



together for the climate

A practical guide for collective actions

ISBN: 978-80-87217-79-5
Issued by NESEHNUTI Brno in 2023, 15 Křížová,
60300 Brno, Czech Republic.

This publication is an output of the project Together for the Climate: New Solutions and Innovations for Youth Climate Action (2020-3-CZ01-KA205-094142).

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Co-funded by the
Erasmus+ Programme
of the European Union

The European Commission's support for the production of this publication does not constitute an endorsement of the contents, which reflect the views only of the authors, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.

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Why Should We Act Together for the Climate?

Maybe you feel like there is a lot around you that could be changed. Maybe you are wondering how to get started and do something for your community, for the environment, for the climate. You're not alone! Almost 90% of 16–24-year-olds in Central Europe say they are trying to avoid exacerbating climate change through their behavior. Yet most of them want to do even more.¹ That's why we've come up with this guide to encourage, motivate and inspire young people to collaborate on local pro-climate projects and strengthen relationships in communities.

In this guide, we've collected the experiences of young, active people; youth workers; and facilitators that have so far worked the best for us. We've put together a 4-step approach to guide you through the process so that you can find inspiration in the stories of other young, active people; map your community; select, plan and implement your project; and celebrate it together in the end. We offer specific tools and activities we like to use in our practice and which we think might be useful for you as well. And, in the end, we will offer more data and resources about climate change itself for those who feel like they do not have enough information or who want to dig deeper.

99.9% of the world scientific community is unanimous in its findings that the rapid changes happening are accelerated by human activity.^{2,3} All the facts and experiences, such as heat waves and extreme droughts or heavy rains and floods, show that the impacts of climate change are a major global threat.⁴ Because it affects all living beings, its solution must be collective. Nations, institutions, businesses, collectives and local communities across the planet should contribute. We should act together for the climate. After all, we can do more when supporting each other.

What can you expect to gain from this guide?

- Strengthening your skills for carrying out engaged community action.
- Practical tips for planning and running your own local pro-climate project.
- Key information about climate change and its real impact on our communities.
- Stories about young people who already act.

Strengthening personal resilience



- the ability to establish and nurture healthy and friendly interpersonal relationships
- the ability to renew the internal resources from which I draw active hope, faith (understanding my needs, emotions)

Critical and systems thinking



- the ability to organise ourselves in favour of mutual learning (skill-sharing) and collective action
- the ability to recover from adversity

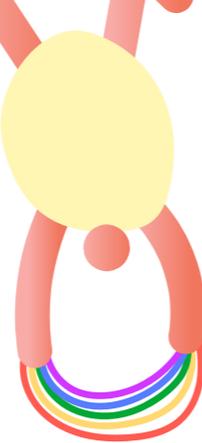
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- the ability to organise ourselves in favour of mutual learning (skill-sharing) and collective action
- the ability to recover from adversity

Being part of autonomous and resilient communities



Imagination



- the ability to imagine

Being part of local communities

- the ability to name and develop skills to meet the needs of the community
- the ability to create, nurture and use a support network
- the ability to sustainably use local resources (food self-sufficiency, energy etc.)

Cooperation and compassion, justice and equality

- developing empathy and solidarity skills
- the ability to communicate openly and nonviolently



Inspired by⁵

Which skills and competencies do you expect to practice and improve upon by working with this handbook? Think about them and pick out those you want to develop in yourself. Take a look at "My Personal Intention" in the "Activities and Tools" chapter to get inspired!

5

We Asked Your Friends

Do you feel like doing something about the current situation? Do you also have some fears in your head at the same time? There are many like you. During 2021, our teams conducted a study aimed at finding out what were the attitudes towards climate change and climate action amongst youth.⁶ We also explored what did and didn't help local participation and action in three countries: Czechia, Slovakia and Austria. Let's take a look at the most interesting findings.

1 Most young people feel that climate change affects their daily lives and are willing to change their life accordingly. The proportion of deniers disinterested or those unwilling to change their lifestyle is less than one-fifth. That means this group may be loud but not that big. Don't let the noise of others' opinions drown out your own inner voice.

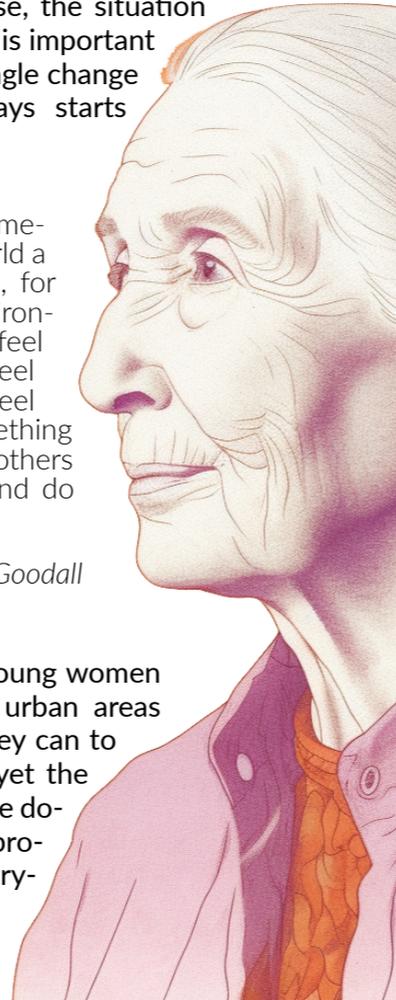
2 The overwhelming majority of young people in all three countries believe that climate change is man-made. Similarly, most young people believe climate change is advancing faster than we expected, which is why they also agree that we

need to act now; otherwise, the situation will worsen dramatically. It is important to remember that every single change matters. Big change always starts small.

"Every time you do something that makes the world a better place, for people, for animals, or for the environment, it makes you feel good. And when you feel good, you want to feel better. So you do something else and you inspire others around you to join in and do their bit as well." ⁷

Jane Goodall

3 For the most part, young women and those living in urban areas are more likely to do all they can to fight climate change, and yet the majority admit they could be doing more. In Austria, the proportion of young people try-



ing to do all they can is the highest, twice as high as in Slovakia and Czechia. When it comes to the level of knowledge on selected key issues related to climate change, young Austrians are the most knowledgeable of the three countries. It's completely fine to admit and accept that we all have different starting points if we want to learn or achieve something. We should keep in mind that we ourselves must find our own level of interest, capacity and activity to combat climate change. We do not have to compare our level to that of others, and starting points may differ.

4 Young people believe that it is primarily the responsibility of business and industry, international actors, government and local authorities to lead the fight against climate change. Young Czechs and Slovaks have taken a passive role, whereas Austrians assign themselves a much more active central role in getting those in power to act. We all know that important frameworks, programmes and decision-makers are the big market players in government and local authority. But we share this responsibility. It is we who need to push them so that the governments do something about these frameworks. Become an active part of a game-changer community!

5 The top three reasons preventing young people from reducing their carbon footprint are lack of resources, lack of decision-making capacity and lack of opportunities where they live. Money seems to be the main obstacle for Austrians and Czechs, but Slovaks also lack available options. A sense of futility, a lack of time or information and a reluctance to take a public stand all prevent young people from becoming civically engaged. We are often restricted by the systematic narrative that young people are not enough (for any kind of change or personal goal) because they do not have enough experience. This is a very unfortunate, systematic condition in the collective mind we are living in. Maybe that's why our study has shown that there are many other young people who have similar feelings to us – anger, fear, helplessness and sadness. But perhaps it might give us some courage when we know that most young people do not feel indifference towards climate change. Let's connect and have fun together! It's time to roll up our sleeves.



¹ Rada mládeže Slovensko, Green Foundation, NESEHNUTÍ, Jane Goodall Institute Austria. (2022). *Together for the Climate. Baseline Study, Final Report*. https://acttogether.eu/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/Together_for_the_Climate_-_Baseline_study_report.pdf.

² Mark Lynas et al. (2021). Greater than 99% consensus on human caused climate change in the peer-reviewed scientific literature. *Environmental Research Letters*. 16(11). Retrieved from: <https://iopscience.iop.org/article/10.1088/1748-9326/ac2966/pdf>. [24-01-2023].

³ Neukom, R., Steiger, N., Gómez-Navarro, J.J. et al. (2019). No evidence for globally coherent warm and cold periods over the preindustrial Common Era. *Nature*. 571. 550–554. Retrieved from: <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41586-019-1401-2>. [24-01-2023].

⁴ European Environmental Agency. (2021, 28.6.). *Climate change impacts in Europe's regions*. EEA.Europa.eu. <https://www.eea.europa.eu/signals/signals-2018-content-list/infographic/climate-change-impacts-in-europe/view>.

⁵ Inspired by: Hroudová, Z. (2021). Kompetence pro kolaps. In: *Volmutová, T. (Ed.) Jak vzdělávat o klimatické krizi. Je změna možná?* Brno: NaZemi. (pp. 30-32). ISBN 978-80-88150-49-7. Retrieved from: https://nazemi.cz/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/sbornik_os_2021_je_zmena_mozna.pdf

⁶ Rada mládeže Slovensko, Green Foundation, NESEHNUTÍ, Jane Goodall Institute Austria. (2022). *Together for the Climate. Baseline Study, Final Report*. https://acttogether.eu/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/Together_for_the_Climate_-_Baseline_study_report.pdf

⁷ Jane Goodall Institute Austria [@jgiaustria]. (2023, January 18). *Aktiv werden und inspirieren - Dr. Jane Goodall* [Video - Shorts]. Youtube. <https://www.youtube.com/shorts/CPXUTUkXtso>.



Chapter 1: 4 Steps to Get Active

Roots & Shoots – I beg your pardon? :)

In order to become active, as impactful as possible and still have fun, we would like to invite you to join the global community action programme Roots & Shoots (R&S). The programme is dedicated to creating a better world for people, animals and the environment. In concrete terms, R&S is about planning and implementing projects you have chosen yourself together with others in your own environment.

The programme was created more than 30 years ago by Dr Jane Goodall, a British behavioral scientist and environmental activist who became famous for her ground-breaking research on chimpanzees and their similarities to us humans. The programme connects tens of thousands of active people in over 60 countries.

The idea behind the name Roots & Shoots, that is, roots and offspring, is explained by Dr Goodall like this:

Roots crawl underground everywhere and form solid ground. Sprouting plants seem very delicate, but they can break through walls to reach light. Imagine that these walls

are all our problems that we have imposed on our planet. Hundreds and thousands of young people around the world can break through these walls to make the world a better place.

