

Greening Every School

Global Basic Standard on Accreditation of Green Schools

Draft for consultation

February 2024

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Global Basic Standard on Accreditation of Green Schools

Foreword

Draft

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List of Abbreviations

ESD	Education for Sustainable Development
CSSF	Comprehensive School Safety Framework
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
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

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Glossary of terms

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: involves 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.

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.

Global Basic Standard: refers to a set of fundamental criteria essential for the establishment of a Green School. These criteria cover the four major dimensions of a Green School (i.e., School Governance, Facilities and Operation, Teaching and Learning, and Community Engagement). Each dimension is set at a threshold of 30%, with one essential action identified within each dimension (four in total).

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

Green procurement: involves acquiring goods and services that have minimal environmental impact throughout their lifecycle, aiming at reducing greenhouse gas emissions, improve air quality, reduce waste, and protect natural resources.

Green School as used in this publication is understood as an educational institution that integrates the core principles of environmental responsibility, sustainability, and resource efficiency in its teaching and learning, facilities and operations, school governance and community partnerships to minimize environmental impact, raise awareness, and inspire environmentally conscious citizens. Although its specific implementation and priorities might differ based on the local context, a Green School actively involves learners in initiatives promoting knowledge, skills, values, and attitudes for social, economic, cultural, and environmental dimensions of sustainable development through a whole-institution approach to education for sustainable development (ESD).

Greenwashing: when companies use tricks in their marketing to make people think their products or policies are eco-friendly, even though they might not be. They do this to take advantage of the growing interest in environmentally friendly things.

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: refers to 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.

I. Introduction

I.1 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 Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) and the Global Framework of ESD for 2030 which recognizes the major role of ESD as a key element of quality education and constitutes the New Social Contract for Education. Its cross-cutting competencies in cognitive, socio-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, particularly, 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 and its impact across all aspects of our societies, leading young people to call for a more holistic approach to education related to climate change. An approach that would empower learners of all ages with the knowledge, skills, values, and agency to make informed decisions and make responsible actions to adapt and mitigate the impacts of the climate crisis by acting as agents of change.

To address this youth demand, the communication term ‘greening education’ is introduced to describe this revised approach to education’s response to climate crisis, and **the task of defining ‘greening school’ as the process through which learning institutions get climate-ready is the focus of this document.**

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 youth surveyed in a recent study said that they had limited understanding about climate change based on what they have learned in school. In the absence of clear and relevant solutions from the top, they are taking transformative, contextually relevant, participatory, and emancipatory actions to promote sustainability and address concerns about the relative lack of climate action. Young people 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 half of the curricula examined did not feature climate change. The inclusion of climate change content was more common in countries mostly 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.

Faced with the tangible impacts of climate change, the lack of urgency with which climate change is being addressed in education, and inadequate educational provision, young people are demanding quality education related to climate change to help them face the present and future challenges of this pressing global issue. This implies collaborative efforts among governments, education policymakers, academics, educators, and teacher trainers to establish green schools that prepare all

learners to get climate-ready by fostering sustainability and encourage them to engage in adapting and mitigating the impacts of climate change.

This is where **school accreditation schemes** come in as 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 NGOs) 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 document. 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 on defining what a climate-ready green school looks like. Over the years, a considerable amount 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, one needs to question whether we are adopting the right approach and whether we 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 focuses on being adaptive and open to change and diversity.

I.2 Why Green School Standard?

Climate-ready 'Green Schools' serve as agents of social change, fostering global citizenship, encouraging community action, and incorporating Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) into the curriculum to instil a sustainable culture. This transformative potential goes beyond the school walls, cultivates community connections involving various stakeholders, and provides models for climate resilience and sustainable practices. 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 Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) programs.

