



PROGRAMME MANUAL

How to Carry Out an Environmental
Action Project for Young People &
Their Project Mentors



ECO-UNESCO

Ireland's Environmental Education and Youth Organisation



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All photos used in this resource are of ECO-UNESCO programme participants.

ECO-UNESCO would like to thank everyone who have taken part in the Young Environmentalist Awards since 1999, and special thanks to Doireann Dunbar and Susan Adams for their kind contributions to this resource.

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Young Environmentalist Awards Programme

Who We Are

The Young Environmentalist Awards (YEA) is an All-Ireland environmental awards programme for young people aged 10-18. Since 1999, ECO-UNESCO has run this programme to recognise and rewards youth-led, action based projects that protect, conserve, and enhance the environment. What kind of projects do we look for? Projects that are youth-led, action based, and involve project-based learning and environmental awareness raising!

How To Use This Manual

This manual is designed to help young people get their YEA environmental action project started. It will guide both young people and their mentors through their YEA journey in a step-by-step manner. The manual follows the 6-Steps-to-Success Framework, providing tips, activities and toolkits along the way. Please note the manual is not intended to be prescriptive, but should be seen as suggestions that may help young people carry out a successful action project.



**Have fun, make friends
& network with others**



**Increase environmental
knowledge and awareness
& learn how to develop an
environmental action project**



**Boost confidence & improve
self-esteem**



Develop new skills



**Develop an attitude of
empathy and care for 'the
other' and for the planet**



**Add to a college/university
application or CV**



**Win awards and
receive certificates of
participation**



**Increase youth involvement through
active citizenship & local environmental
stewardship in the local community**



**Make an ideal TY
or CSPE project**



**Benefit from curriculum links to
Geography, Politics and Society,
Science, SPHE, etc.**



**Learn to make connections
between global issues and
your own life**



**Become empowered to think
critically about local and
global issues**

Why Get Involved?

Who Can Take Part?

YEA is open to any group of young people (2-25 members) in the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland from 10-18 years of age.

Super Junior: 10-12 years

Junior: 12-14 years

Senior: 15-18 years

Note: For awards purposes ECO-UNESCO considers the majority group age. For example, if in your team there are three 15 year olds and two 14 year olds, your team will be considered as a senior group.

Groups can be guided by project mentors. YEA Project Mentors are volunteers (i.e. youth workers/leaders, teachers, or parents) who support young people throughout their YEA action project by offering advice and encouragement. The role of YEA Mentors is not to lead the project but to facilitate youth-led learning that allows young people to explore various environmental issues, develop their own action project and take action.

YEA 5 Key Stages

STAGE 1

Registration (August to November)

Interested groups of young people register online at www.ecounesco.ie.



STAGE 2

Action Project (August to January)

Groups begin to work on their projects, with support from the YEA 6-Steps-to-Success Manual, online training, workshops and other resources.



STAGE 3

Project Submission (February)

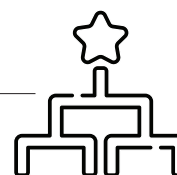
Groups submit their ECO-Action project for adjudication.



STAGE 4

Semi-Final ECO-Dens (March/April)

Shortlisted projects are invited to pitch their project to a panel of expert judges. These are held in regional hubs across Ireland.



STAGE 5

YEA Showcase & Awards Ceremony (May)

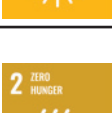
Finalists showcase their projects and winners are announced at the YEA Showcase & Awards Ceremony.



Award Categories

There are 11 main YEA award categories focusing on a different environmental area, each tied to Sustainable Development Goals (more about SDGs on the next page!). As well as this, there are additional award categories.

Main Categories

Category	Description	Relevant SDGs
 Biodiversity	Biodiversity refers to the variety of living species on Earth, including plants, animals, bacteria, and fungi. Projects in this category may comprise of research on a particular species or habitat, and taking action on how to protect or conserve this.	  
 Climate Change	Climate change is a long-term change in Earth's average weather patterns. While this is a complex and broad topic, projects in this area often identify and promote specific behaviour changes that help mitigate or adapt to climate change.	
 ECO-Art & Design	ECO-Art & Design projects creatively inform people about the environment and promote positive action. Ideal for groups with artistic skills, this category includes creating artworks like murals, sculptures, and mosaics to raise awareness about nature and environmental issues.	 
 ECO-Community Development	These projects look into practical solutions to local environmental issues and involve local communities in developing a more sustainable society. It is a good idea to partner with local authorities and various local groups such as community groups, schools, youth cafés and environmental groups.	 
 ECO-Entrepreneurship	ECO-Entrepreneurship projects look at innovative products, technologies, services and processes that contribute to sustainable development. This could include working with local business, or perhaps developing an environmentally friendly business.	  
 ECO-Health & Wellbeing	Projects in this category explore the link between our health (physical and emotional wellbeing) and the environment we live in; from the water we drink, to the air we breathe, to the food we grow and eat.	 
 Energy	Energy projects look at how energy use impacts the environment and how to reduce the environmental impacts of our energy use. It may also include research and actions based on alternative renewable sources of energy.	 
 Food	Food is a broad topic which can cover the whole food system from food production, food consumption habits, food security, food waste etc. Projects in this category look at how our food can impact the world around us and how to reduce the environmental impacts of our food.	 
 Transport	The Transport category encompasses projects that try to understand and mitigate the environmental impacts of various transportation modes. This can include increasing the efficiency of existing transportation, promoting sustainable alternatives, and reducing transport-related emissions.	  
 Waste	We generate significant waste (e.g. plastic, food, electronics, old clothes), which harms the environment and wastes the resources used in making the products. Waste projects can explore consumption, production patterns, and waste reduction strategies.	 
 Water	Water projects focus on any water-related issue. These may include water scarcity, sustainable water management practices, or the impacts of pollution and human activities on water sources, rivers, and oceans.	 

Additional Awards

Once being entered into your chosen main award category, you will also be considered for additional awards, if applicable. As well as the below, other additional awards are added every year!

Category	Description
Local to Global SDG Award	This is an additional award which projects are eligible for if they can find and highlight a link between their action project and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).
Further Growth Award	If you participated in the YEA in recent years and are interested in continuing your existing project and developing it further, we encourage you to apply for our additional award called 'Further Growth'. Remember that all of the legwork has already been done. All you need to do is to identify what went well and what didn't go well last time and take further action! Your existing project can be passed on to another group (e.g. next year's TY group or new YEA project group from the same school/youth organisation).
People's Choice Award	ECO-UNESCO will host an online vote where the public gets to decide their favourite project! As this is an online-based vote, it is a good idea for you to get working on a social media presence from early on – every vote will count!
ECO-Mentor of the Year Award	This Award recognises outstanding YEA Project Mentors who go above and beyond to encourage and support young people in their eco-action. All YEA Mentors are eligible for this Award.

Linking With The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals

Launched in September 2015, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are 17 goals defined by the United Nations to tackle the world's biggest problems by 2030. The 17 SDGs cover a wide range of areas, and address the many causes of poverty, injustice and damage to our planet. The YEA programme encourages young people to contribute towards the achievement of the SDGs.

Have a look at the SDGs below. Which ones do you know, and which ones are new to you?



YEA in Quotes

“ Our school had a fantastic time, and we were thrilled with our victory (bringing an All-Ireland title to Mayo!). The experience has truly motivated our students to focus more on environmental issues and take pride in themselves and their school community. It has significantly boosted their confidence and enthusiasm for learning. ”

“ The whole experience has really empowered the students, giving them self confidence and belief in their own abilities. ”

“ As a mentor, I was genuinely impressed by the Young Environmentalists Awards Project. The kids harnessed their imagination and creativity to tackle real-world problems. ”

“ Working on YEA has changed how we feel about nature and the environment. We started this project to learn more about biodiversity and the environment, but after completing it we now care more about how our actions affect the environment. We are now more conscious and mindful about how our actions affect the environment, and we are all striving to reduce the amount of energy we use in our everyday lives. ”

“ Working on the YEA has shown the whole team that they shouldn't be afraid to speak up about climate issues such as biodiversity loss, because these issues are a big problem in our world today. ”

“ The YEA competition serves as a catalyst for transformative behaviour change, inspiring individuals, and groups to become proactive agents of environmental conservation and advocates for a more sustainable future. ”

6-Steps-to-Success Framework

6-Steps-to-Success Framework

The 6-Steps-to-Success Framework helps guide teams in making an environmental action project. This manual guides groups along this framework, explaining each step and offering activities and toolkits along the way.

Step 1. Get A Team Together

Step 2. Select An Environmental Issue And Research

Step 3. Develop An Action Plan

Step 4. Take Action

Step 5. Raise Awareness

Step 6. Reflect



STEP 1:

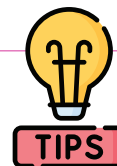
Get A Team Together

IMPORTANT!

Keep track of your work at every step.
It will make project submission a lot easier!

Step 1. Get A Team Together

A YEA team should have between 2 and 25 members. Find friends and peers who care about environmental issues, who share your environmental concerns and who want to take action to make a positive change in the environment.



