



**The Stone Soup Leadership Institute is honored to announce its
2023 Progress Report on The State of Climate Education in U.S., Europe & South Asia.**

Why is Climate Education Important? Scientists, universities, nonprofits, NGOs, concerned parents, and youth environmental leaders are working tirelessly to spread an urgent message to act now: see [IPCC Report](#).

Climate Education Affects Us All: Young people hunger for solutions to the climate crisis – and are eager to learn how they can help and pursue green jobs. 80% of teachers and parents support climate education. Surveys show that educators need educational tools and resources to prepare their students. Business leaders of sustainability-oriented companies need help recruiting a trained sustainable workforce.

84% of young people have Climate Anxiety: 10,000 young people (ages 16–25 years) surveyed in 10 countries by *The Lancet, Planetary Health*, over half felt sadness, anxiety, anger, and guilt about climate change that is negatively affecting their daily life. 75% said the future is frightening; 83% think people have failed to take care of the planet.

Progress Report: Climate Education in the U.S.

The U.S. is in the beginning stages of educating young people about climate change and sustainability solutions.

New Jersey and **Connecticut** are the first two states to legislate a mandate requiring schools to teach climate education. Starting in July, every K-12 public school will “require that a climate change curriculum based upon the **Next Generation Science Standards** be taught starting in elementary school.”

Hawaii passed [legislation](#) in 2013 requiring schools to offer courses in sustainability to all public-school students. In 2018, The Institute developed an online portal to provide free sustainability resources (with UNSDG) to educators.

Arizona, California, Connecticut, Minnesota, New Hampshire, New York, Rhode Island, and Washington are pursuing legislation. **The National Center for Science Education** rated 20 states a C+ or lower with Alabama, Georgia, South Carolina, Pennsylvania, Texas, Virginia—receiving an F. [report](#)

Progress Report: Climate Education in Europe and Asia

European and Asian countries are light years ahead of the USA. They took their charge very seriously when the U.N. Framework Convention on Climate Change was developed at the Paris Agreement in 2015. 178 member countries pledged to use the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as a benchmark to focus their initiatives and measure their progress to improve health and education, reduce inequality, and spur economic growth –all while tackling the challenges of climate change and working to preserve and protect our oceans and forests.

It been 8 years since the Paris Agreement – How They Doing?

- **Portugal** has the best track record in Europe with other leaders: Spain, Finland, Greece and South Asia.

CLIMATE EDUCATION LEADERSHIP

PORTUGAL: Climate Education in Portugal

Portugal's Political Constitution includes a provision (Article 66) that ensures the right to a healthy environment and ecologically balanced human lives.¹ The Constitution assigns the State responsibilities related to environmental education and the promotion of values. As a result of these constitutional provisions, Portugal has implemented education initiatives aimed at addressing climate change challenges in these ways:

- The Roadmap for Carbon Neutrality 2050.²
- The National Strategy for Citizenship Education (2017).³
- The Framework of Environmental Education for Sustainability (2018).⁴
- The National Environmental Education Strategy (2020).⁵

SPAIN: Climate Education in Spain

The Ministry for Ecological Transition (MITECO) is **implementing a national climate change curriculum in public primary and secondary schools** (mandated by two laws introduced in 2014). Spain's role as the host of COP25 (the 25th Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change) prompted the creation of additional public climate change education programs. One of those initiatives is the **Action Plan for Environmental Education for Sustainability (PAEAS)**. Its objective is to foster a cultural shift that enables an appropriate response to socio-environmental challenges.⁶ The plan aligns with the commitment of the Spanish government, as stated in the Declaration on the Climate and Environmental Emergency in Spain.⁷

FINLAND: Climate Change Education in Upper Secondary Education

The Finnish education system follows national curricula, allowing pedagogical freedom while emphasizing the importance of climate change education as a continuous theme throughout different levels of education. Teachers are supported by models that facilitate **planning and integration of climate change education into their teaching practices**.⁸ Climate change focuses on building a sustainable future and understanding one's own activities.⁹ In upper secondary education, climate change is integrated into transversal competence themes and covered in biology and geography. The most recent curriculum document expands the multidisciplinary approach of climate change education to include subjects like language studies, natural sciences, philosophy, and ethics.¹⁰

