about this issue because we suffer from temperature rise, and with the current power supply, our suffering is exacerbated.

The Tigris river, or as I like to call it "the vein of life", that witnessed the first civilization developed on its banks looks like a water canal now, not a river, because of less and less water, the remaining water is hit with pollution, this is because of lack of awareness and understanding and care.

**I'm only 14 years old, but I always wonder, how can I contribute to improving the environment around me and reduce the impact.**

I need to live in a clean, healthy environment, I'm sad now, my plants died, despite me taking care of them regularly, and even my bird died because of the hot weather, I cried a lot. Why is this pollution in my environment? How can I save my city and deliver it from this horror?

It's my right as a girl to have a clean and healthy environment, I wish to ride my bicycle in the middle of the lush gardens, full of life and purity. I'm afraid of the future, hearing all this bad news, earthquakes, and floods that are hitting everywhere in the world. I wish the world leaders to find solutions for a safe future for us and a livable environment. I hope they will listen to the voices of the future.

# Assad

Asaad, 13, poses for a portrait outside his home.

13-year-old Asaad is an advocate for children affected by climate change all around the world. And he has a very personal motivation to make a difference. In 2021, devastating floods washed through Asaad's home in Sudan, causing injuries, deaths and stopping children like him from going to school. As a result, Asaad's family felt they had no choice but to leave Sudan for Cairo, Egypt where he now lives .

With Save the Children's support, Asaad travelled to COP 27 to tell his story and call on world leaders to take urgent climate action for children. Although sharing his story wasn't easy, Asaad felt he had to tell it so that leaders find solutions so that children don't suffer. Now, he wants to go back to COP again to continue standing up for children.

Asaad is also looking forward to the future and is working hard to achieve his dreams of becoming a footballer like Kylian Mbappé, and studying hard so he can also be an engineer, doctor or pilot when he grows up.







**FIREST**

**ETS STOP THE M...**

# Uxbridge and beyond: protecting the UK's electoral consensus on climate

## Steve Akehurst

Insight & Messaging Lead at Global Strategic Communications Council (GSCC), a network of communications professionals in the field of climate and energy



If you look close enough, you'll see an interesting wrinkle in the polling from last summer.

While an overwhelming majority of British voters – in all demographics – felt the record heat waves of July 2022 to be both a concern and connected to man-made climate change, this was *especially* the view of older voters. The tiny pocket of sentiment to the contrary was actually slightly easier to observe in younger age groups.

This despite a barrage of Daily Mail headlines at the time, beseeching a younger generation of woke snowflakes for worrying about rising temperatures – or worse still the BBC for having the temerity to publish guidance for coping with them. 'It's called weather!' the Mail informed us. 'Don't you remember the 70s?!'

Yet in the real world, their own readership was having none of it. Why? Because, unlike the young, they remember that it wasn't always like this. They *know* something strange is happening with our world's climate. Many had noticed it in their daily life long before, whether through their

gardening or local flooding. And they worry: for themselves, for their children and grandchildren.

This episode is notable for two reasons. Firstly, it shows you that the performance of public opinion – on all issues but especially the environment – is usually not the same as the reality.

Most importantly, though, it reveals the foundations on which Britain's climate consensus is built. In the last fifteen years, climate and environment has moved from a distant priority for voters to consistently being a top 3 or 4 issue in polling. Majorities supporting reaching net zero targets have significantly strengthened along the way.

While some of this has been catalysed by the values of more left-leaning voters and social movements, among the broader population much is built on basic self-interest and threat perception. Increasing episodes of extreme weather have made the risk climate change poses to people's lives more concrete. This in turn creates permission structure for action, the most precious of political commodities.

By and large, voters understand the need to switch to clean energy and are tolerant by default towards policy which has that as its aim. As we look to the next 5–10 years, this dynamic is still the biggest tailwind working in our favour towards Net Zero.

As has become obvious this year, though, it is not enough by itself. We have to adjust to some pretty strong forces hurtling in the opposite direction, lest they sweep us away.

While rising issue salience creates some measure of acceptance of cost or inconvenience, the level of either that the average voter can stomach is just much lower than it was in 2021. Historic falls in living standards have taken their toll.

The good news is that, right now at least, most voters do not naturally trade these things off; climate action vs cost of living. They want action on both. That's why even Conservative pollsters think Rishi Sunak's recent turn to Net Zero scepticism will do little for him.

However, when policy is constructed that does force ordinary people to make that trade-off in an immediate way, we lose. It tends to be that simple. 2023 saw it vividly in Uxbridge on ULEZ and in Germany on heat pumps.

This paradox – a public ever more sympathetic, yet ever more jaded and squeezed – is something we are going to have to reckon with. How?

In my view, it means three things.

Firstly, get the policy right – even if that means trade-offs, inefficiencies or short-term risk elsewhere. Too much faith is placed in communications to rescue bad, short-termist policy making.

That means an approach that is more carrot and less stick than policy experts often prefer. Joe Biden's model is the best: a large amount of spending (and subsidy if necessary) to, as much as is possible, make green alternatives – electric cars, heat pumps – as convenient and cheap up-front as the polluting alternatives they are replacing.

Of course, that does not come for free. It's money not spent on other issue areas. It requires fiscal rules which accommodate it. In Labour's case, it requires a confidence about borrowing – an issue on which, no matter how public attitudes have moved, the party still carries deep mental scars after four election defeats.

But the alternatives are far worse. If we maintain targets to phase in EVs and heat pumps as standard but do not invest in the grants and infrastructure needed to make that transition seamless, the ensuing fallout will make Uxbridge look like a tea party. Whoever is in power.

Secondly, once good policy is in place, good communication can make a difference.

Government needs to consistently communicate why we are making this transition as a country; the national mission which people are invited to be a part of. Research is pretty consistent here: the thematic messages which do best tend to be built on universal messages of shared concern and a proximate problem. Things like protecting future generations from the

worst impacts of climate change or, more recently given the Russia/Ukraine war, increasing Britain's energy independence.

Messages which major on the consumer or jobs benefits of green action are tantalising, of course, and popular with elites. The challenge they have to overcome is people's often deep cynicism of 'jam tomorrow' claims, sometimes well founded. On the upside, though, those narratives become more feasible as the benefits of Net Zero become real rather than theoretical.

Thirdly, if climate stays on the agenda, the number of opportunists seeking to divide the country on it will likely expand. To combat this, we need to get more trusted, non-polarising messengers on the airwaves. Funders need to back organisations which have this mission at their core. To give one example: the excellent work of Round Our Way, an NGO dedicated to amplifying working class voices in the climate debate.

All told, we still move into 2024 with British public attitudes among the most pro-environment, pro-climate in the world.

That consensus is not just a testament to the basic reasonableness of British people. It is a reflection of all the hard work of activists and politicians and public servants which spans decades. It is an inheritance, from one generation of campaigners to the next. It is our job to protect that inheritance, to cradle it and carry it with us as we move into the next phase of our journey. If we can make good on that task, we will have a chance to change our country for the better – and with it the world.

# Tackling climate change and building prosperity are two sides of the same coin

## Ryan Henson

CEO of the Coalition for Global Prosperity, an international development think tank, and 2019 Conservative Party parliamentary candidate



In January I visited Marsabit County in Northern Kenya, and met families trying to cope with the effects of the worst drought for 40 years, after six years of failed rains. Thousands of people have died of hunger across the Horn of Africa this year. It was a harrowing reminder that climate change is not just an abstract concept in our future – for millions of people, it is a humanitarian crisis and it is happening today.

Extreme weather events including drought and flooding are causing humanitarian emergencies across the region. Approximately 11.5 million children under five are likely to be acutely malnourished in 2023 and over 16.8 million people have been displaced due to conflict, drought, and flooding. In the past few weeks, devastating flash floods killed at least 111 people, including 16 children.

I was proud to visit UK funded aid programmes in Kenya, and to see the work that is being done to build resilience to these shocks, and mitigate their worst effects, as well as providing life-saving humanitarian support for those in immediate crisis. As the Government sets out its long-term

vision for the role the UK can play in international development, through its recently published white paper, it is so welcome that tackling climate change is now at the heart of its agenda.

Hunger is a horrific silent killer, but the impact of the climate crisis is even further reaching – barring children from education, restricting families from accessing essential resources and altering the makeup of communities who are forced to move from their homes. And the increased number of extreme weather events, from cyclones to floods to wildfires, mean that humanitarian response is as vital as ever. We can no longer think of climate and development as distinct issues. It's increasingly clear that we cannot tackle poverty, disease and suffering if we do not tackle climate change. And we cannot tackle climate change without prioritising those who are most vulnerable to its effects.

Lord Cameron's recent appointment as Foreign Secretary is another welcome sign for this approach. As Prime Minister, David Cameron was central to getting global agreement on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which were an early step in bringing these agendas together. But as we reach the half-way stage of the SDGs, we are set to miss 88% of the goals. If that trend continues, it means that 575 million people will still be living in extreme poverty in 2030. It will also mean that we will have failed to limit global temperature increases to the 1.5°, and we will have broken the collective promise we made in 2015 to other Governments and to our citizens. So international diplomacy needs to play a really central part in our approach to tackling these issues, because the UK cannot achieve it alone, but having been at the heart of building the momentum behind the goals, the UK under David Cameron is uniquely well placed to convene our partners behind an effort to get the SDGs back on track.

