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Green school quality standard

Greening every learning environment



Greening Education Partnership

Education 2030

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Greening Education Partnership
Getting every learner climate-ready

The Greening Education Partnership is an independent and inclusive community of practice on the role of education in tackling climate change. It is led by national governments, intergovernmental organizations, youth, civil society organizations, and private sector, among others. The Secretariat is hosted by UNESCO's Headquarters in Paris. For more information, please contact gep@unesco.org.

Published in 2024 by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization,
7, place de Fontenoy, 75352 Paris 07 SP, France

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ISBN 978-92-3-100684-5

https://doi.org/10.54675/LOCX2930

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Printed in France

S H O R T S U M M A R Y

Greening schools for climate action and sustainability

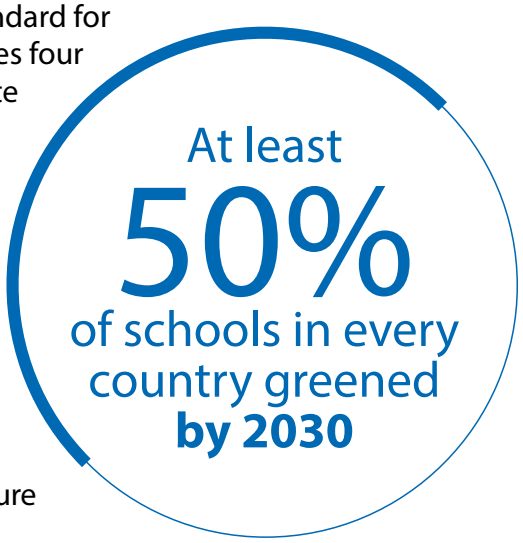
Climate change threatens our planet and future. Schools and other learning institutions are central places for accelerating climate action among learners and local communities.

By empowering teachers and students to understand climate change in their own context contribute to making societies more sustainable and climate resilient.

This publication provides for the first time ever a quality standard for greening schools and other learning environments. It outlines four core areas for integrating sustainability principles and climate action: 1) school governance, 2) facilities and operation, 3) teaching and learning, and 4) community engagement.

Through the Greening Education Partnership, this standard establishes a common language for all stakeholders to jointly reach the global target of greening at least 50% of schools in all countries by 2030.

Policy-makers and ministries in charge of education accreditation schemes, as well as educators, learners and communities are encouraged to use the green school quality standard and join the climate-ready school movement to ensure that every learner is equipped to address climate challenges.



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"Since wars begin in the minds of men and women it is in the minds of men and women that the defences of peace must be constructed"

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Green school quality standard

Greening every learning environment

Foreword

In 2022, UNESCO conducted a global survey with young people, inviting them to share their experiences and aspirations around climate change education at school. The findings were stark. Out of the nearly 17,500 respondents, 70% stated that they couldn't explain climate change, or could only explain its broad principles, or do not know anything about it.

In response to the youth demands, the Greening Education Partnership was launched at the UN Transforming Education Summit in September 2022 with the aim of getting every learner climate-ready through the delivery of strong, coordinated, and comprehensive action around 4 pillars focusing on greening schools, curriculum, teacher training and communities.

One of the clear demands of young people is to strengthen the central role of schools and other learning institutions as spaces for fostering climate action among learners and local community members to mitigate, adapt and be resilient to climate change.

However, to do this, we need to define what a climate-ready green school looks like. Only by setting a common minimum standard of what is needed, can we take coordinated action and monitor progress.

This publication proposes a green school quality standard that provides clear principles and minimum requirements for climate-ready schools. The standard can be implemented in diverse contexts and serve as the basis to monitor progress made globally, with the aim of greening 50% of the world's schools by 2030.

No single entity can achieve this ambitious goal alone, a multistakeholder approach in greening schools is crucial. We need the engagement of all, from policy-makers to school leaders, from students to community members.

UNESCO is pleased to have led the development of this new standard, in close collaboration with the members of the Greening Education Partnership. The publication is part of our efforts to make education the long-term solution to the climate crisis and is complemented by the release of another UNESCO publication focusing on greening curriculum guidance.

Through our global commitment to transforming education, we can ensure that all learning institutions effectively prepare learners to tackle the climate crisis and create solutions needed to build a sustainable future.

Let's work together to get every place of learning climate-ready!



Stefania Giannini
Assistant Director-General for Education, UNESCO

Acknowledgements

The Green school quality standard is the result of the collaborative efforts of countless individuals, institutions and organizations through the Greening Education Partnership, all of whom have played critical roles in establishing this global common understanding to get every learning environment climate-ready.

The publication was developed under the overall guidance of Christopher Castle, Director of the Division for Peace and Sustainable Development, Education Sector, and Jun Morohashi, Chief of Section of Education for Sustainable Development. The publication was coordinated by Won Jung Byun, Sarah Margono Samsudin and Giulia Ceriani. Special thanks to Paul Pace who has been commissioned to develop the manuscript.

The publication is the result of collaboration among the members of the Greening Education Partnership, and special thanks to the co-coordinators of Working Group 1 on Greening Schools - Andrew Cunningham, Aga Khan Foundation; Pramod Kumar Sharma, the Foundation for Environmental Education; Mohamed Abdiweli, World Food Programme - and 450 organizations that have provided direct feedback.

We are especially grateful to those who led the national consultations to pilot the drafts: Egypt Ministry of Education and Technical Education Training, El Salvador Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, Eswatini Ministry of Education and training, Honduras Secretariat of Education, India Ministry of Education, Iraq Ministry of Education, Jordan Ministry of Education and Higher Education and Scientific Research, Lebanon Ministry of Education and Higher Education, Lesotho Ministry of Education and Training, Syrian Arab Republic Ministry of Education, Zimbabwe Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education, India National Council of Educational Research and Training, Syrian Arab Republic National Centre for Curriculum Development, Lebanon National Commission for UNESCO, Jordanian National Commission for UNESCO, Syrian National Commission for UNESCO, Center for Environment Education Ahmedabad, Centre for Educational Research and Development of Lebanon, Poshayi Primary School, Chivakanenyanga Secondary School, Toloane Primary School, Mohale's Hoek High School, Hleoheng High School, Motshane Primary School, Endlozini Primary School, Ngomane High School, Belusile Mhlanga, Caroline Ghostine, Cynthia Dzimiri, Durga Kavya Ramkumar, Elie Mekhael, Ibtisam Aqab Ayoub, Julia Chere Masopha, Kartikeya V. Sarabhai, Linda Kabaira, Lwandle Simelani, Mako Matsela, Nada Gerges, Nadia El Ghazouli, Nawal Akiki, Nokwanda Nhlengetfwa, Nikita Iyer, Plaxcedes Chikunda Ramza Jaber Saad, Rania Saikali, Rola Rajab, Shawqi Abdel Fattah Khalil, Sultan Ahmed Al Khalif, Sweta R. Purohit, Sydney Garvis, Wael Waheed Shatti and Wahfa Abdel Salam Gharib.

We are thankful to Abhinav Kumar, Joyce Poan, Charles Chikunda, Romina Kasman, Carlos Rodríguez, Matías Retamales, Selvin Avelar, Dakmara Georgescu, Fadi Yarak, Maysoun Chehab, Assem Abi Ali and Mary Anne Therese Manuson who coordinated the country consultations, and Bernard Combes, Alison Kennedy, Mark Manns and Karen Castillo for important editorial support.

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1. Introduction

Background

Climate change, ecological degradation and biodiversity loss are threatening the quality of life, planetary services and the stability of learning institutions. Global society requires immediate action on several fronts to adapt and mitigate climate impacts on people and the planet. This publication is rooted in the longstanding work of ESD and the Global Framework of ESD for 2030 which recognizes the major role of ESD as a key element of quality education and the new social contract for education. Its cross-cutting competencies in cognitive, social, emotional and behavioural dimensions of learning bear relevance to all areas of education. Its particular emphasis on competencies related to empathy, solidarity and action-taking can, in particular, help advance Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) Target 4.7, which aims to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all, in building a future where education contributes not only to the successes of individuals, but also to the collective survival and prosperity of the global community.

The emphasis on the education response to address climate change as an entry point to ESD stems from the growing complexity of the climate crisis, its impact across all aspects of our societies, the lack of urgency with which climate change is being addressed in education and inadequate educational provision. All this has led young people to call for quality education related to climate change to help them face the present and future challenges of this pressing global issue.

This approach would empower learners of all ages with the knowledge, skills, values and agency to make informed decisions and take responsible actions to adapt and mitigate the impacts of the climate crisis by acting as agents of change.

Schools play a crucial role in preventing and addressing climate change and promoting sustainable development. They equip society as a whole, and the younger generation in particular, with the necessary knowledge, skills, attitudes, values and competences to promote sustainable development and engage in serious climate action. However, about 70 % of the youth surveyed in a recent study said they had limited understanding about climate change based on what they had learned in school. In the absence of clear and relevant solutions from the top, young people themselves are taking transformative, contextually relevant, participatory and emancipatory actions to promote sustainability and address concerns about the relative lack of climate action. They are spearheading this transformative movement, sometimes in unconventional ways, to jump-start society into taking concrete sustainable actions – particularly serious climate action. They want to be active co-creators of their education programmes and are calling for climate change to be integrally embedded within education systems.

UNESCO's research on how climate change is integrated in the national curriculum frameworks of 100 countries revealed several challenges that need to be addressed. Almost 47% of the curricula examined did not feature climate change. While climate change education was prevalent in the primary and secondary sectors, its occurrence in technical and vocational education (TVET) institutions, higher education and teacher training programmes was limited. Notably, frameworks supporting climate change education were present in TVET and higher education institutions of 70% of countries reviewed, while climate change education could only be traced in teacher training programmes of 55% of countries. The inclusion of climate change content was more common in countries most impacted by climate change rather than in countries that are major contributors to the problem. Although teachers acknowledged the importance of teaching about climate change, many of them said that they lacked the confidence to do so, especially when attempting to deal with relevant climate change impacts and local contexts. Indeed, only about half of teachers reported receiving formal training on climate change and sustainable lifestyles, and less than half reported having a school action plan on climate.

This implies collaborative efforts among governments, education policy-makers, academics, educators and teacher trainers to establish Green Schools that prepare all learners to become climate-ready by fostering sustainability and encouraging them to engage in adapting and mitigating the impacts of climate change.

This is where **school accreditation schemes** become crucial tools in this endeavour. **Accreditation schemes encompass school certification and labels conferred by governments or organizations, awards recognizing schools for exemplary practices in ESD and climate change, as well as school-based initiatives and projects demonstrating a commitment.** Accreditation schemes provide measurable frameworks for evaluating a school's commitment towards sustainable practices. They foster commitment, accountability and transparency, by incentivising schools to provide evidence of their ongoing efforts to meet a set of guidelines and standardized quality criteria. They are either run by a government agency or by civil society, mostly Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), in the context of one specific country or in a broader regional or international network.

A desk review of a sample of ESD-related school accreditation schemes and organizations that promote sustainable practices in educational institutions from various world regions was carried out in preparation for this publication. The review revealed common as well as diverse approaches and themes adopted by the different schemes to promote sustainability practices within educational institutions. These school accreditation schemes provide a diverse range of education support activities to facilitate schools' sustainability efforts. The most commonly featured support activities are teacher training, action-based learning, curriculum development and community engagement. Accreditation schemes tend to address global challenges by fostering global collaboration with formal education institutions from across different countries to promote sustainability and climate-readiness. While the thematic emphasis addressed by these schemes varied, ranging from water, energy to biodiversity and social and cultural themes, there's a need for a comprehensive framework that underscores a set of basic and holistic criteria to define what a climate-ready Green School looks like. Over the years, a considerable number of research papers, studies and books have been published exploring the various nuances of the concept while proposing guidelines and models for Green Schools. However, there still seems to be a significant mismatch between the energy and resources invested in defining how it needs to be done and what has materialised in practice. With hindsight, questions need to be posed as to whether we are adopting the right approach and share the same understanding of the matter. Considering how long it is taking to register significant progress we may need to switch emphasis (at least temporarily) from research-informed practice to practice-informed research, with a specific focus on climate change. Therefore, this document focuses on and learns from good practices in different contexts to propose a methodology and activities that can be tailored to the individual realities of each school rather than assuming a homogeneous approach. In this way, it aims to avoid being prescriptive and focus instead on being adaptive and open to change and diversity.

1.1. What is a Green School?

The term 'Green School' as used in this publication is defined as a learning institution that takes a WIA to ESD, with a particular emphasis on climate change as a thematic entry point to reflect on how schools become climate-ready, both in terms of being safe and resilient places of learning as well as innovative hubs where learners and local communities can be equipped with the knowledge, skills, values and attitudes needed to address the impacts of climate change through the adoption of sustainable practices. They serve as agents of social change, fostering global citizenship, encouraging community action and incorporating ESD into the curriculum to create a sustainable culture. The term 'school' refers to all types of learning institutions including both formal and non-formal learning environments. Compliance with the guidelines contained in this Standard would enable accreditation schemes to be instrumental in advancing climate-readiness and sustainability in a variety of educational contexts, from early childhood to adulthood, including formal institutions, non-formal learning environments and TVET programmes.

a) The principles of a Green School

The successful implementation of Green Schools is strongly dependent on a clear understanding of the principles and inherent implications that define the concept. A clear vision and unwavering principles drive transformative change beyond just good intentions and abundant resources.

A Green School …

…ensures a holistic education

The point of departure in holistic education discourse is the learner. Such education structures teaching and learning experiences around the intellectual, emotional, social, physical and spiritual development of the whole person. It goes beyond academic knowledge and, because it acknowledges diverse forms of intelligence (multiple intelligences), seeks to cultivate critical thinking, creativity, self-awareness, empathy, ethical values, and interconnectedness with others and the natural world. Holistic education incorporates personalized learning, experiential learning, interdisciplinary approaches, mindfulness practices, social and emotional learning, community engagement and reflective practices, all of which contribute to learners' understanding of climate change and their capacity to take informed action. These qualities represent a significant shift away from many traditional educational models. UNESCO has consistently recognized the transformative nature of ESD since its inception in 1977 (formerly referred to as environmental education), emphasizing its pivotal role in revitalizing the educational process).

Climate change has long been one of the thematic areas of ESD and the term 'climate change education' has often been associated with understanding of climate change and its implications in the context of subjects such as natural sciences or geography. However, with the ever-increasing critical mass of concerned global citizens who feel committed to promoting societal transformation, the urgent need to develop a more holistic approach to education related to climate change has grown significantly. Schools need to respond to the active demands of young people and prepare learners to become well-informed global citizens committed to creating a more sustainable future, including by taking concrete steps to mitigate and adapt to climate change.