Tips For YEA Mentors

Schools/youth organisations can enter as many projects as they want, so young people are free to work on different projects based on their own interests and ideas.

We recommend that young people work in a small team (6 is a good team size) because: there are more opportunities available for each member to gain a wider variety of skills; it is more difficult for individual members to free ride; and, each member's real contribution to the team is more likely to be recognised. Also there is a maximum of 6 young people invited to pitch their project to the YEA expert judges at the regional ECO-Den semi-final rounds in March/April.

However, if you have one large group/class working together, consider splitting the group into multiple sub-groups such as a design group, public relations group or social media group. This should help them feel more responsible for their roles in the team and should give more opportunities to develop new skills.

Skills Audit & Role Assignment

Your team is made up of people with different needs, skills and personalities. Getting to know each other is very important to build a happy and successful team. Identify the interests, positive attributes and skills of each team member. Then discuss how to develop stronger skill sets and match everyone to the role best suited to them for achieving your team goals.

Team Contract

Working in a team can be both rewarding and challenging. It is recommended to create a team contract to discuss how you will work together and resolve group conflicts.

Team Building Exercises

Team bonding is essential for a successful YEA project as it brings team members closer together, boosts team spirit, collaboration, teamwork, and ultimately improves team performance. Try some of the team building exercises (e.g. movie day, picnic, and hiking) and have fun!



Activities & Toolkits

As a YEA Project Mentor, facilitate Activity 1-3 with your group to get them started.

ACTIVITY 1: TEAM SKILLS AUDIT (p. 15) This is a positive activity as it gives everyone an opportunity to appreciate not only their own but also other members' strengths. This is suitable to start with together as a team.

TOOLKIT: TEAM SKILLS MATRIX (p. 16)

ACTIVITY 2: ASSIGNING ROLES (p. 17) Based on the Team Skills Audit, let your group decide how to match everyone to the roles and tasks best suited to them to boost the team's efficiency and productivity.

TOOLKIT: ROLE CARDS (p. 18)

ACTIVITY 3: TEAM CONTRACT (p. 19) Guide your group to create a Team Contract themselves through consensus decision-making.

TOOLKIT: TEAM CONTRACT TEMPLATE (p. 24)





ACTIVITY 1: TEAM SKILLS AUDIT

Aim

- **Know how to conduct a team skills audit**
- **Identify and analyse what skills team members have and what skills they would like to develop through a project**
- **Use a team skills audit to improve a team's performance and opportunity for skill development.**

Time

- **30 minutes**

Preparation

- **Whiteboard or flipchart**
- **Team skills Matrix (p.16)**
- **Role Cards (p.18)**
- **Markers or pens**

How To Run

1. Duplicate the Team Skills Matrix (p. 16) on a whiteboard or flipchart paper, or print it out.
2. Brainstorm with your group what skills a team will need over the course of an action project and list them on the first column of the Team Skills Matrix.

Key Skills Required

- **Creative-thinking skills**
- **Critical-thinking skills**
- **Research skills**
- **Information processing skills**
- **Communications skills**
- **Public speaking skills**
- **Presentation skills**
- **Facilitation skills**
- **Organisation skills**
- **Report-writing skills**
- **Action skills**
- **IT skills**
- **Arts & Crafts skills**
- **Videography skills**
- **Photography skills**

3. If the group struggles with brainstorming, distribute the Role Cards (p.18). Facilitate a discussion on the responsibilities each role entails, helping the group to identify the necessary skills.
4. After the discussion, ask each participant to reflect on their skills and the skills they want to develop during the project. Have them add their names to the second and third columns in the Team Skills Matrix.
5. Use the complete Team Skills Matrix to analyse the team's strengths and development areas, and assign tasks based on their interest and qualifications. It is a good idea to pair team members with complimentary skills, for example, matching someone with strong communication skills with someone looking to develop those skills for mutual learning and growth.

TEAM SKILLS MATRIX



ACTIVITY 1
TOOLKIT

Skills required for a project	I have this skill	I'd love to develop this skill
E.g. Research	E.g. Niamh, Michael, Patrick	E.g. Dave, Sarah



ACTIVITY 2: ASSIGNING ROLES

Aim

- **Identify various tasks involved in carrying out a successful action project**
- **Understand team roles and responsibilities**
- **Assign roles to team members, considering their skills and talents to enhance team effectiveness in achieving their goals**
- **Giving people ownership of their role and it's responsibility**

Time

- **15 minutes**

Preparation

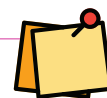
- **Whiteboard or flipchart**
- **Role Cards (p.18)**
- **Markers or pens**

How To Run

1. Get your group to brainstorm what kinds of roles are required for carrying out a successful action project and list them on the whiteboard. Encourage all team members to contribute ideas.
2. Facilitate a discussion on the responsibilities that come with each role.

NOTE:

For younger groups or to add an interactive element, prepare a set of Role Cards (p.18). Mix them up and have the group match each role card with its corresponding responsibilities. Encourage participants to think of additional roles and responsibilities that might be necessary.



3. Ask them to assign roles to each team member based on their current skills and development goals. Use the Team Skills Matrix (p.16) to ensure skills and talents are well-matched to the roles.

ROLE CARDS



ACTIVITY 2 TOOLKIT

Role:	Responsibilities:
Team Leader	• Providing leadership and direction for the team • Establishing a collaborative relationship within the team • Ensuring that every team member is on track with their responsibilities • Ensuring that every team member feels included and has an opportunity to participate
Recorder	• Making notes of ideas, progress and decisions made by the team • Using charts, scrapbooks and other methods to highlight and summarise the ideas of the team • Checking to be sure that ideas are clear and accurate
Timekeeper	• Ensuring that each member of the team contributes equally and receives equal time • Keeping the team aware of time constraints and deadlines • Making sure that team meetings start and finish on time
Spokesperson	• Representing the team and presenting what the team has done to others through media or in person • Being prepared to answer questions and/or have an interview on behalf of the team
Researcher	• Identifying where the team's ideas require more details and explanations • Conducting the research and providing it to the team
Resource Manager	• Managing materials in the team during group work • Being responsible for collecting, distributing and putting away project materials
Social Media Specialist	• Setting up the project team page within social media platforms (e.g. Facebook, Instagram) • Generating, editing and publishing daily content on social media



ACTIVITY 3: TEAM CONTRACT

Aim

- **Know how to create a team contract**
- **Use a team contract to facilitate better collaboration during a project**

Time

- 15 minutes

Preparation

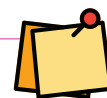
- **Team Contract Template (p. 20)**
- **Markers or pens**
- **Paper/notebook/Flipchart**

How To Run

1. Give the team a few minutes to think about their previous experiences working in teams.
2. Ask them to write down what they liked and disliked about working in a team, as well as any challenges they encountered.

NOTE:

For younger groups or to add an interactive element, prepare a set of Role Cards (p.18). Mix them up and have the group match each role card with its corresponding responsibilities. Encourage participants to think of additional roles and responsibilities that might be necessary.



3. Invite participants to share what they have written, and facilitate a group discussion to brainstorm a set of ground rules and expectations.
4. Ensure the team discusses specific processes for dealing with potential problems. For example, What will happen if a team member doesn't follow the terms of the contract? Encourage thinking about conflict resolution and accountability.
5. Once the ground rules are discussed and agreed-upon, ask them to fill out the Team Contract Templates (p.20) or create their own contract.
6. When the terms of the contract are fully agreed upon, ask each member to sign their name at the bottom of the contract. Display the contract in a room where the team regularly meets or bring it to every team meeting for reference.

TEAM CONTRACT TEMPLATE



**ACTIVITY 3
TOOLKIT**

Project Title:

Team Members:

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

Our Agreement:

We all agree to listen to each other's ideas with respect.

We all agree to

We all agree to

We all agree to

We all agree to

We all agree to

We all agree to

We all agree to

If someone on our team doesn't follow one or more of the above, the team may have a meeting on how to help the person and how to improve the situation. If the person still breaks the rules, we will

.....

Team Members' Signatures:

Date:

STEP 2:

Select An Environmental Issue And Research

IMPORTANT!

Keep track of your work at every step.
It will make project submission a lot easier!

Step 2. Select An Environmental Issue And Research

Once the YEA project team is formed, you need to explore and select what environmental issue to tackle. As environmental issues are broad, you should identify the particular aspect of an environmental issue that will become the goal and focus of your action project. Next take your time and research the chosen issue thoroughly.

YEA Award Categories



Biodiversity



Climate Change



ECO-Art & Design



ECO-Community Development



ECO-Entrepreneurship



ECO-Health & Wellbeing



Energy



Food



Transport



Waste



Water

Where To Start

- Select an environmental issue you care about.
- Start with your personal experience.
- The issue doesn't have to be what you know most about. Research is an important part of the YEA process.
- Think outside the box and be creative!
- Try the suggested brainstorming activities.

