A photograph of three young people standing outdoors in a grassy area with trees in the background. The person on the left is a young woman with curly hair, wearing a dark top and a braided belt. The person in the center is a young man with long hair, wearing a dark t-shirt. The person on the right is a young woman with braided hair, wearing a light blue t-shirt. They are all smiling and looking towards the camera. The text 'THE GLOBAL YOUTH CLIMATE INQUIRY' is overlaid on the image in white and orange capital letters.

# THE GLOBAL YOUTH CLIMATE INQUIRY





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# I. Preface

- 1.1 On 1- 12 November 2021, the UK is hosting the 26th United Nations ("UN") Climate Change Conference of the Parties ("COP26") in Glasgow. COP26 will bring together national delegations to accelerate action towards the goals of the Paris Agreement and the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change.
- 1.2 The Scottish Government has pledged a commitment to making COP26 'the people's COP' noting, in particular, the importance of representation and participation of global youth who are the largest stakeholders in the decisions that will be made this November.
- 1.3 In an effort to further this objective, the UN held the Youth4Climate: Driving Ambition meeting in Milan this September. The first two days of the event were dedicated to developing a manifesto which would be presented to the delegates at COP26 in Glasgow. Indeed, Friday 5 November 2021 is 'Youth and public empowerment' day at COP26 and the Presidency Programme describes the day's focus as "*elevating the voice of young people and demonstrating the critical role of public empowerment and education in climate action.*"
- 1.4 It was in this context, that the Global Youth Climate Inquiry (the "Inquiry") was established by Mishcon de Reya LLP ("Mishcon"), in partnership with One Young World ("OYW") and the Democracy and Culture Foundation (the "DCF") (together, the "Partner Organisations").
- 1.5 The aim of the Inquiry was to take evidence from global youth leaders, in the run up to COP26, as to what they consider to be the most serious climate issues facing their communities and to understand how global youth can be better enfranchised to tackle the climate crisis.
- 1.6 The Call for Evidence ran from 3 – 29 September 2021 and took evidence on two issues:
- 1.6.1 Firstly
- (a) What impact climate change is having on young people personally, on their peers and their community?
- 1.6.2 Secondly
- (a) To what extent are young people able to make their views on climate change heard to local, national and international decision-makers, or hold them to account for the decisions they make on adaptation and mitigation measures?
- (b) Which global initiatives, national initiatives or local initiatives have, in their opinion, been most successful in engaging young people in efforts to tackle climate change and what aspects of these initiatives have been key to their success?
- 1.7 Part one of the Inquiry sought to enable us to gain an insight into the breadth of issues facing global communities and to understand whether global youth identified different issues to those traditionally associated with specific regions.
- 1.8 Part two of the Inquiry considered youth enfranchisement and whether there are lessons that can be learnt by leaders (at a local, national and global level) as to how best to engage the next generation.
- 1.9 A copy of the Call for Evidence can be found at Annex I of this report.
- 1.10 OYW compiled a list of global youth ambassadors, working in the climate change sphere, to approach for testimony. A complete list of Contributors to the Inquiry and their biographies can be found at Section 3 of this report (the "Contributors").
- 1.11 Over 20 written submissions were received in response to the Call for Evidence. The Contributors drew attention to the specific climate issues facing local communities around the globe, from the Amazon rainforest in Brazil to the deserts of Qatar. The Inquiry's expert panellists (the "Panellists") come from similarly diverse backgrounds. They range from Ministers of State to world-renowned climate experts, authors and campaigners (please see their biographies at Section 4 below).
- 1.12 The Inquiry held two roundtable panel events on 19 and 21 October 2021 (the "Panel Sessions"). Over the course of the Panel Sessions, 14 Contributors gave evidence and were challenged on their evidence by the Panellists. The Panellists used their range of expertise and interests to probe the Contributors on how representative their testimony truly was, on the viable options for climate mitigation and adaption and to try to understand the key features of successful initiatives.
- 1.13 This report (the "Report") has been finalised in the two weeks following the roundtable events and in the run up to COP26. The Report will be handed down to the delegates at COP26 with the intention that, by virtue of the extensive network created by the young leaders involved in the Inquiry, the Panellists and the Inquiry's Partner Organisations, its findings will be widely disseminated.



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- I.14 As a formal process, calling for and then testing evidence from young people, the Inquiry does not seek to be a platform for advocacy but rather a vehicle by which evidence is brought into the public domain. Feedback from Contributors indicates that this process was valuable to them and they expressed hope that the Inquiry's findings would help inform, and act as a building block for, future actions to address youth enfranchisement in tackling climate change. As an international law firm, Mishcon has the capacity and expertise to provide a forum for a robust and inquisitorial evidence taking process. The Report is the product of that process. It does not seek to add spin or opinion to the voices of the Contributors. It simply acts as a guide; pooling thoughts, ideas and initiatives into one reference manual in the expectation that world leaders can and must find better ways to work together.
- I.15 Our leaders must learn from one another's experiences and mitigate climate change by driving and inspiring climate awareness and engagement within their communities.
- I.16 The Inquiry's Partner Organisations are committed to taking action to facilitate these conversations and to bring the findings of the Inquiry to the attention of global leaders and decision-makers. The intention of this Report is to identify successful mechanisms of youth engagement that can then be used to develop models for future implementation.

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## 2. Executive Summary

This Report sets out the findings of the Inquiry, carried out between 3 September 2021 and 21 October 2021. It summarises written and oral evidence given by 22 global youth from diverse backgrounds in 19 countries.

Contributors were asked to give evidence on: (1) the impact of climate change on them and their peers; and (2) the extent to which young people are able to make their voices heard and what initiatives have helped enfranchise youth in relation to climate change mitigation and adaptation. The Report considers the local, national and global issues resulting from the Contributors' evidence, and some of the initiatives that have been deployed to tackle those issues. We draw out the common themes below.

### 2.1 Impact of climate change on Contributors, their peers and community

- 2.1.1 An increasing number of young people are suffering from climate anxiety. Contributors described the paralytic effect that this can have and how a sense of hopelessness breeds inertia.
- 2.1.2 Young people from all geographies are being impacted by serious physical and social impacts from climate change.
- 2.1.3 Climate change is experienced unequally, depending on socio-economic background, gender and physical location. Contributors spoke of the differing experiences of the Global North and the Global South, together with the frustration that the Global South has been excluded from the dialogue about climate change. This was mirrored by concern that an English-language dominated dialogue exacerbates disenfranchisement.
- 2.1.4 Contributors highlighted a disparity in education, and the way in which those most affected by climate change are often the least educated about climate change and opportunities for climate mitigation and adaptation. The lack of access to education and to information appears to be a particularly significant barrier to youth enfranchisement in the climate change debate.

### 2.2 Youth enfranchisement – successes and challenges

- 2.2.1 Despite the fact that young people will be the most affected by climate change, age continues to act as a barrier to the decision-making table. There are limited opportunities for participation. Similarly, Contributors were concerned about tokenism and the gulf between their voices being raised (for instance, by using social media), being heard, being taken seriously, and being acted upon.
- 2.2.2 As a theme, initiatives that the Contributors felt were successful were those that allowed young people to make an active contribution, whether by making a tangible difference or by encouraging youth to take on leadership roles.
- 2.2.3 Many of the initiatives identified demonstrate how micro changes can have far-reaching effects and can even help to bridge the generational gaps. Simple initiatives like tree-planting can be great levellers, picking up traction across generations whilst making a tangible difference to climate change mitigation.



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2.2.4 Contributors drew attention to the importance of hearing the youth voice within the business context, not just in the political sphere. Contributors identified initiatives encouraging young people to advocate for change within organisations, as well as efforts by businesses to educate their workforce and to innovate in sustainable ways.

2.3 In an effort to distil the Contributors' evidence into a useful reference guide, Annex 2 of the Report contains a complete table of the initiatives identified as valuable or providing effective opportunities for enfranchisement.

## **2.4 Identified common characteristics of successful local, national and global initiatives**

### **2.4.1 Local initiatives**

- (a) Intergenerational Inclusivity- focussing on engaging entire communities so that everyone can see and understand the benefits of their participation.
- (b) Education- raising climate awareness and understanding, in local languages, so as to enable participation from all ages and local communities.

### **2.4.2 National initiatives**

- (a) Funding and Support- fellowships and programmes that provide young scientists, entrepreneurs and change-makers with the necessary technological, funding and networking support to enable them to develop their ideas.
- (b) Tailored Youth Programmes- with a particular emphasis on maintaining and developing youth engagement through inclusive policies and regular constructive feedback.
- (c) Facilitating Political Engagement- enabling youth to participate actively in policy development; supporting the message that youth engagement is not just tokenistic.

### **2.4.3 Global initiatives**

- (a) Platforms for Youth- providing platforms for youth to present their ideas, in forums where those ideas are taken into account and where relevant decision-makers are required to give substantive consideration to those ideas. The processes should be transparent, including the weight that is given to the youth voice and the manner in which it is accounted for in decision-making.
- (b) Forums for International Collaboration- bringing together groups of young leaders and creating a pool of innovative projects as a resource for multidisciplinary climate solutions.
- (c) Business- harnessing the voices of young people within organisations to bring about meaningful change in the private sector.

The table of initiatives at Annex 2 provides a starting point for wider discussions surrounding global youth enfranchisement.

### 3.The Contributors

\*Contributors marked with an asterisk participated in the Panel Sessions.



**Aisling McCaffrey\***  
Ireland

Aisling is a NextGen committee member for 100 Women in Finance and a member of the FinBiz 2030 Irish Taskforce. She is also Co-Founder of the Green Team Network, a forum that connects firms across the Irish Funds Industry to encourage collaboration and empower change towards a more sustainable environment.



**Amira Odeh\***  
Puerto Rico

Amira is a Geographer and Water Resource Specialist from Puerto Rico. From a young age she has been interested in solving the most pressing environmental issues that she has experienced around her. Amira organised a successful campaign at her University to encourage sustainable water consumption. As a result, her University has installed new drinking fountains in every building and is considering a ban on the sale of non-reusable water bottles on campus. Hers was the first university campus in Latin America or the Caribbean to achieve this. In addition, Amira has led training efforts in Puerto Rico, the United States of America ("USA") and Chile to support new leaders in developing their own community campaigns and environmental initiatives.



**Anna Yang**  
United Kingdom

Anna works as part of Nostos Homes' Legal Team. She is a Bachelor of Laws student at University College London.



**Belyndar Maonia Rikimani**  
Solomon Islands

Belyndar is a law student at the University of the South Pacific, at the Vanuatu Campus. She is also the Secretary of the Pacific Islands Students Fighting Climate Change ("PISFCC").<sup>1</sup> One of the PISFCC's campaigns is to seek an Advisory Opinion from the International Court of Justice in the Hague, the other is to educate and activate youth on the rising impacts of climate change in their communities and how climate change affects individual rights.



**Evan Barnard**  
USA

Evan is the Founder of Nature for All and a Research Fellow at the Council of Strategic Risks. His recent work has included scientific research into how roads affect roadside habitats and the possible regenerative effect of bioremediation. Evan is passionate about encouraging people to interact with the environment. In line with this, he has been developing braille nature trails to enable visually impaired people the opportunity to experience a nature trail unassisted.



**Jennifer Griggs\***  
United Kingdom

Jennifer is a climate advocate living in Paris. She works in energy related finance where she advises companies on how to secure green financing, wind-down or dispose of their legacy assets and expand into new alternative technologies. Jennifer is Co-Chair of internal sustainability outreach and a member of the steering committee of her company's UK Sustainability Network.<sup>2</sup> She is also working towards a sustainability education programme for incoming university students. In 2019, Jennifer won the Larmor Award partly for her dedication to climate change campaigning.

<sup>1</sup> Table of Initiatives, Annex 2, pg. A2.2

<sup>2</sup> Table of Initiatives, Annex 2, pg. A2.10

<sup>3</sup> Table of Initiatives, Annex 2, pg. A2.5

<sup>4</sup> Table of Initiatives, Annex 2, pg. A2.7

<sup>5</sup> Table of Initiatives, Annex 2, pg. A2.2

<sup>6</sup> Table of Initiatives, Annex 2, pg. A2.1





**Jonah Messinger\***  
USA

Jonah recently graduated from the University of Illinois with a Master of Engineering in Energy Systems, Bachelor of Science in Engineering Physics, and a minor in the Hoeft Technology and Management programme. Most recently, Jonah was a research assistant to Dr. Varun Sivaram at the Centre on Global Energy Policy at Columbia University working on Energizing America, a policy roadmap to triple US federal clean energy research, development, and demonstration funding by 2025. This work was endorsed by Secretary John Kerry, funded by Bill Gates' Breakthrough Energy initiative and invited for submission to President Biden's transition team.



**José Daniel Madrigal\***  
Honduras

José Daniel has been involved with the Inter-American Dialogue, specifically with the Energy, Climate Change, and Extractive Industries Program. As part of that effort, he is also part of the Task Force on Climate Change in the Northern Triangle,<sup>3</sup> as a Youth Representative from Honduras. In a similar vein, José Daniel has been a researcher within the framework of the Long-Term Strategy of Decarbonisation of Honduras. He is also a Founding Member of Sustenta Honduras,<sup>4</sup> a Non-Government Organisation ("NGO") for Development, focused on Action for Climate Empowerment as well as a collaborator with other youth organisations such as One Young World, Global Youth Climate Network, Climate Reality Project, and a Local Pathways Fellow from SDSN-Youth. José Daniel holds a B.A. in Political Science from Tecnológico de Monterrey, México, and a MSc in Urbanisation and Development, as a Chevening Scholar, from the London School of Economics and Political Science.



**Joseph Tsongo\***  
Democratic Republic of the Congo  
(the ("DRC"))

Almost half of the African continent's tropical rainforests are found in the DRC, yet an average of 70,000 hectares of forest are lost each year due to agriculture expansion and an ever-growing population. Joseph launched the "One Child = One Tree" project<sup>5</sup> in response to this threat, the project links education and conservation and seeks to use the country's population growth as a tool to fight climate change.



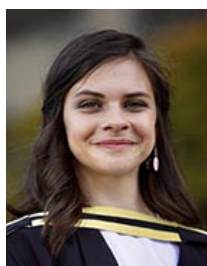
**Josh Hoevenaars**  
Australia

Josh is a Business Development Associate at Clean Energy Mobility with nine years' experience in the energy and retail industries. He is passionate about using the power, scale and expertise within businesses to pursue benefits for people, planet and profit. Josh is building a career in clean energy to use the power of business to address the problems of climate change.



**Kehkashan Basu\***  
Canada/Dubai

Kehkashan is the founder of the Green Hope Foundation (the "GHF"),<sup>6</sup> a social innovation enterprise through which she has had a significant impact on the global community with her work on children's rights, peace and disarmament, climate justice, gender equality and social uplift. She is the only Canadian to be awarded the International Children's Peace Prize (in 2016). Kehkashan is a UN Human Rights Champion, a Forbes 30 under 30, a National Geographic Young Explorer, one of Canada's Top25 Women of Influence, the youngest Trustee of the Parliament of the World's Religions. She was also named as one of the Top100 Sustainable Development Goal ("SDG") Leaders in the World in 2020.



**Kim Brink\***  
South Africa

Kim is Team Leader for South Africa's FinBiz 2030 Climate Action Group where she manages a team of volunteer finance and business professions driving positive change in and outside their jobs. She recently led a tree-planting effort, planting over 140 trees in under 5 hours with a team of 45 volunteers. Kim is also a Product Owner at Aura, a security tech company and previously worked as a Business Analyst at Investec.



**Muzna Dureid**

Syria

Muzna arrived in Montreal from Syria in November 2016. She is currently studying Public Policy and Public Administration at Concordia University and is a liaison officer for the White Helmets. She is currently coordinating a White Helmets project to produce PPE locally in North West Syria. Muzna has been actively involved in multiple initiatives and networks focusing on child and forced marriage issues among Syrian refugees.



**Nathalie Aue**

Venezuela

Nathalie is the founder of the Oceanmar Project<sup>7</sup> and was a finalist for the Unilever Future Leaders League in 2015. The Oceanmar Project was set up to spread information about the ocean and its importance for humanity and the planet; it offers educational courses for children and adults on marine life and uses digital platforms to provide information and support marine conservation.



**Nayeema N Khan\***

Bangladesh

Nayeema studies Economics at Brac University and works as a researcher for two prominent NGOs. She writes a blog for WeMenView (recipient of the Diana Award 2021), which promotes gender rights and aims to counter sexual harassment (with a focus on children). Nayeema is a researcher and core team member of Youth Policy Forum ("YPF"),<sup>8</sup> which works alongside Parliament Members to address policy challenges, reforms and scope for the government. In particular, the YPF environmental research team advocates youth engagement in global climate issues by addressing the challenges of reforms for the environmental policies and aiming to create a climate resilient Bangladesh.



**Neeshad Shafi\***

Qatar

Neeshad is Co-Founder and Executive Director of the Arab Youth Climate Movement, Qatar ("AYCMQ").<sup>9</sup> He was recognised as one of the 'World's 100 Most Influential People in Climate Policy 2019' by Apolitical and is the Curator at Global Shapers (Doha Hub) with the World Economic Forum. Neeshad was named by the European Commission as Peace Ambassador to the OYW Summit in 2017 and, in 2018, was interviewed on Al Gore's 24 Hours of Reality- According to Climate Reality. In January 2020, Neeshad featured in QLife Magazine (published by the Government Communications Office of the State of Qatar) as one of ten influential people in Qatar who have pushed the boundaries and represented Qatar on the world stage.

<sup>7</sup> Table of Initiatives, Annex 2, pg. A2.6

<sup>8</sup> Table of Initiatives, Annex 2, pg. A2.8

<sup>9</sup> Table of Initiatives, Annex 2, pg. A2.3





**Nicolau Miguel**  
Angola

Nicolau serves as a program assistant at the Silencing the Guns Unit, Political Affairs, Peace and Security Department of the African Union Commission, working towards the aspirations of the African Union Agenda 2063 (for a Prosperous, Peaceful and Integrated Africa). In 2019 he participated in the Mandela Washington Fellowship program in the USA and was also part of the African Presidential Leadership Program in Cairo. Nicolau has recently been appointed a Peace Ambassador by the European Commission. In September this year, Nicolau was one of two Angolans at the Youth4Climate Event in Milan.



**Paula Sleiman\***  
Brazil

Paula is a passionate advocate of the environment and education. Born and raised in the Amazon rainforest in Serra dos Caraj, Paula grew up surrounded by immense trees and incredible animals (including, monkeys, deer and jaguars). Paula has volunteered since the age of 10, working to improve access to education and she is currently Team Leader at GE Renewable Energy, she has also helped to implement a waste management system in her conservation area.



**Punit Girdhar\***  
India

Punit is a Regulatory Writer at Novartis Healthcare Pvt. Ltd. in India, working on new drug development. He is a member of the Novartis employee engagement council and, as a council member, is responsible for leading multiple Environmental, Health and Education projects. In his spare time, Punit works with non-profit organisations to help them find innovative ways to tackle issues. He has been recognised by his leadership team for his work in the social field and contributions to his community during COVID-19.



**Redwan Uz Zaman Reham\***  
Bangladesh

Redwan was born and raised in Bangladesh. Redwan recognises that we need to advance some essential policies in order to adopt a unified approach to tackling climate change. He has recently graduated high school and is on his gap year, working for the YPF (alongside Nayeema Khan), a platform of young Bangladeshi people from all over the world interested in policymaking and reforms. Redwan has already worked on a document presented to the Parliament of Bangladesh and wants to continue with this work.



**Sughra Bukhari\***  
Pakistan

Sughra was shortlisted for the Bracken Bower Prize 2020, an award (hosted by the Financial Times and McKinsey & Company) that recognises the best business book proposals of the year by business writers under 35 years old. Sughra's proposed book, entitled "A Master's In Pandemic" aims to explore how the global pandemic has exacerbated the debilitated state of the existing universal education ecosystem that is set to fail the leaders and innovators of tomorrow.



**Tanay Raghavendra**  
India

Tanay is Director of Operations at Nostos Homes. Nostos Homes is a youth led non-profit organisation, based in the UK, which builds homes for people displaced due to natural disasters or as a result of violent conflict. Nostos and its leadership have received extensive international recognition including from the World Bank, Forbes, the Diana Award, Nasdaw and the International Finance Corporation.



### Tolulope Aina

Nigeria

Founder of Tolulope Food and Farms, a social enterprise and nutrition based company focused on curbing malnutrition challenges in Nigeria and across Africa through staple foods production. Tolulope served as President of Youth Agvocates Nigeria between April 2019 and August 2020, an initiative focused on sustainably increasing women and youth participation in agriculture in Nigeria. As President she spearheaded three major projects with over 620 physical participants and over 10,000 virtual beneficiaries.





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## 4. The Panel

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### Julia Blocher:

Julia is President of the International Youth Federation. She is also currently a Doctoral Researcher at PIK, a Ph.D. candidate at Humboldt University in Berlin and an Associate Member of the Hugo Observatory (University of Liège, Belgium). As part of her work, she is contributing to the “East Africa, Peru, India Climate Capacities” Project and the “Governance of Climate Change and Human Mobility Project” at PIK.

Prior to joining PIK, Julia was a Project Manager at the UN University Centre for Policy Research in New York, a think tank within the UN system. She has recently lectured at Sciences Po Paris, Sorbonne Paris Cité (Paris XIII) and Addis Ababa University. Julia previously worked for the UN University Institute for Environment and Human Security, the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre and the UN High Commissioner for Refugees.



### Sophie Cowen:

Sophie is Founder and Campaign Director for Switchit.green. Switchit.green is an international campaign that provides people with a simple, effective way to act on climate. Using its online tool, you can find out whether your bank or energy company is funding fossil fuels, and see alternatives to switch to.

Sophie has a background in campaign strategy and management, press relations, mass participation action organising and digital content production. In 2018, she joined a small group of people planning on doing something big – Extinction Rebellion. For eighteen months she worked with a few others to develop the messaging strategy, networks and relationships that, alongside Extinction Rebellion activists across the globe, have brought the climate and ecological emergency to the centre of the public narrative.



### Richard Dunne:

Richard is the Harmony Project Lead at the Sustainable Food Trust. He has 30 years teaching experience and was Headteacher of an Ofsted graded Outstanding School for 18 years. Richard's work in redesigning a curriculum around Nature's principles of Harmony has already begun inspiring the next generation of teachers and children, with the approach to learning already in place in several schools across the UK.

Richard believes passionately that the best way for children to be motivated in their learning is when it makes sense to them and when they have a key role to play. Through combining core skills to purposeful enquiries of learning, children start to develop their own vision of how they want to see their world and just as importantly what they can do to make it happen.



### John Elkington:

John Elkington is a world authority on corporate responsibility and sustainable capitalism, a bestselling author and serial entrepreneur. He is currently a Founding Partner of, and Chief Pollinator at, Volans a future-focused business working at the intersection of the sustainability, entrepreneurship and innovation movements. John has published many books, reports and articles. His latest book is Green Swans (Fast Company Press, April 2020).

John has spoken at more than 1,000 major conferences and events. These include everything from major gatherings like the World Economic Forum summits in Davos and Dalian, China, to high-octane boardroom sessions and talks to universities, business schools and at village halls.





**Monica Feria Tinta:**

Monica is a leading public international law barrister, specialising in climate litigation, practicing from Twenty Essex Chambers in London. Monica has a wealth of experience in the full spectrum of public international law.

In particular, Monica has been active in cases raising sea-level rise issues, sinking islands, environmental degradation, oil spills, transboundary harm, climate change as a human right issue, environmental harm of waterways, protection of rivers, biodiversity, phasing-out coal mining cases and the enforcement of the Paris Agreement in front of a variety of international organs, including acting in the first climate change contentious case before the Human Rights Committee. She has also advised a State Party representative of a Least Developed Country in the drafting of the Rules of Procedure of Compliance with the Paris Agreement.



**Paula Francisco Coelho:**

Paula is the Secretary of State for the Environment, for the Republic of Angola. Her mandate for this role prioritised environmental education, waste management and the strengthening of the policies related to wildlife prioritised. Prior to her current role, Paula was Secretary of State for Biodiversity and Protected Areas.

Paula started her career with the Ministry of Environment as a technician before becoming the National Director for Biodiversity. During her extensive experience dealing with the environmental challenges in Angola, she has coordinated several projects related to biodiversity, climate change, waste management and soil and water conservation. Born in Luanda, she is an active member of the Central Committee of the People's Movement for the Liberation of Angola and of the Angolan Women Organization.



**Beatrice Karanja (Chair):**

Beatrice is a strategic communications specialist with over 25 years' experience as a development communications professional covering the African continent with extensive experience in East, Central and Southern Africa. She has worked as a journalist with BBC and Reuters and for several international NGO's including the African Wildlife Foundation, UNICEF and Oxfam. Beatrice has also consulted for the Mo Ibrahim Foundation, the Kofi Annan Foundation, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, Stop Ivory, Northern Rangelands Trust and Lewa Wildlife Conservancy.

As a child of Africa with roots in Kenya and Uganda, Beatrice has a strong and unyielding passion for African development and environmental issues, believes that the conservation and development can co-exist and is keen to play her part to make sure Kenya's future is sustainable, balanced and wise. Beatrice is a board representative of S.A.F.E Kenya, the Mara Elephant Project (Board Chair) and Kenya Wildlife Trust. In 2019, Beatrice was appointed to the judging panel of Tusk Trust Conservation Awards and in 2021 as a Tusk Trustee.



**Jacobo Pombo García:**

President of the Global Youth Leadership Forum (GYLF) in Spain.

The GYLF was founded in 2016 with the intention of becoming a forum for debate and discussion where international leaders, experts, businessmen, representatives of different countries and international organisations meet with young leaders with outstanding profiles in their different spheres of action. It aims to generate a unique framework that welcomes a serious, rigorous and firm debate in the search for solutions to the main problems facing the international community.





**Louise Mabulo:**

Louise is an environmentalist, farmer, social entrepreneur and chef from the Philippines. She is Founder of the Cacao Project in the Philippines.

The Cacao project helps to mitigate climate change through providing resilient and resistant crops while and gives farmers an income. The project has trained 200 farmers in agroforestry techniques, planted over 70,000 trees across 70 hectares of land, restored two water sources and uses environmental friendly techniques for pest control and crop fertilization. Louise expects sales of about 11.2 million pesos and a gross margin of around 1 million pesos on 2020's initial cocoa harvest.

Part of Louise's advocacy efforts are directed towards changing people's perceptions of farmers and agriculture, particularly removing the stigma that farmers are poor, uneducated and have failed in traditional educational systems. Through her work and advocacy, she builds an environment of respect and empowerment for farmers as she believes agriculture is fundamental to address climate change.

In 2018 Louise was named Outstanding Young Farmer of the Philippines and in 2019, she won the award Young Champions of the Earth award from the UN Environment Programme. She also won a fellowship with the Young Southeast Asian Leaders Initiative at Brown University and was named on the Forbes' list '30 under 30 Asia', as a featured honouree.



**Paul Polman:**

Paul is Co-Founder and Chair of IMAGINE.

As a leading proponent that business should be a force for good, Paul has been described by the Financial Times as "*a standout CEO of the past decade.*" As CEO of Unilever (2009-2019), he demonstrated that a long-term, multi-stakeholder model goes hand-in-hand with excellent financial performance. Paul was a member of the UN Secretary General's High-Level Panel which developed the SDGs and as an active SDG Advocate he continues to work with global organisations and across industry to push the 2030 development agenda. He is Chair of the B Team and Saïd Business School, Vice-Chair of the UN Global Compact and honorary Chair of the International Chamber of Commerce, which he led for two years.







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## 5.The Partner Organisations

### Mishcon de Reya

#### 5.1 Mishcon de Reya LLP

- 5.1.1 Mishcon is an international law firm with offices in London and Singapore. It is one of few law firms to have attained B Corp accreditation and has a dedicated Environmental, Social and Governance ("ESG") practice, Mishcon Purpose.
- 5.1.2 Mishcon Purpose provides specialist advice and purpose driven insight to help its clients navigate the opportunities and risks presented by a complex landscape; a backdrop characterised by urgent imperatives for change, evolving regulatory frameworks and dynamic yet fragile geopolitical and economic systems.



#### 5.3 The Democracy and Culture Foundation

- 5.3.1 The Democracy and Culture Foundation aims to empower society through citizen engagement and better governance, thereby contributing to the evolution of democracy to meet today's challenges.
- 5.3.2 The Foundation leverages the intellect of original thinkers and powerful decision-makers to identify critical issues on democracy's evolutionary path, subjects them to debate at all societal levels, turns them into specific policy proposals and works towards their implementation.



#### 5.2 One Young World

- 5.2.1 One Young World is a global forum for young leaders. One Young World identifies, promotes and connects the world's most impactful young leaders to create a better world with more responsible, more effective, leadership.
- 5.2.2 The annual One Young World Summit convenes the brightest young talent from every country and sector, working to accelerate social impact. Delegates from over 190 countries are counselled by influential political, business and humanitarian leaders such as Paul Polman, Justin Trudeau and Meghan Markle. Delegates return to their communities and organisations with the means and motivation to make a difference having accessed a global network of over 12,000 leaders.

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## 6. The Submissions

- 6.1 Executive Summaries of each of the submissions, and the submissions themselves, can be found at Annexes 3 and 4 of the Report.
- 6.2 The Inquiry is enormously grateful to all the Contributors and Panellists for giving up their time to submit evidence and take part in the Panel Sessions. The Inquiry and the evidence contained in the Report are of critical importance and the Inquiry's Partner Organisations are excited to work together to help take the ideas contained in the Report forward in a second phase of work.
- 6.3 The Report was prepared by Mishcon, with support and input from the Panellists. The Inquiry's findings reflect the evidence given by the Contributors and do not reflect the views of the Partner Organisations.



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## 7. Introduction and Data

This introductory section does not set out the evidence of the Inquiry, but provides readers with the wider context in which the Inquiry took place. This section explains the concept of youth enfranchisement generally, and in relation to climate, as well as the issues and data surrounding it.

### 7.1 What is Enfranchisement?

7.1.1 According to the Oxford English Dictionary, the noun 'enfranchisement' means "*The giving of a right or privilege, especially the right to vote.*"<sup>10</sup>

7.1.2 The most significant expansion of enfranchisement in the UK followed the First World War, when many of the men returning from the fighting would not have been entitled to vote under the existing laws.

7.1.3 The Representation of the People Act 1918 extended the right to vote to all men over the age of 21, whether they owned property or not, and to women over the age of 30 who met a property qualification (themselves or through their husband). The subsequent Representation of the People (Equal Franchise) Act 1928 finally gave women equal voting rights to men, abolishing the property requirement and giving all women over the age of 21 the right to vote.

7.1.4 The Inquiry seeks to look at the enfranchisement of young people in the context of recognising the critical contribution that young people can make, and are already making, in mitigating and adapting to climate change.

### 7.2 What is Youth Enfranchisement?

7.2.1 National governments, international donors, and domestic youth stakeholders are increasingly recognising the value of youth engagement in political processes and are beginning to adopt pro-youth legal and participatory mechanisms in an effort to facilitate and encourage youth civic and political engagement. Advocates of youth engagement contend that it will result in better policy outcomes across a range of issues that affect young people.

7.2.2 Both distant and recent history indicate that there is a real risk, if young people remain disenfranchised and as they become disengaged from the political system, that this political alienation will manifest itself in angry demonstrations of direct action.

7.2.3 Young people do not have the same legal and political standing as adults. As a result, they often lack a platform from which to make their voices heard and are unable to hold decision-makers to account. This issue is examined in a report compiled by the Consortium for Elections and Political Process Strengthening ("CEPPS"), which notes that by excluding young people from decision-making roles and offices, they are denied access to knowledge and information, making it even harder for them to meaningfully participate in policy debates and reinforcing the imbalance of power.<sup>11</sup>

### 7.3 Climate justice

7.3.1 It is possible, in circumstances where states fail to comply with the legal norms and standards enshrined in human rights instruments, for children (or adults on their behalf) to bring proceedings before a competent court or other adjudicator. In reality, however, the majority of children across the world face enormous obstacles in accessing justice.

7.3.2 Rather than relying on legal redress, young people are advocating for climate mitigation and adaptation through other means; including street protests, online activism and youth organisations. They are, in many instances, agents of change and are at the forefront of a number of environmental movements.

7.3.3 It is of note that certain Contributors are taking steps to enforce climate protection policies through international courts. By way of example, Belyndar Rikimani is Vice-President of the PISFCC<sup>12</sup>, which is seeking an advisory opinion from the International Court of Justice on the issues of climate change and human rights.<sup>13</sup>

### 7.4 Pro youth laws and policies – How effective are they?

7.4.1 The CEPPS Report, which examines the effectiveness of pro youth laws and policies, ultimately concludes that political party wings can either facilitate substantive and constructive youth engagement in the political process, or, paradoxically, act as a vehicle for the mobilisation of political patronage or violence.<sup>14</sup>

7.4.2 In summary:

- (a) Within democratic systems with relatively programmatic political parties, party wings can facilitate the recruitment of young leaders, provide technical training and experience and help parties appeal to youth through substantive policy contributions to the policy platform.
- (b) However, where political systems are characterised by political patronage or violence, political leaders reward loyalty and control youth wing activity, while denying substantive youth contributions to party agendas.<sup>15</sup>
- (c) As identified in the CEPPS report, the lack of coordinated and easily accessible data on youth civic and political engagement is an impediment to understanding how public policy affects youth participation.<sup>16</sup> As a result, the task of locating and analysing concrete data on youth civil and political engagement in the context of the climate crisis is challenging.

## 7.5 Political Engagement

7.5.1 It is evident from the CEPPS report that, despite constituting a large portion of electorates around the world, on average, youth participate in political and civic life at lower rates than older cohorts.<sup>17</sup>

7.5.2 According to CEPPS, a majority of youth find political parties opaque and disinterested in their opinions (this view is affirmed by a number of the Inquiry's Contributors).<sup>18</sup> However, turning away from political parties comes at a cost given the central role they play in power and governance.

7.5.3 The number of young people who join political parties and enter youth wings is relatively low, with some surveys showing less than 10 per cent of young people being involved. According to CEPPS, youth representation from marginalised groups such as the Roma is often even smaller and yet this small number often represents an important group of youth with political aspirations.<sup>19</sup>

## 7.6 The CEPPS report sets out a number of recommendations as to how political parties should run their youth wings.<sup>20</sup>

7.6.1 It suggests they should:

- (a) Make the secretary general of the youth wing an automatic member of the party's top decision-making body and treat the youth wing as the primary source of youth leaders within the party.
- (b) Create a long-term strategy for promoting youth into electable positions and ensuring constant party renewal. This could include quotas for youth candidates and a mechanism for them to select their own candidates.
- (c) Give the youth wing a budget for operating and activity costs that it can manage independently based on an established plan and reporting requirements rather than funding its activities on a case-by-case basis. This could also include providing the youth wing with an office at the party headquarters.

- (d) Train youth wing members as candidates, campaign managers, spokespeople, and party branch heads, both in terms of skills building and political knowledge. Additionally, foster tighter cooperation between youth wings and party caucuses in parliament through policy discussions and internships.
- (e) Define youth membership limits to reasonably include those who will soon be voters (teenagers) and those who are beginning their lives as independent individuals (no older than 30).

## 7.7 Driving change for children through data

7.7.1 UNICEF's Children's Climate Risk Index ("CCRI"), which uses data to generate new global evidence on how many children are currently exposed to climate and environmental hazards, identifies worrying trends. A composite index, the CCRI brings together geographical data by analysing:

- (a) Exposure to climate and environmental hazards, shocks and stresses; and
- (b) Child vulnerability.

7.7.2 Across the two categories, the CCRI brings 57 variables together to measure risk across 167 countries.<sup>21</sup> According to UNICEF's report, The Climate Crisis is a Child's Right Crisis, the CCRI helps to understand and measure the likelihood of climate and environmental shocks or stresses leading to the erosion of development progress, the deepening of deprivation and humanitarian situations affecting children or vulnerable households and groups.<sup>22</sup>

7.7.3 UNICEF's CCRI reveals that nearly half of all children are at 'extremely high risk' of the impacts of climate change: "*Not only are they more vulnerable than adults to the extreme weather, toxic hazards and diseases it causes, but the planet is becoming a more dangerous place to live*".<sup>23</sup>

7.7.4 The CCRI ranks countries based on how vulnerable children are to environmental stresses and extreme weather events. It finds children in the Central African Republic, Chad, Nigeria, Guinea, and Guinea-Bissau are the most at risk.<sup>24</sup>

<sup>10</sup> [ENFRANCHISEMENT | Meaning & Definition for UK English | Lexico.com](#)

<sup>11</sup> [Raising Their Voices: How effective are pro-youth laws and policies? \(cepps.org\)](#)

<sup>12</sup> Table of Initiatives, Annex 2, pg. A2.2

<sup>13</sup> Submission of Belyndar Rikimani, Annex 4, pg. A4.7-8

<sup>14</sup> [Raising Their Voices: How effective are pro-youth laws and policies? \(cepps.org\).](#) (25 March 2019) pg. 5

<sup>15</sup> Ibid, pg. 5

<sup>16</sup> Ibid, pg. 7

<sup>17</sup> Ibid, pg. 2

<sup>18</sup> [Raising Their Voices: How effective are pro-youth laws and policies? \(cepps.org\).](#) (25 March 2019) pg. 88

<sup>19</sup> Ibid, pg. 88

<sup>20</sup> Ibid, pg. 89

<sup>21</sup> [UNICEF-climate-crisis-child-rights-crisis.pdf](#), pg. 73

<sup>22</sup> Ibid, pg. 75

<sup>23</sup> Ibid, pg. 4

<sup>24</sup> Ibid, pg. 5

7.7.5 Despite being most at risk, these countries are among those least responsible for creating the problem. The 33 most high-risk countries collectively emit just 9 per cent of global CO<sub>2</sub> emissions. This is in direct contrast with the 10 highest emitting countries, which collectively account for nearly 70 per cent of global emissions. According to UNICEF, only one of these countries is ranked as extremely high-risk in the index.<sup>25</sup>

## 7.8 Climate Policy

7.8.1 Nationally determined contributions ("NDCs") are non-binding national plans highlighting climate actions, including climate related targets for greenhouse gas emission reductions, policies and measures governments aim to implement in response to climate change and as a contribution to achieve the global targets set out in the Paris Agreement.

7.8.2 The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, enshrines the legal right for children to have their voices and perspectives heard on issues that affect them. UNICEF's work highlights that policies inevitably impact on the lives of children, and that there is no such thing as a "*child-neutral policy*."<sup>26</sup> Despite this, children and young people appear to be consistently overlooked when it comes to designing and formulating climate policies and processes, and this is reflected in evidence submitted to the Inquiry. The consequence of this is that climate policy often fails to identify and address the particular risks and issues children and young people face as a result of climate change.

7.8.3 By way of example, globally, only 42 per cent of all NDCs directly reference children or youth, while only 20 per cent mention children (under 18) specifically. Just three countries mention the rights of children, and a further five countries refer to human rights in the context of intergenerational equity or future generations. Almost one-quarter (23 per cent) of NDCs do not mention children, or youth, or child-relevant terms such as education.<sup>27 28</sup>

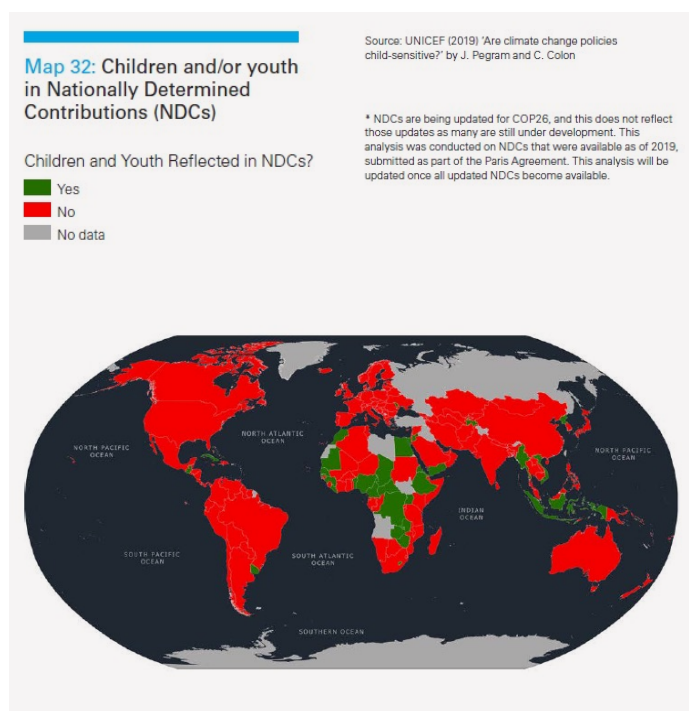
## 7.9 The voices missing from this Report

7.9.1 The Inquiry is necessarily limited in scope. It heard evidence from 22 young people, from 19 different countries. The Inquiry sought to obtain evidence from a wide group of individuals, bringing a diversity of experience and perspectives, however; it did not receive evidence from all geographies, groups or nationalities and it did not hear from people younger than 17 years old. In the time available, it was not possible to secure contributions from indigenous voices.

7.9.2 During the Inquiry's Panel Sessions, Contributors from developing countries, sometimes known as the Global South, repeatedly emphasised that their counterparts in wealthy and developed countries, often referred to as the Global North, do not speak for them. Their experiences differ vastly and excluding them from the conversation reinforces existing inequity. Indeed, they drew the Panellists attention to the fact that discourse around climate change is primarily conducted in English, a factor that poses a significant barrier to participation for the majority of people in the Global South.

