



**InterClimate  
Network**

## Climate Voices II – Mid-point Review



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## Abbreviations and acronyms

CVII	Climate Voices phase II (2018-2021)
ICN	InterClimate Network
JRCT	Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust
MCC	Model Climate Conference
NQ	Not quantified in JRCT project application
PGCE	Postgraduate Certificate in Education
RCCP	Reading Climate Change Partnership
STEM	Science, technology, engineering and mathematics

## 1. Introduction

InterClimate Network's Climate Voices II (CVII) follows on from the initial Climate Voices project (2015-2018). CVII is a three-year project (2018-2021) supported by a grant from Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust (JRCT). Additional funding and support-in-kind was also provided for specific events from local partners.

The ICN team and partners are implementing CVII in highly challenging times. In the first year, the project was hit by the serious illness of one of the key ICN Associates, who has thankfully now recovered. More recently, the Covid-19 pandemic has had a dramatic impact on every aspect of the project. Inevitably some events have had to be postponed, others have moved online or are being delivered through remote technology. Despite the challenges the ICN team have continued to develop creative, flexible ways of moving forward the CVII agenda and engaging with the full range of partners.

One of the target areas for development for CVII was strengthening the medium- and long-term impact assessment through the introduction of an external evaluation role '*to monitor the programme indicators and evaluate overall programme outcomes (including programme growth)*'.

This report summarises the findings and learning from a light-touch mid-point review undertaken by an external consultant, Katy Newell-Jones and four ICN Associates, Michila Critchley, Cecily Etherington, Rachel Shepherd and Richard Usher.

## 2. Aim and objectives of the mid-point review

The aim of the mid-point review is to monitor, and report on, the progress of CVII to July 2020, using the template (appendix A) developed by the Board as the basis.

The specific objectives are

1. To review progress towards the quantitative success factors, including intended target areas, impact, follow-up and school support packages
2. To review progress in relation to the four key areas of development for CVII (***greater focus on schools in disadvantaged areas, more focus on follow up, developing a partnership model, better medium- and long-term impact assessment***)
3. To collate initial data on the impact of the project
4. To identify the current challenges in the implementation of CVII
5. To make recommendations for the on-going impact assessment and end of project review.

## 3. Methodology

The interim review was led by the consultant in collaboration with three ICN Associates.

The Associates provided access to the wealth of qualitative and quantitative documentation on Climate Voices I and II, engaged in two Zoom calls to discuss and review CVII, completed the CVII summary template (appendix A) and produced five case studies highlighting some of the key achievements of CVII (appendix B).

The consultant reviewed a range of project documentation, compiled discussion points for two Zoom calls, collated responses, drafted and revised the interim report which includes recommendations on the on-going evaluation and impact assessment of CVII.

## 4. Mid-point findings

This report covers the first 2 years of CVII. Year 2 has been extended from July to December 2020 in response to the challenges of Covid-19, the figures cited here are up to July 2020. There are several significant remote events planned for the months up to December 2020, the figures from which will count towards the year 2 targets in addition to the figures in appendix A.

The following list is a summary statement (see appendix A for the full details of progress against each objective, compiled by Michila Critchley. A traffic lights system has been used to indicate progress: **green** - on track to achieve the target; **amber** - sound progress made but additional work/resources required to achieve the target; **red** - target is highly ambitious and unlikely to be met. Overall, **12** objectives are rated **green**, **5** rated **amber** and **0** rated **red**.

### 4.1 Progress towards quantitative success factors and areas of development for CVII

#### a. Impact objectives (Indicators 1, 3, & 4 are 'green', 2 & 5 are 'amber')

**Impact 1 100 schools and 2000 students engaged:** Overall there has been strong progress towards the impact indicators with 46 schools reached to date against a target of 100 for the 3 years. Three virtual mini-conferences are planned in Solihull, Reading (to be confirmed) and Liverpool before the end of December.

**Impact 2 300 students leading advocacy & action:** With such a high proportion of students (83%) intending to influence friends and family, it seems highly likely that students are engaged in leading advocacy and action, however, this data is not being collected currently. The team are keen to incorporate questions on actions taken in follow up questionnaires and future engagement.

**Impact 3 30 students recognised for leadership:** Excellent progress has been made with 32 students already recognised including in Hounslow, Reading, Solihull and Bristol. These could be followed up in 2021 to find out whether their activism has continued.

**Impact 4 40 schools engaged in disadvantaged areas:** Sound progress has been made in reaching disadvantaged schools with excellent engagement and follow up. The definition of a school in a disadvantaged area needs clarification - whether the upper quartile (37%) or above the national average (28%). Given the ambitious nature of the targets, the latter definition would seem reasonable, with strong representation from those in the upper quartile.

**Impact 5 10% of disadvantaged school students lead dialogue with decision makers:** Further discussion is required to clarify how this objective is going to be measured.

#### b. Follow-up objectives (Indicators 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 are 'green', 1 & 9 are 'amber')

**Follow-up 1** 36 individualised packages of support for 2 targeted schools in most deprived areas: 15 schools across 5 areas have already received support packages with further support planned.

