



**The Climate  
Initiative**

# **Our Beautiful Planet**

**Community Activity and  
Discussion Guide**

**Dust**

**RISING**

**◀ KIKIM MEDIA**

# WELCOME

We hope this discussion guide sparks conversation surrounding climate change, including the problems we face and the solutions we might find.

The collection of **Our Beautiful Planet** videos are a beacon of hope in the face of a real and catastrophic issue. We hope that this discussion guide for **Dust Rising** will educate you on solutions and inspire curiosity and grassroots action. But to do this, we need to encourage more conversations regarding climate change, which is why we've created this guide.

This is a global problem, but by working together to save the places we love... WE can be the solution.



## We Hope These Films Inspire You to:

- Learn More
- Find Creative Solutions
- Take Action

# A letter from TCI

We face more severe weather, wildfires, warming oceans, and changing habitats as we launch into this new decade. The science behind climate change is indisputable and is no longer a down-the-line consequence or only affecting others in a place far away. We know from scientists that this decade is paramount in addressing climate change before it is too late. We are facing a crisis, not only in our country but globally. Yet, we struggle to talk about what is happening. We feel powerless to make the changes necessary to alter our trajectory.

## ***How do we as communities figure out how to save what we love and what we value before it is too late?***

At The Climate Initiative (TCI), we know that we can start a movement by engaging communities locally and connecting them with what they love and value. We believe that all voices are necessary and powerful for an effective climate movement, especially youth. TCI encourages youth to lead their communities to act locally and think globally.

We want to empower individuals to use their circles of influence to create collective action to solve climate change. By engaging all voices, grassroots movements can grow, influencing others and shifting policy. Throughout our history, our nation has overcome insurmountable obstacles through grassroots movements. Our history tells us that when a few are passionate and live by their beliefs, they can start a movement that creates real change.

Intended to engage people in climate change science without leaving them hopeless, Our Beautiful Planet is a collection of short films featuring scientists. These scientists discuss their research and possible solutions while communicating the impact of climate change in our communities. Our discussion guide provides the structure and the opportunity for discussions and activities around these film topics.

Our hope is for community members, students, and business and conservation leaders to discover their community places at risk and transition that small-scale understanding to a larger, global perspective. Communities will find solutions by listening, engaging, and collaborating to combat climate change in their town while at the same time seeing how to make an impact globally.

The more effectively we communicate both the science and social aspects of mitigating climate change, the faster we can create powerful policies to combat the ticking clock.

We hope that these discussions and films will inspire the next generation of climate scientists, climate solutions, and community adaptations that create a better future for everyone.

By bonding together, we can collectively decide that future!

**Leia Lowery**

**TCI Director of Programs & Outreach**



# A letter from Kikim Media

From roaming dust storms to underwater kelp farms...from mosquito habitats to the diets of cows...[Our Beautiful Planet](#) is a series of films that takes viewers on a journey with a diverse group of scientists researching unique windows into how we can understand and combat climate change.

Today, all of us on this planet are confronting the sobering consequences of climate change. Bigger hurricanes and forest fires. Radical shifts in weather and temperature that can and will disrupt our ability to grow food. Rising sea levels that threaten—within just a few decades—to make the world’s coastal cities uninhabitable.

But we’re far from helpless. We have a powerful tool at our disposal that can help us to understand climate change, find ways to adapt to it, and perhaps even slow it down.

That tool is science.

[Our Beautiful Planet](#) is our new series of short climate films that are constructed in a style designed to appeal to a broad general audience. At a time when we so badly need it, the public’s relationship with science is seriously flawed. Many people flat-out distrust science or get confused and bogged down in misinformation. Part of the problem is the difficulty that scientists have in communicating with the public. [Our Beautiful Planet](#) helps to cut through this confusion by presenting research and scientific solutions to climate change in an accessible way. This is done by using less jargon and presenting interesting stories about scientists who are ordinary people, their passions for science, and the research they are doing which creates opportunities for striking back against climate change.

Kikim Media is partnering on [Our Beautiful Planet](#) with The Climate Initiative (TCI) and the National Science Teaching Association (NSTA), which has produced supporting materials that will help teachers use these films in classrooms across the country. Not only is [Our Beautiful Planet](#) intended to help improve American science education by exposing students to what it’s like to actually do science, we also hope it will inspire a future generation to consider their own scientific careers.

[Our Beautiful Planet](#) doesn’t simply present the challenges of climate change as all doom and gloom. Our goal is to excite viewers through the various solutions that scientists are investigating across a myriad of fields of study. No one person, no one answer will stop climate change in its tracks. The solution will be a combined effort, and we hope that our film series will galvanize others to do their part to keep our planet beautiful.

