

Dear _____ GreenPlace

*Interdisciplinary Workshops & Community
Ceilidhs exploring Climate Change for COP26*

Lewis Hou and Katie Weldon, November 2021



Foreword

"Am deeply proud to be associated with Dear Green Place and the artists, facilitators and participants that delivered and engaged the project. This collection of workshops, performances and encounters arrived in autumn 2021, a time when the arts centre was very much in flux and working out how to meet our core aims with limited access to the building and the ongoing pandemic to contend with. Planning creative activity at this point in time required everyone to be responsive as we all worked to establish boundaries and negotiate shifting public health advice. The flexibility and adaptability of Science Ceilidh was impressive and appreciated. Lewis and Katie delivered engaging and accessible workshops rooted in complex and challenging climate science. It was a joy to sit in class and watch the children around me consider their relationship to the science they were being presented with. The ceilidh itself felt successful and satisfying in many ways - the children presenting their original dances reflecting the science they were exploring; the keen interest and attendance from their families and the high production values of the event itself; it was a real highlight to be present in the space. The format of the ceilidh, the formal and informal nature of the event and the intergenerational appeal it offers, feel really exciting to embrace in the present moment as we move into recovery from a pandemic that has prevented moments of collective celebration. As a venue we have very much enjoyed working with Science Ceilidh and look forward to finding new ways to collaborate with the organisation in the months and years ahead."



Matt Addicott - Platform Arts Manager



Lewis Hetherington - Project Lead

"Dear Green Place was a project defined by inspiring and fearless creative activity, and Science Ceilidh were an invaluable part of our overall programme. We wanted to create ways in which the people of North East Glasgow could think about, and respond to, the Climate Crisis. We wanted people to be able to share their hopes and fears, and then to think about the action that they want to see happen. There was a wonderful mix of things on offer from visual art workshops in nursery schools to creative writing workshops with retired older people, from climate summits in primary schools, to interactive

plays in secondary schools. We wanted to create a project which wasn't afraid to look directly at the challenges we are facing, and think about new ways for us all to live in harmony with the natural world. The Climate Ceilidhs we created in collaboration with Science Ceilidh were the perfect culmination to this project. Full of joy, insight and creativity, these two events brought the community together in a way which felt accessible and fun, whilst emboldening all of us to face the future. "



Overview

Over a 4 week period, Science Ceilidh worked with a total of 6 classes across 2 schools in Easterhouse delivering 24 workshops and co-hosting 2 ceilidhs with the arts centre Platform to explore climate change. This was part of the Dear Green Place initiative, led by Lewis Hetherington, which was a creative programme of workshops, performances and events across northeast Glasgow.

Each week the classes were visited for a 75 minute workshop during the school day which took place in the classrooms and gym hall. In the final week each school hosted a community ceilidh for family and friends at Platform to share their learning.

Throughout the workshops pupils worked with the Science Ceilidh team to develop a creative movement model that represented climate change. Alongside developing a creative climate change model, the pupils shared their hopes and fears of what the future would look like in 30 years time. After spending the first two workshops exploring what climate change means for the world, Scotland and locally to Easterhouse, the pupils considered ways their community could help tackle climate change. They expressed these ideas through drawings which were presented in the format of a community map.

The project culminated with pupils performing their climate change model at the community ceilidh. The pupils also shared their community maps with the opportunity for their family and friends to contribute their own ideas to the map. A few of the Dear Green Place project performances were also presented at the ceilidh.

School	Class	Number of Pupils
Aultmore Park	P6	62
St. Benedict's	P5 and 6	64
		126

Event	Audience	Number of Attendees
Aultmore Park Climate Change Ceilidh	Friends and Family	20
St. Benedict's Climate Change Ceilidh	Friends and Family	72
		92

Highlights

One pupil was thrilled to see a fiddle in real life, they had never heard one played live before and said it was their favourite part of the workshops.

Many of the pupils had never been to a ceilidh prior to this project. After helping host and perform at one, they said how much they enjoyed it and couldn't wait to go to another.

One of the families who attended the ceilidh at shared with us that since learning ways to reduce their impact on climate change from the ceilidh they have started participating in meat free Monday's as a family.

