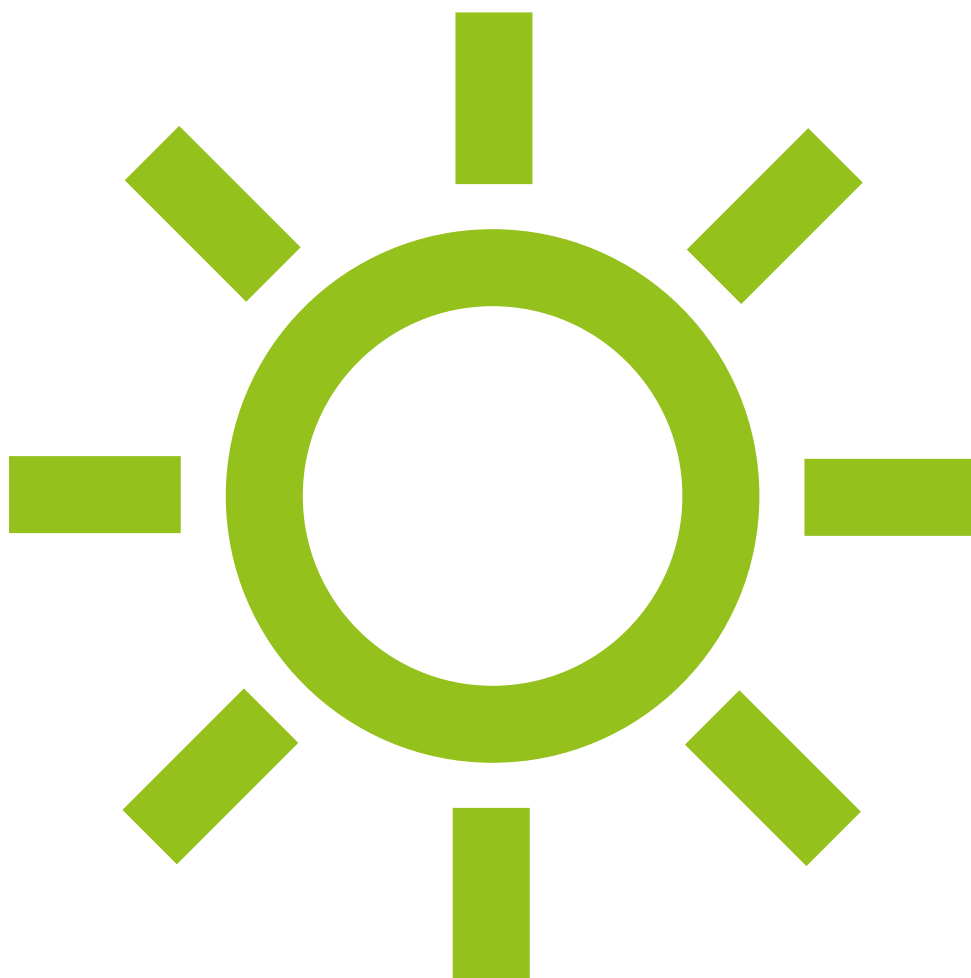


Education unlocks climate action

Activity pack for ages 11–16



About this resource

Our world is facing a climate emergency. There is hope but urgent action is needed now.

Young people are leading the way in calling for action to ensure everyone is able to learn more about climate change and understand the solutions to this crisis. These cross-curricular activities for ages 11-16 explore the importance of education in unlocking climate action.

Activity 1 – Why do we need climate education?

Learners will discuss their knowledge, thoughts and feelings about climate change and reflect on their own climate education experience. They will think critically about why learning about the climate crisis is important and investigate the role education can play in helping people to take climate action.

Activity 2 – How are young people taking climate action?

Learners will find out about some of the amazing ways in which Theirworld's Global Youth Ambassadors are using education to take action for our planet.

Activity 3 – Education unlocks climate action

This activity provides ideas and inspiration to encourage learners to think about how they could use education to unlock climate action in their school community.

