

COUNTDOWN

TED^x
Napier Bridge
Celebrating a decade



The Citizen Climate Lab





Curated and Designed by
The TEDxNapier Bridge Dream Team



Letter from the Curator

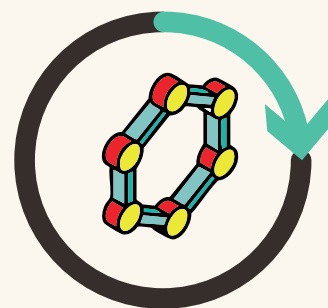
The Earth has faced 5 mass extinction events, which killed most life on our planet; the fifth and latest being the Cretaceous–Paleogene extinction, i.e. the Dinosaur Demise that happened 66 million years ago. There’s an overwhelming consensus among the global scientific community that human-driven climate change could push the Earth towards a 6th mass extinction event. But if it’s any species that’s resilient enough to weather the storm and survive the worst, it’s humanity. There’s more than enough historical proof that if we band together, we can achieve and surpass the impossible.

With that oxymoronic introduction out of the way, this publication is not going to focus on global ideas or grand visions for the future. Rather, this will serve as a guidebook for every ordinary citizen to implement climate-positive measures in their life and become part of humanity’s fight against climate change. We strongly believe that this bottom-up approach is the only way forward. Being aware of the grand scheme of things is necessary, but being paralysed by climate anxiety is harshly counterproductive in this already one-sided fight. Thereby, we, at TEDxNapier Bridge, have curated and compiled a brief list of climate-positive ideas (most of these ideas will be from the perspective of a citizen of Chennai, but would be applicable in a global context, too). These ideas are meant to be experimental and collaborative. Also, please note that this is a public-interest publication and none of the ideas or organisations mentioned are sponsored. If you have feedback or additions that you would like to share with us, please email us at ideas@tedxnapierbridge.com

Read on to build a climate-positive future together.

The Lab Map

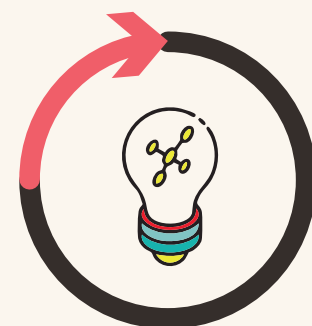
This booklet is divided into four chapters, each containing specific, actionable ideas and nudges to broaden your understanding of climate change and expand the conversation. Feel free to read the sections in any order you like.



