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Federal Ministry  
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European  
Climate Initiative  
EUKI

on the basis of a decision  
by the German Bundestag

# HOW TO BECOME A CLIMATE HERO?

CLIMATE  
HEROES



let's learn!

# WELCOME

## WELCOME TO THE CLIMATE HEROES GUIDE



### WHAT IS THIS GUIDE ABOUT?

The Climate Heroes guide is about you and climate action. It aims to train and inspire you to make a change in your life and the lives of others and for the benefit of the planet.

Here you'll discover the essential lessons and take-aways from a two-year experience involving 116 young people between 15 and 24 years of age (who we will refer to as our "climate heroes"), trainers and experts from 4 countries - Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Romania and Serbia - all brought together by the Climate Heroes project. While diving through the Climate Heroes guide you will get direct inspiration from those who have already lived through this experience: stories and actions brought to you as short films created by the young climate heroes themselves.

### IS THIS GUIDE FOR YOU?

If you are here, it is likely that you were looking for keywords such as "climate change" or "what can I do about climate change?". We have developed this guide for anyone who has a couple of hours to better understand climate change-related buzzwords and wishes to do something about climate change. The "doing" can be surprisingly simple and even connected to your passions and lifestyle.

You might want to explore this by yourself, as an **individual learner**, or you might be a trainer, facilitator, **group leader** or a teacher, interested in leading a group through this thought- and action-provoking activity guide.

### WHAT WILL YOU FIND IN THE GUIDE?



#### Food for "climate thought":

Bite-size information to connect you to the present. Read through and watch the videos in order to lay the foundation.



**Inspiration:** Specific examples and short films created by young climate heroes. Watch the videos to get a grasp of how climate change looks like in our everyday lives.



#### Train your "climate muscles":

**Individual practice:** Activity ideas for you to try while you are still here, in front of your screen. By doing the task you start to develop and use a practical skill. **Group practice:** Ideas to engage the entire group.



**DIY climate challenge:** Ideas and challenges to apply in your life after completing the learning journey in this guide. Choose at least one takeaway action and include it in your routine starting tomorrow. Grow stronger as a climate hero!



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**Climate heroes:** Nina M. (Serbia), Daniela S. (Romania), Luca K. and Octavia S. (Romania), Valeria B. (Moldova Republic), Adam S. (Czech Republic) for the films they created and for allowing us to share them.

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The opinions put forward in this guide are the sole responsibility of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Climate Action (BMWK).

## WHAT WILL YOU EXPLORE?

Your journey will take you through 6 stages: the 6 sections of the guide.

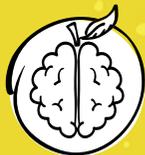


# GETTING STARTED



## WHAT WILL YOU GET OUT OF THIS SECTION?

You will have first contact with the topic of climate change and the science behind it. You will get a video introduction to the climate heroes experience proposed in this guide. You will take time to reflect on where you stand with regard to climate change, on your role in the bigger picture and on what drives you to become active.



## FOOD FOR "CLIMATE THOUGHT": WE ARE ALL CONNECTED

You are about to embark on a journey that takes you from reconnecting with the science regarding climate change to the everyday actions you can take to improve the situation.

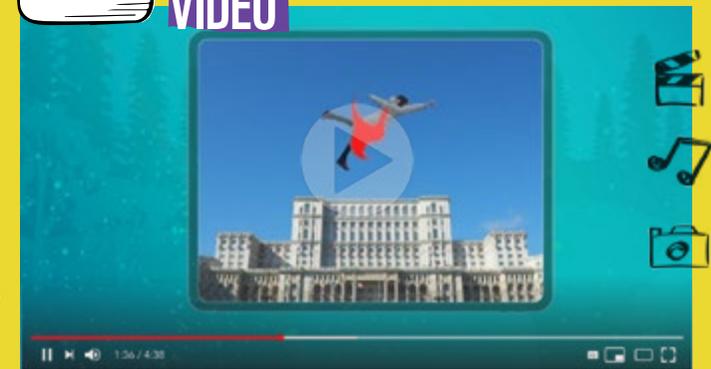
To put things into context, scientists consider that the main causes of extreme climate change are human activities. The average global temperature has warmed by over 1°C since pre-industrial times. Most of the global warming occurred since 1970, with the past three

decades being warmer than any preceding decade since records began in 1850.

Climate change already has visible effects on the environment and it affects all regions around the world. Polar ice is melting and the sea level is rising. Extreme weather events are becoming more common: some regions are experiencing increased precipitation, which can lead to floods, other regions are experiencing more extreme heat waves and droughts and so on. These extreme weather events are expected to intensify in the coming decades.



## GETTING STARTED VIDEO



This time period when the impacts of human activities on nature have become visible has been called, in certain scientific circles, the Anthropocene - the "age of man", a new geological era. As we, both me and you, are people taking part in today's society, we are part of the problem. But also part of the solution.

This is the exact reason why this guide exists. And, we can bet that this is also the reason why you are here. So brace yourself and let's get started!

