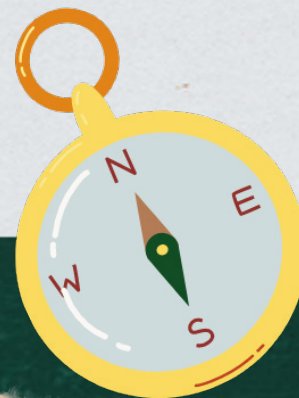


MY PLANET, MY RIGHTS

A guide for children to tell
the United Nations Committee on the
Rights of the Child about their Right
to a Healthy and Safe Environment





WELCOME TO: MY PLANET, MY RIGHTS

Children are the most vulnerable to environmental threats,
yet they are often not heard.
It's time for change - let's speak up about the planet!

*Whether in the world, in our countries or communities,
we all have a role in environmental protection.*

This guide will help you to think about:

- How the environment impacts your rights as children
- Laws and agreements that protect the planet
- How to talk to other children about their environment
- How to report to the Committee on the Rights of the Child about your right to a healthy and safe environment



*When you see this symbol, click on it to
find out more about each topic online.*

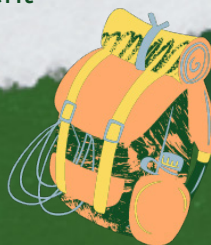


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Base Camp of this toolkit to earn your title as Eco-Hero!

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BASE CAMP 1 ECO-STARTER

CHILDREN'S RIGHTS &
THE ENVIRONMENT

1. DID YOU KNOW?

A HEALTHY ENVIRONMENT IS WHEN:

- The climate is safe for all living beings
- Everyone has clean air, clean water and healthy food
- Everyone has access to healthy ecosystems and biodiversity
- Children grow up in unpolluted and non-toxic places
- Governments and industries protect and promote the health of the environment



Some children (girls, indigenous children, children with disabilities, or those living in poverty) face the biggest risk of all. Poor children often live in damaged and polluted places, and they don't have access to proper healthcare.

Children are more vulnerable to threats in the environment because their organs, immune systems and smaller airways are less able to cope with toxic air, polluted water, diseases or heatwaves.

The United Nations Special Rapporteur on Toxics says pollution is a "silent pandemic" harming millions of children. Each year, air pollution alone kills more than half a million children under five worldwide.



ACTIVITY

2. MY PLANET, MY RIGHTS

HOW DOES THE ENVIRONMENT AFFECT
YOUR RIGHTS AS CHILDREN?

Trace an arrow to match each environmental
issue to one or more child rights.

ISSUE

A tornado has destroyed entire schools and homes.

There are less and less green and safe spaces in cities.

Children have developed illnesses and disabilities
because of high levels of pollution.

Indigenous children had to move away from their
village because of deforestation.

A drought has hit a farming region causing
food shortages.

Children were separated from their families
due to extreme flooding in a village.



THE LOSS OF BIODIVERSITY, CLIMATE CHANGE AND
THE DESTRUCTION OF ECOSYSTEMS HAVE A HUGE
IMPACT ON CHILDREN'S RIGHTS.

RIGHT



The right to education



The right to an adequate standard of living



The right to an adequate standard of living



The right to protection from violence
and exploitation



The right to health



The right to culture and identity

3. ECO-HEROES: CHILDREN LEADING CHANGE



Aged 17, Kenya

LESEIN MUTUNKEI

Lesein is a teenager from Kenya. He was so shocked by the impacts of pollution and deforestation that he came up with a fun way to reforest. When he was just 12 years old, he founded Trees4Goals with a simple mission: to plant 11 trees every time he scores a goal.

LESEIN HAS ALREADY PLANTED MORE THAN 1,000 TREES.



Aged 14 & 17
India

THE BROTHERS RECYCLED 173,630 KILOGRAMS OF WASTE AND WON THE INTERNATIONAL CHILDREN'S PEACE PRIZE.



Aged 15 & 17, U.K.

SO FAR, THE SISTERS HAVE PICKED UP MORE THAN 100,000 PIECES OF SINGLE-USE PLASTIC LITTER ACROSS THE UK.

VIHAAN & NAV AGARWAL

In 2020, Delhi was the world's most polluted capital for the third straight year. Vihaan, who has asthma, was often sick because of poor air quality and couldn't play outdoors. At age 14 and 17, the brothers created One Step Greener, a city-wide operation collecting rubbish from more than 1,000 households, schools and offices.



