

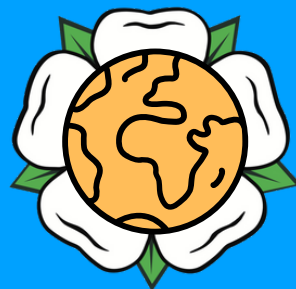
RIPPPLE EFFECT



Handbook on how to include young people in
local and regional sustainable development

“Climate action could and should be a catalyst for further social and political change”

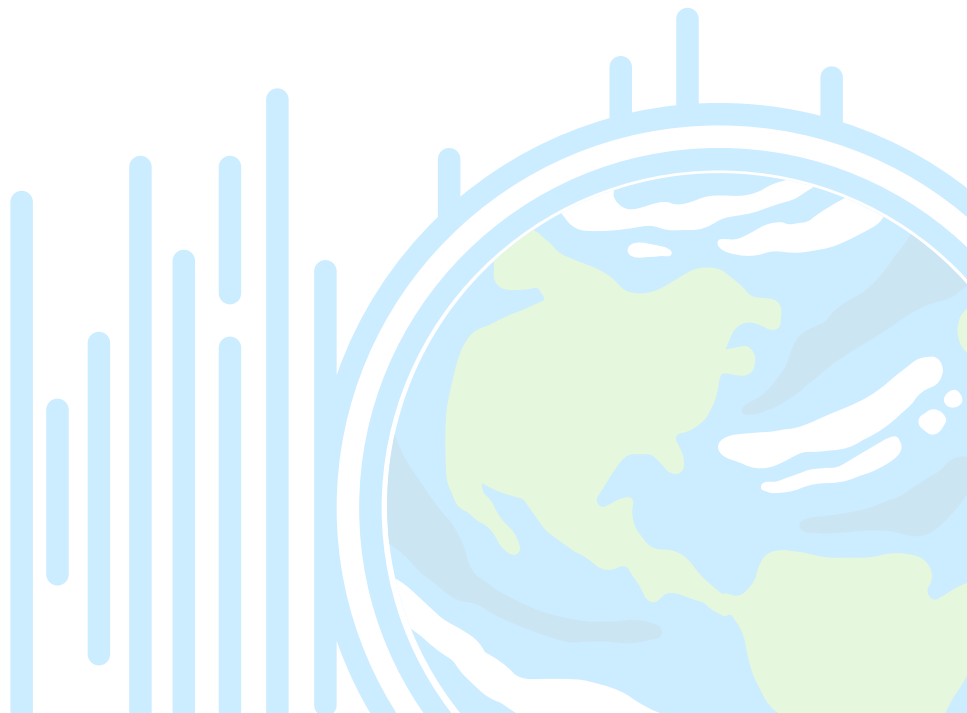
RYCA
YORKSHIRE & HUMBER



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FORWARD DR HARRIET THEW

Deputy Director (Education and Engagement) of the Priestly Centre for Climate Futures

It is with immense pleasure that I introduce you to the Ripple Effect handbook, created by the Regional Youth Climate Assembly for Yorkshire and Humber (RYCA). This book is testament to the power of young people, their unwavering commitment to our planet and its people, and their determination to work together to create positive and lasting change.

In the autumn of 2020, amidst global isolation and uncertainty caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, I first had the privilege of meeting RYCA. World leaders had postponed the 'COP26' United Nations Climate Change Negotiations due to be held in Glasgow and there was a risk that climate action could lose momentum. Despite experiencing significant challenges, including some of their members having to navigate online school while displaced from their homes due to flooding, RYCA were a breath of fresh air. Individually they are inspiring and impressive. Together, they are a collective force of hope, challenging us all to look outwards, not in; forwards not back and to work across generations to pave the way for a fairer, more resilient future for all.

Since that first meeting, I have had the privilege of observing from the side-lines as the young authors of this handbook have claimed a space at the forefront of climate change decision-making. Their journey has taken them from flooded classrooms in Yorkshire to droughts and rising food prices in South Africa, to the corridors of power at (the postponed) COP26. As commissioners on the Yorkshire & Humber Climate Commission, they have navigated complex policy discussions, engaged with local communities, and advocated for sustainable solutions, all the while emphasising the unique perspectives and lived experiences of their generation.