Project Aims

Pupils

- ...Increase their awareness of climate change impacts in Easterhouse, Scotland and the world
- ...Consider what they would like the world to be in the future
- ...Explore ways they and their local community can help tackle climate change
- ...Reinforce their learning using creative movement and arts

Content



Week 1

- Exploring what pupils like about their local area, Scotland and the world
- Exploring what they think the world will be like in 30 years time
- Defining what climate change means to the pupils
- Learning more about what climate change is and what it means for us locally and worldwide



Week 2

- Coming up with creative movements to represent climate change
- Focusing on one particular theme of climate change; floods, wildfires and drought
- Starting to think about small actions we can do to help climate change



Week 3

- Finalising our creative movement model to explain climate change
- Drawing out an action we and our local community can do to help climate change
- Preparing a script to describe our creative movement model to our audience



Week 4

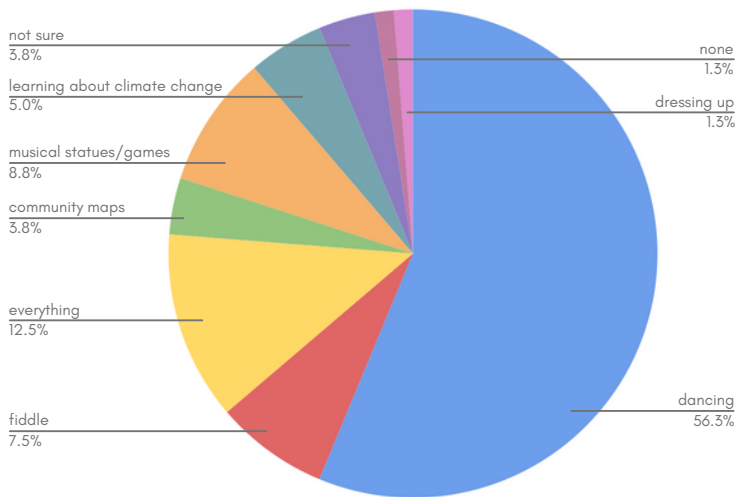
- Rehearsing the creative movement model
- Finalising their community action drawing
- Hosting and performing their creative movement model at a ceilidh for friends and family
- Engaging with other climate themed activities at the ceilidh e.g. a pedal powered light box

Impact on the learners

Pupils found the workshop content enjoyable and particularly benefitted from expressing their learning through creative movement. The pupils had a good baseline knowledge on climate change observed through verbal questions and feedback forms. Their knowledge on the topic was enhanced from the workshops with the pupils learning specifically about climate change in their local area and on an individual level.

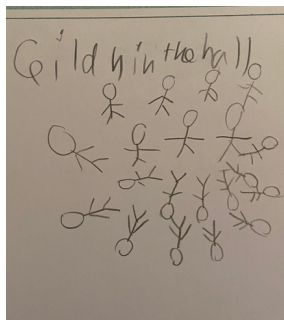
What the learners enjoyed

"Which activities did you enjoy the most?"



Though many of the pupils were initially hesitant when the dance element of the workshops was introduced, this ended up being the most enjoyable part of the workshops for over half of the learners. Music was also a firm favourite with nearly a fifth of the pupils saying that the musical statues and fiddle were their highlights. Just under one in 10 specifically highlighted climate change or the community action maps as their highlight, and encouragingly, a similar proportion enjoyed everything! An overwhelming majority of pupils (72%) rated their enjoyment of the workshops highly (4+/5). Over half the pupils acknowledged they had learned something new about climate change, found out more about climate change in their local community and found out ways to reduce their impact on climate change. This is encouraging with these three statements covering two of the four project aims.

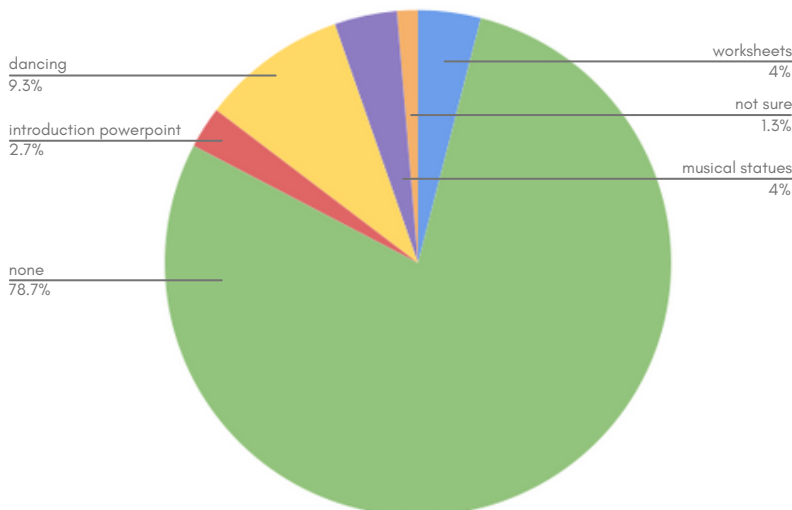
I enjoyed learning the dance performance about climate change



I enjoyed everything

What did the learners not enjoy?

