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WWF

Eco Leaders Guide

WWF's Environmental Education and Youth Advocacy Toolkit for the Mekong Region



Disclaimer:
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WWF

2025



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INTRODUCTION & BACKGROUND

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to your first step towards becoming a powerful voice for the environment! This toolkit is designed specifically for young advocates like you, who are passionate about safeguarding our planet and eager to make a significant impact. Within these pages, you will find a collection of carefully curated tools, insights, and strategies to help you navigate the complex landscape of environmental advocacy. From understanding the basics of environmental issues in the Greater Mekong Subregion (GMS), to mastering the art of mobilizing your peers and influencing decision-makers, this toolkit is your go-to resource for turning your environmental concerns into actionable change. Let's embark on this journey together to foster a sustainable future, one step at a time!



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ABOUT USAID-WWF MEKONG FOR THE FUTURE

The USAID-WWF Mekong for the Future (MFF) program, led by WWF, is all about enhancing how natural resources are managed in the Lower Mekong region, which includes Cambodia, Laos PDR, Myanmar, Thailand and Viet Nam. The goal is to get more community groups, including youth, included in the governance of these resources, working together across borders, and making sure everyone—from local communities to governments and experts—can work together.

The project focuses on a few main areas: boosting the power of civil society throughout the region to help shape environmental policies; pushing for more transparency in the management of natural resources; and tackling major issues like renewable energy, climate resilience for rivers, large-scale infrastructure projects; and ensuring civil society can participate in governance.

In particular, maintaining healthy rivers, streams, wetlands, and lakes is a big part of the MFF program. This is crucial not just for the environment but also for the millions of people in the region who rely on these water systems for their food, jobs, and overall well-being.

WHAT IS THE 'ECO LEADERS GUIDE: WWF'S ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION AND YOUTH ADVOCACY TOOLKIT FOR THE MEKONG REGION' ALL ABOUT?

This "Eco Leaders Guide" was created specifically for youth aged 18 to 25 from the GMS. This cool toolkit isn't just a bunch of facts; it's your guide to making real environmental change where you live. The toolkit's information, activities and tools will help you and your friends to dive into key issues like sustainable freshwater ecosystem management and conservation, climate change, and renewable energy, gaining the know-how to effectively take leadership in advocating with different types of people and groups the importance of protecting and sustaining the natural environment and resources of the GMS. Plus, you're not alone in this journey! The toolkit was shaped by youth leaders from Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, and Thailand, ensuring it speaks directly to your needs and empowers you to expand your influence and rally others in safeguarding your region's environment, culture, and future livelihoods.

WHAT'S INSIDE?

Dive into this toolkit and discover a treasure trove of resources designed just for you, the young changemakers of the GMS. This dynamic resource is more than just a bunch of dry info; it's packed with essential information, engaging activities, and practical tools tailored for young people like yourself who care about the environment and want to do something. This toolkit is designed to deepen your understanding of the crucial environmental and climate challenges shaping the future of the GMS, equipping you with the knowledge to inspire and empower action. Learn how to inspire your peers, raise awareness, and spearhead initiatives that protect vital freshwater resources and advocate for sustainable energy solutions. With this guide, you're not just absorbing information; you're stepping up to lead real change. Get ready to turn your passion into impactful action and make a significant difference in your community.



© Galyna Andrushko

HOW TO EFFECTIVELY USE THIS TOOLKIT

This toolkit is designed to guide you through a transformative process, to advocate about the issues affecting freshwater ecosystem management, climate change, and renewable energy.

The youth environmental advocacy journey has five important stages. First is "Understanding the Issue", where young advocates learn about environmental problems. Next is "Developing a Position", where you form your own opinions and ideas about these issues. The third stage, "Engaging Stakeholders", is about identifying and getting support and building relationships with people and groups who can help. In the fourth stage, "Developing Your Advocacy Plan", you create a detailed plan of action. Finally, in the "Implementing Your Plan", you put your plan into practice to make a real difference. See Figure 1: The 5 Stages of the Youth Environmental Advocacy Journey.

The toolkit is divided into five sequential chapters based on these five journey stages. Each chapter will equip you with the knowledge, strategies, and tools necessary to effectively engage stakeholders, collaborate with allies, and plan for and execute impactful advocacy campaigns.

Whether you're tackling this challenge as an individual or as part of a team, this guide will help you deepen your understanding, refine your approach, and lead successful initiatives that make a real difference. Let's get started on turning your passion for the environment into effective action!

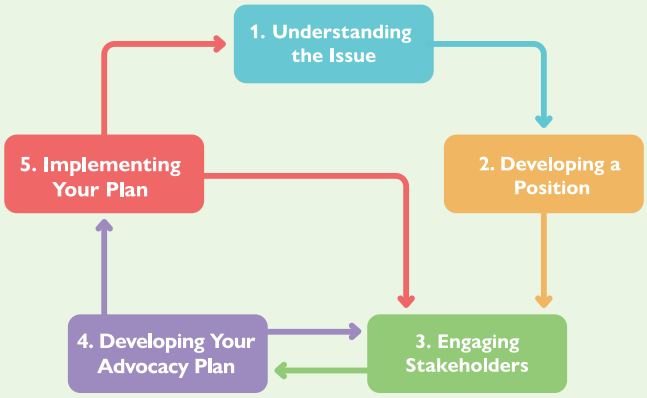


Figure 1. The 5 Stages of the Youth Environmental Advocacy Journey

THE STRUCTURE AND CONTENT OF THIS TOOLKIT



INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

Kick off your adventure in this introduction chapter! Here, you'll be introduced to what this toolkit is all about and discover how you can use it to spark real change on three key environmental issues. We'll guide you through who this toolkit is perfect for and the best ways to use it to make an impact. Plus, we break down what "advocacy" really means in the world of environmental action. Get ready to be inspired by stories and achievements of youth advocates from around the globe and locally in GMS who are making waves in conservation. This chapter is your first step towards becoming a champion for the planet!



CHAPTER 1: EXPLORING THE ISSUES OF THE GMS

Chapter 1 gives you a comprehensive yet detailed look at the major environmental challenges currently impacting the GMS. You then dig deeper into the three pivotal issues at the core of this toolkit: sustainable management of freshwater ecosystems, addressing climate change, and the shift towards a renewable energy future. You'll see how these challenges affect the four countries of Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, and Thailand, and explore their efforts to meet international and regional agreements and frameworks through multilateral institutions such the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and the Mekong River Commission (MRC). To boost your understanding on these issues, the chapter includes interactive environmental education activities and a resource library packed with additional information and external links.



CHAPTER 2: **DEVELOPING YOUR ADVOCACY POSITION**

Picking an issue to champion is a choice that hits close to home. It's about what you're passionate about, your own experiences, what you know, and your drive to make a difference. Chapter 2 is all about helping you find that one issue that fires you up. We'll take you through how to dig deeper into your chosen cause using a set of clever systems thinking and research tools. These tools are designed to give you a broader perspective and sharper insights, enabling you to carry out effective research and zero in on where you and your team can have the biggest impact. Get ready to dive in, explore thoroughly, and set the stage for real change!



CHAPTER 3: **CONSULTING WITH DIFFERENT STAKEHOLDERS AND POINTS OF VIEW**

Engaging with stakeholders is crucial because it helps you gather a variety of perspectives, manage expectations, prevent potential conflicts, and build collaborative relationships. These efforts make your advocacy more sustainable and effective. Chapter 3 highlights the advantages of connecting with key stakeholders and equips you with tools to identify the right people and groups to consult for a deeper understanding of local issues. It also provides strategies for planning and conducting these important consultations. At the end of the chapter, you'll find a resource library packed with additional tools and links to further your advocacy efforts.



CHAPTER 4: **DEVELOPING YOUR ADVOCACY PLAN**

Good planning is the backbone of any successful advocacy campaign. In Chapter 4, we guide you through crafting an effective advocacy plan, beginning with setting Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, and Timely (SMART) goals and strategizing the best ways to influence key groups, especially decision-makers. Your campaign should integrate a strategic mix of communication, relationship-building, and evidence-based persuasion techniques. This chapter offers a wealth of tips, techniques, and tools to help you prepare a compelling advocacy strategy and craft persuasive messages. You'll learn how to develop robust indicators and a monitoring approach, find links to potential funding sources, and access a guide for writing successful funding proposals. This comprehensive support will equip you with everything you need to launch and sustain your advocacy efforts.



CHAPTER 5: **IMPLEMENTING YOUR ADVOCACY CAMPAIGN AND MAKING CHANGE**

Chapter 5 is all about rallying your dream team for advocacy that really resonates. Here, you'll discover how to connect with people on a deep, emotional level, aligning with their values, concerns, and hopes. This chapter delves into the core focus of your advocacy campaign, exploring effective strategies for making an impact in both policy change and public awareness. You'll be introduced to a variety of advocacy methods and activities, helping you find the perfect fit for your team's strengths and the unique needs of your community and country. Additionally, this chapter offers practical tips on using international agreements, treaties, and frameworks to bolster your efforts—especially useful when you're looking to sway national policies or corporate behaviors. As influencing policy and decision-makers is often the pinnacle of advocacy, we provide a clear breakdown of how public opinion and policy interact. You'll get guidance on engaging with policymakers, mastering negotiation techniques, and a handy tool to organize your communication strategies for maximum impact.



WHY IS YOUTH PARTICIPATION IN ENVIRONMENTAL CHANGE SO IMPORTANT?

Due to concern for the planet's future, today's youth are at the forefront of the global environmental movement. These days, young people possess significant awareness and positive attitudes towards environmental issues, and their involvement in decision-making processes and environmental conservation efforts has led to transformative changes in countries around the world. Young people understand that mitigating climate change, protecting biodiversity, and addressing other crucial environmental challenges requires urgent individual and collective action. Young environmental leaders and changemakers are influencing the conversation and demanding accountability from governments, businesses, and society by organizing public actions and using social media as a platform for awareness and advocacy. Youth-led grassroots initiatives have proven to be crucial in accelerating impactful and beneficial environmental change. Millions of young people have taken part in climate strikes and other activities as part of the "Fridays for Future" campaign started by Greta Thunberg and her fellow school strikers.

Importantly, digital savvy teen activists are turning social media into a powerhouse for change. Platforms like Instagram, Facebook, YouTube, etc. aren't just for scrolling; they're tools for mobilizing support, spreading awareness, and sparking collective action on environmental issues. Through compelling posts, informative videos, and viral campaigns, they're making everyone sit up and take notice. More impressively, young people these days are redefining environmental activism, taking it far beyond street protests and hashtag campaigns. They're at the heart of innovation, pushing for sustainable practices across various sectors. From ramping up waste reduction efforts to backing the principles of a circular economy, advocating for sustainable farming, and spearheading the shift to clean energy, their actions are shaping a greener future.

The energy and passion of young people are transforming the landscape of environmental activism and advocacy. They're not just participants; they're leaders calling for policy changes and putting innovative solutions into action. By encouraging their ideas, promoting partnerships across generations, and ensuring they have a seat at the decision-making table, WWF is seeking to empower these young environment champions to lead the charge towards a sustainable and thriving planet.

WHAT IS ADVOCACY AND WHAT MAKES AN EFFECTIVE CHANGEMAKER?

Advocacy is all about standing up and giving your voice to what you believe in. Whether it's pushing for policy changes, spreading the word, or rallying support for taking action, advocacy is about making a positive impact. It's not just about holding up signs and reposting memes and photos—it can mean anything from launching an online viral awareness campaign to sitting down with policy and decision-makers to get them to listen and enlists their support. The endgame? To make real change happen, shaping how people think and act, and boosting the well-being of communities and society as a whole.

Ready to make some noise and shake things up? That's what advocacy is all about!



Advocacy isn't just about speaking up—it's about speaking smart. To really make a difference, you need a mix of skills: think killer communication, savvy negotiation, sharp strategic thinking, and solid relationship-building. When you're advocating for change, you're not going it alone. You'll team up with allies, engage with decision-makers, and collaborate with stakeholders to push your agenda forward and score some real wins. At its core, advocacy is a powerhouse tool for influencing public policy, driving social change, and tackling issues that matter to people and communities around the globe and also closer to home.



Some key attributes that characterize an effective youth leader and advocate include:



- **Motivation and Inspiration:** Motivation and inspiration are contagious. A motivated and inspired young leader can effectively engage and energize others. This is essential for building community support and fostering collective action, which are often necessary for environmental campaigns to succeed.
- **Passion and Commitment:** The best advocates are those who are not just interested, but obsessed with their cause. It's this fire inside that keeps them pushing forward, no matter the hurdles.
- **Empathy and Understanding:** Having a solid knack for getting where people are coming from and what they're going through is key. This lets advocates genuinely connect with and fight for the needs and rights of others.
- **Good Communication Skills:** Whether they're making a speech, drafting an email, or negotiating a deal, advocates need to get their point across effectively and move people to action.
- **Strategic Thinking:** Smart advocacy isn't just about having passion; it's about playing it smart. This means sizing up complex issues, thinking a few steps ahead, and crafting plans that make goals a reality.
- **Knowledge and Expertise:** True advocates aren't just passionate; they're experts. They dive deep into the laws, policies, and big-picture issues they're fighting for, understanding everything from the nitty-gritty details to the wider societal impacts.
- **Adaptability and Resilience:** The road to change is full of bumps and detours. Top advocates roll with the punches, adapting their game plan and bouncing back from setbacks stronger than before.
- **Networking and Relationship-Building Skills:** Change isn't a solo sport. It's about who you know and how well you connect. Effective advocates are pros at forging alliances and cultivating relationships that can turn the tide.
- **Ethical Integrity:** Advocacy is built on trust. To lead, you've got to live out your values, ensuring everything you do is marked by honesty, transparency, and ethical action. In other words, you've got to walk your talk to truly lead and inspire.
- **Persistence and Determination:** Real change doesn't happen overnight. It takes grit and guts. The best advocates stick to their mission, pushing through barriers and bouncing back from setbacks, no matter how tough things get.
- **Cultural Competence:** In a world rich with diversity, top-notch advocates embrace and understand the varied backgrounds and viewpoints of the people they stand for. They skillfully navigate the cultural complexities of the communities they interact with, ensuring everyone feels respected and included.

Where are you right now in terms of being an effective environment advocate and changemaker?

Follow this link to the Sustainability Changemaker Self-Assessment.



Important Message About Advocacy

Know your rights and keep yourself safe! In many countries the rights to free assembly are limited in certain circumstances. Make sure you have read up on your rights and evaluate the risks carefully before engaging in more high-risk forms of advocacy such as protesting.

Examples of Inspiring Global and GMS Youth Advocates & Changemakers

International Environmental Youth Advocates and Changemakers



Greta Thunberg (Sweden): Greta Thunberg (b.2003) is best known as a global environment and climate change activist for her efforts to raise awareness about climate change and advocate for urgent action to address the climate crisis. In August 2018, at the age of 15, Thunberg started the "School Strike for Climate" movement by skipping school to protest outside the Swedish Parliament. She demanded stronger action from politicians to reduce carbon emissions and combat climate change. Greta's activism gained widespread attention through social media and international news coverage. Her speeches at global forums, including the United Nations Climate Change Conference in Poland and the United Nations Climate Action Summit in New York, garnered significant media attention. Her activism has had a profound impact on the global conversation around climate change, sparking widespread debate and mobilizing public support for climate action. She has been recognized with numerous awards and honors for her courage and leadership, including Time magazine's Person of the Year in 2019. Thunberg lives a low-carbon lifestyle, eschewing air travel and adopting a plant-based diet to reduce her carbon footprint.

Click the link below to see the video about Greta Thunberg



How Greta Thunberg Ignited Climate Strikes Around the World | One Small Step



Greta Thunberg wins 'alternative Nobel' for environmental work



Melati Wijsen (Indonesia): At the age of 12, along with her younger sister, Isabel Wijsen, Melati (b.2000) co-founded Bye Bye Plastic Bags, a youth-led environmental organization dedicated to raising awareness about plastic pollution and advocating for its reduction. The organization aims to eliminate the use of plastic bags on the island of Bali. Melati and Isabel started their activism by organizing beach cleanups and educational workshops to engage the local community on the island. They also launched a petition calling on the Balinese local government to ban plastic, which garnered thousands of signatures, resulting in the Bali provincial government committing to banning single-use plastic bags by 2018. Melati's activism has had a global impact, inspiring young people around the world to take action against plastic pollution. She has spoken at international forums, including the United Nations and the World Economic Forum, advocating for sustainable solutions to environmental challenges.

Click the link below to see the video about Melati Wijsen



Our campaign to ban plastic bags in Bali - Melati and Isabel Wijsen



Melati Wijsen: A roadmap for young changemakers | TED Countdown

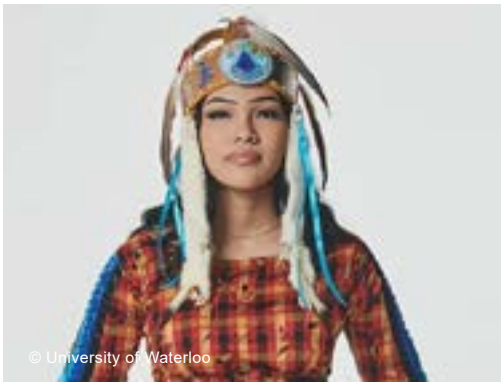


Xiuhtezcatl Martinez (United States): Xiuhtezcatl Martinez (b.2000) is a youth climate activist and hip-hop artist who co-founded the organization Earth Guardians at the age of 6. In 2015, Xiuhtezcatl, along with 20 other young plaintiffs, filed a lawsuit against the U.S. government (Juliana et al v. United States et al), alleging that the government's actions and policies regarding climate change violated their constitutional rights to life, liberty, and property. In addition to his activism, Xiuhtezcatl is also a talented hip-hop artist, using music as a platform to spread messages of environmental consciousness, social justice, and youth empowerment. He has released several albums and music videos addressing environmental issues. Xiuhtezcatl's work has inspired young people around the world to get involved in environmental activism and climate action. He has spoken at major international events, including the United Nations Climate Change Conference in Paris in 2015
and the World Economic Forum, advocating for urgent measures to address the climate crisis.

Click to see the video about Xiuhtezcatl Martinez



Xiuhtezcatl Martinez - Youth Leadership | Bioneers



Autumn Peltier (Canada): Autumn Peltier (b.2004) is an Indigenous youth activist from the Wiikwemkoong First Nation in Canada. Autumn gained international recognition for her advocacy work, particularly focusing on the importance of clean water access and protection. She has been a vocal advocate for indigenous rights and environmental sustainability. Autumn first addressed the United Nations at the age of 13, speaking at the General Assembly on World Water Day in 2018. She has since spoken multiple times at the United Nations, calling for action to protect water sources and uphold indigenous rights. Her advocacy work is deeply rooted in her indigenous heritage and the traditional teachings of her community. She emphasizes the importance of indigenous knowledge and stewardship in protecting the environment and addressing climate change.

Click the link below to see the video about Autumn Peltier



The teen fighting to protect Canada's water — meet Autumn Peltier



Autumn Peltier Talks Pipelines | APTN News



Mya-Rose Craig (UK-Bangladesh): Mya-Rose Craig (b.2002), also known as "Birdgirl", is a British-Bangladeshi birder and conservationist, and has been an active advocate for various environmental campaigns and initiatives, raising awareness about the importance of protecting rivers and their biodiversity. She uses her platform to advocate for sustainable water management practices, the conservation of freshwater habitats, and the preservation of river ecosystems. Mya-Rose is also actively involved in engaging and empowering young people to become environmental advocates and conservation leaders. She organizes workshops, talks, and events to motivate the next generation of environmental stewards. Through her activism, Mya-Rose has inspired young people around the world to take action to protect rivers and freshwater environments. She uses social media, public speaking engagements, and community outreach to amplify her message and mobilize support for environmental conservation efforts.

Click to see the video about Mya-Rose Craig



'Birdgirl' author on leading the flock of environmental activism



Boyan Slat (Netherlands): Boyan Slat (b.1994) is a Dutch inventor and entrepreneur, passionate about creating megaprojects to address planetary problems. He is the founder and CEO of The Ocean Cleanup; a non-profit organization developing and scaling technologies to rid the world's oceans of plastic. While on vacation in Greece at 16 years old, Boyan was scuba diving and saw more plastic bags than fish in the sea, which left him thinking "Why can't we just clean this up?" He started looking into the problem and possible technology solutions, dedicating a school project to developing his idea further. He presented his ideas at a TEDx Conference in late 2012. In February 2013, the TEDx video suddenly went viral, and the momentum that followed allowed Boyan to drop out of his Aerospace Engineering degree to officially found The Ocean Cleanup. Today, The Ocean Cleanup is actively cleaning up the Great Pacific Garbage Patch and has deployed interceptors in some of the world's most polluting rivers (including Thailand's Chao Phraya River) to prevent plastic reaching the ocean in the first place.

Click the link below to see the video about Boyan Slat



Boyan Slat: the man who went out to clean the oceans



Dutch ocean crusader Boyan Slat awarded top global environmental prize for Inspiration and Action


© Young Eco Ambassador Cambodia

GMS Environmental Youth Advocacy Champions

Across the vibrant tapestry of the Greater Mekong Sub-region, young leaders are stepping up as catalysts of change, steering a bold environmental revolution. From nature-dependent rural communities to the bustling cities of the region, youth are not just participants, but are driving conversations and action towards sustainability.

In Laos, young activists are orchestrating large-scale recycling and tree planting campaigns, turning the tide against plastic pollution and climate change at the same time. In Cambodia, dynamic youth groups champion biodiversity, merging environmental education with viral social media campaigns that not only spread awareness but also inspire tangible action across communities. In Myanmar, young leaders are channeling their energy and creativity into both raising awareness and taking direct action to combat climate change and environmental degradation. Thailand's young visionaries are pioneering urban agriculture initiatives, transforming rooftops and empty lots into verdant gardens that challenge the conventional food supply chains, reducing carbon footprints and promoting local produce.

The energy and enthusiasm of these young leaders is palpable as they organize workshops, seminars, and take direct action, educating their peers on the urgency of climate action, biodiversity conservation and sustainable living. They are not waiting for permission to make a difference; they are rewriting the rules, fostering a culture of innovation and resilience that is essential for the environmental challenges ahead. This groundswell of youth-led activism in the GMS isn't just about making noise; it's about crafting solutions, demonstrating that when young people lead, they bring fresh perspectives and unyielding energy that can reshape the world.

We are highlighting here four leading young environmental advocate champions from the four countries of focus in this toolkit: leaders and changemakers who are showing the current youth generation that with greater awareness, critical mass and focused energy, things can rapidly change for the better.


© Young Eco

CAMBODIA: **Puthealy Vin**

Puthealy's work at YoungEco in Cambodia has been pivotal in raising environmental awareness among young people in the country. As a project coordinator, she found her passion in environmental education—believing it to be essential for global biodiversity conservation, especially in developing nations like Cambodia. Puthealy has been actively organizing diverse campaigns and educational initiatives since 2019, including the Wonders of the Mekong campaign with USAID, a photography camp with KampumEra, and the biodiversity outreach program in Siem Pang Wildlife Sanctuary with Rising Phoenix. Her commitment to environmental education continues to inspire young people through various communication and outreach programs, making her a dedicated advocate for the protection of Cambodia's rich natural heritage.

See Puthealy's keynote presentation at the Asia Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development, Youth Keynote Session on Youth Engagement in Biodiversity - Day 1 Regional Dialogue 2023.



© CFI

LAOS: Souksaveuy Keotiamchanh

Souksaveuy is the trailblazing founder of Zero Waste Laos, the first youth-led environmental organization officially recognized as a civil society organization (CSO) in Laos. Not only did she clinch the Women of the Future Award for Southeast Asia in 2022 in the Environment, Social and Governance (ESG) category, but she's also on a relentless mission to steer Laos towards a greener and more sustainable future. Leading a vibrant team of 80 young changemakers, Souksaveuy has inspired over 10,000 young people to participate in Zero Waste Laos's initiatives over the past four years. Her efforts are not just about tackling waste management at both the practical and policy levels; she's equally passionate about climate action, youth empowerment, gender equality, and championing the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) among the next generation. Recently, under the Youth Climate Action Program in Laos, Souksaveuy spearheaded an ambitious project, planting 28,000 trees across 550 schools in 11 provinces, weaving a network of partnerships spanning government bodies, the private sector, development agencies, and NGOs to fuel this youth-led environmental movement.

*Listen to Souksaveuy talk about being a young woman environmental leader in Laos at the **Women of the Future South East Asia Award in Singapore** in 2023.*


© LinkedIn | Shar The Hoy

MYANMAR: Shar Thae Hoy

Shar is a dynamic climate advocate from Myanmar who focuses on designing impactful climate action projects for marginalized communities, specifically supporting young leaders and promoting accessible climate technologies. As the leader of Climate Action Lab Myanmar (CALM), she scales up initiatives to nurture the next generation of climate champions and enhance community resilience during crises. Shar has delivered over 20 climate-related public talks, furthering awareness on environmental and social challenges in Myanmar, and has played a crucial role in youth-focused programs across Myanmar and South Asia. Her efforts extend to pioneering green-stem schools and initiatives aimed at children in climate-vulnerable areas, enhancing their access to climate technology and education. Recognized for her contributions, Shar was named the 2023 Falling Walls Lab Myanmar Winner and recently became an Advisory Board Member in 2024.

*See Shar speak at **Breaking the Wall of Inaccessible Climate Tech**, at the Falling Walls Science Summit in Berlin in 2023.*


© Instagram | Baitong_j

THAILAND: Jareerath Petsom (Baitong)

Baitong is a dynamic environmental activist from south Thailand, known for her multifaceted roles as a scriptwriter, model, TV host, and beauty pageant titleholder. Her dedication to environmental conservation began in 2005 and has since evolved into global advocacy. Crowned Miss Earth Thailand 2021 and Miss Earth Fire 2021, Baitong serves as an Environmental Ambassador for the Green World Foundation and a Sustainable Ocean Ambassador for the United Nations. She founded the Baan Baan page on Instagram, promoting a sustainable lifestyle and eco-friendly living.

Baitong's media work includes producing travel programs with conservation messages. Her commitment to protecting forests and marine environments is reflected in her belief in the power of small, intentional actions. She encourages collective efforts to embrace sustainable living, emphasizing that even the smallest steps can ignite hope and create lasting change.

YOUTH-LED ENVIRONMENTAL ADVOCACY ORGANIZATIONS IN THE GMS

These are some examples of advocacy organizations working on various initiatives, including tree planting, waste management, renewable energy promotion, and advocacy for stronger climate policies. They play a crucial role in raising awareness about climate change and empowering young people to take action for a sustainable future.

If you would like to add or correct any information of the listed organizations, or suggest more organizations like this, please let us know by emailing info-asiapacific@wwfint.org.

CAMBODIA

Young Eco Ambassador Cambodia focuses on raising awareness about environmental issues and empowering youth to take action on climate change through education and advocacy.

Young Eco Ambassador Cambodia | Facebook

Young Eco's missions are to 1) Empower Locals to Protect Local Biodiversity, 2) Provide Career Support for Environment Lovers and 3) Activate Eco-Businesses to Take Off.

young.eco

mekongwonders.org

Cambodian Youth Action (CYA)'s goals are to promote education, sustainable development, and environmental preservation and protection. CYA is dedicated and committed to inspiring, engaging, and empowering global citizens to take action toward peace and sustainability, striving to make a tangible difference in communities through international voluntary service.

cyacambodia.com

Cambodian Youth Climate Change Program (CYCC) empowers youth to be environmental leaders.

CYCC Program | Facebook

United Nations Youth Advisory Panel Cambodia (UNYAP) is a youth advisory body of the United Nations Country Team, coordinated by the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) in Cambodia. UNYAP is involved in activities that allow young Cambodians to contribute their perspectives and ideas to the United Nations' work in the country.

UN Youth Advisory Panel Cambodia - UNYAP | Facebook

Youth Action for Green Environment (YouthAGE) creates opportunity for all youth to acquire knowledge and skills in environmental conservation and climate action through education, advocacy, and community projects.

YouthAGE | Facebook



LAO PDR

Hubbo was established with a vision of promoting civic engagement to Lao people by being a bridge connecting volunteers to volunteering opportunity. Huboo supports Lao Youth through experiential learning in soft skills and engaging youth participation.

Hubbo | Facebook

Social Environmental Education and Development (SEED) is a volunteer group focused on raising awareness about environmental and sustainable development issues. They work within educational settings such as universities and schools, both in urban and remote areas of Laos. SEED is involved in activities that promote understanding and engagement with sustainable development and environmental conservation among students and the broader community.

Social Environmental Education and Development - SEED | Facebook

Zero Waste Laos (ZWL) is a non-profit organization that focuses on promoting waste reduction and sustainable waste management practices and climate action. The organization works to raise awareness about the environmental and social impacts of waste and climate change, and to inspire individuals, businesses, and communities to adopt zero waste principles and planting trees to help mitigate climate change impacts.

zerowastelaos.org

Zero Waste Laos | Facebook

Econox Lao makes environment solutions inclusive for everyone. Econox's aim is to embrace innovative ideas for shaping a synergy between environmental conservation and development.

econoxlaos.com

Econox Lao | Facebook

Lone Buffalo is a free English tuition and youth development project committed to improving the lives of young people living in Laos. Lone Buffalo extends its initiatives with a program called "Green Buffalo," fostering student-led projects aimed at raising awareness of environmental concerns in rural Laos.

lonebuffalo.org

Green Buffalo | Facebook



MYANMAR

Climate Action Lab Myanmar (CALM) is a Myanmar-based initiative focused on educating children and youth about climate science and advocating for social and cultural innovation to enhance community-led climate action projects. CALM emphasizes raising awareness among young people about climate change issues in Myanmar, promoting technological and knowledge-based solutions, and encouraging collaborative efforts to address these challenges.

Climate Action Lab Myanmar-CALM | Facebook

Myanmar Youth Initiative (MYI) is a nonprofit organization established in 2013 by young professionals inspired by global education. It aims to enhance youth participation in development sectors across Myanmar, filling gaps in capacity building through educational, entrepreneurial, and civic engagement events.

Myanmar Youth Initiative | Facebook

SLC Advocates - Advocates for Sustainable Lifestyle and Culture is a project founded by a group of students aimed at promoting sustainable lifestyles and culture in Myanmar.

SLC Advocates - Advocates for Sustainable Lifestyle and Culture | Facebook

Myanmar Climate Action Network (M-CAN) was established in 2023 under the Myanmar Climate Change Alliance (MCCA) Program by UN-Habitat and funded by the European Union. It comprises over 100 non-state climate actors committed to advancing climate action beyond discourse. Through strategic partnerships and advocacy, M-CAN focuses on catalyzing local climate action—particularly for vulnerable communities—using a collaborative approach to address multifaceted vulnerabilities and prioritize sustainable and resilient development.

Myanmar Climate Action Network - M-CAN | Facebook

Young Water Professionals Network Myanmar is supported by the National Water Resources Committee and Advisory Group and aims to develop competent young water professionals. This eleven-month program provides young graduates and government staff with technical training and on-the-job experience through the Ayeyarwady Integrated River Basin Management Project. Participants receive mentoring and training from local and international water experts, covering various aspects of water projects.

Young Water Professionals Network (Myanmar) | Facebook



THAILAND

Youth of Mekong serves to stimulate interests and inspire youth who will shape the future of the GMS. The Youth of Mekong forum encourages young people's active participation in the sub-region's development across various roles and dimensions, which will eventually contribute to sustained and strengthened sub-regional integration.

Youth of Mekong | Facebook

Global Youth Biodiversity Network (GYBN) Thailand is part of the Global Youth Biodiversity Network, which aims to connect and empower youth globally in biodiversity conservation efforts. They work under the Convention on Biological Diversity to raise awareness and build a coalition for biodiversity loss prevention. For more detailed activities and initiatives by GYBN Thailand, their YouTube channel offers insights into their specific projects.

GYBN Thailand | Facebook

Global Youth Biodiversity Network | YouTube

Rakkaochamao Group is a community initiative based in Rayong, Thailand. It focuses on cultivating a deep appreciation and pride among youth for their local heritage and environment. The group operates in a learning center amidst nature, created through community efforts, to nurture young individuals with knowledge, skills, and a sense of belonging to their birthplace. Their activities aim to foster community cooperation and sustainable development aligned with global concerns.

Rakkaochamao Group | Facebook

Baimai is a leading conservation organization working around Thailand to protect ecologically important lands, waters and animals for nature and people. It is formed by a group of passionate volunteers who aim to bring the beauty and goodness of nature to the public through experiencing wild walking, bird watching, and nature games from environmental education.

Baimai | Facebook

baimai.org



REGIONAL ORGANIZATIONS (GMS – ASEAN)

EcoCupid's Mission is to build a social platform that connects environmentalist individuals and initiatives in the ASEAN region; create multilingual written, video, and graphic media content that educate audiences on protecting the environment.

EcoCupid | Facebook

ecocupid-asean.com

Youth for Energy Southeast Asia (Y4E-SEA) is a youth-led organization aimed at driving the energy transition in Southeast Asia. Y4E-SEA focuses on increasing awareness and representation of Southeast Asia's energy transition among young people aged 15-35 at both regional and international levels. The organization supports career building for youths in clean energy and energy transition-related fields through thematic workshops, capacity building, and training programs. Additionally, it collaborates and amplifies the impact of actions, activities, and events with like-minded organizations worldwide to achieve similar clean energy goals.

youthenergysea.com

The Sustainable Mekong Research Network (SUMERNET) is an initiative for research and policy engagement bringing together research partners working on sustainable development in the countries of the Mekong Region: Cambodia, China, Laos, Myanmar, Thailand and Viet Nam.

SUMERNET is a regional network made up of partners from the Mekong that are committed to sustainable development, poverty alleviation, gender and social equality and the incorporation of a rights-based approach in natural resource management. During this phase of SUMERNET, the network will engage with other Southeast Asian countries beyond the Mekong Region to promote greater regional collaboration and knowledge exchange.

SUMERNET Young Professionals | Facebook

sumernet.org

TOOL: CHANGEMAKER SELF-ASSESSMENT

Instructions: The following are a list of skills and capacities that are either fundamental, or highly desirable, for successful changemaker leaders in the context of environmental advocacy and leadership.

Use a "1-5" rating scale, where 1 is "not strong," and 5 is "mastery" (full confidence that you are operating at top professional capacity). Check your assessment with someone else you trust, who knows you and your work well.

SCORE 1 - 5	TOPIC & CRITERIA	REMARKS FOR YOURSELF
	Mastery of knowledge base	
	I have sufficient knowledge of environment issues and topics of focus in the GMS related to my topic of interest i.e. freshwater ecosystem management, climate change and renewable energy concepts and information sources.	
	I am up to date with relevant and current news and events related to GMS environment and climate change issues and trends (freshwater ecosystem management, climate change or renewable energy).	
	I feel confident to interact with topic professionals and experts.	
	Self-knowledge	
	I feel I know what my personal strengths and weaknesses are.	
	I am good at soliciting and receiving feedback from other people.	
	I am able to manage and control my anxiety and fears.	
	Listening Communications	
	I am a good active listener.	
	I can take in new information and am able to suspend my judgment to help me listen clearly for understanding.	
	I am able to communicate well (without speaking) to people I'm listening to so that they understand that they have been heard and understood by me.	
	Verbal / Speaking Communications	
	I feel confident that I can stand up in front of a group of people and talk and present my message and views	
	I am confident in speaking in front of a camera, either a computer camera (online), or a hand-held professional camera in person.	
	I am good at adjusting my voice, language level and tone according to the audience I am speaking to, and spatial situation.	

	Facilitating	
	I feel confident in facilitating meetings and forums of diverse people, backgrounds and issue perspectives.	
	I feel confident to facilitate large and small group workshops and conference size events.	
	I feel I have the ability to effectively facilitate and resolve conflict situations.	
	I am mindful and aware of my body language and facial expression projection and how it affects the energy and responsiveness of groups I facilitate.	
	Writing Communications	
	Writing ability, i.e. blogs, technical reports, press releases, etc.	
	Writing ability in terms of letters, emails, campaign messages, etc.	
	Networking	
	Networking ability: creating and maintaining social and professional networks.	
	Quality of my current network for promoting sustainability-related change.	
	Political and Power Relationship Literacy	
	Have a good understanding of dynamics of power relationships within the social, professional and political groups I am involved in.	
	Ability to interact effectively with a wide range of groups with different types of power dynamics.	
	I can successfully gain the trust of people in authority with whom I interact (especially in the context of environment issue advocacy).	
	Social Influencing	
	I have a good understanding about what motivates people and how people are likely to respond to different situations.	
	I am confident about what topics, approaches and strategies are likely to be successful in a given social context.	
	I am good at respectfully interacting with a variety of different personality types and different cultural backgrounds and perspectives.	
	I have the ability to influence and persuade people to do something new.	

	Strategic Situational Skills	
	Ability to make adjustments to your message and strategy based on different strategic contexts and situations.	
	Ability to quickly respond to changing circumstances and crisis situations.	
	I can appropriately balance caution and courage.	
	I can confidently make action decisions in the absence of visible cues and signals.	
	Personal & Professional Development	
	I devote significant time/attention to personal capacity development.	

List other qualities you believe to be important to be an effective environmental advocate and changemaker, and evaluate yourself on those as well.

CHAPTER 1
EXPLORING THE ISSUES OF THE GREATER MEKONG SUBREGION (GMS)

INTRODUCTION

Chapter 1 of this toolkit dives into the core environmental challenges facing the Greater Mekong Subregion (GMS)—namely managing freshwater ecosystems sustainably, tackling climate change, and transitioning to renewable energy. This chapter breaks down each theme clearly, helping you grasp the essential points. You'll find a range of environmental education activities, designed for both individual and group participation, that explore these topics deeper and understand what changes are needed for a sustainable future in the GMS. Plus, you'll have access to extra resources and videos to expand your knowledge further. The chapter wraps up with an overview of key international and regional commitments like those of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and the Mekong River Commission (MRC), showcasing how the GMS countries are collaborating to address these environmental challenges. By the end of this chapter, you'll be well-equipped with a foundational understanding of the environmental dynamics in the Mekong region.



© kitzstocker

OVERVIEW

The GMS is a vibrant biologically and culturally diverse region located in the heart of Southeast Asia. The GMS is comprised of a mosaic of stunning landscapes—from sprawling river basins and lush plains to towering mountains and thick forests. It is rich in natural resources like fertile land, minerals, and abundant water, and is a globally important storehouse of biological diversity. It is an abundant food source for the world. The GMS is primarily defined by the iconic Mekong River, which starts in the mountains of southern People's Republic of China (PRC), then flows through Myanmar, Laos, Thailand, Cambodia, and Viet Nam. The Mekong River is a vital lifeline and a unifying thread that intricately connects the cultures, economies, and environments of these diverse nations.

For youth in these countries, the Mekong River symbolizes a shared heritage and collective destiny. It nourishes the lands on which millions depend for agriculture, supports bustling economies through trade and transport, and hosts an astonishing array of biodiversity that underscores the ecological wealth of Southeast Asia. As young leaders, understanding and protecting the Mekong River and other biodiversity-rich freshwater ecosystems against unsustainable development and climate change is not just about preserving nature, but is vital to safeguarding a shared future where economic prosperity, social cohesion, and cross-border cooperation can flourish and thrive.



Figure 1. The Greater Mekong Subregion map

Home to over 340 million people, the GMS is a melting pot of ethnic groups, cultures, and languages. Its deep cultural roots are reflected in the region's eventful history, vibrant trade, and the interaction among its diverse communities. Each country in the GMS brings its own unique flavor with distinct traditions, customs, and delicious cuisines. Cities like Bangkok, Hanoi, Ho Chi Minh City, Phnom Penh, Vientiane, and Yangon are not just urban hubs but cultural beacons that drive the region's economy and showcase its dynamic urban culture.

The economic development of the GMS is largely dependent on natural ecosystems and the food, water, energy, and other essentials they provide. The long-term viability of its ecological integrity, rich biodiversity, and economic development will depend on how these natural resources are protected, managed, restored, improved, and developed. It will also be determined by how the region adapts and strengthens its resilience to climate change and other future global and planetary events.

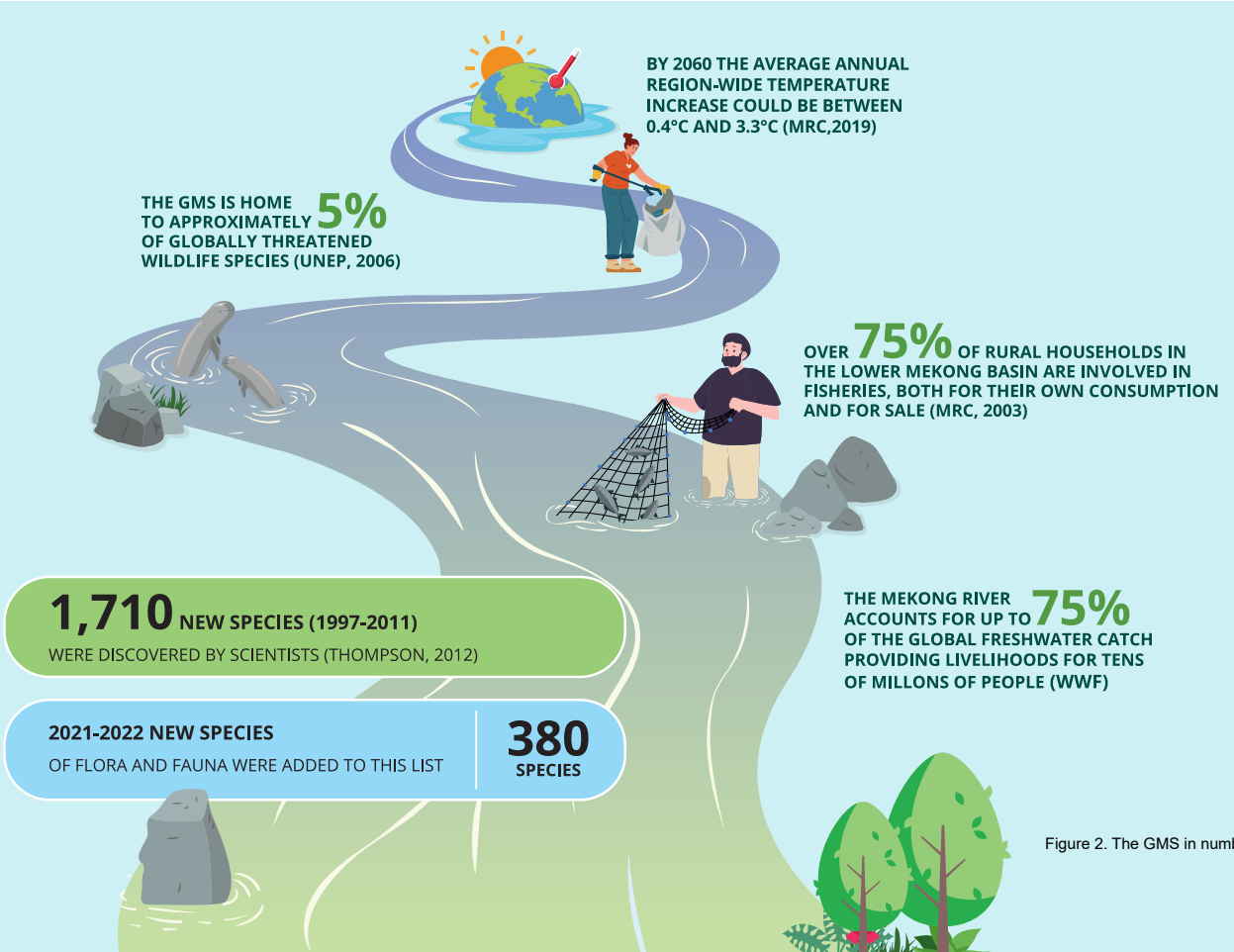


Figure 2. The GMS in numbers

GMS ENVIRONMENT CHALLENGES

The GMS, which includes the six countries of Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, Thailand, Viet Nam, and the Yunnan province of southern PRC, has become one of the fastest-growing regions in the world. However, the significant increase in population over the past four decades, coupled with rapid economic growth, has resulted in a number of serious environmental issues threatening the countries' future sustainable development. These include a rapid depletion of natural resources and a significant decrease in environmental quality across the board, in addition to ecosystem degradation and biodiversity loss. These issues could slow down future economic growth and make it harder to reduce poverty in the six countries that make up the GMS. **Some of the most pressing environmental issues that the countries of the GMS are collectively facing include:**



HYDROPOWER DEVELOPMENT

Hydropower dam development throughout the GMS saw a dramatic increase in 2010, particularly in Laos, China, and Cambodia, with Laos itself hosting 61 hydropower dams by the first half of 2019.[1] Hydropower dams bring significant benefits, like renewable energy, improved water storage and flood control, and they boost the economy by exporting energy. However, they also have serious downsides. Dams disrupt ecosystems, harming fish populations and biodiversity that many people depend on for their livelihoods. They also change how sediment flows in rivers, which can mess up agriculture, cause erosion along riverbanks, displace communities, and lead to conflicts over water rights.



DEFORESTATION

The total forest coverage of the six GMS countries was estimated at 1.2 million square kilometers (km2) in 2015, or 52% of the subregion's total land area. Myanmar has the largest forest area among the GMS countries, and Laos has the highest percentage of forest cover.[2] Unfortunately, deforestation is still a major issue for some countries in the GMS. The pressures on forests in the GMS are generally high and increasing. In Cambodia and Laos for example, key pressures have been caused by forest conversion for agriculture and infrastructure development, spurred on by government economic development policies.[3] Primary forests have decreased substantially in Cambodia, Laos, and Viet Nam, with worrying implications for dependent wildlife.[4]



WASTE MANAGEMENT

Countries in the GMS are grappling with significant waste management challenges, largely driven by rapid urbanization and economic development. As populations and consumer consumption increases, and economies grow, all of the countries of the GMS are struggling to handle the increasing amount of waste. Many towns and communities, especially rural communities, lack waste collection and management services, which leads to open garbage dumping and burning, and results in a number of environmental problems, especially water and land pollution and significant air quality issues.



WATER POLLUTION

In most parts of the GMS, the rivers have pretty good water quality.[5] However, problems do exist, especially in river deltas and areas where a lot of people live. Pollution from agriculture, industry, and urban areas contaminate waterways, lakes and wetlands. These problems often arise because domestic and industrial wastewater isn't properly treated. Cities, in particular, see more water pollution because of all the waste and dirty water they dump into rivers. Additionally, agricultural chemicals seriously pollute rivers like the Chao Phraya, Mekong and Red. In northeastern Thailand and central Laos, irrigation methods are causing soil saltiness, which also messes with water quality. Plus, soil erosion in hilly areas contributes to the water pollution issue. Water pollution affects aquatic ecosystems, human health, and agricultural productivity.

1 Soukhaphon, Baird, and Hogan. 2021. The Impacts of Hydropower Dams in the Mekong River Basin: A Review
2 FAO. 2015. Global Forest Resources Assessment 2015. Rome.
3 Asian Development Bank, October 2018. Greater Mekong Subregion Environmental Performance Assessment 2006–2016.
4 Yasmi et al. 2017. Forest Change in the Greater Mekong Subregion (GMS): An Overview of Negative and Positive Drivers. Bangkok: FAO.
5 ADB, October 2018.



AIR QUALITY

Large cities in the GMS are increasingly experiencing poor air quality. Transportation is usually the biggest culprit behind this air pollution in urban areas. In rural areas, the open burning of domestic waste and agricultural residues are the main causes of air pollution. The main pollutants that people worry about are particulate matter (PM)—especially the tiny particles called PM10 and PM2.5—and gases like nitrogen and sulfur oxides.[6] The good news according to the World Health Organization (WHO) is that sulfur dioxide levels have decreased across the region overall and are still under the safety limits. However, the total amount of PM often hits levels that are bad for human health. Meanwhile, nitrogen dioxide levels have been slowly rising and are now just over the WHO's recommended limit.[7] Air pollution is a major environmental risk to human health, increasing the burdens of stroke, heart disease, lung cancer, and both chronic and acute respiratory diseases, including asthma.



CLIMATE CHANGE

Over the past two decades, climate change has emerged as an urgent issue for countries in the GMS. This shift happened as greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions increased and the harmful effects of climate change became more noticeable. Although the subregion's contribution to global emissions remains low, increasing energy use, expanding transportation, deforestation, and land use changes are all contributing to accelerating GHG emissions. Climate change is a major challenge for the economic development of the GMS, as it will impact both people's lives and the natural environment. Climate change is also affecting energy and transport systems in the GMS countries, threatening lives, property, and other assets throughout the region. Extreme weather events, which have already hit the area hard, are expected to become more frequent and intense. These events can disrupt agriculture, infrastructure, and livelihoods, exacerbating poverty and food insecurity.



ECOSYSTEM DEGRADATION AND LOSS OF BIODIVERSITY

The GMS is one of the world's richest biodiversity hot spots. It's home to around 430 mammal species, 800 reptiles and amphibians, 1,200 bird species, and 20,000 plant types. Between 1997 and 2015 scientists discovered 2,409 new species there. Many of these species are at risk of extinction, including some that are critically endangered.[8] Habitat destruction, overexploitation of natural resources, and climate change are leading to a loss of biodiversity in the Mekong region. This loss threatens the region's diverse ecosystems and the services they provide, such as water supply, nutrient cycling, micro-climate regulation, biodiversity support, commercial and subsistence fisheries, flood regulation, carbon sequestration, recreation and tourism, and cultural and spiritual beliefs and rituals (e.g. Loy Kratong festival in Thailand).

If the countries of the GMS do not improve their policies, planning and management, the current development models could irretrievably damage the natural environment and the quality of life of future generations. This unsustainable path also risks seeing increased biodiversity loss and extinctions, more frequent and bigger impacts from climate change, food shortages, rising food prices, health crises like COVID-19 and dengue fever, and environmental damage and natural resource scarcity that could affect millions of families and jeopardize national economies and small businesses. To address these issues, it is essential for governments, civil society, and businesses to join forces to promote sustainable development, conserve our natural resources, and combat climate change. International cooperation is also vital to effectively tackle these complex challenges and implement lasting solutions.

6 Asian Development Bank, October 2018. Greater Mekong Subregion Environmental Performance Assessment 2006–2016.
7 ADB, October 2018.
8 WWF. Wildlife of the Greater Mekong. http://greatermekong.panda.org/discovering_the_greater_mekong/species/

EXPLORING THE THREE THEMATIC ISSUES

The three environmental topic areas of particular emphasis for the GMS are 1) sustainable freshwater management, 2) climate change mitigation and adaptation, and 3) the just transition to a renewable energy future. These three topic areas, as they exist in the GMS, are explored in more detail in the following section.

A. Sustainable Freshwater Ecosystem Management

What is a Freshwater Ecosystem and Why is it Important?

Freshwater ecosystems include rivers, streams, lakes, ponds, groundwater, cave water, springs, floodplains, and wetlands like bogs, marshes, and swamps. These places are vital homes for many animals and plants. They also provide essential resources for human societies like food and fiber, supporting the economies and livelihoods of rural communities in the GMS. However, these ecosystems face significant threats. In recent years, more than 20% of the world's 10,000 freshwater species have become extinct, endangered, or threatened, making these environments the most at risk for losing species.[9]



Watch YouTube video here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VndXCh1t160

9 Asian Development Bank, October 2018. Greater Mekong Subregion Environmental Performance Assessment 2006–2016.



© Unai82

Key Features of Freshwater Ecosystems

Rivers

Rivers are natural flowing bodies of water, usually freshwater, that travel along a channel to a sea, lake, or another river. They are vital to both nature and human societies for many reasons. For nature, rivers support a wide variety of plants and animals by providing habitats and essential water resources necessary for life. They play a critical role in shaping the earth's landscape by eroding land and depositing soil in new areas, which helps create fertile lands that sustain diverse ecosystems. For human societies, rivers are indispensable sources of water for drinking, agriculture, and sanitation. They have been central to human civilization, supporting farming, transportation, and as power sources through hydropower. Furthermore, rivers are integral to many cultural and recreational activities, enhancing community well-being and economic development.

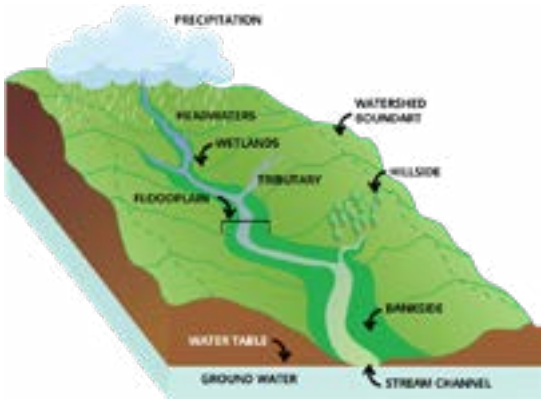


Figure 3. The anatomy of a catchment

Catchment basins or watersheds

Rivers are part of larger areas called catchment basins or river basins. A catchment basin includes all the land where water drains into the same river or lake. Large river basins, like the Mekong River Basin, consist of many smaller catchment basins formed by tributaries—smaller rivers, creeks, and streams. These smaller waterways eventually flow into the larger river downstream. These catchment basins shape the geography of an area, influencing the local climate, types of plants and animals, soil conditions, and even the lifestyles of the communities living there. Unlike political boundaries of states or countries, the natural boundaries of catchment basins create a sense of connection and belonging that is based on the shared natural environment.

A catchment basin strongly influences who we are as people and societies, and how we live our lives, even as far as the kind of art, music and literature we create. People who live in the floodplain, for example, sing different songs than people who live up in the forested mountains, draw different pictures, and often use different materials to create their artwork. The connection between landscapes and the human imagination is reciprocal.

Floodplains and deltas

A river flows within a channel, which is the space between its banks over a stream bed. In larger rivers, there's often a floodplain, an area shaped by floods when the river overflows its channel. These floodplains can be quite broad compared to the river itself. In cities, the lines between the river channel and the floodplain often blur as these areas are commonly developed for housing and industry. Also, rivers that carry a lot of sediment can form large deltas at their ends where they meet the sea or a lake, if the conditions are right.

Wetlands

Wetlands are diverse areas that can include basins, plains, springs, and other types of water bodies, both natural and human-made. They can contain water that is temporary or permanent and vary from freshwater to saltwater, located either along the coast or inland. Wetlands are generally shallow, with water depths not exceeding six meters. These ecosystems are crucial for environmental health because they provide fresh water, store excess water, protect shorelines from erosion, block saltwater from moving inland, and help prevent pollution by filtering out sediments and harmful substances.

Wetlands are incredibly important because they support a wide variety of wildlife, including both water-loving and land-based animals. They offer critical habitats for migratory birds and serve as breeding grounds for numerous fish species, as well as rare marine mammals like dugongs, manatees, and freshwater dolphins. In Southeast Asia, wetlands are especially vital for rural communities, providing fresh water that many people rely on for income and a significant portion of their diet through fishing. The direct benefits wetlands provide to both humans and the environment highlight the crucial need to preserve these unique ecological areas.



Bueng Boraphet wetland, Nakorn Sawan, Thailand

Lakes and ponds

Lakes and ponds are still bodies of freshwater that form through various processes, both natural and human-made (such as damming of rivers). Lakes are generally larger and deeper than ponds, featuring different zones that support diverse life forms and can be found in almost any climate, from the Arctic to the tropics. In contrast, ponds are smaller, shallower, and tend to have more consistent temperature and oxygen levels throughout. They can be temporary or permanent and are more sensitive to environmental changes due to their size.

Both lakes and ponds are vital to freshwater ecosystems, offering habitats for many species, including those that are unique or endangered. They help in nutrient cycling, such as carbon, nitrogen, and phosphorus, and manage water flow and quality, serving as natural buffers against floods and droughts. They also play a role in regulating the global climate by storing carbon and through evaporation. Rich in biodiversity, these water bodies support various organisms from aquatic plants and tiny algae to fish, amphibians, and birds, making them essential for the health of the ecosystem and the survival of numerous species.

GMS Freshwater Ecosystems Services

Ecosystem services refer to the various benefits that humans derive from ecosystems, which are the interactions between living organisms and their physical environment. These services are essential for sustaining life, well-being, and economic activities. Rivers and river basins provide a variety of ecosystem services that are essential for both natural ecosystems and human societies. Here are some of the key services they offer:

Water Supply: Freshwater ecosystems are a critical source of water for drinking, irrigation, and industrial use.

Habitat Provision: They provide habitats for a diverse array of wildlife, including many species of fish, amphibians, birds, and plants.

Food Provision: Many freshwater ecosystems are vital for fisheries, which are a significant source of protein and livelihood for millions of people worldwide.

Water Purification: Freshwater systems naturally filter pollutants and pathogens from water through biological, chemical, and physical processes, improving water quality.

Flood Regulation: Wetlands and lakes absorb excess rainfall and release it slowly, reducing the severity of floods and mitigating damage to environments and human communities.

Climate Regulation: Freshwater ecosystems play a role in regulating climate through carbon sequestration and influencing local and regional temperatures.

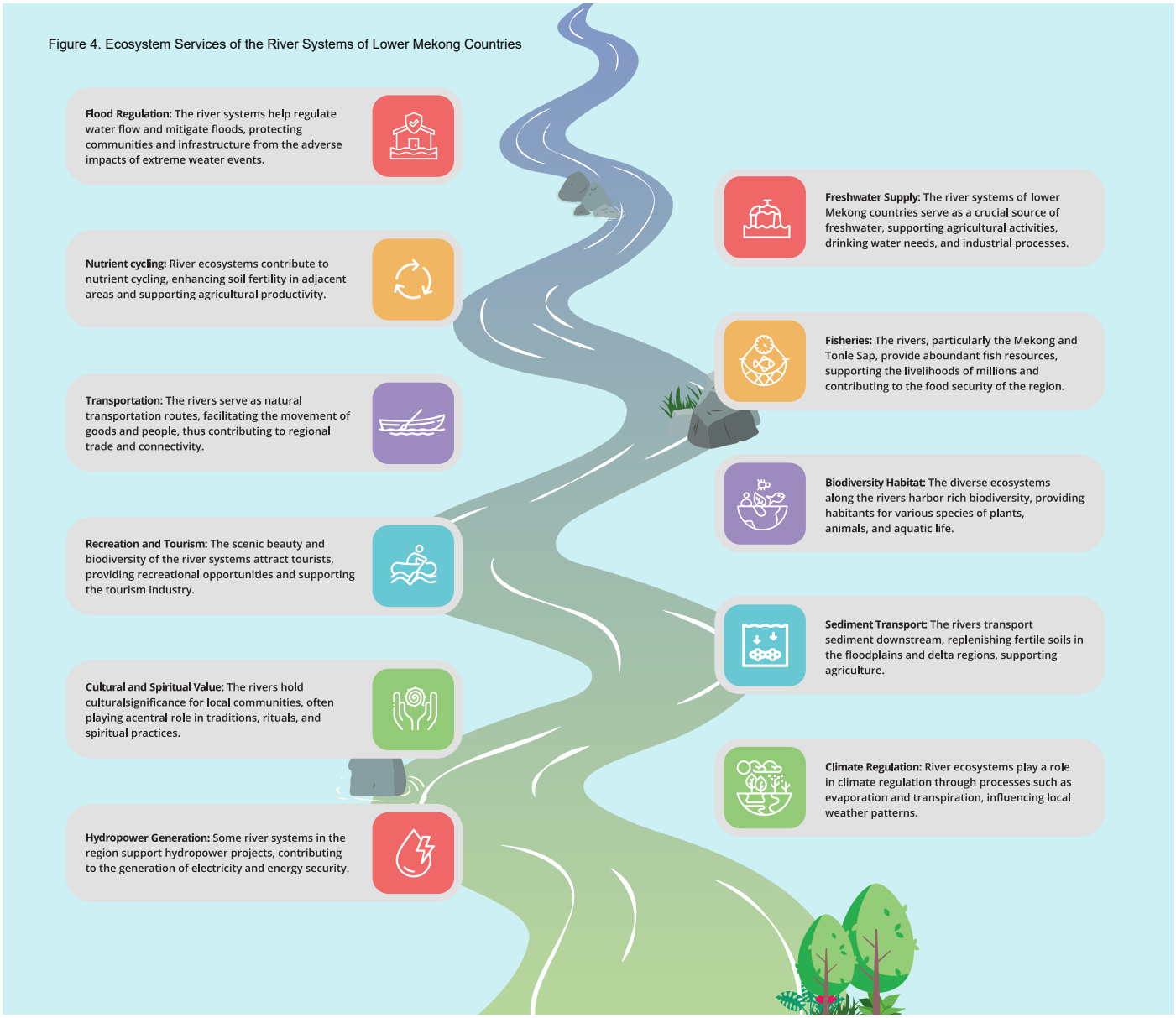
Recreational Opportunities: Many freshwater ecosystems provide spaces for recreational activities such as fishing, boating, and bird-watching, which are important for human well-being and local economies.

Cultural Value: Rivers, lakes, and wetlands have significant cultural, aesthetic, and spiritual importance in many societies.

Nutrient Cycling: These ecosystems are crucial in the cycling of nutrients, including nitrogen, phosphorus, and carbon, which supports plant growth and regulates ecosystem health.

Biodiversity Support: Freshwater ecosystems are hotspots of biodiversity, supporting many endemic and rare species that are not found elsewhere.

Figure 4. Ecosystem Services of the River Systems of Lower Mekong Countries



What Do We Mean When We Say We Are Aiming for "Sustainable Freshwater Ecosystem Management"?

Sustainable freshwater ecosystem management involves a holistic approach that considers ecological, social, economic, and cultural factors to maintain the health, functionality, and resilience of freshwater ecosystems. Some key guiding attributes of sustainable freshwater ecosystem management include the following:

Ecological Integrity: Keeping our freshwater ecosystems healthy is crucial. This means protecting the variety of life they support, preserving different habitats, keeping the water clean, and letting natural processes like nutrient cycling and water flow happen undisturbed.

Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM): IWRM is all about managing our water resources smartly and sustainably. It takes into account how all the different water sources, ecosystems, and human activities connect, and aims to balance the needs of people with the need to protect nature.

Stakeholder Engagement: Managing freshwater ecosystems well means getting everyone involved—from local governments and communities to indigenous groups, NGOs, and businesses. This way, everyone's views and needs are considered in making decisions.

Adaptive Management: Freshwater ecosystems are complex and can be unpredictable. Adaptive management means we keep an eye on these ecosystems, learn as we go, and tweak our strategies based on what works and what doesn't to better protect and restore them.

Ecosystem-Based Approaches: Instead of just focusing on saving specific species or spots, it's about looking at the whole picture. This approach works to keep the entire ecosystem intact and healthy, recognizing how everything within it is connected.

Sustainable Water Use: It's important to use water wisely, whether it's for drinking, farming, industry, or keeping ecosystems thriving. This means promoting ways to use water more efficiently, keeping pollution in check, and making sure there's fair access to water for everyone and everything, including nature.

Conservation and Restoration: To keep freshwater ecosystems functioning well, we need to protect and fix them when they're damaged. This can involve setting up protected areas, restoring habitats, and managing threats like invasive species and pollution.

Climate Change Adaptation: With climate change affecting freshwater ecosystems, it's key to include strategies that help these areas withstand changes and recover from extreme weather like floods and droughts. This could mean restoring ecosystems to make them stronger, improving how we store and manage water, and taking steps to handle extreme weather better.

Major River Basins and Freshwater Ecosystems of the GMS

The GMS is home to several major river basins and freshwater ecosystems, which play crucial roles in supporting livelihoods, biodiversity, and ecosystem services. Some of the major river basins and freshwater ecosystems of the GMS include:

Mekong River Basin: The Mekong River is the most significant river system in the GMS, spanning approximately 4,350 kilometers from its source in the Tibetan Plateau to its delta in Viet Nam. The Mekong River Basin is a lifeline for millions of people, supporting agriculture, fisheries, transportation, and hydropower generation. It is home to diverse ecosystems, including floodplains, wetlands, and riparian forests.

Tonle Sap Lake: Located in Cambodia, Tonle Sap Lake is Southeast Asia's largest freshwater lake, playing a vital ecological and economic role for the country. It is unique due to its flow changing direction twice a year. During the dry season, it drains into the Mekong River at Phnom Penh. However, when the monsoon season comes, the lake expands significantly as the Mekong's flow reverses, filling the lake and surrounding floodplain with water. This annual flood pulse is the driving force behind the lake's incredible productivity and biodiversity. The lake is a critical habitat for fish, birds, and other wildlife, as well as a source of livelihood for local communities through fishing and agriculture. Ecologically, Tonle Sap Lake is a hotspot for biodiversity, supporting over 300 species of fish, numerous bird species, reptiles, and mammals, making it a critical habitat for conservation. Its floodplain acts as a natural flood mitigation system, absorbing and then slowly releasing water, which helps to prevent flooding downstream. The lake and its surrounding floodplain are also crucial for local agriculture, providing fertile soils for crop production.



Figure 5. Major river basins of mainland Southeast Asia
(Source: Encyclopædia Britannica)

Red River Basin: The Red River, also known in Chinese as the Honghe River, flows from Yunnan province in PRC through northern Viet Nam, forming the Red River Delta before emptying into the Gulf of Tonkin. The Red River Basin covers a vast area of approximately 169,000 square kilometers and encompasses a diverse range of landscapes, including mountains, plains, and deltaic regions. The basin supports agriculture, aquaculture, and hydropower generation, and is home to diverse ecosystems, including forests, wetlands, and karst

landscapes. The basin is home to a significant portion of Viet Nam's population, with millions of people living along its banks and relying on its resources for their livelihoods. However, the basin faces various challenges, including sedimentation, water pollution, land subsidence, and flooding, exacerbated by rapid urbanization, industrialization, and unsustainable land-use practices.

Chao Phraya River Basin: The Chao Phraya River Basin covers a substantial area of central Thailand, spanning approximately 160,000 square kilometers. It is primarily located in the central plains region, with the river flowing from the far north of the country through the central plains before draining into the Gulf of Thailand. The basin is a major agricultural and industrial hub, supporting rice cultivation, urbanization, and water-based transportation. The fertile alluvial plains along the riverbanks are highly productive and contribute significantly to the country's food security and economy. The Chao Phraya River Delta is one of the most densely populated and economically important regions in Thailand as it flows directly through the capital city, Bangkok, and is close to several other major urban centers. The Chao Phraya River Basin is home to diverse ecosystems, including wetlands, marshes, and riparian forests.

Irrawaddy River Basin: The Irrawaddy River Basin covers a large area of approximately 255,000 square kilometers in Myanmar, making it the country's largest river basin. The basin extends from the northern highlands near the Himalayas to the southern delta region, draining into the Andaman Sea. The Irrawaddy River originates from the confluence of the Mali and N'mai rivers in northern Kachin State and flows southward through central Myanmar before reaching the Irrawaddy Delta and emptying into the Andaman Sea. The Irrawaddy River Basin is ecologically diverse, supporting a wide range of habitats, including tropical forests, wetlands, and mangrove swamps, and is home to numerous plant and animal species, including several endangered species such as the Irrawaddy dolphin and the Irrawaddy river shark.

Salween River Basin: The Salween River Basin covers a vast area of approximately 324,000 square kilometers, extending across PRC, Myanmar, and Thailand. The Salween River starts from the Tibetan Plateau and flows 2,800 kilometers through Yunnan province in PRC, Myanmar, and Thailand before emptying into the Andaman Sea. It is one of the longest free-flowing rivers in the world, with much of its course remaining untouched by dams and other major development projects. The basin is characterized by rugged mountains, deep gorges, and diverse ecosystems, including forests, wetlands, and riverine habitats. It is home to numerous ethnic minority groups and supports biodiversity hotspots, with many endemic and endangered species, including the Shan Tahr and the Irrawaddy dolphin.

Sesan-Srepok River Basin: The Sesan and Srepok Rivers are major tributaries of the Mekong River, flowing through northeastern Cambodia and Viet Nam. This basin is renowned for its rich biodiversity, including diverse flora and fauna, and serves as a critical habitat for several endangered species. The basin also plays a vital role in supporting local communities through agriculture, fisheries, and hydropower generation. However, it faces various challenges such as deforestation, habitat loss, water pollution, and conflicts over water resource management due to competing demands from agriculture, industry, and infrastructure development.



Watch the documentary here: https://youtu.be/_AqvJaHk-N4

Video: Mekong the Mother

This 47-minute documentary film, entitled Mekong the Mother, offers a holistic view of the significant role that the Mekong River plays in the lives of people living in the five countries of the lower Mekong River Basin. It is part of the Mekong River Commission's on-going campaign to increase awareness of Mekong issues and the need for strong regional cooperation in order to manage natural resources for the population of 60 million living in the Mekong River Basin.

Primary Threats to Freshwater Ecosystems in the GMS

Freshwater ecosystems in the GMS face several threats that jeopardize their health and sustainability. Rapid industrial growth and urbanization are leading to increased pollution from waste and chemicals that end up in rivers and lakes, severely affecting water quality and aquatic life. Extensive dam construction disrupts the natural flow of rivers, impacts fish migration, and alters sediment transport, which can lead to reduced fish populations and degraded river habitats. Overfishing and illegal fishing practices further threaten fish stocks and biodiversity. Additionally, climate change is exacerbating these issues, causing more extreme weather events like droughts and floods that strain these ecosystems even further. These combined threats not only harm the biodiversity of the region but also the communities relying on these waters for their livelihoods and cultural practices.

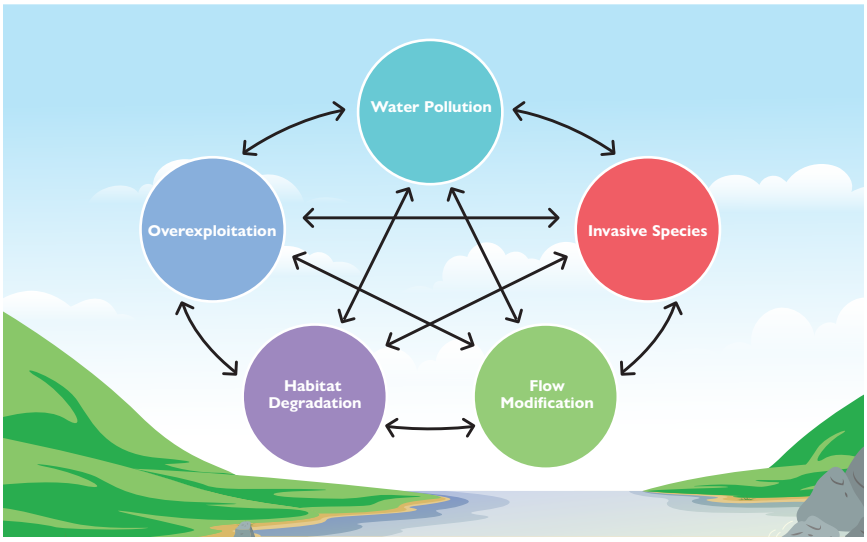


Figure 6. Primary threats to freshwater ecosystems in the GMS



Freshwater Ecosystem Environmental Education Activities

Learn more about the pressures on freshwater ecosystems as well as their role and value in how communities interact with, define themselves and understand the importance of freshwater.

Activity 1.1: Watershed Puzzle
This puzzle helps you discover how different developments along a river's course can affect its water quality, while demonstrating the interconnectedness of actions in a watershed and the shared responsibility for environmental stewardship.

Activity 1.2: Freshwater Ecosystem Observation: How healthy is it?
In this environmental education lesson, you will conduct a scientific investigation of a local river, stream, or canal to assess its environmental health. By using your senses and cognitive skills, you will explore the habitat's biodiversity and water quality, culminating in the creation of a report on your findings. You can then refine your findings using peer or mentor feedback before submitting to a local environmental organization.

Activity 1.3: Investigating Community Links with their Water Ecosystem
In this assignment, participants will explore community perceptions about the local water ecosystems such as rivers, streams, canals, or wetlands. They will investigate how these water bodies impact daily life and identify prevailing community concerns regarding these waterways. Following the investigation, participants are tasked with writing a news article or blogpost to share their findings, enhancing their understanding of public opinion and communication skills.

Library for additional resources

Below are some additional online information resources available for you to dive deeper into this topic of freshwater ecosystem management in the Mekong region.

- WWF, 2013 Ecosystems in the Greater Mekong: Past trends, current status, possible futures. This report gives an overview of the current status and potential future of the principal ecosystems of the GMS and, by association, the well-being of millions of people who are dependent on the region's ecosystem services.
- WWF, Greater Mekong page on website: worldwildlife.org/places/greater-mekong
- IUCN, 2012. Mekong River Basin - Mobilising grassroots engagement and facilitating high-level dialogue for transboundary water management.
- Reuters, December 2023. How Dams Starve the Mekong River Delta of Vital Sediment
- Video: A Teacher's Journey To Protect The Mekong River
- Video: Prachathai - Community Rights in the Mekong Sustainability Management
- Video: Heinrich Böll Stiftung Southeast Asia, 3 December 2021, The Mekong River — Concerns, Struggles and Hopes with Tipakson Manpati.
- Asian Development Bank, 2012. Greater Mekong Subregion ATLAS OF THE ENVIRONMENT, 2nd Edition
- UN Water, 2021. Progress on Freshwater Ecosystems: Global indicator 6.6.1 updates and acceleration needs

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B. Climate Change

Climate change is about how our planet's weather patterns and temperatures are changing over time. This change is mostly driven by human actions like burning fossil fuels, cutting down forests, generating lots of garbage and waste, intensive farming and industrial activities that increase levels of greenhouse gases such as carbon dioxide and methane in the atmosphere (see box for more details). These gases trap more heat, warming the Earth more than usual. This warming leads to extreme weather like heatwaves, droughts, heavy storms, and rising sea levels. All these changes can harm nature, our health, and the economy.

The main causes of climate change include….

- **Burning Fossil Fuels:** When coal, oil, and natural gas are burned for energy (like powering cars, generating electricity, and heating homes), they release carbon dioxide (CO2) and other greenhouse gases.
- **Deforestation:** Cutting down forests reduces the number of trees that can absorb CO2 from the air through photosynthesis. This not only releases the carbon stored in trees but also decreases the overall capacity of forests to act as carbon sinks.
- **Agriculture:** This sector contributes to climate change through methane emissions from livestock and rice fields, nitrous oxide from fertilized soils, and CO2 from the conversion of land for crop production and livestock grazing.
- **Industrial Processes:** Manufacturing industries release a variety of greenhouse gases, including CO2, methane, and nitrous oxide, as well as fluorinated gases, which are potent greenhouse gases used in air conditioning, refrigeration, and manufacturing.
- **Waste Management:** Landfills produce methane as organic waste decomposes. Additionally, waste incineration produces CO2.
- **Land Use Changes:** Besides deforestation, other land use changes that affect the balance of greenhouse gases include urbanization, which often involves clearing vegetation and increasing heat absorption by concrete and asphalt.

Source: The Global Goals, An Idiot's Guide to Saving the Planet: Episode 6 – Climate Action.

How is climate change affecting the countries of the GMS?

Overview of Climate Change Vulnerability in Southeast Asia: This assessment map was constructed by using climate hazard maps, sensitivity maps, and adaptive capacity maps, based on the United Nations' IPCC framework for vulnerability assessment. The map gives a quick, informative look at the region. Based on this mapping assessment, all the regions of the Philippines; the Mekong River Delta in Viet Nam; almost all the regions of Cambodia; north and east Laos; the Bangkok region of Thailand; and west Sumatra, south Sumatra, west Java, and east Java of Indonesia are among the most vulnerable regions in Southeast Asia.[10] The study was conducted by the Environment and Economy Program for Southeast Asia (EEPSEA).

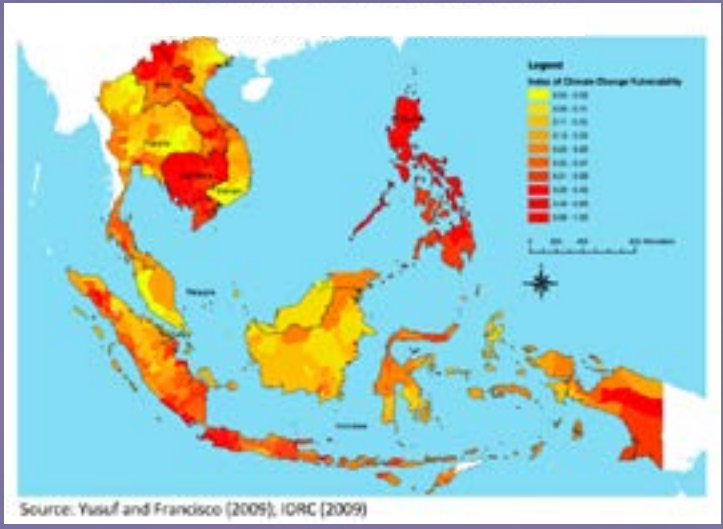


Figure 7. Climate change vulnerability assessment map

10 Yusuf, Anshory & Francisco, Herminia. (2009). Climate Change Vulnerability Mapping for Southeast Asia.



Likely Impacts of Climate Change on GMS Countries

Some of the most significant impacts that are beginning to be observed and will likely increase in the future include the following:

Agriculture and Food Security: The region's farmers rely heavily on the Mekong River's regular flow to time their crop cycles. However, climate change is messing with these water patterns, affecting when and how crops grow. Rising temperatures, shifts in rainfall, and more frequent extreme weather like droughts and floods could lead to fewer crops, putting the region's food supply at risk.

