

Instructions and FAQ for Organizers

Note: These instructions were designed for organizers to better understand the DearTomorrow Photo Promises Project and to give guidance on how to carry it out. This document is not for distribution to participants. We are currently piloting this activity and are open to ideas and suggestions for improvement. Please send any feedback/suggestions to jill@deartomorrow.org

The DearTomorrow Photo Promises Project is an easy and fun way for people to participate in climate change solutions. By sharing these photos, you can motivate others to take action to reduce their carbon footprints and environmental impact. Bring this project to your next community meeting, introduce it as a classroom activity, or gather a group of friends together to create meaningful messages for tomorrow.

Materials:

- *A computer with internet to show examples of Photo Promises from our website. Or, print out and distribute the document “DT Photo Promises Handout.” (Save trees! Don’t make more than a few copies.)*
- *Writing materials for participants (markers, pens, chalk, etc.) and a place to write down the Promises (white paper, construction paper, white boards, chalkboards, computers, etc.) We recommend using supplies and materials you already have.*
- *A camera: a smartphone or a digital camera.*

Step 1: Discuss the project with a group.

Climate change is the most difficult and pressing challenge that we face, but to most people it still feels distant. It can also feel so big and overwhelming that it is sometimes hard to know what to do or where to start. We believe that all people, individually and collectively, can and want to make a difference.

We are asking you to think about climate change in a more personal way, by making one new commitment to address climate change and then dedicating your Promise to your child, family, community or future self. The Photo Promises Project is part of the larger DearTomorrow mission, which is to collect and share letters, photos and videos about climate change action, and to preserve them for the future.

(Organizers— Show [examples](#) of Photo Promises from our website, or print out the document “DT Photo Promises Handout.”)

How it works:

- Make a commitment to do something new to protect the Earth. Dedicate it to a young person in your life or to your future self, by writing: “Dear _____. I promise to...” Submit your photo for the website and the archive. Inspire others by sharing on your own social media channels using the hashtags #DearTomorrow and #actonclimate.

After going online or looking at the handout, discuss the Photo Promises you saw.

Sample questions for discussion:

- What did you notice about these photos?
- What are the different kinds of commitments that people made (awareness, education, voting, waste, transit, energy use, food, etc.)?
- What resonated most with you? Why?
- What concerns might you have about making a commitment?
- What is the benefit of participating in this project?

Step 2: Brainstorm ideas.

Ask people to spend 5-10 minutes brainstorming other ideas that makes sense to them—be creative! If people get stuck, you may want to discuss or write down some common themes to help them think: energy, transportation, education and awareness, investment, green spaces/outdoors, food, waste, activism, and politics.

Then, ask people to share them with the group. Finally, encourage your group members to select their own favorite promise and write it down. Use whatever materials you already have—whiteboards, paper, a tablet—and have participants write out their Photo Promises starting with “Dear _____.”

Step 3: Take photos.

Snap photos of your group with their Promises using smartphones or cameras.

(Note: If you want to your group to share on social media, we recommend using smartphones. However, if you want to print the photos out for display, you may consider using a digital camera or smartphone with high resolution.)

Step 4: Share it!

Share this with your friends and family through your own social media accounts. Be sure to tag #DearTomorrow, #actonclimate and @deartmrw. We want this commitment to feel personal, and we know that when you share your Promise with others you’re more likely to keep it.

Step 5: Become a part of the archive.

Photo Promises can be profoundly inspiring to others, and we want to encourage you to send them to us for use on our own website, social media pages and online time capsule. If participants wish to become part of the long-term archive, they must submit their photo and give their permission directly on the website. Please note: there are some image restrictions for participants under 18 years of age.

We will not publish anyone’s Photo Promise without their permission.

Frequently Asked Questions from Participants

There are a number of questions or concerns that people might express about the Photo Promises Project. Here are some possibilities for addressing them.

“Individual behavior change won’t make a difference.”

This activity is built on the idea that individual behaviors DO make a difference. First and foremost, individual action helps create a space for increased awareness on climate change and for the creation of sound public policy. Secondly, individual actions can be combined with other actions to lead to real reductions in waste, consumption and emissions.

“I’m not sure what to write.”

We suggest that you pick something that is NEW and that is SPECIFIC and MEASURABLE. Ask yourself, if someone asked you at the end of the year “Did you accomplish your promise?” would you be able to say yes? For example, it is more difficult to answer yes to the statement “I’m going to support the environment,” and easier to do so if the promise was to switch to renewables, eat less meat, or participate in a community initiative.

“I’m not a parent or grandparent. Can I participate?”

Yes, yes, yes! This project is dedicated to future generations. If you are not a parent, you can dedicate your Photo Promise to a younger sibling, niece or nephew, your community, your future self, or simply “future generations.” A common option is to simply write “Dear Tomorrow,” if you can’t think of anyone specific.

“I’m under 18, can I participate?”

Anyone can participate and share their Photo Promise with their own friends, family and social networks. If children under 18 want to participate in the online archive, they must either get permission from their parent/guardian or they can participate in the letter project (no photo).

“Should I also submit online?”

When you submit online, you will become part of our online community and the long-term archive. Your Promise will also help spread the word about climate change action.

“I’m not sure that I want to publicize my commitment.”

It can feel risky to put yourself out there with your commitment. We understand this, but also understand that the solutions to climate change require increased engagement and public awareness. Plus, you never know who will be inspired by your idea and photo. This is an opportunity to say to future generations that you were paying attention, and that you cared about this important issue.

“Can I participate in the Photo Promises Project but remain anonymous?”

Yes. When you submit your Photo Promise online, you will have the option of choosing to post your photo anonymously (without your name). If you wish to remain completely anonymous, we recommend that you take a photo of your Promise only, and not yourself.

“Tell me more about the archive.”

The DearTomorrow archive is currently under development. With proper funding, all letters, photos and videos will be re-released in the years 2030 and 2050.

“How might my photo be used?”

When you submit online, you will give your written consent to make the Photo Promise available for publishing on the website, and possibly also on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. It will also be made available in coming years for future generations. Your Photo Promise may also be used to further the greater DearTomorrow mission, and to increase awareness on climate change. It will not be used for commercial purposes.

“Now that I participated, what else can I do with the photo?”

We encourage you to publicize your commitment on your own social media channels and tag #DearTomorrow, #actonclimate. We’re on Facebook and can be found on Instagram and Twitter @deartmrw.

“I love this project and want to engage more!”

DearTomorrow is also collecting letters to the future. Visit deartomorrow.org to read other letters and to submit your own. This venture has been able to get off the ground due to the generosity of dozens of people who have volunteered their time and expertise. If you want to learn more about how to contribute your own skills or free time, or want to organize your own Photo Promises or letter-writing project, please contact co-founder Jill Kubit at jill@deartomorrow.org.