

Montréal 2024




**Plenary
Challenges**



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Contents

Introduction	3
Findings from the Global Consultation Process	4
The 5 Plenary Challenges	7
 Indigenous Voices	9
 The Climate & Ecological Crisis	11
 Artificial Intelligence	13
 Health Inequality	15
 Peace	17





One Young World Co-Founders,
David Jones & Kate Robertson

Introduction

It gives us immense pleasure to introduce the five plenary challenges for the 2024 One Young World Summit in Montréal.

The reason why One Young World continues to be such a powerful force for change is because we are driven and inspired by our global community of young leaders. This is why our Global Consultation Process (GCP) is such an important tool in the development of our plenary challenges, and we are hugely grateful to the fifteen hundred young leaders from 160 countries who took part in this year's consultation.

The results of this year's GCP demonstrate clearly the concerns of our next generation of leaders. The events from the last 12 months have significantly impacted the scale of the challenges facing humanity. Peace and Human Rights formed a large part of the responses to the consultation as did the threat of Artificial Intelligence and gender inequality. When it came to the environmental and ecological crisis we were struck by the number of young people (from all corners of the planet) who are experiencing difficulties surrounding access to clean water. One in six respondents said they faced issues relating to water supply at least once a week - a truly shocking figure.

With the Summit taking place in Tiohtià:ke/Montréal, it was essential for us that we recognised the voices of Indigenous people from all around the world. Therefore, elevating these voices is going to form a central part of the Summit. We acknowledge that One Young World 2024 will take place within the traditional unceded lands of the Kanien'kehá:ka peoples, part of the Haudenosaunee Confederacy. There is also a strong historic presence of Anishinaabe peoples in what is now known as the Greater Montréal area. We honour and thank the traditional custodians of this land and strive to work for the success of future generations.

We hope you enjoy reading more about our plenary challenges for the 2024 Summit and we look forward to seeing you in Montréal!



David Jones
Co-Founder



Kate Robertson
Co-Founder

Global Consultation Process

Key Findings

76%

Believe that businesses are more inclined to 'greenwash' than genuinely take action on the climate emergency.

55%

Have no confidence in political leaders to deliver net zero by 2050.

51%

Said their mental health had been affected by climate anxiety.

47%

Are less optimistic for peace in their region than they were this time last year.

59%

Have confidence in international organisations, such as the UN, to prevent nuclear war.

52%

Believe that capitalism still has the potential to be a force for good.

38%

Believe their country is doing a poor job at promoting gender equality.

42%

Of respondents did not receive any education about indigenous communities or history at school.

3/10

The average score when respondents were asked: how well do you think governments respond to the needs of indigenous communities?

24%

Believe that generative AI will replace their job in five years time.

33%

Of respondents experience problems with access to clean water at least once a month.

Juliet Namujju, Founder and CEO of Kimuli Collections
Delegate Speaker, Belfast 2023



The Five Plenary Challenges



Indigenous Voices

How can we put Indigenous Voices at the heart of global decision making?



The Climate & Ecological Crisis

How can we protect the world's water systems?



Artificial Intelligence

How can humanity make AI a force for good?



Health Equality

How can we eradicate gender inequality in healthcare?



Peace

How can we support young peacebuilders to deliver lasting peace?



Tabotabo Auatabu, Chief Legal & Licensing Officer, Digital Transformation Office, Kiribati Ambassador, Manchester 2022



Indigenous Voices

How can we put Indigenous Voices at the heart of global decision making?

There are more than 476 million indigenous people living in 90 countries across the world. Consisting of over 5,000 different groups, these communities account for 6.2% of the global population.¹ If all Indigenous communities were recognised as one nation, they would be the third most populous country in the world. Furthermore, indigenous people play a vital role in the stewardship of the planet's environment, protecting 80% of the world's biodiversity.²

In spite of this, Indigenous communities are some of the most underrepresented people on the planet and face significant challenges. Often, indigenous peoples are excluded or poorly represented in decision-making processes, and are regularly displaced from their ancestral lands due to the exploitation of natural resources. Also, with one indigenous language dying every two weeks, indigenous communities face a constant struggle to preserve their respective cultures and traditional practices.³

The results from the GCP surrounding indigenous communities make for startling reading. 42% of respondents said they had received no formal education about indigenous history. Similarly, when respondents were asked to rank their current level of knowledge about indigenous communities on a scale of 1-10 (with 1 being the poorest), the average score was 4.5. Regarding the way in which governments respond to the needs of indigenous communities, an outright majority, 52%, considered that their government's approach to identifying, tackling and reforming systemic inequalities towards indigenous people was either poor or extremely poor.

