

**REWIRING  
EDUCATION:  
THE CLIMATE -  
EDUCATION NEXUS**

*at a glance*



# OVERVIEW

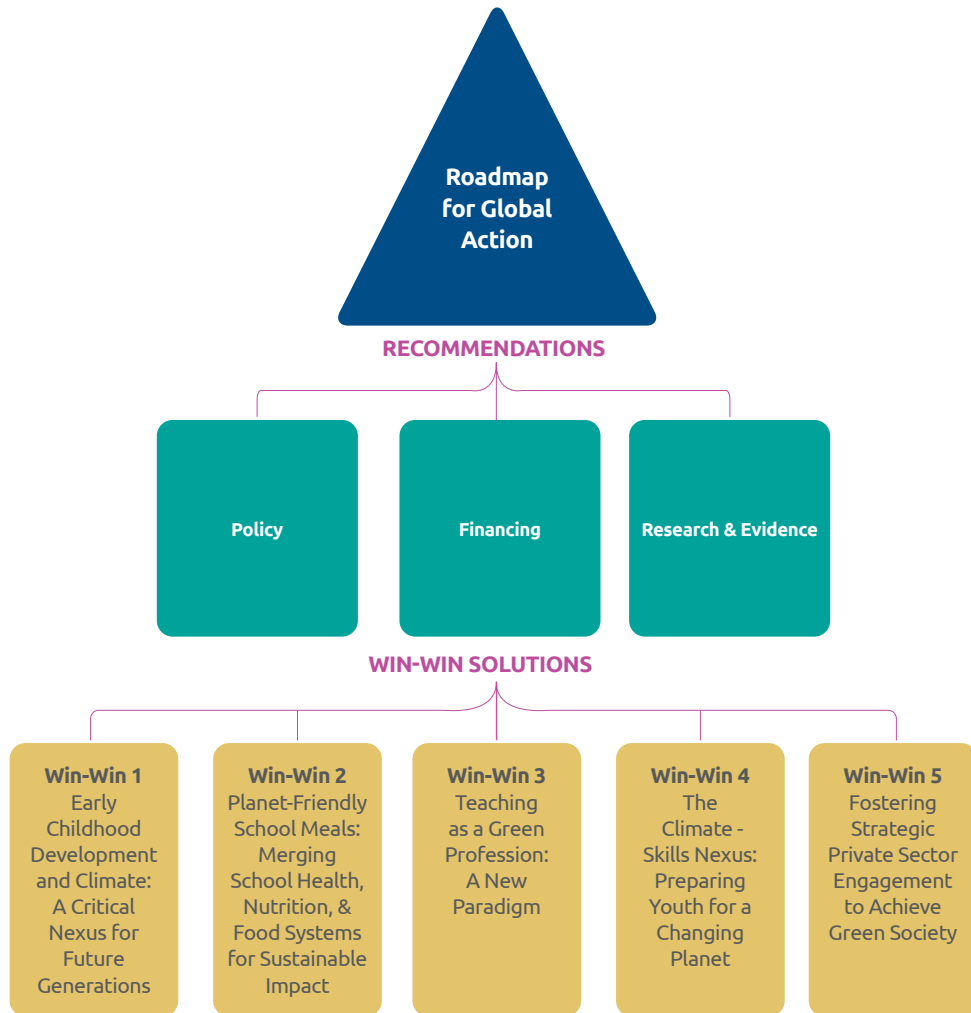
This Report posits that progress for humanity as expressed in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), will only translate to tangible outcomes for people and the planet, if actors recognize the central importance of the human being, both as an end-goal and a powerful agent of change, with education as a fundamental pillar. Acknowledging the inherent potential in the synergy between climate action and education, this Report argues for a strategic approach to the climate-education nexus. It also advocates for an integrated education transformation for people and the planet that spans policy reform, financial innovation, and evidence generation to effectively address interconnected global challenges. Proactive leadership from the education sector is crucial to incorporating climate considerations into education systems. Furthermore, the Report calls on actors and institutions within the climate space to view education as a core component of climate action. It encourages effective collaboration between the climate and education sectors to support the broad-based economic transformation required to prepare for the accelerating impacts of climate change.



Rewiring Education: The Climate - Education Nexus offers 5 win-win solutions, along with 9 concrete policy, financing, as well as research and evidence recommendations, for stakeholders to consider in order to mitigate the adverse effects of climate change and harness the potential of integrating the climate and education sectors.

We invite all actors to coalesce around the RewirEd Summit Outcomes Report's recommendations and to make them their own. This can be done through collaboration and deliberation at international fora, new interventions and financing mechanisms, and research towards a more effective response. No action should be considered too small, and we must work together for a sustainable and prosperous future.

## RewirEd Summit Outcomes Report Key Highlights





The latest Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) Report highlights the increasing severity of extreme weather events, all linked to man-made climate change. Despite efforts like the Paris Agreement to limit global warming to 1.5°C and reach a collective agreement around decarbonization, the Earth continues to warm, and CO2 emissions keep rising, indicating that current approaches are not enough. This chapter identifies three interrelated factors that lead to the lack of action at scale and makes the case for education as the key to resolving these challenges.

# CHAPTER 1

THE CLIMATE CRISIS AND THE  
URGENCY OF ACTION  
PEOPLE AT THE HEART OF THE PLANET



## THREE INTERRELATED FACTORS BEHIND THE LACK OF SCALED CLIMATE CHANGE ACTION



### POLITICAL POLARIZATION

Political polarization hampers climate change action globally and within countries, limiting leaders' abilities to adopt ambitious environmental goals. Internationally, disagreements stem from conflicting values and interests between developed and developing nations. This deadlock, marked by disputes over responsibilities and costs, stalls progress. Education plays a vital role in addressing this challenge by promoting civic education, fostering empathy, and facilitating stakeholder engagement. By cultivating informed citizens who understand the importance of climate action, education can bridge political divides and promote cooperation at all levels.



