

## **Pipers Corner School HOPE Students: Focus on COP 27**

COP 27 (held on 20 November 2022) was the 27<sup>th</sup> annual Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. In this landmark event, COP 27 reached a historic decision to establish and operationalise a loss and damage fund particularly for nations most vulnerable to the climate crisis. This undertaking of international solidarity comes at a time of a worsening energy crisis, severe weather events and record greenhouse gas emissions. Pipers Corner School HOPE students shine an impassioned spotlight on the most vulnerable populations, and what we can do to make a change, now.

### **Global Warming**

Around half of the world's population is 'highly vulnerable' to the impacts of climate change, meaning they are already 15 times more likely to die due to floods, droughts and storms compared to regions with very low vulnerability. Our actions have a huge impact on the wider world and countries that have some of the lowest emissions are the worst affected and we need to fix this urgently. For example, the entire continent of Africa is responsible for under 4% of global emissions, however, African countries are having to deal with droughts, floods, and heat waves exacerbated due to climate change - all of which have chain effects that reduce total food security.

Since 2015, almost all of the countries in the world have committed to keeping the rise in global average temperature to 'well below' 2°C, and preferably 1.5°C, this is under the legally-binding Paris Agreement Treaty. This treaty takes a 'bottoms up' approach which means that every country can choose what steps they take to make this happen. However, under current pledges, our planet may see an above agreed 2.5°C increase in temperature by the end of the century.

The world's population was believed to have reached 8 billion in November 2022, according to the United Nations. John Vidal writes, "It should not be controversial to say a population of 8 billion will have a grave impact on the climate". Of course, our population numbers matter, and our population is still rapidly growing. If our population continues to increase to an additional 2-3 billion people this would have a monumental ecological impact on our planet.

### **Women in Education**

Due to the differing priorities of various governments, the educational needs of women and girls are being cast aside. Tackling the climate emergency could be hugely impacted by access to education and according to the UN Population Fund (UNFPA), 257 million women have an unmet need for proper contraception. This is evidenced by the fact that 50% of all pregnancies are unplanned and nearly 25% of women do not have enough agency to refuse sex. Lack of education for women and girls across the globe is an ongoing problem, as is their access to safe contraception.

Malala Yousafzai stated, "When girls are educated and they stay in schools, they get married later in their lives and then they have less children and that helps us to reduce the impacts of climate change that the population increase brings,". "If every girl was able to exercise her sexual and reproductive health rights through quality education and have access to modern contraception, it would positively influence total emissions".

## **Energy**

Power, transport and buildings cause 84% of UK emissions. Within this, burning fossil fuels to create electricity is the largest source of carbon emissions in the UK. We need to move away from our usage of fossil fuels as fast as possible.

There are a few changes that the general public can make to create a difference and reduce our emissions as well as our carbon footprint. Switching from petrol and diesel cars in favour of low-emission vehicles will make a significant difference in terms of carbon emissions and also make better use of our public transport systems. We should try to remember to walk or cycle for shorter journeys instead of taking the faster (and often easier) option of driving.

While we may not notice this, homes currently account for around 20% of our emissions, yet action to reduce these emissions has been slow. 21 million UK homes are currently not energy-efficient. This is a problem that needs to be addressed. There are some simple short-term solutions that you can start doing to help make your home more energy-efficient. These include but are not limited to: turning off the lights when you leave a room, turning off plugs when they are not in use, closing your curtains if there is a draft and switching your light bulbs to LEDs. There are also some more long-term solutions that you could make to your home that will help reduce our total emissions. This could be adding insulation to your walls, floors and loft, installing solar panels, and upgrading your windows to reduce energy leakage.

When 67.3 million people (the UK's population) each make small contributions to saving our planet a massive difference can be made.

**We can all make a difference.**

Thank you, from the Pipers Corner HOPE (Helping Others Protect the Environment) group.