7.9.3 Whilst Greta Thunberg has become the poster child for the youth climate movement there are many other, less privileged or less visible youth activists whose messages are equally important. Young people in the Global South, or from marginalised communities, are more likely to have first-hand experience of climate change and climate injustice. By way of example, a recent report conducted by the Environmental Protection Agency found that the most severe impacts of climate change fall disproportionately upon socially vulnerable communities in the USA, who are less able to recover from them.<sup>29</sup>

7.9.4 Whilst recognising its limitations, the Inquiry has still produced an important body of, previously unheard, evidence.



<sup>25</sup> Ibid, pg.5

<sup>26</sup> Ibid, pg. 94

<sup>27</sup> [UNICEF-climate-crisis-child-rights-crisis.pdf, pg. 94](#)

<sup>28</sup> Ibid

<sup>29</sup> <https://www.epa.gov/newsreleases/epa-report-shows-disproportionate-impacts-climate-change-socially-vulnerable>







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## 8. Local Issues And Initiatives

**8.1** A running theme throughout the evidence was the unequal way that communities and nations are affected by climate change. As Evan Barnard described it, *"Climate change respects no borders, and climate change impacts are distributed unequally and inequitably."*<sup>30</sup> This inequity takes a number of forms. For many, it is socio-economic: Jonah Messinger's submission highlighted that *"economic development remains a key predictive metric for climate change-induced adversity"*<sup>31</sup>

It is also generational: as Evan noted, younger and older people are *"inequitably affected by climate change impacts"*<sup>32</sup>

### **8.2 Educational barriers**

**8.2.1** At the intersection of generational and economic inequity lies education. Whilst countries are experiencing climate change in different ways, Contributors stressed the significant variations in local experience and the key role education – or a lack thereof – plays in exacerbating inequity.

**8.2.2** According to statistics identified by Nayeema Khan, 85% of young people in Bangladesh study climate change in school and 94% want to make a difference to the climate change debate.<sup>33</sup> However, other evidence before the Panellists indicated the lack of widely accessible education on climate change in other countries. For example, Kim Brink reported that in South Africa, more than 80% of the young generation are unaware of the *"stark realities"* of climate change.<sup>34</sup> In a country which ranks 75 out of 76 (according to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development) and where mining accounts for nearly half a million jobs, Kim expressed the difficulties in relying on education to persuade people of the importance of climate change.<sup>35</sup>

**8.2.3** At a local level, there appears to be enormous variety in attitudes and understanding of young people regarding climate change, depending on access to education in their community. Perversely, it is those poorer communities where access to education is such a struggle that are more likely to be adversely impacted by climate change. As Paula Sleiman's evidence during the Inquiry described, those in poorer communities in Brazil (estimated to comprise 50% of Brazil's youth) are more likely to be affected by frequent intense periods of drought and flooding, and the subsequent loss of homes, loss of harvests and loss of purchasing power.<sup>36</sup> This was echoed by Redwan Reham who commented that poorer people in Bangladesh are more likely to feel the effects of floods, cyclones, droughts, salinity and river erosion.<sup>37</sup> Similarly, Nicolau Miguel stressed that people in rural areas of Angola are struggling in the face of increasingly unpredictable weather and Kim Brink noted that *"those in poverty are the most affected by climate change"*, highlighting the difficulties South Africans face with one of the worst education systems in the world.<sup>38</sup>

**8.2.4** The evidence put forward during the Inquiry identified education as fundamental to youth enfranchisement. Yet the ability to access that education has been limited by climate change disasters. Two Contributors from Bangladesh provided stark examples of this. In 2007, tropical cyclone Sidr hit Bangladesh and is estimated to have affected the education of 100,000 children across 589 schools in 12 districts of the country, with the cost of reconstructing schools and replacing textbooks and other materials totalling USD 85 million.<sup>39</sup> Nayeema Khan cited a further example of her hometown in Kishoreganj experiencing flash flooding in 2017, which caused disruption to the education of more than half a million students.<sup>40</sup>

**8.2.5** If education is to bring about meaningful change to those in local communities, it is clear from the evidence of the Contributors that local differences need to be taken into account. Nicolau Miguel highlighted that developing appropriate climate change terminology in local African languages could assist in helping ensure climate change discussions take place in locally relevant ways. As previously noted, the climate change dialogue typically takes place in English, which risks excluding those in non-English speaking countries and communities from the conversation. This problem is exacerbated if local languages are overlooked. As Nicolau noted, if *"locally relevant practical information"* is to be made available to those communities to *"help them adapt and respond to climate change"*, it must be done so in a language accessible to the recipients.<sup>41</sup>

**8.2.6** The disparities in education affect not only the youth's understanding of climate change but impact on who is participating in the climate change debate. For the most vulnerable, worrying about climate change necessarily is of a lower priority. As Paula Sleiman put it, *"if I go back to my hometown and I ask people, I don't expect them to care about protecting the environment if they have to care about not dying of starvation."*<sup>42</sup> It was understood that this is not to say that the most vulnerable are not concerned about climate change or its implications. For many indigenous communities, climate change has become a matter of life or death and their youth leaders are at the forefront of the campaign for climate adaptation and mitigation. In this regard, the Inquiry notes the experiences of the thirteen indigenous youth leaders identified by the UN as champions of creating a sustainable future.<sup>43</sup> There is, however, a perception – voiced by many of the Contributors – that a privileged minority of global youth feel burdened with the responsibility of voicing the concerns of a generation.<sup>44</sup>

### 8.3 Climate migration

- 8.3.1 Concern about climate-induced migration, i.e. migration caused by climate change and climate disasters, was a recurring theme in the evidence submitted during the Inquiry. The statistics are stark. According to a report cited by José Daniel Madrigal from the New York Times and ProPublica, if governments take modest action to reduce carbon emissions, around 5% of migrants arriving at the southern border of the USA from Central America and Mexico will be driven primarily by climate change.<sup>45</sup> A World Bank report referenced by contributor Muzna Dureid, 143 million climate refugees will be displaced from Latin America, Sub-Saharan Africa, and Southeast Asia by 2050.<sup>46</sup> As a reminder that climate migration is not a distant reality, Amira Odeh recounted to the Panel the challenges facing communities in Puerto Rico from coastal erosion, forcing those without government support to move to the USA.<sup>47</sup>
- 8.3.2 Climate migration is not only an issue at national and international level. Climate change is causing internal displacement at community level with wide-reaching effects. In the Solomon Islands, families have been forced to abandon their homes as sea levels rise.<sup>48</sup> In Bangladesh, Redwan Reham reported that internal displacement leads to overpopulation of particular areas, thus increasing pressure on resources for building. As he described it, there is a “chain reaction”, with people abandoning land which then suffers from a lack of irrigation or agricultural development.<sup>49</sup>
- 8.3.3 As the threat of climate migration grows, an increasing concern is how displacement risks disenfranchising young people in the climate change debate. Muzna Dureid, a Syrian refugee now living in Canada, highlighted the lack of legal recognition and adequate remedies for climate refugees, with no international agreement for people forcibly displaced by climate change.<sup>50</sup> Muzna commented that whilst the youth in general are excluded from political and policy debate, the “refugee youth are more excluded” from that dialogue.

### 8.4 Gender inequality

- 8.4.1 Whilst the different ways in which climate change is affecting communities and countries is a familiar story, one Contributor drew the Panel’s attention to the way that gender affects the lived experience of climate change. Kehkashan Basu highlighted that women and girls suffer more as a result of climate change, compared to men. By way of example, she described how men are more likely to migrate as a result of climate disasters, leaving women to look after the children and increasing incidences of girls dropping out of school to look after younger siblings.<sup>51</sup>

- 8.4.2 Women have also be impacted by climate change in specific ways outside of the context of migration. Kehkashan recounted how “women have traditionally been the keepers of rich knowledge about plants, animals and ecological processes”, meaning that they experience the effects of climate change in a particular way, for example through loss of knowledge relating to seeds and cooking.<sup>52</sup> She highlighted how a complicating issue is that there is no single set of gender inequality-reducing policies in a climate change-mitigation context.<sup>53</sup> Further, a lack of relevant data in relation to the impact of climate change on youth and gender makes it harder to measure the impact of methods adopted to mitigate the impact on these groups.<sup>54</sup> Without the means to measure or quantify the impact depending on age and gender, there is an ineffectual response mechanism resulting in a vicious cycle of inequality.

### 8.5 Changes at local level – challenges and opportunities

- 8.5.1 The Inquiry received evidence that action at local level can present an opportunity where state level action is frustrated by political and economic forces. In Australia, where the federal government’s climate policy and commitments are not aligned to the aspiration of limiting global warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius (compared to pre-industrial levels), the School Strike for Climate expressed the youth’s anger at the inaction of the federal government.<sup>55</sup> However, Australian state governments and local councils have adopted more ambitious climate policies. By way of example, Josh Hoevenaars drew the Panelist’s attention to the City of Greater Geelong which has adopted a net zero target of 2035 and the City of Darebin in Melbourne, which in 2016 became the first jurisdiction in the world to declare a climate emergency.<sup>56</sup>

<sup>30</sup> Submission of Evan Barnard, Annex 4, pg. A4.9-10

<sup>31</sup> Submission of Jonah Messinger, Annex 4, pg. A4.14-15

<sup>32</sup> Submission of Evan Barnard, Annex 4, pg. A4.9-10

<sup>33</sup> Submission of Nayeema Khan, Annex 4, pg. A4.30-31

<sup>34</sup> Submission of Kim Brink, Annex 4, pg. A4.24-25

<sup>35</sup> Ibid.

<sup>36</sup> Submission of Paula Sleiman, Annex 4, pg. A4.33

<sup>37</sup> Submission of Redwan Reham, Annex 4, pg. A4.36-37

<sup>38</sup> Submission of Nicolau Miguel, Annex 4, pg. A4.28-29; Submission of Kim Brink, Annex 4, pg. A4.24-25

<sup>39</sup> Submission of Redwan Reham, Annex 4, pg. A4.36-37

<sup>40</sup> Submission of Nayeema Khan, Annex 4, pg. A4.30-31

<sup>41</sup> Submission of Nicolau Miguel, Annex 4, pg. A4.28-29

<sup>42</sup> Inquiry Panel Session, 19 October; Paula Sleiman

<sup>43</sup> [Meet 13 Indigenous Young Indigenous Rights Activists – Office of the Secretary-General’s Envoy on Youth](#)

<sup>44</sup> Inquiry Panel Session, 19 October; Paula Sleiman and Kim Brink

<sup>45</sup> Submission of José Daniel Madrigal, Annex 4, pg. A4.16-17

<sup>46</sup> Submission of Muznai Dureid, Annex 4, pg. A4.26

<sup>47</sup> Inquiry Panel Session, 21 October; Amira Odeh

<sup>48</sup> Submission of Belyndar Rikimani, Annex 4, pg. A4.7-8

<sup>49</sup> Submission of Redwan Reham, Annex 4, pg. A4.36; Inquiry Panel Session, 21 October; Redwan Reham

<sup>50</sup> Submission of Muznai Dureid, Annex 4, pg. A4.26

<sup>51</sup> Inquiry Panel Session, 21 October; Kehkashan Basu

<sup>52</sup> Submission of Kehkashan Basu, Annex 4, pg. A4.22-23

<sup>53</sup> Ibid.

<sup>54</sup> Inquiry Panel Session, 21 October; Kehkashan Basu

<sup>55</sup> Submission of Josh Hoevenaars, Annex 4, pg. A4.20-21

<sup>56</sup> Ibid.

8.5.2 In contrast, there are limitations to local action where it is unsupported by national or global efforts to tackle climate change. For example, Joseph Tsongo told the Panel about the violence and conflict DRC communities face: where armed groups control parts of the rainforest, the question of deforestation is outside of the hands of local people and needs national and global input to address.<sup>57</sup>

## 8.6 Local initiatives – micro changes with macro effects

8.6.1 The Contributors described a range of local initiatives addressing the challenges of education and inequality and seeking to help empower local communities in the fight against climate change.

8.6.2 Community radio and TV are recognised as important tools in spreading climate change awareness and education. Joseph Tsongo described the role of community radio in the DRC as an important way of involving young people from local communities who are otherwise excluded from global debate.<sup>58</sup> Similarly, one of the Panellists, the Secretary of State for the Environment of the Republic of Angola, noted that Angola has developed TV content in Portuguese addressing climate change, to help reach a wider audience.<sup>59</sup>

8.6.3 In Kehkashan Basu's presentation to the Panel, she described her work, through the GHF<sup>60</sup>, to equip local communities with resources and knowledge to tackle climate change issues. One example she gave is the GHF's efforts to distribute solar cookers to families. By providing these cookers and educating communities on their use, women are able to leave food in the cooker before they leave for work, allowing the children to eat whilst the women are out at work and preventing the harmful pollution associated with fuel stoves by replacing them with a clean energy source.<sup>61</sup> These small behavioural changes, encouraged by appropriate education, help facilitate self-reliance in the community and help address gender and social inequality. Kehkashan spoke powerfully of the need for these types of localised programmes to ensure meaningful outreach.

8.6.4 The importance of education at a local level has also been seen in Bangladesh where some coastal communities have benefitted from resilience-building projects to encourage people to choose to stay on the land. This has included investment in education for farmers on irrigation methods, tree-planting and soil maintenance. By encouraging people to adapt their behaviour rather than simply abandoning the land, investment and education have helped combat further soil and coastal erosion.<sup>62</sup> Similarly, Punit Girdhar spoke about outreach programmes in India to teach children about climate change and engage them in climate mitigation from an early age, which also involve children in planting trees.<sup>63</sup>

8.6.5 Tree-planting was one of the most frequently referred to initiatives, and illustrates how the seemingly small efforts of the many can bring about real change. In the Solomon Islands, the PISFCC engages young people in tree-planting and mangrove planting, along with hosting seminars on the issue of climate change.<sup>64</sup> Joseph Tsongo told the Panel about his initiative, One Child = One Tree<sup>65</sup>, which is intended to link education and conservation, encouraging school children in the DRC to adopt a tree when they start school, and look after it for the duration of their schooling.<sup>66</sup> This initiative forms part of a drive to limit the devastating levels of deforestation in the second largest rainforest on the planet (the Congo Basin comprises 220 million hectares of forest).<sup>67</sup>

8.6.6 The universality of tree-planting initiatives appears to be key to their success. In Pakistan, the Government founded the Ten Billion Trees Tsunami initiative,<sup>68</sup> in partnership with the UN Environment Programme.<sup>69</sup> The aim of the programme is to plant ten billion trees by 2023 and the billionth tree was planted in 2021. People from the Prime Minister to children have planted trees, illustrating the great levelling power of such initiatives, and the ability for simple initiatives to gain traction across the generations.<sup>70</sup>

<sup>57</sup> Inquiry Panel Session, 19 October; Joseph Tsongo

<sup>58</sup> Inquiry Panel Session, 19 October; Joseph Tsongo

<sup>59</sup> Inquiry Panel Session, 19 October; Paula Francisco Coelho

<sup>60</sup> Table of Initiatives, Annex 2, pg. 2.1

<sup>61</sup> Inquiry Panel Session, 21 October; Kehkashan Basu

<sup>62</sup> Inquiry Panel Session, 21 October; Redwan Reham

<sup>63</sup> Inquiry Panel Session, 21 October; Punit Girdhar

<sup>64</sup> Submission of Belyndar Rikimani, Annex 4, pg. A4.7-8

<sup>65</sup> Table of Initiatives, Annex 2, pg. A2.2

<sup>66</sup> Inquiry Panel Session, 19 October; Joseph Tsongo

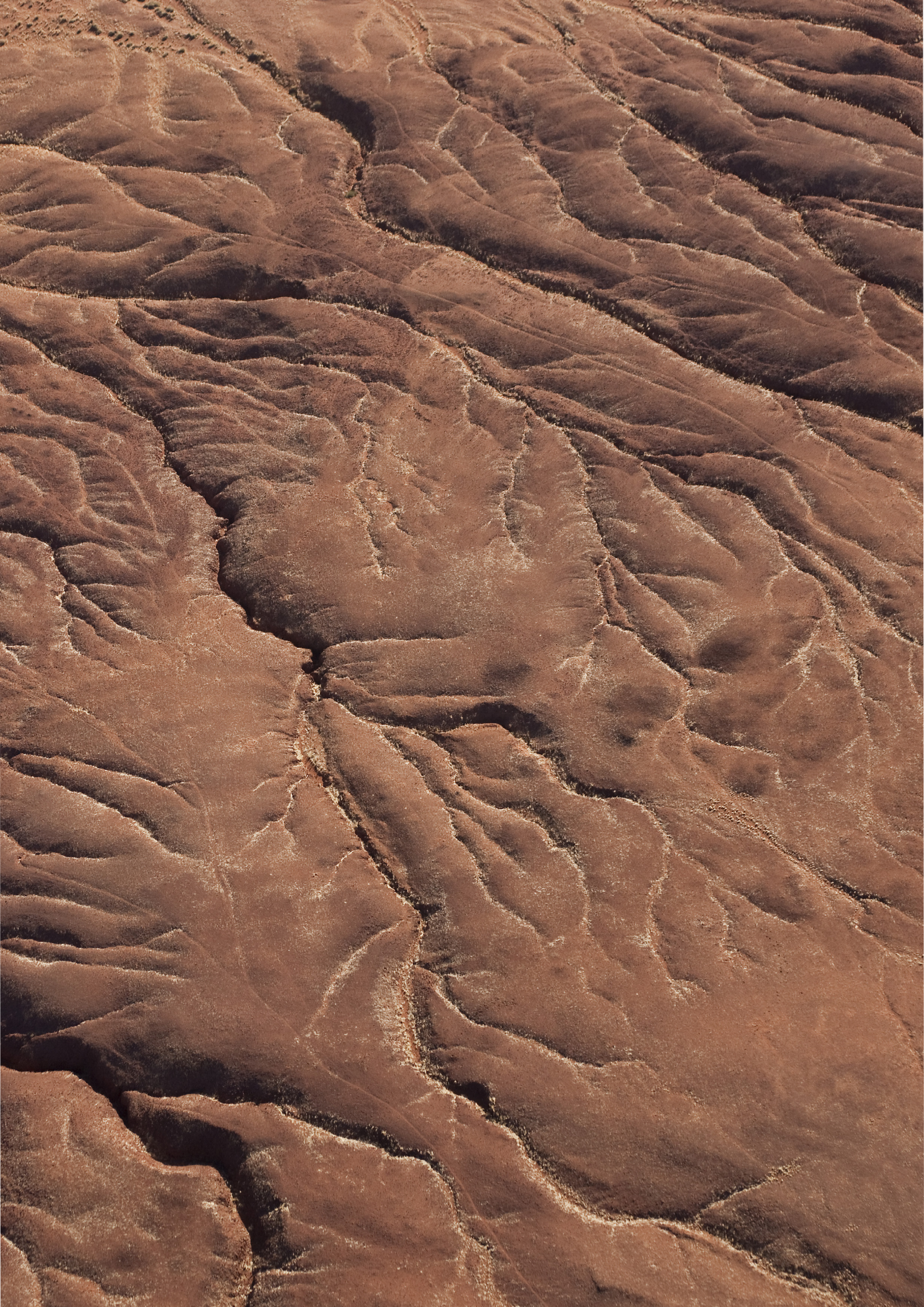
<sup>67</sup> Submission of Joseph Tsongo, Annex 4, pg. A4.18-19

<sup>68</sup> Table of Initiatives, Annex 2, pg. A2.2

<sup>69</sup> Submission of Sughra Shah Bukhari, Annex 4, pg. A4.38

<sup>70</sup> Submission of Sughra Shah Bukhari, Annex 4, pg. A4.38; Inquiry Panel Session, 19 October; Sughra Shah Bukhari







## 9. National Issues and Initiatives

### 9.1 Youth as a barrier to entry and access to information

9.1.1 A persistent theme in the submissions and during the Panel Sessions was that being young acts as a barrier in and of itself. Jonah Messenger from the USA distilled this issue, stating: “young people are not well represented in local, national and international decision-making bodies for obvious reasons related to age related requirements. In many ways [...] global society has adopted sufficient age as a prerequisite for formal engagement and participation in climate adaptation and mitigation initiatives.”<sup>71</sup> Evan Barnard explained that there are limitations on the extent that young people can take action: “First, most have educational responsibilities and time commitments that would prevent them from taking a day off from school to go to a march or other demonstration. Second, many young people may be more limited in their autonomy and ability to travel and attend events. Third, many young people may lack the financial independence or security to take certain forms of expressive action.”<sup>72</sup>

9.1.2 However, as affirmed by Jonah, “in general, paradigm-shifting ideas, technologies, and initiatives are brought to the fore by new entrants and fresh perspectives” and “from next-generation technologies and novel policy recommendations to non-profit development work and creative advocacy strategies, young people can advance the climate action agenda.”<sup>73</sup> His statements elucidate why it is so essential that young people are engaged in decision-making and the development of policies, technology and ideas.

### 9.2 Tokenism: Hearing the voice of the youth versus taking action

9.2.1 The submissions throw into sharp relief the gap between the Contributors' experience of making their voices heard and their voices galvanising action.

9.2.2 Whilst a number of Contributors commented on the wide reach of social media to spread awareness and express their views,<sup>74</sup> it is clear from the submissions that there is a strong feeling that the Contributors' generation simply does not hold the levers of power when it comes to enacting change. For example, Paula Sleiman made clear that youth need to be closer to decision-makers<sup>75</sup> and Amira Odeh told the Panel that, although youth are being listened to, in her view “what they are saying is not being applied” and, further, that there is “a large gap between decision-makers listening and them actually applying the actions really needed.”<sup>76</sup> Belyndar, from the Solomon Islands, put it like this: “Often in some levels of decision-making, leaders see young people [as] not being capable enough to have a seat on the table and engage in contributing to concrete ideas and decisions” as a result “youth voices are being shadowed” in consultations conducted by leaders and stakeholders.<sup>77</sup> During the Panel Session, Amira noted that, in her experience, if the space is not designed by young people, then 90% of the time it is

going to include tokenism: “places that I have been to that are not planned or designed by youth, they talk about youth like we are a thing, “we need to find the youth”, “we need to take a picture with the youth”... and then they're like, yeh, we got the youth voice. OK. Next.”<sup>78</sup>

9.2.3 Jonah Messenger felt that this point was one for the leaders at COP26 to take on board, stating that “the leaders at COP26 can help shape a new approach, focusing on identifying talented young leaders, elevating them to formal leadership positions in institutions making decisions on climate, and promoting their work by providing opportunities and funding.”<sup>79</sup>

### 9.3 Lack of access to information

9.3.1 Further, young people suffer from a lack of access to information (a significant part of this issue also being lack of education, as explored in the local section of the Report above).

9.3.2 In her submission, Aisling McCaffrey quoted statistics from the ECO-UNESCO Youth Climate Justice Survey in collaboration with SpunOut.ie (October 2020). The purpose of the survey was to establish how young people in Ireland felt about climate change and Aisling noted that 36% respondents asserted that “they did not know to contact politicians and key decision-makers.”<sup>80</sup>

9.3.3 Access to education is discussed in detail above, however, many of the Contributors' expressed the view that national change needs to be implemented in this regard. For instance, Jennifer Griggs made the poignant point that “awareness without inspiration is not enough” and that climate change must be placed “front and centre of the national curriculum.”<sup>81</sup> José Daniel Madrigal went further stating that young people require a “higher exposure to the international agenda and climate negotiations, to better comprehend what is being discussed at the international level; that way contributing towards communication strategies regarding their own local context and experiences.” His view is that this approach would democratise the process.<sup>82</sup>

9.3.4 As noted above, a number of Contributors commented on social media as a powerful tool to spread awareness. Interestingly, Paula was the only Contributor to touch on the “fake news” phenomenon in her submission, noting that a large number of Brazilians are both “receiving little information” and are “overloaded with fake news” contributing to a feeling of powerlessness.<sup>83</sup> Paula goes on to illustrate the kind of inadequate messaging used by Brazil's government and its effect: “Instead of looking for the root causes, intensify[ing] the care of the ecosystems, [encouraging the expansion of renewable energy or controlling water consumption on harvests and industries], the President tells people to take fewer and cold showers.” As a result, Brazil's young people refer to themselves online as “sad and Brazilian.”<sup>84</sup>

## 9.4 Political Engagement

9.4.1 An absence or decline of youth political engagement emerged as another theme of the submissions.

9.4.2 According to the submissions, this is not due to a lack of inclination. In Brazil, Paula indicated that youth voices can only be heard either: (i) through politicians; or (ii) through NGOs and private initiatives. However, whilst it is theoretically possible to participate in local voting sessions and public consultations, these are sporadic and are not readily advertised.<sup>85</sup>

9.4.3 Meanwhile, Josh Hoevenaars expressed the practical reality of under-18s being excluded from the franchise, with the age requirement a physical barrier to contributing to the political conversation: *"But let's assume for a moment that the level of awareness is proportionate to the problem, do young Australians have the platforms to raise their voice and hold governments to account? Yes, to some extent, Australia is a democratic nation with multiple levels of government that allows the public to be heard and have their vote on election day. However, this only captures the votes of those over the age of 18. What about all those younger than 18, who have as much insight and foresight into climate change? How do they have their voice heard?"*<sup>86</sup>

9.4.4 Neeshad Shafi also addressed the issue of declining political engagement, stating that *"low voter turnout and membership in political organisations can indicate a belief that such actions do not truly allow people to influence processes and affect outcomes."*<sup>87</sup> This accords with an issue identified in the CEPPS Report referred to above, that formal organisations and processes are viewed with distrust and that *"a majority of youth find political parties opaque and disinterested in their perspectives"*.<sup>88</sup> Evidence from the Contributors suggest that issues regarding access may also be institutional, Neeshad noted that in his country, Qatar, there are legal restrictions on the right to protest which limit the ability of youth to make their voices heard. As a result, he has been forced to use diplomatic channels to access political decision-makers, which are necessarily less public and impact on the ability to hold decision-makers to account.<sup>89</sup>

## 9.5 National Initiatives proposed or endorsed by Contributors

9.5.1 Contributors discussed various national initiatives in their submissions and during the Panel Sessions. One striking example, described by José Daniel Madrigal is Sustenta Honduras.<sup>90</sup> Founded by José Daniel, the initiative focuses on *"climate empowerment."* Its achievements include:

- (a) Hosting the first Local Conference of Youth<sup>91</sup> in the country,
- (b) Acting as one of two National Coordinators for Honduras for the Regional Conference of Youth in Latin America and the Caribbean, an initiative supported by the UN Development Program in Latin America, UNICEF and COP26, and
- (c) Hosting the first climate related forum with the mayoral candidates of Tegucigalpa (Honduras' capital city) during which the candidates were asked what their environmental and climate agenda would be.

9.5.2 José Daniel noted that, whilst Sustenta Honduras is a relatively new organisation, it now comprises over 400 individuals from all over the country. Further, it recently secured international financial support for two projects relating to climate empowerment and adaptation to climate change at the local level.<sup>92</sup>

9.5.3 Belyndar Rikimani described a similar initiative in the Solomon Islands called 350 Pacific.<sup>93</sup> 350 Pacific has *"various satellite bodies [...] led by young people around the world giving them the space to engage and build each other through advocacy and reform programs across the region [and beyond]."*<sup>94</sup> They use lobbying and demonstrations to influence decision-makers. Belyndar explained that the initiative allows youth to take on leadership roles without the need to rely on government to enact change. Instead, the initiative encourages youth to *"show the government how they can support youths in implementing change."*<sup>95</sup>

9.5.4 Redwan Rehman described to the Panel his involvement in the YPF<sup>96</sup> in Bangladesh. Redwan is part of a group of young Bangladeshis working on climate policy with a Government Minister, who is head of the Parliamentary Environment Standing Committee. Redwan's research team proposed policies and he *"presents them in a viable form"* to the Prime Minister and other Members of Parliament.<sup>97</sup> José Daniel is also involved in an initiative that grants him access to political decision-makers. He is the youth representative for the Task Force on Climate Change in the northern part of Central America, known as the Northern Triangle.<sup>98</sup> The Task Force was convened by the Inter-American Dialogue, in Washington DC, with the objective of providing policy recommendations to high-level US officials from the State Department of Energy and the National Security Council.<sup>99</sup> José Daniel noted that, as the only youth representative he is *"well*

<sup>71</sup> Submission of Jonah Messinger, Annex 4, pg. A4.14-15

<sup>72</sup> Submission of Evan Barnard, Annex 4, pg. A4.9-10

<sup>73</sup> Submission of Jonah Messinger, Annex 4, pg. A4.14-15

<sup>74</sup> See, for example, submissions from Joseph Tsongo (DRC), Annex 4, pg. A4.18-19; Redwan Reham (Bangladesh), Annex 4, pg. A4.36-37; Punit Girdhar (India), Annex 4, pg. A4.34-35; Josh Hoevenaars (Australia), Annex 4, pg. A4.20-21

<sup>75</sup> Submission of Paula Sleiman, Annex 4, pg. A4.33

<sup>76</sup> Inquiry Panel Session on 21 October 2021, Amira Odeh; Submission of Amira Odeh, Annex 4, pg. A4.6

<sup>77</sup> Submission of Belyndar Rikimani, Annex 4, pg. A4.7-8

<sup>78</sup> Inquiry Panel Session on 21 October 2021, Amira Odeh

<sup>79</sup> Submission of Jonah Messinger, Annex 4, pg. A4.14-15

<sup>80</sup> Submission of Aisling McCaffrey, Annex 4, pg. A4.2-3

<sup>81</sup> Submission of Jennifer Griggs, Annex 4, pg. A4.11-13

<sup>82</sup> Submission of José Daniel Madrigal, Annex 4, pg. A4.16-17

<sup>83</sup> Submission of Paula Sleiman, Annex 4, pg. A4.33

<sup>84</sup> Ibid

<sup>85</sup> Submission of Paula Sleiman, Annex 4, pg. A4.33

<sup>86</sup> Submission of Josh Hoevenaars, Annex 4, pg. A4.20-21

<sup>87</sup> Submission of Neeshad Shafi, Annex 4, pg. A4.32

<sup>88</sup> [Raising their voices: How effective are pro-youth laws and policies? | National Democratic Institute \(ndi.org\)](https://www.ndi.org/raising-their-voices-how-effective-are-pro-youth-laws-and-policies/), (25 March 2019), pg. 88

<sup>89</sup> Inquiry Panel Session on 19 October 2021, Neeshad Shafi

<sup>90</sup> Table of Initiatives, Annex 2, pg. A2.7

<sup>91</sup> Table of Initiatives, Annex 2, pg. A2.11

<sup>92</sup> Submission of José Daniel Madrigal, Annex 4, pg. A4.16-17

<sup>93</sup> Table of Initiatives, Annex 2, pg. A2.9

<sup>94</sup> Submission of Belyndar Rikimani, Annex 4, pg. A4.7-8

<sup>95</sup> Ibid

<sup>96</sup> Table of Initiatives, Annex 2, pg. A2.8

<sup>97</sup> Inquiry Panel Session on 21 October 2021, Redwan Reham

<sup>98</sup> Table of Initiatives, Annex 2, pg. A2.5

<sup>99</sup> Inquiry Panel Session on 21 October 2021, José Daniel Madrigal

aware of the responsibility [he has]" but that it is yet to be determined what influence he will have within the Task Force.<sup>100</sup>

generations and from the kids because it was simple, and you could see the contribution you were making towards the goal, which is to plant ten billion trees."<sup>112</sup>

9.5.5 Similarly, the Irish government has been piloting the National Dialogue on Climate Action (the "NDCA"),<sup>101</sup> a forum for collaboration between the Irish Government, citizens, youth, local communities and relevant agencies on climate change. The NDCA was designed to "inform people of the opportunities and challenges involved in addressing climate change, motivate them to action, and empower them to participate in the co-design of national climate policy and plans."<sup>102</sup> A new structure for the programme is currently being developed which Aisling hopes will address the lack of youth engagement in politics in Ireland.<sup>103</sup>

9.5.6 Similarly to José Daniel, Neeshad has founded his own national youth organisation, the AYCMQ.<sup>104</sup> He explains that the AYCMQ recognises the importance of "local engagement which helps to amplify larger national and regional changes." It is Neeshad's experience that, in order for a project or initiative to be successful, it must be "structured in such a way to ensure that youth participation is meaningful, they feel comfortable collaborating with facilitators... and reassured that their views will be taken seriously. This can be achieved by working through trusted community partners who are used to working closely with young people and who are conscious of the importance of gathering quality feedback [in order to] ensure sustained participation and engagement."<sup>105</sup>

## 9.6 Government incubators and initiatives

9.6.1 Punit Girdhar's evidence lauded the programmes set up by the Indian Government to encourage climate related innovation and development. Punit explained in his submission that "government policies are primarily focused on reducing CO2 emissions by supporting start-ups to convert petrol and diesel cars to electric and hydrogen-fuelled ones." In addition, "several start-ups receive government funding in order to expand their work and do more innovation in renewable energy."<sup>106</sup> The Indian Government gives "priority to the young leaders who have made significant impacts [by] providing them with grants to do innovation for climate change protection."<sup>107</sup> According to Punit, young people in India have access to a digital platform where they can submit innovative ideas and "get every possible support from the government."<sup>108</sup> Further, each year the Indian Government holds a "government-sponsored innovation week" where innovators can present their ideas. The Government will then help a selection of innovators to turn those ideas into a reality using a start-up incubator and "processes for patents and copyright are streamlined" in an effort to boost innovation.<sup>109</sup> As explained above, and affirmed by Punit, lack of funding, support or awareness of processes is often an obstacle to participation for young people. As Punit put it, "young people have ideas numerous times but never make them a reality."<sup>110</sup>

9.6.2 We have explained above the value of the Government of Pakistan's Ten Billion Trees Tsumani<sup>111</sup> initiative at a local level in Pakistan. Sughra explained that the initiative had "gained a lot of traction from the youth, the older

## 9.7 National Fellowships and Initiatives

9.7.1 According to Jonah Messenger, there are a number of fellowships or programmes in the United States that seek to facilitate innovative and forward thinking climate change solutions. These include the Activate Fellowship<sup>113</sup>, the Atlantic Council and Ecologic Institute's Emerging Leaders in Environmental and Energy Policy Fellowship,<sup>114</sup> the Schmidt Science Fellowship,<sup>115</sup> OYW's Lead 2030 Initiative, the Clean Energy Leadership Institute's Fellowship,<sup>116</sup> the US Cleantech University Prize<sup>117</sup> and the Zayed Sustainability Prize.<sup>118</sup> Further details of these initiatives are included in the table of initiatives at Annex 2. Jonah explained that what these programmes get right is that "they identify leaders and those with leadership capacity, and they provide immense resources, connections and opportunities to enable great ideas to become impactful solutions... In general, the funding is non-dilutive, the frameworks are flexible, and additional opportunities are abundant."<sup>119</sup> Jonah's view is that these programmes should be highlighted and widely replicated.<sup>120</sup>

9.7.2 Aisling also mentioned a number of helpful national initiatives in her submission, these include: (i) Green Schools,<sup>121</sup> an environmental education programme that encourages long-term positive environmental action (something that Jennifer mentioned was essential in her submission referred to above); (ii) Climate Ireland Portal,<sup>122</sup> a website providing information, advice and support on climate adaption in Ireland alongside up to date information on Ireland's climate; (iii) the Climate Ready Programme,<sup>123</sup> a five-year national climate upskilling initiative for Irish businesses; and (iv) the Climate Jargon Buster<sup>124</sup> website, designed to explain common climate action terms in an accessible manner.<sup>125</sup>

<sup>100</sup> Ibid

<sup>101</sup> Table of Initiatives, Annex 2, pg. A2.6

<sup>102</sup> Submission of Aisling McCaffrey, Annex 4, pg. A4.2-3

<sup>103</sup> Ibid

<sup>104</sup> Table of Initiatives, Annex 2, pg. A2.3

<sup>105</sup> Submission of Neeshad Shafi, Annex 4, pg. A4.32

<sup>106</sup> Submission of Punit Girdhar, Annex 4, pg. A4.34-35

<sup>107</sup> Ibid

<sup>108</sup> Ibid

<sup>109</sup> Ibid

<sup>110</sup> Ibid

<sup>111</sup> Table of Initiatives, Annex 2, pg. A2.2

<sup>112</sup> Inquiry Panel Session on 19 October 2021, Sughra Shah Bukari

<sup>113</sup> Table of Initiatives, Annex 2, pg. A2.3

<sup>114</sup> Table of Initiatives, Annex 2, pg. A2.5

<sup>115</sup> Table of Initiatives, Annex 2, pg. A2.8

<sup>116</sup> Table of Initiatives, Annex 2, pg. A2.4

<sup>117</sup> Table of Initiatives, Annex 2, pg. A2.8

<sup>118</sup> Table of Initiatives, Annex 2, pg. A2.9

<sup>119</sup> Submission of Jonah Messenger, Annex 4, pg. A4.14-15

<sup>120</sup> Ibid

<sup>121</sup> Table of Initiatives, Annex 2, pg. A2.5

<sup>122</sup> Table of Initiatives, Annex 2, pg. A2.4

<sup>123</sup> Ibid

<sup>124</sup> Ibid

<sup>125</sup> Submission of Aisling McCaffrey, Annex 4, pg. A4.2-3







# 10. Global Issues and Initiatives

## 10.1 Failure to meet targets

- 10.1.1 In 2015, COP21 was held in Paris and, during the conference, 196 countries signed up to an ambitious set of targets set out in the Paris Agreement. The Paris Agreement is a legally binding international treaty on climate change. The purpose was to limit global warming to well below 2, and preferably 1.5 degrees Celsius, compared to pre-industrial levels. The Paris Agreement works on a five-year cycle, each cycle setting increasingly ambitious climate action goals. Last year, the signatories to the Paris Agreement were required to submit their plans for climate action, these are the NDCs referred to in Section 7 above. NDCs set out the actions that countries will take to reduce their Greenhouse Gas emissions in order to reach the goals set out in the Paris Agreement, they also set out the actions that countries intend to take to build resilience to adapt to the impact of rising temperatures.<sup>126</sup>
- 10.1.2 Importantly, the Paris Agreement includes a framework for financial, technical and capacity building support to those countries who need it. A recurring theme in the evidence heard by the Inquiry was the importance of economic development in reducing climate risk and the notion of “differentiated responsibility” in relation to climate finance.<sup>127</sup> Climate finance is essential for climate adaptation and mitigation and the Paris Agreement affirms that developed countries must provide financial assistance to vulnerable or less economically developed countries. Despite this, the global community has not met the climate finance obligations set out in the Paris Agreement.<sup>128</sup> Contributors expressed concern regarding the apparent misallocation of climate finance funds: Jonah Messinger directed the Panellists towards statistics indicating that, as of 2018, only 20% of this climate finance funding is set to be allocated to climate adaptation.<sup>129</sup> He noted during the Panel Session that, “[the goal of USD 100 billion] is actually a totally insignificant number when you look at what it is actually going to cost for those economically developing countries to ramp up.”<sup>130</sup> According to statistics identified by Jonah, the UN Environment Program projects that annual climate adaptation in developing nations cost USD 70 billion in 2020 and this cost will reach USD 280 to 500 billion in 2050.<sup>131</sup>
- 10.1.3 It is clear from evidence taken during the Inquiry that Contributors from both the Global North and Global South agree that wealthy countries should be taking the lead on climate finance, innovation and adaptation.<sup>132</sup> Indeed, evidence highlighted that the countries that are the most severely impacted by climate change are the ones that contribute least to carbon emissions. José Daniel, giving evidence on behalf of Honduras, affirmed that his country is “at the forefront of the impacts of climate change while being one of the least responsible for it, as Honduras contributes less than 0.05% of global emissions.”<sup>133</sup>

## 10.2 Language and participation

- 10.2.1 Contributors from Qatar and Puerto Rico impressed upon the Panel that it is essential that individuals from the Global North do not speak for their counterparts in less developed countries: “do not speak on our behalf as our stories are not like yours. We have our own stories of success, our own stories of advocacy, our own stories of grassroots work.”<sup>134</sup> It was evident during the Panel Sessions that Contributors from the Global South feel excluded from the conversation and feel that their interests are not properly represented. Amira Odeh told the Panel that “as long as the Global North are the ones making the most decisions and being backed by the corporations that are causing this crisis, and the Global North at the same time not experiencing the same level of climate disaster as I am experiencing... no real action will be taken”.<sup>135</sup> This issue was emotively described by Kim Brink as “climate apartheid”, with a small handful of people having the power to change the lives of the majority.<sup>136</sup> Kim explained to the Panel, “the softest voices are the ones that must be included the most, we need those voices to shape the mainstream because without that it is a race for the few.”<sup>137</sup> Neeshad Shafi shared this sentiment, noting that although Qatar is experiencing extreme weather events, and is seriously at risk from climate change, the “youth climate movement is whitewashed” and “the youth are totally out of the conversation in the Global South.”<sup>138</sup> As discussed earlier in the Report, global conversations around climate change are generally conducted in English, creating a further barrier to participation for representatives of the Global South.