### ABSENT OR INADEQUATE CLIMATE POLICIES

Weak or absent climate policies fail to provide the necessary support and guidance for economic actors to adopt sustainable practices. The underlying reasons include the low prioritization of some governments and concerns about the effectiveness, uncertain impacts, and high societal costs of these policies. Education can address this issue by encouraging policymakers to explore the impacts, benefits, and costs of various climate policies more deeply. Moreover, education can inspire the development of sustainable technologies and business models, aligning economic opportunities with climate goals.



### LACK OF FINANCIAL, INSTITUTIONAL, TECHNICAL & WORKFORCE CAPACITIES

Limited capacity in developing regions hinders climate action, impacting mitigation and adaptation strategies. Challenges include financial constraints, governance issues, limited technical capacity, weak institutions, and a lack of skilled professionals. Education is crucial for overcoming these barriers through targeted vocational training, higher education, and professional development. Knowledge exchange partnerships between educational institutions, governments, NGOs, and the private sector can provide the necessary resources and expertise, enhancing capabilities for effective climate action and promoting financial assistance.

Amidst these challenges, the landscape is changing. The urgency of climate challenges and the transformative potential of education are driving new cooperative frameworks and initiatives. Notably, recent conferences, including COP28 UAE, have showcased significant policy commitments and financing strategies that intertwine educational and climate objectives within Nationally Determined Contributions. These developments are underscored by the recent UNESCO Education and Climate Declaration, indicating a growing recognition of the synergistic relationship between education and climate action.

**The connection between education and climate is increasingly recognized as critical to tackling global challenges. In this climate-education nexus, progress in education is not only disrupted by the growing impacts of climate change but also offers transformative potential for developing the human capital necessary to meet the scale of the challenge. Despite this potential, the two sectors have historically operated in silos.**

Recent developments signal a shift towards integrating these two pivotal sectors, a process that began with the Education for All initiative and the IPCC agreements of the early 1990s, which first identified the linkages between them. Since then, education and climate have operated on parallel but rarely intersecting tracks. The lack of an integrated approach has resulted in missed opportunities for leveraging educational strategies to advance climate goals and vice versa.

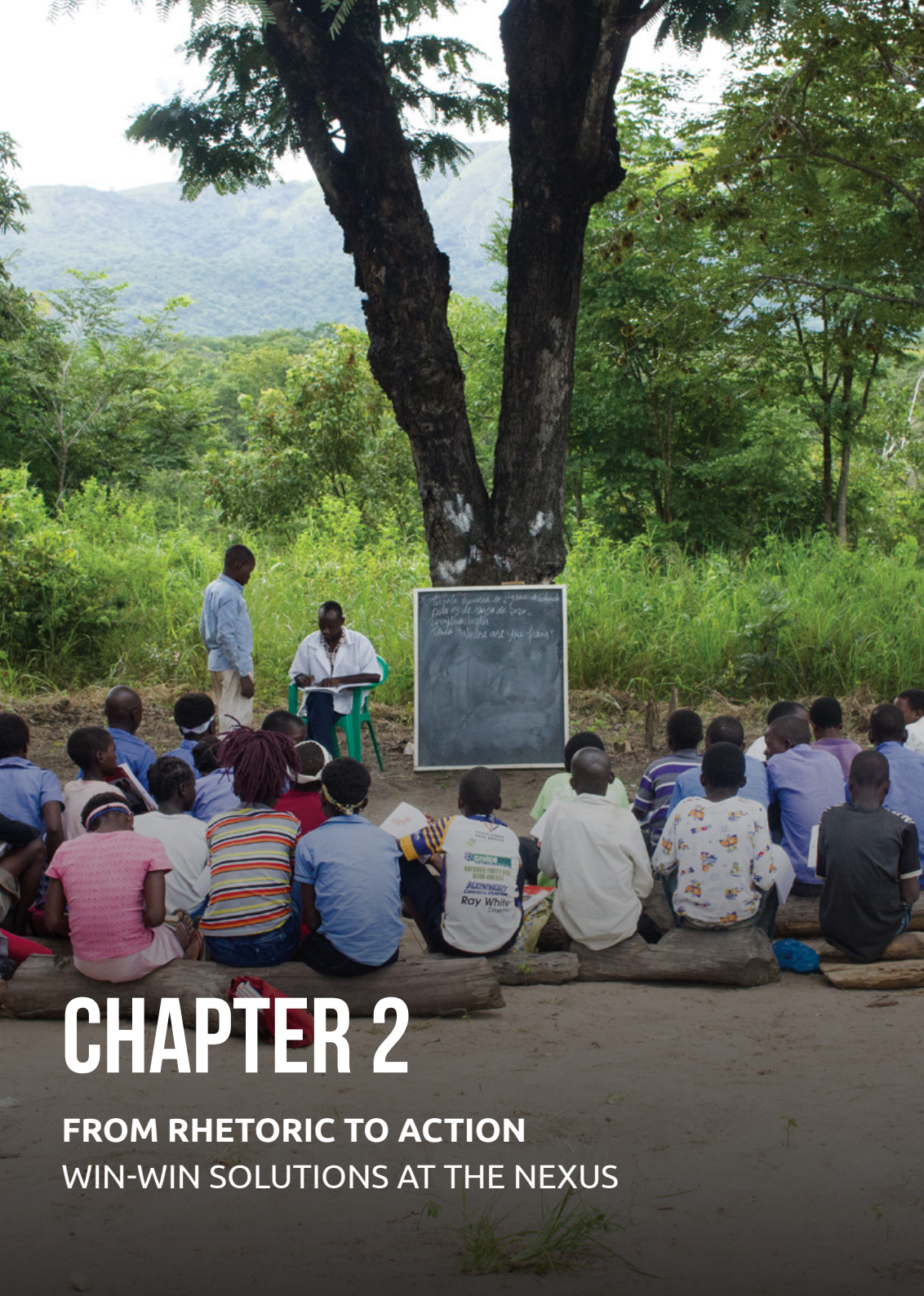
Initiatives to advance the nexus between education and climate change are gaining momentum, with efforts such as the Action for Climate Empowerment (ACE), UNESCO's Greening Education Partnership, and the Global Partnership for Education's (GPE) climate-smart education system framework leading the way. The recent Education Day at COP28 UAE marked a significant milestone, with 38 countries pledging to embed climate education within their Nationally Determined Contributions. Financial mechanisms led by institutions like the World Bank and the UK emerged to support ongoing initiatives.

