




CAMPAIGNING FOR CLIMATE JUSTICE

An action guide



OXFAM

A stylized world map with green landmasses and light blue oceans. The map is composed of simple, rounded shapes. The text is presented in white, rounded rectangular boxes with drop shadows, giving it a 3D effect.

Climate change is threatening humankind. This year, we've seen record breaking heatwaves across the UK and Europe, a fatal famine across East Africa, and monsoon flooding in Pakistan that has plunged a third of the country underwater.

The world must urgently reduce carbon emissions at scale to prevent global warming from reaching catastrophic levels, and world leaders must drastically increase finance to help communities around the world combat the effects of a changing climate. This is why we're campaigning for Climate Justice, and we'd love for you to join us!

This Action Guide is designed to help you kick-start campaigning on your campus. We're here to support you to take action, so if you have any questions or would like any advice, please reach out to Sophie at smorbey1@oxfam.org.uk.

Thank you so much for taking action!

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What is Climate Justice?

Climate justice recognises that climate change is a social and political issue, as well as an environmental one. While the climate crisis is affecting us all, it's hitting some communities worse – and it's the people who've done the least to cause it who are suffering the most.

The over-consumption of the world's richest is fuelling the climate crisis. Between 1990 and 2015, the richest 1% of the world's population were responsible for more than twice as much carbon pollution as the 3.1 billion people who made up the poorest 50% of humanity. This is called carbon inequality and it has historical roots in colonialism. We know it is unjust, yet the world's richest continue to pursue unequal and carbon intensive economic growth at the cost of people and planet.

It's the people who have done the least to contribute to climate change who are most vulnerable to its impacts. Lower-income communities often rely on global water cycles to grow crops, live in poorly built homes in exposed areas, and lack savings or insurance to help them recover after a disaster. As these communities are hit repeatedly by climate-related hazards they are pushed closer to poverty and displacement.

Crises often intersect; the climate crisis exacerbates inequalities linked to gender, ethnicity, education, and conflict. The economic disruption caused by the Covid-19 pandemic has worsened conditions for many communities who were already seeing their livelihoods devastated by the climate crisis.

Climate justice is not just about reducing global carbon emissions to prevent further dangerous global warming (although of course this is crucial). It's about recognising the inequalities that have created the climate crisis.

Campaigning for change can feel incredibly daunting, but there are so many ways you can get involved in fighting for climate justice. Read on to find out more!

Fact File

When campaigning it's useful to know about some key facts and statistics. Take a look below for some key facts about climate justice - but don't worry about knowing them all!

1.

The number of climate-related disasters has tripled in 30 years. Since 2000, the UN estimates that at least 4.2 billion have been affected by droughts, floods and wildfires.

3.

Just 100 companies are responsible for close to three quarters of global emissions (71%) and spend millions lobbying against climate action.

5.

The per capita consumption of the richest 1% is currently around 35 times higher than the target for 2030, and more than 100 times higher than the poorest 50%.

7.

We are set to pass the 1.5° Celsius threshold of warming sooner than previously predicted – by 2040 or earlier. The last 7 years have been the hottest on record, with the UN issuing a “Code Red for Humanity.”

2.

A recent study by the World Bank suggested between 32 million and 132 million additional people will be pushed into extreme poverty by 2030 because of climate change.

4.

On average, over 20 million people a year were internally displaced by extreme weather disasters over the last 10 years. Eighty percent of those displaced live in Asia.

6.

There has been a six-fold increase in people suffering famine-like conditions since the Covid-19 pandemic began.

8.

Kenya, Ethiopia, Somalia and South Sudan are together responsible for just 0.1% of global emissions. Yet severe weather fuelled by climate change, combined with conflict and a global pandemic, has caused widespread food and water shortages in the region, leaving over 40 million people needing humanitarian aid.

Oxfam's History: Fighting for Climate Justice

Oxfam have been talking about the links between climate change and global inequality for decades. In 1986 we published *Weather Alert!*, a report establishing a connection between unusual weather patterns and their negative impacts on those on the frontlines of a hidden climate crisis.

Here's what we've been up to since then!

2007

People and Polar Bears – Oxfam Campaigners from around the world come together at the United Nations Climate Change Conference in Bali. Dressed as polar bears and carrying 'Save the Humans' placards, they highlight the impact of climate change on humans as well as the natural world.



