CCC—CATAPULT: CHALLENGING THE CLIMATE CRISIS: CHILDREN'S AGENCY TO TACKLE POLICY UNDERPINNED BY LEARNING FOR TRANSFORMATION.

INSIGHTS FROM TAMPERE, FINLAND

KEY FINDINGS

- Finnish youth from the Tampere region expressed their concerns about the climate crisis but did not consider it as important as young people in other European countries involved in the project.
- They expressed frustration with climate education, stating that it does not focus enough on actions and solutions that individuals, groups, and societies could implement.
- Climate education curricula and implementation need to be developed to be interdisciplinary, solution-oriented, and considerate of the young people's lifeworld.
- Teachers feel the need for more training to implement quality climate education.

BACKGROUND

The JPI Solstice funded Challenging the Climate Crisis: Children's Agency to Tackle Policy Underpinned by Learning for Transformation (CCC-CATAPULT) project involves young people as researchers working with academics to examine young people's experiences of and learning around the climate crisis. This project is taking place in locations across Europe, including Bristol (United Kingdom), Galway (Ireland), Tampere (Finland), and Genova (Italy). We have recruited a diverse group of young people in each location to take an active role in both shaping the research itself and collaborating across research locations to explore the research questions.

This policy brief presents key findings and recommendations based on the empirical evidence and the research conducted with young people and teachers in schools, as well as from workshops with local stakeholders and policymakers. It focuses on the research activities conducted in Tampere, Finland, and aims to support decision-makers, practitioners, and academics working with young people on tackling the climate crisis in this area, while offering insights and lessons that can be applied in other contexts as well. The content and recommendations in this policy brief are an opportunity to feed into national discussions on changes to the core curriculum to ensure that climate change education is progressive and multidisciplinary, and that synergies between teachers across years and disciplines are maximised.

RESEARCH METHODS

We used qualitative and quantitative research methods to establish a broad empirical basis across the different case settings. Co-production underpinned all research activities, from design to delivery and interpretation. This was achieved through Youth Action Partnership (YAP) groups

Data collection activities conducted in Tampere included:

- Electronic survey, which in Tampere was distributed to young people (n=581) in 5 schools, located in urban and suburban areas
- 9 Interviews with teachers
- 5 Focus groups
- 4 Narrative workshops
- 1 Policy workshop
- Regular meetings with YAP groups

The key research findings are presented below. When presenting the findings, we refer to young people to indicate participants to our research activities.

FINDINGS

YOUNG PEOPLE'S ATTITUDES AND KNOWLEDGE TOWARDS CLIMATE CHANGE

Young people from Tampere reported feeling less concern and anxiety about climate change than their peers in other countries involved in the research project. Of them, 66% considered climate change an important or very important issue (compared to Bristol and Genoa at 84%, Galway at 86%). A larger percentage expressed concern about biodiversity loss and habitat destruction (Tampere 77%, Bristol 87%, Genoa 90%, and Galway 93%). 56% of respondents from Tampere were worried about floods and rising sea levels (compared to Bristol at 79%, Genoa at 82%, and Galway at 84%). A significant portion of respondents from Tampere (47%) did not consider the detachment from fossil fuels important or very important (compared to Bristol and Genoa at 21%, Galway at 18%). The majority viewed changes in national policies and the actions of large corporations as essential means to curb the progress of climate change (Tampere 60%, Bristol 79%, Galway 81%, and Genoa 79%). The importance of individual actions was emphasized even more (Tampere 68%, Bristol 77%, Galway 85%, Genoa 86%). A considerably smaller percentage of respondents reported committing to these individual actions (Tampere 36%, Bristol 63%, Galway 64%, Genoa 48%). However, individual actions were considered insignificant in the face of the challenges posed by climate change (Tampere 36%, Genoa 29%, Galway 41%, Bristol 54%). The majority of respondents felt that their families supported them in climate action (Tampere 79%, Galway 88%, Bristol 83%, and Genoa 81%). Only a small percentage of respondents from Tampere (31%) stated needing more information about climate change (compared to Bristol at 54%, Galway at 63%, and Genoa at 78%). Overall, the perceptions of respondents from Tampere differed significantly from those of young people in other project countries.

Focus group interviews revealed a certain sense of hopelessness among young people. They perceive older generations as having more power and, therefore, more responsibility, but they do not feel they can trust that older generations will effectively solve the climate crisis.

"Why should I do something for the climate if, in return, they take away my hobbies and everything fun."

"The whole scale feels much larger when you start thinking about it alone. Many give up right away."

"We're forced to try to educate our parents because we have to live here longer. It's the responsibility of the young because parents don't understand this situation."

YOUTH EXPERIENCES OF CLIMATE EDUCATION IN FINLAND

Young people expressed frustration with climate education and current teaching practices. They felt that education should focus less on individual responsibility and more on justice and solutions —what individuals and societies can concretely do to address the climate crisis. Young people perceived climate education as repetitive and felt that teachers were unable to answer their engaging questions. According to them, everyday reality and more philosophical questions are rarely addressed in education.

During narrative workshops, religious education classes, and confirmation camps were mentioned as spaces where interesting discussions about climate change take place. Young people desired open and dialogic spaces for discussions. Framing solutions to the climate crisis should consider different worldviews and life experiences, making climate education relevant to young people from diverse backgrounds.

"It's being pushed so much, the same thing."

"They (teachers) are not more knowledgeable than we are."

TEACHER TRAINING AND COLLABORATION AMONG TEACHERS

Teachers identified similar issues in climate education as the youth did. They expressed the need to incorporate climate education into teachers' continuing education. They emphasized the importance of reassessing the core of the curriculum and tailoring climate change education to different subjects to ensure that the content evolves as students progress in their educational journey. This requires collaboration between teachers of different subjects and curriculum developers. Considering young people's perspectives and experiences in the development of climate education is crucial.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In climate education, it is recommended to:

- Involve young people from diverse backgrounds in curriculum development to ensure that content and frameworks used by teachers are relevant and meet the needs and expectations of young people.
- Create opportunities for diverse discussions about climate change, incorporating various worldviews.
- Facilitate interdisciplinary collaboration and collaboration between education providers to reduce the repetitiveness and fragmentation of climate education (e.g., developing learning paths or roadmaps for climate education from early childhood to secondary education).
- Develop biodiversity education alongside climate education.
- Develop and offer new training for teachers or increase the accessibility of existing training, while raising expectations for teacher participation in climate education training.

AREAS AND NEEDS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH INCLUDE:

• Develop learning materials for climate education that support teaching based on research.

• Investigate and develop climate education content for subjects other than geography, as current high school curricula contain the most comprehensive climate education content in geography.

• Address significant differences in climate education between general high school education and vocational education.

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LINK TO PROJECT WEBSITE: HTTPS://CCC-CATAPULT.ORG

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See the CCC-CATAPULT website for more info: