

Chapter Five: From One-Time Activity to Climate Champion Club

After implementing your first climate action project, you might want to consider starting a Climate Champion Club for better coordination for your future activities. Creating your own club can be a rewarding experience and a great way to build momentum for climate action in your community! This chapter provides a series of steps to help you get started with your Climate Champion Club. By following these procedures, you can create a successful and effective club that makes a positive difference in your community!

Step 1: Find Core Members to Start the Club. Just like it takes a community to make change, it takes more than one person to run a club. The first step is to find your core people! Think of people who were really excited to participate in your first climate action activity or friends that enjoy putting on events or organizing activities even just for fun. Having individuals with different backgrounds, cultures, knowledge, and values can help to create a diverse team that can help to tackle diverse challenges. Getting connected through social media, other local organizations, and through your own social groups can help you to reach out and find potential members.

How to ask people to join you in making the club: "Hey! I am starting a club to take climate action. I hope we can work together to [insert preliminary goal for the club] and could really use your help. Would you be interested in joining the initial planning meeting to see what's possible?"

Step 2: Organize the Initial Meeting. All great projects start out with brainstorming and teamwork! Gather your team of initially interested people to help start the club and get to know each other. Start by agreeing on a time and place for the meeting, then make sure to send an agenda. Because not everyone may know each other, it's always nice to start with a fun introduction question, such as 'what is your favorite shoe'? At this meeting think through:

- What issues related to climate change does everyone care about?
- Why was everyone interested in joining this meeting?
- What should the leadership roles be (see step 3)?
- What could possible club goals be (see step 4)?

Step 3: Establish Ideas for Leadership Roles. Identify the types of leadership roles that may be important for your team. Examples include:

- Club Manager(s): run and supervise the club
- Secretary: take notes and share action items for the club
- Treasurer: manage any fundraising or money for the club
- Outreach and Communications: shares upcoming events and makes fliers or social media posts as needed

Step 4: Identify the Purpose and Goals of the Club: After organizing your team, it's time to discuss and prepare the team goal(s). Though it's best to start out with one main goal, you can create as many as you feel you can accomplish! When thinking about the purpose and goal(s) consider:

- What issues do you want to address in your community?
- What does a sustainable future look like to you?
- What actions might make the most impact in addressing the identified issue?
- What outcomes do you hope to achieve?

Here's an example to walk through answering these questions. Let's say you live in a community where you've heard a lot of people complaining about increasing temperatures. This may indicate that extreme heat is an issue. A potential solution could be planting trees to restore deforested lands and bring more trees back into the city landscape. In this scenario, your club goal could be to plant at least 100 trees in your community by the end of the year because tree cover helps to provide shade and reduce heat.

Step 5. Recruit Members: When forming a club, it is ideal to reach out to individuals who are also passionate about making a difference in their communities. Recall from step one that having individuals with different backgrounds, cultures, knowledge, and values can help to create a diverse team that can help to tackle diverse challenges. You can spread the word on social media, post fliers, and set up tabling events to inform the community about your new club! Make sure to provide a time, date, and location for the first club meeting as decided by the initial core team. The amount of members in each club will be left to the discretion of the club itself.

Step 6: Host Your First Club Meeting and Brainstorm Project Ideas. The first meeting is always the hardest! To make the most of your time and start the club off on a positive note, make sure to leave time to get to know each other! An agenda for a sixty-minute meeting could look like:

10 minutes: Introductions and responding to "Why did you join this meetup today"?

10 minutes: Answering the question "What do you hope to accomplish or learn as a member of this club?"

15 minutes: Overview and discussion of the reason for starting the club

10 minutes: Creating group norms by responding to questions such as 1) how often should we meet?; 2) what values do we all share?; and 3) what is the best way to work together? (see step 8).

10 minutes: Brainstorming ideas for club activities

5 minutes: Leave time for any additional questions and sharing out next steps

When brainstorming ideas, remember to be open and honest to everyone's ideas. As people share ideas, dive deeper into the problem you originally intended to solve. Then, make a final choice on the event or activity to pursue! There will likely be a lot of great ideas, but you can't do them all. Remind everyone that once one idea is completed, you can always move on to another one later.

Step 7: Determine Club Leadership Roles. Once you have members, it is time to put a leadership structure in place. The club leadership will have the important role of helping to keep the club functioning, encourage active membership and ensure that projects are moving along. However, it is important that those that occupy your leadership positions have the capacity to support the club, and people who are passionate about your cause and club goal. These positions can help ensure that the club is organized and runs effectively. To select club leadership, it's best to have a nomination and voting process by which club members can nominate themselves for roles followed by a vote from all members. We recommend creating a form or conducting an in-person vote!

Step 8: Develop Club Norms. Create club norms that outline the purpose and goals of the club, as well as the roles and responsibilities of the leadership team and members. This will be your guiding document for how the club operates in the future. Note that it can always be revised, but should reflect the opinions and needs of the current club members.

Step 9. Determine Meeting Times and Locations. Decide on regular meeting times and locations that work for all members. This can be done through a poll or survey to ensure that everyone's availability is taken into account.

Step 10. Plan Activities and Events with a Club Roadmap. Brainstorm and plan activities and events that align with the purpose and goals of the club. These can include educational campaigns, fundraisers, and community service projects. Consider creating a timeline working backwards from the event. For example, if you want to host a beach clean-up in August, create a table for the previous months or weeks with goals of what actions should be completed to make sure the event runs smoothly, including writing a letter to the agency in charge of the beach you intend to clean up to let them know of your intentions and receive a permit; visiting the beach ahead of the clean-up day to access and decide on the quantity and type of equipment you will need or whether to bring more/less waste bags than you initially planned, or making an arrangement with a trucking company in case you will need help moving the packed and sorted trash.

Step 11. Explore Funding Options. Sometimes, it may be important to have funding to support club activities. Fundraising from selling homemade crafts, asking club members to pitch in a little money, or having a bake sale are always easy events to host, but you can also consider applying for grants or sponsorships. You may also want to consider reaching out to environmental organizations or businesses for support and partnerships - remember that not all support could come in the form of money, maybe a business could donate local food?

Step 12: Promote the Club. Promote the club through social media, posters, and word-of-mouth to raise awareness and attract new members.

Step 13: Achieve Your Club Goals. Now that you have set up the foundation for your club, it is time for you all to make a difference in your community as climate advocates. This can be a bumpy ride at the beginning but that's okay. Starting a new initiative sometimes comes with its challenges! Mistakes will be made, but that's how we learn, grow, and become better and stronger, so do not get discouraged.

Step 14: Join the CAC Club Network and Community of Practice. By joining the network you will have the chance to connect with our other club champions globally through virtual opportunities, learn from other climate advocates, and gain resources and tools that will enable your club to succeed. Explore upcoming meetings and make your voice heard on what you want to learn in these meetings by visiting our website here:

<https://www.careaboutclimate.org/climate-ambassadors>

Coordinating the club and staying on top of climate action activities can be overwhelming. In the next chapter, we will discuss a few best practices for maintaining mental health and wellness as you lead changes towards a sustainable future in your community.