



Increasing Climate Literacy, Engagement and Action on Local to Global Scales

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Initiatives to inform, engage and inspire people, especially youth, to understand the causes, effects, risks and range of responses to the impacts of human activities on the climate and environment are not new. Efforts to encourage sustainable practices in society predate the 1987 Brundtland Report, and print and film materials designed to educate about climate impacts of human activities date to the International Geophysical Year in 1958. In 1992 the signatories of the United Nations Convention on Climate Change agreed in principle to inform and engage the public and key professionals to develop adequate responses to global warming, summarized in Article 6 of the Convention. Since then, research has confirmed the importance of education in general and climate literacy in particular in reducing risks and supporting informed environmental and climate decisions, but significant gaps between the aspirational ideals of informed and active global citizens and the reality of continued climate confusion and illiteracy currently undermine these efforts. While some noteworthy successes have been achieved in the quarter century since the Convention, overall efforts to revitalize these goals, including the Doha Work Programme, the Lima Ministerial Declaration, the rebranding of Article 6 as Action for Climate Empowerment (ACE), and the inclusion of education as a key aspect of capacity building in the Paris Accord, climate education, communication and outreach remain largely underfunded and under-appreciated at every scale of society. Here we summarize some of the existing and emerging initiatives to support climate literacy and engagement efforts including the Centre for Environmental Education in India, the US-based CLEAN Climate Literacy and Energy Literacy Network (CLEAN) and Alliance for Climate Education (ACE), the UK Climate Outreach initiative, the Canadian-led SEPNI international climate education research and monitoring partnership, and ECOS, the new UNFCCC community for education, communication and outreach stakeholders. Drawing upon the “collective impact” model, a preliminary theory of change for supporting increased climate literacy and engagement for action at local to global scales will be presented.