

Chapter Four: Championing Climate Action in Your Community



[source](#)

Communities everywhere around the world are vulnerable to climate impacts. Though young people and scientists have raised the alarm on climate, we recognize that achieving the climate goals requires everyone to be a climate champion. A climate champion is someone who leads their community in making changes that are good for people, the planet, and our future. From organizing a workshop to learn about climate impacts in your community to volunteering at a beach clean-up with your soccer team or building a nursery for growing native trees, climate championships can manifest in a lot of different ways.

Taking climate action is not a one-size-fits-all approach, especially when we think about the diversity of nature, our communities, cultures, and social fabrics of life. Thus, we have created a series of steps to help you make a ripple effect of climate action in your community by starting from where you already are today!

The next session lists examples of the activities that you can implement.

Types of Climate Champion Activities

All climate action matters! Here are a few ideas of the types of projects you could implement:

1. **Education Campaign:** Organize a campaign to educate your community on climate justice and why they should care about climate change.

2. Volunteer Day: Mobilize members of your community to organize a beach clean-up
3. Climate Conversation Panel: Create platform for diverse stakeholders to share and explore available opportunities to address pressing impacts of climate change in your community
4. Lunch and Learn About Climate: Organize a picnic and talk about climate, climate and mental health
5. Care About Climate Club: Facilitate the establishment of climate clubs in schools and youth groups in your community to bring next and existing climate advocates in your municipality closely together to demand accountability from your leaders on their climate pledges

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Translating Knowledge to Action

The following guidelines will help you to translate your knowledge into actions;

1. Identify Climate Action Problems in Your Community
2. Identify Your Climate Action Goal(s)
3. Build Your Climate Champion Team
4. Establish Goals and Visions for the Activity
5. Implement Your Activity
6. Celebrate and Reflect.

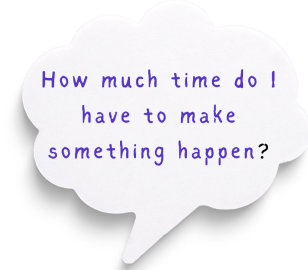
Step One: Identifying Climate Action **Problems** in Your Community

A clear understanding of the impact of climate change in your community is essential for identifying the most meaningful, impactful efforts! Spend some time researching impacts, talking to community organizations or members that may have expertise on fields impacted by climate change, and mapping out climate policies already being implemented in your community.

As you deepen your research, make a record of everything you are learning, including case studies and best practices or gaps in action. In cases where you are not able to get existing research materials due to limited internet or book accessibility, you can engage the people that have been directly impacted by the problems you are trying to address through dialogues and consultations.

Step Two: Identify Your Climate Action Goal

From reducing emissions to adapting to climate change and promoting policy change, figuring out how to implement climate solutions in a way that is meaningful to you can be a challenge. When starting to identify the cause you care about, your brain may fill with questions...



Remember, you cannot address everything and your action doesn't have to be transformational! Every action, big and small, matters. For example, you could create an awareness campaign to teach more people in your community about climate impacts or organize a group of volunteers from your soccer league to plant trees every month.

Tips for identifying your personal goal:

1. **Document your personal values:** Personal values are often what motivate people to take action, such as loyalty, optimism, and leading with courage! To identify your personal values, ask yourself about what made an event meaningful to you in your lifetime or consider what your ideal world looks like and think about people or stories that have inspired you. If you are interested in doing good in your community, you should prioritize a cause that you are passionate about; this will give you satisfaction while you impact your community.
2. **Think about your strengths and expertise:** Conduct a SWOT (Strength, Weakness, Opportunity, Threats) analysis to help you think about what skills you're really good at and could build upon for being successful as well as skills you potentially lack that could be filled by another team member. For example, if you really love social media, maybe an awareness campaign is best for you. Or, if you already know of environmental organizations, then it might be easy to organize a volunteer day. Maximize your impact by leaning into what you're good at!

3. **Potential for impact:** Think about what may be most meaningful to your community! For instance, educating members of a flood prone coastal community about how reforestation could reduce flooding impacts could be really good, but talking about hurricanes in a land-locked place wouldn't likely peak the community's interest.

