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Exciting times for Climate Change Education – from global opportunities to local challenges

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Science indicates that human impact on the planet's climate is clear. Over the past 30 years, climate change has shifted from being primarily a scientific concern to emerging as one of the defining environmental challenges within our society. However, science alone cannot guide us on how to address this crisis. This challenge is also about how we envision living together, what we collectively value, and the level of risk we are prepared to assume. It fundamentally pertains to the kind of society we aspire to, making education a pivotal component. Inspired by the Paris Agreement, the time has arrived for Climate Change Education. It derives its momentum from the aspirations and mobilization of the youth, making it the most potent transformative action in response to climate change.

Climate Change Education comes with unique and exciting opportunities. Firstly, it offers a chance to learn about science in general and climate science specifically, drawing from authoritative sources like IPCC reports. Secondly, it provides an avenue to acquire life skills, humanities knowledge, and insights into global citizenship, imparting a holistic perspective to the young generation on a global scale. Lastly, it fosters critical thinking, hopeful hearts, and empathy in an ever-evolving educational landscape. However, Climate Change Education presents numerous challenges as it strives to balance the development of cognitive, emotional, and practical aspects within existing educational systems. Educators need to be prepared for this unique combination of 'head', 'heart', and 'hands'.

The mission of the Office for Climate Education (OCE) is precisely to empower educators in preparing young generations with a robust understanding of climate change and the skills needed to act as global citizens in a changing world. The OCE, driven by collaboration between climate science and educational communities, develops sets of pedagogical resources, offers teacher professional development opportunities, and facilitates networks of practice worldwide. As a pivotal participant in the newly established Greening Education Partnership, the OCE serves as a bridge between the global landscape of IPCC-based science and the specific needs of local primary and secondary educational systems in over 20 countries.