



for every child



UNICEF's Work to Combat Climate Change

Explorative Discussion Guide #2

Introduction

In celebration of the National Honor Society's (NHS) centennial in 2021, NHS and UNICEF USA have partnered to empower chapters to raise money to build 10 sustainable classrooms in Côte d'Ivoire using recycled plastic bricks—one classroom to honor every decade of NHS.

This activity introduces NHS students and advisers to the effects of changing environments, climate change, UNICEF's work to combat this, and how students are paving a greener path. Using the resource links, NHS students will explore the Plastic Bricks Program in Côte d'Ivoire and discover how women are changing the way plastic is used to provide sustainable classrooms to children and teachers.

Resources

Share the following links with students:

- One Pager: [Climate, energy and environment](#)
- Video: [Green Schools Initiative](#)
- Video: [Young activists reveal how the climate crisis is shaping their lives](#)
- Article: [UNICEF: Environment and Climate Change](#)



Mariam, a 44 year old woman is collecting plastic waste in Côte d'Ivoire.

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Instructions

Have students read through the resources on their own – **15 minutes**
(optional: preassign the resources 1-2 days in advance and have the students come in prepared to discuss).

- Share the Fact Finding questions with students – have them keep an eye out for answers as they read the resources

As a group, quickly review the Fact Finding questions, then use the Discussion Questions to guide a conversation as students reflect on what they've learned – **30 minutes**

Fact Finding

Students will refer to information in the resource links to find answers to the following:

- Rising sea levels, severe weather events, droughts and flooding have dramatic, devastating effects on the environment and are projected to pose grave risks for children over the coming decades. How many children are affected by drought and flooding zones?
- Climate change threatens the basic elements of life for people around the world. What are some of the threats and risks people, specifically children, may face?
- The evidence for the impact of climate change and air pollution on children is firm and growing, but time is running out fast. How many years do we have to make a transformative change?
- UNICEF works with partners at global and local levels to ensure that children can live in a safe and clean environment. What are ways UNICEF is working to make sure children are protected and have a voice in making an environmental change?
- UNICEF is implementing solutions to reduce our environmental footprint in over 70 offices worldwide and counting. What is UNICEF doing in Côte d'Ivoire to make it a greener country?



Women working at the Conceptos Plásticos factory, in Yopougon, in the South of Côte d'Ivoire.

Let's Review

1. Today, nearly **160 million children** live in high or extremely high drought severity zones, and **over half a billion** children live in extremely high flood occurrence zones.
2. Almost one in seven of the world's children, **300 million**, live in areas with the most toxic levels of outdoor air pollution – **six or more times higher** than international guidelines.
3. According to the latest research from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), we have **less than 11 years** to make the transformation necessary to avoid the worst impacts of climate change. The level of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere would have to be cut by **45 percent** by 2030 to prevent global warming above **1.5°C**.

Discussion Starter Questions

Use the following to help stimulate a conversation.

1. Why is it important to discuss changing environments and climate change, especially when talking about children's rights?
2. Why is it important for children and young people to be part of the climate conversation? How can you/they become a part of that conversation?
3. What are some of the challenges children and communities face when it comes to climate change?
4. Why do we need programs like the Plastic Bricks program in Côte d'Ivoire?
5. How can education play a role in changing the effects of climate change?

Take Action!

April 22nd is Earth Day. On this day, students in Côte d'Ivoire will be planting trees and cleaning their schools through their Green Schools Initiative. We encourage NHS chapters to take action to save the environment in your communities! Some ideas:

- Plant a tree
- Go plogging ([learn more](#))
- Clean up a local park/beach
- Host a recycling event

Be creative! Include other members of your community to join in on the fun. Make sure to take photos and tag **#UNICEFUSA**, **#NHS100**, **#EarthDay2021** for a chance to be featured on our channels. You can also submit your project to the **National Student Project Database**.