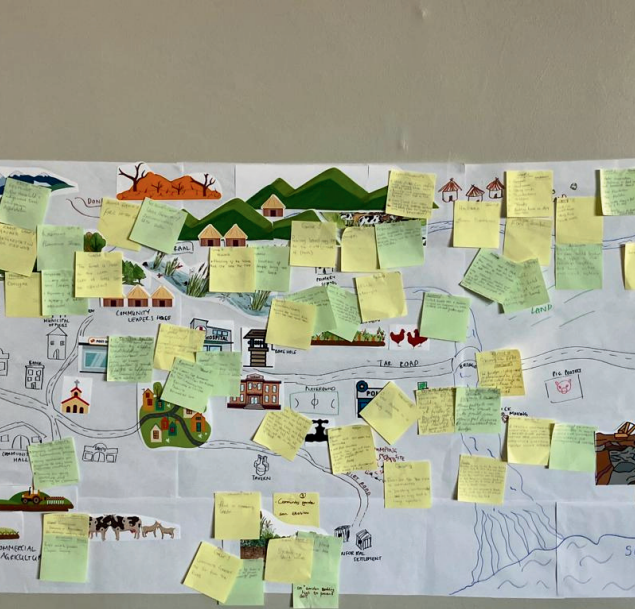




Rural Action for Climate Resilience

Learning Festival Resource Book

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Rural Action for
Climate Resilience



SOCIAL CHANGE
ASSISTANCE TRUST



Ambasáid na hÉireann | An Afraic Theas
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Rural Action for Climate Resilience

The Rural Action for Climate Resilience project (RACR) is a partnership project between the Social Change Assistance Trust (SCAT), the Southern African Faith Communities' Environment Institute (SAFCEI) and the Heinrich Böll Foundation which aims to increase climate resilience and so protect livelihoods in rural communities.



The project is funded by the Embassy of Ireland. A previous phase of the project (2021-2024) was co-funded by the European Union.



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Embassy of Ireland | South Africa



Co-funded by
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For more information about the project visit:
www.ruralaction4climate.org.za



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Glossary

Weather The current conditions of the atmosphere at a particular place and time. Weather conditions are temporary and change frequently.

Climate refers to the pattern of weather over a long period of time. Weather patterns for about 30 years can be used to describe the climate of a particular place.

Climate Change is the global phenomenon of climate transformation characterised by the changes in the usual climate of the planet (regarding temperature, precipitation, and wind) that are especially caused by human activities.

Climate anxiety or eco-anxiety is the fear of environmental doom, triggered by increasing environmental and planetary destruction. It can range from mild stress to clinical mental illness, like anxiety and depression, and can trigger problematic coping strategies, such as increased domestic violence and substance abuse. In particular, where environmental destruction is at the root of a loss of culture, tradition or way of life, this anxiety can be passed down generationally.

Global Warming is caused by emitting certain gases, like carbon dioxide, primarily from burning fossil fuels and destroying old natural landscapes for mass scale agriculture, and industry. These gases create a greenhouse effect as they accumulate in the atmosphere and trap more and more heat near the Earth's surface. As more heat is held within the Earth's atmosphere, the temperature near the Earth's surface gradually warms up.

Food system refers to all the elements and activities related to producing and consuming food, and their effects, including economic, health, and environmental outcomes.

Fossil Fuels are made from plants and animals that naturally decomposed over centuries under high pressures and temperatures. These fuels are found buried in some parts of the Earth's crust and contain carbon and hydrogen, which can be burned for energy. They are limited in supply and are referred to as non-renewable resources.

Greenhouse Gases are natural or human-made gases that trap heat in the atmosphere.



Gender roles refers to society's expectations of men and women that shape how an individual might act, speak, dress, groom, and conduct themselves based on the sex (male or female) they were assigned at birth.

Intersectionality refers to the interconnected nature of social categorisations, such as race, class, and gender, as they apply to an individual or group, creating overlapping and interdependent systems of discrimination or disadvantage.

Integrated Energy Plan (IEP) refers to the South African government's overall energy plan for liquid fuels (petrol, diesel, paraffin), gas and electricity that should outline how projected energy demand will be met. The government is mandated to complete this and renew it annually under Section 6 of National Energy Act, 2008 (NEA) but has failed to release it and was taken to court by Green Connection and SAFCEI in this regard.

Integrated Resource Plan (IRP) refers to the South African government's detailed plan for electricity, which projects electricity demand and considers how to meet that demand. It is supposed to be a living document, reviewed and revised every 2 years.

Non-renewable resources are natural resources that are consumed faster than they can be naturally replenished. There are four major types of nonrenewable resources: oil, natural gas, coal, and nuclear energy.

Renewable resources are natural resources that have no natural limit to their availability, for example energy from sunlight, wind, falling water and wave action.

Youth are people who fall within the age range of 14 - 35 years old, in the context of South Africa.

WHAT IS CLIMATE CHANGE?



Climate change is different from weather. Weather describes the changes that occur from day to day (for example it is hot, it is cold, it is windy, it is raining). Climate describes long-term patterns in weather of a particular place (eg. how often and when a place receives rain in a year, or how hot/cold it usually gets in different seasons). Climate change refers to long term and permanent changes to these weather patterns.

Climate change causes a shift in day to day weather patterns, for example through causing more rain to fall over a shorter period of time, contributing to flooding, or increasing the periods without any rainfall, causing droughts.

Globally, countries have been trying to keep average global warming below 1.5 degrees. Countries have met 29 times, once a year, at the Conference of the Parties (COP), to carry out negotiations. In November 2024 they will meet in Azerbaijan. Despite these efforts, our planet is on track to exceed an average global warming of 1.5 degrees by 2050, and the past year was the hottest year ever recorded globally.

An average increase in temperatures by 1.5 degrees will mean an increase of 3 degrees in Sub-Saharan Africa, because it is a hotspot for climate change, with temperature rising at double the rate of the global average.

In general, African countries are among the least responsible for climate change, in terms of contributions to global greenhouse gas emissions that cause climate change. The African continent is among those that has contributed the least to climate change, but will be amongst the most severely affected by the impacts of climate change.

South Africa specifically is both vulnerable to climate change impacts, but also bears responsibility to prevent a worsening of climate change **because we produce over half of all greenhouse emissions from the African continent.** This is because Eskom burns mostly coal for energy production. Our energy production is tightly linked to our history of mining, colonisation, and apartheid, and the global system of capitalism that prioritises profit over people.

Responding to climate change requires multiple approaches. To address climate change we need to dismantle systems of capitalism and colonialism that underpin the unsustainable relationship that western modernity supports, with each other, with the natural world and the resources it provides.

EXERCISE: CLIMATE CHANGE IS COMPLEX

Climate change is complex. Let's unpack some terms to deepen our understanding of Climate Change, its root causes and its interconnecting impacts!



In your groups you have been given a set of cards, that have terms or phrases written on them. These are referring to climate change, it's root causes, and impacts. Additionally, you have been given a poster of a baobab tree.

In your groups, discuss the terms and place them on the poster as either a cause of climate change (the roots), a key feature of climate change (the trunk), or an impact of climate change (the branches and leaves).

How do the different terms connect to each other? Be ready to explain your justification for why you have connected different terms, and why you've placed them in the roots, trunk or branches of the tree.

If you are looking for more explanation on what the terms mean, the next few pages unpack all the different terms in more detail.

Unpacking terms

What are some possible root causes of Climate Change?

Capitalism is an economic and political system in which a country's trade and industry are controlled by private owners for profit. Capitalism as an economic model does not recognise the finite natural resources on the planet.

Labour exploitation refers to the practice of overworking and underpaying workers, usually in order to cut costs and increase profits for their employers.

Profit over People refers to the mindset within capitalism that puts more importance on increasing profit than on the wellbeing of the planet or people (workers, consumers, and others impacted).

