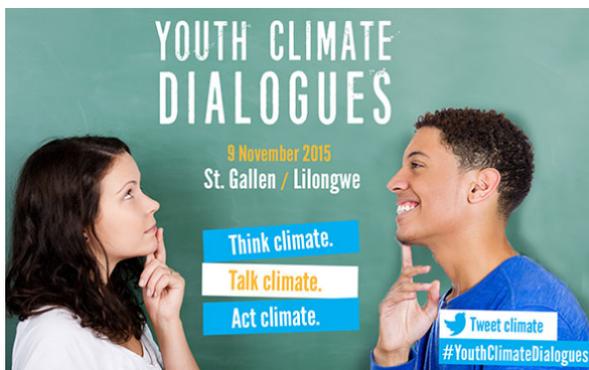


Climate change in the classroom: from theoretical concept to reality

Article, 23.11.2015

The SDC and the United Nations Institute for Training and Research are staging Youth Climate Dialogues at three Swiss high schools. Swiss pupils share their thoughts on climate change via Skype with pupils from a developing country. A report from the Kantonsschule Burggraben in St Gallen.



Youth Climate Dialogues: Swiss high-school pupils in direct contact with pupils from developing countries. © SDC

"We realised the impact climate change can have on people." On this November evening Amélie and Joel from Class 3aL of the Kantonsschule am Burggraben are addressing their fellow pupils, teachers, representatives of the SDC and the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR), parents and media representatives in the assembly hall of the Kantonsschule am Burggraben in St Gallen. They are talking in English about their experience three days earlier when they had a video conference by Skype with a girls' class in Lilongwe, Malawi, on the subject of climate change.

The pupils in Lilongwe talked about floods that swept houses away and claimed lives, and about falling yields in agriculture and the fishing industry. They gave the St Gallen pupils a sense of what it means to be directly affected by the results of climate change. What had seemed far removed from their lives now became real and conceivable. Climate change is no longer just a theoretical concept, remarks one girl at the evening event.





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UN climate change course

If the theoretical understanding the young people have turns into a realisation of how climate change affects people's lives, the SDC will have achieved one of the goals it set itself with the three Youth Climate Dialogues. "We want to raise awareness in society as a whole, but especially among young people, of the results of climate change," explains Daniel Maselli of the SDC, the Youth Climate Dialogues project leader.

Today's high school students are tomorrow's decision-makers, and they are very conscious of the fact. "We are the generation that is affected by this problem and we have to face up to it," says one of the students, Noah, in his short presentation.

From 30 November to 11 December the world's attention will be focused on climate change during the UN Paris Climate Conference, also known as COP21. Instead of having a stand at the conference in Paris, the SDC this year opted to hold the Youth Climate Dialogues to draw the attention of Swiss youth to climate change, says Daniel Maselli.

The young people aged 16 to 17 prepared for the Skype video conference partly by following the online climate change course on the UN CC:Learn platform. This consists of six modules that each take two hours to complete. If all the modules are completed successfully the student is awarded a certificate. The St Gallen pupils have completed two modules. Students Simon and Noah say they have gained an in-depth knowledge through following the e-course.

Teaching the basics

The UN CC:Learn platform was set up in 2009 with SDC support. "Until now over 20,000 people have registered for the course," Amrei Horstbrink, a specialist with the UNITAR Climate Change Programme, tells the St Gallen students. This includes people from all 195 parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.

Malawi's Strategy on Climate Change Learning

Thanks to the SDC UN CC:Learn project and the support of UNITAR, Malawi has since 2013 had a national climate change learning strategy that integrates climate change in curricula from pre-school to university. It is vitally important for Malawi to invest in its youth in climate change matters, stresses Shamiso Najira, Chief Environmental Officer at the Environmental Affairs Department in Malawi and a UN CC:Learn ambassador. She is linked live to the event.

The St Gallen students also filmed short videos as part of the Youth Climate Dialogues project. These dealt with global warming amongst other issues. A compilation of these films will be shown at the Paris Climate Conference.

Besides St Gallen, Youth Climate Dialogues are taking place at the Gymnase de Burier in La-Tour-de-Peilz (Vaud, 18 November 2015) and at the Liceo cantonale di Lugano 1 (Ticino, 9 December 2015).

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Documents

 [Flyer for Youth Climate Dialogue in Lugano/Kampala, 9 December 2015 \(PDF, Number of pages 2, 713.7 kB, English\) \(/content/dam/deza/en/documents/themen/klimawandel/Flyer-Youth-Climate-Dialogues-Lugano_EN.pdf\)](#)

 [Flyer for Youth Climate Dialogue in La-Tour-de-Peilz/Niamey, 18 November 2015 \(fr\) \(PDF, Number of pages 2, 745.5 kB, French\) \(/content/dam/deza/fr/documents/themen/klimawandel/Flyer-Youth-Climate-Dialogues-La-Tour-de-Peilz_FR.pdf\)](#)

 [Flyer Youth Climate Dialogue in St. Gallen/Lilongwe, 9 November 2015 \(PDF, Number of pages 2, 705.8 kB, English\) \(/content/dam/deza/en/documents/themen/klimawandel/Youth-Climate-Dialogues-St-Gallen_EN.pdf\)](#)

 [Kanti im Klimadialog mit Malawi \(High school in climate dialogue with Malawi\), article in the St Gallen Tagblatt, 13.11.2015, p.47 \(de\) \(PDF, Page 1, 178.1 kB, German\) \(/content/dam/deza/de/documents/themen/klimawandel/Zeitungsartikel-SG-Galler-Tagblatt-13-11-2015_DE.pdf\)](#)

Links

[Climate change and the environment \(/deza/en/home/themes-sdc/climate-change.html\)](#)

[SDC Global Programme Climate Change \(/deza/de/home/deza/organisation/bereiche/globale_zusammenarbeit/globalprogramm_klimawandel.html\)](#)

[UN CC:Learn e-Course on Climate Change !\[\]\(0d5ec72f61334709c3fc9450209b754f_img.jpg\) \(http://uncclearn.org/\)](#)

[United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change !\[\]\(b792654f2cef9719eabeb6c5be00811e_img.jpg\) \(http://unfccc.int/2860.php\)](#)

[Kantonsschule am Burggraben, St. Gallen \(de\) !\[\]\(7d1d6890825e83a6a4a51febe2dcc7f3_img.jpg\) \(http://www.ksbg.ch/kantonsschule-am-burggraben-stgallen.html\)](#)

Multimedia

[Youth Climate Dialogue: Official Trailer !\[\]\(b64b40baaee5acddc1eab8538ba84754_img.jpg\) \(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qTaQ-ALFth4\)](#)