

Climate Centre Youth Strategy 2018-2020

A. Introduction

The Climate Centre's youth strategy for 2018-2020 presents our **youth engagement objectives for 2020, to be implemented with a view to longer-term continuity**. As a newly evolving focus area for the Climate Centre, the youth strategy is informed by a review of the current youth-climate change landscape, determining the unique role the Climate Centre is positioned to play.

The strategy proposes a statement of intent detailing the priority areas we aim to influence, how we plan to realise objectives, and the activities we will implement to effectively support advancing youth engagement on dealing with the impacts of climate change. It presents a strategic focus on areas where we have, or are prepared to build, added value.

It is consistent with the IFRC Youth Policy 2017 definitions of 'youth' and 'youth engagement' (Annex 1). This strategy aligns with: [the IFRC Youth Policy \(2017\)](#) and [Youth Engagement Strategy \(YES, 2013\)](#); the [IFRC Framework for Climate Action towards 2020](#) and [IFRC Road Map to Community Resilience](#); and the [Partners for Resilience Strategy](#).

For the IFRC, the terms "youth" and "young people" cover all people in the age range of 5 to 30 years. This includes children (5 to 12* years old), adolescents (13* to 17 years old), and young adults (18 to 30 years old).

B. Youth and climate change landscape and Climate Centre role

Differentiated impacts

Climate change is set to profoundly alter the way we live, and how we seek and share economic development (IFRC Framework for Climate Action Towards 2020). Impacts of climate change on our lives, today and in the future are now widely recognised across the global climate change landscape. However, impacts are differentiated across societal groups. Youth constitute a major societal group affected by humanitarian crises, with the global population growing year on year.

Climate change and youth as agents of change

UNICEF (2014) propose children have the potential to be **'the most powerful protagonists for change.'** The importance of youth engagement and youth sensitive approaches in climate change is increasingly acknowledged. Initial discourse was protectionist, framing young people as passive victims of climate change. More recently it has evolved to argue that young people have a right to be meaningfully engaged and have their voices heard on climate change. Educated, empowered and enabled youth - as per the IFRC 3E's framework (detailed in the [YES](#))- can be effective agents of change in their communities to advance Climate Change Adaptation strategies. However, many still believe that protecting, not involving, young people on climate change should be the priority. Yet, we can argue that protecting and enabling intersect: evidence shows empowering youth to act, through meaningful roles against harmful situations, creates psychological protection by feeling more in control, hopeful and resilient.

Climate change discourse

The climate change discourse is also evolving. Initially climate change ‘action’ referred exclusively to mitigation, whilst today it includes the need to adapt to climate change impacts, which has direct relevance to the humanitarian sector. The Climate Centre was formed in 2002 to help the Red Cross Red Crescent Movement and its partners reduce the impacts of climate change and extreme-weather events on vulnerable people. Climate change is now firmly on the movement’s strategic agenda. The ‘IFRC’s Framework for Climate Action Towards 2020’ prioritises addressing climate variability and change as a key component of disaster risk reduction and resilience strategies.

Aligning Red Cross Red Crescent Climate and Youth Policies

The ‘IFRC’s Framework for Climate Action Towards 2020’ recognises a need to better mobilise regional youth networks from a knowledge and understanding perspective, and the **importance of youth participation** in National Societies and IFRC climate-smart community programming and policy frameworks. However, progress on youth engagement, transfer of experience and leadership renewal requires adequate investment. The specific needs, rights, and potential of youth are often overlooked, in particular at the decision-making tables where their communities are being shaped.

Climate Centre Role and Integrated Action

The Climate Centre is uniquely positioned to play a central role in the evolving youth-climate change nexus in **supporting meaningful alignment of youth and climate change agendas**. In response to the interdisciplinary, multifaceted nature of climate change and variability, it works at the intersection of science, policy and practice. Through initiatives such as Partners for Resilience, the Climate Centre strives to tackle climate change in an integrated manner, working to engage diverse stakeholders. Encouraging collaboration across entities that typically work in disparate ways can be challenging. Yet, meaningful youth engagement, as proposed in the IFRC youth policy, can be a strategic vehicle for transforming institutional cultures. By engaging youth across integrative agendas, in an inclusive, gender-sensitive manner at local, national and international levels, we invest early in opening mind-sets, dialogues and platforms to reduce cross-sectoral barriers. Through awareness raising and inspiring youth-led action and advocacy today, we engage youth to collaboratively advance effective integrated action on climate change now and going forward as tomorrows leaders.