ELLA & AMY MEEK

The sisters were so upset by plastic pollution and waste in the United Kingdom that they started Kids Against Plastic. Aged 10 and 12, they've launched campaigns in over 1,000 schools and published the book Be Plastic Clever.



ACTIVITY

4. POLLUTION SOLUTION

1. In teams or individually, draw a map of your local area.
2. On the map, highlight where you have seen environmental issues (for example, pollution, litter or damage to plants).
3. For each issue, add a solution you could put in place to help.



BASE CAMP 2 ECO-EXPLORER

HARNESSES & HELMETS:
TOOLS TO PROTECT YOUR
RIGHTS AND THE RIGHTS OF
FUTURE GENERATIONS

1. INTERNATIONAL AGREEMENTS

THE CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD



HEALTH



EDUCATION



RIGHT TO
BE HEARD



IDENTITY



STANDARD OF
LIVING



NON
DISCRIMI-
NATION



PROTECTION
FROM ALL
FORMS OF
VIOLENCE



LIFE, SURVIVAL
AND
DEVELOPMENT



RIGHT TO
LEISURE AND
PLAY



BEST INTERESTS
OF THE CHILD



THE 2030 SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS (SDG)



In 2014, 193 country members of the United Nations agreed for 17 main goals to achieve by year 2030 to ensure that people around the world live better, without damaging the planet.

SDG 1: TARGET POVERTY:

Poor children are vulnerable to climate-related and natural disasters because they live in unsafe and unhealthy places, sometimes even on the street.

SDG 3: TARGET HEALTH:

Pollution is a big problem for children all over the world. We need to reduce deaths and illnesses from dangerous chemicals and air pollution or water and soil contamination.

SDG 4: TARGET EDUCATION:

Everyone should learn about sustainable development and lifestyles, human rights, gender equality and cultural diversity.

SDG 11: TARGET CITIES:

Everyone should have access to safe, inclusive and accessible, green and public spaces, in particular women and children, older persons and persons with disabilities.

SDG 13: TARGET CLIMATE CHANGE:

Give children access to information about the environment and make sure governments and institutions work to reduce climate change and its effects.

**MORE TOOLS TO HELP YOU
PROTECT YOUR RIGHTS
AND YOUR PLANET.
WHAT DO THEY SAY?**



THE RIGHTS OF FUTURE GENERATIONS

We also need to protect the planet for our children, grandchildren and generations to come. Decisions and laws we make today have a long-term effect on the environment that future generations will inherit.



THE PARIS AGREEMENT

**SIGNED BY
195
COUNTRIES**

Protect all biodiversity, ecosystems and oceans.

CREATED ON
12 December 2015



THE SENDAI FRAMEWORK FOR DISASTER RISK REDUCTION

**SIGNED BY
187
PARTIES**

Make the world safer and reduce the chance of hazards turning into disasters.

14-18 March 2015



THE CONVENTION ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY

**SIGNED BY
196
COUNTRIES**

Protect all forms of life on Earth including animals, plants, fungi, micro-organisms, and genetic diversity.

29 December 1993



THE MINAMATA CONVENTION ON MERCURY

**SIGNED BY
137
PARTIES**

Protect the environment and human health from releases of Mercury, a toxic heavy metal.

16 August 2017



THE PARIS AGREEMENT



States who sign up have to:

- Report on progress.
- Reduce greenhouse emissions and limit this century's average global temperature increase to no more than 2°C.
- Increase natural areas to absorb greenhouse gases, protecting ecosystems and people.
- Support countries who suffer most from climate change.



YOUNGO, the official youth constituency of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) offers updates and recommendations.



THE SENDAI FRAMEWORK FOR DISASTER RISK REDUCTION



A 15-year plan with 7 key targets, including:

- Reduce the number of people who die or are affected by disasters (natural or human-made).
- Reducing how much money is spent on fixing disasters.
- Ensuring less damage is caused when disasters happen.
- It also says children's education, access to information and participation are part of disaster risk reduction.



THE CONVENTION ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY



- The Convention sets out what needs to be done to solve the biodiversity loss crisis.
- States who sign up have to add biodiversity to public education and try to involve young people in decisions.
- Benefits and profits from the utilization of natural resources have to be shared fairly.



THE MINAMATA CONVENTION ON MERCURY



Mercury is a metal used in fluorescent lamps, thermometers or the production of other chemicals.