Water Resources: The region's major rivers are changing because the rain patterns are shifting. This means more severe weather, with floods and droughts happening more often and more intensely. These changes make it tough to manage water supplies, impacting farming, fishing, and power production from rivers. Climate change could also make water even scarcer in parts of the GMS. Less rain and higher temperatures mean there might be less water available on the surface in some places.

Biodiversity: Climate change is a big problem for wildlife in the region. Changes in weather, like shifts in temperature and rain, are messing up the natural homes of plants and animals, making it too hot, cold, wet, or dry for some to survive. Because it is getting warmer, many species are moving to cooler areas higher up or farther north, which shakes up the balance of local ecosystems. This shift can bring new rivals, predators, or diseases that threaten native species. Some animals and plants can't move to different regions because of barriers or because the climate is changing too quickly, leading to their disappearance in certain areas.

Ecosystem Services: The loss of different plant and animal species due to climate change can mess with important natural processes like pollination, water cleaning, and carbon storage, all of which are crucial for our well-being. This disruption can hit people's livelihoods hard, especially those who rely on natural resources to make a living. It can also create a cycle of worsening environmental damage, making things even tougher for the ecosystem and for us.

Human Health: The GMS is seeing hotter and more frequent heatwaves, which are a direct threat to our health. Warmer temperatures and less predictable rain patterns also raise the risk of diseases spread by water and insects, like malaria and dengue fever. These changes mean we need to be more vigilant about our health and find ways to adapt to these new climate realities, protecting ourselves and our communities from these growing threats.

Economic Development and Prosperity: The economy of the GMS is deeply connected to its natural environment and resources. Climate change poses a major threat, potentially leading to significant financial losses, especially in key areas like farming, fishing, and tourism. Infrastructure is also vulnerable to extreme weather, like storms and floods, which means there will need to be a big investment in strategies to adapt and protect these essential structures.

Social and Migration Issues: As climate change makes resources like water and arable land scarcer, people whose jobs depend on farming and fishing face increased hardships. This can lead to more social conflicts, forcing people to move to cities or even other countries in search of better living conditions. These migrations are challenging, not just for the individuals and families who move, but also for the communities that receive them, often leading to complex social issues.

Efforts to Address Climate Change Impacts

To tackle the effects of climate change, countries in the GMS are focusing on both mitigation strategies to cut down GHGs and adaptation methods to manage the changes that are already happening. These efforts include promoting sustainable agriculture practices, improving water management, protecting natural ecosystems, and strengthening disaster risk management. Regional cooperation is vital for these initiatives to be effective, especially when managing resources that cross national borders, like rivers and forests. Working together, GMS countries can share knowledge, resources, and strategies to better address the universal challenges posed by climate change. Additionally, there is a growing emphasis on innovative technologies such as renewable energy sources and smart infrastructure to further bolster resilience and sustainability in the region.

How Are the Countries of the GMS Adapting to Climate Change?



CAMBODIA

The Royal Government of Cambodia (RGC) is committed to combating climate change and accelerating the transition to a climate-resilient, low-carbon sustainable mode of development. The RGC has adopted a long-term carbon neutrality strategy that is designed to lead Cambodia to achieving net-zero emissions by 2050. The RGC has supported global efforts against climate change by being a Party to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) since 1996. Cambodia has also joined the United Nations' Freshwater Challenge, a country-led initiative to support, integrate and accelerate the restoration of degraded rivers and wetlands, and conserve intact freshwater ecosystems. Some of the other most important initiatives that the country is taking are included below:

- **National Climate Change Strategic Plan**: Cambodia has developed a National Climate Change Strategic Plan to guide its climate change adaptation efforts. The plan focuses on building resilience in key sectors such as agriculture, water resources, and coastal areas.
- **Climate Resilient Agriculture:** Cambodia is promoting climate-resilient agriculture practices to help farmers adapt to changing climatic conditions. This includes the use of drought-resistant crops, improved water management, and sustainable land practices.
- **Community-Based Adaptation:** Cambodia is implementing community-based adaptation projects to help vulnerable communities adapt to climate change. These projects focus on building local capacity, improving infrastructure, and enhancing livelihoods.
- **Flood Management:** Cambodia is investing in flood management infrastructure, such as dykes and reservoirs, to reduce the impact of flooding on communities and agriculture.
- **Mangrove Conservation:** Cambodia is working to conserve and restore mangrove forests, which provide vital protection against coastal erosion and storm surges.
- **Capacity Building and Awareness:** Cambodia is building capacity among government agencies, local communities, and civil society organizations to better understand and respond to climate change. This includes raising awareness about climate change impacts and adaptation measures.



LAOS

Laos, like many countries in the Mekong region, is taking steps to adapt to climate change. In order to adapt to climate change the government, with help from civil society, is strengthening the capacity of the national disaster management committees and village forestry volunteers in forest planting, caring and management techniques as well as the use of village forests. Some of the key initiatives and actions include:

- **National Adaptation Program of Action to Climate Change**: Laos has developed a National Adaptation Plan (NAP) to address climate change impacts. The NAP focuses on building resilience in key sectors such as agriculture, water resources, and infrastructure.
- **National Strategy on Climate Change of Laos**: Presents the country's vision to the year 2050, and strategy and programs of actions to address climate change to the year 2030.
- **Climate-Resilient Agriculture:** Laos is promoting climate-resilient agricultural practices, such as crop diversification, soil conservation, and water management, to help farmers adapt to changing climatic conditions.
- **Ecosystem-Based Adaptation:** Laos is implementing ecosystem-based adaptation projects, such as reforestation and sustainable land management, to enhance ecosystem resilience and reduce vulnerability to climate change.
- **Community-Based Adaptation:** Laos is working to strengthen the capacity of local communities to adapt to climate change through community-based adaptation projects. These projects focus on building local knowledge and skills, improving infrastructure, and enhancing livelihoods.
- **Flood Management:** Laos is investing in flood management infrastructure, such as dykes and reservoirs, to reduce the impact of flooding on communities and agriculture.
- **Capacity Building and Awareness:** Laos is building capacity among government agencies, local communities, and civil society organizations to better understand and respond to climate change. This includes raising awareness about climate change impacts and adaptation measures.



MYANMAR

Myanmar is actively adapting to climate change by investing in climate-resilient infrastructure and revising agricultural practices to withstand variable weather patterns. There is also a focus on community-based adaptation strategies, which include extensive reforestation programs and the promotion of sustainable land management practices to reduce the adverse effects of climate change on vulnerable communities. Some of the key adaptation initiatives and actions include:

- **National Adaptation Plan**: Myanmar developed a National Adaptation Program of Action (NAPA) in 2012 to address climate change impacts. The NAPA focuses on building resilience in key sectors/themes such as agriculture, forests, water resources, and coastal areas.
- **Myanmar Climate Change Strategy 2018-2030**: The policy and strategy share the ambitious vision of transforming Myanmar into a climate-resilient, low-carbon society that is sustainable, prosperous and inclusive, for the well-being of present and future generations.
- **Climate-Resilient Agriculture:** Myanmar is promoting climate-resilient agricultural practices, such as crop diversification, soil conservation, and water management, to help farmers adapt to changing climatic conditions.
- **Ecosystem-Based Adaptation:** Myanmar is implementing ecosystem-based adaptation projects, such as reforestation and sustainable land management, to enhance ecosystem resilience and reduce vulnerability to climate change.
- **Community-Based Adaptation:** Myanmar is working to strengthen the capacity of local communities to adapt to climate change through community-based adaptation projects. These projects focus on building local knowledge and skills, improving infrastructure, and enhancing livelihoods.
- **Flood Management:** Myanmar is investing in flood management infrastructure, such as dykes and reservoirs, to reduce the impact of flooding on communities and agriculture.
- **Capacity Building and Awareness:** Myanmar is building capacity among authority groups, local communities, and civil society organizations to better understand and respond to climate change. This includes raising awareness about climate change impacts and adaptation measures.



THAILAND

Thailand is addressing climate change through comprehensive adaptation strategies that include bolstering flood defenses and water management systems, especially in urban and agricultural areas prone to flooding. The country is also advancing its use of renewable energy sources and improving the resilience of its infrastructure to withstand extreme weather events. Some of the specific adaptation measures that Thailand is taking include:

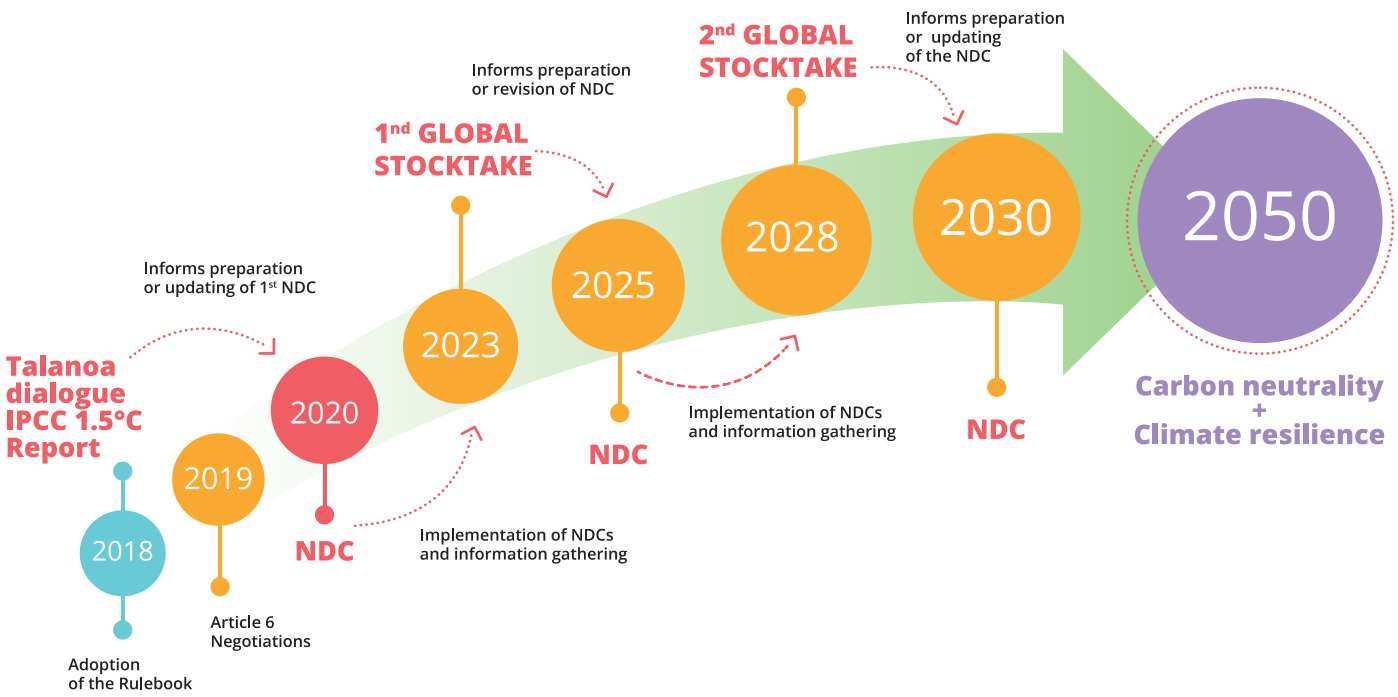
- **Thailand's Climate Change Master Plan (CCMP)**: The national climate change master plan (2015-2050) is designed to help Thailand achieve sustainable low carbon growth and climate change resilience by 2050.
- **Water Management:** Thailand has improved its water management practices to cope with changing precipitation patterns and reduce the impacts of flooding and drought. This includes the construction of reservoirs, flood barriers, and drainage systems.
- **Agricultural Adaptation:** Thailand has promoted climate-resilient agricultural practices, such as the use of drought-resistant crops, improved irrigation systems, and soil conservation techniques. The government also provides support and incentives for farmers to adopt these practices.
- **Ecosystem Conservation:** Thailand has implemented measures to protect and restore its natural ecosystems, such as mangrove forests, which provide important coastal protection against storms and sea-level rise.
- **Urban Planning:** Thailand has incorporated climate change considerations into its urban planning processes to reduce the impacts of extreme weather events and heatwaves. This includes the development of green infrastructure and the promotion of sustainable building practices.
- **Community-Based Adaptation:** Thailand has supported community-based adaptation projects that enhance local resilience to climate change. These projects often involve building local capacity, improving livelihoods, and implementing small-scale infrastructure projects.
- **Policy and Planning:** Thailand has developed policies and plans to mainstream climate change adaptation across sectors. This includes the National Climate Change Master Plan and the National Adaptation Plan, which provide guidance for climate adaptation efforts at national and local levels.

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International Agreements / Frameworks Related to Climate Change

- **United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)**: An international treaty adopted in 1992 to address climate change and its impacts on a global scale. The treaty provides a framework for international cooperation to stabilize greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere.
- **The Paris Agreement**: This agreement was adopted in 2015 at the United Nations Climate Conference (COP21) in Paris, France. It is an extension of the UNFCCC. It outlines a global effort to limit global warming to well below 2 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels, with an aspirational goal of limiting it to 1.5 degrees Celsius.
- **Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs)**: A key component of the Paris Agreement, each country that is a party to the Paris Agreement is required to submit its own NDC outlining its climate action plans and commitments to address climate change including country-specific climate targets, mitigation goals, adaptation measures, and climate finance. Countries are required to regularly report on their progress in implementing and achieving their NDCs, facilitating a transparent and collective assessment of global efforts.
- **Cambodia's Updated Nationally Determined Contribution**. Cambodia submitted its updated first NDC in 2021. The updated NDC presents an emissions reduction target of 41.7% from the business-as-usual scenario by 2030, with half of that reduction concentrated in the forestry and land use sector and the rest primarily in the energy, agriculture, industry, and waste sectors.
- **Laos' Updated Nationally Determined Contribution**. The government of Laos submitted its first NDC in 2015 and first updated NDC in March 2021. The updated NDC has an unconditional emissions reduction target of 245 tCO2e and a conditional target of 415 mtCO2e by 2030.
- **Myanmar's Nationally Determined Contribution**. Myanmar submitted its updated first NDC in 2021. The updated NDC includes an unconditional emissions reduction target of 244.52 million tCO2e and a conditional target of 414.75 million tCO2e by 2030.
- **Thailand's Nationally Determined Contribution**. Thailand submitted its second NDC in 2022. It includes an unconditional emissions reduction target of 30% and a conditional target of 40% by 2030 as compared to the business-as-usual scenario. The second NDC covers the energy, industrial processes and product use, agriculture, and waste sectors.

Figure 8. The mechanisms and cycle of ambition of the Paris Agreement



Source: ECOWAS Commission Department of Agriculture, Environment and Natural Resources Guide to Implementation of the Paris Agreement for ECOWAS member states, 2020



Climate Change Environmental Education Activities

Learn more about the pressures on freshwater ecosystems as well as their role and value in how communities interact with, define themselves and understand the importance of freshwater.

Activity 2.1: Climate Change Witnesses
This activity involves you and your team going into the community to interview 5-10 senior residents to gather personal observations on climate change effects over time. After collecting these insights, you are asked to write an engaging story based on these collective interviews to share on a blog post or other online pr printed media channel.

Activity 2.2: Climate Change Mapping
To deepen your understanding of the complex cause and effect dynamics of global climate change, you are asked to create a system map that visualizes the connections between various factors linked with driving climate change as well as the system responses to climate change over time.

Activity 2.3: The Impacts of Climate Change
With this activity you will first create a mind map of climate change impacts for your country or community, then use this content to develop a comic strip that explores the impacts of climate change on your community in an engaging way.

Activity 2.4: Climate Change Action
In this activity, participants create a mind map to identify and focus on the top five personal actions you can take over the next year to help mitigate climate change.

Library for additional resources

Below are some additional online information resources available to you to dive deeper into this topic of climate change in the Mekong region.

- ASEAN State of Climate Change Report: Current status and outlook of the ASEAN region towards the ASEAN climate vision 2050
- ASEAN Multisectoral Framework for Climate Change
- An Assessment of the Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) of the States of Southeast Asia
- Climate Risk Country Profile: Cambodia (2021): The World Bank Group and the Asian Development Bank
- Climate Risk Country Profile: Laos (2021): The World Bank Group and the Asian Development Bank
- Climate Risk Country Profile: Thailand (2021): The World Bank Group and the Asian Development Bank
- UNICEF, Paris Agreement for Young People, provides an in-depth understanding of the Paris Agreement, its importance and all its articles in youth-friendly language
- UNICEF, Climate Glossary for Young People, is a glossary-style guide of the concepts and definitions that every climate activist, or budding climate activist, needs to know. Contains essential concepts on climate change, climate action, instruments and human rights
- UNICEF, What is Climate Governance, is a guide to help youth and young people better understand national climate governance and international climate negotiations
- United Nations. Mekong WET: Building Resilience of Wetlands in the Lower Mekong Region. Mekong WET: Building Resilience of Wetlands in the Lower Mekong Region - YouTube
- Stockholm Environment Institute (SEI), 2019, Development and Climate Change in the Mekong Region
- Open Development Mekong, 6 December 2017. Climate Change. opendevelopmentmekong.net/topics/climate-change/

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C. Renewable Energy

Renewable energy comes from sources that naturally renew themselves, like sunlight, wind, rain, tides, waves, and geothermal heat. Unlike finite fossil fuels that emit GHGs that cause global warming and climate change, renewables offer cleaner alternatives like solar power from sunlight, wind power from air currents, hydroelectric power from water flow, bioenergy from organic materials, and geothermal energy from the Earth's heat. Using these technologies helps cut pollution, boosts energy security, and supports economic growth, providing a sustainable way to power our world.

The Picture of Renewable Energy in the GMS

Overall, the GMS countries are increasingly embracing renewable energy to meet their growing energy needs, reduce GHGs, and promote sustainable development. Already there is a significant and observable shift happening towards renewable energy in each of the countries of the region. This region, rich in rivers and sunlight, is tapping into its natural resources to shake up how it powers up. Countries like Thailand are big on solar energy, while Laos is using its rivers to produce hydroelectric power. Even Viet Nam is catching some serious wind energy vibes. This move is not just about keeping the lights on; it's about creating cleaner energy that doesn't mess up our planet. With renewable energy, GMS countries are not only aiming to keep their environment fresh but also boost their economies by being less dependent on expensive, imported fuels. It's a smart play towards a sustainable and self-sufficient future.



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CAMBODIA

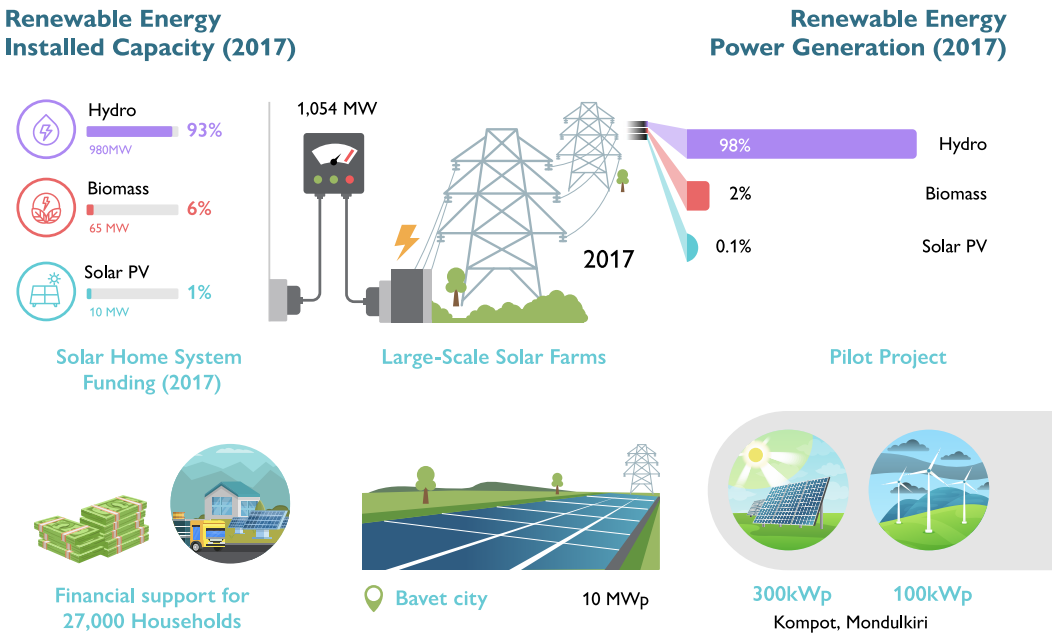


Figure 9. Cambodia renewable energy sources

Source: ASEAN – German Energy Programme (AGEP), 2020. Country Profiles.

Cambodia's Renewable Energy Scene: What's New and What's Next? In Cambodia, where electricity is pricey, renewable energy options like solar, wind, biofuel, and biogas are game changers. By 2020, every village was powered up, and by 2030, the plan is to have 70% of homes using grid-quality electricity. Thanks to its rich solar resources, Cambodia is on track to meet its power goals. Already, the government has set up over 36,000 solar systems in homes with a little help from international friends. There's also a huge 100 MW solar park in the works and a new 10 MW solar plant popping up in Bavet, Svay Rieng Province. These projects aren't just about more solar panels; they're also boosting the local grid with new technological capacity like energy storage, making sure Cambodia's power game is both modern and sustainable.

Wind energy in Cambodia faces challenges like low wind speeds and a delicate power grid, but there's hope. A successful pilot wind turbine project in Sihanoukville shows that wind power could work well in certain areas. To really get renewable energy off the ground, Cambodia needs to boost its technical skills, pass more green energy laws, and find more money to invest.

Some specifics on what Cambodia is doing…

Cambodia has been taking several measures to promote and scale up renewable energy in the country. Some of these initiatives include:

- **Policy Framework:** Cambodia has been developing and implementing policies to support renewable energy development. These include the Renewable Energy Law and the National Policy for Promotion of Renewable Energy for Sustainable Electricity Generation.
- **Investment Incentives:** The government has been offering various incentives to attract investment in renewable energy projects. These incentives may include tax breaks, subsidies, and other financial support mechanisms.
- **Renewable Energy Targets:** Cambodia has set renewable energy targets to increase the share of renewables in the country's energy mix. These targets provide a clear direction for the development of renewable energy infrastructure.
- **Hydropower Development:** While controversial due to environmental concerns, hydropower has been a significant focus in Cambodia's renewable energy development. Projects like the Lower Sesan II Dam have been built to harness hydropower.
- **Solar Energy Projects:** Cambodia has been increasingly investing in solar energy projects. This includes both large-scale solar farms and distributed solar systems, particularly in rural areas.
- **Wind Energy Potential:** Cambodia has also been exploring its potential for wind energy generation. Studies and assessments have been conducted to identify suitable areas for wind farm development.
- **International Cooperation:** Cambodia has been collaborating with international organizations and development partners to support its renewable energy efforts. This collaboration involves knowledge sharing, technology transfer, and financial assistance.
- **Capacity Building:** Efforts have been made to build local capacity in renewable energy technologies and project management. This includes training programs, workshops, and educational initiatives to equip local professionals with the skills needed for the renewable energy sector.

Find out more about Cambodia's energy information including national policy and activities here.

LAOS

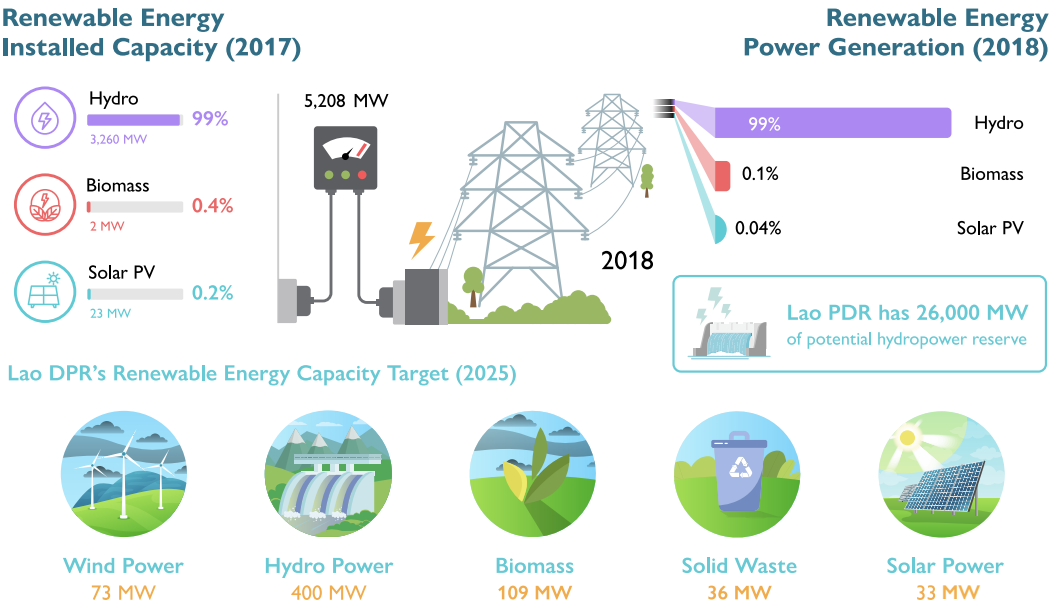


Figure 10. Laos renewable energy sources

Source: ASEAN – German Energy Programme (AGEP), 2020. Country Profiles.

Laos' Renewable Energy Scene: What's New and What's Next? The Lao government is aiming to shake up the renewable energy scene by fulfilling 30% of the country's energy needs with renewables by 2025. Mini-hydropower plants will be the focus, but solar, wind, biomass, and biogas aren't far behind. Around 20,000 solar systems are already powering homes, and they've even kicked off hybrid solar-mini hydropower systems in rural areas. But here's the hitch—many rural spots are still off the grid, making it tough to set up big solar and wind projects. For those in off-grid areas, tapping into small-scale solar or wind energy is an option, though it might be a bit pricey.

Laos is gearing up for a cross-border power project that blends traditional grid systems with innovative off-grid solutions like battery storage and mini-grids powered by renewables. Thanks to its significant solar potential and dropping prices in renewable tech, especially solar photovoltaics, Laos sees off-grid renewable energy as a viable option in electrifying its rural areas. This move is part of a bigger push to boost renewable energy use and hit sustainable development goals.

Some specifics on what Laos is doing …

The Laos government has been taking several measures to promote and scale up renewable energy in the country. Some measures include:

- **Hydropower Development:** Several large-scale hydropower projects have been developed, and more are planned for the future. However, there have been environmental and social concerns associated with some of these projects, leading to increased scrutiny and efforts to address these issues sustainably.
- **Solar Energy Projects:** Laos has been increasingly investing in solar energy projects, particularly for off-grid electrification in rural areas where extending the national grid may not be feasible. Notably, the introduction of solar home systems has been a key strategy, supported by international collaborations and funding mechanisms aimed at enhancing rural electrification.
- **Wind Energy Potential:** The country has also been exploring its potential for wind energy generation over the past decade. Studies and assessments have been conducted to identify suitable areas for wind farm development, with the Monsoon Wind Power Project already operational in the southern provinces of Sekong and Attapeu.
- **Policy Framework:** Laos has developed policies and regulations to support renewable energy development. These include the Renewable Energy Development Strategy, which aims to promote the use of renewable energy and increase its share in the country's energy mix.
- **Investment Incentives:** The government offers various incentives to attract investment in renewable energy projects, including tax breaks, subsidies, and other financial support mechanisms.
- **International Cooperation:** The Laos government is collaborating with international organizations, development partners, and neighboring countries to support its renewable energy efforts. This collaboration involves knowledge sharing, technology transfer, and financial assistance.
- **Capacity Building:** Efforts have been made to build local capacity in renewable energy technologies, project management, and policy implementation. This includes training programs, workshops, and educational initiatives to equip local professionals with the skills needed for the renewable energy sector.
- **Grid Expansion and Interconnection:** Laos is also working on expanding its national grid and enhancing regional grid interconnections to facilitate the integration of renewable energy sources into the power system and promote regional energy trade.

Find out more about Laos' energy information including national policy and activities here.

MYANMAR

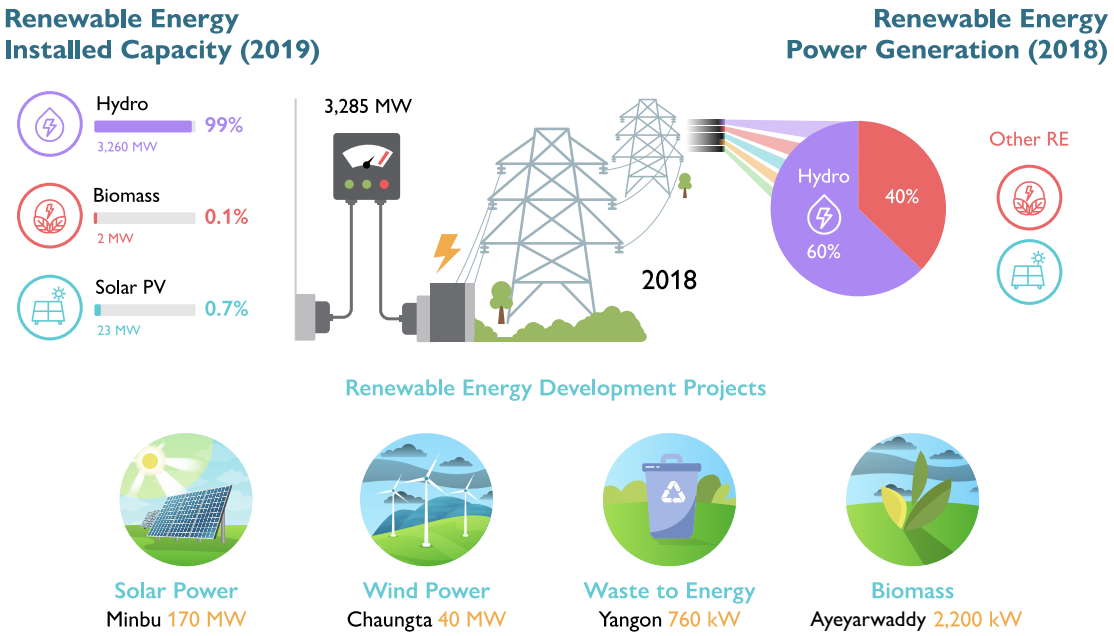


Figure 11. Myanmar renewable energy sources

Source: ASEAN – German Energy Programme (AGEP), 2020. Country Profiles.

Myanmar's Renewable Energy Scene: What's New and What's Next? The development of the country's solar, wind, and biomass energy potential has lagged behind hydropower. Even though many parts of Myanmar get a lot of sunlight, the mountainous terrain, protected areas, and the limited size of the electrical grid make it tough to tap into this potential on a large scale. Right now, the country uses smaller solar solutions like battery charging stations, solar lights, and village mini-grids, but hasn't built any big solar power plants yet. Back in 2014, Myanmar set out a renewable energy policy under its Rural Electrification Plan, aiming to generate significant wind and solar power—6,500 MW from wind and 1,500 MW from solar.

Some Specifics on What Myanmar is doing ...

Myanmar has been taking several measures to promote and scale up renewable energy in the country. Some of these initiatives include:

- **Policy Framework:** Myanmar has been developing policies and regulations to support renewable energy development. These include the National Electrification Plan (NEP) and the National Renewable Energy Policy (NREP), which aim to promote the use of renewable energy and increase its share in the country's energy mix.
- **Investment Incentives:** Incentives have been offered to attract investment in renewable energy projects. These incentives may include tax breaks, subsidies, and other financial support mechanisms to encourage both domestic and foreign investment.
- **Hydropower Development:** Myanmar has abundant hydropower potential, and hydropower has historically been the dominant renewable energy source in the country. However, there are environmental and social concerns associated with large-scale hydropower projects, leading to increased scrutiny and efforts to ensure sustainable development.
- **Solar Energy Projects:** Myanmar has been increasingly investing in solar energy projects, particularly for off-grid electrification in rural areas. These projects include standalone solar systems, solar mini-grids, and utility-scale solar farms.
- **Wind Energy Potential:** The country also has significant wind energy potential, particularly in coastal and mountainous regions. While wind energy is not as widely utilized as hydropower and solar energy currently, there has been growing interest in exploring and harnessing this resource.
- **Grid Expansion and Interconnection:** Myanmar is working on expanding its national grid and enhancing regional grid interconnections to facilitate the integration of renewable energy sources into the power system and promote regional energy trade.
- **Capacity Building:** Efforts have been made to build local capacity in renewable energy technologies, project management, and policy implementation. This includes training programs, workshops, and educational initiatives to equip local professionals with the skills needed for the renewable energy sector.
- **International Cooperation:** Myanmar collaborates with international organizations, development partners, and neighboring countries to support its renewable energy efforts. This collaboration involves knowledge sharing, technology transfer, and financial assistance.

Find out more about Myanmar's energy information including national policy and activities here.

THAILAND

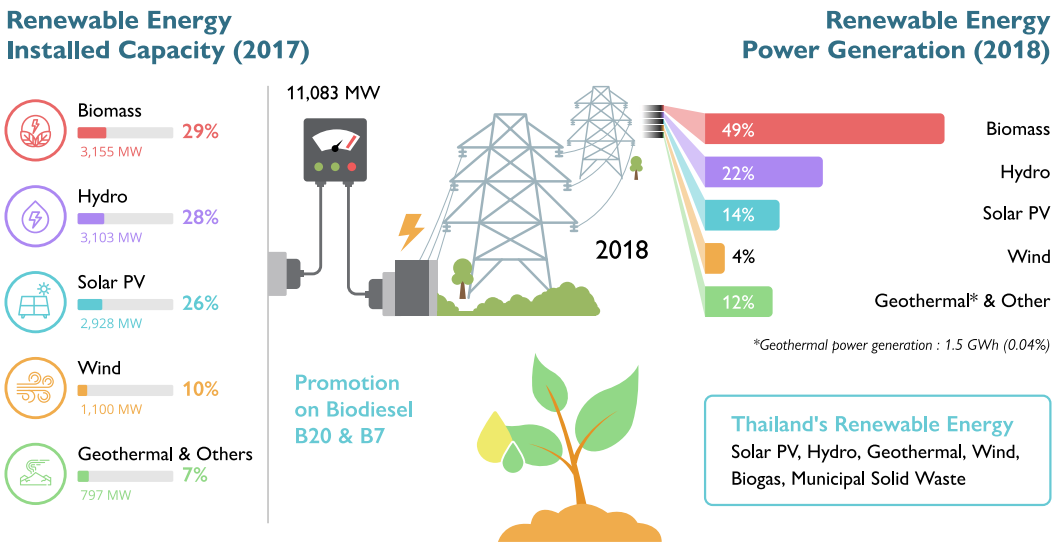


Figure 12. Thailand renewable energy sources

Source: ASEAN – German Energy Programme (AGEP), 2020. Country Profiles.

Thailand's Renewable Energy Scene: What's New and What's Next? Thailand's energy policy is focused on reducing GHGs and cutting down on imported energy by boosting renewable energy use. By 2021, Thailand aims to increase its renewable energy usage by 25%, which includes ramping up mini-hydropower, doubling biomass energy production, and expanding solar and wind power capacities. As of 2016, Thailand installed 2,142 MW of solar energy. Back in 2014, its wind energy capacity was 224 MW. From 2010 to 2014, the share of renewable energy in electricity production jumped from 5.9% to 9.9%, showing significant growth in this area.

Some specifics on what Thailand is doing ...

Thailand has been actively promoting and scaling up renewable energy as part of its energy security and sustainability goals. Some key initiatives and strategies include:

- **Renewable Energy Development Plans:** Thailand has established renewable energy development plans, including the Alternative Energy Development Plan (AEDP) and the Power Development Plan (PDP). These plans set targets and provide a roadmap for increasing the share of renewable energy in the country's energy mix.
- **Feed-in Tariff (FiT) and Renewable Energy Auctions:** Thailand has implemented feed-in tariff schemes and renewable energy auctions to incentivize investment in renewable energy projects. These mechanisms provide guaranteed payments for electricity generated from renewable sources and help attract private investment.
- **Solar Energy:** Thailand has made significant investments in solar energy, both utility-scale solar farms and rooftop solar installations. The country has favorable solar irradiation levels, making it well-suited for solar power generation. Government incentives, including FiT schemes and net metering programs, have contributed to the growth of the solar energy sector.
- **Wind Energy:** Thailand is also developing its wind energy potential, particularly in the southern and northeastern regions. Wind farms are being established, and the government has introduced policies to support wind power development, such as FiT schemes and competitive bidding processes.
- **Bioenergy:** Thailand has been utilizing biomass, biogas, and waste-to-energy technologies to generate electricity. The country has abundant agricultural and forestry residues that can be used as feedstock for bioenergy production. Incentives and policies to promote bioenergy projects have been implemented to diversify the energy mix and reduce GHGs.
- **Hydropower:** While hydropower has been an important part of Thailand's energy mix for many years, there has been increasing awareness of environmental and social impacts associated with large dams. As a result, there has been more emphasis on small-scale hydropower and run-of-river projects that have less significant environmental footprints.
- **Energy Storage and Grid Integration:** Thailand is exploring energy storage technologies to enhance the integration of renewable energy into the grid. Battery storage systems and other forms of energy storage can help address intermittency issues associated with renewable energy sources and improve grid stability.
- **Research and Development:** The Thai government, along with research institutions and private companies, is investing in research and development initiatives to advance renewable energy technologies, improve efficiency, and reduce costs.

Find out more about Thailand's energy information including national policy and activities here.



Renewable Energy Environmental Education Activities

Activity 3.1: Energy Quiz
Kick off your exploration of renewable energy with this engaging warm-up quiz! Test your knowledge on various renewable energy sources and see how much you know about the current status of energy powering your own country

Activity 3.2: Renewable vs Non-Renewable Energy
Sometimes whether an energy source is truly renewable or nonrenewable is not well understood. By extension, the advantages and disadvantages to development for a country selecting which type of energy source to exploit or use can also be complex or confused. This activity will guide you through these questions, so that you will have a clearer understanding of the overall energy picture.

Activity 3.3: Renewable Energy Alternatives
This activity tasks you with searching out news articles about various forms of renewable energy used in your own country, and analyzing their application, impact, and suitability for local community needs to better understand their potential benefits and challenges for investment and long-term use.

Library for additional resources

Below are some additional online information resources available for you to dive deeper into the topic of renewable energy in the Mekong region.

- Renewable Energy Developments and Potential in the Greater Mekong Subregion (adb.org)
- UNICEF's A young person's guide to sustainable energy provides a simple summary of key concepts to understand sustainable energy and its relationship with climate change, the role of young people, and why the world needs a just energy transition.
- Channel News Asia, 4 April 2024. Southeast Asia needs to accelerate development of capacities for renewable energy: Study (youtube.com)
- DW News, 2011. Renewable energy in Cambodia | Global Ideas. Renewable energy in Cambodia | Global Ideas (youtube.com)
- APAC Network, 12 September 2022. Laos' new energy agenda. Laos' new energy agenda (youtube.com)

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Key GMS Institutions, Agreements and Frameworks related to Freshwater Ecosystem Management, Climate Change and Renewable Energy

The GMS has several key institutions, agreements, and treaties regarding river and wetland management. The most important include:

- **1995 Mekong Agreement:** The Mekong Agreement established the legal framework for cooperation among the riparian countries for the sustainable development of the Mekong River Basin. It provides principles for water utilization, resource management, and cooperation in various sectors, including hydropower, agriculture, fisheries, and environmental protection.
- **Mekong River Commission (MRC):** The MRC is an intergovernmental river basin organization that facilitates cooperation among the riparian countries of the Mekong River–Cambodia, Laos, Thailand, and Viet Nam. It facilitates cooperation among the riparian countries for sustainable development of the Mekong River Basin. The MRC implements various programs and projects related to water resource management, hydropower development, fisheries, and environmental protection. The MRC operates under the 1995 Mekong Agreement.
- **Mekong-Lancang Cooperation (MLC):** The Mekong-Lancang Cooperation is a framework initiated by PRC in 2015 to enhance regional cooperation and connectivity. The member countries include PRC, Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, Thailand, and Viet Nam. MLC focuses on various areas, including water resources, connectivity, production capacity, cross-border economic cooperation, and sustainable development.
- **Mekong River Basin Development Strategy and Action Plan:** This strategy and action plan, developed by the MRC, provides a framework for addressing key challenges in the Mekong River Basin, including water resource management, climate change adaptation, and sustainable development. It guides the implementation of projects and initiatives to achieve sustainable development goals in the basin.
- **Sustainable Hydropower Development Strategy:** The MRC member countries have developed a Sustainable Hydropower Development Strategy to guide the planning and management of hydropower projects in the Mekong River Basin. The strategy aims to balance the economic benefits of hydropower development with environmental and social considerations.
- **GMS Environment Operations Center (EOC):** The GMS EOC facilitates regional cooperation and coordination on environmental issues, including those related to rivers and wetlands. It supports the implementation of the GMS Strategic Framework and Action Plan for Environmental Management and Biodiversity Conservation.
- **Greater Mekong Subregion Strategic Framework:** The GMS Strategic Framework provides a framework for addressing key challenges in the Mekong River Basin, including water resource management, climate change adaptation, and sustainable development.
- **ASEAN Agreements and Initiatives:** The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) has various agreements and initiatives related to water resource management and environmental conservation in the GMS. These agreements often complement efforts at the national and regional levels.
    - **ASEAN Agreement on Transboundary Haze Pollution (AATHP):** The AATHP agreement aims to address the issue of transboundary haze pollution, which is often caused by forest fires and land-clearing activities, particularly in Southeast Asia. It promotes cooperation among ASEAN member states to prevent and mitigate haze pollution.
    - **ASEAN Working Group on Climate Change (AWGCC):** The AWGCC coordinates ASEAN's efforts on climate change adaptation and mitigation. It facilitates information exchange, capacity building, and cooperation among ASEAN member states on climate-related issues.
    - **ASEAN Climate Change Initiative (ACCI):** The ACCI focuses on enhancing ASEAN's capacity to address climate change challenges through various activities, including research, policy development, and implementation of climate change adaptation and mitigation measures.
    - **ASEAN Plan of Action for Energy Cooperation (APAEC):** The ASEAN Plan of Action for Energy Cooperation is a framework that outlines the strategic goals and actions for energy cooperation within the ASEAN region. Mekong countries such as Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, Thailand, and Viet Nam, being members of ASEAN, are involved in initiatives to promote renewable energy and enhance energy security.
    - **ASEAN Climate Change and Energy Project (ACCEPT):** The ASEAN Climate Change and Energy Project (ACCEPT) is a comprehensive initiative aimed at enhancing the coherence between ASEAN's energy and climate policies to foster a more climate-friendly development of the energy sector. This project is a collaborative effort between the ASEAN Centre for Energy (ACE) and the Norwegian Institute of International Affairs (NUPI), funded by the Norwegian Government under the Norwegian-ASEAN Regional Integration Program (NARIP).
- **Convention on Biological Diversity:** The Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) is the first global agreement to cover all aspects of biological diversity. The CBD has three main objectives: the conservation of biological diversity; the sustainable use of the components of biological diversity; and the fair and equitable sharing of the benefits arising out of the utilization of genetic resources.
- **Ramsar Convention**: Several wetlands in the GMS are designated as Ramsar sites under the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands. This international treaty aims to conserve and sustainably use wetlands and their resources. These sites play crucial roles in maintaining biodiversity, supporting livelihoods, and regulating water flow within the region. Ramsar Convention Wetland sites in the GMS can be found below:
    - List of Ramsar wetlands of Cambodia
    - List of Ramsar wetlands of Laos
    - List of Ramsar wetlands of Myanmar
    - List of Ramsar wetlands of Thailand
    - List of Ramsar wetlands of Viet Nam

Cross-Cutting Environmental Education Activities

Activity 4.1: What am I drinking, what are the impacts, and what change can I make or influence?
This activity will provide some deeper insights into the environmental, social and economic impacts of an average person's daily routine. Following the activity's sequence of steps will also provide deeper thinking on what one can do to make and influence positive change through one's personal decisions and actions.

Activity 4.2: Pieces, Patterns and Processes (PPP)
By following this activity, you and your team will explore your community through observation, interviews, map-making, and hands-on experiences to answer some key questions about their relations with the topic you are investigating. PPP will provide a good opportunity to uncover some critical insights about your community interrelations with the Mekong environment and interconnectedness between the three aspects of sustainable development (environment, society and economy).

Activity 4.3: Compass Mapping a Thematic Issue
The Compass Mapping exercise will help you to examine one of the three thematic issues through a 360° sustainability lens. This approach will enable you to have a clearer understanding of the causes and effects of the issues, empowering you to identify effective solutions.



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1.1.1

WATERSHED PUZZLE



Age Group: 15 years old and above.

Time Required: 1 1⁄2 - 2 hours

Location: Area with shelter and good writing space/floor

Author: Wet Project

Photo Credit: Traidhos Barge Program

Materials: Flipchart or poster paper, lottery sign, drawing pens, color pencils, crayons, food coloring, etc. (for "pollution") and a bowl of water.

ACTIVITY DESCRIPTION

Participants will demonstrate how to form a river system. Starting from the headwaters, each person is asked to explain their development and how it will affect the water quality of the river (i.e. which types of pollution does their development add to the river and why). Participants will add pollution (food coloring, paper, soil, coffee, etc.) to a container of clean water, which represents what they have contributed to the river's pollution. Likewise, if they developed their land into a nature reserve they can add some fresh water to help dilute the concentration of the pollution. Eventually the last person will end up with a bucket full of very disgusting looking water, signifying the waste that has accumulated along the whole watershed.



LEARNING OUTCOMES

Participants will...

- Recognize that everyone contributes to and is responsible for a river or lake's water quality.
- Identify ways to reduce pollution.
- Develop conservation practices in their community or school to reduce waste.

SAFETY CHECK

- Don't visit sites by yourself, especially in the evening or in high risks areas.
- Don't get into the water if you do not know how deep it is.
- Don't touch the water without any protection, especially if you do not know how contaminated the water is.
- If possible, bring life-jackets for everyone on your team.

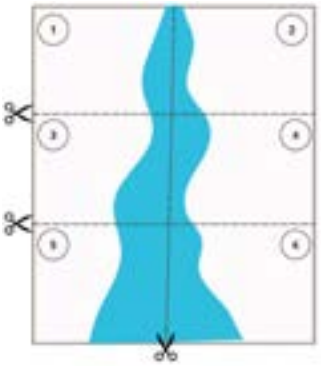
BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The quality of water in a river is, to a large extent, a reflection of land uses and natural factors found in its watershed. If soil near a river naturally erodes, chances are the river has sediment and turbidity problems. If the land has stable vegetative cover, erosion is kept in check. When humans settle and develop land, water quality is affected. Breaking sod, cutting forests, building cities, mining and other land have an impact on water quality.

Everyone bears responsibility for the health of a watershed and the water systems (river, lakes, wetlands, etc.) within a drainage basin. Individual action, both negative and positive, add up. Understanding a river or lake's water quality involves investigating the condition of the contributing watershed. If the watershed is polluted, the river will likely be polluted.

Sources for more information: *Project Wet Curriculum & Activity Guide. The Watercourse and Western Regional Environmental Education Council*

SET UP



Using a blue marker on large poster paper, draw an outline of the River (that you contextualize your learning around) from the water head down to the gulf or a lake. Divide the river in half down the middle and crosswise into sections. Each section should include a bit of river and blank space to allow room for learners' drawings. The number of sections should correspond with the number of groups of learners working together. Number the sections on one side of the river in sequential order, placing numbers in upper left/right corners and repeat for the other side. Cut out the quadrants.

HOW TO RUN THE ACTIVITY

Engage (5 minutes): This can be a role play in which the instructor is a funny game show character. The character will present each person with a "Congratulations, you have won US$600,000" (convert to your local currency).



Explore (10 minutes): What river are we on? What is a watershed? Can you name the rivers that make up this delta/river system? Where do these rivers originate? What are some of the prominent land uses that you have noticed while cruising along the river? Do you think any of these land uses negatively affect the watershed? What do you think the attitude of downstream residents might be about the water received from their upstream neighbors?

Explain (5 minutes): Remind the participants that they have just inherited a river front and US$600,000. Have them list the ways they could use the land and the money. Possible land uses include farming, mining, logging, residences, industries, temples, parks, etc.

Activity (30 minutes)





Step 1:

- At this point the participants will start their drawings.
- It is important that they are creative but are reminded that they have US$600,000 to spend (don't forget to convert the amount to your local currency). Describe what that amount could buy in real life.
- Once they have completed their drawings, have them turn their paper over. On the back side they should write the reasons they chose to develop the land the way they did, and what they used water for**.**

Step 2:

- Ask the participants to put their papers back in chronological order. Explain that each piece is actually part of a puzzle. Starting with number one, have participants assemble their pieces. Tape the watershed together again.

Step 3:

- Produce a container of clean water.
- As the discussion takes place, pass the container down the watershed, adding pollutants as it reaches the sea. Have each person describe how they developed their land and how they used water. Give them a representation of their contributions to the river with an item from the pollution box.
- After each group has described their development and added pollution, pass it on to the next group. The group that developed the gulf area / lake will eventually have a container with a lot of polluted water.







POSSIBLE POLLUTION CAUSES:

- Landslides/erosion/dirt = soil and leaves
- Food waste = old food
- Household waste = plastic, paper, string
- Garden waste = green tea leaves
- Petrol and oil from engines = cooking oil
- Soil = Ovaltine
- Rubbish/trash = white crumpled paper
- Runoff from farms = food coloring.
- Clean water = cup of clean water
- Factory waste = add hot water
- Sewage = anything that resembles sewage!
- Fertiliser and chemical waste = vinegar (no color but strong smell)

Evaluate (10 minutes): Ask these question to the group and explore their answers together

- What was the condition of the water in the north of the watershed at the start of the game?
- What is it like now at the gulf/lake?
- How did that happen?
- How did the groups in the middle and end of the watershed feel?
- How did their property plans affect the river pollution levels?
- Can a downstream user be affected by an upstream user? Could upstream users alter the water quality of those downstream?

Elaborate

Option 1 (20 minutes): Ask the participants what they could do to prevent water sources being polluted. This may include:

- Take shorter showers so less grey water flows to rivers
- If you are playing in a waterfall, do not use soap or shampoo
- If your family car leaks oil on the road, get it fixed
- Refuse single use plastics
- Carry your own bag, straw, lunch container
- Plant trees/leave green margins next to rivers to absorb hot runoff
- Support organic products so artificial fertilizer use is minimized

Option 2 (20 minutes): Show the participants the water quality map of the river they have drawn. Explain that the map on the left is what they want the river to look like and the one on the far right is what the river looked like in year XXXX and the one to the left is how it looks now.

Ask them if that confirms what they have just learned in the activity: that the start of the waterway is always cleaner than the lower section. If time permits, show them a satellite image of your country. Then ask the participants to find that river on the map. Explain to them what the colors mean and what colors used to be predominant along the river. How has this affected the quality of the river? Where do they think their fish comes from, and how about their trees? (This might be a non sequitur but it could lead to a conversation about minimizing waste.)

Further Activities

It will be helpful to review concepts such as watershed and drainage basin, as well as point and non-point source pollution. This can tie in nicely with the water quality tests.

Ask the participants to write a one paragraph description of ways to reduce the amount of pollution he/she contributed. The participants can research the regulations governing waterfront property in their communities. If they feel their waterways are poorly treated, have them write letters to government officials supporting stricter laws and more enforcement.

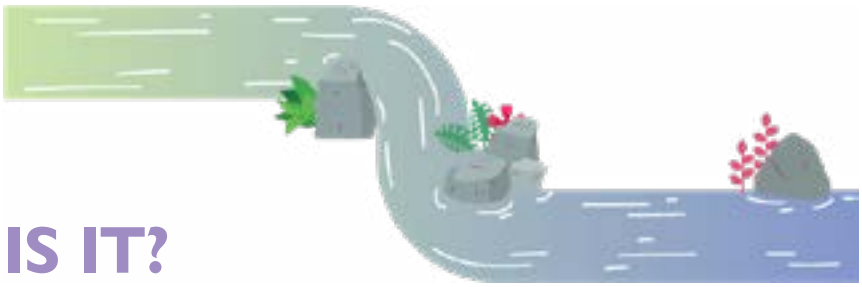
Variations

You could also start the activity with a river full of trash. See if participants can figure out what to do with their land that will reduce the waste flowing through the river. Depending on what they build, have them take a certain amount of trash/ dirt from the river. See if there is a way to eradicate all the waste flowing into the delta - a good way to get focused on clean up instead of pollution.

1.1.2

FRESHWATER ECOSYSTEM OBSERVATION

HOW HEALTHY IS IT?



Age Group: 15 years old and above

Time Required: 2-3 hours for the observation trip then 1-2 hours for research and a summary of your findings

Group Size: This activity should be done in pairs or small group(s)

Location: Area with shelter and good writing space/floor

Materials:

1. 1. Field observations worksheet with pens or pencils
2. 2. Gloves, plastic bottle or glass jar for water collection and Litmus paper (if available)
3. 3. Fishnet or aquarium net with a tray (if available)

Activity Objectives/Participants will...

- Get a deeper understanding of the functions of the local waterway and its ecosystems;
- Recognize the importance of freshwater ecosystem habitat and that a diverse river or stream habitat is crucial for maintaining a healthy waterway;
- Utilize critical thinking to conduct a scientific investigation of the ecosystem's health.
- Be able to assess the overall environmental health of the community's water ecosystem based on the observations and findings.

YOUR ASSIGNMENT

Your assignment is to take a couple of hours for a walk along the river, stream, or canal near your home or community. Something that is not well understood by most people is that rivers, streams, and even man-made canals are not simply drainage channels for water to flow down. They are also the homes of freshwater animals and different plants. A diverse river or stream habitat is, therefore, the key foundation to a healthy waterway. Using your sight, hearing, touch and your brain power, make a thorough scientific investigation of this water ecosystem to determine what the overall environmental health is.

Once you have completed your investigation, your task will be to write a short and informative report about the environmental health of your community's water ecosystem. Ask your friends or a mentor to review and help edit it before you send it to your local environmental organization or use it for your blog post, information board, or other materials.

SAFETY CHECK

- Don't go by yourself, especially in the evening or to a potentially high risk area.
- Don't get into the water if you don't know how deep it is.
- Don't touch the water without any protection, especially if you don't know how contaminated the water is.
- If possible, bring enough life-jackets for everyone in your team.
- Check the weather when you are planning to go on a field investigation!



FIELD OBSERVATIONS

Date: _____

Time: _____

Location: _____

Instructions: Walk along the river, stream, or canal near your home or community and collect as much of the following information as you can with the time and materials you have available. Remember to consider safety as your first priority.

1. **First of all, describe the type of the water ecosystem (river, stream, canal lake, etc):**

   - ☐ Stream or canal
   - ☐ River
   - ☐ Wetland or lake

2. **What is the extent of alteration?**

   - ☐ 100% natural
   - ☐ Slightly modified
   - ☐ Extremely modified

3. **Draw a simple sketch of the water ecosystem and its two banks (sides)** and indicate through labels what you estimate to be the depth of the water and width of the channel. Also show in the sketch what the vegetation looks like along the banks and in the water.

WATER ECOSYSTEM SKETCH

4. **Collect water from the river, stream, canal, or wetland using the plastic bottle or glass jar.** Observe the color and smell of the water, and mark in the appropriate box to record your observations.

Smell: What does the water smell like?

- ☐ No smell
- ☐ Slight smell
- ☐ Strong smell
- ☐ Very strong smell

Water Color: What color is the water that you can see in the container?

- ☐ No color - looks good, but could still be contaminated
- ☐ Turbid brown - there is soil in the water from erosion of land and/or banks
- ☐ Clear like tea - color of decomposed vegetable matter. Could be natural
- ☐ Green - color of suspended algae; maybe too much fertilizer or organic matter
- ☐ Yellow - color of another type of algae; also indicates pollution from fertilizer or organic matter.
- ☐ Grey/black - heavily polluted with sewage
- ☐ Other colors (describe): _____

5. **pH level of the water:** _____

Here is how to measure the pH level:

- Take a strip of litmus paper and dip it into the water sample you want to test.
- Remove the paper and observe the color change.
- Compare the color of the litmus paper to the color chart provided with the litmus paper kit to determine the pH level of the water.

Note: The optimal pH range for a healthy freshwater ecosystem is considered to be between 6.5 - 8.5

6. **The Water Current: How fast does the water at the surface of the channel travel?**

- ☐ Very fast
- ☐ Fast
- ☐ Moderate speed
- ☐ Slow
- ☐ Standing water

7. **Life around the water ecosystem: What things live in the water or in the area of the banks?**

Take some time to look around the area of the banks and in the water to see what plants, animals or insects there are. Look for big things as well as little things. Look at the surface of the water. If the water is clear, try to observe life in the water. If you can, filter the water with a fishnet, and look under logs and rocks. Try not to disturb or harm living things. Put them back after observation. **Note:** Take photos of anything you find during observation that you do not recognize.

Record your observations in the space provided below:

Mammals	**Birds**	**Amphibians and Reptiles** (frogs, salamanders, snakes, & lizards)

Flying insects

Crawling or walking insects

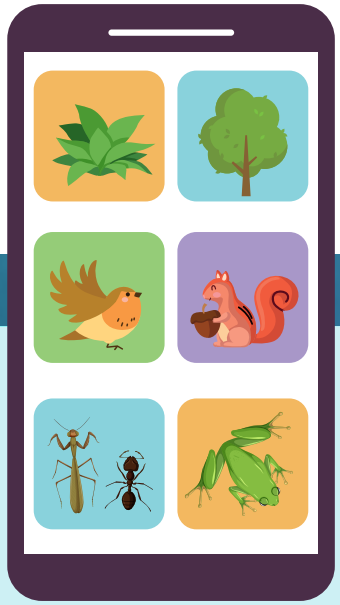
Water insects

Fishes

Invertebrates

Plants and algae

PLANTS AND ANIMALS IDENTIFICATION MOBILE APPLICATIONS



PLANTS AND ANIMALS

iNaturalist: A joint initiative by the California Academy of Sciences and the National Geographic Society, iNaturalist lets you upload photos of plants and animals for identification by a community of experts and enthusiasts. It includes many species from Asia.

Seek by iNaturalist: Seek is a free app designed for beginners. It provides immediate identification using the same database as iNaturalist and rewards users for their discoveries. It includes many species from Asia.

Google Lens: Although not a dedicated plant identification app, Google Lens can identify a wide variety of plants. Simply take a photo with Google Lens, and it will provide information about the plant.

PLANTS

PlantSnap: PlantSnap allows you to identify flowers, trees, succulents, mushrooms, and more. It has a large database and covers many Asian plants. You can take a photo of the plant, and the app will provide identification. You can use it to identify up to five plants a day for free—beyond that, a paid plan is required.

PlantNet: PlantNet is a free app that allows users to identify plants from photos. It has a large database and is supported by a community of users who help verify plant identifications.

Flora Incognita: This app allows for the identification of plants through photographs. It's known for its accuracy and includes many species found in Asia.

BIRDS, INSECTS, REPTILES AND AMPHIBIANS

Merlin Bird ID by Cornell Lab: Merlin Bird ID is an excellent app for bird enthusiasts. It helps identify birds based on photos and bird songs. It includes a wide range of birds found in Asia and provides detailed information about each species.

Picture Insect: Bug Identifier: This app is great for identifying insects and spiders. It has a large database and can identify many species found in Asia.

HerpMapper: Reptiles and amphibians Identifier: Users can upload sightings, and the community helps with their identification. It includes many species found in Asia.

Each of these apps has its own strengths and features, so you might want to try a few to see which one.

8. **Garbage & Waste:** Garbage and other forms of human waste can pollute rivers and streams as well as actually harm aquatic animals and the people who use the water from that source. They are also very ugly. Note the different types of garbage that you find in the water and along the banks for at least ten meters on each side. Mark ☑ in the appropriate box.

- ☐ Food scraps - they pollute the water if fish cannot eat them
- ☐ Paper - it pollutes the water
- ☐ Plastic - it is harmful to aquatic animals if eaten or if they get trapped inside
- ☐ Glass - it does not cause pollution since it is made from sand, but broken glass is dangerous and can cut people
- ☐ Cans/ metal scraps - sharp edges are dangerous to animals and people.
- ☐ Chemical containers / Oil cans / Spray cans / Batteries – Chemical residue left inside may contaminate and pollute the water.
- ☐ Animal droppings and human feces - they pollute the water and spread disease
- ☐ Dead animals - they pollute the water and can spread diseases
- ☐ Other garbage: _____

9. **Your Conclusions:** In the space below write a short summary of the conclusions of your observation and investigation concerning the environmental health of the river, stream or canal. Make sure to explain your findings with proper reasons and facts/observations.

Adapted from: Kanjanavanit, Oy and Moonchinda, Narumol, Handbook for Stream Detectives, Green World Foundation, 1999.

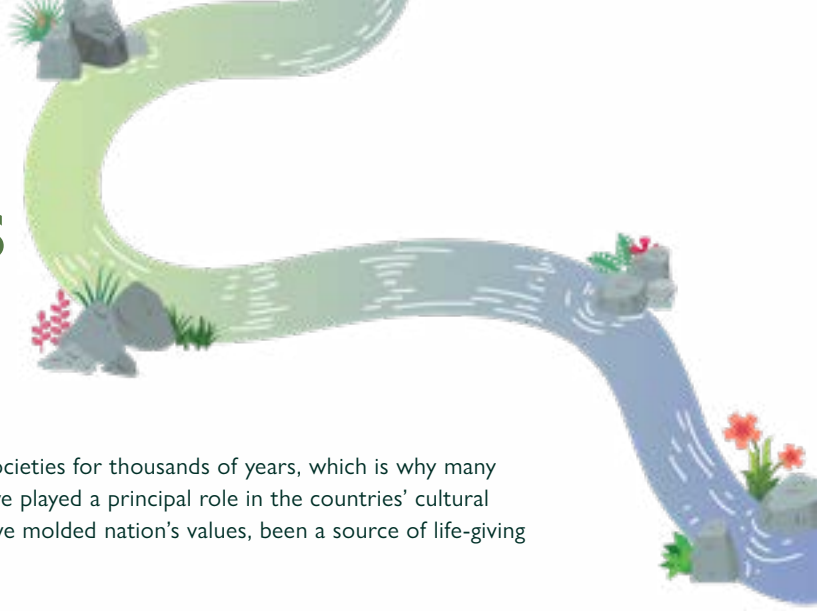
FRESHWATER ECOSYSTEM HEALTH REPORT

Title of Report: _____

My Thoughts and Feelings After Completing This Assignment:

1.1.3

INVESTIGATING OUR COMMUNITY'S LINK WITH RIVERS OR WETLANDS



Rivers have played an important and life-sustaining role in human societies for thousands of years, which is why many of the world's great cities sit on the bank of a great river. Rivers have played a principal role in the countries' cultural traditions and beliefs, political history, and in economics. Rivers have molded nation's values, been a source of life-giving food, served as our highways and linked our communities.

Age Group: 15 years old and above

Time Required: 2-3 hours for the observation trip then 1-2 hours for analysis

Group Size: This activity should be done in pairs or small group(s)

Materials:

1. A notebook with pens or pencils
2. Phone for voice recording and photographs

Activity Objectives/Participants will...

- Develop questioning and interpersonal communication skills.
- Gain an understanding of the role the water ecosystem plays in daily lives.
- Gain perspectives from community members about what they feel are the current issues regarding the river or stream in your community.

YOUR ASSIGNMENT

Your assignment is to go into the community and find out what people think of their connection with the closest river, stream, canal, and/or wetland, what role the water ecosystem plays in their daily lives, and what they feel are the current issues surrounding it.

Discuss with your team to determine the number of interviewees that you feel represent the community and fit within the time that you have.

When your investigation is completed, you should write a short news article or blog post about the results of your investigation.

REMEMBER

- When planning to meet with community members, choosing the best time in a day for each person is crucial for maximizing engagement. The optimal time can vary based on several factors including people's work schedules, family considerations, cultural and religious practices, and other specific needs.
- Dividing roles among your team members will make your interview more effective. These roles can include interviewer, note taker, photographer, etc.
- Do not forget to ask for permission before you take photographs or video.
- Check the weather when you are planning to go on a field work!

PREPARING YOUR INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

- Start with general and simple questions before moving on to more complex ones
- Ask "open questions" rather than "closed questions" that have only one answer like yes or no. Open questions encourage people to talk with more details.
- Questions that begin with 'why', 'how', or 'when' are good open questions because they encourage people to think hard about the reasons why things happen.
- Other good questions are those which ask about local people's knowledge and ideas about the river or stream, including current situations taking place.
- By asking questions that encourage people to review changes over time will give you a clearer understanding of the current situation. Example: "What differences have you noticed in the water quality of the local river over the past ten years, particularly in terms of clarity, odor, and the presence of wildlife?"

Need more tips? *Visit* ***Chapter 2 Developing an Advocacy Position*** *to see some tips on how to conduct interviews*

List some of your prepared interview questions below:

Test the questions you listed on your friends or mentor before using them in real interviews!

List of Community People that You Interviewed:

1. Name: _____ **Age:** _____ **Occupation:** _____

Address: _____

Telephone no.: _____ **Date of interview:** _____

Summary of main answers:

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

2. Name: _____ **Age:** _____ **Occupation:** _____

Address: _____

Telephone no.: _____ **Date of interview:** _____

Summary of main answers:

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

3. Name: _____ **Age:** _____ **Occupation:** _____

Address: _____

Telephone no.: _____ **Date of interview:** _____

Summary of main answers:

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

List of Community People that You Interviewed:

4. Name: _____ **Age:** _____ **Occupation:** _____

Address: _____

Telephone no.: _____ **Date of interview:** _____

Summary of main answers:

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

5. Name: _____ **Age:** _____ **Occupation:** _____

Address: _____

Telephone no.: _____ **Date of interview:** _____

Summary of main answers:

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

6. Name: _____ **Age:** _____ **Occupation:** _____

Address: _____

Telephone no.: _____ **Date of interview:** _____

Summary of main answers:

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

After conducting the interviews, use the table below or recreate the spreadsheet to collect all your information in one place.

INTERVIEW SUMMARY- Investigating our Community's Link with Rivers or Wetland

Instructions

- Use the table below, or recreate it using Microsoft Excel or another spreadsheet software, to collect all the information you received from the interviews you have conducted.
- Add the key questions your team has agreed should be asked in every interview into the table.
- Feel free to adjust the table to fit your interview plans, e.g. adding more columns for more questions

Interviewee Information			**Summary of the response to key questions asked during the interview**				**Notes**
Interviewee Name	Age	Occupation	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Any observations, topic to do more research, etc.

COMMUNITY RIVER LINKS REPORT

You should invest time and effort to develop an article. Researching and presenting additional information that provides more context to the interviews and broader issue can ensure your work is comprehensive and impactful. By thoroughly understanding the issues, you can present well-informed and persuasive arguments, highlight diverse perspectives, and propose effective solutions. This dedication to accuracy and depth not only strengthens the credibility of your advocacy but also helps educate and engage a broader audience, ultimately driving meaningful change in your community.

Title of Report: _____

My Thoughts and Feelings After Completing This Assignment:

1.1.4

FRESHWATER ECOSYSTEMS HEALTH MAPPING

Developing a visual representation of climate change processes and linkages map can deepen your comprehension of the causes and effects of climate change and highlight the intricate connections among its various elements. This improved understanding of climate change is crucial for making informed decisions when addressing this global challenge.

Age Group: 15 years old and above

Group Size: This activity can be done individually or in small group up to 6 people maximum. If there are more people, please consider to make more groups.

Time Required: 45-60 minutes

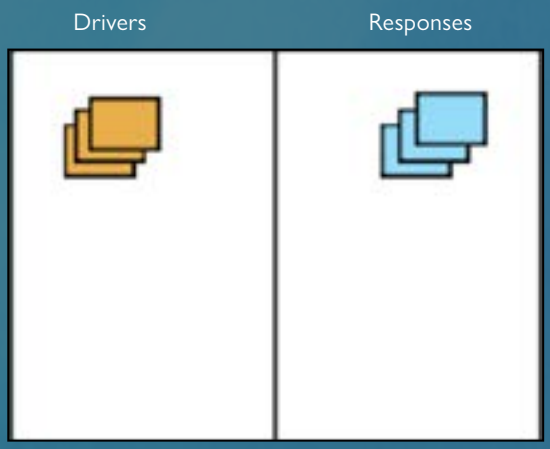
Materials:

1. **Print out the provided visual elements on A4-size paper, double-sided, and proceed to cut them into individual pieces. Sort them out by color (border color).**
    - The card set contains 2 different colors of cards. Yellow represents the drivers and pressures of the freshwater ecosystem health and blue represents the impacts and responses of the freshwater ecosystem health
    - Each card should feature a picture with a corresponding title on the front side, while the back side should contain a text explanation corresponding to that specific title.
2. **Prepare a big flipchart paper and markers. Fold the flipchart to divide the paper space into 2 sections. If only small-sized flipchart available, you may consider put 2 flipcharts together.**

ACTIVITY INSTRUCTIONS

1. Place flipchart paper on a smooth surface / table.
2. Place the stack of cards on each quadrant of the paper according to color designated (see picture on the right).
3. First, Participants are encouraged to work on the left side of the paper (Drivers and Pressures of the Freshwater Ecosystems Health). Once done, the participants can work on the other cards on the right side of the flipchart paper (Impacts and Responses)
4. Start by putting the blue card, titled **"Freshwater Ecosystem Health"**, in the middle of the flipchart and identify the cause-and-effect relationships of this card with the other cards in yellow colors.
5. Draw an arrow between the 2 interconnected elements to illustrate its directional cause and effect relationship. For example, **Habitat Encroachment → Freshwater Ecosystem Health**

Note: More information provided on the back of each card. If you get stuck in identifying the cause and effect relationship among these cards, flip the card to read the information provided.





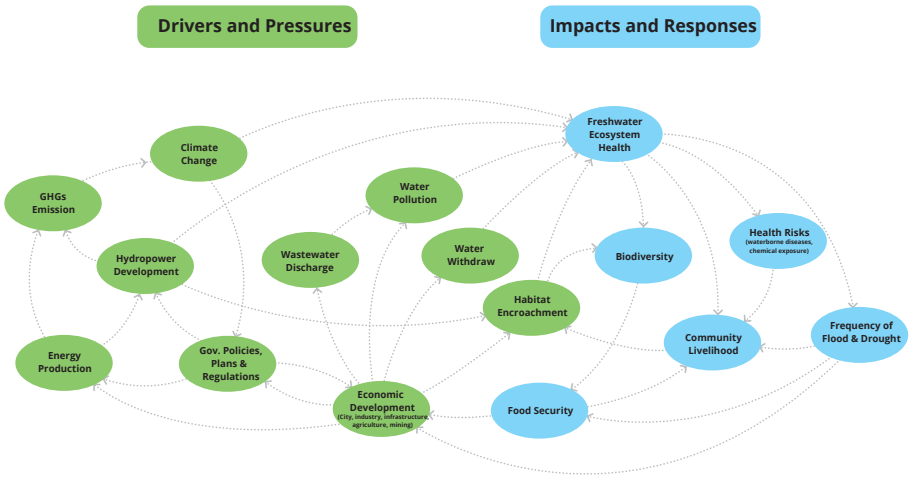
6. Continue to identify the cause-effect linkages between different elements and draw directional arrows to indicates their causal relationships. If you think some elements are missing from this set of cards or, if you would like to add more details, please write down the additional elements on the blank cards provided and include them in your system map.

7. When you are satisfied with the map of the Driver and Pressures of the Freshwater Ecosystem Health (left side of the paper), go ahead and work on the **"Impacts and Responses side"** (right side of the paper), with the card set in blue color.

Note: There are some **blank cards** provided in this card deck. The purpose of having the blank cards are to allow you to expand your view and make connections between climate change and your topic of interest. During the activity, you can add new cards at anytime. It is also okay if you or your group do not use some of the existing cards, if you think these cards are not fit into the conceptual picture.

The system diagram provided on the next page (see picture below) is intended to be used as a guide. It is totally fine if your final map does not look exactly the same with this one. What matters is the conversation/discussion you have with the group.

Master Answer Key



Do not worry if your map does not look exactly like the answer key. What is the most important is the learning and the understanding of the interconnections between different elements in this system map.

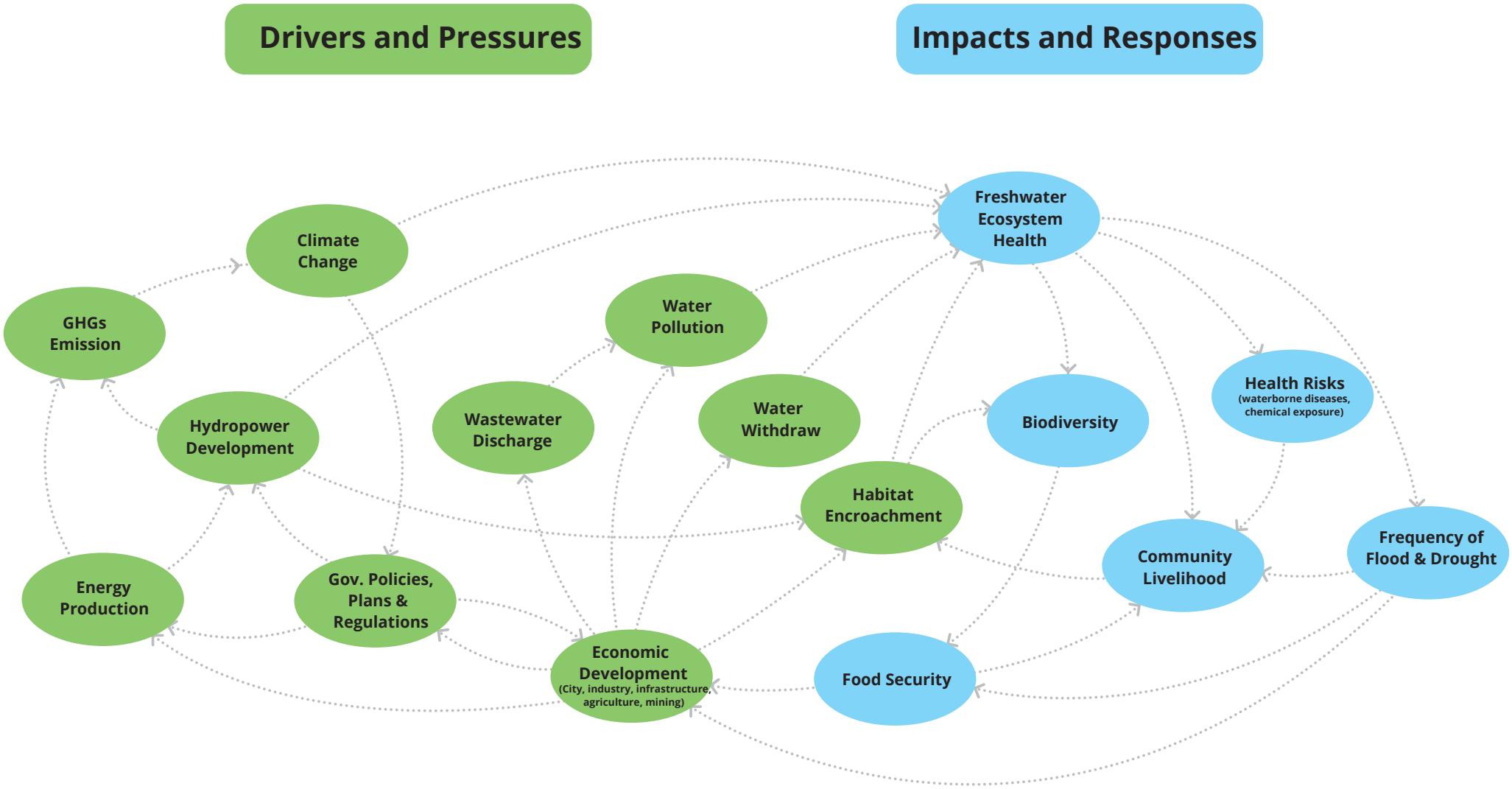
FRESHWATER ECOSYSTEM HEALTH DIAGRAMMING ANALYSIS AND DEBRIEF QUESTIONS

After you finish working on the map, try to go through each of these questions below to generate deep thinking and discussion among the team.

