



Youth Perspectives on Climate Action



Act now!

“Act now!” is the powerful message that young environmental leaders are sharing with their communities - to encourage everyone to step-up to the challenges that lay ahead in the fight against climate change.

With support from the [Ontario Trillium Foundation](#), this past school year, EcoSchools Canada launched a Youth Advisory Committee (YAC) composed of secondary students from the York-Simcoe region in Ontario, Canada. YAC members collaborated throughout the year to raise awareness and engage their peers in environmental action and change.



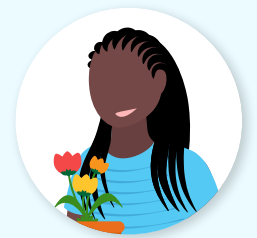
In spite of the new challenges presented by COVID-19, the YAC worked diligently and creatively to offer guidance into the EcoSchools program while also leading environmental projects and campaigns in their schools and communities.

We are so inspired by this group of committed youth leaders and want to share some of their thoughts and insights from the past year.

What are some of the biggest challenges you have faced this year?

“ The biggest challenge was the Covid-19 pandemic because many of our initiatives were planned to be in person so we have had to quickly adapt to virtual campaigns [...] One of our successful initiatives has been our Water Initiative in which we focused on issues concerning water on a local, provincial, national, and international level. As part of our initiative, we wrote letters voicing our concern to local newspapers (which were published) and held an Importance of Water virtual workshop. ”

- **Boluwatife, SCDSB, grade 12**



“ Climate change is certainly one of the biggest issues that face us today. I'm concerned about the politicization of climate change, but I also think that there is reason for optimism. Despite a number of setbacks, more people today know about climate change and its threats than before. Thanks to COVID-19, people have also become more familiar with simpler lifestyles. These small lifestyle choices are just as important in combating climate change as sweeping reforms, and will go a long way in the future. ”

- **Rico, YRDSB, grade 12**



What are your hopes and concerns about the future in relation to climate change?



“ I hope that new values such as prioritizing the environment and the future over money and the economy can one day be woven into society, instead of the values of economy and capitalism, which are proving to be destructive to both people and nature. I think that the worst thing that could happen is that we learn nothing from this pandemic, and continue our normalized destructive habits.”

- Cara, SCDSB, grade 10



“ Climate change is threatening the way we live and the future of our planet. Without taking action, it will exacerbate several current issues, such as food & water scarcity, health risks, etc. Everyone is encouraged to take the initiative to tackle climate change and its impacts. For youths, uniting with other like-minded people is a great way to share ideas and inspire one another! ”

- Jeanette, YRDSB, grade 12



“ I hope that caring for the environment becomes as natural as caring for our own safety and future, because really, they are the same thing.”

- Julia, YCDSB, grade 12

Why is it important for youth to get involved in climate action?

“ Small actions make a difference too. Feeling that you do not have enough resources to take action is not an excuse! You can start off by simply using more reusable items in your life, using more sustainable transportation when possible, or even just spreading information on the urgency of climate change. Making small changes in your daily life can add up in the long run.”

- Jasmine, SCDSB, grade 10



“ The best thing you can do right now is prioritize environmental education, awareness, and to get your peers to care. Do what you can within your limits – if these limits seem like they are too much, they are not. There is always more to do, there are always more people who you can get to care for.”

- Keona, YRDSB, grade 11



Thanks for leading the way in environmental learning and climate action!

If you want to take action, register your school to participate in the EcoSchools program! Visit app.ecoschools.ca. To get in touch with a question, email us at programs@ecoschools.ca.