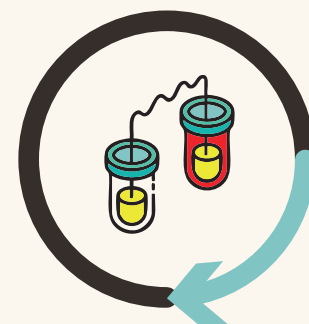
Ideas in
Climate Adaptation



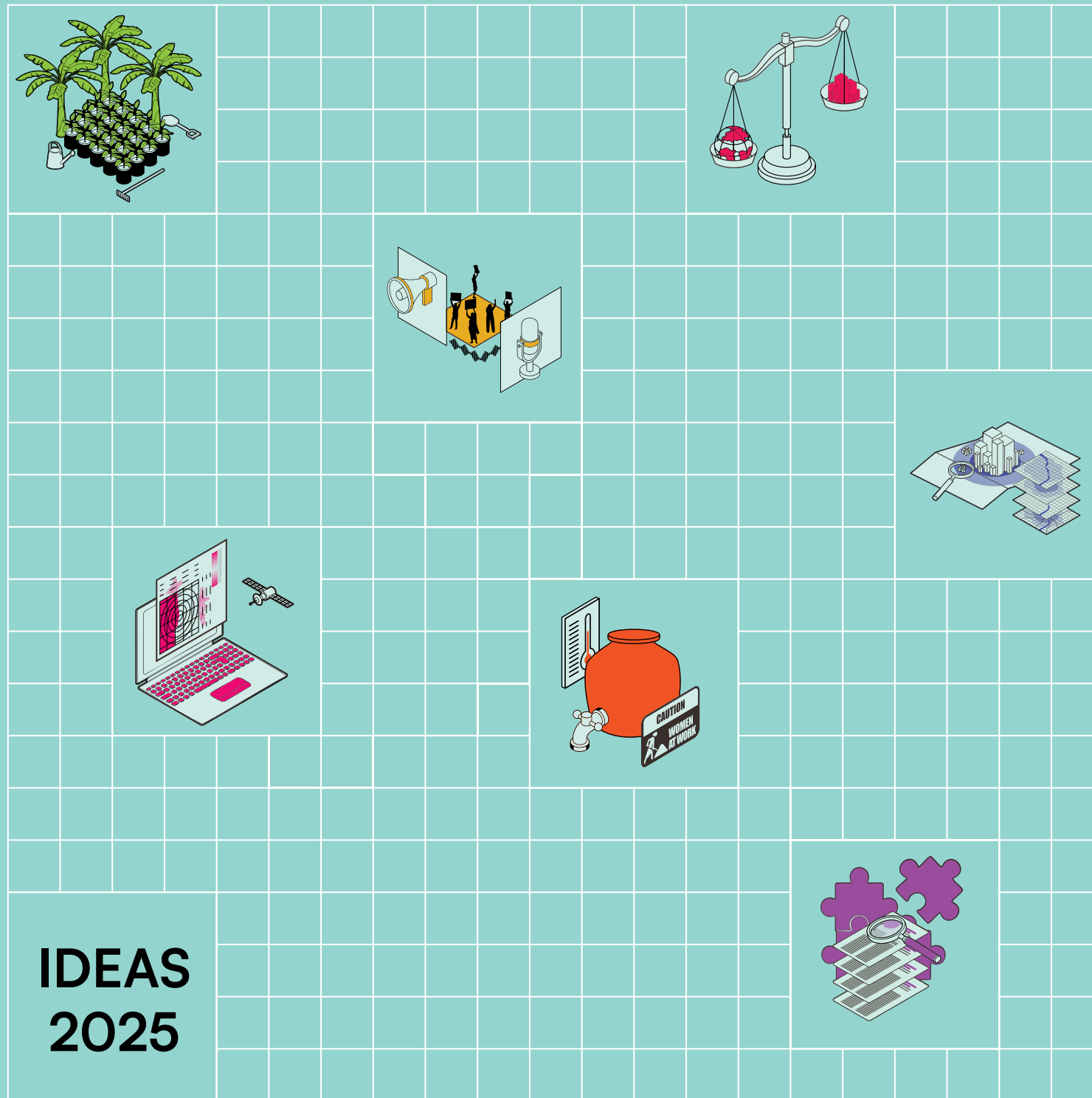
Ideas in
Climate Mitigation



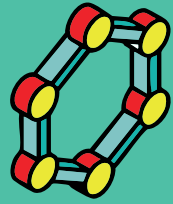
Ideas in
Climate Resilience



Bridging the
Awareness-Action Gap



Ideas in Climate Adaptation



Climate change is not a problem to be solved by our future generations. Its impacts are being felt all over the world widely and acutely. Even before we make climate-positive lifestyle changes, we need to understand how climate change impacts us now and adapt to sufficiently safeguard ourselves from its ill effects.

01

Prepare for extreme weather

The single most devastating impact of climate change that hasn't failed to touch all our lives is the increase in extreme weather events all over the world. In 2024, India experienced extreme weather events in various regions for 322 days of the year. It's safe to assume that all of us will experience an extreme weather event every single year.

