

2020 Regional Technical Expert Meetings on Adaptation

The role of the Education Sector in South Asia: Empowering youth and children for climate change adaptation action



Summary Report
August 2020

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2020 Regional Technical Expert Meetings on Adaptation Technical Examination Process on Adaptation (TEP-A)

Title: The role of the Education Sector in South Asia: Empowering youth and children for climate change adaptation action

Date: August 6, 2020

Time: 2:45 PM – 4:15 PM Kathmandu time (GTM +5:45)

Volunteer expert organizations involved: UNICEF Regional Office for South Asia (ROSA)

About the TEP-A

The technical examination process on adaptation (TEP-A¹) was established at COP 21 as part of the enhanced action prior to 2020 in the decision adopting the Paris Agreement. The technical expert meetings on adaptation (TEM-A²) are the core of this process. The TEP-A is taking place during 2016-2020, seeking to identify concrete opportunities for strengthening resilience, reducing vulnerabilities, and increasing the understanding and implementation of adaptation actions. The topic for the TEP-A in 2020 is "Education and training, public participation and youth to enhance adaptation action". The TEP-A events in 2020 will take place over several months, concluding in October with a wrap-up event. It will include creative ideas for policy briefs and case studies, video messages, virtual talks and workshops, art competitions and more.

Short description of the virtual talk

UNICEF ROSA presented its priorities on climate change linked to education, discussing potential entry points for action in South Asia. The meeting provided a platform for stakeholders in the education system from across the region to discuss current works, challenges and goals. It also enabled every participant, including the audience members, to discuss the entry points presented, as well as to suggest possible ways that climate change can be addressed through education sector through policies, planning, training, curriculum reform and so on. The virtual talk consisted of six speakers from the region of South Asia,

¹ <https://unfccc.int/topics/adaptation-and-resilience/workstreams/technical-examination-process-on-adaptation-tep-a>

² <http://tep-a.org/technical-expert-meetings-on-adaptation/>

including two youth speakers, and nearly 70 participants joined to listen and engage in active discussion.

Agenda

- Opening remarks from Alessandra Sgobbi, Co-Chair of the Adaptation Committee of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)
- Presentation on UNICEF priorities on climate change and linkages between education sector and the UNFCCC
Mr. Reis Lopez Rello, Regional Climate Change Adviser, UNICEF ROSA
- Presentation on UNICEF ROSA's ongoing regional study (outline/scope; methodology; anticipated outcomes)
Ms. Fumiyo Kagawa, Research Director, Sustainability Frontiers
- Ministry of Education's perspectives on Climate Change Adaptation (CCA) and education system entry points
 - *Mr. Ibrahim Asif, Director General, Policy Planning and Research Division, Ministry of Education, Maldives*
 - *Mr. Wangpo Tenzin, Dean, Curriculum Development Centre, Royal Education Council, Bhutan*
- Youth's perspectives on existing CCA learning and action opportunities at school; learning opportunities and support they would like through the education system
 - *Ms. Shreya K.C, Coordinator of Nepalese Youth for Climate Action (NYCA)*
 - *Ms. Heeta Lakhani, Focal Point for the Global South Youth Constituency for UNFCCC (YOUNGO)*
- Facilitated by Mr. Frank van Cappelle, Regional Education Specialist, UNICEF ROSA

Presentation outline

1. *Mr. Reis Lopez Rello, Regional Climate Change Adviser, UNICEF ROSA*

- UNICEF's approach to-date has been focused on school safety (preparedness and safety education) but it is necessary to go beyond the infrastructure's impacts and to achieve a more comprehensive approach and focus on strengthening the education system.
- Promote continuous education and alternative modalities to target the most vulnerable and marginalized children and youth.
- Actions to help children and young people become recognized as agents of change:
 - Provide educational tools for action and platforms to raise concerns and to be part of the solution.
 - Encourage education system and services to integrate the new skills that are

required to shift to a low-carbon economy.

