

1 Conference Evaluation Feedback from 2019

231 students answered a pre-conference survey across 5 Climate Conferences in 2019 and a post-conference survey was completed by 171 students. Responses were also gathered in a post-conference survey of 38 teachers from 32 of the 39 participating schools. Further analysis has been worked up for each area and used in discussions with schools and in our feedback to Local Authority teams and other partners.

1.1 Pre conference findings from 231 students

See this online storyboard: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/stories/SM-3FZY3Z57/>

98% of students at the conferences said they were **“somewhat or very concerned about Climate Change”** with just 2 young people saying they were not at all concerned and 2 that they were not really concerned.

Students’ open comments about what they hoped to gain from the conference endorsed our approaches and can be grouped as:

- Knowledge and understanding of Climate Change
- More awareness of the global impact of Climate Change
- Ideas and insight into how to tackle Climate Change locally and globally
- Skills and experience for their CVs, as well as building confidence.

Almost half of the students taking part were positive when asked if they feel they can make a difference in their school and community, with **49%** answering ‘yes’, 42% ‘maybe’ and 8% saying ‘no’ to this question.

When asked whether they agreed with the statement ‘I know how I could take action on climate change and influence others’, an overall total of **65%** either agreed or strongly agreed. Responses varied between areas and one possible link could be the indication of more eco-group engagement recorded in Bristol, Cheltenham and Hounslow than in Reading and Solihull:

- Bristol, Cheltenham and Hounslow, over 50% students said ‘Yes’ they think they can make a difference.
- In Reading and Solihull, the response was less positive with most answering ‘maybe’ to making a difference with 34% and 37% respectively.

1.2 Post conference analysis of student feedback

Online storyboard, post event: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/stories/SM-D2B5ZZ57/>

A main headline for the conferences is that **90% of students said their views were listened to**. In preparation for the conference, students had been tasked to outline ideas for Climate Action that would be most relevant in their school (linked to 4 key areas of Energy; Food; Travel, What we buy & use).

They were able to talk about their ideas within the Local Action marketplace session at their conferences and then presented them as ‘pledges’ at the final plenary (see separate document). Of significance in terms of students’ sense of their role and the part they can play in climate action was that by the end of the conference:

- 83%** agreed, **“I know how I could take action and influence others”** (pre-conference response was 63%)
- 83%** said that as a result of taking part they now want to **“Influence friends and family”**
- 38%** said they want to **“Join an eco-group”** after the conference.

When asked about the strength of their climate voices before the conferences started

33% strongly agreed or agreed with the statement that ‘Local decision-makers take notice of what we as young people think’.

Asked whether national politicians and decision-makers want to hear their views, a low

19% said they agreed or strongly agreed and 46% either *disagreed or strongly disagreed*.

By the end of the conferences, there was a:

220% increase in students *strongly agreeing* with the statement **“Local decision-makers take notice of what we as young people think”**

50% increase in students *agreeing and strongly agreeing* with **“National politicians and decision-makers want to hear our views”** post-conference survey

Although responses varied slightly in terms of top priority in each area, when asked, ‘What do you believe can make the biggest difference to tackling climate change in our area’, overall:

55% placed **“Involve more people in climate action”** either first or second

44% had **“Give young people a bigger voice in local decisions”** either first or second

The top three responses to the question, ‘What can ICN do to help you and your schools’ climate action’ were:

64% **“Give you advice and guidance on your Climate Action”**

55% **“Link your school representatives to local organisations”**

49% **“Help you communicate your views including to politicians”**

1.3 Teacher responses post-conference

Teacher feedback comments continue to be strongly positive about what the conference offers. In response to an open question, “What skills and other learning benefits do you think your students developed through their preparation for and participation in the conference?” 24 separate benefits were cited, and many were then echoed by other teachers (see Box 1 below).

