

FROM ACTION TO ADVOCACY: EMPOWERING ADULTS TOWARDS CLIMATE JUSTICE

POLICY BRIEF

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LEVERS



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The [LEVERS_project](#) case studies highlighted in this policy brief provide actionable insights addressing key action areas relevant to ESD policy implementation. To get in touch, email LEVERS@tcd.ie

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KEY POLICY LEVERS FOR ADVOCATING FOR ACTION-FIRST MODELS OF CLIMATE AND SUSTAINABILITY EDUCATION ACROSS EUROPE

1 Reframe sustainability learning as a form of civic and policy advocacy for climate action

Advocate for funding and policy recognition of learning programmes that explicitly build advocacy, policy literacy, and institutional engagement capacities.

2 Embed sustainability learning within (EU) climate governance frameworks

Advocate for local climate-related learning to be formally embedded within local or EU climate governance frameworks, rather than treated as a stand-alone policy area.

3 Strengthen the climate justice dimension in climate and sustainability policies

Advocate for stronger integration of climate justice and social equity in sustainability and climate strategies at the EU and national level, ensuring that adult learning and community participation are recognised as core elements of a just transition.

4 Leverage transnational networks to amplify learning-based climate advocacy

Connect climate action initiatives with European and international civil-society climate networks to scale impact and strengthen collective advocacy.

5 Advance critical digital skills for a truly just and green transition

Promote a holistic approach to digital skills within the green transition, combining technical competences with a critical understanding of the environmental and social impacts of digital technologies.



HOW CAN CLIMATE LEARNING ENGAGE ADULTS AS ACTIVE PARTICIPANTS FOR CHANGE?

LEVERS: Learning Ventures for Climate Justice is a Horizon Europe Coordination and Support Action, promoting open schooling for innovative science education, with a specific focus on lifelong learning for sustainability and climate action. The project investigates the potential of localised learning ecosystems or "Learning Ventures" to support climate responses in nine countries: Ireland, the UK, Portugal, Belgium, Switzerland, Slovenia, Serbia, Greece, and Cyprus.

Community engagement in adult education is not merely about advertising courses; it is a fundamental democratic process designed to engage the "hard-to-reach", those who need education the most but are least likely to access it. Effective outreach requires shifting from a provider-centric model to a learner-centred approach. It also involves overcoming the barriers that are frequently reported by learners, such as accessibility and a lack of time [1].

Engagement that is successful is rarely top-down but more often participatory and intersectional: where the target group is involved in designing the strategy through focus groups and co-creating solutions, ensuring that the outreach narrative resonates with the actual experiences of the learners rather than imposing a standard institutional jargon. This approach respects "intersectionality," acknowledging that a learner's identity is formed by a plurality of elements, including gender, culture, and socio-economic status [2]. Extended education cannot be the sole responsibility of educators. It requires a "multi-stakeholder" approach involving municipalities, NGOs, and employers.

Adult Learning and Education (ALE) provides powerful examples of participatory approaches to climate action through education. For example, the Citizens' University of Larissa (Greece), the Winner of EAEA's Grundtvig Award, demonstrates how political will can drive outreach. The city established a "Learning City" philosophy, coordinating between volunteers and stakeholders to reach marginalised citizens, including Roma and refugees. By offering free learning cycles on diverse topics (from digital literacy to health) and providing necessary educational materials, they engaged over 4,000 citizens in a single year. The key to their outreach was the removal of financial barriers and the creation of a city-wide culture of solidarity.

Moreover, the Intercultural Storytelling Project (Ireland) fostered outreach by pairing "New-Irish" (migrants) with locals to co-write biographical stories. This method acted as a "literacy practice" that strengthened community cohesion. It attracted learners by framing the activity as social engagement and cultural exchange rather than strict "schooling," thereby creating a new social network for individuals at risk of isolation. These examples show how climate justice, social inclusion and education are linked and can inform one another [3].

The LEVERS approach and policy recommendations

In this policy brief, five policy recommendations are presented which aim to increase empowerment through climate action in learning processes. These recommendations are drawn from the work done through the Horizon Europe project, LEVERS: Learning Ventures for Climate Justice. LEVERS promotes Open Schooling [4] for innovative science education, with a specific focus on lifelong learning for climate action and environmental justice. The project investigates the potential of localised learning ecosystems or "Learning Ventures" to support climate responses in nine European countries.