# GETTING STARTED



## INSPIRATION: FROM “ECO-ANXIETY” TO “ACTIVE HOPE”

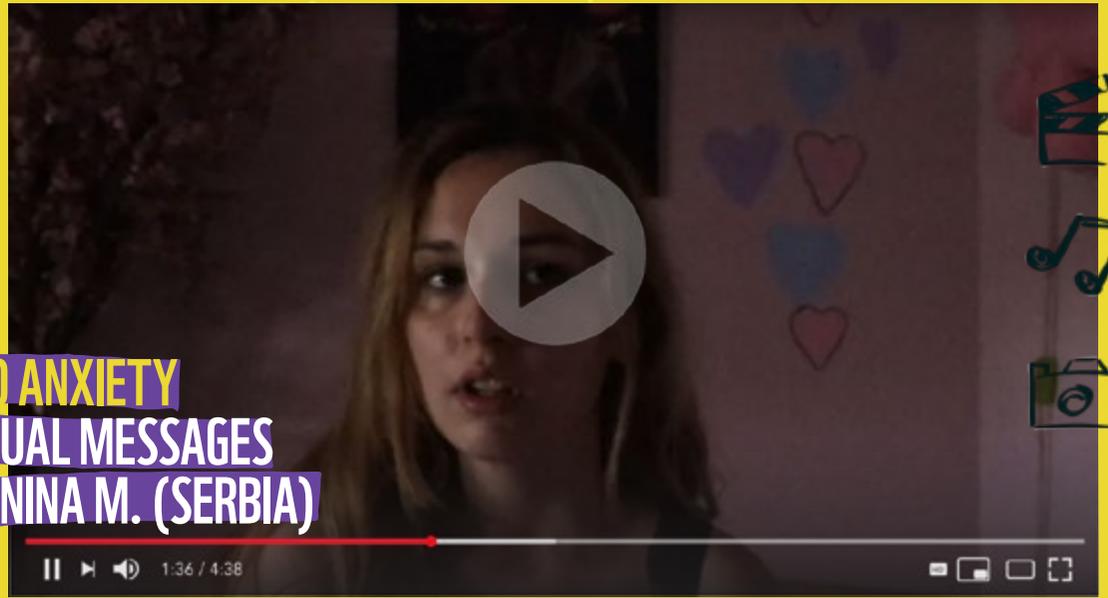
We’re surrounded by the climate change phenomenon as much as a fish is surrounded by water. One important step to be able to do anything about it is to be aware that it exists, to acknowledge it. Congratulations! If you are here, it means you have already taken this step.

The next step on this journey is to acknowledge how you feel about climate change. **The way you feel about climate change will determine how you act about it.** Given the complexity of the issue, people have a whole range of emotions and reactions to climate change.

At the gloomy end of the spectrum there are “ecological grief” and “eco-anxiety”, which make one feel disempowered. Eco-anxiety has been



## ECO ANXIETY VISUAL MESSAGES BY NINA M. (SERBIA)



defined as “chronic fear of environmental doom” (2017, American Psychological Association). Some things we can relate to eco-anxiety are described in the video by Nina. M, a climate hero from Serbia. At the other end of the spectrum there is “eco optimism”, which might slide towards an over-enthusiastic approach.

**Climate heroes choose the middle ground: the “active hope” approach.**

## Active hope

“Active hope” is a concept described in

the work of Joanna Macy, PhD and defined in contrast to “**Passive hope**”:

- “**Passive hope**” is about waiting for external agencies to bring about what we desire.
- “**Active hope**” is about becoming an active participant in bringing about what we hope for.

In the next sections you will find yourself embodying the active hope approach, by simply starting to **act** on the change that you want to see in the world.

# GETTING STARTED



## DIY CLIMATE CHALLENGE:

Create your own inspirational “climate mood board”. Mood boards are a great way to get you inspired, organise thoughts and visualise the future you hope for the planet but also for your immediate surroundings. Add pictures of the future you wish for, of people who inspire you to be a climate hero, inspirational quotes and the way you see yourself and your role in the bigger picture. Tip: upcycle old magazines to source photos ;-)

You can use the sentences written below to get you started in the creative process.

- Looking into the future of the planet, what I hope for is...
- I would like to play a part in tackling climate change because I hope...
- What inspires me to get involved is...
- I will get involved by...



## TRAIN YOUR “CLIMATE REFLECTION MUSCLES”:

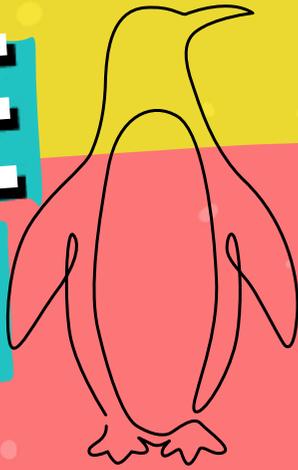
### Individual practice:

- How do you FEEL about climate change? You might acknowledge more than one emotion regarding the complex phenomenon of climate change. One might feel anxious, empowered, sad, hopeful etc. Take a moment to consider your emotions and list them. Do you understand why you are feeling each of these emotions?
- Who or what are examples of “active hope” globally and locally to you. As in who is implementing the “active hope” approach?

### Group practice:

- Step 1:** Have your group sit in a circle. Each participant can take a minute to think about their emotions regarding climate change and write each emotion on a separate post-it note.
- Step 2:** Each participant shares their post-its (emotions) with the group. Then places them in the middle of the circle.
- Step 3:** After everyone has shared, invite participants to gather around the post-it notes and group similar emotions together. What conclusion can participants draw after looking at grouped emotions? Have a group discussion.

