

# CLIMATE CHANGE AND HUMAN RIGHTS PARTICIPATORY WORKSHOP: A FACILITATORS MANUAL





Photo credit: Pamela EA

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The climate emergency is a human rights crisis of unprecedented proportions. It is part of the triple planetary crisis of climate change, pollution and biodiversity loss. Climate change threatens the enjoyment of civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights of present and future generations and, ultimately, the future of humanity. According to the European Union's [Copernicus Global Climate Report](#), 2023 was the hottest year ever recorded. Global heating is worsening heatwaves and droughts, increasing wildfires, intensifying rainfall and generating more violent storms, all of which can have a devastating effect on the environment, biodiversity and marginalized groups.

As activists, social movements, and grassroots groups are on the frontlines demanding and fighting for climate justice, it is vital that more people engage and are equipped with the knowledge, skills and attitudes needed to understand the complexities of climate change and how this global crisis infringes upon human rights. Crucially, they must also feel empowered to be part of the solution and possess the agency to take meaningful climate action.

This workshop is designed for participants to actively explore the topic of climate change and human rights, identify how the climate crisis impacts their communities, and work collaboratively to brainstorm, critically discuss, and draft practical solutions. These solutions can serve as the stepping stones for transformative climate action, empowering participants to take the crucial first, second, and third steps towards effecting positive change.



# WORKSHOP FRAMEWORK



8 hours



15-30 participants

Activity	Components	
Introduction	Introductions & Icebreaker Activity	1 hour
Activity 1: Climate Change and Specific Human Rights	Introduction to human rights exercise Self reflection exercise Humans rights analysis group work	2 hours
Break		30 min
Activity 2: Community Assessment	Intro to marginalized groups impacted by climate crisis Community assessment group work Group presentations	1 hour
Break		1 hour
Activity 3: Develop a Climate Action Plan	Hook Group Discussion Develop a climate action plan group work	2 hours
Reflection		30 min



## BEFORE YOU BEGIN: AN INTRODUCTION TO KEY HUMAN RIGHTS STANDARDS

As a facilitator of this workshop, it is important that you familiarize yourself with some key concepts, treaties, conventions, and important agreements related to climate change and human rights. This understanding will enable you to provide accurate information, guide meaningful discussions, and ensure participants have a comprehensive understanding of the subject matter.

## CIVIL AND POLITICAL RIGHTS

The full range of human rights laid out in the [Universal Declaration of Human Rights](#) is often divided into two sets: **civil and political rights**, and **economic, social and cultural rights**.

Civil and political rights include the right to self-determination, life, physical integrity, equality and non-discrimination, freedom of expression, association and peaceful assembly, privacy, movement, and the right to participation in public affairs. These rights are enshrined in international law, such as the [International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights \(ICCPR\)](#), which most countries agree to follow.

## ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL RIGHTS

[Economic, Social and Cultural Rights \(ESCR\)](#) include protections for the basic things we need to live: food, water, sanitation, health, housing and social security. They also cover guarantees we need to live a dignified life like education, workers' rights, and rights affected by the ongoing climate crisis. [The International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights \(ICESCR\)](#) provides the most authoritative collection of protections for a large range of ESCR.



## UNITED NATIONS FRAMEWORK CONVENTION ON CLIMATE CHANGE (UNFCCC)

The [United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change \(UNFCCC\)](#) is a global treaty to fight climate change. It entered into force in 1994 and includes almost every country in the world. Its main goal is to reduce emissions of greenhouse gasses, like carbon dioxide, to stop the Earth from getting too warm. The UNFCCC helps countries work together, share ideas, and create plans to mitigate and adapt to the effects of climate change. One of its most well-known agreements is the [Kyoto Protocol](#).

## THE PARIS AGREEMENT

In 2015, an international climate change conference took place in Paris. The conference adopted an international treaty - [the Paris Agreement](#) - aimed at setting all countries on a course to limit global warming to well below 2° Celsius, preferably to 1.5°C, compared to pre-industrial levels. It entered into force in 2016 and has been ratified by most countries.

The Paris Agreement gave new life to how climate action is tackled at the national level. Among others, it requires countries to set targets to reduce emission of greenhouse gasses (also known as Nationally Determined Contributions) every five years.

