

# Climate for Communities – Insight from SIS Service Users – Portuguese Speakers

*Insight gathered and written up by Mariana Robinson.*

Five Portuguese speakers who moved to the UK from Brazil took part in a group discussion with SIS Bilingual Community Researcher, Mariana Robinson, in January 2026.

## **Test-retest questions:**

At the start of the event, three participants were not very confident in their understanding of climate change; two were partially confident and understood basic concepts.

When asked how confident they felt about their knowledge of climate action, four said they were not very confident and had limited knowledge; one was partially confident, understanding the main and basic concepts.

One participant believed they were already taking action considered climate action; four weren't sure.

After the event, four participants were only partially confident in their understanding of climate change. One was confident and had a clear and complete understanding.

When asked how confident they were in their knowledge of climate action, three said they were only partially confident and understood the core concepts. Two were confident and had a complete and clear understanding.

Four participants believed they were already taking action considered climate action; one wasn't sure.

## **1. What do you think about climate change?**

For **question 1**, when asked about climate change, each participant selected a picture and explained what it meant to them, what it represented, and why they chose that picture.

One participant selected an image they associated with beach littering and marine and land pollution. They also discussed how long plastic and other materials would take to biodegrade.

One participant chose a picture of a traffic jam. It reminded her of the city she lives in and of many other cities around the world. She believes this is a major contributor to climate change, as it increases air pollution and affects the ozone layer. She also mentioned the different types of fuels used in vehicles, noting that some are more polluting than others. She reminded the other participants of the importance of walking or taking public transport as much as possible.

One participant commented on a picture of a factory and the fumes it emits, which cause air and water pollution.

Another participant selected an image of a flooded area. It reminded her of her hometown in southeastern Brazil, prompting her to think of the gutters overflowing into the streets. She believed one of the contributing factors is littering and overflowing rubbish that blocks drainage pipes and waterways.

One participant chose a forest fire image. She considered victims, the destruction of homes and businesses, the loss of wildlife and green areas, and the consequent impact on the earth's air quality.

## **2. Does climate change connect to your everyday life and community?**

In **question 2**, participants were asked to look at the pictures on the table and connect them to their everyday lives and communities.

One participant mentioned the melting of the ice caps, although no picture related to this was shown. Two participants noted that this contributes to climate change, noting that in some places there's extreme heat, while in others there's extreme cold, snow, rain, and flooding. The number of cars on the streets was also discussed, along with how lift-sharing would be beneficial, as well as biking and busing instead of driving.

When discussing the factory picture and the air pollution it causes, two participants mentioned that this affects their and their family's health, worsening respiratory and skin diseases. They all agreed that this could occur in most major cities worldwide. One participant also noted that factories harvest raw materials, often through deforestation, which is itself environmentally damaging, and that during manufacturing, they emit toxic fumes and other air pollutants, causing further damage. He reflected that "it is the vicious and destructive cycle of greed and profiting, with no regard to the planet and the impact their actions have on people's lives."

One participant, commenting on the flood image, reported that her family lost part of their land in Portugal and was left stranded, without electricity and running water, due to flooding.

Another participant selected a picture of seagulls and wondered whether they're flying inland because the sea is so polluted that they can't find food anymore. Some of the others disagreed with that.

Shopping in second-hand shops was also mentioned; four participants said they use them frequently, noting that they are not just a good way to recycle and contribute to climate action, but also more economical.

## **3. What are people in your community (in this context, those who speak your language and live in B&H) saying about climate change?**

In **question 3**, all participants agreed that recycling is the community's primary focus for climate change action. The importance of recycling and avoiding single-use plastic and reusable shopping bags was also emphasised. One participant added, "if each of us has a coffee a day in a single-use cup, that's a lot of cups in the bin. But if most of us used reusable cups, that would probably make a huge difference in the amount of rubbish in wastelands".

