

VotesforCOP26 Impact Report

December 2021

Working alongside:

UNITED KINGDOM

unicef  | for every child



Be informed.



Be curious.



Be heard.

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Introduction & Timeline

What We Do

VotesforSchools provides weekly resources for teachers to facilitate informed discussions on challenging topical issues. At the end of the week, children and young people vote and comment (with an average of 30,000+ voters participating each week). We publish the voting data, hugely raising the profile of student voice. We also share the results with relevant influential people and organisations and ask them to respond to voters so that they know they have been heard.



The timeline below outlines the sequence of events leading up to this Impact Report:

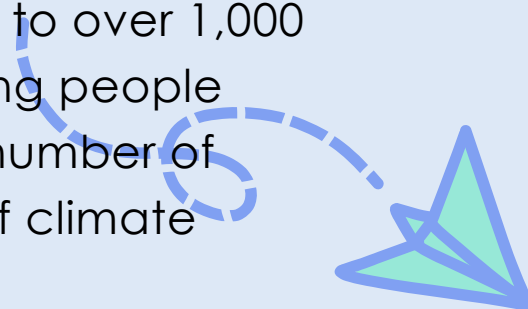


March 2021: Planning

There is no bigger issue for our children's future than climate change, so we are delighted to have been able to work alongside UNICEF UK to create free resources, initiate debate, and make sure these views were heard loud and clear in the run-up to COP26 in Glasgow.

9th Sep 2021: Resources Sent to Schools

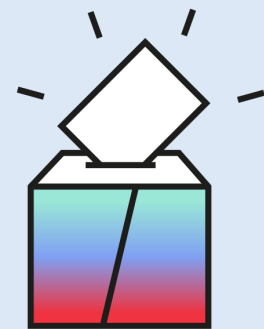
We emailed resources with the VoteTopic "Will climate change affect children's rights?" to over 1,000 schools across the UK. Children and young people had a month to consider and discuss a number of issues and questions about the impact of climate change on children's rights.



Introduction & Timeline

1st Oct 2021: Vote Closes

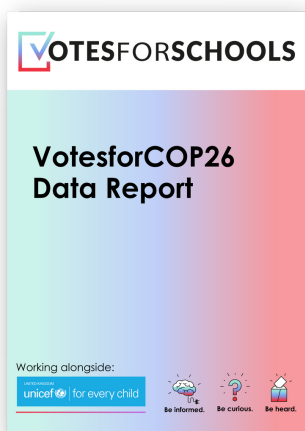
Our VotesforCOP26 vote officially closed with 46,245 young people between the age of 4-18 having made their voices heard.



22nd Oct 2021: Data Report Published

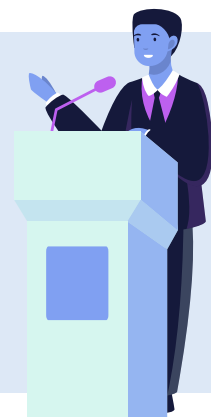
At the end of October, a week ahead of the Climate Conference in Glasgow, we published our findings and shared these far and wide with organisations such as UNICEF UK, Oxfam, The Co-op, The Wildlife Trusts and many more.

[Click here to read the full Data Report.](#)



31st Oct - 12th Nov 2021: COP26

During these two weeks, the 2021 United Nations Climate Change Conference took place in Glasgow, Scotland.



18th Nov 2021: Was COP26 Successful?

Following extensive press coverage of the conference, we also wanted our voters to reflect on COP26 themselves. In a follow-up VoteTopic, they explored whether enough was achieved in Glasgow by deciding where they stood on the question: "Was COP26 successful?"



VotesforCOP26 Results

Between 9th Sep - 1st Oct 2021

46,045 children and young people

age 4 -18 voted on the question:

"Will climate change affect children's rights?"

73.5%

voted Yes,
climate change
will affect
children's
rights.

95%

were concerned
about climate
change.

31%

were extremely
concerned
about climate
change.

89%

thought not
enough is being
done.

81%

felt young
people are not
being listened
to.

35%

felt decision-
makers had the
biggest
responsibility.

— “ —

If Governments don't reduce emissions and prevent big corporations from damaging the environment, it will affect children's health and wellbeing both physically and mentally. Governments fail to understand the toll that it takes on mental health knowing that the older generations are doing nothing to prevent a crisis that we will take the brunt of, and feeling powerless to stop it.

