



The role of Children in the Future of Food



A presentation by
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on behalf of
The Humane Education Trust



How fast the world is changing!

Gone is the old English maxim whereby
‘children must be seen and not heard’.



In terms of Article 12 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, children who are capable of forming a view must be afforded the right...

- ✓ **to express these views freely in all matters affecting them**
- ✓ **and such views must be given due weight in accordance with the age and maturity of the child.**

Thus, **the children of Africa** are stakeholders in this esteemed gathering here today at the African Protein Summit.

The world they inherit is currently in our hands and **their views must be given 'due weight'**.

We need to ask them...

- **How do you feel, as a child of Africa,** about a future whereby Africa is colonised, yet again, but this time by a system of industrialised agriculture that is condemned in Europe and the USA for its contribution to climate change, as well as for its inhumanity to animals?
- **How do you feel, as a child of Africa,** about rural farmers losing their livelihoods because of the intrusion of massive international food corporations?

- **How do you feel, as a child of Africa,** about inheriting a world where nature disappears before your eyes, as land is stripped bare, to make way for vast fields of soya to feed farm animals locked in cages, crates and feedlots?

- **How do you feel, as a child of Africa,** about inheriting a system of food production that is psychologically and physically violent towards the very beings that we use for our food?

➤ **How do you feel** about asking the governments in Africa to invest exclusively in regenerative farming methods where farm animals play their part in the sustainability of soil; where animals eat grass and shrubs – the food we as humans cannot eat; where farm animals are afforded the ability to exercise natural behaviours;

➤ **We must ask our children:**

Which Africa do you choose?

Your voice matters.

Your voice counts.

It is your future we are talking about.

Please tell us?

Nowadays, in terms of the
United Nations' Rights of the Child,
children's voices must be heard –
in fact, they must become central to
decision-making itself!



The recent addition on September 18, 2023 of GC26 to the **UNs' Rights of the Child**, is also of relevance.

In terms of GC26, Article 35, the UN decreed that children are to be protected from exposure to all forms of physical and psychological violence – be it domestic, societal or inflicted on animals.



Currently, the primary focus of GC26 is on bull-fighting in countries like Spain, Portugal and Colombia, trophy-hunting in Africa, and the shooting of street dogs in Morocco, for example.

However, **we need to ask our children if factory farming should be included in this focus.**

Industrialised Agriculture

Inhumanity to Animals



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Industrialised Agriculture

Inhumanity to Animals



As we speak, billions of dollars and euros are being invested in animal agriculture throughout Africa. The intention is to improve nutrition and food security by lowering the cost of meat and increasing its accessibility.

Pig and goat farms in my own home country Zimbabwe, have proliferated and there has been a surge in the number of slaughterhouses.



**IF WE CAN'T SHOW CHILDREN
HOW WE TREAT FARM ANIMALS
THEN WHAT WE ARE DOING
TO THE ANIMALS IS WRONG**

Understanding empathy and the repercussions of the erosion of empathy

Our world is beset by violence in all its forms. Yet **we are all born with a natural instinct for empathy.**

Without empathy the development of human society could not have evolved because civilization depends on collaboration, cohesion, understanding and concern for each other.

In other words **human civilization is rooted in our natural instinct for empathy.**

Empathy has two dimensions:

- 1. Cognitive empathy:** the ability to understand the appropriate responses to someone's needs. Cognitive empathy is sometimes low in autism.
- 2. Affective empathy:** the ability to emotionally feel the needs of others. Importantly, low affective empathy results in callous behavior towards others and denotes psychopathic tendencies.

Exposure of children to violence and abuse towards any living being – human or animal - causes an erosion of affective empathy resulting in a normalisation of abusive behavior. The victim of abuse becomes objectified. A need to control the victim is established. The erosion of affective empathy is underway and our very humanity itself is diminished.

No longer should we wonder where all the violence comes from!

It is up to us to nurture empathy in our children, and it begins with those at our mercy... the animals.

Our thanks to the World Link Coalition for bringing this vital scientific research to the attention of the United Nations.



It will be very interesting to learn from children how they feel about the commodification of animals in industrialised agriculture...

- **Does it teach children that the suffering of animals is irrelevant?**
- **Does it normalise ill-treatment of animals?**
- **What do children feel when they witness an animal being cared for and treated well?**
- **Do they know about the link between animal abuse and human violence?**
- **Do they think that encouraging a culture of treating animals well, will help bring about a kinder world for people as well?**

Ladies and Gentlemen, we know now that **exposure to violence, whether directed at humans or animals, predicts and increases a child's engagement in maladaptive behaviours as a coping mechanism.**

It is essential to address these issues from their point of view.

The Lundy Method in Northern Ireland is being used as a foundation for the very purpose of recording and collecting the views of children.

We also need to ask:

Does our school curriculum include humane education programmes to raise awareness, promote empathy, and teach responsible and compassionate treatment of animals?



I am here today to represent **The Humane Education Trust** which, through its nature-based platform, offers freely-downloadable, curriculum-friendly, online readers, lesson plans, theatrical plays and fun games.

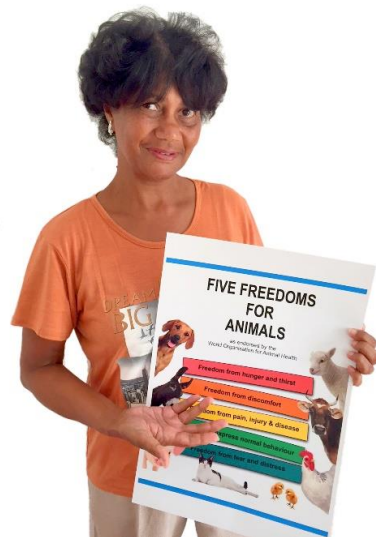


www.naturebased.education



Children learn about animal behaviour, the Five Freedoms for Animals, and the importance of treating animals with kindness.

Humane education encourages empathy and fosters a sense of responsibility towards animals and people.



5 FREEDOMS for ANIMALS

Endorsed by the
World Organisation for Animal Health (WOAH)

Freedom from hunger and thirst

Freedom from discomfort

Freedom from pain, injury or disease

Freedom to express normal behaviour

Freedom from fear and distress

The world is redefining its relationship with animals, moving away from domination and exploitation towards respect for their immense sentience.



Since the beginning of 2022 to date,
this platform is being used by educators
as follows:

Teachers: 393

Learners: 54 722

Schools: 325

Universities: 2

University of the Witwatersrand (WITS)

University of Pretoria (TUKS)

Internationally: 8

Battersea UK

Cambridgeshire UK

India

Nairobi

Turkiye

Ontario

New Jersey USA

Barcelona

In closing...

the children of Africa hold the power to help shape the destiny of Africa, its people and its animals.

<https://animoto.com/play/swC1BTNqDR8TmbC02KLuXQ>



We thank you for your role in helping to achieve a kinder world.