In the face of this lack of representation, how can we elevate the voices of young indigenous leaders and allow for greater representation of indigenous communities in both national, and the global decision making process?

¹ UN Data on Indigenous Peoples: <https://www.un.org/en/fight-racism/vulnerable-groups/indigenous-peoples>

² Convention on Biological Diversity: <https://www.cbd.int/kb/record/newsHeadlines/135368?FreeText=protected%20areas>

³ United National Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues: <https://www.un.org/development/desa/indigenuspeoples/wp-content/uploads/sites/19/2018/04/Indigenous-Languages.pdf>

Dr Sylvia Earle, Oceanographer and President of Mission Blue
Counsellor, Manchester 2022





The Climate & Ecological Crisis

How can we protect the world's water systems?

This year's Global Consultation Process explored young leaders' perceptions of existential threats. Over and above threats such as nuclear war, famine, pandemics, artificial intelligence and a collapse in the global economy, the Climate and Ecological Crisis was named as the most prevalent threat, with an outright majority (52%) considering it to be the biggest challenge facing humanity.

Central to the Climate and Ecological Crisis is the world's water supply. From our oceans and seas to our rivers and lakes, from its use in industry and agriculture to access to clean water and sanitation, water touches every aspect of our lives. However, when we asked respondents about their experiences with access to water and the water supply in their area, the figures were extremely concerning. 17% of respondents, one in six, said that they experience either water shortages or problems with their water supply at least once a week. That figure then jumps to a third (33.5%) for those affected once a month, and then more than half (55%) for those affected once a year. It is not acceptable that in 2024 half of young people will experience a problem with their water supply at least once a year.

Similarly concerning, is how our respondents rate the response to the Climate and Ecological Crisis given by current leaders. Well over half (56%) said they had no confidence in current political leaders to deliver net zero by 2025, and more than three quarters (76%) believed that big businesses were more likely to 'greenwash' than take measures to tackle climate change.

Moreover, it is not just the climate emergency where discussions on our planet's water are most prevalent, with 2.4 billion people living in water-stressed countries,⁴ experts are increasingly concerned that conflicts over water will become more common without science-based water diplomacy.⁵ How then can young leaders better protect and fairly distribute the world's water supply?

⁴ UN SDG: <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/water-and-sanitation/>

⁵ UNGA 2023:

<https://www.un.org/pga/77/2023/02/07/press-release-conflicts-over-water-will-become-more-common-without-science-based-water-diplomacy-panel-tells-un-general-assembly/>

Dr Keyun Ruan, Founder, Human-AI Alignment
Returning Ambassador, Belfast 2023





Artificial Intelligence

How can humanity make AI a force for good?

Over the past 12 months, generative artificial intelligence has become one of the most discussed topics on earth.⁶ In May 2023, the world's leading AI experts signed an unprecedented statement saying that world leaders needed to take the existential threat of AI just as seriously as nuclear war or a global pandemic.⁷ Since then we have seen nations come together to begin the process of establishing an international regulatory framework for prevention of the misuse of AI.⁸

Whilst this international approach is still very much in its early days, the impact that generative AI is having on the One Young World community, came through clearly in the Global Consultation Process. What was clear from the outset was just how widely AI is already being used by young people. One in five (20%) use the technology daily, rising to 45% who use it at least once a week and then 69% who use it at least once a month.

Particularly prevalent in the GCP data, was the fear of job insecurity caused by the rise of AI. Almost a quarter of respondents (24%) were concerned that AI will have replaced their jobs in five years time. Similarly, when it came to rating, on a scale of 1-10, how well big businesses are facing up to the threat of AI almost half (45%), gave a score of 4 or below. In spite of this 99% of respondents were opposed to a total ban on AI. In contrast, a majority (57%) of respondents acknowledged the benefits of AI but believed it was up to both industry and political actors to enact safeguards.