— ” —

AGE 17, BRISTOL - ENGLAND

VotesforCOP26 Comments

— “ —

Children have a right to a future with a healthy, safe planet.

— ” —

**AGE 11,
BRISTOL - ENGLAND**

— “ —

Climate change affects what happens in my future!

— ” —

**AGE 14,
CAMBRIDGESHIRE - ENGLAND**

— “ —

Everyone is spending so much time thinking about what is going on and talking about it but not taking enough action. At somepoint between 2027 and 2045, climate change will be irreversible. Additionally, it is the younger generation who will have to clean up the older generations' messes so it should be our right to speak up for ourselves because, in the end, we will have to deal with these problems. Climate change gets progressively worse over time and if action isn't taken now, it will be so much more difficult in the future. To conclude, I would like to see more being done about climate change because it will affect everything as we know it.

— ” —

**AGE 12,
LONDON - ENGLAND**

— “ —

Children have to live with the mistakes of adults, their wrongs and opinions. But as we grow up we as a generation understand what is going on with the world and should have a valid say.

— ” —

**AGE 14,
LONDON -
ENGLAND**

VotesforCOP26 Comments

— “ —

It's children's future so why don't they decide what will happen to them?

— ” —

**AGE 11,
BRISTOL - ENGLAND**

— “ —

It can change the right to go outside and the right to a healthy amount of water.

The earth is heating up, which will cause shortages of water in some areas and flooding in others, climate change needs to be helped.

It needs attention and it needs it ASAP!

— ” —

**AGE 11,
HIGHLANDS - SCOTLAND**

— “ —

We should stop climate change and I think children should have a right to have a voice in COP26. I think climate change affects our rights as children because it will affect our education and health, which will impact our ability to learn and become successful in our future.

— ” —

**PRIMARY VOTER,
LEICESTERSHIRE - ENGLAND**

— “ —

Because we (the next generation) will be the ones suffering from it.

— ” —

**AGE 12,
LONDON - ENGLAND**

— “ —

I think it will affect children's rights because the consequences are going to happen during our time and we don't get to have a say. More and more decisions will be made for us so that climate change can stop but we don't actually get involved.

— ” —

**AGE 13,
CAMBRIDGESHIRE - ENGLAND**

Impact - Media

Good Morning Britain, ITV Breakfast Show

Audience: 4,071,333

On 22nd October, our Data Report featured on Good Morning Britain with children from Lea Forest Primary Academy (a UNICEF UK Rights Respecting School) and an interview with UUK High Profile Supporter Cel Spellman. The feature included the key findings from the report, citing that 9 out of 10 children are extremely concerned about the climate crisis. The school children talked about the effects of the climate crisis on their health, and the health of children globally, and said that not enough is being done to tackle the problem. Cel Spellman expressed that children have been one of the biggest driving forces in the shift in consciousness around the climate crisis.

**Good
Morning
Britain**



Click here to
watch the full
report
([youtube.com/
watch?
v=iv29Ri-Qyq0](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iv29Ri-Qyq0))