However, challenges remain in fully realizing the potential of this nexus. The impact and long-term sustainability of these efforts depend on how well the interventions are incorporated or mainstreamed within the priorities and daily work of critical sectors for climate action.

One of the main hurdles in strengthening this nexus is a lack of holistic perspectives and ownership of climate concerns within the education sector. There is a misconception that climate initiatives are solely the responsibility of a monolithic climate community, rather than a collective effort involving various sectors, including education. This narrow view inhibits the potential for education to drive transformative change toward climate ambitions. To overcome these challenges, there is a need for capacity-building, increased cross-sector collaboration, and a shift towards a more inclusive approach where education plays a central role in addressing climate change.

**The climate-education nexus presents a unique window of opportunity to rewire and align strategies with a dual focus on human capital development and climate resilience. This report argues that the traditional approach to education, which has often underemphasized climate issues, must evolve. Education systems are urged to adopt new lenses and tactics that not only address educational needs – such as gaps in literacy, numeracy, and innovation – but also align educational outcomes with the demands of a climate-impacted world.**

This involves transforming education systems to not only equip learners with the necessary skills to thrive in a changing economic landscape, but also to become enlightened and engaged citizens who contribute effectively to climate mitigation and adaptation efforts.



# CHAPTER 2

## FROM RHETORIC TO ACTION WIN-WIN SOLUTIONS AT THE NEXUS

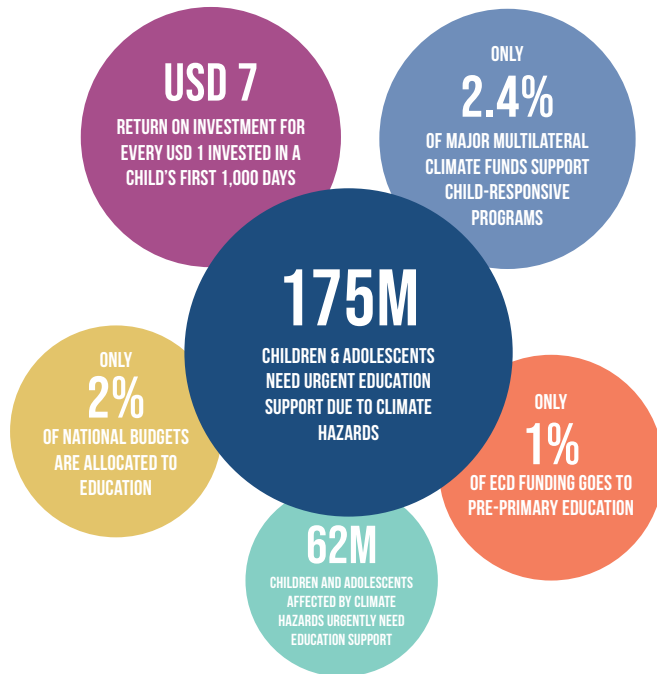
To help accelerate the shift towards greater collaboration and progress in the climate-education nexus, this report identifies actionable areas that could catalyze significant progress by placing climate objectives at the heart of education transformation. The report uses a methodology similar to the landmark 2022 “Rewiring Education for People and Planet” report, which emphasizes a holistic, whole-of-society approach to education that addresses complex global challenges and offers a blueprint for future initiatives. The win-win solutions highlight the potential for educational outcomes to enhance climate change efforts through concrete examples and areas ripe for further investment and collaboration.



## WIN-WIN SOLUTION 1

### EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT AND CLIMATE: A CRITICAL NEXUS FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS

Early Childhood Development (ECD) provides an impactful avenue to build foundational human capital early in life, while addressing climate vulnerabilities. By focusing on holistic educational activities that support early cognitive, physical, social, and emotional development, ECD prepares children for primary education and instills essential skills for environmental stewardship. This solution recognizes the heightened vulnerability of young children to climate impacts and leverages ECD as a proactive strategy for climate mitigation, emphasizing the need for increased investment and inclusion of young children's needs in climate policies.



Infographic: Early Childhood Development and Climate

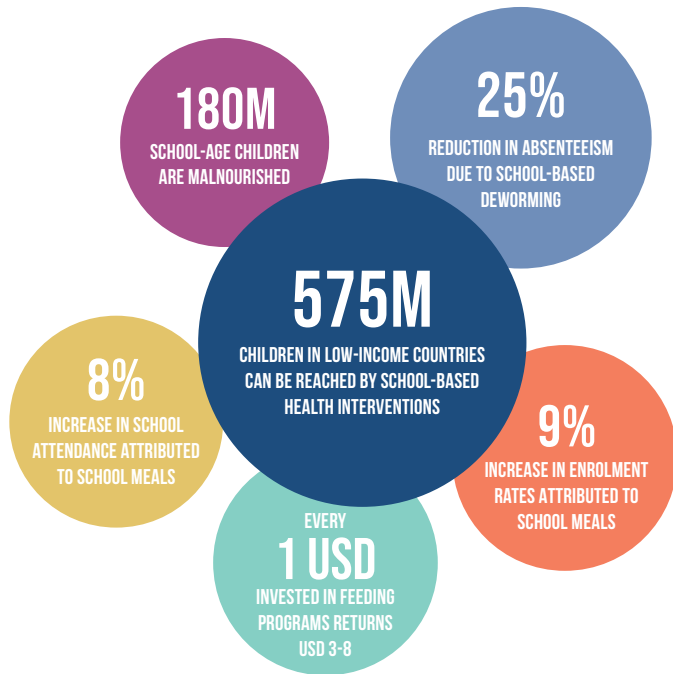


Comprehensive universal ECD at the national level is a cost effective and impactful way to help achieve climate goals and is a powerful counterpoint to the inequities of climate change.

