



# CLIMATE CRISIS: HOW DID WE GET THIS FAR?

MONDAY 21ST NOVEMBER 2022  
TERRA, THE SUSTAINABILITY PAVILION AT EXPO CITY DUBAI



المجلس العالمي لأجيال المستقبل  
NEXT GEN WORLD MAJLIS

FOSTERING CONVERSATIONS. EMPOWERING CHANGE.



# SPEAKERS



**Ameera Yousif AlHammedi**  
Emirates National Schools  
Al Manseer Abu Dhabi



**Ella David**  
Clarion School  
L.L.C



**Emmanuel Tanaka Maviyo**  
Cambridge International  
School Dubai



**Juliana Zabaleta**  
GEMS Dubai American  
Academy



**Kristina Gezlan**  
The Pearl Academy  
Aldar Academies



**Loki Taumoepeau**  
The Arbor School  
Al Furjan



**Mohammed Yusuf Suhail**  
Delhi Private School  
Jebel Ali



**Muhammad Ibrahim Siddiqui**  
Our Own High School  
Al Warqa



**Nathan Ged D. De Torres**  
The Philippine School  
Dubai



**Oscar Vingut Laycock**  
The British School  
Al Khubairat

# MODERATOR



**Helen Farmer**  
Moderator  
Dubai Eye 103.8

**O**n World Children’s Day, we launched a new season of Next Gen World Majlis by inviting the leaders of tomorrow to discuss their thoughts on climate action and the future of our planet.

The discussion was held at Terra, the Sustainability Pavilion at Expo city Dubai and included students between the ages of 9 and 12 from across the UAE. The participating students were selected to take part in the sessions after having submitted their audio applications through their schools.

In front of an audience of classmates, teachers, parents and members of the Expo City Dubai team, the ten students shared insights on the dangers of climate change, discussed their thoughts on how humanity can do better and described how their schools are helping educate the next generation. The discussion was moderated by Helen Farmer, a broadcast journalist and host of ‘Afternoons with Helen Farmer’ on Dubai Eye 103.8. Helen, a mother of two, uses social media platforms to write about parenthood and is hopeful the next generation will lead the way in solving the Climate Crisis.

### **What does your school do to teach about climate change?**

Students began the discussion by explaining how their school is educating students while making a difference in their community.

Loki (Arbour School, Dubai) explained how ‘the biodome school’ embedded Eco literacy classes into the curriculum and teaches students “what we need to know to better the world.” The biodomes at his school are used to cultivate plants which are then used by the school kitchen.

Ella (Clarion School, Dubai) described how the school uses Styrofoam eating worms in sustainability class projects. Nathan (Philippine School, Dubai) and Kristina (The Pearl Academy, Abu Dhabi) explained how their schools focus on plants being critical to our climate with projects such as ‘taking care of a plant’ and aeroponics. All students talked about a range of recycling projects at their schools with some involving prizes for the most recycled materials collected.



## Why can't we ignore the problem and how can you convince someone that climate change is real?

All ten participants were very concerned about the current path we are on with Emmanuel (The Cambridge School, Dubai) particularly concerned about the suffering of future generations. Ameera (Emirates National Schools, Abu Dhabi) is also worried about the impact climate change will have on ocean life. Oscar (The British School, Al Khubairat) echoed Ameera's concerns, stating that seagrass and coral produce a significant amount of the world's oxygen (and removes significant amounts of carbon too).

Everyone agreed with Ibrahim (Our Own High School, Al Warqa) and Kristina that it is difficult for one person to make a big difference, so we all need to act together. He suggested that world leaders need to set an example by acting together too. Ella argued that "we need to help the Earth, not go against it". Students had a range of ideas for persuading their friends to realise that climate change is a real threat.

Nathan recalled a time when a friend did not believe in climate change; this prompted him to conduct research and share facts with his friend, which allowed him to improve his own persuasive skills to try and change his mind. Oscar suggested showing video evidence and Kristina suggested more school projects such as the documentaries about climate change she had made at school.



## What could we do differently?

Most people recognise that climate change is a real threat to our way of life, however, many don't take action. Loki states that "convenience is the detriment to our society", claiming we all need to go out of our way to do what is best for everyone. All students agreed that people should recycle more.

Juliana (GEMS Dubai American Academy) and Ameera offered the example of reusing and repurposing plastic bottles as a way to reduce the amount of waste going to landfills and ending up in our oceans. Ibrahim and Emmanuel explained that recycling alone is not enough: instead of the 3Rs we are familiar with – Reduce, Reuse & Recycle – a fourth R, Repair, should be added to the mix to encourage us to repair items before discarding or even recycling them.

Yousuf (Delhi Private School, Jebal Ali) also called on people to plant more trees in order to actively take carbon dioxide out of the atmosphere.

Ella, Oscar and Loki highlighted the issue of food waste while offering some practical solutions we can all implement like thinking about where our food comes from and buying local produce (Ella), eating leftovers rather than throwing excess food away (Oscar) and composting food waste (Loki).

Nathan and Kristina suggested that people should consider alternative products which are more environmentally friendly such as using biodegradable items (Nathan) and palm oil-free chocolate (Kristina). Their hope was that reducing the demand for environmentally damaging products would reduce the supply, forcing companies to produce less. Loki explained that simply aiming for sustainability isn't enough: we need to use less and create more in order to live in abundance.

### What could governments do differently?

All our participants had a range of ideas for governments to implement, including making citizens live more sustainably. They also discussed various ways in which governments could think differently.

Kristina initiated a discussion about the effectiveness of the ban on plastic bags in Dubai and suggested this should be adopted in more countries, whereas Loki requested to see a ban on fossil fuel use except for cooking food. He also suggested forcing more people to use energy from renewable sources in order to reduce the price of renewable energy.

Emmanuel suggested a law limiting food waste, triggering a discussion about the effectiveness of 'take what you like, eat what you take' policies in restaurants. Juliana called for added protection for trees and more control over where trees can be cut down.

Ibrahim questioned government pledges to reduce climate change and called for more credible policies rather than empty promises. He suggested that governments track the carbon footprint of all residents of a country and reward those doing the most to reduce theirs.

Ella and Loki shared their frustration with countries competing with each other to build the tallest buildings, highlighting that they should compete for being the most sustainable instead (Loki), or building fewer malls and more parks and green spaces (Ella). Yousuf also recommended that governments replace empty spaces in malls and public spaces with vertical farms for growing food.



## Renewable energy and a machine to solve climate change?

When challenged to describe a machine to solve climate change, students came up with a number of innovative suggestions. Loki and Ella, however, were quick to point out that we also need to consider how the machine is being built and powered, not just its function.

Loki described a drone he has seen that can plant 100,000 small trees in a day and suggested a machine that can renew nutrients in soil so that more trees can grow quickly. Juliana and

Yousuf thought about a machine which can turn any materials into compost with Emmanuel suggesting that we use the natural gasses released during composting instead of digging for oil and gas.

Ameera suggested inventing a machine that can recycle anything and turn it into something new, whereas Oscar would like a machine that removes carbon from the atmosphere.

Students also shared examples of inventions that already exist: Loki and Ibrahim described windows that convert sunlight to electricity and bioluminescent algae used instead of electric lights. Ella recalled solar powered phone charging stations she saw in the USA.

Students agreed that renewable energy sources such as wind and solar are the answer to solving climate change with Loki remarking that “fossil fuels are dead” because they’re “fossil” and therefore, should not be used anymore.



## Is Expo City Dubai sustainable?

Throughout the discussion it was clear that students were very aware of the responsibility that big corporations have towards environmental sustainability and climate change. Many brands operating in the oil, F&B, and real estate industries were mentioned by name.

Students questioned the sustainability of Expo 2020 Dubai, particularly the large number of buildings for the event and even the brightness of the lighting in the auditorium where the session was being held.

Loki, however, stated that buildings are being reused for this Next Gen World Majlis session, as well as being reused and recycled to create Expo City Dubai. It was also highlighted to students that the venue for this session, Terra, The Sustainability Pavilion is an LEED certified building which generates all of its own power and that Expo city itself is a car-free city.

## Key Outcomes from this Next Gen World Majlis:

Thank you to all our 'planetists' for participating in this session and sharing their research, ideas and understanding of Climate Action. During this session we learned that schools across the UAE are playing their part by integrating climate action into the curriculum, exposing students to the latest technology being used to make a difference. We all want to do better and can make small changes to our everyday lives that would make a big difference, however, it is clear that some changes might be too costly at this point in time.

Although Terra is on the journey to becoming a net zero carbon building, Expo City Dubai also recognises that there is a need to reduce energy use, even if the source of that energy is renewable. The participants were reassured by Marjan Faraidooni, Chief of Education and Culture at Expo City Dubai, who was present in the audience that Expo City Dubai will review the comments made about the lighting in the auditorium and consider how we can do better as a city too.

## Key takeaways from this session:

- Climate action is everyone's responsibility
- Small changes can make a big impact – we should think about the decisions we make each day and consider if we are doing what is right, or what is convenient
- Consider what we buy and what we throw away – can we buy local products and can an item be repaired before we throw it away?
- Leaders should stop making empty promises and offer credible policies that can be implemented
- Create an environment of accountability, whether on a corporate or personal level, where sustainable behaviour is rewarded but also where damaging behaviour is addressed and penalized.
- It's important to recognize that schools in the UAE have already implemented some great sustainable initiatives within their communities.
- Young students are very much aware of environmental issues and are clearly demanding more accountability from leaders and corporations



Next Gen World Majlis aims to empower the young learners of today by fostering global conversations that will lead to change. While each discussion highlights the many challenges being faced, it also provides us with fresh perspectives and potential solutions for a better world.

More Next Gen World Majlis sessions will be announced soon so stay tuned

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