Impact - Media



Sky News Breakfast

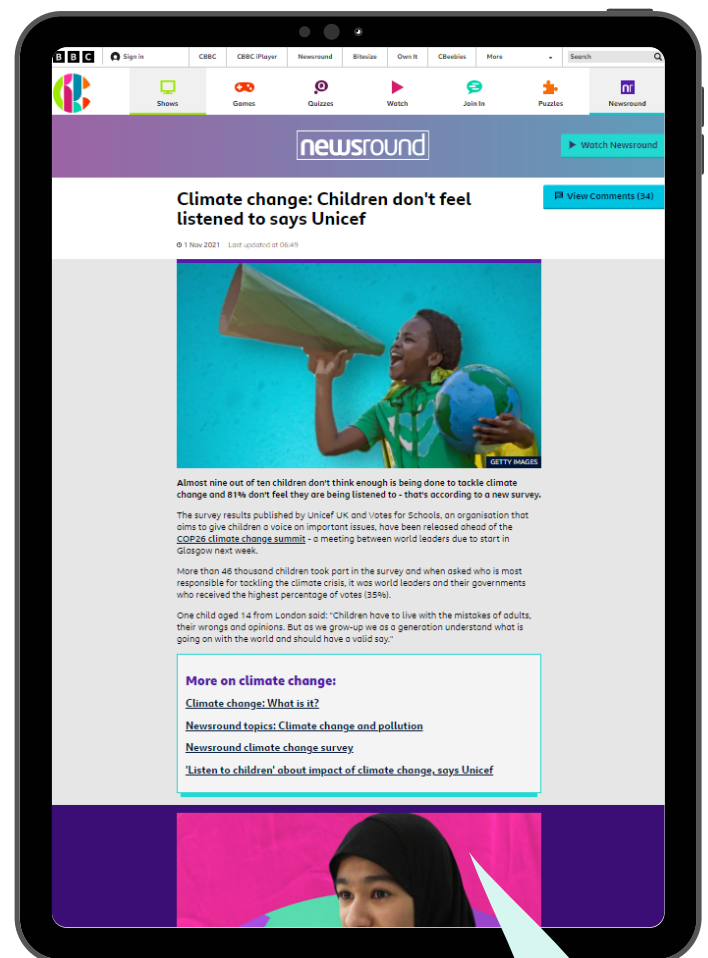
Audience: 462,001

On 22nd October 2021, Sky News Breakfast featured the key findings from our report, quoting that 9 out of 10 children are concerned about the climate crisis, along with other key messages and calls to action for COP26. There was an interview with Rebecca Dallison from UNICEF UK. The same piece was repeated later the same day on The Daily Climate Show.

CBBC Newsround

Audience: 1,916,376

The VotesforSchools Data Report was the lead story on the Newsround website for several days after its publication. The headline read: "Climate change: children don't feel listened to, says UNICEF". The feature included key findings from the report, including videos from children and young people, quoting that 9 out of 10 children are extremely concerned about the climate crisis, alongside calls to actions for COP26.



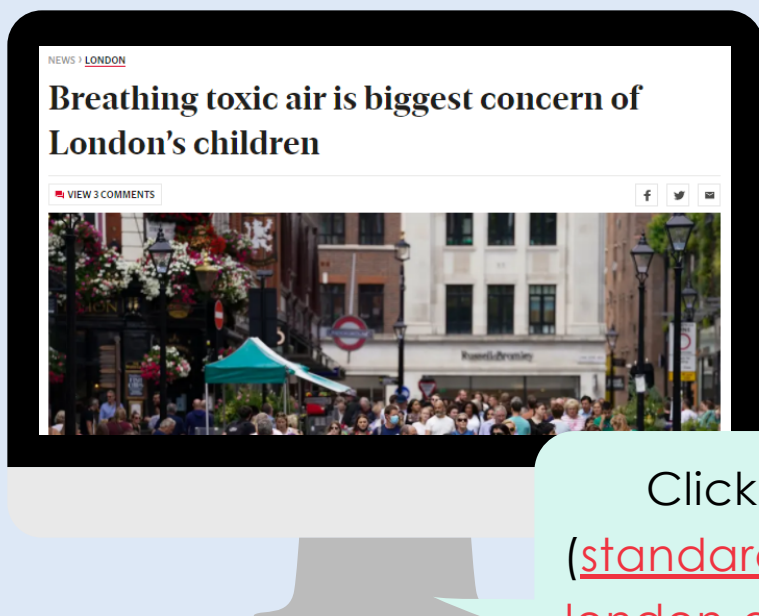
Click here to read the full article (bbc.co.uk/newsround/59001663)

Impact - Media

London Evening Standard

Audience: 816,378

"Breathing toxic air is biggest concern of London's children". This Standard article included key findings from the report, as well as London-specific data and a quote from Dafne Keen.

