

# EmpowerED

Redesigning Education  
to Map to Global  
Sustainability



April 2024

## Post-Summit Report

AI Synthesis and Summary

Please be advised that the accompanying document is an AI-generated synthesis of the Youth Climate Summit. While every effort has been made to ensure accuracy and comprehensiveness, it is important to acknowledge that the AI technology may not have captured every nuance and critical context of the discussions. As such, certain intricate details or perspectives might have been inadvertently omitted.

For a complete and immersive understanding of the summit's proceedings, we recommend viewing the full recording of the event. This will provide a more holistic experience and ensure access to all the insights and discussions that took place. The recording can be accessed via the following link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vhNrMrd8rIU&t=11200s>



World Systems Solutions™

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## Overview

In a world teetering on the brink of climate crisis, technological upheaval, shifting work paradigms, and diminishing trust in institutions, the need for an educational overhaul has never been more critical. Tomorrow's leaders must emerge as world builders—innovative, ethical, and collaborative problem-solvers equipped with technological savvy. The WSS EmpowerED Climate Summit represents a global effort to unify, innovate, and solve the long-term challenges facing our world, aiming to redesign education to nurture sustainable global systems and empower the leaders of the future.

## Opening Statement: Amie Rafter

Amie Rafter, Vice President of Operations and Programs at World System Solutions (WSS), addressed the urgent need for educational transformation in response to the climate crisis, technological advancements, and the evolving global landscape. She outlined the education triple crisis identified by the UN—equity and inclusion, quality, and relevance—highlighting the dire need for an educational overhaul that equips future generations with the knowledge, skills, and values necessary to navigate and mitigate these challenges.

- 1. Global Education Triple Crisis:** Amie highlighted the UN's identification of an education triple crisis - equity and inclusion, quality of education, and relevance of current education systems to today's challenges.
- 2. Holistic Learning:** She advocated for a global, synchronized, transformational education system designed for sustainability, regeneration, and reharmonization with nature. This system, Amie suggested, should fundamentally alter the collective mindset about education's purpose, shifting from a profit-driven to a planet-centered paradigm.
- 3. Gap in Climate Education:** A significant gap exists in curriculum worldwide regarding climate change, with 50% of analyzed curriculum documents in 100 countries lacking mention of climate change. She emphasized the pivotal role of technology in bridging educational gaps while cautioning against its potential to widen disparities.
- 4. Gender Disparity:** Amie pointed out the profound disempowerment faced due to the lack of basic literacy, with two-thirds of the 771 million people lacking basic literacy being women.
- 5. Necessity for a New Paradigm:** The pressing need for a global system of education that emphasizes sustainability, regeneration, and reharmonization with nature, leveraging technology for good.

**6. Transforming Mindsets:** The current Western paradigm of education focused on profit and consumption needs a fundamental shift towards understanding our interconnectedness with the planet.

**7. EmpowerED Workshops and Climate Emergency Response Forums:** These initiatives aim to foster collaboration and co-creative solutions among diverse groups to address the policy crisis and global challenges.

## **Audience Answers to “What Inspired You to Be Here Today?”**

**1. Education and Learning:** Participants are driven by a desire to deepen their understanding of climate education and effective sustainability practices. This knowledge is sought to enhance their ability to make informed decisions and implement relevant solutions in their respective fields.

**2. Networking and Collaboration:** Attendees emphasize the importance of connecting with others to exchange ideas and strategies. This networking is seen as crucial for developing collaborative efforts that can address environmental challenges more effectively.

**3. Empowering and Inspiring Others:**

Many are motivated by the opportunity to inspire and empower others, especially through educational means. They see their role as pivotal in guiding the younger generations to be proactive and engaged in making systemic changes.

**4. Personal and Professional Development:** Some are there to enhance their professional skills and knowledge, seeking different perspectives on tackling climate change to enrich their educational and professional experiences.

