

## **Green Wave is not a trend - it's my generation acting on very real fears for our future**

Molly Hoque article in Irish Independent

28 May 2019

On the 15<sup>th</sup> of March 2019, myself and over 10,000 students flocked to Leinster House to strike for climate action. I was lucky enough to be one of the youths to speak at this strike. At the time I didn't realise the scale of the event. I did not expect to be speaking in front of 10,000 people that day, and yet, I felt completely calm. I realised my ease was because I was not talking about myself, I was speaking on behalf of the Earth.

A few weeks after the strike my school was invited to Leaders on Our Level in the Convention Centre. We were graced with the presence of Taoiseach Leo Varadkar. In his speech Varadkar said that he was inspired by the students that went on strike. I had hoped he would describe to us the actions that our country would be taking but unsurprisingly there was no description. It reminded me of something I had mentioned in my speech, "We must convince a government that endorses our protest today and yet, if they had really tried, we probably wouldn't have to be here."

As a member of this new generation I can tell you that our education has always been sprinkled with Green Thinking. In Primary School we would assign students to turn off the lights and check the taps whenever we'd leave the room. We had a Green Schools Committee who made sure we recycled properly. I think that this new green wave is simply the natural progression of what we have always been taught. The only thing that has changed is that we have gotten older, and more scared.

I remember when I was 5 years old I would have a recurring nightmare about sea levels rising and everyone I knew drowning. I remember watching animal programmes on television and hearing soon that these animals would go extinct. I didn't think these situations would worsen by the time I was 17.

Almost everyone in school has a reusable water bottle or coffee cup. People are giving up meat. Girls often swap clothes for events. A lot more people are using apps and websites to buy second hand clothes and some people have begun to alter clothes. I would always hear stories about the women in my family upcycling clothing; we are simply bringing back a system that seemed to work best. But there is a lot more to do.

The strikes and protests are happening for a different reason. The real aim for these events is to change the government's way of thinking. We need to consider the climate with every decision we make.

I think a build up of fear and repetition is the cause of this new Green Wave. To me it is not a trend, it is an honest feeling of uneasiness about our own futures. It has always been hard to imagine the future but for some today, we don't even want to imagine.