



NATIONAL BACKGROUND PAPER: Just Transition, Lifelong Learning and Adult Education in France



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1. Introduction – Just transition: an issue already prominent in the public debate

Environmental education and the ecological transition in France take place within a broader European context, where the just transition has become a central issue. This concept, developed by the labor movement in the 1980s, seeks a fair shift towards a post-carbon society. The just transition aims to fairly distribute the benefits of the green economy and support those who may be economically disadvantaged by this transition.

In France, the issue of fairness in the ecological transition gained particular prominence with the Yellow Vests protest. This social movement, which began in October 2018, was triggered by the announcement of an increase in the carbon tax on fuel, intended to encourage a shift toward clean energy and low-emission technologies. The protesters, wearing yellow road safety vests as a symbol of unity, quickly expanded their demands to include buying power, fair taxation, and participatory democracy. The movement primarily manifested through the occupation of roundabouts, road blockades, and weekly protests, often marked by violent clashes with law enforcement. This unprecedented mobilization exposed a deep divide between government decisions on ecological transition and their impact on the daily lives of citizens, particularly those in rural and peri-urban areas heavily reliant on their vehicles. The Yellow Vests protest underscored the need for a more inclusive and equitable approach to implementing environmental policies, highlighting the importance of an ecological transition that takes into account the socio-economic realities of all population segments. In fact, according to an IFOP¹ study, 82% of French citizens are concerned about climate change. Furthermore, 74% believe that in the fight against climate change, the state asks too much of the poorest citizens and not enough of the richest. Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) is closely linked to this just transition. They share a common goal: to

ensure a fair ecological transition for all, thereby creating a society where environmental sustainability is integrated with social justice, allowing for an inclusive and equitable societal transformation. Additionally, popular education actors play a crucial role in ensuring that ESD reaches all audiences, including the general public and children, but also those most distant from sustainable development issues due to economic, social, or geographical reasons.

This report on the state of ESD and the just transition in France does not aim to be exhaustive, as there are numerous actors, projects, and initiatives. The actions carried out in the French associative sector demonstrate a significant commitment to ESD. By raising public awareness of ecological issues while promoting inclusive practices, these initiatives contribute to a more equitable societal transformation. To provide this overview of ESD, although partial, this report was written in consultation with French ESD stakeholders. It is interesting to note that the term “just transition” is not always familiar to the actors interviewed, although the issue is at the core of their approaches. These interviews with long-standing committed stakeholders offer valuable historical perspectives on the evolution of practices surrounding ESD. This methodology was complemented by documentary research.

Thus, this report highlights not only the challenges but also the opportunities presented by the ecological transition in terms of environmental education and social transformation. The report explores several key areas, analyzing the impacts of climate change, emphasizing the economic and social repercussions, particularly in vulnerable sectors, and on groups such as women, migrants, and low-skilled workers. The report also underscores the importance of both formal and non-formal education.

1 <https://www.ifop.com/publication/les-francais-et-le-rechauffement-climatique-perceptions-comportements-et-anticipations/>

2. Climate change impacts and just transition policies and programmes

2.1. Economic and social impacts of climate change, impacts in the education sector, on women, migrants and low skilled workers or adults with low levels of education

The French: “Very” Concerned About Climate Change

Climate change is already having significant impacts on the French economy and society, and these effects are expected to intensify in the coming years. According to the Pisani-Ferry² report, the economic consequences are manifold: loss of productivity, damage to infrastructure, and rising adjustment costs. Particularly vulnerable sectors, such as agriculture and tourism, are being heavily affected.

The Economic, Social, and Environmental Council (ESEC) has noted that these impacts disproportionately affect certain segments of the population. Elderly people and rural residents are particularly exposed to risks associated with extreme climate events, such as heatwaves and floods. Young people are also deeply affected, as they will endure the long-term and increasingly severe consequences of climate change, impacting their economic, social, and environmental futures. According to a scientific study published by The Lancet, climate change’s impact on young people in France is significant: 60% of them are “very” or even “extremely” concerned about climate change. Another study conducted by the Jean-Jaurès Foundation and the French Youth Forum, surveying French youth aged 18 to 30, highlighted a sense of “eco-anger” in response to a perception of government inaction. In France,

55% of young people feel abandoned. Only 26% believe the government is doing enough to avert disaster, and 28% feel that the government’s actions align with climate science. According to the same study, 37% of young people aged 16 to 25 are hesitant to have children due to climate-related concerns.

However, the Pisani-Ferry report also notes that climate change presents new economic opportunities. The transition to a green economy could spur innovation and create new jobs. The ESEC emphasizes that this transition requires substantial investments and well-designed policies to be both effective and equitable. The Ministry of Ecological Transition’s Climate Action Plan³ highlights the importance of building societal and institutional resilience to address the inherent uncertainty in adaptation strategies.

Climate Change Exacerbates Inequalities in Education

Climate change significantly affects the education sector, with direct consequences on children’s learning conditions and a worsening of existing inequalities within the education system.

French school buildings are often poorly adapted to the new climatic conditions. Most schools were built without considering climate change challenges, making them vulnerable to extreme temperatures. This lack of adaptation results in poor thermal insulation, inadequate ventilation, and the absence of sustainable air conditioning systems. According to an Oxfam France study⁴, 55% of French preschools are at risk of experiencing indoor temperatures exceeding 35°C by

2 The Pisani-Ferry report, titled “The Economic Implications of Climate Action,” was commissioned by the Prime Minister and led by economist Jean Pisani-Ferry. It aims to assess the macroeconomic impacts of the ecological transition in France. The report’s findings were made public in June 2023.

3 https://www.ecologie.gouv.fr/sites/default/files/documents/20194_bilan_Plan-Action-Climat-synthese-4.pdf

4 Oxfam (2024) « Réchauffement climatique. Nous ne sommes pas prêts.e.s » [“Global warming. We are not ready”], <https://www.oxfamfrance.org/rapports/changement-climatique-nous-ne-sommes-pas-pret/>

2030. These extreme conditions affect students' concentration and performance, compromising the quality of education. Moreover, climate change deepens the disparities already present in the French education system. Schools located in disadvantaged or rural areas are often less equipped to handle climate challenges, widening the gap with better-resourced institutions. The Oxfam report also highlights that 100% of children enrolled in schools in Seine-Saint-Denis, France's poorest department, will be exposed to excessive temperatures.

Extreme weather conditions also disrupt the school schedule. School closures due to heatwaves or severe weather events are becoming more frequent, causing interruptions in the learning process. Overseas territories are particularly vulnerable to climate risks, facing more frequent extreme weather events. Oxfam France reports: "It is the increased intensity of heatwaves but also their extended duration, from May to October, that impact the school calendar." These disruptions force schools to reconsider their schedules and teaching methods, with a growing reliance on distance learning. However, this can exacerbate inequalities among students, given unequal access to digital tools. To address these challenges, the climate and environmental strategy consulting firm EcoAct⁵ emphasizes the need to invest in school infrastructure adaptation and to develop resilient educational strategies to cope with climate change. This involves not only physical improvements but also a deeper integration of education for sustainable development (ESD) into school curricula to prepare future generations for climate issues. However, upgrading school buildings faces administrative complexities and budgetary constraints of local authorities.

