




Simply
sharing week

A just climate?

www.simplysharingweek.org.au

Photo: Solomon Islands, Paul Smart/Act for Peace



About Simply Sharing Week

Dear friends,

Welcome to Simply Sharing Week education resource for 2011!

Simply Sharing Week is an ecumenical initiative of several Christian relief and development agencies in Australia. Each year, Simply Sharing Week encourages Australians to learn about and become involved in issues of social justice.

This year Simply Sharing Week is focusing on climate justice and will be held from 5-11 June; however you can participate at the time of year that best suits you and your community.

The theme for 2011 is "A Just Climate?"

Climate change is one of the greatest social, economic and environmental challenges of our time. Our consumer mentality and heavy demand on energy resources has contributed to the excessive human production of greenhouse gas emissions. The effects of climate change are already having a significant impact not only on ecosystems around the globe, but on the lives and livelihoods of many people, particularly the world's poorest and most vulnerable. The World Health Organization has estimated that 150,000 people are dying every year because of climate change.¹ Are we living in 'A Just Climate?'

These Simply Sharing Week resources and activities explore the many complex issues surrounding climate change; present information on the causes and consequences of climate change; give a voice to those who are being directly affected by the changes in climate; and provide tools for reflecting on our individual and collective contribution to this global situation.

Advocacy activity for 2011

This year, as part of Simply Sharing Week, we are joining with the Micah Challenge Australia² 'Share the Earth' Campaign, to send a clear message to the Australian Government, that as a nation we must take responsibility and act now on climate change in order to ensure environmental sustainability and reduce the effects of a changing climate on the poor.

You can be involved by organising a 'Share the Table' event in your community. Information on how to take part in this action is included in these resource materials.

Thank you for participating in Simply Sharing Week 2011.

Kind regards,



Jack de Groot
CEO,
Caritas Australia




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What is in this kit?

- Background information
- Prayer and reflection resources
- Climate change witness
- Primary activities
- Secondary and Parish activities
- Advocacy action: Share the Table
- Poster

Online resources

Visit the Simply Sharing Week website at simplysharingweek.org.au

- Download all printed resources
- Download the Simply Sharing Week powerpoint
- Access additional resources, activities and links to further information
- Complete the online feedback form to help us improve on Simply Sharing Week in the future.

¹ Campbell-Lendrum, Diarmid, Foley, Jonathan A, Holloway, Tracey, & Patz, Jonathan A, Impact of regional climate change on human health, Nature issue 438, pp 310-317, 17 November 2005.

² Micah Challenge is a global campaign of Christians speaking out against poverty and injustice www.micahchallenge.org.au



Photo: Paul Smart/Act for Peace

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Please give us your valuable feedback! Complete our online survey at www.simplysharingweek.org.au or send us an email at ssw@caritas.org.au

Background information

What is climate change?

The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) states that 'climate change refers to a change of climate which is attributed directly or indirectly to human activity that alters the composition of the global atmosphere and which is in addition to natural climate variability observed over comparable time periods.'



Greenhouse effect

The Earth's climate is driven by a continuous flow of energy from the sun. Heat energy from the sun passes through the Earth's atmosphere and warms the Earth's surface. As the temperature increases, the Earth sends heat energy back into the atmosphere. Some of this heat is absorbed by gases such as carbon dioxide (CO₂), water vapour, methane, etc. These gases, which are all naturally occurring, act as a blanket, trapping in the heat keeping the Earth's average temperature at about 15°C, warm enough to sustain all life. Without these gases, the average temperature would plummet and everything would freeze.¹

Human activities and climate change

The amount of naturally produced CO₂ is almost perfectly balanced by the amount naturally removed. Small changes in human activity can have a significant impact on this balance. Scientists have discovered that the rate of global warming is far beyond what can be explained by natural changes. Data from the World Resources Institute (WRI) shows that humans have added 2.3 trillion tonnes of CO₂ to the atmosphere in the last 200 years. Half of this amount was added in the last 30 years. The largest absolute increase in CO₂ emissions occurred in 2004, when burning fossil fuels alone added more than 28 billion tonnes to the atmosphere.²

What are the impacts of climate change?