Introducing ACTIONS and POLICY LEVERS

This policy brief introduces two complementary dimensions: ACTIONS and POLICY LEVERS.

In this context, ACTIONS do not refer to activism, campaigning or behavioural messaging. Rather, they describe a structured learning orientation that provides learners, educators and the wider school community with opportunities to engage directly with local climate and biodiversity challenges. These actions are varied and may include hands-on projects, collaborative initiatives and partnerships that serve as a foundation for reflection, inquiry and inclusive learning processes. Across all LEVERS case studies, this approach supported learning institutions in strengthening alignment between curriculum content, school culture, learning environments and community engagement. The experience of the LEVERS Learning Ventures points towards a more integrated pathway: an action-oriented, place-based and partnership-supported model. Such an approach can help reduce administrative and pedagogical burden on teachers, enhance leadership engagement and strengthen student agency by embedding climate and sustainability learning within everyday institutional practices.

POLICY LEVERS are statements and associated values and practices that seek to change systems related to climate education.

They are not only targeted at direct policymakers (i.e. locally elected politicians), but also all members of a community that can bring about change in learning contexts: educators, staff, management, community group leaders and of course, learners. Implementing these recommendations does not have to mean changing a law, a text or an official guideline in an institution or context. Rather, they are reminders that every individual who takes part in lifelong learning is part of a system of change, and has the power to mobilise their community and participate in climate action.

We intentionally **present actions before policy levers, reflecting a key finding of the LEVERS project: actions drive beliefs** [5]. Evidence indicates that engagement in concrete activities can shape attitudes and values more effectively than awareness-raising alone. Participation in action supports the development of agency and strengthens individuals' confidence in their capacity to contribute to change.

Accordingly, this policy brief prioritises practical examples and transferable practices. By illustrating how beliefs can be reinforced and sustained through action, it seeks to support replication, adaptation, and uptake across diverse European contexts [5].

Who can benefit from the policy LEVERS and how?

These policy levers are designed for policymakers - at the local, national or regional level - and also everyday decision makers in climate-related educational settings or instruments. By this, we refer to decision-makers in educational institutes, directors and managers. Through this document's policy recommendations and roadmap for developing sustainable communities, policymakers, in this broader sense, are encouraged to support ALE institutions in designing and implementing climate-related educational practices. They are also invited to consider incorporating these practices into broader sustainability policies, with a whole-ecosystem approach.

The LEVERS project case studies presented in this policy brief provide concrete, practice-based evidence to inform priority action areas in policy implementation. The recommendations set out here are intended to complement - not replace or supersede - existing policy frameworks, and they do not claim to represent an exhaustive set of measures for advancing action-oriented climate education. At EU level, initiatives such as Learning for sustainability in Europe's schools [23] adopt an inspiration-based approach, pairing recommendations with illustrative examples drawn primarily from formal education contexts. In contrast, the recommendations advanced in this brief are designed for cross-sectoral application, recognising that meaningful climate learning takes place across formal, non-formal and informal settings, and should therefore be embedded in policies that extend beyond compulsory schooling.

To this extent, these policy recommendations have been developed with the whole consortium and with the specific insight of the European Association for the Education of Adults (EAEA) as a partner of LEVERS and a non-profit international organisation with over 120 members across Europe, representing the voice of non-formal Adult Learning and Education (ALE).

The findings from the nine LEVERS Learning Ventures active in Portugal, Belgium, Ireland, Serbia, Slovenia, Switzerland, Greece, United Kingdom [5] have been extended across EAEA's ALE network and the proposed recommendations hence well embedded in an ALE framework.





ACTION IN PRACTICE #1

PEER-LEARNING TOURS, FIRST HAND, UK

In South London, Pembroke House is leading an experiment in neighbourhood-level food system transformation. Their Walworth Neighbourhood Food Model brings together community spaces, local projects, and grassroots organisations to build a fairer, more resilient urban food system.