Climate Change: A Differentiated Vulnerability

In France, as in other parts of the world, climate change exacerbates existing socio-economic inequalities. It disproportionately affects women, migrants, and low-skilled workers. The 2003 heatwave in France illustrates this differentiated vulnerability: of the nearly 15,000 deaths, there was a 15% higher mortality rate among women compared to men. This disparity can be explained by social factors such as the more frequent isolation of elderly women and inequalities in access to healthcare⁶.

Migrants represent another particularly vulnerable group in France. Often living in precarious conditions, they face additional obstacles in coping with climate risks, such as limited access to housing, employment, and healthcare services. This precariousness increases their exposure to the consequences of extreme weather events.

Low-skilled workers are also more exposed to the effects of climate change in France. According to the French General Commission for Strategy and Foresight⁷, the 23 most affected professions are often held by construction worker, farmers, security staff, but also bakers, cooks and healthcare workers. These jobs, which are often poorly paid and carried out in precarious conditions, accumulate inequalities when facing climate risks. As they generally have fewer resources at their disposal, these workers find it harder to adapt, whether it's to change their work environment or their working hours. For example, they have fewer means to invest in heat protection equipment or to acquire new skills suited to a changing environment. Moreover, these workers are often less informed about the risks associated with climate change and how to protect themselves, increasing their vulnerability.

5 EcoAct. (2023). Vulnérabilité des écoles aux changements climatiques : quels besoins d'adaptation dans les territoires ? [Schools' vulnerability to climate change: what are the local adaptation needs?] : https://eco-act.com/fr/blog/ecoles-changement-climatique/Etudes/2003/Etude2003_7/8pagescani_1_.pdf

6 <https://www.ors-idf.org/fileadmin/DataStorageKit/ORS/>

7 France Stratégie (June 2023), « Le travail à l'épreuve du changement climatique », ["Work in the face of climate change"] https://www.strategie.gouv.fr/sites/strategie.gouv.fr/files/atoms/files/fs-2023-na123-adaptation_changement_climatique-juin_2.pdf

2.2. Global climate pledges, green transition policies, regulations, and plans.

France is committed to the fight against climate change, both internationally and nationally.

Global Climate Commitments

France has ratified the Paris Agreement, thereby committing to contribute to the global effort to limit climate warming to well below 2°C, and ideally to 1.5°C, compared to pre-industrial levels. Under this agreement, France has set ambitious targets to reduce its greenhouse gas emissions. In terms of international climate financing, France allocated €7.6 billion to climate action in developing countries in 2022, surpassing its target of €6 billion per year. France is also developing partnerships for a just energy transition with several countries, such as the Paris Pact for the People and the Planet (4P)⁸. This initiative aims to reform the international financial system to better address the climate issues and mobilize financial and technical resources to support climate action and sustainable development.

Policies, Regulations, and Green Transition Plans

At the national level, France is committed to achieving carbon neutrality by 2050. To reach this goal, it has implemented several key policies and strategies:

- The National Low-Carbon Strategy (NLCS), established by the law of August 17, 2015, on energy transition for green growth, outlines the trajectory for reducing greenhouse gas emissions through 2050. The main objectives of the NLCS are:
 - Reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 40% by 2030 compared to 1990
 - Achieving carbon neutrality by 2050.

To meet these targets, the NLCS provides sectoral guidelines (transport, buildings, agriculture, industry, energy, waste) and cross-cutting strategies (carbon footprint, education, research).

- The Multiannual Energy Plan (MEP) serves as France's energy roadmap, setting the government's energy priorities for the next ten years. Its primary goals are:
 - Reducing fossil energy consumption
 - Developing renewable energy
 - Improving energy efficiency
- The Climate and Resilience Law of 2021, adopted on August 22, 2021, aims to accelerate France's ecological transition across various sectors, including transport, housing, consumption, and food. Key measures of this law include:
 - Banning the rental of poorly insulated homes from 2025
 - Creating low-emission zones in cities with over 150,000 inhabitants
 - The obligation for supermarkets and hypermarkets to devote 20% of their sales area to bulk products by 2030.

Implementing these policies requires coordination between various stakeholders, including ministries, local authorities, businesses, and citizens.

8 <https://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/fr/politique-etrangere-de-la-france/sommets-et-enjeux-globaux/le-pacte-de-paris-pour-les-peuples-et-la-planete-4p/>

2.3 National recovery and transition Plans

France has implemented several national recovery and transition plans to address economic and environmental challenges. These plans aim to stimulate the economy while accelerating the country's ecological transition.

« France Relance » (« France relaunch »)

Launched in September 2020, this plan is a major initiative by the French government to respond to the economic crisis caused by the COVID-19 pandemic and to prepare the economy for the future. With a total budget of €100 billion, it is structured around three main pillars: ecology (€30 billion), competitiveness (€34 billion), and social and territorial cohesion (€36 billion). The ecological component of France Relance, with its €30 billion allocation, aims to accelerate the transition towards a greener and more sustainable economy. Key areas of action include energy-efficient building renovations, the development of clean transport, industrial decarbonization, support for the circular economy, agricultural transition, and biodiversity preservation. These investments not only seek to reduce greenhouse gas emissions but also to create jobs in green sectors and improve the quality of life for citizens.

National Recovery and Resilience Plan (NRRP)

The NRRP is France's version of the European recovery plan, "Next Generation EU." It aims to support investments and reforms that will enable France to address economic and social challenges while accelerating its ecological transition. The NRRP outlines how France plans to use European funds to support the necessary reforms and investments for a sustainable recovery. Initially estimated at €40.9 billion, the NRRP was adjusted in 2023 to reach €41.9 billion. It is structured around nine components, several of which are directly related to the ecological transition:

- Energy-efficient renovation
- Ecology and biodiversity
- Green infrastructure and mobility

- Green energy and technologies
- Business financing
- Technological sovereignty and resilience
- Digital upgrade of the state, regions, and businesses
- Employment protection, youth, disabilities, and professional training
- Research, health and dependency, territorial cohesion.

Other Sectoral Plans

In addition to these overarching plans, France has implemented several sectoral plans to support the ecological transition in specific areas:

- « France 2030 »: This €30 billion, five-year investment plan aims to enhance industrial competitiveness and future technologies in France. It includes significant components related to the ecological transition, such as the development of small nuclear reactors, industrial decarbonization, and support for clean technologies in transportation.
- Bicycle and Active Mobility Plan : Launched in 2018 and strengthened under France Relance, this plan aims to triple the share of cycling in daily travel by 2024, increasing it from 3% to 9%.

These various plans and strategies demonstrate a clear political commitment to transform the French economy towards a more sustainable model. However, their implementation raises several critical questions. Firstly, while the scale of investment is significant, it remains insufficient in the face of the climate emergency and the ambitious targets set by the Paris Agreement. Moreover, the multiplicity of plans and their overlap may create administrative complexity, potentially hindering their effectiveness on the ground. Additionally, these initiatives are framed within a green growth logic that does not fundamentally challenge the current economic model, which is a source of many inequalities and environmental pressures. Lastly, as revealed by the Yellow Vest protest, the ecological transition cannot succeed without careful attention to social justice and support for the most vulnerable populations.

