



Position paper

Making Education a Pillar of Climate Resilience

INTRODUCTION

The climate emergency is the defining challenge of our time, threatening human and economic stability. Yet one of the most critical levers for resilience remains underutilized: **education**.

Education systems are far from being spared; they are highly vulnerable to climate shocks. The findings are alarming: in 2024 alone, **242 million students across 85 countries had their schooling interrupted due to climate-related disasters** (UNICEF 2024), leading to damaged infrastructure, increased risks of school dropout, and an acceleration of the learning crisis, with climate shocks acting as multipliers of vulnerability.

At the same time, education is part of the solution. It is a key lever for awareness-raising, adaptation, and resilience, and is essential for preparing communities for future shocks. This recognition is institutionalized at the global level through **Action for Climate Empowerment (ACE)** [1]. This framework, anchored in **Article 12 of the Paris Agreement** - which recalls that education is a fundamental tool for preparing the citizens and professionals needed to achieve the treaty's climate objectives - requires States to mobilize education, training, and public participation in support of climate action. It is further reinforced by the **Lima Action Plan** [2], which calls for the systematic integration of climate considerations into national education policies.

In response to this critical interdependence, five education coalitions - Coalition Éducation France, COSYDEP (Senegal), CNT/EPT (Togo), CN-EPT/BF (Burkina Faso), and CONAMEPT (Madagascar) - have joined forces to advocate collectively, drawing on documented evidence from data collection, consultations, and analyses conducted in the target countries since 2023: "Education and Environment: Realities and Practices in Togo, Senegal, Burkina Faso, and Madagascar".

This advocacy statement adopts a **broad understanding of education**, viewed as a continuum that spans formal, non-formal, and informal learning throughout life. It therefore recognizes the central role played by a wide range of stakeholders - including education systems, communities, civil society organizations, local authorities, and popular education actors - in building climate resilience.

This advocacy effort is all the more urgent given that the **Education-Climate nexus remains largely underintegrated into public policies, both in the fields of education and climate action**. In 2021, **only 1.5% of global climate financing was allocated to education** (World Bank). This financial marginalization persists despite growing regional political will, as highlighted by the Regional Declaration on Strengthening Climate Education in West Africa. This landmark text notes that climate education - targeting both the general public and key actors (youth, professionals, and marginalized groups) - remains "poorly funded, fragmented across numerous initiatives led mostly by under-resourced NGOs and local associations." [3].

In light of these findings, we call on the governments of the target countries and French cooperation actors (through AFD and the Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs) to take action by ensuring effective political and financial prioritisation by 2027. This agenda is further reinforced by a favourable international context, marked by the COP28 Declaration on the Joint Programme for Education and Climate Change (COP28) and the tenth anniversary of the Paris Agreement.

1. Climate Empowerment Action (more commonly known by its English acronym ACE, standing for Action for Climate Empowerment) is the official designation adopted by the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) to refer to the implementation of Article 6 of the original Convention and Article 12 of the Paris Agreement.

2. The Lima Ministerial Declaration on Education and Awareness Raising and its accompanying Work Programme, adopted at COP20 in Peru in 2014, is a United Nations strategic framework calling on States to integrate education, training, and public awareness on climate change into national policies. It serves as a bridge between the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the Paris Agreement.

3. The Regional Declaration on Strengthening Climate Education in West Africa was signed in 2023 in Dubai on the margins of COP28. It is based on a survey conducted among approximately one hundred individuals and institutions playing a central role in climate education in West Africa, led by member countries of the Permanent Inter-State Committee for Drought Control in the Sahel (CILSS) and UN CC:Learn.

Defining the Education-Climate Nexus

The Education–Climate nexus refers to the interdependent relationship between education and the climate crisis and urgency of action. It is based on two alarming realities: education is both **a victim of climate change** (school disruptions, infrastructure destruction, climate shocks as vulnerability multipliers) and a **key lever for adaptation and resilience**, requiring the transformation of education systems into pillars of individual and community resilience.

Shared Vision and Core Political Message

Faced with the climate emergency and the growing inequalities it exacerbates, we share a common vision: to make education a strategic and sustainable pillar of climate resilience and social justice. We believe that the right to quality, inclusive, and equitable education is inseparable from the right to a healthy environment and a viable future for present and future generations.

We affirm that the Education–Climate nexus must be recognized, planned, and financed as a major policy priority. Resilient, inclusive, and sustainable education systems are essential to protect learning continuity, train citizens capable of action, and strengthen social cohesion.

Environmental and sustainable development education can no longer be marginal, optional, or underfunded. It must be fully integrated into education policies, curricula, teacher training, and non-formal and vocational education systems.



We urge governments to establish the education–climate nexus as a key pillar of national climate and education strategies, supported by coordinated, ambitious, and equitable action to ensure that all learners are prepared for, protected from, and empowered to address the impacts of climate change.

