

The Students and Schools Partnership Declaration

Adapting in Changing World: Improving Communication, Education, and Action

This declaration is the collaborative product of 13 students from Japan, Russia, and the United States of America who were fortunate to participate and benefit from the EMECS 11 – Sea Coasts XXVI Joint Conference in Saint Petersburg, Russia. We express our gratitude for the warm welcome from our international hosts, the wonderful presentations from the main conference participants, the hard work and dedication of the chair and the organizing committees, and the fruitful engagement of the students and educators in the sixth students and schools partnership session.

The eleventh iteration of EMECS has been very successful in retaining strong international collaboration, building upon the flow of ideas for over two decades, and continuing the SSP session. However, there are improvements that need to be made to ensure that the next conference is even more successful. We demand the full integration of the SSP session into the main conference. The separation of the SSP does not exemplify a true exchange of ideas between the professionals and the students. This does not allow for the highest level of learning.

We further challenge the conference to include larger student representation in both number and nationality in the conference. There are far too few student voices involved.

A greater number of students from different backgrounds creates a richer and more productive exchange of ideas. This leads to more specific questions, better research, and more effective solutions.

If allowed uninhibited interaction, students and professionals are able to learn from each other. Intergenerational communication needs to be highly valued because we offer a unique perspective. We are going to inherit the earth and need a say in its future condition. Thanks to your contributions and of those before you, our education has evolved to be interdisciplinary. This allows us to analyze problems from multiple directions and widen our focus and therefore our impact.

In our SSP session, we identified a lack of clear communication of science to the public as the primary issue that inhibits effectual understanding and action. Science needs to be more accessible to the average person, and this can be done by communicating the message in clear and simple terms. The message needs to be presented in a relatable format to lessen the gap between scientific knowledge and general understanding. Improving the transfer of knowledge also needs to be included in our education systems.

When environmental education at all levels is lacking, citizen involvement in environmental issues is

delayed or nonexistent. In order to encourage action, we must first revolutionize our environmental education. This can be remedied through hands-on learning and the incorporation of solution-based curriculum regarding the world's most urgent environmental issue: climate change. This engagement develops a network of lifelong learners, which lessens the divide between scientific knowledge and public understanding. These learners will use their new understanding and apply it in the political realm to emphasize the importance of the environment and demand government action.

While it is also important to take action on the individual level, it is crucial to work at the community level. Being adaptable in a changing world requires the sharing of knowledge and ideas in local, regional, and global communities. We need to work together to find a solution that fits the scale of the problem.

We are thankful for this opportunity to learn about the challenges and progress that is being made towards creating solutions around the world. When we overcome our differences in culture, language, and discipline, we generate stronger solutions and better prepare for the future.

One person cannot change everything. But if millions of people make a little change together to protect our nature, the earth will be different. The young generation like us must take over the will and efforts to conserve our nature hand in hand for all the creatures sharing the earth. Let's think about what we can do together.