**Note:** Indicators 2-8 are not quantified in the JRCT project proposal. Appendix A identifies multiple examples under each which are readily available electronically.

**Follow-up 2** Increased support post-event from volunteers, associates and local charities/businesses

- Follow-up 3** Local events to showcase (e.g. Mayors' Town Hall Events)
- Follow-up 4** Recognition & feedback (e.g. from politicians)
- Follow-up 5** Reflections from pupils / teachers to ensure continued relevance
- Follow-up 6** Social media activity & short films
- Follow-up 7** Political guests and others encouraged to share learning through blogs & media
- Follow-up 8** Encourage more links to other organisations (by ICN & schools)

The CVII team have clearly prioritised showcasing good practice and obtaining feedback from a wide range of stakeholders. Communication about CVII is high quality: relevant, accessible to young people, concise and eye-catching, with effective use of infographics and quotations from students, staff, volunteers and market place organisations.

Another considerable strength of the CVII team is their commitment to extensive networking which includes sharing resources and strengthening links both with ICN and between schools and organisations. Almost all communications between the CVII team and partners include links to other organisations, materials, articles to read, events to participate in or surveys to complete.

**Follow-up 9 Hold annual National Summit:** This is not a JRCT funded activity but noted as an objective in the application.

The CVII team will be submitting a joint application with Size of Wales to hold a Four Nations event.

c. Partner objectives / Partnership model (Indicators 1 & 2 are 'green', 3 is 'amber')

**Partner 1 Establish partnerships in London:** Strong partnership developed with London Borough of Hounslow - see case study 4.

**Partner 2 Establish partnerships in two cities outside home regions, at least one in north of England:** Partnerships in progress with Merseyside with a remote conference in December 2020. Additional interest has been generated through the DEC network, following a presentation at the 2019 DEC conference in several additional areas and there is the potential for partnerships in the Isle of Man, Yorkshire & Humberside, Devon and Dorset. There is the potential to exceed the target, however, this might stretch existing resources and put at risk achievement of some of the impact targets.

**Partner 3 Develop a way (framework / plan) to subsequently roll-out MCC / Local Summits nationally in a sustainable way:**

## 4.2 Evidence of the impact of CVII

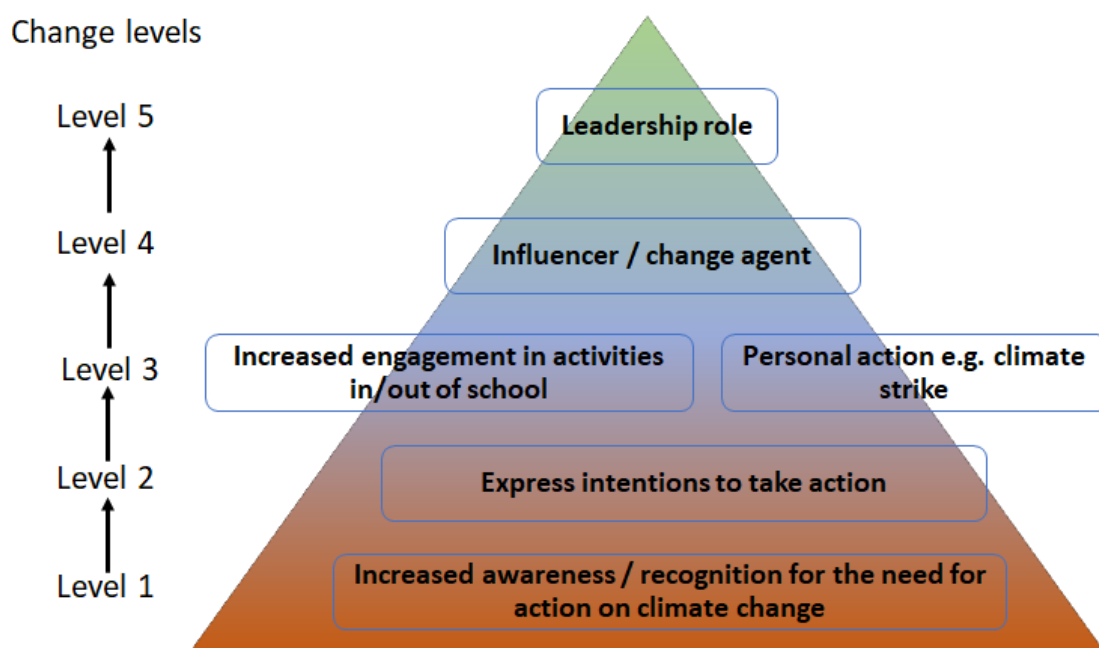
As CVII progresses, there is a need for a specific focus on impact assessment, i.e. the changes taking place following engagement in the CVII project. This is an area identified for development for CVII and will be a strong focus for the final evaluation. Impact assessment is highly challenging in a project as complex, diverse and organic as CVII. This section highlights some of the changes which have been noted by the CVII team. Section 4.4 describes some of the challenges and 5.1 makes recommendations for the on-going data collection and final evaluation.

There needs to be an element of caution in assigning specific changes to engagement in a single project or activity as students, schools and organisations are usually exposed to a range of different factors (see 4.4c). However, care has been taken to only use examples where it appears that engagement with the ICN team has been one of the strongest factors stimulating change.

