

Global Warming and Pollution

The Multi-school’s Council | Pupil’s voices across Essex

**Background**

In 2023, MSC meetings were held across Essex (North, Mid, South, West and Uttlesford) and the question were asked to young people ‘*what more do you think adults and communities could be doing*?’. Research shows that climate change has important implications for the health and futures of children and young people, yet they have little power to limit its harm, making them vulnerable to climate anxiety (Hickman, et al, 2021). There has been reports of high numbers of negative thoughts about climate change, for example, 75% said they think the future is frightening and 83% said they think people have failed to take care of the planet.

*What we are witnessing today is merely the top of the iceberg. Our children, and our children's children, will undoubtedly pay the highest price. If future generations are to avert a disaster, we must turn this ship around (Action against Hunger, 2021).*

All these research links back into our question ‘*what more do you think adults and communities could be doing*? and this strong, effective poem demonstrates the impact it has had on children.

***Justina 15-year-old-girl, Zambia***

*My soul is so grieved.*

*My heart is so hurt,*

*Because of the change, obstruction, destruction known as “Climate change”.*

*Oh! Climate Change how sweet and lovely is the melody and sound it has, yet the negative impact it has brought on the environment.*

*I [as] a child of this generation, I want to voice out on the impact climate change has brought.*

*This has given children less participation in this nation,*

*Excessive rains causing floods, which bring about diseases such as cholera, by the affected water which is untreated.*

*Poor rains causing drought, leading to food shortage which is causing hunger on children as a result leads to less concentration on lessons on their education.*

*Excess rains leading to poor attendance on school going children.*

*Poor rains leading to load shedding giving people no option but to practice deforestation for charcoal use all in the name supplementing electricity.*

*Huh! My words are failing to come out.*

*My tears are failing to drop because of the condition and situation.*

*If we can be the causers, we can be the solvers.*

*Out Loud I Appeal*

*All decision makers take afforestation into consideration.*

*I appeal and cry again.*

*To all decision makers to raise awareness on climate change and children’s participation to the nation, because it states an (Africa fit for children.)* (Save the children, no date).

We can support children and young people to navigate difficult conversations about climate change, and we can start by hearing them out because we should not be underestimating their ability to ask tough questions, to propose smart solutions and most often, us adults would learn something new from children and young people!

Below, the children have made some recommendations on what the adults and local communities could be doing more.

**Recommendations**

* To encourage people to be walking, cycling or carpool to reduce the amount of pollution from cars. As well as encouraging the use of Park and Ride.
* To install solar panels in schools which should be funded appropriately from the Government.
* To call people out for dropping litter or to have camera coverage to catch litterers and fly tippers.
* Schools to ensure they have eco warrior’s councils or a gardening club in their schools where children can plant trees amongst other things to support the eco-system. Individual classes to build birdhouses.
* More bins on the streets as well as the playground is needed.
* To encourage people to eat less meat and ALL private houses as well as schools should have a compost bin to ensure the food is not being wasted.
* To ensure that appliances are energy efficient, but we should also have a day where we turn off the electricity.
* To speed up the process of banning petrol and diesel cars, but also, there should be a limit on petrol and gas usage.
* Litter picking to be a behavioural consequence.
* To spend more time outdoors to appreciate nature.
* There have been some local concerns on how animals are being treated, so should investigate into that.
* Finally, the rules should be stricter.

**Conclusion**

A third of young people in Britain are scared, sad or pessimistic about climate change. As mentioned in the recommendations above, we should be spending more time in the outdoors because according to research, 86% said they felt that being outdoors and in nature had a positive effect on their mental health (Halpin, 2023).

We live on a beautiful, diversified, nurturing, and awe-inspiring world. Our children and future generations are entitled to the same.

If you're worried right now, you're not alone. Millions of individuals are collaborating to save our planet. Earth Hour is a fantastic reminder that mankind is capable of great things when we work together, and that we can influence change for the right reasons (WWF, no date)

In a year's time, the group will revisit this topic and assess progress towards these suggestions. They will then follow up with a 'one-year on' impact report, which will be distributed again. Change begins here, and change begins with you. We want to be able to applaud the report's progress rather than express concern about the lack of interaction. While they may be tiny steps for your organisation, they could lead to tremendous changes for an entire generation.

**The Multi-school’s Council Global Warming and Pollution report,**

**Published…..**

**Amy Gair**

[**Amy.Gair@essex.gov.uk**](mailto:Amy.Gair@essex.gov.uk)

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