RYCA's manifesto - the Green Youth Deal - outlines a comprehensive vision for a just transition. From climate change education and green jobs to pollution pricing and infrastructure development, their proposals span local, regional and national levels. RYCA understand that addressing climate change requires collective effort and systemic change.

This book is more than a manifesto, it is a call to action. Through personal stories, reflections, and insights, the authors showcase the Ripple Effect that young people can have within our communities. Their voices resonate with urgency and compassion. They remind us that every action—no matter how small—creates ripples that can transform our world.

With hope and determination.

INTRODUCTION

Sustainable development is the defining drive of the 21st century. Both the need for net zero and nature's recovery as well as the need for deep economic renewal. Sustainable development requires every level of government local, regional, national and international to work together and effectively; and to do that young people need to be at the heart of decision making.

The United Nations, and others, have put Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) at the centre of its work. These 17 missions cover everything needed for a fair and sustainable planet: from education to food, climate action to peace and justice. They also highlight sustainable communities (SDG 11) which can't be possible without the young people who live in those communities helping to make them thrive. Strong institutions (SDG 16) won't survive if they don't serve every generation and adapt to a rapidly changing world. And there is no way to have quality education (SDG 4) without the young people it aims to support having some ownership of its direction. In fact none of these goals will have the effect needed without young people in the decision making process, otherwise they'll become 17 more promises never fulfilled.

This handbook aims to bring together experiences of young people and decision makers on local and regional climate decision making and showcase how to create effective youth voice.



The Regional Youth Climate Assembly (RYCA) was started in April 2020, we are a group made of members from across the Yorkshire & Humber region to provide a collective youth voice for young people within the climate discussion. RYCA began as a demand for greater youth engagement and action towards the fight against climate change and has demonstrated this through many of our campaigns, collaboration and international work.

Over the past 4 years we've been able to sit as commissioners on the Yorkshire & Humber Climate Commission, facilitated an event at COP 26, worked with the Department for Education and wrote our manifesto - a Green Youth Deal - as well as much more.

The Green Youth Deal is our manifesto for climate action and youth empowerment. We've included actions for national, regional and local government on a range of issues that all need to be tackled to ensure a just transition to net zero:

- Climate Education
- Green Jobs
- ACE Awards
- Housing
- Agriculture
- Fast Fashion
- Pollution
- Transport
- Pollution Pricing

We went to COP 26 with youth@SAIIA (a youth group from South Africa) with the Ripple Effect Film. A film that was made up from clips of young people talking about the effect of climate change on them and their communities, from Year 6 kids talking about their school flooding in West Yorkshire to ecological loss in South Africa. This handbook is a kind of sequel to that film. We want to showcase the ripple effect young people can have on our communities when we're involved and hopefully the ripple effect this can have on local and regional sustainable development.



RYCA members at the UN's COP 26 summit in Glasgow

ARTICLE 12

UN CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD

“1. States Parties shall assure to the child who is capable of forming his or her own views the right to express those views freely in all matters affecting the child, the views of the child being given due weight in accordance with the age and maturity of the child.”

TOGETHER
FOR OUR
PLANET

YOUTH VOICE

Youth voice is the inclusion of young people in the decision-making process in a capacity where they can advise and scrutinise decision-makers, beyond one-off consultations, or where they can act on their own project.

For anyone to make effective policy they need to first understand the full scale of the problem and the impact of solutions. You cannot do that without including young people. We experience issues in unique ways and are all too often overlooked when decisions are made whether at local, regional or national level.

There is a particular distinction we'd like to draw between voice and consultation. Consultation is almost certainly a questionnaire, questionnaires can be incredibly useful in understanding the needs of a group (we've used questionnaires in this research) however it leaves that group out of the rest of the decision-making process. This is incredibly different from voice. Voice requires dialogue between young people and decision-makers and gives young people the opportunity to hold decision-makers to account more effectively. Although consultation can help you identify a problem it is very bad for finding solutions as it is almost entirely controlled by the questioner, so if they don't know which questions to ask or the context of young people's experiences they won't get effective responses. This consultation heavy approach also exacerbates another problem which is when a policy maker talks to young people and they aren't happy with a policy and push for another approach often this will be seen as a failed youth voice exercise because they didn't like the policy. But in reality this is incredibly important as they can help you develop or redesign a policy to work for everyone.