2009

Global Climate Hearings – In the run up to climate conference COP15 in Copenhagen, Oxfam convenes 'climate hearings' where people from around the world come together to testify to the impact of climate change on their lives. Thousands of people participate globally, sending a unified, urgent message on climate change to the world.



2011

Challenging Food Companies – Together with farmers, consumers and investors, Oxfam launches the Behind the Brands/Behind the Barcodes campaign, calling on the world's biggest food producers to cut emissions. 238,000 people support the campaign and Kellogg's and General Mills commit to significant reductions. Other food companies follow.

2014

Funding for Climate Adaptation – Oxfam plays a key role in securing a commitment for 50% of the Green Climate Fund to be allocated to a much-needed climate adaptation. The UK is the first country in the world to commit 50% of its climate finance to adaptation.

2015

Calling time on Coal – Oxfam's campaigning helps secure the UK's commitment to phase out coal by 2025 and the historic decision by the European Investment Bank to end all fossil fuel lending.

2019

Second Hand September – Oxfam launches our first annual Second Hand September. In its first year, 62,000 people sign up to take part, pledging to buy only second hand clothing for a month. The campaign promotes sustainability and raises awareness of the cost of fast fashion on people and planet.



2021

Thousands March during COP26 in Glasgow – Around the world, hundreds of thousands of people marched through cities, signed petitions, and took action, to persuade world leaders that we must prevent catastrophic global temperature rise, now.

2022

Calling for Loss & Damage Finance – Elizabeth Wathuti and Oxfam campaign to call for a Loss & Damage Fund.

If you haven't yet, you can scan here to read and sign Elizabeth's open letter to world leaders.



COP26 & COP27

What is COP?

COP stands for the Conference of the Parties. It's the UN's annual climate change summit bringing together nearly 200 countries under the 1992 United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). The 26th COP summit was hosted by the UK in Glasgow in November 2021, meaning that the UK held the COP presidency. The COP presidency gives a government more influence over the agenda and priorities throughout the summit and during UN climate negotiations throughout the year. The UK's presidency ends with COP27, which is being held in Sharm El-Sheikh, Egypt in November 2022.



Andy Aitchison/Oxfam

Oxfam Campaigners perform a stunt at COP26, criticising the inaction of world leaders.

What Happened at COP26?

COP26 was the most significant summit since the 2015 Paris Agreement, where countries committed to pursuing efforts to limit global warming to 1.5°C. As COP president, we hoped that the UK would take a leading role in securing ambitious climate commitments from world leaders. But unfortunately, we saw very little of the climate action that's so urgently needed.

What was Agreed (Or Not)?

- World leaders at the summit agreed to a Glasgow Climate Pact, which asks countries to make new commitments on climate by COP27, but doesn't force them to.
- The language used in the Pact has rightly been criticised as too weak. But the Pact does explicitly mention the phasing down of unabated coal power, and the phasing out of inefficient fossil fuel subsidies, which is a signal of hope.
- The talks failed to reach a commitment on providing support for communities facing the consequences of irreversible climate impacts like sea-level rise – this is called “Loss and Damage Finance,” and you can read more on page 9.

What next?

World leaders will be meeting again in November 2022 for COP27, and we are campaigning again for climate justice to be on the agenda.

As Gabriela Bucher, Oxfam International Executive Director says:

“It's painful that diplomatic efforts have once more failed to meet the scale of the crisis. But we should draw strength from the growing movement of people around the world challenging and holding our governments to account for everything we hold dear. A better world is possible. With creativity, with bravery, we can and must hold onto that belief.”

We will be holding onto that belief as we continue our fight for Climate Justice in 2022/3!

Our Campaign for Climate Justice

We're fighting for a fairer world, where world leaders commit to drastically reducing CO2 emissions. Our remaining global carbon budget (the amount of CO2 we can emit before reaching 1.5°C of global warming) should be spent on a just transition to renewable energy sources and lifting all of humanity to a decent standard of living.

But we're not there yet, and communities who are least responsible are already experiencing impacts of climate change that can't be mitigated or adapted to. These communities are suffering "Loss and Damage" – "loss" refers to things that are irreversibly lost such as lives, health, a way of living or a historical site, while "damage" refers to things that might eventually be repaired or recovered, such as roads, buildings or crop yields.

