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## TIPS ON FOUR CLIMATE ADVOCACY SKILLS:

- EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION
- NETWORKING
- STORYTELLING
- DATA INTERPRETATION

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## **INTRODUCTION**

Climate change is one of the greatest challenges of our time, with far-reaching effects on ecosystems, societies, and economies. Over the years, it has gained the attention of researchers, policymakers, and the public due to its increasing severity. Reports from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC, 2014) indicate that the pace and intensity of climate change are worse than previously anticipated, with developing countries like Nigeria facing some of the most severe consequences such as rising temperatures, erratic rainfall patterns, desertification, flooding, and biodiversity loss which threatens food security, public health, and livelihoods, particularly in vulnerable communities. Without urgent action, these impacts will continue to worsen, deepening existing social and economic inequalities.

While efforts have been made to educate primary school children about climate change, a significant gap remains in engaging secondary school students, a critical group at the cusp of adulthood and decision-making. Findings have shown that young people are among the most affected by climate change, yet they are often excluded from conversations and policies that shape their future. Secondary school students, in particular, are at a pivotal stage where they can begin to influence their peers, families, and communities. Providing them with the right knowledge and advocacy skills will ensure they not only understand climate change but also become active participants in addressing it.

This manual is designed to train secondary school students on four essential skills for climate advocacy, viz; **effective communication, storytelling, data interpretation, and networking**. Climate action is not just about tree planting and nursery establishment; it requires strong voices, compelling stories, data-driven insights, and meaningful connections to create real impact. According to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), successful climate advocacy depends on clear messaging, credible evidence, and the ability to engage diverse stakeholders. Through this training, students will learn how to raise awareness, influence policies, and drive community-led climate solutions.

Through the project titled “**Combating Climate Change through Education, Nursery Establishment and Tree Planting in Secondary Schools in Ilorin, Kwara State, Nigeria**”, sponsored by the **Rufford Foundation**, we aim to equip students with the tools to speak up and take action thereby nurturing a generation of confident and capable climate advocates committed to building a more sustainable and resilient future.

## EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION FOR CLIMATE ADVOCACY

Effective communication is a crucial skill for climate advocacy as it enables individuals to convey complex climate issues in a clear, engaging, and persuasive manner. Climate advocates must communicate effectively to raise awareness, inspire action, and influence policy changes. Below is a simple guide on Effective Communication for Climate Advocacy:

### 1. Understanding Your Audience

To communicate effectively, climate advocates must first understand their audience. Different groups of people have varying levels of awareness, interests, and concerns about climate change.

#### Key Aspects:

- **Identify their level of knowledge** – Are they experts, policymakers, students, or the general public?
- **Determine their values and priorities** – What matters most to them? Health, economy, environment?
- **Use relatable language** – Avoid jargon and use simple, clear terms.

#### Example:

*When speaking to primary school students, use storytelling and simple analogies like "climate change is like a fever for the Earth." When addressing policymakers, use data and policy recommendations.*

### 2. Crafting a Clear and Concise Message

A well-structured message ensures that the audience understands and remembers key points.

#### The Three C's of Climate Communication:

1. **Clear** – Use simple and direct language. Avoid overly technical terms.
2. **Concise** – Stick to key points and avoid unnecessary details.
3. **Compelling** – Make the message engaging by using real-life examples and storytelling.

#### Message Structuring Formula (ABC):

- **A – Attention:** Start with an interesting fact, question, or story.
- **B – Body:** Provide key points with supporting evidence.
- **C – Conclusion:** End with a strong takeaway or call to action.

#### Example:

*Did you know that Nigeria loses over 350,000 hectares of forest every year? This is harming our air quality and increasing temperatures. By planting more trees, we can improve the air and combat climate change. Join us in our tree-planting initiative today!*

### **3. The Power of Storytelling**

Stories help people connect emotionally with climate issues.

#### **How to Use Storytelling in Climate Advocacy:**

- Share **personal experiences** (e.g., how flooding affected your community).
- Use **real-life stories** of individuals impacted by climate change.
- Frame the narrative in a way that highlights both the problem and the solution.

