SCHOOLS for EARTH

Climate Protection and Climate Justice Action Package

We are the first generation that can end poverty and the last that can end climate change.

Former UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon

Greenpeace is an international environmental organisation that uses non-violent direct action to protect the capacity of our planet Earth to nurture life in all its diversity. It is our goal to prevent environmental destruction, change behavioural patterns and implement solutions.

Greenpeace is above party lines and completely independent of governments, political parties and industry. Some 580,000 people in Germany support Greenpeace financially, thereby making our daily work to protect the environment possible.

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Educational concept and editing beta – Die Beteiligungsagentur

Educational consultant Mareike Hachemer

Design www.elisabethkatharina.de

Responsible for content Thomas Hohn

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Working together for a future worth living

Drought-stricken areas, sinking islands, habitat loss, increasing extreme weather and climate events, poverty and hunger – we usually think of catastrophic effects such as these when we talk about climate change.

But why don’t we talk about possible alternatives? About the kind of world we would like to live in? About what we can do now to make this vision a reality?

“We are the first generation that can end poverty and the last that can end climate change.” This is how former UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon described the task we face – and the opportunity we have. Together we can work towards making the world a diverse, sustainable and creative place – by starting in our own communities.

We are therefore calling on to teachers and students: turn your school into a “School for Earth”, committed to fighting climate change, promoting climate justice and creating a future worth living.
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**Here you can find …**

1. **Information for teachers**
   What role can Education for Sustainable Development play in the school context? How can schools, teachers and students get involved in climate protection and climate justice? You can find answers to these questions in the Information for Educators!

2. **Schools for Earth-Actionposter**
   What can individual students and teachers, but also classes and schools, do for the climate? On our Action Poster you can find ideas and inspirations about how to play an active part in climate protection and climate justice.
SCHOOLS for EARTH

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Information for Educators
Let’s take action and work together for climate protection and climate justice!

Thomas Hohn
is a campaigner for environmental and educational policy at Greenpeace Germany. He is also an honorary member of the Stiftung Bildung foundation and spokesman of the Bündnis Zukunftsbildung, an initiative of German non-governmental organisations active on youth and environmental issues, nature conservation, development and human rights.

Dear Educators,

People from all parts of the globe are beginning to take action. There is growing awareness that now is the time to act. More and more people are becoming seriously committed to mitigating climate change and bringing about climate justice – both publicly and politically – but above all in practical ways and locally. They are beginning to take a closer look at their own behaviour and exert a positive influence on others around them. I am particularly excited about the number of schools, students and educators around the globe that strive to be a driving force for change and are dedicated to fighting climate change and achieving climate justice.

When I see how schoolchildren in Brandenburg replaced plastic with sustainable alternatives, making their entire school more sustainable; when I look at Canada, where students are using creative methods to reclaim their local environment; when I see how Mareike Hachemer in Wiesbaden takes a hands-on approach to the UN’s Sustainable Development Goals in her classroom – these examples show me how this key interest – education for sustainable development – can be successful. This approach to education should empower people to understand complex relationships and issues and thereby develop future-oriented behaviours, effectively changing themselves and the society we live in.

Empowerment activities can range from simulation games focusing on the future to serving organic food in schools and youth participation in UN committees. We need spaces for creative thinking to explore new perspectives and develop ideas for the future. At the same time, it is essential to actively engage the next generation and ask them what they want their future, education and life to look like.

I am inspired by the idea that schools could be designed to be places where young people learn and experience how they themselves can make the world a better place. We call this “Education for Action”: education which both conveys knowledge and focuses on self-efficacy, responsibility and action.

The Greenpeace sustainability barometer, a representative survey of young people commissioned by Greenpeace and conducted by Leuphana University in Lüneburg, shows us that young people are quite eager to get involved and take action. So let’s take action and work together for climate protection and climate justice!

We would like to support you with this action package and help you turn your school into a School for Earth – a place where young people can learn, live and experience commitment to a better world.

Sincerely, Thomas Hohn
About the Schools for Earth action package

With the Schools for Earth action package, Greenpeace wishes to offer students and educators, indeed entire classes and schools, ideas on how to take an even greater step in progressing from knowledge to action, and to show them how they can take action to fight climate change and achieve climate justice instead of just dealing with climate change theoretically.

