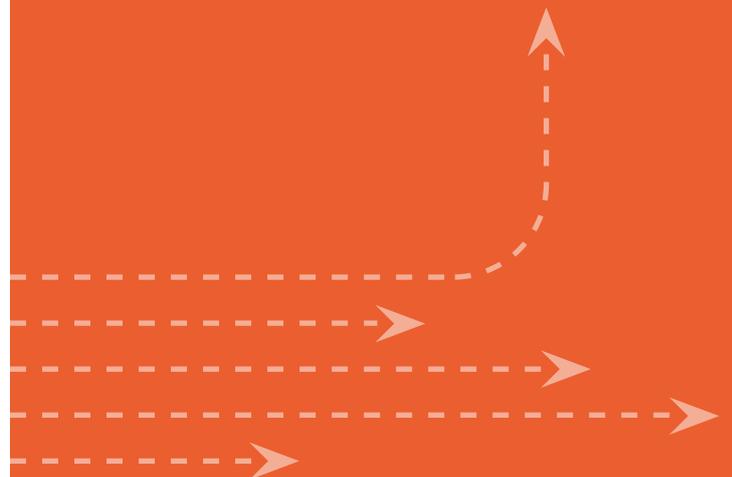




# Theory of Change

Creating a social mandate for climate action



## About Climate Outreach

Climate Outreach is a team of social scientists and communication specialists working to widen and deepen public engagement with climate change. Through our research, practical guides and consultancy services, our charity helps organisations communicate about climate change in ways that resonate with the values of their audiences. We have 15 years experience working with a wide range of international partners including central, regional and local governments, international bodies, academic institutions, charities, businesses, faith organisations and youth groups.

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## Acknowledgements

We would like to thank our trustees for their guidance and input in shaping our theory of change, in particular Amiera Sawas, Camilla Born and Phil Bloomer. Also a big thank you to all staff at Climate Outreach who have contributed their thoughts and asked all the right questions.

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Cite as: Clarke, J., Webster, R., Corner, A. (2020) *Theory of Change: Creating a social mandate for climate action*. Oxford: Climate Outreach.

Cover photo: Young women ask governments to make a commitment to young people at a UN Commission on the Status of Women event in New York, USA. Credit: Ryan Brown / UN Women / CC BY-NC-ND 2.0.

JUNE 2020

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# Introduction: why do we need public engagement?

## 1.1 Public engagement is often forgotten, but critical for the response to climate change

Responding to climate change requires accelerated action across the world, at all levels of society. There is no simple, off-the-shelf blueprint for how this will be achieved. Major social shifts—for example changes in attitudes or social norms, or the introduction of new behaviours into a population—are unpredictable events, emerging in different ways at different places and times.

It is, however, clear that achieving rapid social change, with the consent and participation of the population, requires **effective communications** and **the active engagement of the public**, or it will not succeed. This critical part of the climate change response has often been ignored.

At the time of writing (2020), public concern about climate change has been growing steadily for a decade. But high levels of concern aren't the same as committed public support for change. Rapid emissions cuts require significant lifestyle changes and shifts in what is politically acceptable, both in high-carbon nations and those that aspire to those lifestyles.

In many countries, including the UK, a social 'climate silence'<sup>1</sup>—an informal silent agreement not to talk about climate change—has prevented active discussion of the topic. In many high-carbon countries, acceptance of the need to take action has also polarised across different political perspectives – an effect fuelled by opposition forces and the echo chamber effect of social media.

As a result politicians have rarely felt compelled to act and, when they have, climate policies have often failed.<sup>2</sup> Similarly, high-carbon behaviours remain aspirational, emissions have continued to grow, and countries are failing to adapt to the realities of a changing climate.

Climate advocates often focus on political and policy change, shifting elite opinion through the media, and stimulating 'grassroots' campaigns where movements of ordinary people mobilise for policy change or take personal action. To succeed in the long-term, these strategies also need to engage the wider public and build the **social mandate** for long-term and effective change.

Despite often taking a backseat behind technological advances and the introductions of regulations, policies and laws, the **social science of public engagement** is therefore a crucial piece of the climate change puzzle.

## 1.2 The challenge of climate change engagement

Generating strong and consistent public support for action on climate change is a challenging problem for a wide range of reasons.<sup>3,4,5</sup>