I hope that the Coalition for Global Prosperity can play an important role in this effort too. We know that governments don't take action in a vacuum, and the political environment is essential to building momentum. So we work with politicians and leaders across sectors like business, religion and defence, to facilitate a conversation about Britain's role in the world, and build understanding of the difference we can make. This year we

launched our Future Leaders Programme, bringing a cross-party group of parliamentary candidates face to face with a range of experts in defence, development and diplomacy, and facilitating visits so they can see British diplomatic, development and defence capabilities in action. As the impact of climate change continues to drive inequality across the world, we know that the long-term difference that Britain can make relies on having leaders who have the understanding and passion required to face up to global challenges.

The lottery of life has put some people on the frontline of climate change, and the situation in the Horn of Africa is a stark illustration of what that means. It's absolutely right that we play our part to provide the assistance that could keep these people alive, but we must also look at the bigger picture and redouble our efforts to halt climate change in its tracks, so we all have a chance of a prosperous future. Political leadership is an essential ingredient to making this a reality – I'm confident that this government, and particularly the new team at the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office knows this only too well, and I'm proud that the Coalition for Global Prosperity plays its part in developing the leaders of governments to come.



# Empowering change: why the government must act to support citizens to tackle the climate crisis

## Baroness Young of Old Scone

Labour Member of the House of Lords and Chair of the Labour Climate and Environment Forum (LCEF)



The impacts of climate change vary greatly across the globe. For families in the Small Island States it may mean the upheaval of leaving forever a home at risk of flooding to move permanently to higher ground or even to a different country. For many in parts of Africa, droughts are already creating famine and populations are forced to move to survive. Here in the UK, the impacts are just as dramatic though less visible and require focused action by government to help families transition to new zero carbon technologies for transport and power and help them benefit from the jobs and economic growth that a new climate friendly economy offers.

The Climate Assembly was a citizens jury set up by a number of Select Committees of Parliament to bring citizen voices into their deliberations on climate change. The Assembly was very clear that what the public want from government is twofold: a clear steer on the most important things individuals and families need to do to help reduce climate impacts and support in making these priority actions easier and affordable.

The four priorities for individual action should probably be at their simplest: reducing carbon from transport and from heating of homes, buying less stuff, and modest changes in diet away from meat and towards plant based foods. But government hasn't really articulated these clearly and simply and too few steps have been taken to help the poorest adopt and adapt – clearly the answer to supporting families on the lowest income cannot just be delaying policies and kicking the can down the road as the current administration appears to be doing. Moving to (hopefully) more affordable heat pumps and other renewable energy options and to electric vehicles still has high upfront costs beyond the means of many and are mostly the preserve of early adopter dinner party circuits in the Home Counties or Islington.

For those 1/3 of UK households not blessed with a driveway and therefore unlikely to have access to an off street charge point, the cost of charging an electric vehicle is twice as expensive. Many of the least well insulated, colder and damper homes are in the poorest areas. Unhealthy processed food is cheaper and more convenient for hard pressed parents than either more expensive vegetarian or vegan foods or fresh veg. Government has the levers in its hands that can change all this, through promotion, education and advice, subsidy and taxation.

Most sound thinkers in all the political parties have grasped the fundamental that the huge changes we need to see in the way we travel, heat, eat and buy are not bad for jobs and the economy but *are* the jobs and economic opportunities for the future. But we have lessons to learn from transitions in the past. The transition in our power industries from coal to gas were disastrous for many communities. Highly skilled workers in the old technologies of coal, both extraction and generation, were hounded out of jobs and flung on the scrapheap with two or more generations of coal communities facing chronic unemployment, decline and misery.

The Trade Unions are right to fight for a better deal for workers as we make the transition to the zero carbon industries, but we need a just, thoughtful and planned transition while still hitting the net zero targets, or we will run the risk of polarising the argument to that of jobs versus the environment.

President Biden's Inflation Reduction Act has skilfully shown even climate change sceptic State Governors the benefits to jobs and growth of the new climate change industries. Similarly, the Labour Party's Green Prosperity Plan with £28bn investment in economic growth, more affordable energy and greater energy security from the new technologies and jobs by the end of a first Labour term would be crucial in this.

Climate change is only one half of the twin crises of our time, the other being the terrifying decline in biodiversity which is crucial to the health of the planet on which human life depends. In the UK restoration of our natural ecosystems is vital to help reduce floods, support agriculture, clean our air and cool our cities amongst other ecosystem services. In addition, recent work by the Woodland Trust has shown that it is the more deprived communities that have the least access to green open spaces and woods, both vital for health and mental health as well as the ecosystem benefits.

Without positive action, climate change impacts will reduce that access for poorer families rather than increase it. National governments need to step up to the mark in prioritising nature based solutions to climate change problems beyond the recent announcement of a too modest £12m fund to incentivise landowners in this. Local Authorities have a key role to play in creating urban green spaces close to where people live. I would like government to legislate for the inclusion of minimum standards of green open space and tree canopy in all new developments.

I began with an international perspective and let me finish with one. Whole areas of the globe will become more and more inhospitable as drought, extreme temperatures, floods and wildfires increase. The rich will relocate, the poor will suffer. Our immigration tensions are only just beginning. We need to face these challenges head on, and find a language to come to a consensus. We are already seeing huge movements of people globally and we need to plan fair, just and compassionate policies in all areas, including immigration, so that children can inherit the kind of world we want them to live in.

# Iman\*

Iman\*, 10, in her family's small garden that's located in front of their tent at the displacement camp where they are living in Syria.

Iman is in the fifth grade. Three years ago, she fled conflict and was forced to relocate to a displacement camp elsewhere in Syria with her father, mother, two brothers, and two sisters. 250 other families live there too.

Iman loves tending to the garden the family has painstakingly built around their tent. They used to own land and work in agriculture. Now, they grow vegetables and flowers using only a few metres. Iman says that climate change is frightening due to the potential increase in storms and drying up of bodies of water. Water scarcity is already having an impact - making doing laundry and boiling water for cooking difficult.

Her father, Jamal\*, says that climate change is becoming more noticeable every year. However, he believes that agriculture can help, by cultivating plants that cool the atmosphere and stopping deforestation.

Iman's family doesn't have an income. They depend on food aid, which isn't always available. The family's tent is pitched on mountainous, rocky ground. In the winter, the tent becomes extremely cold and Iman often gets sick. During the summer, the tent becomes extremely hot and makes sleeping uncomfortable.

At school, Iman loves studying Arabic, art, mathematics, and science. She wants to be a pharmacist or a painter. Iman dreams of one day returning home. She wants all children to live in peace.

\* Name changed to protect identity



RD 9326



# “The child is the only true hero in history”: so how can children solve the climate issue?

## Durra

Youth activist from Syria and living in Egypt working with Save the Children International to raise awareness and push for action on climate change



My name is Durra, a Syrian resident in Egypt, I am 12 years old. A few years ago, I participated with Save the Children in some activities about the environment and climate change, it was the first time I delved into the topic of climate change and the impact it has on the planet and on us as humans, specifically as children. From here, I began to learn more about this dilemma.

Climate is one of the most important challenges facing the world in the 21st century. It affects the lives of millions of people, especially children, who suffer from its negative effects on their health, nutrition, education, development, survival and future potential. But do children get a chance to express their opinion and participate in climate-related decision-making? And how can their voice have an impact in this area?

I will try and answer these questions based on some examples and I will also provide some guidance and advice to the children wishing to participate in climate action.

Since I first discovered my passion for fighting climate change, I participated in many activities and camps on climate change, in addition to participating in a seminar organised by Save the Children for journalists and media professionals: “The Role of Media in Highlighting the Repercussions of Climate Change on Children and Youth”. I shared my opinion about the challenges and difficulties caused by climate change that I face in my daily life and the lives of many children in the regions most affected by climate change.

I participated in a conference held by the Egyptian Minister of Sports and Youth ahead of COP27, and I spoke at this conference about some points like the impact of climate change on our lives as children and how it causes, directly or indirectly, the displacement and asylum of many families with their children. I also spoke about the importance of children’s participation in solving the climate issue and respond to their demands. In the end, I participated in COP27 conference, which was an important milestone in my life.

Through the opportunities I have had to learn more about the issue of climate change, I have gained many experiences that will enable me to write this article and from these experiences:

- I have expanded my understanding about the magnitude of the mistakes made by mankind for more than 70 years, which, unfortunately, brought us to this stage.
- I learned that everyone should take the initiative to do what they can to contribute to the fight against climate change, even if it’s a simple step forward it is better than waiting.
- I realised that the scientist Newton is right in his words, every action has a reaction, what we are doing towards our planet will respond to us one day, and here is climate change.

This is my journey around climate change, but it is a journey that has begun and will not end.

## **Why should we involve children in international climate meetings?**

There are several reasons why it is necessary for children to participate in international meetings on climate, among them:

- The right of children to express their opinion and be heard.
- The impact of climate on the lives and rights of children.
- The contribution of children to solving the climate problem.

## **How can children participate in international climate meetings?**

There are several ways children can participate in international climate meetings, both direct and indirect. Some of these methods are:

- Attend meetings as delegates or observers.
- Use social networking sites to communicate children's voices to the world.
- Contribute to awareness and education campaigns about climate change and its effects on the environment and humans. Everyone can contribute to this, even children, by taking a big step forward and opening greater horizons for them.

