

News

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Measures to address the climate crisis: 3rd International Conference on Education for Climate Change defines goals

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The importance of education as an effective measure against climate change was emphasized at the Conference on Education for Climate Change and Sustainable Development, which took place online – well attended by 9,000 participants – from June 22nd to 24th. The initiators, in addition to the main organizers Universidad de Chile and Center for Climate and Resilience Research (CR)², the Office for Climate Education (OCE), Siemens Stiftung and other institutions, set the implementation of new educational methods as well as networking and cross-sectoral cooperation as goals in a joint declaration.

Among the main objectives of the conference is to recognize the shared responsibility of each person to actively engage in the protection and care of the environment and to engage citizens and institutions in cross-sectoral collaboration to strengthen climate change education. New alliances should be created to strengthen local and regional networks. In addition, it is important to support action that respects and promotes nature, culture and, above all, education.

Thus, the social impact of the Covid-19 pandemic has shown that it is essential to address inequities in education. This is especially true for the subjects of Science, Technology, Engineering, Art and Mathematics (STEAM). Education is particularly relevant in climate change because the sharing of knowledge and the transmission of experience can bring about a change in mentality. The way forward lies in the implementation of active methods – for example, design thinking, project-based learning or scientific inquiry – as already promoted by the ICEC Program - MINEDUC Chile, Universidad de Chile, Siemens Stiftung, UNESCO, Office for Climate Education (OCE) and in general all allies of the Red STEM Latinoamérica.

Accordingly, Dr. Nina Smidt, Managing Director and Spokesperson for the Siemens Stiftung foundation, summarizes the main objectives: "The major challenges of our time can only be met jointly in the form of networks. Heterogeneous actors at different levels must be connected with each other. New methods such as design thinking can be used significantly to solve problems in education."

And Ulrike Wahl, Head of the Siemens Stiftung Regional Office Latin America, adds concerning the targeted alliances: "My feeling after this 3rd conference is that we are only a small step away from being able to fully link arms. This is where the idea of region and collaborative capacity among players takes force, from academia, teachers, government authorities, the private sector, and civil society. Based on diverse regional alliances, we can drive changes that, from a local perspective, integrate a more global view."

Three conferences in a row

The 3rd Conference on Education for Climate Change and Sustainable Development made a renewed commitment to align with the Sustainable Development Goals promoted by UNESCO and to adhere to the newly

established key targets. In this regard, the idea of cross-sectoral collaboration to strengthen climate change education already dates back to the first conference in 2019.

As a result, numerous alliances were established at the level of educational institutions and teaching networks, and increasingly with Ministries of Education, Departments of Education, and universities. In addition, investments were made in interregional cooperations, such as the network Red STEM Latinoamérica, coordinated by Siemens Stiftung. The goal of the 2nd conference in 2020 was to share visions and experiences around education for climate change and its relation to the challenges for sustainable development – and to achieve a paradigm shift led by joint efforts from local to global.

The progress made towards these objectives was highlighted by Macarena Troncoso, coordinator of RedLAMA: “I get the feeling that there has been great evolution since the 1st conference in 2019. We have observed a stronger collaboration and horizontal alignment in our work, inviting people from different areas to achieve the goal of sustainable development, ideally by 2030.”

The 3rd International Conference on Education for Climate Change and Sustainable Development was held online from June 22nd to 24th under the theme "Urgent Action for Climate Change". It featured 52 speakers, 12 webinars, two conferences, four panels, three master classes and two keynotes. The event was again organized by the ICEC Program - Ministry of Education Chile in coordination with the Universidad de Chile, the Center for Climate and Resilience Research (CR)², Instituto de Estudios Avanzados en Educación CIAE, the ECBI Program, RedLAMA, Siemens Stiftung, the Office for Climate Education (OCE) and UNESCO. It was held under the auspices of the Ministries of Education and Environment of Chile and the German government, represented by the German embassy in Chile.

The 4th International Conference on Education for Climate Change and Sustainable Development is scheduled for mid-2022.

About Siemens Stiftung

As a nonprofit foundation, we promote sustainable social development, which is crucially dependent on access to basic services, high-quality education, and an understanding of culture. To this effect, our project work supports people in taking the initiative to responsibly address current challenges. Together with partners, we develop and implement solutions and programs to support this effort, with technological and social innovation playing a central role. Our actions are impact-oriented and conducted in a transparent manner.

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