<b>VESTED INTERESTS</b>	Climate change challenges established power. As a result vested interests have focused years of energy on undermining concern, with opposition particularly stemming from advocates on the right of the political spectrum.
<b>SCIENTIFIC LITERACY</b>	Understanding the threat posed by climate change requires a level of scientific literacy and knowledge of the potential impacts. In many countries, this literacy level is low.
<b>POLITICALLY DIVISIVE</b>	In many countries, climate change has developed in the public discourse through campaigns led predominantly by advocates on the left of the political spectrum, making engagement across the political spectrum more difficult to achieve.
<b>ABSTRACT PROBLEM</b>	The technical language used to describe climate change, as a scientific discipline, fails to resonate with people's concerns.
<b>FUTURE PROBLEM</b>	The language and imagery of climate change—which has emerged from a scientific discipline and interaction between advocates and the media—gives the impression of a problem far away in space and time, irrelevant to the concerns of day to day life.
<b>GROUP IDENTITY</b>	The majority of people do not identify as 'environmentalists', so the labelling of climate change as an 'environmental' rather than 'human' issue means they are less likely to view the issue as something for 'people like them' to worry about.
<b>COPING WITH CHANGE</b>	It is difficult for citizens to see their place in large-scale solutions to climate change, or those solutions clash with their values, and social norms generally do not signpost the way towards low-carbon behaviours.
<b>UNCERTAIN OUTCOMES</b>	Reducing emissions requires citizens to take short-term action—often involving some degree of perceived sacrifice—for an uncertain, common, long-term benefit.
<b>NEED FOR STABILITY</b>	People are naturally resistant to any significant shift to the operation of their lives and societies and so translating generic concern into support for action is not easy.

### 1.3. A social mandate is critical to underpinning significant climate action



Fig. 1 Vicious Cycle. Credit: Climate Outreach.



Fig. 2 Virtuous Circle. Credit: Climate Outreach.

## 1.4 Changing levels of concern – the example of the UK

By the end of 2019, the proportion of people expressing concern about climate change in the UK was rising rapidly – probably as result of the increasing visibility of the impacts of climate change, and new climate movements and spokespeople. High levels of concern were also evident around the world, particularly in poorer countries heavily impacted by climate change.<sup>6</sup>

This is not the first time levels of concern have risen to high levels in the UK, however. The number of people expressing themselves “concerned” rose sharply from the mid-2000s,<sup>7</sup> as climate change became more salient, and campaigners ratcheted up the urgency of their rhetoric. This led to some significant political changes, including the 2008 UK Climate Change Act.

But this was followed by a collapse in concern from 2010, undermining much of the political and social buy-in from the preceding years.<sup>8</sup> The political debate polarised between the right and left, the ruling Conservatives felt able to present climate policy as ‘green crap’ and many campaigners and funders focused on other issues.

This sudden fall was a result of a combination of factors, including the global financial crisis, the activities of climate opponents—including the impact of the ‘climategate’ email hack on media narratives—and the failure of the Copenhagen UN climate conference to reach an agreement.<sup>9</sup>

The climate narratives of the time, which presented the Copenhagen conference as a ‘make or break’ moment, as well as little or no consideration being given to public engagement after the conference, may have also played a role. A political strategy that focuses on ‘demands’ for political change, with limited attention paid to nurturing and moving public engagement from concern into commitment, is vulnerable to changes in the political winds.

These fluctuations in level of concern in the UK presents a warning – backsliding is possible and maintaining momentum requires an ongoing, broad-based and robust social mandate. Converting high levels of concern and climate activism into social change requires a commitment to evidence-based strategies of public engagement that have not, for the most part, played a central role in either civil society or governmental campaigns and communications so far.

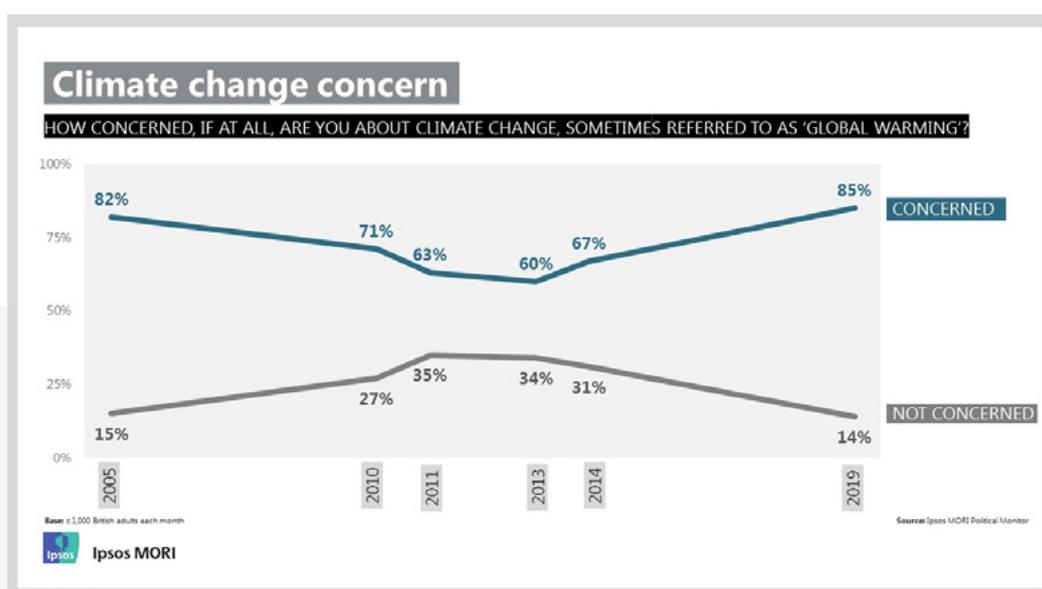


Fig. 3 Climate change concern in the UK. Credit: Ipsos MORI, 2019<sup>10</sup>



A woman and her child walk through flood waters in Jakarta, Indonesia. Credit: Kompas/Hendra A Setyawan