## **4. Where do you hear or get information about climate change from?**

In **question 4**, participants were asked where they obtain information about climate change. They all agreed that social media platforms, such as Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube, and online newspapers were the primary sources.

There were mixed views on the level of trust in information sources, with one participant saying he checks the facts he sees and reads.

Three of the participants also commented that their children's schools are a great source of information; they share information with parents, work with the children who subsequently bring information home, and promote events such as toy and uniform swaps, distribute recycling information, and more.

One participant sourced information from her local community centre, where she takes English lessons.

None of them believes in climate denial; they believe climate change is real, and all other opinions are driven by conspiracy theories or political interests. They all agree that climate change is visible and undeniable

Two participants cited summers in Brighton as changeable and inconsistent over the time they have lived here, attributing this to climate change. The remaining three agreed.

## **5. Is there anything you're finding confusing or annoying about conversations about climate change?**

When asked in **question 5** whether they found the conversation about climate change confusing or annoying, two participants said they did. Politics plays a significant role in climate change information sharing; views can be confusing, and the information may seem conflicting, extreme, or insufficiently emphatic. This can ultimately cause significant confusion for the general public.

All participants agreed that it can be annoying: "everyone knows what to do, but they still won't because profit comes first. They all know it's wrong but still do it", referring to big corporations polluting, deforesting, and failing to handle their waste appropriately.

One participant mentioned food waste in fast-food restaurants, the lack of recycling facilities, the absence of separate waste collection for customers after their meals, and the potential responsibility they should have to educate and promote actions such as recycling, reducing food waste, and being more careful with their transport methods.

## **6. Do you already do anything that has a positive impact on climate / environment?**

When asked in **question 6** whether they already take any action that has a positive impact on the climate and the environment, most participants agreed that recycling was their most significant contribution.

One participant said she chooses not to use her car at least 3 times a week and takes the bus to work and for her daughter's school runs.

Three participants chose pictures of the reusable bag, mending clothes, and the bus ride, and said they all do those things to contribute to climate action. As one put it, "I started doing it to save money, but soon realised these actions contribute to saving the environment as well."

One participant selected the charity shop image and said that most of her clothing purchases are made in second-hand shops. She first started doing it for financial reasons, then it became a hobby, something she does to distract herself and pass the time. She never thought, until

recently receiving a leaflet from her child's school, that this was part of climate action, and she is very pleased to see that she "can kill three birds with one stone!"

Two participants selected the tap image and highlighted the importance of turning off the water when it's not in use. Both said they teach their children to save water to save money and protect the environment.

One participant has started buying her takeaway coffee at a specific local supermarket, where she can take her own cup and refill it for free. She believes this is a good climate action because she doesn't use single-use cups when she's out in town.

One participant enjoys growing herbs and vegetables, but has only done so in the summer since moving to England. She finds it too cold to work outside at any other time of year. She mentioned that she used to grow most of her vegetables in Brazil as a hobby, not with climate change or action in mind. On that topic, two participants said they wouldn't consider growing food because it's too time-consuming and they don't have a large enough garden.

All participants agreed that climate action is motivated by financial considerations. One stated, "We do it for both reasons, but first and foremost to save money. It's not that we don't care about the environment, but our financial motivation is the driving force."

#### **7. What would motivate you to get involved in climate and environmental action?**

In **question 7**, four participants would be motivated to engage in climate action if it were relevant to their priorities, such as the cost of living, well-being, and improving their local environment.

One stated they would do it because they wanted to contribute to the environment.

#### **8. Do you have any climate friendly ideas that would help your community?**

In **question 8**, one participant believes the council should increase waste collection frequency from fortnightly to weekly to prevent waste from accumulating and attracting seagulls to the town centre and residential areas. The others didn't have anything to add.

#### **9. What makes your community special? What's good about where you live?**

**Question 9** generated a long discussion in which all participants agreed; they didn't feel they were part of a community, they felt the Brazilian community is not united and there was nothing special about it.

