



Addressing Climate Change

The effects of climate change are far reaching affecting individuals, communities, businesses and governments the world over. It is for this reason that all sectors of society are now looking for ways to both minimise and deal with the effects climate change will have in the future.

Taking action

- § In 2006, the UK Government outlined a Climate Change Bill to reduce emissions by 60% by 2050 (UK Government 2006).
- § In 2001, in San Francisco USA, the community voted in favour of an initiative that paid for solar panels, increased energy efficiency and wind turbines for public facilities (The Vote Solar Initiative 2007).
- § Mexico was the first large oil producing nation to ratify the Kyoto Protocol (Pew Center on Global Climate Change 2007).
- § In 2007 the German Environment Minister announced that he will work towards doubling the amount of non-fossil fuel energies in Germany by 2020 (Deutsche Well World 2007).
- § Wal-Mart, the world's largest retailer is aiming to cut emissions by 20% by 2012. This is also expected to reduce operating costs (Mongabay.com 2006).
- § Brazil offers tax incentives for buyers of cars with lower emissions (Pew Center on Global Climate Change 2007).
- § In India in 2000 energy policy initiatives reduced carbon dioxide emissions by 5% (Pew Center 2007).

Solutions

Reducing emissions

The primary cause of climate change is increased levels of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere (UNEP 2007). The main greenhouse gas is carbon dioxide which is produced by the burning of fossil fuels such as coal, oil and natural gas to produce energy (PEW Centre on Global Climate Change 2007). These fuels are used to produce electricity and for transport around the world.

There are many ways in which greenhouse gas levels can be reduced:

- § Reduce your impact at home and work by replacing light bulbs with new energy efficient bulbs, unplug electronic devices when not in use and recycle where possible.
- § Walk, cycle and use public transport where possible to reduce carbon dioxide emissions.
- § Switch to green power: Energy generated by clean renewable sources. (Climatecrisis.net).

Solutions at all levels

All sectors of society play a part in activities that produce greenhouse gases. Solutions must therefore involve individuals, communities, businesses and governments, and action must take place at the local, national and international level.

Governments can:

- Introduce policies and legislation that:
- § Support alternative energy sources such as wind and solar.
- § Promote energy efficiency and conservation by businesses and households.
- § Establish carbon trading schemes.

Businesses can:

- § Introduce technologies and techniques to cut their operational energy use.
- § Improve the energy efficiency of products they produce such as electrical appliances and vehicles.
- § Become *carbon neutral* by offsetting their emissions.
- § Save money by reducing their energy use.

Individuals can:

- § A good place to start is to calculate your current impact. See http://www.davidsuzuki.org/Climate_Change/What_You_Can_Do/carbon_neutral.asp for a range of online calculators.
- § Simple changes in your energy consumption such as turning lights off, and using your car less can reduce your impact.

Communities can: see over the page for suggestions for action.

Community Action

Action needs to be taken by all sectors of society. Action at the community level not only has the potential to minimise and deal with the effects of climate change directly, it also has the power to influence and bring about change in other sectors such as business and government.



Community Action

- § Calculate your individual/family/community carbon dioxide emissions, set a reduction target and make a plan of action to achieve it. See http://www.davidsuzuki.org/Climate_Change/What_You_Can_Do/carbon_neutral.asp or <http://www.earthday.net/>
- § Encourage government and politicians (local, state and national) to introduce emission reduction targets, and policies that encourage renewable energy. The UNFCCC (2007) has recommended that industrialised countries need to reduce their emissions by 60-80% by 2050.
- § Encourage your local government to join Cities for Climate Protection at www.iclei.org/co2/
- § Protect trees and forests. Deforestation and land use change accounts for as much as 25% of global greenhouse gas emissions (Conservation International 2007).
- § Organise a tree planting program. See the Billion Tree Campaign website for information and support materials - <http://www.unep.org/billiontreecampaign/index.asp> (in English, French, Spanish, Portuguese and Arabic).
- § Avoid excess packaging. Reducing waste will help cut emissions (Climate Crisis 2007). See the CUW Waste in the Environment and Plastic Bags Information Sheets.
- § Encourage schools to include climate change content in the curriculum.

- § Explore alternative energies such as solar cookers – see <http://www.solarcooking.org/docs.htm> (in 15 languages).
- § In areas affected by drought, water may be scarce. Look at ways to be more water efficient and consider additional water storage – see <http://practicalaction.org/practicalanswers/> and the CUW Water Conservation Information Sheet.
- § Talk to your teacher or employer about organising a walk to work/school day.
- § Agricultural biodiversity provides resistance to changing conditions. Maintaining diverse seed supplies and being flexible in the types of crops that can be grown are key adaptation strategies. <http://www.ukabc.org/> and <http://www.fao.org/biodiversity/>
- § Raise awareness in your community – use a local hall or town square to establish a central information point, erect public noticeboards, organise dances, plays or poster competitions. Keep messages simple for maximum effect.
- § Approach local media such as radio to include one-off and/or ongoing segments on climate change.
- § Remember to share your successes as widely as possible - notify media, CUW and other local, national and international organisations.

Please see the References section and CUW Internet Resource List for more useful websites on this issue.

Document last updated May 2008

References

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