




STORY

**Telling climate and
environmental stories**



What makes a climate
story compelling and
engaging?

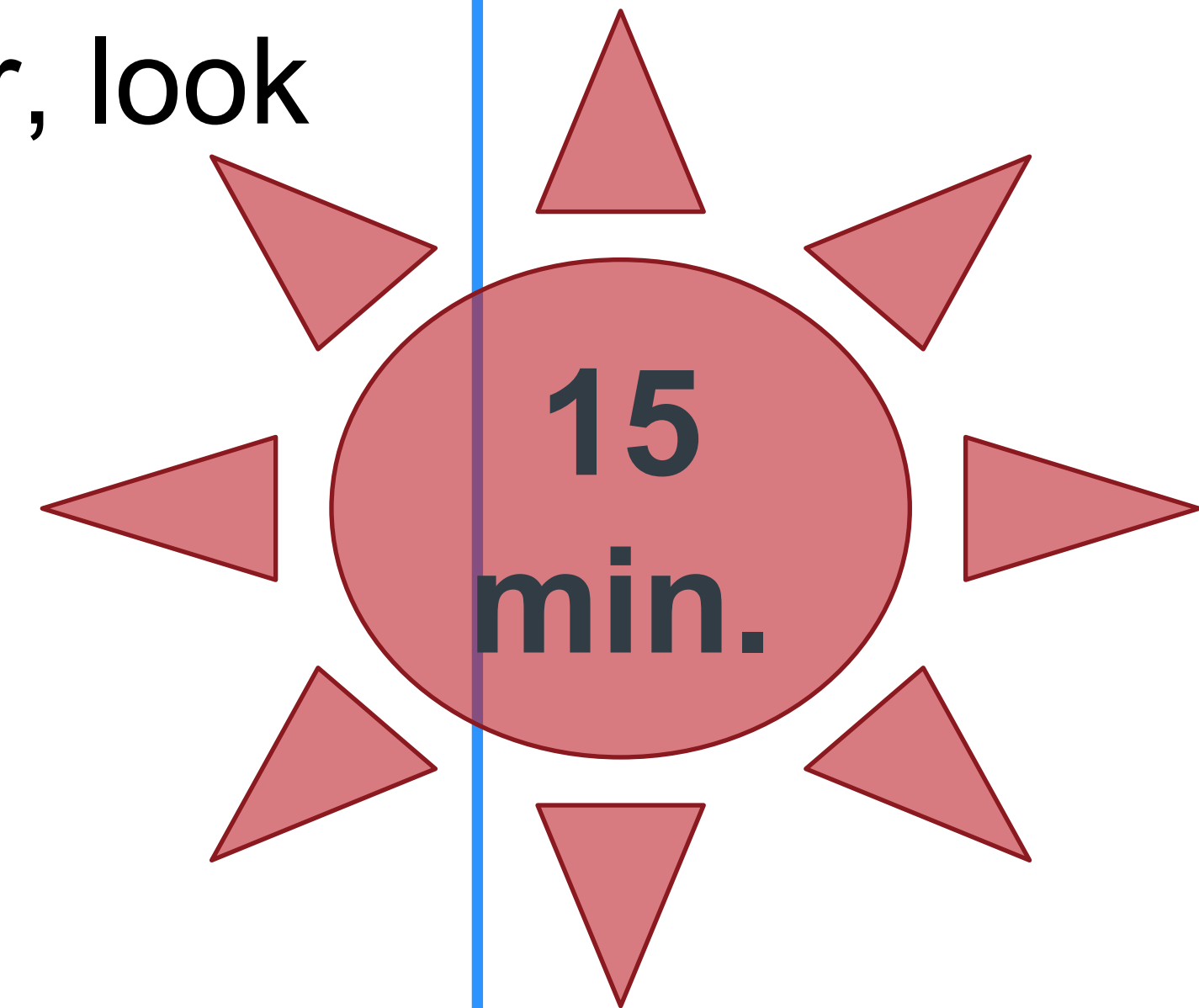
Group Work

Task:

- 3 groups
- Think of climate stories you liked, that you remember, look them up to refresh yourself.

Discuss these questions:

- Why did you like them?
- Are there specific characteristics they shared?
- What characteristics should a good climate change story have?
- What makes a climate story NOT memorable?



Elements of a good climate story

1. Connecting scientific facts with real-world events
2. Showing impact on nature
3. Showing impact on humans
4. Looking at past causes as well as current and future effects
5. Providing practical solutions / responses / ways forward



Stories transform
complex subjects
into something that
feels...