The Global Basic Standard on Accreditation of Green Schools is a comprehensive framework designed to help harmonize the criteria of school accreditation schemes, ranging from school certification and labels, awards, school-based initiatives and projects demonstrating a commitment, through the lens of whole-institution approach to ESD- integrating 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. This Standard offers a structured approach that makes the holistic transformation towards climate-ready school easier and provides educational institutions the tools they need to deal with daily challenges. The Standard aims to:

- identify specific Green School criteria that cover various aspects of educational practices, sustainability, and stewardship that encourage educational institutions to adopt sustainable and innovative practices to reduce their ecological footprint, promote resource conservation, and enhance environmental awareness and 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 fosters 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;
- advocate for the active contribution of Green Schools to the attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals, thereby supporting global efforts to address climate change, biodiversity conservation, and other challenges.

The main target audience for this Standard is the organizers and implementers of the accreditation systems, which are essential facilitators of sustainable practices in educational environments.

- Accreditation scheme organizers range from international associations, governments to non-profit/civil society organisations 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.
- Accreditation scheme implementers include the education authorities at different levels, civil society organizations, schools, universities, and community learning centres.

In addition, the Standard informs the policy makers at large in developing education and climate change policies for school.

Benchmark: The minimum threshold for alignment of the criteria of the existing accreditation schemes with the Standard is one third (1/3) of 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 achieve larger proportions of the suggested activities to be integrated in due course as an on-going commitment of the school's sustainable practices.

Goal : With its call of getting every learner climate-ready, the Greening Education Partnership brings together various partners from Member States and the organizations running the accreditation schemes, with **the goal of transforming at least 50% of schools, colleges, and universities into Green**

Schools by 2030, a target that is being considered to be measured using the national SDG 4 benchmark process, within which countries will set national benchmark targets for progress for the years 2025 and 2030.

I.3 What is a Green School?

Green school as used in this publication is defined as a learning institution that takes a whole-institution approach 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 constituting safe and resilient places of learning as well as forming innovative learning grounds for the learners and the local communities to be equipped with the adequate knowledge, skills, values and attitudes to address the impacts of climate change.

a) The principles of a Green School

The success of the 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. It 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), it 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 from many traditional educational models. 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 global citizens who are concerned about the current situation and 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 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 more people and planet-friendly practices. Prioritizing sustainability implies recognising 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 principles of sustainability, enhancing climate change awareness and action, integrating climate action into curricula, the design of indoor and outdoor grounds, inclusive school governance, and 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 stewardship

One major value that stands out when promoting sustainability is stewardship. This value promotes a sense of accountability and 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 responsibility to act as responsible custodians entrusted with the responsible management and care of resources to ensure the well-being of current and future generations. By embracing stewardship, a Green School commits itself to sustainable practices that conserve resources, and protect ecosystems, recognizing the importance of mitigating climate change impacts. 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 approach to decision-making involving all relevant stakeholders become habitual routine practices supported by policies.

b) The Whole Institution Approach to Green School

The Whole Institution Approach (WIA) identified 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.

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;
- ✓ 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
- ✓ develop mechanisms for receiving feedback and foster a culture of continuous improvement, action, and innovation, leading to more effective and sustainable educational practices.

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

- 1) implementing climate-proof, sustainable building designs and technologies, and incorporating green infrastructure within the school grounds;
- 2) designing a formal curriculum and non-formal learning opportunities that provides various teaching strategies that cater for the 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;
- 3) facilitating learner involvement in decision-making and participation in opportunities that promote active engagement within the school community and beyond; and
 - 4) considering families and community organizations as valid partners in education and establishing strong collaborative partnerships to enhance the educational potential of the school.

II. Four core dimensions of Green School Standard

With their potential of 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 promoting 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 stewardship. 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 system & 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.

Under each dimension, concrete steps are offered, arranged according to the resources needed, enabling educational institutions to customize their strategy to fit their capacities and contexts. Given the interdisciplinary and system-based nature of education to tackle climate change, some proposed actions may be relevant to more than one dimension (hence some apparent repetition of certain actions).

