



Climate Explorers: A co-production approach to educating primary school children

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There is now overwhelming scientific consensus on Anthropogenic climate change, pointing to a future of increased climate-based hazards, such as drought, flooding, and storminess. Mitigation and solutions-based adaptation strategies to cope with these changes should be addressed from an early age, but attention is seldom given to educating primary school (7-12 years) children about the importance and likely impacts of climate change. This is a critical learning age, when fundamental scientific principles become embedded in a child's understanding of the world. Most children have a basic knowledge of weather, through their day-to-day experiences, but they do not have a firm grasp of climate. Few studies have addressed the provision of climate science learning resources at the primary school level, despite the need to engage children in this major global issue.

To address this educational gap, we developed Climate Explorers, a project aimed at enhancing the climate science knowledge of primary-age children by developing engaging and entertaining multimedia content, including online radio programmes and accompanying animated short films.

We applied a novel co-production approach, in which academics (lecturers, research assistants, and PhD students) and the Children's Radio UK production team worked collaboratively with teachers and school children to inform and create programme content. This was achieved through the training of 11 early-career researchers from across the UK in public engagement methods, media skills, and school workshop development, followed by a series of primary school workshops in 8 schools. This resulted in the direct engagement with over 300 primary school children, and the development of 10 three-minute-long on-line radio programmes. Since completion (July 2017), our content has been listened to by over 180,000 people, and the videos have received over 5,000 views. Our approach provides an effective, easy to achieve framework for continued climate change engagement education activities.