2.4 National and multilateral funding for just transition, including in the education sector and to support women, migrants/ refugees, and adults with low levels of education

Education and Employability, Without Specific Funding

Although there is limited specific funding targeting education within the framework of a just transition, several mechanisms can be leveraged to support this sector, notably the Green Fund for the energy renovation of school buildings. This fund, which allocates resources for modernizing educational infrastructures, helps improve learning conditions while reducing the carbon footprint of schools. However, a just transition in education extends beyond financing projects. It also requires evolving curricula and pedagogical practices to incorporate ecological transition issues. In addition to embedding climate and environmental topics into programs, teacher training is essential to equip educators with the tools to convey these issues to their students.

Similarly, various programs and funding, while not explicitly labeled as part of the “just transition,” play a significant role in adapting skills and supporting workers as they face economic and ecological changes. The National Employment Fund (NEF) plays an important role by financing the NEF-Training program, which aims to assist companies and employees in developing the skills needed for the ecological transition. Other national public aid programs, such as CDES (Commitment to the Development of Employment and Skills), which includes both a prospective component and a development actions component specifically for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), contribute to preparing these businesses for the changes brought by the ecological transition. Regionally, regional councils play a crucial role in funding the just transition, given their responsibilities in professional training and ecological and energy transitions.

Regions are implementing various innovative initiatives, such as creating training programs focused on green and “greening” jobs.

Moreover, France’s National Recovery and Resilience Plan (NRRP) includes components that can indirectly benefit young people and adults undergoing professional retraining. Likewise, the European Social Fund Plus (ESF+) offers financing opportunities for educational and training initiatives aimed at vulnerable groups, including women and migrants. Additionally, the Economic, Social, and Environmental Council (ESEC) has adopted an opinion titled “Gender Inequalities, Climate Crisis, and Ecological Transition,”⁹ which makes several recommendations for better integrating gender considerations into ecological transition policies. These include integrating a gender inequality indicator into national environmental planning or strengthening the gender criterion in public procurement for ecological transition-related infrastructure and equipment.

European Funding

The European Union plays a major role in financing the just transition, primarily through two funds: the European Social Fund Plus (ESF+) and the Just Transition Fund (JTF). For the period 2021-2027, France’s national program for the ESF+ allocates nearly €4 billion. Priority 3 of this program, which accounts for 12% of the funds, specifically targets the development of skills for employees in companies facing ecological and digital transitions. The JTF, a new fund for the 2021-2027 period, aims to support the energy and industrial transition towards a carbon-neutral economy.

In France, the JTF focuses on six regions: Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes, Grand Est, Hauts-de-France, Normandy, Pays de la Loire, and Provence-Alpes-Côte d’Azur. These funds are intended to support a just and inclusive transition, with

9 https://www.lecese.fr/sites/default/files/pdf/Rapports/2023/2023_05_inegalites_genre_.pdf

particular attention to vulnerable groups such as women, migrants/refugees, and adults with low educational levels. The planned closure of the coal power plant of the city of Cordemais in the Pays de la Loire region in 2026-2027 threatens more than 800 direct, indirect, and induced jobs, including 370 employees and 210 subcontractors¹⁰. In response to this challenge, the JTF intervenes to assist these workers in their professional retraining by providing training, support for career orientation, and help in finding new job opportunities, thereby aiming to mitigate the social and economic impact of the ecological transition of the region.

¹⁰ https://pays-de-la-loire.dreets.gouv.fr/sites/pays-de-la-loire.dreets.gouv.fr/IMG/pdf/annexe_11_pttj_pdl_annexe_version_longue.pdf

3. Formal and non-formal education on climate, environment, and Just Transition

3.1. Formal and non-formal education on environment, climate, sustainable development, and just transition issues in formal and non-formal education

Towards the Anthropocene: A Historical Perspective on Education for Sustainable Development (ESD)

Environmental education in France has evolved since the 19th century. It began with an initial movement focused on *education through the environment*, aiming to emancipate children through direct contact with nature. Scouting and popular education are its main representatives. In the 1970s, the first environmental laws shifted practices towards education for the environment. This period saw the emergence of clubs like “Know and Protect Nature” and green classes aimed at raising awareness among young people about environmental issues. The 1980s and 1990s marked a turning point towards concrete actions for environmental protection, with initiatives such as waste collection drives and the engagement of associations in forming eco-citizens. The 1990s brought the advent of the concept of sustainable development, characterized by two main approaches: a behaviorist view focused on eco-friendly actions and a socio-constructivist approach aimed at understanding and improving one’s living environment. New actors such as businesses and management unions became involved in environmental education. Finally, with the 2000s, the emergence of socially sensitive issues addressed subjects that sparked debate in society, based on knowledge that is constantly evolving, such as climate change. Today, with the growing importance of the notion of the Anthropocene and significant upheavals, the emphasis is now on acquiring skills to equip learners to act in complex, uncertain, and impermanent contexts. This evolution

reflects a growing awareness of environmental issues and an adaptation of educational methods to contemporary challenges.

A Cross-Curricular Formal Education

Since 2004, education for sustainable development (ESD) has been officially integrated into the French school curricula. This integration has been gradual, with several circulars reinforcing its importance over the years. The goal is to provide students with an understanding of environmental and climate issues throughout their schooling, from primary to secondary education. ESD in the French education system is characterized by its cross-curricular approach. It is not taught as a standalone subject but integrated across all disciplines. This approach allows students to understand environmental issues from various perspectives: scientific, economic, social, and cultural.

A notable initiative in formal education is the creation of “eco-delegates.” Since 2019, each class in middle and high schools elects an eco-delegate responsible for promoting ecological behavior within the school. Eco-delegates play a crucial role in raising awareness among their peers and implementing concrete projects related to sustainable development. The achievements of eco-delegates are diverse and touch upon many aspects of school life, such as observing and preserving biodiversity on school grounds, greening and redesigning schoolyards, and establishing waste sorting and recycling systems.

To encourage and recognize these actions, the Ministry of National Education established the Eco-Delegate Action Award in 2020. In 2022, the Karl-Marx College in Villejuif won the eco-delegate action award for the Créteil Academy for their numerous ecological projects carried out throughout the school

year¹¹. The eco-delegates of the college initiated a series of concrete actions to improve their school environment and raise awareness among their peers about ecological issues. Among the notable initiatives of the year, one can highlight:

The greening of the hallways and courtyard of the college

- The organization of three environmental races, including a waste collection drive that allowed for the collect of 42 kg of litter
- A collection of bottle caps intended for the production of seats for the 2024 Olympic Games
- A fundraising campaign to finance the re-greening of the college
- The creation of fat balls for birds
- The production of recycled paper
- The creation of informative posters about the environment

The impact of this commitment extends far beyond the environmental realm. The eco-delegates see their involvement recognized in their school career, particularly for the oral exam of the middle school national diploma (“brevet”). These projects provide them with a unique learning opportunity about the world around them, while also inspiring other schools to implement similar initiatives. Additionally, these ecological actions have had positive effects on an individual level. At Karl-Marx College, a struggling student discovered a passion for horticulture through his involvement in these projects, illustrating the transformative potential of these initiatives on students’ personal paths.