## **The role that decision makers and governments need to play to solve the climate issue**

During COP27, I discussed children's rights and the impact of climate change on children, recalling my personal experiences with weather changes and the pandemic. I stressed the need to protect the rights of children and ensure their safety in the climate change crises.

I demanded the following:

- How to ensure assistance to developing countries in times of disasters.
- What measures have been taken to ensure that all children have access to their natural rights such as: health, housing, protection, etc.
- Raising awareness by journalists of what is appropriate for children about the phenomenon of climate change.



- Establish an interactive Council for children similar to the people's Council and take their views.
- Asked world leaders to give children the opportunity to participate in addressing climate change through climate change seminars.
- Providing safety for children living in places that are affected by climate change.

COP27 was a very beautiful experience; I learned and benefited from it and expanded my knowledge about climate change. I hope that children's opinion will be taken into account in all decisions, because, as we have said before, they are the people most affected by climate change.

In the end, I would like to add the saying of the British writer George Orwell: "the child is the only true hero in history". Therefore, all parties around the world should give children the opportunity to express their opinions and present their demands.

# Youth movements matter: why young people's voices must be heard in the fight for climate action

## Poppy Stowell-Evans

Chair of Youth Climate Ambassadors for Wales

## Jessica Morden MP

Member of Parliament for Newport East and  
the Shadow Minister for Wales



I've known Poppy for many years, and have seen her passion and knowledge for climate activism and protecting the planet for the future flourish over the last half a decade.

As the Chair of the Youth Climate Ambassadors for Wales, she has used her voice on an international platform, representing the young people of Wales at COP 26, the UN and in other forums.

Therefore, when I was asked to create an essay with Poppy on youth climate activism for Save the Children after asking a question on her behalf in Parliament, I knew that letting her use her voice was the only thing to do.

I hope, like me, that you'll find Poppy's insight into the responsibility our young people feel for protecting the world for future generations both inspiring and hopeful.

### **Jessica Morden, Member of Parliament for Newport East**

For the last 5 years or so, we have been surrounded by headlines about youth or climate activism. Whether an article was enraged at the students for protesting the lack of action by governments or whether they praised the young people as heroes of the day. No matter the content of the article, one thing was clear: young people were making themselves noticed.

But what does that mean? The activism of young people over the last 5 years in relation to the climate crisis has caused a global shift in the way we view the climate crisis. It is my genuine opinion that if it wasn't for the work of young people and activists then climate change would not be as high on world leaders' agendas as it is today. So, why does it matter? Why is it a good thing that youth activism is being recognised?

Youth activism represents so much more than the actual activist. One foot marched on a protest, one Instagram post shared, and one meeting with a politician is so much more than a singular action. When that singular action is taken, you are representing the voices of thousands, if not millions of people who not only care about climate change but are directly impacted by it.

That's why the youth movement matters. Because, together, young people have worked to fully realise their power. Each movement of activism is a movement of empowerment, it means not waiting to be listened to but demanding that they be heard. But, most importantly, with each act of activism, we see more hope for change, and another person fighting for someone who doesn't have the privilege to be heard, even when they demand it.

Since the age of 14, I have engaged in youth activism. My work has varied from making Instagram posts in my bedroom to attending COP26 but, as

my journey continues one truth continues to motivate and ground me: I am acting alongside millions of young people and people who care about the world. It is that community that motivates me to continue calling for change, even when the situation can seem bleak.

Children's voices are essential to the fight for climate justice because they represent a vital perspective. They embody hope; they represent change; and for world leaders, they should represent why change needs to happen. If not for the benefit of today, then for the children who care so deeply about our world.

It is also important to recognise, however, that not all children have access to the amplification that many people experience in the West. Instead of having the privilege of choosing to be an activist, many children around the world care about climate change because it is already changing their lives.

Over 20 million people are displaced every year because of climate change. This means children are losing out on opportunities for a stable upbringing, and for consistent access to education and sometimes are placed in very dangerous situations because of climate change. Subsequently, we must see these children, we must work to protect them. When that action happens, the world will be doing what it truly means: listening to children; we will be putting their futures first.

Climate change is a unique issue because it is not singular. When we talk about climate change, we often think it's just about global warming. When we think about it like this, it can be easy to grow disconnected from the issue. However, the issue of climate change is the issue of the protection of not only future generations but of the future of children today.

**Poppy Stowell-Evans**

# Inequality and climate change: a global crisis through the eyes of girls

## Dr Nataliey Bitature

Chief of Staff and Board Member of The Simba Group, an East African group of companies spanning a range of sectors, and Chair of Save the Children's Africa Advisory Board



Picture a dewy morning, sun beating down on a village in sub-Saharan Africa. As the day awakens, a group of children gathers under the shade of a tree. These children, like countless others in this region, experience the vivid realities of climate change in ways we can scarcely imagine. Their stories, woven into the tapestry of climate change and inequality, illuminate the pressing need for action.

Africa, a continent of striking beauty and incredible diversity, faces a unique and formidable challenge: it is on the frontline of climate impact. Despite comprising about 17 percent of the world's population, Africa contributes just 4 percent of global carbon emissions at 1.45 billion tonnes. Yet, the negative effects of climate change on African economies, nutrition, and social protection are massive.

As the world grapples with the consequences of a warming planet, children bear a disproportionate burden of this global crisis. Among these children, the impact is especially severe for girls. Consider the staggering statistics of child marriage and teenage pregnancy in the wake of climate change.

Globally, the number of girls at high risk of extreme climate events and child marriage is set to increase by 2.3 million from 29.9 million to 32.2 million by 2030. By 2050, the number of girls growing up in the hotspot countries will be 39.9 million, an increase of one-third. The sobering truth is that the simultaneous existence of these two threats will continue to shape the lives of countless more girls. And what does this forecast say about the world we are creating for the next generation?

In many African communities, climate change exacerbates existing vulnerabilities, leading to an array of harrowing outcomes. Rising temperatures and unpredictable rainfall patterns often lead to crop failure, pushing families deeper into poverty. As resources dwindle, the prevalence of child marriage soars. For families struggling to feed their children, marrying off their daughters may seem like a desperate means of survival. Trapped in a cycle of poverty, these young girls face a future marred by early motherhood, lack of education, and limited opportunities.

Consider this: In Niger, a country that grapples with the harsh consequences of climate change, the rate of child marriage is one of the highest in the world. A staggering 76 percent of girls are married before their 18th birthday, with many becoming brides as young as 15.

Teenage pregnancy, another heartbreaking consequence, unfolds as climate-induced disasters displace families and disrupt access to healthcare and education. The consequences of these pregnancies reverberate through communities, as young girls grapple with maternal responsibilities they are ill-prepared to shoulder.

As we examine this complex challenge through the eyes of these African children, we find a compelling need for action. The concept of a “just transition” becomes all the more vital. We must address climate change in a way that does not deepen existing inequalities. These children, their dreams intertwined with the changing climate, deserve opportunities for growth and a fair chance at a better life.

The stories of these children underscore the profound interconnections between climate change and inequality. We must prioritise the most

vulnerable among us, especially our girls, as we strive to mitigate the effects of climate change. A just transition, recognition of indigenous rights, equitable international climate finance, nature conservation, and addressing the impact on family finances are not just morally sound strategies; they are vital to securing a sustainable and equitable future for the next generation.

Africa may contribute only a fraction of global carbon emissions, but the weight of climate change falls heavily upon its children. Their resilience and strength in the face of such adversity serve as a powerful reminder of the importance of our collective efforts to combat climate change and protect the world's most vulnerable.

In the face of this urgent global crisis, it is imperative for governments to implement and uphold policies safeguarding the rights of women and children. The onus is on them to implement policies that prioritise education, healthcare, and economic opportunities for girls, ensuring that they are not forced into child marriages as a result of climate-induced vulnerabilities. Governments must allocate resources for climate-resilient agriculture and social safety nets that can shield families from the worst effects of climate change, reducing the likelihood of early marriages driven by desperation.

At an individual level, we can all contribute to the positive change we desire. Whether through donations, volunteering, or raising our voices, we have the power to create an impact. Remember, it all starts within our own communities.

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# Junior

Junior, 16, holding a seedling in a community garden in Malaita Province, the Solomon Islands.

Junior is a funny and confident teenager. He loves soccer and making his four younger siblings giggle.

But there's way too much on Junior's shoulders. "I usually feel sad and sometimes I feel sick because I have nothing to eat, because the rising sea level has damaged our food," says Junior. "I feel angry and sad."

The Solomon Islands is one of the most vulnerable communities in the world to climate change. Rising sea levels and increasingly ferocious storms have flattened homes and killed crops. Junior says, "The rain can last for up to a week. Winds can get very violent. And the sea level rises even more."

It's not an exaggeration to say Junior's generation is inheriting a battle for existence.

Save the Children is helping young people in the Solomon Islands adapt for challenging times ahead. We're educating communities about climate-resilient farming, soil management, and which crops grow best in extreme weather.

Junior's been putting it straight into practice. "After the training we planted taro, kumara, tomatoes, cabbage, and beans."

It's Save the Children's job to make sure young people are well prepared, but also able to just be confident, funny teenagers.

"I am happy today during the training," says Junior. And nothing's more important to us than that.



