

Child Centred Climate Change Adaptation (4CA)

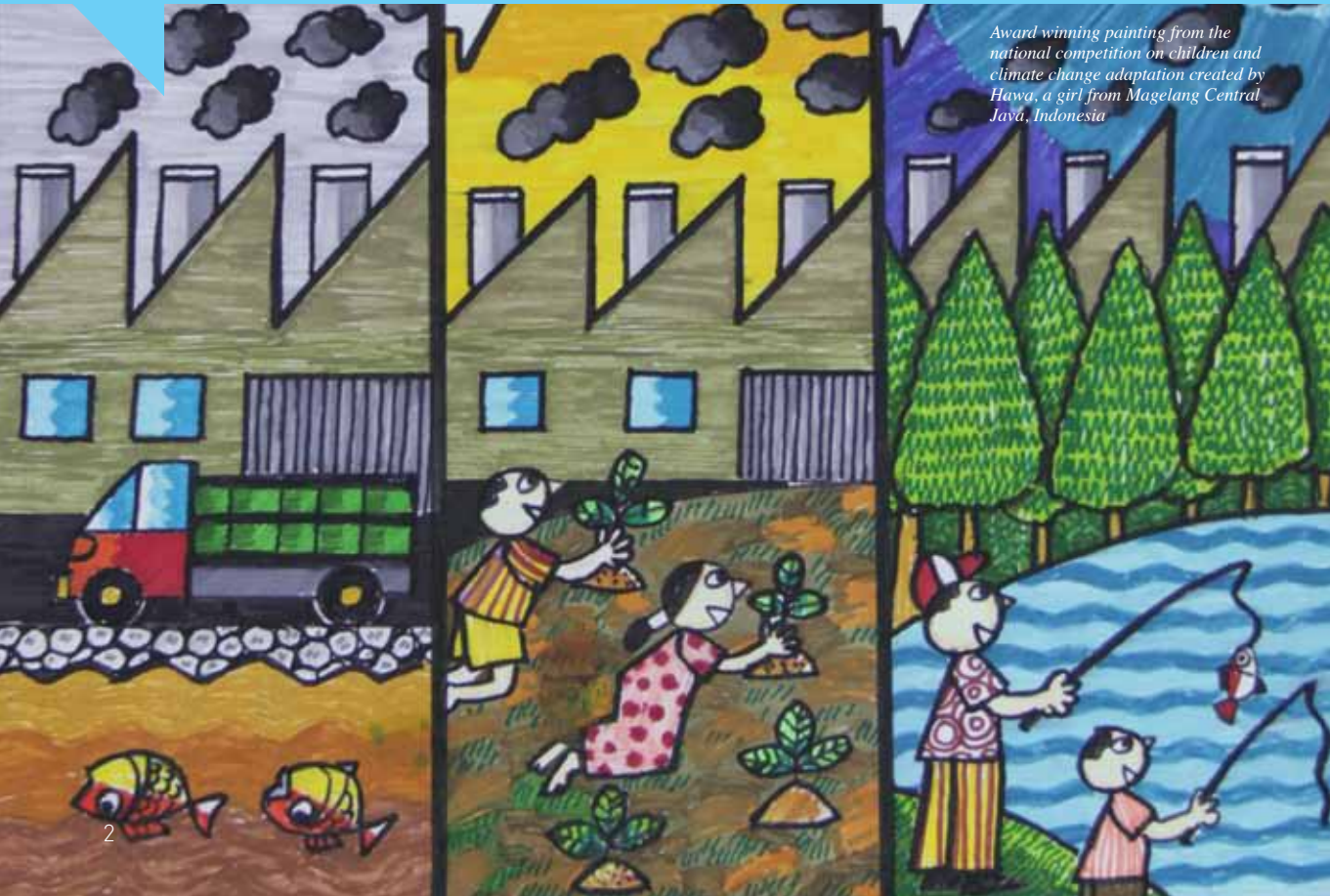
Act to Adapt





Climate change is the development issue for this generation, and future generations, of children living in Asia and the Pacific.

