Why No One Is Talking About Climate Anymore

When was the last time you heard about climate in the news? Not about another extreme weather event, not about record temperatures, but about the climate crisis itself as a topic that requires our attention and action?

If you have the feeling that climate has disappeared from mainstream media and public debate – you're not alone. And no, this isn't our collective paranoia.

The Great Retreat

The data is merciless. Analysis by the Oxford Climate Journalism Network from 2024 shows that media coverage of climate topics dropped by 25% compared to 2021, even though the effects of the climate crisis are more visible than ever. In Poland, the situation is even more dramatic – according to the Climate Media Monitor Europe report, only 2.4% of articles in major media in 2023 concerned climate change.

But it's not just the media. The Autumn 2024 Eurobarometer shows that climate dropped from second to fifth place among EU citizens' priorities. Economic crisis, inflation, and energy security have taken over the narrative. Even Google Trends confirms it: interest in "climate change" peaked in 2019 and has been systematically declining since 2022.

The climate topic has been pushed to the margins. And we – climate and educational organizations – are stuck in an echo chamber, talking mainly among ourselves.

Who We Lost Along the Way

This is where the most uncomfortable truth begins: we never really reached everyone.

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The "Energy Literacy for Inclusion" report, developed as part of the European Energy Literacy for Youth project, reveals something many of us suspected but didn't want to name outright: our approach to climate education has systematically excluded young people from marginalized groups – migrants, refugees, youth from smaller towns, people with disabilities, LGBTQ+ individuals.

While we organized workshops on carbon neutrality, they were asking themselves: "How do I pay for electricity this month?"

While we debated climate scenarios for 2050, they were struggling with digital exclusion, lack of access to public spaces, and daily discrimination.

And that's exactly why we're losing the narrative.

Energy as the Key

But there is hope and it lies exactly where we haven't been looking.

The "Energy Literacy for Inclusion" report shows that young people from marginalized groups are interested in energy topics, provided we talk about them in ways that matter to their daily lives:

- 77% of study participants want to know more about saving energy at home, because it directly translates to living costs
- Energy is a more inclusive topic than climate – it connects geopolitical, economic, and social issues in ways everyone can understand
- Young people with migration experience better understand global interdependencies, they know their electricity bills in Poland are connected to the war in Ukraine and EU energy policy

As one project participant says: "*The topic of energy is closer to me than climate, because it concerns my daily life. I can see how much I pay for electricity.*"

What We Must Change (And Fast)

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If we want to reclaim climate and energy in public debate, we must stop doing what we've been doing for the last 10 years. Here are four concrete changes:

1. Stop talking ONLY about climate - start with what's close: energy bills, heating in winter, energy security. Climate can come later, as context, not the starting point.

2. Include the marginalized as experts - young Ukrainian refugees know more about the energy crisis than most of us. Young migrants understand global interdependencies. People experiencing energy poverty are experts in saving energy. Give them the microphone.

3. Change your spaces - if your workshops take place in city centers, elite schools, or require reliable internet – you're excluding most young people. Go where they are. To shelters, aid centers, small towns, online (but truly accessible).

4. Measure inclusivity, not just reach - don't ask "How many people did we reach?". Ask: "Who is not in this room? Whose voices are not being heard? Who doesn't have access to our materials?"

Last Chance?

Climate disappeared from the mainstream not because it stopped being important. It disappeared because it was never truly mainstream, it was a topic for the privileged, educated, urban.

But this could be our breakthrough. Because the energy crisis, inflation, and wars have shown everyone, including those we previously excluded, that energy and climate affect everyone.

Now we either use this moment to build a truly inclusive movement that speaks a language everyone understands…

…or the climate topic will actually fade into obscurity. This time for good.

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The choice is ours.

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