



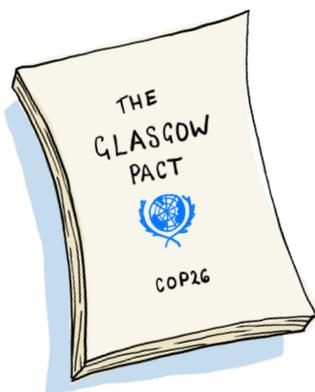
COP26

What were the positives?

YouthLink
S c o t l a n d
The national agency for youth work

COP26 seems to have come and gone in the blink of an eye, and what with all the media coverage, protests, fringe events, panels, concerts and parties that happened alongside the conference, it's easy to forget that the main purpose of COP26 was to come up with a global agreement on how to deal with the escalating climate crisis. Many activists, politicians, indigenous people, young people, and people from the Global South have labelled COP26 a failure. The conference has been accused of being exclusive, elitist, platforming big business and oil companies, ignoring voices from the most affected people and areas (MAPA), and concluding with a watered-down agreement that falls way short of limiting global warming to 1.5⁰C as stipulated in the Paris Agreement.

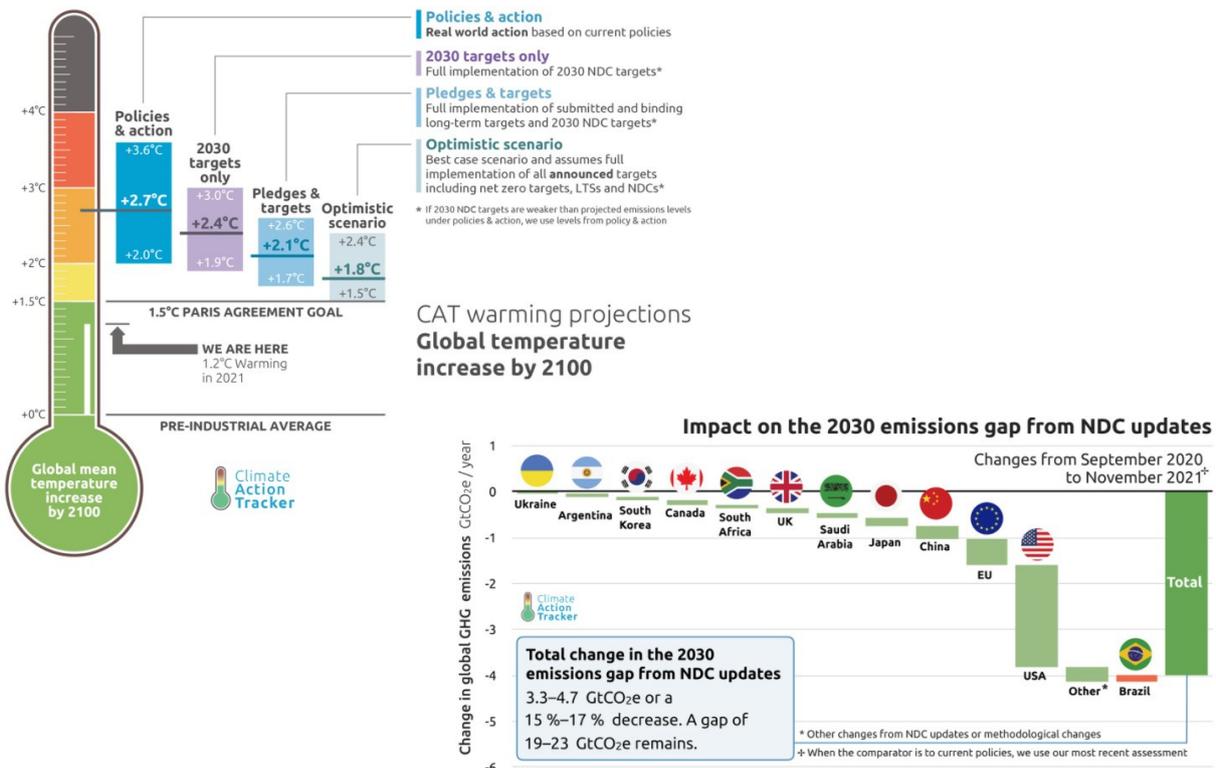
Whilst all of this is true and the system that perpetuates these issues needs to be criticised, it is also true that a lot of people worked very hard on putting together the Glasgow Pact, and behind the UN jargon and drawn-out arguments over semantics, it does actually include some crucial differences from previous agreements which cannot be ignored. COP26 also meant different things for everybody who attended it, and for many people and leaders from the Global South and MAPA, it is one of the few opportunities they get for their voices and pleas to be heard on a global stage. Having discussions about these small wins may help young people to feel less despondent about the results of COP26, and this resource aims to break down what the Glasgow Pact actually says and how this differs from previous climate agreements, to make it easier for youth workers to have these conversations and point out the positives. It also points to some helpful further resources which will help young people to visualise the differences that COP26 has made.