1. **Comparison with Master Diagram:** Does your freshwater ecosystem health model (diagram) look similar or different to the Master system diagram? How is yours different, and can you explain the difference a bit?
2. **New Insights:** In doing this activity, what new insights and thinking have come to you? What does doing this activity cause you to think about regarding freshwater ecosystem health?
3. **Challenges in Mapping:** What was challenging for you in putting together your own freshwater ecosystem health map from the cards (i.e., system elements) that you were given?
4. **Additional Elements:** Were there any new elements that you added to the model? Explain your thinking behind these additions.
5. **Leverage Points for Change:** When you think about making big changes in a system, like how things work in your community or even globally, we're curious to know where you think the best places to make those changes are. We call these spots "leverage points." They're like key places where even a small change can make a really big difference in how things work. So, where do you think these important spots are in your map? What makes them so crucial? And if you could make changes there, what kind of impact do you think it could have on your community or country?

Follow the link provided to learn more about Leverage Points: Leverage Points - Places to Intervene in a System (4.55 minutes)

Freshwater Ecosystems Mapping





Water Withdraw

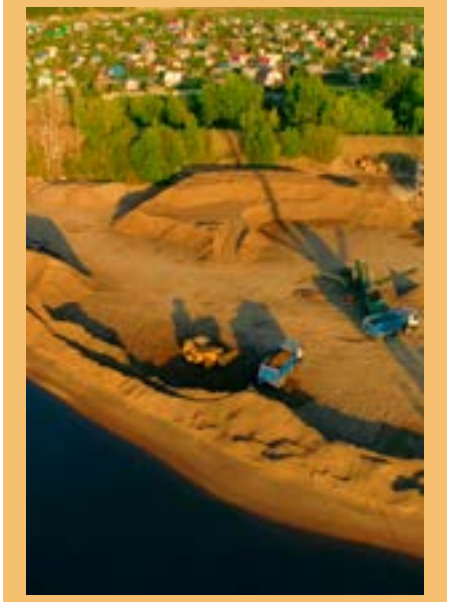
Flip me →



Economic Development

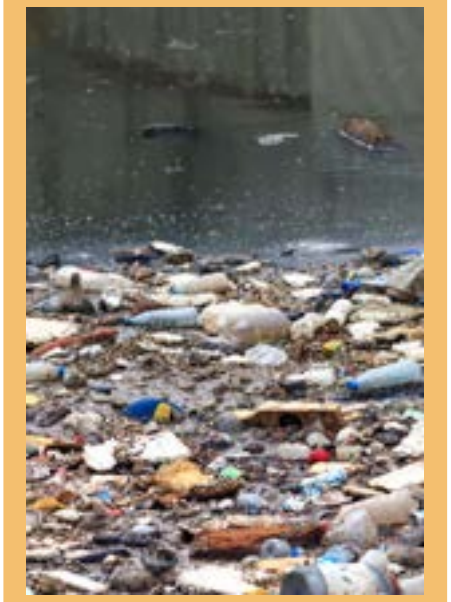
Industry, infrastructure, city, agriculture, mining, etc.

Flip me →



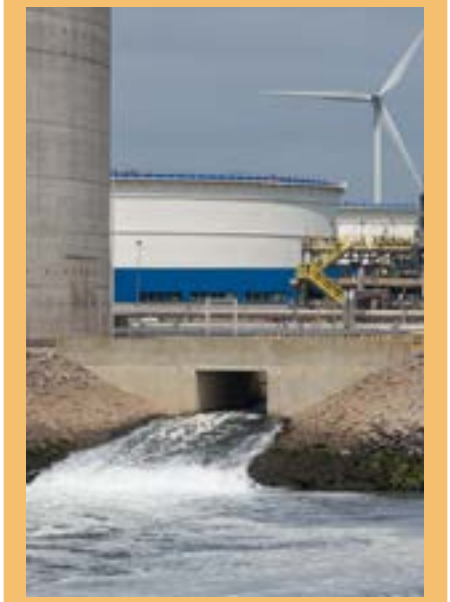
Habitat Encroachment

Flip me →



Water Pollution

Flip me →



Wastewater Discharge

Flip me →



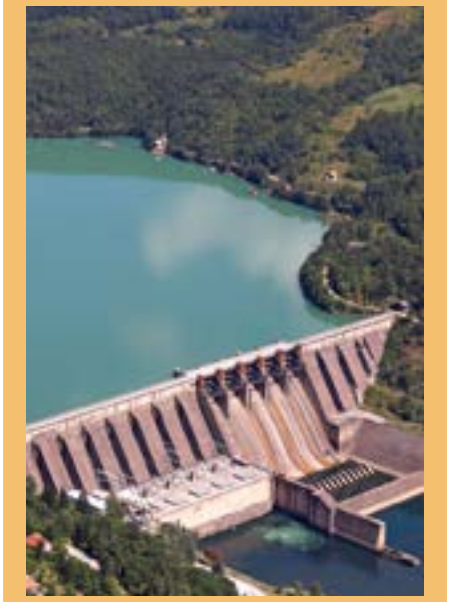
Government Policies, Planning and Regulations

Flip me →



Climate Change

Flip me →



Hydropower Development

Flip me →



Energy Production

Flip me →



Greenhouse Gases (GHGS) Emissions

Flip me →

Water Discharge

Wastewater discharge resulting from economic development occurs when industrial, urban, and agricultural activities produce contaminated water that is released into freshwater sources. Rapid industrial expansion, urbanization, and intensive agricultural practices generate large volumes of wastewater containing pollutants such as chemicals, heavy metals,and nutrients.

Water Pollution

Water pollution resulting from **economic development** and **wastewater discharge** occurs when industrial, urban, and agricultural activities generate large volumes of contaminated water that are discharged into freshwater sources without adequate treatment.

Industrial expansion, urbanization, and intensive agricultural practices driven by economic growth produce pollutants such as chemicals, heavy metals, and nutrients, which degrade water quality and harm aquatic ecosystems.

Wastewater discharged from industries, urban areas, and agricultural fields carries these pollutants into rivers, lakes, and oceans, posing risks to human health, biodiversity, and ecosystem functionality.

Habitat Enroachment

Habitat encroachment significantly impacts the **health of freshwater ecosystems** by leading to habitat destruction, reduced biodiversity, and degraded water quality.

This fragmentation of habitats limits species movement and reduces genetic diversity, making ecosystems more vulnerable to environmental stresses. Overall, habitat encroachment undermines the stability and health of freshwater ecosystems, threatening their biodiversity and functionality.

Economic Development

(Industry, infrastructure, city, agriculture, mining, etc.)

Economic Development, through industrial expansion, urbanization, and intensive agriculture, requires excessive **water withdraw** and significantly contributes to water pollution. Industries **discharge of wastewater** with harmful chemicals into nearby water bodies, urban areas generate untreated or poorly treated sewage, and agricultural runoff carries fertilizers and pesticides into freshwater sources, causing nutrient pollution and contamination.

Habitat encroachment caused by **economic development** activities destroys and fragments wetlands, forests, and other critical areas, disrupting freshwater ecosystems and the species that depend on them.

Government policies and plans can drive **economic sector** to investments in eco-friendly infrastructure and sustainable agriculture, fostering economic growth while preserving freshwater ecosystems. Conversely, **government planning and policies** are also **influenced by economic considerations**, such as the need to balance environmental protection with economic development.

Water Withdraw

Excessive **water withdrawal** reduces river and stream flows, potentially causing water bodies to dry up during dry seasons. This not only affects the entire aquatic ecosystem but also undermines the overall **health of freshwater ecosystems**, leading to habitat loss and decreased biodiversity.

Extensive water withdrawal for agricultural irrigation and industrial use can significantly alter river flow, disrupting sediment transport patterns and impacting the geomorphology of riverbeds and deltas. These changes can adversely affect spawning grounds for fish and other aquatic organisms, further threatening the stability and diversity of freshwater ecosystems.

Greenhouse Gases (GHGS) Emissions

Energy production is the primary contributor to **greenhouse gas emissions**, which are a major driver of climate change.

Hydropower development is often promoted as a renewable energy source to mitigate **GHGs emissions** from fossil fuel-based power generation.

Energy Production

Energy production is driven by the **government policies and plans** as well as the **economic development**.

Depending on the energy mix, **energy production** can significantly **contribute to the GHGs emissions**.

Hydropower Development

Hydropower Development is promoted by the **government policies and plans** as part of a solution to reduce GHGs emissions and to ensure the **energy production** meet the demand side.

However, **Hydropower Development** has huge impacts on **habitat encroachment** during the construction and alter the water flow, which directly and indirectly undermine the **overall freshwater ecosystem**.

Climate Change

Greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions contribute to → **climate change**, prompting → **governments to implement policies** aimed at reducing emissions. In response, hydropower development is often promoted as a renewable energy source to mitigate GHG emissions from fossil fuel-based power generation.

On the other hand, **climate change** impacts **freshwater ecosystem health** by altering precipitation patterns, leading to changes in water availability and quality, and by increasing temperatures, which can disrupt aquatic habitats and biodiversity. These changes exacerbate existing stressors on freshwater ecosystems, threatening the survival of species and compromising ecosystem functioning.

Government Policies, Planning and Regulations

Government policies and plans profoundly influence **energy production** and **hydropower development**, to ensure the energy demand of the country is met.

Government policies and plans can drive **economic sector** to investments in eco-friendly infrastructure and sustainable agriculture, fostering economic growth while preserving freshwater ecosystems.

Additionally, the pressures of **climate change** drive **governments policies** to promote low carbon emissions by advocating for alternative energy sources like hydropower and enforcing stricter controls on business practices.



Food Security

Flip me →



Community Livelihood

Flip me →



Frequency of Flood and Drought

Flip me →



Health Risks

(waterborne diseases, chemical exposure)

Flip me →



Freshwater Ecosystems Health

Flip me →



Biodiversity

Flip me →

Frequency of Flood and Drought

The **frequency of floods and droughts** is impacted by the **health of freshwater ecosystems**, as healthy ecosystems regulate water flow, reducing the severity and occurrence of these extreme events.

When **floods and droughts** occur frequently, they devastate agricultural productivity, leading to food shortages and loss of income for farming communities, which compromises **food security** and disrupts **livelihood**.

Floods and droughts also damage infrastructure, reduce industrial output, and strain resources, thereby hindering overall **economic development** and stability.

Community Livelihood

Community livelihood is significantly impacted by increased **health risks** and the **frequency of floods and droughts**, which disrupt agricultural productivity, living conditions, and overall **community livelihood**.

Additionally, biodiversity loss threatens **food security**, further affecting the **community livelihood**.

Food Security

Food security is impacted by **biodiversity loss**, as it reduces the availability of diverse crops and livestock, weakening ecosystem resilience and agricultural productivity. The increasing **frequency of floods and droughts** further disrupts **food production**, exacerbating food shortages and threatening community stability.

Food security impacts **economic development** by influencing the stability and productivity of urban, industrial, and agricultural sectors; reliable food sources support a healthy workforce and stable markets.

Food security contributes to the **community livelihood** by ensuring consistent access to nutritious food, which is essential for health, productivity, and overall well-being, reducing poverty and enhancing quality of life.

Biodiversity

Biodiversity is negatively influenced by **habitat encroachment** and the **health of freshwater ecosystems**, as habitat loss and degradation reduce species diversity and ecosystem resilience.

Healthy **biodiversity** supports **community livelihood** by providing essential resources, ecosystem services, and opportunities for sustainable economic activities.

Freshwater Ecosystems Health

The **health of freshwater ecosystems** depends on the impacts of **climate change, wastewater discharge, water pollution, habitat encroachment**, and **hydropower development.**

Freshwater ecosystem health determines **biodiversity status**, regulates water flow to help control **floods and droughts**, supports **community livelihood**, and reduces **health risks** from waterborne diseases and chemical contamination.

Health Risks

(waterborne diseases, chemical exposure)

Health risks such as waterborne diseases and chemical exposure are influenced by the **health of freshwater ecosystems**; degraded ecosystems lead to contaminated water, increasing these risks.

These **health risks** negatively impact **community livelihood** by causing illness, reducing productivity, and increasing healthcare costs.

Write an element here

Additional Element

Write an element here

Additional Element

Write an element here

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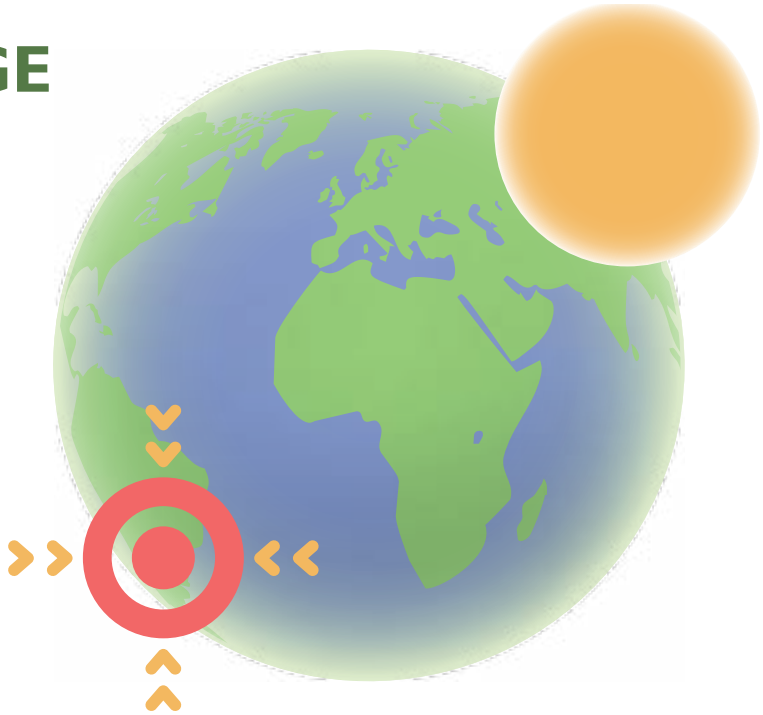
Additional Element

Write an element here

Additional Element

1.2.1

CLIMATE CHANGE WITNESSES



Changes in temperature, precipitation, and extreme weather all affect ecosystems, which in turn affect the people dependent on natural resources for food production, as well as their jobs and traditional livelihoods.

In recent decades, science has documented many observed changes in climate and their associated impacts. At the local level, changes can be small and imperceptible at first, but over time, can be quite major. Usually people don't tend to notice change unless they are asked to reflect on the past in comparison to the present.

Age Group: 15 years old and above

Time Required: 2-3 hours depending on the extent of interview your team would like to do

Group Size: Small group of 4-6 people

Materials:

1. A notebook with pens or pencils
2. Handouts (interview forms)

Activity Objectives/Participants will...

- Observe and analyze the changes in the community over time as a result of climate change;
- Develop an understanding of the impacts of climate change on a specific community.

YOUR ASSIGNMENT

Your assignment is to c**ollect information from local people in your community about the changes that they may have perceived over their lifetime in relation to climate change.** You should primarily interview at least 5-10 older residents in the community as they will have lived long enough to have witnessed any changes that may have occurred.

When your interview is completed, share the stories with others by writing an engaging story, creating a PhotoVoice with captions or developing a mind map with a video explaining the story.

Need more tips? *Visit Chapter 2 Developing an Advocacy Position to see some tips on how to conduct information interviews.*

CLIMATE CHANGE WITNESSES INTERVIEW FORM

Follow the Interview form outlined here with all of your interviewees.

Name: _____ **Age:** _____ **Occupation:** _____

Address: _____

Telephone no.: _____

How long have they lived in this community: _____

Questions:

1. **What changes in the local climate have you noticed during your lifetime in our community?** Describe.

_____

_____

_____

2. **Have you witnessed any changes in average seasonal temperatures over your lifetime for the same time of year?**

Yes ☐ No ☐ **If yes:** **Higher temperatures** ☐ **Lower temperatures** ☐

Explain:

_____

_____

_____

3. **Have you witnessed any noticeable changes in rainfall over your lifetime in this region of the country?**

Yes ☐ No ☐ **If yes:** **Increase in annual rainfall** ☐ **Decrease in annual rainfall** ☐

Explain:

_____

_____

_____

4. **Have you witnessed any noticeable increase in extreme weather events over your lifetime in this region of the country, such as significant flooding, prolonged drought, or heatwave?**

Yes ☐ No ☐

Explain:

_____

_____

_____

5. **Have you witnessed any noticeable changes in the water levels and flows of the local rivers, streams and canals in our area over your life time?**

Yes ☐ No ☐

Explain:

_____

_____

_____

6. **Have you witnessed any noticeable changes in plant and animal species in our area over your lifetime?**

Yes ☐ No ☐

Names of some plant species: _____

Names of some animal species: _____

Explain:

_____

_____

_____

7. **Have there been any personal impacts on your own life from climate change?**

Explain:

_____

_____

_____

MY CLIMATE CHANGE WITNESS ARTICLE/STORY

Headline: _____

My Thoughts and Feelings After Completing This Assignment:

1.2.2

CLIMATE CHANGE MAPPING

Developing a visual representation of climate change processes and linkages map can deepen your comprehension of the causes and effects of climate change and highlight the intricate connections among its various elements. This improved understanding of climate change is crucial for making informed decisions when addressing this global challenge.

Age Group: 15 years old and above

Group Size: This activity can be done individually or in small group up to 6 people maximum. If there are more people, please consider to make more groups.

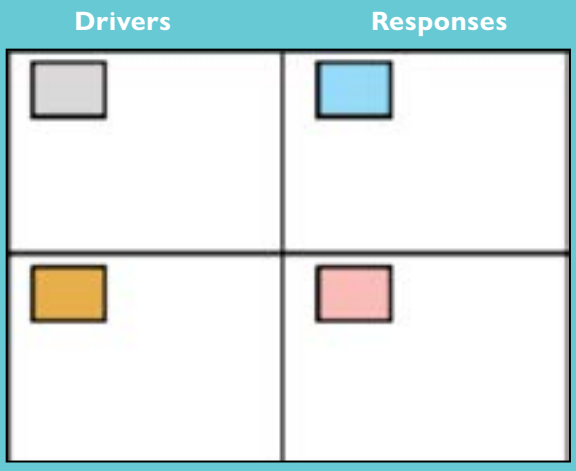
Time Required: 45-60 minutes

Materials:

1. **Print out the provided visual elements on A4-size paper, double-sided, and proceed to cut them into individual pieces. Sort them out by color (border color).**
    - The card set contains 4 different colors of cards. **Blue** represents the climate change responses, **Pink** represents the impacts from Climate Change, **Grey** represents the Climate Change's secondary Drivers, and **Yellow** represents primary root cause human activities that drive Climate Change.
    - Each card should feature a picture with a corresponding title on the front side, while the back side should contain a text explanation corresponding to that specific title.
2. **Prepare a big flipchart paper and markers. Fold the flipchart paper to divide the paper space into 4 quadrants. If only small-sized flipchart available, you may consider put 2 flipcharts together.**

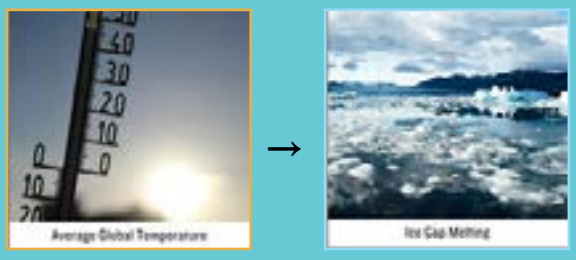
ACTIVITY INSTRUCTIONS

1. Place flipchart paper on a smooth surface / table.
2. Place the stack of cards on each quadrant of the paper according to color designated (see picture on the right).
3. First, participants are encouraged to work on the 2 quadrants (blue and pink) on the right side of the paper (Responses and Impacts of Climate Change). Once done, the participants can work on the other cards on the left side of the flipchart paper (Drivers).



Note: You do not have to start working on the ***"Responses and impacts"*** side. Feel free to choose the starting point that makes the most sense for you and your team.

4. Start by putting the blue card, titled **"Average Global Temperature",** on the flipchart and identify the cause-and-effect relationships of this card with the other cards in blue and pink colors.
5. Draw an arrow between the 2 interconnected elements to illustrate its directional cause and effect relationship. For example, **Average Global Temperature → Ice Cap Melting.**



Note: More information provided on the back of each card. If you get stuck in identifying the cause and effect relationship among these cards, flip the card to read the information provided.

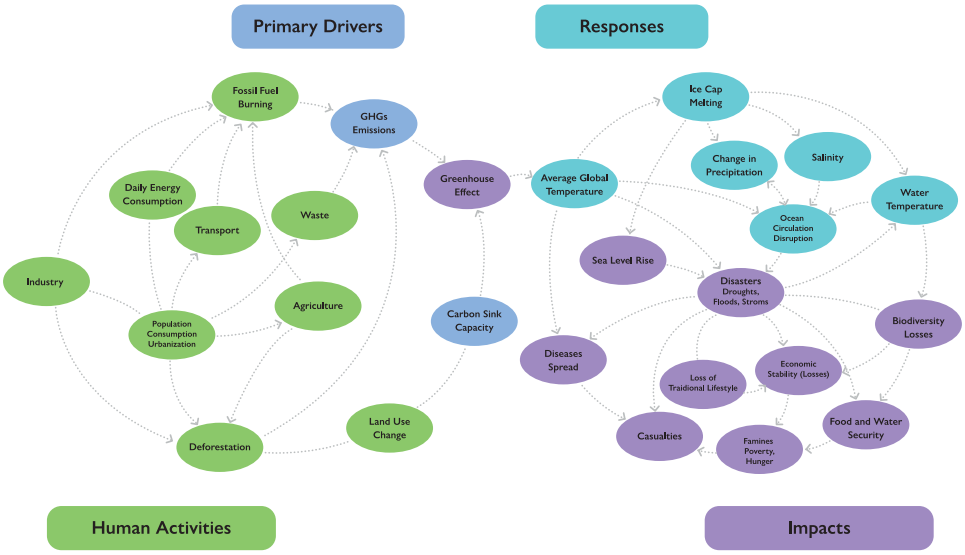
6. Continue to identify the cause-effect linkages between different elements and draw directional arrows to indicates their causal relationships. If you think some elements are missing from this set of cards or, if you would like to add more details, please write down the additional elements on the blank cards provided and include them in your system map.
7. When you are satisfied with the map of the Climate Change Responses and Impacts (right side of the paper), go ahead and work on the "**Drivers of Climate Change**" (left side of the paper), with the card set in grey and yellow colors.

Note: There are some blank cards provided in this card deck. The purpose of having the blank cards are to allow you to expand your view and make connections between climate change and your topic of interest. During the activity, you can add new cards at anytime. It is also ok if you or your group do not use some of the existing cards, if you think these cards are not fit into the conceptual picture.

The system diagram provided on the next page (see picture below) is intended to be used as a guide. It is totally fine if your final map does not look exactly the same with this one. What matters is the conversation / discussion you have with the group.

Master Answer Key

Do not worry if your map does not look exactly like the answer key. What is the most important is the learning and the understanding of the interconnections between different elements in this system map.

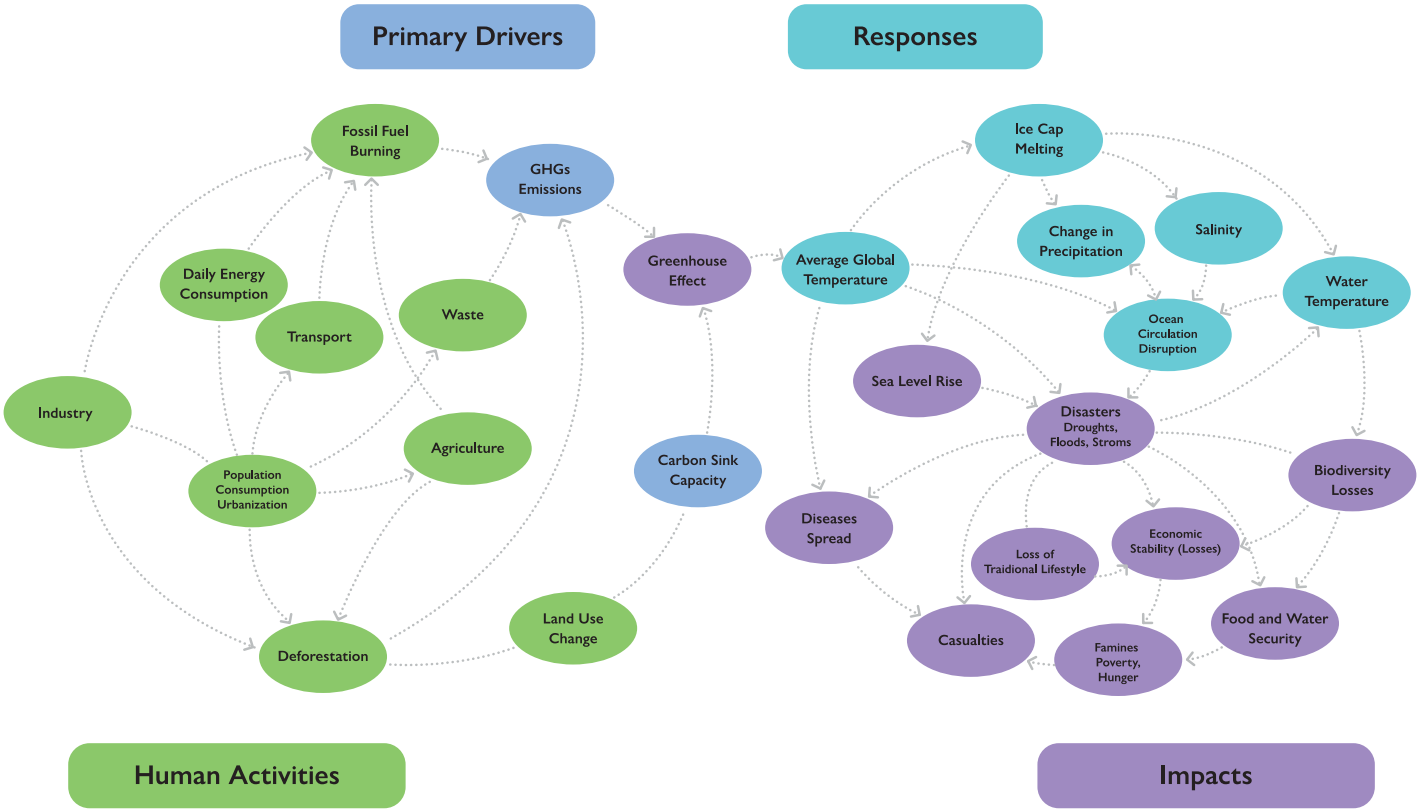


CLIMATE DIAGRAMMING ANALYSIS AND DEBRIEF QUESTIONS

After you finish working on the map, try to go through each of these questions below to generate deep thinking and discussion among the team.

1. Does your Climate Change system model (diagram) look similar or different to the Master system diagram? How is yours different and can you explain the difference a bit?
2. In doing this activity, what new insights and thinking have come to you? What does doing this activity cause you to think about?
3. What was challenging for you in putting together your own Climate Change system map from the cards (i.e. system elements) that you were given?
4. Were there any new elements that you added to the model? Explain your thinking.
5. On the effects side of the diagram, which of the system elements do you feel is the lynchpin for the severity and extent of climate change impacts on human societies, especially looking to the future?
6. When you think about making big changes in a system, like how things work in your community or even globally, we're curious to know where you think the best places to make those changes are. We call these spots "leverage points." They're like key places where even a small change can make a really big difference in how things work. So, where do you think these important spots are in your map? What makes them so crucial? And if you could make changes there, what kind of impact do you think it could have in your community or country?

Climate Change Mapping



Adapted from: An Analysis of Opportunities for USAID Indonesia's Water and Energy Team to Incorporate Global Climate Change Activities in the Natural Resource Management and Energy Sectors, December 2008



Deforestation

Flip me →



Population, Consumption, Urbanization

Flip me →



Land Use Change

Flip me →



Industry

Flip me →



Agriculture

Flip me →



Transport

Flip me →

Land Use Change

Forests act as carbon sinks by absorbing and storing large amounts of CO2 through photosynthesis. Trees capture carbon and release oxygen, contributing to the global carbon cycle.

When forests are cleared during **deforestation**, causing **land use change** and thus **carbon sink capacity** is lost.

Also the process of deforestation, especially through burning, releases stored carbon in the form of CO2 back into the atmosphere. This contributes to **increased greenhouse gas** concentrations and exacerbates climate change.

Population, Consumption, Urbanization

As the world population increases, **residential demand** for energy increases (cooking, heating, colling and lighting).

To build habitat for people, building more roads and other infrastructures also caused **deforestation**.

When cities grow really fast, they need even more energy for **transportation**, **industry** as well as **agricultural** activities.

Deforestation

The conversion of land from a forested state to another land use type (such as **agriculture**, **urbanization**, **industry** and/or infrastructure development) constitutes a significant **change in land use.**

Transport

Cities in Asia expand rapidly,thus there is a simultaneous development of extensive road networks, leading to a greater dependence on both public and private transportation.

The **increasing urban populations** contribute to heavy traffic, causing congestion, longer duration of **transportation** and raising reliance on **fossil fuels burning** like gasoline and diesel.

Agriculture

As the **global population increases**, the demand for food rises, thus there may be increased pressure to convert natural ecosystems, e.g. forests, into **agricultural** land thus causing **deforestation**.

To maximize food production, there's often an intensification of agricultural practices, involving the use of fertilizers, pesticides, and machinery, which often rely on **fossil fuels**. The use of fossil fuels in agriculture contributes to greenhouse gas emissions.

Methane emissions from flooded rice paddies are a significant GHG emission source in Asia.

Industry

The modern **consumption patterns** around the world drive the need for more resources, land, energy, and products, thus **industry** increases their activities. The needs for more resources caused more **deforeststation** for agriculture or logging, and using more energy in their services and production process is produced daily from **fossil fuels.** Additionally, the production and transportation of goods contribute to carbon emissions.



Daily Energy Consumption

Flip me →



Waste

Flip me →



Fossil Fuel Burning

Flip me →



Greenhouse Gases(GHGS) Emissions

Flip me →



Carbon Sink Capacity

Flip me →



Greenhouse Effects

Flip me →

Fossil Fuel Burning

Daily energy consumption, **agriculture** activities, **transportation**, and **industry**, require use fossil fuels like coal, oil, and natural gas for things like it creates a lot of smoke and releases **Greenhouse gases** into the atmosphere.

Waste

As the world **population** increases, we use up more resources, which results in more **waste** being produced. When waste isn't managed properly, such as by dumping it openly or burning it, it adds even more **greenhouse gases** to the atmosphere, worsening climate change.

Daily Energy Consumption

(lighting, heating, cooling, cooking, etc.)

Urbanization, consumption, and population growth are significantly increasing our **daily energy consumption**. This surge in energy demand is largely fulfilled by **burning fossil fuels** like coal, oil, and natural gas, which are major contributors to environmental problems such as air pollution and climate change. As cities expand, people consume more goods and services, and the global population grows, our reliance on these fossil fuels intensifies, perpetuating a cycle of environmental degradation.

Greenhouse Effect

The greenhouse effect is a natural process that warms the Earth's surface. When the sun's energy reaches our planet, some of it is reflected back to space, and the rest is absorbed and re-radiated by greenhouse gases in the atmosphere.

However, human activities, such as burning fossil fuels and deforestation, have reduced the **carbon sink capacity**, and **increase the concentration of greenhouse gases**, thus enhancing the natural **greenhouse effect**. This extra warming contributes to climate change, with consequences such as **rising the average global temperatures**.

Carbon Sink Capacity

Forests, oceans, and other natural areas are like super-sized sponges that absorb a lot of carbon dioxide. This sponge is what we call a "carbon sink."

With **landuse changes** (from urbanisation, deforestation, etc.), the **Carbon sink capacity** is reduced. This means the earth can't absorb as much carbon dioxide, and more of it stays in the air. This extra carbon dioxide contributes to the **greenhouse effect**, making our planet warmer than it should be.

Greenhouse Gases (GHGS) Emissions

Imagine the Earth as a cozy blanket that keeps us warm by trapping some of the sun's heat. This natural warmth is a good thing because it makes our planet just right for living.

Burning of **fossil fuels** like coal, oil, and gas, **deforestation** and improper **waste** management contribute to more greenhouse gases emissions. Instead of just keeping the right amount of warmth, these extra layers make the blanket too thick. This thickening is what we call the **greenhouse effect**. It traps too much heat around the Earth, making it warmer than it should be.



Average Global Temperature

Flip me →



Ice Cap Melting

Flip me →



Salinity

Flip me →



Water Temperature

Flip me →



Change in Precipitation

Flip me →



Ocean Circulation Disruption

Flip me →

Salinity

Ocean salinity, or the concentration of salt in seawater, is a crucial factor influencing ocean circulations / currents.

As **ice caps and glaciers melt**, they release freshwater into the oceans, altering the usual balance of salt and freshwater. Changes in **ocean salinity** impact the density and buoyancy of seawater. In turn, these changes can influence the patterns of **ocean currents/ circulation.**

Reduced salinity in certain areas can disrupt the normal functioning of currents like the Atlantic Meridional Overturning Circulation (AMOC), which plays a key role in redistributing heat globally.

Changes in ocean currents can further influence regional and global climate patterns, affecting weather systems, sea surface temperatures, and precipitation.

Ice Cap Melting

The **rising global average temperature** is a key factor contributing to the **melting of ice caps** and glaciers around the world. As Earth's temperature increases, it leads to the warming of the atmosphere and oceans. This warmer climate results in the melting of ice caps, glaciers, and polar ice sheets.

Average Global Temperature

The increased concentration of greenhouse gases such as carbon dioxide and methane in the atmosphere enhance the **greenhouse effect**. These gases act as a kind of insulating layer around the Earth, trapping heat and causing the **average global temperature** to rise.

This extra warming contributes to climate change, with consequences such as **melting ice caps, disrupting Ocean Circulation**, more climate-related **disasters**, and more s**pread of diseases**.

Ocean Current Circulation Disruption

Changes in **average global temperature, water temperature, salinity, and precipitation patterns** can significantly influence **ocean current circulation**.

Disruptions in ocean current circulation can contribute to a range of **natural disasters** with significant impacts on both human and environmental systems.

Disruptions in ocean current circulation can alter weather patterns, leading to more frequent and severe storms. Additionally, disruptions in ocean circulation can impact marine ecosystems, affecting the distribution of nutrients and leading to declines in fish populations. Furthermore, changes in ocean currents can influence sea level rise and coastal erosion, exacerbating the risk of flooding and coastal inundation events.

Change in Precipitation

The **melting of ice caps** plays a crucial role in **changing precipitation patterns** on a global scale.

As **ice caps and glaciers melt** due to rising temperatures, they release substantial amounts of freshwater into the oceans. This influx of freshwater can disrupt established **ocean circulation** and affect the distribution of heat around the globe.

Changes in ocean circulation patterns, such as the Atlantic Meridional Overturning Circulation (AMOC), can **influence atmospheric circulation and precipitation**.

Water Temperature

The **melting of ice caps** impacts **ocean water temperature** primarily through the introduction of freshwater into the oceans. Ice caps, especially those in polar regions, store vast amounts of freshwater in the form of ice. As these ice caps melt due to rising temperatures, the freshwater is released into the surrounding seas. The influx of freshwater from melting ice alters the density and salinity of the oceans, impacting **ocean circulation patterns**.

When **droughts** occur, they can cause the **water temperature** in rivers, lakes, and other bodies of water to rise. This rise in temperature can have far-reaching consequences for **biodiversity**, the variety of life in a particular habitat.



Disasters (floods, droughts,storms, etc.)

Flip me →



Diseases Spread

Flip me →



Famines

Flip me →



Casualties

Flip me →



Economic Stability (Losses)

Flip me →



Biodiversity Losses

Flip me →

Famines

Famine is a severe scarcity of food that leads to widespread hunger, malnutrition, and sometimes even starvation among a large population.

Climate change-induced **disasters (flood, droughts, extreme weather patterns)** have devastating effects on both **economic stability** (Economic loss) and **food and water security**, often exacerbating conditions that lead to **famine**.

Famines are intricately linked to **casualties** as the severe shortage of food and nutritional deficiencies directly jeopardize the health and survival of populations. In extreme cases, famine can result in a significant number of casualties due to starvation, weakened resistance to illnesses, and inadequate access to medical care.

Diseases Spread

Warmer temperatures contribute to the expansion or **spread of diseases**, vectors such as mosquitoes and ticks extending their geographic range. In areas where these vectors transmit diseases like malaria, dengue fever, Zika virus, and Lyme disease, the prolonged warmer seasons create favorable conditions for these disease carriers to thrive and spread illnesses to new regions.

Additionally, the rising frequency and intensity of **natural disasters** pose threats to public health infrastructure, displacing populations and creating environments conducive to the **spread of diseases**.

Spread of diseases are intricately linked to **casualties**.

Disasters (Floods, droughts,storms, etc.)

Natural disasters have far-reaching impacts, causing **loss of lives (casualties), economic losses** through damage to infrastructure and disruption of supply chains but also creating conditions for the **spread of diseases** by disrupting public health infrastructure and displacing populations.

Additionally, these disasters contribute to **biodiversity loss** through habitat destruction and harm to species, disrupting ecosystems (such as increasing **water temperature**, dry up water bodies, etc).

Furthermore, they can disrupt **traditional lifestyles** by damaging homes, eroding cultural landscapes, and undermining community structures, compelling affected populations to adapt and often resulting in the loss of cultural practices and heritage.

Biodiversity Losses

Climate-related disasters, including storms, floods, and extreme weather events, exert direct and indirect impacts on ecosystems, their inhabitants and **biodiversity**.

While the rise in ocean **water temperatures** directly affects marine habitats, leading to coral bleaching, coastal ecosystem destruction, and species displacement, disrupting normal life cycles, impairing reproduction, and contributing to population declines, **biodiversity losses** and the potential extinction of vulnerable species.

Biodiversity loss significantly impacts **food and water security** by disrupting ecosystems, leading to decreased crop yields, increased vulnerability to pests and diseases, and limiting dietary diversity, while also undermining water regulation, purification, and availability for drinking, irrigation, and fisheries, affecting the livelihoods of millions of people globally.

Economic Stability (Losses)

Climate-related natural disasters, such as storms, floods, or droughts can cause destruction of infrastructure and **economic assets**, leading to significant economic losses for affected communities. Simultaneously, these events often result in the **loss of traditional lifestyles** as homes are destroyed, cultural landscapes erode, and community structures are undermined. As people adapt to the aftermath, the **economic loss** continues with the displacement of populations and the need for costly recovery efforts.

Biodiversity loss and declining essential ecosystem services like pollination, water purification, and disease regulation diminish due to climate change, impacting various sectors of the **economy** dependent on these services.

Casualties

Climate-related **natural disasters** can lead to a chain of interconnected challenges, resulting in **casualties**. These events, such as storms, floods, and droughts, can cause immediate casualties through physical harm and displacement.

Additionally, the breakdown of infrastructure and sanitation systems during disasters creates conditions conducive to the rapid **spread of diseases**, further increasing casualties.

The long-term impacts of such disasters on agricultural systems often contribute to **famines**, as crop failures and food shortages exacerbate food insecurity, leading to malnutrition and, in severe cases, starvation-related **casualties**.



Food and Water Security

Flip me →



Loss of Traditional Lifestyle

Flip me →



Sea Level Rise

Flip me →

Sea Level Rise

Ice caps melting, particularly those in polar regions and glaciers, they contribute freshwater to the oceans, leading to an **increase in sea levels**.

As the sea level increases, it can lead to **flooding**, erosion of coastlines, and saltwater intrusion into freshwater sources.

Loss of Traditional Lifestyle

Climate-related **natural disasters** significantly impact **traditional lifestyles** by causing widespread disruptions to communities' cultural practices, livelihoods, and socio-economic structures. Events such as storms, floods, or droughts can result in the destruction of homes, agricultural lands, and vital resources, forcing populations to adapt to new, often unfamiliar conditions.

The **loss of traditional landscapes** and natural resources can undermine customary activities like agriculture, or fishing, leading to **economic instability** and altering social structures.

Additionally, the displacement of communities and the destruction of infrastructure during these disasters often challenge the resilience of traditional ways of life, as individuals and societies must cope with the aftermath and navigate the complexities of recovery.

Food and Water Security

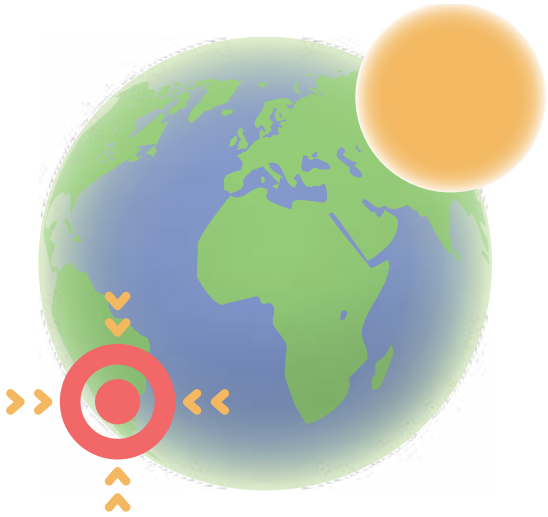
The decline in **biodiversity** undermines agricultural productivity and **food security**, as diverse ecosystems contribute to pollination, soil fertility, and natural pest control.

Climate-related **disasters**, such as storms and extreme weather events, exacerbate these **food security** challenges by directly affecting crop yields and the overall stability of agricultural systems.

Simultaneously, healthy ecosystems regulate the water cycle, ensuring water availability and quality. The loss of biodiversity, coupled with climate-related events, disrupts this regulation, leading to water scarcity and compromising the reliability of water sources for both agriculture and human consumption.

1.2.3

IMPACTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE



The understanding of the potential hazards and impacts of climate change on communities is vital for numerous reasons.

Firstly, it facilitates risk assessment and preparedness, enabling proactive planning to mitigate potential damages and disruptions to local environments, infrastructure, and economies.

Secondly, it aids in protecting human health by identifying and addressing heightened risks such as heat-related illnesses and air pollution.

Additionally, it supports economic resilience by recognizing the potential of climate-related events to disrupt local economies, allowing communities to diversify, invest in resilient infrastructure, and support affected businesses.

The understanding of these impacts also guides efforts to preserve natural resources, promote social equity and justice, inform policy development, engage and educate communities, and foster long-term resilience and sustainability. In essence, this understanding forms the basis for informed decision-making, effective policies, and collaborative action to address climate change's multifaceted impacts.

Note: Hazards in the context of climate change encompass a range of environmental threats exacerbated by shifting climatic conditions. These include extreme weather events like hurricanes, floods, and heatwaves, as well as rising sea levels, temperature extremes, and altered precipitation patterns. Climate change also intensifies risks such as wildfires, vector-borne diseases, food and water insecurity, and biodiversity loss.

Age Group: 15 years old and above
Time Required: 1-2 hours to identify the hazards and impacts of Climate Change
1-2 hours to create the comic strip
Group Size: Any size. Small groups will encourage more participation
Materials:

1. Hazards and Impacts of Climate Change worksheet/handout
2. Big piece of paper for comic strip
3. Pen, pencils and color for comic strip creation

Activity Objectives/Participants will...

- Develop an understanding of the impacts of climate change on different aspects of the community.
- Be able to communicate these issues using various mediums, such as comic strips.

YOUR ASSIGNMENT

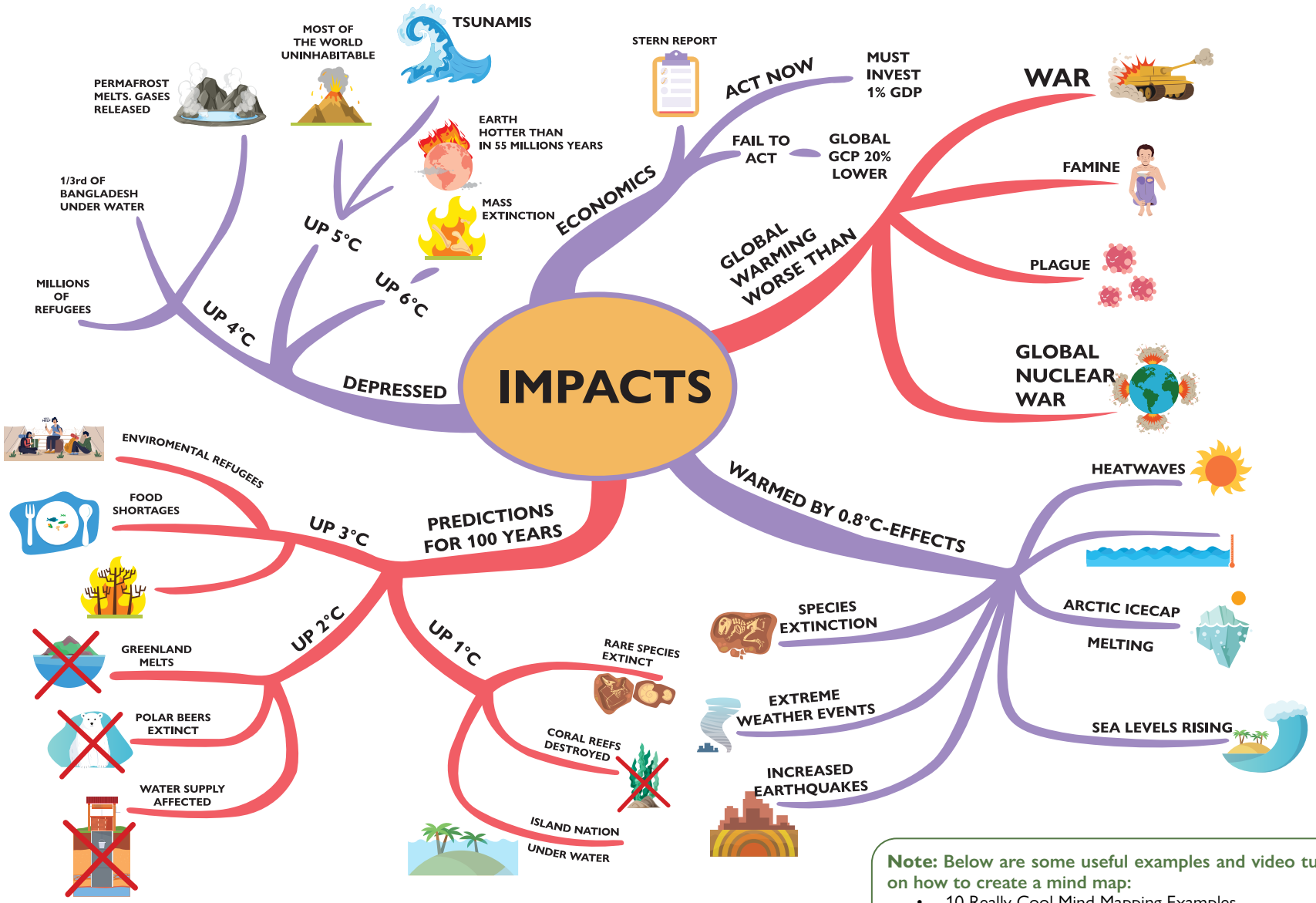


1. Using different sources of information that you have an access to, find more information about the impacts of climate change to different aspects of your community and briefly summarize what you found on the worksheet provided. Write your answers inside the clouds shown in the graphic.
2. Following from your research, create a comic strip based on your understanding of the impacts of climate change on your community. Develop one or two interesting characters & a storyline that takes into account the story's background context, includes aspects of the local lifestyle and dramatic events or conflicts that may have developed as a result of climate change. Use the seven comic strip panels provided to make your comic story.

Need to learn "How to Create a Comic Strip"? Follow this link.

CLIMATE CHANGE AND GMS

Countries in the Greater Mekong Subregion are particularly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change. Among the effects of climate change expected in the GMS are those experienced in other similar parts of the world such as...



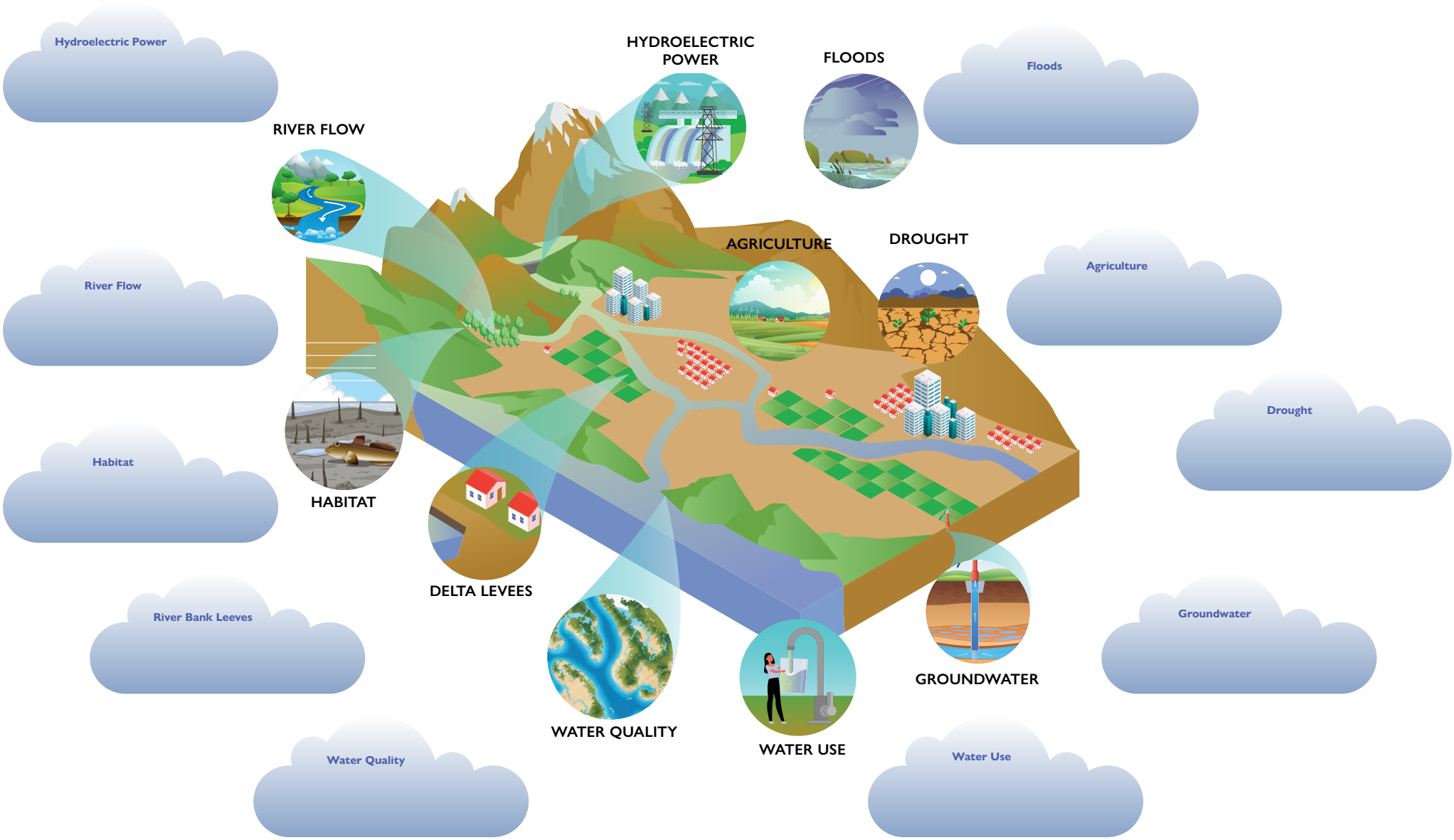
Note: Below are some useful examples and video tutorials on how to create a mind map:

- 10 Really Cool Mind Mapping Examples
- Step by Step directions for creating a mind map
- Miro Mind Mapping Tutorial

YOUR ASSIGNMENT

Using different sources of information that you have an access to, find more information about the impacts of climate change to different aspects of your community and briefly summarize what you found on the worksheet provided. Write your answers inside the clouds.

Hazards and Impacts of Climate Change



Climate Impacts Comic Strip

INSTRUCTIONS

Following from your research, create a comic strip based on your understanding of the impacts of climate change on your community.

Try to create one or two interesting characters & a storyline that takes into account the story's background context, includes aspects of the local lifestyle and dramatic events or conflicts that may have developed as a result of climate change. Use the seven comic strip panels to make your comic story.

My Thoughts and Feelings After Completing This Assignment:



1.2.4

CLIMATE CHANGE ACTION

Age Group: 15 years old and above

Group Size: This activity can be done individually or as a small group

Time Required: 60-90 minutes for mind mapping and 30-45 minutes on action plan

Materials:

1. Flipchart or other large sheet of paper, markers, and pastels
2. Climate Change Action Plan Template

Activity Objectives/Participants will...

- Gain a comprehensive understanding of various actions that can contribute to solving the climate change problem.
- Learn to create a mind map to explore and organize potential actions against climate change.
- Improve the ability to communicate complex issues related to climate change in a clear, organized, and visually appealing manner.
- Develop a sense of personal responsibility and commitment to implementing the identified climate action strategies.

YOUR ASSIGNMENT

- Creating a **"mind map" of how you can help to mitigate the climate change problem** we now face.
- Pick the top five ways that you will focus on in the coming year.

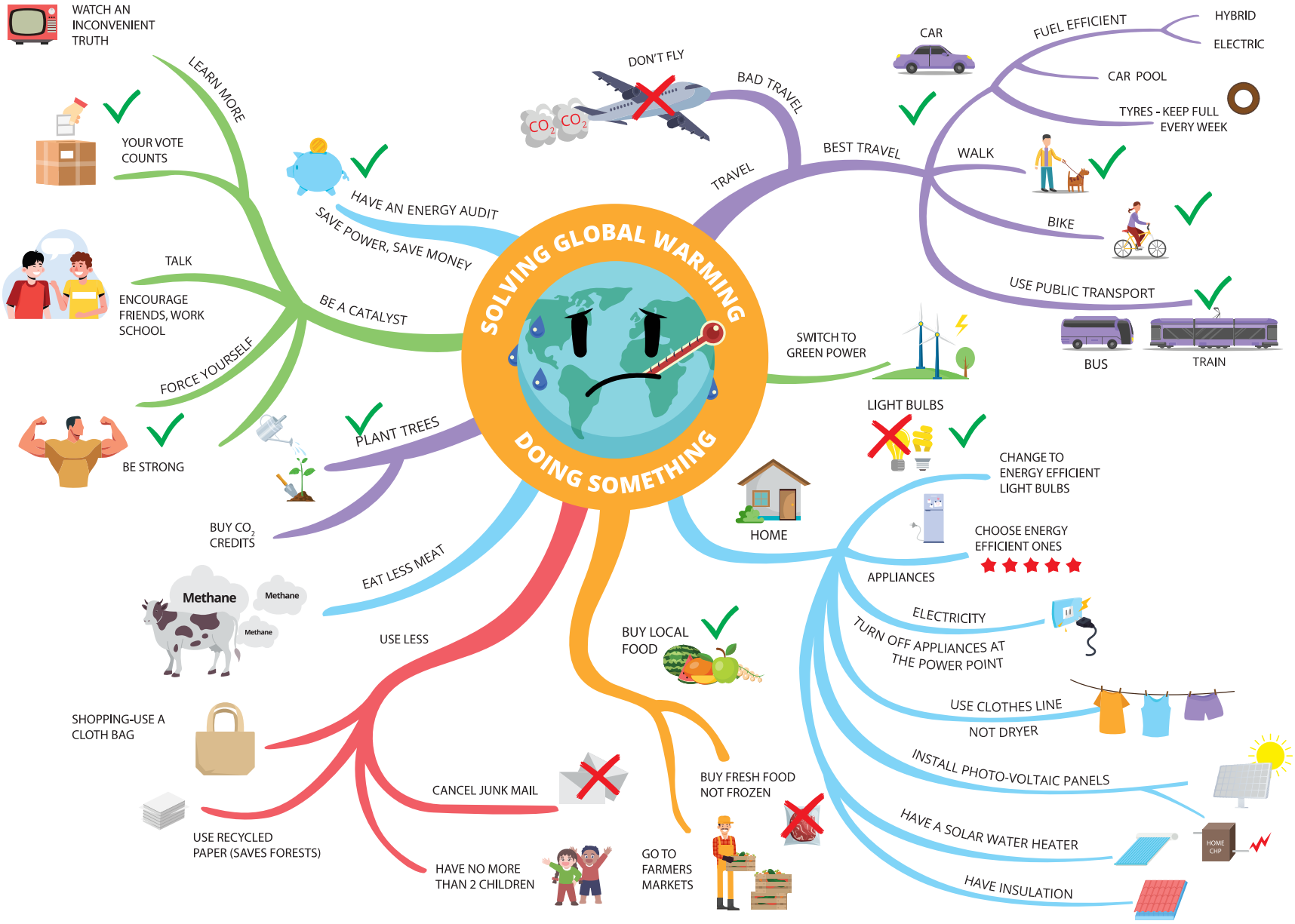
Creating a mind map is quite simple, just follow the simple steps described here...

- First, write your main issue, "Climate Action" in the center of a flipchart or other large sheet of paper.
- Next, think of as many key categories of actions that you could take, such as transportation choices, habits and practices, friends, home, etc.
- Progressively branch out from each main category into smaller, or more specific types of actions that you can do.
- When you construct your mind map, remember to be as creative and artistic as possible. Make it colorful and engaging!
- You can create a mind map on paper or electronically using templates available online for computers or tablets.

Note: Below are some useful examples and video tutorials on how to create a mind map:

- 10 Really Cool Mind Mapping Examples
- Step by Step directions for creating a mind map
- Miro Mind Mapping Tutorial

Example of Climate Change Action Mind Map



See an example of the climate change action mind map above for some ideas. However, please try to develop your own ideas. It will only really make a difference if the contents of the mind map come from your own ideas and feelings.

Once you have finished with the mind mapping, use the "My Climate Change Action Plan" template provided on the next page to make a list of the action items you would like to focus on for this year.

MY CLIMATE CHANGE ACTION PLAN

Based on the potential action items that you have brainstormed on the mind map, select five or more action items that you would like to do this year and use the template provided below to help you create your action plan.

IT IS TIME TO CREATE YOUR CLIMATE CHANGE ACTION PLAN

Action You Want to Focus on This Year	What Help Is Needed?	Possible Obstacles	How Will You Know You Are Successful?
(Example) Turn off the lights when I leave the room	• Place reminder sign on the door. • Ask for reminders from my family and friends	Forgetfulness and laziness	Unit of electricity saved on the monthly bill

1.3.1

ENERGY QUIZ 1

POWER GENERATION

Electric power can be generated from various types of fuel sources.

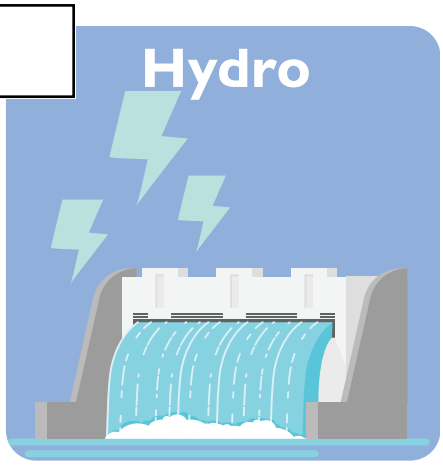
Rank power generation in your country by which fuel sources it uses most.

Example:

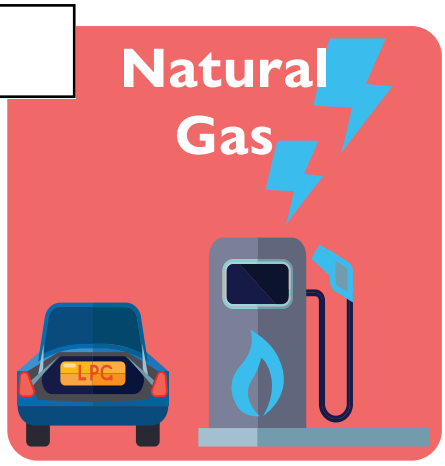
- Highest share = 1
- Lower shares = 2, 3, 4, etc.

Mark ☒ if you think that particular sources are not used to generate power for your country.

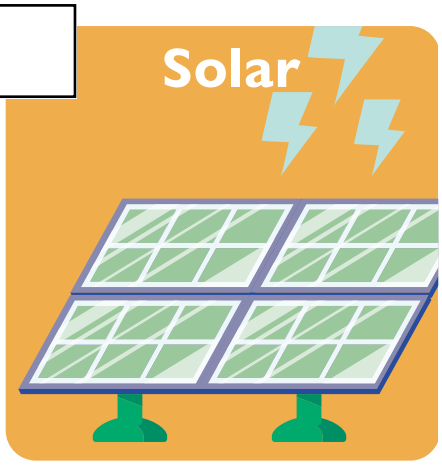
☐



☐



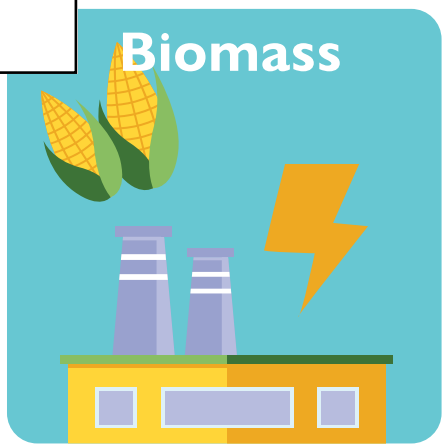
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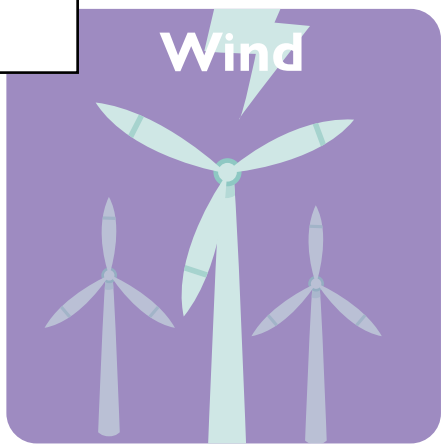
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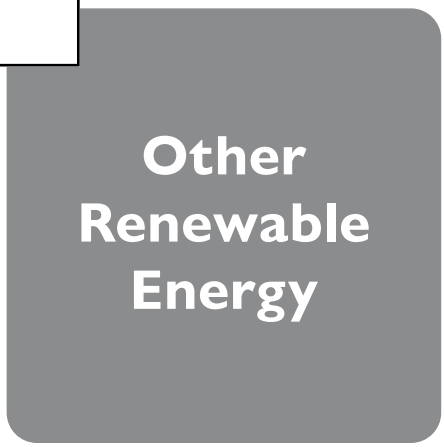
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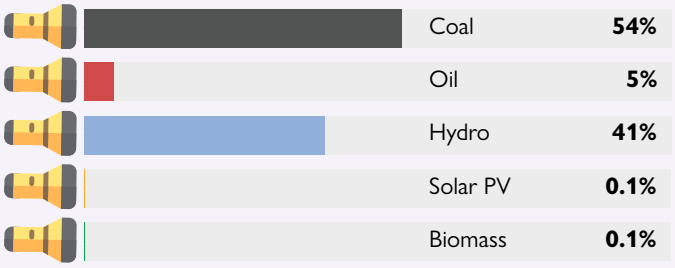
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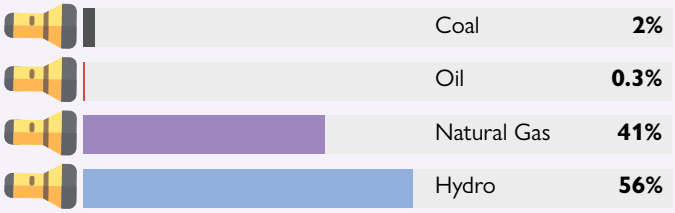
Check your answers ⟶

POWER GENERATION
BY COUNTRY

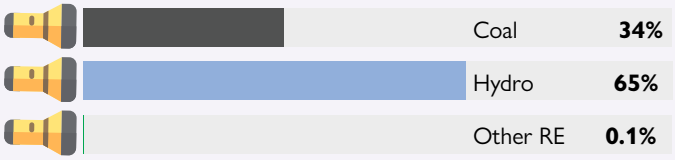
CAMBODIA
2017 Power Generation
6,633 Gwh



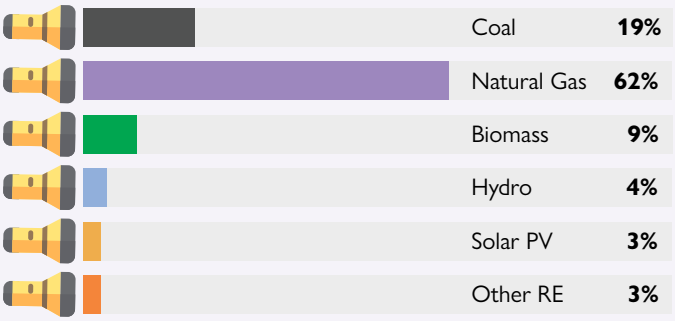
MYANMAR
2017 Power Generation
19,920 Gwh



LAO PDR
2017 Power Generation
31,740 Gwh



THAILAND
2018 Power Generation
187,362 Gwh



Data source: ASEAN-German Energy Programme (AGEP)

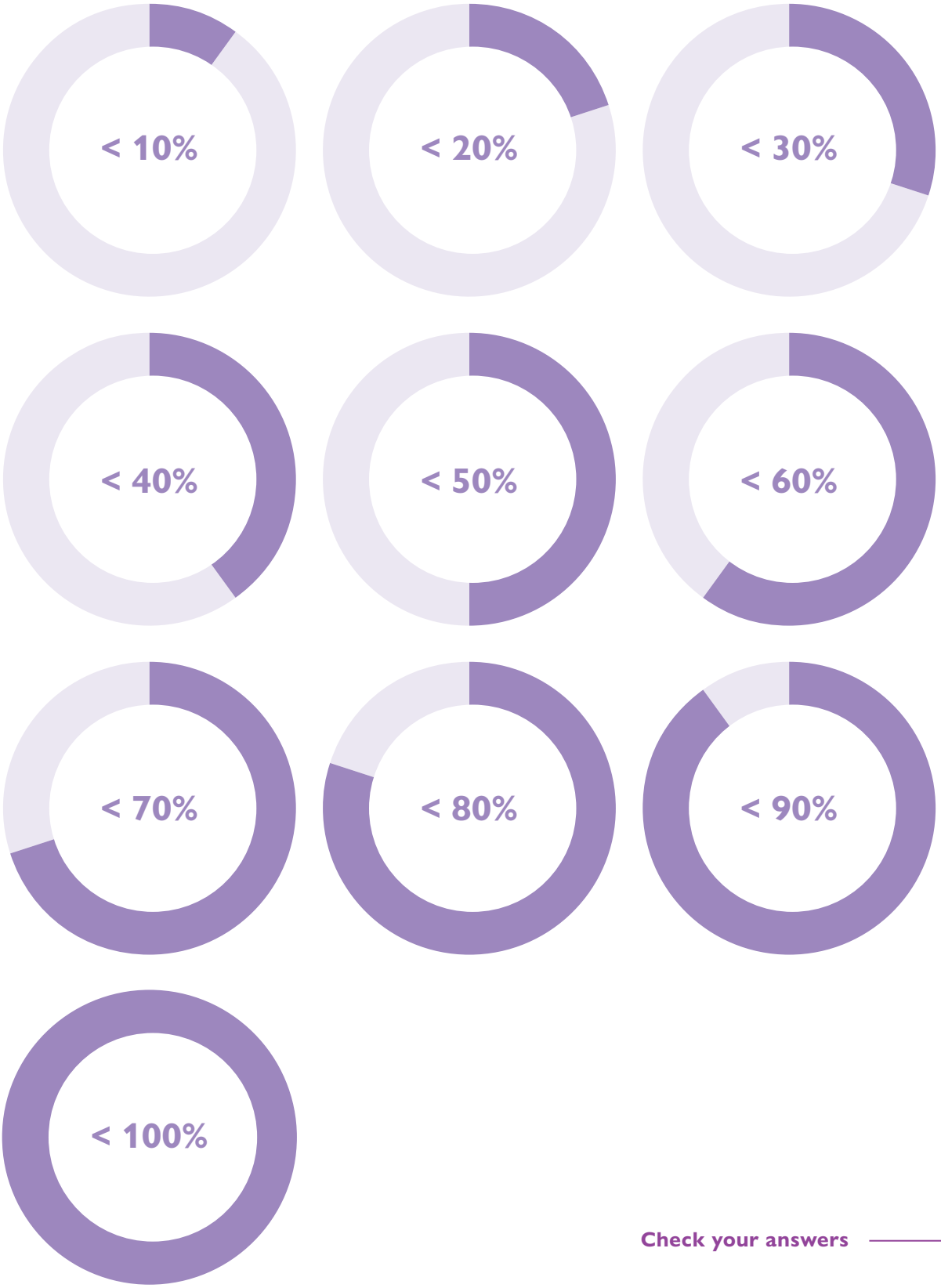
https://agep.aseanenergy.org/ SCAN ME

ENERGY QUIZ 2

ACCESS TO CLEAN COOKING

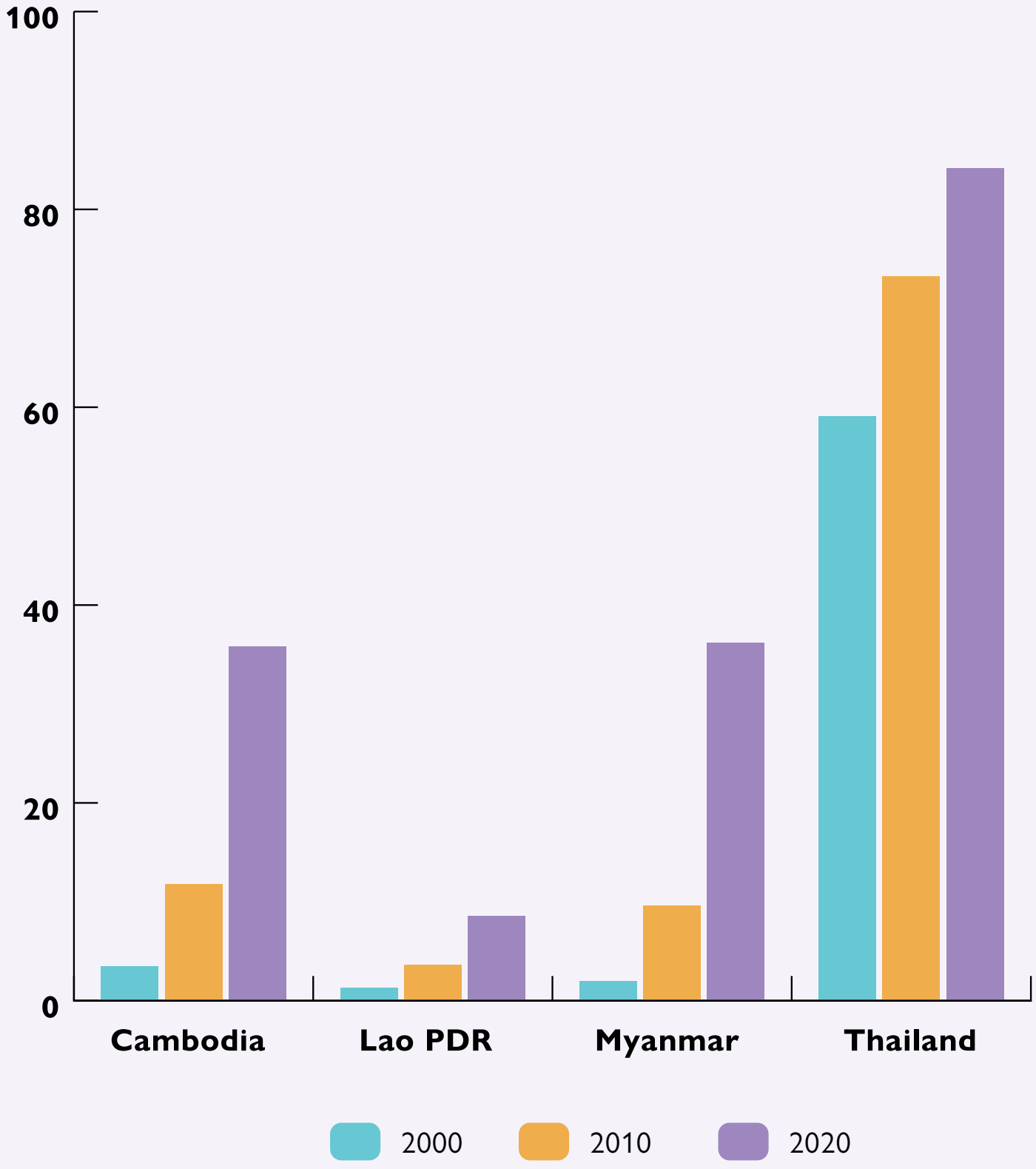
The share of the population in ASEAN that has access to clean cooking varies greatly between countries. According to the ASEAN Centre for Energy (ACE), as of 2017 around 60 million households or 240 million people, were still cooking with traditional biomass or non-modern fuels in ASEAN (ACE, 2020).

Task: Estimate percentage of population in your country with **access to clean cooking in 2020**.



Check your answers →

SHARE OF POPULATION WITH ACCESS TO CLEAN COOKING



Source: WHO (2022)

ENERGY QUIZ 3

ENERGY USAGE

Fill in the blank spaces!

The thick dust on a light bulb can block up to _____% of the light.

Each time we open our refrigerator, it lets up to _____% of cold air out.

Air conditioning, heating, and ventilating systems make up for _____% of the total energy use in the commercial sector.

When we turn an incandescent light bulb on, only _____% of the electricity used is turned into light while _____% of it is wasted as heat.

We can save up to _____% of energy when switching to a compact fluorescent as compared to a regular bulb. Another plus of a compact fluorescent is that it can last up to four years.

Check your answers →



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ENERGY USAGE

Answers

The thick dust on a light bulb can block up to 50 % of the light.

Each time we open our refrigerator, it lets up to 30 % of cold air out.

Air conditioning, heating, and ventilating systems make up for 40-60 % of the total energy use in the commercial sector.

When we turn an incandescent light bulb on, only 10 % of the electricity used is turned into light while 90 % of it is wasted as heat.

We can save up to 75 % of energy when switching to a compact fluorescent as compared to a regular bulb. Another plus of a compact fluorescent is that it can last up to four years.

Data source: https://www.c-asean.org/post/fun-fact-about-energy SCAN ME

© Rido81

1.3.2

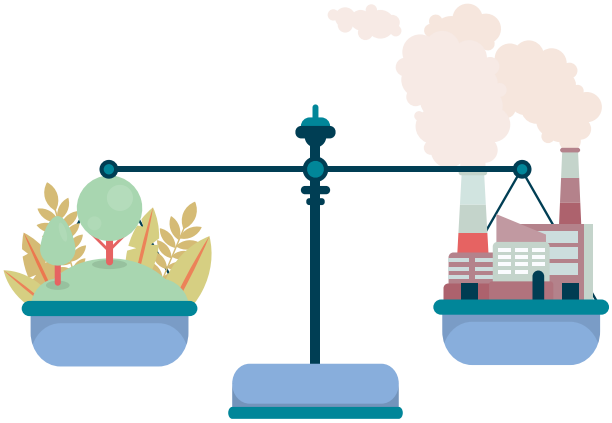
RENEWABLE ENERGY VS. NON-RENEWABLE ENERGY

Age Group: 15 years old and above

Time Required: 30-40 minutes for card game part and 2 - 3 hours for reflection questions research

Group Size: Recommended to do in pair or small group(s)

Location: It can be done anywhere. Indoor is preferable to prevent wind blowing all the cards away. It might be helpful to be somewhere with internet access to find the info you might need.



Materials:

1. Card decks 1, 2 and 3
2. Flipchart paper and a marker
3. Glue or adhesive tape
4. My Community's Energy Sources Worksheet

Learning Objectives:

By the end of this activity, participants will...