- Include climate change information in social subjects, not only in science-based courses.
- Recognize the continuum: education - skills development - shift to a low-carbon economy.
- Children and young people in South Asia
 - South Asia has the largest population of children and young people in the world (+880 million, age 0-24).
 - New industries are emerging that require new skills, training and education to prepare for the low-carbon economy.
- Education sector in the climate agenda
 - NDCs (Nationally Determined Contributions) of 8 countries in South Asia do not mention children, youth or education. Governments should include the education sector in their pledges.
- UNFCCC financial mechanism / Climate funds
 - Training and capacity development efforts included in most climate projects are targeted to Ministry of Environment staff and main beneficiaries.
 - There is a need to prioritize Ministries of Education (MoE) and young people's skills.
 - Climate pledges by each government to the UNFCCC should better articulate the continuum. These pledges should bridge the link between Ministries of Education, Environment and Youth Affairs.
 - UNFCCC financial mechanism – integrate criteria for funding to cover education sector and skill development aspects.

2. Ms. Fumiyo Kagawa, Research Director, Sustainability Frontiers

Conducting a Regional Study on the Impacts of, and Responses to, Climate Change across Education Systems in South Asia

- Scope of the study
 - Climate change impacts on 4 areas of education systems; education access; learners; education processes/provision (including teachers); and learning facilities and environment.
 - Education system responses to climate change - 7 key components: National policies, plans and strategies; Coordination and partnership; Financing; Curriculum, teaching and learning; Teacher capacity development; Communication and student/community participation mechanisms; Monitoring, evaluation and accountability.

- The study aims to showcase key stakeholder experiences, perceptions and needs concerning climate change education, including children and youth, teachers, and MoE personnel.
- Data collection methods:
 - Desk-based review
 - Stakeholder consultations: National-level stakeholder surveys, school-level focus group discussions
 - U-Report online survey
3. *Mr. Ibrahim Asif, Director General, Policy Planning and Research Division, Ministry of Education, Maldives*
- Since the revamp of the Maldives education curriculum in 2008 (rolled out in 2015), climate change has been part of the primary and lower secondary curriculum; however, it is still limited.
 - Schools are affected by climate change especially during the heavy rainy season.
 - Ministry of Environment (MoE) and other government agencies have climate change-related policies but impacts to education are not necessarily factored in.
 - Curriculum being taught in school but change in behavior not seen yet. Children are not taking major roles to advocate for or be part of the change.
 - Maldives is one of the most vulnerable areas to climate change in South Asia and the environmental education needs to be strengthened.
4. *Mr. Wangpo Tenzin, Dean, Curriculum Development Centre, Royal Education Council, Bhutan*
- There have been school-based club activities and competitions on climate change to engage young people in Bhutan.
 - The environmental education will be part of Bhutan's effort to realize Gross National Happiness, the philosophy of development of the country, which balances material and non-material values.
 - Since 2015, MoE and Royal Education Council have launched the environmental science curriculum for the first time in the country. The curriculum is being taught in school but change in behavior not seen yet.

SI No	Subject	Class	Objectives
1	Environmental Science: Natural resource degradation , Pollution & GHG, Phenology, Climate change hazard, mitigation and adaptation	9 - 12	Information input, engagement, awareness and valuing
2	Science: Natural resource degradation, Pollution & GHG, Climate change Impacts	4 - 8	
3	Social Studies: Pollution & GHG, Climate change Impacts	4 – 6	
4	Geography: Natural resource degradation, Climate change Impacts	7 – 12	
5	Non-Formal Education: Impacts of CC & living, adaptation	Adult	

Photo credit: Royal Education Council of Bhutan.

Photo caption: School curriculum in Bhutan presented during the Virtual Talk

5. *Ms. Shreya K.C, Coordinator of Nepalese Youth for Climate Action (NYCA)*

- Making people aware of climate change should be the first crucial step in taking action. Students are often deprived of knowing more about environment, about the urgency of climate crisis, and how to take action.
- Education is already affected by climate change - rain affects the study and attendance of the students.
- Implement mandatory education about climate change in curriculum to ensure students know about its cause, impact, and what they can do to tackle it.
- When it comes to learning about the climate crisis, students want practical and meaningful education. Students should be encouraged to apply the education in their lifestyle, not just to score higher grades.

