GLOBAL CLIMATE CHANGE WEEK

How to organise Global Climate Change Week at your university

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1. What is Global Climate Change Week?

Global Climate Change Week aims to encourage academic communities – academics, students, and professional staff at universities – in all disciplines and countries to engage with each other, their communities, and policy makers on climate change action and solutions. The first GCCW was held from 19-25 October 2015. In 2016 GCCW will be held on 10-16 October. During this week, academics, students and professional staff will organise activities focused on awareness-raising, behaviour change and transformation in relation to climate policy, with the participation of NGOs, the community and not-for-profit sector.

The need for action

In Copenhagen in 2009, the international community agreed to limit global warming to no more than two degrees centigrade above pre-industrial levels. Since then, a growing body of research has shown that 2°C is too much. Consequently, in Paris in 2015 the international community agreed to 'pursue efforts to limit the temperature increase to 1.5°C'. If current climate policies around the world continue, though, the expected result would be around 3.6°C warming. If we factor in the current pledges or promises governments have made, assuming they will all be met, global warming would still be likely to reach about 2.7°C.

So as things stand, the international community does not appear to be prepared to take the measures necessary to limit global warming even to 2°C. This is profoundly shocking, given that any sacrifice involved in taking those measures is far overshadowed by the catastrophes we are likely to face if we do not: more extinctions of species and loss of ecosystems; increasing vulnerability to storm surges; more heatwaves; more intense precipitation; more climate related deaths and disease; more climate refugees; slower poverty reduction; less food security; and more conflicts worsened by these factors.

So there is an urgent need to reduce emissions of greenhouse gases much more quickly than is currently projected. There is also an urgent need to adapt to the global warming that can't now be prevented, and especially for rich countries to help other countries to adapt and develop in low carbon ways. Global Climate Change Week (GCCW) aims to encourage academic communities – academics, students, and professional staff at universities – to contribute more to ensuring that these needs are met.

What can I do?

You are only bound by the limits of your imagination! But to get you thinking, here are some of our suggestions:

- University-based education activities (including academics altering their programs to coordinate their teaching on some aspect of climate change during GCCW)
- Research activities (such as conferences and workshops on climate change)
- Education activities beyond the university (such as talks to schools, community groups or the general public on climate change; forums and Q&A sessions)
- Online activities (such as discussion groups, forums, social media, online Q&A sessions, podcasts)

- Campaigns (including petitions, consumer boycotts, demonstrations)
- Art and cultural activities (such as performances, installations, music, satire/humour)

Whatever you choose to do during GCCW will be amplified by the activities and campaigns run at other universities around the world. The GCCW global coordinating team will keep participants informed about what other university groups are doing through email updates and the GCCW webpage, and will promote GCCW as a whole.

2. Getting started

You may try to organise GCCW at your university by yourself, but it will be easier if you work with a team of energetic and enthusiastic people who share your vision.

First, try sounding out the idea of organising GCCW at your university with other staff or students who may be interested in joining you. They might be able to help you refine your idea for GCCW at your university, or come up with alternatives. Then try promoting the idea to a wider audience. For example, consider having a staff forum seeking feedback from your colleagues, or host an information session for other students. The more people you have involved, the more ambitious your GCCW goals and activities can be.

To get other people involved, you need to spread the message. This will depend on what options are available at your university, and you will know them best. But generally speaking, each faculty has a marketing and communications unit that will be able to point you in the right direction to communicate with staff and students across the university.

As you are getting feedback from people, think about how they can contribute to organising GCCW at your university. Ideally, you will put together a team with a wide range of skills and expertise, including marketing and communications, event management, media and graphic design, and web support if you plan to promote your activities on the internet. Be open to ideas that other people may have about how they can contribute to organising GCCW at your university. It is also a good idea to get academics, professional staff, and students to work together as much as possible to maximise your impact.

Do	Don't
Sound out colleagues or students who may be interested in joining you informally first.	Assume that colleagues and students will be willing to give up their time for GCCW; some will, some won't.
Have some initial ideas on what you can achieve together with your colleagues and students during GCCW.	Be discouraged if you have not got the response that you were expecting. Think about why this is the case, ask for more feedback, and adapt.
Keep an eye on what events and activities other university groups are organising.	Have fixed plans that you are unwilling to change.
Promote GCCW as widely as you can.	
Be open to ideas from your colleagues and students.	