So, do you finally want to get active and become part of the R&S network? Here we go!

The Roots & Shoots Approach

R&S gives you the opportunity to understand the challenges in your immediate environment (your community, your city, your district) and to contribute to their solutions through your actions.

Find some like-minded people and form a group so that your ideas can have a bigger impact. Don't worry. You are not alone in your desire to take action. Implementing a project together with others sometimes requires patience and strong nerves, but it is also a lot of fun to be active together and to bring about a positive change in your own environment. Everyone can contribute their individual

strengths, and you can support and learn from each other. Of course, you can also use the R&S approach to implement a project on your own, just as you like it.

How do I find a group?

Perhaps you already have someone in your circle of friends in mind who would like to take part? If not, no problem at all!

If you are in Austria, then simply write to the Jane Goodall Institute Austria at rootsandshoots@janegoodall.at, and we will support you in finding other like-minded people.

If you live in Czechia, contact the NESEHNUTÍ organization at brno@nesehnuti.cz.

And if you are in Slovakia, contact the organization Green Foundation at info@greenfoundation.eu.

You can also check the next chapter. There you can find other collectives active in the field of climate change protection in Central Europe.

The 4 Steps at a Glance:

1. Get inspired

There are already hundreds of thousands of young people who are actively involved in making the world a better place. Get inspired by the projects and ideas of others.

2. From an idea to a concrete project!

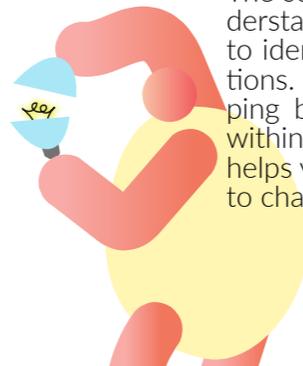
The second step is to analyse and better understand the immediate environment in order to identify challenges but also possible solutions. We call this process community mapping because it makes the local conditions within a community visible on a “map” and helps you to find the areas in which you want to change something.

3. Get started. Become active!

With the help of this overview map, you have identified challenges and solutions. Now it is a matter of deciding on one of those solutions, setting a goal and defining important steps along the way as well as assigning roles. And, of course, getting started!

4. Done! Reflect, evaluate and celebrate success!

Once the goal is achieved, reflect on the changes you have made in your environment. Analyse what worked well in the process and what you would like to do differently on possible future projects. At least as important, however, is appreciating what has been achieved and celebrating success. Your project has changed something!



Step 1: Get Inspired!

Learn what your friends are already working on. Get inspired by the life and actions of other young people and motivate yourself to become active!

Udržitelný Palacký and Okrašlovací spolek

In Czechia, students come together to help the climate at their universities. Udržitelný Palacký (The sustainable Palacký association) operates at Palacký University in Olomouc. Together, the members created several projects, including the Václavka Community Garden, a free shop where donated items can be taken for free and the FreeFood UPOL food-sharing platform. “The fact that we feel mutual support among the members, and we see that there is interest in these topics among other students, helps us with certain climate anxiety,” says a member of the initiative Veronika Miklíková.

Most of their activities focus on changes towards a more sustainable lifestyle, which also have an impact on climate: “Our free shop and online food sharing platform help students to not waste valu-

able resources. Instead of ending up in a landfill, new owners can get the goods for free and the emissions to produce them are not wasted.”



A similar activity is being carried out by Okrašlovací spolek (Beautification society), which operates at the Faculty of Social Studies at Masaryk University in Brno. The association is not only dedicated to supporting community life at school and alternative economics by organizing housing seminars, swaps or a free shop, they have also organized a joint trip to Germany to attend the Ende Gelände¹ protest against coal mining. According to Veronika from Udržitelný Palacký, in this phase of the crisis, demonstrating and voting deliberately is also key.

And what advice do the members of Okrašlovací spolek have for anyone thinking about starting something similar? “First and foremost, don't worry!”

Limity jsme my

Pro-climate activities in Czechia can have a more unofficial and underground vibe. Inspired by the activities of Ende Gelände, a group of young Czech activists and students started to organize themselves and formed the non-hierarchical movement for climate justice² called Limity jsme my ([We are the limits](#)). Their goal? To end the fossil fuel era.

Back in 2015, the Czech government authorized exceeding the limits of coal mining in northern Czechia which was particularly infuriating considering that coal mining and burning is the biggest contributor to climate change in Czechia. Nevertheless, this was an opportunity, and like many other collectives, Limity jsme my was born out of circumstance.

In 2017, the movement was joined by other activists and citizens, and together they blocked the excavators in the Bílina coal mine in the northern part of the country and stopped the mining. This was the first direct action of its kind in the Czech context. Since then, this act of nonviolent civil disobedience has attracted hundreds of people of all ages across the country. Every year until 2020, they organized climate camps which consisted of a summer climate justice school and action weekend dedicated to direct action in places linked to coal mining and burning. In 2022, they resumed their activities in order to point out the controversies in the process of energy sector transformation.

Apart from the annual climate camp and direct action, Limity jsme my offers workshops on how to organize, demonstrate, lobby and so on. They also

organize climate bike rides in the regions affected by the coal mining with emphasis on building relationships with local communities.³

Young climate ambassadors

The graduate programme for young leaders – Climate Ambassadors – provides Roots & Shoots graduates (and possibly other young people with similar experience) with opportunities to further develop skills and implement their own community project ideas for sustainable development. In this section, we will dig into two examples of successful practices:

Juraj Lubik is one of the most active young people you will meet. His interest in protecting the environment brought him to the Climate Ambassadors training programme, where he founded a podcast on the climate crisis⁴ and its solutions.

This podcast, called *Všetci tu umrieme* (We are all gonna die here), is focused on raising the environmental and ecological knowledge of the public. The aim of the podcast is to talk more about the impact of climate change from both environmental and socioeconomic points of view. The podcast fo-

cuses primarily on young people who have the energy to make real change, although the episodes are available to the wider public so that everyone has access to the information and can become a change-maker.



Two other young students Patrícia Králová and Barbora Garguláková created a profile on Instagram called @klimejezle and started sharing climate-related posts. So far, their interest has focused on fossil fuels and their impacts. The two young ambassadors were approached by the local movement #klimatapotrebuje, and they are collaborating on shared posts on Instagram. It empowered them and has already provided them with a lot of useful know-how and networking opportunities.

Part of the project is also about literature, whether reading books or reviews or sharing books with others. They even involved the local library and aspire to set up a climate section. They noticed that librarians do not have enough knowledge when it comes to climate change, and they often do not know which books are about this topic. Patrícia and Barbora would therefore like to build this unique section so that anyone who comes to the library knows where to find these books. As Patrícia said, “What is important to point out is that some of the books were lent to people without enough knowledge on the topic of climate change. After reading the book, they became interested in

the topic and are now learning about it with enthusiasm and motivation.”

Moss graffiti – the perfect mix of nature, art and message

Did you know that in Austria, areas the size of 20 soccer fields are *sealed* every day? Natural soils are among the largest carbon reservoirs in the world. Soil sealing makes it easier for flooding to occur, heat islands to form and biodiversity to be lost.

A small group of students from Vienna decided to raise awareness about this issue and also actively promote greening measures in public spaces. The following criteria were important to them: a highly frequented location, a relatively quick implementation time and an innovative design. And just like that, the idea of realizing moss graffiti on the Danube Canal in the city center of Vienna was born.

After an extensive planning phase, they were ready to get active. A suitable location on the Danube Canal was found – it was important to find a place where legal paint spraying was allowed and a mounting option was available for a wooden plate



for the moss graffiti to be placed so as not to damage the wall. In an action lasting several hours, a wall was painted over with white paint, the moss pads collected in the forest were glued to a wooden plate and placed on the wall, and appropriate slogans on the theme were sprayed all around.

In the center of the designed wall was the word “CONCRETE” in large letters made of moss. The aim was to attract the attention of passers-by with this contradiction and to encourage further discussion of the problem of soil sealing with the slogans.

Everyone was eager to work, and the students attracted the attention of passing Sunday strollers, who were happy to ask them what was being created and why.

Since the longevity of the designed wall cannot be guaranteed in such a high-traffic location, the students documented the process with photos and a [video](#). Based on this, they created a blog where they intend to share more detailed information about soil sealing, instructions for creating DIY (do-it-yourself) moss graffiti and their project experiences. Currently, the blog is still under

construction, but you can already have a sneak peek [here!](#)

The project was a great success, and the positive feedback encouraged them to implement further projects of this kind.

Step 2: From Idea to Concrete Project

The second step is about critically observing and better understanding the immediate world around you – in your borough or community. The method that we propose for this is called *community mapping*. This is a way of making the local conditions graphically visible on a map and, thus, easier to recognize special features but also problems or challenges in your environment. Through mapping, you can see where and in what form an action would make sense. And this provides the basis for your project idea.

Find out information about the area you are interested. Search on the Internet and in the media, but also explore the chosen location with your own eyes. Observe the surroundings, notice details, engage your senses, and talk to people who live or

work there. Record the information you find and include it in a map of the area. Then use your collective imagination and creativity to think about what could happen to make your community more resilient to climate change or to reduce it.

If you want to see the method in more detail, skip to the chapter “Activities and Tools”, where you can follow it step by step!

What is a community?

What does “community” mean to you? It is important that, as a group, you agree on who your community is, as this will be a central part of your project. Here are a few questions you can discuss together:

- What is a community? And what different communities do you know?
- What makes a community? What are their characteristics?
- What different groups make up the community in your city, district or village?
- How are these communities embedded in the environment or the ecosystem? How is the community affected by the environment? And how does the community affect it?



Speaking about the places where we live, communities are commonly seen anthropocentrically – as groups of people. It can be a group that has common interests (dogs, gardeners, seniors, etc.), values (vegetarians, activists, etc.) or religious beliefs (Christian, Buddhist), or it can represent the residents of a specific region, city or village.

We are used to drawing a clear line between cities and nature. But if you look around, you will probably see some plants too. Has a pigeon flown past you? Or a bat in the evening? Maybe you've met a mouse in the cellar. Are these beings also part of your community or not?

