



UNICEF WORKING PAPER

June 2022

A study on youth (including children) and climate policy and action in Azerbaijan

Disclaimer

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Abbreviations

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| DRR | Disaster Risk Reduction |
| EU | European Union |
| FGD | Focus Group Discussion |
| GEF | Global Environment Facility |
| MHPSS | Mental Health and Psycho-social Support |
| NGO | Non-Governmental Organization |
| SDG | Sustainable Development Goals |
| SGBV | Sexual and Gender-based Violence |
| STEM | Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics |
| UNCCC | United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change |
| UNDP | United Nations Development Programme |
| UNEC | Azerbaijan State University of Economics |
| UNEP | United Nations Environment Programme |
| UNICEF | United Nations Children's Fund |
| WASH | Water, Sanitation and Hygiene |

Executive Summary

This study focused on the engagement of children and youth in climate policy and action in Azerbaijan. It was undertaken between April and July 2022 with the main objective to generate data that can be used as the basis for the United Nation's Children Fund (UNICEF) Azerbaijan Climate Change Program that will be developed in the near future. Towards this end, a study team composed of an international and a national consultant undertook a desk review of relevant documents and conducted semi-structured interviews with key stakeholders (i.e., staff from Government Ministries, Government-affiliated centers, the non-governmental organization [NGO] Ruzgar, the Azerbaijan University of Economics [UNEC], UNICEF), and Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) with children and youth.

While none of the findings were particularly surprising or unexpected, the study produced encompassing, new, and useful data that provide a sound basis for the development of future projects and programs on children/youth and climate change in Azerbaijan. The key findings are:

1. The current policy framework of Azerbaijan provides a thin basis to promote and invest in children/youth and climate action: children/youth engagement is not explicitly mentioned in any of the main national documents on climate change, neither is climate change adequately mainstreamed into sectorial policies critical to children and youth.
2. This is echoed by the type and scope of the activities implemented by the diverse stakeholders: most of these are ad hoc activities that follow an event-based approach focused on awareness raising and implemented by one stakeholder; collaborations between stakeholders, including between Ministries, are rare, and a long-term national strategy that outlines activities and responsibilities of the diverse stakeholders does not exist.
3. All stakeholders interviewed perceived the lack of such a strategy as one main issue in achieving inclusive, sustainable climate policy and action. Another key barrier most stakeholders referred to is the lack of an adequate communication / media strategy that requires and guides the dissemination of technical knowledge, and that facilitates awareness among youth of activities offered by stakeholders across the country. Furthermore, stakeholders identified limited resources in terms of finances, equipment, teaching materials, and qualified staff who have both, adequate knowledge on climate change and experience in working with children and youth, as major challenge.
4. Despite these obstacles there is a great level of openness and willingness among the diverse stakeholders to work with children/youth in the context of climate policy and action, and stakeholders identified specific entry-points. Likewise, children and youth showed a great interest and commitment to learn more about and actively engage in climate policy and action.

Based on these and further study findings, two overarching recommendations for future UNICEF action were formulated:

1. Initiate and spearhead the preparation of a national strategy on children / youth and climate policy and action, including a longer-term action plan with streamlined activities that utilize powerful synergies, and that assigns clear responsibilities to each stakeholder, and an encompassing communication strategy that utilizes the power of social media and other digital platforms.
2. With regard to UNICEF's planning and programming in the field of climate change, utilize the major entry points emphasized by numerous stakeholders, i.e., the next 5-year state program "Youth of Azerbaijan" which is currently being prepared; the focus of the Government on the Karabakh region; and the focus of the Government and Universities/research centers on the green/circular economy.

1 Background

Climate change has become the most challenging development issue of the twenty-first century. The United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) recognizes that climate change poses a direct threat to children and young people’s ability to survive, grow and expand their opportunities to reach their full potential. While children, adolescents and youth are among the most vulnerable to disasters, climate disruption, energy deficiency, and environmental degradation, they are also powerful agents of change. In 2020, UNICEF supported more than 760,000 young people around the world to participate in or lead, offline and online civic initiatives on climate, environment, energy, and disaster risk reduction (DRR). UNICEF campaigns to engage young people in advocacy and action were active in 106 countries.

In December 2021, the government of Azerbaijan expressed strong interest to the UNICEF Representative to collaborate on water and climate change. It was highlighted that over the past few years, the impacts of climate change on water resources are rapidly increasing and started to cause serious problems for communities. Azerbaijan’s 4th National Communications to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) highlighted that the country’s water resources have already declined by 13%, affecting both availability and quality of water for drinking and other purposes. For example, reduced river flow causes the infiltration of seawater upstream in coastal areas. The Minister highlighted the need to thoroughly assess the situation across the country, identify measures and implement these which will likely be a combination of large-scale infrastructure and household level interventions including behavior change.

UNICEF Azerbaijan, through the new Country Programme of Cooperation with the Government (2021-2025), seeks opportunities to expand partnership on Climate Change. As the first step, a study on youth engagement in climate policy and action in Azerbaijan will be conducted. In addition, outcome 3: Integrated Youth-friendly Services and gender/social inclusion of the EU funded “Development of Community and Family-based Integrated Social Services for the Most Vulnerable Children in Azerbaijan” project envisages to support adolescents’ potential, growth, and wellbeing, and to invest in and reinforce the skills, assets and competencies needed to navigate through the changes in their lives. Outputs and activities under this Outcome support the development and implementation of integrated youth-friendly and community-based services to ensure youth and adolescents’ inclusion, participation, and activation at the level of their families, communities and societies at large.

2 Objective

The main purpose of this assignment was to conduct a study on youth (including children) and climate policy and action in Azerbaijan that will serve as the framework for youth engagement as part of the to be developed UNICEF Azerbaijan climate change programme. The programme will primarily support the engagement of youth, including both girls/young women and boys/young men, in adaptation and mitigation initiatives and should incorporate intervention strategies that can

increase youth participation and ownership on climate action. In line with this, the guiding questions of the study were as follows:

- To what extent does Azerbaijan’s climate change policy reflect issues affecting children/youth?
- To what extent has climate change been integrated into policies and programmes critical to youth and children, such as in the sectors of health, education, water, social policy and youth development?
- What are the strengths and capacity building needs for youth-related institutions (government, non-governmental organizations [NGOs]) to engage in climate change?
- What are the strengths and capacity building needs for climate/environment-related institutions (government, NGOs) to engage with youth?
- How can Azerbaijani youth further engage in climate change policy and action at the individual, community, district, and country levels?

3 Methodology

3.1 Study team

The study was led by the international consultant, and supported by the national consultant, UNICEF staff, and the interpreter. Key tasks of the international consultant included the development of the study methodology and tools; review and analysis of relevant data and materials; conducting of interviews with relevant stakeholders; and preparation of the draft and final deliverables. The national consultant supported the international consultant in her work including through provision and translation of key documents; identification of relevant interviewees and organization of appointments on site; and review and provision of substantive inputs to all deliverables. UNICEF oversaw the study process and progress, and provided logistical and technical support based on need. The interpreter provided translation services during the meetings with stakeholders.

3.2 Time frame

The study, including the preparation of all deliverables, was conducted between 18 May and 15 July 2022 (i.e., 30 working days for the international consultant; 20 working days for the national consultant). While the national consultant was based in Azerbaijan over the entire time frame, the international consultant split her time between Berlin (home-base) and Azerbaijan (Baku). The national and international consultants worked closely together to ensure high quality and timely preparation of all deliverables.