Minamata Bay is a place in Japan where people's health was seriously harmed by mercury pollution in the past.

- The Convention wants to control mercury supply and trade, and reduce its use.
- Raise public awareness, and help institutions to #MakeMercuryHistory.

2. YOUR GOVERNMENT'S OBLIGATIONS

PROTECTING CHILDREN FROM ENVIRONMENTAL HARMS

GOVERNMENTS MUST MAKE AND ADOPT LAWS AND POLICIES THAT PROTECT CHILDREN BY:



Carefully examining their impacts on children

Collecting information on the effects of environmental harms on children and the barriers to children's rights



Involving children in decisions using child-centered and child-friendly programmes

Making sure businesses respect laws, and do not abuse children's rights



GOVERNMENTS MUST RESPECT YOUR RIGHTS AND TAKE YOUR VIEWS AND OPINIONS SERIOUSLY THROUGH:



Making information about children's rights and protection from environmental harms available in child-friendly language and accessible formats.



Protecting children's rights to express themselves freely, join forces and speak up about environmental issues.



Supporting child environmental rights defenders, for example, by promoting their stories positively.



Removing barriers that children face in court when defending their right to a healthy environment





3. ENVIRO-BINGO

In teams or individually,
write your answers in the table below
and shout 'bingo' when you finish!



HOW GOVERNMENTS CAN SUPPORT CHILD ENVIRONMENTAL RIGHTS DEFENDERS	WHAT THE RIGHT TO IDENTITY IS ABOUT	THE LIMIT PUT BY THE PARIS AGREEMENT ON GLOBAL TEMPERATURE	WHAT THE SDG ON EDUCATION WANTS EVERYONE TO LEARN
THE NUMBER OF COUNTRIES WHO SIGNED THE CONVENTION ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY	1 WAY GOVERNMENTS CAN PROTECT CHILDREN FROM ENVIRONMENTAL HARM	3 RIGHTS FROM THE CRC THAT ARE CONNECTED TO THE ENVIRONMENT	3 RIGHTS FROM THE CRC THAT ARE CONNECTED TO THE ENVIRONMENT
HOW THE ENVIRONMENT CAN AFFECT HEALTH	HOW HAZARDS COME ABOUT	WHAT YOUNGO DOES	HOW YOU CAN USE THESE TOOLS



STORIES FROM MEKONG YOUTH ASSEMBLY

STORY 1

THE BLOOD SUGARCANE PLANTATION IN CAMBODIA

"Our children were born here, but now our land is gone, they will have no way to make a living".

In 2006, the Cambodian Government gave away land to two companies to build a sugar cane plantation, violently evicting 4,000 villagers.

Villagers say this was illegal: they were not consulted and the land was theirs. They must, at least, be given money from the profits made from selling the sugar.

The eviction has been terrible for children's rights. Families were moved far away from the school so children can't access education. Because parents lost the income from their land, some children had to start working.

A lawsuit is still ongoing.



STORY 2

LEAD CONTAMINATION IN THAILAND

"The children in Lower Klity Creek village cannot swim in the river anymore".

A lead mine has been pouring waste directly into Klity Creek. Villagers, from the Karen indigenous community are exposed to the poisonous metal through water, soil, fish, and vegetables.

Children are suffering from big health problems such as mental disability, blindness, liver, kidney and stomach damage.

Klity Creek is one of the country's worst sites of industrial pollution but the government has not cleaned the river or offered any medical care to villagers.

ACTIVITY

WRITE A SHORT LETTER TO YOUR GOVERNMENT.

WRITE ABOUT ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES IN YOUR COMMUNITY AND HOW YOU THINK YOUR STATE CAN HELP USING SOME OF THE TOOLS YOU LEARNED ABOUT.

YOU CAN ALSO CELEBRATE SOMETHING YOUR GOVERNMENT IS DOING WELL FOR THE ENVIRONMENT.



SUCCESS STORIES FROM AROUND THE GLOBE



In 2019, **Bangladesh** became the first country of the world to grant its rivers the same legal status as humans. This means that if a person is accused of harming the rivers, they can be taken to court.



In 2022, **Ecuador, Colombia, Costa Rica and Panama** made a safe marine route for turtles and other ocean creatures threatened by climate change and industrial fishing. Now they can migrate safely.