If you want your project to benefit as many beings as possible and not harm anyone, it's a good idea to think about community in a broader sense. The *more-than-human* concept⁵ can be rather inspirational as it points out the existence of non-human life in our settlements. Try to notice urban nature and the relationships between humans and other entities, between plants and the environment and so on.

But, equally, try to be sensitive to the different groups of inhabitants. Of course, the community in

which you will carry out your project is bounded and does not include all living beings in the world. However, within your boundaries, do not forget about vulnerable or excluded groups of people. They are also part of the community, they have specific needs, and your project can improve their lives too.

Step 3: Get Started. Become Active!

1. Create a project

After reflecting on the situation in your community, your group should already have some ideas for potential climate protection projects. Now is the perfect time to put all ideas on paper, to see them all in front of you:

- Write down any issues identified using the map.
- Discuss the causes of the different problems. What are the key ones?
- Collect ideas that solve (or help to solve) the problems and write them down. Try to be

specific so that all the ideas are clear to everyone in the group.

- There are usually no limits to the ideas. It could be something that you really want to do, that you are really passionate about, but remember that the projects should fit the abilities, capacities, skills and preferences of your group!

2. Select your project

It is now important to decide which of these you actually want to implement. You can use the consensus method to reach a decision. Consensus is not compromise or unanimity. It aims to bring together the best ideas of all group members and key interests – a process that often leads to surprising and creative solutions that inspire both the individual and the group as a whole. But you may decide that the voting method is more appropriate for you. In the chapter "Activities and Tools," you'll learn more about both decision-making methods, including a step-by-step process.

Woo-hoo! Once you've decided on a project, it's time to start planning.

3. Plan your project

WHAT?

Define your project goals!

Goals show us direction by describing the final state we want to achieve. We should know clearly from its wording whether it has been achieved or not. During difficult times goals also help us to remember what we are aiming for in order not to get distracted by challenges on the way. Think of both short-term and longer-term goals. A short-term goal could be to hold one workshop on the topic of greening public infrastructure at a university. A long-term goal could be to educate a certain number of students at a university about the importance of greening public infrastructure in order to reduce extreme summer heat or increase the number of green areas at the university by 20% over the next year.

Right at the beginning of the project, sit down together and take some time to decide which criteria you would like to use to evaluate your project at the end of it. *Quantitative* key figures are helpful (e.g., one workshop, a 20% increase in green areas, etc.) because they are measurable, but don't forget

that it's equally important to reflect on the whole process together with the group and talk about what you learnt from the process, whether you had fun working on it, etc. You can also use *qualitative* criteria for evaluation. For example, you can conduct a survey before and after the project to see if awareness of the issue being addressed has changed.

HOW?

Think about how you can achieve these goals and what you need to do to achieve them.

What information or permission do you need? Who could be an important contact? What abilities and skills are available in the group? Who could be of important help outside the team? Which materials must be organized? Are you going to need any money? How much? Make a list of everything that is needed! Remember that many companies and organizations are happy to support you with information and material donations and that many locals might be happy to help you with specific steps. Dare to contact as many sponsors, experts and potential helpers as possible. Sometimes it can also be useful to get in touch with the

local authorities who can help you practically, financially or with advice.

WHERE?

Find an ideal location but also alternatives to it.

You can use the following checklist to ensure that the location is suitable and available:

- We have permission from the owner of the property (if you want to use public property, you need district or municipal permission) / We have reserved the room.
- The space is big enough for all the people we expect to come.
- The location is accessible to everyone, including people with reduced mobility or elderly people.
- Other project members and guests have the opportunity to travel to and from the project site.
- There is an option to offer some kind of childcare for parents (if needed).
- There is enough daylight and fresh air. It is warm enough but not too hot to work or concentrate. There is a shelter in case of rain or heavy sunlight.



- It is possible to transform the place for every format we need (sitting around a table, sitting in a circle, etc.) and the activities we plan to do (playing, watching, listening, dancing, working, etc.).
- There is all the necessary technical and material equipment necessary (electricity, projector, microphone, toilets, the possibility to prepare snacks, etc.).
- Our activity will not damage any valuable natural environment or harm other species or vulnerable people.

WHEN?

Plan the entire timeline of your project.

Create a timeline for important milestones, that is, significant events or decisive moments, and mark their respective dates. Think about when the project will probably end right at the beginning, and don't forget the celebration date. Title the individual phases of the project between the milestones and define what needs to be done during these. Pay attention to already fixed dates and periods outside of the project when you cannot work (holidays/vacations, exams, etc.). It is important

that everyone gets a copy of the jointly created schedule.

WHO?

Distribute the roles and tasks within the group fairly.

To do this, the various areas of activity must first be defined. A few areas are listed here. Decide together how to manage them so that they go well during your project.

- Coordination: bring together individual areas of responsibility and maintain an overview of the entire project.
- Fundraising: think about campaigns to collect money, look for possible sponsors and always keep an eye on the finances.
- Managing materials: find ways to collect materials and manage them.
- External communication: present the project to the outside world and write texts to sponsors and the media.
- Internal communication: ensure that there is smooth and respectful communication within the group and that there are clear and suffi-

cient opportunities to communicate both face-to-face and online.

- Data collection: keep track of collected information, maps, schedules, etc.
- Photo/videography: document the project and produce images/videos that can be used for the project.

When dividing specific tasks, take into account that nobody must take on a task they really don't like. Pay attention to each other's strengths and abilities. Alternatively, someone may want to take on a task that is completely new and challenges them. To be more aware of it, you can use the activity "My Personal Intention" in the chapter "Activities and Tools". Everyone should share the time invested fairly and consider the capabilities and needs of each member of the group. Take care of each other and help each other if a team member is stressed, doesn't feel well, etc.

4. Make it real

Important tips for successful implementation!

- Inform the responsible authorities in the municipality/city of your planned project and ask them for feedback, permits or personal advice.
- Obtain any other permits required to carry out the project if applicable (e.g., private property).
- Invite members of your community to share their passions and talents to contribute creatively to your project. This can take the form of direct physical assistance, such as manual work, etc. (municipality/city); the provision of information and meeting spaces for the community (library); in-kind donations (local companies) or finances (individual).
- Find an organization whose mission complements your project.
- Prepare yourself with research and practical solutions before you exchange ideas with potential project partners.

Communication checklist

Before you start communicating your project to others, sit down in the group and try to think about who needs to know what about your project and which tools you will need to reach them best. Here is some inspiration:

- Create a social media page where important information about the project and photo/video documentation of the activities will be published.
- Create an information sheet that you can send to potential project partners, local authorities and supporters.
- Instead of contacting individual organizations, institutions, companies or representatives of the active public, it is also possible to organize a public information event about the project (a community meeting) to which all interested parties are invited (e.g., at a local library or another meeting place).

HELP! WHAT NOW?

Challenges!

Challenges, problems and unplanned changes occur in almost every project – that, in itself, is not a bad thing. It is important that you are prepared and think in advance about what could happen and how to deal with it. A small time buffer has often proven to be very helpful. Sometimes things just can't be rushed. After experiencing a difficult situation in the team or during the project, take a moment to reflect on it together so you can learn from it:

- Why was the situation difficult for me?
- What could have worked differently? How?
- What did I learn from the situation, about myself, about the team, about our project?

Care both for yourself and others

Indeed, mutual care within your group and self-care are important aspects of sustainable, healthy (and long-term) activism. Trying to go step by step towards your vision of a more just, more solidarity-based world requires a great deal of courage, determination and energy. And although collective

action is, above all, empowering and liberating, there may be moments that will have a negative impact on your psychological state. In extreme cases, this can lead to burnout. But luckily, you can prevent this.

Try to build honest and open relationships from the beginning of your project planning and work towards a space where you can share your feelings, even if it is emotions such as fear, sadness or anxiety. Try to name the activities or situations that make you feel uncomfortable so that others can help you and you can feel relieved – and vice versa. Sometimes it may be easier to start by individual thinking or sharing in pairs and then sharing with the whole group – you can find a tip on how to do this in the activities called “Recognize Your Feelings” and “The Dyad” in the chapter “Activities and Tools”.

From another perspective, never forget that stress is not characteristic of a situation but an individual’s response (albeit not consciously chosen). This means that each member of your group will perceive each situation in their own specific way. Therefore, avoid judgment and, instead, offer the empathetic side of your personality. In general, a

method called nonviolent communication can be useful for understanding one’s own emotions as well as empathizing with others.⁶

Remember that part of your project involves celebrating together but also holding each other up when things don’t go as planned. Don’t be afraid to re-evaluate your project together, adjust your schedule or re-think your demands. Don’t push for efficiency and performance at the expense of your own well-being and enjoyment of working together. The path you take can be more important than the destination, so it would be a pity not to enjoy it.

It’s also important to take care of yourself. In order to stay strong for your project, also take time for rest, sports, your friends and other hobbies – simply renew your internal resources.⁷ Eat well and get enough sleep. Many people also find meditation helpful. Don’t be afraid to say no to activities you don’t want to do. And above all, whenever you feel overwhelmed – by activities or emotions – turn to a person you trust to confide in.^{8,9}

Step 4: Done! Reflect, Evaluate and Celebrate Success!

Reflect

What did you learn for yourself and as a group during the project? Creating a sharing circle in the group and talking with each other is one way you can reflect on what you learned during the project. You can also share in a pair with one member of the group and then share the most important outcomes with the others. If you enjoy more creative approaches, try to include drawings, freewriting, short poems or body expressions like dance or living sculptures. You can also write a blog throughout the project or take photos and use these tools at the end of the project as a way to revive memories.

Here are some questions that can help you with the reflection process:

- Looking back on our project, how did I feel? What was it like for me?

- What happened during the project? What did we experience, create and do together?
- Which moments, situations, tasks, etc., did/didn’t I particularly enjoy? Why?
- What problems did the group encounter? How were they solved?
- When did the group work together best?
- What do I appreciate most about the group and project?
- What have I learned from the project? What will I take away from it?

Evaluate

At the end of the project, think about how it impacts people, animals and the environment. Can any unintended positive influences be observed? How has the community reacted to the project?

At the beginning of the project, you chose criteria to determine whether it was successful. At the end of the project, it is useful to compare the achieved milestones with the goals and the planned timeline.

Create a new overview map

For some projects, it can be useful to create a new overview map after the project has been completed. Go back to the original observations and compare them to the changes you have made in the community with your project.

