

CLIMATE CONFERENCE

2021 Conference Evaluations



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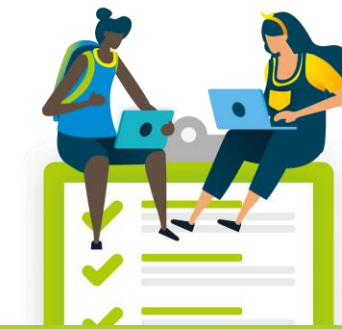


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Introduction

During the weeks of COP26 (1-12 Nov 2021) InterClimate Network (ICN) ran five Climate Conferences between secondary schools, as well as supporting partners' and teacher-led conferences in and between schools across the country.



This report is feedback from our conferences in Bristol, Gloucestershire, London Borough of Hounslow, Reading and Solihull in which almost 300 students participated.

Section A: Student feedback

- 101 students completed our post event survey.

Section B: Teacher feedback

- 13 teachers completed a separate survey.

“Thanks for all of your time and effort in organising and hosting this event, it is one of the best activities I have taken part in with my eco group over the years. I like the fact that it is specific, focused, with an overall outcome at the end.”

See also [ICN website](#) for reports from each conference including students' questions in the conferences' *Climate Question Time* sessions.

Key outcomes from the Climate Conferences

- **97% of students have a better understanding** of how they could act on climate change.
- **8 in 10 students feel more confident they can influence others** on climate change.
- **7 in 10 students are looking to influence family and friends** on climate change as a result of participating in the Conference.
- **6 in 10 students feel young people should be given a bigger voice** in local decisions.

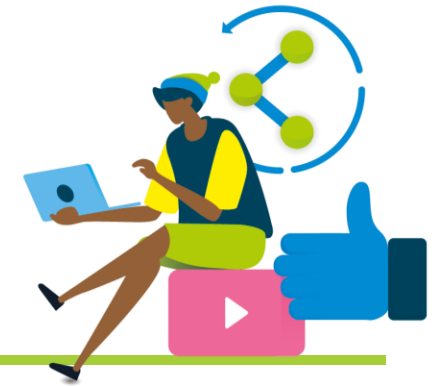
Section A

Student feedback



What it meant to participate

From students' feedback, it is clear that the vast majority gained understanding of action on climate change and confidence in presenting information to and influencing others. Students spoke in public and felt that their views were listened to. Just some of what they enjoyed is shared here, from discussing about nations' efforts, to sharing ideas with other schools, to questioning local people who have the power.



As a result of the Climate Conference....

- 97%** Have a better understanding of how they can take action on climate change
- 96%** Said they had opportunities to speak in public today.
- 87%** Feel more confident presenting information about climate change to others
- 87%** Felt people had listened to their views.
- 82%** Feel more confident they can influence others on climate change.



At the Conference I most enjoyed.....



"Sharing our contributions and thoughts. And how realistic it was to COP. And hearing the differences between our thoughts and the thoughts of countries internationally. Having our voices heard and feeling important!"

"Researching the issues beforehand. I discovered lots that we had not been told - for example about the 4 different IPPC models and the uncertainties around them. I also discovered that the briefing documents were wrong."

"It was also interesting to read about the recent polling for the UK - while the majority of the population agree that climate change needs action, only 7% of the population feel that they should bear the costs."

"The discussion between new people about ways to reduce carbon emissions of specific countries."

"The collaboration on the cities pledge as it gave me a wider understanding of each country's individual perspective and needs."

"Speaking my mind and letting people know how we can stop climate change. And hearing other people's point a views as well."

"The question and answers aspect, I really enjoyed seeing the perspective in people who have the power to inflict change."

"Hearing everyone's contributions and opinions about climate change on how we can also raise awareness."

Action after taking part

Taking part in the conference seems to have been a big motivator with 98% students saying they intend to take action. Nearly three-quarters (70%) want to influence others, and particularly their family and friends. There were many specific 'take-away' actions and initiatives that the young people want to do themselves, and with others: almost one-third (32%) were inspired to join their school eco-group.



What climate action are students going to take as a result of the conference?

