

CLIMATE CHANGEMAKERS!

IMPACT REPORT

March 2022



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**ABOUT CHILDREN'S
PARLIAMENT**



SPOT BROCHAN!

Brochan is our mascot and he's a hedgehog. We call him Brochan because that is Gaelic for porridge. Brochan is actually the most fortunate of us all because he actually got to travel around Scotland meeting our Members of Children's Parliament.

INVESTIGATOR, AGE 11, WESTERN ISLES

Brochan's journey continues! How many times can you spot him in these pages?



THANK YOU

A lot of very special people made this work happen.

Thank you to all the parents, carers and school staff who have supported this project from day one and have gone above and beyond to make weird and wonderful things happen at every stage. None of this would have been possible without you!

Thank you to **Scotland's Climate Assembly** – the secretariat, design and facilitation team, stewarding group, evidence leads, and Assembly members. We have learned a lot together and it's been an incredibly rich and rewarding experience for all involved. Thank you for being wonderful Unfearties at every step of the way!

Thank you to **Globe International** and the **Scottish Parliament** for your support in bringing The Moment to life, and for championing Scotland's children and young people on the international stage at the Globe Legislators COP26 summit in Scottish Parliament.



Thank you to Julie, Becky, Elspeth and Gillian in the **Scottish Government's COP26 division** for all your support in the run up to, and during, COP26.

Most of all, we want to say a **very big thank you** to the 113 children who participated in Children's Parliament's investigation for Scotland's Climate Assembly, and a special thanks to the 16 Investigators who have led this work with such passion, creativity, curiosity, fun and compassion. As one of the Investigators said, this really did all start with a box in the post – and look what you have achieved since! We are so proud of you and cannot wait to see how you continue to be climate changemakers.

A handwritten signature in white ink that reads "Katie Reid".

Katie Reid
Children's Voices
Programme Manager

A handwritten signature in white ink that reads "Sandra Rabbow".

Sandra Rabbow
Children's Voices
Project Worker

A handwritten signature in white ink that reads "Sophia Georgescu".

Sophia Georgescu
Climate Changemakers
Project Worker

INTRODUCTION



Children's Parliament is Scotland's centre of excellence for children's participation and engagement. Our dream is that children grow up in a world of love, happiness and understanding. Our mission is to inspire greater awareness and understanding of the power of children's rights and to support implementation of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) across Scotland. Through rights-based, creative practice, we support children up to 14 years of age from diverse backgrounds across Scotland to meaningfully engage and participate in local, national and international decision-making processes.

The climate emergency is one of the greatest threats to children's rights globally. Since Children's Parliament was founded in 1996, climate change has been a key issue for children across our work. Like many children and young people across the world, children living in Scotland are calling for urgent climate action from decision-makers, recognising its urgency and the implications inaction will have on their futures.

Scotland is taking positive steps towards becoming a nation which promotes, protects and fulfils children's rights. After over a decade of campaigning from children, young people and civil society, the Scottish Parliament unanimously passed a Bill in 2021 that will see the incorporation of the UNCRC into Scots Law. However, children have continuously highlighted how they lack opportunities to have a say and be taken seriously in decisions being made about the climate emergency, despite this being one of their fundamental human rights.

Children's Parliament therefore welcomed the invitation from Scotland's Climate Assembly to work with children across Scotland to ensure their views, ideas and calls to action informed Scotland's Climate Assembly deliberations and recommendations.

Scotland's Climate Assembly is the first citizens' assembly to directly involve children under the age of 16.

¹ Note: All children who participate in our projects and consultations become Members of Children's Parliament. Unlike other parliamentary bodies, Children's Parliament is not an elected body. Rather it is a participatory one, engaging with children up to 14 years of age across Scotland.

From October 2020 to March 2021, Children's Parliament worked with over 100 Members of Children's Parliament (MCPs) from across Scotland, designing and facilitating their participation in a parallel, integrated process to Scotland's Climate Assembly. To find out how this worked, and to learn about the children's views and 42 calls to action, we encourage you to read the children's report 'It's up to you, me and all of us!'¹ which was laid in Scottish Parliament in June 2021 as part of Scotland's Climate Assembly recommendations. Find the report at bit.ly/3uUH4GB.

It is important to emphasise that at the beginning of this process, those involved in Scotland's Climate Assembly could not have foreseen the truly transformative impact the children's contribution would have on the process, outcomes and impact. The initial aim of the children's investigation (as we termed it) was so adult Assembly members could be informed by children's views and ideas in their deliberations and development of recommendations. However, as the process unfolded, the weight of the children's contribution grew in significance and influence, and the two parallel processes became more and more integrated. This resulted in the children's findings and calls to action – which were presented to the adult Assembly members to consider incorporating into their own recommendations – becoming fully embedded into the final recommendations report laid in Scottish Parliament.

In response to how integrated the children's work had become with Scotland's Climate Assembly, and the significant amount of international interest our work received, we received funding and support from Scotland's Climate Assembly, Globe Legislators and the Scottish





Government's COP26 Division to create our legacy programme, **Climate Changemakers** enabling us to:

Support the participating children to continue their involvement in Scotland's Climate Assembly, including taking their calls to action to key decision-makers in the lead up to the Scottish Government's official response in December 2021, and reviewing the response with adult Assembly members at the final Climate Assembly weekend.

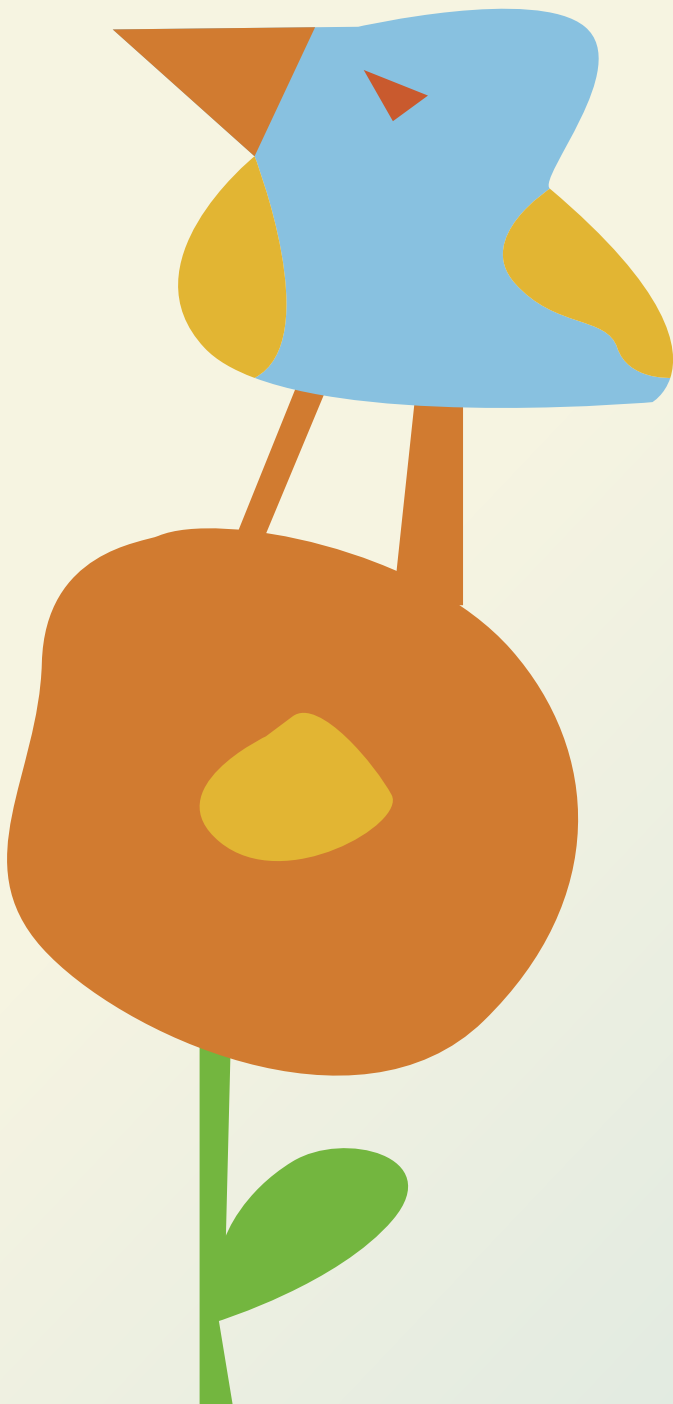
Create an online toolkit with the participating children to support other children across Scotland, and internationally, to carry out their own climate 'investigation' and influence decision-makers and elected representatives to take climate action in the run up to, and beyond, COP26.