Change in temperature

In 2007 the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), released a report on climate change. It found that:

- in the last 100 years the Earth has warmed by 0.74°C;
- eleven of the last 12 years (1995-2006) rank among the 12 warmest years since 1850; and
- there is a risk that by the end of the 21st century temperatures could rise by between 1.1 and 6.4°C.

Increased global temperatures are already associated with a reduction in polar ice, melting of glaciers and thawing of permanently frozen ground in high latitudes. At a regional or local scale, it is uncertain as to how much climate change will affect snowfall and the altitude of snowlines.³

What's the difference between weather and climate?

The difference between weather and climate is a measure of time. **Weather** is a description of conditions over a short period of time – a 'snapshot' of the atmosphere at a particular time. **Climate**, on the other hand, is the sum or synthesis of all the weather recorded over a long period of time.

Rising sea levels

The increase in ocean temperatures will not only melt polar ice and glaciers, it will also make the volume of water in oceans expand. Both of these processes contribute to rising sea levels.

1 http://wwf.panda.org/about_our_earth/aboutcc/how_cc_works/

2 WRI, Navigating the numbers, based on data from IEA, EIA, Marland et al, and BP.

3 Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, Climate Change 2007: The Physical Science Basis. Summary for Policymakers, Working Group I, Fourth Assessment Report, Geneva, 2007



The most vulnerable to sea level rises are low-lying oceanic islands, particularly island atolls, and river deltas, such as the Ganges delta in Bangladesh and the communities in the Pacific Islands. In these localities, rising sea levels are already causing groundwater contamination, and submergence during high tides is becoming more frequent. Concerns are now emerging that many island atolls will become uninhabitable, forcing migration of human populations and extinction of island fauna and flora.

Nature at risk

Scientists predict that under a 2°C global temperature rise about 25% of the Earth's animals and plants will disappear, a 3°C rise would see 35% disappear. In Australia, at least 90 species are considered at risk. Global warming also stresses ecosystems through temperature rises, water shortages, increased fire threats, weed and pest invasions, intense storm damage and salt invasion, just to name a few.

Humanity at risk

Despite the fact that climate change is being primarily caused by people in wealthy countries, people in developing countries will bear the brunt of the impacts.

The Stern Report (2006) stated that:

"The poorest developing countries will be hit earliest and hardest by climate change, even though they have contributed little to causing the problem. Their low incomes make it difficult to finance adaptation. The international community has an obligation to support them in adapting to climate change. Without such support there is a serious risk that development progress will be undermined."

Water

Climate change will severely affect access to drinkable water supply in a variety of ways. Rainfall changes, combined with projected evaporation increases, are expected to result in reduced run-off across most of Australia. Whereas in many Pacific Island nations, drinkable water supply is at risk of contamination from rising sea levels.

Agriculture

Climate change is likely to have a significant impact on the agricultural sector, although there is some potential for adaptation. Climate change may affect stock and crop production by increasing the heat stress, increasing outbreaks of pests and disease, and reducing the supply of water and feed.

The IPCC reports that, by 2020, productivity from agriculture in many African countries could be reduced by as much as 50%. These negative impacts on agriculture will compromise food security and increase cases of malnutrition.³

Displacement

The year 1998 was not just the hottest year in a millennium; it was also the first in which more people fled disaster than war, according to the International Red Cross. Drought, floods, deforestation and poor agricultural prospects drove some 25 million environmental displaced persons off the land into already crowded shanty towns. That year, they represented 58% of the total refugee population worldwide.

Some countries, especially the world's small island nations, face obliteration due to climate change and rising sea levels. It is estimated that there will be 150 million climate refugees within 50 years and 75 million in the Asia-Pacific region alone.