- **personal**
- **local**
- **relatable**
- **solvable**



Accurate science and facts is crucial,
but you need to connect emotionally
with your audience.



How do you present the
facts in a way that makes
people care?

Don't be too broad



Narrow your focus

Topic or story? Broad or focused?

Extreme storms

Crops of poor community in rural lowland area wiped out by floodwaters

Greenhouse gas emissions

Despite warnings by scientists, CO2 emissions in SE Asia rise due to more coal-fired power plants

Lao climate policy

Lao PDR and UK sign agreement to boost decarbonization efforts

Floods in Pakistan



Let's look at the rest of this multimedia story...

Pakistan floods: Climate change likely worsened impact



© Fareed Khan/AP Photo/picture alliance

Tips for better climate stories

Know your audience

- **Who is your reader / listener / viewer**
- How much do they know about climate change?
- What do they care about?
- How might they be personally affected?



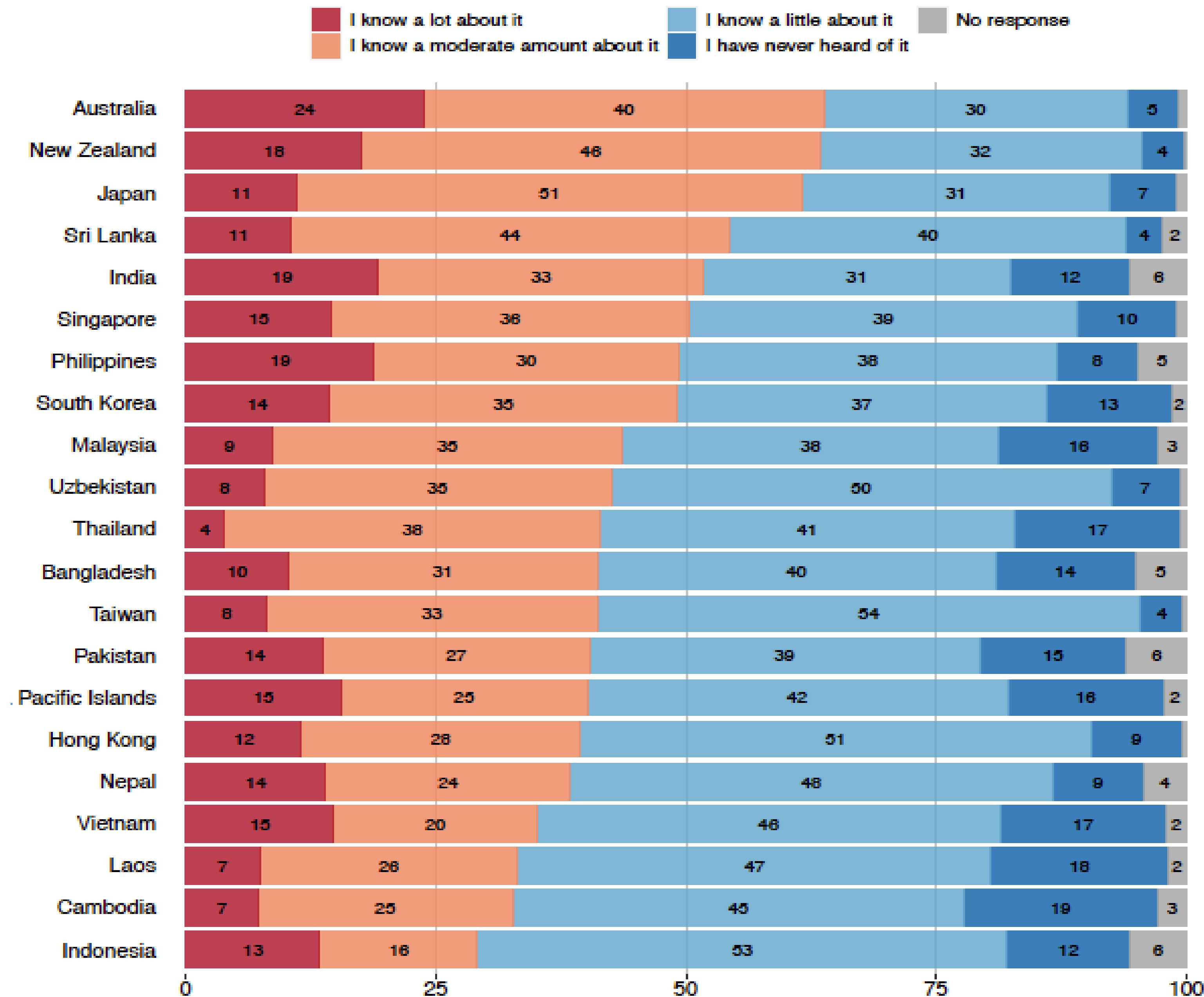
Lao PDR

- 7% know a lot
- 26% know some
- 47% know a little
- 18% never heard of it

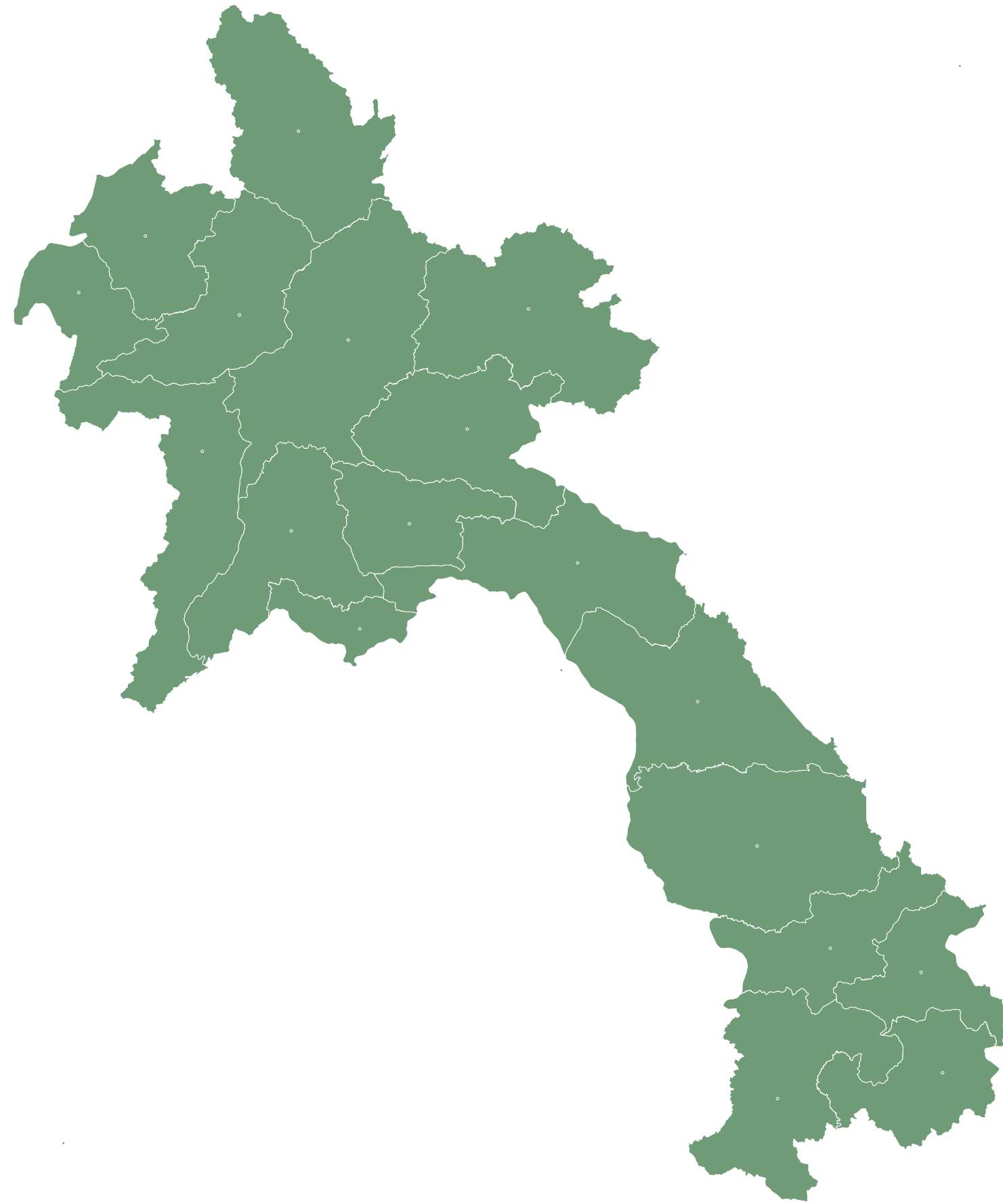


Knowledge about climate change

Asia & the Pacific



Other Lao PRD-related answers



Do you think climate change is happening?

