

Climate Change Education

4 March 2026

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WEBINAR

Key messages

- Climate change education is increasingly recognized as a critical enabler of effective, inclusive and lifelong climate action, supporting learners and communities in contributing to climate resilience and sustainable development.
- Presentations highlighted growing international efforts to strengthen climate change education through whole-of-system approaches, including greening schools, curricula, teacher training, education systems and communities.
- International and regional initiatives demonstrated the importance of integrating climate change education into national education systems, climate policies and resilience-building efforts, while strengthening coordination across ministries and sectors.
- Participants emphasized the importance of sustained funding, teacher training, institutional coordination and community engagement, particularly involving children, youth and local communities as active participants in climate change education.
- Discussions further highlighted the need for stronger international cooperation, improved monitoring and evaluation mechanisms, greater access to finance and stronger integration of climate change education into adaptation, mitigation and just transition efforts.

ACE Activity Series 2026

Action for Climate Empowerment (ACE) refers to efforts under Article 6 of the Convention and Article 12 of the Paris Agreement. The overarching goal of ACE is to empower all members of society to engage in climate action through the six ACE elements – climate change education, public awareness, training, public participation, public access to information and international cooperation on these matters.

In 2026, the Subsidiary Body for Implementation (SBI) is conducting the midterm review of the Glasgow work programme on ACE.¹ This presents a critical opportunity to revitalize the ACE agenda and accelerate its implementation at all levels. Ahead of the midterm review, the secretariat is organizing a series of activities, under the authority and guidance of the SBI Chair, to enable a deeper assessment of ACE implementation since the adoption of the work programme and its action plan,² and to initiate discussions on the way forward.

The ACE Activity Series includes public webinars and informal networking meetings for ACE focal points and negotiators. The events engage a wide range of stakeholders, within and outside of the ACE community, in an

¹ For the Glasgow work programme on ACE, see <https://unfccc.int/documents/460955>.

² For the action plan under the Glasgow work programme, see <https://unfccc.int/documents/626563>.

inclusive and interactive manner. More detailed information on the ACE Activity Series, including the recordings, is available on the [UNFCCC website](#).

Climate change education

Climate change education equips learners of all ages with the knowledge, skills, attitudes and values necessary to understand climate change and contribute to climate policy and action. It encompasses formal, informal and non-formal education taking place within and outside the classroom, and it targets children and youth, as well as adults through lifelong learning, and is therefore essential for accelerating inclusive, gender-responsive and intergenerational climate action.

Advancing climate change education through the Greening Education Partnership

UNESCO presented the work of the [Greening Education Partnership](#) (GEP), launched in 2022 as a global initiative that takes a whole-of-system approach to support countries to tackle the climate crisis by harnessing the critical role of education. Drawing upon Education for Sustainable Development (ESD)'s holistic approach to learning, the Partnership is structured around four interlinked pillars of transformative education: greening schools, curricula, teacher training and education system capacities, and communities.

Over the last four years, the Partnership has grown into an open and inclusive community of practice, with its membership now comprising 98 countries and over 2,000 stakeholders, including inter-governmental organizations, civil society, youth, academia, and the private sector. Under the Partnership, global targets for 2030 include greening 50% of schools in each country and ensuring 90% of countries adopt green national curricula, with additional targets under development for the remaining two pillars.

To monitor progress against these targets, the [GEP Dashboard](#) has been developed as an interactive global monitoring platform that tracks country-level progress across the four pillars of greening education. The Dashboard allows for sharing of best practices and reports from countries and partners, providing country-level insights and facilitating broader engagement with the Partnership.

The Partnership supports country implementation through, among other things, developing global standard-setting guidance documents (see box 1) and organizing capacity-building sessions. A training-of-trainer course for curriculum developers and education policy planners is under development to support green curricula and green schools. The Partnership also plays an active advocacy role at COPs, including by convening ministerial roundtables on greening education, to highlight education as a key enabler of climate action.³

In addition, UNESCO provides direct support to countries to implement climate change education. As part of the Climate Smart Education Systems Initiative (see the next section for more information on the Initiative), UNESCO provides technical assistance to 35 countries in reviewing national curricula, developing educational materials and providing teacher training to strengthen the integration of climate change and sustainability topics in education systems.