## CONVENTION ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY (CBD)

The [Convention on Biological Diversity \(CBD\)](#) is a global treaty aimed at protecting the Earth's plants, animals, communities and ecosystems. It entered into force in 1993, and helps countries work together to protect nature, share knowledge, and develop plans to ensure that all forms of life on Earth can thrive and be used responsibly for the benefit of current and future generations.

The UNFCCC and CBD are both known as “[Rio Conventions](#).” They were opened for signature at the Rio Earth Summit in 1992. Their sister agreement is the [United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification](#). The three are intrinsically linked.

## WANT TO LEARN MORE?

Take a few short moments to watch [this video](#) and explore how human rights are intimately linked with climate change because of its effect on not just the environment but our own well-being.

## IMPORTANT NOTE FOR FACILITATORS

This activity explores climate change, a topic that resonates deeply, affecting lives and cultures globally. It addresses a growing anxiety about our collective future, hence facilitators should be equipped to handle various emotional responses with sensitivity.

To foster resilience and understanding, facilitators are encouraged to create a supportive environment that promotes open dialogue and offers reassurance to participants. Facilitators play a crucial role in ensuring that participants leave feeling informed, empowered and inspired to contribute positively to this pressing global issue.



# PART 1: CLIMATE CHANGE AND SPECIFIC HUMAN RIGHTS



2 hours

## ABOUT THIS ACTIVITY

In this activity participants will be introduced to human rights concepts and how human rights are eroded by the climate crisis. Participants will be encouraged to self-reflect and critically analyze how the climate crisis adversely affects the enjoyment of human rights. As a part of this activity, participants are encouraged to reflect, share and learn from their own experience and other participants within their working group.

## MATERIALS:

- **Background information:** [Universal Declaration of Human Rights](#)
- **Handouts:** [Climate Action Toolkit.pdf](#)
- **Powerpoint Presentation:** <https://www.canva.com/design/DAFMwMhMGns/Ug1VcSSF9Hc2yWkvMB7DOw/edit>
- Paper, pens, flipcharts, moveable seating
- **Optional:** Internet connection, computer & projector

## LEARNING OUTCOMES:

By the end of this workshop, participants will be able to:

1

Detail how the climate crisis is a human rights crisis

2

Define and express key terms and concepts related to human rights and climate change

3

Identify specific human rights impacted by the climate crisis

## PREPARATION:

- Prepare handouts for all participants
- Prepare powerpoint presentation
- Optional: To learn more about climate change and human rights, explore the online course [Climate Change and Human Rights](#) on [Amnesty Human Rights Academy](#).

## MORE INFORMATION

- [CRC/C/GC/26: General comment No. 26 \(2023\) on children's rights and the environment with a special focus on climate change](#)
- [Simplified version of the UDHR](#)
- [UDHR summary FAQ page](#)
- [Fatal fuels: Why human rights protection urgently requires a full and equitable fossil fuel phase out](#)
- [Climate change and human rights summary FAQ page](#)
- [Stop burning our rights! What governments and corporations must do to protect humanity from the climate crisis](#)

### WANT TO LEARN MORE?

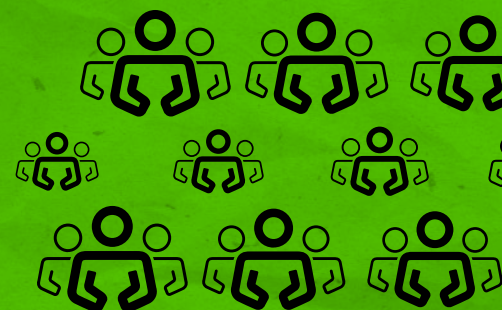
Amnesty International offers online human rights education courses, including a 5 hours course about climate change and human rights: <https://academy.amnesty.org/learn/course/external/view/elearning/252/climate-change-and-human-rights>

### IMPORTANT NOTE FOR FACILITATORS

If you are not familiar with participatory learning methods, look at Amnesty International's Facilitation Manual before you start  
<https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/act35/020/2011/en/>

## ICEBREAKER

Before you begin this workshop, encourage participants to introduce themselves and describe their expectations for the workshop. The goal of this introduction is to create a safe, inclusive and participatory space where all participants and facilitators have mutual understanding and expectations for the workshop.





