



Education International
Asia-Pacific Region
EIAP



Teach for Climate Action

An Advocacy Toolkit on Climate Change Education
for Educators and Their Unions



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**Teach for Climate Action:
An Advocacy Toolkit on Climate
Change Education for Educators
and Their Unions**

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Education International represents organisations of teachers and other education employees across the globe. It is the world's largest federation of unions and associations, representing thirty million education employees in about four hundred organisations in one hundred and seventy countries and territories, across the globe. Education International unites teachers and education employees.

Contents

vii	Abbreviations
viii	How to Use This Toolkit

PART 1

1	Climate Change Education: Global and Regional Perspectives
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Introduction: The Challenge Without Precedent• How Can CCE Be Integrated into Education for Sustainable Development?• How Is CCE Put into Practice in Asia and the Pacific?

PART 2

13	Climate Change Education in the Classroom and in Curricula
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• How to Talk About Mitigation, Adaptation, and Disaster Risk Reduction• How to Make Learning Environments Safe and Sustainable• How to Relate Climate Change to Equitable Systems and Sustainable Futures• How Can CCE Empower Students Towards Climate Action?

PART 3

33	Advancing Climate Change Education in and Beyond the Classroom
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• What Do Education Unions Demand to Ensure Quality CCE for All?• How Can Education Unions Strategically Push for Quality CCE for All?• How Can Education Unions, Within Their Organisations, Contribute to Climate Action and Education?• How Can Education Unions Build International Solidarity for Quality CCE for All?

Abbreviations

ACE	Action for Climate Empowerment
CCE	climate change education
COP	Conference of Parties
DRR	disaster risk reduction
EI	Education International
EIAP	Education International Asia-Pacific Region
ESD	Education for Sustainable Development
GHG	greenhouse gas
IPCC	Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
NC	national communications
NDC	Nationally Determined Contributions
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
TVET	technical and vocational education and training
UN	United Nations
UNDRR	United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund

How to Use This Toolkit

This toolkit grew out of *E4SD: Educators for Sustainable Development*, the campaign of Education International Asia-Pacific (EIAP) Region calling upon governments to urgently prioritise the provision of quality climate change education (CCE) for all.

WHO WILL USE THIS TOOLKIT?

It is for teachers, educators, and education unionists. It works for both those who have some experience campaigning for or teaching climate change and those who want to start this work by learning some tips for use in the classroom or in their respective trade unions.

WHY IS THIS TOOLKIT IMPORTANT?

The need for CCE is as urgent as ever. This toolkit aims to contribute to educators' and education unionists' skills and baseline knowledge in this regard.

This toolkit is meant to be neither comprehensive nor prescriptive. Instead, it builds on existing research, analyses of needs and constraints, and best practices. The most it hopes to achieve is to

serve as a stepping stone for developing context- and user-specific plans for CCE-focused advocacy.

WHAT'S INSIDE THIS TOOLKIT?

It is structured and designed to provide an accessible introduction to climate education. Each section can be used as a standalone guide that users can complement with up-to-date examples and knowledge of their local contexts.

- The **first part** introduces CCE within the framework of Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) and details the work done on it in Asia and the Pacific.
- The **second part**, addressed to teachers and educators, offers an overview of approaches to and curricular vision of CCE in a learning environment. It is organised according to general learning topics to be covered, and a list of readings, resources and training guides for each topic are provided by hyperlink for those interested to delve into applicable approaches and learning materials. This part of the toolkit also features case studies and examples of best practices.
- The **third part** guides education unionists in their campaigns for the inclusion of CCE in their respective country's national education plans and climate action agenda.

Educators and education unionists may choose to read and digest the toolkit in its entirety or select material from sections that they believe are relevant to their efforts to strengthen climate education.



MARK OKON

PART 1

Climate Change Education: Global and Regional Perspectives

Introduction: The Challenge Without Precedent

In the Global South, what people know about climate change is hardly taught in the classroom but lived out in daily scenes of destitution. There is no safe vantage point from which to observe them, but some places and peoples are at greater risk than others. Poor countries bear the heavier brunt.

In a new report as part of its sixth assessment cycle, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), a consensus-building, UN-mandated body on climate science, warns of ever grimmer environmental shocks in Asia and the Pacific, in particular (see **Box 1.1**).

The region is, after all, home to half of the 10 countries most vulnerable to climate change, including India, Bangladesh and the Philippines, said Susan Hopgood, President of Education International (EI), citing contemporary climate data in her opening speech at the 8th EI World Congress in 2019. “Nowhere on the planet is that threat more apparent than in the Asia-Pacific region,” she said.

Weather extremes that are becoming vanishingly rare can reverse development gains in this part of the Global South. A hotter planet will prove damaging to a region that is, in the first place, no longer on

track to achieve any of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030, according to the UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific in 2019. The region is thus best positioned to rethink its development paths and to retool the institutions most responsible for imparting the skills, knowledge and attitudes that inform people's decisions and collective action on the climate crisis.

Education International Asia-Pacific (EIAP) Region recognises the urgent need for quality climate change education (CCE) for all. Climate-literate individuals are better equipped to help hasten a just transition to a sustainable future. Teachers and education unions are among their allies in ensuring that CCE, based on science and with a civic action focus, becomes as fundamental as teaching reading and writing.

Ultimately, EI's vision of a quality CCE for all (see **Box 1.2**) is one in which the resilience of education institutions, communities and economies can overcome the greatest existential threat facing humanity.

How Can CCE Be Integrated into Education for Sustainable Development?

Teaching climate change effectively is more than just laying out facts and data. It must be integrated into all spheres of learning to examine the dynamic relationships between environmental, political, economic and cultural driving forces behind climate change. It is too big and complex a subject to be confined solely to the science classroom. An interdisciplinary, cross-curricular perspective allows for a deeper appreciation of the various dimensions of sustainability.

It explains UNESCO's shift in the 1990s from promoting environmental education to introducing Education for Sustainable Development (ESD). The latter has evolved to be more intersectional, encompassing gender-responsive education, indigenous knowledge and CCE, among others.

Though itself key to Target 4.7 of the SDG on education, ESD has been recognised as an enabler of all the other SDGs. It locates climate justice in the interplay of local, regional and global development issues. Its focus on intergenerational accountability imbues CCE with a stronger

BOX
1.1

IPCC's AR6 Common Regional Changes and Climate Projections in Asia and the Pacific

HIGH CONFIDENCE

- Regional mean sea level will continue to rise in Asia, causing coastal area loss and shoreline retreat.
- Seasonal snow duration, glacial mass, and permafrost area will decline further by the mid-21st century in Asia.
- Heat extremes will continue to increase while cold extremes will continue to decrease over the next decades in Asia.
- Marine heatwaves will continue to increase in Asia.
- Rainfall will continue to decrease across small Island regions in the Pacific, except in parts of the western and equatorial Pacific.
- At 2°C global warming and above, heavy rainfall events will increase in the western tropical Pacific.

MEDIUM TO HIGH CONFIDENCE

- Average and heavy precipitation will increase over much of Asia.

MEDIUM CONFIDENCE

- Fire weather seasons will lengthen and intensify, particularly in North Asia regions.
- Glacier runoff in the Asian high mountains will increase up to the mid-21st century.
- At 2°C global warming and above, higher evapotranspiration under a warming climate will either amplify or partially offset, respectively, the effect of decreases or increases in rainfall resulting in increased aridity in parts of the Pacific.
- Mean surface wind speeds will continue to decrease in central and northern parts of Asia.

SOURCE:

IPCC. (2021). Climate Change 2021: The Physical Science Basis. Contribution of Working Group I to the Sixth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. Masson-Delmotte, V., P. Zhai, A. Pirani, S. L. Connors, C. Péan, S. Berger, N. Caud, Y. Chen, L. Goldfarb, M. I. Gomis, M. Huang, K. Leitzell, E. Lonnoy, J. B. R. Matthews, T. K. Maycock, T. Waterfield, O. Yelekçi, R. Yu and B. Zhou (eds.). Cambridge University Press.



**BOX
1.2**

Education International Manifesto on Quality Climate Change Education for All

Education International, the global voice of educators, calls on every government in the world to deliver on their commitments to climate change education and Education for Sustainable Development in the Paris Agreement (Article 12) and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (Targets 4.7, 12.8 and 13.3). This Manifesto outlines the profession's vision for quality climate change education and the policy framework necessary to implement it.

- Governments ensure quality climate change education for all.
- Every student leaves education climate-literate and equipped with the skills and knowledge needed to tackle climate change, adapt to uncertainties, and take part in building a more sustainable future.
- Quality climate change education is based on science, and addresses the ethical, cultural, political, social and economic dimensions of climate change.
- Teachers are trained and supported to provide quality climate change education.
- Schools and learning environments are transformed, to support quality climate change education.