"Which activities did you enjoy the least?"



An overwhelming majority of the pupils (78.7%), shared that there was no part of the workshops they didn't enjoy. While most of pupils enjoyed the creative movement element of the workshops, just under a tenth of pupils enjoyed the dance model the least compared with other activities.

The worksheets and powerpoint which were enjoyed the least by a small percentage of pupils were the least interactive of the activities. This suggest the pupils enjoy learning through interactive activities.

*The above charts are based on the responses from 87/126 of the pupils. The 39 pupils whose responses weren't included either didn't fill out the forms or missed out the question so could not be included.

Changes in attitudes

We were interested in understanding how connected the pupils felt to climate change in terms of their personal life and their wider local community (Easterhouse) so presented them with the questions below in week 1 and week 3.

HOW CONNECTED DO YOU THINK CLIMATE CHANGE IS TO YOUR LIFE?

Circle the picture below that best represents your answer



Climate change doesn't connect to me at all



Climate change connects to me a little



Climate change connects to me a lot



Climate change connects to me completely

HOW CONNECTED DO YOU THINK CLIMATE CHANGE IS TO YOUR LOCAL COMMUNITY?

Circle the picture below that best represents your answer



Climate change doesn't connect to the local community at all



Climate change connects to us a little



Climate change connects to us a lot



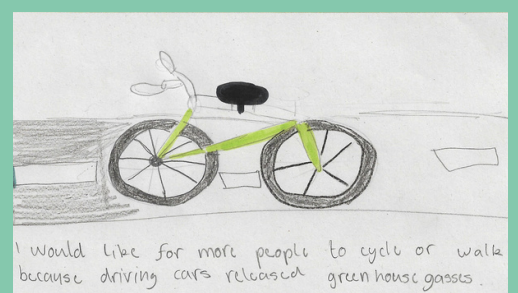
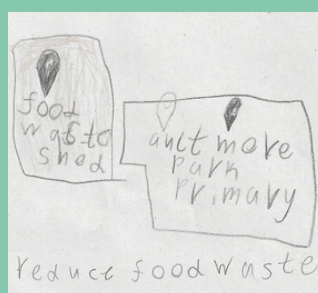
Climate change connects to us completely



Interestingly, both at the start and the end of the programme the pupils felt a stronger connection between climate change and their local community compared to their personal lives. At the beginning of the programme 73% of pupils felt climate change was highly connected to their local community while 43.8% felt a strong connection between climate change and their life. By the end of the programme 76.7% of pupils felt there was a strong connection between climate change and their local community and 50% of pupils now felt a strong connection between climate change and their life. By the end of the programme only 4.5% of pupils felt no connection between climate change and their local community and 9.3% felt no connection between climate change and their lives.

The conceptual way we framed this question may have not been fully understood by especially the younger pupils - as fed back by some teachers - and though we did ensure we spent time explaining this, it likely still challenging and we'd be interested to explore different methods for this age group in future.

From one of the drawing tasks in week 3 however, it was clear that the pupils were reflecting on and considering ways to reduce their individual and local communities impact on climate change. The pupils came up with various creative ideas such as batch cooking meals to reduce energy usage, creating cycle paths and setting up lockable bike sheds in the area to make it safer and more secure to cycle and setting up community fridges to reduce food waste. There were also some big picture ideas for the community such as creating pathways around the community leading into reservoirs to combat increased flooding.



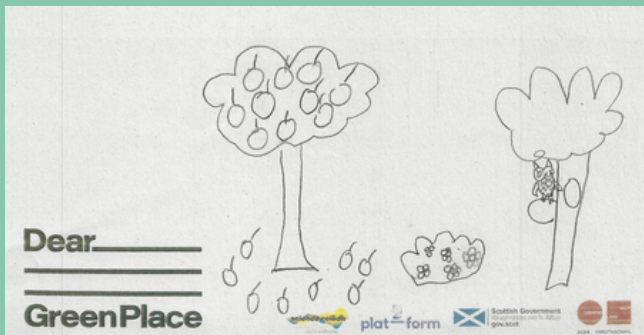
The pupils were asked to draw what climate change meant to them in the first week and again in the third week to observe if they changed at all after the workshops.

