



# Guideline Climate Hikes

**Step by Step Towards your Climate Hike!**



Co-funded by the  
European Union

## **Imprint**

Published by  
Naturfreunde Internationale  
Viktoriagasse 6/1, A-1150 Wien  
[www.nf.int.org](http://www.nf.int.org)  
E-mail: [office@nf-int.org](mailto:office@nf-int.org)  
Tel.: +43 (0)1 892 38 77

Researched, authored and edited by  
Naturefriends International (NFI), Young Naturefriends Germany (NFJD), Ecosystem Europe and FROS  
Multisport Flanders (fros)

Photographs  
(c) fros Multisport Flanders, Ecosystem Europe, Naturefriends International

Graphic design, layout and composition  
Naturefriends International (NFI)

## **Project Information**

Climate Hikes is an Erasmus+ cooperation between Naturefriends International (NFI), Young Naturefriends Germany (NFJD), Ecosystem Europe and FROS Multisport Flanders (fros). You can find more information about the project at: [nf-int.org/climatehikes](http://nf-int.org/climatehikes)

*The Climate Hikes project is funded by the European Union. However, the views and opinions expressed are solely those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or the European Education and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA). Neither the European Union nor the EACEA can be held responsible.*

# Table of Contents

<b>Chapter 1: What Is “Climate Hikes”?</b> .....	<b>1</b>
• Hiking for a Better Future!	
• About the Project	
• Why Do We Need Climate Hikes?	
• Benefits of Hiking	
• Who Do We Want to Appeal To?	
• Climate Crisis Facts	
• 10 Facts About the Climate Crisis	
• Naturefriends for Climate Justice	
<b>Chapter 2: Planning Your Climate Hike</b> .....	<b>5</b>
• Step 1: Finding Your Climate Hike Topic & Setting the Foundations	
• Step 2: Determine the Target Group and Reach out to Them	
◦ How Do You Reach Your Target Group?	
◦ How to Consider Special Needs of Your Group	
• Step 3: Hiking Basics	
◦ Who Can Organise a Climate Hike?	
◦ Better Safe Than Sorry!	
◦ Tips for Your Climate Hike	
<b>Chapter 3: Communication</b> .....	<b>9</b>
• Promoting Your Climate Hike	
• Communication During Your Climate Hike	
• Post-Hike Promotion: Implementing Your Topic in a Sustainable Way	
• Communicating Climate Topics to Your Participants	
• Nudging	
• Positive Vision	
<b>Chapter 4: Get Ready to Hike!</b> .....	<b>13</b>
• The Heart-Hand-Eye Principle	
• Ready for a Climate Hike?	

# Chapter 1

## What Is “Climate Hikes”?

### Hiking for a Better Future!

Hiking is popular because it combines physical activity, experiencing nature and mental relaxation in an ideal way. Not only does it keep our bodies in shape but it also gives our minds time to blossom. Get out of the working week and into relaxation! Every deep breath of fresh air lifts our spirits and reduces stress. Especially at a time when many of us spend most of our days indoors, hiking gives us the opportunity to reconnect with nature. Whether majestic mountains, quiet forests or vast fields – the fresh air and tranquillity of nature have a calming and grounding effect. By slowing down and hiking, we experience our environment more consciously, sharpen our senses and perceive the small wonders of nature more intensely: the rustling of leaves, the chirping of birds or the scent of fir trees and flowers. This connection to the environment promotes a deeper awareness of nature and motivates many hikers to live in a more environmentally conscious way.

We need this awareness more than ever. We are facing the greatest crisis of our time, not only, but above all, because we humans have lost our awareness of ecological connection and alienated ourselves from nature. The natural world in which we live is in danger and we want to use the Climate Hikes to address it. To talk about these topics, you need others along your journey with whom you can share your ideas, concerns and experiences. We want to use the momentum of a joint action to be together, walk together, play together, enjoy together and to listen to and learn from each other. A group can give you comfort and the necessary strength to stay capable of acting: **We are in this together!**

That means that not only the communication of research-based climate facts plays a role, but also the way we experience nature, how we as a community can share our visions and work for a positive future development and how we can make hiking itself a sustainable leisure activity.