The Walworth Neighbourhood Food Model brings together a local ecosystem of food stakeholders who have co-created a range of initiatives:

- A community hub at Pembroke House that anchors urban food system change
- Projects like Right to Grow, which mobilise residents and influence local policy
- An action-learning network of food actors, from the long-standing Fareshares food co-op to Walworth Garden, a community enterprise combining training, retail, and green space creation
- A food-actor mapping method, now being shared with researchers at London South Bank University

Together, these elements form the foundations of a neighbourhood-scale infrastructure for sustainable, community-led food systems.

Building on this ecosystem-based approach, the UK LEVERS initiative First Hand developed peer-learning experiences embedded directly within these real-world climate action contexts. In collaboration with Pembroke House, neighbourhood learning tours were co-designed in Walworth, hosting cross-sector professionals, including representatives from local authorities and food innovation sectors, for immersive, practice-based sessions.

The co-created learning experience at Walworth highlighted three recurring themes: 1) Partnerships are the work. Effective climate action depends on networks, relationships, and shared governance — not just individual organisations. 2) Decision-making

Aligned with LEVERS' commitment to open, place-based learning, First Hand designs local learning experiences that aim to:

- Inform – by showcasing real people and places demonstrating green skills in action
- Inspire – by revealing what becomes possible when ordinary communities drive change
- Connect – by expanding networks and fostering collaboration across sectors

These experiential formats enabled participants to engage directly with community-led transformation processes, facilitating knowledge exchange, institutional learning, and the transfer of locally grounded solutions across sectors.

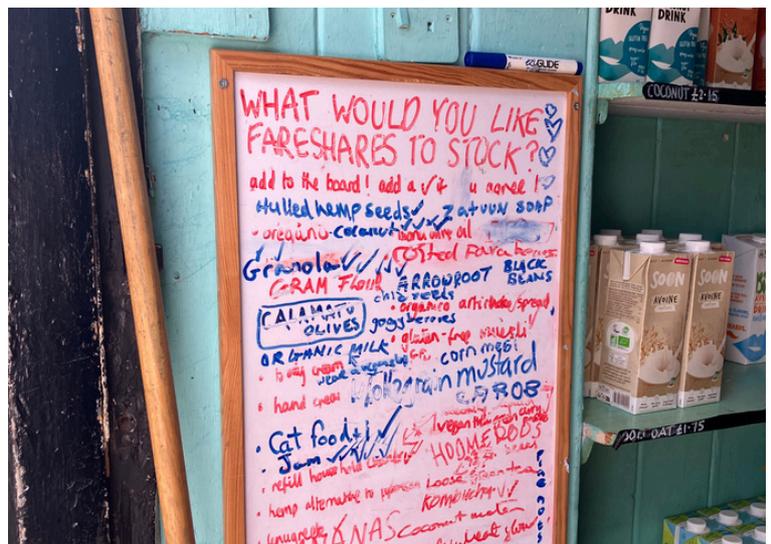
These learning experiences show the importance of systems thinking and highlight the relationship between capacity-building and advocacy skills. Systems thinking helps complex problems to be understood by examining both their parts and the connections between them. These tools enable the major challenges of the world to be addressed, highlighting how gaining these system thinking skills can contribute to better action-driven advocacy [6].



ACTION IN PRACTICE #1

PEER-LEARNING TOURS, FIRST HAND, UK

No single organisation can deliver climate capability at the pace required. Learning must increasingly happen in real places, through real relationships, where communities and professionals learn from and with each other. The Walworth Neighbourhood Food Model — along with other First Hand sites — shows how neighbourhoods can function simultaneously as testbeds and classrooms, cultivating the skills, partnerships, and imagination needed for climate justice [7].



Name of the initiative: First Hand, <http://www.firsthand.tours>
 Coordinator: Forth Together CIC, <https://www.wegoforth.org>
 Partners: Pembroke House, Eit Food
 Contact: Dee Halligan - dee@wegoforth.org



REFRAME SUSTAINABILITY LEARNING AS A FORM OF CIVIC AND POLICY ADVOCACY

Recommendation

Advocate for funding and policy recognition of learning programmes that explicitly build advocacy, policy literacy, and institutional engagement capacities.

Background

There is growing recognition that effective climate action requires informed citizens who can engage with policymaking processes. As voters, they elect governments and influence policy directions. They experience the impacts of policy implementation, reaping the benefits and bearing the costs. As individuals, they act and make behavioural choices for themselves, their households, and their workplaces [8]. As members of society, they share opinions, spread norms and shape cultures.