Activity 4 – Creating our climate action plan

In this final activity, learners will work collaboratively to plan some collective climate action to take as a school community.



Notes for educators

- These flexible activities are intended to support your teaching rather than direct it. The activities could be used as standalone sessions for a drop down (off-timetable) day or to enrich the teaching of different subjects and topics. An overview of potential curriculum links is provided below.
- The approximate timings given for each activity are a guide only. We recommend completing all the activities over a series of lessons, if possible, but educators may prefer to use a selection depending on their learners' needs and the time available. Some additional activity ideas are included at the end of the resource.
- Learning outcomes are provided at the start of each activity. No starters and plenaries are included as it is assumed that educators will want to plan these individually.
- All activity and resource sheets are included in this pack. An accompanying slideshow is provided as a separate download.
- Where possible, the activities and resources are differentiated to help you meet the needs of different learners in your class. This guidance might also be useful in adapting some of the activities for younger and older learners. It may also be helpful to refer to the Education unlocks climate action activities for ages 7-11.
- This resource assumes some prior knowledge and understanding of the causes and impacts of the climate crisis, as well as potential solutions. We've also put together a list of useful links and resources to help support any additional teaching about these issues.

Curriculum links

England: Citizenship, English; Geography;

Northern Ireland: Environment and Society/Geography; Language and Literacy; Learning for Life and Work

Scotland: Health and Well-being; Literacy and English; Social Studies

Wales: Humanities; Languages, Literacy and Communication

Background information

All of us are affected by climate change, but it is the poorest and most vulnerable communities, those who have contributed the least to carbon emissions, who are impacted the most. More frequent extreme weather events are threatening food security, destroying homes, disrupting education and ruining livelihoods. And it is children who often bear the brunt of these impacts.

Education is a critical tool to addressing the threat of climate change. Education helps people understand the root causes and impacts of climate change, shifting their behaviour and attitudes towards more sustainable lifestyles. It builds the knowledge, competencies, and skills necessary to adapt and innovate to save our planet, transforming economies, and improving health and security. In particular, education benefits vulnerable groups that are disproportionately affected by the climate crisis.

Young climate activists in the UK and around the world are leading the calls for a greater emphasis on climate education in the curriculum. A survey by the charity, Global Action Plan, found that 91% of students in the UK wanted to see their school doing more to help them engage with climate change issues. In a separate survey, more than two thirds of UK teachers said that they thought there should be more teaching about the climate crisis in schools. But climate education goes beyond the classroom and curriculum reform. Now is the time for organisations across all sectors, from government to civil society to the private sector, to come together to support community-based action and unleash the creativity of teachers and students to combat climate change.

About Theirworld

Theirworld's Global Youth Ambassador Programme is a network for over 2000 young people from over 130 countries across the globe working together to campaign for the right to education. Many of them are speaking up about the importance of education in unlocking climate action and helping to create a safer, fairer and more sustainable future for all.

Activity 1 – Why do we need climate education?

30 min+



Learning outcomes

Learners will:

- share their ideas, thoughts and feelings about climate change
- investigate why climate education is important

What you need:

- Slideshow (slides 3-6)
- Paper, pencils and pens
- Copies of the [Why do we need climate education?](#) resource sheet

What to do:

- 1** Organise learners into groups of three or four and give each group a large piece of paper. Show slide 3 and ask learners to write 'climate change' in the middle of their piece of paper. Give learners 5-10 minutes to create a spider diagram by writing down any words or phrases they associate with climate change.
- 2** Feedback their ideas as a class. The questions on slide 4 could be used to prompt this discussion.
 - What do they know about climate change and how have they found out this information? For example, this learning might have taken place at school, by going online at home, or by talking with other people.
 - Which of their ideas are facts? Which are thoughts or feelings? Learners could use different coloured pencils or pens to mark this on their paper.
 - Do you have any questions that you would like to ask about climate change? How could you find out the answers to these? Learners could add these questions to their climate change spider diagrams.
 - Do they think it is important for young people to learn about climate change?
- 3** Explain that many people around the world are calling for more to be done to help young people learn about the climate crisis and understand how they can help take action for our planet. They are asking the government to make changes to the curriculum (what young people learn at school) so that there are more opportunities for climate education.
- 4** Ask learners to talk in their groups about possible reasons why young people should learn about climate change.
- 5** Discuss their ideas as a whole class before sharing copies of the [Why do we need climate education?](#) resource sheet. Ask learners to read and talk about the different statements with others in their group. Some of these statements are provided on slides 5 and 6 as a visual aid if needed.
- 6** As an extension to this activity, learners could write a letter to persuade the government to do more to help young people learn about climate change and take action. Learners might want to join [Climate Changemakers](#) – a campaign being organised by the World's Largest Lesson to support young people to share their views and messages about the importance of climate education.