- ...be able to correctly identify the properties of the energy sources
- ...recognize the challenges of utilizing each source of energy, such as high initial costs, technical issues, and potential environmental impacts
- ...be able to critically evaluate the pros and cons of different energy sources and how can they apply that knowledge to their community context

Preparing materials: Print the 3 card decks provided and proceed to cut them out into individual pieces. Organize them in 3 decks according to the type and size of the cards.

CARD DECK 1

Energy Card

PLACE THE RIGHT SOURCE OF ENERGY IN THIS BLOCK	A type of energy that is generated by utilizing as a fuel source, typically through processes like fuel cells of combustion.
	Pros:
	Cons:

CARD DECK 2

Energy Source



CARD DECK 3

Pros & Cons

Pros	Pros	Pros	**Pros:**
•	•	•	• Uses the most abundant element • No harmful emissions when used as a fuel • Can be used in a variety of applications • Has a high energy-to-weight ratio
Cons	Cons	Cons	**Cons:**
•	•	•	• Producing hydrogen using renewable energy sources can be energy-intensive and costly. • Safety risks due to its flammability and the potential for leaks or explosions.

ACTIVITY INSTRUCTIONS

Step 1: Identify and match the energy source

- Spread all the energy cards (deck 1) on the table
- Read the description provided, one card at a time
- Based on the description, identify the "Energy Source" (deck 2 cards) that match with the description and place the identified Energy Source card on the first column on the energy card. Glue or tape them to the card.
- Repeat the same process and complete the matching of energy sources with their property descriptions.

Step 2: Matching Pros & Cons with each the energy source

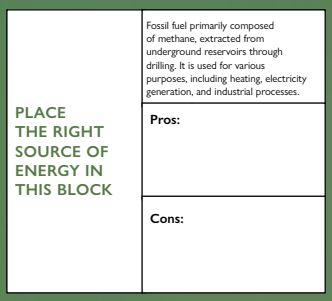
- Look at the Pros & Cons card (deck 3), one card at a time, and match each card with the Energy source. Glue or tape the Pros & Cons card on the Energy card. Repeat the same process until you match all the Pros & Cons cards to the Energy cards.

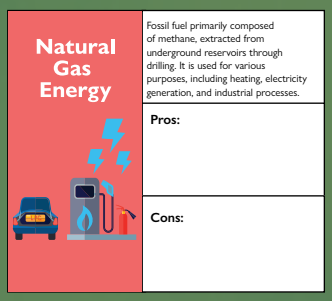
Step 3: Renewable Energy VS Non-Renewable Energy

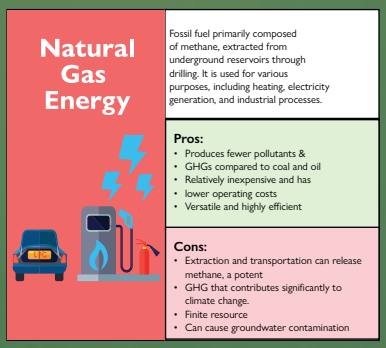
- Use a marker pen to divide a flipchart paper into 2 sections. Write "Renewable Energy" on the left side of the paper and write "Non-Renewable Energy" on the right side of the paper
- Look at all the Energy cards and identify which energy sources are renewable and which ones are non-renewable. Place each card on the corresponding side of the flipchart paper.

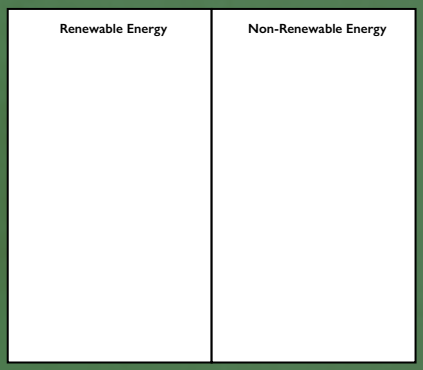
Step 4: Explore and reflect on the current and potential renewable energy sources in your community, along with related policies.

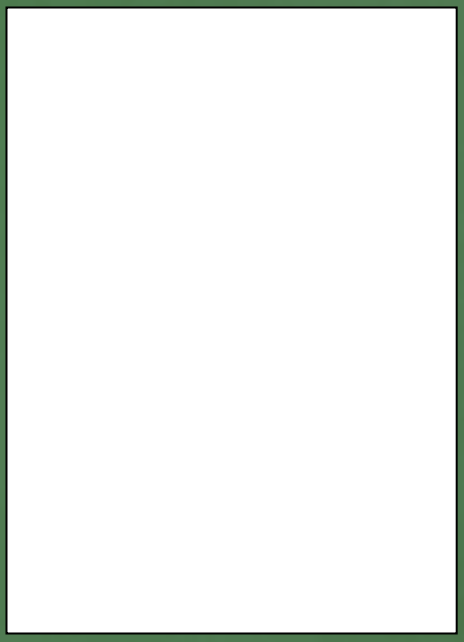
- Use the "My Community's Energy Sources Worksheet" with the guiding questions to explore and reflect on the current and potential renewable energy sources in your community, as well as the related policies.





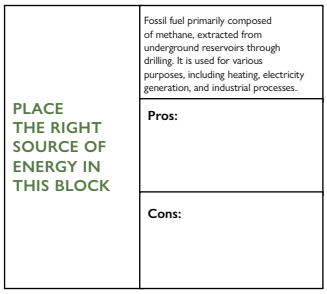






CARD DECK 1 ENERGY CARD

Instructions:
Print this page on one-sided paper (A4) and cut it into individual pieces. See picture below.



PLACE THE RIGHT SOURCE OF ENERGY IN THIS BLOCK	Fossil fuel primarily composed of methane, extracted from underground reservoirs through drilling. It is used for various purposes, including heating, electricity generation, and industrial processes
	Pros:
	Cons:

PLACE THE RIGHT SOURCE OF ENERGY IN THIS BLOCK	A type of energy that is generated by utilizing hydrogen as a fuel source, typically through processes like fuel cells or combustion
	Pros:
	Cons:

PLACE THE RIGHT SOURCE OF ENERGY IN THIS BLOCK	Used to generate energy by burning liquid petroleum products for various applications, including heating buildings, generating electricity, and powering vehicles
	Pros:
	Cons:

PLACE THE RIGHT SOURCE OF ENERGY IN THIS BLOCK	Harnessing the kinetic energy of ocean tides as they rise and fall to turn turbines placed underwater to generate power
	Pros:
	Cons:

PLACE THE RIGHT SOURCE OF ENERGY IN THIS BLOCK	Energy comes from Uranium which is mined underground. It generates electricity by splitting atoms, releasing heat to produce steam that drives turbines to generate electricity.
	Pros:
	Cons:

PLACE THE RIGHT SOURCE OF ENERGY IN THIS BLOCK	Energy that is produced by burning of the black materials mined from deep underground to generate heat, which is then used to produce electricity.
	Pros:
	Cons:

PLACE THE RIGHT SOURCE OF ENERGY IN THIS BLOCK	Energy that is produced by burning organic materials like wood, crops, and waste to generate heat and electricity.
	Pros:
	Cons:

PLACE THE RIGHT SOURCE OF ENERGY IN THIS BLOCK	Conversion of kinetic energy of wind into electrical power
	Pros:
	Cons:

PLACE THE RIGHT SOURCE OF ENERGY IN THIS BLOCK	Generating electricity & heat by using the natural heat from inside the Earth
	Pros:
	Cons:

PLACE THE RIGHT SOURCE OF ENERGY IN THIS BLOCK	Conversion of energy from sunlight into electricity
	Pros:
	Cons:

PLACE THE RIGHT SOURCE OF ENERGY IN THIS BLOCK	Harnessing the energy of flowing or falling water
	Pros:
	Cons:

CARD DECK 2

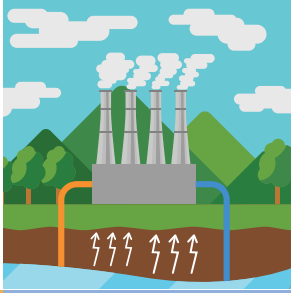
ENERGY SOURCE CARD

Instructions:
Print this page on one-sided paper (A4) and cut it into individual pieces.

Stack them all into one pile.



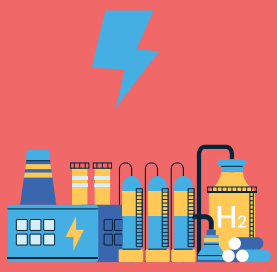
Geothermal Energy



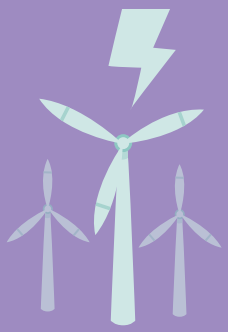
Biomass Energy



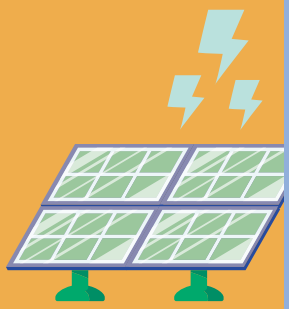
Hydrogen Energy



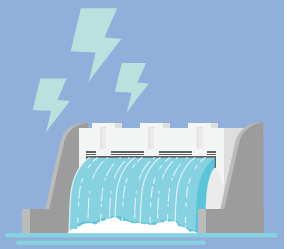
Wind Energy



Solar Energy



Hydro Energy



Nuclear Energy



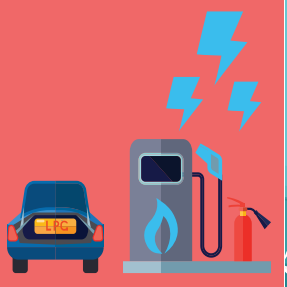
Crude Oil Energy



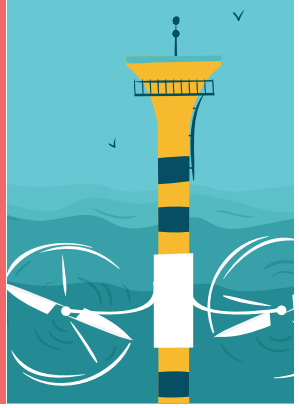
Coal Energy



Natural Gas Energy



Tidal Energy



CARD DECK 3 ENERGY SOURCE PROS & CONS

Instructions:
Print this page on a paper (A4) and cut it into individual pieces
(Pros & Cons together = 1 piece)

Stack them all together into one pile.

Pros:
- Harnesses heat from within the Earth, making it a virtually inexhaustible energy source
- Reliable and consistent energy production

Cons:
- Dependent of geological conditions
- Make significant environmental impacts from drilling

Pros:
- Uses the most abundant element
- No harmful emissions when used as a fuel
- Can be used in a variety of applications
- Has a high energy-to-weight ratio

Cons:
- Producing hydrogen using renewable energy sources can be energy-intensive and costly
- Safety risks due to its flammability and the potential for leaks or explosions.

Pros:
- Utilizing the abundant resource
- Cheap when produced in scale
- Minimal GHGs release once the equipment is installed.
- Occupy minimal land area, allowing land beneath them to be used for other purposes

Cons:
- Unreliable production - dependent of wind speed and direction
- Local people often dislike the noise of the turbines

Pros:
- Minimal environmental impact
- Low maintenance & long lifespan
- Has been used widely
- Scalability - can be scaled up or down to meet different energy needs, from small residential to large scale

Cons:
- Initial high installation costs
- Energy production depending on weather and time of day
- Requires ample space for installation
- Storage can be expensive

Pros:
- Extremely reliable
- High energy density, making it a highly efficient source of energy
- Can produce large amounts of electricity
- Low GHGs emission

Cons:
- Has radioactive waste that requires long-term storage & management, posing environmental & safety concerns
- High upfront costs
- Uranium, the primary fuel is finite

Pros:
- Cheap energy
- Quite reliable production
- Low carbon emission once the equipment is installed.

Cons:
- Unreliable production
- Installation of equipment can have a significant environmental impacts on coastline & marine ecosystems

Pros:
- Cheap when produced in scale
- Low carbon emission once the equipment is installed.

Cons:
- Expensive to build
- Large local impacts, sometimes causing the community relocation.
- Disrupts freshwater ecosystems

Pros:
- Reduce organic materials in landfill
- Reduces waste and greenhouse gas emissions

Cons:
- Can compete with food production
- Possibly causing deforestation for more farming area
- Transportation & storage issues
- Fluctuating availability & supply

Pros:
- Relatively affordable energy
- Reliable production of energy
- Widely available fossil fuel found around the world and existing infrastructure are designed to use this energy source

Cons:
- Releases pollutants contributing to air pollution and negative health impacts
- Significant contributor to global greenhouse gas emissions and climate change

Pros:
- Extensive infrastructure for extraction, refining, and distribution exists, facilitating its use and availability
- High energy density and versatile, supporting diverse industries

Cons:
- Releases pollutants and particulate matter, contributing to air pollution & climate change
- Extraction and transportation can lead to habitat destruction, posing severe environmental risks

Pros:
- Produces fewer pollutants & GHGs compared to coal and oil
- Relatively inexpensive and has lower operating costs
- Versatile and highly efficient

Cons:
- Extraction and transportation can release methane, a potent GHG that contributes significantly to climate change
- Finite resource
- Can cause groundwater contamination

MY COMMUNITY'S
ENERGY SOURCES WORKSHEET

Objective: Explore, research and reflect on the current and potential renewable energy sources in your community, along with related policies

Instructions: Look at your community and consider the following questions

Looking for more information? Visit Chapter 1 for additional resources

1. **Current Power Source:** What is the current power source for the electricity generation in your city / community?

2. **Renewable Energy Potential:** What is the most appropriate renewable energy source for electricity in your city or community in 10-15 years? Explain your answer here.

PLACE YOUR RENEWABLE ENERGY CARD HERE

3. **Supporting Policies:** Is there currently any policy in your country that supports this type of renewable energy source? Find the name of the law and/or article that supports renewable energy in your country.

ANSWER KEY 1

Natural Gas Energy

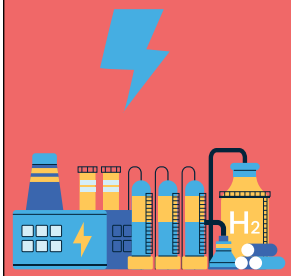


Fossil fuel primarily composed of methane, extracted from underground reservoirs through drilling. It is used for various purposes, including heating, electricity generation, and industrial processes

Pros:
- Produces fewer pollutants & GHGs compared to coal and oil
- Relatively inexpensive and has lower operating costs
- Versatile and highly efficient

Cons:
- Extraction and transportation can release methane, a potent GHG that contributes significantly to climate change
- Finite resource
- Can cause groundwater contamination

Hydrogen Energy



A type of energy that is generated by utilizing hydrogen as a fuel source, typically through processes like fuel cells or combustion

Pros:
- Uses the most abundant element
- No harmful emissions when used as a fuel
- Can be used in a variety of applications
- Has a high energy-to-weight ratio

Cons:
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- Safety risks due to its flammability and the potential for leaks or explosions.

Crude Oil Energy

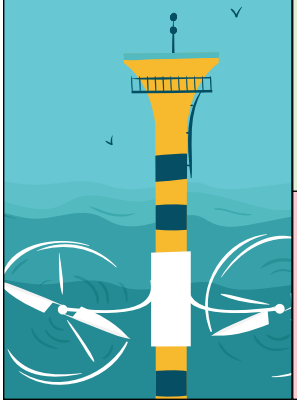


Used to generate energy by burning liquid petroleum products for various applications, including heating buildings, generating electricity, and powering vehicles

Pros:
- Extremely reliable
- High energy density, making it a highly efficient source of energy
- Can produce large amounts of electricity
- Low GHGs emission

Cons:
- Has radioactive waste that requires long-term storage & management, posing environmental & safety concerns
- High upfront costs
- Uranium, the primary fuel is finite

Tidal Energy



Harnessing the kinetic energy of ocean tides as they rise and fall to turn turbines placed underwater to generate power

Pros:
- Cheap energy
- Quite reliable production
- Low carbon emission once the equipment is installed.

Cons:
- Unreliable production
- Installation of equipment can have a significant environmental impacts on coastline & marine ecosystems

Nuclear Energy



Energy comes from Uranium which is mined underground. It generates electricity by splitting atoms, releasing heat to produce steam that drives turbines to generate electricity.

Pros:
- Extensive infrastructure for extraction, refining, and distribution exists, facilitating its use and availability
- High energy density and versatile, supporting diverse industries

Cons:
- Releases pollutants and particulate matter, contributing to air pollution & climate change
- Extraction and transportation can lead to habitat destruction, posing severe environmental risks

Coal Energy



Energy that is produced by burning of the black materials mined from deep underground to generate heat, which is then used to produce electricity.

Pros:
- Relatively affordable energy
- Reliable production of energy
- Widely available fossil fuel found around the world and existing infrastructure are designed to use this energy source

Cons:
- Releases pollutants contributing to air pollution and negative health impacts
- Significant contributor to global greenhouse gas emissions and climate change

Biomass Energy

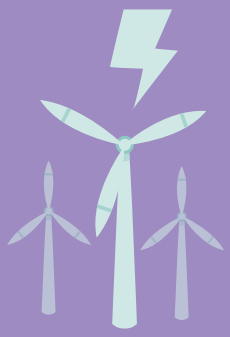


Energy that is produced by burning organic materials like wood, crops, and waste to generate heat and electricity.

Pros:
- Reduce organic materials in landfill
- Reduces waste and greenhouse gas emissions

Cons:
- Can compete with food production
- Possibly causing deforestation for more farming area
- Transportation & storage issues
- Fluctuating availability & supply

Wind Energy

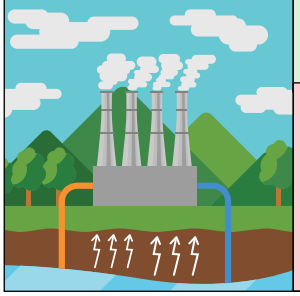


Conversion of kinetic energy of wind into electrical power

Pros:
- Utilizing the abundant resource
- Cheap when produced in scale
- Minimal GHGs release once the equipment is installed.
- Occupy minimal land area, allowing land beneath them to be used for other purposes

Cons:
- Unreliable production - dependent of wind speed and direction
- Local people often dislike the noise of the turbines

Geothermal Energy

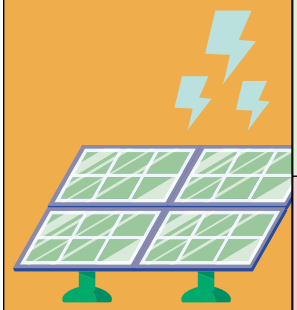


Generating electricity & heat by using the natural heat from inside the Earth

Pros:
- Harnesses heat from within the Earth, making it a virtually inexhaustible energy source
- Reliable and consistent energy production

Cons:
- Dependent of geological conditions
- Make significant environmental impacts from drilling

Solar Energy

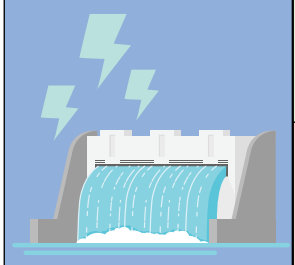


Conversion of energy from sunlight into electricity

Pros:
- Minimal environmental impact
- Low maintenance & long lifespan
- Has been used widely
- Scalability - can be scaled up or down to meet different energy needs, from small residential to large scale

Cons:
- Initial high installation costs
- Energy production depending on weather and time of day
- Requires ample space for installation
- Storage can be expensive

Hydro Energy



Harnessing the energy of flowing or falling water

Pros:
- Cheap when produced in scale
- Low carbon emission once the equipment is installed.

Cons:
- Expensive to build
- Large local impacts, sometimes causing the community relocation.
- Disrupts freshwater ecosystems

ANSWER KEY 2

Renewable Energy	Non-Renewable Energy
Solar	Crude Oil
Hydrogen	Coal
Hydro	Natural Gas
Wind	Nuclear
Tidal	
Biomass	

Note: Many people mistakenly consider nuclear energy a renewable source; however, it is not classified as renewable because the uranium used in the process is finite.

Uranium, the primary fuel for nuclear reactors, is a naturally occurring element found in limited quantities in the Earth's crust. While there are substantial reserves of uranium worldwide, they are not inexhaustible. The process of extracting, refining, and enriching uranium also has environmental impacts and energy requirements.

Due to the finite nature of uranium reserves and the challenges associated with nuclear waste disposal, nuclear energy is not considered a renewable energy source. Instead, it is classified as a low-carbon but non-renewable energy option.

1.3.3

RENEWABLE ENERGY ALTERNATIVES

Renewable energy is energy from a source that can be maintained in a constant supply over time. Six main renewable energy sources exist: water, sun, wind, biomass, energy from within the earth, and hydrogen power. Since the beginning of time, these renewable energy sources have provided warmth, movement, light; in short, energy for life. From early sailing ships to high production wind farms; from ancient civilizations to future generations, solar, wind, water and biomass have been primary sources of power for our everyday needs. With a growing concern on climate change and the shortage of fossil-fuel based energy and advancements in technology, the integration of renewable energy poses real opportunities and real challenges for today and for our future.



Age Group: 15 years old and above

Time Required: 2-3 hours

Group Size: This activity can be done individually or as a small group

Materials:

1. Renewable Energy Research Template
2. Phone or computer with access to the Internet

Activity Objectives / Participants will...

- Increase awareness and understanding of diverse renewable energy options and their role in sustainable development.
- Be able to compare and contrast different renewable energy sources and their potential impact on your community.
- Assess the potential suitability of different renewable energy sources for your community, considering local needs and conditions.

YOUR ASSIGNMENT

- Search the daily news or articles for instances of diverse renewable energy forms being utilized in your country. Once you locate the articles, thoroughly read them, and extract relevant information to address the questions pertaining to each renewable energy source.
- Feel free to select a few sources of energy that have the potential to be appropriate for your community. You do not have to research all sources of energy.
- Use the research template with questions provided in this document for your research.

A. Bioenergy/Biomass

Biomass is matter usually thought of as garbage. Some of it is just stuff lying around, like dead trees, tree branches, yard clippings, left-over crops, wood chips & bark and sawdust from lumber mills. It can even include used tires and livestock manure.

From the news story, how is this kind of energy used in your country currently?

_____

_____

Where is it being utilized here in your country?

_____

_____

What are the challenges to its use by most of the people in your country?

What are the pros (advantages) and cons (disadvantages) of using this form of energy here in your country?

Do you know of any use of bioenergy/biomass in your area? If so, explain.

List your information sources: (i.e. news channel, magazine, field guide, textbook, other book, brochure, television, radio, Internet, talking with a person, etc.)

B. Earth Energy

Geothermal Energy has been around for as long as the Earth has existed. "Geo" means earth, and "thermal" means heat, so geothermal means earth-heat. The different ways of obtaining it are through a Horizontal ground loop, a Coiled loop, a Vertical ground loop, Lake loop systems, or an Open loop.

From the news story, how is this kind of energy used in your country currently?

Where is it being utilized here in your country?

What are the challenges to its use by most of the people in your country?

What are the pros (advantages) and cons (disadvantages) of using this form of energy here in your country?

Do you know of any use of earth energy source in your own area? If so, explain.

List your information sources: (i.e. news channel, magazine, field guide, textbook, other book, brochure, television, radio, Internet, talking with a person, etc.)

C. Hydroelectric Energy

Hydroelectric power uses the kinetic energy of moving water to make electricity.

From the news story, how is this kind of energy used in your country currently?

Where is it being utilized here in your country?

What are the challenges to its use by most of the people in your country?

What are the pros (advantages) and cons (disadvantages) of using this form of energy here in your country?

Do you know of any use of hydroelectric energy source in your own area? If so, explain.

List your information sources: (i.e. news channel, magazine, field guide, textbook, other book, brochure, television, radio, Internet, talking with a person, etc.)

D. Solar Energy

Solar energy is a way of saying "energy that comes from the sun". Today, many buildings, organizations, schools, and even whole communities in GMS are powering themselves using the sun's energy.

From the news story, how is this kind of energy used in your country currently?

Where is it being utilized here in your country?

What are the challenges to its use by most of the people in your country?

What are the pros (advantages) and cons (disadvantages) of using this form of energy here in your country?

Do you know of any use of solar energy source in your own area? If so, explain.

List your information sources: (i.e. news channel, magazine, field guide, textbook, other book, brochure, television, radio, Internet, talking with a person, etc.)

E. Wind energy

Wind energy harnesses the kinetic energy of the wind and converts it into mechanical or electrical energy. This renewable energy source is becoming increasingly important in the GMS. When wind turbines capture wind energy, they convert it into electricity, providing a clean alternative to fossil fuels. In addition to generating electricity, wind energy has traditionally been used for various purposes, such as propelling boats with sails and pumping water from wells using windmills.

From the news story, how is this kind of energy used in your country currently?

Where is it being utilized here in your country?

What are the challenges to its use by most of the people in your country?

What are the pros (advantages) and cons (disadvantages) of using this form of energy here in your country?

Do you know of any use of wind energy in your own area? If so, explain.

List your information sources: (i.e. news channel, magazine, field guide, textbook, other book, brochure, television, radio, Internet, talking with a person, etc.)

F. Hydrogen energy

Hydrogen energy involves using hydrogen as a clean and versatile source of energy. It can be produced through methods like electrolysis, steam methane reforming, or thermochemical processes.

From the news story, how is this kind of energy used in your country currently?

Where is it being utilized here in your country?

What are the challenges to its use by most of the people in your country?

What are the pros (advantages) and cons (disadvantages) of using this form of energy here in your country?

Do you know of any use of hydrogen energy source in your own area? If so, explain.

List your information sources: (i.e. news channel, magazine, field guide, textbook, other book, brochure, television, radio, Internet, talking with a person, etc.)

My Thoughts and Feelings After Completing This Assignment:

1.4.1

WHAT AM I DRINKING, WHAT ARE THE IMPACTS, AND WHAT CHANGE CAN I MAKE OR INFLUENCE?



Problem solving (or problem influencing) is not just about having a fuller picture of the issues and challenges that define sustainability in the Mekong region's environment, societies and economies. It is also about using the insights that you get and deciding on what you can do to contribute with positive actions and outcomes that will add to the necessary systemic solutions. You can add a dimension of decision-making and action by asking the following questions:

- What impact does this have?
- Does this need to change?
- How can things be changed?

Age Group: 15 years old and above

Time Required: 90-120 minutes

Group Size: This activity can be done individually or as a small group

Materials:

- Flipchart or other large sheet of paper
- Permanent markers and pens
- Note cards or sticky notes.
- Worksheets (Task 1, 2 and 3)

Activity Objectives / Participants will...

The purpose of this activity is to provide deep insights into the environmental, social and economic impacts of a personal activity, as well as an understanding of what one can do to bring or influence positive change.

TASK 1: Take some time to investigate some or all of the following questions. Use the table with guiding questions provided on the next page to record your answers.

- Does my daily cup of tea, coffee or other drinks have an impact on any, or all, of the three thematic issues that we are focused on: 1) Sustainable Freshwater Ecosystems; 2) Energy Use, and 3) Climate Change
- Where does the energy come from to make my drink? Is it from a renewable or non-renewable source?
- Where does the water that is used in my drink come from? Where is its source?
- Where do the drink's ingredients come from? Are they locally grown or imported from outside my country or even the Mekong region?
- Is the drink that I mostly drink organic or non-organic?
- Are the cups that I mostly use disposable ones, or are they reusable?
- Where do the sugar, milk or creamer that I use in my drink come from?
- What happens to the coffee grounds / tea leaves, cups and other items used to make and drink my drink when it is finished? Where do they go?

TASK 2: Take some time to investigate the possible impacts that your daily cup of drink has...

...on the natural freshwater ecosystem environment in my country, and regionally.
...on energy production and use in my country, and regionally.
...on global climate change and its effects in my country, and regionally.
...on economic and social development in my country, and in the region.

and what can be done to reduce the negative impacts and increase the positive impacts.

Note: Look at the likely impacts you have identified, and check that you have covered all of the following:

- Local/global impacts
- Impacts in relation to coffee/tea and other drinks' ingredients growing, processing (eg. making instant coffee granules), transport, brewing, packaging and waste management
- Positive and negative impacts

Additional resources to support your thinking process when completing Tasks 1 & 2.



Source: How coffee is made?

Here's how your cup of coffee contributes to climate change:
https://theconversation.com/heres-how-your-cup-of-coffee-contributes-to-climate-change-196648

Wonder about the impact of your daily cup of coffee on the planet? Here's the bitter truth:
https://ideas.ted.com/truth-about-coffee-impact-on-environment-planet/

Coffee: here's the carbon cost of your daily cup – and how to make it climate-friendly:
https://theconversation.com/coffee-heres-the-carbon-cost-of-your-daily-cup-and-how-to-make-it-climate-friendly-152629



Source: How tea is made?

From Farm To Cup: The Environmental Impact of Tea:
https://www.thegoodboutique.com/inspiration/environmental-impact-of-tea

The Environmental Impact of Tea Production:
https://www.halmaritea.com/blog/environmental-impact-tea-production

The Carbon Footprint of a Cup of Tea:
https://circularecology.com/news/the-carbon-footprint-of-a-cup-of-tea

TEST 1 WHAT AM I DRINKING AND WHAT ARE THE IMPACTS ON THE ENVIRONMENT?

Instructions: Brainstorm answers (individually or as a group) to each of these questions in the table. Don't worry if you are having to make assumptions—jot down what you think are the most likely answers—no one will be holding you to the accuracy of your answers.

Note: You can print this table on an A0 size paper or redraw freehand the table onto a flipchart paper or other large sheet of paper, and use note cards or sticky notes to record your answers.

Insight Questions	Your answers
Where does the energy come from to make my drink? Is it from a renewable or non-renewable source?	
Where does the water that is used in my drink come from? Where is its source?	
Where does the drink's ingredients come from? Is it locally grown or imported from outside my country or even the Mekong region?	
Is the drink that I mostly drink organic or non-organic?	
Are the cups that I mostly use for my drink disposable ones or are they reusable?	
Where does the sugar, milk or creamer that I use in my drink come from?	
What happens to the coffee grounds / tea leaves, cups and other items used to make and drink my coffee when it is finished? Where do they go?	

TEST 2 WHAT AM I DRINKING AND WHAT ARE THE IMPACTS ON THE ENVIRONMENT?

Instructions: Individually or as a group, use the questions in the table below to identity the real and/or possible impacts that your daily cup of coffee or tea has on the three thematic areas within the Mekong Region: 1) Sustainable Freshwater Ecosystems; 2) Energy Use, 3) Climate Change and what can be done to reduce the negative impacts and increase positive impacts.

Look at the likely impacts you have identified, and check that you have covered all of the following:

- Local/global impacts
- Impacts in relation to coffee/tea growing, processing (e.g. making instant coffee granules), transport, coffee/tea making (ie making the cup of coffee/tea you drink), waste management
- Negative and positive impacts on the environment, society and economy

Impact Questions	**Negative Impacts** (local / global)	**Positive Impacts** (local / global)
What impact does my daily cup of coffee or tea have on the natural freshwater ecosystem environment in my country, and regionally?		
What impact does my daily cup of coffee or tea have on energy production and use in my country, and regionally?		
What impact does my daily cup of coffee or tea have on global climate change and its effects in my country, and regionally?		
What impact does my daily cup of coffee or tea have on economic and social development in my country, and in the region?		

TASK 3: What Change Can I Make or Influence?

Instructions:

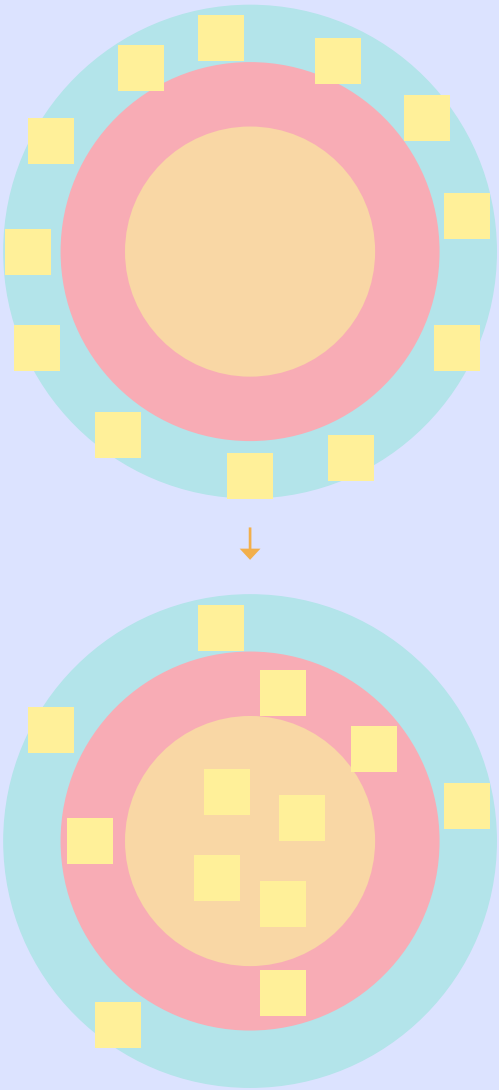


1. Take a large sheet of paper (a flipchart for example) and draw three concentric circles on it, making each large enough to fit in several sticky notes or similar slips of paper.
    - **Inner Circle** = Individual action that can influence
    - **Middle Circle** = School/university/organization actions to influence
    - **Outer Circle** = Outside of the power to influence by myself, my peers, and my school

2. Brainstorm what decision / actions could be taken to make your drink...
    - ...more environmentally sustainable in relation to freshwater ecosystems?
    - ...more environmentally sustainable in relation to energy production and consumption?
    - ...more environmentally sustainable in relation to climate change (mitigation of greenhouse gases and resiliency to climate change impacts)

3. Think of multiple things that could be done, and do not limit yourself to only one or two ideas. Be as imaginative as you can. For this activity your suggestions don't need to be totally economically, socially and politically feasible yet in relation to the global or national context of your own country.

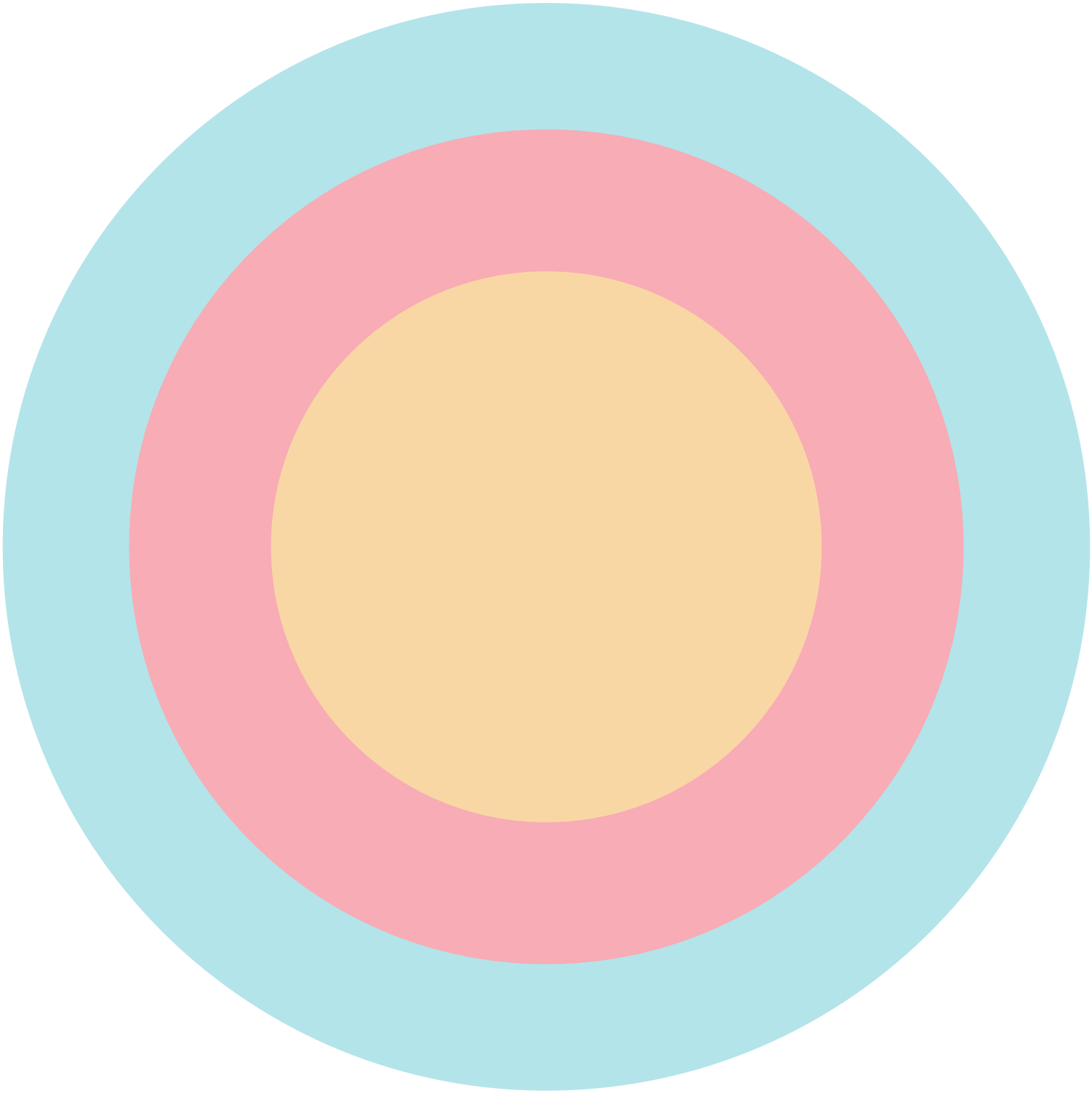
4. Write each suggestion on an individual sticky note, then...
    - Put all the notes on the outer circle of the paper, similar to this example.



5. Now begin to sort the points you have identified.
    - Which of them are feasible and could be undertaken by your school/college/organization (including things that the school/college/organization could do to influence others)?
        - Move these into the second circle
    - Keep any ideas that are either not feasible or outside the power of the school/college/organization in the outer circle.
    - Next, which of the ideas could you, as an individual, undertake (including those that you can influence your school/college/organization and peers to do something about)?
        - Move these into the inner circle and leave any that are outside your own power in the second circle.

TEST 3

WHAT CHANGE CAN I MAKE OR INFLUENCE?
ACTION INFLUENCE CIRCLE



Inner Circle = Individual action that can influence

Middle Circle = School/university / organization actions to influence

Outer Circle = Outside of the power to influence by myself, my peers, and my school

1.4.2

PIECES, PATTERNS AND PROCESSES



Age Group: 15 years old and above
(activities and depth can be adapted to age)

Group Size: Small team(s) of 3-9 people

Time Required:

- 30 minutes to 1 hour for introduction
- 2-5 hours for community investigation and data collection
- 1-2 hours for analysis
- 30 min to 1 hour for discussion and debrief

Materials:

- Field Notebook or Journals
- Binoculars (optional)
- Bird I.D. books or laminated sheets; Bird cutouts (optional)
- Macro-invertebrate sampling equipment (optional)
- Plant guide (e.g. wetland plant I.D. field guide) (optional)
- Pre-drawn large map of the investigation area (e.g. wetland and community)

Author/Source: Magic Eyes Chao Phraya Barge Program (ME-CPBP)

Activity Description
Pieces, Patterns and Processes is a learner-directed community investigation activity whereby youth, in teams, develop their own investigative questions based on some background knowledge, as well as their own interests, within three areas: Environment, Economy and Society/Culture. Participants then go into the community to investigate and try to find the answers to their questions using observation, interviewing, map making and, if possible, hands-on experience in the process. This activity gives youth the opportunity to discover things about the lives and livelihood of their community, its people and their relationship to their environment. The primary objective of this activity is to have youth discover the connections and relationships that exist between the three sectors mentioned above and then examine their own lives and communities within this context.

Materials:

- Understand how to conduct a community investigation outside of the classroom as part of a field research team.
- Develop skills in observation, questioning, interviewing, field data collection, critical thinking, analysis and synthesis, systems thinking and map-making.
- Gain a greater understanding of the interdependent relationships that exist in any community between the environment, economy and society/culture.

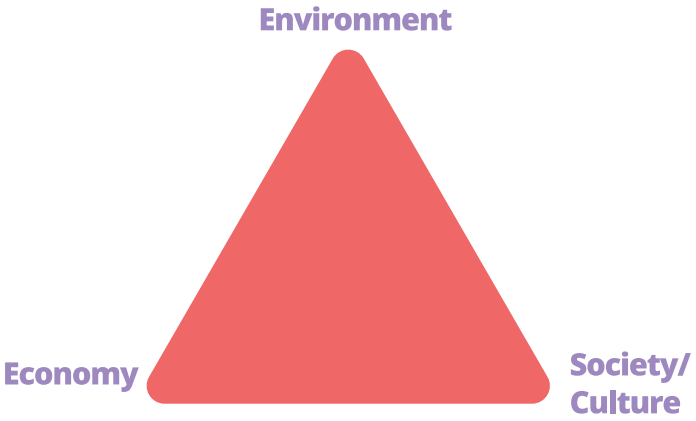
BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Pieces, Patterns and Processes (PPP) is adapted from the various needs assessment techniques (PRA, RRA and other similar approaches) used by NGOs and others to learn more about a particular place in a way that directly involves the local community development stakeholders. PPP asks participants to develop preliminary questions that will enable them to more effectively go into a community to collect information (the pieces) through a variety of methods, including: observation, interviewing, mapping, etc. The pieces of information will at times seem quite isolated in nature, but as more pieces are collected, trends and patterns that illustrate the connections, linkages and relationships that are inherent within the community relating to environment, economy and society/culture should start to become obvious.

Activity Outline

1 Review some background information on the ecosystem area and/or community that you will be investigating, incorporating as much info as possible about the history, culture and other aspects that will help you form your own more penetrating questions. If you have a map of the community, sometimes this helps to visualize some of the issues that you may want to ask questions about and investigate more closely.

2 Go into the natural environment and community, then investigate it from three different angles: Environment, Economy and Society/Culture (the PPP triangle). If you are unclear about what the three different angles mean, brainstorm the meaning of each angle with your friends. The buzzwords that you come up with will provide a good basis for you to develop investigative questions.



3 If you work with your team, first divide your team into three expert groups to form your own discovery questions. Sit together and discuss what you want to find out as well as come up with 5–10 questions that will focus your investigation. Sometimes one person in your group is needed to help facilitate the group's discussion flow and question formulation. Start with easy questions that begin with "what" then add some "how" and "why" questions. Each group must also agree on a symbol for each of the common features you think that you will encounter in the community to go on the map (e.g. the economy group may want to draw a small bag or soda bottle to represent a shop selling goods).

4 After each "expert" group has agreed on the investigative questions...
Optional: divide the expert group members into 2-3 new groups so that each new group has 1-3 representatives from each of the "expert" groups.

- Go into the natural environment/community, seeking the answers to your self-generated questions, while mapping the features that you see that relate to your focus. Time should be given to stop and interview local people (interviewing people of different ages, genders, types of work, etc. is preferred to just talking to several people with similar characteristics).
- At times there may be opportunities for you or your team to have hands-on experiences in the community (e.g. join in making pottery, planting rice, making mud bricks, etc.) while carrying out your PPP activities.

5 Once your team returns from the community, you should meet back together to discuss what you found and organize your information. Place the large master map on the floor. Write Environment, Economy, Society/ Culture on the paper around the map. Leave space for you to write down the facts. Create the map and record your observations with a legend with all the symbols, and you may write 3-4 additional facts (pieces) that you discovered while in the community.

6 After the map is complete, all the teams sit together around the map. Each one will make a short presentation of what they found out. The team members should encourage each other to listen and ask questions after each presentation. The connections and linkages that exist between the three sectors (Environment, Economy, Society/Culture) should be discussed. Additional questions about the meaning, causes, consequences, processes occurring, etc. should be raised.

7 Finally, you should prioritise your stakeholders, in order to focus on who you should be concentrating your time, attention and how to develop your advocacy message that reflects your stakeholders concerns.

WORKSHEET

1 **Identify the map symbols:** With your team, imaging yourself walking in to a community, what are some common features you will encounter? Brainstorm and agree on a symbol for each of the common features to go on the map.

Symbol	Representation of...

2 **Develop investigation questions:** Sit together with your team and discuss what you want to find out while going into the community. Come up with 5–10 questions that help you to focus your investigation.

What You Want to Find Out	What Questions We Should Ask	What We Should Observe

INTERVIEW NOTE PAGE

COMMUNITY MAP

1.4.3

MAPPING A THEMATIC ISSUE WITH THE COMPASS OF SUSTAINABILITY



Age Group: 15 years old and above (activities and depth can be adapted to age)

Group Size: While this activity can be done individually, working together as a team provides a broader range of perspectives for examining an issue more comprehensively

Time Required: 2-3 hours

Materials:

- Compass of Sustainability diagram
- Flipchart or other large sheet of paper or whiteboard (if working in a group)
- Permanent markers or pens
- Sticky notes (optional)
- Reference materials related to the thematic issue (articles, reports, data, etc.)

Learning Objectives: The aim of this exercise is to prompt you to examine an issue of your interest through a more comprehensive lens. This approach will enable you to have a clearer understanding of the causes and effects of the issue on the community, empowering you to identify effective solutions. When carrying out this activity you will...

- ...identify the factors or elements connected to the central issue challenges from the four dimensions of sustainability.
- ...discover some causal (cause and effect) system linkages between these factors / elements.
- ...and through discussion with your peers, better understand the dynamics that surround this issue

Setting up:
Print and use the Compass Mapping Template provided on the last page or draw the Compass of Sustainability on a large sheet of paper or whiteboard, **dividing it into the four quadrants: Nature, Economy, Society, and Well-being**.



As a team, agree on a thematic issue you want to explore in greater depth through mapping.

Here are some examples of issues you could choose from, but you are not limited to this list:

- Water pollution
- Transition to renewable energy
- Adapting to the impacts of Climate Change

Write the issue in the middle of the Compass.

Next, collect data, articles, and other resources related to the thematic issue. This information will help you fill in each of the four parts of the compass.

Then, review the Compass of Sustainability to ensure that everyone on your team understands it!

Overview of Compass of Sustainability

The Compass Is Divided Into Four Main Parts: the Quadrants	
N (North) **Nature**	<u>ENVIRONMENTAL ASPECTS AND NATURAL SYSTEMS</u> **Example Components:** Plants, trees, environment, forest, ecosystems, animals, oceans, the biosphere **Example Issues:** Pollution, deforestation, land clearing, coral bleaching, threatened species, enhanced greenhouse effect, extreme weather pattern, natural disasters **(Things to do with the natural environment)**
E (East) **Economy**	<u>ECONOMIC ACTIVITIES AND FINANCIAL SYSTEMS</u> **Example Components:** Money, industry, factories, shops, jobs, trade, market, investment **Example Issues:** Unemployment, affordable housing, unfair trade, access to resources, distribution of wealth, poverty and affluence, economic viability, cost effectiveness **(Things to do with money and generating income to survive)**

S (South) **Society**	**SOCIAL SYSTEMS, COMMUNITIES, LAWS AND REGULATIONS, AND CULTURES** **Example Components:** Government, culture, friends, community, local councils, religious groups, political parties, sporting clubs, laws, policies **Example Issues:** Design for human scale/community, social justice, racism, war and peace, democracy, equality, gender issues, youth suicide, immigration issues, community building, cultural sustainability, indigenous issues, human rights **(Things to that affect people as a whole)**
W (West) **Well-being**	**INDIVIDUAL HEALTH AND HAPPINESS** **Example Components:** Personal health, fitness, sense of happiness and satisfaction, religion and spirituality **Example Issues:** Toxic chemicals and health impacts, aesthetics, nutrition, personal development, spiritual development, health problems, disease, personal income, career, sense of self and purpose, happiness **(Things to that affect people personally)**

Watch this video to learn more about the Compass and how to use it to explore an issue of your interest.



YouTube: The Sustainability Compass
Source: Compass Education (www.compasseducation.org)

Activity Steps

Step 1: Brainstorm and list factors

Begin brainstorming the various factors related to the thematic issue, one Compass quadrant at a time.

- List them under the relevant quadrant.
- You can use sticky notes for easy adjustments if needed.
- Some factors may overlap multiple quadrants. Place these factors at the intersections of relevant quadrants.

Step 2: Analyze interconnections

- Discuss with your teammates to identify how factors in different quadrants interrelate in a cause-and-effect relationship (e.g. how agriculture produce affects people's income).
- Draw arrows to indicate connections between them. The arrowhead should point to the factors that are affected by other factors.
- Repeat the same process until you feel satisfied with the map your team has produced.

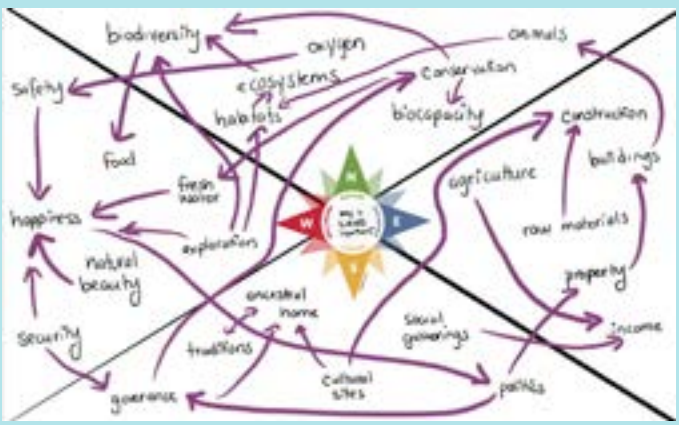
Step 3: Reflection

- Together with your teammates, discuss and reflect on the key insights and patterns that emerge from the mapping process.
  - What are the key connections that you see?
  - What do you notice from seeing all of these connections?
  - Are there any items on the map that are more connected, compared to others?
- Based on the insights, brainstorm potential strategies to address the thematic issue of sustainably.
- Ensure the strategies consider the impacts across all four quadrants of the compass.

By following these steps, you can create a comprehensive and balanced understanding of a thematic issue through the lens of sustainability, facilitating informed decision-making and strategic planning.



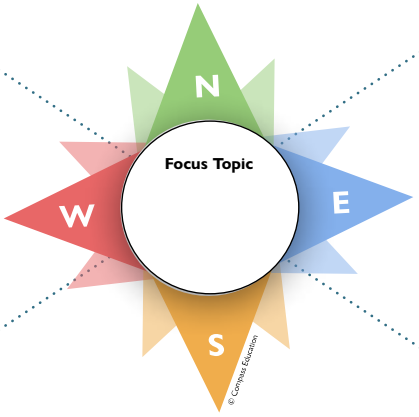




COMPASS THEMATIC ISSUE MAPPING TEMPLATE

NATURE

WELL-BEING



ECONOMY

SOCIETY

CHAPTER 2
DEVELOPING AN ADVOCACY POSITION



INTRODUCTION

In Chapter 1 you explored a number of seemingly entrenched environmental issues that your country and/or community is facing. You may feel overwhelmed by the scope of the problems and unsure about how to help solve them. Don't stress out, as no one can work on all these issues. What makes most sense is to **focus your energy and passion on the one issue that inspires and motivates you the most**. While the urgency of certain issues is important, the sustainability and staying power of your advocacy work is even more crucial.

Concentrating on one issue that you are passionate about will provide you with the experience, drive and resilience to keep working towards solutions. Everyone has a specific environmental concern that resonates with them deeply. Identifying and dedicating yourself to that issue is essential for long-term commitment and impact.



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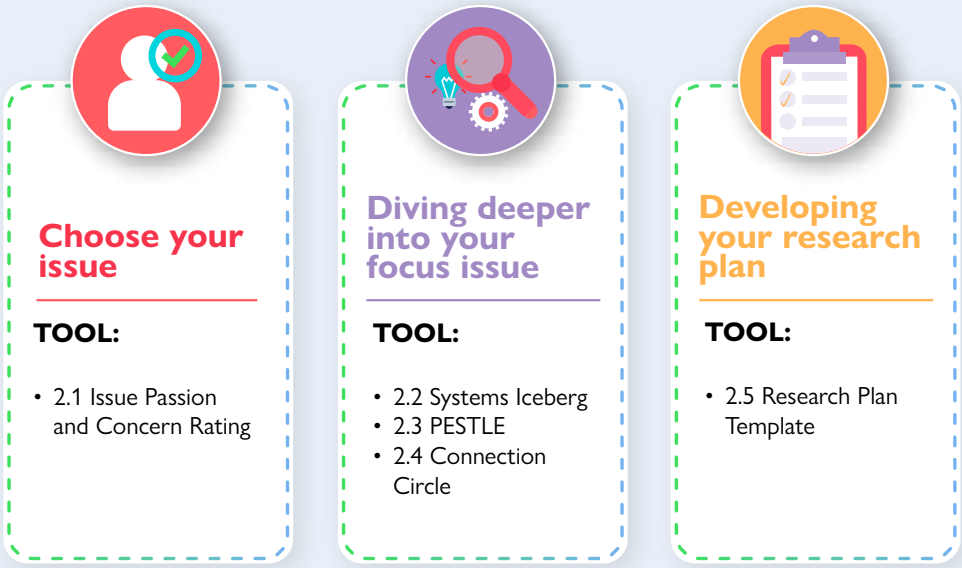
WHAT YOU WILL GAIN FROM WORKING THROUGH THIS CHAPTER OF THE TOOLKIT

Chapter 2 is all about finding the issue that you connect with most, and then exploring the issue deeply so that you feel capable and confident in your position when engaging with and addressing people of different perspectives, different ages, different economic statuses, and even different positions of power and decision-making roles. By working through the series of systems thinking analysis tools, you and your team will build and strengthen your knowledge base regarding the root cause drivers and dynamic, systemic causal relationships that influence the issue you are working on. The insights you gain from using these tools will empower you to ask the right questions and connect with the appropriate individuals when strategizing and conducting your research on the issue. Creating a well-thought-out research plan is essential for laying a solid groundwork to effectively convey a message that strikes a chord with your specific group of stakeholders.

Prior to delving into your research plan, we will explore some suggested research approaches that you may wish to employ for your research endeavors. These methods include engaging in interviews with important stakeholders, utilizing in-person or online survey questionnaires, conducting focus group sessions, and/or organizing workshops.

Within this chapter, you will find four tools that can be utilized sequentially, leveraging the insights obtained from each tool to inform the next one, culminating in the final tool, before moving on to your research plan using the provided template. Alternatively, you have the flexibility to select only the tools that you find most beneficial before immersing yourself in your research.

TOOLS IN THIS CHAPTER



Chapter 2 Tools & Template Description

- **Issue Passion and Concern Rating:** If you have many issues you're interested in but can't decide where to focus your efforts, the Passion and Concern Rating Tool can help you narrow this down to one. This tool allows you to evaluate your level of passion and concern for various issues across three main topic areas, helping you identify the issue that most inspires you to take action.
- **Systems Iceberg:** Working through the Systems Iceberg model helps you uncover deeper insights into complex issues by analyzing underlying structures and mental models that influence visible events and patterns. Note: The outputs from the Systems Iceberg analysis, especially at the systems level, can be explored more deeply using the PESTLE analysis tool.
- **PESTLE:** A PESTLE analysis helps you gain a comprehensive understanding of the Political, Economic, Social, Technological, Legal, and Environmental contexts influencing your chosen issue, which will help you to develop an effective advocacy strategy. Note: Insights from both the Systems Iceberg and PESTLE analysis will inform the elements that you can use with the Connection Circle tool.
- **Connection Circle:** This is a tool to help you visualize and understand the complex interactions and dependencies among different components within your issue, promoting a more holistic approach to your advocacy efforts.
- **Research Plan Template:** provides you with a structured approach to identifying stakeholders and gathering, organizing, and analyzing information, enhancing your ability to effectively address and develop a base foundation for your future advocacy work.

CASE STUDY

An advocacy group from northern Thailand leveraged data and research to hold the government accountable for neglecting its duty to protect public health. Their research revealed that the safe dust standards of PM 2.5 were frequently exceeded in Chiang Mai, Chiang Rai, Lamphun, and Mae Hong Son from January to April each year. As a result, about 1,700 people, including activists, academics from Chiang Mai University, and local residents, filed a lawsuit in the Administrative Court against the Prime Minister and the National Environment Commission. They accused these entities of failing to address the high levels of annual smog density, which they claim is shortening their lives by about five years.

The group demanded the Prime Minister use Section 9 of the 1992 Environmental Quality Promotion and Protection Act when a serious disaster occurs by ordering concerned agencies to tackle the problem. They also demanded that the commission abide by the government's action plan to tackle the dust problem that was announced in 2019.

As a result, the Chiang Mai Administrative Court, in its ruling, mandated the National Environmental Commission to propose **"preventive methods to solve pollution both short and long term"** within the stipulated 90-day period.


Chiang Mai court gives govt 90 days for plan to combat smog

Source: Bangkok Post


Press Release > Air Pollution | Climate & Energy | The issues we work on

Thai Court rules on PRTR implementation to be carried out by Industry Ministry

Source: Greenpeace Southeast Asia

CHOOSING YOUR ISSUE

Choosing an issue to advocate for is a deeply personal decision that often stems from a combination of passion, personal experiences, knowledge, and a desire to create positive change. In this toolkit, we are mostly interested in three key topics: 1) sustainable freshwater ecosystem management; 2) climate change; and 3) renewable energy. There are many issues that connect with each of these three topic areas, some of which are special to one topic, and others that can be interrelated.

Remember that advocacy is a journey, and it's okay to evolve and adapt your focus over time as you learn and grow in your advocacy work. By choosing an issue that aligns with your values and interests, you can make a meaningful impact and contribute to positive change in your community and beyond.

Here are some things you can do to help you choose your advocacy issue:

- **Identify your passions and interests:** To be an effective advocate, you should be passionate about the issues related to the three main topic areas and clear about the changes you seek. This passion fuels your commitment and drives you to achieve your advocacy goals.
  - What environmental issues are you most passionate about? What makes you feel frustrated?

- **Reflect on your personal experiences:** Reflect on your personal experiences, challenges, or injustices you've faced or seen. These personal ties often fuel a compelling advocacy mission.
  - Do you have any personal experiences or connections to a particular environmental problem?

- **Research and educate yourself:** Dive into researching issues you care about. Understand the root causes, current challenges, and possible solutions. This knowledge will guide you in choosing the right focus for your advocacy efforts.
  - Is there sufficient data and research available to support advocacy efforts on this issue?
  - Can you identify credible sources of information and experts in the field?
  - What are the current policies and regulations related to this issue?
  - Are there upcoming policy changes or opportunities for advocacy within the legal framework?

- **Consider the impact and urgency:** Consider how urgent and impactful different causes are. Some issues might need immediate attention and have widespread effects, while others could be less urgent.
  - Are there any emerging environmental issues that need urgent attention?
  - Which environmental problems pose the greatest immediate threat to ecosystems or human health?
  - Which environmental issues are most pressing in your local community?
  - How do these issues affect the health, economy, and well-being of your community members?

- **Assess your skills and resources:** Think about what you're good at, like communicating, organizing, fundraising, researching, or networking. Figure out how you can use these skills to powerfully support the cause you care about.
  - Do you have access to the necessary resources and information to effectively advocate for this issue?

- **Connect with communities and organizations:** Get involved with communities and groups that share your interests. Join events, volunteer, or discussions to learn from those who are already making an impact in advocacy.
  - Are there existing organizations or groups working on this issue that you can collaborate with?
  - Are there potential partners (NGOs, community groups, academic institutions) that can support your advocacy?

- **Listen and learn from others:** Stay open to new ideas and different opinions. Make an effort to talk and learn from people with diverse backgrounds and viewpoints to deepen your understanding of the world around you.

- **Evaluate the feasibility and sustainability of your efforts:** Think about how realistic and sustainable it is to advocate for a specific issue.
  - Check if you have the time, resources, and support necessary to dedicate to long-term advocacy.
  - What mechanisms can you potentially put in place to maintain momentum and support for this issue?

- **Trust your instincts:** Ultimately, go with your gut instincts and pick an advocacy issue that resonates with you. Your passion and commitment are key to powering your efforts and making a meaningful impact.

Use this Passion and Concern Rating tool to gauge how passionate or concerned you are about various issues within the three main topics.

Tool 2.1: Issue Passion and Concern Rating – What Issue Are You Most Passionate And Concerned About?


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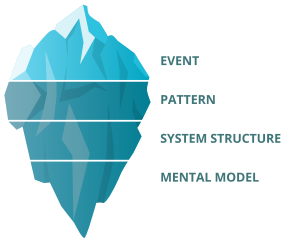
DIVE DEEPER INTO YOUR FOCUS ISSUE

What do you already know about this issue?
Everyone starts with some knowledge about an issue, even if they don't realize how much they know. Start by jotting down your thoughts and ideas on the problem you want to tackle. Consider these questions to guide your thinking:

- What is my issue?
- What are the main drivers and causes of my focus issue?
- What is happening as a result of this issue? What are the effects and impacts?
- What are young people and/or others currently doing to help solve this issue?
- What environmental issues are you most passionate about? What makes you feel frustrated?

Tools to help you to analyze and understand your issue deeper
We have selected a suite of different tools for you and your advocacy team to deepen your understanding of the issue you are addressing. It is preferable to use these tools sequentially to gain a comprehensive insight. Using these tools in isolation may not provide the depth of understanding we aim to achieve.

Tool 2.2: Systems Iceberg



Systems thinking is like zooming out to see the big picture when tackling a problem. Whether you're examining an environmental issue, an ecosystem, a business, or a complex social problem, it's about understanding how different parts of the system interact and affect each other. The Systems Iceberg is a valuable tool for uncovering the deeper causes of the environmental issues you care about. Think of an iceberg: what you see above the surface is just a small part of the larger story hidden underwater. The Systems Iceberg model helps you uncover the hidden forces at play—like underlying patterns and causes—giving you a clearer view of why things are the way they are. By using this approach, you can spot connections and solutions that aren't immediately obvious, making you more effective in tackling these issues.

The basic steps in using the Systems Iceberg tool to analyze an issue are:

1. **Spot the Events**: Start by noticing the obvious events happening around you, like news headlines. These are just the surface level and don't tell the whole story. These are specific moments or facts that stand out and are easily observed.

2. **Find Patterns:** Look for repeated behaviors or trends in these events. Patterns are recurring behaviors or outcomes that suggest a consistency over time. These patterns help you predict what might happen next and give you a better understanding of the issue. By recognizing patterns, you can begin to anticipate future events and gain a deeper understanding of the issue.

3. **Dig into the Structures:** Check out the systems, rules, and norms that create these patterns. This includes things like policies and social norms. Understanding these helps explain why things keep happening in the same way.

4. **Uncover Beliefs:** Go deeper to explore the beliefs, values, and assumptions that shape these structures. These mental models influence how we see and act in the world. To truly solve an issue, we might need to rethink these beliefs.

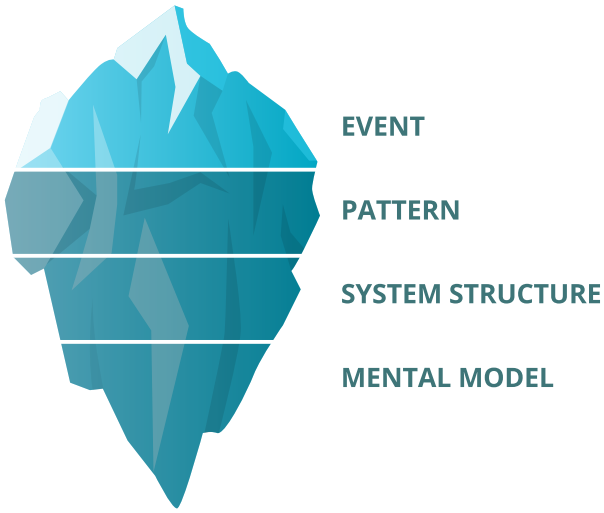
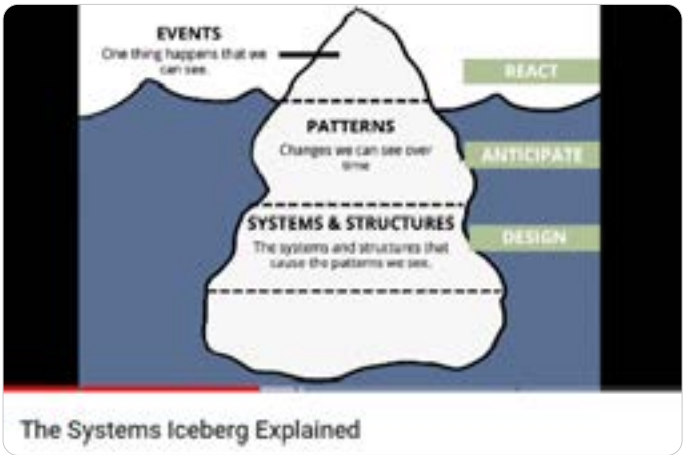


Figure 13. Systems Iceberg

Find the Systems Iceberg Tool Instructions PowerPoint and Iceberg Template here. You can use this tool individually, but it will be more effective if done in small groups of 5-6 people.

ALSO WATCH! To help you understand how to apply the Systems Iceberg to your issue so that you can draw insights to how external factors are linked with the issue, either as a driver, cause, or response, click on the link to the Compass Education video below.

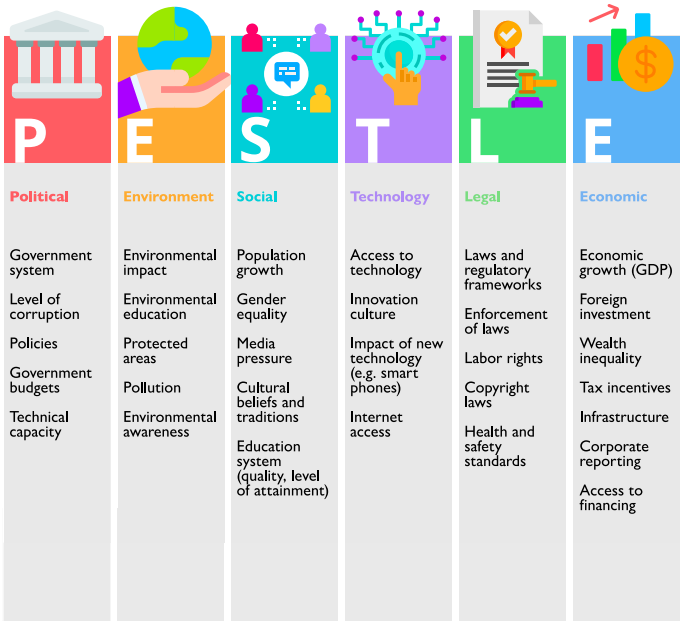


Watch YouTube video here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y6h2_EcOOcM

Tool 2.3: PESTLE - Political, Environment, Social, Technological, Legal and Economic Analysis Tool

A PESTLE Analysis helps you look at what's happening in society that affects your issue. The tool is usually associated with business marketing strategy, but it can be adapted to help you put together a successful environmental advocacy plan. To effectively use the PESTLE Analysis tool, it will be good if you and your team have already gone through Chapter 1 and practiced some of the activities found there on the three thematic topic areas. The PESTLE Analysis tool helps you to identify the Political, Environment, Social, Technological, Legal and Economic factors which have some influence and/or impact on the issue that you want to address.

Note: It will be helpful to have used the Systems Iceberg tool before you jump into the PESTLE Analysis, as the iceberg analysis process will stimulate your thinking towards the six aspects of PESTLE, and open up your thinking for using the PESTLE Analysis tool.



You will find the Youth Environmental Advocacy PESTLE Analysis Tool Instructions Worksheet and Template here. You can use this tool individually, but it will be a more effective analysis tool if done in small groups of 4-6 people.

GO TO THIS WEBSITE (https://www.groupmap.com/portfolio/pestle-analysis) to help you understand how to apply the PESTLE Analysis tool to your issue. It can help you draw insights into the underlying factors influencing and impacting the issues that you have chosen to tackle.

ANOTHER OPTION IS TO WATCH THE VIDEO BELOW to also get some additional insights in how to effectively use the PESTLE Analysis tool for environmental issue advocacy planning.



Watch YouTube video here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NaofchxbhXo

Tool 2.4: Systems Connection Circle

A Connection Circle is an easy visual tool that shows how different parts of a story are related. You start with a big circle and label all the parts of the story randomly around the edge. Then you draw lines to connect the related parts. This creates a web of connections, helping you spot key areas where changes can have a big impact. The example below shows a Connection Circle about women's economic empowerment.

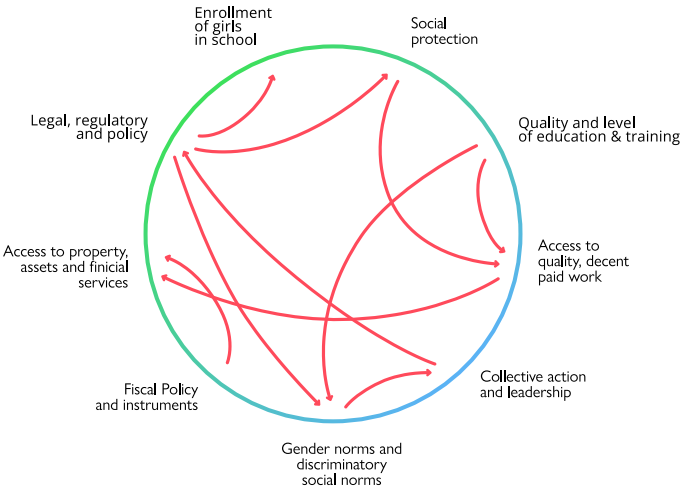


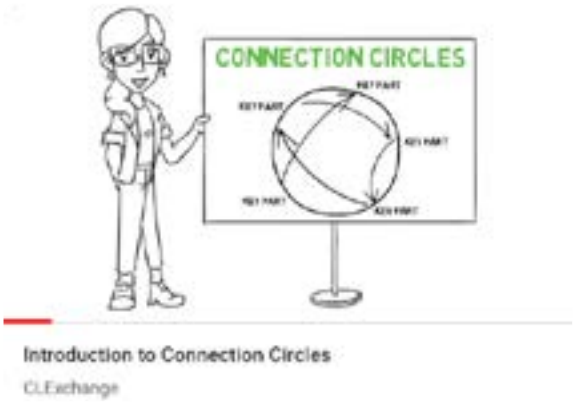
Figure 14. Connection Circle on Women's Economic Empowerment

To most effectively use a systems thinking tool such as the Connection Circle, there are several essential driving questions that you should be asking yourself and your team. Examples include the following:

- What are the key variables or elements in this story and what are the cause and effect relationships between the variables?
- Where are the important connection hubs? Why are they so connected?
- Are there any complete feedback loops present?
- After gaining a big-picture view of the various interconnections between linked elements in the system, what insights can be reached? Do they provide any ideas on interventions that can change the system in a positive way?

WATCH THE VIDEO below to also get some additional insights in how to effectively use the **Connection Circle Systems Analysis tool** for your issue.

You will find the Connection Circle Systems Analysis tool instructions and worksheet template here. You can use this tool individually, but it will be more if you use it in a small group of 4-6 people.



Watch YouTube video here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hUb7SmgDE1Q

DIGGING DEEPER BY RESEARCHING YOUR ISSUE

Research is very important for advocacy work because it helps you really understand the issue you're tackling. Here are some key reasons why research matters for your environmental advocacy:

- **Understanding the Issue**: Research helps advocates gain a deep understanding of the root causes, drivers, and impacts of the issue they are advocating for. This knowledge is essential for developing informed strategies and interventions to address the problem effectively.
- **Identifying Solutions:** Research enables advocates to identify evidence-based solutions and best practices that have been successful in addressing similar issues elsewhere. By analyzing existing research and case studies, advocates can determine which approaches are most likely to be effective in their specific context.
- **Building Credibility:** Conducting thorough research and citing reliable sources enhances the credibility of advocacy efforts. Evidence-based advocacy is more likely to be taken seriously by policymakers, stakeholders, and the public, increasing the likelihood of achieving positive outcomes.
- **Informing Advocacy Strategies:** Research provides insights into the political, social, economic, and cultural factors that influence the issue and shape the policy landscape. This information helps advocates develop strategic advocacy plans tailored to the specific context and target audience.
- **Mobilizing Support:** Research findings can be used to mobilize support from stakeholders, decision-makers, and the public. Compelling data and statistics can highlight the urgency and importance of the issue, garnering attention and support for advocacy efforts.

Key Factors to Consider when Designing Your Advocacy Research Plan and Methods

No matter if you're advocating for social, environmental, health, or other issues, there are some key things to keep in mind to make sure your research is strong, trustworthy, and makes a difference. Here are some important factors to think about:

- **Define Clear Objectives:** Clearly articulate the goals of your advocacy research. What change are you hoping to achieve? Who is your target audience? Understanding your end goal will guide your research design and methodology.
- **Research Design:** Choose a research design that best suits your objectives. This could be qualitative, quantitative, or mixed methods research. Each has its strengths and can be chosen based on the type of data you need to collect and the questions you aim to answer.
- **Evidence-Based Approach:** Ensure that your research is evidence-based. This means relying on credible sources of information, using validated data collection tools, and adhering to rigorous research methodologies. The strength of your advocacy largely depends on the reliability of your evidence.
- **Stakeholder Engagement:** Identify and engage with stakeholders who are affected by the issue or who have influence over it. This can include community members, policymakers, experts, and other relevant organizations. Their insights can enrich your research and help tailor your advocacy messages.

- **Ethical Considerations:** Adhere to ethical standards in conducting research, especially when dealing with sensitive topics or vulnerable populations. This includes obtaining informed consent from your respondents, ensuring confidentiality, and minimizing harm.
- **Data Analysis and Interpretation:** Analyze your data systematically and interpret the findings in the context of your advocacy objectives. Be transparent about your methodology and cautious about overstating your conclusions.
- **Communicating Your Findings:** Develop a strategic plan for disseminating your research findings. This should consider the most effective channels and formats for reaching your target audience, whether through policy briefs, social media, presentations, or media outreach.
- **Actionable Recommendations:** Your research should culminate in clear, actionable recommendations. These should be practical, specific, and tailored to the stakeholders you aim to influence.

Advocacy Requires Participatory Research Before You Make a Plan

Participatory research is an approach that actively involves the people or communities being studied as active participants in the research process. Rather than being conducted solely by external researchers, it emphasizes collaboration, partnership, and shared decision-making. This method is recommended for an environmental advocacy team because it engages community members, leveraging their local knowledge and experiences to gather accurate data and develop tailored solutions. It builds trust, empowers the community, and fosters collaboration, making advocacy efforts more credible, practical, and effective. By involving those directly impacted, the advocacy plan becomes more relevant and has a greater chance of achieving sustainable outcomes.

Some important questions about research…

- **Why collect evidence?** Evidence consists of information, data, or findings that back up a specific claim, hypothesis, argument, or conclusion. It forms the basis of research, validating the credibility and dependability of research results. Evidence can take different shapes, such as empirical data, statistical analysis, expert viewpoints, literature reviews, case studies, and theoretical frameworks. Compelling and solid evidence is crucial for gaining support from others for an idea or plan of action.
- **How much evidence do you need for your advocacy research?** The amount of evidence required varies depending on who you're trying to persuade. Government officials may need a significant amount of national data to be convinced, while NGOs or school principals might be swayed by feedback from a small group of students and parents. To determine the right amount and type of evidence, consider seeking advice from successful advocates or directly asking your target audience: "What information would impact your decision-making on this issue?"
- **What kind of evidence is necessary?** Different types of evidence will resonate with different individuals and groups. For example, data and statistics are effective in convincing corporations and government officials, especially when they are tied to outcomes concerning the economy, health, and quality of life. On the other hand, some stakeholders respond better to personal stories that illustrate the human impact of an issue.

Important Note: Before determining the types of evidence needed, consider the stakeholders you will need to persuade and win over to support your advocacy efforts.



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SPEAK WITH PEOPLE

Why is it important to speak with others when planning advocacy initiatives?

Engaging and talking with a diverse range of individuals is essential for the effectiveness and success of advocacy work.

Understanding their perspectives, viewpoints, and opinions is key. It is crucial for advocates to actively listen to ideas and engage in meaningful conversations. Whether it's chatting with friends, coworkers, neighbors, elders, service workers, business owners, community leaders, educators, or fellow changemakers, seeking input from a variety of sources is vital. Even if you don't necessarily agree with every viewpoint, staying open and attentive can lead to valuable insights that support your advocacy efforts in the long run.