What is climate justice?

The United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights says: *Everyone has a right to life, liberty, and security of person.* If climate change leads to crop failures, loss of safe drinking water and civil strife then these rights will be jeopardised. With rights come responsibilities and in the case of climate change we individually and collectively have a duty to protect the Earth, its life forms and its resources for future generations.

Similarly industrialised countries whose economic growth over the last 200 years has been powered by burning large quantities of fossil fuels, resulting in the release of much of the CO₂, have a responsibility to support developing nations adapt practices to ensure that they do not follow in the same unsustainable polluting path to development.

Prayer and reflection resources

‘Environment is God’s gift to everyone, and in our use of it we have a responsibility towards the poor, towards future generations and towards humanity as a whole...’

Pope Benedict XVI, *Caritas in Veritate* (nn 48, 51).



Prayer for climate justice

Creator God,

We give thanks for the magnificence of your creation and for entrusting us with the privilege of caring for it.

We give thanks for the sun, which brings us daylight and warmth.

We give thanks for the moon and the stars, which give us hope in moments of darkness.

We give thanks for air, which gives life to all creatures.

We give thanks for water, which cleanses and rejuvenates.

We give thanks for plants, which bring colour to the world and fruit for nourishment.

We give thanks for all living creatures, which bring diversity and order to your creation.

We give thanks for your creation – Earth, which sustains and keeps us.

Loving God,

We confess that we have not cared for your creation with the nurturing love that you require of us.

We confess that we have allowed our greed to blind us from the environmental degradation our actions have caused.

We confess that we have forgotten that we are all interconnected and that all of our actions impact those who are most vulnerable in our world.

God of justice,

Open our eyes, to see the destruction that we have caused environmentally and to reconnect with the majesty of your creation.

Open our ears, to hear the cry of people in poverty who are already suffering and will continue to suffer water and food shortages and who will be displaced by climate change.

Open our minds to work together as a global community to find creative and just solutions that protect the people who are most vulnerable in our world and all of creation for future generations.

Open our hearts and give us the courage and perseverance required to work for justice for those most affected by climate change.

Creator God,

Send forth your Spirit to inspire us to care for your creation as you had intended with a self-sacrificing and nurturing love.

Send forth your Spirit to empower us to work together as one global community, to restore your creation.

Amen.



Ecological commitment

The following extract from 'Earth Charter' www.earthcharter.org could be read by a leader from your school/community or simultaneously as a group in a prayer service.

I / We, [Name], stand at a critical moment in Earth's history, a time when humanity must choose its future.

As the world becomes increasingly interdependent and fragile, the future at once holds great peril and great promise.

To move forward we must recognise that in the midst of a magnificent diversity of cultures and life forms we are one human family and one Earth community with a common destiny.

We must join together to bring forth sustainable global society founded on respect for nature, universal human rights, economic justice, and a culture of peace.

Toward this end, it is imperative that we, the peoples of Earth, declare our responsibility to one another, to the greater community of life, and to future generations.

Theological reflection

Read the following extracts from Micah Challenge Australia's 'Theology of Climate Change'. Use the questions highlighted as discussion points.

As Christians, our faith shapes the dimensions of our moral and ethical response, which includes a strong imperative to fulfil Jesus' most basic teaching "to love your neighbour as yourself" (Matt 22:39). We are also called to advocate for those who are voiceless or marginalised, "The spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour." (Lk 4:18-19). In developing a theology of climate change, this bias for the poor and tackling injustice is paramount.

Christians must be wary of the trap of thinking there is choice between caring for people and caring for creation, when in reality, the two are inseparable. To care for people and particularly those living in impoverished countries means that we need to address climate change, as this will have disastrous implications for humanity. To care for the Earth is to care for ourselves.



