

#DECARBONIZE



#DECOLONIZE

COP 24



#DECARBONIZE:#DECOLONIZE

PROLOGUE

This paper is the culmination of work done by over thousands of students from 28 countries, in partnership with The Centre for Global Education, TakingITGlobal, Ocean Wise, Polar Bears International, and UNESCO ASPnet. Interacting asynchronously on a virtual classroom platform, students from around the globe came together to discuss climate change and decolonization as concepts that revolved in a complex relationship. From each of the 28 countries involved, students exchanged ideas through art, blogs, and video conferences, debating and discussing what should be done about climate change through the Talanoa framework with a focus on the Indigenous lens. Through our collaborations, we found that even in our diversity, climate change is impacting everyone. Power structures, in addition to the oppression of voices created through decolonization, presented themselves differently in each country, and yet are universal. The cumulative event of the project concluded when youth delegates from the different global lead schools around the world collaborated to represent and resonate the voices of the youth in their respective countries.

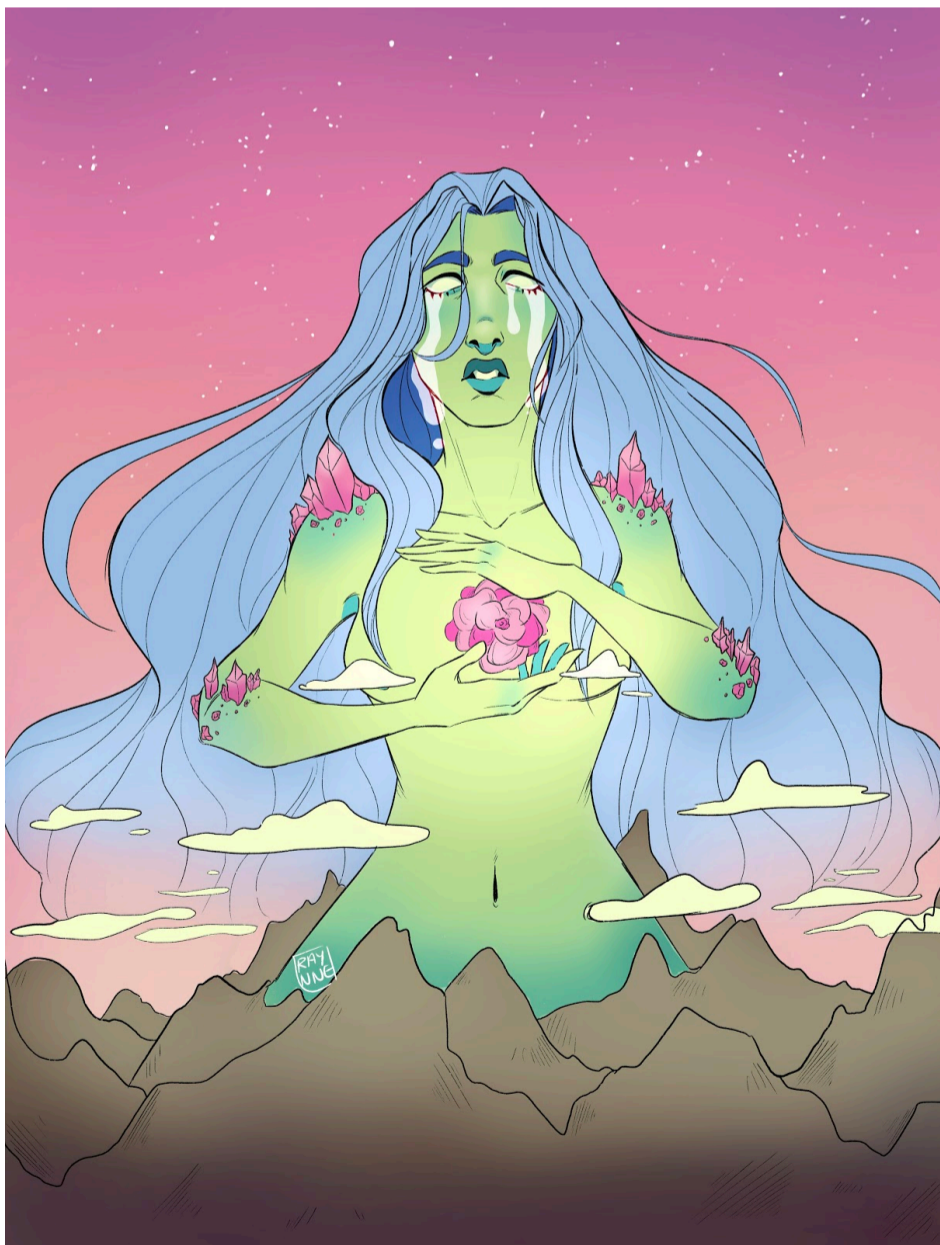
Throughout this project, we discussed our views on what the definition of the terms "Indigenous, equity, decolonize, and decarbonize" mean to us. We understand that the definition of Indigenous is different for every individual, group, community, and country. So we acknowledge that we will not come to a consensus about the definition of Indigenous. It is important to keep this term ambiguous because that is actually what makes it so powerful. It is a part of a person's identity and yet it is a wide term that can fit many different people or groups. Instead of patronizing Indigenous peoples and communities, or assuming that an outsider knows what is best for "them," we should work with, alongside - making space for voices, needs, and knowledge. This means that we all need to work together with Indigenous peoples to further climate discussions.