Skills for policy engagement, advocacy, and institutional dialogue remain underdeveloped. As suggested in the Agenda 2030 [9], the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4.7 highlights the importance of gaining “knowledge and skills for sustainable development by 2030, focusing on Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) and Global Citizenship Education (GCED), integrating human rights, gender equality, peace, non-violence, cultural diversity appreciation, and sustainable lifestyles into curricula and policies to foster active, responsible global citizens for a sustainable future”. The European Sustainability Competence Framework, GreenComp [10], was also developed to guide educators and learners to build a common understanding on how sustainability can act as a catalyst for action in lifelong learning. GreenComp uses knowledge, skills and action to frame these sustainability competences which include competences in problem framing, political agency and collective action.

LEVERS' added value

LEVERS shows how learning environments can empower adults to engage with institutions, influence local decision-making, and contribute to systemic change.

Advocacy angle

Support and seek out learning programmes that explicitly build the capacity of learners to engage in climate-related advocacy.



ACTION IN PRACTICE #2

KARAVAN'KE, BELGIUM

For the Belgian LEVERS Learning Venture, partners set out to address a challenge that was both urgent and socially relevant: the rising impact of urban heat. Brussels is experiencing increasingly intense heatwaves. Urban heat islands do not impact all areas equally; they affect different neighbourhoods in Brussels in varying ways. In particular, the most disadvantaged neighbourhoods, such as Molenbeek, are more severely impacted than others, experiencing higher temperatures and greater exposure to heat-related risks. This unequal distribution highlights how social and environmental vulnerabilities intersect, making some communities more susceptible to the health and infrastructure challenges associated with urban heat. Indeed, urban heat island effects are driven by dense construction, asphalt, and a lack of vegetation — conditions that disproportionately affect vulnerable groups living in crowded neighbourhoods with limited green space and poor housing quality. Beyond physical discomfort, heat stress also affects mental well-being, contributing to anxiety, sleep disturbances, and reduced social functioning. Recognising the need for community-driven solutions, Stickydot and local partners designed a Learning Venture rooted in co-creation, inclusion, and place-based learning.

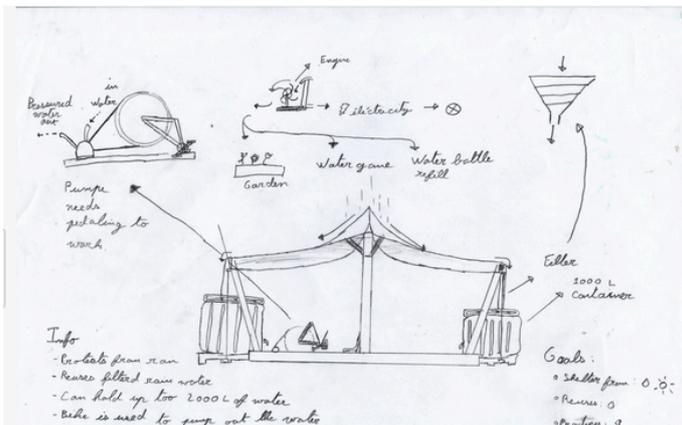
Instead of relying on fear-based climate messaging, the programme used insights from social psychology and participatory design to empower citizens — especially young people — to take meaningful, practical action. Workshops began by exploring local climate impacts and existing mitigation efforts, then moved toward understanding how extreme heat affects daily life and intersects with social justice.

This process led to the creation of Karavan'ke, a colourful, mobile cooling structure co-designed by teenagers in Molenbeek at the maker spaces Fablab'ke and FabWest, supported by facilitators from La Maison des Cultures et de la Cohésion Sociale, a local community centre. Through mentoring sessions with designers, architects, and scientists, the participants learned to prototype feasible, sustainable solutions such as shaded seating, water-misting systems, and solar-powered features. The collaborative environment blended technical skills with climate awareness, fostering creativity, confidence, and collective ownership. In one of the workshops, the parents came along and used their sewing skills to help the young people create flags to decorate the structure with messages about climate change.