We also call on the international community to place the education–climate nexus at the heart of international cooperation efforts and to scale up technical and financial support for dedicated policies, programmes, and projects. Investing in education is essential to building resilient, inclusive, and sustainable societies capable of responding to the challenges of climate change and advancing a just transition.

Key Findings

Weak political and budgetary prioritization of ESD (Education for Sustainable Development)

In the four countries studied, Education for Environment and Sustainable Development (ESD) remains insufficiently prioritised both politically and financially, which limits its implementation and its potential to strengthen resilience to climate shocks. It is often treated as optional and weakly structured: in Senegal, Togo, and Madagascar, 70% to 72% of teachers dedicate less than two hours per week to it (compared to 49% in Burkina Faso), reflecting the absence of a clear framework and dedicated curriculum time.

While strategic frameworks exist, their translation into concrete education policies remains limited. In Senegal, the *Plan Sénégal Émergent* (2019–2023) and the *PAQUET* (2013–2025) acknowledge the issue, but commitments are largely focused on awareness-raising or environmental compliance, without systemic transformation of curricula or education governance. In contrast, Burkina Faso has developed more structured tools (SNEE, PASNEEE 2022–2024, and a legal framework), reflecting stronger political commitment.

Despite these advances, a common bottleneck persists across all four countries: **the absence of dedicated national budget allocations for ESD, which prevents scaling up and undermines the continuity of interventions.**

In this context, alignment with international dynamics (COP28), the regional declaration for strengthening climate education in West Africa, and French cooperation priorities represents an opportunity to elevate ESD into a true budgetary and programmatic priority.

Insufficient teacher training and pedagogical resources

To strengthen climate risk prevention and develop adaptation skills, Education for Environment and Sustainable Development (ESD) must be integrated from an early age across formal, non-formal, and vocational education systems. However, despite strong student interest in environmental education—estimated between **43% and 63% across the four countries surveyed—teachers remain insufficiently equipped** to address climate change due to a lack of training and appropriate resources. In Senegal, **81% of teachers report a lack of teaching tools**; in Togo, **71.4% cite insufficient time** (and training); in Burkina Faso, **64.9% primarily identify a need for training**; and **in Madagascar, only 18% of teachers hold a pedagogical qualification**, which undermines knowledge transmission and the quality of ESD learning outcomes.

This situation is further confirmed by recommendations expressed to governments: **23% of teachers in Togo, 65% in Senegal, 32% in Burkina Faso, and 70% in Madagascar explicitly highlight the need to strengthen teacher training and pedagogical support.**

Finally, ESD remains insufficiently structured within curricula and textbooks. It is mostly addressed in a cross-cutting, occasional, and often theoretical manner. As a result, the skills needed to **measure, prevent, manage, and mitigate environmental impacts** are still weakly integrated into technical and vocational education and training frameworks, limiting the education system's ability to prepare learners for the challenges of adaptation and transition.

Weak integration of climate resilience in education and climate sector plans

The resilience of education systems remains insufficiently integrated into education sector plans and national climate frameworks. According to a 2025 study by the NAP Global Network and Save the Children, **although the majority of National Adaptation Plans (NAPs) refer to education, fewer than half incorporate it into climate risk assessments**, reflecting a lack of data on the specific impacts of climate change on the sector and its adaptation needs.

This trend is also evident in the countries examined. In Senegal, education is not identified as a vulnerable sector in the National Adaptation Plan, although it is indirectly addressed through measures related to flood risk management and the protection of infrastructure. In Burkina Faso, the absence of a structured education component within the National Climate Change Adaptation Plan (PNACC) illustrates the sector's low level of prioritization, despite the inclusion of capacity-building measures and the existence of complementary strategies on climate change education. In Togo, education remains largely absent from both the National Adaptation Plan and climate governance mechanisms, although intersectoral coordination processes may indirectly influence education policies.

In addition, the limited technical capacity of Ministries of Education to assess educational vulnerabilities and access climate finance, as highlighted by UNESCO-IIEP, represents a common challenge. This constraint hampers investments in resilient school infrastructure, educational continuity, and school safety. Nevertheless, initiatives supported by UNICEF, the Global Partnership for Education (GPE), and the Green Climate Fund (GCF) demonstrate that **aligning education planning with climate adaptation objectives is both feasible and effective. Such initiatives have successfully promoted climate-resilient school infrastructure and strengthened mechanisms to ensure continuity of learning in the face of climate-related disruptions.**

Weak synergy between education and climate policies

Despite the proliferation of environmental and education policy frameworks in West Africa and in partner countries, **weak synergy persists between education and climate policies. In Burkina Faso, Madagascar, Senegal, and Togo, national strategies reference awareness-raising, training, or the integration of environmental principles, but these commitments have yet to translate into structural reforms of curricula, planning processes, or education governance.**

This disconnect is also reflected in climate policies, particularly within National Adaptation Plans (NAPs) and Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) under the Paris Agreement. The participation of Ministries of Education in climate processes remains limited: while **58% are involved in implementation, only 11% were consulted during the drafting phase, and few are included in coordination or monitoring and evaluation mechanisms. Furthermore, only 27% of planned education-related actions are budgeted**, which constrains the shift from policy intent to implementation (NAP Global Network).