# Climate for Communities – Insight from SIS Service Users – Cantonese Speakers

*Insight gathered and written up by Lai Lai Wu.*

Five Cantonese speakers who moved to the UK from Hong Kong took part in a group discussion with SIS Bilingual Community Researcher, Lai Lai Wu, in January 2026.

## **Test retest questions:**

At the start of the event, 1 person felt partially confident about their knowledge of what climate change means, and 4 people felt not very confident and that their knowledge was limited. At the end of the event, 4 people felt confident and that they have a clear understanding. 1 person felt partially confident.

At the start of the event, 1 person felt partially confident about their knowledge of what climate action means, 3 felt not very confident, 1 felt not confident at all. At the end of the event, 4 felt confident and 1 felt partially confident.

At the start of the event, 1 person felt they were already doing things that are considered climate action, 4 people weren't sure. At the end of the event, all 5 felt that they are already doing things that are considered climate action.

## **1. What do you think about climate change?**

### **Picture 1 – Extreme heat**

This picture shows people lining up in the shade during extremely hot weather. It reminds participants of Hong Kong, where summer temperatures can be scorching and almost unbearable. Fortunately, air conditioning is commonly available indoors, at home as well as in shopping malls and offices, which helps people cope with the heat.

One participant reflected that when visiting Italy and Spain in summer, they noticed air conditioning is not commonly used there. They wondered how people manage to cope with such extreme heat and expressed sympathy for those affected.

### **Picture 2 – Plastic pollution**

This picture shows a large number of plastic water bottles washed up on a beach. It relates closely to a recent event in East Sussex. Due to a shipping incident, a large amount of waste (including packaged items such as crisps and onions) was washed up near Beachy Head in Eastbourne.

One participant felt very sad when hearing that a seal pup became trapped in onion packaging nets and died. This was seen as an example of how plastic and ocean pollution can directly harm wildlife.

### **Picture 3 – Flooding**

This picture shows flooding. Participants worried that flooding can damage homes and personal belongings, and cause disruption to daily life, such as travelling to work or school. Flooding was described as becoming more frequent and as a serious threat to communities.

### **Picture 4 – Storms / typhoons**

This picture represents storms. Participants shared that in Hong Kong, typhoons previously occurred mainly during summer months (usually July and August). However, they felt typhoons now last for a longer period and may occur from July to October, or even later in the year.

This was described as having a significant impact on daily life, as typhoons can cause serious damage to the environment and buildings, and may lead to loss of life.

### **Picture 5 – Traffic congestion**

This picture shows a traffic jam. Participants highlighted that traffic congestion causes air pollution, which is harmful to health. Petrol-powered cars were also described as contributing to climate change.

One participant explained that they do not drive and instead choose to walk or use public transport whenever possible.

### **Additional reflections raised by participants**

Participants noted that climate change has a clear impact on quality of life, and that action is needed to reduce its effects. During extreme weather, people tend to use more air conditioning or central heating, which increases electricity consumption. This was described as a “vicious cycle” that worsens climate change.

Participants also highlighted inequalities, noting that in some developing countries, people may lack the financial resources to protect themselves from climate change. For example, they may lose crops due to drought. Some businesses were described as exploiting natural resources in ways that further contribute to global climate issues.

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## **2. Does climate change connect to your everyday life and community?**

One participant summarised their view as follows:

*“Although our living standards have improved in many ways, certain aspects of quality of life have deteriorated and become very challenging.”*

### **Air pollution and health (most relevant issue)**

All participants agreed that air pollution directly affects everyday life and is the most relevant issue to them.

- 3 out of 5 participants reported having severe hay fever or allergic rhinitis while living in Hong Kong and needing medication to manage symptoms.
- These participants felt significantly better after moving to Brighton, as air pollution was perceived to be less serious.
- One participant stated that they or their family experienced asthma episodes triggered during periods of poor air quality.