INTRODUCTION

We, the youth from around the world, are here to resolve what many generations have neglected and ignored. Young people are at their peak potential and with booming passion, we deserve to be heard and have our words genuinely considered. Climate change is happening everywhere and elements of colonization are still present in modern society; limiting Indigenous voices. We have recognized and put these points at the forefront, coming together to take initiative and prioritize the mindsets of our policymakers, leaders and older generations. Our previous attempts have been government-led but we hope to expand the leading group into a greater collective. This time around we need to learn from what we've done to go further than where we've been.

"One challenge every country encounters is that no one listening. Either people do not know about the problem or don't speak up about it. The only people that seem to care are the youth."

Aarthi, Student



Raynne Penconek, Canada

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WHO ARE WE?



We, the global youth representatives that constitute this project, are from 28 different countries. These 28 unique parts of the globe carry with them significant similarities and differences. Each of us, as individuals, identifies with different races, ethnicities, ancestries, indigeneity, and places of origin. While we are all tied together by these differences, we cannot avoid the fact that we come from different economic backgrounds and are provided with different opportunities in the future. We, together, are a wonderfully and profoundly diverse group. However, rather than setting us apart, these differences make us stronger and more connected to one another. We use this diversity as a tool to promote global cooperation and strength in terms of climate change and climate action.

This paper is a story of unity, persistence, and collective responsibility. Despite the different stories that we have individually, the bond we have formed together has helped us to understand each other.

So who are we? Our response is that we are all part of a single united community fighting against different kinds of discrimination and how these impact our abilities to move forward in the fight against climate change. The following identity charts are illustrations of our diversity and the commonalities that bridge us. This initiative, the Decarbonize: Decolonize project, has provided a means for us to express ourselves positively and identify potential pathways forward to climate change.

"It's a common saying that a picture is worth a thousand words and it certainly is, but in this context, it gives a person a voice, wherever in the world they may be."

Sarah, Australia

Participating Countries

- Australia
- Brazil
- Canada
- China
- Colombia
- Costa Rica
- Cuba
- Ghana
- India
- Indonesia
- Kenya
- Latvia
- Morocco
- Nepal
- Nigeria
- Palestinian Territories
- Peru
- Philippines
- Poland
- Slovenia
- Taichung
- Tanzania

Our global climate change project focuses on decarbonizing through the lens of decolonizing. We define decarbonizing as the removal or withdrawal of carbon emissions from the atmosphere. This implies generating less carbon in communities. Decolonizing to us is to champion the culture and way of life of Indigenous peoples and communities, and to provide legitimacy, space, and position for these voices, knowledge, and ideas. Due to widespread political marginalization, as well as physical and social displacement, Indigenous voices are not always heard. The process of decolonization provides Indigenous peoples an opportunity to express what is needed, and non-Indigenous people the opportunity to listen to these needs. In this situation, non-Indigenous people are not assuming that they know what is needed, what is wanted, and what is important to Indigenous peoples.

We believe, representing both indigenous and non-indigenous communities, that it is impossible to find one definition for the term Indigenous. We have concluded that Indigenous can be used either as a noun or a verb, depending on the context. Indigeneity can refer to the connection to a specific land or location, refer to the descendants of natives of a specific country or relate to something entirely different based on the space, place, relationships, and communities you find yourself within. Instead of chasing the need to determine static, unchanging definitions of words, we need to understand that to make impactful climate actions we need to work together - regardless of identity or definition.