Even as the impacts of climate change gather momentum, it is possible that high levels of concern around the world could regress, particularly as the Covid-19 pandemic presents the world with unprecedented economic and social challenges. As a result the political mandate has the potential to weaken, meaning policies are not implemented. Preventing this means defending against shifting political and economic winds and ensuring low-carbon behaviours, and pressure on government, aren't a fashion to be later discarded.

## 1.5 Context analysis – what's happening in 2020?

**Covid-19 and public concern:** At the time of writing, public concern about climate change remains high across many countries but Covid-19 has shifted it down many people's priority list.<sup>11</sup> The advent of the Covid-19 pandemic creates uncertainties as to how this will develop in the future.

**Policy advances:** High levels of public concern have led to significant policy advances in many, but certainly not all, countries. A growing number of nations have committed to net zero legislation and more attention is being given to facilitating low-carbon behaviours like more walking or cycling.

**Growing consumption:** Many richer countries experienced a rise in interest in vegetarianism, flight shame and cycle use in 2019.<sup>12</sup> Globally, however meat consumption, flying and emissions from transport and housing continued to grow before the Covid-19 pandemic – a trend that seems likely to continue when economies are restarted.

**Populism and polarisation:** Right-wing populism, often linked to an anti-climate agenda, grew rapidly around the world in the years leading up to 2020, exacerbating identity divisions and appearing likely to create new ones.

**Opposition to climate policies:** Nations, regions and communities that are heavily dependent on oil and gas feel threatened by climate action.

**Unstable economics and competing global threats:** The unanticipated and rapid spread of the Covid-19 pandemic has taken many lives, destabilized the world economy, and disrupted people's lives and livelihoods. It is not yet clear what impact this will have on climate change engagement or discourse. The impact on the global economy poses a particularly significant threat to global climate action.

**Increasing climate change impacts around the world:** Extreme weather events are ever more frequently experienced and reported around the world and the public are making the link with climate change.<sup>13</sup>

# 2

## The core principles of public engagement

### 2.1 Values-based engagement and social mandate

The social science evidence base shows that people do not form their attitudes or change behaviours as a result primarily of weighing up expert information and making rational cost-benefit calculations. Instead, they are influenced by stories that ‘feel right’ – narratives that resonate with their values and identity, presented by people they trust, and made acceptable by the social norms around them.

People take action when they understand the reasons for doing so, and where these reasons resonate with their concerns.<sup>14</sup> Financial inducements can facilitate low-impact actions like reducing plastic bag use, but more fundamental change requires a deeper understanding of the reasons for undertaking the actions. Because of this, the canon of ‘behavioural insights’ techniques, sometimes referred to as ‘nudge’ approaches, are a necessary but not sufficient approach to public engagement.<sup>15</sup>

Change of the type required for fast and sustained social transformation on climate change does not simply come from individuals in response to an advertisement or informational messaging campaign, sometimes referred to as the Information Deficit Model. Change also emerges from the interaction between individuals and wider society. Social norms drive what is acceptable within a group and people shape their behaviour according to what their peers do and say. As a result peer to peer communication—not just what is written and said in the media—matters.

