the climate we speak

Older People Engage in Climate Communication.



Collection of Methods and Formats

to Engage Older People in Climate Communication

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The Project

Climate change is such an important and ever-present issue in our lives that it cannot go unspoken, even though many people find it difficult or uncomfortable to discuss. The Erasmus+ project The Climate We Speak aimed to encourage this very conversation. Together with partners from Poland, Portugal, Belgium, and Austria, we sought to give practitioners the confidence and tools needed to address this topic with older adults. Our aim was to explore how conversations about climate and sustainability can become more accessible, empathetic and meaningful for and with this target group.

Over the course of two years, our partners designed and tested a variety of hands-on formats for these conversations—ranging from simple icebreakers to more in-depth reflective exercises and excursions. What connects them all is the shared goal of creating a welcoming atmosphere where participants feel comfortable sharing their experiences, asking questions, and contributing their own ideas. The results of this work are presented in the collection of thirteen methods you are holding now.

Here you will find a variety of approaches, formats, and materials, all developed and tested in collaboration with older adults. Some methods were created from scratch by our partners, while others were adapted from existing approaches specifically for the target group of older adults and tested within our interactive exchange formats ("Climate Hubs"). For each entry, you will find descriptions of how to use the method, helpful tips, accompanying materials, and links to additional resources.

Our thanks go to all the project participants and cooperation partners who helped test and refine these methods with us, and who generously shared their materials and experiences.

This collection was created for anyone working for and with older people who wants to open up a dialogue on these topics or encourage an exchange of personal experiences and thoughts. It also speaks to older adults themselves, who may wish to inspire others in their own lives to engage with climate and sustainability.

Climate Cube



© queraum

The method

How can we discuss climate topics with older adults in a calm, joyful, and relaxed manner? The Climate Cube is an easy way to start conversations about climate change and everyday life. It helps people share their memories, thoughts, and feelings. Possible topics include nature, household waste, weather and climate change, food, and daily habits. The cube is very flexible. You can change the pictures and questions to fit the interests, experiences, and needs of the group.

Climate Cube

Implementing the method

You use a large cube made of a soft material. There is one photo on each side of the cube. Participants take turns rolling the cube. Each picture represents a question or a sentence starter. Participants begin a conversation based on the question and share their thoughts.

Participant quotes

"I got to know things I didn't know about others."

"There is so much expertise around this table."

Example questions
(one per side of the cube):

- **What is your relationship with nature? What does nature mean to you?**
- **Think about household waste 40 years ago and today. What has changed?**
- **You see the Earth from above. How do you feel when you look at this picture?**
- **What do you do on very hot days?**
- **Do you feel that the weather and nature have changed since your childhood?**
- **What are the ingredients in your favourite meal?**

There are no right or wrong answers. Sharing personal stories is more important than facts.

Climate Cube

Experiences and tips

The Climate Cube was used by the Austrian partners queraum and Hallo Klima! with older visitors in a day-care centre in Vienna.

From this experience, we recommend the following:

- **Use a large cube made of a soft material. It should roll easily on a table or on the floor.**
- **Bring the questions on large cards as well. This makes it easier for everyone to see the picture and read the question.**
- **Pass the cards around so all participants can look at them closely.**
- **Older people enjoyed the method because it involved physical activity: Rolling the cube added movement, play, and interaction to the conversation.**

The Climate Cube helps create a friendly atmosphere and makes it easier to talk about climate topics through personal life experiences.

Materials

- **Link to a crafting template for the cube**
- **Link to a collection of possible pictures and questions**

The Trees Of Our Memories And Our Future



© https://animalia-life.club/qa/pictures/oak-tree

The method

Trees are silent witnesses to change. They often live longer than people, connect generations and carry stories in their roots, trunks, branches, and leaves. They remind us that the landscapes around us are constantly changing – sometimes slowly, sometimes faster than we realise. Inspired by the traditional Polish proverb "You don't transplant old trees" – often used when speaking about older people – the method uses the image of trees as a bridge between personal memories and contemporary climate challenges.