The creation stories in Genesis (Gen 1 and 2) provide two perspectives on how we are to relate to God and the natural world – ***are we called to have dominion over creation or are we called to be stewards?***

The creation story in Genesis 1 has been widely discussed in relation to the instruction to humanity to subdue the Earth and rule over all creatures. However, the more dynamic implication of this passage rests with the first part of verse 26, "Let us make mankind in our image according to our likeness." In this passage, humanity is placed in a particular relationship with God, we are called to be God's likeness. ***What does it mean to be created in God's likeness?***

In Genesis 2, humanity is given the task as gardener, "The LORD God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to till it and keep it." (Gen 2:15). As gardeners we have a relationship with the Earth. We can choose to let things be or we can choose to plant things in particular places, pull weeds out, add nutrient to the soil, harvest, we make decisions. However, these decisions need to reflect what else we know about God's likeness and the teachings of Jesus. ***How can we tend God's world in a way that allows the creation to flourish and cares for human life, particularly those who are marginalised?***

The key challenge is to see if we can manage the garden in a way that all life is sustained. Instead of the soil being stripped of its nutrient, the nutrient is maintained and life is abundant for future generations as well. Instead of a model that assumes we can control the garden, we recognise the limits and the needs of the garden itself in order to allow it to be naturally fertile and to go on feeding us. Whilst we acknowledge our power and our ability to subdue, we remember the example of Jesus who came "not to be served but to serve" (Matt 20:28, NRSV). Adopting an attitude of humility will help ensure that all are adequately fed.

Climate change witness

Communities around the world are experiencing the impacts of climate change in different ways. While developed nations debate the politics of climate change globally it is the poorer countries that are suffering the consequences. It is the poorest communities globally that are more vulnerable to the impacts of climate change because they are more directly dependent on their immediate natural resources and because they have a lower economic capacity to cope with environmental hazards and shocks.

Scientists have warned that one of the likely consequences of climate change is a rise in sea level. The Pacific Islands face a number of problems associated with sea level rise. Some islands barely exceed 2-3 metres above sea level at present; these islands are vulnerable to wash-over during storms and shoreline erosion. They also have problems with the supply of drinkable water as they rely on low and unreliable rainfall or on shallow fresh groundwater which is easily contaminated with seawater.

The hazards associated with sea level changes and the limitations they place on development in these island countries need to be considered in the context of other problems these countries have. These include remoteness, limited land resources, population pressures and stress caused by waste disposal and pollution.

James' story demonstrates how communities in Solomon Islands are preparing for the impacts of climate change.

James Mao lives in a small coastal village called Illiciana on the Island of Malaita, Solomon Islands with his wife Grace and their five children. James is the third generation of his family to grow up in Illiciana. His home is built out of local materials in a mangrove swamp, the only land available. James used coral and stones as the foundation.

James is a fisherman and sells his catch and shell products in the market for a living and to provide an education for his children. James dreams that one day his village will solve the problems of rising sea-levels and finding fresh water.

It is for this reason that James became the Chairman of the Village Community Disaster Management Committee. Field Project Officers visited and told James' community about the initiative to help them understand and plan to reduce the impact from environmental risks that have previously caused havoc in coastal villages. By learning helpful techniques, James and the community have analysed potential hazards and are taking action to reduce them. They also have a plan to minimise damage and loss of life when disasters strike.

Right now, the small coastal village of Illiciana is drowning and if the community does not act soon, many homes will be lost. In addition, the community also faces a problem with fresh water. Every two or three days, men from the community travel across the bay in canoes to purchase fresh water for cooking and drinking. This is costly and time consuming. Fresh water is a major issue for the 500 Illiciana residents.

James says that his community has "explored the option of relocating our village to a safer

"We are also reluctant to leave our homeland. Our culture is unique and tied to the land that we have been living on for generations."



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Photo: Paul Smart/Act for Peace

place. There are many difficulties in negotiating suitable land for the whole village, as land ownership is a major issue in the Solomon Islands. We are also reluctant to leave our homeland. Our culture is unique and tied to the land that we have been living on for generations.”