## 10.3 The role of business

- 10.3.1 It was apparent from the evidence presented during the Inquiry that businesses have a significant role to play in climate mitigation and adaptation. A number of our Contributors were conscious that they are the work force of the future and that they wanted to align their aspiration for a greener world with their careers and consumer choices. Various Contributors noted the powerful political influence of multinational corporations;<sup>139</sup> their power to act as leaders in developing nations by introducing global sustainability frameworks and policies<sup>140</sup> and their ability to influence markets and consumer habits.<sup>141</sup> Corporate power can be wielded to good effect, and Jennifer Griggs believes “strategic partnerships with influential brands across business, fashion, sport and music... are key to engaging the youth of today.”<sup>142</sup> Conversely, Joseph Tsonga noted the detrimental influence of multinational corporations in his community, which is beset by violence and conflict. Joseph explained to the Panel that, in the West of the DRC, multinational companies are responsible for deforestation: “this is a political issue because political authorities need the money and so they collaborate at a local level.”<sup>143</sup> Similarly, Jennifer noted the role that businesses can play in dis-incentivising a workforce from climate activism by having “limited tolerance of, let alone support for, those who challenge the status quo.”<sup>144</sup> That said,

Contributors also noted that young people form valuable human capital within organisations and business leaders generally want to retain their young workforce. According to Jennifer, her company, Credit Suisse, is aware of this risk. Having lost its Energy team to an energy transition focused fund, it has sought to combat this threat by reorganising and hiring a number of people *“who have really strong, genuinely strong, sustainability credentials high up in powerful positions... putting sustainability a bit more front and centre.”*<sup>145</sup>

- 10.3.2 A few of the Contributors' evidence set out the experiences that they have had seeking to make a change from within corporate structures. Notable amongst these was the testimony of Aisling McCaffrey, Jennifer Griggs, Kim Brink and Punit Girdhar. Aisling's evidence affirmed the power of effective storytelling.<sup>146</sup> For young people within organisations and businesses, the challenge of how best to make their voices heard by decision-makers within their organisation is as stark as it is for youth seeking to make their voices heard by local and national decision-makers. Aisling explained that constructing a compelling narrative is critical both when explaining issues to decision-makers within her organisation and to clients: *“Can we articulate [sustainability] in a way that it makes sense to someone and it is mainstream? And it's not, you know, something nice to do for a pat on the back.”*<sup>147</sup> From a financial services perspective, it is important to change the way that people think about sustainability related investments, make them more 'mainstream' and ensure that they bring a return.<sup>148</sup> Many companies still regard ESG targets as a tick box exercise for their financial statements rather than an essential element of their corporate governance.<sup>149</sup> Until this perspective changes, compensation for jobs in sustainability is likely to remain less attractive than many conventional career paths.<sup>150</sup> Jennifer noted that this inequity is *“hardly surprising, because the value of sustainability is not yet fully priced into any part of the economic system”* but that she is aware of discussions around *“rewarding companies for sustainable behaviour beyond the remit of just profit and punishing them for unsustainable practices.”*<sup>151</sup> Jennifer highlighted the active role that young leaders can take in the transition to a more sustainable economy: *“oil and gas exposure or energy produced from oil and gas is, in some places, still cheaper than energy produced from renewable sources... Youth have a major role to play in combatting both of those problems, both in terms of making the sustainable option the more economical option by [developing] technologies that make renewables more economical... and introducing better carbon tax systems across the globe.”*<sup>152</sup>

- 10.3.3 The huge global diversity of evidence received by the Inquiry makes it abundantly clear that climate change has no borders. Contributors highlighted the opportunities our connectivity presents for collaboration, knowledge sharing and increased political cooperation: *“sentiments are changing around the power of the individual which is evident by the unified chorus from individual voices around the world. Technology and increased connectedness on social*

*platforms are changing how we access, demand and challenge information.”*<sup>153</sup> This is particularly true in light of what has been achieved by the global community battling Covid-19. As Kim stated, *“hopefulness breeds purposeful movement”* and, in the run up to COP26, there is much to be hopeful about.<sup>154</sup>

#### 10.4 Initiatives proposed by Contributors

- 10.4.1 As Aisling set out in her submission, one of the most successful global climate initiatives in recent times has been Fridays for Future,<sup>155</sup> the youth-led and organised global climate strike movement originally started by Greta Thunberg. Statistics identified by Aisling indicate that, *“since it began in 2018, over 15million people have participated in climate strikes across the globe”*.<sup>156</sup>
- 10.4.2 The concept of youth enfranchisement has slowly been gaining traction in more formal spheres, with an increasing number of global bodies setting up dedicated youth 'wings' or initiatives so as- in theory- to facilitate greater youth engagement in decision-making. By way of example, the UN founded the Young SDG Innovators Programme,<sup>157</sup> which has been a *“great success”* for large corporations that want to be part of the change.<sup>158</sup> The Programme facilitates successful young leaders to *“make a tangible difference in internationally- operating financial institutions; logistics; manufacturing and even some of South Africa's biggest mining corporations.”*<sup>159</sup> The UN has also founded its Youth Advisory Group,<sup>160</sup> although the group's ability to influence

<sup>126</sup> [The Paris Agreement | UNFCCC](#)

<sup>127</sup> Inquiry Panel Session on 19 October 2021, Jonah Messenger, Sughra Shah Bukhari, José Daniel Madrigal, Kehkashan Basu.

<sup>128</sup> Submission of Jonah Messenger, Annex 4, pg. A4.14-15

<sup>129</sup> Ibid

<sup>130</sup> Inquiry Panel Session on 19 October 2021

<sup>131</sup> Submission of Jonah Messenger, Annex 4, pg. A4.14-15

<sup>132</sup> Inquiry Panel Session on 19 October 2021, Jonah Messenger

<sup>133</sup> Inquiry Panel Session on 21 October 2021, José Daniel Madrigal

<sup>134</sup> Inquiry Panel Session on 19 October 2021, Neeshad Shafi

<sup>135</sup> Inquiry Panel Session on 21 October 2021, Amira Odeh

<sup>136</sup> Inquiry Panel Session on 19 October 2021, Kim Brink

<sup>137</sup> Ibid

<sup>138</sup> Inquiry Panel Session on 19 October 2021, Neeshad Shafi

<sup>139</sup> Inquiry Panel Session on 19 October 2021, Joseph Tsonga

<sup>140</sup> Inquiry Panel Session on 21 October 2021, Punit Girdhar

<sup>141</sup> Submission of Aisling McCaffrey, Annex 4, pg. A4.2-3

<sup>142</sup> Submission of Jennifer Griggs, Annex 4, pg. A4.11-13

<sup>143</sup> Inquiry Panel Session on 19 October 2021, Joseph Tsonga

<sup>144</sup> Submission of Jennifer Griggs, Annex 4, pg. A4.11-13

<sup>145</sup> Inquiry Panel Session on 19 October 2021, Jennifer Griggs

<sup>146</sup> Inquiry Panel Session on 21 October 2021, Aisling McCaffrey

<sup>147</sup> Ibid

<sup>148</sup> Ibid

<sup>149</sup> Ibid

<sup>150</sup> Submission of Jennifer Griggs, Annex 4, pg. A4.11-13

<sup>151</sup> Ibid and Inquiry Panel Session on 19 October 2021, Jennifer Griggs

<sup>152</sup> Inquiry Panel Session on 19 October 2021, Jennifer Griggs

<sup>153</sup> Inquiry Panel Session on 19 October 2021, Kim Brink

<sup>154</sup> Submission of Kim Brink, Annex 4, pg. A4.24-25

<sup>155</sup> Table of Initiatives, Annex 2, pg. A2.10

<sup>156</sup> Submission of Aisling McCaffrey, Annex 4, pg. A4.2-3

<sup>157</sup> Table of Initiatives, Annex 2, pg. A2.12

<sup>158</sup> Submission of Kim Brink, Annex 4, pg. A4.24-25



stakeholders appears limited and, as Jonah has noted, *"it is not enough to have these talented leaders on panels; they must be in negotiations where policy agreements are crafted."*<sup>161</sup> As noted in relation to the national programmes above, young people participating in these programmes and advisory groups still lack the power to hold decision-makers to account, even if their voices are, notionally, being heard.

- 10.4.3 Contributors praised OYW<sup>162</sup> and the support it provides to global youth leaders, both in making their voices heard and promoting their ideas and initiatives on the world stage. Each year, OYW holds a global youth summit. Its global youth ambassadors (many of whom were Contributors to this Inquiry) are introduced to business leaders, philanthropists and entrepreneurs who provide motivation and guidance as to how best to achieve their ambitious goals. The summit provides a valuable forum for collaboration enabling leaders to *"share their knowledge with other leaders from other countries and transfer technologies related to the environment."*<sup>163</sup> By way of example, last year, in conjunction with the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, Ikea Foundation, United Way and the Zurich Foundation, OYW launched the Covid Young Leaders Fund which identified and supported 39 projects put forward by its global Ambassadors to bring about meaningful change in their communities. OYW calculated that the projects directly impacted 630,000 people and each project was awarded between USD 5,000- 20,000.<sup>164</sup>
- 10.4.4 A number of submissions suggested that we need a global framework for youth enfranchisement and for tackling climate change. Paul Polman, one of our expert Panellists, asked our Contributors to consider what this might look like and how it could be implemented. In response to this question, Jonah Messinger asserted that a number of the frameworks already exist, but that we need to find a way to use them more effectively.<sup>165</sup> In addition, Kim Brink's evidence highlighted the value of the existing UN SDG framework which *"has created the perfect roadmap for investment into our future ahead of and beyond 2030, allowing public and private entities, and individuals, to dissect sustainability into clear, transparent objectives with metrics, targets and goals that are achievable."*<sup>166</sup>
- 10.4.5 As we have seen above, both local and national initiatives have the power to bring about huge change. Similarly, businesses can hugely impact their local, national and global communities. Kim Brink heralds the valuable impact that FinBiz2030 South Africa's SDG13 Taskforce<sup>167</sup> has had *"enabling young finance and business professionals to make meaningful short- and long-term- effects by partnering with existing organisations to find real solutions to South African- and global- issues."* She notes that *"this partnership with Chartered Accountants Worldwide is a critical one: educating accounting and business professionals to make*

*meaningful impact at the nucleus of the organisation, where key decisions are made"* and that this *"has the potential to create a ripple throughout the industry"*.

- 10.4.6 Punit Girdhar describes the power of other initiatives to have ripple effects, noting that multinational corporations implementing a global company policy can bring about far-reaching change.<sup>168</sup> The Contributors are taking the lead in bringing about this change. In Ireland, Aisling has been appointed to coordinate a Global Working Group at Chartered Accountants<sup>169</sup> to develop baseline sustainability training for member firms across the company network, working alongside colleagues in Sweden, the US, Israel, Australia and South Africa.<sup>170</sup> For Punit, who works in the healthcare industry, his company is taking on small initiatives that benefit nature but are also seeking partnerships with NGOs that dedicate their time to sustainability issues and in India more broadly, multinational organisations have been using corporate social responsibility funds to purchase government-owned land in order to grow plants and reduce their carbon footprint.<sup>171</sup>
- 10.4.7 Jennifer Griggs noted that she still hears comments warning against becoming *"too active"* in the space *"lest people spend too much time away from revenue generating activities or, worse still, threat their company's fossil-fuel related business lines."*<sup>172</sup> However, some businesses are making efforts to combat this perception of ESG initiatives for example, with the introduction of 'Karma points'<sup>173</sup> for companies in India. Punit explained the concept of 'karma points' to the Panel, the idea being that you get rewarded for taking part in ESG related activities by your company. The 'karma points' earned by employees can be donated to the charity or organisation of their choice.<sup>174</sup> In this way, people feel that they receive a tangible reward for participating in ESG schemes at work.

<sup>159</sup> Ibid

<sup>160</sup> Table of Initiatives, Annex 2, pg. A2.12

<sup>161</sup> Submission of Jonah Messinger, Annex 4, pg. A4.14-15

<sup>162</sup> Table of Initiatives, Annex 2, pg. A2.11

<sup>163</sup> Submission of Punit Girdhar, Annex 4, pg. A4.34-35

<sup>164</sup> [Young Leaders fund | Covid 19 the global Pandemic \(oneyoungworld.com\)](https://www.oneyoungworld.com/young-leaders-fund-covid-19-the-global-pandemic)

<sup>165</sup> Inquiry Panel Session on 19 October 2021, Jonah Messinger

<sup>166</sup> Submission of Kim Brink, Annex 4, pg. A4.24-25

<sup>167</sup> Table of Initiatives, Annex 2, pg. A2.10

<sup>168</sup> Inquiry Panel Session on 21 October 2021, Punit Girdhar

<sup>169</sup> Table of Initiatives, Annex 2, pg. A2.10

<sup>170</sup> Submission of Aisling McCaffrey, Annex 4, pg. A4.2-3

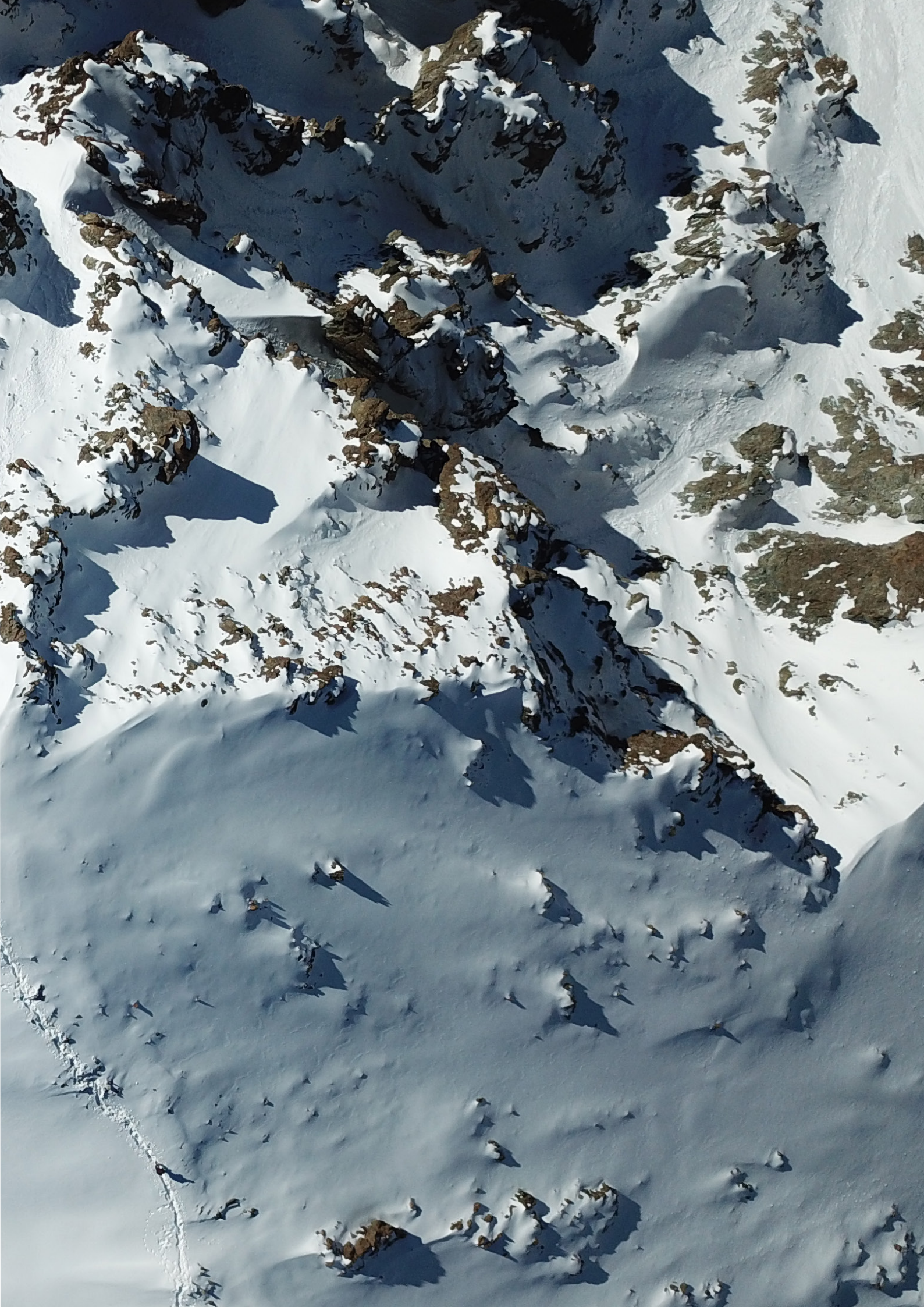
<sup>171</sup> Submission of Punit Girdhar, Annex 4, pg. A4.34-35

<sup>172</sup> Submission of Jennifer Griggs, Annex 4, pg. A4.11-13

<sup>173</sup> Table of Initiatives, Annex 2, pg. A2.11

<sup>174</sup> Inquiry Panel Session on 21 October 2021, Punit Girdhar







# 11. Conclusion

- 11.1 The extent, both in terms of detail and global breadth, of evidence received by the Inquiry is indicative of the level of youth engagement in the climate crisis. Young people are aware that the time to act is now and many reported a feeling of anxiety at the significant burden this places on the shoulders of their generation.<sup>175</sup> This sense of urgency was conveyed to the Panel by José Daniel Madrigal, who explained that if Honduras waits to take action until it receives climate finance, especially with the state of the current economy, it is going to be too late for “so many people”, as a number of Hondurans are “already migrating towards the North.”<sup>176</sup>
- 11.2 According to statistics identified by Jennifer Griggs, “a recent Bath University [global] study showed that nearly 60% of young people felt “worried or extremely worried” by climate change.” There is, however, reason to believe that this message of concern and urgency is filtering through. John Elkington, one of the Inquiry’s expert Panellists spoke to the Contributors of his experience: “One of the things that really strikes me at the moment is the CEOs and business leaders that we are working with, one thing they are consistently saying is that they are getting it in the neck from younger people. They are getting it from their family at the breakfast table, they are getting it from interns, they are getting it from people that they are trying to recruit.” He went on to reassure the Contributors not to “imagine your voices are not being heard... it takes a while to break through but I do think that it is happening.”<sup>177</sup>
- 11.3 The concept of ‘educating-up’ is addressed earlier in the Report. By way of example, Aisling advocated for the power of a compelling narrative when seeking buy-in from her colleagues and clients.<sup>178</sup> It is also striking, from the evidence received, the extent to which young people are generating transformative ideas to generate climate action. This energy and skill can, and should, be captured. For example, Sughra suggested that youth engagement could be accomplished by governments assigning “district champions who run awareness campaigns and mobilise people across all age groups to take part in community-improvement plans” and that “incentive schemes could be set up to ensure participation from all strata of the community-not only the privileged.”<sup>179</sup>
- 11.4 However, it is also evident that there is – as José Daniel put it – no “magic wand”.<sup>180</sup> Countries must work together and learn from each other. Aisling concluded that, in her opinion, generating and facilitating conversation is the most important tool in bringing about change. She explained that bringing people together, and connecting people who are one step removed from one another’s problems, enables them to assess whether there is “anything in [their] arsenal that can help with [someone else’s] situation.”<sup>181</sup> Kehkashan Basu affirmed that there is no “one size fits all approach”<sup>182</sup>, and Kim Brink explained, “We need to recognise that different contexts call for different approaches. While some communities are not bound to certain locations, others are completely isolated. This is where we need to

*focus our attention: on mobilising and enfranchising youth- and all individuals- by investing in initiatives that may not fit into a global, generic narrative.”*<sup>183</sup> This idea of international investment in local initiatives, tailored to the needs of specific communities, was a significant feature of the evidence received during the Inquiry.

- 11.5 Neeshad neatly distilled what is required in his submission, stating that: “Ensuring that young people are actively engaged in strategies and initiatives is fundamental in building active participation and in creating programmes that fully reflect the needs and concerns of youth. Fostering this climate of engagement and participation is dependent upon the creation and implementation of effective and tailored programmes and projects. [These projects] should have specific, targeted policy goals beyond simply ‘improving the engagement of young people.’” He explains, “projects should be structured to achieve realistic outcomes, such as increasing the influence of young people within a particular institution; increasing youth access rates to a particular online tool or platform; or encouraging the use of particular open datasets by youth groups and young citizens.”<sup>184</sup>
- 11.6 Clearly, global youth will be critical in adapting to and mitigating the current climate crisis. Not only are they the next generation of entrepreneurs, scientists and leaders, but they have the energy, passion and ideas to bring about swift and meaningful change. It is in all of our interests that we harness that energy, knowledge and power.
- 11.7 Indeed, as the proverb proffered by our expert Panellist, Paul Polman, goes:

*“Alone you might be able to go fast, but together you are going far.”*

<sup>175</sup> Submissions of Jennifer Griggs, Aisling McCaffrey, Kim Brink, Paula Sleiman

<sup>176</sup> Panel Session on 21 October 2021, José Daniel Madrigal

<sup>177</sup> Panel Session on 19 October 2021, John Elkington

<sup>178</sup> Panel Session on 21 October 2021, Aisling McCaffrey

<sup>179</sup> Submission of Sughra Shah Bukhari, Annex 4, pg. A4.38

<sup>180</sup> Panel Session on 21 October 2021, José Daniel Madrigal

<sup>181</sup> Panel Session on 19 October 2021, Aisling McCaffrey

<sup>182</sup> Panel Session on 21 October 2021, Kehkashan Basu

<sup>183</sup> Submission of Kim Brink, Annex 4, pg. A4.24-25

<sup>184</sup> Submission of Neeshad Shafi, Annex 4, pg. A4.32





# ANNEX

## I-4

# Global youth are the generation most impacted by climate change yet they are the least enfranchised.

Mishcon de Reya LLP (Mishcon), in collaboration with One Young World and the Democracy and Culture Foundation, is holding a Global Youth Inquiry to hear evidence from global youth leaders on how climate change is impacting them and to understand how they can be better enfranchised in decisionmaking and action taking.

The purpose of the Inquiry is to provide global youth leaders with an opportunity to engage with decision-makers and prominent climate activists and to provide a platform through which they can present their concerns and ideas during the UN Climate Change Conference of the Parties (COP26) in November 2021.

One Young World has identified a list of exceptional and talented global youth leaders to take part in the Inquiry. We hope to receive responses to this Call for Evidence from youth leaders from a range of nations with details of the climate issues that they perceive to be most relevant to their communities. The Inquiry will also consider the respondents' proposed solutions or observations as to what does and does not work well from grassroots activism to actions taken at a national or global level. We have set out a list of questions, in the Call for Evidence section below, for respondents to consider when preparing their submissions.

A final report, collating findings of the panel and the submissions, will be presented to the COP26 delegates at a high-profile event in Glasgow on 11 November 2021.

## Background to the Global Youth Inquiry

On 1 – 12 November 2021, the UK will host COP26 in Glasgow. COP26 is the most important global summit on the most pressing global issue of our times. COP26 will bring together national delegations in an effort to accelerate action towards the goals of the Paris Agreement and the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change. It will be the focus of public, global attention, as the decisions made by the parties will determine the future of our climate – and therefore the quality of life for the future of mankind.

The Scottish Government is keen to ensure that COP26 is “*the People's COP*”, and in particular that it includes representation and participation from the youth, who are the largest stakeholders in the decisions made this November. We believe that youth representation is fundamental to a meaningful legacy.

The Inquiry is modelled on an all-party Parliamentary inquiry and will receive written submissions from around 30 youth leader representatives from all regions of the world. Youth leaders have been identified for this purpose by One Young World, a global forum that promotes and connects the world's most impactful young leaders.

Whilst the Inquiry will have no official powers, it will be apolitical and independent. The Inquiry aims to provide a platform for a representative group of global youth to give evidence to decisionmakers using a robust, tried, tested and recognised methodology.

The Inquiry will facilitate an open evaluation, in the context of the international COP26 meeting, of evidence submitted by global youth on the impacts of climate change on them and their communities and their enfranchisement in decision-making and action to mitigate and adapt to climate change. The key outputs will be:

- Written submissions: whereby a representative group of youth leaders, drawn from a diverse group of member states, will provide evidence and testimonials. These will be published and appended to the report detailed below;
- Oral sessions: there will be a live or virtual inquiry process in which a representative group of those who have submitted written submissions will present their evidence to a panel; and
- The Report: summarising the findings of the Inquiry panel and their recommendations. A copy of the final Report will be presented at COP26.



Although the Inquiry will have no legal force, it is intended to be a high profile event drawing international focus to the evidence of the impact of climate change on global youth today and the extent to which they are enfranchised in taking action to address climate change. The success of the Inquiry to a large extent will result from the diversity and quality of the submissions which are made and the profile of individuals and parties involved.

### Timetable

8 September 2021	Call for Evidence questions issued
29 September 2021	Deadline for responses to Call for Evidence
w/c 18 October 2021	Inquiry panel events – we expect that this will take place virtually, however, if convenient for panel members and respondents there may be an opportunity for an in person event.
w/c 25 October 2021	Inquiry panel presents its findings
11 November 2021	The Report will be presented to the COP26 delegates at a high-profile event, taking place in Glasgow.

### Call for Evidence

#### Part 1 – Impact of Climate Change on youth

1. What impact is climate change having on you personally, on your peers and community?

In answering this question, you may wish to consider:

- Both the direct and the indirect impacts of local, regional and global climate change;
- Whether youth are differently impacted by climate change from older generations and if so, how;

- What you perceive to be the greatest threat to your community as a result of climate change;
- The current impacts of the perceived threats of future climate change; and
- Whether your community and/or your national government has implemented any initiatives to combat this threat.

#### Part 2 – Enfranchisement of youth in mitigation and adaptation

2. To what extent are young people able to make their views on climate change heard to local, national and international decision-makers, or hold them to account for the decisions they make on adaptation and mitigation measures?

In answering this question, you may wish to consider:

- What structures and processes are in place that enable young people to participate, and how effective these are;
- What obstacles young people face in participating and how these could be overcome; and
- What advantages greater youth enfranchisement would bring to understanding and action to mitigate and adapt to climate change at a local, regional and global level.

3. What global initiatives, national initiatives or local initiatives have, in your opinion, been most successful in engaging young people in efforts to tackle climate change and what aspects of these initiatives have been key to their success?

Please send your submissions, by no later than Wednesday 29 September 2021 to [alexandra.agnew@mishcon.com](mailto:alexandra.agnew@mishcon.com). We suggest that submissions should be between 1500- 2000 words long.

Please do not hesitate to get in touch if you have any questions regarding the process of the Inquiry or the questions set out in the Call for Evidence. We have a dedicated team who would be happy to provide guidance as to how best to prepare your submission.



# Table of Initiatives

The table below is comprised of the initiatives referred to by Contributors in their written and oral evidence. Each initiative was identified as valuable by a Contributor; however, we have highlighted those that particularly address the issue of **youth enfranchisement** as this is the primary focus of the Report.

Initiative	Location	Type	Target audience	Description
<b>Local Initiatives</b>				
BRAC <a href="#">BRAC: Creating opportunities for people to realise potential</a>	Bangladesh	NGO	Local Communities	Analysing the causes of climate migration and funding projects to protect livelihoods in areas affected by climate change (e.g. providing funding to raise houses above flood levels).  Referred to during a Panel Session by <b>Redwan Rehman</b> .
Green Hope Foundation ("GHF") <a href="#">About Us – GreenHopeFoundation</a>	Global	Youth-led Not for Profit Organisation	Local, National and Global Communities and Decision-Makers	A global social innovation enterprise that combines grassroots action with advocacy at the highest levels of policy-making in an effort to create a just, equitable, peaceful and nuclear-weapons-free world. The anthropogenic impacts of climate change and biodiversity loss disproportionately affect regions and communities least responsible for it – amongst them young people, the old and the infirm, women and girls, indigenous communities – most of whom are from the Global South. GHF's actions are driven through a human and planetary lens, built on the pillars of multilateralism, collaboration and intergenerational solidarity. GHF focuses on climate justice, social upliftment, land degradation, clean water & sanitation, sustainable consumption and production, peace and nuclear disarmament, gender equality, biodiversity conservation, clean energy, future justice and rebuilding better through the creation of local circular economies.  Founded by Contributor, <b>Kehkashan Basu</b> and referred to by her during a Panel Session.
National Disaster Management Bureau <a href="#">Department Of Disaster Management</a>	Bangladesh	Government of Bangladesh, with support from the World Bank	Local Communities	The National Disaster Management Bureau has developed a mechanism for early weather warnings, crisis management and post-crisis rehabilitation (including education provision).  Referred to in <b>Redwan Rehman's</b> submission



Initiative	Location	Type	Target audience	Description
Nature clubs and Tree Plantation programmes	Bangladesh	Local Communities	Local Communities, Children and Youth	<p>Focussing on climate education and tree planting – these outreach programmes help to engage and educate children at a local level.</p> <p>Referred to during a Panel Session by <b>Redwan Rehman</b>.</p>
One Child = One Tree <a href="#">“One child = one tree” project linking education and conservation in DR Congo — Youth4Nature</a>	Democratic Republic of Congo	Youth-led Not for Profit Organisation	Local Schoolchildren	<p>The idea is that each schoolchild plants and adopts a tree that they then continue to care for throughout their education. The schoolchildren plant all sorts of different trees: acacias, coffee bushes, avocado trees and mango trees.</p> <p>Founded by Contributor <b>Joseph Tsongo</b> and referred to by him during a Panel Session. Joseph noted that deforestation is a big problem where he lives but that if everyone got involved in the project then there would be thousands of trees planted each year.</p>
Pacific Islands Students Fighting Climate Change (“PISFCC”) <a href="#">Pacific Islands Students Fighting Climate Change   Seeking an Advisory Opinion from the ICJ (pisfcc.org)</a>	Pacific Islands	Grassroots Youth Network	Pacific Island Students	<p>One of PISFCC's campaign aims is to obtain an Advisory Opinion from the International Court of Justice in the Hague on climate change and human rights, its other aim is to educate young people on the rising impacts of climate change in their communities and how climate change affects individual rights. PISFCC engages young people in tree planting and mangrove planting as well as hosting seminars on the issue of climate change.</p> <p>Referred to in <b>Belyndar Rikimani's</b> submission.</p>
10 Billion Trees Tsunami <a href="#">Ministry of Climate Change (mocc.gov.pk)</a>	Pakistan	Government of Pakistan The project is being implemented across Pakistan by the Ministry of Climate Change along with the Provincial and Territorial Forest and Wildlife Departments.	The People of Pakistan	<p>The Government of Pakistan implemented the Ten Billion Trees Tsunami programme in partnership with the UN Environment Programme. The project aims to plant ten billion trees by 2023. It has recently planted its billionth tree.</p> <p>The overall objective is to revive forest and wildlife resources in Pakistan, to improve the overall conservation of the existing Protected Areas, and to encourage eco-tourism, community engagement and job creation through conservation.</p> <p><b>Sughra Bukhari</b> praised the simplicity of the initiative in her submission. She identified this as a key to the initiative's success, noting that this enabled it to inspire participation across Pakistan from people from all walks of life (including the Prime Minister).</p>

Initiative	Location	Type	Target audience	Description
<b>National Initiatives</b>				
The Activate Fellowship <a href="#">Activate Fellowship for Entrepreneurial Scientists &amp; Engineers – Career Advising &amp; Professional Development   MIT</a>	United States of America	Massachusetts Institute of Technology	Scientists	<p>The Activate Fellowship empowers scientists to reinvent the world by bringing their research to market. The two-year fellowship provides the most promising science entrepreneurs with the funding, technical support, networking, community and time they need at the outset of their entrepreneurial journey.</p> <p>Of the 74 companies they have supported, 96% are still active and those companies have gone on to raise USD 330m in outside funding.</p> <p>Recommended by <b>Jonah Messinger</b> in his submission on the basis that it identifies individuals with novel and exciting scientific ideas relating to climate change. The Fellowship offers direct funding as well as links to other forms of funding, professional networks and national laboratories.</p>
<a href="#">The African Forest Landscape Restoration Initiative ("AFRI00")</a>	Africa	AFRI00 is an international partnership between African nations and financial and technical partner organisations (e.g. UNESCO and the World Bank).	African Nations	<p>AFRI00 is a country-led effort to bring 100 million hectares of land in Africa into restoration by 2030. It aims to accelerate restoration to enhance food security, increase climate change resilience and mitigation and combat rural poverty.</p> <p>— After six years of political commitment and targeted implementation, AFRI00 is launching its second phase in 2022 with a major influx of financial commitments.</p> <p>Referred to in <b>Joseph Tsongo's</b> submission.</p>
Arab Youth Climate Movement <a href="#">AYCM Qatar, Arab Youth Climate Movement Qatar</a>	Qatar	Grassroots, Youth-led Not for Profit Organisation	Local Communities, Youth	<p>The AYCMQ recognises the importance of engaging youth by creating and implementing effective and tailored programmes and projects. Projects should have specific, targeted, policy goals such as increasing the influence of young people within a specific institution, or increasing access rates to a particular online tool or platform. Projects include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— Grassroots education and awareness</li> <li>— Capacity development and community building</li> <li>— Policy and advocacy</li> </ul> <p>Founded by Contributor, <b>Neeshad Shafi</b>.</p>



Initiative	Location	Type	Target audience	Description
Clean Energy Leadership Institute's ("CELI") Fellowship  <a href="#">2021 Fellowship — Clean Energy Leadership Institute</a>	US, Global	NGO	Multidisciplinary	<p>The Fellowship creates a diverse community of change-makers across sectors and disciplines to drive an equitable, decarbonized, and resilient energy ecosystem. One of its aims is to equip emerging leaders with the skills and expertise to lead the transition to a clean energy economy.</p> <p>Over the last seven years, CELI has trained over 600 professionals from over 450 organisations through its Fellowship program and an additional 6,000 students and professionals through its clean energy educational and community programming.</p> <p>Recommended by <b>Jonah Messinger</b> in his submission on the basis that it identifies individuals with novel and exciting scientific ideas relating to climate change. The Fellowship offers direct funding as well as links to other forms of funding, professional networks and national laboratories.</p>
Climate Action Portal  <a href="#">gov.ie - Climate Action (www.gov.ie)</a>	Ireland	Government of Ireland	Everyone	<p>Climate Action Portal is a website providing information. Advice and support on climate adaption in Ireland alongside up to date information</p> <p>Referred to in <b>Aisling McCaffrey's</b> submission.</p>
Climate Jargon Buster  <a href="#">Home - Climate Jargon Buster</a>	Ireland	Government of Ireland	Everyone	<p>The Climate Jargon Buster is a website designed to explain common climate action terms in an accessible way.</p> <p>Referred to in <b>Aisling McCaffrey's</b> submission.</p>
Climate Ready Programme  <a href="#">Climate Ready: Talent for Ireland's Green Economy (skillnetireland.ie)</a>	Ireland	Government of Ireland	Irish Businesses	<p>A five-year national upskilling initiative for Irish businesses.</p> <p>Climate Ready offers leadership and skills support for enterprises who want to develop their operational and strategic sustainability.</p> <p>Referred to in <b>Aisling McCaffrey's</b> submission.</p>

Initiative	Location	Type	Target audience	Description
<p>Emerging Leaders in Environmental and Energy Policy Network ("ELEEP")</p> <p><a href="#">What is ELEEP?   Eleep</a></p>	North America and Europe	NGO	Early and mid-career North American and European leaders working on environmental and energy issues	<p>Launched in 2011 by the Atlantic Council and Ecologic Institute, ELEEP a dynamic, membership-only forum for the exchange of ideas, policy solutions, best-practices and professional development for early and mid-career North American and European leaders working on environmental and energy issues. Since its founding, ELEEP has organized eight study tours, three conferences, and over 200 closed door consultations and meetings between members of the network and leaders in the public, private, and non-profit sectors in Germany, Denmark, Belgium, the Netherlands, Poland, Hungary, France, England, Scotland, and throughout the United States.</p> <p>Referred to in <b>Jonah Messinger's</b> submission.</p>
<p>Green Schools</p> <p><a href="#">Green-Schools – Working together for a sustainable future (greenschoolsireland.org)</a></p>	Ireland	Government of Ireland The programme is operated and coordinated by the Environmental Education Unit of An Taisce (FEE member for Ireland).	Schoolchildren	<p>Green Schools is an environmental education programme that encourages long-term positive environmental action. Green Schools promotes long-term, whole-school action for the environment. It is a student-led programme with involvement from the wider community.</p> <p>Referred to in <b>Aisling McCaffrey's</b> submission.</p>
<p>Honiara Youth Council</p> <p><a href="#">Honiara Youth Council - Honiara City Council</a></p>	Solomon Islands	Honiara City Council	Local Youths	<p>Honiara Youth Council is a voluntary urban youth-led governing body, representing the voice of young people in Honiara City. Its vision is to encourage young people's participation in the development of Honiara City.</p> <p>Referred to in <b>Belyndar Rikimani's</b> submission.</p>
<p>Inter-American Dialogue's Task Force on Climate Change in the Northern Triangle</p> <p><a href="#">Inter-American Dialogue Launches Task Force on Climate Change in the Northern Triangle - The Dialogue</a></p>	El Salvador; Guatemala, Honduras, the United States of America	International Task Force	US Government	<p>The Task Force on Climate Change in the Northern Triangle convenes diverse voices from the region to provide policy recommendations on US assistance for climate change adaptation in the Northern Triangle, with a focus on economic and social equity and climate justice.</p> <p><b>José Daniel Madrigal</b> referred to this initiative during a Panel Session, he is the sole youth representative on the Task Force.</p>

Initiative	Location	Type	Target audience	Description
<p>Oceanmar Project</p> <p><a href="http://oceanmar-project.org">Oceanmar Project - Inicio (oceanmar-project.org)</a></p>	Mexico	Youth-led Not for Profit Organisation	National and Global outreach	<p>Oceanmar seeks to promote environmental awareness by focusing on the care and protection of the ocean, its fauna and flora. Oceanmar wants to identify future marine biologists, oceanographers or simply new ocean lovers.</p> <p>Referred to in <b>Nathalie Aue's</b> submission.</p>
<p>National Dialogue on Climate Action</p> <p><a href="http://www.gov.ie">gov.ie</a> - National Dialogue on Climate Action (NDCA) (<a href="http://www.gov.ie">www.gov.ie</a>)</p>	Ireland	Government of Ireland	Irish Citizens	<p>A forum for collaboration between the Irish Government, citizens, youth, local communities and relevant agencies on climate change.</p> <p>A new structure is current under development following its successful pilot scheme.</p> <p>Referred to in <b>Aisling McCaffrey's</b> submission.</p>
<p>Re-think &amp; Innovate for a Sustainable Environment - mentorship programme</p> <p><a href="http://icccad.org">International Centre for Climate Change and Development (ICCCAD)</a></p>	Bangladesh	The International Centre for Climate Change and Development, Bangladesh	Youth	<p>The programme focuses on providing young people with a grounding in climate science and sustainability issues, as well as mentoring on project design and implementation. As a critical barrier to most initiatives is support (mostly financial and technical), the programme aims to encourage the young people to identify the appropriate assistance and guidance they need to approach key stakeholders (investors/decision-makers, etc.), to propose feasible solutions and to mobilise their peers to make real changes.</p> <p>Referred to in <b>Nayeema Khan's</b> submission.</p>



Initiative	Location	Type	Target audience	Description
<p>Sustenta Honduras ("Sustenta")</p> <p><a href="#">Inicio   Sustenta Honduras (wixsite.com)</a></p>	Honduras	National, Youth-led Not for Profit Organisation	Youth, Youth-led Groups	<p>Sustena focuses on climate empowerment in Honduras (and the wider region). It has achieved several important milestones, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(i) Hosting the first Local Conference of Youth in Honduras;</li> <li>(ii) Being one of the two National Coordinators for Honduras for the Regional Conference of Youth in Latin America and the Caribbean, an initiative which was supported by the United Nations Development Program in Latin America as well as UNICEF and COP26; and</li> <li>(iii) Co-hosting the first climate-related forum with mayoral candidates of Tegucigalpa, asking them what their environmental and climate agenda would be.</li> </ul> <p>Although Sustena is a relatively new organisation, it is now a community of over 400 individuals from all over the country and it recently secured international financial support for two projects related to climate empowerment and adaptation to climate change at the local level.</p> <p>Founded by Contributor <b>José Daniel Madrigal</b> and referred to in his submission.</p>
<p>Youth Agvocates Nigeria ("YAN")</p> <p><a href="#">Youth Agvocates Nigeria - CGIAR Platform for Big Data in Agriculture</a></p>	Nigeria	Local Community Groups	Women and Youth	<p>Focused on sustainably increasing women and youth participation in agriculture in Nigeria, YAN is an advocacy and campaigning organisation working across Nigeria to end hunger and extreme poverty, promote food security and provide decent jobs. It does this by emphasising the significant role that young people can play in promoting the industrialisation of the Nigerian agricultural sector, which recognises and targets women and youth as the major enablers.</p> <p>Referred to in <b>Touloupe Aina's</b> submission.</p>

Initiative	Location	Type	Target audience	Description
Youth Policy Forum ("YPF") <a href="#">Youth Policy Forum - People   Policy   Progress (ypfbd.org)</a>	Bangladesh	Government of Bangladesh	Youth, Government, Non-Government, Global and State-level Policymakers	<p>YPF works with Government Ministers to address policy challenges, reforms and proposals for the Government. In particular, the YPF environmental research team advocate for youth engagement in global climate issues and aim to create a climate resilient Bangladesh.</p> <p>By creating a pool of young intellectual minds, YPF intends to establish a great support system that will help the Government, non-Government, global and state-level policymakers to formulate and adopt more inclusive policies.</p> <p><b>Redwan Rehman</b>, who works on environmental policy at the YPF, referred to the initiative during a Panel Session. He explained that he values the direct access that working for at the YPF grants him to Government Ministers and the opportunity it affords him to work on real policy.</p>
Schmidt Science Fellowship <a href="#">Homepage - Schmidt Science Fellows</a>	United States of America, Global	NGO	Scientists	<p>A philanthropic initiative of Eric and Wendy Schmidt, who pledged USD 25 million for the first three years as part of a broader USD 100 million drive to fund scientific research. The Fellowship aims to develop the next generation of science leaders to transcend disciplines, advance discovery and solve the world's most pressing problems.</p> <p>Recommended by <b>Jonah Messinger</b> in his submission on the basis that it identifies individuals with novel and exciting scientific ideas relating to climate change. The Fellowship offers direct funding as well as links to other forms of funding, professional networks and national laboratories.</p>
U.S. Cleantech University Prize <a href="#">Cleantech University Prize (Cleantech UP)   Department of Energy</a>	United States of America	United States Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy	Students from a specific set of US Colleges/ Institutions	<p>The US Energy Department's Cleantech University Prize aims to inspire and equip the next generation of clean energy entrepreneurs and innovators by providing them with competitive funding for business development and commercialisation training and other educational opportunities. Since the competition started, participants have formed more than 200 ventures, created 120+ jobs, and raised more than USD 120 million in follow-on funding.</p> <p>Recommended by <b>Jonah Messinger</b> in his submission on the basis that it identifies individuals with novel and exciting scientific ideas relating to climate change. The Prize offers direct funding as well as links to other forms of funding, professional networks and national laboratories.</p>