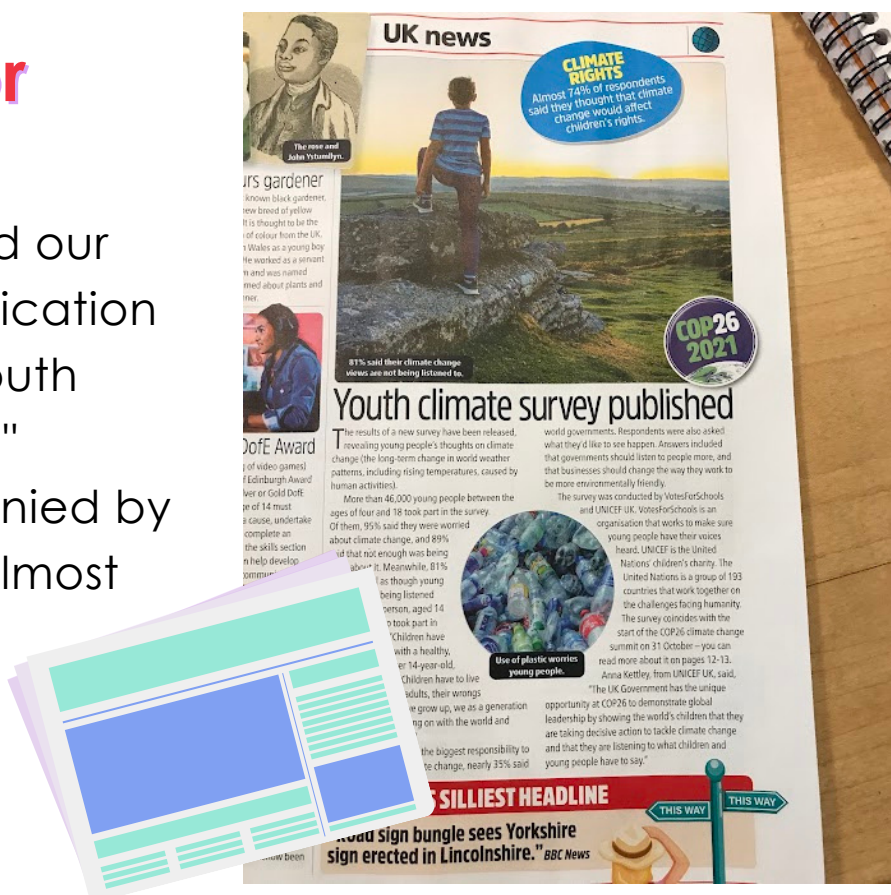


Click here to read the full article (standard.co.uk/news/london/toxic-air-london-air-quality-cop26-b963253.html)

The Week Junior

Audience: 90,000+

The Week Junior featured our Data Report in their publication on 29th October: the "Youth climate survey published" headline, was accompanied by the report insight that "Almost 74% of respondents said they thought that climate change would affect children's rights."



Impact - Advocacy

VotesforSchools' E-Cards to the Prime Minister

The weekend before COP26 began, 2,618 people sent e-cards to the Prime Minister asking him to listen and act. These were accompanied by a quote and other findings from the VotesforSchools Data Report.

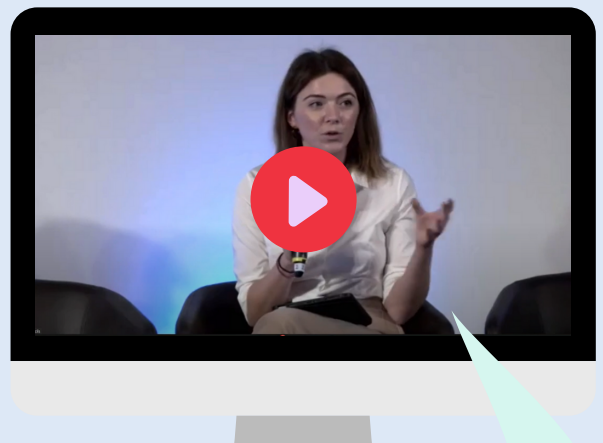


Letter to Secretary of State for Education, Rt Hon Nadhim Zahawi MP

From UNICEF UK Interim Executive Director, Steven Waugh, the letter was copied to the following Ministers and their Advisers: Children and Families Minister; COP26 President, and Minister for the Pacific & Environment. The COP26 President's Team and Education Secretary's Advisers both responded, and this communication helped UNICEF UK secure a meeting. A formal response to the letter is still to come.

London Climate Summit 2021

VotesforSchools' Amy Bull presented our Data Report at the London Climate Summit 2021 alongside Mayor of London Sadiq Khan.



Click here to watch in full (youtube.com/watch?v=l8ikt44mK48)

Impact - Social Media

We made the most of social media by posting regular updates on the vote and reaching out to influential people and organisations for a response. Here is an overview of the reach that we gained on the relevant posts in the month following the publication of our Data Report on 22nd October 2021:

VotesforSchools Social Media

14,566

Twitter
impressions

392

Twitter
engagement

2,123

Facebook
impressions

416

Instagram
impressions

UNICEF UK Social Media

7,817

Twitter
impressions

63,133

Facebook
impressions

300

Facebook
engagement

21,478

Instagram
impressions

The following UNICEF UK Ambassadors helped spread the word on Twitter:

Rama Ali

17.4k
followers

**Levison
Wood**

75.8k
followers

**Jemima
Goldsmith**

70.5k
followers

Impact - Social Media

Click the images below to see the tweets in full:

Ramla Ali

17.4k followers



Ramla Ali
@somaliboxer

In a recent @votesforschools report 89% of young people felt not enough is being done to tackle the #ClimateCrisis. The climate crisis is a child rights crisis. We must act now. #VotesforCOP Please sign @UNICEF_uk petition and protect future generations unicef.uk/ar_climate_pet...