Lead and champion the participation of younger children in COP26.

A lot has happened since we began this journey with Scotland's Climate Assembly. With no blueprint to work from, we have all experienced first-hand the possibilities and opportunities that deliberative democracy offers to bring generations together to tackle the most significant threat to our collective survival. Reflecting on our experiences over the last 16 months, this report aims to highlight the process, learnings, reflections and impact so far, as well as our recommendations for the future realisation of children's rights in the context of the climate action and deliberative democracy.

PART 1:

WHAT WE DID



CHILDREN'S PARLIAMENT IN NUMBERS

17

MONTHS (OCTOBER 2020 – FEBRUARY 2022)

10

SCHOOLS

42

CALLS TO ACTION

16

INVESTIGATORS

4

MEETINGS WITH MEMBERS OF THE SCOTTISH CABINET

35

INVESTIGATOR ZOOM WORKSHOPS (52.5 HOURS!)

124

PACKAGES SENT IN THE POST

A GAZILLION

TRIPS TO THE POST OFFICE

113

MEMBERS OF CHILDREN'S PARLIAMENT

1026

MILES BROCHAN HAS TRAVELLED ACROSS SCOTLAND

5

FILMS



THE MOMENT

2000+

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE ACROSS SCOTLAND

80+

CLIMATE SURGERIES

50+

ELECTED REPRESENTATIVES



THE JOURNEY

From Scotland's
Climate Assembly...

October 2020 – February 2021

Children's Parliament's investigation for Scotland's Climate Assembly takes place, involving 113 children from across ten regions of Scotland.



March 2021

The children's final 42 calls to action are shared with Assembly members in their short film² and report³.

Learn about the investigation in the children's report at bit.ly/3uUH4GB.

June 2021

Scotland's Climate Assembly recommendations and children's calls to action are laid in Scottish Parliament. Nadia, Tyler and Ayesha, (West Lothian Investigators) and Assembly members meet party leaders at Scottish Parliament for the launch.

Nadia and Tyler meet the Queen and Princess Anne, sharing their experiences of being involved in Scotland's Climate Assembly.



Children's Parliament at Scottish Parliament for the launch of Scotland's Climate Assembly recommendations, June 2021
Image: Chris Watt Photography



Nadia and Tyler, Investigators, meet with Queen Elizabeth II in June 2021
Image: Edinburgh Climate Change Institute

...to Climate Changemakers

August 2021

Our Climate Changemakers programme begins, with four new Investigators joining the team!

Dialling in from the Highlands, Investigators Maya, Ben and Mollie answer questions from the Presiding Officer and Members of Scottish Parliament (MSPs) about their calls to action at Scotland's Future Forum panel⁴.

September 2021

The Investigators and Assembly members meet Cabinet Ministers and Cabinet Secretaries to discuss their calls to action. The Investigators and Children's Parliament team create **climatechangemakers.scot**, a toolkit to support children's participation in influencing climate governance and action.



Maya, Ben and Mollie, Highlands Investigators



Investigators and Climate Assembly Members meeting with Cabinet Secretaries in September 2021

October 2021

Children's Parliament and Scottish Youth Parliament host **The Moment**, a nationwide day of **80+** climate surgeries led by **2000+** children and young people to discuss their calls to action with elected representatives ahead of COP26.

...the biggest day of children's democratic engagement in Scotland!

November 2021

The Investigators are some of the **youngest participants in COP26**, sharing their experiences and calls to action with international decision-makers, parliamentarians, negotiators and activists across the Blue Zone, Globe Legislators COP26 Summit, New York Times Climate Hub and online.



Investigators Ben, Mollie, Maya and Dan speaking at the Globe Legislators COP26 Summit in Scottish Parliament Image: Andrew Cowan @spcb



Nadia and Tyler in the COP26 Blue Zone



February 2022

December 2021

The Scottish Government publishes its official **(162-page)** response to Scotland's Climate Assembly which directly addresses the children's calls to action throughout.

The Deputy First Minister shares a **film response for the children** which is shared at the final Climate Assembly weekend when the Investigators and Assembly members meet for the final time. Together, they discuss the response and reflect on their experiences since October 2020.

The Investigators meet with the Scottish Parliament Net Zero, Energy and Transport Committee to discuss how they can take forward children's calls to action as Scotland's Climate Assembly comes to an end.



Mikiko Otani, Chair of the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child



Nadia, Tyler and Ayesha outside Scottish Parliament.
Photo credit- Chris Watt Photography, 2021.

PART 2:

WHAT DIFFERENCE HAS IT MADE?





REALISING CHILDREN'S RIGHTS IN CLIMATE GOVERNANCE AND ACTION

UNCRC, Article 4: The Scottish Government and UK Government should both work to make sure the Convention is known about and upheld.

The immediate overarching outcome of the Climate Changemakers programme has been the significant demonstration of the power and influence of children in the efforts towards tackling the climate emergency.

Children have both inspired and motivated adults – Assembly members, parents and carers, teachers, local, national and international decision-makers, to reflect on children's views and experiences, and to take forward children's calls to action in their personal and professional lives. Children have reminded adults that decisions being made about the climate emergency, that will ultimately affect children's lives the greatest, must not exclude children: it is their right to have a say, and to be taken seriously.

While it is too early to see the long-term, systemic climate action called for by the children, here we highlight the immediate, evolving impact of the children's participation in Scotland's Climate Assembly and its evolution into the Climate Changemakers programme. We divide this section into three key components, due to their unique aims in supporting children to participate in national, local and international forms of deliberative democracy and climate action respectively:

A. Scotland's Climate Assembly

B. The Moment

C. COP26





Members of Children's Parliament and Assembly Members at Scottish Parliament for the launch of the recommendations and calls to action Image: Chris Watt Photography

A: SCOTLAND'S CLIMATE ASSEMBLY

As we near the end of Scotland's Climate Assembly in Scotland, the transformative impact of the children's participation in this process continues to unfold. Drawing from evidence from the children's investigation and research from Scotland's Climate Assembly, we describe the impact across four areas.

relationship, we facilitated an online session between the Investigators and Assembly members to discuss the final recommendations and calls to action in March 2021. Addressing the children, Susie Townend, Head of the Climate Assembly Secretariat characterised the impact children had in these terms:

1 Impact on Scotland's Climate Assembly Process and Outcome

As previously described, the children's investigation was initially designed to inform the Assembly members' deliberations each month via a series of filmed updates capturing the children's learnings, deliberations and calls to action. Although we received written feedback from Assembly members' on the children's input, the direct engagement between children and Assembly members was limited until the end of the five-month process. To help consolidate the

I wanted to thank you for the way your work has helped the work of Scotland's Climate Assembly as a whole. I think it has been really ground-breaking to have you as part of this process. I wanted to talk about three ways that you have helped the whole of Scotland's Climate Assembly. The first is that adults recognised that they had a responsibility to you and future generations. Just by being part of the Assembly meetings, you reminded the adults that the decisions they made would impact you and that's why their Statement of Ambition – which includes your words of a call to action say – if we fail to act now, we will fail our current and future generations in Scotland and across the world. I think that's

in part because they saw you in every meeting and they were reminded to think about you.