In 2017, **New Zealand** gave Mount Taranaki the same legal rights as a person. For indigenous peoples, the mountain is like an ancestor or a family member. Now, if someone damages it, they can be legally prosecuted.



4. REPORTING TO THE COMMITTEE ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD

*There are two ways to report to the Committee.
What is the difference?*



THE STANDARD REPORTING CYCLE:

1. First, your government sends the Committee a report.
2. The Committee then sends back some questions.
3. Your government has to send a second document with replies to the questions.



THE SIMPLIFIED REPORTING CYCLE:

1. The Committee asks your government questions.
2. Your government sends back its replies to the questions. This means your government only sends one report instead of two.



For more information, look at:
My Pocket Guide to CRC Reporting



**Watch this video about
The United Nations
Committee on the Rights
of the Child**



ABOUT YOUR REPORT:



Children can write and send a report themselves, or together with adults. You can also contact: Child Rights Connect, Child Rights Coalition Asia, UNICEF or child rights/ human rights organizations in your community.



The Committee accepts reports anytime but discussions happen at certain points of the reporting cycles.



Your report should be no more than 30 pages, with more pages for drawings, photos, etc.



Write your report in English, French, Spanish, or in your language and ask UNICEF or child rights/human rights organizations to help you translate your report into English, French, or Spanish.



Make sure to also share your report and views with adults and organizations that work with children in your country and community so they can help you make a change.

**You can use different media in your report.
What would you like to include? Tick the box:**

☐

VIDEOS

☐

DRAWINGS

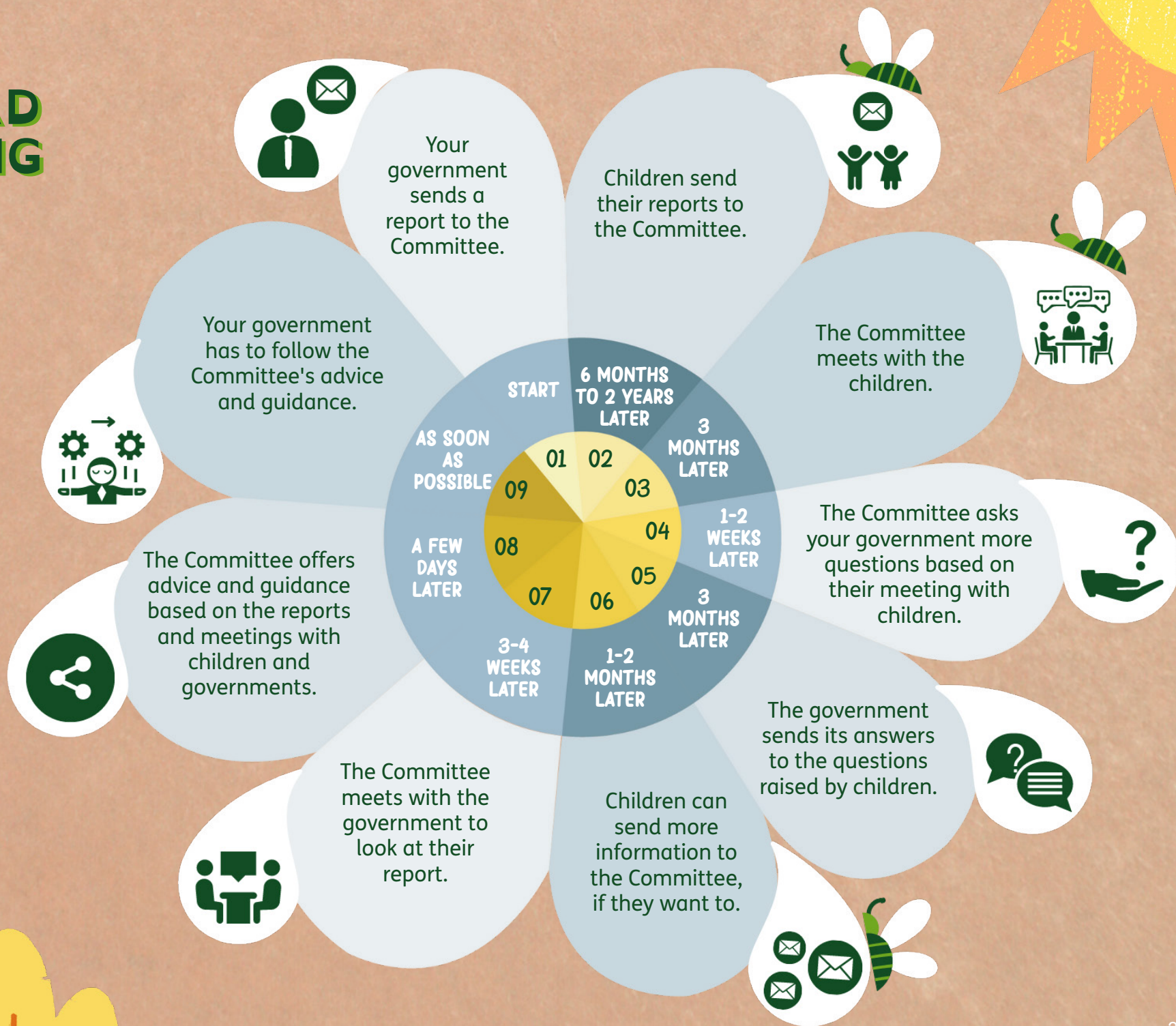
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PHOTOS