You may read EI's Manifesto in full:

<https://www.teach4thepplanet.org/manifesto/>

- Support EI's #Teach4thePlanet campaign by signing the manifesto!
- Translate the manifesto into your local language!
- Share the manifesto with your local/national officials!

sense of urgency than has been the case. Its framework emphasises holistic approaches to reimagining learning content and outcomes, pedagogy, and a learning environment geared towards social transformation (see **Figure 1.1**).

UNESCO has outlined how ESD can be applied to CCE via specific learning objectives in cognitive, socio-emotional and behavioural domains (see **Table 1.1**). The [Berlin Declaration on ESD](#), adopted in May 2021, considers the learning competencies in these domains as foundational to the “ESD for 2030” framework and its Roadmap for Implementation, the guiding documents for the next 10 years to mobilise action on ESD. Over 2,800 participants from governments, international, intergovernmental and nongovernmental organisations, civil society, youth, the academic community, the business sector and all spheres of teaching and learning have committed to the Berlin Declaration.

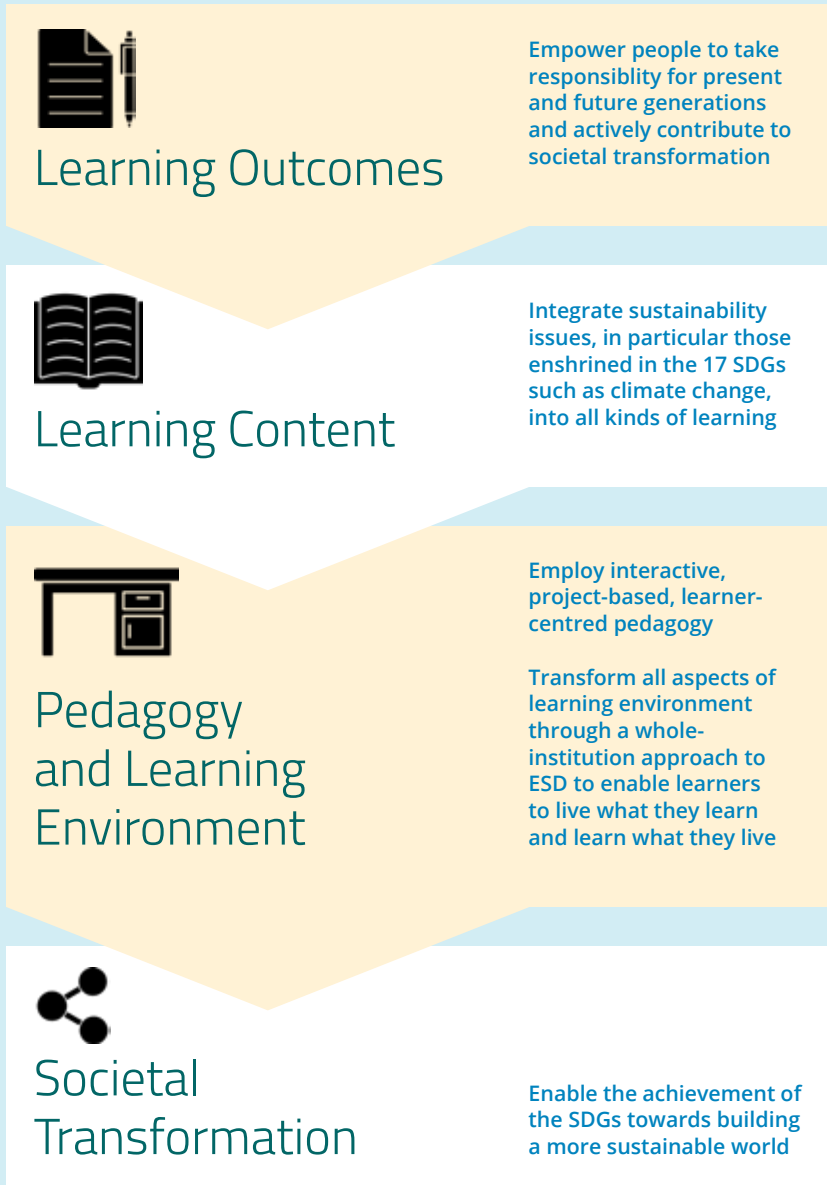
ESD shapes learners into agents of change who dare to question the kind of development that profit-oriented economic models pursue. They are adept at strategies for mitigation, to pre-empt worst-case climate scenarios, and for adaptation in the face of clear and present dangers. They aspire to progress that does not diminish the prospects of future generations.

CCE for sustainable development, by extension, further seeks to enrich learners’ appreciation not only of their individual agency but also of the collective response that tackling climate change necessitates. Education and training, respectively, change habits in the long run and hone practical skills. These two priority areas of work are among the elements of Action for Climate Empowerment (ACE) that foster multi-stakeholder and multi-sectoral partnerships and community engagement.

The scope and objectives of ACE hark back to the work under Article 6 of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) in 1992 (see **Figure 1.2**). It has been reaffirmed and adopted in many other international frameworks. ACE is so undeniably crucial that, at the 24th Conference of Parties (COP24), in Katowice, Poland, it was the very first thematic intervention that countries agreed on when deciding what commitments to include in the package of decisions to enact the Paris Agreement.

Another historic step forward towards accelerating inclusive climate policies is when at COP25, in Madrid, Spain in 2019, a group of

FIGURE 1.1. Education for Sustainable Development (ESD): What Needs To Be Done?



SOURCE:
UNESCO. (2020). Education for Sustainable Development: A Roadmap. Paris.

TABLE 1.1. Learning Objectives and Target Competencies for SDG 13 on Climate Action

COGNITIVE LEARNING OBJECTIVES

The learner . . .

1. understands the greenhouse effect as a natural phenomenon caused by an insulating layer of greenhouse gases.
2. understands current climate change as an anthropogenic phenomenon resulting from increased GHG emissions.
3. knows which human activities—on a global, national, local and individual level—contribute most to climate change.
4. knows about the main ecological, social, cultural and economic consequences of climate change locally, nationally and globally and understands how these can themselves become catalysing, reinforcing factors for climate change.
5. knows about prevention, mitigation and adaptation strategies at different levels (global to individual) and for different contexts and their connections with disaster response and disaster risk reduction.

SOCIO-EMOTIONAL LEARNING OBJECTIVES

The learner is able to . . .

1. explain ecosystem dynamics and the environmental, social, economic and ethical impact of climate change.
2. encourage others to protect the climate.
3. collaborate with others and to develop commonly agreed-upon strategies to deal with climate change.
4. understand their personal impact on the world's climate, from a local to a global perspective.
5. recognise that the protection of the global climate is an essential task for everyone and that we need to completely re-evaluate our worldview and everyday behaviours in light of this.

BEHAVIOURAL LEARNING OBJECTIVES

The learner is able to . . .

1. evaluate whether their private and job activities are climate friendly and—where not—to revise them.
2. act in favour of people threatened by climate change.
3. anticipate, estimate and assess the impact of personal, local and national decisions or activities on other people and world regions.
4. promote climate-protecting public policies.
5. support climate-friendly economic activities.

SOURCE:
UNESCO. (2017). Education for Sustainable Development Goals: Learning Objectives. Paris.

FIGURE 1.2. Key Milestones for CCE in Climate Negotiations

<p>1995</p>	<p>COP1: Adoption of Article 6 of the UNFCCC</p>	<p>Emphasises six priority areas of work on CCE and outreach:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • education, • training, • access to information • public awareness • public participation • international cooperation
<p>2002</p>	<p>COP8: Adoption of the New Delhi Work Programme</p>	<p>Sets a five-year work plan with a country- driven approach to integrate Article 6 activities into existing climate change strategies</p>
<p>2012</p>	<p>COP18: Adoption of the Doha Work Programme</p>	<p>Establishes dialogues for Action on Climate Empowerment (ACE), later reflected in other international frameworks such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Global Action Programme (GAP) for Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) in 2014 • SDGs in 2015 • The Escazú Agreement in 2018
<p>2014</p>	<p>COP20: Lima Ministerial Declaration on Education and Awareness-Raising</p>	<p>Calls on governments to include climate change into school curricula and climate awareness into national development and climate change plans</p>
<p>2015</p>	<p>COP21: Adoption of Article 12 of the Paris Agreement</p>	<p>Reaffirms the need for Parties to “cooperate in taking measures, as appropriate, to enhance climate change education, training, public awareness, public participation and public access to information”</p>
<p>2016 to 2019</p>	<p>Continuation of the Dialogues on ACE</p>	<p>Provides a regular forum to Parties and other stakeholders to share their experiences, exchange ideas, good practices and lessons learned regarding the implementation of Article 6 of the UNFCCC</p>

SOURCE:
 El. (2019). Education: A Powerful Tool for Combating Climate Change: A guide for education unions and educators. Brussels.

governments joined young climate activists to sign the [Declaration on Children, Youth and Climate Action](#). They united around, among other priorities, the need to invest in climate change and environmental education to reach marginalised children and youth.

