



CatalyseChange

Empowering Young Women
for Sustainable Futures

Catalyse Change Impact Report 2024



Catalyse Change increases the opportunities for young women and non-binary changemakers to pursue purposeful careers through building a community of confident, connected climate leaders.



catalysechangeic



catalysechange

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Who are we?

Catalyse Change CIC is a social enterprise that empowers, inspires, and upskills young women and non-binary changemakers or catalysts.

Our mission is to provide our catalysts with the knowledge, skills, confidence, and connections they need to pursue careers as sustainability leaders and changemakers.

We provide **gender equality, female empowerment, and sustainability solutions** by partnering with innovative UK businesses, organisations, and individuals to build a powerful network of support.

Our Programmes

We worked directly with 200 catalysts and delivered three sustainability empowerment programmes in 2023;

1 Catalyst Summit & Mentoring

Our flagship programme takes a holistic approach to sustainability, including training in; Green Careers and Skills, Personal Development and Well-being. It took place in July 2023 with 76 attendees, of whom 62 went on to be mentored by a woman working in sustainability between August 2023 – February 2024.

2 Green skills & careers

Online training and upskilling course to prepare young women for careers in sustainability. It was delivered in November 2023, attended by 26 catalysts.

3 Masterclasses & meet-ups

Monthly opportunities for networking and developing sustainability knowledge and skills. 141 catalysts attended seven of these events. We also spoke to over 500 people at three external events.

We also published a book last year!

[Your Green Career: the handbook for young women and non-binary changemakers.](#)

Traci Lewis, our co-founder, wrote and published this book based on our Catalyse Change delivery over the past eight years. It was a No.1 bestseller on Amazon for over a month. We launched it in Bristol at Sparks in partnership with Women in Sustainability, with over 70 people attending. All proceeds from the book go towards Catalyse Change.



Meet three of our catalysts

Ayesha

"I live in London and love walking and hiking. I would like to be a Social Impact Officer in Sustainability. I joined the programme to learn, connect with like-minded people, and gain direction."

What are the top three benefits you've experienced as a result of taking part?

Confidence, resilience and focus.



Izzy

"I am 21 from Plymouth and a final-year student in Birmingham. I like wild swimming and environmental volunteering. I joined the programme to further my understanding of the sustainability space and network with others."

What would your dream green or climate job be?

Either in radical environmental economics think tanks such as the New Economics Foundation/Wellbeing Economy alliance or in the EU/UN policy working towards changing the goal away from GDP in a more holistic well-being economy.

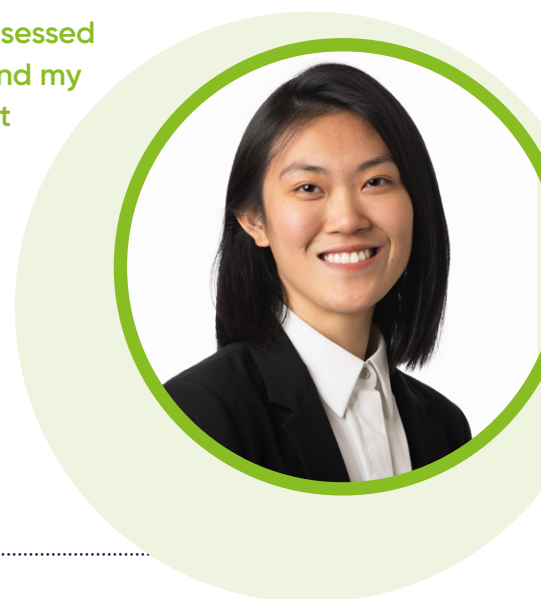


Zhen

"I love spending time in parks, enjoy live music, and am obsessed with cat cafes. I joined Catalyse Change as I wanted to land my first job in sustainability and learn more about the different career paths people take. I'm now working as a BREEAM auditor at BRE."

What would you say if you were to recommend us to your best friend?

The programme is an amazing, safe space for you to share your thoughts, interact with, and learn from other brilliant women in sustainability, which will greatly help you to achieve your next goal in your studies or career.



Feedback from our Programmes

Who are our Catalysts?

