

International Conference
Climate Change and Environmental Education: Challenges, Responses, Local
Knowledge, and Opportunities

April 23, 24, and 25, 2025

Lusophone University of Cape Verde — São Vicente Island Mindelo City

Network of Organizing Partners

Lusophone University of Cape Verde

Lusophone Network

University of Parma, Italy (CUCI — International Cooperation University Center; ESH-Lab –

Environmental Social Humanities Lab

IULM University of Milan, Italy

Mochi4ThePlanet

Premise

The idea for this conference was born from a broader collaboration and an agreement signed on the 21st July 2022 between the Lusophone University of Cape Verde at Mindelo and the CUCI (International Cooperation Center) of the University of Parma. As part of this collaboration, the two universities are planning: international mobility, joint planning, and joint courses.

Conference Concept Note

The international conference "Climate Change and Environmental Education. Challenges, Responses, Local Knowledge, and Opportunities" aims to explore, from an interdisciplinary perspective, the phenomenon of climate change in the relationship between the local and the global. This theme raises fundamental questions such as the relationship between the Global North and South and between humans and non-humans, new forms of life, environmental education, ecological, technological, political, and energy futures, sustainability, mitigation and adaptation strategies, international cooperation, public policies, local knowledge, and indigenous cosmologies. The conference allows for the exploration of different narratives about environmental crisis and different forms of planetary resilience, confronting challenges, responses, local knowledge, and opportunities, and valuing their cultural dimensions. Furthermore, the conference promotes dialogue between specialized, technical, and humanistic knowledge, between institutions, educational

agencies, and civil society, between associations, activism, and academia. Although starting from the Lusophone world, the conference welcomes contributions from any context.

A series of subtopics that can be studied and further developed during the Conference are briefly illustrated below. All themes are interconnected, with the main focus being to examine and identify the most resilient and sustainable forms most suitable for the context of Small Island Developing States (SIDS).

List of Subtopics:

1) Cultural Dimension of Climate Change

Explore how climate change affects and is influenced by different cultures, traditions, and ways of life in various countries, with special attention to Portuguese-speaking countries. Based on the evidence that all cultures have faced climate and its changes, the objective is to reflect on the representations, ideas, categories, notions, and practices related to climate change.

2) Environmental, Social, and Economic Sustainability

Examine the interconnection between sustainability, socioeconomic development, and environmental preservation, and how these aspects manifest in Portuguese-speaking contexts, especially in island regions.

Islands represent only 5% of the Earth's surface but are home to 20% of the world's bird, reptile, and plant species, as well as more than 40% of highly threatened creatures. At the same time, island populations are constantly under pressure to develop their economies while building resilience to issues such as climate change and natural disasters. The lack of resources, visibility, and support can be a challenge for the sustainable development of islands.

Sustainability should be considered according to four main pillars (economic, social, environmental, and governance) in order to involve all key stakeholders.

3) Interdisciplinary and Collaborative Environmental Education

Recognize the importance of collaboration between diverse academic disciplines, sectors of society, and professionals to address the challenges of climate change and environmental education. Environmental education is very important as climate change is a global phenomenon with strong local impacts. The resulting complexity can only be addressed through an interdisciplinary approach,

which requires rethinking the theoretical, methodological, epistemological, and technical toolbox in order to develop appropriate responses to the challenges posed by climate change.

4) Mitigation and Adaptation Strategies

Discuss and develop practical and effective strategies to mitigate the effects of climate change and adapt to them. Proposals that focus on the realities of Portuguese-speaking countries and those experiences involving civil society in mitigation processes—understood as interventions to reduce the environmental impacts of human activity—and adaptation—understood as interventions to reduce the harmful effects of climate change—are particularly appreciated.

5) International Cooperation

Explore ways to strengthen international cooperation between Portuguese-speaking countries and the global community to address common challenges related to climate change and environmental education.

Deepen the role of cooperation (including cooperation between universities) as a factor for sustainable development. Analyze and debate the principles and best practices of South-South Cooperation. Assess the possibility of exchanging best practices with Portuguese-speaking countries.

6) Sustainable Agriculture

The agricultural sector represents the livelihood of a high percentage of the world's workforce, and it suffers from widespread and severe decent work deficits and is particularly vulnerable to the impact of climate change.