Thinking Globally, Acting Locally

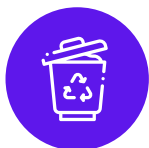
As you select an environmental issue, remember the importance of integrating global insights with local initiatives to drive change. In today's interconnected world, addressing environmental challenges requires a global perspective and local action. By thinking globally, we understand the broader impact of our actions and align with international efforts to create a sustainable future. Acting locally empowers us to make tangible, positive changes within our communities. Take a look at some examples below.



Food

Local: Overuse of pesticides and fertilisers in local farming, Food waste at the household and community level

Global: Deforestation for agricultural expansion, Overfishing leading to depletion of marine species



Waste

Local: Littering, Contamination of local water sources from waste

Global: Microplastics pollution in oceans and ecosystems, E-waste and its impact on developing countries



Biodiversity

Local: Lack of green spaces, Loss of local plants and animals

Global: Loss in global biodiversity, Worldwide ecosystem instability, Deforestation



Transport

Local: Lack of safe bike or walking paths, Traffic congestion, Low air quality, poor public transport options

Global: Global warming, Air pollution



Activities & Toolkits

If your group has trouble selecting an issue, brainstorm environmental issues with your group using Activity 4-6 based on your group's previous knowledge and interest regarding sustainability and the environment.

ACTIVITY 4: RELAY RACE (p. 25)

This activity can be useful for young people who are unsure where to start and are looking for speedy, fun motivation. It encourages quick thinking and collaboration while providing a list of potential issues.

ACTIVITY 5: FINDING STORIES (p. 26)

This activity engages the group in identifying and analysing real-world environmental issues. This can be used to inspire the development of an action project.

ACTIVITY 6: ENVIRONMENTAL FILM SCREENING (p. 27)

If your group is looking for fun motivation or not able to have direct discussions, having a film screening could be a good idea. This activity educates and engages the group on environmental issues through visual media.

Research

Research is an important part of a YEA action project. Once an environmental issue has been decided, conduct research on the causes and impacts of the issue. With a better understanding of the causes and impacts of the issue, you can come up with creative and innovative actions.

Remember, not all sources are made equally! When researching, make sure to use reliable sources to make sure your information is accurate and reliable. The below questions may help in figuring out if a source is reliable:

1. Who/what is the source?
2. What is their motive, or why do they say what they do?
3. Does anything jump out as possibly untrue?
4. How does it compare to another source?



Activities & Toolkits

Support your group in conducting research on their topic using Activity 7-8 and relevant Toolkits.

ACTIVITY 7: CAUSES AND IMPACTS OF AN ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUE (p. 28)

This activity will help your group not only understand their chosen issue more in depth but also develop research and information processing skills.

TOOLKIT: RESEARCH RECORD SHEET (p. 29)

It is important to use credible and reliable sources in research and to record all of the sources used for the project. Provide your group with the Research Record Sheet and explain how to use it.

TOOLKIT: RESEARCH MIND MAP (p. 30)

ACTIVITY 8: LOCAL TO GLOBAL MAKING CONNECTIONS (pp. 31-32)

Highlighting these links can help your group to understand the importance of combatting these issues at a local level.

TOOLKIT: LOCAL & GLOBAL ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUE IMAGE CARDS (p.33)

Print the images and cut them out for the facilitation of Activity 8 (Option 1-3).

TOOLKIT: LINKING WITH THE SDGS WORKSHEET (p. 34)

Print this worksheet for the facilitation of the Activity 8 (Option 3).



ACTIVITY 4: RELAY RACE

Aim

- **Come up with a list of environmental issues while participating in an engaging activity**
- **Brainstorm environmental issues which can be used as a focus for a YEA project**

Time

- **30 minutes**

Preparation

- **Two flipchart sheets with letters of the alphabet listed on them**
- **Markers**
- **String (optional)**

How To Run

1. Write every alphabet letter vertically on two separate sheets of flipchart paper and hang them up at the end of the room.
2. Make a start line using a piece of string.
3. Split your group into two teams. Each team lines up in single file behind the start line.
4. Explain that this is a relay race and each team has to work together to come up with a sustainability and environmental issue that begins each letter of the alphabet.
5. The first person runs to the flipchart and writes a word for 'A', then runs back to hand the marker to the next person, and they move to the back of the line. The second person then must run and write down a word for 'B' and continue until one of the teams has reached 'Z'.
6. Announce the winner when one group reaches 'Z' but allow the game to continue for the others to finish.
7. Gather all team members to examine the winning team's sheet to check if all words are relevant to sustainability and environmental issues. Decide together if the group is indeed the winning team.
8. Once the race is complete, your group will have a list of environmental issues which they can choose from.
9. When selecting an issue to focus on for their action project, ask the following questions to help them narrow down their lists such as;
 - What issue interests, concerns, or affects you most?
 - Which issues are you passionate about?
 - What changes do you want to make?
 - What issues affect your local area?
10. Once young people have selected an issue, they can move onto 'Step 3. Develop an Action Plan' (pp.35-42).

(adopted from the ECO-UNESCO Youth for the Future Handbook, 2010)



ACTIVITY 5: FINDING STORIES

Aim

- **Examine and assess information on environmental issues from a range of media sources**
- **Identify stories that are related to the environment and sustainability**

Time

- **45 minutes**

Preparation

- **Online media resources or newspapers/magazines**

How To Run

1. Ask your group to sit together in their project teams.
2. Give each team a selection of newspapers and magazines (physical or online) and ask them to choose one or two stories which they think relate to environmental issues.
Note: *If the group meets regularly, remind them to bring relevant news stories in advance for future sessions.*
3. Have each team identify the environmental issues related to their chosen story. Encourage them to discuss and explain which story they feel most strongly about.
4. Guide the teams to discuss potential actions to tackle the issues featured in their stories and how developing an action plan will help mitigate for these issues. (See p. 35 - 42). (Step 4, skips to developing of the plan but trying to get them to think ahead on how/what plan would they develop).
5. If the chosen story highlights an aspiring individual/group acting as agents of change, facilitate a deeper discussion with the following questions:
 - What do you think about the story/person?
 - What environmental issue was the person trying to address?
 - What do you think the biggest challenges were?
 - At what level did their project address the issue?
Global/ National/Local?
 - Would you have done it differently?
 - If you wanted to progress this project, what would you do next?



ACTIVITY 6: ENVIRONMENTAL FILM SCREENING

Aim

- Introduce environmental issues
- Gain focus for a YEA project
- Discuss and develop possible actions

Time

- Movie/Documentary length plus 30 minutes mind mapping

Preparation

- Movie/documentary focusing on sustainable and environmental issues
- Prompt questions
- Paper & pens/markers

How To Run

1. Select a film/documentary suitable for your groups age and environmental knowledge level. Pre-screen the film to ensure it is appropriate for the group.

Some Environmental Films worth watching can be found by visiting

<http://topdocumentaryfilms.com/category/environment/>

2. Create and distribute handouts with prompt questions for note-taking during the film. This helps make them focus and think during the film.

For example if you are watching *Before the Flood* (2016) by Fisher Stevens

- What causes of climate change are mentioned in the film?
- What consequences of climate change are mentioned in the film?
- What is China doing to combat climate change?
- Why do some people not believe in climate change?
- Is Leonardo optimistic or pessimistic about the future?

3. After the film, have a discussion with the group based on the pre-screening questions.
 - What were your initial reactions to this film?
 - What issue did the film address?
 - What impacts did the issue have?
 - What did you learn from watching the film?
 - What did you agree or disagree with and why?
 - Do you have any stories or experiences that relate to the film?
 - Why is addressing the issue important?
 - Will you change any aspect of your lifestyle, behaviour, or thinking after seeing the film?
4. Ask the group to create a mind map of potential actions to combat the issue/s highlighted in the film. Encourage everyone to think creatively and write down as many ideas as possible, even if some seem unrealistic. The actions highlighted can be pursued in more detail during 'Step 3. Developing an Action Plan' (See pp. 35-42)



ACTIVITY 7: CAUSES & IMPACTS OF AN ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUE

Aim

- **Understand the causes and impacts of the chosen topic**
- **Learn how to research and process information**
- **Identify the particular/most interesting aspect of the issue that will become the focus of the YEA project**
- **Generate creative actions**

Time

- **45 minutes or longer**

Preparation

- **Computers/tablets with internet access**

How To Run

1. Have computers ready for your group to research the issue of their choice. Use the below prompts for their chosen issue:
 - What are the causes of the issue?
 - What are the impacts of the issue on the local and global level?
 - Are there any interesting facts related to the issue?
2. Give enough time to explore the issue and ask them to find any interesting facts, connections, and aspects of the issue, which can establish the goal of the project. The more specific the goal is, the easier it becomes to run a project.
3. Ensure they record all their research details in the 'Research Record Sheet' (p. 29).
4. After gathering the needed information, ask the group to create a Research Mind Map (p. 30) on the flipchart provided.
5. Invite them to come up with as many creative actions as possible and expand the Research Mind Map on the flipchart. Make sure to bring the flipchart for the next 'Developing an Action Plan' step (pp. 35-42).

RESEARCH RECORD SHEET



It is important to use credible and reliable sources in research and to record all of the sources used for the project using this 'Research Record Sheet'.