As CVII has progressed, the ICN team has been aware of individual students changing in a variety of ways in relation to climate change. The team discussed the nature of these changes and identified types or levels of change (fig.1).

The base of the Pyramid of Change (level 1) is *increased awareness / recognition for the need for action on climate change* as this is a core building block on which higher level actions are based. Level 2 is where students are expressing an intention to take action. At level 3 students are beginning to take action, whether personal or as part of a group, inside or outside their school. At level 4 students are influencing the views of others on climate change and in this way being an agent of change. Finally, at level 5 students are proactively taking on a leadership role and driving forward action on climate change.

Students will have different starting points on the Pyramid of Change. A successful impact is supporting young people in moving up the pyramid, rather than just measuring the position of young people at the end of the project. Students at many of the schools involved with CVII already have some awareness of climate change; some have already established eco-groups. The aim of CVII in these schools is for students to move up the pyramid and engage in the higher levels of activities. In other schools, where the level of awareness on climate change prior to their engagement in CVII is limited, the aim of CVII is for students to establish their position on the base of the pyramid.



**Figure 1:** Climate Voices II Evidence of Change Pyramid

### *CVII data on impact to July 2020*

The CVII team is to be commended on the wealth of data collected and the clear, concise and visually engaging ways in which it is presented on the ICN website (<https://interclimate.org/about-us/impact/>).

Data collected before the MCCs (2019-2020) indicated that 98% of students said they were 'somewhat or very concerned about Climate Change'. Impressively, after the events, 90% of students at the conferences said their views were listened to, which shows how inclusive and engaging the conferences were.

Teachers were asked in the post-conference survey following MCCs to identify the learning benefits for students of being involved. The responses include evidence of *increased awareness on climate change* in the form of greater comprehension of global climate issues, real world and cultural capital, research and analysis. Responses also indicate an *intention to take action* in the form of increased confidence, debating and teamwork skills, awareness of the need to involve others in school.

Pre- and post-event questionnaires have been used to demonstrate changes in the awareness and attitudes of students as a result of participating in CVII events.

After conferences, 83% said they knew how to take action, up from 63% in the pre-MCC survey. These data confirm that the conferences are engaging, pitched at the right level, with relevant content and include a focus on taking action.

Overall, in the post-conference survey, 83% of students said they will influence family and friends and 38% intend to join an eco-group. Some also intended to volunteer with a local charity. Students identified three types of support they would like; namely, links with local schools and local organisations, advice and guidance on their climate action and help communicating their views to politicians.

In addition, there were increases in the post-event responses to the following statements:

- **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

These statistics suggest that students may feel empowered by events to make their voices heard. As the project moves forward, it would be useful to match these statements with an indication of how many take action to be heard both locally and nationally.

Appendix B consists of brief case studies of groups of students or individuals who have been involved in CVII highlighting the support which CVII has provided and the actions that groups and individuals have taken following their involvement with CVII. Each case study has been selected to highlight one or more themes. See appendix B for more information about each case study.

1. *Behaviour Change Survey - developed through responding and listening to students*

The CVII Behaviour Change Survey has been developed through a highly collaborative and consultative process with four Gloucestershire schools. It was initiated following contact with Chosen Hill school where an active group of students were enthusiastic and committed but needed support to convert their ideas to actions on climate change.

The Behaviour Change Survey is a tool, developed with feedback from Chosen Hill students and students from seven other schools over the lockdown period, which will now be piloted across the school.

As well as being an example of the CVII team **building the confidence and skills** of students by listening to and engaging with them in the development of materials for use with young people, it has also resulted in **deepening the level of knowledge and commitment** among those students involved in giving feedback on the tool.

It is also an example of the CVII team maximising the impact by the **multiplier effect** of engaging other schools and in developing a tool suitable for a wide range of eco-teams.

2. *Reaching schools in disadvantaged areas - Bristol schools*

This case study highlights the considerable benefits of engaging with schools from disadvantaged areas. The students from the 14 such schools showed marked increases in **confidence** as well as increased **ability to research and debate with others**, and **increased knowledge** on climate change. They also showed a clear **intention to take further action**, in the case of St Mary Redcliffe to make links with Bristol Food Network, Sustainable Energy and Earthwatch.

It is also clear that engaging with schools from disadvantaged areas in most cases requires greater levels of support from the ICN team both in order for them to fully participate and also in converting their increased motivation into actions.

3. *Sixth formers as climate change activists and leaders*

In addition to working with groups of students, the ICN team have also supported individual sixth formers in becoming influencers and in taking on leadership roles. Emily Smith and Muhammed El-Beik are two young people from Reading who have engaged in MCCs, demonstrated a keen interest in becoming climate change leaders. Muhammed has developed his **strategic awareness** and **commitment to influencing policy** on climate change through his engagement in the Reading Climate Change Partnership climate emergency strategy meeting in June 2020. Emily has developed her **presentation, research** and **debating skills** through her involvement in Reading's Youth Cabinet Climate debate and her **future study and career aspirations** are now focused on climate change, with a special interest in research.