The Trees Of Our Memories And Our Future

This memory-based conversation method invites older people to explore climate change through their own observations and life experiences. Rather than starting with facts, statistics or environmental problems, participants approach the topic with something familiar and meaningful: the trees and natural surroundings they have known throughout their lives.

Implementing the method

The method can be used in two ways: Facilitators may simply select a few reflection questions that fit their group and available time, or they can guide participants through the full five-step conversation journey. The journey is designed as a flexible framework: Individual steps can be shortened, combined or omitted and facilitators are encouraged to choose the questions that best suit the context, group size, and time available.

Participants sit together in a circle and reflect on questions such as:

- **Which trees were part of your childhood?**
- **What changes have you noticed in nature over the decades?**
- **Which species might thrive in the future?**
- **What would you like future generations to inherit?**

The Trees Of Our Memories And Our Future

Experiences and tips

This method was used by LAB60+ in a large group meeting with over 40 senior citizens at the Local Activity Centre in Wrocław.

- **Based on this experience, we recommend preparing a meeting plan with a schedule. Our plan may serve as a template and can be adapted.**
- **This method requires no additional materials.**
- **Our participants particularly appreciated the circle discussion, the calm, slightly reflective tone of the session and the opportunity to share memories.**

Climate Animals



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The method

The Climate Animals are a set of seven characters created for the KLIMA_X exhibition by the Museumsstiftung Post und Telekommunikation in Germany. Each animal represents a different emotional response to the climate crisis, for example: the busy bee who works together with others; the angry gorilla ready to fight; the startled chicken caught in panic and the slow turtle moving carefully, one step at a time.

Climate Animals

Because the conversation focuses on animals and feelings rather than facts and figures, this method is an effective warm-up. It can encourage an honest exchange about how people feel about the climate: maybe frustrated one day, hopeful the next or experiencing all these feelings at once.

Implementing the method

Lay out several printed sets of the cards across a table – animal side up, descriptions hidden underneath. The slightly abstract drawings often make people curious about what they are looking at and they start guessing which animal is which.

Go through the seven animals one by one and read each short description aloud. The little first-person monologues – the panicking chicken, the head-in-the-sand ostrich – usually earn a few knowing laughs and set a relaxed tone.

Invite participants to reflect on which climate animal(s) they are and feel most related to now. You can also ask the following questions:

- **Are you sometimes two animals at once?**
- **Does it change from day to day, or with the news?**

This is where the real conversation begins – about attitudes and feelings.

Climate Animals

Experiences and tips

- Many people see themselves in more than one animal and realise that our climate feelings shift.
- Remember that there are no right or wrong animals. The aim is to name a feeling out loud and to notice that others potentially share those feelings.
- We found it helpful to print the animals with their short descriptions on the back several times in a larger format (A5).

Materials

- ✓ Print templates of the Climate Animals (illustrations with short descriptions)



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Excursions: Climate Up Close



© queraum

The method

There is a Portuguese saying: "De grão em grão, a galinha enche o papo" – Grain by grain, the hen fills her belly. Small, local steps, when added together, can amount to real change. Excursions and study visits build on exactly this idea: Instead of explaining climate and sustainability in the abstract, they take participants out to places where topics become tangible and approachable.

Participants see, touch and ask about real initiatives, talk things through on the spot and get to know one another. The focus can be on "success stories" – positive examples that leave participants feeling motivated rather than overwhelmed. Excursions are a way of taking learning out of the classroom and into the real world.

Climate Up Close

For inspiration: video of the excursion to Alqueva Multipurpose Project

Participant quotes

"The excursion was fantastic."

"Thanks for inviting me to join the group. I am used to being in a group with people and discussing different subjects."

At each stop, participants might be invited to reflect on questions such as:

- **What is happening here and who made it happen?**
- **Have you seen something similar where you live?**
- **What surprised you about this place?**
- **What small step could you imagine taking yourself?**

Excursions: Climate Up Close

Implementing the method

An excursion may be organised as either a half-day or a full-day activity and may include visits to one or multiple sites.

