



Childhood, Adolescence, Youth and Climate Change:
Reports from national, international, and multilateral
organizations on climate change
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This bulletin is part of a series aimed at understanding in depth the current debate connecting children, adolescents, and young people to climate change and its impacts. The series is based on articles organized in the bibliographic database "Adolescents, Youth and Climate Change – National and International Academic Production (2020–2024)"; and on reports produced by national, international, and multilateral organizations between 2015 and 2025, also available in the same database.

The research was developed within the scope of the project "Citizen Participation: Child and Youth Population in Focus," coordinated by Professor Irene Rizzini (PUC-Rio/DSS/CIESPI), with support from FAPERJ (CNE - Process E-26/201.113/2022). The project analyses different aspects of citizen participation and the leadership role of children, adolescents, and young people in Brazil.

In addition, it is part of the project "Youth and Climate Change in Brazil," also coordinated by Professor Irene Rizzini (PUC-Rio/DSS/CIESPI), with support from the José Luiz Egydio Setúbal Foundation and the Nova Institute for Health, in partnership with the Associação Cidade Escola Aprendiz. The research included a survey of 200 students, aged 12 to 18, from all regions of the country, to understand how they think and act in relation to climate change.

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1.0 - Introduction

This research bulletin presents a review of national and international reports on climate change produced with, and about, adolescents and young people living in Brazil, aged twelve to twenty-nine¹, published between 2015 and 2025. The references identified provide a broad range of quantitative and qualitative data on the subject.

The analysis identified the main features of the reports, in addition to gaps and opportunities for further developments.

2.0 - Methodology

Climate change is the central focus of the twenty-four reports analyzed. Broadly, the definition of climate change refers to alterations in the composition of the global atmosphere. In addition to natural causes such as volcanic activity and Earth's orbital variations, it also includes those resulting

from human activities, particularly greenhouse gas emissions.

The reports produced by Brazilian, international, and multilateral organizations, both governmental and non-governmental were identified using various search terms. Google and Yahoo were the main search engines. Reports from South and Central American countries that included data about Brazil were also included in the analysis.

Combinations of different terms were tested through preliminary searches and informed the selection of the final keywords, which targeted the intended population, Brazil, and climate change. The selected keywords included terms in English, Spanish, and Portuguese. The combinations that generated the most results were: "Climate crisis report, childhood and adolescence"; "Database reports climate change childhood youth"; "Climate education reports"; and "Reports on climate change childhood youth."

One of the main challenges was identifying reports related to the initial search period, given that results tend to show the most recent and most viewed. Therefore, to broaden the results, specific years were added along with the key terms, as well as the names of countries located in Latin America, given the greater likelihood of those countries including information about Brazil. The total number of reports and guides aligned with the established parameters was twenty-four. Of these, eleven publications focus specifically on Brazil, while one includes comparative data between Brazil and Mexico. Multilateral organizations such as UNICEF and UNESCO, international organizations as World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) and Plan International, and national organizations as ABRINQ, Fundação Grupo Boticário, and Fundação Alana were among the main sources of information

Another important source for results were the bibliographic references of the reports, or of the reports shared between the different networks and coalitions of which CIESPI/PUC-Rio is a part, such as the Coalition for Climate, Children and Adolescents (CLICA)².

The reports were systematized into five thematic categories: rights; climate emergencies and climate finance; climate change and cities; youth narratives; and climate change in numbers. Although some reports include material on more than one topic, for the purposes of systematization, each report was allocated to a main category.

Regarding age group, some reports specifically analyzed adolescents up to eighteen years of age, or young people up to twenty-nine years of age, while others include a broader audience. Our analyzes, however, separate by age group, allowing the perspectives of different age groups to be identified separately. In the specific case of the report *Natureza e cidades: a relação dos brasileiros com as mudanças climáticas* (Nature and cities: Brazilians' relationship with climate change), participants are defined solely as "adults," given that the interviewees are eighteen years of age or older. However, it was decided to include the report in the analysis because it includes relevant data on the im-

pact of climate change on urban environments according to young adults. We also included reports in which data are included for children under twelve years of age, especially those produced by UNICEF but in these cases the term children also appear in the analysis.