In light of this, adaptation to climate change is the only real option for James and his community.

With the support of Field Project Officers, the Community Disaster Management Committee has been able to develop their own Community Disaster Plan (CDP) with the following priorities:

- Raising sea walls to protect homes and gardens from sea water inundation
- Fitting guttering on iron roofs, such as the Evacuation Centre and church, and building water tanks to collect fresh drinking water
- Planting more mangroves to protect us from storm surges and sea level rise
- Planting special salt resistant seeds for improved food security .

Now that James and the Illiciana community have a Community Disaster Plan in place James says “we feel much more confident and ready to survive the worst conditions.”

Act for Peace is working in the Pacific Region, with the Australian Government, to reduce risks associated with natural disasters (eg tsunamis and cyclones); and helping communities plan for climate change impacts. www.actforpeace.org.au

Anglican Board of Mission is working with the Episcopal Church in the Philippines (ECP) in confronting effects of climate change. The ECP will plant thousands of trees in a sustainable forestry program and promote organic farming as more sustainable and drought resistant. www.abmission.org/

Anglicord is supporting the Anglican Diocese in Iringa, Tanzania, to install solar powered lighting in remote schools. Millions of students here study by candle light or kerosene lamps which are poisonous as well as highly pollutant. A similar project is also underway in the Solomon Islands. www.anglicord.org.au

Caritas Australia in partnership with Down to Earth (DTE) work to promote climate justice and sustainable livelihoods in Indonesia. DTE facilitates information in and out of the country, focusing on research, analysis, advocacy and capacity-building. www.caritas.org.au


UnitingWorld is working with the United Church in PNG to assist communities establish gravity feed water systems as well as installing tanks to capture and store rainwater to adapt to changes in rainfall patterns and contamination of groundwater through rises in sea levels. www.unitingworld.org.au

Primary activities

Climate change... what's it all about?

- What is climate change?
- What is the difference between climate and weather?
- How do humans contribute to climate change?
- What happens to the environment when the Earth's temperature gets warmer?
- How will climate change affect people living near the ocean?

Reconnecting with nature...



Take your students on a quiet nature walk. Before going have some quiet time to encourage the students to stay in the present, to use their four senses (all but taste!) and to focus on their feelings (are they feeling peaceful, anxious, happy, sad etc).

During the nature walk have students observe a specific area. While observing this area ask the students to focus on how what they are seeing is making them feel. Ask the students to also observe the sounds they have heard since coming to the site.

At the end of the walk have the students list the different feelings they experienced and sounds they heard on their nature walk. Encourage students to discuss their experiences.

Going green at school...

- How do the three Rs (reduce, reuse, recycle) help to combat climate change? Devise a recycling strategy for your school if there is not one already in place.
- Have students analyse, sort and reduce classroom waste (paper, compost, plastic, etc). This is a two-day activity: the first part occurs on a 'typical' day and the second part on a day when students make an effort to reduce their waste. Students measure the volume and weight of the waste – a

useful math activity. Students create labels and posters for their classroom recycling, compost and garbage bins.

- Waste free lunches! Set your class the challenge of packing waste free lunchboxes to reduce the amount of waste you throw away. You could do this over two weeks to monitor the difference in your class' waste production.
- Look into setting up a school garden; you could have an herb or vegetable garden at school with the produce to be used in the tuckshop.



Going green at home...

- As a homework task, ask students to keep a car journal with their family, recording all the trips your family makes in the car each week, including the distances. At the end of the week discuss if any alternative transport could have been used for each trip.
- Students go around their homes and list the lights, appliances, and other household items that are turned on. Students compare what is turned on during a typical evening at home to a second evening when they are trying to conserve energy.

Creative arts...

- Design a poster or comic strip that highlights the impacts of climate change and includes some tips on how we can care for creation.
- Create a collage of recyclable items using pictures cut from magazines.
- Make your own recycled paper.
- Create a sculpture from recycled material.