Together with educators, today's young generation can urge their governments, the private sector, civil society and all development actors to put climate action front and centre in decision-making and social transformation. To this end, EI, the global voice of educators, is taking the lead in sustaining social dialogue between them and policy-makers to change curricula, teacher training and professional development, and education systems for the better.

How Is CCE Put into Practice in Asia and the Pacific?

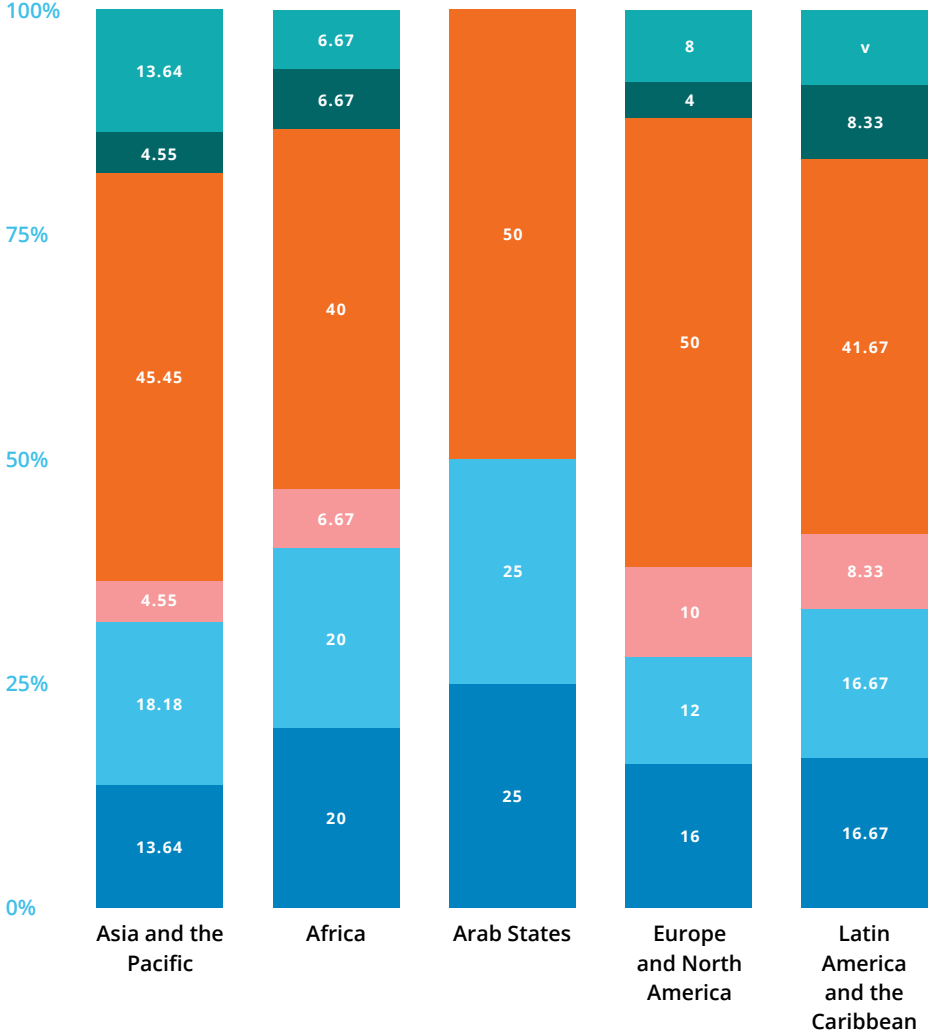
Globally, strides have been made to mainstream CCE at all levels — in teacher education, in curricula, and in national education programmes. But, in Asia and the Pacific, while there has been welcome progress, much remains to be done by way of policy and institutional arrangements around CCE.

Formal education and training remain second only to public awareness as approaches to delivering CCE around the world, according to UNESCO's analysis of Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) and national communications to the UNFCCC in 2019 (see **Figure 1.3**). The Asia-Pacific region, in particular, registers the most reference to international cooperation as an approach. Yet it still needs to work on leveraging public participation and public access to information in broadening CCE's reach.

All venues and modes of delivery must be exhausted. Delay in implementing CCE and ESD comes at a steep price in humanity's scramble to make up for lost time. As far as EI is concerned, any profound changes in this regard must begin with reorienting education systems to sustainable development.

For without the necessary policy-level, curricular and programmatic changes, it is counterintuitive to just rely on countries' good faith to undertake the CCE and ESD actions they have been "encouraged" or "invited" to fulfil as part of their commitments to international frameworks and policy instruments.

FIGURE 1.3. Regional Differences in Approaches to Implementing CCE†



Legend:

- Education
- Training
- Public Access to Information
- Public Awareness
- Public Participation
- International Cooperation

†A total of 196 National Communications and 172 Nationally Determined Contributions submitted by 194 countries to the UNFCCC Secretariat were analysed.

SOURCE:

UNESCO. (2019). Country progress on Climate Change Education, Training and Public Awareness: An analysis of country submissions under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. Paris.

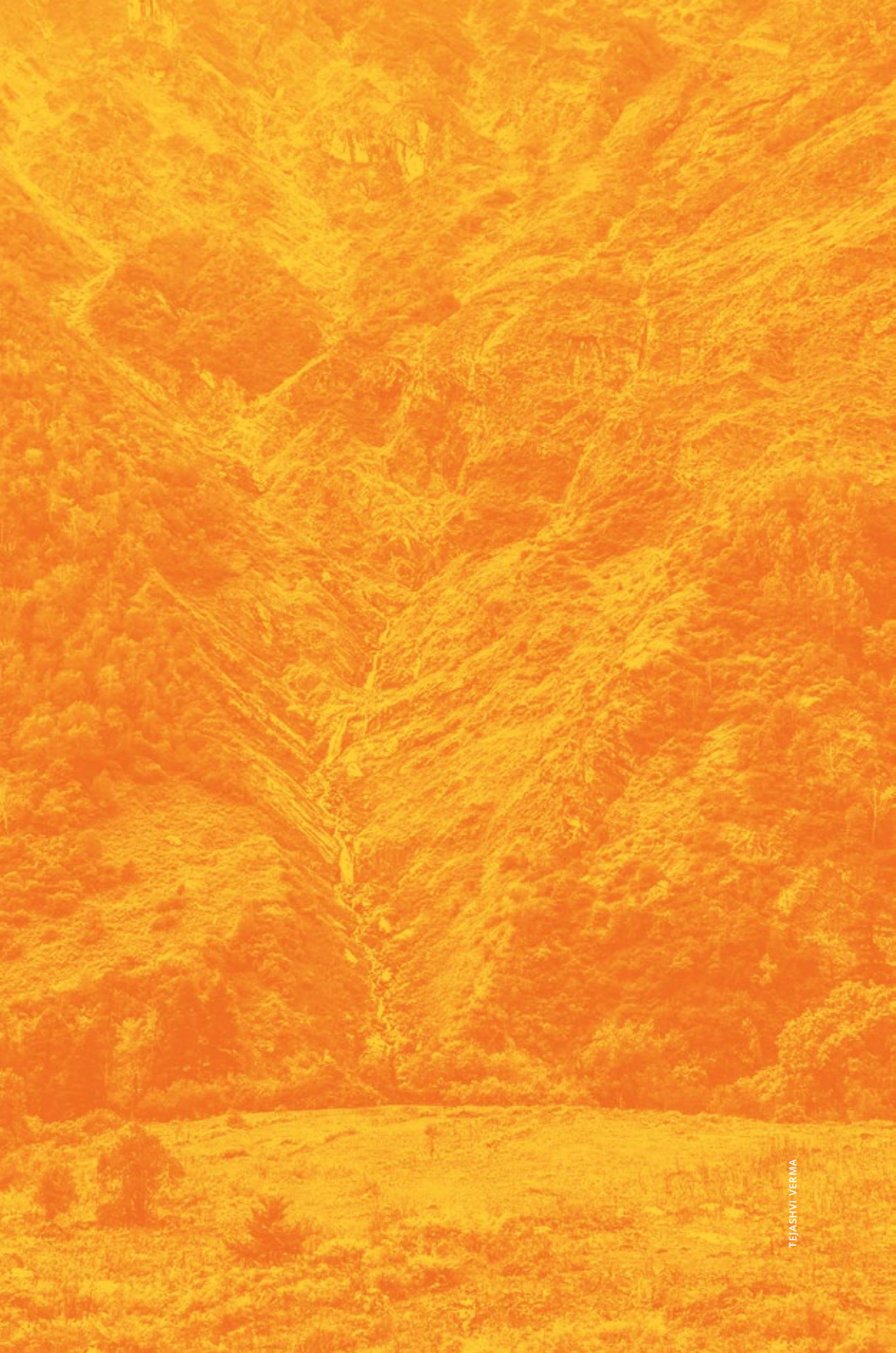
That is why, in an [analysis of updated NDCs and National Climate Change Learning Strategies](#) (NCCLS), EI identified a set of indicators for each of the six metrics based on its [Manifesto's vision for quality CCE for all](#): (1) policy ambition; (2) pervasiveness or extent of integration; (3) inclusion of key and relevant stakeholders; (4) quality of CCE; (5) climate justice; and (6) system strengthening. Across the board, EI concluded, every country either failed or just barely made the mark.

