

Key U.K. Youth ESD Initiatives

[Brief prepared by Tammy Randall (UNECE Youth Delegate to the Steering Committee on ESD)]

In the lead up to COP26, many organisations throughout the U.K. have carried out youth-led and youth-focused initiatives. Below is a brief overview of some of the most prominent activities;

The Futures Forward Academy

- The FFA is a leadership academy in sustainable development for young people between the ages of 20-30.
- The Academy seeks to support UK/Gibraltar's next generation of leaders with the necessary capabilities, mindsets and networks to create a more positive and sustainable future.
- The various elements of the Academy programme comprise of workshop on themes such as 'Futures Thinking' and 'Purposeful leadership; Inspirator sessions with innovators and change leaders from across the international community;
- Young people are engaged in individual change projects designed to immerse participants in the most pressing issues and making a difference to their local community and the wider region.
- UNECE UK Government Focal Point, Prof Daniella Tilbury, established this programme in 2020 with support and facilitation from Tammy Randall, UNECE Youth Rep. This programme could extend beyond the UK to involve all UNECE member states.
- <https://youtu.be/hcmlF12cruM> <https://www.futuregenerations.gi/news/meet-our-future-makers-40>
<https://www.futuregenerations.gi/news/futures-forward-academy-30>

Students Organising for Sustainability

- SOS-UK is a student-led education charity focusing on sustainability. Their work spans across issues of social justice and wellbeing but has recently focused on embedding ESD into the higher education curriculum.
- High profile campaign which led to debates at the UK Parliament to advocate for legislation that supports ESD in higher education – advocating for climate education and internships in ESD
- SOS-UK hosted the Mock COP26 in light of the postponement of the COP26 talks last year. The online conference brought together over 330 youth delegates representing over 140 countries. It culminated with a global declaration to world leaders containing 18 policies covering 6 important themes; climate education, climate justice, climate-resilient livelihoods, physical and mental health, nationally determined contributions and biodiversity.
- <https://www.sos-uk.org>

Y7 2021

- The Y7 is the official youth engagement group for the G7. Each year they bring together young leaders from across the globe for a week long summit. The 2021 summit is being held in the U.K. later this year.
- The summit is chance to champion the youth voice at the highest levels and influence national and international priorities.
- The broad thematic areas for the 2021 G7 are climate and the environment; digital and technology; the economy; and health. UNECE UK Government Focal Point, is a keynote speaker and advisor Y7.

#iwill Campaign

- The #iwill campaign aims to make participation in social action the norm for young people under 20.
- Their 'Power of Youth Charter' provides a framework for organisations to empower more young people to shape decisions, take social action and make a positive difference.
- Signatories are required to outline the actions they will take to deliver on the commitments of the charter. This represents a public commitment to take meaningful action and support young people in becoming active citizens.