Save the Children

EMPOWERING VOICES: CHILDREN LEAD THE WAY IN CLIMATE ADVOCACY

12/01/2024

Country:
Malawi

Theme:
CHILD RIGHTS

Sub-theme:
DISASTER AND CLIMATE CHANGE

Context:
EDUCATION

Key terms:
CLIMATE CHANGE, CHILD RIGHTS, CLIMATE INDUCED DISASTERS

Donor: ***(When applicable)***
SCI

KEY SUCCESSES

Provide the key program successes in bullet points

- Empowered children and youths on climate justice

Children and youth are among the most vulnerable groups to the impacts of climate change thus affecting realization of their human rights. The recent Tropical Cyclone Freddy, for instance, led to violation of various child rights including right to life, right to education, right to decent housing, right to food among others.

The success story unfolds in the context of a community grappling with the multifaceted challenges of climate change. Situated in a region with high vulnerability to environmental shifts, the community experiences adverse impacts on agriculture, water resources, and livelihoods. National indicators reveal a rising trend in climate-related issues, affecting a substantial population.
Civil Society Network on Climate Change (CISONECC) and the National Youth Network on Climate Change (NYNCC), with support from Save the Children Sweden through Save the Children Malawi are implementing the CSO Capacity Strengthening Programme.

The programme envisions a strong civil society in Malawi that demands and supports the fulfilment of girls' and boys' rights – holding states to account, mobilizing and empowering children and their communities by strengthening CSOs' capacity to better represent, and act on children's rights in relation to climate change. The programme has four pillars: CSO Capacity; Child Rights, Children's Agency and Civic Space which will ensure the implementation of the program goal.

In the dynamic landscape of climate change advocacy, 2023 marked a pivotal year for CISONECC in achieving Outcome 2 – "Children express their views and organize themselves around issues of their concern." This success story not only reflects numerical achievement but underscores a transformative shift in empowering the younger generation to actively engage in shaping policies that impact their future.

Under Outcome 2, CISONECC achieved a remarkable feat in 2023 – the implementation of two impactful child-led initiatives designed to influence decision-making and enhance social accountability processes. This strategic move was aligned with the organization's commitment to inclusivity, with a specific focus on involving girls and children most impacted by discrimination and inequality.

At the heart of this achievement lies a collaborative effort with the National Youth Network on Climate Change (NYNCC). The partnership aimed at not only facilitating but empowering children to play a central role in decision-making processes related to climate justice.

Children and Youth in a panel discussion at UNIMA

The success story unfolds through two key activities – the pre-COP28 Joint Children, Youth, and CSOs Climate Justice Summit. Staged at the Lilongwe University of Agriculture and Natural Resources and the University of Malawi, these events were uniquely led by children and youths. It was not just a platform for participation; rather, the children and youths took charge, passionately developing and delivering statements to duty bearers.

These engagements were more than events; they were platforms for the children and youths to articulate their perspectives on climate justice. Fearlessly, they voiced the urgent needs related to climate justice, outlining crucial points that should be on the agenda for COP28 delegates. The children and youths emerged not just as participants but as leaders, demonstrating their capability to drive meaningful discussions and advocate for change.

Beyond the numerical achievement of the indicator, the success represents a paradigm shift in the dynamics of decision-making. It showcases the transformative potential of empowering children to actively engage in shaping policies and discussions concerning their future. The impact extends far beyond the quantitative measure – it speaks to the qualitative change in the narrative around youth participation.

The influence of the children and youths reached beyond the summit venues. Their statements, passion, and active participation played a vital role in influencing COP28 discussions. Their voices resonated in the corridors of decision-making, emphasizing the urgency of addressing climate justice issues and creating a more sustainable future for all.