3.3 Desk review of relevant data and materials

The first part of the assignment was a thorough desk review of relevant data and materials. Country-specific documents related to climate change / environment in the English language that were reviewed included the following:

- [Azerbaijan 2020: Look into the Future Concept of Development](#)
- [Azerbaijan 2030: National Priorities for Socio-Economical Development Decree of President of Azerbaijan \(as of 02 February 2021\)](#)
- [Brief Outline of Climate Change-related Policy Processes \(United Nations Environment Programme \[UNEP\]\)](#)
- Capacity Gap Assessment Report for Regional (rayon level) Trainings Needs (UNDP NAP Project) (unpublished document prepared for UNDP by Aytan Poladova, national consultant).
- [CEDAW: Sixth Periodic Report Submitted by Azerbaijan under article 18 of the Convention, due in 2019](#)
- Climate, Landscape Analysis for Children in Azerbaijan (UNICEF) (document not available online)
- [EU4Climate: Azerbaijan](#)
- [Climate Risk Country Profile: Azerbaijan \(World Bank / ADB\)](#)
- [Financing Climate Action in Azerbaijan \(OECD\)](#)
- [Fourth National Communication to the UNCCC: Republic of Azerbaijan](#)
- [GCF Readiness Proposal](#)
- [Information to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change \(UNFCCC\) on the Intended Nationally Determined Contribution of the Republic of Azerbaijan](#)
- [Inputs for OHCHR's Analytical Study on the Impacts of Climate Change on the Enjoyment of the Right to Health \(Human Rights Council Resolution 29/15\) Contribution by Azerbaijan](#)
- Mapping Document on Climate Change Adaptation regional (rayon level expertise, UNDP NAP Project) (unpublished document prepared for UNDP by Aytan Poladova, national consultant).
- [The Rights of Children and Why they Matter: The Work of UNICEF in Azerbaijan \(UNICEF\) UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework 2021-2025](#)

These documents were reviewed and analyzed with the aim to better understand the status quo regarding children/youth and climate policy and action in Azerbaijan. Specifically, and in line with the guiding questions for this study, the documents were reviewed with a focus on the extent to which Azerbaijan's climate change policy framework reflects issues affecting children/youth.

Furthermore, internationally important documents for climate change and children/youth, such as UNFCCC's contribution to the 'Inputs for OHCHR's Analytical Study on the Impacts of Climate Change on the Enjoyment of the Right to Health (Human Rights Council Resolution 29/15)', and national legislations, such as the Constitution of Azerbaijan, were reviewed. In addition, key ministerial policies, strategies and plans on education, health, youth, labor and social policy, water and sanitation, and emergency were reviewed to gain an overview of the extent to which climate change has been integrated into documents critical to youth and children.

3.4 Qualitative interviews and focus group discussions with relevant stakeholders

Following the desk review, semi-structured interviews with relevant stakeholders located in Baku were conducted. These include Government ministries, Government-affiliated Centers (Youth House and Eco-club), the NGO Ruzgar, the Azerbaijan State University of Economics, and UNICEF staff. In addition, multiple FGDs with children and youth were held, as well as two individual interviews with youth and one individual interview with a young teacher. The attached agenda provides detailed information on all interviews and FGDs held during the mission.

During the selection process of the interviewees and FGD participants a specific focus was paid on gender, i.e., on ensuring that both boys and girls, and women and men were included in the sample and their voices captured. Furthermore, the selection of interviewees was guided by the principle of diversity in terms of participation of international (e.g., UN agencies) and national (e.g., local NGOs) partners, as well as of practitioners (e.g., University lecturers), and policy makers (e.g., Government officials).

The main objective of the interviews was threefold: first, to validate and complement the findings from the literature review; second, to better understand the capacity building needs of youth-related institutions (government, NGOs) to engage in climate change on the one hand, and the capacity building needs of climate/environment-related institutions (government, NGOs) to engage with children/youth on the other; and third to identify gaps, barriers, and entry points for youth engagement in climate action in Azerbaijan.

The international consultant led the interviews and took detailed notes; the national consultant supported the interviews through substantive additions to the discussions if applicable, and through note taking. An interpreter translated the interviews from English to Azerbaijani and back.

4 Findings

4.1 Desk review

The desk review showed that Azerbaijan's climate change-related policy framework does barely reflect issues affecting children/youth, and that the extent to which climate change has been integrated into policies and programmes critical to youth and children (e.g., in the sectors of health, education, water, social policy and youth development) is very limited. However, the desk review also showed that there are still some entry-points, i.e., references in national documents that can be used as a justification to work on children/youth and climate change (in addition to the provisions found in international frameworks, UNICEF programming objectives etc.):

First and foremost, Article 39 "Right to live in healthy environment" of the Constitution of Azerbaijan states that (i) everyone has the right to live in a healthy environment, that (ii) everyone has the right to gain information about the true ecological situation and to get compensation for

damage done to his/her health and property because of the violation of ecological requirements, that (iii) no one may cause threat or damage to the environment and natural resources to the extent that is higher than the limit prescribed by law, and that (iv) the state guarantees the preservation of ecological balance and protection of the species of wild plants and animals determined by law. Especially Paragraphs (i), (ii), and (iii) are of relevance for the context at hand as they capture the rights of children and youth, and thus serve as a justification to invest in climate education.

Furthermore, the Law of the Republic of Azerbaijan on Child Rights is of relevance: Article 30 states that the state ensures the protection of children living in areas of natural and ecological disasters on the basis of special programs, and Article 38 specifies that the state provides urgent support to children who suffer from difficult situations as a result of natural disasters.

The document “Azerbaijan 2030: National Priorities for Socio-Economical Development Decree of President of Azerbaijan 02 February 2021” is of relevance to this study, too, even though in an indirect way: the document highlights the commitment of Azerbaijan to climate change mitigation and adaptation, as well as its great emphasize on the green economy. It is clear that the objectives spelled out in this Decree require the involvement of young, qualified people, including those with specific STEM backgrounds, e.g., in environmentally sound technologies.

With regards to progress reports prepared by the Government, the “Responses of the Office of the Commissioner for Human Rights (Ombudsman) of the Republic of Azerbaijan to the questionnaire regarding the study on climate change and the full and effective enjoyment of the rights of the child addressed by the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights” deserves special mentioning. Among others, the questionnaire requests the Government to share any commitments and best practices for effectively engaging children or youth in climate-related decision-making processes and climate action, particularly those most impacted by climate change, and with consideration for young people of different ages, gender and social backgrounds. Key excerpts from the response read as follows: “Children as decision-makers have the right to participate in decisions affecting them (UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, Article 12). Decisions on climate change mitigation and adaptation are critical to the future well-being of children, and as such children should be centrally involved in them. Young people should be well informed and aware of the effects of climate change. The right to participate can help children make sure their ideas on climate change are heard by those in power.” Subsequently, some initiatives are listed, such as the 2009 International Conference on “Protection of child rights in emergencies and the role of National Human Rights Institutions”, and activities undertaken by the Azerbaijan Child and Youth Peace Network.

4.2 Semi-structured interviews and FGDs

4.2.1 Government ministries

Meetings were held with representatives from the following Ministries: Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources (including the Department of Environmental Education and Public Relations);

the Ministry of Health; the Ministry of Agriculture; the Ministry of Youth and Sports, and the Ministry of Labor and Social Protection of the People (see agenda in the Annex for details). During these meetings, Government staff confirmed the findings of the literature review: specific references to youth in national policies and frameworks relevant to the environment / climate change are in essence non-existent, neither is climate change adequately mainstreamed into child and youth-related policies and frameworks, such as those on education.