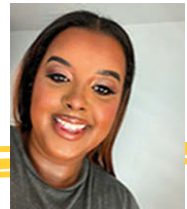




# Climate change and intersectionality: analysing the Global North's response and the role of foreign aid

## Sami Dubed

History and Politics student at the University of Cambridge who is working closely with Save the Children UK to bring the voices of diaspora communities into its campaigning and advocacy



The issue of climate change is a pressing challenge of our time, with far-reaching consequences that affect different regions and groups disproportionately. There is responsibility on everyone for greenhouse gas emissions, although it is not evenly distributed, with developed nations in the Global North holding a significant share.

This article delves into how the Global North tackles the complex issues arising from the intersection of climate change problems. Secondly, it examines how the role of foreign aid raises significant concerns regarding the fairness and effectiveness of foreign aid in addressing the intersecting challenges posed by climate change. We analyse the motivations behind the allocation of foreign assistance and the intricate interplay between social movements, economic interests, and climate change policy to provide a comprehensive understanding of the Global North's response to intersectional climate concerns. Our analysis contributes to the ongoing

debate on equitable and sustainable climate action as the effects of climate change ripple across the globe, affecting regions and populations with varying degrees of vulnerability.

Climate change is not just an environmental issue; it is a social, economic, and political challenge. It requires a comprehensive and inclusive response. The impacts of climate change are not felt equally by all, with marginalised communities, developing nations, and indigenous peoples often bearing the brunt of its consequences. This unequal distribution of climate impacts is exacerbated by the uneven distribution of responsibility for greenhouse gas emissions. Developed nations in the Global North, historically responsible for the majority of greenhouse gas emissions, have a moral obligation to address the intersectional challenges posed by climate change. While the immediate effects of climate change may not be as severe in these nations, they have a responsibility to act for the sake of global equity and justice. The challenges posed by climate change are not limited to environmental factors alone. The convergence of social and economic factors has given rise to intersectional climate challenges that exacerbate existing inequalities.

The impact of climate change is felt most acutely by marginalised communities, including low-income populations, indigenous communities, and people of colour, who often lack the resources to adapt to or recover from climate-related disasters. Addressing these challenges requires a multifaceted approach that goes beyond technological solutions to encompass social and economic dimensions, including environmental justice and racial and socioeconomic disparities. Developed countries in the Global North have committed substantial financial resources to help developing nations adapt to the impacts of climate change and transition to cleaner, more sustainable energy sources through foreign aid. However, the effectiveness and motivations behind foreign aid can vary significantly, and it is crucial to ensure that climate policies benefit all members of society.

Foreign aid, although presented as a noble endeavour, is subject to a complex interplay of motivations and interests. Developed nations often

provide aid as a means of climate diplomacy, with the aim of maintaining geopolitical influence and strengthening alliances. Unfortunately, these economic interests can sometimes overshadow the altruistic objectives of assisting vulnerable nations. The distribution of international assistance is undeniably influenced by an intricate interplay of internal politics, economic motives, and global priorities. Although the primary objective of foreign aid is typically to address humanitarian and developmental needs, it is not impervious to political and economic considerations, particularly in developed nations. A prime illustration of how economic interests can mould the allocation of foreign aid is the emphasis placed on gaining entry to new markets for environmentally friendly technologies and products. For example, China's ambitious Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), an extensive infrastructure development project spanning across Asia, Europe, Africa, and beyond. While the BRI encompasses investments in various sectors, a noteworthy aspect is China's active promotion of green technologies.

While the promotion of clean energy technologies is crucial for addressing climate change, it can also be viewed as a manifestation of economic neo-colonialism. Developed nations may utilise foreign aid to bolster their green technology industries in the Global South, thereby benefiting their own economies while potentially undermining local industries and sovereignty. This raises significant concerns regarding the fairness and effectiveness of foreign aid in addressing the intersecting challenges posed by climate change.

However, social movements and activism have emerged as powerful forces in shaping the global response to intersectional climate challenges. Climate change advocacy has gained momentum in recent years, with a growing emphasis on justice and equity. Grassroots organisations, indigenous groups, and environmental activists have been instrumental in pressuring governments to take bolder actions to combat climate change and address its disproportionate impacts. The influence of these social movements has pushed governments in the Global North to prioritise climate justice and allocate foreign aid more equitably. They have played a crucial role in highlighting the intersectional nature of climate challenges and the need to

consider the most vulnerable communities. The interplay between social movements and climate policy is also shaping the Global North's response to climate change.

The solution to intersectional climate challenges faced by the Global North must prioritise mitigating the far-reaching impacts of climate change and ensuring that marginalized communities are not left behind. It is crucial to recognize the agency of African nations in the Global South, as this approach allows for a comprehensive discussion on how to address the issue holistically, combining emission reductions with adaptation, fair resource allocation, and acknowledging the interconnectedness of climate change and social inequalities. The ongoing discourse on equitable and sustainable climate action will continue to shape the world's response to this existential threat, with the Global North playing a pivotal role in the journey towards a more equitable and sustainable future.

# A generation is watching us: children's futures must be today's concern

## Kirsty McNeill

Executive Director of Policy, Advocacy and Campaigns  
at Save the Children UK



If you don't already have them, it's hard to imagine what your grandchildren will be like. Maybe they'll be funny, maybe studious, maybe they'll be gifted at music or sport or art. Maybe they won't excel at anything beyond being the beating heart of your family, an irreplicable, utterly unique gift of a person you would do anything to keep safe from harm.

One thing we *do* know about our grandchildren is that they are in very grave danger already. This generation of adults is bequeathing to their children a climate and biodiversity crisis which, without a significant ramping up of our ambitions, will ensure that their children will contend with preventable suffering in every aspect of their lives.

A Save the Children partnership with Vrije Universiteit Brussel<sup>1</sup> found that children born today are likely to experience at least twice the number of extreme weather events (wildfires, floods, droughts, heatwaves and so on)

<sup>1</sup> *Born into the Climate Crisis*. Save the Children International (<https://www.savethechildren.net/born-climate-crisis>)

as their grandparents. In some places it will be seven times as many. These are the risks for children born *today*. The dangers posed to their children are even greater still.

We know, of course, that these negative effects will be unevenly distributed – they always are. When trying to make sense of the Covid pandemic's implications for child rights I often came back to the idea that things can be universal but not uniform. Back then, I was working through what our organisation should do about the fact that there were parents in precarious employment in every country, children going hungry in every country and children out of school in every country. This was a species-level event – but some of us, by virtue of our identity or our location – were more protected than others.

The climate and biodiversity crises operate in a similar way – they too are universal but not uniform. The ways that poverty and discrimination compound their effects should give all of us who care about fairness renewed impetus behind our calls for action. To take just one example, between now and the end of this decade, well over half<sup>2</sup> – 60% – of girls will face an extreme weather event. The consequences are devastating and long-lasting: in 2021 climate-related events meant around 4 million girls were not able to complete their education in the poorest countries.

At COP 26 in Glasgow, I met a youth activist from Brazil. She told me she was there because “the systems that are supposed to protect and provide for us do neither. So, we need to create new ones”. That encapsulates well the duties each generation owes to the next: if we cannot design systems that protect and provide for children something has gone very seriously awry.

Our environment represents children's natural inheritance: we are no more entitled to destroy it or make it unsafe than we are to visit any other act of cruelty upon them. Every single person on earth depends on planetary

2 *Global Girlhood Report 2023: Girls at the Centre of the Storm – Her planet, her future, her solutions.* Save the Children's Resource Centre ([https://resourcecentre.savethechildren.net/pdf/STC\\_Global\\_Girlhood\\_Report\\_2023.pdf/](https://resourcecentre.savethechildren.net/pdf/STC_Global_Girlhood_Report_2023.pdf/))

stability in our climate and ecosystems, making this the greatest test of all of our concern for one another. It is one we are currently failing.

The effects are felt here at home too, where inaction on the climate crisis is compounding the cost-of-living crisis. Research from the Energy and Climate Intelligence Unit found that last year the average household in the UK saw their food bill jump by £407<sup>3</sup> because of how climate change impacts the global food system. These kinds of price hikes are tough for all of us, but they are devastating if – like the families Save the Children works with across Scotland, England, Wales and Northern Ireland – you are already battling on a low income.

Rebecca, a mum in Norfolk, told us: “This summer I have used up every single penny I had spare on the essentials. I usually can work really well within my very strict budget, but I cannot budget or function when everything is so expensive. We’re still alive and we have made it through, but I couldn’t tell you how.”

It would be easy, faced with statistics and stories such as these, to give up hope. Children have not.

Last year Save the Children conducted our largest ever consultation with children. We spoke with 54,000 children from 41 countries<sup>4</sup> about how they felt about climate change and inequality and the links between the two. What we heard simply redoubled our resolve to take action on this great challenge of our time.

One boy from India told us: “Hope is a thing that is the beginning of anything. If you hope to do anything there is no power that can stop you.” Children continue to believe it is possible to “make poverty history” and

3 *£407 added to 2022 food bill by oil and gas prices and climate change.* Energy & Climate Intelligence Unit (<https://eciu.net/media/press-releases/2022/407-added-to-2022-food-bill-by-oil-gas-prices-and-climate-change-new-research/>)

4 *Generation Hope: 2.4 billion reasons to end the global climate and inequality crisis.* Save the Children's Resource Centre (<https://resourcecentre.savethechildren.net/document/generation-hope-2-4-billion-reasons-to-end-the-global-climate-and-inequality-crisis/>)



ensure that everyone can thrive: they know that things can be so much better than this.

This collection – bringing together as it does the perspectives of children and young people with those of policymakers, researchers and advocates – seeks to infuse the wider UK policy debate with children's optimism. They are already taking climate action in their own lives in unprecedented numbers, making change today in stubborn rejection of the patronising idea they are the leaders of tomorrow.

They know the stakes. And they know the urgency. What they do not yet know is whether, in our generation of leaders, they will find the commitment. At COP 28 we have the chance to show them we are capable of what this moment demands of us. We must not let them down.

# Ibsan

Ibsan, 12, in her family's corn field, in the Dry Corridor region, Guatemala.

Ibsan's mother Juana's home is nestled between sweeping mountains. The landscape is covered by green and brown foliage, seared by the sun.

The heat is a constant presence in the Dry Corridor, a drought prone region of Guatemala.

"It is difficult to live here," Juana explains, "There are times, in summer, when there is no rain. It's harder because there is no corn, there is no harvest."

The food crisis has been getting worse due to the changing climate. Save the Children has been providing families with cash transfers. Families can spend this money on whatever they need.

Juana says, "With the money from the cash transfers, we get beans, rice, milk, meat, onions, tomatoes, papaya, carrots, and many other things."

"I love that my children go to school to learn to write and read. I hope that some of my children can become a teacher, a doctor, or a nurse."





# Progress for planet: a national purpose focused on climate *innovation*

## Kanishka Narayan

Labour's Prospective Parliamentary Candidate (PPC)  
for the Vale of Glamorgan, previously climatetech investor  
and Expert Adviser to the Environment Secretary



Each week, I hear a common search on British doorsteps - here in the Vale of Glamorgan, and echoed across our country. We share a common diagnosis of how the last thirteen years have damaged us: all the signs of Broken Britain. Yet, we seek still a common purpose.

Climate innovation can be our common purpose.

Innovation is deeply in our national history. It is in our laws of motion, our theory of evolution, our structure of DNA, our steam locomotive, our jet engine, our World Wide Web, our AlphaFold. And it is in each of our communities: in Barry driving the world's peak coal exports, in Llantwit Major being both Britain's original seat of learning and its modern home of education innovation, the first site of International Baccalaureates. Improving our understanding of the world, and improving the world with our understanding, has been our communities' shared endeavour before.

It can be so again. The opportunity of our generation is in focusing our technological innovation on our planet. The price of a solar panel was

\$600,000 in 1956. Through progress, it is now just \$121. Solar PV has shot up from a non-entity to nearly 10% of global power capacity; by 2027, it is supposed to overtake coal. Progress is possible in our bid to protect our planet; it may even be the best shot we have.

To succeed, a common purpose based on climate innovation has to have three ingredients.

First, local meaning. We achieve things most durably when we are true to our history, our geography and our values. The Vale of Glamorgan has a coastline unparalleled in its beauty and foremost in nature's gift of tidal force. We have a history of putting our energies into generating the world's power: Aberthaw generating it, Barry exporting it. And we have a powerful eternal strength: the exceptional talent of everyone in our community. A shared national purpose has to give progress for our planet local meaning, binding us – our communities' particular histories, identities, special attributes – into a coherent whole.

Second, national prosperity. The home of the Industrial Revolution has lost its way, starkly so in the last decade. Progress for our planet can be our route back to national prosperity, the engine of our renewed productivity. That involves focus again – not just on mirroring others' factories, but on the match between our strength, global need and the trajectory of technology.

Third, global impact. Focusing our effort on what makes a mark on global climate has obvious moral benefit. It also has the chance to reinforce our national prosperity: it is in exporting Britain's strengths that we can most boost our productivity. And it has the promise of protecting our interest in the world – making Britain stronger internationally, not reliant on trading our values for others' energy.

Our ability to tie prosperity and planet is the political challenge of our age. If achieved, it is also the resolution of our common search: a national purpose focused on climate innovation.

# Time for paradigm shifts: lessons from India on how to tackle climate change and inequality

## Ashish Kothari

Founder of Kalpavriksh, an Indian non-profit organisation that campaigns for environmental and social justice in India and around the world



The climate crisis is no longer in the future, it is here. Already tens of millions of people are facing the consequences of extreme weather events, crop failures, loss of livelihoods, displacement from their homes, and worse. As in all such crises and disasters, children (and women/marginalized genders, 'disabled', elderly, street and farm workers) are amongst the worst affected. Serious levels of inequality and deprivation, vulnerabilities of various kinds, and related ecological and social crises exacerbate the impacts. For the sake of both current and future generations of children who are going to have to adapt to and tackle the multiple crises they face or will face, urgent and widespread actions are needed now.

Unfortunately, most governments are still to act with the urgency needed. They are either blindly moving in the same directions that have caused the climate and ecological crises, or are veering towards band-aids like carbon trading, technical fixes, and market mechanisms that do not address the

systemic roots of the crises. So much of the talk in UN or other global forums dealing with climate, biodiversity, and 'sustainable development' is about money, technologies, and price mechanism being the solutions. Much of the 'net-zero' discussion, for instance, is premised on yet-unproved technologies, or on fanciful afforestation programmes for which the land has not even yet been identified, let alone the owners or users of those lands having been asked. Most governments seem to be happy about supporting the shift to electric vehicles, ignoring the growing evidence of the enormous ecological and social disruption this causes where lithium or other minerals have to be mined. There is a grand delusion at work here, and it is driven by continued profit-seeking corporations hand-in-glove with power-hungry political parties in power (or wanting to be in power) and the military-industrial complex that thrives on war and conflict. Meanwhile, the earth burns, literally. And the young ones of humans and all other species suffer in agony.

If any party in power in any country, especially in the global North, is really serious about enabling children and youth to deal with these crises, they should, first and foremost, significantly cut down their own emissions and give full attention to adaptation and resilience building of communities who are worst affected. They should also acknowledge the enormous ecological and climate debt they owe to the global South and urgently put resources into alternatives for a just and democratic energy transition as reparations and repayment, not charity.

A just and democratic energy transition would prioritise decentralized, community-led, equitable and ecologically sensitive energy generation, not mega renewable energy projects that are ecologically destructive and socially disruptive. It would encompass redistribution of energy (and other resources) from luxury and wasteful consumption to the poor who don't have enough. It would shift power away from the corporations and political interests that stand to benefit the most from a mega-energy, heavy infrastructure-based climate strategy to small and medium manufacturers, worker-led cooperatives and producer companies, etc. It would also re-employ tens of millions of workers who may lose their jobs in today's

'dirty' industries and power stations, in climate-friendly production facilities, with appropriate training where necessary.

Equally crucial would be the recognition of the origins of the climate crisis and its relation to other crisis in neoliberal, neocolonial, racist, patriarchal and capitalist 'development' approaches that have given a god-like status to economic growth. Countries and communities in the global North need to shift their mindsets to understand that 'progress' and 'development' is not about more and more material wealth but about living within the limits of the earth and in spiritual co-existence with other species, about which they can learn a lot from the global South.

This would have to be coupled with paying much more attention to a range of radical alternatives in generating and sustaining well-being which are ecologically wise and socially equitable, thousands of which already exist on the ground but are struggling in the face of perverse policies or a lack of supportive ones.<sup>1</sup> This includes supporting the defence and conservation of (and by) Indigenous Peoples' and other community territories, and their ecologically sensitive production and consumption patterns, which are such an important bulwark against climate change.

One tool emerging from the Indian experience on radical transformations, is the Flower of Transformation,<sup>2</sup> which uses five intersecting spheres of life to understand such transformations. These are:

- **ecological integrity and resilience**, including the conservation of nature and natural diversity, maintenance of ecological functions, respect for ecological limits (local to global), and ecological ethics in all human actions;

1 See for instance, stories from India, [www.vikalpsangam.org](http://www.vikalpsangam.org) and the rest of the world, <https://radicalecologicaldemocracy.org>; see also, for about 90 examples of radical transformatory practices and worldviews like swaraj, ubuntu, sumac kawsay, buen vivir, country, degrowth, ecofeminism, commons, and others, the book *Pluriverse: A Post-Development Dictionary*, ed. by Kothari et al, Tulika and Authors Upront, New Delhi, 2019 (available at <https://radicalecologicaldemocracy.org/pluriverse>).

2 <https://www.meer.com/en/68872-the-flower-of-transformation>



- **social well-being and justice**, including fulfilling lives (physically, socially, culturally, and spiritually), equity between communities and individuals, communal and ethnic harmony; and erasure of hierarchies and divisions based on faith, gender, caste, class, ethnicity, ability, and other such attributes;
- **direct and delegated democracy**, with decision-making starting in spaces enabling every person to participate meaningfully, and building from this to larger levels of governance by downwardly accountable institutions; and all this respectful of the needs and rights of those currently marginalised;
- **economic democracy**, in which local communities and individuals have control over the means of production, distribution, exchange, and markets, based on the principle of localization for basic needs and trade built on this;
- **cultural diversity and knowledge democracy**, with multiple co-existing knowledge systems in the commons, respect for a diversity of ways of living, ideas and ideologies, and encouragement for creativity and innovation.