Summary diagram illustrating the interconnectedness of the various components of a green school to be added

Every school in their own journey

Education institutions aiming to achieve the Global Basic Standard on Accreditation of Green Schools would need to:

- Familiarize themselves with the principles and requirements outlined in the Standard paying close attention to the four key dimensions outlined above.
- Evaluate their current practices in each dimension and determine the areas that require improvement.
- Establish specific and attainable goals for every dimension, setting priorities for the actions that will affect the school's sustainability practices the most.
- Identify specific, applicable, and quantifiable actions for every dimension required to meet the predetermined goals. **The threshold for alignment with the Standard's requirements is set at 30% for each of the four key dimensions of a Green School, with four essential actions identified within each dimension.**
- Keep track of the progress using benchmarks and key performance indicators; and modify actions as necessary to resolve problems encountered.
- Make a commitment to lifelong learning and development of sustainable practices by reviewing actions in response to emerging circumstances.

Under each of the 4 dimensions, there is one essential action which is deemed as pivotal for being a Green School. Other than the 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.

This Standard proposes to categorise actions according to the resources required for their implementation – with the actions requiring the least resources being the ones that can be easily implemented as 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 actions that could be adapted to each school's context, such as urban/rural settings, age groups, institution size, and economic differences. The list is not intended as a checklist but as a collection of suggested actions or a source of inspirations encouraging the synergies between the top-down and bottom-up approaches. 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 engage in meaningful actions.

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II.1 School Governance

School governance plays a crucial role in a school's 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 their 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 stewardship from all individuals.

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 building, 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	✓			
	Promote a low resource consumption culture (conducive to the principles of a circular economy) by organizing workshops to engaged 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 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 in 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 can facilitate this process.	Moderate to High	✓			
	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 increasing 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, ensuring the representation from youth, girls/women, people with disabilities, indigenous peoples and other minority groups while promoting gender balance and inclusivity in the spirit of no-one being left behind.	Low to Moderate	✓	✓		✓
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 local or international research centres that provide up-to-date data and information about climate risks 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	✓	✓		✓
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 identifies 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 NGOs, 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	✓	✓	✓	✓
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		✓	✓	✓
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 regarding stewardship.	Moderate				✓
Partner with local indigenous organizations or NGOs 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		✓	✓	✓

II.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, minimise 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 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) 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. Ensure gender balance and inclusivity in the Team 's composition.	Low	✓	✓	✓				
Train cleaning staff on water-efficient cleaning techniques , such as using microfiber mops and spray bottles, highlighting the role of water conservation in climate change mitigation.		Low		✓					
Use outdoor spaces as outdoor 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 into this action to encourage sustainable actions, and foster a culture of environmental stewardship 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			✓				
Promote active commuting to reduce carbon emissions and mitigate climate change by 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				✓			

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 Fair¹ for the school and/or the surrounding community during which participants exchange or trade items, like clothing, accessories, books, household goods, toys, they no longer need.	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 where volunteers and/or skilled repairers teach learners basic repair techniques for broken or damaged items, like clothing, electronics, and bicycles, thus prolonging their lifespan, reduce waste and promote 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				✓	✓		
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	Low	✓						

¹ 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.

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.							
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-water usage, 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		✓				
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			✓			
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		✓				✓	
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				✓			
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 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 ² , low-flow water taps, toilets, and urinals, to reduce water consumption as part of the school's climate mitigation actions.	Moderate	✓	✓				✓	

² Water hippos: water-filled containers placed in toilet cistern to reduce the amount of water used with every flush.

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			✓				
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, and support climate change adaptation and mitigation actions, promotes a habitat for pollinator-friendly species, and contributes to biodiversity.	Moderate		✓			✓		✓
Create rain gardens with native plants to capture and filter stormwater runoff, enhance water quality, replenish groundwater, and 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)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
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	✓			✓			
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		✓			✓	✓	
Install a greywater recycling system to reuse greywater from sinks and showers for non-potable purposes, like toilet flushing, and landscape irrigation, and promoting 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		✓				✓	
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						✓	

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		✓				✓	
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 programs 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	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓
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						✓	
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						✓	
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			✓				✓
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, promote sustainable diet choices while improving the health and wellbeing 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, emphasising the school's commitment to social responsibility and environmental stewardship.	Moderate					✓	✓	
Promote the transition to low-emission or electric vehicles in the school's vehicle fleet to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and air pollution.	High	✓			✓			

II.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. 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 that 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 21st-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 learner 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 crisis 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 solution, tackling the multidimensional aspects related to the climate crisis and therefore concretely contribute to adaptation and mitigation measures to address climate change rather than just addressing the symptoms.

