

Rivers of change

12+

AIM

To explore climate change as a justice issue affecting everybody and look at actions to stop it.

Time

40 Minutes

Material

Photocopied statements and the facts, scissors, flipchart paper, markers and paints

What to do

Stand in a circle. Ask each person to imagine a type of weather and what they would be doing in it, e.g. Sun bathing or swimming, using an umbrella or struggling to cycle against the wind. One by one the participants act out their situation. The group copy the actions of each person, see if somebody can remember them all?

Cut out the statements and the facts. Place them in two separate piles. Divide the large group into teams of two. Use as many statements and matching facts as there are teams. Tell each team to take one piece of paper from one of the piles. They now have to find their matching fact or statement.

After all the matches have been found, make groups of four. Ask them to create a river on a flipchart page. The source of the river should show the current situation, the mouth of the river show the future they want to happen. The tributaries leading into the river are the actions that need to happen so we can reach the future, boulders and other obstacles in the water can be the challenges to making this happen. When the rivers are completed, hold a walking gallery where everybody gets to see the work done by the other groups.

Debrief

Was it easy or difficult to find your matching statement? Who suffers most from climate change? Is this fair? What can young people do to try and stop it? If you were the government, what laws would you introduce?

Action Idea

Find out how your group can take action on climate change. Visit www.stopclimatechaos.ie

Statements

Climate Change is being caused by the US and other big countries, they should sort it out!

People will just adapt to the new climate.

It's not our fault if climate change creates problems in other countries.

It's more important to save the people affected by climate change than the plants and animals.

Only strong laws will make people do anything to change their habits.

The government is responsible for stopping climate change not us.

Facts

The United States emits 24.5 tonnes of carbon per person into the atmosphere every year, Ireland 17.5 tonnes and China just 3.9. Meanwhile, Malawi emits less than one tonne per person Ireland is the sixth largest producer of greenhouse gases per person So who should be paying to sort the climate out?

Developing countries are the most vulnerable to climate change as they have little or no back-up system. Over 26 million people (that's over 6 times the population of Ireland) have become refugees as a direct result of climate change and each year a million more are made homeless. Island communities from the south pacific and the Indian Ocean have had to leave their land and countries behind as the sea level rises

In 2007 the UN released a report stating that human activity is responsible for most of the climate change in the past 50 years. The developed countries that have produced nearly all of the gases that are causing climate change are also the ones with enough money to adapt to changing conditions

The UN predicts roughly one in three species on Earth will go extinct if nothing is done to halt climate change. Since we depend on plants and animals for things like housing, food, pollination, clean air, clean water, medicine, etc, could humans be one of the three?

More and more people are trying to find out what they can do to help prevent climate change, simple things like turning off unused lights, unplugging your TV and computers when you're not using them, buying local food and goods can all help you save money too. Go to www.stopclimatechaos.ie to find out more

The government definitely needs to act strongly on climate change but without people to keep reminding them why it's so important and by showing what individuals and groups such as your youth organisation can do, the government won't change as quickly as needed