☐

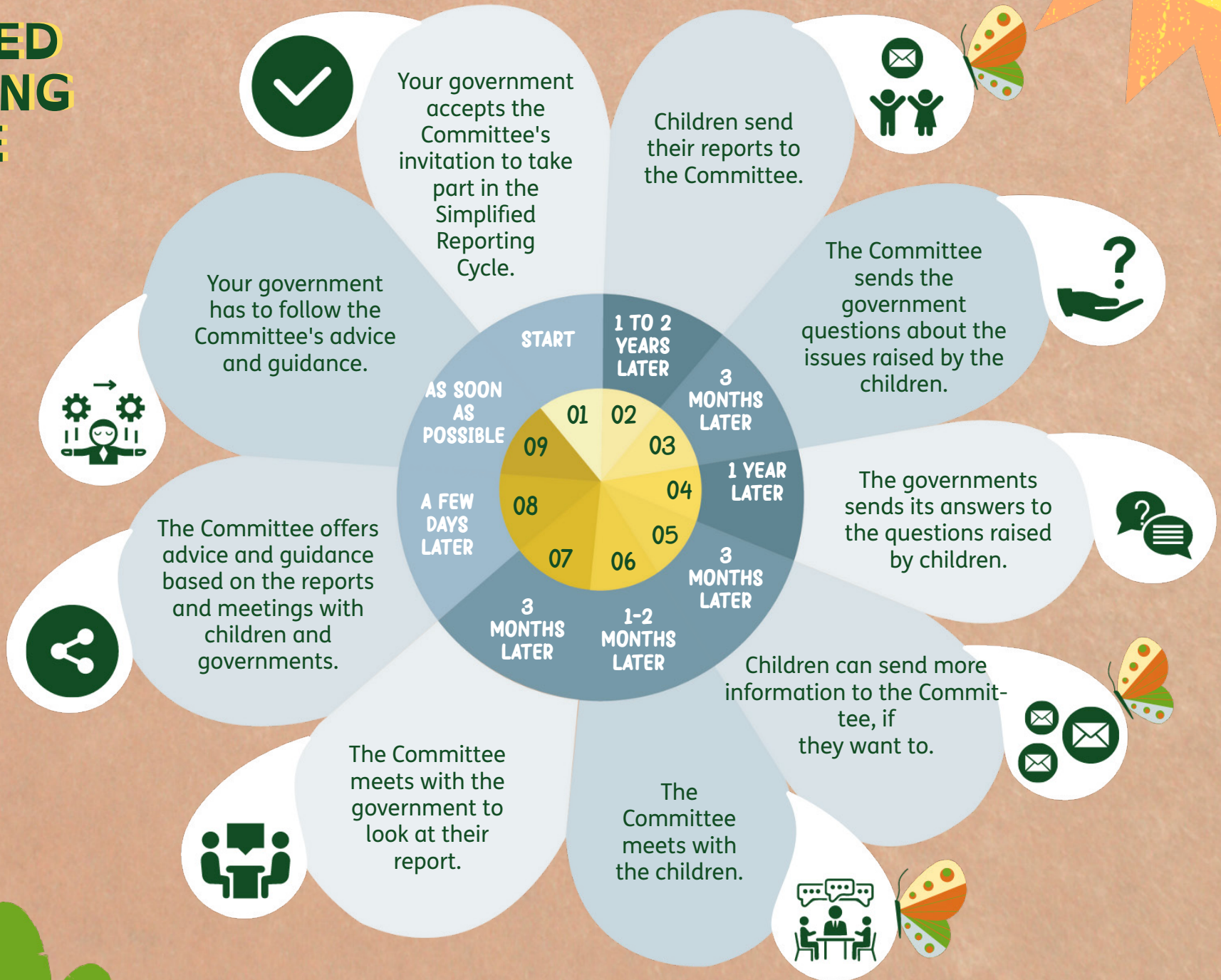
CHILDREN'S STORIES

STANDARD REPORTING CYCLE



THIS IS THE STANDARD
REPORTING CYCLE FOR
THE COMMITTEE ON THE
RIGHTS OF THE CHILD.
WHEN CHILDREN
PARTICIPATE IN THE
CYCLE, YOU'LL SEE
THIS SMALL BUG

SIMPLIFIED REPORTING CYCLE



**THIS IS THE SIMPLIFIED
REPORTING CYCLE FOR
THE COMMITTEE ON THE
RIGHTS OF THE CHILD.
WHEN CHILDREN
PARTICIPATE IN THE
CYCLE, YOU'LL SEE
THIS BUTTERFLY**

BASE CAMP 3 ECO-PIONEER

CHILDREN'S RIGHTS &
THE ENVIRONMENT

1. MOUNTAIN TOP VIEW



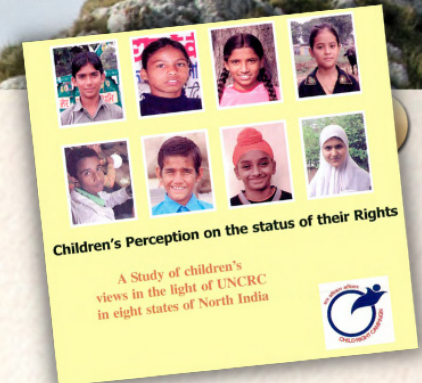
IN TUNISIA...

- 24 children from 15 regions trained to report to the Committee on the Rights of the Child.
- Two methods were used:
 1. Consultation workshops with 170 children affected, such as those accused of law breaking or children with disabilities.
 2. Drama workshops for children to create plays inspired by stories from their peers.



IN HUNGARY...

- 5300 children shared their views about their rights.
- Child Rights Ambassadors used social media to promote an online survey in schools.
- They filmed an interview with the members of the Committee on the Rights of the Child for other children to learn about the reporting process.
- A special survey was designed for deaf children.



IN MADAGASCAR...

- Over 1000 children were empowered to engage in the Committee on the Rights of the Child reporting cycle.
- Children were divided into 10 groups such as children without parents or children who live on the streets.
- A questionnaire was made for each group and all the answers were recorded without adults to reflect the exact views of the children.

2. EXPEDITION TRAINING

CHILDREN WHO SPEAK TO CHILDREN CAN DISCOVER NEW INFORMATION THAT ADULTS WOULDN'T BE ABLE TO FIND OUT.