NATIONALLY DETERMINED CONTRIBUTIONS

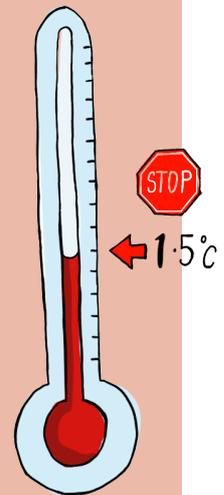
Part of why COP26 was so significant was that it was the first opportunity to review and update the Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) that countries put in place after the Paris Agreement in 2015. After Paris, it was agreed that these NDCs would be strengthened every five years. However, the Glasgow Pact goes one step further and requests that parties strengthen their NDCs again next year to close the gap between current pledges and the 1.5°C limit. This is a significant move as it demands much faster and more decisive action than the previous 5-year cycle.

Use the [Climate Action Tracker](#) for a visual analysis of how different countries are doing in terms of Net Zero targets and limiting warming to 1.5°C. Young people will be able to see the gaps between what has been promised and what is needed, and identify the next steps we need to take to reach the targets. The UK's policies are ranked as 'almost sufficient' in terms of what is needed to reach the target of 1.5°C.

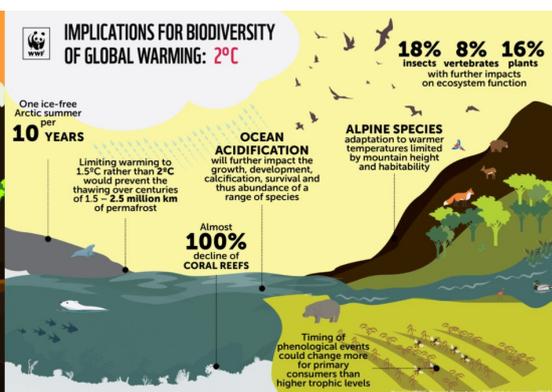
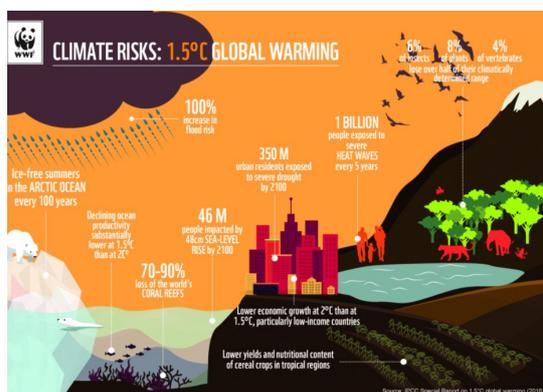
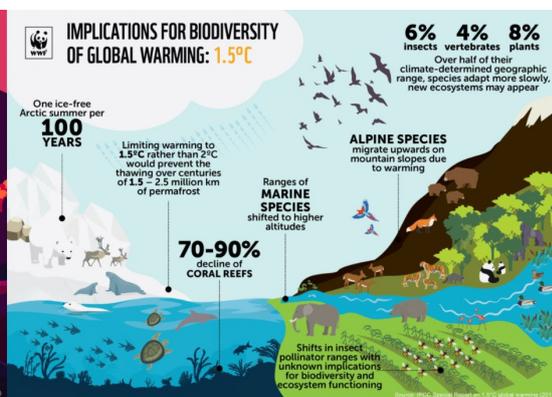
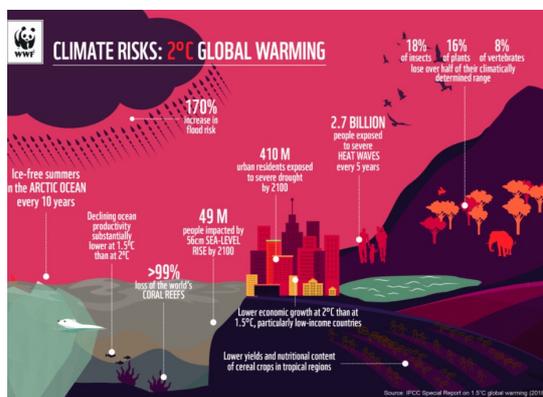


