

At COP26 – the nuclear young generation showed the world the future of nuclear

The role of nuclear power in supporting global decarbonization was discussed more at this COP than at any previous one. We have seen articles with headlines like **“Nuclear Was the Quiet Hero of COP26”** talking about the gains made in getting people to listen to the arguments in support of nuclear power. World Nuclear Association Director General Sama Bilbao y León was in attendance and noted, *“There has been a change in how nuclear is perceived at this COP.”*

While there were many hard-working people who deserve thanks for their efforts in advancing the discussion on the merits of nuclear power, it is the energy and commitment of the nuclear young generation that really stood out.



NIYGN at COP26

The Nuclear Young Generation consists of groups of young people in 50+ country/continental chapters around the world that come together as the International Youth Nuclear Congress. For COP26 they were organized by the Nuclear

Institute Young Generation Network (NI YGN). Their small team was supported by about 80 volunteers from countries around the world.

Their efforts to advocate for nuclear power and influence world leaders and policy makers were well received. Their message was heard in numerous talks and panel sessions right across the conference.

What was amazing is the way in which these young people engaged. There were no old men in white lab coats giving monotonous lectures on the how nuclear power works. Rather there were symbols like Melty the polar bear and Bella the 3 metres tall inflatable gummy bear who represents the amount of uranium that could power all of Glasgow's electricity for 16 months.

Their voices were heard. And they made a difference. They even organized a flash mob to get attention to their slogan for the event – Net Zero needs nuclear. Antinuclear activists and aligned politicians have called this video cringe worthy. Yet in their criticism they also widely shared the video giving it even more attention.

As stated in one of the articles coming out of COP26, *“Nuclear is losing its stigma, in other words, it's been invited to the cool kids' table.”* And these cool kids are smart passionate young people who are well on their way to being the future leaders of a strong global industry that is playing a major role in solving climate change. From those of us that are not as young as we once were, but remain passionate about nuclear power, and are still young at heart – thank you. The future is in good hands.