SUPPORT AND GUIDANCE:

Try to find supportive adults around you. These may be family, friends, or workers from school. They might be a child rights or human rights organization in your community, or one you contacted online. Not only can your supportive adults help you with your report, they can also teach you new skills to become an Eco-Hero.



Find out more about how to do research:

- 👉 [Save the Children Child-Led Data Collection](#)
- 👉 [Plan International Advocacy Toolkit](#)
- 👉 [Child Human Rights Defenders Learning Platform](#)

1. WHO WILL YOU TALK TO?



Speak to schools, organisations, or do some research online – you can use this in your report to the Committee on the Rights of the Child.



Talk to as many children as you want, or to children you know whose right to a healthy and safe environment was violated.



Choose a “representative sample”. This means an equal number of girls and boys from different ethnic and social backgrounds.



Talk to children whose views do not get heard as much, like young children, refugee children, children who work, or who are not in school.



If you want to speak to children who speak another language, ask for help to get an interpreter.

2. HOW AND WHAT WILL YOU FIND OUT?

Speak to children about their rights and issues that matter to them. Create and share surveys or interview small groups of children. You can also use online platforms that are accessible to the children you want to talk with.

When talking to children in sensitive situations such as victims of violence, in prison, or those with mental health difficulties, it's better to interview them one-to-one and ask for help from adults they trust.