The second thing that you did was the adults learned from your ideas. We saw this particularly after some of them met with you but also when they saw your films. They heard what you had to say on plastics, on how we build homes, on tree planting, on creating jobs for you to do in the future, and they've made similar recommendations so I think we can see how you have influenced what they decided.

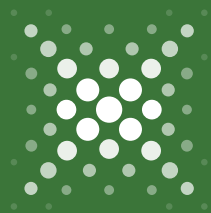
Finally, working with you created a shared purpose. You asked for adults to take you seriously. You said it was important for you to know what was happening to your ideas and that you had truly been listened to. Your ideas have been included in the main Assembly report and the interim report that came out last week. Your words will be included in the main report. They're still your ideas, your calls to action, but they are completely embedded in the whole work of the Assembly.

So you've done a lot! You've reminded, you've inspired and you've created a shared purpose with Scotland's Climate Assembly.

Our Climate Changemakers programme offered us the opportunity to learn from and build on this as our partnership with Scotland's Climate Assembly continued. We were struck by how the Secretariat sought to ensure the Investigators were able to participate, as equals, alongside Assembly members in ministerial and parliamentary meetings to discuss the recommendations and calls to action. Additional support from the Scottish Government's COP26 division and Child Rights International Network enabled us to bring two of the Investigators to the COP26 Blue Zone with Assembly members where they posed questions to international decision-makers about their commitments to involving children and young people in open, deliberative forms of climate governance.



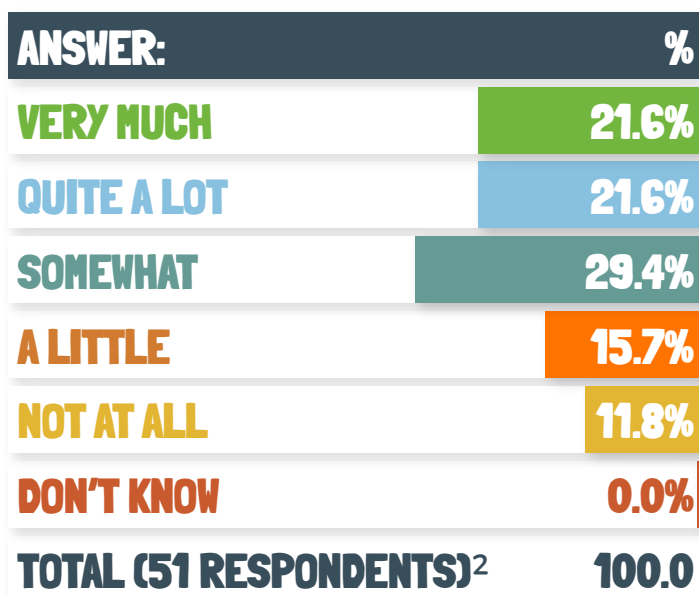
Members of Children's Parliament and Assembly Members with international decision-makers at COP26



Scotland's Climate
Assembly
Seanadh Gnàth-shìde
na h-Alba

In February 2022, we brought the Investigators together with Assembly members as part of the final weekend, to discuss the Scottish Government's response. Following this weekend, Climate Assembly research⁵ indicates that the majority of feedback received was positive about the children's contribution and recognised its impact and influence on their journey as Assembly members:

In the Weekend 8 Respondent's survey, the 73 participating Assembly members were asked: **To what extent did the children's contribution shape/inform your deliberations and recommendations as an Assembly member?**



Comments made by survey respondents included³:

The children's contribution was important in many ways. Their degree of engagement with the climate emergency was inspirational. They shared many of the concerns discussed by the Climate Assembly, expressing their recommendations in a clear and concise manner. They reminded everyone of the responsibility that we have as adults to safeguard their future.

ASSEMBLY MEMBER, WEEKEND 8 RESPONDENT'S SURVEY

I thought they were brilliant – brought a different perspective and drive that cut through some of the complexities the adult assembly tended to get bogged down in. Just do it, and do it now. And, they are the ones who will inherit the consequences of what we do or don't do in the near future, so it was entirely right that they were involved.

ASSEMBLY MEMBER, WEEKEND 8 RESPONDENT'S SURVEY

I don't think seeing the children's reports changed my mind on anything but I admired their energy and it renewed mine.

ASSEMBLY MEMBER, WEEKEND 8 RESPONDENT'S SURVEY

² As only 70% of Assembly members who attended Weekend 8 completed the survey, the results should be treated with caution.



2

Impact on participating children

Scotland's Climate Assembly was designed to bring individuals from all walks of life to learn about and deliberate on the climate emergency. For many children, like Assembly members, their involvement with Scotland's Climate Assembly was the first meaningful opportunity they had to learn about the climate emergency. Children reported an increase in their knowledge and understanding of the climate emergency, the impact of climate change at a local, national and international level, the solutions for Scotland, and the opportunities and challenges of implementing such solutions in a fair, human rights-based way.

Reflecting on the deliberative, participatory nature of their learning experience through their investigation, many children described how limited their experiences of learning about climate change had been prior to this. A number of children described their climate education at school as being largely reduced to concerns about littering and pollution. As evidenced in their calls to action, children are calling for improved climate education – both in terms of what is taught, but also how it is taught. Children recognise that climate education must extend to providing children with practical 'green' skills and supporting them to take, and influence, climate action at home, within the school, community and at a local authority even national level.

My favourite Call to Action is better education for children and adults about the current situation because I feel like in school, we were taught 'Don't litter in the playgrounds!' and told to go and make posters about not littering. That is completely idiotic! It's not just children: some adults may not have heard or know enough [about climate change] so I feel like we need to teach everybody about the wider picture because there's so many different things that contribute to the situation.

INVESTIGATOR, AGE 11, HIGHLANDS

Being in the Children's Parliament and Climate Assembly has opened up lots of new perspectives for me because I didn't really know about climate change before and I've learned so much. I think other people, adults, also know that, because we're doing this in the Children's Parliament, children do care about climate change.

INVESTIGATOR, AGE 13, WEST LoTHIAN



Children also demonstrated an increased understanding and awareness of their human rights, particularly their rights to participation, education, information and to a healthy environment, and of deliberative democratic processes such as citizens' assemblies. Children highlighted that the Climate Assembly has been an example of having their say in matters that affect them and feeling heard and taken seriously.

At the start the pupils were quite sceptical that their views would be listened to so the first workshop was really good in changing their opinions. They then felt quite empowered when they realised that their views would count. They loved doing the posters and they enjoyed talking about climate issues.

TEACHER

LEARNING FOR SUSTAINABILITY AWARD

We are delighted to share that the Investigators won the Youth award for their amazing work for Scotland's Climate Assembly in the Daily Record & Education Scotland Learning for Sustainability Awards.



Finally, children have continuously highlighted how being involved in Scotland's Climate Assembly has increased their confidence in voicing their opinions and ideas, given them a sense of pride and achievement, and enabled them to develop friendships across Scotland and generations. We return to reflecting on the significance of the relational, emotional aspect of the children's participation in the next chapter.



MCPs at Forgandenny Primary School with their thank you parcels in May 2021

3

Impact at home, at school and in the community

A significant impact of the children's participation in Scotland's Climate Assembly has been how it has inspired, motivated and educated the participating children to engage in the issues and take climate action. The children's passion, commitment and knowledge has extended to informing and inspiring their peers, families, schools and communities.