### About the Project

The idea of the Climate Hikes is to combine sustainable outdoor activities with environmental awareness raising. Through this activity not only mental health, physical fitness and social inclusion will be practised and encouraged, but also the SDGs, the EU Green Deal and general topics of climate crisis and sustainability will be discussed. The goal of creating and encouraging climate friendly behaviour while helping and inspiring socially disadvantaged people will be combined with the idea of improving their physical fitness and simply put, having a great time outdoors. In the separate method-collection, you will be able to find a multitude of games and methods that will help you plan your Climate Hike.

### Why Do We Need Climate Hikes?

Hiking is a sport that anyone can do and it is practised all over the world. But there are many people who need help to get into nature, either because of social, physical or mental health reasons. Climate Hikes can help these people to discover and experience nature and possibly even to love hiking and other outdoor activities. At the same time, we see that environmental awareness is stagnating and needs to grow, especially among people who want to explore nature. We want to counteract the feelings of Climate Anxiety and helplessness that many people have when it comes to climate protection. Openly talking about issues like climate change, pollution and its effects can often already make a difference and have a positive impact on one's well being, especially when it is combined with outdoor activities, just like hiking. Therefore, we see the idea of Climate Hikes as an especially potent project when it comes to building psychological resilience in the face of an ever growing climate emergency.

## **Benefits of Hiking**

Hiking has proven to be a simple, inclusive and effective form of physical activity. It strengthens your bones and muscles, it improves your sense of balance, as well as the capacity of your lungs and heart and, as mentioned above, also improves your mental stability.

Hiking is a great way to improve your social health. You get to spend time with people who think like you do, and you can both enjoy the great views and wildlife. There will always be challenges to overcome, and you can count on the occasional unexpected event, too. Whether it's sudden weather changes, crossing streams or rivers, or other unexpected events, these situations often create the perfect chance to make new friends and build strong, lasting relationships.

Hiking also serves as a perfect activity to get close with nature. The slow activity of walking makes for the ideal setting in order to experience the smells, sound, colours, details and diversity of our world. It is precisely the slow tempo of hiking that makes it special and a truly educational experience in itself. This is one of the main reasons why Climate Hikes promises to be such an impactful project. Hiking serves as the ideal backdrop for educating people about the importance of climate protection, keeping the forests clean and saving our environment.

## **Who Do We Want to Appeal To?**

Organising a Climate Hike is possible for anyone who wants to combine the pleasure and enjoyment of a hike with a climate topic of their choice. It doesn't matter whether you are a hiking guide, part of an NGO or simply a committed private individual. There are countless topics available for Climate Hikes. For example, you can focus on the general climate crisis, the lack of water in the region or the influence of increasingly hot summers on the vegetation, people's lack of relationship with nature, as well as positive local initiatives.

The Climate Hikes are aimed at different target groups. We have prepared a few inspiring Climate Hikes scenarios for you so that you can pick up on your target group thematically. We offer you an extensive repertoire of topics, methods and scenarios that you can put together for your own hike.

## **Climate Crisis Facts**

The Climate Change 2023 Synthesis Report by The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), the United Nations body for assessing the science related to climate change, come to the conclusion that human activity is responsible for global warming through its contribution to increased global greenhouse emissions, caused by unsustainable energy and land usage as well as lifestyle patterns of consumptions that are putting immense stress on the earth and its climate. Extreme weather events like wildfires and severe floods are increasing and will continue to. According to the IPCC, there is a "rapidly closing window" of opportunity to secure a liveable and sustainable future for all.

According to the European Union's "The Copernicus Climate Change Service" (C3S), the year 2024 was the warmest on record globally, with an average global temperature of 1.6°C above pre-industrial average. The atmospheric concentrations of carbon dioxide and methane reached record levels in 2024, at 422.1ppm. The annual average sea surface temperature reached a record high of 20.87°C in 2024 (the average being around 16°C). The C3S further states that sea ice at the poles has reached historically low values and that extreme weather events will increase across the globe.



# 10 Facts About the Climate Crisis

1

**2024 was the hottest year on record** – The year was 1.6°C warmer than the 20th century average.

2

The oldest and thickest ice in the **Arctic has declined by about 95%**. By summer 2040 the Arctic could be ice-free.

3

**Global sea level is rising**. Currently it is rising by 3.6mm per year which will lead to increased coastal erosion and endangering coastal cities and settlements.