### **Industrial pollution and food costs**

One participant suggested that industrial production contributes significantly to air pollution by releasing harmful substances into the air. They believed these pollutants may return to the ground through rainfall, contaminating soil and agricultural land. As a result, crops may become unsafe for consumption, affecting food supply and contributing to rising food prices.

Participants also linked this to increasing living costs, which were described as adding pressure to households.

One participant commented:

*“When I first came to live in England, a pot of 600ml double cream was £2.60 and now it is £3. A can of Spam was £1.30 and now it is £1.90. It has only been a couple of years, but life is more difficult now.”*

### **Drinking water concerns**

Participants noted that in Hong Kong, drinking water comes mainly from reservoirs, while in the UK drinking water is mainly sourced from groundwater.

2 participants expressed concerns that air pollution and contaminated rainfall may introduce harmful substances into groundwater sources, leading to anxiety about the safety of drinking tap water.

One participant said:

*“I worry that air pollution affects the rain, and that harmful substances can end up in the soil, our food, and even the water we drink.”*

Another participant said:

*“I started buying bottled water because I don’t feel confident drinking tap water, but at the same time I am concerned about microplastics in bottled water. To feel safer, I bought a water filter that removes plastic-related substances, which adds to my household expenses.”*

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### **3. What are people in your community saying about climate change?**

In the Cantonese-speaking community, participants reported that people often relate climate change to everyday life experiences, such as changes in weather patterns. For example:

*“The weather is very strange now. Summers didn’t use to be this hot.”*

There was concern, but also a strong sense of helplessness. Many people feel the problem is too large for individuals to influence. Participants said community members often believe climate change is mainly an issue determined by governments rather than by individual action:

*“We’re too small to change anything!”*

People also linked climate change to practical worries, such as storms, heavy snow, and flooding. These events increase anxiety about children travelling to school and family members commuting to work. Participants also described concerns about food prices and food quality.

Growing vegetables at home (in gardens or allotments) was described as popular in the Chinese community.

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#### 4. Where do you hear or get information about climate change from?

##### Main sources

- Chinese news (Hong Kong and Mainland China)
- Chinese social media (WhatsApp, WeChat, YouTube)

All participants stated that they do not actively search for climate change topics. Instead, climate-related content usually appears through news feeds or social media recommendations.

##### Trust in information sources

Participants generally stated that they do not fully trust any particular source or individual when it comes to climate change. However, all agreed that the most effective approach is focusing on personal responsibility, such as reducing household food waste and recycling.

##### Recycling concerns

Some participants expressed concerns about the local recycling system. They reported confusion about why plastic and glass are collected in the same recycling box and questioned how these materials can realistically be separated and reused.

Participants also stated that recycling collections are not frequent enough, leading to overflowing bins. In apartment blocks where bins are shared, residents may throw recyclable items into general waste bins, causing inconsistency in the materials being collected.

Due to these issues, participants doubted whether the council is able to make good use of recycled materials. They felt this may result in wasted human effort and financial resources.

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#### 5. Is there anything confusing or annoying about conversations about climate change?

Some participants expressed feelings of helplessness when discussing climate change. They reported that it is difficult to stay motivated because not everyone appears to work towards the same goal. In some cases, climate-related community activities were seen as creating division when people hold different opinions.

Participants also noted that climate action does not show immediate results, making it difficult to demonstrate impact and encourage long-term commitment.

### **Food waste collection concerns (Brighton & Hove)**

Several participants raised concerns about the recent introduction of food waste collection in Brighton & Hove. Bin distribution was described as inconsistent:

- Some households received only a small caddy without compostable liners.
- Others received both large and small bins with liners.

This caused confusion about how the system should work.

Participants also highlighted that they are non-English speakers and face additional challenges due to limited translated information. Some participants were unsure where to buy compostable bin liners and did not know that they could order them from the local council free of charge.

All participants reported seeing outdoor bins being blown into the street, which was described as unsafe for pedestrians and drivers.