## WIN-WIN SOLUTION 2

### PLANET-FRIENDLY SCHOOL MEALS: MERGING SCHOOL HEALTH, NUTRITION & FOOD SYSTEMS FOR SUSTAINABLE IMPACT

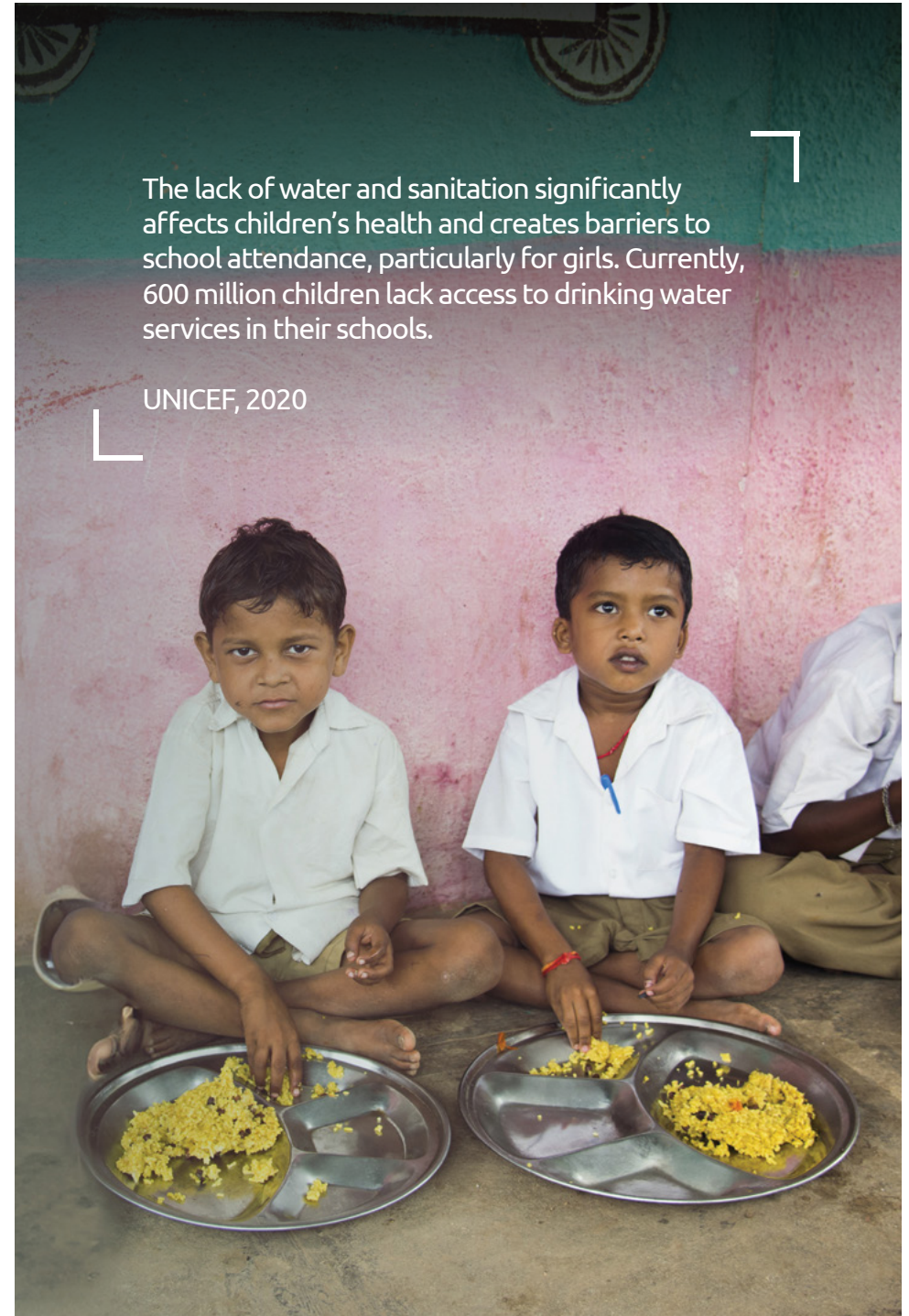
This solution leverages school health and nutrition programs to build resilience against climate change while promoting sustainable food systems. By integrating nutritious, locally sourced foods into school meals, these programs not only combat malnutrition but also reduce environmental impacts and support local agriculture. Furthermore, comprehensive school health programs, including water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH), as well as disease prevention, enhance students' ability to learn and thrive in the face of climate challenges. This approach positions schools as critical platforms for delivering integrated health and educational benefits, thereby supporting broader human capital development that is essential for effective climate adaptation and mitigation.



Infographic: School Health & Nutrition and Food Systems

The lack of water and sanitation significantly affects children's health and creates barriers to school attendance, particularly for girls. Currently, 600 million children lack access to drinking water services in their schools.

UNICEF, 2020

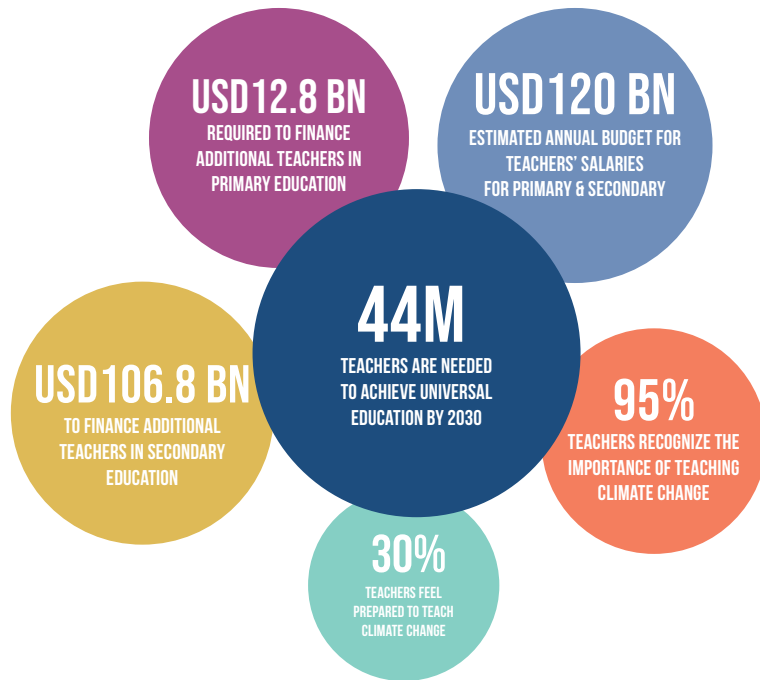




## WIN-WIN SOLUTION 3

### TEACHING AS A GREEN PROFESSION: A NEW PARADIGM

Positioning teaching as a green profession transforms educators into pivotal agents of environmental and climate action. This solution focuses on empowering teachers with the knowledge and resources to integrate sustainability into their teaching practices and to encourage environmentally-responsible behaviors. By providing professional development on climate change and sustainability, teachers can effectively inspire and educate the next generation about the importance of environmental stewardship, making the education sector a key player in global efforts to combat climate change.



