



For the human right to education with environmental, climate and gender justice

Climate change poses a significant threat to life on the planet. Education is called to play a fundamental role in guiding and preparing the population for climate action, integrating approaches to human rights, intersectorality and intersectionality, contributing to the construction of an equitable world with socio-environmental and climate justice.

Environmental and climate justice must be central axes for the guarantee of access and permanence in transformative public education systems, which question and contribute to the transformation of the current development model based on the exploitation of nature, dispossession and the accumulation of wealth in a few hands.

The idea of environmental and climate justice implies recognizing that those who have generated and continue to impact climate change are not the main ones affected by it. Although, as a global phenomenon it affects us all, it does not do so in the same way. Clearly, the most vulnerable groups who have contributed the least to climate change, turn out to be the most affected. Paradoxically, it is these groups who have the knowledge, leadership and creativity to drive real solutions

In this sense, the transformation of the relationship between human beings and the Earth also involves a change in the relationships between human beings themselves. In that change, Gender Transformative Education (GTE) can play a key role, challenging hierarchical power structures, questioning discrimination, confronting systems that perpetuate inequities and oppression, and recognizing the knowledge of girls, women, and indigenous communities.

This is a call for a human right to education with environmental, climate and gender justice.



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Regional and global challenges



The evidence of climate change is overwhelming and the consequences are becoming more severe. Over the past 50 years, the number of weather, water and climate-related disasters has increased fivefold¹. Every year, tens of millions of people are displaced by sudden or slow-onset weather hazards; in 2022 alone, an estimated 32.6 million were displaced by weather hazards².

According to UNICEF data³, 188 million children and adolescents live in Latin America and the Caribbean. Of this population, 169 million live in areas where at least two climate and environmental risks overlap, while 47 million live in areas affected by at least four extreme weather events per year. As documented in the policy brief recently published by CLADE⁴, the impact of these phenomena is different and directly threatens the exercise of the human right to education of vulnerable populations. In Africa, seasonal shifts in rainfall cycles cause floods, droughts and cyclones that destroy educational infrastructure and expose girls and women to gender-based violence⁵. In South Asia, rising temperatures are associated with increases in violence against girls and women⁶. In the Middle East and North Africa, home to 13 of the 20 most water-stressed countries, the combination of climate change and conflict in certain countries means that access to education for girls and women is considered a dispensable luxury⁷.

The data collected in this *policy brief* confirm that, when extreme weather events affect household economies, girls are more likely to be the first to drop out of school, assuming caregiving and income-generating responsibilities and are even pushed into forced marriage. Such rights violations are even more severe in female-headed households, where a 1°C increase in average temperature is associated with a 34% reduction in total income in these households, compared to male-headed households.

¹ World Meteorological Organization, 2021. Available at: wmo.int/media/news/weather-related-disasters-increase-over-past-50-years-causing-more-damage-fewer-deaths

² International Displacement Monitoring Center 2023 Global Report on Internal Displacement. Available at: [internal-displacement.org/global-report/grid2023](https://displacement.org/global-report/grid2023)

³ Report The Climate Crisis is a Child Rights Crisis, available at: unicef.org/reports/climate-crisis-child-rights-crisis

⁴ Gender Transformative Education for climate justice: links and advocacy actions. Available at:

⁵ UN Women, 2023. Gender and climate-related migration in Jordan and Sudan. Available at: arabstates.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/2024-02/awc-unw-publication-gender-cc-migration.pdf

⁶ Yixiang Zhu; Cheng He; Michelle Bell et al. Association of ambient temperature with the prevalence of intimate partner violence among partnered women in low- and middle-income South Asian countries. Available at:

⁷ The Cairo Review of Global Affairs, 2024. Climate change, conflict, and gender inequality in the MENA Region. Available at: thecairoreview.com/essays/climate-change-conflict-and-gender-inequality-in-the-mena-region

However, ensuring gender parity in classrooms and eliminating school absenteeism is not enough: education needs to be truly transformative. According to data from a study conducted by



CLADE⁸, learning content about climate change in Latin America and the Caribbean is fundamentally based on a cognitive dimension. National school curricula prioritize a technical-scientific understanding of natural phenomena, with less development in attitudinal, social or climate action dimensions and do not consider the structural causes of climate change and its social, political and economic implications. That is, they are not based on an environmental and climate justice approach.