FOR BOOKS, JOURNAL ARTICLES, NEWSPAPER ARTICLES & PRINT MAGAZINES

Resource Type	Title	Author Name	Year Published	Publisher
Book	Not the End of the World: How We Can Be the First Generation to Build a Sustainable Planet	Hannah Ritchie	2024	Little, Brown Spark

FOR WEBSITES, BLOGS & ONLINE ARTICLES

Resource Type	Title	Author Name	Date Published	Link	Search Date
Online Article	How animals are changing to cope with stronger heatwaves	Jonathan Goldenberg	10/07/2024	https://theconversation.com/how-animals-are-changing-to-cope-with-stronger-heatwaves-231116	10/07/2024

RESEARCH MIND MAP



ACTIVITY 7 TOOLKIT

WHAT IS YOUR ENVIROMENTAL ISSUE?

**WHAT ARE THE CAUSES
OF THE ISSUE?**

**WHAT ARE THE IMPACTS OF THE
ISSUE, LOCALLY AND GLOBALLY?**

**ARE THERE ANY INTERESTING FACTS, CONNECTIONS
OR ASPECTS OF THE ISSUE?**

WHAT ACTIONS WILL YOU TAKE TO SOLVE THE ISSUE



ACTIVITY 8: LOCAL TO GLOBAL MAKING CONNECTIONS

Aim

- Explore how local environmental issues are linked with global sustainability and environmental issues
- Identify what local actions can be taken to combat global environmental issues
- Connect and take action on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

Time

- 45 minutes

Preparation

- A4 sheets of paper

How To Run

OPTION 1: FIND OUT WHICH LOCAL ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES ARE LINKED WITH GLOBAL SUSTAINABILITY AND ENVIRONMENTAL PROBLEMS

1. Prepare two sets of image cards representing local environmental issues and global issues respectively. Alternatively, you can brainstorm with your group to come up with as many local and global environmental issues as possible and write each issue on A4 paper. Also prepare 17 individual icon cards showing the SDGs (available at <http://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/news/communications-material/>).
2. On the floor, spread the set of local issues image cards on the left and the global issues cards in a separate group on the right.
3. Ask your group to stand around the image cards and discuss what global or local issue each card represents. Also ask them if there are any more issues that need to be added. If there are, create cards instantly using A4 paper.
4. Working in pairs: ask the participants to find links between the local and global issues. Each pair can pick one local issue and one global issue card that are linked and explains how they are connected to the group. For example:

Local	Global
• High number of plastic bottles consumed/not recycled in the local area • More frequent local floods • Local beef farming	• The Great Pacific plastic garbage patch • Global climate change • Global Warming

Alternatively, ask the pairs to select one random image of a local and global issue and force a connection between the two images.

5. As environmental issues are broad, guide your group to identify specific aspects of environmental issues that they can use to focus on throughout their action project.

OPTION 2: THINK GLOBALLY AND ACT LOCALLY. COMBAT GLOBAL ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES BY TAKING ACTION LOCALLY

1. Ask your group to select three image cards of global environmental issues.
2. Place the three image cards they have selected at three different corners of the room along with a sheet of flipchart paper each.
3. Divide your group into three smaller groups. Ask Group 1 to stand around Issue 1, Group 2 with Issue 2, and Group 3 with Issue 3.
4. Give each group 5 minutes to brainstorm ideas about what can be done at a local level to solve the issue. When the time is up, Group 1 needs to move to Issue 2, Group 2 to Issue 3 and Group 3 to Issue 1. One person from each group has to stay as a rapporteur and give an update on what has been discussed to the new group.
5. The new group needs to have a look at what has already been written by the other group and add more ideas to the list. After 5 minutes, the groups do the same one more time.
6. When finished, ask each rapporteur to summarise the suggested local actions for each global environmental issue.
7. After this, ask your group to discuss which global issue to tackle and what actions to take as part of their YEA project.

OPTION 3: CONNECT ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES WITH THE SDGS

1. Spread all the environmental issue image cards on the floor.
Create 2 copies of each image
2. Ask your group to pick one image from the floor.
3. Hand out the Linking with the SDGs worksheet (p. 34) and ask them to fill out the Worksheet based on the image they have selected. Allow about 5-10 minutes for this.
4. Once completed, ask them to find the other person who has the same image and go through each other's Worksheet and share ideas and opinions.
5. Each pair needs to report back to the whole group about what they have come up with.



LOCAL & GLOBAL ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUE IMAGE CARDS



ACTIVITY 8 TOOLKIT

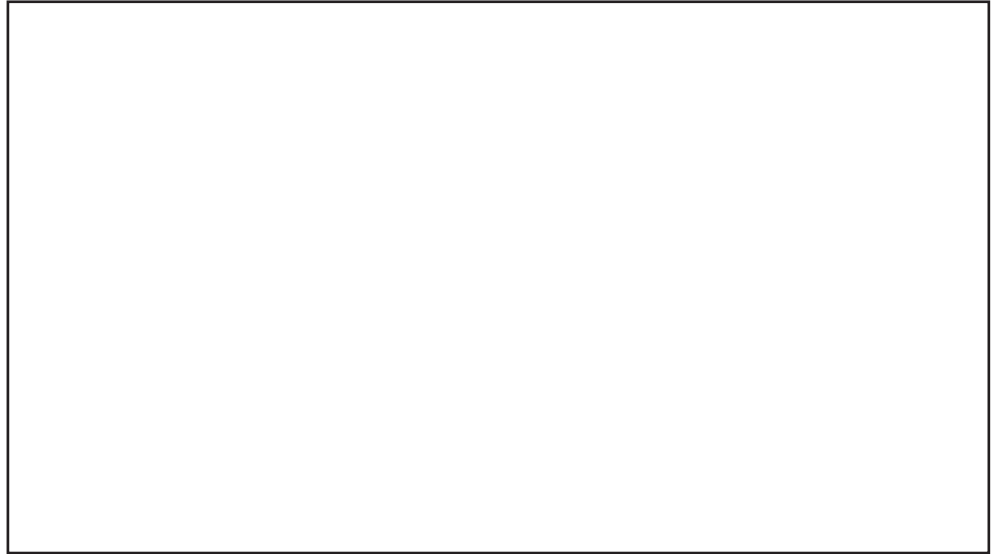


(Source: National Geographic)



LINKING WITH THE SDGS WORKSHEET

1: Choose an image.



**2. What feelings does this image evoke in you?
Or what does it make you think of?**

**3. Choose three of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)
that you think are in some way related to this photo. Think about why.**

SDG

SDG

SDG

**4. How do you think this problem could be addressed at
individual/local/global levels?**

.....

.....

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STEP 3:

Develop An Action Plan

IMPORTANT!

Keep track of your work at every step.
It will make project submission a lot easier!

Step 3. Develop An Action Plan

Once the environmental issue of choice has been explored, you need to develop an action plan. An action plan is a detailed plan outlining actions needed to achieve particular goals. In order to measure your success at the end of your project, you must set clear goals and targets. Action planning will help you focus your ideas and run your project smoothly. However, it is not set in stone and can be reviewed and adjusted as needs be.

Here are some questions to consider in developing an action plan.

- **Overview:** What is your project about?
- **Specific Goals:** Why are you doing this project? What do you want to achieve?
- **Audience:** Who is your target audience?
- **Actions:** What actions are you taking to achieve your goals?
- **Person Responsible:** Who is responsible for what tasks?
- **Timeline:** When each task needs to be completed by?
What is your anticipated completion date for each action?
- **Resources:** What support/resources do you need?

Good YEA Action Projects

- Youth-led, action-based, and environmental awareness-raising
- Set 1-3 clear and realistic goals that are broad enough to maintain interest but also specific enough to maintain focus
- Achievable considering timeframe, scale, budget etc.
- Sustainable and long-term
- Creative and innovative
- Reach a broad audience

Choosing an Action

When choosing an action, ensure it is a solution to your chosen environmental issue. Here are some ideas:

- | | | |
|--|---|--|
| ☐ Be part of existing environmental campaigns/ programmes | ☐ Hold an exhibition | ☐ Organise a fundraising/ awareness-raising event |
| ☐ Conduct a survey | ☐ Interview (radio, TV, newspaper) | ☐ Organise a school/ community fair |
| ☐ Create an environmental activism campaign | ☐ Invite guest speakers | ☐ Role Play |
| ☐ Create and sign a petition | ☐ Join marches and rallies | ☐ Run a poster competition |
| ☐ Create a website/blog | ☐ Lobby | ☐ Run a social media campaign |
| ☐ Create a drama | ☐ Make a video diary | ☐ Write a book |
| ☐ Deliver a presentation to various types of audience | ☐ Make a stop motion video | ☐ Write a letter to politicians and experts |
| ☐ Develop a peer education workshop on environmental issues | ☐ Organise a challenge | ☐ Write a song/rap |
| | ☐ Organise a flash mob | ☐ Write and publish an article |

Activities & Toolkits

Facilitate Activity 9 and/or Activity 10 to help your group to come up with creative ideas and actions insert how they will achieve the team goals. Following the action brainstorming, your group should develop an action plan (Activity 11). Make sure all their ideas and actions are recorded.