As seen from these examples, the pupils were highly engaged and showed some really in-depth understanding of climate change even at the beginning of the process. Positively, in week 1, only one pupil labelled gases in their drawing while in week 3, five pupils labelled fossil fuels, greenhouse gases and/or the Ozone in their drawings. Thematically, pupils were quite consistent before and after the workshops with many pupils keeping to the same theme in both drawings. Pupils drew trees and plants dying, ice melting, storms, a hotter sun, littering and recycling bins and cars emitting greenhouse gases. Positively, in week 1 only one pupil labelled gases in their drawing while in week 3 five pupils labelled fossil fuels, greenhouse gases and/or the Ozone in their drawings.

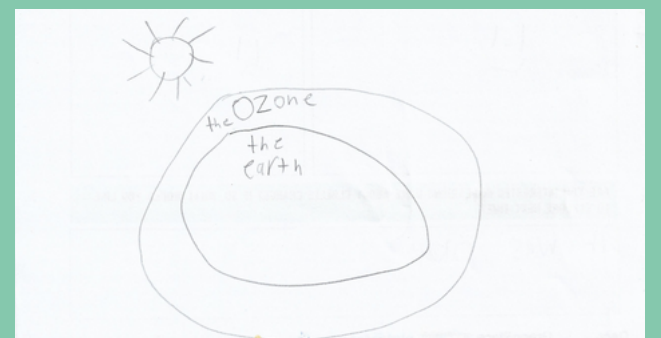
Week 1

Week 3

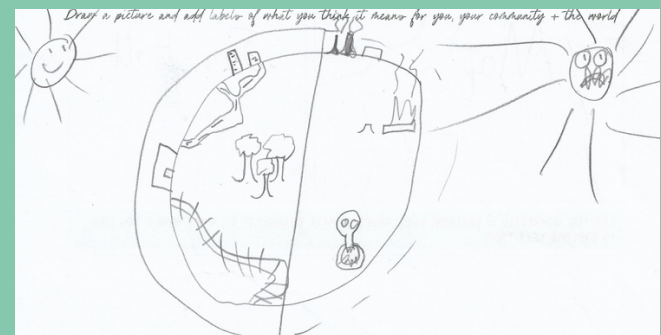
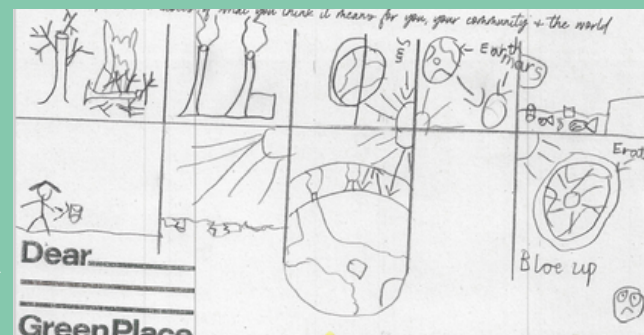
Pupil A



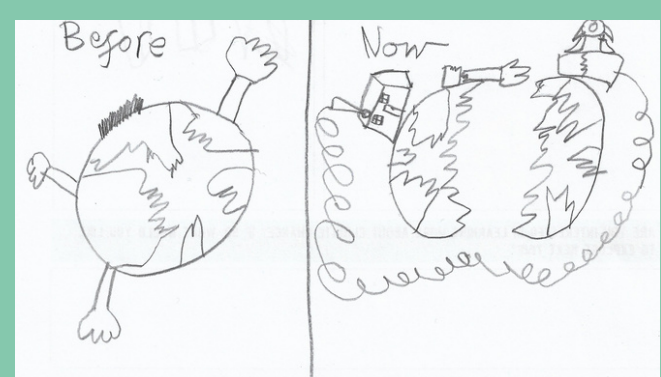
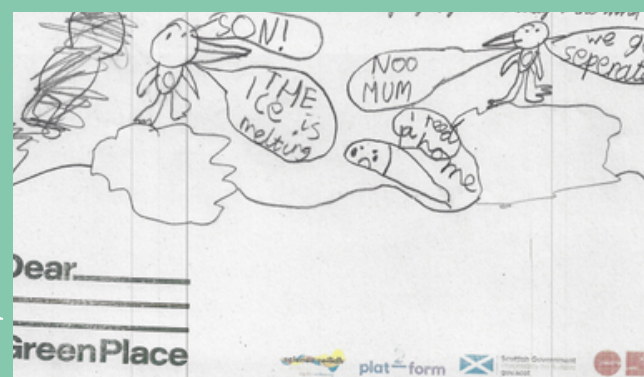
Pupil B



Pupil C



Pupil D





Impact on the Teachers

The teachers were particularly excited by the combination of science, music and dance in this project and how "the combination of curricular areas made this fun for children and teachers alike and allowed sensitive issues to be tackled in a more comprehensive way."