- 71% yes
- 4% no
- 24% don't know

How worried are you about climate change?

- 30% very worried
- 41% somewhat worried
- 19% not very worried
- 8% not at all worried

Will climate change be personally harmful?

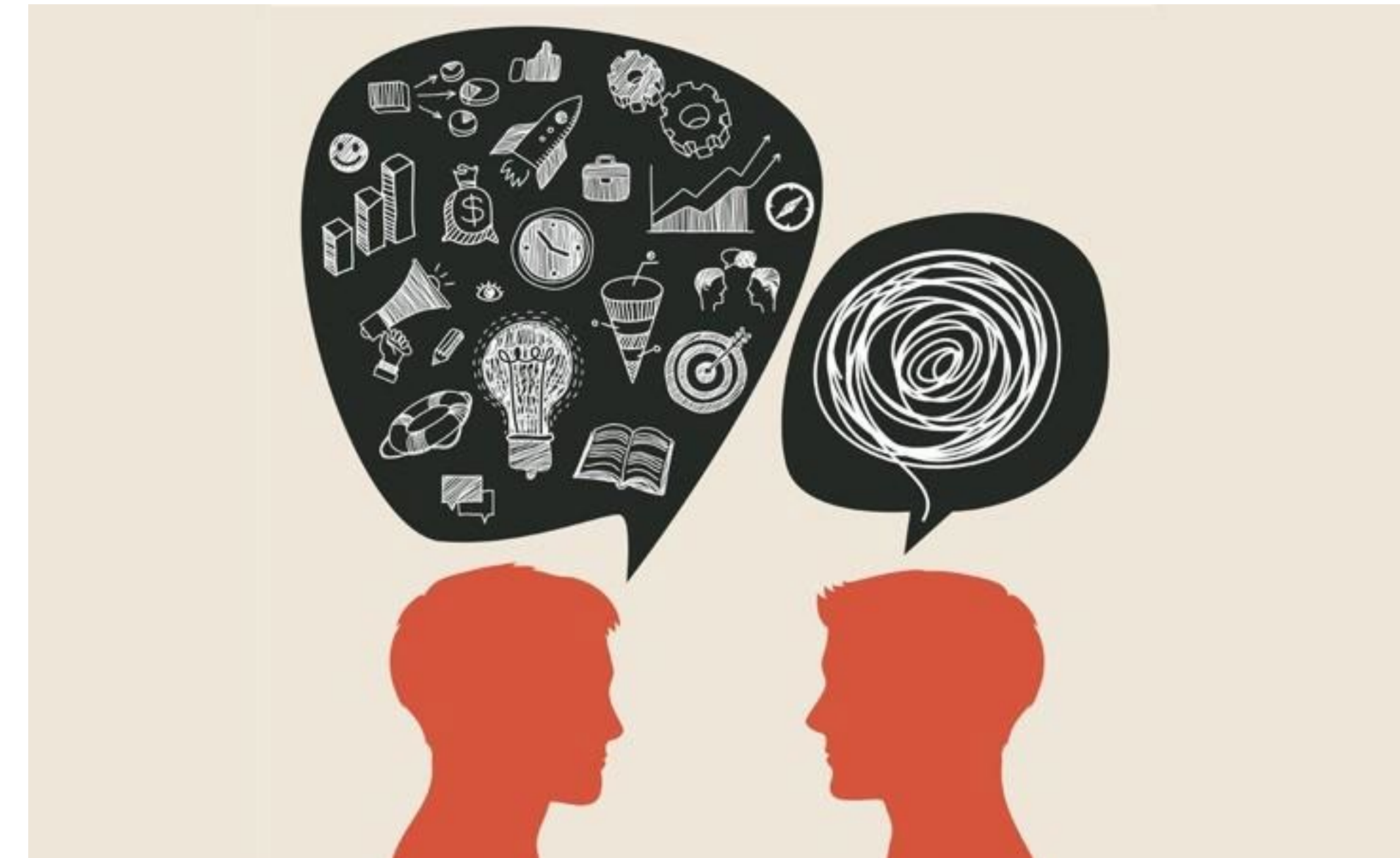
- 37% a great deal
- 33% a moderate amount
- 12% only a little
- 5% not at all



Tips for better climate stories

Localise the jargon

- You know what Anthropocene, decarbonization, UNFCCC mean –
- **Your audience probably doesn't**
- Ask sources to simplify
- If you don't understand, ask them to explain again



The goal: understanding

Tips for better climate stories

Make it for and about people

- Put people at the center
- Make the abstract real and relevant
- Localize big stories
- Put things in terms your audience will understand:
(The price of bread, petrol, rice...)