4. *Pro-active partnerships*

Building, supporting and strengthening partnerships is a recurring theme throughout CVII and is one of the ways which the team maximise and multiply the impact of their activities.

Case study 4 describes the extension of the CVII project in 2019, to Hounslow, an area of higher pupil premium rates. As with other partnerships, it began with existing links, was tailored to the context and took a holistic approach working with schools and students, whilst also drawing in local organisations to form the Local Action Market Place, and also working closely with the London Borough of Hounslow education and environment teams.



Additional funding was secured resulting in a far higher profile event, with shared ownership with local partners.

The MCC, with the involvement of 10 schools, was clearly highly valued with students gaining **knowledge, confidence and skills**.

5. *Higher education - cross curriculum engagement in sociology and initial teacher training*

The ICN team have used their links with higher education to draw on skills to enhance the CVII project whilst also influencing faculty and students in curriculum areas not usually associated with climate change. Case study 5 describes how Sociology students at the University of Gloucestershire, who were initially looking to be involved in a community project became involved in the development of the Climate Action survey. Through this activity all **increased their interest and knowledge** about climate change, **changed their personal behaviour** and had **increased confidence to communicate ideas and solutions to others**. 75% of them also **intend to become more involved in collective action**, such as climate strikes and social media campaigns.

As a result of networking with Exeter University, PGCE Science students participated in workshops developed by the CVII team introducing climate change concepts including 'wicked problems'. The sessions were described as **'thought-provoking'** and **'mind-blowing'**, with some faculty finding them quite challenging to facilitate with strong opinions and rich discussion. With the challenges of Covid-19, no follow up has been possible to explore whether the trainee teachers will use the session with pupils in schools or incorporate more on climate change in their curriculum, or whether the sessions will be repeated with future cohorts.

The case studies above support the earlier indication that the CVII interventions are having an impact on the awareness, interest, knowledge levels and confidence of young people in relation to climate change. In addition, young people reported increases in skills including research, debating, communicating ideas and solutions to others. These relate predominantly to level 1 of the Evidence of Change Pyramid and are reported strongly across the case studies.

Where questions are asked about intentions to take action (level 2), young people described a combination of personal behaviour changes and becoming more involved in collective action.

The young people described in case study 5 are clearly involved in being influencers and change agents (level 4). Both seem committed to taking on leadership roles (level 5).

***Ways impact assessment is currently taking place***

Currently, data is being collected on the nature of events, the levels of engagement, enjoyment, interaction and energy arising from the activities and in some cases the intended future actions of individuals. These are all collated, stored and readily retrievable.

In addition, the CVII team is aware of a whole host of changes taking place following engagement in the project, similar to the ones highlighted in the case studies. Currently this tends to be collected in the form of individual examples, rather than being systematically into the post-conference surveys and follow up activities.

### 4.3 Current challenges in the implementation of CVII

Most of the challenges are experienced as tensions between competing agendas

a. *Expanding the reach / maintaining the depth of engagement*

There is a tension between on the one hand extending the project to reach new areas, new schools and to work with new partner organisations, and on the other hand providing the level of follow-up support which results in real changes in awareness and the implementation of climate change-related activities. This tension is particularly evident when working with schools in disadvantaged areas, where there are fewer in-school resources and support structures for students to draw on.

b. *Developing materials through listening and engaging with students / rapidly expanding the resource package with less consultation*

The CVII approach has involved consultation with schools, teachers, students and other local partner organisations. This approach does take time and resources and is particularly challenging when face-to-face meetings are not possible. However, the resulting materials have been highly valued, directly relevant to young people and motivational.

c. *Organisational impact / influencing individual students*

CVII has had some success in establishing eco-clubs in some schools and in influencing curricula (e.g. linking resource materials to STEM topics and embedding climate change into teacher training at the University of Exeter). It has proved difficult to influence whole school strategies. The most significant changes have come from the actions of key individuals who have been highly motivated and driven change personally.

Funding remains a significant challenge with difficult decisions needing to be made by ICN Associates about priorities for their own time and also needing to source additional funding for local initiatives.

### 4.4 Challenges in assessing the impact of CVII

There are several key challenges to assessing the impact of CVII; including

a. *Identifying evidence of actual change taking place.*

At MCCs and other CVII events the team have begun to ask participants to identify their intentions to change, which are usually varied and wide-ranging. Intentions provide valuable evidence of the effectiveness of an event / intervention. The challenge, however, is then in following up to find out to what extent intentions have been carried through to actions.

b. *Recognising change building on different starting points.*

In some schools, students are already informed on climate change, eco clubs have already been established and there are a range of staff, parents and volunteers available to support new initiatives. In other schools, students are new to many of the concepts around climate change and lack the in-school support structures.

c. *Contribution analysis*

There are many different factors contributing to increased awareness and action on climate change and it is difficult at times to identify the key trigger for change and the specific contribution of any one intervention.

d. *Wide variation in the activities undertaken as a result of CVII*

The range and diversity of actions taking place following engagement in the project is one of the many strengths of CVII. Schools are encouraged to consider their own context and select their response to climate change based on their locality, their interests and the resources available to them. Motivation is highest when students are fully committed to the actions they have devised and consequently the range of initiatives is extremely broad, making quantitative data collation difficult.