Infographic: Teaching as a Green Profession

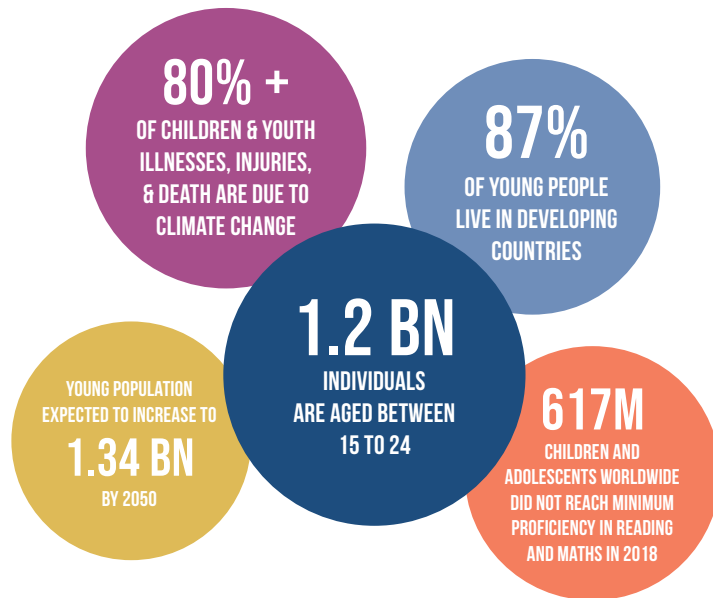
Within the complex interrelationship of education and climate systems, the teacher is the critical and foundational node in how information is presented, disseminated, and digested.



## WIN-WIN SOLUTION 4

### THE CLIMATE-SKILLS NEXUS: PREPARING YOUTH FOR A CHANGING PLANET

Recognizing the significant demographic force that youth represent, particularly in developing countries most affected by climate change, this solution aims to equip them with both technical and transformative green skills necessary for future employment in the green economy and for active participation in climate action. The potential of youth to drive economic and social changes needed to address climate challenges hinges on quality education with strong foundational literacy and numeracy skills. Creating updated curricula, pedagogy, and assessments within a supportive environment, alongside multisectoral partnerships, can help youth develop and apply green skills effectively. By fostering skilled and knowledgeable youth, this approach enhances the adaptive capacities of communities and drives forward the transition towards sustainable and resilient societies. Alternative education pathways and diverse certification routes can further ensure access to livelihoods and translate skills into economic gains for both youth and society.



Infographic: The Climate-Skills Nexus



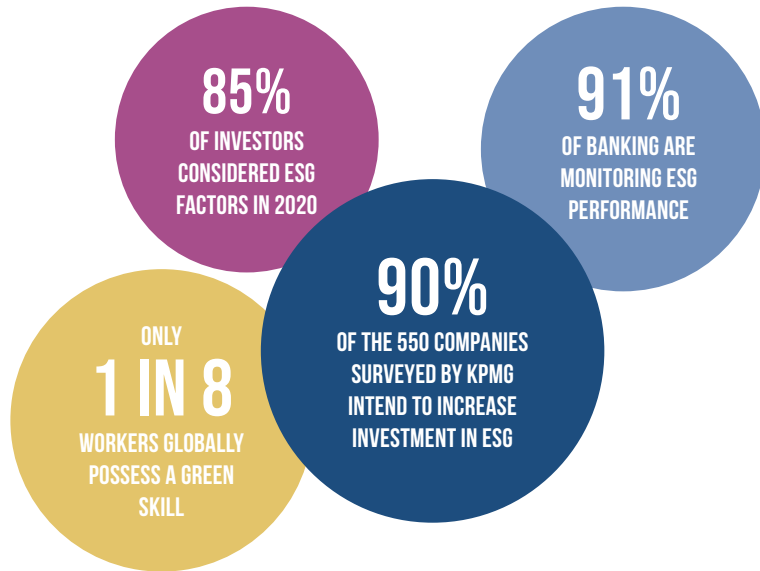
Investing towards efforts that meaningfully engage youth – ensuring their participation is utilized not tokenized – allows more effective solutions-based action.




## WIN-WIN SOLUTION 5

### FOSTERING STRATEGIC PRIVATE SECTOR ENGAGEMENT TO ACHIEVE A GREEN SOCIETY

The private sector can contribute to the nexus by offering innovative funding solutions, investing in green skills through educational initiatives, and responding to shifting consumer demands for broader economic transition towards green practices. Education can play a crucial role in supporting the private sector's efforts towards sustainability by cultivating a skilled workforce for green jobs, fostering innovation, and influencing consumer behavior towards eco-friendly products. Aligning education with industry needs enables businesses to access a talent pool ready to drive sustainable initiatives. Furthermore, education transformation that integrates climate concerns can stimulate economic opportunities in line with climate goals and encourage the adoption of sustainable practices by consumers, ultimately contributing to a greener society.