The most effective youth voice requires a permanent group of young people like youth councils or regional groups. They have to be able to bring young people together and hold constant dialogue with decision makers, otherwise it's all too easy for decision makers to pick and choose which young people (and which opinions) they listen to. The young people working with decision makers also need to be talking to a wider group of our peers so we can accurately represent the views of young people, whilst also having that support network. These groups need to be permanent because there needs to be constant back and forth, so decisions can be scrutinised and policy makers never lose contact with young people.

Timing is also incredibly important, asking young people what we think of a policy once it's written isn't helpful for anyone. Not only does it diminish our influence over the policy but if there is a serious problem with it policy makers have wasted time making a flawed policy. We need to be directly involved with policy making throughout the process. From the identifying of the problem all the way through to implementation.

YOUTH VOICE

YOUNG PEOPLE

- If we're not on these decision making boards its all too easy for decision makers to ignore us and make policy without considering young people
- We're not there as experts on climate change or economics or policy making but we're there as the experts for young people
- You won't always 'win' (often its not about that), it is often about finding compromise and innovative solution but don't be afraid to stand you're ground
- Don't do it alone, have that group and youth workers behind you

DECISION MAKERS

- Having young people on your boards/ committees is just as helpful for you. We offer a new perspective and solutions. Youth voice is always good governance
- You have to invite them into your spaces as well as being willing to go to them
- Don't just *consult* at the end, involve us across the policy making process
- Be willing and bold to include us, you're policy and constituents will be the better for it

We're not the next generation.

The issues we face are important today and young people need to be included or we will only perpetuate problems and fail to achieve sustainable development



Background

Calderdale's Climate Action Partnership (CAP) has two permanent representatives from Calderdale Youth Council (CYC) who over the past 5 years have worked incredibly well together. Whether that be ensuring young people understood the technical information, creating a space for them within the group, the buy-in from members or the ability of the young people to be members of that committee whilst staying youth councillors - Calderdale is a fantastic example of including young people in formal local climate settings.

Young Person's Perspective - Will Solomon, Calderdale Youth Council

I've been a member of CYC for 5 years (since I started at 13) and for a lot of that time I've been one of the youth representatives on CAP. Over those years the youth council's representation on that board has allowed us to have a direct impact on policy, communication and strategy. It was my starting in climate change, before then I was interested in youth voice broadly but not specifically climate. It's probably the space I've learnt the most about local climate action and politics as well as the jumping off point for regional and national climate activism.

Youth council's relationship with the CAP has developed over the years, partly because the members of the panel got to know us as individuals better, because we learnt more about net zero and got more confidence as well as trust forming between both organisations (and the wider council) which gave us more room to be bolder.

One of the key things that really helped this was the meetings we had with council officers before the meeting. This allowed us to ask questions, check what things meant as well as get our thoughts together. A lot of these meetings and reports can be dense, technical and have a lot of acronyms so being able to go through them was a great help.

The other really important thing was having a youth council there. For a lot of meetings we sent two representatives so you weren't alone. But the wider group was also incredibly helpful because there was a support network if we were ill or had a lot on at school and a wide group to speak to about these issues. For local groups and councils youth councils work really well as that group but it doesn't have to be.

Finally, I want to emphasise why young people have to be on local committees like this. They won't always be the most exciting thing you've done, you'll sometimes feel progress can be slow, some people might not fully respect you (the vast majority will). But if we're not there then young people will either be forgotten or misrepresented. A lot of your time will be spent bringing topics together; most people there represent topics and issues (like transport or housing) but we represent young people who experience all of the topics. So often we have to point out where things can work together or contradict or will adversely affect young people. And finally, we always have to be solutions based, if we don't give specific suggestions on how to fix problems then you'll find our ownership will slowly disappear. As well as the fact that most of the problems are well known (often not in the context of young people) it's the bold, creative and practical solutions that we need.

Decision Maker's Perspective - Sam Saxby and Councillor Scott Patient

When Calderdale Council declared a Climate Emergency in January 2019, the Council formed a new group to look at how we move towards Net Zero in Calderdale.