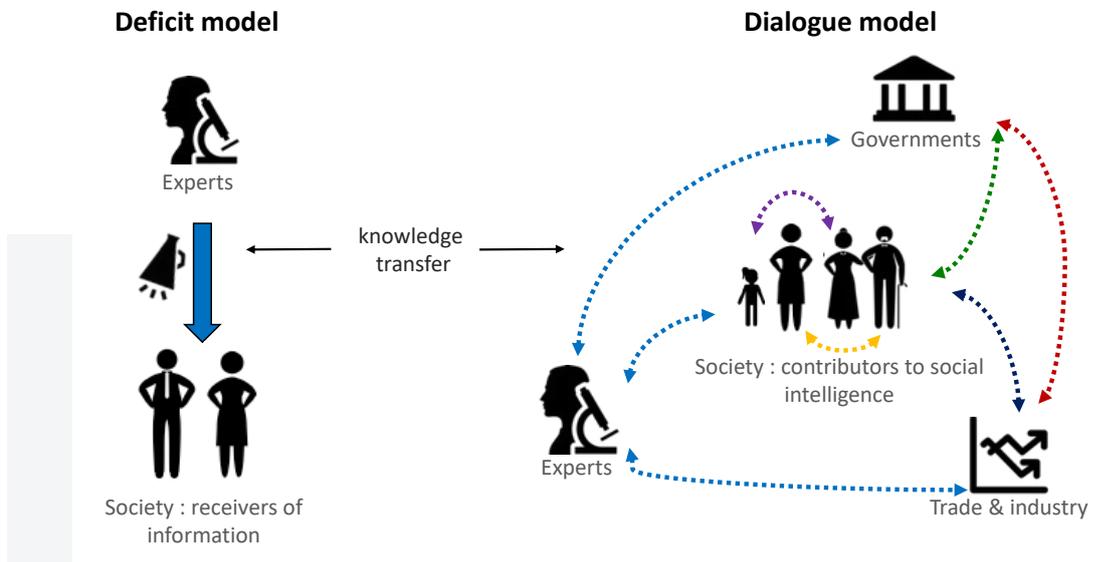


Fig. 4 As opposed to the one-way information deficit model, this Dialogue model reflects a more dynamic way of information being transferred and understood. Credit: Franck Courchamp, 2017.<sup>16</sup>



Two women look over the solar thermal collector system at West Potomac Park in Washington, D.C USA.  
Credit: Stefano Paltera / U.S. Department of Energy Solar Decathlon / CC BY-ND 2.0

In conclusion, a social mandate emerges as a result of different communities being given a voice. Building and maintaining support whilst overcoming polarisation between different groups means enabling a broad range of public audiences to:

- see their values, identity and concerns in the climate change story;
- know others they identify with are acting on climate change in a way that appears as authentic;
- be empowered to take actions that resonate with them, their concerns and the concerns of their community.

Generating sustained, committed action from high levels of concern therefore requires appropriate consideration of people's values and the social contexts in which they operate.

Engaging with diverse 'communal' values that can underpin meaningful and committed engagement from a wide range of communities and constituencies is central to Climate Outreach's approach.



Fig. 5 The role of values, beliefs and norms in generating action.<sup>17</sup>

## 2.2 A social license to operate

Public engagement also has relevance to many of the structural shifts required from the global economy. Corporations and the finance sector need a social licence to operate. If the fossil fuel industry and heavy-emitting sectors retain their social licence, they have little incentive to make or deliver on commitments to climate action.

Conversely, corporations struggle to operate when they lose their social licence, as exemplified by the tobacco industry's fall from public acceptance. Leaders of the oil and gas sector are currently expressing concerns that they might be in the same position,<sup>18</sup> but with fossil fuels forming such a central aspect of modern lifestyles, from driving to heating, the challenge to permanently shift public perceptions is significant.

# 3

## The elements of social transformation

Any social transformation is complex, and there is no ‘blueprint’ for decarbonisation. But there are recurring features linking many significant social transformations in recent history, including for example, the Irish abortion referendum campaign, the rapid changes in attitudes to same-sex marriage, and the advance of smoking bans. These are also reflected where progress on net zero policies has taken place around the world.

Broadly speaking, transformative change appears to require:

- **A social mandate:** a consistent majority of the public in support of significant change or transformation;
- **Compelling narratives that relate to communal values:** allowing diverse communities to engage with the issue in a way that chimes with their identity, rather than simply as a factual or technical policy issue;
- **A supportive economic context:** without a prevailing economic wind, even popular policy changes may not be implemented or prioritised.

### 3.1 Public consent and people-led change

People will need to be central to much of the societal transformation needed around the world. For example, the UK’s Committee on Climate Change is clear that the majority of UK emissions reductions to reach net zero will need to come from significant societal or behaviour change,<sup>19</sup> and therefore will require significant public buy-in. Without this buy-in, climate policies may fail, as has already been seen internationally with carbon pricing programmes,<sup>20</sup> or domestically on zero-carbon home policies.<sup>21</sup>



Thousands of students take part in a climate demonstration in Berlin, Germany. Credit: Tim Lüddemann / Fridays For Future/ CC BY-NC-ND 2.0

This isn't unprecedented – profound changes have happened in the past. Social pressure was crucial to the ending of the slave trade, which had huge implications for the global superpowers of the time.<sup>22</sup> Smoking indoors moved to being socially unacceptable in many societies over a relatively short time period. The rights of people stigmatised because of their race or sexuality are now socially and politically recognised across geographies, despite deeply ingrained societal prejudices that once seemed insurmountable. In 2020, governments across the world significantly changed the lifestyles of their populations in response to the Covid-19 pandemic.

None of these transformations happened through technocratic changes alone – they required widespread acceptance, and rapidly shifting social and moral norms around the need to act. Attitudes and actions that previously seemed ‘radical’ were normalised, and a sustained shift in what is politically and socially acceptable took place.

# 4

## Generating a social mandate for climate action

Climate Outreach believes that there are three critical elements that combine to generate a social mandate for climate action: cross-societal concern, lack of polarisation and concern turned into action. The following outlines the indicators of success for each element.

### Cross-societal concern

- 1 Polling consistently shows that climate change is amongst the top five concerns for a population, and that people across different communities are talking about climate change.
- 2 Politicians report regularly being pressured or supported on taking climate action by their geographical and political constituents.
- 3 The majority of the public supports the delivery of specific low-carbon policies.
- 4 Audiences across a society express support for advocates for action on climate change, and their campaigns.