- I love illustration, communicating with people, and being outside. I want to work in a change-making job that focuses on local projects for global issues.
- I am currently at a stage in my early career where I am trying to determine what paths would be best suited to me, what I feel most passionate about in the sustainability industry, and how to land my dream job ultimately.
- I am a woman of colour working in the Climate Change and Sustainability Space. I want to grow in leadership and join a group of passionate, like-minded people.
- I have been interested in gender equality from a young age, inspired by my grandmother's feminist activism. I have pursued my interest in gender equality in my voluntary journalism work.
- Climate action is most interesting to me as I feel connected to the issues; I live near Luton Airport, which has plans to expand and will have negative health implications for local residents. I have been assisting with awareness of the campaign against the expansion and have been struggling with feeling hopeless about the situation.
- I am very passionate about the sustainable fashion industry in particular, as fashion has been an interest of mine for years, and I love being able to make my own clothes.
- I'm 19 years old and am a Philosophy and Politics student at the University of Bristol. I enjoy dancing, reading, and advocating for change in terms of animal rights and climate change.
- I am 25 years old and based in Glasgow. I work at a company that focuses on reusable packaging as a service, with the goal of eliminating single-use plastic packaging.



Why did you join the programme?

- "As a generation, I believe we can make a big change. Recently, my country (and the entire world) has been affected by heat waves that have claimed human lives. I feel so responsible for so much damage done to the planet, and since I entered university, I have dedicated my studies to sustainable design."
- "I love the idea of a women-led community where one can feel safe and encouraged to learn and grow."
- "I'm currently studying an MSc in Energy at the University of Birmingham, and I'm hoping to secure a job in the sustainability or renewable energy sector after I finish."
- "My biggest interest in the programme is finding a community of like-minded people. I believe that it can give me a sense of direction and confidence in pursuing my aspirations."
- "Sustainability is such a big topic nowadays. I think getting to know more is worth a bit of investment and will significantly help my career path."
- "What interests me the most is the opportunity it provides to address the climate emergency and make a meaningful difference. As someone who feels worried about our future on the planet, I am eager to gain the knowledge and skills necessary to contribute to sustainability efforts. I believe that attending this will empower me by providing inspiring and informative training on sustainability and green careers."
- "One challenge I face is not knowing how to effectively make a difference in the face of the climate emergency. This programme offers the guidance and mentorship of a woman working in sustainability, which would greatly support me in navigating my change-maker journey. The one-on-one sustainability mentoring would provide invaluable insights and advice tailored to my specific goals and aspirations."



What was your overall experience?

Izzy:

"It was the most incredible opportunity. I have learned so much about how policymaking recruitment works, as well as how to create your own work experience. It was also just very inspiring on a personal level to work with someone who is so motivated and proactive in this space, with such optimism and enthusiasm for these top-down policy changes."

Carolina:

"It was a great opportunity, with loads of valuable resources and a brilliant mentor."

Sophie:

"It made me more inspired, and it was good to connect with other women in the sustainability space. It is good that these new connections have been with women my own age so I can see the paths they are undergoing but also women that are older than me so I can take inspiration from what jobs/paths they have taken to get them where they are today."

Nina:

"I enjoyed having someone to go to with questions and the support that they gave me. Knowing that my mentor was rooting for me helped build up my confidence. I ended up applying for roles I previously considered out of my reach."

What are the top three benefits you experienced as a result of taking part?

Izzy:

- ★ Better understanding of how change occurs.
- ★ Better understanding of the distinction between the private and public sector roles in the sustainability space.
- ★ Equipped with the ability to set goals and achieve them.

Putu:

- ★ Getting many useful tips to implement in the workplace, things I can try and evaluate to establish a rhythm at work.
- ★ Having a chance to bounce off ideas with my mentor before speaking to my line manager when I have problems and issues. This helps me structure my thoughts and identify other things I can do that I didn't think about before.
- ★ And feeling more confident and empowered! My mentor helped me see that I should not be insecure and not feel good enough. She helped me see why I am good enough!

2023 Catalyst Summit

Over three days in July, we hosted over 150 catalysts, speakers, facilitators, and mentors.

From our catalysts...

