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Climate Education Is Useless If Nobody Gets Dirt Under Their Fingernails

The EU finally added climate education to its official climate plan. Good. Necessary. But before anyone starts celebrating, let's be clear:

This won't change a damn thing if the education stays trapped in classrooms and PowerPoints.

I farm in the heat and clay of San Martín de Montalbán. I design learning systems. I host volunteers who think they understand sustainability until they actually meet land, weather, and work. And here's what I can tell you after years of watching people learn the hard way:

Climate literacy doesn't happen in your head. It happens in your hands.

If the EU's new plan ignores that, then all we've done is create prettier paperwork—nothing more.



Instructional Design Without Reality Is Just Another Excuse

Everyone's suddenly excited about “green skills.”

Politicians love that phrase because it sounds productive and costs them nothing.

But let's talk plainly:
Skills don't come from nice intentions. They come from design—and most climate education is designed like it's afraid of real life.

If we want climate education that actually works, we need to stop pretending learning happens just because we say it should. It happens because the design forces people to engage, reflect, adapt, fail, and try again.

ADDIE, Bloom's, experiential learning—they only matter if they lead to competence, not theory.

Right now climate education produces more anxiety than capability. More talk than action. More “awareness” than understanding.

You don't fix that with posters.
You fix it with practice.



Permaculture Isn't a Buzzword – It's the Framework Schools Avoid Because It Demands Responsibility



Permaculture makes people uncomfortable because it exposes the truth:

You can't outsource your impact. You either design regeneratively or you design destruction.

When you teach students to observe land, read water, track energy loss, close loops, manage soil, build systems—they can't pretend anymore. They see the cost of every shortcut. They understand consequences. They recognize complexity.

Permaculture is accountability dressed as agriculture.

And guess what?

That's exactly what modern education avoids: real responsibility.

Climate education built on permaculture principles would wake people up—but most institutions aren't ready for that kind of honesty.

Regenerative Farms Should Be Classrooms Because Nature Doesn't Lie



On my farm, nature gives immediate feedback.

Seedlings die if you ignore them.
Soil cracks if you mistreat it.
Water disappears if you waste it.
Shade becomes survival in August.
Mulch becomes gold when the rain stops.
Mistakes show up fast and brutally.

No political spin.
No theoretical optimism.
No hiding behind "we covered that chapter already."

If students learned climate through actual land—through regenerative systems where every action has a real consequence—we'd build humans who understand ecology through muscle memory, not memorization.

That's the kind of competence Europe actually needs: people who can grow food, restore soil, manage water, close loops, and design for resilience.

You can't fake that knowledge. You can't shortcut it.
And you sure as hell can't teach it from a fluorescent-lit classroom with laminated posters.



The EU Opened the Door. Now Someone Needs to Have the Courage to Walk Through It.

EarthDay.org pushed for this change. Respect. They got the policy on paper.

But policy isn't action.

And action requires a different kind of person—one who's willing to get uncomfortable, step outside, and face the reality of ecological work.

If the EU wants climate education that isn't hollow, they need people who understand both:

- how to design learning, and
- how to grow life from degraded ground.

People who understand soil as deeply as instruction.

People who see climate not as an abstract threat but as daily decision-making.

People willing to teach through reality, not rhetoric.

Here's the truth nobody else will say:

If climate education doesn't change how we relate to land, we are lying to ourselves.

If it doesn't build ecological competence, it's a waste of time.

If students can't manage a compost pile, don't talk to me about "green skills."

If a curriculum never steps outside, it is part of the problem.

The EU can write all the policies it wants.

Real regeneration will still come from people who know how to design meaningful learning and put their hands in living soil.

This isn't about "saving the planet."

It's about finally learning how to live on it—intentionally, responsibly, and without excuses.

And that starts with education that has dirt under its fingernails.