Engaging storytelling, compelling character(s)

Migrants face changing climate

PUBLISHED : 1 JUL 2018 AT 05:22

NEWSPAPER SECTION: SPECTRUM
WRITER: PARITTA WANGKIAT

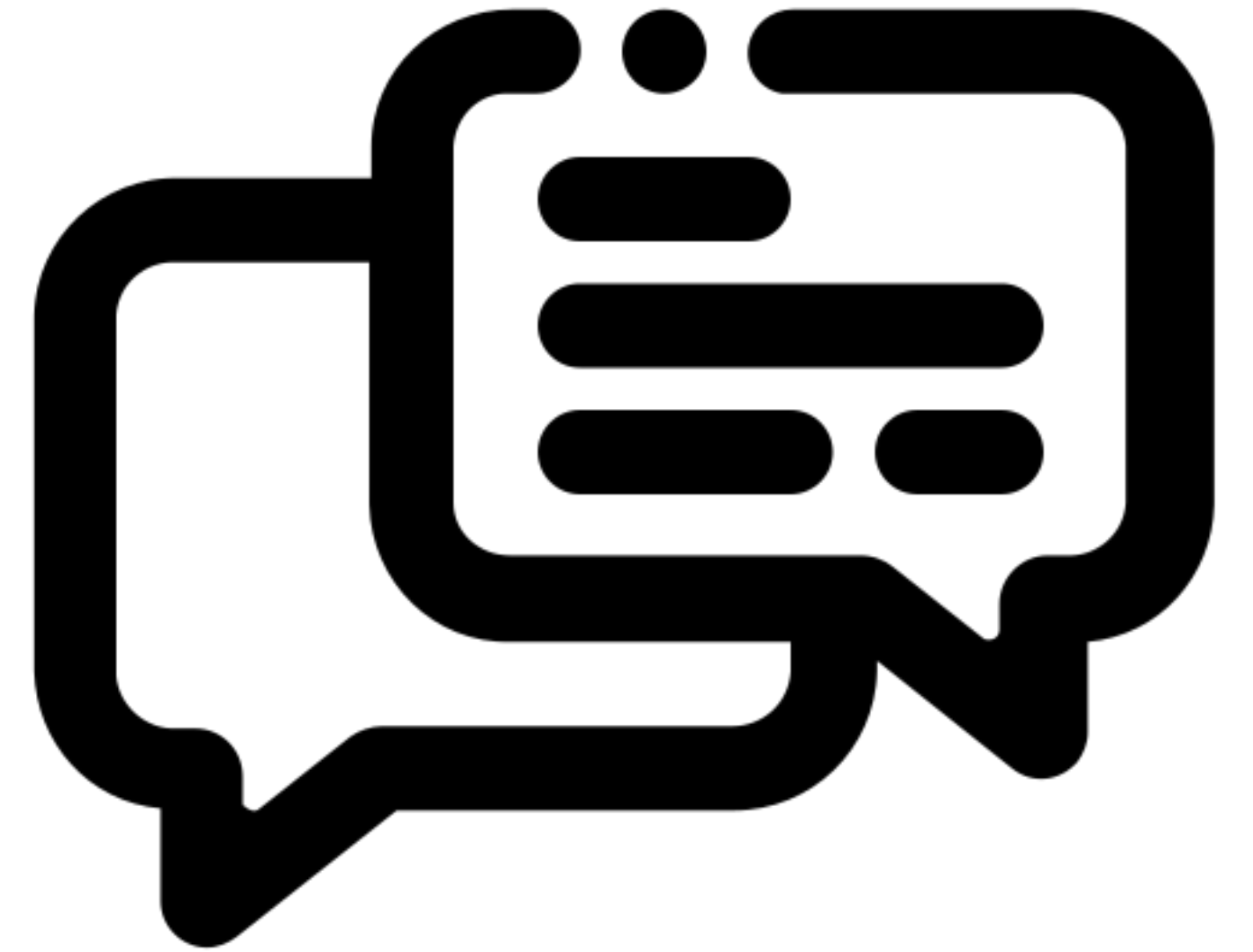


taking stock: Farmers harvest hay in dry season and store it for feeding animals in Kang Meas district, Kampong Cham province, Cambodia. In recent years, farmers have experienced extreme weather — one of several factors that lower yields in rice farming. Many farmers migrate from villages seeking better economic opportunities in cities. Thailand is one of the most popular destinations.

