

Challenging Being Left Behind: Young People in Climate Action

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Leaving young people behind through *adulthood*

- Social exclusion, or a form of social relations that: leaves people out of the structures that govern the allocation of resources, devalues the contributions people have to make to society; denied agency or the right to control one's life or make decisions about it, is rarely considered with regards to young people.
- Power relations termed adulthood, is a process whereby adults deny young people the right to agency and decision-making on the basis of their age, and that leaves young people behind.
- The climate crisis has become a site wherein young people have exercised their voice as a collective group, to demand that adults take action to address climate change, e.g., the Fridays for Future Movement following Greta Thunberg of Sweden in 2018. Next demo 25 March 2022.



Adultism during COP26 (Conference of the Parties)

- COP26 separated the activities of young people and adults by using the fact that the UK shared the Presidency with Italy (not that many people knew about it) to divide the 26th UNFCCC Conference of the Parties (COP26) into two:
 - that organising activities around young people in Italy; and the activities espousing adult interests in Glasgow led by the UK's Ashok Sharma.
- There were 400 young climate activists meeting with the Italian and British governments and
- Stefano Cingolani (Minister Ecological Transition) and Nicola Cosentino (Executive Secretary of UNFCCC) supported young people's activities.
- Jayathma Wickramanayake, UN Youth Envoy since 20 June 2017 facilitates communications between young people and the UN systems.



Young people take action around COP26

- The Set Your #EyesOnCOP26: The Time for Action is Now! sought to raise the ambitions of the government delegates at COP26 – the UNFCCC COP (Conference of the Parties) or government delegates and agree a plan of action to implement immediately.
- Young people responded by organising outside the formal proceedings of COP26 in the Blue Zone, e.g., the initial march on the rainy streets of Glasgow at the beginning of the COP26, and huge Demonstration on 6 Nov 21, both led by Greta Thunberg.



The UN begins to take youth action seriously

- The UN Envoy for Youth has identified four priority areas:
 - Participation,
 - Advocacy,
 - Partnerships
 - Harmonization
- The foci within these areas are: employment and civic engagement.
- UN Panel on Youth
- Works with ECOSOC Youth Forums and National Youth Advisory Groups to prepare the UN Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF).
- Communicates with youth-led organisations.
- Supports young leaders (aged 18-30) to engage with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).



Students in School in Scotland have put their Demands for Climate Action on this Poster

1



Reduce pollution and waste.

2



Protect nature.

3



Change laws.

4



Stop ignoring the problem: do more.

5



Educate people.

6



Reduce emissions.

7



Cooperate internationally.

8



Leaders, change your own behavior.

9



Invest in the environment.

10



Help people and future generations.

Conclusions

- Young people are imaginative, creative, and have ideas about what they want to do.
- Adults need to reduce their reliance on adultism and engage young people to take their place at all decision-making places and assume responsibility for working with adults already in place in the governance structures to find new solutions for eliminating the use of fossil fuels, increasing the use of renewable energies throughout the world, and changing patterns of productions and consumption in promoting social and human development.