Non-formal education: associations in all direction

Alongside formal education, numerous non-formal education initiatives contribute to raising awareness and training the public on environmental and climate issues.

The Permanent Centers for Environmental Initiatives (PCEI) play a crucial role in non-formal environmental education. Certified by the French government, these centers offer hands-on educational activities, allowing for a concrete and practical approach to environmental questions. The National Union of PCEI, recognized as a “complementary educational association to public education” and as an “environmental protection association,” coordinates these training and awareness-raising efforts nationwide. The PCEI develops environmental education programs for various audiences. For instance, PCEI Sèvre et Bocage¹² offers school-based educational programs consisting of several half- days that alternate between classroom sessions and field trips, depending on the chosen theme. These programs are aimed not only at schoolchildren but also at leisure centers and the general public. PCEI Bresse du Jura provides free downloadable activity sheets and educational tools, thus offering accessible resources for environmental education¹³. In addition to these educational activities, PCEIs also organize training for civil servant, teachers, and professionals from various sectors.

National associations like Greenpeace France offer resources aimed at a broad audience, from young children (as early as age 6) to high school students. The goal is to provide age-appropriate content to engage young people on environmental issues. among the many contributions, Greenpeace publishes a special magazine called “Planet Greenpeace,” designed for children under 10. This magazine allows children to discover environmental issues through stories, games, and activities. The association also offers a new family membership option that includes educational content for children, answering their questions about current environmental events and providing tips for integrating ecology into their daily lives.

11 <https://www.leparisien.fr/val-de-maine-94/collecte-de-dechets-vegetalisation-jardinage-les-collegiens-de-villejuif-primés-pour-leurs-projets-eco-responsables-29-06-2022-SC24RFQZYBZBW7HRUGG3TXVJHHU.php>

12 <https://www.cpie-sevre-bocage.com/cpie/content.aspx?ID=150272>

13 <https://www.cpie-bresse-jura.org/activites-nature-outils-pedagogiques/>

At the local and regional levels, many initiatives are emerging. For example, the Regional Energy- Climate Agency in Île-de-France region develops projects like “Je m’écotransporte!”¹⁴, (“I’m ecotransporting myself!”) which is a pedagogical toolkit for children aged 5 to 11 aimed at promoting education in eco-mobility by providing tools to design, organize, and animate educational actions on sustainable mobility.

The Ligue de l’Enseignement and the “sustainable tourism” sector

Since April 2021, the Ligue de l’Enseignement has established a “sustainable tourism” sector to support the ecological transition of vacation centers and educational stay facilities. Discovery classes and summer camps are privileged contexts for proposing environmental education activities and nature exploration. The update of the educational project for the Vacation, Stay, and Leisure sector in 2025 will provide an opportunity to review the existing services and adapt them to new educational challenges, such as reinforcing nature experience education or developing the eco-citizen dimension of everyday life in the facilities. Similarly, the “Ecological Transition” sector of the Confederation Center has developed the TransiTerre program for many years to support the deployment of civic service missions for young volunteers wishing to engage in environmental education actions. Also a number of educational programmes aim to equip educators within the Ligue de l’enseignement network, focusing on participatory sciences, for example.

The upskilling of educators is therefore an important aspect of non-formal education. Networks like GRAINE Île-de-France¹⁵ offer training for environmental education actors, thereby enhancing the skills and knowledge of those involved in environmental awareness-raising.

3.2. Educators and trainers’ capacities on climate justice and Just transition issues

The capacities of educators and trainers on climate justice and just transition issues in France are being developed through various initiatives.

Popular Education and Legal Action

In the field of informal education, associations and NGOs play a key role. The association “Notre Affaire à Tous”, for example, carries out educational and awareness-raising efforts on climate justice and just transition topics. According to their official website, the association organizes training sessions and workshops to educate the public on climate issues and legal action for environmental protection. These initiatives aim to strengthen citizens’ ability to understand and act on the stakes of climate change, emphasizing the legal and social aspects of the ecological transition. This approach aligns with a broader trend where environmental organizations combine legal action with popular education to promote climate justice and an equitable ecological transition.

The impact of these educational initiatives is also felt in public debate. Climate marches, organized by citizen collectives, have mobilized hundreds of thousands of people in France, demonstrating growing awareness of climate issues among the population. In 2018, 130,000 people protested in France, with nearly 50,000 in Paris on September 8, followed by another march on October 13 that gathered 120,000 participants¹⁶.

In Urban policy priority areas

The “Just Transition” program by makesense¹⁷, implemented in the Île-de-France region, illustrates a targeted approach aimed at engaging young people from Urban policy priority

14 <https://www.arec-idf.fr/nos-travaux/publications/kit-pedagogique-je-mecotransporte/>

15 <https://graine-idf.org/leedd/>

16 <https://reporterre.net/La-plus-grande-manifestation-pour-le-climat-jamais-vue-en-France>

17 <https://france.makesense.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/6/2022/11/rapport-2022-makesense-ghettup.pdf>

areas in the ecological transition. This program was designed to address the specific needs of these young people, who are often underrepresented in environmental movements despite being more vulnerable to climate change. The program notably involves training community leaders who work with disadvantaged neighborhoods youth on the skills needed to facilitate workshops on ecological transition. Additionally, workshops encourage young people to study their local area, identify a relevant ecological initiative, and implement it. This targeted approach seeks to overcome the specific challenges faced by disadvantaged neighborhoods youth, such as prioritizing daily social and material urgencies over the ecological emergency, and the sense of injustice regarding the pressure to adopt eco-friendly practices.

In Gironde, the Ligue de l'Enseignement (« Federation 33 ») has developed a territorial approach to sustainable development education, deemed “the most relevant” according to Carole Garcia, delegate for social and ecological transitions. This approach, implemented for over 20 years, focuses on exploring the environment and local area, particularly targeting disadvantaged populations in priority neighborhoods and Rural Revitalization Zones¹⁸.

Among the many projects launched are the “in-situ vacations” for children from priority neighborhoods, offering environmental or sports activities. For example, children are invited to climb a tree near their building or observe a stream. These are all opportunities to discover local biodiversity, transforming their perception of existing resources. Complementary artistic and cultural activities encourage a creative perspective on the neighborhood. Initially led by la Ligue de l'Enseignement, these initiatives

required collaboration with multiple stakeholders, particularly for funding. They involve the urban policy, the Urban Solidarity and Social Cohesion Grant¹⁹, and social housing providers. Today, these projects have been taken over by local actors, mainly social centers.