Structuring your organising committee

There are a few different options for structuring your organising committee when it begins to take shape. This will largely depend on what you want to do and the number of people who get involved and can take on organising roles. There are two main options.

Option 1 – formal structure

You can create a structure and stick to it. For example, you can have a convenor, events person, website person, marketing person, etc. Each of these people will be responsible for their particular role, and perhaps even a committee of people working on this particular area. This ensures that everyone is certain about what their role and responsibility is. It also ensures that there is a strict delineation of roles so that there is little overlap and duplication.

Option 2 – organic structure

Let your committee follow an organic structure. Create roles as they are needed or as someone with a particular area of expertise volunteers to assist. This structure is predicated on good lines of communication and may require more availability for physical meetings to ensure that everyone is on the same page with the planning. This structure can be really beneficial if you have a small number of volunteers, as it provides the flexibility for everyone to pitch in with the tasks that are most pressing at a particular time.

Do	Don't
Ensure that there are open lines of communication.	Change the structure regularly. Your volunteers need stability and certainty.
Think about your structure in relation to the strengths and weaknesses of the particular group of volunteers that you have.	Allow anyone to feel that they are not being heard, or that others don't know what they are doing.
Ensure that whatever activity is chosen, everyone knows what they are responsible for.	Be authoritarian about things. There is no need to be dictatorial in approach, and it will probably discourage others from participating.

3. Setting objectives

When planning for GCCW at your university, it is important that your group develop clear objectives – that is, a clear idea of what you want to achieve during GCCW. An agreed objective will give your group a focal point for activities during the week. It will also allow you to assess afterwards whether you achieved what you intended.

When thinking about setting objectives you should consider a number of different factors. What are the capabilities and interests of your team? What time frame do you have? Is there a decision-maker you want to influence, such as a local or national politician, or the vice chancellor or senate of your university? What is likely to work best to galvanise climate action in your community? What partnerships or networks can you work with and leverage (student groups, professional groups, community groups, alumni and so on)? What is going on in the environmental movement currently? Can you achieve your aims and objectives by joining in with actions and campaigns being organised by another group (such as a local non-government organisation or community group), or will you be more effective by working separately?

Some examples:

1) To better inform students across all disciplines about climate change and the necessity of stronger action in response to it;
2) To better inform the general public about the negative impacts climate change will have on them, and the necessity of stronger action in response to it;
3) To bring together university staff, students and community members to discuss community action and grassroots solutions to climate change (for instance around a campaign for the university to divest from fossil fuel investments or to reduce its carbon emissions);
4) To get at least one letter or article about climate change published in all local media outlets.

Additional resources

A ten step guide to strategic planning –
http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTAFRREGTOPTEIA/Resources/mosaica_10_steps.pdf

Another guide to strategic planning with more detail – http://www.otsmanagement.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2014/05/Strategic-Planning-for-NFP-10-Step-Guide.pdf

4. Choosing activities

The activities you decide to run during GCCW will depend on what objectives you set yourselves, and the skills and interests of your organising committee, as well as any opportunities you have identified to coordinate with other groups already organising activities.

Coordinated teaching

One GCCW activity that almost every academic can join in is coordinating teaching to focus on some aspect of climate change. It takes relatively little effort to organise – most people can take part simply by ensuring their syllabus has content relevant to climate change during the week – and the more academics participate, the higher the overall impact of GCCW will be.

You can promote this component of GCCW to academics across your university as something they can do even if they are unable to participate in other activities. Strategies you can suggest to facilitate coordinated teaching during GCCW include swapping lectures with another staff member during the week, or bringing in a guest lecturer, from the same or another university.

If you have expertise in climate change, you could consider volunteering to give guest lectures. And if you have teaching materials you're happy to share, contact us at contact@globalclimatechangeweek.com and we will put a link to them on the GCCW website.

Other activities

Research activities, such as conferences and workshops on climate change related topics, could be timed for GCCW, and could also be coordinated with public lectures or forums.