02

Floods and cyclones

Invest in an off-grid power solution

On-grid EB power is almost always affected during a flood or cyclone, be it a result of infrastructure damage or a safety shutdown. A relatively small investment in an off-grid power solution could provide disproportionate benefits. A tubular battery for power backup, a solar inverter that can automatically switch between EB and solar, and small 12V solar panels can provide uninterrupted power. Solar panels generate minimal power even when it's cloudy or raining. Coupling this with power-efficient appliances like BLDC (Brushless DC motor) fans and LED lights might alleviate a lot of discomfort during disasters.

Get trained in emergency response

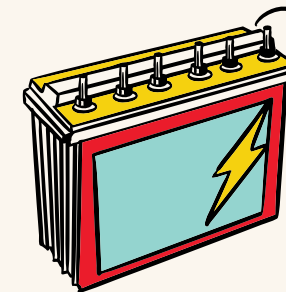
Emergency services such as ambulances are crippled during floods and cyclones. Getting trained in basic first-aid and emergency response might prove crucial for your loved ones. We assure you that this would prove much more useful than that random Udeemy course you signed up for.

A quality non-profit like <https://alert.ngo/> could help you get trained in less than 2 weeks. Additionally, always have an emergency first-aid kit at home.

Cash is still King

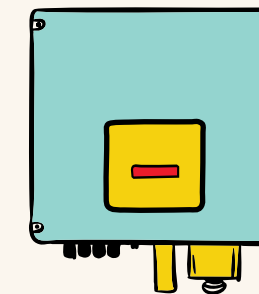
UPI is a technological marvel in the digital payments space and is revered all over the world. The share of cash payments in India's consumption spending (private final consumption expenditure or PFCE) has decreased from **80.6% in 2021 to 51.9% in the first quarter of 2024**. You often see young adults go completely cash-free and rely solely on UPI. This might cripple your purchasing power, given that internet services are usually shot during a flood or a cyclone. It's always wise to have a small emergency fund as cash to buy essentials in the event of a disaster.

OFF-GRID SOLAR SOLUTION



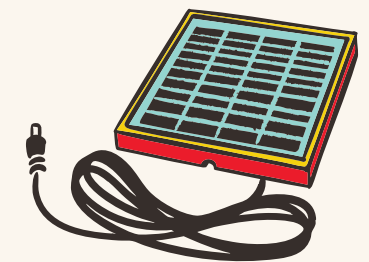
Tubular Battery
Rs. 16,000

+



Solar Inverter
Rs. 9,000

+



12V solar panels
Rs. 8,000

Total approx. cost range- Rs. 35,000 to Rs. 40,000

03

Heat Waves and Droughts

Beware of creeping heat

If you're young and accustomed to air-conditioners, you most probably don't think heat strokes or exhaustion will affect you. Children and people over 65 years of age are indeed much more vulnerable to heat, but there have been an increasing number of instances of heat exhaustion blindsiding young adults. Take proper measures such as hydrating well and eating cooling foods, regardless of whether you're young or old, during hot summer days.