### Lack of polarisation

- 1 Political parties of all stripes recognise the importance of climate change in their manifestos and political speeches.
- 2 Spokespeople associated with right-of-centre organisations speak out on climate change.
- 3 Polling shows decreasing support for the fossil fuel industry and high-carbon policies.

### Concern turned into action

- 1 Populations are consistently positive about key low-carbon behaviours—for example transport, heating, diet and consumption—and report that they are acting on this.
- 2 Populations report that they know others in their communities who care about climate change and are acting.
- 3 Communities are genuinely involved in creating climate policies and holding decision makers to account.
- 4 Corporates report high levels of demand for low-carbon choices from their customers and clients.

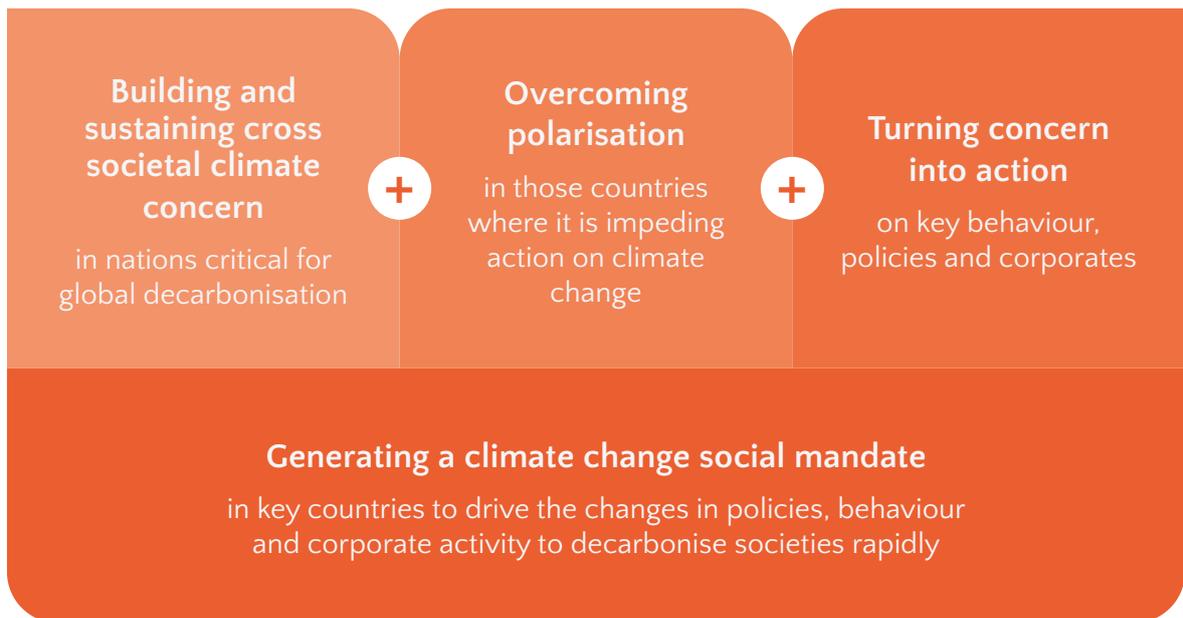


Fig. 6 Generating a climate change social mandate. Credit: Climate Outreach.



Local residents and businesses pitch in to clean up the town centre and riverside after a devastating flooding in West Yorkshire, UK. Credit: Damien Maguire Photography / Alamy Stock Photo

# 5

## Critical themes for effective public engagement

Climate Outreach will focus on **five critical themes for public engagement** that will guide and cut across the organisation's strategy and five programme areas.



Fig. 7 Critical themes for effective public engagement. Credit: Climate Outreach.

### 5.1 Political polarisation

Across many parts of the world climate change is strongly associated with the values and narratives of the left. Groups almost exclusively associated with the political right (especially in the Anglophone world) that have actively exploited the left-leaning identity of the issue, framing it as an assault on liberties or a covert attempt to create a socialist political system.

This has resulted in groups with differing identities pulling away, feeling disengaged, and unable to connect positively with their peers on the issue. Views on climate change are particularly polarised in the USA, Australia and Brazil, where it is firmly seen as a 'leftist' issue that those on the right identify in opposition to.

Societies demonstrating high levels of cross-societal concern—for example Germany, Norway and the UK at times—tend to have achieved higher levels of political ambition on climate change. Conversely, where the issue is identified largely with one section of society, climate action has been sporadic – for example US, Canada, Australia or Brazil.

Climate Outreach's groundbreaking work on engaging centre-right audiences has helped put climate advocates in the UK on the front foot in tackling polarisation. These insights are likely to be extremely valuable in other nations where polarisation threatens political and personal action. Climate Outreach's methodology is also needed to give a voice to sectors that are going to be significantly impacted by the low-carbon transition.



