

This is slightly different to other blog posts I have written, but does link – tenuously – to guiding. Through the ‘beyond the UK’ pathway of Inspire (the Guiding 18–30 section), I was challenged to complete an international badge. Soon, I discovered the YUNGA challenges. These are a set of challenges created by the Youth and United Nations Global Alliance based around a range of global issues such as water, soil, disaster risk reduction, and ending hunger. Intended to be used by young people all over the world, the badge packs contain a huge amount of information and practical activities to help us make a real life change in our world. You can find out more about them here:

<https://www.wagggg.org/en/resources/yunga-challenge-badges/>

After some consideration, I began the ‘climate change’ challenge, and the final task for me to finish the badge is to write a blog all about climate change – so here we go!

### **So what is climate change?**

The climate is the general weather in an area – what it does most of the time, rather than what it is doing right now (that is the weather). The earth’s climate has always changed gradually. You might have heard of the Ice Ages, when Earth’s climate was much colder. In recent history, however, human activity has caused the planet’s atmosphere to warm up much faster than it would naturally. This is because human activities such as farming, industry and burning fossil fuels release lots of greenhouse gases. These gases, including methane, carbon dioxide and water vapour sit in the atmosphere and trap heat from the sun, warming up our atmosphere.



## **But why should I care?**

This is such a huge question I can't really begin to answer it here, but it is our responsibility to keep the planet safe for future generations, plants and animals. If global temperatures rise by just 4 degrees we could experience the following and more:

- Extinction of a range of animal species
- Changes in rainfall causing flooding and drought
- Lack of water availability in the summer due to less snowfall in the winter
- Changes to the timing of seasons affecting animals and crops
- More extreme weather
- Loss of soil that takes thousands of years to replace
- Spread of diseases such as malaria and dengue to different areas
- Spread of invasive species disrupting ecosystems
- Increase in forest fires
- All this can lead to increased poverty, hunger and health issues for people worldwide

## **So what can I do?**

Fantastic - you want to make a change in your life to help our planet and the people, animals, and plants which call it home. Here are 5 things you can do to make a difference.

### **1. Make changes at home:**

There are lots of websites where you can find out your household's carbon footprint. This gives you an idea of what your greenhouse gas emissions are like and what you could do to improve them. They require different amounts of information so here is a simple one from the WWF  
<https://footprint.wwf.org.uk/#/>

Once you know what you need to change, do it! This might be small changes to save energy in your home such as taking shorter showers and getting energy efficient lightbulbs, right through to bigger actions like installing solar panels on your home, buying an electric car or buying more locally produced food.

### **2. Prepare:**

Ok, so this one doesn't directly impact climate change, but it is important. Learn about the area around you and how climate change has altered it so far. Then consider how climate change could further alter it in the future. Are there any natural hazards that will be more likely to happen where you live if the global temperature continues to rise? Learn more about these and their impact.

**3. Look after nature:**

Planting and caring for a tree can help combat climate change as trees absorb and store carbon dioxide; one of the major greenhouse gases. Growing your own vegetables also helps reduce the emissions created by packing and transporting food. You can also research which animals in your area are being impacted by climate change and what you can do to help them. For example in the UK more hot, dry periods are occurring. During these, setting out and maintaining bird baths can help animals access water.

**4. Get involved:**

Use resources available to you to support a group or charity working to combat climate change such as Friends of the Earth (<https://friendsoftheearth.uk/take-action/join-group-near-you>) or Climate action network (<https://climatenetwork.org/>). There are loads of groups that focus on different aspects of climate change, so choose one to suit you. You can then volunteer with the group or raise money to support their cause. Perhaps you could hold a bring and buy sale or organise a sponsored event.

**5. Spread the word:**

Use the internet or books to learn more about climate change and how to fight it. Get the message out there however you can. You could run meetings for your unit, do a presentation at school, share posts from reputable sources on social media, design posters, write to your local government, or even write a blog!