**5. Creating Systemic Change:** A focus is placed on redesigning educational systems and involving communities in sustainability efforts. The belief is that systemic change is essential for effectively addressing global crises.

**6. Global and Community Impact:** There is a strong desire to understand and influence the collective mindset on climate issues, aiming to make a broader impact through community and global efforts.

**7. Advocacy and Action:** Motivated by a commitment to advocate for and take action on climate issues, recognizing the urgency of addressing climate change and its impacts on humanity and the planet.

These motivations reflect a collective urgency and responsibility towards enhancing climate education, fostering global and local collaborations, and empowering individuals and communities to engage actively in sustainability efforts.

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*Speaker 1:*

## **Matthew Friedman on Ethical Leadership to Solve the Climate Crisis and Human Abuse**

Matthew Friedman's talk at the EmpowerED Climate Summit highlighted the complex and pervasive issues of modern slavery and human trafficking, particularly in relation to forced labor within supply chains. Matthew emphasized that despite significant efforts by NGOs, governments, and international organizations, the impact on combating modern slavery remains minimal, only 0.2% of victims receive help, a statistic that he used to call for greater engagement and responsibility from global corporations and institutions. Here are the key points and developments from his talk:

**1. Statistics and Scope of the Issue:** Matthew pointed out that a staggering number of individuals are affected by modern slavery and human trafficking, yet the percentage of victims being helped is minuscule. This discrepancy is partly due to the enormous profits generated from modern slavery (\$236 billion), contrasted with the insufficient global funding allocated to fight this issue.

**2. Role of Private Sector and Legislation:** A significant development has been the increasing involvement of the private sector in addressing forced labor within supply chains. Matthew noted that various international acts and regulations have begun to compel businesses to take responsibility for eradicating modern slavery from their operations. This includes the California Transparency in Supply Chains Act, the UK Modern Slavery Act, and similar legislation in other countries, which demand transparency and proactive efforts from corporations.

**3. Challenges in Eradication and Prosecution:** The talk highlighted the challenges in prosecuting criminals involved in modern slavery and the difficulty in eradicating the issue due to its profitability and complexity. Matthew stressed the need for more effective awareness, education, and action to tackle the root causes and manifestations of modern slavery.

**4. Importance of Awareness and Education:** A critical point made by Matthew is the lack of awareness and education about modern slavery and human trafficking. This lack of awareness contributes to the ongoing exploitation and abuse of vulnerable populations.

## Discussion with Matthew Friedman and Participants

In the discussion portion of the presentation, Matthew Friedman addressed complex issues surrounding modern slavery and its intersection with socioeconomic factors and global ethics. He highlighted systemic problems within migrant labor, particularly in industries where workers pay large sums to secure jobs abroad, which are then not reimbursed by employers as required by new international labor standards. This has led to widespread deceit and corruption within recruitment and employment processes, exacerbating issues like indebted labor and exploitation.

A participant commented on the limitations of modern slavery acts, noting that in countries like New Zealand and Australia, these laws only apply to companies with substantial annual revenues, leaving smaller businesses unchecked and capable of exploiting domestic and foreign workers. This gap in enforcement is often left to foreign affairs offices, which are responsible for policing work permits and government labor laws.

The conversation moved from monetary to moral considerations, emphasizing humanity over profit. Methodical education and organized support were suggested as means to foster understanding within the human collective and develop a support system for collaborative change efforts.

Participants discussed the lost connections both within our species and between humans and the natural world. Finding ways to reconnect is seen as essential, with the sharing of voices and allowing young people to be heard identified as potentially powerful methods for fostering understanding and empathy.

The necessity for a global support infrastructure to help accelerate and catalyze this reconnection process at various societal levels was also highlighted, indicating that such efforts could help effect change globally.

From an educational perspective, one participant reflected on teaching experiences, noting that when children are made aware of significant issues through subjects like math, using statistics to illustrate points, it not only generates classroom discussions but also carries these conversations into students' homes, offering avenues for further exploration and informed decision-making.

