

Language Teaching for the Planet

Summary

Climate change is the greatest challenge of our time, affecting every nation, society and individual across the world. In the British Council's recent soft power survey of 37,158 adults aged 18-34 across the 36 survey countries, climate change was perceived to be the most important issue facing the world today. The 2021 United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP 26) is a key opportunity for the UK to play a leadership role in the global effort to address this pressing issue through international collaboration and cooperation.

The British Council is supporting the UK's role in COP26 through a global programme centred on climate change, including a specific strand focussing on environmental sustainability in English language teaching and learning called 'Language Teaching for the Planet'.

Through this strand of the global programme, we are working with experts in the field to develop high quality resources to help build the capacity of national ELT teacher associations, schools and teachers to integrate environmental issues in English language curricula – raise awareness of these issues; equip learners with the language skills to understand, discuss and engage critically with climate change issues, and promote solutions to local and global environmental problems.

In 2021, through our 'Language Teaching for the Planet' programme, we will launch:

Online Course for Teachers & Teacher Educators. Working together with experts we are developing a series of 3 modules to help build the capacity English teachers and teacher educators to integrate environmental issues in English language Teaching. The three modules will include (1) Introducing environmental issues into language teaching classes (2) Developing and delivering lessons with a sustainability focus and (3) Making sustainability part of your learners' lives.

Resources for Teachers. Working together with experts, we are developing a PDF book consisting of 12 climate change themed lesson plans for a variety of different age groups and language proficiency levels. These lesson plans will be accompanied by a theory section providing teachers with practical guidance on how to integrate climate change issues into the curricula and prepare new climate change themed lessons suitable for local contexts.

Podcast Series for the Global English Language Teaching Community. We are creating a podcast series exploring, discussing and highlighting global innovations integrating environmental approaches in English language teaching from around the world. The series will encapsulate the key issues facing the world of English language teaching (ELT) with regards to the climate crisis.

Global Research – Green ELT Sector. Working together with experts in the field we are conducting research into 'Green' initiatives in the UK ELT sector and the Global English Language Teaching Industry. As part of this research, we are conducting interviews with key ELT stakeholders as well as a global survey for English language teachers, schools and universities. The findings from this research will be used to publish a report highlighting global efforts being taken to make the global ELT sector greener, promote and facilitate environmental responsibility, reduce environmental impact and incentivise sustainability.

Global Competition for Language Teachers and Learners. We are currently designing a lesson planning competition for English language teachers around the world. The top entries to this competition will be collated into a global resource of climate change themed lesson plans from around the world. In addition, we are also developing a global 'climate change' themed competition for English language learners.

For more information on the British Council's 'Language Teaching for the Planet' programme, please contact Colm Downes, Technical Lead: colm.downes@britishcouncil.org.

Further Information on the British Council's programme for UN Climate Change Conference of the Parties, COP26.

The British Council is leading a global cultural relations programme to add value to COP26 through the three pillars of our work: Arts, English language and Education. This will support the UK's Government's COP26 objectives as part of its wider Global Britain ambitions: to create a 'whole of society' COP26; to build the political environment for effective negotiations; and to raise domestic and international ambitions to reach net zero carbon emissions. The programme will be supported by a creative global communications campaign, which will enable people across the world to engage digitally in dialogues on climate change and search for local opportunities to get involved.

With a presence in over 100 countries and a reach of over 790 million people, we will access policy makers, alumni networks and young people to positively shape perceptions of the UK and support transformational change in communities across the world. We will increase young people's access to dialogues and debates on climate change, taking dialogues beyond the typical climate change circles and helping global leaders and policy makers understand the needs and concerns of young people.

Through our programme, the British Council is working with and for all parts of the UK, working closely with HMG, Devolved Governments, cities and sector partners across the UK and internationally. Supported by our Scotland team, we will explore opportunities for engagement during COP26 in Glasgow next November. We are exploring options to collaborate with Italy, as the UK's COP26 partner, during Youth COP and Pre-COP in September 2021. Because climate change will remain a priority beyond the close of COP26, developing a sustainable legacy programme is also central to our approach.

Our programme is divided into three inter-connected engagement strands, each complementing and strengthening the others: Youth, Policy and Public. Activities will be taking place across the UK and internationally, involving both UK and international partners.

Strand One: Youth Engagement

Targeting young people (including the British Council's alumni networks), teachers, youth and community networks and early career researchers to engage in dialogue and debate on climate change and to take action against climate change. We are particularly focused on working with marginalised groups including women and girls and amplifying voices from the Global South.

Strand Two: Policy Engagement

Engaging UK and international policymakers and leaders at all levels, including cities, in discussion and debate on climate change. This will focus on enabling discussions between policymakers and young people, to share their perspectives and learn from each other's actions.

Strand Three: Public Engagement

We will carry out wide public engagement to build trust in climate science, amplify youth voices, engage different parts of society in dialogues on climate change, and highlight innovations to tackling climate change. Our work will widen access to, and understanding of, the dialogues policymakers are engaged in in the run up to, during and beyond COP26.

For more information on the British Council's COP26 programme, please contact Sarah Giles, Policy and External Relations Manager: sarah.giles@britishcouncil.org.