Technicians work on a drilling rig in Alberta, Canada. Credit: Mikael Kjellstrom.

## 5.2 Just transition

The implementation of ambitious policies and behaviour change initiatives will be rejected unless key communities see the need for them, accepting both their necessity but also the costs and benefits involved.

The transition to a low-carbon economy is likely to have the greater negative impact on poorer communities unless careful consideration is given to a just transition, which can only happen if the voices of such communities are integrated into the change process. ‘Climate gentrification’<sup>23</sup> is already exacerbating inequalities within cities, for example.

In the past populists have focused on engaging those segments of the population that are threatened by modernisation and pro-climate action, such as fossil fuel workers.<sup>24</sup> If these audiences are not equally engaged in the conversation, climate policies are likely to fuel political polarisation, further undermining national and international action.

## 5.3 Behaviour

As the most recent report from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC)<sup>25</sup> makes resoundingly clear, rapid societal transitions—including significant shifts in the lifestyles of ordinary people in high-carbon countries like the UK—must take place over the coming years to avoid the worst impacts of climate change. Three-quarters of the UK’s carbon emissions are attributable to households.<sup>26</sup> From the way we travel, to the food we eat and the way we use energy at home, achieving a ‘1.5 degrees’ world means mainstreaming low-carbon lifestyles, in tandem with the structural and policy changes required to decarbonise quickly.

Key developments such as the phasing out of coal from the energy mix have happened mostly behind-the-scenes, and have required only limited public engagement. Many of the challenges that remain involve public support for more far-reaching policy shifts, and the active participation in low-carbon lifestyles. But while there is some evidence of limited shifts in behaviours in some nations (e.g. reusing plastic bags in the UK), low-carbon lifestyles are very far from being the norm. Many of the most significant behaviours in the carbon footprint of a typical high-consuming citizen—such as flying, or eating red meat—show few signs of progress.

The severe disruptions created by the Covid-19 pandemic may offer opportunities for habits to change on a long term basis. There is a risk, of course, that there will be a rush to ‘return to normal’. What is clear, shining a critical light on why the right values-led engagement strategies are so critical, is that behaviours and lifestyles will not shift without a concerted society-wide effort. The reasons and motivations behind changes in behaviour really matter. When an action is perceived to be driven by a sense of conviction (‘I want to do this’), rather than the result of coercion (‘I’m being told I should do this’), lifestyle changes will be more likely to follow.

Mainstreaming new social norms is critical to achieving this. Behavioural changes need to be about more than just money if they are to add to a shift in low-carbon lifestyles. The point is not that people don’t care about how low-carbon choices will impact on their wallet (they do), but that this is not enough to sustain a low-carbon lifestyle, and that through the ‘rebound effect’, low carbon choices in one situation may be cancelled out by high-carbon choices in another, where the financial incentives are absent.



Families gather at a community garden in Washington, USA. Credit: King County Parks Your Big Backyard / CC BY-NC-ND 2.0.



A technician makes adjustments to a wind turbine at the National Wind Technology Center in Colorado, USA. Credit: Dennis Schroeder / Department of Energy / NREL / CC BY-NC 2.0.

## 5.4 Mitigation

The international community agreed in 2015 to “pursue efforts” to limit warming to 1.5 °C by the end of the century, as part of the Paris agreement on climate change. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change’s (IPCC) October 2018 Special Report lays out the vast array of social, political, cultural, economic and technological changes this would entail, and the speed with which measures would need to be implemented.<sup>27</sup>

The decline of coal-fired power and the rise of renewables in the power system, particularly in advanced economies,<sup>28</sup> demonstrates that progress is being made. But the decarbonisation of world economies is still an enormous challenge, and vested interests continue to push back against the radical changes that are needed.

Technological changes will not be sufficient to achieve this – a social and political mandate is needed. In the past, for example, some public opposition to windfarms has been sufficient to limit expansion of the industry in both the UK and Germany.<sup>29</sup> Rapid and far-reaching emission cuts are only likely when the fossil fuel industry and heavy-emitting sectors lose their social licence to operate under the current model.

Achieving this means creating narratives that resonate with values and identity across society – often focused on co-benefits but without losing the connection to climate change. Policy will only succeed in the long-term if it responds to the day to day needs of the population, discovered through effective engagement.

## 5.5 Adaptation

As a critical decade for curbing global greenhouse gas emissions gets underway, the climate is already changing, affecting citizens and communities in a range of increasingly visible ways.<sup>30</sup> Perhaps understandably, policies and targets for curbing carbon emissions (mitigation) receive more attention from politicians and the media than strategies for building resilience to the impacts of climate change (adaptation). However, adaptation policies are now becoming increasingly important in shaping the world's response to climate change, and in the aftermath of the Covid-19 pandemic, 'building back' in a low-carbon, more resilient way, will be front of mind for many policy, campaign and public groups.