- UNHCR says 20 million people are displaced due to climate change a year...
- But stories of statistics can be overwhelming
- Tell the story of one family

- How is this affecting people concretely?
- Takes it out of the abstract and makes it relatable
- Readers learn of the human cost

Quote different voices

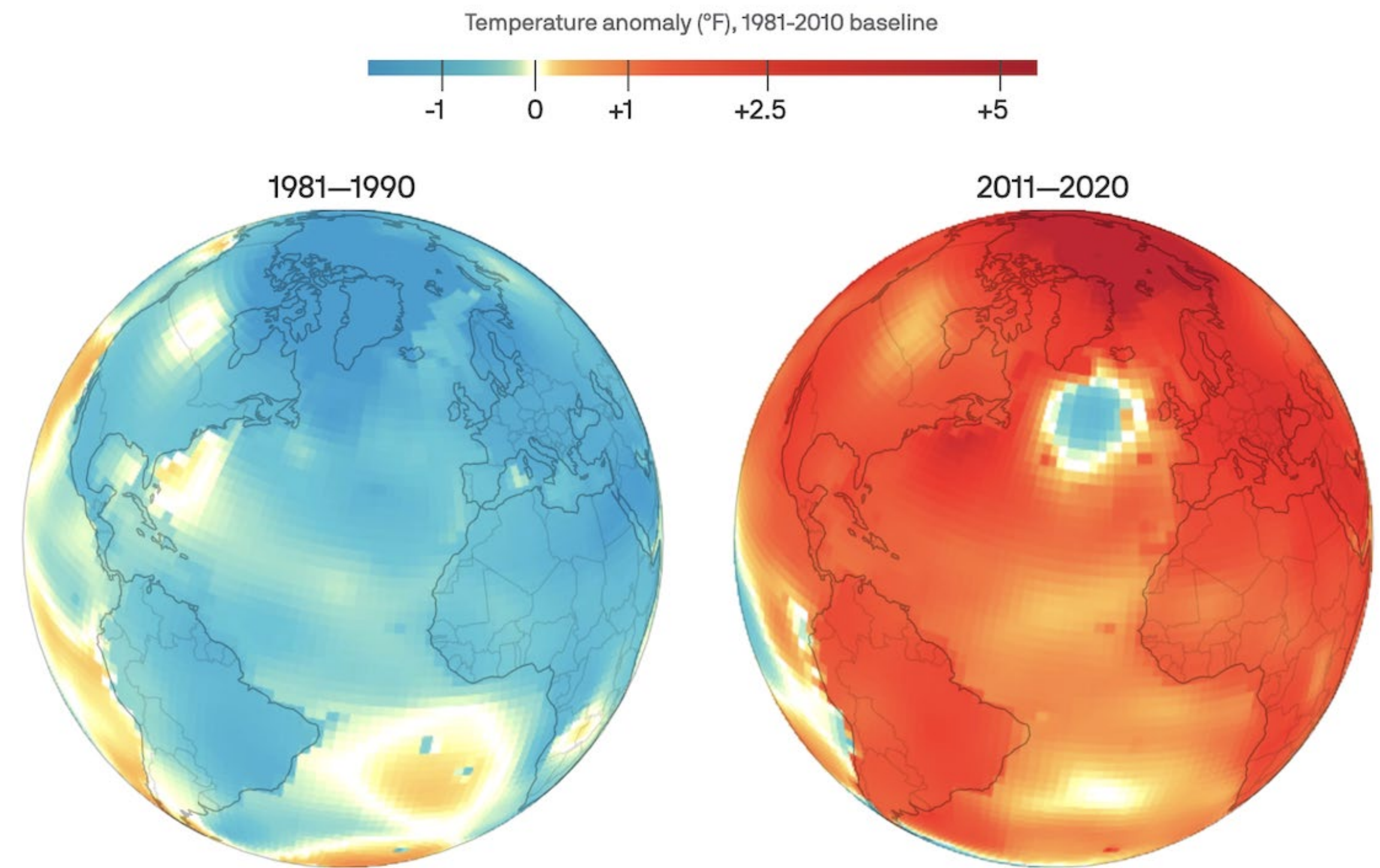


- Talk to the experts and policy-makers, but go further
- Who is directly affected? Who has a different perspective?
- Think about gender and generation
- A variety of voices leads to more nuance and richer stories