Young people are not the only audience for these types of initiatives in priority neighborhoods. To reach a wider audience, La Ligue de l'Enseignement launched the “Outside is also our home” initiative in response to a social housing provider’s request regarding waste sorting. This initiative transformed a frequently squatted lobby in the Aubiers district of Bordeaux into a welcoming space for four days. Various activities, from tasting dishes prepared by residents to artistic projects, raised awareness about waste sorting and illustrated the interconnection between ecological and social transitions.

Rural Youth: Closer to Nature but Not Better Equipped

In rural areas, recognizing that young people do not necessarily know nature better, the Ligue de l'Enseignement revived the project “My Village, a space for Biodiversity.” Born in the south of Deux- Sèvres department, this program unites residents around nature as a common good. It encompasses various actions, from school programs to the creation of communal art pieces, the installation of educational beehives, and the organization of monthly activities. This initiative, financially supported by certain regions, aims to raise awareness, promote ecological practices, strengthen social cohesion, and encourage citizen involvement in local environmental management.

Finally, in small towns along the Garonne River, such as Le Haillan and La Réole, vocational high school students have

¹⁸ Rural Revitalization Zones are rural areas in France that receive tax and social benefits to support economic development and combat depopulation.

¹⁹ The Urban Solidarity and Social Cohesion Grant is a fund in France aimed at financially supporting municipalities and public intercommunal cooperation establishments facing economic and social difficulties. disadvantaged neighborhoods.

participated in planting micro-forests²⁰. These compact and efficient spaces offer an innovative solution to greening urban areas and improving quality of life, while serving as an educational tool for these potential future municipal agents.

For those in precarious situations as well

The Ligue de l'Enseignement of Gironde department also extends its action to the precarious populations of the Adoma and Galilée social residences, welcoming individuals with challenging life paths. Nature outings, workshops on nutrition, and beach cleanup operations are organized to address sustainable development while promoting well-being.

3.3. Education frameworks and collaboration between education stakeholders on climate justice and Just Transition issues

Educational frameworks and collaborations among education stakeholders on climate justice and just transition issues in France are developing through various initiatives involving associations, coalitions, foundations, and international organizations. The association Notre Affaire à Tous plays an important role in this area by collaborating with schools and youth associations to provide training on climate justice issues. Their program "Education & Awareness," launched in September 2019, offers interventions in middle schools, high schools, and higher education. These interventions take the form of dynamic workshops, moving debates, and long-term projects tailored for different audiences.

Outdoor Classes: When Formal and Informal Education Complement Each Other

Outdoor classes, already well-established in some European countries, are gaining ground in France. They serve as an educational tool that combines children's health with education for sustainable development. From about a hundred outdoor classes, France now has approximately 2,000, thanks in particular to the advocacy and coordination work of La Fabrique des communs pédagogiques, as well as research on practices. According to Benjamin Gentils, co-founder of La Fabrique des communs pédagogiques, "School is the primary place for engagement in ecological transition; there is no education for sustainable development without it, and outdoor classes help understand one's environment and its fragility." To develop its initiatives, La Fabrique des communs pédagogiques relies on the International Convention on the Rights of the Child, ratified by France in 1989, which names the right to health and the right of children to participate in matters that concern them. The outdoor classes aim to raise awareness among children, who may then gain a deeper understanding of these issues and have the capacity to assert their rights. Greta Thunberg has even relied on children's rights to hold states accountable for failing to respect these rights²¹. This is how formal and informal education complement each other.

Outdoor classes in France today primarily involve primary and elementary school classes, where learning is enhanced by contact with nature. The City of Paris supports this type of initiative, notably with the outdoor school in the Square des Deux Nèthes²², which opened in January 2024, offering free access to Parisian classes and providing a space for outdoor learning initiation and training. However, for La Fabrique des communs pédagogiques, the development of outdoor classes

20 Urban micro-forests, inspired by the Miyawaki method from Japan, are densely planted spaces of local species on small plots in the city. Their uniqueness lies in becoming self-sufficient in just three years, requiring no maintenance after this period. These mini-ecosystems quickly provide a refuge for urban wildlife, attracting a surprising biodiversity. For the residents, they create valuable cool islands, potentially reducing ambient temperatures by up to 2°C during hot periods.

21 <https://www.unicef.org/fr/communiqu%C3%A9s-de-presse/16-enfants-dont-greta-thunberg-d%C3%A9posent-une-plainte-historique>

22 <https://mairie18.paris.fr/pages/ecole-dehors-25729>

in secondary education is equally important in order to foster what Benjamin Gentils calls “the right to inquiry.” This right to inquiry is based on UN General Comment 26²³, which provides “clear guidance to Member States on what they must achieve to uphold children’s right to a clean, healthy, and sustainable environment.”

In the context of outdoor classes in secondary education, students from Bagnolet, in the suburbs of Paris, have built a device to measure air quality, and in Marseille, a class is investigating the energy autonomy of Frioul Island. By exercising the right to inquiry, young people are working towards potentially building a case for legal action. All these approaches are part of Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) in the Anthropocene era. Nathanaël Wallenhorst, Dean of the Faculty of Education at The Catholic University of the West in the city of Angers and researcher on the Anthropocene, explains: “If we want to do something, it’s not just about adapting schools to climate change, but about how schools can contribute to mitigating climate escalation.”²⁴

At the University level

At the university level, the University Network for Training, Education, and Sustainable Development is an association that brings together various education and training stakeholders in sustainable development, including trainers, researchers, university faculty, and practitioners in both formal and informal education. This organization aims to support the development of educational policies in the field of sustainable development and transitions, while contributing to discussions on the challenges of a critical, civic, and republican education for sustainable development. The association operates in the context of initial and continuing professional training, promotes research, and encourages collective reflection. The association functions as a network designed to build a common foundation for sustainable development education for all students, share resources, and promote interdisciplinary approaches. It also organizes scientific events and meetings among professionals from different backgrounds, including an annual international conference, “Training for Tomorrow’s World,” held in the city of Clermont-Ferrand.

23 <https://www.ohchr.org/fr/news/2023/09/presentation-de-observation-generale-ndeg-26-du-comite-des-droits-de-lenfant>

24 <https://pad.faire-ecole.org/s/WebinaireAdapterlecoleAuChangementClimatique2501>

4. Civil society consultation, collaboration, and coalition building

4.1. Advocacy and campaigns : CSOs' mobilisation on environmental and climate action

French civil society plays a crucial role in mobilizing for environmental and climate action through various coalitions, awareness campaigns, legal actions, and citizen mobilizations, demonstrating the vitality and diversity of engagement in French civil society.

Create a breakthrough

The Climate Action Network (CAN) is a major organization that brings together 27 national associations and 10 local associations engaged in the fight against climate change. Established in 1996, the CAN coordinates the advocacy actions of its members and represents France in the Climate Action Network International. Its objectives include promoting public policies aimed at reducing greenhouse gas emissions, raising awareness among the public and decision-makers, and actively participating in climate debates and negotiations.