3.0 - Categories of analysis

3.1 - Rights

In 2022, UNICEF published the report *Crianças, adolescentes e mudanças climáticas no Brasil* (Children, adolescents, and climate change in Brazil) in which it associates the impacts of the climate crisis with a crisis of the rights of the child and youth populations. The publication highlights that children and adolescents are the most affected groups. The challenges start from birth, and are extended throughout adult life, with consequences for health, adequate access to food, and general well-being. The study also indicates that the effects of the climate crisis disproportionately affect black, indigenous, quilombola children³ and adolescents, and those belonging to other traditional peoples and communities, migrants and/or refugees, children and adolescents with disabilities, and girls. The report addresses these different groups individually, including recommendations for the inclusion and participation of children and adolescents in the climate agenda, in addition to analyzing the transversality and intersection between the climate crisis and the rights of children and adolescents in Brazil. As expressed by the Brazilian Federal Constitution, everyone has the right to an ecologically balanced environment (Art. 225) and the rights of children and adolescents must be an absolute priority in the country (Art. 227)" (UNICEF, 2022: p.10).

The effects of the climate crisis from the perspective of the rights to health, education, food and nutritional security of children and adolescents, is also the central theme of the report *Mudanças climáticas e seus impactos na sobrevivência infantil* (Climate change and its impacts on child survival), produced by the ABRINQ Foundation in 2024. The publication uses data and individual narratives to

discuss the impact of global warming on the development and well-being of younger generations. It highlights that the growing number of extreme weather events interfere directly with the country's food production capacity. The health effects extend to negative impacts on the immune system, the worsening of chronic and infectious diseases, and mental health, including post-traumatic stress disorder, anxiety, and depression, among others. The climate crisis also interferes with education including adequate health conditions for the absorption of knowledge and information, and the closure of schools for long periods, leading to loss of productivity and a greater risk of school dropout.

The report also demonstrates the relevance of adopting measures considering the specificities of each territory to mitigate the effects of climate change, and the importance of mobilizing and strengthening existing initiatives. Each theme is illustrated with quotes from children and adolescents between seven and eighteen years of age.

A focus on Latin America and the Caribbean was identified in two reports. The first, *Medioambiente y juventudes en América Latina y el Caribe* (Environment and youth in Latin America and the Caribbean, (OIJ/CAF/UNDP, 2023) addresses the issue of rights based on reflections about the relationship between youth and climate change, and the role of young people as agents of change in the face of the environmental crisis in the region. The publication, accessible to the public in general, is particularly aimed at representatives of civil society organizations that work to guarantee the rights of young people in the region.

The publication is part of a series entitled *Desafíos* that addresses challenges faced by young Ibero-Americans as they relate to inclusion, governance, and the environment. It also includes the experiences and knowledge of young people engaged in different initiatives. The publication presents detailed information on specific issues related to Latin America and the Caribbean with the aim of "enriching the understanding of the interrelationship between the region's environmental challenges and youth, with the ultimate goal of strengthening public

policies that cover both spheres" (OIJ/CAF/UNDP, 2023: p.13). In the final segment, entitled Conclusions and recommendations, additional information was subdivided into categories such as food, water and sanitation, clean energy, and sustainable cities, among others.

The second publication from 2023, *Acción clima desde la infancia* (Climate action from childhood, Tejiendo Redes Infancia), focuses the debate on human rights from multiple perspectives, i.e., social, political, economic, environment, health, and international cooperation. The focus on climate change is justified since it is "the greatest challenge facing modern humanity, and children and young people will be the most affected population in the coming years" (2023: p.6). The research combines exploratory documentary methods with interviews with key actors who develop and participate in projects aimed at children and adolescents, as well as those carried out with children and young people involved in actions on the theme of climate change. Similar to the previous publication, it includes a series of recommendations, and a glossary with key terms. The written and visual language is easy to read and understand.