Online activities, such as podcasts, organised discussion groups or forums, and Q&A sessions can be cost effective ways to reach out across a university or beyond, and to promote campaigns you are running as part of GCCW.

Education activities beyond the university, such as public lectures and forums, or presentations to schools, community groups or government policy makers, can be used to raise public awareness of climate change and its impacts, or to increase public demand for action.

Activism, such as joining consumer boycotts and demonstrations, or advocating for a cause to decision-makers, is not for everyone. But well organised campaigns, using effective advocacy and community engagement, have the potential to bring about major change. For example, divestment campaigns, supported by initiatives such as the Asset Owners Disclosure Project (aodproject.net), have already resulted in a number of universities divesting partly or wholly from carbon intensive investments.

Art and cultural activities, such as performances, exhibitions, installations, music or satire/humour, can change community attitudes towards climate change, and help increase public demand for stronger action. Initiatives such as CLIMARTE's 'Art+Climate=Change 2015' series suggest strategies for making space for public discussion of climate change challenges and solutions. Staff working in the creative arts may choose to organise climate change related creative activities for GCCW.

Examples of GCCW activities

GCCW 2015 saw participants around the world organise a huge variety of events and activities. Many universities, including the University of New South Wales, Heythrop College London, the University of California Berkeley, Bath University, and the University of Wollongong organised lectures, seminars and talks to inform both students and members of the general public about climate change issues. There were also many forums and Q&A sessions to get feedback and ideas from a range of participants.

A number of GCCW organisers took the opportunity to focus on the issue of divestment at their universities. Divestment campaigns at a variety of universities, including the University of New South Wales and the University of Wollongong, began at GCCW 2015. Other universities, such as the University of East Anglia, organised discussions focused on divestment.

GCCW 2015 also saw a diverse array of art and cultural activities. These included film nights, art displays, a book launch at University College London, and a comedy event at the University of Sydney called "Fossil Fools: A Night of Sustainable Laughter." Other art and cultural events included hands-on activities like a flash mob at the University of Wollongong, and jewellery making, sculpting, sewing and face painting at the University of New South Wales.

In addition to these activities, there were many more successful events organised around the world, including mock UN negotiations, tree plantings, green sport and exercise activities, environmental education labs, and many more.

Additional resources

See the examples of GCCW activities carried out in 2015 in the links given in the GCCW 2015 report here.

5. Organising events

A well planned event attracts a good audience and runs smoothly. To organise a successful event, preparation is essential. Prepare as much as you can, as early as possible. This will leave you more time to promote your event widely, avoid last-minute hitches, and get the largest possible audience to come along.

Tips before an event

Once you have decided to hold an event, your first step is to lock in a day and time, keeping in mind the availability of any speakers. Consider factors that may affect the size of the audience for the event. For example, if you are targeting academics, a heavy teaching or marking time may reduce the audience. If you are targeting students, they may have more time to attend if it is a non-teaching week.

Once the day and time are set, you need to organise a venue. The choice of venue is crucial and there are many important things to factor in. What sort of venue is best for your event (for example, a lecture hall, theatre, or space in a café or pub, or even an outdoor area)? What else is happening in the vicinity of the venue that could encourage or discourage attendance? Will many possible venues be taken up by planned events for high school students at your university at that time, or by university exams? Book the venue as early as you can.

You will need to also consider your budget. Do you need money? How much? Where will you get it from (for example, a sponsor, or a gold coin donation by audience members)? You should try to spend funds efficiently, and in a way which is environmentally conscious. Will you need to provide food? Is insurance needed? Will transportation costs need to be covered? All of these are factors in determining how much money you require.

Organising the program for the event is another important step. You will need to confirm your schedule – what will happen at the event, and in what order. Do you need presenters? These can be hard to get, so ask them as early as possible. You will need to make arrangements based on presenters' requirements: do you need to provide a computer for them to show a presentation, or will they bring their own? Will Wi-Fi be available? Are there sound capabilities? Plan how long the event will run for, and be sure to communicate the timing to all speakers and other participants.