Green issues affect everyone

Be visual

- Reduce complexity by using explanatory visuals
- Always ask: "how can I visualize this?"
- Photos, videos, graphs/charts, infographics, maps, sidebars




Find a good opening photo/visual



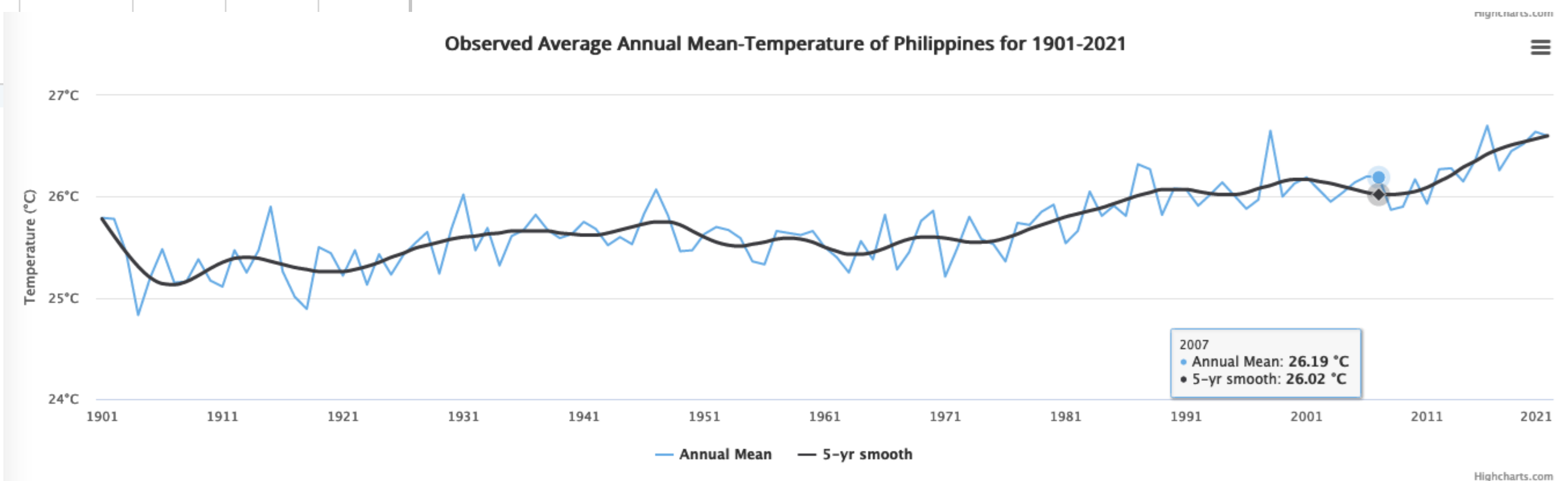
Data visualization

Observed Average Seasonal Mean Temperature

The identified sub-national units with the highest and lowest mean

Units: °C	1991-2020			
	 DJF	MAM	JJA	SON
Country: Philippines	25.07	26.86	26.47	26.13
Highest: Region V (Bicol region)	25.82	27.60	27.97	27.28
Lowest: Cordillera Administrative region (CAR)				

- Present complicated data in easy-to-digest way
- More engaging to readers
- Gives bigger picture

