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Climate Change in Education

The world is experiencing a triple planetary crisis: climate change, pollution, and biodiversity loss. The climate crisis is causing more frequent and extreme weather events. In 2023 alone, millions of people were displaced or died due to droughts, heatwaves, floods, cyclones, hurricanes, wildfires, and other extreme weather events around the world.

Climate change and education in numbers

- **559 million children are exposed to high heatwave frequency.**
- **By 2050, virtually every child on earth – over 2 billion children – will face more frequent heatwaves.**
- **The education of 40 million children is being disrupted every year because of climate-intensified disasters.**
- **Only 0.03 per cent of all climate finance is spent on education.**

Climate shocks disrupt children's education setting their learning further back. The climate crisis is robbing children of their ability to gain the foundational and green skills they need to adapt and prepare for future climate events. Women and girls in climate hotspots disproportionately suffer the effects of extreme and unpredictable weather, pushing more girls out of school and threatening their mental health, food security and livelihoods – and placing them at greater risk of child marriage, violence and exploitation.

Urgent action is needed to make education systems climate resilient and to engage children and youth in meaningful climate action.

The opportunity

Education has transformative potential for climate change adaptation and resilience. UNICEF is doubling down efforts to strengthen local capacities for climate resilient education systems. Our work on climate change in education has four strategic pillars:



Greening learning and skills

Increasing access to quality curriculum, learning materials and digital resources for children and youth to develop the necessary skills for future participation in the green economy.



Youth-led climate action

Increase youth engagement in climate-smart solutions and climate advocacy at local levels.



Greening capacities of systems

Supporting Ministries of Education to strengthen system-level resilience, upskill their teaching workforce and engage in risk-informed sector planning, preventing learning disruptions caused or exacerbated by climate-related events.



Greener and safer learning facilities

Strengthening country-level shock responsiveness to climate induced emergencies, through greener school infrastructure and disaster risk reduction strategies.



UNICEF in action

In 2022 and 2023, UNICEF supported active engagement of young people to take climate actions in 96 countries across seven regions and worked with governments in 57 countries to integrate climate, green skills and disaster reduction in learning programmes.

Vietnam: Greening learning, skills and systems

- **Up-skilling teachers.** Training 400 teachers on gender-responsive approaches to teaching climate change.
- **Youth-led solutions:** Reaching 250,000 adolescent students with learning opportunities, enabling them to apply their green skills through grassroots projects and take climate action in their communities.
- **Greening learning:** Working with the Ministry of Education to integrate climate change into the national curriculum.

India: Taking climate action to scale through education

- **Influencing policy:** Robust advocacy leading to the integration of climate in the National Curriculum Framework (NCF) and implementation of comprehensive school safety programmes in 12 states.
- **Teacher training:** 101,706 teachers trained in climate change in education.
- **Climate resilient schools:** Over 100,000 schools developed and implemented climate-smart school improvement plans.
- **Youth-led action:** 78 Ministries and departments across India, are using the UNICEF-supported mobile application, Meri-Life, to support young people hone their green skills and take climate action. So far 25.2 million citizens have taken action nationwide.



Iraq: Greener and safer learning facilities

- **Greener schools:** Across 314 schools in twelve provinces, over 120,000 students benefited from continuous supply of green energy and safe water contributing to reduction of carbon emissions.
- **Solar-powered digital learning:** Children and school administration gained access to digital learning and are using a child-friendly mobile application to monitor water outputs.
- **Innovation:** New technology for air-to-water generation has been piloted in schools, producing safe drinking water in areas with water scarcity, and engaging students in learning green skills for climate resilience.



UNICEF's comparative advantage

UNICEF is uniquely positioned to harness the transformative potential of education for climate.

- **Largest operational capacity:** expert staff with a network of trusted partners and governments.
- **Scale:** UNICEF achieves impact for children by scaling up tailored innovation, best practices and programming at the country level, regionally and globally.
- **Before, during and after an emergency:** UNICEF's teams are on the ground to ensure every child has access to quality learning and are working with governments to help build resilient systems and position education as a key enabler to address climate change.
- **Childhood and adolescence:** UNICEF supports children to fulfill their potential and meet key milestones. In education this means ensuring that they are ready for school, acquire foundational and green skills, and are prepared for life.

Investment: US\$ 40 million over three years will support 10 champion countries to make schools climate-ready benefiting 3 million children with skills for climate action and indirectly benefiting 100 million children.