- "Made good connections - Good for goal setting - Very holistic - Inspiring."
- "More confidence, more insights into sustainability career pathways, a wonderful community."
- "There's something really powerful about the Catalyst Summit being a women's/non-binary-only space. It's so well tailored to address challenges we face in our personal development, e.g., dealing with imposter syndrome. Everyone is so lovely and supportive, and inspirational to hear so many stories from women fighting the good fight!"
- "If you feel lost or unsure about your next steps but want to transform your career for sustainability and you are willing to put in the time and effort - this is one of the best opportunities you'll find to achieve that! Also, it's an amazing community of inspiring women who support and encourage each other to be their best selves and achieve their career goals."
- "It has helped to make me feel a lot less lost. Speaking to mentors and speakers and knowing that they all had individual journeys to get to where they are is reassuring."
- "Amazing opportunity to network with like-minded and supportive women. It is a very calming experience to know I am not alone in my journey and to find some direction."
- "I would say it is a brilliant opportunity to kickstart your career and start thinking about options to explore within the sustainability space. It is also an extremely brilliant way to give you much-needed hope and community in a sector that is often rather dismal and distressing."
- "It's such an inspiring and helpful programme that I can't recommend it anymore. You get the chance to meet some of the incredible women in sustainability, get to know their journey, and hear their advice. It's also amazing to have a career support group with the rest of the catalysts in the same boat as you. You are looking for a job in the sector and are willing to make a positive impact, support each other, and share useful resources and tips."
- "It is a great opportunity to get to know yourself, your values, and your passions and meet a range of inspiring women working in different sustainability sectors."
- "It's definitely worth it; there are lots of inspirational women to network and share ideas with, and it's so lovely to be in this space."

Mentoring

Sixty mentors were trained and paired with sixty-two mentees this year.

Top three 3 benefits

- Understanding of career and education options
 - Skills and knowledge
 - Confidence
-

Mentee feedback

Milla: "It's been good meeting somebody regularly to talk through my plans and build a way forward with advice from somebody who's been where I was many years ago. I can better break up my big goals into smaller ones and have some practical next steps. I now have more confidence, connections, and opportunities open to me. I'm looking forward to what comes next."

Audrey: "My mentor helped me build a habit of focusing on the positives that happened each day, and just writing it down helped me to see the day in a different light. I'm much happier and more content now. Amazing!"

2023 alum: "It has helped me to get advice from an industry professional while job hunting and helped to build my confidence, especially as a young woman. I don't doubt myself when I know I will need to job hunt in the future as I know I can do it. Gaining lots of contacts, meeting such a big community of nice people in my position, and hearing so many inspiring stories from the likes of Clover Hogan, etc."

Carolina: "I loved working with my mentor. She helped me convert my dream into a tangible goal. I work a lot more on myself and what I want to do. More confidence, a network of inspiring women, and a clear path to achieve my goal."

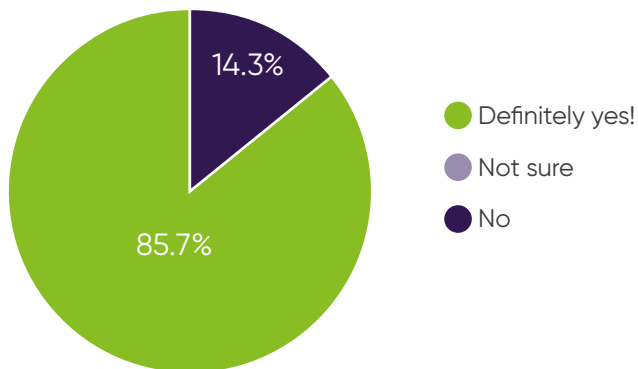
Izzy: "It was so inspiring to work with someone who had achieved so much in the exact field I would love to work in. I enjoyed that concrete advice was given but in a flexible way that allowed me to lead the discussion."

Sophie: "I managed to secure a summer internship, which was mainly done on my own, but my mentor continued to encourage me with my development and ideas of things I could get involved in next"

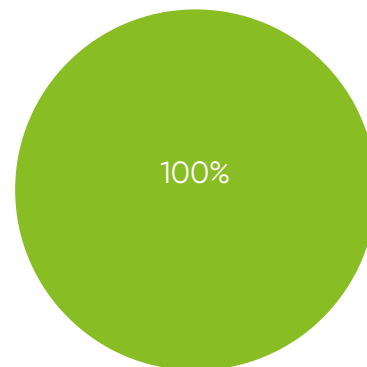
Nina: "Mentoring has made all the difference to my career goals and plans. My mentor helped me focus on where I wanted to go, jobs to apply for and how to get there. I've recently landed a new job in renewable energy and my mentor helped me to achieve this."

