



Discussing Climate Change Involving All Generations



The u3a Online 'Countdown to COP' (CtoC) group and the Warwick University 'Climate Reality Chapter Corps' (CR Warwick) group have been exploring ways of engaging younger and older people together in conversations about how to address climate challenges.

Our joint aim was to hear each other's views, support and encourage each other and share our climate concerns in order to inform ourselves better, without in any way undermining the choices others may make around climate-related issues.

Since 2021, a number of approaches have been used by both partners to engage different generations in climate conversations.

Lessons have been learned and this brief guide summarises our joint advice and recommendations to others.

We anticipate that the advice will also be useful for multi-generational discussions of topics such as housing, health, social media etc.

“There is great benefit to combining the wisdom of older people who have more life experiences with the views and voices of children and youth.”

UNICEF Youth Advocacy Guide 2020



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How to Make a Start...

1 BE VERY CLEAR ABOUT THE PURPOSE OF YOUR CONVERSATIONS

Intergenerational dialogue
“only works if young people and adults demonstrate mutual respect...” UNICEF

2 YOUNGER PEOPLE ARE LOOKING TO EXPRESS THEIR CONCERNS AND BE HEARD BY OTHERS

Adults who actively listen to younger voices can benefit from their different points of view and provide reassurance by sharing their own concerns

3 BE AWARE THAT YOUNG PEOPLE OFTEN FEEL INTIMIDATED

by their own lack of experience and shyness when surrounded by louder/older voices. Adult participants can offer support but should not assume they know what's best for others – provide advice ONLY if asked!

4 IDENTIFY YOUR POTENTIAL PARTNER(S) FOR THEIR PASSION, COMMITMENT AND WILLINGNESS TO BECOME INVOLVED, SUCH AS:

- An enthusiastic teacher, lecturer or climate group leader whose members are keen to share their concerns about climate change with different age groups
- A knowledgeable leader of a school group, guide/scout group or youth group whose students want to speak up about climate change, but need support to do so
- Academic staff and students with a keen interest in climate matters who want their concerns to be heard by others in their local community

5 BUILD TRUST WITH YOUR PARTNERS

Communicate with and regularly update both leaders and participants; always treat them as equal partners and share the organisational tasks before, during and after the event

6 REMEMBER THIS WILL BE A TWO-WAY (OR THREE-WAY) CONVERSATION BETWEEN GENERATIONS

Do allow more time for discussions than for lectures/presentations and make it enjoyable for all participants

For further practical information, see:

u3a Countdown to COP
<https://u3asites.org.uk/climate-change/page/127051>

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