"It is important to listen to the Indigenous peoples of our countries, and we need to advocate for this if any change is wanted. Through being a part of this year's #Decarbonize: #Decolonize, we are already on the path to change, because as a whole, we have investigated and learnt more about the people of our lands. Each and every one of us can pass on and spread the knowledge we have attained,"

Chontelle, Australia

That said, it is not as simple as stating our desire to move beyond definitions. We also cannot ask Indigenous communities to carry the weight of combating climate change, especially since many were killed, deprived of land and rights, and not acknowledged as

an important part in our society. Moreover we cannot just forget the pain that the Indigenous people have gone through because of colonization. Although giving Indigenous people a platform to voice their opinion will be helpful, it will not fully address the issue that humanity is facing. We need to acknowledge that Indigenous groups have been disregarded and withdrawn, and so therefore we need to generate equity by providing support so that the Indigenous groups can have the same voice in climate discussions.

"All of [the] Indigenous voices are not valued nor incorporated as much as they should be. If we're trying to save the world why not listen to what those with the deepest connection to land have to say?"

Jocelyne, Canada.

While Indigenous values, beliefs, and practices are as diverse as each of the different groups themselves, their common roots in living on or close to the land are a way of life they would like to retain and pass along to their children and grandchildren. Many Indigenous communities have unique and distinct cultures connected with the natural world around them. In these communities, a traditional way of life acknowledges the importance of land and living in

harmony with and alongside it. For many Indigenous peoples, ideas of land often do not include property ownership, but instead involved a sacred relationship between people as well as land and water. These conceptions prioritize taking care of the land so that it is not destroyed, but honoured and cherished. However, we cannot ignore that there are some Indigenous communities that do not even have access to water, education, healthcare, or even their lands. In these communities, the priorities and abilities to focus on Traditional Environmental Knowledge (TEK), is superseded by the need to access basic necessities. Overall, Indigenous knowledge continues to be poorly recognized by most governments and citizens as valuable, which puts those communities and countries in an extreme disadvantage in finding solutions for climate change.

Indigenous groups from around the world all have unique perspectives as to how climate issues can be solved. These individuals and groups should not feel shut out from conversations or afraid of voicing their own points of view about climate change. Listening to multiple perspectives can only help us further understand the necessity for climate discussions. We see ourselves, youth from around the world, as the leaders of future generations to come, who believe that we can and will work to reduce the effects of climate change. We are inheriting this world and it is up to us and our communities to contribute our quota in making the world a better place.

Who are we? We are young defenders of the environment (decarbonizers), we are the voices of the Indigenous peoples (decolonizers), guided by all those people who have given their contribution, whether large or small actions, in favour of global integrity. We are combatants of our own will, who have invested our time in a cause that is necessary for today's world, with the aim of transforming the actions of those whose thoughts affect our world, because it's their thoughts that start change. In conclusion, we are: Me, you, him, her, us, we are all, we are the world. That's why: Save my planet, your planet, our planet, our Earth and the future.

"En conclusión, nosotros somos: Yo, Tú, Él, Ella, Nosotros, Somos todos, Somos el Mundo. Por eso: Salva, mi Planeta, Tu planeta, Su Planeta, Nuestro Planeta, La Tierra."

Lisvany, Cuba & Andres, Peru

We are young people with deep conviction, revolutionary ideas, undeniable passion and we distinguish the infinite faith in reaching our goals. If we as young people unite and raise our voices in combating climate change and environmental issues, if we insist on the decolonization of territories, and if we involve the greatest number of people willing to turn the world into a place of peace, natural, pure and sustainable; we'll get people to listen to us!



Students, Australia

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WHERE DO WE WANT TO GO?

We realize that the equity and justice among Indigenous and colonized communities must be recognized and included in government policies in order to develop feasible and effective climate change solutions. We, as a whole - Indigenous, colonizers, and settlers alike - must come together and acknowledge our differences and similarities to support each other in order to run our world together, hand in hand.

It is important to include all Indigenous communities in decision making regarding the future of the Earth, learning from Indigenous peoples and incorporating traditional environmental knowledge alongside scientific. To include Indigenous peoples in government decisions on climate change, it is necessary that those voices are placed in a position of greater effective power and can be heard. Therefore, those in power (with the most privileged voices) need to take a step back. By opening enough space, and breaking down societal barriers, Indigenous peoples gain opportunity, representation, and effective power in discussions and decisions. By prioritizing equity among our collective populations, we can work together with multiple, diverse, and even conflicting but united strategies and knowledge in order to find viable solutions to real world climate change issues as a whole instead of becoming separated into fragments. While becoming a whole community may involve some stepping forward and others stepping backward in the societal power hierarchy, by achieving this balance of equal voices, the effects of decolonization will gradually become less devastating as we will begin to collectively work together with each other's communities. At the end of the day, we are people who belong