… prioritizes sustainability practices to tackle climate change

As clearly outlined by the SDGs, promoting sustainability involves taking conscious decisions and adopting practices to ensure long-term well-being and harmonious interactions between people and the planet. In most cases, this means reorientating values, norms and behaviours to support a societal transition that replaces unsustainable economic models, consumption patterns, interactions with nature, social networks and community interactions, with increased people and planet-friendly practices. Prioritizing sustainability implies recognizing the interdependence and interconnectedness of environmental, social and economic concerns, and consequently recognizing that decisions made in one area can have impacts on others. Within the context of Green Schools, prioritizing sustainability translates into integrating the principles of sustainability, enhancing climate change awareness and action, instilling climate action into curricula, the design of indoor and outdoor grounds, inclusive school governance, and enhancing school relations with learners, staff and the surrounding community. It encourages a long-term perspective, participatory decision-making and collaboration between various actors to achieve a sustainable and resilient future and supports learners in developing systemic thinking about the interconnectedness of the current global challenges, recognizing how tackling climate change is linked with all the other SDGs.

… promotes a sense of responsibility

One major value that stands out when promoting sustainability is a sense of responsibility which encourages proactive measures to address environmental, social and economic challenges. It is rooted in the understanding that humanity is interconnected with the natural world and has a duty to act as responsible citizens entrusted with the management and care of resources to ensure the well-being of current and future generations. By embracing a sense of responsibility, a Green School commits itself to sustainable practices that conserve resources and protect ecosystems, recognizing the importance of mitigating climate change impacts. In this way, issues about school governance concerning daily practices, such as sustainable land and resource management, energy and water conservation efforts, responsible consumption, ethical business practices and participatory approaches to decision-making involving all relevant stakeholders, become habitual routine practices supported by policies.

b) The whole-institution approach to greening schools

The WIA illustrated in the ESD for 2030 Roadmap hinges on the belief that institutions should walk the talk and lead by example, thus reflecting their values by providing learners with opportunities to learn from lived experiences and apply that knowledge to their daily lives. Deciding to adopt a WIA is an acknowledgement that the entire school community (i.e. learners, teachers, administrators, support staff, parents and the wider community) plays a crucial role in promoting the well-being and holistic development of learners, including their understanding of the complex social, economic and environmental challenges related to climate change.

Although various common aspects characterize every WIA, each WIA process is specific to the school adopting it because of (i) different socio-economic realities and contexts; (ii) resources available; (iii) support of the Head of School and readiness of the school staff and learners to engage in the process; (iv) support provided by parents and other stakeholders; and (v) whether the education authorities approve of the initiative.

In the context of education and organizational management, a WIA is closely related to the concept of systems thinking as they both emphasize the interconnectedness and interdependencies of the various components and stakeholders within a system, aiming for comprehensive and holistic approaches to problem-solving and decision-making. By understanding the relationships and interactions among the different components of a system, stakeholders can:

- recognize the complexity and interrelation of various internal and external elements within a school system – in particular, issues relating to complex social, economic and environmental challenges;
- engage in collaboration and cooperation between different sectors, breaking down barriers that might hinder cross-disciplinary efforts. This collaboration acknowledges the strengths of different disciplines, identifies cross-curricular connections between them and leads to a more comprehensive and interconnected curriculum. This shared vision of the curriculum results in a better distribution of resources and enhances teachers' abilities to develop a broader understanding of pedagogical approaches, instructional strategies and assessment methods that support a WIA;
- develop a systems thinking mindset enabling them to consider the broader context and systemic implications of their decisions and actions;
- identify leverage points where changes can have the greatest positive impact and address the root causes of challenges, rather than merely treating the symptoms; and
- develop mechanisms for receiving feedback and foster a culture of continuous improvement, action and innovation, leading to more effective and sustainable educational practices that may challenge traditional settings and norms in education, constituting an opportunity growth and gradual improvement.

The key elements of a WIA to developing a school environment in which learners feel safe, cared for, valued as a person, supported and motivated to learn are:

- implementing climate-proof, sustainable building designs and technologies, and incorporating green infrastructure within the school grounds;
- designing a formal curriculum and non-formal learning opportunities that provide various teaching strategies that cater for diverse learning needs thus ensuring the learner's holistic development, and offering ongoing professional development opportunities for staff to enhance their knowledge and skills to help them face the challenge of providing effective instructional practices;
- facilitating learner involvement in decision-making and participation in opportunities that promote active engagement within the school community and beyond by encouraging learners to become autonomous and critical thinkers. In this context, learners and teachers can actively contribute to shaping teaching and learning experiences and learners are encouraged to engage stakeholders in policy and practice to ensure participatory and inclusive decision-making processes that incorporate diverse perspectives and promote social equity and;
- considering families and community organizations as valid partners in education and establishing strong collaborative partnerships to enhance the educational potential of the school by building a shared understanding and a sense of ownership of the approach among all stakeholders.

1.2. What is the Green school quality standard?

The Green school quality standard is a comprehensive framework designed to help harmonize the criteria of school accreditation schemes, ranging from school certification and labels, awards, school-based initiatives to projects demonstrating a commitment, through the lens of a WIA to ESD, which integrate sustainability principles and climate action into the day-to-day running and decision-making of the school, the teaching and learning taking place in and out of the classrooms, and the school's interactions with the community.

The ultimate aim of this standard is to provide a holistic educational journey that ensures continuity and coherence across educational stages – from the early years through to higher education – enabling individuals to thrive in a sustainable and interconnected world. While early years education lays the foundation by introducing sustainability concepts and practices at an early age, higher education ensures that sustainability principles are integrated into advanced learning environments and professional contexts. This needs to be framed within the context of lifelong and life-wide education. Lifelong education recognizes that learning extends beyond formal schooling and continues throughout one's life. By instilling sustainability values and practices early on and reinforcing them through higher education, individuals are more likely to adopt sustainability and climate-friendly behaviours throughout their lives. Additionally, life-wide education acknowledges that learning occurs in various contexts beyond the classroom, such as at home, in communities and in workplaces.

The Standard offers a structured approach that makes the holistic transformation towards a climate-ready school easier and provides educational institutions with the tools they need to deal with daily challenges. It aims to:

- identify specific Green School criteria that cover various aspects of educational practices and sustainability that encourage educational institutions to adopt sustainable and innovative practices to reduce their ecological footprint, promote resource conservation, and enhance environmental awareness and a sense of shared responsibility among the school community;
- offer a standard framework for assessing and accrediting Green Schools across different socio-economic, regional and cultural contexts, helping them meet sustainability goals, while promoting equity and fostering inclusive access to ESD, effectively reducing disparities in educational opportunities and outcomes;
- establish mechanisms to foster a culture of continuous improvement, with opportunities for accredited schools to evolve and enhance their sustainability efforts and;
- advocate for the active contribution of Green Schools to the attainment of the SDGs, thereby supporting global efforts to address climate change, biodiversity conservation and other challenges.

Goal: With its call to make every learner climate-ready, the Greening Education Partnership brings together various partners including Member States, intergovernmental organizations and CSOs as well as entities running the accreditation schemes, with **the goal of transforming at least 50% of schools, colleges and universities into Green Schools by 2030**.

Dimension	Qualitative outcome
School governance	Schools have a comprehensive Green School vision and policy that engages the school community through inclusive decision-making and active engagement to combat climate change, optimize resource management, enhance resilience and foster sustainable practices.
Facilities and operation	Schools have reduced risk through climate-proofing and improving emergency preparedness, as well as actively fostering sustainable practices in school (including energy and water use, waste management and procurement), especially by engaging learners in monitoring the school's progress. This promotes responsibility, climate resilience, health and well-being while inspiring sustainable choices within the school community.
Teaching and learning	Schools have incorporated ESD and climate change education in the curriculum demonstrating commitment to holistic learner development and equipping learners with skills to engage with their communities. *(For more in-depth guidance follow the Greening Curriculum Guidance)*
Community engagement	Schools raise community-wide awareness on climate change and preparedness, by empowering learners and engaging diverse stakeholders, through organized campaigns, promoting shared responsibility and sustainable practices to foster a culture of resilience and sustainability.

The target audience for this Standard are the organizers of the accreditation systems, who are essential facilitators of sustainable practices in educational environments.

Accreditation scheme organizers range from international associations, governments to non-profit/CSOs that provide official recognition and/or certification to schools based on their actions on ESD, in particular climate change education. These scheme organizers promote ESD and climate-readiness in schools, provide support to achieve those goals, and, in some measure, certify a school by benchmarking and tracking progress.[1]

In addition, the Standard informs accreditation scheme implementers such as education authorities at different levels, CSOs, schools, universities and community learning centres as well as policy-makers at large in developing education and climate change policies for school.

Benchmark: To achieve the minimum threshold for alignment with the Standard, accreditation schemes need to integrate at least one-third of the suggested activities for each of the four key dimensions of a Green School, with one essential action identified within each dimension.

Progressive advancement is encouraged over time to implement larger proportions of the suggested activities to be integrated in due course as an on-going commitment to the school's sustainable practices.

1 For further information, please visit: https://www.unesco.org/en/education-sustainable-development/greening-future/schools

Table summarizing steps: (more detailed explanation in section 3)

Accreditation scheme organizers	Governments	Schools
▶ Review your programme's criteria. ▶ Meet the minimum threshold of alignment. ▶ Support schools to become climate-ready and contribute to achieving the global target of 50% of schools becoming green climate-ready schools by 2030.	▶ Refer to the list of accreditation schemes aligned with the Standard. ▶ Collaborate with aligned accreditation schemes or develop a government-led scheme aligned with the Standard. ▶ Support the national transition of schools to become green climate-ready schools and contribute to achieving the global target of 50% of schools becoming green climate-ready schools by 2030.	▶ Refer to the list of accreditation schemes aligned with the Standard. ▶ Consider joining an accreditation scheme aligned with the Standard. ▶ Follow a WIA in your journey to becoming a green climate-ready school.

2. Four core dimensions of the Green school quality standard

With their potential for shaping the attitudes and actions of future generations, Green Schools can be at the heart of societal transformation by instilling a culture of sustainability. By integrating climate change and ESD into the curriculum, Green Schools empower learners to become active citizens committed towards promoting sustainable lifestyles and climate action. Green schools nurture a sense of global citizenship that encourages learners to become advocates for environmental causes and promote activism within their communities. The influence of Green Schools goes beyond the school walls. Green schools view the community as their partner in spreading the message of environmental sense of responsibility. Leading by example, Green Schools inspire other entities to adopt sustainability and climate-friendly practices in the way they are designed and operated.

To achieve this goal, this Standard provides a comprehensive approach to Green School development, organized around four core dimensions:

School governance: In Green Schools, governance bodies drive sustainability by establishing policies and allocating resources ensuring participatory decision-making, fostering engagement from diverse stakeholders including learners and educators and community actors, and laying the foundation for long-term commitment to sustainability.

Facilities and operation: Green Schools implement sustainable practices in areas such as energy, water use, waste management, canteen and building and school yard design thus reducing greenhouse gas emissions and environmental impact, ensuring the health and well-being of learners and staff, fostering a culture of responsibility and inspiring the surrounding community.

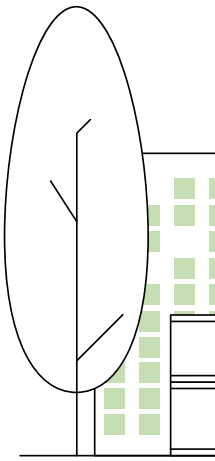
Teaching and learning: At the core of Green Schools, teaching and learning integrate ESD into the curriculum, enabling learners to develop systems and critical thinking, problem-solving skills and a sense of global citizenship, empowering them to address complex climate and sustainability challenges effectively.

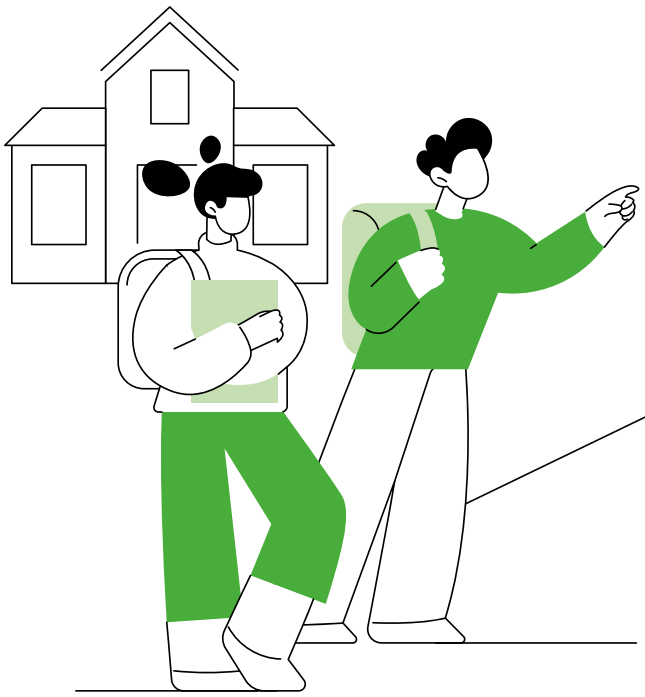
Community engagement: Green Schools collaborate with diverse community members to amplify sustainability efforts thus extending learning opportunities, resources, and community involvement, transforming Green Schools into hubs of resilience and climate action for mitigation and adaptation that inspire and engage the broader community.

Recognizing the inherent connection between safety, resilience and sustainability in educational settings, the Green school quality standard has been aligned with the Comprehensive School Safety Framework (CSSF). The School governance component is connected with the Enabling systems and policies component of CSSF to emphasize the establishment of the necessary systems, policies and leadership structures to support safety, resilience and sustainability initiatives within the school. The Facilities and operations component includes concerns for safer learning facilities as well as school safety and educational continuity management of the CSSF to integrate safety and sustainability principles into the design and operation of school facilities. The Teaching and learning component along with the Community engagement component addresses the Risk Reduction and Resilience Education component of the CSSF in incorporating climate change education, disaster risk reduction and teachings for resilience and active climate and sustainability actions into the curriculum while engaging with local communities through a whole-of-society approach. By bridging these frameworks, the Standard extends beyond physical safety to cultivate environments that not only protect but also nurture learners, fostering a culture of resilience and sustainability that prepares them to actively seek innovative solutions to the climate crisis and sustainability challenges.