## ACTIVITY 1: INTRODUCTION TO HUMAN RIGHTS AND CLIMATE CHANGE

**1** Begin the activity by working as a whole group and discussing some general questions about human rights.

- What climate impacts are you experiencing in your community?
- What human rights are you aware of/ have you been introduced to?
- Why are international and regional human rights laws and standards important to tackle the climate crisis?

**2** As a group, encourage participants to explore the UDHR. Depending on the age and level of the students, you can use the [simplified version of the UDHR](#) or the [UDHR summary FAQ page](#). Once participants have had sufficient time to reflect on the documents, encourage the small groups to discuss the following questions:

- Were you aware of all the rights listed?
- Which rights were you most aware of? Which were you less aware of?
- Did anything surprise you?
- After reading through your human rights, which do you feel are most impacted by the climate crisis?



### ACRONYM ALERT!

#### CBDR-RC? WHAT DOES THAT MEAN?

CBDR-RC stands for **Common but Differentiated Responsibilities and Respective Capabilities**. CBDR-RC is an important principle in international law that acknowledges the different capabilities and differing responsibilities of individual countries in addressing climate change. The principle explains that higher-income countries must take the lead in climate mitigation efforts. They must decarbonize their economies faster, including by stopping the expansion of fossil fuel production and providing assistance through funding and technology transfer to developing countries for them to meet their mitigation targets.

### DID YOU KNOW?

That the right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environments was formally recognized as a human right in 2022

Photo credit: Haus of Hyman Production Company





## ACTIVITY 2: IMAGINE EXERCISE

- 1 Begin by watching the [video](#) on the Bodo oil spill in Bodo, Nigeria.

### FACILITATORS NOTE

For those without access to internet or video equipment, the story of the Bodo oil spill can also be read aloud to participants in the workshop.

### THE BODO COMMUNITY'S STORY

For several hundred years, the people of Bodo in the Niger Delta have made a living from fishing and farming. This serene way of life suddenly changed on 28 August 2008, when a breach in a Shell oil pipeline caused thousands of barrels of oil to spill into the local creek.

The land and water around Bodo was soon polluted with oil. The spill continued until 7 November. In December 2008, a second spill began, lasting for 10 weeks. Both spills were caused by equipment failure.

The oil destroyed people's livelihoods and devastated the environment. Fish in the creek died or moved away from the pollution. 4 years after the spill, no proper clean-up had taken place causing the land and water to remain polluted and unproductive. The damage done to fisheries and farming resulted in food shortages and rising food prices in Bodo.

A third spill in June 2012 deepened concerns that Shell's pipeline is old and prone to leaks. Many people in Bodo were pushed deeper into poverty as a consequence of the oil spills. Meanwhile, the contaminated soil, water and air put their health at risk.

- 2 Ask participants to share in a larger group and answer the following questions:

- Have you heard about this disaster before? What stands out to you?
- What human rights were implicated in this disaster?
- How is this disaster related to climate change?
- How are the human rights of community members implicated by this disaster interconnected?

## ACTIVITY 3:

### BRAINSTORM AND SHARE

- 1 Begin the activity by working in small groups of 4-6 people. When participants have finished the discussion, ask each group to highlight and share one example from each group. Groups should be encouraged to answer the following questions:

- Have you witnessed climate-change related events in the last year?
- Do you feel that climate change-related events have impacted your human rights?
- Did you feel like you had a chance to respond or take action?



Photo credit: Haus of Hyman Production Company



## ACTIVITY 4: HUMAN RIGHTS ANALYSIS

**1** Begin the activity by working in small groups of 4-6 people. Participants should be encouraged to work together to discuss the human rights listed in the resources provided.

**2** Using the [Human Rights Analysis Tool](#) (page 5), ask participants to note down which specific human rights they feel have been impacted by the climate crisis.

- Encourage participants to discuss if and when they have experienced the specific human rights listed impacted by the climate crisis.
- Participants should be encouraged to share their findings with the group.
- Were there any trends within the group?

