



CLIMATEGENERATION
A MILLIENNIUM LEGACY

WINDOW INTO PARIS: COP21 FINAL REPORT

WINDOW INTO PARIS: COP21 Program Summary

Recognizing that educators are critical messengers of climate and energy literacy for hundreds of students each year, Climate Generation selected a delegation of 10 Education Ambassadors to bring to the UNFCCC 21st Conference of the Parties in Paris, France December 6-December 11, 2015 through the Window into Paris program. These 10 teachers attended COP 21, as both learners and climate change communicators back to their educational settings and communities. The teachers represented diverse subject areas, grade levels, and educational settings from each of the following states: New York, North Carolina, Georgia, Minnesota, and Colorado.



These Educator Ambassadors joined 40,000 individuals from around the world in observing UN negotiations, as well as attending side events throughout the city, webcasting back to their classrooms, blogging, and attending Climate Generation sponsored round table discussions with special guests and experts. This program was part of The White House Back-To-School Climate Education Event. As a representative of the White House Climate Education and Literacy Initiative, we were able to secure a special meeting with the Assistant to the President for Science and Technology, Dr. John Holdren, to present position statements from students and citizens.

On December 12, the final day of Window Into Paris: COP21, 196 countries finalized and signed the Paris Agreement – the first global climate accord that commits all signatories to climate action. As news of the agreement spread, first to the halls of the Blue Zone – where negotiators and observers clapped and cracked Champagne – and then to the streets of Paris and beyond – where tens of thousands gathered to celebrate the agreement and challenge it to go further – and finally to our Climate Generation team when their planes touched down in the U.S., the historic importance of the moment was undeniable. The international community now has an action plan in place to address climate change that is “commensurate with the scale of the threat,” as New York Times reporter Justin Gillis puts it.

But as many have recognized in the days since the agreement, the pledges and promises made in the COP21 document are not enough by themselves to save the planet. In fact, they would lead to a world nearly twice as warm and climate-impacted as the aspirational 1.5°C target laid out in the Paris text. Now that the foundation for action is in place, however, there is much that we can all do to ensure that the Paris Agreement lives up to its commitment to limiting temperature rise to 1.5°C. Our ten education ambassadors returned from COP with a newfound drive to get more engaged in personal climate action in their communities, as well as do more in their schools and professional lives. All have continued to include climate change this year, some have become engaged with looking to divest their teacher pensions from fossil fuels, and many look ahead to science standards revision in Minnesota and hope to ensure climate change is included.

Window Into Paris: COP21 Final Photo Slideshow: https://youtu.be/1_9XD3MyVL4
Final Video Reflections of each Ambassador: <http://bit.ly/1OAEjgX>



Many thanks to Best Buy for their support of the Window Into Paris: COP21 program, donors and supporters who provided financial support and followed along, and to the many partners that guest blogged for us or joined us during the week for Cafe Roundtables. A special thanks to our #Youth4Climate partners for helping elevate youth voices and the importance of climate change education.

Guest Speakers

Ellen Anderson, University of Minnesota
Representative Melissa Hortman
Jeffrey Iverson, Journalist
Ben Lilliston, Director of Climate Strategies, Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy
Laura Bishop, Best Buy, VP Public Affairs and Sustainability
Kate Knuth; Boreas Leadership Program Director, Institute on the Environment, University of Minnesota and Beth Mercer-Taylor, Sustainable Studies Director, U of MN
Laura Bishop, Best Buy, VP Public Affairs and Sustainability
Aly Johnson-Kurtz, SustainUS Youth Delegation Leader
Kate Wolford, President McKnight Foundation
Erlend Moster Knudsen, Pole to Paris
Ed Miller, Environment Program Director Joyce Foundation

Ken Berlin, President and CEO Climate Reality Project

Guest Bloggers

Paul Moss, MPCA
Sarah Gainey, St. Johns University
Ellen Anderson, Energy Transition Lab
Beth Mercer-Taylor, University of Minnesota
Frank Niepold, NOAA Climate Office
Laney Siegner, UC-Berkeley
Raj Rajan, EcoLab Foundation

#Youth4Climate Partners

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA)
U.S. Department of Energy
Association of Science-Technology Centers (ASTC)
CLEAN Network
The Wild Center
Connect4Climate
Alliance for Climate Education
Earth Day Network
Climate Interactiv

