

Scaling Urban Climate Education, Communication and Outreach

Urban regions vary in size from massive mega-cities that are larger than many nations to medium-sized cities to small villages and rural communities. The original vision of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) included in Article 6 guidelines on national-scale education, training, public awareness, engagement and international collaboration, but many of these efforts may be better addressed on an urban and local scale that is able to customize strategies for the unique cultural backgrounds, political, economic and social realities of regional and local scales. With experts calling for an exponentially expanding transition towards a carbon-free economy, there may benefit in using a logarithmic “powers of ten” framework. This approach may assist in climate education, communication and outreach efforts by framing how the individual (10^0) is embedded within a family (10^1), that is itself nested in a local neighborhood scale (10^3), which are inherently interconnected with national (10^6) to continental (10^8) and global (10^9) scales. This framework may assist in identifying common but differentiated responsibilities. Between the individual and the 10 billion people anticipated in 2050 (10^{10}) there are ten orders of magnitude, and each “powers of ten” scale has its own challenges, barriers, opportunities for intervention and engagement, and all have the potential to contribute to the transformation of society and the integration of efforts toward climate action. Examining how this framework relates to specific strategies for reducing greenhouse gases and sequestering carbon from Project Drawdown, which has reviewed and ranked 100 of the top solutions, this analysis will examine the potential for scaling climate education, communication and outreach efforts within the urban context.