

Climate Action Project Building Toolkit

Youth Climate Leadership Program



What is Transformative Change?

In the climate movement, we recognize that the small scale solutions that have been presented to us are not matching the scale of the crisis we are experiencing. We know that individual sustainability efforts are not enough to ensure a livable future for all. The Transformative Change model presents a strategy of collective, justice centered action that works to reform a system from the ground up. Transformative change is about transitioning from focusing just on doing things better to actually doing this differently. It's about recognizing that we can not continue working through these preconceived systems of power to make change. If we want a shot at a livable future we need something more innovative and something more creative. Transformative change empowers us to think bigger and allows us to start questioning what it really means to take direct action. What does change actually look like in your community? And for us, in the YCLP, this work is about identifying the role that young people have to play in social change beyond the limitations that are presented to us. We really believe that centering youth voices is going to be the solution to the climate crisis.

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Climate Action Project Planning and Envisioning Process

Step 0: Team building

- Before taking action and making changes together, the first step is to do some team building, get to know your team members, and work together to cultivate a sense of belonging within your changemaker team. We can not make transformative change if we're not working in community with one another.

Step 1: Identifying Climate Change Impacts and Community Issues

- To start your project, first think about your community's relationship with climate change.
 - Questions:
 - What needs to be changed?
 - How are we being impacted by climate change?
 - What does our community need in order to adapt to the climate crisis?
 - Examples:
 - Flooding in our communities
 - Heatwaves impacting our school sports
 - Subpar climate education standards in our schools
 - Food justice issues

Step 2: Understanding inequity and vulnerabilities

- Next, you must assess how your team is going to prioritize environmental justice and inclusivity in your plans. For any effective CAP it's essential to center equitable action.
 - Questions:
 - What populations in our community are most vulnerable to these risks and impacts?
 - What climate risks does our community face?
 - Are there any policies that need to be updated to promote climate justice in our communities?
 - Bonus question!: What does the word *justice* mean to us and what does allyship mean to us?
 - Examples:
 - Environmental justice communities (black and brown communities, queer communities, disabled communities, low income communities)
 - Fossil Fuel Pipelines
 - Air pollution
 - Access to Green space
 - Tree equity

Step 3: Strengthening Resources for Climate Resilience

- Step three is all about identifying support systems and assessing what resilience resources you have in your toolbox throughout this process. It also includes thinking about who the power holders are in your community and how you will be interacting with them in your project.
 - Questions:
 - Who are our community partners and who will we be drawing support/mentorship from?
 - Are there any current initiatives working on similar issues that we can collaborate with?
 - Who are the power holders is this inequity that we are pushing against?
 - Examples:
 - Youth led clubs and organizations
 - Adult and intergenerational organizing spaces

Step 4: Identifying levers of change and pathways for action

- After identifying an issue, assessing the environmental justice factors/influences, and building up your community resilience, it's now time to start thinking about the solution!
 - Questions:
 - How can we take action as young people and what tools will we be utilizing?
 - What transformative change teachings from the Summit Trainings can we incorporate?
 - What specific skills/gifts/talents do individuals on our team bring to our group and how can we utilize them in a collaborative way to aid our goals?
 - Examples:
 - Advocacy
 - Lobbying
 - Art and Creativity
 - Community Organizing

Step 5: Designing your CAP

- And finally, it's time to create your project plan and outline your first steps!
 - Questions:
 - What are your long term goals?
 - What are the steps you need to take to reach these goals?
 - What does your timeline look like?
 - Bonus question!: What positive impact do you envision your project will have on your community once it is complete?

Team Building

How to create a sense of belonging within your changemaker team

- **Identifying Group Norms**

- The first step is about asking big questions! What is community? What does empowerment mean to us?
- In one of your first meetings, take some time to identify a set of group agreements to help maintain an inclusive and group culture.
- These guidelines can help demonstrate the shared expectations of how leaders will operate in your group as you work together to make change.

- **Utilizing a Wide Range of Skills**

- It is important to share the unique skills/gifts/talents/perspectives that each individual on our team brings to the group. This way you can utilize this divergent range of assets to accomplish your goals!

- **Distributing Roles and Responsibilities**

- As you start taking action with your team, it's important to create an intentional system of how you will delegate planning roles. Depending on the size of your group and the scope of your project, this system can look very different.
- In your meetings you will likely need facilitators, time keepers, note takers, group norms watchers, and volunteers to create the agendas.

- **Looking for Support**

- At any and all stages of your CAP it's important to identify partners, mentors, and systems of support that you can fall back on. These groups can help navigate challenges, turn roadblocks into opportunities, provide training for your leaders as you learn new skills, and provide mentorship along the way.

- **Centering Mental Health and Eco-Hope**

- In your changemaker team it is important to prioritize group resilience work in order to build up an intentional group culture that welcomes vulnerability, celebrates everyday forms of resistance, actively works to dismantle systems of white supremacy, and cultivates trust between our youth leaders.
- For strategies on how to navigate eco-hope/eco-grief conversations and center mental health in climate work, reach out to your YCLP youth mentors from the Summit!

Envisioning Question: What does real change look like for your community?