

Public Awareness & Training

25 March 2026

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Webinar

Key messages

- Public awareness and training are increasingly recognized as essential enablers of effective and inclusive climate action.
- Presentations highlighted growing public concern over climate change, expanding efforts to strengthen climate-related skills and training, and increasing attention to inclusive and locally relevant approaches.
- Public awareness and training initiatives are increasingly moving beyond information-sharing towards supporting behavioural change and whole-of-society engagement.
- Participants emphasized the importance of sustained funding, institutional coordination, locally adapted approaches and inclusive participation, particularly of women, children, youth, persons with disabilities, local communities and Indigenous Peoples in public awareness and training initiatives.
- Discussions also highlighted the need for stronger international cooperation, enhanced monitoring and evaluation methodologies, and greater integration of public awareness and training into national climate policies and future ACE implementation 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](#).

Public awareness and training

Public awareness and training are essential components of ACE, supporting individuals, communities and institutions in contributing to effective climate action. Public awareness efforts aim to improve understanding of climate change and strengthen public engagement through accessible, locally relevant and science-based communication. Training focuses on strengthening the knowledge, skills and capacities required for climate action across sectors, professions and levels of society. Together, public awareness and training can support behavioural and societal change, strengthen participation and build the capacities needed to implement climate policies and action effectively.

Progress since Glasgow: Growing momentum for public awareness and training

For public awareness and training, it remains difficult to comprehensively assess global progress since the adoption of the Glasgow work programme due to limited consolidated data and reporting across these two ACE elements. Presentations from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA) therefore provided useful insights into emerging trends, ongoing implementation efforts and key priorities related to public awareness and training.

UNDP presented the Peoples' Climate Vote 2024 and broader efforts under the Climate Promise to strengthen public awareness and training on climate change and action. The presentation highlighted how ACE can help translate growing public concern and support for climate action into effective policies and implementation.

The [Peoples' Climate Vote 2024](#), conducted jointly with the University of Oxford, was presented as the world's largest standalone public opinion survey on climate change. Conducted over eight months in 87 languages, the survey engaged more than 73,000 people across 77 countries, representing approximately 87 per cent of the world's population. The survey explored people's lived experiences of climate change, perceptions of existing climate action, priorities for future action and expectations for international collaboration.

Public awareness of climate change is both high and increasingly personal. Globally, 56 per cent of respondents reported thinking about climate change daily or weekly, while 53 per cent indicated they were more worried about climate change than the previous year. In addition, 69 per cent stated that climate change was already influencing major life decisions, including where to live and work, and what to buy. The findings suggest that climate change has shifted from a distant concern to an issue with direct relevance to people's everyday lives, creating both an opportunity and a responsibility to align climate ambition and implementation with lived realities.

Strong public support for ambitious climate action also emerged. According to the survey, four in five people globally called for their countries to strengthen climate commitments, including in many high-emitting countries. There was also broad support for transitioning away from fossil fuels, strengthening protection for vulnerable communities and enhancing international cooperation on climate action.

The evolution of the Peoples' Climate Vote since its first edition in 2021 further illustrates growing efforts to understand public perceptions of climate change. While the results are not directly comparable, 64% of respondents in 2021 already considered climate change a global emergency. The 2021 survey reached 1.2 million people across 50 countries via a mobile gaming platform, while the 2024 edition introduced 15 new questions and adopted a broader methodology to yield deeper insights into public perceptions and priorities.

The presentation concluded with an overview of how UNDP supports ACE implementation through public awareness and training initiatives for policymakers, practitioners and partners under the [Climate Promise](#). Examples included communication tools such as Climate Action Explained and the Climate Dictionary, as well as youth leadership programmes and school-based initiatives in Guinea, Panama and Burundi. UNDP emphasized that public awareness and training are mutually reinforcing, with awareness creating demand for climate action and training helping translate that demand into effective and inclusive implementation on the ground.

IRENA presented global trends and priorities related to renewable energy, jobs and training in the context of the energy transition. Achieving global renewable energy transition will require investment not only in technology and infrastructure but also in skills development, education and inclusive training systems capable of supporting a rapidly expanding workforce.

The implications of the UAE Consensus agreed at COP 28 were a key point of reference, particularly the targets to triple global renewable energy capacity and double the rate of energy efficiency improvements by 2030. While renewable energy deployment reached record levels in 2024, substantially higher annual installation rates would still be required to remain on track. According to IRENA's latest [Renewable Energy and Jobs: Annual Review 2025](#), developed in collaboration with the International Labour Organization (ILO), the renewable energy sector employed 16.6 million people globally in 2024, continuing a steady upward trend since the research began in 2012. Meeting future workforce demand will require a broad range of technical, policy and administrative skills.

Strengthening training systems and addressing skills gaps emerged as critical priorities. Many countries, particularly in Africa, continue to face limited access to renewable energy job opportunities due to insufficient investment, infrastructure, policy support and availability of skilled labour. Targeted skills development is needed in areas such as manufacturing, decentralized renewable energy systems, digital technologies and energy planning. Integrating workforce development into nationally determined contributions (NDCs) and national energy and climate policies was also identified as an important enabling factor.

Inclusive and accessible training opportunities remain essential to ensuring a just and effective energy transition. Women continue to be underrepresented in the renewable energy workforce and often face barriers related to STEM education, technical and vocational education and training (TVET) and career advancement. Persons with disabilities similarly experience low labour market participation, underscoring the need for accessible training environments and inclusive workplace practices. Renewable energy education, TVET and youth-focused skilling initiatives also play an important role in engaging young people and preparing the future workforce.