Infographic: Fostering Strategic Private Sector



Private sector engagement in education can cultivate a competent workforce equipped for green jobs and shape consumer purchasing habits towards green products, thereby fostering a green society



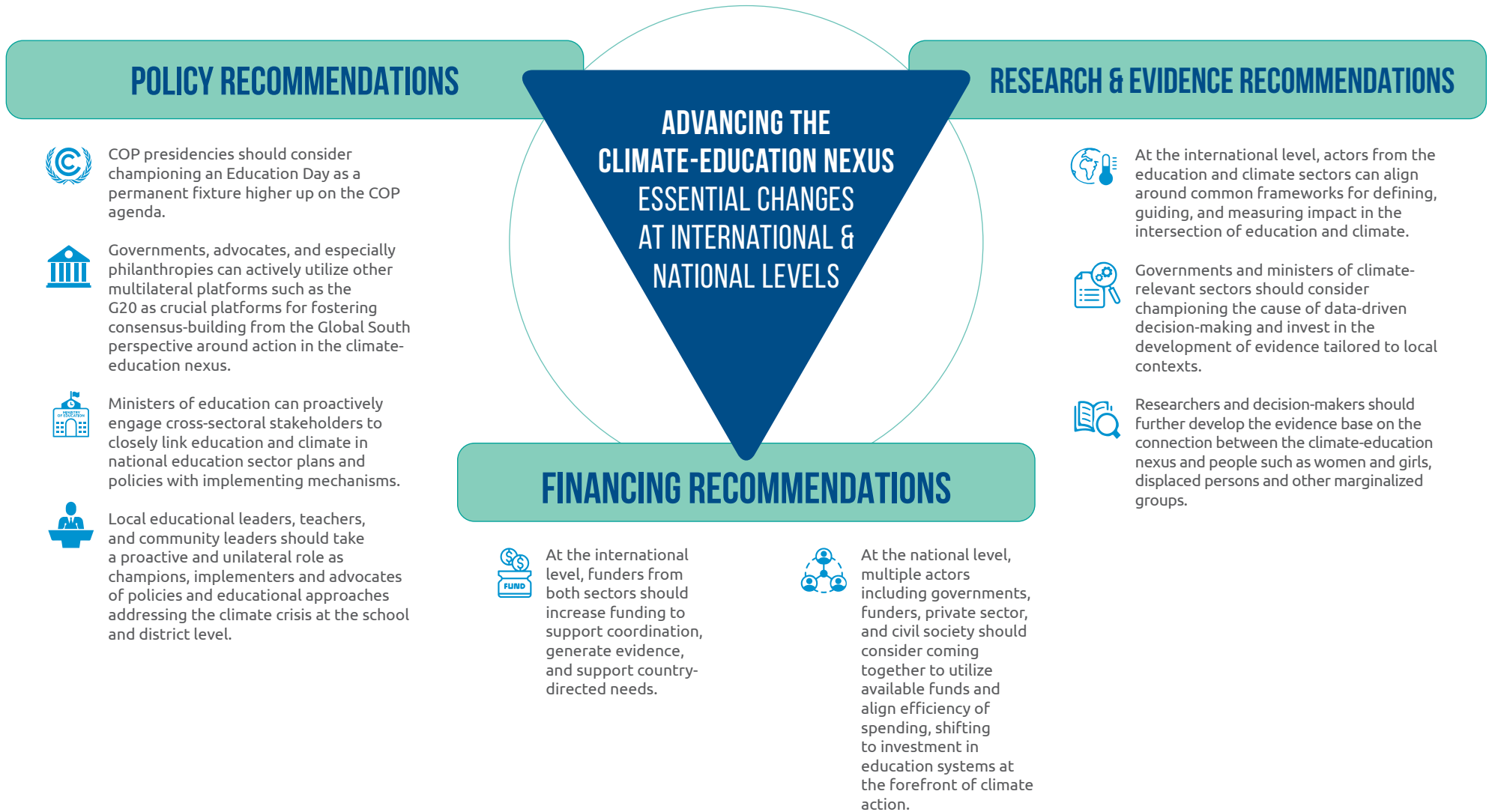
# CHAPTER 3

THE FUTURE OF PEOPLE AND PLANET  
A WAY FORWARD

The win-win solutions represent an important starting point but require a well-established enabling environment to be successful. Rewiring Education for People and Planet: Climate-Education Nexus Report identifies 9 recommendations on policy, financing, as well as research and evidence for stakeholders to adopt.



# ADVANCING THE CLIMATE-EDUCATION NEXUS: ESSENTIAL CHANGES AT INTERNATIONAL AND NATIONAL LEVELS



**Infographic:**  
Advancing the Climate-Education Nexus: Essential Changes at International and National Levels



## POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

### RECOMMENDATION 1

COP presidencies should consider championing an Education Day as a permanent fixture higher up on the COP agenda, thereby institutionalizing the intersection of climate and education as a priority for both government and non-government actors.

### RECOMMENDATION 2

Governments, advocates, as well as NGOs and philanthropies can actively utilize other multilateral platforms such as the G20 as crucial venues for fostering consensus-building from the Global South perspective around action in the climate-education nexus.

### RECOMMENDATION 3

At the national level, ministers of education can proactively engage cross-sectoral stakeholders - including ministries of environment and other climate-relevant sectors, the private sector, and civil society - by leveraging inter-ministerial committees if present, to closely link education and climate in national education sector plans and policies with implementing mechanisms.

### RECOMMENDATION 4

Local educational leaders, teachers, and community representatives should take a proactive and unilateral role as champions, implementers and advocates of policies and educational approaches addressing the climate crisis at the school and district levels.



## FINANCING RECOMMENDATIONS

### RECOMMENDATION 1

At the international level, funders from both sectors should consider increasing funding to support coordination, generate evidence and guidelines, and support country-directed needs.

### RECOMMENDATION 2

At the national level, multiple actors including governments, funders, private sector, and civil society should consider coming together to utilize available funds and align efficiency of spending, shifting to investment in education systems at the forefront of climate action.



## RESEARCH AND EVIDENCE RECOMMENDATIONS

### RECOMMENDATION 1

At the international level, actors from the education and climate sectors should consider aligning around common frameworks for defining, guiding, and measuring impact at the intersection of climate and education.