In the run-up to the event itself, make sure that everyone who is involved in organising the event understands the program and their role, for example in setting up beforehand, facilitating or technical support during the event, and packing down afterwards. If the event is complex or has several stages, developing and sharing a running sheet that sets out the order of proceedings can be helpful to everybody involved.

Tips during an event

Managing an event is a mixture of making sure things run to plan and to time, and being alert and responsive to problems and opportunities that crop up. Here are a few tips:

- Be there and readily available the whole time. Ensure that your mobile phone is charged, and that all volunteers have your contact number.

- If you have a running sheet, keep it handy and do your best to keep participants to time.
- Be ready to trouble shoot at all times. Constantly scan the room and listen to the chatter. Consider practicalities, e.g. that the room is not too hot or cold and that there is sufficient seating. Use this time to chat to the participants and seek their feedback about your event.
- Be sure all your volunteers know what their role is, and are projecting a positive image for your organisation and event.

Tips for after an event

After the event, seek feedback from the volunteers, presenters and participants. Ensure that the venue is left in the same state that you occupied it in. Ensure that you think all of the volunteers, suppliers and presenters.

From the feedback, consider writing up a report: it doesn't necessarily have to be long, but it just outlines the objectives and feedback following the event. Write out some recommendations as well to ensure that anyone seeking to run a similar even in the future can learn from your successes and failures. Share your findings with the GCCW coordinators, so that they can learn from them too.

Do	Don't
Prepare carefully.	Leave preparation to the last minute.
Market widely.	Expect that people will just know about the event.
Review your event afterwards.	

Additional resources

 The New South Wales Government's guide to running an event – http://www.events.nsw.gov.au/event-starter-guide/1-introduction/

A simple event checklist – http://www.activenetwork.com.au/event-management-resources/articles/sample-event-planning-checklist.htm

Tips for organising a Green Event from WWF – http://wwf.panda.org/how_you_can_help/live_green/at_the_office/green_events/

Some free Green Events guides which are quite detailed – http://www.greeneventbook.com/resources/downloads/

6. Media

Seeking media coverage can be difficult and time-consuming. Your chances of success can be altered by who you know and what is happening that is newsworthy at the time you are seeking media attention.

Media is important because it allows you to amplify your message to a broader audience. It is also free. One of the most important keys to gaining media coverage is cultivating relationships. If you have a good relationship with your local media organisations and the journalists who work there, they will be more inclined to help you out. Use your networks, and leverage the contacts of the people you know who may assist in building these relationships. Especially in regional areas and with smaller media outlets, journalists can play favourites, so focus on cultivating those relationships. Many media outlets have someone specifically allocated to education, higher education or environment, so it's worth finding out who they are, and focusing most of your attention on them for coverage.

The easiest way to seek media is through a press release. Your press release will convey all of the information that you want reported to the media. You should write this in news story form. Include a headline, quotes and even photos if you have them. Use plain English, write in the active voice, and use the inverted pyramid structure. Don't sensationalise, or attempt to dress things up in descriptive language. Focus on conveying your messages clearly and with sufficient detail to make them interesting to media outlets. Ensure that they are not left asking questions about the event or campaign. When writing your press release try to capture a human element or include a story or case study, which will help people identify with your cause.

Do	Don't
Build media networks.	Exaggerate.
Keep media releases under a page long.	Use flashy language.
Make your media releases 'story ready' – written in the form of a news story.	Expect that the media will know about you and your events without being told about them.
	Expect media for every little thing that you do.

Additional resources

Tips on how to write a media release –
http://www.ourcommunity.com.au/marketing/marketing_article.jsp?articleId=1575

Tips on how to write a comprehensive media strategy –
http://www.ourcommunity.com.au/marketing/marketing_article.jsp?articleId=1424

Tips for implementing a media strategy –
http://www.ourcommunity.com.au/marketing/marketing_article.jsp?articleId=1572

7. Advocating for a cause

Advocacy can be defined as action intended to change the policies or decisions of an institution. Depending on your objectives, your targets for advocacy during GCCW could be your university, institutions in the private sector, or any level of government from local to international.