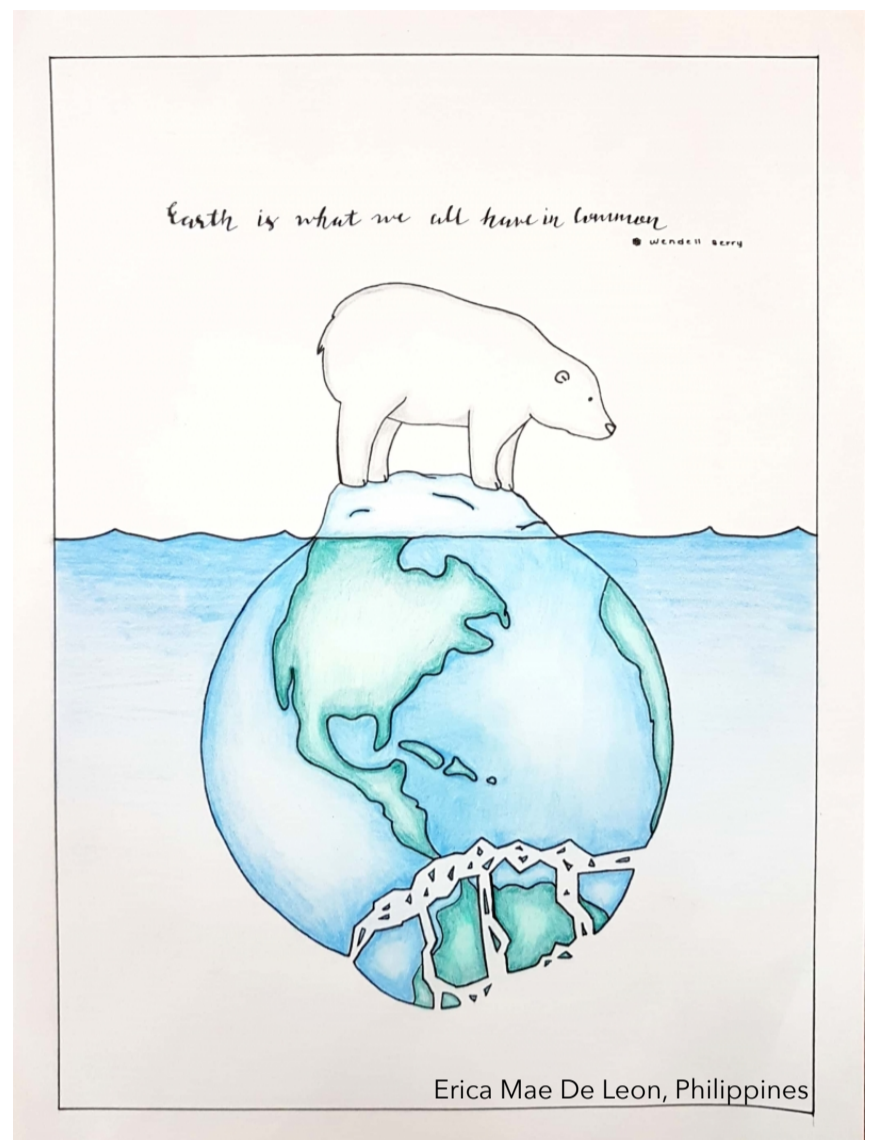
to the same world and we all depend on its well-being for a better future, or rather, a just future.

Despite Article 26 of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), which states: "Indigenous peoples have the right to the lands, territories and resources which they have traditionally owned, occupied or otherwise used or acquired," Indigenous communities around the world are still displaced by governments, as they focus on industrialization and the growth of their economies. This results in infrastructure and pipelines being built on Indigenous lands without the consent of the Indigenous inhabitants. For instance, the Trans Mountain Pipeline, in Canada, that was completed in 1951. In this example, 518 km of pipeline was built across the Secwepemc territory over First Nations that were never ceded or relinquished through treaties. At the time, it was illegal for Indigenous peoples to politically organize or hire lawyers to advocate on their behalf - a position that has now changed. Things such as the Trans Mountain Pipeline poisons Indigenous lands, the water, and the food, which may be the main source of diet and nutrients. The Indigenous communities contribute the least to greenhouse gas emissions, and unjustly are affected by climate change the most. The government and all communities, mainly Indigenous communities, must come together for a general consensus by focusing, acting, and investing in a more sustainable earth.

"Based on our discussions, proper information dissemination and cultural representation are needed to formulate effective policies and action projects for the benefit of all, especially the cultural minorities."

Richard Muñiz, Philippines

The government within each and every country has a vital role to play in ensuring where we want to go in terms of feasible climate solutions. Although we as constituents cannot constantly rely on our respective governments, there are certain things the government



must acknowledge and include before we can begin implementing climate friendly strategies.