Create a poll for your community

Another great way to gauge the impact of your campaign is to conduct a survey. You decide how detailed or in-depth the survey is. You may wish to conduct a survey both before and after implementing the project. In this way, one can determine whether locals are aware that the problem has changed.

Celebrate

Now it's time to celebrate your success together! By taking the time to highlight the work accomplished, you have an opportunity to share your personal achievements with the community and reflect on the journey you took. There are many different ways to celebrate the success of a project:

Celebrate with those around you

Hosting an event with the group members can be a great way to involve those around you (friends, classmates, parents, college professors, residents, etc.) in the celebration. Your event can be as big or small as the situation allows. As part of the celebration, your project can be presented to the public. In any case, all those who have contributed positively to the implementation of the campaign should be invited.

Celebrate virtually

Opting for a virtual celebration of the campaign is a great way to share your story with the community and can be a chance to continue spreading your message even after the project is over.

A virtual celebration can be designed in different ways:

- Become a virtual event host: using online platforms, you can easily connect as a group from wherever you are and celebrate the success of your project together.
- Create a virtual scrapbook: group members can capture footage, images, dates, your map

¹ The German movement for climate justice Ende Gelände (Here and no further) believes that “the more we are, the more power for change we have”. This group of young people came together in 2015 in reaction to persisting coal mining in Germany. Ende Gelände focuses on civil disobedience and nonviolent direct action in coal mines in order to raise awareness about climate justice.

² The term “climate justice” is related to human rights issues and refers to the fact that citizens of all countries and social groups do not share equally in man-made climate change. Climate justice thus aims to take social issues into account in addressing climate change, both in relation to the direct impacts of climate change and in relation to mitigation policies.

³ What do the climate camps look like? Watch this video from the 2017 edition: [Klimakemp Limity jsme my 2017](#).

⁴ The term “climate crisis” describes the impacts of climate change on society, underscoring the urgency that climate change poses to humanity, individual communities and individuals. The term is not a scientific one, but it is one that you will often see in media texts or in environmental movements and activist groups.

⁵ For more information on the concept, you can read the book *Healthy Urban Environments: More-than-Human Theories* by Cecily Maller.

⁶ For a quick overview of the nonviolent communication (NVC) concept, you can watch this video. For more and deeper information on the topic, you can read, e.g., *Nonviolent Communication: A Language of Life* by Marshall Rosenberg, the NVC founder.

⁷ In the book *Active Hope* by Joanna Macy and Chris Johnstone, you can find specific tools that can help you to feel joy and hope while facing “the mess we’re in”, as the authors call it. Check www.activehope.info

⁸ Cox, L. (2011). *How do we keep going? Activist burnout and personal sustainability in social movements*. Into-ebooks (<http://into-ebooks.com>), Helsinki. Retrieved from: https://mural.maynoothuniversity.ie/2815/1/LC_How_do_we_keep_going.pdf.

⁹ For more on the topic of sustainable activism and burnout prevention, you can read the work of [Laurence Cox](#) or the zines *Hell Yeah Self Care* and *Staying With Your Feelings* by Meg-John Barker, where you also find specific tips and tools.



Chapter 2: Activities and Tools

Community Mapping

Using the following four steps, you can easily create an overview map of your community:

1. Gather diverse sources of information, observe and talk to people.

To learn more about your community's needs, you can choose from a diverse set of methods. Each of them will help you to gain a slightly different set of information, so the best is to combine at least two of them.

You can start with observation. Walk around your community or sit and watch it around you regularly – this can help you to notice new things and contexts. A suitable place for observation may be a bench located in a busy place or somewhere people meet naturally and communicate with each other. Make yourself a note whenever you see something new or interesting.

While observing, ask yourself some of the following questions:

- Who is here and who is not here? Why?
- Do human and non-human beings meet in this spot? How do they interact?
- What activities are the people around you doing? How does the character of the place affect these activities?
- What would the place look like at another part of the day, week and year?
- Notice senses other than sight: What do you smell with your nose or feel with your fingers? What do you hear? How does it affect how you feel in this spot?
- How do you feel in the spaces in terms of the effects of climate change (heat, drought, torrential rains)? How are the spaces equipped in terms of adaptation to climate change?

You can also check what is written about your community in different documents, in local and national media, on the websites of local associations and in the local municipality. Are there any topics mentioned related to climate change? How are they described? Are there any people mentioned

in these sources who you would like to talk to and learn more about?

Interview members of the community – you can have a conversation with randomly addressed people you meet while observing or make an appointment with a specific person. Think about who is an influential person in your community who can give you important information or help you in the later stages of your project (e.g., the mayor, a dedicated employee in the municipality, a member of a local NGO, etc.). A good opportunity for an interview can also be local events, such as festivals, concerts, gatherings and the like. Address also your family members, neighbours and friends.

Think about what you want to find out exactly and prepare some questions in advance. You can even prepare a questionnaire that you will fill in when talking to people or a few topics or questions that you will further develop in the interview according to the situation. Make notes or recordings, and don't forget to ask if your conversation partner agrees with it.

Here are some ideas to help you create the questions:

- What is your role in this community or area?
- What is your relationship to the community or area?
- What do you think are the greatest values of this community or area?
- What do you think is the biggest problem in your community or area?
- Do you perceive climate change as a problem? If yes, how and where do you feel the impact in your community or area? If not, why not?
- What do you think are potential causes for some of the climate change impacts you witness in your community?
- Where would you like to see change(s)?
- How do you think the environment can benefit from these changes?
- What can people do to contribute to these changes?
- Do you know any individuals or collectives in your area who are dealing with climate change challenges?

If you find that obtaining information in person is difficult, for example, due to pandemic measures, you may also want to consider an online format. You can create a poll online or in a paper format. The advantage of an electronic form is the possibility of sending the questionnaire to a large number of respondents and, after completing it, having the results of the individual answers automatically displayed in a graphic. The disadvantage is that it is impersonal and lacks the possibility for direct communication with a member of the community.

2. Draw, print or buy a map of your area.

Since this is all about becoming active right from your doorstep – the area you know best! – we recommend a map with a 3–8 km radius around your chosen location. If you prefer to create your map digitally, there are a variety of free platforms you can use.

Platforms tips:

- relive.cc - a free outdoor tracking app that records your route and can then be saved as a 3D animated video, including stops, photos and descriptions. The internet must be switched on at all times on a mobile phone.
- zbgis.skgeodesy.sk - a Slovak map app for interactive work with digital data from the real estate cadastre, address register, land register, raster maps from the archive and the digital relief model of Slovakia
- mapy.cz - a Czech map app that can display different levels – base, air, tourism, transport, history, etc., especially for Czechia and Slovakia. After login, there are also other functions available

3. Mark special features on the map that you come across while gathering information.

Mark the locations that are somehow related to climate change in your area as well as other problems and opportunities that you encountered during your data collection (e.g., causes, manifestations and measures against climate change; places

to cooperate with, use or get help with possible solutions; vulnerable people, species or ecosystems; etc.). Use our list below for inspiration. Consider whether these spots are somehow relevant in your case. Feel free to add or change features so that it fits your specific context and community!

- Schools and kindergartens
- Important roads, paths and parking places
- Recreational areas
- Community centers
- Meeting places
- Local associations, authorities, NGOs and charities
- Religious institutions
- Shops and markets (with local, organic, vegan, fair-trade and other goods)
- Restaurants and cafés (with local, organic, vegan, fair-trade and similar services)
- Swaps and second-hand markets
- Hospitals
- Homeless shelters
- Retirement homes
- Orphanages
- Places to dispense food to the socially disadvantaged
- Fire brigades

- Pedestrian infrastructure
- Electric car infrastructure
- Cycling infrastructure
- Shelters against heat in the summer for people or animals
- Protection construction against flooding and torrential rains
- Renaturation of rivers
- Irrigation of plants for very dry periods
- City greenery, like parks, green lanes around roads and paths, community gardens, etc. Abandoned places like urban wildscapes, brownfields, etc.
- Green roofs
- Animal shelters
- Pet and farm animal facilities
- Areas for wild animals (open spaces, wet biotopes, forests, meadows, pastures, etc.)
- Feeding sites for wild animals during very dry periods
- Bee pastures
- Insect hotels
- Wildlife corridors and connections between green spaces
- Place where you've met wild animals
- Factory farms (e.g., dairy, pork, chicken, fish and so on)

- Natural and protected areas
- Water surfaces (springs, lakes, ponds, rivers)
- Mountains
- Waste collection centers and composting facilities
- Power plants (coal, wind, water, bioenergy, solar systems, etc.)
- Drinking water protection areas, reservoirs
- Wetlands
- (Organic) farms
- Forests and meadows
- Important ecosystems or species (e.g., endemic or memorable trees)

4. Reflect on your experiences and think about what you can do to make your community more resilient to climate change or to reduce it.

You can use the following questions to reflect on the map you have created:

- What are the most severe consequences of climate change in your community?
- Who are the most vulnerable groups of people, animals or ecosystems affected by climate change in your area?
- Are there people in your community who need special help (elderly people, homeless people, people with disabilities, etc.)? How does climate change impact them? Does the community care enough about it?
- What are the most important causes leading to the climate change impacts you can see on your “doorstep”?
- What could we change/improve to reduce these impacts?
- What types of roads are in your area? What condition are they in? Are they also suitable

for the movement of pedestrians, children, the disabled or cyclists? How do people commute around your area? Are there any chances to reduce their necessity to travel by car?

- Are there natural or semi-natural areas (parks, gardens, green spaces, etc.) in your community? What condition are they in? How do they serve the community and the ecosystem?

- What plants are there in the area? Do you know how they got there? What condition are they in? How do they serve the community and the ecosystem?

- Are there animals in your community? What wild animals are there in addition to domestic animals? How do they interact with the local community? How do humans and their way of living influence their lives?

- Are there any bodies of water, streams or other water resources in your area? What condition are they in? How do they serve the community and the ecosystem?

- In what ways does your community access its energy demands? Are there any opportunities for renewables?

- How does your community work with waste? Is there any potential for improvement?

- Where does your community get food and other goods from? Is it possible to encourage more use of local sources in your community?

- How are members of your community involved in planning and deciding on new projects in the municipality? Could it be strengthened?

- Can you think of a solution to any local problem or a way to contribute to tackling the climate crisis that benefits humans, animals and the environment?