Reflecting on teachings from other cultures

Many cultures around the world speak of Mother Earth. In Bolivia and Peru, for example, before someone has a drink a little is poured back in thanksgiving to the Mother Earth or Pacha Mama.

Share and reflect on this traditional Ute Prayer (native North American):

Earth teach me stillness as the grasses are stilled with light.

Earth teach me suffering as old stones suffer with memory.

Earth teach me humility as blossoms are humbled with beginning.

Earth teach me caring as the mother who secures her young.

Earth teach me courage as the tree which stands all alone.

Earth teach me limitations as the ant which crawls on the ground.

Earth teach me freedom as the eagle which soars in the sky.

Earth teach me resignation as the leaves which die in the fall.

Earth teach me regeneration as the seed which rises in the spring.

Earth teach me to forget myself as melted snow forgets its life.

Earth teach me to remember kindness as dry fields weep with rain.

- Our world is full of diversity – what can we learn from the teachings of other cultures about our relationship with the Earth?
- Ask the children to write their own prayers or poems starting each line with 'Earth teach me'.
- Illustrate the prayers/poems for display or publish using a computer, choosing appropriate fonts to elaborate the qualities and inserting images to show the aspects of nature.

Source: www.cafod.org.uk

Fijian school children help spread the message about disaster preparedness

Watch this short video to see how school children have come together to help educate their community about disaster preparedness, after their school was destroyed by a cyclone in 2008.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gFuJT9PhAVM>

Focus on Kiribati

Visit the website <http://pcc.org.fj> scroll down to the videos at the bottom of the homepage and watch the 'Kiribati – A Climate Change Reality' video. After watching the video discuss the following questions:

- What evidence is there of rising sea levels?
- What are residents trying to do to hold off the effects of rising sea levels?
- What does the President see as the ultimate consequence of climate change on his country?
- How do local Kiribati people feel about their future?



Photo: Paul Smart/Act for Peace

Secondary and Parish activities

Climate change... what's it all about?

- What is climate change?
- What human activities contribute to climate change?
- What are the major risks from climate change for people living in low-lying coastal areas?
- Complete the table below to indicate the types of extreme events that may take place in response to climate change, and the impacts these events may have on plants, animals and humans.

	Type of extreme event	Impacts on animals, plants and/or humans
Increasing temperatures		
Increasing precipitation		
Decreasing precipitation		
Rising sea level		

Going green at school...

- How can schools encourage greener transportation to and from school?
- What ideas can you think of to help your school reduce its greenhouse gas emissions? Try to be as realistic as possible, and to think of ways to motivate students and teachers to make changes. Research what other schools are doing to be green.

Going green at home...

- How can you save energy in your home? Research the energy use in your household. Look at your energy bills. Do a household audit with your family.
- What does reducing consumption have to do with reducing greenhouse gas emissions?
- How does what we eat contribute to climate change? Think about where the components of your family's evening meal have come from and what greenhouse gases they have emitted.

A global issue...

- As an Australian what does climate change have to do with you? What impact could it have on your future, your culture, your way of life, your community?

- Identify and explain the different ways people around the world will be affected by climate change.
- Climate change has the heaviest impact on people living in poverty. Can you explain why you think this statement is true or false?

Challenge governments and business to go green...

- List as many examples as you can of governments taking action to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.
- Sometimes industries need a little encouragement to bring about changes that would lead to a reduction of their greenhouse gas emissions. How can you as consumer encourage industries to become greener? How can governments encourage industries to become greener?



Australia taking responsibility – the carbon tax debate

The idea of a carbon tax being introduced in Australia has caused a great deal of public debate. Hold a classroom debate on the Australian carbon tax issue. Divide the class into two groups and have each group research and prepare a debate for their side. Encourage the class to keep in mind the different levels and dimensions of the issue eg 'thinking globally and acting locally'.