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## **6. Do you already do anything that has a positive impact on climate / environment?**

Participants shared several actions they already take:

- Saving water by reusing shower water to flush toilets or mop floors
- Walking and cycling as exercise and a way to save money
- Donating unwanted items to charity shops
- Using reusable shopping bags to reduce waste and avoid charges
- Using apps such as **Too Good To Go** to purchase discounted food and reduce food waste
- Growing food in gardens as a leisure activity and exercise

Overall, participants reported that environmentally friendly habits are already integrated into their daily routines.

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## **7. What would motivate you to get involved in climate and environment action?**

Participants identified the following motivations:

- If it was relevant to things that are important to me (**3 participants**)
- Because I want to do something for the environment (**1 participant**)
- Because it is important that people like me and communities like mine are involved (**1 participant**)

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## 8. Do you have any climate-friendly ideas that would help your community?

Participants suggested reducing littering in the community. As the area is close to the seafront and has many seagulls, rubbish bags are often torn open, causing litter to spread across the streets.

Suggestions included:

- Schools teaching children not to litter
- Parents leading by example
- Residents carrying small rubbish bags and disposing of waste properly

Some participants suggested introducing fines for littering and smoking outside designated areas to discourage irresponsible behaviour.

There were mixed views on public bins:

- One participant suggested reducing the number of bins to encourage residents to take rubbish home.
- Two participants felt that more bins should be provided to make disposal easier and more convenient.

Overall, participants agreed that stronger education, clearer rules, and shared responsibility could help improve the local environment.

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## 9. What makes your community special? What's good about where you live?

Participants described several positive aspects of their community:

- Chinese cultural values emphasise frugality and resourcefulness from a young age. Saving and reusing water (e.g., for cleaning floors, flushing toilets, or watering plants) was described as a traditional virtue that many continue after moving abroad.
- Participants highlighted a strong sense of civic responsibility, including maintaining hygiene and avoiding littering.
- The Chinese community was described as supportive and well connected. People share money-saving information online, such as energy or utility discounts, to help one another reduce living costs.
- Participants valued living near the sea, with fresh air and relatively mild weather compared with other UK cities.
- Brighton & Hove was described as inclusive and friendly, with polite and respectful interactions.

# Climate for Communities – Insight from SIS Service Users – Arabic Speakers

*Insight gathered and written up by Mariam Latif.*

Four Arabic speakers who live in Brighton and Hove took part in a group discussion with SIS Bilingual Community Researcher, Mariam Latif, in January 2026.

## **Test-retest questions:**

At the start of the event, no one felt confident about their knowledge of what climate change or climate action means – 2 were partially confident, 1 not very confident and 1 not confident at all.

At the end of the event, all 4 participants felt confident about what climate change means, and 3 felt confident about what climate action means, with 1 person partially confident.

At the start of the event, no one felt sure whether they were already doing things that can be considered climate action. At the end of the event everyone felt they were already doing things that are climate action.

## **1. What do you think about climate change?**

Participants began by describing the images presented to them. The image of burning forests was interpreted as environmental destruction and the loss of green areas, which directly contributes to climate change. The image of factories releasing smoke led to a discussion about pollution. One participant explained:

“أنا اخترت المصانع لأن الدخان والعوادم اللي بتطلع من المصانع بتسبب تلوث.”

“I chose the factories because the smoke and emissions that come out of factories cause pollution.”

The group clarified that factory pollution is not limited to smoke alone but also includes industrial waste and discharge that contaminate water and harm the wider environment. Another image showed heavy traffic congestion, which participants described as both time-wasting and environmentally damaging. One participant stated:

“الزحام بيضيع الوقت وبيأثر على البيئة بسبب عوادم العربيات.”

“Traffic wastes time and affects the environment because of car exhaust fumes.”