My favourite part about being involved in the Climate Assembly is that I'm just really thankful, because I've learnt a lot about climate change and I want to like spread the word to other people, like my family. I mean some of my family members now have hobbies about climate change because I persuaded them. I told them what's happening and it's great that they are now helping out with the climate emergency.

**INVESTIGATOR, AGE 13,
WEST LoTHIAN**

This project has changed her outlook on life and how serious the issue is. She also informs people if they don't know something. It has given her the opportunity to meet new people and now she also tells us about what she learned which lets me learn more and help out.

PARENT

Through being involved in the Climate Assembly and other events with adult decision makers on the climate emergency, I've noticed that other adults around me at school and at home have been inspired by our work. They've changed their attitudes and perspectives on climate change in one year.

INVESTIGATOR, AGE 13, WEST LoTHIAN



Behind the scenes! Members of Children's Parliament, their parents and the Children's Parliament team at Scottish Parliament, November 2021

We agree with the children's calls to action. It has encouraged us to take action and think of more ways in which we can take action for example we recently purchased a triple A rated washing machine. This has been an amazing experience for us all.

PARENT

We are recycling more, we pick up litter from around our area and we have to look at where our food has come from when shopping. Thank you, this experience has been a positive one for our son and an educational one for all of us.

PARENT

The Children's Parliament Grove

Following their participation in COP26, Ben, Mollie and Maya – three Members of Children's Parliament – set up the 'Children's Parliament Grove' with Trees for Life. The children were so excited to share this with the wider group when we met for an online celebration event in early December.

My favourite moment of COP26 was actually afterwards when the Children's Parliament Grove happened.

BEN, AGE 11, HIGHLANDS



treesforlife.org.uk/groves/362147

4

Impact on Scottish Government

The Scottish Government published its official response to Scotland's Climate Assembly in December 2021. A child-friendly version, in the form of a short film message from the Deputy First Minister⁶, followed in February 2022 and was played to the Investigators and Assembly members at the final Climate Assembly Weekend. This in itself was a clear demonstration of the ongoing commitment to meaningfully realising children's participation rights throughout this process: in their report to Scottish Parliament, the children had asked for a

child-friendly film response from the Scottish Government, to ensure children could understand the outcome of their participation.

The children's calls to action are addressed through the entire 162-page response, with the Scottish Government acknowledging the children's contribution throughout. Whilst we cannot go into every detail in the report, here is a snapshot of some of the key commitments made:



CALL TO ACTION!



Label all food and everyday items with where they are made and their impact on the environment.



RESPONSE!

Scottish Government has committed to looking at the idea of labelling foods, to help people know if they are good for the environment.



DIET

LIFESTYLE



CALL TO ACTION!



Ban plastic packaging and single-use plastic (especially cutlery, bottles and plastic bags).



RESPONSE!

Scottish Government has committed to banning some of the most problematic single-use plastic items from 1 June 2022.



CALL TO ACTION!



Create sharing libraries in communities for toys, clothes, food, tools, books... and more!



RESPONSE!

Scottish Government has committed to creating more sharing libraries - four times as many as there are now (over 100 sharing libraries in Scotland!).



CALL TO ACTION!



Make travelling to school in environmentally friendly ways easier and cheaper. This would involve S'Cool buses, cycle/walking buses, and more, safer cycle routes across Scotland.

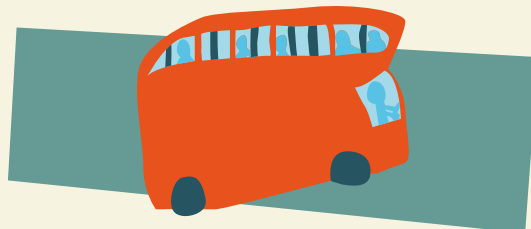


RESPONSE!

Scottish Government is testing plans to give free bikes to school children who can't afford them.



CALL TO ACTION!



Make public transport more environmentally friendly. This would involve making it easier and cheaper for children and adults and making buses and trains electric or hydrogen-powered.



RESPONSE!

Scottish Government is making it free for children and young people to travel on buses.

TRAVEL



WORK & LEARNING



CALL TO ACTION!



Make sure all children and adults learn about climate change. This would involve hearing from experts on climate change. Help children and adults learn green skills that will help tackle the climate emergency like:

How to grow food and compost waste

How to recycle properly

How to repair and mend things

How to have a climate friendly diet

How to plant trees and protect wildlife



RESPONSE!

Scottish Government is supporting the Dandelion School Growing project which will enable 100,000 children and young people to experiment with different ways of growing crops.

Scottish Government is committing to reviewing and refreshing the Learning for Sustainability action plan, informed by children and young people.

We are absolutely committed to ensuring that the views of children and young people form the bedrock of our policy development in all areas of policy. It is important to me that it is done properly. The specialist support provided by the Children's Parliament and the climate changemakers programme will mean that the ideas and comments of younger children will be directly available to officials and to me and other ministers, which is particularly important at present, while we are refreshing the learning for sustainability action plan, as that will allow us to build their ideas in from the beginning of that project.

SHIRLEY-ANNE SOMERVILLE, CABINET MINISTER FOR EDUCATION AND SKILLS



CALL TO ACTION!



Involve children in decisions being made about tackling the climate emergency. This could be in school, in communities or at a national level – like the Climate Assembly!



RESPONSE!

Scottish Government is committing to involve children and young people in citizens' assemblies and other forms of decision-making going forward.

We have learned from the fantastic job the Children's Parliament did this time round but a number of us are involved in some work to look at how we institutionalise citizens' assemblies and make sure that we do and we them well. One part of that is making sure that children and young people are routinely involved. They shouldn't be seen as an add-on or an exception.

DOREEN GROVE, HEAD OF OPEN GOVERNMENT, SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT AT OBSERVER SESSION, CLIMATE ASSEMBLY WEEKEND 8⁷



CALL TO ACTION!



Create a national tree planting day in Scotland. Everyone would plant a tree, every year.



RESPONSE!

We want to give a special mention to this call to action as this has been a firm favourite for the participating children. Although no commitment has been made by Scottish Government to bring this to life at the time of writing, we feel it important to acknowledge that Assembly members specifically raised this as one of their key questions to Ministers during the final Climate Assembly weekend, on behalf of the children. As Kaela Scott, Director of Innovation and Practice at Involve, explained in the Observers' session of the final Climate Assembly weekend:

One of the things that a couple of the groups prioritised to take to Patrick Harvey [Minister for Zero Carbon Buildings, Active Travel and Tenants' Rights] was 'Why can't we have a National Tree Planting Day like the children suggested?'. Given that the Assembly members had a limited number of questions and time, it is significant that they really wanted to promote this call to action from the children.

LAND & SEA

THE INVESTIGATORS' TAKE ON THE SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT'S RESPONSE:

It's good that they're going to teach more because I didn't know much about climate change – all I knew that it was affecting the planet and it was to do with pollution, and now I know a lot more.

INVESTIGATOR, AGE 11, CLACKMANNANSHIRE

They're trying to do stuff, but it takes like ten years. We've not got ten years! We do have to appreciate that it can cost a lot of money to do these things but it has to happen now because this world won't last.

INVESTIGATOR, AGE 11, HIGHLANDS

Adults don't always do what they say they're going to do so we were surprised that they responded to us. We like what you're doing but think you could do more.

