

NEWS FLASH

Stand with the youngest children

ARNEC, partners craft global call to action for COP26: our climate is our children's future



ARNEC enjoins organisations and individuals to support the Global Call to Action hosted by ECDAN in <https://covidaction.ecdan.org/climatechange>

In the lead up to the global Climate Change Conference of the Parties (COP26) on 31 October-12 November 2021, ARNEC in collaboration with the Early Childhood Development Action Network (ECDAN), UNICEF and Save the Children issued a Global Call to Action seeking support by COP26 delegates, governments, the

private sector, the civil society, and other partners to uphold the well-being of young children in setting national and global commitments for reducing greenhouse gases (GHGs) by half in 2030 and to zero by 2050.

“The climate crisis is a child’s rights crisis at its core.

Protecting the youngest children across the globe is integral to the climate crisis response,” stressed the global call hosted by ECDAN.

The same call is pushing for four priority actions by COP26, one of which is to ensure that global and national resilience and adaptation plans address

UNICEF: Over 40% of the people living in areas of high or extremely high drought severity are in Asia



ARNEC's Call to Action:

We stand with the youngest children and urge for their voices to be heard in addressing the climate crisis

Support ARNEC's Regional Call to Action to address the impacts of the climate crisis on young children available in https://arnec.net/static/uploads/webrelease_ARNEC%20Call%20to%20Action%2030Sep2021.pdf

impacts on the youngest children and support services for the early years.

Next is to increase investments for the nurturing care of young children and target the most climate-vulnerable groups of young children, especially in lower- and middle-income countries where inequalities have been worsened by the climate crisis, environmental degradation, and the COVID-19 pandemic.

Third is to build evidence through research and evaluation

to inform policy choices and investment decisions and raise awareness on the central role of ECD in protecting young children from climate change.

And finally, to empower civil society to implement locally-led and child-sensitive actions on climate change ensuring that the voices of children are heard.

Earlier, ARNEC also released a Regional Call to Action to protect the well-being of young children in the Asia-Pacific, which is home to severe droughts, high flood occurrence,

and extreme weather events and where 60% of the world's population and some of the most vulnerable cities and island nations are found.

"Now is the time when we must put young children at the centre of climate change discussions," ARNEC emphasised in its Regional Call to Action available in its website.

"We need to make early childhood development (ECD) integral in all policy discussions on climate change...at global and country levels," ARNEC stressed.

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The climate crisis is a children's crisis.



...millions of children born in the last year will face... 2-7 times more extreme weather events than their grandparents....This puts children's rights to a safe home, healthy environment, healthcare, food and learning are at risk.

ARNEC Core Team develops knowledge products on ECD and climate change, gender

Plan International and Save the Children, two of the members of the ARNEC Core Team, have released new knowledge products on ECD in the context of promoting gender equality and upholding child rights in climate action, respectively.

In August 2021, Plan International and Promundo launched **Promoting Men's Engagement in Early Childhood Development: A Programming and Influencing Package**, which includes resources developed for programmes that aim to increase male engagement in nurturing care and ECD, as well

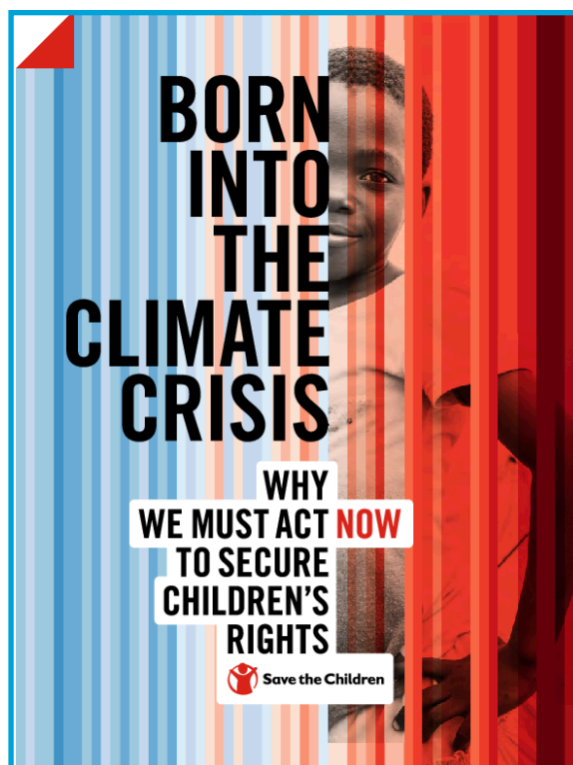
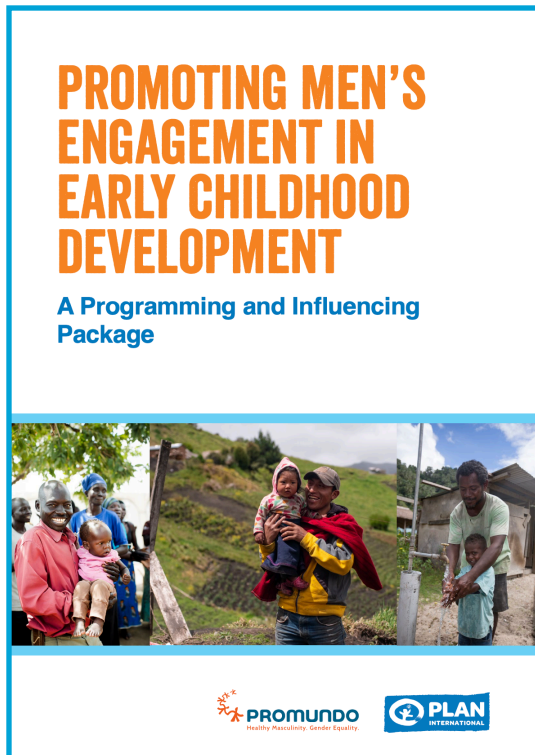
as in maternal health and wellbeing.