Calderdale Youth Council were invited to join, and have had two representatives on the Climate Partnership since this date. Youth Council speak up for young people and help the Climate Partnership to understand how to engage young people and make climate work accessible.

Councillor Scott Patient, Cabinet Member, Climate Action, Active Travel and Housing, explains why this was important:

“For me, having young people's voices represented from the very start was key to maximising engagement and having transparent, open and honest conversations. The decisions the Climate Partnership makes (or doesn't make) will affect your, and future generation the most.”

Since 2019 Youth Council have supported the Climate Partnership to:

- Set a target: to get Calderdale to net zero by 2038. This target is more ambitious than targets set for the whole of the UK - but it is backed by science
- Write and publish a Climate Action Plan for the Borough
- Run a busy engagement consultation period to get people's views on Climate Action (more than 700 people responded)
- Launched a newsletter, videos, infographics and comms campaigns on climate

Here are a few things which has helped make our Climate Partnership work such a success:

- Meeting Preparation. Council Officers offer a pre-briefing meeting to Youth Council reps before formal meetings. This lets Youth Council ask questions about any complex language or terminology being used in papers. This meeting helps ensure that when Youth Council reps get to meetings, they fully understand concepts being discussed and are encouraged to share their views and opinions.
- Youth Council took their learning on Climate into their own activities and plans - forming plans for a regional Ripple Effect campaign; for a school Advocates for Climate & Environment awards scheme and launching climate grants in partnership with Community Foundation for Calderdale.

You can find out more about climate work in Calderdale at

<https://new.calderdale.gov.uk/environment/sustainability/climate-emergency>



YOUNG PEOPLE

- Have a group behind you
- Make sure you have some understanding of the reports (ask for help)
- Always be solution based
- Never forget, you're not the economic, political, technical experts you're the experts on young people
- If you're not there then who's going to represent young people?

DECISION MAKERS

- Meeting Preparation. Council Officers offer a pre-briefing meeting to Youth Council reps before formal meetings. This lets Youth Council ask questions about any complex language or terminology being used in papers. This meeting helps ensure that when Youth Council reps get to meetings, they fully understand concepts being discussed and are encouraged to share their views and opinions.
- Make sure you have buy in from the committee (especially the Chair)
- You're inviting young people into a decision making space, make sure its young people who are speaking not workers or teachers



RYCA AND THE YORKSHIRE & HUMBER CLIMATE COMMISSION



The Yorkshire & Humber Climate Commission (YHCC) was set up to bring together academics, politicians, governments, industries and the third sector to tackle climate change. Originally part of the Place-Based Climate Action Network it is unique in its size and for its consistent inclusion of young people.

We've spoken at their first launch and the manifesto launch, as well as them speaking at many of our events and the Yorkshire Post Climate Summit. We became the only young commissioners in the country for any Climate Commission and the only group commissioners at YHCC. This slightly unique arrangement is there so we can spread the load of being a commissioner across our network and to increase the number of youth voices being heard. This was a huge step for us and the commission for letting young people be a direct part of the conversation, not just an observer from the outside. It gave us a chance to build on the skills we'd learnt and apply that to a much broader context. RYCA are also members of the Public Affairs Committee, the Community & Engagement Committee as well as the Skills Flagship Project and co-hosting their Climate Action Plan launch.

YHCC's inclusion of young people has been consistent, although we wanted to highlight some of our asks, we've been talking about with the Commission in regards to youth participation. The meetings themselves were not very youth friendly, although that is to be expected they weren't designed that way. The times often during school or just after, realistically any meeting with young people can't be any earlier than 4:30pm. So often no youth reps have been able to attend, although we see the minutes/documents and make comments.

RYCA members also said that we had to have our voices heard as individuals with specific knowledge and interest in an area rather than young people. This is not necessarily a bad thing as our contributions have to stand up for themselves but it was felt that the contribution of a young person's opinion alone did not have as much impact. The YHCC is a group of experts who all come to climate change with a specific skill set, rather than a more holistic view that youth reps offer (going back to the point in Chapter 3 about young people's expertise). In many ways bridging different skill sets and policy areas is exactly what the YHCC is there to do.

RYCA has felt that our contributions have been listened to and that our relationship with the YHCC has been incredibly constructive and fruitful, especially as this is the first time any young people have been permanently included in a Climate Commission.