Therefore, we would like to see:

- All forms of diversity to be included in governments for decision making
- The inclusion of Indigenous groups in climate change research and solutions
- Representation that reflects the real social groups of countries (race, colour, ancestry, place of origin, religious beliefs, gender, gender identity, gender expression, age, physical disability, mental disability, marital status, family status, source of income, and sexual orientation, etc)
- Collaboration between governments, public populations, Indigenous and NGO's to find climate solutions



Adrianna Śmiałek, Katowice, Poland

“Learning from the land is something we can't learn anywhere else and we have to know how to read it. Therefore, is a form of literacy because you have to know how to read the land to know how it behaves and coexists with everyone and everything.”

Mónica J, María Jesús, Costa Rica

Aiming at the education of the global community about the effects of climate change, we, the youth, want to mandate education around the real facts about climate change in our school curriculum across the globe. We want to educate youth about climate change because they will be more aware of their actions, and therefore will be more mindful of their impact on the environment. If present and future generations are not aware of their impact on the environment, then the climate conditions will continue to worsen because of the lack of knowledge in communities. Without every human on Earth onboard in combating climate change, we cannot truly diminish the effects of climate change as a whole. The basis for general change and one of the most important foundational aspects is education.

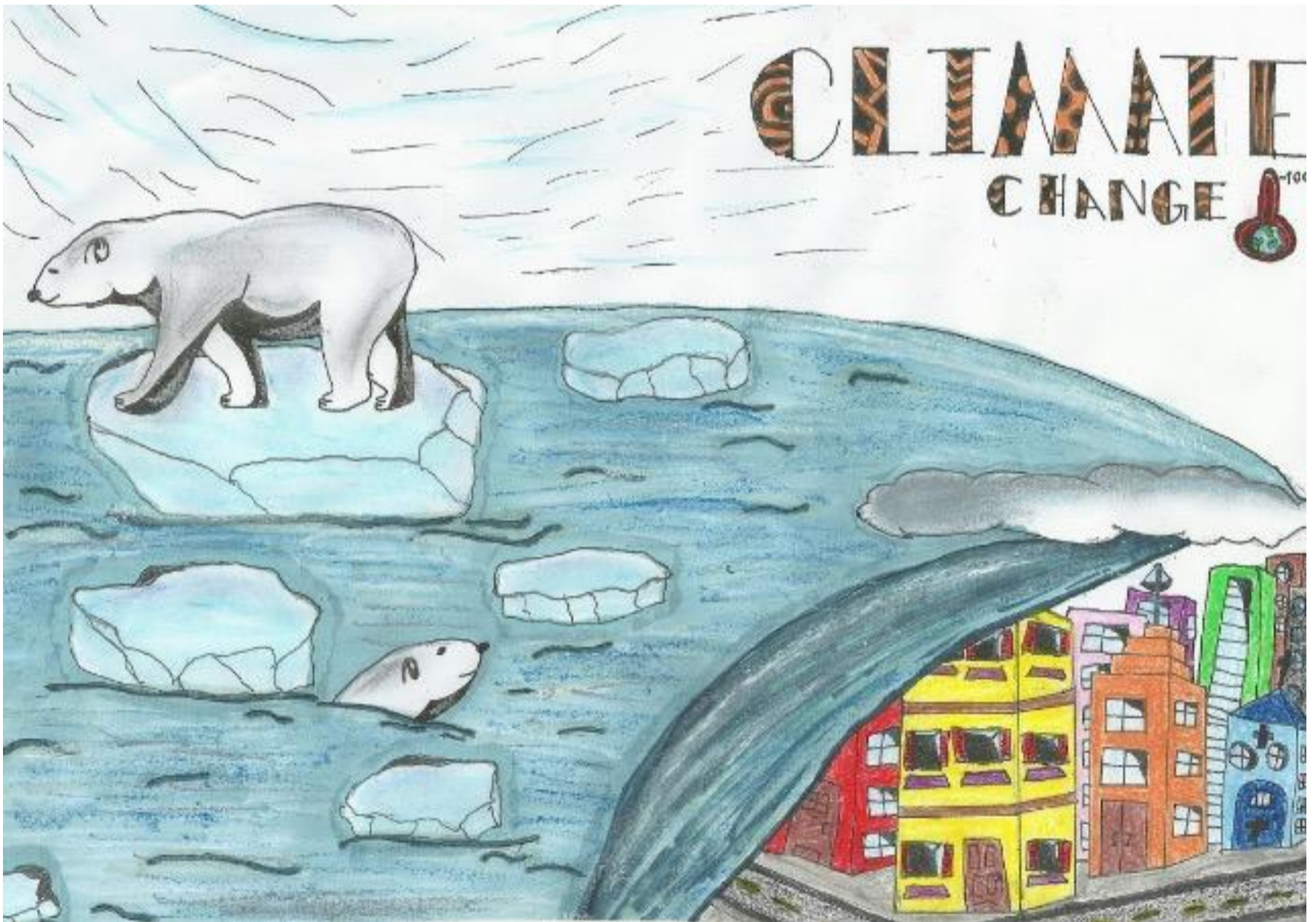
Educating also encourages actions rather than simply being complacent. If we all become active members of society, with the persistence to learn and create solutions, then education develops into a successful tool. Awareness and action progresses work better together when the people of the world, young and old, are well educated. To change this current situation and act on our mission of decarbonizing and decolonizing, we want to educate youth about climate change.

