



ARNEC
Asia-Pacific Regional Network
for Early Childhood

#ARNEClearning

ARNEC holds webinars to connect the ECD community in the Asia-Pacific region and beyond on early childhood development

Launch of the Scoping Study on ECD and Climate Change

14 December 2022, 12:00-1:30 PM Singapore time

Citing differentiated climate impacts on young children across developmental stages

ARNEC launches scoping study on young children, climate change; recommends action at different levels

In his opening remarks in the ARNEC webinar on 14 December 2022, Sheldon Shaeffer, PhD and Chair of the ARNEC Board of Directors, stressed that young children are the most profoundly affected by climate change and environmental degradation and COVID-19; yet they are least represented in policies and programs designed to respond to adverse impacts and plans for future consequences.

Dr. Shaeffer explained that the scoping study by the University of Wollongong is a pioneering response to this situation and has been designed by ARNEC, UNICEF, and Save the Children to put young children at the heart of climate and environmental actions.

Deputy Regional Director Myo-Zin Nyunt of the UNICEF East Asia and

Scoping Study Launch
Most Vulnerable to Most Valuable

A scoping study to put young children at the heart of climate actions and environmental protection
Hosted by the The Asia Pacific Network for Early Childhood (ARNEC)
14th December 2022 (Online)

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With
Cathrine Neilsen-Hewett, PhD
Lisa Kervin, PhD
Anthony Okely, EdD
Ellie Taylor, PhD
Karel Strooband, PhD
Lisa Kilgariff, MA

EARLY START
UNIVERSITY OF WOLLONGONG AUSTRALIA

Pacific Regional Office (EAPRO) welcomed the scoping study exploring the linkages between early childhood development and climate change and environmental degradation.

“Negative impacts from climate and environmental shocks in early childhood can last throughout their lifetimes with risk of deepening intergenerational poverty and inequity. Investing in the early years across the nurturing care components can increase adaptation and resilience of young children to climate impacts,” emphasized the UNICEF official.

Meanwhile, Rushda Majeed, Chief Programme Officer of the Bernard van Leer Foundation (BvLF), cited how the study could inform communities and decision makers in thinking about climate adaptation and resilience from the lens of young children and their families.

She also shared BvLF’s initiatives promoting the interlinkages between early childhood development and climate change in cities and communities, such as the Urban 95 (<https://bernardvanleer.org/ecm-article/2018/urban95-creating-cities-for-the-youngest-people/>).

In case you missed it

For the full documentation report, presentation resources, and recording, visit the ARNEC website or click this link: <https://arneck.net/events/webinar-launch-most-vulnerable-most-valuable-scoping-study-put-young-children-heart-climate>

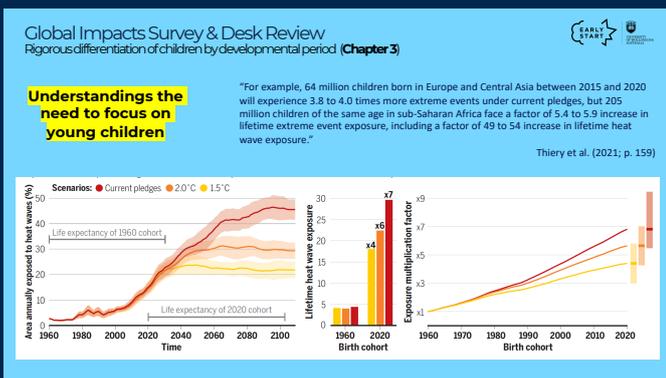
At a glance

Key points from the presentation by the University of Wollongong



Marc de Rosnay, Professor of Child Development and Academic Director of Early Start, University of Wollongong, presented the findings of the scoping study to put young children at the heart of climate actions and environmental protection. The pioneering study was pursued under the auspices of ARNEC in partnership with UNICEF EAPRO and Save the Children International and with the support of BvLF.

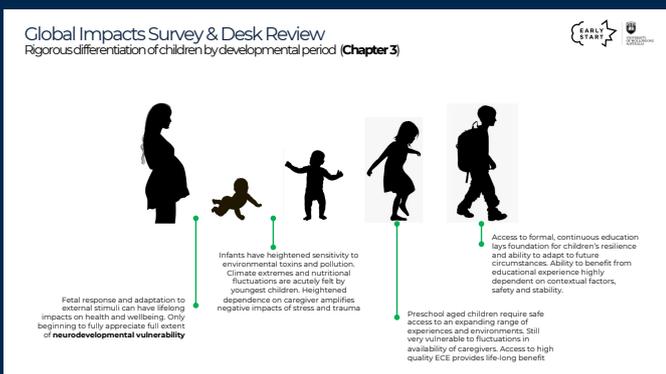
Young children aged 0-8 are the most vulnerable to the impacts of climate change and environmental degradation. But they are also the most valuable group in the fight against it. Supporting young children is a smart investment and should be placed at the forefront of climate resilience action.



1

There is evidence that young children born in the year 2020 are more increasingly exposed to extreme climate events in their lifetime than those born in 1960.

This evidence compels us to focus on young children now more than ever and the supports they need to build the capacity for adaptation, mitigation, and resilience.



2

We need to stop referring to 'children' or 'youth' as if they are one homogenous cohort. We need to start being rigorous in the way we think about the impacts of climate change across the developmental stages and ages of children.



3

Needs of children differ across age and development stages and, as such, careful attention should be given to differentiated impacts of climate change on young children. International agreements (and national policies) should not oversimplify 'children' as a homogenous group in climate and environmental actions.