INVESTIGATOR, AGE 11,
PERTH & KINROSS

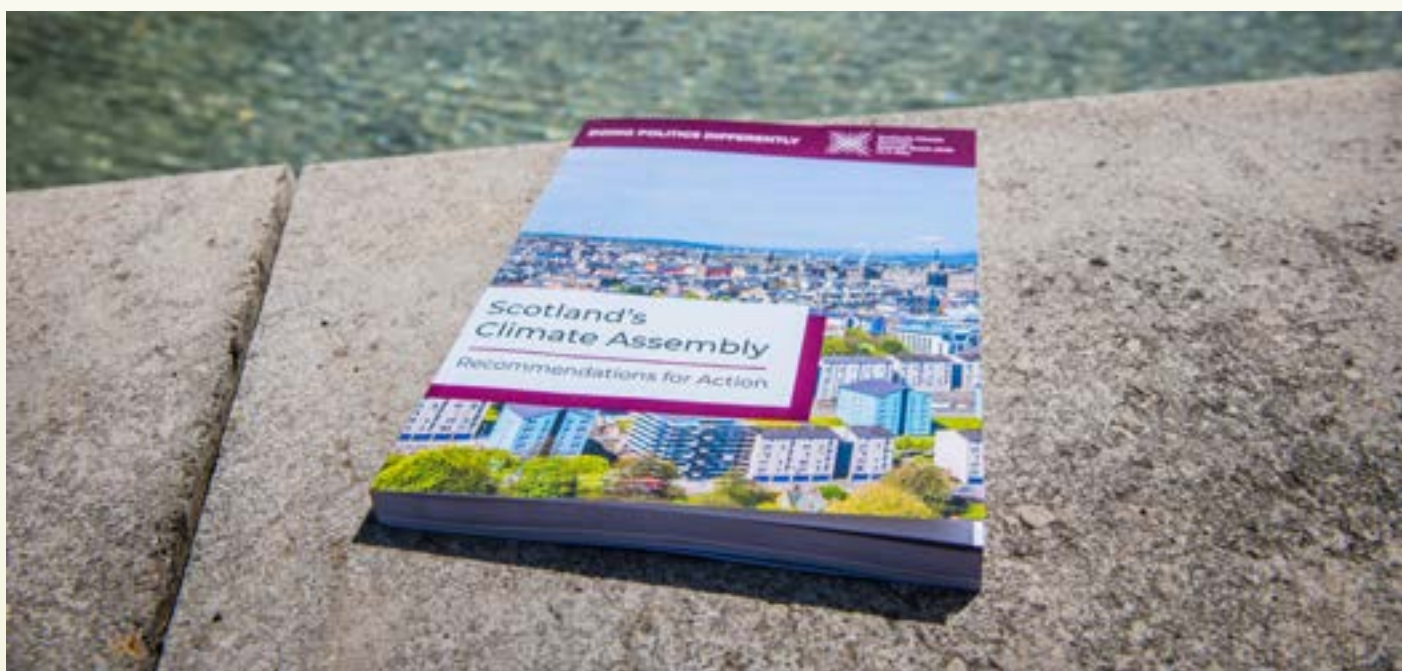
They're only doing the things that they're already doing or that they only just started doing that are quite easy to do. They're not doing the really tough ones we want them to do.

INVESTIGATOR, AGE 12,
WESTERN ISLES



They say there are going to do stuff but then they don't explain how they are going to do it. Be more specific on what you're going to be doing.

INVESTIGATOR, AGE 13, WEST LoTHIAN





B: THE MOMENT

On 29th October 2021, Children's Parliament and Scottish Youth Parliament hosted The Moment, a nationwide day of deliberative, creative climate surgeries led by children and young people with their elected representatives to discuss their climate calls to action ahead of COP26. Using Children's Parliament's Climate Changemakers toolkit and additional resources provided by the Scottish Youth Parliament, over 2000 children and young people across Scotland participated, holding over 80 climate surgeries with over 50 elected representatives including Members of Parliament (MPs), Members of Scottish Parliament (MSPs) and local councillors. Climate surgeries took place online and in nurseries, schools, parks, and community spaces.

The Moment was definitely the highlight for us. The structure and incentive to talk to our elected representatives has opened the learners' eyes to the way our political and government system works and who can do what. We have made some amazing connections we will continue to build on in the future. The whole class now have a greater understanding of the Scottish political system and are proud of having made a difference and influenced political thinking and decision making – if only in a small way. This is something that will stay with them for ever and they won't be afraid of making their views heard in the future.

TEACHER

Children's Parliament created an interactive map documenting each of the climate surgeries. Here are some of the climate surgeries that took place:

Livingston

Children from Deans Community High School met with Lorna Slater MSP to discuss their experiences of being involved in Scotland's Climate Assembly, and their calls to action around tree planting, climate education and reducing carbon emissions.

The Moment campaign, which is run by the Scottish Children's Parliament, [...] was one of the most positive and inspiring discussions I've had since being elected as an MSP. [...] The school students I met are going above and beyond to do their part to build a fairer and greener future. It is time for world leaders to do the same.

LORNA SLATER, MSP AND MINISTER FOR GREEN SKILLS, CIRCULAR ECONOMY AND BIODIVERSITY⁸





Tullibody

Children from Banchory Primary School met with Mark Ruskell MSP in their school to discuss how unused land can be used for community tree planting, and how children can be better included in planning decisions.

I'm going to remember this conversation and think about just how important it is that communities are involved. What you were talking about is about making Tullibody a better place while also tackling climate change. Your ideas can make people's lives easier, rather than harder.

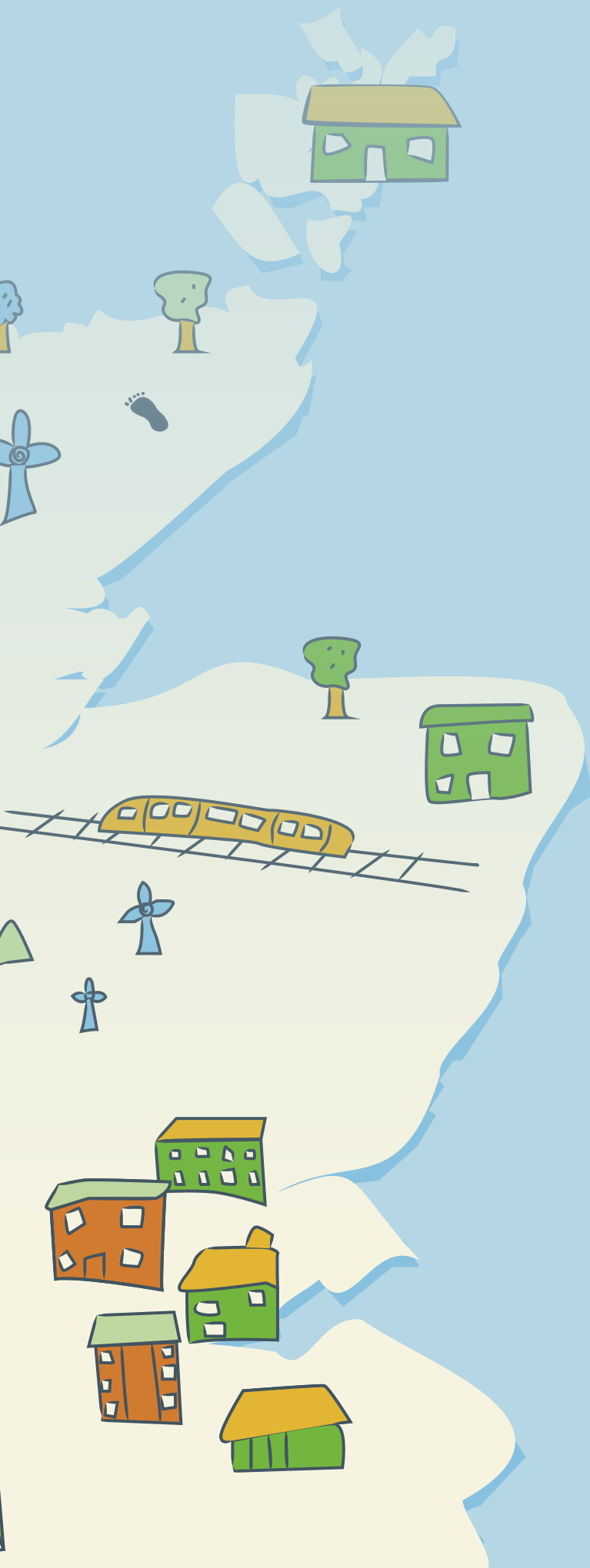
MARK RUSKELL, MSP

Falkirk

Over 1000 children and young people across Falkirk⁹ met with Monica Lennon MSP during a week-long series of on-line and in-person climate surgeries. Monica Lennon lodged a motion in Scottish Parliament on 8th November 2021:

That the Parliament congratulates the Children's Parliament and the Scottish Youth Parliament on the success of The Moment initiative, which led to children and young people taking part in nationwide climate meetings with their elected representatives; understands that the preparatory work carried out by children, young people and schools resulted in over 60 virtual and in-person events, believed to be the largest ever direct engagement of children and young people in Scotland meeting their elected representatives; welcomes the children and young people's calls to action on climate change, and notes these were plotted on The Map, which was presented to international parliamentarians at the Globe COP26 Legislators' Summit, held in the Scottish Parliament on 5 November 2021; congratulates everyone involved in The Moment on making the voices of children and young people heard during COP26, and agrees that all elected representatives should continue to engage with children and young people on the climate emergency and other issues that matter to them.





Forgandenny

Children from Forgandenny Primary School hosted 8 elected representatives from their local area in a series of climate surgeries. The children shared their 3D map of Forgandenny and calls to action about creating outdoor learning and growing spaces in schools (like Forgandenny's polytunnel) and using sheep wool as building insulation. In November 2021, Jim Fairlie MSP raised the children's sheep wool idea in the National Planning Framework debate in Scottish Parliament¹⁰. Alex Rowley MSP lodged a motion¹¹ in Scottish Parliament on 4th November 2021, congratulating the children from Forgandenny for their work as Members of Children's Parliament and involvement in The Moment and COP26.

C: CHILDREN'S PARTICIPATION IN COP26

In November 2021, the United Nations Climate Change Conference, COP26, took place in Glasgow and brought parties together from across the world to progress action towards the goals of the Paris Agreement and the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).

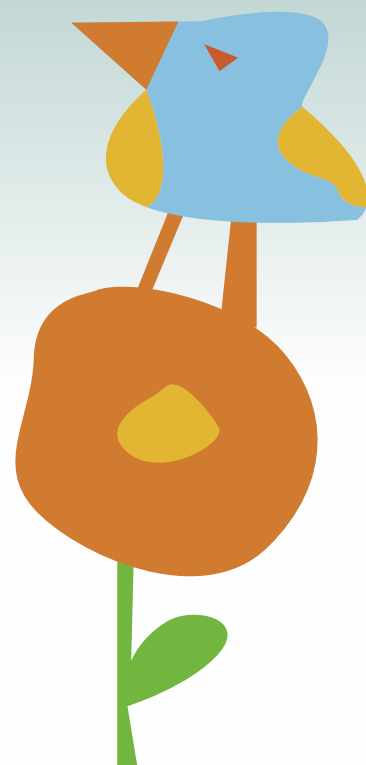
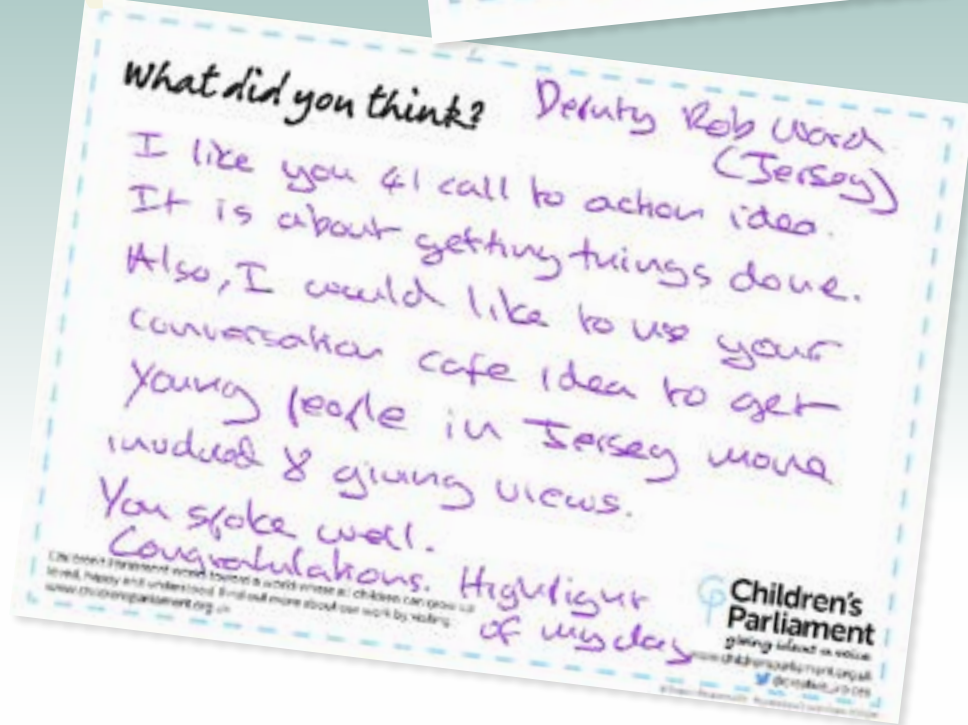
A key focus of COP26 was engaging young people from across the world in its delivery – a clear reflection of the remarkable role young people are playing in driving and demanding climate action at the local, national and global level, and the need for diverse, intergenerational dialogue. It was clear in the run up to COP26 that less attention, however, was being given to younger children's engagement in this critical milestone in the global response to tackling the climate emergency.

In light of this, Children's Parliament received funding from Globe Legislators and the Scottish Government COP26 division to create opportunities for younger children up to 14 years of age to participate and engage in COP26 in-person and remotely. This also enabled the Investigators to share and amplify their experiences of being the first children to have been involved in a climate assembly to a global audience. International engagement and interest in the children's contribution to Scotland's Climate Assembly increased significantly as a result of the platform they had at COP26 to discuss their experiences and ideas.

We have also rightly been challenged by Assembly members to go further and faster, and we will continue to consider these recommendations as we develop our approach in Scotland. Meeting members from the Assembly and Children's Parliament was a highlight of my time at COP26, and I am grateful to them all for their hard work and commitment.

MICHAEL MATHESON, MSP AND CABINET SECRETARY FOR NET ZERO, ENERGY AND TRANSPORT¹²





Globe Legislators COP26 Summit

The Moment was supported by Globe International, who hosted the Globe Legislators COP26 Summit in Scottish Parliament on 5th and 6th November 2021. Globe International invited Members of Children's Parliament and Scottish Youth Parliament to share stories of The Moment with parliamentarians from across the world in attendance. Children from across Scotland dialled into watch the children address parliamentarians on their behalf.

My favourite moment of COP26 was realising I was in the same room as adults from around the world who were important. I felt proud that my whole school was watching the Parliament event, even though I found it embarrassing at first. Once I was in there, I felt proud of myself for being there.