2023 alum: "I enjoyed having someone to go to with questions and the support that they gave me. Knowing that my mentor was rooting for me helped build up my confidence. I ended up applying for roles I previously considered out of my reach."

**If you did identify a goal,
was it achieved?**



**We'd love to stay connected with
you, will you stay part of our Catalyst
Community and/or LinkedIn group?**



Mentor feedback

"The programme is so important. The programme works with girls who have put their hands up and want to work in sustainability. It's vital we arm these girls with the confidence to believe they can make a difference in our world and share our networks to help them succeed. It's a great programme, and I'm delighted to be involved!"

"This is such a powerful programme. It was gratifying to help a young woman navigate all the different choices in her early career and highlight how much value she has to add to the world. It was also really beneficial for me to learn from my mentee about young people and their motivations and concerns for their careers in sustainability. Thank you, Traci for making this happen."

"I love this programme and always get so much out of supporting young women in sustainability and impact work."

"I wish this programme had been around when I was starting my career. I love the many components to the programme, from practical tools to inspiration to community and ongoing support. Is a brilliant resource that I am very proud to be a part of."

"It's a good programme to support younger people in this space - so many great minds mentoring!"

"The Catalyse Change programme is such a great opportunity and a rewarding experience for mentee and mentor alike. I have enjoyed mentoring these past two years and feel my time and input has been worthwhile. It's great to play even a small part in supporting young women to thrive in their education and careers."

"The programme was extremely useful, even as a mentor I got a lot out of it in terms of knowledge exchange and self reflection. Highly recommend!"

Meet two of our mentors



Dr Michal Nachmany

Founder and CEO of Climate Policy Radar

Founder of a not-for-profit AI startup on a mission to organise, analyse, and democratise data on climate law and policy.

Michal is a visiting fellow at the Grantham Research Institute at LSE, where she previously spent almost 10 years heading the 'Climate Change Laws of the World' project, and leading a team to support climate-positive investment.

Michal holds a PhD from the London School of Economics, an MA in Energy Policy, and an MBA. She is a Regular speaker on climate policy and action with diverse audiences and media.

"I believe in radical and compassionate collaboration between people - pulling each other up, helping each other shine, giving without putting a price on it, using our vulnerability as a source of power. It's what we need as humans to overcome our personal demons, and as a humanity, to collectively overcome climate change and institutional inequalities."



Bryony Salter

Head of Impact & Sustainability at Positive Planet

Bryony has eight years of broad sustainability expertise, encompassing diverse areas such as waste-to-energy and climate tech R&D projects, carbon accounting, Net Zero consultancy, and EU-funded projects promoting sustainability and business growth.

Currently leading the expansion of project delivery and sustainability teams at a purpose-driven start-up, she is dedicated to driving positive environmental and social impact. Bryony is passionate about empowering young people, encouraging them to unlock their potential and craft innovative business solutions for people and our planet.

"I'm inspired by the boundless ideas and enthusiasm of young people. I am looking forward to the opportunity to nurture and support their aspirations through the Catalyse Change programme. I aim to foster their self-assurance, empowering them to overcome obstacles and achieve their dreams. They are pivotal in shaping a brighter future for our planet!"

Some words our catalysts chose to describe their experience with Catalyse Change...



Our sponsors



"Wholegrain Digital proudly supports the Catalyse Change programme, recognising its crucial role in inspiring, empowering, and upskilling young women and non-binary changemakers. This initiative aligns with our values of fostering sustainable development and nurturing the next generation of leaders, and building a community of confident and connected climate activists who are equipped to drive positive environmental and societal transformations through green careers and sustainable practices."

Vineeta Greenwood, Wholegrain Digital

Our Board and Advisory Board

We are grateful to our brilliant Board and Advisory Board, who guide our strategy and support our programme marketing and delivery. We welcomed seven new advisory members in 2023 and said goodbye to three others from the founding group.

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Anthesis, Senior
Sustainability Consultant



Sussy Wanjala
Sustainability practitioner
and consultant

Growing a global community of connected climate leaders

This year helped facilitate a truly global catalyst community, with nearly 20 different countries represented through our mentees and mentors.



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