Pathways to Education Transformation

The guarantee of the human right to education with environmental, climate and gender justice will only be possible from the reconfiguration of the hierarchical power relations established by patriarchy and the exploitation of the land **under the cumulative and extractive logic of capitalism**. To this end, the approach to climate change from an environmental and climate justice perspective, gender transformative education and human rights are axes of educational transformation for Latin America and the Caribbean.

In this regard, the Global Campaign for Education movement, which includes CLADE and the Brazilian Campaign for the Right to Education, urges States to:

Protect education in times of crisis and prevent them

- 🌱 Develop strategies to prevent educational disruption in times of climate emergency, ensuring adequate funding and policies for the continuity of the educational trajectory, especially of vulnerable groups based on their gender, race, identity, economic conditions and living areas, among others;
- 🌱 Implement initiatives that help students, teachers and other members of the educational community to manage climate anxiety, recognizing its differentiated effects on vulnerable groups;

⁸ CLADE, 2025. Estudio sobre la justicia climática en currículos escolares nacionales en América Latina y el Caribe. Available at:
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✿ Prioritize and expand girls' and women's access to quality public education in areas vulnerable to climate change, considering education as a strategic imperative to advance towards environmental and climate justice and gender justice;

✿ Establish measures to hold States and their governments accountable for non-compliance with environmental education laws and policies, including through public civil actions, when schools in risk areas are not protected or continuity of education is not ensured during climate emergencies.



Recognize the transformative role of education

✿ Ensure sustainable and equitable financing for quality public education on climate change, with an environmental and climate justice approach at all levels and sectors. High-emission countries should contribute proportionately to these investments, reflecting their responsibility for the climate crisis and their obligation to support education for climate action;

✿ Adopt curricular approaches that promote the understanding of climate change from an environmental and climate justice approach, as well as values of respect and care for nature, gender equity, intersectionality and indigenous and rural cosmovisions in a transversal way;

✿ Include in teacher training the proposal of gender-transformative education with an environmental justice perspective, so that climate change education is not limited to the technical-scientific understanding of the phenomenon;

✿ Promote critical pedagogies that integrate the construction of relationships of identification with the territory and its protection from transdisciplinarity and the empowerment of girls and women;

✿ Work on the issue of climate change from a critical and experiential approach, recognizing the differences in each school context;

✿ Promote the effective participation of students (through student centers and groups), families, communities and education professionals in the preparation and monitoring of the Political-Pedagogical Projects (PPP) of the schools and the Institutional Pedagogical Projects (IPP) of the universities, ensuring that environmental and climate justice are structuring axes;



- ✿ Create specific programs and calls, including in universities, that recognize and fund critical environmental education experiences led by indigenous peoples, rural communities and traditional populations, recognizing them as vital references for achieving environmental and climate justice;
- ✿ Guiding textbook programs and other educational materials policies to incorporate issues such as environmental racism, climate justice, agroecology, and traditional knowledge, with a critical review of content that perpetuates distorted or superficial views on environmental issues;
- ✿ Guarantee the necessary financing so that all public educational institutions have adequate infrastructure, including essential elements for environmental justice, such as green spaces, basic sanitation, access to water,⁸ energy efficiency and rainwater harvesting systems, among others.

Rethink the development model:

- ✿ Integrate critical reflections on development models based on the exploitation of nature and the patriarchal system into education, valuing sustainable, comprehensive and equitable alternatives that benefit communities;
- ✿ Act swiftly to prevent persecution and violence against teachers, school communities and traditional peoples working to defend the environment and critical education, guaranteeing the freedom of education and the safety of these actors;
- ✿ Sharing reliable information and combating misinformation about environmental racism and the climate crisis in social circles, valuing traditional and local knowledge;
- ✿ Include vulnerable and impacted groups in the formulation of climate and educational policies, as well as in the daily life of educational communities, recognizing the contributions of civil society to public policy, increasing transparency and democratic management;
- ✿ Recognize care as a human right, considering equal care responsibilities between humans and human beings with the Earth.

The preservation of life on the planet passes through the guarantee of the human right to education.