

Creation of an International Initiative for Climate Education

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The essential role of education in tackling the causes and consequences of anthropogenic climate change is increasingly being recognised at an international level. For example, Article 12 of the historic Paris Agreement states that “Parties shall cooperate in taking measures, as appropriate, to enhance climate change education”, while the InterAcademy Partnership for Science (IAP) have recently stated that climate education “must become a prime component of science education at all educational levels”. However, as made clear by a 2016 UNESCO analysis of 78 national curricula, there remains a large disparity between these aspirations and the current global state of environmental education.

To discern how to best address this gap, an international workshop was organized to bring together recognized experts in both climate change and education. Held in Erice, Sicily in 2017, its concluding statement called for the creation of an international initiative to identify, develop and disseminate classroom-ready and place-appropriate resources on climate change to primary and secondary school teachers across the developed and developing world. In addition, it highlighted the need for these resources to span both the natural and social sciences, as well as to utilise pedagogical best practice (e.g. inquiry-based pedagogy) and the latest scientific findings (including from IPCC reports).

In this talk, we outline recent progress towards the large-scale implementation of this envisaged initiative, now known as the Office for Climate Education, further elaborating on its mission, scope and structure. In particular, we elucidate how, through creation of a collaborative global network of scientific and educational partners, the project aims to bring the latest thinking on climate change science and solutions to classrooms worldwide, spurring both local engagement and proactive actions.