Climate change represents a real and urgent threat to vulnerable children and their communities. The Earth's atmosphere is warming, largely as a result of greenhouse gas emissions, creating uncertainty in weather patterns and increasing the likelihood of climate-related disasters and crises. These include rising temperatures and sea levels; changing rainfall patterns, which can result in more frequent extreme weather events such as severe floods or extended droughts; and increasing intensity of storms.



Award winning painting from the national competition on children and climate change adaptation created by Hawa, a girl from Magelang Central Java, Indonesia



Children in rural communities such as Moksouk Village in Laos are at risks from climate related disasters.

The impacts of climate change are already affecting communities across the world, especially in Asia and the Pacific. According to the United Nations University, seven of the world's ten countries most vulnerable to climate change and natural disasters are in Asia and the Pacific. The region accounted for 65% of the world's deaths caused by natural disasters in the last decade.ⁱ Extreme weather events displaced more than 42 million people in the Asia-Pacific region during 2010 and 2011 and affected on average more than 200 million people annually in the last decade.

Climate models indicate expected temperature increases in Asia and the Pacific between 0.5 and 2°C by 2030. In the southern Philippines, the World Bank reports that warmer water temperatures and habitat destruction could lead to a 50% decrease in ocean fish catches.

The Asian Development Bank (ADB) estimates that the number of people living in cities in Asia at risk of coastal flooding will increase from 300 to 410 million by 2025. A 30 centimetre sea level rise in Vietnam's Mekong Delta, a global rice producing area, could see the loss of around 11% of crop production and subsequent rises in food prices.ⁱⁱ

The ability of communities and nations to adapt to change is crucial, as the frequency, intensity and dangerousness of climate change-related events escalate. Children in Asia and the Pacific will be at the forefront of these changes. We must empower children and young people to lead and participate in their communities' efforts to adapt to an increasingly fast-changing world.

ⁱ <http://www.adb.org/themes/climate-change/facts-figures>

ⁱⁱ World Bank (19 June 2013) 'What Climate Change Means for Africa, Asia and the Coastal Poor'. Available online at: <http://www.worldbank.org/en/news/feature/2013/06/19/what-climate-change-means-africa-asia-coastal-poor>

Why children?

Children are often more vulnerable to the impacts of climate change than adults, but they are also more than passive victims. As powerful and engaged members of any community, it is essential that girls and boys actively participate and contribute to decisions and planning around climate change.

Climate-related disasters often have disproportionate impacts on children, with serious implications for securing their human rights. Despite children's right to participate in decisions that affect them, they are often excluded from the decision making process.

In 20, 30, 40 and 50 years' time, it will be these children and their own families who will be affected by the decisions made today. By supporting children now to explore the issue of climate change, they will be better placed to face the challenge in the future.



Villagers joining together to address the environmental climate change in Bokeo province, Laos

Communities in Lao PDR take charge to adapt to environmental change

“I am excited” says Leuan, a young man in Pha Oudom, northern Lao PDR . “I hope the drainage canals we are going to construct will prevent riverbank erosion and we can keep our rattan ball court for children”.

In the last decade in Pha Oudom alone, 700 houses have been lost to flooding, affecting more than 8,500 people in these isolated and marginalised communities. It is one of the poorest regions in Lao PDR , and is frequently affected by storms, flash flooding and wildfires. Six communities in Pha Oudom District in Bokeo are being supported by Plan Laos in the process of adapting to environmental change and disaster risk.

After holding a rapid appraisal with the women, men, and children of the communities to identify potential disaster risks, especially to children, possible solutions have been identified that can be implemented by the community themselves with support from Plan. Soil and river erosion from flash floods and food insecurity were the main concerns identified. Plan is providing construction materials to establish drainage canals, fishponds to diversify food sources, barbed wire for cattle zones in order to protect crops, and solar lanterns to reduce the risk of fire from gasoline lanterns and to provide a clean source of electricity to the remote villages.

Disaster risk reduction is quite new in Laos, says Saphet Sivilay, the Disaster Risk Management Coordinator.

“Therefore, we have been working in partnership with government and communities on climate change adaptation to ensure communities are prepared for emergency situations and to help reduce the risk of loss”.

Activities are also extended schools. A disaster risk reduction curriculum is being piloted in 30 primary schools with school teachers and district education officers receiving training.