COP21: Window into Paris BY THE NUMBERS

750 Students Reached Directly

400 Subscribers to the *Your Window Into Paris Daily Digest* with a 50% average open rate

100 Blogs written by Ambassadors, Staff and guests

15 Webcasts from COP

10 Education Ambassadors

13 Cafe Roundtables with experts including business, academia, philanthropy and education.

1 Meeting with Dr. John Holdren to present position statements



Media Coverage

Media features of our Window Into Paris program

- MinnPost [Community Voices piece by Kristen](#) (why educators) 11/28; our website [link](#)
- MPR [Climate Cast with Peter Johnson](#) 12/3; our website [link](#)
- KFAI [interview with Katie](#) 12/4; our website [link](#)
- KFAI [interview with Janet](#) 12/11; our website [link](#)
- Southwest Journal [article recapping local views](#) on the agreement 12/12
- Southwest Journal article, [Resolutions for the climate](#) (paper version has lots of our photos) 12/31
- MN Educator feature story, [Heating Up Education on Climate Science](#), Feb. 2016

Local Education Ambassador articles

- ISD 197 [article re Kristy Otte attending COP21](#) 9/18; our website [link](#)
- Star Tribune [article re Billy Koenig being selected to our educator delegation](#) 9/21; our website [link](#)
- Adirondacks paper re [Shannon Bartholomew's participation](#) in Window Into Paris 11/28; our website [link](#)
- Atlanta Intown [article re Roy Lander](#) 12/1; our website [link](#)
- Star Tribune [education blog article re Beckie Alexander](#) 12/4
- Pine Island/Zumbrota [article re Peter Johnson](#) 12/29
- Shakopee Valley News [feature story re Billy Koenig](#) 1/22

Education Ambassador HuffPost blogs

- [Phillip Haberman](#) 12/5
- [Peter Johnson](#) 12/5
- [Beckie Alexander](#) 12/6
- [Nicole Anderson](#) 12/6
- [Shannon Bartholomew](#) 12/7
- [Kathy Bosiak](#) 12/8
- [Kristy Otte](#) 12/8
- [Lauren Leith](#) 12/9
- [Billy Koenig](#) 12/9
- [Roy Lander](#) 12/9
- [Peter Johnson](#) 12/10
- [Beckie Alexander](#) 12/10

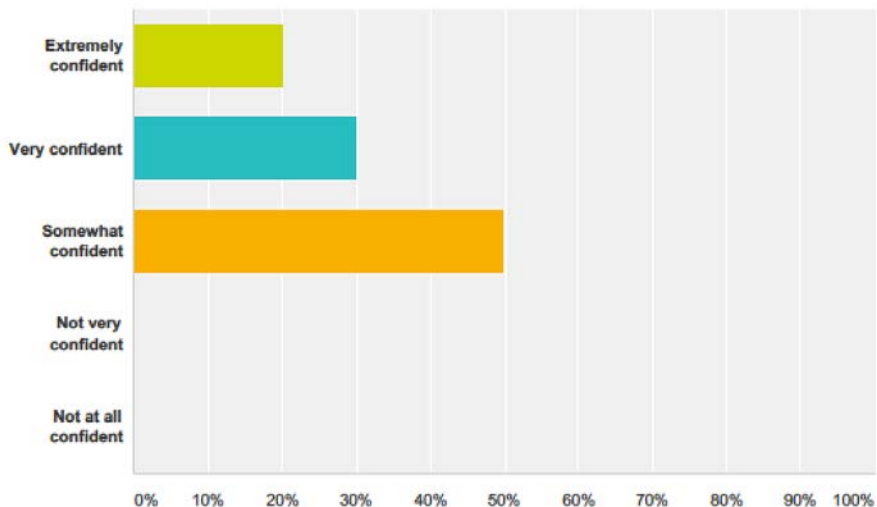
WINDOW INTO PARIS: COP21 Program Evaluation Results

Our 10 Education Ambassadors reported an increase in their confidence to teach about climate change science and policy after the Windows Into Paris program.

Pre-survey

Q14 Overall, how confident are you about teaching about climate change?

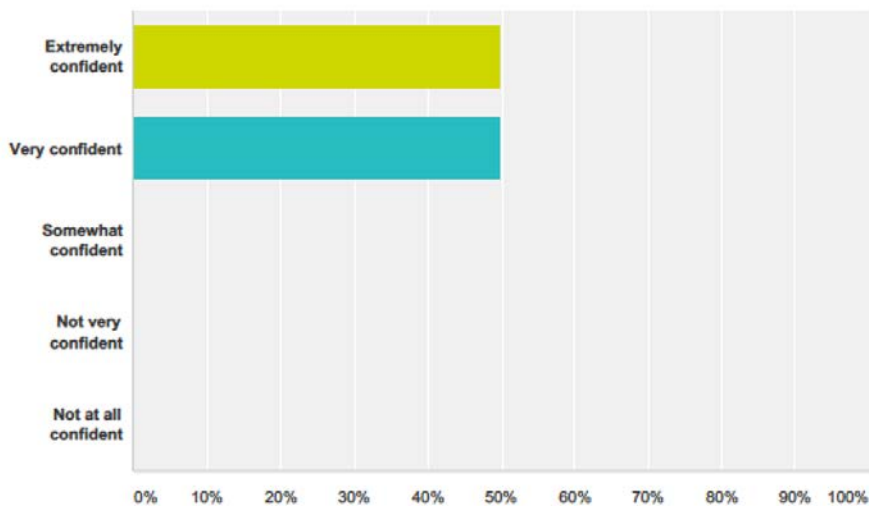
Answered: 10 Skipped: 0



Post-survey

Q3 Overall, how confident are you about teaching about climate change?