RYCA can't forget our own role in this relationship and ask questions about how we can improve so we can better represent young people and be the best possible group that young people need us to be. That means questioning our ability, representation, function, successes and failures (all of which is incredibly important for any young people interested in this work). A lot of this handbook is about our successes and where we felt we/ our members have had real influence but there are still important gaps and areas of improvements we can't ignore. We are a very strategic group, by that we mean we talk about policy with key players, run workshops on topics, speak at events and act as a bridge between young people and decision makers. This means our actionable, tangible work can sometimes be limited or hard to see (although this handbook aims to highlight a lot of that work). However, this structure of having strong local groups (youth councils and other) working on specific local projects with regional groups bringing good practice together, holding regional/ national decision makers to account works well. You need those two working together because you can too easily get lost in ultra local work as easily as being 'too big picture'.

There is also the ongoing problem, as with many groups at the moment, about membership and retaining membership. At any of the youth focused events we're a part of we almost always do a recruitment drive and although we always get lots of sign up that doesn't always correspond to increased membership. I think one solution to both of these problems would be to work with local groups more on specific topics that they're passionate about and (do as we say) by going into local spaces a lot more and helping. This would create even stronger links between local and regional work whilst increasing our representation.

As both RYCA and the YHCC move into new phases there are key ways we can build on our successes. Both of us fulfil important roles in Yorkshire and climate policy, both being helped by each other. Our work with the YHCC has been invaluable and our partnership indispensable. Many of the lessons learnt are similar to that from the Calderdale Climate Partnership but on a larger scale:

- Have a group behind you
- Make sure you have some understanding of the reports (ask for help)
- Be bold and creative with responses
- Always be solution based
- Never forget, you're not the economic, political, technical experts you're the experts on young people
- Always speak up when there are practical problems (like timings of meetings)





Young Person's Perspective - Curtis Yip, Rotherham Youth Cabinet

As highlighted in 'Chapter 2 - Youth Voice', effective activism requires a permanent group of young people. In 2018, during which South Yorkshire was in the process of establishing a regional combined authority, the Youth Work Unit was successful in setting up what is now known as the South Yorkshire Youth Combined Assembly (YCA) - a dedicated youth group to influence, engage and take part in regional decision making with their metro Mayor.

The YCA largely came about from an initial meeting with candidate at the time, Dan Jarvis MP, at a previous regional Youth Convention. Here young people successfully pitched the idea of a Youth Combined Assembly - which later became one of Dan Jarvis's committed manifesto pledges. Note that this conception came from the process of meaningful discussion rather than a simple survey or tokenistic appearance at a youth event.

The YCA, at first, faced many difficulties and did not meet the desirable ways of how a true youth board ought to be run. In its initial development, meetings tended to be jargon heavy and largely adult-led: the structure (at first) never really allowed for the young people in it - and more broadly youth voice - to flourish to its genuine capacity. For example, the proposed dates would usually be on times and days that were incompatible with young people's commitment to education, i.e at 2pm on a weekday when a young person would be in school. However with structural changes and a genuine appetite from the Mayor to engage with young people, the YCA soon operated as a large success.

Some of the major changes that the young people pushed for were

- The dates of meetings would be on a structured, rolling basis - compatible with school holidays/ term times.
- Young people to create the meeting agenda, rather than being talked AT by decision makers.
- For young people to chair the meetings.
- Work more collaboratively with other groups/departments within the Combined Authority.
- To have more of an active role in decision making. Feeding in ideas directly to the plans of the Mayor, rather than scrutinising them after such plans have been made.

The last structural change proved to be a major one through the introduction of the Zoom Beyond Travel Pass - a concessionary travel fare for young people aged 18-21 (an extension of the young fare for those at university, apprenticeships or just starting out in employment for the first time). Previously, the eligibility of the child fare (which was 80p per journey) was only for young people under 18, leaving those in further and practical education with no government support at all. Due to the policy of the Zoom Pass - a youth led outcome, made through young people's shared experiences of using public transport and with the Mayor's genuine desire to listen - it made South Yorkshire one of the cheapest places in the whole country for young people (up to age 21) to use public transport; thus enabling greater access for young people to access jobs and opportunities, to boost the regional economy, and to help combat the climate crisis by incentivising decarbonised travel. It has also helped both Universities in Sheffield (University of Sheffield and Sheffield Hallam) to attract more students - being ranked as one of the cheapest and student friendly cities to study. 'Zoom' has also significantly helped alleviate the burden of the cost-of-living crisis for many young people across the region.