Initiative	Location	Type	Target audience	Description
The White Helmets <a href="#">Support the White Helmets</a>	Syria	Humanitarian, Volunteer-based initiative	Syrians in need	<p>The work of the White Helmets has expanded in response to the needs of the communities it serves. It now provides essential services to millions of people. The White Helmets' work includes fixing electrical grids, maintaining sewage works, clearing rubble from roads, removing unexploded weapons and community education and preparation for future attacks.</p> <p>Contributor <b>Muzna Dureid</b> is currently coordinating a White Helmets project to produce PPE locally in North West Syria and referred to the organisation in her submission.</p>
Zayed Sustainability Prize <a href="#">Zayed Sustainability Prize</a>	United Arab Emirates	H.H. Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan	Entrepreneurs, Scientists, Technocrats, Activists	<p>Established in 2008, this annual award recognises and rewards the achievements of those who are driving impactful, innovative and inspiring sustainability solutions across five distinct categories: Health, Food, Energy, Water and Global High Schools.</p> <p>Over 352 million people have been directly or indirectly impacted by the sustainability solutions and school projects of the 86 recipients of the Prize winners since the first awards ceremony in 2009.</p> <p>Recommended by <b>Jonah Messinger</b> in his submission on the basis that it identifies individuals with novel and exciting scientific ideas relating to climate change. The Prize offers direct funding as well as links to other forms of funding, professional networks and national laboratories.</p>
350.org Pacific <a href="#">350.org – Pacific</a>	The Pacific Islands	Youth-led Grassroots Network	Governments, Local Communities, Youths	<p>350 Pacific focuses on combatting human induced climate change. It has a number of satellite bodies led by young people around the world, providing them with a space to engage and build with each other through advocacy and reform programmes around the world.</p> <p>The organisation enables young people to take on leadership roles. It does not rely on governments to make the changes, but shows governments how they can support young people to implement change. 350 Pacific has been recognised for its leadership ideas and communities have acknowledged that it was vital in influencing change at the decision-making level.</p> <p>Referred to in <b>Belyndar Rikimani's</b> submission.</p>



## Global Initiatives

Employee Network Sustainability Committee, Credit Suisse	UK	Credit Suisse UK	Internal business initiative	<p>A network of sustainability champions across divisions within Credit Suisse who ensure that messages about sustainability are properly disseminated to the company's employees.</p> <p>Referred to in <b>Jennifer Griggs'</b> submission.</p>
<p>FinBiz2030 South Africa's SDG13 Taskforce</p> <p><a href="#">FinBiz2030 South African Task Force Leadership - Chartered Accountants Worldwide</a></p>	South Africa	Chartered Accountants Worldwide	Finance and Business Community	<p>FinBiz2030 has established regional task forces around the world to help mobilise the finance and business community to achieve the SDGs by 2030.</p> <p>In 2020, it launched the South African Regional Task Force. The objective of the regional task force is to support the overall objectives of FinBiz2030 by driving change locally focusing on key priorities in their respective markets.</p> <p>In particular the South African Task Force is focused on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Goal 13: Climate Action- how to address the needs of developing countries to both adapt to climate change and invest in low carbon development.</li> <li>• Goal 10: Reduced Inequality- how to reduce inequality including those based on race, gender, religion, origin and economic status.</li> <li>• Goal 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth- how to promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, productive employment and decent work for all.</li> <li>• Goal 4: Quality Education- how to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all.</li> </ul> <p>Contributor <b>Kim Brink</b> is a member of the Climate Action Team on the Task Force and referred to it in her submission.</p>
<p>Global Climate Working Group</p> <p><a href="#">Welcome   CAS Accountants</a></p>	Ireland	Accountancy firms in CAS Accountants' Network	Employees, CAS Accountants' Network	<p>Global Working Group of Chartered Accountant's international offices working on developing sustainable policies and practices.</p> <p>Referred to in <b>Aisling McCaffrey's</b> submission.</p>
<p>Fridays For Future</p> <p><a href="#">Fridays For Future is an international climate movement active in most countries and our website offers information on who we are and what you can do.</a></p>	Global	Grassroots, Youth-led Movement	Everyone	<p>Fridays for Future is a youth led global climate strike movement and, since it began in 2018, over 15 million people have taken part around the globe.</p> <p>Referred in <b>Aisling McCaffrey's</b> submission</p>

Initiative	Location	Type	Target audience	Description
Karma Points Scheme	India	Business	Employees	<p>Employees are rewarded by their company for taking part in ESG related activities. The 'karma points' earned by employees can be donated to the charity or organisation of the employee's choice.</p> <p>Referred to during a Panel Session by <b>Punit Girhar</b>. Punit explained that, by taking part, people feel that they receive a tangible reward for participating in ESG schemes at work.</p>
One Young World <a href="#">One Young World   Forum For Young Leaders</a>	Global	Not for Profit Organisation	Young Leaders	<p>OYW is a global forum for young leaders. It identifies, connects and promotes young leaders and provides them with a global platform.</p> <p>Each year OYW holds a Summit to introduce young leaders to business leaders, philanthropists and entrepreneurs who provide motivation and guidance as to how best to achieve their ambitious goals.</p> <p>Referred to in <b>Paula Sleiman</b> and <b>Punit Girdhar's</b> submissions and by a number of other Contributors during the Panel Sessions.</p>
UN Conferences of Youth <a href="#">Conference of Youth (COY)   UNFCCC</a> <a href="https://ukcop26.org/pre-cop/youth4climate-2021/">https://ukcop26.org/pre-cop/youth4climate-2021/</a>	Global	United Nations	Youth	<p>The UN organises three types of Conferences of Youth, in an effort to strive for universal accessibility, true inclusion and diversity. These include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Global Conference of Youth ("GCOY") – the biggest and most substantial youth conference related to the multinational UN climate processes. The GCOY takes place a couple of days before COP and at the same venue, it serves as a space for capacity building and policy training in order to prepare young people for their participation at COP.</li> <li>• Virtual Conference of Youth ("vCOY") – a virtual space for the global youth community facing barriers to travel and participation. The vCOY seeks to ensure that the voices of less privileged, marginalised, vulnerable, refugee and Indigenous groups are adequately heard and represented. All input feed into the final policy document.</li> <li>• Regional Conferences of Youth ("RCOY") and Local Conferences of Youth ("LCOY") – organised in the run up to GCOY across the world in order to localise the climate conversation and get more input from the ground. RCOY and LCOY inputs feed into local and national policy making as well as the GCOY (and consequently climate negotiations).</li> </ul> <p>An example of a GYOC is the Youth4Climate 2021: Driving Ambition meeting, in Milan during September 2021. The manifesto agreed by the youth that attended the meeting was presented at COP26 this year.</p> <p>Referred to by <b>José Daniel Madrigal</b> during a Panel Session.</p>

Initiative	Location	Type	Target audience	Description
UN Joint Framework Initiative on Children, Youth and Climate Change  <a href="#">Partnerships   UNFCCC</a>	Global	United Nations	Youth	<p>The United Nations system recognises the key role that youth play in tackling climate change and works closely with youth-led and youth-focused organisations around the world through the United Nations Joint Framework Initiative on Children, Youth and Climate Change.</p> <p>Since 2008, the UNFCCC secretariat has coordinated the work of 16 intergovernmental entities and many youth organisations to empower youth to act on climate change and enhance their climate change policy decision-making processes.</p> <p>The work of the Initiative is closely linked to the implementation of Article 6 of the UNFCCC and in particular the implementation of the Doha work programme on Article 6 of the Convention.</p> <p>Referred to in <b>Redwan Rehman's</b> submission.</p>
UN Youth Advisory Group  <a href="#">The Youth Advisory Group on Climate Change   United Nations</a>	Global	United Nations	Young leaders	<p>Aims to amplify youth voices and to engage young people in an open and transparent dialogue as the UN gears up to raise ambition and accelerate action to tackle the climate emergency.</p> <p>Its members will bring the voices of young people into high-level decision-making and advise the Secretary-General on the implementation of his 2020-21 Climate Change Strategy.</p> <p>Referred in <b>Jonah Messinger's</b> submissions</p>
UN Youth Climate Summit  <a href="#">YOUTH CLIMATE SUMMIT – Office of the Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth (un.org)</a>	Global	United Nations	Youth	<p>The UN Youth Climate Summit is a platform for youth climate action leaders to showcase their solutions at the UN and to meaningfully engage with decision-makers.</p> <p>The 2020 event brought together youth climate champions from over 140 countries and territories to share their solutions on the global stage.</p> <p>Referred to in <b>Redwan Rehman's</b> submission.</p>



Initiative	Location	Type	Target audience	Description
Young SDG Innovators Programme  <a href="#">Young SDG Innovators   UN Global Compact</a>	Global	United Nations	Young talent within participating companies of the UN Global Compact	<p>A ten-month accelerator programme helping future business leaders and change-makers to develop and drive innovative solutions through new technologies, initiatives, and business models and deliver on their company's sustainability objectives.</p> <p>The Young SDG Innovators Programme is designed to engage UN Global Company companies' brightest and best talent in advancing sustainability efforts by driving innovation and delivering tangible solutions with potential market value for their companies.</p> <p>Referred to in <b>Kim Brink's</b> submission.</p>
Youth UNESCO Climate Action Network ("YoU- CAN")  <a href="#">Youth UNESCO Climate Action Network YoU-CAN</a>	Global	UNESCO	Youth	<p>YoU-CAN is a hub of knowledge, a pool of potential partners, a source of innovative projects and a resource for multidisciplinary climate solutions. It aims to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Leverage youth-led climate action by sharing and upscaling ideas, collaborating with networks and organisations and implementing successful grassroots projects;</li> <li>• Upscale UNESCO's positioning on climate change, by contributing to its climate change activities, and co-designing and co-implementing climate activities in all its fields of competence; and</li> <li>• Improve the ownership of youth and leadership in UNESCO's activities by building on the knowledge of youths, their creative potential and innovative ideas to make and influence positive climate action, through meaningful collaboration and partnerships.</li> </ul> <p>Referred to in <b>Redwan Rehman's</b> submission.</p>



## Aisling McCaffrey (“AM”) Ireland



AM is a NextGen committee member for 100 Women in Finance and a member of the FinBiz 2030 Irish Taskforce. She is also Co-Founder of the Green Team Network, a forum that connects firms across the Irish Funds Industry to encourage collaboration and empower change towards a more sustainable environment.

### Question 1:

**What impact is climate change having on you personally, on your peers and community?**

- A recent global study of young people aged between 16-25, across 19 countries, found that 60% of young people approached said that they felt worried or extremely worried about climate change and 75% indicated that “*the future is frightening*”.
- Ireland is getting warmer and wetter as a result of climate change, according to the Climate Status Report for Ireland 2020, rainfall has increased by 6% in the 30-year period leading up to 2018, compared to the previous 30 years.

### Question 2:

**To what extent are young people able to make their views on climate change heard to local, national and international decision-makers, or hold them to account for the decisions they make on adaptation and mitigation measures?**

- In October 2020, ECO-UNESCO conducted a Youth Climate Justice Survey in collaboration with SpunOut.ie to establish how young people in Ireland feel about climate change. 1,043 young people took part in the online survey and, when asked about the barriers to tackling climate change, 54.6% of respondents indicated that they felt they were not being listened to. 45.7% felt that a lack of skills was a barrier to taking climate action and, importantly, 36% noted that they do not know how to contact politicians and key decision-makers.
- Ireland has established the National Dialogue On Climate Action, a forum for collaboration between citizens, communities, youth, the Irish Government and relevant agencies. It was piloted between 2017 and 2017 and a new structure is currently under development which should go some way to addressing the concerns in the ECO-UNESCO survey.

### Question 3:

**What global initiatives, national initiatives or local initiatives have, in your opinion, been most successful in engaging young people in efforts to tackle climate change and what aspects of these initiatives have been key to their success?**

- There are a number of local and national initiatives that have been implemented in Ireland, including (i) Green Schools – an environmental education programme that encourages long term environmental action, (ii) Climate Ireland Portal – a website providing information, advice and support on climate adaption and up to date information, (iii) Climate Ready Program- a five year national upskilling initiative for Irish businesses, and (iv) Climate Jargon Buster – a website designed to explain common climate action terms in an accessible way.
- AM believes that it is important to support initiatives that seek to close the gap between policy makers and youth and demystify the decision-making process.
- We should be harnessing increasing connectivity – with over 69% of the world's youth using the internet.
- Reflect on the success of Fridays for Future; this is a youth led global climate strike movement and, since it began in 2018, over 15m people have taken part around the globe.
- AM believes that we should be amplifying the voices global youth. The establishment of the UN Youth Advisory Group on Climate Change should be replicated across other governmental bodies.
- AM notes the value of strategic partnerships with influential brands across business, fashion, sport and music to promote climate action and engage with today's young people.



# Anna Yang (“AY”) & Tanay Raghavendra (“TR”) India



TA is Director of Operations at Nostos Homes and AY is part of Nostos' legal team. Nostos Homes is a youth led non-profit organisation based in the UK which builds homes for people displaced due to natural disasters or as a result of violent conflict. Nostos and its leadership have received extensive international recognition including from the World Bank, Forbes, the Diana Award, Nasdaw and the IFC.

## Question 1:

**What impact is climate change having on you personally, on your peers and community?**

- TR is originally from Bihar, in India. Up to 70% of Bihar's population subsist below the poverty line and almost 90% of its population lives in rural villages. Climate change exacerbates existing problems and creates new ones. Northern Bihar often faces floods (76% of its population live under threat of flood devastation), while the south is prone to droughts- events which are becoming increasingly commonplace.
- The 2020 floods in the region displaced over 7million people. Only 0.1% of houses in Bihar are made from stronger material than grass and reeds and so for the majority of people, their homes are lost when floods descend.
- TR tells the story of a childhood friend, Biju, whose home and possessions were devastated by floods, whose grandmother was seriously injured and who lost all their savings. The trauma of the experience had a lasting effect on Biju.

## Question 2:

**To what extent are young people able to make their views on climate change heard to local, national and international decision-makers, or hold them to account for the decisions they make on adaptation and mitigation measures?**

## Question 3:

**What global initiatives, national initiatives or local initiatives have, in your opinion, been most successful in engaging young people in efforts to tackle climate change and what aspects of these initiatives have been key to their success?**

- TR joined Nostos Homes in an effort to combat this threat. Nostos Homes builds collapsible, modular and secure temporary shelters to house people immediately after a disaster and to give them a home for the immediate term. The idea is to create a community and sense of psychological safety.

## Amira Odeh (“AO”) Puerto Rico



AO is a Geographer and Water Resource Specialist from Puerto Rico. From a young age she has been interested in solving the most pressing environmental issues that she has experienced around her. AO organised a successful campaign at her University to encourage sustainable water consumption. As a result, her University has installed new drinking fountains in every building and is considering a ban on the sale of non-reusable water bottles on campus. Hers was the first university campus in Latin America or the Caribbean to achieve this. In addition, AO has led training efforts in Puerto Rico, USA and Chile to support new leaders in developing their own community campaigns and environmental initiatives.

### Question 1:

**What impact is climate change having on you personally, on your peers and community?**

- AO notes that her country is experiencing increasingly frequent droughts and more intense hurricanes. These events lead to loss of life, destroy the country's infrastructure and affect the local economy, causing small businesses to close and local people to relocate in order to find stable employment.
- AO is concerned about the effect that climate change will have on her physical and mental health. She notes that young people are being affected by climate anxiety, feeling that they need to prepare now in order to be safe in the future. Young people are conscious that the increasing frequency of extreme weather events may lead to disease outbreaks and scarcity of resources during their lifetime.
- These issues impact on the way young people perceive their ability to achieve their dreams and the lifestyles that they hope to have in the future.

### Question 2:

**To what extent are young people able to make their views on climate change heard to local, national and international decision-makers, or hold them to account for the decisions they make on adaptation and mitigation measures?**

- AO believes that, due to the hard work of organisations and support from members of the press and public, youth have been able to send a message to decision-makers about their concerns. However, she notes that a disconnect remains between decision-makers listening to these concerns and actually implementing the changes needed to help keep younger generations safe.

### Question 3:

**What global initiatives, national initiatives or local initiatives have, in your opinion, been most successful in engaging young people in efforts to tackle climate change and what aspects of these initiatives have been key to their success?**

- AO believes that the success of global climate strikes, local campaigns and progress in advancing climate change conversations, can be attributed to youth leadership and allowing youth leaders to expand their leadership talents.
- Successful movements will offer space to train new leaders and will trust people to apply their knowledge and achieve their goals.

# Belyndar Rikimani (“BR”) The Solomon Islands



BR is a law student at the University of the South Pacific, at the Vanuatu Campus. She is also the Secretary of the Pacific Islands Students Fighting Climate Change (PISFCC). One of the PISFCC's campaigns is to seek an Advisory Opinion from the International Court of Justice in the Hague, the other is to educate and activate youth on the rising impacts of climate change in their communities and how climate change affects individual rights.

## Question 1:

**What impact is climate change having on you personally, on your peers and community?**

- BR notes that there have been a number of studies considering the impact of climate change on the Pacific oceans, but far less consideration has been given to Pacific Islanders and how to help them prepare for such an uncertain future.
- BR has witnessed the rising sea levels forcing local communities to relocate to higher ground or to leave their lands and the island altogether. Local communities in the Roviana Region of the Western Province, which is particularly vulnerable to rising sea levels, are working with scientists and local organisations to develop strategies to mitigate the impacts of climate change.

## Question 2:

**To what extent are young people able to make their views on climate change heard to local, national and international decision-makers, or hold them to account for the decisions they make on adaptation and mitigation measures?**

- Young people are helping to drive change in many levels of decision-making. The expansion of civil society in the Pacific Islands has provided space, and a platform, for youth to voice their opinions to national and international leaders.
- Several civil society organisations are encouraging young people to work as volunteers to help engage them and to empower them to be able to have a positive impact, to have a sense of leadership and to take ownership of ideas.
- One of the challenges youth face is not being regarded as capable of having a seat at the table and, subsequently, having their voices overshadowed during consultations.

## Question 3:

**What global initiatives, national initiatives or local initiatives have, in your opinion, been most successful in engaging young people in efforts to tackle climate change and what aspects of these initiatives have been key to their success?**

- The organisation 350 Pacific focuses on combatting human induced climate change. It has a number of satellite bodies led by young people around the world, providing them with a space to engage and build with each other through advocacy and reform programmes around the world. The organisation enables youths to take on leadership roles without relying on governments to make the changes but showing them how they can support youths in implementing change. 350 Pacific has been recognised for its leadership ideas and communities have acknowledged that it was vital in influencing change at the decision-making level.
- In the Solomon Islands, the Honiara Youth Council are developing leadership skills and providing young people with exposure to networks, such as the Solomon Islands Climate Action Network, so that young people can build their personal and professional brands as climate youth activists.
- One of the most successful ways of tackling climate change is providing a simple explanation of what climate change really is and explaining how youths can become actively engaged in tackling it. For example, the PISFCC engages people through tree planting, mangrove planting and hosting meetings and seminars.



## Evan Barnard (“EB”) USA



EB is the Founder of Nature for All and a Research Fellow at the Council on Strategic Risks. His recent work has included historical environmental security research on climate change as it informs modern and future climate security risks. EB is passionate about encouraging people to interact with the environment. In line with this, he has been developing braille nature trails to enable visually impaired people the opportunity to experience a nature trail unassisted.

### Question 1:

**What impact is climate change having on you personally, on your peers and community?**

- EB notes that the personal impact of climate change on him and his immediate environment is minimal. Climate change is a threat multiplier- it exacerbates existing threats (e.g. human migration and violent conflict) and its impact is therefore unequal.

### Question 2:

**To what extent are young people able to make their views on climate change heard to local, national and international decision-makers, or hold them to account for the decisions they make on adaptation and mitigation measures?**

- EB emphasises youth's ability to harness the power of social platforms and recognises the value of education and knowledge. Younger generations have a wealth of resources and information at their fingertips online and many young people have used these tools to become effective climate change communicators and influencers.
- The extent of youth action is, however, limited. Young people are constrained by their education commitments, meaning that they cannot always attend protests as they may be unable to travel and attend events and they lack of financial independence to make climate savvy choices.

### Question 3:

**What global initiatives, national initiatives or local initiatives have, in your opinion, been most successful in engaging young people in efforts to tackle climate change and what aspects of these initiatives have been key to their success?**

- President Biden has taken several steps to address climate change: (i) he has issued a number of climate related Executive Orders, (ii) he has re-joined the Paris Agreement, (iii) he appointed a Special Envoy on Climate to the State Department, and (iv) he held a Leader's Summit on Climate attended by 40 countries.
- Youth popularity of involvement in grassroots organisations has grown significantly, e.g. Fridays for Future. Media and policy makers at a local, national and international level notice massive collective action events but they do not guarantee accountability in the climate policy world.
- Young people are now more politically motivated to make a personal difference in the future of climate action. Young people around the world now run for office on climate agendas. Not only are these people being elected to office but they are also bringing climate to the forefront as they make their mark on government.

# Jennifer Griggs (“JG”)

## UK



JG is a climate advocate living in Paris. She works in energy related finance where she advises companies on how to secure green financings, wind down or dispose of their legacy assets, and expand into new alternative technologies. JG is co-chair of internal sustainability outreach and a member of the steering committee of her company's UK Sustainability Network, she is also working towards a sustainability education programme for incoming university students. In 2019, she won the Larmor Award partly for her dedication to climate change campaigning.

### Question 1:

**What impact is climate change having on you personally, on your peers and community?**

- JG notes the recent flash floods in London but acknowledges that such events are the exception, rather than the rule. The primary threat of climate change to the UK in the near future is the knock on effect that global food insecurity, heightened inequality, global unrest and geopolitical instability will cause.
- Climate change disproportionately affects the younger generation and a recent study has shown that 60% of young people are “worried or extremely worried” about climate change.

### Question 2:

**To what extent are young people able to make their views on climate change heard to local, national and international decision-makers, or hold them to account for the decisions they make on adaptation and mitigation measures?**

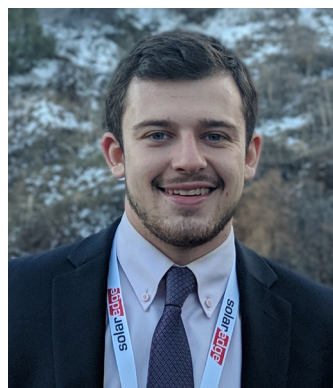
- On a personal level, young people can lobby MPs, participate in council meetings on local implementation of climate policy and participate in public demonstrations.
- On a professional level, there are an increasing number of sustainability focused career opportunities. Similarly, even if jobs are not directly linked to climate policy, they may afford young people the opportunity to make themselves heard by decision-makers within large organisations; this can directly impact on how corporate funds are invested.
- Sustainability related jobs are often, however, less well paid and organisations may not support climate activism amongst their employees.
- Young people are often accused of being idealistic and can struggle to ensure their voices carry weight. JG notes that those who are able to make their voices heard are often young people who are conventionally well-educated and these people tend to have less lived experience of climate change than those from poorer communities.

### Question 3:

**What global initiatives, national initiatives or local initiatives have, in your opinion, been most successful in engaging young people in efforts to tackle climate change and what aspects of these initiatives have been key to their success?**

- JG states that climate education must be at the forefront of youth enfranchisement. For example, we need to identify the key areas blocking change (i.e. financial expertise to build a fully-fledged carbon tax system or scientific expertise to solve the intermittency issues associated with renewables) and we should have a comprehensive education programme both in climate, and the fields that are blocking change, to equip young people to tackle the issues.
- JG notes the immediate global investment to tackle COVID-19 and that the climate crisis poses a similar level of threat.
- We should harness the power of the snowball effect- this comes through better education and people seeing their peers behaving in a climate conscious way. We need global initiatives to provide overarching frameworks, national initiatives to inspire and local initiatives to provide context for changes that we can implement in a targeted way.

# Jonah Messinger (“JM”) USA



JM recently graduated from the University of Illinois with a Master of Engineering in Energy Systems, Bachelor of Science in Engineering Physics, and a minor in the Hoeft Technology and Management program. Most recently, JM was a research assistant to Dr. Varun Sivaram at the Centre on Global Energy Policy at Columbia University working on Energizing America, a policy roadmap to triple U.S. federal clean energy research, development, and demonstration funding by 2025. This work was endorsed by Secretary John Kerry, funded by Bill Gates' Breakthrough Energy, and invited for submission to President Biden's transition team.

## Question 1:

**What impact is climate change having on you personally, on your peers and community?**

- JM notes that climate change is a global phenomenon, but that it will of course affect future generations disproportionately. He argues that is no better example of intergenerational climate impact inequity than the lack of climate modelling beyond 2100.
- Studies indicate that economic development remains a key predictive metric for climate change-induced adversity and the consequences are drastically intensified for younger and future generations. As the global south and developing nations tend to have disproportionately young populations, this compounds generational climate inequities. JM notes that wealthy countries have fallen well short of the 2009 funding commitment they made to provide USD 100bn of climate finance to developing nations by 2020 (extended to 2025 at COP21).

## Question 2:

**To what extent are young people able to make their views on climate change heard to local, national and international decision-makers, or hold them to account for the decisions they make on adaptation and mitigation measures?**

- Young people in the US are not well represented in local, national or international decision-making bodies, mainly due to age requirements.
- JM notes that, generally, paradigm-shifting ideas, technologies and initiatives are brought to the fore by new entrants and fresh perspectives. The innovative power of young people should be harnessed to advance the climate action agenda. COP26 leaders should focus on identifying talented young leaders, elevating them to formal leadership positions and promoting their work by providing opportunities and funding.

## Question 3:

**What global initiatives, national initiatives or local initiatives have, in your opinion, been most successful in engaging young people in efforts to tackle climate change and what aspects of these initiatives have been key to their success?**

- From a US perspective, programs that facilitate innovative and forward thinking climate change solutions include:
  - the Activate Fellowship
  - Atlantic Council and Ecologic Institute's Emerging Leaders in Environmental and Energy Policy Fellowship
  - Schmidt Science Fellowship
  - One Young World's Lead2030 initiative
  - Clean Energy Leadership Institute's Fellowship
  - U.S. Cleantech University Prize
  - Zayed Sustainability Prize
- These programs work well because they identify potential leaders and provide resources, connections, and opportunities to enable great ideas to become impactful solutions. In addition, the funding is non-dilutive, the frameworks are flexible, and additional opportunities are abundant.
- JM notes that promising organisations, such as the COP26 Youth Advisory Group, should be effectively leveraged at meetings. It is not enough that these talented leaders are on panels, they must be in negotiations where policy and agreements are crafted.



## José Daniel Madrigal (“JDM”) Honduras



JDM has been involved with the Inter-American Dialogue, specifically with the Energy, Climate Change, and Extractive Industries Program. As part of that effort, he is also part of the Task Force on Climate Change in the Northern Triangle, as a Youth Representative from Honduras. In a similar vein, he has been a researcher within the framework of the Long-Term Strategy of Decarbonisation of Honduras. He is also a Founding Member of Sustenta Honduras, a NGO for Development, focused on Action for Climate Empowerment; as well as a collaborator with other youth organisations such as One Young World, Global Youth Climate Network, Climate Reality Project, and a Local Pathways Fellow from SDSN-Youth. JDM holds a B.A. in Political Science from Tecnológico de Monterrey, México, and a MSc in Urbanisation and Development, as a Chevening Scholar, from the London School of Economics and Political Science.

### Question 1:

**What impact is climate change having on you personally, on your peers and community?**

- Honduras has recently been devastated by the effects of extreme weather conditions. For example, it suffered two catastrophic hurricanes just two weeks apart in November 2020.
- Nearly half the population was affected, with the destruction of 800,000 acres of crops, damage to 85,000 homes and estimated economic losses of USD2.8bn. Despite suffering the devastating effects of climate change, Honduras contributes only 0.05% of global emissions.
- The wider effects of climate change, such as food insecurity, drought and deforestation are felt most keenly by the agriculture dependent areas of Honduras. Agriculture employs more than 30% of the Honduran workforce.
- Poverty and inequality, as well as low access to healthcare, deforestation

### Question 2:

**To what extent are young people able to make their views on climate change heard to local, national and international decision-makers, or hold them to account for the decisions they make on adaptation and mitigation measures?**

- There are few mechanisms through which young people can contribute towards decision-making and climate policy. While youth led climate action is happening in Honduras, a general development model that is more inclusive, sustainable and considerate has not yet been articulated. The idea is there but it needs implementation and greater granular detail.
- Recently, a Declaration of Youth from Latin America and the Caribbean has been conceived and has reached over 25,000 signatures (using Change.org). It will be presented at PRE-COP in Milan and COP26. The Declaration makes a number of demands (e.g. to eliminate fossil fuel subsidies by 2030).
- Young people in Honduras must gain access to the international agenda and climate negotiations in order to: (i) learn from action taken by other nations, (ii) learn more effective communication strategies for their own communities, and (iii) to help democratise the strategy for global climate action.

### Question 3:

**What global initiatives, national initiatives or local initiatives have, in your opinion, been most successful in engaging young people in efforts to tackle climate change and what aspects of these initiatives have been key to their success?**

- Youth-led groups, such as Sustenta Honduras, which focuses on climate empowerment in Honduras (and the wider region), have reached important milestones. These include hosting the first Local Conference of Youth in the country as well as being one of the two National Coordinators for Honduras for the Regional Conference of Youth in Latin America and the Caribbean, an initiative which was supported by the United Nations Development Program in Latin America as well as UNICEF and COP26.
- Sustenta Honduras also co-hosted the first climate-related forum with mayoral candidates of Tegucigalpa, asking them what their environmental and climate agenda would be.
- Although Sustena is a relatively new organisation, it is now a community of over 400 individuals from all over the country and it recently secured international financial support for two projects related to climate empowerment and adaptation to climate change at the local level.

## Joseph Tsongo (“JT”) Democratic Republic of the Congo (“DRC”)



Almost half of the African continent's tropical rainforests are found in the DRC, yet an average of 70,000 hectares of forest are lost each year due to agriculture expansion and an ever-growing population. JT launched the “*One Child = One Tree*” project in response to this threat, the project links education and conservation and seeks to use the country's population growth as a tool to fight climate change.

### Question 1:

**What impact is climate change having on you personally, on your peers and community?**

- JT notes that the DRC has been experiencing episodes of extreme heat, droughts and flooding which have resulted in a decline in agricultural production leading to food insecurity. At the same time, the DRC is beset with conflict and community violence.
- According to JT, the greatest threat is the acceleration of development in the DRC through mining, logging, oil and overfishing in the Congo Basin. The development is occurring at a rate the ecosystem cannot sustain.
- Political decision-makers in the DRC do not consider protection of the environment a priority, this is particularly true as they profit from the illicit exploitation of the country's natural resources.

### Question 2:

**To what extent are young people able to make their views on climate change heard to local, national and international decision-makers, or hold them to account for the decisions they make on adaptation and mitigation measures?**

- Young people do not have the space or opportunity to make their voices heard in the DRC. JT uses local radio, social media and the internet to amplify his voice. Through his organisation he has organised exchange days, inviting members of local communities and local decision-makers to attend.
- JT considers the issue of youth enfranchisement to be twofold: firstly, there are young people who lack the motivation to participate and, secondly, there are those who are motivated but lack access. In order to overcome these obstacles, we need to talk to young people about climate issues and encourage their involvement in conferences, advisory committees and political processes at a local and global level.

### Question 3:

**What global initiatives, national initiatives or local initiatives have, in your opinion, been most successful in engaging young people in efforts to tackle climate change and what aspects of these initiatives have been key to their success?**

- African Union Development Agency (AUDA- NEPAD): runs AFR100 (the African Forest Landscape Restoration Initiative) coordinating restoration action in Africa. As part of this initiative, 28 African countries have committed to restore 113 million hectares of land.
- Notes the importance of protecting the Congo Basin (the world's largest CO<sub>2</sub> sensor) and its 220 million hectares of forest, as decided at COP22 with the creation of the Blue Fund.

## Josh Hoevenaars (“JH”) Australia



JH is a Business Development Associate at Clean Energy Mobility with nine years' experience in the energy and retail industries. He is passionate about using the power, scale and expertise within businesses to pursue benefits for people, planet and profit. He is building a career in clean energy to use the power of business to address the problems of climate change.

### Question 1:

**What impact is climate change having on you personally, on your peers and community?**

- JH has witnessed increasingly extreme weather events in Australia, including the 2019/2020 bushfires, as well as severe flooding, cyclones, droughts and heat waves. Droughts are putting strain on the municipalities' water supplies, threatening the livelihoods of farmers and putting pressure on food supply. Extreme weather events are expected to become more frequent and rising sea levels are expected to damage Australia's beaches, putting animals and plants' lives at risk.
- JH notes the indirect impacts of climate change, such as its adverse effect on mental health (brought on by a feeling of powerlessness to prevent the dangers ahead). A mental health crisis is already developing in Australia, with a significant number of young people reporting anxiety, depression and other issues.
- Australia is increasingly likely to become host to climate refugees, particularly from the Pacific Islands most at risk from rising sea levels. This places strain on infrastructure; likely to be exacerbated by internal migration away from areas at risk from bushfires, droughts or floods (and the insurance premiums that are prohibitive to living in these areas).

### Question 2:

**To what extent are young people able to make their views on climate change heard to local, national and international decision-makers, or hold them to account for the decisions they make on adaptation and mitigation measures?**

- JH notes the success of the School Strike for Climate amongst young Australians. However, most of them are not yet able to vote and so are unable to hold the government to account. That said, 'pester politics' can work and should not be underestimated – there are numerous instances of the media and government being influenced to progress climate positive action because of the words and actions of children.
- The biggest barrier to youth engagement and activism is lack of education and awareness.
- Harnessing the power of social networks and social media. Australia's youths need to work to develop a national conversation on climate change in order to force a change of direction.

### Question 3:

**What global initiatives, national initiatives or local initiatives have, in your opinion, been most successful in engaging young people in efforts to tackle climate change and what aspects of these initiatives have been key to their success?**

- Australia is not on track to meet the Paris Agreement goals. Climate Action recently rated its climate policy as “*highly insufficient*”, partly as a result of the absence of a net zero target at a federal level. By contrast, all Australian state governments have set net zero targets of 2050 and several local councils have gone even further. JH notes that the fact that the highest level of government is taking the least action is perhaps indicative of its vulnerability to external influence (such as power brokers and benefactors) in order to retain power.



## Kehkashan Basu (“KB”) Canada/Dubai



KB is the founder of the Green Hope Foundation (the “GHF”), a social innovation enterprise through which she has had a significant impact on the global community with her work on children’s rights, peace and disarmament, climate justice, gender equality and social uplift. She is the only Canadian to be awarded the International Children’s Peace Prize (in 2016). KB is a UN Human Rights Champion, a Forbes 30 under 30, a National Geographic Young Explorer, one of Canada’s Top25 Women of Influence, the youngest Trustee of the Parliament of the World’s Religions. She was also named as one of the Top 100 SDG Leaders in the World in 2020.

### Question 1:

**What impact is climate change having on you personally, on your peers and community?**

- KB has noticed that climate change disproportionately affects the people and communities that are least responsible for it. For example, girls and women, who become increasingly vulnerable to abuse and exploitation. Climate change exacerbates existing inequalities.
- KB notes the importance of remembering that youth empowerment and gender equality are multipliers of sustainability.
- KB’s submission focuses on the disproportionate effect of climate change on women and girls. For example:
  - In Kenya, climate change has impacted on freshwater availability which disproportionately affects women and children who, as the primary water carriers, expend more time and energy fetching water; also risking injury and assault;
  - Women are often the keepers of rich knowledge about plants, animals and ecological processes. The erosion of biodiversity driven by climate change leads to a loss of knowledge, as seen in the Sundarbans communities.

### Question 2:

**To what extent are young people able to make their views on climate change heard to local, national and international decision-makers, or hold them to account for the decisions they make on adaptation and mitigation measures?**

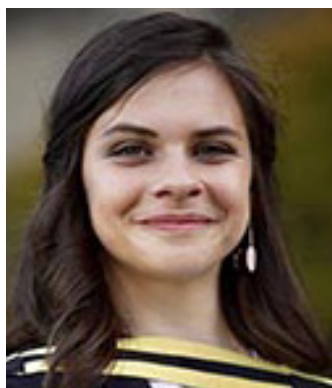
- There is a general absence of youth and gender data. However, this is particularly true in the Global South where exploitative work takes place.

### Question 3:

**What global initiatives, national initiatives or local initiatives have, in your opinion, been most successful in engaging young people in efforts to tackle climate change and what aspects of these initiatives have been key to their success?**

- KB’s GHF has sought to tackle the lacuna in knowledge by addressing the low level of awareness among young people, especially young women and girls in developing nations.
- The GHF empowers young people in 25 countries to cut through social, cultural and economic barriers through grassroots action as well as providing a platform to amplify their voices at the highest levels of decision-making. It uses Education for Sustainable Development as a tool to provide them with knowledge, skills, attitudes and behaviours to act and think in a sustainable manner.
- KB has developed an advocacy tool called Environment Academy, this is an engagement platform (both in person and virtual) organised by youth for youth.
- GHF has embarked on a project in Bangladesh to empower men, women and children by establishing local circular economies. By providing agricultural skills training, as well as education on sanitation and how to build waste management systems, the GHF has demonstrated that even in the most vulnerable and conservative communities, men and women can be elevated equally.
- During COVID-19, the GHF launched a webinar series called Dare to Dream- Women Impacting the World that shared the life stories of women leaders to inspire girls and women.

## Kim Brink (“KB”) South Africa (“SA”)



KB is Team Leader for South Africa's FinBiz 2030 Climate Action Group where she manages a team of volunteer finance and business professions driving positive change in and outside their jobs. She recently led a tree planting effort, planting over 140 trees in under 5 hours with a team of 45 volunteers. KB is also a Product Owner at Aura, a security tech company and previously worked as a Business Analyst at Investec.

### Question 1:

**What impact is climate change having on you personally, on your peers and community?**

- The impact of climate change in SA is critical but the socio-economic environment means that a significant portion of the country's GDP comes from sectors that exacerbate it. Understanding of the urgency is not widespread amongst the general population.
- Fossil fuels are responsible for +85% of energy in SA and are the third largest Forex source. By way of example, power in SA comes from a state-owned enterprise that is constrained by significant red tape. While it contributes USD13.6bn to the economy per annum, Eskom is + USD400m in debt and unable to service it. SA is not on track to reach the goals it signed up to in the Paris Agreement.
- The country has a 50% unemployment rate and mining is responsible for circa 500,000 jobs. This is a critical concern when considering the shift towards renewable resources.
- Those in poverty are most affected by climate change. They have the worst access to education and medical care, which are critical in the wake of increasing droughts and natural disasters.

### Question 2:

**To what extent are young people able to make their views on climate change heard to local, national and international decision-makers, or hold them to account for the decisions they make on adaptation and mitigation measures?**

- KB notes that the feeling of hopelessness breeds inaction. However, academic leaders at universities are increasingly contributing to drafting the Sustainable Development Goals and, historically, universities have been platforms for change: giving young leaders the foundation to demand and create growth.
- Only a handful of South Africans are able to attend university and those fortunate enough to attend are burdened with fighting an entire generation's battle. Out of 76 countries, SA's education ranks 75th according to the OECD. Youth are disempowered and have limited access to critical learning and upskilling that fuels action, this feeds into a growing issue of youth unemployment.

### Question 3:

**What global initiatives, national initiatives or local initiatives have, in your opinion, been most successful in engaging young people in efforts to tackle climate change and what aspects of these initiatives have been key to their success?**

- The UN's Young Innovators Programme has been a great success for leading operations that want to be part of the change. It has enabled successful young leaders to make a tangible difference in industries such as the international financial institutions; logistics; manufacturing and even some of SA's biggest mining corporations.
- FinBiz2030 SA's partnership with Chartered Accountants Worldwide is critical: it educates accounting and business professionals to have a meaningful impact at the nucleus of their organisations, thereby creating a ripple through the industry.
- The UN SDG framework has created a positive roadmap for investment in the future, beyond 2030. It provides public and private entities, and individuals, to dissect sustainability into clear and transparent objectives with achievable metrics, targets and goals.

## Muzna Durei (“MD”) Syria



MD arrived in Montreal from Syria in November 2016. She is studying Public Policy and Public Administration at Concordia University and is a liaison officer for the White Helmets. She is currently coordinating a White Helmets project to produce PPE locally in North West Syria. MD has been actively involved in multiple initiatives and networks focusing on child and forced marriage issues among Syrian refugees.