### RECOMMENDATION 2

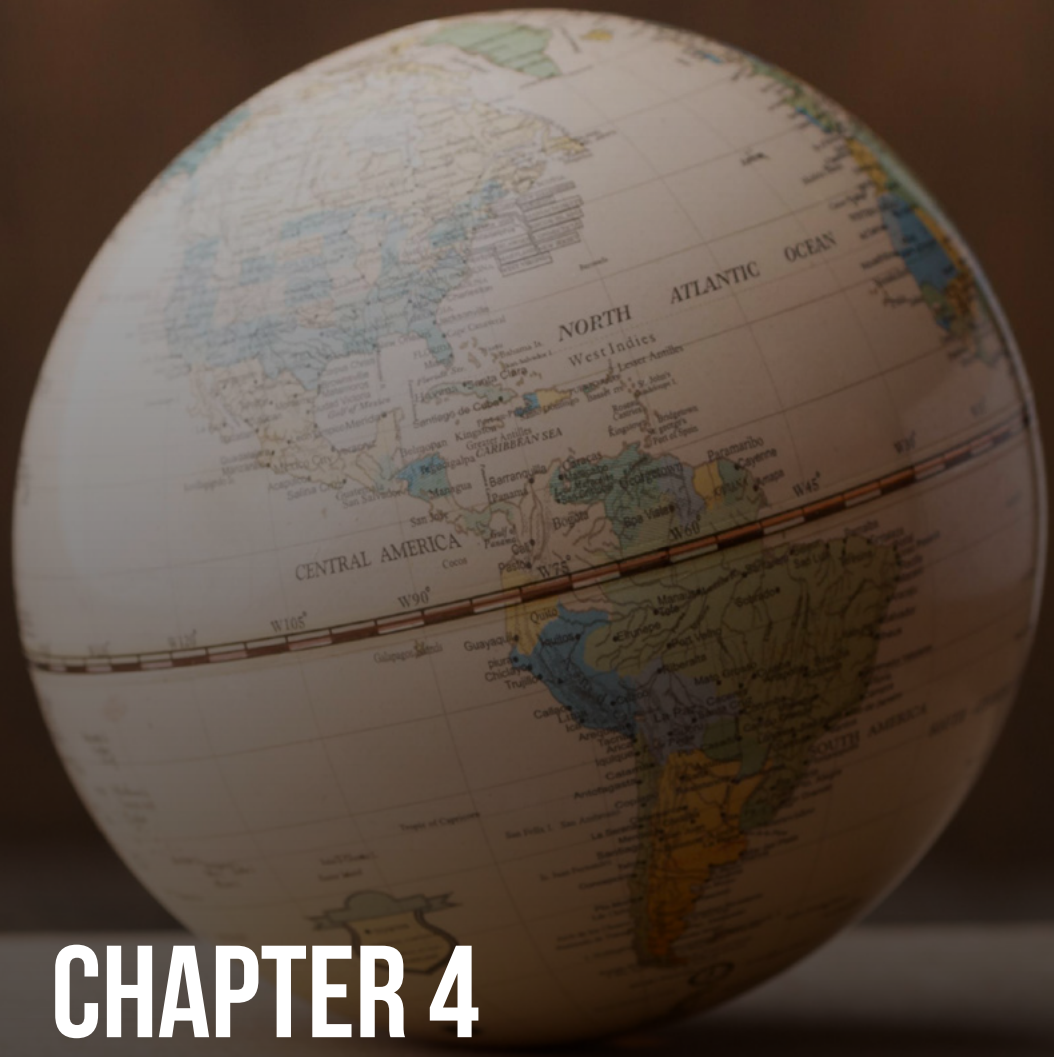
Governments and ministers of climate-relevant sectors should consider championing the cause of data-driven decision-making and invest in the development of evidence tailored to local contexts.

### RECOMMENDATION 3

Researchers and decision-makers should further develop the evidence base on the connection between the climate-education nexus and people such as women and girls, displaced people, and other marginalized groups.







# CHAPTER 4

## A ROADMAP FOR ACTION KEY GLOBAL MOMENTS

The policy, financing, as well as research and evidence recommendations are critical priorities that players across sectors and geographies can commit to in the mid- to long-term. However, the urgency of action at the nexus requires strong commitment to ensure education transformation for climate action is an international, national, and local priority everywhere.

Bringing these recommendations and the urgent need for action together, the final section of this report outlines concrete steps that actors across sectors can take in the near term to advance critical policy, financing, and research priorities and address the urgent dual challenges of climate change and education system transformation.

## A ROADMAP FOR ACTION

### KEY GLOBAL MOMENTS

If actors across the spectrum come together to drive concerted and effective action, then success can look as follows:

#### 4.1 POLICY

- COP Presidencies and other key stakeholders engage to ensure impactful Education Days at COP29 and COP30, that convene multilateral stakeholders, financiers, ministers of education and environment, and practitioners in both sectors to forge concrete commitments and pledges in the nexus.
- The climate-education nexus is brought to the agenda of G20 working group meetings, especially the sustainable finance working group, climate and environment sustainability working group, and education working group, and other political forums like the G7 and United Nations General Assembly (UNGA).
- At the national level, ministers of education conduct comprehensive policy reviews and initiate at least one interministerial meeting to plan the inclusion of climate goals in national education policies or sector plans.
- Local authorities or school leaders organize large campaigns in partnership with teachers and students to empower local change agents at the district and school levels with effective tools and resources to navigate the effects of and contribute towards positive action in the face of climate change.

#### 4.2 FINANCING

- Key multilateral funds in the nexus including GPE, ECW, GCF, and others receive increasing commitments from a broadening array of international funders and increasingly devote more funds towards nexus initiatives such as BRACE.
- The Greening Education Partnership Multilateral Trust Fund rapidly solidifies and brings concrete commitments from donors committed to driving action in the nexus.
- Bilateral education funding increasingly integrates climate-related objectives, and climate funding integrates education transformation as a strategy and a goal.
- National governments mobilize increased domestic funding to support national education transformation, supported by the integration of climate change into national education sector plans and policies.