RECOGNISING 1.5°C AS A LIMIT

At COP21 in Paris, parties agreed to limit global warming to well below 2°C while ‘pursuing efforts’ to limit it to 1.5°C. However, since 2015, extensive scientific research has shown that the differences between a world with 1.5°C of warming and one with 2°C of warming would be catastrophic, causing millions more people to lose their homes, their livelihoods and their lives. Therefore, in the Glasgow Pact, the language around the target of 1.5°C of warming is much stronger, stating that it ‘recognis[es] that the impacts of climate change will be much lower at the temperature increase of 1.5°C compared with 2°C’. This centring of scientific evidence is a big step towards ensuring that warming is kept to 1.5°C, but now needs to be backed up with action.



Use the WWF 1.5°C vs 2°C graphics (see below) to give the young people a visual representation of the difference that 0.5°C of warming will have. Discuss what the impacts of climate change will be like in their local area with 1.5°C rather than 2°C.

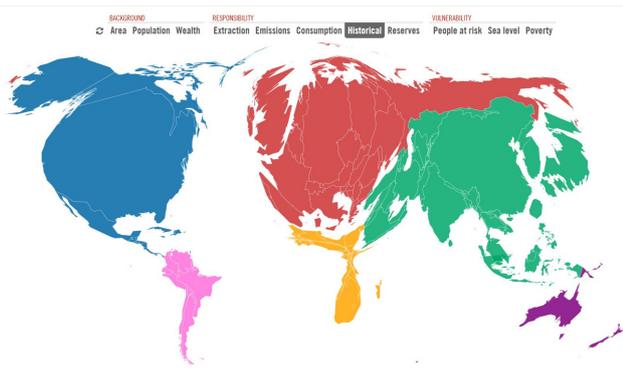


FINANCE FOR VULNERABLE COUNTRIES

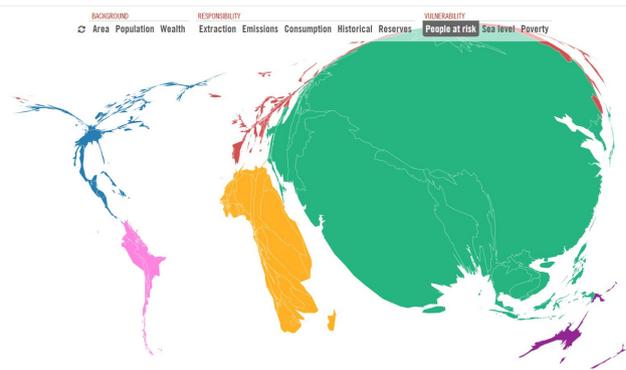
In 2009, developed countries pledged to deliver \$100 billion in climate finance to more vulnerable developing countries annually by 2020. This target was not met, which was ‘note[d] with deep regret’ in the Glasgow Pact, which also urged developed countries to ‘significantly increase support for developing country Parties’ beyond the \$100 billion by 2025, which is an ambitious statement given that the first \$100 billion is still yet to be delivered.