This framework enables communities, civil society organisations, and government agencies to assess for themselves, the holistic impacts of any interventions they are making. It helps go beyond single-focus or tunnel-visioned approaches, for instance the support to mega-solar projects that do not look at their ecological and social impacts. Within this, a special focus could be to assess the impacts on children and other vulnerable sections; and equally important, to enable the agency of children and youth themselves to be part of decision-making and being central actors in deciding their own future and the future of the earth.

# Can international development finance meet the global challenges of climate and inequality?

## Rt Hon Liam Byrne MP

Member of Parliament for Birmingham Hodge Hill and  
Chair of the Global Parliamentary Network on the World Bank  
and International Monetary Fund (IMF)



Eight years ago, the world came together to agree an ambitious plan to spread freedom, security and justice to every corner of the planet. The sustainable development goals agreed in New York in September 2015 offered hope, progress and a better life to billions of people. Months later the climate change agreement that would help us guarantee that there would be a planet left on which to make those goals a reality was established in Paris.

However, the truth is that such ambitions are in deep trouble. There are just 10,000 days to go before the Paris climate agreement deadline and a perfect storm is now threatening the world's potential to deliver on the goals that we agreed just eight years ago. In fact, seven giants now stand in the way of progress: want, hunger, disease, lost learning, conflict, debt and climate change. They are a cascading, connected set of challenges of lethal force.

Extreme poverty has risen for the first time this century, with six hundred million people now forecast to be living on less than \$2.15 a day by 2030. Globally, two hundred million people now wake up without enough to eat, and three hundred million children will need humanitarian assistance this year. On current trends, we will not meet our goal of ending hunger by 2030. That scarcity is fuelling violence. About half of the world's extreme poor are expected to live in conflict-affected areas by 2030. In turn, those conditions are threatening our ability to make good children's lost learning during covid, which could cost \$21 trillion over the course of their lives. Poorer nations have now exhausted their reserves. In fact, debt in developing countries is now the highest it has been for fifty years – and it continues to rise.

Looming malevolently over all of that are the changes in our climate and the chaos of extreme weather. Across half the world and most of Africa, the seasons are simply no longer predictable. The sun which once brought life now brings death because it burns so ferociously. The rains, when they fall, fall with such force that life-giving water floods and destroys the land it once nourished. Against that murderous maelstrom, low and middle-income countries need to mobilise some \$6 trillion between now and 2030 to hit their Paris climate targets.

**Poor countries did not cause climate change, but the world's poorest are somehow expected to pick up the pieces. We cannot go on like this.**

And, as always, it is the most vulnerable that suffer the most from these financial and climate inequalities. A 10-year-old boy at a primary school in rural Narok County, Kenya told me, "Sometimes we eat once in a day because there is no food and we don't have enough water to drink. Despite all these challenges we still come to school to learn." The children of that school have the same dreams as our children. They want to be lawyers, doctors and teachers. Yet such is the drought, such is the poverty, and such is the desperation that many families struggle to survive. Girls of 11 years old are married off, and boys are sent to work even younger. Children are not in school because they are hunting for water all day. If we do not step up and solve these challenges, there will be not just an opportunity gap

for those children, but an opportunity cost for all of us. **That is a price humanity cannot afford.**

The UK, the wealthier nations, *must* help champion the agenda set out with such passion, force and eloquence by Barbados' Prime Minister, Mia Mottley. She has helped to galvanise the biggest shake-up of global development finance since the World Bank and IMF were created in 1944. Her Bridgetown initiative is a pragmatic collection of ideas with radical implications for the World Bank's mission and model, the resources deployed by the IMF, and the goal that richer countries must step up to and meet.

Reforms are under way and the agenda is moving but our best estimates are that the Bretton Woods institutions must at least triple the finance that they supply. The UK should champion this debate internationally.

The World Bank has committed to an expanded crisis toolkit, replete with new types of insurance to backstop development projects, and crucially, to a pause in debt repayments so that countries can focus on what matters when crisis strikes without worrying about the bill. The IMF has suggested we may now be on track to meet the target of sharing \$100 billion in special drawing rights. However, there is still a gap in what needs to be accomplished, which is why the UK needs to rediscover the lost art of leading.

First, we should increase the on-lending of special drawing rights. We have £19 billion-worth of new special drawing rights gathering dust in the exchange equalisation account. Following Japan's lead we should share 40% of these and supply nearly £4 billion of extra resources to the poorest countries.

Secondly, we should use some of those special drawing rights to support the work of the African Development Bank. If we lent £500 million-worth of special drawing rights, the ADB could quadruple it in new concessional lending to countries across Africa.

Thirdly, we should be helping to build a bigger World Bank. The World Bank remains the most efficient and effective way of mobilising development

finance. A \$20 billion increase in its capital base would unlock \$200 billion in concessional lending over the course of the decade. If the UK contributed to that kind of increase, our share might be about \$1 billion – \$200 million a year over five years – but we could step up to that challenge. We will get £3.5 billion back from the European Investment Bank between now and 2030. We should recycle that money into the World Bank to help it radically expand lending to some of the world's poorest countries.

There is no doubt that climate change is exacerbating global inequalities, making even more distressing those iniquities suffered by the poorest. We are struggling to find answers. It isn't easy. It is really, really hard.

And perhaps definitive answers aren't possible. But progress is possible. If we are willing to fund it.

Sometimes, showering a problem with money *can* be the answer.



A blue plastic bowl filled with approximately 15 brown eggs sits on a patch of green grass. The background is a blurred field of tall grass and trees, suggesting a rural farm setting.

## Tomás and Edizon

Brothers Tomás, 9, and Edizon, 7, with a bowl of eggs from their farm in Quiche, Guatemala.

Their mum, Rebeca, grows delicious food on the lush, green fields on their farm in Guatemala.

Rebeca is one of the farmers working with Save the Children. Local farmers are supported with farming skills, so they can provide nutritious food to over 280 schools. The project means that no child goes hungry at school.

Tomás explains, “When I eat well at school, it means I am more creative.”

Rebeca currently feeds over 1,500 children in her community. “We try to give them food that is locally produced.” she says. “The secret ingredient of any meal is love, preparing it with love, so that the entire family can enjoy it.”

Farming has been getting more difficult with increasingly unpredictable weather. Rebeca and others have been provided with drought and flood resistant seeds. “The improved seeds will help children in the future, because they’ll always have food,” Rebeca says.

Tomás has a full tummy and big dreams, “I would like to be a maths genius!”

# Protecting family finances and reducing inequality: why the UK must leave oil and gas in the past

## Tessa Khan

Founder and Executive Director of Uplift, an organisation which supports the movement for a just and fossil fuel-free UK



Over the last year, the tragic consequences of our reliance on fossil fuels have been laid bare globally. Deadly weather events – flooding in south Asia, wildfires in north America, drought in the Horn of Africa – have been super-charged by climate change, which is overwhelmingly caused by emissions from burning oil, gas and coal. Russia has relied on demand for oil and gas to continue to finance its war in Ukraine and, across the world, skyrocketing fossil fuel prices have caused huge economic shocks and driven inflation.

In the UK, the consequences of soaring gas prices have been particularly acute: last winter seven million households struggled to pay their energy bills, despite government intervention to limit the price of energy. Even though energy prices have fallen since then, record levels of household energy debt mean this winter will feel just as hard, if not harder, than the last. In the private rented sector alone, 1.6 million children are living in damp, cold homes, with serious consequences for their physical and



mental health.<sup>1</sup> Gas prices are expected to remain volatile for years to come, which means there is no guarantee that our energy bills will return to pre-2021 levels.

How does one of the richest countries in the world end up not just with such catastrophic levels of fuel poverty, but with the most unequal energy bill burden between poor and rich households of any country in western Europe? According to the IMF,<sup>2</sup> the answer is simple: last year the UK had the highest household energy bills in western Europe because of our exceptional dependency on gas to heat our homes and generate electricity, and the fact that we have incredibly energy inefficient homes. While oil and gas companies operate domestically in the North Sea, the price we pay for those commodities is determined by regional and global markets – so producing it in the UK doesn't make it any more affordable.

The solution is obvious: transitioning as quickly and as fairly as we can to renewable energy; ensuring that our energy bills are not distorted by gas prices; and upgrading our homes, starting with those neighbourhoods that need it the most. Not only would this make huge strides towards making our society more equal and create thousands of jobs in the renewable and retrofitting industries, it would also help reduce the climate impact of one of the most carbon-intensive sectors in the UK – our housing.<sup>3</sup>

Instead, the UK is moving in the opposite direction. In the last year, we have had a failed auction round for offshore wind projects, a drop in the rate at which energy efficiency measures have been installed such that the rate is the lowest it's been in a decade, and the UK government has doubled-down on the root cause of the problem by approving new oil and gas projects

1 M Marmot, I Sinha, A Lee, "Millions of children face a 'humanitarian crisis of fuel poverty'" British Medical Journal 2022; 378 <https://www.bmj.com/content/378/bmj.o2129>

2 A Ari et al, "Surging Energy Prices in Europe in the Aftermath of the War" IMF Working Paper July 29 2022 <https://www.imf.org/en/Publications/WP/Issues/2022/07/28/Surging-Energy-Prices-in-Europe-in-the-Aftermath-of-the-War-How-to-Support-the-Vulnerable-521457>

3 National Housing Federation, "England's leaky homes are a greater threat to the climate than all of its cars" 25 August 2021 <https://www.housing.org.uk/news-and-blogs/news/englands-leaky-homes-greater-threat-to-climate-than-cars/>

and licences in the North Sea. Not only does that keep us hooked on fossil fuels for longer by creating long-term infrastructure and extending the power of the oil and gas industry, it is irreconcilable with staying within safe climate limits.<sup>4</sup>

This is an astonishing trajectory for a country that has, until recently, helped establish benchmarks for climate leadership globally. This includes passage of a Climate Change Act, the rapid reduction of coal in the power sector, and the creation of international initiatives like the Powering Past Coal Alliance and the Glasgow Group on ending overseas finance for fossil fuels. The UK is now not only sending a dangerous international signal by backing new fossil fuel projects, it also risks being excluded from leading multilateral efforts – like the Beyond Oil and Gas Alliance, a club of countries that have pledged to end domestic oil and gas production – that it was once celebrated for creating. And as countries like the US and EU grasp the massive economic opportunities associated with the energy transition, the UK risks being left behind in both its climate and economic credibility.