Get preventive tests and vaccines

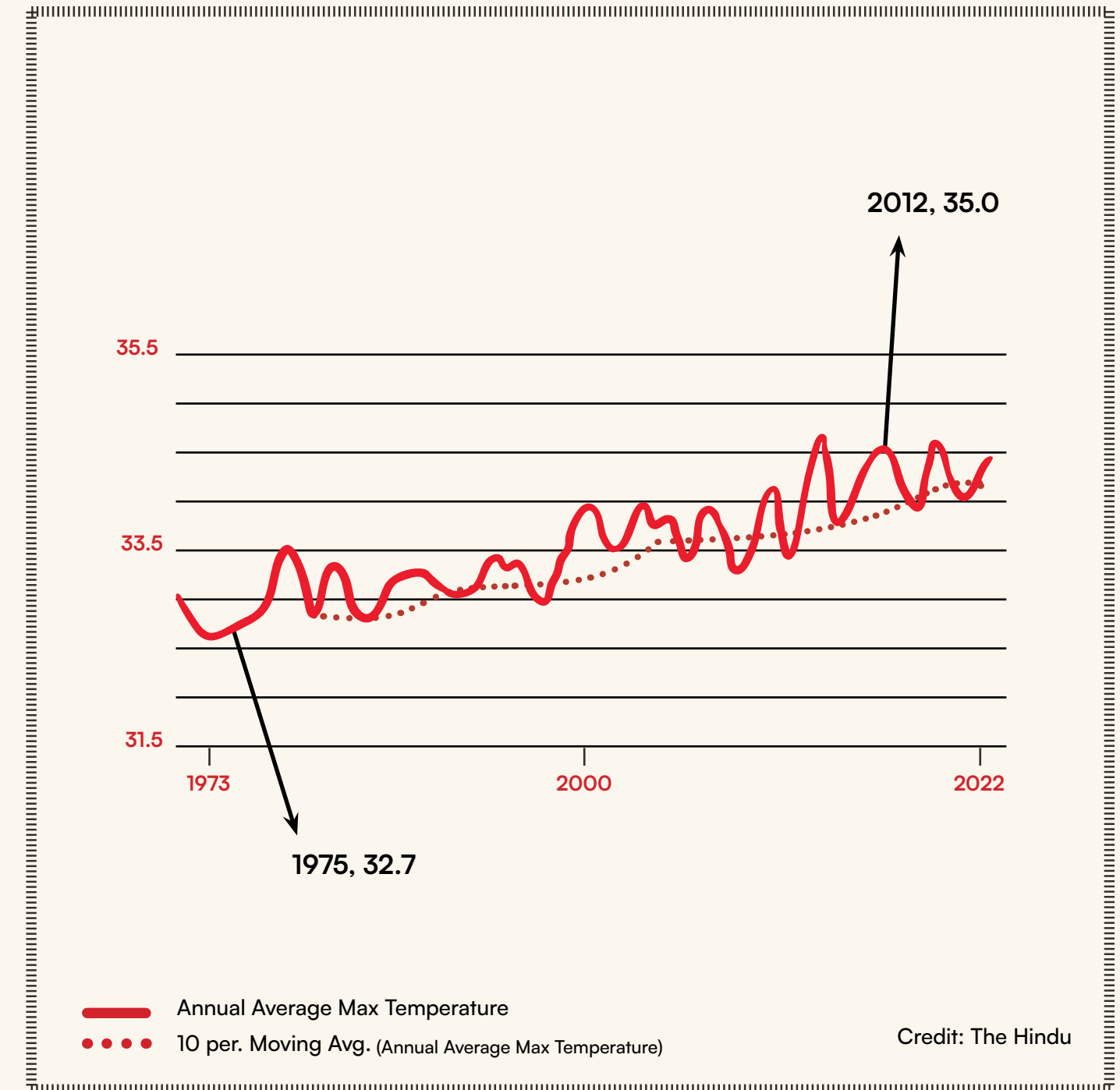
Prolonged heat waves sharply increase vector-borne (eg: dengue, malaria) and water-borne (eg: typhoid, gastroenteritis) diseases. Be informed of regional outbreaks and take all necessary safety measures. Get preventive vaccines if necessary.

Focus on mental health

If you feel highly irritable or anxious during prolonged periods of heat, it's not just you. Heat waves have been statistically linked to mental health problems. Acknowledge, and seek help if necessary.

Invest in passive cooling

Don't try to hide behind an air-conditioner all day. Invest in passive cooling solutions such as white reflective paints or tiles and rooftop gardens. Simple solutions like these avoid creating urban heat islands and can yield disproportionate benefits.



Ideas in Climate Mitigation



Once we've sufficiently adapted to the effects of climate change, we can start thinking about incorporating climate-positive actions into our lifestyle. Even small changes could quickly add up to large climate goals when we do it collectively.