What if you encounter disinterest when discussing your cause? Perhaps it's all in the approach. Some individuals may not feel connected to the issue or perceive its relevance to them. In such cases, it's essential to reflect on how you present the topic and consider different ways to spark their interest. Remember, every interaction provides valuable information that can inform and strengthen your advocacy work. Engaging with others and being receptive to feedback can lead to new perspectives and strategies for creating meaningful change.

TAP INTO EXISTING RESEARCH AND ONLINE MEDIA

The internet is a valuable resource for accessing research related to your advocacy issue, offering a cost-effective and convenient starting point. By leveraging the internet, you can explore a wealth of information without the need for extensive travel or significant expenses.

When conducting research, seek out a variety of sources such as research papers, reports, surveys, consultation notes, statistical data, policies, personal accounts, blogs, case studies and online media stories and articles. Connect with individuals actively engaged in or connected to the issue you are addressing to discover the types of information that are accessible and where to access them. This collaborative approach can provide valuable insights and help you gather the necessary data to support your advocacy efforts effectively.

Finally, tapping into online media is crucial for gathering current information and evidence when researching an environmental issue for a campaign, as it provides timely access to the latest developments, scientific studies, policy changes, and public opinion. Online platforms offer a vast array of resources, including news articles, research papers, expert analyzes, and social media discussions, which collectively help in understanding the multifaceted nature of the issue. Utilizing these sources ensures that the campaign is informed by the most recent and relevant data, enhancing its credibility and effectiveness in advocating for change and engaging stakeholders.

Check out some of the excellent sources of current and up-to-date information, articles, research, etc. in relation to the Greater Mekong Subregion in the textbox on the following page.



Sources of Information on GMS Topics and Issues

Mekong Eye (mekongeye.com)
Launched in 2015, Mekong Eye is a clearing house of reported environmental stories about the Mekong Region from regional media sources. It also produces original content in collaboration with local journalists from Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, Thailand, and Viet Nam. These stories are published on mekongeye.com and promoted on social media through @MekongEye on X, Facebook, and Instagram.

Open Development Mekong (ODM) (opendevelopmentmekong.net)
The ODM platform is an online network platform that supports data and digital rights for all citizens across the Mekong Region. Its target audience includes civil society, the private sector, government, academia, and marginalized communities, all of whom use ODM's extensive data repository for research, analysis, and decision-making. The ODM datahub has become a reliable and diverse platform, offering essential data and information on significant national and regional development issues.

A Mekong River Commission (MRC) Reports (mrcmekong.org)
The MRC is an intergovernmental organization for regional dialogue and cooperation in the Lower Mekong River Basin, established in 1995 through the Mekong Agreement between Cambodia, Laos, Thailand and Viet Nam. The organization serves as a regional platform for water diplomacy and a knowledge hub of water resources management for the sustainable development of the region.

Greater Mekong Sub-region Program (greatermekong.org)
The GMS Program supports the implementation of high-priority subregional projects in agriculture, energy, environment, health and human resource development, information and communication technology, tourism, transport, transport and trade facilitation, and urban development. The website is a rich source of reports and publications, news, and statistical data.



CONDUCT A SURVEY

Why conduct a survey? What are the benefits?
Surveys, which can be either on paper or online (e.g. Survey Monkey, Google Forms, etc.), are a great way to quickly gather information that reflects the views of the people and groups you want to influence. You can use surveys to learn about attitudes and reactions, understand opinions on various issues, and make your research more credible. Since surveys involve directly asking people questions, they provide firsthand information instead of relying on secondhand sources like written records.

You can use surveys to measure ideas or opinions about community issues related to your initiative. For example, you might want to know how many people see climate change as a threat to their future and what aspects of their personal lives they think are at risk because of it.

A survey helps you understand what a larger population is thinking, feeling, seeing, or experiencing by sampling a smaller group. Since you can't survey everyone in a community, it's crucial to ensure your sample group accurately represents the whole community. This means considering the different identities of the people you want to survey and making sure that all, including vulnerable and marginalized groups, are represented in your sample.

Choose how to collect the information

- Involve members of the local community in the design, planning and carrying out of the survey.
- Choose appropriate data collection methods for the group that you want to survey. Some methods could include selecting and interviewing people randomly in the street or sending out an online Google Forms questionnaire via email or QR code. You can also place surveys in a popular online location such as Dropbox, or ask partner organizations and groups to help you distribute the survey questionnaires.

Tips on choosing your survey questions
It is advisable to use open-ended questions, as opposed to closed (yes / no) questions if you want detailed responses. For example: "What do you think is the reason that people throw their waste in freshwater bodies like rivers?" If you want information that will be easy to analyze, ask closed questions, that only invite a "yes" or "no" response, or have multiple choice answers that the person can choose from.

Below is an example of a closed question: "To what extent do you agree or disagree that corruption is a significant problem in this region? Choose from the following options:
1) Strongly disagree, 2) Disagree, 3) Neither agree nor disagree, 4) Agree, 5) Strongly agree".

- Put the easier questions to answer at the beginning of the survey questionnaire (first or early on).
- Keep the survey as short as you possibly can (it should not take more than 10 minutes to complete) Note: Make a distinction between what you need to know and what you would like to know—which isn't essential.
- Start the survey questionnaire with what you most need to know, then see if you have time for more less important questions.

CHECK IT OUT! To help you with designing your survey questions, check out this Guide to the Design of Questionnaires from the University of Leeds in the UK. This guide is designed for students and novice researchers intending to carry out a questionnaire survey. It provides a compilation of dos and don'ts for good questionnaire design that will, if adopted, make data analysis easier and faster.

Below is a table containing some of the top free online survey tools. Please explore and find the one that best suits your needs and capacity.

Survey Tool	Free Plan	Conversational UI	In-App Feedback	Dedicated Mobile App	AI-Powered
SurveySparrow	√	√	√	√	√
Typeform	√	√	-	-	√
ProProfs	√	√	-	-	-
Jotform	√	-	√	√	√
Google Forms	√	-	-	-	-
QuestionPro	√	√	√	√	√



CONDUCT INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEWS

An informational interview is a conversation you have in order to gather information, not to get a job. It involves talking directly with people who have deep knowledge or experience in a field, industry, or role that interests you. The goal is to learn and get insights that you can't find online or in books, including firsthand stories and opinions about a specific issue or problem and its effects on different things.

Some benefits of conducting an information interview when researching an issue include:

- **Access to Insider Knowledge:** Individuals who are directly involved in a particular industry, discipline, or specific issue, can provide insights that are not available through secondary research sources. They can share firsthand experiences, trends, challenges, and opportunities related to the issue you want to address.
- **Gathering Interesting Anecdotal Stories and Testimonials:** Interviews are especially useful to gather individual personal stories and testimonials about the issue that you are focused on, and its effects and impacts on something that the person being interviewed observes and/or really cares about.
- **Networking Opportunities:** Informational interviews allow you to build relationships with professionals in your area of interest. These connections can offer support, advice, and potentially lead to further opportunities for cooperation and collaboration in the future.
- **Clarification of Goals and Expectations:** Speaking with someone associated with the issues of interest can help clarify what is required to succeed in addressing and improving the situation around your issue. It can also give you a realistic understanding of different perspectives on how to solve or change something that is connected with your issue of concern as an advocate.

Some tips for preparing for and conducting interviews

- **Define Your Objectives:** Understand why you are seeking an informational interview and what you hope to learn.
- **Research and Prepare:** Research the person you're interviewing and their organization. This preparation will help you ask informed and specific questions.
- **Be Professional:** Introduce yourself, explain why you're reaching out to them specifically, and be clear that you're seeking information, not a job.
- **Prepare Your Questions:** Have a list of questions ready, but be flexible. Your questions should be open-ended to encourage detailed responses. Focus on their experiences, decisions, and any advice they can offer.
- **Be Respectful of Their Time:** Clearly state how much time you're requesting (usually 15-30 minutes) and be willing to accommodate their schedule. Stick to the agreed time during the interview.
- **Create a Conversational Flow:** While it's important to ask your prepared questions, also allow the conversation to flow naturally. Be an active listener and show genuine interest in their responses.
- **Practice Good Etiquette:** Arrive on time if meeting in person or ensure your technology works if meeting virtually. Dress appropriately and thank them for their time at the beginning and end of the interview.
- **Ask for Additional Contacts:** If appropriate, ask if they can recommend anyone else you can speak with. This can help you expand your network and gain more insights.
- **Follow Up:** Send a thank-you note or email within 24 hours of the interview. Express your appreciation for their time and the information they shared. This helps in building a lasting professional relationship.

WATCH THESE VIDEOS!
Here are two short animated video tutorial clips on how to conduct a semi-structured interview. Take the time to watch both before you plan for your in-person interview.



https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nw9TOjyCWiM



https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HUg71M25VK4

CONDUCT A FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION

Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) should be used when you want to understand an issue at a deeper level than you can access with a survey questionnaire. They are helpful for adding meaning and understanding to existing knowledge or getting at the "why" and "how" of a topic. Planning and administering a FGD requires careful preparation and a thoughtful approach to engaging participants and eliciting valuable insights.

By following these steps, you can maximize the effectiveness of your FGD and contribute to the success of your research and/or advocacy efforts:

1. **Define Objectives:** Start by clearly defining the purpose of the FGD. Understand what you aim to achieve or learn from the discussion. This step guides the entire planning process, from participant selection to question design
2. **Identify and Recruit Participants:** Select participants who represent the target demographic or stakeholders relevant to your research or advocacy issue. Aim for diversity to capture a wide range of perspectives, but ensure participants have some commonality relevant to the discussion topic. Recruitment can be done through direct invitation, open calls, or through organizations and networks.
3. **Develop a Discussion Guide:** Create a structured guide that outlines the key questions and topics to be covered during the FGD. This guide should include open-ended questions to encourage discussion and allow for probing deeper into participants' thoughts and experiences. The guide should be flexible enough to allow for a natural flow of the conversation.
4. **Choose a Suitable Venue and Time:** Select a venue that is accessible and comfortable for all participants. Consider privacy and confidentiality, especially for sensitive topics. Schedule the FGD at a time convenient for most participants to ensure maximum attendance
5. **Assign Roles for the FGD Team:** A typical FGD team includes a moderator, who facilitates the discussion, and a note-taker or observer, who records the conversation and participant dynamics. Ensure the team is trained on their roles and the objectives of the FGD.
6. **Conduct the FGD:** The moderator should start the session by explaining the purpose of the FGD, the structure of the session, and any confidentiality considerations. Encourage participation from all attendees, manage dominant voices, and probe for deeper insights where necessary. The note-taker should capture key points, quotes, and any non-verbal cues.
7. **Analyze and Report Findings:** After conducting the FGD, analyze the data collected to identify themes, patterns, and insights. Transcribe recordings (if any) and use the discussion guide to structure the analysis. Present the findings in a report that outlines the key outcomes, supporting quotes, and recommendations or next steps.
8. **Follow-Up:** If necessary, follow up with participants to clarify ambiguous points or explore further insights. This step is also an opportunity to thank participants and share how their input will be used, respecting any confidentiality agreements.
9. **Evaluate the FGD Process:** Review the FGD process to identify what worked well and what could be improved. This evaluation can help refine future FGDs or other research activities.



https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SLHq8OH66vA

Some tips for conducting a FGD:

- Do not judge people who speak; accept what they say.
- Avoid leading statements and questions; questions should guide the discussion rather than solicit direct answers from each of the participants.
- Avoid dominating the discussion.
- Ask simple questions and only one question at a time.
- There are no right or wrong answers, only differing points of view.
- Record the session at all times.
- Ask all participants to give verbal consent before the session and after initiating the recording, even if they have already given their written consent.
- Two researchers should ideally be present at all times. One of them will serve as the facilitator who will directly interact with the group.



CONDUCT WORKSHOPS TO COLLECT INFORMATION

Workshops are a fantastic way to dive deeply into the topics you're passionate about and want to make a difference in. Think of workshops as super interactive sessions where you get to learn, discuss, and work on a specific topic or project. They're not your average boring lectures, workshops are all about hands-on learning, skill-building, and having fun while you're at it! It's like leveling up your knowledge and abilities in a way that really stays with you.

Facilitating a workshop:
Imagine being the ultimate guide to group learning and sharing—that's what facilitation is all about! It's like being the Most Valuable Player of teamwork, making things simpler and more effective when you're working with a group of interesting people. Whether you're in the planning stages or diving into your advocacy work, having facilitation skills in your toolbox is a game-changer. With facilitation, you can bring together different voices, help people share their perspectives, and find common ground on the path forward.

Hosting a workshop can be a powerful and highly rewarding way to gain valuable information for your advocacy projects. These sessions are all about getting everyone involved, sharing ideas, and creating a buzz of collaboration that can really supercharge your efforts. By getting diverse stakeholders in the mix, workshops become a goldmine of insights, opinions, and data that can take your advocacy work to the next level.

Here's how facilitation of a workshop can aid in this process:

- **Gathering Diverse Perspectives:** Workshops bring together participants from various backgrounds, including community members, experts, activists, and potentially affected individuals. This diversity fosters a rich dialogue and exchange of ideas, ensuring that the advocacy campaign addresses a broad spectrum of concerns and viewpoints.
- **Identifying Key Issues and Concerns:** Through structured activities and discussions, workshops can help pinpoint the most pressing issues and concerns within a community or target group. Facilitators can use techniques such as brainstorming sessions, SWOT Analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats), or Problem Tree Analysis to help participants articulate and prioritize their concerns. These insights can then shape the focus of the advocacy campaign.
- **Building Consensus:** Workshops can facilitate consensus-building among stakeholders on critical issues, goals, and strategies for the advocacy campaign. Facilitators can guide participants through processes such as group discussions, voting, or ranking exercises to achieve a collective understanding and agreement on the campaign's objectives and tactics.
- **Collecting Data and Evidence:** Interactive workshops can also be a venue for collecting qualitative data and anecdotal evidence that supports the advocacy campaign's goals. Storytelling sessions, case studies, and personal testimonies shared during the workshop can provide compelling evidence to back up campaign messages and demands.
- **Generating Solutions and Strategies:** Facilitated workshops can be used to brainstorm and develop innovative solutions and strategies for advocacy. Participants can engage in creative problem-solving exercises, design thinking sessions, or strategy mapping to come up with actionable plans that the campaign can implement.
- **Building Support and Mobilizing Allies:** Workshops can help build a base of support for the advocacy campaign by educating participants about the issue and engaging them in the campaign's development. This inclusive approach can mobilize allies and advocates who are committed to the cause and willing to take action.
- **Skills Development:** Facilitated workshops can also focus on developing the skills and capacities needed for effective advocacy. Sessions on communication strategies, digital activism, legal rights, or campaign planning can empower participants to contribute more effectively to the campaign's success.

Some tips for facilitating effective workshops:

- Identify clear objectives, an agenda and timeline, and share with the people attending the workshop.
- Choose an accessible and appropriate venue and make the space feel comfortable and friendly.
- Start with icebreaker activities that help people to get to know each other, and to relax and feel comfortable in the process and space.
- Avoid being the expert. The facilitator's role is not to teach people, but rather to support people to share their perspectives and ideas, as well as learn from others.
- Incorporate a variety of participatory methods to engage participants actively and encourage sharing and collaboration.
- Ensure that all participants feel welcome and safe to express their opinions and experiences.
- After the workshop, summarize the key outcomes, thank participants for their contributions, and outline next steps to keep them engaged in the advocacy campaign.

Leading a workshop takes thoughtful preparation, a deep grasp of the campaign's objectives, and the knack for inspiring and energizing participants. When done right, workshops become a game-changer, helping you gather crucial information, build support, and ignite the momentum required to fuel impactful advocacy campaigns.

DEVELOPING YOUR RESEARCH PLAN

So, are you now ready to do your research? How to make a start? Drafting a research plan is probably the best choice you can make.

Where to Start?

Tool 2.5: Download a Research Plan Template here

Instructions and an example of a research plan for the topic of "sand dredging in river systems, which is causing massive erosion of river banks" is provided to help you develop your own research plan.

Example:

Issue indentified: Sand dredging in river systems causing massive erosion of river banks.

Column A: Key Questions	Column B: Stakeholders	Column C: Research Methods	Column D: Analysis Tools
What are the associated problems caused by river sand dredging?	Environmental scientists, local residents	Interviews, field observations	The Sustainability Compass, Problem Tree, Systems Iceberg, PESTLE
How does river bank erosion impact local communities?	Local community leaders, government officials	Surveys, focus groups	Stakeholder Mapping, System Mapping
What regulations exist regarding sand dredging?	Legal experts, regulatory agencies	Document analysis, expert interviews	Regulatory Framework Analysis
What are potential solutions to mitigate the erosion?	NGOs, environmental engineers	Literature review, case studies	SWOT Analysis

Library for additional resources

Below are some additional online resources that can help you dive deeper with regards to conducting research.

- MRC Data and Information Services: portal.mrcmekong.org/home
- Mekong Water Data Initiatives: mekongwater.org
- The Art of Building Facilitation Capacities – A Training Manual by Lydia Braakman & Karen Edwards: recoftc.org/publications/0000214





2.1

TOOL: ISSUE PASSION AND CONCERN RATING

WHAT ISSUE ARE YOU MOST PASSIONATE ABOUT?

Instructions:

1. Find a quiet and peaceful space, such as under a tree in a public park or next to a river or lake.
2. **Imagine the world you want:** Close your eyes and let your mind unwind. Picture yourself in a future where sustainability is the prevailing value and mindset among governments and societies in the Mekong Region. Consider the four aspects of sustainability: 1) Nature, 2) Economy, 3) Society, and 4) Human Well-being and Happiness. What might you observe in this sustainable Mekong Region? In the table below, **list some descriptive words that capture the essence of this envisioned future.**

Nature	Economy	Society	Human Well-being

3. **List the issues:** Based on the words you have listed, what are some key issues related to the three main topic areas (Freshwater Ecosystems Management, Climate Change and Renewable Energy) that you are interested in working on?
4. Once you have the list of issues, **transfer the different issues into the table** provided on the next page
5. From here, rate the issues: Carefully review and rate each issue based on your level of concern and passion. Consider how strongly you feel about each topic and how urgently you believe it needs to be addressed. Give each issue a score from 1-5 (refer to the rating scale below) and mark ☑ in the appropriate box.

1 = Very low passion and concern (not passionate about it)

2 = Low passion and concern about the issue, but it's not at the forefront of my thinking

3 = Moderate passion and concern about the issue, and want to know more

4 = High passion and concern about this issue and feel like I would like to contribute towards reducing or solving it

5 = Very high passion and concern and feel most passionate to do something to make positive change on the issue

Environmental Issues		Very Low	Low	Moderate	High	Very High
	PASSION					
	CONCERN					
	PASSION					
	CONCERN					
	PASSION					
	CONCERN					
	PASSION					
	CONCERN					
	PASSION					
	CONCERN					

6. **Compare your ratings:** Once you have finished rating all the issues, compare your ratings. Look for the issue that stands out with the highest combined score of concern and passion.
7. **Identify your priority:** The issue with the highest combined rating is the one you feel most strongly about and believe requires immediate attention. This indicates both your urgency to address the situation and your passion for making a difference.

2.2

SYSTEMS ICEBERG

The Systems Iceberg model can be used to understand the underlying causes of a problem or event. It helps focus our attention on areas of high potential for change (leverage). It is typically presented visually, with the visible event, impact or problem above the surface of the water and the underlying patterns and causes at different levels below the surface.

Age Group: 18 years old and above. For younger age groups, you may need a youth facilitator to provide guidance for discussion.

Time Required: 45-60 minutes

Group Size: This activity can be done individually or in small groups of up to 6 people maximum. If there are more people, please consider making additional groups and comparing your analyzes.

Materials:

1. The iceberg introduction video or the Systems Iceberg Explained video. You can also search for more examples online.
1. The iceberg template. You can print the provided template on an A4/A3 paper for small groups, or you can draw a big iceberg on a flipchart paper for larger groups.
2. Pens, pencils or permanent markers.
3. Post-it notes (if available)

How the Systems Iceberg works:

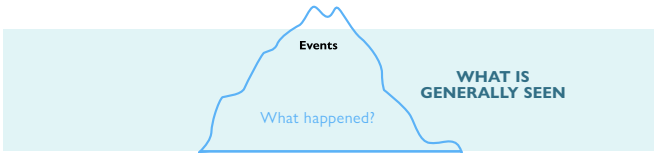
Moving down through the various layers of the iceberg, we find the following levels, starting with the top: Events; Patterns and Trends; Systemic Structures; and Mental Models. As we move down the iceberg we gain a deeper understanding of the underlying systems, and at the same time gain increased leverage for changing the system or its effects.

The layers of the Iceberg Model are:

1. **Events: What are the day to day events or situations that are most prominent or in view?**

   Events are what we can easily see. What we see above the water is just a small part of the iceberg, but that is where we focus most of our attention.

   What really draw our attention are events! These are HEADLINES in the newspapers, urgent emails with problems to solve, fires to put out, or some new proposal... The issues and factors that grab our attention and call for a response.



2. **Pattern of Behavior: What's been happening? What are the trends? What changes have occurred over time?**

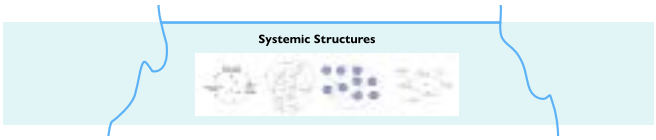
   As we string events together we start to recognize trends and patterns. This provides a deeper level of understanding, which leads to the insight that 'this event has happened repeatedly over time—it has happened before.'



3. **Systems Structure: What systemic structures have contributed to the behavior patterns and trends that we have identified?**

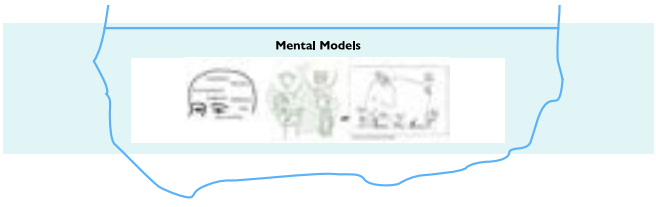
   A structure creates the foundation that supports the trends and patterns—which in turn result in events. These systemic structures are for example: policies, processes and practices.

   Structure is important as it gives us a deeper understanding of the system and can help us to predict systems behavior.



4. **Mental Model: What assumptions, values, and beliefs do people hold about the issue and system in general?**

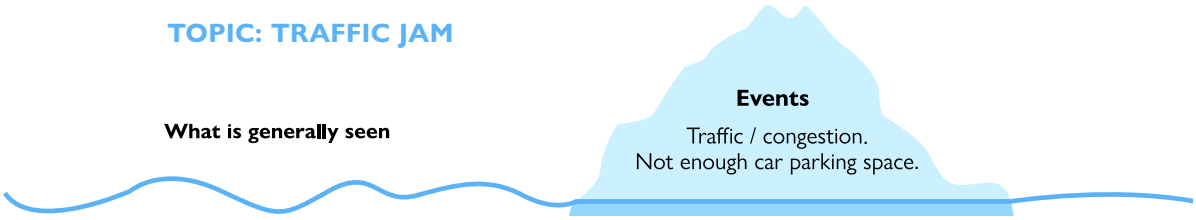
   Systemic structures, in turn, are frequently held in place by beliefs or "mental models." Beliefs may be undiscussable theories, residing in the minds of leaders, on what constitutes quality, service excellence or customer orientation. These beliefs may also affect interpersonal dynamics–such as approaches toward conflict, leadership or the best way to introduce change.



TOOL: ISSUE ANALYSIS ICEBERG TEMPLATE

Instructions: The basic steps in using the Systems Iceberg to analyze an issue:

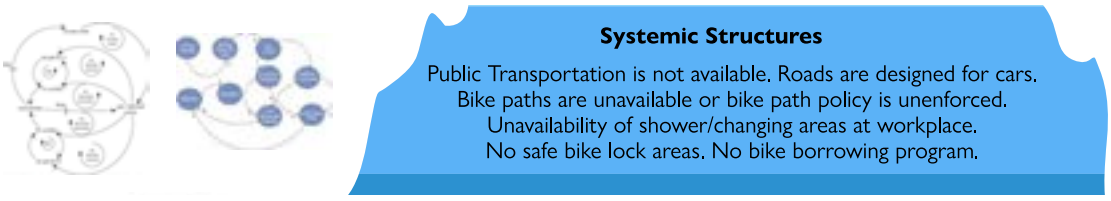
1. **Identify the Events:** Start by observing the visible occurrences or "events" related to the issue. These are the specific incidents or data points that are readily apparent and often reported in the media. Events are the "tip of the iceberg" and the most superficial level of understanding.



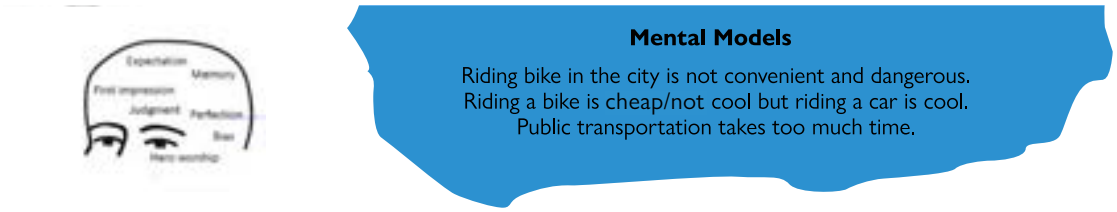
2. **Look for Patterns and Trends:** Next, identify any patterns or trends among the events you've observed. Patterns are recurring behaviors or outcomes that suggest a consistency over time. By recognizing patterns, you can begin to anticipate future events and gain a deeper understanding of the issue.



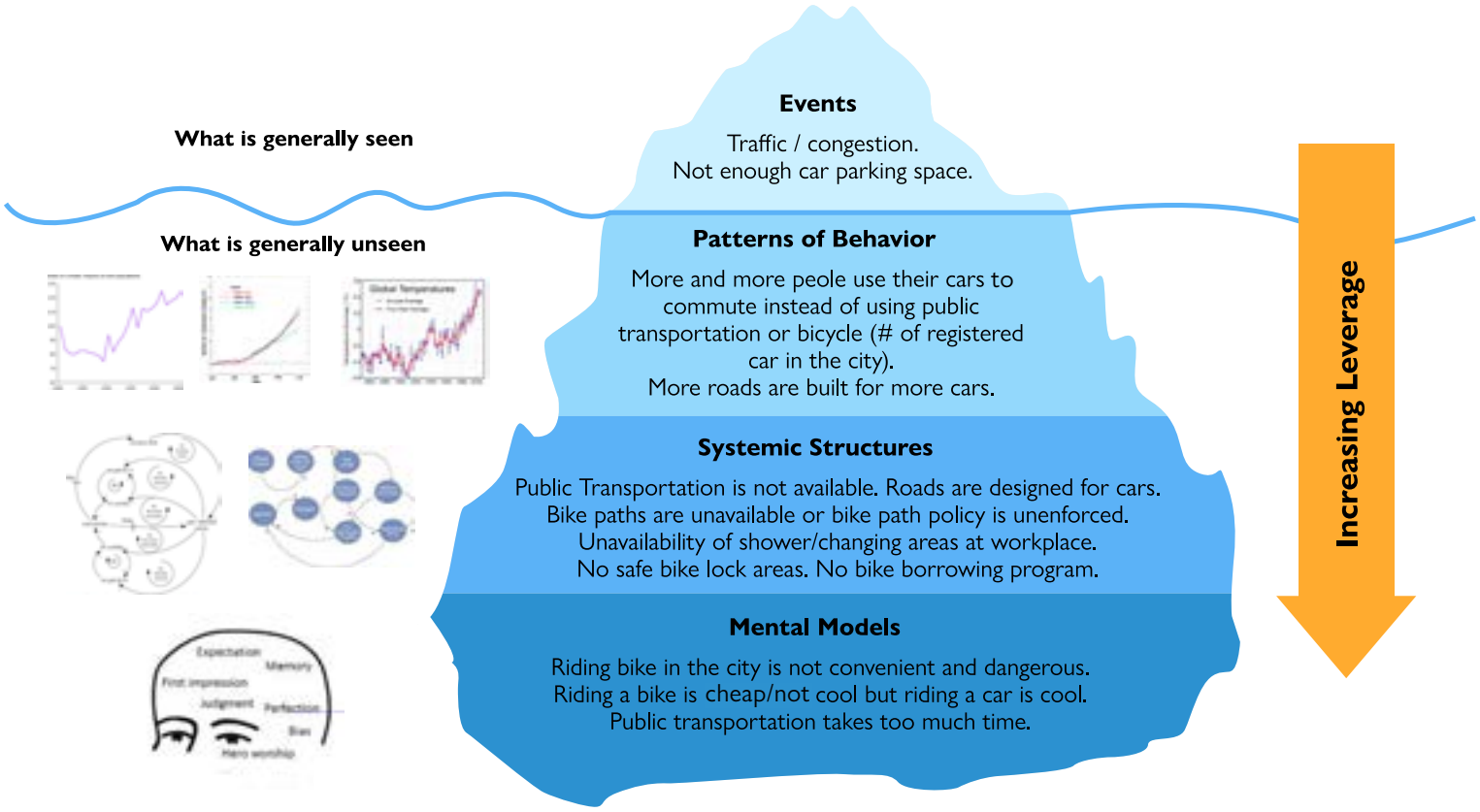
3. **Analyze Underlying Structures:** The structures layer of the iceberg consists of the systems, rules, and norms that shape the patterns and trends observed. This includes policies, feedback loops, and physical infrastructures. Analyzing these structures helps to understand why certain patterns persist and what forces are shaping the behavior of the system.



4. **Examine Mental Models:** At the deepest level of the iceberg are mental models: the beliefs, values, assumptions, and cultural norms that inform the structures. Mental models influence how we perceive the world and, consequently, how we design and interact with systems. To truly address an issue, it's important to uncover and possibly challenge these underlying mental models.



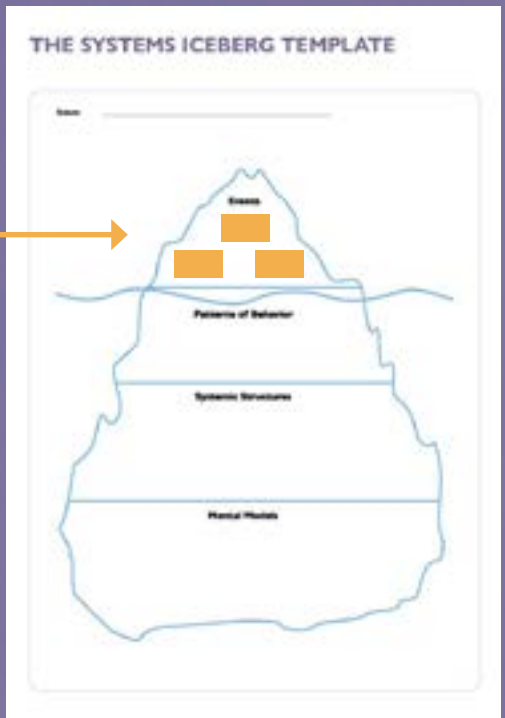
EXAMPLE OF THE ICEBERG MODEL



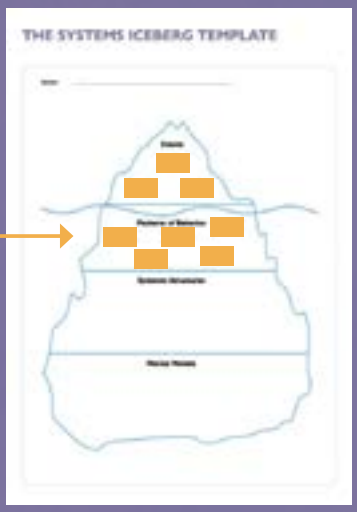
ACTIVITY INSTRUCTIONS

Now it's your turn!

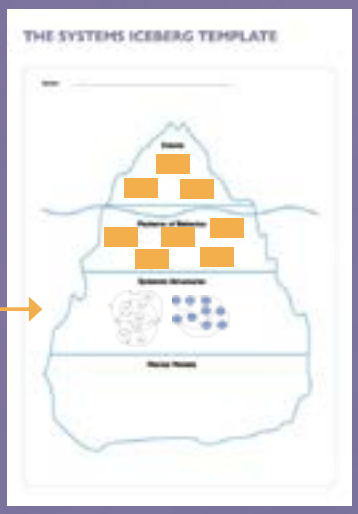
1. Based on your topic of interest, gather a group to look deeper and understand the underlying causes of a problem or event.
   - Place the Iceberg Systems template in the middle of the group
   - Watch the iceberg model explanation video and go through the example provided together.
   - Start the group discussion by looking at the **Events** level, asking yourself a question: *What are the day to day events or situations that we see in relation to our topic of interest?*
   - …Write your answers directly on the template or on post-it notes.



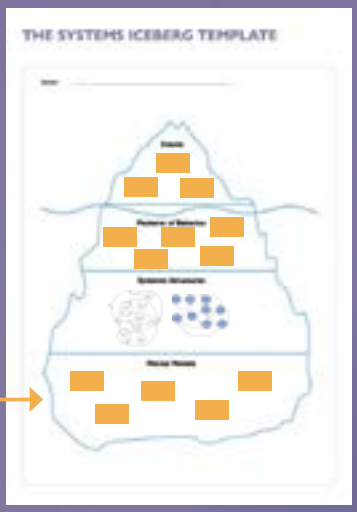
2. Next, look for **Patterns and Trends**: Identify any patterns or trends among the events you've observed. Patterns are recurring behaviors or outcomes that suggest a consistency over time. Ask yourself the questions below and record your answers on the second level of the Iceberg.
   - *What's been happening?*
   - *What are the trends?*
   - *What changes have occurred over time?*



3. Next, look for **Systemic Structures**: What structures have contributed to the behavior patterns and trends that we have identified?
   - *What are the policies, processes and practices that generate these pattern of behaviors?*



4. Then, explore the **assumptions, values, and beliefs** that people hold about this issue and system in general.
   - *What are the mental models and shared values that design the existing systems structures?*



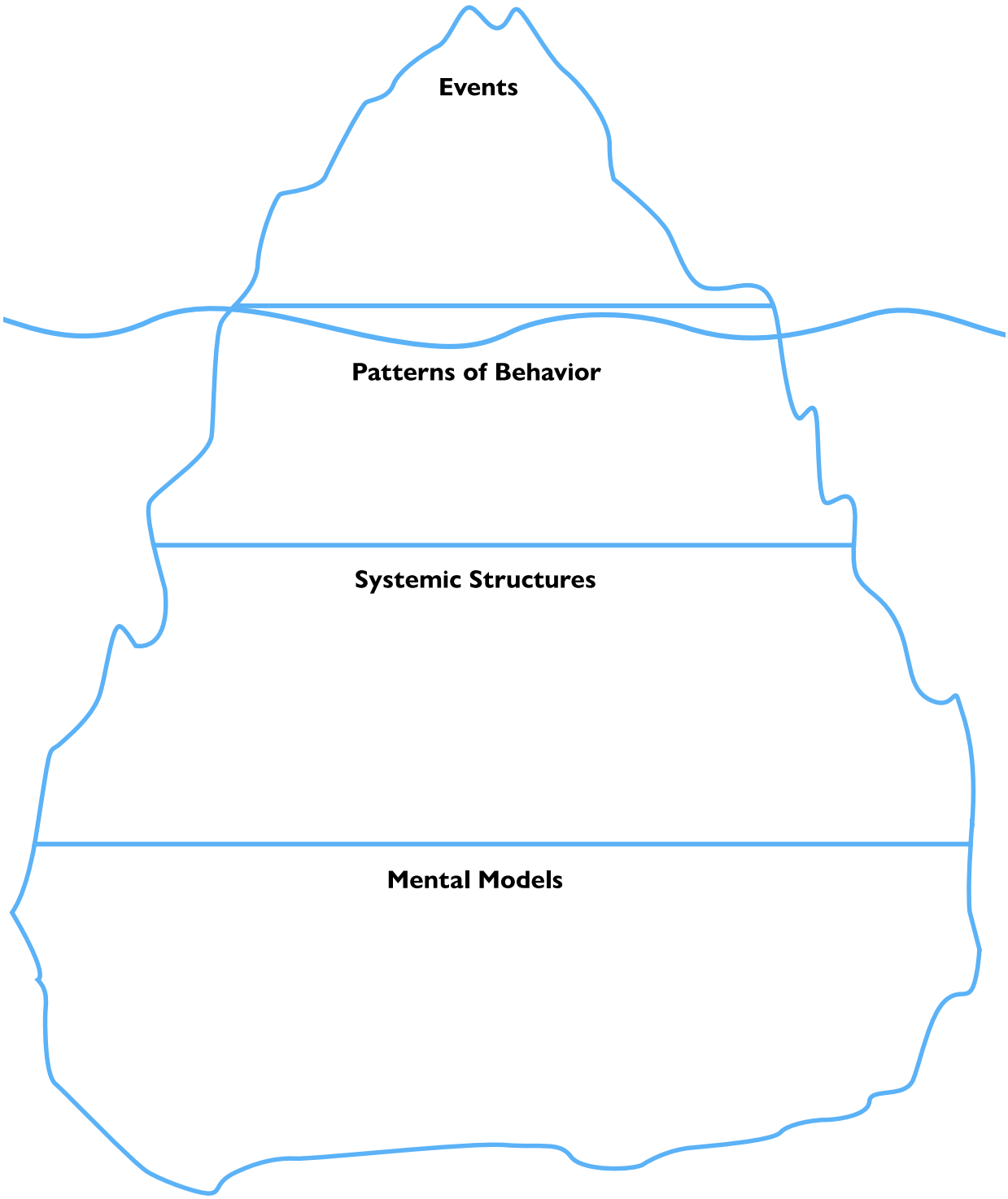
ANALYSIS & DEBRIEF QUESTIONS

When you've completed the Systems Iceberg analysis, try to go through some or all of these questions below…

1. What insights did the Systems Iceberg model analysis reveal about the situation or issue?
2. Did any unexpected factors emerge during the analysis that were not initially apparent?
3. How do the underlying factors identified in the analysis influence the visible situations or patterns?
4. What implications do these insights have for addressing the issue or making decisions moving forward?
5. Are there any gaps in the analysis that need further exploration or investigation?
6. How might stakeholders be affected by addressing the hidden factors identified in the analysis?
7. What strategies could possibly be implemented to address both the visible and hidden aspects of the issue effectively?
8. How can the insights gained from the Iceberg model analysis be communicated and utilized within the organization or team?
9. What lessons have been learned from this analysis that can be applied to future situations or projects?

THE SYSTEMS ICEBERG TEMPLATE

Issue: _____



2.3

TOOL: POLITICAL, ENVIRONMENT, SOCIAL, TECHNOLOGICAL, LEGAL AND ECONOMIC (PESTLE) ANALYSIS TOOL

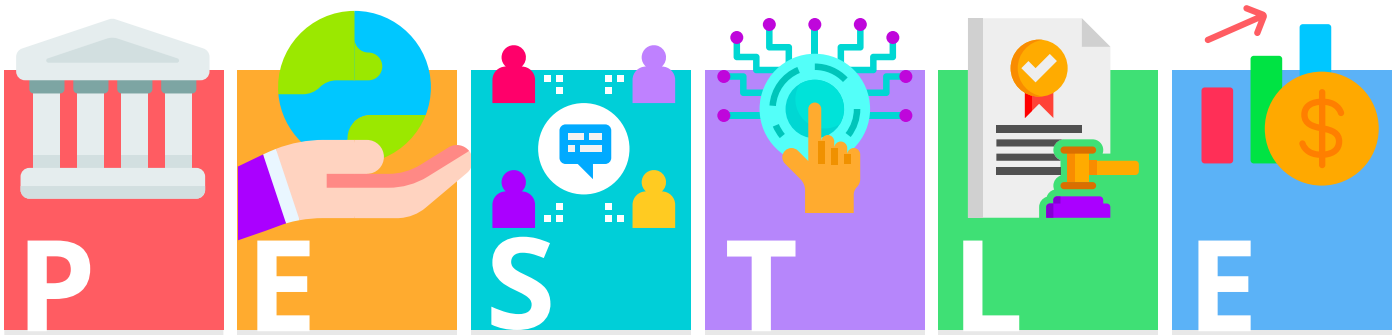
PESTLE analysis encourages you to think about what is happening in wider society that is influencing your issue. This tool has been used in business contexts to analyze the factors that impact an organization's strategies—we can adapt it to use in environmental advocacy projects too.

Age Group: 18 years old and above. For younger age groups, you may need a youth facilitator to provide guidance for discussion.

Time Required: 60-90 minutes

Group Size: This activity can be done individually or in small groups of up to 6 people maximum, to allow everyone to have the opportunity to share their knowledge and thoughts. If there are more people, consider having multiple groups and compare the answers.

Examples of factors that fall under the PESTLE analysis can be found below.



Political	Environment	Social	Technology	Legal	Economic
Government system	Environmental impact	Population growth	Access to technology	Laws and regulatory frameworks	Economic growth (GDP)
Level of corruption	Environmental education	Gender equality	Innovation culture	Enforcement of laws	Foreign investment
Policies	Protected areas	Media pressure	Impact of new technology (e.g. smart phones)	Labor rights	Wealth inequality
Government budgets	Pollution	Cultural beliefs and traditions	Internet access	Copyright laws	Tax incentives
Technical capacity	Environmental awareness	Education system (quality, level of attainment)		Health and safety standards	Infrastructure
					Corporate reporting
					Access to financing

Instructions:

Step 1: (30-45 minutes)

Complete a PESTLE analysis by looking at your study or the Iceberg analysis and brainstorm a list of the Political, Environment, Social, Technological, Legal and Economic factors you think have an impact on your topic of interest. Brainstorm a list of factors for each of the PESTLE aspects in the appropriate column.

Your Issue / Topic of Interest: _____

 Political	 Enviroment	 Social	 Technology	 Legal	 Economic

Step 2: (30-45 minutes)

Based on the list of factors you have identified in Step 1, transfer them onto this table and think about the impact each factor has on your topic of interest. What research methods can you use to find out more?

PESTLE Aspects	List of factors impacting your issue	In what ways are each of the PESTLE factors impacting your main issue?	What do you need to know more about concerning any of these factors to have a more solid understanding about the issue you want to address? Jot down your ideas. (e.g. related policies, international agreements, past or ongoing projects, trends, etc.)
Political			
Environment			
Social			
Technology			
Legal			
Economic			

2.4

CONNECTION CIRCLE

Connection Circle is a tool to help you visualize and understand the complex interactions and dependencies among different components within their issue, promoting a more holistic approach to advocacy efforts.

Age Group: 18 years old and above. For younger age groups, you may need a youth facilitator to provide guidance for discussion.

Time Required: 60 minutes

Group Size: While you can use the tool by yourself, it is recommended to work in a small team of 4-6 people so you can collaborate and get a wide range of perspectives looking at your issue.

Materials:

1. The Connection Circle Video
2. The Connection Circle Template. You can print the template on a big sheet of paper or you can draw a large circle on a flipchart paper
3. Pens, pencils or permanent markers
4. Sticky notes (if available)

KEY QUESTIONS

While drawing a connection circle, ask yourself these questions:

- What are the key variables or elements in this story and what are the cause and effect relationships between the variables?
- Where are the important connection hubs? Why are they so connected?
- Are there any complete feedback loops present?
- After gaining a big picture view of the various interconnections between linked elements in the system, what insights can draw out in terms of interventions to change the behavior of the system in a positive direction?

Instructions:

1. **Draw a Circle:** Begin by drawing a circle in the center of a piece of paper or a whiteboard. This circle represents the system you are examining, **in this case, water pollution**.

2. **Identify Key Elements:** Start by identifying the key elements related to the issue you would like to work on.

   Place each key element you identified around the circle. Try to keep it within 10-15 elements.

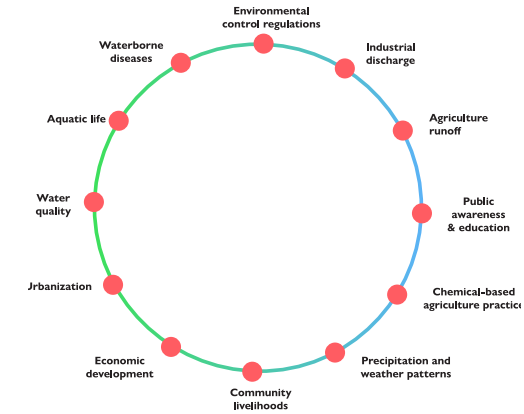
   For the water pollution example, these elements may include sources of pollution (e.g., industrial discharge, agricultural runoff, sewage), affected bodies of water (e.g., rivers, lakes, oceans), impacts on ecosystems and wildlife, and consequences for human health.

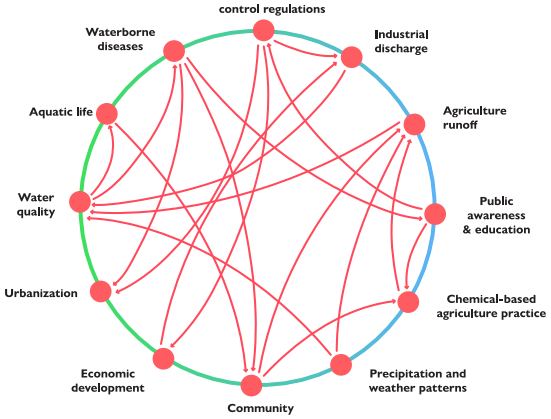
3. **Draw Arrows:** Draw arrows between the elements to indicate the directional relationships and connections between them. Use arrows to show how one element influences or impacts another. For instance, you can draw an arrow **from "Industrial Discharge" to "Water Quality"** to show how pollution from industries affects the quality of rivers.

   Continue this process until you cannot see any more direct causal connections between these elements. Links may be based on actual data or on hypotheses.

4. **Identify Feedback Loops:** Identify any feedback loops in the system. A feedback loop occurs when the output of a process loops back and affects the input.

Example using issue of Water Pollution





For example, Agricultural runoff negatively impacts water quality, which in turn harms aquatic life. This degradation of water quality and aquatic ecosystems affects community livelihoods, often driving farmers to increase chemical-based agricultural practices in an attempt to boost their income. These practices, however, exacerbate the agricultural runoff, creating a harmful feedback loop that further deteriorates water quality and aquatic life.

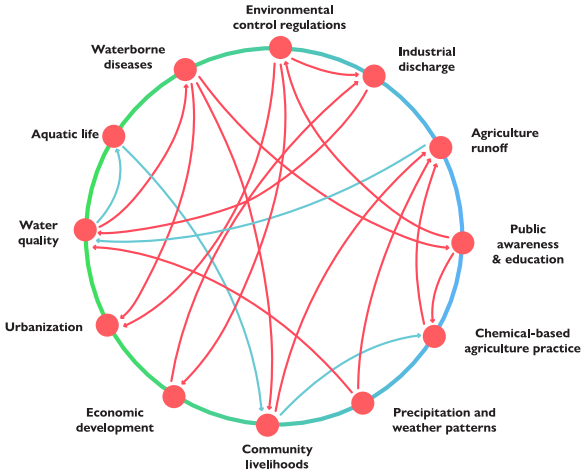
Draw feedback arrows to represent these loops. Use a different color to distinguish feedback loops from regular connections.

5. **Review and Refine:** Step back and review your diagram to ensure that the connections and feedback loops accurately reflect the complexity of the water pollution issue. Make any necessary adjustments or additions to improve clarity and understanding.

6. **Selecting an Advocacy Feedback Loop:** There might be several feedback loops represented in your connection circle. However, it is unlikely that you can effectively intervene in all of them. It is recommended to select the feedback loop sub-system that you and your team have the ability to intervene in and make some level of measurable change.

   Discuss with your team to select the feedback loop that most makes sense to you as a "story" of cause and effect. It should be a loop that you can build an advocacy campaign strategy around that will resonate with different stakeholders in your community.

   In Chapter 3 of the toolkit you will identify those stakeholders, and in Chapter 4, you will develop an advocacy plan that draws from this Connection Circle system feedback loop story.





ADDITIONAL TIPS: HOW TO READ AND ANALYZE A CONNECTION CIRCLE

Below are some key consideration points for you to look at in your Connection Circle. These are not strict rules, but can give you some insights about the connections you identified using the Connection Circle.

Which elements have lots of arrows around them? Why? Elements with lots of arrows moving to and from them tend to be leverage points in the story. Because of all their connections, key elements create lots of changes. In a connection circle about "French Fries in the economy", "French Fries Sold" might have lots of arrows pointing to and from it because it drives the key issues raised in the article.

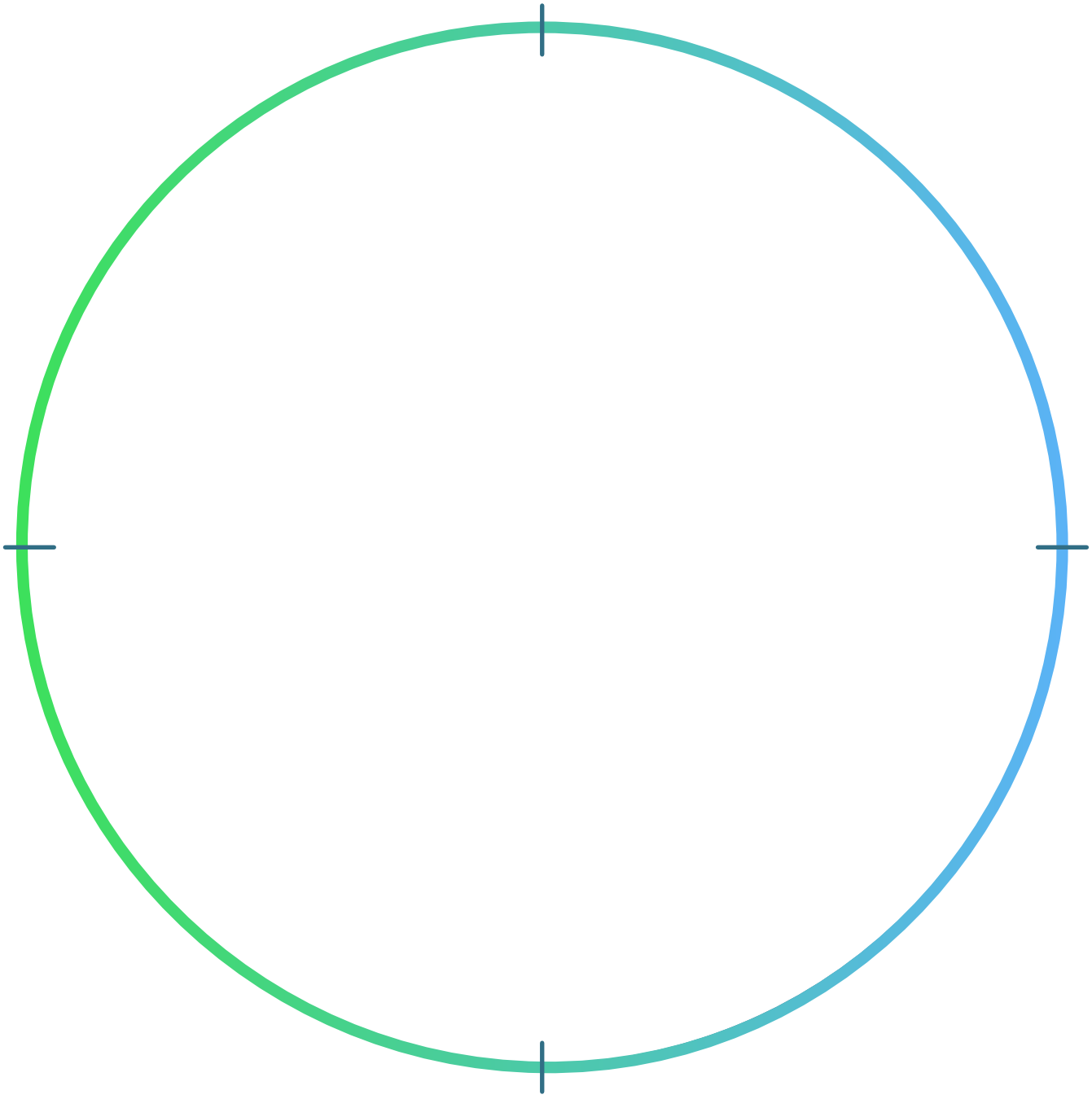
What is the significance of an element that has no arrows pointing to it? When an element has no arrows pointing to it, it is not being changed by any other element represented in the circle. If it is important, you may need to add another variable that causes the first variable to change.

What is the significance of an element that has no arrows coming from it? No arrows out means that the element doesn't influence anything that is currently in the circle. You may need to add one or more new elements.

What is the significance of an element with no arrows connected to or from it? No arrows at all means the element is not critical to the part of the story being traced, or other elements have been omitted that need to be included.

What does it mean when a pathway of arrows leads back to the starting element? When a pathway of arrows loops back to the original element, there is feedback in the story. Each closed loop identified is a feedback loop. When one element in the loop changes, the effect ripples through the whole loop, eventually affecting the original element as well.

CONNECTION CIRCLE TEMPLATE



2.5

TOOL: GMS YOUTH ADVOCATE RESEARCH PLAN TEMPLATE

Instructions:

1. **Write down the Issue or Problem:** Start by writing the specific issue or problem you have identified at the top of the template.
2. **Develop Specific Questions:** In Column A, write out questions that specifically reflect the issue or problem you want to address. For example, instead of a general question like "Is there a problem?" for the issue of "sand dredging in river systems, which is causing massive erosion of river banks," you could write ***"What are the associated problems caused by river sand dredging?"***
3. **Identify Key Stakeholders:** In Column B, list the ***stakeholders you need to speak with to find out more about the issue***. Include individuals or groups who are already working on this issue and try to consult with them early in your planning. They may become valuable collaborators in your advocacy journey.
4. **Choose Research Methods:** In Column C, select the research methods you will use to answer each question. Refer to the Research Methods section of the toolkit. You can use one method, such as interviewing, to answer multiple questions.
5. **Analyze and Reflect on Your Research:** Use the tools provided in the toolkit (or your own tools) to help you analyze, organize, and reflect on your research information. For example, to answer the question "What needs to change?" you could use a Problem Tree or the Systems Iceberg for analysis.

Example:

Issue Identified: Sand dredging in river systems causing massive erosion of river banks.

COLUMN A: Key Questions	COLUMN B: Stakeholders	COLUMN C: Research Methods	COLUMN D: Analysis Tools
What are the associated problems caused by river sand dredging?	Environmental scientists, local residents	Interviews, field observations	The Sustainability Compass, Problem Tree, Systems Iceberg, PESTLE
How does river bank erosion impact local communities?	Local community leaders, government officials	Surveys, focus groups	Stakeholder Mapping, System Mapping
What regulations exist regarding sand dredging?	Legal experts, regulatory agencies	Document analysis, expert interviews	Regulatory Framework Analysis
What are potential solutions to mitigate the erosion?	NGOs, environmental engineers	Literature review, case studies	SWOT Analysis

By following these steps, you will be able to systematically approach your issue and gather the necessary information for your advocacy efforts.

TOOL: GMS YOUTH ADVOCATE RESEARCH PLAN TEMPLATE

COLUMN A: **Key Questions**	**COLUMN B:** **Stakeholders**	**COLUMN C:** **Research Methods**	**COLUMN D:** **Analysis Tools**

CHAPTER 3
ANALYZING AND CONSULTING YOUR STAKEHOLDERS

INTRODUCTION

Engaging with stakeholders is crucial because it helps you gather a variety of perspectives, manage expectations, prevent potential conflicts, and build collaborative relationships. These efforts make your advocacy more sustainable and effective. Chapter 3 begins by clarifying what we mean by the term 'stakeholders' and what benefits can be had from engaging and consulting them. We also highlight the advantages of connecting with key stakeholders as well as the associated challenges. It is important to differentiate stakeholders by sector, and by their influence and interest in the issue we care about, because not all stakeholders hold the same level of power or interest in the topic at hand. By understanding the varying degrees of influence and interest among stakeholders, we can prioritize our engagement efforts effectively.

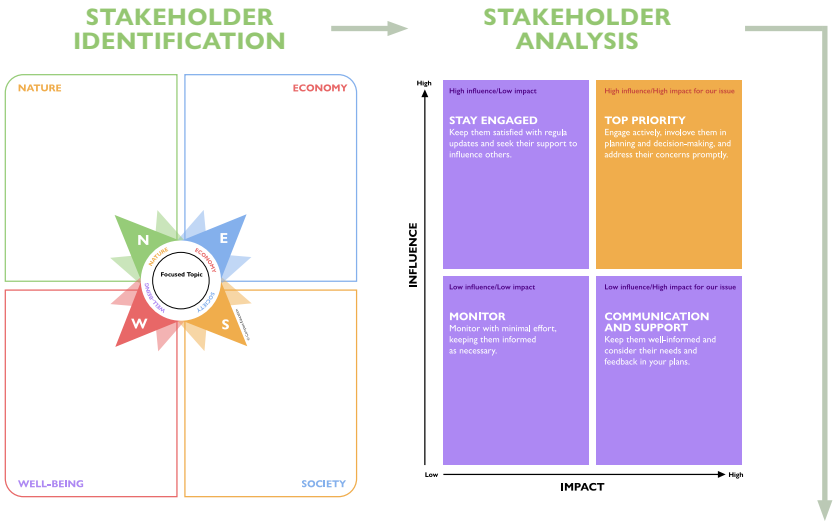
In Chapter 3, we introduce two interlinking tools to help you identify and analyze stakeholders from four sustainable development dimensions: environment, economy, society, and human well-being. These tools will enable you to assess each stakeholder's relative influence and impact on the issue you are addressing with your advocacy work, and help you to prioritize your efforts. Additionally, we provide a Stakeholder Consultation Planning template to help you develop strategies for effective consultations, which will contribute to your overall advocacy campaign. At the end of the chapter, you will find a resource library with links to further materials for enhancing your stakeholder engagement efforts.



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Tools & Template for Stakeholder Analysis and Consultation Planning

We offer two sequential tools to assist you in engaging with community stakeholders as part of your research and information-gathering phase. These tools can help you understand who your stakeholders are and determine where to focus your time, attention, and messaging. Upon completing the tools, you can fill in the "Stakeholder Consultation Plan" template. All three resources work together as the figure below shows.



STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATION PLAN TEMPLATE

Stakeholder	Why it's crucial talk to them	How to engage them?	What to find out from them?	Questions to ask	How to contact them (and the best times to do so?
Example Elders in the community	**Example** They have lived in this community for many decades, which means they have experience and have likely observed the changes in the environment over time.	**Example** In-person interviews; focus group discussions; and possible video interviews	**Example** How overall environmental quality, ecosystem health,and biodiversity in and around the community has changed over time.	**Example** • Are there any plants or animals that you saw, or were present in the ecosystem near the community that you do not see anymore? • What climate factors have changed since you were a child? (e.g. rainfall) • What is your opinion as to why these plants and animals no longer exist here?	**Example** Visit their home in the morning (late morning)

TOOLS IN THIS CHAPTER



Stakeholder Identification

TOOL:

- 3.1 Sustainability Compass Stakeholder Identification



Stakeholder Analysis

TOOL:

- 3.2 Stakeholder Analysis: Influence and Impact Matrix



Stakeholder Consultation Plan

TOOL:

- 3.3 Stakeholder Consultation Plan

WHAT DO WE MEAN WITH THE TERM "STAKEHOLDERS"?

Stakeholders are individuals or groups who have an interest in or are impacted by a particular issue, project, or decision. Engaging and speaking with stakeholders is crucial because their perspectives, needs, and concerns are essential for making well-informed and inclusive decisions. By involving stakeholders in discussions and decision-making processes, you ensure that their voices are heard, their input is considered, and the outcomes reflect the diverse viewpoints of those affected. This inclusive approach not only leads to better solutions but also fosters trust, collaboration, and a sense of ownership among all parties involved. So, by engaging with stakeholders, you can create more meaningful and effective outcomes that benefit everyone involved.

In any advocacy campaign, it's important to figure out who the stakeholders are, what they care about, and how to talk to them in a way that resonates. By doing this, you make sure that everyone's viewpoints, needs, and hopes are taken into account, which boosts the chances of your project or campaign succeeding.

Some Stakeholder Engagement Best Practices

Understanding and implementing best practices can boost your confidence when interacting with stakeholders and help ensure the best outcomes for them, as well as your project and organization.

Start by making a list of your stakeholders. This is a key first step in your stakeholder plan. Think about everyone who might be affected by your project or who could influence its outcome. This includes individuals, groups, and organizations. Once you've identified your stakeholders, you'll have a clearer idea of who you need to reach out to.

You can then start to design your messages and strategies in a way that meets the specific needs and interests of each stakeholder or group. This approach helps ensure that your project or organization gets the support and input it needs to succeed.

Identify your key stakeholders. If your initial list is extensive, it's a sign you've been thorough, but remember, you can't connect deeply with everyone. Focus on pinpointing who your key stakeholders are—these are the individuals and groups crucial to your project's success, with whom you need to engage more intensively.

To efficiently manage your time and resources, use the Stakeholder Mapping method, sorting stakeholders by their Influence, Interest, and Impact. This approach allows you to prioritize your engagements, ensuring you focus on those who are most important while still maintaining a broad engagement strategy.

Define what success looks like for you. Even if you're doing a great job engaging with your stakeholders, you won't really know how effective your efforts are unless you're keeping track of everything—from who's getting involved, to how they're participating, to the outcomes of these interactions. Make sure you set clear, realistic expectations for what you want from your stakeholder engagement.

Consider what the minimum level of involvement you need is and aim for that as a starting point. Setting achievable goals will help you measure your progress effectively.

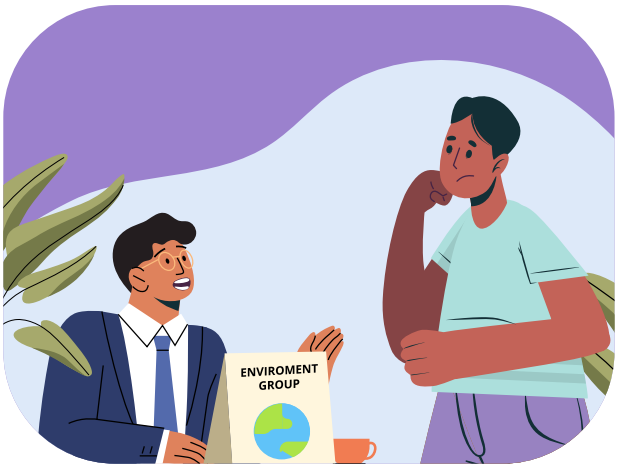
Examples:

- At a future issue outreach and awareness raising event, there will be at least 100 people who sign the participation sheet.
- Of the 100 people, 60% or more will be community members
- 250 survey questionnaires are answered and returned.
- 1,000 views of our YouTube video.
- At least 500 people sign the petition in support of action on the issue.

Make a plan. Creating a stakeholder engagement plan should be one of your initial steps. Start with the basics: identify who your stakeholders are, understand why you need to connect with them, decide on the methods you'll use to engage them, figure out what you need to learn from them, and determine the key questions you'll ask. Having a solid plan not only sets you up for success but also helps you evaluate your team's ability to carry out effective stakeholder engagement. This preparation is crucial for making sure your efforts pay off.

Keep it inclusive. Your stakeholders come from all walks of life, and it's up to you to ensure everyone has an equal opportunity to get involved. Here's how you can make it happen:





- √ Figure out exactly who your stakeholders are and their favorite ways to communicate. Knowing this helps you connect better.
- √ Make sure your information is accessible in various formats—whether it's audio, video, text, face-to-face, or online. And don't forget about offering translations!
- √ Actively work to engage people from different economic, ethnic, and situational backgrounds. This makes your project richer and more inclusive.
- √ Be especially receptive to those from vulnerable and marginalized groups, such as people from low-income communities, LGBTQ+ and people with disabilities. Always use language that makes everyone feel welcome and included.

Be adaptable and flexible. Stakeholder engagement isn't about controlling people and making them your pawns. It's about collaboration. Your stakeholders' contributions, perspectives and concerns should be taken into consideration and should influence the decisions that are made. Following stakeholder engagement best practices means you welcome constructive feedback and that you're open to making changes and adapting.

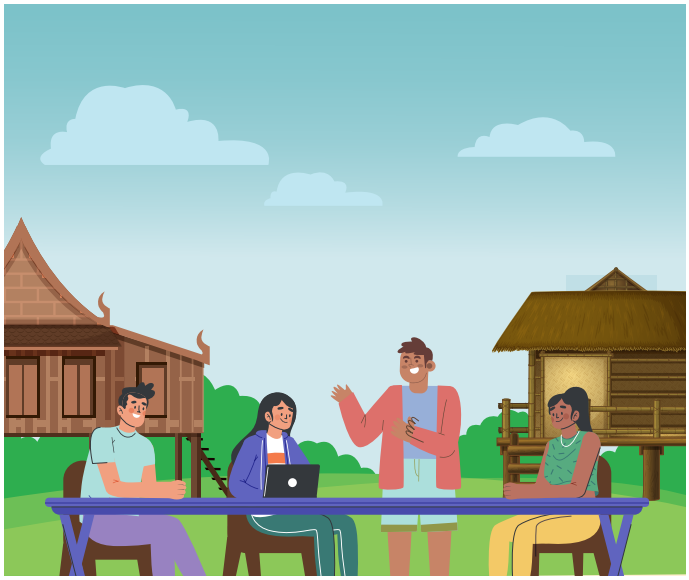
Design your message to be suitable for your stakeholders. Not every group you engage with will respond well to the same style or method of communication. It's best practice to customize your content for different stakeholders. This means adapting your message to focus on what matters most to them and presenting it in a way they appreciate. Whether it's a more formal presentation for business leaders or a casual chat for community members, make sure your message hits the right note with each group.

Part 1: Stakeholder Identification & Analysis

Stakeholder analysis is a systematic process used to identify, evaluate, and engage individuals or groups who have a stake in a specific issue, project, or outcome. In advocacy work, stakeholder analysis is essential because it helps organizations understand the array of actors involved and their various interests, influences, and interrelations concerning the issue at hand. Stakeholder analysis is particularly important for advocacy issues for some of the following reasons:

- **Understanding the Players:** First, you need to know who you're dealing with: What do they care about? How does your issue affect them? This helps you predict how they might react and lets you plan how to approach them.
- **Measuring Power:** Not everyone has the same amount of power or influence. Some can make changes happen; others might just have opinions. Knowing who can actually influence outcomes is key to deciding where to focus your energy.
- **Teaming Up:** Sometimes, you'll find others who share your goals. Teaming up can make your advocacy stronger and give your voice more weight. It's about finding strength in numbers.
- **Smart Planning:** With all this information, you can make smarter plans. You'll know who to talk to, what to say, and how to say it to engage people effectively and insist on the changes you want.
- **Staying Ahead:** Knowing the situation helps you identify both opportunities and obstacles early on. This way, you can use opportunities to your advantage and avoid potential problems.
- **Smart Talking:** Each group you talk to might see things a bit differently. By knowing your audience, you can design your messages so they resonate more strongly and clearly.
- **Checking Your Impact:** After you act, look back to see what worked and what didn't. Did you reach the people you wanted to? Did you make a difference? This helps you do even better next time.

So, stakeholder analysis is all about understanding the situation before starting your activities. It makes sure your efforts to change things for the better are smart, sharp, and likely to succeed.



Who should we be talking with and listening to?

For an effective advocacy issue campaign, engaging with a broad spectrum of stakeholders is essential. Identifying the right stakeholders involves understanding the situation surrounding your advocacy issue, including who has the power to bring change, who is affected by the issue, and who can influence public opinion and policy. Effective stakeholder engagement is about building relationships, understanding each stakeholder's interests and perspectives, and finding common ground to advance your advocacy goals.

Identifying Your Stakeholders

The specific individuals or groups you need to talk to can vary depending on the issue at hand, but generally, they will come from these types of groups:

- **Affected Communities or Individuals:** Directly engaging with those who are most impacted by the issue is crucial. Their stories, experiences, and needs can provide valuable insights and legitimacy to the campaign.
- **Policy Makers and Government Officials:** These include local, regional, and national elected officials, regulatory agency staff, and other government employees who have the power to make, change, or influence policies related to the advocacy issue.
- **Experts and Researchers:** Specialists in the field related to your advocacy issue can provide data, evidence, and credibility to support your campaign's goals and strategies.
- **NGOs and Civil Society Organizations:** Organizations that share similar values or have been involved in similar issues can be allies. They can offer support, resources, and a broader network to amplify your campaign.

- **Media and Journalists:** Media professionals can help raise public awareness about the issue. Providing compelling stories for journalists and bloggers can help generate public support and put pressure on decision-makers.
- **Business Leaders and Industry Representatives:** In certain campaigns, particularly those related to environmental issues, public health, or consumer rights, engaging with the business sector can be important for both support and addressing opposition.
- **Community Leaders and Influential Figures:** These individuals can influence public opinion and mobilize community action. They can be religious leaders, celebrities, local activists, or respected community members.
- **General Public and Supporters:** Engaging with the broader public is crucial for building a base of support. This can include organizing grassroots activities, public meetings, and using social media to engage with a wider audience.
- **Legal Experts:** For advocacy campaigns that may involve litigation, or need to navigate complex legal frameworks, consulting with legal experts is essential.
- **International Organizations and Bodies:** For issues that cross national boundaries or can be influenced by international policy, engaging with representatives from relevant international organizations can be beneficial.
- **Technical experts:** For advice on running a project and campaigning with a team, you may need to approach more technical stakeholders who can help your project with financial advice, facilitation training and advisory roles. Who might these people be in your situation?

At this point, we recommend using the **Sustainability Compass Tool** for helping you and your team to identify who are the various individuals and groups who have a valid "stake" in the issue that you are wanting to address with your advocacy work.

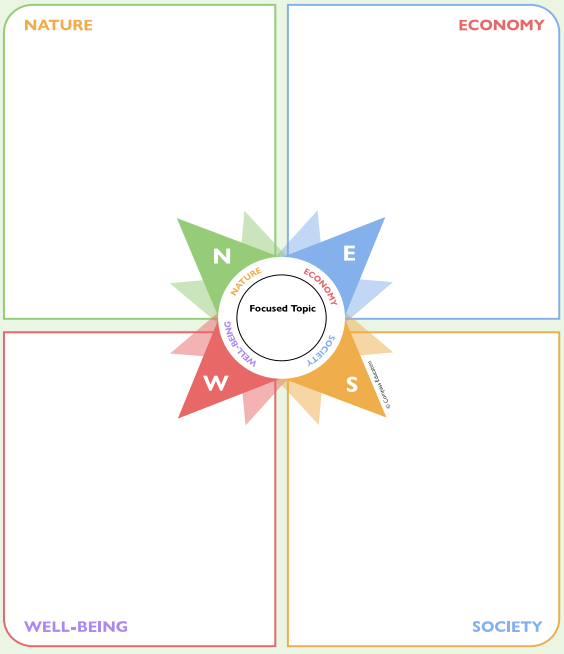
Stakeholder Tool 1: Sustainability Compass Stakeholder Identification

The Sustainability Compass, with its focus on the four dimensions of Nature, Economy, Society, and Well-being, can be a very useful tool for stakeholder identification. The compass uses four key dimensions represented by the initial letters **N**orth, **E**ast, **S**outh, and **W**est, corresponding to Nature, Economy, Society, and Well-being respectively. Each dimension of the compass can lead to identifying specific groups or entities that have interests or impacts in that area.



Examples:

- Nature: Environmental NGOs, regulatory bodies, and local communities living in proximity to natural resources.
- Economy: Businesses, investors, and economic policymakers who play roles in the economic aspects of sustainability.
- Society: Social groups, minority communities, and advocacy organizations concerned with social justice and equity.
- Well-being: Healthcare providers, wellness organizations, and public health authorities.



The Sustainability Compass is also a very useful tool for the identification of interdependencies among different stakeholders who fit in any of the four sustainability dimensions. The Sustainability Compass helps identify how these dimensions interact, revealing stakeholders who might not be immediately obvious.

For instance, for a particularly critical environmental issue, some stakeholders may be associated with both the Economy and Nature aspects. Understanding these interdependencies ensures more effective engagement and strategy planning.

In summary, the Sustainability Compass provides a structured framework that not only aids in identifying a diverse range of stakeholders but also facilitates a deeper understanding of their roles and interests in sustainability efforts. This can enhance the effectiveness of initiatives by ensuring all relevant perspectives and influences are considered from the start.

Analyzing Our Stakeholders

After identifying and organizing stakeholders using a tool like the Sustainability Compass, the next step is to analyze these stakeholders based on their influence and impact concerning the issue at hand. In advocacy work, and many other fields, identifying stakeholders based on their influence and impact is crucial for effective engagement and successful outcomes.

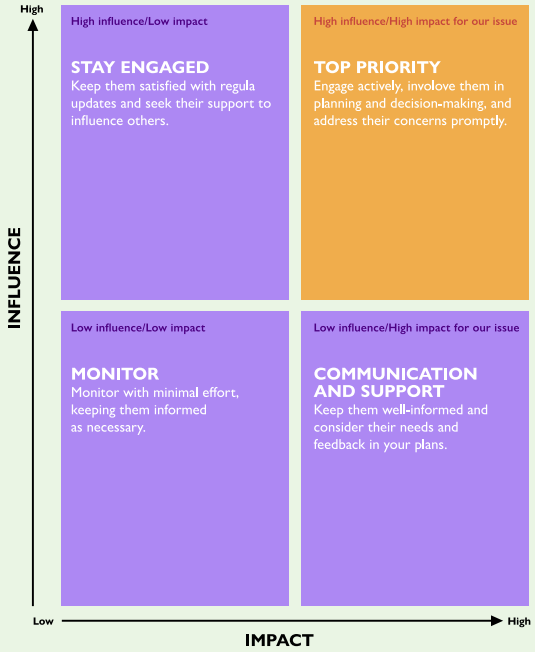
The next tool that we recommend using for your analysis is the **Stakeholder Analysis - Influence & Impact Matrix Tool.**

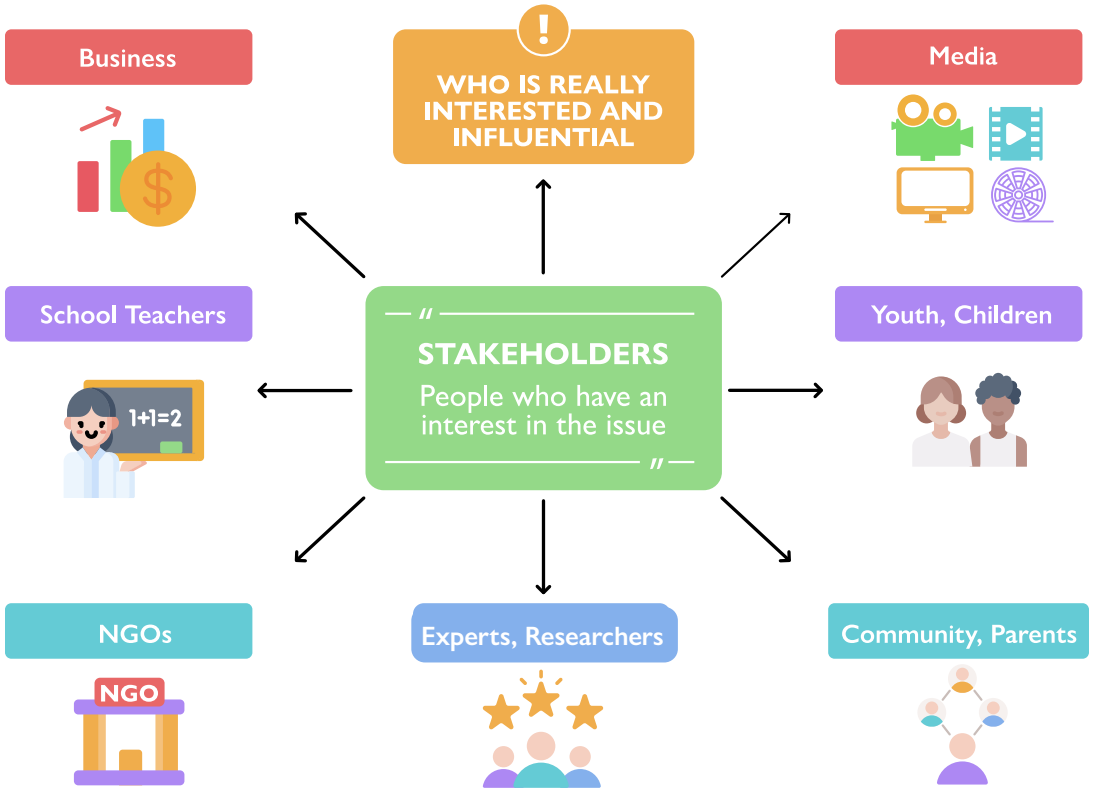
Stakeholder tool 2: Stakeholder Analysis - Influence and Impact Matrix

Using this tool can help you sort and rank your identified stakeholders based on how much they can affect outcomes and how interested they are in the work you're doing. By mapping stakeholders using this matrix, you can spot who has a big influence and/or impact, and who doesn't.