## 5. Recommendations

This section is divided into programmatic and evaluation and impact assessment recommendations, however, they are strongly interconnected. Once decisions have been about the direction for the final phase of the project, it would be beneficial to clarify the objectives and targets in consultation with JRCT so that project implementation and impact assessment are aligned. It may be wise at this stage of the project to propose a slight reduction of the numerical targets (e.g. impact objectives 2 & 5) in order to ensure sustainability of impact.

### 5.1 Programmatic

The key challenges for ICN for the final phase of CVII team are

- Which of the many opportunities and potential links to prioritise in the remaining period of the project?
- How to balance ensuring the impact of the project is sustainable through deepening the engagement with key schools, regions and individuals, as opposed to widening the range and reaching out to new regions.

The Covid-19 pandemic adds another level of complexity and challenge and so makes these questions even more relevant.

The current practice of focusing the follow up with schools on two schools per region is wise given the additional challenges of Covid-19 and the likelihood of additional local and/or national lockdowns later in 2020.

The main focus of the next phase of CVII is on

- consolidating of the high-quality work which has taken place so far in schools
- extending the project to reach additional schools in each of the existing areas
- piloting of the Behaviour Change Model
- disseminating the resource materials.

In addition, the expansion of the project to Liverpool is well under way and would meet the target of establishing two partnerships outside the home regions and would also continue the focus on disadvantaged areas.

It is recommended that across all of these areas there is a stronger focus on supporting the development of action plans and gathering data on the extent to which these are translated into actions.

## 5.2 Evaluation and impact assessment

### **a. *Balancing quantitative and qualitative data collection***

Statistics are valuable in providing an overview of the effectiveness of a project and its impact, whereas narrative examples are valuable in describing the nuanced impact and in identifying learning. Both are essential to provide an accurate picture of the impact.

It is recommended that both quantitative and qualitative data should continue to be collected, with an increased focus on linking their use e.g. with case studies being used to give greater depth to statistical data.

### **b. *Adopt a model/framework to describe the different levels / types of changes taking place***

The Climate Voice Evidence of Change pyramid (fig. 1) arose out of discussions with the CVII team as a way of conveying the range of changes of which the team are aware. This framework provides a way of categorising different project 'changes' so that an overall picture of the impact of CVII emerges. Further discussion is required with the team to clarify the distinction between levels 4 and 5.

It is recommended that the CVII team adopt a framework and tailor their data gathering around the levels of the pyramid.

### **c. *Embedding more impact questions in post-event and follow-up surveys (particularly levels 1, 2 and 3)***

There is already some evidence that the majority of those participating in CVII activities demonstrate levels 1 and 2 of change. With more focussed data collection, it should be possible to state these percentages with greater confidence.

There are also many narrative examples of changes at level 3. The team is now considering how they can gather more quantitative data on this level of change to supplement the case studies by embedding more impact questions in post-event surveys.

Some data is already being collected on statements like 'I feel more confident', 'I have more knowledge', 'I know what to do' 'I understand the importance of climate change'. These provide valuable level 1 quantitative data.

Data is also collected after some events on participants' intentions (i.e. level 2 data). These could be collated into percentages of people intending to change their own behaviour, talk to family and friends, join a group etc. It is important here that these are **new** actions for them.

The level 3 data collection could be increased by inviting young people to describe the specific ways in which they have changed since participating in the CVII events.

e.g. 'I have changed my behaviour by.....' 'I have worked with others in my school to.....' 'I have worked with others outside my school to.....'

It would also be useful to include a question like 'What has happened as a result of the actions you have taken? which links to level 4 in the Evidence of Change pyramid.

It is recommended that impact data for levels 1, 2 and 3 focus on identifying the percentage of young people changing in these ways, with brief narrative information on some of the most commonly identified actions. It may then be possible to identify differences in the impact between different regions, different interventions, for all schools and for those from disadvantaged areas etc.

***d. Using case studies to capture evidence of young people becoming change agents, influencers and adopting leadership roles (levels 4 and 5)***

Only a small number of young people participating in CVII events will go on to become influencers or change agents and even fewer who adopt leadership roles in relation to climate change (levels 4 and 5). This is particularly the case in schools in disadvantaged areas where young people tend to have had less exposure to dialogue around climate change and there are fewer support structures available.

Evidence of change at these levels will therefore, be primarily narrative, rather than statistical, although it might be possible to make statements like 'In X% of the schools selected for follow up, at least 1 young person had changed to become an influencer / change agent'.

When gathering case study materials for these levels include 'Are there young people who have gone on to become change agents, influencers and leaders in climate change?', 'How can they be identified?', 'What impact have they as young people had?', 'What evidence is there that the changes are sustainable?' and 'What actions on behalf of the CVII team contributed to their success?'.

It is recommended that case studies are used in a systematic way to provide narrative examples of change at levels 4 and 5, perhaps using a simple template agreed by the CVII team. These could be very brief and include region, type of school etc. and could be expanded if appropriate, for the final review.