### Question 1:

**What impact is climate change having on you personally, on your peers and community?**

- MD is a Syrian refugee, living in Canada and she describes her experience of displacement as “*very hard and harmful*”. MD explains that her community are under threat of climate displacement and that there are no measures or international agreements to protect displaced people living in camps; initially displaced by the bombardment and now facing the risk of further displacement.
- According to the United Nations, 17.2m people, in 148 countries, were displaced in 2018 due to global climate change and natural disasters. The World Bank has estimated that 143m climate refugees will be displaced by 2050 from Latin America, Sub-Saharan Africa and South East Asia.

### Question 2:

**To what extent are young people able to make their views on climate change heard to local, national and international decision-makers, or hold them to account for the decisions they make on adaptation and mitigation measures?**

- Youth in general are excluded from policy design. Refugee youth are even more likely to be excluded from participating in political discussions or from contributing to policy.

### Question 3:

**What global initiatives, national initiatives or local initiatives have, in your opinion, been most successful in engaging young people in efforts to tackle climate change and what aspects of these initiatives have been key to their success?**

MD did not address the issue of youth enfranchisement specifically, but noted that:

- Refugees and internally displaced people should be involved in all summits, meetings and conferences as well as being included on steering committees and on advisory boards;
- The Geneva Convention is not sufficient, we need to provide climate refugees with a valid legal status to protect them from the impact of displacement and the lack of comprehensive policies that protect the needs of millennials;
- We need to ensure that meaningful participation is paired with intersectionality: ensuring that there is a seat at the table for the most marginalised groups (including indigenous people, youth, women, refugees etc.). This is essential to improve the outputs of global talks and meetings related to climate change and its impact on the global south; and
- Policies should be decolonised so that they are drafted, negotiated, adapted and implemented in a way that focuses on people and not politics.



## Nathalie Aue (“NA”) Venezuela



NA is the founder of the Oceanmar Project and was a finalist for the Unilever Future Leaders League in 2015. The Oceanmar Project was set up to spread information about the ocean and its importance for humanity and the planet; it offers educational courses for children and adults on marine life. It uses digital platforms to provide information and support marine conservation.

### Question 1:

**What impact is climate change having on you personally, on your peers and community?**

- NA's submission focuses on the impact of climate change on the oceans. As a scuba diver she has witnessed its impact on the great barrier reef and the colonies of corals. She notes that while we are generating regulations to have a “greener” planet, 70% of that planet is being forgotten. Underwater goals are not prioritised by governments despite their potential to profoundly impact on delivering other sustainable development goals.
- NA notes that many of the Latin American countries have been affected by mass deforestation, overfishing, corruption and lack of opportunities and that these issues disproportionately affect low income areas.

### Question 2:

**To what extent are young people able to make their views on climate change heard to local, national and international decision-makers, or hold them to account for the decisions they make on adaptation and mitigation measures?**

### Question 3:

**What global initiatives, national initiatives or local initiatives have, in your opinion, been most successful in engaging young people in efforts to tackle climate change and what aspects of these initiatives have been key to their success?**

- The UN has recognised the lack of priority given to protecting our oceans and has declared a decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development in order to work on a common framework to protect the oceans.
- A number of ocean literacy and conservation organisations have been founded in the last few years, including Oceanmar Project, Nakawe and Oceana.
- Global movements have originated on social media, however, NA notes that these movements can lack impact due to lack of accountability and the way that the media communicates the challenges. NA also notes that movements are shut down by powerful people with financial interests.
- NA highlights the Fonsalia Port campaign in the Canary Islands as an indication that working together, we can have an impact. A multidisciplinary team came together to oppose the construction of the port.

# Nayeema Nazmul Khan ("NK") Bangladesh (Dhaka)



NK studies Economics at Brac University and works as a researcher for two prominent NGOs. She writes a blog for WeMenView (recipient of the Diana Award 2021), which promotes gender rights and aims to counter sexual harassment (with a focus on children). NK is a researcher and core team member of Youth Policy Forum ("YPF"), which discusses policy challenges, reforms, and scopes for the government by working alongside Parliament Members. In particular, the YPF environmental research team advocates youth engagement in global climate issues by addressing the challenges of reforms for the environmental policies and aiming to create a climate resilient Bangladesh.

## Question 1:

**What impact is climate change having on you personally, on your peers and community?**

- NK notes that Bangladesh is experiencing significant issues as a result of rising sea levels and that these issues are expected to worsen. Along Bangladesh's coast, rising sea levels will cause river bank erosion, salinity intrusion, flooding, infrastructure damage, crop failure, fisheries destruction, and biodiversity loss.
- From a personal perspective, NK's hometown in Kishoreganj suffered a flash flood in March 2017 in which 350 hectares of land were flooded in a single day. This disaster resulted in the loss of the staple food boro crop. In addition, a dam broke causing thousands of tonnes of fish to be lost and water to be contaminated. Farmers were unable to protect their land. To this day, schools remain closed and at least half a million students are not receiving regular education as a result of the disaster.

## Question 2:

**To what extent are young people able to make their views on climate change heard to local, national and international decision-makers, or hold them to account for the decisions they make on adaptation and mitigation measures?**

- A 2014 UNFPA study indicated that there were 48 million young people in Bangladesh, making up 30% of the total population and yet they are typically on the periphery of decision-making.
- In Bangladesh, 85% of young people study climate change in school (this is higher than in any other South Asian country) and 95% of young people want to learn more. 70% of young people are concerned about climate change (also higher than any other South Asian country) and 94% of young people want to make a difference but feel they need more support.

## Question 3:

**What global initiatives, national initiatives or local initiatives have, in your opinion, been most successful in engaging young people in efforts to tackle climate change and what aspects of these initiatives have been key to their success?**

- The Government of Bangladesh has introduced a number of laws, regulations and programmes designed to mitigate the effects of climate change. It has taken a proactive approach to the issue and has fiscal policies in place to encourage sustainable consumption and production.
- NGOs, university societies and academic institutions in Bangladesh are encouraging young people to get involved with climate actions by arranging workshops, seminars, innovation fairs and competitions on climate change and environment-related problems.
- Of particular note is International Centre for Climate Change and Development's "*Re-think & Innovate for a Sustainable Environment*" mentorship programme. The programme focuses on providing young people with a grounding in climate science and sustainability issues, as well as mentoring on project design and implementation. As a critical barrier to most initiatives is support (mostly financial and technical), the programme aims to encourage the young people to identify the appropriate assistance and guidance they need to approach key stakeholders (investors/decision-makers, etc.), to propose feasible solutions and to mobilise their peers to make real changes.

# Neeshad Shafi (“NS”) Qatar



Co-Founder and Executive Director of the Arab Youth Climate Movement, Qatar (“AYCMQ”), NS was recognised as one of the ‘World’s 100 Most Influential People in Climate Policy 2019’ by Apolitical. NS is also the Curator at Global Shapers (Doha Hub) with the World Economic Forum. He was named by the European Commission as Peace Ambassador to the OYW Summit in 2017 and, in 2018, was interviewed on Al Gore’s 24 Hours of Reality- According to Climate Reality. In January 2020, NS featured in QLife Magazine (published by the Government Communications Office of the State of Qatar) as one of 10 influential people in Qatar who have pushed the boundaries and represented Qatar on the world stage.

## Question 1:

**What impact is climate change having on you personally, on your peers and community?**

- Key areas of risk include increasing temperature, water and migration. On June 22, the city of Nuwaiseeb (Kuwait) recorded the highest temperature in the world 53.2 deg. C. The Middle East is host to 70% of the world’s most water stressed countries, leading to loss of life and local agriculture, which in turn causes political, social and economic instability.
- A number of the 11.4m internally displaced people in the Middle East are “climate refugees”, however, as this term is not recognised in international law, they are not afforded the same protections as refugees fleeing conflict or persecution.

## Question 2:

**To what extent are young people able to make their views on climate change heard to local, national and international decision-makers, or hold them to account for the decisions they make on adaptation and mitigation measures?**

- Young people have shifted to alternative methods of activism for fostering political engagement: protesting and sharing views and information online allows young people to express their opinions and formulate demands for action and change.
- Low voter turnout and political party membership suggests a belief that political engagement does not truly allow people to influence processes and affect outcomes. Such beliefs are particularly prevalent in disadvantaged groups and communities and this trend should be taken into account when designing strategies.

## Question 3:

**What global initiatives, national initiatives or local initiatives have, in your opinion, been most successful in engaging young people in efforts to tackle climate change and what aspects of these initiatives have been key to their success?**

- The AYCMQ recognises the importance of engaging youth by creating and implementing effective and tailored programmes and projects. Projects should have specific, targeted, policy goals such as increasing the influence of young people within a specific institution, or increasing access rates to a particular online tool or platform.
- Youth participation must feel meaningful and the youth should feel comfortable collaborating with facilitators, such as government agencies or academics, and reassured that their views will be taken seriously. This can be achieved by working with trusted community partners who understand the importance of gathering quality feedback and of sustained participation and engagement.
- In order to make a project successful, there needs to be clear, transparent and timely feedback to enable participants to understand the impact of their contribution on the decision-making process.

## Nicolau Miguel (“NM”) Angola



NM serves as a program assistant at the Silencing the Guns Unit, Political Affairs, Peace and Security Department of the African Union Commission, working towards the aspirations of the AU Agenda 2063 (for a Prosperous, Peaceful and Integrated Africa). In 2019 he participated in the Mandela Washington Fellowship program in the United States and was also part of the African Presidential Leadership Program in Cairo. He has recently been appointed a Peace Ambassador by the European Commission. In September this year he was one of two Angolans at the Youth4Climate Event in Milan.

### Question 1:

**What impact is climate change having on you personally, on your peers and community?**

- Youth (aged 10- 24yrs) comprise approximately 60% of the African population. The youth are particularly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change due, partly, to their limited ownership of productive assets and unemployment (or limited job opportunities).

### Question 2:

**To what extent are young people able to make their views on climate change heard to local, national and international decision-makers, or hold them to account for the decisions they make on adaptation and mitigation measures?**

- NM notes the increasing global acknowledgment of the role of youth in the fight against climate change, both in policy formulation, implementation and transitioning to a green global economy.
- The Sustainable Development Solutions Network- Youth Report (2017) indicates that youth have voiced concerns about transforming their ideas into solutions. It also indicated that scientific goals (relating to biodiversity, climate action and oceans) could present a barrier to youth participation.
- Africans, particularly in rural areas, are struggling in the face of increasingly unpredictable weather. Communities need greater information, resources and locally relevant practical information to help them adapt and respond to climate change- effort should be invested in developing appropriate climate change terminology in local African languages so that climate change can be discussed and explained in locally relevant ways.
- NM notes the importance of developing youth knowledge and expertise, in particular: (i) explaining the Paris Agreement and UNFCCC; (ii) supporting stakeholders to share information and expertise; (iii) sharing experience and successful approaches to finance innovation; (iv) providing diverse and inclusive platforms for youth to showcase successful innovations and initiatives to combat climate change; (v) providing opportunities to young participants, entrepreneurs, journalists and students to directly address high-level speakers on key questions.

### Question 3:

**What global initiatives, national initiatives or local initiatives have, in your opinion, been most successful in engaging young people in efforts to tackle climate change and what aspects of these initiatives have been key to their success?**

- A Monitoring and Evaluation framework would be a helpful tool for tracking the performance and impact of specific climate goals, actions and outputs.
- COVID-19 recovery plans present an unprecedented opportunity to implement a green recovery, through initiatives such as the Green New Deal, which involves allocating recovery funds in a way that is compatible with the climate targets set out in the Paris Agreement.



## Paula Sleiman (“PS”) Brazil



PS is a passionate advocate of the environment and education. Born and raised in the Amazon rainforest in Serra dos Caraj, PS grew up surrounded by immense trees and incredible animals (including, monkeys, deer and jaguars). PS has volunteered since the age of 10, working to improve access to education, and she is currently Lean Leader at GE Renewable Energy she has also helped to implement a waste management system in her conservation area.

### Question 1:

**What impact is climate change having on you personally, on your peers and community?**

- PS notes that while the privileged young people in Brazil are well educated on the issues presented by climate change, and are infuriated to see the destruction of its main preservation areas (such as the Amazon), over 50% of the young generation are from poor communities who are not aware of the risks. She notes that climate change is the second reason for mental distress in her age group, the first being politicians!
- Poorer communities are less well educated in relation to climate change but feel its effects most keenly; losing homes, purchasing power and harvests.
- Brazil has developed on a culture of exploitation of its natural resources, the current Government acts against environmental causes by approving laws to reduce preservation countermeasures. Brazil is currently facing an energy crisis. It relies on hydropower; however, as the volume of rainfall and riparian vegetation decreases, demand from industry and harvests increases. The President has advised people to take fewer- and colder- showers.

### Question 2:

**To what extent are young people able to make their views on climate change heard to local, national and international decision-makers, or hold them to account for the decisions they make on adaptation and mitigation measures?**

- PS suggests that youth voices could only be heard (i) through politicians, or (ii) through NGOs and private initiatives. While it is possible to participate in local voting sessions and public consultations, they are sporadic and are not readily advertised.
- Medium term changes can be brought about by the younger generation influencing those around them to make better decisions, including during elections, and attracting young people to politics (e.g. Tabata Amaral – the 27 year old Brazilian politician who is Federal Deputy for the Socialist Brazilian Party for the state of Sao Paulo).

### Question 3:

**What global initiatives, national initiatives or local initiatives have, in your opinion, been most successful in engaging young people in efforts to tackle climate change and what aspects of these initiatives have been key to their success?**

- PS notes the power of organisations, such as OYW, to give youth a voice and to encourage them to use it to make an impact on their local communities.
- PS has created an internal office hub at GE Renewable Energy and is helping to foster sustainability and boost the company's efforts towards carbon neutrality. She notes that she is particularly proud of the little effects that she sees she has on her surroundings; influencing colleagues, family and friends to change their consumption habits.

## Punit Girdhar (“PG”) India



PG is a Regulatory Writer at Novartis Healthcare Pvt. Ltd. in India, working on new drug development. He is a member of the Novartis employee engagement council and, as a council member, is responsible for leading multiple Environmental, Health and Education projects. In his spare time, PG works with non-profit organisations to help them find ways innovative ways to tackle issues. He has been recognised by his leadership team for his work in the social field and contributions to his community during COVID-19.

### Question 1:

**What impact is climate change having on you personally, on your peers and community?**

- PG has experienced, as a result of climate change, (i) rising temperatures and subsequent problems relating to heat waves, (ii) increasing food prices, (iii) increasing outbreaks of water-borne illnesses, and (iv) increasing demand for electronic power for air conditioning which impacts on economic wellbeing.
- Climate change is brought about by the industrial development of developing countries. The migration of people to cities leads to issues with, (i) agricultural soil (erosion, decline in organic matter, salinization, etc.), (ii) loss of biodiversity and eco systems (e.g. through deforestation), and (iii) increasing transmission of infectious diseases.

### Question 2:

**To what extent are young people able to make their views on climate change heard to local, national and international decision-makers, or hold them to account for the decisions they make on adaptation and mitigation measures?**

- Youth in India have access to a digital platform where they can submit innovative ideas to obtain support from the Government.
- Most young people who are innovative have the right mind-set but lack time because of their daily work schedules. PG notes that some companies are offering support to their employees through Corporate Social Responsibility programmes.

### Question 3:

**What global initiatives, national initiatives or local initiatives have, in your opinion, been most successful in engaging young people in efforts to tackle climate change and what aspects of these initiatives have been key to their success?**

- The Indian Government has been prioritising environmental campaigns and initiatives, focusing on reducing CO2 emissions by supporting start-ups to convert petrol and diesel cars to electric and hydrogen-fuelled ones. It has also installed solar park areas on lake and desert areas to generate and support electricity.
- In India, climate change is being combatted by NGOs focusing on tree plantation, waterbody restoration, community outreach and education for students.
- Each year the Government sponsors an innovation week, during which innovators present their ideas. The Government has established a start-up incubator to support youth projects and patent and copyright processes are being streamlined to boost innovation.
- In 2008, the National Action Plan on Climate Change was successfully launched by the Government in an effort to combat climate change. The initiative focused on eight key areas, including solar power; enhanced energy efficiency, sustainable agriculture and strategic knowledge. The initiative has developed in line with changing needs and is predominantly run by the younger generation under the control of the central Government.

## Redwan Reham (“RR”) Bangladesh



RR was born and raised in Bangladesh, recognized worldwide as one of the most vulnerable countries to global climate change. RR recognises that we need to advance some essential policies in order to adopt a unified approach to tackling climate change. RR has recently graduated high-school and is on his gap year working for the Youth Policy Forum (“YPF”), a platform of young Bangladeshi people from all over the world interested in policymaking and reforms. He has already worked on a document presented to the Parliament of Bangladesh and wants to continue with this work.

### Question 1:

**What impact is climate change having on you personally, on your peers and community?**

- Bangladesh has a history of extreme climate events which claim lives and destroy past development gains. RR lives in Dhaka where the air and water quality are so bad that they are forced to use purifiers.
- Bangladesh is threatened by three different geo-climatic zones: (i) droughts and floods in the north, (ii) cyclones and tidal surges in the south, and (iii) river erosion and floods in the middle of the country.
- Flooding severely impacts on the ability of children to access schooling. The cyclone Sidr damaged 589 schools in 12 districts, the cost of repairing and resupplying the schools was approximately USD85m.
- Extreme weather disasters result in forced migration, further disrupting the education system, creating civil conflict and an increasing necessity for children to participate in agricultural labour. This undermines efforts to increase education provision and boost economic and human development.

### Question 2:

**To what extent are young people able to make their views on climate change heard to local, national and international decision-makers, or hold them to account for the decisions they make on adaptation and mitigation measures?**

- National architecture for climate change response is relatively robust. There are several national and international NGOs operating in the country, the National Disaster Management Bureau has developed a mechanism for early warnings, crisis management and post-crisis rehabilitation (including education provision), however, there needs to be a shift from response mode to adaptation and mitigation mode.
- RR notes the importance of harnessing the younger generation’s social and environmental awareness, knowledge and energy to steer us towards a low carbon climate-resilient future.
- RR also highlights how micro efforts (e.g. recycling, tree planting and getting involved in campaigns) can have a macro effect on our surroundings and the planet.

### Question 3:

**What global initiatives, national initiatives or local initiatives have, in your opinion, been most successful in engaging young people in efforts to tackle climate change and what aspects of these initiatives have been key to their success?**

- Activism (e.g. striking) can be the answer; Greta T’s #FridaysForFuture is a good example of this.
- Global events organised by the UN Joint Framework Initiative on Children, Youth and Climate Change are helpful in giving youths a sense of empowerment, trust and reliability. Similarly, organisations such as Youth UNESCO Climate Action Network and the UN Youth Climate Summit are effective.

## Sughra Bukhari (“SB”) Pakistan



SB was shortlisted for the Bracken Bower Prize 2020, an award (hosted by the Financial Times and McKinsey & Company) that recognises the best business book proposals of the year by business writers under 35 years old. SB's proposed book, entitled “*A Master's In Pandemic*” aims to explore how the global pandemic has exacerbated the debilitated state of the existing universal education ecosystem that is set to fail the leaders and innovators of tomorrow.

### Question 1:

**What impact is climate change having on you personally, on your peers and community?**

- SB notes that rapid urbanisation and accelerated industrialisation have led to mass deforestation and disruption to the natural way of life. This has exacerbated poor living conditions and low hygiene practices.
- Pakistan is not equipped to deal with this threat, most of its population is vulnerable to climate change but they lack the awareness or resources to make the necessary lifestyle changes.
- According to the World Health Organisation, global mortality in 2004 as a result of climate change was around 141,000 and 85% of these were children.
- A US poll suggested that over a third of Americans under 45 either do not have children, or expect to have fewer children than they might otherwise, because they are worried about climate change.

### Question 2:

**To what extent are young people able to make their views on climate change heard to local, national and international decision-makers, or hold them to account for the decisions they make on adaptation and mitigation measures?**

- Older generations have expressed concern about climate change but the onus remains on younger generations to bring about the requisite changes. Despite this, the authority to implement strategies and policies that are critical to these changes lies with the older generation.
- Social media is used very effectively. However, while it expands the reach of voices, it lacks impact. This is in part due to the lack of accountability that comes with it.

### Question 3:

**What global initiatives, national initiatives or local initiatives have, in your opinion, been most successful in engaging young people in efforts to tackle climate change and what aspects of these initiatives have been key to their success?**

- The Government of Pakistan implemented the “*Ten Billion Trees Tsunami*” programme in partnership with the UN Environment Programme. The project aims to plant ten billion trees by 2023 and has recently planted its billionth tree! SB notes that the most effective initiatives have been very simple but have rallied people from all walks of life (the PM planted a tree, as did children across the country).
- SB suggests that district champions should be assigned to run awareness campaigns and to mobilise people across all age groups to take part.
- Incentive schemes should be set up to ensure participation from all strata of the community – not just the privileged. SB notes that until the marginalised and low income groups of society are involved, the desired impact of change will not be generated.
- SB suggests that youth enfranchisement initiatives should be backed by the UN so that best practices are implemented on a global, national and local level.



## Tolulope Aina (“TA”) Nigeria



Founder of Tolulope Food and Farms, a social enterprise and nutrition based company focused on curbing malnutrition challenges in Nigeria and across Africa through staple foods production. TA served as President of Youth it's Advocates Nigeria between April 2019- August 2020, an initiative focused on sustainably increasing women and youth participation in agriculture in Nigeria. As President she spearheaded three major projects with over 620 physical participants and over 10,000 virtual beneficiaries.

### Question 1:

**What impact is climate change having on you personally, on your peers and community?**

- As TA was growing-up, she witnessed the decline of agriculture in rural areas and the rise in food prices. Nigeria has experienced floods in the Lagos, dry spells in the north leading to the migration of cattle herders (and their subsequent illegal encroachment on farms), inconsistent rainfall and shrinking bodies of water as well as malnutrition, poor sanitation for girls, little access to education, thriving tropical diseases and biotic stress.

### Question 2:

**To what extent are young people able to make their views on climate change heard to local, national and international decision-makers, or hold them to account for the decisions they make on adaptation and mitigation measures?**

### Question 3:

**What global initiatives, national initiatives or local initiatives have, in your opinion, been most successful in engaging young people in efforts to tackle climate change and what aspects of these initiatives have been key to their success?**

- From her perspective as an advocate for agriculture, TA sees the greatest challenge of climate change as its effect on food systems. She has been working to tackle this through youth and women empowerment initiatives and capacity building through online and offline physical training.
- TA believes that the climate issues stem from the lack of stringent regulations or sanctions to hold nations to account. Developing nations accept funding to tackle climate change but without well- tailored strategic implementation plans in place.
- Nigeria is a signatory to the Paris agreement but its indices are not ambitious enough.
- Youth need a seat at the decision-making table, TA notes that there is little that we can do if we do not come together (including youth) and promote greater cooperation, ambition and more credibility to achieve a sustainable and resilient future.



# Aisling McCaffrey

## One Young World Ambassador Ireland

### Part I – Impact of Climate Change on Youth

1. What Impact is climate change having on you personally, on your peers and community?

Climate change is one of the biggest global threats of our generation. The Covid-19 pandemic has brought an increased focus on a green recovery and in my view, accelerated conversations around climate change and in turn climate action. According to the Carbon Brief (a UK based website covering the latest developments in climate science, climate policy and energy policy), we as young people are likely to spend a substantial portion of our lives contributing to climate mitigation. To combat rising sea levels, record-breaking global temperatures, and achieve the Paris Agreement's goal of restricting global warming to well below 2°C, we will have to decrease our lifetime carbon emissions by eight times that of our grandparents<sup>1</sup>.

On a personal level, I often feel like I am walking a tightrope between finding the energy to take action and feeling absolutely helpless. At times, I feel like I am carrying a great burden that not everyone is willing to bear and as a result there are days where I would love nothing more than to stay in bed and pretend climate change doesn't exist. It appears that I am not alone in battling this new found eco-anxiety. In an age of social media and globalisation, this generation have unprecedented levels of awareness and exposure to information surrounding climate change. A global survey was recently conducted of 10,000 people aged between 16-25 across 19 different countries. It found that 60% of young people approached said that they felt very worried or extremely worried about climate change and 75% indicated that *"the future is frightening"*<sup>2</sup>.

Over the last few years I have had an increased focus on my individual impact and as a result made a number of adjustments to my lifestyle. I prioritise the use of sustainable products, avoid fast fashion and offset my travel emissions. I seek out conversations on climate change with colleagues, friends and family members although this is not always met with enthusiasm. As a result, I have actively sought out forums to further educate myself on climate action and connect with others who are keen to effect change. I take great comfort in speaking to people who are passionate about climate change but more than that I find that I am desperately seeking reassurance that people actually care.

In the last 18 months the topic of climate change has also impacted my professional life. The increased regulation relating to the measuring of climate risk (specifically in the financial services industry) has resulted in the development of a new service line to assist clients with their sustainability advisory needs. More recently, I have been appointed to coordinate a global working group with a view to developing baseline sustainability training for member firms across our network working alongside colleagues in Sweden, US, Israel, Australia and South Africa to

name a few. On one hand, this has been a positive experience for me as it has allowed me to deep dive into a topic I am passionate about and find synergies between my work life and core values. At the same time, I have been exposed to varying attitudes of both clients and colleagues in addressing climate related issues. For some it is about doing what is 'right' but for a large majority in the industry it is purely about being compliant. For me, this has highlighted a significant difference in mind set which appears to be highly correlated with generational differences. From my peers, there is a strong sense of frustration verging on anger that we are being forced to live in a world that has been damaged primarily due to the carelessness of previous generations. In contrast, from my interactions with older generations, there is often a sense of detachment and reluctance to shoulder the burden of climate change responsibility, perhaps due to historic lack of communication on the topic and the complexity of the subject matter.

As an island, Ireland is getting warmer and wetter as a direct result of climate change. According to the Climate Status Report for Ireland 2020, rainfall has increased by 6% in the 30-year period leading up to 2018, compared to the previous 30 years and air temperature has risen by almost 1°C in the last 120 years, with 15 of the top 20 warmest years on record having occurred since 1990<sup>3</sup>. As a community we need to adapt to ensure that our towns do not get flooded and our road and rail infrastructure can withstand excess rainfall or high temperatures. As a nation with a large farming community we also need to ensure our agricultural systems have the capacity to adapt to changing climate scenarios.

At present, there are a number of initiatives in place or in progress that seek to combat the threat of climate change in Ireland.

A Global Climate Observing System ("GCOS") national committee was established in Ireland in early 2018. GCOS-Ireland works to ensure the sustained provision of reliable physical, chemical and biological observations and data records for the total climate system – across the atmospheric, oceanic and terrestrial domains, including hydrological and carbon cycles, for Ireland.

Utilising this research, the Irish Government published the Climate Action Plan in June 2019 which detailed 183 actions, broken down into 619 individual measures required to meet our EU 2030 targets and put Ireland on the right trajectory towards net zero emissions by 2050. The plan outlined the current state of play across key sectors including Electricity, Transport, Built Environment, Industry and Agriculture and charts a course towards ambitious decarbonisation targets. As part of the Plan, a Climate Action Delivery Board was established within the Department of the Taoiseach to ensure coordinated delivery of the actions in the plan and hold each department and public

body accountable for its implementation. Implementation rates under the Climate Action Plan 2019 have fluctuated on a quarter-by-quarter basis. The overall implementation rate to the end of Q4 2020 stands at 78%, with 391 measures completed out of a total of 500 measures due<sup>4</sup>.

The new Programme for Government was published in June 2020 and outlined Ireland's commitment to a green post pandemic recovery, including a more ambitious climate target of an average 7% emissions reduction per year to 2030. Intense planning and analysis is now underway to outline how that step-up in ambition will be met in the Climate Action Plan 2021. A public consultation was held this Spring to engage with citizens and stakeholders on ideas for collectively addressing the climate crisis and it is expected that the full Plan will be launched in tandem with the renewed National Development Plan this Autumn. Alongside this, the Climate Action and Low Carbon Development (Amendment) Bill 2021 was enacted in order to support Ireland's transition to Net Zero and achieve a climate neutral economy by no later than 2050.

From an awareness and communication point of view, there are a number of initiatives currently in play at a national and local level, for example:

- Green Schools – an environmental education programme that encourages long-term positive environmental action
- Climate Ireland Portal – a website providing information, advice and support on climate adaptation in Ireland alongside up to date information on Ireland's climate
- Climate Ready Program- a five-year national climate upskilling initiative for Irish businesses
- Climate Jargon Buster – a website designed to explain common climate action terms in an accessible manner

## Part 2 – enfranchisement of youth in mitigation and adaptation

2. To what extent are young people able to make their views on climate change heard to local, national and international decision-makers, or hold them to account for the decisions they make on adaptation and mitigation measures?

At present, I believe the level of engagement of youth in decision-making forums is largely inadequate. In October 2020, ECO-UNESCO undertook the Youth Climate Justice Survey<sup>5</sup> in collaboration with SpunOut.ie to establish how young people in Ireland feel about climate change. 1,043 young people took part in the online survey and when asked about the barriers to tackling climate change, 54.6% of respondents indicated they felt that they were not being listened to. In addition, 45.7% felt that a lack of skills were a barrier to taking climate action and notably 36% noted they did not know how to contact politicians and key decision-makers. These figures clearly indicate a failure to actively engage the Youth of Ireland in the fight against climate change. It also highlights the importance of young people feeling empowered to take action in ways that feel tangible, where they feel they are having an impact at local, national and global levels. The National Dialogue on Climate Action ("NDCA") is a national forum for collaboration between citizens, communities, youth, the Irish Government, and relevant agencies on climate change that was piloted between 2017 and 2019. The initiative was designed to inform people on the opportunities and challenges involved in addressing climate change, motivate them to action, and empower them to participate in the co-design of supporting national climate policy and plans<sup>6</sup>. A new structure is currently being developed for the NDCA which will hopefully go some of the way to addressing the lack of youth engagement highlighted by the aforementioned survey.

3. What global initiatives, national initiatives or local initiatives have, in your opinion, been most successful in engaging young people in efforts to tackle climate change and what aspects of these initiatives have been key to their success?

In my opinion, we need to support initiatives that try to close the gap between policy makers and youth and demystify the decision-making process. At the end of 2019, the International Telecommunications Union (ITU) estimated that just over half of the world population was using the internet with this proportion increasing to over 69% among youth<sup>7</sup>. I believe successful initiatives have harnessed this connectivity, encouraged collaboration and facilitated access to key people of influence. In relation to youth engagement, one of the most successful global initiatives in recent times is Fridays For Future, the youth-led and organised global climate strike movement originally started by Greta Thunberg. Since it began in 2018, over 15 million people have participated in climate strikes across the globe. Global platforms like One Young World and Global Shapers are also good examples of organisations that have successfully engaged and empowered youth to work together on global issues.

In order to be successful, I believe there must be a concerted effort to amplify the voices of those young people who are directly impacted by climate change. In that respect, I welcome the recent announcement by UN Secretary-General António Guterres of a Youth Advisory Group on Climate Change and hope that this will be replicated across other governmental bodies. In addition to this, I believe that strategic partnerships with influential brands across business, fashion, sport and music to promote climate action are key to engaging the youth of today.

Young people are key contributors to the advancement of climate action by designing innovative solutions and technologies that will contribute to a green recovery. It is critical that young people are provided with structured educational support, access to key decision-making forums, tools to facilitate collaboration and financial aid to develop these solutions where appropriate. In addition, the impact of eco-anxiety on youth needs to be taken seriously and adequate supports must be put in place to address same.

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.carbonbrief.org/analysis-why-children-must-emit-eight-times-less-co2-than-their-grandparents>

<sup>2</sup> Hickman, C. et al. Preprint at [https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract\\_id=3918955](https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=3918955)

<sup>3</sup> [https://www.epa.ie/publications/research/climate-change/Research\\_Report\\_386.pdf](https://www.epa.ie/publications/research/climate-change/Research_Report_386.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> <https://assets.gov.ie/136661/92c35cd6-e77d-4b81-8132-dac842b89339.pdf>

<sup>5</sup> <https://ecounesco.ie/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/CJ-2020-Survey-Report-March.pdf>

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/4bf2c-national-dialogue-on-climate-action-ndca/>

<sup>7</sup> ITU, 2019 <https://www.itu.int/en/ITU-D/Statistics/Dashboards/Pages/IFF.aspx>



# Anna Yang & Tanay Raghavendra

## One Young World Ambassador

### India

'Once you live in Bihar, you won't want to live anywhere else'. It's a popular refrain in my home state, offered habitually by its residents. For although this great sense of nostalgia and romanticism is characteristic of our state, and linked intrinsically with our sense of pride, its most common utilisation is in muffling a crippled reality – an emotional band-aid on a bullet wound, if you will.

Bihar is India's third most populous state. Bihar faces a huge battle against poverty with up to 70 percent of its people subsisting below the poverty line.<sup>1,2</sup> Furthermore, almost 90 percent of the population lives rurally in villages.<sup>3</sup> In recent years, Bihar has made enormous strides in righting the ship, but the journey still remains a very long one.

Given this tenuous canvas, the effects of climate change both exacerbate existing problems and create novel ones. The state was already unique in its vulnerability to hydro-meteorological disasters, with the northern part of Bihar having often faced floods, whilst the south is prone to droughts. Nevertheless, climate change is turning more extreme climate events into commonalities, with incidences of landslides, flash floods, and extended droughts all on the rise. 14 out of the 50 most vulnerable districts to climate change in India are in Bihar.<sup>4</sup> Annual patterns of sudden drops in winter temperatures and extended dry spells during the monsoon have become more common across the state. These changes have meant increased economic hardships for most people, with impaired crop yields affecting the income of a large group of people. However, those who have just lost income because of climate change are still fortunate. For those less fortunate, climate change has meant forcible displacement. This is the biggest threat that the people of Bihar face because of climate change. Even as I write this, the Koshi river is flooding the Khagaria region, uprooting countless families.

Bihar is India's most flood-prone state, with 76% of the Northern population living under the recurring threat of flood devastation.<sup>5</sup> Climate change and deforestation have cemented these events as an annual certainty, as well as increasing their destructive strength. The floods have taken thousands of human lives, with the reported governmental figure standing at 9,500 since publication started in 1979.<sup>6</sup> Moreover, for every one person tragically losing their lives there are hundreds more displaced from their homes. 32% of all homes in Bihar are constructed from grass, reeds, or similar materials, and only 0.1% are built from stronger permanent materials such as stone concrete; therefore, for the overwhelming majority, their home

is the first thing lost when a flood descends. The 2020 floods<sup>7</sup> alone displaced over 7 million people.<sup>8</sup> Furthermore, the paucity of infrastructure results in millions living in makeshift shelters, that are sometimes no more than a polythene sheet over their heads. They are left without their life savings, their house, their community and are left to fend for themselves.

I have witnessed this first hand. When I was in sixth grade, a new kid moved into my locality. His name was Biju. Biju's parents were responsible for cleaning our colony, and selling milk to each house. They had shifted from the Buxar district in Bihar. Biju quickly became a fixture in our friend group, and used to comment on how different things were in Patna – on how in Buxar, he was used to having to walk to school in knee-deep water during the monsoon season. At 11, we did not look at this story with anything other than fascination with what it must be like to walk in such deep water. A couple of years passed. Biju used to visit his home district and extended family every monsoon season. This particular year, he did not return for quite a while. My parents heard news that Buxar had been completely flooded, and in the absence of communication, we all began to grow concerned for Biju and his family. Then one night our phone rang.

On the other end, it was Biju's father sobbing. He told us how the floods had destroyed their house and all their life savings. How they had not a penny to their name; how they had nothing to show for the years of strenuous labour they'd endured at jobs with meagre wages. How Biju's grandmother had been seriously injured in the displacement and now could not walk. How they could not afford the transport back to Patna.

Biju and his family lived in a state of limbo under a national highway bridge. They only had enough to allow them a house made of tarp and bamboo.

After another seven months, they were finally able to return home to Patna. Biju saw his friends, now a year ahead of him in life. His parents saw the new colony cleaner and milkman. Biju was not the same person. He did not talk as much, and hardly ever came out of his house. The trauma from the experience had carved him out.

People close to me have had to subsist in jerry-built boats because of forcible displacement. Friends and classmates have had no choice but to discontinue their education, with the full knowledge of the shutters it puts on their future. Their parents have become unemployed and destitute, as the foundations they have built for their children are swept away. I have witnessed the caprices of climate change take away or change entirely the lives of people in a matter of seconds. I have felt the human impact of such disasters dearly throughout my life.

The physical and mental consequences of forcible displacement are demanding and immediate, particularly to the youth, whose future prospects are almost always inevitably hollowed – it is obvious that addressing and mitigating its impacts is essential to building a climate-resilient future.

In an effort to combat this threat, I joined Nostos Homes, a youth-led non-profit that innovates and builds collapsible, modular, and secure temporary shelters to house people immediately after a disaster and give them a home for the intermediate term.

The idea behind Nostos Homes is to go beyond just providing a roof over one's head - it's to help create a community and a sense of psychological safety. We want these homes to act as a mechanism to help restore privacy, personal dignity and stability in times of crisis.

Our homes are based on the concept of delivering the entire package - they include living spaces, sanitation access and everything else needed to get someone the foundation to live a good life. This is all folded into a small, easy-to-ship and easy-to-deploy module. Our simple design and materials also give us the capability to help people in the most remote locations in the world.

The flexible design of our units also allows us to adjust to local deployment contexts in the manufacturing process, thus further differentiating between them and normal shelters. They can be customized, expanded or re-oriented as per the needs of local communities. Moreover, our houses can be repurposed to create medical centers, schools and community spaces.

A single Nostos unit provides over 32000 people nights. We're able to do this all for only 11 cents a day per shelter - an amount directly comparable with the amortized cost of canvas tents, but with a significant increase in effective value.

Our aim is to provide Biju a house to sleep in. We want him to go to schools built through repurposed Nostos shelters. We want his parents to get treatment in a modular medical centre. We want them to return to jobs in the community our houses build. Our aim is to protect families and people who have had their futures snatched away because of climate disasters.

A big positive in the fight against climate change is the rise of youth organisations like Nostos Homes. Through initiating partnerships gratis with state governments, we are able to support a curated route to alleviating one of our country's most formidable problems.

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## Amira Odeh

# One Young World Ambassador Puerto Rico

1. Climate change is already affecting my country in ways that are harmful to my community and eventually my own life. In the past years we have seen more frequent droughts and more intense hurricanes, which causes lives to be lost, destroys my community's infrastructure and also affects the local economy, causing small businesses to close and people needing to move to be able to find employment.

At a personal level, I know that climate will eventually affect my physical health when the time comes to be exposed to more severe extreme weather disasters. However, at the moment many in my generation, myself included, have our mental wellbeing affected by feelings of climate anxiety and feeling like we need to prepare now to try and be safe in upcoming years. We know that we will suffer from frequent hurricanes, droughts, disease outbreaks and possible scarcity during our lifetime and that impacts the way we perceive our capacity to achieve our dreams and the lifestyle we hope to have in the future.

2. I believe that youth certainly have been able to send a message to decision-makers about climate related concerns. This has been possible thanks to the hard work done by organizers and the support of members of the press and the public. However, there is still a large gap between decision-makers listening and them actually applying the actions really needed to keep the younger generations safe.

It is time to take seriously the concerns of youth voices to include these in real and tangible systems that urgently create the necessary changes to mitigate emissions and adapt vulnerable communities.

3. From the global climate strikes to local campaigns that are shutting down fossil fuel infrastructure around the world, youth leaders in these spaces have created incredible impacts that have greatly advanced the conversation around climate and achieved some very important actions to reduce emissions.

Initiatives like this are successful because they follow youth leadership and they allow youth to expand their leadership talents. Successful moments will always offer space to train new leaders and will trust people to apply their knowledge and achieve their goals.

# Belyndar Rikimani

## One Young World Ambassador

### Solomon Islands

#### I. What impact is climate change having on you personally, on your peers and community?

In answering this question, you may wish to consider:

- Both the direct and the indirect impacts of local, regional and global climate change;
- Whether youth are differently impacted by climate change from older generations and if so, how;
- What you perceive to be the greatest threat to your community as a result of climate change; — The current impacts of the perceived threats of future climate change; and
- Whether your community and/or your national government has implemented any initiatives to combat this threat.

For the Pacific Islands, Climate Change has affected our people in so many ways and has really shifted our livelihood and lifestyle in a different level compared to what our ancestors have lived in before by posing a great existential threat towards our Pacific way of life. And it will continue to exacerbate other severe challenges that has already affected the Pacific region. There has been a great deal of researches that have come up with similar and concrete consensus and evidences showing the evidential detrimental impacts of climate change on specifically Oceans but unfortunately what that is lacking in many of the studies were on how this impacts will have on the Pacific Islanders livelihoods, security, culture and well – being. There has been very less consideration on having to see the evidences for Pacific Islanders to be better prepare and adapt for the uncertain future that we will be facing.

As a young indigenous Pacific woman from the Solomon Islands, I saw and felt the firsthand impacts of climate change at my home island where I saw how the rising sea level has really impacted many of coastal communities in my home island and some families were being forced to move out and relocate to higher grounds in searching for a safer place to live for their families and it is truly saddening to see our people leaving their lands and islands without any option but were faced with the reality of the increasing of climate change given the very little contribution that they did towards the environment. Climate Change has really posed a great threat towards the livelihood of our present generation and we are worried of the severe impacts of climate crisis that our future generation will be facing in the coming years.

Many young people of the Pacific today have seen how this climate crisis will surely affect their future. They have lived, felt the changes that took place and they saw the firsthand effects of the climate crisis around them and that had prompt many young people today to take up the initiative to strongly be one of the voice advocating for leaders to address the greatest issue that affects the humanity of the young people of this current and future generation.