Select a Method for Decision-Making

The consensus method

- Discuss different project ideas. Who speaks for or against an idea? Important: listen to the comments of each group member.
- Eliminate some (less appropriate) ideas or change them to make them acceptable to the whole group.
- Check your common consensus (group consensus):
 - Block a suggestion: I disagree with the basis of the suggestion. We must find a new proposal.
 - Distance: I can't support this proposal because ____, but I don't want to stop the group, so I bow to the decision of the others.
 - Reservations: I have some reservations, but I will accept the proposal.
 - Agree: I support the proposal and would like to implement it.
- Discuss until you reach a common consensus, in other words, a situation where nobody is blocking anything, and there are only a few people

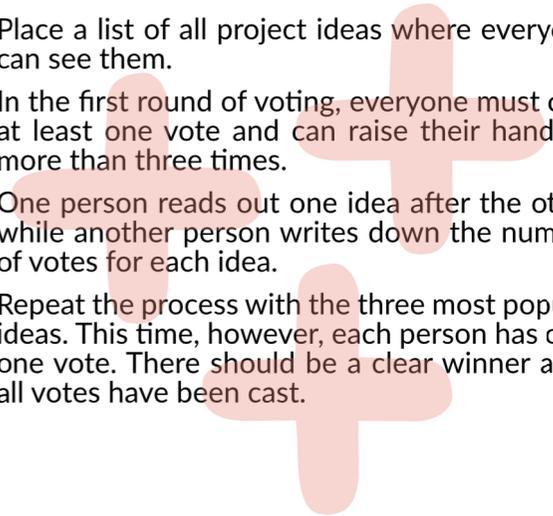
who are distant or have reservations. Everyone can live with the decision and look forward to its implementation.

- If there are many different ideas and interests within the group and the consensus method is not successful, you can also choose the voting method.

The voting method

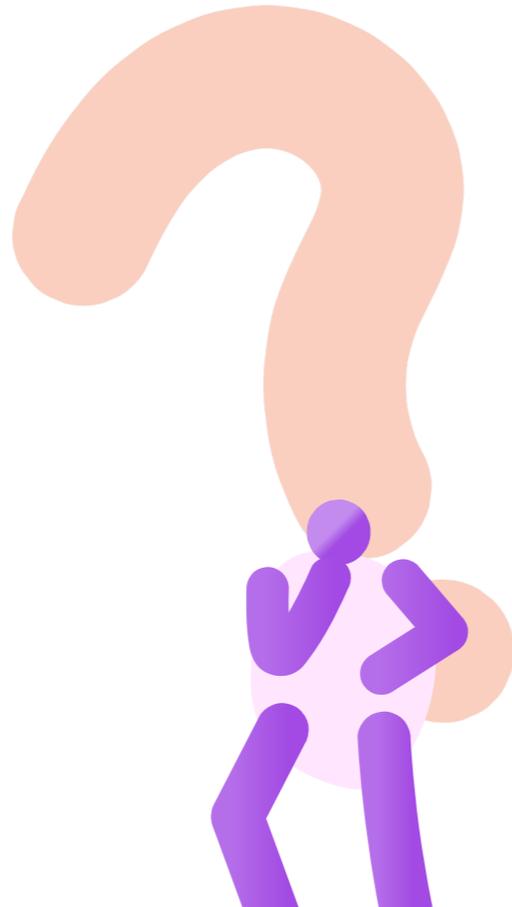
Here is an example of what a voting process could look like:

- Place a list of all project ideas where everyone can see them.
- In the first round of voting, everyone must cast at least one vote and can raise their hand no more than three times.
- One person reads out one idea after the other while another person writes down the number of votes for each idea.
- Repeat the process with the three most popular ideas. This time, however, each person has only one vote. There should be a clear winner after all votes have been cast.



My Personal Intention

Use this tool to be more aware of the strengths, abilities and challenges you want to develop during the project. You can share it with other members of your group so you know what everyone's intention is. Check the "6 key skills to help save the Earth" section in the Introduction chapter for inspiration!



Skills I can develop through the project:	In what situations am I already successful?	In which situations am I not doing as well (so far)?
How much time do I want to devote to this project (per week)?	Three skills I want to work on the most:	
How can I support myself in order to develop in these?		
What can distract me from my effort? And how to change it?		
How do I want to celebrate when I succeed?		

The Dyad

Do you want to strengthen relationships and empathy between group members? To get participants tuned into the group, start your meeting with dyads

Divide members into pairs and into the roles of A and B. The purpose of the process is for everyone to have time to think about the question asked, e.g., "What are you arriving with today?" First, person A thinks aloud for 3 minutes while B listens without interruption. After the sound signal, the roles change. (It is also possible to use the given time for joint silence.)

After the dyads have run, you can bounce a few ideas across the group. Then go back to the last meeting and ask what anyone remembers from the last meeting. It will make it easier to follow up on the topic. Then present the intention and plan of the day and solve important organizational matters, for example, when is the break!

This whole process helps to detach from what was happening before the meeting and devote yourself fully to the group and the topic. It also helps to be

aware of your own feelings and develop the ability to listen empathetically.

Recognize Your Feelings

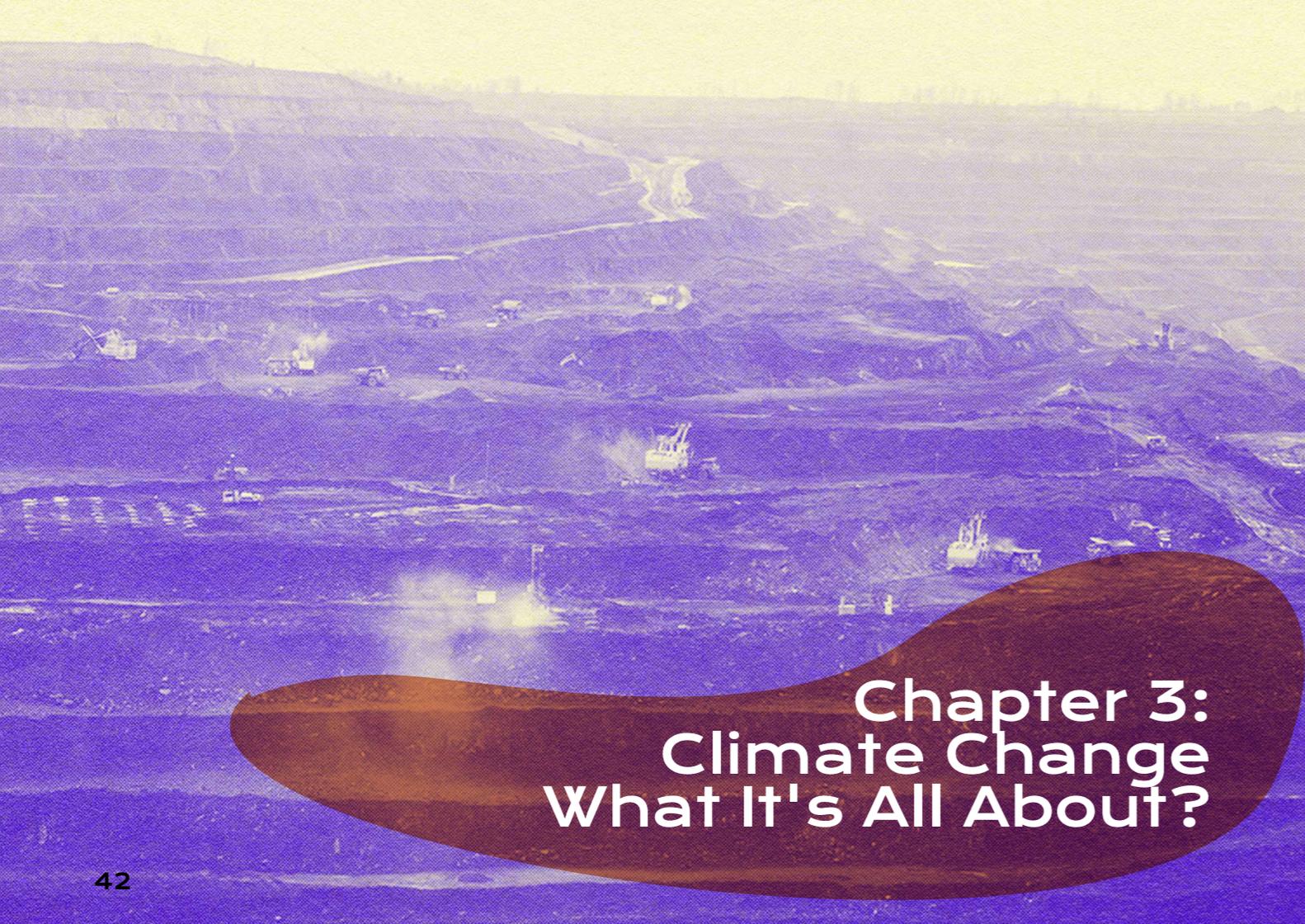
Sometimes, it's not that easy to recognize your feelings and bring them honestly to the group. It might be helpful to train your ability to be aware of your emotions. You can try the following exercise created by a queer therapeutic writer [Meg-John Barker](#):

- Sit comfortably and quietly and bring your attention slowly to your body and explore how it is feeling.
- Ask what is demanding your attention. Focus on any sensation that you notice in your body.
- Welcome the sensations warmly. Check-in with yourself. Does it feel okay to spend some time on that sensation now? If not, it is fine to stop or focus on something different.
- Really listen to that sensation. Try to find the best way to describe it.

- Check back in with the sensation to see whether that description fits well enough or whether you need to change it or add to it.
- Stay with the feeling with interest and curiosity. Don't try to change it or force it to communicate. Just be with it gently and curiously. Acknowledge everything that comes up.
- When it feels ready to finish, you can reflect on whether there's anything more that is asking for your attention.
- If not, express gratitude to the feeling and to your body and reassure it that you'll keep coming back to listen to it.

Want to know more about staying with your feelings? Read the zine [Staying With Feelings by Meg-John Barker](#).





Chapter 3: Climate Change What It's All About?

If we want to do something for the climate, it is essential to base our actions on reliable information and its reflection. Only when we have a good understanding of both us and the causes and manifestations of climate change can we find solutions to which we are able to contribute and which are, at the same time, truly efficient. In this, the last chapter, therefore, we start with some information about climate change that we think is useful for those who need to learn more. We also recommend sources of information and data that we consider reliable and, at the same time, clear and readable. Feel free to search for your own sources of information and discuss them with others!