Matthew responded to questions about empowering individuals across all economic levels by stressing the importance of holistic and sustainable approaches that consider the ethical implications of economic decisions, such as the impact of automation on employment and the prioritization of human welfare in business and environmental practices.

The dialogue also touched on practical steps individuals and governments can take to combat modern slavery, such as consumer activism and legislative advocacy. Matthew detailed the significant role businesses can play in ensuring ethical practices within their supply chains, from leadership awareness and comprehensive audits to employee training and grievance mechanisms.

Education emerged as a central theme, recognized as crucial both for preventing exploitation and for empowering communities to recognize and assert their rights. The discussion underscored the need for greater corporate and governmental responsibility in addressing these issues, suggesting that a collective, informed effort is necessary to make substantial progress.

## **Connect with Matthew Friedman**

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*Speaker 2:*

## **Tahiya Islam on Climate Education and Leadership**

**Opening Question for Audience:** What is one action have you taken to reduce carbon footprint on EARTH?

Here's a synthesized synopsis of the various actions participants have taken to reduce their carbon footprint, as shared during your discussion. This summary groups similar actions to provide a clearer overview of the collective efforts:

### **Home and Lifestyle Adjustments:**

- Several participants have made significant changes to minimize their living spaces and reduce overall consumption. Actions include downsizing homes, minimizing living space by half, and adopting minimalism.
- Efforts to conserve water and increase efficiency in its use were noted, along with switching to renewable energy sources such as solar panels.
- Many are focusing on reducing waste through comprehensive recycling, composting food scraps, and promoting the use of reusable items like washable water bottles.
- Emphasis on sustainable living extends to gardening, with several individuals growing their own food and teaching others about sustainable practices.

### **Transportation and Diet:**

- Participants are making conscious choices about transportation by riding bikes instead of driving, reducing the frequency of flights, and limiting car trips, particularly to urban areas.
- Dietary changes are a common theme, with many opting to eat less meat or adopting vegetarian diets to lessen their environmental impact.

### **Consumer Habits:**

- There is a strong focus on local and responsible consumption. This includes buying locally grown food, purchasing second-hand clothes, and avoiding fast fashion.
- Several individuals highlighted their practices around reducing food waste and ensuring that no food goes to waste.

### **Educational and Community Initiatives:**

- Education plays a critical role, with actions ranging from teaching students about recycling and ethical consumption to running workshops on how to open a seed library.
- Community involvement includes volunteering at urban/community gardens and engaging in programs that promote sustainable choices and urban agriculture.

### **Innovative and Collaborative Projects:**

- Some participants are involved in creating systems for greenhouse gas offsets, renewable energy credits, and social impact credits.
- Development of applications like ClimateScale to support green projects through offsets and renewable energy credits highlights the technological approach to managing carbon footprints.

### **Overall Approach and Philosophy:**

- The overarching sentiment emphasizes moving from a focus on monetary gains to prioritizing morality and humanity.
- Collective efforts and education are seen as crucial for bringing about understanding and support for sustainable practices across communities.

This synopsis captures the breadth of individual and collective actions undertaken by participants to address their carbon footprints, reflecting a strong commitment to environmental responsibility and sustainable living.

## **Summary of Tahiya's Presentation**

Tahiya Islam's talk at the EmpowerED Climate Summit focused on integrating climate education and leadership into the high school curriculum, particularly in South Asia, with a spotlight on Bangladesh. Her presentation outlined the urgency and necessity of formalizing climate education to equip the next generation with the knowledge and skills needed to tackle climate challenges effectively. Here are the major topics, developments, and contributions she discussed:

**1. Curriculum Development:** Islam proposed a curriculum that covers the basics of climate science, impacts of climate change, adaptation and mitigation strategies, climate advocacy, leadership, and potential climate action projects.

**2. Educational Activities:** She suggested incorporating debates, panel discussions, field activities, research projects, and multimedia resources like documentaries and films to make learning interactive and engaging.