“My school was torn into pieces. Luckily no one got hurt” said Nom, a 13 year-old schoolgirl in Hadom Village. The simple primary school building, built from bamboo and soft wood, was destroyed in less than an hour by strong winds in 2008.

“The curriculum includes drought, hydrological disaster, and bushfire that will educate school children about those risks and what they are, how they impact, and how to avoid and/or respond to the disasters”, adds Sivilay.

Plan Laos is now also working with school clubs in Laos to design and implement learning activities to prepare for emergency situations at school. Through a school competition, the best project ideas from children will be supported.



Climate change communicators, Ly (left) and Mon (right), explain their peers about disaster risk reduction in Quang Tri province, Vietnam.

Climate change adaptation programming for and with children

Children's rights are at the centre of Plan's climate change work. This includes work on adaptation for children, in delivering child-sensitive adaptation projects, and adaptation with children, which ensures children's active participation in the design and implementation of adaptation projects.

Plan's Child Centred Climate Change Adaptation (4CA) program is a three-year project taking place over 2011-2014. It aims to build the awareness of children and their communities about climate change and to empower them to be active participants in adaptation efforts. This involves the translation of relatively new and complex climate science concepts into real life practice using the tools, techniques and knowledge of local communities.

It is an innovative approach to climate change adaptation that fosters the agency of children and young people. Each community designs and implements unique projects that explore how and why things are changing, the impact this might have on children's rights, and gets adults talking to and learning from children on finding the best roles for children to play in community resilience. The overall goal is to achieve safe and resilient communities in which children and young people contribute to managing and reducing the risks associated with climate change.

The regional 4CA program is being implemented in four countries in Southeast Asia: Indonesia, Laos, Thailand and Vietnam; and in six countries in the Pacific: Fiji, Kiribati, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, Tonga and Tuvalu. It is funded by the Australian Agency for International Development (AusAID) through the AusAID Humanitarian Partnership Agreement and the AusAID NGO Cooperation Program (ANCP).



Analysing the impact of climate change in Bokeo province, Laos



Vietnamese children in Quang Tri province learning through play

1

Knowledge: Children, young people and teachers are becoming trainers and peer educators in their community on climate change and disaster risk reduction.

- Each of the countries has developed and adapted a number of child friendly education material on disaster risk reduction and climate change appropriate to the local context. These include teacher manuals and student books, cartoons and animation films, and games. The materials have been widely adopted by governments and other organisations. For example, upon request of the Vietnamese Ministry of Education, over 380 teachers from almost 250 schools were trained on the climate change education material using explorative teaching methods.
- All countries have conducted trainings for community members and leaders, youth leaders and children on disaster risk reduction in a changing climate. A toolkit for community facilitators on climate change assessments was also developed in Indonesia to motivate participants, especially children, to take a lead role in raising community awareness on climate change.
- In Indonesia, children were trained in writing and photography skills to encourage them to analyse and explore changes in their community related to climate change. Local knowledge that could be used for adaptation was identified, mapped and recorded to help communities increase their resilience.
- In Quang Tri province in Vietnam, 'Climate Change Communicators' – a group of trained children – will lead and train other children on climate change adaptation and mitigation through games and films and other communication activities.
- In Thailand, young people from Chiang Mai and Chiang Rai were trained on how to use shadow puppet shows to build community awareness on disaster risk reduction and climate change in a fun and engaging way.

How children and communities are participating in 4CA across Southeast Asia

The 4CA program in Southeast Asia has three key components: increase awareness and capacity; participatory implementation of community and/or school projects; and advocacy. This is a snapshot of those activities and how 4CA is taking shape in Southeast Asia, directly engaging with over 26,000 children and their communities.



Igen, peer counsellor (at the centre)

Capacity building and peer educators

Together with two other children, Igen is a Peer Counsellor in a village in Lembata, Indonesia. He participated in a study trip to the Indonesian island of Bali, to learn about climate change adaptation and gain practical skills, like how to make biogas fuel or provide first aid after a disaster.

The impact of climate change is all too apparent to Igen and communities in Lembata. Harvest seasons are increasingly unpredictable and the sea level appears to be rising around their communities.