TIP: The facts never stand alone. Where am I and my emotions?

The information and facts we hear about climate change can be worrying. Our feelings can paralyze us, but they can also bring about determination and motivation to take action. After reading each part of the text, take a few minutes to stay with your feelings and reflect on the gained knowledge. Be careful with yourself, and feel free to stop reading when it is overwhelming to you.

Our reflection guide at the end of this chapter can help you. You can also try the activity "Recognize Your Feelings" in the previous chapter.

12 Climate Change Facts Everyone Should Know

In the book *There Is No Planet B*¹, author Mike Berners-Lee concludes with a few facts every politician should know about climate change. A team of Czech experts on environmental education adjusted his list so that it was easier for everyone to understand.² In our opinion, they are a great summary of the essentials:

1 Climate change is caused by the release of greenhouse gases due to human activity. These additional gases reinforce the existing greenhouse effect in the atmosphere, leading to global warming and other related changes in the Earth's climate. The main greenhouse gas emitted by humans is carbon dioxide (CO₂).

2 Current science tells us that a global temperature rise of 2°C (compared to pre-industrial values) looks very risky, but 1.5°C is much less so. Keeping the warming within these limits is the aim of the Paris Agreement.³ It is not just about a warmer climate (more frequent heat waves, droughts, fires, floods, more intense hurricanes, etc.); when a certain temperature is reached, it may activate tipping points, which will lead to an irreversible transformation of the climate (e.g., melting permafrost will release large amounts of methane, which will lead to further significant warming).

3 The increase in temperature roughly corresponds to the increase in greenhouse gases (mainly CO₂) in the atmosphere. This is true so long as we do not exceed the tipping point mentioned above. That means we have a certain carbon budget. This tells us how much CO₂ we can still release into the atmosphere. Keeping warming below 1.5°C will be difficult because it has already warmed by 1.2°C since the pre-industrial era.

4 Global CO₂ emissions have been growing steadily since the industrial revolution. The increase is not the same every year. In 2009, for example, emissions fell slightly due to

the economic recession. A year later, they rose sharply again. If we do not take action quickly, we're headed for several degrees of warming with dramatic consequences for the future of humankind on Earth.

5 It is still uncertain when we will be at the top of the CO₂ emissions growth curve. But we need to get these emissions to zero as soon as possible! In 2020, there was a decrease in emissions due to the coronavirus crisis, but emissions are rapidly recovering after this temporary blip.

6 It takes a long time to put the brakes on. What we do in the next 10 years will determine in many respects whether climate protection will have a chance of success. CO₂ emissions and other greenhouse gasses cannot be stopped overnight. First, we need to change the whole infrastructure of society: how we get energy, how we get food, how we transport goods, how we produce items, etc. Even when we get emissions to zero, some of the effects of climate change will have great inertia; for example, glaciers will continue to melt, and sea levels will continue to rise for many decades.

7 Almost all fossil fuels (coal, oil, natural gas) that get dug up get burned – so they have to stay in the ground. The carbon footprint of extracted fuels is practically identical to the carbon footprint of burned fuels plus the carbon footprint of all the consumer goods and services.

8 Growth in renewables, energy savings and other technological innovations will not be enough to stop emissions. They are absolutely major but the reverse effect of energy savings, a growing appetite for additional energy in an economy of endless growth and consumption, will still lead to emissions.

9 We need an agreement that will make burning fossil fuels too expensive, illegal or both. The best and most effective deal will be a global one. Until then, similar agreements and laws at the level of individual countries (and entities like the European Union) will help to reduce emissions and create pressure for a global agreement.

10 In a broader context, we need a whole new worldview, a new self-understanding, a new approach to the non-human world, a new goal – one that meets the basic needs of all people without exceeding the ecological limits of

the planet (the UN Sustainable Development Goals, for example, are aimed at similar transformations by 2030).

11 Industrialized countries such as Czechia or Austria have a greater share of the responsibility for tackling the climate crisis. In our history and on the way to our wealth, we have burned more of the carbon budget than is attributed to each inhabitant on Earth. Therefore, we should be at the forefront of reducing emissions and contributing to the transformation of poorer countries.

12 It may be necessary to remove carbon from the atmosphere. But we have yet to find secure and affordable technology to do so. While it makes sense to develop these technologies quickly, we cannot rely on solutions that do not yet exist and further postpone the necessary cessation of emissions.

Causes and Consequences – Everything Is Interconnected!

Climate change is not just a rise in temperature, it is an umbrella term for a range of interrelated phenomena. A change in one factor, such as an increase in the concentration of CO2 in the atmosphere, sets off a long chain reaction of causes and consequences. In the following infographic you will learn about other effects of human activity on changes in global systems and their impacts on ecosystems and society.

Schematic map of climate change⁴

HUMAN ACTIVITY

Burning of fossil fuels especially in the energy and transport sectors

Deforestation and changes in land use

Cattle breeding and industrial fertilizers in agriculture

Industrial processes, e.g. cement production

Increasing concentrations of CO2 and other greenhouse gases in the atmosphere

CHANGES IN GLOBAL SYSTEMS

Stronger greenhouse effect

Increase in air temperatures

Melting of the Greenland and Antarctic continental glaciers

Mountain glaciers melting

Rising levels of the world's oceans

Increasing the volume of water in the oceans by thermal expansion

Increase water temperatures in the oceans

Less glaciation of the Arctic Ocean

Ocean acidification

SELECTED IMPACTS ON ECOSYSTEMS AND SOCIETY

More frequent and severe extreme events: heat waves, droughts, floods or hurricanes

Shifts in vegetation zones and ecosystem collapses

Shifting seasons

Water scarcity in glacier-fed catchments

Coastal flooding

Fish and marine animals' migration

Declining concentrations of dissolved O2 in water, thus increasing marine "dead zones"

Coral reefs dying

Causes and Consequences Right on Our Doorstep

The previous infographics have helped us imagine how climate change is working globally. But the interconnectedness of causes and effects can still seem abstract and complex. We therefore looked around for how they manifest themselves in Central Europe, the region where we live. We offer a few examples to which you might relate easily, but there are many more causes and consequences. Will you be able to find some more related to your region? Let's start with two important causes which have significant impact on the CO2 emissions in the Czechia and Austria:

Cause 1: Keep It in the Ground!

How is it that Czechia, with its 10.7 million inhabitants, ranks among the most polluting countries per capita in the world?⁵ The answer is found primarily in what is called the energy mix – the combination of different energy sources in the produc-

tion of electricity (e.g., water, solar, wind or fossil and nuclear fuels). The European Union's energy mix is still made up of up to 84% non-renewable sources⁶, and this is no different in Czechia, where the energy sector is dominated by coal-fired power plants and heating plants.⁷ These plants produce almost 40% of the total greenhouse gas emissions in Czechia.⁸ Surface mining of lignite (or brown coal) irreversibly destroys the landscape and ecosystems; its combustion contributes to climate change through the production of greenhouse gases and burdens the environment with heavy metals that have a negative impact on human and animal health.⁹

The worst example of all in Czechia is the Počerady Power Station. It is obsolete and thus inefficient in burning coal. Such a plant is only beneficial to its owner, who still makes billions a year from its operation. In addition to all the negative impacts on health and climate already mentioned, this example shows another problem in the energy sector – ownership. While electricity is a key commodity for everyday life, very few decisions about its production are made by people themselves in community energy projects. Počerady is not needed for

Czech consumption. Czechia exports much more energy than this inefficient power plant produces.

If you are wondering what to do about it, you're not alone. The need to end this unjust and unsustainable business for the sake of the climate, society and ecosystems was brought to our attention by the collective Limity jsme my (We are the limits) in 2020. As part of an action weekend against coal, a peaceful demonstration called For a Coal-Free Future was held in front of the Počerady power plant. Three hundred people from the affected region and the rest of Czechia came to protest, and many others expressed their support on social media. Some activists also occupied the nearby Vršany open-pit lignite mine.

Photo credit ¹⁰



Cause 2: Food for Thought

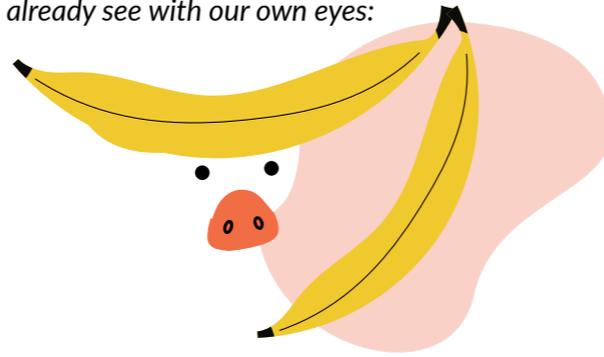
Did you know that a third of all CO2 emissions worldwide are caused by what we eat?^{11 12} More than anything else, our almost religious adherence to daily meat in Austria contributes to our climate impact. Factory animal farming is responsible for more greenhouse gases than all the cars, ships and planes in the world combined. Austria has one of the highest meat consumption rates in Europe. The average per person in 2020 ate 60.5 kg of meat and sausages.¹³ Consumption of dairy products in the country was even higher, at around 112 kg per person.¹⁴

Here are a few facts that explain why meat consumption is such a driver of climate change.¹⁵ In Austria alone, almost two-thirds of the arable land is used to grow animal feed, often in monocultures. Huge amounts of pesticides and fertilizers are used, which not only threaten biodiversity and reduce soil quality but also release the greenhouse gas nitrous oxide. Nevertheless, Austria cannot cover all of its feed requirements itself, so rainforests are cut down in distant countries to make room for the cultivation of maize and soybeans.

About 40% of the total world grain harvest is fed to livestock. Taken together, farm animals consume an amount of feed that corresponds to the calorie requirements of 8.7 billion people – more than the entire world population. Vast areas of valuable arable land that could be used to grow plant food for humans are used to grow animal feed. Worldwide, more antibiotics are given to healthy breeding animals than to sick humans. In addition, industrial factory farming causes unbelievable animal suffering, be it live animal transport, animal factories, fully slatted floors and chick shredding.¹⁶

In a nutshell, our eating habits not only influence our own health but also have a significant impact on climate and animal welfare.

