

Weekly

Concept Note: Regional Webinar on Integrating Education into National Adaptation Plans: Building Climate-Resilient Education Systems for Children and Youth in East and Southern Africa

Date: 6 May 2026

Time: 11:00 –13:00 EAT (Kampala)

Venue: Virtual (MS Teams)

Organizers: UNFCCC RCC EASA, Save the Children and the NAP Global Network

Target Audience: Ministries of Education, Environment, and Planning; National Designated Authorities (NDAs); UN Agencies; Civil Society Organizations; Academic Institutions; Youth Representatives.

2. Background and Context

Climate change poses significant threats to education systems worldwide, particularly in vulnerable regions like East and Southern Africa, where extreme weather events such as droughts, floods, cyclones, and heatwaves disrupt schooling and endanger millions of children. According to UNICEF (2021), climate-related disasters affect over 100 million children annually, with Sub-Saharan Africa experiencing some of the highest risks, including school closures and infrastructure damage. In East and Southern Africa, countries like Mozambique, Malawi, Kenya, and South Africa have faced recurrent cyclones (e.g., Cyclone Idai in 2019) and prolonged droughts, leading to the displacement of learners and loss of educational continuity. These impacts are not felt equally amongst children, with girls, children with disabilities, children living in poverty and displaced children, amongst others, often most affected (Bogado Duffner et al, 2025). As a sector that is both highly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change, but also critical to building adaptive capacity amongst children and their communities, the education sector must adapt to the impacts of climate change, and this can be enabled and supported through the National Adaptation Plan (NAP) formulation and implementation process.

The NAP framework, established under the UNFCCC's Cancun Adaptation Framework (Decision 1/CP.16, 2010), provides a mechanism for countries to identify medium- and long-term adaptation needs and integrate them into development planning. Even though the education sector has been historically underrepresented in climate policies, this is changing, with more countries starting to include the sector in their NAP (Merryweather and Pham, 2025). The benefits on including the education sector are many and align to the principles and guidance set out in the NAP technical guidelines:

- The NAP technical guidelines emphasize the need for sectoral integration, and including education in a country's NAP process can set out a national commitment to adaptation for the

education sector and support the mainstreaming of climate change adaptation in education sector planning.

- Article 7.5 of the Paris Agreement notes that adaptation action should follow a "country-driven, gender-responsive, participatory and fully transparent approach", as well as respect, promote and consider Parties' obligations on the rights of children (amongst other groups). In East and Southern Africa, where 60% of the population is under 25 years old (UNICEF, 2022), prioritizing children and youth through a focus on education in NAPs aligns with the UNFCCC's emphasis on vulnerable groups (Paris Agreement, Article 7, 2015) and safeguards their right to an education in the face of climate change.
- Additionally, a climate resilient education system will support children and youth to develop the skills, knowledge and climate literacy they need to rapidly adapt to a changing climate and build adaptive capacity, a key objective of the NAP process (LEG, 2025).

This webinar will draw on an analysis of NAP documents from the NAP Global Network and Save the Children '[Education in NAP Processes](#)' report (Merryweather and Pham, 2025).

L3. Rationale and Justification

The education sector in East and Southern Africa is profoundly impacted by climate change. In 2024 alone, almost 8 million students across 11 countries in the region had their education disrupted by climate related events (UNICEF, 2025)¹. In Africa, climate-related disruptions in 2024 have placed 20 million children at risk of dropping out of school – in addition to the 107 million children who are already out of school (UNICEF, 2025), and these climate related disruptions exacerbate the pre-existing learning crisis in the region (UNICEF, 2025b). For instance, in Southern Africa, droughts have led to food insecurity, forcing children to drop out of school to support families, while in East Africa, flooding has destroyed school infrastructure in countries like Ethiopia and Tanzania. Education is integrated to varying degrees in published NAPs in the region, and at the same time, many countries are looking to prioritize, or are interested in focusing on, education more in their NAP processes.