01 Don't 'Blinkit' like you blink

Food delivery aggregation and quick commerce have seen unprecedented growth in India, like nowhere else in the world. Your delivery is not free just because you have Swiggy One or you got a discount coupon. The planet pays the price. Even if you use these services, try planning your orders to reduce delivery frequency and avoid long-distance orders.



285g

of CO₂ per last mile
delivery in India

02 Squares don't fit in stars

Just buying green and blue garbage bags doesn't help unless you correctly segregate organic and inorganic waste. According to the IPCC, 1 ton of mixed organic municipal solid waste produces ~0.25–0.5 tons of CO₂-equivalent per year in methane if landfilled instead of processed. Chennai generates ~4,500–5,000 tons of municipal solid waste daily, out of which 60% - 70% is organic. Thus, even minor mismanagement could add up to huge emissions.

04 Commute or Cardio

We're not asking you to cycle to the office. But don't be that person who drives 2 kilometres to the gym and runs on the treadmill for 2 kilometres. If and when possible, replace your short commutes with walking or cycling instead of driving or riding.



03 Your ChatGPT queries are not free

LLM queries like ChatGPT might be free for the end user. But it's estimated that every ChatGPT query causes 4.32 grams of CO₂ emissions. Similarly, all your digital actions do have a carbon footprint. Don't let your digital carbon footprint run rampant for trivial reasons.

YOUR CHATGPT QUERIES ARE NOT FREE!

4.3g of CO₂
Emissions per ChatGPT query



Approx. 5
queries per user per day



~8000g
Total emissions per year of CO₂ per year

That's equivalent to driving a petrol
hatchback for 40 km



Ideas in Climate Resilience



Climate Resilience is similar to mitigation but focuses more on a policy level than the individual level. These ideas aim to build society-wide systems and processes to make humanity adapt to the effects of climate change and reverse it wherever possible.

01

Vote for no CO2, not NOTA

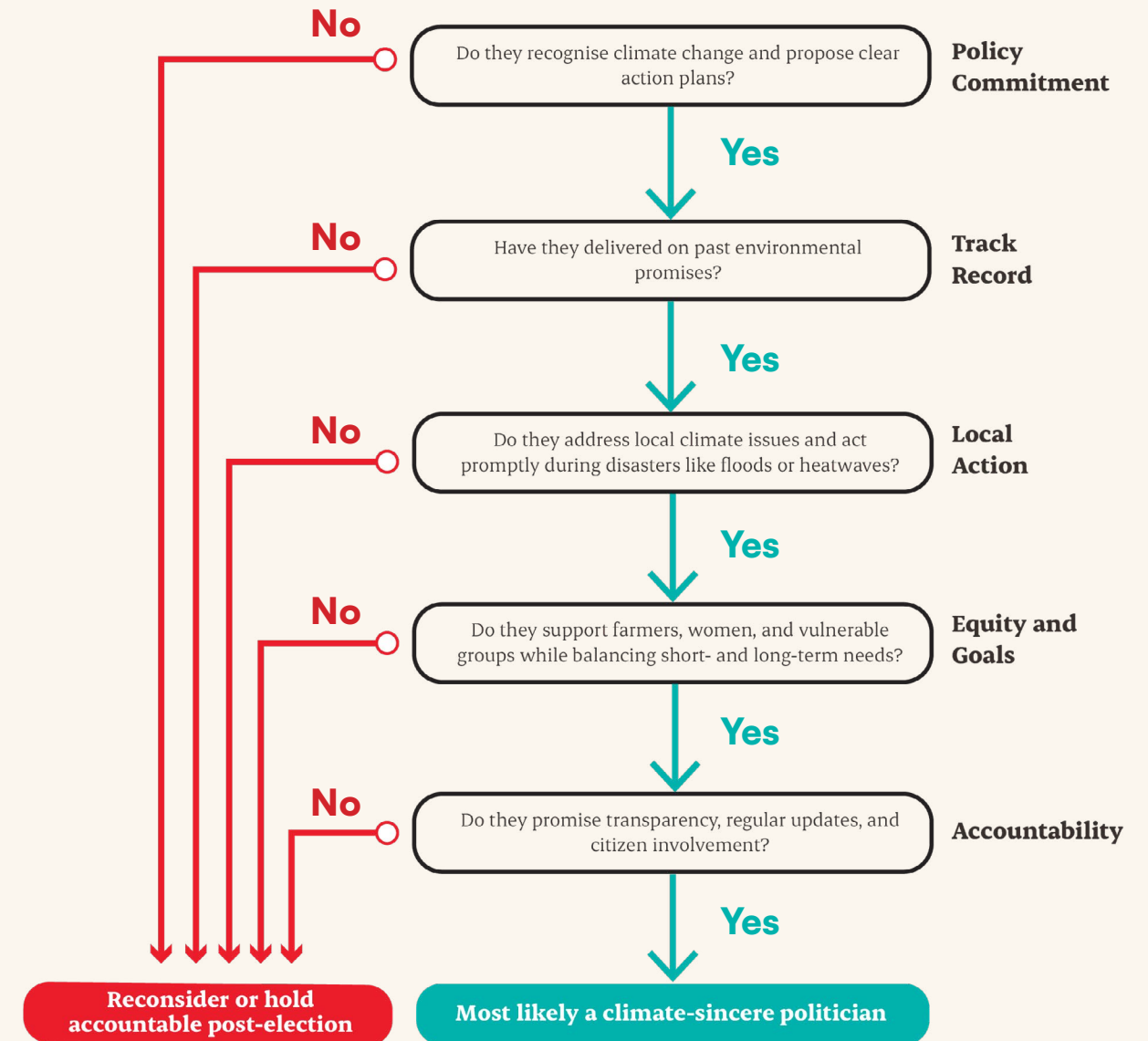
Make it a point to review and take into consideration a party and candidate's climate action plan before you vote for them. The biggest changes needed are from the state, and make sure you use your vote to positively shape the climate policy of your country.