# CLIMATE CHANGE



## WHAT WILL YOU GET OUT OF THIS SECTION?

You will have a bird's-eye view on the **effects** (or "**symptoms**") of climate change, followed by a dive into its root **causes**. Along the way, you will get acquainted with Mr. **Carbon**. Lastly you will start to think and **act** like someone who is **solution-oriented**.



## FOOD FOR "CLIMATE THOUGHT": WHY BOTHER ABOUT CLIMATE CHANGE?

We have started to notice the "**symptoms**" of climate change and how they threaten the wellbeing of the entire biosphere<sup>1</sup> and, implicitly, of mankind.

**Ice is melting**, both mountain glaciers and polar ice shields. The Arctic Ocean could become ice free in summer before 2050.

**Sea levels are rising**, by more than 3mm per year. Rising water temperature combined with higher CO<sub>2</sub> concentrations (oceans absorb huge amounts of CO<sub>2</sub>) turn the ocean more acidic.

**Extreme weather phenomena are becoming more frequent:** hurricanes, heavy rains (that can lead to floods), droughts and heat waves (increasing the risk of wildfires, lost crops, drinking water shortages).

**Rain and snowfall patterns are changing**, some regions are becoming wetter and others

drier and more vulnerable to droughts. The frost-free season is also getting longer.

**Ecosystems are changing and wildlife is at risk.** Climate change happens too fast for many plants and animals (including us humans) to adapt. Some species are moving to new places (like going further north), while others cannot afford to do that (polar bears, tigers, etc.). On the other hand, there are species which thrive (mosquitoes, ticks, jellyfish, crop pests, etc.) but at the cost of others. For example, bark beetles have devastated millions of acres of forests in the U.S.



## TRAIN YOUR "CLIMATE SCIENCE MUSCLES":

### Individual practice idea:

#### How are people affected by climate change?

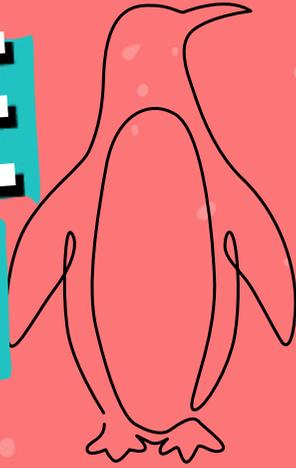
How do droughts, rising sea levels, or the migration of certain animals influence the lives of people in those areas? Write at least 10 specific examples, two for each of the "symptoms".

### Group practice idea:

Brainstorm with your group on 10 impacts that climate change has on people's lives.

<sup>1</sup> Biosphere is the part of the Earth's crust, waters, and atmosphere that supports life.

# CLIMATE CHANGE



## FOOD FOR "CLIMATE THOUGHT": WHAT CAUSES CLIMATE CHANGE?

Find out what the greenhouse gases are. Meet Mr. Carbon. And explore which human activities are the most responsible for climate change.

## A bit of science: what do we refer to when we say "greenhouse gases"?

Certain gases, once they get into the atmosphere, trap the sun's heat and stop it from leaking back into space, just like the glass in a greenhouse. Although many of these gases occur naturally, human activity contributes to an increase in their concentrations in the atmosphere. The main responsible for climate change are **carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>), methane, nitrous oxide and fluorinated gases.**

- CO<sub>2</sub> is the most common greenhouse gas produced by human activities. **The concentration of CO<sub>2</sub> in the atmosphere**

**has increased by more than 40%** since the beginning of the Industrial Revolution.

- Methane is the second most common greenhouse gas. Even though it is produced in smaller quantities, **it traps heat far more intensely than CO<sub>2</sub>** (from 30 times to thousands of times stronger, in some cases).
- Nitrous oxide is more dangerous than both of the above-mentioned gases, but it is produced in smaller quantities.
- Yet, the most dangerous of all are the **fluorinated gases which produce a warming effect up to 23 000 times greater than CO<sub>2</sub>**. As fluorinated gases do not damage the ozone layer, they have actually first been used to protect the environment and to replace harmful substances like freon. Unfortunately, fluorinated gas emissions are rising, so the EU has issued regulations to reduce and phase down their use.



## INSPIRATION: MEET CARBON. IS IT A HERO OR A VILLAIN?

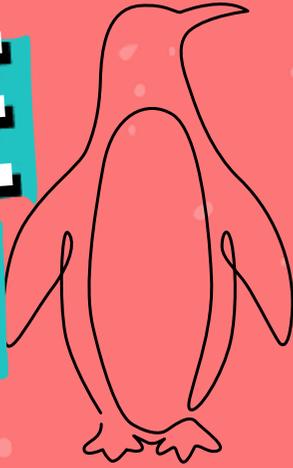
This is the story of Carbon in a nutshell. The film created by Daniela S., a 21 year old climate hero from Romania, sums up the entire climate change phenomenon in 11 minutes of masterful storytelling. If you want to consult just one source of information and inspiration about carbon - this might be the perfect choice.