3.2 - Climate emergencies and climate finance

The *Guia sobre educação em situação de emergências climáticas* (Guide on education in situations of climate emergencies) published in 2024 by the Abrinq Foundation is specifically focused on climate emergencies, including information, concepts, data, and references on the Right to Education in Climate Emergency Situations. Additionally, it proposes recommendations for schools, communities, and families.

Education is also the central theme of the report published by Plan International in 2023, with a focus, however, on gender and climate finance. *Mudanças climáticas, gênero e idade: considerações sobre o acesso à educação e financiamento climático* (Climate change, gender, and age: Considerations on access to education and climate finan-

ce) explores the impact that climate education has on resilience and the development of girls' adaptive capacities, including cross-cutting themes such as gender, generation, territoriality, and race. The research included seventy-eight girls from eight countries, including Brazil. The report addresses climate finance, a topic that is missing from most other publications.

3.3 - Climate change and cities

The relationship between climate change and urban environments, including perspectives for mitigating its effects, is the central theme of the survey *Natureza e cidades: a relação dos brasileiros com as mudanças climáticas* (Nature and cities: the relationship of Brazilians with climate change). Launched in 2023 by the Fundação Grupo Boticário, it includes in-person interviews with 2,000 people aged 18 or over, residing in 55 Brazilian cities located in the country's 5 regions. The inquiry looked at respondents' feelings and perceptions about climate change, including interest in science and technology, and awareness of misinformation.

With extensive use of visual resources and accessible language the results shows that 64% of Brazilians are afraid of intense precipitation and storms; eight out of ten Brazilians are concerned about climate change; more than 95% of the Brazilian population says they are aware of climate change; interest in science and technology is greater among people who consider themselves more aware of the need to protect the environment, and 93% of Brazilians believe that climate events are intensifying in the world. In addition, 98% of people would like to have more green areas in their cities, and 87% of respondents are willing to change habits for the benefit of the climate, such as recycling, planting trees, avoiding plastics, and using less polluting transport. These responses are correlated to the concept of Nature-Based Solutions (NBS), i.e., actions that adopts natural resources to solve human challenges, and the importance for more sustainable urban planning.

3.4 - Youth narratives

The 2022 report *Juventudes, meio-ambiente e mudanças climáticas* (Youth, environment, and climate change) is structured on the participation of young people in the processes of formulating and conducting research. Co-produced by the organizations Em Movimento and Rede Conhecimento Nacional, in partnership with Engajamundo, Ayíka Institute, and Uma Concertação pela Amazônia, it includes young leaders from traditional peoples in Brazil. The survey mapped how Brazilian youth are/will be impacted by climate change and how they have perceived these transformations. In addition, it emphasizes the production of information that stimulates the involvement and mobilization of young people from different regions of Brazil, including the formulation of public policies and of a sustainable development plan for the recovery of different biomes, concomitantly addressing social inequalities.

The participation of young people in the processes of formulating and executing research is also central to the publication *Informe Planeta Vivo 2024: Edición juventud por los Jóvenes, para los Jóvenes* (Living Planet Report 2024: Youth edition by youth, for youth) released by the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF). With direct involvement of twenty-four young people, it analyses scientific facts of the Living Planet Report, in addition to including ideas and inspiration so that younger generations can express themselves freely and transform ideas into actions. It has a proposal similar to the report produced by Plan International in 2021, *Reimaginar la acción climática: una visión de la educación y la participación juvenil* (Reimagining climate action: a vision of education and youth participation). The main conclusions and recommendations are based on the experiences and proposals of young people, focusing on education on climate change, and participation in climate policy-making processes.