GREECE: Climate and Environmental Education (EE) Policy

- **83% climate change is the greatest challenge faced by humanity in the 21st century.**
- **88% believe that climate change has a direct impact on their daily lives of Greeks (EU average 77%)**
- **95% advocate for educational initiatives and raising awareness with children as a solution.**

¹ [Political Constitution](#)

² [Roadmap for Carbon Neutrality 2050](#)

³ [National Strategy for Citizenship Education](#)

⁴ [Framework of Environmental Education for Sustainability](#)

⁵ [National Environmental Education Strategy](#)

⁶ [Action Plan for Environmental Education for Sustainability](#)

⁷ [Climate and Environmental Emergency in Spain](#)

⁸ Climate Change Education in Finland:

https://www.researchgate.net/publication/359759458_Climate_Change_Education_in_Finland

⁹ Finnish National Agency for Education. National Core Curriculum for Basic Education; Finnish National Agency for Education: Helsinki, Finland, 2014

¹⁰ Finnish National Agency for Education. National Core Curriculum for General Upper Secondary Schools; Finnish National Agency for Education: Helsinki, Finland, 2019

Greece's Ministry of Education created a **Cross-Curricular Programme Framework of Studies** to guide project implementation. In 2010, a curriculum for Environment and Sustainability was developed. However, it is limited in practice¹¹ since EE is not included in the formal K-12 curriculum of the Ministry of Education.

- Teachers can voluntarily incorporate EE into their teaching.
- Schools can join EE networks and communities of practice that provide support to the EE community.
- The Centers of Environmental Education in 52 prefectures offer one- to two-day EE programs for K-12 students. Programs are free for students, with support from municipalities and financial aid from EU funds.

SOUTH ASIA: Climate Education across South Asia

South Asian countries states have policies from 2007 to 2021 concerning formal and informal education, research and development, and public awareness initiatives. A regional U-Report poll by UNICEF, it was found:

- 65% learned about climate change in school.
- 64% reported that they do not understand climate change and are unable to explain it.¹²
- 78% reported that climate change had affected their education, with heat waves and flooding.
- 85% expressed eagerness to take action to address climate change if given the necessary support.

What's Next ?

Given their track record, why are more EU countries not farther along with implementing climate education goals. The Survey identified the main reasons why teachers might not incorporate climate education into their lessons.

- 66% respondents: a lack of expertise or training.
- 51%: a shortage of climate education resources.
- Only 29% felt that climate education is already adequately covered in the school curriculum.
- Surveys in **Canada** and **UK** – 75% of teachers reported insufficient training in climate education.

Survey results of 36 European countries on climate education by Erasmus, School Education Gateway (2020):

- The responsibility of climate education lies with schools.
- 70% respondents stated that the current school curriculum doesn't address climate education.

About the Stone Soup Leadership Institute

The Institute is global non-profit organization founded in 1997. For over 25 years The Institute has been a leader in developing climate education and sustainable workforce development tools, trainings, and initiatives ([Case Studies](#)). The Institute's [Stone Soup Climate Education Curriculum](#) is based on the real-life 100 stories in the book, *Stone Soup for a Sustainable World: Life-Changing Stories of Young Heroes*. Each of the Lesson Plans in the Curriculum features STEAM & Language Arts activities, Sustainability Innovations and Sustainable Career Pathways that are aligned with NGSS (Next Generation State Standards), Massachusetts state standards, and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (UNSDG).

In April 2023 the Institute presented the [Cronkite Awards for Climate Education](#). "They represent a model for future collaboration; with the award we will highlight their leadership and build bridges to push this important agenda forward," said The Institute's founding director, **Marianne Larned**. "The transition to a sustainable economy is the most challenging issue of the 21st century," she said adding, "The next generation deserves the best educational tools to prepare them for their future – to offset the impacts of the climate crisis. It's up to each one of us to respond and to take action with the urgency of NOW."

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¹¹ Global Environmental Education Partnership: <https://thegeep.org/learn/countries/greece>