ACTION IN PRACTICE #2

KARAVAN'KE, BELGIUM

Unveiled during the Fiesta des Ateliers, Karavan'ke now travels through the neighbourhood as both a practical cooling space and a symbol of youth-led climate resilience [11]. The partnership between the community centre (Maison des Cultures et de la Cohésion Sociale de Molenbeek) and Stickydot that led to the development of Karavan'ke has increased its visibility at the local level. The methodology developed in the Belgian Learning Venture has been included in the local action plan (Plan d'Action Climat) of the municipality, Molenbeek, showing how co-creative climate-related learning can have a local policy impact.



Karavan'ke video. Source: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M7zDLBBw1rY>

Name of the initiative: Karavan'ke

Coordinator: Stickydot, <https://stickydot.eu/>

Partners: Stickydot, Maison des Cultures et de la Cohésion Sociale de Molenbeek-Saint-Jean

Contact: Benjamin Valcke - benjamin@stickydot.eu

EMBED SUSTAINABILITY LEARNING WITHIN (EU) CLIMATE GOVERNANCE FRAMEWORKS

Recommendation

Advocate for local climate-related learning to be formally embedded within local or EU climate governance frameworks, rather than treated as a stand-alone policy area.

Background

At the EU level, climate action is structured around integrated governance tools such as the European Green Deal [12], the EU Climate Law [13], and the Fit for 55 [14] package. While these frameworks acknowledge skills and behavioural change, learning remains weakly institutionalised. At the global level, the UNFCCC's Action for Climate Empowerment (ACE) [15] recognises education, training, and public participation as pillars of climate action, but implementation across Member States remains uneven.

LEVERS' added value

LEVERS highlights how adult learning ecosystems can act as governance enablers by supporting informed participation, democratic ownership, and local implementation of climate policies. A key example is the Belgian Learning Venture, explicitly referenced in the Molenbeek Climate Action Plan (CAP, approved November 2025) as a good practice [16]. This includes the integration of the Karavan'ke approach, which co-creates activities with teenagers, enhancing their capacity to act on climate justice through DIY and engaging learning activities. The CAP itself is an example of a policy tool that translates learning initiatives into tangible local climate action, demonstrating policy impact.

Advocacy angle

Position local climate-related learning as a governance tool that increases policy effectiveness, social acceptance, and democratic legitimacy of climate measures.



ACTION IN PRACTICE #3

ECO ACTION FOR CLIMATE JUSTICE, CYPRUS

The Learning Venture in Cyprus was coordinated by the Centre for Social Innovation (CSI) together with local partners. CSI has a focus on green entrepreneurship and skills building. It developed a series of initiatives for adult learners that strengthen climate resilience through hands-on learning, community engagement, and inclusive innovation. Two flagship initiatives, the Sustainable Fisheries Workshops and the EcoAction Bootcamp, demonstrate how action-first approaches can empower both traditional communities and emerging changemakers.

CSI worked with small-scale fishers in Larnaka, Zigi, Paphos, and Limassol to address the pressures of industrial fleets, climate change, and declining fish stocks. In practical and conversational workshops, fishers tested sustainable trap techniques, shared everyday practices, and learned safe bycatch-release methods, including guidance for protecting the critically endangered Angelshark. These activities opened space for deeper conversations on ecological responsibility, cultural heritage, and the future of small-scale fisheries. The initiative strengthened trust between fishers, recognised local knowledge, and highlighted the vital role of fishers in marine conservation [17].

Across the Learning Venture, activities were intentionally designed to start with hands-on experience. In additional circular economy workshops, participants handled plastic waste and operated small-scale recycling tools before exploring business models related to these sectors. During “Brunch with Nature” in Kato Drys, learners produced beeswax products using local materials and discussed entrepreneurial opportunities rooted in local natural resources. Hackathons and innovation labs similarly engaged participants with real sustainability challenges before strengthening ideas through mentoring and peer learning.

This action-first approach-built confidence, ownership, and motivation by grounding learning in local realities such as waste reduction, water scarcity, sustainable food systems, and fisheries protection. It helped bridge scientific expertise and community knowledge, supporting participants in moving from climate awareness toward practical experimentation. By valuing lived experience, the initiative demonstrated that vulnerable and underrepresented groups including small-scale fishers and rural communities can play an active role in sustainability transitions.