Jemima Goldsmith

3.2m followers



Jemima Goldsmith
@Jemima_Khan

A @votesforschools survey found 81% of young people feel their concerns on the #ClimateCrisis are not being listened to. The climate crisis is a child rights crisis. Please sign @UNICEF_uk's petition to protect future generations unicef.uk/ar_climate_pet... #VotesforCOP. Thank you

9:40 AM · Oct 31, 2021 · Twitter Web App

Levison Wood

75.8k followers



Levison Wood
@Levisonwood

Climate change is the greatest threat facing children and young people, yet they are the least responsible. They need action and a say in how the world responds to this crisis. Please sign @UNICEF_uk's petition and protect future generations unicef.uk/ar_climate_pet... #VotesforCOP



10:30 AM · Oct 30, 2021 · Twitter Web App

UNICEF UK

229.7k followers



UNICEF UK
@UNICEF_uk

Just 3.4% of children think enough is being done about climate change!

The urgency of children & young people's calls for action are clear.

Here's what one student in Wiltshire had to say.

You can help do something about it here:

unicef.uk/COP26
#VotesforCOP26



8:35 PM · Oct 29, 2021 · Hootsuite Inc.

Impact - Social Media

From schools:

Barassie Primary School



Barassie PS
@Barassie_PS

Primary 6 enjoyed discussing issues relating to climate change and the upcoming COP26. They then voted on issues important to them, ensuring their voices are heard. [#votesforCOP26](#) [#RRSA](#) [#COP26](#)
[@votesforschools](#)



3:58 PM · Oct 5, 2021 · Twitter for Android

Lady Alice Primary School



Miss J Robertson
@MissJRobertson9

On Friday, Primary 4 were discussing COP26 issues and voted on some big questions to have their say. I was so impressed with the excellent discussions we had, sharing opinions and ideas about what we can do to tackle climate change! [@COP26](#) [#votesforcop26](#)



6:16 PM · Oct 3, 2021 · Twitter for iPhone

St. Paul's Primary School



St. Paul's G32
@stpaulsshet

Votes have been submitted to [@votesforschools](#) - our children want to have their voices heard [@cop26](#) and feel strongly that climate change will have an impact on their rights 🗳️ Here are two of our P6s giving their views 🌟💙
[#VotesForCOP26](#) [#CountdownToCOP26](#)
[#OurDearGreenPlace](#)



8:56 PM · Sep 28, 2021 · Twitter for Android

Impact - Social Media

UNICEF UK's Ambassador, Cel Spellman (70K followers), helped us spread the word on Twitter:



We even tried to reach Greta Thunberg!



Impact - Partners

The Data Report was shared with hundreds of partner organisations, some of whom were present at COP26. We received support from key organisations such as The Co-op, Oxfam, PiXL and The Wildlife Trusts. On the next few pages are some key responses to all the children and young people who voted and commented:



Impact - Partners

— “ —

These findings highlight the increasing anxiety that children and young people living in the UK feel about their future. And they have every right to be concerned. Three quarters of the children and young people that took part knew that climate change would have a profound impact on their future and that their human rights as enshrined in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child were being impacted. At the UK Committee for UNICEF (UNICEF UK) we often hear that climate change is a priority that young people want to see definitive action on, yet nearly 89% of respondents said not enough is being done to tackle the climate crisis.

The UK Government has the unique opportunity at COP26 to demonstrate global leadership, by showing the world's children that they are taking decisive action to tackle climate change and that they are listening to what children and young people have to say. As one child stated, 'children should have a valid say in what happens next'. We urge the UK Government to recognize that the climate crisis is a child rights crisis, and ask that they work to ensure children's voices are heard and taken into account by every world leader when making decisions at COP26.

” —

UNITED KINGDOM

unicef  for every child

ANNA KETTLEY, DEPUTY EXECUTIVE
DIRECTOR OF ADVOCACY,
PROGRAMMES AND SAFEGUARDING, THE
UK COMMITTEE FOR UNICEF (UNICEF UK)

Impact - Partners

— “ —

It's incredibly concerning to see children as young as eleven worrying about how climate change will affect their future. Young people are our future, and more action must be taken to fight for them and their planet. We all have a role to play – Governments, individuals, and certainly business – and we all need to co-operate because nobody can solve this on their own, but we can all play our part.

That's why, as part of our wider plan to tackle the climate crisis, we're partnering with the Count Us In campaign, which encourages us all with small, practical steps which combined have the potential to have a huge impact. Everyone must act together, as individuals, businesses and communities, to create a fairer world.



STEVE MURRELLS,
CEO, CO-OP

— ” —

— “ —

This generation of young people have spoken out and we need to hear what they are saying and we need to really listen. We owe it to them to take them, and this issue, seriously and find ways of ensuring that their fears do not become our world's reality.

— ” —

RACHEL JOHNSON,
CEO, PiXL



Impact - Youth Advisory Boards

In October 2021, VotesforSchools Primary and Secondary Youth Advisory Boards discussed the key questions in online meetings, as did the UNICEF UK's Youth Advisory Board. Here are some of the students' statements from these meetings:

VotesforSchools Primary Youth Advisory Board

— “ —

We need to think more about how we live our lives. If everyone follows the same example, we can make such a difference.

— ” —

— “ —

It is predicted by 2030 there will be more flooding and droughts. The world needs to take action.

— ” —

— “ —

The loss of animals and deforestation will contribute to the destruction of ecosystems.

— ” —

— “ —

I think adults need to do way more on the issue of climate change. As kids we don't have the power to do very much but adults can. It's weird because they act like this will only affect us; it'll affect them too.

— ” —

Impact - Youth Advisory Boards

VotesforSchools Secondary Youth Advisory Board

— “ —

While it may seem like we're not doing much, climate change can't be resolved in one day, no matter how many people are listening. We need the bigger dogs (the Government) to take the actions they promised, but we need to keep informing people because there will be masses of people who will see this as a "trend" or something that will "blow over soon".

— ” —

— “ —

The Government should have the responsibility – they have the power to enforce change/legislation on the big companies who will then have to take responsibility.

— ” —

— “ —

Even though we are under 18 it will affect our rights. It is affecting our mental health; we are worried about climate change and all the things that might have to change will end up impacting on us.

— ” —

— “ —

Some young people feel that they are also the contributors to climate change, [with things] like fast fashion.

— ” —

— “ —

People are attempting to raise the issue – but is there a plan? Some of these meetings don't lead to real change.

— ” —

Impact - Youth Advisory Boards

— “ —

Climate change is being swept under the rug - it isn't really working. People are starting to protest and then seen as being a pain.

— ” —

UNICEF UK Youth Advisory Board

— “ —

I stand with children and young people around the world as they make their voices heard in the weeks leading to COP26. The VotesforSchools survey shares their hopes and fears, aspirations and anxieties – Government, it's time to listen!

— ” —

MICHAEL, UNICEF UK YOUTH ADVISORY BOARD MEMBER

— “ —

95% of young people are concerned about climate change; 89% think that not enough is being done. These are simply terrifying statistics and show the importance of the UK Government taking meaningful action now.

— ” —

UNICEF UK YOUTH ADVISORY BOARD MEMBER

— “ —

It's time the Government step up and take action on climate change. Out of nearly 50,000 children polled, 89% don't think that enough is being done - it's time we fix this. COP26 is the perfect opportunity for the Government to show they care about young people's futures.

— ” —

UNICEF UK YOUTH ADVISORY BOARD MEMBER

Impact - Youth Advisory Boards

— “ —

The climate crisis is a child rights crisis. Not only does the scientific evidence support this, but 74.5% of children polled agree. World Leaders need to listen to young people and act to protect our futures. World Leaders need to take action now.

— ” —

UNICEF UK YOUTH ADVISORY BOARD MEMBER

— “ —

The VotesforSchools report is a prime example of the meaningful contributions that young people can make to big decisions, when they are given a platform to do so. This is an important step forward, but it's only one step. It's important that we continue this discussion, and keep building a platform for children and young people to express themselves. The future starts here.