4

The desertification and subsequent **growth of the Sahara Desert growing by approximately 48 km per year** and is continuing in large parts of Northern Africa.

5

About **80% of the global population most at risk from crop failures and hunger** caused by the climate crisis are in Sub-Saharan Africa, South and Southeast Asia, where farming families are disproportionately poor and vulnerable.

6

26 million people are displaced by the climate crisis. **About 80% of the displaced are women**. These numbers are projected to continue growing.

7

Eurobarometer findings show that **85% of EU citizens want the EU to take action** to improve energy efficiency by 2030.

8

Worldwide an average decline of **69% in animal species populations** since 1970 has been observed, with climate change being one of the main factors.

9

The use of renewable energy in Europe has reached an all-time high thanks to a number of supportive policies. **Europe currently produces around 11% of the world's CO2 emissions**, which is a decrease of 21% since 2000. In 2023, 24.5% of the electricity in Europe was generated from renewable energy sources.

10

Global growth in wind and solar pushed **renewables to make up more than 30% of the global electricity mix** in 2023.

## **Naturefriends for Climate Justice**

Climate justice is a principle that grants everyone worldwide, including future generations, the same right to an intact global climate and strives for equitable financing of measures necessary as a result of climate change. Naturefriends are committed to ecological and sociopolitical causes. The aim of the activities is sustainable development of the environment and the society at the regional, national and global level. This also includes the protection of our climate, climate justice and solidarity with the Global South such as reflected in the Naturefriends Climate Fund, which is financed from donations of Naturefriends of the Global North and enables climate action of African Naturefriends organisations.

Climate justice is not charity, but a necessity for securing a decent life for all! Climate justice requires a fundamental social and ecological change of the existing conditions in the states of the Global North and of the Global South. The aim of Naturefriends International is to combine its demands regarding peacekeeping, environmental protection and ecology into a social transformation programme that enables climate justice. Since their founding, Naturefriends have stood for values such as solidarity, empowerment and social justice. These principles are reflected in Climate Hikes, which are also a tool for Naturefriends local groups to implement our values on the ground.

Moreover, hikes offer ideal opportunities to rethink social and political issues. Climate Hikes build on the historical concept of “Social Hiking” and bring it into the context of the climate crisis. In our time, challenges such as climate crisis, environmental destruction, and social inequalities demand new perspectives and strategies for action.

Climate Hikes make topics like the climate crisis and climate justice tangible in many ways: participants can witness the direct impacts of climate change at specific locations, they are listening to others and are learning from their experiences. Silent moments of contemplation create space for personal reflection. Additionally, methods of non-formal learning encourage reflections on global (in)justice regarding who causes and who suffers from the climate crisis.



**Are you interested in taking  
action for Climate Justice?**

More information about  
the Naturefriends Climate Fund:

**[www.climatefund.nf-int.org](http://www.climatefund.nf-int.org)**

# Chapter 2

## Planning Your Climate Hike

In this chapter you'll find step by step instructions to implement your Climate Hike. We will guide you through brainstorming for your ideas, communication of your Climate Hike and the necessary organisation to make your Climate Hike a successful experience for everybody.

### Step 1: Finding Your Climate Hike Topic & Setting the Foundations

The first and most important thing is that you think about the message you want to transport during your hike. We suggest combining general climate topics with specific and local topics relevant in your region. Furthermore, you should choose a topic which has a connection to your target group - it shouldn't be something too abstract, but you should look for links to the personal life of the participants:

- Look for a topic that really interests you, where you have an emotional connection and is important to you: You will have a better commitment and it will be easier to inspire people. Talk about something you know and have a personal relationship with
- Try brainstorming including possible questions: What fascinates you most about nature? What are your biggest concerns in your region? What is your vision of the future for your region?
- Write down the core message: it will help you keep your focus on the right things!

**Example:** *One example could be water scarcity in your region and the problem of warming oceans. Maybe you can find a hike in your area where you can see rivers or runlets that are affected by water scarcity. Take a look at it and discuss it with your group. How will this affect your community? What can be done to solve the problem?*

### Step 2: Determine the Target Group and Reach out to Them

In this step you will find inspiration to find the right target group for your Climate Hike. Think about how you can involve as many people as possible so that they feel welcome and motivated. Consider the needs of your target group so that as many people as possible can take part, regardless of age, background or ability.