A climate-ready green learning environment should…

SCHOOL GOVERNANCE	TEACHING AND LEARNING
…entrust the Green Committee to develop a Green School vision and policy and cover 1/3 of suggested activities on ▶ Cultivating sustainable practices ▶ Ensuring daily sustainable practices ▶ Resilience and climate proof governance ▶ Establishing a green community	**…develop lesson plans on ESD and climate change education and cover 1/3 of suggested activities on** ▶ Integrating ESD with an emphasis on climate change in teaching and learning ▶ Fostering meaningful connections beyond the school ▶ Hands-on projects and initiatives ▶ Leadership and capacity building
FACILITIES AND OPERATION	**COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**
…set up a monitoring team and cover 1/3 of suggested activities on ▶ Climate education, awareness and training ▶ Developing a climate-friendly infrastructure ▶ Ensuring climate resilience and disaster preparedness ▶ Promoting school safety and educational continuity management ▶ Promoting green procurement and ethical purchasing	**…organize awareness campaigns for the school and the surrounding community and cover 1/3 of suggested activities on** ▶ Building climate resilience in the community ▶ School's contribution to community resilience to climate change ▶ Local community support for education responses to climate change ▶ General community-based climate awareness





Schools have an inclusive governance that engages the entire school community through participatory decision-making and active engagement to combat climate change, enhance resilience and foster sustainable practices.



BY 2030

At least 50% of schools in each country greened

Schools have incorporated ESD and climate action in the curriculum demonstrating commitment to holistic learner development and equipping learners with skills to tackle real-world sustainability challenges within their communities.

Schools raise community-wide awareness on climate change and preparedness, by empowering learners to meaningfully engage with diverse stakeholders within the local community, promoting shared responsibility and sustainable practices to foster a culture of resilience and sustainability.

Schools have reduced risk through climate-proof facilities and operation, emergency preparedness upskilling, and cultivating sustainable practices by actively engaging learners in monitoring the school's progress on becoming a green climate-ready school.

Under each of the four dimensions of the Standard, concrete steps are offered and arranged according to the resources needed enabling educational institutions to customize their strategy to fit their capacities and contexts. Within each dimension, schools must achieve at least one-third of the suggested activities and one essential action which is deemed as pivotal for being a Green School. Other than these essential actions, there is no prescribed sequence nor timeline, granting schools creativity and flexibility to adopt and implement any actions – as well as identify other (not listed) relevant actions – that fit with their priorities, needs, locally available resources and opportunities, and those of the surrounding community.

The list of actions could have been categorised in various ways, but this Standard proposes to categorise them based on the resources required for their implementation – with those requiring the least resources potentially being the first steps in the journey. It is important to highlight that resource requirements may vary depending on the school's size, the existing infrastructure, the expertise available at school and the outside community, the level of coordination required and the level of commitment from stakeholders. The diverse array of actions is designed to offer a choice of achievable undertakings that could be interpreted and adapted to each school's context, such as different age groups, urban/rural settings, institution size and economic differences. The list is not intended as a checklist but as a collection of suggested actions or a source of inspiration encouraging synergies between top-down and bottom-up approaches, where the top enables and recognizes the needs of the grassroots which are at the frontline. It is important for school leadership to ensure enabling conditions, such as a culture of open dialogue, collaboration and celebration, so that the entire school engages in meaningful actions.

Accreditation schemes will define overarching principles which serve as benchmarks against which a school's commitment will be assessed based on the actions it implements. Since schools are free to pick and choose actions from the lists provided based on their unique priorities, challenges and opportunities, accreditation schemes need to acknowledge that, although the commitment to climate action and sustainability may be the same, one school's Green School journey will not be the same as another's.

Accreditation schemes should emphasize that school-based actions should not solely aim at obtaining accreditation, but rather focus on the process it entails. Accreditation is not an endpoint but a journey, with achieving the Standard marking the beginning. Accreditation schemes should guide candidate schools beyond initial accreditation, presenting ongoing challenges to ensure sustained commitment to quality. Monitoring and evaluation are crucial for recognizing progress and supporting schools in effective implementation.

2.1. School governance

School governance plays a crucial role in the transformation into a Green School. School governance bodies that are strongly committed to sustainability are the driving force behind all the efforts to develop a Green School. By prioritizing sustainability and integrating green practices into policies, school governance bodies establish a robust framework for a long-term commitment to a Green School that is climate sensitive and implements effective climate actions. Committed school governance develops policies that promote sustainability, ensures their smooth implementation, monitors their progress, and actively plans for their improvement. School governance bodies that promote sustainability invest in the school's infrastructure and allocate funds and resources enabling the efficient and effective implementation of Green School policies. By establishing participatory decision-making processes involving a diversity of stakeholders, irrespective of age, gender, ability, ethnic group, belief and socio-economic status, school governance bodies ensure a wide representation of perspectives. This fosters more engagement in sustainable practices and commitment towards a culture of responsibility from all individuals.

Additionally, by emphasizing ESD learning outcomes, school governance contributes to building resilience in learners, aligning educational goals with sustainability, energy efficiency and environmental responsibility. When school governance bodies champion sustainability, they seamlessly integrate climate change and sustainability initiatives into all aspects of school life and set an inspiring example for the broader school community. Their positive response to sustainability practices encourages the school community to actively participate in the development of a Green School.

Action related to …						
	Action	**Level of resources needed**	**Policy development**	**Stakeholder engagement**	**Integrating into the curriculum**	**Advocacy & partnerships**
CULTIVATING SUSTAINABLE PRACTICES						
Essential action	**Entrust the Green Committee** (see below) **to develop a Green School vision and policy** with clear goals, strategies and targets that outline the whole school's commitment to addressing climate change and other aspects of sustainability. This would include management of energy and water resources, waste management, green procurement, green buildings, integrating climate action for mitigation and adaptation and community engagement as well as strategies for emergency preparedness that enhance resilience to climate-related disasters.	Low to Moderate	✓			

Action related to …					
Action	**Level of resources needed**	**Policy development**	**Stakeholder engagement**	**Integrating into the curriculum**	**Advocacy & partnerships**
Promote a low resource consumption culture (conducive to the principles of a circular economy) by organizing workshops to engage students and the community to share, barter, reuse, fix and repurpose items, reducing the need for new resources.	Low	✓			
Use locally sourced and affordable materials for construction and maintenance, employing techniques that match the community's available resources and skills. Establishing partnerships with relevant local authorities/ local employers can facilitate this process.	Low	✓			
Invite resource persons from external organizations, both in person and virtually, as guest speakers who bring to the classroom local and global case studies about climate change and other aspects of sustainability.	Moderate			✓	
Introduce workshops that teach practical skills in sustainable economic practices that are relevant to the local economy, fostering entrepreneurship and providing alternative paths for learners who may not continue formal education. This will directly engage youth in learning employable skills and empower them to play active decision-making roles within their communities on issues concerning sustainability.	Moderate	✓	✓		
Implement an energy conservation policy that reduces energy consumption within the school by adopting energy-saving practices and technologies, contributing to climate change mitigation efforts. Establishing partnerships with relevant local authorities/local employers can facilitate this process.	Moderate to High	✓			

Action related to …					
Action	**Level of resources needed**	**Policy development**	**Stakeholder engagement**	**Integrating into the curriculum**	**Advocacy & partnerships**
Establish a commitment to professional learning about ESD practice among school leaders. This would entail cultivating a whole school approach by creating a coherent ESD vision that supports professional development and curriculum planning to guarantee ESD for all learners, and increases understanding of local, national and international ESD policies.	Moderate to High	✓	✓	✓	
Provide professional development opportunities for teachers to improve their understanding of climate change and other aspects of sustainability and teaching methodologies, and assist them in the integration of climate change across the curriculum.	Moderate to High			✓	
Organize cross-curricular projects that allow learners to apply knowledge and skills from multiple subjects to address climate change and other aspects of sustainability.	Moderate to High			✓	
ENSURING DAILY SUSTAINABLE PRACTICES					
Establish a Green Committee from various representatives of the school community (i.e. learners, staff, parents and community members) other learning centres and governing bodies. This committee will be responsible for developing, implementing and monitoring climate action and other green initiatives, including emergency preparedness measures within the school and in the wider community aiming to achieve the representation of youth, people with disabilities, indigenous peoples and other minority groups while promoting gender balance through girls/women representation, and inclusivity.	Low to Moderate	✓	✓		✓

Action related to …					
Action	**Level of resources needed**	**Policy development**	**Stakeholder engagement**	**Integrating into the curriculum**	**Advocacy & partnerships**
Appointing a staff member to serve as the school's coordinator to ensure that the school's commitments towards climate action and sustainability are maintained. Such a role should be allotted time to coordinate sustainability issues and access to training opportunities. To ensure a seamless continuity of operations, it is crucial to establish a long-term commitment to the position.	Low to Moderate	✓	✓		
Create sustainable learning environments within the school to promote sustainable practices and serve as a learning resource, providing youth with hands-on experiences and understanding of climate action and other sustainable behaviours enabling them to participate in decision-making forums, and offering them opportunities to implement their ideas.	Moderate to High			✓	
RESILIENCE AND CLIMATE PROOF GOVERNANCE					
Begin school events with acknowledgment of the land, recognizing the traditional custodians of the land and promoting a respectful connection to the environment.	Low	✓	✓	✓	✓
Consult the most up-to-date data and information about climate risks that are provided by local or international research centres to inform school policy and practice as well as training opportunities for the school community. Furthermore, acknowledge the importance of local, indigenous and native populations' knowledge and incorporate their insights into specific actions and decision-making processes.	Low	✓	✓		✓
Set up an emergency response team made up of learners and staff who are trained to respond to and assist during climate-related disasters or other emergencies. The training should include regular drills to ensure everyone knows how to react in the event of an emergency.	Low to Moderate	✓	✓		✓

Action related to …					
Action	**Level of resources needed**	**Policy development**	**Stakeholder engagement**	**Integrating into the curriculum**	**Advocacy & partnerships**
Prepare for potential disasters by creating and maintaining emergency supply kits and implementing evacuation plans that are known to all members of the school community. Connect with the local disaster risk management structures.	Moderate	✓			
Adopt a disaster-risk reduction management plan that is already available. The plan should cover prevention and mitigation, preparedness, response recovery and rehabilitation components and identify vulnerable communities and their unique needs. If such plans do not exist in your community/country, develop such a plan based on international norms.	Moderate to High	✓	✓		
ESTABLISHING A GREEN COMMUNITY					
Provide platforms and support for learner-led initiatives and campaigns that promote climate change adaptation and mitigation efforts and other sustainability actions offering youths, in particular, opportunities to initiate and lead their own sustainability campaigns encouraging active participation in their communities.	Low to Moderate		✓		
Engage with the wider community (i.e. community members, local and international CSOs, government agencies, inter-governmental organizations and businesses) to develop partnerships and networks that promote and support Green School initiatives, gain access to expertise and resources from outside the school and facilitate community-based projects about climate change and other aspects of sustainability. This approach encourages consultation, feedback and adaptation based on community input.	Low to Moderate	✓	✓	✓	✓

Action related to …					
Action	**Level of resources needed**	**Policy development**	**Stakeholder engagement**	**Integrating into the curriculum**	**Advocacy & partnerships**
Develop effective communication networks that regularly inform, update and consult stakeholders, through social media and online platforms, about the school's achievements and challenges related to its initiatives about climate change and other aspects of sustainability.	Low to Moderate		✓		✓
Conduct surveys and interviews to gather feedback from stakeholders about the priorities, concerns and suggestions regarding climate change and other aspects of sustainability thus ensuring their perspectives are considered in decision-making processes and share the results with the informants for continued improvement.	Low to Moderate		✓		
Organize workshops and meetings for stakeholders where they can discuss, suggest ideas, share experiences, and actively contribute to the school's agenda about climate change and other aspects of sustainability.	Moderate		✓		
Host community-based events, such as fairs, festivals, presentations, seminars, workshops, courses, to raise public awareness about the importance of addressing climate change and showcase the school's green initiatives. These events can encourage community engagement and possibly build a network of support for emergencies.	Moderate		✓		✓
Facilitate intergenerational dialogues by inviting community elders to participate in school activities, workshops, or climate action-focused events providing opportunities for youth to learn from their wisdom and experience while also fostering intergenerational collaboration in decision-making forums.	Moderate		✓	✓	✓

Action related to …					
Action	**Level of resources needed**	**Policy development**	**Stakeholder engagement**	**Integrating into the curriculum**	**Advocacy & partnerships**
Develop an advocacy plan to raise awareness about climate action and other aspects of sustainability within the school community and beyond, empowering learners, staff, parents and community members to become advocates for these issues. The plan should include a focus on systemic and collective approaches, recognizing the importance of addressing producer issues and the influence of policies and regulations related to emergency preparedness and climate resilience.	Moderate			✓	
Collaborate with other schools locally and globally on joint projects that promote climate action and other aspects of sustainability while fostering a sense of collective responsibility.	Moderate				✓
Partner with local indigenous organizations or CSOs to co-create and implement initiatives that promote the reawakening and embedding of indigenous knowledge systems that are often aligned with nature-based solutions and can be integrated in a complementary way into local climate resilience strategies.	High		✓	✓	✓

2.2. Facilities and operation

Facilities and operations refer to the physical infrastructure, systems and daily operations within the school. They focus on the implementation of sustainable practices in areas such as energy and water use, waste management, transport, building design, and procurement practices that can reduce the school's carbon and ecological footprints. Adopting sustainable facilities and operations involves implementing measures that reduce energy and water consumption, minimize waste, and incorporate other practices which would tangibly reduce negative environmental impacts. These initiatives not only achieve cost savings but also allow for the redirection of funds and resources towards supporting further sustainability initiatives and enhancing educational provision.

Sustainable facilities and operations transform schools into living laboratories of sustainability, in which learners experience first-hand climate action and understand the consequences of their actions. Green Schools that prioritize indoor air quality, natural lighting and comfortable environments are also actively contributing to the health and well-being of learners, staff and visitors and a more productive atmosphere for learning and work. A Green School, with its sustainable and climate-conscious facilities and operations, generates a culture of responsibility among learners and staff that spills over into the local community inspiring it to make sustainable choices.

