A Guide to Building the Climate Movement While you Travel, Volunteer, or Study Abroad
Background to the 350.org Campaign

350.org is an international grassroots campaign that aims to mobilize a global climate movement united by a common call to action. 350 represents the parts per million carbon dioxide concentration that leading scientists, including Dr. James Hansen, Director of the NASA Goddard Institute for Space Studies, have now set as an upper threshold for a safe climate. The problem is that international climate negotiations are now focused on targets that are scientifically inaccurate and dangerously inadequate. Our mission is to move the goalpost, to make sure that the world is aiming for a target that will actually avert dangerous climate change.

We are a small, youth-led team from around the world, and we need your help. In the next two years we want to embed the number 350 deeply in public consciousness—make it ubiquitous across societies, languages, and ideologies. We believe that once 350 is widely known, it will provide an important benchmark for people worldwide who seek an equitable solution to the climate crisis. As a benchmark, 350 can help bring about a political breakthrough in international climate change negotiations and help catalyze the global transformation that the climate crisis demands.

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While the rise of the internet and social networks have made our planet’s citizens and civil society more connected and active than ever, a vast percentage of the world’s communities remain disconnected. We
believe that concerned citizens abroad can play an important role in connecting more people to the important global movement to save our planet's future. Climate change is already harming communities all over the world, especially the poorest and most vulnerable. Meanwhile, the media and politicians often overlook the voices of ordinary citizens. 350.org will provide a megaphone for individuals and communities everywhere. We need your help to weave their voices, their innovative ideas, their commitment and our collective drive to save our planet into a movement more powerful than the sum of its parts.

In this guide, we will outline a few ways it is possible to help build the 350 movement during your time abroad, and important guidelines for organizing appropriately in a community and culture other than your own.

Thanks for all you do,
The 350.org Team

For more information about the background and strategy of the 350 campaign, please visit our website at 350.org, and don't hesitate to contact us with questions. The following are a few ways you can be a part of this project during your time abroad:

**Build the Movement**

**Network Building**

Help build the 350 network in the country where you are studying by connecting with local environmental and non-profit organizations, community leaders, schools, or other parts of civil society. By helping to connect local individuals' and organizations' work with a broader movement, you can help amplify the impact of their work, and build the momentum of the movement everywhere. Don't be afraid to ring some phones or knock on doors to first get in touch with groups. Often times people are thrilled to hear from individuals who care to take the time while traveling to speak with local groups. With whomever you speak with, introduce them to the project, invite their participation in some way, and think collaboratively with them about what sorts of participation make sense for that place and that community.

On our website at www.350.org/en/resources, you can find materials to help you organize a 350 action and educational event for a community, organization or school wherever you are, to help engage new participants in this global project. For more about ways to involve new groups in 350, please see our partnerships document, which can be a helpful tool for explaining the project to organizations:

- Partnerships with 350.org:
- Organizing and Education Resources:
  www.350.org/en/resources

**Organize an Action**

If appropriate, one of the best ways to spread the word while you’re abroad is to host an action or event with a local organization, student group, or local friends you’ve made, and send in a photo of the action to 350.org. It will be important to assess what type of event is appropriate to organize (educational, political, artistic, faith-based...), and to ensure that you team up with a local organization or local leaders to plan. If you’re interested in planning an educational event...
or action, please read through our organizing guide for ideas, suggestions, and tips:

• 350 Organizing Guide (coming soon)

Document Climate Stories

All around the world, there are important and inspiring human stories about the courage and resilience of communities who are already experiencing the impacts of global warming, and finding solutions to the problem. These stories need to be heard by citizens, the media, and policymakers everywhere, and you can help bring them to a wider audience by participating in our climate stories project. On our website, you will be able to upload text, audio, photo, and video material you collect of the climate impacts and solutions you see in your travels. We will be displaying these stories on our website, our partners' websites, and ultimately at the UN climate meetings in Poland in December of 2008.

Important Information About Organizing Abroad

It will be very important to recognize your place as an outsider while traveling to other places, and approach each situation with a local community or organization respectfully and appropriately. We encourage you to help bring more people into this movement, while always exercising your best judgments about cultural sensitivity and safety in your organizing approach.

