

## On Global Citizenship

*A global citizen is aware of and understands the wider world and their place in it. As educators we both want and hope that students will build their own understanding of the world. A recent initiative driven by teachers in partnership with students has been to create a ‘Scotch Global’ programme. This aims to enable boys to gain knowledge of the world and how people from different countries interact with each other. Boys are encouraged to develop an appreciation of other cultures, understand and accept the values of others; identify and recognise the causes and consequences of a variety of current issues. They are encouraged to respond to global issues, individually and in partnership with student-led and community groups. To this end, a group of students who expressed their interest in being part of this programme were invited to an inaugural event in early March to hear guest speaker d’Arcy Lunn from Teaspoons of Change.*

Max Fan, Year 11, shares his reflections below:

When I was young, and people asked me “What do you want to do when you grow up?” I would answer with big ideas – world peace, climate change, poverty, education. With adolescence came the cynical realisation that these ideas are much bigger than us – one person cannot lift billions out of poverty, solve climate change, settle all conflicts and educate young people, all at once. d’Arcy Lunn’s presentation based on his project *Teaspoons of Change* dispelled much of this cynicism – arguing that all change is robustly rooted in individual behaviour. In effecting the change for me, there were three broad takeaways from the learning experience.

### I *Individual change is meaningful*

All change, regardless of how large, meaningfully occurs at a micro level – reaching global carbon neutrality means that every individual in the world must cut back on carbon usage, individual people need to change their voting patterns and individual people need to be convinced of its significance to their lives. The notion of *Teaspoons of Change* is founded on the idea that when individual people each give a tiny bit, the effect when we engage global citizens in to real action quickly adds up to be noticeable. By encouraging individuals to set small, achievable goals, we encourage a more accountable and meaningful form of engagement with these global issues.

### II *Effective change is nuanced and difficult*

Every person is different – giving up petrol for electric, for instance, is much easier for a city-dwelling family than a rural one. Giving up coal is much easier for developed economies than developing. So much nuance is missing from the discussions surrounding poverty or climate change at a national or even state level where politicians talk in dollar amounts and broad strokes about hitting carbon neutrality without plans for doing so. d’Arcy, throughout the day, was never shied away from the difficult questions about how we, as young people, strive for a better future, be they about coal miners in Kentucky or food waste at Scotch.

### III *Communication is the greatest barrier to change*

Even when change is made, too often it ignores the needs communities. d’Arcy shared two stories which, encapsulated the problematic lack of communication between the helpers and the helped. The first is of a school who had received a whiteboards in every classroom from western charities and yet could not use them because of a lack of whiteboard markers in the mountainous region where they were situated. The

second was of a two large 40,000-dollar generators being donated to a psychiatric hospital in Sierra Leone with both being unusable because they were so powerful that they shorted out the electrical grid. In both instances, I was reminded of the fraught system where the charities and governments create solutions for people rather than with them, choosing generic one-size-fits-none solutions rather than unique solutions for unique communities. It is so important to know and understand the global community and their actual needs and come up with a workable solution.

What was most inspiring about d'Arcy's talk, however, was the way in which he "walks the talk", living a waste-minimal life, using no plastic bottles for the past 9 years, going into remote communities Kyrgyzstan to climb mountains but also to teach, printing business cards on waste cardboard. The talk was nothing short of eye-opening.