The coalition “Never Again” is an alliance between trade unions and environmental associations, launched in 2020. It initially brought together eight organizations, including General Confederation of Labour, Greenpeace, Oxfam, and the Solidaires trade union, and has since been joined by around twenty others. This coalition aims to promote a fair ecological transition by linking social and environmental issues. It has notably developed a plan for social, ecological, and solidarity-based transformation detailed in 36 concrete measures. In a world seeking solutions to social and environmental

issues, this ambitious plan aims to deeply transform society, combining social justice and ecological transition. At the heart of this initiative are innovative proposals such as a 32-hour workweek, strengthening public services, and overhauling the banking and tax systems. By skillfully articulating the immediate needs of citizens with a long-term vision for societal transformation, this plan aims to serve as a genuine springboard toward a fairer and more sustainable future. It embodies the hope for a break from the current economic model, paving the way for a society where human and environmental concerns take precedence over profit.

Legal Actions

Notre Affaire à Tous conducts legal actions against large polluting companies. The association uses the law as a tool in the fight against climate change and is notably involved in “The Case of the Century.” This climate justice campaign, initiated in 2018, has also been undertaken by the Foundation for Nature and Humanity, Greenpeace France, and Oxfam France. This legal action against the French state for climate inaction resulted in a historic ruling on February 3, 2021, when the Paris Administrative Court recognized the state’s fault and the ecological damage caused by its inaction²⁵. In October 2021, the court ordered the state to take “all necessary measures” to repair this damage²⁶.

Citizen Mobilizations and Local Solutions

Alternatiba excels in organizing festive and engaged citizen mobilizations for the climate. With its 110 local groups, Alternatiba successfully deploys a decentralized mobilization rooted in local territories while coordinating significant

²⁵ <https://paris.tribunal-administratif.fr/decisions-de-justice/dernieres-decisions/l-affaire-du-siecle>

²⁶ <https://paris.tribunal-administratif.fr/decisions-de-justice/dernieres-decisions/l-affaire-du-siecle-le-tribunal-estime-que-la-reparation-du-prejudice-ecologique-bien-que-tardive-est-suffisante-et-ne-prononce-de-mesures#:~:text=Par%20un%20jugement%20du%2014,titre%20du%20premier%20budget%20carbone%2C>

national events. Its “villages of alternatives” have become emblematic, gathering tens of thousands of people to discover existing local solutions. The movement also organizes the “Alternatiba Tour,” a major cycling journey across France to raise awareness and mobilize people on the field. In 2018, the Tour covered 5,800 km in 4 months, reaching over 200,000 people in 200 cities and villages. Alternatiba also co-organizes large Climate Marches, which have gathered up to 1.5 million participants in France. Its “Climate Camps” train thousands of citizens each year in non-violent action.

4.2. Education : CSOs engagement on formal and non-formal learning on climate and just transition issues

French civil society organizations (CSOs) play a crucial role in formal and non-formal education on climate issues and just transition. Their actions are carried out through various methodologies and tools, reaching a wide audience.

The Commitment of the Ligue de l'enseignement

The Ligue de l'enseignement is actively involved in education for sustainable development (ESD) and the ecological transition. Its commitment is reflected through various initiatives and concrete actions. The reference text “Urgency and Ecological Transition: Living Together in a Common World”²⁷ serves as the foundation for the Ligue’s reflection and action on ecological issues. This document, resulting from a collaborative effort involving about thirty federations over a one-year period, emphasizes the importance of a global and systemic approach to these issues. The Ligue offers a wide range of training and educational resources on sustainable development and ecological transition topics. These tools are designed to meet the needs of teachers, educators, and the general public, providing an inclusive approach to environmental education.

²⁷ https://www.laligue42.org/images/eedd/Urgences-et-transitions-ecologiques-HABITER_UN_MONDE_COMUN.pdf

²⁸ <https://ecoreact.eu/en/>

²⁹ <https://www.laligue42.org/index.php/actualites/developpement-durable/409-malle-pedagogique-conscience-numerique-durable-appel-a-interet>

Additionally, since 1992, the Ligue has managed the Citizenship, Environment, and Sustainable Development label, aimed at organized Youth Activities structures. This label seeks to promote civic attitudes and behaviors, encourage ecological management, and stimulate engagement in the sustainable development of local areas. The organization is also involved in several specific projects related to the ecological transition. These include the “Transi’Terre” program aimed at youth, which includes workshops, outings, and collaborative projects, allowing participants to better understand their impact on the planet and take action for a more sustainable future. The Ligue is also an active relay of the “Climate Fresk”, a collaborative and educational workshop on climate mechanisms based on scientific data from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, which allows participants to understand the causes and consequences of climate change through a card game. Finally, the Ligue has been working for several years to obtain the European Ecolabel for its vacation centers.

At the European level, the Ligue coordinates projects like “EcoReactEU”²⁸, in partnership with Arci (Italy), EkoGreece (Greece), and Utrecht University (Netherlands). The project focused on eco-anxiety among young people, aimed at training and equipping professionals working with youth to identify and support those suffering from eco-anxiety. This involvement highlights the organization’s dedication to addressing the psychological and emotional aspects of environmental issue.

The Ligue’s commitment is also evident at the local level. For instance, the Loire federation has produced 50 pedagogical toolkit²⁹ to raise awareness among young people about the ecological impacts of digital technology, illustrating the adaptation of initiatives to local contexts.

ADEME ressources

The French Agency for Ecological Transition (ADEME) provides a variety of educational resources to understand climate issues. Its practical guide, “Climate Change in 10 Questions,” is an example of a resource accessible to the general public, designed to help people understand the basics of climate change and its impacts. It covers topics such as the difference between weather and climate, the greenhouse effect, the causes of global warming, and the role of human activities in climate change. This guide can be used in various educational contexts, from middle school to higher education, including vocational and technical training. ADEME also offers other resources, such as animated infographics, online training, and a dedicated website for middle school, high school, and college students called “MtaTerre³⁰, which provides information on environmental news, videos, and reports on various topics related to sustainable development.

The Climate Fresk: Praised and Criticized

Innovative initiatives like the Climate Fresk, have managed to train over 1 million people in France³¹. This success reflects the effectiveness of interactive educational approaches in fostering a better understanding of climate issues among the public. However, this tool has also faced criticism for its perceived overly liberal approach and its popularity among major CAC 40 companies. The Climate Fresk is particularly appealing to multinationals wishing to train their employees, which raises questions about its real effectiveness in promoting structural changes rather than superficial adjustments within companies whose business models remain fundamentally polluting. Some observers question the ability of this tool to genuinely challenge the economic logics that are at the root of the climate crisis, despite its wide dissemination.

Academic Resources

“The Great Transition Handbook” is a collective work arising from the FORTES initiative (“Training for Ecological and Social Transition in Higher Education”)³², launched in 2019 by the Campus of Transition. This guide, developed by more than 70 educators, researchers, and practitioners, proposes an interdisciplinary approach to ecological and social transition in higher education. The book aims to provide a foundation of knowledge and skills to understand and act in response to contemporary challenges. Structured around six main themes, it addresses topics ranging from housing to ethics, as well as economics and civic action.