More key points

Presentation by the University of Wollongong



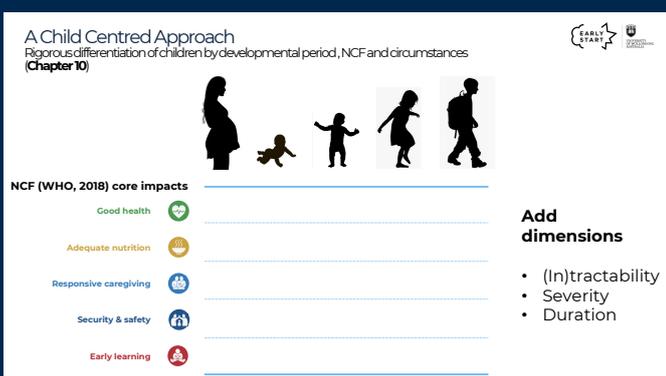
4

By introducing rigour in how we think about ‘children’ and understanding how climate change impacts affect children differently across developmental stages, there is a need to introduce pathways to resilience at different levels: in the home, communities, schools and early childhood education settings, and ECD services, programs and policies using a child-centred approach.



5

And for policy, the opportunities for change include disaggregating childhood and emphasising meaningful development transitions; promoting children’s voice; focusing on children’s learning environments; improving children’s physical environments; and enhancing funding mechanisms, including predictable investments for the early years.



6

Finally, there is also a need to understand how the **duration**, **intensity** and **(in)tractability** of environmental and climate impacts affect children (at different stages of development) differentially and cumulatively.

ARNEC would like to thank the team from the University of Wollongong for conducting the scoping study led by Professor Marc de Rosnay. Please download the full presentation of Professor Marc de Rosnay from the ARNEC website at <https://arnec.net/events/webinar-launch-most-vulnerable-most-valuable-scoping-study-put-young-children-heart-climate>.

The Scoping Study is available in the ARNEC website.

Click this link: <https://arnec.net/resources/arnec-resources/most-vulnerable-most-valuable-scoping-study-put-young-children-heart-0>.

Panel responds to the scoping study



JOY MILLAN-MALER, ECD SPECIALIST, UNICEF PACIFIC

The scoping study extends the discussions beyond the narrative of young children as the most vulnerable to climate change. What is more exciting for us in the Pacific and the Regional Council for ECD and its Coalition of Partners, including UNICEF, is a case for early childhood development investment as a critical pathway for resilience. In February 2023, 15 Pacific Island countries will gather across sectors of finance, education, health, and social welfare to discuss ECD and resilience. This study will help inform the discussions.



DR MANJUMA AKHTAR MOUSUMI, ASSISTANT PROFESSOR AND HEAD OF ACADEMICS, BRAC UNIVERSITY, BANGLADESH

In Bangladesh, climate change has profound negative effects on livelihood, health, and wellbeing. Extreme weather events during early childhood have negative impact on the poorest and most vulnerable groups. BRAC is working with underprivileged communities to lead in climate adaptation. Examples include the One Room Schools, curriculum enhancement to include climate change and environmental protection, and teacher training support, among others. BRAC'S philosophy is that if children can't go to schools, then schools will go to the children, especially in the context of extreme climate events and humanitarian crises. The scoping study recommendations will be vital in supporting BRAC's work going forward.



DR SRI HARI GOVIND, DOCTOR AND CLIMATE HEALTH FELLOW, GLOBAL CONSORTIUM OF CLIMATE AND HEALTH EDUCATION

The most effective, the least responsible, and the least represented in climate change are children. Building resilience is not only focusing on the short-term and the now, but also anticipating and preparing for what happens in the next forty years or so. The scoping study brings to light the lack of focus on young children. It is, indeed, an act of empowerment to invest in the early years to build resilience in the long-term. We need to build a global movement of young people, young professionals, and young parents to support early childhood development to build climate resilience.



DR MARIA RITA LUCAS, DEAN OF THE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION-LIBERAL ARTS-MUSIC-SOCIAL WORK, CENTRO ESCOLAR UNIVERSITY, PHILIPPINES

The findings of the scoping study are similar with those in our micro research in villages in the Philippines on the impacts of climate events on young children and their parents and teachers. Some recommendations from the findings of the community study include: (1) integrating environmental protection and care in the ECCD curriculum; (2) developing lesson guides and the need for contextualisation; (3) preparing teaching modules covering content and pedagogy; and (4) providing support for parents, especially addressing climate anxiety and trauma.



Save the Children reiterates ECD investment as a pathway to resilience

Caroline Dusabe, Pacific Education Senior Advisor at Save the Children Australia, provided the closing message in the webinar.



“This is a real good opportunity to build a coalition and a movement to move forward the agenda on addressing the impact of climate change and environmental degradation on young children,” she said.

Echoing the change of narrative of young children from the most vulnerable to becoming the most valuable, Caroline amplified the call for ECD as a smart investment for sustainable development. Apart from the differentiated domains of impact, she also reinforced the view about

how children experience the impacts of climate change differently across development stages. Investing in the nurturing care components should also take into account the different needs of children based on local context, she stressed.

ARNEC, UNICEF EAPRO, and Save the Children, with the support of BvLF, commit to developing a regional roadmap on climate- sensitive ECD and resilience-building prioritising actions in the home, community, schools, and policy level in consultation with different sectors and stakeholders. She encouraged participants to continue engaging and collaborating in this initiative in 2023.

Participants rate webinar, provide feedback



Participants speak
Taken from the webinar evaluation

I can use the information gathered to advocate to our government leaders and everyone concerned with children to raise their voice to protect the innocent children from effects of climate change.

Thank you, this was so insightful to someone new to the area of climate change, with concrete recommendations.

Thank you very much for presenting this extremely important information for the modern world! Let's hope that together we can...[provide]...a better place...for young children to live.

Results of the webinar evaluation are provided below (selected qualitative responses are provided on the left).