Rather than delivering one long lecture, facilitators break the input into small portions: a short explanation at each stop, followed by time for questions, comments and exchange within the group.

Walking and travelling together between the stops creates natural moments for informal conversation. Facilitators are encouraged to choose the sites and prompts that best suit their group, the time available and the distances involved.

Experiences and tips

- **Based on our experience, we recommend keeping participants' mobility in mind when developing the route, ensuring accessibility and planning for breaks.**
- **Printed materials proved valuable: Handouts allow participants revisit the content in their own time or share it with family, friends and neighbours.**
- **The relaxed, on-site atmosphere and the chance to talk informally while moving between locations were particularly appreciated.**

The Green Neighbour-hood Game



© LAB60+

The method

The Green Neighbourhood Game makes climate action fun, social and easy to understand by turning it into a board game. Players move a counter across a board of everyday situations, e.g., reusing yesterday's leftovers, refusing unnecessary plastic bags, collecting rainwater for the balcony, taking used batteries to the recycling point instead of throwing them in the bin. Climate-friendly choices move you forward; wasteful ones send you back.

The Green Neighbourhood Game

Rather than starting with statistics or warnings, the game starts with small, familiar decisions of daily life and shows in a playful way, how they can add up to a shared "green neighbourhood".

Implementing the method

You need a printed board, a dice and a counter for each player (small stones, buttons or coins).

Whenever players land on a text space, they read it aloud and follow the instruction: a small reward for a good habit, a step back for a wasteful one.

The game encourages players to start conversations with each other. Facilitators can pause after each square to ask, for example, "Do you do this at home?", allowing participants to share their own habits. The game can be played for a few minutes as a warm-up or icebreaker, or for a longer period depending on the group and the context.

Experiences and tips

- **We recommend reading each square aloud together and allowing time for participants to contribute their own examples.**
- **Keep the materials simple and tactile: using a large printed board and chunky counters makes it easy for everyone at the table to follow along.**

Materials

- Board and counters
- Instructions on how to play the game

Planet B



© pixabay

The method

Planet B presents a fictional scenario: Planet A is no longer liveable, and humanity must relocate to a new planet—Planet B. Each person is allowed to bring only one item with them. This simple yet powerful constraint encourages participants to reflect on their values, priorities, and emotional connections to objects, memories, or ideas. The method creates a space for storytelling, personal reflection, and meaningful exchange among participants.

Implementing the method

Printed pictures of different planets can be laid out to inspire participants. Every participant who wants to share an item is invited to do so. After everyone has shared their ideas, the facilitator can create a joint image of the whole group being on Planet B with their different items.

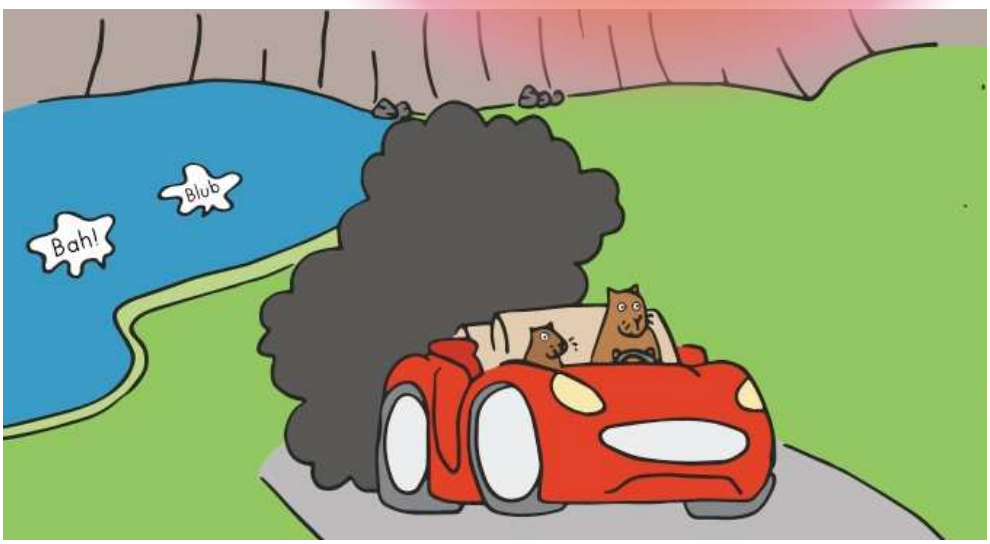
Materials

- **Use open licence images from e.g.,** https://pixabay.com/de/images/search/planets/