#### **Example:**

*Musa, a 12-year-old boy, loved butterflies. Over the years, he noticed fewer butterflies in his garden. He later learned that climate change was affecting their habitat. Determined to help, he planted more flowers and educated his friends. You too can make a difference!*

### **4. Choosing the Right Communication Medium**

Different platforms are suitable for different audiences and messages.

#### **Common Communication Channels:**

- **Social Media (Twitter, Instagram, Facebook, TikTok)** – Best for reaching a large audience quickly.
- **Public Speaking & Workshops** – Effective for in-depth discussions and engaging directly with people.
- **Traditional Media (TV, Radio, Newspapers)** – Useful for reaching people who don't use social media.
- **Infographics & Visuals** – Help simplify complex information.

#### **Example:**

*A climate advocate targeting young people might use TikTok videos, while a message for policymakers could be delivered through policy briefs and news articles.*

### **5. Active Listening and Engagement**

Effective communication is not just about speaking; listening to others' perspectives is equally important.

#### **Key Strategies for Active Listening:**

- Maintain eye contact and show genuine interest.
- Ask questions to encourage discussion.
- Acknowledge concerns and provide clear responses.

**Example:**

*During a climate education session, if a student asks, “What can I do to stop climate change?”, respond with actionable steps like reducing waste, planting trees, and conserving energy.*

## **6. Overcoming Misinformation and Climate Skepticism**

Misinformation about climate change is widespread, and advocates must be equipped to counter false narratives.

**Tips to Address Misinformation:**

- **Use facts and credible sources** to support your claims.
- **Stay calm and respectful** when correcting misinformation.
- **Ask thought-provoking questions** that challenge false beliefs.

**Example:**

If someone claims, “*Climate change is not real*”, respond with evidence: “*According to NASA, global temperatures have increased by over 1°C since the industrial revolution, leading to more extreme weather.*”

## **7. Call to Action: Encouraging Participation**

Advocacy is most effective when people take action.

**How to Encourage Action:**

- Provide clear steps on what people can do.
- Use positive reinforcement to inspire hope.
- Offer incentives for participation (e.g., recognition, certificates, community benefits).

**Example:**

*Join our community tree-planting event this Saturday! Every tree we plant brings us one step closer to a greener future!*

## **NETWORKING FOR CLIMATE ADVOCACY**

Networking is an essential skill for climate advocates as it enables them to build relationships, collaborate with like-minded individuals, and amplify their impact. Climate issues require collective action, and strong networks can help advocates mobilize resources, gain support, and drive meaningful changes. Below is a concise guide on Networking for Climate Advocacy:

### **1. Understanding the Importance of Networking in Climate Advocacy**

Networking helps climate advocates to:

- **Expand their reach** – Connect with individuals and organizations that share similar goals.
- **Gain knowledge and resources** – Learn best practices, access funding, and collaborate on initiatives.
- **Influence decision-makers** – Engage policymakers, community leaders, and stakeholders.
- **Enhance personal growth** – Improve communication, leadership, and collaboration skills.

#### **Example:**

*A young climate activist in Nigeria who builds a strong network with environmental NGOs, researchers, and government agencies can mobilize support for tree-planting campaigns and policy advocacy.*

### **2. Identifying Key Stakeholders and Allies**

To be effective in networking, climate advocates must recognize the key players in climate action.

#### **Key Stakeholders in Climate Advocacy:**

- **Government Agencies** – Ministries of Environment, local environmental protection agencies.
- **Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs)** – Organizations working on climate change and conservation.
- **Community Groups** – Youth organizations, faith-based groups, and local environmental clubs.
- **Media and Influencers** – Journalists, bloggers, and social media activists who can amplify messages.
- **Academics and Scientists** – Climate researchers, university professors, and experts in the field.
- **Corporate Entities** – Businesses promoting sustainability and corporate social responsibility.

#### **Example:**

*If an advocate wants to push for a plastic ban in their city, they should connect with government officials, media, and environmental groups to gain widespread support.*

### 3. Effective Strategies for Building a Strong Network

A climate advocate must actively build and maintain professional relationships.