With hope,

<b>Kiki Kapany</b>	<b>Producer</b>
<b>Edward Gray</b>	<b>Writer and Director</b>
<b>Alyn Divine</b>	<b>Co Producer</b>
<b>David Evans</b>	<b>Former Executive Director of NSTA</b>

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# How to Use the Guide

This discussion guide starts needed conversations and opens the door for brainstorming necessary actions to move forward. Learning about new challenges and possible solutions helps move people toward climate action. By encouraging community conversations, we inspire future scientists and create the opportunity for actionable change.

We hope to build a groundswell of knowledge and ideas critical to creating a grassroots movement that can influence the larger region, nation, and world with every discussion.

**This guide is set up to help facilitate community conversations about Our Beautiful Planet.**

In this guide you will find:

- Suggestions on how to use the videos
- Suggestions on identifying and engaging stakeholders
- Strategies to have meaningful conversations
- A variety of questions to inspire conversations from multiple perspectives
- Activities and exercises to inspire deeper conversations
- Information about how to run a fishbowl (for a larger audience)
- Follow-up activities to spark action



## About The Series

Our Beautiful Planet is a fascinating new series highlighting work that climate scientists around the country are doing to solve some of the world's most pressing issues. These dedicated scientists seek to better understand and plan for the realities of our changing climate. Their answers are sometimes found in somewhat surprising and unexpected places using cutting-edge technology and innovative problem-solving.

Our series lets viewers see essential fieldwork conducted today, taking the science out of the classroom and into the real world. These compelling stories will not only teach our viewers crucial scientific principles, but we hope to inspire them to use science to examine the issues affecting their communities.



# About the Films

## Dust Rising

With their howling winds and thick yellow clouds, dust storms can be terrifying. Here in the U.S. we don't hear that much about them. But in parts of the world that experience them frequently, people dread their arrival. They can clog the air with so many particles that it becomes hard to see and even harder to breathe. People who are regularly exposed to airborne dust become more susceptible to respiratory diseases. But as the world becomes hotter, will dust storms become a more frequent threat in many more parts of the world? That's the question that brings atmospheric scientist Amato Evan and his research team from UC San Diego out to this research station in the Southern California desert.

## In Search of Nitrogen

When scientists in the early 20th century discovered how to manufacture this nitrogen-based compound—ammonia, it was hailed as one of history's greatest achievements. That's because it is such a powerful fertilizer. It delivers nitrogen, an element that's vital to plants, in a form they can use. Without manufactured ammonia, farmers could not grow anywhere near enough food to feed the world's 8 billion people. Unfortunately, ammonia fertilizer has become so widely used that it's now causing grave damage to the environment. The problem is nitrogen pollution—and Stanford University chemical engineer Will Tarpeh is determined to take it on.

## After the Flames

As higher average temperatures dry out plants and trees and make them more combustible, wildfires are becoming bigger and more frequent in many countries. That means that their consequences—such as floods and mudslides—also promise to become a more frequent threat. Amir AghaKouchak, a professor of engineering at UC Irvine, is determined to find ways for scientists to anticipate these kinds of events so that people will know what's about to happen and be able to avoid as much damage as possible.

## Liquid Gold

Each year, farmers must produce a staggering amount of food to meet the demand of a rising global population. Ammonia is a critical ingredient in the fertilizers that enable farmers to grow the enormous amount of food that's needed to feed the world's 8 billion people. But the factories that manufacture the ammonia used in fertilizers are a major source of planet-warming carbon dioxide. Will Tarpeh, a chemical engineer at Stanford University, is developing a groundbreaking technology to tap into an unlikely new source of nitrogen for fertilizer: ammonia contained in human waste.

## Mosquito Menace

Considered to be the deadliest animals on earth, mosquitos kill hundreds of thousands of people and make millions more sick every year. The diseases they transmit have long been most common in the warmest parts of the world. But with average temperatures rising everywhere due to climate change, does that mean that all of us may soon be facing a greater risk for these diseases? Stanford University biologist Erin Mordecai is attempting to answer this question in order to help people anticipate which mosquito-borne disease risks are likely to increase in a particular region and which are more likely to decrease.

# About the Films

## The Search Beneath the Sea

The Maine seacoast is an iconic hotspot, full of beautiful landscapes, crisp ocean views, and coastal fishing communities. However, off the shores, those beautiful landscapes and coastal communities are facing challenging changes. The Gulf of Maine is warming three times faster than the global average and 99% faster than any other body of water its size. Find out why Oceanographer Charles Tilburg and his students from the University of New England are embarking on a data collecting journey. They collect data about "heat content" and how greenhouse gases affect the oceans on a large scale. They hope that this data will answer questions and provide answers to what is happening to the Gulf of Maine, and the future changes it faces. Will they inspire solutions and future scientists to help mitigate and adapt to a changing Ocean?