The next three stories will show you examples of the impacts of climate change on our own region, which we can already see with our own eyes:



Impact 1: It's Getting Hotter

Imagine you can't walk fast from one patch of shade to another, that you are simply not that resistant to heat exposure, and it exhausts you? This is how vulnerable groups, such as the elderly and children, experience heat waves in a city that is not adapted to their needs. The most frequent manifestation of climate change on an urban level are heat waves and the corresponding urban heat island (UHI) effect.

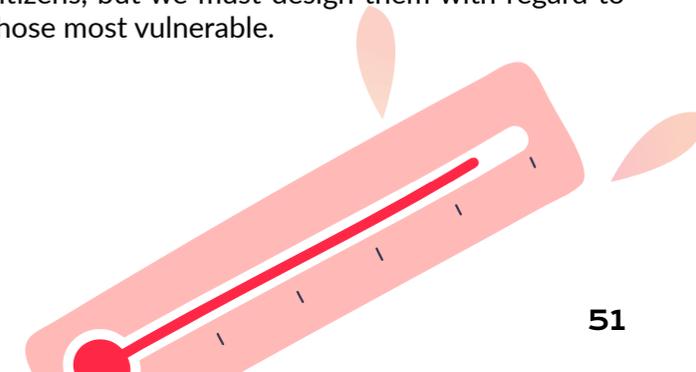
The UHI effect occurs in urbanized areas that cannot offset the heat due to a lack of vegetation, soil and/or water. The surface then accumulates heat and significantly increases the temperature of its surroundings.¹⁷

Glass bus stops with metal benches on hot concrete, parking lots in front of supermarkets with no shade, town squares and streets without trees – these places reveal the weak spots of urban planning which have left out the vulnerable. In some cases, it can have fatal consequences, proved by statistics on the increased mortality of the elderly due to heatwaves.

Even though hot temperatures are often connected to climate change, implied by the outdated term “global warming”, they are not the only impact that climate change has on weather. Increased precipitation rates during summer months or unpredictable thunderstorms are other examples of climate change effects.

Adapting urban areas to climate change while taking into consideration vulnerable groups should be common practice in urban planning. It would be enough to use well-known adaptation measures,¹⁸ such as the extension of urban vegetation, planting trees in exposed areas, placing benches in the shade, implementing retention basins for stormwater management and making services, institutions and public transport more accessible.

Cities can be pleasant and respectful places for all citizens, but we must design them with regard to those most vulnerable.



TIP:

Ask your grandma, grandpa or your elderly neighbors how they experience summer in the city. Is their city/town adapted to heat waves or not? Would they appreciate it to be handled better?

Try to see the city through their eyes. Ask them to show you the places that are pleasant for them as well as the places that are challenging for them.

Impact 2: From Ice Cave to Black Cave

The Demänovská Ice Cave is located in the northern part of the Low Tatras. It is remarkable for the permanent ice that fills it. For the last five hundred years, ice has been filling the cave, creating, in combination with the geological decoration, a unique tour for visitors. However, we may be the last generation to have the opportunity to see this natural phenomenon.¹⁹ The ice cave currently has the lowest amount of ice measured in the last 70 years. This is due to the warm winter seasons we have experienced, especially in the last decade. The ice cave used to be filled all year long via ground ice, drops and glaciers. At the moment, ice

occurs only in the central part, at the heart of the cave; however, this only accumulates on the floor. The ice loses its strength and is constantly shifting. Annual changes are about two to four centimeters.²⁰ The cave administrators are considering installing air conditioning in the cave, which, by the way, will add additional CO₂ emissions and will worsen the cause of the melting ice. How peculiar is that, isn't it?!²¹

Impact 3: How Snowball Fights and Drinking Water Are Connected

As a child, did you enjoy snowball fights, skiing or tobogganing in winter? Do you still love it? A visible sign of the effects of climate change here in Austria is the rise in the snow line and the resulting reduction in snowfall in the lowlands and cities. The snow line rises by around 120 meters for every degree of temperature rise.²² The climate models for Austria assume a warming of 3.5 degrees Celsius by 2100.²³ With this increase, only a few ski areas in Austria are snow-sure.

By the way, did you know that there are currently 925 glaciers in Austria? Unfortunately, virtually all of them are losing mass – and quickly. In the next 15 years, it's expected that half of them will already have disappeared, and by the end of the century, glaciers in Austria could even disappear completely. Due to warming, the boundary of the year-round frozen permafrost on the glaciers is shifting further and further towards the summit. Where the ground thaws, it easily slips, and entire mountain slopes can come loose. Paths are becoming unstable, there are more rock falls, mountain sports are becoming more and more dangerous.²⁴ This development is exacerbated by frequent storm events with heavy rainfall, and more and more often, entire paths and bridges are simply washed away. The retreat of the glaciers in the Alps also means the loss of natural water reservoirs and thus regional drought, which in turn can affect the availability of our precious drinking water.²⁵

Adaptation, Mitigation, Action!

What is meant by the two magical words adaptation and mitigation, which so often occur in connection with climate change? And what are the differences between them?

The purpose of adaptation measures is to reduce the adverse effects of ongoing climate change (e.g., more frequent occurrences of extreme heat or frost, strong winds, storms, torrential rains, floods, droughts, etc.). These measures can be, for example, afforestation, open space preservation, flood protection or community engagement.

On the other hand, climate change mitigation is human intervention to reduce emissions or enhance the sinks of 23 greenhouse gases. Mitigation measures are, for example, renewable energy technologies, waste minimization processes or public transport practices. In other words, mitigation addresses the root cause of the problem, whereas adaptation describes the process of dealing with the already existing effects.

It is important to know that adaptation and mitigation measures can be mutually reinforcing, but they can also weaken each other. The latest trend, therefore, is to look for measures that contribute both to climate change mitigation and adaptation. These measures include building green infrastructure, creating local food systems, education and water conservation. This is also supported by the latest IPCC report.^{26,27} According to it, it will be necessary to adapt to the worsening effects of climate change. However, without rapid emission reductions, adaptation will not be sustainable in the long run.

Does your project fall more into the field of adaptation or mitigation? Discuss it with your group and try to increase its positive impact on the climate by getting both dimensions.

Mitigation

Action to reduce emissions that cause climate change



Building

Climate Resilience



Adaptation

Action to manage the risks of climate change impacts





What Do We Want? TRANSFORMATION! When Do We Want It? NOW!

What can make the climate crisis so overwhelming is its complexity and its inseparability from other fundamental problems we face as humanity.

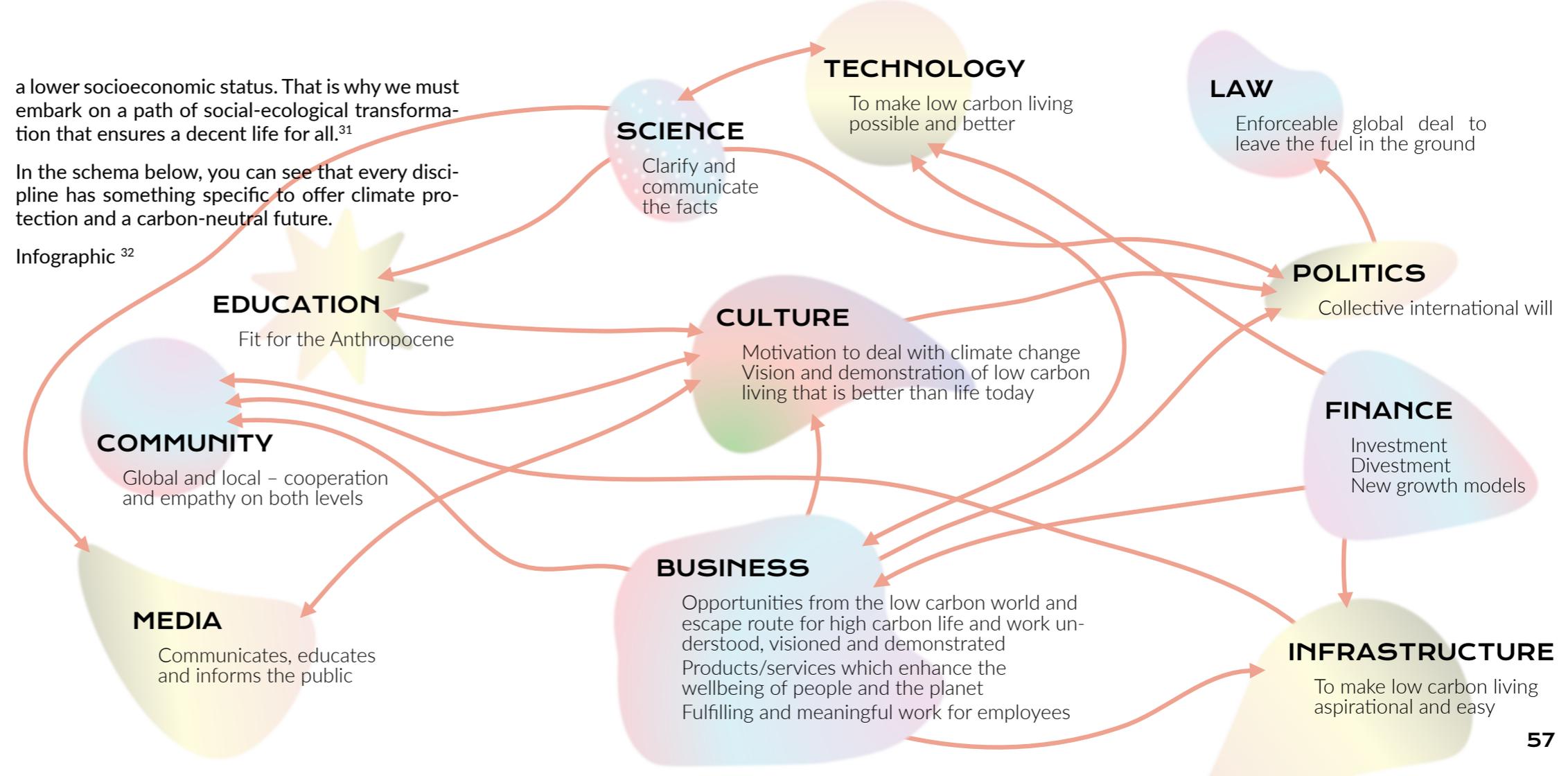
The current global economic system is based on a vision of endless growth, privatization and endless consumption of natural resources, and profit maximization. This combination creates extreme inequalities in society, and the gap between the rich and the poor is still widening.²⁸ Moreover, as we know, our fossil fuel dependent lifestyles have a severe impact on the environment, other living beings and the climate – meaning it is both unjust and unsustainable.

