

CONFRONTING CLIMATE CHANGE THROUGH EDUCATION



Extreme weather has destroyed the Nazareth school in the Democratic Republic of Congo. GPE/Elvix Kwanu

The impacts of climate change and environmental degradation adversely affect children's well-being and their ability to attend school and learn. Education gives children the knowledge to mitigate these impacts and is a powerful driver to transition to greener societies. To fully harness the potential of education for climate action, the **Global Partnership for Education (GPE)** works with partners to promote and finance climate-smart education systems.

THE CHALLENGE

- › Approximately **1 billion children**—nearly half of the world's children—live in “extremely high risk” countries for the impacts of climate change.
- › Extreme weather events such as cyclones, floods and heat waves are increasing in frequency and strength, threatening children's lives. Nearly **40 million children a year have their education interrupted by disasters** and subsequent disease outbreaks following extreme weather events.
- › Climate change could **displace more than 216 million people by 2050**, forcing them out of their homes and communities, interrupting their schooling, causing psychosocial stress and straining education provision at their destination.

- › **Women and girls are more likely to be impacted** by climate-related disasters with greater fatalities, displacement and violence. Households whose livelihoods have been lost to climate change are more likely to reduce the number of children they send to school and to prioritize boys.

EDUCATION'S CONTRIBUTION TO CLIMATE ACTION

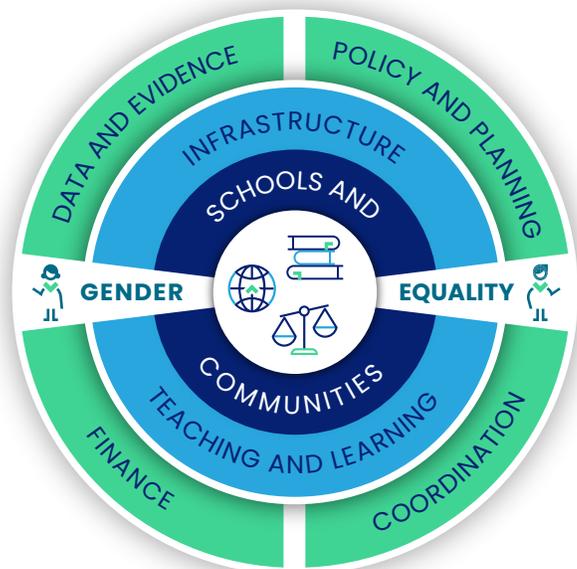
Education gives people the knowledge and tools they need to adapt to the impacts of climate change and the risks it poses to lives, livelihoods and well-being. Education can also be a powerful driver for more sustainable development, including a transition to greener societies.

- › Quality education dramatically reduces deaths from weather-related disasters. Girls' education has been shown to be the most important socioeconomic determinant in reducing vulnerability to climate-driven disasters.
- › Quality education can drive behavior change toward more sustainable lifestyles and livelihoods, empowering citizens to demand faster action from governments and businesses on the climate.
- › Inclusive basic and secondary education is essential for developing a future workforce to support adaptation to the impacts of climate change and a transition to a low carbon economy.
- › Education systems typically account for the public sector's largest workforce and network of facilities, spread across every region of every country. Low carbon and resilient infrastructure along with practices that preserve the environment on which communities depend can save lives and livelihoods and reduce the carbon footprint of schools.

GPE'S APPROACH

- › GPE financing supports equitable, inclusive and resilient education systems through **analysis, planning and capacity development for preparedness, response and recovery**, and through sustained investments in system transformation.
- › GPE developed a **framework for climate-smart education systems** with strategies and practices that governments can deploy to include climate risk in their education planning, increase the capacity of education actors to mitigate and adapt to impacts of climate change and support greener and more ecologically conscious societies.
- › GPE launched a new **Climate-Smart Education System Initiative** with Save the Children and UNESCO, which provides technical assistance to education ministries to mainstream climate change into education sector policy, plans and budgets.

SEVEN DIMENSIONS OF A CLIMATE-SMART EDUCATION SYSTEM FRAMEWORK



MADAGASCAR

In the last 35 years, more than 5 million children have been affected by 46 natural disasters in Madagascar, including cyclones, droughts and floods. These disasters, intensified by climate change, have destroyed school infrastructure across the country and reduced school attendance, especially for students from vulnerable families. Through its school construction program, the Ministry of Education is identifying safe locations to build schools, adopting climate-proof designs so school buildings are capable of withstanding disasters, and is implementing new disaster-resistant infrastructure standards for schools in high-risk areas. With GPE funding, the ministry is revising the school calendar to align with the agriculture and weather seasons, which will help minimize high student and teacher absenteeism caused by problems accessing schools during the rainy, cyclonic and drought seasons.