02

Transition to a climate job

A huge chunk of the climate transition is made possible by companies focused on coming up with innovative solutions to combat climate change. And these companies would only succeed if they had the best minds working for them. The climate workforce is not just in need of scientists and policy-makers. It needs recruiters, bankers, programmers, artists, lawyers, etc., if we're to transition to a climate-positive society. So if you get the opportunity, do try to transition your job to work directly against climate change.

How to vote for a climate conscious candidate?



“We are the first generation to feel the effect of climate change and the last generation who can do something about it.”

Barack Obama

03

Offset your carbon footprint if possible

Carbon offsets are not just for companies; they exist for individuals as well. If you feel you're unable to make climate-positive changes to your lifestyle, you can try offsetting your carbon footprint by funding meaningful, broad-based efforts. Beware of this route as it has two devious pitfalls. Verify before you donate; there are more than tenfold the number of greenwashing initiatives than there are genuine ones. Don't let this give you a hall pass to let your carbon footprint run rampant. One trusted aggregator we've found is <https://www.wren.co/>

04

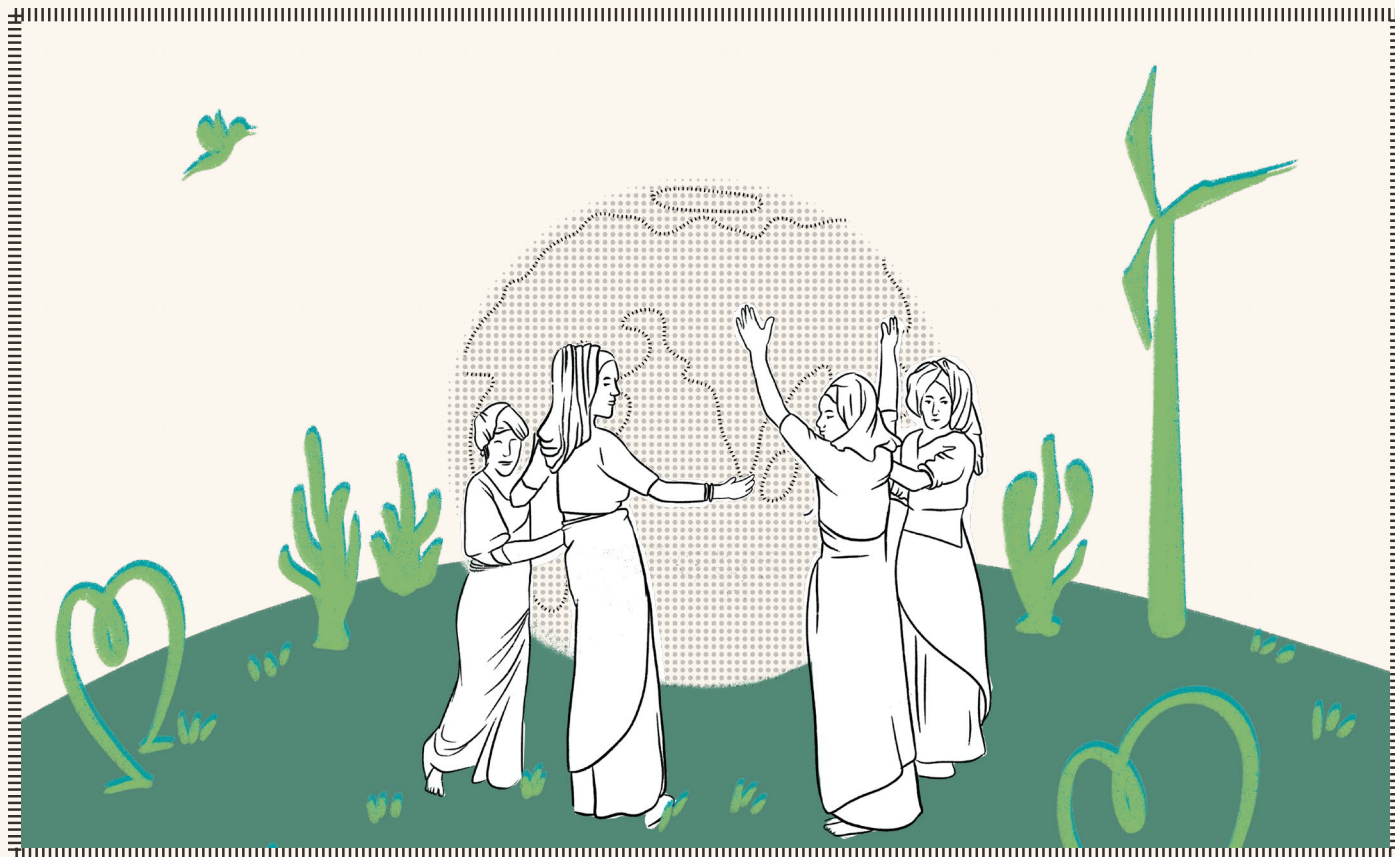
Volunteer

Try dedicating your time to volunteer for genuine, community-based initiatives. There are multitudes of non-profits working in this space right here in Chennai. Examples include:

- [Environmentalist Foundation of India \(E.F.I\)](#)
- [Aram Thinai](#)
- **Nizhal**

Bridging the Awareness Action Gap

Most of us understand the reality of climate change, and many even carry the weight of eco-anxiety. But the harsh reality is that we do not take the right actions either to curb the causes of climate change or to shield ourselves from its effects. This awareness-action gap, also called the psychological climate paradox, is a well-studied phenomenon and is the result of a multitude of factors, such as misinformation, powerlessness, hyper-convenience, overwhelmingness, etc.



01

Why does this happen (for the most part)?