Questions to ask yourself when trying to identify your goal:

1. What cause are you most passionate about? List them below
2. Why do you care about this cause?
3. How does it affect your community?
4. What do you hope to achieve?

Step Three: Building Your Climate Champion Team

It's always easier to take on a new action with a team! Some people, though interested, may not think they have time to organize, engage, or commit to something new. Instead of trying to find completely new links to make your climate action team, start by asking your family, friends, neighborhood groups, sports team, workout group, religious groups, or any group of people you see frequently. If conversations aren't producing successful results, try social media or posting a flyer on a community bulletin. Note that a team can be as little as two people and as large as you want, so long as you have enough people to execute your activity!

Check out sample social media posts to recruit people to your climate team:

What do you say to get people interested in joining your climate champion team?

- **Event Creation:** Hey! I have been learning a lot about climate change, such as [insert impact in your community] and really want to do something about it! I know you're interested in [insert something they're interested in] and was wondering if you would want to design an event for our community with me?
- **Policy Change Effort:** Hey! I have been learning a lot about climate change, such as [insert impact in your community] and really want to do something about it! I am really inspired by the potential to create a new policy that supports climate action in our community. Would you be interested in attending a meeting with me and our local leaders to talk about what's being done and what's missing? Then, maybe we can create a policy campaign!
- **Volunteer Day:** Hey! I have been learning a lot about climate change, such as [insert impact in your community] and really want to do something about it! I recently learned about [insert local organization doing climate work] and thought it would be great for our soccer team to volunteer there one day together. What do you think?
- **Care About Climate Club:** Hey! I have been learning a lot about climate change, such as [insert impact in your community] and really want to do something about it! I know you're interested in [insert something they're interested in] and was wondering if you would want to start a club where we organize climate action events for our school, group, and/or community together? What do you think?

Step Four: Establish Goals and Visions for the Activity

To achieve the desired impact of your activity, it's important to have your end goal and long-term impact activity to have written down. Everything you do should contribute to the achievement of this vision. One strategy for identifying your goals is through using the SMART Goal method, which states that goals, whether personal or professional, must be- Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Time-bound. Let's look at this in more detail;

Specific: Don't take on too much! Making your goals narrow with a specific focus makes it easier to achieve. For example, you may want to connect with individuals working on ACE across the globe and set up a community of practice, or focus on creating a platform to educate people about climate change. Outlining a specific topic, theme, or group of people to connect with makes it easier to prioritize events to attend.

Measurable: Set clear indicators that will be evidence that you are making progress. Using the climate education platform example, you might want to engage with two (2) schools in your community per week. That way, you know you will engage at least 8 schools and educate over a 100 students about climate change in a month.

Achievable: Deciding on a goal is as important as knowing how to achieve the goal. What are the strategies and tools you will employ to be successful? For example, educating students about climate change requires you to reach out to the management of the schools by writing to them. When you do write or meet with them, make sure to have a short and well-tailored introduction of yourself, why educating young people about climate change is important, the model of delivery, and what you hope they would do with the knowledge they acquire.

Relevant: Maximum benefits can be reaped when your project goals align with your values and larger, long-term professional goals. Be sure to think about where you want to make a direct impact in the climate space and set goals that relate to that. For example, for the goal of implementing climate education in school, thus, you'd want to make sure that you talk with professionals in climate education and government leaders that may have successfully introduced universal climate education.

Whatever it is you want to achieve as your overall objective, while crafting your goals keep in mind your ultimate vision for success. Are you trying to reduce emissions, help people have more access to water during a drought, provide clean energy to your community, plant trees and protect forests, raise awareness of climate change, etc? As you implement your activity, come back to your SMART goals to adjust them as needed or reflect on how to improve your activity with the aim of achieving them.

Step Five: Implementing Your Activity

With a vision, team, and quantifiable goals, it's time to implement your activity! Now, it's time to identify the strategy and tactics you need. For example, if you're organizing a volunteer day, your next steps require picking a date, time, and place you want to volunteer at with an explanation of how their work is connected to your goal(s).

