

# The Abu Dhabi Roadmap EE and ESD Actions in Response to the Triple Planetary Crisis

## THE ABU DHABI ROADMAP

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# A CALL FOR URGENT ACTION

The Abu Dhabi Roadmap is a call to raise the ambition of EE and ESD with an unmatched urgency by 2030 as the UN SDGs and the Decade of Ecosystem Restoration come to a close.



## PREFACE

Humanity is confronting ‘planetary crises’ rather than ‘global issues’, and the odds are building up like never before! **The Triple Planetary Crisis** of climate change, biodiversity loss, and widespread pollution confronts us all.

With six of the nine Planetary Boundaries breached, “Earth is now well outside of the safe operating space for humanity.”

When the IPCC released its AR6, Climate Change 2021: The Physical Science Basis, UN Secretary-General António Guterres declared it “Code Red for humanity”.

The Stockholm Conference, held half a century ago, declared that “a point in history has been reached when we must shape our actions throughout the world with a more prudent care for their environmental consequences” (UN Conference on the Human Environment, Stockholm 1972).

Better late than never; the course must change for the better. Environmental Education (EE) and Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) lay the groundwork for humanity’s transition to a sustainable planet.

EE and ESD catalyse responses that make the planetary crisis revocable.

# A SOLID FOUNDATION

EE and ESD are built on the strong foundation of our traditional societies, communities, and leaders that believe in a culture of sustainability. The vital function of EE and ESD has been recognised unanimously and collectively through intergovernmental and international deliberations.

The intergovernmental and worldwide conferences on environmental education were held at Tbilisi (1977), Moscow (1987), Thessaloniki (1997) and Ahmedabad (2007).

EE and ESD received attention in a number of global frameworks, including UN Agenda 21, Chapter 36 (1992); the Earth Charter, the UN Decade of ESD, World Environment Education Congresses; the Gothenburg Consultation on ESD, UN SDG 4-Target 4.7, Action for Climate Empowerment (ACE) (Article 6 UNFCCC); ESD for 2030 Framework (2019) and in Article 22 (Communication, Education, and Awareness) of Kunming Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, (2023).

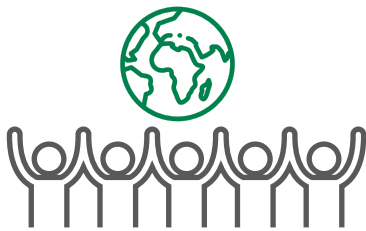
Networks such as Regional Centres of Expertise on ESD (RCE), Global Environment Education Partnership (GEEP), Southern African Development Community Regional Environmental Education Programme, (SADC-REEP) North American Association for Environmental Education (NAAEE), Australian Association for Environmental Education (AAEE), FEE (Foundation for Environment Education), WESSA (the Wildlife and Environment Society of South Africa), SASEANEE, SWEDES and many others build collaboration.

Global efforts in EE and ESD include the Greening Education Partnership (UNESCO), Race to Zero (UNEP), Nature Positive Universities, and Green Jobs for Youth Pact (UNEP/ILO and UNICEF).

Awards like the UN Climate Action Award (youth category), Young Champions of the Earth Awards (UNEP), and the Zayed Sustainability Prize for youth and high schools encourage young people, teachers, and educational institutions to take action.



# RECOMMENDATIONS



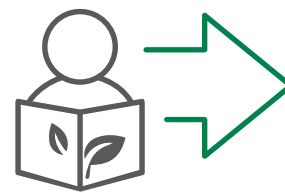
## Ramp up Pace and Scale of EE & ESD

Time is of the essence! To confront the Climate Crisis, world leaders and governments must commit to EE and ESD on a large scale. They must realise that education is critical in mobilising citizens, emphasising the importance of global, national, and subnational commitment through policy, capacity building, and financial support. A strong educational foundation with active public participation is essential for ensuring sustainability.



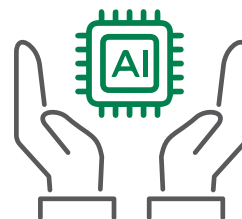
## Recognise that Planetary Crisis is a Nexus Challenge

Drawing attention to the interconnectedness of global resource systems and environmental concerns that intersect and converge necessitates collaboration across different sectors and disciplines. EE and ESD must help communicate nexus challenges, uncover research gaps, drive technical advances, and contribute to better decision-making.