## Climate Secret of Cows

It may come as a surprise to you that one of the world's most loved agricultural animals, the cow, comes with a hefty environmental price tag. Cows and other ruminants release large amounts of methane into our atmosphere and at a greater rate than the world has ever seen before. Methane is 84 times more potent than CO<sub>2</sub>! Ermias Kebreab, a Professor of Animal Science at the Davis Campus of the University of California, is trying to figure out how to reduce methane emissions from cows by changing their diet. Could an unlikely food from the sea change how they digest?

## Sea Change

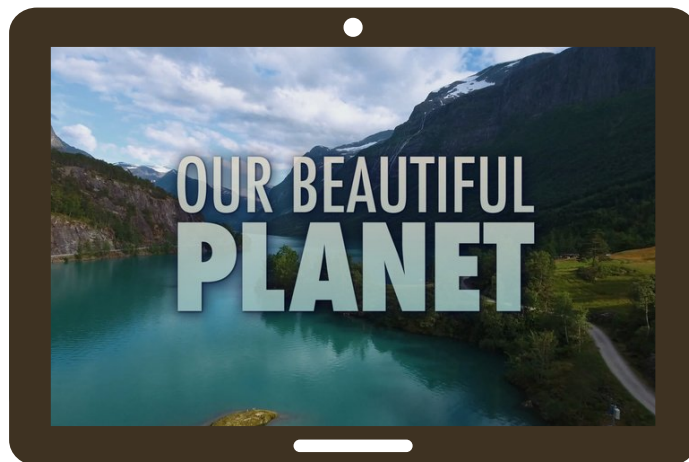
Oceans levels are rising, and we can see the effects now! Around the world, scientists are watching the Gulf of Maine. The Gulf of Maine is warming 3 times faster than the global average and 99% faster than any other body of water its size. As the water warms, its particles expand, amplifying the effects of sea-level rise. Scientists are trying to figure out why the Gulf of Maine is warming so fast. They want to spread the message that this is not just a problem for those on the Gulf of Maine, but a sign of a changed future for all of us! What can we learn from this scientist, and what can we do?

## The Superpowers of Seaweed

Our oceans are going through a historic change. As humans continue to burn fossil fuels, the oceans absorb one-third of the CO<sub>2</sub> we put in our atmosphere resulting in acidification. The more acidic ocean water puts many of our beloved marine animals, especially shellfish, at risk. Follow the journey of two scientists: Susie Arnold of The Island Institute and her colleague, Nichole Price of Bigelow Laboratory for Ocean Sciences, as they try to help coastal communities cope with the results of ocean acidification. Many coastal communities rely on the fishing industry for their livelihoods; these changes could greatly affect their way of life. Through science and research, can these two scientists work with each other and local communities to protect Maine's marine life with the help of an unlikely plant friend?

## The Future of Shellfish

Markus Frederich, Professor of Marine Sciences at the University of New England, explores animal species "winners" and "losers" with climate change. Markus works and studies in the Gulf of Maine, where the temperatures are warming at an astonishingly fast pace. He also looks at the effects that it has on different shellfish. Sea creatures like the Green Crab, an invasive species on the Maine coast, are thriving in the warmer water. The American Lobster, a Maine native and driver of Maine's economy, thrive in colder waters. What does this mean for the aquatic inhabitants of the Gulf of Maine? Who wins and who loses, as climate change continues to change the waters and the landscapes of our coastal communities?





# How to Facilitate

## Ways to use the videos:

Our Beautiful Planet films educate about climate change issues and possible solutions. We hope that these films will start conversations about the changes facing communities right now and educate others on how, as a community, people can prepare for, mitigate, and adapt to the future. While these films look at specific issues in unique locations, we hope the discussions will encourage people to connect them with the broader issue of climate change. We also hope it encourages viewers to think globally, act locally, and possibly inspire future pioneers in science and climate solutions. After all, climate change is a global problem, but we can all be a part of the solution.

## Tips to Facilitate Productive Conversation

Climate change can be controversial. Just mentioning the words brings about different emotions for each individual. Explore the following resources to get a sense of how the nation and your community think and feel about climate change.

- Watch the film first and familiarize yourself with the information. With a better understanding, you will be able to facilitate better dialogue.
- At the beginning of the film, alert people to the end goal and subsequent conversation to ensure that discussions lead to the desired outcome.
- Communication about climate change is best when it uses local data, tells a story, and is rooted in place.
- Create an open atmosphere where all views are valued and heard.
- Identify different perspectives. It isn't about convincing people of your viewpoint but understanding multiple perspectives and finding sustainable solutions.
- Be a confident communicator and use an authentic voice, not abstract ideas.
- Encourage people to find common ground with whom they are talking.
- LISTEN, LISTEN, LISTEN. Most people want to feel heard. Feeling heard makes people less defensive and more open to conversation (you can use the listening exercise on pg. 13 before any discussion as a warm-up).
- Connection with each other is the key. Climate change ultimately is a human story; people identify with the world around them through the human experience, not only statistics.
- Speak only for yourself, and do not try to speak for others or in generalities.
- Climate change is a heavy topic. Try to end with hope, try having people imagine what their community or the world might look like if we solve the climate crisis. What about their lives might be better? What part in the solution might they play?