#### A. Attend Climate Events and Conferences

- Join **climate summits, policy forums, and workshops** to meet experts and stakeholders.
- Participate in local and international climate initiatives like **COP (Conference of the Parties)** and UN Climate Programs.

**Example:**

*Attending a climate workshop in Lagos can help an advocate connect with researchers working on renewable energy solutions.*

#### B. Leverage Social Media and Online Platforms

- Use LinkedIn, Twitter, and Facebook to connect with climate advocates globally.
- Join **climate-focused groups and communities** to share ideas and collaborate.
- Follow organizations like **UNEP, WWF, and local climate bodies** for updates and opportunities.

**Example:**

*A climate advocate who actively engages on Twitter using hashtags like #ClimateAction and #ActOnClimate can attract the attention of policymakers and international organizations.*

#### C. Join or Create Climate Advocacy Groups

- Become a member of existing **climate organizations and youth movements** (e.g., Fridays for Future, Climate Reality Project).
- Establish a **local climate action group** to address specific environmental issues in the community.

**Example:**

*A student can create a Green Club in their school, bringing together like-minded individuals to advocate for environmental sustainability.*

#### D. Build Relationships with Mentors and Role Models

- Identify experienced climate advocates and **seek mentorship**.
- Learn from experts through webinars, books, and mentorship programs.
- Develop a **professional relationship** by engaging with their work and seeking guidance.

**Example:**

*A young climate advocate can reach out to a university professor researching climate change for advice on a tree-planting project.*



## **4. Communicating Effectively in Networking**

When building networks, clear and professional communication is essential.

### **A. Introducing Yourself and Your Advocacy Work**

A strong introduction helps create a lasting impression.

#### **Example:**

*Hello, my name is Aisha, and I am passionate about climate advocacy. I lead a youth-led initiative that focuses on tree planting and climate education in Nigerian schools. I would love to collaborate with your organization on future projects.*

### **B. Engaging in Meaningful Conversations**

- **Ask questions** about the work and interests of others.
- **Listen actively** to understand different perspectives.
- **Share your experiences** and passion for climate action.

#### **Example:**

*I noticed that your organization works on sustainable agriculture. How do you think young people can contribute to promoting eco-friendly farming practices?*

### **C. Following Up and Maintaining Relationships**

- Send **thank-you messages** after networking events.
- Keep in touch by **sharing updates** about ongoing climate projects.
- Offer help and **collaborate on initiatives** when opportunities arise.

#### **Example:**

*Dear Mr. David, it was great connecting with you at the climate summit. I appreciate our discussion on community tree planting, and I hope we can collaborate on a similar initiative in Ilorin.*

## **5. Overcoming Networking Challenges**

Networking may sometimes be challenging due to shyness, lack of opportunities, or cultural barriers.

### **How to Overcome Networking Challenges:**

- **Start small** – Begin by networking within local groups before expanding globally.
- **Step out of your comfort zone** – Engage in conversations even if it feels intimidating.
- **Leverage digital platforms** – If in-person networking is difficult, build connections online.
- **Be patient and consistent** – Building a strong network takes time.

**Example:**

*A shy climate advocate can start by joining an online environmental forum before attending in-person events.*

## **6. Using Networking to Create Opportunities for Climate Action**

Networking should not just be about making connections but also about **collaborating for impact**.

**How to Use Your Network Effectively:**

- Organize joint climate projects with NGOs and government agencies.
- Seek funding or sponsorship from organizations supporting environmental initiatives.
- Advocate for policy changes by working with policymakers and media.
- Spread climate awareness by using connections with educators and influencers.