Environment / climate change-specific activities targeting children and youth

Despite the above, some of the Ministries – especially the Department of Environmental Education and Public Relations under the Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources – carry out environment / climate change activities that target children and youth. However, a national plan / strategy on children / youth and climate action does currently not exist, and concerted action within and between ministries seems to be very rare with regards to this specific topic.¹ Staff across Ministries perceived this situation – the lack of a strategy and the lack of systematic collaboration – as a key barrier that hampers the successful, sustainable engagement of children and youth in climate action. Indeed, most of the activities that are currently implemented are stand-alone/one-stop activities, guided by the 5-year state program and rolled out with support from numerous schools across the country. (The last 5-year program “Youth of Azerbaijan” was completed in 2021, the new one is currently being developed. The program provides a rather flexible guidance for a wide range of activities, and offers opportunities to mainstream actions on children, youth, and climate change). The activities currently undertaken typically focus on awareness raising, are easy to implement, and lack a long-term goal; examples include tree planting, cleaning of beaches and other areas, the invitation of youth on study trips to the Ministry, quizzes and competitions, and recycling/waste management events. Based on the interviews, initiatives that connect national activities with international action, such as participation in youth constituencies to the UNCCFF, do not exist, neither were government staff aware of such opportunities.

As for the other Ministries, the following findings emerged: The Ministry of Health is hardly doing anything on children/youth and climate change: while there meanwhile is a lecture on environmental health integrated in the medical curriculum of the State Medical University (4 hours), this is by and large the only tangible action undertaken in the specific context of youth and climate change. The Ministry of Agriculture noted that children and youth are not their focus groups, hence no specific activities are being rolled out. However, staff noted there was an option to design some activities and mainstream these into their portfolio, e.g., invite youth to some of their workshops on climate smart agriculture, and/or add a session for youth to the respective workshop. The Ministry of Youth and Sports runs projects, such as the SDG Ambassador project with UNDP, but does not implement any specific activities on climate change – but staff would like to do so. The Ministry of Labor and Social Protection of the People is also not focusing much on youth and climate action yet,

¹ There are a few activities / projects implemented in collaboration, e.g., the Ministry of Ecology and Natural resources collaborates with the Ministry of Education on a specific project. However, joint programmatic actions over longer periods of time are the exception.

but staff see a strong need to provide services for youth to facilitate better access to jobs in the green economy.

Collaborations with other UN entities

Some of the Ministries have in the past and/or currently are collaborating with other UN entities, especially UNDP. One example for an ongoing collaboration related to youth and climate change is the SDG Young Ambassador Program the Ministry of Youth and Sports is engaged in. Further, the Ministry of Labor and Social Protection of the People collaborates with UNDP on the provision of support for University graduates in writing job applications, crafting CVs, and other important documents for the job market, including green industries. There are also activities related to youth and climate change undertaken as part of a specific program between the EU, UNDP, and various Ministries – an example is the event that was held on 8 June at Marriott Hotel to commemorate World Environment Day. Noteworthy activities from the past Government staff referred to include an event in 2021 with UNDP, the EU and the Ministry of Health on climate change, and the preparation of a series of booklets for children in 2012 on environmental issues, including climate change, together with UNDP, GEF, the EU, and the NGO Ruzgar.

Openness towards youth engagement

The Government staff interviewed unanimously agreed that working with children and youth in the context of climate change was very important: as the future generation, children and youth were seen as having a huge responsibility and thus should be educated on this important topic as early as possible. However, the data also showed that the Government understands engagement largely as a ,top-down' process, i.e., as children / youth participating in activities planned by Ministries (vs. ,bottom-up' approaches, such as active participation of youth in decision-making at the national and international levels). Generally, Government staff noted they themselves were very open to receive recommendations from UNICEF on children/youth engagement in climate policy and action, and that they would also like to hear what other countries are doing in this context. While this openness was communicated by staff from all Ministries, the Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources and the Ministry of Youth and Sports seemed to be particularly interested in working on the intersection of children/youth and climate change. Furthermore, the Ministry of Labor and Social Protection of the People seemed to be very open to engage in respective projects and programs (e.g., related to jobs in the green/circular economy).

Awareness of climate issues among youth and urban-rural divide

Overall, most government staff from Ministries indicated that based on their personal assessment of the situation in the country, the knowledge and awareness of climate issues among children and youth was rather limited and certainly not at the level where it ideally should be. When asked, the Ministry of Youth for example rated the level of knowledge at “2” on a scale from 0 to 10. The Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources stated they use some of the quizzes they organize as an indicator for the level of knowledge, and some of its staff serve as part-time lecturers at Universities. However, some government staff also emphasized that this situation seems to be in the process of changing for the better, with children and youth nowadays being more interested in the environment than in previous years, and also more active: reportedly, they have “turned from listeners to initiators.”

When asked about the rural-urban divide, staff across Ministries agreed that while there are no barriers as such for children and youth in the regions to engage in climate action, access to relevant education, information, and organized/formal activities is very limited in these areas, especially when compared to the opportunities provided in Baku. At the same time though, people residing in the regions, including children and youth, are experiencing climate impacts more directly and profoundly (e.g., impacts on agricultural productivity and water scarcity for household purposes) – and thus are perceived by staff as having a greater motivation and interest in getting engaged in climate action than those based in the capital.

Gender

When asked about the potential differences in interest in and access to study programs and jobs in the STEM fields, staff across Ministries stated that a gender divide does not exist; indeed, some staff highlighted that in some Ministries, women did even outnumber men in technical positions. However, when asked about the specific tasks women and men take on in environment-related sectors it turned out that it is typically men who undertake fieldwork (e.g., conducting measurements in the regions) and work that requires “hard physical labor”, while women typically work in offices and engage in events, such as conferences. In terms of explaining this situation, staff insisted that this was not due to any cultural or structural barriers, but rather a result of individual preferences.²

Needs and recommendations for future action:

When asked about the specific needs and recommendations for future actions, some of the interviewed staff shared the following concrete thoughts:

- Focus on the Karabakh region: Given the government’s great attention to these territories and the infrastructure that will be newly established there, Karabakh provides excellent opportunities for projects on environmental sustainability / green infrastructure, including the engagement of children and youth in respective activities. Staff from all Ministries made references to the Karabakh region and highlighted the great opportunities investments in such projects would offer.
- Prepare high quality teaching materials: There is a huge lack of specific information / teaching materials, especially for children, yet such materials are much needed to address the persisting limited knowledge among children and youth on environmental issues in general and climate change in particular. Especially the Ministry of Youth and Sport highlighted the need to invest in teaching materials – and the Ministry of Health added that references to environmental health should be made in all teaching materials, too.

² Please note that based on the professional experiences of the study team and the literature on gender, such statements should generally be treated with caution and further in depth research on site is needed to be able to draw sound conclusions on the gendered division of labor and the role of socially constructed norms in explaining these.