## Finding the Stakeholders

Stakeholders are people and organizations with a vested interest in the topic you are discussing. Stakeholders may be actively involved in the topic/project or will be positively/negatively affected due to the issue.

Determine who might know about changes in the community over time. Also, consider who can affect, or will be affected by, climate change.

Some examples might be:

- Town managers
- Town planners
- Business owners
- People living in an affected area
- School administration or facilities managers
- People who have lived in the town for many years with a historical perspective
- Land trusts or other environmental groups
- Youth environmental clubs or action groups
- Rotary
- Fire, police, EMS, and other safety workers
- Electricity companies
- Sustainable businesses
- People in the industry affected by the film

# Creative Ideas to Prompt Discussion

These are some suggestions about ways to structure conversations about the movie. Choose prompts that best fit your audience, but encourage people to look at the topic from multiple perspectives.

## Pre and Post-Film Questions to Spark Conversation

Pre and Post questions allow people to test what they have learned compared to what they previously believed. For some, the film will resonate with their predetermined thoughts, but there may have been a lack of awareness or different information that could spark conversation for others.

1. (Before) What are dust storms? What do you currently know about dust storms?  
(After) What are the effects of dust storms that this film mentioned? What did you learn? What surprised you that you didn't know before?
2. (Before) How might global warming affect dust storms? What do you hope to learn about dust storms?  
(After) After watching the video, how does climate change play a role in dust storms? Were there any effects that you did not know? Where do dust storms most likely occur?
3. (Before) Why do you think we do not have a good understanding of when dust storms will occur?  
(After) According to the video, how can weather models help us monitor dust clouds? What are Amato and his team monitoring to better detect dust storms?

## Facts from the Film with Starter Questions:

- Dust storms can stretch for miles, rise thousands of feet and cripple whole cities while damaging our eyes, lungs, and hearts.
- Rising global temperatures are making our soils dryer and dust storms more frequent.
- The Salton Sea is drying out because of diversion for drinking water and rising temperatures; this is not unique and has also happened in bodies of water in Iran, Turkey, and Central Asia.

What is your reaction to these facts that were in the film?

Do you feel most people know this information? What do you think would change if more people understood this information?

Why did Amato Evan and his team choose the region outside of San Diego, CA, over other dust storm regions?

How is the shrinking Salton Sea impacting the people that live nearby?

What do you think dust storms will be like 20 years from now? 50 years from now? Do you think there will be a better way to predict dust storms? Why?

What problem is Arman Evan's research trying to solve? How will this be necessary research for the future?

# Creative Ideas to Prompt Discussion

## Gauge Understanding by Linking to the Big Picture

- If dust storms have always been around, why are dust storms becoming a point of interest within the context of climate change? Where else have dust storms been a problem?
- Why are mathematical models important in determining weather forecasts? How can mathematical models determine dust storms?
- Amato Evan and his team use a ceilometer to collect data on dust storms. How can your community collect data on climate change phenomena near you?
- How can the research Amato Evan and his team conduct in the desert 100 miles away from San Diego, CA, help other parts of the world? How can this research address different aspects of climate change?
- One senior colleague told Amato Evan that he would waste his time researching dust storms. Why do you think he said that? Do you agree or disagree with his senior colleague, and why?
- How might dust storms disproportionately affect developing nations or vulnerable populations?
- Are dust storms only affecting those who live in deserts? What effects might people who live in other regions see due to dust storms? Do you think other areas may experience dust storms in the future? Why or why not?
- How do you think we can reduce the frequency and intensity of dust storms? How do you think we can improve the predictability of dust storms?
- Do you think that dust storms could impact you in the future? Why or why not?



# General Questions and Conversation Starters



- This film is important because \_\_\_\_\_
- What is one thing in the film that piqued your interest? Or what did you find surprising?
- What effect do dust storms have ecologically, economically, and socio-culturally?
- How did Amato Evan explain how rebellion ties into science? How did that rebellion help him move forward in his studies and research on dust storms?
- What inspires you about Amato Evan and his team's research? What are they doing differently than other scientists?
- This film listed several inland bodies of water that are shrinking due to climate change. What are the impacts on the communities near these bodies of water?
- How did nearby agricultural practices create worse conditions for humans during dust storms? What other impacts beyond human health might these practices have caused?
- How can we get people who do not experience dust storms to care about this issue? What information can we provide to them to show how dust storms may be an issue?
- What role do our news and media outlets play in communicating about dust storms? Does this communication have a positive or negative effect, and how can it help us move towards solutions?
- Who else should you include in this conversation? Who may be affected by this through their business or livelihood? What about their experiences bring value to this conversation? Do you have a personal experience with dust storms?
- If we cannot control dust storms, how can we reduce the harmful effects of dust storms?
- What other solutions for dust storms can you think of, and what would work in our community?
- We know about the science of climate change and have known about it for quite some time. Why have we not seen more movement towards sustainable solutions? What can we do differently to inspire change?



