Mobilize, resist, transform: Friends of the Earth groups among millions mobilizing for climate justice across the world

03 Oct, 2019

The world's streets came alive with the footsteps and voices of climate protestors, from 20-27 September 2019, as millions came out to demand that governments and companies take real action on climate change. A record 7.6 million people – including youth, social movements, trade unions, workers and activists – took part in global climate strikes and actions across the planet, making this the biggest climate mobilization in history.

Friends of the Earth groups around the world were part of this movement, supporting school strikers and calling for climate justice for those on the front lines already facing the impacts of climate change, dirty energy and false solutions.

Groups across the Asia-Pacific region called for an end to fossil fuels and demanded a just transition to renewable energy. From Malaysia to Sri Lanka, Australia, the Philippines, Bangladesh, Japan and Indonesia, thousands walked out in protest. In South Korea and Timor-Leste, people were even out on their bicycles.

Amongst the huge numbers mobilizing in Melbourne, Australia, our FoEI flag proclaiming the strong message of "dismantle patriarchy not the planet" was featured.

> "Climate Justice for all"
>
> "Dismantle patriarchy not the planet" #ClimateStrike Melbourne pic.twitter.com/b8Bci3XyI7
>
> — Friends of the Earth (@FoEAustralia) September 20, 2019

Europe saw some of the biggest climate mobilizations, with 1.4 million people reported in Germany alone. This year was dominated by the voices of young people, inspired by the global #FridaysForFuture movement and young climate activists including Greta Thunberg. Youth and families across the continent made demands to protect their future, including in Croatia, Spain and Austria.

In Macedonia, young Friends of the Earth organized a workshop on building power and global action.

> ⏯️ A lot of activities and actions happened last weeks in the largest climate mobilization across the world
>
> Our colleagues from Young Friends of the Earth Macedonia organized this workshop about building power and global action #climatestrike #schoolstrike #climatjustice pic.twitter.com/49tRksvif0
>
> — Young Friends of the Earth Europe (@Young_FoEE) September 30, 2019

Get the full round up from Friends of the Earth Europe.

Youth in Africa also mobilized and led actions to raise awareness on climate issues. Friends of the Earth Togo organized a football match action with local children, while a young activist from Mozambique took part in the strikes and spoke powerfully on climate justice.

> . @adttogo continue de marquer la semaine de mobilisation mondiale pour le #Climat en organisant un match de football pour sensibiliser sur la crise climatique. #ClimateStrike @FoEInt_fr pic.twitter.com/Pom7i3eAwi
>
> — Amis de la Terre (@adttogo) September 28, 2019

Groups in Nigeria, South Africa, Ghana, Tanzania and Togo took messages of "climate justice for all" out on to their local streets.

> Accra march for Climate. Thank you all for showing up. Now let's carry the message home. The demand for climate action shall continue until our leader start acting. #climatestrike pic.twitter.com/egmuws3bbM
>
> — KASA INITIATIVE GHANA (@KasaInitiative) September 27, 2019

Two representatives from Friends of the Earth Africa also joined the mobilization on the streets of New York city, ahead of the UN Secretary General Climate Action Summit held there on 23 September. Philip Jakpor from Environmental Rights Action, Nigeria, and Sostine Namanya from NAPE, Uganda, joined the crowds of over 300,000 people.

> NAPE participating in Friday's for the Future climate strike in NewYork City #ClimateRights4All pic.twitter.com/P8ISRFSTxl
>
> — NAPE@NAPE-UG (@nape36272826) September 20, 2019

They also took part in a Southern Voices side event, an action against the Oil and Gas industry with allies and secured some fantastic media coverage.

> Activists, grassroots groups tackle oil executives on climate change https://t.co/UfDf3q4K3P via @environewsng @FoEAfrica @ERAFoEN1 @FoEint @foe_us @foeeurope @diptimoz @FMEnvng @NGRPresident
>
> — Philip Jakpor (@jakporphilip) September 24, 2019

There were huge marches across many cities in North and Latin America. Friends of the Earth US helped organize a shutdown of Washington DC to demand action on the climate crisis, and groups in Paraguay, Colombia and El Salvador were out on the streets, even in the rain.

Friends of the Earth International brought forward a single coherent demand for system change, and showed solidarity with indigenous peoples and local communities most severely and immediately affected by the climate crisis. In an interview on Real World Radio, climate justice and energy campaigner Sara Shaw commented:

> "Communities in the South are being hit by the impacts of climate change and dirty energy now. It's not a question of the future, it's a question of now… We are participating in these mobilizations to stand with people being impacted now as well."

These demands for climate justice and real system change come at a critical time, as peoples in the global South already feel the devastating effects of climate crisis whilst northern governments fail to cut emissions or provide the finance needed for energy transition.

The incredible turnout in this week of mobilization is an inspiring display of people power in action. But this must lead to action by Northern governments to reduce emissions, stop funding fossil fuels, and to pay their fair share for energy transformation and climate damages in the global South.

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