Name of the initiative: Eco Action for Climate Justice, Cyprus

Coordinator: Centre for Social Innovation, <https://csicy.com/>

Contact: Styliani Karra - stella.karra@csicy.com

ACTION IN PRACTICE #3

ECO ACTION FOR CLIMATE JUSTICE, CYPRUS

Informal and participatory formats positioned learners as co-creators of solutions, reinforcing two core insights of the LEVERS approach: action builds agency, and trust enables sustained and inclusive participation.

CSI's skills-building approach connected environmental protection with economic resilience across multiple initiatives. In the fisheries workshops, sustainable practices were linked to long-term livelihood security and marine conservation. In parallel, the EcoAction Bootcamp and circular economy workshops encouraged young innovators to develop business models rooted in climate adaptation, waste reduction, and regenerative practices. Activities such as "Brunch with Nature" further demonstrated how local natural resources can be transformed into value through responsible entrepreneurship. By integrating livelihood concerns, conservation practices, and circular business thinking, the Cyprus Learning Venture embedded climate justice into practical learning processes illustrating how communities can both respond to environmental change and shape more equitable sustainability transitions.



Name of the initiative: Eco Action for Climate Justice, Cyprus

Coordinator: Centre for Social Innovation, <https://csicy.com/>

Contact: Styliani Karra - stella.karra@csicy.com



POLICY LEVER #3

STRENGTHEN THE CLIMATE JUSTICE DIMENSION IN CLIMATE AND SUSTAINABILITY POLICIES

Recommendation

Advocate for stronger integration of climate justice and social equity in sustainability and climate strategies at the EU and national level, ensuring that adult learning and community participation are recognised as core elements of a just transition.

Background

Climate policies increasingly recognise the need for a just transition to a sustainable, low-carbon economy. However, current implementation often focuses narrowly on labour markets, industries, and unions, leaving gaps in social inclusion, civic participation, and adult learning. While initiatives like the Union of Skills [18] and the Just Transition Mechanism [12] address upskilling and reskilling, civil society continues to highlight unequal access to decision-making processes, especially for vulnerable groups. More holistic instruments, such as the European Social Fund+ (ESF+) [12], are needed to integrate adult learning and social equity into the just transition.

LEVERS' added value

LEVERS demonstrates how linking climate action with social justice, community empowerment, and inclusion can fill these gaps, showing that adult learning can strengthen community engagement, support underrepresented groups, and contribute to more equitable policy outcomes.

Advocacy angle

Frame adult learning as a mechanism to ensure climate policies are socially fair, accessible, and responsive to diverse community realities.



ACTION IN PRACTICE #4

ADVOCACY TRAINING FOR THE TWIN TRANSITION, BELGIUM

From May 5–7, 2025, the European Association for the Education of Adults, EAEA, in cooperation with SVEB and the International Council for Adult Education, ICAE, organised a training titled “Making the Case for Adult Learning and Twin Transitions: From the EU to Local Perspectives.” Over three days, the training brought together 15 ALE educators eager to learn more about the twin transition and how to advocate for it.

To launch the international training, Professor Simeon-Fayomi Bolanle Clara, expert in Adult Education and Lifelong Learning at Obafemi Awolowo University, led participants through an interactive storytelling session. At the conclusion of the story and accompanying dance, participants shared reflections on working collectively in their communities to address climate action, expressing gratitude for natural resources and awareness of pressing climate challenges.

Day Two focused on advocacy fundamentals, inspiration from practitioners, and the development of advocacy plans. The training focused on the just transition, guiding participants through the concept of a just twin transition and stressing the importance of bottom-up and grassroots advocacy. As one trainer indicated, “as individuals, we are part of policy actions. Our decisions to march, to demonstrate, to network, and to push for our learners’ needs make ALE an integral part of the twin transition.” Participants then explored six steps for effective advocacy and began planning their own objectives and actions.

On the final morning, participants practised pitching their advocacy ideas to stakeholders. Three psychological insights developed by the University College London Climate Action Unit and used in the LEVERS Horizon Europe project for climate justice were presented:

1. The Elephant and the Rider – Recognising the balance in thinking between intuition (the elephant) and reasoning (the rider) helps advocates align their messages with stakeholders’ values and emotional responses.
2. Ginger the Dog – Not everything we say is understood as we intend. Others may interpret the same words as having different meanings. Clear, accessible language helps ensure our message is received as intended.
3. Actions Drive Beliefs – Actions, rather than awareness alone, shape attitudes and values. Self-persuasion is the best form of persuasion, and taking action allows people to develop their self-belief and agency to make change. Highlighting practical examples and best practices helps people to see others like them taking action, and make tangible the idea that they too, could take action on things that matter to them.

