

## **RESEARCH**

### **TOPIC: REFORMATION OF CHILDREN'S RIGHTS IN CLIMATE CRISIS AND OVER POPULATION IN TODAY'S GENERATIONS IN GLOBAL SOUTH.**

#### **Introduction**

Climate change from the children's perspective offers multifaceted insights. This is because children are the least responsible for the unfolding climate crisis and yet they bear the brunt of climate-related impacts (World Vision, 2019). Climate change has resulted in the abdication of the young people's generation, violating the principles of intergenerational equity and undermining a broad spectrum of children's rights. The outcome of this includes shortage of food, water, housing, among other basics needed for survival. The situation is apparently fraught among vulnerable children or those from poor economic settings (Barford *et al.*, 2021; World Vision, 2019). Even with their limited capacities to survive and their high vulnerability levels to climate change impacts, they are exposed to the same climate change crisis thus compounding the already multiple hardships they face. They are also exposed to other broader socio-economic factors such as gender inequality and poverty which further exacerbate their situations thus affecting their quality of life (Barford *et al.*, 2021).

From a country-perspective, most low-income countries have rapidly-growing young populations, and given the limited usage of contraceptives or family planning methods, their child populations are also high (Barford *et al.*, 2021). Despite these, their contribution to climate change is very low and yet they have limited adaptation capacities. This puts even a greater number of children and future generations at risk. The United Nations Convention of the Rights of Children advocates for children's rights and the implementation of policies whose decisions do not affect them, however, most climate change policies globally, regionally and nationally have undermined the effects of climate change to children (World Vision, 2019). This has left them further vulnerable to climate disruptions and undermined the development of concerted responses with the primary considerations of children. Therefore, children of today and future

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generations are at a risk of facing severe climate disruptions which may likely affect every facet of their lives, and for children from poor socio-backgrounds, pre-existing socioeconomic challenges are bound to accelerate and have worse effects on their lives (Fambasayi & Addaney, 2021). Children are thus being exposed to high levels of uncertainty concerning their futures and capacity to absorb climate-induced shocks. The climate change crisis is a child-rights crisis which needs to be resolved to prevent the deepening of inequalities among generations. Children should not be left to inherit a problem that is not of their own doing.

### **Problem statement**

In light of the unfolding climate change crisis, children who are vulnerable and at risk need to be protected. Children from low economic settings are prone to face more serious consequences due to climate change disruptions unlike the rest, and thus need to be protected. However, despite the increased publicity on children's rights and the need to avert the climate change crisis, challenges still remain which have not yet been dealt with. The same applies to the efforts that have so far been applied. There is a need to increase concerted efforts to reduce the vulnerability of children to climate change crises.

### **Research aim**

The aim of this research is to increase on the ongoing concerted efforts to reduce the vulnerability of children to climate change disruptions in the Global South.

### **Research objectives**

- To sustain children's nutrition needs by promoting fruit tree and vegetable planting in the Global South.
- To grow children's savings by encouraging parents to utilize fruit tree and vegetable planting as income streams in the Global South.
- To encourage planned pregnancies by promoting the use of contraceptives among young people in the Global South.
- To facilitate children in the Global South to recover from climate change disruptions by advocating for climate reparations.

## **Research questions**

- How can children's nutrition needs be sustained by promoting fruit tree and vegetable planting in the Global South?
- How can children's savings be grown by their parents by utilizing fruit tree and vegetable planting as income streams in the Global South?
- How can planned pregnancies be encouraged by promoting the use of contraceptives among young people in the Global South?
- How can children in the Global South be facilitated to recover from climate change disruptions by advocating for climate reparations?

## **Methods**

This research has been conducted by utilizing existing literature on climate change and its intersection with children. Focus has been placed on children in the Global South. The findings have been presented as per the research's objectives.