# Activities

## Activity 1: The 1:1 - Communication, Engagement, and Sense of Place

This activity is great for modeling good listening skills, creating a connection between people, and creating a personal connection to climate change through identifying personal special places.

### Part 1 (pre-movie)

- a.) Hand out a small piece of paper to each person and explain what they will be doing. Have a watch or a phone ready to be a timer.
- b.) Task: Each person should think of a place they love. It can be anywhere: inside, outside, local, away. It doesn't matter; think of a place that they love. Give people a couple of minutes to describe it or draw it on their paper (It can be a drawing, bullet points, written description).
- c.) Have participants pair up with a person they do not know and designate Person A and Person B.
  1. 1 minute: Person A has 1 minute to describe their place to Person B when the timer starts. They are to talk for the whole 1 minute, but they have to stop when we tell them to stop. Person B may NOT TALK. Person B may nod; they cannot add anything to the conversation.
  2. 30 Sec.: Now, Person B has 30 seconds to tell Person A what they heard them say about their place.
  3. Repeat but reverse roles. This time Person B is talking for 1 minute. They cannot reference Person A's place in their description.
- d.) Debrief with the participants: What did you notice? Was it hard to listen and not add your thoughts while the other person talked? How did it feel to speak the whole time without interruptions?

#### On listening:

People have a desire to connect with others. Often we interrupt someone speaking with us to agree with them about what they are saying, but in doing so, we often take over the conversation. When discussing issues close to the heart, like the places we love or the environmental changes we see in our communities, it is vital to listen to one another actively. Only add your voice when someone has completed their thought. By remembering how it felt to be heard and truly listened to, we can create meaningful dialogue about tough topics.

#### On our places:

When everyone thinks about a place they love, it unites them in that commonality. Though everyone has a different special place, they are finding common ground. This mutual understanding allows more empathy to enter the discussion when transitioning to the questions, "How would it feel if this place was at risk?" or "Is this place at risk due to climate change?"

- e.) Next Question: How would it feel if this place was at risk? Or is your place at risk due to climate change?

### Part 2 (post-movie)

- What was the problem being researched in the movie?
- What was the cause of the problem? Could that problem affect your special place?
- Were there similarities between the location in the film and your special place?
- Are there collective actions that we can take as a group to help our community become more sustainable?

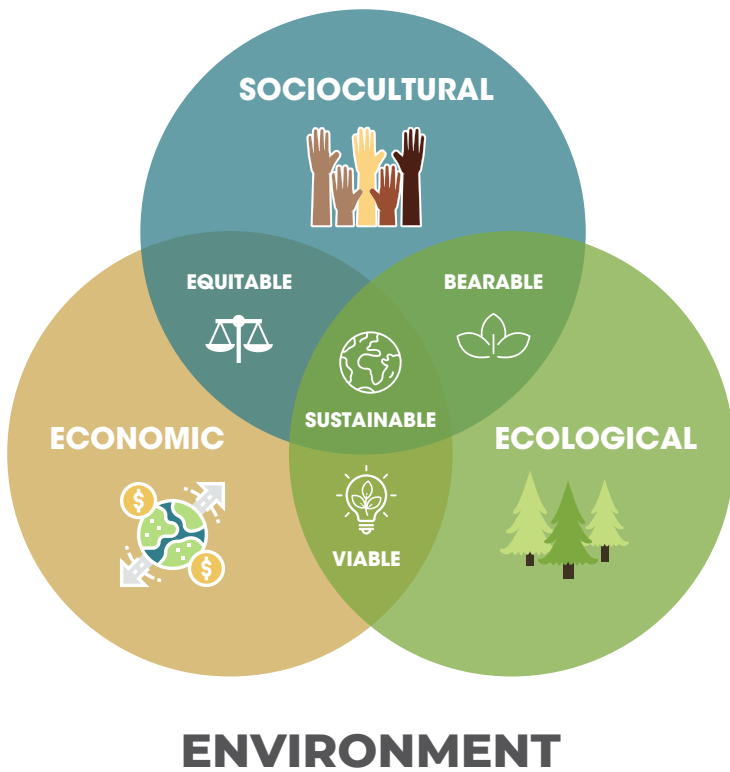


# Activities

## Activity 2: Bring it Home

We know our climate is warming fast. As temperatures get warmer, it causes a multitude of problems. These rising temperatures cause soil to become dryer, making dust storms more frequent. We saw in the film that these dust storms can spread for miles and rise in our atmosphere for thousands of feet, impacting human health by damaging eyes, lungs, and hearts. However, there is very little understanding of predicting when dust storms can occur. Optimistically, Scientist Amato Evan is collecting data on dust storms that happen to better understand, prepare, and adapt to these changes. Still, we need to consider what those adaptations might mean for our people, ecosystems, and economy.

