

Speaking 4 the Planet **Changing the World – One Performance at a Time**

Speaking 4 the Planet (S4P) is an arts-based approach to sustainability education. It is a competition that invites students to express their views on matters related to the planet and the future – their future. And they express those views through the Arts: speaking, drama, art, writing, meme and video. S4P creates space and opportunities for young people to intertwine humanities and sciences, to philosophise about human actions, and to imagine a better world while standing deep in the science of the world they live in. Youth marches and student strikes are the very public faces of (climate change) protest. Speaking 4 the Planet is an equally powerful opportunity for students to speak up and advocate for a healthy future.

S4P events inspire young people to think creatively, independently, and courageously; they create space for students to ask challenging questions; and they provide opportunities for critical thinking – applause and jeers – about decisions made at various levels of government. S4P creates opportunities for youth voice not silence. The sustainability changes that the world needs won't occur by following existing dogma and practices. New thinking is required. Youthful thinking is required. The arts invite influential ways of communicating through school curriculum areas typically omitted from sustainability education. Speaking 4 the Planet is founded on the beliefs that Science provides the data, while the Arts change the world.

“As a student, I would recommend Speaking 4 the Planet to others as it acts as a wake-up call to the crisis we are currently in. It is a wonderful opportunity to learn how we can help save our planet.” High school student, Armidale.

“Now I can tell stories through art.” Primary School student, Hampden Public School.

“I would say to other teachers that S4P is a great day for students to engage with real-world environmental issues using their creativity.” Rachel McKendrick, teacher

S4P has been run with primary schools, secondary schools and trainee teachers at universities. Speeches, performances, artworks, videos, memes and pieces of writing (30 words!) have explored solutions to sustainability problems. Chess games where losing pieces are islands drowning. Posters about eating less meat. A plea for a Copernican shift in how we dream – putting the planet at the centre instead of our desires. A drama piece where the boss of the planet, Humanity, sacked the hardest worker – Nature – but then had to beg Nature to return. ‘I will,’ she said, ‘but there will be conditions.’

Speaking 4 the Planet builds skills and confidence in communication, research, argument, and advocacy. The events and competitions provide students with opportunities to express their views and feelings on issues that concern them and the whole of humanity. Such opportunities are good for their well-being and for their sense of agency. These competitions strengthen leadership and advocacy skills, and they build networks of youth.

“Speaking 4 the Planet ignited in me a passion for the cause and perhaps a career path.”
Student, The Hills Shire.

Slovenia will join the competition in next years, planning in 2022, we applied to Erasmus+ call together with ISSBS, International School for Social and Business Studies, Celje, Slovenia.



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