ACTIVITY 9: THE IMPOSSIBLE ACTION (p. 38)

Creativity is a critical part of environmental problem solving. This activity will help stimulate creative thinking for your group to come up with new ideas, approaches and unconventional ways of looking at a problem before deciding on their real action project.

ACTIVITY 10: RAPID ACTION BRAINSTORMING (p. 39)

The purpose of this activity is to produce as many ideas as possible in a short period of time and to encourage thinking outside the box and coming up with innovative solutions to complex environmental issues.

ACTIVITY 11: ACTION PLAN MIND MAP (pp. 40-41)

When planning, it is important to consider various elements of an action project such as project goals, person responsible, etc. This mind map activity will help your group brainstorm thoughts organically and connect these thoughts together. It will also help visually structure their ideas so makes it easy to understand and follow.

TOOLKIT: ACTION PROJECT PLANNING WORKSHEET (p. 42)

Your group may find the Action Project Planning Worksheet useful to help arrange and structure their ideas and thoughts from the Action Plan Mind Mapping activity (pp. 40-41).





ACTIVITY 9: THE IMPOSSIBLE ACTION

Aim

- **Stimulate creative thinking before deciding on an action project**
- **Come up with as many project ideas as possible without worrying how silly, strange or unrealistic the actions might seem**

Time

- **30 minutes**

Preparation

- **Post-it notes**
- **Pens**

How To Run

1. Give everyone a post-it note.
2. Ask your group to choose an environmental issue to solve.
3. Ask the group members to write down funny/impossible actions or ideas to solve the environmental issue. The funnier the better!
4. Ask them to stick their post-it notes on the wall and then read out all the impossible actions suggested.
5. Select one idea. Their challenge will be to adapt the impossible action to make it possible for the team to do.
6. The winning idea is the one that remains impossible to adapt!



ACTIVITY 10. RAPID ACTION BRAINSTORMING

Aim

- **Generate creative new ideas and approaches**
- **Come up with as many project ideas as possible without worrying about how good they are**
- **Practice rapid ideation in designing solutions to environmental issues**

Time

- **15 minutes**

Preparation

- **Flipchart paper**
- **Markers**
- **Post-it notes**
- **Research mind map**

How To Run

1. Ask your group to decide 1-3 specific and realistic goals to tackle the environmental issue they have selected and researched.
2. Provide flipchart paper and markers and ask them to write the 1-3 goals in the middle of the flipchart paper leaving plenty of space around each goal.
3. Challenge everyone to come up with as many solutions to each goal as they can within 2-5 minutes. Emphasise that they should not worry about how good, realistic, or silly the ideas might seem, and should write all of them down on post-it notes.
4. When the time is up, ask everyone to stop writing and to quickly compare their list with each other's.
5. Ask everyone to attach their post-it notes to the flipchart paper under the relevant goal. Give them 5 more minutes to look over what has been written down and reflect on the variety of ideas.
6. Now that they have explored different solutions, its time to decide on the solutions they want to focus on for their action project. Make sure its something they are passionate about and are relevant to their chosen issue.



ACTIVITY 11: ACTION PLAN MIND MAP

Aim

- **Choose actions that can be taken for a project**
- **Learn how to develop a structured project outline**
- **Develop project planning skills**

Time

- **45 minutes**

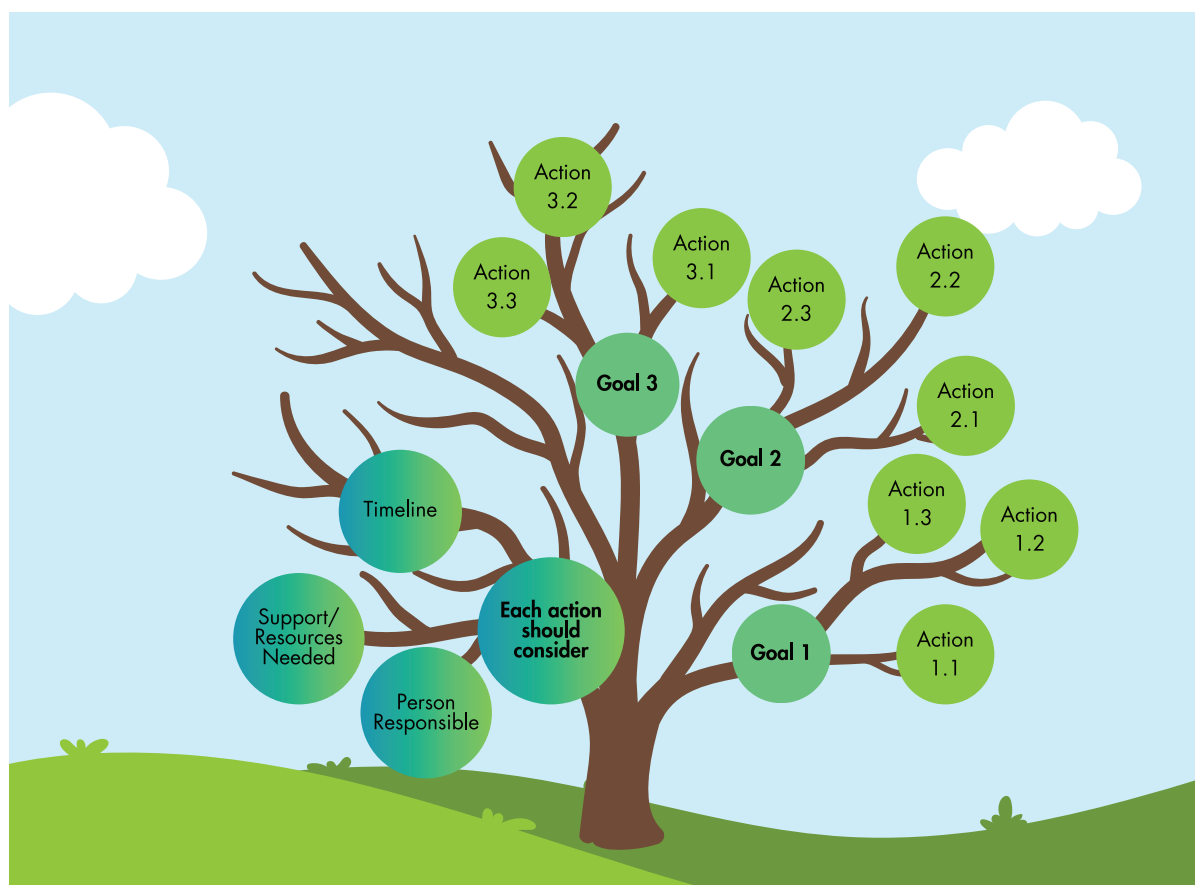
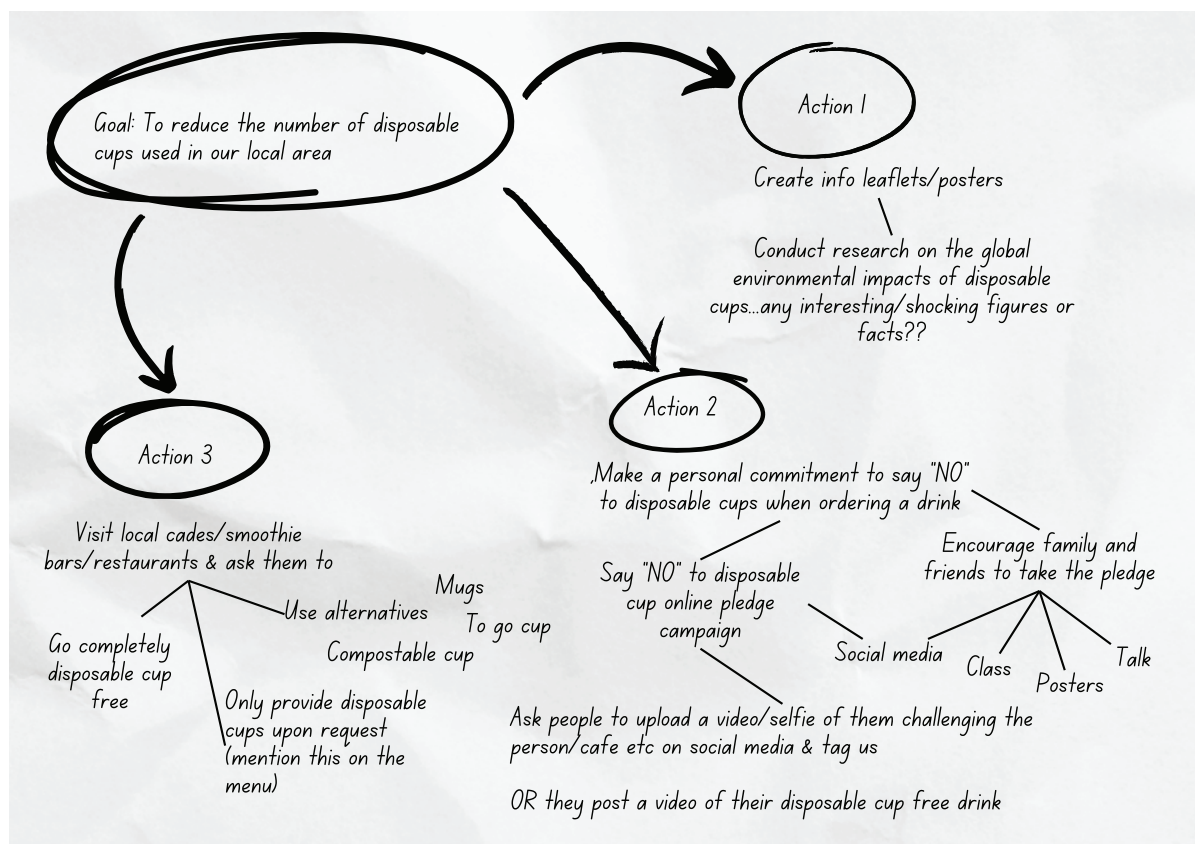
Preparation