The Climate Centre’s strengths in innovation are well aligned to inspiring, engaging and motivating a new generation of climate change advocates and activists. Participatory and interactive approaches, [serious games](#), the [‘Y-Adapt’](#) curriculum and the [‘Junior Researcher Programme’](#) all promote meaningful engagement. Working closely with national societies and partners to develop, contextualise and utilise these tools and approaches, while strategically building upon past and current initiatives such as [‘Youth on the move’](#), provides a strong grounding to advance the youth-climate change agenda (see ANNEX 2). National societies are well positioned as auxiliary to government to cultivate youth advocacy for meaningful participation and youth-sensitive policies at local and national decision-making tables. **The global network of Red Cross Red Crescent youth represents extensive potential to promote youth-led community action on climate change.** There is real opportunity to effectively and innovatively advance a crucially important youth-climate change agenda across the movement. Working closely with national societies, Red Cross Red Crescent youth and partners can strive to serve as a model of good practice for wider application.

Looking forward

It is imperative that our 2020 Youth Strategy is implemented with a **forward-looking outlook**. In an increasingly globalised, urbanised and digital world, the humanitarian sector can project changing

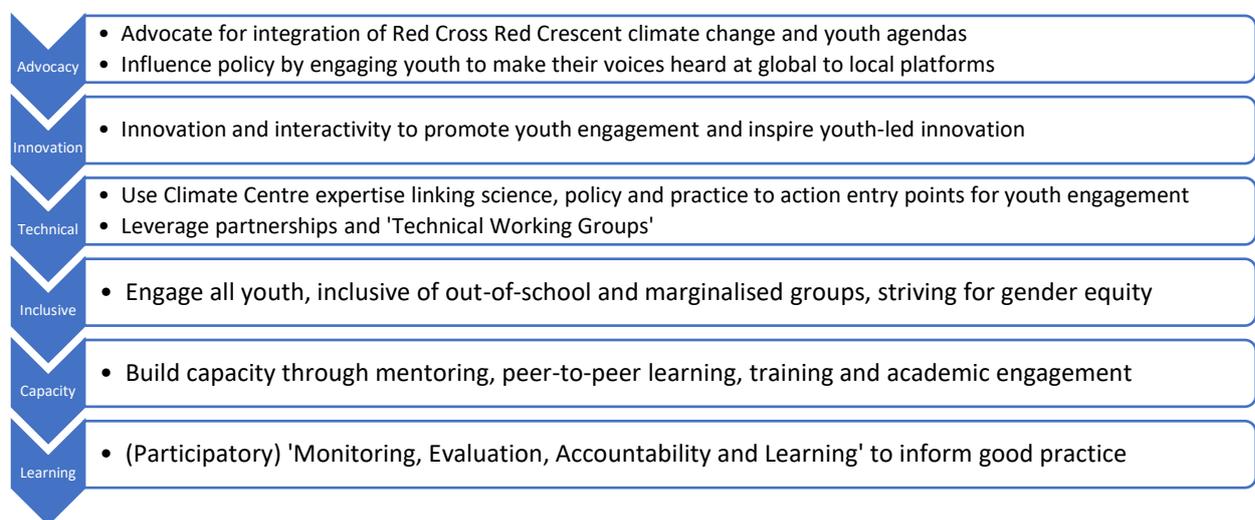
discourses. New ways of thinking, broadening perspectives and open, dynamic outlooks will be key to effectively achieve objectives and position us for future collaborations with new partners – such as the private sector. The influence of a growing population of engaged and aware youth can be a powerful force for change at local to global levels. However, in strengthening sustainable youth-led advocacy and action, it is key that engagement sets higher standards for gender equity and inclusivity, also including marginalised groups and out of school youth. Inclusive youth engagement and youth led-action on climate change is as crucial today, as it will be integral to longer term strategies.

C. Vision of success

More youth across the world are educated, empowered and enabled to act to make their communities more resilient to climate variability and weather extremes. Youth and their communities are better prepared for and resilient to climate change impacts, from a youth sensitive, inclusive outlook. Climate change agendas at the international, national and local level better promote youth engagement, in direct alignment to and in cooperation with youth agendas and partners at all levels. Inclusivity and gender sensitivity is core to all youth engagement activity.