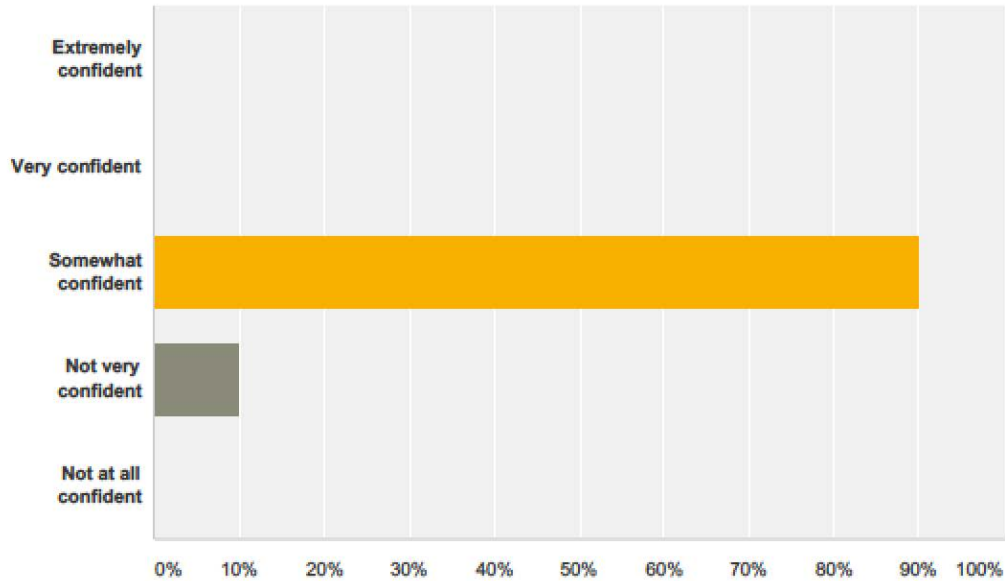
Answered: 10 Skipped: 0



Pre-survey

Q15 Overall how confident are you about teaching about climate change policy?

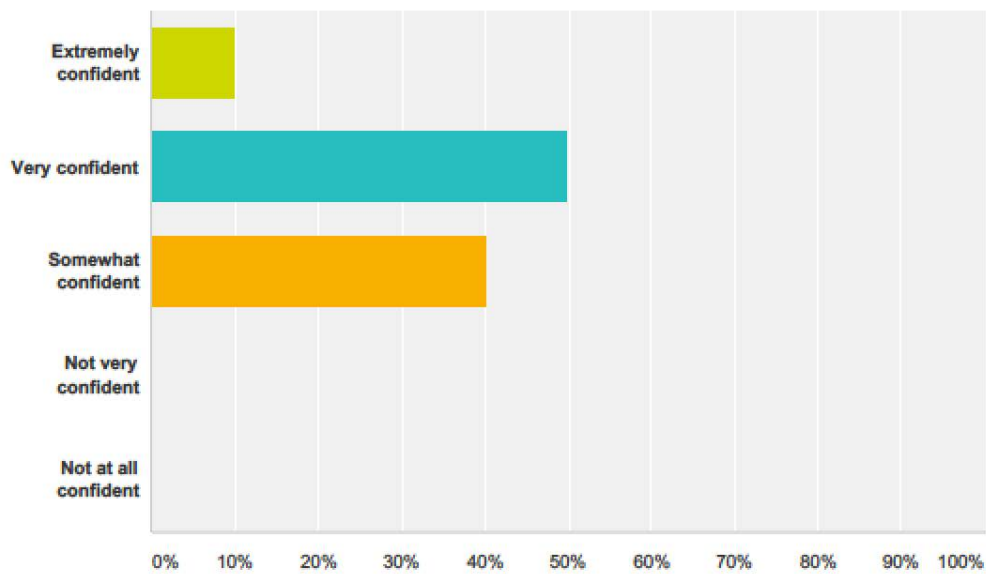
Answered: 10 Skipped: 0



Post survey

Q4 Overall how confident are you about teaching about climate change policy?