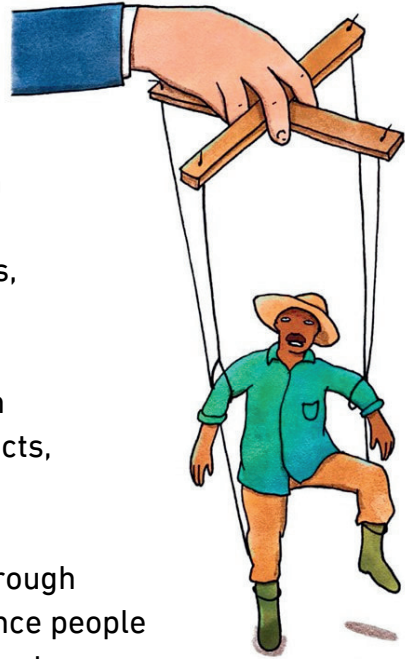
Consumerism refers to the social and cultural association of a good life with the constant consumption of new products, regardless of their utility or necessity.

Consumerism is usually encouraged within capitalism, through advertising and media, because businesses have to convince people to keep consuming. They cannot make profits if their products are not purchased. It encourages unnecessary use of our planet's limited resources.

Market expansion refers to growing a business and increasing profits, through increasing the size of operations, the number of customers it has, and overall presence in existing locations or new geographic areas.

For example, colonisation enabled businesses from Europe to reach a new set of customers in the colonies, resulting in the expansion of these businesses to the colonies and enabling them to make large profits from expanding their customer base to the colonies.

This was also aided by colonial laws and regulations that often gutted local business and production systems.



What are some possible root causes of Climate Change?

Colonialism is practice of exerting political control over another territory, usually through occupying it with settlers, extracting resources or economic exploitation.

Occupation of indigenous lands refers to a key part of colonialism, which is the displacement of indigenous communities from their land by colonial settlers who forcibly seize control to occupy the lands instead.



Resource extraction from colonies was a key motivation for colonialism. Colonialism enables resources to be extracted cheaply, making huge profits for colonial companies, often with government support through unfair social policies and governance of resources, or exploitative and destructive environmental and labour practices.

Industrial Revolution refers to the period from mid 1700s to mid 1800, which saw the first large scale move towards production using machines rather than by hand, in Britain, continental Europe and eventually the United States of America. It marks the starting point from where human generated carbon emissions increase rapidly due to the use of fossil fuels to power the industrial revolution,

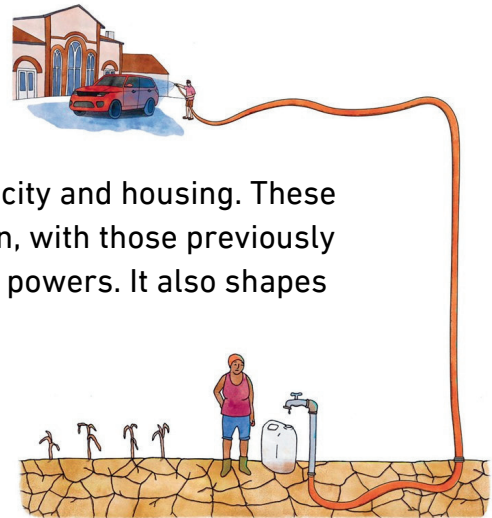
Many of the natural resources (eg cotton, rubber, coal, diamonds) used in the industrial revolution were extracted through exploitative practices from colonies in Asia, Africa and the Americas.

Historic emissions refers to the carbon emissions emitted in the past (eg in the industrial revolution) that continued to exist in the atmosphere and contribute to current day climate change.



What are some possible root causes of Climate Change?

Global inequality refers to the extreme differences in levels of income, wealth and access to resources between different parts of the world, that means that some people consume excessively while others do not have even their basic needs met for food, water, electricity and housing. These differences tend to follow the same lines of colonisation, with those previously colonised tending to have less than the former colonial powers. It also shapes who has power in decision making spaces.



Political vested interest in fossil fuels refers to governments or those with decision making power having direct or indirect connections with fossil fuel industries that benefit them, so they avoid, hinder or delay the necessary rapid phase out of fossil fuels needed to address climate change,

Fossil fuel companies refers to companies that are involved in fossil fuel production, whether through extraction, refining, transporting or selling fossil fuels. Examples would include Shell, Exxon Mobil, TotalEnergies, Glencore, Exxaro.

Fossil fuel centred development models refers to a set of ideas that assume development, and more broadly a good life for all, cannot be achieved without the use of fossil fuels.



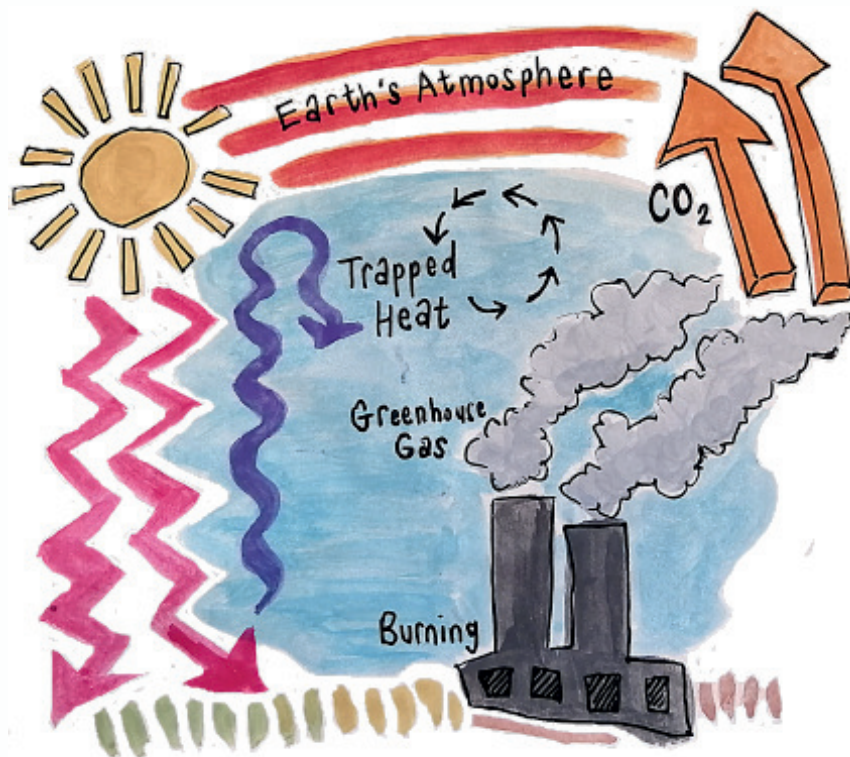
What are the key conditions that directly result in Climate Change?

Greenhouse effect refers to the natural, heat-trapping effect that certain gases like, Carbon dioxide, and methane, have when in our atmosphere. These gases prevent heat from the sun escaping out to space, allowing our planet to be habitable. In excess however, they trap too much heat and cause the entire planet to warm.

Continued use of fossil fuels globally refers to the fact that, despite the clear scientific links between fossil fuel use producing large amounts of greenhouse gases that cause the planet to warm, there has been no tangible action towards halting the use of fossil fuels globally.

Increasing CO₂ and Greenhouse Gases in the atmosphere is ongoing and will continue unless we rapidly phase out fossil fuel use globally.

Increasing Global Average Temperatures refers to the process by which global temperatures are increasing due to increasing levels of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere, that cause a stronger greenhouse effect on the planet.



What are the different direct and indirect impacts that climate change is causing on the planet?

