

Our Future, Our Mic

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Young people have nothing to gain and everything to lose from climate change. The ignorance towards our planet's call for help is egregious and anger provoking. Amid the deep misfortune of climate change, young activists have not failed to bring people of all age groups together, striving to fix the broken world that is about to be handed to us. Teen-age climate activists such as Greta Thunberg deserve to be acknowledged for their efforts and courage as well as be viewed as moral heroes in our society. The future of our planet is no longer guaranteed and needs to be fought for.

Climate change has been a topic of discussion for years, backed up by a tremendous amount of scientific proof. Certain world leaders holding a significant amount of power to their names have not started to work towards a solution, nor have they admitted a problem exists. In 2015, the Paris climate agreement became the world's major plan to take steps towards action. In theory, this agreement is attempting to get the planet's carbon dioxide emitters working together to cut the heat-trapping gases being released into the atmosphere ("Opinion | World Leaders Are Failing"). Donald Trump, the President of the third most populated country in the world – the United States, is openly in denial of climate change existing. Mr. Trump is planning on removing the United States from the Paris agreement next year, which "Not only makes the United States the object of international contempt – it also deeply undercuts the accord's effectiveness" ("Opinion | World Leaders Are Failing"). A country as populated as the United States not taking serious action towards a green plan will be immensely harmful to the environment. Against this, other leaders have taken action. Justin Trudeau, the Canadian Prime Minister, has addressed climate change and promised to act on his words. Since his election in October 2015, Trudeau has sparked hope in Canadian citizens for change. Canada has joined the Paris agreement, and

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Trudeau has promised to fulfill the G20 commitment, work on developing North American clean energy and endow the Low Carbon Economy Trust with \$2 billion (“Prime Minister Justin Trudeau”).

Moreover, teen-age climate activists have played an influential role in raising awareness amongst young adults. Activists like Greta Thunberg fearlessly speaking their mind provides a common language, sets an example, and brings the younger population together to strive for change. “Thousands of children in Britain have followed Ms. Thunberg's example by joining "climate strikes", skipping lessons on a Friday to protest. She has also addressed Extinction Rebellion activists in London who want the UK to become carbon neutral by 2025” (Webster and Cooke 2). Teen-age activists alone surely do not have the authority nor the experience to make the changes they so strive for, but they are doing a remarkable job bringing this issue to light. Taking young activists seriously and working with them could improve the path the world is heading down. A passion such as improving our damaging habits is inspiring adolescent individuals to get more educated and raise awareness. The International Congress of Youth Voices is an organization bringing passionate young activists and writers together to speak and act. “Teenagers speak with a directness and a moral clarity that is desperately rare in our elected leaders, and perhaps in the adult species as a whole” (Eggers: Why We Should Listen to Teenagers). Young activists appear on almost every social media platform, inevitably coming up on a teen-ager’s screen one way or another.

The young generation is often criticized and ridiculed by older people who refer to climate change as a “hoax”. Essentially, the leaders in denial of climate change tend to be 50 years old and over, indicating that they will not be around to suffer the consequences when a true threat to life comes around. This suggests that they have nothing to lose by carrying on with

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harmful actions that benefit them personally and financially. Coming back to President Trump, he has recently taken the time to invalidate Greta Thunberg on Twitter – a commonly used social media platform. “Greta must work on her Anger Management problem, then go to a good old-fashioned movie with a friend! Chill Greta, Chill!” Trump tweeted to his 67.5 million followers on Twitter (Boer 19). By denying the issue, leaders such as Donald Trump encourage millions of supporters to acquire a similar opinion, diluting the intensity and reality of the situation. On the other hand, young people are doing everything in their power to make a change. Certain members of the International Congress of Youth Voices have a personal experience that brought them insight; while some of them are just naturally aware and angry. “In 10 years I’ll be 28. My life will just be beginning when the world is ending” (Eggers: Why We Should Listen to Teenagers).

The passion and devotion of young activists proves genuine concern and shines light on potential future politicians. This strong determination has the potential to drastically reduce and eventually get rid of harmful factors in human life. Young climate activists deserve to be heard; the future is theirs, yet they are watching poor decisions slowly devour their home before they get the chance to save the planet. Reducing ignorance, bringing communities together and focusing on the consequences of self-centered decisions is just the beginning. These people are wise, inspiring and kind. The young generation is growing older and wiser every day, standing up for the Earth they deserve. Our future, our mic.

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