Climate change curriculums from schools participating in COP24 examples:

- St. Joseph's Academy, Philippines: has a Disaster Readiness and Risk Reduction class integrated in its K-12 curriculum aimed at educating students about disasters and the effects of climate change in the Pacific.
- Pimlico State High School, Australia: has a global studies class that focuses on climate change and Indigenous rights.
- Queen Elizabeth High School, Canada: is a UNESCO ASPnet school and has a global citizenship (global connect) class. It also has an innovation course that focuses on finding sustainable agriculture practices that get implemented in the school.
- Argyll Centre, Canada: has partnered up with Climate Justice Edmonton to combat climate change together and get students involved in the movement within the community.
- Cuba: a course is provided to all the high school students that serves as preparation to confront meteorological phenomena and other disasters.
- College of Sciences of Huánuco, Peru, there are different collaborative experimental projects with the environment, and among other activities, students

try to locate and reduce environmental deficiencies.

Although the Decarbonize: Decolonize project and learning platform has already supplied us with so much new knowledge, the possibilities of learning are endless as long as the people of our society have a will to learn. The United Nations stated in a *2018 Revision of Urbanization Prospect* report that 55% of the world's population lives in urban areas, and this is expected to increase to 68% by 2050. It is the present trend that as the years go by, the world becomes progressively more urbanized. With this expectancy of a high increase in urbanization, the prospect of our planet reaching its point of no return is looming closer each day. What is equally important, is the education and action which must be implemented at an international level in order to maintain our one and only home: Earth.



Caio Krause Conradt, São Paulo, Brazil



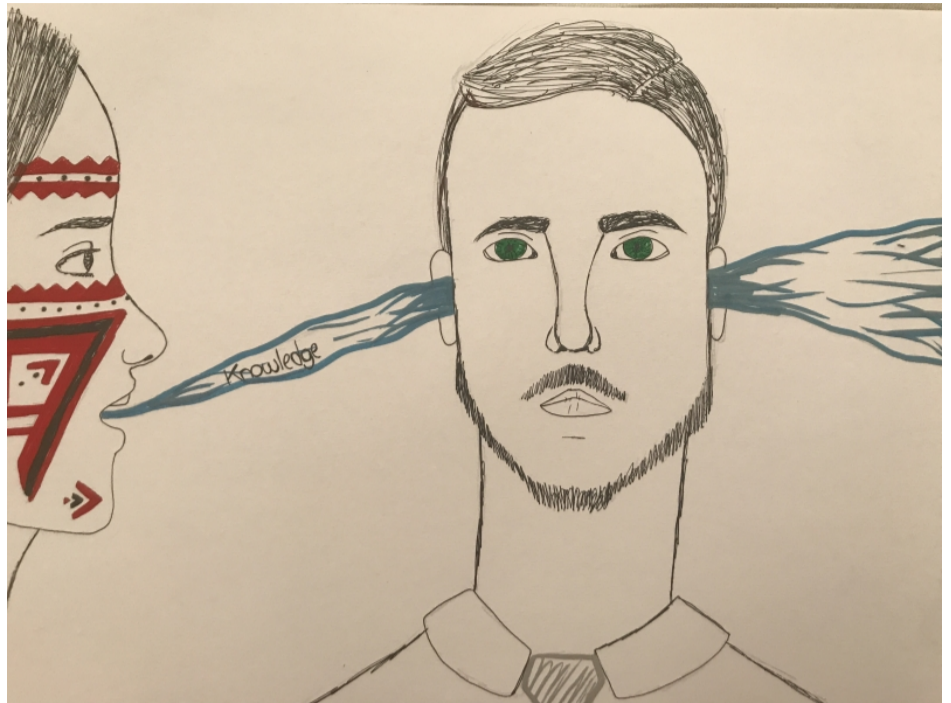
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HOW DO WE GET THERE?