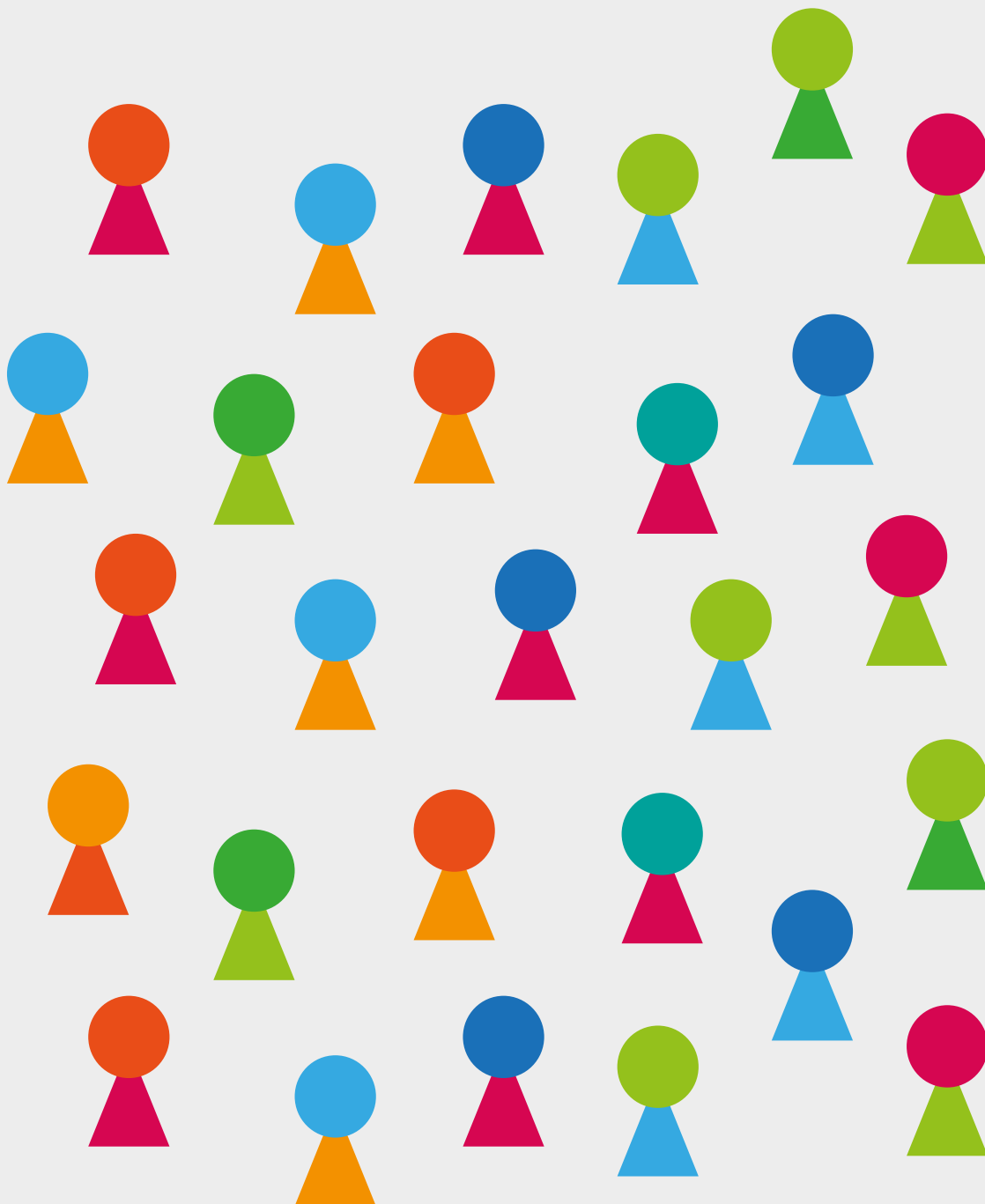
Differentiation

Make it easier:

Learners could use the differentiated version of the Why do we need climate education? resource sheet in the Education unlocks climate action activities for ages 7-11.

Make it more difficult:

Challenge learners to carry out online research to find additional reasons to support the case for climate education.



Activity 2 – How are young people taking climate action?

30 min+



Learning outcomes

Learners will:

- explore some of the inspiring ways in which Theirworld's Global Youth Ambassadors are taking action for the planet

What you need:

- Slideshow (slides 8-14)
- Paper, pencils and pens
- Copies of the Young people are taking climate action case studies

What to do:

- 1** Ask learners what taking action means. Say that we can think of taking action as doing something to help stop a situation (usually bad) from developing or continuing.
- 2** Say that education can help people to take action against climate change in lots of different ways. This might be by helping people to adapt to the changing climate, for example by training farmers to grow drought-resistant crops. Or it might be by encouraging people to take action to reduce carbon emissions. Show slide 8 and briefly discuss learners' ideas about how education can unlock climate action.
- 3** Explain that in this activity learners are going to be finding out how some amazing young people around the world are using education to take action against climate change.
- 4** Organise learners into pairs and give each pair a copy of one of the Young people are taking climate action case studies. Copies of these case studies are also provided in slides 9-12. Tell learners that these young people are taking part in a Global Youth Ambassadors programme, supported by the education charity, Theirworld. They are part of a network of over 2000 young people aged 18-30 from over 130 countries across the globe working together to take action on different issues.
- 5** Ask learners to read their case study and discuss the following questions (also provided on slide 13).
 - How is climate change affecting the life of this young person and their community?
 - How is this young person taking action against climate change?
 - How are they encouraging other people to take action?
 - What advice does this person have for other young people wanting to take climate action?

6 Now organise learners into groups of eight (four pairs). Each pair should have a different case study. Ask learners to take turns at introducing their young person to others in their group.

7 Allow time for some whole class discussion at the end of the activity. Possible discussion questions are provided below and on slide 14:

