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## Youth and United Nations Global Alliance (YUNGA) Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)

### Submission for the review of the amended New Delhi work programme on Article 6: Education, Training and Public Awareness

#### SUMMARY

The following submission has been made in response to the Secretariats invitation to parties, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations for their views on possible elements of a successor New Delhi work programme on Article 6 of the Convention (education, training, public awareness).

By including Article 6 in the UNFCCC nations have identified the importance of education, training and public awareness in achieving the goals of the convention. Education, training and public awareness are the most cost effective and socially empowering means to provoke actions for mitigating climate change as well as achieving adaptation efforts. It is therefore timely to revise and strengthen the commitment to Article 6. In particular it is suggested that the successor programme provides more efforts into mechanisms to engage children and young people, support activities related to agriculture and consumption and support access to knowledge and understanding on effective methodologies and techniques to create behavioural changes.

#### INTRODUCTION

Under Article 6 of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change the parties agree to “promote and facilitate educational and public awareness programmes on climate change and its effects”. The following submission sets out evidence on why this commitment to education is absolutely fundamental to the convention’s success. Climate change is caused by human activities. Mitigating and adapting to climate change will require behavioural change. It will require every human being on earth to make changes to their daily lives to create a cumulative effect which will limit greenhouse gas emissions and stabilise the climate. Government-led directives and infrastructure change, though important, will not achieve the objectives desired if they are not translated into the changes in public awareness and changes in lifestyle. Investment in education is therefore essential to raise awareness, empower individuals with the knowledge and create the desire to adopt the required mitigation and adaptation strategies.

#### CLIMATE CHANGE EDUCATION

Climate change education has two ultimate aims - to limit and mitigate greenhouse gas emissions and to make citizens more able to adapt to a changing climate. This ‘climate literacy’ usually comprises understanding the basic science, making connections to economic, health and social justice issues and supporting informed decision making and behaviour change. (Feder & Forest, 2011)

Recent research in Nicaragua, where temperature increases have seen crop failures and food shortages, shows that education is the most effective means of reducing vulnerability to food insecurity (Kafarkis *et al*, 2011). Studies by the World Bank and Centre for Global Development have found that educating women and girls is one of the best, and most cost effective, ways of enabling communities to adapt to climate change. However, current educational programmes are often ad hoc and disjointed, meaning that they are not as effective as they could be (Anderson, 2010).

Effective climate change education needs to draw on educational theory and behavioural theory. Focussing on the science of how and why climate change happens is not enough to change behaviour. Indeed, people will often adopt more sustainable habits without understanding the underlying science unless they are suitably motivated. Energy saving is a good example – in the current global economic situation people are turning off the lights to save money, rather than through concern for the environment.

### **MOTIVATORS FOR BEHAVIOUR CHANGE - “WHAT’S IN IT FOR ME?”**

The science of climate change is poorly understood by the general public, especially by adults. People’s ability to learn about climate change is also influenced by their willingness to engage with the subject at all (Feder & Forest, 2011). Even if they do accept and understand climate change, for the majority of adults, increased awareness of environmental issues does not lead to pro-environmental behaviour (Dietz & Stern, 2002; Kollmuss & Agyema, 2002; National Research Council, 2011). Achieving behaviour change is difficult and requires direct communication to individuals, to achieve such changes therefore requires the participation of a broad stakeholder group including NGOs and the private sector. Humans have an overwhelming tendency to resist change and to take the easy option - this usually means continuing to do what they have always done. People will also shun long term gain if it means short term pain, e.g. when offered free loft insulation, which would reduce energy bills for years to come, people declined due to the hassle of clearing out the loft (Behavioural Insights Team, 2011).

If people can’t even be bothered to take up such offers how can we expect them to embrace the comprehensive lifestyle changes that may be required to mitigate climate change? Change needs motivation (“*What’s in it for me?*”) and among adults the biggest motivators for change are societal norms and personal relevance (Dietz & Stern, 2002).

One of the biggest problems is that for the majority of people in the developed world, climate change is invisible. They might notice that the weather is a bit unpredictable, they might even welcome flowers blooming earlier in spring, but they don’t have to deal with devastating droughts or the prospect of their home being washed away by a rising sea. Environmental concerns are lost among the worries of daily life like unemployment or illness (National Research Council, 2011). Another issue is that it is perceived as being too big a problem to deal with – how can one person really make any difference? (Ellison & Satara, 2009) What really matters to the average person is what is happening in their local area and how the people around them are behaving.

### **MOTIVATORS FOR BEHAVIOUR CHANGE - THE SOCIAL NORM**

Recycling, like many of the behavioural changes prescribed to mitigate climate change, benefits society, but gives little or no benefit to the individual. In fact, when you factor in the space needed for different bins and the time taken sorting waste it can be a considerable inconvenience. Researchers in the USA have found that most people who recycle don’t do it out of concern for the environment, they do it because it is socially acceptable – it is the ‘social norm’. (Schultz, 2002)

This desire to conform is particularly strong for behaviours which are visible to others e.g. putting out the recycling bin or driving a smaller car, but makes less difference to non-visible behaviours like turning the heating down. Circulating information about climate-smart behaviour within a particular local area can have a dramatic effect (Schultz, 2002). US energy company, Opower, found that sending monthly statements comparing the residents energy use with that of their neighbours led to overall reductions, especially among high users (Behavioural Insights Team, 2011).

Community activists, people who lead by example, encourage others and provide practical assistance can also be particularly influential (Schultz, 2002). With the growth of the internet and social networking this ‘community’ need not be a geographical one – people will align themselves with the behaviour of a group of people they feel a connection with.

