

Climate Change and School Grounds

ISGA FAZENDA SERRINHA - DE KALEI CLIMATE STATEMENT OCTOBER 2024

The International School Grounds Alliance strongly believes that as school grounds are at the heart of communities they play a significant part in responding to the impacts of climate change and ensuring climate justice* for children and young people. School grounds can provide quality spaces for communities to gather, to play, to learn, and to live in harmony with nature. They also link to local spaces, habitats and initiatives beyond their boundaries.

THEY PROVIDE A KEY SPACE FOR RESPONDING TO CLIMATE CHANGE THROUGH:

- Providing frequent contact with natural materials to improve physical and mental health.
- Learning about climate change by discovering its impacts through direct outdoor experience including play, learning, being and researching outdoors.
- Taking action by investigating issues, designing solutions and making positive changes to their grounds, leading to knowledge, skills and attitudes that will last a lifetime.

ISGA believes that a whole school approach engaging pupils, staff and the local community results in culturally sensitive and contextually responsive solutions to climate change.

On the following pages we look at seven key climate themes with examples of who schools are addressing each impact around the world.

* Climate justice is the moral and ethical principle that seeks to address the disproportionate impact of climate change on vulnerable communities and future generations. (United Nations)



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Photo: Cedric Ryckaert

The growing area, Klimaatspeelplaats Sint-Paulus, Kortrijk, Belgium



Photo: Cedric Ryckaert

Shade sales over a slide with sand, Klimaatspeelplaats Sint-Paulus, Kortrijk, Belgium

Through a meaningful design of school grounds we can address the impacts of climate change in a range of ways, such as:

Thermal comfort: schools can mitigate effects of extreme heat and cold events:

- create shade and shelter for buildings and grounds through planting and structures;
- Create energy-efficient areas by using green roofs and facades
- make changes in design and build to improve air flow;



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A variety of shade features at Escola La Maquinista, Barcelona (climate adaptive school grounds)



Creating shade at Don Bosco Vocational Trainings Centre, Phnom Penh, Cambodia

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Healthy ecosystems: schools with healthy ecosystems help mitigate climate change:

- improve habitats to increase biodiversity;
- ensure specific plant selection responds to local needs.



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Planting for pollinators Ysgol Pentrefoelas, Wales, UK



Planting heat resistant species Green School, Bali, Indonesia

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Air quality: school grounds can help improve air quality:

- plant in and around school grounds to trap pollutants;
- provide different layers of planting.



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Planting helps to maintain air quality, Sherman Elementary School, San Francisco



Layers of planting combat pollution, Galilei Grundschule, Berlin

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Water management: school grounds can help with water management:

- use organic materials to retain moisture and improve soils;
- manage water through planting and design, water capture systems, increasing surface permeability and improved drainage.



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Stormwater management Freie Waldorfschule, Berlin, Germany



Permeable surfacing, Brazil

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Carbon management: school grounds can help to capture carbon:

- plant mixed layers of vegetation with a range of life cycles;
- rejuvenate soils to improve carbon capture.



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Mixed woodland edge and meadow, UK



Mature trees play their part in carbon capture in Chile

Through a meaningful design of school grounds we can address the impacts of climate change in a range of ways, such as:

Materials and management: school ground consumption choices can reduce impact on the Earth's limited resources:

- use sustainable materials from local sources and suppliers;
- refuse, reduce, reuse and recycle resources, and consider the end of life of materials and equipment used on site.



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ISF HK Centre for Renewable Energy Education, Hong Kong



Photo: Antje Schwabersberger

Using sustainable materials at Brodowin Primary School, Berlin, Germany

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Resilient communities: school grounds can build community resilience and hope:

- grow vegetables using composted food waste and create food forests;
- open school grounds for community use.



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"Rocket" Composter. ISF HK Centre for Renewable Energy Education, Hong Kong



Community and school come together to grow crops, Sweden