In this regard, the Climate-Smart Education Systems initiative (GPE, Save the Children, and UNESCO-IIEP) represents a structuring approach to integrating adaptation and environmental sustainability into sectoral plans and budgets, while strengthening intersectoral coordination led by Ministries of Education.

Strategic Recommendations

By 2028, we call on governments and the international community to:

01

Integrate the resilience of education systems into education sector plans and climate frameworks (National Adaptation Plans and Nationally Determined Contributions), including mechanisms for learning continuity in line with the recommendations of the Lima Action Plan.

*In Burkina Faso, the flagship **REPAIR project** (**Restoring Education System Performance and Improving Resilience**), implemented with support from the World Bank and the Global Partnership for Education, aims to strengthen the resilience of the education system by incorporating climate-resilient school infrastructure, education in emergency contexts, and institutional capacity-building for data-informed planning.*

02

Institutionalise Education for Environment and Sustainable Development (ESD) within curricula, textbooks, and initial and in-service teacher training, supported by validated pedagogical resources. It is urgent to move beyond simple awareness-raising in order to fully implement the six pillars of ACE (Action for Climate Empowerment). This requires equipping learners and education professionals with real adaptation skills, ensuring empowerment and resilience in the face of environmental shocks.

*For example, **advocacy by CN-EPT/BF** led to the integration of environmental and sustainable development issues into school curricula through the design, validation, and official handover on 8 May 2025 of a module aimed at incorporating environmental education in primary and secondary schools in Burkina Faso. The module is entitled: “Training Module on Environmental Education linked to REDD+ for teachers in preschool, primary, lower secondary and upper secondary education in Burkina Faso.”*

03

Create dedicated education-climate budget lines by mobilising both national budgets and international financing mechanisms (European Union, World Bank, Green Climate Fund, Global Partnership for Education, Education Cannot Wait, and Nationally Determined Contributions). In line with commitments under the Regional Declaration on Strengthening Climate Education in West Africa, mobilising blended resources (public and international) is essential to transform the demographic opportunity into a lever for resilience. Investment must cover not only infrastructure adaptation but also equip young people with mitigation and adaptation capacities.

*The **BRACE project** (**Building the Climate Resilience of Children and Communities through the Education Sector**), funded by the Green Climate Fund (FP274) and co-financed by the GPE and Save the Children, is a pilot initiative aimed at strengthening the resilience of education systems through climate-adapted schools, climate-integrated curricula, and school-based early warning systems. It is being implemented in three pilot countries: Cambodia, South Sudan, and Tonga.*

04

Strengthen intersectoral coordination (Education–Environment–Social Protection–Health–Finance, etc.) through clear governance mechanisms.

*The “**Green School Year**” initiative in Togo, co-organised by the Ministry of National Education and the Ministry of Environment and Forest Resources and led by local and prefectural authorities, is a strong example of intersectoral cooperation for sustainable development and a healthier environment.*

05

Strengthen the support of French cooperation by explicitly integrating the education–climate nexus into cooperation frameworks and technical and budgetary assistance. France should uphold its commitments under ACE by making education a lever for climate empowerment and action.

The ADAPT’ACTION programme in Senegal aims to mainstream climate issues within the education system by demonstrating the leverage role that education can play in responding to the challenges of climate change. Its integration strategy is based on two key principles: an educational continuum approach and a competency-based approach.

Our Strategic Alliance

The education coalitions of **Burkina Faso** (CN-EPT/BF), **France** (Coalition Éducation), **Madagascar** (CONAMEPT), **Senegal** (COSYDEP) and **Togo** (CNT/EPT), have formed a strategic alliance, in line with the recommendations of the Regional Declaration on Strengthening Climate Education in West Africa, to place education at the heart of environmental resilience.

Following in-depth diagnostics on Education for Sustainable Development in both basic education and vocational training systems, this transnational advocacy network builds on complementary expertise: African coalitions bring field-based solutions and locally driven innovations, while the French coalition supports engagement with international donors and global financing mechanisms.

Together, they aim to strengthen the education–climate nexus by bridging policy, practice, and funding to accelerate climate resilience through education.

This policy brief is produced by the education coalitions of Burkina Faso (CN-EPT/BF), France (Coalition Éducation), Madagascar (CONAMEPT), Senegal (COSYDEP), and Togo (CNT/EPT).

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