### WANT TO LEARN MORE?

If you are interested in learning about different cases related to climate change and human rights, be sure to check out the following resources:

- [Mexico: Climate displaced community needs urgent relocation](#)
- [A burning emergency: Extreme heat and the right to health in Pakistan](#)
- [Any tidal wave could drown us – Stories from the climate crisis](#)

### FACILITATORS NOTE

Be prepared to not be able to use powerpoint! Print key slides in advance or share a QR code for your presentation if participants have access to the internet and devices.

When discussing the impacts of the climate crisis, it may be helpful to highlight that the climate crisis/global warming leads to both slow and rapid onset events. These events can manifest in a combination of environmental disasters. Examples of a sudden on-set disaster include: tidal waves, tropical cyclones, tornadoes and hurricanes. Slow-onset events are more incremental, they can include: sea level rise, increasing temperatures, ocean acidification and land degradation.



## PART 2: 1 hour

# COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT

### ABOUT THIS ACTIVITY

Participants will learn how the climate emergency exacerbates pre-existing inequalities, reinforces neglect and exclusion, and increases vulnerabilities of at-risk and marginalized groups. Participants will be encouraged to localize the topic of climate change and critically assess how the climate emergency disproportionately affects those with multiple and intersecting identities within their communities. In order to make this activity highly participatory participants will be encouraged to work in groups to creatively demonstrate/express what they have learned through art, song, performance etc.

### LEARNING OUTCOMES:

Outline the numerous inequalities of climate change, including their causes and consequences across regions and demographics

### MATERIALS:

**Handout:** Toolkit Pages:

**Optional:** Powerpoint Presentation

Paper, pens, flipcharts, moveable seating

**Optional:** Internet connection, computer & projector

### PREPARATION:

- Prepare handouts for all participants
- Prepare powerpoint presentation
- Optional: To learn more about climate change and human rights, explore the online course Climate Change and Human Rights on Amnesty Human Rights Academy:  
<https://academy.amnesty.org/learn/course/external/view/elearning/252/climate-change-and-human-rights>

### MORE INFORMATION:

[Report of the Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance, E. Tendayi Achiume - Ecological crisis, climate justice and racial justice](#)



### DEFINITION ALERT!

Intersectional discrimination occurs when discrimination on different grounds operates together to produce a compounded or distinct disadvantage. For example, after a climate-induced extreme weather event, marginalized communities may face greater hurdles in recovery efforts. Consider a low-income racialized woman with disabilities living in a flood-prone area: she might experience unique hurdles in the aftermath of a flash flood as she seeks to access emergency services, secure temporary housing, and receive disaster relief. In this example, resettlement options may be gender responsive, but not accessible to a person with disabilities.



## ACTIVITY 1: BRAINSTORM

**1** As a large group, brainstorm and discuss how climate change disproportionately impacts specific marginalized groups more adversely.

- What groups of people come to mind initially?
- Do you feel any groups have been missed?
- Initially, when you hear the words “intersectional discrimination” what comes to your mind?
- Can you think of some examples of intersection discrimination that you have observed in your own community?

## ACTIVITY 2: COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT

**2** Introduce the Community Assessment chart in the [Climate Action Toolkit.pdf](#) (page 13)

- Ask participants to get into small groups of 5
- Task participants with choosing a marginalized group(s) of people from the Community Assessment chart in the toolkit
- Participants are encouraged to brainstorm, discuss and select a creative way to illustrate how climate change impacts their selected group(s)
- Ensure to provide materials for illustration and flip chart paper for each group to note down their initial ideas in the group brainstorm
- Encourage each group to present their work (5 mins each)





## PART 3: 2 hours

# DEVELOP A CLIMATE ACTION PLAN

### ABOUT THIS ACTIVITY

In this activity participants will be encouraged to make connections between human rights, climate change related impacts and their country or community. Participants will be introduced to the case of two enormous oil spills from Shell pipelines in Bodo, Nigeria and the subsequent legal battle that led to Shell being forced to pay £55 million in compensation to the community and its people.