Lead a discussion about dust storms and their effect on our communities. Where does it touch our lives even if dust storms do not directly impact us? How can sustainable practices, research, and adaptation help the collective whole as we see the devastating effect of doing nothing? How can we all be a part of the solution and bring hope? How does this topic affect your community directly or indirectly?



## Activity 3: The 3 Lenses

### Part 1: Set Up and View Film

Set up 3 tables with large sheets of paper at each table and pens.

Then as a whole, watch the film. Have people list at least two stakeholder groups that are affected by this situation, and how. They don't have to agree with their statement or have a solution. Just have them start thinking about who is affected by the situation and who they believe can affect change.

Divide into three groups, and assign them to a table. Each group will visit each of the three tables during part 2.

### Part 2: Travel through the points of view

Each group will start at their designated table (5 minutes). Here they will discuss the issue through the lens associated with the table at which they are sitting. What are the positive effects on this lens and the negative? Each group must add at least one new item to the list at each table. It must be something new and can not be a repeat of what other groups have said.

Rotate until everyone has visited all 3 three tables (lenses).

### As a Group Debrief

Ask each group to share out the written items at their table. Discuss the topic from each of the three lenses. You can also discuss the connection of the local issue to the global problems we are seeing and address the biases that sometimes exist between groups (inland communities and coastal communities, developed vs developing nations, etc.). What topics come up as possible disagreements or conflicts, and how might we overcome those to come to sustainable solutions? How can the actions of your community be a greater influence?

# Activities

## Question Suggestions for the 3 Lenses Perspective

- What are the potential economic impacts of dust storms? Consider different scenarios like agricultural areas, cities, community residents, businesses, etc.
- What, beyond the immediate impact of their research, are the possible ripple effects of learning how to predict dust storms? How might these discoveries impact other climate change issues or other places?
- How can we effectively communicate both the rippling effects of desertification and also conditions that allow it to occur?
- Think about how communities vary greatly. Using the 3 lenses perspective, think about solutions to prevent either desertification or dust storms that could be effective in one community but maybe not another? What does this tell us about climate solutions?
- How might we communicate an effective message to groups represented by each of the three lenses?



# Conversation

Climate change is a global issue that can sometimes feel so insurmountable it cripples people from taking action... It often leads to this question: "How can what I do on a personal level make a real difference on a global issue?" While this is valid, it is the wrong way to think about it!

Individual actions can lead to social mobilization, which is very effective. Think about a time when someone you respect and in your circle of friends influenced you by something they were doing. That observation and acknowledgment can inspire action in you.

We all have that ability within our own spheres of influence. What we choose to do can mobilize others around us. When this happens, and the action spreads from your sphere of influence to others and their friendship and influence groups, it becomes a grassroots social movement that can and does affect drawing down greenhouse gasses on a larger scale.

These discussions and collaborations are the beginning of finding your way to be an influencer, normalizing climate-friendly behaviors and conversations, and making a difference in your community.

# in Action

## Individual Actions that influence:

**\*\*\* We encourage engaging youth in your community through schools, clubs, or other organizations to join in these community actions. They are powerful change agents, enthusiastic participants, and the future of all our communities.**

**Community Audit:** Do people understand the impacts of rising temperatures on our local waters? Are there places where bodies of water are drying up, or places where fields and topsoils are overly dry and dusty? Are there practices that can help these issues? Have a public forum or information session once data is collected; this can be done online or in person. Invite feedback and discussion about the findings, try to tap into how people feel, collect stories, and find out what more they might want to learn.

**Webinar:** Invite three stakeholders to participate in a panel to discuss sustainable practices, or experts on droughts, dust storms, and desertification. How can our communities start taking action after understanding the impacts of rising temperatures and water scarcity? How can taking action and understanding this concept further climate justice and equity and help other regions in the future? Have an information session with questions for the panelists in the fishbowl format, then open to community questions; this is a great way to get information across but through multiple perspectives, allowing each attendee to feel they see themselves in the problem and the solution!

### Action Project to Lower Greenhouse Gasses:

- Starting community-wide composting efforts to reduce waste and methane gas emissions
- Solarizing government buildings and schools
- Investing in renewable energy
- Sustainable agricultural and horticultural practices
- Creating and protecting natural carbon sinks

**Monitoring Project:** Get involved with a citizen science monitoring project! Find universities or local organizations already monitoring a problem your community is facing and volunteer to be a part of the team that collects data. Many states have programs that depend on citizen-collected data. By participating in monitoring, you will learn more and have opportunities to engage others in meaningful conversation and action.