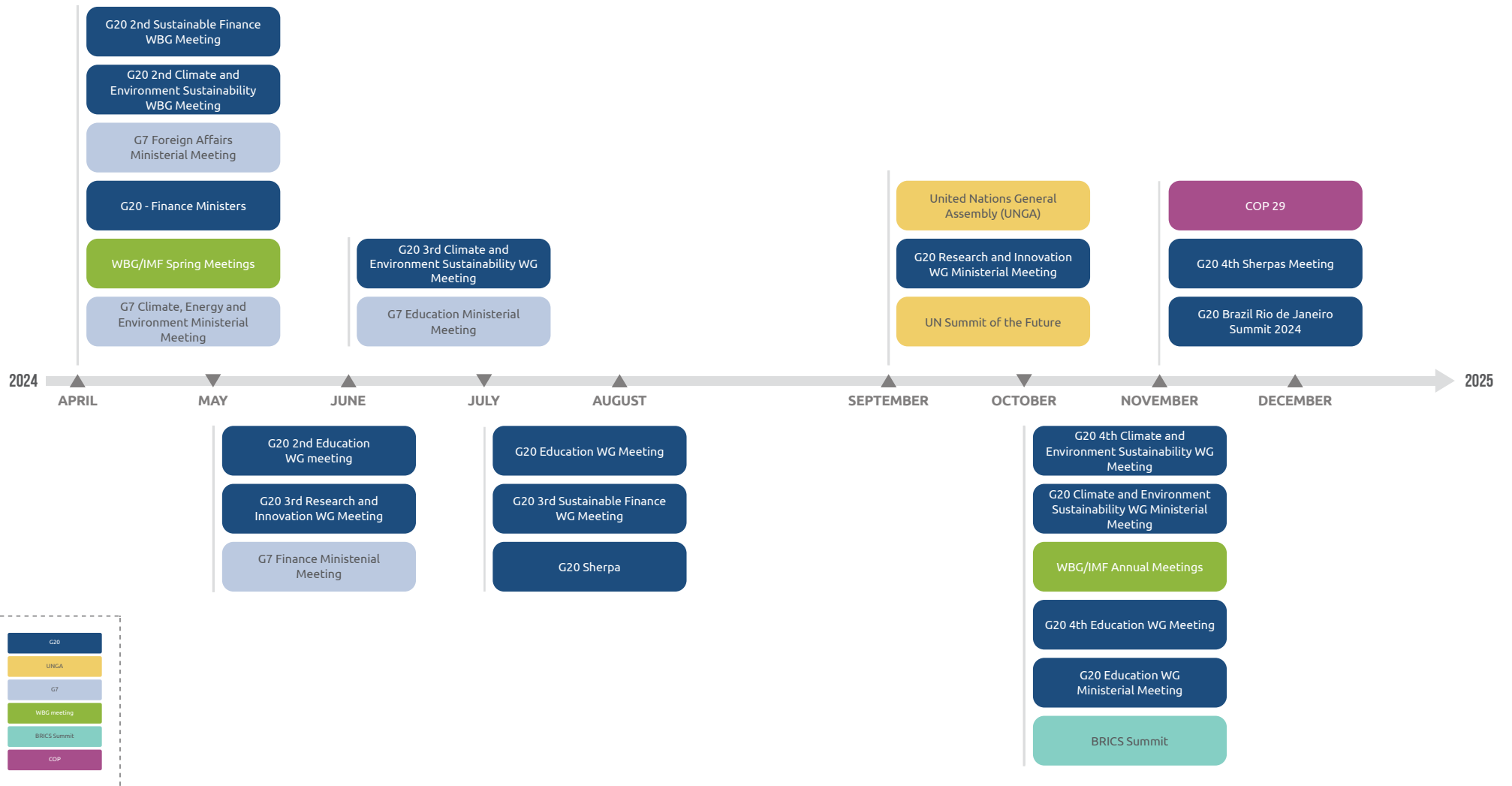
#### 4.3 RESEARCH AND EVIDENCE

- Researchers and advocates develop publications or reports with stronger evidence on the cost-effectiveness and return on investment of interventions in the climate-education nexus.
- Researchers and advocates develop a clearer baseline of international and national funding flows in the education and climate nexus, to serve as a starting point for future calls for increased funding and a potential investment case.





# KEY GLOBAL MOMENTS AT THE CLIMATE-EDUCATION NEXUS



## ORGANIZATIONAL ENTRY POINTS FOR ACTION

Driving progress towards these outcomes requires consistent and aligned engagement across multiple political levels. The report urges actors in the nexus to come together to ensure education transformation for climate action secures a place on agendas and concrete commitments at crucial global, national, and local events throughout 2024 and 2025, such as:

### A) G20 MEETINGS

Advocacy at G20 working groups, particularly those focused on sustainable finance, climate and environment sustainability, and education, is highlighted as a crucial opportunity to elevate the climate-education nexus on a global economic agenda.

### B) UNGA AND SUMMIT OF THE FUTURE

Engagement at UNGA and the upcoming Summit of the Future is critical. These platforms are ideal for advancing discussions on sustainable development and integrating education as a key component of climate resilience.

### C) THE WORLD BANK ANNUAL MEETINGS

These meetings are pivotal for advocating for integrated education and climate finance strategies, aligning with global financial flows to maximize the impact on the nexus.

### D) G7 MINISTERIAL MEETINGS

The report underscores the importance of leveraging G7 meetings to shape global policy directions in education, climate, and finance, which collectively influence international development strategies.

### E) BRICS SUMMIT 2024

Engagement with the BRICS bloc is essential to promote the nexus in emerging economies, focusing on sustainable development and holistic approaches to education and climate challenges.

### F) COP29 AND 30

The COP29 Azerbaijan and COP30 Brazil presidencies can continue the COP28 UAE legacy of having a dedicated day for education, highlighting and providing a deliberative forum for both the challenges and the opportunities at the nexus.

### G) UN SECRETARY-GENERAL'S EFFORTS FOR EDUCATION TRANSFORMATION (2024-2026)

The 2022 Transforming Education Summit highlighted the global education crisis, and from 2024 to 2026, the UN Secretary-General will leverage major global platforms to promote educational discussions. These forums will be crucial for enhancing international cooperation and ensuring that education remains a central focus in the global development agenda.









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**RewirEd Summit 2023  
Outcomes Report**





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