This webinar will assist countries to align with the UNFCCC's Least Developed Countries Expert Group (LEG) guidelines (UNFCCC, 2025), which call for sectoral integration in NAPs. It will also explore how to leverage the NAP process to strengthen the climate resilience of the education system, particularly for children and youth. Save the Children and the NAP Global Network are currently developing guidance on integrating the education sector into the NAP process, due to be released in May, and this webinar will provide an opportunity to share elements of this guidance with participants. Additionally, Save the Children has been working with a number of countries

¹ Data available for Ethiopia, Kenya, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, South Sudan, Tanzania, Uganda and Zimbabwe.

within the EASA region as part of the Climate Smart Education Systems Initiative², which aims to support countries to adapt to mainstream climate change adaptation within education sector planning, strategies and budgets, as well as enhance cross sectoral coordination on climate change and education. With EASA countries at various stages of their NAP formulation and growing interest in education in the region, it is an opportune time to provide a webinar on the inclusion of education in the NAP process. Without education's integration, NAPs risk failing to protect the 250 million school-aged children in the region (UNICEF, 2022), perpetuating cycles of vulnerability.

The webinar is justified by the need to:

- Raise awareness among policymakers, other education sector actors and youth advocates in East and Southern Africa about best practices for inclusion of education in NAP formulation and implementation.
- Show how a greater focus on education has the potential to help address regional challenges, such as high youth unemployment and climate migration, by leveraging education for adaptive capacity-building.
- Share resources and emerging good practice for integrating education into the NAP.

4. Objectives

The primary goal of the webinar is to ***enhance the capacity of stakeholders in East and Southern Africa to integrate the education sector effectively into their NAP processes.***

Specific Objectives:

- To share the current status of the education sector's inclusion in NAP documents from developing countries within the ESA region.
- Share entry points for the integration of education into the NAPs
- Highlight case studies of NAP integration in the education from the region (e.g., Malawi, Mozambique)
- To identify barriers and opportunities for mainstreaming education into NAP
- Foster regional collaboration among stakeholders to advocate for education-inclusive NAP revisions.

5. Target Audience

- Policymakers and government officials from ministries of education, environment, and disaster management in East and Southern African countries

² In partnership with UNESCO and UNESCO-IIEP and supported by the Global Partnership for Education. Find out more about the Initiative here: Access more detail on the Climate Smart Education Systems Initiative here: <https://www.globalpartnership.org/content/climate-smart-education-systems-initiative>

- Other education stakeholders, such as educators, school administrators, and teacher trainers.
- Youth representatives, NGOs, and civil society organizations focused on climate and education.
- International partners, including UNFCCC, Save the Children, UNICEF and other development Partners.

6. Methodology and Approach

The webinar will be a 90-minute virtual event hosted on a Microsoft Teams in English Language.

- **Structure:**
 - **Opening session (10 minutes):** Welcome and Opening Remarks by the Representative from UNFCCC RCC EAS/ Save the Children / NAP Global Network
 - **Keynote Presentation (10 minutes):** Understanding the NAPs and the NAPs Updated Technical Guidelines_ UNFCCC Adaptation Division
 - **Keynote Presentation (10 minutes):** Entry points for integrating children's education in the phases of the NAP. – Save the Children and the NAP Global Network
 - **Panel Discussion (50 minutes):** Building Climate - Resilient Education Systems through the NAP process: opportunities and challenges
Panelists: TBC
 - **Interactive Segment (10 minutes):** Q&A for participants to discuss regional challenges, barriers and opportunities for mainstreaming education into national adaptation
 - **Closing Remarks and Way Forward (10 minutes):** Recommendations and call to action, with a focus on advocating education Integration in the NAPs

Facilitation: Moderated by a Climate education / Adaptation Expert

7. Expected Outcomes and Impact

- Enhanced understanding among participants of the critical intersection between education and climate adaptation.
- Increased awareness, with participants equipped with tools and approaches for education integration in the NAPs

- Identification of entry points for integrating education into the next cycle of NAP revisions in ESA countries.
- Strengthened networks between climate change focal points and education sector planners.

8. References

- Bogado Duffner, M., Cavitte, M., Grant, L., Strømsø, I., Thiery, W., & Wakefield, J. (2025). Born into the climate crisis 2. An unprecedented life: Protecting children's rights in a changing climate. Save the Children International. <https://resourcecentre.savethechildren.net/document/born-into-the-climate-crisis-2-an-unprecedented-life-protecting-childrensrights>
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- UNICEF. (2019). *After the Storm: Education Recovery Post-Cyclone Idai in Mozambique*. UNICEF Eastern and Southern Africa.
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