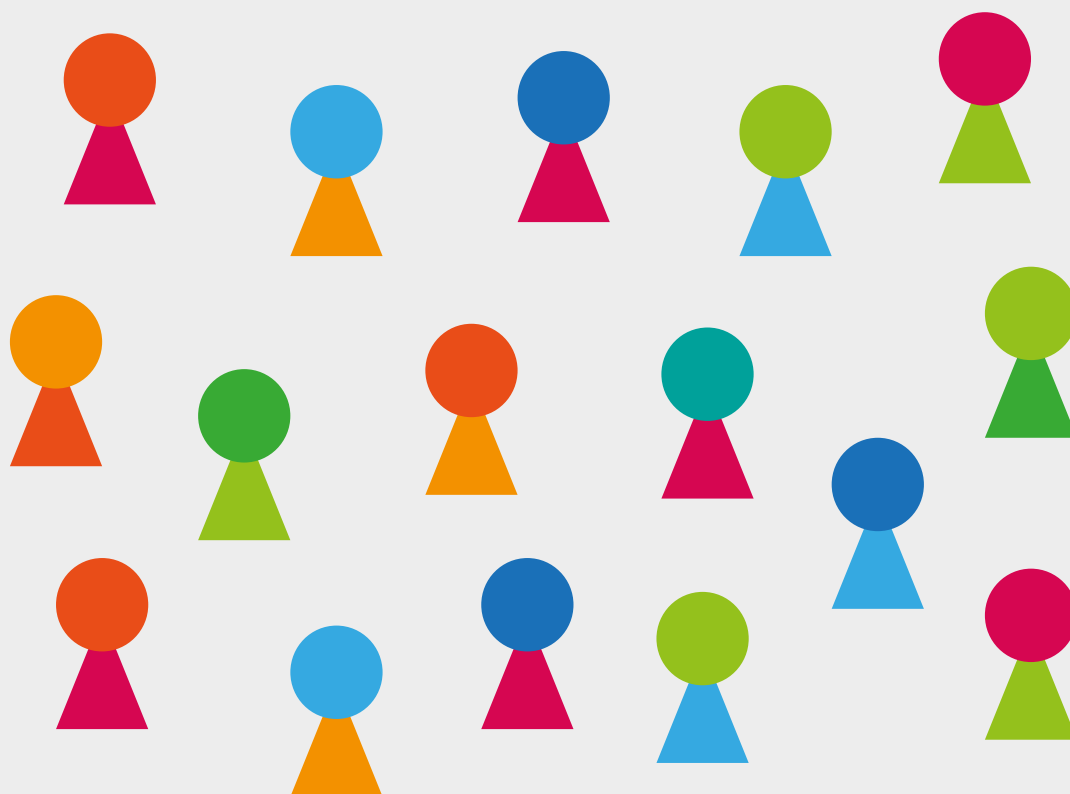
- What questions would you like to ask these young people?
- What do you think and feel after reading these stories?
- How could you help others in your school or community to take climate action?

8 Finish by making the point that big problems like climate change can sometimes feel overwhelming and make us think that there is nothing that we can do to stop it. Positive stories like these can help. People all over the world are taking action for our planet in amazing ways and no one is too small to make a difference.

Differentiation

Make it more difficult:

Learners could work individually rather than in pairs to read one of the case studies and present this person to others in the class.



Activity 3 – Education unlocks climate action

30 min+



Learning outcomes

Learners will:

- discuss ways they could use education to take action against climate change in their school and community

What you need:

- Slideshow (slides 16-17)
- Copies of the [Education unlocks climate action](#) resource sheet

What to do:

- 1** Show slide 16 and explain that in this activity learners are going to think about how they could work together to use education to take action against climate change. How could they help others in their school and community to learn about the causes and impacts of climate change? How could they encourage and support others in their school and community to take climate action?
- 2** Remind learners that every action, no matter how small, can make a difference. We can't always do everything but we can all do something. As well as taking action as individuals, we can also act together with others. We can call this collective action.
- 3** Discuss why it might be helpful to take action together with other people. For example, it might help us to feel that we are not alone and stay motivated, as well as achieve a greater impact. Learners might like to share any personal experiences of taking action individually or collectively.
- 4** Organise learners into groups of three or four. Ask learners to work as a group to come up with possible actions that they could take. They could write down their ideas on paper or digitally.
- 5** Use the questions on slide 17 to support learners' thinking:
 - Who could you influence? For example, this might be other young people, teachers, the school business manager, parents or school governors.
 - How could you raise awareness about the causes and impacts of climate change? Think about the different ways in which you learn and find out information at school and home. How could you make it informative and fun?
 - How could you encourage and inspire others to take action to reduce their environmental impact? This might be by providing advice and ideas. It could be by organising community events such as a tree planting day.
 - How could you let others know why climate education is important?
- 6** The ideas provided in the [Education unlocks climate action](#) resource sheet could be used as a discussion prompt if needed.
- 7** Allow some time at the end of the activity for learners to share their ideas with other groups.