Training systems must also evolve alongside the changing nature of the energy sector. Improved labour market data and stronger public-private partnerships are needed to better align workforce skills development with industry needs. Qualification frameworks and mutual recognition of skills are expected to become increasingly important as workforce mobility grows. At the same time, many renewable energy workers continue to acquire skills informally through on-the-job learning, highlighting the importance of recognizing and integrating informal learning pathways into broader workforce development systems.

IRENA's ongoing work on skilling and energy education includes analytical research, educator capacity-building and youth-focused programmes. Participants were invited to contribute to IRENA's "[Call to Action on Skilling for the Energy Transition](#)", which seeks to promote international cooperation, exchange good

practices, and showcase concrete workforce development initiatives from governments, industry, educational institutions and civil society organizations.

Public awareness and training in practice

As a good practice at the subnational level, the **Government of Québec**, Canada, shared its approach to climate mobilization and training under the province's 2030 Plan for a Green Economy, which serves as Québec's framework policy for climate action and its roadmap toward carbon neutrality by 2050. The Plan includes more than 150 measures and 12 sectoral targets covering areas such as transport, energy efficiency, adaptation and decarbonization. Revenues generated through Québec's carbon market are reinvested in climate action through the Electrification and Climate Change Fund.

A central component of this approach is Québec's [Mobilization Strategy for Climate Action](#), which seeks to strengthen the social mandate for climate action across society. The strategy is structured around four key directions: understanding behavioural and social drivers of climate action, supporting collaboration among climate actors, strengthening communication and public awareness, and encouraging citizen-led action. Initiatives include the Climate Action Barometer, an annual survey on climate-related attitudes and behaviours, and a community of practice on climate communication that brings together hundreds of civil society organizations to exchange knowledge and good practices.

Action-Climat Québec provides financial support for climate mobilization initiatives led by civil society organizations. The programme adopts a bottom-up approach, with projects selected through calls for proposals and designed around citizen engagement, organizational involvement and capacity-building. Supported projects are required to combine awareness-raising, training and practical action-oriented activities. Examples include the "Vélovolt" initiative, which promoted the use of electric bicycles as alternatives to private vehicles through workplace pilot projects and research on behavioural change, and "Agriclimat", which supported farmers through workshops, regional adaptation plans and consultations on climate adaptation and mitigation practices in the agricultural sector.

Training is also a central pillar of Québec's green economy plan. Efforts focus on aligning workforce skills and training opportunities with the evolving needs of the transition while minimizing negative social and economic impacts. Climate-related knowledge is being integrated into technical, university and continuing education programmes, alongside efforts to monitor labour market developments and anticipate future workforce needs.

In the health and social services sector, training activities support professionals and decision-makers in strengthening their understanding of the impacts of climate change on public health, including through continuing education projects and curriculum development. Another initiative, developed in collaboration with professional associations of architects, engineers and urban planners, aims to strengthen capacity to integrate climate adaptation into the built environment and land-use planning through online training and interdisciplinary collaboration.

Discussions

In the following breakout group discussions, participants discussed the critical factors and obstacles to scaling up public awareness and training and identified priority international action over the next five years.

Critical factors for success

Participants identified several enabling conditions for scaling public awareness and training efforts. Adequate and sustained funding emerged as a key priority, alongside strong institutional coordination and political

backing to mainstream climate change across sectors and levels. Participants also emphasized the importance of adapting communication and training approaches to local contexts through the use of local languages, accessible messaging and approaches connected to people's lived experiences.

Inclusive participation and partnerships were repeatedly highlighted, particularly engagement with women, youth, local communities, Indigenous Peoples and civil society organizations. Participants further stressed the importance of strengthening training-of-trainers, lifelong learning and public awareness across all sectors and education levels. Sharing good practices and building public trust through science-based communication and information integrity were also identified as important success factors.

Most serious obstacles

As noted above, funding constraints were consistently identified as one of the most significant barriers to scaling up public awareness and training efforts. Weak institutional coordination across sectors and levels, alongside insufficient political prioritization of climate awareness and training, were also highlighted as major challenges. Participants additionally noted capacity limitations, including insufficient training-of-trainers, limited technical expertise and weak implementation frameworks. Difficulties in reaching rural and marginalized communities, limited local-language materials, and frequent institutional turnover were also raised as obstacles.

Participants further highlighted the challenge of assessing the effectiveness and long-term impacts of public awareness and training initiatives, including limitations in monitoring, evaluation and reporting methodologies and systems. The broader difficulty of translating climate information into concrete behavioural and societal change, while ensuring inclusive and accessible approaches, was also emphasized.

International actions for the next five years

Participants identified several priority international actions to strengthen public awareness and training over the next five years. Stronger international cooperation and coordination were seen as essential, particularly through enhanced collaboration among governments, civil society, youth networks, educators and international organizations. Participants emphasized the value of leveraging existing tools and developing common tools, platforms and communities of practice to facilitate knowledge-sharing and the replication of successful initiatives across countries and regions.

There were also calls for stronger integration of public awareness and training into national climate policies, including NDCs, national adaptation plans and education strategies, alongside improved monitoring and reporting mechanisms. Access to finance and dedicated support for public awareness and training initiatives were viewed as critical to enabling implementation. Participants further highlighted the importance of strengthening partnerships with media and social media actors, promoting information integrity and supporting climate communication approaches that are accessible, locally relevant and action-oriented.