



Dr Barbara Filtzinger,
Head of Education, and
Member of the Strategic
Board of the Office for
Climate Education



Badin Borde, Education
Project Manager and
Member of the Scientific
and Pedagogical
Committee of the Office for
Climate Education

The importance of climate education

Established in 2008 by Siemens AG, Siemens Stiftung's overarching goal is promoting sustainable social development. The three working areas of the Foundation are Education, Culture and Development Cooperation. Within this spectrum, climate-related issues are an integral part of our project work.

For example, the project [Design Thinking in STEM](#) combines STEM (science, technology, engineering, mathematics) education with critical thinking and creative problem solving around the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). With the Office for Climate Education (OCE) and the European Capacity Building Initiative we co-organise an [annual conference in Chile on Climate Change Education](#). In 2019, together with the Little Scientists' House (Stiftung Haus der Kleinen Forscher), we ran the [International Dialogue on STEM Education](#) to explore how STEM education can empower children to contribute to creating sustainable societies.

We have been focusing on STEM education for years, and it was our positive experience with our international STEM education programme Experimento that led to our support for the OCE. We were actively looking for ways to scale the approach, and discussions with the French Fondation La main à la pâte suggested that getting involved in OCE would be an ideal fit for us. We have now entered into a cooperation agreement with the other OCE partners: climate change is a global challenge that can be addressed effectively only if we work together.

The Office for Climate Education

Preparing young people for living in today's world requires education on the underlying processes and impacts of climate change. This challenges educators because it focuses on the complex interrelations between climate change and the environmental, economic and social dimensions of our lives. To address this gap, a group of nearly 20 foundations and scientific institutions from France, Germany, Ireland, the Netherlands, Uruguay

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and the USA established the OCE in 2018. As one of the founding partners, Siemens Stiftung supports the OCE financially and operationally. We have one seat each on OCE's Strategic Board and on the Scientific and Pedagogical Committee, which is responsible for the content of the teaching materials.

The teaching materials are based on recent climate research and follow a multidisciplinary approach, including subjects from natural, human and social sciences. Their content follows publication of the IPCC reports, breaking down the findings into manageable and easy-to-understand lessons. All resources are made available to teachers in digital format free of charge. The OCE also offers professional training, especially for teachers in developing and emerging countries. This takes the form of field trips and face-to-face or online workshops, conferences and symposiums.

Recommendations for funders

- Connect climate change education and education in science, technology, engineering and mathematics education. These are often seen as separate areas, but they are closely interlinked.
- Support communication on climate science. This involves translating complex scientific knowledge into simple words, objectively considering the facts from all sides. Communication around the COVID-19 pandemic shows that this is possible.