**3. Impact of Curriculum:** The envisioned curriculum aims to raise awareness about climate issues, foster community engagement, promote behavioral change, develop critical thinking and leadership skills, and create networking opportunities for students.

**4. Pilot Project:** Islam shared her experience of running a pilot project that involved teaching students about recycling, tree planting, and care for plants. The project had a significant impact on students' awareness, behavior, and leadership skills regarding climate change.

**5. Collaboration and Support:** She emphasized the need for collaboration among educators, policymakers, tech leaders, social activists, and entrepreneurs to develop and refine this curriculum, making it a robust resource for global adoption.

## Discussion with Tahiya Islam and Participants

In this segment of the online summit, various participants discussed the integration of climate change education into community contexts and educational systems, emphasizing the necessity of making such education relatable and continuous across all learning environments. One participant highlighted the need for grassroots campaigns to effectively address climate change, suggesting that proposals should be directed toward local authorities and supported through collaborations with external organizations. This approach aims to tailor actions based on specific community needs and locations.

A former teacher reflected on her teaching experiences and suggested that climate education should not be isolated as a separate unit but integrated continuously across all subjects—like "climate math" or reading materials focused on environmental themes. This integration would help inculcate a fundamental and enduring awareness of climate issues among students.

Another educator emphasized the pervasiveness of climate issues, suggesting embedding climate-related themes in all narratives used in education, from storytelling to building moral values.

This would ensure that climate awareness is a constant presence in educational contexts, helping students understand their personal responsibility towards maintaining a clean and sustainable environment.

Participants also discussed innovative methods to engage students, such as featuring a youth climate activist each week to inspire students and support them in not feeling overwhelmed by the topic. The importance of supporting courageous communications and developing support systems for collaborative efforts was highlighted, suggesting that cohesive and coherent backing from governments and organizations is crucial for grassroots initiatives.

The dialogue explored challenges faced by educators who expressed concerns about the practical implications of climate education in terms of resource availability and economic outcomes for students. It was suggested that a curriculum should meet diverse school standards and be infused throughout all educational content, requiring support systems to help educators develop and implement these learnings effectively.

The discussion concluded with a focus on the importance of leadership roles in promoting climate education, with a call for global commitment to empowering women and integrating an interdisciplinary approach to connect science, mathematics, geography, history, social studies, language arts, economics, and technology to climate change. This approach equips students with comprehensive knowledge and leadership qualities to address climate challenges effectively.

Finally, participants echoed the sentiment that global coherence and aligned transformational action are needed to accelerate the process, with a strong emphasis on building resonance around the change we want to see and engaging students through hands-on activities like gardening and community seed sharing to foster a deeper connection with the environment.

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*Speaker 3:*

## Michael Muyot on From Vision to Reality, Next Gen Eco Innovators' Actional Blueprint

Michael's presentation at the EmpowerED Climate Summit explored the multifaceted aspects of sustainability, emphasizing the integration of environmental responsibility into business practices, technology, and education. He drew from his experience transitioning from a Wall Street perspective to a focus on sustainable development, highlighting the opportunities that lie in addressing both environmental and social aspects.

### Key Points of Michael's Presentation:

**Definition and Importance of Sustainability:** Michael referred to the 1987 Brundtland Commission's definition of sustainability, highlighting the crucial balance needed for current generations to live within their means without jeopardizing the future of upcoming generations. He pointed out the alarming rate at which resources are consumed globally, at 2.5 times the sustainable rate annually.

Emphasis on "Reduce" in Waste Management: The discussion around waste management emphasized the "reduce, reuse, recycle" mantra, with Michael stressing the importance of reducing consumption as the most crucial step in minimizing waste and environmental impact. The integration of additional principles like "Refuse, Repurpose, Remember, and Revision" was suggested to enhance the traditional recycling model, aiming to close the loop on resource use and keep core values in mind when making consumption choices.