#### How Do You Reach Your Target Group?

- Start with a group you are familiar with. You don't have to start with the most difficult conditions, make it easy for yourself and work your way up.
- How can you spark the interest of these people? What are the interesting questions for your target group? Are they usually active in nature, or are they more interested in talking about climate and climate issues? Do they have hobbies that align with the project? Is it older people who are thinking about the future of their grandchildren, or are they particularly burdened individuals seeking a connection to nature? Put yourself in your target group's shoes and try to see things from their perspective.



- Adjust the programme to the needs and topics of interest for your target group.
- Are there any groups, associations or organisations that can help you reach your target group? Whether it's the local kindergarten or sports club, ask for their help.
- Which platforms do they use? Social media, local networks or direct contact? Use strong images, short videos or simple infographics to get your message across clearly and attractively. (You can find more information about communicating your activities in chapter 3)
- Identify and break down barriers: What could prevent the target group from participating in your project? (e.g. accessibility, language, etc.). How can you ensure that your activity is inclusive and everyone feels welcome?

### **How to Consider Special Needs of Your Group**

As already mentioned, it is crucial to put yourself in your target group's shoes and try to see things from their perspective. There is a major difference between hiking with kids and hiking with an adult group in respect to responsibility and thus organisation. Other groups have of course also extra needs that need to be taken into consideration.

If you plan your Climate Hike with a group of youngsters and they are all scouts, it is hardly necessary to mention the need for proper footing and clothing. These youngsters know what it is like to hike and to be in nature. But if you plan a Climate Hike with a group of children from a school in town, you might have children who have never hiked before and don't have the right shoes or a raincoat. This is especially true for children from diverse backgrounds and origins, who may have never experienced nature before. You need to consider this when preparing your Climate Hike.

The same is true for adult groups. Many adults may have never hiked before and will not understand if you tell them to wear "proper shoes". They simply may not know what proper shoes are. In these cases, it may be helpful to show a picture of appropriate footwear on the leaflet or information sheet you send them, as pictures are easier to understand than text. This is especially true for many people who have emigrated to another country. We know from experience that it is a challenge to invite this group to outdoor activities, and that you need to work together with them and maybe even get the help of social workers who know them.

It doesn't matter with whom you want to do a Climate Hike, you will always have to consider specific details that are important to specific groups of people. Don't see this as a problem but rather as a beneficial thing to consider so that you are well prepared for the hike! Here are some examples of what you should think about.

#### ***Example: Physically disabled people***

*Check the infrastructure: How about arrival? Is the road suitable for people in wheelchairs? Are there accessible restrooms? Where can I rest with the group? Depending on the disabilities, announce the event in easy-to-understand language. Add these points in your invitation: Accessibility, trail conditions, duration, resting opportunities, are guide-dogs allowed?*

*We have developed a guideline especially for this target group.*

### **Example: Socially Disadvantaged People**

*Experience showed that this group tends to be not too familiar with outdoor activities, so make it easy! Show them how to identify different types of trees, for example. Nothing too challenging. Try to find out if they have been on hikes before, and when. If not, why not? Think about what they want to talk about. Are they interested in climate change? Or are they more interested in nature or hiking in general?*

### **Example: Single Parents**

*Maybe no beginners of outdoor activities but short of time, make it worthwhile! This group is probably more interested in topics of climate crisis and sustainability. Good topics to talk about: What can a single parent do to help the environment? Probably the social factor is more important than the climate topic in itself. Most single parents need some time off from their kids every now and then and a Climate Hike could be a really good idea to unwind and get out. It is important to make it enjoyable, so games could be a good way to release tension and connect with the other participants of the Climate Hike.*

Of course, these examples are not representative for all of the groups pointed out: Socially disadvantaged people can be very familiar with nature and hiking, and single parents might have no experience in outdoor activities. Get to know the people you want to hike with and take this guideline as inspiration!

## **Step 3: Hiking Basics**

Still interested in doing a Climate Hike? Great! While motivation and joy is the key for success, there are some basics that you should know if you want to plan a Climate Hike. Here are some short but useful tips for you!

