

Child Friendly Information about Climate Change and Economic Inequality

Some young people live without proper food, shelter, education, protection or health. This is not fair!

Remember: All children must have access to these, and other, basic rights!
More about the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) [here](#).

It's worse now because of COVID-19 and climate change. These are putting many children at greater risk, especially those who have less money or fewer opportunities to escape from the risks.

What is Climate Change?

Climate change describes a change in the Earth's climate - this can be temperature or other weather conditions - over a long period of time. Scientists have observed that the Earth's global temperature is warming and that extreme hazards are increasing. Scientists estimate that since the **Industrial Revolution**, human activity has caused the **Earth** to warm by approximately **1°C**.¹ The Earth's climate has always changed in some ways ever since it began, but humans' interference has sped up this change in the last century.²

Some examples of extreme hazards that are getting worse due to climate change:

- coastal zones and flood plains are most at risk from rising sea levels and floods
- glaciers are melting and retreating
- extreme weather events are taking place like droughts and forest fires
- millions of hectares of forest have been destroyed



- water levels are rising
- a million species are at risk of extinction
- Average global temperatures have already surpassed 1°C above pre-industrial levels



What is Economic Inequality?

The world is not an equal place. Each person's experience is different with regards to human rights, opportunities and quality of life.

¹ Source: <https://www.natgeokids.com/uk/discover/geography/general-geography/world-is-climate-change/>

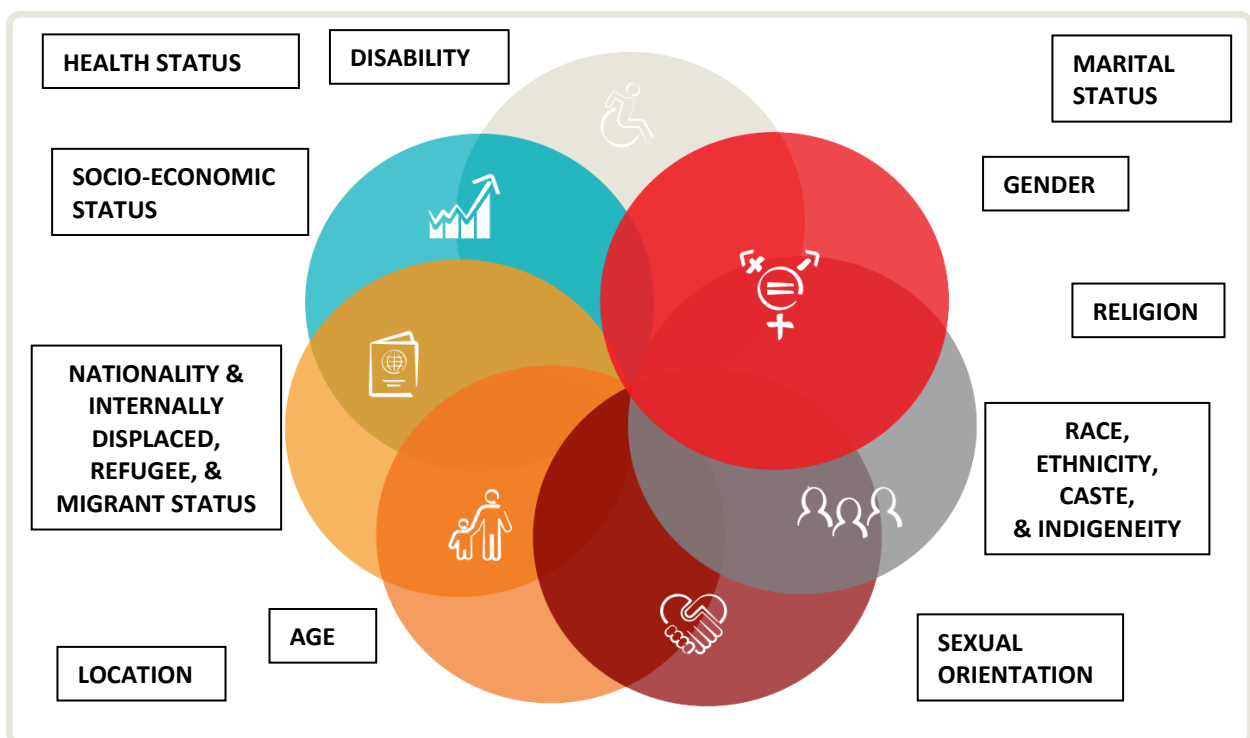
² Source: <https://www.twinkl.co.uk/teaching-wiki/climate-change>