The solution to the climate crisis is a carbon-free future. This means 100% renewable energy and a shift in the economic system that is not based on growth but on the opposite – degrowth.^{29,30} However, this represents a complete upheaval in many sectors that will affect workers – often people with

a lower socioeconomic status. That is why we must embark on a path of social-ecological transformation that ensures a decent life for all.³¹

In the schema below, you can see that every discipline has something specific to offer climate protection and a carbon-neutral future.

Infographic ³²



Politicians are finally realizing the gravity of the changes we are facing. The countries of the European Union have committed to implementing the European Green Deal, a document whose vision and ambition is to reduce European emissions by 55% by 2030 compared to 1990 and to make Europe the first climate-neutral continent by 2050.

This is great news! But as different people have different interests, we need to watch over how the European Green Deal will be implemented in our own countries so that our commitments to planet Earth are met and no one is left behind.

Take a moment to reflect:

- Are there any specific emotions you felt while reading the chapter? (Check the activity “Recognize Your Feelings” which can help you with this)
- What information was new to you? Are there any new causes or consequences of the climate crisis that you did not yet know?
- Imagine if you could change anything in today's world to help the climate, what would it be?
- Choose one of the topics that interest you the most and try to find out more details

about it so that you can explain it to others in a joint discussion next time. Dive deeper into the further resources collected in the last chapter!

¹ Berners-Lee, M. (2019). *There Is No Planet B: A Handbook for the Make or Break Years*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. ISBN 978-11-084-3958-9.

² Daniš, P., Březovská, R., Činčera, J., Kolenatý, M., Krajhanzl, J., Kulich, J., Medek, M., Svobodová, R., Žďárský, T. a kol. (2021). *Klima se mění – a co my? Proč a jak se učit o změně klimatu. Doporučení Pracovní skupiny pro klimatické vzdělávání Rady vlády pro udržitelný rozvoj*. Ministerstvo životního prostředí.

³ For a quick overview of the Paris Agreement, you can watch [this video by WWF-Brasil](#). For more information, visit the website of the [United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change \(UNFCCC\)](#). If you want to get deeper and become a Paris Agreement expert, [read the full text of the agreement](#).

⁴ Translated from the infographic [Schematická mapa klimatické změny](#) by author [Fakta o klimatu](#) licensed under [CC BY 4.0](#).

⁵ Ritchie, H., Roser, M. (2020). *CO₂ and Greenhouse Gas Emissions*. Retrieved from: <https://ourworldindata.org/co2-and-other-greenhouse-gas-emissions>. [22-01-2023].

⁶ Eurostat. (2022). *Shedding light on energy in the EU*. Retrieved from: https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/cache/infographs/energy/img/pdf/shedding-light-in-the-EU-2022_en.pdf?lang=en. [22-01-2023].

⁷ Fakta o klimatu. (2020). *Elektrina v ČR: výroba, spotřeba a emise*. Retrieved from: <https://faktaoklimatu.cz/infografiky/elektrina-sr>. [22-01-2023].

⁸ Fakta o klimatu. (2021). *Emise skleníkových plynů ČR*. Retrieved from: <https://faktaoklimatu.cz/infografiky/emise-cr>. [22-01-2023].

⁹ Greenpeace Česká republika. (2019). *Největší výfuk České republiky - Elektrárna Počeradý*. Retrieved from: <https://youtu.be/YiaFhfQ30tg>.

¹⁰ Used with the permission of the author, Pavel Mezihorák.

¹¹ Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. (2021, March 9). *Food systems account for more than one-third of global greenhouse gas emissions*. Retrieved from: <https://www.fao.org/news/story/en/item/1379373/icode/>.

¹² United Nations News. (2021, March 9). *Food systems account for over one-third of global greenhouse gas emissions*. Retrieved from: <https://news.un.org/en/story/2021/03/1086822>.

¹³ AMA – Agrarmarkt Austria Marketing (n.d.) *Entwicklung des Pro-Kopf-Verbrauches von Fleisch inkl. Geflügel gesamt in Österreich*. Retrieved from: https://amainfo.at/fileadmin/user_upload/Fotos_Dateien/amainfo/Presse/Marktinformationen/Allgemein/Pro_Kopf_Verbrauch_Fleisch.pdf.

¹⁴ AMA – Agrarmarkt Austria Marketing (n.d.) *Entwicklung des Pro-Kopf-Verbrauches von Milch und Milchprodukten in Österreich*. Retrieved from: https://amainfo.at/fileadmin/user_upload/Fotos_Dateien/amainfo/Presse/Marktinformationen/Produktion/Pro_Kopf_Verbrauch_Milch_und_Milchprodukte.pdf.

¹⁵ Want to learn more about meat consumption? Read the *Meat Atlas 2021* published by Heinrich Böll Stiftung, Friends of the Earth Europe and Bund für Umwelt und Naturschutz.

¹⁶ Ethik.Guide (n.d.) *Brennstoff für die Erderwärmung: Fleisch und Milch*. Retrieved from: <https://ethikguide.org/infothek/fleisch-und-milch-brennstoff-fuer-die-erderwaermung/>.

¹⁷ For more information about urban heat islands, see these videos: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lnBO4vX82Fs>, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Od2d1bYQVHs>, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4SihdPRR>.

¹⁸ For more information about adaptation measures, see, e.g., the website <https://www.adaptterraawards.cz/en>, which shows good examples from the Central European region, or a Czech publication *Udržitelná města*: https://nesehnuti.cz/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/Udrzitelna_mesta-e-book-1.pdf.

¹⁹ Štátna ochrana prírody Slovenskej republiky. Správa slovenských jaskýň. (n.d.). Demänovská ľadová jaskyňa. Retrieved from: <http://www.ssj.sk/sk/jaskyna/5-demanovska-ladova-jaskyna>.

²⁰ Cenkner, D. (2021, August 6). *Demänovská ľadová jaskyňa môže byť už čoskoro bez ľadu. Ten mizne pred očami*. Retrieved from: <https://www.imeteo.sk/clanok/demaenovska-ladova-jaskyna-rapidne-prichadza-o-lad>.

²¹ You can learn more about the Demänovská Ice Cave, other impacts of climate change and how to get engaged in climate and environmental protection in Slovakia by watching the documentary film *Po nás potopa* (*After us, the flood*) and visiting the interactive website of the Regional Association for Nature Conservation and Sustainable Development (BROZ).

²² Global2000 (n.d.). *Klimawandel in Österreich*. Retrieved from: <https://www.global2000.at/klimawandel-oesterreich>.

²³ Die Presse (18.09.2014). *Klimawandel: In Österreich wird es um 3,5 Grad wärmer*. Retrieved from: <https://www.diepresse.com/3871886/klimawandel-in-oesterreich-wird-es-um-35-grad-heisser>.

²⁴ Global2000 (n.d.). *Klimawandel in Österreich*. <https://www.global2000.at/klimawandel-oesterreich>.

²⁵ Alpenverein (1.4.2022). *Gletscher: „Ewiges Eis“ auf dem Rückzug?* Retrieved from: https://mein.alpenverein.at/portal/news/2022/2022_04_01_Gletscherbericht_2020-21.php.

²⁶ IPCC. (2022). *Climate Change 2022: Impacts, Adaptation, and Vulnerability. Contribution of Working Group II to the Sixth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change* [H.-O. Pörtner, D.C. Roberts, M. Tignor, E.S. Poloczanska, K. Mintenbeck, A. Alegria, M. Craig, S. Langsdorf, S. Lösschke, V. Möller, A. Okem, B. Rama (eds.)]. Cambridge University Press. In Press.

²⁷ The IPCC is the United Nations body for assessing the science related to climate change and is probably the most influential research institution in the field of climate change.

²⁸ According to Oxfam's report *Survival of the Richest* and the World Bank's *Poverty and Shared Prosperity* report, the richest 1% have captured almost two-thirds of all new wealth since 2020, and it is the first time in 25 years that global poverty has increased. (Oxfam: <https://oi-files-d8-prod.s3.eu-west-2.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/2023-01/Survival%20of%20the%20Richest%20Full%20Report%20-English.pdf>; World Bank: <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/bitstream/handle/10986/37739/9781464818936.pdf>)

²⁹ For more extensive information and many tips on other resources about Degrowth, you can visit [Degrowth.info](https://degrowth.info)

³⁰ The publication *Čas dorůst* by the Nerůstový kolektiv (Degrowth Collective) is available for the Czech readers.

³¹ For inspiration, we recommend the film *The Loud Spring :Collective Paths Out of the Climate Crisis*: <https://en.labournet.tv/project/loud-spring>

³² Berners-Lee, M. (2019). *There Is No Planet B: A Handbook for the Make or Break Years*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. ISBN 978-11-084-3958-9.

Dig Deeper and Get Inspired Elsewhere

TIP:

Prepare a climate change reader's diary in the form of videos or short texts on social networks. You can influence other people around you to read texts that inspire or motivate you.

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About us

Maybe you're wondering who exactly worked on this handbook. We are youth workers from three different organizations and from three different countries. We created this handbook through long-term and deep dialogue as a part of the Erasmus+ project "Together for the Climate: New Solutions and Innovations for Youth Climate Action".

Do you like how we do it here? Support our unique experiment with a small donation to our transparent accounts. Only together with you we can build a better society. Thank you ❤️



NESEHNUTÍ is a Czech-based non-hierarchical movement with 25 years of experience dealing with environmental topics, civic engagement and human and animal rights. Its members have also long been involved in informal education,

supporting engaged citizens and sharing good practices for sustainable measures in cities and municipalities.

Do you like our activities? Join us and become a volunteer at dobrovolne.nesehnuti.cz.

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Austria

The Jane Goodall Institute Austria is one part of a global environment conservation organization that protects chimpanzees in Africa and supports

children and youth in Austria in caring for the environment through the Roots & Shoots programme.

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The Green Foundation is a Slovak NGO that works in the field of non-formal environmental education and shares the Roots & Shoots programme.

The key role in the programme is played by teachers and facilitators for whom the Green Foundation's team provide accredited innovative education.

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