"Now from the field we can only harvest one or two sacks of corn. Many crop fields are failing. Farmers are not sure

when they have to plant. From the elder we learned, corn harvesting used to be in March, but now in May it was still raining." Igen also remembers his parents often recognised signs from nature before the rainy season or when they have to start planting, "but now no more, and farmers can no longer find a benchmark."

Igen is using his photography training to document the impacts of climate change.

"On the beach, there is one coconut tree that used to grow, but over a few years it is already far out to sea and now it's dead", remarks Igen.

2

Action: Children and their communities are developing and implementing locally appropriate 'climate smart' solutions to build capacity and resilience within and across their communities.

- Through a participatory process, Plan works with communities and children to analyse how climate related disasters and other changes could impact their communities and encourages them to identify appropriate solution. For example, in Laos, some communities identified activities that would ensure better nutrition for children by creating alternative livelihoods and improving environmental protection.
- Priority activities are implemented by communities and children themselves with support from Plan and other engaged stakeholders. Some of these activities take place in schools and children are involved in developing and monitoring the projects.
- Most projects aim to counter increasing risk of local disasters and environmental degradation. In Thailand and Indonesia, projects run by children's groups and communities include replanting and reforestation in watershed areas, constructing small check-dams, and wildfire protection. Activities by children's groups also included

campaigns for protection of local wildlife and ancient forests, producing radio programs on disaster protection, and creating climate change adaptation learning centres in schools.

- In Vietnam, a nation-wide competition called on children and youth groups to develop child-centred climate change adaptation projects. Almost 100 proposals were submitted and so far 40 seed grants have been awarded for projects led by children and young people to be implemented at schools and in communities. The projects range from activities such as setting up water filter tanks for slums, bio-fertilisers, and waste collection campaigns to climate change adaptation education signboards, young journalism clubs and school festivals on climate change education, Earth Hour events, and other awareness raising events for children.

3

Advocacy: Children and young people are becoming powerful advocates and leaders on climate change adaptation in their communities and regions. This is done through a peer-to-peer advocacy approach, exchange visits and connecting children with the decision-makers at national and regional levels.

- Different types of multimedia material are being created under the program across the four countries, including two videos made by children in [Indonesia](#) and [Vietnam](#), [shadow puppet shows](#) created by children in Thailand, a [website](#) for youth in Vietnam, and radio broadcasts in three ethnic languages in Laos.
- Peer-to-peer activities are effective ways for children to learn from one another and build connections between their communities. In Thailand, children from flood affected areas in central Thailand went on an exchange trip to share experiences with children from northern Thailand on how they can get involved in disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation activities. Together they conducted a joint peer-to-peer education activity for 60 school children in Chiang Mai. In Indonesia, children from Kefa and Lembata went on a learning visit to Bali to find out about climate change adaptation practices and then shared their experiences by writing articles for their local newspaper.
- Seventeen children from across Asia offered ideas and solutions at the 5th Asian Ministerial Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction. Supporting children as visible and outspoken advocates will help push countries to prioritise children in climate change adaptation (as recognised in the [Yogyakarta declaration](#)). Such events demonstrate the capacity of children to become more than victims, and to act as leaders of their communities.
- Documenting the perspective of children on how disasters and climate change affects their lives and their rights is a powerful message. By presenting their own experiences of participating in disaster risk reduction activities, the [Children's Action for Disaster Risk Reduction publication](#) aims to inspire other children and youth, as well as encourage local governments, NGOs, and the private sector to support child-centred community risk reduction and climate change adaptation.



Environmental Club members

Student-led clean water initiative builds resiliency and awareness among the floating village communities of Vietnam's Red River

Mr Duoc's family is one of 23 families living in a floating village on the Red River near Hanoi. The village is very difficult to access, with limited electricity and a lack of basic services, particularly clean and regular water supply.

Nguyen is a Grade 12 student at high school in Hanoi. As a member of the school's Environmental Club, he is part of a growing network of students in Hanoi working on issues of environmental protection and climate change.

Nguyen joined a short-term training course organised by Plan Vietnam and Live & Learn, inspiring him to reinvigorate his Environmental Club's focus on youth mobilisation around sustainability and climate change adaptation.

Mr Duoc and Nguyen worked together to renovate the community's water filter tanks at three wells. The group replaced the old filters with new ones made from quartz sand, charcoal and gravel.