Action related to …								
Action	**Level of resources needed**	**Energy efficiency**	**Water conservation**	**Waste management**	**Sustainable transportation**	**Green infrastructure**	**General infrastructure**	**Health and well-being**
CLIMATE EDUCATION, AWARENESS AND TRAINING								
Essential action **Set up a Monitoring Team** (made up of learners where possible) who regularly monitor whether sustainable resource management actions are being followed and educate their peers about the importance of these practices in climate change mitigation. Maximise gender balance, diversity and inclusivity in the Team's composition.	Low	✓	✓	✓				
Train cleaning staff on water-efficient techniques, such as using microfiber mops and spray bottles, highlighting the role of water conservation in climate change mitigation.	Low		✓					

Action related to …								
Action	**Level of resources needed**	**Energy efficiency**	**Water conservation**	**Waste management**	**Sustainable transportation**	**Green infrastructure**	**General infrastructure**	**Health and well-being**
Use outdoor spaces as classrooms to foster a connection with nature.	Low						✓	
Involve learners in the design and maintenance of the school's green infrastructure promoting their understanding of sustainable practices and their role in addressing climate change.	Low						✓	
Participate in community-based and/or national waste reduction campaigns to encourage creative ways of dealing with waste and highlighting its link to climate change mitigation.	Low			✓				
Install informative and interpretive signage throughout the school grounds to educate learners, staff and visitors about the importance of energy and water conservation, as well as the benefits and features of the school's green infrastructure. Additionally, integrate behaviourally informed nudges to encourage sustainable actions, and foster a culture of an environmental sense of responsibility and proactive engagement in mitigating climate change.	Low					✓	✓	
Organize innovation challenges and competitive activities such as waste reduction challenges for learners and staff. Extend this concept to additional areas of climate change mitigation and introduce competitions and prizes to encourage eco-friendly behaviour among students.	Low			✓				

Action related to …								
Action	**Level of resources needed**	**Energy efficiency**	**Water conservation**	**Waste management**	**Sustainable transportation**	**Green infrastructure**	**General infrastructure**	**Health and well-being**
Promote active commuting to reduce carbon emissions and mitigate climate change and in support for health and wellbeing encouraging learners and staff to use sustainable modes of transportation (e.g. walking, cycling, skateboarding) through awareness campaigns, incentives and infrastructure improvements.	Low				✓			
Coordinate educational initiatives and behaviour change and advocacy campaigns among learners, staff and the community, aimed at fostering sustainable resource management behaviours and their links to climate change mitigation.	Low to Moderate	✓	✓	✓				
Promote a waste management policy that educates the school community on waste reduction practices, life-cycle assessment, the importance of a recycling infrastructure, and the impact of waste on the environment and on aggravating climate change.	Low to Moderate			✓				
Organize sustainable mobility campaigns to promote sustainable transportation choices, including road safety, cycling skills and public transportation etiquette, linking them to climate change mitigation.	Low to Moderate				✓			
Encourage sustainable transportation practices to reduce carbon emissions by promoting alternative methods of transportation, educating the school community about the environmental benefits of these actions in mitigating climate change, and implementing a no-idling policy for vehicles while inside the campus.	Low to Moderate				✓			

Action related to …								
Action	**Level of resources needed**	**Energy efficiency**	**Water conservation**	**Waste management**	**Sustainable transportation**	**Green infrastructure**	**General infrastructure**	**Health and well-being**
Provide training on waste management practices for learners, staff and parents about how to reduce waste, properly separate waste fractions (paper, plastic, glass, metal, organic waste), and dispose of hazardous materials correctly. This action needs to be framed within the impact of waste on the climate and the environment.	Moderate	✓		✓				✓
Organize a swap fair[2] or permanent stalls for the school and/or the surrounding community during which participants exchange or trade items, like clothing, accessories, books, household goods, toys, etc.	Moderate			✓				
Organize seminars about upcycling for the school community and beyond encouraging the creative reuse of various materials, like textiles, furniture, glass, plastic, wood, metal, and reduce the environmental footprint associated with resource extraction and production.	Moderate			✓				
Organize repair workshops/stations where volunteers and/or skilled repairers teach learners basic techniques for broken or damaged items, like clothing, electronics and bicycles, thus prolonging their lifespan, reducing waste and promoting a circular economy.	Moderate			✓				
Dedicate soil patches for growing crops that can be managed by learners. Besides learning about sustainable food production methods (e.g. permaculture), learners can explore issues related to local food systems, and the carbon footprint of food production and transportation (i.e. food miles).	Moderate				✓	✓		

2 Swap fairs: also known as swap meets, are gatherings where individuals exchange items they no longer need or want, promoting the reuse of goods and reducing waste through barter transactions or purchasing with actual money.

Action related to …								
Action	**Level of resources needed**	**Energy efficiency**	**Water conservation**	**Waste management**	**Sustainable transportation**	**Green infrastructure**	**General infrastructure**	**Health and well-being**
Establish small, low-maintenance school gardens focusing on drought-resistant crops that can serve as a sustainable food source for the school and also provide hands-on agricultural education for learners.	Moderate		✓			✓		
Organize community-driven native tree-planting initiatives to combat soil erosion, provide shade, and contribute to local biodiversity by including pollinator-friendly species.	High		✓			✓	✓	
DEVELOPING A CLIMATE-FRIENDLY INFRASTRUCTURE								
Conduct energy audits (including taking readings from the electricity meter and reviewing utility bills) to learn how energy is being used in school, understanding the carbon footprint, the type of appliances available and practices that can either be encouraged or discouraged particularly because of their impact on climate change. Also investigate sustainable energy options that could be used in the school.	Low	✓						
Conduct water audits (including taking readings from the water meter and reviewing utility bills) to learn how water is being used in school, identify areas of high usage, and highlight the need to conserve water resources in the context of climate change.	Low		✓					
Conduct regular waste audits to assess the composition weight and volume of waste generated (including food waste) in the school, and probable sources framing it within a discussion about the impact of improper waste management on the environment, including the contribution to greenhouse gas emissions.	Low			✓				

Action related to …								
Action	**Level of resources needed**	**Energy efficiency**	**Water conservation**	**Waste management**	**Sustainable transportation**	**Green infrastructure**	**General infrastructure**	**Health and well-being**
Promote energy-saving habits in relation to the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions, by maximizing natural lighting in classrooms and common areas, opening/closing windows to regulate room temperature and fixing reminders to turn off lights/equipment when not in use.	Low	✓						✓
Implement waste reduction measures at source such as minimizing paper usage, opting for electronic document sharing and promoting the use of reusable water bottles, utensils and lunch boxes, and adopting strategies to reduce food waste, while discussing the link between resource consumption and climate change. Considering the unique perspectives and experiences of youth, women and indigenous communities can lead to more inclusive, culturally appropriate and effective solutions.	Low			✓				✓
Ensure waste bins are properly labelled, conveniently situated and provided in sufficient quantities.	Low			✓				
Develop simple and affordable rainwater harvesting systems to collect and store water for drinking and sanitation purposes, especially in regions with irregular access to clean water.	Low			✓				
Implement carpooling and ridesharing programmes to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by decreasing the number of single-occupancy vehicles travelling to and from the school.	Low				✓			

Action related to …								
Action	**Level of resources needed**	**Energy efficiency**	**Water conservation**	**Waste management**	**Sustainable transportation**	**Green infrastructure**	**General infrastructure**	**Health and well-being**
Conduct regular maintenance of the heating, ventilation and air conditioning systems to ensure their efficient operation, thereby enhancing climate change mitigation efforts.	Low	✓					✓	
Conduct regular inspections to detect and fix leaks in plumbing systems, water taps, pipes and toilets.	Low		✓				✓	
Set up simple and low-cost composting systems using locally available materials to manage organic waste, enrich the soil, and reduce the need for expensive fertilizers.	Low			✓		✓		
Implement low-cost sanitation stations such as simple handwashing stations with soap, to improve hygiene and reduce the spread of waterborne diseases.	Low		✓				✓	
Conduct fire safety inspections and implement prevention measures (e.g. ensuring adequate fire exits, alarms and extinguishers) in strategic locations throughout the school premises. This should be followed by regular drills to educate staff and students on proper evacuation procedures.	Low						✓	✓
Aim for green building certification for new and/or existing buildings to promote sustainable practices, responsible use of resources, health and safety, and resilience to withstand and recover from climate-related disasters.	Low to Moderate	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Organize a walking bus to promote sustainable commuting and reduce greenhouse gas emissions. The walking bus follows a traditional school bus route, but instead of a vehicle, learners form a walking line accompanied by adult volunteers.	Low to Moderate				✓			

Action related to …								
Action	**Level of resources needed**	**Energy efficiency**	**Water conservation**	**Waste management**	**Sustainable transportation**	**Green infrastructure**	**General infrastructure**	**Health and well-being**
Explore opportunities for telecommuting and remote learning, where possible, to reduce the need for daily transportation to the school and subsequent greenhouse gas emissions.	Low to Moderate				✓			
Replace traditional light bulbs with energy-efficient LED lights throughout the school to reduce carbon footprint.	Moderate	✓					✓	
Enhance the insulation of roofs, walls, windows and doors to minimize heat transfer, improve energy efficiency and reduce the carbon footprint.	Moderate	✓					✓	
Install programmable or smart thermostats that can automatically adjust temperature settings according to occupancy and time schedules reducing the impact on the climate.	Moderate	✓					✓	
Replace inefficient water outlets with water-saving fixtures, such as water hippos[3], low-flow water taps, toilets and urinals to reduce water consumption as part of the school's climate mitigation actions.	Moderate	✓	✓				✓	
Install a composting system such as vermicomposting to process organic waste, including food scraps and garden/green waste into nutrient-rich compost and reducing methane emissions from landfills.	Moderate			✓			✓	
Implement an e-waste management programme promoting the proper disposal and recycling of electronic waste, such as computers, printers and mobile devices.	Moderate			✓				

3 Water hippos: water-filled containers placed in the toilet cistern to reduce the amount of water used with every flush.

Action related to …								
Action	**Level of resources needed**	**Energy efficiency**	**Water conservation**	**Waste management**	**Sustainable transportation**	**Green infrastructure**	**General infrastructure**	**Health and well-being**
Establish collection points for items that are no longer needed, such as books, clothes, furniture and electronics, that can then be donated or reused.	Moderate			✓				✓
Install secure bike racks or shelters to encourage cycling, provide safe and convenient bike parking options, reduce carbon emissions and improve air quality.	Moderate				✓		✓	✓
Plant native or drought-tolerant trees strategically around the school grounds to provide shade, improve air quality, replace those used for firewood, reduce the urban heat island effect, support climate change adaptation and mitigation actions, promote a habitat for pollinator-friendly species, and contribute to biodiversity.	Moderate		✓			✓		✓
Create rain gardens with native plants to capture and filter stormwater runoff, enhance water quality, replenish groundwater, promote wildlife-friendly habitats, and provide resources for pollinators to enhance biodiversity.	Moderate		✓			✓	✓	✓
Incorporate traditional building methods into school infrastructure projects, showcasing sustainable and locally adapted construction techniques.	Moderate	✓	✓				✓	
Conduct an environmental audit to evaluate the current footprint of the school, including its greenhouse gas emissions and energy consumption, identify areas for improvement, and determine a baseline for future progress in climate change adaptation and mitigation.	Moderate to High (if external consultants are engaged)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	

Action related to …								
Action	**Level of resources needed**	**Energy efficiency**	**Water conservation**	**Waste management**	**Sustainable transportation**	**Green infrastructure**	**General infrastructure**	**Health and well-being**
Improve pedestrian infrastructure around the school by including crosswalks, sidewalks, traffic calming measures and designated drop-off zones to make streets safer, encourage walking and reduce carbon emissions.	Moderate to High				✓		✓	✓
Optimize school bus routes and schedules to reduce fuel consumption, minimize emissions and improve operational efficiency.	Moderate to High	✓			✓			
Retrofit the school building with earthquake-resistant technologies and structural reinforcements, (e.g. strengthening foundations, reinforcing walls and columns and installing seismic dampers or braces) to enhance seismic resilience by minimizing structural damage and ensuring occupant safety.	Moderate to High						✓	✓
Replace old and inefficient appliances like refrigerators, dishwashers and washing machines with energy-saving models that reduce the production of greenhouse gasses.	High	✓						
Enhance the insulation of roofs, walls, windows and doors to minimize heat transfer, improve energy efficiency and reduce carbon emissions.	High	✓					✓	
Set up green roofs and/or vertical gardens to improve insulation, reduce energy consumption, enhance air quality, utilize rainwater, reduce stormwater runoff and enhance biodiversity.	High	✓	✓			✓		
Optimize the school's irrigation system by using drip irrigation and rain sensors to ensure water-efficient landscaping and address the impacts of climate change on water availability.	High		✓			✓	✓	

Action related to …								
Action	**Level of resources needed**	**Energy efficiency**	**Water conservation**	**Waste management**	**Sustainable transportation**	**Green infrastructure**	**General infrastructure**	**Health and well-being**
Install a greywater recycling system to reuse greywater from sinks and showers for non-potable purposes, like toilet flushing and landscape irrigation, and promote sustainable water management.	High		✓			✓	✓	
Install electric vehicle charging stations in the school's parking area to encourage the use of electric vehicles among staff and parents.	High	✓			✓		✓	
ENSURING CLIMATE RESILIENCE AND DISASTER PREPAREDNESS								
Implement low-cost solar solutions such as solar lamps or solar-powered chargers to provide lighting and basic electricity needs in classrooms or for learners' study time.	Low	✓					✓	
Set up simple and affordable rainwater collection barrels or containers to collect and store water for drinking and sanitation purposes, especially in regions with irregular access to clean water.	Low		✓				✓	
Address natural and climate change-induced hazards by identifying vulnerable areas and developing plans for landslides, flooding, earthquakes, tropical storms or extreme heat.	Low to Moderate						✓	✓
Set up water and sanitation facilities that are accessible and women-and girl-friendly, in consultation with women and girls. These can include water points, handpumps and water containers.	Low to Moderate						✓	
Install a rainwater harvesting system for non-potable uses, like flushing toilets and irrigation, improving the school's drought resilience, reducing its dependency on municipal water, and conserving water resources.	Moderate		✓				✓	

Action related to …								
Action	**Level of resources needed**	**Energy efficiency**	**Water conservation**	**Waste management**	**Sustainable transportation**	**Green infrastructure**	**General infrastructure**	**Health and well-being**
Promote native plant landscaping by replacing water-intensive lawns with native or drought-tolerant species, including pollinator-friendly species, that require less water and are climate friendly.	Moderate		✓			✓		✓
Create green spaces that are climate-resilient by adopting landscaping practices like using rainwater harvesting measures, permeable surfaces and drought-resistant plants, that provide natural buffers against extreme weather.	Moderate		✓			✓	✓	✓
Establish seed-saving programmes to preserve local plant varieties, including pollinator-friendly species, ensuring a diverse and resilient crop base for the community.	Moderate					✓		✓
Optimize natural lighting through well-planned window placement and the use of skylights or light tubes, reducing the need for artificial lighting and lowering energy consumption and subsequent greenhouse gas emissions.	Moderate to High	✓				✓		✓
Replace traditional impermeable surfaces with permeable pavement materials to allow water infiltration, reduce stormwater runoff and mitigate the urban heat island effect.	Moderate to High		✓			✓	✓	
Invest in a climate-resilient infrastructure to safeguard the well-being of learners, staff, and school facilities ensuring continuity of education and operation even during climate-related natural disasters and extreme weather events. Such infrastructure could include flood barriers, stormwater management systems, green roofs and walls, ventilation systems, renewable energy systems and earthquake-resistant structures.	High	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓

Action related to …								
Action	**Level of resources needed**	**Energy efficiency**	**Water conservation**	**Waste management**	**Sustainable transportation**	**Green infrastructure**	**General infrastructure**	**Health and well-being**
Install renewable energy systems (e.g. solar panels) to generate clean electricity as part of the school's climate mitigation measures and provide a reliable energy source during electrical blackouts.	High	✓					✓	
Ensure a flood-resistant infrastructure by investing in construction and engineering projects to elevate facilities and buildings above the flood level or installing flood barriers to protect the school.	High						✓	
PROMOTING SCHOOL SAFETY AND EDUCATIONAL CONTINUITY MANAGEMENT								
Conduct risk mapping exercises to identify vulnerable areas within the school and develop plans to address specific hazards, such as landslides, flooding, earthquakes, tropical storms or extreme heat.	Low to Moderate						✓	
Conduct regular inspections to ensure the structural integrity and resilience of the school building against natural disasters, such as landslides, tropical storms and earthquakes. These inspections will be followed by essential upgrades (including retrofitting) to address any structural weakness and potential hazard.	High						✓	
PROMOTING GREEN PROCUREMENT AND ETHICAL PURCHASING								
Adopt a green purchasing policy that prioritizes items that are produced from sustainable and ethical sources, are fair trade, non-toxic, energy-efficient and climate friendly.	Low			✓				✓
Encourage students to research about environmentally friendly and ethically sourced products.	Low			✓		✓	✓	✓

Action related to …								
Action	**Level of resources needed**	**Energy efficiency**	**Water conservation**	**Waste management**	**Sustainable transportation**	**Green infrastructure**	**General infrastructure**	**Health and well-being**
Establish a student-led committee to research about products used within the school and provide suggestions to the school administration on the procurement of environmentally friendly and ethically sourced products.	Low to Moderate			✓		✓	✓	✓
Establish green procurement practices i.e. adopting purchasing policies that prioritize climate and environmentally friendly products and services.	Moderate			✓				✓
Establish a sustainable procurement policy of food in school canteens, cafeterias and vending machines to reduce the carbon footprint, and promote sustainable diet choices while improving the health and well-being of learners and staff. This should include actions like offering fair trade coffee and hot chocolate, introducing veggie/vegan days and sourcing locally produced products.	Moderate							✓
Establish a financial policy that directs school funds towards banks that invest in ethical and sustainable projects, emphasizing the school's commitment to a social and environmental sense of responsibility.	Moderate					✓	✓	
Create a student-run store selling green and ethically sourced products to educate about sustainable and ethical purchasing choices.	Moderate to High			✓		✓	✓	✓
Promote the transition to low-emission or electric vehicles in the school's vehicle fleet to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and air pollution.	High	✓			✓			

2.3. Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are the very core of a Green School's mission as they are fundamental in shaping individuals who are responsible citizens capable of tackling complex climate and sustainability challenges, including risk assessment, reduction, and response-preparedness for disasters and emergencies in schools. The inclusion of ESD, with a specific emphasis on climate change as a key component in the curriculum, is proof that the school or education authorities truly acknowledge its significance and believe it is essential for learner development. This acknowledgement must be supported further by the allocation of time, resources and instructional support. Through ESD, teachers can adopt transformative pedagogies and assessment methods that promote inquiry-based learning, critical thinking, problem-solving and collaborative and cooperative learning. Learners are equipped with the skills, attitudes and values required to actively engage with their communities by developing advocacy and participatory decision-making skills. Further, ESD prepares learners for the challenges and opportunities of the twenty-first-century workforce and empowers them to become active change agents for climate change and sustainability in their personal lives, careers and communities.

Being presented with meaningful, locally, or regionally relevant issues to explore and address through active learning methods makes learning more relevant, encourages active participation, and enables a deeper grasp of sustainability topics. To remain relevant and effective, curricula need to be regularly reviewed and updated to reflect current climate crises and other sustainability challenges.

This crucial effort not only exposes learners to a holistic understanding of the underlying causes of climate change and other global issues but also equips them with the knowledge, skills, values and attitudes needed to effectively address and resolve these challenges. An interdisciplinary perspective encourages learners to develop systems thinking and view the world as a complex network of interrelated systems that interact and influence one another. Learners learn how to connect knowledge and skills from various subjects to address real-world sustainability challenges through experiential learning. They are empowered to devise more effective and sustainable solutions, tackling the multidimensional aspects related to the climate crisis and therefore concretely contributing adaptation and mitigation measures to address climate change rather than just addressing the symptoms.

UNESCO and the Greening Education Partnership have developed the Greening Curriculum Guidance that proposes learning outcomes on climate change from the perspectives of economic, social and environmental pillars of sustainable development. While more in-depth guidance per age group can be found in this Greening Curriculum Guidance, the table below presents some of the accessible actions to transform teaching and learning to prepare learners to tackle climate change.

Action related to …						
Action	**Level of resources needed**	**Foster climate education**	**Cultivate climate action**	**Empower learners**	**Shape environmental values and ethics**	**Promote collaboration**
INTEGRATING ESD WITH AN EMPHASIS ON CLIMATE CHANGE IN TEACHING AND LEARNING						
Essential action **Develop lesson plans** that incorporate concepts and activities related to ESD and climate change education across various curriculum subjects and across different grade levels.	Low to Moderate	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Ensure that teaching and learning addresses issues related to climate change and other sustainability issues such as ecological systems, ethical consumption and production, carrying capacity, renewable energy, sustainable agriculture, solidarity with local and global communities and cultures, celebrating human commonalities, and diversity and waste reduction.	Low	✓			✓	
Organize regular storytelling sessions with community elders where they can share traditional stories related to sustainable practices.	Low	✓		✓	✓	✓
Encourage learners to observe and document seasonal changes based on indigenous indicators, such as plant blooming or animal behaviour.	Low	✓		✓	✓	
Incorporate climate-resilient education including for crises and disruptions contexts into the school's curriculum to raise awareness and stress the significance of climate-proofing and preparedness through sustaining foundational skills and promoting psychosocial support and well-being.	Low	✓	✓	✓		

Action related to …						
Action	**Level of resources needed**	**Foster climate education**	**Cultivate climate action**	**Empower learners**	**Shape environmental values and ethics**	**Promote collaboration**
Support learners to develop research projects and investigations on specific climate-related themes and other aspects of sustainability. Besides developing research skills, learners experience independent learning and critical thinking.	Low	✓	✓	✓		
Assign local and global case studies that present real-world challenges, such as climate change, and invite learners to explore these cases, consider ethical implications, and propose sustainable solutions.	Low	✓			✓	
Introduce learners to literature, poetry or art that deal with climate issues and other aspects of sustainability, incorporating social-emotional learning elements to encourage greater self-awareness, agency and belonging as well as empathy through modelling and nurturance. Encourage them to read, analyse and reflect on these works while also addressing climate anxiety and fostering emotional resilience.	Low				✓	
Integrate traditional art and crafts into the school's art curriculum, allowing learners to express their connection to the environment through creative activities.	Low			✓	✓	
Include indigenous perspectives, teachings and practices related to an environmental sense of responsibility and sustainability in the curriculum.	Moderate			✓	✓	
Integrate local traditional knowledge into the curriculum showcasing the relevance of indigenous practices and fostering pride in cultural heritage.	Moderate			✓	✓	

Action related to …						
Action	**Level of resources needed**	**Foster climate education**	**Cultivate climate action**	**Empower learners**	**Shape environmental values and ethics**	**Promote collaboration**
Organize regular evaluation sessions to obtain feedback from learners, teachers and parents to identify areas that need improvement and teaching and learning practices that need refining to better meet the educational needs of learners.	Moderate			✓	✓	✓
Integrate ESD into the curriculum with a specific emphasis on climate change education as a key component, enhancing learner awareness by infusing climate change concepts and sustainability principles into various subjects. Refer to the *Greening Curriculum Guidance* that offers clear and visible links with learning outcomes for the economic, social, and environmental domains of ESD.	Moderate to High (depending on the degree of centralization of the curriculum)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
FOSTERING MEANINGFUL CONNECTIONS BEYOND THE SCHOOL						
Organize debates or discussions about climate change and other aspects of sustainability. Learners learn to research and present their ideas, thus developing critical thinking and communication skills.	Low	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Conduct values reflection exercises allowing learners to think about their personal values and beliefs regarding climate change and sustainability. This helps them make informed choices that reflect sustainable lifestyles while acknowledging the impact of government policies and industrial practices on these decisions.	Low			✓	✓	

Action related to …						
Action	**Level of resources needed**	**Foster climate education**	**Cultivate climate action**	**Empower learners**	**Shape environmental values and ethics**	**Promote collaboration**
Facilitate discussions or debates on ethics, moral responsibilities and historic carbon emissions. Through these activities, learners can explore different perspectives and develop critical thinking skills, leading to a deeper understanding of systemic factors contributing to climate change and the need to engage in climate change mitigation and sustainable practices in a systemic way, rather than individually, as well as the impact of external influences on their actions.	Low	✓		✓	✓	
Invite guest speakers like resource persons, activists, indigenous leaders, community leaders and NGO members, to inspire learners by sharing their knowledge, experiences and insights about climate change and other aspects of sustainability.	Low	✓				
Foster a culture of continuous learning by engaging community members, including older learners or adult volunteers, to support literacy programmes for younger learners.	Low			✓	✓	✓
Organize screenings of films or documentaries that explore topics such as climate change, pollution or conservation followed by discussions to encourage reflection and deepen understanding.	Low to Moderate	✓			✓	
Engage parents, including through Parent-Teacher Associations (PTAs), in meaningful decision-making discussions about the school's commitment towards climate change and other aspects of sustainability. Parents can be valuable allies in promoting greening education and ESD in schools as well as continuing to teach sustainability through practice with their children at home.	Low to Moderate	✓			✓	✓

Action related to …						
Action	**Level of resources needed**	**Foster climate education**	**Cultivate climate action**	**Empower learners**	**Shape environmental values and ethics**	**Promote collaboration**
Organize environmental conferences or symposia where learners can present their research, projects, ideas and achievements related to sustainability including climate change adaptation and mitigation strategies.	Moderate to High	✓	✓	✓		
Organize nature walks or field trips to local parks, nature reserves and environmental centres as well as infrastructure facilities such as waste recycling plants, power stations and sewage treatment plants, providing hands-on experiences and fostering awareness related to climate change and sustainable practices. This could be enhanced by the setting up of an exhibition with photos taken during the walk and shared on social media so that parents and family can engage.	Moderate to High	✓	✓		✓	
Engage learners in community-based projects through which they can collaborate with local organizations to address specific issues that are directly relevant to the community, encouraging active participation in climate change mitigation at the local level.	Moderate to High		✓	✓		✓
HANDS-ON PROJECTS AND INITIATIVES						
Organize eco-art projects that, besides raising awareness of the importance of waste reduction, encourage learners to create artwork using recycled materials or natural resources.	Low	✓	✓			
Conduct a general audit of the school during which learners can collect data about the use of resources, analyse them, identify unsustainable practices and suggest sustainable and climate-friendly actions that can be adopted.	Low	✓	✓	✓		

Action related to …						
Action	**Level of resources needed**	**Foster climate education**	**Cultivate climate action**	**Empower learners**	**Shape environmental values and ethics**	**Promote collaboration**
Implement a waste management programme in the school where learners actively participate in sorting waste and educating their peers on proper waste management practices that contribute towards climate change mitigation.	Low		✓	✓		✓
Organize water conservation challenges for learners and staff to help them focus on their water consumption patterns and adopt water-saving strategies that address climate change.	Low		✓		✓	✓
Raise awareness about sustainable food choices and their impact on the environment by encouraging learners to research and present information on topics like locally grown food, organic food, food waste reduction, plant-based diets and the link between food choices and climate change, with a focus on incorporating these principles into school canteen practices.	Low	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Motivate learners to personally commit or pledge to embrace sustainable practices. Learners can publicly announce their commitment towards adopting sustainable behaviours and inspire others to join them in climate change mitigation efforts.	Low		✓	✓	✓	
Set up learner-led eco-clubs or green teams that promote learner engagement, leadership and collaborative problem-solving by providing them with a platform to discuss and plan climate action and other sustainability initiatives, integrating interventions for behaviour change.	Low to Moderate	✓	✓	✓		✓

Action related to …						
Action	**Level of resources needed**	**Foster climate education**	**Cultivate climate action**	**Empower learners**	**Shape environmental values and ethics**	**Promote collaboration**
Set up a composting project that is managed and maintained by learners as part of their efforts to manage organic waste in mitigating climate change.	Moderate	✓	✓	✓		
Develop upcycling or repurposing projects that encourage learners to create artwork, functional items, or decorations using discarded material.	Moderate	✓	✓			
Engage learners in a green building design project where they research and propose sustainable design features for a hypothetical or existing school building integrating climate-resilient infrastructure principles.	Moderate	✓	✓	✓		
Establish a school garden managed by learners where they can learn about plant life cycles, organic gardening, permaculture practices, and the benefits of growing their own food in the context of climate change.	Moderate	✓	✓	✓		
Organize events led by elders about traditional practices related to sustainable agriculture, herbal medicine, or environmental conservation.	Moderate	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
LEADERSHIP AND CAPACITY-BUILDING						
Organize leadership workshops or training sessions for learners that develop skills in responsibility, communication, project management, teamwork, journalism and advocacy, and behaviour change related to climate change and sustainability.	Moderate			✓	✓	✓

Action related to …						
Action	**Level of resources needed**	**Foster climate education**	**Cultivate climate action**	**Empower learners**	**Shape environmental values and ethics**	**Promote collaboration**
Set up a learner climate champion programme where interested learners can be trained in developing skills that enable them to play an active role in awareness-raising, organizing events, and encouraging their peers to engage in climate change mitigation and adopt sustainable lifestyles.	Moderate		✓	✓	✓	✓
Set up curriculum mapping meetings, where relevant, during which teachers of different subjects review the existing curriculum to identify opportunities for seamlessly integrating themes and skills pertaining to climate change, sustainability, and other related topics across different grade levels and subjects, prioritizing student input and collaborative design.	Moderate	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Encourage learners to organize and lead behaviour change campaigns or advocacy projects within the school and/or local community. This can involve producing information pamphlets, designing promotional posters, organizing workshops, raising awareness, and advocating for climate change and other aspects of sustainability.	Moderate to High	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Engage learners in hands-on environmental activities that include volunteering for habitat restoration projects, climate actions and community support.	Moderate to High		✓	✓	✓	✓

2.4. Community engagement

Community engagement is an important milestone in the journey towards becoming a Green School. By collaborating with community partners, a Green School's sustainability efforts gain acceptance, momentum, and can achieve more significant and lasting results in promoting a sense of shared social and environmental responsibility, and financial stability. Community engagement implies involving diverse community stakeholders, including parents, local businesses, environmental groups, local authorities/local employers, health systems, social enterprises, charities, environmental experts/professionals, other community members (e.g. residents, activists, and volunteers), media outlets, and other neighbouring educational institutions. This collaboration enables larger-scale locally relevant projects, increased access to resources, and extends the sphere of influence of green initiatives developed by Green Schools. To maintain relationships with community partners and ensure their involvement in sustainability initiatives, Green Schools need to ensure that community engagement is an ongoing process (not just a one-time event) by actively seeking their input and involvement.