- Invest in innovative programs and activities: Most of the activities undertaken up to this date were considered as important, but also as somewhat repetitive (e.g., tree planting and beach cleaning). To really make a difference and to motivate youth, more inspiring programs are needed, including competitive research activities so that youth have a chance to really learn how to protect the environment, and how to draft proposals that attract funding and generate jobs. This recommendation was shared by the Ministry of Youth and Sport; the Ministry of Health also highlighted the need for innovative programs based on what other countries are doing in order to inspire future generations and attract their interest.
- Invest in pilot programs on youth employment in the green/circular economy: The green/circular economy is becoming increasingly important for the country, and programs are needed to a) raise awareness on the job opportunities the green/circular economy bears, b) upscale University programs and train youth in relevant subjects so that they meet the qualifications for green/circular economy jobs, and c) facilitate better access of young people to these jobs, including those who have studied abroad and come back with excellent knowledge and skills. These programs also need to focus on gender, i.e., promote equal pay for equal work and support the employment of young women in technical as well as high-paid leadership positions. If these pilot programs work, upscale and replicate them. The Ministry of Labor and Social Protection shared this recommendation.

Barriers in terms of institutional and personal capacities and resources

During the interviews, some barriers in terms of institutional and personal capacities and resources were identified. Staff mentioned some of these explicitly; others became obvious during the conversation.

- Limited funding: none of the Ministries has a specific budget line for the specific work on children/youth and climate change.
- Lack of specialized staff: none of the Ministries has a staff member or consultant working specifically and exclusively on children/youth and climate change.
- Lack of human resources / time: most Ministries are understaffed, which makes it difficult to dedicate time to this particular topic, including participation in trainings and workshops on climate change / youth engagement; especially the Ministry of Youth and Sport emphasized the issue of staffing.
- Limited knowledge and skills: while some Ministries (e.g., the Ministry of Youth and Sports) noted that the knowledge on climate change among staff is limited, other Ministries (e.g., the Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources) stated that while they have staff with sound technical knowledge on climate change, these staff did not know enough about how to convey technical content to children and youth in an understandable manner.
- Lack of national strategy: no national strategy exists that guides current action and details the way forward on children/youth and climate action, including the responsibilities of the different relevant stakeholders, i.e., most actions are ad hoc and follow an event-based approach.
- Limited collaboration between Ministries: while Ministries may collaborate on certain activities (e.g., events and conferences), systematic long-term collaboration is barely

happening. Especially the Ministry of Youth and Sport highlighted the need for MoUs with other Ministries, such as that of Ecology and Natural Resources.

- Performance evaluation: youth engagement / working on children/youth and climate change (e.g., in the form of mainstreaming), is not part of performance evaluations in any of the Ministries.
- Limited capacity to keep the public informed: keeping the public, including youth, informed about all ongoing activities that could be of interest to them presents a challenge.
- Limited capacity to reach rural populations: although the Government has regional offices, implementing activities in rural areas is difficult, and not enough people are reached in these areas.

4.2.2 Government-affiliated centers

Eco-center

The Eco-Center operates under the Ministry of Education. With a total of about 400 staff and 58 Branches across the country, it is a large institution that focuses on eight different units/themes, including environmental education. The Center collaborates with numerous schools in the implementation of its programs, and children and youth are actively engaged in the activities offered. The Centers' largest program at the moment focuses on cleaning and agri-diversity; its implementation started six years ago.

The Center's Director highlighted that the interest of children and youth in environmental topics was heavily dependent on how these are being taught. Over the last years, the Center made an effort to 'sell' the topic differently than in earlier years, i.e., to emphasize the creative and volunteering aspects of sustainability and environmental protection, and to combine theory with practical tasks and exercises, all of which helped a great deal to get more children and youth excited and join the respective activities. Indeed, a recent sex-disaggregated survey about the popularity of different topics/clubs offered by the Center showed that both girls and boys enjoy the clubs on tourism and environment the most. The Eco-Center interprets this as a major success and highlighted the potential of further investments in youth and climate action.

In terms of future actions, the Director formulated three key recommendations:

- Invest in further and better environmental education of children and youth: currently, related topics are being taught in high schools and Universities, but do not get enough attention in primary and secondary schools. One key issue is the lack of up to date teaching materials and textbooks, especially in the Azerbaijani language. Further, a specific subject on ecology should be incorporated into curriculums (vs. merely mainstreaming environmental information into other subjects, such as biology).
- Invest in more practical exercises and tasks, i.e., design and implement activities that take place outdoors, including in the regions. These could be implemented through the Clubs

across the country. Examples include measuring the temperature and rainfall on a regular basis at different locations and create (publicly accessible) databases.

- Invest in Training of Trainers on how to communicate and teach environmental subjects to children and youth: there is a lack of qualified personnel in the country who have technical knowledge on the environment and are able to communicate these to the specific audience of children and youth in a way that is understandable to them and triggers their motivation and interest.

The main barriers faced by the Eco-center to implement these and further activities include the limited availability of equipment, limited transport options (e.g., to regions), and limited funding. The Eco-Center does collaborate with the private sector to address these barriers, but – for moral reasons – hesitates to engage with big companies such as McDonald and CocaCola (at least as long as they demand to have their brand name displayed publicly: the Center is dedicated to promoting a health lifestyle for children and youth). Generally though the Center reported a huge potential for collaboration with the private sector and a general willingness of firms to provide support, including through their social corporate responsibility programs. The Center has also collaborated with UNICEF before.

Khazar Rayon Youth and Sport Centre

There are multiple Youth Centers across the country, which operate under the Ministry of Youth and Sport; the Center visited is one of the largest in the country. It was constructed in 2014, is currently run by six Government staff, and offers a range of different learning activities such as painting, sports, and languages. These services are free of charge. The Center also hosts a Women Resource Center, which helps women in finding employment, and a Center that provides support with establishing start-ups/small and medium enterprises.

The number of children and youth visiting the Center depends on the season and the specific activities offered; on average, about 100 youth visit the center each day. Most of them are between 14 and 19 years old (the Center is open to youth between 14-25 years of age). Based on a survey with youth on what they wish to engage in, painting/art making and the studying of foreign languages were identified as the most popular activities. With regards to the environment / climate change, the Director noted that this topic does not receive as much attention (yet); typical activities offered by the Youth House are tree planting, cutting of dying trees, and cleaning of beach areas. No specific activities on climate change are currently implemented or planned, but the Director stated that some awareness raising activities on environmental issues would be helpful. Generally, the activities offered by the Youth House are based on and aligned to the objectives and activities outlined in the 5-year state program.

With regards to the capacity of the Youth House, the Director noted that some training was needed to roll out specific activities on climate change; the staff currently does not have the required technical knowledge to do this. In terms of budget, the funds available for activities are typically between 800-1000 Manat, meaning that only small-scale projects/activities can be implemented.

4.2.3 NGO Ruzgar

The Ecological Society "Ruzgar" is non-governmental, non-political and non-profit Organization of Azerbaijan citizens. It was established in April 1996 by a group of scientists, engineers, doctors, sociologist, lawyers, economists and journalists, working in various fields of environment protection. The NGO was registered with the Ministry of Justice in 1996.³

Three staff attended the meeting with Ruzgar, including its Director and Deputy Director (see agenda in the Annex for further details). These staff reported on a few activities related to climate change and youth the NGO implemented in 2013 as part of a specific awareness raising project. One key output of this project was the publication of a series of topic-related booklets in 2012 in collaboration with UNDP, GEF, SGP, and the EU. Currently, however, the NGO does not roll out any specific activities on climate change; in general, the NGO has not been as active since the global Covid pandemic hit the world in 2020. However, staff noted a great need for such action, and highlighted the importance of focusing on children and youth as the generations to come, vs. investments in adults. Specifically, staff recommended a stronger integration of environmental / climate change issues in textbooks and formal education curricular, and the organization of practice-oriented study trips / field trips to the regions to raise young peoples' awareness and to further increase their motivation to engage in climate action.