Experiences and tips

- **Emphasise that there are no right or wrong answers. Personal stories are the most valuable part of the exercise.**
- **Encourage participants to not only name their item but to share why they chose it.**
- **The limitation to one object is crucial, as it creates depth and reflection.**
- **Helps participants to get to know each other better.**
- **Use enlarged photos of different planets to inspire participants to reflect.**

Everyday Climate Choices



© Annechien Hoeben

The method

The method "Everyday Climate Choices – Sorting Actions by Impact and Effort" invites older participants to reflect on everyday choices (e.g., turning off light; avoiding flying) by sorting them along two dimensions:

Everyday Climate Choices

- **How much does this actually help the climate?**
- **How hard is it for me to do?**

The approach builds on the work of climate psychologist Thomas Brudermann (www.klimapsychologie.com). His original version offers a wide range of everyday climate choices. We deliberately narrowed it down to just five symbols to keep things simple and approachable. In our experience, these symbols are a good low-pressure way to get people talking. Almost everyone recognises these examples from their own life, and that familiarity makes joining the conversation easy, informal and even a little playful.

Implementing the method

Introduce the matrix and the selected symbols.

It is important to allow enough time to introduce the graphic and its two axes: difficulty and effectiveness of climate choices. It is important to emphasise that difficulty is subjective; it varies from person to person depending on their individual capabilities.

Effectiveness can vary greatly; for example, not all meat is the same—local organic pasture-raised beef is very different from an imported Argentinian steak.

Hand out the blank matrix and the five symbols.

Ask participants to sort the symbols by climate impact and level of difficulty. Let them place them on the matrix and introduce these questions:

- **Which climate-friendly actions do you already take? How easy are they for you?**
- **Which would you like to take, but can't (yet) manage?**
- **Which do you think have the greatest impact?**

Talk it through together.

Everyday Climate Choices

Once the symbols are placed, open up the room for sharing:

- **How does it feel to see your choices laid out like this?**
- **Was it easy or hard to decide where things belong?**

Show the full graphic (by Brudermann) with the placement of the selected symbols and compare:

- **Were the symbols placed "correctly"?**
- **What surprises you about it (most)?**

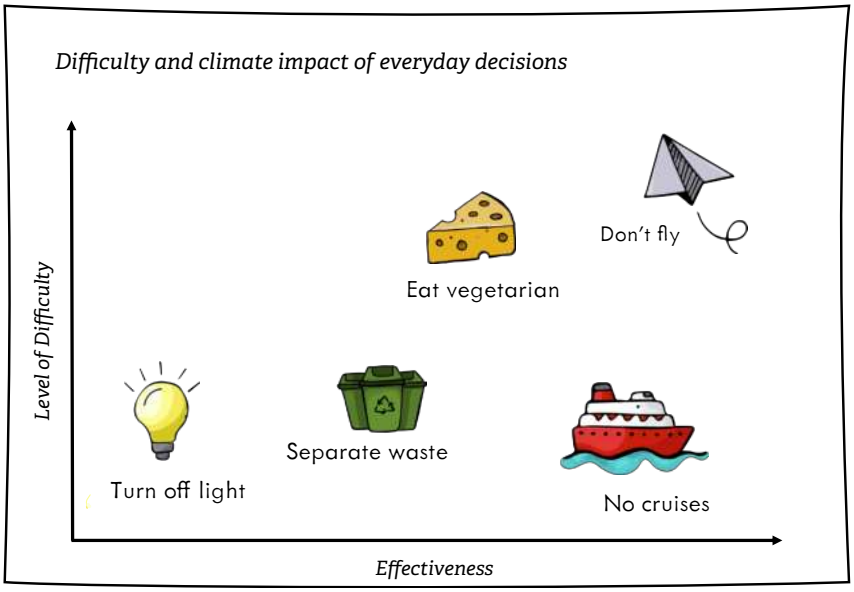
Experiences and tips

The method works best in small groups of 2–3 people. Small groups can keep everyone engaged and can create a space to share personal stories.

