



Parks for the Planet Forum

Nature and Childhood: From Research and Activism to Policies for Global Change

6-10 March 2018

We urgently need decision makers to put in place policies and actions to reconnect children with nature in urban environments. The 2017 Salzburg Statement provides a framework from which to develop more detailed policy. It is an important resource for city authorities and civil society organizations everywhere.'

– Jonny Hughes, CEO Scottish Wildlife Trust, IUCN Global Councillor, Salzburg Global Fellow

I. Background

Since its launch in 2015, Salzburg Global Seminar's annual meeting of the **Parks for the Planet Forum** has explored critical intersections between nature and human development, with a particular focus on the impacts of urbanization and reduced access to nature upon health and wellbeing.

Now entering its fourth year, the Salzburg Global Parks for the Planet Forum is a ten-year collaborative partnership with IUCN-International Union for Conservation and numerous national parks services designed to connect the 2014 and 2024 IUCN World Parks Congresses and progress the Sustainable Development Goals. Each annual meeting addresses a focused nexus topic to advance cross-sector conservation strategies as critical investments for human health and wellbeing, climate resilience, and social and economic innovation. Over ten years, the Forum will build a core group of ambassadors and champions from selected urban areas and the private sector, including financial and investment firms, to accelerate transformative policies and action across the world.

II. The Child in the City – 2017

In 2017, international participants at the Parks for the Planet Forum meeting on '*The Child in the City: Health, Parks and Play*' developed a Salzburg Statement proposing eight actions to transform cities for children:¹

1. Ensure children of all ages, backgrounds, income, and abilities have equitable access to nature and play regularly and in meaningful ways to promote good health and wellbeing.
2. Embed nature in everyday places used by children, such as schools, backyards, parks, playgrounds and city streets, to make the city into a natural outdoor classroom.
3. Involve children in designing and planning natural spaces for recreation, education, inspiration and health, to give them ownership and pride in their local communities, schools and parks

¹ See <http://www.salzburgglobal.org/topics/article/the-child-in-the-city-health-parks-and-play.html> for more detail.

4. Build curiosity, wonder, and care for nature in children (for example by greening school grounds and involving children with community gardens).
5. Protect natural features across cityscapes and create an equitably distributed network of accessible green and nature-rich spaces that all generations can reach on foot.
6. Connect cities with the broader ecosystems in which they are embedded, creating corridors for people, plants and animals to move safely across the city and into its surroundings.
7. Establish more urban conservation areas to increase access to nature and connect cities to the broader protected area network
8. Work together through cross sectoral and multi-level partnerships to build an inclusive culture of health in cities.

Building on these eight recommendations, the Parks for the Planet Forum will focus in 2018 on ways to advance specific holistic policy approaches to make these actions a reality.

III. Nature and Childhood – 2018

In 2018, the Parks for the Planet Forum will focus on ***Nature and Childhood: From Research and Activism to Policies for Global Change***. Around the world, access to nature and green space for children growing up in urban environments is increasingly becoming an issue of equity and social justice.

All children need and deserve the right to play outdoors and to grow up in an environment at home and school that allows them to develop a sense of wonder and responsibility towards the natural world. There is a compelling evidence base on the many benefits that access to nature and safe outdoor play bring to children and the wider communities in which they live. These benefits include improved learning outcomes, improved health and wellbeing, and the development and acquisition of a broad range of social and emotional skills. The return on such investments is much higher if begun in early childhood. Currently, however, governments around the world continue to over-invest in corrective policies for older children, and to under-invest in ongoing early years' initiatives.

Policies that give all children more opportunities to play outdoors and grow up with a love of nature have benefits well beyond individual children's lives and development. They are essential for the future health and stewardship of the planet and also make strong economic sense for governments and city leaders. Unfortunately, growing up with access and opportunity to play outdoors and to learn to value the natural world is far from the experience of many children. Changing this paradigm is not just the right thing to do, it is the smart thing to do.

The 2018 meeting of the Parks for the Planet Forum will therefore focus on four targeted policy interventions:

- **Play as a Lever for Economic and Social Resilience:** Embed nature in everyday places used by children, such as schools, backyards, parks, playgrounds and city streets, to make the city into a natural outdoor classroom.
- **Designing Parks for Community Well-Being:** Involve children in designing and planning natural spaces for recreation, education, inspiration and health, to give them ownership and pride in their local communities, schools and parks.



- **Influencing the Next Generation of Conservation Leaders:** Build curiosity, wonder, and care for nature in children (for example by greening school grounds and involving children with community gardens).
- **Establishing Cross-Sectoral Partnerships:** Work together through cross sectoral and multi-level partnerships to build an inclusive culture of health in cities

The meeting will engage up to 60 leaders and influencers from around the world who have the capacity to bring about significant policy change in their communities. These will include representatives from sectors such as: government, civil service and policy; business, finance and real estate development; urban design and planning; construction, technology and green infrastructure; educationalists, academia and research; sport and recreation; environmental conservation; physical and mental health; civil society and community organizations; and journalism.

IV. Outcomes and Impact

During the 2018 program, participants will jointly develop a 'Salzburg Statement' recommending scalable policies and practices to help local and regional governments and private sector stakeholders ensure that all children can grow up with nature and opportunities for outdoor play. Following the program, there will be a series of interactive questions on social media, webinars and podcasts to discuss and disseminate the Salzburg Statement and multiply its impact in different settings.

A report will subsequently be published summarizing the program as well as highlights from the social media and webinar debates that follow it

V. About Salzburg Global Seminar

Salzburg Global Seminar is an independent non-profit organization founded in 1947 to challenge current and future leaders to shape a better world. Our multi-year programs aim to bridge divides, transform systems, and expand collaboration.

Salzburg Global convenes outstanding talent across generations, cultures, and sectors to inspire new thinking and action, connecting local innovators and global resources. We foster lasting networks and partnerships for creative, just, and sustainable change.

Over 35,000 Fellows from 170 countries have come together through our work, many now in senior leadership positions. Our historic headquarters at Schloss Leopoldskron in Salzburg, Austria – now also an award-winning hotel - allows us to welcome all Fellows in conditions of trust and openness.

www.SalzburgGlobal.org