- **Action Project Planning Worksheet (p. 41),**
- **Flipchart**
- **Paper, markers**

How To Run

1. Provide your group with flipchart paper to create an Action Plan Mind Map (p. 41) outlining actions needed to achieve their project goals. This will help them focus their ideas and run their project smoothly.
2. Ask the group to write on the paper 1-3 specific and realistic goals for their project (i.e. what do you hope to achieve by carrying out this project?).
3. Have the group think of a couple of actions needed to achieve each goal. For each action they can determine: who the target audience is, how each action will be carried out, who is responsible for each task, what support/resources will be needed, a timeline for each step to ensure the team stays on track.
4. After completing the Action Plan Mind Map, ask them to evaluate their plan by considering the following questions:
 - Will it make an interesting project?
 - How effective will the actions be?
 - Is the project achievable?
 - Will the project be environmentally friendly at all stages?
 - What are some issues the team could potentially face?
5. Recommend using the Action Project Planning Worksheet (p. 42) to create a final action plan. This should be brought to every team meeting for regular review and updates, ensuring it continues to reflect the current situation and the team's objectives.

SAMPLE ACTION PLAN MIND MAP



(Source: www.vecteezy.com)

ACTION PROJECT PLANNING WORKSHEET



ACTIVITY 11 TOOLKIT

Project Title	What is the project title?
Overview	What is your project about?
Audience	Who is your target audience?
Specific Goals	What do you want to achieve?
Actions	What actions are you taking to achieve your goals?
Person Responsible	Who is responsible for which tasks?
Resources	What support/resources do you need?
Timeline	When does each task need to be completed by?
Assess Progress	Are you on schedule? If yes, keep it up! If no, what are the challenges? How will you resolve the challenges? If they can't be resolved, are there any alternatives?

Note to YEA Mentors:

Please feel free to create your own worksheet based on the information below.

STEP 4:

Take Action

IMPORTANT!

Keep track of your work at every step.
It will make project submission a lot easier!

Step 4. Take Action

You are now ready to implement your action plan! Unlike traditional projects, action projects emphasize taking tangible steps to address an environmental issue directly. This active approach is a key component of the YEA programme. Through these actions, you can showcase your learning and gain the confidence to undertake action in the future.

Action Recording

Make sure you keep a record of the work carried out at every stage of the process. It is much easier for you to do this continually throughout the project rather than trying to remember all the steps after you have finished.

Regular Team Meetings

Having regular team meetings will help monitor project progress to ensure the project is following the plan and everyone is on track with their responsibilities. It will also help build supportive relationships between team members and help them learn how to resolve problems together. It is a good idea to write meeting minutes. You can use a printed copy of Team Meeting Minute Template (p. 45) or create your own. Make sure that your team's 'Resource Manager' keeps them together and brings them to the next meeting.

Keeping Up The Motivation

Staying motivated can be tricky along your journey. Perhaps things don't go to plan, or you come across an unexpected challenge. Throughout the journey remember why you started in the first place and think about the successes you have had with your team! Make sure to celebrate any milestones and try to see any challenges as opportunities for learning.



Activities & Toolkits

With this step, your main role as a mentor is to motivate and encourage your group to take action based on their action plan. You may need to check regularly how they are getting on and to see if they need extra support.

ACTIVITY 12: TEAM MEETING MINUTES (p. 45)

Recommend that your group writes minutes for every meeting. This structured approach will help in organising meetings efficiently, ensuring that all team members are engaged and aware of their responsibilities.

TOOLKIT: TEAM MEETING MINUTES TEMPLATE (p. 46)





ACTIVITY 12: TEAM MEETING MINUTES

Aim

- **Know how to use team meeting minutes**
- **Understand that having regular meetings will help a team communicate, keep a project on track and also help make sure everyone in the team is playing an equal part**

Time

- **45 minutes**

Preparation

- **Team Meeting Minutes**
- **Template (p. 46)**
- **Team Contract (pp. 19-20)**
- **Pens**

How To Run

1. Before the meeting, ask your group to reflect on the following questions:
 - Why they are meeting
 - What do they hope to achieve from the meeting?
2. Provide a copy of the Meeting Minutes Template (p.46) to the recorder of the group and explain how to use them:
 - **Note Taker** – Assign this role to someone in the team who has good IT skills or handwriting. This person should bring the last team meeting worksheet.
 - **Date of Meeting** – Record the date of the meeting. Encourage regular meetings (e.g. weekly, biweekly, monthly)
 - **Time Started** – Note the start time of the meeting.
 - **Time Finished** – Note the end time of the meeting.
 - **Location** – Specify where the meeting takes place.
 - **Attendees** – List all the people who attended the meeting.
 - **Non-attendees** - List those who were absent. Emphasize the importance of full attendance.
 - **Update on Action Items from Previous Meeting** – Review progress on tasks assigned in the last meeting and record any updates. Discuss if tasks are on track, identify any challenges, and plan how to address them.
 - **New Action Items** – Discuss and assign new tasks to be completed by the next meeting and identify responsible individuals and set deadlines.
 - **Proposed Date of Next Meeting** – Set a date for the next meeting.
 - **Any Other Business (AOB)** – Note any additional items that need discussion.
3. Ask the group to lead a team meeting by themselves using the Team Meeting Minute Template (p. 46). Make sure everyone has a chance to contribute.

TEAM MEETING MINUTES TEMPLATE



NOTE TAKER:	
DATE OF MEETING:	
TIME STARTED:	
TIME FINISHED:	
LOCATION:	
ATTENDEES:	
NON-ATTENDEES:	

ACTION ITEM DISCUSSED	RESPONSIBLE	DUE DATE	ACTION UPDATE

Is everything on track? If no, what are the challenges? How will you resolve them?

.....

.....

NEW ACTION ITEM	RESPONSIBLE	DUE DATE

Proposed Date of Next Meeting:	AOB
--------------------------------	-----

STEP 5:

Raise

Awareness

IMPORTANT!

Keep track of your work at every step.
It will make project submission a lot easier!

Step 5. Raise Awareness

Raising awareness is about informing and educating others to inspire change. During and after taking action, it is crucial to raise awareness about your project. Raising awareness is essential for informing and educating people about the issue, influencing attitudes, behaviours and beliefs, and supporting the achievement of your project goals. Raising awareness is an essential ongoing element throughout the life of the YEA project.

Whether you are discussing the issue with your friends and family, running a social media campaign, organising a public event, or lobbying decision-makers, it is important to think about how to get people to listen to you and increase the reach of your message.

What To Consider

When raising awareness about your issue, it is important to consider the below:

- Understand your audience and target them.
- Tell people about your project and its goals – Keep it brief and be clear!
- Give people information about the selected environmental issue.
- Encourage people to spread the word and also take action.
- Partner with other interested individuals/groups/organisations.

Awareness Raising Ideas

As part of YEA, we love seeing groups raise awareness not only in their organisation, but also within their wider community and with external organisations. Here are some ideas:

Within your school/youth group etc:

- Display posters around the building, workshops
- Facilitate a workshop
- Simply talk to people in your organisation

Within your wider community:

- Create a social media campaign about the issue
- Contacting radio stations and papers to share information about your issue
- Attend a community fair/event or organise your own
- Display information leaflets in local shops and libraries

With external organisations:

- Talk to local businesses to support your cause
- Meet with your local TDs/local county council's Environmental Awareness Officer
- Collaborate with local environmental nonprofits or advocacy groups to amplify your message
- Engage with local universities or research institutions

Peer Education As An Effective Behaviour Change Strategy

Peer education is one of effective ways of raising awareness about your project because people are more likely to hear messages, and thus to change their attitudes and behaviours, if they believe the messenger is similar to them and shares the same concerns.

After the completion of your YEA project, take part in ECO-UNESCO's Youth for Sustainable Development Peer Education Programme! Through a training process including various workshops, action project and facilitation practice, you will be empowered to become a confident and skilled 'peer educator' who works as a powerful agent for Sustainable Development among your peers and in your community. For more information, see <http://ecounesco.ie/programmes/youth-for-sustainable-development>.

