

# Today's education is tomorrow's climate solution



*Cultivating Pathways to Sustainability*

**C**reating solutions to address our climate crisis, for current and future generations, requires urgent action. A vital piece of that action is climate change education.

Recent studies show the potential of education to slow climate change: If only 16 percent of high school students in high- and middle-income countries received climate change education, we could see a nearly 19 gigaton reduction of carbon dioxide by 2050, more carbon dioxide than the world's forests absorb each year (Cordero et al, 2020). When students are empowered to develop personal connections to climate solutions, it can impact their decision making over a lifetime.

We've long believed education is the key to change for a healthier, more sustainable future. Shelburne Farms is acting on that belief by supporting climate change education in schools, communities, and on our home campus. Here are a few of the ways we're inspiring climate action to accelerate positive change.

## With educators and schools

The Shelburne Farms Institute for Sustainable Schools offers professional learning programs and resources for PreK-12 educators with an integrated focus on climate change. Among U.S. teachers, 86 percent agree that climate change should be taught in schools, but 55 percent say they don't cover the topic or discuss it with students (NPR, 2019). Our professional learning aims to close that gap, empowering and inspiring educators and students. **Two of those programs are:**

**The Climate Resiliency Fellowship** Each year, interdisciplinary teams of educators from across the northeast establish a foundation in approaches to teaching about climate change solutions; explore communication best practices; and create strategies to engage students in service learning that deepens their understanding, impact, and agency.

**Cultivating Pathways to Sustainability** Over the course of a year, youth-adult teams from schools around the world develop and implement community action projects to address the United Nations' 17 Sustainable Development Goals, with coaching for teams and professional learning support for educators from the Institute and our partner, UP for Learning.



## Educating for climate action

### In communities

To catalyze change, we work with formal and informal educators across the globe to share knowledge and best practices relevant to their place, including:

#### The Northeast Climate Change Education Collaborative

Convened by our staff, this is a regional network of leaders from 80+ nonprofits, educational institutions, and government organizations. Members benefit from peer-to-peer networking, professional learning and resources, and, above all, space to unite around educational strategies and best practices that empower students and adult learners to create climate change solutions.

**Park for Every Classroom** Teachers and community partners team with national park staff, tapping into each park's unique potential to enhance learning. The program launched a national pilot in 2022 to specifically support educators across the U.S. in equity-centered climate change education.

### On our campus for learning

Our 1,400-acre campus is a living classroom where we talk about the big ideas of climate change with learners of all ages – from patterns and seasons to conservation and the effects of a warming world on forests, crops, and animals. We offer immersive programs for early learners, youth, and adults year-round.

Visitors can also see our carbon drawdown plan in progress, from the ways we're developing healthy soil and forests for increased carbon sequestration, to increasing the efficiency of our buildings, to reducing food waste.

Discover more at [shelburnefarms.org](https://shelburnefarms.org)



"I'm seeing students realize that they have power. They're looking at their world, seeing what they care about, and realizing that they can do things to make a change. And that's so exciting to watch."

–Teacher, Cultivating Pathways to Sustainability participant, Vermont

"Cultivating Pathways has given me the opportunity to expand my skills as a leader and share my passions about climate change with youth from Vermont and around the world. Facilitating and leading with other youth and adults has opened my eyes to the infinite ideas that come from this partnership."

–Youth facilitator, Cultivating Pathways to Sustainability, Vermont

"The Climate Resiliency Fellowship strengthened my skills as an educator. I was able to dive into my role with renewed creativity and energy, feeling confident steering conversations toward climate change and climate change solutions, even with young audiences."

–Educator, Climate Resiliency Fellow

"The ultimate goal for any educator is to provide the best education opportunity for students, and to create and foster future stewards of the land that we love and are trying to protect. Park for Every Classroom has really given us the ability to do that."

–National Park Staff, Maine