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**The 3 Step Guide to Hosting a**

**Climate Conversation**

*We need to talk about climate change.*

It seems so far away. So big an issue it doesn’t bear thinking about... The biggest threat to justice & human rights of our time! And let’s be real, in many ways it is far away & really big. Yet solutions to this global challenge can be found close to home, in small everyday actions. With this in mind, the aim of a *climate conversation* is to come together with others, for a chat and a cup of coffee, and explore how we can take action collectively for climate justice.

**Organising a Climate Conversation**

**Ingredients:** Some post-it notes, pens, big sheets of paper/flipchart, tea/coffee, food, friends, a comfy community space.

**Step 1: Collaborate**

The first ingredients of an exciting conversation are its participants. The conversation can be as big or small as you want, but thinking about who you’d like to speak to is the first step. Who could you collaborate with to host a conversation in your community? Could you invite community groups, community gardens, tidy towns, youth groups, students’ unions or university societies? Are there any people in your community who are often left out or underrepresented? How can you support those groups to be part of the conversation?

**Step 2: Create the space**

A climate conversation could take place as a coffee morning, a lunchtime gathering, an evening potluck or any format that works for the groups you are going to chat with. It should be a welcoming, informal and cosy space where conversations can flow and everyone’s voices can be heard. It could be useful to have some large sheets of paper to record a flavour of the conversation.

**Step 3: Hold the conversation**

The aim of the climate conversation is to explore how we can act collectively on climate change. The conversation is a space to reflect personally and collectively. You can adapt and change the process to suit the group of people who come together for your conversation, but here’s what we suggest:

* **Welcome and introduction**

Welcome everyone to the climate conversation. You could introduce Margaret Wheatley’s “principles of a good conversation” (see below) and check if there are any special requirements to help everyone contribute.

* **Climate change - what’s the story?**

Invite people to spend two minutes brainstorming what comes to mind when they think about climate change, including knowledge, fears and hopes. If the group is large, ask people to share their thoughts in pairs first to help everyone feel comfortable speaking. Then invite people to share their thoughts together. Try to have someone who can record the key themes. What are the similarities and differences in the stories that people use to understand climate change?

* **Getting to the root of climate change**

Invite each person to write down an answer to the question ‘why is climate change happening (in your opinion)?’ Working in pairs, each person offers their answer and the other person asks ‘But why?’ The person answering should try to answer as many ‘but whys’ as possible. After each pair has done this, invite them to share their thoughts with the whole group and have a chat together. What were peoples starting points? Where did they end up? Record the root causes that the group identifies.

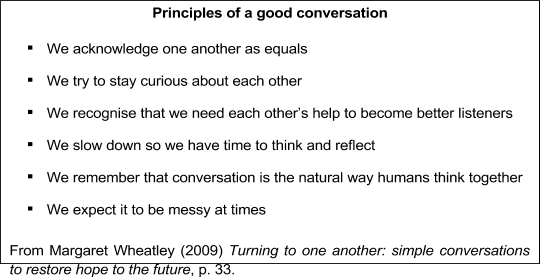
* **Digging up the roots**

Look again at the root causes that the group has identified. Ask each person to take two minutes to think about where and how they see these roots in their own life and in their community.  Invite everyone to share these connections and record them in two columns: ‘personal’ and ‘community’.

* **From old roots to new shoots**

Looking at the ways in which the root causes of climate change appear in our own lives, personally and in our communities. What are the common themes or ideas?

What actions could the group take to address some of the root causes they have identified? After a group conversation invite each person to share their final thoughts on the discussion. What one thing are people taking away? Is there one change they/the group can make?



**At the end of the Climate Conversation:**

Guests are invited to sign up to host a gathering in their home with a new group of people.

**Climate Conversations Guide:**

**Format**

Host - person who brought the group together and organises / provides the venue.

Facilitator - person who guides the ‘conversation’ / brings materials etc.

Six to eight guests personally invited by host - are already concerned or curious about the issue.

*Larger event could use similar format to ‘World Cafe’ or ‘Conversation Salon’ and invite the public using a public space such as Third Space or the Food Coop.*

**Overarching Narrative (Climate for Change);**

1. Climate change is a serious urgent issue - it affects all of us.
2. Solutions are available and ready.
3. People with power are not acting fast enough
4. People with power are holding us back
5. All over the world the movement is growing
6. Ordinary people are driving the movement for change
7. But we’re running out of time…
8. We need to act now; stand up, reach out, be informed.
9. What groups are active in my neighbourhood / area of interest
10. Who can I target - politicians, leaders, decision makers, producers, businesses
11. Next steps - up to the group / individuals

**The Gathering - Step by Step**

**1. Group introductions**

Ice Breaker -

How do we know the host, what brought us here, what do we hope to gain from today.

**2. Intro to Climate Conversations (could work at end)**

WHY talking about it is so important - <https://thinkprogress.org/end-climate-silence-cbe439a31a8e>

The dangers of silence - Pluralistic ignorance -

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/energy-environment/wp/2016/05/12/the-vicious-cycle-that-makes-people-afraid-to-talk-about-climate-change/?utm_term=.64c008fe7c42>

Building a movement - your role and voice as part of the wider movement.

<https://grassrootschange.net/our-approach/>

**3. Finding common ground - sharing values**

Activity / exercise to explore our values and to find common values among the group

What do we care about?

How will climate change have an effect on our values?

What’s at stake?

**4. Active Listening**

What is active listening?

Partner up and listen to each other talk about what climate change means to them.

Here we could bring in our [‘personal narratives’](https://docs.google.com/document/d/11EyjiqqVuHtqbDp07P_nwCo5NTLEMzAjVnguYnRRwLg/edit) (for the facilitators / host) - why we care about climate change and why we decided to host this intimate gathering - our story.

**5. Bring it home (background info to have available but not necessarily sharing)**

What impacts will climate change have in Ireland?

What is Ireland’s current position on climate change?

What solutions do we have in Ireland, could we be doing more?

Who is holding us back - who’s making the decisions - who’s benefiting from these actions?

What role does Ireland play in the bigger global picture of climate change?

**6. Short Video on Climate Change?**

Examples;

Global Weirding Videos

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q48BvprCFr0>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bv7zFAdZ6LI>

Ted Talk - Mary Robinson

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7JVTirBEfho>

**7. We already have the solutions**

* Renewables, solutions and technology leading the way to a sustainable clean future.

**8. Power of grassroots change -**

The movement needs all of us in order to bring the change - Climate movement is intersectional.

We still have time - BUT - we need to act now.

Naomi Klien - Climate Movement Video - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QjRmzfKZWgU>

We can all be leaders and the courageous first followers (bit of fun) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fW8amMCVAJQ>

**Rework this for Ireland / Irish situation**

<http://www.climatecouncil.org.au/relevant-immediate-local-guide-to-communicating-climate-change-in-australia>

**9. Call to Action**

Stand up, Reach out, Be informed -

**10. Community for change**

You are not alone… join an existing group or start your own with the people already around you.

What can you do together?

Why do it together?

- for mutual support through the ups and downs - avoid burn out to allow yourself to take time out knowing others are keeping it going. It’s more fun to do things as part of a community. Feel part of something bigger than your individual actions.

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