With this psychological lens, participants tailored action plans and created roadmaps for engaging stakeholders effectively.

ACTION IN PRACTICE #4

ADVOCACY TRAINING FOR THE TWIN TRANSITION, BELGIUM

The training was organised jointly by a European, Swiss and International network working on lifelong learning. Thanks to the cooperation, the will of all three organisations to continue to work on the just transition was strengthened, and the participants found local and international partners interested in collaborating together in their local contexts [19]. The transnational cooperation was particularly impactful as participants gained insights into the real climate-related issues faced in countries from the global south. The workshop organised by Professor Simeon-Fayomi Bolanle Clara on storytelling was a powerful learning moment for participants to engage in their emotional response to climate change and to learn from an action-focused story. The mix of participants and this storytelling approach enriched the group work and roadmaps for action that were developed during the training.



Name of the initiative: Advocacy training for the twin transition, [video](#)

Coordinator: [European Association for the Education of Adults \(EAEA\)](#)

Partners: European Association for the Education of Adults (EAEA), International Council for Adult Education (ICAE), [Swiss Federation for Adult Learning - SVEB](#)

Contact: Charlotte Ede, charlotte.ede@eaea.org



POLICY LEVER #4

LEVERAGE TRANSNATIONAL NETWORKS TO AMPLIFY LEARNING-BASED CLIMATE ADVOCACY

Recommendation

Connect climate action initiatives with European and international civil-society climate networks to scale impact and strengthen collective advocacy.

Background

EU climate policymaking is heavily influenced by coalition-based advocacy. Networks of NGOs, community organisations, and research actors play a decisive role in shaping narratives, consultation responses, and political priorities - particularly ahead of legislative negotiations and Council presidencies. The Marrakech Framework for Action [20] signed by over 140 countries, considers vertical and horizontal multi-sectoral partnerships a fundamental pillar for an advancing society across levels.

LEVERS' added value

LEVERS offers grounded, community-based evidence that complements high-level advocacy and strengthens the credibility of civil society positions.

Advocacy angle

Position learning initiatives as “evidence generators” that reinforce network advocacy with real-world practice and citizen engagement on different levels and from various perspectives and backgrounds. Create mechanisms between practice and policy to involve more people and facilitate exchange, so that the stories of action are clearly visible.



ACTION IN PRACTICE #5

RESPONSIBLE HYBRID LEARNING SPACES

The European Association for the Education of Adults (EAEA) has long promoted hybrid and digital learning approaches as tools for inclusive adult education. In the context of climate action, EAEA emphasises not only the development of digital competences, but also a critical understanding of the environmental and social impacts of digital technologies, including how digital tools shape learning, access, and equity, while influencing energy use, sustainability practices, and societal outcomes. Insights on this can be drawn from an EU-funded initiative in which EAEA participates, JUST4ALL, illustrating how hybrid learning can advance climate resilience, social equity, and sustainable digital skills. Two LEVERS Learning Ventures, in Switzerland and the UK, also highlight how a responsible approach to digital skills can drive innovative climate-related actions.

Just4All: The Just Transition for All via online learning

Just4All focuses on ensuring a just transition for all adult learners, including those who are marginalised, including migrants, women, and low-skilled adults. Its MOOC, Just Transition and Competences for the Future, offers recorded webinars, case studies, and skill-building resources that extend beyond employment to support fair and sustainable futures. The course promotes digital literacy alongside critical reflection on how digital technologies impact environmental and social systems. By focusing on a historic perspective of climate justice and marginalised communities, ALE educators learn how current green and digital solutions can be navigated responsibly.

First Hand Cross-Mentoring and Digital Hub, UK

First Hand's Cross-Mentoring programme offered a six-week hybrid learning initiative for early- and later-career sustainability professionals. Created with youth engagement specialists We Rise and workplace skills experts Change Agents, the programme combined online sessions with a central real-world immersive learning event, to support these professionals in developing the skills needed for newly emerging climate and sustainability challenges in their professional sectors.