Activity 4 – Creating our climate action plan

30 min+



Learning outcomes

Learners will:

- work with others to create a climate action plan for their school and make a start on making these positive changes happen

What you need:

- Slideshow (slides 20-21)
- Copies of the [Our climate action plan](#) activity sheet

What to do:

- 1** Remind learners that we can't always do everything but we can all do something. Explain that learners are going to use their ideas from the previous activity to create a plan for the climate action they would like to take as a class or school.
- 2** Discuss what sort of criteria learners could use to help them choose which actions to take. Learners could use an impact matrix (provided on slide 20) to rank different actions according to how easy each action is to do and the potential impact that it might have.
- 3** Organise learners into groups of three or four. Ask learners to work as a group to choose some actions to take and create an action plan for achieving these.
- 4** Show slide 21 and say that learners need to think about aspects such as a breakdown of the steps required for each action; who will be responsible for doing these different activities; the resources and support required, timescale for completion and how they will measure their success.
- 5** Finish by inviting a spokesperson from each group to share their action plan and give reasons as to why they have chosen these actions.
- 6** See the [useful links and resources](#) section for ideas of ways in which learners could be supported to put these plans into action!

Differentiation

Make it easier:

Learners could use the table provided in the [Our climate action plan](#) activity sheet to help them think through and record their ideas.

Additional activity ideas



Learners could:



Investigate the impact of the climate crisis on education. It may be helpful for learners to first identify some specific climate change impacts and then think critically about possible consequences on education. For example:

- Unpredictable rains can make it difficult for people to find water close to home. Children, often girls, have to spend more time collecting water. This may cause them to miss lessons.
- Extreme weather can cause flooding. This might damage school buildings or make it dangerous for children and their teachers to travel to school.



Research human and physical geographical features that might make people in the countries featured in the Young people are taking climate action case studies more vulnerable to the impacts of climate change than elsewhere in the world.



Share your learning!

Theirworld would love to hear how any schools have used these activities in the classroom. Please also let us know any feedback so that we can try to improve our resources and support for schools in the future. Email schools@theirworld.org or find @theirworld on [X](#) and [Facebook](#).

Useful links and resources

- Browse [Theirworld's other teaching resources](#) and investigate the importance of education in unlocking big change.
- [The Key](#) is a comprehensive information toolkit created by Theirworld with all the talking points, pitch decks, facts and infographics you need to make the case for education.
- Theirworld and its Global Business Coalition for Education initiative have launched the Key series to bring together experts to discuss the most important issues of the day and how education underpins solving them. Educators may wish to listen to this [discussion exploring the role education can play in tackling the climate crisis](#).
- The Met Office has produced this [guide](#) with useful information about our climate and how it is changing.
- See the regular [reports](#) from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) to find out more about the science behind the climate crisis – the causes, impacts and future risks, as well as different response options.
- The Climate Visuals website has a [growing library of photographs](#) for communicating about climate change and inspiring action among all age groups.
- [Transform Our World](#) is an online resource hub to help teachers bring environmental action into the classroom.
- [Reboot Education](#) is an online platform which lists hundreds of resources to support teachers in developing a global dimension in the classroom and across the school community.
- The [World's Largest Lesson](#) has a selection of free resources to engage and inspire young people aged 8-14 to take action for the climate. Learners are also invited to take part in [Climate Changemakers](#) – a campaign being organised by the World's Largest Lesson to support young people to share their views and messages about the importance of climate education. Theirworld would love to see copies of any messages if young people choose to take part in this campaign.
- The Campaign against Climate Change has a list of [suggested resources and links](#) for climate change education, for use both in the classroom and across the wider community.
- Leeds Development Education Centre, working in collaboration with other partners, has developed a [whole school framework](#) to help schools plan and assess climate education across the 5-16 age range.

- Find out more about the action being taken across the UK to campaign against climate change and how individuals and communities can get involved.
 - [The Climate Coalition](#)
 - [Climate Coalition Northern Ireland \(CCNI\)](#)
 - [Stop Climate Chaos Scotland](#)
 - [Stop Climate Chaos Cymru](#)
- There are lots of online tools and resources for helping people to reduce their environmental impact. For example, this [environmental footprint calculator from Giki Zero](#) helps people to understand their environmental footprint and how they can go about reducing it.
- One of the best ways of encouraging people to take action for the climate is by developing their connection with the natural world around them. There are lots of creative ways to take learning outside of the classroom. This list of [free outdoor learning ideas from the charity, Learning through Landscapes](#), could be used as a starting point.