## THE CARBON STORY SHORT MOVIE BY DANIELA S. (ROMANIA)



# CLIMATE CHANGE



## Which human activities generate the most greenhouse gases?

**Burning fossil fuels.** Fossil fuels - coal, oil and natural gas - are made from decomposing plants and animals over the course of hundreds of millions of years, containing carbon and hydrogen which can be burnt to get energy. They are used as fuel for transportation (cars, planes, etc.), as resources in the industry and for generating energy.

**Deforestation.** When forests are cut down, the negative effects are doubled: we lose a natural “sponge” for storing carbon, but also the carbon previously stored in the trees is released back into the atmosphere. CO<sub>2</sub> builds up quicker when there are no trees to absorb it.

**Intensive agriculture (planting crops and livestock farming).** Organic fertilisers release **nitrous oxide**. Rice crops in Asia and the decomposition of waste in landfills produce methane. Cows and sheep also produce methane when digesting their food.



## TRAIN YOUR “CLIMATE SCIENCE MUSCLES”:

### Individual practice idea:

Our daily actions and our buying habits are connected to these 3 major causes of climate change: burning fossil fuels, deforestation, intensive agriculture. List at least 10 daily activities which have a negative impact on the environment and link them to the 3 major causes of climate change.

### Group practice idea:

Divide the group into 3 teams: “burning fossil fuels”, “deforestation” or “intensive agriculture”. Each team lists concrete examples of daily actions which are connected to their topic of reference.



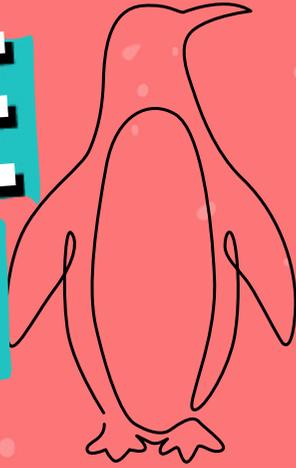
## DIY CLIMATE SCIENCE CHALLENGE:

For this “sweet” experiment, you will need:

- Two pieces of chocolate
- One see-through (transparent) cup
- A larger black surface and a sunny spot

Place both pieces of chocolate on the black surface, in the sun. Cover one piece with the cup and leave the other one uncovered. Wait for 20 minutes. You will notice that the piece of chocolate under the cup melts far more quickly, due to the greenhouse effect.

# CLIMATE CHANGE



## FOOD FOR “CLIMATE THOUGHT” & ACTION: WHAT CAN WE DO TO ALLEVIATE CLIMATE CHANGE?

Mitigating climate change is challenging, but possible on both a large scale (changing the system) and an individual scale (changing the way each of us does things).

### Cut greenhouse gas emission

Human society depends on fossil fuels (coal, oil and natural gas), which makes them hard to get rid of. But not impossible.

We can **change our main sources of energy** from oil and coal to solar, wind and geothermal, clean renewable energy sources, which don't produce CO<sub>2</sub>.

We can **rethink our transportation** by using electric and hybrid vehicles, or developing new clean technologies (eg. green hydrogen). We

can switch from cars to public transport, trains or non-motorized vehicles, such as bikes.

### Reduce the amount of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere

Plants and trees are our allies: they absorb CO<sub>2</sub>. To reduce CO<sub>2</sub> we need to plant new **forests** (*afforestation*) and restore old ones (*reforestation*). When we manage our forests, we need to balance the quantity of wood taken out with the new trees planted. And to also improve the way we use and recycle paper & cardboard.

Other less known plants that play the same role are **seagrasses** (which also stabilise the sea bottom and provide food and habitat for sealife) or **“agricultural cover crops”**, like peas, beans, rye, mustards etc. (which slow erosion and improve soil health).

## Head towards a circular economy

The circular economy is based on three principles:

- reduce production of new items
- reuse the items
- recycle them

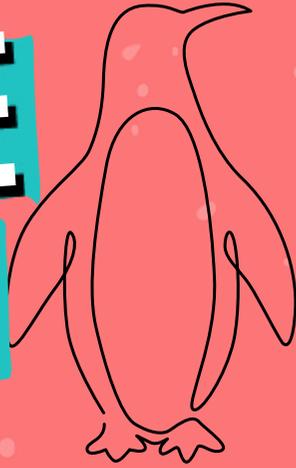
We need to avoid producing unnecessary new objects, change the way we produce things and replace single use items with ones that can be reused and recycled.

## Change how we eat

A large part (roughly 40% according to a WWF study) of the food produced worldwide is wasted, for various reasons: not enough storage spaces, food lost during processing and spoiled during transportation, supermarkets keeping the price up until the date of expiry, but also careless behaviour of consumers.

The impacts are huge: there is pressure to cut forests in order to create new farmland, energy is wasted in order to grow, process, pack and transport the food.

# CLIMATE CHANGE



## Adopt a lifestyle that is "lighter" on the planet

There are many things you can do yourself. Here are just a few of so many options:

- Eat more meat-free meals, and thus reduce greenhouse gases produced by intensive livestock farming .
- Unplug devices when they are off to save a lot of energy.
- Reduce water waste (take shorter showers, turn off the tap while brushing your teeth) because it takes a lot of energy to pump, heat, and treat the water.
- Use LED light bulbs, as they use up to 80% less energy than conventional incandescent bulbs.
- Choose solar power for outdoor lighting. And so on.