Here are a couple of articles to help the class get started:

<http://au.news.yahoo.com/thewest/a/-/latest/8916664/carbon-tax-billions-to-help-poor-nations/>

<http://www.abc.net.au/rural/news/content/201103/s3171877.htm>

Climate change in the Pacific

The Pacific is made up of a number of Island Nations, some of which are very familiar to us including Australia, NZ, Fiji, PNG, Vanuatu, Tonga etc. However there are a number of smaller, less heard of Nations within the Pacific that regularly get overlooked such as Kiribati, Tavalu, Nuie, etc. Many islands in the Pacific are low lying and small rises in sea level means enormous loss of land. Many of the smaller Island Nations are facing the very real possibility that their country may no longer exist in 20, 30, 50 or 100 years time.

The Island Nations of the Pacific are not the countries who are the most responsible for climate change, but they will be amongst the countries most drastically affected. Read the following article <http://www.smh.com.au/environment/climate-change/you-caused-it-you-fix-it-tuvalu-takes-off-the-gloves-20091210-kksq.html>



- In this article, what is Tuvalu asking of developed and large developing countries? Would Australia be included in this? Give reasons.
- What could the Australian Government do? What can ordinary Australians do?
- What is the Kyoto Protocol.

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- What does the President see as the ultimate consequence of climate change on his country?
- How do local Kiribati people feel about their future?

Human rights and climate change...

For a long time the climate change debate has focussed on the science and economics rather than the moral and ethical issues regarding who is responsible. Read the following article <http://mg.co.za/article/2011-03-15-world-needs-climate-justice--now/>

- How does climate change undermine human rights and sustainable development?
- How does the concept of climate justice challenge us to think differently about climate change?
- What makes people living in poverty more vulnerable to climate change?
- How can climate change become a positive opportunity for economies in both developed and developing nations?

Advocacy action: Share the Table

This year, as part of Simply Sharing Week, we are joining with the Micah Challenge 'Share the Earth' campaign, and calling on the Australian Government to act now on climate change in order to ensure environmental sustainability and reduce the effects of a changing climate on people living in poverty.

As Christians we believe that every person should be able to enjoy the good fruits of God's creation. However in many parts of our world, creation groans under the pressure of human exploitation and misuse. Food resources are being depleted, forests are diminishing, climates are changing and seas levels are rising.

Humans are interconnected with one another and with their environment. The choices we make such as the food we eat, the clothes we buy and the amount of energy we use all contribute to these environmental pressures. In many cases, the result is that the poorest people of our world, who rely heavily on their local environment and ecosystems, are suffering.

'Share the Table' events bring people together for a meal as a simple but powerful way of reminding ourselves, our communities and our leaders about our responsibility to share the Earth and its resources in a way that reflects and promotes justice.

Millennium Development Goal 7 – Ensure Environmental Sustainability

MDG 7 aims to ensure environmental sustainability as a way of alleviating poverty. Specifically the targets are to:

- Integrate the principles of sustainable development into country policies and programmes

- Reverse the loss of environmental resources
- Reduce our carbon pollution, and
- Reduce by half the proportion of people without sustainable access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation.

Refer to weblinks for more information on the MDGs.

The problem

To ensure environmental sustainability, the effects of climate change can't be allowed to undermine the progress already made on the Millennium Development Goals (refer to weblinks on the back page for more information). Australia is currently lagging behind other countries who have committed to taking action on climate change. For example, the European Union have committed to reducing greenhouse gas emissions by at least 20% on what they were in 1990, whereas Australia has only committed to reducing emissions by at least 3.89% from what they were in 1990 (or 5% on 2000 levels).

At the same time, around the world there are approximately 2.6 billion people without access to sanitation and around 884 million without access to safe water. Approximately 25% of the annual 8.1 million child deaths around the world could be avoided by sanitation intervention alone.

Australia's investment in water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) however, has been lacking. Currently we give only \$171million/year to water and sanitation programs. To do our fair share globally, we need to give AUD \$500million/year.



