

**Thematic Session  
Children and Youth**

## **Youth Taking the Lead in Climate Actions**

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The organization “One Point Five Celsius Degree” consists of the ‘youth’ who are taking ‘climate actions’ in Gwangju. In the summer of 2019, this organization was launched by the teenagers who listened to the special lecture on climate crisis at Gwangju Youth Creative Hub and realized how serious the climate crisis issue was. Feeling so desperate about the climate crisis, they have carried out climate actions for four years now. Currently, “One Point Five Celsius Degree” has 18 youth members aged from 17 to 24. The organization’s name “One Point Five Celsius Degree” reflects its members’ commitment to limit the global warming to the critical temperature of 1.5°C. Its name also means that they know the temperature limit of 1.5°C is an unequal threshold and that they will act on the climate crisis until the CO2 from human activities becomes zero.

When we first gathered, we decided to deepen our knowledge on climate crisis by reading books, watching documentary films, studying, and having discussion with each other. Based on our understanding on climate crisis, we began to put our knowledge into practice and actions. “One Point Five Celsius Degree” is now positioning itself as a youth climate activist group in Gwangju while picketing on the street and creating diverse activities to let more people know about climate crisis. With growing interest from many people, we promised ourselves that we would become untiring and sustainable activists with a long-term perspective. With this vision, we prepare and enjoy various activities such as theatre festivals, recital of a play, quiz shows, and vegan cuisine classes, etc. with the citizens of Gwangju.

It is not easy to practice what you value in your heart. Climate action requires individual practices in which we face many conflicts. We fight ourselves and sometimes fight others while carrying out climate actions. At some point in our climate actions, we might feel anxious about the uncertain future and could be overwhelmed by climate grief.

One of the biggest reasons for our climate grief is that although the youth are directly affected by the climate crisis, their ‘subjectivity in exercising climate actions’ is not guaranteed. Putting constraints on the climate actions of the youth is no different from having the youth perceive themselves as ‘helpless victims.’ The youth have the right to know what is happening to themselves and to the world, and they should be able to become the main agents to solve the issues facing them.

We have advocated for our rights to study about the climate crisis, to have vegan school meals, to refuse to take a leather crafting class, and to carry out climate actions, which have all been connected deeper into our life through the youth rights movements and the climate justice movements.

We will continue to 'study' about the climate crisis, carry out individual and collective climate 'actions' and 'recover' from climate grief. While undertaking such difficult tasks, we consider ourselves a light to each other. We give light to each other and help each other to rise from any frustrations in our challenging journey. We are eager to connect our actions to the world, while aiming to continue what we can do with pure heart.