The influential work of 'Zoom' has less to do with the distinct benefits that young people now have as a consequence in using public transport (as much of an achievement it is alone), but it has more to do with the process and development which thus allowed young people to create such change in on of itself; the relationship between the democratiser and the democratised.

Each time the Zoom Beyond Pass is used, it is a celebration of the great capacity and positive influence young people have across the region; a symbol of youth voice being recognised in every wave that is used to transmit information from the card onto the machine reader.

Young people did not just influence and create policy alone, but they created the actual platform which allowed them to advocate ideas such as 'Zoom'. They adopted their own process of youth voice, the correct principles of youth voice, and utilised this to create such a successful outcome for all young people.

The success of 'Zoom Beyond' came from, and was only allowed, because of the strong, youth foundations of the YCA itself, and the relationship which they had with the Mayor at the time, along with the support and development from all youth workers. Had reforms of 'good youth work' not been made earlier on in the process, Zoom would have possibly not worked out as great. This therefore shows the importance of having strong, youth engagement in structures that underlie youth groups/ boards - in order for young people to produce the best outcomes and to influence the greatest change.





YOUNG PEOPLE

- Being able and willing to push for structural changes is sometimes absolutely necessary. Doing so, whilst maintaining a good relationship with decision makers
- Bold projects, like the Zoom Beyond Pass, are vital for sustainable development. Having young people advocating for them and championing them is a key step in their development. Often the most innovative and creative solutions are the best

DECISION MAKERS

- Youth voice can't be entirely controlled by adults. You have to be able to let young people take a lead in meetings
- Although you may sign on to a particular version of a youth advisory board, it may (and probably will) have to adapt to work for both of you. Being open to these changes is important; it will help you, policy making and the young people
- The Zoom Beyond Pass shows that youth lead policies can be effective, positive and become a key part of regional government. With the challenge, forum and money provided by decision makers are a vital part of that



Young Person's Perspective - Safaa Shreef ,Barnsley Youth Council

This project began in early 2020 initially known as the 'urban tree fund project'. After hearing about the Urban Tree Challenge Fund (UTCf) the Protect the Environment campaign within Barnsley Youth Council decided to submit an application hoping to get some funding. After securing land from the council which we could use, the application was submitted by one of our workers in June 2020. In November we heard back that we'd been successful. We began working with Remedi to fulfil our vision of turning the unused land into a tranquil area beneficial for mental health and the environment. We also started working with Twiggs (a ground maintenance group) who helped clear the land late January 2021 of any dangerous materials before the young people started planting trees in February-March. Across 4 sessions over 450 trees of various species were planted. The members of Twiggs taught the young people how to plant the trees correctly to increase chances of survival. This led to all the young people receiving an official qualification in tree planting. From then on we had and still have regular maintenance sessions which involve litter picking, building bug hotels and bird houses and cutting down any disease trees. The maintenance sessions may have more planned for them, for example during summer 2021 we held a consultation at the site with the local community, young people and any councillors which attended the event to decide what our next steps would be. This led to the decision that we needed an accessible bench, recycling bins and wild flowers. We have planted many wild flowers and gotten an accessible bench since then. We are still trying to get recycling bins and the next idea is to have a sensory patch therefore by summer the locals can pick fruit from the fruit trees and use stuff from the sensory patch like mint.



Terrific Tree Task

THE YOUTH WORKER

The Youth Worker - Claire Whitely, Yorkshire & Humber Youth Work Unit

When RYCA asked me as one of the workers who has supported their journey from individual YP all with a passion for climate change - (though in different ways) to becoming an assembly amplifying young people's voices on climate and also on voice itself I was surprised as I did not consider them a group led by workers / by adults. They had created the assembly through their shared interest, had undertaken research and developed a manifesto themselves. This wasn't co-production, it was YP led. But then I realised that was the point - this was youth voice in action, supported by adults who facilitated ideas and action designed and developed by YP.