**Example:**

*A climate advocate who builds a strong network with local businesses can secure sponsorships for a school tree-planting project.*

## STORYTELLING FOR CLIMATE ADVOCACY

Storytelling is a powerful tool in climate advocacy. It enables advocates to communicate complex environmental issues in a way that is engaging, relatable, and inspiring. People connect more deeply with stories than with statistics, making storytelling an effective way to drive awareness and action. Below is a guide on Storytelling for Climate Advocacy:

### 1. The Power of Storytelling in Climate Advocacy

Storytelling helps climate advocates by:

- **Creating emotional connections** – People remember stories more than facts.
- **Making climate issues relatable** – Personal stories help audiences see how climate change affects real people.
- **Inspiring action** – Well-told stories can motivate individuals and policymakers to act.
- **Simplifying complex topics** – A story can break down difficult scientific concepts into understandable narratives.

#### Example:

*Instead of saying, "Deforestation leads to biodiversity loss," tell the story of a farmer whose land is drying up due to tree loss, showing the real-life impact of deforestation.*

### 2. Key Elements of a Compelling Climate Story

To tell a great story, climate advocates should include the following elements:

1. **A Relatable Character** – Someone the audience can empathize with.
2. **A Clear Problem** – A challenge related to climate change.
3. **An Emotional Connection** – Make the audience feel something (hope, urgency, empathy).
4. **A Solution or Action** – Show how the problem can be or is being solved.
5. **A Call to Action** – Encourage the audience to do something about the issue.

#### Example:

*Musa used to wake up every morning to the chirping of birds near his home. But one day, he noticed the trees were being cut down, and soon, the birds were gone. He decided to plant trees with his friends, and slowly, the birds returned. You, too, can help restore nature by planting trees in your community.*

### 3. Types of Climate Stories

Different types of storytelling can be used in climate advocacy:

#### A. Personal Stories

- These are firsthand experiences that show how climate change affects individuals.
- Personal stories create **empathy** and make the issue feel real.

**Example:**

*As a child, I used to play under a large mango tree in my village, but last year, it was cut down due to logging. Now, the heat in my village is unbearable. We must protect our trees before we lose more of them.*

**B. Community Stories**

- These highlight how climate change affects groups of people.
- They are useful for mobilizing communities to take collective action.

**Example:**

*The fishermen in our town used to catch enough fish to feed their families. But rising water temperatures have reduced the number of fish in the river. Now, they are struggling to survive. We must act before it is too late.*

**C. Success Stories**

- These focus on **solutions** and give people hope.
- They highlight **positive changes** made by individuals or communities.

**Example:**

*A group of students in Ilorin started a tree-planting club three years ago. Today, their school has over 500 new trees providing shade and improving air quality. Imagine what we can achieve if more schools join this movement!*

**D. Future Stories**

- These use **imagination** to show what the future could look like.
- They can present **positive or negative** scenarios based on current actions.

**Example:**

*In 2050, if we continue cutting down trees, our city will have no shade, and temperatures will be unbearable. But if we start planting trees today, the future will be greener and cooler for the next generation.*

## **4. Storytelling Techniques for Climate Advocacy**

To make climate stories more engaging, advocates should use the following techniques:

**A. Use Vivid Descriptions**

- Describe the setting, people, and emotions vividly.
- Help the audience **see, hear, and feel** what is happening.

**Example:**

*The once-green fields had turned brown, cracked by the scorching sun. The farmers, once hopeful, now looked at the sky, praying for rain that never came.*

**B. Use Metaphors and Analogies**

- Make complex climate concepts simpler by comparing them to everyday experiences.

**Example:**

*The Earth is like a human body—when it gets too hot, it develops a fever. That’s what climate change is doing to our planet.*

**C. Build Suspense and Emotion**

- Start with a problem, build up tension, and end with a solution.

**Example:**

*One morning, Aminat woke up to find her house flooded. She had heard about rising sea levels, but she never thought it would happen to her. Now, she is determined to fight climate change by educating her community.*

**D. Show Real People Taking Action**

- Make the audience believe they can make a difference too.