4.3. Cooperation with environmental and climate groups on formal and non-formal education

Working at the National Level

Cooperation between environmental/climate groups and actors in formal and non-formal education in France manifests through various innovative initiatives and multi-stakeholder collaborations. This is where “outdoor schooling” takes on its full meaning by enhancing education for sustainable development with a direct experience of nature. This approach is particularly relevant in the Anthropocene era, where reconnecting humans to their environment becomes crucial. As Baptiste Morizot, philosopher specializing in ecology, expresses, “The most rigorous intelligence must be connected to the most vibrant sensitivity.”³³ The French Network for Nature and Environmental Education, formerly known as the School and Nature Network, is a historic player in the rise of outdoor schooling in France. The network develops and shares valuable educational resources, enabling teachers to enrich their outdoor practices. At the same time, it contributes to advancing knowledge by supporting and disseminating

30 <https://mtaterre.fr/>

31 <https://www.usinenouvelle.com/article/avec-plus-d-un-million-de-francais-formes-la-fresque-du-climat-gagne-du-terrain-y-compris-dans-les-entreprises.N2177312>

32 <https://pressbooks.pub/manueldelagrandedtransitionformerpourtransformer/>

33 *Manières d’être vivant : enquêtes sur la vie à travers nous*, Arles, Actes Sud, 2020, p. 66.

research on the benefits and methodologies of outdoor schooling, thus creating an essential bridge between field practice and academic reflection.

At the associative level, the French Collective for Environmental Education for Sustainable Development brings together around twenty national organizations and represents the main networks and actors of education for sustainable development in France. It acts as a spokesperson for the sector and facilitates communication between public authorities and ESD actors. Cooperation also extends to local authorities. Many cities, such as Paris and Lyon, actively collaborate with associations to implement climate education projects.

Acting at the Local Level...

The Territories Committed to Nature program is part of a broader approach to local education for sustainable development. Led by the French Office for Biodiversity, it aims to identify, recognize, and promote action plans for biodiversity in municipalities and inter-municipalities. While education is not its main focus, the program often includes awareness and education actions for biodiversity in the action plans of local authorities. This may involve partnerships with schools, local associations, and sometimes businesses, creating learning opportunities rooted in the community that foster a systemic and local approach to biodiversity preservation and sustainable development education.

...And Into Families

The “Positive Energy Family Challenges,” now renamed “Défi DECLICS” (Local Citizen Challenges for Climate and Sobriety³⁴), perfectly illustrate the synergy between local authorities, associations, and citizens in educating for ecological transition. This fun and educational initiative, supported by ADEME and many local authorities, invites families to reduce their energy and water consumption over a period of five months,

typically during the winter. Participants, grouped into teams, compete to adopt simple but effective eco-friendly habits in their daily lives. Beyond the competitive aspect, the challenge creates a collective dynamic of learning and mutual support, where everyone shares tips and experiences. The results are significant: on average, families manage to reduce their energy consumption by 8 to 12%, saving about €200 on their bills while significantly lowering their carbon footprint. This program demonstrates the effectiveness of non-formal education in raising awareness of environmental issues and fostering more sustainable behaviors at the household level.

4.4. Consultation of civil society organisations on just transition by government agencies, and challenges facing their work on climate and just transition plans

The French State has established several bodies and mechanisms to involve civil society organizations (CSOs) in the development of environmental policies.

The National Council for Ecological Transition: Consultation or Legitimization?

The National Council for Ecological Transition is a dialogue body created in 2013. It consists of 50 members divided into six colleges, including a college of environmental NGOs. The Council is only consultative; its opinions and recommendations are taken into account by the government and parliamentarians during the development of environmental laws and strategies. The Council is consulted on bills concerning the environment and energy, as well as on national sustainable development strategies. Its influence often manifests through adjustments or improvements made to initial projects following its consultations. The Council was notably consulted throughout the process of developing the

³⁴ [https://www.apc-paris.com/particuliers/agir-sur-mon-comportement-au-quotidien/passer-a-l'action-grace-au-parcours-sobriete/#:~:text=Le%20d%C3%A9fi%20D%C3%A9clics%20\(D%C3%89fis%20Citoyens,un%20esprit%20ludique%20et%20convivial.](https://www.apc-paris.com/particuliers/agir-sur-mon-comportement-au-quotidien/passer-a-l'action-grace-au-parcours-sobriete/#:~:text=Le%20d%C3%A9fi%20D%C3%A9clics%20(D%C3%89fis%20Citoyens,un%20esprit%20ludique%20et%20convivial.)

Energy Transition for Green Growth Act (2015)³⁵. Its input helped shape certain aspects of the legislation, particularly regarding greenhouse gas emission reduction targets and the development of renewable energy. The Council has also actively participated in the development of the National Strategy for Ecological Transition toward Sustainable Development 2015-2020³⁶. However, it has faced criticism: its effectiveness is questioned due to the non-binding nature of its opinions, leading some to view it as a mere tool for legitimizing government decisions. This perception culminated in September 2020 with the boycott of three major environmental associations, denouncing a “discreet dismantling of environmental law”³⁷.

The Citizen's Climate Convention: The Limits of Citizen Consultation

The Citizen's Climate Convention (CCC), established in 2019, represented a unique experience of participatory democracy and consultation with civil society organizations on ecological transition in France. By bringing together 150 randomly selected citizens, it allowed for a diverse representation of society in the development of climate proposals. This experience highlighted several major challenges, including the delicate balance between climate urgency and social justice, as illustrated by debates around measures such as the carbon tax. The CCC revealed certain limitations in the consultation of civil society organizations by government agencies. Although the process was praised for its innovative character, the effective implementation of the proposals faced political and economic obstacles. President Macron's initial commitment to transmit the proposals “without filter” was only partially honored,

with only about 10% of the measures fully adopted by the government³⁸.

Public Consultations

Public consultations exist on various themes, such as the National Mobility Assizes, held in 2017, which allowed for wide consultation of civil society actors on transportation policy. Territorial workshops and an online platform gathered contributions from local authorities, users, operators, and NGOs. The same year, the General States of Food³⁹ brought together producers, processors, distributors, consumers, and NGOs to reflect on the future of agriculture and food in France. Furthermore, the Ministry of Ecological Transition and ADEME regularly establish thematic working groups involving CSOs. For example, a working group on off-grid energy access, led by the Renewable Energy Syndicate and ADEME, brought together NGOs, businesses, and public institutions to share experiences. The development of strategies such as the National Biodiversity Strategy also involves CSOs through thematic working groups.

Despite these measures, some environmental associations have recently expressed their dissatisfaction with what they perceive as setbacks in environmental policy⁴⁰. The government has committed to maintaining dialogue⁴¹, particularly on issues like the new pesticide reduction plan.

35 <https://www.ecologie.gouv.fr/sites/default/files/documents/CNTE%20-%20Avis%202015.pdf>

36 *Idem*

37 https://www.lemonde.fr/planete/article/2020/09/02/des-ong-denoncent-un-detricotage-systematique-du-droit-de-l-environnement_6050631_3244.html

38 <https://reporterre.net/Convention-pour-le-climat-seules-10-des-propositions-ont-ete-reprises-par-le-gouvernement>

39 The General States of Food is a French initiative launched in 2017 aimed at reforming the national food system. Its objectives include improving food quality, reducing food waste, ensuring fair incomes for farmers, promoting food accessibility for all, and supporting sustainable agricultural practices through consultations among stakeholders in the food supply chain.