Due to existing inequalities and lack of resources, and to the increasing magnitude and frequency of extreme weather events, these impacts simply can't be prevented. They are an inevitable cost of the climate crisis even if we are able to prevent further warming.

Sommie's Photography/Oxfam



“ This is not about money – because money can never replace what [people] have already lost. This is about justice. It is about building trust and solidarity. This is what the global community needs if we are to solve the nature and climate crises together. ”

Elizabeth Wathuti, Kenyan Climate Activist

What are we calling for?

When campaigning it's really important to be clear on our campaign asks so that you can communicate them as effectively as possible.

We have 3 main asks for the UK government:

1. Hold world leaders accountable for their climate promises.

Words are not enough. We need radical action for a cleaner, fairer future. Governments must follow through on their commitment to strengthen their 2030 emission reduction targets ahead of COP27, to 'keep 1.5 alive.'

2. End the era of fossil fuels, starting now

This means no new UK oil and gas fields or coalmines and ensuring a just transition for affected workers and communities. The first step is to scrap plans for the Jackdaw gas field, the Rosebank oil and gas field, and the Cumbrian coalmine. This is also a crucial step in building a sustainable future independent from volatile global oil and gas markets.

3. Provide Loss and Damage finance for those on the frontlines of the climate crisis.

Leading by example, the UK must support people already facing the irreversible impacts of the climate crisis. We're asking them to champion a new global fund for communities on the frontlines facing "loss and damage" from the climate crisis. We're delivering an open letter on Loss and Damage from Kenyan Climate Justice activist Elizabeth Wathuti to world leaders in Egypt at COP27.

Please share our asks far and wide! The more people who are aware of and engaging in issues surrounding climate justice, the more successful our campaign is likely to be!

Campaigning for Climate Justice Around the World

Around the world, students and young people are mobilising to fight for climate justice. Tackling the climate crisis can feel overwhelming, so it's important to know that there are millions of people fighting to make a difference. Change is possible. Below are just a few examples of some amazing climate justice campaigns from young people around the world!

Choked Up, London, United Kingdom

@CHOKEDUP_UK

Air pollution is a public health crisis and a social justice issue. Choked-Up was founded by a group of BIPOC teenagers living in poorer parts of London where air pollution levels are illegally high. They are campaigning for clean air laws with the goal to create legally binding legislation that forces the UK government to commit to World Health Organisation targets. Choked-Up is challenging perceptions that the UK is safe from climate-related issues, and demonstrating the realities of the global environmental crisis, and its disproportionate impacts on BIPOC and lower-income communities, even in the UK.

@TREES4GOALS

Trees4Goals, Nairobi, Kenya

Deforestation is a huge issue in Kenya. In 2018, as a young teen, Lesein Mutunkei was compelled to stand against it. He committed to planting 11 trees for every goal he scored whilst playing football with his friends and sparked a movement of young people committed to doing the same. He also used his growing social media platform to raise awareness of climate change in his local community, and advocate for sustainable policies. He believes in the power of sport to connect and inspire people, noting that "Football is a universal fame and climate change is a universal issue." Having started the initiative by himself, Trees4Goals came second in the Green Kids Award in Kenya, and Lesein was selected to attend the UN Youth Climate Summit in New York and represent Kenya on a global platform.

@DEJUSTICIA Amazon Rainforest Litigation Case, Colombia

You might have seen that Friends of the Earth won a legal case against the UK government, in which it was ruled that the government's current Net-Zero strategy breaches the Climate Change Act. This case is part of a wave of legal action around the world that is building a new legal framework and precedent for environmental accountability, arguing that a safe environment is a human right.

In January 2018, a group of 25 young Colombians filed a lawsuit against their government. Pressure on land for farming, logging, and growth of crops has led to mass deforestation despite legal commitments made by the Colombian government to protect it. The youths argued that failing to protect the Amazon was endangering their futures. Their case was supported by Dejusticia, a local Human Rights NGO. The case was initially ruled against, then an appeal to the Colombian Supreme Court resulted in a historic judgement in support of the youth.