In this context, it becomes imperative to: explore the role of agriculture as an essential element for sustainability, food security, and food sovereignty of small islands; propose good practices of sustainable agriculture inspired by the principles of Agroecology; analyze the social, environmental, and economic principles of sustainable agriculture through the case study of organic farming; reflect on the valorization of quality agricultural production as a tool for the appropriation and valorization of traditional knowledge; reinforce the role of small producers as guardians of traditional knowledge and forms of agriculture that are resilient and suitable to combat the threats of climate change; link sustainable agriculture to forms of sustainable tourism through the presentation of good practices and case studies from around the world.

7) Sustainable Tourism

Understand, on one hand, the impact of tourism on environmental, social, and economic ecosystems, and, on the other, the role of sustainable tourism as a factor in mitigating climate change. Reflect on local productions (food and crafts) as elements of attractiveness and on the standards of sustainable tourism and its forms of certification. Analyze the host-guest relationship from an ecological perspective, the different forms of the tourist imaginary conveyed by agencies, tour guides, social networks, public policies, and the relationship of the imaginary with climate change.

8) Public Policies

Analyze the role of public policies in promoting sustainability, mitigating climate change, and integrating environmental education into educational systems and governance. In particular, the panel will be dedicated to communications that evaluate the effectiveness of public policies, identify gaps, propose improvements, analyze implementation challenges, the ideological background, and the relationship between global character and local execution, and finally, the importance of participatory governance and impacts in terms of social justice.

9) Traditional/Indigenous/Vernacular Knowledge and Worldviews

When addressing climate change, it is essential to consider other worldviews, other relationships between culture/nature, man and environment, other ways of inhabiting the world, and local knowledge that offer conceptual bridges to imagine alternative future paths. What are these worldviews? How to make these knowledge and conceptions dialogue with those of the Global North? How to incorporate these knowledge and worldviews into environmental education programs? How to take these knowledge and worldviews into account in the definition of public policies?

10) Eco-anxiety, Climate Emotions, and Immersive Technology in Educational Contexts

Present theoretical, empirical, or applied articles that discuss the challenges and opportunities of new technologies, including immersive technologies, to address eco-anxiety and other emotional responses to climate change in educational settings. Contributions that investigate, from eco-anxiety and other climate emotions, the different forms of re-signifying climate change, including processes of agency, but also removal, scotomization, inaction, and denial, are welcome. In particular, we want to give voice to research that consolidates interdisciplinary dialogue and exchange in the fields of humanities and social sciences and new technologies on climate change.

11) Impacts and Potential Solutions of Climate Change on Water, Soil, and Biodiversity

Resources

Water availability has always been one of the greatest challenges for the people of Cape Verde, who have always shown unwavering strength and resilience during times when drought has hit our country more intensely. Climate challenges have made our people resilient and always in search of better alternatives to adapt to environmental adversities.

It is important to analyze the water resources in the country; highlight the methodologies and strategies for an intelligent approach to the environmental adversities that have plagued the country; analyze the impact of droughts on soil and biodiversity; create maps of the areas most affected by drought and the consequent problems in agriculture.

Format: Mixed: online and in-person

Conference Audience: Institutions; Civil Society Associations; Non-governmental Organizations; Students; Universities from Lusophone Countries (and beyond); Entrepreneurs.

Methodology: Plenary sessions; parallel sessions, and field visits to observe best practices implemented in Cape Verde, specifically on São Vicente Island.

Expected Participants: The expected number of participants is approximately 70 people.

Call for Papers: August 20, 2024, to November 20, 2024


Budget:

Possible co-financing sources:

- Active UN programs in Cape Verde focused on sustainability, agriculture, tourism, and environment (e.g., UNDP, GEF, FAO, IFAD, etc.)
- South-South Cooperation projects: Brazil
- Projects with NGOs
- European Union (EU)
- Embassy of China
- Embassy of Japan
- Ministry of Environment and Agriculture of Cape Verde

Mindelo, 01 de julho de 2024

A Presidente da Comissão Organizadora,



Professora Doutora Elisa Lopes da Cruz Ferreira da Silva

