



Climate Change and Children in Vietnam: Influencers, Understandings and Perceptions

Florence Halstead and Daniel Parsons

Energy and Environment Institute, University of Hull, Hull, United Kingdom

An essential first step in developing educational outcomes is an appreciation of existing understandings and perceptions of the target audience. It is also important to decipher where these understandings and perceptions stem from, identifying the influencing factors. Whilst all understandings and perceptions are unique to the individual, it is common for societies to share collective cultural beliefs and perceptions, particularly when assessing perceived hazard and risk.

This paper presents preliminary findings from a cohort of school children on the Mekong Delta in Vietnam, one of the most at risk regions globally in terms of exposure to climate change and sea-level rise. The results show that their understandings and perceptions in relation to climate change and flooding are shaped by four main influences: the media, family, lived experiences and formal education. The most obvious of these four to target when strategically implementing climate change education is formal education within schools. However, to be executed correctly, it must consciously take account of the other 3 factors that have influence on children and their views.

This may highlight that a more localised approach to climate change education in schools will be more effective, drawing on local and regional changes as driven by climate change. Climate change will effect each society throughout the world in different ways, and whilst the global impacts of climate change need to be educated to all, societal resilience and overall capacity to adapt and mitigate climate change will need to have a strong local and regional understanding base.

Through developing an understanding on the influences of children's perceptions, shaped by local knowledge and experience, a more effective and holistic approach to children's climate change education can be implemented, which will ultimately enhance societal resilience into the future.