



A HIDDEN GLOBAL ISSUE AND ITS' IMPACT ON CLIMATE: A NEED FOR EDUCATION AND ACTION

Alternative Media Category

Undergraduate: Wildlife Ecology and Conservation Science (BSc)
Institution: University of The West of England (UWE)

Category of Entry: Alternative Media category

No AI has been used in this entry.

Student: Hannah Rose Cruddace
Hannahcruddace@gmail.com

Abstract

This combined short essay and alternative art media piece describes a personal journey, lifting the lid on a global issue that is at the heart of PRME's mission.

For my final project in the Climate Education course at UWE, I created artwork connecting my personal climate-related challenges with the recent consequences the world is facing today. It identified a failure in commercial and government environmental ambition, as well as in the medical and recycling supply chain.

Combined material medical blister packs are heavily used to package solid oral medicines for patients, 85% in Europe for example. There are many reasons for this, but the end result is always that these blister packs are either difficult or impossible to recycle.

My mixed-media project looked at my own consumption of these blister packs over a month, then linking them through art to the recent fires in Los Angeles to show how these types of issue compound to impact our climate.

The story directly relates to PRME's seven Principles - educating the next generation of business and management leaders through showcasing examples like this. It feels an obvious problem to solve, but needs the leadership, will and ambition of governments and industry.

Brief description of my project



I take medication daily and have done since I was diagnosed with Addisons Disease at 11. I am constantly throwing

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away tablet packaging as it is made of mixed materials that are difficult or impossible to recycle. This leads to large amounts of unavoidable waste being dumped into landfill annually. I decided to collect this packaging for a few weeks to see how much I was really throwing away. This led me to the idea of creating something out of this waste.

The devastating wildfires in Los Angeles had been all over the news leading to more conversations surrounding our changing climate. Although it is not yet confirmed how these fires started, climate change is creating increasingly better conditions for wildfires to rapidly spread. This not only makes it harder to control but causes greater consequences, such as more land/properties being affected and larger numbers of lives at risk.

I decided I wanted to create something to connect my personal climate-related challenges with the recent consequences the world is facing today, allowing people to form their own interpretations. This led me to create a skyscraper landscape out of the collected tablet packaging with news headlines and articles relating to the LA wildfires in the background (Appendix 1).

The topics I covered and why

The main module I took inspiration from was 'What are the consequences of climate change?' (Appendix 2). This section made me think about broad consequences the whole world faces due to our changing climate, but I felt it was up to me to apply what I had learnt to real-world examples. This is why when I found out about the Los Angeles fires which started in early January 2025, I decided I had to show this example, to represent how climate change will and has affected everyone.

The quote, “It is true that even the rich and famous could not spare their homes from burning to the ground (Fayyad, 2025)” was made by Vox during the 2017 California wildfires. This is a haunting reminder that if no change is made the conditions for wildfires, floods and droughts will become more and more common, and there is no ‘free pass’ for the rich and famous.

I felt a personal connection to this piece, as someone who takes daily medication and will do so for life, I sometimes feel it is impossible for me to do my bit against climate change as my life is constantly creating so much waste. This is due to the mixture of plastic and aluminium foil to protect the tablets and there may be residual of the tablets still left inside the packaging, resulting in there being little you can do in terms of recycling. This results in tens of millions of people world-wide, including me, simply throwing these cases in the bin to go to landfill.

This piece shows my audience the connection between everyday life for some people and how the impact on the climate, although sometimes invisible, is still very much there and will attack unsuspectingly.

My target audience and how I communicated with them

As an end goal I want my work to be primarily aimed towards the general public (mainly focusing on the working-age population of 15-64), as this allows my message to reach many different groups of people who may not necessarily be as concerned or focus about the changing climate as much. With all these different groups of people being reached, many different personalised interpretations of the piece will be created, allowing the viewer to feel more connected to the message.

I personally am able to gather information more quickly from something visual rather than writing. I feel it stands out and I am much more likely to stop and understand the message behind the piece.

I recently went to a Bristol Museum and while I was walking around the paintings, I saw many people getting drawn into specific pieces. Once they had walked over to these paintings, they took time to stop and read about them. This gave me an idea that if I was able to catch people's attention with my artwork, they are more likely to stay, read and understand the issue itself. This is why I included headlines from newspapers to indicate there being extra information out there the research. This also helps connect the art to real-life impacts of climate change in Los Angeles.

I am in my first year of 'Wildlife Ecology and Conservation Science' at UWE and am enjoying it so much but feel I could be a bit more creative when it comes to what I believe strongly in. This is why when I saw this 'Climate Education' course it felt like the perfect opportunity to express my feelings in a fun and creative way.

The results

I believe the project was very effective with my target audience as well as anyone outside that category as I feel it is a lot easier to gain a quick and dramatic understanding through a picture or painting. This stands out to the audience and gives a clear message rather than an essay on the same topic needing time to be read which many people may gloss over and not get the full effect from. I also feel that the oxymoron used in the news title between 'hell' and 'angels' has a significant impact in people's minds and gets them thinking if this disaster can happen to 'the City of Angels' it can happen anywhere and to anyone.

I shared my work on Instagram and asked people what their interpretations were. I got many replies saying how they loved the style and use of tablet boxes, but I got a few giving their full interpretation of the message, my favourites being:

- They felt the piece represented how capitalism was built on ensuring there is profit over healthcare (especially in America) and how detrimental this system was on the environment.
- How upsetting it must be that the medication people need to survive on a daily basis destroys the nature that they care so much about.