This case exemplifies the profound impact of environmental degradation, specifically stemming from fossil-fuel extraction, which significantly contributes to the climate crisis. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) emphasizes that “climate change is real and human activities, largely the release of polluting gases from burning fossil fuel (coal, oil, gas), is the main cause.”

As a part of this activity participants are encouraged to work in groups to identify common human rights violations across communities and work together to create an action plan for addressing these violations.

### LEARNING OUTCOMES:

1

Identify regional human rights mechanisms, tools and tactics to shape climate action.

2

Build connections between the human rights and climate justice movements.

3

Take action to promote human rights and climate justice

### MATERIALS:

**Handout:** Toolkit Pages:

**Powerpoint Presentation:** Paper, pens, flipcharts, moveable seating

**Optional:** English Video on residents of Bodo Nigeria:  
<https://adam.amnesty.org/asset-bank/action/viewDownloadSharedAsset?download=615342652b704e6842464470594d66487048697438673d3d>

**Optional:** French Video on residents of Bodo Nigeria:  
<https://adam.amnesty.org/asset-bank/action/viewDownloadSharedAsset?download=7632646d4f336b766a455a4b53487535744c4e6845413d3d>

**Optional:** Assessing our impact: Niger Delta:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1XEfJVpXegM>

**Optional:** Internet connection, computer & projector

### PREPARATION:

- Prepare handouts for all participants
- Prepare powerpoint presentation
- Optional: To learn more about climate change and human rights, explore the online course Climate Change and Human Rights on Amnesty Human Rights Academy:  
<https://academy.amnesty.org/learn/course/external/view/elearning/252/climate-change-and-human-rights>



## ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

- European Court of Human Rights:  
<http://www.echr.coe.int/Pages/home.aspx?p=home>
- European Convention on Human Rights:  
<http://www.coe.int/en/web/conventions/full-list/-/conventions/treaty/005>
- African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights:  
<http://en.african-court.org/>
- Inter-American Commission on Human Rights and the Inter-American Court of Human Rights:  
<http://www.oas.org/en/iachr/>
- Arab Human Rights Committee:  
<http://www.lasportal.org/ar/humanrights/Committee/Pages/default.aspx>
- Arab Charter on Human Rights:  
<http://www.right-to-education.org/resource/arab-charter-human-rights-revised>

## WANT TO LEARN MORE?

Want more examples? Take a few short moments to watch the videos linked below:

- [Climate Change is Fuelling a Human Rights Crisis in Madagascar](#)
- [How Fisherfolk Have Lost Homes and Livelihoods Through Climate Change](#)



## FACILITATORS NOTE

Encourage participants to explore some inspiring cases of individuals combining their collective power to take meaningful and in some cases, landmark, climate action:

- [Global: Ruling in favor of activists in US climate lawsuit sets historic human rights-based precedent](#)
- [Europe: Six young people to present landmark climate case before the European Court of Human Rights](#)





## ACTIVITY 1:

### CREATING AN ACTION PLAN

- 1 Ask participants to watch the following videos:
  - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZrsABwv8lx8>
  - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1XEfJVpXegM>
  - Alternative: Finish describing the story of the Bodo oil spill and discuss the following questions:
    - How were members of communities impacted?
    - What did organizations do to tackle this crisis?
    - How were human rights mechanisms used to redress the crisis?
    - What was the outcome?
- 2 Introduce the story of change and actions taken by Amnesty:
  - <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/campaigns/2015/05/nigeria-landmark-shell-lawsuit-changing-lives/>
  - <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/afr44/039/2012/en/>
- 3 Break into small groups of 3-5 participants. Using Exercise 3.3 in the toolkit task participants with thinking through how human rights remedies were used to address the degradation of the Niger Delta region.
- 4 Using Exercise 3.3 in the toolkit ask participants to choose a case that was discussed within their groups and develop a draft action plan.
- 5 Encourage groups to present their action plan based on their specific case, encourage participants to focus on how human rights can be used as a tool for change.



## PART 4: REFLECTION

- Encourage participants to come up with one word that describes the training and share with larger group
- Discuss how we can move from “me” to “we” when tackling the climate crisis
  - What can I do as an individual?
  - What can I do within this group?
  - What can I bring back to my community?

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