Strategy is a THEORY for how you can turn the RESOURCES you have into the POWER you need to win the CHANGE you want.

Tactics are actions and activities in your campaign that get you closer to achieving your goal. (events, emails, petitions, clean up days, news articles, etc).

Questions to consider when designing your strategy:

- What should your activity look like (e.g. a social media campaign, a panel discussion at a community center, a day of service)?
- Who is your target audience (e.g. your soccer team, your parents, your policymakers)?
- How long should the activity be?
- What actions do you need to take to be successful in implementing our activity?
- What resources do you need?
- Who on the team should handle what specific tasks?

Use the questions above to create your strategy statement. a strategy statement says; If we do (this), then (outcome will be achieved) , because (the reasons why).

After thinking about your strategy, take time to identify a timeline of action and assign roles for different team members. Work with your climate team to identify the strategy and tactics for your project! Recall that all actions matter, so it's okay to start small and lean into existing opportunities.

Bonus Tip: As you work with your team, think about if you need to expand and add additional expertise!

After you write your strategy statement, list out all of the tactics that will be used to achieve your goal(s) and assign specific roles for each one! Tactics could include writing a petition, organizing a documentary screening, or meeting with a local non-profit to organize a volunteer day. Specific roles could include designing flyers, emailing possible panelists, or creating a check-list of all activities that need to be accomplished.

Below we provide a couple of exemplary approaches to indicate how identified strategy and tactics could work:

Here's an example of a strategy for policy change: Your goal is for a town, village, or community to commit to getting their energy from 100% renewable energy within the next 5 years so you are no longer reliant on fossil fuels. The decision maker might be your town council. Your strategy could be to find ways to connect with council members individually and pressure them through their social networks. A tactic might be to have individual meetings with them to see where they stand, and ask them if they would support a 100% renewable energy resolution. If they do, ask what they would have to do next to get it passed, and will they do that? If not, ask why. Then you can base your next action on that. However, you know your goal is to get to 100% renewable energy for your city by 2050 and you have to change your strategy depending on how you need to approach that.

Here's an example for integrating climate action into your weekly religious group meeting: If you have a goal to raise the consciousness of the members of your religious group about climate action through climate education. To achieve this goal, your strategy could be to approach the conversation from the perspective of climate change and faith intersection, then you can ask your members to identify a climate action that they feel comfortable to commit to. Your tactic then might be to have individual and group check-ins with them to see how they are going about it, and support them where they might be struggling or needing knowledge to help them achieve

the actions they might have committed to as much as possible. Another tactic could be to recommend and organize monthly clean-ups and campaigns as a corporate social responsibility of your religious groups to your community, as a way of giving back.

After everything is designed, it's time to implement your activity.

Step Six: Celebrate and Reflect

Take time to celebrate your hard work, you deserve it! Whether it's going out to eat at a restaurant or baking a cake, take time to celebrate your wins no matter how little. Following your celebration, take a moment to reflect on your activity. Reflection is a powerful tool for gaining insights to move forward and understand perspectives. To reflect on your activity, consider writing down answer in a journal or talking with your team about the following questions:

- What went well in the activity?
- What was your biggest takeaway/what did you learn?
- Did we achieve our goal? If not, what was the main barrier?
- What could we do differently next time?
- What are you excited about next?

While you hope and prepare for all positive outcomes, it is important to keep in mind that sometimes our unexpected barriers pop up that minimize the impact of our activity. Those are the things that make us stronger, because we learn from the mistakes and do it better next time.

As you explore what empowers you to be a climate champion, remember that actions should reduce emissions, improve your communities ability to adapt, or support policy changes! Even starting with convening climate conversations over lunch can be a great way to take off. Are you ready to be a climate champion?

You can pick one type of champion activity and repeat it over and over again or switch it up every time! Who knows, maybe you'll even inspire others in your community to be a champion and start new activities too. Also, know that it's not always about the number of people who attend your activity. When you're starting something new, it may take time for people to buy-into the idea, so your focus should primarily be about if the people there took something positive away to motivate behavioural and/or social change.