The YP, who became RYCA, asked for an opportunity to meet (online initially) so that they could discuss the ideas they had about climate action, look at what they could do, not just to support themselves but other YP and the YWU provided the space and offered support but RYCA exists because of YP.

As the worker supporting RYCA I had to give up control (I wasn't expected to write an agenda, guide the meetings, direct the proceedings - so often as youth workers we have targets (transparent or not) which impact the direction of our projects and influence how we work. With RYCA this was not the case; the ideas were theirs, the conversations were theirs, the actions were theirs, the decisions and most importantly the words were theirs - written or spoken. My role was support, to safeguard and to support links to the other adult led organisations keen to work with RYCA (and highlight those where Youth Voice was a real and active commitment).

As youth workers we often talk about empowerment, about promoting / celebrating YP's voice and activism but often don't reflect on how we give up our power in this process. As adults we see things from an adult perspective and are influenced by the adult lens - are we prepared? How will our colleagues receive our work? Will we be successful? If this fails? What if the YP say the wrong thing? But RYCA's work wasn't ours - it was theirs and TRUST was the underpinning ethos of supporting them.

In fact one of the key aspects of embedding youth voice is not using terms like failure - activism is a journey and a flexible approach works - it is the YP who are the goal, when they are heard, not a target and also YP don't say the wrong thing - they say what they think / feel / mean with both passion and dignity so while it may be different it isn't wrong.

They were the experts, they were the movement and the influencers but because of their ages and our societal structures they needed (an) adult/s to challenge the gatekeepers, the holders of processes, the managers of time, the agenda setters and sometimes to be backed - change the time of this meeting, no it is You need to ask, not me, please explain why this can't happen - that is really the role in supporting youth voice - encouraging other adults and organisations to see the talent, knowledge, passion and understanding of the YP in front of them.

An example may explain this more clearly - I was lucky enough to accompany RYCA to COP 26 where they were presenting in the green zone on the Monday. We had had lots of meetings with YP from other parts of the UK and with YP from South Africa to prepare for the workshop on RYCA and SAIIA's film (the Ripple Effect) and workshop and spent 2 days visiting the green zone and attending sessions.

On Sunday night after we returned to our accommodation the YP said maybe we should prepare our workshop! For a moment I felt a wave of panic but I knew these YP were the experts, they had prepared workshops, have planted trees, interviewed other children and young people for their views on the impact of climate change, made short videos, written papers, given speeches, spoken to the press, asked academics for their views - this was their workshop and on the day on delivery they shone. They were proudly defined by their knowledge of climate change and young people's activism - they didn't need oversight or guidance as they were leaders in the best sense of that word; by example, through their knowledge, their inclusivity which underpinned all of their work, their active commitment to making a difference, not just for themselves but for people and the planet. My moment of panic was a mis step, but in reflecting on that experience what is it that enables us, as adults, to fully embrace Youth Voice? It is to trust YP, not just to deliver a script but to write the script, to be true to themselves, to highlight the things which matter to them (and should therefore matter to us), to offer radical and inclusive solutions and to make us, the adults, reflect.

That same weekend the YP went to a workshop on green jobs and the UK MP presenting, when asked a question by a member of RYCA, said he would talk to them after the session. They took him at his word, bought him a coffee and met him when he left to continue their conversation. I doubt he expected this but RYCA had no hesitation in respectfully getting their voices heard.

YP make links we have yet to see through intersectionality - RYCA is a diverse group open to all but also sees protecting the planet is about taking care of people, everyone. They have always valued every contribution made whilst they formed and became an assembly from litter picking wobble groups to ministerial conversations and they see the links. For YP Climate Change is not a single issue - it is part of who we are. It is linked to poverty, gender, globalisation, education, identity, rights etc and so RYCA see and hear the voices of others as they amplify their own voices. They value the views of their peers, respect seems ingrained in the minds of Young Activist who will step aside to create space for others - something many adult led organisations could learn.

As workers we need a high level of flexibility to keep conversations open, enabling a change of direction, thought, always seeking to be inclusive.

RYCA talk about not writing off the current generation - Youth are not the future they are here, now and we need to actively listen to what they have to say, as then we can support them to make the difference we all want but they can achieve.

This is a risk for some adults and some of our structures but is one worth taking if we want to make a real difference.