### **Who Can Organise a Climate Hike?**

Anyone can organise a Climate Hike, but as an organiser, you are responsible for the people on your hike. If you plan a Climate Hike alone with minors, you are completely responsible. With adults, it is easier and can be seen as a shared responsibility. The best option is to work with an official organisation (NGO, governmental (youth)organisation, etc.) that has good liability insurance for you. Remember that a Climate Hike should be a non-profit activity, so you will not receive any monetary compensation.

### **Better Safe Than Sorry!**

Whether you plan a hike with adults or with minors: it is always the responsibility of the organiser that everything works out fine. Climate Hikes, by nature, happen outside. Nature has its hazards like weather changes and even the “civilised” nature, like the one we are used to encountering in the touristic areas can hide a challenge. This is even more true for participants who are not used to or experienced in hiking. It is up to the organiser to anticipate those possible hazards.



## Tips for Your Climate Hike

1. Start with a group that you are familiar with. That way the group will be less likely to overwhelm you and the hike will not be too demanding. Only take a group on a trail that you as an organiser and guide can rely on. This way you won't get any unwelcome surprises during the hike and be able to point out all the interesting spots & possible challenging sections of the hike.
2. When hiking with youngsters or children: at least two guides are necessary for the group: one of you will always stay with the group, the other can – if needed – seek help, food, etc.
3. Do not go on a hike in nature with more than 12 people: a larger number is too hard to keep together and tends to get too noisy to enjoy nature and keep under control.
4. Give the participants a clear and extensive briefing on the hike at least one week before you meet for the hike, so that they know exactly what to expect in terms of physical condition and equipment.
5. Check that every participant has appropriate footwear: slippers are never appropriate in nature, but heavy mountaineering boots are maybe too much for moderate hikes.
6. Take care that everyone brings food and drinks appropriate for the length of the hike. If hiking in mountainous regions: drinking 1 litre for every 1000m altitude is important to stay hydrated. Discourage the use of soda and alcohol. Water is the best.
7. As a guide: bring extra “power food” in case a participant runs out of energy and gets exhausted.
8. Make sure that every participant brings appropriate clothing. Something warm like a fleece or a sweater and something to protect against wind and rain is standard on every hike.
9. Every participant should bring a bag to carry all her/his waste back home, out of the nature.
10. The guide checks the weather forecast before and follows the evolution of the weather during the hike. Avoid getting people caught in rain or storm: turn around or seek shelter before it is too late.
11. “Out together – home together”: We never leave someone behind in nature! We do not let people run ahead, nor let someone trail off behind us. The golden rule is: stay in distance of “speech and view”. The guide is always the last one to enter the hut, shelter, pub, bus, train in order to leave nobody behind.
12. Be flexible, do not get fixated on the plans you made. Adapt to the changing situation of nature, people's mood and unexpected possibilities that you meet on the hike.
13. Brochures from local touristic services and also touristic maps can be very helpful. They can provide useful information concerning the accessibility of trails and forests. Forests can be private and even inaccessible or can be closed off in certain seasons. Of course, always respect nature, if only by not leaving the path and absolutely respect plantations.
14. Enjoy it! Participants will only learn something from the activities if they enjoy it and feel good. A Climate Hike is not a school nor a training, but in the first place a hike in nature.

This section deals with the communication part of a Climate Hike. It is important for you to know that there are two types of communication that will be presented here: The external and the internal communication. The first section deals with the external communication outwards in order to get as much attention as possible for the hike. Advertise your planned hike on as many platforms (digital and real-life) as you can so that you get the biggest outreach possible!

### Promoting Your Climate Hike

To promote your hike and ensure it's a sustainable experience, we recommend leveraging digital communication, particularly through social media. Social media is widely used in people's personal time, offering a space for connection, exchange, and joy. Therefore, your content should go beyond sharing basic information—it should create an emotional connection with your audience.

Start by identifying a certain person from your target group. A broad category like “people between 16 and 27” is too general for effective communication. Instead, try using the “personas” approach. This method involves creating detailed, fictional profiles that represent your audience. By empathizing with these personas, you can better tailor your messaging to their interests and needs. Try to answer questions like: what motivates them? Where do they spend most of their time online, where can I reach people like him/her?

The next step is to adjust your messaging and tone. Different audiences respond to different styles, for families you should maybe emphasize safety and joy, while beginners may respond more to a welcoming and encouraging, inclusive tone.

