



UNESCO International Seminar on Climate Change Education

This three-day expert seminar on climate change education was organized by UNESCO with financial support from Denmark at UNESCO Headquarters in Paris, from 27 to 29 July 2009. It brought together a multi-disciplinary and diverse group of more than 50 educators, scientists, educational planners, and representatives of Small Island Developing States (SIDS) as well as multilateral and non-governmental organizations to discuss and make recommendations on the role and potential of education in addressing global climate change.



The Seminar was designed to reach and involve the key stakeholders involved in climate change education – from policy to action level.

“Education is crucial in the challenge of tackling climate change”

(Ambassador Poul Erik Dam Kristensen, Permanent Delegate of Denmark to UNESCO)

Its specific objectives were to:

- promote the effective integration of climate change education into educational programmes and school curricula;
- mobilize support for teacher training on climate change education;
- enhance the exchange of experiences and good practices on climate change education among ministries, teachers, practitioners and young people;
- identify opportunities for using various networks (such as the UNESCO Associated Schools Network, World Heritage sites, biosphere reserves and the International Hydrological Programme networks) to encourage local field-based education on climate change; and
- identify learning materials and good practices on climate change education and enhance their dissemination via information and communication technologies, as well as other means.

The Seminar provided a unique opportunity, particularly for individuals from Small Island Developing States, to gather and exchange experiences, good practices, knowledge, tools and resources for climate change education, through presentations and discussions in both plenary and working group sessions.

“It is important to let children play a role in the fight against climate change”

(Prof. Philippe Chris Reid, University of Plymouth, United Kingdom)

Its added-value was undoubtedly to give the three different working groups, and let them

1. the integration of climate change education into educational policies, programmes and curricula;
2. the identification of climate change education tools, materials and good practices; and
3. the mobilization and engagement of networks and partnerships in support of climate change education.

The Seminar recognized that climate change is a truly global challenge that will impact all ecosystems and human societies, but in different ways and to different degrees.

“Education should make young people be critical-thinkers, lifelong learners and adaptable”
(Carole Young, University of Auckland, New Zealand)



participants the opportunity to break into work for two days on issues related to:



Addressing climate change requires involvement and action at the local, regional and global level, and education has a central role to play in understanding, mitigating and adapting to climate change. Participants made a number of recommendations to UNESCO and its partners, outlining actions to be taken in order to follow-up on key issues identified during the seminar.

« Climate change education is about helping learners understand and address the impacts of global warming today, while at the same time encouraging the change in attitudes and behaviour needed to put our world on a more sustainable path in the future”

(Koïchiro Matsuura, Director-General of UNESCO)

The priority activity identified by the seminar included the setting up of a clearinghouse for the exchange of information on climate change, in partnership with UNFCCC.

Such activity would aim to:

- develop ways for supporting a “community of practice” (i.e. people who are interested and actively engaged in climate change and climate change education);
- enhance networking and cooperation for action on climate change education among all stakeholders, in particular through actively engaging communities and youth;

As one of the actions to be taken, it was agreed to:

- undertake of a review of existing educational policy and curricula on climate change, in order to initiate the development of guidelines to facilitate the inclusion of climate change issues into educational programmes, policies and curricula;
- undertake of a comprehensive review and inventory of existing tools, materials and practices in teaching and learning climate change.