UNESCO and the Greening Education Partnership is developing the *Greening Curriculum Guidance* that offers 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 below table offers 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, 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 into the school's curriculum to raise awareness and stress the significance of climate-proofing and preparedness.	Low	✓	✓	✓		
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. 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 environmental stewardship 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			✓	✓	
Organise 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 <i>Greening Curriculum Guidance</i> 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 reflect on 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			✓	✓	
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 solely 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 programs 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 continue to teach sustainability through practice with their children at home.	Low to moderate	✓			✓	✓
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 also 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	✓	✓	✓		
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	✓	✓	✓		✓
Set up a composting project that is managed and maintained by the 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 an 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 stewardship, communication, project management, teamwork, journalism, and advocacy, and behaviour change related to climate change and sustainability.	Moderate			✓	✓	✓
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 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, 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	Moderate to High	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

pamphlets, designing promotional posters, organizing workshops, raising awareness, and advocating for climate change and other aspects of sustainability.						
Engage learners in hands-on environmental activities that include volunteering for habitat restoration projects, climate actions and community support.	Moderate to High		✓	✓	✓	✓

II.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 responsibility, financial stability, and environmental stewardship. Community engagement implies involving diverse community stakeholders, including parents, local businesses, environmental groups, local authorities, 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, instil 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 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	✓			✓	
Create informational materials about climate-proofing and climate readiness measures and distribute them among the school and the local community.		Low	✓			✓	
Forge partnerships with NGOs that can provide essential supplies, such as textbooks, writing materials, and basic classroom furniture.		Low	✓			✓	
Organize bicycle donation programs 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		Moderate	✓	✓		✓	

conservation, and waste management) related to climate change mitigation and adaptation strategies.						
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	✓		✓		✓
Establish partnerships between the school and NGOs 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 NGOs 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	✓				
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 skills, 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				✓	
Develop community outreach programmes where learners actively engage with parents, residents, businesses, health systems, social enterprises, charities and community groups through workshops,	Moderate	✓				✓

training sessions, information campaigns, and behaviour change initiatives focusing on community-based climate change mitigation and adaptation actions.						
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 firsthand in climate action.	Moderate	✓				
Set up alumni involvement programs. 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					✓
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 NGOs or governmental organizations.	Low	✓	✓		✓	

Promote the development of repair skills within the community through local workshops, making use of local expertise.	Low		✓		✓	
Offer programs 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		✓		✓	
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		✓			
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					✓

III. Strategic pathways for implementing Green School accreditation

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 internalised by the various actors.

III.1 For accreditation scheme owners

Q. What are the components of training programmes that accreditation schemes need to provide to support schools in their efforts to become Green Schools?"

- A. The training programmes should (i) introduce accrediting standards and discuss them with educational institutions in their own context. Once they identify gaps and opportunities, provide practical advice on how to translate them into their daily activities, (ii) address the assessment / evaluation techniques to ensure effective implementation and follow-up, (iii) encourage collaborative actions through partnerships with key players, and (iv) have feedback mechanisms that facilitate continual improvement of sustainability practices.

Q. What is the threshold for alignment, and how is it determined?

- A. To initiate the accreditation process, schools should conduct a comprehensive evaluation of their current practices within each dimension to identify areas requiring improvement and possible actions. The choice of each action depends on the school's context and available resources: its size, its existing infrastructure, the available expertise, resources and support, and the level of stakeholder commitment. Schools are free to adopt any action from the list provided in Section 4 and identify other inspirations.