- 1** Influence family and friends (70%)
- 2** Find out how I can get involved / share my views at COP26 (43%)
- 3** Join school eco-group (32%)
- 4** Other (27%)
- 5** Volunteer with local charity (17%)
- 6** Write to my councillor or MP (9%)
- 7** Make a short film about climate action in school, for school website (5%)
- 8** Write a blog (2%)
- 9** I don't intend to do any action as a result of the conference (2%)



- "I will educate my family on the effects of climate change and how to recycle"
- "I will influence my friends and family to reduce their Carbon emissions such as by cycling or eating less meat. This will be done by telling them about the different 'sticking points' and deals done which may make them interested in Climate Change. I will also look for volunteering opportunities around the local environment (such as the Adopt-a-Street programme)."
- "Encourage them to buy less clothing, drive less, use more public transport/avoid vehicles, use less heating and water." (Shorter showers!)
- "I am going to try and influence my family and friends to think about their lifestyles and actions and urge them to consider how they could make them more eco-friendly."
- "I will tell my family and friends about the event and will look for more similar events to attend in the future."
- "Try and do my part to reduce climate change."
- "Personally, I would like to research further the effects of climate change on biodiversity in the UK, and what steps could be taken to protect British species."
- "For my DofE I'm going to set up a stall and influence people about litter picking and plastics in the sea."
- "Try and make the school carbon neutral."
- "Look into and implement a change in my school to help it become carbon neutral."
- "Take ideas back to our eco club."
- "Investigate into saving energy at my school and the possibility of solar panels."
- "I'm going to email an MP about a gardening project initiative in schools, I feel like it will help build teamwork and a deeper understanding of the world around them."
- "Talk to parent who is local councillor."

What others can do to help

Involving more people in climate action came out strongly as the way to make the biggest difference in their areas. More practical help is wanted on energy and transport, but a close second was the call by 61% to give young people a bigger voice in local decisions. Almost half (47%) students said that local decision-makers take notice of what they think and were positive about their voice in school.



What do students believe can make the biggest difference in tackling climate change in their area?



1

Involve more people in climate action (70%)



4

Make clean transport widely available (51%)



2

Give young people a bigger voice in local decisions (61%)



5

Create more 'green' jobs (38%)



3

Help with energy saving at home and in school (52%)



6

Give more information about what is best to buy and use (27%)

How much say do students have?

Our teachers support us to have a say in our school and community

87%

Our school leaders want to hear our views on climate change

71%

Local decision-makers take notice of what we as young people think

47%

National politicians and decisionmakers want to hear our views

37%

"I think that young people's voices should be heard and governments should take into account that we are the next generation and what we say should matter to them."

Welcoming the opportunity

Whether in person or in the on-line 'chat' and here in the end of event evaluation, the ICN team heard a similar phrase used across the conferences, *'Thank you for the opportunity'*. For the face-to-face inter-school events, it was the first time for many that they had been in their Council Chambers. Even where the conferences were virtual, it was a rare chance to speak and work with students from other schools.



Reading 'Climate Question Time' panel

“Thank you so much for the opportunity to be involved in the COP26 conference for schools, and I thoroughly enjoyed the experience.”

“Thank you very much the event was well organised, very informative and a great educational experience.”

“Loved the event!”

“It was a great experience, and I thoroughly enjoyed participating!! Thank you :)”

Section B

Teacher feedback



Expectations and benefits

Teachers' reactions to the climate conferences were strongly positive, from the way in which their pupils were included through to the wide range of skills and learning benefits resulting from students' participation.



What were the teachers' expectations of the conference, and how far were they met?.....



"Thank you for a fantastic event. I was so impressed with the way in which it was beautifully lead. Everyone felt included and welcomed and that their voice was heard and important."

"This is the first time that we took part and I wasn't sure what to expect. Needless to say it was brilliant and the students enjoyed it."

"My expectations of the conference was completely exceeded. I expected my year 8's to feel a little lost, but it was so inclusive, all students were given a chance to speak. It was run extremely well, and so professionally. I was really impressed."

"The conference was absolutely amazing."

"It was the first time I had participated with pupils in a model conference so I didn't really know what to expect. I was slightly concerned that our younger pupils would not have a role to play. The experience the pupils gained was fantastic, the conference was managed brilliantly in terms of pace and organisation and all participants had the opportunity to contribute."

"High standard of information about COP26 and all of the different countries viewpoints. Info on other initiatives around the area."