4.2.4 Azerbaijan State University of Economics

UNEC was founded in 1930 and serves as "the fundamental educational center teaching the science of economics in the region."⁴ UNEC offers programs at the Bachelor, Master and Doctorate levels taught in Azerbaijani, English, Russian and Turkish. In 2021, the University opened the "Research Center for Sustainable Development and Green Economy Studies named after Nizami Ganjavi." The Center has five goals in the fields of sustainable development and green economy:⁵

- 1) To develop human capital;
- 2) To strengthen research capacity;
- 3) To promote cooperation between business and academia for contribution to research and development, innovations and inventions;
- 4) To promote public-private-universities-academia-NGOs partnership;
- 5) To contribute to public awareness on sustainable development and green economy.

³ Ruzgar (n.d.), accessible through <http://www.ruzgar-ngo.org/site/>

⁴ UNEC (n.d.), Why UNEC?, accessible through <https://unec.edu.az/en/>.

⁵ See UNEC (2021), Opening ceremony of the UNEC Research Center for Sustainable Development and Green Economy Studies named after Nizami Ganjavi was held, accessible through <https://unec.edu.az/en/unec-de-nizami-gencevi-adina-dayaniqli-inkisaf-ve-yasil-iqtisadiyyat-tedqiqat-merkezinin-acilisi-olub/>.

The meeting with UNEC was attended by three staff members, including the Director of the Research Center for Sustainable Development and Green Economy; the Director of the International Center for Master's and Doctoral Studies; and the Head of Lifelong Learning Department. The meeting revealed that with the opening of this new center, the University pays more attention to environmental issues than ever before. Indeed, special attention is currently being paid on environmental research and awareness raising: a research collaboration with UNEP exists, and events such as the recent "green week campaign" are successfully carried out. One key issue however is that UNEC lacks in-house capacity to achieve what needs to be achieved in terms of research and teaching: while a Department of Ecology exists, staff noted that the quality of teaching and research does not meet international standards, and UNEC does currently not employ any professors or lecturers who specialize in green/circular economy. Furthermore, the University lacks up-to date teaching materials, especially in the Azerbaijani language. To address these issues, UNEP committed to provide training to UNEC staff, and selected University staff are currently in the process of acquiring additional knowledge and skills through self-study. Furthermore, a collaboration with UNESCO on the green/circular economy is underway.

International cooperations are being considered as important by UNEC, too, including in the field of green/circular economy. At the moment an Erasmus program is being implemented, and a proposal for a program on sustainable energy was recently prepared with other local Universities and Universities in Denmark, Italy, and Spain.

With regards of the level of awareness of its students, UNEC staff noted that most students have very limited knowledge on environmental / climate change issues. To address this issue, the subject 'Green Economy' will from 2023 onward be offered as an elective course for all students. When asked about their personal assessment of the level of awareness of youth in Baku vs. youth in rural areas, staff concluded that there is a real lack of knowledge among youth in general, regardless of where they reside. However, those living in rural areas had less access to information, while showing a greater interest than youth in Baku: Universities in the regions had been particularly active during the "green week" campaign. When asked about gender differences in terms of interest in environmental topics and access to respective courses, staff noted that up to this date they had not observed any differences between young women and men.

With regards to youth engagement in climate action at the national policy / decision-making level, staff confirmed that youth are typically not included in such processes. However, the University serves as an advisory body to the government and is contracted to provide inputs to the preparation of relevant policies and plans.

One successful activity in the past is the preparation of an edited book on climate change-related subjects published by Springer. The recent Green Week was also cited as a success, as it generated a lot of interest among youth. In terms of current activities, staff highlighted the existence of thematic clubs, such as the Green Economy Club. These clubs organize activities such as tree planting based on students' ideas and suggestions; the University supports the implementation of these activities through the provision of the required infrastructure (e.g., labs and laptops), and if possible some small grants.

4.2.5 UNICEF

Conversations were held with UNICEF staff working on child protection, education, health, and youth development. While only few specific actions on climate change are currently being implemented as part of these thematic areas, UNICEF staff reported numerous linkages between their current portfolios and climate-relevant action, and showed great openness towards leveraging existing and creating new entry-points. Examples mentioned during the discussions are the following:

| Area of work | Linkages / entry-points for climate-related activities |
|--------------------------------|---|
| <i>Child protection</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Service provision for children during emergencies, including climate-related disasters such as floods => train children and youth how to protect themselves in emergencies • Lack of safe sanitation systems / water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) at schools => affects girls in particular • Lack of access to potable water / water scarcity => potential risk of harassment and sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) when women and girls as they walk longer distances to fetch water • Weak systems of reporting harassment and SGBV, including those cases that occur in climate-related emergencies => these need to be strengthened, especially in rural areas • MHPSS services need to be strengthened and also consider stresses related to climate change / environmental issues |
| <i>Education</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The education system is well structured and the formal curricula for primary and secondary schools present an important entry point => an in depth analysis is needed to better understand to what extent climate change is currently integrated • In terms of the informal curriculum / extracurricular activities, the Eco-club and its centers in the region offer further entry points for advocacy and awareness raising, as well as specific projects on climate change • The territories of Karabakh offer another important entry point in terms of 1) establishing sustainable infrastructure (e.g., schools relying on sustainable energy), and 2) creating education projects that focus on the specific environment / climate change issues in this particular area (e.g., water pollution) • Competitions and skill building initiatives for young entrepreneurs (e.g., hackathons) make sense |
| <i>Health</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recent preparation of Proposal for Healthy Environments for Healthy Children => key step re future actions on environmental health • Integration of environmental health in primary care programs is underway • Territories of Karabakh as main entry-point, in terms of establishing sustainable infrastructure (e.g., health centers relying on sustainable energy) will be set up new in this region, which provides great |

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| | opportunities to ensure environmental sustainability |
| <i>Social policy (includes also other areas the social policy section is responsible for)</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shock Responsive Social Protection – Protection of vulnerable people and children during climate-related and other shocks • Disaster Risk Reduction • Emergency preparedness and planning (including climate related emergencies) • WASH |
| <i>Youth development</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proposal writing training and skill development => in the past, there were some activities that focused on proposals related to the environment => successful initiative • Youth forums => discussions among youth can also be utilized to enhance their participation in climate dialogues and action at the national level • 5-year State Youth Program => UNICEF provides inputs and the program serves as an excellent opportunity to mainstream climate change • Social entrepreneurship project => provides opportunities to focus on environmental challenges |

Staff also mentioned some key barriers they are currently facing or expecting to face in the context of climate change-related work. These include:

- Limited funding in general, and for climate-specific activities in particular;
- Lack of awareness among key stakeholders (e.g., Government counterparts) of the many linkages of climate change and UNICEF’s current work/focus areas;
- Limited in-house knowledge on climate change and useful adaptation and mitigation actions that make sense in the local context;
- Lack of up to date, high quality quantitative and qualitative data on climate change, the limited capacities from institutions within Azerbaijan to generate such data, and the limited efforts from the Government to invest in high quality data generation;
- Limited accessibility of available data (e.g., through websites and public data bases);
- The focus of key stakeholders, such as NGOs but also the Government, on Baku (vs. regions);
- High staff turnover in Ministries, which makes collaboration and capacity building more challenging;
- Lack of collaboration between Ministries (‘silo mentality’) and rigid top-down approach, which makes it hard to identify counterparts who are both willed and in a position to act, and who can be held accountable;
- NGO activities being largely driven by funding availability and personal interests by those in leading positions, which makes most of them rather weak counterparts;
- Lack of a systematic national strategy/roadmap that outlines the concerted way forward re children/youth and climate action, including the specific role of the various stakeholders (i.e., UNICEF as well as other international organizations, local NGOs, Universities, and the private sector) in these endeavors.