When graded on a curve, only two countries in the Asia-Pacific region passed EI's assessment of NDCs — Cambodia and the Marshall Islands. Few NDCs recognise the youth as agents of change. Even fewer of them — only 1 in 10 of NDCs — reference teachers' role in greening the education system, but still none mentions efforts to engage teachers or education trade unions as a climate stakeholder group.

CCE is, in fact, mentioned in only 18% of NDCs, but none of them are calling for compulsory CCE for all. Those countries that at least focus on CCE as a climate strategy have been found to be among the most vulnerable to climate change impacts and the least responsible for present-day emissions.

Meanwhile, NCCLS of countries fare better than NDCs when it comes to CCE. Still, bolder ambitions for concerted climate action are needed at all levels. On the ground, educators and their unions are the first port of call on the road to a sustainable future. To entrust in their hands the future generation requires resources and opportunities to equip teachers as well with the values and technical know-how required for a just transition.

Otherwise, the alternative will be much the same world, only hotter, more unjust, doomed to more vested interests than it is now — or than it might have been.



PART 2

Climate Change Education in the Classroom and in Curricula

The following points are based on some of the tried-and-tested, best practices on the ground that can be modelled or adopted to reform curricula and to make a climate-ready classroom engaging, student-driven and transformative. They hope to guide teachers and education support personnel in shaping climate-literate students and equipping them with critical-thinking skills and the scientific and civic knowledge to change course.

At the same time, these recommendations reflect what education unions want in quality CCE for all, as reflected in [El's Manifesto](#). This part of the toolkit also draws from the commitments set out in the [Berlin Declaration on ESD](#) and the priorities identified by children and youth throughout the world in the [Declaration on Children, Youth and Climate Action](#) at COP25 in 2019, among other international documents and agreements.

There are numerous resources online concerning the science of climate change, and even more are coming in as research in the field advances. The following tips and recommendations thus no longer cover the basics of climate change or the arguments on whether it is real — at this point, it should no longer be the subject of conjecture or a class debate.

How to Talk About Mitigation, Adaptation, and Disaster Risk Reduction

BUILD ADAPTIVE CAPACITIES IN COMMUNITIES AND PURSUE MITIGATION STRATEGIES IN SYSTEMS.

“Strengthen the capacity of children and young people on climate change mitigation and adaptation efforts by establishing and investing in climate change and environmental education, and equipping children and young people with the knowledge and skills required to protect themselves and contribute to a safe and sustainable future, ensuring that such efforts reach marginalized children and youth.”

— **Intergovernmental Declaration on Children, Youth, and Climate Action (COP25, 2019)**

Adaptation encompasses actions taken to cope with climate change at present and its looming impacts, whereas mitigation pertains to efforts to reduce, sequester or altogether avoid greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. Both concepts need to be taught and practised in parallel — and not be framed as flip sides of the same coin — as a focus of an integrated climate response.

Strategic adaptation responses are not limited to what governments are undertaking to address loss and damage and to prepare for worst-case scenarios, such as food insecurity and extreme flooding. They are also cultivated in small pockets of communities.

Just as community-based adaptation requires a profound rethinking of traditions and collective practices, so does mitigation entail radical transformation of economic systems and their causal links to GHGs.

What can teachers do?

- Introduce to students the role homes and traditional village leaderships play in building communities’ adaptive capacities.
- Provide examples of how adaptation strategies are designed and implemented in communities, e.g., low-cost projects like drought-resistant farming, installation of shallow-tube wells, building of wind-breaks and shelterbelts, cyclone-proofing or retrofitting of housing units.

- Discuss how green investment decisions in assets and long-term infrastructure diminish emissions.
- Introduce systems planning: How do governments balance economic imperatives and the demands for climate resilience? The gamut of options is wide and practicable: shift from fossil fuels to clean and renewable energy, promotion and consumption of locally sourced food (with “low food mileage”), enhancing carbon sinks like oceans and soil, and so on.

EXPLORE DISASTER WORK WITHIN THE RISK MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK OF VULNERABILITY AND RESILIENCE.

CCE “recognises that vulnerable populations and groups are most directly affected, including low-income countries, small island states, poor communities, indigenous peoples, people with disabilities, people of colour, women, girls, and children.”

— **EI Manifesto on Quality CCE for All**

Reducing the impacts of climate-exacerbated disasters may be taught from a practical perspective, as in a competency-based approach (e.g., how to prepare for landslides, floods and storm surges). But the science of hazards alone hardly produces proactive learners. Disaster risk reduction (DRR) in CCE shifts the attention from exclusively ensuring safety to building resilience, not just in the dispositional sense but also organisationally and systemically.

What can teachers do?

- Focus less on the inevitability of disasters, as worsened by climate change. Instead, delve into their economic, political and cultural dimensions — how they differ across different regions, peoples and vulnerabilities.
- Interrogate the concept of resilience. It must be clarified that building a people’s resilience to environmental shocks does not excuse from accountability those industries and economies that have done the most to cause the climate crisis. If anything, it calls on them to take part in the necessary reparative work.
- Carry out socio-affective or empathetic exercises. Encourage students to share their fears, hopes and anxieties, especially in

On disaster risk reduction

SUGGESTED RESOURCES

Skills Development and Climate Change Action Plans: Enhancing TVET's Contribution

UNESCO & International
Centre for Technical and
Vocational Education and
Training (UNEVOC), 2019

This discussion paper reviews country submissions (NDCs and NCs) of climate action plans for emissions reduction. It looks at issues of skills supply and demand in climate change priority sectors, the information on which is particularly relevant for students and providers of technical and vocational education and training (TVET).

Comprehensive School Safety: A global framework in support of the Global Alliance for Disaster Risk Reduction and Resilience in the Education Sector and the Worldwide Initiative for Safe Schools

UNDRR, 2017

This document is useful for school administrators as it focuses on child-centred, inclusive, participatory and evidence-based school safety planning.

Disaster Risk Reduction in School Curricula: Case studies from thirty countries

UNESCO & UNICEF, 2012

This report captures national experiences in the integration of DRR in the curriculum, identifies good strategies from the countries surveyed, reviews issues and gaps, and at the end provides a checklist of optimal DRR curriculum practices.

post-disaster environments. Unpack stories of historical disasters. Explore and envision the futures students want in the face of climate change.

As climate change impacts are highly unequal across the world, those who are most vulnerable to disaster risks would benefit most from a curriculum that adapts DRR to local needs and realities (see **Box 2.1**).

How to Make Learning Environments Safe and Sustainable

IMPLEMENT A WHOLE-INSTITUTION APPROACH.

“Promote a whole-institution approach, recognizing that learners and the school community become meaningfully engaged in sustainable development through democratic participation when their institutions become living laboratories for participation and active citizenship, equity and gender equality, health, connections with nature and respect for the environment, energy efficiency and sustainable consumption, and where learning is experiential, action-oriented, localized and culturally specific, allowing learners to learn what they live and live what they learn.”

— Berlin Declaration on ESD (2021)

“School leaders, teachers and education support personnel are supported and trained to climate proof their institutions, with the view to a just transition.”

— EI Manifesto on Quality CCE for All

This approach is best captured in a 4C model — curriculum, community, campus (physical environment), and (institutional) culture. Organisationally, CCE providers must create synergies between each sphere.

In Japan’s flexible schools, for example, the whole-institution approach extends most notably to school governance and cooperation with communities in sustainable management, said Nobuaki Nishihara, deputy general secretary of the Japan Teachers’ Union (JTU), an EI affiliate and the country’s largest and oldest union of teachers and education support personnel.

In general, however, Nobuaki added, the national curriculum still subsumes ESD content, let alone CCE, under the umbrella of environmental education rather than integrating it comprehensively and compulsorily in all subject areas. At least what is important, he said, is that existing institutions, standards, and education unions' initiatives are in place to further mainstream ESD (see **Box 2.2**).

TURN SCHOOLS OR CAMPUSES INTO LABORATORIES FOR LEARNING.

“Educational infrastructure is safe and climate-resilient. Education providers at all levels prioritise and invest in making education institutions environmentally friendly. Education institutions are energy-efficient and sustainable institutions, in line with the climate-proofing of workplaces carried out by the union labour movement. School leaders, teachers and education support personnel are supported and trained to climate-proof their institutions, with the view to a just transition.”

