



Hosting a discussion event on loss and damage – a brief guide

This guide is for anyone planning to hold a film screening and discussion event to get people in your community talking about loss and damage. It doesn't have to be big or complicated - you could just invite a few friends round to your house.

Loss and Damage Action Day is Thursday 22 September 2022, so we encourage you to hold an event before then to inspire people to take action - but if that doesn't work for you, the event can be at any time.

To find out more about loss and damage and why it matters, please see our Talking Points guide.

Why host an event?

We need to talk about loss and damage in our communities, because people at the sharp end of the climate crisis need money now to rebuild their lives and to prepare when extreme weather is on the horizon.

The need for action on loss and damage is recognised at the UN and by the UK government, but no money has been provided and no mechanism set up to collect and distribute any funding.

If the UK government fully supports an international loss and damage fund – and uses its influence to persuade other countries to do the same – we could see progress. But to get that far, we need many more people talking about this. We believe faith communities are often in a good position to do this, because we can speak with a strong moral voice, and because we are connected to communities around the world who share our faith.

A discussion event - especially if it's in person, in a familiar setting - can offer people a safe place to learn about and explore an issue. And by bringing people together, you can help bring them a step closer to taking action for change.

What should my event be like?

It's up to you what kind of event you want to run - it might be online or in person, in your house or in a local venue. You might invite three people, or three hundred! Loss and damage can be difficult and upsetting to talk about, so we recommend allowing plenty of time for people to discuss their feelings, perhaps with just one other person. It's also good to give people some ideas of what to do next, so they know they have some power to help change things.

What practical things do I need to think about?

Start by deciding where you want to hold the event - this will depend how many people you hope to attract. You could hold an online event if travelling or finding a venue is difficult - or you might be able to use your place of worship or community centre. If you're meeting in a physical space, it's a good idea to plan for some refreshments!

If you're hosting online there are lots of video conferencing options. Some of the most popular ones are [Zoom](#) and [Google Meet](#) - see if you can find anyone with a paid account you can use, as free accounts often come with a limit on meeting length. It's a good idea to have one person managing the technology while another focuses on hosting the conversation.

Don't forget to think about accessibility and schedule in a break. If you're hosting online this is a useful starting point: <https://www.littlecog.co.uk/accessible-meetings.html>.

Prepare an agenda for the meeting and think about timings - you might like to follow our suggested structure below. During the event, keep an eye on the time and make sure everyone has a chance to speak.

How can I get people to come along?

You will probably have ways to publicise events that are happening in your community, such as email lists, noticeboards, and announcements after services or meetings. These are all useful - but by far the best way to encourage people to take part in something is to ask them personally. Speak to as many people as you can, explaining why you personally think this is important. Phone your friends. Ask them to phone their friends. And so on!

I don't know anything about loss and damage - can I still hold an event?

Yes, absolutely. We recommend having a look at our Talking Points before you get started - but your event can be about all of you learning together. In fact, this can be a powerful basis for bringing people along with you. Saying something like: "I've just been hearing about how people in other parts of the world are dealing with the impacts of climate change. Apparently, no one is providing money for this at a global level. I'd really like to learn more about this and think about what we can do within our church/community. If I organised a conversation about it, would you be interested?" can be more persuasive than sounding as though you already have all the answers!

What can my community do next?

The Make Polluters Pay campaign is planning several actions for Loss and Damage Action Day on Thursday 22 September. You can:

- Email your MP asking them to support a loss and damage fund - Make Polluters Pay will be publishing a template to help with this in September: www.makepolluterspay.co.uk
- Hold a vigil for loss and damage on 22 September - see our separate guide on how to do this
- Follow Make Polluters Pay ([@MakePolluterPay](https://twitter.com/MakePolluterPay)) and Faith for the Climate ([@fftcnetwork](https://twitter.com/fftcnetwork)) on social media for details of an online action
- Join the Global Day of Action for climate justice during the COP27 climate talks in November - details to follow
- Host a photo exhibition on loss and damage - email charlotte@robinhoodtax.org.uk for details of how to bring the Make Polluters Pay exhibition to your local community.

Where can I learn more?

We recommend starting with our Talking Points document for an overview of what loss and damage is all about.

For first-hand stories of people living with climate-related loss and damage, see the Loss and Damage page at www.makecopcount.org

To learn in detail about the finance needed and where it might come from, Oxfam's recent report is a good place to start. [Footing the bill: fair finance for loss and damage in an era of escalating climate impacts | Oxfam International](#)

Suggested event structure

1. Allow a few minutes for people to arrive and settle in. Welcome everyone - you'll need to decide whether it's appropriate for everyone to introduce themselves or not, based on how many people there are and whether they already know each other.
2. Invite people to share how they are feeling about climate change. This might be done all together if your group is small, or in pairs.
3. Share why you want to have a conversation about loss and damage - sharing your personal story of discovery can be powerful and help make the issue more relatable.
 - Summarise what loss and damage is (you can use our Talking Points to help!)
 - Say how you first found out about it, or use an example you were particularly struck by
 - Talk about how it made you feel
 - Say why you decided to suggest a conversation.
4. Show the [video](#).
5. Ask people to share their reflections on the video - What was new to them? How did they feel? What will stay with them? You can use our talking points to respond to any questions they raise.
6. Together (or in groups of 3-4 if there are lots of people), discuss any personal connections to climate-related loss and damage. Do you have any direct experience of it? Do you have family or friends in parts of the world that are badly affected? What makes you want to talk about this or take action?
7. You might like to offer a prayer, or a short reflection on how this issue connects to your faith, or hold a period of silence.
8. Ask everyone to join you in talking about what you might do next. We offered some suggestions above, but we'd also love to hear what you come up with!
9. Make sure you know how you are going to follow up with people. E.g. Are you going to meet again, or take some action? Are you going to check in with everyone in a couple of weeks?

You will probably need to allow between 60-90 minutes for the session, depending on how many people are attending and how much they are likely to want to talk! For events longer than an hour, it's a good idea to schedule a break in the middle.