Considerations for working with healthcare providers and community health workers and with communities and leaders is included in the knowledge product, as well as tools and templates on policy influencing and social and behaviour change communication campaigns in favour of men's engagement.

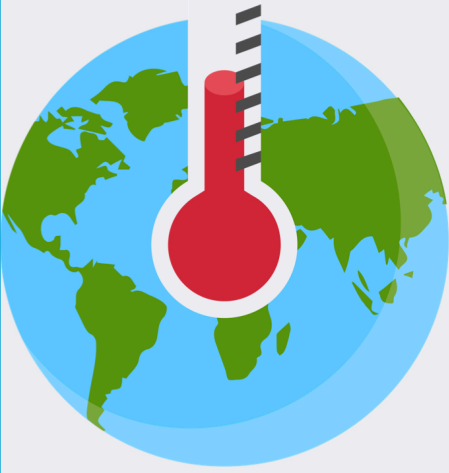
Save the Children, on the other hand, recently released **Born into the Climate Crisis: Why We Must Act Now to Secure Children's Rights**.

"The climate crisis is a children's crisis," stressed Save the Children amplifying how climate change has put children's rights under threat and how future generations of children will likely be exposed to extreme weather events in their lifetime.

The report provides scientific evidence on the effects of global warming on current and future generations of children and calls for climate action through the COP26 to limit global warming to 1.5 degrees above pre-industrial levels.



Promoting Men's Engagement in Early Childhood Development is available in <https://plan-international.org/publications/promoting-mens-engagement-early-childhood-development>. Born into the Climate Crisis can be downloaded from <https://resourcecentre.savethechildren.net/document/born-climate-crisis-why-we-must-act-now-secure-childrens-rights/>.



UN Child Rights Committee rules that countries bear cross-border responsibility for harmful impact of climate change

ARNEC: Protecting the youngest children is integral to the climate crisis response

In a historic ruling on 11 October 2021, the UN Child Rights Committee ruled in favour of the petition filed by 16 children from 12 countries in 2019 against five high emitting states, namely, Argentina, Brazil, France, Germany, and Turkey for failure to take preventive measures to protect children’s rights. Full story is available in <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=27644&LangID=E>.

WFF seeks global leaders for young children from the Asia-Pacific region

The Global Leaders for Young Children program at the World Forum Foundation seeks to identify and develop the next generation of early childhood leaders throughout the world.

Since its inception in 2004, approximately 250 emerging leaders from 72 countries have participated in the program, with many graduates currently playing major roles in shaping the early childhood policies and practices in their countries and regions.

Global Leaders engage in an 18-month program, during which time they develop and implement action-oriented projects in their own communities aimed at improving the lives of young children.

Funding support for qualified ECD professionals and practitioners is available. Visit the ARNEC website for more information: <https://arnec.net/highlight-details?id=80>.



Karma Gayleg of Bhutan participated in the previous Global Leaders for Young Children program

WHO leads ARNEC learning session on nurturing care, seeks partnerships for multisectoral ECD

Two interrelated action areas

What the child's brain and body expects and needs

Components of nurturing care

Enabling environments for nurturing care

Sheila Manji

Speaking before the ARNEC Learning Groups, Institutional Members, and National Representatives, Sheila Manji, ECD Specialist, Child Health and Development at the World Health Organization, facilitated the 'Nurturing Care Framework (NCF) refresh'.

The learning session also culminated with the sharing of NCF experiences in ECD programs and policies in Bhutan, Cambodia, and Indonesia.