## **2. Does climate change connect to your everyday life and community?**

Participants discussed how these situations lead to air pollution, water pollution, and environmental degradation. Burning forests reduce oxygen levels and increase carbon dioxide in the atmosphere. Industrial waste harms ecosystems, and traffic emissions worsen air

quality. They recognised that these issues contribute directly to climate change and negatively affect both the environment and daily life.

### **3. What are people in your community saying about climate change?**

The group discussed the personal and social impacts of climate change. They noted that extreme heat can affect people's health, and if someone becomes ill due to weather conditions, it impacts not only the individual but also the wider community. Participants mentioned unusually hot summer days, very cold winter periods, strong winds, and heavy rainfall. Flooding was highlighted as a serious issue, with homes sometimes becoming submerged during intense storms, causing major disruption. Water scarcity during hotter seasons was also discussed as a concern. They observed that temperature extremes appear to be increasing over time, leading to health issues related to heat exposure.

### **4. Where do you hear or get information about climate change from?**

Participants explained that information about climate change comes from schools, television, news programs, newspapers, analytical TV discussions, friends, and family members. However, awareness levels vary. It was noted that some people only associate climate change with the ozone hole and do not have deeper knowledge of the topic. The group acknowledged that sometimes information may be exaggerated or misunderstood, and not everything shared is fully accurate.

### **5. Is there anything confusing or annoying about conversations about climate change?**

When discussing causes, participants referred to factories, vehicle emissions, and pollution in general. They emphasised that factories contribute through smoke, emissions, and industrial waste that pollute both air and water. Traffic congestion was also considered a significant contributor due to the large number of cars producing exhaust fumes. The group recognised that pollution from human activities plays a central role in environmental harm.

### **6. Do you already do anything that has a positive impact on climate/ environment?**

Participants discussed both council-led and individual actions. They mentioned that the council has provided special food waste bins so that food scraps can be turned into compost rather than being thrown away. Awareness events were also organised to educate the public. One participant said:

“عملوا اليوم ده كتوعية.”

“They organised this day as awareness.”

On a personal level, participants shared examples of actions they already take. Some mentioned fixing water leaks and reducing water waste. Others spoke about riding bicycles instead of driving cars. One participant explained:

“لما بركب العجلة بدل العربية، ده بيساعد البيئة وكمان بيوفر فلوس.”

“When I ride a bicycle instead of using a car, it helps the environment and also saves money.”

Reusing children's clothes instead of buying new ones was also discussed, with participants noting that clothing production harms the environment through manufacturing processes. Selling or giving away unused clothes through apps and social media platforms was mentioned as a way to reduce waste. Growing plants at home was described as beneficial for oxygen levels and environmental improvement. One participant expressed:

“أنا بحس إنني بنضف البيئة.”

“I feel like I am cleaning the environment.”

Overall, the group agreed that small daily actions can contribute positively and that responsibility should be shared collectively across the community.

## 7. What would motivate you to get involved in climate and environmental action?

No participants chose "Nothing, it doesn't concern me."

One participant would be motivated if the participation is enjoyable.

Two participants would be motivated if it aligns with personal priorities like health or local improvements.

One participant wants to do something beneficial for the environment.

One participant provided another reason: " ( لأنني أهتم بالتوعية العامة ومساعدة المجتمع من حولي ) " (Because I care about public awareness and helping the community around me).

## 8. Do you have any climate friendly ideas that would help your community?

Participants suggested awareness campaigns, preserving green spaces. One quote shared: " في ( في ) ( هذا يفيد المجتمع ) ) (In rural areas, they preserve trees, and this benefits the community). Also participants suggested government incentives, such as making electric vehicles more affordable.

## 9. What makes your community special? What's good about where you live?

Participants valued recycling ( هنا شيء جديد اعتدنا عليه ) ( Recycling here is something new we got used to), protected green spaces, and clean air. One said, " الهواء هنا نقي، وهذا شيء مميز " (The clean air here is something special.) They also mentioned the strict preservation of green areas compared to their home regions.