D. Statement of Intent

The Red Cross Red Crescent Movement has a real opportunity for leadership in promoting effective, inclusive practice to integrate climate change action with youth engagement to reduce climate change impacts on the most vulnerable. In line with the Climate Centre’s pathways to change, our youth engagement strategy is grounded in these core functions that enable us to achieve our vision for 2020:



E. Youth engagement priorities and core activities

The 3 youth engagement strategic priorities align with and integrate the IFRC Youth Engagement Strategy (YES), the IFRC Climate 2020 Strategy and the Partners for Resilience (PfR) Strategy. They should be realised in coordination with these the IFRC and other relevant organisations, working with Red Cross Red Crescent national society implementing partners to achieve integrated objectives and

set a precedent for good practice. All activities should be approached in an inclusive, participatory manner, informed as widely as possible by youth and other stakeholders. The priority areas are developed in alignment with the IFRC's 3E's framework to promote youth engagement through:

- (i) **Education** (ii) **Empowerment** (iii) **Creation of Enabling environments**

The priorities consider youth across 3 core capacities, through which youth can be key drivers in humanitarian action, development and in fostering community resilience (IFRC Youth Policy 2017):



ENABLING ENVIRONMENTS

PRIORITY 1: Promote strategic integration of inclusive youth engagement and climate change agendas

- 1.1 Advocate for **integration** of climate change and youth engagement agendas within and across the movement; aiming to serve as a **model of wider climate change good practice**
- 1.2 Draw upon expertise linking science, policy and practice to action entry points for youth engagement across programmes in achieving climate change agendas. Scoping should include **urban, forecast-based-financing, social protection and climate policy**
- 1.3 Strive for **gender and diversity** in agendas -actively collaborating with experts- to engage all youth, inclusive of out-of-school and marginalised groups

EMPOWERMENT

PRIORITY 2: Support inclusive youth led action & advocacy on climate change, utilising innovative approaches

- 2.1 Develop innovative youth engagement approaches on climate change, with a focus on the **Y-ADAPT curriculum** aiming to inspire youth-led action & advocacy
- 2.2 Develop existing and new **analogue and digital innovation** for youth engagement, action & advocacy on climate change in collaboration with partners (movement and external).
- 2.3 Engage youth to create spaces to make their voices heard at **global, national and local level climate change platforms** (may include COPs, NAPs, planning local action plans, etc.)

EDUCATION

PRIORITY 3: Promote capacity building on climate change action & advocacy (i) for youth (ii) for stakeholders

- 3.1 Using interactive and participatory approaches support **peer to peer learning** on climate change action & advocacy (i) between youth and (ii) between national societies
- 3.2 Develop and diversify capacity building opportunities for students in higher education through the **Climate Centre Junior Researcher programme**
- 3.3 Establish participatory **Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability and Learning** (MEAL), including knowledge management and sharing experience via a range of mediums including online platforms, tools and resources (e.g. **Climate Centre Training Kit**, innovative documentation, workshops etc.)

F. Aspirational outlook and work plan

We are already seeing increasing demand from partners on youth and climate change agendas. Accordingly, we wish to be strategically ambitious and the priorities and core activities are formulated with an aspirational, long term outlook. By positioning youth across the work of the Climate Centre,

we aim to make progress on all aspects of the youth strategy by 2020, whilst acknowledging it will take a longer time period to fully achieve strategic objectives. The complementary annual work plan details specific deliverables and timeframes for 2019, whilst Annex 2 details the current status of the strategic priorities, whether ‘aspirational, initiated, exploratory, ongoing or completed’, with a view to ongoing work into the future.

A. Conclusion and next steps

The priority areas and core activities outlined in this strategy represent a strategic overview of the Climate Centre focus on youth engagement until 2020. However, to fully achieve objectives, implementation will be with a view to establishing sustainable procedures post-2020. The 3 priority areas will inform each other through linking (i) strategy (ii) action & advocacy (iii) capacity building and knowledge sharing. The depth to which we engage in specific areas may change in light of emerging needs, opportunities and shifts in the youth-climate change nexus. One advocacy aim is for flexibility from donors to fully enable activities to be guided by youth perspectives and priorities. Progress will be reviewed during monthly meetings of the Climate Centre’s youth focal points and the Management Team will be involved in priority setting. Emerging opportunities, challenges and potential new connections will also be considered.