Answered: 10 Skipped: 0



The Ambassadors reported the Window Into Paris experience was overwhelmingly positive, educational, and in many cases transformational for them personally and professionally. They also reported their presence in Paris was a point of pride and inspiration for their students observing and following them back home.

On the Roundtables...

- The Cafe Roundtables were extremely informative and I enjoyed participating in them every day.
- I really enjoyed hearing from our elected officials, university professors, business leaders, and other activists.
- The discussions that stick out the most were Melissa Hortman, Ali Johnson, and Poles to Paris.

On Logistics...

- All of the logistics were handled well. Despite sharing a room with three other guys, we got along great and handled a small space with much humor!
- Wonderfully- Freedom but responsibility where I think most adults thrive. Plus support with anything if you needed it.

On the google hangouts...

- 100% said they would consider using google hangout again.
- The Google Hangout went well and I think that it was extremely beneficial for my students. There were a few challenges experienced on the other end of the Hangout but those problems were resolved and it ended up going really well. Upon reflection this is something that I would have liked to do even more of during the experience because I found it to be so valuable.

On blogging...

The Blogging went great I got great comments from my students. They were to read the Blogs and comment on them. They were difficult at the time but worth it.

Impact on students...

- It had a big impact. They could really relate to the news that was happening. It has given them a deeper understanding of the complexities of problems and how interconnected we are
- A strong impact. My Ecology club was sputtering but received an injection of new blood and energy. There is a new curiosity, And students now come up to talk to me about climate change and its effects. Other teachers from my school, pass kids along to me that have questions on climate change.
- My students are very proud of me for going to Paris for the talks. They know that this is something that I am passionate about based on many other things that I do here in the school and in the community. We often have impromptu discussions on climate policy or personal actions in class since returning because they had read something or heard something on the tv or facebook. So it's been a great discussion tool.
- I believe that this experience had a powerful impact on my students as my direct participation brought these negotiations to life. Through my experience I believe that students have a greater understanding that these types of opportunities exist and that they are worth taking your time to apply to. My hope is that they see knowledge and learning as an action step that they can take to take action on climate change. My current students and future students will be given a direct window into the Paris negotiations, which I believe is of great importance.
- A fellow teacher told me on my return, "I am really impressed by the knowledge of your students. They know more about climate change than I do, and probably more than most adults do!" My

students share what they are seeing and hearing outside of school with respect to climate change. I love that they are so aware of the outside world with regards to climate change!

When you think back on your experience at COP21, what do you remember the clearest?

- The energy and emotion. The can do attitude of the people that were there. But also recognizing the extreme political chess game that has to be played.
- The passion and commitment to change that the small island nations brought and were able to affect real change in the document. I find this to be super inspiring, even though they are a small economically challenged group, they were able to get a major part put in the agreement.
- By far, the most impactful were the UNESCO presentation, the meeting with John Holdren, the sheer number of people who came to Paris for this event, and especially the wide variety of indigenous peoples who came. I also valued the friends I made within the Climate Generation Group and hope to continue to work together.
- What has stuck with me the most from the conference is how drastically climate change and deforestation are impacting indigenous people and the small island nations. I was also impressed with how much other countries have done to reduce their carbon use. And...YEAH, we have a global agreement!
- When I look back on my experience at COP21 I remember the energy from all of the involved participants. Hearing from our cohort of passionate educators from around the country about what they are doing in their classrooms was deeply inspiring. Hearing, seeing and bearing witness to the energy from all of the youth advocates was incredibly powerful as well. Experiencing the testimony from impacted community members from around the world was alarming and truly brought the issue of climate change to life. When I think about my experience at COP21 I think about the energy and passion of all of the involved participants and it further inspires to continue to bring attention to this issue.

Parting thoughts...

- This conference was a turning point for the world. It didn't totally solve the problem, but it did get us started in the right direction. I was proud to be there and will point back to this conference as the first step we took as a world to start to address climate change.
- My experience as part of Climate Generation's Window into Paris has transformed my classroom by bringing the complex problems of the world into my classroom. It has allowed them to view the problem of climate change as both a world citizen and a US citizen.
- After this program I can no longer be a silent supporter.
- My participation as an Education Ambassador for Climate Generation at the UNFCCC COP21 Negotiations was the most powerfully transformative professional development experience of my career. It further helped me to see there are opportunities available for teachers and students and as an educator I believe that it is my responsibility to seek these experiences whenever possible. I will be using this experience in my classroom for years to come as I was given the unique opportunity to experience these historic negotiations first hand.
- I transition out of this experience with a further developed commitment to taking action on climate change and I pledge to continue to do everything that I can to protect and preserve our environment for future generations.