— ” —

NIAMH, UNICEF UK YOUTH ADVISORY BOARD MEMBER

— “ —

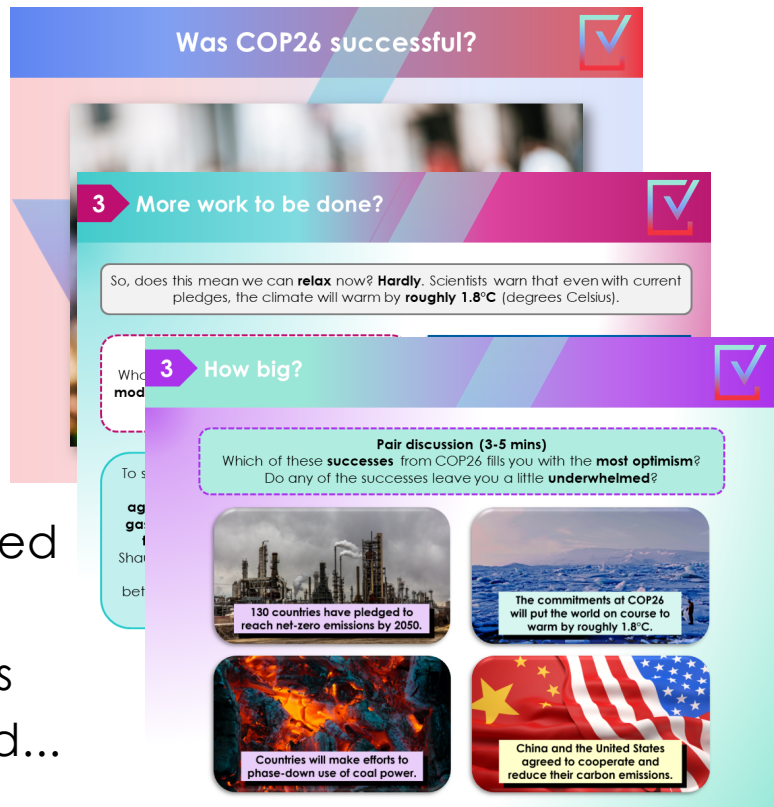
These are shocking statistics. Yet I'm not surprised that 81% of children polled feel ignored on the climate crisis, or that 95% are concerned about climate change with regards to their futures. The UK Government needs to start listening to us, and taking us seriously. The Governments of the world need to start respecting the views of young people, and taking action to protect their futures. This needs to start now.

— ” —

EDDIE, UNICEF UK YOUTH ADVISORY BOARD MEMBER

Was COP26 successful?

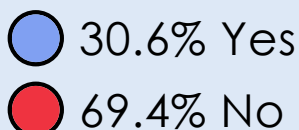
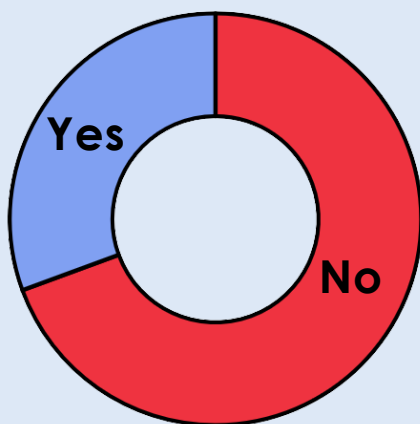
On 18th November, we sent new resources to 800+ schools so that voters had the chance to reflect on COP26. We asked them: "Was COP26 successful?". In these resources, they explored the main takeaways from the conference and decided whether enough progress was made. As is clear from the results below, most were not convinced...



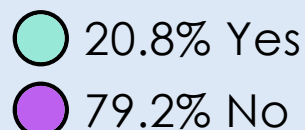
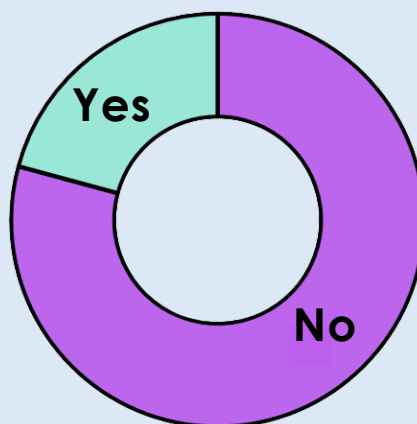
36,063 children and young people

age 4 -18 have voted on the question: "Was COP26 successful?" with the following results:

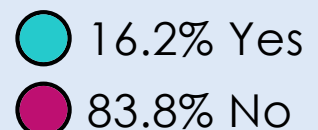
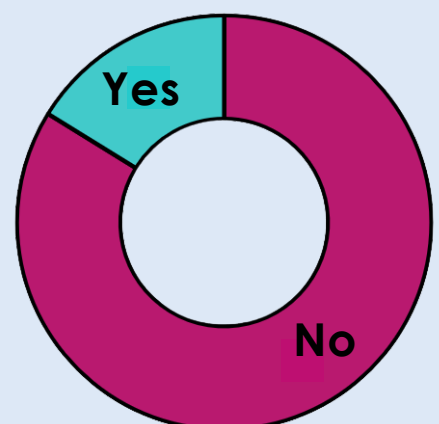
Primary KS2



Secondary



16+ & College



Was COP26 successful?