— **EI Manifesto on Quality CCE for All**

CCE offers space for students to create and enjoy the systems that make their learning environment climate friendly.

What can teachers do?

- Task students with a simple waste audit of the schoolyard. They can also carry out other hands-on environmental projects, like making sinks out of recyclable products.
- Have students monitor how food scraps get broken down in a school compost and reflect on how efficiently the school uses water, energy and paper.
- Assign students as guides to visitors on tours around the campus. Showcase, say, a materials recovery facility that the school staff maintains, a cafeteria that serves only healthy and minimally packaged foods, or a garden of flowers, shrubs and vegetables that the students have grown.

BOX
2.1

Integration of Disaster Risk Reduction in Curricula in Indonesia

Indonesia, the world's largest archipelago, is no stranger to disasters. Its curriculum system is flexible enough for schools to infuse DRR into their own curricula as appropriate to local needs. In practice, they do so in at least three ways:

1 INCORPORATING DRR THEMES AND TOPICS INTO EXISTING SUBJECTS.

Disaster-related curriculum content appears in at least three subject areas at all grade levels. In Physical Education and Health, for example, learning units related to disaster and safety include lessons on mutual help and preservation of a healthy environment and are reinforced by safe outdoor activities.

2 TEACHING DRR AS A SPECIAL SUBJECT WITHIN THE LOCAL CONTENT CURRICULUM (LCC).

The country's new curricular framework, developed in response to decentralisation reforms, provides schools flexibility and autonomy. Many schools have since included DRR in their LCC, with lesson plans and syllabi adapted to locally specific disaster risks. Teachers are also encouraged to develop DRR modules and other references in local languages.

3 TEACHING DRR THROUGH A SELF-DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME.

Outside of their classes, students learn about vulnerabilities and hazards through extracurricular activities and counselling sessions, among others.

SOURCE:

Selby, D., & Kagawa, F. (2012). Disaster risk reduction in school curricula: case studies from thirty countries. UNESCO & UNICEF, Spain.

BOX
2.2

Creating an Enabling Environment for a Whole-Institution Approach to CCE and ESD in Japan

Despite institutional and policy challenges, the JTU believes there are good starting points for scaling up ESD and climate education at the national level:

1 FLEXIBLE SCHOOLS

More schools in Japan have been established to respond to the country's increasingly multicultural demographic. Their academic guidelines and flexible curricula tend to offer promising alternative education programmes that are conducive to implementing ESD. For example, in Kawasaki High School, in Kanagawa Prefecture, part of the Greater Tokyo Area, students learn about SDGs and the global issues around them as early as the first and second grades, according to Asuka Inoue, a geography teacher that represented the JTU in the UNESCO World Conference on ESD in May 2021.

2 INTERNATIONAL STANDARDS FOR ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS

All organisations, including schools, businesses, and national and local governments, in Japan are encouraged to register under ISO 14001, a standard that helps an organisation enhance its environmental performance. It also ensures that an organisation fulfils its compliance obligations to applicable laws and regulations on sustainability. Schools must heed this standard to better prepare them for delivering quality CCE for all, Nobuaki of the JTU said.

3 RESEARCH ACTIVITIES FOR TEACHERS AND EDUCATION PROFESSIONALS

The JTU holds an annual research conference that gathers over 10,000 educators nationwide to discuss various issues and developments in the sector. Lately, Nobuaki observed, participants have brought up more successes and challenges in delivering CCE.

These reports laid bare issues of sustainable development that were not strictly environmental but instead touched on other topics that had yet to be holistically covered in the classroom, such as fair trade, peace, international solidarity and mutual society. The JTU plans to work through the research it has compiled over the years and come up with recommendations on implementing ESD more broadly.





On greening learning environments

SUGGESTED RESOURCES

The Whole-School Sustainability Framework: Guiding principles for integrating sustainability into all aspects of a school organization

Center for Green Schools,
at the US Green Building
Council (USGBC), 2014

This report presents the key principles of integrating sustainability into all three aspects of a school — physical place, educational programme, and organisational culture — and illustrates, by case study, how schools and school districts can create the conditions necessary for each principle.

Sustainable and Climate-Friendly Schools: A teacher's guide to taking action

UNESCO & UNESCO
Associated Schools, 2015

It offers a handy checklist of 12 guidelines and step-by-step instructions on how to include sustainability and climate action in school governance, teaching, campus management and community partnerships.

Transforming Universities into Green and Sustainable Campuses: A toolkit for implementers

UNEP, 2014

Designed for higher learning institutions, this toolkit suggests basic strategies and tactics necessary to transform campuses into green, low-carbon institutions, to improve ecosystem management, to maximise resource efficiency, and to minimise waste and pollution.

How to Relate Climate Change to Equitable Systems and Sustainable Futures

EMPHASISE THE MAIN VALUE THAT UNDERLIES SUSTAINABILITY: RESPECT FOR THE DIGNITY AND HUMAN RIGHTS OF ALL.

“CCE addresses the unequal contribution of countries towards causing climate change and the unequal impact of climate change today, recognising that the current system is inequitable, and levels of production and consumption are unsustainable.”

— EI Manifesto on Quality CCE for All

CCE from a rights-based perspective highlights the groups and peoples disproportionately harmed by climate change — indigenous peoples, women and children, environmental rights defenders, migrants and internally displaced persons, older people, the disabled, the poor — and their quest to seek redress and protection.

Vulnerable populations similarly deserve climate equity — not just protection from hazards, but also access to environmental benefits for all, irrespective of race, age, gender, income, and other identifiers.

A world that is equitable and upholds everyone’s human rights is ultimately the kind of future climate-ready students would like to see. CCE also throws this vision into sharp relief against probable futures (i.e., those that the world is heading to, given present trends). A sustainability-oriented curriculum should thus stress intergenerational accountability.

What can teachers do?

- Have students list down climate strategies, big or small, that they think respect people’s rights and differences. Distinguish between ineffectual gestures and drastic changes in values and priorities.
- Carry out exercises in which students envision how to reorganise systems that unsustainably exploit resources. Discuss how these proposals differ from or align with current alternatives to how economies produce goods without compromising ecological integrity.
- With more advanced learners, talk about the human rights obligations of both state and non-state actors to climate-affected peoples,

access to remedy and accountability, trends in climate change litigation, and the references to human rights in climate negotiations.

LET STUDENTS HELP BUILD CLIMATE-RESILIENT COMMUNITIES THROUGH PARTNERSHIPS.

“Students are involved in sustainable practices at education institutions in collaboration with the broader education community.”

— **EI Manifesto on Quality CCE for All**

“Empower young people as change agents for sustainable development, by creating opportunities for learning and civic engagement, and providing them with the competencies and tools to participate in ESD as co-creators of individual and societal transformation.”

— **Berlin Declaration on ESD (2021)**

It takes a village to raise climate-ready learners. Schools alone cannot instil in students the kind of climate education that is civic-action oriented unless other stakeholders become allies in learning and teaching. Farmers, artisans, elders, shopkeepers — all of them often offer untapped expertise.

Not only the students get to benefit from community partnerships. Members of the community can also learn from students about the school’s climate action initiatives and reflect on their neighbourhood’s own climate adaptation targets and strategies. An open exchange of ideas between the school and the larger community also cultivates pride of place, a sense of belonging, and participatory learning.

What can teachers do?

- Engage in partnerships with the community. They can take the form of field trips to, say, local farms or water treatment facilities, and apprenticeships.
- Implement joint outreach programmes between the school and nearby neighbourhoods, such as cleanups and initiatives to raise awareness about local biodiversity that is under threat.
- Encourage students to join community service learning programmes (see **Box 2.3**) in which they themselves experience the daily work of cooperatives or businesses engaged in sustainable practices.

**BOX
2.3**



Agroecology as a Curricular Pillar in an Indigenous School in the Southern Philippines

Alongside indigenous knowledge and holistic community-based health, agroecology was one of the pillars of the curriculum used in the Community Technical College of Southeastern Mindanao (CTCSM), a charity school whose 70 percent of the student population consisted of the Lumad, an indigenous people in the southern Philippines. For them, who came mostly from marginalised rural communities, the collective struggle for ancestral land resources was central to lifelong learning.

Lumad students appreciate the potential of sustainable organic agriculture as a self-sufficient and, more importantly, climate-resilient way to produce food. In CTCSM, learning about this production model went beyond just the curriculum. It was practised in a variety of student-led yet community-wide activities:

BOX
2.3
CONT'D

1 FARMING IN A FIELD LEARNING SITE.

Students applied what they had learned in the classroom to a five-hectare farm, where different sustainable farming techniques were practised: alternative pest management, seed banking of traditional crops, contour farming, rain catchment irrigation, organic livestock production, and coconut-based diversified integrated farming, among others.