Develop Your Pitch:

Emotion - Hope - Action

When pitching your project and reaching out to engage people in your action, consider following the next three steps.

- 1. Emotion:** First start with emotion. Ask questions that highlight the problem in order to evoke a shared feeling about the problem.
- 2. Hope:** Then evoke hope. You want people to believe that change is possible. Turn their concern about the problem into a solution.
- 3. Action:** Finally make sure that people know they can make a difference by taking action.

Activities & Toolkits

These toolkits will support you in raising awareness about your project through various means. This is a great starting point in coming up with ideas on spreading your message.

TOOLKIT: PRESS RELEASE (pp. 50-51)

TOOLKIT: SOCIAL MEDIA CAMPAIGN (p. 52)

TOOLKIT: EVENT ORGANISATION (p. 53)

TOOLKIT: LOBBYING (pp. 54-55)



PRESS RELEASE WRITING TIPS



TOOLKIT

A press release is a written communication targeting members of the media for announcing something newsworthy. It can be an effective way for your local paper, TV or radio station to hear about your project and for you to gain publicity from a wider audience. Remember that when your story is interesting and different, it is more likely to be published!

Top Tips

1. **Headline**

Your headline is the first thing that people will read. Create a catchy headline to grab the reader's attention and make them want to learn more about your project! We recommend that you read your headline again after finishing your whole story to check if it is still a newsworthy title.

2. **Opening Sentence**

Journalists are flooded with stories to read every day so they may only read the first paragraph and scan the rest. So get right to the point in the first paragraph (1-2 sentences) and keep it short and clear.

3. **Body**

- Using the five 'W's (what, when, where, who and why), write the essence of your project - What is the story? Why does it matter?
- Mention early on that you are doing the project as part of the ECO-UNESCO Young Environmentalist Awards.
- Keep it short. Limit your press release to one page.
- Include interesting/significant figures and quotations to give your press release a human touch.
- A photo can grab people's attention better than text on its own. Attach the photo of your group and your project work to your press release with photo caption. Make sure the image is a close-up shot in high resolution.

4. **Contact Information**

Don't forget to include your contact information (e.g. name, email, and phone number) on the bottom of your press release so journalists can follow up with you. Also provide access to more information about your project such as links to your project website, social media and blog.



Sample Press Release

A group of young people involved with ECOUNESCO's Youth for Sustainable Development programme have been celebrating the announcement that you can now use the Leap Card to use the bike share service 'Dublin Bikes', an ambitious idea that they brought to politicians in 2015.

Group members are delighted to learn that their two-year project which aimed to open the scheme to young people has finally come to fruition. Their project, entitled 'A Leap 2 the Future', began in 2014 as an entry to the ECO-UNESCO Young Environmentalist Awards programme.

The group wanted to tackle the issue of climate change on a local level by looking at ways of reducing emissions from transport in Dublin City Centre. [...] The group came up with the idea of linking the Leap Card, which is widely used by both students and the majority of transport users in the Dublin area, to the hugely successful bike share scheme in order to make the scheme accessible to more people. As well as creating a social media campaign to raise awareness of the issue, they met with their local TDs and Councillors; organising meetings with several officials in the following months.

One of the officials the group met with was Sinn Féin Councillor Ray McHugh, whom after a meeting in June 2015 commented:

"The bike scheme is a great success but needs to be expanded, young people need to be catered for and the student proposals I feel would be a realistic approach to make the scheme available to all our citizens both young and old, on an whole island basis and this would also be of great benefit to health of our people and the environment."

He added, *"The students were very professional with the presentation and the Q and A, and are a great credit to the school and their parents."*

A group member commented on the project: *"We looked at the most problematic areas in the city and the incredible congestion in and around Dublin seemed like a good place to start. The Dublin Bikes scheme seemed heavily underutilised by young people as they don't have credit cards to use the service. It is now much more accessible, which will mean fewer cars in the city and more sustainable transport being used. This will lower CO2 emissions in the city, lowering Dublin's carbon footprint."*

The group were rewarded for their exceptional efforts at the prestigious ECO-UNESCO Young Environmentalist Awards Final in both 2015 and in 2016, winning the Senior Transport in 2015 and the Further Growth Award 2016.

Ends

For further information, please contact:

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ECO-UNESCO Communication Officer
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Notes to Editors

About the ECO-UNESCO Young Environmentalist Awards:

ECO-UNESCO's Young Environmentalist Awards (YEA) is an all-Ireland environmental awards programme that recognises and rewards young people who raise environmental awareness and improve the environment. Since 1999, over 40,000 young people have taken part in the programme and reached countless others with awareness-raising campaigns in schools and communities throughout Ireland. The programme aims to empower young people to become better citizens, build awareness of environmental issues and promote simple lifestyle changes to improve the environment.

For further information visit: www.ecounesco.ie

SOCIAL MEDIA CAMPAIGN



ACTIVITY 13 TOOLKIT

Social media can be a great communication tool for raising awareness about your project with a larger audience. Think about #BlackLivesMatter campaign. It started as a 140 word story shared on Twitter and has now become a global movement for social justice and racial equality. Your campaign could be the next one!

Top Tips For Running A Successful Awareness-Raising Social Media Campaign

1. **Select social media channels carefully.**

Don't create a profile on every social media platform such as Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube. Choose one or two -whichever suits your needs best in terms of use and audience.

2. **Share stories.**

Share your own story. Why did you become interested in the topic? How does it impact you? What motivates you to do this? Then encourage others who are impacted by the cause to share their stories too. By sharing sincere stories, natural conversations will occur and when people feel connected they are more likely to support your project.

3. **Keep it fun.**

Post funny and interesting memes with captions about your project or use engaging photos and videos that show the work you are doing to make a positive change. Ask your followers to share your posts. Your message will reach more people and bring more attention and support to your cause.

4. **Engage with people.**

Engage with the people who make the effort to 'like' and 'comment' on your social media posts by thanking them, answering their questions and asking them to spread the word and also to take action.

5. **Get influencers on board.**

Find well-known influencers (e.g. celebrities, athletes, activists, politicians, decision makers, local TV or radio personalities, etc.) who are interested in the same cause. Ask them to share the story of your project. It will help you increase your audience significantly.

6. **And finally**

Remember, you won't win your issue because of social media alone, but you can't win without it.

We love to see your photos, videos and news articles highlighting your project work. Tag us to keep us informed on how you are getting on with your project and what actions you have taken. We will also keep you updated with the latest YEA news through social media and share your success with ECO-UNESCO friends and followers.



ECO-UNESCO



@ecounesco @youngenvironmentalistawards



ecounesco



ECO-UNESCO

Use the YEA hashtags **#YEA, #ECO-UNESCO**

EVENT ORGANISATION



ACTIVITY 14 TOOLKIT

Events are a great way to create awareness and get others involved in your cause. They include School/Community Fairs, Exhibitions, Concerts, Film Screening, Sports Challenge Day, Drawing/Poster Competition, or a Talk.

1. Before the Event

- ☐ Decide whether your team will hold an event or attend an event organised by someone else.
- ☐ Ask for permission from your YEA Project Mentor to hold an event or to attend another event.
- ☐ Set your objectives – what do you want to achieve through this event and why?
- ☐ Determine your target audience and guest list.
- ☐ Identify a suitable venue.
- ☐ Set a date and time.
- ☐ Identify and confirm your guest speakers.
- ☐ Estimate a budget considering venue hire, catering, AV equipment hire, transport, etc.
- ☐ Decide on the communication channel with your audience.
- ☐ Think about ways to encourage people to come to the event (e.g. free food, drinks and small gifts)
- ☐ Create a detailed event agenda with clear deadlines and responsibility assignment.
- ☐ Prepare promotional materials (e.g. signs, banners, information leaflets and posters) to display and hand out at the event and other basic materials (e.g. name badges, registration forms, etc.)
- ☐ Promote the event by telling people, using notice boards/posters/social media, and contacting local press/radio.

2. On the Day

- ☐ Check the setup of the venue (e.g. signage, furniture, AV equipment, etc.)
- ☐ Ensure everyone is doing their job in the right place at the right time.
- ☐ Take photos and/or make a video.
- ☐ Update social media to communicate with more people about the event and get them to forward the message to other people.
- ☐ Have fun!

3. After the Event

Thank everyone who has been involved.

- ☐ Take follow-up actions (e.g. mailings, meetings, organising further events)
- ☐ Evaluate the event to see if the objectives you set beforehand have been achieved.





Lobbying

As young people you can guide and influence government decisions on a particular issue of interest to you by lobbying policy makers, politicians and legislators. These people are elected to represent your voice and make informed decisions that benefit everyone.

You can also contact other representatives and leaders such as school principals, youth leaders, local business groups, and anyone with a decision making capacity connected with your issue.

Remember that you are all future voters! You can shape your own sustainable future by sharing your unique insights, and opinions about the issues that matter to you. You can influence political decisions!