Advocacy can take many forms. More traditional forms of advocacy include petitioning, protests and demonstrations, face to face meetings, letter writing and phone calls. More recently developed, online advocacy involves using email and social media to circulate petitions, images and webpages. Lobbying individual decision makers directly, to try to change their opinion, is a type of advocacy, but advocacy can equally be directed at an organisation as a whole.

Having a politician, CEO, vice-chancellor or other public figure advocating for your cause can greatly assist the reach and legitimacy of your campaign or activities. This also allows you to speak directly to people with power to make broad changes and influence those in higher places.

Make sure you have a clear purpose for your advocacy. You need to know what you want to achieve. Filter this purpose down to a few (no more than 3) clear core messages. You should always tailor your messages to your audience, and be strategic about the target that you select. When engaging in lobbying, make sure you clearly ask for a particular response. Don't just complain to them, suggest something that they can do. And make sure that you follow up, as without persistence your request may be forgotten or brushed aside.

Do's	Don'ts
Have a clear purpose.	Attack or be unnecessarily inflammatory in approach.
Be strategic in your choice of target.	Over-complicate your message.
Tailor your approach to your audience.	Make unrealistic demands (e.g. if your university uses no renewable energy, don't ask them to go 100% renewable in a year).
Be calm and professional at all times.	Give up too quickly!

Additional resources

ACTIONS' best practice guide for advocates –
http://www.action.org/documents/ACTION_Best_Practices_Guide_small.pdf

Southern Voices on Climate Change also have useful advocacy guides –
http://www.southernvoices.net/en/news/programme-news/687-the-advocacy-toolkits.html

Global Health Communication have prepared an introduction to advocacy –
http://www.globalhealthcommunication.org/tool_docs/15/an_introduction_to_advocacy_-_training_guide_(full_document).pdf

8. Marketing and communicating

You have a message, an event or a campaign ready. Now it's time to spread the word and get the message out there. You can have the perfect event or campaign set up, but what will get you the effect that you want is participation.

Marketing and communicating can be difficult, time consuming, and is best done by people with specialist skills and experience. The best advice is to find someone with a background in this to assist you with it. If you don't have a background in this area, keep your marketing and communications simple. Think about the most appealing aspects of your campaign and event and use these to sell it. You also need to think in terms of your point of difference. Why would people choose to participate in your event, sign up to your campaign or join your organisation instead of doing something else? You should think of your audience at all stages. If you are communicating to academics, think about what makes you interested in something. If you are communicating to a section of the community, or students, try to put yourself in their shoes and think about what would get them interested in what you are doing, and formulate your marketing and communications accordingly.

For producing marketing material, consistency of brand and message is the key. You want to create some brand awareness for what you are doing, so that people start to recognise and remember. Again, simplicity is key, and try to use simple and targeted language to get your message across.

Do's	Don'ts
Keep the messages simple.	Complicate your message.
Try to create a consistent brand.	Use complex language.
Tailor your marketing and communications to your target audience.	Send things out without thoroughly checking them first.

Additional resources

A simple blog on creating a snappy marketing message –
http://www.entrepreneur.com/blog/224057

9. Social media

Social media – platforms such as Facebook, Twitter and Instagram – is an important and useful tool for any event or campaign manager, and can be used to promote an event or campaign, or for advocacy. It is free, simple to use, and an easy way to engage and seek feedback from a large audience.

Social media requires shorter and sharper messaging than other forms of communication or advocacy. It should focus on building an emotional connection with the audience, and seek to tell them a story. Social media algorithms also favour content that is quite visual for space on newsfeeds and tickers. So to maximise your reach ensure that you use graphics.

Social media is also all about interactivity. So consider asking questions of your audience, or running competitions or quizzes to boost participation. Greater volumes of interaction with your audience will make your updates more effective, because it will mean they are shown more on feeds, walls, or tickers, thus reaching more people with your messages. Make sure you use hashtags to multiply the reach of your posts. (A hashtag is a keyword or phrase preceded by the hash (#) sign, such as #GCCWeek or #climatechange.)

We will be tweeting from GCCWeek for the event, so make sure to mention us in your tweets with #GCCWeek. Just hashtag relevant concepts in your messages, and it will aggregate your content with other relevant content. So using hashtags like #environment and #climatechange will reach a broad audience of people interested in these topics.

