

Climate Change Overview

This provides a brief overview of the issue that is climate change. To find out more, download the critical thinking activities, workshops and presentations, and look at the action guide to see what more you can do to help.

TAGS

Climate change

Introduction

There is overwhelming scientific evidence to show that there have been changes in the global climate since the early 1900s, and that these climate changes and the future ones predicted are largely due to human activities releasing huge quantities of greenhouse gases, which are warming up the earth. Often referred to as global warming, it has damaging effects on natural resources, land, food, and people, especially the poorest ones.



Bangladesh, 2009. People escaping their flooding homes over an eroding embankment. Credit: Mahmud/Oxfam

The annual “Conference of the Parties” (COP) was setup by the United Nations to coordinate the global response to climate change. Limiting global temperature rises to 1.5°C is widely agreed as the limit to prevent very serious and damaging climate change. The objective of the 2015 COP Conference, that took place in Paris, was to achieve a legal and universal agreement from all the countries of the world to reduce greenhouse gases so we don’t go above a 2°C rise, and to reduce the impacts even this will have across the world, especially on poorer people.

Our Climate

For the sake of all the things we care about that will be effected by climate change, all citizens, including young people, should make clear to their government that they care about climate change and the impacts it is having now and will have in the future. Building pressure on politicians will help push them to play the leading role we expect of them. In addition, large businesses that also emit greenhouse gases should be prompted to change their behavior and reduce their emissions.

There has been a lot of debate about the best ways to combat climate change, and how to persuade all countries to agree to them. For example, a large carbon-fuel exporting country (e.g. Russia) will have a very different view to a small island state threatened by rising sea levels (e.g. Mauritius). How can they be resolved? Only a shared love of the planet will do this. Young people’s voices and opinions from around the world are vital in this debate. Find out more on how to make young people’s voice heard on this critical global issue with our range of activities and workshops.