I personally really enjoyed creating this piece, through problem-solving and arranging each element for it worked together as one. I really liked the collage-like style I chose, as it gives the impression of being a bit random and broken with the teared-out newspaper while the composition still works together.

This project made me understand how divided the climate change issue is at the moment. The majority of people when asked will say they think the changing climate is bad, scary and will lead to many further challenges yet the people with large amounts of power and influence such as presidents and prime ministers are doing little in the way of working together. Until this happens the global crisis of climate change will stay unchanged.

If I had the opportunity to complete this project again, I would include information about the LA wildfire and the environmental impact medication production has, for the people who want to research and understand the issue further.

What's next

I have really enjoyed all aspects of this course, through completing each unit and understanding different sections to creating my own personal final project. This has driven me more to completing my Ecology and Conservation course at UWE to better understand this changing climate and the different communication methods that can be used to get information across to audiences. Not everyone enjoys reading lots of text, including me and these people still need to be reached about the important messages regarding climate change.

I would also love to display my artwork in a wider setting and would be open to any opportunities to do that.

How did I work with others

I personally completed this Final Project and each unit alone as I believed I would gain a better understanding to each section as I had to fully learn each topic before moving on. Throughout this project though I was researching information online, using other people's resources through websites, videos, interviews and more as well as got feedback on my end piece of art.

References

Fayyad, A. (2025, January 17). *What happens when the California fires go out? More gentrification.*

Retrieved from Vox:

<https://www.vox.com/policy/395261/california-wildfires-los-angeles-gentrification-displacement>

Appendix 1: Interpretation of the business education issue



Appendix 2: Original Assignment Brief

Overview

Your final assessment for this course will be based on a piece of work of your choosing. We are asking for evidence that you have undertaken an activity in response to climate change. It must show that:

- You understand what you have learnt during the course.
- You can communicate one or more of these ideas to an audience.
- You have thought about how the issues affect you and your life.

The task

You are being asked to ‘[plan and undertake meaningful action based on a personal response to what you have learnt](#)’. This assignment involves developing an activity which shows how you have changed behaviour in response to this course. This behaviour change could be:

- Yourself as an individual
- Within a group which you are part of (family, friends, sport, social, travel etc)
- Influencing wider society in some form.

The activity format is open but Unit 8 and 9 have many suggestions on activities you could choose. Some ideas include:

- A new activity you try yourself
- An event you put on for your group or wider society
- Communication activities to influence others – social media, articles, photo stories, videos, artwork, presentations etc

What you will submit

You will not be asked to submit everything associated with your chosen project. You will need to provide:

1. Evidence that you completed your project (this could be a photograph of an event, a link to a website or social media post, [text of an article you wrote](#) etc.)
2. An [individual reflection](#) on your work, which summarises what you did and how it meets the requirements of the brief.

Your submission will be marked as Pass/Fail.

Your project in detail

The following information will help you choose what sort of work you will do for your assessment. A reminder of the learning outcomes:

1. Explain climate change causes, impacts and actions.
2. Communicate persuasively one or more aspects of the climate crisis and related issues.
3. Plan and undertake meaningful action based on a personal response to what you have learnt.

A reminder of the topics:

- Why is climate change happening?
- What are the consequences of climate change?
- What does a sustainable and just future look like?
- What are governments and the international community doing?
- What's happening locally and at UWE?
- What can I do if climate change makes me feel scared or anxious?

- How can I get others to listen and act?
- How can I take action in my own life and work?

You might want to start by thinking about and making a note of:

- Your intended output (report, presentation, video, artwork, organised event etc.)
- Your intended audience (young adults, local community, employer etc.)
- The topic(s) you will draw on
- Why you have chosen this project and how it relates to your interests
- Who you may be working with
- What resources you might need

You should aim to spend at least 10 hours on your project.

Demonstrating your understanding

You do not have to show knowledge of all the topics you have covered, but your work should have clear relevance to at least one of the units. You will be asked to reflect on the topic(s) you addressed and how your learning informed your work.

Communicating your ideas

In order to have real-world impact, your work must be shared with people other than the tutors assessing you. Even if your project is a personal one, talking about it with others can encourage more people to act. You might just want to have a conversation about it with your family and friends. Or you could write about it on social media or a public-facing website. If you want to, you could even communicate your ideas through an event or presentation. You will be asked to reflect on your choice of audience and the impact you think it had.

Giving a personal response

Your work should be meaningful to you and related to some aspect of your life. For example:

- Related to your degree subject or future career plans
- Linked to a place that is important to you (where you live, where you grew up)
- Relevant to your background/culture/religion
- Based on a personal interest

You will be asked to reflect on why you chose your project and how it is meaningful to you.

Group work

You may work as part of a group to design and complete a project or task for assessment. You will still be asked for an individual reflection on your work, including what part you played in the group.

Reflection

Please see the attached reflection template. We suggest you use this format to present your reflection. You may also submit your reflection in an audio or video format using [Panopto](#).

You can find guidance on [reflective writing](#) through UWE's Study Skills webpages.

Formative assessment and feedback

During the course you will receive feedback in various ways:

- Marks from multiple choice questions to check your understanding
- Feedback from peers in Climate Cafés and discussion boards
- Responses from the audience you share your project with

- Self-reflection is also a form of feedback, and you will do this for your final submission

You will be informally assessed in various ways throughout the course. This may involve participation in group work, doing research and sharing what you have learnt, or taking part in online polls and quizzes. These activities should help you build your knowledge and communication skills, and prepare you for your final project.