

WORKER CLIMATE CONFERENCE

22/23 OCT

REPORT



CONTEXT FOR CONFERENCE

LGND was founded on the principle that ownership and control of our economy cannot be left in private hands if we are to tackle climate change and build a better society. Instead we have been working towards not only public ownership of industries, but worker control as a key pillar of any desirable transition. For this, we understand the need for a strong worker-climate movement which can successfully fight and win by coordinating across a variety of methods.

In our attempts to help develop these efforts over the pandemic, we found that many union members and groups were undertaking important projects, but that they were often not as connected to one another as would be useful. As it became possible to hold in-person events again, we saw hosting a Worker-Climate Conference as a key contribution we could make to connect these efforts together to strengthen this developing movement. We focused in the conference on workers already undertaking some kind of climate-related organising, building direct relationships with a growing network through recommendations and ,when possible, long-form interviews to gain better understanding and create conference resources.

RUN THROUGH OF SESSIONS/ SOCIALS/ATTENDANCE ETC

Throughout the two-day Worker Climate Conference, participants from various trade unions across the country had points of agreement within discussions and identified the structural barriers that need to be overcome to engage in effective climate justice organising.

- **Session One: ‘Evaluation of Worker-Climate Organising 2020-22’** allowed attendees to introduce themselves to each other with speed-dating and group discussion formats, facilitating a space where trade union members could discuss points of agreement, differences, achievements and challenges in worker-climate organising. During this session, there was speed dating, climate justice posters that people could read in the hall and in the corridors and an evaluation section where people could feedback any reflections and questions they had.
- **Session Two: Just Transition and Worker-Planning** aimed to explore an understanding of ‘just transition’ where worker-led propositions, planning and policy implementation is given the utmost importance. It was an opportunity for attendees to share concrete examples of just transition work, to identify the processes by which this can be achieved, and the potential aims, targets and methods to achieve a just transition.

- Discussion during **Session Three: Local Organising** looked at examples of local worker-climate organising, identifying organisational opportunities in the midst of the cost-of-living crisis such as the United for Warm Homes Campaign, where residents and tenants can create associations and have support from unions, faith groups and council representatives. It was agreed upon that workers need to build partnerships with one another on already existing issues and relate environmentally friendly policies to our daily lives. Moreover, worker-climate movements must form alliances between trade union representatives and members, government representatives and the wider community on a local, regional and national level.
- To conclude, day two of the conference began with **Session Four: Models of Worker-Climate Organising in UK Unions**, where participants had to identify strengths and limitations within their own unions, with discussions about green reps being given appropriate support and resources, educational material being brought more directly/effectively to workers, many workers have not been taught about how unions function, and the lack of empowerment and support for people to take on responsibility. There was a need for more accessible educational material for members to learn about the structures, committees and processes within their own unions, as well as learning about collective bargaining.

- Finally, during **Session Five: Going Forward**, participants agreed that the language we use in worker-climate organising must have clarity, conciseness and be relatable to everyone's daily life. There must be more conferences, workshops and events where people can share their ideas and methods to build practical solidarity across various industries and sectors of our economy. The main goals that participants agreed upon include green representatives expanding across unions, resource email lists must be created on chosen issues/ case studies, rebuilding bridges between unions and climate justice campaigners, and to have more in-person events on a city/region level where we invited supportive union regional officers, supportive politicians, environmental activists, trades councils and local TUC members and representatives.



DISCUSSIONS

Below are some short summations of recurring points which we recorded throughout the weekend of the discussion. There was a wide range of views on specifics of tactics and methods, as well as many details of discussions which we could not fully capture. Please find the longer summary of discussion points [here](#).

Union Structures:

- Green Reps need to be resourced and supported by union structures to be effective
- Green Reps need to be integrated into other union structures to ensure dissemination and relationship of this work to other rep's concerns e.g overheating at work
- Within unions, there is a need for specific Just Transition officers, alongside other issue specific officers
- Climate issues should be worked into collective bargaining processes, as equality issues have been

Developing Our Network:

- The worker-climate movement is currently under-coordinated. The respective groups should work to integrate and collaborate.
- Information, case studies, learning resources for worker-led climate organising are disparate or incomplete. Easy

Resources and Education:

- Resources that are produced need to be deliberately utilised to drive learning and action - for example, training sessions and branch level education - towards climate goals within the TU movement and in the workplace

Local Organising:

- Climate justice is a cross cutting issue. Coalitions can be made with diverse groups coalescing around a common project.

Climate Movement:

- The climate movement and TU movement need to coordinate better, driving awareness and reducing barriers to collaboration on shared goals.
- A 'worker-climate conference' targeted at the broader climate movement could be a powerful project



OUTCOMES

A shared feeling between conference organisers and participants throughout the weekend was that while the conference was a highly successful model of networking worker-climate activists, it had only scratched the surface of a much wider effort. To build on this, LGND aims to build ongoing structures to expand and strengthen the network of worker-climate activists understanding each other's work in-depth and providing space for them to think deeply about collaboration.

While the exact forms this will take are still being developed, this may involve further long-form interviews as a basis for resource development, and running facilitated calls for un/under-connected groups of organisers who are focused on similar methods/tactics to ensure effective cross-working. These will build towards future wider events bringing wider groups together for tactical and strategic reflection. For these efforts to be successful, we will be recruiting to expand our Worker-Climate Team, particularly across analysis and outreach.

If you/anybody you know wants to join us, get in touch at [**tradeunions@labourgnd.uk**](mailto:tradeunions@labourgnd.uk)

We aim to play a supportive role in the variety of other projects which were highlighted as part of the conference, as well as any others which are formed aiming to address the issues diagnosed in the various discussions held over the weekend.

We look forward to working with you!