³ For example, for the GEP activities at COP 30, see <https://www.unesco.org/en/climate-change/education/cop30>.

Box 1. Key guidance documents by the Greening Education Partnership

Green schools quality standard: Greening every learning environment (2024) provides a framework for schools to integrate sustainability into governance, teaching and learning, facilities, community engagement and student participation, supporting a whole-school approach to climate action and sustainable development.

Greening curriculum guidance: Teaching and learning for climate action (2024) supports policymakers and curriculum developers in integrating climate change, biodiversity and sustainability across curricula and learning pathways, with an emphasis on competencies, systems thinking and locally relevant learning approaches.

Educators at the heart of greening education: A climate resilience toolkit for policymakers (2026) explores how collaborative approaches and educator perspectives can shape more effective, climate-responsive education systems, while supporting teacher training, professional development and educator well-being.

Greening communities guidance: Lifelong learning for climate and sustainability action (2025) provides a practical framework to empower cities and communities to drive meaningful climate and sustainability action through inclusive lifelong learning, partnerships and community-based engagement.

Box 2. UNESCO-UNFCCC webinar series on climate change education

From 2022 to 2025, UNESCO and UNFCCC convened four seasons of webinar series on climate change education, focusing on the four pillars of the Greening Education Partnership. Each session brought together experts, policymakers and youth to share experience and discuss climate change education. Recordings of all sessions are available on the [UNFCCC website](#).

Strengthening climate change education through international and regional initiatives

The **Global Partnership for Education** (GPE) supports country-led resilience-building in education systems. GPE's work highlights the importance of a systems approach, in which climate change education efforts can be effective and sustained only if the entire education system is resilient. The interlinked dimensions of the climate-smart education systems framework include data and evidence, policy and planning, partnerships and coordination, finance, physical infrastructure and facilities, curriculum, teaching and learning, school safety and educational continuity.

The Climate Smart Education Systems Initiative (CSESI), launched in 2023 and implemented with partners, aims to enhance countries' capacities to mainstream climate change adaptation and environmental sustainability into education sector plans, budgets and strategies, as well as enhance education ministry capacity for cross-sectoral coordination on climate and environment-related policy and programming.

The initiative is currently providing technical assistance to 35 of the most climate-vulnerable countries. For example, in Zimbabwe, the initiative supported the Ministry of Education in integrating climate-related indicators into the annual school census, enabling a shift from reactive responses to climate-informed planning. In South Sudan, the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Environment are collaborating through a technical working group to jointly develop guidance on school safety and climate-responsive planning. The box below provides an overview of steps taken in Malawi to implement the initiative.

Box 3. CSESI in action: Malawi

The following steps have been taken in Malawi:

1. Conducted climate risk analysis for the education sector to inform a consolidated climate change strategy.
2. Supported inter-ministerial coordination to integrate education into UNFCCC-related processes and climate finance pipeline.
3. Identified opportunities to mobilize climate-related funding for education through the climate finance roadmap.
4. Strengthened climate-related data access and data collection tools.
5. Reviewed school infrastructure guidelines and developed costed recommendations to enhance climate resilience.
6. Developed and piloted school-level standard operating procedures to address a range of climate-related hazards.
7. Supported the integration of climate change and sustainability into learning and teaching.

In addition, the Building the Climate Resilience of Children and Communities through the Education Sector (BRACE) initiative, a five-year project with the Green Climate Fund launched in 2025 and implemented by Save the Children and the governments of Cambodia, South Sudan and Tonga, serves as a proof of concept demonstrating that education systems can be credible and investable entry points for climate adaptation and resilience building. Beyond country implementation, the BRACE initiative also plays a global role by aligning donors, governments and partners, including through the establishment of a global climate co-finance platform to unlock and coordinate climate finance for the education sector.

Technical resources, including country-level climate finance roadmaps and global guidance, such as on integrating education into NDCs to help countries align education priorities with their national strategies and vice versa, will be made available through a dedicated climate change and education knowledge space to support continued exchange and learning.