BOX 1 Summary of benefits identified by teachers, 2019 Conferences

- * Greater comprehension of global climate issues, new knowledge, awareness of COP & other countries
- * Research, analysis and interpretation and debating skills, conflict resolution skills and teamwork
- * Public speaking, articulacy and oracy, justification and critical thinking skills. Confidence
- * Understanding alternative viewpoints in a complex environment, real world & ‘cultural capital’
- * Bigger picture, awareness of need to involve students more widely within, and ideas for, school

Of the 38 teacher responses representing 32 separate secondary schools, there was a strong indication that Climate Action is driven by their eco-groups:

73% said that ‘Climate Action’ fits with their schools’ eco-group

35% said it was a teacher-led initiative only as was the next highest response

When asked ‘How feasible is it that the Climate Action pledges made by your students will be taken forward after today’:

58% thought the ideas were feasible, some with the proviso ‘financial limitations’. **29%** were unsure but to note that several responses were from trainee, retired or support teachers.

They also gave clear indication of the type of support for Climate Action in school they would welcome:

- 91%** said yes to being connected with relevant local organisations
- 83%** said yes to a follow up visit / workshop from ICN team
- 74%** would want to take part in or host a joint school workshop to share progress and ideas
- 69%** said yes to local / national show-casing for their students’ work (25% were unsure)
- 65%** said yes to joining a local ‘TeachMeet’ style teacher group (26% were unsure)

2 School workshop comparison

A small survey was carried out with two groups at the start of school workshops. The same questions were used for these groups and the pre-conference survey so provides some interesting comparisons (see Box 2 for detail).

The students in the class-based workshops were younger and had had no preparation tasks. Climate Conference participants had been asked to read about the impacts of climate change globally and specifically for an assigned country, and to think about making a difference in their school. This might account for the difference between the (still large) proportion of the workshop young people saying were somewhat or very concerned about climate change compared to the overwhelming majority expressing concern at the conferences.

A greater percentage of young people in the school workshops said they had not yet had the opportunity to support climate action at home or at school. They were Year 7s, so had only been at school for one term. Also to note is the comparatively higher eco-groups involvement in the left column, which is a significant impetus for climate action. Engagement at home may well have a two-way link to involvement in school eco-groups.

In both sets of students, there was a strong sense that national politicians and decision-makers do not want to hear their views but that their own teachers, and to a lesser extent their school leaders, support their ‘voice’.

BOX 2

Climate Conferences 2019 (mixed year groups)	School workshops (Year 7s)
98% of students at the conferences said they were somewhat or very concerned about Climate Change	65% of students in the workshops said they were somewhat or very concerned about Climate Change
49% , of the students taking part were positive when asked if they feel they can make a difference in their school and community, with 42% answering ‘maybe’	28% said ‘yes’ they feel they can make a difference in their school and community whereas 63% answered ‘maybe’.
When asked how they have already supported Climate Action at home: 82% said they are helping or encouraging their families to recycle 65% are trying to reduce energy use 51% are thinking about their own choices eg clothes, products, food 47% are talking about what they eat at home 9% said they hadn’t yet had the opportunity to supported climate action at home	When asked how they have already supported Climate Action at home: 50% said they are helping or encouraging their families to recycle 39% are thinking about their own choices eg clothes, products, food 31% are talking about what they eat at home 22% said they hadn’t yet had the opportunity to supported climate action at home

<p>When asked how they have already supported climate action at school:</p> <p>61% said that they recycle at school</p> <p>30% said they have not yet had the opportunity</p> <p>28% are part of their school's eco-group</p> <p>27% have helped school reduce it's waste eg plastic</p>	<p>When asked how they have already supported climate action at school:</p> <p>54% said that they recycle at school</p> <p>43% said they have not yet had the opportunity</p> <p>1 person said they were part of school's eco-group</p>
<p>Responding to questions about having a say:</p> <p>46% either disagreed or strongly disagreed that national politicians and decision-makers want to hear their views</p> <p>74% either agreed or strongly agreed that their teachers support them to have a say in our school and community</p> <p>59% either agreed or strongly agreed that their school leaders want to hear our views on climate change.</p>	<p>Responding to questions about having a say:</p> <p>37% either disagreed or strongly disagreed that national politicians and decision-makers want to hear their views</p> <p>56% either agreed or strongly agreed that their teachers support them to have a say in our school and community</p> <p>28% either agreed or strongly agreed that their school leaders want to hear our views on climate change.</p>