These were some of the reasons our voters gave for their decisions on the question: "Was COP26 successful?"

— “ —

It was a good start, but these things take time, we can all make a difference by our actions rather than words.

— ” —

**PRIMARY VOTER,
SURREY**

— “ —

COP26 wasn't as successful as it could be, there seemed to be little concern for the animals and their environment in these agreements.

— ” —

**SECONDARY VOTER,
SURREY**

— “ —

I don't think COP26 was that successful because some people are still protesting everywhere and saying that COP26 didn't do that much as people thought it would've so in my opinion, I don't think it was that successful.

— ” —

**PRIMARY VOTER,
HERTFORDSHIRE**

— “ —

Yes, because the success is that by 2030 deforestation will end.

— ” —

**PRIMARY VOTER,
LINCOLNSHIRE**

— “ —

The controversy regarding "phase down" and "phase out" is understandable, but phase down still means we are going in the right direction.

— ” —

**SECONDARY
VOTER,
GREATER
MANCHESTER**

Was COP26 successful?

— “ —

If big countries are still burning and using fossil fuels, this still massively impact our planet.

— ” —

**PRIMARY VOTER,
LINCOLNSHIRE**

— “ —

No because it needs to change now not in 2030 or 2040.

— ” —

PRIMARY VOTER, SUFFOLK

— “ —

I don't think that COP26 was entirely successful as lots of the changes they are aiming to make, will not be reached until about 10 more years. However, I do think it is a step in the right direction and we are making progress.

— ” —

**SECONDARY VOTER,
WEST MIDLANDS**

— “ —

If we do not fix this issue everyone will feel the catastrophic consequences of global warming. Even if it does not directly affect world leaders and other well - off people in developed countries, many people's lives - in less developed countries for example - will be dramatically changed. People in our generation and future generations will be the most affected. So, I think people in power need more empathy for these people.

— ” —

COLLEGE VOTER, BRISTOL

Was COP26 successful?

— “ —

No, because there are too many things happening like animals dying, global warming and flooding but people are still not agreeing. We need to step up and this is something that we need to fix.

— ” —

**PRIMARY SCHOOL,
BUCKINGHAMSHIRE**

— “ —

I'm glad we are talking about this; all the leaders say "oh well we'll hit 0 carbon emissions by 2050" but they probably won't even be able to do it by 2100. It was a fail and it wasn't successful.

— ” —

**SECONDARY VOTER,
LANCASHIRE**

In addition to our voters' comments, we had feedback from the InterClimate Network, who said the following:

— “ —

This report is a fitting tribute to young people's drive to make a positive difference on climate change - and a call to adults to step up their support.

— ” —

CECILY ETHERINGTON,
ASSOCIATE,
INTERCLIMATE NETWORK



**InterClimate
Network**

[Click here to read our full Data Report for this VoteTopic.](#)

What's Next?

There are a few signs of hope, such as:

On Friday 5th November 2021, Nadhim Zahawi, Secretary of State for Education, announced a draft Climate & Sustainability Strategy for the Department for Education that “puts climate change at the heart of education”. The draft strategy sets out the vision that “the UK is the world-leading education sector in sustainability and climate change by 2030”.

And, Greta Thunberg reminded us that:



Greta Thunberg ✓
@GretaThunberg



A reminder: the people in power don't need conferences, treaties or agreements to start taking real climate action. They can start today. When enough people come together then change will come and we can achieve almost anything. So instead of looking for hope - start creating it.

8:14 AM · Nov 15, 2021 · Twitter Web App

We will continue to inform young people about developments regarding the environment and climate change and ensure that their voices are heard throughout 2022 and beyond.



Find out more on our website:

www.votesforschools.com

Or contact us at:

info@votesforschools.com

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Be informed.



Be curious.



Be heard.