***e. End of project review planning***

It would be beneficial if the evaluation/impact assessment is fully integrated into the project, rather than being a separate process. Ideally this would be through a collaborative process with the CVII team and the consultant. There is already a wealth of monitoring, evaluation and impact data being collected by the team and being used to improve the effectiveness of the project in an on-going process. The recommendations above should be seen as modifications to existing systems, rather than new processes.

It is recommended that the CVII team meet with the external evaluator in the next few months to (a) establish the key targets and indicators against which the impact assessment will take place and (b) streamline the data collection processes and the specific focus of the final review, so that data is readily available for the different learning and reporting processes at the end of the project.

## 6. Conclusion

The CVII project has made strong progress towards all of the objectives in the first 2 years, despite the ambitious nature of the proposal and additional challenges posed by the Covid-19 pandemic. The approach taken is collaborative and consultative, resulting in events and resources which are relevant to young people delivered in inclusive, interactive and engaging ways.

The scope of the project to develop in the next 2 years far outweighs the available resources and so prioritising is required to make the most efficient use of resources. Expanding the project to include Liverpool will increase the reach of the project outside the home regions and increase the engagement with disadvantaged areas, however, the resources required might mean that compromises might need to be made for some of the other targets.

There is clear evidence of the project having a significant impact on the awareness, knowledge, skills, attitudes and intentions of young people. There are strong case studies of some young people becoming influencers and change agents. There is a need to strengthen the reporting of the extent to which intentions are resulting in actions on climate change at individual, school, wider community and policy-making levels.

## Appendix A Progress towards CVII objectives

Please click [here](#) to access this document.

## Appendix B Five case studies highlighting the impact of CVII

The following case studies were produced by;

Cecily Etherington (1 & 5), Rachel Shepherd (2), Richard Usher (3), Michila Critchley (4).

### 1. Responding and listening to students: Chosen Hill

ICN's approach to supporting schools' climate actions are directly linked to the students we work with – we listen to what they say and respond to support them. This Case Study follows our interaction with Chosen Hill in Gloucestershire but many other schools have similar case studies.

In the Spring of 2019 ICN met with our teacher contact at Chosen Hill, alongside eco team members, to find out how we could support their climate actions. Their feedback resonated with what other schools were telling us - the school has a team of active students who want to lead positive action. However, students often struggle with knowing how to undertake action. The teachers also have very little time available to support the eco groups – they are usually doing this work (due to their own environmental concerns) on top of their already heavy day-to-day workload.

As a result ICN ran a follow-up workshop in July 2019, hosted by Chosen Hill and bringing together three Gloucestershire schools. Using ICN resources the students worked together to think about different climate ideas and solutions. Students outlined how they were finding it hard to change their school culture and get everyone engaged. There were discussions around how they felt more emphasis should be on the positive (not the doom and gloom image) and on showing what action is working.

*“I wanted to get involved because I truly want to make a difference. I am part of the Student GreenGroup and we work on persuading the public and students to go green with us.”*

Workshop participant

These discussions led directly to the development of the Climate Action Survey. The idea is that survey data will help the eco teams know the best approaches to successfully achieve their climate actions. And by asking as many students in a school as possible to complete the survey the intention is for everyone to 'have a say' and be involved in plans. It is a project that an eco team can hit the ground running with. We will also analyse the data, taking the pressure off the teachers.

During lockdown students from Chosen Hill gave feedback on the draft survey, directly impacting the final survey. They are now looking to pilot the survey across the school.



## 2. Reaching schools in disadvantaged areas

For the 2019 ICN conferences, ICN actively targeted those schools with a higher than average percentage of pupils eligible for pupil premium. A number of them attended the Bristol conference in December 2019: Redland Green School (30.2 %), Kings Oak Academy (30.2 %), Fairfield High School (34.3 %) and Bedminster Down School (37.6 %).

The teacher from Bedminster Down was bringing a group for the first time and while expressing how keen the students were and what a great opportunity it would be for observing others in a public speaking role, she had concerns about their lack of confidence and experience. We offered encouragement and support via email. We assured her that in our experience, even if they started off slowly, their confidence would grow during the course of the conference and that there were other roles in addition to speaking ones.

As a group they took on just one country and they and their teacher had done a lot of preparation. She offered them a lot of support throughout the conference, sometimes reading for them if they lacked the confidence. It was great to see all the students in the group get involved in some capacity during the day and witness a couple of students, unwilling to speak at the start, be prepared to do so near the close of conference.

ICN received feedback from a support teacher accompanying an autistic student from Fairfield High School. This student is a keen environmentalist and upon our invitation, had expressed a keen interest in the conference. Her anxieties had apparently caused her to change her mind about going several times but ultimately she did attend and gained a lot from the experience.

Below is feedback from a member of staff at St Mary Redcliffe and students at Temple School.

Dear Rachel,

I am writing to send our newsletter article. Kids were asked to write a paragraph about their experience on this lovely occasion.

We would like to follow up directly with organisations in the market place mainly with Bristol Food Network, Sustainable Energy, EarthWatch if it is possible. Looking forward to coming together with other secondary schools to work together towards a green future.

We are going to start our actions after Christmas.

Thank you for your support.