2 SUSTAINABLE GARDENING.

Groups of students were in charge of their vegetable gardens, where they could appreciate the symbiosis between plants and insects and other natural components of production. Not only did they harvest organically grown vegetables like water spinach, cassava and string beans, but they also produced their own various organic fertilisers.

3 DEVELOPING AN INCENTIVE SYSTEM.

Guided by a teacher-adviser, student dormitory teams could sell their excess organic vegetable harvests to score “school canteen credits”, which they often used to buy snacks, coffee and cleaning materials.

4 CAPACITY-BUILDING FOR TEACHING AGROECOLOGY.

Lumad teachers joined workshops led by seasoned organic farming practitioners from Masipag, a local farmer-scientist network, to evaluate their senior-high syllabi on sustainable agriculture.

5 TRAINING OTHER SCHOLARS.

Senior high school students from CTCSM developed an overall farm plan to help teach and train the scholars and faculty of a nearby Lumad community college, which was planning to offer an undergraduate course on agricultural crops production.

Amid an ongoing crackdown on Lumad communities, the Philippine education department ordered in May 2020 the shutdown of CTCSM due in part to “noted deficiencies in the implementation of the K-to-12 curriculum.”

In hopes of raising funds to continue their schooling, Lumad students sold handicrafts and books, such as *Scent of Rain, Sun and Soil*, a recent collection of poems, testimonials and photographs from CTCSM's students and staff that illustrates the Lumad's commitment to living sustainably.

On equity and sustainability

SUGGESTED RESOURCES

How to Defend Child Rights Affected by Climate Change: A teacher's guide for exploration and action with children 11-16 years old

UNICEF, 2011

This pack contains 18 activities for children involving role plays, simulations, games and creative writing. Each activity follows this plan: duration, objectives, overview, materials and preparation, instructions for the facilitator/teacher, debriefing, what next and several suggestions for possible follow-up.

Climate Change: Unpacking the burden on food safety

Food and Agriculture Organization, 2020

Mostly informational, this publication identifies some current and anticipated food safety issues that are associated with climate change. Teachers can use it to relate climate to larger issues of food security and inform students of forward-looking approaches to building resilient food systems.

YouthXchange Guidebook Series: Climate change and lifestyles

UNESCO & UNEP, 2011

This guidebook for young people (ages 15-24) provides advice on food and beverages, travel and transport, shopping and investment, and leisure and entertainment, among others. In accessible language, it weaves issues of sustainable consumption into the daily lifestyle choices of today's generation.

How Can CCE Empower Students Towards Climate Action?

LEARN FROM SOCIAL MOVEMENTS ON THE FRONTLINES OF CLIMATE ACTION.

“CCE promotes a multicultural vision and recognises indigenous knowledge.”

— **EI Manifesto on Quality CCE for All**

Students are, of course, encouraged to apply what they learn about sustainability in their homes, circles, and themselves, but individual actions can only go so far and do so much. Meanwhile, there is a strong pushback from powerful, well-resourced interests to keep the way things are, no matter their effects on climate, and the only way to counter them is to bring everyone along for climate action. The ultimate answer to the challenges of climate change is to match its immensity: to organise and get organised.

Organising for climate action does not happen overnight. Thankfully, many groups have already laid the groundwork (see **Box 2.4**). Educators and young people are taking to the streets to alert policymakers and the public to the urgency of the crisis. Indigenous peoples, as some of the most vulnerable in the face of climate change, are also among the leaders of the growing climate justice movement. They are, after all, stewards of land and resources and of sustainable ways of life in harmony with nature.

URGE STUDENTS TO SPEAK UP AND TAKE ACTION.

“CCE fosters critical thinking and civic engagement. It is transformative and empowers students to consider just and sustainable alternatives, and then take action in their local communities and beyond.”

— **EI Manifesto on Quality CCE for All**

“Enhance the meaningful participation of children and youth in climate change processes.”

— **Intergovernmental Declaration on Children, Youth, and Climate Action (COP25, 2019)**

Students’ concerned engagement with climate change can start small. Aware by this point that despair or cynicism solves no climate

BOX
2.4

Indigenous and Student Movements Calling for Climate Justice in New Zealand

The New Zealand Educational Institute Te Riu Roa (NZEI), the largest education union in New Zealand and an EI member organisation, has expressed support to students striking for climate action and the indigenous climate movement that has long fought for the same goal. What follows are NZEI's approaches to its climate work:

1 A MĀORI APPROACH TO CLIMATE ACTION.

Māori are Indigenous Polynesian people of mainland New Zealand. NZEI members are building relationships with local iwi/hapū (tribes/clans) in their area to learn about the local histories that capture the role of Māori as Kaitiaki (guardians). The goal is to develop a Maori approach as the basis for its climate-related activities:

- A Māori approach to climate change considers people's pepeha (geographical connections) to land, sea, rivers and mountains
- A Māori approach to climate change considers people's whakapapa (genealogical connections)

2 CLIMATE ACTION FOR THE LEARNING OF TAMARIKI (CHILDREN OR YOUNG PEOPLE).

NZEI Community Campaigner Conor Twyford believes that "challenging the government on climate justice is also one way that young people can address their grief and anxiety regarding what is happening to our planet." The recent School Strike 4 Climate NZ, for example, aired their demands for government action on CCE, among other climate priorities:

- To teach the basic foundations of science behind climate change, as well as its economic, social, and cultural impacts
- To teach topics through a Te Ao Māori perspective
- To include the current international and domestic state of climate policy and agreements
- To implement compulsory climate education within public and state integrated schools, from Year 1 to 10 and in NCEA subjects where relevant

"My dream is that we have coalitions and little hubs of climate activism that involve NZEI members all around the country and that we build that strength and that connection in a community," Twyford said in *Ako*, the journal for members of NZEI. Children are not passive receptacles of social action, she added, but social agents and leaders in their own right.

threat, they must be spurred to develop and hone their skills for advocacy. They must be empowered to make mature, informed climate choices. At the same time, they must learn to consider the effectiveness and ethics of the form of climate action they are proposing.

Children and young adults will understandably run up against certain limitations. That is why schools and CCE providers must go out of their way to provide students space in social and policy dialogue and to ensure they are free to contribute ideas, not just in a tokenistic role.

What can teachers do?

- Help organise a students' congress. It is one way to let CCE learners speak their minds before local decision-makers and opinion leaders and to inspire in them the conviction that collective power makes for meaningful climate action.
- Offer counsel and, together with education support personnel, help students flesh out their plans, and arrive at critical decision points that can hopefully lead to genuine difference.

On climate advocacy

SUGGESTED RESOURCES

EE Advocate: An advocacy guide for environmental education professionals and supporters

North American Association for Environmental Education, 2019

This guide focuses mainly on lobbying legislators or federal representatives for support for environmental education. While mostly applicable to the United States, many of its recommended practices are still relevant for engagement with local school boards or elected officials in other contexts.

Climate Resistance Handbook: Or, I was part of a climate action. Now what?

Daniel Hunter of 350.org, with foreword by Greta Thunberg, 2019

Part-memoir, part-manual, this handbook contains inspiring and instructive stories of climate activists around the world, explains how social movements can make big wins for climate action, and shares some campaign tools and creative frameworks at every activist's disposal.

Southern Voices on Climate Change: The Climate Change Advocacy Toolkits

Southern Voices, 2014

This set of toolkits comprehensively covers the following advocacy tasks: planning; communications; network-building; engagement with decision-makers, the public, and the media; support to local organisations; and finance and policy.

PART 3.

Advancing Climate Change Education in and Beyond the Classroom

Universal quality climate education is a globally shared vision and requires advocacy efforts that cut across all stakeholders. It entails building coalitions that grasp the gravity and scope of the problem. The recent findings of [EI's CCE Ambition Report Card](#) could not but sound the alarm more loudly: not only do governments fail to recognise the role of quality CCE in national climate plans, many of them overlook teachers and education systems and refuse to heed young climate activists.

Representatives of education unions can participate in the COP, the main decision-making forum on climate change, albeit only as non-voting observers. Still, they can exert considerable pressure on climate negotiations, as in the crafting of the Paris Agreement, in strategic and creative ways. Outside the UNFCCC, increasingly more avenues for social and policy dialogue, civic actions and multi-sectoral partnerships provide opportunities for education unions to advance CCE in and beyond the classroom.

What Do Education Unions Demand to Ensure Quality CCE for All?

At present, climate education policies in many parts of the world are woefully lagging behind other national priorities. The following demands are based on EI's [Manifesto](#), which outlines the vision and policy framework necessary to implement quality CCE for all.

1 CLEAR CLIMATE ACTION PLANS FROM GOVERNMENTS.

Countries must include CCE in their climate pledges. The specific and measurable ways to achieve these commitments must be made transparent and accountable to all, especially the education sector. These climate plans must also focus on results, such that their implementation and impacts are regularly monitored and evaluated against a set timeline and comprehensive indicators of success.

