

# Research for climate action: ACU and British Council announce the Commonwealth Futures Climate Research Cohort

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The Association of Commonwealth Universities (ACU) and the British Council have partnered to launch the Commonwealth Futures Climate Research Cohort, bringing together 26 rising-star researchers – in recognition of the 26th United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP26) – from Commonwealth countries spreading across sub-Saharan Africa, Asia, the Pacific, the Caribbean, and the Americas.

Joining forces under a shared commitment to diversity and inclusion, the ACU-British Council partnership will support the cohort to bring local expertise to a global stage, translate research into action, and enable researchers to work with experts in the sector to influence issues related to climate and environment in their communities and beyond.

With an extensive global network covering some of the Commonwealth's most climate-vulnerable regions – especially small island states – the ACU-British Council partnership has been able to recruit and connect a truly diverse group of emerging climate research leaders from 16 countries.

Throughout 2021, the cohort will be working closely with senior experts in climate research and benefit from funded attendance at COP26 in Glasgow, leadership training with a cohort of peers through virtual, expert-led workshops, skills development for knowledge exchange and policy influence, and an opportunity to conduct a peer-led research-to-action project with seed funding.

Dr Joanna Newman, MBE FRSA, Chief Executive and Secretary General of the ACU said:

'With the UK-chaired COP26 on the horizon, the ACU is proud to be supporting a new generation of climate research leaders. These talented researchers will be critical allies for governments to deliver on their climate commitments and promote an equitable, green recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic. The timely Climate Research Cohort programme builds on the successes of our existing partnership with the British Council, to continue lifting the voices of young leaders through the Commonwealth Futures series.'

Maddalaine Ansell, Director of Education at British Council, said:

"The British Council is delighted to be working closely with the ACU, supporting emerging research leaders to collaborate and use their voices and expertise to influence and inspire climate action. Science is crucial to this endeavour and the British Council is proud to work with young people committed to leading transformative change as the UK chairs COP26."

On the fifth anniversary of the Paris Agreement, and with the UK-chaired COP26 drawing nearer, countries around the world are due to step up their climate commitments – and this partnership recognises that research plays an essential role by informing the roadmap for action.

Currently, there remain persistent gaps between academia and policy, and between local expertise and global dialogues, that must be bridged to ensure global climate solutions are equitable and

evidence-based.

The Climate Research Cohort builds on the existing partnership between the British Council and ACU. The two organisations have strong track records in international research capacity-building and have collaborated previously to deliver the Commonwealth Futures workshop series, aimed at providing young leaders across the Commonwealth with a platform to raise their voices – and contribute to policy dialogues.

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For more information, a copy of the report, or to speak to Professor Leopold, contact Katie Hurley at BlueSky Education on [khurley@bluesky-pr.com](mailto:khurley@bluesky-pr.com) or call +44 (0) 7538412793

Editors notes

About the British Council

The British Council is the UK's international organisation for cultural relations and educational opportunities. We build connections, understanding and trust between people in the UK and other countries through arts and culture, education and the English language. Last year we reached over 80 million people directly and 791 million people overall including online, broadcasts and publications. Founded in 1934 we are a UK charity governed by Royal Charter and a UK public body. We receive a 15 per cent core funding grant from the UK government. [www.britishcouncil.org](http://www.britishcouncil.org)

About the Association of Commonwealth Universities

The ACU is an international organisation dedicated to building a better world through higher education. International collaboration is central to this ambition: by bringing universities together from around the world – and crucially the people who study and work within them – the ACU helps to advance knowledge, promote understanding, broaden minds, and improve lives. The ACU champions higher education as a cornerstone of stronger societies, supporting its members, partners, and stakeholders as they adapt to a changing world. With over 500 member universities in more than 50 countries, the ACU's network spans over 10 million students and 1 million academic and professional university staff. [www.acu.ac.uk](http://www.acu.ac.uk)