



Getting started with climate change education

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Interviewees

Pooja Bhatia

Principle

The Ardee New Friends Colony, India

Samson Madzudza

Teacher and Exams Officer

Gateway High School, Zimbabwe

Susan Holmes

Principle

Nehru World School, India

Paola Izzi

Teacher and Exams Offices

Scuola Europa, Italy

What can schools and teachers do?

Pooja

Firstly, it should be a whole school approach. An approach with every stakeholder, whether it's a parent, or it's the senior leadership team or it's a student.

Samson

What we want is to make sure that the learners know about climate change, even from as low a grade as grade ones going up.

Pooja

In our school, we start very small. We tell them to switch lights off daily. We encourage them to reduce plastic. We tell them to adopt sustainable practices.

Samson

We can have maybe some competitions about climate change, where we will have some

classes having a competition on which ones would have better knowledge about the causes of climate change and again, the effects of climate change.

Pooja

So our school vision and mission statement should be such that it reflects the climate change education goals.

Susan

What I found when we looked at our own mission statements was that it's actually all encompassing enough, and climate change can easily be integrated into what we're doing because our vision and mission statement supports it.

Paola

They can make the students calculate their own carbon footprint. That could be a good way to make each individual student assess his or her lifestyle.

Pooja

All our students in our school know that they have to reduce their carbon footprint. So they all measure the impact that they make on the environment by adopting small small practice.

Paola

Especially the little ones are not so aware of the difference that can be made by the way they got to school - car, bike, just going on foot. So there are many, simple actions that everyone can take. And I think that's very important for the students to understand.

Samson

Here we have the El Niños that have caused a devastating drought. So when we have a poster and we have competitions of making posters among the children, in that way knowledge is passed from one class to the other, from one child to the other.

Pooja

So we have started a movement which says "Every plate tells a story". We explain to students that you need to be mindful of your own plate. So you have to notice small things like how much processed sugar is in your plate, how much food are you wasting, how much junk food are you having, and where is the food which is on your plate coming from?

Paola

Local case studies, or any kind of information that the students can relate to.

Pooja

And we realised that every student mostly every one, carries a plastic pencil box. We have around 800 students in school. We thought, how about just devoting six months to making every student replace that pencil box? So we started giving them options on how you can have a cloth pencil box, how you can make a recycled pencil box, and started creating awareness.

Susan

If you're looking for a place to start, I would recommend that the Global Perspectives course, which runs from grade one through to grade 12 as part of the Cambridge curriculum, is an excellent place to start you on your journey.



Pooja

Like in Global Perspectives, they say that, do it at a personal level, then carry it forward to your local, then make a difference in community. And when you make a difference in community, there is a whole difference that you can make in the world around you.