**Make Videos or Social Media Posts:** Social media platforms effectively communicate to the public. Just be sure to offer solutions to go with the information about the problem.

# Local Assessment Activities

How do we bring these crucial issues to our local landscape? It is easy to feel disconnected from a topic when an example is in a faraway place or doesn't seem relevant to our day-to-day lives. In order to be effective, it is important to feel empowered by working together to save the places we love and live in. It is vital that we provide opportunities for all members of our community to thrive and live in environmentally sound places.

## Think Globally - Act Locally

### Activity 1: Fishbowl Conversation

Fishbowl conversations are a great way to elicit multiple points of view about a topic and allow interviews of stakeholders in a controlled and open way that makes them feel safe to share their opinions and thoughts.

- Identify Stakeholders from different points of view, and invite them to a forum or a group zoom call (Ex: town manager, fire chief/police officer, business owner, retiree, land trust director, town planner, parent, someone from public works, etc.).
- Have questions formulated before the forum. Make sure to give them to your speakers prior. TIP: Take the time to formulate well-thought-out questions that elicit the information you want to know or get across.
- If in person, seat interviewees in front of the audience in a semicircle for good visibility for all participants. (If online, pre-determine the order in which they will answer questions.)
- Ask one question at a time, allowing a designated number of minutes per person to answer from their perspective before moving on to the next question. Proceed in the opposite direction for the next question and continue back and forth for all questions.
- Leave time at the end for general discussion or your panel to answer the audience's questions. This forum will often open communications between community members and stakeholders, creating a meaningful dialogue.

\*\*\*This activity can be done on its own as a conversation starter or a way of disseminating information and can also be used as a way to end a community conversation and summarize what was discussed in the groups.

### Activity 2: Community Mapping


Community Mapping engages community members in conversation about their local landscape. Having community members look at a local map and see how climate change will affect the places they know and visit regularly makes finding solutions more urgent. Jointly looking at a community map allows for open conversation and questions specific to people's needs and fears. Community mapping can empower advocacy on environmental issues, support management of access to land and natural resources, and educate on the economic considerations of any plan.

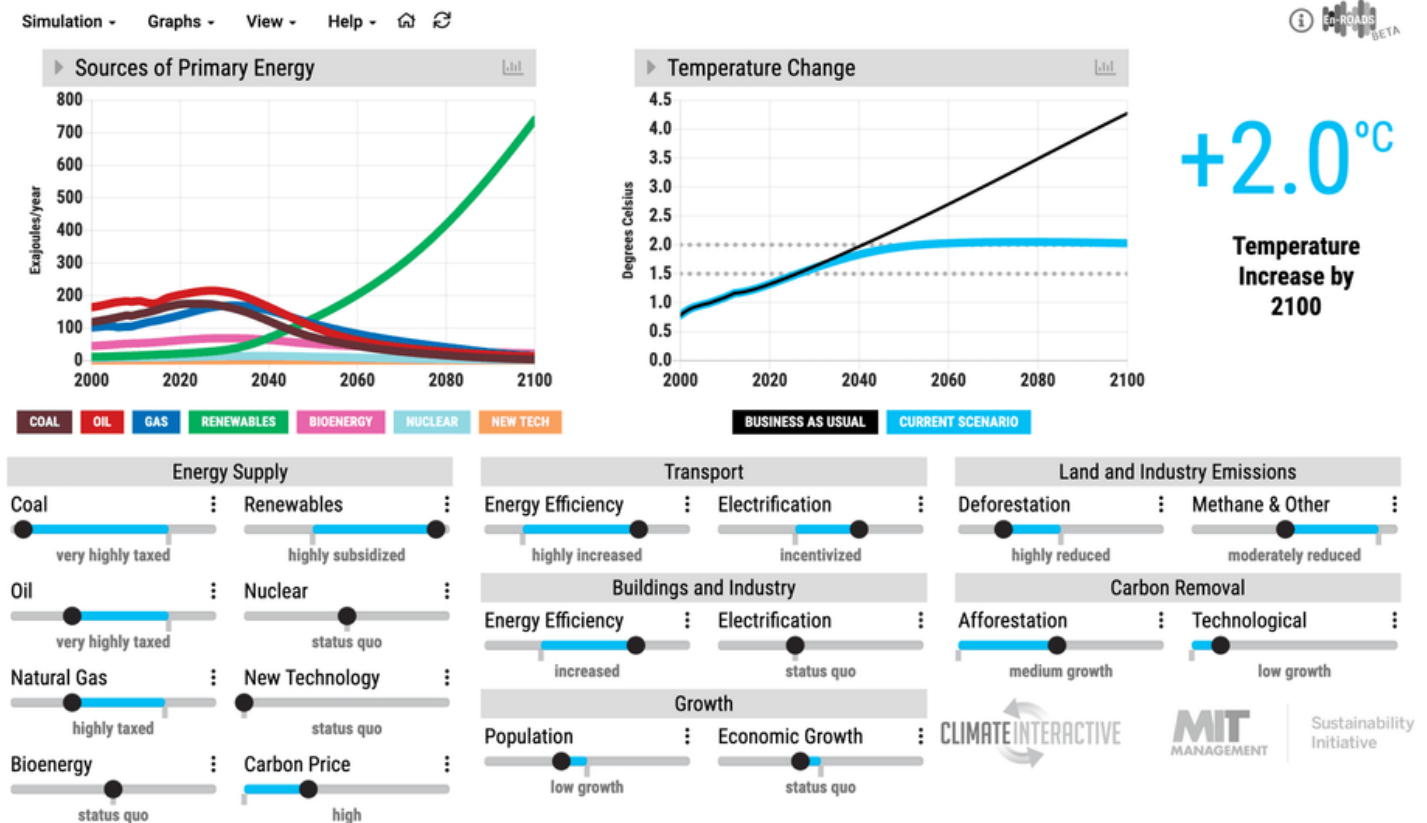
- Introduce Community Mapping and the role it plays in collaboration and community buy-in.
- Have a map of your town that is large enough for people to gather around at a table or have up on an easel.
- Have people mark the places meaningful to them, places they love and want to protect.
- Next, make sure all the significant assets to the town are marked and identified (main streets, ocean, lake, rivers, forested areas, parks, bridges, public works locations, etc.).
- Place sticky notes or circle places on the map that might be affected by climate change or affected by the issue your conversation is addressing. Make sure everyone has a chance to participate.
- Identify the places most at risk and the areas that are options for solutions.
- Engage stakeholders with knowledge about the town and the current policies to give participants guidance on viable solutions.
- Conclude with a few actions that individuals or the collective can take to help solve this problem.