Like policies on mitigation, efforts to adapt to climate risks and build resilience will not succeed unless they are based on an understanding of public attitudes around climate risks and strategies for reducing our vulnerability to them.<sup>31</sup> In addition to the technical, environmental and economic factors underlying decisions about future adaptation options, supportive public opinion—obtaining a social mandate—is crucial. And engagement with individuals and communities (whether these are campaigners, civil society groups or policy makers) on climate risks and adaptation must be grounded in the growing body of social science evidence around the effective communication of climate change and climate risks.<sup>32</sup>

# Engaging with critical stakeholders

Climate Outreach will also focus on working with six types of critical stakeholders for effective public engagement. The following outlines how and why we work with these stakeholders.



Fig. 8 Critical stakeholders for effective public engagement. Credit: Climate Outreach

## 6.1. Climate advocates

- Climate strikers, Extinction Rebellion disruption and a new generation of activists offer critical 'grassroots' recipients for Climate Outreach resources and thinking. Civil society groups engage widely with Climate Outreach work;
- Climate advocates, including funders, increasingly recognise the importance of public engagement.

## 6.2. Non-climate communities

- Supporting key spokespeople from outside the traditional climate community to tell new authentic stories of climate concern and action is a key aim across Climate Outreach's programmes;
- Right-wing populism and political polarisation—including previous work on the centre right—is a central focus for Climate Outreach.

## 6.3. Social scientists

- Working with academic partners to generate the key 'resource' Climate Outreach draws on, the social science that underpins the organisation's work;

- Partnering with social scientists and shaping Research Council priorities strategically means there is a two way flow of thought leadership and an exchange of evidence and impact between Climate Outreach and the social science sector.

## 6.4 Visual media

- The Climate Visuals programme generates a new visual language for both traditional and digital media, enabling wider communities to engage with visual narratives on climate change.



Technicians install and test a solar array as part of a project to electrify rural schools in Bamiyan province, Afghanistan. Credit: Robert Foster / Winrock International / US AID / CC BY-NC 2.0.



## 6.5 Experts

- Working with climate scientists to authentically and effectively speak up on their issues in a way that resonates widely;
- Enabling other key expert influencers, such as teachers and economists to confidently communicate their knowledge around climate change to the widest possible audiences .

## 6.6 Decision-makers

- Building public pressure on politicians to act in a way that resonates across the political spectrum;
  - Ensuring the public are central to climate policy creation, particularly through the creation of deliberative democratic spaces;
  - Educating politicians so that governments (a) ensure the communication of policies and behaviour change initiatives starts from the values and concerns of the audiences, and (b) understand how to best create long-lasting shifts in high-carbon behaviour;
  - Using the UNFCCC Action for Climate Empowerment (ACE) dialogue process as a lever to drive national governments to deliver best practice public engagement with their citizens and ensure governments implement and communicate gender-appropriate policies and initiatives.
- 

# Climate Outreach's contribution

## 7.1 Pathways to generating a social mandate

Climate Outreach will build on the elements for generating a social mandate (cross-societal concern, overcoming polarisation and turning concern into action) via three complementary approaches, in order of priority:

- 1 Mobilising understanding of how to best engage key audiences with climate change actions and ensuring research drives significant impact.
- 2 Motivating a diverse range of communities through supporting communicators, organisations and trusted messengers to effectively engage key audiences through informed practices.
- 3 Promoting the importance of informed public engagement to decision-makers, and the centrality of people-based approaches in successfully tackling climate change to governments, public bodies, civil society and funders.

Guided by our themes and working with different stakeholders, these approaches will enable multiple pathways towards generating a social mandate for climate change action.