The existing accreditation schemes are encouraged to align with the Standard, which sets a minimum threshold of alignment with one third (1/3) of suggested activities for each dimension and encourages advancement - towards half, two-third, and all- as the school achieves its sustainability goals over time. This underscores a commitment to ongoing development of the school's sustainable practices.

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. In this light, adopting a progressive approach that will recognize additional efforts made by schools to progress in their green school journey beyond the 30% minimum threshold could be beneficial. Additional recognition could be granted when a school achieves 50%, 80% or 100% of alignment for each dimension.

Q. How is the alignment of accreditation schemes validated?

- A. An open validation process involves individual accreditation schemes informing Greening Education Partnership on how it aligns with the Global Basic Standard whether through already existing criteria or through active update of their criteria. The Working Group 1 on Green Schools of the Greening Education Partnership creates a peer group of accreditation scheme implementers and policy makers that facilitates exchange of good practices.

Q. What procedures are in place to manage how the alignment is put into practice?

- A. The operational aspect involves the periodic publication every 2 years of a list of accreditation schemes that align with the Global Basic Standard. Additionally, there is an ongoing process of monitoring the number of schools meeting the Global Basic Standard. These procedures ensure effective implementation and management of alignment practices.

UNESCO extends an invitation to governments, organizations, and educational institutions to share any information to identify and map existing accreditation schemes by completing the survey available at the following link: <https://secure.unesco.org/survey/index.php?sid=11561>. For the purposes of this document, accreditation schemes encompass school certification and labels conferred by governments or organizations, awards recognizing schools for exemplary practices on climate change as an entry point to ESD, as well as school-based initiatives and projects demonstrating a commitment to tackle climate change.

III.2 For governments

Q. How can my country benefit from collaborating with Green School accreditation schemes?

- A. There are several accreditation schemes that aim to green school in many countries (see the annex – the list of the GEP partners offering the schemes, etc.). Collaborating with these existing ones is a first step so schools in your country could benefit from their expertise and network.

Q. What is the significance of developing a new accreditation scheme led by the government?

- A. If there is no relevant accreditation schemes in your country, developing a new government-led accreditation scheme could be planned using the Global Basic Standard, as having a nationally recognized framework would help ensure consistent application of the standards, and provide basis for systemic monitoring and evaluation across educational institutions in the country. It is key to get involved all stakeholders in the development process – including school leaders, educators, learners, parents, CSOs, local governments, business sector, etc.

Q. How can the governments support schools in their efforts to become Green Schools?

- A. 1) provide information and training sessions for school leadership and teachers to ensure a thorough understanding of the country's policy frameworks and available support for schools; 2) provide opportunities for partnerships and networking among schools and stakeholders; 3) connect schools with other relevant mechanisms including disaster risk management, environmental conservation, health and nutrition sectors, construction, energy or agricultural sectors as well as scientific community to foster collaboration in greening schools.

III.3 For Schools

Q. Why should my school consider joining one of the accreditation schemes in my country aligned with the Global Basic Standard?

- A. Joining an aligned accreditation scheme in your country provides a structured approach to implementing and meeting established standards, fostering a collective commitment to sustainable practices.

Q. What steps should my school consider when joining accreditation schemes aligned with the Global Basic Standard?

A. The main target audience for this Standard is owners and implementers of accreditation schemes, which are essential facilitators of sustainable practices in educational environments. The recommended procedural steps include thorough consideration and adherence to the outlined guidelines and requirements set by the accreditation scheme, ensuring a smooth and effective integration into the sustainable practices framework.

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

A. Establishing priorities, providing templates and frameworks, suggesting resource allocation, 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 document 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 function 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.

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

- (i) choosing to divide the journey into manageable bits without an overarching plan, thus being more flexible to adjust along the way, while meeting the 30% for each of the four key dimensions of a Green School, with one essential action identified within each dimension (four in total); and
- (ii) meticulously planning out the entire journey in advance ensuring that every step is carefully orchestrated while meeting the 30% for each of the four key dimensions of a Green School, with one essential action identified within each dimension (four in total).