Community engagement provides a Green School with a wealth of resources and learning opportunities. Schools can benefit from practical advice from local experts, support and guidance on the implementation of initiatives. Learners can also engage in community service related to sustainability that, besides benefiting the community, instils a sense of responsibility and commitment. Interaction with the community exposes learners (and schools) to local knowledge facilitating the alignment of sustainability actions with the specific needs, concerns, and values of the community, making them more relevant and effective. Green School community initiatives need to be communicated and celebrated to reinforce commitment and inspire neighbouring schools and organizations, encouraging them to adopt eco-friendly practices and cultivate a culture of sustainability in their contexts. All these actions transform Green Schools into community hubs of resilience and climate action.

Action related to …							
	Action	**Level of resources needed**	**Shared responsibility**	**Local Expertise & resources**	**Real-life experiences**	**Learning opportunities**	**Long-term impact**
BUILDING CLIMATE RESILIENCE IN THE COMMUNITY							
Essential action	**Organize awareness campaigns** (in association with other local educational partners if possible) for the school and the surrounding community to educate about climate change, its causes and impacts, and the importance of climate-proofing and climate readiness measures.	Low	✓		✓		

Action related to …						
Action	**Level of resources needed**	**Shared responsibility**	**Local Expertise & resources**	**Real-life experiences**	**Learning opportunities**	**Long-term impact**
Create informational materials about climate-proofing and climate readiness measures and distribute them among the school and the local community.	Low	✓			✓	
Forge partnerships with CSOs that can provide essential supplies, such as textbooks, writing materials and basic classroom furniture.	Low	✓			✓	
Organize bicycle donation programmes, where appropriate, to enhance learners' access to education, particularly in areas where transportation barriers can be a significant challenge.	Low	✓			✓	
Organize a series of guest speaker sessions where local resource persons, environmentalists, scientists and professionals share their knowledge and experiences about climate change and other sustainability issues.	Moderate		✓		✓	
Organize workshops and training sessions in collaboration with local resource persons and/or organizations to educate the local community about sustainability issues (such as energy conservation and waste management) related to climate change mitigation and adaptation strategies.	Moderate	✓	✓		✓	
Adopt an early warning system to alert learners, staff and the local community in the event of climate-related emergencies and/or extreme weather events.	Moderate	✓	✓		✓	✓
Conduct disaster simulation exercises and drills to assess the school's and community's preparedness to respond efficiently and effectively to climate-related emergencies with special attention to vulnerable communities.	Moderate	✓	✓		✓	✓
Initiate sustainability projects that involve learners, teachers and community members working together to implement sustainability initiatives, especially climate change mitigation and adaptation, that address real community needs.	Moderate to High	✓		✓		✓

Action related to …						
Action	**Level of resources needed**	**Shared responsibility**	**Local Expertise & resources**	**Real-life experiences**	**Learning opportunities**	**Long-term impact**
Establish partnerships between the school and CSOs and/or government agencies to jointly organize campaigns, advocate for policy changes and collectively organize action plans to address climate change and other aspects of sustainability relevant to the community.	Moderate to High	✓	✓	✓		✓
Collaborate with local authorities and CSOs to conduct vulnerability assessments and support climate-proofing initiatives by accessing expertise, resources and funding opportunities for disaster risk reduction.	Moderate to High	✓	✓	✓		✓
Organize capacity-building workshops for learners, teachers and community members to enhance their knowledge and skills in disaster risk reduction and climate adaptation.	Moderate to High	✓			✓	✓
Establish community gardens around the school, involving learners and community members in the cultivation of nutritious, locally adapted crops to address both food security and educational needs.	High	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Establish small-scale school farms by collaborating with local farmers or community members that provide hands-on agricultural education and supplement school meals.	High	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Foster cultural exchanges between different indigenous communities, allowing for the sharing of knowledge and practices related to environmental sustainability.	High	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
SCHOOL'S CONTRIBUTION TO COMMUNITY RESILIENCE TO CLIMATE CHANGE						
Organize a community clean-up campaign where learners and staff team up to clean up a local area, raising awareness about the underlying causes of waste pollution and its environmental impacts on climate change.	Low	✓				

Action related to …						
Action	**Level of resources needed**	**Shared responsibility**	**Local Expertise & resources**	**Real-life experiences**	**Learning opportunities**	**Long-term impact**
Establish gardens with native plants that are significant to the local community, providing hands-on learning experiences and connecting learners with traditional knowledge. Foster community cohesion and intergenerational learning by encouraging parents to get involved in the creation and upkeep of these gardens.	Low	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Create outdoor classrooms that mimic traditional gathering spaces, allowing for experiential learning and the sharing of indigenous knowledge. Improve the educational experience by involving parents and utilizing their knowledge and experience.	Low		✓	✓	✓	
Collaborate with elders (particularly parents and grandparents) to create community maps that highlight significant environmental features and incorporate indigenous wisdom about local ecosystems.	Low	✓	✓		✓	
Encourage learners to design and administer surveys or needs assessments to understand the environmental concerns and priorities and challenges faced by community members adapting to and mitigating climate change. These inputs inform decision-making processes about sustainability and climate action.	Low to Moderate			✓		
Encourage learners to develop and deliver presentations or workshops on climate change and other aspects of sustainability to the community. This enables them to develop public speaking and research skills and provides them with a platform to share their knowledge and educate others. Invite parents to attend these events to promote intergenerational dialogue and mutual learning experiences.	Low to Moderate				✓	

Action related to …						
Action	**Level of resources needed**	**Shared responsibility**	**Local Expertise & resources**	**Real-life experiences**	**Learning opportunities**	**Long-term impact**
Develop community outreach programmes where learners actively engage with parents, residents, businesses, health systems, social enterprises, charities and community groups through workshops, training sessions, information campaigns, and behaviour change initiatives focusing on community-based climate change mitigation and adaptation actions.	Moderate	✓				✓
Conduct participatory research projects involving learners (and possibly their parents) working directly with community members in the research process, fostering community-based climate action and empowering learners to address real-world issues.	Moderate	✓		✓	✓	
Engage learners (and possibly their parents) in citizen science projects including climate change-related studies, where they actively participate in data collection and analysis alongside scientists, contributing to scientific research and gaining practical scientific skills.	Moderate				✓	
Encourage learners to participate in volunteer programmes within the local community that focus on climate change and other aspects of sustainability, providing them with opportunities to engage first-hand in climate action.	Moderate	✓				
Set up alumni involvement programmes. Alumni can act as mentors contributing their expertise and experiences to support ongoing school and community-based initiatives about climate change and various other aspects of sustainability.	Moderate					✓
Encourage learners to advocate for climate change and other aspects of sustainability and participate in policy-related initiatives at the community level.	Moderate to High					✓

Action related to …						
Action	**Level of resources needed**	**Shared responsibility**	**Local Expertise & resources**	**Real-life experiences**	**Learning opportunities**	**Long-term impact**
Engage learners in problem-solving projects related to community climate change and sustainability issues. Community members can support learners in identifying local issues and proposing relevant solutions.	Moderate to High		✓	✓		
LOCAL COMMUNITY SUPPORT FOR EDUCATION RESPONSES TO CLIMATE CHANGE						
Foster collaboration with local community leaders or organizations to bring sustainability and climate action to the community.	Low	✓	✓		✓	
Organize cost-effective training sessions on climate change issues, potentially collaborating with local CSOs or governmental organizations.	Low	✓	✓		✓	
Promote the development of repair skills within the community through local workshops, making use of local expertise.	Low		✓		✓	
Offer programmes that focus on preserving and revitalizing indigenous languages, ensuring that traditional knowledge is passed down through linguistic channels.	Low	✓	✓		✓	✓
Organize consultation and/or mentoring sessions with local professionals or NGO members to support learners working on climate change and other sustainability projects, providing guidance and expertise to foster meaningful community engagement.	Moderate		✓			
Organize field trips to community spaces and resources (e.g. nature reserves, sustainable farms and industries and infrastructure facilities) where learners can appreciate nature and explore issues related to climate change and sustainable development. Following these trips, learners can set up awareness exhibitions using mixed media and share them on social media so that parents and family can engage.	Moderate		✓		✓	

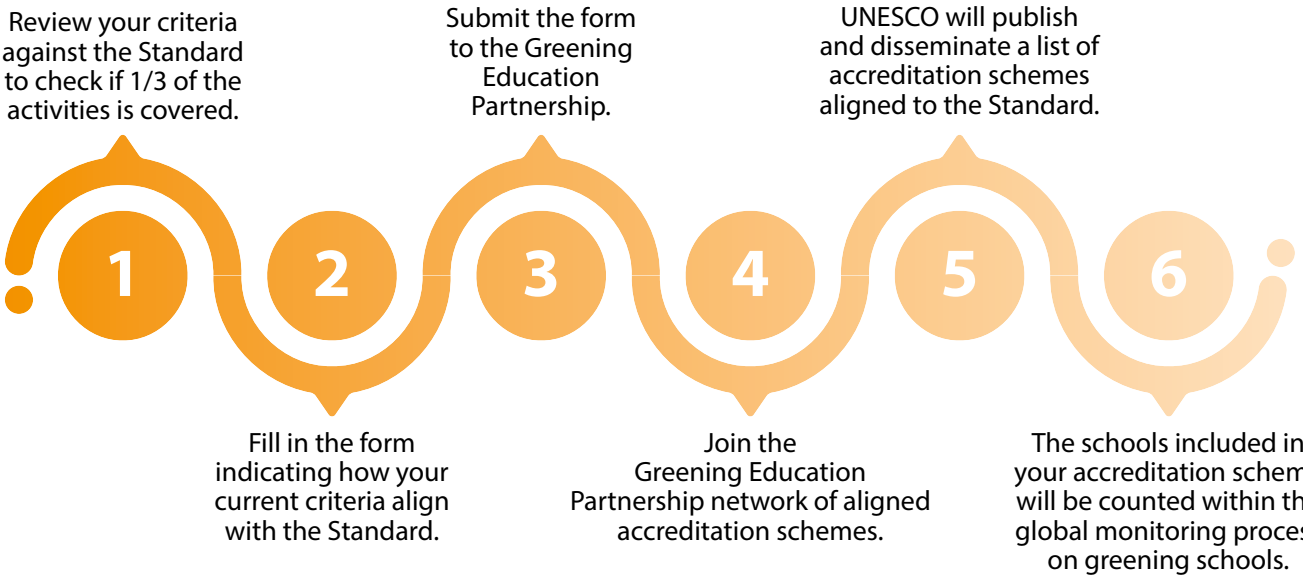
Action related to …						
Action	**Level of resources needed**	**Shared responsibility**	**Local Expertise & resources**	**Real-life experiences**	**Learning opportunities**	**Long-term impact**
Develop partnerships with local governments to provide learners with opportunities to understand governance structures and align their actions with local policies and priorities, particularly on issues concerning climate change and other aspects of sustainability.	Moderate	✓		✓		✓
Develop partnerships with local businesses, organizations and agencies to provide internship or apprenticeship opportunities for learners, enabling them to apply their knowledge and skills related to climate change and other aspects of sustainability in real-life settings and gain practical experience.	Moderate		✓	✓		
GENERAL COMMUNITY-BASED CLIMATE AWARENESS						
Disseminate information using alternative methods, including illustrated posters, storytelling sessions or community discussions.	Low				✓	
Facilitate collaboration between nearby schools through cost-effective means, promoting shared resources during community events.	Low	✓		✓	✓	
Integrate sustainability into rural schools through diverse activities, such as drama, art and music competitions, during local events and community gatherings, to promote climate change awareness.	Low				✓	✓
Facilitate the use of community resources by conducting mapping exercises to identify local expertise, organizations, and resources related to climate change and other aspects of sustainability, fostering collaboration and knowledge-sharing within the community.	Low to Moderate		✓			
Set up platforms that facilitate resource sharing within the community. This could involve sharing tools, camping gear, toys and educational materials among community members and the school.	Low to Moderate		✓			

Action related to …						
Action	**Level of resources needed**	**Shared responsibility**	**Local Expertise & resources**	**Real-life experiences**	**Learning opportunities**	**Long-term impact**
Establish a community garden where learners, staff and community members collaborate in planting, maintaining and harvesting produce, emphasizing the link between food systems and climate change.	Moderate	✓				
Organize competitions or challenges about climate change and other aspects of sustainability, such as eco-art contests, energy/water-saving and waste minimization challenges, encouraging learners and community members to actively participate and promote sustainable actions.	Moderate				✓	
Plan and host annual or regular community engagement events such as eco-fairs, swap fairs, tree planting and clean-up campaigns and panel discussions on climate change and various other aspects of sustainability, involving the wider community and providing opportunities for knowledge-sharing, inspiration and collective action.	Moderate to High					✓

3. Strategic pathways for implementing the Green school quality standard

Deciding to become a Green School is not an end in itself, but only the beginning of a process to anchor sustainability values in all dimensions of the school life. If successful, the process transforms not *just* buildings but lives of people, empowered by the skills and values developed that are internalized by the various actors.

3.1. For accreditation scheme organizers



Key steps for accreditation scheme organizers to use the Standard

Accreditation schemes are encouraged to:

- Review their programme's criteria against the Standard.
- Meet the minimum threshold of alignment by covering 1/3 of the actions recommended under each dimension (Governance; Facilities and operation; Teaching and learning; and Community engagement) including the four essential actions.
- Fill in a dedicated template to show that your accreditation scheme is aligned with the Standard and send to the Greening Education Partnership secretariat at UNESCO to be published online to inform countries.
- Continue to support schools to become green climate-ready schools based on the Standard and their specific needs and contexts.
- Collaborate with the Greening Education Partnership to monitor the progress of schools within the network and contribute to achieving the global target of getting 50% of world's schools green by 2030.

What is the minimum threshold set by the Standard that accreditation schemes are invited to meet?

To achieve the minimum threshold for alignment with the Standard, existing accreditation schemes need to integrate at least one-third of the suggested activities for each of the four key dimensions of a Green School, including all four essential actions.

Accreditation schemes are encouraged to guide candidate schools beyond initial accreditation, presenting ongoing challenges to ensure sustained commitment to quality. Monitoring and evaluation are crucial for recognizing progress and supporting schools in effective implementation. It is therefore encouraged for accreditation schemes to conduct regular reviews of schools after granting them the recognition of fulfilling the minimum threshold. In this light, adopting a progressive approach that will recognize additional efforts made by schools to progress in their Green School journey beyond the minimum threshold, could be beneficial and reflected through additional recognition granted.

