

## **WHERE ARE WE?**

PUSH Sweden has high ambitions when it comes to uniting and engaging Swedish youth for a truly sustainable development in general, and a transition to a fossil free, climate neutral society specifically. We believe, and have experienced, that young people can do wonders when working together to handle the challenges that our generation faces. Mitigating the climate change ahead requires just that, a collective engagement from stakeholders representing a true long-term perspective.

Looking back on the path we have traveled thus far, despite decades of negotiations, we cannot ignore the lack of sufficient results when it comes to reducing greenhouse gas emissions. With the advent of the Paris Agreement, some hope has arisen – however, we now stand at a crossroads. Either we keep on the current paths, with not enough efficiency or speed towards our goal, or we channel all the potential, accelerate the political action as required and try to retrieve the Paris momentum for ambition.

Five years ago, partly inspired by this current situation in climate politics, PUSH Sweden started. In these years, we have established a platform for young people in Sweden to network with others and channel their passion for environmental action and justice, also connected with the other two pillars of sustainable development, economic and social. Our annual get-together conference, Power Shift, is a growing project uniting young people interested in sustainability in real life. And, above all in this case, the continued presence and activity from our international team at the UNFCCC conferences have been a wonderful opportunity for us to acquire knowledge and disseminate to our target group of Swedish youth, as well as to do advocacy in several fora. Our wonderful friends and colleagues in YOUNGO continue to do great work, and to collectively represent the young voice inside the UNFCCC.

Young people will make up a growing, already huge part of the world population and are no doubt the leaders of the future. The transition has already started, but in order to provide the energy required to speed it up, as well as securing that those future leaders and world citizens are prepared with knowledge, language and drive - networks and platforms need to grow. PUSH does its part in the Swedish context and hope to see and learn from other initiatives in this category, of which there are plenty.

## **WHERE DO WE WANT TO GO?**

The whole organisation of PUSH Sweden has a vision that coming generations will inherit a planet where you have good conditions to live a good life. We also want the

society to be driven by renewable energies. We commit to do as much concrete action as possible for the climate with our members in Sweden - at both a local, as well as at a national level. We also have a budding idea to expand our work towards the European Union, as much of the politics in Sweden are closely connected to the work within the EU, where ambition crucially needs to be raised. We want a livable planet for us humans, animals and plants in the future. Since we are young, we will experience more of the consequences of climate change than most grown-ups that set the agenda, which gives us another kind of perspective on the urgency to minimize those consequences.

Therefore, one of our underlying, visionary goals is to demand a decarbonized EU by 2030. In order for this vision to actually be feasible, we see decisions being made based on the growing scientific knowledge – including the coming IPCC report – and resources being used in a sustainable and just way. By justice, we mean global justice - developed societies shall acknowledge and account for the damage that has already been done by our emissions - but also intergenerational justice. We want to move into a future where the representation on the global arenas mirrors the population of the earth and that the equal value and dignity of all humans is respected. In addition, we of course see only renewable, clean energy sources.

Obviously, we see a crucial role for youth in building this future Swedish, European and global society. If we are many uniting around engaging youth, then this is a powerful force for ambition. Young people today represent global solidarity and consumption awareness – in the coming decades, we will represent the new generation of the labor market, as well as parents of new generations.

## HOW DO WE GET THERE?

The UN and our national government can help us achieve our actions, vision and goals by providing support in different ways. Both financial (to be able to do more activities and run campaigns) and knowledge sharing and support (for our members to gain more knowledge about sustainability, climate change and the politics - in order to then engage constructively). Finding the best ways to engage and connect young people is a challenge in this day and age, with the medial structures and online communities and fora changing rapidly. The UNFCCC would do well to acknowledge this, and to use the expertise of young people to strategically meet this challenge. We hope to continue having meetings with the Swedish delegation and the ministry of environment, which we are fortunate to have today - a dialogue we believe is mutually beneficial. The UN can support us and our youth NGO colleagues by maintaining access to the climate conferences as observers to push the countries for more ambitious NDCs.

Policywise, we hold the vision that everything is possible, or at least many things are – if the political will exists. One current success story is the German feed-in tariff system, which has led to a massive increase in solar PV cells on thousands of roofs in Germany. Another success story is the Norwegian government, which has introduced several policies to incentivize people to buy electric vehicles; if you own

an electric car, you can for example drive in the bus lanes and park for free. Sweden has a high tax on fossil fuels, which has steered Sweden to a more sustainable society with lower carbon emissions, also incentivizing energy efficiency measures.

These are different kinds of best practice examples in our vicinity (that by the way can also be paired with criticism against the same countries) which can be spread across the EU where we mainly work, but ideally also to other regions and countries. All across the globe, different kinds of solutions are innovated, implemented and inspiring, to this challenge that we all face together. The best practice norm, as well as the counterpart blame-and-shame mechanism, is part of the soft power that the Paris Agreement contains - and it needs to be used, constructively.

However, for the UNFCCC as well as for ambitious, progressive Parties, the issue of conflicts of interest needs to be thoroughly handled and evaluated. Implementation will include non-party stakeholders including business, yes – but implementation and policy are separate things. The coming finalization of the rulebook, a policy process, will coincide with this inspiring Talanoa process, which focuses on ambition – so, there is a joint dynamic. We encourage the UNFCCC to acknowledge and evaluate the impact that vested interests may have on the policy processes, reflected in articles and agenda points (one example being article 6), and more precisely, if the rulebook then will create an effective platform for swift enhancing of ambition. The purpose of the Convention and the Agreement is to safeguard a livable climate, by preventing dangerous human interference and aiming to limit to 1,5/2°C. We also have this as our main priority and driving force – and hope that this is the purpose that will guide the way forward.

A short list of general policy examples that we can see as quite obvious, which are in the hands of leaders but guided by the UNFCCC and the level of ambition required to meet the Paris Agreement:

- Remove fossil subsidies. Divest public capital from the fossil industry.
- Don't allow any new investment in fossil infrastructure.
- Support renewable energy and electric mobility by technology policies.
- Come together internationally on carbon pricing, starting with best practices, for example in the form of a tax.
- Lead an inclusive, just transition, engaging the citizens of the world through education and dialogue, e.g. through the tools and initiatives in the Action for Climate Empowerment (ACE) workstream.

In short, we believe that civil society, and youth in particular, can provide the crucially needed long-term perspective on this existential challenge for humankind. With politicians relying on the short-term support from their citizens, often having to prioritize issues that might seem more urgent, and corporations looking ahead to the next annual reports; we will be there to always represent the interests of the people at the vulnerable front lines of climate change impacts, as well as the voice of future generations.