Cultural Sensitivity and Safety

Be sure to check with your study abroad professors, host family, or local organization leaders before entering a certain community, conducting interviews, or organizing an event. In many places, the 350 effort will likely be received well, in others it may be perceived as threatening. Political organizing. It is important that you consult locals and other foreign visitors that have more experience in the culture you are working in, to gain a better understanding of how what you are trying to do will be perceived. Only through understanding the culture and politics of an area, and approaching your project sensitively will it be effective. This is also incredibly important for your safety. Please avoid projects that require you to enter conflict zones, make you a target for governments or corporations, or in any other way jeopardize your safety or the safety of those around you.

Documentation Tips

"Video, film and photographs are part of a truly international language, transcending national, cultural and linguistic boundaries. (These mediums) can be used to bring an issue to life, making it interesting and intelligible to a wide diversity of people, including those who are not directly affected by the issues you are addressing." - Environmental Justice Foundation's Video Manual

Below you will find more information about ways to document climate organizing, impacts, and solutions during your time abroad using different types of media. We encourage you to use photo and video as ways to tell your story, as these mediums communicate more easily across languages and cultures, and can provide undeniable evidence of both environmental problems and solutions. You will be able to upload text, photos, and/or videos to the 350.org website that document the event you organized, or the community story you wish to tell.
Photo

A picture says a thousand words. At 350.org, we rely heavily on images to tell our story to the media and the public. For an example of how we used photos to tell the story of a movement, check out our past efforts at www.stepitup2007.org. Photography will be useful whether you’re organizing an action, documenting stories, or creating videos. Be sure to travel with enough film or memory, and back up your photos online frequently as you travel. Photos that depict 350 or climate change impacts and solutions will be very useful for telling your story on the 350.org website. For more technical tips, please check out the following resource:


Video

Video is an excellent way to show the human face of climate change, and to allow local communities’ voices and stories to reach a wider audience. YouTube, cheaper video cameras, and easy-to-use editing software has made documentary-making and digital story-telling more accessible than ever, so regardless of whether you’ve made videos before or not, consider this medium as a compelling way to document your work abroad, communicate your story to the folks back home, and to amplify your impact. Even if you don’t have your own video camera, you may be able to rent one for your time abroad, or borrow one from your university or library. For upload to the 350.org website, we ask that you try to keep your submissions under 10 minutes, subtitled or in English, and related to climate change impacts or action. Below are a few excellent resources about video advocacy, planning your film, interviewing tips, shooting your film, editing, and uploading to the web. Be sure to check them out before your trip and before starting to film:

• The YouTube Handbook for Producing and Uploading your own videos: http://www.youtube.com/t/yt_handbook_produce
• Witness.org’s Effective Strategies for Video Advocacy Guide: http://www.witness.org
• The Center for Digital Storytelling’s “Storytelling Cookbook”: http://www.storycenter.org/cookbook.html
• Insight’s Handbook on Participatory Video: http://www.insightshare.org/training_book.html

Using the Website

The 350.org website is available in ten languages and counting, and is very accessible. You can help us by:

• Uploading your action photo/video/description - after you’ve organized an event, or documented a story, visit our Take Action page to upload photos and descriptions. Be sure to include the location of the action, and to tag it thematically. Instructions are available on the website. http://www.350.org/en/take-action
• Writing a blog - you can check out our blog to get an idea about the type of topics we like to highlight. We would be happy to post a piece about a story, a local NGO, or action you organize. Just e-mail kelly@350.org with the story you’d like to share.
• Linking us up with new partner organizations -
check out the types of organizations we're working with, and start contacting groups where you are. Good databases to start with are Wiser Earth (www.wiserearth.org) and Idealist (www.idealist.org). E-mail may@350.org with partner contacts. A list of our current partners can be found at www.350.org/en/ friends

If you're able to upload your action photos, climate stories, or any other material you submit by mid-November, it will travel with the 350.org team to the UN climate negotiations in Poland. So get started early, and keep that date in mind!

Getting Credit (for students)

If you think creatively, chances are you may be able to create an independent study, service learning project, or research paper that allows you to do work that simultaneously advances your studies and allows you to support the work of 350.org. Most institutions today have an interest in ensuring that their students' work is contributing to the common good, so in many instances, it may be quite easy to make the case that work on climate change advocacy is an important part of your education. Feel free to contact us for more tips.

Further Resources

Study Abroad Partners
Middlebury College Study Abroad and Schools Abroad (http://www.middlebury.edu/academics/ump/sap)
School for International Training (www.sit.edu)
Abroad View (www.abroadview.org)

Please contact us at kelly@350.org if you are a study or volunteer abroad program interested in working together on this initiative.