**Example:**

*A group of teenagers in Lagos started cleaning plastic waste from beaches every weekend. Today, their movement has grown, and hundreds of people join them every month. You can be part of this change too!*

**5. Choosing the Right Medium for Storytelling**

Different storytelling platforms reach different audiences:

Medium	Best For
Social media (TikTok, Instagram, Twitter)	Short, engaging climate stories for young audiences.
Videos & Documentaries	In-depth storytelling with visual impact.
Podcasts	Storytelling through conversations and expert interviews.
Blogs & Articles	Detailed climate stories with facts and personal experiences.
Infographics	Quick, easy-to-understand visual storytelling.
Public Speaking	Direct audience engagement and emotional impact.

**Example:**

*A climate advocate can share a 1-minute video on TikTok showing a before-and-after story of a reforestation project.*

## **6. Using Storytelling to Drive Climate Action**

A good story should **inspire people to take action.**

### **A. Make the Call-to-Action Clear**

- Tell people what they can do immediately.
- Use phrases like **"Join us," "Take action now," "Sign the petition," or "Share this message."**

**Example:**

*The trees in our school are disappearing. We need your help to plant 200 new trees. Join us this Saturday to make a difference!*

### **B. Show That Every Small Action Matters**

- Help people see that their contribution counts.
- Share stories of individuals making an impact.

**Example:**

*Ali started using a reusable water bottle, and now, 50 of his classmates do the same. Small actions create big change!*

### **C. Use Storytelling to Influence Policy and Leaders**

- Share stories that **highlight the need for change.**
- Use personal stories when speaking to policymakers.

**Example:**

*I met a farmer who lost his entire harvest due to drought. He said, 'If only we had more trees, maybe the rain would come back.' This is why we need stronger reforestation policies.*

## DATA INTERPRETATION FOR CLIMATE ADVOCACY

Data interpretation is a critical skill for climate advocates as it allows them to understand, analyze, and effectively communicate climate-related information. By interpreting climate data correctly, advocates can back their arguments with evidence, influence policies, and credibly educate the public. Below is a guide on Data Interpretation for Climate Advocacy:

### 1. The Importance of Data in Climate Advocacy

Climate advocacy is more persuasive when supported by facts and evidence. Data helps advocates to:

- **Validate claims** – Avoid misinformation by using accurate climate statistics.
- **Make complex issues understandable** – Simplify large datasets for general audiences.
- **Influence decision-makers** – Convince policymakers to take climate action based on scientific findings.
- **Measure progress** – Track the effectiveness of climate initiatives.

#### Example:

Instead of saying, “*Temperatures are rising,*” an advocate can use data: *According to NASA, global temperatures have increased by 1.1°C since the late 19th century due to greenhouse gas emissions.*

### 2. Understanding Climate Data Sources

Reliable data comes from credible sources, including:

Source	Type of Data Provided
NASA	Global temperature trends, satellite imagery.
IPCC (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change)	Scientific climate reports, future projections.
NOAA (National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration)	Weather patterns, ocean temperatures.
UNEP (United Nations Environment Programme)	Climate policies, environmental impact data.
Local Meteorological Agencies (e.g NiMet)	National climate trends, weather forecasts.
Scientific Journals	Peer-reviewed climate research.

#### Example:

*A climate advocate in Nigeria might reference data from the Nigerian Meteorological Agency (NiMet) to show rising heat levels in the region.*

### 3. Key Climate Indicators and How to Interpret Them

Understanding key climate data points is essential for advocacy.

### **A. Temperature Trends**

- Measured in degrees Celsius (°C) or Fahrenheit (°F).
- A rising trend over decades indicates global warming.

#### **Example:**

*The average temperature in Nigeria has increased by 0.8°C over the past 50 years, leading to more frequent heatwaves.*

### **B. Carbon Dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) Levels**

- Measured in **parts per million (ppm)**.
- High CO<sub>2</sub> levels correlate with increased global temperatures.

#### **Example:**

*In 1960, atmospheric CO<sub>2</sub> was 316 ppm; today, it exceeds 420 ppm, significantly contributing to climate change.*

### **C. Sea Level Rise**

- Measured in **millimeters (mm) per year**.
- Higher sea levels result in coastal erosion and flooding.

#### **Example:**

*Lagos has recorded a sea level rise of about 3.3 mm per year, increasing the risk of coastal flooding.*

### **D. Deforestation Rates**

- Measured in **hectares lost per year**.
- A high deforestation rate leads to biodiversity loss and climate instability.