This leaflet will provide you with background information and suggestions on how you can strengthen and advance commitment to climate protection at your school.

The core component of the resources package is the Schools for Earth action poster. It is designed to inspire both educators and students to work towards protecting the climate and bringing about climate justice by offering tangible and practical ideas, and recommendations: with students in class, in interdisciplinary projects, with the entire school, or in a student project. Like the idea? Then hang up the poster in a prominent spot in the school building so that everyone in the school community can always see how much they can contribute to mitigating climate change.

Interview

How do you approach education for sustainable development?
When new students come to my class, I want to find out what their relationships to school and the world are like. Students usually express lots of frustration with the world and with their classes too. We then look at what they would like to change. Frequently, my students don’t find this easy because they have already given up believing in change. I then show them the 17 Sustainable Development Goals. They react either with scepticism or become curious and want to know how that’s supposed to work, and who, if anyone, is doing anything about it. Normally, we then begin by doing research or reaching out to and exchanging ideas with school classes in other parts of the world so that students also develop an emotional connection. Sometimes, I also notice that there are students who already have enough awareness to start thinking about actions that would allow us to contribute to sustainable development.

What obstacles do you encounter and how do you overcome them?
Sometimes, I get the impression that students are not at all used to looking for solutions and then actually implementing them. We have usually taught them to be very good critics, able to find fault with any idea, but they rarely come up with and act on good ideas of their own. So I keep raising the issues, and together with my students I look at the situation and ask questions. Why do you feel uncomfortable about this? What’s bothering you? Why do you get into such a bad mood whenever I encourage you to imagine a better world?

What motivates your commitment to the sustainability goals?
Without education, we will not meet any of the sustainability goals. Educational scientist Klafki proposed that we use education to resolve the key issues of our times. I believe that education based on the sustainability goals is the logical next step – it’s about key issues, but defined as goals. And everybody in our society should know about these goals and help contribute to achieving them, including the world’s 60 million teachers and 1.2 billion students. What motivates me is that every day I hear about educators around the globe who enthusiastically report on how their students are changing the world and flourishing because they are experiencing self-efficacy.

Do you have any advice for teachers who wish to advance education based on the sustainability goals?
My advice is to look at the Sustainable Development Goals and see how they are related to the subjects you teach. Initiate a school project week that addresses the global goals. Participate in “The World’s Largest Lesson”. Connect with other teachers who work on these issues, for example at TeachSDGs (www.teachsdgs.org, @TeachSDGs on Twitter).

Mareike Hachemer teaches German, English and Performing Arts in Wiesbaden. She was a finalist for the 2015 Global Teacher Prize and distinguished as one of the TOP 50; today, she is a member of the jury. She is active in various roles dedicated to improving education, advocating the Sustainable Development Goals and creating a positive teacher image. www.mareikehachemer.jimdo.com
Frequent Questions:
Politics and climate protection in school

1 What do climate change and politics have to do with schools? And why are they relevant to the subjects I teach?

Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) is a fundamental responsibility of the education system; it should be integrated into school and extracurricular learning and be reflected in everyday life in and outside of school. The guiding principle of ESD is to empower people to recognise sustainable development, and to think and act sustainably. The UN has resolved “(by 2030) to ensure that all learners acquire the knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, including, among others, through education for sustainable development.” The Curriculum Framework Education for Sustainable Development, a joint project of the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs and the German Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development, offers comprehensive overviews of appropriate teaching contexts and school development.

2 What objective does Greenpeace pursue with the action package and its educational material?

We believe that critically analysing issues related to the future and promoting involvement, including in political issues, can and should play an important role in schools. The Schools for Earth material is meant to encourage students and educators to address climate change and take action to protect our climate. The action package shows various ways of doing this. Only you can decide which ones you choose to use, taking into account your students, your approach to education and teaching, and your personal convictions.