How can an accreditation scheme be considered aligned with the Standard?

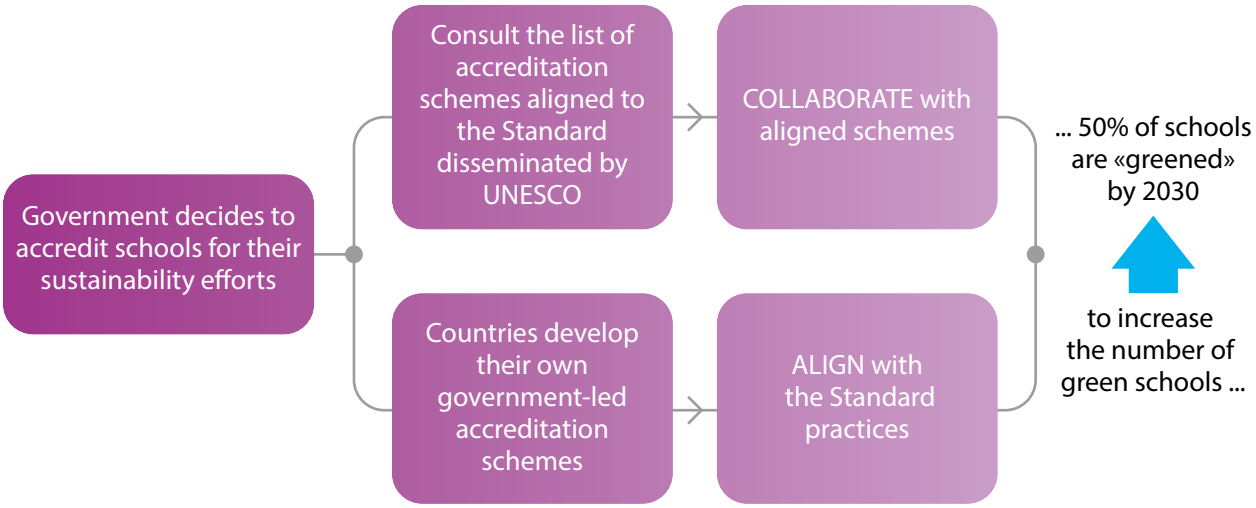
An open validation process involves individual accreditation schemes informing the Greening Education Partnership on how it aligns with the Standard whether through already existing criteria or through an active update of their criteria. The Working Group 1 on Greening Schools of the Greening Education Partnership will serve as a community of practice among accreditation scheme implementers and policy-makers to facilitate the exchange of good practices.

How is the alignment of accreditation schemes with the Standard put into practice?

The operational aspect involves the regular publication of a list of accreditation schemes that align with the Green school quality standard on UNESCO's greening schools dedicated webpage.[4] Additionally, there is an ongoing process of monitoring the number of schools meeting the Green school quality standard which will contribute to the global monitoring of progress through the Greening Education Partnership's Working Group 1 on Green Schools.

4 For further information, please visit: https://www.unesco.org/en/education-sustainable-development/greening-future/schools

3.2. For governments



Key steps for governments to use the Standard

Governments are encouraged to:

- Support at least half of the country's schools to become green climate-ready schools using the Standard. To do so, governments may wish to pursue either or both of the following two avenues:
    1. collaborate with existing accreditation schemes that are aligned with the Standard which are present in their country/region; and/or
    2. develop a government-led scheme that accredits Green Schools in alignment with the Standard. In this case, the authority in charge is invited to fill in a dedicated template to show that the accreditation scheme is aligned with the Standard and send it to the Greening Education Partnership secretariat at UNESCO.
- Collaborate with the Greening Education Partnership to monitor the progress of schools within the network and contribute to getting 50% of the world's schools green by 2030.

An updated list of accreditation schemes aligned with the Standard will be provided to governments on a regular basis.

How can the schools in my country collaborate with accreditation schemes aligned with the Standard?

Various accreditation schemes aim to green schools in many countries. As a government, you may decide to collaborate with existing accreditation schemes that are already aligned with the Standard to expand the number of schools engaged in these networks to benefit from their expertise, thus increasing the proportion of Green Schools in your country. As explained above, regular periodic publication of the list of accreditation schemes that align with the Green school quality standard will be undertaken on UNESCO's greening schools webpage.[5]

5 For further information, please visit: https://www.unesco.org/en/education-sustainable-development/greening-future/schools

What if there are no accreditation schemes aligned with the Standard in my country?

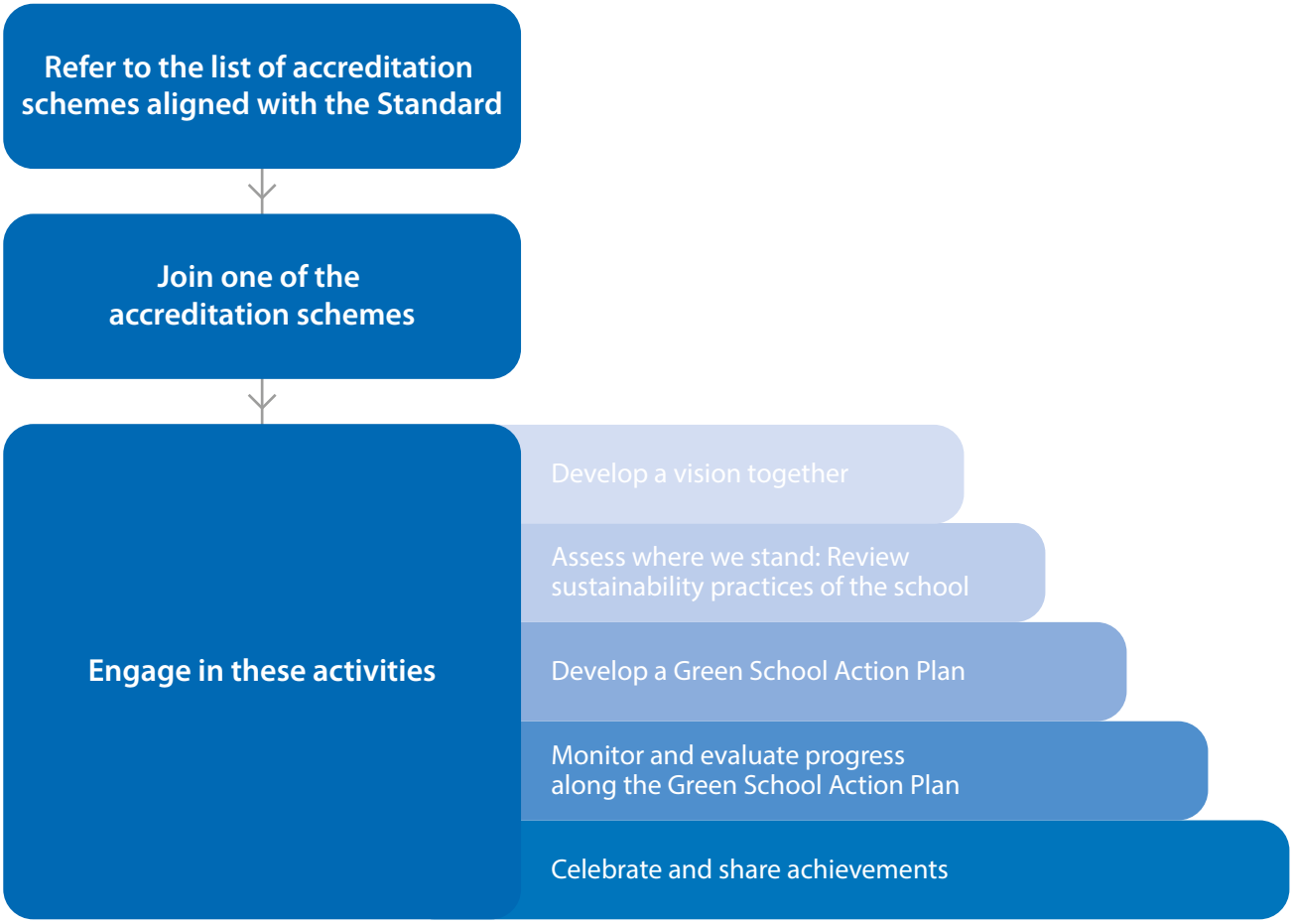
If there are no relevant accreditation schemes in your country, as a government you may wish to develop a new government-led accreditation scheme built upon the Green school quality standard in consultation with relevant stakeholders in the country. Having a nationally recognized framework could help ensure consistent application of the Standard and provide a basis for systematic monitoring and evaluation across educational institutions in the country. It is key to involve all stakeholders in the development process – including school leaders, educators, learners, parents, CSOs, local governments, business sector, etc.

How can the governments support schools in their efforts to become green climate-ready schools?

Countries can undertake the following initiatives to support schools in their journey to becoming green climate-ready schools:

- provide information and training sessions for school leaders and teachers to ensure a thorough understanding of the country's policy frameworks and available support for schools;
- provide opportunities for partnerships and networking among schools and stakeholders; and
- connect schools with other relevant mechanisms including disaster risk management, environmental conservation, health and nutrition sectors, construction, energy, or agricultural sectors as well as the scientific community to foster collaboration on greening schools.

3.3. For schools



Key steps for schools to use the Standard

Schools who are interested in becoming a Green School using the Standard are encouraged to:

- Consider joining a school accreditation scheme present in the country/region that is aligned with the Standard. The information is found on UNESCO's greening schools webpage.
- Follow a WIA to ESD in your journey to becoming a green climate-ready school (see annex for detailed recommended journey):

    1. Develop a vision: get familiar with the principles and requirements of the Standard paying close attention to the four key dimensions;
    2. Review the current sustainability practices of the school;
    3. Develop a Green School action plan with specific and attainable goals for every dimension, setting priorities for the actions that will affect the school's sustainability practices the most and aim at meeting the minimum threshold of the Standard;
    4. Monitor and evaluate progress;
    5. Celebrate, share achievements and make a commitment to lifelong learning for the continued development of sustainable practices.

How can my school engage with the Green school quality standard?

Schools are encouraged to join an accreditation scheme that is aligned with the Standard to benefit from their network and expertise. The information is found on UNESCO's greening schools webpage. Through this process, your school will be recognized as a Green School that contributes to the achievement of the global target of greening 50% of world's schools by 2030.

Individual schools are welcome to familiarize themselves with the principles and requirements of the Standard to reflect them within all dimensions of the school system so that learners become climate-ready. When doing so, schools are encouraged to consider the recommended journey in the Annex.

Why doesn't the Standard offer more specific guidelines for implementing each action?

Establishing priorities, providing templates and frameworks, suggesting resource allocation, and setting measurable goals and budgetary allocations are essential components for tailoring the list of proposed actions to the specific needs of the school. However, it is equally important to acknowledge the diversity of school realities that this publication is trying to address. Creating a one-size-fits-all list of actions would ignore the distinct needs and challenges faced by different schools and communities.

Every school functions in a unique setting with unique capacities, priorities and resources. Therefore, it should be the responsibility of the relevant schools and/or government to specifically carry out the implementation of actions and allocate resources. This approach makes sure that the actions adopted are customized to the unique requirements and conditions of every school, increasing their applicability, efficacy and sustainability over time.

4. Conclusion

The application of a WIA to develop and sustain a Green School can appear daunting, given the diverse realities faced by schools all over the globe. Curriculum demands, heavy teacher workloads, funding constraints, overcrowded classrooms, resource limitations, learner diversity and technology integration are a few of the challenges that schools face regularly.

In certain world regions, this is further compounded by instances where basic human needs are not met and access to education is limited and even denied. In such instances, the processes and directives to implement Green Schools need to be flexible, sensitive and all-inclusive. Concrete and effective action to address these fundamental needs and ensure social equity and social justice should be taken as a priority. Only once these goals are achieved, can schools start thinking about becoming Green Schools.

Developing Green Schools is possible, not only for those that are highly resourced but also for 'ordinary' schools that struggle daily to stay afloat. No one recipe fits every reality. However, when schools and teachers are committed to a specific goal, they possess the resilience to continue functioning, providing education and supporting learners even in the face of challenges. Just imagine what more can be achieved if they are supported in their efforts to become Green Schools.

This support could be forthcoming if:

- Educational authorities recognize the importance of getting every school climate-ready as an indispensable component of quality education, and climate change authorities acknowledge the role of education in tackling climate change.

- Well-defined national policies are established to explicitly recognize the significance of ESD as an entitlement of a learner's holistic development. These policies would then be subsequently enforced, accompanied by targeted implementation strategies, guaranteeing formal curriculum integration, trained educators and dedicated resources.

- A WIA to Green Schools is promoted as the outcome of a harmonious synergy between top-down and bottom-up approaches. In this context, educational authorities extend support to school-based initiatives that align with grassroots movements and values, embracing a collaborative stance rather than imposing rigid directives.

The evolution of the Green School concept is not a linear process with one 'new' approach being considered 'better' than, and hence replacing, the 'older' model. Its evolution is more like a branching tree with new approaches developing and coexisting happily with other approaches, each fitting particular niches in the variety of worldwide educational systems.

Acronyms

CSO	Civil Society Organization
CSSF	Comprehensive School Safety Framework
ESD	Education for Sustainable Development
PTA	Parent-Teacher Association
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SMART	Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Time-bound (goals)
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
WIA	Whole-institution approach

Glossary of terms

Accreditation schemes: encompass certifications and labels conferred by governments or organizations to schools, recognizing exemplary practices in addressing climate change and more broadly Education for Sustainable Development (ESD). These schemes also include awards, initiatives and projects demonstrating a commitment to tackling climate change.

Audit: a systematic examination or review of a process, a system or an organization, to assess its efficiency, effectiveness or compliance with a set of guidelines or standards.

Climate proofing: developing or adjusting measures to protect against and adapt to the impacts of climate change, ensuring that systems, infrastructure and policies can face climate challenges.

Climate resilience: the ability of a system or community to anticipate, prepare for, respond to and recover from the adverse impacts of climate change.

Education for Sustainable Development: Education that empowers learners with knowledge, skills, values and attitudes to take informed decisions and make responsible action for environmental integrity, economic viability and a just society empowering people of all genders, for present and future generations, while respecting cultural diversity (UNESCO, 2020).

Ethical purchasing: also known as ethical sourcing or ethical consumption, refers to making purchasing decisions based on ethical considerations such as environmental sustainability, fair labour practices, animal welfare and social responsibility.

Governance: the procedures, frameworks and policies that direct the development and implementation of decisions in institutions, organizations or systems. Effective governance ensures the maintenance of integrity and the smooth running of organizations, governments and communities.

