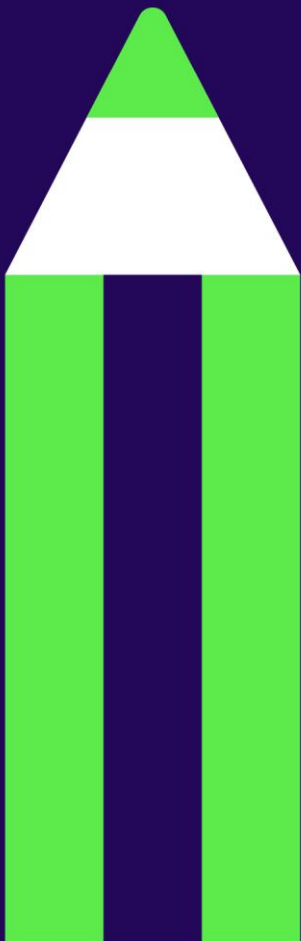
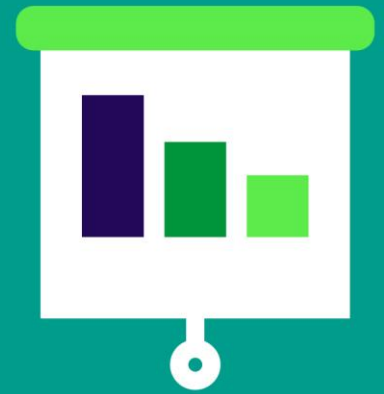


The Climate Connection



Youth Voice on Climate Action

Sri Lanka

#TheClimateConnection
www.britishcouncil.org/climate-connection

The Global Youth Letter on Climate Action is a call for action from young people globally, directly addressing the leaders attending COP26 – the 26th UN Climate Change Conference, in Glasgow, November 2021.

It is the result of a large-scale research exercise between the British Council and not for profit social enterprise Catalyst in Communities, who used a mixed methodology approach to garner the views, experiences and aspirations of 8,000 young people across 23 countries.

Aiming to be as representative as possible in terms of gender, background, location and socio-economic status, the research team worked through global COVID-19 restrictions to amplify the unheard voice of the climate debate: today's young people. Research for the report was carried out between January and March 2021.

The Global Youth Letter on Climate Action, and accompanying 8,000 Rising campaign, is part of the British Council's [The Climate Connection](#) programme, a global platform for dialogue, cooperation and action, connecting millions of people through shared solutions to the climate crisis.

Read the Global Youth Letter on Climate Action, the research report and join in the 8,000 Rising campaign here:

www.britishcouncil.org/climate-connection/get-involved/global-youth-letter

Sri Lanka's young people and climate action

The following letter and accompanying data represent the views and perspectives of young people in Sri Lanka.

It is a collective statement of all those who participated in the Global Youth Letter on Climate Action research in Sri Lanka and can be used as a starting point for leaders and policy makers to understand how to address young people's concerns in relation to climate change, and how they can use this untapped potential in to bring about climate action.

We hope the following letter inspires both young people and decision makers across Sri Lanka and beyond to work together to find sustainable solutions to climate action.



Dear COP26 leaders,

Ayubowan and Vannakkam!

We, the young people of Sri Lanka, are here to share our aims and aspirations for the future of our country, and our planet.

Sri Lanka is home to an array of natural habitats, from our impressive coastlines, to our highest point, Pidurutalagala, at 2,524 metres above sea level. Our culture combines modern and traditional elements, and we are well known for our ecological diversity. And we want to safeguard this for the future.

Those who contributed to this collective statement represent the unheard voice in the climate conversation. We include those with disabilities and those from ethnic minorities. We have different levels of education and employment. Nearly half of us are female, and half also come from rural areas.

Shockingly, 25 per cent of us believe we don't possess the skills to address climate change in our communities, or that we've learnt about climate change through our education. This needs to change, which is why we are here to collectively call for climate action!

How climate change affects us

We are all feeling the effects of climate change in our daily lives. Deforestation levels are alarming, and over one-quarter of us are deeply worried about the effects of climate change.

Through this consultation process, we have become more familiar with the UN Sustainable Development Goals and better informed about COP26.

For us, the three most important Sustainable Development Goals are:

1. SDG 4: Quality Education
2. SDG 3: Good Health and Well-Being
3. SDG 2: Zero Hunger.

A majority of us think that climate action needs to be mainstreamed into education, work and day-to-day life allowing us to get more meaningfully involved in climate interventions.

Our lives are being impacted by climate change every day, in real and visible ways, so we are here to show you how we can work together to find solutions.

Our commitment to climate action

We, as a diverse group, are prepared to act, but we cannot do this alone, and leaders and policymakers, neither can you. We need you to include us in meaningful ways and draw on our agency, passion, and readiness to not just mitigate, but quickly adapt to, the climate threats facing our country. Many of us have never participated in climate mitigation actions.



That needs to change, through youth-led interventions on addressing our biggest area of concerns, like deforestation.

What we demand from our leaders

First, 90 per cent of us recognise the importance of knowledge and education in tackling climate change, so you must provide opportunities for all young people within our society, so we can come together and find solutions.

You have the power to 'mainstream' youth climate action. You can better prepare us by giving us broader access to education, knowledge and skills, by appointing a youth climate ambassador for our nation, to encourage climate-action participation among our peers, and by supporting us in becoming leaders in our communities.

Through education and collaboration, together we can develop sustainable climate solutions, but only if you include and consult us in plans to address the major environmental challenges facing our country, and our planet.

Our voices

'Currently, our country suffers from huge deforestation, which has been used as a political prop by political parties in past elections. As governments change, little is done to address the damage to the environment. This is a major problem.' **Female, unemployed voice**

'Think ahead and begin planning for the future, so young people will be motivated to change issues within society.' **Rural voice.**

'Leaders should focus on the development of the country overall to enable opportunities for talented young people.' **Female voice.**

Our parting message

Ensure younger generations have the skills and knowledge to play a leadership role in taking action on climate change and empower and involve youth to take climate action into their own hands. With the right support, young people can develop projects designed to drive change and gain a diverse set of skills related to sustainability and climate action.

