

# OutRight

## World Children's Day Event

If you couldn't attend the celebration on 20 November 2023, then this document provides you with an overview of the event, outlining the presentations and providing an example of some of the brilliant questions discussed on the day.

This year's event included learning about youth involvement in climate adaptations in the Philippines and in Mozambique, menti polls and a presentation from a Rights Respecting School, Graeme High School in Falkirk, who joined us to present the local actions they've been taking in their community before answering lots of enthusiastic questions from the audience.

The event also included a lively Q&A on climate adaptation with UNICEF UK's Senior Policy Advisor, Debora Leao who leads on climate advocacy, and Issy Booth, Youth Campaigns Officer.

### Graeme High School

The young people from Graeme High School explained that they are a part of The Green Team Eco Group and outlined how they have been **defending their rights** and **calling for action**. This is taking place within their schools and their wider community, with a focus on tackling a litter prevention plan. Alongside raising the profile of the Green Team Eco Group in their school, they have been speaking with local MPs to call for more bins in the local area and encouraging other schools to take part in local litter picks.

The young people from Graeme High School talked through why they have taken the steps to create change in their community, explaining that **the climate crisis is a child's rights crisis**. They explained: '**we are the children of the world, and this is the country in the world we are going to grow up in, so it's only right that the people who are living in it, whether that be children, and adults, and it's really important to exercise that it's adults as well, that we're all doing our part in protecting the planet**'.

They discussed how talking about climate change can often feel scary, but that they've focused on learning as much as they can about climate change and the actions that they can take - concentrating on the positive impacts they've made. They said: **'It's really important to celebrate our work as well, and we always, always say that if everyone focuses on their small bit to protect the planet, we can always make a change!'** – a motivating note to us all!

The young people continued to answer some questions from the audience:

The audience was interested in the Eco Group and how long it had been running. The young people discussed how they had signed up for a cross party working group, with politicians, local councillors and the community which inspired them to take action within their own school. The group now has 15 members, with monthly sessions where people who haven't engaged before are encouraged to come along and to act. When asked about how many events the Eco Group had been a part of, the young people referred to their first event – a litter pick in the park which happened with only a few members. They then reflected on the most recent event, which was during the school open day, where they had a stall and were able to talk about the action they've been taking.

A further question asked the young people what inspired them to act, and they explained how knowing that the climate crisis was happening, but also that there are immediate actions that young people can take inspired them to make a start.

As the young people themselves confirmed, **the climate crisis is a child rights crisis**, so they were asked what connections they would draw between their actions on climate change and their rights as children. The young people proudly announced, **'we've got a voice'**, and highlighted how article 12 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child was central to their work. They referenced Article 24 – **every child has the right to good quality health care and a clean environment**. The young people said the local community also had a better understanding of children's rights and explained how every month the right of the month is conveyed to parents and carers.

To finish, the young people were asked:

**‘What top tip would you give to all the student groups taking part in OutRight?’**

- **There is always somewhere to start, and any little thing you do will spiral into something great!**
- **Always take an opportunity and say exactly what you need so you’re heard!**
- **Don’t be scared!**

The next section of the event was an exciting Q&A session with UNICEF UK’s Senior Policy Advisor Debora. Before diving into the audience’s questions, Debora introduced herself, explaining that she works alongside the UK Government to advise them on climate change.

**Why is climate adaptation so important?**

Debora spoke firstly about the importance of reducing our climate footprint, and that we need to transition to a low carbon world. However, because some of the impacts of climate change have already been felt around the world, adaptation supports us to protect ourselves and nature. Debora highlighted that adaptation shows us solutions that are easy to do, such as having trees lining towns to create shade for hot days and is the smart thing to.

**What is UNICEF UK doing to help children around the world grow up safely in a changing climate?**

Debora told us that she was amazed at the work UNICEF is doing to ensure children around the world have access to healthcare and education, even in a changing climate. She spoke about the variety of work that UNICEF supports globally and explained how climate adaptations such as solar panels can ensure that hospitals have electricity even during a climate emergency. Debora highlighted that a big part of UNICEF’s work is to encourage young people to raise their voices and make change.

### **What inspired you to take action on climate change?**

Debora explained that she was originally inspired to take action on climate change as a child herself. She was born in Brazil and her family is from the Amazon region. As child Debora loved to play outside surrounded by the trees, but as a teenager she noticed that these trees had been removed due to construction. Debora noticed that there were not many young people talking about climate change so she started to use her voice to do so. It is important that all children and young people can call on decision makers so that they take action to protect children's rights and future generations.

### **What can children do to help tackle the climate crisis?**

Debora assured everyone that there are lots of things we can all do to tackle climate change, including children speaking with their parents and carers, and encouraging their schools to act. Debora always encourages people to learn more about climate change. There are lots of ideas in the OutRight resources too:  
<https://www.unicef.org.uk/rights-respecting-schools/outright-resources/>

However, it is also important that all children and young people can call on decision makers to encourage them to take action to protect children's rights and future generations.

### **Sometimes, talking about the climate crisis and the action we need to take can feel scary, so what do you do to remain hopeful?**

Debora has always been inspired by UNICEF's commitment to taking climate action, and how UNICEF works with young people to centre their voices. Debora makes sure that she takes time to reflect on the positive actions that we have already achieved. In addition, Debora highlighted that through the OutRight campaign, so many children and young people have been inspired to act on climate change.

Finally, Debora reminded everyone that **it's important to lean on the people around us, such as our friends and families for support and hope** – an inspiring way to end the Q&A session.