

Introduction

Countries are yet to identify ways in which the six elements of Article 12 (education, training, public awareness, public participation, public access to information and international cooperation) can foster the implementation of the Paris Agreement by strengthening climate action announced in the Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs).

The basic hypothesis of this report is that paucity of evidence and the lack of strong arguments that support the causal connection between education and successful climate action continue to hamper a more vibrant debate on education at UNFCCC. Does climate education work? How? What does it cost and will it pay off? How much can the impact be?

Many such doubts remain in the absence of evidence in the form of good case studies. The present report captures 17 case studies from across the globe where climate change education has played a significant part in making a success of climate change mitigation and adaptation projects. The projects in this selection, which is by no means comprehensive, are exemplary in the way they demonstrate the role of education and awareness-raising in mitigation and adaptation as well as loss and damage projects. The case studies showcase a range of educational approaches that have led to smart choices with respect to transportation, energy and life style options, initiatives on leapfrogging from conventional fossil fuel-based energy supplies to renewable energy systems, improvements in water management, health and other initiatives. We see that education has, in these cases, ensured that project objectives and methodology are successfully embedded in communities and society, thereby enabling enduring outcomes.

Clearly, Climate Change and Agenda 2030 with its 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are tightly interlinked. Non-mitigated climate change would undermine the SDGs while mitigation and adaptation could open the doors to a sustainable future. The UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (2005 - 2014) and its follow-up, the Global Action Programme in ESD (GAP), strengthened the case for better understanding and integration of education in all programmes aimed at achieving sustainable development. The emerging education debate at the UNFCCC negotiations should hence forward be held in consonance with the discussion on ESD and the SDGs as explicitly mentioned in SDG 13 on climate change.

With the help of a survey among the Action for Climate Empowerment Focal Points and UNESCO's network of Partners in Education for Sustainable Development, a large number of potential case studies were initially gathered. The criteria set for the selection of the final 17 cases included i) significant mitigation or adaptation impact ii) strong educational component iii) transferability of the core idea to a comparable setting, iv) sustainability of the project and v) data availability. The presentation of the selected case studies in this report focuses on the educational component of the project and makes no judgement about the other aspects.

The findings of this case study analysis suggest that education has been successful in supporting the achievement of the Paris agenda at many different levels. Firstly, because the factors that lead to climate change are very closely connected to individual lifestyles and the current paradigm of

development, any change in these factors can only happen with a change in human attitudes and behaviour. Education is the only way by which such change can be instigated. Yet the priority accorded to education during international policy discussions remains marginal. Secondly, the achievement of the Paris long-term goals on climate change mitigation and adaptation is imperative if global society is to become sustainable. Awareness, knowledge and skills are required to implement the targets and the roadmaps which were developed for the current NDCs. Future NDCs must include educational components to strengthen their approaches. Thirdly, education under the UNFCCC can and should be discussed in conjunction with Education for Sustainable Development and Education 2030 Agenda.