6. *Ms. Heeta Lakhani, Focal Point for the Global South Youth Constituency for UNFCCC (YOUNGO)*

- Heeta Lakhani asked the same question in two different schools in Mumbai, where she was running workshops about climate change for 11th graders: *“When I asked how it was for them to miss a school due to heavy rain, the students from the school of upper class area looked happy and said they had a day off and it was fun. When I asked the same questions to the students from the other school in a slum area, they told me their houses were flooded and their family was stuck somewhere. For them, the impact of climate crisis was a lot more real.”*
- It is easier to teach a child about climate change than an adult as they are more accepting of new ideas. Teaching children can be the most effective way to bring about change as they can help influence adults.
- Children and young people need education as a first step, then direction, and capacity building to come up with a solution.

- Education on climate change needs to come with capacity building and training, resources, and clear action-oriented goals.

Available presentations can be accessed at:

<https://unicef.sharepoint.com/teams/SAR-CC/Open%20Library/Forms/AllItems.aspx>

Discussion and Q&A

Q. What areas will the toolkit include? What are the elements included in the toolkit?

Answer by Fumiyo Kagawa: The toolkit will focus on the 7 specific areas of national-level response to climate change mitigation from the study, with specific indicators under each of these areas. Any government will be able to use this toolkit to self-assess their progress to-date and understand the additional factors that they could address to help mitigate the effects of climate change on education.

Q. How can we empower out-of-school children?

Answer by Frank van Cappelle: Make information catchy. If the content is too long, children won't read it, so it is better to make it short. Use social media and deliver messages through short videos, animation, infographics and so on. For universities, make sure it is included in the curriculum and encourage them to join eco-clubs, extracurricular and inter-universities activities.

Q. Do National Adaptation Plans (NAPs) in South Asia mention children and education?

Answer by Reis Lopez Rello: The countries often mention other environmental resource management but not really education. MoEnv's should be encouraged to use the funding that NAPs receive from Green Climate Fund to make connection with MoEs.

Q. Is a Ministry of Climate Change (MoCC) common in South Asia?

Answered by Reis Lopez Rello: Pakistan has Ministry of Climate Change and India has Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change. It's not that common to see MoCC in South Asian countries at the moment, but it is becoming more common to see governments trying to cooperate within one department and ministry for climate change.

Q. How to effectively sensitize the Education Department officials to take Climate Change seriously and integrate it in each and every aspect of schooling - Curriculum, Teaching Learning Materials, Teacher Training materials, and make it integral part of the Teachers Training events?

Answer by Wangpo Tenzin: More information and data can be one of the solutions. The

government officials should listen more to the children and young people and engage with the stakeholders. They can build a platform for this or use one that exists already.

Q. There are needs for joint initiatives to mitigate climate change. How can we improve coordination among countries, especially in South Asia?

Answer by Frank van Cappelle: UNICEF ROSA can play an important role to make a platform where people can share experiences, raise questions, and create something together.

Q. The opinions from the new generation of youth is very different compared to the previous generations. Is this going to have an impact on the public policy?

Answer by Heeta Lakhani. There have been a lot of changes, at least in India. A number of young people are advocating for climate change actions and there have been more demands for change, but we haven't seen it translated into policies yet. Government support is very much needed to be able to create the policy changes.

Closing remarks

Mr. Reis Lopez Rello, Climate Change Adviser, UNICEF ROSA

- Importance of climate change as mandatory in education both in social and natural science as it's a multi-disciplinary subject
- Curriculum reform is a cyclical process that requires stability of budget and buy-in from schools and teachers, the latter requiring training to be able to teach the interconnection of climate change along subjects in the curricula.
- Lessons learned from COVID-19 on how to reach the most vulnerable need to be included in education systems' approaches to reduce the number of out-of-school children in South Asia.
- Education Information Management Systems (EMIS) should include climate change-related indicators to generate an evidence base that can be translated into policies and budget support.
- UNFCCC should have a role to bring closer Ministry of Environment and Education to discuss the role of education in the climate change agenda and to broker within the financial mechanism of the convention ways to channels resources for this emerging work in education systems.