## Adapt and prepare for the future

Even if we drastically reduce greenhouse gas emissions in the present, the effects of climate change are still going to be felt. We should also have **measures to adapt**, because some effects are still going to happen. For instance, we need to create barriers to protect coastal cities that will be affected by sea level rise and more powerful storms etc.



## DIY CLIMATE SCIENCE CHALLENGE:

Journaling has many benefits - it helps us prioritise problems, helps achieve goals and inspires creativity. Start your "climate journal" where you record examples of climate change you observe in your daily life, ways it has been mitigated by individuals or groups and your own "lightbulb moments" to get active yourself.



## TRAIN YOUR "CLIMATE MUSCLES":

### Individual practice idea:

- Go back to the list that you drafted at the previous "individual practice" - 10 daily activities with a negative impact on the environment. Write at least one alternative behaviour for each. And then decide which ones you can practice starting ...today.
- What are at least 5 actions that you have already taken to tackle climate change (eg. buying fruit from the farmer market, car sharing on your weekend trip etc.)? Recognize your contribution so far and the small victories you have achieved!

### Group practice idea:

The group scan their surroundings to spot examples of waste that can be prevented or lowered. Form teams and assign each team one identified type of waste. Each team should: 1) name the effect of this waste on climate change; 2) name and explain the existing alternatives to producing this type of waste; 3) suggest potential solutions to minimising this waste in the future.

# POLICY ACTION



## WHAT WILL YOU GET OUT OF THIS SECTION?

You will get an overview of the policies supporting the fight against climate change. You will learn the steps needed to change a policy (and what an “advocacy strategy” is). And you will hopefully feel inspired to act in order to change “the rules of the game”.



## FOOD FOR “CLIMATE POLICY THOUGHT”: WHICH POLICIES HELP MITIGATE CLIMATE CHANGE?

### At the global level

The **Paris Agreement** (signed in 2015) is an international treaty with the long-term goal to keep the increase in global average temperature below 2 °C. In order for the agreement to enter into force, at least 55 countries representing at least 55% of global

emissions had to ratify it. Signatory countries agreed to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and achieve a climate neutral world by 2050.

The Paris Agreement marks the beginning of a shift towards a low-carbon world.

### In Europe

**The European Green Deal** aims to make Europe the first climate neutral continent by 2050 and reduce greenhouse gas emissions for 2030 by 50% compared with 1990 levels, by :

- decarbonizing the energy sector and increase the share of renewable energy;



## POLICY ACTION VIDEO



- improving buildings’ energy efficiency;
- developing cleaner and cheaper forms of private and public transport;
- developing environmentally-friendly technologies and innovating in technology etc.

### The European Recovery and Resilience

**Facility** plan was intended to support countries to recover after the COVID-19 outbreak. It continues and funds only projects that meet certain green criteria. 25% of all funding goes to climate change mitigation.

# POLICY ACTION



“**Clean energy for all Europeans**” (2019) is a package of eight European legislative acts that the member states need to transpose into national laws, on issues like buildings’ energy performance, increasing the share of renewable energy, research and innovation etc.

## In your country

**National recovery and resilience plans.** In the context of the European Recovery and Resilience Facility, EU member states elaborate national recovery and resilience plans (to be implemented by 2026), addressing the challenges and reaping the benefits of the green and digital transitions.

**National energy and climate plans (NECPs).** Each EU member state and accession country needs to elaborate a 10-year plan for energy and climate change for the period 2021-2030 and consult citizens, businesses and regional authorities.

## What can YOU do? And what are your tools for policy action?

In order for a legislative change to happen or to influence a decision, you need a plan. It’s called an “advocacy strategy” and these are its main steps:

### 1. Draw a map of the people and institutions who have a say on your problem/desire

Begin by mapping the stakeholders - people and institutions who have a say on the issue you want to change (policy makers both national and international, public institutions, NGO’s, industry representatives, media etc.). According to their previous positions regarding your topic, the stakeholders can be divided into three categories: supportive, neutral or against your cause.

### 2. Gather together with like-minded (and like-hearted) allies

Be active in networking. Create coalitions

with other people or NGO’s, and also with companies that might support the cause. As part of an alliance or a coalition, your message can be heard stronger.

### 3. Write down what you want to change

The next step is to elaborate policy briefs. A policy brief presents a concise summary of information or a short analysis regarding a subject, that can help readers understand and make decisions about government policies. They can suggest possible policy options, or go even further and argue for particular courses of action.

### 4. Meet with the people you want to influence

After the policy brief is ready **a further step** is to **engage the policy makers**. There are more types of policy makers. They can be Government representatives, lawmakers, public institutions representatives, and

# POLICY ACTION



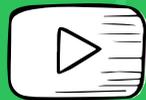
European institutions representatives. Engaging them could be done **by setting up advocacy meetings, by participating or organising seminars and conferences.** A way of engaging them can be through written interaction (e-mails etc.). This is useful also in order to keep the connection with them.

## 5. Spread the word! Let people know about what you do & ask for help, if you need it

Simultaneously with the advocacy strategy, **a communication campaign must be set up.**

The campaign should contain **press releases, media appearances (TV or radio),** and if the budget **allows materials on physical support.**

Not least, in order to influence a decision, petitions can help. However, you should be careful. Petitions, like the ones online, don't have any juridical power, and can be considered more as part of the communication campaign.