Educational Reform and Technology Integration: Michael advocated for transformative education that integrates sustainability across all subjects, not just as isolated units. This approach was enriched by suggestions from participants like integrating STEM with the arts (STEAM) and utilizing innovative technologies such as 3D modeling and the metaverse to create engaging and interactive learning environments. Participants also discussed the importance of adding environmental literacy to various subjects to develop comprehensive understanding and leadership in students.

Sustainability in Business Practices: His work on the NASDAQ Global Sustainability Index was highlighted, showing how corporate responsibility can be quantified and promoted through financial instruments. Discussions also touched on the life cycle analysis (LCA) of products to assess their environmental impact comprehensively.

Local and Global Sustainability Efforts: Michael emphasized the significance of local actions in achieving global sustainability goals, with examples of community-level initiatives that could be scaled globally. The conversation broadened to include the potential of digital platforms in promoting sustainability, such as the #EcoWeb project, which aims to evaluate the digital footprint of climate action organizations.

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*Speaker 4:*

## **Ginny Whitelaw on Resonant Leadership: Navigating Uncertain Times with Authenticity and Resilience**

Ginny Whitelaw's presentation at the WSS EmpowerED Climate Summit focused on the critical themes of resonance, resilience, and energy management for creating whole leaders and world builders. Ginny, with her extensive background in biophysics, Aikido, and leadership strategy, emphasized the importance of understanding and harnessing the power of resonance—the capacity to vibrate in harmony with the energies around us—for personal and collective change. She introduced practical methods for enhancing personal energy and resonance, such as breath work and grounding practices, illustrating how these can lead to a more energized, grounded state and ultimately to more effective leadership and collaboration. Here are the key highlights from her talk:

**1. Energy and Resonance:** Ginny emphasized that everything is energy, and leadership involves turning this energy into things that matter. She introduced the concept of resonance, explaining how energy changes form and how we, as individuals and leaders, can resonate with the changes we wish to see in the world.

**2. Resilience through Practice:** A significant portion of her talk focused on resilience, underscoring its importance in today's leaders and educators. She advocated for practices that build both resonance and resilience, offering specific breathing exercises as a method to ground oneself and enhance personal energy management.

**3. Inner Work for Outer Impact:** Ginny emphasized that the change we want to see externally must begin within ourselves. Through inner work and physical practices, we can "clear the bell," allowing us to resonate more purely and make our authentic difference in the world.

**4. The Role of the Heart:** The presentation highlighted the heart's critical role in our electromagnetic field and its impact on our environment. By nurturing our heart center and ensuring it's open and resilient, we can more effectively radiate positive change outward.

## Discussion with Ginny Whitelaw and Participants

In the interactive discussion with Ginny Whitelaw, there was dialogue by one participant that acknowledged her practice of Qigong and its impact on her understanding of energy and resonance. She posed a question regarding how individuals can differentiate between negative resonances, such as fear or hostility, and more positive, higher energies. This question was particularly relevant in a world where negative emotions often seem amplified, especially on platforms like social media.

**Ginny Whitelaw's Response:** Whitelaw responded by explaining that the human nervous system is wired to amplify negative signals, a survival mechanism that unfortunately also magnifies negative emotions in our interactions and media. However, she noted that the heart can distinguish between being uplifted and being dragged down. True leadership, according to Whitelaw, involves elevating people to their potential rather than exploiting their fears.

Whitelaw emphasized that while the world will always have its challenges, individuals have the ability to choose their resonance, opting for joy and positivity over negativity. This choice, she suggested, is crucial in influencing others and fostering a more coherent and positive global community.

**Further Questions and Dialogue:** Another participant further inquired about individuals who may not realize the possibility of being uplifted, wondering how to engage and elevate those who have never experienced such positivity. Whitelaw suggested that influential figures such as teachers or mentors often play a pivotal role in showing what is possible. She underscored the power of personal connection and the ability of one connected person to uplift another, reinforcing the concept of personal impact and leadership.

