



13 CLIMATE ACTION



מרכז האוניברסיטה העברית לקיימות
The Hebrew University Center for Sustainability
مركز الجامعة العبرية للاستدامة



Scientific Progress

Although the climate crisis is the most concerning global issue of our times, adaptation and mitigation methods have not yet been sufficiently translated into action at the local and community levels. Doctors Itay Greenspan and Orna Shemer (Paul Baerwald School of Social Work and Social Welfare) in cooperation with Dr. Galit Cohen-Blankshtain (Geography Department & Federmann School of Public Policy) are working on a research project that focuses on the challenges of thinking globally while acting locally on the global climate crisis. The project focuses on examining the effectiveness of participatory climate assemblies organized by environmental NGOs in Israel, with the aim of maximizing the effectiveness of such initiatives.

Prof. Daniel Rosenfeld (Herrmann Institute of Earth Sciences and a member of the Center for Climate Science) studies the human impact on cloud composition, precipitation, cloud aerosol interactions, and the implications of those processes on climate variability and change. Prof. Rosenfeld was among the authors of the 6th Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) report, contributing to the chapter on changes in water circulation, assessing the impact of warming and air pollution on changes in rains, desertification, droughts, and floods.

Community Impact

Impactful and engaging climate change communication is crucial for engaging citizens and organizations in climate action and adaptation. However, in recent years climate change has become a controversial topic that remains an exclusive subject engaging mainly scientists, stakeholders, and politicians. In order to involve and include as many people as possible, HUJI has created “1.5 Degrees,” a climate outreach program of 27 short online episodes that simply explain the science behind global warming. The series was created by researchers from HUJI who, together with national experts, curated 10-minute-long episodes to engage people of all ages beyond the scientific world.

As a follow-up to the international 2021 United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP26) in Glasgow, the Hebrew University, in cooperation with Haaretz, organized the Israel Climate Change Conference in Jerusalem, including a wide range of key speakers. Additionally, HUJI's researchers participated in the Israeli Climate Forum established by the President.

Studies and Learning Initiatives

The Advanced School for Environmental Studies offers six diverse study programs hosting over 150 PhD and Master's students and over 100 courses. This multidisciplinary graduate school aims to “equip the next generation of leading researchers, along with leaders in the business and public sectors, with the tools to bring about an environmentally sustainable reality.” The school provides various funding opportunities for students, including scholarships to promote women in environmental studies.

HUJI acknowledges the importance of environmental and climate change knowledge for all students (not only climate scientists), and has thus created a new program for undergraduate students called ‘Sustainability, Climate, and Society.’ This program, developed by The Center for Sustainability, offers a new minor open to humanities, social sciences, business, and law students. The Center for Sustainability also offers a course on “Citizen science - sustainability and climate action.” The course will be a platform to promote citizen science projects for solution-oriented approaches to addressing sustainability challenges in the real world, and particularly in the implementation of action plans of policy makers in the climate field.

Actions on Campus

The establishment of a new Hebrew University Center for Climate Science (HUCS) is an attempt to address climate change, a challenge HUJI considers the most significant problem the world currently faces. The center, led by Prof. Hezi Gildor and Dr. Uri Adam, is the largest in Israel, made up of 28 researchers from multiple fields, who focus on building an updated climate model specifically for the Mediterranean region, in cooperation with the Israel Meteorological Service. The center aims to provide information and suggestions for decision-makers based on place-based knowledge, as opposed to predictions and knowledge not specific to the Middle East that have been applied for years.

“Thinking Big and Aspiring to Zero” is a competition dedicated to minimizing carbon emissions on campus. The competition invites students to propose initiatives, offering money prizes for the cleverest initiatives, which are then considered and implemented where possible. Increasing the vegan food range, installing monitoring sensors for light and water use, and using plants in a creative way are all initiatives stemming from this competition.