For communities in the Solomon Islands and also other Pacific Island Countries, sea level rise will be known to be as one of the greatest threat that will affect most of the Pacific Population. For instance, in the Roviana Region of the Western Province are very vulnerable to increasing temperatures, rain falls and sea level rise<sup>1</sup> many islanders are now looking into effective ways to build resilience into the communities. Most of the coastal communities surrounding the Roviana Island are at the risk of being flooded by huge storm surges that poses threat towards their people. And now these communities are now working together in collaboration with Scientists and local organisations to put together an adaptation strategy work plan that could be a way forward with mitigating the impacts of climate change:

- Map marine and coastal habitats and access their vulnerability to climate change.
- Access the health of coral reefs, sea grasses and mangroves.
- Survey of coral bleaching and disease.
- Measure the water quality and water flow into lagoons.
- Make a documentation of the health of coastal gardens and forests.
- Lastly identifying issues that is affecting the adaptive capacity of people, and tangible ways through which to increase resilience for the people<sup>2</sup>.

#### Part 2 – Enfranchisement of youth in mitigation and adaptation

2. To what extent are young people able to make their views on climate change heard to local, national and international decision-makers, or hold them to account for the decisions they make on adaptation and mitigation measures?

In answering this question, you may wish to consider:

- What structures and processes are in place that enable young people to participate, and how effective these are?
- What obstacles young people face in participating and how these could be overcome; and
- What advantages greater youth enfranchisement would bring to understanding and action to mitigate and adapt to climate change at a local, regional and global level.



Young people today are the mechanism that drives change in many levels of decision-makings. The strength of civil society expansion into the Pacific has really provided a space and platform that youths have capitalize on to voice out their opinions to national, regional and international leaders<sup>3</sup>. Many civil society organisations have implemented an approach where they get young people to work as volunteers but engage them into capacity building trainings that will empower them with the tools they need to shape them to be strong, resilient, adjustable, adaptive and vocal on issues that matters to their future especially climate change issues. For example, 350 Pacific is one of the rising climate change movement that is focused on combating human induced climate change<sup>4</sup>. Under 350.org they have various satellite bodies that were led by young people around the world giving them the space to engage and build each other through advocacy and reform programs across the region as well as beyond. This gives youths to take initiative in leadership roles of not relying on government to make a change but showing the government what and how they can support youths in implementing change. Also the 350 Pacific based youth have used traditional methods of advocacy by involving in direct lobbying to decision-makers and facilitating demonstrations<sup>5</sup>. And from their engagements they have been recognized for their ideas of leadership that their communities held and acknowledged to be vital to influencing change in the decision-making level.<sup>6</sup>

By implementing of such practices and engagements, 350 Pacific has seen the fact that it is very important to have that sense of leadership and ownership to be embedded in communities that the youths have engaged in and also young people themselves can sense how it is important to take full ownership of and encourage leadership from the ground up as it will also give them purpose of knowing that their voices does makes a difference in all levels .

But the given the spaces, a lot of challenges were being faced by young people in making sure that their opinions and voices are taken into serious consideration by leaders and are not in vain. One of the obstacles that they face is that the ignorance by the leaders when young people share their stories. Often in some levels of decision-making, leaders see young people of not being capable enough to have a seat on the table and engage in contributing to concrete ideas and decisions and this happens in ways where the youth voices are being shadowed most of the times in consultations that were done by the leaders and stakeholders following climate change issues of the country.

Therefore given these challenges, many civil society organisations have established the action points to always make sure they identified the gaps that exists for youths in the decision-making level and they work together with leaders in filling in the gaps as a way forward for young people to contribute effectively in the decision-making level. For example, in the Solomon Islands the Honiara Youth Council have made positive development in developing leadership skills and providing great exposure for young people to decision-making to professional networks like the Solomon Islands Climate Action Network (SICAN), Pacific Islands Students Fighting Climate Change (PISFCC), Pacific Islands Climate Action Network (PICAN) and many others around the region that have well established climate networks which youths can build their personal and professional capacity and participation as emerging youth activists.

Having to provide these opportunities by the stakeholders and civil society organisations for building youth leadership in the climate arena has really empowered many young Pacific Islanders nowadays to contribute fully in climate debates of mitigation and adaptation strategy in national, regional and international dialogues and consultations. And this has also brought towards the establishment of new climate movement by many young Pacific Islanders across the region.

### **3. What global initiatives, national initiatives or local initiatives have, in your opinion, been most successful in engaging young people in efforts to tackle climate change and what aspects of these initiatives have been key to their success?**

Based from my experience as a young climate activist from the Pacific for the past 4 years, one of the successful efforts of engaging young people into tackling climate change is to provide the simple understanding of what climate change really is and give them ways forward on how youths can become active into addressing the impacts of climate change. Basically a clear approach of advocacy use in communities where young people can see themselves up skill and expose to active engagement with climate networks and civil society organisations. For example, in the Solomon Islands the Pacific Islands Students Fighting Climate Change (PISFCC) which I am the Vice President has also derived an objective aside from its main campaign which is to seek an advisory opinion from the International Court of Justice on the issues of climate change and human rights to also work towards educating youths to take ownership as custodians of their environment and look after their land. And as part of that, we engage young people into activities of tree planting, mangrove planting, hosting national dialogues with participation of young as attendees and speakers, hosting seminars in Universities and High Schools around the region.

By having these activities has really helped youth development both directly and indirectly as young people are a think tank that practically has a lot to contribute and as they are the leaders of tomorrow. They do have a lot of capacity and a lot of knowledge that we don't really utilize. Therefore it is very crucial that information are rightly shared and distributed in communities that young people understand. For the issue of climate change, it is seen now that the young people are the ones who are initiating and driving ambitious change and are strongly demanding that their voice to be heard through all levels of advocacy by strikes, dialogues, high level meetings like the UNGA or other important meetings. These has truly reflected the growing sense of optimism for change by the young people of the Pacific.

<sup>1</sup> Solomon Islanders Build Community Resilience as sea level rise, Roviana Climate Change Resilience Plan 2013- 2017, Adapting to Climate Change, Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment, Australian Government, Accessed Online 11 September 2021.

<sup>2</sup> Solomon Islanders Build Community Resilience as sea level rise, above note 1.

<sup>3</sup> Aidan Craney, Youth Leadership in Fiji and Solomon Islands: Creating Opportunities for Civic Engagement, Rationalizing Power Imbalances. p. 143.

<sup>4</sup> Aidan Craney, above note 3. P. 144.

<sup>5</sup> 350 Pacific- based youth's n.d.

<sup>6</sup> Aidan Craney, above note 3. p. 145

# Evan Barnard

## One Young World Ambassador USA

I consider a discussion of the effects of climate change on the younger generation and on populations in general to be a better use of this submission than a more minimal personal account of climate effects on me and my immediate environment. I write this, however, from the perspective of a young person.

Climate change is undoubtedly the greatest issue of our time, and of the future. A simple reference to the “*code red for humanity*” labeling in Assessment Report 6 by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change suggests that the world’s scientists believe the human population is in a grave situation with accelerating anthropogenically augmented climate change. As a non-partisan think tank Research Fellow working in the field of climate security and a graduate student studying natural resources and sustainable development, I must believe that there is a potential positive outlook and that we, as a global population and society, have the potential will to stop short of the ecological and climate tipping points beyond which there may be no return to safe inhabitation of the planet. I do believe it is possible to avert the worst effects of rapid climate change, but it will not be a simple task. Not simple, but absolutely necessary for today’s younger generations that will live their lives in increasingly extreme climatic conditions, and also for the future generations that have never known an atmospheric carbon dioxide concentration less than 400 parts per million.

If the younger generations must carry the weight of the Anthropocene upon our shoulders like Atlas, then climate action is not a matter of when, but how quickly can it be mobilized and accomplished. The more of a role that youth can take, the better our future will be. Youth should not be solely responsible for the inevitable policy heavy lifting – if we wait until we have our way in political office, then it will be too late. Young people, however, understand that incremental and cumulative, collective action can pay off longitudinally. I present below evidence for such youth action and longitudinal progress.

### Part I – Impact of Climate Change on Youth

In security parlance, climate change is a threat multiplier. Climate change itself is unlikely the sole cause of threats like human migration, armed conflict, or violent extremism, but climate change can and in most cases does exacerbate these threats. Drought can induce agricultural failure which can spur human migration; terrorist groups can weaponize scarce water resources as a method of coercion. With accelerating climate change, these threats to human security continue to worsen and increase in prevalence. Young people today will live in a world of growing climate insecurity tomorrow.

Climate change respects no borders, and climate change impacts are distributed unequally and inequitably. From historical context, climate change impact inequity is a serious issue that has garnered substantial attention in international conferences. At the 1972 Stockholm Convention, the first environmental conference of its kind, there was a stark division of interests and agendas between the more developed and lesser developed nations. The actions of industrialized nations – much more responsible for accelerating emissions and climate effects – were compared against the impacts on the still developing nations. At the 1992 Rio Earth Summit, the concept of Common But Differentiated Responsibilities (CBDR) to take climate action emerged. CBDR is found now in the structure of climate finance and even the Paris Agreement’s Nationally Determined Contributions system.

What does this historical context have to do with the youth relationship to climate action? The younger generations have a different perspective on climate change and climate action than prior generations, and disregarding that fact would be accepting rather than acting upon generational climate inequity. Young people are often wistfully told by older generations that they will be responsible for the bulk of “*fixing*” the climate change situation. Many young people believe this will ultimately be the case, but it does not have to be. Young people realize the time to act on climate is yesterday, but the next best option is immediately today.

Whether younger and older people are equally affected by climate change impacts is perhaps debatable, but the two demographics are inequitably affected by climate change impacts. Many a young person would argue that the older generations have contributed substantially more to climate change than the younger generations, and therefore the climate change effects on young people now and in the future are more the fault and responsibility of the older population. Many a young person would also argue that everyone should take responsibility for their actions and try to minimize their warming contributions. This is, in effect, youth making a CBDR argument. If CBDR works for the global climate regime and the global ozone regime (Montreal Protocol, Kigali Amendment, and Vienna Convention), it might well serve as an effective generational argument. President Biden’s Administration has taken several strides in the right direction. Within the first weeks of his inauguration, President Biden issued a number of climate related Executive Orders, including Addressing the Climate Crisis at Home and Abroad, in which he called for a whole of government approach to investigate and address climate change. On his first day in

office, President Biden rejoined the Paris Climate Agreement. He appointed a Special Envoy on Climate at the State Department, and on Earth Day, he held a Leaders' Summit on Climate with 40 countries. The Administration has a long way to go on climate action, but things are starting to progress in the right direction.

### Part 2 – Enfranchisement of Youth in Mitigation and Adaptation

The proliferation of youth climate movements is a testament to youth initiative and interest on climate change. As Greta Thunberg would attest, however, these climate strikes and other movements and activities cannot guarantee decision-makers will hold themselves to a higher standard for climate action. Climate activism alone does not ensure accountability in the climate policy world, which has relatively little regulation in general.

What can make a difference, as has been created in international climate agreements like the Paris Agreement, is accountability by reputation. If a country wants clout at the next Conference of Parties, it needs to show progress and effort to achieve its Nationally Determined Contribution. In the youth context, this entails speaking up at council meetings, producing media about governing bodies or policy makers' preference of alternative priorities, and more.

This is not to say young people are not effective at crowdsourcing as a primary participatory measure, because the youth movement has made great use of social platforms and available information. Social media savvy young people can have a far reach when it comes to climate communication. The younger generations have an incredible, vast resource of climate change information at their fingertips online and on mobile devices. Armed with this wealth of information, many young people have become effective climate change communicators and influencers. Readily available information might be the younger generations' greatest asset in climate action.

Young people do have some limitations on the extent of their action. First, most have educational responsibilities and time commitments that would prevent them from taking a day off from school to go to a march or other demonstration. Second, many young people may be more limited in their autonomy and ability to travel and attend events. Third, many young people lack the financial independence or security to take certain forms of expressive action, such as refusing to buy products from certain industries or companies or investing money in a climate conscious manner. These are limitations, but the degree of youth enfranchisement grows as young people innovate in creative ways.

### Part 3 – Initiatives and Success of Youth Climate Activism

Three primary types of successful initiatives for young people with scalable results are involvement in grassroots organisations, demonstrations, voting and running for office. If a "grassroots" organization is defined as fundamental to the cause the organization seeks to support, then youth popularity of involvement in grassroots organisations focused on climate issues has recently increased dramatically. Movements like "*Fridays for Future*," among others, have garnered substantial attention and participation by young people in the past few years.

Massive collective action events like global climate strikes are

noticed by media and policy makers on local, national, and international scales. There is substantial reported evidence of this, and mass activism events historically have had policy impact. However, one of the best and most directly effective actions young people can take on climate is to get involved in politics. Political activism, even by people too young to vote, can make a substantial difference in changing the direction of climate policy.

One can look to the recent German elections for an example of how voting can change a government's attention to climate issues. The Social Democrats intend to form a government with the Green Party, which has already stated it will partially base decisions on climate impact. The inclusion of the Green Party in the ruling parliamentary coalition could put climate action at the forefront of the German policy agenda. This shift in priority can serve as an example of how voting can shift climate policy in more developed nations.

Young people are now more politically motivated to make a difference personally in the future of climate action. Young people around the world run for political office with a climate agenda. Not only are more being elected to office, but young political leaders are promisingly bringing climate to the forefront as they make their mark in government.

Climate security is human security, and human security is a human right. Future generations should have the right to an inhabitable planet. Youth must be part of the solution, but they must not be the only solution. Despite our vested interest and intense motivation, time is not on our side. Immediate and sustained climate intervention must prevail.

Thank you very much for your time and consideration.

# Jennifer Griggs

## One Young World Ambassador UK

### Part I: Impact of Climate Change on youth

I. What impact is climate change having on you personally, on your peers and community?

In answering this question, you may wish to consider:

- Both the direct and the indirect impacts of local, regional and global climate change;
- What you perceive to be the greatest threat to your community as a result of climate change;
- Whether youth are differently impacted by climate change from older generations and if so, how;
- The current impacts of the perceived threats of future climate change; and
- Whether your community and/or your national government has implemented any initiatives to combat this threat.

A few months ago, London experienced some of the most intense flash floods it has ever seen. A colleague who lives near where I used to live in the centre of town had his apartment flooded so badly that in a few hours he went from normality to being totally unable to use his home any more. Effectively, climate change had turned his world upside down.

This happened to one of the most enfranchised and privileged people I know – a white man in his late thirties, probably on a salary of over £200,000 per annum – in one of the most enfranchised and privileged neighbourhoods in London. For the majority of people in the world, who have a fraction of his financial and social capital, the impact of an event like that would have been not just life-changing, but life-threatening. And sadly, it is precisely that majority of people who are materially more likely to be affected by these events.

For now, at least in London – and in Paris, where I moved several weeks ago – incidents like the one I mention above are the exception, rather than the rule. The greatest near-term threat to us comes not from the direct impacts of climate change, but rather just from having to confront its knock-on effects. To give one example – climate-related agricultural difficulties across vast swathes of the globe are likely to bring about global food insecurity, and this in turn is likely to lead to heightened inequality, global unrest, geopolitical instability and mass migration – all of which could very easily cause a near-term crisis for our economy and people. As the crisis advances beyond the near term, we will begin to have to confront not just the knock-on effects, but also the direct effects at their root. We will more often see extreme weather patterns in our own countries; our own farmers will suffer more frequently from reduced crop harvests; and we will see changes in how we relate to other species in our own countries, with new epidemics as a possible result.

And in all of this, young people are, and will continue to be, disproportionately affected. The most obvious reason for this is that our lives will start and end later than our ancestors' lives, and climate is an ever-worsening problem – so climate will affect our lives worse than our ancestors' lives. Nor is the relationship between one's age and the impact of climate change on one's life likely to be linear, but rather exponential: the extent to which our children will suffer from the effects of climate change more than we do is materially greater than the extent to which we suffer more than our ancestors did. Another dimension of the issue is the psychological one: the impact of climate anxiety on young people. A recent Bath University study showed that nearly 60% of young people felt "*worried or extremely worried*" by climate change, and this is hardly surprising considering the ingredients mixed together in many young people's minds. A dark future – because the latest IPCC report leaves little room for light. A feeling of powerlessness – because there will not be enough of us in positions of power before we are well past so-called global "*tipping point*" is a thing of the distant past. And simultaneously, a feeling of guilt – because as much as the current systems of government make it difficult for us to accede to positions of power, they also expect us to be the ones acting.

The UK has by no means been inactive in confronting these issues. In 2020, the government announced plans to reach a 68% reduction in greenhouse gases by the end of the decade compared to 1990 levels. They also announced that sales of new petrol and diesel cars are to end in the UK by 2030. This climate leadership contrasts sharply with some other countries I have lived in, visited, or heard about. To give an example – friends from Arab nations tell of a life on the other end of the spectrum, where many not only live without regard for, but actively contribute to, climate change. There is limited belief in the feasibility of renewables vs. incumbent energy sources such as oil and gas, and new sustainability projects such as Masdar City and The Line are often regarded with great scepticism. Indeed, it is often difficult to see how they can succeed given that they will be isolated in sea of heavily oil-dependent states.

Admittedly, it would be wrong to attribute full credit to the UK government for its climate initiatives. The actions of successful democratic governments are by definition the function of the views of their people, and we must therefore credit those who put pressure on the government to change, including young campaigners – from Extinction Rebellion, whose first protests earned them a seat at the table; to the average person, whose everyday discussions about climate change raise the profile of the issue and make the government realise we care.



## Part II: Enfranchisement of youth in mitigation and adaptation

2. To what extent are young people able to make their views on climate change heard to local, national and international decision-makers, or hold them to account for the decisions they make on adaptation and mitigation measures?

In answering this question, you may wish to consider:

- What structures and processes are in place that enable young people to participate, and how effective these are;
- What obstacles young people face in participating and how these could be overcome; and
- What advantages greater youth enfranchisement would bring to understanding and action to mitigate and adapt to climate change at a local, regional and global level.

As I see it, young people have two main ways of making their views on climate change heard by major decision-makers. The first is in their personal lives, which in the UK could include writing to MPs, participating in council meetings on local implementation of climate policy, or participating in public demonstrations. The second is to use their careers. With the current boom in climate-related jobs, increasing numbers of young people are going into jobs in climate- or policy-related industries, which gives them privileged access to decision-makers. Jobs not directly linked to climate policy, too, may afford young people the chance to make their views heard to decision-makers within their organisation. Of course, this is not the same as having a direct line to politicians, but in some fields similarly impactful (reaching the management of a top financial institution, for example, could potentially impact where vast sums of money are invested). Opportunities to contribute to evidence-gathering initiatives like this Global Youth Inquiry are of course a third option, but in my experience are still limited in scale and often the average person will find it difficult to get into such initiatives. Citizens Assemblies on climate would be a good solution, but seem all too infrequent in the UK – perhaps Germany's first Bürgerrat Klima could be used as a precedent for us to institute something similar.

Having outlined the ways in which young people can make their voices heard, it is critical to note that they face many obstacles in doing so. At the outset, there are a number of barriers to entry. One of these is that the compensation for jobs in sustainability is less attractive than many conventional career paths – which is hardly surprising, because the value of sustainability is not yet fully priced into any part of the economic system. In finance, for instance – the sector I work in – client-facing roles are consistently better paid than internal sustainability functions. While this might not deter idealistic individuals from financially secure backgrounds, those who come from poorer backgrounds or who have to provide for others are thus disincentivised from entering the space. Moreover, in some jurisdictions, activism is not only unattractive, but also risky. Organisations often have limited tolerance of, let alone support for, those who challenge the status quo. I have found my organisation to be broadly supportive, as they are keen to become a sector leader in

sustainability; but I still hear of comments about not becoming “*too active*” in the space lest people spend too much of time away from revenue generating activities, or worse still threaten their company's fossil fuel-related business lines. The same is true at the national level, particularly in jurisdictions where fossil fuels lay at the heart of the economy. Finally, young people's voices are often taken less seriously due to their inexperience or idealism. If young people's voices do carry any weight, it tends to be the voices of those who are most conventionally well-educated – and these people on average tend to have less lived experience of the issue at hand than those from poorer backgrounds. And thus we see in the case of climate the same issue as we see in the case of many other social issues – that those with the most direct experience of a problem are those least well equipped to be able to fight against it.

Quite apart from the fact that facilitating young people's involvements in climate discussions is morally the right thing to do, given that these are decisions that affect us more than anyone else, it would deliver a whole host of concrete societal benefits. Firstly, we would end up with better climate policy, as young people have the greatest will and (in some respects) ability to inform climate policy. Our greater will for change comes from the fact that we are more affected and therefore have more vested interest. Our greater ability to inform change comes from the fact that we are less self-interested and more idealistic, we are less wedded to the status quo and more open to radical solutions, and we are often better informed than the older generation on climate-related issues. Secondly, today's young people already make up a large proportion of voters, and this proportion will only continue to grow – so the more young people are involved, the more it will be in the government's interest to listen.

### 3. What global initiatives, national initiatives or local initiatives have, in your opinion, been most successful in engaging young people in efforts to tackle climate change and what aspects of these initiatives have been key to their success?

In my opinion, it all comes down to education. The initiatives to date to engage young people in climate – whether global or local, historical or recent – that have in my opinion had the biggest impact have been those based on climate education. And so much remains to be done that in my view climate education will continue to be the type of initiative that creates the most impact going forward. Essentially, we need decision-makers to identify the key areas blocking progress – financial expertise to build a fully-fledged carbon tax system, scientific expertise to solve the intermittency issues associated with renewables, and so on – and we urgently need comprehensive education programmes both on general climate topics and in these specific fields to equip young people to make a change. These education programmes should be spread across all stages of education.

School is the most formative stage, and therefore in some ways the most critical for climate education – yet at present, many students graduate from school aware of climate change, but not actively inspired to do anything about it (especially in the UK, where many of us are isolated from the harsh current realities of climate change elsewhere in the world). Awareness without inspiration is not enough. We need to answer the demands of campaigns like “*Teach the Future*” to put climate change front and centre of the national curriculum, either as a separate multidisciplinary subject or as an obligatory component of existing subjects such as science, geography and ethics, and we need to use these classes to inspire students to act.

Initiatives targeted at university students / apprentices are also critical to be able to form a graduate body that is more responsible, better informed, and better equipped to embark upon careers where they can fight the crisis. Sustainability ratings agencies have waiting lists miles long. Banks' sustainability departments are overstaffed as they try to wrap their heads around new sustainability-related regulations and guidelines, implement them in their own organisation, deal with thousands of client demands on sustainability. Preparing young people for careers in this field is likely to alleviate the massive dearth of labour that currently plagues the sustainability sector and reduce the likelihood of there being a shortage of labour in the sector going forward.

Ultimately, of course, we need to go beyond educating people and actually create a climate where people can use their education to deliver change. We saw in the COVID-19 pandemic how government funding was invaluable to success – e.g. 97% of the Oxford / AstraZeneca vaccine funding came from taxpayers' money. We also saw how guaranteed vaccine purchase contracts reduced market risk, and promoted innovation at a much faster rate than it would otherwise have happened. Admittedly this sets a dangerous precedent (would we want the same level of funding and guaranteed purchase contracts to go towards the armaments sector? Possibly not). But my point is that the climate crisis is a global crisis that threatens the human race with mass extinction, and should be treated as such. If we could view the climate crisis with the same urgency as we viewed the COVID-19 crisis, and allocate the same funds to it, perhaps it would drive young labour towards it – and perhaps it would result in us solving the crisis better than we have done to date.

In summary, if there is one takeaway, I want it to be that we need to teach the future. The more young people are aware of the severity of the situation, the more action will happen – and this will snowball, as if people think their peers feel the same way and see their peers acting, they're more likely to act too. Though there may be a large cost associated with launching these education programmes, it will more than pay itself back in reduced climate relief expenditure going forward. Additionally, climate education funding may be able to wind down over time – partly because once climate teaching infrastructures are built,

the costs of continuing to run them will be less than the costs of building them in the first place; and partly because once greater climate awareness is attained, the system will be to some extent self-sustaining. But to get to that stage, we need big changes at every level. We need global initiatives to provide the overarching frameworks, national initiatives to inspire, and local initiatives to provide contexts where we can implement in a targeted way, and to translate inspiration into action.

# Jonah Messinger

## One Young World Ambassador USA

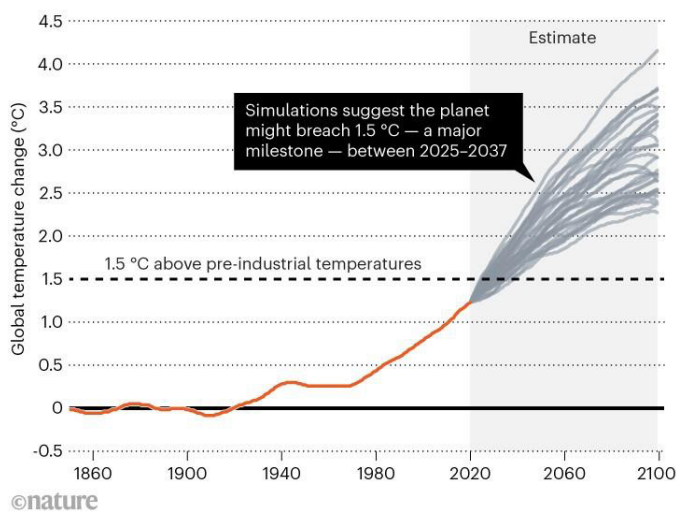
### Part I – Impact of Climate Change on Youth

Climate change is a global phenomenon. The preponderance of scientific evidence and consistent conclusions of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) reports since the 1990s can assure global leaders and policymakers of the nature and severity of climate change.

Achieving net-zero emissions by 2050 and limiting global warming to 1.5 °C or 2.0 °C relative to pre-industrial levels, the former being essentially out of the realm of possibility, are ambitious goals that have garnered much support since the Paris Climate Agreement in 2015<sup>1</sup>. Global warming is expected to fall in the range of 2.3 °C to 4.1 °C by the end of the century, as shown in Figure 1<sup>1,2</sup>. And the IPCC's special report on achieving 1.5 °C highlighted that the nationally determined contributions set forth by nations in the Paris Climate Agreement are insufficient to limit warming well below 2.0 °C<sup>3</sup>.

### WARMER WORLDS

To bolster confidence in their projections, climate scientists align their simulations with available historical observations. The latest simulations from 33 research groups around the globe project that Earth will warm by between 2.3 °C and 4.1 °C by 2100 in a middle-of-the-road scenario with little change in global and technological development trends.



Importantly, decarbonization deadlines such as net-zero by 2050 and warming thresholds such as 1.5 °C and 2.0 °C are somewhat arbitrary from a scientific perspective. Indeed, reaching net-zero emissions by 2040 is better than by 2050, which is more favorable than 2060. Similarly, limiting warming to 1.5 °C is superior to 2.0 °C, which is preferable to 2.5 °C. The best estimates for climate sensitivity, generally defined as the degrees of warming per doubling of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, place the figure in the range of 2.6 °C to 3.9 °C<sup>4</sup>. The takeaway is that the pace of decarbonization will have tangible consequences on global warming and climate impacts for future generations.

In the context of climate modeling, there is perhaps no better example of intergenerational climate impact inequities than the simple, and yet seldom discussed, fact that climate modeling beyond the year 2100 is sparse. Experts will be quick and correct to point out that modeling beyond 2100 introduces more uncertainty. Certainly, climate modeling is complex enough as is, but increasingly, climate scientists are calling for studies with longer time horizons<sup>5</sup>. These recommendations should be taken seriously and implemented. The IPCC's sixth Physical Sciences Basis Assessment Report on climate change, released shortly before the COP26 meetings, featured several welcomed efforts in this regard [6].

Net-zero emissions by 2050 will require rapid turnover of global infrastructure from fossil fuel to clean energy technologies. A recent report by the International Energy Agency (IEA) outlined what such a turnover in the global energy economy would require and specified that net-zero by 2050 is an achievable goal. The 400-milestone pathway to net-zero by 2050 includes no new fossil-fuel boilers by 2025, net-zero electricity by 2035 in economically advanced countries and by 2040 globally, and 7.6 gigatons of captured CO<sub>2</sub> emissions in the year 2050. Moreover, the IEA estimates that more than half of the technologies needed for energy decarbonization by 2050 are not currently commercial<sup>7</sup>. The IEA report makes clear the importance of research, development, and demonstration for emerging clean energy technologies. Clean energy innovation will be crucial to decarbonizing the most difficult sectors and applications such as heavy industry and manufacturing, multi-day electricity storage, next-generation nuclear power, high-heat and industrial chemical processes, and carbon capture, utilization, and storage technologies. In our book, *Energizing America* (2020), my colleagues and I chart out a national energy innovation mission for the United States<sup>8</sup>. Other countries should adopt similar innovation policies and initiatives to drive global energy decarbonization. In the United States (U.S.), my home country, the Biden Administration has taken important steps to address climate change. Namely, under President Biden's leadership, the U.S. promptly rejoined the Paris Climate Agreement and has committed to cutting greenhouse gas emissions to half of what they were in 2005 by 2030. Furthermore, the Biden Administration is in the process of passing a suite of major infrastructure legislation, which will drive decarbonization in several sectors.

While a global phenomenon, the implications, consequences, and damages of climate change are far from resembling a uniform distribution. Indeed, economic development remains a key predictive metric for climate change-induced adversity. In a recent publication in *Science*, Thiery et al. elucidated how the influence of economic inequities on exposure to climate change hazards are drastically intensified for younger and future generations. What is more, the global south and developing nations tend to have disproportionately young populations, further compounding the generational climate inequities writ large<sup>9</sup>.

Global climate solutions cannot limit economic development in low-income countries, the primary modality for enabling effective climate adaptation strategies. Furthermore, wealthy countries are still short on their 2009 commitment to provide 100 billion dollars of climate finance to developing nations by 2020, which was later extended to 2025 at the COP21 Paris Climate Agreement in 2015. According to OXFAM International, from 2020 to 2025, this shortfall is expected to reach between 68 and 75 billion dollars in aggregate. A recent report from the Energy For Growth Hub pointed out that, as of 2018, only 20% of these climate finance funds were allocated for climate adaptation<sup>10</sup>. However, the United Nations Environment Program projects that annual climate adaption costs alone in developing nations were 70 billion dollars in 2020 and will reach 140 to 300 billion dollars in 2030 and 280 to 500 billion in 2050<sup>11</sup>. COP26 will only succeed if wealthy nations elevate their climate finance commitments to adequate levels, as identified in the literature, and provide certainty on an actionable plan to execute these commitments.

## Part 2 – Enfranchisement of Youth in Mitigation and Adaptation

Young people are not well represented in local, national, and international decision-making bodies for obvious reasons related to age requirements. In many ways, and not for lack of reason, global society has adopted sufficient age as a prerequisite for formal engagement and participation in climate adaptation and mitigation initiatives. A common rebuke of this paradigm is that naturally, as I have previously described, younger people will endure more harm and face a greater threat from climate change than their older counterparts. This is a sensible sentiment, to be sure, but what is often lost is the consideration of future generations even beyond today's young people. The negative impacts of climate change will only worsen over time with continued greenhouse gas emissions. Anything short of net-zero emissions will result in continued warming. Even keeping the concentration of CO<sub>2</sub> in the atmosphere, currently at roughly 410 parts per million<sup>6</sup>, constant, is insufficient and likely to result in a breach of 1.5 °C warming in the early 2100s<sup>12</sup>. If greenhouse gas emissions continue at the current rate, future warming will have detrimental effects on food and agriculture, natural disaster frequency and severity, sea-level rise and ocean acidification, viral transmission season duration, and much more. These consequences are too often heavily economically discounted, vastly underestimating the human toll climate change will cause. The dogma of discounting human damages and public goods is, by first approximation, intellectually robust according to the economic literature, but in actuality, it is a disastrous decision-making framework for society<sup>13</sup>.

Young people can play a valuable role in decision-making bodies grappling with the challenge of climate change. In general, paradigm-shifting ideas, technologies, and initiatives are brought to the fore by new entrants and fresh perspectives. From next-generation technologies and novel policy recommendations to nonprofit development work and creative advocacy strategies, young people can advance the climate action agenda. The leaders at COP26 can help shape a new approach, focusing on identifying talented young leaders, elevating them to formal leadership positions in institutions making decisions on climate, and promoting their work by providing opportunities and funding. For example, in science and technology, young researchers who have brilliant ideas with significant potential to contribute to the climate solution set often shelve these ideas simply because of a lack of grant or fellowship funding and formalized appointments to support such investigation.

There are model programs that facilitate innovative and forward-thinking climate change solutions. Examples, from an admittedly

U.S.-biased perspective, include the Activate Fellowship, Atlantic Council and Ecologic Institute's Emerging Leaders in Environmental and Energy Policy Fellowship, Schmidt Science Fellowship, One Young World's Lead2030 initiative, Clean Energy Leadership Institute's Fellowship, U.S. Cleantech University Prize, Zayed Sustainability Prize, and more. In particular, what these programs get right is that they identify leaders and those with leadership capacity, and they provide immense resources, connections, and opportunities to enable great ideas to become impactful solutions. In addition, these programs are crafted for people. In general, the funding is non-dilutive, the frameworks are flexible, and additional opportunities are abundant. These programs should be highlighted and widely replicated.

Youth engagement and leadership in institutional frameworks such as COP26 is not a silver bullet. Nevertheless, the global youth have important contributions to make to the climate action paradigm. COP26 should ensure that existing and promising efforts such as the COP26 Youth Advisory Group are effectively leveraged in the meetings. It is not enough to have these talented leaders on panels; they must be in the negotiations where policy and agreements are crafted. In summary, global climate leaders should leverage the abilities and ideas of young climate leaders during COP26 and in the broader climate action landscape.

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# José Daniel Madrigal

## One Young World Ambassador

### Honduras

I come from Honduras which, according to Germanwatch, has been one of the most vulnerable countries to the adverse impacts of climate change, globally, in the period from 1998-2017<sup>1</sup>. In recent memory, Honduras suffered from a dual shock in 2020, when it was impacted by hurricanes Eta and Iota, just two weeks apart in November. According to USAID both storms impacted nearly nine million people in Guatemala, Honduras, and Nicaragua<sup>2</sup>.

Just in Honduras, nearly half of the national population was affected and the World Bank preliminary estimated economic losses of \$2.8 billion (where GDP was \$25.1 billion in 2019), and damage to 85,000 homes. The destruction of 800,000 acres of crops must also be taken into consideration, as this represented a severe disruption of the sowing cycle, meaning higher possibilities of famine and food insecurity during 2021<sup>3</sup>.

Likewise, the Inter-American Development Bank (IADB) and the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) established that the effects of these two storms were concentrated in the productive sector (68%), the social sector (18%), and infrastructure (10%)<sup>4</sup>.

Specifically, within the productive sector, it was commerce and industry which accounted for the highest toll, with 78% of damages as well as 62% of losses. Meanwhile, agriculture had 18% and 27%, respectively.

Regarding the social sector, housing had the biggest impact with 74% of damages, while transport represented 62% of damages in the infrastructure sector.

In terms of GDP, there was an expected contraction of 7.4% in the Honduran economy during 2020 because of the COVID-19 Pandemic. Nevertheless, once Eta and Iota struck the country, that economic contraction worsened. Concretely, it reached around 8.2%, having a devastating toll on lives and livelihoods.

In short, one can see the brutal impacts the country had in 2020 due to both Eta and Iota, but there are also other threats which the country faces, such as droughts in agriculture-dependent areas such as the Dry Corridor.

That said, agriculture employs more than 30% of the workforce in Honduras<sup>5</sup>, and the Migration Policy Institute mentions floods and droughts, generally linked to the El Niño phenomenon, combined with structural weaknesses such as poverty and inequalities, low access to health care, deforestation, among others, tend to produce food insecurity in rural areas. Such an array of variables demand coping mechanisms from local communities and eventually, migration becomes the only way out.

In this vein, a report from the New York Times and ProPublica mentions that if governments take modest action to reduce emissions, around 5% of the migrants arriving to the US southern border from Central America and Mexico, will be driven primarily by climate<sup>6</sup>. This represents around 680,000 persons between now and 2050.

With this context in mind, it is evident that Honduras is at the forefront of the impacts of climate change, while being one of the least responsible for it, as it contributes less than 0.05% of global emissions. Nevertheless, the country is trying to make its part, by updating its Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) and taking steps towards its Long-Term Strategy (LTS) of decarbonisation, as well as efforts on adaptation.

Similarly, youth-led groups are acting, such as Sustenta Honduras, an NGO for Development, which has become one of the leaders among youth-led organisations, focused on action for climate empowerment in Honduras, and arguably, the region. Sustenta Honduras has reached important milestones, such as hosting the first Local Conference of Youth (LCOY) in the country; as well as being one of the two National Coordinators for Honduras towards the Regional Conference of Youth (RCOY) in Latin America and the Caribbean, an initiative which was supported by the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) in Latin America, as well as UNICEF and COP26.

Speaking of outcomes, a Declaration of Youth from Latin America and the Caribbean was conceived, and it has now reached over 25,000 signatures through Change.org and will be presented during the PRE-COP in Milan, and COP26 in Glasgow. Concretely, the declaration demands the following:

- Adherence to the Escazú Agreement by every country in Latin America and the Caribbean.
- 50 % of international climate financing redirected towards adaptation to climate change.
- Protect, at least, 30% of land and marine ecosystems by 2030.
- Eliminate fossil fuel subsidies by 2030.
- Greenhouse gas emissions cut in half by 2030 and carbon neutrality by 2050.
- Achieve a development model which contemplates a Just Transition towards green and sustainable jobs, without leaving anyone behind.

This set of demands will be passed along to decision-makers and government officials who will attend the conferences. Another great outcome of this process was the articulation between youth organisations from the region, as 20 countries were represented through their National Coordinators. As previously mentioned, Sustenta Honduras was one of those two National Coordinators in the Honduran case.

As a Founding Member, I can say Sustenta Honduras is a recently conceived NGO compared to other players in the field, but it already has a community of over 400 persons from all over the country, and it recently secured financing from international cooperation for two projects related to climate empowerment, and adaptation to climate change at the local level.

The project whose focus is on climate empowerment will be executed with the kind support of UK Aid through its British Embassy in Honduras, and it will be aligned with one of the compromises within Honduras' updated NDC.

Likewise, our organization co-hosted the first climate-related forum with mayoral candidates of Tegucigalpa, the country's capital. The focus of such democratic exercise was to hear the environmental and climate agenda from the candidates in the biggest city of Honduras, as well as one of the most vulnerable to the adverse impacts of climate change in the country. We will continue striving towards making these types of events to be the norm, and not the exception.

Examples such as the previously mentioned are evidence of the intense work from Sustenta's community of young leaders, which was recently recognised with a youth award, at the national level. This was given by the United Nations in Honduras as well as the Honduran Government, and it has elevated the NGO's compromise towards climate action and sustainable development overall.

Nonetheless, one must consider that spaces and platforms for youth participation have normally been lacking not only in Honduras, but in the region, especially for topics which unfortunately, still don't have the urgent traction they deserve, such as climate action. Therefore, it is our hope that Sustenta Honduras is contributing to paving the way for future youth engagement in such causes, both at the national and international level.

Regarding obstacles, it can be argued that there is still a lack of platforms and mechanisms where young persons can contribute towards decision-making in general, and climate and environmental policy in specific. I would also argue that there is still a weak articulation between youth efforts and the notion that climate action could be a potential bridge or catalyst towards a development model which is more inclusive, sustainable, and considerate of intergenerational and intragenerational equity. I would not say that such lines of thought are inexistent in the country, but I would argue that they need to be strengthened, better articulated, and have a higher level of granularity.

To have better chances of achieving this, I consider that young persons from Honduras, as well as anywhere else in the world, need to have a higher exposure to the international agenda and climate negotiations, to better comprehend what is being

discussed at the international level; that way contributing towards more effective communication strategies regarding their own local context and experiences. This would ultimately democratise the whole process and enhance it.

Finally, it is imperative that any effort from civil society in general, and youth, is met by institutions which adhere themselves to transparency, accountability, the rule of law, and guarantee its citizens with the access to public information, as well as justice. Any initiative or action which is well intended, and which tackles climate change will not thrive if it does not find better governance along the road.

On a final note, I consider that coming from Honduras, one can only but understand the importance and urgency of structural issues such as multidimensional poverty, inequalities, corruption, and violence, as well as the immediate sanitary crisis associated with COVID-19. Those issues take the headlines most days of the year, but it is imperative that we come to terms with the fact that climate change is the biggest threat of all, as the lack of action in that realm will only aggravate all the other problems we already live with. The climate crisis is an existential one, and as a civilization, we only have a clear route: act now.

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# Joseph Tsongo

## One Young World Ambassador

### Democratic Republic of the Congo (“DRC”)

#### Part 1 – Impact of Climate Change on youth

##### 1. What impact is climate change having on you personally, on your peers and community?

I will say that climate change affects me personally because I have recently been experiencing episodes of heat and extreme drought in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Floods and erosion ravaging, but also with the scarcity of rains, agricultural production has tended to decline and food insecurity is gaining ground in my region. At the same time at home here, conflicts and community violence are underway, especially for the conquest of land between herders and farmers etc. And as if that weren't enough, there are around me here, a number of local and foreign armed groups who are storming protected areas like Virunga Park, the oldest in Africa.

In short, the effects of climate change are keenly felt and I would also say that I am a double victim because beyond the climate threat, I and my community are also facing violent conflicts here in eastern DR Congo.