Plan enough time for revealing the full graphic and the joint reflection that follows.

Materials

- ✓ **Links to the empty graphic and 5 symbols**



© Difficulty and climate impact of everyday decisions, T. Brudermann & A. Hoeben. Die Kunst der Ausrede (Oekom Verlag), CC-BY-ND.

Climate Bingo



© Age Cymru, unsplash

The method

Climate Bingo is an interactive and participatory method that encourages participants to exchange experiences, opinions and everyday practices related to climate change and sustainability. Using bingo cards with statements or questions connected to climate-friendly behaviour, participants move around the room, talk to each other and discover common experiences as well as diverse perspectives.

Climate Bingo

The method creates an open and informal atmosphere that supports communication within the group and helps participants engage with climate-related topics through personal interaction. It is especially suitable as an energiser, icebreaker or introductory activity in workshops.

Implementing the method

The ready-to-use Climate Bingo template can be adapted to the specific target group or workshop context if needed. The template provides different questions related to climate change, sustainability and everyday environmental behaviour, which serve as conversation starters.

Each participant receives a bingo card and a pen. Participants then move around the room and talk to different people to find someone who can answer a question or matches a statement on their card. When a participant finds a suitable person, that person signs the corresponding field.

The activity encourages participants to meet many different people, exchange personal experiences and discover shared interests or perspectives related to climate action and everyday sustainability. Depending on the group size and available time, participants can aim to complete a row, several fields or the entire bingo card. After the activity, the facilitator invites participants to reflect together.

Possible questions for discussion include:

- **Which statements were easy or difficult to match?**
- **What surprised you during the conversations?**
- **Which experiences or challenges were shared by many participants?**

Climate Bingo

Experiences and tips

- Facilitators should adapt the bingo statements to the target group and the workshop context.
- The activity works best when participants have enough space to move around freely.
- For smaller groups, the activity can be simplified by reducing the number of fields or conducting the reflection together after each conversation round.

Materials

- ✓ Prepared bingo cards
- ✓ Pens

I don't eat meat every day. ☐	As a child, I helped grow fruit or vegetables at home. ☐	I know someone who is actively engaged in climate protection. ☐
I usually walk, cycle, or take public transport instead of driving. ☐	I try to buy local or seasonal food. ☐	I have reduced my energy use at home in recent years. ☐
I remember the weather being different when I was young. ☐	I repair or reuse things instead of throwing them away. ☐	I have made at least one change in my daily habits for the environment. ☐

© Method adapted from: klimaaktiv – Klima-Bingo, https://www.klimaaktiv.at/klimabildung/klimakommunikation/wie-erreiche-ich-junge-menschen/klima-bingo

Song of Our Warming Planet



© Video production by Elizabeth Giorgi

The method

Communicating climate change is often done through graphs, numbers or scientific visuals. Daniel Crawford, a student at the University of Minnesota, developed a different and more emotional approach: He translates climate data into music using his cello.

Song of Our Warming Planet

Scientific measurements show that the average global temperature has increased by about 0.8 °C since 1880. While this trend is usually presented in charts or maps, Crawford uses data sonification to turn temperature records into musical notes, making the changes audible instead of just visible.

As Crawford explains, climate science typically relies on established ways of presenting data – but music can offer additional, more accessible ways to engage people. The video concludes with a powerful message: By the end of this century, temperatures are expected to rise by another 1.8 °C – reaching tones that would exceed the range of human hearing.

