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Scottish Women's Convention International Women's Day Celebrations

"If a frog is placed in cold water and the water is slowly heated up to boiling, the frog will stay in the water until it boils to death. When a frog is placed in already boiling water, however, it will immediately jump out. Hi, I'm Tess, I'm 16 and I'm a youth climate striker. I am so grateful for having the opportunity to listen and speak to the women here today. But it would be really great if young people didn't need to protest to persuade people that if we don't act now there will be catastrophic ecological breakdown. In March last year, I went on my first climate strike. The atmosphere was incredible and exciting. So, I decided to do more research on climate change and found that it wasn't a joke, it was a crisis. Across the world millions of people will have to deal with increased drought, famine, disease, etc etc. Across the world millions of people will experience massive accounts of suffering at the hands of this. And governments were doing next to nothing.



I decided that this wasn't right. I needed to help. It all started from there, and after the next global strike in May, I joined the organisation Scottish Youth Climate Strike and began to strike at least once a month. It has taught me so much, and If you had told me a year ago that today I would be speaking in front of 400 empowering women about climate change, there is no way I would have believed you. Doing jobs without being told what to do has brought me the initiative that I was seriously lacking before and talking to people to get them to strike has given me confidence when I used to just keep my head down. I've also learned the boring, yet vital, life skills - how to facilitate meetings, take minutes, the list goes on. I have also met some of the most amazing people through climate activism, many of whom I'm lucky enough to call my best friends.

But of course, it hasn't all been plain sailing and activism has come with its fair share of challenges. Not everyone agrees with what I'm doing yet, and while most people are supportive of my activism, I still get the odd "climate change is fake" or "skiving school isn't going to do anything." It especially hurts when such



comments come from people in my generation, the people whose futures I am fighting for. My head is constantly full of the reality of what will happen, and I get bogged down with eco anxiety. I also still have school, and with my exams coming up it is increasingly difficult to balance activism and revision, while also maintaining a social life. But I suppose these are just the usual side effects of activism. Luckily for me, the friends I have met through striking have the same problems, we talk to each other, and we help each other through.

I know I have helped to bring awareness to others - family, friends, and community. But I know that the whole climate movement has had an effect on the way people think globally. The movement has quickly picked up a lot of momentum. With over 4 million people across the world taking part in the strikes in September, and hopefully even more on the 3rd April, the next global strike.

One of the most powerful images I have ever seen was of the September strike in Afghanistan. A banner was being held by a long line of young women, and in front of the banner, rather than a teenager with a megaphone, was a man with a gun. Climate strikes don't happen for fun. They are brought about by fear, for

action. Us young people are scared. We are scared for the future of our generation and generations to come. We are scared for the future of life on Earth. We have influenced this worldwide reaction. And things are changing, but they need to change more quickly.

One of the movements favourite chants goes “What do we want? Climate justice! When do we want it? Now!” but when I joined the climate movement, I didn't quite grasp what climate justice was. I was busy thinking about this country, what would happen to people like me, but then I thought about people from developing countries, poor people, people less privileged than myself. Recently, I have really started to realise the true meaning of climate injustice. The climate crisis will not affect everybody proportionately, not at all. This crisis will affect the least well off first, and in light of women's day I will use an example of the impact on women.



Climate change will affect women before it will affect men, especially in poorer countries where the climate emergency will hit first and hardest. In times of drought, it will be women and children having to walk further to find a water source. A source which will almost definitely be even more contaminated than it is now. Due to the longer distance, they may also be carrying heavier loads of water to cut down on the amount of trips they take. Famine will also be more frequent, so these women will have to walk further with heavier loads, on an emptier stomach. Unfortunately, these people who will feel the worst effects of the crisis are not the decision makers in solving it. The decision makers are world leaders in developed countries, some of the last people to feel the effects, but if Donald Trump was forced to walk for miles in a drought every day for a dirty glass of water, I have a funny feeling America would be back on the Paris agreement. Maybe he would have a little more respect for women, too.”