

The background features stylized green plant and tree graphics in the corners. In the top-left, there are various leaf shapes and a circular element. In the top-right, a large circular shape with a stem and leaves is visible. In the bottom-left, there are triangular shapes resembling trees and a plant with leaves. In the bottom-right, there are more triangular tree shapes and a plant with leaves and a circular fruit-like element.

Empowering Student Voice and Agency: A University-K12 Partnership for Climate Change Education

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Introduction

- Today, the U.S. fails to engage young people in democracy.
- Young people would like to make a difference; however, often don't know where to start.



Creating pathways for young people to engage in democracy, we can strengthen participation in the electorate and build communities for people to challenge ideas and accept their differences.

Principles of a Healthy Democracy



- Civic Participation
- Elections
- Governing Institutions
- Civil Society
- Rule of Law...

However, schools today fail to invite students and teachers into the conversation on issues that directly impact them.

Importance of Climate Change Education

- Climate change isn't talked about in schools. Ed Week found that 26% of teachers haven't talked about climate change because "they can't think of any way it is related to the subject they teach."
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- However, the importance of climate change is on the rise, particularly with young people.



Importance of Climate Change Education

- Younger generations are “especially likely to express an interest in addressing climate change — and [...] have personally taken some kind of action to do so” (Pew Research).
- Young people are victims of environmental injustice across disenfranchized communities.
- Climate Change Education can help students with:
 - making informed decisions
 - change attitudes and behaviors
 - help adapt to climate change trends
 - empower them to act as agents of change



The Problem

Challenging topics, like climate change, can burden teachers as they're supposed to focus on topics such as reading and writing.

Researching independently can expose them and students to possible misconceptions and bias findings.

Teachers today are also burdened with tasks that aren't always in their job description. They also feel pressure to prepare students for standardized test.



The Problem Continued

Focusing on climate change, teachers can feel:

- Overwhelmed
- Worried over losing credibility
- Fear over not teaching climate change accurately

Younger generations are stuck in a revolving thought process that they can't make a difference as one person, when they actually can.



Overview

This program connects college students with K-12 schools to:

- Enhance climate literacy in middle schools
- Provide classroom project resources for educators
 - Empower students voices by working on projects in their community
- Train college students as Climate Ambassadors for K-12 schools



Program Goals

- Improve student understanding of climate science, especially in their own community
- Support teachers with flexible lesson plans
- Provide leadership and teaching experience for college students




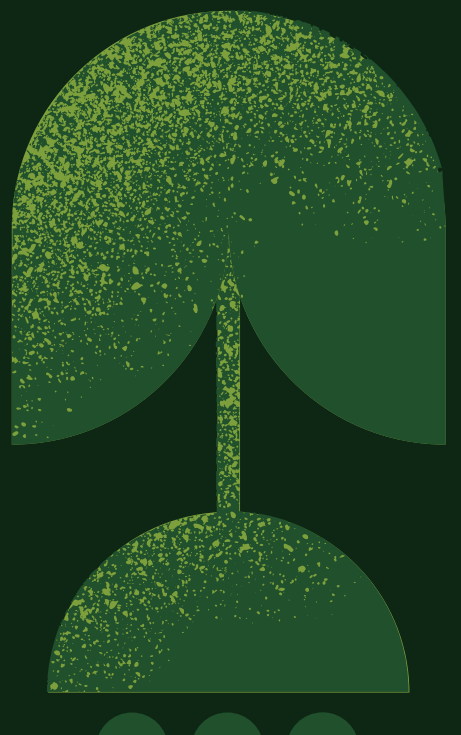




Existing Solutions

We have current solutions to empower young people to make a difference in their community through democratic education:

- Earth Force
- Project Citizen
- ICivics
- Participatory budgeting

However, we are proposing that we take it a step further and begin to take action inside the classroom.






How Our Program Differs

Many students face barriers when accessing these programs because they occur outside of the school day.

Our program embeds hands-on learning into classrooms. By engaging ASU students, we can also build a more robust teacher profession.





- College students are trained as Climate K-12 Ambassadors through the Weather and Climate Club
- Sessions include interactive activities and discussions
- Focus on alignment with state standards
- Lessons are co-developed with K-12 teachers

Program Structure



Program Benefits

- Gain access to flexible, ready-to-use climate lessons
- Collaborate with trained college students
- Enhance student engagement with interactive activities
- Focus more time on other curriculum priorities
- Inspire college students to enter education and the teaching profession
- Encourage K-12 students to access higher education