Tips For A Face-To-Face Meeting With Decision-Makers

Before the Meeting

- Decide who the best decision makers are to support your cause.
- Call or email their offices and ask for an appointment.
- Make sure you know what you want them to do and prepare 1-3 key messages that are clear, concise and specific.

At the Meeting

- Bring any supporting materials (e.g. research, PowerPoint slides, storyboard, portfolios, petitions, etc.)
- Relax and present your work with confidence. Make the case for your cause and ask if they have any questions.
- When the time is up, thank them for their time and consideration.

After the Meeting

- Within a few days after the meeting, send them an email or letter thanking them again and follow up with a summary of what was discussed.
- Post the meeting experience on social media and tag them to reach their wider audience!

Alternative Lobbying Ideas

- Write a letter to decision-makers describing what you want them to do.
- Follow decision makers' official social media accounts. Share their posts that are relevant to your project work, leave comments and invite them to support what you do. For example, create a tweet to raise awareness about the environmental issue you are working on and tag decision makers to the post or ask them to like and retweet.
- Petitions can be a useful lobbying tool. However, you will need a lot of signatures to have any real effect. There are a range of online petition sites available. Read some useful tips on how to start an online petition and run it successfully at <https://guide.change.org>.

YEA Lobbying Project Examples

ECO-Pirates, Kill O' The Grange National School, Dublin

"We, Eco-Pirates, campaigned about the local and global plastic crisis. We focused on single use plastic bottles and the impact they have on the environment. We decided to lobby our Local Government to implement a Bottle Deposit Scheme in Ireland. This scheme has been proven to reduce plastic in landfill and it reduces the damage to our ecosystems and wildlife. We carried out a petition and received 500 support signatures for the bill. We presented the petition to Cathaoirleach Cllr Cormac Devlin who sent it to Minister Naughten. We also performed a play about the bottle bill; showcased our project at the school fair; ran a bottle drive in school collecting 1,659 bottles over 3 lunch times."

If Your Dog Poops You Scoop, Presentation Secondary School, Kerry

"We were concerned about the environmental impact dog waste was having on Tralee. We were particularly concerned about the lack of bins available in the town and the impacts it can have on our health and the environment. We conducted a local survey of 250 people and did a survey of how much waste was around the town. In response to this, we held an awareness day giving out stickers, leaflets and dog waste bags. We also met the Kerry Local Council on the issue and have built contacts to lobby for more bins and signs. We also advertised through local media and social media. Moreover, we are now involved with educating national school children about the importance of scooping their dogs' poop."

USEFUL CONTACTS

Find Your TDs

www.contactyourtd.ie

Department of Communications,
Climate Action and Environment

www.dccae.gov.ie

Green Party Ireland

www.greenparty.ie/people

Local Authorities

[www.gov.ie/en/publication/
942f74-local-authorities/](http://www.gov.ie/en/publication/942f74-local-authorities/)

STEP 6:

Reflect

IMPORTANT!

Keep track of your work at every step.
It will make project submission a lot easier!

STEP 6: Reflect

At the end of your project, reflection is essential to determine whether your project has achieved its goals and to see if there are any lessons to be learnt. Think critically and honestly about your and your team's accomplishments and the impacts of your project. The lessons learnt from this will help you to be better prepared for the next action!

You may benefit from reading over your project planning worksheet, meeting minutes and project portfolio to help recap on your overall project.

Project Reflection

Project reflection is important after finishing an environmental project because it helps us see what went well and what could be improved. We can check if we achieved our goals and understand how our project affected the people we wanted to reach. By looking at what worked and what didn't, we can learn lessons for next time.

Individual Reflection

Reflecting individually on your environmental action project is also important. It helps you understand what you learned about the environment and how you've grown. You can think about the skills you've improved, like teamwork and problem-solving. Consider what you enjoyed most and found challenging about the project. Has it changed how you think or act about environmental issues? Reflecting helps you see the impact of your actions and how you can keep making a difference.



Activities & Toolkits

TOOLKIT: PROJECT REFLECTION FORM (p. 58)

This is a good exercise for the team to reflect how the project went.

TOOLKIT: INDIVIDUAL SELF-REFLECTION FORM (pp. 59-60)

This form can be filled out by every team member to think about how the project went for them and what they learnt.

Further Growth Award

Your project doesn't have to end here! Environmental action is a continuous effort, and it could be worthwhile to consider how your project can grow and develop further. ECO-UNESCO strongly encourages teams to enter the Further Growth Award, which recognises action projects that build upon previous YEA initiatives. Discuss with your team how your project could be continued into the next year, identify opportunities for improvement, and brainstorm new ideas to expand its impact.



PROJECT REFLECTION FORM

1. DID YOUR PROJECT ACHIEVE ITS GOALS?

2. WHAT IMPACTS DID YOUR PROJECT HAVE ON YOUR TARGET AUDIENCE?

**3. WHAT WORKED WELL AND WHAT DIDN'T WORK?
ARE THERE ANY LESSONS TO BE LEARNT?**

4. WHAT ARE YOUR TEAM'S NEXT STEPS?

INDIVIDUAL SELF-REFLECTION FORM



ACTIVITY 13 TOOLKIT

Your Name:

Your Role & Tasks in the Team:

1. Please reflect on what you knew before starting the YEA project and what you have learned as a result of taking part in the YEA. Rate this on the scale of 0-5 in the before and after columns of each box (0 = none, 3= some, 5 = maximum)

Before Score (0-5)	Assessment	After Score (0-5)
	Knowledge	
	I know how to work as part of a team to achieve the team's goals.	
	I understand the causes and impacts of the chosen environmental issue.	
	I understand the local to global link of the chosen environmental issue.	
	I know what the UN Sustainable Development Goals are.	
	I know how to develop an environmental action plan.	
	I know various ways of taking action and raising awareness.	
	Skills	
	My teamwork skills	
	My critical thinking & research skills	
	My action skills	
	My project management skills	
	My communication skills	
	Values & Attitudes	
	I am confident in carrying out an environmental action project.	
	I feel motivated to get other people involved in taking action on environmental issues.	
	I feel empowered to take action on environmental and sustainability issues and make a positive change!	

2. What did you learn about the chosen environmental issue by carrying out your project?

3. What was the most enjoyable/challenging part of your project?

4. What skills did you newly develop or improve?

5. Have any of your behaviours/attitudes/opinions changed as a result of the project? If so, how?

YEA Project Submission Guidelines

Submission Process

Registered groups submit their YEA project via their online submission form by the given deadline, usually in February. The submission form follows the 6-Steps-to-Success Framework.

Judging Criteria

Success starts with knowing what matters most! The Judging Criteria are based on the 6-Steps-to-Success Framework, with each step carrying a different weight. Most marks are allocated to Steps 3, 4, and 5. There are also subcriteria to help guide your project.

For all the details, visit ecounesco.ie/young-environmentalist-awards/submit-project/.

Judges' Tips

1. Give Yourself Time: Start early and pace yourself—good things take time!
2. Review Thoroughly: Towards the end before submitting, do a final check to make sure everything is in order.
3. Enhance Your Submission: Feel free to include images, PowerPoints, or any creative extras to bring your idea to life and wow the judges.
4. Show Your Enthusiasm: Let your passion shine through! Share your excitement and hard work—it's infectious and will make your project stand out.



About ECO-UNESCO

ECO-UNESCO is Ireland's environmental education and youth organisation affiliated to the World Federation of UNESCO Clubs, Centres and Associations (WFUCA).

ECO-UNESCO's aims are:

- to raise environmental awareness, understanding and knowledge of the environment among young people
- to promote the protection and conservation of the environment
- to promote the personal development of young people through practical environmental projects and activities
- to promote the ideals of UNESCO

ECO-UNESCO provides a wide range of programmes and services, which include:

- **Environmental Youth Programmes**

ECO-UNESCO develops and runs programmes for young people on a broad range of environmental issues through schools, youth organisations, community groups or local authorities. These programmes include: environmental events and activities, environmental workshops, a National Youth ECO-Forum, the Young Environmentalist Awards, ECO-UNESCO Clubs, ECO-Youth Choices and Youth for Sustainable Development Peer Education Programmes.

- **Training Programmes**

ECO-UNESCO develops and runs training programmes for young people and trainers within non-formal and formal education, providing a specialist approach to working with young people. These programmes include: short training courses on a wide range of issues related to sustainable development and the environment, FETAC accredited courses (Introduction to Sustainable Development, Level 5) and ECO-Choices, a drugs misuse prevention programme.

- **Education Resources**

ECO-UNESCO produces environmental education resources including publications, and posters for primary and secondary school teachers, youth groups and community groups.

- **Consultancy**

ECO-UNESCO offers consultancy services to groups and agencies that want a specialist approach to environmental education, environmental youth work and Education for Sustainable Development.

ECO-UNESCO is also a key partner of the UNESCO Global Action Programme (GAP) on Education for Sustainable Development which aims to generate and scale up education and learning in all agendas, programmes, and activities that promote sustainable development, and contribute substantially to the 2030 agenda.





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For more information about the Young Environmentalist
Awards programme, contact the YEA Team at
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