Our world has been stuck on the 'where do we want to go?' mindset for a long time, unable to design and implement actions for combating climate change and colonization. We as active global citizens need to be courageous and put ourselves out on the line, transforming our inspirational words into tangible action. We encourage everyone: Our governments, our schools, our communities, our Indigenous peoples, and our youth to take a stand and ignite the flame that will burn down our barriers and challenges as an international community. In this section, we focus on all the ideas of what we want and how we will act. Will we continue to let these thoughts be words simply written on a piece of paper, or will these ideas be implemented and transformed into the change of our future?

1. Focus on the Inclusion of Diverse Perspectives

Traditional Environmental Knowledge, also referred to as Traditional Ecological Knowledge, is defined as the, “local observational knowledge of Indigenous peoples about wildlife species and other environmental phenomena”. It incorporates thousands of years of history, society, spirituality, and culture that must be considered for a broad understanding of possible climate change action. Part of our main



Melissa, Brazil

objective is to empower the voices of our Indigenous people, creating a platform for them to express their perspectives and share their knowledge. A call to action that echoes Article 15.2 of UNDRIP, which says, “States shall take effective measures, in consultation and cooperation with the indigenous peoples concerned, to combat prejudice and eliminate discrimination and to promote tolerance, understanding and good relations among indigenous peoples and all other segments of society.”

The preamble to the Paris Agreement includes, “Acknowledging that climate change is a common concern of humankind, Parties should, when taking action to address climate change, respect, promote and consider their respective obligations on... the rights of indigenous peoples.” As global citizens, we must both listen to and involve our Indigenous people in decisions and actions combating climate change while making a conscious effort to provide space that may allow Indigenous peoples to rebuild environments and cultures that were destroyed by colonization. For example, the Western Arnhem Land Fire Abatement or WALFA project in the Northern Territory of Australia, employs the local Warddeken, Adjumarllal, Djelk, Mimal and Jawoyn Indigenous groups to conduct controlled burn offs on bush fire prone land. The project combines new technology with the traditional knowledge and practices of the local Indigenous people to reduce the risk of bushfires, lower net CO₂ emissions by 40% and benefit the Indigenous communities (ConocoPhillips Australia). Similar programs could be mimicked or scaled to a national or even international scale, demonstrating how the utilization of Traditional Owner Knowledge leads to both effective and feasible climate change action and the rebuilding of Indigenous environment and culture.

It is time for the voices of young people around the world to be heard and considered, as we will inherit the world of tomorrow and it is us that will feel its effects the most. We, young people, bring fresh ideas and perspectives to the discussion, suggesting new and different actions. The New Zealand Youth Group Generation Zero is an example of how united and dedicated youth can collaborate to help find climate solutions. The group was founded in 2013 and is aiming to introduce a Zero Carbon Act that will make New Zealand carbon neutral by 2050 in order to meet the targets of the Paris Accords. These young people have already brought passionate and innovative thinking to the issue of climate change, showing the implications of how further youth involvement would help the world decarbonize and decolonize.

“The perspectives of Indigenous knowledge are priceless but often disregarded by our countrymen.” -

Tracy Cajuday, Philippines

2. Invest in Education

Awareness about climate change is essential for the world and local communities. While a global survey that we conducted showed that 68.6% of respondents agreed that climate change is impacting me/ my family/ school/ community/ city/ province/ country; 23.6% were neutral or undecided, leaving 7.8% saying that climate change has no impact. It is vital that all communities are aware of its devastating impacts. By educating people about climate change, they too will become more aware about the world that we need to protect.

Educating the youth will play a major factor in the continuation and increasing awareness of climate change since some schools already play a role in climate change awareness. In our global youth survey, 62.5% of respondents are moderately or extremely familiar with TEK because of school. 23.6% neutral, so 14% not at all aware. Moreover, in São Paulo, Brazil, there is a positive change movement already becoming implemented by Colégio Magno (Magno School), which is called Copo Zero (Zero cup). However, this isn't incorporating the wider scope of youth on our planet. We need to include climate change education around the world, which includes taking a step further to implement projects and initiatives such as this one on a global level.

“St. Joseph's Academy here in the Philippines have collectively thought out that traditional and indigenous knowledge can be better integrated into our climate change solutions through education and proper information dissemination.”

Students, Philippines

Education can be included by promoting the teaching of climate action practices to younger children in institutions such as primary schools and kindergartens. Practices including, picking up rubbish, reusing and recycling, walking or riding to school, planting gardens and creating composts create healthy climate oriented habits. This education could also be implemented in both middle schools and high schools where students can learn about the dangers of carbon emissions and the effects of climate change in their country and countries other than their own. The culmination of these environmental practices and learning can eventually lead to implementation of carbon neutral schools. Being carbon neutral implies that there are net zero carbon emissions emitted from the school.