40 https://www.bfmtv.com/economie/economie-social/france/un-recul-majeur-la-liste-des-promesses-aux-agriculteurs-s-allonge-et-fait-grimacer-les-associations-environnementales_AD-202402130511.html

41 <https://www.francebleu.fr/infos/environnement/ecophyto-ce-que-l-on-sait-de-la-nouvelle-strategie-de-reduction-des-pesticides-qui-sera-presentee-lundi-6341746>

5. Cross-border solidarity

5.1. Transnational networking and coalitions

Working in Education

The Eco-School program, developed in France by the association Teragir, is part of the international Eco-Schools network present in 74 countries. In France, over 4,000 schools participate in the program, with 2,700 certified as Eco-Schools, thus recognizing their commitment to a comprehensive approach to sustainable development. “Eco-Ecole”, “Eco-Collège”, or “Eco-Lycée” certified schools in France have the opportunity to connect with schools abroad engaged in the Eco-Schools sustainable development program⁴². These partnerships promote exchanges of experiences and best practices among students and teachers from different countries, allowing the realization of joint projects on sustainable development themes. This approach strengthens intercultural understanding and a sense of global citizenship among participants.

France actively participates in the UNESCO Global Coalition for Education, an initiative launched in response to the education crisis caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. This coalition, which includes 222 partners in 112 countries, aims to ensure the continuity of learning for all children and young people, promote inclusion and equity in education, and support innovations in teaching and learning. France contributes by sharing its expertise in EDD and participating in collaborative international projects. This participation enhances France’s capacity to integrate international best practices into its EDD programs, promote a comprehensive approach aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals, and contribute to the development of innovative educational policies for sustainable development globally.

⁴² <https://www.eco-ecole.org/article/qui-sommes-nous/eco-schools-un-reseau-international#jumelages-et-cooperation-entre-porteurs-de-pr>

⁴³ <https://youthforclimate.fr/>

Understanding and Acting

Initiatives aimed at promoting climate solidarity beyond borders are also being implemented. The French Development Agency launched the project “Climate Solidarity: I Understand, I Act!” which seeks to mobilize one million citizen actions in France for climate solidarity. This type of program helps raise awareness among the French public about global climate change issues and encourages concrete actions for international solidarity.

The project revolves around three main pillars: understand, act, and support. It aims to raise awareness among the French public about global climate change issues while encouraging concrete actions for international solidarity. The goal is to create a tangible link between French citizens and communities in developing countries that are on the front lines facing the impacts of climate change. To achieve this, the Agency collaborates with various civil society actors, educational institutions, and local authorities. For example, this may involve participating in reforestation projects, supporting climate change adaptation initiatives in Southern countries, or engaging in advocacy for global climate justice. By encouraging French citizens to take concrete actions for international climate solidarity, the Agency hopes not only to have a direct impact on vulnerable communities but also to strengthen public support for development and climate change mitigation policies on an international scale.

Youth Engagement

Youth movements for climate perfectly illustrate the transnational dimension of citizen engagement. Youth for Climate France⁴³, is part of a vast global network that organizes school strikes and awareness actions in many countries.

Similarly, Fridays For Future France is the French branch of an international movement uniting millions of young people worldwide, united by the common aspiration to live on a preserved planet. These transnational networks not only facilitate the coordination of large-scale actions but also enable the sharing of experiences and strategies between countries. They play a crucial role in building climate solidarity that transcends national borders, recognizing the global nature of the climate issues and the need for a collective and coordinated response.

5.2. Cross-border projects

A European territorial cooperation program

The European Union plays a crucial role in promoting cross-border solidarity regarding ecological transition and education for sustainable development (ESD). Notable initiatives include the Interreg Euro-MED Academy⁴⁴, a free and accessible online learning platform aimed at sharing knowledge, skills, and results from Interreg MED projects. This academy offers a series of online courses focused on sustainable and inclusive development in the Mediterranean. One of the flagship programs of this academy focuses on funding opportunities and cooperation mechanisms for a sustainable Mediterranean. This course allows participants to better understand the challenges of sustainable development in the Mediterranean region and explore various funding and cross-border collaboration options to implement sustainable projects. The Interreg Euro-MED program itself is a European territorial cooperation program that covers 69 regions in 14 countries around the Mediterranean. It aims to make the Mediterranean region more “innovative” and “green” by funding projects developed and managed by public administrations, universities, private organizations, and civil society.

⁴⁴ <https://www.interreg-euro-med-academy.eu/>

⁴⁵ <https://www.bretagne.bzh/actualites/rennes-cork-mais-au-fait-a-quoi-servent-les-jumelages-de-villes/>

Knowledge and Skills Exchange

Cross-border solidarity is also expressed through various exchange and knowledge-sharing programmes. The ERASMUS+ program plays a major role in promoting education for sustainable development at the European level. The program funds educational projects involving French and European partners, with a particular emphasis on ecological transition. It also encourages eco-responsibility by providing financial incentives for the use of less polluting transport methods during mobility. Furthermore, projects that incorporate environmental priorities receive special attention during the evaluation of applications.

Twinning between French and foreign cities is another important channel for exchanging best practices in ecological transition. These partnerships, initially designed to promote reconciliation after World War II, evolve to address contemporary challenges, including climate change. These twinings also allow official delegations to share their experiences and observe initiatives implemented in other European municipalities. For instance, during the 40th anniversary of the twinning between Rennes and Cork, the Irish mayor expressed interest in Rennes’ urban heating network and its waste policy, which aims to significantly reduce waste production per capita by 2024⁴⁵.

6. Conclusion and Recommendations

The future of education for Sustainable Development in France lies first in its **natural integration into all forms of education**. It is important to stick to a cross-curricular approach that includes all subjects, in order to show the links between environmental issues and other disciplines. What's more, by approaching the issue from the point of view of educating young people, it is easier to build a common awareness base, in line with the just transition's requirement for inclusiveness.

In order to achieve this broad dissemination, we need to understand **education in a sense that is not restricted to schools**. CSOs can enrich the educational content and give pupils practical experience of the resources and green spaces they work with. Therefore, cooperation between schools, local authorities and associations means that practical projects can be set up in the field, enabling pupils to better understand and take action on environmental issues.

Active teaching methods must therefore be adopted, such as project-based learning, field trips and participatory workshops, to involve pupils in local actions that have a direct and tangible impact on their environment, thereby strengthening their sense of ecological citizenship.

However, this objective cannot be achieved without **specific training in EDS for teachers, educators and professional trainers**. This training must be in a continuous format so that education and training professionals can update their knowledge and adapt their teaching methods to current issues and different audiences. From the point of view of the just transition, it's less a question of proposing specific content than of trying to push environmental education to the limits of its ability to adapt to all kinds of audiences.