

INFORMATION ACTION BRIEF

A RESOURCE FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

UN SDG climate 13 action*

Take urgent action to combat climate change
and its impacts



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PROMOTING ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY AND CLIMATE ACTION WITHIN AN INFORMATION CONTEXT

WHAT IS OUR GOAL?

Create, provide access to, and manage accurate, understandable, and actionable information to strengthen the global response to the threat of climate change and respond to misinformation.

* <https://sdgs.un.org/>



WHY SHOULD WE CARE?

Climate change is the defining challenge facing humanity right now. Nothing else matters if we don't address this. This issue cannot be understood without access to reliable information. Information professionals and researchers provide an essential service to organizations, governments, policy makers, and citizens in decision making about the environmental challenges facing humanity. We can be positive vectors for change using our knowledge and skills to enable connective and collective action by all stakeholders.

We can highlight the effects of climate change through place-based and locally relevant examples that make sense to people in different climates. We can translate research into understandable, visual information that can be used by local communities that have the power to take grassroots action to tackle this wicked problem facing humanity.

HOW IS THIS RELATED TO INFORMATION?

Information professionals can help make sure that those who are responsible for taking climate action are doing so with the best available information.

One way is to promote information literacy. Due to the politicized nature of climate change, there is substantial misinformation on the internet. It is vital that people have the skills to evaluate the veracity of information that they find.

We can also connect people with research. Much of the important research on climate change lies behind gated journals. We as information professionals play a vital role in connecting practitioners with the best and latest research. We have been at the forefront of pushing for open access and university librarians have negotiated transformative agreements to allow their faculty to publish their research in ungated open access journals without paying article processing charges.



“THE SITUATION THE EARTH IS IN TODAY HAS BEEN CREATED BY UNMINDFUL PRODUCTION AND UNMINDFUL CONSUMPTION. WE CONSUME TO FORGET OUR WORRIES AND OUR ANXIETIES. TRANQUILISING OURSELVES WITH OVER-CONSUMPTION IS NOT THE WAY.”

Thich Nhat Hanh

<https://www.theguardian.com/sustainability/environment-zen-buddhism-sustainability>

In addition to helping others address climate change, information professionals can also incorporate green principles into their own work. Data centers can be created with green computing in mind. Librarians are working to digitize their collections, which reduces paper use.

The University of Freiburg focused on sustainability when constructing a new library building. [i] Others looking to follow this concept can do so by working to make their buildings LEED Certified, which takes a "holistic approach that considers the construction process, building systems, furnishings, features, and daily operations." [ii]

Information professionals can also connect individuals with information to make their own behavior more environmentally friendly. For example, some libraries allow people to check out appliance energy monitors to reduce their personal energy consumption. Libraries have also created community gardens and some allow people to check out seeds to plant themselves. [iii]

[i] <http://www.kommunikation.uni-freiburg.de/pm-en/press-releases-2018/sustainable-use-of-resources-requires-the-university-library-to-close-at-night>

[ii] <https://www.utc.edu/library/about/building/leed.php>

[iii] <https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/8853/98524586144d11e7863cb02853a0eac493c7.pdf>



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WHAT CAN I (OR THE PROFESSION) DO?

Actions for social transformation in Practice[P], Service/community engagement[S], Education[E] and Research[R]

- 1.[E] Incorporate green information practices into LIS curriculum.
- 2.[P, E, R] Develop and adopt green information technologies in education, research and practice.
- 3.[S, E] Develop community outreach programs to improve digital information literacy skills related to climate change and environmental sustainability.
- 4.[P, R] Support and collaborate with researchers in climate change and environmental sustainability research.
- 5.[R] Undertake original research on climate literacy and action.
- 6.[P, S] Play an active role in translating and disseminating climate research to all stakeholders.
- 7.[P, S, E] Advocate for accurate information across all areas of environmental literacy and activism.
- 8.[P, R] Work with the climate science community to ensure the creation, management, and curation of authoritative data over the long term in evidence-based decision making.
- 9.[P, S, E, R] Use information research outcomes to build campaigns against misinformation/disinformation.
- 10.[P, S, E, R] Connect global climate action information to local perspectives, interests, and needs.

SUMMARY

Trustworthy information and data are critical to addressing the challenges identified in SDG 13, and helping with the mitigation of and adaptation to climate change. Through the continual collection, monitoring and analysis of information and data about the climate we can provide the foundation for the development of strategies to combat climate change. By foregrounding climate change as a defining problem of our times, we can help address this challenge through our own unique skills and influence.

INFORMATION AND CLIMATE ACTION INFOGRAPHIC

SOME
84%
OF SURVEYED
YOUNG PEOPLE
AGREE
THAT THEY
NEED MORE
INFORMATION
TO PREVENT
CLIMATE
CHANGE

ABOUT
73%
OF SURVEYED
YOUTH SAY
THEY
CURRENTLY
FEEL
THE EFFECTS
OF CLIMATE
CHANGE

SOME
89%
OF YOUTH
RESPONDENTS
SAY YOUNG
PEOPLE
CAN MAKE
A DIFFERENCE
ON CLIMATE
CHANGE

"WE ARE THE FIRST GENERATION THAT CAN END POVERTY

WE ARE ALSO THE LAST GENERATION THAT CAN SLOW GLOBAL WARMING BEFORE IT IS TOO LATE"

TakeAction #YouthNow

UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon



Climate data must be made **understandable** to the average person, which can be done by people and/or technology.



There is an **opportunity** for the public and private sectors and academia to work together in new and innovative ways to ensure climate data meets the needs of end users.



Experts need to **guide** climate data end users on choices such as where to find and use reliable data, and also understanding its limitations.

SOURCES

Graphics

1. <https://www.un.org/youthenvoy/environment-climate-change/>
2. <https://public.wmo.int/en/resources/bulletin/why-does-access-good-climate-data-matter>