2 GREATER DOMESTIC INVESTMENT IN EDUCATION.

Well-funded public education systems are a precondition for quality CCE for all. International cooperation (e.g., official development assistance and open access to knowledge and resources) can supplement domestic funding to further strengthen education systems.

3 MULTI-STAKEHOLDER, INCLUSIVE SOCIAL DIALOGUE ON CLIMATE EDUCATION.

The voice of teachers and education support personnel should resonate in social and policy dialogue. Governments must engage them and their unions to incorporate their input into curriculum design, implementation and assessment. Similarly, insights and contributions from student organisations and indigenous groups, among others, will serve to inform and enrich such discussions on CCE policies.

4 COMPULSORY INTEGRATION OF CCE INTO CURRICULA IN PRIMARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION.

In addition, CCE must be made part of early childhood education, TVET, further and higher education, and adult education.

5 CLIMATE-PROOFING OF SCHOOLS.

Governments must invest in making education infrastructure safe and climate resilient across every jurisdiction. They must also collaborate with labour unions to transform education institutions, through a just transition, into workplaces that are sustainable and energy efficient, with all education personnel trained in clean technologies and processes.

6 INITIAL TEACHER EDUCATION AND CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FOR CCE.

The goal is to integrate CCE into pre- and in-service training and education of teachers. Government and institutional support must be extended to help them upskill and innovate on CCE.

7 TEACHING AND LEARNING RESOURCES FOR CCE.

Governments must fund training institutions, so that they can prepare teachers for delivering CCE. Well-equipped and supported, teachers can assert their professional autonomy and feel confident to commit to this relatively new field pedagogically. They need time and, most crucially, resources and tools such as instructional materials that are gender-responsive, up-to-date, contextually and culturally appropriate, and sensitive to the development needs of teachers and students alike.

How Can Education Unions Strategically Push for Quality CCE for All?

LOBBY POLITICAL LEADERS AND POLICYMAKERS.

EI has long underscored governments' responsibility to transform education systems. "Only a strong and well-financed public sector with vision and regulatory muscle and public support can bring us back from this brink," EI President Susan Hopgood said at a UNESCO conference in May 2021, which gathered education ministers from the world over to discuss the implementation of ESD for 2030.

CCE, within the framework of ESD, and other just-transition priorities are indeed yet to be put on countries' national agenda. Education trade unions must take the lead in addressing this gap by putting pressure on governments through effective lobbying.

What can education unionists do?

- **Plan.** Identify who would be the target of advocacy. While the exact roles of decision-makers differ from country to country, a union can work either top-down (e.g., going straight to the education minister and other higher-ranking or key decision-makers) or bottom-up (e.g., engaging first with elected representatives, local or district governments, junior officials and parliamentary committees, then working the way up the bureaucratic ladder).

Establish a common ground with allies in government and try to clinch the support of “neutrals”, so to speak, by finding out about their policy and political interests, their party affiliations and the committees on which they serve, and the issues they care most about.

- **Prepare.** It would be productive to research existing CCE programmes or steps in this direction. This way, with the policy gaps and resource constraints identified, unionists can offer ways forward based on their CCE-focused campaigns that policymakers can deliberate and act on.

Delivering a clear message is one thing, but it is also quite another to determine realisable expectations from a prospective dialogue with political leaders and policymakers. It is crucial to pin down key “asks” that they can feasibly deliver on within their power and purview.

- **Set up a meeting.** Getting a foot in the door, however, would require another set of skills, mainly in mobilising a union's network to find points of contact with political leaders and policymakers and establishing a union's credentials. Once they grant a request for a meeting, a union must take advantage of the opportunity to introduce the main points of advocacy and to hear the targets' initial thoughts on them.

A dialogue is an honest exchange of views, and so while both sides may arrive at nothing concrete yet, in terms of policy promises,

it is still important to end the meeting on a forward-looking note, even if it is just an agreement to further the dialogue. A mechanism for it must be set up to jointly explore the proposed alternatives in depth down the line.

- **Follow up.** Unionists must build on the relationship they have formed with decision-makers, all while monitoring any follow-through in terms of policy developments. Legislation and enacting national strategies have conventionally been tedious and can seem frustrating. Still, advocacy efforts must continue. Lobbying is not the end-all, be-all of advocacy, and it would not work, anyway, unless a union complements it with other strategies to exert influence.

Another venue in which education unions can lobby decision-makers is the drafting of the NDCs, a set of successive policy documents submitted to the UNFCCC, in compliance with the Paris Agreement, that contain countries' five-year plans to meet their climate commitments to mitigation, adaptation, and shift to low-carbon development pathways. EI has recently published a [toolkit on global climate policymaking](#) that, among other things, presents education unionists with useful tips on how to push for the inclusion of climate education in their countries' NDCs (see **Box 3.1**).

BUILD SUPPORT FROM THE COMMUNITIES THROUGH PARTNERSHIPS AND OUTREACH.

CCE fosters not only critical thinking but also civic engagement. Just as learners are inspired to take action in their local communities and beyond, so too should education unionists reach out to the very people who have much to offer, knowing as they do what is at stake when climate action falters — indigenous peoples, the poor, people of colour, persons with disabilities, women, girls and children.

Unions must explore the work these sectors have done and try to align their demands and stances with the latter through joint campaigns and projects. Community leaders on the front lines of the crisis will be just as invested in spotlighting the need for CCE. They listen, lead by example, and galvanise all allies and concerned individuals to various forms of action (e.g., public meetings, petitioning, on-the-ground campaigning, picketing, boycotts, demonstrations, lobbying).

BOX
3.1

How can education unions advocate within the NDCs process?

The following guide, for the most part, is adopted from EI's [*Teach for the Planet: An education unionist's guide to climate education advocacy*](#).

1 BE FAMILIAR WITH THE COUNTRY'S CLIMATE PLAN.

The [NDCs registry](#) is a good place to start. From here, unions can access the latest national climate plans of 191 Parties to the Paris Agreement.

2 APPRAISE THE COUNTRY'S NDC.

Identify its gaps, particularly on climate education. [EI's recent study on countries' CCE commitments](#) employed six metrics developed from the Manifesto's vision for quality CCE for all. The study's findings can guide a union's own content analysis of its country's NDC, while the indicators used for each metric are framed as relevant questions to reflect on when assessing the country's specific climate policy provisions.

3 PUSH FOR THE INCLUSION OF QUALITY CCE FOR ALL IN THE NDCS AGENDA.

It is possible that, while climate education is already part of a country's NDC, specific provisions on it are still deficient. Through their networks, education unionists must contact and seek an audience with their country's education and environment ministers. They can also participate in a public consultation, if any, as sectoral representatives and use these venues to start lobbying for climate education.

4 KEEP AN EYE ON DEADLINES FOR THE SUBMISSION OF NDCS.

Though a country may have already submitted its NDC to the UNFCCC, it can still update the submission. The UNFCCC has put together [a list of national focal points](#) for climate negotiations that can help unions determine the government representative to get in touch with. They can then ask the national focal point to make a request for an amendment of the NDC to include climate education. Otherwise, they can prepare for the next cycle of NDCs submission and, in the meantime, lay the groundwork for negotiations within the national bureaucracy.

ENGAGE THE MEDIA TO ENHANCE MESSAGE AND COMMUNICATIONS.

Advocacy efforts gain better traction when brought to local or even national attention. It is in this light that the media can help, through effective communication, using all their available means, to better secure buy-in from the wider public for CCE-related campaigns. But the press is only as helpful as the information it is getting. Unions should thus maximise their own communication channels as well.

What can education unionists do?

- **Form a dedicated communications team.** It will be in charge of developing a communications plan, devising and framing the union's core message, and delivering it effectively, within clear guidelines (e.g., what terms to say and not to say, how to get the message across on which medium or platform, and for which primary audience) and protocols (e.g., designation of spokespersons or procedures for sign-off on internal and external communications).
- **Leverage communication materials and knowledge products.** Write blogs and press releases, send out newsletters, put up bulletins, launch study reports or briefing papers, circulate petitions and open letters to decision-makers. All such materials must be shared not just with fellow trade unions and the wider public, but with the media as well. Similarly, to highlight huge milestones in the campaign, a press conference can draw coverage and wider interest in the union's advocacy. It will potentially steer the mainstream conversation and influence public opinion behind climate education.
- **Be active on social media.** Facebook and Twitter, in particular, have lately served to amplify various advocacies, build an engaged virtual community, and even reach opinion leaders and officials. The union's communications team must be able to walk all staff members through digital storytelling guidelines and the more practical tips to maximise the strengths of different social media platforms.
- **Reach out to mainstream and community media.** Especially in closely knit communities, the local press — TV, radio, newspapers

and small magazines — is still a reliable source of information. Union leaders can also do media interviews or, more traditionally, write and file a letter to the editor or an opinion piece for a newspaper to get the union's messages and key asks in front of an audience. Such commentaries, if expressed eloquently and strategically, can raise awareness and impress upon people that mainstreaming climate education is a more urgent policy priority than previously thought.