3 Is it permissible to become politically active with students? What about the Beutelsbach Consensus?

It is up to each individual to decide for themselves whether they wish to become politically or practically involved in creating a better world, based on a critical discussion of the subject. The issue of political engagement in schools and the Beutelsbach Consensus is the subject of much debate, but it is important to observe its three principles in school. The prohibition against overwhelming students states that it is not permissible to catch students off guard, indoctrinate them, or hinder them from “forming their own independent judgements”. The imperative to present controversy requires that controversial issues be presented from a variety of perspectives and treated as controversial. This principle is not a requirement of neutrality which prohibits educators from dealing with political issues. The consideration of student interests means that “students must be put in a position to analyse a political situation and to assess how their own personal interests are affected, as well as to seek means and ways to influence the existing political situation in support of their own interests” – acting not only in their own self-interest, but also in the interest of the common good.

4 What do I do if individual students don’t want to participate or their parents don’t want them to?

If students do not want to become politically active or support measures to mitigate climate change, you should not and must not force them to do so. This, however, does not mean that that they cannot participate at all or that they should not be confronted with opinions they do not share. Involve such students by giving them roles that reflect their scepticism – they can, for example, be cast as critical reporters whose job it is to report on the action being carried out or who systematically research opposing views. An open approach to differing points of view is of central importance, allowing you to involve all students and show respect for their differences.

5 How can students and teachers take part in demonstrations?

Depending on the German state a school is in, its degree of freedom will vary when it comes to reconciling the fundamental right to freedom of assembly for students and educators during school hours with the duties and responsibilities of a teacher and compulsory school attendance. In principle, schools can grant individual students or groups leave upon application. Particularly when entire classes or study groups wish to take part in an action or demonstration, lessons can be rescheduled so that participation is made possible with no need to cancel classes. Furthermore, there are often no guidelines as to how schools should react when groups of students attend a demonstration instead of going to school. One thing is clear: under no circumstances should students be forced or pressured into taking part in a demonstration.

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1) See Nationaler Aktionsplan Bildung für nachhaltige Entwicklung (German National Action Plan on ESD), published by the National Platform on ESD, 2017. Download: www.bne-portale.de/de/infothek/publikationen/1891
2) For further information see the ESD portal of the German UNESCO Commission: www.bne-portale.de/de/einstieg
5) See writings by Sibylle Reinhardt, for example, and the publication Brauchen wir den Beutelsbacher Konsens? [Do We Need the Beutelsbacher Consensus?], Federal Agency for Civic Education, published by B. Widmaier and P. Zorn, Bonn, 2016.
6) See, for example, www.schulministerium.nrw.de/docs/Recht/Aktuelle-rechtliche-Themen/Streiks-Demos/index.html
Do climate issues play a role in class?

In addition to conventional knowledge teaching, the most important aim of education is to help students to take action. Your school does this? Do you have an opportunity to be creative and practice?

Are there any learning projects about climate protection and climate justice?

The interdisciplinary educational project "Sustainable Development" of the Hamburg International School is an example of good practice in this field. The project is part of the "Global Goals" initiative of the United Nations. The interdisciplinary educational project "Sustainable Development" of the Hamburg International School is an example of good practice in this field. The project is part of the "Global Goals" initiative of the United Nations.

Do we talk about protecting our climate and climate justice at school?

Climate change affects all of us, and the effects of climate change are already being felt in our daily lives. It is important to talk about the issue of climate change at school and to involve the students in action. Teachers and students can work together to make a difference.

What can we do to fight climate change and promote climate justice?

Many schools have already embarked on this path and established a firm and ongoing commitment to fighting climate change. Are you one of them? Do you want to learn about climate protection in class – there are lots of good resources!

How can we as a school affect the world around us?

Climate change and climate justice are issues that are important for all of us, and the effects of climate change are already being felt in our daily lives. It is important to talk about the issue of climate change at school and to involve the students in action. Teachers and students can work together to make a difference.

Get some help!

You have ideas on how to engage your students? Then you're not alone! Lots of schools and teachers are already taking action to fight climate change and promote climate justice.

Recognise engagement!

Are you interested in climate change and want new ideas? Or are you looking for new opportunities to get involved in climate change?

Implement practical projects!

A project doesn’t always have to be big to help our climate. Local action at school can have a big impact. Why not encourage students to take action in their local environment? Start with something small and see where it takes you.

Be creative!

The future depends on education. Be creative! The future depends on education. Be creative! The future depends on education. Be creative! The future depends on education. Be creative! The future depends on education. Be creative! The future depends on education. Be creative! The future depends on education. Be creative! The future depends on education.
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