Kind regards,

Anita Molnar

SMRT ECO-Team

### Climate Conference review

Last Wednesday a group of 6 year 11s and 5 year 10s went to the council house to participate in a youth climate conference and to learn more about how we can make an impact in our local community.

*'Our school was given Japan to represent. So we researched beforehand their steps to try and meet their climate goals to allow us to prepare a short opening speech and then participated in a whole room debate with the 20 other various countries on several topics such as who was doing enough to meet their goals and what we can do to push our own goals. We also worked on forming collaborations on protecting the oceans and creating innovative cities.'* (Yr11 student)

*'It was fun and I enjoyed meeting other schools in the deals section. Seeing ideas about local actions for schools, as well as learning about other countries and their efforts to help climate change was very enjoyable. Would do it again next year if I got the option to. Also helped my*

*communication and organisation skills.' (Yr10 student)*

*'It was a great experience and debating with the delegations from other schools as well as learning about other countries and their efforts to help climate change was very enjoyable. It was an amazing day and I would definitely do it next year if I got the chance to.'* (Yr10 student)

*'I really enjoyed this event. I learnt a lot of new things about what different countries are doing in order to combat climate change, as well as some new and exciting methods suggested by the young people in order to combat current events regarding climate change. I loved meeting new people and networking with the other students, as well as being set new and exciting challenges. I look forward to next year!'* (Yr11 student).

### 3. Sixth formers as climate change activists and leaders

#### **Emily Smith, Kendrick School**

ICN has engaged schools in Reading to learn about climate change and take action over the last eight years. Following participation in the Reading Model Climate Conference in 2019, a group of sixth formers from Kendrick School in Reading developed their interest and understanding further with support from ICN (Richard Usher, ICN's Associate) working to support the school eco-group. Within this group Emily Smith described how the support from ICN and exposure to the initial conference resulted in her changing her university choice and orientating her outside school activities towards climate action and a career in this area.

#### **What happened and what type of change occurred?**

With support from ICN's Associates Richard Usher and Mary Singleton-White, Emily and other engaged students from Kendrick School sixth form then went on to make the opening speech at Reading Climate Change Partnership's 3rd Strategy Day consultation, June 2019.

Emily was invited to speak at Reading Youth Cabinet's climate debate on 31 January 2020, as the cabinet shifted their focus towards climate action and broader pro-environmental work in Reading. She worked with ICN's Associate Richard Usher in a Q & A style presentation which showed how Emily's interest and involvement in climate change and climate action had developed.

Together with James Streeter, ICN's Executive Chair, Emily took part in a podcast to speak about getting involved in climate action.

#### **What change happened in school?**

Emily described how her involvement with the school eco-committee, work which was supported by ICN sharing ideas and awareness of further sources of support locally, has led to change in school and is moving towards influencing climate action locally as a young leader:

*'I am on my school's eco-committee, and we are working towards becoming an eco-school. Additionally, through my role on the youth council I help am on the Reading Climate Action Network carbon committee, where we are focusing on helping to make Reading carbon neutral by 2030, 20 years before the rest of the country.'*

#### **What input from the ICN team has contributed to this change?**

From the initial engagement through to ongoing support Emily described her participation:

*'My Geography teacher recommended that I attend an ICN Climate Change Conference with the school. The reading and debating that we did and the speeches that I listened to started my interest in climate change.'*

*[The Climate Conference] gave me a much bigger interest in climate change than I already had and inspired me to want to study it at University and go into research for my job. I changed from applying for an engineering degree to applying to a geography degree.'*

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### **Muhammed El-Beik – Reading School**

*ICN has worked with Reading School over the last five years to engage students in Model Climate Conferences and support climate action work directly in the school particularly focusing on work with the Environment Lead Prefect. In 2019-20 ICN supported Muhammed El-Beik to work with a group of four students from across the year groups at Reading School to participate in Reading's Climate Change Partnership climate emergency strategy meeting in June 2019.*

#### **How did change happen?**

*Muhammed led environmental action within the school which added momentum to the support that ICN was able to provide. There was also keen interest to get involved at a local level in local issues around climate action:*

*On a personal level, my involvement in the event has struck a chord in this respect. Ideas such as networks across different schools address this... These are things I intend to invest time in. The future Reading Climate Strategy must also be able to move in tandem with developments in technology. We can see this abundantly with electric cars. An increase in charging points and relevant facilities is a prime example. It is imperative that we keep up with advancements in technology to maximise the scope of future climate-related action.*

#### **What support helped this?**

*Muhammed led a team of Reading School participants at the 2019 Reading Model Climate conference, supported with resources from ICN. This followed Reading School's and Muhammed's involvement in the RCCP event. Feedback on participation was positive, building the confidence of the group enough to be able to provide a plenary speech to conclude the event:*

*[The event was] tremendous in and of itself by laying the initial ground for a [Reading] plan. But it has also had an impact by affecting individuals, such as myself, to move forward with a clearer mentality of how we need to achieve our goal in making Reading eco-friendlier.*

*Beyond the climate conferences ICN's support in Reading has focused on tailored responses to schools needs and opportunities that arise. It was energizing to work with a group of young people and support them to take forward their interests and passions to influence policy at a local level.*

*Reading's Climate Emergency Strategy will be launched in Autumn 2020 following on from this consultation event.*

## 4. Pro-active partnerships

Our decision to extend CVII to Hounslow was based on the criteria for partnership developed at the start of the project with the emphasis on working in areas of higher pupil premium rates.