Teachers found that workshops engaged the pupils really well overall and were pitched at the right academic level (5/5 average for both scores). Teachers also highly rated the workshops engagement specifically around the climate change and creative movement content (4.75/5). The length of the programme was 4.5/5 with some suggestions that even more movement time would have been great.

What worked well?

When asked what worked well in the workshops and the final the ceildh the teachers said:

"Built on our prior learning and added new perspectives too"

"I think this made the messages around climate challenge much easier to comprehend"

"The class loved the musical elements"

"The session was great at keeping the children engaged"

"They enjoyed being creative"

"[At] no time children were disengaged"

"The end event was fun, practical and timing was totally appropriate to allow children to have a range of experiences that were suited to them. The inclusion of families made this a real family learning event and allowed the climate challenge messages to be portrayed to a wider audience."

What could be improved?

When asked what they would improve about the workshops two main comments came up:

- Having longer workshops to allow for more movement time with the pupils
- Poor acoustics in the gym hall coupled with masks was challenging



Impact on wider families

One of the aims of the project was to reach and engage the wider families of the pupils in Easterhouse. Strikingly, when registering for the event, all of those attending self-described as never having been to an event around climate change before so this was a successful way of engaging a broader community beyond the already "converted" and provided a strong opportunity to bring new voices around climate change and engage through the young people's performances.

"I've never really thought about climate change until I seen the children's show"

Feedback from friends and family who attended the ceilidhs at Platform was overwhelmingly positive. Based on the feedback form emailed to those attending, the families highly enjoyed the ceilidh and thought that the pupils had benefitted from the workshops and ceilidh experience (both with an average of 9.9/10, n: 9)

What the wider families enjoyed

When asked what they enjoyed about the climate change ceilidh the families said:

"The whole event was enjoyable"

"The children explaining the impact of climate change through dance - I felt it was a great way to help the kids understand the effects"

"It was fantastic to see the enthusiasm in the children taking part, and educating them on the importance of climate change."

"the wee bags with a snack and pencil sprout were a lovely touch. We have planted ours and are patiently waiting on it growing"

What could be improved?

The only comment given about what could be improved about the event was to be able to invite the wider community to the ceilidh which was unfortunately not possible at this event due to COVID restrictions.

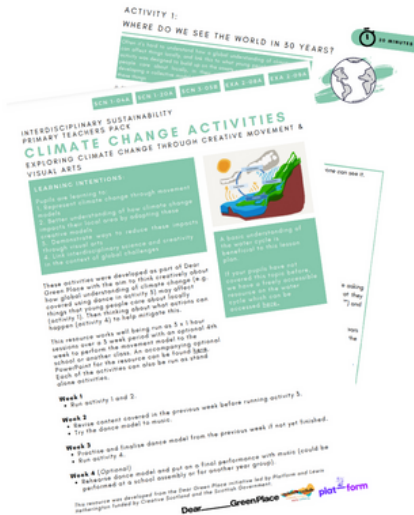
"It [the ceilidh] definitely made us more aware of things we could do differently"

"We walk more, and have introduced a no meat day for mealtimes."

Ceilidh Photos



Further Links



To read about the Dear Green Place initiative and see videos and photos from all the projects visit: platform-online.co.uk/latest/article/dear-green

Access the resource pack developed from this project here: scienceceilidh.com/dear-green-place

For other resources adopting an interdisciplinary approach, particularly that of STEM and movement, traditional dance and expressive arts visit: scienceceilidh.com/resources-home

If you would like to get in touch about the project or enquire about hosting a Science Ceilidh workshop in your school contact: lewis@scienceceilidh.com

Acknowledgements

A huge thanks to the teachers and pupils at Aultmore Park Primary and St.Benedict's Primary for their involvement and enthusiasm for the workshops and celebration ceilidh events. We end this project feeling inspired by the pupils creativity and ideas for the future.

We appreciate all the friends and family members of the pupils who came along to the celebration ceilidhs, got stuck in with the activities and enjoyed the pupils performances.

A special thank you to Sophie Bell, Kirsty Nolan and Sofia Velazquez-Pimental for their support with this project as part of their placement with Science Ceilidh.

This project would not have been possible without the team at Platform, Matt Addicott and Lewis Hetherington. We look forward to finding ways to continue this partnership in the future.

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