INVESTIGATOR, AGE 11, CLACKMANNANSHIRE

As well as the climate surgeries that took place during The Moment and the Globe Legislators COP26 Summit, the Investigators were amongst the youngest participants in COP26 within the official 'Blue Zone' in Glasgow and online fringe events. These are some of the events children contributed towards:

An interactive discussion on children's access to climate justice

Hosted by Child Rights International Network and the Children and Young People's Commissioner Scotland: Ben, Mollie and Maya speaking with Mikiko Otani, Chair of the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child¹³.



Artist interpretation of the webinar, Raphael from Hawk and Mouse

New York Times Climate Hub



Margaret, Seumas and Atholl speaking at the New York Times Climate Hub¹⁴.

My favourite moment of COP26 was getting international recognition through the New York Times. I have just come such a long way. I used to just be a normal P7. Now I am confident, and a Member of Children's Parliament!

INVESTIGATOR, AGE 12, WESTERN ISLES

Global Compassion Initiative

Nadia, Ayesha and Tyler speaking at the Global Compassion Initiative conference hosted by University of Edinburgh and Stanford University.



Nadia and Tyler in the Blue Zone

As 12- and 13-year olds, Nadia and Tyler were two of the youngest official observers at COP26 in the Blue Zone, joining Assembly members to share their experiences being involved in Scotland's Climate Assembly. On the train home, they recorded their reflections on the day with Katie which became a blog posted by the Scottish Government's Open Government team¹⁵. Here is an excerpt from the conversation:

Tyler: When we arrived at the COP26 blue zone, I was thinking 'this is very busy!'. It was really surreal. At first, I thought there wouldn't be a lot of people because of how hard it was for us to get passes to get into COP, but there were a lot of people there. This did make me happy as it showed how many other people are helping with the climate crisis.

Nadia: The only thing that made me feel bleh was that there weren't many children, as that's what we're doing right now – we're trying to speak up for children and get more children involved!

Katie: How would you make COP26 more child-friendly?

Tyler: There was a lot of language that I could understand but if there were going to be more children there in the future, then they should use more simplistic words. They were using pretty long words.

Nadia: In the future if COP26 wants to involve children, you could have children's spaces or area where there are fun events for children and child-friendly information on what adults are speaking about. That would be pretty cool. I think children should be involved in COP26 and big events like it so people can hear new perspectives, new voices and new ideas from children.

PART 3:

WHAT WE HAVE LEARNED



WORKING TOGETHER: A CHILDREN'S RIGHTS-BASED APPROACH



UNCRC, Article 42: All children and adults must know about these rights

Across our work, Children's Parliament takes a children's rights-based approach, meaning our work is guided by principles, and furthers the realisation, of the rights of all children as outlined in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC).

Throughout the Climate Assembly process, we used creative, participatory, digital and play-based methods to support children to express their views, ideas and experiences and to develop the skills, knowledge and confidence to take their calls to action to relevant authorities and decision makers. In the children's Climate Assembly report, you can read about the investigation methodology. Find this at climatechangemakers.scot along with adapted versions of the materials and activities created for this work.

We began this journey with little knowledge or expectation of where it would take us. With this being the first time under-16s have been directly involved in a climate assembly, we had no blueprint to work from. We therefore drew from our previous experience designing and delivering child participation programmes, projects and consultations, creating a model that, whilst staying close to the 'adult' Climate Assembly process, would allow us the creativity and flexibility to be guided by the children as it evolved. From the beginning, we worked closely with the Climate Assembly secretariat – learning from one another throughout the process.

Drawing from feedback from the children and adults involved, here are some of the things we have learned, the challenges we faced and what we would do differently.

It's all about relationships

UNCRC, Article 12: Children have the right to be listened to and taken seriously

Children's Parliament had not worked with any of the children involved in this work before and, during the pandemic, had the challenge of establishing and nurturing relationships with the children entirely online and remotely from day one. Children told us that the time and energy we put into nurturing positive relationships with them helped them to gain confidence and trust in sharing their views and ideas as the process evolved.

When we started in the Children's Parliament, Katie and Sandra were so kind to us. They really helped us out and made us feel comfortable which made us more confident about what we actually had to think about. They made it really clear...and that really mattered to me. I felt welcomed and I felt listened to which improved our Calls to Action.

INVESTIGATOR, AGE 13, WEST LOTHIAN

It's easier for children to speak to an adult they have a bond with. It means stronger ideas.

INVESTIGATOR, AGE 11, HIGHLANDS

People think I'm confident but I'm not that confident inside myself. Children's Parliament has helped me to feel like I can speak out about my feelings and share my views.

INVESTIGATOR, AGE 12, WESTERN ISLES



One of the most significant impacts on the participating children has been the development of friendships and new connections, across Scotland and across generations. Despite the challenges of the digital, remote process, it opened up significantly more opportunities for meaningful, national deliberative engagement, than if we had brought everyone together in person at every stage.

Given the COVID-19 restrictions in place, we relied heavily on partnerships with the children's schools to deliver the work and support the children's participation remotely.





I would also like to take this opportunity to thank Katie and Sandra for all the time and effort that you have put into the project. I have noticed a marked difference in each child; all three children have gained so much from the project: greater self-belief, confidence and a better self-awareness of the issues impacting us all. They have loved the zoom meetings and have been super keen to share their work with the rest of the class. Many thanks for affording us the opportunity to be part of your fantastic project.

TEACHER

As a teacher, I'm obviously used to teaching. But I was taught a lot - so much - by the Investigators in all the Zoom meetings. As for the participating children from my school, I would never have got to know them like that without having had this experience.

TEACHER

Finally, our relationship with Scotland's Climate Assembly Secretariat was critical to the success and outcomes of this work. From the beginning, the entire Secretariat committed to ensuring the children's participation was meaningful at each stage and took every opportunity to amplify the children's investigation findings and calls to action with decision-makers as well as with their wider network. The Secretariat also ensured that Scottish Government provided a child-friendly response alongside the official response and supported the children's participation in the final Climate Assembly weekend.

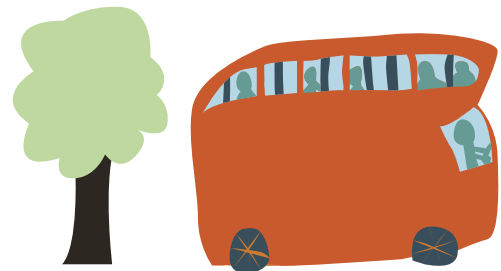
Never underestimate the power of an online dance party or a toy hedgehog.

UNCRC, Article 31: Children have the right to play and relax

A children's right-based approach puts children's wellbeing at the heart of any process. With the climate emergency posing such immediate threats and anxiety for the future, and in the context of the pandemic, it was our primary concern that children felt emotionally supported, informed and hopeful at every stage of the process. We purposefully adopted a positive and empowering tone for the children's investigation and provided climate anxiety and safeguarding guidance developed with climate psychologists for teachers involved.

They are the ones we all need to protect and provide a safe future for and to educate in how they can help but not add any fear in doing so.

ASSEMBLY MEMBER, WEEKEND 8 RESPONDENT'S SURVEY



Climate Changemakers Playlist

Boogie Wonderland – **Earth, Wind & Fire**

Move on Up – **Curtis Mayfield**

Reels: Chasing Squirrels, Lord of the Dance – **Gerry Conlon, Seamus O'Sullivan**

Western Isles – **Peat and Diesel**

Celebration – **Kool & The Gang**

Happy – **Pharrell Williams**

Can't Stop the Feeling! – **Justin Timberlake**

I'm on My Way – **The Proclaimers**

Rockin' Around the Christmas Tree – **Brenda Lee**



As facilitators, this also meant we had to get creative to make sure the online Investigator calls stayed engaging, hopeful, fun and interactive, especially in the 2021 winter lockdown with the ups, downs and uncertainty of isolation and home schooling/working. Here are some of the ways we kept things light and playful:

Creating and posting monthly activity boxes with 'missions' to the children at home and in school (find out more at climatechangemakers.scot)

Sending Brochan (the team mascot) to each of the Investigators' schools and homes and sharing photos and stories of his adventures

Having treasure hunts around our houses during the calls

Making and sharing artwork together on calls

Attempting to translate party games into Zoom (often with much laughter!)