3.5 - Climate change in numbers

For quantitative information the reports published by UNICEF, *The coldest year of the rest of their lives: Protecting children from the escalating impacts of heatwaves* (2022) and *The climate-changed child* (2023) are among the main sources of data. The publications include data about Brazil among a worldwide survey on the impacts of climate change for the child and youth population. Results indicate the worsening of the negative effects for human populations, in case of absence or reduced mitigation measures, with special emphasis on greenhouse gas emissions. The reports include the description of important regulatory frameworks, such as the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (1992), the Paris Agreement (2015) and the Conference of the Parties (COP).

Analogous to the scope of the UNICEF reports, between 2023 and 2024 it published the results of two surveys with broad geographic range. The first, entitled *Global views on climate change*, was carried out by IPSOS Global Advisor aimed at exploring perceptions of climate change in thirty-one countries. The age range of the participants was sixteen to seventy-four years old. The survey adopts the combination of online and face-to-face interviews for data collection. Key findings include a decline in individual action, growing concerns about climate impacts, understanding of the importance of the 1.5°C target (referring to the Paris Agreement signed at COP-21), varying perspectives on government action, and economic concerns related to renewable energy.

Secondly, the United Nations Development Programme in partnership with the University of Oxford, conducted the *People's climate vote* survey, including a total of 73,765 telephone interviews in 87 languages, aiming at broad linguistic and geographical representation. The age group included respondents from fifteen years of age. Among the results, there was strong support for climate action, i.e., 80% want governments to adopt more effective measures to combat climate change, including joint work between countries (86%). There is also sup-

port for nature protection, the transition from fossil fuels and climate education in schools. Additionally, the more people experience extreme weather events, the more likely they are to become aware of the need to mitigate the effects of the crisis.

Three publications specifically on Brazil were launched in 2020, 2024 and 2025 focusing on climate change. The first, *Mudanças climáticas na percepção dos brasileiros* (Climate change in the perception of Brazilians), was a joint venture between the Institute of Technology and Society of Rio (ITS), the Yale Program on Climate Change Communication and IBOPE. It was held a total of 2,600 interviews with the Brazilian population over eighteen years of age. Among the results, despite the importance given to the issue of global warming and concern for the environment, only 25% of respondents declare that they know a lot about the subject. Knowledge about global warming and climate change is closely associated with schooling and access to the internet; 77% defend the protection of the environment even if it generates less economic growth and fewer jobs, while 88% believe that global warming can greatly harm future generations.

The second report is the result of the national sample *Percepção sobre mudanças climáticas no Brasil* (Perception on climate change in Brazil) by the DataFolha Research Institute, which carried out face-to-face interviews in several municipalities with people aged sixteen and over, including 2,457 people in all regions of Brazil. The sample was selected to represent the Brazilian population in terms of region, age, and education. Among the results, 34% of Brazilians are unaware of climate change and global warming and 51% of respondents said they do not know how they can contribute to the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions. The survey highlights the importance of investing in education and awareness about sustainable practices and initiatives against global warming.

The third report, *Pesquisa nacional sobre mudanças climáticas. Percepções das crianças e juventudes* (National survey on climate change: Perceptions of children and youth), an initiative of the

Reconecta and Schools for the Climate movements, included 6,586 participants from 2,041 municipalities in all Brazilian states. The three central topics of the survey are concern, ability to act and optimism. Among the total number of respondents, 2,344 were between seven and fourteen years of age, and 1,940 were between fifteen and twenty-nine years of age. The results of the survey showed that the age group between fifteen and twenty-nine years old showed that they felt less able to intervene in the face of the challenges imposed by the climate crisis compared to children and adolescents between seven and fourteen years old. Regarding the feeling of optimism in the face of the possibilities of solving the climate crisis, the youngest (50%) were more confident, compared to the age group of fifteen to twenty-nine years, whose percentage of optimism was 39.7%. The trend is reversed in the degree of concern, 73.4% between seven and fourteen years old said they were worried or very worried, while in the age group of fifteen to twenty-nine years the index was 86.1%.

4.0 - Limitations and conclusions

The bibliographic review has limitations that should be considered when reading the results. The first refers to the fact that the search was carried out on two platforms, Google and Yahoo, which, although they offer access to a wide set of reports, may restrict the inclusion of relevant reports available on other platforms.