#### **Example:**

*Nigeria loses 350,000 hectares of forest annually, worsening air pollution and increasing carbon emissions.*

### **E. Rainfall and Drought Patterns**

- Measured in **millimeters (mm) of precipitation per year**.
- Extreme changes indicate shifting climate patterns.

#### **Example:**

*The annual rainfall in Northern Nigeria has decreased by 20% in the last decade, leading to longer drought periods.*



## 4. How to Analyze and Visualize Climate Data

Interpreting raw data requires **visualization tools** to make it understandable.

### A. Graphs and Charts

- **Line graphs** show trends over time (e.g., rising global temperatures).
- **Bar charts** compare data across regions (e.g., CO<sub>2</sub> emissions per country).
- **Pie charts** show proportions (e.g., sources of greenhouse gas emissions).

#### Example:

*A line graph showing CO<sub>2</sub> emissions over 50 years can visually demonstrate how human activities contribute to climate change.*

### B. Infographics and Maps

- **Heat maps** illustrate temperature changes across different regions.
- **Infographics** summarize complex data into simple visuals.

#### Example:

*A heat map of Africa highlighting regions most affected by desertification can make climate advocacy more compelling.*

## 5. Communicating Climate Data Effectively

Once data is understood, it must be communicated in a way that inspires action.

### A. Simplify Complex Data for General Audiences

- Avoid technical jargon; use everyday language.
- Use comparisons that are easy to understand.

#### Example:

Instead of: "CO<sub>2</sub> levels have increased by 50 ppm over the past century,"  
Say: "The amount of CO<sub>2</sub> in the air is like adding 50 extra blankets around the Earth, making it much hotter."

### B. Use Data to Tell a Story

- Combine statistics with real-life examples.
- Personalize data to make it relatable.

#### Example:

*The temperature in Ilorin has increased by 1.2°C over the last 30 years. This explains why heatwaves are becoming more frequent, affecting farmers and causing crop failures.*

### **C. Address Misinformation with Facts**

- Counter myths with data from credible sources.
- Use graphs and reports to back up claims.

**Example:**

Myth: *"Climate change is natural and not caused by humans."*

Fact: *"NASA data shows that CO<sub>2</sub> levels are at their highest in 800,000 years, primarily due to human activities like burning fossil fuels."*

### **D. Use Data to Support Policy Advocacy**

- Present data in meetings with policymakers.
- Use facts to push for environmental regulations.

**Example:**

*Deforestation in Nigeria has reduced rainfall by 15% in affected areas. We urge the government to enforce stricter forest conservation laws.*

## **6. Practical Exercises for Students in Climate Advocacy**

To help students improve their data interpretation skills, the following exercises can be included in climate education programs:

### **Exercise 1: Analyzing Temperature Trends**

- Provide students with a graph showing temperature changes over the past 100 years.
- Ask them to identify trends and explain how it relates to climate change.

### **Exercise 2: Comparing CO<sub>2</sub> Emissions by Country**

- Show students a bar chart comparing CO<sub>2</sub> emissions from different countries.
- Discuss why some countries produce more CO<sub>2</sub> and how they can reduce emissions.

### **Exercise 3: Visualizing Local Climate Impacts**

- Ask students to collect climate-related data from their communities (e.g., flooding incidents, tree loss).
- Have them present findings using infographics or short presentations.

## **7. Using Data Interpretation to Drive Climate Action**

Once students and advocates understand data, they must use it to create change.

**Ways to Use Data for Climate Action:**

- **Raise Awareness** – Share data-driven infographics on social media.
- **Advocate for Policy Change** – Present evidence-backed arguments to local leaders.
- **Develop Climate Solutions** – Use data to design projects (e.g., tree planting in areas with high deforestation).
- **Monitor Environmental Progress** – Track improvements in climate action over time.

**Example:**

*A climate advocate who sees a rise in flooding cases in their city can use data to push for better drainage systems and reforestation efforts.*