The greatest threat is that with the development process which is currently accelerating in Africa with the business of mining, logging, oil tankers or overfishing professionals etc. the Congo Basin, (including the area of peatlands straddling the two Congos alone captures the equivalent of twenty years of US carbon dioxide emissions), is under great human pressure and will risk no longer being able to render this invaluable ecosystem service, for which it is moreover not paid.

On the other hand, the political decision-makers in my country (the DR Congo), consider the question of the environment as an even minor subject because they profit from the illicit exploitation of natural resources. So the threat is almost permanent and it is we, the youth, to cry out loud and clear for resilient initiatives to be put in place today, before the worst happens.

In answering this question, you may wish to consider:

- Both the direct and the indirect impacts of local, regional and global climate change;
- Whether youth are differently impacted by climate change from older generations and if so, how;
- What you perceive to be the greatest threat to your community as a result of climate change;
- The current impacts of the perceived threats of future climate change; and
- Whether your community and/or your national government has implemented any initiatives to combat this threat.

#### Part 2 – Enfranchisement of youth in mitigation and adaptation

##### 2. To what extent are young people able to make their views on climate change heard to local, national and international decision-makers, or hold them to account for the decisions they make on adaptation and mitigation measures?

On this subject, I would say that young people like me, do not yet have the appropriate space or opportunity to make our points of view heard, but we are capable and until now, we still use the means available. . Personally, to make my point of view heard, I go through local community radios and with my organization Amani-Institute ASBL, we also organize exchange days where we invite members of local communities but also local decision-makers. And to make my point of view on climate change heard by national and international decision-makers, I use the internet with networks and social media, I also try to find an opportunity to meet these decision-makers but it has always been difficult. Young people are not even invited to the big meetings where decisions are made regarding climate change, yet we are increasingly aware of the multifaceted climate stress caused by climate change, but we are suffering from some form of injustice.

In short, there are on the one hand young people who lack the motivation to participate and on the other hand, there are young people like me (especially in French-speaking Africa) who have the motivation but we lack access, we feel excluded and less represented.

And I think that to overcome these obstacles, we still have to talk to young people about climate issues and motivate their participation in conferences, management of youth-led organisations, participation in advisory committees, and participation in political processes from local to global level. The biggest advantage that a greater emancipation of young people would bring is the responsibility and ownership of the climate fight for the benefit of present and future generations.

In answering this question, you may wish to consider:

- What structures and processes are in place that enable young people to participate, and how effective these are;
- What obstacles young people face in participating and how these could be overcome; and
- What advantages greater youth enfranchisement would bring to understanding and action to mitigate and adapt to climate change at a local, regional and global level.

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**3. What global initiatives, national initiatives or local initiatives have, in your opinion, been most successful in engaging young people in efforts to tackle climate change and what aspects of these initiatives have been key to their success?**

Locally, nationally and globally, it's really hard for me to even identify an initiative that has succeeded in involving (as it should) young people in efforts to tackle climate change. The leaders of my country, for example, prefer to rage elsewhere when the feeling of helplessness is combined with the lack of political will. There are only small initiatives led by local organisations that are struggling to mobilize young people for lack of resources. But at the regional level, I know that there is the African Union Development Agency (AUDA-NEPAD) which, with its AFR100 initiative involving young people in particular, coordinates restoration actions in Africa with the assists technical partners of the initiative, including the Center for International Forestry Research (CIFOR), United Nations Environment Program, World Resources Institute (WRI), World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF), IUCN, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and GIZ.

Indeed, the key to success here is the AFR100 program, in which 28 African countries have committed to restore 113 million hectares, which, if the goal is reached, will exceed the initial target of 100 million hectares from which the initiative takes its name, to be restored by 2030 across the continent.

I would say that this program in which I am also personally involved, has most succeeded in involving young people in efforts to fight against climate change, in particular through the mobilization of African youth for restoration and the means of capture and devote more money to catering activities, two closely related issues.

But that is not enough yet, and that is why, we young people especially coming from French-speaking Africa, we continue the fight to ensure that our point of view is heard at all levels so that, for us who live in the same time in areas of violent conflict, strategies that include the dynamics of peaceful conflict management, knowing that the climate of threat is global, but those living with violent conflict are most at risk.

But also and above all, I would like to speak with decision-makers at the global level to recall that in terms of mitigation and adaptation to the effects of climate change, the big polluters, in particular China, the United States, Europe, Russia, Australia... must already pay to subsidize projects that will help preserve the Congo Basin (the world's largest net CO2 sensor) and its 220 million hectares of forests, as decided at COP22 with the creation of this blue fund.



# Josh Hoevenaars

## One Young World Ambassador

### Australia

#### Part I – Impact of climate change on youth

This is my view the impact of climate change on youth, and the level of youth enfranchisement to mitigate and adapt to the worst impacts of climate change, in my region of Geelong, Victoria, Australia.

I want to start by reminding myself about climate change. It's easy to hold it as a term, as a topic, even a topic of interest, and forget what it really is. Climate change is the issue of our generation. It is the issue with a broad reach, both in the number of people affected and the number of problems it creates. It is the issue that may have the most impact on our future prosperity or livelihood depending on how fortunate one is. This fortune, luck, or otherwise is determined by a combination of where we live, our education, wealth, government policy and age. It is on age that we focus. So then, what is the impact of climate change on us, on youth, and in what ways can we engage young people to mitigate and then adapt to the worst impacts of climate change?

It seems to me that climate change is a more important issue for those who are younger because the more life we have left to live, the more we will experience the worst effects of a warming climate. In Australia many young people are aware of the dangers of inaction on climate change and face a federal government that doesn't seem to recognise this danger. This puts young people in a tricky scenario. The young have less experience and influence, but perhaps the best foresight of the problems that lie ahead, and certainly they have the most to lose by not acting. What develops is a rising angst or perhaps worse, apathy, in the face of inaction, whilst some incumbent leaders seem interested in maintaining the status quo.

Our corporate knowledge of climate change is growing, driven by the evidence of climate change in the form of more frequent severe weather events. In Australia, we have witnessed extreme bush fires (like the bushfire season over the summer of 2019/20), severe flooding, cyclones and heat waves which are occurring more often and at a greater severity since records began. Droughts too are becoming more common, and are hitting harder, putting strain on water supplies for municipalities and threatening the livelihoods of farmers and putting pressure on food supply.

In the future, these extreme weather events are tipped to become more common as the average temperature warms and global weather systems become more erratic. In Australia we can expect to see more extreme bush fire seasons, more days

where we're advised to stay inside to avoid extreme heat (days over 45 degrees Celsius) or bushfire smoke that has begun to invade even metropolitan areas (as we saw in early 2020 in Melbourne and Sydney). We are also likely to see more extreme storms and rain events, which in combination with rising sea levels and king tides can cause coastal erosion, damaging Australia's pristine beaches and putting at risk the plants and animals that make their homes there.

It's likely that Australia will also see indirect impacts of climate change, including increasing mental health burden across young people, catalysed by a growing realisation of the dangers ahead and a lack of power to stop them. We are seeing already a developing mental health crisis with young people reporting anxiety, depression, and other mental health issues at great rates. This has been exacerbated by COVID-19 and continued long-term lockdowns in Australia, but climate change represents a real long-term catalyst that isn't going away. We can also expect to see increased number of climate refugees in our region, particularly from Pacific island nations at most risk of rising sea levels, who are likely to see Australia as an attractive country to seek refuge. Australia could see this provision of refuge as a great privilege, but it will also increase strain on existing infrastructure. This could be made worse with intra-country movement because of severe weather and rising sea levels. It's likely that many will have to move from bushfire, drought, or flood-prone regions, towards cities or safer regions to avoid the risk of damage to homes, lives, or at the very least, increased insurance premiums.

We know that climate change is causing problems now, and will only cause more in the future, so what are Australian governments and communities doing to combat this threat? Let's start at the top. Despite their best endeavours to communicate otherwise, the Australian federal government's climate policy and commitments are not aligned with a Paris 1.5-degree world. Climate Action Tracker recently rated their climate policy as 'highly insufficient' in pursuit of limiting warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius, for many reasons, most notable the absence of a net zero target. This lack of action, ambition and policy causes angst for the young people of Australia, and we have seen a great response from youth, most notably through the School Strike for Climate, expressing their anger at the inaction from our federal government. Despite this, the issue remains that most of the protestors don't have the power to vote, and so it has little impact on the ability of incumbent governments to retain power. The subject of climate has long been a political 'hot potato' in Australia, one that has caused division in and downfall

of many politicians over the past decade in Australia. It should be noted that the federal government has injected money into hand-picked technologies, through the Technology Roadmap, but this seems to be a piecemeal approach. Australia's lack of climate policy may be represented by the fact that (as of 28th September 2021) our Prime Minister has not confirmed whether he will even attend COP26.

Despite the lack of national climate policy, we are seeing action at the next level of government, with all Australian state governments setting a net zero by 2050 target and accompanying policies driving renewable energy generation, electric vehicle adoption, research and development into hydrogen, and reduction of thermal coal and other emission-intensive industries. Going down a level again, many local councils have driven action further, setting earlier net zero targets (like my local council, the City of Greater Geelong with a net zero target by 2035) and many also declaring a climate emergency (the City of Darebin in Melbourne was the first jurisdiction in the world to do this in 2016). The fact that the highest level of government is taking the least action may say something about the way governments can be influenced by party powerbrokers, factions, benefactors; those they are trying to keep happy so to hold onto power. It seems more effort seems to go into holding onto power rather than solving the dangerous problem of climate change that we all face.

## Part 2 – Enfranchisement of youth in mitigation and adaption

So, the dangers of climate change are looming large, the youth of Australia are becoming more aware, and there is mixed supportive policy through governments. But to what extent are young people able to make their views on climate change heard with decision-makers? The extent to which youth are heard on climate change, depends largely on their level of interest and activism. The biggest barrier to youth engagement and activism is lack of education. From my experience, it was only after learning more about the depth and bread of the impacts of climate change that I became empowered to speak up to those in power. It seems the foundation of positive action is education and awareness. This is growing in Australia as governments, NGOs, companies, and community groups corporately increase their awareness and communication on the issue. Is this at a level that is proportionate to the problem? It seems not, and so the awareness from young people in Australia is also not proportionate to the size of the problem, and thus many young people are not prepared or aware of the need to act.

But let's assume for a moment that the level of awareness is proportionate to the problem, do young Australians have the platforms to raise their voice and hold governments to account? Yes, to some extent, Australia is a democratic nation with multiple levels of government that allows the public to be heard and have their vote on election day. However, this only captures the votes of those over the age of 18. What about all those younger than 18, who have as much insight and foresight into climate change? How do they have their voice heard? It is this cohort who are the unheard, the powerless, or so it was until the School Strikes for Climate. This movement allowed the unheard to be heard, the powerless to gain power. It was effective, with media, governments and parents taking notice. Children sent a powerful message, it was heard, but has it been heeded? Not as much as we would hope. Governments heard the message, but from a group who won't vote to keep

them in power or remove them from power, and so the strikes were met with a scolding for skipping school, treating them as immature school children rather than concerned citizens with a voice.

So, what choice do young people have to act on climate, particularly if they're not of voting age? There's an array of options, but youth must be proactive because the odds are not in their favour. For those under 18, school strikes are a powerful tool, a way to get media, government and perhaps most importantly, parent attention. Pester power shouldn't be overlooked. I have heard many examples in the media, and at my own workplace of significant decision-makers and business leaders being influenced to progress climate positive action because of the words and actions of their children. What about youth who are a little older; how can they act? From my experience, things are little easier. We can act at work, pushing for net zero and renewable energy targets, driving climate education through work groups and networks. Our voice shouldn't be underestimated, we have significant social networks we can influence in person and on social media. From my experience, we speak of the big issues far too little, and the trivial far too often. Young people need to spend less time talking about food and entertainment and more on climate change, inequality, poverty, and energy access. Whether at the water fountain as a child, or parties as a young adult, these should be our talking points!

Let's think about a world where youth are engaged with the platforms to speak and influence on the world's big issues, like climate change. Giving voice to problems drives awareness and action on the solutions, at all levels. With a deep and wide problem, we need deep and wide awareness. An enfranchised youth in Australia would force key stakeholders to be aware of the danger of climate change, and urgency to drive solutions. From parents to businesspeople, media moguls to Prime Ministers, it would drive a national conversation that would pervade dinner parties, council meetings and parliamentary question times. There are other methods too, structural forums setup by NGOs and governments, protests driven by activists, and climate programs driven by intrapreneurs within businesses will also assist. But I think that if young Australians develop a national conversation on climate change, and bring everyone to the table, no matter background, age or location, Australia's climate direction would change quickly. Such a conversation driven from the ground up would drive unity in problem solving, instead of disunity through disagreement. I hope that this conversation develops quickly, and that COP26 will be an inspiration for us as a forum that brings people together to drive disruptive yet positive action on climate change.

## Kehkashan Basu

### One Young World Ambassador Canada

I consider myself to be a global citizen – born and schooled in Dubai in the United Arab Emirates, with roots in India and now living in Canada. Different countries, different regions but none spared by the impacts of climate change, that has been gnawing away cancerously over time. The threat from climate change comes mainly from the fact that it is not obvious to most people. It is happening right in front of our eyes, yet we do not see it and even if we do, we assume that it is a problem for someone else to solve. It is this lack of awareness and apathy that is the basis of my crusade, through Green Hope Foundation, the social innovation enterprise that I founded when I was 12 years old. I noticed early on that the impacts of climate change have a disproportionately higher effect on those people and communities who are the least responsible for it. Amongst them are girls and women, who also suffer significantly more, increasing their vulnerability to abuse and exploitation. Not only does climate change have unequal impacts – it exacerbates existing inequalities.

An additional complexity arises from the fact that no single set of gender inequality-reducing policies with relation to mitigating the impacts of climate change applies to all countries or in all contexts.

However, the main issue is with the implementation process combined with a lack of intent. In addition to this, I encountered an absence of youth and gender data in most countries, especially in those of the global south when most of work takes place. This translates to a situation in which one cannot measure or quantify the impact, which leads to an ineffectual response mechanism. This is a vicious cycle on inequality that gets deeper and more convoluted, making the recovery process even more complex.

We must remember that both youth empowerment and gender equality are multipliers of sustainability and the inverse also holds equally true. Women and men often have different vulnerabilities to climate change impacts and this gets amplified further for youth. This often yields varying perspectives on the extent and seriousness of these problems, and the best solutions. Defining dynamics within households, including between children, youth, women and men, is critical to fully understanding local environmental behaviour and its outcomes. For example, during our work in Kenyan villages we witnessed how climate change impacts freshwater availability as well as the increase in land degradation which disproportionately affects women and girls more, because as the majority of water carriers, women and children not only spend a substantial amount of time and physical energy fetching water, but also risk injury and assault.

In many societies, women have traditionally been the keepers of rich knowledge about plants, animals and ecological processes. The erosion of biodiversity driven by climate change has therefore had specific impacts on women, including losses of knowledge related to seeds, processing and cooking. We witnessed this in our work with rural communities in the Sunderbans, the world's largest mangrove rainforest. Addressing this above requires climate change mitigation efforts to be viewed and actioned through the gender lens, empowering women and girls, ensuring that they have not only have a voice but a place at the decision-making table and this is the mantra that we follow at Green Hope.

#### Our approach

Green Hope Foundation approaches this lacuna by addressing the low level of awareness amongst young people, especially young women and girls, predominantly in developing nations and in marginalised communities, that is the main impediment to their becoming self-reliant. It empowers them, cutting across social, cultural and economic barriers through grass roots level actions as well as providing a platform that amplifies their stories at the highest levels of decision-making thereby impacting in policy changes. It uses Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) as a transformative tool to provide them with the knowledge, skills, attitudes and behaviours to think and act in a sustainable manner. ESD enables them to view their current challenges as one's own and shows how to approach them at a grassroots level (*"think globally, act locally"*), thereby creating new values and behaviors that contribute to solutions for those problems and, by extension, to the creation of a sustainable society. I developed an advocacy tool called *"Environment Academy"* which is essentially an engagement platform, both in person and now virtual, organized *"by youth – for youth"*.

We train our youth members in 25 countries, some of whom are as young as 6, to conduct these academies and this unique *"peer to peer"* engagement has proven to be extremely effective for the target audience who take to it more enthusiastically than if they were being *"told"* by adults. Global warming, carbon footprint, biodiversity loss, gender inequality, sustainability – these are difficult concepts for children to understand, especially as a majority of the youth whom it engages have never been to school. Since our work is global, there are additional dimensions of language and social strictures, particularly for girls and women. To circumvent these issues, we use innovative, non-formal communication modes in their advocacy – such as Art, Dance, Music, Sport and Drama – to spread awareness. Its academies also incorporate STEM education to build necessary skill sets amongst the participants. Armed with this knowledge, the

academy participants venture out within their local communities taking definitive steps to build resilience, thereby “*localizing the SDGs*”. Green Hope works with them in the implementation of these campaigns, monitoring impact and supporting them till they reach a level of self-reliance.

#### Rebuilding better from COVID-19

Covid19 has exacerbated the impacts of climate change and deepened the inequalities amongst women and girls especially in countries of the global south. Green Hope is currently working amongst two such affected communities in Bangladesh and Liberia, respectively implementing unique solutions that are helping in rebuilding better.

##### - Circular economy model in Bangladesh

This project is building resilience in a community of 6000 displaced persons and migrants in a rural community in Bangladesh. This is a 2-year project that Green Hope has embarked upon since March 2020 to support these displaced persons who have no sources of income and now depend only on begging for food.

There was sharp increase in child marriages and trafficking of girls and women as families lost their income. Green Hope is addressing the economic situation by empowering both women and men equally in these villages. The men are being provided skills training on sustainable farming and thereafter being provided organic seeds. They have learnt composting their waste to create fertilizer. The women and girls are being trained in poultry farming for them to become self-employed entrepreneurs. The farm and poultry produce is partially consumed by the villagers and the rest is sold to the market to provide a steady income source. Green Hope is also educating them on hygiene and sanitation and building toilets, as well providing sustainability education to their children. This is a very conservative community where SRHR did not exist. By working collaboratively with the village elders (all men) we built a level of trust that our work was beneficial for health and well-being. By providing them with sanitary napkins, spreading awareness to use toilets instead of open defecation, using waste pits instead of using the river as waste dump, our actions all contributed to improving the sexual health of women and girls. Improving the economic situation of men as well as women, has contributed directly to a reduction in gender based violence and we have recorded a drastic drop in child marriages too.

As a part of the climate action plan, the youth in these villages have been trained by our local teams to implement rainwater harvesting solutions. Green Hope has also installed a deep bore tubewell that provides permanent source of clean drinking water. Through this project, Green Hope has established a local circular economy, while also demonstrating how gender based climate adaptive actions contribute to resilience even in the most vulnerable and conservative communities, wherein women and men are elevated equally, from poverty and into a life of dignity.

##### - Powering education through clean energy

This is a grassroots project that advances youth empowerment in a poverty stricken, climate impacted rural society in Liberia. Our work is ongoing in an extremely impoverished village with no electricity, only one school and where most of the girls have no education. Persistent drought has decimated the traditional agricultural livelihoods of this community. As a result, these girls fall victims to abuse, drugs and crime and it is this vicious cycle that this project is breaking, by providing them skills-based education, making them computer literate so that they are become digitally aware, tech-savvy and this will not only help them to find suitable employment, but also open the doors for further knowledge through the internet.

The village has no electricity and is therefore cut-off from the outside world.

My local Green Hope team is installing solar grid that will not only power the school but will also drive the irrigation network that will allow the villagers to resume their farming. Through this innovation that addresses the intersectionality of climate change, clean energy, youth empowerment and social inequity, Green Hope is driving a zero emission solution in this rural community that will scaled up over the next 5 years to cover more villages in the region.

##### - Digital Outreach through webinar series

Digital advocacy took on a new level of importance due to Covid and Green Hope launched a webinar series “*Dare to Dream - Women Impacting the World*” that shared the life stories of women leaders to inspire girls and women to take inspiration to fight off their challenges. Conducted as live interviews, these webinars showcased how these great women, all of whom came from ordinary backgrounds, overcame their obstacles to reach a position of power and eminence. These included HE Maria Espinosa, 73rd President of the UN General Assembly and Ms. Joyce Msuya – Deputy Executive Director of UNEP.

While a lot needs to be done and with accelerated speed, I would like to mention one movement in particular that is critically important to mitigate climate change impacts. It is the movement for climate justice. Grassroots experiences are steadily shifting our awareness of climate change, from an abstract phenomena of carbon levels and future impacts - to a more tangible, multi-layered intersectional issue - bringing together myriad social, economic, and environmental struggles and solidarities. That is why it is so important to address climate change from a human lens, and youth groups like Green Hope Foundation are driving forward the climate action agenda on this basis.



## Kim Brink

# One Young World Ambassador South Africa

### What impact is climate change having on you personally, on your peers and community?

While the impact of climate change in South Africa is one of the most critical in the world, the socio-economic environment means that a significant portion of our GDP comes from sectors that exacerbate it. Additionally, as the most unequal society with a Gini coefficient of 0.65, the understanding and urgency of our context is not widespread throughout much of our general population, who are not confronted with this information.

South Africa faces systemic problems in education, stability, health and poverty and as a result, climate action is often deprioritised to deal with more immediate threats instead of being viewed as a foundation to the future prosperity and reduction of these systemic issues.

Fossil fuels are responsible for more than 86% of energy in South Africa and is the 3rd largest foreign exchange source. Moreover, all power comes from a state-owned enterprise with extreme red-tape on who may contribute to it. While it contributes \$13.6 billion into our economy annually, Eskom is more than \$400 billion in debt, and unable to service it. In a nation with a 50% unemployment rate, mining is responsible for nearly half a million jobs. This is a critical concern in discussing the shift towards renewable resources, where many of the skills are not transferable, implicating that unskilled, uneducated laborers would be left without income, affecting nearly half a million families.

Sadly, those in poverty are the most affected by climate change. These South Africans have the worst access to education and medical care - both critical in the wake of our increased droughts and other natural disasters which have adverse ramifications on the lives and livelihoods of communities.

Our government has implemented a National Climate Change Committee (NCCC) and it must be noted that South Africa is a signatory of the Paris Agreement and has pledged to reach the SDGs by 2030. While some progress is being made by implementing wind farms etc., we are far from being on track.

The feeling of hopelessness breeds inaction: feeling that there is no meaningful change that an entire generation can make, as more than 80% of it is unaware of the stark realities. For those of us who are in the more privileged position to take action, these factors often make it difficult to feel empowered to make meaningful change. The greatest threat to climate action is the difficulty and lethargy with which we are moving away from industries which rely on it.

As an individual whose passion is SDG13, I find it challenging to have conversations with some of my peers who are in a similar place of hopelessness. It seems that the “*every small bit counts*” argument doesn’t hold as easily in a country where, at a systemic level, it isn’t upheld; where recyclables more often than not end up in toxic landfills near rural communities and ‘reducing plastic straws’ and similar endeavours seem like a futile exercise, but simultaneously are the extent of what most people know as the only option for action.

Taking the same argument from a different perspective shows merit as well: hopefulness breeds purposeful movement. There are incredible organisations that are leading their communities with vigour and determination and as 2030 approaches, it is invigorating to see growth in these spaces. Some One Young World ambassador groups such as Khuthaza Foundation are making great strides in the effort to encourage food security, environmental restoration and soil sequestration through tree planting and community gardens.

FinBiz2030 South Africa has a SDG13 task force, enabling young finance and business professionals to make meaningful short- and long-term effects by partnering with existing organisations to find real solutions to South African - and global - issues. This partnership with Chartered Accountants Worldwide is a critical one: educating accounting and business professionals to make meaningful impact at the nucleus of the organisation, where key decisions are made, has the potential to create a ripple throughout the industry.

Another United Nations-led initiative is the Young SDG Innovators Programme, which has been a great success for large leading corporations aiming to be part of the change. It has enabled successful young leaders to make a tangible difference in internationally-operating financial institutions; logistics; manufacturing and even some of South Africa’s biggest mining corporations.

These organisations’ success speak for themselves: with a problem as immense as South Africa’s climate change journey, many people do not know where to begin. However, when a few people have the courage to lead, disruption follows.

I’ve experienced that it is the business sectors that are seeing climate action for what it is: an investment into our economy. South Africa has the seventh most developed financial system and in some cases it seems that the financial industry is becoming ever more competitive in this space; that industries

are holding regulators accountable and are spurring on legislative change, rather than the converse.

**To what extent are young people able to make their views on climate change heard to local, national and international decision-makers, or hold them to account for the decisions they make on adaptation and mitigation measures?**

At a university level we are seeing an accelerated engagement from the institutions' leaders. The University of Cape Town - Africa's top university - not only had academic leaders contributing to the drafting of the Sustainable Development Goals, but is actively involved in making SDG achievement a reality in Africa.

Historically, universities have always been platforms for change catalysis, where young leaders are given the foundation to demand and create growth. I hope to see sustainability become intrinsic to not just the research institutions and general university practice, but core to the varied syllabi that these young leaders receive.

Yet only a handful of South Africans are able to attend these tertiary institutions. The reality is that a mere 6% of South Africans pay 92% of the country's personal tax, which speaks volumes about not only the resources that are available from the nation's tax earnings, but gives insight into how small finance and business industries are within that.

The small minority of young professionals within that category who are in a position to advocate for change are heavily burdened with the responsibility of fighting an entire generation's battle.

The vast majority of young people are disenfranchised in more ways than one:

The lack of education is one of the biggest issues. Out of 76 countries, SA's education ranks 75th according to the OECD. This means that students are disempowered and have little access to critical learning and upskilling that fuels action, in turn feeding into an existing and youth unemployment issue.

SDG9 (industry, innovation and infrastructure) and SDG17 (partnership for the goals) become pivotally important in the fight for climate action.

Investment into the enfranchisement of youth should be seen as the biggest investment in our future. For too long have we seen the missing middle growing. This is where real and meaningful change would be apparent.

There is a lot of discussion around the issues that our youth are facing globally, but it seems that the next steps of engagement and action are not being reached.

We've seen the excitement and vigour with which younger generations are vocalising their concerns and engaging with issues internationally. The repercussions of climate change are felt in South Africa as much as anywhere, but issues are not yet socialised to the same extent as in many other nations present at COP26.

Climate change knows no borders, however, and it is the collective responsibility of the global community to take action together. A change within one nation can be undone by the lack

of it in another. With partnership comes exponential impact.

**What global initiatives, national initiatives or local initiatives have, in your opinion, been most successful in engaging young people in efforts to tackle climate change and what aspects of these initiatives have been key to their success?**

It's clear how cyclical and intrinsic the issues around inequality, education, poverty, health and wellbeing, food security and climate action are in South Africa and globally. However, so too are the solutions and innovations, where addressing SDGs in unison is greater than the sum of their individual efforts.

The UN SDG framework has created the perfect roadmap for investment into our future ahead of and beyond 2030, allowing public and private entities, and individuals to dissect sustainability into clear, transparent objectives with metrics, targets and goals that are achievable.

From here, there is only up. The escalated interest in Climate Action on the global stage from our business and government leaders, coupled with the growing demand for transparency from our communities are expediting the urgency with which we move.

Sentiments are changing around the power of the individual which is evident by the unified chorus from individual voices from all corners of the world. Technology and increased connectedness on social platforms are changing how we access, demand and challenge information. However, we need to recognise that different contexts call for different approaches. While some communities are not bound to certain locations, others are completely isolated. This is where we need to focus our attention: on mobilising and enfranchising youth - and all individuals - by investing in initiatives that may not fit into a global, generic narrative.

# Muzna Durei

## One Young World Ambassador Syria

My community in Syria is under a direct threat of climate displacement without having any measures or international agreement that protect already displaced people who are in camps because they are forcibly displaced by the bombardment and now under the risk of multiple displacement. I'm a refugee in Canada and my experience with displacement as youth was very hard and harmful.

For many years, scientists have warned governments about the destructive impact of climate change. According to the UN<sup>1</sup>, 17.2 million people have been displaced in 148 countries during 2018 due to global climate change and natural disasters. A report from the World Bank has estimated that a 143 million climate refugees will be displaced by 2050 from Latin America, Sub-Saharan Africa, and Southeast Asia.

There is a responsibility for western countries specifically Canada to support climate refugees because of the damage caused by their emissions.

The dilemma is the lack of legal recognition and adequate remedy for climate refugees. To date, there is no international agreement for forcibly displaced climate people. The current international refugee system was created after World War II by the United Nations under the legal framework of the 1951 Refugee Geneva Convention to protect refugees fleeing their countries only on the basis of political persecution.

Further, youth in general are excluded from policy design and refugee youth are more excluded from participating in any political discussion or policy avenues.

However, displaced youth are still trying to get involved and to change international convention and agreements to update the international response to meet the need of new problems that are not recognized by the law or international agreements.

Recommendations:

- **Ensure meaningful participation of refugees and forcibly internally displaced people (IDP's)**  
Every single meeting, conference, and summit should include refugees and IDP's and diverse participation not only as participants, but they should be invited to participate in high positions as steering committee, advisory boards ...etc
- **The 1951 Geneva convention for refugees**  
Geneva convention is essential for future generations to ensure that countries will consider them as refugees when they cross the borders because of the threats related to climate change and hard weather. We need to provide climate refugees a valid and legal status to protect them from the impact of displacement and the lack of comprehensive policies that meet the needs of millennials.
- **Enhance intersectionality**  
We need to ensure that meaningful participation should be paired with intersectionality to ensure there is a seat for the most marginalized groups such as indigenous people, youth, women, disabled people, LGBTQ, IDP's, stateless and refugees. This combination will improve the outputs of any talks or meetings that related to climate change and its impact on the global south.
- **Decolonize the policies**  
Policies should be crafted, negotiated, adopted, and implemented in decolonized way which mean to people before politics and to centralise the global south by considering the struggles of citizens in non- western countries.

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/blog/2019/06/lets-talk-about-climate-migrants-not-climate-refugees/>

# Nathalie Aue

## One Young World Ambassador Venezuela

1. What impact is climate change having on you personally, on your peers and community?

2. To what extent are young people able to make their views on climate change heard to local, national and international decision-makers, or hold them to account for the decisions they make on adaptation and mitigation measures?

3. What global initiatives, national initiatives or local initiatives have, in your opinion, been most successful in engaging young people in efforts to tackle climate change and what aspects of these initiatives have been key to their success?

Society is focusing on solving a lot of issues from the point of view of businesses and currently our planet is threatened by many anthropogenic factors but did you know that our oceans are threatened as well?

I am an ocean lover who fell in love with its immensity and greatness by starting scuba diving. Very fast, while diving in the great barrier reef, I could see the impact that we were having in the ocean and this big colony of animals called corals, and that many other people did not know the effects of our decisions in climate change.

The crucial role the ocean plays in our lives is not often commented on in the news, they keep us alive by regulating the climate, providing food, containing many important ecosystems with a huge biodiversity, coastal economies are also generating millions of dollars and even generating more than 50% of the oxygen we are breathing. We are harming it without noticing in different ways such as overfishing, rife with plastic, exploitation for non-renewable resources (like minerals and fossil fuels), introducing chemical and even electronic pollutants over different industries and so many factors that we cannot see that easily. Climate change is not only the change in the weather; it is also the change of temperature and the acidification of the ocean, it is also all catastrophes happening all over the world. All these problems are coming from a lack of regulation and control. We are generating many regulations to have a greener planet, but 70% of our planet is left apart.

Many countries in Latin America, like Nicaragua, Honduras, Guatemala, my country Venezuela and others, are working towards climate change but they have been very affected by mass deforestation, overfishing, macro projects affecting different ecosystems but it is also affected by corruption, lack of education and opportunities. It is important to say that many of the countries in the region have coast limits with very important places like migration regions, the second biggest coral reef or turtle spawn places, etc. The consequences of these factors are far more visible in comparison with other high-income or developed regions such as North America or Europe. We can see the effects of all these factors in day by day lifestyle, poverty, hunger and lack of resources are the first hints of the consequences of the lack of adapted and inclusive regulations

in the countries, and of course the creation of blue economies which also protect the oceans.

In the latest years the sustainable development goal #14: Life underwater has not been prioritized by many organisations, governments or even global institutions, even though it has a profound impact in delivering all the other SDGs. Currently, we don't see proposals calling for public policy that are focusing on solving ocean challenges.

The United Nations has already recognised the lack of priority in addressing the degraded state of our oceans and has declared the decade of Ocean Science for sustainable Development in order to work in a common framework to deliver results on behalf of the oceans. Nonetheless, this is not enough, we must act in the decade of the ocean. Many people are starting to speak about its importance but it is crucial that the governments think global and as a region, and place more emphasis on behalf of 70% of our planet.

We can see that many organisations have been born in the last years, many of them are working on ocean literacy and conservation like "Oceanmar Project", "Nakawe" or "Oceana", coral conservation has been a research activity in many places in the caribic and even some success stories like "Corales de Paz" who are upscaling restoration for coral reefs, seeking to restore staghorn communities at 20% live coral cover to a total area of 4.15 acres (1.68 hectares), and also organisations researching the incredible world of shark migration in the pacific. But the organisations are not enough, we need the creation of international policies that support activists. Regulations that offshore drilling and encourage investment in renewable ocean energy, policies that control overfishing and enhance sustainable seafood and fishing, increase the regulation about illegal, unreported or unregulated fishing and create laws that creates marine protected areas that are also applying the legislations to protect the biodiversity, regulations that reduce carbon intensive marine pollutions and support real circular economies.

Movements have been originated globally from social media itself thanks to accelerated digitalization. This has helped in expanding the reach of our voices, however; it lacks in impact is partly due to the lack of accountability that comes with it and the way the media is communicating the challenges. It is also said that many movements are being shut down by powerful people, since one of the biggest challenges is to fight against money. Different activities driven to solve climate change are also affecting bigger businesses and local activists are also sometimes threatened.

One of the campaigns that I believe is a clear example that together we can do something is the campaign started in the Canary islands by a group of individuals who raised their voices against the "Fonsalia Port" it has not been decided if the port will be constructed but in my opinion it was a clear example of how a multidisciplinary team with scientifics, communicators, influencers, politicians and even artists can make things happen and why it is important to have a global movement which supports a mix of objectives. I deeply believe that passion is what goes the extra mile to reach the goals we want to work on behalf of the planet.

*"In the end, we will conserve only what we love; we will love only what we understand and we will understand only what we are taught."* - (Baba Dioum, 1968.)



# Neeshad Shafi

## One Young World Ambassador Qatar

### Part 1 – Impact of Climate Change on youth

#### 1. What impact is climate change having on you personally, on your peers and community?

There are many areas where climate-related issues are already posing problems for countries in the Gulf and Arab Middle East region. Due to pre-existing high temperatures, the Arab Middle East region is particularly sensitive to climate change-related outcomes. One of the key areas of risks of climate change are overall increasing temperatures, water, and migration. Temperature in the Arab region, which may see average temperatures increase by 4 degrees Celsius by the end of the 21st century. On June 22, the Kuwaiti city of Nuwaiseeb recorded the highest temperature in the world so far this year at 53.2 Deg C. In neighbouring Iraq, temperatures reached 51.6 DegC on July 1, 2021, with Omidyeh, Iran, not far behind with a maximum temperature of 51 DegC recorded so far. Several other countries in the Middle East, including the United Arab Emirates, Qatar, Oman and Saudi Arabia, recorded temperatures higher than 50 DegC in June. Secondly the Middle East is the most water-stressed region in the world, 70 percent of the world's most water-stressed countries are in MENA. Aside from the threats to human life, the loss of local agriculture and of jobs in the agricultural sector pose significant risks of political, economic, and social instability. Thirdly, migration, refugees are typically associated with conflict, and the Middle East already hosts a disproportionate number of refugees and internally displaced people. In 2017, disasters in the region led to 11.4 million internal displacements, mostly from Iraq, Syria, Yemen, Libya and North Africa. Further, although these populations are often deemed “*climate refugees*,” this term is not recognized by international law and thus they are not afforded the same protections as refugees fleeing conflict or persecution. And Finally, Drought and forest fires are just a few of the extreme weather events that are triggered by the shifting weather dynamics exacerbated by climate change. In a study of weather hazards in six Arab states, forest fires were the most prevalent event, followed by drought, storms (including electric storms, sandstorms, and windstorms), and flash floods.

### Part 2 – Enfranchisement of youth in mitigation and adaptation

#### 2. To what extent are young people able to make their views on climate change heard to local, national and international decision-makers, or hold them to account for the decisions they make on adaptation and mitigation measures?

Well, at the moment the views of youth are still not heard at large, and where it is heard more of tokenism. But indeed, they are trying. Instead, political engagement has shifted to alternative territories: activist and protests like FFF are still powerful channels for political expression, while the online sharing of views and information allows young people to express their views and formulate demands for action and change outside of official structures and oversight.

A shift from formal political engagement to informal or online engagement can reflect a sense on the part of young people that government and its institutions are run by professional elites who

have little sense of or interest in the concerns of the youth. Low voter turnout and membership in political organisations can indicate a belief that such actions do not truly allow people to influence processes and affect outcomes. Such beliefs can be particularly prevalent amongst those communities that are often marginalized by political processes – migrants, minorities, low-income families and people lacking basic education. These changing means and areas of engagement need to be taken into account when designing strategies.

Young people should not be treated as ‘youths in training’ but should feel that they have an important voice in discussions, that their concerns are being taken seriously, and that their input is being put to good use. Adults should act as partners and commit to working with young people towards shared goals, rather than guiding the process to their own ends.

#### 3. What global initiatives, national initiatives or local initiatives have, in your opinion, been most successful in engaging young people in efforts to tackle climate change and what aspects of these initiatives have been key to their success?

We at Arab Youth Climate Movement Qatar believes in local engagement which help amplify to larger national and regional changes. Ensuring that young people are actively engaged in strategies and initiatives is fundamental in building active participation and in creating programmes that fully reflect the needs and concerns of youth. Fostering this climate of engagement and participation is dependent upon the creation and implementation of an effective and tailored programmes and projects. should have specific, targeted policy goals beyond simply ‘improving the engagement of young people’: instead, projects should be structured to achieve realistic outcomes, such as increasing the influence of young people within a particular institution; increasing youth access rates to a particular online tool or platform; or encouraging the use of particular open datasets by youth groups and young citizens.

For an Initiative or project to be successful, projects should then be structured in a way to ensure that youth participation is meaningful, they feel comfortable collaborating with facilitators, such as government agencies, academic researchers or representatives of civil society organisations, and reassured that their views will be heard and taken seriously. This can be achieved by working through trusted community partners who are used to working closely with young people and who are conscious of the importance of gathering quality feedback and ensure sustained participation and engagement. So projects will also contain education and training elements to support. In order a project initiative to be successful, we need to ensure clear, transparent and timely feedback to enable participants to understand the impact that their contribution or the decision-making process.

## Nicolau Miguel

### One Young World Ambassador Angola

Globally, youth (between 10–24 years) make up about a sixth (17%) of the total population, and even higher in Africa (60%). Today, these youth are exposed to climate change impacts with vulnerabilities due to limited ownership of productive assets, unemployment or limited decent work, amongst other challenges. As youth, together with governments, work to escape these vulnerabilities, limited knowledge of effective climate change solutions poses a huge sustainability risk that can reinforce the cycle of poverty for many generations. These cascading effects of climate change are minimally understood, at the household level, and a shift to sustainable lifestyles is happening much slower in developing countries.

Nevertheless, there is a growing global acknowledgement that youth are potential active actors in the fight against climate change, both in policy formulation, implementation and transitioning to a green global economy. Realizing the full potential is very dependent on the extent other actors support their voices and make their actions count. The Sustainable Development Solutions Network -Youth Report (2017), which includes 60 youth-led solutions and ideas sourced globally, indicates that a large portion of these ideas voiced concerns for help and guidance in transforming their Ideas into full-fledged solutions. It further observed that environmental goals such as terrestrial biodiversity (SDG 15), climate action (SDG 13), and oceans (SDG 14), being scientific in nature, could present a barrier for youth participation. These constituted the least number of ideas and solutions.

Based on the fact of leaving no one behind, these seminar should benefit government agencies and non-state actors, including: CSOs, Financial Institutions and entrepreneurs supporting and or interested in youth and climate change issues, and also it would be very beneficial to youth climate advocates and entrepreneurs. Raising youth expertise on climate seminars with the following objectives, but not limited:

- Enhancing knowledge of the Paris Agreement and UNFCCC that are targeted to enhance youth participation in global climate action.
- Enabling stakeholders to share experience on successful approaches and information on current interventions to support youth climate action in various sectors.
- Sharing experience of successful approaches to finance innovation with the potential for generating significant climate change benefits and co-benefits essential for sustainable development.
- Offer a diverse and inclusive platforms for youth in action to showcase successful innovations and initiatives to combat and adapt to climate change;

- Providing an opportunity to young participants, entrepreneurs, journalists, students to directly address high-level speakers on key questions that are most relevant and urgent for the region;

At the 14th Extraordinary Session of the Assembly of the African Union on Silencing the Guns in Africa, on 6 December 2020, the Assembly decided to extend the implementation of the AU Master Roadmap of Practical Steps to Silence the Guns in Africa for a period of ten (10) years (2021-2030), with periodic reviews every two (2) years, within the context of Agenda 2063. The environmental aspect is one of the 5 elements showcased on this Master Roadmap. So, the environmental degradation can lead to different implications like pollution in various forms, coastal erosion, food insecurity, and many others. Together with local and international partner organisations, practical steps should continue to be collectively implemented in order to address scourges imposed by the climate change.