### **WHY YOUNG PEOPLE?**

Education programmes focussed on young people are particularly important. Instilling environmental and social awareness at a young age is the best way to protect the environment and develop a better society. Young people make up around one third of the world’s population. Children and young people are concerned, thoughtful citizens capable of participating in and changing the society they are a part of and have an important role to play in addressing and affecting the issues of our world. Young people are the workers and decision makers of the future. They are the custodians of the Earth’s future and the ones who will have to cope with the

changes that are coming. Although they may not wield political power, young people have enthusiasm, imagination and abundant energy to undertake local actions and are great agents of change in local communities. They therefore have a significant influence on behaviour within their own families and communities. As the evidence laid out here shows, the key motivator for behaviour change in the average person is feeling that the change is important for their own local community.

### **YOUNG PEOPLE AND THEIR INFLUENCE OVER THE SOCIAL NORM**

Many of the challenges of engaging adults can be bypassed by targeting young people. Young people are far more environmentally conscious, and thus more likely to care about climate change. In a 2009 survey of over 1000 young people in the UK, 88% said that climate change would affect their lives and 75% felt they should do something about it (Ellison & Satara, 2009). Being 'green' is the social norm among children and young people who rate environmental studies as the third most important subject after maths and literacy (The Co-operative Group, 2011). They are also more open to change than adults, and exercise increasing amounts of power over decision making in the home.

'Pester power' is the tendency of children to nag their parents to get what they want. Previously it has been considered a negative thing, focused on consumerist demands for the latest toy or gadget, but so-called 'positive pester power' is being harnessed to encourage children to change their parents behaviour. Through pestering their parents, friends and extended family young people are having a big influence. According to a study 6 out of 10 parents say their children have made them 'greener', e.g. recycling or leaving the car at home, and when pressurised on an environmental issue 95% say they will make the change (The Co-operative Group, 2011).

Therefore, through their ability to use persistence and enthusiasm, young people have the potential to be the most important environmental change-makers in their own communities.

### **INFORMAL EDUCATION CAN CONTRIBUTE TO BEHAVIORAL CHANGE**

Informal education can deepen and enrich learning by applying formal learning in new ways and enabling young people to experience the world outside of a textbook (National Research Council, 2011). Young people nowadays spend more time indoors than ever and increasing number live in urban areas. It is clear that direct experience of the natural world and a feeling of connection with the environment is a key predictor of pro-environment behaviour (Schultz, 2011). Community youth groups like the Girl Guides and Scouts place great emphasis on outdoor exploration, so provide opportunities to connect with the natural world that might not otherwise be accessible.

Youth groups promote youth empowerment, community activism and often national or international travel which all helps young people to appreciate their place as global citizens. Youth groups also encourage group work, team building and social interaction. Research on behaviour change to improve public health has shown that personal or small group interventions are far more effective than mass media campaigns (Schultz, 2002).

Young people also recognise that individuals and communities need to act in order to combat climate change – a survey of 16-24 year olds shows they think communities working together will be more important for adapting and mitigating climate change than government legislation (Ellison & Satara, 2009). Children and young people have the enthusiasm, imagination and energy to take a lead on climate change in their communities and the wider world.

### **HOW DOES FAO CONTRIBUTE**

The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) supports its member countries to address climate change issues. This includes building adaptation and mitigation capacity through various knowledge transfer methods. Key initiatives include Farmer Field Schools and Junior Farmer Field and Life Schools which have evolved from the concept that farmers and young people learn optimally from field observations and experimentation. FAO has created the Youth and United Nations Global Alliance (YUNGA) in partnership with other agencies and youth organisations to develop resources and initiatives to raise awareness, educate and involve children and young people in a range of environmental, social and sustainable development issues,

including agriculture, biodiversity, climate change, energy, forests, hunger, nutrition, oceans and water. Training, workshops, guide books and challenge badges, competitions, etc are examples of some of the resources and initiatives developed. Recently FAO has undertaken some work on food value chains and in particular sustainable diets, under YUNGA educational resources and challenge badges are being developed to promote the adoption of sustainable diets by children and young people.

## **CONCLUSION**

By including Article 6 in the UNFCCC, nations have identified the importance of education, training and public awareness in achieving the goals of the convention. From the above analysis it can be seen that:

- Behaviour change is key to climate change mitigation and adaptation.
- Education is an essential part of encouraging behaviour change.
- Education is cost-effective and the most empowering intervention.
- Education programmes must provide motivation for change, as well as factual information.
- Young people are key influencers of the social norm among their communities.
- Young people care about climate change and want to do something.
- Youth groups are uniquely placed to provide motivating climate change education and opportunities for engagement.

Education, training and public awareness can be achieved through a number of channels including schools (formal education), through informal education and non-formal initiatives. Numerous methods and technologies are available and are being used. Individual institutions have developed considerable knowledge and expertise on education, training and public awareness. However, surprisingly, there is limited information and guidance on which of these methods are the most effective in achieving the required behavioural changes. Greater work should therefore be undertaken under Article 6 to gather, build and exchange the knowledge base of creating effective behavioural changes in different contexts and domains.

Children and young people are important and large stakeholder group especially due to the influence they can exert in local communities now and in the future. Youth participation as a key stakeholder has also been identified by Parties in the amended New Delhi work programme (FCCC/CP/2007/Add. 1, para 17 (k)) and in the terms of reference of the review (FCCC/SBI/2011/7, Annex I). Any successor programme should therefore contain a core programme related to youth.

Agriculture is one of the sectors where the impacts of climate change can be most clearly seen and where adaptation interventions are urgently required. On the other hand, production and consumption is one of the biggest sectors in regards to resource and energy usage and emissions. Education, training and public awareness has therefore a key role to play and a successor programme should include work to support the development of sustainable and resilient production and consumption systems. Topics, such as sustainable diets, which behavioural changes are fundamental should be given specific attention.

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