"We are thankful for what the students did. The health of people, especially children, will be improved. They are so enthusiastic! Who could imagine these kids at such a young age can come here and help? We need a new generation like that", Mr Duoc adds cheerfully.

"We are ambitious", states Nguyen. "For the next project at the floating village, we aim to change behaviours towards littering, using river water for cooking and drinking and continuing informal climate change education for children".



Natcharin, 13 years old girl

Children in northern Thailand shine a light on disaster risk reduction using theatre

Natcharin, a 13 year-old girl who lives in Chiang Saen, Thailand recalls her experiences of disasters. "I was watching a soap opera and all of a sudden an earthquake took place. My mum and I hid under the table and bed. If there is a disaster, people in our community will be in trouble. In our story, we want to talk about how it isn't good to ignore flood warnings. I'll use my knowledge to perform for adults and children so that they know how dangerous disasters can be".

The story Natcharin is performing takes the form of puppet shadow theatre. An effective way for children and communities to understand disaster risk reduction is to use easy, fun, and engaging media. In partnership with Plan Thailand, the

organisation Wandering Moon uses puppet shadow theatre to help children understand about disasters and how to prevent them.

Natcharin attended a two-day workshop with 29 other children from four different villages in Chiang Saen in the province of Chiang Rai, creating characters and stories to use for the show.

Although it is a lot of fun, the real world application of what they have learned is potentially lifesaving. "I've learned how to make puppet here, and now I can perform shows for my friends and families so that they know and learn about disasters and are able to prepare for and handle these things", Armonthep, 16 year-old boy explains.

What are the results to date?



The 4CA program is proving to be a **valid and successful model for enabling children's participation in climate change adaptation and advocacy**. It has already been replicated in two other countries in the region (Bangladesh and Nepal), with Myanmar joining in 2013.

The various 4CA projects are ensuring the **meaningful participation of children**. Children have been involved in documenting and monitoring community activity through video documentaries, working together with adults in the implementation of small grants projects, and in climate change adaptation advocacy at national and regional levels. Children are developing the confidence and self-esteem to act as leaders and pioneers of change in their community.

There are already **significant changes at the community level**. Opportunities for communities and children to learn about and build their capacity around climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction are multiplying. Children and young people understand what is at stake for this generation and future generations not just in their community, but also for their country and region as a whole.

Education materials developed **are being adopted and taken up by other organisations, government agencies and countries**, multiplying the reach and impact of the program. The national government of each of the four countries has acknowledged the 4CA approach, which will help ensure its continuation and uptake.

What are we learning?



Focus on local impacts. Empower children and communities to identify and map the changes in risks and livelihoods. Don't start by talking about what is climate change with children. First, talk about how disasters and environmental changes are affecting them now, what is changing in their communities. Building on a basic understanding of how human activities and environment are interlinked, begin introducing the bigger picture of climate change.

The key is to link children with project activities. Each country is taking a different path to involving children, and identifying what the best path is for finding meaningful roles for children in their community. They can become local champions for change.

Climate change is an intergenerational issue. Adults and policymakers often focus on the now. We need to bring in the perspective of children, who are always looking into the future. In the dialogue of advocacy and change, that is a huge added value that children can bring to the table.

• For further information about the program, please contact Caroline Borcard, Regional Climate Change Specialist, Plan Asia Regional Office, at caroline.borcard@plan-international.org
• Editor of this publication: Brendan Rigby

“They (children) are vulnerable, but they are also potential actors for change and to influence behaviour by us (adults), that can make children less vulnerable” – Ari Mochammad, Secretary of Adaptation Working Group of the National Council for Climate Change in Indonesia.



Plan Asia Regional Office

14th Floor, 253 Sukhumvit 21 Road (Asoke),
Klongtoey Nua, Wattana, Bangkok 10110, Thailand
Tel: +66 (0) 2 204 2630-4 Fax: +66 (0) 2 204 2629
www.plan-international.org/asia
Facebook: PlaninAsia Twitter: @PlanAsia
July 2013



This program is funded by AusAID through the Humanitarian Partnership Agreement and the AusAID NGO Cooperation Program (ANCP).