# Local Assessment Activities

## Activity 6: En-ROADS Simulation

En-ROADS is an online simulation for groups of people to investigate their solutions to climate change. [Here is a link to the simulation](#), and you will also find multiple resources to become more educated on the topic. This link will give you a 20-minute introductory video to En-Roads. [Here is a link to a two-page guide](#) from TCI about the various levers. The goal of the simulation is to keep the temperature below 2°C or 3.6°F while maintaining a healthy economy, and society. It is a great way to encourage people to look at climate change on a global scale, but bring it home to see what they can do on a local level.

- Separate into groups of 2-4 people and ask them to decide what they think the best solution would be to keep the temperature rise below 2°C or 3.6°F (Just one action).
- Come back together as a whole and try each group's scenario. How low did the group get the temperature?
- Engage in conversation about other solutions. Encourage people to look at the levers more deeply by clicking the three dots beside each lever which takes you to more information. You will see three icons:  the first allows you to see more graphs, and the i icon gives you more information about the specific lever. The information button will include research on the topic, examples, and equity considerations. Reading this information is a great way to encourage further investigation into specific topic areas.
- Once you have gotten the temperature below 2°C, lead a discussion about what you learned. Are there solutions that your community could take on to lower emissions? Could you start community composting? Could you encourage an energy efficiency audit for governmental buildings? Could your town support community members to make their homes more energy-efficient, saving them money and lowering emissions?





# Examples of Actions, Resources, and More Information

## Links to:

### Policy, Mitigation, and Adaption

The National Drought Mitigation Center provides information in this link about The Dust Bowl and the economic effects of drought:

<https://drought.unl.edu/Dustbowl/Home.aspx#Recovery>

This article by The Conversation explains how we can mitigate the impacts of dust storms:

<https://theconversation.com/how-can-we-mitigate-the-impacts-of-dust-storms-156688>

The United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification discussed the impacts on sand and dust storms. They created a three pillars approach to supporting countries for mitigation:

<https://www.unccd.int/actions/sand-and-dust-storms>

The Congressional Research Service provides a drought response and preparedness document for U.S. policy and legislation:

<https://crsreports.congress.gov/product/pdf/IF/IF10702>

The Congressional Research Service provides this report on the science, policy, and selected federal authorities of drought in the U.S.:

<https://crsreports.congress.gov/product/pdf/R/R46911>

The State of California provides this website to show the state's actions against drought:

<https://drought.ca.gov/#:~:text=Governor%20Newsom%20signed%20a%20package,and%20quality%2C%20and%20support%20wildlife.>

### Social Movements and Social Change

This links you to a chapter in a textbook about social change and social movements:

<https://opentextbc.ca/introductiontosociology/chapter/chapter21-social-movements-and-social-change/>

The Pacific Institute for Climate Solutions article on encouraging social mobilization:

<https://pics.uvic.ca/sites/default/files/uploads/publications/FINAL%20Social%20mobilization-Sussman%20Gifford.pdf>

### For more information on dust storms, visit:

World Meteorological Organization

NOAA

USGS

NASA

USDA

EOS

