Climate Change Education Inside and Outside the Classroom

UNESCO Course
Module 1

ESD as a response to climate change in Africa and SIDS
1. Brief overview of human vulnerability in the context of climate change

2. Education for Sustainable Development as a response
   - Background to ESD
   - ESD’s underlying values

3. Educational approaches associated with ESD

4. Group activity: expanding our understandings of educational approaches
Consider the heightened risk of human vulnerability to climate change caused by links between:

- Impacts of climate change
- Environmental degradation
- Ecological systems under pressure
- Inadequate knowledge
- Increased disasters due to natural hazards
- Poor governance
- Poverty
Stresses linked to climate change are predicted to include:

- inundation of low-lying coastal areas due to rising sea levels;
- shortages of fresh water;
- changes in agricultural practices (and hence economic activity) due to changed climate patterns;
- loss of biodiversity and the decline of natural ecosystems;
- vulnerability to extreme weather events.

(See notes: “Climate Change Impact Descriptions”)
WHAT IS EDUCATION FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT (ESD)?

- ESD offers a holistic framework for considering and integrating ecological, economic, social and cultural sustainability.

- ESD addresses the complexity and interconnectedness of global issues with a framework of underlying values:
  - Respect for the dignity and human rights of all;
  - A commitment to social and economic justice for all;
  - Respect for the greater community of other-than human life and protection of ecosystems;
  - Respect for cultural diversity and commitment to building a culture of tolerance, non-violence and peace.

(UNESCO, 2005, p. 7-8)
MITIGATION: identifying the causes of climate change and developing the knowledge, skills and values needed to rectify those causes.

ADAPTATION: building resilience and reducing vulnerability to climate change impacts.

UNDERSTANDING & ATTENTIVENESS: not only understanding the causes and impacts of climate change, but creating a mind-set of alertness, care and responsibility at individual and communal levels.
Secondary school teachers have a vital role to play in equipping young people and communities to reduce their vulnerability to multiple stresses caused by climate change.

Through locally relevant, up-to-date and critically-informed curriculum activities, secondary school teachers can:

- Develop knowledge, skills and values needed in communities to adapt to climate change stresses;
- Provide essential information related to disaster risk management;
- Initiate projects and networks to take appropriate action, locally and globally;
- Develop critical thinking skills and ethical responses in young people to foster the social change needed for climate change mitigation.
ESD APPROACHES IN THE CONTEXT OF CLIMATE CHANGE:

- Holistic, multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary
- Critical and creative thinking
- Science-based and information-based
- Open-ended
- Local and global
- Ethics-oriented
- Futures-oriented
- Action and change-oriented
- Whole-school approach
Divide the class into nine groups, and allocate each group a different subsection from the Educational Approaches section.

Each group should read, discuss and report back to the rest of the class a *summary of the main points* in their section.

As the notes on each section are presented as ‘starting points’ rather than definitive texts on each approach, groups are encouraged to engage critically, to identify gaps, and elaborate by providing examples of the opportunities and limitations of this approach from their own context.