Both approaches have their merits and drawbacks. Whether to choose one or the other depends on the preferences of school leadership, community, school governing body or the educational authorities of the country, resources available, and the nature of the journey itself. The same applies to when a school opts to become a Green School through a WIA. Due to the 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 (as those suggested in Section 4) 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 this Global Basic Standard sets the threshold for alignment at 30% for each of the four key dimensions of a Green School. 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 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 for the school.

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 satisfy the 30% compliance threshold. As the school community gains knowledge, skills, experience, and resources, sustainable practices become ingrained in daily routines possibly ushering the time for a well-planned strategy, with ESD with focus on climate action at its core, to guide long-term sustainability efforts.

III.3.1 Process of Whole Institution Approach

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

Moreover, other inherent challenges need to be addressed to ensure the successful development of a Green School through a WIA:

- An integrated approach fosters 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 the teachers' ability to develop a broader understanding of pedagogical approaches, instructional strategies, and assessment methods that support a WIA.
- A WIA promotes collaboration and shared decision-making within a school community, encouraging learners to become autonomous and critical thinkers. It encourages questioning of traditional methods and active participation in promoting change. By promoting shared leadership and inclusive decision-making processes, a WIA creates opportunities where learners and teachers can actively contribute to shaping teaching and learning experiences. Engaging stakeholders in policy and practice requires fostering participatory and inclusive decision-making processes that incorporate diverse perspectives and promote social equity. While stakeholders, such as parents, community members, and organizations external to the immediate school community may have different interests and expectations, it is essential to create a platform for clear communication and sharing of ideas about the school's goals and rationale. Providing opportunities for education and open dialogue can build a shared understanding and a sense of ownership of the approach among all stakeholders. This redistribution of decision-making power benefits all members of the school community, allowing for a more inclusive and equitable learning experience.
- Adopting a WIA requires embracing new ideas, pedagogical approaches, and ways of working that may challenge traditional settings and norms in education. However, this transition does not have to be threatening; instead, it can prove to be an opportunity for growth and improvement. Bridging the gap between traditional settings and a WIA requires patience and understanding allowing stakeholders to adapt gradually and witness the positive impact of the new approach firsthand.

The process through which a school becomes a Green School through a WIA by adopting a well-planned and focused strategy is outlined in the following table.

Procedure	Performance indicators
1. Developing 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.	
- 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 the 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. - 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.	- 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 Team. - 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. - Specific sessions were 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 prioritised based on available community resources and needs.

• 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.	• 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.
2. Assess where we stand: Review of 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.	• 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.

• 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 summarises the audit's findings and proposed recommendations. • Share the audit report and recommendations with relevant stakeholders and seek their feedback on it.	• 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 were identified. • A set of clear and prioritised 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,	• The Action Plan lists recommendations identified during the audit process. • Each recommendation is translated into a strategy that outlines specific actions to be taken.

(iii) the resources (including budget) needed, (iv) how progress will be monitored and (iv) how it can be linked to the curriculum. Details concerning the Teaching and Learning domain are spelled out in the <i>Greening Curriculum Guidance</i>.	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 (iv) links to the curriculum.
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.	Multiple platforms (e.g., newsletters, websites, social media, and school assemblies) and mediums (e.g., newspaper articles, photographs, video

• 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.	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, NGOs, 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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IV. Conclusion

The application of a Whole Institution Approach to develop and sustain a Green School, sounds like a tall order, 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 highly resourced schools (where everything is possible) but also for the 'normal' schools that struggle daily to stay afloat. No one recipe would fit every reality. However, when schools and teachers are committed to a specific goal, they possess the uncanny resilience to continue functioning, providing education, and supporting learners even in the face of various challenges. Just imagine what they can achieve 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. This would give education role, both as victim and solution, to tackle climate change currency and justification within educational and climate change circles.
- 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 Whole Institution Approach 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.

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