

Schools take over climate negotiations in Mock COP26 conference

(London, 20 October 2021) Schoolchildren from all four UK nations took on the role of negotiating teams ahead of the United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP26) at a unique youth summit this past week.

The Four Nations School Climate Conference saw pupils from 15 secondary schools agree on a range of measures and actions aimed to address climate change and environmental degradation.

Organised to emulate the real-life conference in Glasgow next month, the virtual event on 13 October 2021 resulted in resolutions being agreed to reduce reliance on fossil fuels, to prevent illegal logging and to protect coastal communities from sea level rises, among others.

Hosted by charities Size of Wales and the Welsh Centre for International Affairs (WCIA), InterClimate Network, Centre for Global Education and ScotDEC and the Welsh Centre for International Affairs (WCIA), the event received support from the ScottishPower Foundation, which has funded the Size of Wales MockCOP programme since 2019.

The students formed teams representing a diverse mix of 20 developed and developing countries attending COP26 - including Australia, Bangladesh, Brazil, India, Kenya, the Marshall Islands, Saudi Arabia, Uganda, UK and USA. The 20 countries together account for three quarters of the world's total greenhouse gas emissions.

Kevin Rahman-Daultrey, Policy and Education Manager at Size of Wales, said:

"MockCOPs are a vital way for young people to learn about how world leaders coordinate to take international action on climate change. At this event, young people from across the UK set an excellent example for world leaders to follow. They showed that global consensus on addressing the climate crisis is both possible and necessary to protect all of our futures".

Melanie Hill, Executive Officer and Trustee at the ScottishPower Foundation, said:

"It's so inspiring that young people from across the UK are coming together at this very special four nations MockCOP event to address the climate crisis. It's a privilege for the ScottishPower Foundation to support young people who are spearheading change within their communities and beyond."

Putting forward policy positions using carefully chosen arguments in a conference debate model that mirrors the UN negotiations, the students agreed on a set of resolutions on key themes. The resolutions will be taken to COP26 in Glasgow at a special youth event organised by Size of Wales on the 10th of November live from COP26.

ENDS

Inspiring the next generation of climate leaders

InterClimate Network is the brand and trading style of InterClimate Trust. InterClimate Trust is a registered charity in England and Wales 1100981 and a company limited by guarantee registered in England and Wales 4174919.

Editor's Notes

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2. About InterClimate Network

InterClimate Network is a registered charity (No. [1100981](#)) which provides climate sustainability programmes to engage young people (primarily age 13-18) across the UK with the complexities of climate change, inspire their climate action, and promote their voices in their own sustainable future.

What problem are we trying to solve?

Climate change is the challenge of our generation. Its root cause is clear – an economic and societal model that is exhausting the limited resources of our planet. It is critical that youth are empowered to act on climate change and its root causes – but they currently lack opportunities to act across lifestyle, career and society.

3. Background

The youth climate conference is part of a 'Connecting the UK - MockCOP' initiative which has seen the participating teachers organise mock climate conferences to raise awareness among students about this year's United Nations climate talks, known as COP26.

The highlight of the initiative was this week's special Four Nations conference which inspired and equipped the students to pursue action on climate change at a local, national and UK wide level, and to initiate their own change projects in their schools and communities.

The collaboration builds on the success of the existing climate programmes of the partner organisations. Size of Wales and WCIA's MockCOP programme, funded since 2019 by the ScottishPower Foundation, has inspired climate action and advocacy through work with schools across Wales.

InterClimate Network's Climate Voices programme, funded primarily through grants provided by the Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust, has a track-record of inspiring youth voices and advocacy on climate change through its long-running model climate conferences in Bristol, Gloucestershire, Reading, Solihull, Liverpool and West London, alongside other work inspiring youth climate voices and action in schools through workshops, resources and action surveys.

Two long-established well regarded Development Education Centres, in Northern Ireland (Centre for Global Education) and Scotland (Scotdec – Global Learning Centre), have joined the project to make it a unique four nations event.

The ScottishPower Foundation was established in 2013 to make a significant and lasting contribution to society, enhancing the lives of people living in communities throughout the UK. It provides funding to help support the advancement of education, environmental protection, arts and culture and citizenship. It also supports charities who aim to provide relief from poverty, disability, or other disadvantages. www.scottishpowerfoundation.com

4. Participating schools

The schools participating in the Four Nations School Climate Conference are from:

England

- Fairfield High School, Bristol
- Harris Girls' Academy, Bromley
- Harris Riverside Academy, Purfleet
- Lyndon School, Solihull
- Redland Green School, Bristol

Northern Ireland

- St Colman's High and Sixth Form College
- Ulidia Integrated College, Carrickfergus

Scotland

- Holy Rood High School, Edinburgh
- James Gillespie's High School, Edinburgh
- Newbattle High School, Dalkeith, Midlothian
- Portobello High School, Edinburgh
- Penicuik High School, Penicuik, Midlothian

Wales

- Westbourne School, Cardiff
- Ysgol Bro Myrddin Welsh Comprehensive School, Carmarthen
- Ysgol Gyfun Gwynllyw, Pontypool

5. Conference resolutions agreed by the students included:

Cities: Calling on all nations to

- Invest and create Smart Cities globally that integrate global research and technology into the best options from tarmac to recycling waste.
- Reduce reliance on fossil fuels in providing energy for cities.

Energy: Requesting international cooperation towards

- Specific targets to achieve 50% cars run on renewable energy / electricity
- Creation of clear time-lines for these and all energy transition targets.

Forests and food: Calling for international support to maximise the world's sustainable forests through:

- Laws in place to prevent illegal logging
- Agreed time by which deforestation is stopped.

Oceans: Requesting all nations to give priority support for

- Coastal communities vulnerable to sea-level rise
- Shared use of technologies especially converting waves into energy
- Stronger rules to prevent polluting our oceans with plastic waste.