The barriers and enablers of systems change – learning from each other

Activity Recap:

- You will have 30 minutes in total for this breakout session
- If all 4 people in your room would like to share a challenge, you will have 7 minutes each to do so. If fewer people in your room would like to share a challenge, then keep an eye on the time to make sure everyone who wants to share is able to. It's completely up to you whether or not you'd like to share.
- One person in each breakout room will need to nominate themselves as a scribe and capture the discussion as much as possible.

Questions to think about in your breakout room:

- What are you trying to achieve? What change do you wish to see?
- What is the barrier or challenge you are trying to overcome? Why do you think this barrier has occurred?
- What enablers of change can you identify?

Challenge 1:

Change they would like to see
Systems change – in academia and research with communities
Barriers to making this change happen
• How people at grassroots are treated in research • Research is done *on* people rather than *with* people. When research is finishes, researchers don't go back and communicate with communities. Language is alienating and too technical - people don't understand and how outcomes relate to their lives. • Communities have research fatigue. • Communities don't see the benefits from the research. • Stuck in system that incentivises behaviours in particular way – e.g. more publications prioritised for promotions. • Lack of funding for iterative research processes – that don't have a predetermined shiny product or outcome – the process is important when no idea what the outcomes will be. • Academic language is selective and technical • Communications is a common barrier, not just in academia– also for companies. For example, communicating how change impacts people and how to relate change to people's lives, and giving people the agency to get involved.
Ideas for enablers of change
• Co-production and conversations with people are crucial
Other comments, ideas, advice etc.

- Things are changing – early-career researchers are more interested in seeing research that has tangible benefit for society and it doesn't take much to open doors to allow them to do that.

Challenge 2:

Change they would like to see
Barriers to making this change happen
• At 'what now' and 'so what' juncture in work • Children's Parliament are the only organisation in world to involve children in citizens assemblies • They've been invited to COP26, but it won't happen in a meaningful, in-person way and they're not in negotiation room, so keep finding themselves asking 'so what'. • Challenge – once you've put work in on the ground – where do you go with it next and go somewhere meaningful with it. • Young people can't spend all their time organising for climate action – detrimental to mental health (e.g. climate anxiety) and have other needs. • Capacity and funding – only have 7 people in their organisation • Trying to platform children's voices and there are so many voices that need to be platforms, can't represent all, e.g. don't represent indigenous voices. • Scotland not doing enough to listen to children's views about climate change.
Ideas for enablers of change
• Young people finding their voice is hugely powerful • National Grid – come and approach us, we have community projects and stakeholder engagement programmes and if we can help develop something we'd be happy to. National Grid is in listening mode on their just transition strategy, whether that is a framework or platform that links into things other groups are doing. • Common problem is scaling up. Potential enabler - identify communities of practice and find right approach that is agency building within that group. Helping spin out something that works withing that community of practice overcomes that scaling up problem to some extent. Find other groups around the world with similar ideas that can help spin it out. • Make issues relatable by doing practical things to help understanding e.g. using natural indicators like lichens to demonstrate impacts of air pollution so people begin to understand their environment - they can relate to that more easily than statistics and data.
Other comments, ideas, advice etc.
• Children's Parliament are launching a toolkit for children sharing experiences in climate change and tapping into adult decision makers. Supporting children in schools and their environments.