There are three important things that we are looking for in using this Stakeholder Analysis Tool. These are:

- **Assessment of stakeholder influence in the context of the issue:** It is important to determine the level of influence each stakeholder has on our issue. By "influence," we mean the power or authority a stakeholder has to effect change or sway decisions in relation to the issue. This can include political power, financial resources, control over resources, or the ability to influence public opinion or other stakeholders' actions.
- **Assessment of stakeholder impact in the context of the issue:** It is equally important to evaluate how significantly each stakeholder could be impacted by the issue or how significantly they can impact the issue. Impact can be considered in terms of the consequences for the stakeholder if the issue is or isn't addressed and their capacity to affect the outcome of your initiative.
- **Mapping the stakeholders in relation to their influence vs Impact on the issue:** Create a matrix using this tool to map out the stakeholders based on their levels of influence and impact in relation to your advocacy issue. This visual tool helps in understanding the situation at a glance and can guide strategy development.





Part 2: Stakeholder Consultation (Talking With the Right People)

Stakeholder consultation is very important when advocating for environmental issues because it brings everyone's voice to the table. Whether it's local people, environmental experts, businesses, or government officials, getting everyone involved helps gather different viewpoints and smarter solutions. This inclusive way of doing things not only makes the plan stronger but also gets more people on board, making it more likely to succeed. Plus, chatting with stakeholders early on helps spot any obstacles in the road ahead, modifying plans to make them even better. This approach ensures that the efforts to tackle environmental challenges are well-rounded and more effective.

What benefit can we get from talking with stakeholders?

Speaking with different people and groups when planning for advocacy work is fundamental to understanding your issue in a broad and deep way, as well as building necessary relationships, and devising strategies that are informed, inclusive, and adaptable to achieve meaningful and lasting change.

Following are some specific benefits that you will get as an environmental issue advocate by engaging and talking with different stakeholders:

- **Understanding Diverse Perspectives:** Engaging in conversations with a wide range of stakeholders allows advocates to gather different viewpoints and insights. This helps in understanding the complex nature of the issue at hand, identifying various impacts, and recognizing potential challenges and opportunities. It ensures that advocacy strategies are well-informed and inclusive of diverse needs and expectations.
- **Building Relationships and Trust:** Communication is key to establishing and maintaining trust among stakeholders. By engaging in open and transparent dialogue, advocates can build stronger relationships with key individuals and groups, including those directly affected by the advocacy issue, potential allies, policymakers, and the general public. Trust facilitates collaboration and support, which are essential for effective advocacy.
- **Identifying Allies and Opponents:** Conversations help in identifying potential allies who can support the advocacy efforts and opponents who may resist change. Understanding the motivations and concerns of both can inform more strategic planning and approach to advocacy, including designing messages that resonate with different audiences and developing strategies to mitigate opposition.
- **Enhancing Credibility and Legitimacy:** Involving stakeholders, especially those directly affected by the issue, adds credibility and legitimacy to the advocacy work. It demonstrates a genuine commitment to addressing the concerns and needs of those impacted, rather than pushing an agenda that may be perceived as disconnected from the real issues.
- **Mobilizing Support:** Engaging with people can help to mobilize support for the advocacy cause. Through conversations, advocates can inspire and motivate others to take action, whether it be through raising public awareness, influencing policy, or contributing resources towards the advocacy efforts.
- **Adapting Strategies to Real-World Contexts:** Speaking with people provides insights into the practical challenges and real-world contexts within which the advocacy efforts will operate. This allows advocates to adapt their strategies to be more effective and responsive to the dynamics at play, ensuring that their efforts are grounded in reality and more likely to achieve the desired change.
- **Feedback and Continuous Improvement:** Engaging in dialogue with stakeholders provides opportunities for feedback, which is invaluable for assessing the effectiveness of advocacy strategies and making necessary adjustments. Continuous improvement based on stakeholder feedback ensures that advocacy efforts remain relevant and impactful over time.

Preparing for Engaging and Talking with People

Preparing for stakeholder consultations is a crucial step for a youth environmental advocacy group aiming to engage effectively and gather meaningful input. Here are some key steps you should take to ensure successful consultations:

1. **Define Objectives**: Clearly define what the group hopes to achieve through the consultations. Is it to gather opinions, seek support, or inform stakeholders about the issue? Having clear goals will guide the structure and content of the meetings.
2. **Identify Stakeholders:** Using tools such as the Sustainability Compass and the Stakeholder Analysis Influence-impact matrix, identify who you should involve in the consultations. Consider including local community members, environmental experts, business leaders, policymakers, and other relevant groups. Aim for a diverse mix to get a wide range of perspectives.
3. **Develop a Plan:** Create a detailed plan that outlines the format of the consultations, including whether they will be in-person meetings, online forums, or a combination of both. Decide on the number of sessions, their locations, and timings to accommodate as many stakeholders as possible.
4. **Prepare Materials:** Develop clear, concise, and engaging materials to share with stakeholders. These could include information packs about the environmental issue, the group's goals, and what is expected from the consultation. Visual aids like slides, charts, or videos can be particularly effective in communicating complex information.
5. **Set the Agenda:** Develop an agenda that allows time for presentations, discussions, and Question & Answer (Q&A) sessions. Make sure the agenda is structured but flexible enough to accommodate unforeseen discussions or particularly engaging topics.
6. **Train your Facilitators:** Choose facilitators from within the group or hire external professionals experienced in leading stakeholder engagements. Facilitators should be trained on the issues being discussed, as well as on managing diverse groups and fostering constructive dialogue.
7. **Promote the Consultation:** Use various channels to invite stakeholders and encourage their participation. Social media, emails, community bulletins, and direct invitations can be effective. Make sure to communicate the importance of their contribution and how it can impact the issue.
8. **Logistics and Accessibility:** Ensure that the venue is accessible to all participants, including those with disabilities.

Consider logistical needs such as seating arrangements, audio-visual equipment, refreshments, and transportation if necessary.

9. **Establish Ground Rules**: To maintain a respectful and productive environment, establish ground rules for participation. These might include encouraging respectful dialogue, allowing everyone a chance to speak, and handling disagreements constructively.
10. **Feedback Mechanism:** Plan how you will collect and use the feedback received during the consultations. This might involve surveys, follow-up interviews, or a formal feedback form. Explain to participants how their input will be used to shape your advocacy efforts.
11. **Follow-up:** After the consultations, send thank you notes to participants and provide them with a summary of the outcomes. Keeping stakeholders informed and engaged even after the consultations enhances relationships and supports ongoing collaboration.

Some Simple Dos and Don'ts When Engaging With Stakeholders

Dos:

1. Listen actively to stakeholders' opinions and perspectives.
2. Ask open-ended questions to better understand their insights.
3. Respect diverse viewpoints and experiences.
4. Maintain clear communication throughout the consultation process.
5. Consider stakeholders' feedback and integrate it into your project where possible.
6. Show appreciation for their time and input.
7. Be transparent about your goals and intentions.
8. Seek to build positive relationships.

Don'ts:

1. Don't dismiss or ignore stakeholders' feedback.
2. Avoid making assumptions about their needs or preferences.
3. Don't dominate the conversation; give all stakeholders a chance to speak.
4. Avoid using technical jargon that may be confusing.
5. Don't rush the consultation process; allow stakeholders enough time to express their views.
6. Avoid being defensive if stakeholders provide critical feedback.
7. Don't promise things you cannot deliver.
8. Avoid favoring certain stakeholders over others; strive for fairness and inclusivity.

Developing a Stakeholder Consultation Plan for Environmental Advocacy

For young environmental advocates, developing a thorough stakeholder consultation plan is the first step towards meaningful change. It allows you to identify who needs to be involved, understand their interests, and engage them effectively.

By building strong relationships with key stakeholders—from community leaders to government officials—you ensure your advocacy efforts are supported and impactful. A well-devised consultation plan not only garners broader support but also enriches your strategy with diverse perspectives, making your environmental initiatives more inclusive and successful. Let's start with understanding our allies and opponents to build a foundation that turns your vision into reality!

Stakeholder Plan Template: Stakeholder Consultation Plan

Creating a Stakeholder Consultation Plan is essential if you want to successfully engage and involve relevant actors in your environmental issue work or advocacy campaign.

The purpose of using a Stakeholder Consultation Plan before starting your advocacy planning is to ensure you engage with the right people in the right way, to gather their input and feedback to support your environmental issue advocacy efforts.

This planning template will help you identify key stakeholders you need to talk to, and to understand their perspectives. The template will also ask you to think about the best methods for engaging your stakeholders, and establishing clear communication channels and messages that resonate with them.

Stakeholder	Why it's crucial talk to them	How to engage them?	What to find out from them?	Questions to ask	How to contact them (and the best times to do so?
Example Elders in the community	**Example** They have lived in this community for many decades, which means they have experience and have likely observed the changes in the environment over time.	**Example** In-person interviews; focus group discussions; and possible video interviews	**Example** How overall environmental quality, ecosystem health,and biodiversity in and around the community has changed over time.	**Example** • Are there any plants or animals that you saw, or were present in the ecosystem near the community that you do not see anymore? • What climate factors have changed since you were a child? (e.g. rainfall) • What is your opinion as to why these plants and animals no longer exist here?	**Example** Visit their home in the morning (late morning)

Environmental Education Activity - Community Stakeholder Investigation

If you and your team are inclined to undertake a more in-depth, rapid community stakeholder investigation, you can also use the Environmental Education activity "Pieces, Patterns, and Processes" (PPP) which was introduced in Chapter 1 for exploring the three thematic topics of this toolkit. See the explanation below.

Cross-Cutting Environmental Education Activity:

Pieces, Patterns and Processes (PPP) is a cross-cutting environmental education activity that focuses on engaging with and talking to local stakeholders in their community. It is designed to identify how they think about issues from different angles, perspectives or reference points, such as from environmental, economic or socio-cultural points of view. As with how it is used to explore community perspectives on the thematic issues introduced in Chapter 1, PPP can also be a great activity for a team of 3-9 or more people to find out their views on the specific issues that your advocacy campaign will focus on. This activity also asks you to draw causal relationship linkages between responses that you receive from community stakeholders from each of the three aspects (environment, economy and society). This makes PPP a really good systems thinking stakeholder engagement activity.

You can access the activity lead sheet at the link provided here.

Library for additional resources

- Carbon Market Watch, April 2021. Practitioner's guide for local stakeholder consultation.
- The Community Foundation for the Greater Capital Region (cfgcr.org). Stakeholder Engagement Best Practices Guide.



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3.3.1

SUSTAINABILITY COMPASS STAKEHOLDER IDENTIFICATION

The Sustainability Compass uses four key dimensions represented by the letters **N**(orth), **E**(ast), **S**(outh), and **W**(est), corresponding to Nature, Economy, Society, and Well-being. Each dimension of the Compass can lead to identifying specific persons, groups or entities that influence or impact the environmental issue you are working on.

The Compass helps identify how these dimensions interact, revealing stakeholders who might not be immediately obvious. For instance, for a particularly critical environmental issue, some stakeholders may be associated with both the Economy and Nature. Understanding these interdependencies ensures more effective engagement and strategy planning.

INSTRUCTIONS

- Write the topic you are focusing on in the middle of the Compass.Identify ways to reduce pollution.
- As a team, brainstorm stakeholders for each of the four directions of the Compass and list the stakeholder groups using the provided Compass Stakeholder Identification Template.

Consider the following questions for each Compass direction:

Nature (N)



- Who are the key environmental groups or organizations that could be affected by, or interested in, your work?
- Are there any local, regional, or national environmental agencies or regulatory bodies we need to consider?
- Which community groups or NGOs focus on environmental protection in your area?

Write these groups down in the Compass Nature Quadrant (Box).

Economy (E)



- Which businesses or economic entities are directly or indirectly involved?
- Are there any economic regulations or policies that need to be considered?
  Who can influence the decision-making process?

Write these groups down in the Compass Economy Quadrant.

Society (S)



- Are there any social issues, cultural or social norms that need to be addressed?
- Who are the community leaders or influential figures in the area? Are there specific demographic groups (e.g., youth, elderly, minority communities) that should be consulted?
- Which community-based organizations or social service providers could be relevant?

Write these groups down in the Compass Society Quadrant.

Well-being (W)



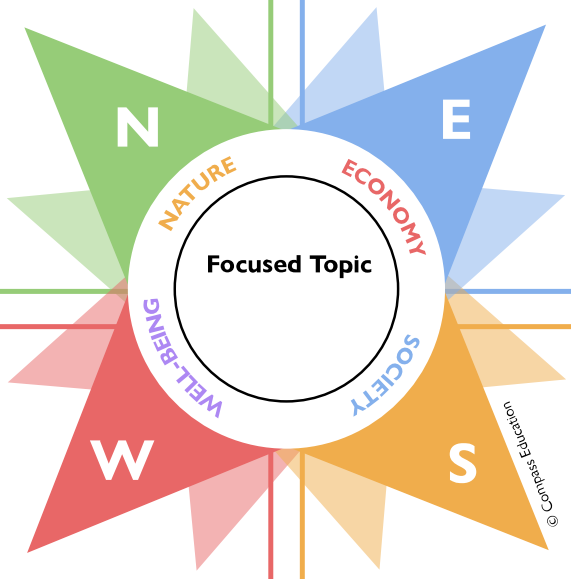
- How does this issue affect public health and safety?
- What are the potential benefits or risks to individual & community well-being?
- Who are the advocates for human rights and quality of life?
- Are there any health and well-being groups, organizations or agencies already engaging with the issue?

Write these groups down in the Compass Well-being Quadrant.

COMPASS STAKEHOLDER IDENTIFICATION TEMPLATE

NATURE

ECONOMY



WELL-BEING

SOCIETY

A REMINDER... WHAT DOES EACH LETTER OF THE SUSTAINABILITY COMPASS STAND FOR?

Use the description of each Compass quadrant below for reference when considering the stakeholder groups relevant to the environmental topic you are focusing on.

N is for Nature

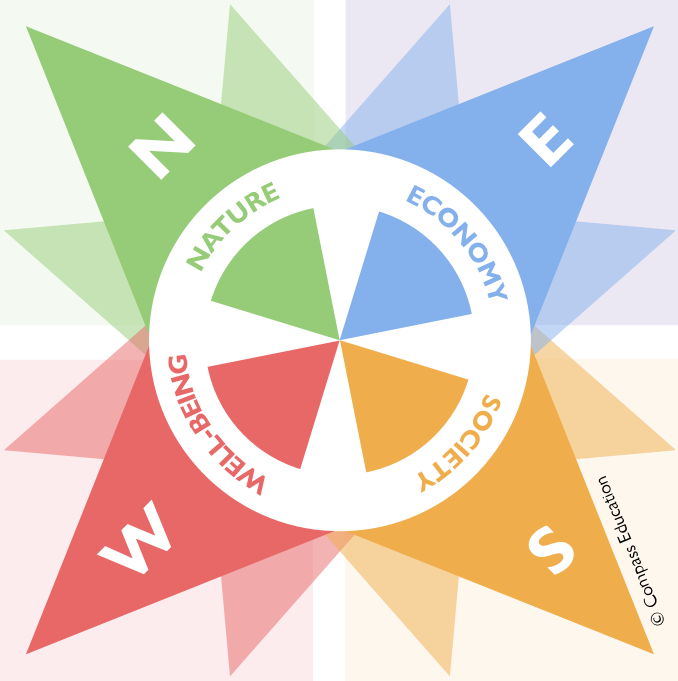
All of our natural ecological systems and environmental concerns, from ecosystem health to resource consumption and waste.

Identify key environmental groups; local, regional, or national agencies; and conservation-focused NGOs that could be affected by or have an interest in the issue.

E is for Economy

The systems and processes by which we use nature, together with our own ideas and work, to create goods, services, money and jobs.

Consider local businesses, economic development organizations, and financial institutions that might be impacted or interested in the issue.



W is for Well-being

Individual health, happiness and quality of life. This also includes the health and happiness of our families and others who are close to us—and our relationships to them.

Engage health & wellness organizations, mental & physical health advocates, and educational institutions that could have an interest in or be affected by the issue.

S is for Society

The institutions and structures that organize our collective life as humans, from government agencies to school clubs, as well as the cultural values that shape and guide them.

Include community leaders, community-based organizations, social service providers, and specific demographic groups.

EXAMPLE: COMPASS STAKEHOLDER IDENTIFICATION

NATURE

Natural scientists

Environment ministries

Environmental NGOs

Local conservation clubs

ECONOMY

Industry associations

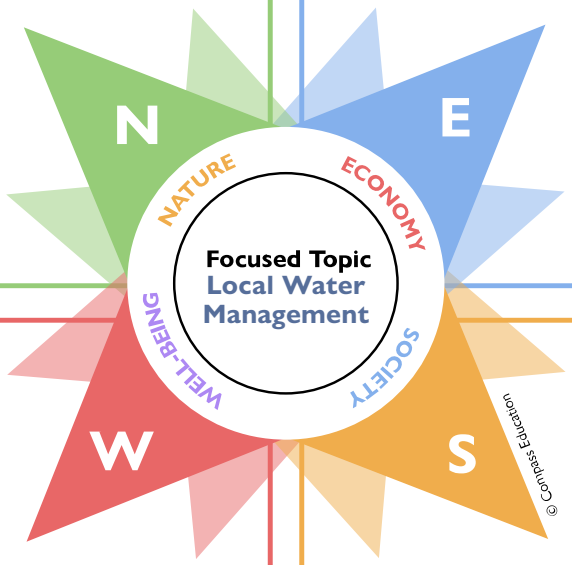
Agricultural planners and policy makers

Farmers

Local co-op group

Economic development authorities

Businesses



Health department: Water-borne disease prevention programs

Local school

Environmental NGOs

Landscape architects (e.g. park designers)

Sanitation experts

WELL-BEING

Water governance experts

Policy makers

Advocates for equitable access to clean water

Water management agencies

Traditional /indigenous users & practitioners

SOCIETY

3.3.2

STAKEHOLDER ANALYSIS

After compiling a comprehensive list of individuals and organizations who affect or are affected by your issue, it's both crucial and useful to assess their influence and impact using the Influence- Impact Matrix. This tool helps you to systematically identify and engage with stakeholders to maximize their support—and effectively advocate for your environmental issue.

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Review Your Stakeholder List

Start by looking back at your stakeholder identification efforts. Ensure you have a comprehensive list of all relevant people and organizations.

2. Assess Each Stakeholder's Influence

Determine how much power each stakeholder has over the environmental issue. Ask yourself these questions:

- Which stakeholders have the most influence or power to affect the change I am working on?
- Are they able to influence environmental policies or projects?
- Do they have access to funding, expertise, or information?
- Are they recognized experts or thought leaders in the environmental issues I am focusing on?
- Do they have connections that can help mobilize support?
- Are they able to shape public opinion or awareness?
- Are they able to enforce environmental regulations or policies?

3. Evaluate Each Stakeholder's Impact

- Assess how much each stakeholder is affected by or can affect the issue you are focusing on. Consider:
- Who are the stakeholders that could be most impacted by changing the environmental issue?
- Will they benefit from or be harmed by environmental changes?
- How will environmental policies affect their daily life or their organization's operations?
- What financial consequences will they face?
- How will their community be impacted?
- How will their public image be affected?
- What legal or regulatory consequences will they encounter?

4. Categorize Stakeholders Using the Matrix

Use the Influence and Impact Matrix provided on the next page to map each stakeholder. The Matrix has two axes:

- The horizontal axis represents the level of influence (low to high).
- The vertical axis represents the level of impact (low to high).

5. Place Stakeholders in the Appropriate Quadrants

Based on your assessment, write down each stakeholder's name or organization in one of the four quadrants.

- High Influence/High Impact (top right quadrant): Key players who are critical to the main issue and your advocacy efforts.
- High Influence/Low Impact (top left quadrant): Stakeholders who can sway others but are less directly impacted.
  Low Influence/High Impact (bottom right quadrant): Those significantly affected but with less power to change outcomes.
- Low Influence/Low Impact (bottom left quadrant): Stakeholders who are less involved but still worth considering/monitoring.



- Use the result of this analysis to help you design your stakeholder engagement strategies based on the quadrant each stakeholder falls into.
- Recognize that resources are limited and you cannot engage with all stakeholders equally. Identify a few key stakeholders from the High Influence/High Impact quadrant to focus your efforts on, as their support will be critical to your success.
- Stakeholder dynamics can change over time. Regularly review and adjust your stakeholder analysis and engagement strategies to reflect any changes in a stakeholder's influence, impact or priorities.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

Discuss these questions with your team mates:

- Were there any stakeholders whose influence or impact was challenging to assess? If so, why?
- What did we learn from this stakeholder analysis process? Were there any surprises or insights gained about certain stakeholders that we did not anticipate?

STAKEHOLDER ANALYSIS - INFLUENCE AND IMPACT MATRIX



NOTE: Each box (quadrant) in the matrix provides specific advice on how to engage with stakeholders based on their position.

3.3.3

STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATION PLAN TEMPLATE

Creating a Stakeholder Consultation Plan is essential for engaging and involving relevant parties. Below is a template that you can customize based on the specific issue you're working on. You may want to print or replicate this template onto a larger A0 size poster paper to make it easier to fill out with your team. ***Use the information you have gathered from the "Sustainability Compass Stakeholder Identification" and the "Stakeholder Influence and Impact Analysis" to support your stakeholder consultation planning.***

Step 1: In Column A, list the key stakeholders that you have identified earlier using the Sustainability Compass and Stakeholder Analysis tool.

Note: Focus on the stakeholders who you feel have enough influence and impact with regards to your issue.

Step 2: In Column B, brainstorm why you feel it is important to talk with each of the stakeholders that you listed. Is it because of their influence on others, in policy making, law enforcement or education? Or is it something else, like the impact that this issue has on their lives and livelihoods?

Step 3: In Column C, discuss with your team and identify the best methods to engage the stakeholders—you want to be able to meet them and get their perspective in a safe and open manner. Depending on the type of group or the individuals, you will need to tailor your engagement and consultation methods accordingly.

Step 4: In Column D, you should try to identify the type of information that you want to find out from each stakeholder. Each stakeholder will be somewhat different as they will see the issue from different "points of view" (POV). So, depending on what relationship they have to the issue that you are addressing, they will provide different feedback. Discuss with your team and others and determine what type of information you will likely get from them. This step will assist you in coming up with some good and precise questions to use during your stakeholder consultations.

Step 5: In Column E, after you have thought about and recorded what you want to find out from each stakeholder, it will be time to brainstorm the specific questions you will ask them during the consultation. Good questions should be short, concise and clearly related to your topic. Your questions should mostly be "open-ended" questions that can have multiple possible answers, some of which can be long —in particular during focus group discussions and interviews. Survey questions should mostly come with multiple choice answers, true/false answers, or be answered in short sentences.

Step 6: Column F of your Stakeholder Consultation Plan is for recording the most current and correct contact information for each stakeholder group, organization or individual. This might be their email, their WhatsApp or Line number, their Facebook page or Instagram profile, or their website if they are an organization. Also try to find out and record what is the best time of the year, month, week and day that they would be available to engage with you.



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STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATION PLAN TEMPLATE

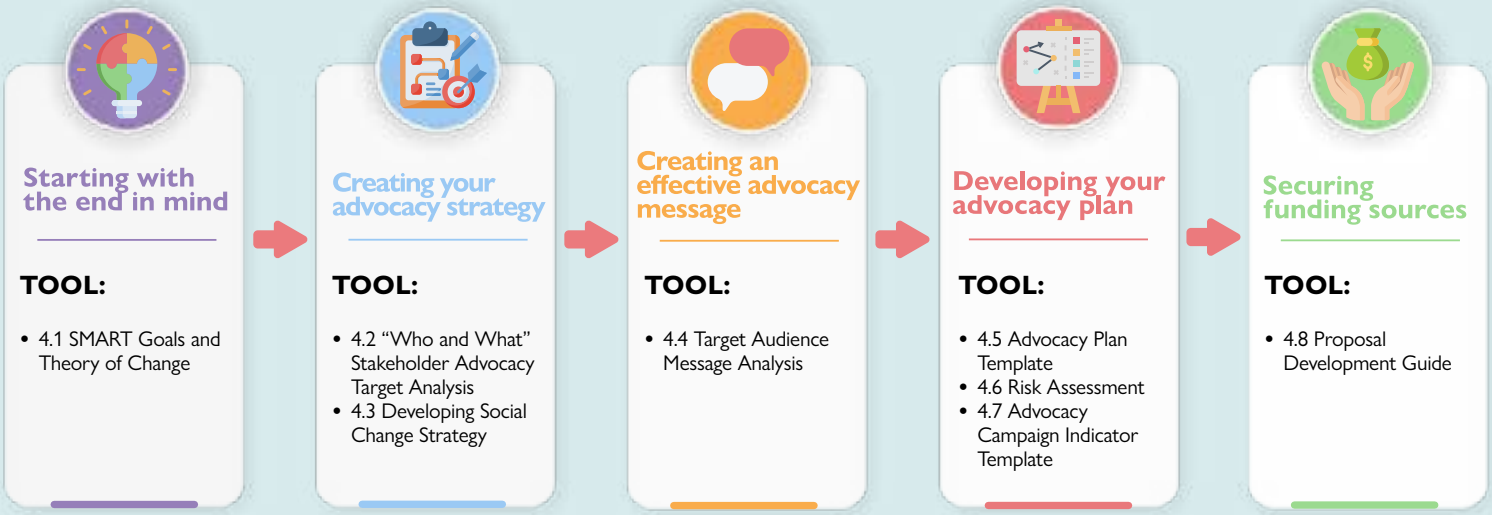
Column A	Column B	Column C	Column D	Column E	Column F
Stakeholder	**Why it's crucial to talk to them**	**How to engage them?**	**What to find out from them?**	**Questions to ask**	**How to contact them (and the best times to do so)**
Example *Elders in the community*	*Example* *They have lived in this community for many decades, which means they have experience and have likely observed the changes in the environment over time.*	*Example* *In-person interviews; focus group discussions; and possible video interviews*	*Example* *How overall environmental quality, ecosystem health,and biodiversity in and around the community has changed over time.*	*Example* • *Are there any plants or animals that you saw, or were present in the ecosystem near the community that you do not see anymore?* • *What climate factors have changed since you were a child? (e.g. rainfall)* • *What is your opinion as to why these plants and animals no longer exist here*	*Example* *Visit their home in the morning (late morning)*

CHAPTER 4
DEVELOPING YOUR ADVOCACY PLAN

INTRODUCTION

Good planning is the backbone of any successful advocacy campaign. In Chapter 4, we guide you through developing an effective advocacy plan, starting with setting "SMART" Goals and strategizing the best ways to influence key groups, especially decision-makers. Your campaign should integrate a mix of communication, relationship-building, and evidence-based persuasion techniques. There is a wealth of tips, techniques, and tools here to help you prepare a compelling advocacy strategy and create persuasive messages. You'll learn how to develop a risk management plan as well as robust indicators and an effective monitoring approach for you and your team. Finally, at the end of this chapter you will find links to potential funding sources, and access to a guide for writing successful funding proposals. This comprehensive support will equip you with everything you need to launch and sustain your advocacy efforts.

TOOLS IN THIS CHAPTER



STEP 1: STARTING WITH THE END IN MIND - DEVELOPING YOUR SMART GOALS & OBJECTIVES

Starting with the end in mind means beginning your advocacy campaign by clearly defining your goals and objectives. This approach ensures that all your efforts are focused and aligned, making it easier to stay on track and achieve the desired impact. It helps you create a clear roadmap to guide your actions and measure your progress effectively.

After completing your research and talking with various stakeholders, you should have a better grasp of the problem and what the potential goals and objectives of your advocacy campaign might be. Before diving into your advocacy plan, take a moment to reflect on what you've learned from using the other tools in this toolkit with your team. Using these insights and a deeper understanding of the issues from different perspectives, it's time to set your advocacy goals and objectives. Create a "what I/we have learned so far" list or document to help you capture your learning throughout this advocacy journey.

Now… when preparing to develop your advocacy plan, the best starting point is the future "end of the project," meaning that you should start with what you want to achieve, see, or create when your advocacy work is ultimately successful. This means identifying what your goals, objectives and outcomes are.

Step 1.1: Identify Your SMART Goals & Objectives

The term "SMART Goals" is usually used to guide us in developing effective goals and objectives, though this term is a bit of a misnomer as goals are really quite broad and not that specific or measurable. What we really mean by "SMART Goals" is that we have "SMART" measures, which can be objectives, outcomes and/or impacts.

Consider the tools and activities you used earlier to understand the broader context of the main topic area. Break down your issue and the type of change you want to make into **S**pecific, **M**easurable, **A**chievable, **R**elevant, and **T**ime-bound (SMART) goals.



Note: In the real world, it may not be possible to meet all the SMART criteria. Your goals and objectives might just have some of the main elements. So, it may be more realistic to see SMART goals as something to work towards rather than a hard-and-fast rule.

The Difference Between Goals & Objectives
Understanding the difference between a goal and an objective can be difficult. **Goals are broad, short statements of intent, that provide focus or vision to your planning.** Goals are typically not very specific and therefore not actually measurable. An example of a goal statement might be:

> *"All wetlands in the Mekong River Basin are protected by national laws."*

Objectives, on the other hand, are meant to be **realistic targets to be achieved during the period of the program or project.** Objectives are written in the active voice and use verbs like plan, write, conduct, produce, etc., rather than learn, understand, or feel. Objectives help you to focus your project or program on what matters. They will answer the following questions.

- Who is going to do WHAT?
- WHEN are they going to do it?
- WHY are they going to do it?
- And to WHAT standard?

Step 1.2: Define Your Specific Objectives

Break down each goal into specific objectives - smaller, actionable steps that will guide you towards achieving your goals. Your objectives should be clear and measurable, so when you reach them, you'll know exactly how close you are to achieving your goals. Set realistic timelines and consider the resources available to your team.

Defining SMART Measures…

- **SPECIFIC** – What are we actually going to do, and with/for whom? This might be an "outcome" that you want to achieve and see at the end of the activity or project. This outcome is stated in numbers, percentages, frequency, reach, etc. In other words, the objective is clearly defined. Example: Cut the amount of plastic waste entering the river by 50%.

- **MEASURABLE** – Is it measurable, and can we measure it? This means that the objective can be measured and the measurement data source is identified and accessible. All activities should be measurable at some level. Example: The amount of plastic waste entering the river (kg/year)

- **ACHIEVABLE** – Can we get it done in the proposed time frame, and with the budget we have? Your goal should be realistic and attainable. Example: Partner with five local schools and communities to run cleanup events and educational programs.

- **RELEVANT** – Your goal should align with your broader mission and be meaningful. Example: Focus on reducing plastic waste because it's a major pollutant in the Mekong River, impacting local ecosystems and communities.

- **TIME-BOUND** – Your goal should have a clear deadline. Example: Achieve a 50% reduction in plastic waste within the next 12 months.

SMART in Practice

See the example of a SMART Target Objective below. This is from a project to raise awareness among villagers, in order to change their behavior regarding the use of illegal fishing gear and other practices that are destroying fisheries, severely impacting long-term ecological health and sustainability.



Figure 15. Example of a SMART Target Objective for changing fishing behavior practices

Step 1.3: Testing Your Goals and Objectives

Once you have clarified your goals and objectives, you can test them against what is known as **Theory of Change**. This is a testable hypothesis used to guide decision-making and action during the development and execution of an advocacy strategy. It explains the process of change and helps you evaluate whether your advocacy actions are leading to the expected outcomes.

Theory of Change Example

Theory of Change is typically expressed in the format: "If X… then Y… because…"

Example:

IF youth organizations are empowered to engage in higher level consultations and discussions, as well as in decision-making, to inform climate change adaptation strategies…

THEN local government will start to adopt better climate resilience adaptation actions that address youth concerns…

BECAUSE youth organizations will have a level of access to power and a voice in local policy development decisions which can hold government authorities accountable.

Tool: SMART Goal & Theory of Change Template

The **SMART Goals Worksheet** is designed to help you identify whether what you want to achieve is realistic, and to determine a deadline. When writing SMART goals, use concise language, but include relevant information. This tool is designed to help you develop your advocacy project/campaign goal and objectives, and to help you succeed so be positive when answering the questions.

This tool also contains a Theory of Change (ToC) template which you can use to clearly outline how you see the change process progress to a clear outcome; i.e. linking raising awareness to behavior change and environmental improvement.



STEP 2: CREATING YOUR STAKEHOLDER ADVOCACY STRATEGY

Step 2.1: Identifying Your Change Target Stakeholders

Take a look back at the Stakeholder Analysis you completed earlier in Chapter 3. Think about who you need to persuade in order to bring about the change you're aiming for.

Identify the exact individuals who have the authority to support you. For example, instead of trying to reach everyone in the Ministry of Environment or the top policy decision-makers—something that would be overwhelming or even impossible—focus on connecting with specific people within the ministry that are involved or associated with youth activities and events, such as a department director general or deputy director. In terms of connecting with stakeholders in the private sector, you could also target a leader in a specific industry—especially one that has a robust Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) program—or a well-known personality or influential figure. Make sure you know these people by their names.

When deciding who to engage, **specify your primary and secondary targets.**

- **Primary targets are decision-makers:** people who have the power to realize the change you are seeking, such as politicians, government officials, community leaders and individuals in the business sector.
- **Secondary targets are power-holders and influencers:** people who have influence over a primary target, such as Minister's advisors, constituents, celebrities, academics, local government officials and people associated with the media. In the event that primary targets are difficult to reach, you may be able to access them through these secondary targets.

Also, consider how you can best reach these people. As an advocate for environmental issues, your job is to influence people and organizations that can make a difference.

HOW TO IDENTIFY YOUR TARGET STAKEHOLDERS

1. Review the Stakeholder Influence and Impact Analysis you developed in Chapter 3. Add any additional key stakeholders that you see missing from the previous analysis.
2. As a team, discuss and agree on who to target for your campaign. Ask yourself two important questions about each of the people/organizations:
    a. Which stakeholders have the political, economic or social influence on decisions and behavior?
    b. Who has the ability to actually make this change a reality? Just like with setting your goals, it's important to be specific in this case.

High Influence/Low Impact	High Influence/ High Impact For Our Issue
KEEP SATISFIED Keep them satisfied with regular updates and seek their support to influence others. **Advice**: Try to work with these groups over the long term. Explore what influences them and look for opportunities to build and strengthen your relationship with them.	**TOP PRIORITY** Engage actively, involve them in planning and decision-making, and address their concerns promptly. **Advice**: Focus most of your time and energy on this group. They are your main target. Most likely to be your main target group
Low Influence/Low Impact	**Low Influence/ High Impact For Our Issue**
MONITOR Monitor with minimal effort, keeping them informed as necessary. **Advice**: Put minimum energy into this group. Just make sure to keep them in mind, as they may become easier to influence or more powerful in the future.	**NEED SUPPORT TO ENGAGE** Keep them well-informed and consider their needs and feedback in your plans. **Advice**: Make sure to reach out to this group, as they could give you some easy access to inspire or reach others. They could also be "door openers" to more important targets and allies who will add their voice to your campaign–or informants who have access to information.

List the stakeholders you select in the "Who and What" Stakeholder Advocacy Target Analysis Tool – Column A.

Step 2.2: Understanding How to Influence Our Key Target Audience / Individuals?

To influence and persuade important individuals and groups—especially decision-makers—with your advocacy efforts, you will need to use a smart mix of communicating, building relationships, and using convincing evidence. Here are some ideas for effectively persuading these various groups through your advocacy strategies:

- **Research and Identify:** Find out who the key people are that can help make a difference for what you care about. This could be politicians, business leaders, community influencers, or other important people involved in your cause. Get to know what matters to them and the challenges they're dealing with.
- **Develop a Clear Message:** Create a strong and simple message that matches what you're fighting for. Your message should connect with the values and interests of these important people. Keep it short and back it up with good evidence.
- **Build a Coalition:** Team up with other groups or individuals who share your goals. Working together can make your message stronger and show more support for what you believe in.
- **Engage Through Multiple Channels:** Use different ways to reach out to the key people you're targeting. This can include face-to-face meetings, social media, newspapers, and speaking at events they go to.
- **Leverage Data and Evidence:** Back up your arguments with solid data, research, and real-life examples. Decision-makers are more likely to listen when you show them the facts.
- **Personalize Your Approach:** Customize your communication to fit each decision-maker's interests and concerns. Sharing personal stories and experiences can be really convincing.
- **Foster Relationships:** Build and keep up relationships with decision-makers and people who influence them. By regularly talking with them, understanding their struggles, and being a helpful resource, you can boost your impact.
- **Advocate through their Constituents:** Get in touch with and rally the supporters of decision-makers. This grassroots pressure can convince them to support your cause.
- **Offer Solutions:** Instead of just highlighting problems, propose actionable and practical solutions. Decision-makers are more likely to engage with advocacy that presents clear, feasible paths forward.

Tool: "Who and What" Stakeholder Advocacy Target Analysis Tool

This template tool is intended to assist you and your team to better understand what type of engagement strategy to use when seeking support for your issue and ideas for change:

- √ Know the WHO and WHAT about the key stakeholders that you have decided to engage after using the Stakeholder Analysis Matrix (Column A).
- √ Know WHICH side they sit on in relation to your issue. Are they for or against doing something to change the status quo around your issue (Column B)?
- √ Know WHO influences your target—you can ask them to act on your behalf or lend their support (Column C).
- √ Know WHAT influences your target—you can find ways to include what your targets care about in your advocacy message (Column D).

Example of how to use the "Who and What" Stakeholder Advocacy Target Analysis Tool

Advocacy Objective: Promote experiential, nature-based environmental education for primary and junior secondary school students			
Column A	**Column B**	**Column C**	**Column D**
TARGET	**WHICH** side do they sit on in relation to your issue (for or against)?	**WHO** influences your target?	**WHAT** influences your target?
Vice Minister of Education	Not clear where he sits on this idea, but from what is publicly available he might be open to it.	• Two very close personal advisors • Education consultant • Influential educators • Minister of Education • National media	• Negative public sentiment on policies and project implementation • National elections • Influential international / regional media and political leaders • Used to work as an advisor for Mekong River Commission

Step 2.3: Developing an Advocacy Strategy

Strategic advocacy is the backbone of effective advocacy. It is a disciplined effort to generate fundamental decisions and actions that guide an organization and shape its course for a specific issue. Developing an advocacy strategy requires figuring out how to reach short-term outcomes while keeping the long-term vision alive. Whether used for a short-term project or a long-term venture, a sound plan always offers chances to develop work and safeguard benefits.

General Aspects to Consider When Designing an Advocacy Strategy:

- **Context:** Every political environment is different. Each presents its own opportunities and constraints. Political decisions are affected by a wide range of difference factors, including the nature of the state, politics, media and strength of civil society. Different countries have different levels of freedom and access to the public sector. People use these opportunities differently depending on education and literacy, poverty levels, and social relationships and power structures. A society's degree of tolerance and openness to social change is influenced by its culture, religion, ethnicity, race, and economic status. It may be more practical in some nations to advocate locally or internationally than at the national level.
- **Timing:** Each moment in history presents distinct political opportunities and constraints. International economic trends may make a country tighten or expand political space. Elections or international conferences may provide opportunities to raise controversial issues. Sometimes a protest or march will bring attention to a problem. In other cases, a march could result in suppression.
- **Organization:** In designing your strategy, it is important to be aware of your group or organization's comparative strengths and weaknesses. How broad and strong is your potential support? Do you have well-placed allies? Is there a strong sense of common purpose among the leadership? Is decision-making efficient and responsive? What resources can you rely on? Are your aims clear and achievable? Can you draw on organizational history for learning and inspiration?
- **Risk:** Not all advocacy strategies can be used in all countries and in all situations. In some places, a direct action aimed to reach a key decision-maker may be politically dangerous, or may weaken or reduce the potential for long-term change. In some countries, advocating for changes that impact cultural values may elicit a severe reaction. Conflict in families, communities, and social settings may also arise when people who are typically marginalized—such as women and children—are involved. Advocacy leaders have a primary responsibility to find ways to navigate through opposition without taking on undue risk. In some cases, you may believe there are situations where taking a chance is the only course of action. Everyone concerned in these situations needs to be aware of the possible risks and potential ramifications.

Some Advocacy Strategies and Actions

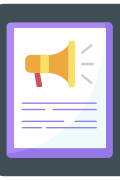


Look at the list and descriptions of possible advocacy methods and consider the following:

- √ What will have the strongest impact on your target person or group?
- √ What might be the easiest actions that you can take towards influencing them?
- √ What skills and contacts does your team/group already have?
- √ What do you and others in your team like doing? What excites you?
- √ What do you know has worked for others in the past … both in other countries in the Mekong region, as well as in your own country?
- √ Will you try to influence decision-makers? How best can you do this? Or will you focus mostly on the public and influencing public opinion?

ACTIONS
YOU COULD USE IN YOUR COMMUNITY





Design and put up **posters** in your neighborhood to get people talking about the adaptation issue you are advocating about.

Send **letters or emails** to your local representatives and politicians highlighting your, or your group's, stance on key climate adaptation issues. What groups are represented in decision-making? Is this a fair representation of your region? What is your local government doing about the climate crisis?



Write a **press release** and communicate with **local media** about the climate adaptation work you are doing. Let them know your core aims in a simple and straightforward way.

Hand out flyers or post. letters through people's doors.



Set up an **information desk** at local events to share information about adaptation and your advocacy around key issues.



Stage a **rally or public protest** in a place where you will get a lot of attention, only if it is safe to do so in our country context.

Start an online advocacy campaign with a hashtag or images about climate adaptation.



TikTok, Facebook, Instagram, etc

Planning Your Advocacy Strategy:

Once you've planned what you will do and who you will engage to advocate for change, it's now time to use the information that you have gathered about the key target individuals and groups that you think will be most effective to develop an effective advocacy strategy. Bringing change to a system usually involves a combination of two different kinds of knowledge:

- **General knowledge** about what is required in order to create change in a system, especially a cultural system, since most sustainable development work involves changes in culture (in the form of different kinds of decisions, policies, or even values).
- **Specific information** about what parts of the system, and what people, are likely to be more accepting of change. Which will be more resistant? And which can be helpful or harmful in other ways?

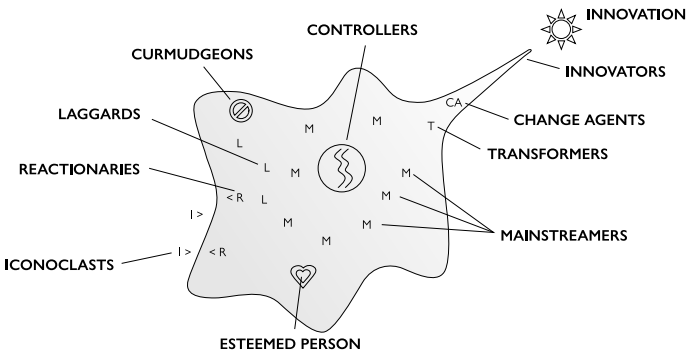
The "Amoeba Model", in combination with "Gilman's Equation", are two tools that are introduced here to help you plan for and develop your advocacy change strategy

The Amoeba Metaphor for Cultural Change

In nature, the amoeba is a predator. It is always seeking food—just as human organizations seek new ideas and solutions to problems.

The amoeba aggressively hunts down and absorbs (eats) other smaller microorganisms. When it senses food, it stretches out an appendage, known as a pseudopod or "false foot," in the direction of the target. When the amoeba absorbs the food item, it does not draw the "foot" back: instead, it surges forward in that direction, and fully engulfs its prey. It must move and change shape in the process. The food, once ingested, then spreads throughout the amoeba's body.

In other words, the search for new food, and the willingness of the amoeba to "stick its neck (or foot) out", results in a shift in position and a re-shaping—a transformation!—of the entire amoeba. This is what makes the metaphor so powerful.



To go deeper: the Amoeba Model makes a parallel between amoebas and human cultural groups. New ideas and techniques—described collectively as innovations—are like food. A small part of the overall cultural group "stretches the boundary" of culture, in search of such innovations. When these explorers—or as they are called here, Innovators and Change Agents—are successful in developing new ideas and getting them absorbed into the main body of the cultural "amoeba," the entire amoeba is moved ... and changed. Sometimes, this change causes many other alterations, resulting in a major shift in how all the members of that culture behave—a transformation.

To learn more about the "amoeba" of cultural change and the different cultural change roles involved in this process, check out this video: **"The Story of the Solar Panel Kid"**.



Watch YouTube video here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZV-ernHBXC0

To help you gain a good understanding of the amoeba metaphor, a case study exercise is provided below. You can work on this by yourself or with your friends.

CASE STUDY EXERCISE: Using the Amoeba Model for Positive AI Change

Learning Objective: This case study exercise will help you to think about your own environmental issue change situation, as it uses the example of changing the mindset and practice of IT and learning at a school with the introduction of artificial intelligence (AI), which as we know is still quite controversial. By reading and thinking about the amoeba's behavior in this example you will be able to effectively reflect on how people will react to your own call for change. Through this you will better understand the roles you and your team are playing in your own advocacy change process, as well as the roles played by others external to your group. It can also help you to consider some strategies to get them onboard with the change you want to make.

Instructions:

1. Read through the Amoeba AI case example article from "Designing for Positive AI Change" with this link: https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/using-amoeba-model-positive-ai-change-kelly-schuster-paredes-tlnee/



2. Use the AI case example to answer the following questions:
   - According to Alan AtKisson, the creator of the Amoeba Model, how is the way that the single-celled amoeba organism lives similar to the cultural change process? Describe what you think is the reason an amoeba is used as a metaphor for cultural change. What is its metaphorical value?
   - What is the concern about AI among educators as expressed in the case? Would there be similar concerns among people in your social context, who may also express reservations with your cause and your change efforts? Brainstorm how they might, and your thoughts on that possibility.
   - In the case example of AI diffusion in education, what distinguishes the change agent's role? Why is this person (i.e. the computer science teacher) identified as the change agent? What is the suggested strategy they should take to move the Innovator's idea forward at the school?
   - What is the difference between the change agent's role strategy and the iconoclast's role? What's the difference between their respective strategies for influencing organizational / cultural change (i.e. incorporating a new idea (AI) into an existing system? Could they accidentally cancel out each other if they are not coordinated in their efforts?
   - Why is the Transformer's role so important in the AI Education change process? What leverage do they have and why would they help to "legitimize" the new idea so that others in the cultural system (i.e. the school) accept and adopt the new idea? Can you think of any possible transformers in your own environmental issue advocacy and change situation?
   - Based on this AI case example, what is the importance of the strategy used with either Laggards or Reactionaries? How are they different from the strategies used for the Change Agent or Transformer?

How to choose your advocacy strategy to influence and support your call for change

In order to develop a concrete advocacy strategy, you will need to identify the actions you want to undertake in relation to the people and groups who you are targeting with your campaign. "Gilman's Equation" is another useful tool for identifying these strategic actions that you will need to incorporate into your final advocacy plan.

N – O > CC

Gilman's Equation suggests that there are three basic strategies to pursue, to make an innovation more likely to be adopted.

1. **Increasing "N"**—*Promote the Perceived Value of the **N**ew Way.* This is commonly known as marketing, which focuses on communicating the benefits of the new idea or thing to the target population.
2. **Decreasing "O"**—*Critique the Perceived Value of the **O**ld Way.* This is done by highlighting the problems, shortfalls, and failings associated with the idea, practice, or thing that the innovation is trying to replace. This is what iconoclasts do.
3. **Decreasing "CC"**—*Reduce the Perceived **C**ost of **C**hange.* This can be done by making it easier for people to switch, through discounts, subsidies, step-by-step guides, etc.

See the example below of how to use Gilman's Equation for developing a stakeholder influence strategy.

Selected Change Action: Support education policy to make learning more authentic (experiential)

Primary Target Group(s): Ministry of Education, Vice Minister and Advisors

Gilman Equation Analysis (The Equation: Change occurs when N – O > CC)		
N - Perceived Value of New	***O - Perceived Value of Old***	***CC - Perceived Costs of Change***
They acknowledge that quality education reform means reforming programs for 21st century skills and values.	They know that traditional education is not producing critical thinking skills, but at the same time most policy-makers give changing education pedagogy a low priority, resulting in the persistence of old models.	They are afraid that education reform on this scale is too much trouble, as it requires curriculum change, wholesale teacher re-training/training, etc.
Actions to Promote the Perceived Value of Your New Action	***Actions to Demote the Perceived Value of the Current or Old Way You Want to Replace***	***Actions to Decrease the Perceived Costs of Change to Switch from the Current/Old Way to Your New Idea***
Provide real evidence of countries/ school systems that have adopted experiential learning pedagogy and the outcomes and impacts that have been realized as a result. Show video case studies, study tours, and use country examples similar to your country.	Provide video and documented testimonials and surveys of what parents, teachers and students think/ feel about traditional education methods and pedagogy. This should be framed in terms of value and giving them the knowledge and skills needed to compete in the 21st century global world.	Secure partner schools where you can pilot this new form of hands-on experiential learning, develop co-created curriculum with educators, and test. Document everything with pre-tests/post-tests, video documentaries, testimonials, etc.

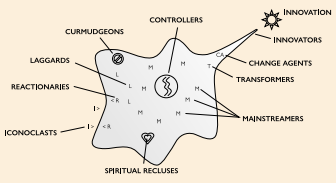
Tool: Developing a Social Change Strategy

Part 1: Amoeba: Amoeba is a tool for understanding, mapping, and planning for new idea adoption and cultural change processes. According to research by Alan AtKisson on "Innovation Diffusion Theory," there are five main reactions to change. This tool helps you to explore the amoeba change roles so that you can reflect on how people will react to your call for change. This will help you to better understand the role they are playing as environmental advocates, the roles played by others external to your group, as well as the dynamics affecting the innovation and change process. **You need to be prepared and plan an approach for each of them.**

The Amoeba Model is combined with the **Gilman Equation** for cultural change. With this insight, change agents can come up with more effective advocacy and change strategy.

Part 2: The Gilman Equation: The Gilman Equation is a tool for constructing a compelling argument or promotional strategy. The equation says that in order for a person to adopt an innovation, the following must be true: The **Perceived Value of the New Way** minus the **Perceived Value of the Old Way** must be greater than the **Perceived Cost of Change**.

Source: Alan AtKisson, Compass, Pyramid, Amoeba: How these tools for accelerating sustainability came to be, how they began spreading around the world, and what's going to happen next | Alan AtKisson



AMOEBA ROLES IDENTIFICATION



AMOEBA CASE STUDY ANALYSIS



Consider how people will react to your call for change using the Amoeba

STEP 3: CREATING AN EFFECTIVE ADVOCACY MESSAGE

The Amoeba Model and Gilman's Equation have hopefully given you a clear understanding of the socio-cultural landscape that your advocacy work is embedded in, as well as helped you develop a holistic innovation diffusion-based strategy for influencing key people and groups to reconsider their decisions and actions. Now it is time to create some catchy and effective communication messages that will sum up your cause and resonate with your intended target audiences.

What's your message?

At the heart of any campaign is a catchy message, but it's tough to boil down the complex issues facing the GMS into a single phrase. While our toolkit zooms in on managing sustainable freshwater ecosystems, tackling climate change, and shifting towards renewable energy, these topics are still quite intricate. However, for young people to become deeply passionate about these challenges, we need to find a way to simplify them. Very technical or complex messages won't be meaningful to most of our audience. Instead, we need straightforward, punchy messages that grab people's attention.

Once you've captured the interest of your audience, you'll find plenty of chances to dive deeper into the issues. Think of your campaign's messages in two layers: primary and secondary. Your primary message should hit home with everyone (using messages such as "The river is life; it's our duty to protect it"). Then, when you need to strengthen your point for specific groups, bring out the secondary messages. These messages back up your main point by detailing how we'll achieve what the primary message promises, designed specifically to address the particular concerns or interests of different segments of your audience.

Your primary message should include the following: **Statement + Evidence + Example + Goal + Action Desired**

- **The Statement:** This is your main idea or the heart of your message. It explains why the change you're talking about is essential.
- **The Evidence:** Back up your statement with straightforward facts and figures. Make sure to use clear and simple language so everyone can understand.
- **The Example:** Add a real-life story or example to give a personal touch to your message. This helps make the issue more relatable.
- **The Goal:** Spell out what you're aiming to achieve. This is the outcome you want from your efforts.
- **The Action:** Define the specific actions you want to take to reach your goals. This is your plan for solving the issue and what makes your message stand out from just any other conversation.

Note: Sometimes, like during a TV interview or an unexpected chat at an event, you'll need to express your main point in just one sentence. Having a quick, one-sentence version of your primary message ensures you can get your point across effectively and fast.

A secondary message is more specific and addresses certain specific groups. It goes deeper or reinforces the primary message, especially when your audience needs a little extra motivation. These messages often detail the next steps your audience should take, addressing their specific interests or concerns. You might need several different secondary messages, each designed for different audiences or situations.

No matter who you're trying to reach—be it policy-makers, business leaders, international groups, influencers, or just everyday people—you need to have a crystal-clear message about climate change adaptation. Make sure you know exactly what you want to say and why it matters to your audience.

What makes an effective advocacy message?



Think back to the last time an advert, a marketing blitz, or even a social or environmental campaign really caught your attention. What attracted you? Was it something that sparked your curiosity or made you reflect on your own choices and actions?

Creating an effective advocacy message is crucial for gaining support, influencing policy, and rallying people to your cause.

The key ingredients of a powerful advocacy message include:

1. **Keep It Clear and Simple**
   - Be Direct: Keep your message short and avoid any unnecessary jargon.
   - Easy to Understand: Make sure anyone can understand it, no matter their background.
2. **Strike an Emotional Chord**
   - Make it Personal: Connect through personal stories, testimonials, or interesting statistics that make the issue 'real' for your audience.
   - Drive Action: Inspire your audience to believe they can truly make a difference.
3. **Be Specific**
   - Goal-Oriented: Clearly state your advocacy goals, including the specific actions or results you're aiming for.
   - Know Your Audience: Customize your message to resonate with the specific concerns and interests of your intended audience.

4. **Build Credibility**
   - Back it Up: Use solid data and trustworthy sources to support your message.
   - Stay Consistent: Keep your messaging consistent across all platforms to strengthen your campaign.
5. **Urgency**
   - Immediate Action: Convey a sense of urgency that compels your audience to act now rather than later.
   - Time-Bound: Link your message to specific deadlines or events to emphasize the need for prompt action.
6. **Solution-Oriented**
   - Practical Solutions: Offer clear, practical solutions or actions that the audience can take to address the issue.
   - Empowerment: Empower your audience by showing how their actions can lead to meaningful change.
7. **Personalization**
   - Connection: Personalize the message to resonate with the values, experiences, and interests of your audience.
   - Engagement: Encourage direct engagement or interaction with your message, such as asking questions or inviting feedback.
8. **Visual and Emotional Impact**
   - Visuals: Use compelling visuals, such as images, infographics, or videos, to complement your message and make it more memorable.
   - Storytelling: Incorporate storytelling to make the issue more relatable and to illustrate the impact of advocacy efforts on real people's lives.
9. **Call to Action**
   - Clear Instructions: Include a clear and specific call to action, directing your audience towards what you want them to do next.
   - Accessibility: Ensure the action you're asking for is accessible and feasible for your audience to perform.

Creating an effective advocacy message means balancing key elements to fit your goals and audience. Your message should be engaging, persuasive, and actionable, helping you gain more support and make a real impact for your cause.

Tool: Target Audience Message Analysis

Designing your advocacy message to address specific target audiences is essential for making it relevant, engaging, and persuasive. Different audiences have unique values, concerns, and knowledge levels. Customizing your message helps you to connect more effectively, creating interest and motivating action.

Using the Amoeba Model and Gilman's Equation insights, the **Target Audience Messaging Analysis Tool** helps you identify key advocacy messages. It focuses on understanding what concerns your audience about your issues, who and what influences their thinking and actions, and the best strategies and messages to use.

Step 3.1: Preparing your messages

It is important that you use different message approaches for different target audiences.

1. **Preparing a Full 'Issue Brief'**



Preparing a full issue brief is useful for you and your team as it helps you to have a deeper but concise understanding of the issue, thus being able to communicate it clearly, accurately and effectively. This will ensure that it is also compelling and useful for those who have an interest and are involved in this issue. The 'brief' should include some of these key elements:

- √ What is the problem and how can it be changed?
- √ Data and informational evidence (examples: infographics, graphs and tables)
- √ Why is change related to this issue so important?
- √ What is being done and can be done to make the change happen?
- √ What specific actions need to be taken?

2. **A Quick Concise Message**

A short and powerful format is needed to get your message across quickly in less than one minute to people who might be interested. It should include key information, such as:

- √ What is the problem and how can it be changed?
- √ What do you expect from the person you are speaking to? It could just be a chance to meet and discuss the issue in more detail.

Example: *"Don't mess with Texas"* was the slogan of a very successful anti-litter campaign in the U.S. state of Texas.



3. **Adapt Messages for Your Specific Audience**

Find ways to link the interest of the people you want to influence with your advocacy issues. For example, if your goal is to get the public to value wetlands, and you want to appeal to a person with interest in economic issues, your message could be:

"Invest in Nature,
Reap Financial Rewards:
Protecting Our Wetlands



Did you know that natural wetlands are not just ecological treasures but also economic powerhouses? By preserving our wetlands, we're not just saving habitats; we're investing in a sustainable future that boosts our economy."



Brilliant messages are...

1. **Simple**
2. **Solution-focused**
3. **Practical and reasonable in their requests**
4. **Evidence-based:** They include real life stories, facts, and stats
5. **Appropriate for the audience in language and content**
6. **Personal:** They show why you care

Step 3.2: Testing Out Your Messages

Creating a powerful message that informs, persuades, and inspires action is key to any successful advocacy campaign. Before you launch your campaign, it's crucial to pre-test your messages. This means getting feedback from a small group that represents your target audience. By doing this, you can fine-tune your message to make it even more impactful.

Connect with people who are passionate about issues like sustainable freshwater ecosystem management, climate change, and the growth of renewable energy in the GMS. Ensure your facts are accurate and use compelling examples. Gather feedback to refine your message, pitch, and delivery to make sure you communicate it as best as possible.

Benefits of Testing Your Advocacy Messages

The benefits of pre-testing your advocacy messages are substantial and can greatly enhance the impact of your advocacy efforts. Some of the key benefits include:

- **Understanding Audience Reactions:** Pre-testing allows you to gauge how your target audience reacts to your messages. This insight is invaluable because it helps ensure your messages resonate with your audience as intended, avoiding misunderstandings or negative reactions.
- **Improving Message Clarity and Effectiveness:** Feedback from pre-testing can highlight areas where your messaging might be confusing, overly complex, or simply not compelling enough. This enables you to refine your messages for clarity, persuasiveness, and impact, ensuring they are understood and embraced by your audience.
- **Identifying and Mitigating Potential Problems:** Sometimes, messages can unintentionally offend, alienate, or provoke negative responses from certain segments of your audience. Pre-testing helps identify these issues before a wide release, allowing for adjustments that make your campaign more inclusive and effective.
- **Enhancing Engagement:** By ensuring that messages directly address the values, concerns, and aspirations of your audience, pre-testing can help increase engagement with your campaign. Engaged audiences are more likely to support, participate in, and advocate for your cause.
- **Resource Optimization:** Investing in message development and distribution can be costly. Pre-testing ensures that your resources are directed toward messages that are most likely to succeed, thereby optimizing your budget and efforts for the best possible outcomes.
- **Benchmarking and Measuring Impact:** Pre-testing provides baseline data on how your messages perform with your target audience. This information can be invaluable for measuring the impact of your advocacy campaign over time and making data-driven decisions.
- **Customizing Messages for Different Segments:** Different audience segments may respond differently to your messages. Pre-testing can help identify these variations, allowing you to customize your messaging to better appeal to different groups within your target audience.
- **Building Confidence in Your Campaign:** Knowing that your messages have been tested and refined based on actual audience feedback can provide your team with greater confidence in the campaign. This confidence can enhance your advocacy efforts, making your team more motivated and assertive in their outreach and engagement

STEP 4: DEVELOPING YOUR ADVOCACY PLAN

Now it's time to develop your Advocacy Plan. An advocacy plan is essential for success because it provides a structured framework that identifies clear, actionable goals. When done correctly, this will address specific environmental issues and engage a diverse group of young individuals passionate about environmental advocacy—and leverage their unique perspectives and energies.

A structured approach is critical for several reasons:

- **Provides Clarity of Purpose.** Clearly defining your goals ensures everyone is focused on the same aim, making your efforts more efficient and impactful.
- **Ensures Effective Strategic Planning.** Providing clear direction in identifying your target audience, the best communication channels, and effective tactics increases the chances of success.
- **Enables Efficient Resource Allocation.** Ensure you wisely use resources, preventing waste and maximizing the impact of your efforts by using your time, money, and people effectively.
- **Ensures Successful Stakeholder Engagement.** Engaging key supporters builds broad support and leverages the strengths of diverse allies.
- **Enables Measurement and Adaptation.** Tracking progress allows you to adjust your tactics as needed, keeping your efforts effective.

- **Accountability and Transparency.** Provide a clear roadmap which promotes accountability within your team and transparency to supporters and funders.
- **Ensures Sustainability.** Planning for long-term impact that ensures the changes you achieve are lasting and benefit the community over time.

Putting All the Pieces Together in Your Advocacy Plan

So, let's start putting the plan together. Creating an effective youth advocacy plan requires identifying clear, actionable goals and objectives that address specific environmental issues. It also requires engaging a diverse group of young people who are passionate about working together to effect change in the current status quo by leveraging their energy, enthusiasm, and unique perspectives.

Below are several steps, along with accompanying tools, to help you identify the necessary actions, possible risks, and how to measure the success of your initiative.



Step 4.1: Putting together the plan

Now that you have worked on the various aspects of the advocacy planning process, take the outputs from these previous steps (i.e. your Advocacy Goals, Objectives and Theory of Change; your Advocacy Target Stakeholders, and your Change Strategy and Advocacy Messages) and put them all together to create an overall Advocacy Plan.

Making the Change We Intend to Make Review

- **Defining Goal & Objectives:** What change do you want to make in relation to your environmental issue? What do you want your target audience to do to contribute to your goal?
- **Targeting Influencers:** Who do you need to influence to either make a decision or to act in some way?
- **Developing Strategies:** How to go about successfully influencing them to think differently, make changes, or to act?
- **Setting a Timeline:** When will the different activities and action happen?

By answering these questions, you'll create a clear roadmap for your project, making it easier to achieve your goals and inspire others to join your cause.

Tool: Advocacy Plan Template

Now it's time to develop your Advocacy Plan! Use this template to outline your team's plan of action. Review your goals and objectives, your Theory of Change actions, and stakeholder analysis. Also remember to consider the stakeholder role from the Amoeba Model, the Gilman's Equation strategy, and key messages. This template will help you organize tasks for each change action, assign responsibilities, and set a tentative timeline. After completing your draft Advocacy Plan, you can proceed to a Risk Assessment & Management Plan, a Performance/Impact Indicator Framework & Monitoring Plan, and finally, a Success Reporting & Dissemination Plan.


TOOL: ADVOCACY PLAN TEMPLATE

1. WHAT IS THE OVERALL CHANGE WE WANT TO SEE?
(Write out your long-term goal and campaign/project objectives)

2. WHAT ARE THE THINGS THAT WE EXPECT TO SEE HAPPEN AS A RESULT OF OUR ADVOCACY EFFORTS? (Tangible outcomes)

Step 4.2: Managing uncertainty, obstacles and risks in your advocacy campaign

All advocates and campaigners will eventually run into some problems. However, playing things too safe will likely not get you very far. There are inherent risks in any change endeavor, but the important thing is to identify the risks in advance and consider how to avoid them if possible, or deal with them if the risks turn into reality.



Tool: Risk Management

This Risk Management tool can help you identify your project's obstacles and risks, as well as to come up with potential ways your team can mitigate and reduce them.

All of your information should be organized in a table similar to the one below.



IMPORTANT: Know your rights and keep yourself safe! In many countries, the rights to free assembly are limited in certain circumstances. Make sure you have read up your rights before engaging in more high-risk forms of advocacy such as protesting.

Example:

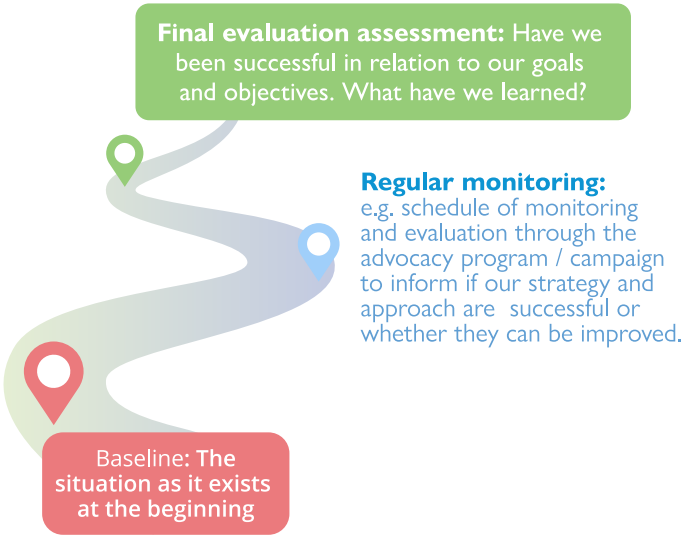
Risk	How to avoid	How to deal with
Being overambitious with your goals and objectives and expected outcomes	Plan to start small and grow as you realize some early successes. Plan for phases of your advocacy work.	Monitor and review your progress regularly to keep focused on the most important activities, and adjust as needed.
Insufficient funding to complete all activities	Do a good budgeting process with help from experts or others who have previous experience on what things cost.	Cut out low priority or unnecessary activities, materials, media, and try to get free volunteer 'in kind' assistance.

Step 4.3: Monitoring your success

So, your team has now kicked off your advocacy campaign. Through creative and careful planning, you are using what you feel are effective strategies, tactics and tools. Your activities are directly engaging with your primary and secondary stakeholder targets with the aim of influencing them to make change.

But how do we know if our strategy is actually working, or if we are really on target to achieve our goals? That's where the crucial step of monitoring and evaluation comes in. Evaluating your strategy allows you to document your gains and highlight where you could have taken a different approach. It gives you a chance to redesign and plan new advocacy strategies and tactics.

Monitoring is about regularly gathering information on the positive and negative impacts of your advocacy work. Effective monitoring and evaluation of your advocacy campaign requires careful planning. It is crucial to establish what information is necessary for tracking progress, and how it can be obtained, before your first action is taken.



By monitoring, you will be able to...

- **PROVE:** gather evidence about whether change is actually happening. This is done so that you can know and show to others what is really going on.
- **IMPROVE**: learn about and gain insights into what is working as expected and what is not.

Establish monitoring timelines

Make sure you assign time for regular reviews to adjust your strategy and tactics and update your monitoring and evaluation systems accordingly. No matter how much preparation goes into your strategy, advocacy initiatives rarely follow a set plan and anticipated timelines. It is important to acknowledge this by allowing moments for reflection and learning. Develop a learning plan or timeline for sessions that review the data your team has collected, and reflect on lessons learned and changes that need to be made.

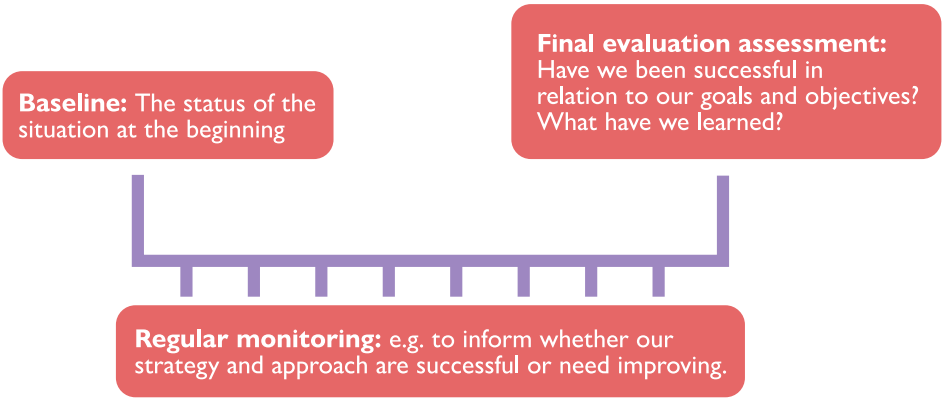
What should we be monitoring?

Think about what it is that you need to know to either adapt and improve your advocacy strategy while it is ongoing, or to demonstrate success and impact to key stakeholders such as government decision-makers, media and donors. Some points to consider monitoring may include:

- √ Did the actions get a reaction?
- √ Did the reaction achieve a result?
- √ Did this result have the desired effect?
- √ What worked and what did not work as planned/expected?
- √ Were there unexpected outcomes that we did not plan for (both positive and negative)?

To answer each of these questions you should think carefully about the information you need and how you will collect it during the planning phase. When gathering information, make sure it is from a reliable source, and where possible, use the same sources of information throughout your advocacy campaign.

Note: You will need to gather information and data at different phases of your advocacy work.



Below are some sources where you can find useful information about what the situation is at the beginning (i.e. your baseline starting point) and how it is changing.

- √ Surveys
- √ Evaluation forms
- √ Meeting minutes
- √ Outreach program participant evaluations
- √ Informal impressions from random or targeted people
- √ Interviews and consultations
- √ Social media comments and posts by target groups online
- √ Media stories

Note: The information that you collect does not always have to be formal data (qualitative or quantitative), but can include individual personal perspectives and points of view from both you and your team, as well as other stakeholders.

For this reason, one of the most effective methods is to organize periodic review, reflection and evaluation meetings with your team to identify what is working and what is not.

Identifying Good Indicators of Success

To measure our inputs, activities, outputs, and outcomes, we need indicators. Indicators define the type of information and data that you will collect and analyze. An indicator is a variable or metric that measures the various components of your advocacy program and activities (i.e. inputs, activities, outputs, outcomes). Indicators can be either quantitative or qualitative.

Tool: Advocacy Campaign Indicator Template

Welcome to the **Youth Advocacy Campaign Indicator Template**. This tool is designed to help your advocacy team set out clear objectives and outline campaign activities while providing a structured space to identify and track indicators of success. By defining specific, measurable indicators, your team can effectively assess the impact of your strategies, messages, and activities in achieving your campaign goals.

Use this template to systematically document your objectives, describe your planned activities, and establish relevant indicators that will help you assess and evaluate your progress and make informed adjustments to your advocacy efforts.



Characteristics of Good Indicators

Valid
Accurate measure of behavior, practice or action that is the expected output or outcome of your program or activity

Precise
Operationally defined in clear terms

Relevant
Has meaning to the people and groups who you need to influence

Measurable
Quantifiable using available tools and methods

Reliable
Consistently measurable in the same way by different observers

Understandable
Your target group of stakeholders (decision-makers, students, public) can easily understand what the indicator is showing

STEP 5: SECURING FUNDING RESOURCES

Developing a budget and action plan for advocacy work is essential to make a realistic assessment of existing resources and identify potential sources of funding to support the work. It is helpful at this stage to identify possible donors and/or funding opportunities to finance your advocacy project. Here, you could draw up a list of potential donors to approach for funding and add them to an Excel spreadsheet as a database. You can also sign up for various funding opportunity email alerts and e-newsletters that publish updates on new funding opportunities, deadlines for grant applications, and relevant news that can help youth organizations stay informed about potential funding sources.

Possible Funding Sources:

Funding sources for youth advocacy projects in the GMS can come from a variety of organizations, including international NGOs, government agencies, and private foundations that focus on development, human rights, environmental protection, and educational initiatives. Some possible sources of funding for your advocacy project may include:

- **ASEAN Foundation:** The ASEAN Foundation supports various initiatives aimed at building ASEAN identity and promoting cooperation among ASEAN countries, which includes the GMS countries. They may offer grants for projects that align with their objectives.
- **The Asia Foundation:** This foundation works on improving lives across a dynamic and developing Asia, including the Mekong region. It supports programs related to governance, law, economic development, women's empowerment, environment, and regional cooperation.
- **The United Nations Development Program:** UNDP offers funding for projects that aim to address climate change, democratic governance, poverty reduction, and the sustainable development goals in the region.
- **European Union:** The EU offers small funding for projects in the GMS that promote human rights, democratic governance, sustainable growth, and environmental sustainability.
- **Country Embassies:** Embassies of countries like the United States, Germany, Canada, Australia, and several European Union members often have small grant programs. These can include funding for education, environmental conservation, and social entrepreneurship among youth. The specifics can usually be found on the respective embassy's official website or by contacting their public affairs or cultural section.
- **Private Companies:** Companies allocate a portion of their profits to Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiatives, which can include a wide range of activities such as community development, education, environmental conservation, health, and more. Projects led by or targeting youth often align with companies' CSR objectives, particularly if they address issues like education, skill development, sustainability, or innovation.
- **Crowdfunding and Social Media Platforms:** For smaller projects, platforms like Kickstarter, GoFundMe, or local platforms in the GMS can be used to raise funds from individuals who are interested in supporting specific causes.
- **FundsforNGOs:** Funds for NGOs serves as an online resource to help NGOs—including youth-led and youth-focused groups—find potential funding sources from various donors around the world. These sources can include governments, international organizations, private foundations, and CSR programs (fundsforngos.org). The platform offers:
  - **Lists of Funding Opportunities:** Detailed listings of available grants and funding opportunities categorized by sector, region, and focus area, including those specifically targeting or suitable for youth advocacy and activities.
  - **Capacity Building Resources:** Guides and articles on how to apply for grants, write proposals, manage NGO finances, and more, which can be particularly useful for youth organizations looking to strengthen their funding applications.

Tool: Proposal Development Guideline

Proposals are an essential tool to convince donors to support your organization. Writing high quality proposals that are persuasive will help you get continued funding from both old and new donors. Often donors will have their own specific proposal template, which you must follow. Though each donor's template will likely be different in some regards, depending on the donor's specifics, there are more commonalities than differences, which essentially follow the results framework.

This Proposal Development Guidebook will provide you with the basics of developing a project results framework (sometimes referred to as a logical framework) for your proposal. This will usually cover the core part of any donor's template.

Conducting Monitoring and Evaluation Review Meetings

Reflection, evaluation and reviewing is essentially the process of gathering information at key points in time during your advocacy campaign, in order to get a broad and timely perspective on:

- √ What is happening?
- √ What is working and what isn't?
- √ What needs to be adjusted or changed in relation to what we expect the outputs and outcomes to be at the end of the campaign?

Reflection and review mean that you gather information at key periods during your advocacy work/campaign to gain a wider perspective on what is going on with the different aspects of your work. When planning a reflection and review meeting, it is important to choose the right questions to ask yourself, and to also create a safe and supportive atmosphere where the members of your team (and invited outsiders) feel able to share their views freely. Participants of these meetings should feel that their opinions are valued and that they are able to question the plan and others' suggestions. It may be a good idea to involve a variety of different people in your review meeting. Some questions to use for initial prompting of responses may include the following:

- What have we learned so far from our work?
- What are the successes so far?
- What has come up that was unexpected, and what was the result?
- What have been our noteworthy challenges so far?
- How have we adjusted our original work plan?
- How can we improve our performance going forward?
- Are there other questions that we should be asking/answering?

Some Useful Tips When Planning Your Monitoring

Make monitoring easy and avoid using methods that are time-consuming. Involve others who would benefit from successful advocacy when you are planning and carrying out monitoring. This will encourage ownership and trust of the advocacy campaign. Assessing the effect of your advocacy campaign is best done with the people the campaign is trying to help.

Library for additional resources

- An online course from CARE International, The Basics of Advocacy Strategy Design, allows you to probe deeper into the advocacy planning and implementation cycle.
- Power Tool: Developing a low-cost, low-tech advocacy Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL) System (English), also by CARE. This consists of multiple tools for developing a simple system to measure and track progress on your advocacy goals.
- Monitoring and Evaluation for Advocacy and Influencing. This guide from CARE provides various options, depending on who you are trying to influence, how you aim to influence, how you want to capture the effects of your advocacy effort, and what resources you have to achieve this.