Greening education: Rooted in the long-standing efforts on ESD, the process of pursuing knowledge, skills, values and attitudes to engage in transformative action on mitigation, adaptation and resilience to climate change, aimed at shaping green, low emission climate-resilient societies.

Green procurement: the acquisition of goods and services that have minimal environmental impact throughout their lifecycle, aimed at reducing greenhouse gas emissions, improving air quality, reducing waste and protecting natural resources.

Green School: a learning institution that adopts a whole-institution approach (WIA) to ESD, emphasizing climate change as a primary focus. It aims to create safe, resilient learning environments and innovative educational platforms. Green Schools equip learners and communities with the knowledge, skills, values and attitudes needed to address climate change through sustainable practices. The term 'school' encompasses diverse learning environments and educational contexts, including formal and non-formal settings, early childhood to higher education, as well as Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) programmes.

Greenwashing: misleading or deceptive marketing tactics employed by entities to portray their products or policies as eco-friendly, despite potential inconsistencies with environmental standards. This practice capitalizes on the increasing consumer interest in environmentally-friendly products and initiatives.

Greywater recycling: the process of treating and reusing wastewater generated from activities such as laundry, bathing and handwashing for non-potable purposes, such as irrigation or flushing toilets.

Rain garden: a type of landscape design, usually consisting of native plants and certain soil combinations, that collects and processes precipitation runoff to facilitate soil infiltration and lessen stormwater discharge thus enhancing water quality and replenishing groundwater.

Retrofitting: the modification or addition of new technologies, features, or systems to existing structures or products to improve their performance, efficiency, or compliance with current standards.

Sustainable learning environment: a setting that supports the holistic development of learners by prioritizing ecological, social and economic sustainability. This includes physical infrastructure planned for minimal environmental impact and efficient use of resources. It fosters a supportive community that encourages social equity, diversity and inclusivity among learners and teachers. Additionally, it fosters economic resilience and strives for financial stability through creative funding sources and economical methods.

Threshold for alignment: the minimum level or percentage that accreditation schemes or similar entities must meet to demonstrate compliance with established standards. It represents the baseline level of conformity required for recognition or alignment with specific standards or criteria.

Upcycling: the creative process of transforming discarded or old materials into products of higher quality or value, often with an environmental or aesthetic improvement.

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Annex Suggested Green School journey for schools

There are two main approaches to consider when deciding to embark on a journey:

1. choosing to divide the journey into manageable bits without an overarching plan, thus being more flexible to adjust along the way, while implementing successfully at least one-third of the suggested activities for each of the four key dimensions of a Green School, including one essential action within each dimension; and
2. meticulously planning out the entire journey in advance ensuring that every step is carefully orchestrated while implementing successfully at least one-third of the suggested activities for each of the four key dimensions of a Green School, including one essential action within each dimension.

Both approaches have their merits and drawbacks. Whether to choose one or the other depends on the preferences of school leadership, the community, the school governing body or the educational authorities of the country, and resources available. The same applies when a school opts to become a Green School through a WIA. Due to varying social, cultural, political and economic conditions in which schools operate, there is no one-size-fits-all methodology for transitioning into a Green School. The ultimate choice of approach depends on the school's specific needs, priorities and available resources.

Although lacking the coherence and comprehensive impact of a well-planned strategy, investing in disparate actions has the advantage of allowing the school to respond to relevant sustainability issues as they arise. These actions allow schools to make progress in a step-by-step manner toward becoming a Green School by taking advantage of available opportunities and resources. This incremental approach may be more suitable for schools with limited human and financial resources.

It is worth noting that to achieve the minimum threshold for alignment with the Standard, schools should implement successfully at least one-third of suggested activities for each of the four key dimensions of a Green School, with one essential action identified within each dimension. This basis provides a point of departure for a school to undertake its journey to becoming a fully Green School with the recommendation to aim at increasing the number of actions over time to ensure the holistic integration of sustainability in all dimensions of the school.

A well-planned strategy provides the school's efforts to adopt sustainable practices with a clear vision, an organized structure and defined targets to measure progress. However, developing such a comprehensive strategy may require expertise, resources and time which may not be readily available.

Moreover, a combination of both approaches can also be beneficial. Schools can start by organizing smaller-scale, low-cost actions that have an immediate impact and still achieve the minimum threshold for alignment with the Standard. As the school community gains knowledge, skills, experience and resources, sustainable practices become ingrained in daily routines possibly creating the time for a well-planned strategy, with ESD and a focus on climate action at its core, to guide long-term sustainability efforts.

Procedure	Performance indicators
1. DEVELOP A VISION TOGETHER **This step involves setting up a Greening Team which will be responsible for the planning, implementation and monitoring of the strategy. The first task involves collaboratively establishing a vision that clearly identifies the specific goals and purpose of the strategy. Besides outlining the strategy's implementation, the vision will ascertain the extent to which the Green School initiative is embraced by the entire school community.**	
Setting up a Greening Team ▶ Recruit team members who are passionate about sustainability and are willing to commit their time to the task. Consider sending out invites, hosting information meetings, or reaching out to specific individuals. ▶ Ideally, the Team should consist of diverse stakeholders: learners, teachers, administrators, support staff, parents and community members. Ensure that more than half of the Team are learners to encourage youth engagement and empowerment. ▶ Assign specific roles and responsibilities to Team members. Consider establishing vice-roles who would be able to (i) support the work of the primary role and offer advice, (ii) take up the role in the absence of the primary role, (iii) learn and develop skills from the primary role, and (iv) succeed the primary role and ensure a smooth transition. ▶ Invest in Team-building opportunities that focus on (i) enhancing knowledge about sustainability, and (ii) developing skills in group dynamics. **Developing a Green School Project Roadmap** ▶ Conduct brainstorming sessions (using group discussions and/or tools like mind mapping or concept mapping) to generate ideas and identify potential goals and purposes for the strategy. ▶ Identify key sustainability areas that are relevant to the school community. Prioritize the areas based on the school's values, needs and available resources. ▶ Based on the identified sustainability areas, identify SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Time-bound) goals. ▶ Define the strategy's long-term vision (i.e. the outcome). ▶ Develop a concise mission statement that reflects the Team's work and the desired impact of the strategy on the school community and the environment. ▶ Share the proposed vision, mission statement, goals, and purpose with the whole school community. ▶ Invite feedback to ensure that the proposed goals and purpose reflect the expectations and values of the school community. This will help foster a sense of ownership and collective responsibility among the school community. ▶ Finalize the goals and purpose into a Green School Project Roadmap by incorporating the suggestions from the feedback and making any necessary revisions. ▶ Communicate and share the product with the school community.	**Setting up a Greening Team** ▶ The size of the Team reflects the size and needs of the school. ▶ Team members hail from various stakeholder groups, guaranteeing gender and social inclusion, as well as a diversity of perspectives, expertise and skills. ▶ Team members are aware of the remit of the group. ▶ Team members have assigned roles based on their abilities, expertise and interests. ▶ The Team meets on a regular basis (at least once a month). ▶ The Team has an efficient communication network with the rest of the school. ▶ The Team organizes training and capacity-building opportunities for its members to enhance their expertise in sustainability, skills related to implementation and group dynamic skills. **Developing a Green School Project Roadmap** ▶ Specific sessions are conducted with various stakeholders to identify the potential targets for the Green School Project Roadmap. ▶ The Roadmap identifies key sustainability areas that are relevant to the school community and prioritized based on available community resources and needs. ▶ The goals of each identified sustainability area are realistic, measurable and meaningful. ▶ The vision, mission statement, goals and purpose are clearly explained in the Green School Project Roadmap. ▶ Various members of the school community (including those from historically marginalized or underrepresented populations) are aware of the contents of the Green School Project Roadmap. ▶ Various members of the school community (including those from historically marginalized or underrepresented populations) share (own) the goals and purpose of the Green School Project Roadmap.

Procedure	Performance indicators
2. ASSESS WHERE WE STAND: REVIEW SUSTAINABILITY PRACTICES OF THE SCHOOL **The audit involves the systematic assessment of the school's current practices, policies and infrastructure related to the sustainability areas identified in the Green School Project Roadmap. The audit will help to identify areas for improvement and serve as a foundation for developing a strategic and comprehensive Green School Action Plan.**	
▶ Based on the sustainability areas being investigated, decide on the type of data that will be gathered during the audit and the sources from where they will be gathered. ▶ Select a team of individuals who will be gathering the data. Make sure that learners are actively involved in the process. ▶ Set a timeline for the audit process. ▶ Collect the relevant data based on the sustainability areas being investigated. The data collected can be from primary sources (e.g. interviews with learners and staff, water meters) or secondary sources (e.g. existing policies and reports). Make sure to collect both qualitative and quantitative data. ▶ Analyse and evaluate the gathered data to identify areas where the school's sustainability performance is strong and areas that need improvement. ▶ Within the Team discuss recommended actions that will help improve the school's sustainability performance. ▶ Prepare a report that summarizes the audit's findings and proposed recommendations. ▶ Share the audit report and recommendations with relevant stakeholders and seek their feedback on it.	▶ The audit clearly identified the data and the sources from where they will be gathered, relevant to the sustainability areas chosen. ▶ The audit was conducted by members of the Team. ▶ Learners (including those from historically marginalized or underrepresented populations) were actively involved in the audit process. ▶ The audit process had a set timeline. ▶ Accurate qualitative and quantitative data were collected from primary and secondary sources. ▶ The gathered data were analysed and evaluated against regulations, policies and/or recognized sustainability standards, relevant to the sustainability areas chosen. ▶ Clear indicators were used to identify specific areas where the school's sustainability performance is strong and areas that need improvement. ▶ A set of clear and prioritized recommended actions to improve the school's sustainability performance were identified as relevant to the sustainability areas chosen. ▶ A report summarizing the audit's findings and proposed recommendations was shared with the school community. ▶ The audit report was shared with other relevant stakeholders.
3. DEVELOP A GREEN SCHOOL ACTION PLAN **Create a detailed action plan that outlines the steps, responsibilities and timelines for implementing the recommended actions identified in the audit report. Section 4 provides examples of these actions along with the relative level of resources needed for their successful implementation. To help schools strategize activities across the four major dimensions of a Green School, the actions are also grouped under the following headings: (i) School governance; (ii) Facilities and operation; (iii) Teaching and learning; and (iv) Community engagement.**	
▶ For each recommendation identified in the audit, develop a strategy of specific actions aimed at implementing the recommendation. Make sure that the action plan is not just a list of unrelated environmental actions. ▶ For each action identify: (i) the person(s) responsible for overseeing its implementation, (ii) the deadline by which the action is to be completed, (iii) the resources (including budget) needed, (iv) how progress will be monitored and (v) how it can be linked to the curriculum. Details concerning the Teaching and learning domain are spelled out in the *Greening Curriculum Guidance*.	▶ The Action Plan lists recommendations identified during the audit process. ▶ Each recommendation is translated into a strategy that outlines specific actions to be taken ▶ Each action identifies: (i) the person(s) responsible for its implementation, (ii) the deadline for completion, (iii) the resources (including budget) needed, (iv) how progress will be monitored and (v) links to the curriculum.

Procedure	Performance indicators
4. MONITOR AND EVALUATE PROGRESS ALONG THE GREEN SCHOOL ACTION PLAN **Regularly track and evaluate the progress along the Green School Action Plan to ensure that the process is on track, adapts to changing circumstances, and identifies emerging areas of focus.**	
▶ Conduct periodic evaluations to track progress towards targets and use data to identify areas that require improvement. ▶ Ensure that the evaluation data collected accurately reflect the school's sustainability efforts and progress by avoiding greenwashing. ▶ Consider involving external or independent parties to verify evaluation data to ensure that the assessment process is credible and objective.	▶ The Green School Action Plan lists SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Time-bound) targets providing a framework to effectively guide the monitoring and evaluation process. ▶ Persons (including learners) conducting the monitoring are trained to perform their role. ▶ Reliable methods for data collection were used to collect accurate and relevant data and information. ▶ The Green School Action Plan shows signs that plans were modified based on the feedback obtained from the evaluation. ▶ Monitoring and evaluation sessions are held periodically to track progress at predetermined intervals within the timeline of the Action Plan. ▶ External or independent parties were involved in the monitoring and evaluation process.
5. CELEBRATE AND SHARE ACHIEVEMENTS **Besides fostering a supportive environment and reinforcing positive behaviours, celebrating achievements recognizes and validates the progress made and motivates individuals to continue with their efforts.**	
▶ Recognize and reward the efforts of individuals, classes and teams that contribute significantly to the school's sustainability goals. ▶ Highlight good practices, share accomplishments and showcase the positive impact of sustainable practices with the school community. ▶ Celebrating achievements provides an opportunity to foster collaboration and shared responsibility for sustainability. ▶ Celebrating achievements demonstrates that sustainability is not just an isolated project but an integral part of the school's identity and ethos. ▶ Sharing and celebrating good practices can serve as a source of inspiration for other schools, educational institutions and the wider community as it demonstrates that living sustainably is possible.	▶ Multiple platforms (e.g. newsletters, websites, social media and school assemblies) and mediums (e.g. newspaper articles, photographs, video clips and presentations) were used to share achievements with the various stakeholders. ▶ The events celebrated the positive outcomes of the process towards improving environmental conditions, enhancing learner learning, promoting a greater sense of community and cultivating a positive reputation for the school. ▶ Certificates, awards, or public recognition were used to honour individuals, groups and organizations that contributed to the success of the Green School Action Plan ▶ The good practices and achievements were shared with external stakeholders (e.g. local authorities, CSOs, government agencies, businesses) to develop partnerships and foster joint events and campaigns. ▶ The celebration and sharing of achievements were an opportunity to inspire and guide other schools or organizations interested in pursuing similar initiatives. ▶ The celebration and sharing of achievements served as a valuable opportunity for the school community to engage in reflection and foster a culture of continuous improvement.

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Green school quality standard

Greening every learning environment

Building upon the demands expressed by young people to transform education to tackle climate change, this publication offers concrete steps for schools to transition into climate-ready green institutions.

Green school quality standard provides a comprehensive guide to support learning environments in integrating sustainability principles and climate action into the four core dimensions of whole-institution approach to Education for Sustainable Development: **School governance, Facilities and operation, Teaching and learning, and Community engagement**. The standard invites accreditation schemes that work with schools to align their criteria with at least one third of the actions proposed. Through the Greening Education Partnership and its Working Group on Green Schools, the Standard serves as the common language for all stakeholders to collaborate to jointly reach the global target of greening at least 50% of schools in all countries by 2030.

To catalyse this transformative journey and ensure that every learner is equipped to take action to address the climate crisis, commit to your action for the Greening Education Partnership.

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4 QUALITY EDUCATION

Sustainable Development Goals