For Australia to do its fair share to achieve MDG7 we must:

1. Take a global leadership position on carbon emission targets.
2. Increase the level of aid allocated to sanitation, hygiene and water (WASH) to meet Australia's fair share of AUD \$500 million per year by 2015.
3. Ensure that at least 50% of funding for WASH is allocated to sanitation.



What can you do to advocate for environmental sustainability as a way of alleviating poverty?

1. Learn more about MDG7 and how we can work on both a Governmental and personal level to ensure environmental sustainability. Refer to the weblinks for educational resources on MDG7.
2. Sign a recipe for success on MDG7 card to the Prime Minister encouraging our Government to take action on MDG7. Visit the action section of www.simplysharingweek.org.au to download the card.
3. Run a 'Share the table' event at your school or church. Visit the action section of www.simplysharingweek.org.au to download a 'how to guide'.

'Share the Table' event ideas

- Brainstorm your own creative ideas about how you can best communicate the message to your community and your Member of Parliament or use one of these ideas:
- Invite your MP to a church picnic and present them with a picnic basket of 'recipe for success' cards and signatures.

- Hold a Masterchef or My Kitchen Rules style competition. Ask contestants to cook a sustainable meal. Invite the local MP to be the judge. Invite the community to taste-test and give a people's choice award.
- Organise a sustainable cooking class or demonstration and educate people about local produce.
- Highlight issues of water and sanitation by holding a hand or foot washing ritual as part of your event.
- Hold a 'global reality' simulation meal. Download the guide at www.simplysharingweek.com.au
- Bake a cake or pie and invite people to share in their 'fair share' of the pie in a morning tea after church. Highlight the reality that the richest 20% of people in the world (Australians included) consume 80% of the world's resources.

Remember to...

- Take a photo of everyone with their cards.
- Invite local media to your event and write an article for your local paper or denominational publication/website. Visit www.simplysharingweek.org.au for a link on How to Contact Your Local Media.
- Take lots of photos. Email us your best photo and a story of how your event went to ssw@caritas.org.au

Climate change information and statistics

Australia Government Department of Climate Change and Energy Efficiency
<http://www.climatechange.gov.au>

BBC website http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/shared/spl/hi/sci_nat/04/climate_change/html/gulf.stm

World Wildlife Fund (WWF) http://wwf.panda.org/about_our_earth/aboutcc/

WWF also has a fantastic interactive map that explores climate hot spots http://wwf.panda.org/about_our_earth/aboutcc/problems/rising_temperatures/hotspot_map/

Educational

Global Education – Climate change and sea levels in the South Pacific
www.globaleducation.edna.edu.au

Bureau of Meteorology www.bom.gov.au

Australia Education Resources For Teachers For Students – Think Climate Think Change <http://www.forteachersforstudents.com.au/ClimateChange/ThinkClimate/P-Lesson/lesson-ideas.php>

Teaching Climate Change: A resource for teachers and students <http://www.teachingclimatechange.com.au/>

Classroom resources and activities <http://www.teachers.ash.org.au/jmresources/climate/change.htm>

Planet kids has a great handout with statistics and action ideas <http://www.planetkids.biz/resources.htm>

Further information and weblinks

Youtube videos

Confronting Climate Change, with Al Gore
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qglVY0iqhEk>

Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC)

<http://www.ipcc.ch/>

The Earth Charter

<http://www.earthcharterinaction.org/content/>

Advocacy action – Share the Table

More information on the Micah Challenge 'Share the Earth' action <http://www.micahchallenge.org.au/share-the-earth>

Millennium Development Goals

<http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/>

The Climate Institute

<http://www.climateinstitute.org.au/>

Climate Action Network Australia

www.cana.net.au

The Robin Hood Tax

www.robinhoodtax.org.au

Australia religious response to climate change

<http://www.arrcc.org.au/>

Catholic Earthcare

www.catholicearthcare.org.au

ABM Anglican Board of Mission - Australia
Working for Love, Hope & Justice

