

ZCB and young people

Opportunities for young people in a zero carbon Britain

Louisa Casson of the UK Youth Climate Coalition (UKYCC)

Every young person has a stake in a future free from climate chaos. We've grown up with the knowledge that we need to make a change in the way our society works – and we have the creative thinking and the determination to make this happen.

The UK Youth Climate Coalition aims to inspire, empower, mobilise and unite young people to take positive action against climate change and become drivers for change towards a zero carbon future.

We see this happening by making sure there are opportunities for British youth to learn key knowledge and skills, and gain employment experience, to enable them to take a proactive role in a zero carbon economy.

The UKYCC envisions a world in which formal and non-formal education promotes an understanding of the issues of climate change and sustainability in young people, equipping them with the knowledge to apply this together in their daily lives. In this world:

The national curriculum prioritises a strong understanding of the scientific and ethical issues behind climate change.

An informed and educated understanding of climate change is vital for young people and future generations to live in the economy, society and environment of the next few decades. Climate change must be recognised as a political, cultural, economic and social issue and should be integrated across the curriculum. This will also fulfil the British government's commitment to Article Six of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change regarding climate change education, and

their duty to ensure that all children have universal access to a basic education of how climate change will impact on the world in which they will be living and working.

Everyone has the opportunity to participate in sustainable initiatives in their schools, colleges, universities, other non-formal learning contexts and wider communities.

Extra-curricular activities support young people to imagine and implement innovative sustainability solutions, enabling them to become change makers while still in formal education. In their wider communities, we envision a strong grassroots youth climate movement, which offers workshops and projects to channel the energy and creativity of young people into productive contributions to a zero carbon society.

Education prepares and empowers young people to work in the green economy, providing the skills needed to take up meaningful green jobs for all.

Both formal and non-formal education encourages young people to take active responsibility for their environment and equips them with knowledge and the capacity to make a valuable contribution to a zero carbon society.

The UKYCC envisions green jobs with fair pay and real progression opportunities made available to all young people as part of a strong green economy in the United Kingdom.

Green jobs give Britain the chance to offer meaningful employment opportunities to its citizens, who in return gain the opportunity to be at the heart of the transition to an environmentally sustainable economy.

We want to see young people's creative drive help shape the broadening of the definition of employment in a zero carbon economy. We define green jobs in four main ways:

- Green jobs are long-term, not just for the short-run. This can include training programmes and apprenticeships designed to lead to stable and long-term employment.
- Green jobs provide a way to improve your personal set of working skills and ensure future opportunities for building your career.
- Green jobs must be non-exploitative and provide a 'living wage', particularly with respect to young people in full-time employment for the first time.
- Green jobs are sustainable and have stewardship of the environment at their core.

New green jobs are created in all sectors, supported by investment, innovation and legislation.

Green jobs are not limited to traditional sectors such as waste management and renewable energy construction. We envision governmental support to build confidence across an ethical and environmentally sustainable economy, exploring the full range of possibilities for new forms of green employment in a zero carbon future. While 'direct' green jobs involve the manufacture, installation and maintenance of environmental technology, such as solar panels, we also envision the expansion of 'indirect' green jobs that are linked to maintaining and improving the quality of our natural environment – such as 'greening' existing jobs.

Everyone is supported to be a part of the transition to a zero carbon economy, including provision for individuals to make their current jobs and workplaces more sustainable.

Access to training and education is fair and open to people of all backgrounds and ages, ensuring that the opportunities of the green economy are open to everyone.

Education on sustainability and reducing carbon emissions is extended beyond young people to enable existing employment sectors to make effective changes to create green jobs across society. This involves reconceptualising the workplace, moving away from wasteful, carbon intensive workspaces

by introducing or extending recycling facilities, low carbon travel initiatives, by limiting paper usage, using electricity more efficiently and encouraging sustainable lifestyle practices.

We believe that empowered youth must be at the centre of our pathway to a zero carbon future. Making green jobs and education opportunities readily available to young people will form the key building blocks for a healthy, just future.

About the author:

Louisa Casson works as a Communications Officer for the UK Youth Climate Coalition. Run entirely by a team of highly motivated volunteers aged 18-29, the UKYCC campaigns on issues closely relating to young people as part of a wider, cross-generational movement for change. The UKYCC believes that to tackle climate change we need an inspiring vision of how we want the world to be and a movement that anyone can feel part of.

