



Triangular Conversations Report

Participants: students from Fundación Educativa Mary Ward
Topic: climate change and biodiversity

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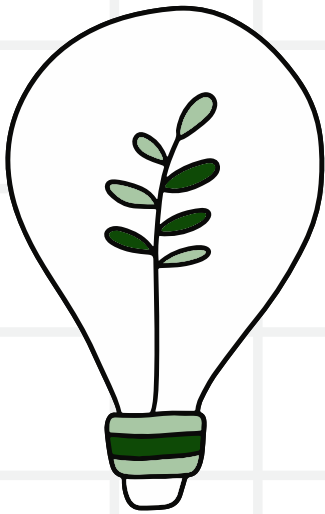
On Tuesday 7th November 2023, Irene Cebrian de Arancibia, Youth Representative for IBVM Spain held a lively online event with students aged 12-14 from "Fundación Educativa Mary Ward" schools in Spain. Fundación Educativa Mary Ward brings together both IBVM and CJ Schools in one body.



Triangular Conversations was held a few weeks before the 28th Conference on Climate Change (COP28). The main objective of the online event was to boost the students' awareness of SDG 13 from Agenda 2030, and provide them with a space to exchange ideas and boost their initiative and resourcefulness.

INTRODUCTION

Why *Triangular*? In the groups the students were divided in, each of them were assigned a different role. Some of the students acted as scientists, others as journalists, and others represented the government. Their role determined the line of their investigation previous to the event. According to their role, they answered a different set of questions, guaranteeing a high level of specialization and technicality in their responses.




During Triangular Conversations, the 40 students - coming from 8 different schools - were divided into groups. Each of these groups focused on one of four different themes. The following report illustrates the conclusions and ideas presented by students during the event for each of the four topics.






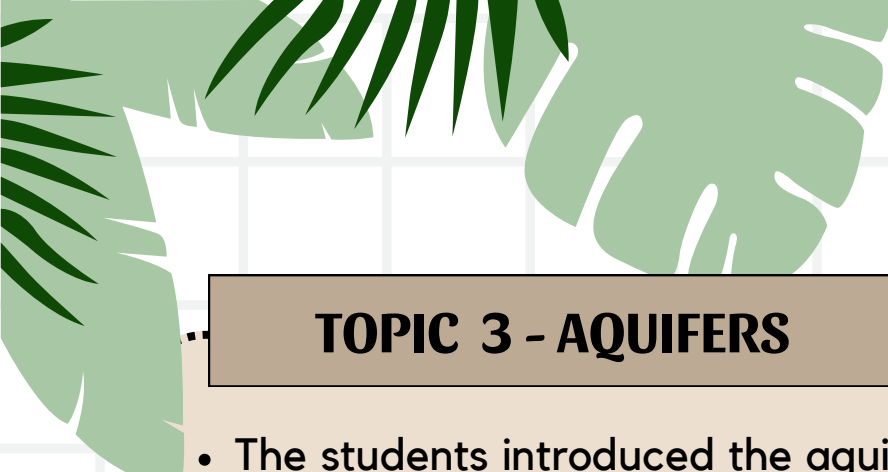
TOPIC 1 - HEAT WAVES

- The students defined them as “prolonged period of high temperatures that affects people and the environment in various ways”.
 - They highlighted the detrimental effects of heat waves, namely its consequences on skin, health, hyperthermia and fire risk.
 - The students also acknowledged that most current solutions to address the issue are focused on climate change mitigation (e.g. recycling, protecting forests and reducing carbon emissions).
 - Lastly, they came up with some solutions on their own, such as optimizing energy consumption, achieving a 0% deforestation rate and investing in fire control. When introducing their suggestions, students acknowledged that, while firms’ commitment is a necessary condition, our individual actions can bring about significant changes in the way firms choose to act.
 - Additionally, they emphasized the importance of green cities, taking Medellin as an example. In this Colombian city, the creation of a network of green corridors has reduced the temperature in the last 5 years. The use of such example proves that the developing world can be a model for climate change mitigation.
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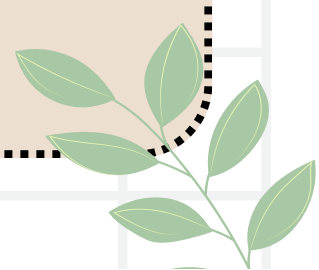