USE RESEARCH TO INFORM AND ENHANCE POLICY AND ADVOCACY.

Internally, education unions can define their analysis of climate education by setting it out in an evidence-backed and well-argued position paper or in an organisational climate change policy. Research will be crucial in supporting the union's advocacy goals and policy recommendations.

Though laborious, the conduct of such research — by case studies, participatory research, focus group discussions, surveys, key informant interviews, or data analysis — will also acquaint the union with multiple perspectives on climate change and help its members communicate its advocacy objectives with different audiences.

Education unions that are looking to get involved in climate advocacy would also do well to invite climate experts. The latter can provide data, brief unionists on the latest climate findings, or share policy advice to reinforce the communications and outreach components of a campaign. As consultants, they can also contribute to internal audits and reviews of a union's climate-related research.

EI has also published [a guide to planning, conducting and disseminating research effectively](#). It provides education unions with tips and recommendations for building an evidence base to counter the dominant knowledge production of for-profit education companies and big think tanks.

How Can Education Unions, Within Their Organisations, Contribute to Climate Action and Education?

WALK THE TALK ON CLIMATE CHANGE.

Education unions must involve as many of their members as possible in concrete steps to decarbonising their organisations, among other ways to get their house in order, as it were (see **Box 3.2**). The overarching aim is to reduce or eliminate, if possible, GHG emissions from a union's daily activities.

The organisation must pay attention to and calculate its carbon footprint, such as in energy consumption, purchases, staff travel, and the conduct of its meetings. From there it can weigh its options against certain constraints like funding and adjust its organisational practices accordingly, as reasonably as possible.

Unions must also begin to audit its financial links with major polluting companies. Over the past two decades, for example, a few trade unions, some other non-profit organisations, and increasingly more investors have divested or withdrawn their pension funds from fossil fuel companies.

ASSIST IN THE CAPACITY BUILDING OF UNION MEMBERS AND TEACHERS.

Teachers are no less committed to teaching climate change and sustainability. What they need, though, is a network of support that can lend them opportunities to collaborate and can facilitate free exchange of know-how, experiences, and tips on pedagogical approaches to CCE.

While, ultimately, the goal is for governments to ensure that teachers are trained and supported in facilitating CCE in the classroom, education unions can still contribute to teacher training. Some unions have set up mentoring networks, virtual communities and other spaces for information sharing to assist teachers in climate education (see **Box 3.2**).

Education unions are encouraged to pave the way for such collaboration. To this end, in partnership with the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development and UNESCO, EI has launched the

[Global Teaching Insights](#), a joint initiative to gather teaching expertise on what makes a difference in empowering students for climate action. It features an online platform for teachers to connect with colleagues and leaders in the field from around the world and to share ideas and best practices in CCE.

How Can Education Unions Build International Solidarity for Quality CCE for All?

WORK WITH OTHER TRADE UNIONS, LOCALLY AND CROSS-REGIONALLY.

It is crucial to collaborate with other trade unions, both those who are already involved in campaigns for sustainable development and those who have yet to initiate the work. Both camps can pool resources, coordinate campaigns, and strengthen each other's presence in climate forums or policy arenas.

Alongside other global union federations, the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) has been at the helm of the global campaign for a climate-proof industrial transformation. It ensures that labour has a seat at the table when discussing a just transition to a low-carbon world. It has documented best practices in social dialogue processes and collected [resources](#), such as case studies, multimedia and reports, which other trade unions can use.

Particularly, on climate education, EIAP's conference on 11-12 October 2021 featured a panel on cross-regional efforts at mobilising education unions to promote ESD. Their collective strength is a testament to the education sector's capacity for stronger, more meaningful change when unions within the region and beyond work together and enlist each other's support.

WORK WITH INTERNATIONAL FUNDING PARTNERS AND MULTILATERAL INSTITUTIONS.

The Paris Agreement has created momentum for international climate cooperation. Many developed economies have pledged to reduce emissions and to strengthen climate financing to developing

BOX
3.2



WWW.EI.ORG/EN/ITEM/25185:HARNESSING-EDUCATIONS-POWER-FOR-POSITIVE-CLIMATE-ACTION

NZEI's Four Areas of Climate Change Policy and Phased Work Plan

The New Zealand Educational Institute Te Riu Roa (NZEI), an EI member organisation, passed a climate change policy in 2016 and has since supported its Area Councils and Branches to put the plan in place.

1 BUILD NZEI'S KNOWLEDGE OF CLIMATE CHANGE FROM A MĀORI WORLDVIEW.

NZEI staff have decided to deepen their relationship with the indigenous movement and, in so doing, have begun to understand more about the relationship between land and people. "Why [indigenous peoples] do things, where the things go, all that systematic way of living is what keeps them sustained all their lives," said Laures Park, NZEI's Matua Takawaenga.

2 BECOME CARBON NEUTRAL.

The union underwent a sustainability audit that looked at areas such as energy use and waste management that the staff could improve on. Decarbonising, for NZEI, involved reducing all its members' carbon footprint — from recycling and cutting down on paper to switching their energy provider and implementing a carbon offsetting programme for air miles.

"It's about driving that behaviour to be thinking about the environment, not just cost, every time you're making a decision," said Liam Rutherford, president of NZEI.

3 ESTABLISH NZEI AS A LEADER IN CLIMATE EDUCATION IN NEW ZEALAND.

NZEI has built [a community of educators](#) on Facebook, with over 1,100 members at present, who are creating and sharing their own CCE resources and talking about their experiences and good practices in the classroom. Most of the Facebook group's members have started meeting face-to-face to discuss actions on broader climate issues in their community and ways, for example, to put pressure on the government to shift schools to renewable energy.

Conor Twyford, a community organiser, whom NZEI appointed as a full-time climate change campaigner in 2020, coordinates these actions and organises NZEI members offline to be part of the wider climate activist movement.

"We actually want people to get to local communities, and to be having that conversation around how to wage a really holistically whole climate education through what the union's doing," Rutherford said.

4 JOIN THE WIDER LABOUR UNION MOVEMENT IN CALLING FOR A JUST TRANSITION.

NZEI is a member of the Transition Group of the New Zealand Council of Trade Unions (NZCTU or CTU). The cross-union group is an avenue to share strategies around just transition issues.

NZEI also provides advice to other trade unions or sector groups in New Zealand. Rutherford recognised that transitioning to low-carbon operations might be far too expensive for some unions, but it is the mindset, he said, of greening practices within the organisation, as practically as possible, that counts. "It's more about what they can do within the bounds of their union," Park added.

countries. The key to unlocking transnational sources of funding — funnelled through bilateral modalities or multilateral bodies, such as donors, aid agencies, the development sector and philanthropic foundations — is understanding the global climate finance architecture and its enabling trends.

Trade unions can lobby international stakeholders to invest in quality CCE. In this arena, EI works with the [Global Partnership for Education \(GPE\)](#), the single largest source of grants to education in lower-income countries. This funding platform invites education unions to make their case before governments in the Global North and private actors for getting money to where it matters the most at this historical moment — in furthering the education and the climate agenda.

WORK WITH CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANISATIONS (CSOS).

More and more CSOs are also engaging in climate action and in multilateral forums on climate change, although not necessarily in a voting capacity in negotiating sessions. Still, their reach, through their networks, can amplify an education union's advocacy for quality universal CCE.

Unions can build inclusive partnerships with CSOs, which have proven reliable in mobilising a vibrant range of organised and unorganised actors. Both groups promote rights-based campaigns to wield influence over policymakers and businesses. The most involved in climate justice among CSOs monitor developments in industries and, together with unions, can hold the latter accountable to the public. They keep an eye on relevant national days or global justice events around which to organise their activities.

WORK WITH STUDENT MOVEMENTS.

Social movements for climate action around the world, with no less than students and youth at the forefront, can infuse hope, energy, and a sense of urgency into the global campaign for evidence-based, civic action-oriented CCE. The likes of Greta Thunberg, a young climate activist who has led school strikes since 2018, are ambassadors of a generation that is about to inherit an uncertain future.

It is in the best interests of education unions to work with student movements. Integral to EI's *Teach for the Planet* campaign is its partnership with the [Global Student Forum](#), the largest platform of its kind that coordinates student-led political action.

Students are indeed yearning for sustainable, systemic change. According to EARTHDAY.ORG, 85% of youth globally believe they have a responsibility to tackle climate change, yet over 40% are unsure of how they can make a difference. They are eager to act, learn, leave schools climate literate, and keep learning, living, and leading a global citizenry in an equitable world.



Teach for Climate Action

An Advocacy Toolkit on Climate Change Education
for Educators and Their Unions

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