### School relationships

The spark for the work came from existing relationships with staff of two Hounslow schools: Gumley House School FCJ and Isleworth & Syon Boys School (2015 conference and 2017 in Kew House School). In 2018 Gumley House invited ICN to their 6th Form Climate Conference. Isleworth's head of geography, who was also the lead teacher for Hounslow's geography curriculum group, was there and after hearing about CVII plans to expand, invited us to present the programme at their curriculum group meeting in February. The overwhelmingly positive response provided the endorsement for the ICN team to write directly to the Director of Education at London Borough of Hounslow (LBH).

### Partnership in practice

Making this conference happen represented a significant body of work to find and secure matched funding, plan and bring together all the contributors including local action organisations. The partnership approach we envisaged with CVII was to identify like-minded organisations to work alongside us with a view to them taking on the ICN model and run their own conferences in the future. Links were pursued with the Humanities Education Centre in London. They were interested and were one of the Local Action market place organisations at the conference but it didn't ever quite gel with their own priorities.

In practice the partnership that made the whole event work was with LBH's Education team. After initial discussions with the Head of Education, significant resources were allocated to the conference: many hours' time of Secondary lead Nina Johal; use of the chambers; logistical support and photography; catering costs; contact with Councillors and Council teams for their inputs; follow up meeting with LBH Environment team. As a result, LBH had a big investment in the conference and between ICN's bursary and their pressure, the CVII team worked hard to make sure that two schools about to drop out at the last minute (staffing difficulties) remained involved.

### Outcomes

The conference film and evaluation show that Hounslow was a top quality event encapsulated by:

- The young people's input was of such high calibre that the Director of Education in Hounslow wrote to all of the 10 schools' headteachers to commend them.
- Teacher on the day being asked how often schools come together like this answered, 'Never'.
- One young student came up with her teacher at the end of the conference to say 'thank you for the amazing opportunity'.
- Gumley House member of staff unfortunately has been made redundant this summer but wrote as leaving to say, 'Thank you for all the experiences you have provided for our young people, they have really gained so much knowledge, motivation and skills too from them.'

ICN has an ongoing relationship with LBH and Hounslow schools. Communication has continued throughout lockdown, particularly about adaptations to the work so that CVII can maintain work in Hounslow. Several of the students have responded to the survey/Climate Correspondents during lock down and the CVII team will be working with schools on the pilot work. The LBH Director of Education moved to Southend on Sea and recommended CVII to the team there, and this was being pursued before lockdown. Links will be picked up for promotion of ICNs COP26 work.

## 5. Higher Education - cross-curriculum engagement

Through ICN's partnership with Cheltenham Borough Council, the team were put in touch with Dr. Hazel Roberts, Senior Lecturer in Sociology at the University of Gloucestershire who was looking to run a module where her students could support a community project. Following a meeting with 6 students they decided they would like to support ICN develop the Climate Action Survey.

Students went on to undertake significant research into climate change, notably looking at impacts at an individual and community level, and around behaviour change. Their research, supported by ICN's own parallel research, formed the framework for the Climate Action Survey.

ICN continued to liaise with the students throughout lockdown (students worked from home and spoke with us via Microsoft Teams), supporting us to develop the survey questions. Interesting discussions about how different ages, genders, race and class perceive climate change helped us shape the survey in a way that wouldn't have happened without their engagement (the students literature review should soon be available to ICN). The university students had wanted to support us in delivering the pilot and analysing results, alongside running focus groups in schools, but lockdown meant this was not possible. We are in discussion with Dr Roberts about another cohort of students supporting us next year if this becomes possible.

What we hadn't foreseen at the beginning of the project is how, through their input into this project, the university students themselves enhanced their interest and awareness of climate change - they came on board to support a community project, not because they were interested in climate change. As a result of taking part in this project:

- 100% strongly agreed they had become more interested in the topic.
- 100% agreed they had increased their confidence to communicate views and solutions around climate change to others
- 75% said they planned to undertake climate action as a result of taking part in this project.

Responses as to what they would do included:

*"Being more conscious of my impact on the environment: - When it comes to buying a new car, looking into more eco-friendly options - Thinking more about my consumption and if it's really necessary to buy an item - Thinking of small changes I can encourage in my home e.g. alternatives to clingfilm - Trying more vegetarian and vegan options - Continuing supporting more ethical and environmentally friendly companies e.g. Tropic for skincare products - Paying closer attention to governments action / inaction - Consuming more media sources about climate change e.g. Netflix documentaries and seeking out reputable information."*

*"I already do individual action like recycling, but I would now be more inclined to participate in collective action, such as climate strikes or social media campaigns."*

*"Probably try to encourage more friends to think critically when doing certain things, changing my own habits and try to be more aware of the impact actions/ purchases can make."*

*"Improved team working skills which has been really useful. Also, time management as we had tasks to do across the projects to certain deadlines. I've also learnt a lot more about climate change!"*