Additionally, countries that are already experiencing the impacts of climate change have been calling for finance to cope with this loss and damage for 30 years now. The Glasgow Pact acknowledges that loss and damage is already being caused by climate change and is expected to get worse, the first time this has been recognised in a global climate agreement. However, the Glasgow Pact itself does not set out how these funds will be mobilised, only endorsing the Santiago Network which facilitates conversations between countries about loss and damage funding. The only country to pledge any funding specifically for loss and damage reparations is Scotland, with Nicola Sturgeon announcing a pledge of £2 million during the conference.





Historical emissions



People at risk from climate change

Climate finance may seem like a million miles away from the interests of young people in Scotland, but it is a vital part of working towards climate justice. Use the [Carbon Map](#) (see above) to explore with young people the difference between which countries have historically produced the most emissions, and which are the most vulnerable to the impacts of climate change. There is also a lot of crossover between the countries with the highest levels of poverty and the countries most vulnerable to climate impacts. You can also use the Climate Negotiations activity in the [Climate Emergency Toolkit](#) to help young people understand the bargaining and deal making that goes on around climate finance.

FOSSIL FUEL LANGUAGE

The Glasgow Pact ‘calls upon Parties’ to ‘accelerat[e] efforts towards the phasedown of unabated coal power and phase-out of inefficient fossil fuel subsidies’, which may not seem like a very strong statement. There was much [debate over the wording of this statement](#), with [US](#) and [EU negotiators](#) arguing for language about oil and gas to be excluded, and Indian negotiators arguing for the language on coal to be toned down from phasing out coal and fossil fuel subsidies to just phasing down unabated coal. Nevertheless, this is actually the first time that any language about fossil fuels has been used in a global climate agreement, signaling that the Parties have finally acknowledged the direct link between extracting fossil fuels and climate change.

Use the fossil fuels emissions matching activity in the [Climate Emergency Toolkit](#) to explore with young people the links between different types of emissions and climate change.

IN NUMBERS:

Current pledges, NDCs and agreements submitted at COP26 (if they are fully implemented) will result in:

- 2.4°C** of warming (optimistic scenario of 1.8°C)
- 85%** of global emissions are covered by net zero pledges
- 90%** of world GDP is now covered by net zero pledges
- 3** largest emitters (USA, China and India) have submitted net-zero pledges for 2050, 2060 and 2070 respectively
- 137** countries with 90% of the world's forests to end deforestation by 2030
- 105** countries to cut methane emissions by 30% by 2030 – this covers 46% of global methane emissions

All in all, the Glasgow Pact leaves a lot to be desired and it remains to be seen whether governments will actually deliver on their promises. Young people are right to be critical of it, and youth workers should continue to support young people in both holding governments accountable for their promises and demanding more urgent action. However, it's also important that young people don't feel too despondent about the outcomes of COP26. We need to look at how far we have come and know that we can and must go further, and through understanding a bit more of the context around the Glasgow Pact, we can better appreciate its global significance and not dismiss COP26 as a complete failure.



OUTSIDE COP26

Another huge source of optimism after COP26 doesn't come from the conference at all, but rather from the huge mobilisations of people outside the fences of the SEC. Throughout the two weeks of COP there were a huge number of protests, from Extinction Rebellion to migrant justice groups to anti-greenwashing demonstrations. The largest protests of all happened on the Friday and Saturday of the middle weekend of COP, mobilising 30,000 and 150,000 people respectively for climate justice. There was something for everyone, and some much-needed crossover between different movements such as the youth climate movement and workers' strikes, and indigenous activists and the racial justice movement. Activists from all over the world commented that this mass mobilisation brought them hope for the future. Young people in Scotland were also engaged with the climate crisis to an unprecedented level, with the protests happening on their doorstep making the issues feel unusually close to home. We need to keep up the momentum and energy from these protests in the coming years, and the youth work sector has a vital role to play in keeping young people engaged and active. Youth workers can sign up to [Climate Emergency Training](#) designed specifically for the youth work sector to learn more about how we can achieve this. Some resources from our Learning for Sustainability team to help get you started are [Where to Start?](#) and [Hosting a Mini COP](#).