Some remedies to address these barriers as well as some additional suggestions made by staff re potential future UNICEF initiatives to address issues related to climate change include:

- Develop a clear children/youth and climate change strategy/roadmap for the coming years together with the Ministries, spell out responsibilities for all actors involved (i.e., international organizations, NGOs, Universities/research institutions, and the private sector), and make sure the roadmap is lined to existing strategies and plans;
- Invest in good coordination mechanisms between stakeholders, and ensure that stakeholders in the regions (e.g., government offices and youth houses) are fully integrated and on board;
- Advocate with Ministries to launch a continuous, long-term digital media campaign on climate change;
- Use social media to raise awareness of the linkages of climate change to sectors of relevance to UNICEF on the one hand, and the importance of actively engaging children and youth in climate action on the other;
- Conduct an assessment of the current formal primary and secondary school curricular to better understand how climate change is currently integrated;
- Conduct an assessment on the private sector in Azerbaijan, including international companies, and with a focus on the oil and gas sector, and explore opportunities to collaborate with large companies such as BP, and other large British companies that are known to expand their businesses to Azerbaijan in the near future;
- Set up collaborations with the private sector / Public Private Partnerships, e.g., with BP, and consider expanding these collaborations to multi-stakeholder projects between for example the Eco-club, UNICEF, and BP, including to improve the funding issues faced by the Eco-Club towards a more long-term/ sustainable funding architecture;
- Explore options for collaborations with Universities abroad and set up dual degree programs Azerbaijani students can participate in (e.g., programs on the green/circular economy, sustainable energy);
- Some Ministries, e.g., the Ministry of Education, have annual grant schemes NGOs as well as schools and individual teachers can apply to: advocate for climate change to be included as a topic on which project proposals can be submitted;
- Invest in awareness raising on the need to protect the environment and mitigate climate change in daily life;
- Advocate for policies that support environmentally friendly behaviors, such as the recently introduced system of having to pay for the water used in households (vs. previous flat-rate system);
- Advocate for a better integration of climate change into school curricular, starting early on (primary school);
- Design and implement play-based strategies and initiatives in kindergardens that raise awareness and facilitate behavioral change early on;
- Collaborate with the training center under the Ministry of Ecology, and the Institute of Education: invest in capacity building of their staff, as they significantly influence the national education system and the curriculum, respectively;

- Explore opportunities to closely work with the daughter of the President, Leyla Aliyeva, perhaps in the role of UNICEF Goodwill Ambassador (which was considered in the past already), to strengthen advocacy work on climate change and push it further up on the priority lists of Ministries as well as the NGO IDEA and the Heydar Aliyev Foundation

4.2.6 Children and youth

Two FGDs with children and three FGDs with youth were held, complemented with two individual interviews with youth and one young teacher. Most FGDs were held in person in different locations; one FGD was held through Zoom (see agenda in the Annex for further details on the FGDs). The discussions with and among youth show that participants were overall very interested in the topic of environment / climate change. However, the data also show that both the self-rated and observed knowledge on these topics among children and youth is very limited.

Generally, children and youth repeatedly stated that they enjoy very much to implement activities with their friends, and the opportunities clubs and centers offer to meet their peers and get to know further likeminded people; the communal aspect is a key reason for their engagement. Specific activities that youth would like to engage in / that youth suggested to adopt include:

- Hackathons, ideathons, and other types of competitions, such as quizzes and photo/multi-media contests;
- Mentoring-services, especially on proposal writing and founding and managing start-ups (i.e., incubator and accelerator services);
- Gamification: learning through digital games;
- Study / field trips to the regions to complement the theoretical knowledge and classy style of learning;
- Practical work / projects, such as measuring the daily temperature and recording rainfall patterns and creating databases on this;
- Awareness raising campaigns and activities that can be done jointly with friends, such as beach clean ups, tree planting etc.;
- Engaging in climate action through social media (Instagram, tic toc, Facebook, Twitter etc.) – youth are very active on social media and information posted here has a wide reach;
- Working informally with resource persons (vs. teachers and lecturers at school) – this way they feel they can engage more openly, ask different questions than in formal settings, and spend more time together and therewith learn faster;
- Having (national/local) celebrities engaged in climate action – they can be powerful role models and are able to set trends.

Barriers youth mentioned that hamper their participation in existing activities, and that affect their motivation to come up with new / additional activities:

- Lack of awareness of existing activities was perceived as a key issue: many youth were not well informed about opportunities and activities planned by diverse stakeholders, and hence don't participate although they would have an interest in getting engaged;

- Lack of free time, especially among students who have to work aside from their studies to sustain a living;
- Limited knowledge on the topic, which makes it difficult for them to come up with useful ideas and projects themselves;
- Limited capacity to draft useful and feasible proposals that have a chance to be selected / successful;
- Cultural specifics which typically don't see youth in leading roles / top-down approach;
- Limited knowledge on the topic among parents, teachers, and other role models.

5 Conclusion and the way forward

While none of the findings were particularly surprising or unexpected, the research on children/youth engagement in climate policy and action produced encompassing, new, and useful data that provide a sound basis for the development of the children/youth engagement strategy as well as potential future programs and projects on children/youth and climate change.

Overall, the results from the literature review and the interviews and FGDs are coherent: the results from the literature review showed that the policy framework of Azerbaijan itself provides a rather thin basis to promote and invest in children/youth and climate action, which is echoed by the type and scope of the activities implemented by diverse stakeholders: most of these are ad hoc activities that follow an event-based approach focused on awareness raising and implemented by one stakeholder; collaborations between stakeholders, including between Ministries, are rare, and a long-term national strategy that outlines activities and responsibilities of the diverse stakeholders does not exist.

With regards to barriers, all stakeholders perceived the lack of a strategy as one main issue in achieving inclusive, sustainable climate policy and action. Further key barriers faced by most stakeholders are the lack of an adequate communication / media strategy that requires and guides the dissemination of technical knowledge, and that facilitates awareness among youth of activities offered by stakeholders across the country. Furthermore, stakeholders identified limited resources in terms of finances, equipment, teaching materials, and qualified staff who have both, adequate knowledge on climate change and experience in working with children and youth, as major challenge.

However – and this is of great importance – the interviews revealed a great level of openness and willingness among the diverse stakeholders to work with children/youth in the context of climate policy and action, and stakeholders identified specific entry-points. Likewise, children and youth showed a great interest and commitment to learn more about and actively engage in climate policy and action. In light of this and the further study findings two overarching recommendations for future UNICEF action can be formulated:

First, initiate and spearhead the preparation of a national strategy on children / youth and climate policy and action, including a longer-term action plan with streamlined activities that utilize powerful synergies, and that assigns clear responsibilities to each stakeholder, and an encompassing communication strategy that utilizes the power of social media and other digital platforms.

