



To what extent can disappearing glaciers help to change our behavior?

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Generating awareness of human impacts on the climate system is the key for peoples' willingness to transform toward less or zero greenhouse gas emitting societies. Whereas major human impacts are well understood and plenty of knowledge is available, bringing this information to individuals without causing any kind of negative reactions like overload, feeling of paternalism or skepticism due to mismatch with personal experiences is a challenge. This is particularly true when working with heterogeneous groups (of youngsters), which are framed by their very diverse social environment. For example, some might already be fully aware of climate change (consequences) and adapting their behavior, while others might be skeptical or feel threatened because their (family) business is in perceived conflict with climate change mitigation strategies. Another issue is the wide use of social media as sources of information without any quality control and tons of half truths, myths or fake news. The resulting key question is which strategies are most universally applicable and successful when applied to heterogeneous groups.

Plenty of practical experiences gave us the strong impression that using and investigating elements in the landscape affected by climate change as springboards for various formats of climate change education (presentations, workshops, excursions) works very well or even best. Being based in the Alps, in our case we strongly benefit from the availability and prominence of shrinking glaciers in our backyards as perfect testimonials of global warming impacts. Our poster will present a simple concept: we start with disappearing glaciers as a motivation to explain and understand climate change, and by following the melt water on its way to the oceans we continue and end with local and global consequences of glacier melt in particular and climate change in general. This includes e.g. impacts on local agriculture or reinforcing of conflicts and migration globally. We will also point out some potential limitations of the overall sense and effectiveness of our activities and are interested to critically reflect our methods and strategies with the other session contributors.