As the birthplace of the coal-fired industrial revolution and one of the top 10 biggest historical emitters of carbon, the UK also has an outsized responsibility for the climate crisis. The fact that it is one of the world's largest economies and has the resources to lead the energy transition only underlines its moral imperative to do so. It is therefore hard to overstate the benefits of the UK rapidly transitioning away from oil and gas. A safer climate, warmer homes and a more equal society, a leading edge in the industries that will shape the future economy, and global and moral leadership are all at stake. The choice to leave oil and gas in the past has never been more obvious.

4 Carbon Brief, "New Fossil Fuels 'incompatible' with 1.5C goal, comprehensive analysis finds" 23 October 2022 <https://www.carbonbrief.org/new-fossil-fuels-incompatible-with-1-5c-goal-comprehensive-analysis-finds/>

# Safeguarding tomorrow: a youth's pledge for a liveable planet and sustainable climate leadership

**Xia**

**Save the Children Philippines first Child Ambassador  
and climate activist**



The last four lines of the Philippine Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag, “For God, for Nature, for the People, and for Country,” are the very same words that motivate me to take part and call on leaders and fellow children to protect our environment to preserve our future.

The issues that our generation is currently facing include frequent flooding, destructive typhoons, extreme temperatures, polluted water, and epidemics like dengue and COVID-19. These issues are all connected to unclean surroundings, environmental degradation, and climate change. Being a Filipino youth means being pro-nature, as embodied in the daily pledge that the majority of us say. As such, we, as children and youth of this generation, can demonstrate this trait by taking even small to significant steps to protect our environment.

When I was six years old, I started joining my mother in the Mindoro province to take part in outreach programs where we would give school supplies and slippers to children of the Mangyan indigenous tribe.

I saw firsthand how families that practice environmental stewardship greatly depend on nature for clean water and food. They now have to walk a long way to obtain water, and they don't know if it's safe to drink.

Since witnessing how a deteriorating environment takes away our basic needs as humans, I have always strived to use my influence as a young actress to call for climate action. I participated in various tree-planting activities, led the Save the Children Generation Hope Campaign, and became Vice President of the Red Alert Steering Committee for Asia.

In March 2022, I spoke on a panel at the Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development about the importance of children and families having access to clean and sustainable water. In all of these, I have also met a lot of young and driven campaigners who have participated in environmental movements and have innovative solutions too; all they needed was for the government to invest in them and invest in their future.

Now as a 14-year-old advocate for the environment and children's rights and a future inhabitant of this planet, I hope to contribute to creating a future where humanity can survive despite decades of evolution.

I believe that a beautiful, sustainable planet can still be achieved by educating young people like me about what lies ahead if we don't address climate change right away. Every nation's educational system has to include giving young people the tools and guidance they need to raise the level of awareness required to protect the environment.

Whatever solutions we come up with, the task will be made more difficult. A solid foundation of knowledge allows people to approach and solve the issue from its very roots. Legislators' support and the ability to enact new laws depend on their understanding of the issue of climate change.

I find great inspiration in the work of Nikola Tesla, the Serbian-American inventor of alternating current electricity who made significant contributions to the development of wireless communications and modern, widely used X-ray technologies. He came up with an innovative solution, but there is always room to do things better and more sustainably.

If the world can transition from burning fossil fuels and extracting oil from underground to using clean energy obtained from the ether and the atmosphere, then the Earth will be a much better place to live and the needless use of energy that contributes to the planet's deterioration may be minimized!

To our leaders – we need you to lead and take action. Lead the way to a better future for all of us. We are young but we are people and citizens too. We have a right to be heard. We have a right to a safe and healthy future. Please don't take that away from us. Be a strong leader for us.

Children will be the ones directly impacted by whatever solutions and actions elected world leaders decide to take at this point, so I hope leaders will listen to us when we speak out about the future of the planet.

# Esther

Esther, 17, is a climate change champion in Malawi. She learned about the impacts of climate change at her school, which was sponsored by Save the Children. Locally she has planted trees to try and reduce the soil erosion to ensure that during future heavy rains homes and gardens won't be washed away and families won't be left without food and a safe place, like her and her family were.

While at school she was also provided with solar power, torches and a bike to travel the 7km to get there and back every day after she had started missing the first lessons. From a young age, Esther witnessed the impact of climate change around her but never understood it. In recent years, she saw her house be knocked down while she and her family were inside, her family lose all their crops due to floods and people catching diseases brought on by a mixture of drought and flood. Since becoming a climate change champion, she has worked with people in her community to replant trees and educated the people around her.





# COP28: the UK must play a leading international role in correcting global climate injustice, through public and private finance

**Ryan Jude**

Programme Director of Green Taxonomy at the Green Finance Institute



COP28 President Dr. Al Jaber has said that “addressing climate finance is a cornerstone of the COP28 Action Agenda.”<sup>1</sup> But as he pointed out at London Climate Action Week this year, “Money isn’t flowing to the places that need it most. Less than 2 per cent of the \$1.5 trillion of clean tech finance was invested in vulnerable and low-income countries across the Global South.”<sup>2</sup>

Previous COP conferences have seen high profile sustainable finance pledges being made; COP26 in Glasgow was seen as the “finance COP” – the first of the annual climate conferences that truly acknowledged the

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.cop28.com/en/news/2023/11/multilateral-development-banks-to-show--more-ambition>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.bloomberg.com/press-releases/2023-06-29/cop28-president-designate-calls-for-holistic-ecosystem-to-drive-climate-action-during-london-climate-action-week>



important role of private finance in funding the transition. But as we approach COP28, is the wider sustainable finance agenda progressing? And what is the role of the UK Government and City of London in this?

## The UK's leadership role

The City of London consistently ranks as the world's top green finance centre,<sup>3</sup> underpinned by the UK's emerging green finance regulatory environment, but the emissions impact of financial decisions made in the City are still having huge impacts abroad.

It is estimated that just a subsection of UK financial institutions finance 805 million tonnes CO<sub>2</sub> per year<sup>4</sup> – generating more emissions than Germany and almost twice the amount of the UK's domestic carbon footprint. These emissions are in projects all across the world, and so the UK has a responsibility to help direct these decisions made in the City of London towards sustainable outcomes.

The UK Government has announced its aim to become the world's first "Net-zero Aligned Financial Centre",<sup>5</sup> and acknowledges the need to act in a co-ordinated way with the City of London. But this aim must necessarily extend beyond the UK's borders, and in doing so creates an opportunity for the UK to support global efforts to decarbonise the financial sector, and to ensure previous high-profile sustainable finance pledges are met.

## COP finance pledges

The UK can play a leading role in supporting the delivery of three prominent finance commitments, associated with previous COP conferences: i) the \$100bn climate finance pledge ii) the "Loss & Damage Fund"<sup>6</sup> and iii) the Glasgow Financial Alliance for Net Zero (GFANZ). Action on all of

3 <https://www.longfinance.net/programmes/financial-centre-futures/global-green-finance-index/>

4 <https://www.wwf.org.uk/updates/uk-banks-and-investors-responsible-more-co2-emissions>

5 <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/fact-sheet-net-zero-aligned-financial-centre/fact-sheet-net-zero-aligned-financial-centre>

6 <https://unfccc.int/news/cop27-reaches-breakthrough-agreement-on-new-loss-and-damage-fund-for-vulnerable-countries>

these is crucial to achieving climate justice. Those countries that have done the least to cause climate change are being impacted the most, and developed nations and private finance have the means and ability to support them.

Developed nations have failed to meet the \$100bn target. Recent rumours that the UK was to row back its own contributions to this target were met with much criticism,<sup>7</sup> due to the impact it would have on the nations this pledge should support, and threatened the UK's position as a leader in sustainable finance. With a new target – the “New Collective Quantified Goal (NCQG)” – set to be agreed in 2024,<sup>8</sup> developed nations will be expected to indicate how confident they are on delivering on this original target at COP28. The failure to meet the \$100 billion has become symbolic of failing to support developing nations; an indication that progress is being made is crucial to restoring trust.

