# Abi Taylor reflects on her climate activism journey



Abi Taylor, the Co-Head Facilitator of the Durham student environmental campaign group EcoDU, recently shared her journey into climate activism and her reflections on the broader challenges of engaging with climate issues. Speaking to Tabitha Lanyon, Editor of the EcoDU society newsletter, Taylor recounted her initial aversion to the news as a child due to anxiety surrounding global events. Her perspective changed significantly when a friend’s charity fundraiser opened her eyes to the impact individual actions can have.

Taylor’s involvement in activism grew from fundraising for organisations like Tearfund during the pandemic to a deeper engagement with political issues. This shift was influenced by her studies in A-level Politics, which sparked a fascination with the ability of politics to affect everyday lives. Taylor noted her belief that political engagement is essential in tackling the climate crisis. "Politics is probably the best pathway to tackling the climate crisis," she stated, emphasising the intricate relationship between various sectors and the need for national legislative changes in light of the global nature of climate issues.

Reflecting on the political landscape, Taylor voiced her apprehension regarding the American election and the potential implications for climate action. "I think it decides the future of the planet," she remarked, pointing to the United States' significant role in global emissions. She expressed concern that the current American leadership could undermine international climate efforts, providing a "permission slip" for other nations to neglect their climate responsibilities.

The enormity of climate issues has taken a toll on Taylor’s mental endurance. She acknowledged feeling exhausted and grappling with the pressure of constant exposure to alarming news. "It’s very hard to constantly take in pessimistic information," she admitted. She discussed coping strategies, including stepping back from the activist sphere to recharge, highlighting the importance of self-care for sustainability in activism.

In terms of her role within activism, Taylor's humility was evident as she separated her contributions from direct action, which she described as sometimes intimidating. While she identifies as an activist, her focus has been on systemic change through engagement with politics rather than disruptive tactics. Taylor articulated the challenges of straddling the divide between internal policy and external activism, noting that the tension between these approaches can create feelings of not fully belonging in either camp.

Taylor underscored the significance of student activism, viewing it as a foundational training ground for future leaders. She argued that the values instilled during university years could shape students’ career trajectories towards more sustainable practices. "If people think, 'Oh, actually I don’t want to do a fossil fuel-based career,' that totally changes the trajectory of their life," she explained.

When addressing the critical question of optimism regarding climate change, Taylor shared her mixed sentiments. The immediacy and severity of climate impacts contribute to her anxiety about the future, as she expressed concern about the long-term consequences of rising temperatures. Despite these fears, she held onto a belief that the world can change for the better, provided that people continue to engage actively with these issues.

In conclusion, Taylor’s reflections encapsulate the complexities of being a climate activist—balancing hope and anxiety, navigating the political landscape, and managing personal well-being amidst the challenges posed by climate change. Ultimately, she embraces her role as an activist while yearning for a time when she might simply pursue her dream of owning a bookshop, free from the pressing demands of social justice work. "Do I wish someone would just come and sort it out? Yes, I do," she stated, conveying the desire for resolution in a deeply challenging landscape.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://climate.ny.gov/Resources/Climate-Justice-Working-Group> - This URL supports the discussion on climate activism and the importance of political engagement in addressing climate issues, as it highlights New York's efforts to ensure disadvantaged communities benefit from clean energy transitions.
2. <https://www.ipcc.ch/srccl/chapter/summary-for-policymakers/> - This URL provides context on the global nature of climate issues and the need for national legislative changes, as emphasized by Abi Taylor's belief in the role of politics in tackling the climate crisis.
3. <https://www.epa.gov/ghgemissions/sources-greenhouse-gas-emissions> - This URL corroborates Taylor's concern about the United States' significant role in global emissions and the potential implications of American leadership on international climate efforts.
4. <https://www.un.org/en/climatechange> - This URL supports the discussion on the global nature of climate issues and the importance of international cooperation in addressing them, as highlighted by Taylor's concerns about the American election's impact on climate action.
5. <https://www.who.int/news-room/q-and-a/detail/mental-health-and-climate-change> - This URL provides context on the mental health impacts of climate change, which aligns with Taylor's experiences of feeling exhausted and grappling with the pressure of constant exposure to alarming news.
6. <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/sustainable-development-goals/> - This URL supports the broader discussion on sustainability and the role of student activism in shaping future leaders towards more sustainable practices, as emphasized by Taylor's views on student activism.
7. <https://news.google.com/rss/articles/CBMizAFBVV95cUxQa3Yzd2xUZHN1bjRaeC00NkZwZlI5cDl3QjlRbld3SUNncXBDRHZ4aG1YUXpZYzU4MGx5S29EVk04Y2Z4X0RfNG5TaDlMakJQamtXSGNGMWxCc3NDclAzYXltNVdwdnZ3cWEwZWVNaVNFTWJEa21CcHFRR213aVZab0dUdUJYRFRna2VZclJ0RjkyZE9mZEgtZFJYRHc1T2NvQ0paQ2NLRVY5M3c5bVJqXzZCMjZyNndidjd1NFJfQjlObE9DS3l1ZFVoY0s?oc=5&hl=en-US&gl=US&ceid=US:en> - Please view link - unable to able to access data