The links and resources [provided above] include and will take you to materials and sites that have been produced by third parties. We do not maintain or control these links, materials or sites and have no responsibility for the content or your use of the same. Please be aware that there may be separate terms and conditions applicable to your use of these materials and sites.

Why do we need climate education?

Resource sheet

Education can help people to develop green technologies to reduce carbon emissions. Building offshore wind turbines, insulating houses, designing electric cars... there are lots of things we can do!

Young people can spread the word about the importance of climate action. They can teach and influence their parents and others in the community.

Only two countries (Italy and New Zealand) have fully integrated climate change into the curriculum. Mexico is soon to be the third country to take this step.

Schools around the world are taking action to reduce their carbon footprints – composting food waste, installing solar panels, reducing energy consumption, planting trees and more!

Education can develop skills such as problem-solving, teamwork and resilience to help people adapt to the impacts of climate change – now and in the future.

Millions of people across the world are being affected by climate change and we need to take action now.

Research found that more than two thirds of UK teachers think that there should be more teaching about the climate crisis in schools.

Communities in Bangladesh have set up floating schools. Flooding is common in many regions of Bangladesh, destroying homes and forcing schools to close. These boat classrooms help young people to continue their education.

A survey found that 45% of students in the UK think that climate change is the biggest issue we face

Young people have taken part in strikes around the world to put pressure on world leaders to do more to tackle the climate emergency.

Three quarters of young people in the UK said that thinking about climate change made them feel anxious. Taking climate action may help people to manage their anxiety levels.

Education can help people prepare for and respond to climate-related disasters such as flooding, droughts and wildfires.

91% of students surveyed in the UK wanted to see their school doing more to help them engage with climate change issues.

Climate action needs climate justice. The richest 10% of the world's population are responsible for over half of global carbon emissions.

Educating everyone on the planet could help reduce global carbon dioxide emissions by 68.9 gigatons.

Learning about the science behind climate change is the first step to taking action.

A lot of countries promised to do more to improve climate education when agreeing to the 2015 Sustainable Development Goals in.

Education can train farmers to grow drought-resistant crops to adapt to the changing climate.



Beatrace:

Young people have to work together to push for the cause

Beatrace is 23 years old and lives in Kenya.

I am passionate about climate change issues because I have seen the impacts on my family and the lives of other people. When I was young I had to walk long distances to collect water. Unstable weather conditions and pest invasions are making it difficult for people to grow food. Wild animals are migrating from place to place in search of food and water. This can make it dangerous for children on their journeys to and from school.

I am taking action for climate justice in lots of different ways. I have supported tree planting and training activities in schools, and helped organise recycling contests and clean-up activities in parks and community spaces. I have spoken with policy makers about how we can look after our natural resources and manage human-wildlife conflict. I have also helped to train farmers on sustainable agricultural practices.

Climate anxiety is very common. My advice for young people would be to remember that one can do anything but not everything. One of the mistakes a young person can do is to do nothing at all because you can only do something small. With climate action, everything matters. Any kind of action that will reduce our carbon footprint is action and big moves start with little bold steps. Young people have to work together to push for the cause.



Fontoh: **Connect your actions to the kind of world you want to live in**

Fontoh is 28 years old and lives in Cameroon.

I consider climate change in our world today as a virus that affects everyone. Many people in sub-Saharan Africa depend on farming, hunting, fishing or forestry. Climate change is making their lives difficult. In Cameroon, people are worried about food shortages, droughts, famine, disease and pollution.

Connecting children to nature has been my priority. I have helped to set up eco-clubs for children in our community. We have organised activities such as environmental quizzes, art and drama, poster competitions and radio talks to encourage people to look after our planet. We now have eco-clubs in five schools and have trained over 200 children in forest conservation. We have also spoken with school leaders about why it is important to teach children about our environment.