## Discussion with Ginny Whitelaw and Participants *(continued)*

Continued Discussion: The discussion also touched on the integration of body and mind, the importance of creating safe environments for the heart to open, and the role of the lower energy centers (Hara) in providing a stable foundation for heart energy. Whitelaw shared practices from Qigong and martial arts that help in cultivating these energies and achieving personal balance and resilience.

The conversation concluded with insights into how individuals could use their inner work and developed capacities to contribute to broader societal healing. Whitelaw advocated for mindfulness and personal growth as tools for overcoming cultural constraints and engaging with global issues, emphasizing the need for each person to act as a change agent in their own right.

Overall, the session highlighted the importance of personal development and conscious living as foundations for leadership and societal change, with a particular focus on overcoming negative resonances and fostering positive connections within communities.

### Connect with Ginny Whitelaw:

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## Closing Statement: John Jones

John Jones's closing statements at the Empowered Climate Summit highlighted a visionary approach to addressing global challenges, particularly those related to climate change and societal issues. He began by expressing gratitude for the insights and wisdom shared by earlier presenters, emphasizing the value of their contributions to the dialogue on solving the climate crisis. John underscored the importance of collaborative effort, recognizing that the amalgamation of different perspectives, experiences, and expertise forms a critical part of the puzzle in addressing the climate crisis. He stressed that no voice or contribution is expendable in the quest for solutions.

**1. The Imperative for Collaboration:** He stressed the critical need for cohesive, coherent, and transdisciplinary approaches to solving the climate crisis. He pointed out the inadequacy of traditional leadership methods in addressing these issues and called for transformative leadership styles that are conscious, collaborative, and inclusive of all life.

**2. Values and Superordinate Goals:** John advocated for shifting collective values towards sustainability, harmony, and inclusivity. He underscored the importance of recognizing our interconnectedness and the necessity of adopting superordinate goals that prioritize the well-being of the planet and future generations over competition and self-centered motivations.

## Closing Statement: John Jones *(continued)*

**3. Educational and Empowerment Needs:** His speech highlighted the need for educating and empowering diverse populations, especially women and the youth, as they are vital for crafting a sustainable future. He discussed the importance of integrating STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Mathematics) and AI (Artificial Intelligence) knowledge wisely and compassionately.

**4. Call to Action for Future Collaboration:** John concluded with a call to action for continued collaboration and the development of integrated solutions to address the multifaceted challenges of the climate crisis. He mentioned the Phoenix platform, developed by World System Solutions, as a tool to facilitate efficient and effective collaboration towards these ends.

## Overall Summary

The April EmpowerED Climate Summit provided a comprehensive platform for addressing the urgent issues of climate change, modern slavery, and the need for transformative education. The summit showcased the insights of thought leaders and experts who emphasized the critical need for holistic, sustainable practices and the empowerment of communities through education. Key themes included the pressing necessity for a reformed educational system that integrates climate knowledge across all disciplines and the pivotal role of technology in both facilitating and democratizing access to information. The dialogue also delved into the complex interplay between corporate responsibility and legislative action in tackling modern slavery, underscoring the vast gap between current efforts and the scale of the problem. Participants were united in their call for greater ethical oversight in business practices and a stronger commitment to comprehensive and inclusive educational approaches. Overall, the summit highlighted the interconnectedness of environmental, social, and technological challenges, advocating for a unified approach to foster a resilient, informed, and conscientious global community.

## How To Participate with World Systems Solutions

**Attend and/or apply to speak at the Weekly Global Solutions Collaboration Forum:**

<https://wssnow.org/wss-forums/friday-meetings/>

**Attend the ongoing WSS EmpowerED Climate Summits:** <https://wssnow.org/wss-forums/#empowered-workshop>

**Volunteer or Collaborate:** <https://wssnow.org/collaborate/>

**Visit over 200 educational videos on our YouTube Channel:**

<https://www.youtube.com/@worldsystemssolutions>

**Connect with us in Private Facebook Group: WSS Green Room:**

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/570104881413326>

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