Increased heat waves occur due to rising global temperatures

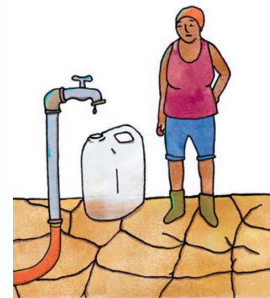
Increased evaporation of water refers to the increased amounts of water that air can carry at higher global average temperatures

Unpredictable rainfall is caused by shifts in winds and currents in a warmer world

Water shortages is due to higher levels of evaporation of water in a warmer planet.

Drought is becoming more common in some parts and persisting for longer periods of time.

Dehydration and heat stroke increases due to higher temperatures, heatwaves, water shortages and droughts



Damage to Agriculture and Ecosystems is caused by many climate impacts including increasingly extreme storms and rainfall events, extended droughts and intense heatwaves

Loss of life and cultures is increasing due to the destruction of people and land from climate impacts, and communities forced to migrate or change traditional practices that are no longer feasible in a warmer world.



For example, rearing cattle will become increasingly difficult due to climate change in Sub-Saharan Africa, which may cause the loss of these traditions.

Increased cost of living will occur as agriculture and supply chains become increasingly disrupted by climate impacts.

Increased inequality is expected given that resources that could be used to address equality will be redirected for disaster response and recovery.

What are the different direct and indirect impacts that climate change is causing on the planet?

Heavy rainfall events (cyclones, rain bombs), like the rain bombs that fell in Durban in April 2022, occur with increasing frequency and intensity in a warmer world.

Flooding occurs more often because when rainfall occurs, it is more intense, falling over shorter periods of time, so not all the water can be absorbed by infrastructure and the environment.

Damage to Infrastructure occurs due to flooding and storm winds that damage buildings, roads, electricity cables, water and sanitation networks to name a few.

Loss of housing results from heavy rainfall and flooding events

Disrupted basic services will be caused by damaged infrastructure from extreme weather or insufficient resources, like water, during extreme drought.



Disrupted supply chains is caused by damaged infrastructure like roads, which can impact transport of goods, as well as damage to production systems, like farmlands.

Reduced finance for repair will be available after responding to each repetitive climate impact, which will limit rebuilding and repair. Finances required to respond to increasingly frequent extreme weather also reduces available funds for other things, like education.

Damage to local economies and business will occur as climate impacts destroy infrastructure, disrupt the transport of goods, damage products and redirect resources to rapid responses and recovery from climate shocks.



Reflections



What climate impacts have you experienced in your community?

What would you add to the suggested climate impacts above?

What responses to climate change have you been part of?

Based on how you laid out your tree, do the responses to climate change that you have been a part of address the root causes of climate change or the impacts?



STORYTELLING FOR CLIMATE ADVOCACY



As Climate Change Champions in your communities, you have an important role in raising awareness around climate change. **Storytelling, through making use of real-life examples of climate change, how it impacts us and what we can do about it, can be a persuasive mechanism to build advocacy.**



Social media platforms have become central to exchanging information and sharing stories. They can be **powerful platforms and reach both a wide audience, and a targeted audience**, if used effectively.

Simultaneously, they can be dangerous because of the **abundance of misinformation and fake stories that are shared and re-posted**. These can be counter-productive to building a well-informed advocacy space around issues.

Discussions on **climate change in particular can trigger lot of scepticism and fear mongering**. This is why it's **important to be factual and accurate** in all your stories.

Check the accuracy of your information before sharing it!

Some questions to think about...

What is your main message? Be clear and concise. Make sure your message conveys your campaigns key values and objectives.

Who is your target audience? What are their values, concerns and perspectives? Use this to tailor your content.

What language are you using? Is it understandable? Avoid jargon and terminology. Can you use storytelling and visuals to make your message more understandable?

Which platform will be most effective? Choose your social media platform(s) based on your message and target audience.

What is your social media objective? What is the aim of the campaign? Are you trying to increase following, or generate engagement on content?

What social media tactics can you use to target your audience? For example: #hashtag, @tagging, key words, search optimisation content.

How often are you posting? Create a social media plan, and develop and schedule content to be released in a staggered manner and build momentum.

Brainstorming