Another limitation concerns the linguistic approach. Although publications in Portuguese, Spanish and English were included, research in other languages were left out, which could otherwise have expanded the diversity of the sample. The search identified thirty-two additional reports that address the theme of climate change for the child and youth population, however, since they did not refer to Brazil, they were not incorporated into the analysis.

The survey identified that from 2020 onwards there is an increase in reports on climate change, and/or overarching themes, including climate education, climate justice, and climate finance. The re-

ports, resulting from quantitative, qualitative, and/or mixed-methods research, address the climate crisis from different perspectives, including thematic (for example, levels of optimism and knowledge on the subject), age, and geographic distribution, among others. Reports that included the direct participation of adolescents and young people, and/or are aimed at informing these specific groups, often present visual/imagery resources, and accessible language.

The age group of children under twelve years of age had the lowest number of studies, possibly because of the challenges of conducting research/interviews with young children due to language specificities, access and the need for authorization from parents and guardians. However, even though adolescents and young people are now more widely contemplated by research studies the number of methodological processes that include them directly in the co-creation and execution of studies, incorporating their narratives and worldviews, is still low.

The results point to the fact that, in general, adolescents and young people are familiar with the ongoing processes related to the climate crisis and the need for mitigation actions, as well as the desire for involvement. On the other hand, as indicated by the UNESCO study (2022), 70% of young people (between eleven and nineteen years old) interviewed and/or focus group participants stated that they were unable to explain in detail what climate change is. In the case of Latin America and the Caribbean, 52% were aware of the problem in general terms. Or, according to the UNICEF/Gallup global survey (2023), on average, 85% of young people between the ages of fifteen and twenty-four surveyed in fifty-five countries said they had heard of climate change, but only 50% of them chose the correct definition according to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).

The report *Youth and climate change in Brazil*, published in 2025 by CIESPI, specifically analyses data referring to that country, and includes the five Brazilian regions. The data reveal the perceptions and feelings of 200 students from public and private schools between twelve and eighteen years of age living in urban areas. The interviews, carried

out face-to-face, identified that the participants show concern about climate change, especially when they think about the future, and feel its effects in the form of anxiety, fear, and insecurity. However, they were revealed to be unaware of ways to contribute to broader environmental efforts beyond individual actions on e.g saving water and the proper disposal of garbage.

These findings highlight the pressing need to disseminate information, to stimulate youth engagement, as well as to rethink everyday strategies to address these challenges and promote new paradigms of youth interaction with the natural world. The correlation between climate anxiety and (dis) connection with nature offers an approach that is still little explored, especially in relation to younger generations.

From global, to regional and local, climate change occupies a growing concern on the agendas of civil society, and governmental and non-governmental organizations. Among the common aspects are the correlation of climate change to transversal and intersectional set of phenomena, the specificities of each territory, as well as the centrality of children, adolescents. and young people, given that they constitute the most affected by the effects of the climate crisis.

The results also point to the need to identify how to better access the younger generations regarding sharing, co-creation, and circulation of information/knowledge, in addition to stimulating and promoting individual and collective possibilities of engagement and participation.

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Notes

¹ The definitions of children, adolescents and young people are aligned with the Child and Adolescent Statute (ECA/Brazil) that defines a child as a person under 12 years of age, and an adolescent between 12 and 17 years of age. The National Youth Policy defines young people as those aged 15 and 29. In this case, we have adolescents (15 to 17), youth (18-24), and young adults (25-29). However, because the age groups of children and young people included in the literature are not always clearly defined, or because the term "young" is more commonly used, especially in international literature, we use the term youth to encompass all young people between the ages of 12 and 29.

² CLICA is a civil society coalition that aims to defend the right of children and adolescents to an ecologically balanced environment, both for present and future generations, [www.clica.org.br](#).

³ People of African descent in Brazil who are descendants of runaway enslaved people, forming communities called quilombos to preserve their culture, history, and relationship with the land.