When our team set out to curate our first conference on climate change back in 2023, we were faced with a never-ending stream of news stories predicting doom and highly polarising debates that often failed to delve deeper or present a workable solution. This left us paralysed not just in our work, but also intensified our eco-anxiety to new levels. What started as an ambitious project left us dejected, leading us to even abandon climate-positive actions we were already doing in our lives. It took us a while to cut through all the cruff and stabilise. In our conversations with hundreds of people over the last 2 years, we realised it wasn't just us. Most people never take any action because of analysis paralysis and powerlessness. There are so many opinions, how do I know if the actions I take by sacrificing my convenience are contributing to positive change? Can 1 person make a difference? We're all doomed anyway, so why does it matter what I do?

Why do I care if this is only going to affect generations centuries in the future? Any one or a combination of questions like these is, for the most part, responsible for inaction.

02

What can you do?

Focus on high-quality news and literature. Stay away from sensational or bait-based news articles and social media posts that polarise you without depth or context. Understand that climate change is not a future problem. The impact of climate change is shaping our lives now and here. Focus on the small stuff that you can change; don't get caught up in the grand scheme of things. Understanding the big picture is important, but dwelling on it causes analysis paralysis and decision fatigue.



Here are our recommendations for you to gain a rich body of knowledge about climate change.

Books

- **“The Climate Action Handbook” by Heidi A. Roop:** An accessible guide to implement climate-positive actions in our everyday lives
- **“Collapse” by Jared Diamond:** A philosophical account of what climate change could entail for humanity
- **“The Ministry for the Future” by Kim Stanley Robinson:** A novel that combines climate fiction with deeply researched policy ideas
- **“Climate Justice” by Mary Robinson:** Stories from all over the world on the disproportionate impact of climate change on vulnerable communities
- **“The Uninhabitable Earth” by David Wallace-Wells:** A vivid exploration of what the future could hold if climate change remained unchecked
- **“The Sixth Extinction” by Elizabeth Kolbert:** Pulitzer prize-winning account on the loss of biodiversity due to anthropogenic actions

Newsletters

- Grist: Looking forward
- Yale Climate Connections
- Inside Climate News: Justice and Health

Not a voracious reader? We’ve still got you covered.

Documentaries

- Coral Woman (2019)
- An Inconvenient Truth (2006)
- Before the Flood (2016)
- Our Planet (2019)
- 2040 (2019)
- The Climate Question - BBC World Service

Movies

- Don’t Look Up (2021)
- The Day After Tomorrow (2004)
- Okja (2017)
- The Day the Earth Stood Still (2008)

Podcasts

- Aram Thinal
- Climate One
- Green Dreamer
- The Carbon Copy
- Mothers of Invention

TED Talks

- [Remembering climate change ... a message from the year 2071](#) by Kim Stanley Robinson
- [Why Climate Action Is Unstoppable](#) and “Climate Realism” Is a Myth - Al Gore
- [Feeling Stuck on Climate Change? Here’s What To Do](#) by Kris De Meyer
- [I’m a Conservative — and I Care About the Climate, Too](#) by Danielle Butcher Franz
- [The Herds, a Vast Act of Theater to Spark Climate Action](#) by Amir Nizar Zuabi

If you want more TED talks, check out the full [TED Countdown playlist](#).

TEDxNapier Bridge Productions

- [Why is shaping young minds a game-changer in the climate crisis?](#) | Yuvan Aves
- [How does a community’s livelihood fight tie into the climate battle](#) | Saravanan K
- [The Green Construction Playbook](#) | Anupama Bothireddy & Aafreen Fathima Kabir
- [Should end users bear the burden of recycling? Debunking the myth](#) | Ann Anra
- [Redefining Urban Living: How can communities heal lands and minds?](#) | Shobha Menon
- [Unforeseen Toll of Climate Change: Why Water is Becoming Expensive](#) | Smitha TK
- [The Quest for Renewable Energy from Our Oceans](#) | Dr. Purnima Jalihal
- [Thoughts on Sustainable Fashion](#) | Ashwin Thiyagarajan & Reethu Paramasivam