Skills and other learning benefits students developed through their preparation and participation ...



Research, group work, critical thinking and considering other opinions



Awareness of challenges of global governance and issues of climate change



Confidence & public speaking



Working with students from different backgrounds



Awareness of the role of the council

Positive careers and role models

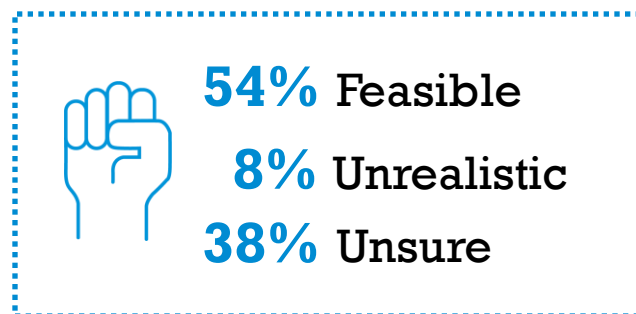


Where climate action fits

Eco-groups (62%) and teacher-led initiatives (38%) remain the main impetus for climate action in school, said teachers. Their comments showed the constraints from time and capacity issues for staff taking on these roles informally, the impact of COVID on initiatives, to the need for solid action plan templates. Some green groups are making strides, however, by involving their whole school community.



How feasible is it that the Climate Action pledges made by the students will be taken forward after today?

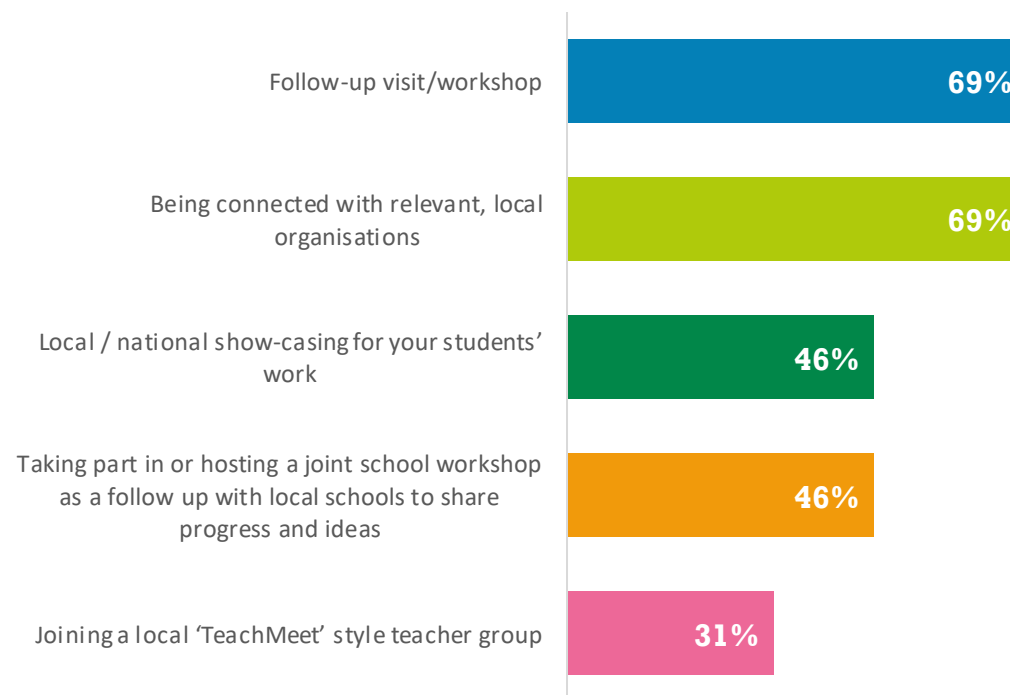


"Time commitment is the biggest thing holding me back - I drive the eco committee and schoolwide initiatives but I'm not paid or given time to do it and it's an informal role. Therefore I have to be careful with what I take on unfortunately."

"This needs to be a greater focus within our school."

"We have a green group at school that looks at the infrastructure of our school and ways to take positive climate action. This includes the SLT, site staff, parents, teachers, and pupils."

What follow-up support for Climate Action did teachers want in their school?



"Thank you - it was a wonderful experience for the students and has given them a valuable opportunity to engage with a very important issue."