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CASE STUDY EXERCISE: USING THE AMOEBA MODEL FOR POSITIVE AI CHANGE

LEARNING OBJECTIVE

This case study exercise will help you think about your own environmental issue. It uses a case example of changing the mindset and practice of IT and learning at a school with the introduction of Artificial Intelligence (AI), which as we know is still quite controversial.

Reading and thinking about the Amoeba change roles in this example can help you to more effectively reflect on how people will react to your call for change. This will help you to better understand the roles you and your team are playing in your own advocacy change process, as well as the roles played by others outside your group. It can also reveal some strategies to engage them and get them onboard with the change you want to make.

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Read through the Amoeba AI case example article from "Designing for Positive AI Change" with this link: https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/using-amoeba-model-positive-ai-change-kelly-schuster-paredes-tlnee/

2. Use the AI case example to answer the questions on the next page.



DESIGNING FOR POSITIVE AI CHANGE

USING THE AMOEBA MODEL

Artwork Generated by Dalle with Inspiration from the Amoeba Model

1. According to Alan AtKisson, the creator of the Amoeba Model, how is the way that the single-celled amoeba organism lives similar to the cultural change process? Describe what you think is the reason an amoeba is used as a metaphor for cultural change. What is its metaphorical value?
2. What is the concern about AI among educators as expressed in the case? Would there be similar concerns among people in your social context, who may also express reservations with your cause and your change efforts? Brainstorm how they might, and your thoughts on that possibility.
3. In the case example of AI diffusion in education, what distinguishes the change agent's role? Why is this person (i.e. the computer science teacher) identified as the change agent? What is the suggested strategy they should take to move the Innovator's idea forward at the school?
4. What is the difference between the change agent's role strategy and the iconoclast's role? What's the difference between their respective strategies for influencing organizational / cultural change (i.e. incorporating a new idea (AI) into an existing system? Could they accidently cancel out each other if they are not coordinated in their efforts?
5. Why is the Transformer's role so important in the AI Education change process? What leverage do they have and why would they help to "legitimize" the new idea so that others in the cultural system (i.e. the school) accept and adopt the new idea? Can you think of any possible transformers in your own environmental issue advocacy and change situation?
6. Based on this AI case example, what is the importance of the strategy used with either Laggards or Reactionaries? How are they different from the strategies used for the Change Agent or Transformer?

4.4.1

SMART GOALS WORKSHEET

Crafting SMART goals is a process to help you identify whether what you want to achieve is realistic, and to determine a deadline. When writing SMART goals use concise language, but include relevant information. The process is designed to help you succeed, so be positive when answering the questions.

INSTRUCTIONS

As a team, follow the steps below and develop a SMART goal.

FIRST STEP	Write the goal you have in mind
GOAL	**Example:** Local communities become actively engaged in environmental health protection.

S	What exactly do you want to accomplish? Why is this goal important? Who needs to be included? When do you want to do this? Where will it take place?
SPECIFIC	**Example:** Increase the number of volunteers for our community clean-up project.

M	How can you measure progress and know if you've successfully met your goal?
MEASURABLE	**Example:** Recruit 50 new volunteers within the next three months.

A	Do you have the skills required to achieve the goal? If not, can you obtain them? What is the motivation for this goal? Is the amount of effort required on par with what the goal will achieve? What are the potential obstacles?
ACHIEVABLE	**Example:** Partner with local schools and community centers to reach potential volunteers.

R	Make sure your goal aligns with broader objectives and is worthwhile. Does this goal matter? Is it the right time? Does it align with other efforts or needs?
RELEVANCE	**Example:** This goal supports our overall mission to improve community engagement and environmental health.

T	When will it be achieved? What can be done today? What can be done six weeks from now? What can be done six months from now?
TIME-BOUND	**Example:** Recruit 50 new volunteers by September 30th.

SMART	Review what you have written, and craft a new goal statement based on what the answers to the questions above have revealed.
GOAL	**Example:** "Our goal is to enhance community engagement and environmental health by recruiting 50 new volunteers for our community clean-up project by September 30th. We will achieve this by partnering with local schools and community centers to reach potential volunteers over the next three months."

Identify Objectives

Based on your SMART goal, define specific objectives—smaller, actionable steps that will help you achieve your goal(s).

Then test your goal(s) and objectives using a tool known as a Theory of Change. This is a testable hypothesis that guides decision-making and action during the development and execution of an advocacy strategy. It explains the process of change and helps you evaluate whether your advocacy actions are leading to the expected outcomes.

Then, the next step will be to develop strategies to accomplish these objectives. This could involve public awareness campaigns, lobbying for policy changes, building coalitions, or other methods, depending on the nature of your advocacy.

OBJECTIVES	**1.** **2.** **3.**

THEORY OF CHANGE	**IF...** **THEN...** **BECAUSE...**

4.4.2

TOOL: WHO AND WHAT STAKEHOLDER ADVOCACY TARGET ANALYSIS

INSTRUCTIONS:

Use the table below to understand your target stakeholders and think about what type of engagement strategy you will use to get them to support your issue and ideas for change.

1. Review the Stakeholder Influence and Impact Analysis you developed in Chapter 3. Add any additional key stakeholders that you see missing from the previous analysis. Discuss with your team and agree on who you need to persuade in order to bring about the change you're aiming for.

   Ask yourself two important questions about each of the people/organizations:
   a. Which stakeholders have the political, economic or social influence on decisions and behavior?
   b. Who has the ability to actually make this change a reality?

List the stakeholders you select in the Who and What Advocacy Target Template (Column A).

2. Understand their views of your advocacy issue, and identify what type of engagement strategy you will use in getting them to support your issue and ideas for change.

- Know ***WHAT side they sit on in relation to your issue.*** Are they for or against doing something to change the status quo around your issue? (Column B).
- Know ***WHO influences your target.*** You can ask them to act on your behalf or lend their support (Column C).
- Know ***WHAT influences your target.*** You can find ways to include what your targets care about in your advocacy message (Column D).

For each of your key targets, map out how they think in relation to your issue and the change you want to make, as well as the influences on their position around your issues.

EXAMPLE

Advocacy Objective: Promote experiential nature-based environmental education for primary and junior secondary school student

TARGET	What Side Do They Sit on in Relation to Your Issue (For or Against)?	WHO Influences Your Target?	WHAT Influences Your Target?
Vice Minister of Education	Not clear where he sits on this idea, but from what is publicly available he might be open to it.	• Two very close personal advisors • Education consultant • Influential Educators • Minister of Education • National Media	• Public negative sentiment on policies and project implementation • National elections • Influential international / regional media and political leaders • Used to work as advisor for Mekong River Commission (MRC)

WHO AND WHAT ADVOCACY TARGET TEMPLATE ANALYSIS - INFLUENCE AND IMPACT MATRIX

Advocacy Objective:			
Column A	**Column B**	**Column C**	**Column D**
TARGET	**What Side Do They Sit on in Relation to Your Issue (For or Against)?**	**WHO Influences Your Target?**	**WHAT Influences Your Target?**

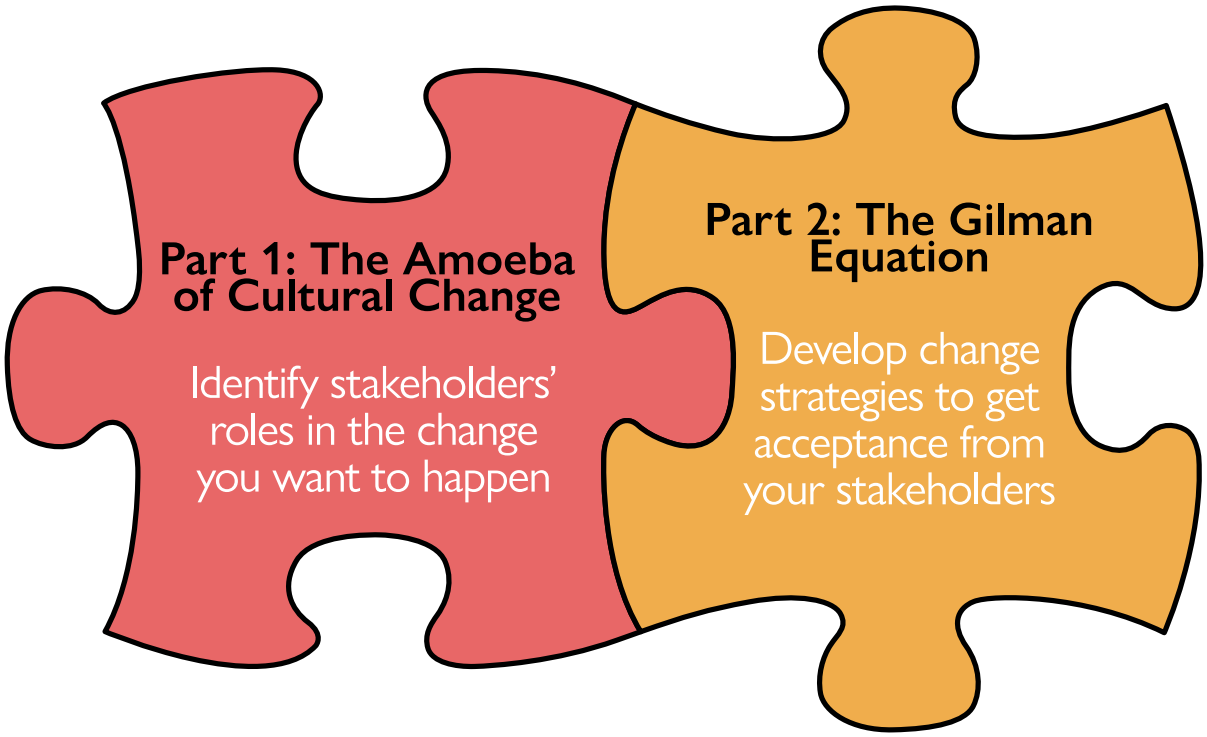
4.4.3

DEVELOPING SOCIAL CHANGE STRATEGIES

This tool is all about social change, including the perspectives and strategies required to move an idea forward. The tool combines two connected tools that will help you better understand your stakeholders and identify the roles they might play in the change process. You will then be able to develop strategies to ensure their acceptance and support of your idea/initiative.

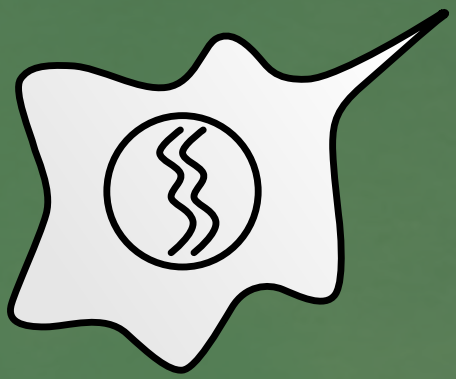
HOW TO USE THIS TOOL

Together with your team, sit down and go through the information and instructions provided on the following pages.



AMOEBA (PART 1)

1. Read the background information and the Amoeba role descriptions provided. Make sure that everyone in your team understands the Amoeba analogy and role characteristics.
2. Look at the list of stakeholders you have identified in the previous stage of advocacy, and identify, one by one, their Amoeba roles. Are they potentially reactionaries, transformers or mainstreamers?
3. ***Use worksheet 1 to create your own AMOEBA MAP***



THE GILMAN EQUATION (PART 2)

1. Read the explanation of Gilman's Equation. Make sure that everyone in your team understands it.
2. An example of strategies to be used with a transformer in the context of School Solar Panel Installation is provided to help get you started.
3. List each Amoeba role, and their names on Worksheet 2. Then follow the guiding statements to develop the change strategies.
4. ***Use Worksheet 2 to record your Gilman strategies.***



PART 1 THE AMOEBA OF CULTURAL CHANGE

A Metaphor for Cultural Innovation & Change Processes



Human cultural groups and organizations absorb new ideas the way an amoeba absorbs food

INTRODUCTION

Amoeba is a tool for understanding, mapping, and planning for cultural change processes. The Amoeba model at the heart of this tool assists changemakers to develop a sound strategy to support effective change duties for sustainability in a culture, group, organization, or community.

THE AMOEBA METAPHOR

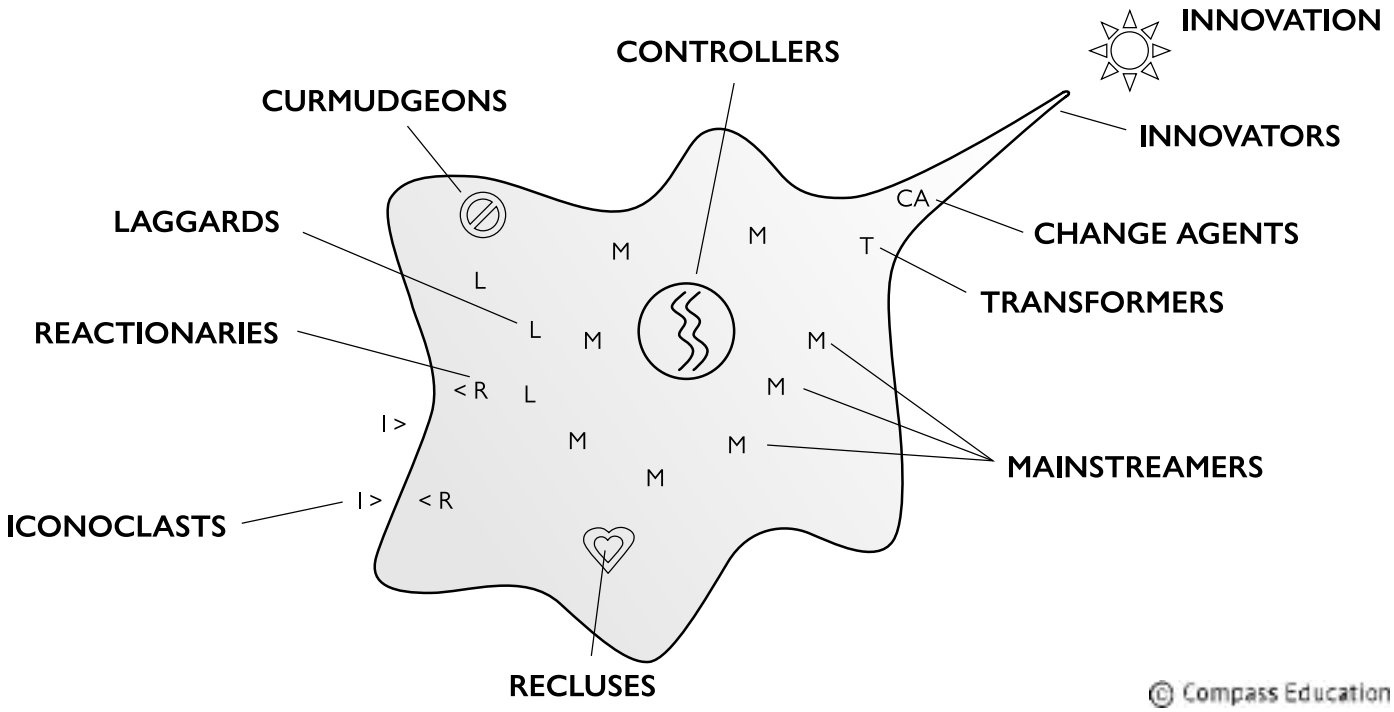
The learning model in Amoeba builds around a central metaphor: the idea that ***human cultures are like the amoeba, a single-celled organism.*** In nature, the amoeba is a predator. It is always seeking food—just as humans seek new ideas and solutions to problems. The amoeba aggressively hunts down and absorbs ("eats") other smaller microorganisms. When it senses food, it stretches out a pseudopod ("false foot"), an extension of itself, in the direction of the target. When the amoeba absorbs the food item, it does not draw the "foot" back: instead, it surges forward in that direction, and fully engulfs its prey. It must move and change shape in the process. The food, once ingested, then spreads throughout the amoeba's body. In other words, the search for new food, and the willingness of one part of the amoeba to "stick its neck (or foot) out," results in a shift in position and a re-shaping—a transformation!—of the entire amoeba. This is what makes the metaphor relating to bringing social change so powerful. Sometimes change causes many other changes in social groups, resulting in a major shift in how all the members of that culture behave—which is what we call a cultural transformation.

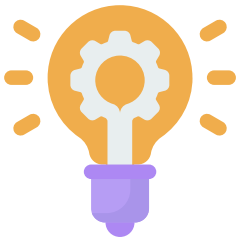
THE AMOEBA MODEL

- Helps you to understand the role you are playing, the roles played by others in your community and/or organization, and the dynamics affecting the innovation and change process.
- Helps you plan more effectively for the introduction of new ideas.
- Empowers you to enable other advocates, achieving greater multiplier effects. The Amoeba model itself can be viewed as an innovation designed to spread the principles of innovation diffusion theory.

ROLES IN AMOEBA MODEL - EXPLANATION

This is a map of the roles that people play in the cultural change process. Let's get familiar with each of them!





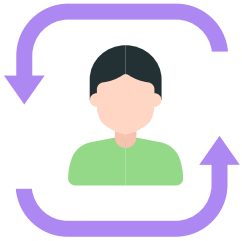
INNOVATOR:

The Innovator lives on the edge. S/he is the source of new ideas. Think of the leading-edge researcher, thinker, writer, or inventor. Sometimes people like this are thought of as eccentric by others. They are often obsessed with their ideas, or passionate about keeping them pure. For these reasons, they are often not very good at promoting their own ideas. That's why they need Change Agents.

Examples: *Thomas Edison and the light bulb; James Lovelock and the Gaia Hypothesis; Einstein and Relativity Theory, etc.*

Characteristics:

- They tend to think differently to the mainstream.
- Generate groundbreaking ideas and inventions.
- Often seen as eccentric or overly passionate.
- Not typically skilled at promoting their own ideas.



CHANGE AGENTS:

Change Agents translate the Innovator's ideas into a form that can sell. They move outside the mainstream, but they know how to communicate with the mainstream. The classic model of a Change Agent is a consultant who studies the works of new thinkers and translates them into a form that a client can digest. Change Agents are concerned with promotional strategy. But to succeed, they need to connect with Transformers.

Examples: *The entrepreneurs who brought Edison's inventions to the market; younger physicists who created experiments to prove Einstein right; today's journalists who write about global environmental issues, etc.*

Characteristics:

- They 'translate' and communicate the Innovator's ideas to the mainstream.
- They are skilled in promotional strategy and communication.
- They often act as consultants or intermediaries.



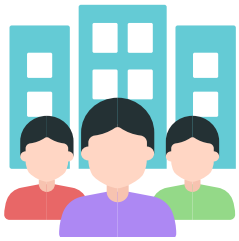
TRANSFORMERS:

Transformers are those who embrace new products or ideas before they become mainstream. They are open to new ideas, and they want to promote positive change. But they also do not want to sacrifice their own reputation, or their position of influence if they have one. They adopt the innovations they think will ultimately catch on with the rest of society. They serve as gatekeepers into the mainstream. A classic example would be the senior executive who hires the consultant, with an eye toward whether the ideas the consultant brings will both improve life in the organization and enhance her or his own reputation.

Examples: *Technology critics who get an early look at the latest technical equipment, before it is marketed to the general public. Their reviews will generally determine whether the product succeeds in the market.*

Characteristics:

- They embrace new products or ideas before others.
- They are open to new ideas and interested in promoting positive change.
- They serve as gatekeepers for new ideas entering the mainstream.



MAINSTREAMERS:

These are members of the 'noisy majority,' busy with the basic essentials of cultural life. Mainstreamers are neither for nor against change, in principle. In fact, they are often unconscious that change is happening. They adopt the innovation when they see that 'everybody else is doing it.

Examples: *The broad acceptance of any popular consumer product or mainstream fashion. The iPod, iPhone, and iPad come to mind.*

Characteristics:

- They make up the majority of the population.
- Broadly speaking, they are neither for nor against change.
- They adopt new innovations when they see widespread acceptance.



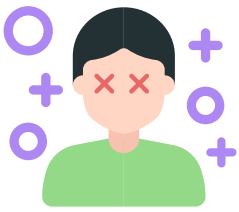
LAGGARDS:

Laggards are basically Mainstreamers who don't like change in general. They're the opposite of Transformers. They are happy and comfortable with the status quo. Diffusion theorists call them 'late adopters.' They usually only change when they can no longer avoid it, because the Mainstream has already done so.

Examples: *People who didn't want to give up vinyl for CDs — or later, give up CDs for digital services.*

Characteristics:

- They are resistant to change and prefer things as they are.
- They adopt new ideas and technologies very late.
- They change only when it becomes unavoidable.



CURMUDGEON:

Curmudgeons are cynical grouches. For them, nothing will ever change, and if it does, it probably won't be for the better. Their motto is, "Why bother?" They've seen it all— perhaps they even used to be idealistic dreamers themselves—but now they mostly complain. They act as wet blankets in any change process.

Examples: *People in the group will undoubtedly recognize this character in their own experience.*

Characteristics:

- They are cynical complainers ... "why bother?"
- They believe that change is futile or likely to be negative.
- They tend to complain and oppose change.



REACTIONARY:

Reactionaries react powerfully against change, because they believe it will harm culture—or harm them personally. Reactionaries generally are perceived as having a vested interest in keeping things as they are, or in moving things in the opposite direction. They actively resist the adoption of innovation, by any means in their power—sometimes very cleverly. They often have an economic or power interest in the status quo; or have their sense of identity or core values invested in it. They go along with change only if it is unavoidable, and then very late in the process.

Examples: *Car companies that resisted requirements for fuel efficiency; citizens' groups that resist the introduction of technologies they think are dangerous.*

Characteristics:

- They strongly resist change due to perceived harm to culture or personal interests.
- They have a vested interest in maintaining the status quo.
- They use various means to actively resist innovations.



ICONOCLAST:

The Iconoclast is the person who identifies the problem that the Innovator is trying to solve. The word means 'attacker of cherished beliefs.' Iconoclasts attack the status quo. Where the Innovator and Change Agent is trying to pull the Amoeba in a new direction, the Iconoclast is kicking it from behind. A classic example is the gadfly journalist or columnist, who attacks the powers that be and exposes problems in society. Protest groups are also Iconoclasts. In a contentious change process, Iconoclasts keep Reactionaries busy, so that Change Agents can effectively promote the new idea.

Examples: *Protest groups; social-protest comedians; politicians who "go negative"; critical journalists.*

Characteristics:

- They challenge and attack the status quo.
- They identify and highlight problems that need solving.
- They are often seen as disruptive or provocative.



RECLUSE:

The Recluse is somebody like a monk, an artist, a poet, or a peace activist, who is more preoccupied with discovering a 'great truth' than with something so mundane as changing the world. The person with this role usually doesn't actively engage with the change process, but they can still affect it, often in unpredictable ways.

Examples: *Recluses have existed within cultures for centuries.*

Characteristics:

- They are withdrawn from active participation in the change process.
- They focus on a personal search for truth or artistic expression.
- They impact change indirectly and unpredictably.

KEY STRATEGY POINTS TO WORK WITH PEOPLE IN DIFFERENT AMOEBA ROLES

Once you identify who plays what role in the community in relation to your initiative or idea, you can think about applying some of these ways to work with each of them.

Innovators and Change Agents

- Innovators need Change Agents to help spread their ideas.
- Innovators are often not as effective as Change Agents.
- Both Innovators and Change Agents sometimes fail to actively adopt and/or demonstrate the innovation themselves.
- Innovators can be overly attached to a "pure" version of their idea, hindering its spread.

Change Agents and Transformers

- Change Agents need to collaborate with Transformers.
- They are more effective when they work together.
- Trying to change Reactionaries can be a waste of time for Change Agents.

Reactionaries

- Reactionaries are effective when they discredit or disempower Change Agents.
- It's often easier to stop real change as a Reactionary than to be a Change Agent.
- Reactionaries often believe their actions benefit the whole community, and sometimes they are right.

Mainstreamers

- Mainstreamers often desire some change—but they fear too much change.

Iconoclasts

- Iconoclasts should keep Reactionaries busy.
- Iconoclasts often make terrible Change Agents, and vice versa because they are focused on the problems and not the practical solutions.

Curmudgeons

- Curmudgeons can hinder change, especially if they have a platform to voice their opinions and if Innovators and Change Agents engage with them too often.
- Many Curmudgeons were once Change Agents who became disillusioned.

Esteemed Persons (Recluses)

- Recluses or Esteemed Persons are highly respected and can either speed up or slow down the change process.

KEY POINTS TO CONSIDER

Adapt the Innovation

Make it suitable for the group you are trying to influence!

Motivate the Change Agents

This includes yourself (!) and any team you are working with to promote change within the system.

Organize the Transformers

Get them engaged in your effort—and bring them on board—as early as possible.

Easy Does It for the Mainstreamers

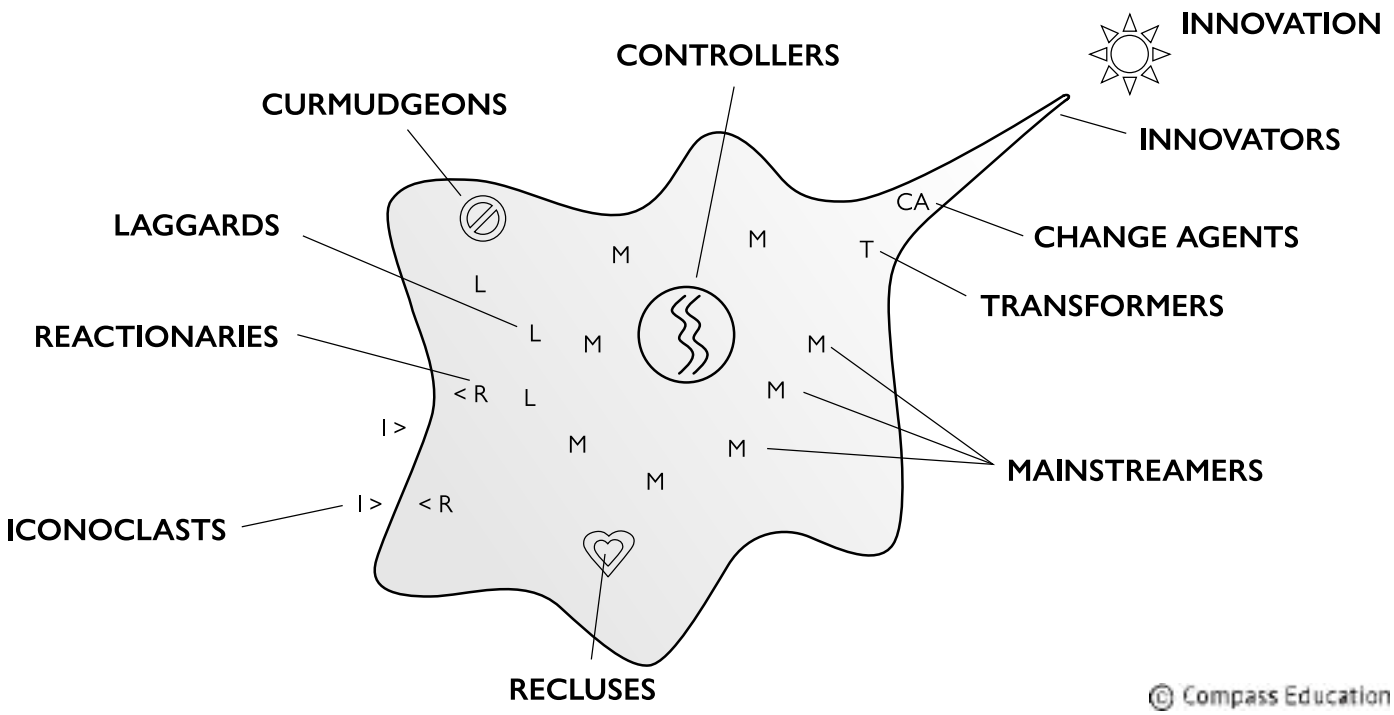
Don't go out trying to promote something to the Mainstream that "isn't yet ready for wider use." Take it easy, get it working with the Transformers first, then get them to help you plan the introduction to the Mainstream.

Build the Momentum

Create small successes that build one on each other, so that all involved in the change process can feel "the wave building up".

Avoid the Reactionaries

As much as you can, don't engage with the Reactionaries. Indeed, try to escape their attention! Let your new idea just ooze into the Amoeba, naturally and positively. If there is Reactionary resistance, try to get the Iconoclasts involved to keep them busy!





"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever has."

- Margaret Mead

WORKSHEET 1: CREATING YOUR AMOEBA MAP

Consider your project or initiative and identify the key Amoeba roles individuals play in relation to what you are trying to accomplish. In the table below, list their names, positions, and organizations. This information will help you identify strategies to effectively work with or address them.

AMOEBA ROLE	Names, positions, and organizations
CHANGE AGENTS	
TRANSFORMERS	
REACTIONARIES	
ICONOCLASTS	
RECLUSES	
CURMUDGEONS	

PART 2 THE GILMAN EQUATION (DEVELOPING CHANGE STRATEGIES)

Now that you have identified the roles each person plays in the Amoeba framework, it's time to develop strategies to spread your initiative.

Dr. Robert Gilman developed an "equation" to explain why a diffusion strategy for spreading ideas does or does not work. We call this the "Gilman Equation" to honor his insight. We can use this insight to develop strategies that can help to get our work supported by different stakeholders.

The Gilman Equation says that in order for a person to adopt an innovation, the following must be true...

THE PERCEIVED VALUE OF THE NEW WAY MINUS **THE PERCEIVED VALUE OF THE OLD WAY** MUST BE GREATER THAN **THE PERCEIVED COST OF CHANGE**

Here is another way to say it...



The Gilman Equation suggests that there are three basic strategies to pursue, to make an innovation more likely to be adopted.

1. **Increasing "N" — Promote the Perceived Value of the New Way.**

This is commonly known as marketing, which focuses on communicating the benefits of the new idea or thing to the target population.

2. **Decreasing "O" — Critique the Perceived Value of the Old Way.**

This is done by highlighting the problems, shortfalls, and failings associated with the idea, practice, or thing that the innovation is trying to replace. This is what Iconoclasts do.

3. **Decreasing "CC" — Reduce the Perceived Cost of Change.**

This can be done by making it easier for people to switch, through training, discounts, subsidies, cost-sharing, step-by-step guides, etc.

WORKSHEET 2: CHANGE STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT EXAMPLES

Use the table in the following pages to develop strategies for engaging stakeholders to promote the change you want to happen.

Initiative / Innovation: Installing Solar Photovoltaics (PV) on School Roof				
Amoeba Role	**Name**	**Perceived Value of New Way**	**Perceived Value of Old Way**	**Perceived Costs of Change**
Transformer	Mr./Ms. ... (School Principal	This is not the main mission of the school	If it isn't broken, don't fix it.	Costly and requires additional procurement process, adding extra workload to administration team
		Actions to Increase:	**Actions to Decrease:**	**Actions to Decrease:**
		Present/write to the school principal, emphasizing the school's vision and missions that incorporate sustainability as a key component of the overall mission. By installing solar PV, this will help to build the school's reputation as a leader in education for sustainability.	Conducting research and submitting a proposal for the project. Showcase other schools with solar PV and highlight the return of investment (RoI) and other benefits	Start with a pilot phase so the school doesn't have to make a large investment all at once. Identify in-kind expert support for system management to provide advice on operations at no or very low cost. Offer to collect and process data over time on the proportion of energy used from different sources by the school.

WORKSHEET 2: YOUR CHANGE STRATEGIES

Initiative / Innovation				
Amoeba Role	**Name**	**Perceived Value of New Way**	**Perceived Value of Old Way**	**Perceived Costs of Change**
		Actions to Increase:	**Actions to Decrease:**	**Actions to Decrease:**
		↑	↓	↓

Amoeba Role	**Name**	**Perceived Value of New Way**	**Perceived Value of Old Way**	**Perceived Costs of Change**
		Actions to Increase:	**Actions to Decrease:**	**Actions to Decrease:**
		↑	↓	↓

Amoeba Role	**Name**	**Perceived Value of New Way**	**Perceived Value of Old Way**	**Perceived Costs of Change**
		Actions to Increase:	**Actions to Decrease:**	**Actions to Decrease:**
		↑	↓	↓

Initiative / Innovation				
Amoeba Role	**Name**	**Perceived Value of New Way**	**Perceived Value of Old Way**	**Perceived Costs of Change**
		Actions to Increase:	**Actions to Decrease:**	**Actions to Decrease:**

Amoeba Role	**Name**	**Perceived Value of New Way**	**Perceived Value of Old Way**	**Perceived Costs of Change**
		Actions to Increase:	**Actions to Decrease:**	**Actions to Decrease:**

Amoeba Role	**Name**	**Perceived Value of New Way**	**Perceived Value of Old Way**	**Perceived Costs of Change**
		Actions to Increase:	**Actions to Decrease:**	**Actions to Decrease:**

4.4.4

DEVELOPING YOUR MESSAGE FOR DIFFERENT AUDIENCES

In advocacy work, tailoring your messaging to specific audiences is crucial because it ensures that the communication is relevant, engaging, and persuasive for those you are trying to reach. Different audiences will have varied values, concerns, and levels of knowledge about the issue at hand. By customizing the message, advocates can connect more effectively, sparking interest and motivating action. For instance, policymakers may require data-driven arguments, while the general public might be moved by emotional storytelling or personal experiences. Tailored messaging makes it possible to address these diverse needs and perspectives, maximizing the impact of the advocacy efforts. It helps break down complex issues into understandable and relatable terms, thereby enhancing the likelihood of support, engagement, and ultimately, the desired change.

INSTRUCTIONS

Look back at your **"WHO and WHAT" analysis** along with the **"Amoeba roles and Gilman's Equation strategies"** that you have identified. Write in the table below who you consider to be your key target audience and develop a message that you think will help motivate them to do what you want them to do.

Note: We have provided a few examples of stakeholders in the table below. Please remove and replace them with your own identified target groups.

Target Audience	What concerns them in relation to your primary issue(s)?	WHO" and "WHAT" influence them?	What strategies do you plan to use to get them to support your goals / objectives? (from Gilman's Equation)	What is a message that you can use to influence them the way you want?
Example: Decision-makers (government ministers, legislators, administrators, corporation heads)				
Example: Donors (foundations, bilateral agencies, multilateral agencies)				

Example: Journalists				
Example: Civil society organizations				
Example: Rural youth				
Example: Urban educated young adults				
Example: Opinion leaders (religious leaders, chiefs and traditional/community leaders)				

TOOL: ADVOCACY PLAN TEMPLATE

1. WHAT IS THE OVERALL CHANGE WE WANT TO SEE?
(Write out your long-term goal and campaign/project objectives)

2. WHAT ARE THE THINGS THAT WE EXPECT TO SEE HAPPEN AS A RESULT OF OUR ADVOCACY EFFORTS? (Tangible outcomes)

3. WHAT STRATEGIC ACTIONS NEED TO BE TAKEN TO MAKE THIS CHANGE HAPPEN? (List below)

HOW (Strategic actions & activities)	TO DO TASKS (What needs to be done to take this action?)	WHO WILL BE RESPONSIBLE	WHEN (What is your (time frame?)
1.			
2.			

3.			
4.			
5.			
6.			

MANAGING RISKS	HOW TO AVOID	HOW TO SOLVE / DEAL WITH
POSSIBLE RISKS		

MONITORING SUCCESS (INDICATORS)	SOURCES OF DATA & INFORMATION	WHEN TO MONITOR
WHAT TO MONITOR? (INDICATORS)		

COMPLETED TEMPLATE WITH EXAMPLE OF ADVOCACY PLAN

What is the overall change we want to see? (Write out your long-term goal and campaign/project objectives)	We are aiming to have outdoor, experiential environmental education become a standard part of teaching practice for teacher in all grades.
What are the things that we expect to see happen as a result of our advocacy efforts? (Tangible outcomes)	Integrate nature-based experiential environmental education (EE) into existing school curriculum so that students and teachers are more connected with natural ecosystems and learn to value nature (such as wetlands, rivers) as learning resources
What would make this change happen?	1. Catch the attention of Ministry of Education officials and influential education advisors and teachers 2. More and more schools are open to integrating nature-based experiential EE into their curriculum 3. Connect students and teachers with the natural world so that they understand it better and are more connected and care about natural ecosystems



HOW (Strategic Actions & Activities)	TO DO TASKS (What things need done to take this action)	WHO WILL BE RESPONSIBLE	WHEN (What is your (time frame?)
1. Raise awareness of the situation among school directors and teachers	• Develop presentation and issue brief paper on what experiential nature-based EE is and the benefits of it to student learning success • Make presentations to education officials and school heads/ district officials		
2. Create agreement with schools and district authority to test this type of learning	• Get approval from school heads/ district officials to co-develop this pilot learning program after school hours (as an extracurricular activity) • Sign Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) and/or Memorandum of Agreement (MoA) with district officials and School heads of participating schools		
3. Provide prototype syllabus with experiential EE learning activities	• Co-develop the syllabus of nature-based experiential EE activities with team, and EE experts and teachers • Conduct a review with outside advisors and experts		
4. Create alliance with video media producer	• Get agreement with visual media producer to film the learning process and make a short promotional documentary		

5. Train teachers on experiential learning for EE river and wetland activities	• Conduct teacher training on experiential EE for all teachers of participating schools, as well as other key educators		
6. Conduct lessons with schools, and film & document the process	• Prepare students for the outdoor lesson beforehand • Conduct a series of nature-based EE activities in tandem with teachers on subject of freshwater ecosystem and climate change		
7. Get Feedback from teachers and students on this learning experience	• Conduct in-person and online evaluation of the experiential lessons and document pre- and post-test results		
8. Use the film and report, posters, and brochures to advocate with education officials and teachers at conferences and events.	• Take the film and documents on the project on a roadshow, speaking and presenting at any relevant conference or meeting possible • Get people to sign a support statement for integrating more authentic experiential nature-based EE in school curriculums		

MANAGING RISKS	RISKS	HOW TO AVOID	HOW TO SOLVE / DEAL WITH
	• Cannot attract any school to test these type of outdoor experiential EE activities • Being manipulated and ignored because we do not know the system • Loss of motivation due to slow process of change	• Be realistic about expectations • Track and monitor involvement • Understand the system – get professional advice from inside • Inject energy often	Step up the pressure when you feel interest fades Refer to higher authorities

MONITORING SUCCESS	INDICATORS	SOURCES OF DATA & INFORMATION	MONITORING SCHEDULE (WHEN)
	• Number of schools participating • Number of students • Increase in knowledge and skills • Perception of school officials, education experts, teachers, students and parents		Throughout the process monitor schools and students At the start and end of pilot activities At the beginning and end of the entire project

4.4.6

TOOL: RISK ASSESSMENT

To help you identify your project's obstacles and risks—and also develop potential ways to mitigate and reduce them as much as possible—your advocacy team should use this "Risk Management" tool.

INSTRUCTIONS

1. With your team, brainstorm possible risks. Write each risk on a sticky note or piece of paper using the corresponding color based on the risk level.



Use a yellow sticky note or pen for low-risk items.



Use an orange sticky note or pen for medium-risk items.



Use a red sticky note or pen for high-risk items.

2. It may help to group the risks into categories and deal with them together.
3. Starting with the high-risk issues, discuss how each can be avoided or dealt with.
4. Put all your information in a table similar to the one below.

Example:

Possible Risks	How to avoid	How to deal with
Being over-ambitious with our goals, objectives and expected outcomes	Plan to start small and grow as we realize some early successes. Separate the advocacy work into phases.	Monitor and review our progress regularly to keep focused on the most important activities, and adjust as needed.
Insufficient funding to complete all activities	Do a good budgeting process with help from experts or others who have previous experience on what things cost.	Cut out low priority or unnecessary activities, materials, media, and try to get free volunteer 'in kind' assistance.

Important: Know your rights and keep yourself safe! In many countries the rights to free assembly are limited in certain circumstances. Make sure you have read up your rights before engaging in more high-risk forms of advocacy such as protesting.

RISK MANAGEMENT TEMPLATE

Possible Risks	How to avoid	How to deal with

4.4.7

TOOL: PROJECT INDICATORS DEVELOPMENT TEMPLATE

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Write the identified objectives and activities in the **Advocacy Indicators Development Table.**
2. Work with your team to identify some good indicators for each campaign / project objective and activity.
3. Once you have a list of candidate indicators, use the **Indicator Assessment Tabl**e to rate how good your indicators are. Refer to the characteristics of Good Indicators explained in the graphic below



4. Based on the outcome of the **Indicator Assessment**, discuss with your team to finalize the indicators and mark them down in the **Project Indicators Development Table**.

PROJECT INDICATORS DEVELOPMENT TABLE

Use the template below to come up with and record some indicators that could be good for measuring the effectiveness and impact of your actions/objectives.

Our Advocacy SMART Objectives: (List below): 1. 2. 3.			
What are the Indicators that we will use to measure the success of the Advocacy Campaign?	Objective Success Indicator 1. 2. 3.		
Advocacy Actions / Activities that We Have Planned (list below)	**Indicators** How do we know if our actions are successful? Brainstorm a success indicator for each action / activity below.	**Sources of Data for Our Indicators**	**Time frame for Monitoring the Activity Indicators**
Activity 1:			
Activity 2:			

Activity 3:			

INDICATOR ASSESSMENT TABLE

Look at your indicators carefully, one-by-one, and rate them based on these criteria from 0-3, where…

0 = Not good 1 = Fair 2 = Good 3 = Very good

Indicators	Valid	Precise	Relevant	Measurable	Understandable	Reliable

If any of your indicators get a very low score, consider identifying a better indicator that more accurately measures the intended outcome.

PROPOSAL DEVELOPMENT GUIDELINE

ELEMENTS OF A GOOD PROPOSAL

PROPOSAL STRUCTURE

For a proposal to be successful, some sections need to be fully completed and comprehensive. This section of the guidebook will help you to understand the most important elements of a proposal.

1. **Cover Page:** Sometimes also referred to as the title page, it is the first page that introduces the document to the reader. The title page provides the reader with basic information about the content of the document. When developing the proposal, particular attention should be given to preparing an attractive cover page, as it is the first thing that the reader will see. A nicely prepared cover page can help create interest in your proposal. The cover page should:
    - Be attractive
    - Be professional and formal
    - Provide information about the proposal
    - Not be cluttered
    - Use official fonts and color scheme
    - Use an image that relates to your project and organization

    The cover page should also capture the essence of the project and proposal, and should immediately catch the attention of the donor. Most experts suggest including the following information in the cover page:
    - Title of the project
    - Organization name and logo
    - Name of the donor
    - Complete contact details of the organization (Address, Website, Email)
    - Submission date
    - Relevant image (optional)

2. **Table of Contents:** The table of contents goes after the cover page and provides the reader with an organized list of the various sections and subsections of the proposal. This gives the reader a clear idea of the way you have organized the proposal and they can move to the sections that are most relevant to them. Things to consider while you develop the table of contents are:
    - Use a simple format
    - Lists all the sections
    - Make sure that page numbers are correct
    - The titles and headings should match with what is in the text

3. **Executive Summary:** The executive summary is considered the most valuable and important part of the proposal. Its primary purpose is to create interest about your proposal and help convince the donor to support you with funding. In simple terms, it helps you sell your project.

    Things to consider while writing the executive summary:
    - You should analyze important points relating to the main problem that your project will address. What is the solution, how is your proposal unique, and why is your organization suitable to carry out such a project?
    - It needs to address the Why, How, and What of the proposal.
    - Restrict the length to one page (approximately 300-500 words).
    - It should capture the attention of the donor and entice them to read the entire proposal.
    - Important components of an executive summary:
        - **Opener/Problem (1-2 paragraphs):** Focus on the issue, challenge and the need. Include some information that comes from academic research to demonstrate that you understand the problem.
        - **Solution (1-2 paragraphs):** State the solution that you propose to solve the problem. Mention your strategy, the possible impact, how many people will benefit from the program, how/where it will be implemented, etc.
        - **Funding Requirement (1 paragraph):** Explanation of the estimated amount required for the project.
        - **Organization and Expertise (1 paragraph):** Talk about your organization and your organization's strengths. The emphasis should be on why and how your organization is the best suited to implement the project successfully.

- Questions that the Executive Summary should address:
    - Why is the project important?
    - What is the problem that you are addressing?
    - How do you intend to resolve the problem?
    - What is the total budget and duration for the proposed project?
    - What is your expertise?
    - What is the grant amount being requested?

- Tips for writing an excellent executive summary are as follows:
    - Be concise and clear
    - Don't use jargon (specialized words) and overly technical language
    - Focus on the benefits of the project
    - Use the right tone that suits your target reader
    - Do not include too much data
    - Make it exciting
    - Don't make it too long

4. **Problem Statement:** This is a key section of the proposal as it presents the argument for why your project needs funding. It describes the issues and problems that a particular community faces and how your organization would address the given problem. The primary purpose of the problem statement is to convince the donor that your project is important and the issue that you intend to solve is real. At the same time, it should also make the donor hopeful that their support can help in addressing the problem, and that practical solutions exist to reduce the problem or issue.

   While writing this section, it is critical that you quote facts and figures as evidence of your problem. These facts can be from data that your organization has collected or can be from research articles or government reports. Along with using data to justify the project, you should also mention why your organization is suitable to carry out the project (for example, mention similar projects that you have implemented in the past). The problem statement should answer the "5 Ws": (Who, What, Where, When and Why):
   - What is the problem that you intend to solve? What is its impact?
   - What will happen if the problem remains unsolved?
   - Who are the people/communities (i.e. target group) that the problem affects?
   - When did the problem/issue become critical?
   - Where is the issue occurring?
   - Why is it important that we fix the problem now?

5. **Project Description:** This is the main narrative of your project and provides the reader with all the necessary information about the project. This section will include important elements of the proposal and will describe the project goal, objectives, methodology, impacts, etc., to the reader.

   Below is an explanation of the various components of a project description:

   5.1. **Goal:** Goal is a broad statement that sets out what you plan to do in a project. The goal essentially defines the purpose of the proposal by making it clear to the reader what problem your organization intends to address. As the goal of the proposal demonstrates to the reader your intention to solve a particular problem, it should be linked with the problem statement. The following tips will help you to frame a quality goal:
   - Avoid being vague
   - Link the goal with the problem statement
   - The goal should be consistent with your organization's mission and vision statement
   - Use simple language to write a goal
   - Choose only one goal for a proposal

   5.2. **Objective:** Once you have a logical and well-reasoned goal, you have to frame three/four objectives that would help you to achieve it. Objectives are detailed statements describing the ways through which you intend to achieve the goal. Consider the following while framing the objectives of your proposal: Objectives should also address the "5 Ws" and fulfill or consider the following:
   - Objectives should support the goal
   - Objectives should follow a logical order.
   - Be SMART objectives: Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, and Time–bound.
   - Use action verbs while drafting objectives: Use active verbs like create, identify, promote, enhance, increase, and develop etc.
   - Have 3-4 objectives: Most experts recommend keeping three to four objectives in a proposal.

5.3. **Project Activities:** These refer to the smallest identifiable and measurable pieces of work planned for successful completion of the project. Defining the activities helps project staff to understand what actions to take and at what time. Every activity is associated with a definite interim goal or objective. The project activities will describe how each of your objectives will be achieved. Key questions that this section should answer include:

- What are the specific tasks?
- Who is responsible for each task?
- What resources are needed?
- When will these activities occur and over what time period?
- Are there other organizations in your community serving a similar audience?

5.4. **Staffing and Administration:** This section talks about project management aspects. Here, you can mention the implementation staff, the implementation schedule and other related information. You can describe the people who will be hired as part of the project, along with their respective roles. Some of the points that can be considered while writing this section include:

- The number of people to be hired for the project
- The role of each person
- The qualifications expected for each role

5.5. **Project Results:** Project proposals should explain the expected results that will be achieved by the project. Project results can be divided into three types:

- **Outputs:** These are immediate results obtained after implementing an activity. E.g. Number of hand pumps installed.
- **Outcomes:** Outcomes are the mid-term results which are not observed immediately but are felt after some time. E.g. Improvement in water availability.
- **Impact:** Impact is usually a long-term result and is normally not achieved during the life cycle of the project. E.g. Reduced water stress in villages.

5.6. **Project Timeline:** The project timeline indicates when the various activities and processes will be carried out during the course of the project duration. The primary purpose of the timeline is to help the project staff to carry out the various activities in a timely and smooth manner. Some suggestions about writing the timeline are:

- Use a simple format (e.g. in table or Gantt Chart form)
- Set realistic deadlines
- Allow some flexible buffer time to get things done by the completion deadline.

5.7. **Monitoring and Evaluation:** This section discusses the proposed mechanisms and procedures for monitoring the project activities so that one can ensure that all activities occur as planned. You should have a well-defined plan to monitor your project activities and also to evaluate the success of the project. Monitoring allows the project team to keep a check on the progress, while evaluation helps the team to appraise data and improve project implementation in the future. While working on the evaluation plan, the following questions should be addressed:

- How will success be measured?
- What do you consider success to be?
- How will the result be measured?
- What methods will be used to assess results?
- Who will conduct the evaluation and when?

5.8. **Risk and Assumptions:** This section of the proposal describes the external factors that may impact the success of the project. Identifying the risks and assumptions will help you not only in developing a stronger proposal, but will also show the donor that you have a good understanding of external and internal factors. By thoroughly analyzing these, you will also be in a better position to mitigate the risks and reduce the chances of project failure. While assessing the risks and assumptions you should look at:

- Political willingness
- Resource availability
- Climatic conditions
- Accessibility
- Support of government
- Internal organization issues (e.g. experts, trainers and staff)

5.9. **Sustainability:** To sustain the impacts of any community-based project, it is essential that suitable linkages are developed with the local community, government departments and all relevant stakeholders. You should clearly spell out the sustainability measures in your project, so that the donor is convinced that the project will sustain itself even after the funding ends. While describing the sustainability section you should include references to the following:

- **Participation:** Describe how the project will ensure ownership and participation throughout the planning, implementation and monitoring and evaluation phases.
- **Support from authorities:** Explain the linkages that will be developed with local authorities and government departments that will help strengthen and sustain the project.
- **Sustainability of the project:** Describe the measures that will be taken to help ensure that the project activities will continue —or that the project will have a lasting impact—after the funding ends.

5.10. **Communication:** An important aspect of the project is the communication plan that will be used to disseminate the project results and key project learnings. Your project proposal should mention how you would ensure that the project results are shared with relevant stakeholders and target groups. Here you can include references to the following:

- Use of social media
- Type of reports that will be published
- Field manuals and training booklets
- Workshops for sharing project results
- Best practices
- Case studies

6. **Budget:** Often, the most difficult part of a proposal is budgeting. While developing the budget, get one of your finance team members and project team members to sit together and work on a tentative budget. Give this team a brief overview of what you want to do in the project so that they can work out the costs. Your budget should be divided into categories such as salaries, expenses and fringe benefits, travel, supplies, and equipment.

7. **Organization Profile:** Your organization profile is an important document that presents information about the organization, such as: its background; where it has come from; its future plans and intended trajectory; who are the people running and leading it; and who are the people impacted by its action. A profile provides important information about your organization to the donor and should include the following:
    - Organization name
    - Established date
    - Registration details
    - Contact details
    - Aim and objectives
    - History
    - Track record of experience
    - Organization structure
    - Awards
    - Certifications

8. **Annexure:** The Annexure is the additional information that you wish to submit to the donor. All additional documents and reports should be submitted as appendices and should not be part of the main body of the proposal. Points to consider when preparing the annexure are as follows:
    - All documents should be properly numbered
    - Only the most relevant documents should be submitted
    - The following documents can be annexed:
        - CVs of the project team
        - Evidence of nonprofit status of your organization
        - Research reports/data to support your problem statement
        - Relevant experience of the organization

SAMPLE PROPOSAL TEMPLATES

There are several possible templates that can be used for preparing a proposal. The template you choose will depend on the following:

- ***Donor Requirement:*** This is the most important factor that should determine the template you choose. A donor usually provides a template for submitting your application. In case they have not, you can go through the application procedure to understand the donor's expectations and select a template accordingly.
- ***Technicality of the Proposal:*** If the proposal is too technical you should opt for a template that has several sections and subsections.
- ***Funding Volume:*** When applying for a large grant, the project template you select should be comprehensive and cover all the details of the project. If the grant size is small go for a simple and short proposal template.
- ***Time for Preparing the Proposal:*** When preparing a proposal with a tight deadline, select a simple template; if you have more time then go for a detailed proposal template.

No matter which project template you choose, you will have to include key elements such as the Executive Summary, Project Goals and Objectives, Activities and Budget.

Below we provide three proposal templates that can be used for writing quality proposals.

- Detailed Proposal Template
- Intermediate Proposal Template
- Short Proposal Template

1. **Detailed Proposal Template:** Such a proposal will be approximately 25-30 pages long and cover all the elements we have discussed in the section above. This kind of template is generally selected when preparing large projects.

Detailed Proposal Template

1. Cover Page
2. Table of Contents
3. Executive Summary
4. Introduction
5. Problem Statement
    - 5.1 Problem Analysis
    - 5.2 Beneficiary Profile
    - 5.3 Resource Assessment
6. Project Description
    - 6.1 Goal
    - 6.2 Objectives
    - 6.3 Project Strategy
        - 6.3.1 Key Approaches
        - 6.3.2 Activities
    - 6.4 Project Results
        - 6.4.1 Outputs
        - 6.4.2 Outcomes
        - 6.4.3 Impact
    - 6.5 Project Management
    - 6.6 Timeline
    - 6.7 Monitoring and Evaluation
    - 6.8 Risks and Assumptions
    - 6.9 Sustainability
    - 6.10 Communication
7. Budget
    - 7.1 Budget Narrative
    - 7.2 Detailed Budget
    - 7.3 Budget Summary
8. Organization Profile
9. Annexure

2. **Intermediate Proposal Template:** Such a proposal will have a length of approximately 15 to 20 pages. This kind of template will also include all the key elements of a proposal, but will not be as detailed as the detailed template.

Intermediate Proposal Template

1. Cover Page
2. Table of Contents
3. Executive Summary
4. Problem Statement
5. Project Description
    - 5.1 Goal
    - 5.2 Objectives
    - 5.3 Project Activities
    - 5.4 Project Results
    - 5.5 Timeline
    - 5.6 Monitoring and Evaluation
    - 5.7 Risks and Assumptions
    - 5.8 Sustainability
    - 5.9 Project Management
6. Budget
    - 6.1 Budget Narrative
    - 6.2 Detailed Budget
    - 6.3 Budget Summary
7. Organization Profile
8. Annex

3. **Short Proposal Template:** This template can be used when applying for a small grant—the length of the proposal can range between 8 and 12 pages. This template only includes a few important elements of the proposal.

Short Proposal Template

1. Cover Page
2. Table of Contents
3. Problem Statement
4. Project Description
    - 4.1 Goal
    - 4.2 Objectives
    - 4.3 Project Activities
    - 4.4 Project Results
5. Budget
    - 5.1 Detailed Budget
6. Organization Profile
7. Annex

EXAMPLE PROPOSAL

Here is a sample proposal using the intermediate proposal template. The sample proposal has all the elements that you need to include in the proposal with a small description of each section and sub section. Please note that this is just a sample and the various sections do not have the complete description. It has been drafted to give you an idea of how each section is to be written. When writing the proposal for your organization, you will have to elaborate in each and every section so that it provides sufficient and adequate information to the donor.

1. Cover Page



2. Table of Contents

1. Executive Summary 1
2. Problem Statement 2
3. Project Description 4
3.1. Goal
3.2. Objectives
3.3. Project Activities
3.4. Project Results
3.5. Timeline
3.6. Monitoring and Evaluation
3.7. Risk and Assumptions
3.8. Sustainability
3.9. Project Management
4. Budget 12
4.1. Budget Narrative
4.2. Detailed Budget
Organization Profile 14
Annexure 16

3. Executive Summary

Climate change poses a serious threat to people worldwide and impacts their livelihoods to different degrees. Studies reveal that the most vulnerable people belong to developing countries, and in particular rural communities.

The northern regions of Ghana are the poorest part of the country, with a high proportion of the population living in poverty. Most of the people are dependent on farming and related sectors as the country offers limited alternative income options. This makes the country highly susceptible to even a slight change in weather patterns, making the people severely vulnerable to climate change.

To address the issue of food insecurity, it is important that climate smart farming techniques are promoted and adopted. This would help make agriculture more resilient to climate change and also ensure food security. Climate smart agriculture is still in its nascent stage and the

project will open new gateways for the development of viable and sustainable agronomic practices in developing countries. Through this project, ClimateSmart Foundation aims to initiate a multi-stakeholder dialogue to develop a community-based adaptation strategy for the communities of Bonitot village. The project is in line with the existing issues being faced by the local people of the area and would focus efforts towards the following:

- Increasing awareness on linkages between climate change and food security.
- Improving food security through adoption of climate smart agriculture practices.
- Enhance adaptation and preparedness of the vulnerable communities of the area.

4. Problem Statement

Climate Change (CC) poses a severe threat to the underprivileged and the rural masses, by reducing their access to food, energy and water. Communities that rely heavily on natural resources are the worst hit and often fall victim even to a slight change in weather. The huge attention being given to CC issues is evident from the fact that several international and national agreements have been signed to reduce GHG emissions. Several multilateral and bilateral agencies are also routing funds for CC mitigation and adaptation.

Along with global mitigation and adaptation strategies to cope with climate change, there is also a need to preserve traditional practices. Farmers worldwide are facing tremendous pressure to meet the demand of growing populations and food consumption. CC further adds to this existing pressure. Studies reveal that CC will reduce food productivity by affecting all four dimensions of food security: food availability, access to food, stability of food supplies, and food utilization. There is a need to adapt to changing climatic conditions to reduce the vulnerability of rural communities to climate change. This would be possible by introduction of fundamental changes in agricultural practices. Integration of traditional knowledge with innovations in agriculture also has a huge potential to enhance the adaptive capacity of the rural communities. International organizations and research institutes worldwide have developed an approach that tackles both the issues of climate change and food insecurity.

The UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) defines climate-smart agriculture as an approach to guide actions to transform and reorient agricultural systems to effectively and sustainably support development and food security under a changing climate. Climate-Smart Agriculture (CSA) promotes production systems that sustainably increases productivity, resilience (adaptation), reduces/removes GHGs (mitigation), and enhances achievement of national food security and development goals. Rural communities in Ghana are one of the most vulnerable to climate change impacts. Rising temperatures, erratic rainfall patterns and the increased frequency of natural disasters create challenges for the agrarian society of many West African Countries.

The Ghanaian economy is dominated by agriculture as more than 25% of the country's GDP derives from this sector. CC will therefore greatly impact existing farming practices and by extension the livelihoods of those dependent on it. The northern regions of Ghana are the poorest part of the country, with a high proportion of the population living in poverty.

Climate projections available for the northern regions of Ghana suggest the following changes in climatic conditions:

- Mean daily temperatures will increase by 2.5-3.2°C by 2100.
- Annual rainfall totals will decrease by up to 27% by the year 2100, causing increasing droughts.
- Increasing desertification.
- Decreasing river flows and recharge rates.
- Potential for increased floods as a result of increasingly erratic rainfall

5. Project Description

The project will provide scientific solutions to extend the adaptive capacities of rural peoples and farmers. It will provide a set of agronomic practices to suit the agro-ecology of the area and improve food security and increase productivity. The proposed project will be implemented over a period of two years. It will be implemented in Bonitot village, Amansie-West District of the Ashanti Region of Ghana. The area is characterized by hot, humid tropical climate conditions. 80% of the population practices agriculture, and the farmers mainly rely on small scale cash crop farming. Most farmers have small plots of land and use traditional farming practices. The project will benefit the farming communities of Bonitot village through an awareness campaign and will directly benefit the 500 farmers who will be trained on aspects of climate smart agriculture.

5.1 Goal

The overall goal of the proposed project is to increase food security through adoption of climate smart agriculture practices.

5. 2 Objectives

1. To sensitize the farming community in Bonitot village about the linkages between food security and CC.
2. To promote adoption of climate smart farming practices suitable for the agro- ecological region of Bonitot through capacity building and training of 500 farmers.
3. Establish a resource center to serve as an information hub and library for the farmers to get latest information on climate change.

5.3 Project Activities

a) **Mapping and Situation Analysis:** The purpose of this activity is to understand the current situation in the Bonitot district. This would include mapping of the various socioeconomic, political, and environmental aspects of the area.

b) **Development of Awareness Tools to Suit the Local Communities:** Audiovisual material will be developed to sensitize local communities on CC risks and threats. Leaflets, booklets and flashcards will be developed in vernacular to create greater impact. CC documentaries made by international agencies will also be translated.

c) **Awareness Campaign:** Awareness generation is a key activity for achieving project success. Farmers will adopt climate smart agriculture practices only after they understand the implications of CC on food security. Follow-up sub-activities will be undertaken to sensitize the communities.

- **Community Meetings:** Project team will initiate community meetings to discuss the project and also share information on climate change risks and food security threats.
- **Distribution of Leaflets and Pamphlets:** Communication material developed in the vernacular language will be distributed. Use of easy language will help in developing a better understanding of the issues.
- **Documentary Film Screening:** A documentary film will be screened in a community meeting hall, to showcase the threats of CC.
- **Mobile Information Centre:** A mobile van will be used for dissemination of information. This will serve as an information center that can be used by people who are not able to attend the awareness camp.

d) **Promotion of Area-Specific Agricultural Activities:** Area-specific technologies that are aligned with agro-ecological principles will be promoted in the villages. Adoption of such technologies will help in improving the biological, social and economic systems resilient to climate change.

e) **Trainings Will Be Focused on the Following Aspects of Climate Smart Agriculture:**

- Crop and nutrition management
- Conservation agriculture
- Livestock management
- Agro forestry
- Aquaculture
- Diversified energy systems
- Soil and water management
- Risk insurance
- Weather forecasting
- Technological interventions

Training sessions will also be given on some traditional agricultural practices such as mulching, intercropping and manure production. All the training sessions will be given in local vernacular so as to facilitate easy learning and understanding amongst the farmers.

f) **Establishment of Resource Center and Weather Forecasting Center:** The resource center will serve as an information hub for farming-related activities. In addition to the educational material, quality seeds, cropping material, organic manure, pesticides, insecticides, etc., will be made available to the farmers at lower prices.

5.4 Project Results

- Increased awareness among the community on linkages between CC and food security.
- Enhanced learning of various aspects of climate smart agriculture.
- 500 farmers adopt the climate resilient practices and supplement their income.
- Resource center established in the village becomes an information hub for neighboring villages, where farmers can gain knowledge about various new technologies and agriculture practices.

5.5 Project Timeline

No.	Activities	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5	Q6	Q7	Q8
1	Mapping and Situation Analysis								
2	Development of Awareness Tools to Suit the Local Communities								
3	Awareness Campaign								
4	Promotion of Area-Specific Agricultural Activities								
5	Capacity Building								
6	Reporting and Documentation								
7	Monitoring and Evaluation								

5.6 Monitoring and Evaluation

The project will undertake monitoring and evaluation (M&E) at all levels as per the (M&E) plan. Monitoring will be carried out right from the project inception, so as to ensure that processes and results are documented regularly. This will in turn allow steering decisions and for modifying the project processes to meet the deliverables in a timely manner. Data gathered during monitoring will help in evaluating the project progress at the end. Quarterly activity reports will be submitted to the donor agency, which will help in project evaluation.

5.7 Risks and Assumptions

- Lack of involvement from the stakeholders.
- Poor participation of farmers in training workshops and demonstrations.
- Land is unavailable for establishing the resource center.

5.8 Sustainability

The project will ensure financial, institutional and environmental sustainability. To ensure long term impact and sustainability, the following strategies will be followed:

- Training and capacity building of the farmers will help in meeting the project objectives. The trained farmers will help in transferring the knowledge to their peers.
- As the material will be in the local language it will be easy for the participants to understand and share the knowledge.
- Establishment of the resource center in the area will help in the long run. After the project is completed, trained farmers will take charge of it and our NGO will support them with updating information.

5.9 Project Management

The project will be implemented by a team of five staff members and will comprise the following:

No.	Position	Responsibility
1	Project Director (1)	Responsible for the overall administration and management of the project. He/she will develop proposals for future funding and manage other staff.
2	Social Worker (1)	Responsible for mobilization and conducting initial village-level meetings and orientation sessions.
3	Trainers (3)	Two agriculture experts for training on various aspects of CSA will be hired for a period of two years. They will be responsible for initially imparting training and will them be responsible for managing the resource center.

6. Project Budget

Activity	Description	Total Cost	Requested Fund
Human Resource	1 Project Coordinator	1500 USD/Year	3500 USD
	2 Project Assistant	2000 USD/Year	
Activity	Awareness Camp	1000 USD	5000 USD
	Training Workshop	3000 USD	
	Study Tour	1000 USD	
Travel	Travel, accommodation, and per diem expenses	1500 USD	1500 USD
Total			**10,000 USD**

7. Organization Profile

ClimateSmart is a national NGO engaged in developing programs and material to increase awareness about the environment and sustainable development in Ghana. The organization was established in 2000 and has since worked towards creating awareness about the environment and conservation. ClimateSmart's primary objective is to improve public awareness and understanding of the environment, so as to promote nature conservation and sustainable development.

8. Annexure

1. Certification of Registration
2. Tax Exemption Certificate
3. Climate Vulnerability Report of Ghana
4. CV of Project Director

Good luck with your proposal writing!

CHAPTER 5

IMPLEMENTING YOUR ADVOCACY CAMPAIGN AND INFLUENCING PEOPLE

INTRODUCTION

Chapter 5 is all about building and motivating an environmental advocacy team around shared passions and issues. In this chapter, you'll discover various advocacy methods and activities that match your team's strengths and community needs. It is also full of tips, techniques, and tools to help you connect with people on a deeper level, align with their values, and inspire support for real change. You'll learn how to organize rallies, exhibitions, concerts, talks, workshops, and effective social media campaigns. Plus, we'll guide you on influencing policy-makers, mastering negotiation, and using international agreements to boost your efforts and impact national policies and corporate behaviors.

TOOLS IN THIS CHAPTER



Building Your Advocacy Team

TOOL:

- 5.1 Building Your Volunteer Advocacy Team



Conducting an Advocacy Campaign

TOOL:

- 5.2 Planning Your Advocacy Event/Activity
- 5.3 Learning What Others Are Doing Through Online Advocacy
- 5.4 Planning for Your Own Online Social Media Advocacy Engagement
- 5.5 Press Release Template
- 5.6 Understanding & Engaging with Policy
- 5.7 Developing Your Advocacy Pitch

BUILDING YOUR ADVOCACY TEAM

Getting a group of like-minded people to form a passionate team around an environmental issue isn't easy. It starts with inspiring them and building their awareness and knowledge about the issue. Then, you'll need to help them develop the necessary skills and create a solid plan of action. This includes engaging stakeholders, raising funds, and defining clear roles and responsibilities. It's also about creating opportunities for meaningful contributions and fostering a sense of community and shared purpose. Finally, building a strong sense of team spirit is crucial for working efficiently and effectively together towards your goal. By mobilizing people, advocacy campaigns amplify their voice and impact, making it more likely to achieve the desired outcomes and bring about change.



Some Key Lessons in Building Your Advocacy Team

Start by Creating a Shared Vision and Shared Values
It's important for the team members to share their personal values and vision. By combining these individual perspectives, you can create a shared vision with values that will help the team work together towards its goals effectively.

Establishing Clear Roles
As already mentioned, to have an effective and successful advocacy team, it is really important to have clear roles and responsibilities for each different task within the campaign clearly identified. People filling the different roles should have a clear understanding of what is expected of them and what their responsibilities are as part of the overall advocacy team and campaign.

Consider these four Cs before when determining the roles for your team:

- **Clarity:** Is the role clearly defined, including responsibilities and time commitment. Will the person taking on the role know exactly what's expected of them? Sometimes roles can be unclear or change over time. The key is always making sure everyone knows what they are expected to do.
- **Commitment:** Does the person want to take on the role? Are they committed to doing what it takes to succeed?
- **Confidence:** Is the person confident they can do a good job? What support, training, or resources do they need to feel confident?
- **Capacity:** Can the person actually do what's being asked of them? Are they the best fit for this role?

How to Create a Volunteer Recruitment Announcement

- **Step 1:** Find the Perfect Template: Start by choosing a great template for your volunteer recruitment poster. There are many free options available from respectable sources. Check out websites like Canva for professional and eye-catching flier templates that match the look and feel that you want.
- **Step 2:** Show Your Organization's Identity: Make sure your flier reflects your organization's identity. Include your organization's name, logo, slogans related to your volunteer program, and your brand colors. Recognizable branding helps build trust and makes potential volunteers more likely to apply.
- **Step 3:** Add a Catchy Headline: Your headline is the first thing potential volunteers will see, so make it stand out. Think about what would catch your eye if you saw it on a wall full of posters. A strong, attractive headline is key to grabbing attention.
- **Step 4:** Highlight the Purpose or Goal: Focus on what you want to highlight, whether it's inviting supporters to an event or promoting a new program. Your flier should clearly explain the volunteer recruitment program and encourage immediate action. Clarity of purpose is crucial for an effective recruitment flier.
- **Step 5:** Create a Motivating Call to Action: Your flier should inspire action with a clear call to action. Here are some examples:
    - Volunteers needed!
    - Visit our website to get involved.
    - Be part of our movement. Call today.

These simple yet direct calls to action guide the reader on what to do next. Make sure to include key details like your website, phone number, or email address so they know exactly how to get involved.

- **Step 6: Include Pictures and Graphics:** Use vivid pictures and eye-catching graphics to make your flier stand out. Bold colors and high-quality images relevant to your cause will draw attention and attract potential volunteers. Visual appeal is crucial for grabbing and keeping interest.
- **Step 7: Add Your Contact Information:** Always include your contact information on your flier. Put your address and phone number in a visible spot, preferably in bold. You can also add your social media handles or website. This makes it easy for potential volunteers to reach out with questions and learn more about how to get involved.

Tool 1: Building Your Volunteer Advocacy Team

This tool/template helps you with thinking about how to assemble your dream advocacy team, starting with brainstorming who to invite to join your team; how to best announce your recruitment efforts; who will be recruiting advisors and mentors for your youth team; and what qualifications to expect of your youth applicants. Each of these thinking steps are very important for building a good team of committed and inspired youth to create positive change.



Keeping Your Team Motivated

Working with an advocacy campaign team can be one of the most exciting and rewarding experiences you'll ever have. However, achieving success can take a long time, and you might not always reach your ultimate goal. There will be highs and lows along the way, so it's crucial for the team to stay motivated no matter what. Some tips for keeping your team motivated include:

- Celebrating individual and team successes
- Communicating well. Setting up regular team meetings/calls
- Discussing as a team how to deal with confrontation and disagreement internally and externally
- Taking responsibility. If you all feel like you're in it together, you will be a happier and more effective team
- Having some "free" time. You may be making the world a better place, but you are also only human, so you have your own lives, needs and issues to deal with
- Make sure to have FUN!

Coaching and Mentoring

Being supported, having someone to chat with, and feeling like you are developing both personally and professionally are crucial aspects of being part of a good team. A good way to strengthen your team support system is to have each member be a coach and mentor for others.

A simple and effective mentoring process for your team is to use the GROW model. Have mentors ask the following questions:

- **G** = What are their **Goals**?
- **R** = What is their current **Reality**?
- **O** = What **Opportunities** and **Obstacles** are there between the reality that they experience and their goals?
- **W** = What **Work** can they do to make the most of the opportunities and also overcome their obstacles?
    - √ Discuss any actions that they will take before the next meeting
    - √ Chat through any other questions and agree on another time to meet. These meetings should take place every 6-8 weeks on average



MOBILIZING SUPPORTERS

As you work on your advocacy campaign, you'll want to get both individuals and groups involved and participating in your activities. For example, think of the riverbank clean-up events organized by Trash Hero in Thailand. Getting supporters to join your advocacy activities has many benefits: it significantly boosts the impact and reach of your efforts. A large, engaged group of supporters increases the visibility and legitimacy of your cause, making it more likely to attract attention from the public, media, and decision-makers.



Consider the "Ladder of Involvement" when planning for long-term supporter mobilization

The "Ladder of Involvement" is used in advocacy to describe the gradual process of engaging and deepening the commitment of supporters or volunteers in a campaign or activity. This metaphorical ladder illustrates the steps or stages through which individuals might progress, from having a minimal level of awareness or interest in an issue to becoming deeply involved and possibly taking on leadership roles within the advocacy effort.

THE LADDER OF INVOLVEMENT

Ownership: At the top of the ladder, individuals fully embrace the cause as their own. They may take on leadership roles, spearhead initiatives, or become ambassadors for the issue, dedicating substantial time, energy, and resources to the advocacy campaign.

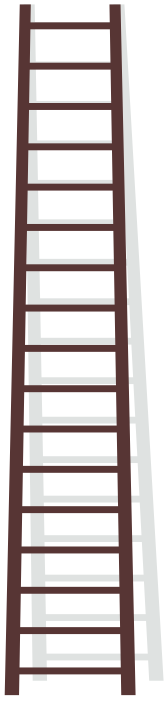
Commitment: Individuals who reach this rung are highly committed to the cause. They might regularly volunteer, donate, or advocate for the issue within their own networks. They are reliable supporters who contribute significantly to the campaign's efforts.

Involvement: At this stage, supporters start actively participating in campaign activities. This could include volunteering for events, participating in workshops, or contributing to discussions

Engagement: With increased interest, individuals may engage with the cause by participating in minor, low-risk activities such as signing a petition, sharing content on social media, or attending a webinar.

Interest: Once aware, individuals may develop an interest in learning more about the issue. They might follow the organization on social media, subscribe to newsletters, or attend informational events.

Awareness: The first rung involves making individuals aware of the issue or cause. At this stage, your communication efforts should aim to inform and capture the interest of potential supporters.



By understanding where individuals are on the ladder, you can design your strategies in a way that encourages supporters to climb higher and increase their involvement and commitment to the cause. It recognizes that supporter engagement is a dynamic process and will require different tactics to move individuals from awareness to deeper levels of involvement.



Networking and Building Alliances and Partnerships

Networking offers new connections, but much more benefit comes from genuinely building relationships and creating allies. Establishing a network of dependable allies is often less spontaneous and more calculated than networking. Your allies are the more intimate, reliable individuals in your life who provide friendship as well as support, help, guidance, information, and safety. With their special skills and methods, they enhance your strengths and make up for your deficiencies. They can also assist you in seeing things from a different angle. When you need someone to just stop and listen, when you need emotional support, or when you need to work through an idea, your allies are there for you.

Working with other organizations, groups and people that have the same goals and objectives as you do may help you achieve your own goals and objectives that you couldn't accomplish alone. Networking and coalition building are critically important for youth advocacy on environmental issues for several reasons:

- **Strength in Numbers:** Joining forces with like-minded individuals and organizations amplifies the collective voice, making it harder for policy-makers and the public to ignore. A larger group can mobilize more resources, including people, skills, and funding, which can significantly enhance the impact of advocacy efforts.
- **Knowledge and Resource Sharing:** Networking allows youth advocates to share knowledge, strategies, and resources. This exchange can lead to more effective and innovative approaches to tackling environmental challenges. Learning from the successes and failures of others can save time and resources, and shared resources can make campaigns more feasible and impactful.
- **Increased Credibility:** Being part of a larger coalition can lend credibility and legitimacy to the cause. It demonstrates that the issue is not the concern of a single group but is shared by a wider community. This can make advocacy efforts more persuasive to both the public and decision-makers.
- **Diverse Perspectives and Skills:** Collaborating with a variety of stakeholders brings diverse perspectives and skills to the table, which can enhance the creativity and effectiveness of advocacy campaigns. Environmental issues are complex and interconnected; addressing them often requires multidisciplinary approaches.
- **Greater Reach and Visibility:** A coalition can leverage the networks of all its members, significantly expanding the reach of advocacy messages. This is crucial for raising awareness among the general public and engaging with policy-makers at all levels.

- **Political Influence:** A broad coalition can exert more political pressure than individual groups acting alone. It can more effectively lobby for policy changes, participate in public consultations, and influence political agendas.
- **Sustainability of the Movement:** By building a network, youth advocates can ensure the sustainability of their movement. Even as individual activists move on (due to age, relocation, or other commitments), the network remains and continues the advocacy work.
- **Support and Solidarity:** Advocacy work, especially on contentious issues like environmental protection, can be challenging and sometimes confrontational. Being part of a network provides moral and emotional support, helping activists to stay motivated and resilient in the face of obstacles.

In summary, networking and coalition building are not just beneficial for youth advocacy on environmental issues—they are essential. They enable more effective, resilient, and sustainable advocacy efforts, which are crucial for driving meaningful change in environmental policies and practices.