The youth of today will soon become the leaders of tomorrow. Educating the youth about the negative effects of climate change will lead to a progressively more educated and well-rounded society when it comes to climate change awareness. More youth will be able to help combat this worldwide problem with the accumulation of climate change knowledge.

Art is arguably, one of the most influential platforms around the globe. Everywhere we go, art can be seen on walls, in parks, cars, streets, and so much more. It is a universal language. Therefore, the use of art by different communities globally will be a powerful tool in our journey of reducing the impacts of climate change by spreading awareness. Not only that, but we can reuse materials that would otherwise be harmful if simply disposed of and transform them into art installations.

For example, in India, there is a rock garden where sculptures are made from scrap metal and other materials which cannot be easily disposed of. Companies should look into supplying said materials to contemporary artists and Indigenous artists, without charging the artists for the supplies. There should be specific recycling zones located in different parts of our communities used solely for the act of recycling items that can be later used for art. By doing this, people will pay attention to the imminent fact that is climate change. Art is always seen; it is the forefront of our societies and is rooted in cultures, Indigenous or not. Instead of destroying, we must create.

Indigenous people have taken care of the land longer than anyone else, since they were the first peoples on the land. Some Indigenous communities have continued to incorporate their knowledge of their land by practicing their traditional methods, which have been more sustainable.

“Learning from the land is a form of literacy. It is not just learning about the land, it is learning from the land.”

Piper, United States of America

Governments around the world should implement a standard curriculum focusing on educating students, young and old alike, to learn from those who are Indigenous to the land. Policies such as this can positively influence people across our diverse world to connect more with the land and allow students to become aware of climate change, and ways we can combat it. However, some countries no longer have Indigenous communities, such as nations who were directly affected by imperialism and colonization. In this case, students can learn from those with traditional knowledge.

“Hopefully their voice will grow in the future, and we will realize how important they can become.”

Hayden, United States of America

People with traditional knowledge have lived in a specific place all their life and have seen it evolve. By attaining knowledge which has been passed down for centuries, or discussing climate change with someone more knowledgeable of what happened in the past, we as the youth can collectively learn as a whole on how to better understand nature. The understanding and wisdom that Indigenous peoples have about the environment would help the children and adolescents in schools understand climate change and its consequences.

3. Scale Up Government Involvement

Now that we have talked about knowledge at an Indigenous level and innovation at a youth level, it is time to discuss leadership at a governmental level. Climate change and colonization impact all aspects of communities, yet all policy making surrounding these issues are dependent on governments. Therefore to find effective and feasible solutions, we must combine the resources and authority of the government with the knowledge of the Indigenous people and creative, innovative, and passionate perspectives of the youth. The world has changed, and the priorities of the people have changed, so our leadership must also change. This is called for in Article 7.5 of the Paris Agreement, “5. Parties acknowledge that adaptation action should follow a country-driven, gender-responsive, participatory and fully transparent approach, taking into consideration vulnerable groups, communities and ecosystems, and should be based on and guided by the best available science and, as appropriate, traditional knowledge, knowledge of indigenous peoples and local knowledge systems, with a view to integrating adaptation into relevant socioeconomic and environmental policies and actions, where appropriate.” It will only be when we

“Why are we so focused on growing and developing if our world is slowly dying? We cannot stop a burning candle from melting by adding more wax. If the source of heat is not put off, the candle will only continue melting.” -

Lisa Ndegwa, Kenya

empower the voices of the youth and Indigenous we can reverse the effects of colonization and only when we incorporate those perspectives into our action can we combat climate change.

Carbon tax is a fee imposed on the usage of carbon-based fuels including coal, oil, and gas. This type of tax would be beneficial in eliminating much of the cause which climate change enacts on our planet. By implementing a universal law which limits the amount of carbon each country is permitted to emit each year, worldwide carbon emissions can slowly decrease as each country contributes to part of the cause in discharging less and less carbon yearly. The success of implementing a universal Carbon Tax would be determined if governments and companies alike are discouraged to use carbon because of the fee and would move instead to cleaner energy sources like solar, wind, and geothermal among others. Nevertheless, a carbon tax would not stop climate change by itself, it would need a boost from other policies. Yet, this universal law would be a regulator and a motivator. It would regulate us to avoid crossing the line of abusing our natural resources and motivate us to look into more eco-efficient processes.



Lisa Ndegwa, Kenya