Second, and with regard to UNICEF's planning and programming in the field of climate change, utilize the major entry points emphasized by numerous stakeholders, i.e., the next 5-year state program "Youth of Azerbaijan" which is currently being prepared; the focus of the Government on the Karabakh region; and the focus of the Government and Universities/research centers on the green/circular economy.

In doing so it is key to consider the specific country context, especially the different challenges and conditions observed in rural areas vs. those in Baku. The Youth Houses across the country as well as the Eco-Club seem to make good collaborating partners for UNICEF in endeavors related to children/youth and climate action. Furthermore, working with celebrities and influential persons, such as the daughter of the president, will help a great deal in promoting the importance of climate policy and action among youth and decision-makers.

Annex 1: Interview guides

The following interview guides will guide the interviews with key stakeholders. They will be adjusted based on the position of the respective interviewee and the context in which the interviews are held. As such they serve as an orientation to collect the relevant data (vs. being a rigid tool).

Interview Guide for Youth

This interview guide was prepared to support answering the question “How can Azerbaijani youth further engage in climate change policy and action?”. It contains open and closed questions, using likert scales where appropriate. The questions build on each other, with some of them being follow-up questions / probes. However, if more applicable to the situation they can also be asked as stand-alone questions (and hence they are listed as stand-alone questions). The order of the questions might also be adjusted based on the situation on site. In case of time restrictions, some questions will be skipped. Respondents will be granted confidentiality, i.e., no names will be recorded. Demographic data to be collected are sex, age, level of education, subject of study (for University students), and place/region of residence.

1. How well do you understand the topic of climate change?
1-not at all/I never heard of it; 2-a little bit; 3-good understanding; 4-very good understanding
2. What are your thoughts about climate change?
1- climate change does not exist; 2-climate change exists but it does not worry me; 3-climate change is a minor problem; 4-climate change is a crisis
3. How would you define climate change?
4. What else do you know about climate change?
5. Where and when have you learned about climate change (e.g., at primary / secondary school, at home as a child/teenager, through media)?
6. What did you learn about climate change at home (from your parents, siblings, other family members)?
7. What did you learn about climate change at school (primary / secondary) and at University?
8. What did you learn about climate change through the media (e.g., TV, radio, social media like facebook, twitter, tiktok etc.)?
9. If you want to learn about climate change, where do you get your information from (e.g., the internet, talking to teachers / professors, talking to friends)?
10. What else would you like to learn about climate change?

11. To what extent / how often do you talk/discuss about climate change (e.g., with your peers or parents)?
1-never; 2-sometimes; 3-often; 4-very often
12. Have you personally experienced any climate-related events in the last 3 years (e.g., floods, droughts, air pollution, storms)?
13. To what extent do you worry about climate change and its impacts on your future?
1-not at all; 2-a little bit; 3- a lot; 4-extreme worry
14. Which measures / actions do you know of that protect the environment / address climate change (e.g., reducing air travel, waste recycling, riding a bike)
15. What measures do you currently apply to protect the environment?
16. Is there anything else you currently do regarding climate action/activism (e.g., engagement in youth campaigns, demonstrations)?
17. Is there anything else you would like to do to protect the environment / address climate issues (and if so, what is it)?
18. What barriers are you facing in this context / what prevents you from engaging in climate action?
19. How could these barriers be addressed / what do you need to facilitate your engagement in climate action?
20. Do you think you can make a positive difference with regards to climate change?
1-I can't make any difference; 2-I can make a bit of a difference; 3-I can make a huge difference
21. What changes would you like to see with regards to climate education at school / University, and inclusion in climate policy at the national / international levels?

Guiding Questions for Focus Group Discussions with Youth

These questions will guide the FGDs with youth, and aim to answer the question “How can Azerbaijani youth further engage in climate change policy and action?” The questions might be adjusted to match the specific context on site. FGDs will consist of five to ten young women and men. Necessary demographic data will be collected, yet confidentiality granted.

1. Tell me about the last time you discussed climate change with your peers!
2. What matters most to you with regards to climate change?
3. How are you currently engaging in climate policy and action?
4. What is going well and what are the barriers you are facing?
5. How would you like to engage in climate action in the future?
6. What support do you need to follow-through with these goals?

Interview Guide for Government Officials, NGO staff, and other Stakeholders Working on Climate Change

This Guide will be adjusted based on the interviewee's position. Some questions might be skipped given the context on site. The questions are designed to help answering the questions "To what extent does Azerbaijan's climate change policy reflect issues affecting children/youth?" and "How can Azerbaijani youth further engage in climate change policy and action?" Demographic data will be collected, including names (but these will not be mentioned in any of the reports).

1. How often do you talk about / discuss youth engagement / the role of youth in climate action with your colleagues/professional counterparts? Please elaborate on your rating.
1-never; 2-sometimes; 3-often; 4-very often
2. Based on your position and experience, how would you rate the overall engagement of youth in climate policy and action at this point in time in a) the capital, and b) rural areas? Please explain your rating and provide some explanations for this situation?
1-no engagement; 2-some engagement; 3-high engagement
3. To what extent do you think youth should be engaged in climate policy and action (and why do you think so)?
1-not at all; 2-should be engaged but not in decision-making; 3-should play a key role, including in decision-making
4. Do you think youth can make a positive difference with regards to climate change?
1-they can't make any difference; 2-they can make a bit of a difference; 3-they can make a huge difference
5. What are typical barriers youth face in terms of engagement in climate policy and action (e.g., structural barriers, limited knowledge, time constraints etc.)?
6. How can these barriers be addressed?
7. Do you know of one or two good practices / success stories of youth engagement in climate action? Please describe these.
8. What do you think would be the most useful activities to ensure the needs of youth are being considered in climate action, and their voices heard, and what needs to be done to realize these activities?

Annex 2: Capacity assessment guide

This assessment is designed to help answer the following questions: “What are the strengths and capacity building needs for youth-related institutions (government, NGOs) to engage in climate change?”, and “What are the strengths and capacity building needs for climate/environment-related institutions (government, NGOs) to engage with youth?”

Please note: depending on the stakeholder, youth engagement will be replaced with engagement in climate change!

Available resources

- Did your organization offer any specific workshops or trainings on youth engagement within the last two years (or was youth engagement discussed as part of other workshops/trainings)?
- Do you know of any materials (e.g., guidelines, training manuals, handbooks) your organization has on youth engagement? If so, have you utilized these, and how useful do you find these?
- Do you know of any networks / working groups within your organization and/or with external partners on youth engagement?
- How about human resources – is there a staff position or focal point position dedicated to youth participation within your organization (or the participation of vulnerable groups in general, or on inclusion/diversity)?
- How about financial resources – does your organization have a dedicated budget for affirmative action that could be used for activities to further youth engagement?
- How do you rate your organization’s readiness to engage with youth/implement activities that enhance youth engagement?

Personal capacity

- Have you personally received any training or information on youth engagement from your organization? When was that? And how useful did you find it?
- How do you rate your own capacity to engage with youth / how well do you feel prepared to engage with youth as part of your current job?
1-no capacity/not prepared; 2-some capacity/somewhat prepared; 3-good capacity/well equipped to engage with youth
- What would you need to feel better equipped / prepared to engage with youth as part of your job?

- What are the barriers you personally experience in working towards greater youth engagement?

Organizational strengths and opportunities

- In what way is your organization well positioned to work with youth – what are the comparative strengths of your organization?
- And more specifically, what are the main entry points you see that could be utilized to engage with youth?
- What resources are needed to utilize these (e.g., budget, staff, trainings)?

