

Education International Asia-Pacific Unions Call for Quality Climate Change Education for All



Education International member organisations in the Asia-Pacific urge governments, education unions in the region, and delegates to the 2021 United Nations (UN) Climate Change Conference (COP 26) to ensure quality climate change education (CCE) for all and to recognise its role in a just transition to a more sustainable world.

Climate change continues to upend communities, especially in the most vulnerable parts of the world, such as the Asia-Pacific. The latest assessment report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) reveals that, by 2040 or sooner, we will reach a 1.5-degree rise in global temperatures, the most ambitious target set in the 2015 Paris Agreement. But, while we may be locked into at least 30 years of catastrophic cyclones and flooding, severe droughts, heat waves and bushfires, we have a narrow window to course correct, through dramatic and concerted actions, and limit the warming beyond 2050.

At the recently concluded conference with the theme “Mobilising Educators for Climate Change Education”, educators and their unions in the Asia-Pacific stressed the urgency of climate action in the education sector as a key step, among many, to tackling the most pressing crisis confronting humanity today. Education is a long-term investment in shaping a global citizenry equipped with the knowledge, attitudes and skills necessary to sustain our planet for all biodiversity, living systems, and present and future generations. Yet decision-makers have yet to invest in transforming and strengthening education systems for them to live up to this goal.

The decades-long failure to prioritise universal CCE, based on science and with a strong civic action focus, has hampered efforts to prepare learners for future global crises and for their contributions to a sustainable future. It has undermined the participation of all stakeholders, including educators and unionists, in social and policy dialogues and in decision-making processes towards meaningful and inclusive climate action at the national, regional and global levels. Unless decisive steps are taken, such neglect will continue to weaken our resilience against ever more devastating impacts of the climate emergency.

Now, more than ever, it is imperative that we come together to put CCE on the agenda.

We, Education International member organisations in the Asia-Pacific, call on governments to:

- Formulate and implement climate action plans that include CCE in their commitments, with specific and measurable indicators to track progress and results, to maintain transparency and accountability to all, especially the education sector, and to include education unions in the conduct of review, development, monitoring and evaluation of national climate education programmes;
- Increase domestic investment in education as a precondition for quality CCE for all;
- Hold multi-stakeholder social and policy dialogues on climate education that provide space for teachers and education support personnel, as well as their unions; student organisations; and vulnerable groups, especially prioritising the voices and needs of indigenous peoples;



- Integrate CCE, as a compulsory holistic and interdisciplinary component, into curricula in primary and secondary education, as well as in early childhood education, TVET, further and higher education, and adult education;
- Invest in making schools, learning environments, education institutions, and their education infrastructure safe and climate-proof across every jurisdiction;
- Incorporate CCE into pre- and in-service training and education of teachers, as well as in their continuing professional development; and
- Fund training institutions and invest in teaching and learning resources for CCE that are gender-responsive, up-to-date, contextually and culturally appropriate, and sensitive to the development needs of teachers and students alike.

We call on COP26 delegations to:

- Enjoin all parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, including UN member states, to deliver on their commitments to CCE 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);
- Uphold the need for more ambitious policy provisions for climate education in countries' updated Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) under the Paris Agreement;
- Promote greater international cooperation through development assistance and open access to resources and knowledge to supplement domestic investments in climate education, especially in developing countries;
- Urge policymakers to draft and develop a strategic plan for national activities and strategies — including clear monitoring, evaluation and reporting mechanisms — to implement the UNFCCC's Action for Climate Empowerment programme, which focuses on education, training, public awareness, public participation, public access to information, and international cooperation on these priority areas of climate action; and
- Support the call of trade unions for just-transition priorities in the climate negotiations agenda.

We call on EI member organisations to:

- Lobby political leaders and policymakers to integrate quality CCE for all in national curricula and education programmes;
- Advocate within the NDCs process, ensuring that ambitions for climate education are not only present but also adequately raised in countries' updated climate action plans;
- Ally with student unions, community-based organisations, civil society organisations, indigenous groups, climate activists, and other like-minded groups through partnerships and outreach to amplify the advocacy for quality CCE for all;
- Assist in the capacity building of union members and teachers, such as by establishing mentoring networks and spaces for collaboration and exchange of know-how and resources to innovate pedagogical approaches to CCE;
- Strive to decarbonise their unions and withdraw their investments in major polluting companies;
- Promote the transformation of education institutions, through a just transition, into workplaces that are sustainable and energy efficient, with all education personnel trained in clean technologies and processes; and
- Work with other trade unions regionally and cross-regionally to forge stronger solidarity, enlist each other's support for local and regional climate action initiatives, and encourage more members and allies into action.