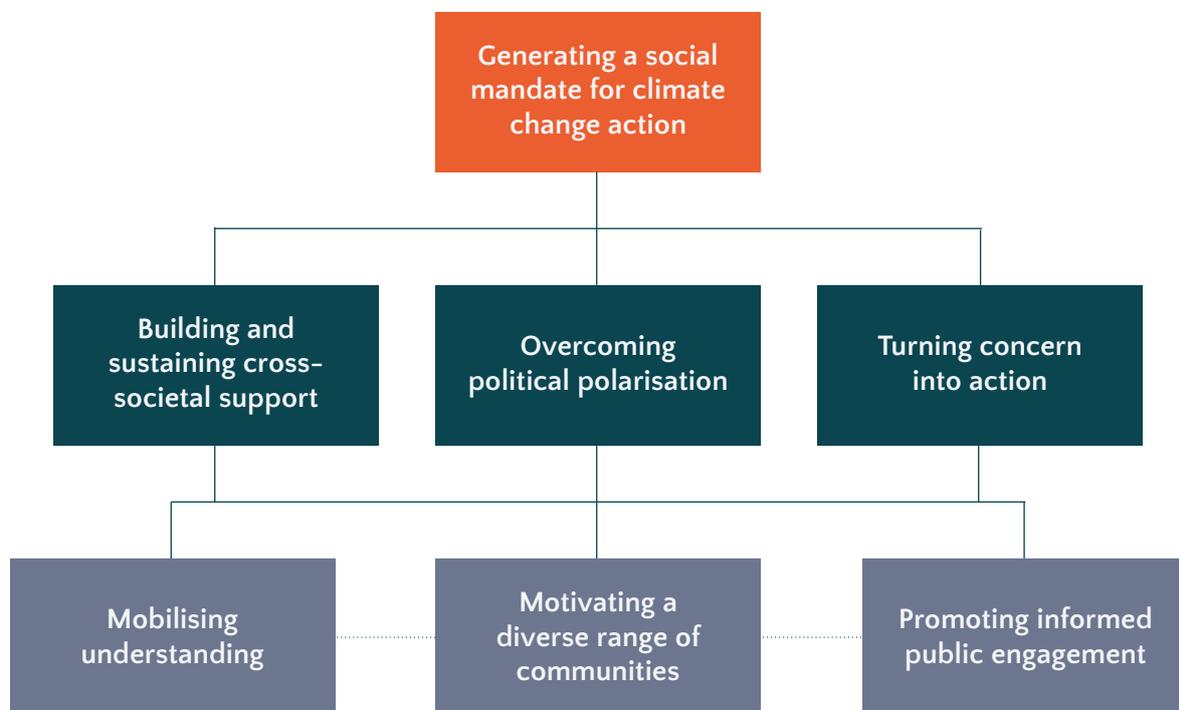


Fig. 9 Pathways to generating a social mandate. Credit: Climate Outreach.

## 7.2 Key Activities

The three approaches will guide Climate Outreach's activities, creating different pathways of change towards generating a social mandate on climate action. These activities include:

- 1 Creating and catalysing motivational value-based climate narratives and imagery that resonate with key concerns of key communities, including health, cultural preservation, family and faith.
- 2 Supporting trusted spokespeople to advocate for climate action in a way that resonates with key communities, whether they are climate experts or community leaders.
- 3 Promoting actions that enable communities to have efficacy and to turn concern into tangible action.
- 4 Generating positive social norms and a facilitating environment around low-carbon behaviours whilst stigmatising and creating barriers to high-carbon behaviours.
- 5 Creating a consistent landscape where public bodies are reinforcing the need to act.
- 6 Campaigning for stakeholders to build public engagement infrastructure and resources equivalent to any other low-carbon infrastructure.

## 7.3 Geographical focus

As the impacts of climate change escalate and the world's ability to deal with cumulative emissions becomes harder, it is vital to raise the voices of impacted communities at the international level whilst promoting effective domestic public engagement by governments and key campaigns. Concentrating support for effective public engagement in the following three key types of nations is critical:

- 1 High-emitting nations in which political polarisation is acting as a barrier to climate action. Allowing these countries to show that a low level of climate ambition is acceptable risks undermining the positive efforts of other nations and fuelling opposition.
- 2 High-emitting nations in which concern is high but where translating this into implementing transformative actions is proving hard. Enabling these countries to achieve rapid decarbonisation will act as a multiplier effect for others.
- 3 High-emitting, emerging economies in which the impacts of climate change are significant but which are highly dependent on fossil fuels and where there is little public concern about, or knowledge of, climate change.

# 8

## Placing people at the heart of addressing climate change

Climate Outreach's approach places people – their values and experiences – at the heart of public engagement on climate change, in order to build the social mandate necessary to transform our societies.

The organisation is a world leader in climate change public engagement, recognised for empirically driven expertise, practical support for communicators and passion for driving effective public engagement on climate change. The organisations' role is as a catalyser of best practice and understanding. It supports key stakeholders in strategic communities to create the cross-societal buy-in so necessary for decarbonisation.

Climate Outreach's ambition is to be an influential force for change, unifying societies in the fight against climate change. It does this by focusing on the importance of ensuring diverse communities are at the heart of the climate struggle.

### 8.1 Capacity

Climate Outreach has a team of social science experts at the forefront of generating climate change public engagement understanding, working with leading practitioners and strategists to advise and support key organisations and initiatives with communication insights, tools, training and advice. It leverages impact through partnership and thought leadership rather than delivery. As Climate Outreach operates with and through delivery partners and wishes to remain focused and nimble, the staff team has a ceiling of 30 employees, the majority of whom will be UK-based.

### 8.2 Added value

Climate Outreach expertise is in creating, synthesising and catalysing the best public engagement understanding and practices. Using cutting-edge social science the team is focused on enabling diverse peoples to connect with the reality of climate change, and translating this knowledge into practical tools for engaging wider communities.

The organisation works with and through partners to fill key gaps, helping organisations from across the world and the political spectrum drive sustained and transformational change. By sharing experience and knowledge the organisation to raise the collective understanding and impact of public engagement, rather than as a direct deliverer. We believe strongly in the importance of effective public engagement as a key solution to climate change and advocate with decision makers to ensure it is central to addressing climate change.

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