Some countries have more resources and wealth than other countries. Some countries have a peaceful, stable government and others don't. Some countries are naturally safer and some are more dangerous, with lots of earthquakes or hurricanes.



Economic inequality can also exist within a country. Some people are richer than other people. Some people live in areas with high quality roads, hospitals, schools, while others don't. Inequalities around the world can have many causes. Equality is based on the belief that nobody should have worse life chances because of things like where they come from, what they believe, their sexual orientation and whether they have a disability.³

Different individuals and groups that make up a society have different levels of power and status. There are different forms of inequality (including economic inequality) that might overlap (or *intersect*). The diagram shows how some different types of inequality can overlap.⁴



Are Climate Change and Economic Inequality Connected?

³ Source: <https://www.twinkl.co.uk/teaching-wiki/equality>

⁴ Source: <https://resourcecentre.savethechildren.net/document/gender-power-gap-analysis>

Poorer children are more at risk from the impacts of climate change. For example, families with less money may not be able to afford to cope with the damage caused by extreme weather events compared to richer families. Here is an example:

"I live in a flood prone area, since the past 3 years we have lived through cyclones every year. Since we can't afford to live in a concrete home, our home is made out of small scraps and cardboard boxes in a heavily populated city. Our slum is more prone to flooding than any of the buildings built for those who can afford it. Every year our house gets washed away and we rebuild it, every year we try our level best not to catch diseases from the dirty water that surrounds us. Even if we get sick, we can't afford to go to a doctor because we need that money for food and to rebuild our home. I have heard that people have something called health insurance, we can't pay for that since we owe money to people already. We are not sure if we can survive another cyclone." - Suraj
Kolkata, India*

As Suraj's story shows, some people's houses may be more at risk of flooding and moving to a different area may be too expensive. Climate change can also affect farming and how crops grow, which can make food more expensive, especially for poorer families.

Economic inequality is also making climate change worse. Richer people, companies and countries have contributed the most to climate change, for example through using more coal and oil for transport and factories. But they are now not doing enough to stop climate change, or to help poorer people and countries to cope with the damage it is causing. Because they have more money and power, they don't always listen to children and families that are calling for change. All children have the right to be heard!

People most affected by economic inequality are most affected by climate change - and have the least power to change the situation. Over time, this may make economic inequality even worse, making it more difficult for children from poorer households to have the same opportunities in life as those from richer ones.

Climate Change and Economic Inequality are two sides of the same coin!

Children are the least responsible for the climate crisis, yet will bear the heaviest burden of its impact, now and in the future.

Children are leading climate action around the world. **There is power in children's voices!**



We want fairness for future generations of children. We want to know what children think about these issues.

"We are not owners of the earth but we are part of the earth, we forget that we are stardust, our spiritual consciousness gets blocked. The slavery of the system. Because we keep consuming more and more to be comfortable," child in Argentina

"Climate change is a huge issue in Sri Lanka," 17-year-old Kaviti in Sri Lanka

*"My parents don't have money to feed me and my siblings, especially my younger 3-year-old brother who is still small and needs to eat"
12-year-old girl in Colombia*

"The issue of climate change came up when many people try to have an income for their daily needs by cutting down trees and clearing forests to build buildings and markets," child in Indonesia

*"Climate Change affects children most, especially in society's margins. We take the hit from urban pollution and repeated disasters"
19-year-old Kunal Das in India*

"Inequality and climate change are key important issues to solve as fast as we can. They both have a bad influence on each other and both hit children hardest", 14-year-old Emmanuel in Norway