The **Permanent Interstate Committee for Drought Control in the Sahel (CILSS)** presented progress on the Regional Declaration on Climate Education in West Africa, an initiative launched at COP 27 in collaboration with UNITAR and Burkina Faso. The declaration emerged in response to the slow adoption of climate-resilient behaviours and practices across the region, which continue to undermine long-term resilience and sustainable development. It reflects a collective political commitment by CILSS member states to prioritize climate change education and training as a central component of climate action. All 13 CILSS member states have now joined the declaration, demonstrating growing regional ownership and political support for climate change education in West Africa.

Technical and financial support has played a key role in advancing the initiative. UNITAR has provided technical support since the conceptualization phase in 2022, while financial support for the development of the project concept note, feasibility study and programme document was provided by the Islamic Development Bank and the Arab Bank for Economic Development in Africa (BADEA). A fundraising roundtable organized in Vienna also brought together development and financial institutions, several of which announced their intention to support implementation efforts. The effective mobilization of pledged resources was identified as the next priority to operationalize the regional climate education project in West Africa.

Expected on-the-ground impacts of the initiative include strengthened subregional cooperation on climate change education, training, research and innovation, alongside greater behavioural change and adoption of

climate-resilient practices across sectors such as agriculture, water management and natural resource management. The initiative also seeks to enhance public participation, particularly among women and youth, in climate resilience programmes and projects throughout the Sahel and West Africa.

Partnerships and regional collaboration were highlighted as critical to the initiative's success. CILSS facilitates regional coordination and knowledge-sharing among member states through dedicated platforms and networks that support the exchange of good practices, pedagogical approaches and digital learning tools. Ongoing efforts are also strengthening teacher training and digital innovation through specialized regional institutions and programmes.

The regional climate education initiative is closely linked to broader CILSS programmes related to ecosystem restoration, food and nutritional security, livestock health and sustainable livestock value chains. Through these initiatives, CILSS aims to strengthen the integration of climate change education and training into wider resilience-building and sustainable development efforts across the region, while continuing to share lessons learned and experiences with partners working on similar thematic areas.

Discussions

In the following breakout group discussions, participants discussed the critical factors and obstacles to scaling climate change education and identified priority international action over the next five years.

Critical factors for success

Participants converged on several foundational conditions for effectively scaling climate change education. Adequate and sustained funding was seen as essential, alongside strong institutional coordination across ministries. Teacher training and professional development emerged as a consistent priority, with recognition that incorporating climate change into teaching practice remains relatively new in many countries. Equally important was the need for community engagement and co-ownership, particularly with children and youth, who should be seen as active participants rather than passive beneficiaries. Other critical factors included mainstreaming climate change education into NDCs and NAPs, monitoring and evaluating progress, and ensuring climate change education spans all levels. Nature-based education and the role of schools in directly responding to local climate impacts were also raised as promising entry points.

Most serious obstacles

Funding and coordination were consistently identified as key barriers to progress. Climate change remains insufficiently integrated into curricula and education systems. Weak implementation mechanisms, together with capacity gaps among teachers, education systems and national ACE focal points, continue to constrain effective delivery. Participants also highlighted challenges related to the use of local languages, elevating climate education as a national policy priority, and strengthening monitoring and reporting systems. Difficulties in capturing subnational activities and linking them to national reporting under the UNFCCC process were identified as a particular challenge.

International actions for the next five years

Participants identified a range of priorities, such as developing clear climate change education policies at the national level, supported by international frameworks, and called for every country to have such a policy in place. There was strong support for developing common tools to facilitate regional collaboration and knowledge-sharing across borders. Access to finance, including through platforms like the GPE's global climate co-finance platform for the education sector, was seen as critical to enabling countries and

communities to act. Tracking progress through national communications and NDCs was highlighted as an important measure.

Beyond policy and finance, participants called for stronger partnerships with youth networks, social media platforms, and civil society organizations, as well as deeper connections between international climate and education actors and networks. A recurring question was what support the ACE focal points need to scale climate change education, and how the international community can help create those conditions. There was also a call for greater focus on resilience as a holistic framework, and for climate change education to be more fully integrated into other workstreams such as adaptation, mitigation, and just transitions. Finally, COP presidencies were seen as a powerful lever to elevate climate education on the global action agenda and sustain momentum between sessions.