## Sustainability from the Start in Early Childhood Education & Care

Education for sustainability begins at birth. Early childhood presents an unparalleled opportunity to promote sustainability-related attitudes, behaviors, habits and meaning-making. A holistic early childhood pedagogy incorporates social, cultural, and economic dimensions of sustainability and emphasises children's learning through play and active participation in matters that concern them.



## Embrace Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Smart Technologies

Create AI and Smart Technology teacher engagement and student learning experiences and templates through pilot projects in various cultures that can be shared globally via a repository, ensuring that EE and ESD advocates have an AI-enabled workforce to achieve their goals faster, more equitably, and with greater impact.



## Consider Ethics and Values

It is critical that EE and ESD provide opportunities for explaining and supporting the principles that can lead to sustainable societies, as well as cultivating an ethic of care and responsibility for the common good. Incorporating environmental ethics and sustainability ideals into learning processes can enable learners (future leaders) to make judgements and act with awareness of our human-nature relationship and a determination to contribute to the well-being of current and future generations.



## Evaluate EE and ESD for Appropriateness

Guide, promote and strengthen EE and ESD interventions by integrating participatory monitoring, evaluation and reporting processes that draw on qualitative and quantitative data, case studies, surveys and syntheses to iteratively refine pathways to impact and mobilise participants' active engagement in shared, critical reflections. connections, finance, and technology to our work.



## Network and Collaborate

Building and maintaining strong networks energises our environmental education and sustainability activities. Networks that enable cross-pollination can expand possibilities to share and duplicate great approaches, amplify our collective voices, boost visibility for our work, and strengthen social movements. Strong EE networks also increase effect and spark innovative new tactics by bringing together diverse viewpoints, backgrounds, skill sets, and approaches. Networks, by connecting individuals and organisations, act as catalysts for social change, bringing new resources, connections, finance, and technology to our work.



## Dovetail Green Skills and Green Jobs

EE and ESD can lay the ground for youth to positively impact sustainability by connecting green skills to the overarching goal of sustainable development. It can ensure the demand and pace of sustainable development in the real world of careers and livelihoods.



# ACT NOW

The Abu Dhabi Roadmap encourages EE and ESD actors to see climate change, biodiversity loss, and widespread pollution as part of the same complicated challenge. In dealing with crises, it is critical to develop systems thinking and use a nexus-based strategy.



## Tackling the Crisis of Climate Change

Implement the Greening Education Partnership in letter and spirit. In response to the Declaration on the Common Agenda for Education and Climate Change made at COP 28, let education systems act emphatically.

All educators and education systems should prioritise climate change education. In addition to imparting knowledge and science of Climate Change, it is essential to include pedagogies encompassing the emotions of living with Climate Change.



## Tackling the Crisis of Waste and Pollution

To address the waste and pollution crisis, EE and ESD players must combine and expand circularity education and the circular economy to oppose linearity.

To consider themselves as change agents, young people must use interdisciplinary and participatory/hands-on ways to reason, analyse, assess, connect, and construct sustainable lifestyles.



## Tackling the crisis of Biodiversity Loss

EE and ESD actors should respond to the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration (2021–2030) call for protecting and reviving ecosystems worldwide to build a harmonious relationship with nature. This should be done by reaffirming and emphasising outdoor and place-based learning and teaching and learning about nature-based solutions.

# YOUTH RECOMMENDATIONS

The views of youth were sought to ensure representation from youth within this roadmap. The following represent the consensus of opinions.

- Put an emphasis on all-around green education by making sure that all grade levels include a mix of facts, hands-on experience, and action. By giving out the right tools, you can improve basic scientific literacy. Fix the problems that come from being cut off from nature by making reconnecting with it a central focus of schooling.
- Make sure that people and the world have a fair and sustainable future by making sure that education and learning systems give young people the skills they need to use their energy to fight the Triple Planetary Crises of Climate Change, Nature and Biodiversity Loss, and Pollution and Waste.
- Change the way schools work so they fit the way today's students learn, including including science and local knowledge. Look at the ways that education is done and make plans for how to teach that are based on facts.
- Teach young people about national and foreign policies that affect sustainable development issues and get them involved in them. Devise ways to guide and influence them to make smart choices.
- Use hands-on learning to share what you know with different groups. This can help kids behave well and give them a bigger picture of problems with the world and growth.







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