

# You control climate change

Turn down. Switch off. Recycle. Walk. Change.

The ongoing EU Climate Change Awareness Campaign is highly visible across Finland. Advertisements have been broadcast on television and published in newspapers. The campaign is co-coordinated through Finland's national Climate Change Communications Program, which is providing material, information and other support to help partners organize local events and campaigns. In Finland, two important target groups are schools and households in urban areas where there are plenty of opportunities for people to change their consumption patterns.

The message is summarized in keywords: "Turn down. Switch off. Recycle. Walk. Change." For all its severity, it is an optimistic message: We can make a difference. This is important when addressing young people who easily assume that the previous generations have already spoiled their future permanently.

## Awareness and action

In February 2005, the Finnish Ministry of Trade and Industry commissioned a national study on citizens' views and attitudes towards climate. It showed that Finns are well aware of the global effects of climate change and are worried about them.

Many people are willing to act in order to mitigate climate change. Only a few respondents out of a hundred (4%) believe that they, themselves, cannot contribute in any way. Many of the respon-



dents are ready to take action related to their household economy and energy use. Of the individual issues, the sorting and recycling of waste were the most interesting ones, as nine out of ten of the respondents were very or quite ready to participate in these actions (88%). Energy conservation (85%), composting of bio waste (80%), reduction of consumption and waste (80%) and the use of renewable energy sources in heating (74%) were also considered to be among suitable methods of mitigating climate change.

## Educating the young

The Finnish Meteorological Institute and Climate Change Communications Program have produced a six-minute

film about climate change. It addresses questions like

- What is global climate change?
- How real is the danger?
- Can we control climate change?
- Can we be prepared?
- Can I do something?

The video starts with causes and consequences of climate change, bringing the issue very close to the audience by illustrating the effects of a rise in sea level in downtown Helsinki. It also shows very simple everyday actions by which everyone can affect his or her energy consumption and the emissions of greenhouse gases. The film is distributed on DVD and through the FMI website [www.fmi.fi](http://www.fmi.fi) in three languages - Finnish, Swedish and English. Many secondary schools and upper comprehensive schools have ordered the DVD for classroom use.

Also the World Meteorological Organization, WMO, appreciates the need to address the young in their own language. It has produced a comic strip called "We care for our climate" about climate change. This has been translated into several languages. The original text is written by the President of the WMO Commission for Climatology Mr. Y. Boodhoo, and illustrations are by Mr. S. Teeroovengadam. The cartoon can be downloaded at [www.wmo.ch/web/catalogue/freedwn](http://www.wmo.ch/web/catalogue/freedwn). ■