#### **Example Persona: "Outdoorsy Young Person"**

**Name:** Max

**Age:** 20

**Job:** Carpenter

**Hobbies:** Soccer, climbing, cooking, motor sports

**Motivation:** Action, adventure, community, healthy lifestyle

**Frustration:** Overly academic content, slow-paced activities, boredom

**Attributes:** Active, enthusiastic, social, caring, chatty, impatient, determined

**Social Media Channels:** Instagram, TikTok



One very important factor of social media and online content is the visual aspect. A good picture or video says more than a thousand words. Again, based on your target group, select images that are relatable and beautiful, with good graphics and proper file-size. Make sure that you post your promotion on the right page or social media platform. You should start with the promotion at least 3 weeks before the Climate Hike, as well as try to reach out to a local newspaper that may also want to promote your activity. Who knows, maybe you will become a local celebrity!

In your post, try to highlight benefits that matter to your audience. This might be the factor that tips the scale for a person to join the Climate Hike. Adventure seekers might want to hear about exciting river-crossings, while other target groups might want to hear about social inclusion or the flora and fauna of the region. Try to find some collaboration-partners on your social media channels, that way you can use their platform for promotion as well!

Don't forget to use keywords and hashtags that your audience follows. This will increase the chances that someone might accidentally stumble across your content and promotion!

Engaging with your target audience even before the Climate Hike is always a good idea. Join relevant online groups and forums, take part in discussions to learn more about topics that matter for your target audience and connect with people that may be able to help you out if you need any help.

And finally, it can be very helpful to use contacts with people from the region for your climate hike. When planning, think about which people you could involve. Perhaps there are already existing collaborations that you could utilise? The more knowledge you have about the region and the hiking trails, the better prepared you will be.

### **Communication During Your Climate Hike**

During the hike, collect materials for social media, such as photos and short videos. You can also involve participants in digital storytelling—a method of sharing experiences in a personal and engaging way. Digital stories are presented in compelling and emotionally engaging formats and can be interactive. Simply put, digital storytelling describes a personal and individual storytelling but combined with digital tools like digital cameras, digital voice recordings and of course digital programs for editing and uploading. By capturing individual voices, you can create deeper, more impactful content that resonates with your audience. This way you will be able to combine thoughtful planning, engaging personas, and dynamic storytelling and make your hike promotion both impactful, exciting and sustainable.

Here are some basic rules that one should follow when working with Digital Storytelling:

- Content is key
- Great pictures are vital
- The heading/title should tell the story
- Avoid monotony
- Find a fitting mood for the context

During your hike you should use your social media channels to show in a first-hand way what a Climate Hike can be like and how much joy it is. The best way to promote a Climate Hike is to do one! Many platforms, especially Instagram, have made video-content like Reels more and more important for their page and promote these much more than normal posts with pictures only, since you can show more emotions on a video than on a picture. Reels are also pushed more on the “Explore” section of the platform, which makes the chances higher that new people will find and follow you if you post short videos instead of pictures. Furthermore, short videos also give you the chance to share stories, personalities or interactions much better and with a bigger impact than what pictures could.

## **Post-Hike Promotion: Implementing Your Topic in a Sustainable Way**

Promotion doesn't end with the event. Consider your target audience for post-hike content. Are you aiming to attract future participants or recruit potential guides? Perhaps you have a political or social message you want to convey to a broader audience unfamiliar with your topic. Think about their interests, motivations, and how to connect with them effectively.

- Thank everyone who took part or supported the project and mention cooperation partners to strengthen the collaboration.
- Share figures or successes, e.g. how many people took part or what results and ideas were generated.
- After the event, send a short summary with the highlights of the event to your contacts to show what you have achieved together. A short text with quotes from the participants makes the event more tangible for outsiders. Announce a possible continuation of your project or simply get feedback from the participants.
- Provide inspiration: Encourage others to implement similar projects and invite them to share their experiences with you!

**Tip:** Use visual elements such as graphics, photos or short videos to reinforce your message. With clear and inviting communication, you will not only reach many people but also leave a lasting impression.

As stated above, the promotion doesn't end with the event. Inspiring others to plan a Climate Hike is a very important part of the project. Post highlights of the event and share what you achieved together. Thank everyone who participated or supported the project and mention cooperation partners to strengthen the collaboration. Give us tips on how to encourage and inspire others to also do a Climate Hike or a similar activity!