Climate Change Education, India

@LICYPRIYAK

Licypriya Kangujam grew up in Manipur in India and was just seven years old when she was inspired to start campaigning on climate change, after attending a UN disaster conference in Mongolia and hearing the stories of those affected by climate disasters. In December 2019, Licypriya launched a new campaign to lobby state governments in India to make climate change education compulsory. Within two months, the states of Rajasthan and Gujarat both responded positively, confirming they would introduce mandatory climate education for the 2020-21 school year, a decision which brings climate education into over 140,000 schools.

What Can You Do?

There are so many ways you can campaign to build awareness of climate justice and engage people with Oxfam's work! Here are a few ideas:

Rally for the climate

Holding a rally, either virtually or in person (if safe!) is a great way to get people excited for campaigning on climate change! Is there a way you can connect with other groups, such as Fridays for Future or Stop Cambo! to make it even more impactful?

Get Craftivisty

Craftivism is a great way of bringing people together, either virtually or in-person to take action. You could think creatively about how to amplify your climate campaigning through the world of crafts – could you do an arts session where you create climate messages and then amplify them across social media?

Collaborate on Campus

The Climate Movement is full of exciting and vibrant campaigners and organisations, so there are lots of opportunities to collaborate! Can you link up with your university's People & Planet, Amnesty International or Sustainability Groups and campaign together?

Contact Sophie if you'd like any help or support, or would like to discuss any new ideas! Email smorbey1@oxfam.org.uk

Start Stalling

A campaign stall is a great way to get the message out there and start talking to people about climate justice. Get in touch with Sophie for lots of offline materials, petitions, action cards, and posters to help grab people's attention.

Reframe the narrative

The focus of our campaigning is on the human impacts of climate change and how it is an injustice, so it's important that climate justice is the focus of your campaigning work. Take a look at our fact file on page 2 to help you build your campaigning narrative.

Persuade decision makers

Target both local and national decision-makers to encourage them to take action in support of climate justice! Can you write to your University Chancellor, or your local MP asking them to take action?

Run events

We can help you organise panels, screenings, and other on-campus (or online) events to engage people with issues relating to climate change.

Template Letter

It can be hard to know how to write to your MP about Climate Change, so we have put together a template structure – feel free to also personalise it if you would like to! You should receive a response within 2 weeks.

Introduction:

Explain why you/your group are writing to them about climate justice. What is it you are most concerned about and why?

Asks:

Next it is important to explain clearly what action you would like your MP to take. We've created some template text below, but please do feel free to personalise!

"We are asking you to please write to the new Prime Minister calling on them to make three clear commitments on climate action:

1. Hold world leaders accountable for their climate promises.
2. End the era of fossil fuels, starting now
3. Provide Loss and Damage finance for those on the frontlines of the climate crisis."

There are more details about these asks on page 10.

Closing:

Thank them for their time and once again highlight why you care about climate justice. It is also always helpful to say you are looking forward to hearing back from them, and to ask them to report back on the action they take as a result of your letter.

Further Resources

Thanks so much for taking action! It is only by taking action that we will create change. You can find Oxfam's student campaigning resources online, and follow our social media accounts to keep updated about Oxfam's newest actions and campaigns.



@oxfamcampaigns



@oxfamcampaignsgb

Below is a list of additional resources to help deepen your understanding of climate justice – please get in touch with Sophie at any point at smorbey1@oxfam.org.uk if you need any help or support.

Read:

[Oxfam: What is Loss and Damage?](#) - What does it mean for Climate Justice?

[Oxfam: Confronting Carbon Inequality](#) - Climate Justice after Covid-19

[Oxfam: Tightening the Net](#) - About Net Zero Target Climates

[Oxfam: Footing the Bill](#) - Loss and Damage in an era of escalating climate impacts

Explore Oxfam's website for more blogs, articles, and reports!

Watch:

[Take One Action: Not Without Us](#)

[BBC: Climate Change - Ade on the Frontline](#)

[Earthrise Studio: Seat at the Table](#)

[Clover Hogan: What to do when Climate Change feels unstoppable](#)

[Explore Waterbear for many more films on climate justice!](#)

Support:

Here are just a few other organisations who are doing amazing climate justice work!

@StopCambo

@Fridays4Future

@PaidToPollute

@PeopleandPlanet

@ClimateLive

@friends_earth