## ROMANIANS PEDAL CYCLING INITIATIVE BY LUCA K. AND OCTAVIA S. (ROMANIA)



## INSPIRATION:

If it sounds complicated, relax. It can be much easier to engage with authorities than you might expect. Just ask them to support you with your plans. Just like Luca did. Have a look at his story and get inspired to involve authorities in your initiatives.

## 6. What if you want to propose a change directly?

If you want to by-pass authorities and propose a legislative change (a modification of an existing act or a completely new act) directly, you can start a **civic initiative.** Depending on which type of regulation you want to change, your civic initiative will need to meet certain criteria.

- To change European regulations, a **European Citizens' Initiative (ECI)** needs to be backed by one million citizens of the EU and coordinated by a citizens' committee formed by 7 residents in at least 7 different Member States.
- If you want to change country laws, you may send a **civic initiative** to the national Parliament. In Romania, for example, in order to do that, it is necessary that 100.000 people who have the right to vote and live in at least a quarter of the country's counties (minimum 14 counties), also from each county must sign at least 5,000 people. This is regulated by Article 74 of the Constitution.
- In your town or village, you can propose **an initiative to the Local Council** if you gather the signatures of at least 5% of the population with the right to vote, with domicile or residence in that locality.

# POLICY ACTION



## TRAIN YOUR "CLIMATE MUSCLES" & DIY CLIMATE CHALLENGE:

### Individual activity idea:

**Train your detective muscles.** Use online resources to find out what is your country's National Energy and Climate Plan (NECP).

- What are its strengths and weaknesses? How far has it been implemented?
- What are the next steps? Are the solutions it offers truly the best or are there better alternatives?
- Who are the decision makers in your country or your town relevant to the NECP?

### Group activity idea:

Work in teams to do the research. Each team shares their findings with the rest of the group.

### Individual activity idea:

**Put yourself in the shoes of the climate policy advocate.** Practice writing a policy brief!

A policy brief should be no longer than one page of A4 and should contain the following:

- Provide a background for the reader to understand the problem
- Convince the reader that problem should urgently be addressed
- Provide evidence to support one alternative course of action
- Call on the reader to make a decision

**Remember:** all information in the policy brief should be based on known facts!

**Finally: Think of a catchy title for your policy brief!**

### Group activity idea:

Develop the policy brief in teams. After having defined their arguments and asks, each team thinks of a presentation strategy and how to be as convincing as possible. Then they present to the large group, as if they were in front of the relevant authorities.

In order to create a more powerful experience, you may play with the room setup. You may arrange the room for a round table discussion, or a parliamentary session.

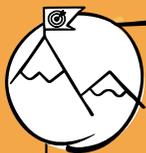
### Individual activity idea:

**Give it a creative spin!** Your advocacy campaign is off to a great start! It now needs to be communicated to a wider audience so that you raise awareness. What would your advocacy slogan be? Try to think of it as a catchy and memorable **T-shirt slogan OR social media hashtag!**

### Group activity idea:

Each team or individual participant can cut off T-shirt shapes from A4 papers and write their slogans on them. Invite them to share their slogan with the group. You may create a T-shirt gallery.

# STORY-TELLING



## WHAT WILL YOU GET OUT OF THIS SECTION?

You will discover the blueprint of a captivating story and how to create a short film out of it, in order to inspire climate action.



## FOOD FOR "CLIMATE THOUGHT": STORIES THAT TOUCH HEARTS AND MOVE PEOPLE

People have a variety of opinions about climate change. Regardless of who you communicate with, allies or opponents, a good story will help you express your own opinion and (re)kindle the emotions that fuel climate action.

The most universally used blueprint for a story, across continents and centuries, is the one described in the **Hero's Journey** and it contains:

- A character (the hero)
- A problem

- A conflict (and an opponent, the "antihero")
- A challenge
- The fix for the initial problem (or an even bigger problem)

Watch this video to dive into the steps of the Hero's journey and how you can adapt them for your Climate story.



## STORYTELLING VIDEO



*After you have created your story, allow it to spread its wings and fly. Share it! The more people it touches, the more powerful your story becomes.*

After you have created your story, allow it to spread its wings and fly. Share it! The more people it touches, the more powerful your story becomes.



## TRAIN YOUR "CLIMATE STORYTELLING MUSCLES":

### Individual practice ideas:

Look around the room and see what objects tell a story about climate change. Choose one object as the hero of your story. What problem does this hero face? How does he solve it? How is he transformed along this journey?

Your next challenge is to share your story with 3 different people and bring climate change closer to their hearts and minds.

### Group practice idea:

After forming teams, ask them to look around for objects that tell a story about climate change and choose one. You might already have a few objects prepared, such as: an empty glass, a fishing net, a yarn, a branch, a plastic bag, a cardboard box...

Each team creates their own climate story using their object as a hero and making sure they go through the stages of the Hero's journey. Then they share their creations in a "storytellers' circle".

# STORY-TELLING



## DIY CLIMATE SCIENCE CHALLENGE:

Speak to the oldest and the youngest person you know and discover their unique perspectives and stories about climate change.



## FOOD FOR "CLIMATE THOUGHT": TURN YOUR STORY INTO AN IMPACTFUL CLIMATE CHANGE VIDEO

Create your own powerful climate change film by following these stages:

### 1. Preparation. The pre-production process

The preparations you need before starting to actually shoot your film ("the production") are called "pre-production".

