

The Flourish Project collaborates with Montessori Europe to create the SDGs Handbook for the Early Years

- for immediate release -

It's never too early

From the moment of birth, and even before, children are part of ecosystems which support and nurture their well-being, sense of belonging and learning about their environment. Their families and communities create such ecosystems and support their holistic development. In today's world, pre-school experiences at childminders, nurseries, kindergartens and daycare centres are a vital element of these systems and nurture curiosity, offer new ideas and plant seeds of later understanding of our planet and how it functions.

Young children are key agents of change, and they need experiences and activities which will promote positive attitudes of care, respect and responsibility.

Understanding Big Ideas

The Flourish Project has partnered with Montessori Europe to explore ways of introducing the concept of sustainability to young children. It believes that the first six years of life are the ideal time for such an introduction – because young children are capable of absorbing, grappling with, expressing and sharing their understanding of big ideas.

This will then accompany the Flourish Project's existing **SDGs Handbook for Primary and Elementary Schools**, and both are being offered as a free resource to educators in the lead up to COP26.

As an ecosystemic framework, the Flourish Model encompasses all 17 of the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and puts the wellbeing of the child firmly at the centre of the system.

“Young children are ready for big ideas, it is our role to prepare the environment which offers time and space to explore them and to hear the child's voice. We hope this handbook will serve as an inspiration and that the suggested activities will be shared with joy and curiosity. The children of today are our future.

Barbara Isaacs, President, Montessori Europe

You can read more about the SDGs Handbook for the Early Years here <https://www.flourishproject.net/sdgs-for-the-early-years.html>

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NOTES TO EDITORS

- **The Flourish Project** is a UK-based Community Interest Company (C.I.C.) that has developed a new ecological wellbeing framework to promote community involvement and whole-systems thinking. The framework puts child wellbeing at the heart of the system and offers educators and policymakers the ability to better understand and promote the health and wellbeing of their own communities and populations. It highlights the vital importance of protecting future generations and is contributing to the global call for a more caring and compassionate world.
www.flourishproject.net
- **Montessori Europe** connects Montessorians in Europe and beyond, to consider how education can be reimagined to help guide our children to cope with the complexities and uncertainties of the modern world in the 21st Century. As a hub for Montessori education in Europe, Montessori Europe is committed to strengthening the ties between Montessorians in Europe and beyond. Recognising [the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development](#), alongside specific initiatives such as the UNESCO [Futures of Education](#) programme, we offer events and other opportunities to encourage networking and collaboration, promoting the exchange of ideas and mutual support, facilitating the preparation of today's children for tomorrow's world.
www.montessori-europe.net
- **COP26** is the 2021 United Nations climate change conference

For nearly three decades the UN has been bringing together almost every country on earth for global climate summits – called COPs – which stands for ‘Conference of the Parties’. In that time climate change has gone from being a fringe issue to a global priority. This year will be the 26th annual summit – giving it the name COP26. With the UK as President, COP26 takes place in Glasgow. In the run up to COP26 the UK is working with every nation to reach agreement on how to tackle climate change. World leaders will arrive in Scotland, alongside tens of thousands of negotiators, government representatives, businesses and citizens for twelve days of talks. Not only is it a huge task but it is also not just yet another international summit. Most experts believe COP26 has a unique urgency.

To understand why, it's necessary to look back to another COP.

The importance of the Paris Agreement

COP21 took place in Paris in 2015. For the first time ever, something momentous happened: every country agreed to work together to limit global warming to well below 2 degrees and aim for 1.5 degrees, to adapt to the impacts of a changing climate and to make money available to deliver on these aims. The Paris Agreement was born. The commitment to aim for 1.5 degrees is important because every fraction of a degree of warming will result in the loss of many more lives lost and livelihoods damaged. Under the Paris Agreement, countries committed to bring forward national plans setting out how much they would reduce their emissions – known as Nationally Determined Contributions, or ‘NDCs’. They agreed that every five years they would come back

with an updated plan that would reflect their highest possible ambition at that time. Glasgow is the moment for countries to update their plans

The run up to this year's summit in Glasgow is the moment (delayed by a year due to the pandemic) when countries update their plans for reducing emissions. But that's not all. The commitments laid out in Paris did not come close to limiting global warming to 1.5 degrees, and the window for achieving this is closing. The decade out to 2030 will be crucial.

So as momentous as Paris was, countries must go much further than they did even at that historic summit in order to keep the hope of holding temperature rises to 1.5 alive. COP26 needs to be decisive.