Implementing the method

Participants watch and listen – ideally, both audio and visuals should be used: a speaker/music box for sound and a beamer with a laptop to project the video, so the rising temperature curve can be seen while hearing the music. Play the video in a quiet setting. Ask participants to pay attention to both the sound and the visual curve.

After the video, short reflection questions can encourage exchange among participants e.g.,

- **How do I feel now?**
- **What did I feel during the music?**
- **What did I notice about the changes in sound and image?**

Song of Our Warming Planet

Experiences and tips

- Make sure the room is quiet and the technical setup works well (clear sound and visible projection).
- Allow enough time for reflection, as participants may need a moment to process their emotions. It can be helpful to reassure participants that there are no “right” or “wrong” feelings.

Materials

- **Link to music video:**
  https://vimeo.com/69122809

True or False Quiz



© queraum

The method

The True or False Quiz is an interactive discussion method based on short quiz statements. Participants decide whether a statement is correct or false and indicate their answer by holding up numbered signs. The quiz format provides a low-threshold entry point into a topic and encourages participation from everyone.

True or False Quiz

The method combines playful elements with knowledge sharing. After each statement, the group discusses the answer together, which allows participants to exchange ideas, reflect on their assumptions, and learn additional facts. The quiz can be conducted with the whole group or in small groups.

Implementing the method

The facilitator prepares statements about the topic. Each statement is read aloud and shown visually (e.g., on a card or slide).

Participants then decide whether the statement is correct or false. Each participant is given small signs with numbers: sign 1 represents “true” and sign 2 “false”. Participants raise the sign that corresponds to their answer.

After everyone has shown their answer, the facilitator reveals the correct response. The statement is then discussed with the group, allowing participants to share their thoughts.

Experiences and tips

The True or False Quiz was used by queraum and Hallo Klima! with older visitors in a day-care centre in Vienna. From this experience, we recommend the following:

- **Use large, clearly printed numbers on the answer cards so they are easy to read.**
- **The cards should be easy to hold, ideally with a thicker handle or stick.**
- **Provide printed versions of the questions in A4 format so everyone can read them comfortably.**
- **Pass the cards and printed materials around so participants can look at them closely.**

True or False Quiz

- Participants particularly appreciated the dynamic and playful nature of the activity. The combination of movement, visual materials, and discussion created an engaging atmosphere and encouraged active participation.
- Supporting visuals or graphics can be shown and printed information sheets can be placed on the table so participants can look at them more closely.

Materials

- ✓ Presentation slides with example statements and answers



© queraum

Climate Flower



© Alex Ohan, pexels

The method

The Climate Flower is a creative and reflective activity designed to help participants explore the connection between climate change, climate action and their personal values, identities, everyday experiences, and social roles. By visualising important aspects of their lives in the shape of a flower, participants reflect on individual motivations, barriers and opportunities connected to climate action. The method encourages dialogue, strengthens personal relevance and creates an accessible entry point into climate communication without requiring prior expert knowledge.

Climate Flower

Implementing the method

Provide each participant with a flower template or ask them to draw a flower with several large petals on a sheet of paper.

Experiences and tips

- **This method values participants' experiences, biographies and knowledge. It helps them to develop a personal and emotional connection to climate issues and reduce feelings of distance and helplessness often associated with climate change.**
- **Facilitators should create an open and respectful atmosphere and emphasise that participation and sharing are voluntary.**

Participants reflect individually on questions such as:

- **What changes have you noticed in your environment or daily life?**
- **What are you already doing that you feel is good for people or the environment?**
- **What is one thing you would like to try or learn more about in the future?**

Materials

- **Flower template or blank paper**
- **Pens and coloured markers**
- **Method adapted from:**
  https://www.klimaaktiv.at/klimabildung/klimakommunikation/wie-erreiche-ich-junge-menschen/aktiv-fuers-klima/klima-blume

Climate Scrabble



© Age Cymru, unsplash

The method

Climate Scrabble is a creative and interactive method to explore associations with a specific word, such as "climate change". Participants use the letters of a given keyword to find related terms, ideas, or concepts. It encourages brainstorming, activates prior knowledge and reveals different perspectives within the group.

