



A tale of two COPs: the official conference and the People's COP

There were two very different COPs – the official governmental gathering and the vibrant civil society space, where many groups (from business and finance to NGOs, faiths and more) were determined to deliver for people and planet, whatever the governments did or did not achieve. Faithinvest went to COP26 to find these people and partnerships. Here are our reflections.

- 'COP26 was always going to be difficult' – [CEO Martin Palmer](#)
- 'Substance behind the signalling' – [Director of Membership Nana Francois](#)
- 'A tale of two COPs' – [Director of Movement Building Lorna Gold](#)

FaithInvest CEO Martin Palmer explains why he found inspiring signs of change at the UN's COP26 Climate Conference

COP26 was always going to be difficult. For those wanting it to be the answer to all our problems, it was going to be a failure. For those expecting an apocalypse, it was going to be a disappointment! What we ended with was actually two separate events with very different energies, aspirations and commitments.

The formal governmental, UN-managed one – the COP system itself – is basically designed not to work because, as a former UN Assistant Secretary General has said of these Government/UN meetings, the nation states come trying to ensure they do as little as possible but want to be seen to be trying. That was very much what happened at Glasgow.



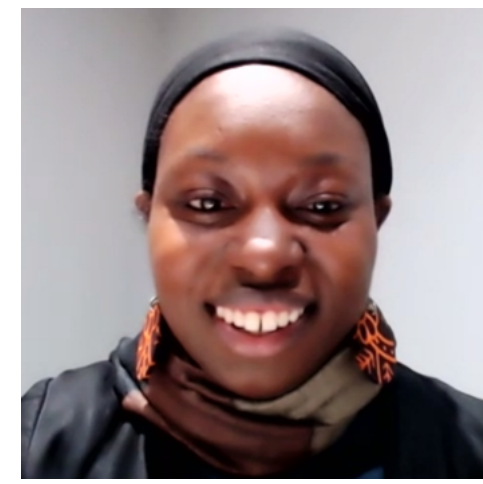
The other event at Glasgow was a sign of change. And that was the huge civil society programme. There were, of course, the marches and the petitions, a vital part of democracy. But more important were the new working partnerships that were being created, strengthened or discovered during the COP.

This time, the faiths featured as major players at all sorts of levels – not just as finger-wagging outsiders but as vital components of civil society committed to make the changes necessary within themselves.

[READ MARTIN'S FULL REFLECTION](#)

There was substance behind the signalling, says Nana Francois

One of the reasons FaithInvest participated at COP26 was to work with those focused on the solutions, building partnerships and opportunities to support the mobilisation of capital in a faith-consistent manner for the good of people and planet.



This work is most effective when it engages hearts, minds and wallets, and as we reflect back on the events, conversations and conclusions from the fortnight, there are three key takeaways which give me optimism for the future and a good sense of urgency in our next steps.

1. **There was substance behind the signalling** – at all levels from government to civil society.
2. **Civil society captured the imagination**, and there was a **spirit of action and collaboration** focused on actions as well as statements.
3. **Faith-based groups**, in particular, are ready and eager to **engage with concepts of positive investment** as a progression of their screening and/or divestment activities.

There is a real richness of curiosity and knowledge here, and for me this is the most encouraging development as we explore different possibilities to co-create large scale impactful fund possibilities in partnership with implementation experts – for the faiths from the faiths.

[READ NANA'S FULL REFLECTION](#)

A tale of two COPs: What it was like to be there: Lorna Gold

I returned home on Friday after almost two weeks at COP26 in Glasgow. It was like running a marathon for ten days in a row – shuttling about from meeting to dinner, protest to prayer vigil, summit to roundtable discussion – and then press 'repeat'. What, if anything, apart from near exhaustion, did those two weeks of intense activity achieve?

Was COP26 a success? For me, it is too early to answer this question. We will only really know whether it was 'enough' in the months and years to come. In my own mind, there were at least two COPs going on in Glasgow. At this point, I have mixed feelings on whether either succeeded.



The first COP was the one happening in the so called Blue Zone. It was the official COP of the climate negotiators – a windowless labyrinth of marquees and hangers which had been transformed into UN territory for the COP.

I was lucky to have a Blue Zone pass so was entitled to enter this highly protected area. Inside, it was a hive of activity and as the days progressed, a place of stress, tension and near exhaustion. I have to admit I barely used my official pass. After an initial visit, I quickly decided that this was not where I wanted to be for the most part.

Thankfully, there was a whole other COP happening in Glasgow, and that is where I spent most of my time. There was a 'peoples' COP' happening out on the streets, in parish halls, in churches and mosques, in community centres – every available space was taken up with activists, NGOs, union organiser: civil society of every sort and colour.

Everywhere you turned there were people organising – making colourful banners, displaying knitted blankets (Stitches for Survival), praying, shouting, singing, discussing. It felt like everyone was finding their place in a wonderful kaleidoscope of humanity fighting together for a safe future.

[READ LORNA'S FULL REFLECTION](#)



What we did at COP26, and our take on the key outcomes

- FaithInvest took part in some wonderful events at COP26: [Find out what we were up to.](#)
- We analyse some of the key outcomes in our [Look back at COP26](#). Our verdict? 'Historic event makes progress, leaves many disappointed.'

FaithInvest supports faith-based asset owners to align their investments to their faith values. We support the rapidly growing movement of faiths actively using their investments and other assets to create a better world – for the benefit of people and planet. Visit www.faithinvest.org for more information.



Copyright © 2021 FaithInvest, All rights reserved.

Want to change how you receive these emails? You can [update your preferences](#) or [unsubscribe from this list](#).