As we face up to the challenges surrounding AI, from its impact on employment to the spread of misinformation and the threat it poses to democracy, how can young leaders work to ensure the ethical development of this technology to make it a force for good?

⁶ VOA: <https://www.voanews.com/a/here-are-wikipedia-s-most-searched-topics-in-2023-/7385418.html>

⁷ Centre for AI Safety: <https://www.safe.ai/statement-on-ai-risk>

⁸ BBC News: <https://www.bbc.com/future/article/20231107-why-global-regulation-of-artificial-intelligence-is-still-a-long-way-off>

Emma Watson, Actress and Activist
Counselor, Ottawa 2016





Health Equality

How can we eradicate gender inequality in healthcare?

Gender-based disparities in healthcare access are evident on a global scale, affecting both developed and developing nations. The World Health Organization (WHO) reports that women face unique health challenges, and their access to healthcare is often hindered by socio-cultural, economic, and political factors. In many regions, traditional gender roles limit women's autonomy and decision-making power regarding their health.⁹

It's not just a lack of access to essential services, many other pervasive factors, such as violence against women and girls; restrictions on reproductive autonomy; societal norms about body size; social media, and economic disadvantage, have a hugely detrimental effect on the physical and mental health of women worldwide.¹⁰ This inequality is perpetuated further when intersectional differences between women are taken into account. For example, more than 90% of maternal deaths occur in low and lower middle-income countries, disproportionately affecting women of colour.¹¹

Just 39% percent of respondents to the Global Consultation Process believed that their country was identifying, tackling and reforming systemic gender inequalities. In fact, on the same question, more than one in ten (11%) thought their country was doing 'extremely poorly'.

In terms of economic equality, an outright majority of respondents thought big businesses could do more to address the gender pay gap. When asked on a scale of 1 - 10 (with 1 being not at all seriously and 10 being extremely seriously) how seriously businesses were taking tackling the gender pay gap, 52% of those asked scored five or below.

Therefore, how can young leaders be at the forefront of global efforts to address the cultural, economic, and social factors that perpetuate these disparities?

⁹ World Health Organization: <https://www.who.int/news-room/q-a-detail/gender-and-health>

¹⁰ Ibid

¹¹ World Health Organization <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/maternal-mortality>

Her Majesty, Queen Rania Al Abdullah of Jordan
Counsellor, Belfast 2023





Peace

How can we support young peacebuilders to deliver lasting peace?

2023 was a dark year for peace and the global unrest over the past 12 months has had a colossal impact on the One Young World community: almost half of respondents (47%) were less optimistic about peace in their region compared to this time last year. Similarly concerning were the global figures on the numbers of refugees and displaced people. According to the most recent statistics, there are currently 108.4 million forcibly displaced people around the world, of which an estimated 43.3 million, 40% of them, are children.¹²

In terms of young leaders' confidence in global leadership, the figures also make for concerning reading. Whereas the vast majority (59%) believe that the global community, through organisations such as the UN, has the power to prevent a nuclear war, a similar number (54%) do not have confidence in global leadership to uphold human rights in war zones and areas of conflict. This is a shocking figure considering that 90% of the victims of war are citizens and not members of armed forces.¹³

In 2023 we held the One Young World Summit in Belfast and commemorated the historic 25th anniversary of the signing of the Good Friday Agreement and the legacy it has had on influencing peace agreements around the world. As HM Queen Rania of Jordan said in her keynote address, Belfast showed that if peace could be achieved in Ireland, it can be won in the Middle East. Her words are as important now as they were in Belfast. However, as Her Majesty also said, current global leadership is not stepping up to the challenge of delivering lasting peace.

This is where young leaders are having to answer this call to action and become voices for peace. In this respect what can we do as a global community to support these young leaders working for a more peaceful future for all?

¹² UNHCR Data:

<https://www.unhcr.org/refugee-statistics/#:~:text=At%20the%20end%20of%202022,below%2018%20years%20of%20age.&text=Between%202018%20and%202022%2C%20an.born%20as%20refugees%20per%20year.>

¹³ UN Data: <https://press.un.org/en/2022/sc14904.doc.htm>



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