TOPIC 2 - FAST FASHION

- The concept of fast fashion refers to the large volumes of clothing produced by the fashion industry. The production methods of the fast fashion industry accelerate the greenhouse effect.
 - The students recognized the difficulty of the issue, considering fast fashion is also cheaper and hence more accessible to people with fewer resources.
 - However, they still believe the problem could be solved by reducing consumption and encouraging purchase of long-lasting clothes, avoiding "getting carried away by trends and prices". The students believe people can reuse clothes by passing them on to their relatives or donating them to local associations.
 - They suggested that the UN continue to raise awareness in the networks and that the governments try to lower the prices of all sustainable fashion so that everyone can afford it.
 - We ought to highlight a truly original idea suggested by one group of students: there should be limits on the extent to which influencers can sponsor, promote or advertise first-hand clothes in social media, and they should be encouraged to promote second-hand purchases.
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TOPIC 3 - AQUIFERS

- The students introduced the aquifer of Doñana, a protected natural park in Spain, located between the provinces of Huelva and Seville. This reserve was created by Guillermo Gavery on October 16, 2016 in order to protect endangered animals. Doñana's rich set of ecosystems -beach, dunes, preserves, marshes, etc.- is suffering an irreversible regression.
 - The groups explained that, because there is so much land, this brings about frequent periods of draught, which threatens endangered species such as Retuerta horse, the Marismeño horse or the Marismeña cow.
 - According to the students, the overexploitation of the aquifers by the construction of illegal wells increases the risk of draught, hence creating a vicious cycle.
 - Interestingly, students also outlined how this could also have detrimental effects for the workers, since they could see their job positions disappear if the park is harmed.
 - Regarding potential solutions, students outlined the importance of stronger control of illegal wells, and they also emphasized the need to take farmers into account. They also suggested adding penalties for water misuse, and limiting the number of people visiting the park to avoid pollution.
 - Lastly, there was strong emphasis on the relevance of raising awareness among the civil society, so as to ensure a reduction in water misuse.
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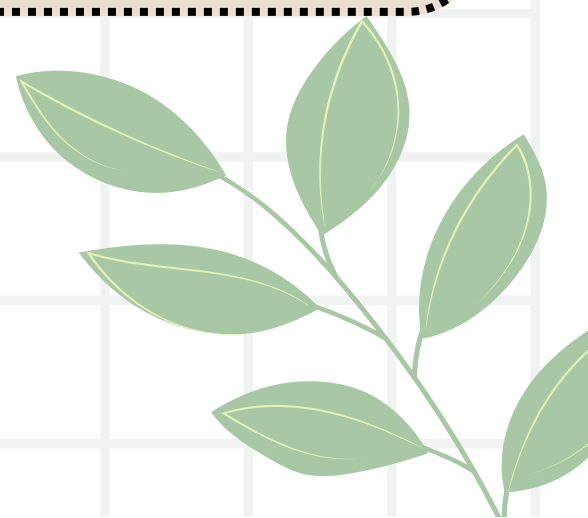


TOPIC 4 - WOLF CONSERVATION

- Firstly, the students noted the controversy that wolf conservation entails in Spain, where the interests of farmers and sheperds often clash with environmentalists' stance on the matter, considering wolfs often attack livestock.
 - The groups came up with a remarkable, scientific-based reasoning by explaining how, without the wolf, the food chain would collapse because this animal balances the cycle of life and controls the overpopulation of other species.
 - The students stressed that, in Spain, there are only between 2600- 2700 wolves left. Following this line of thought, students strongly criticized hunting of wolfs, which they defined as "unconscionable and illegal".
 - Potential solutions suggested to promote coexistence between human and wolf, inspired by the work of NGOs and associations, included the use of infrastructure (e.g. fences, dogs like *tibetan mastiff* or *dogo argentino*) to protect the livestock, as well as providing the shepherds with compensation from the government and raising awareness among the population.
 - Finally, the students demanded the incorporation of the Iberian wolf to the List of Wildlife Species under Special Protection Regime developed by RD 139/2011. They also asked fot the immediate halt of the population control programs of the species and to carry out a peninsular census of the Iberian wolf.
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TOPIC 5 -INDIGENOUS RIGHTS

- Students believe that indigenous people are more affected by climate change because they have a higher dependence on natural resources compared to non-indigenous people. Human-induced climate change is hence forcing indigenous communities to change their way of life.
 - They noted that around 476 million people in the world are indigenous, which is equal to 8% of the population. There are also more than 5000 cultures.
 - A possible solution would be to not pollute so much to try to slow down climate change.
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CONCLUSIONS

In conclusion, students from Spanish schools of Fundación Educativa Mary Ward demonstrated an outstanding commitment to climate change, reflected not only in their diligent and profound preparation and research work prior to the event, but also in the enthusiasm and willingness to participate during the meeting. We left *Triangular Conversations* with a vibrant hope in what future generations can bring to the table, and reminding participants of their ability and power to make significant changes. It is our desire that, after our dialogue, students left with lessons learned and, hopefully, the eagerness and knowledge necessary to use one's voice, once the microphone is handed over.