WHAT CAN YOU DO TO LOOK FOR GOOD ADVOCACY PARTNERS?



CONDUCTING AN ADVOCACY CAMPAIGN

Advocacy work is all about influencing public opinion, policy decisions, and laws on social, environmental, or political issues. It involves coordinated activities like public engagement events, social media outreach, lobbying, and other such events to raise awareness, gain support, and persuade decision-makers and the public to take action for your cause.

Campaigning aims to bring about change, whether it's passing new laws, changing policies, protecting human rights, or addressing environmental issues. The goal is to achieve specific outcomes that reflect the campaigners' values and objectives, using various strategies to build momentum and have a real impact.

REASONS FOR CONDUCTING A CAMPAIGN

- To raise awareness and educate people about your issues.
- To raise the profile of your organization, group and your work
- To increase public pressure on decision-makers
- To grow the number of supporters and recruit more people to help you.
- To initiate public conversation or debate around an issue.

What are the reasons for organizing an advocacy campaign?

Conducting an advocacy campaign is all about raising awareness, influencing public opinion, and driving change on important issues. It's a strategic effort to bring a specific problem to the attention of the public and policy-makers, mobilizing support and pushing for solutions or policy changes.

Through targeted messaging, engagement activities, and advocacy, campaigns highlight the importance of an issue, educate the community, and encourage actions that help resolve the concern. Whether it's about environmental conservation, health initiatives, or social justice, campaigns play a crucial role in shaping discussions, policies, and behaviors toward achieving desired outcomes.





1. RALLIES AND MARCHES

Engaging and talking with a diverse range of individuals is essential for the effectiveness and success of advocacy work.

The Benefits of Organizing a Rally or March

A rally or some kind of march can play several critical roles in the broader effort to bring about change:

Visibility and Awareness: Rallies and marches draw public attention to specific environmental causes, making them more visible to the general population, policymakers, and the media. They can highlight urgent issues, such as climate change, deforestation, pollution, and biodiversity loss, raising awareness among those who might not be informed about the severity of these problems.

Unity and Solidarity: These events bring together individuals from diverse backgrounds, uniting them under a common cause. This show of solidarity is a powerful statement that the concern is shared by a broad segment of society—not just niche groups or activists. It demonstrates widespread support for environmental protection and sustainability, reinforcing the message that action is needed by everyone, including governments and businesses.

Pressure on Decision-makers: Large gatherings and public demonstrations can apply significant pressure on political leaders and decision-makers. They serve as a visible and vocal reminder of the public's demand for urgent action on environmental issues. This can influence politicians and corporate leaders to adopt more environmentally friendly policies and practices.

Empowerment and Engagement: Participating in rallies and marches can empower individuals, making them feel part of a larger movement and giving them an active role in advocating for change. This engagement can foster a sense of responsibility and agency, motivating further action and involvement in environmental causes.

Media Coverage: These events often attract media attention, spreading their message further. Media coverage can extend the reach of the rally or march, bringing its message to a wider audience, including those unable to attend.

Networking and Coalition-building: Rallies and marches provide opportunities for activists and organizations to network and build coalitions. They can share resources, strategies, and support, strengthening the environmental movement as a whole.

Education and Communication: These gatherings can also serve as platforms for educating the public about environmental issues and the specific demands of the movement. Speakers, informational materials, and interactions among participants can disseminate knowledge and inspire further learning and action.



2. MUSIC, THEATER, POETRY AND OTHER PERFORMANCES

Artistic expressions can be a powerful way to raise awareness, inspire action, and create a deeper emotional connection with environmental issues. Music, theater, poetry, and other performances enrich environmental advocacy by connecting with people emotionally, simplifying complex issues, inspiring action, and influencing culture.

Here's how they contribute:

Emotional Engagement: Art has the unique power to evoke emotions and connect with people on a personal level. Music, theater, and poetry can make complex issues like climate change, deforestation, and pollution feel relatable and real. This emotional connection can motivate people to learn more and take action.

Communicating Complex Ideas: Artistic performances can break down complex environmental issues into easy-to-understand stories. Through storytelling, metaphors, and symbolism, artists can highlight the importance and urgency of these problems.

Inspiring Action and Hope: Environmental messages in art often encourage awareness and action. They emphasize the possibility of change and the power of working together, inspiring audiences to join efforts in environmental conservation and sustainability.

Reaching Broader Audiences: Performances can attract people who might not usually engage with environmental advocacy. A concert, a theater play, or poetry reading can introduce new audiences to environmental issues, expanding the reach and impact of advocacy efforts.

Creating Community and Solidarity: Art brings people together, fostering a sense of community and shared purpose. In advocacy, feeling part of a collective effort is vital for sustaining engagement and activism over time. Performances can serve as rallying points, building solidarity among diverse groups.

Cultural Influence: Art can influence culture and change social norms. By placing environmental themes into music, theater, and poetry, artists can contribute to a broader cultural shift towards sustainability and environmental responsibility.

Memory and Legacy: Artistic expressions leave lasting impressions, placing messages in society's collective memory. They can honor past struggles and victories in environmental advocacy, serving as reminders of the journey and beacons for future action.

Political and Social Commentary: Through satire, allegory, and direct commentary, performances can critique current policies and attitudes towards the environment. This can provoke thought, stimulate public debate, and pressure policymakers to consider more sustainable and eco-friendly options.



3. PUBLIC MEETINGS

Public meetings are very important for environmental advocacy because they bring people together to share information, engage with the community, and take collective action. Whether they happen in town halls, community centers, or online, these gatherings offer many benefits and play key roles in pushing for environmental sustainability and protection:

Raising Awareness: Public meetings are great for educating the community about environmental issues like pollution, climate change, deforestation, and biodiversity loss. They help spread important information and scientific findings to a wider audience.

Community Engagement: These meetings give people a chance to directly engage in environmental discussions and decisions that affect them. This involvement encourages a sense of ownership and responsibility toward local environmental challenges, fostering a proactive approach to sustainability.

Facilitating Dialogue: Public meetings create a space for open dialogue between community members, advocacy groups, scientists, and policymakers. This can lead to a better understanding of issues and the development of more comprehensive and inclusive solutions.

Mobilizing Support: By bringing together individuals who care about the environment, public meetings can rally support for specific environmental campaigns or actions. They can inspire collective action.

Influencing Policy: Public meetings provide a way to influence environmental policy. Advocates can present their concerns and proposals directly to decision-makers. Showing strong community support for certain actions or policies can pressure officials to adopt more sustainable practices or legislation.

Building Coalitions: These gatherings allow for networking and building coalitions among environmental groups, community organizations, and other interested parties. Stronger coalitions mean a more unified and powerful advocacy effort, capable of driving significant environmental changes.

Identifying Local Solutions: Public meetings are valuable for brainstorming and finding local solutions to environmental problems. Community members can share their knowledge and experiences, contributing to solutions that fit the specific ecological, social, and economic context of the area.

Empowerment: Participating in public meetings can empower individuals and communities, making them feel heard and valued in the environmental advocacy process. This empowerment encourages further engagement and activism, creating a positive cycle of involvement and action.



4. TALKS AND PRESENTATIONS

Talks and presentations, like those at TEDx events, are very important for environmental advocacy. They serve as powerful platforms for spreading ideas, educating the public, and inspiring action. These presentations have a big impact because they reach a wide audience, are easy to access, and use the persuasive power of storytelling.

Here's how they contribute to environmental advocacy:

Educating and Informing: Talks and presentations provide an opportunity to educate a wide audience about environmental issues, scientific research, and sustainable practices. Speakers can break down complex topics into understandable segments, making it easier for the general public to grasp the urgency and intricacies of environmental challenges like climate change, biodiversity loss, and pollution.

Inspiring Action: By sharing compelling stories, successes, and even personal journeys, speakers can inspire individuals to take action. The motivational aspect of these talks can lead to increased engagement in environmental causes, from individual lifestyle changes to participation in larger advocacy efforts.

Spreading Innovative Ideas: TEDx and similar forums are known for showcasing innovative solutions to global problems. Presenters can introduce novel approaches to environmental conservation, freshwater ecosystem management, and climate action, encouraging the adoption of these ideas by a broader audience.

Building a Community of Support: Talks and presentations often bring together like-minded individuals who are passionate about environmental issues. This can foster a sense of community and support among attendees, facilitating networking and collaboration among activists, experts, and enthusiasts.

Influencing Public Opinion and Policy: High-impact presentations can influence public opinion, creating a more informed and concerned citizenry. This shift in public sentiment can, in turn, pressure policy-makers and businesses to prioritize environmental sustainability and adopt greener policies.

Highlighting Grassroots Movements and Voices: Talks and presentations can provide a platform for voices that are often underrepresented in mainstream environmental discussions. This includes Indigenous Peoples, local community leaders and grassroots activists, whose experiences and knowledge are crucial for understanding and addressing environmental issues.

Creating a Record of Advocacy: Recorded talks serve as a lasting record of advocacy efforts and ideas at a given time. They can be referenced in the future for education, inspiration, and as a historical document of environmental activism.



5. PUBLIC STALLS AND EXHIBITIONS

Public stalls and exhibitions are great tools for environmental advocacy, offering unique chances for education, engagement, and mobilization. They make environmental issues easy to understand and interactive, encouraging informed discussions, participation, and action towards a more sustainable future. Here's how they help the cause:

Direct Engagement: Public stalls and exhibitions let environmental advocates interact face-to-face with the public. This personal connection is very valuable for building relationships, answering questions and having in-depth discussions, making the message more persuasive and memorable than digital campaigns.

Educational Opportunities: Public stalls and exhibitions include educational materials, displays, and activities that inform people about environmental challenges like climate change, pollution, and biodiversity loss. They present sustainable practices in a way that's easy for everyone to understand, from kids to adults.

Showcasing Solutions: Exhibitions are great for showing off sustainable technologies, practices, and products. They introduce people to renewable energy options, conservation techniques, and eco-friendly products, making sustainable living feel more real and achievable.

Community Involvement and Empowerment: Involving local communities in these events, whether through participation, organization, or as the target audience, empowers individuals and builds a sense of community around environmental issues. This encourages collective action and support for local environmental initiatives

Visibility and Awareness: By taking place in public spaces, these events attract a diverse audience, including those who might not actively seek out information on environmental issues. This boosts the visibility of environmental concerns and spreads advocacy messages wider.

Cultural and Artistic Expression: Exhibitions can include art, culture, and creativity to convey environmental messages. Art installations, performances, and interactive exhibits engage audiences in unique and impactful ways, leaving a lasting impression.

Feedback and Learning: Direct interaction with the public allows organizations to gather feedback on their campaigns, messages, and approaches. This feedback is invaluable for refining strategies and understanding public perceptions and concerns about environmental issues.



6. PETITIONS

Petitions are a key tool in environmental advocacy. They help rally public support and can influence policy and corporate practices. While one petition might not change everything, it's a crucial part of a bigger strategy to push for environmental protection and sustainability goals.

Amplifying Voices: Petitions bring together individual voices into a powerful collective force, showing widespread public concern about specific environmental issues. This united expression can be particularly impactful, demonstrating to decision-makers that many people want change.

Influencing Policy and Legislation: When a petition gets a lot of signatures, it can pressure policy-makers, governments, and corporations to consider, change, or introduce new policies and practices that support environmental sustainability. Petitions can highlight the public's demand for action on issues like climate change, conservation, and pollution control.

Raising Awareness: Signing and sharing petitions can educate people about specific environmental challenges and the need for action. Those who might not have known about an issue can learn about it through a petition and spread the word to others.

Building Community and Solidarity: Petitions help build a sense of community among people who care about environmental issues. By signing a petition, individuals realize they are not alone in their concerns, fostering a sense of belonging to a larger movement.

Providing a Platform for Engagement: For many, signing a petition is the first step towards more active engagement in environmental advocacy. It can lead to further participation, like attending rallies, volunteering, or supporting environmental organizations.

Creating a Record of Concern: Petitions serve as a tangible record of public concern that can be used in advocacy efforts, negotiations, and discussions with decision-makers. They provide concrete evidence that the public is paying attention and demanding action.

Flexibility and Accessibility: The digital age has made creating and signing petitions easier than ever, allowing for rapid sharing and participation across geographical boundaries. Online platforms enable environmental campaigns to reach a global audience, gathering support from around the world.



7. WORKSHOPS AND TRAININGS

Workshops and training sessions are key to environmental advocacy. They give you the knowledge, skills, and inspiration needed to take action and make a real impact in protecting our planet. Through these experiences, you can learn how to effectively contribute to sustainability efforts and become a strong voice for change in your community.

Organizing different types of in-person, or even online, workshops around your environmental issue can help you, your team and target stakeholders in numerous ways:

Building Knowledge and Awareness: Workshops and training sessions offer essential information on environmental issues like climate change, biodiversity loss, pollution, and sustainable practices. They help you understand the scope of these challenges, their causes, and their impacts on ecosystems, human health, and economies.
Skill Development: These sessions provide practical skills for environmental advocacy and action. Learn how to organize and mobilize communities, engage with policy-makers, use social media for advocacy, conduct environmental research, and incorporate sustainable practices into daily life.
Empowering Communities: Workshops and training sessions empower individuals with knowledge and skills, enabling communities to tackle local environmental issues. Empowered communities can develop and implement solutions, advocate for their interests, and participate in decision-making processes.
Fostering Leadership: Workshops and training can identify and nurture environmental leaders who can lead local initiatives, mobilize others, and represent their communities in broader environmental movements or negotiations.
Behavioral Change: Education and training lead to a deeper understanding of the environmental impact of our actions, encouraging more sustainable behavior among participants and their networks.
Strengthening Advocacy Efforts: Learn how to effectively advocate for environmental issues by building compelling campaigns, communicating with different audiences, and influencing policy and practice. This strengthens the overall impact of environmental advocacy.
Networking and Collaboration: Workshops and training provide opportunities to connect, share experiences, and build networks. These connections can lead to collaborations and partnerships that amplify the impact of environmental advocacy.
Adapting to Local Contexts: Specially planned workshops and trainings address specific environmental issues relevant to particular communities or regions, ensuring the content is applicable and directly beneficial to participants.
Promoting Sustainable Development: By focusing on sustainable practices and solutions, these educational sessions contribute to broader goals of sustainable development, ensuring that environmental protection aligns with economic and social progress.

Tool 2: Planning Your Advocacy Event/Activity

The Planning Your Advocacy Event/Activity tool template will assist you in thinking through a series of questions that you will need to address as you plan for any event or activity as part of your overall environmental issue advocacy campaign. You can use this template to help you with brainstorming and planning all of your campaign activities. Questions focus on the following:

- Topic and theme
- Target audience
- Purpose of the event and expected outcomes
- Event activities
- Venue
- Type of support you will need
- Who to partner with for this event
- Next steps



8. USING ONLINE DIGITAL MEDIA FOR ADVOCACY

Social media and other digital channels are great tools for spreading ideas, raising public awareness, and gaining support for your cause. With more people using their phones to access the internet, digital engagement is a quick, affordable, and easy way to reach a large audience. Digital platforms let you connect with your peers and others throughout your country, and worldwide, and help you discover different perspectives, points of view and ways of tackling similar environmental issues through advocacy and awareness–raising actions. Social media can encourage young people to build networks of solidarity while boosting creativity and innovative thinking.



Be Cautious and Protect Yourself Online

Although digital platforms are powerful channels and modes of communication, they should be used quite carefully. For example, you should always use social media with awareness and caution. Avoid becoming victim to the social media temptation of engaging in pointless online debates with others or wasting hours scrolling through posts aimlessly. Additionally, carefully verify the accuracy of any information you find online. Double check the information or story that you are thinking about sharing, to make sure that it is truthful and accurate.

Conducting Online Campaigns

Conducting your campaign online is an excellent way to reach many more people than you would have in the past. The online space is ideal for advocacy work. The online digital media best for running online campaigns include Facebook, Instagram, X, Tik Tok, and YouTube, as well as online petition websites (e.g. Change.org), virtual marches and many more.

What Are the Advantages of Online Campaigning?

- **It's Easy** — Technology is developing fast and there are more and more ways to get people involved in your campaign.
- **It's Quick** — You can respond to news and events, send messages to supporters, share information at the click of a button.
- **It's Cheap** — It's all there for you. Emails, social media and a whole lot of web-based tools are there for you to use for free.
- **Reach** — It's where people are. People spend time on the internet and by using social media you can reach huge numbers online, your supporters can spread what you share with others in their networks, and so on…
- **Making Connections** — Social media can help connect your supporters to each other. This makes them feel that they are part of a community and motivates them by feeling they are part of something bigger than themselves.
- **Easy to Act** — Engaging supporters in action can start with something simple, like signing an online petition. There are simple entry points that can lead to greater involvement.
- **Data** — You can easily store and build up a database of information about your supporters and help them move up the ladder of involvement.

Things to Consider When Starting a Digital Online Advocacy Campaign

When starting a digital online environmental issue advocacy campaign, several key considerations are crucial for its success:

- **Have Clear Goals and Objectives:** Know exactly what you want to achieve with your campaign, such as raising awareness, influencing policy, or changing behaviors.
- **Know Your Audience:** Identify who you want to reach and understand their values, concerns, and online behaviors. This will help you design your message and choose the most effective online platforms for engagement.
- **Compelling Messaging:** Develop clear, persuasive, and engaging messages that resonate with your audience. Your messaging should highlight the urgency of the issue, the impact on the audience, and a clear call to action.
- **Choosing the Right Platforms:** Select digital platforms that are popular with your target audience, whether it's social media, blogs, email, newsletters, or online petitions. Consider a multi-platform approach to maximize reach.
- **Use of Multimedia Content:** Use a mix of text, images, videos, and infographics to make your campaign more engaging and shareable. Visual content can help simplify complex issues and make a more impactful statement.
- **How to Stimulate Engagement:** Encourage interaction by asking questions, creating polls, and responding to comments.
- **Monitor and Adapt:** Use analytics to track the performance of your campaign. Be prepared to adapt your strategies based on what is working well.
- **Collaboration and Networking:** Partner with influencers, organizations, and activists who share your goals. Collaborations can extend your reach and lend credibility to your campaign.
- **Ensure Accuracy and Credibility:** Make sure all information shared is accurate and credible. Misinformation can damage your campaign's reputation and effectiveness.
- **Be Consistent and Persistent:** Environmental advocacy can require sustained effort. Maintain a consistent presence online and keep pushing your message to build momentum over time.

Tool 3: Learning What Others are Doing Through Online Advocacy

Learning from the experiences of others can give your own advocacy campaign strategy new ideas and creative energy, as well as helping to building a sense of community among different environmental advocacy groups.

This tool provides a series of questions to help guide you and your advocacy team in exploring the online world to identify what others—in other countries as well as your own—are doing with online advocacy.



Visit this website to see some highly rated environment campaigns from 2022.

Using Hashtags

A **hashtag** is a word, or phrase, with the symbol of a hash (#) in front of it. It means certain types of post can be tagged and so be easily identified when searching online. For example, **#ClimateOfChange** is one of the main hashtags for this campaign.

If you need to **add a hashtag to your specific action**, check out in advance if it's already been used or not. It's ideal to have something that's not too hard to say or spell. Hashtags can group your posts with a particular wider issue, such as **#ClimateJusticeNow**. Be aware that the advised number of hashtags per single post is different in each internet platform.

On X (formally Twitter) some analysts suggest that a maximum of two hashtags per tweet will enhance engagement. Including more hashtags in a single tweet can actually harm your reach.

On Facebook and LinkedIn, the same rule applies. However, Instagram is somewhat different.

On Instagram, you are allowed 30 hashtags per Instagram post and you're actually recommended to use them all! Hit return a few times so they appear at the bottom of your text, as they don't look so pretty. Don't forget to use hashtags in stories too.

THE DO'S AND DON'TS OF USING SOCIAL MEDIA TO BUILD YOUR CAMPAIGN

Social media is a powerful tool for building and spreading advocacy campaigns, offering a wide reach and the ability to engage directly with supporters and policymakers. To maximize its effectiveness while going through potential risks, here are some recommended "dos" and "don'ts":

Dos

- √ **Do Define Clear Goals:** Start with specific, measurable objectives. Knowing what you want to achieve will guide your content strategy and help measure success.
- √ **Do Know Your Audience:** Design your message so that it addresses the interests, needs, and behaviors of your target audience. Different platforms attract different demographics, so choose and customize your content accordingly.
- √ **Do Use Engaging Content:** Use a mix of text, images, videos, and infographics to make your message compelling and shareable. Stories that evoke emotions tend to resonate more and encourage sharing.
- √ **Do Be Consistent:** Maintain a regular posting schedule and keep your messaging consistent across all platforms. This helps build recognition and trust with your audience.
- √ **Do Engage With Your Audience:** Respond to comments, messages, and mentions. Engagement increases your visibility and fosters a community around your cause.
- √ **Do Collaborate:** Partner with influencers, organizations, and other stakeholders who share your values to extend your reach and credibility.
- √ **Do Use Hashtags Wisely:** Relevant hashtags can increase the visibility of your posts to a wider audience interested in your topic.
- √ **Do Monitor and Adapt:** Use social media analytics to track the performance of your campaign. Be ready to adapt your strategy based on what works best.

Don'ts

- √ **Don't Ignore Negative Feedback:** Address criticisms and concerns professionally. Ignoring or deleting negative comments can harm your campaign's credibility.
- √ **Don't Spread Yourself Too Thin:** Focus on platforms where your target audience is most active rather than trying to be everywhere.
- √ **Don't Forget Privacy and Safety:** Be mindful of privacy and safety concerns, especially when sharing information about individuals or sensitive topics.
- √ **Don't Make Unsubstantiated Claims:** Ensure that your posts are accurate and credible. Misinformation can quickly damage your campaign's reputation.
- √ **Don't Overwhelm Your Audience:** While regular posting is important, bombarding your followers with too much content can lead to unfollows. Find a balanced posting schedule.
- √ **Don't Neglect Visuals:** Avoid posting large blocks of text without visuals. Posts with images or videos tend to perform better in terms of engagement and reach.
- √ **Don't Engage in Online Arguments:** While it's important to address misinformation and defend your cause, avoid getting into heated arguments. Always communicate respectfully and constructively.
- √ **Don't Ignore Copyrights:** Respect copyright laws by using original content or obtaining permission to use copyrighted material.

Tool 4: Planning for Your Own Digital Advocacy Campaign

Social media is a great way to bring people together around a common cause. Campaigns and important policy battles have certainly been won (and lost) online. This type of interaction can be quite quick to develop, but can also take a lot of time, depending on the issue and what is happening around it.

This tool/template provides you with a list of questions that you are encouraged to answer with your core advocacy social media and communications team members. Brainstorming initial ideas to use when taking your campaign online will be very helpful in developing your Advocacy Event Activity Plan later.



9. WORKING EFFECTIVELY WITH MAINSTREAM MEDIA

When using the term "media" here, we are referring to more traditional media such as radio, television, and print media (newspapers, magazines), as well as web-based media. Of course, there is currently a change happening where more young people increasingly interact with social media platforms rather than engage with mass or traditional media. However, traditional media can still be a very powerful tool for your advocacy work, especially with certain stakeholder groups, including decision-makers. Whatever form of media you decide to use, there are a few things to know and skills to develop, including:

- What makes a good story?
- How to get noticed?
- How to write a press release?
- How to give an effective interview to media representatives?

What Is News and a Good News Story?

This is the most basic and important question to ask of any news story. It must inform about something that we either didn't know before, or build on our existing knowledge and understanding about something.

If you were responsible for writing a news story that catches the attention of the public, what would it be? What things make for a good news story? Remember that there are always at least two sides to every story, and no matter how passionately you feel about a subject, there are hundreds of other people who are equally passionate about their own topics or interests, and you are all competing for media attention.

Is It Newsworthy?



Essentially, newsworthy content is that which is considered important, interesting, or engaging enough to be brought to the attention of the wider public through news outlets. Newsworthy content typically meets one or more of the following criteria: relevance to the audience, timeliness, significance or impact, proximity to the audience, uniqueness or novelty, conflict or controversy, and human interest. These factors help determine whether a story is likely to capture the attention of the public and the media, thereby being worth covering.

Characteristics of Newsworthy Stories

A Big Story — As well as being news. The media are always interested in stories about: conflict, tragedy, hardship and threats to the community, as well as scandal and individual achievement.

A Trend — Small, single, one-off issues are not of much interest to news outlets. Reporters are more interested in stories that have something to say about society as a whole, and how it is changing over time (whether quickly or slowly).

A Surprise — A story that shows evidence that goes against what most people believe always gets some attention.

Easy to Understand — Can it be explained and understood in one paragraph?

Accessible to All — Your story should be interesting to as wide an audience as possible, not just the people who already support your issue. As the saying goes, do not only "preach to the choir."

Memorable — The story is so powerful that it is not easily forgotten.

It has a Hook! — Does your story relate to something that is already in the news or is it something people are already talking about?

The table below shows ways to get noticed by the media (reporters and editors). What are they thinking?

AT EVENTS
• Invite journalists to your events well in advance of the event (not last minute). • Introduce them to any key speakers or guests. • Make them feel looked after by giving them good seating arrangements, etc.
ON THE PHONE
• Call them, as journalists are the type who like a tip by phone, rather than email. • Work out your 1-minute pitch and messages before calling them. • Do not speak to journalists unprepared. If they call you first, tell them you will call back, then prepare yourself.
BY EMAIL / LETTER
• Write a press release to send them by email (see Tool: Press Release Template). • Make sure to send your email or letter to the right person. • Follow up with a phone call to make sure that they received your email or letter.



Some points that journalists consider when deciding whether to pay attention and give their time to your group and your event.

Writing a Press Release

A press release is an official statement that your group or organization will use to make an announcement for public release, with the aim of getting journalists' attention so that they will attend and report on your event (which isn't guaranteed). Press releases are recommended as they are a significant element of your group's public relations strategy. Your press release must be concise and stick to the facts. While the tone is formal, you can use images, statistics, numbers, and quotes to keep readers engaged.



Tool 5: Press Release Template

Here you will find a press release template, designed specifically for youth environmental advocates to alert and invite the media to their events. This template will help you to effectively communicate your message, ensuring your events gain the attention and coverage they deserve.

SAMPLE PRESS RELEASE

PRESS RELEASE

2nd Annual Environmental Education & Awareness (EEA Laos Alliance) Exchange Dialogue

Your name or the name of your campaign.

Date: 14-15 November 2023
Embargo: 02 November 2023

The time and date that the information can be made public.

Care Today for Tomorrow... Sharing Tools, Approaches and Successes of Environmental Education in Lao PDR

Headline—Keep it short and sweet.

In a groundbreaking shift towards preserving the country's unique biodiversity heritage preservation, Laos has taken a pioneering step by significantly developing and mainstreaming environmental education (EE) into formal and non-formal education, marking a transformative approach in the nation's battle against environmental degradation. This visionary initiative underscores Laos' commitment to cultivating a generation that is not only aware of the pressing environmental challenges facing the country, but is also equipped with the knowledge, skills, and passion to advocate for sustainable solutions. EE is key to building future where environmental conservation is not just a policy priority, but a way of life for every Laotian citizen.

The 1st paragraph is crucial—It should be summarize Who, What, Where, Why and How.

The EEA Dialogue Exchange Conference is intended to bring together institutions, organizations and groups from government, academia, civil society and private sector that support and apply environmental education awareness and communication approaches, tools and activities as part of their environmental protection, conservation and/or development strategies in Lao to share their experience and perspectives with each other and to identify a path forward in continuing to develop and scale EE across the country.

The Conference will showcase a mixture of activities to support the sharing and exchange of ideas, tools, experiences, etc. among different sectors and organizations, including a Moderated Panel Discussion, an exhibition area for organizations to display and share their own tools, approaches and projects related to environmental education, along with concurrent breakout workshops from the organizational partners of the EEA Alliance network, in addition to a special program showcasing the experiences and perspectives of the EEA youth volunteers and interns on issues of plastic waste and climate change action. On the evening of the 14th there will be a special dance music and poetry performance by Fang Lao Dance Troupe as well as an environment themed screening of short films by Mind Media.

Paragraphs 2 and 3—Use to expand on any newsworthy points.

Dr. Somsanook Achavong, Director of the National University of Laos' outreach unit (NREP) Faculty of Forestry Science states that the conference last here was "the highlight of her year and is so looking forward to sharing and learning with so many amazing practitioners."

Quotes—Use to get key points across.

About EEA Alliance Network

The Environmental Education and Awareness (EEA) Alliance is a national network of like-minded organizations from government, academia, civil society and the private sector who are committed to working together in a spirit of co-creation and cooperation to develop. promote and mainstream Environmental Education (EE) as key environmental conservation strategy for the sustainable development of Lao PDR.
Facebook Page: https://www.facebook.com/eeaalliancelaos

Notes to editors—Add any additional info and links that would be useful.

Ms. Visouda Chanthavong @ Visouda.Chanthavong@gfa-group.de M: 020 86 664 129

Contacts—Provide details of whom to contact for more information.

Talking with the Media — Interview Skills

An interview is a good opportunity to get coverage and spread your advocacy messages with journalists, podcasters, vloggers, and the media.

Know Who You Are Talking to

- Try to get to know the journalist or interviewer beforehand (check their profile online).
- Get to know their publication, website, social media platform, or program.
- Figure out who their primary target audience is. Who are they writing for?

Know What You Want to Say

- Select your key messages (best not to have more than three).
- Prepare your introduction and finishing statements (don't be spontaneous about these).
- Know your facts, data, personal anecdotal stories and any case study examples that you might want to use.
- Know the source of your evidence (facts), as you may be challenged on what you say.
- Prior to the interview, ask if you can have some of their questions beforehand.

Practice What You Want to Convey

- Practice saying your key messages.
- Have a friend or colleague give you a practice interview.
- Think beforehand about what might be the difficult questions that the interviewer will ask you.
- Practice "bridging or linking," meaning that whatever question is asked to you, you can answer through one of your main messages.

Learn from Every Interview You Give

- If it doesn't go well, don't be too hard on yourself.
- Ask for feedback from the interviewer if it is possible.
- Learn from what you did well as well as your mistakes and things you feel were not strong in the interview.
- If you are a note taker or keep a diary or journal, write down your impressions of the interview, what went well, what didn't, and lessons learned for next time.

Always Be Professional in Interviews

- Remember the 3Cs of confidence, clarity and control—this is what you must show in every interview.
- Try to get your key messages communicated early in the interview. Do not wait for later, as the time may not come.
- Try not to use a lot of special "jargon" or language that is not used by most people. Keep it simple.
- Do not get flustered if you do not know something (you can say you will find it out and get back to them).
- Always handle your interview with calmness, mindfulness and courtesy.
- Summarize your final words in the interview by repeating your key messages, but do not sound robotic.
- Most important: be human … be you! Being authentic and passionate (not emotional) is more important than being perfect.

10. POLICY ADVOCACY

As mentioned in the toolkit's introductory chapter, the main goal of advocacy is to influence public policy, social systems (like public opinion), and individual behaviors in order to protect the interests, rights, and well-being of specific groups or the general public. This is done by protecting the environment and working for a sustainable and clean environmental future. Advocacy involves raising awareness, building support, and persuading decision-makers to change or create new laws, policies, or practices. Specifically, we want to raise awareness, gather public support, and push for legislative and regulatory changes to balance human activities with environmental conservation.

By advocating for the environment, we aim to protect natural habitats and ecosystems, safeguard species, and ensure a healthy planet for future generations. Public opinion and public policy are constantly influencing each other in variations that depend on societal context.

When people take decisions, they often don't have all the information about the issue concerned and rely on various shortcuts. Most people form their opinions about complex issues by interpreting the information they receive from authorities such as politicians, government officials, scientists, the mass media, and increasingly, social media. This information helps shape their understanding of an issue. Public opinion forms through a balance of awareness and deeply rooted values and socioeconomic factors. Policies can communicate information to the public, especially when they receive a lot of media attention or when they directly affect people's lives. In a democratic system, if policies don't align with the public interest, there is pressure on policy-makers to amend or create new policies.

Whether policies influence public opinion or vice versa, there is a definite feedback mechanism at work (as demonstrated in the "Policy–Public Opinion Feedback Loop" graphic). Therefore, it is important for advocates trying to change how societies, communities, and individuals think about, respond to, and behave toward the local and global environment, to understand the dynamics between policy and public opinion. This knowledge ensures that advocacy campaigns and actions address both factors effectively.

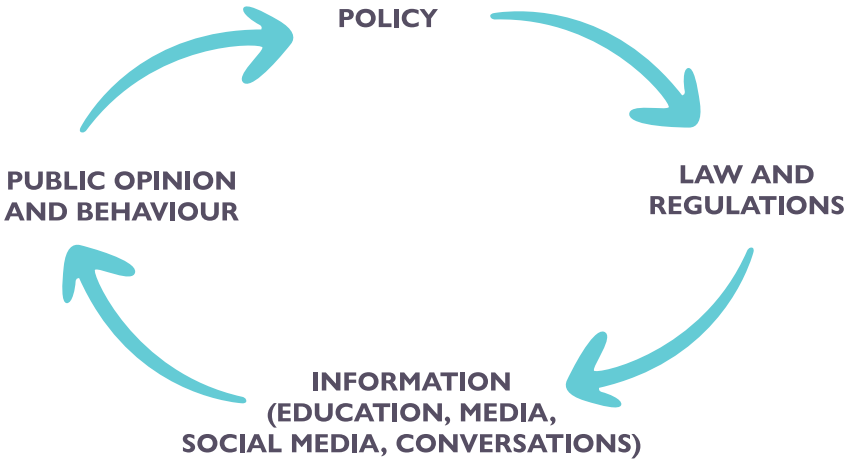
What is Policy and Why is it Important to Influence it?

The term "policy" can refer to several related but distinct concepts, depending on the context in which it's used. A policy is a guide for decision-making and a commitment to a course of action. Some policies can become law. For example, the dumping of raw sewage and waste is illegal in most countries now.

- In the context of government, public policy refers to the actions taken by a government to address public issues. It can include legislation, regulations, decisions, and actions designed to solve specific problems or achieve certain objectives within a society. For example, environmental policy might include regulations to reduce air, water and soil pollution and to protect natural resources such as forests and wildlife.
- Within organizations, policies are the rules and guidelines created to outline the operations and decision-making processes of the organization. They provide a framework for consistent decision-making and standard operating procedures. For example, a company's human resources policy might detail how to handle employee grievances or outline the process for promotions and raises.

Environmental policy is a set of laws, regulations, and guidelines created by governments and organizations to manage the impact of human activities on the environment. The goal is to protect natural resources, promote sustainable development, and prevent ecosystem damage.

Environmental policy covers a wide range of issues like air and water pollution, waste management, biodiversity conservation, climate change, and the sustainable use of natural resources. By setting standards, enforcing rules, and encouraging eco-friendly practices, environmental policy aims to balance economic development with the need to preserve the environment for future generations. Working together at local, national, and global levels, these policies strive to create a healthier planet and a more sustainable future for everyone.



Policy-Public Opinion Feedback Loop

How Policy is Made and Implemented?

Policy making and implementation is a complex process involving multiple stages and stakeholders. It usually follows a structured path, starting from identifying a problem to evaluating the policy's outcomes after it's implemented. Here's a simplified overview of the process:

Step 1: Agenda Setting — The first step is recognizing a problem or need that requires government action. Issues can be brought to the political agenda through public opinion, interest groups, experts, media coverage, or government officials.

Step 2: Policy Formulation — Once an issue is on the agenda, relevant stakeholders (government officials, experts, interest groups, and sometimes the public) work together to create policy options. This involves researching, discussing, and proposing different ways to address the issue, considering the potential impacts, costs, and benefits of each option.

Step 3: Decision-Making — This step involves choosing a policy option from those that have been developed and proposed. Legislative bodies (like parliament or congress) usually make these decisions, but it can also involve executives (presidents or prime ministers) using their regulatory authority. The process often includes negotiations, modifications, and compromises before reaching a final decision.

Step 4: Policy Implementation — This step is all about putting the chosen policy into action. Various government agencies or departments develop and enforce rules, allocate resources, and take necessary actions to enact the policy. Effective implementation requires clear guidelines, enough resources, and ongoing coordination.

Step 5: Policy Evaluation — After the policy is implemented, it's evaluated to see how well it addressed the initial problem. This involves collecting data, analyzing outcomes, and assessing whether the policy met its goals. Evaluation can lead to recommendations for continuing, changing, or ending the policy.

Step 6: Feedback Loop — Feedback from the evaluation phase can send the process back to earlier stages. This might mean adjusting the current policy, creating a new one to address shortcomings, or deciding no further action is needed. This feedback loop helps continuously refine and adapt policies to better meet society's needs.

Note: Throughout all these stages, the process involves negotiation, compromise, and sometimes conflict among different interest groups, including government entities, private sector organizations, non-profits, and the public. The success of policy making and implementation depends a lot on the political, social, and economic context.

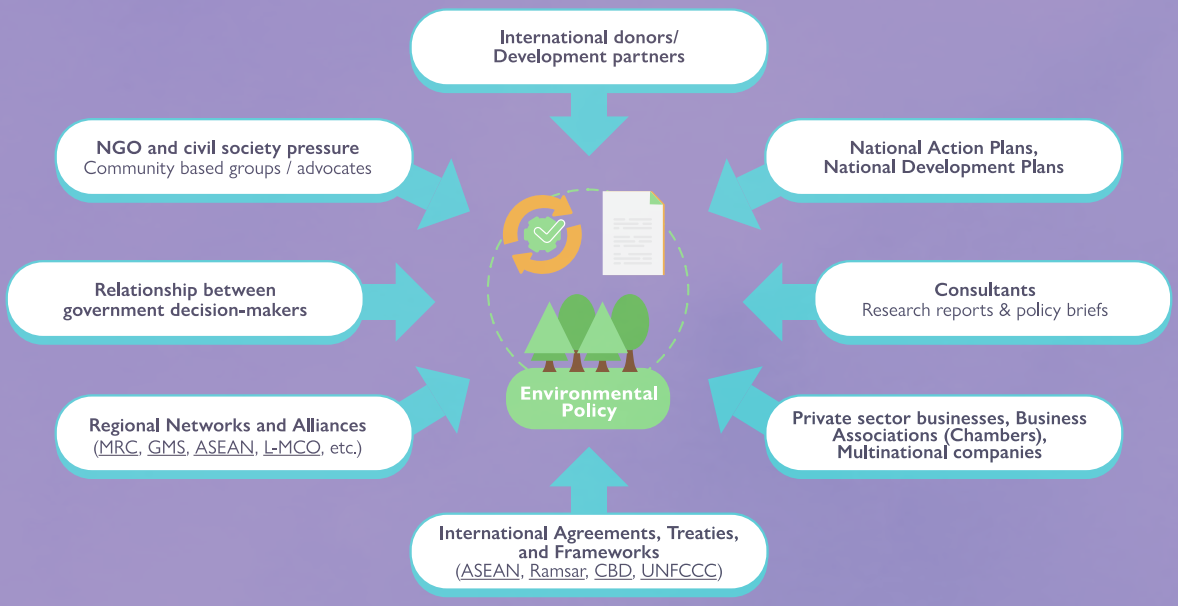
Although this step-by-step process looks quite simple, the way that policy is developed and influenced is actually often quite complicated and complex. This can make planning an advocacy strategy challenging. However, this can also be a good thing, as it means that there are potentially many different ways to influence policy.



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Influencers of Policy

Environmental policy formulation and implementation are influenced by various factors, including government officials, experts, interest groups, and public opinion. Politicians and lawmakers create and enforce policies, while scientists and experts provide the necessary research and data. Interest groups, like environmental organizations, advocate for specific issues and push for change. Public opinion, shaped by media and social movements, also plays a crucial role by putting pressure on decision-makers to act. Together, these influencers help shape policies that aim to protect the environment and promote sustainability. The infographic image below illustrates the array of different stakeholders and factors that influence the formulation of environment policy.



The array of different stakeholders and factors influencing the formulation of environment policy.

Tool 6: Understanding & Engaging with Policy

Understanding the policies that affect your issue is fundamental to your education as an advocate. In fact, dreaming up new policies and replacing outdated ones could be one of your key aims as an advocate. Improve your understanding of the policies surrounding your issue and you will improve your advocacy efforts.

Go through the following questions which, step-by-step, will help you identify the policy/policies impacting the environmental issue that you care about. These questions will also guide you to analyze how your advocacy efforts can best be directed to improve existing policy, or to influence the creation of new policy that will support your cause.



Meeting with Decision-Makers

To succeed, you and your team will probably need to meet with someone in a position of authority. This could be the Minister or Vice-Minister of Natural Resources and Environment (MoNRE), a department head like the Director General or Deputy Director General, an advisor, a United Nations representative, or even the head of a nearby village or district. Whoever it is, there are a few things to keep in mind in order to connect with and persuade them.

Setting Up and Preparing for a Policy Advocacy Meeting

There are several key things you will need to do and/or keep in mind when setting up a meeting with someone from a policy-office of the government, or someone in a position that is part of the policy process in either government (local or national), or with a company or other entity.

- √ **Do Your Research:** Understand the person's role, responsibilities, and their stance on environmental issues. Know the current policies and any recent changes or proposals. Look at their LinkedIn profile, their Facebook posts, any opinion pieces or articles that they may have written, or any keynote speeches or presentations that they have given, etc. Think about whether they could support the type of change that you are looking to see.
- √ **Contact:** Find out the best way to reach the person that you are hoping to meet and talk to. Is there anyone who can help you set up a meeting?
- √ **Timing:** Is this a good time to approach this person or organization? Can what you are asking them to do be done now, or must it be delayed for a while?

- √ **Be Clear About Your Goals:** Define the purpose of your meeting and what you hope to achieve. Have a clear and concise message or request.
- √ **Identify Who in Your Team Should Go to this Meeting:** Think about who in your team is best placed to attend the meeting. Which person in your team has the presence, and the ability to speak with this official? Could you possibly involve any person directly affected by the issue to meet with this person?
- √ **Assign Tasks for the Meeting If You Are Going with a Group:**
  Determine who is going to say or do what—and in what order. Tasks include:
  - Making introductions/thanking the person for meeting with you
  - Taking notes
  - Presenting the message: the problem and/or the facts
  - The personal example/story
  - Making the request
  - Responding to questions
  - Responding to counter arguments/resistance
  - Closing the meeting and thanking them for their time
- √ **Prepare Your Position Points:** Gather facts, data, and real-life examples to support your cause. Be ready to explain why your issue matters and how it affects the community or environment.
- √ **Be Respectful and Professional:** Show respect for their time and position. Dress appropriately, be punctual, and address them respectfully.
- √ **Be Clear About What You Expect from The Meeting:** Be clear about what you want from them (how much of their time and exactly what you want to speak about, including possibly sending them your questions ahead of time).
- √ **Practice Your Presentation:** Rehearse what you're going to say. Practice with your team to ensure everyone is confident and clear.
- √ **Develop Your "Pitch":** In advocacy we are constantly "case making" or making a pitch. We do this for our organizations, mission and mandates and shared causes. Knowing your audience is an absolute must, but ultimately it is about being crystal clear on what you hope to receive from them, inspire them to do and/or engage with. Know your audience, what matters to them, the tone and tenor of the message delivery and what you hope to achieve. Develop and practice your pitch with your team. Go through your key messages and what you are asking of them ("the ask"). List out the key talking points that you want to communicate.

EXAMPLE ADVOCACY PITCH



Safeguard Colorado's water | Mackenzie Warden 2023

Watch YouTube video here: Safeguard Colorado's water | Mackenzie Warden 2023
Also refer to Advocacy Pitch Competition — Defend Them All Foundation

Tool 7: Developing Your Advocacy Pitch

An advocacy pitch is a concise and persuasive presentation designed to gain support, influence opinion, or prompt action on a specific issue or cause. It highlights the importance of the issue, the desired change, and how the audience can contribute to making that change happen.

The tool we provide here uses an easy 6-step approach to developing your environmental issue advocacy pitch, with an example to help you develop your own pitch.



Other Things to Consider for Your Meeting

- √ **Are you legitimate?**
  Are you recognized as a representative of the people whose interests you are advocating for? Do you have evidence of your research available to show them (if needed)?
- √ **Are you convincing?**
  Do you have evidence to support your position? Will what you are proposing really make much of a difference?
- √ **Have you got a Plan B?**
  It is common to arrive at a meeting and find that the person you are meeting is not the person you planned or expected to meet. Or, you have much less time than you need… Or the person's agenda is different to what you had agreed beforehand. Be ready for all contingencies.

AT THE MEETING

1. Introduce yourself and the purpose of the meeting.
2. Listen carefully and recognize the positions, points and interests of others.
3. Ensure that you are able to communicate your key message and key points.
4. Don't get into an argument as it can create negative energy and waste time.
5. Focus on what you have in common.
6. At the end of the meeting, summarize what each side has agreed to do.
7. If the first meeting ends well, try to schedule a follow-up meeting.



Try to Create an Ongoing Dialogue

Meeting with decision-makers may give you an opportunity for "real dialogue." Dialogue is a conversation where the main purpose is to share and learn from the other people participating in the discussion. A successful dialogue will build and strengthen trust, establish mutual respect among people with different perspectives and improve the understanding between you/your team and the decision-makers.

Note: For a dialogue to be considered successful, it is important to apply active listening and communication skills, and provide an opportunity for everyone to participate in the conversation.

Negotiations with Those Who Have Decision-Making Influence

Negotiation is when two or more parties with different needs and goals discuss an issue in order to find a solution that works for everyone. It involves talking and compromising, with the aim of reaching an agreement that benefits all involved.

We negotiate all the time—in conversations with our parents, friends, teachers, and work supervisors. Some advocacy meetings with decision-makers may also involve negotiation. For example, you might want a Minister to support your pilot project with local schools for nature-based environmental education. In return, you might be asked to help the Minister with something later on.

Before any meeting with powerful stakeholders (like decision-makers), it's important to consider what both you and the other party need and can offer in return. This is key to achieving a 'win-win' outcome. Here are some important questions to consider:

- √ What are your main goals and needs?
- √ What are the other party's main goals and needs?
- √ What can you offer that would benefit the other party?
- √ What can you reasonably expect to receive in return?
- √ What compromises are you willing to make to reach an agreement?

It is also very important that before going into any meeting with a stakeholder who has power (i.e. decision-makers), you seriously consider some key aspects of what both you and the other party need and can expect to receive from each other. This is the heart of negotiation, resulting in a 'win–win' outcome for both sides. Thus consider the following important questions:

- **Their Needs** — What do you think that the other party will want to gain from your meeting? Why do they accept the meeting?
- **Your Offer** — Can you provide something that the other group wants? What can we offer them for their support?
- **Your Needs** — What does your group need to get from this meeting? What is the minimum you will be happy with?
- **Your Concessions** — What are you willing to give up in order to get what you want?

In any negotiation, you must go into the meeting with two key mental strategies:

- **Aim high** — You can always negotiate down, but it is difficult to negotiate up.
- **Give concessions reluctantly** — drive a hard bargain as much as you can. Do not give up your leverage easily.

Possible Negotiation Outcomes

- √ **Win–Win** — This is when both parties feel that they have achieved something positive.
- √ **Win–Lose** — When one party comes out as a 'winner', and the other feels that they have lost.
- √ **Lose–Lose** — When both parties feel that they have lost out.



Some Negotiation Tactics to Consider as You Prepare for Your Meeting

Advocacy groups can employ a number of effective negotiation tactics when meeting with people in power and decision-makers, in order to influence outcomes in their favor. Some that we recommend include:

- √ **Preparation and Research:** Understand the issues very well, including the interests and constraints of the other party. This enables your advocacy group to present well-informed arguments and anticipate counterarguments.
- √ **Build a Strong Case:** Use credible evidence, data, and stories to support your position. A well-structured argument that highlights the benefits of your proposal can be very persuasive.
- √ **Establish Common Ground:** Identify areas of agreement at the beginning of the discussion to create a positive atmosphere. This can make it easier to navigate more contentious issues later on.
- √ **Active Listening:** Show genuine interest in the other party's views. Understanding their perspective can help you to refine your arguments and propose solutions that address their concerns.
- √ **Framing:** Present your arguments in a way that aligns with the interests and values of the decision-makers. For instance, if economic factors are a priority for them, highlight the economic benefits of your proposal.
- √ **Strategic Questioning:** Use questions to guide the conversation, reveal the other party's priorities, and challenge assumptions without being confrontational.
- √ **Negotiation Leverage:** Understand what leverage you have, such as public support, expertise, or the ability to mobilize voters, and use it wisely to strengthen your position.
- √ **Offer Solutions:** Instead of just presenting problems, offer practical and feasible solutions. This demonstrates a constructive approach and willingness to work towards a common goal.

USING INTERNATIONAL FRAMEWORKS FOR ADVOCACY LEVERAGE



Almost every country has ratified the leading international environment and climate change agreement and treaties. This means that if your team is knowledgeable about these agreements, treaties and frameworks, especially in terms of your country's position on them, you can use them as leverage for your negotiation with decision-makers.

Leveraging global/international agreements, treaties, and frameworks can significantly enhance your advocacy efforts, particularly when aiming to influence national policies or corporate practices. Here's how advocacy groups can effectively use these international instruments:

- **Build Your Case with International Standards:** Reference specific commitments and standards from international agreements to strengthen your advocacy position. This lends credibility to your arguments, showing that they align with global norms and values.
- **Highlight State Obligations:** Emphasize the legal and moral obligations that governments have under international treaties. This can pressure national governments to align domestic policies with their international commitments, such as those related to human rights, environmental protection, or health.
- **Use as a Benchmarking Tool:** Compare national policies and practices against the commitments and standards set by international agreements. Publicizing these comparisons can highlight gaps and areas for improvement, mobilizing public opinion and government action.
- **Engage in Shadow Reporting:** Participate in the reporting process of international treaties by submitting alternative or "shadow" reports that provide civil society's perspective on government compliance. This can influence the recommendations made by treaty bodies to states.
- **Advocate for Ratification:** If your country has not ratified a relevant treaty, campaign for its ratification. Ratification enhances the treaty's legitimacy and can compel the government to align domestic laws with international standards.
- **Utilize International Forums:** Engage with international forums and conferences as platforms to raise issues and network with stakeholders from other countries. This can facilitate knowledge exchange, coalition-building, and amplify your advocacy messages.
- **Collaborate with International NGOs and Networks:** Partner with international organizations and advocacy networks that can provide support, resources, and global visibility to your cause. This can also strengthen your credibility and influence at the national level.
- **Invoke Universal Periodic Review (UPR) Processes:** The UPR process reviews the human rights records of United Nations member states. Engage with this process to highlight your issues and recommend actions, leveraging the international community's scrutiny to advocate for change.
- **Lobby for Implementation:** Even after treaties are ratified, advocacy is crucial to ensure their effective implementation. Lobby for the adoption of national legislation, policies, and measures that fulfill international commitments.
- **Educate and Mobilize Public Support:** Use international agreements as educational tools to raise awareness among the public about global standards and the government's commitments. Mobilized public opinion can exert pressure on policy-makers.

By strategically using international agreements, treaties, and frameworks, you can anchor your demands in globally recognized standards, making it harder for national governments or corporations to dismiss your calls for change. This approach not only bolsters the legitimacy of advocacy efforts but also aligns them with a broader global movement towards sustainable development, human rights protection, and environmental conservation.



International Sustainability, Freshwater Ecosystem Management, and Climate Change Agreements

- **United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC):** As the primary international treaty on climate change, the UNFCCC commits states to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and adapt to the impacts of climate change. Its associated agreements, like the Kyoto Protocol and the Paris Agreement, are critical for setting emission reduction targets and adaptation strategies.
- **Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD):** This treaty aims to conserve biological diversity, promote sustainable use of its components, and ensure fair sharing of benefits arising from genetic resources. It's vital for protecting the rich biodiversity of the Mekong Region.
- **Ramsar Convention on Wetlands:** This international treaty promotes the conservation and wise use of wetlands. It's particularly relevant for the management and protection of the Mekong Delta and other wetland ecosystems in the region, which are crucial for biodiversity, flood management, and livelihoods.
- **UNESCO World Heritage Convention:** This convention aims to protect natural and cultural heritage sites of global significance. Several sites in the Mekong Region are designated under this convention, emphasizing the importance of sustainable management practices to preserve these areas.
- **Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES):** CITES regulates international trade in endangered species, including many found in the Mekong Region, to ensure that such trade does not threaten their survival.
- **Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs):** This treaty aims to eliminate or restrict the production and use of persistent organic pollutants, which can accumulate in ecosystems and pose a risk to human health and the environment.
- **The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development:** While not a treaty, this global agenda includes the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), providing a broad framework for addressing economic, social, and environmental sustainability. SDGs related to clean water and sanitation (Goal 6), climate action (Goal 13), life below water (Goal 14), and life on land (Goal 15) are particularly pertinent to the Mekong Region.
- **Mekong River Commission (MRC):** Though not a global agreement, the MRC is a vital regional organization that facilitates cooperation between the governments of Cambodia, Laos, Thailand, and Viet Nam on the sustainable management of the Mekong River and its resources. China and Myanmar are dialogue partners.
- **ASEAN Agreement on Transboundary Haze Pollution:** This agreement among ASEAN countries aims to prevent and reduce haze pollution from land and forest fires. It's relevant for ensuring air quality and reducing the impacts of fires on ecosystems and human health in the region.

Library for additional resources

- Using evidence to influence policy: Oxfam's experience, combines insights from policy studies with specific case studies of Oxfam campaigns. It describes different ways to promote the uptake of research evidence in policy.
- Prepare to act. Practical tips for climate advocacy and action is produced by UNICEF for adolescents and young people to assist them in preparing for climate advocacy and taking practical action to raise awareness and bring about change.
- Youth participation in events by contextual safeguarding highlights the things you should keep in mind when inviting other young people to a public event.
- Planning guide on how to hold a youth summit is a step-by-step outline for what to do when planning a public youth summit.
- UNICEF's Prepare to Act booklet has many useful tips on how to engage with influencing policies and tactics to use in advocacy.
- Youth Service Bureau's Social Media Resource Guide: Tips and Tools for Talking to Your Kids About Social Media (2016).
- Green and Prosperous blog is a digital marketer's guide that provides some tips for harnessing social media for environmental advocacy.
- UNICEF's Putting Together Your Advocacy Team is a website that describes the key roles that make up most youth advocacy volunteer teams.

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5.5.1

BUILDING YOUR VOLUNTEER ADVOCACY TEAM

When building your volunteer advocacy team, there are several key factors to consider in order to ensure effectiveness and impact.

- Firstly, diversity in skills and expertise are crucial; team members should bring a range of talents including policy analysis, community organizing, media relations, and scientific knowledge, allowing for a comprehensive approach to advocacy.
- Secondly, passion and commitment to environmental issues are essential for sustained motivation and resilience in the face of challenges.
- Thirdly, the ability to work collaboratively within a team and with external stakeholders, including communities, policymakers, and partners. This is vital for leveraging collective strengths and achieving common goals.
- Additionally, consider the importance of leadership qualities among team members to inspire and guide the team towards achieving its objectives.
- Finally, understanding the social, economic, and political context surrounding the environmental issue is necessary for crafting effective advocacy strategies and messages. A well-rounded team with a shared vision and diverse capabilities can significantly enhance the impact of environmental advocacy efforts.

Where to Start?

When building a volunteer youth advocacy team, start by identifying passionate and motivated young individuals with a shared interest in your issue. Places to look for recruiting your advocacy team may include the following:

- Start with your own circle of friends and your networks, including:
    - Your close friends and their friends
    - Students currently studying in your faculty
    - Other faculties of your university
    - Students from other universities
    - Youth associations and groups interested in issues similar to yours

Brainstorm who to invite to join your team.

Use the space below to do a quick brainstorm of who you can reach out to when recruiting your advocacy team members.

Write your answers here

How to Best Announce Your Recruitment Efforts

Youth groups trying to build their volunteer advocacy team should announce their recruitment efforts through a strategic mix of channels in order to maximize outreach and engagement. It is very important that you develop clear and compelling messages that highlight the purpose of the advocacy, the roles available, and the impact potential recruits can make.

Utilizing social media platforms, school and community bulletin boards, and local youth organizations or clubs can help reach a wide audience.

Additionally, partnering with educational institutions and leveraging word-of-mouth through existing network members can attract passionate individuals. The announcement should emphasize the benefits of joining the team, such as skill development, networking opportunities, and the chance to make a meaningful difference on issues important to the youth community.

In the context of your own country and local situation, brainstorm ways in which you can reach out to other youth, as well as adult and professional advisors who could join your team.

Write your answers here

Recruiting Advisors and Mentors to Your Youth Advocacy Team

Any youth advocacy group or campaign should aim to recruit adult advisors and mentors who can bring a mix of expertise, experience, and passion for environmental advocacy to the team. This includes professionals with backgrounds in environmental science, policy, law, and education, who can provide knowledge-based guidance and strategic advice.

Additionally, experienced activists or community organizers can offer insights into effective advocacy techniques and campaign strategies. It's also beneficial to include mentors skilled in media relations and digital communication to help amplify the group's message.

The ideal advisors and mentors should share a commitment to environmental causes and possess the ability to inspire and empower young advocates, providing both practical skills training and moral support to navigate the challenges of advocacy work. Their diverse expertise and experiences can significantly enhance the group's capacity for making impactful changes.

Think about the kind of advisors, coaches and mentors that you feel would give your youth advocacy team the right kind of professional advice to increase the effectiveness of your team's knowledge, skills and overall capacity, and ability to develop a successful advocacy campaign.

Brainstorm the kinds of outside advisors, experts and mentors that you think would strengthen your team and its ability to influence policy, public awareness and behavior.

If you have specific people in mind, list them down as well.

Write your answers here

Qualifications of Youth Members in Your Advocacy Team

For a strong environmental youth advocacy campaign team, new youth volunteers should possess a genuine passion for environmental issues and a willingness to learn and engage in advocacy work. Specific qualifications may vary depending on the campaign's goals. Desirable characteristics include strong communication skills, the ability to work collaboratively in a team, and the ability to initiate —as well as participate—in campaign activities. Some background knowledge of environmental science, policy, or related fields can be beneficial but not mandatory, as diverse perspectives and skills can enrich the campaign. Additionally, commitment to the campaign's mission and values, alongside the readiness to dedicate time and effort to its activities, is crucial for effective participation and contribution to the team's success.

Brainstorm the qualifications that you expect youth applicants to have when applying to your advocacy campaign team.

These qualifications should be included in both your recruitment announcement and your selection process.

Write your answers here

5.5.2

PLANNING YOUR ADVOCACY EVENT

Events and activities aimed at advocacy efforts can take many forms. Be sure to use your creativity and have fun when planning and carrying out an event or an activity. Make sure it is designed to achieve your aims and not stray too far from your main purpose.

Use the following questions to help you think through what you want to achieve with the event or activity, in the context of your overall environmental issue advocacy campaign.

1. What is the topic and/or theme that we want to organize the event or activity around?

Describe the topic/issue in some detail.

Write here

2. Who is the audience that we would be targeting with the event or activity?

Describe the target audience in terms of who they are (e.g. students, youth, teachers, working adults, business people, civil society organizations, general public, etc.), their interests and general relationship to the issues you want to address.

Write here

3. **What is the purpose of the event or activity that we are organizing ? What do we hope to achieve? For example:**
    - Raising awareness or educating people more deeply about the issue(s)
    - Taking visible action addressing the issue
    - Sharing and exchanging ideas, perspectives, experiences, tools, etc.
    - Gathering support from identified target group(s)
    - Raising funds

4. **Clearly list the objectives and outcomes you would like to see. What would we like participants / attendees to do during the event?**

Objectives (What do you want the attendees to do during the event?)	**Outcomes** (What do you want to have as a result of this event?)

5. Brainstorm some event or activity ideas and rate their capacity to help achieve our stated purpose, objectives, outcomes and outputs.

(Examples: Exhibition or booth, public meeting, petition signing, march or rally, art/music, theater or other performance, conference, symposium, workshop, field trip, etc.)

No.	Event or Activity	Pros	Cons	Capacity to help (1-5) 1 = very low 5 = very high

6. Final event or activity decision

Write here

7. What type of venue or location is needed to organize this event or activity?

Describe the type of venue and/or location that you believe is appropriate to successfully carry out this event or activity.

Write here

8. What type of support do we need to successfully organize and conduct this event or activity?

Identify and describe the type of support you think you will need to carry out this event or activity, as well as ideas about where to find it / who to ask. (Examples: knowledge or expertise, equipment, decorations, volunteers, first aid, funding, food & drink, giveaways, etc.

Type of support we need	Where to find it / Who to ask

9. Who might we partner with in organizing and conducting this event or activity?

Brainstorm some potential partners to cooperate and/or collaborate with who can bring value to your event / activity, and identify what value they could contribute (e.g. expertise in something, more participants from their network, high media and/or public visibility to your event, in-kind equipment or other support, etc.)

Organization / Group / Individual Name	Added value they will bring

10. Optimal Scheduling: What is the best date / time for our event or activity?

Discuss and identify the time of year, day of the week, and time of day for holding your event or activity so that you will get maximum participation and exposure. Briefly explain your rationale or reason.

Write here

11. What are our next steps?

Brainstorm what you think your next steps should be to push your event or activity forward to the end.

Write here

5.5.3

LEARNING WHAT OTHERS ARE DOING THROUGH ONLINE ADVOCACY

For a new youth environmental advocacy group, learning about the activities of other similar groups, particularly their online advocacy campaigns, is important for several reasons:

- Firstly, it offers valuable insights into effective strategies and tactics that resonate with audiences and can be adapted and applied to its own efforts.
- Secondly, understanding the successes and challenges faced by other groups helps in avoiding common problems. It can also enable the use of best practices to your advantage, thereby increasing the chances of making a meaningful impact.
- Thirdly, it provides opportunities for collaboration and networking, as groups with similar goals can join forces to amplify their message and reach a wider audience.
- Finally, studying the past and present activity of established campaigns can inspire innovation and creativity. It can help new groups to explore new ways of carrying out advocacy in a way that engages and mobilizes supporters effectively.

Overall, learning from the experiences of others enriches a group's campaign strategy, builds a sense of community among environmental advocates, and enhances the overall effectiveness of their advocacy efforts.

Below are a series of questions to help guide you and your advocacy team in exploring the Internet. These questions will help you identify what others—in other countries as well as your own—are doing, and determine what works or doesn't work in relation to environmental issue advocacy.

1. **What are some online platforms/spaces that are doing environmental advocacy and running campaigns, particularly targeting youth? And what can we learn about our issues from them?**

   Spend about 30-45 minutes searching online about what others are doing in terms of raising awareness and engaging youth and young adults on environmental issues. Your search can be about issues that your group is focused on, as well as other environmental issues.

   Use the space below to document the hashtags (#) you found that are most helpful, as well as any other relevant information you discovered regarding your issue, planned activities, and anything else.

Write here

2. **From your online research of interesting youth advocacy groups and platforms, copy and paste some digital campaigns that you admire:**

   Insert links in the spaces below for reference.

3. **Use the questions below to reflect on the online campaigns that you found:**

What key features do we like in the online campaigns we found?
What do we feel are the benefits or advantages of the formats, styles and structures used in these online advocacy platforms, in relation to their intended audience?
What do we not like so much about the way the sites communicate their messages and try to engage the audience? What wouldn't work for us? (Explain why).

Are there any lessons learned that we can apply to our issue and campaign?

What changes would we need to make for something similar to work for our effort?

What are some actions that our team could adopt into our overall social media strategy to make our advocacy campaign posts more effective in engaging and impacting our target audience?

5.5.4

PLANNING FOR YOUR OWN DIGITAL ADVOCACY CAMPAIGN

Part 1: Pre-Planning: Digital Advocacy Campaign Exercise



Instructions: With your advocacy team, conduct the following exercise to get your team ready to develop your own advocacy campaign.

- Review the list of questions below with your core advocacy team.
- Collaboratively discuss and answer each question to the best of your ability.
- Use this brainstorming session to generate initial ideas for taking your campaign online.
- These ideas will be invaluable for developing your Advocacy Event Activity Plan later.

1. What are some initial ideas that we have for engaging our target audience on social media?

Write your answers here

2. Some digital campaigns we admire are:

Insert links in the spaces below for reference.

3. **Use the questions below to reflect on the online campaigns that you like:**

What are the key features of the campaigns that you like?
What do you feel are the benefits or advantages of this structure for the viewer, as well as their approach in regards to advocating for their issue message?
What do you not necessarily like about the site and how they are communicating their message and engaging the viewer?
Are there any lessons learned for my/our issue or campaign?
Are there any lessons learned for my/our issue or campaign?

4. **Based on the answers that you provided in the previous questions, develop some ideas regarding creating your own digital advocacy campaign:**

Write your answers here

Part 2: Planning - Digital Advocacy Campaign Planning Template

Use the steps outlined below to help you and your team develop your digital advocacy campaign.

Step 1: Defining the Campaign

What is the primary goal of the campaign?

Who is the target audience?

What specific environmental issue are we addressing?

What message do we want to convey?

Step 2: Knowing Your Audience

What are the key demographics and interests of our target audience?

Which social media platforms and digital channels does our audience use most?

How can we make our message relatable and engaging for our audience?

Step 3: Developing Content Strategy

What type of content will we create (e.g., articles, videos, infographics)?
How often will we post content, what is the best time for posting, and on which platforms?
Who will create and manage the content?

Step 4: Utilizing the Online Social Media Tools

Which digital tools and technologies will we use to execute the campaign (e.g. Hootsuite, Buffer, Mailchimp) ?
Will we use any hashtags, keywords, or slogans to unify the campaign?

Step 5: Looking for Partnerships and Collaborations

Are there any influencers, organizations, or stakeholders we can partner with?
How can we leverage these partnerships to amplify our reach?

Step 6: Managing Risk

What potential challenges or risks might we face during the campaign?
How will we address negative feedback or misinformation?

Step 7: Monitoring and Evaluation

How will we measure the success of the campaign? What are the metrics that you will use to measure your campaign performance (e.g. engagement metrics, website traffic, viewing clicks, petition signatures)?
What tools will we use to track and analyze the campaign's performance?
How often will we review and adjust our strategy based on the data?

Step 8: Sustaining and moving forward with your social media campaign

How will we sustain engagement and momentum after the initial campaign?
Based on the analytics, what things from your current media strategy and approach would you consider revising and/or changing / adding?
What are our plans for follow-up actions or future campaigns?

5.5.5

TOOL: PRESS RELEASE TEMPLATE

Press Release

Your name or the name of the campaign
Date: *Date of the event or activity*
Embargo: *The time and date that the information can be made public*
Headline: *Keep it short and sweet*
Paragraphs: *The first paragraph is crucial as it is the "hook" for the reader (especially a journalist) to want to write about this event or activity. Paragraphs 2 and 3 are used in order to expand on any newsworthy points. The fourth paragraph should then summarize the Who, What, Where, When, Why and How. Use quotes from respected people at the end, in order to communicate key points of the event or activity's purpose to the reader.*

Add any additional info about your organization or group and links that are important

Contact Information: *Your contact information goes here—provide details of who to contact for more information*

5.5.6

UNDERSTANDING & ENGAGING WITH POLICY

Understanding the policies that affect your issue is fundamental to your education as an advocate. In fact, dreaming up new policies and replacing outdated ones could be one of your key aims. By improving your understanding of the policies that impact your issue, you will improve your advocacy efforts. Remember, a policy is a set of plans or methods that guide decisions for achieving a course of action.

Instructions:

Go through the following steps to identify the policy / policies impacting the issue that you care about. These instructions will also help you analyze and understand the best ways your advocacy efforts can be applied, in order to amend existing policies—or to influence new ones—that will support your cause.

Which policy / policies have obvious (direct) and not so obvious (indirect) implications and impacts on the issues and problems that you are working to address?

Step 1: Identify the policy or policies that directly impact the issue or problem you are addressing.

Use the table below to list the policy document name, and the relevant section and article that relate to your issue. Policies can be found through online research, your university handbook, or legislative documents. Utilize the document search function to find keywords that help identify the key sections and articles related to your issue.

Policy Document Name	Policy Section / Article & Page # (copy the section text as necessary)	Online / offline location (where to find the document)

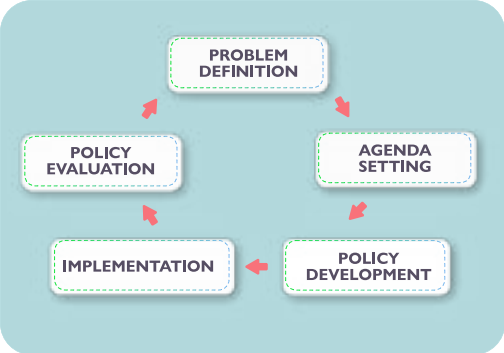
What new policy content and language would we like to change?

Step 2: Identify how you would change the existing policy to better support the goals and outcomes you are seeking for your issue. Start by considering a specific policy shift or change you would like to see. Based on the policy documents and the sections or articles identified in Step 1, draft new language for the sections you'd like to change to address your issue. Use the table below to organize your thoughts.

Ask yourself these questions to help you draft the new policy language:

- How effective is the existing policy?
- What is missing from your policy research? What do you need to research and find out?
- Is there any similar policy somewhere else i.e. from another country or another organization that we can compare to and learn from.

Policy Document Name	Policy Section / Article Text	Ideas for improving existing text or adding new text



What do you need to do to influence the policy development or policy revision process?

As a youth advocacy team, the most effective place to intervene and make changes in a policy is during the policy evaluation and problem definition stages. To influence the policy, ask yourself the following questions:

- Who is in charge of the policy development process and who influences the policy makers?
- What is motivating policy development at the level you are targeting (national, provincial, district, community, organization, etc.)?
- Where in the policy development process can you have the most impact and what do you need to do to influence the process?

Step 3: Map out the policy development process you want to influence. Brainstorm with your team to identify actions you and your group can take now or in the near future that would have a chance to influence these policies directly related to the issue and problem you want to address.

Policy Document Name	**Policy cycle stage to intervene in** (i.e. policy evaluation stage, problem definition stage, etc.)	**What do you need to do to influence the policy development or policy revision process?**

5.5.7

DEVELOPING YOUR ADVOCACY PITCH

An advocacy pitch is a concise and persuasive presentation designed to gain support, influence opinion, or prompt action on a specific issue or cause. It highlights the importance of the issue, the desired change, and how the audience can contribute to making that change happen.

How do you write an advocacy pitch?

Follow these 6 steps to create a concise, strong advocacy message for any audience.

1. Open with a statement that engages your audience.
2. Present the problem.
3. Provide facts and data about the problem.
4. Share a story or give an example of the problem.
5. Connect the issue to the audience's values, concerns, or self-interest.
6. Make your request (the "ask").

1. Develop your opening statement that engages your audience.

Make a statement that gets your audience's attention right away, perhaps by using a dramatic fact. This is your lead-in and should be only a sentence or two.

Example: "Did you know that every minute, the amount of sunlight that strikes the Earth could meet the world's energy needs for an entire year? This fact underscores the untapped potential of renewable energy, which we feel is crucial for the sustainable future of our own country."

Write here

2. Present the problem.

Describe the problem, who it affects, and its impact.

Example: "Climate change is starting to hit the poor and marginalized rural communities in our country the hardest, wrecking their crops, homes, and lives with extreme weather. And yet, they still do not have electricity in their villages, and certainly are not contributing to climate change themselves."

Write here

3. Provide facts and data about the problem.

Data is important to demonstrate that a problem exists and to support your position. Look for facts that are relevant to your audience.

Example: "According to a recent UNDP climate-related disaster report, Southeast Asia has experienced a significant rise in extreme weather events like typhoons and floods. These destroy homes and farmland with increasing frequency and severity, in particular affecting rural areas where people depend on agriculture for their livelihoods."

Write here

4. Share a story or give an example of the problem.

An example or story puts a human face on the issue and makes it real and more compelling. Again, make sure the example is relevant to your audience—for instance, it could be the experience of a family losing their home to a landslide caused by extreme rains in the same district as your audience.

Example: "In our own district, the Sok family lost their home to a devastating landslide caused by extreme rains last year. They have since struggled to find stable shelter and rebuild their lives, facing uncertainty and hardship every day."

Write here

5. Connect the issue to the audience's values, concerns, or self-interest.

Show your audience how this issue fits with what they care about, want or need. Learn what you can about the person. For example, is the person you are meeting an opponent of dam building, or a champion of social issues?

Example: "We understand your commitment to safeguarding our community and promoting sustainable development. Our focus on renewable energy directly aligns with your goals of reducing environmental risks and fostering resilience in vulnerable areas."

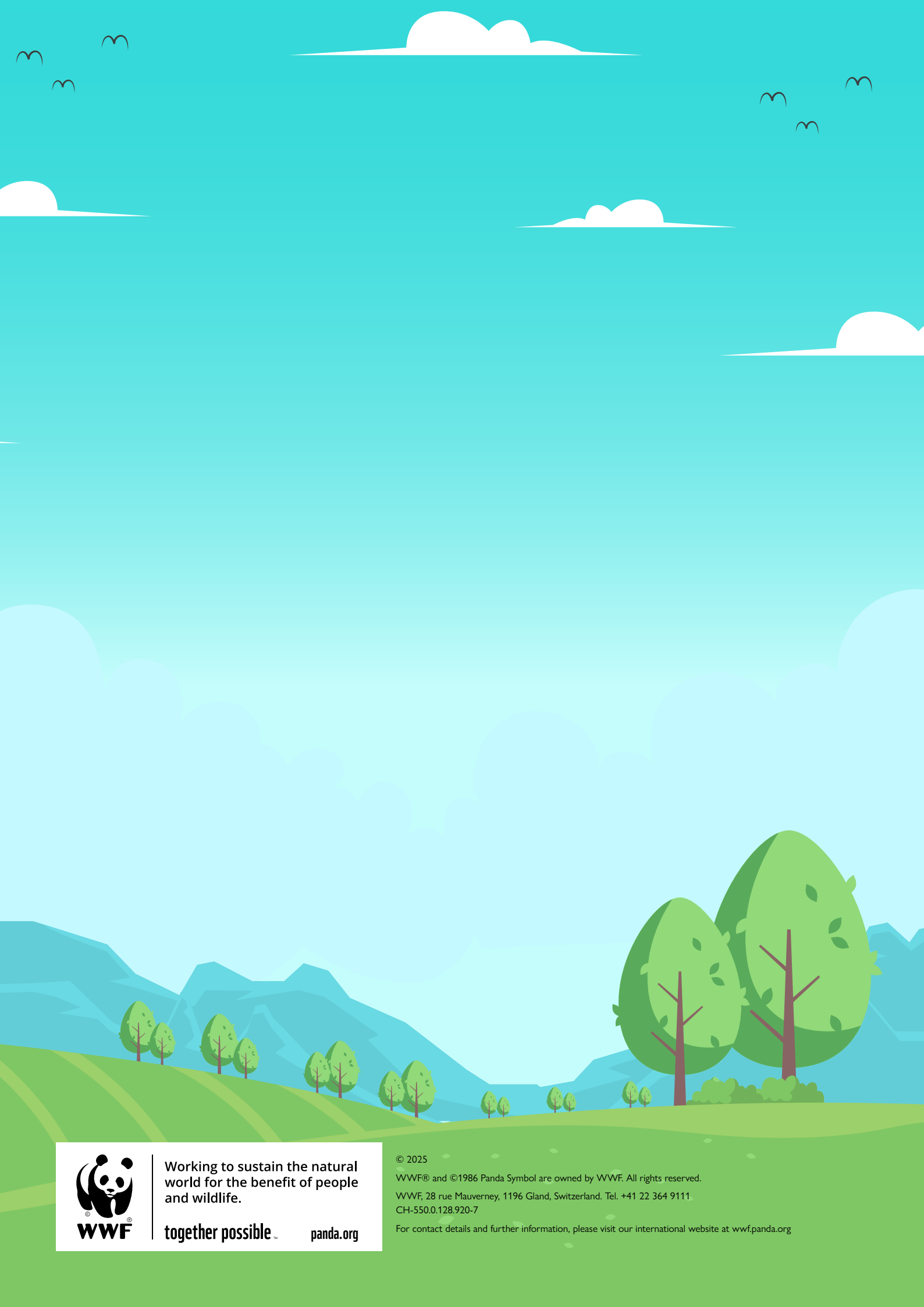
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6. Make your request (the "ask").

Clearly state what you want the person to do.

Example: "We urge you to support and implement policies that prioritize the transition to renewable energy sources, ensuring funding and resources are directed towards sustainable projects that benefit both the environment and marginalized communities."

Write here



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