Recalling Agenda 2030's roadmap to achieve sustainable growth and development without leaving anyone behind and in particular SDG7 which requires Parties to ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all, Acknowledging that a fair and just transition to clean energy will require a multi-stakeholder and intergenerational approach involving governments, the private sector; youth, Indigenous, marginalized and vulnerable communities as well as ensuring that both developing and developed nations have access to reliable and cheap energy, Recognizing that the green energy transition will require Parties to implement regulatory and financial mechanisms to support infrastructure and technology development, as well as workforce capacity building, Acknowledging that COVID-19 recovery plans present an unprecedented opportunity to implement a Green Recovery, through initiatives such as the Green New Deal, which involves allocating recovery funds in a way that is compatible with climate targets set out in the Paris Agreement.

Emphasizing that a return to business-as-usual will prevent Parties from reaching the "well below 2°C" target set out in the Paris Agreement and further noting that continued investment in fossil fuels is incompatible with climate targets and green recovery goals, Noting that the energy transition will have adverse side-effects on fossil fuel industry jobs whilst also noting that these losses can be balanced with equivalent green industry jobs leading to a positive labour market transition which can help break the false dichotomy of environmentalism versus prosperity.

#### Energy Transition and Green Jobs

All countries should offer training and capacity-building opportunities in green jobs to tackle unemployment, create

new work opportunities and develop a workforce that is able to bring about a rapid energy transition whilst achieving SDG8, including by:

Promoting equal access to education in schools, universities and vocational schools as well as bridging the education-career gap by providing skill-building programs, access to mentorship and peer networks, and using a systems approach to building the clean energy workforce taking example from initiatives such as Student Energy;

- Equipping the structurally unemployed with new skills through subsidized or free training programs;
- Creating work opportunities across the entire energy value chain, from research and development, to maintenance, distribution and generation;
- Investing in youth by providing training to access green jobs, supporting youth-led organisations and initiatives, creating the social, economic and political environment that will enable youth entrepreneurship in the renewable energy sector.

Green Jobs are possible, hence Africa's leaders and youth should increasingly embrace circular economies and restoration – seeing the environment as a creator of jobs and livelihoods. Policies to support green jobs will need to be relevant and inclusive of youth. Africa's young people and policy makers to consider the environment as part of these core values. Conserving, protecting and restoring the nature we live in will ensure that we too can live healthy, fulfilling lives.

As we approach the final decade of the sustainable development goals, Africa's policy makers and youth, so both sides can work together towards a nature-positive future. Last year, Bp announced an industry leading ambition for Bp to become a net zero company by 2050 or sooner, and help the world get to net zero. So, in order to achieve the promises of the Paris Agreement, it is essential for energy companies to play their roles otherwise nothing is going to happen. Greening companies like Bp for example, can move faster if they have the world best talents working for them, which is an opportunity to help change the world in a very direct and very practical way. Bp, as greening company, is one of an increasing number of companies already in action. But without help, progress is going to be slow, to do this better and faster, global support for policies, incentives, and regulations is needed to make low carbon choices easier and cheaper.

Evidence has been mounting that climate change has been impacting adversely on natural resources such as water, coastal and marine biosystems, forests, and so on. Such negative trends are expected to intensify as the climate crisis deepens. For adequate safeguards to be designed against climate risks, it would be necessary to monitor, evaluate, and report not only on the extent of damage inflicted by climate change, but also use the findings of research and prediction models to guild scenarios of potential natural resource change. As regards estimating the impacts caused by climate change, an effective tool that can be used to determine, monitor, and track changes of natural resources is the system of economic and environmental accounting. Natural resources deliver consumptive and non-consumptive services and functions. Such flows would be

impaired more and more as climate change aggravates. By conducting valuation exercises on a regular basis it would be possible to estimate losses in livelihoods and declines in economic welfare.

As conclusion, it is imperative to emphasize the sense of urgency – the issue of climate change and its impacts needs to be communicated to everyone as a matter of urgency. Many Africans, particularly those in rural areas, are struggling in the face of increasingly unpredictable weather. Individuals and communities need greater information, resources, and locally relevant practical information to help them adapt and respond to climate change. Effort should be invested in developing appropriate climate change terminology in local African languages so that climate change can be discussed in locally relevant ways that can help to provide an insight into the reality of the changes that most Africans are experiencing.

A Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) framework is yet an important tool for tracking the performance and impact of implementation of specific goals, actions and outputs presented in this climate change strategy. Monitoring in this context refers to systematic collection of data in order to provide information on the extent of progress and achievement of the goals and actions of the strategy. Evaluation refers to the systematic and objective assessment of the strategy design, implementation and results covering specified criteria which includes coverage, relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, impact, sustainability and replicability/up scaling of climate change programmes. The evaluation framework will emphasize an approach of participatory identification of challenges, constraints, success factors as a basis for conclusions, lessons learned and decision on courses of action or change. The M&E framework will be a mechanism to link accountability and learning for better management of climate change programmes.

# Nayeema Nazmul Khan

## One Young World Ambassador

### Bangladesh

Climate change has become a major concern in recent years. Various human actions are causing the world to become increasingly heated. Global warming, or climate change, is the end effect. Sea level rise is caused by rising atmospheric temperatures, which impacts low-lying coastal areas and deltas around the world. Bangladesh, a coastal country with a 710-kilometer-long shoreline facing the Bay of Bengal, is experiencing a variety of effects as a result of rising sea levels. Bangladesh has already been impacted by soil erosion, salt intrusion, and biodiversity loss. Its potential hazards are expected to become even more severe in the future. Along this coast, rising sea levels will cause river bank erosion, salinity intrusion, flooding, infrastructure damage, crop failure, fisheries destruction, biodiversity loss, and other issues. The large coastal territory and flood plain zone of the country will be affected by a one-meter sea level rise (SLR). It will have an impact on the Millennium Development Goals and result in environmental refugees. Coastal resources, water resources, agriculture, and Bangladesh's biodiversity are the most vulnerable sectors to a one-meter sea level rise. Moreover, the population is expected to grow to 200 million people by 2050, which will have substantial implications for environmental change. Urbanization and industrialization that accompanied this growth in population caused serious strain on environmental quality and natural resources, including air, water, and soil pollution. This has threatened ecosystems and public health as well as economic growth. The leading environmental challenges that Bangladesh face due to such changes in its population and economic activities.

Bangladesh has two options: adaptation and mitigation. The first is country-specific, or even local-specific, whilst mitigation encourages global groups to work together.

Bangladesh will be better able to deal with the critical threats of sea level rise if it develops adaptation policies for various sectors. Lobbying in international communities will be beneficial in reducing CO2 emissions, which are the cause of global warming and sea level rise. To keep sea level rise to a minimum, proper mitigation policies and adaptation policies are becoming crucially influential.

The preponderance of climate change's dire repercussions are predicted to be felt soon. Young people are particularly vulnerable to the impacts even though they are typically on the periphery of decision-making and will be threatened by climate change for many years to come. As a result, taking (or not taking) efforts to reduce climate change or adapt to difficulties without their cooperation would be unethical.

Youths have spontaneously (and in enormous numbers) joined movements around the world, and they have partnered with groups that are seeking to address their concerns and offer solutions to real-world problems.

According to UNFPA (2014), Bangladesh has 48 million youth, accounting for 30% of the total population. It is impossible to guarantee the future of this significant part of society. In Bangladesh, 85 percent of young people study about climate change in school, which is higher than in any other South Asian country.

95% want to learn more about climate change, especially how to avoid it and take local action.

70% of young people are concerned, which is greater than the rest of South Asia.

Seventy-one percent believe the government will act to combat climate change.

94% of young people want to make a difference (but need support).

To address the issue more precisely a real life encounter to the impacts of global climate change a brief personal incident is stated here. My hometown is in Kishoreganj district under Dhaka division. Due to geographical location Kishoreganj Haor region is highly sensitive to the climatic events such as flash flood, soil erosion, heavy rainfall, drought, storm surge etc. The flash flood in March 2017 caused immense sufferings to thousands of farmers of the Kishoreganj and Netrokona districts. The farmers were very unprepared because naturally flood happens in haor area from April but this time it was a month early with the worst consequences ever. The sudden flood triggered by heavy rainfall destroyed the only single time staple food, boro crop. About 350 hectares of fresh land in seven upazilas were flooded just in one day. The dam broke and the farmers couldn't protect the embankment either. Thousands of tons of fish died – rotting and floating on the water due to water contamination. Thousands of duck farms are affected too. Schools remain closed, at least half million students dropped their regular education because of the disaster. Almost all village-level roads, homes & assets were inundated for days.

Department of Agriculture Extension (DAE) affirmed that the blaze flood has lowered 141000 hectares of farmland in six northeastern regions, influencing around 423,000 ranchers. 4.76 lakh hectares of land this year in the division with a creation focus of 2.49 lakh tons rice. Around 73,070 hectares of paddy fields are lowered in rising water in the Netrakona locale's obliterating around 421,980 tons of paddy. In Kishoreganj DAE had found around 23,300 hectares of paddy handles totally immersed and the reap loss of about Tk. deeply. There were no early directives for the flood, the government has some undertaking about early notice however more often than not these tasks can't satisfy the principle target.



The Government of Bangladesh took different strategies and policies in the last 10 years to improve the state of environmental management, which includes an impressive list of environmental laws, regulations and plans covering a wide range of environmental issues including forest degradation, air pollution, water pollution, biodiversity loss and wetland management. Additional laws, regulations and programmes related to agriculture, land, water management, fisheries and disaster management also seek to address environmental concerns in areas, such as land degradation, sustainable management of fisheries, management of water resources, waste management and disaster risk reduction. The policies addressed under the 8FYP through implementation of effective environmental fiscal reforms that are based on a mix of both “polluter pays” and “beneficiary pays” principles reinforced by sustainable consumption and production which mainly includes- Improved institutional capacity, activities to mitigate river bank erosion, activities to reduce land degradation, improved coastal afforestation, established forest and carbon inventories. These are in terms with the PPP 2031 to build Bangladesh a sustainable middle income country and a higher income country by 2041. The government also took a huge project on hand The Bangladesh Delta Plan 2100.

However, The government recognises these limitations and aims to improve such limitations by implementing the broader strategic objectives and targets of the Bangladesh Delta Plan 2100, which undertakes a holistic approach to reconcile long-term economic progress with the environmental concerns associated with both climate change and industrialization.

Alongside government organisations, Non- government organisations are encouraging youth of the country to get involved with climate actions in order to secure the future of the country and its people. Youth actions in climate change have already been activated in Bangladesh. Various environment-related university clubs had started working on this problem. They are arranging workshops, seminars, innovation fairs, various competitions on climate change and environment-related problems. For example, Local chapters of Youth-mappers are contributing a lot in mapping base volunteering, and Green Planet Club of Independent University organized Green Genius Contest, where university students present their innovative ideas to make a sustainable environment.

Academic institutions are also promoting youth-oriented climate actions. The Department of Environmental Sciences, Bangladesh University of Professionals, arranged an Environmental Fest last year. Institute of Remote Sensing, Jahangirnagar University arranged a two days workshop on applications of GIS and Remote Sensing, where 100 students from ten universities participated and had some introductory lessons about applications of geospatial technologies in environmental management.

A recent initiative, developed by the International Centre for Climate Change and Development (ICCCAD) supported by UKAid and British Council, aims to build the capacity of young people to become the actors in taking climate actions. It is designed as a year-long mentorship programme, entitled “*Re-think & Innovate for a Sustainable Environment (RISE)*” that works to engage the youth (selected university students from across Bangladesh) to break down the complex sustainability issues that will challenge their generation and to identify opportunities in how they can initiate projects and activities on their own.

The programme focuses on providing a grounding of climate science and sustainability issues, mentoring on project design and implementation, representing their peers among various stakeholders (policymakers/practitioners/private sector firms, etc.) and engaging their peers to collaborate and participate in national development issues.

As a critical barrier to most initiatives is support (mostly financial and technical), the programme aims to catalyze the youth into; identifying the appropriate assistance and guidance needed, to approach key stakeholders (investors/decision-makers, etc.) and propose feasible solutions and mobilize their peers into making real changes.

The youth of any nation is a valuable asset for prosperity and sustainable development, and the youth of Bangladesh is no different. These eager and enthusiastic minds can, and should, be channeled towards adaptation & mitigation projects (under our existing policies/frameworks).

To network and share their ideas, and most importantly, to become actors that take climate actions it is vital to provide adequate support and assistance by investing in the youth of our nation.

<https://www.dhakatribune.com/climate-change/2019/05/04/youth-in-climate-action>

<https://www.unicef.org/rosa/media/12321/file/Rising%20to%20the%20Challenge%20-%20Youth%20Perspectives%20on%20Climate%20Change%20and%20Education%20in%20Bangladesh.pdf>

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[http://www.plancomm.gov.bd/sites/default/files/files/plancomm.portal.gov.bd/files/68e32f08\\_13b8\\_4192\\_ab9b\\_abd5a0a62a33/2021-02-03-17-04-ec95e78e452a813808a483b3b22e14a1.pdf](http://www.plancomm.gov.bd/sites/default/files/files/plancomm.portal.gov.bd/files/68e32f08_13b8_4192_ab9b_abd5a0a62a33/2021-02-03-17-04-ec95e78e452a813808a483b3b22e14a1.pdf)

# Paula Sleiman

## One Young World Ambassador Brazil

### Part I – Impact of Climate Change on Youth

I) I will talk from where I stand, being a young adult in Brazil. Our country may be rapidly summarized as a 3rd-world, highly ethnic-mixed, visible social gap, very land-extensive, mother of the great Amazon and many incredible nature gifts. From here, I say our generation is the one with the biggest awareness rate on climate change. Of course, it is somehow correlated to their social class as the richer you are the greater are the chances you receive proper education. I would say the privileged young people (where I belong) have had access to education and now have access to information which makes them super aware of the changes, and the imminent risk. I would say that by knowing that this group of people is infuriated by the local lack of respect and control of the destruction of our main preservation areas. We see Amazon get burned down, the Pantanal, no preservation of the riparian vegetation. We feel the changes on the rain calendar across the country, we see droughts becoming more intense and more frequent, we have seasons becoming more intense, colder winters and hotter summers, we see storms getting more intense, new storms of dust. For us that natural resources have never been close to lack, are now scarcer. I won't lie that climate change is on the top 2 main reasons of mental distress of my group (together with politicians). The other 2 big groups of youth in Brazil are the middle class negationist (which I won't spend time trying to understand), and the poor youth, representing over 50% of our generation. The bottom of the pyramid may not receive due information about climate change at school and their awareness rate is surely smaller. But unfortunately, they are the ones who face its effects closely. They are the ones losing homes, losing the purchasing power, losing the harvests. I feel that the climate change discussions seem far away from the largest number of Brazilians, as they are both receiving little information, overloaded with fake news, and made to feel powerless. If I could, I would empower these amazing people with very good education and renew the politicians to focus on giving people a voice.

Brazil is a huge country blessed with intense and diverse ecosystems. We were built upon a culture of exploration of the natural resources, and we have never changed our mentality until now. But as expected, resources will end. And the outcomes will be brutal. Instead of helping to slow down the effects of climate change, we are acting as catalysts of it. Mostly due to the shrinking of the Amazon rainforest, as said in the name, the biggest threat locally and globally will be the intensification of natural phenomena, rarer rain periods, more frequent and intense droughts, floods, and agricultural impacts. For a country that depends economically on agribusiness, it sounds insane that our government and population don't prioritize the climate issue. There are not only no relevant initiatives but a huge decrease in the federal money allocated on the initiatives (for example the ICMBio and other fire fighting and preservation organisations). The current Government not only doesn't help but acts against the environmental causes, negating the climate change, approving innumerable laws to reduce preservation countermeasures the businesses (mainly the agri) must comply with.

Right now, the country is facing an energy crisis since our energy relies on hydropower and is raining less and the riparian vegetation is getting smaller and smaller as mentioned before. Instead of looking for the root causes, intensify the care of the ecosystems, make great encouragements to renewable energy to expand (huge potential on onshore wind, solar, offshore is still nonexistent), control the water consumption on the harvests and industries, the President tells people to take fewer and cold showers. Unbelievable. As commonly used online, my generation describes themselves as 'sad and Brazilian'.

### Part II – Enfranchisement of youth in mitigation and adaptation

2) Today in Brazil, after putting some thought into it, I could only think of two ways of making the youth voice be heard. 1- through the politicians we elect and 2- through NGOs and private driven initiatives. I could only think of manifestations (in person or social media driven) to push decision-makers to engage and really hold accountability. I know it is possible to participate in local (city and state-level) environmental secretaries voting, sessions, and public consults. They happen sporadically and you need to be very attentive to be informed. The medium-term effect could also be caused by a restless generation that would influence their surroundings to make better decisions, including during elections. Even attract young talents to politics, as Tabata Amaral example. Youth needs to be closer to decision-makers. They need to be protagonists in society. But to do that, they need to shape their voices and get the needed knowledge. 3) First and foremost, I will start with One Young World and share my personal testimonial. I was born and raised in the middle of the Amazon, lucky enough to be taught in school since my early years about environmental conscience (sponsored by the mining company Vale). I was also lucky to be surrounded by many great examples of giving back and volunteering (from my parents, teachers, to church fellows). By all of that, I recall first starting to act for others at the age of seven collecting food donations for soup weekly. From there on, I have engaged in various initiatives, all related to the SDGs #4, 5, and 13. But never have I considered myself an activist or a change-maker: It was only after participating to OYW summit in 2019 that I fully understood the people of the youth and individual actions. I came back empowered. They gave me a voice and I will do my best to never lose it. Regarding climate change, I could help my employer to consolidate an internal official hub (employee resource group, as it is called internally) to foster sustainability on tier 1 and boost the company's efforts towards carbon neutrality. I am particularly proud of the little effects on my surroundings, on how I can influence colleagues, friends, and family to adopt more sustainable habits by example. Also on how I am - even that by the smallest part - responsible for a change in the consumption habits by challenging stores and sellers on reverse logistics (by insisting on returning recipients) and on rethinking the packages. Looks so simple, and even though I may always have advocated for that, I didn't raise my voice before (not sure even if I had any). OYW has this power for gathering an incredible group of individuals. CEOs, celebrities, Nobel prize winners, activists, and regular people doing outstanding work. It opens your mind for the various issues our planet faces and at the same time showcases what has been done, filling us with hope. Other than that, in Brazil, I can also mention voting for responsible people as a way to make a difference. The greater impacts I see come from companies who are either responsible or obligated to make compensations, such as engaging in the carbon market, sponsoring reforestation and preservation projects, educating the local community, among others. But again, I cannot strongly correlate those actions with a more engaged youth.

## Punit Girdhar

### One Young World Ambassador India

Human activities has led to an increase in global temperatures since 1950. By burning fossil fuels, cutting down forests, using fertilizers that contain nitrogen, and raising livestock, humans are increasingly affecting the climate and the earth's temperature. Consequently, huge amounts of greenhouse gases (carbon dioxide, methane, nitrogen oxide, and fluorinated gases) are released into the atmosphere, contributing to the greenhouse effect and global warming. Carbon dioxide emissions from human activities cause the largest contribution to global warming. By 2020, its concentration in the atmosphere had risen to 48% above its pre-industrial level. There are already observable impacts on human health from climate change. Climate change affects everyone directly or indirectly. Personally, I have experienced the following impacts in India because of climate change.

- Throughout the summer, temperatures continue to rise and break records, which led to problems related to heat waves.
- The prices of foods and vegetables are increasing each year. Several factors contribute to higher food prices, but climate change is a major one. Extreme weather can affect livestock and crops, and droughts can affect food prices and stability.
- Over the past few years, we have faced multiple outbreaks and increases of water-borne illnesses.
- The consumption of electric power during the summer increased because of air conditioners and fans, which leads to a rise in electric bills and affects our economic well-being.

The direct and indirect effects of global climate changes on human societies are as follows:

- Heat waves and extreme weather increased in frequency, duration, and intensity. This has the greatest impact on people who work outside, such as construction workers, miners, firefighters and agricultural workers.
- Hurricanes and floods become stronger, causing heavy damage to property and infrastructure, as well as to human health.
- A series of intense storms and heavy precipitation lead to contamination of water resources. Cities suffer from runoff that picks up pollutants and overflows the sewage system, causing the quality of drinking water to degrade.
- Due to climate change, we had seen Tsunamis and earthquakes that have killed hundreds of people and destroyed communities.
- Warmer temperatures prolong pollen season and worsen air quality, both of which can cause asthma attacks and allergies because of climate change. Ground-level ozone, a major component of smog, which increases when temperatures warm, can also cause coughing, chest tightness or pain,

decrease lung function, and aggravate asthma and other chronic lung diseases.

- Water supplies in rural areas can be polluted by runoff from animal waste, pesticides, and fertilizers, which can contaminate drinking or recreational water sources. Infections such as diarrhea, Legionnaires disease, cholera, and eye, ear and skin infections can be caused by contaminated dirty water.
- In some low-lying coastal areas, sea level rise could result in saltwater entering groundwater supplies. Ultimately, affects people who rely on groundwater to supply drinking water.
- As temperatures warm and precipitation increases more pathogens will thrive and affect plant health; food will spoil more easily as a result.
- Human health is affected by the lack of fresh oxygen.
- Hunger, poverty, and diseases such as malaria and diarrhea, caused by climate change, disproportionately affect children; about 90 percent of malaria and diarrhea deaths occur in young children.

Climate change is happening due to industrial development and household development in every country that is moving from a developing to a developed stage. The migration of people from villages to cities causes deforestation. These rapid developments have increased the impact of climate change multiple folds than a few decades ago.

- Agricultural soil is badly impacted, which affects our food quality. Increased erosion, decline in organic matter, salinization, loss of soil biodiversity, landslides, desertification, and flooding. Increased carbon dioxide levels, rising temperatures, and changing precipitation patterns are all contributing to these impacts.
- Direct and indirect impacts of climate change lead to a loss of biodiversity of ecosystems and species. Climate change is already affecting biodiversity, and that situation will continue to deteriorate.
- Due to the worsening climate change, the transmission of infectious diseases has also increased, including dengue fever, malaria, tick-borne disease, leishmaniasis, and ebola.

Because the impact of climate change is increasing continuously, there are some threats that are already existent and will worsen in the future.

**Air pollution:** Pollution from carbon dioxide gases pollutes the air, causing small particles to enter the body through breathing, entering the lungs, the heart, and finally entering the bloodstream. Consequently, strokes and heart attacks will be more common. People over the age of 65 will be most vulnerable to the harmful effects of air pollution in the upcoming year.

**Extreme heat:** Temperatures are expected to increase because of climate change in the future as well. Those who are exposed to extreme heat for too long are likely to develop a cascade of problems in their bodies if they are unable to release this heat adequately. As a result of heat exposure, dehydration can also cause serious damage to the kidneys, which rely on water to function properly.

**Food insecurity:** A changing climate results in a reduction of available food as well as a reduction of its nutritional value. Increasing temperatures, changing precipitation patterns, and extreme weather events have already affected crop yields and will continue to do so.

The factors causing climate change are increasing every day and seem to be beyond our control. The only way to control them is to slow down greenhouse gas emissions. A number of countries and their governments understood the implications of climate change and are collaborated with other countries to resolve these issues. The government has formed and implemented multiple policies and laws to curb climate change.

**Government:** The government prioritizes environmental campaigns and initiatives. In India, government policies are primarily focused on reducing CO<sub>2</sub> emissions by supporting startups to convert petrol and diesel cars to electric and hydrogen-fueled ones. The government installed large solar panel parks on lakes and desert areas in order to generate and supply electricity. In order to save the aquatic habitat, some strict rules have been formed, and companies have been given strict instructions. Several startups receive government funding in order to expand their work and do more innovation in renewable energy. A number of CO<sub>2</sub> filtering towers are established to reduce the CO<sub>2</sub> concentration in the air.

**Non-governmental organization (NGO):** Climate change is being combated by many NGOs with volunteers on the ground. Most of the initiatives for protecting the environment are being taken by the young generation. NGO's focus on initiatives such as tree plantation, waterbody restoration, community outreach, and environmental education for students. Government schools provide full support to students by educating them on the harmful effects of the environment and how to reduce CO<sub>2</sub> emissions.

With the help of their corporate social responsibility funds, multinational companies are purchasing government-owned land in order to grow plants and reduce their carbon footprint. Internally, they banned plastic and installed solar panels to generate their required electricity. Many companies have adopted the virtual work culture to reduce their carbon footprint.

Young people are extremely concerned about the effects of climate change on the environment and their impact. In order to reduce carbon emissions, they are making all efforts. Few young leaders have come forward with their innovative ideas for utilizing renewable energy sources. Young activists using social media to campaign for environmental protection.

Some international platforms support youth involvement in global communities and provide all the support necessary to help them save the environment. In One Young World, young

people who are making meaningful impacts from around the world are invited, motivated, and guided by the greatest leaders in the world. In this way, these leaders share their knowledge with other leaders from other countries and transfer technologies related to the environment. The government giving priority to the young leaders who have made significant impact and providing them with grants to do innovation for climate change protection.

Youth in India had access to a digital platform where they could submit innovative ideas and get every possible support from the government. A government-sponsored innovation week held every year, where innovators can display their ideas. The government to help young innovators convert concepts into reality established a startup incubator. Processes for patents and copyright are being streamlined to boost innovation. Global conferences and events provide innovators platforms to make their innovations heard around the world. Youth can make their innovation heard around the world via social media, where they can reach millions of people.

Due to lack of support and unawareness of the process, young people have ideas numerous times but never make them a reality. Lack of funding is one of the factors preventing innovators from innovating. Most young people who are innovative have the mindset but lack time because of their day-to-day work schedules. Most of these obstacles are increasingly being overcome as innovative incubators are established and the process is getting better. As part of their Corporate Social Responsibility programs, some companies support their employees in volunteering for these activities.

Young leaders from every country will have to be included in global platforms working on climate change where they can meet and come up with innovative solutions. Having young leaders from different countries in the room can definitely lead to a fruitful exchange of ideas. All nations must also ensure that all their young leaders have the opportunity to act on climate change on a global scale. It is essential that the government selects young climate change leaders and gets them involved so they feel rewarded and other young innovators are motivated to do more.

The National Action Plan on Climate Change (NAPCC) was a very successful initiative launched by the Indian government in 2008 to combat climate change. Until now, this is the most successful initiative for combating climate change. Solar Mission, Enhanced Energy Efficiency, Sustainable Habitat, Water Mission, Sustaining the Himalayan Eco-System, Green India, Sustainable Agriculture, and Strategic Knowledge for Climate Change were the eight core topics of this initiative. The best part of this initiative is that it was amended multiple times whenever there was a new climate action required. At the ground level, this initiative is mainly run by the young generation, under the control of the central government.



# Redwan Reham

## One Young World Ambassador

### Bangladesh

#### Part I – Impact of Climate Change on youth of Bangladesh

I live in Bangladesh, a country recognized worldwide as one of the most vulnerable countries to global warming and global climate change. The country encompasses a history of extreme climatic events claiming countless lives and destroying past development gains. The impacts of global warming and climate change can challenge our development efforts, human security, and, therefore, the future. I live in the capital, but my hometown community in the village recently got hit by a sudden flood that delayed the food supplies for a long time. Then again, in my city - the air and water quality is so drastically bad that we are forced to use purifiers, even when the pandemic brought a significant rejuvenation in nature. Maybe we are not that directly affected at once, but the adversities are faced every day in my personal and community life.

People suffer from floods, cyclones, droughts, salinity, and river erosion, and the poorer people feel this more than any others. These environmental disasters are threatening the lives and futures of over 60 million children in Bangladesh. 63 million children in Bangladesh may become physically and socially vulnerable because of the increased frequency and enormity of hazards like floods, cyclones and storm surges, tornadoes, riverbank erosion, drought, and sea-level rise. The physical vulnerability may include death, injury, diseases, physical abuse, chronic malnutrition, and forced labor. The social vulnerability may include loss of parents and family, internal displacement, risk of being trafficked, loss of property and assets, and lack of educational opportunities.

A large part of the population is young, and since the future of Bangladesh is within the hands of those children, we need to remember global climate change and take action. I'm determined to work on this tirelessly, though it isn't a straightforward task. It may be said that global climate change is a reality, and there's a necessity for combating it through planned mitigation and adaptation interventions in a time frame. Climate change has been an issue for a long. However, it got due political importance after Al Gore and the U.N.'s Intergovernmental Panel on climate change won the 2007 Nobel Peace Prize.

Four different geo-climatic zones are at risk of different types of hazards in Bangladesh. Drought and floods within the north, cyclone and tidal surges within the south, and river erosion and flood in Bangladesh's middle are major climate change hazards. River floods affect from 20% to 65% of the country each year. The frequency and height of floods will increase because of rising sea levels and extended monsoon. Together with regular

floods, occurrences of an irregular flash flood, tidal flood, and rain flood will increase hampering schooling of youngsters.

In 2008 approximately 49 schools were washed away, and 700 schools were seriously damaged, causing severe disruption in access to education for around 50,000 children. The entire rehabilitation cost to the damages was approximately USD 8 million.

Tropical cyclones from the Bay of Bengal amid storm surges are another climate change hazard that may seriously negatively impact Bangladesh. The cyclone SIDR affected the education of quite 100,000 children in 589 schools in 12 districts of the country. The overall cost of reconstructing the individual institutions, supply of textbooks, and other materials was approximately USD 85 million. This is often almost 30 times more than the average USD 35 per-pupil expenditure. Another issue is forced migration because of disasters that might also disrupt education systems (which puts pressure on schools and parents in both sending and receiving communities), civil conflict, and the increased necessity for children's participation in agricultural labor. Therefore, the resulting social and economic costs include many development concerns, from malnutrition and health problem to an increased risk of child labor and child trafficking. This seriously undermines existing efforts to increase education provision and to boost both economic and human development.

We can take different adaptation measures, and those could include hazard specific school design and construction, retrofitting the prevailing schools to resist further hazards, flexible school calendar and test schedule, provision of an emergency pool of teachers and educational materials, boat schools, food, water, and medicine storage for kids in schools, include climate change in curriculum for both teachers and students, community awareness about continuing education during hazards.

National architecture for climate change response is quite robust. Alongside several national and international NGOs, the National Disaster Management Bureau has developed a mechanism for early warning, crisis management, and post-crisis rehabilitation, including education provision.

However, a shift is important from a response mode to an adaptation and mitigation mode. Bangladesh climate change Strategy and Action Plan points towards that direction. Future education programs should be screened from the adaptation and mitigation points of view. A detailed cost analysis could also be administrated for adaptation and mitigation within the education sector.

Since the great cyclone SIDR, the government of Bangladesh has undertaken some projects with the help of international funds. Significant developments have ensured secured coastal embankments that have reduced the number of schools breaking down. And the government is training the farmers and more people to ensure better agriculture and a food-secure society so that the youth don't drop off from the schools due to adverse climate effects.

## Part 2 – Enfranchisement of youth in mitigation and adaptation

This new generation has an increasingly strong social and environmental awareness, energy, and knowledge to steer our societies towards a low carbon and climate-resilient future. Youngsters are actively engaged at local, national, and global levels in raising awareness, running educational programs, conserving our nature, promoting renewable energy, adopting environmentally-friendly practices, and implementing adaptation and mitigation projects.

If climate change cannot be stopped, could Earth still be able to sustain life? What's going to happen to future generations to come? The solution to those questions now lies in our hands. Most importantly, the youth. Why us? Why should we be involved? It's because the youths of today are the longer term and therefore the people of tomorrow. The youths of today will function as the inspiration for the following generation to come back.

So how can the youth help stop climate change? Some youths are obviously not rich and simply not capable enough to sponsor various environmental programs or projects. Some aren't influential people that could invite many people. Some are just ordinary students. But keep in mind that every one of those notions isn't required to help fight climate change.

Youths can help stop climate change in simple yet purposeful ways. Such as: joining environmental organisations or groups; participating in various governmental, non-governmental, school, or community programs and projects against climate change; joining clean-up drives at respective institutions or within the community; participating in tree planting and go-green activities; garbage picking and recycling initiatives; getting involved in environmental protests and campaigns; using social media like Facebook, Twitter or Instagram in promoting climate change and environmental awareness to the public; limiting the usage of plastics; helping report illegal activities to authorities; walking or biking in brief distances rather than riding fueled vehicles; segregating garbage at home and lastly, encouraging our friends, schoolmates and our family to try and do what we do.

Doing those things can help mitigate climate change. Today, we must always realize that we've an ethical responsibility towards the environment and our planet. Stopping climate change isn't easy. But if we work together, our micro efforts will have a macro effect on our surroundings and planet. The survival of each living being on Earth depends on how we handle our surroundings. Humans are the very best beings on this planet, so we are responsible if things fail on our planet. To me and every one of the youths around the world, allow us to act now. Allow us to be involved during this fight. As a young generation, allow us to help the previous generation in shaping our surroundings. Our voice matters, and our life matters. So what are we waiting for? Allow us to stand together to prevent global climate change.

## 3. What global initiatives, national initiatives, or local initiatives have, in your opinion, been most successful in engaging young people in efforts to tackle climate change and what aspects of these initiatives have been key to their success?

There are outright activism against the people and authorities who are directly harming the environment. Greta Thunberg's #FridaysForFuture movement is a big example, and inspired by that- youngsters around the world are actually ensuring some of the sustainable developments through climate strikes, institutional campaigns and more. Sometimes, outright activism is the answer- and they are showing it rightly.

But mainly, there are many events under the United Nations Joint Framework Initiative on Children, Youth, and Climate Change. These events are arranged on a truly global scale, which gives the youth a sense of trust and reliability, because even though we are working with massive enthusiasm- the situation of world climate is very bad. A robust policy-based approach and motive are very important and necessary to reduce the adverse climate impacts and accelerate green and sustainable developments. The participating youths get that sense that someday, somehow, my proposed policies will be enacted in a standard and healthy way so that we all can live in a nice environment. Events like Youth UNESCO Climate Action Network YoU-CAN and United Nations Youth Climate Summit can serve as great examples.

## Sughra Bukhari

# One Young World Ambassador Pakistan

Climate change and the potential threat it brings with it has engulfed all generations across the globe. Given its high impact, that comes as no surprise. When we speak of climate change, we are referring to the very survival of planet as we know it - our ecosystems, our oceans, our forests, our glaciers, all the biodiversity including plants animals and everything in between.

It is, however, important to note that this threat is not limited to worsening weather conditions and greater cataclysmic events but indeed expands its effects to impact each one of us on an individual level. Declining mortality rates, increased exposure to environmental toxins, reduced quality of life, consequential physiological and psychological impairments as well as deteriorating food and water security are just some of the areas directly impacting us.

While climate change impacts all and sundry across the globe, some impacts are region-specific. South Asia constitutes of numerous low-income countries such as India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh and so on. With its high population density and rising young workforce, consequences of climate change are far more stringent in comparison with other high-income or developed regions such as the Americas or Europe. Rapid urbanization and accelerated industrialization have led to mass deforestation and disruption in natural way of life. This in turn has exacerbated the poor living conditions and low hygiene standards practiced in these countries.

Pakistan in particular is not equipped to deal with a threat of this level as not only is majority of the country's population vulnerable to climate change, they also lack the awareness to bring about the necessary lifestyle changes to fight the disaster of tomorrow. Lack of, or rather disproportionate access to, resources is at the heart of this unawareness. Vulnerable communities are hustling day in day out for the basic necessities of life and in this continuous tirade, climate change takes a backseat. This in itself is the most significant area of concern when it comes to addressing climate change in Pakistan.

Within the various age groups, the elderly and children are more exposed to the threats posed by climate change. According to the World Health Organization, the global mortality in 2004 as a result of climate change was around 141,000 of which 85% were children. Scientists have made it clear that the next decade will be crucial in determining how climate change unfolds into the various facets of our life. While the older generations have expressed due concern over climate change, the onus of bringing about requisite changes to combat this threat has been left to the younger generations. This pressure is driving these younger generations to make life-changing decisions such as whether or not to raise a family, cut down on travel, shop local and so on. One poll suggested that a third or more of Americans younger than 45 either don't have children or expect to have fewer than they might otherwise because they are worried about climate change.

This onus on millennials and subsequent generations is a paradox in itself as the authority to implement requisite strategies and policies lies with the baby boomers. The damage caused by the three industrial revolutions has to be reversed to fight this irreversible alteration to our planet and human existence as a whole. This must be done via effective awareness campaigns and action plans that make each and every one of us responsible and accountable for the carbon footprint we put out in this world.

One such effective strategy implemented by the Government of Pakistan is the "*Ten Billion Trees Tsunami*" in partnership with the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). As the name suggests, this ambitious project has set out to plant ten billion trees by 2023. Launched in 2019, the project has just reached a new milestone – planting of the billionth tree.

However, needless to say, more needs to be said and done on all levels of the communities we live in - spanning from local to regional to global. Young people are voicing their concerns over climate change via informal channels and peer-to-peer networks. Movements have been originated globally from social media itself thanks to accelerated digitalization. While this has helped in expanding the reach of our voices, it lacks in impact partly due to the lack of accountability that comes with it.

There is a dire need to formalize these movements. This could be accomplished by setting up official portals and governmental offices that run initiatives involving the youth in leadership positions. Another way to accomplish this would be through assigning district champions who run awareness campaigns and mobilize people across all age groups to partake in community-improvement plans. Incentive schemes could be set up to ensure participation from all stratas of the community – not only the privileged. Until and unless the marginalized and low-income groups of the societies are not involved, the desired impact for change will not be generated. Additionally, if such youth enfranchisement initiatives are backed by the United Nations, the impact could be multiple folds with best practices being implemented on a local, regional and global scale. Building on that, the most effective initiatives have been the simplest in nature. The "*Ten Billion Trees Tsunami*" initiative, for instance, witnessed participation from across the country starting from the Prime Minister all the way to children of the marginalized communities. Initiatives like these not only help rally people from various walks of life but will also spread awareness of the most pressing issue of today's time and propagate these masses to take positive steps towards a future fit for humankind to survive and thrive.

## Tolulope Aina

### One Young World Ambassador Nigeria

During festive seasons while growing up especially Christmas, we had a family tradition of travelling to our grandparents' home (a mini-mansion in a village) for the holidays and during this period I get to see practically all my extended family. I looked forward to blending with the locals and sharing experiences too, it was always a priceless experience. This tradition was similar with other families in the environment and it was a period we always looked forward to. The major highlight was that we always had a chance to visit the farms (my grandfathers' inclusive) and the barns that stored the yields of previous seasons. We got to compare the biggest yams in the barn, largest cassava, tomatoes, livestock and so much more of many farmers.

As I grew older, the enthusiasm of farmers to take us on a farm tour dwindled with each visit majorly because their productivity was on a continuous and steep decline, I saw the local youths get more uninterested in the noble profession of farming, poor living standards, and many growing youth and children either dropped out of school or not commenced schooling. Back home in the city, my mother always complained about the steady hike in food prices and this trend has consistently continued to date.

Undoubtedly there is a climate emergency on us, and it has shown how broken our system is across various sectors particularly in developing nations of the world. The close shortfall is the environmental human crisis springing up as a result of climate change. Is it from the flooding constantly being experienced in the largest city in South-West Nigeria (Lagos) because it is a coastal region? Or the dry spell experienced up North causing migration by cattle herders down south hence resulting in the farmer-herder crisis due to illegal encroachment of farms? Or is it the inconsistency in rainfall distribution patterns, shrinking water bodies thus leaving farmers uncertain and at a loss because they majorly depend on rainfall? Less I forget other implications on the health especially malnutrition among children particularly below the age of 5, poor sanitation for girls, little or no access to education, high rate of insecurity, displacement caused from climate disasters, thriving tropical diseases, and biotic stress resulting in dwindling livelihood. Youth are much more on the receiving end from the aforementioned effects of climate change.

As a passionate advocate of agriculture with core work focused on combating malnutrition, Youth and women empowerment initiatives, and most recently, capacity building through online (e-learning), and offline/physical training, the greatest challenge of climate change I see is on our food systems. We need a more equitable, responsible, and sustainable food system with all food system actors taking a frontier role. The impact of climate change will continue to drag us back in this regard.

Beyond Nigeria, we see the flood and water crisis in Afghanistan, extreme weather events within central and African blocks such as locust invasion in early 2020 with countries like DRC, Somalia, South Sudan, Kenya, Ethiopia hit heavily by the impact of climate change. We also see the recent volcanic eruption experienced in the Kalahari region among other nations of the world.

The IPCC report and several local and global conventions and dialogues reveal the catastrophic path the world is tilting towards 2.7 degrees of heating as opposed to the 1.5-degree pathway and also proposes actionable steps to take in this regard. However, they are not being implemented. In my opinion, I believe it is mainly because there are no stringent regulations or sanctions that hold nations of the world accountable. We see that reflected when the US pulled out of the Paris agreement, the failure of China to submit her NDC report among other developed countries of the world failing to put in place the financial commitment needed to combat the effect of climate change. We see developing nations of the world also open to accepting funding to tackle climate change locally (even though the funds are not currently sufficient) but my observation is that it is little or there is no well-tailored strategic implementation plan in place.

Nigeria is currently a signatory to the global Paris agreement, attends the United Framework Convention for Climate Change, submits her NDC (nationally determined contributions) report and everything else the Paris agreement requires. However, our indices are not ambitious enough. The current structure in place does not give youth the power to effect real change. Youth are majorly involved in dialogue and not in the implementation process. Youths need a seat at the table of decision-making and implementation as the effects of climate change have more implications on the youth. The reality is that there is little or nothing we can do individually if we do not come together (Youth Inclusive) to promote more cooperation, more ambition, and more credibility to achieve a sustainable and resilient future that is safe for us all.



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