

"Adults Have Ruined Our World"

Climate change will have a massive impact on the lives of today's young people. What is our future going to look like, and what can we all do to help? Six reporters from Headliners went to investigate.

Adults are ruining the world we are growing up in. All over the world climate change is causing natural disasters and human tragedies and this is going to get worse. How is climate change going to affect us as the next generation?

One adult who is in a position to try and do something about the effects of climate change is Emily Thornberry, MP for Islington South and Finsbury. She has taken this responsibility seriously, so much so that she won the ePolitix award for **Environment MP of the Year 2006**.

When we interviewed Emily she told us: "Climate change will affect everyone - but it is the next generation of young people who stand to suffer most from the long term consequences of climate change.

"I know that a lot of young people understand this and are pushing the politicians of today to tackle this huge problem. I think politicians will listen to young people since they realise that the long term effects of climate change are particularly important to the next generation."

Emily also worries about how climate change will affect vulnerable people: "There are a number of things that will happen as a result of climate change - rising sea levels, disruption to food supplies, more volatile weather - and I think the most disturbing fact is that these problems will affect the poorest first."

She reckons that everyone needs to take responsibility for the problem: "We need to work together to tackle climate change. That means we all have to do our part as individuals, and the Government has to make sure that we are taking action at the national and international levels as well."

A word with the Woodcraft Folk

In order to find out more about how climate change will affect our futures, and what things we can do to help stop it, we met with young people from the youth organisation the Woodcraft Folk. Gloria, Emma and Kemi are on the steering group of the C-Change campaign, which the Woodcraft Folk has been working on all year to raise awareness about climate change.

Emma, who is 18, told us that "Young people should really be interested in climate change because our world is going to be next."

We wanted to know how our lifestyles would be affected: "Definitely we're going to have to make changes," she told us, "Maybe we'll be limited in terms of making less flights. We'll certainly have to develop new technologies and new ways of doing things."

Gloria, 14, also pointed out that "We get most of our food from overseas so if they can't grow it any more because of floods or droughts then it's going to mean we won't get such a wide selection and we'll be going back in time in the way of what food we get."

The impact of climate change can be much more serious than a change of diet for some people, as Emma made clear: "Climate change causes a lot of natural disasters, like hurricanes, volcanoes. And when these things happen it tends to hit the poor worst, and it hits them first, and that's what really affects me."

Do these young campaigners think that our politicians are doing enough to deal with climate change? Gloria didn't think so: "No, obviously they can do more. Because we don't have very strong rules about it at the moment, we just have guidelines which people don't really have to conform to - there should definitely be stronger rules."

Kemi, 17, agreed that "they should start tackling it more now, because it's going to be one of the main things that they're striving to do something about in the future," especially in terms of implementing the **Kyoto treaty**.

But Kemi did have some positive things to say: "It's quite interesting because there's the new **Climate Bill** that's been drafted and come through, I think that's one of the main steps - at least they're thinking about it now and taking action."

Emma was aware of the practical difficulties for politicians of dealing with such a big issue: "Politicians know that they're only going to be in politics for a short amount of time and climate change is a long-term issue, so sometimes it's very difficult for them to really get committed to it, but I think there are some politicians who really do care, and I think particularly the European Union has made a lot of progress."

It's clear that young people need to be aware of the possible consequences of climate change in the future. But what are the things they can do to help? Gloria told us "We're hoping to make people change their attitudes so they don't think of climate change as this great big, scary thing that no-one can do anything about. We think of it as something that we can all help with."

Kemi, for example, suggested "maybe putting a brick inside the cistern of the toilet - it sounds funny but actually it means that less water's used when you flush the toilet. Also turning down the thermostat in your house and wearing a jumper instead, and just switching off appliances, like your TV."

Emma said "the best thing you can do for yourself is just to find out more - the next generation shouldn't be denied the rights and resources that every previous generation has had," and she said young people have another role as well: "you can pressurise your parents and make them change their lifestyle too."

The adults today are hopefully listening and might try to stop driving cars, try to turn washing machines to 30 degrees and stop destroying the world we are growing up in. We don't know what's going to happen in the future - maybe it could become a new ice age or a heat wave. We don't know what will happen, but we should be prepared just in case. We are already ruining the world, and we should all see that by now.

About this article

Interviews were carried out by Maryam Akerbousse, 8, Gabby Ali Craig, 11, Jamie Craig, 13, Lizzie Diggins, 9, Gyasi Rogers, 10, and Ziyad Said-Wardell, 9.



3 comments

Enviro-Police

Sad. "Pressurise your parents and make them change their lifestyles..." Yes, since adults are incapable of making responsible choices themselves, we need to make sure we exploit a child's fear as a means to achieve our righteous political ends. Poor kids don't realize they're being used like prostitutes, except they don't get paid...

Jarek Peila from Bozeman, MT, USA, 27 February 2011 02:14

Kids Comments

These kids are well brain washed! We are going into a cooling age and here they are worried and concerned about global warming. Where I live it has to be COLD to snow. We are having record cold temperatures but that isn't in the media or told to these poor brainwashed little children! God created this world and ALL that is in it. HE is perfect and makes NO mistakes.....

Terry Jenkins from USA, 20 December 2009 23:33

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hey... remember that it's not all of the adults' fault, although they do create a substantial amount of the pollution today (caused by nuclear and other weapons, factories, etc.) there are things that we contribute to pollution as well. Next time when someone drops trash on the floor, help out by picking it up. Although this doesn't contribute directly to "global warming," doing this can allow us to lose certain habits that we would carry on to adulthood.

Steve from California, 30 December 1899 00:00

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