Climate Scrabble

The method works well as an introduction to a topic, helping participants engage in a playful, low-threshold way while already reflecting on key themes.

Implementing the method

Choose a central word related to your topic (e.g., "climate change"). Write it vertically in the middle of a sheet of paper, a flipchart, or a board.

Prepare copies if participants work individually or in small groups.

After a given amount of time (e.g., 10–15 minutes), invite the participants to exchange their scrabble sheets.

Experiences and tips

- **This method is especially useful as an icebreaker or introductory activity. It helps participants to actively engage, and it can make existing knowledge visible.**
- **For better understanding you can demonstrate the method briefly with a simple example.**
- **Choose a keyword with enough letters to allow a wide range of associations.**
- **In smaller groups, the activity can also be done together on a shared flipchart or board.**

Materials

Method adapted from:
https://www.germanwatch.org/sites/default/files/publication/17832.pdf

“Times change, winds change”



The method

Nearly every language has its store of proverbs about weather, seasons and nature. This method uses them as an entry point into climate conversations. Instead of opening with data and scenarios, it opens with language and lived experience: Does the saying still hold true? When did you last see it happen? What has changed since you learned it?

Proverbs put older participants in the role of experts. They know these sayings, they have watched the weather they describe for decades, and they are the ones who can tell whether the old rules still work. This makes an abstract topic tangible and easy to talk about, and it keeps the conversation close to everyday life. The method also works across generations: sayings travel from grandparents to grandchildren, and so do observations about a changing climate.

Proverbs: “Times change, winds change”
Video of Climate Hub in Tavira

Implementing the method

Prepare a set of proverbs about weather, seasons, harvest, water and nature in the local language or, if possible, in regional or dialect versions. Print them in large letters, one saying per card, or show them one by one on slides. Six to ten proverbs are usually enough for a session of about an hour.

Read a proverb aloud, or invite a participant to read it, and first let the group enjoy it: Who knows it? Who heard it at home? Then open the conversation with questions such as:

- **What does this saying mean? Is there a similar one in your family or region?**
- **Does it still hold true today? When did you last observe it?**
- **What would you have to change in the saying so that it fits today’s weather?**
- **Which sayings should we pass on to our grandchildren – and which ones need a new version?**

“Times change, winds change”

Encourage participants to contribute sayings of their own. As a closing round, the group can invent a “new proverb for a changing climate” and write it on a flipchart.

The method combines well with an activity that brings in facts and figures, for instance the Climate Cube: the proverbs open the conversation, and factual input then places the observations in a wider context.

Participant quote

“I learned much and feel like I am much more informed on the issue of climate change and how it affects Europe and in particular the Algarve. I will share this information.”

Materials

- ✓ **Blank cards (A4 or A5) and thick pens for participants’ own sayings**
- ✓ **Flipchart or poster to collect the group’s “new proverbs”**

Experiences and tips

The method was developed and tested by the Portuguese partner USO in the municipal library of Tavira with around 25 older participants. From this experience, we recommend the following:

- **If possible, ask the group in advance which sayings they know. Participants are the best source of material, and being asked already creates ownership of the session.**
- **Print each proverb in large letters on a separate card and pass the cards around, so everyone can read and hold them.**
- **Combine the proverbs with a method that offers facts and figures, so that personal observations can be connected to what science describes.**
- **The method also works with large groups: proverbs can be discussed in plenary, or each small group receives one card and reports back.**

Imprint

The Climate We Speak is an Erasmus+ project (Cooperation Partnerships for Cooperation, adult education) running from December 2024 until November 2026. The project is carried out by five partner organisations:

- **queraum. cultural and social research, Austria (European Coordination)**
  https://www.queraum.org/en
- **Hallo Klima!, Austria**
  https://halloklima.at
- **LAB60+, Poland**
  https://lab60plus.pl
- **Universidade Sénior de Oeiras, Portugal**
  https://www.usoeiras.pt
- **AGE Platform Europe, Europe/Belgium**
  https://www.age-platform.eu

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the-climate-we-speak.eu

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