Dance parties



I was surprised they all continued to participate during lockdown, so they were motivated and confident enough to join in on their own merit.

TEACHER

The adults had a lot to learn from the children especially in terms of their learning process it was fun and they had a brighter outlook than the adults. Plus next assembly a mascot and crazy dancing is a necessity.

ASSEMBLY MEMBER, WEEKEND 8 RESPONDENT'S SURVEY

A very special treat that we do practically every single week is called the dance party. One of the adults plays some music and if I'm starting then I will do a dance move, and everyone can do that dance move and then I will call out who I want to do the next dance move. If you don't want to do it, that's fine. Just say pass. It's volunteer-al. It's an option. You don't have to do it if you don't want to. If you don't feel like shaking your...if you don't feel like shaking on the dance floor then that's fine.

INVESTIGATOR, AGE 12, WESTERN ISLES

Design matters

UNCRC, Article 17: Children have the right to information

Children have the right to accessible, age-appropriate information, and this was a key element of our process as we had to accurately translate the evidence, content and information being presented to Assembly members into simplified language, and creative, colourful and fun formats. We worked with 8 Million Stories, an Edinburgh-based creative agency, to bring the materials to life and ensure our materials were from ethical, sustainable sources. Even the physical boxes posted to the children were repurposed in activities. The Investigators liked that the designs were not 'babyish' and felt excited and proud to see their own artwork included.

The packs arriving in the post made our pupils feel special and appreciated.

TEACHER

Time is key (and always have a plan B, C, D and E...)

I really like what you did altogether but for next time I wish we were out of the pandemic so we could do it in person. You can't change that obviously, so it isn't what you need to do.

MEMBER OF CHILDREN'S PARLIAMENT, AGE 11, FIFE

The COVID-19 pandemic presented us with limitations and challenges. Firstly, restrictions meant we were unable to deliver the significant majority of the work with children in-person.

Whilst we did work with the circumstances to the best of our ability, we would, of course, have loved to have been able to work with all 113 children in person. To make sure everyone could be safe, healthy and happy, we also had to often rethink and redesign our plans with the children – which left us all feeling disappointed and frustrated at times.

What worked well was that we were still able to have the chance to participate despite all the ongoing restrictions. It meant we did not have to worry about things changing to continue to be a part of it. The children could also continue during lockdown.

TEACHER

The rapidly changing situation made it difficult to plan and to manage the MCPs expectations and hopes...I appreciate COVID and political decisions made this almost inevitable, but it was difficult to juggle whilst meeting the needs of the other learners in the class.

TEACHER



The COVID-19 pandemic has warped our sense of time in all sorts of ways and there can be a misunderstanding that remote, online participation and engagement work with children takes less time than in-person. Although travel time is reduced, the planning, designing, coordinating, communicating, delivering, recording, reflecting and analysing that goes into making children's participation meaningful and effective – online, offline and in a hybrid form – takes significant amounts of time. Building trusting relationships with children as well as their parents, carers and schools takes time. Compared to working with adults and older young people, working with children requires longer lead in times and wiggle room for plans changing.

The pre-determined timeframe and pace set for both Scotland's Climate Assembly and COP26 made it challenging at times for us in terms of delivery and ensuring the children were not overwhelmed by the sheer volume of activity, and in terms of ensuring all our activity, communications and materials were as fully accessible as we would have liked. For example, had time and resources allowed, we would have developed early years, large-print and Gaelic versions of the materials and outputs.

Intergenerational participation is the way forward!

If we could jump in a time machine and whizz back to October 2020, quite simply, we would have increased the opportunities for intergenerational activity and dialogue between children and adults from the beginning.

I found their contributions really emotional as the kinds of things they were doing were the kinds of things I did at their age in school, hopeful that it would make a change. I am genuinely frightened that they will be in my position in 10 years and angry that it has been passed on to my generation and theirs. Seeing how much they care motivates me to make sure these issues don't become theirs, while it is upsetting that it has been passed to my generation, I want it to end with us.

ASSEMBLY MEMBER, WEEKEND 8 RESPONDENT'S SURVEY

It often felt like a race against time. The amount of work for us and the children sometimes felt crazy, but it remained joyful, and fun.

CHILDREN'S PARLIAMENT PROJECT WORKER



When I was about their age, I learned that a local river was polluted, but it wasn't at one time. I remember still, as an old man, the pain I felt as a child knowing I'd been robbed of something. That reminds me of what these children are facing. They're facing a climate where they may well be robbed. I thought the connection between generations, my generation was aware of it, but we continued to live our lives and benefit from the exploitation, and now they have to pay the price. There's a terrible unfairness in that. It's a generational unfairness. So, it really is important for old and young to cooperate together, the same as we were shown in that video with David and Maya, to try to bring change.

**ASSEMBLY MEMBER, CHILDREN'S PARLIAMENT
PLENARY, WEEKEND 8¹⁶**

Increasing intergenerational activity would also have included expanding the age of participating children beyond the 7-14 age group we worked with to ensure representation from under 7s and 14, 15 and 16 year olds. A combination of factors, including COVID-19 school 'bubble' restrictions in place, meant this was one of the limitations of this work. Children themselves reflected on this in their evaluation of the process:

Maybe we could have involved more younger people to see what they think about climate change.

**MEMBER OF CHILDREN'S PARLIAMENT, AGE 11,
PERTH AND KINROSS**

Listen to a wide variety of people. Listen to children's thoughts and ideas.

INVESTIGATOR, AGE 11, HIGHLANDS



A FINAL WORD FROM THE INVESTIGATORS



In the children's report to Scottish Parliament laid in June 2021, the Investigators created a joint letter calling on adults to take urgent climate action. One year on, as the Climate Assembly meets for the final time, here are their reflections and hopes for the future.

Children's Parliament is just a group of children. All of us are children and we just want to make a difference and have our voices heard. In Children's Parliament, we've met so many new people. We've made plenty of friends doing this and it's been really, really memorable. It's meant a lot being a Member of Children's Parliament, because we are deciding on our futures, and we want to be a part of changing it.

Children should be involved in decisions about the climate emergency because it's our future. It's a great thing that children have been involved in a climate assembly, but it shouldn't just be Scotland – it should be the whole world that involve us. We are people, we are humans so we need to say what we think should happen as well.

When adults actually listen to children, it makes us feel confident and happy. It makes us realise that adults do care about our futures.

We want our ideas and calls to actions to be taken forward in Scotland, so we can look back on this when we are older and feel proud.

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ABOUT CHILDREN'S PARLIAMENT

Established in 1996, Children's Parliament is Scotland's centre of excellence for children's participation and engagement. Our mission is to inspire greater awareness and understanding of the power of children's human rights and to support implementation of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) across Scotland.

Through our children's human rights-based, creative practice, we provide children up to 14 years of age from diverse backgrounds across Scotland with opportunities to share their experiences, thoughts and feelings so that they can influence positive change in their lives at home, in school and in the community. We use creative, participatory methods to support children to meaningfully engage in decision-making processes, as outlined in the UNCRC.

For more information, please contact: info@childrensparliament.org.uk

**To learn more, see our digital report at
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