The Loss & Damage Fund, announced at COP27 to provide funding for vulnerable countries that are suffering the worst impacts of climate change, was described by UN Secretary General António Guterres as “a fundamental question of international solidarity – and climate justice”. It is in its early stages, with the COP27-established transitional committee scheduled to provide recommendations at COP28 on how to operationalise the fund, with action needed as soon as possible. The UK must support these efforts.

Moving from the billions to the trillions, and from public finance to the private sector, GFANZ has had a mixed couple of years. Some large firms have left the coalition, however overall membership has increased, with the AUM of those committed standing at \$150 trillion. UK-based GFANZ members have performed relatively well on acting on these commitments,<sup>9</sup> but more is still needed to support real action, through supporting regulation and governments deploying blended finance approaches, although progress is being made.

7 <https://www.e3g.org/news/uk-breaks-pledge-on-climate-finance-e3g-responds/>

8 <https://unfccc.int/NCQG>

9 <https://www.theglobalcity.uk/resources/from-commitment-to-action>

## Wider sustainable finance progress

Away from the high profile pledges announced at previous COPs, there has been important progress in international sustainable finance. Green finance regulatory regimes are advancing globally, with the UK making progress on the development of Transition Plans, the UK Green Taxonomy and the FCA's Sustainable Labels regime. But the emerging regulatory environment poses another risk that could impact developing nations – that of fragmentation and inconsistent requirements across jurisdictions. For example, the UK's Green Technical Advisory Group (GTAG) has noted there are almost 50 green taxonomies – science-based dictionaries that define sustainable activities and investments – in development across the world.<sup>10</sup>

Large divergences in regulation could make it harder for sustainable finance to flow into developing nations – the exact opposite of what is needed. It is for this reason that many experts are calling for interoperability of these regimes,<sup>11</sup> something which should also be discussed at COP28. Given its position as the leading green finance centre, the UK government has an opportunity to show real leadership in supporting developing nations with the design of their regulatory regimes.

Blended finance – financial products or structures that combine public and private funding sources – has been highlighted by the UK government for the key role it will play in the transition,<sup>12</sup> and will support the deployment of much of the capital committed through other pledges. It is expected to create key moments for sustainable finance in Dubai. For example, the Network on Greening the Financial System (NGFS) – an international network of central banks and financial regulators – will be launching

10 <https://www.greenfinanceinstitute.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/10/GTAG-Chair-Final-Statement.pdf>

11 <https://www.greenfinanceinstitute.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/10/GTAG-Chair-Final-Statement.pdf>

12 [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/1149690/mobilising-green-investment-2023-green-finance-strategy.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1149690/mobilising-green-investment-2023-green-finance-strategy.pdf)

its Blended Finance Handbook at COP28,<sup>13</sup> providing case studies and guidance on how to develop a thriving blended finance ecosystem.

COP28 should be an important moment for sustainable finance and climate justice. The expected updates on high-profile pledges will, if positive, start to mend trust, and reduce the air of caution around big finance pledges. But it is only the start of the implementation phase. Governments and the private sector need to work together to ensure adequate finance is flowing to developing countries, in a way that maximises the benefits to those nations. Through international interoperability of regulations and deploying blended finance structures to channel public and private capital, substantial progress can be made.

The UK, with the role it began to establish at COP26, the Government's target to have the world's first Net-Zero Aligned Financial Centre, and with the power of the City of London, should take responsibility and play a leading role in this. It is through finance that the UK can have the most impact in fixing global climate injustice.

<sup>13</sup> <https://www.ngfs.net/en/communique-de-presse/ngfs-publishes-conceptual-note-blended-finance-handbook-0>



# Contributors

**Steve Akehurst** is a recognised expert in political communications and audience insights. He is currently Lead on Insight and Messaging at the Global Strategic Communications Council, where he works to make climate action a greater priority for governments around the world. He has also been the Head of Strategic Communications at the Cabinet Office and Head of Campaigns and Public Affairs at Shelter.

**Dr Nataliey Bitature** sits on the board of the Simba Group – an East African group of companies operating across several sectors including energy. She is also the founder of Musana Carts – a social enterprise building solar-powered street food vending carts – and HER – an online mentorship platform with more than 4,000 young African women. Dr Nataliey is Chair of Save the Children’s Africa Advisory Board. Her work has been recognised by Forbes 30 under 30, the World Bank and other institutions.

**Rt Hon Liam Byrne MP** has represented Birmingham Hodge Hill as a Labour MP for 19 years. He chairs the House of Commons Business and Trade Select Committee and Global Parliamentary Network on the World Bank and International Monetary Fund. He has served in the Cabinet in 10 Downing Street and the Treasury.

**Degan\*** is 14 years old, lives in Northern Iraq’s Ninawa Province and is a powerful youth activist who works with Save the Children International’s network of partners. She uses her voice to speak out against environmental pollution by taking part in community-level advocacy, including the organisation of green clubs.

\* Name changed to protect identity

**Sami Dubed** is a third-year student at the University of Cambridge who is working closely with Save the Children UK to bring the voices of diaspora communities into its campaigning and advocacy. Sami has a deep commitment to social justice and environmental advocacy. Her academic work has centred around the complex interplay of motivations and interests behind foreign aid, climate diplomacy, and the enduring legacies of colonialism.

**Durra** is 12 years old and is from Syria but lives in Egypt. She took part in preparation for COP27, and has also taken part in a number of workshops and meetings to highlight the impact that climate change is having on children's rights.

**Emily** is 15 years old and a member of Save the Children's Youth Advisory Board (YAB) from North Devon. She is passionate about reducing the impact of climate change for young people, pursuing a degree in law, and working towards a safe, fair and hopeful future for generations to come.

**Ryan Henson** is the CEO of the Coalition for Global Prosperity, working to ensure the UK remains at the forefront of saving lives, alleviating poverty, and bringing freedom, security and prosperity to those who need it most. A member of the Conservative party for 18 years, Ryan was the Conservative Parliamentary Candidate for Bedford at the 2019 General Election.

**Ryan Jude** leads on the Green Finance Institute's Green Taxonomy work as Programme Director. He also represents Lancaster Gate as a Labour councillor and is Westminster Council's Deputy Cabinet Member for Climate Action and Biodiversity, seeking ultimately to make Westminster carbon-free. Ryan previously worked as an investment banker, specialising in power, energy and infrastructure.

**Tessa Khan** is the founder and Executive Director of Uplift, a key voice pushing for a just and fossil fuel-free UK. Tessa is a lawyer and campaigner focusing on climate change and human rights matters. She has been an expert adviser to UN human rights bodies and a number of governments. She was co-founder and co-director of the Climate Litigation Network, a project that supports strategic climate litigation around the world. In 2019,

Tessa was named by TIME as one of 15 incredible women leading the fight against climate change.

**Ashish Kothari** is a prominent environmentalist and founder of Kalpavriksh, an Indian non-profit organisation that pushes for environmental and social justice in India and around the world. Ashish has served on several boards, including that of Greenpeace International and Greenpeace India. He coordinated India's National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan and helped to draft key legislation, including the Forest Rights Act.

**Kirsty McNeill** is Save the Children UK's Executive Director of Policy, Advocacy and Campaigns and leads the division in delivering programmes that support families across the UK. The division's award-winning policy, advocacy, campaigns and media work highlights how issues such as climate change, conflict, inequality and poverty are impacting children around the world. Kirsty was Gordon Brown's Special Adviser for three years and founded a consultancy advising world-leading social purpose organisations.

**Jessica Morden MP** was first elected as the Labour MP for Newport East in 2005. She is currently Keir Starmer's Parliamentary Private Secretary and the Shadow Minister for Wales. Prior to this, she was a Senior Whip in the Opposition Whips' office and Shadow Leader of the House of Commons. Before becoming an MP, she worked for two local MPs and was General Secretary of the Wales Labour Party.

**Kanishka Narayan** is the Labour Party's Parliamentary Candidate for the Vale of Glamorgan. He has advised ministers on domestic public policy as a senior advisor for the Cabinet Office, been an adviser to the Environment Secretary, and also advised the Labour Party on tech policy. Kanishka has a background in business and has previously worked as a climatetech investor.

**Poppy Stowell-Evans** is 19 years old and lives in Newport, South Wales. Poppy is the Chair of Youth Climate Ambassadors for Wales, a group of young people from across Wales fighting for climate justice, and she was honoured at COP26 in 2021 for being a green champion. Poppy is currently studying History and Politics at Yale University in the USA.

**Will** is 17 years old and a member of Save the Children's Youth Advisory Board from Lancashire. He is passionate about human rights, equality, and the climate crisis. He'd like to pursue a degree in International Relations, and work towards creating a just and equal world, where children's rights are protected.

**Xia** is 14 years old and from the Philippines. She is the first Child Ambassador of Save the Children Philippines, and led over 50 young people to take part in The Climate Canvas art activism project. This programme aims to amplify the voices of children around the world about the impact of the climate crisis on children and their rights.

**Baroness Young of Old Scone** is a Member of the House of Lords and the Chair of Labour Climate and Environment Forum. Her priorities include issues related to the environment, agriculture and climate-change. Baroness Young is chair of the Woodland Trust and the Royal Veterinary College, and a member of the Commission on Food, Farming and the Countryside. She has been Chief Executive of the RSPB, Diabetes UK and the Environment Agency.



# THE FUTURE IS

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## GLOBAL PERSPECTIVES ON TACKLING CLIMATE CHANGE AND INEQUALITY

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