Additionally, be sure to share your experiences and expertise with the Naturefriends-groups. Your first-hand knowledge is very valuable to us, and we have much to learn from you! Let us now about your learnings and we will share it with our network.

## **Communicating Climate Topics to Your Participants**

The other part of the communication has to do with the internal communication in your team during your hike and how you can get your message across to the participants the best way possible. Before and during the Climate Hike you should decide on what core message you want to communicate. Deciding on a central message will give you a thread which will help you structure and organise everything much better.

## **Make Your Topics Tangible!**

The environment can help to make your topic more accessible. For example, if you are talking about sustainability, you could stop at a place where there is litter to show participants the effects of littering.

It is worth familiarising yourself with the area where your activity is taking place beforehand. Learn more about the landscape and the impact of the climate crisis on the region. Also, don't forget to give participants the opportunity to actively explore the environment around them. Let them be curious and explore the topic first hand.

### **Nudging**

“Nudging” is a concept from behavioural economics that aims to subtly steer people towards a certain behaviour without restricting their freedom of choice. This can be an effective tool in order to draw attention to global sustainability issues and promote sustainable behaviour. People tend to choose the default option, and they prefer what is more accessible. For example, you can specify a public transport route for your hike and avoid giving directions by car. You can also specify the vegetarian option as the default option for a shared snack.

### **Positive Vision**

Positive instructions and rewards work better than prohibitions and punishments. If you want your participants to be motivated and hopeful about the topic, then try to include this in your communication. With a positive vision of the future, you are sowing the seeds of a good future in the minds of the participants.

**Example:** *You can show how people rely on practical, environmentally friendly solutions in their everyday lives. Solar panels are installed on the roofs of houses and public buildings to generate sustainable electricity. They also grow herbs and vegetables on their balconies and cycle or walk more often. Things are repaired instead of thrown away, and there are easily accessible options for sustainable products everywhere - from reusable cups to plastic-free packaging. Show that for many people it feels normal and uncomplicated to behave sustainably.*

Furthermore, emphasize shared values. Show that you share similar goals, e.g. shaping a sustainable future. It happens surprisingly often that people only realise how similar their viewpoints and beliefs are to each other when they start to talk about it openly. A good idea is to talk about a personal story that relates to the SDGs and the activity. That way you not only can show how close and important the SDG goals are to each and every one of us but also open up a conversation that everyone can take part in and where everyone can share a personal experience.



# Chapter 4

## Get Ready to Hike!

While the primary goal of your hike is to engage your group with a specific topic, creating an enjoyable experience for everyone should always be your top priority. Keep the atmosphere light and avoid putting too much pressure on participants by planning a flexible and adaptable schedule.

In non-formal education, the focus isn't on traditional knowledge transfer but on sparking curiosity and providing "food for thought." This approach is particularly important when addressing sensitive topics like the climate crisis. Don't underestimate the emotional impact of these discussions. Aim to inspire participants, foster meaningful conversations, build connections, and most importantly, enjoy the time together.

### **The Heart-Hand-Eye Principle**

When leading a Climate Hike, nature should be more than just a backdrop – it should actively enhance the experience. For instance, if discussing migration, you could cross a river to illustrate the concept of borders.

Additionally, it's valuable to familiarise yourself with the area where your hike will take place. Use the Heart-Hand-Eye Principle to understand the type of landscape and its formation, the history of the place, the influence of human activity, and how the climate crisis is impacting the region. By integrating these elements into your program, you can make the hike both educational and immersive. Also, give people possibilities to explore the surrounding nature. Plan time for stopping to examine interesting plants, for instance.

### **Ready For a Climate Hike?**

We hope that this guideline has helped and inspired you in the planning of your very own Climate Hike! Keep in mind that this is a guideline that aims to assist you, not a rulebook that you must follow if you want to organise a Climate Hike. The most important thing is that everyone enjoys the hike, that everyone learns something about the climate and that you can inspire more people to think and act for the benefit of nature!

**Good luck!**



The method collection & helpful materials e.g. Climate Hike-examples and detailed curricula are available on our Website: [nf-int.org/climatehikes](https://nf-int.org/climatehikes)





ecosystem  
europe