The story you have created before can be your "script". During pre-production you break the story down into individual scenes. This will also

### Bear in mind:

**The rhythm** The way that images are cut and combined together in a sequence gives the film a "rhythm". The rhythm is what makes a film feel more dynamic (like an action movie) or slower (like a documentary). The viewers prefer rhythmic movies to monotonous, slow paced movies.

When you edit your film, do take into account the rhythm of the action (how long your camera stays on one object, how long a frame is, how fast the images follow one another etc)

### The soundtrack

- Supports the story told by images
- Includes music, sound effects, ambiance, dialogue and... silence
- Using the sound during editing is a "trick" that helps us give the film a certain pace (it can be a music that is given up in the end or any other sound structure that is rhythmically appropriate)



help you get organised and find the locations, necessary objects ("props"), actors, costumes, visual and sound effects, the equipment and all the necessary team members (the "crew").

You then create a calendar of the shooting and make all the arrangements for every person and every object to be there at the planned time.

### 2. Shooting the film. Production

This is the stage when the actual filming takes place. It is important to respect your calendar and bring all people, equipment and resources together.

A typical day shooting begins with the crew arriving on location. While the crew prepares their equipment, the actors do their costumes, hair and make-up. And rehearse. Finally, the action is shot in as many takes as the director wishes. At the end of the day, the director approves the next day's shooting schedule. And may watch what was filmed, to review the work.

During filming the team gets very close together. The tradition is to organise a party at the end, to thank actors and the entire team for their involvement.

### 3. Wrapping it up. Postproduction

After filming, it's time to put the pieces together. This stage is called "postproduction"

# STORY-TELLING



and it usually takes longer than shooting the film. What you do during this stage can significantly change the message and the atmosphere of the film.

Postproduction includes cutting and “sewing” the scenes together (the “editing”), adding sounds and music, correcting the colours, and subtitling.



## INSPIRATION:

We hope you draw inspiration from every video in this Guide. As well as all your pool of personal experiences with bad and good films, that you have watched or even created. Yet, as we are here, we’d like to present you Valeria ... from Republic of Moldova who created a visual story that we enjoy (as well as we admire her for taking multiple roles during the movie-making process, from script writing to directing and acting).

## A NIGHTMARE THAT CAN BECOME A REALITY

## SOS SAVE NISTRU RIVER INITIATIVE BY VALERIA B. (MOLDOVA REPUBLIC)



## TRAIN YOUR “CLIMATE VIDEO MUSCLES”:

### Individual practice ideas:

How would you turn your climate change story into a short film? Where would

you film it? What would you choose as a soundtrack? What would the ending look like in a visual format?

### Group practice idea:

In teams, create short films. Start with the script and then continue with shooting and the post-production. Over the course of the next few days, the team members take up roles (director, cameraman, reporter, technical master etc) and weave together a visual story. You may want to add a “call to action” (a specific action that you want people to take) regarding climate change action!



## DIY CLIMATE CHALLENGE:

Become the hero & main actor! How about stepping into an actor role? Film yourself telling your story. And then share it!

Be mindful of the tone of your voice, when you make pauses within the story, how do you relate it effectively and powerfully to the audience?

# GETTING ACTIVE



## WHAT WILL YOU GET OUT OF THIS SECTION?

If you have a burning environmental issue in your community, you will get guidance on how to plan and run an initiative to solve it. While working on your initiative, you will feel empowered and you will most probably get a taste for more civic actions ;-)



## FOOD FOR "THOUGHT" ON "CLIMATE INITIATIVES":

### What are climate initiatives?

Initiatives are a set of concrete actions which result in specific changes in your reality. Their goal is to solve a real problem. They are best done in a team.

### How to implement climate initiatives?

Initiatives, just like films, require 1) preparation and planning, 2) implementation and 3) follow-up activities. Before getting

started, checkout this Initiative Checklist that we have prepared for you.



## GETTING ACTIVE VIDEO



## Climate initiative checklist

### Preparation & planning

- ✓ What is the problem you want to tackle? In which geographic area?
- ✓ Who is affected and how?
- ✓ What are the causes of this problem? What is the goal of your initiative? *Just as a gardener pulls the weeds out of the ground, your initiative will be the most effective if you work on the root causes of that problem. Choose one cause and write down how things will look like once this cause is eliminated. This will actually define the goal of your initiative. This is how a goal could sound like: Students bike to school in order to minimize the pollution caused by commuting by car.*
- ✓ What will you do, by when? Look up "SMART objectives", they can help you have a clear idea of what you actually want to do.
- ✓ What resources do you need - people, materials, equipment, contacts etc? Do you already have access to them or will you need support to get them?
- ✓ If you need financial support, will you want to reach out to sponsors or organize a fundraising event?

# GETTING ACTIVE

- ✓ Who will you work with? Who does what?
- ✓ What will be your steps? Define an Activity Plan, mentioning the responsible people and the resources for each activity. The more detailed the plan, the easier it will be when you get to work.