The ARNEC learning session with the theme 'Unpacking the NCF' was aimed at developing a shared understanding of NCF and its components and sharing good practices, innovations, and tools in operationalising the NCF in ECD programs and services.

Manji cited the set of WHO recommendations to improve ECD

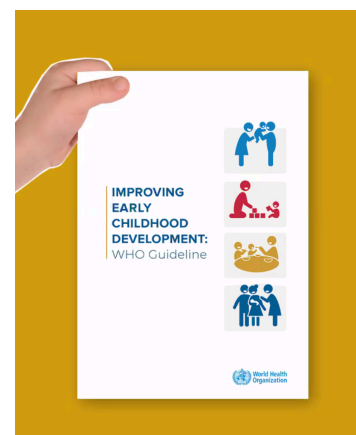
with entry points from NCF. All infants and children should receive responsive care and early learning in the first three years of life; caregivers also need to be supported to provide nurturing care and early learning.

She also added that responsive care and early learning should be integrated with nutrition interventions. Supporting maternal mental health should be part of ECD interventions to support the well-being of young children.

Majority of participants or 77 percent assessed the learning from the activity very good to excellent. More than half (52 percent) rated the overall satisfaction as 'very good'.

"I liked the resources shared and the...experiences from different countries," one participant reflected after the learning session.

Sheila Manji stresses the interrelationships of the components of nurturing care and the enabling environments required to support these, including the need for partnerships at the global, regional, and country levels to improve ECD and nurturing care policies and programs



ARNEC, UNICEF ROSA partner for quality ECD in the Asia-Pacific region

The Regional Office for South Asia (ROSA) of UNICEF has partnered with ARNEC to support quality ECD in the Asia-Pacific region through two initiatives.

The first initiative is developing and rolling out a formative assessment package in the region to address the learning loss of pre-school children resulting from the closure of ECD centres and pre-schools due to COVID-19.

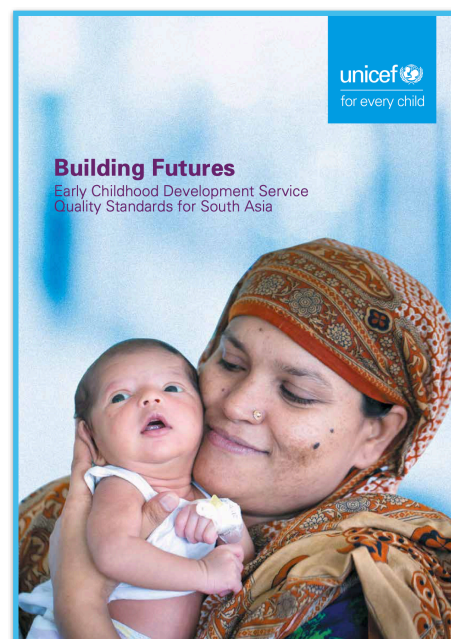
The formative assessment package is for preschool teachers and primary school teachers (to use with children entering grade 1) to support learning at preschools/primary schools and at home in collaboration with parents and caregivers.

This includes tools and guidance on associated teaching and learning strategies to address learning gaps and raise learning to developmentally appropriate levels.

The pilot implementation is being carried out in 1-2 countries to generate evidence for improvement. ARNEC has also organised a technical advisory committee to help enhance the assessment package.

Another initiative is supporting the regional uptake of UNICEF ROSA's ECD quality standards for South Asia, which was presented in an ARNEC webinar in April 2021.

The quality standards would help guide countries in developing their own where these are absent; and reviewing and



The ARNEC webinar report on UNICEF ROSA's ECD quality standards is available in <https://arneck.net/resource?id=276>.

enhancing those that already exist.

A pilot implementation in one country is also in the offing to test these standards in a specific context and generate implementation-specific opportunities for improvement, particularly the flexibility to adapt in diverse operating contexts.

Regional networks, Harvard Center on the Developing Child on the science of ECD

ARNEC has joined the other regional ECD networks in partnering with the Harvard Center for the Developing Child (HCDC) to translate the science of ECD into policy development and implementation.

Led by the International Step by Step Association (ISSA) in the Netherlands and also in collaboration with the Africa Early Childhood Network (AfECN) in Kenya, and the Arab Network for Early Childhood Development (ANECD) in Lebanon, this initiative is focusing on building capacity at country and

regional levels to support shared learning for country-level teams to advance their ECD agendas.

For the Asia-Pacific region, the Indonesia National HI-ECD Coalition, the Alliance for Early Childhood Development Nepal, the Philippines ECCD Council, and Mobile Creches India have been supported since the workshop in August 2021 to use the science knowledge base and practical tools to develop action plans in preparation for the second workshop in November.

Regional networks...continued from page 5

Country action plans include embedding the science base into organisational strategy, capacity building of local governments in implementing integrated ECD program, supporting community mobilisation for ECD activities, and developing communication strategies for information, education and advocacy activities.