We are creating a community forest and have planted over 6,500 trees. Again as a team, we have collected and picked up about 20,000kg of plastic bottles which have been turned into pavements and building materials.

My message to young people would be to start small in all our efforts to fight climate. Connect your actions to the kind of world you want to live in and what a beautiful world that would be.



Sagar: **With the involvement of young people, everything is possible**

Sagar is 23 years old and lives in Nepal.

Despite contributing only a tiny percentage of global greenhouse gas emissions, Nepal is one of the countries at greatest risk from climate change. Our ecosystem is very fragile and highly vulnerable. We have snow-capped mountains, lakes and rivers, and lots of different plants and animals. These are all affected by climate change.

I started taking climate action when I was at school. I campaigned to make the place I live cleaner and I helped to plant trees. I have taken part in online and offline climate strikes across Nepal. I have also trained hundreds of young people to encourage them to help look after our planet.

Climate change is real. If we do not act now, we will be late for sure. I have a dream that one day the world will be a better and sustainable place for everyone to live. We young people need to put pressure on the government and stakeholders to take action.

Young people are the future and the main change makers. With the involvement of young people, everything is possible. My advice to others would be to start with what you can, no matter how small it is. Your small effort can make a big difference.



Susan: **Do the best you can with what you have**

Susan is 24 years old and lives in Kenya.

Climate change is a problem for all of us which needs urgent solutions. I am so passionate about this issue because it touches the daily lives of everyone in some way. I grew up watching nature documentaries so I think that's where my interest started. Then I moved to Nairobi (the capital of Kenya) where the level of pollution is very high and I saw how this was affecting people's health. Climate change can also make it difficult to grow crops and food shortages are a problem here.

People can take action by themselves but this problem needs everyone to take action together.

I am the founder of Mazingira Na Amani, an environmental charity. Our main aim is to promote environmental conservation through peace. I talk to people about the impacts of their actions on their environment and what they can do to help. I also organise community activities such as tree planting, recycling and picking up litter.

My message to young people would be to do the best you can with what you have. It can be overwhelming, but sometimes just talking to someone and educating them on climate change is a good first step.

You are never too young to start appreciating the environment and understanding your relationship with it.

Education unlocks climate action

Resource sheet

Paint a climate action mural trail around your school or community.

Talk to the school business manager about switching to a green energy supplier.

Organise a community tree planting day.

Use drama to raise awareness of the impacts of climate change on people and our planet.

Write an article for the school newsletter with some top tips for taking climate action.

Display posters around the school to encourage people to turn off lights and computers when they aren't in use.

Share your learning about climate change with others in your family. Perhaps you could go online at home together to find out more.

Create a positive climate action news board for your class or school with photographs or stories about how people are taking action for the planet.

Carry out a survey to find out what young people, teachers and parents think about the importance of climate education.

Talk with your teachers about how climate change links to the different subjects you learn at school.

Organise a 'climate festival' in your local community with events to raise awareness and inspire action.

Invite your local parliamentary representative into school to talk about the importance of climate education.

Design a leaflet or poster with advice for young people who are worried about the climate crisis.

Give an assembly or teach another class to share your learning about climate change.

Talk with others at home about how you could take action as a family to reduce your carbon footprint.

Meet with your headteacher to talk about how you could learn more about climate change in your lessons.

Join the [Climate Changemakers](#) campaign to let decision makers know why climate education is important.

Make a video to encourage others to take climate action. Perhaps you could show it on a screen in the school entrance or put it on the school website.

Start an eco-club for young people, staff, parents and governors at your school.

Organise a second-hand pop-up shop for families to buy and sell uniform, clothes, toys and books.

Talk to the school catering manager about having meat-free days.

Our climate action plan

Activity sheet

| Action | Activities needed | Resources and support required | Who is responsible? | When will we do it by? | How will we measure how successful the activity is? |
|--------|-------------------|--------------------------------|---------------------|------------------------|---|
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Theirworld

Theirworld is a global children's charity committed to ending the global education crisis and unleashing the potential of the next generation.

Registered Charity 1092312

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