Decide what questions to ask:

- Closed questions (answered by yes or no)
- Open questions (that allow explanations to answers)
- Multiple choice questions (like a quiz)
- Ratings (from 1 to 5/ Very Important to Not Important).

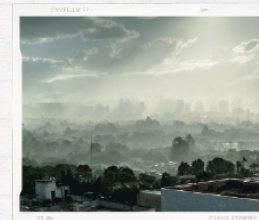


*Be creative!
Ask children to draw, create a song, a play, a poem, or anything else that could work in your country.*

KEY TOPICS YOU CAN REPORT ON:



ENVIRONMENTAL DAMAGE AND POLLUTION



AIR POLLUTION AND OTHER CAUSES OF INCREASE IN GLOBAL TEMPERATURE



CLIMATE CHANGE



IMPACT OF BUSINESSES TO ENVIRONMENT AND CHILDREN'S RIGHTS



PARTICIPATION OF CHILDREN IN DECISION-MAKING



ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION



TOXIC CHEMICALS



PROTECTION OF CHILD ENVIRONMENTAL RIGHTS DEFENDERS



ACCESS TO INFORMATION

3. FIELD EXPEDITION

3. FIELD EXPEDITION

IT'S TIME TO GO OUT AND SPEAK
TO OTHER CHILDREN.

REMEMBER TO:



Tell children why you're doing the research.



Ask permission to use information they give you in your report to the Committee on the Rights of the Child.



Tell children they do not have to answer any questions that make them feel uncomfortable.



Record what they say – take notes, or (with their permission) use audio or video recording.



Share news about what happened to the results of your research with the children involved.

WHAT DID YOU FIND OUT?

Write down what children talked about. Quotes can also be very useful for your report. For example, “I’ve often been sick since a factory moved to my village”.

[illegible]

4. DATA ROCKS

WHAT WERE CHILDREN'S VIEWS AND SOLUTIONS ABOUT THESE ISSUES?

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HOW MANY CHILDREN DID YOU TALK TO?

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WHAT WERE THE ISSUES CHILDREN TALKED MOST ABOUT?

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BASE CAMP 4 ECO HERO

PROTECTING ECOLOGICAL
CHILD RIGHTS

1. CLIMBING FOR CHANGE: WRITE YOUR REPORT

The Committee accepts confidential information so you can decide if and when to make your report public (on the Committee of the Rights of the Child's website).

If you think there could be negative consequences when your government or anyone else sees your report, discuss it with other children involved and ask for help from supportive adults.



REPORTING TEMPLATE

Which child right(s) are you defending?

Which key topics do you want to work on?

- ☐ Environmental damage and pollution
- ☐ Air pollution and other causes of increase in global temperature
- ☐ Protection of child environmental rights defenders
- ☐ Climate change
- ☐ Toxic chemicals
- ☐ Environmental education
- ☐ Participation of children in decision-making
- ☐ Access to information
- ☐ Impact of businesses to environment and children's rights

Who did you speak to?

How many children you interviewed and who they were.

What is the key issue you are trying to solve?

This is the issue that was talked about most by children.

What information did you discover?

This is the issue that was talked about most by children.

Are there any other tools you can use to defend your right(s)?



- Go back to pages 12 to 17 for international agreements.
- Research or ask your supportive adults about the laws and agreement in your country and community.

What are your recommendations for the Committee on the Rights of the Child?

These are the solutions you thought of with other children.

Do you have photographs, drawings and videos to support this?

☐ DRAWINGS

☐ PHOTOS

☐ VIDEOS

2. REACHING THE SUMMIT: SHARE YOUR REPORT

Send your finished report through the online platform on Child Rights Connect's website:



<https://www.childrightsconnect.org/alternative-report-archive/>



3. ECO-HERO HIKING TRAIL

Based on the information you gathered from other children, map out which other actions you can take locally to protect children’s right to a healthy and safe environment.

On page 46, there are five sets of horizontal dotted lines for writing:

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.....

On page 47, there are three sets of horizontal dotted lines for writing:

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The booklet *My Planet, My Rights: A guide for children to tell the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child about their Right to a Healthy and Safe Environment* was developed with advice from children aged 12-18 and with funding support from Terre des Hommes Germany.

This guide was produced based on *Children's Rights and the Environment: Guidance on Reporting to the Committee on the Rights of the Child* and is designed for children aged 13 and above.



 terre des hommes
Help for Children in Need



Guide written & designed by Films For All for CRC Asia