Social media is also useful for advocacy. You are often able to talk directly to the people in power and their staff. You can ask politicians questions, and use hashtags so that others will like or favourite your comments and/or retweet/post them to the politician. Facebook and Twitter both have metrics on hashtags and topics that trend (i.e. are very popular topics of conversation). It is difficult to get things to trend, but if they do, it adds great weight to your campaign.

With social media, volume of communication is important to keep people engaged, and response times should also be quite quick to ensure that engagement doesn't break down.

Do	Don't
Use short, sharp messaging.	Be verbose.
Be visual.	Be technical.
Seek participation and engagement.	Forget to link to things. Social media is a way to amplify the voice that you have elsewhere.
Respond to people that want to engage.	Complicate things – it's easy to decontextualise things said online. This can lead to unwanted attention.
Use hashtags.	

Additional resources

A quick list of tips to maximise your social media reach –
http://www.socialmediaexaminer.com/social-media-marketing-tips-pros/

The Twitter Help Centre has great resources on how to use the platform –
https://support.twitter.com/

A slideshare on social media for NGOs, specific for India, but scroll through to the slides which give hints, tips and examples – http://www.slideshare.net/namratab/social-media-marketing-for-ngos

The Change Agency offers a useful guide on using social media for advocacy –
http://www.thechangeagency.org/campaigners-toolkit/links/social-media-strategies-for-advocacy-and-targeted-communications/

10. Funding

Funding is crucially important if you want to run any event or campaign on a larger scale. It's useful even just for simple things like snacks at events, or a larger venue to host a guest speaker. There are many ways to seek funding and these will largely depend on your location.

If small amounts of funding are required, you can try fundraising through things like raffles and BBQs. For both of these, to keep the costs down, try to seek donations (such as raffle prizes) from the community. This can also build a greater connection between your organisation and the local community, which can be beneficial in the long run.

Otherwise, you can seek sponsorship from businesses and other organisations within the community. To do this, you should treat it like advocacy above. Have a few clear core messages, formulate a pitch to the business with a clear ask for money or in kind sponsorship. Large organisations which are services based (i.e. banking, law firms, accounting firms) are usually quite supportive. Similarly, Lions and Rotary Clubs are often able to assist with small amounts of money.

Grants and charitable trusts are also a good option. They usually have application deadlines and require lengthy submissions. Before you apply for these, it is important that you have a strong brand and web presence. You should also have clear aims and objectives and the ability to formulate a rationale and budget for the amount of funding that you require, and how you will report back on the funding that is received.

Additional resources

A great portal for information on how to obtain money as an NGO: http://www.fundsforngos.org/

A search engine for grants and funding opportunities in Australia:
http://community.grantready.com.au/

11. Communicating the climate change message

Climate change is an incredibly complex and multifaceted issue, which can make talking about it a difficult task. Many people are often unsure about how to communicate with others about climate change due to the range of scientific, ethical, political, social and economic issues involved. With this in mind, we have prepared some links to resources to help you communicate about climate change:

- The Center for Research on Environmental Decisions (CRED) has produced an excellent guide for communicating about climate change. It contains a wealth of information on the subject, including psychological information useful for motivating people to care about climate change.

  http://cred.columbia.edu/guide/

- The Yale Project on Climate Change Communication site features many resources including peer-reviewed articles, research papers, videos and webinars. These focus on issues of communication and the goal of changing the public perception of climate change.

  http://environment.yale.edu/climate-communication/

- The Climate Access "Tips and Tools" page features a variety of great recommendations from experts on climate change communication. These recommendations are also highly accessible as they are provided in the form of easy-to-use tip sheets.

  http://www.climateaccess.org/tips-and-tools

- The Talking Climate website provides a variety of great guides for communicating about climate change. It also provides a great database of research done on climate communication, a newsletter service, and an informative blog dealing with current issues relating to climate change.

  http://talkingclimate.org/

12. Questions and suggestions

If you have questions about any of the information in this Guide, have a suggestion for improving it, or would like further advice about organising GCCW at your university, please get in touch with the GCCW Coordinating Committee. You can reach us on contact@globalclimatechangeweek.com.