The second workshop will be a shared learning experience within and across regions, where teams

will discuss what has and has not worked, ease of application of knowledge, value of this partnership, and other opportunities for improvement at the regional level.

In addition, next steps will be agreed based on assessment to sustain sustain country-level capacity for influencing policy and practice through regional networks in 2022.

ARNEC, UNESCO craft SEL handbook for ECCE teachers

ARNEC and UNESCO Bangkok entered into partnership to develop the Asia-Pacific Regional ECCE Teacher Training Handbook for Social and Emotional Learning (SEL).

Crafting the handbook benefited from the guidance of the ARNEC Board of Directors and the support by the UNESCO Advisory Team.

The handbook and modules were completed in July 2021 and will be finalised after generating field test feedback from four countries. Wider dissemination is expected by mid 2022.

There has been increased awareness and efforts to promote SEL in the region. However, having a structured and comprehensive teacher training, which is contextually relevant and culturally sensitive, is lacking.

The handbook and modules are meant to help equip teachers with SEL knowledge and skills to effectively support children's development.

SEL is critical and integral part of teacher's professional development and curricula for children, and SEL in ECCE is vital in contributing to an equitable and quality ECCE programme.



Why Social emotional learning (SEL) in ECCE?

Social emotional learning (SEL) is a process in learning a variety of non-cognitive skills and developing knowledge in managing emotions, building resilience, setting goals and caring for others - essential for a child's holistic development. With a strong social and emotional foundation, children can better thrive in a highly dynamic and skill-driven future.

-UNESCO Bangkok, 2021

available in <https://bangkok.unesco.org/content/empowering-early-childhood-care-and-education-ecce-teachers-transformative-vision>

Two learning sessions on playful parenting held



ARNEC had two learning sessions on evidence-based playful parenting in support of activities under the Prescription to Play (P2P) Project in partnership with Save the Children and funded by The LEGO Foundation.

The first learning session featured the Parenting the future program of the Center for Experimental Economics in Education, Shaanxi Normal University in China on 23 June 2021. Assistant Professor Jie Yang presented the importance of nutrition and a good parenting (stimulating) environment within the first 1000 days of life. The parenting environment during 0-3 is crucial as most brain development happens before the age of 3, thus

greatly predicting the future quality of human capital.

The presentation focused on the source of human capital development and discussed how evidence-based ECD interventions have addressed challenges in parenting and caregiving for 0-3 year old children in rural China.

“Our hope is that [with play] and toys, a focused curriculum, and a team of ‘parent trainers’, we could increase and improve parent-child interactions in rural households, and ultimately improve child development,” she stressed.

The other learning session focused on ‘play everyday’ with Sesame Workshop India on 31 August 2021. Sukhna Sawhney, Senior Manager-Content & Curriculum of Sesame Workshop, presented two evidence-based playful parenting

programs, particularly (1) The Play Every Day and (2) ‘Play. Learn. Connect.’ programs.

Using research evidence as basis for program design and implementation, Sukhna walked through the participants on the elements of the play-based programs addressing notions of parents and caregivers about play.

Although most parents value play with their children, Sukhna explained citing research findings that there are negative perceptions surrounding play: “What will people say when we play with a child?”

Sesame Workshop India used this baseline finding to introduce play-based programs that would transform caregivers’ behaviours valuing play as an essential component promoting child learning, development, and well-being.

Insights from the learning session with Shaanxi University, 23 June 2021

- Recognising the merits of Bayley Scales of Infant and Toddler Development as a measurement tool, but noting its limitations in the context of the region
- Exploring the opportunity for context-responsive child development and caregiver-specific tools and measures especially in low-resource settings
- Embracing local culture and folklore as sources for discovering play and introducing play-based interactions between young children and their caregivers

Insights from the learning session with Sesame Workshop India, 31 August 2021

- Recognising that parents do not fully understand the power of play in the area of critical thinking or holistic development of the child; baseline research important in play-based ECD programs
- Drawing from cultural resources the appropriate content and approach for play-based interventions for the child and the caregiver
- Valuing evidence that the workshop model in community settings works best and more scalable for play-based programs; use of mobile phone technology well received but with limitations

Playful parenting information system to enhance community engagement in ARNEC advocacy page

ARNEC is developing a playful parenting information system to improve the advocacy page on responsive caregiving and playful parenting.

The system will host the mapping of playful parenting practices in the region and the knowledge library for responsive caregiving resources.

In addition, it will also provide opportunities for community interaction through discussion boards and sharing of good practices.

It will also support learning platforms for the Learning Group or Community of Practice.

The playful parenting information system is expected to be up by the first quarter of 2022 and is supported by the P2P Project.



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