## Implementation

- ✓ Each member of the team does what was planned.
- ✓ Meet regularly with the team, share experiences and set the tasks until the next meeting.
- ✓ Don't be afraid to change your plan along the way (if you get a better idea or see that something isn't working).
- ✓ Involve sponsors in your actions and stay in touch with them throughout the initiative
- ✓ Keep a record of what you are doing by taking notes during your meetings, but

also through pictures, videos, statements of participants etc

- ✓ Keep informed all who are interested in or affected by your initiative. This can mean people from your community, from your school, journalists, friends, your team, people who have joined your events, sponsors etc
- ✓ Try to involve more people in your initiative by directly engaging them.

## After the initiative

- ✓ Organise a final event, a celebration with those who played a role in your initiative. Thank them! And cherish what you have accomplished.
- ✓ Send "thank you" notes to sponsors.
- ✓ Gather with your team and reflect on what each one has learned, what you did well, what you would do differently next time.
- ✓ Think of ways to continue or of another initiative.

## ECO GYM - BIKE CHARGER PROJECT BY ADAM S. (CZECH REPUBLIC)



## INSPIRATION:

For inspiration, have a look at Adam's initiative. Notice how he found a very concrete solution to a problem he identified due to his hobby.

# GETTING ACTIVE



## TRAIN YOUR "CLIMATE MUSCLES":

### Individual practice idea:

Think of an environmental problem in your building, your school or neighbourhood. What will things look like once this problem is solved? Formulate your goal. Then think about concrete steps you can take to actually solve it, plus resources, people and time. After such good planning, why not actually do it? ;-)

### Group practice idea:

Divide the group into teams. Give them the following goal: "Students bike to school in order to minimise pollution". Invite teams to formulate a SMART objective under this goal. The next step is to brainstorm activities necessary to achieve the goal. Encourage teams to discuss and agree on a common work plan.



## DIY CLIMATE CHALLENGE:

The best challenge is to actually implement the activities you have just brainstormed on. We encourage you to get active and grow into a real-life climate hero!

# CLOSING



## WHAT WILL YOU GET OUT OF THIS SECTION?

You will wrap up the climate hero journey. You will reflect and celebrate. You will acknowledge that this is not the end, but merely the beginning of a new greener and more meaningful chapter in your life.



## FOOD FOR “CLIMATE THOUGHT”:

Well done! You are at the final stage of the journey towards becoming a climate hero!

### Look how far you've come

By now you understand the causes and effects of climate change. You feel more confident to engage with decision-makers and change the rules of the game by influencing the policies related to climate change. You can touch people's hearts by sharing with them your story or your film about climate change. And you can act in a very concrete way to solve real-

life environmental problems. This has been quite a journey!

Now take a moment, in the light of all you have covered in this guide to recognize your strengths. Each of us has many skills we can use to help the planet.

### What next?

How will all this knowledge carry further in your personal life? It will be visible in what you do. And what you do is determined by your decisions. Each person makes around **35,000 decisions** in one day! Each decision, of course, carries some consequences. What

decisions did you make today? Did any of those decisions directly or indirectly contribute to climate change? How can you fine-tune those decisions and make small adjustments so that their impact is positive?

The future is now and it begins with each and every one of us, being part of the solution in a way that we use our skills and interests.



## TRAIN YOUR “CLIMATE MUSCLES”:

### Individual practice idea:

Reflect on what has changed since you started the journey with this guide. How has the way you see yourself changed? How about the way you perceive the topic of climate change and how you can actually make a difference?

### Group practice idea:

This exercise will help your group visualise the ever changing state of the planet. It is a calming, backward and forward looking exercise which will help participants see

their role in the future more clearly. Guide your group by reading out loud to them the following:

## Step 1: Travel back into the distant past

Close your eyes and imagine yourself in your favorite spot in nature. It may be a hill, a beach, a garden, whatever your favorite spot is. Think about this spot for a minute. What makes it special to you? How does it feel being there in your mind right now?

Now, think about what that same spot used to look like 10, 50, 100 years ago. Who were the people frequenting it? Did it have the same plants, animals? Now go further back in time. Imagine it 500 years ago. How is it different? Perhaps it hasn't seen the human hand, or maybe people are riding on horseback through it. What about 3000 years ago? Is flora different? Are extinct species inhabiting it? Go backwards even further, millions of years ago. Was your favorite spot underwater? And if so what life was there? Take a moment to think about all the changes this spot has gone through over the millennia.

## Step 2: Now fast forward to the near future and the present

You are there, a part of the same spot which used to host diverse life. Over the past 100 years your favorite spot has most likely experienced effects of climate change. Whether it was wildfires, acid rain, or loss of biodiversity, these impacts we could have gone without, but they were accelerated by human activity. This is proof that nature is continuously changing and that it can be modelled by human intervention. This is bad news. But also good news. In the sense that we do have a real chance of reversing the negative impacts of human activities and supporting nature to thrive in its own rhythm and logic. We are acknowledging that and looking to the future. You are the present and you are the future and you are part of this changing process of your favorite spot. What knowledge, strengths, tools do you have at your hand to lead the change? You are its future, and the future is now.

**Invite participants to share their thoughts and feelings.**



### DIY CLIMATE CHALLENGE:

**Throw a party!** How else to embody everything you have learned and practised so far if not by throwing a sustainable party? Enjoy the party, celebrate and share your accomplishments with your friends, all while making sure that you leave a light footprint on the planet. In the end, **everybody wins.**