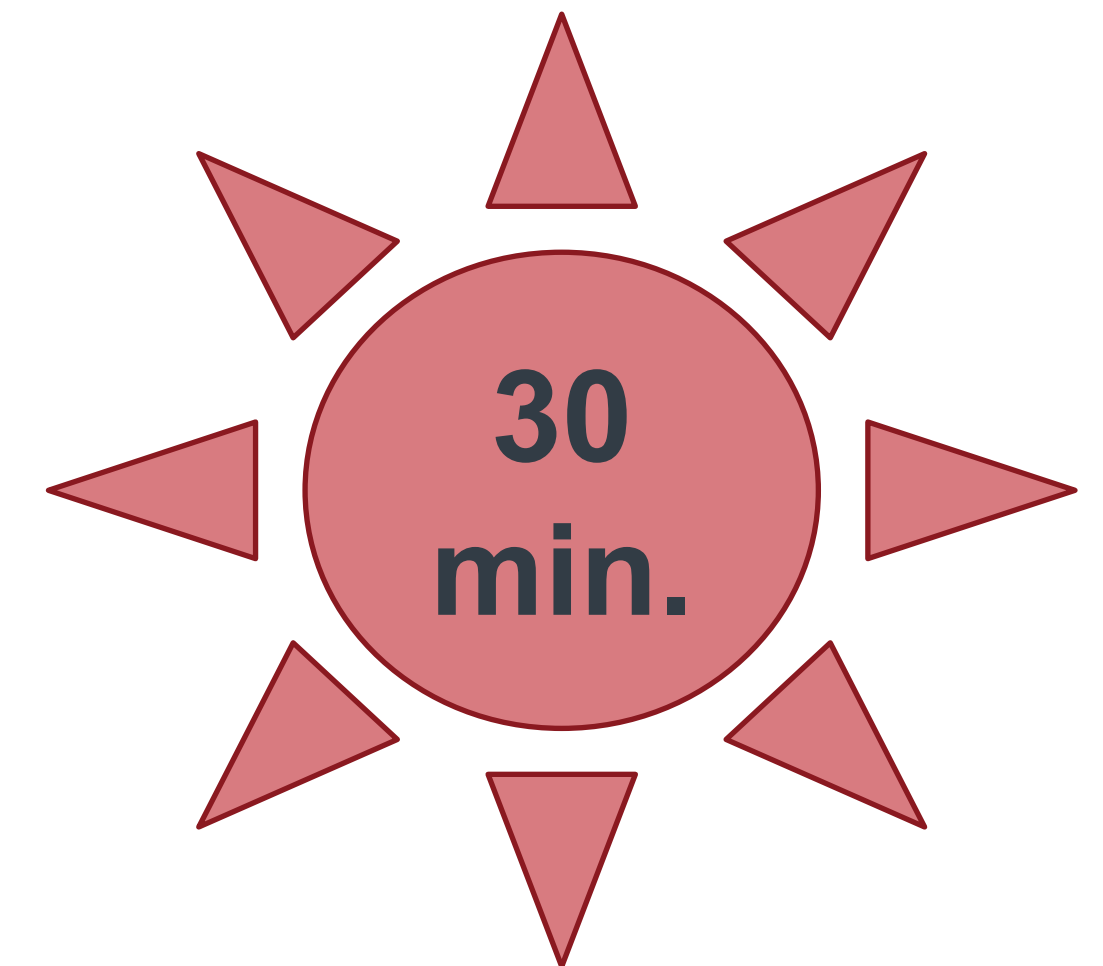


Group Work – simplifying, humanizing

- In groups
- Look at these complex stories. Pick a target audience, provide a two-sentence easy-to-understand pitch, tell us who you would talk to and how would you would put people at the center.

Group 1: Delegates at the COP29 will discussing climate justice in the Anthropocene and whether decoupling mandates should apply to economies in transition.

Group 2: A study explores the potential of the Lao PDR to engage in carbon sequestration projects to mitigate climate change. Afforestation projects are planned as well as agroforestry farms that might help local communities grow and harvest crops more sustainably.



From Local to Global / From Global to Local



From Local to Global

If local, put it in a larger context:

- How could this relate to broader issues?
- How does this relate to similar events in the region, world? Is it part of a global trend?
- Causes/effects beyond the local area?



The ecological roots of India's farming crisis

The storming of the Red Fort in Delhi marked a dramatic escalation to months of protest to new farm laws. Could a more sustainable form of agriculture be part of the solution?



For months, farmers have been blocking highways and gathering in New Delhi to protest agricultural reforms

- Expands local story to a wider narrative about policy and climate.
- Farmers protested against new laws which they say will ruin their livelihoods.
- Examines India's farm laws which don't take environmental impacts into account.
- Examines national policy, impacts on biodiversity, water scarcity, drought and flooding.

From Global to Local

Look at a general climate change topic. Perhaps there's a new IPCC study out or statement from COP meeting.

Localize the issue:

- How does it affect my region?
- how does it affect the local community?
- how does the community deal with this problem?
- What are local authorities doing about it?



QUIZ!

Storm and dislocation



You're a reporter for a local newspaper in Savannakhet. A extreme storm has hit that caused the displacement of many people in remote areas. Your editor wants you to cover the story and talk to the families.

Typhoon and dislocation

Which approach would you choose?

Which elements might you include to make the story more relatable to your audience



How to find Green Stories

- Monitor local and global climate trends and research
- Connect with environmental and climate groups
- Attend environmental conferences and summits
- Follow policy developments and government activities
- Visit local communities
- Use social media