Organizational weaknesses

- And what are the main weaknesses and barriers you see on the organizational level that impede (greater) engagement with youth?
- Is youth engagement currently reflected in your organizations vision/mission/strategic plan?

Annex 3: Mission agenda

| Date | Time | Event | Location | Participants |
|---------|---------------|--|---|--|
| 08 June | 09:00 – 17:30 | World Environment Day 50th “National Adaptation Plan” Project | Venue: Baku Marriot Hotel Boulevard | <u>Separate informal conversations</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students from the Azerbaijan Highest Oil School • Students from the Azerbaijan Diplomatic Academy • Students from the Azerbaijan Aviation Academy <p>Hannah Strohmeier, International Consultant Aytan Poladova, National Consultant</p> |
| 09 June | 09:00 | Meeting with UNICEF staff | UNICEF Office | <u>Meeting</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alex Heikens, UNICEF Representative • William Abi Abdallah, UNICEF Deputy Representative <p>Hannah Strohmeier, International Consultant</p> |
| | 14:00 | Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources of Azerbaijan | Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources of Azerbaijan, National Hydrometeorology Division | <u>Meeting 1:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mr.Akper Asgarov, National Hidro Meteorological Service, Chief of Section <u>Meeting 2:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mr. Rafiq Verdiyev, National Hidro Meteorological Service, Deputy Chief • Ms. Matanat Ayvazova, Monitoring Section, Lead Specilaist • Ms. Guliyeva Aysel, Chief Engineer • Ms. Abbasova Gulnara, Director of Environmental Monitoring Centre <p>Hannah Strohmeier, International Consultant Aytan Poladova, National Consultant</p> |

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|----------------|-------|--|---|---|
| | 17:00 | Meeting with environmental NGO 'RUZGAR' | Institute of Radiation problems of Azerbaijan | <p><u>Meeting</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mr. Islam Mustafayev, PhD in Chemistry, Director of NGO Ruzgar • Ms. Zargalan Nabizada, Ruzgar NGO, project assistant • Ms. Amina Mikayilova, Deputy Director of Ruzgar NGO <p>Hannah Strohmeier, International Consultant Aytan Poladova, National Consultant</p> |
| 13 June | 14:00 | Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources of Azerbaijan | Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources of Azerbaijan | <p><u>Informal conversation</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ms. Refige Nejef, lead specialist of International Department of Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources of Azerbaijan • Ms. Gulsum Huseynli – specialist of International Department of Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources of Azerbaijan <p><u>Meeting</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ms. Sayyara Mammadova, Head of the Environmental Education and Public Relations Department of Azerbaijan's Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources <p>Hannah Strohmeier, International Consultant Aytan Poladova, National Consultant</p> |
| | 16:00 | Students of Baku State University, Faculty of Social Sciences and Psychology | Café in close proximity to Baku State University | <p><u>FGD</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 8 youth (8f / 18-21yrs) <p>Teacher: Ms. Lala Maxsudova, Department on Gender and Applied Psychology</p> <p>Hannah Strohmeier, International Consultant Aytan Poladova, National Consultant</p> |

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|----------------|-------|--|---|--|
| 14 June | 12:00 | Ministry of Youth and Sport of Azerbaijan | Ministry of Youth and Sport of Azerbaijan | <p><u>Meeting</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ms. Narmin Aslanbekova, Head of Unit on Promotion Health Style and Social Programs Ms. Zarifa Zulfugarova, Project Coordinator on UNDP Project “Creating new platforms for active youth engagement in global policy debates” <p>Hannah Strohmeier, International Consultant Aytan Poladova, National Consultant</p> |
| | 15:00 | Azerbaijan Republic Ministry of Public Health | Ministry of Public Health | <p><u>Meeting</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ms. Sevinj Fatullayeva, PhD in Medicine, Department on Nutrition and medical ecology department of Azerbaijan Medical University Mr. Samir Afandiyev, Environmental Manager, Public Health Center <p>Hannah Strohmeier, International Consultant Aytan Poladova, National Consultant</p> |
| | 16:30 | Research Center on Sustainable Development and Green Economy named after Nizami Ganjavi, Azerbaijan State University of Economics” | , | <p><u>Meeting</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ms. Gulnar Mirzayeva, Director of the Research Center for Sustainable Development and Green Economy Mr. Fariz Ahmadov, Director of the “International Center for Master’s and Doctoral Studies” Mr. Galandar Mammadli, Head of Lifelong Learning Department <p>Hannah Strohmeier, International Consultant Aytan Poladova, National Consultant</p> |
| 15 June | 14:00 | UNICEF office | UNICEF Office and Zoom | <p><u>Meeting 1</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mr Vugar Salmanov, UNICEF Child Protection Specialist <p><u>Meeting 2</u></p> |

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| | | | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mr Natic Umarov, UNICEF Youth Engagement Specialist • Ms Nigar Nasrullajev, UNICEF Youth Development Consultant <p><u>Meeting 3 (Zoom)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ms Thofa Jamilova, UNICEF Health Specialist <p>Hannah Strohmeier, International Consultant Aytan Poladova, National Consultant</p> |
| 16 June | 10:00 | Khazar Youth Centre | Khazar Youth House | <p><u>Meeting</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mr. Vuqar Aliyev, Director of Khazar rayon Youth and Sport Centre <p><u>FGD</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 17 youth (4f, 13m / 15-25 yrs) <p><u>Individual interviews</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two youth (1m-21 yrs/1f-17 yrs) • One teacher (m-27yrs) <p>Hannah Strohmeier, International Consultant Aytan Poladova, National Consultant</p> |
| | 15:00 | Ministry of Agriculture of Azerbaijan | Ministry of Agriculture of Azerbaijan | <p><u>Meeting</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mr. Firudin Tagiyev, Chief of Department on Control of Soil Usage • Mr. Nuriyev Bahruz, Chief of sector of ecology and climate change under Department on Control of Soil Usage • Ms. Sima Mammadova, Consultant of the Department <p>Hannah Strohmeier, International Consultant Aytan Poladova, National Consultant</p> |
| | 17:30 | Youth from Bilasuvar | Zoom (online meeting) | <p><u>FGD</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 7 youth (3f, 4m / 17-24 yrs) |

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| | | | | Hannah Strohmeier, International Consultant Aytan Poladova, National Consultant |
| 17 June | 12:00 | Children-Youth Development Centre, Ecoclub (under the Ministry of Education) | Children-Youth Development Centre | <p><u>Meeting</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ms. Firuza Sultanzade, Director of Children-Youth Development Centre, Director of Ecosphere NGO <p><u>FGD 1</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 6 children (5f, 1m / 11-14 yrs) <p><u>FGD 2</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 4 children (1f, 3m / 12-15yrs) <p>Hannah Strohmeier, International Consultant Aytan Poladova, National Consultant</p> |
| | 14.00 | Ministry of Labor and Social Protection of the Population | Ministry of Labor and Social Protection of the population | <p><u>Meeting</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mr Rashad Dayiyev, Chief of Division on Employment Policy Ms Rana Abdullayeva, Deputy of the Division on Employment Policy <p>Hannah Strohmeier, International Consultant Aytan Poladova, National Consultant</p> |
| | 16.00 | UNICEF Debriefing | UNICEF Office | <p><u>Meeting</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Alex Heikens, UNICEF Representative Rashad Huseynow, Social Policy Specialist <p>Hannah Strohmeier, International Consultant Aytan Poladova, National Consultant</p> |



for every child

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