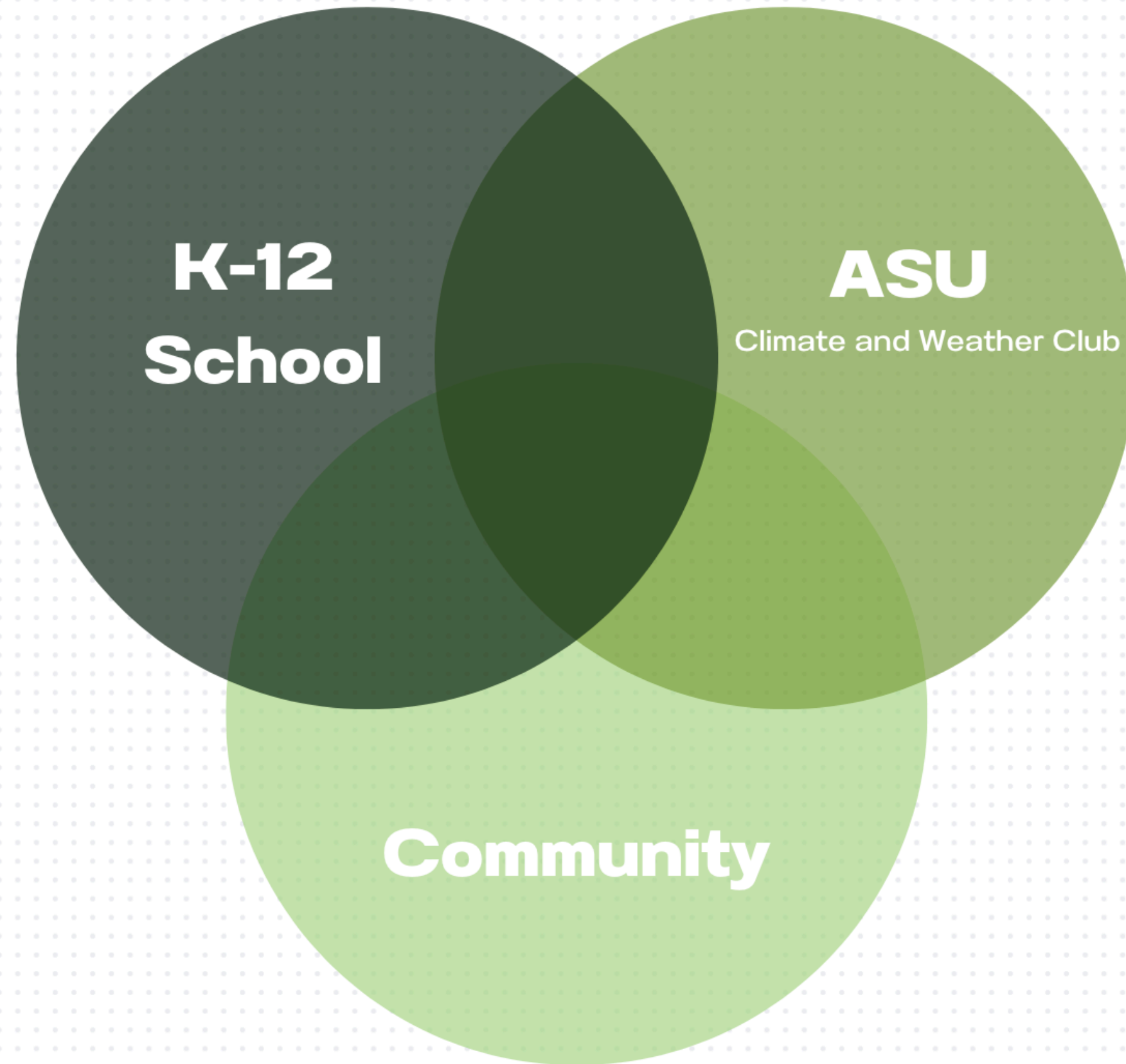
Action Plan

1. ***Initiative Launch:*** Collaborate with a public middle school and the Climate and Weather Club at ASU to pilot a climate education program.
2. ***Lesson Development:*** Club members work closely with teachers to design a curriculum focusing on how climate change impacts local neighborhoods.



Action Plan

3. ***Role of Club Members:*** Serving as designated “experts,” club members lead activities and encourage students to formulate actionable solutions tailored to their community’s needs.
4. ***Community Impact:*** These proposed solutions, backed by both K-12 students and their teachers, have the potential to reach city council agendas, supporting tangible community improvements driven by youth engagement.



Importance

Decisions today—whether oil drilling, energy policy, or consumption—shape the future of our climate.

It's critical that young people influence decisions, especially with climate change, as it greatly impacts them and their future.

While students identify environmental issues in their communities, having an ability to debate with their peers and collaborate with community members, “they begin to see themselves as change-makers [...] they start to understand they can influence their communities and the world around them” (EarthForce).

"Democracy has to be born anew every generation, and education is its midwife"
- John Dewey





Q&A

We would love to hear your feedback on this program.