## **Results**

### **Sustaining children's nutrition needs by promoting fruit tree and vegetable planting in the Global South**

Fruits and vegetables are rich in micronutrient sources and thus recommended for children's diets. However, most families have poor fruit and vegetable consumption behaviours which result in malnutrition (Kretz *et al.*, 2021; McMullin *et al.*, 2019). Given that fruits and vegetables are seasonal crops, in seasons where they are unavailable, families face financial constraints in purchasing them and thus opt to forego them which affects the nutrition of children. This exposes children to micronutrient deficiencies and limits their ability to fight diseases and increases their risk of facing child obesity. Wijesinha-Bettoni *et al* (2013) notes that children with a high intake of fruits and vegetables have a reduced risk of suffering from cardiovascular diseases, cancer, diabetes and obesity, among other micronutrient deficiencies. It has been noted that homesteads with fruit trees and vegetables have a high consumption rate of fruits and vegetables (Kretz *et al.*, 2021). This necessitates the need to promote fruit tree and vegetable planting to not only meet local consumption needs but also improve children's nutrition. Therefore, by promoting fruit tree and vegetable planting, sustained efforts for food security and the reduction of micronutrient

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diseases among children are encouraged. Fruit trees and vegetables also contribute to reducing greenhouse effects thus alleviating the negative impacts of climate change. A project promoting fruit tree and vegetable growing in the Global South would go a long way in contributing to a better world and future for children and future generations.

### **Growing children's savings by utilizing fruit tree and vegetable planting as income streams in the Global South**

When households take up the planting of fruit trees and vegetables, not only can they improve their intake of fruits and vegetables but also take it up as an investment by which they can expand their income streams. Children can be involved in fruit tree and vegetable planting with parental support further exposing them to future life skills. This can enhance their capacity in developing practical forest garden designs and transforming home gardens into sustainable forest gardens. Fruit trees and vegetables serve as means to diversify food options and income streams (Kretz *et al.*, 2021). Therefore, surplus fruits and vegetables can be sold by children. The incomes received can be banked on children's savings or emergency accounts for present or future use as deemed necessary. Thus, utilizing fruit tree and vegetable planting as income streams can facilitate the growth of children's savings.

### **Encouraging planned pregnancies by promoting the use of contraceptives among young people in the Global South**

Pregnancies among children of childbearing age are a global problem with a prevalence all around the globe (Chandra-Mouli & Akwara, 2020). However, the most at risk are children from low-income settings who when exposed to unintended pregnancies suffer adverse consequences that limit their economic prospects and also put their lives at risk. In light of looming crises like the climate change crisis, meeting the unmet need for planned pregnancies globally would reduce unintended pregnancies, minimize the vulnerability of children to complicated situations and give them a chance to study and increase their economic benefits. Therefore, there is a need to encourage planned pregnancies by promoting the usage of contraceptives or other family planning methods. Dombola *et al* (2021) encourages involving children in decision-making and implementing health policies which motivate them to use contraceptives. This would encourage planned pregnancies and give them a chance to thrive.

## **Facilitating children in the Global South to recover from climate change disruptions by advocating for climate reparations**

The World Economic Forum (2022) defines climate reparations as interventions initiated to facilitate countries to recover from climate-induced disasters. Climate reparations focus on supporting countries to manage climate-induced losses that cannot be avoided by mitigation or adaptation. They give a chance for countries or international bodies to do good by supporting those who have been disproportionately affected by climate change. This includes vulnerable countries (Chapman & Ahmed, 2021). When reparations are implemented, those who have contributed to climate change most are given a chance to redress the harm caused through in-kind and monetary means. They are also given a chance to accept responsibility and undertake measures to repair climate injustices and associated effects. Climate reparations thus give a chance to developed countries and large private corporations who have contributed the most to greenhouse gas emissions thus affecting the climate to uplift those in low-income countries who have been disproportionately affected. For children, this gives them a chance to advocate for accountability and demand for a better world.