Co-creation of digital resources included the LEVERS Field Guide v1, where consortium members contributed digital diary entries - including text, images, and multimedia - to create a shared, open record of project development. The UK Learning Venture, led by creative studio Forth, created a Digital Hub: a curated online hub accessible to 16 cross-disciplinary sustainability practitioners, serving as a repository for agendas, notes, recordings, and links. Over time, this hub has grown into a shared resource that attracts new participants.

All three initiatives demonstrate together how online learning and digital platforms can democratise access, enable collaboration, and support the development of digital skills alongside a critical understanding of the environmental and social consequences of technology use.



ACTION IN PRACTICE #5

RESPONSIBLE HYBRID LEARNING SPACES

Online Teacher Training, Onl’Fait, Switzerland

As part of the LEVERS project in Switzerland, two interactive 90-minute online seminars led by Jonathan Mille, (Climate Action Unit, University College London) were delivered to all teachers in the canton of Geneva, with support from the DIP (Department of Public Education, Training and Youth) and local LEVERS consortium member Onl’Fait.

The first seminar explored the contributions of neuroscience and psychology to climate action in schools, addressing:

- How to avoid or circumvent polarisation around climate action.
- How and why individuals change - or fail to change - behaviours.
- How to engage entire educational communities in building comprehensive school approaches to climate and nature.

The second seminar introduced systemic thinking tools to help teachers develop educational strategies addressing climate and sustainable development challenges. These tools encourage participants to see the school ecosystem as an interconnected system, highlighting how decisions in one area affect others.

Systems thinking can foster critical reflection on digital skills and the use of digital tools, prompting educators to consider not only how technology can enhance learning, but also its social and environmental implications, including energy use, accessibility, equity, and the sustainability of online platforms. LEVERS training materials can be accessed on the project website www.leversforclimate.eu

Name of the initiative: Just4ALL

Coordinator: EAEA

Contact: Angeliki Giannakopoulou,
angeliki@eaea.org

Name of the initiative: First Hand Cross-Mentoring

Coordinator: Forth Together CIC,
<https://www.wegoforth.org>

Partners: We-Rise and Change Agents
Contact: Dee Halligan - dee@wegoforth.org

Name of the initiative: Online Teacher Training

Coordinator: Onl’Fait, Switzerland <https://onlfait.ch/>

Partners: UCL Climate Action Unit

<https://www.ucl.ac.uk/climate-action-unit/>

Contact: Patrick Condevaux - paddy@onlfait.ch

ADVANCE CRITICAL DIGITAL SKILLS FOR A TRULY JUST AND GREEN TRANSITION

Recommendation

Promote a holistic approach to digital skills within the green transition, combining technical competences with a critical understanding of the environmental and social impacts of digital technologies. Digital literacy should enable learners to evaluate not only how to use technology effectively, but also its broader implications for sustainability, equity, and democratic participation.

Background

EU frameworks increasingly emphasise digital skills as enablers of the green and twin transitions. The Digital Education Action Plan 2021–2027 [21] promotes digital competences across education and training systems, yet its focus largely remains on access, usability, and adaptation to digitalisation, with limited attention to the environmental and social impacts of digital technologies. The twin transitions - combining the digital and green shifts - are systemic processes involving complex interactions among social, technological, and natural systems. Digital innovation can accelerate environmental, social, and economic sustainability, but only if it is deployed responsibly [22]. A frequently neglected aspect is the sustainable development, diffusion, and use of digital technologies, including the energy and material costs of digital infrastructure, equity of access, and long-term societal impacts. Without attention to these dimensions, digitalisation risks reinforcing inequalities or generating unintended environmental harms [22].

LEVERS' added value

LEVERS demonstrates how adult learning for sustainability can bridge the gap between digital competences and environmental awareness at the community level. By embedding critical reflection on technology use within learning ecosystems, LEVERS supports a form of digital empowerment that contributes to both environmental sustainability and social justice, reinforcing the human and democratic dimension of the twin transition.

Advocacy angle

Digital skills policies should go beyond purely technical or market-driven approaches, integrating environmental responsibility, critical digital literacy, and sustainability awareness. Adult learning can equip citizens and workers not only to use digital tools, but also to understand their environmental implications, assess social consequences, and act as informed participants in a just and green transition.

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