## **Discussion**

### **How children's nutrition needs can be sustained by promoting fruit tree and vegetable planting in the Global South**

Different interventions can be taken to promote fruit tree and vegetable planting in the Global South from a multi-sectoral perspective. This would involve collaborating with governments, development partners, local leaders and communities to combine efforts to promote fruit tree and vegetable planting in the Global South. The key considerations to be addressed include access to land, access to grafted seedlings, training and continuous support. There is also a need to educate communities about the use of fruits and vegetables and why they should be included in children's nutrition. This is because most children are vulnerable and do not have a say in things like what they should eat. If their parents do not understand the importance of fruits and vegetables as sources of micronutrients, they will not encourage their intake. Therefore, while all the interventions should be approached from the children's perspective, attention must be put on the adults who are the breadwinners and also the decision-makers of the children.

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### **How children's savings can be grown by their parents by utilizing fruit tree and vegetable planting as income streams in the Global South**

In the efforts of promoting fruit tree and vegetable planting, there is a need to promote the investment approach. Fruit trees and vegetables can be a source of income for the family but they can also be implemented as projects for children to supplement their food options as well as provide an avenue to grow their savings. With this approach, a balance has to be emphasized whereby children are not denied fruits and vegetables due to the expected income that can be realized or fruits and vegetables are not being wasted due to focusing on only nutrition needs. There are reports already to confirm that most fruits and vegetables that are grown end up being wasted due to a number of reasons. This implies that implementers have to come up with interventions to minimize the wastage of fruits and vegetables, provide financial services to parents, equip parents with knowledge on markets and other existing avenues for selling their produce and provide after-support services to ensure that the efforts are sustained.

### **How planned pregnancies can be encouraged by promoting the use of contraceptives among young people in the Global South**

Promoting planned pregnancies among children is a journey which has to start right before they reach puberty. This is because most of the factors that push children to engage in early sex can be managed earlier on if identified. Parents have to look out for their children and keep them engaged with other activities to discourage them from idleness and hanging out with wrong crowds. Parents also have to monitor what their children are exposed to so as to guide them where there is a need. There is also a need to talk to children and discourage them from engaging in early sex by educating them about the dangers of early pregnancies and what it can mean to them as children. Children need to know what they stand to lose if they fall victims of unintended pregnancies. On the other hand, despite these efforts, the use of contraceptives among children has to be promoted. This is because parents do not have control over their children's lifestyles or behaviours, however, they can safeguard them from unwanted pregnancies. Mothers should discuss with their daughters and introduce them to contraceptives whose usage must be monitored to ensure that in case they fall victim to early sex or sexual assault, they are protected.

## **How children in the Global South can be facilitated to recover from climate change disruptions by advocating for climate reparations**

Human rights activists, children's rights activists, community leaders, governments, development partners and civil society organisations can support children in benefitting from climate reparations by sharing their plight. Climate change affects children disproportionately and therefore, stories need to be told about how children from different areas are being affected by climate change. This will increase publicity around their situations and cause for public outcry which has to be resolved by facilitating these children to recover from climate change disruptions. Children also need to be educated about climate change to promote their participation in climate change related issues by encouraging them to speak up. When children's voices about how climate change is affecting them increase, they will be loud enough and garner local and international attention which will push for climate reparations towards children.

### **Conclusion and Recommendations**

Solving the effects of climate change towards children is a challenge that requires strengthening the children's capacity to adapt to climate change disruptions as well as mitigating climate change. A fruit tree and vegetable planting project increases the resilience of children against climate change as it boosts their nutrition needs and improves their immunity as well as provides an income stream which can reduce their level of vulnerability. On the other hand, encouraging the use of contraceptives is a form of population control which reduces already vulnerable populations, such as children, from having children who will further deepen their vulnerability and increase their susceptibility to climate change disruptions. Lastly, climate reparations can result in erasing errors from the past to build a better world for children and future generations. In conclusion, averting the climate change crisis involves multifaceted concerted efforts which call for interventions that strengthen the adaptability and reduce the vulnerability of children and other most-at-risk populations. It is thus recommended that concerned stakeholders work together to elevate the lives of children, especially those from low-income settings, to ensure that they are less vulnerable to climate change impacts. It is also recommended that diverse efforts with the ability to promote a good environment, fill nutrition gaps and increase income streams

among children are encouraged because of their benefits, for example, fruit tree and vegetable growing.

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