

Young Environmentalist Awards

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.

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HOW

TO USE

THIS

MANUAL

THIS YOUNG ENVIRONMENTALIST AWARDS (YEA) MANUAL IS DESIGNED TO HELP YOUNG PEOPLE GET THEIR OWN YEA ENVIRONMENTAL ACTION PROJECT STARTED.

IT WILL GUIDE BOTH YOUNG PEOPLE AND THEIR YEA PROJECT MENTORS THROUGH THEIR YEA JOURNEY IN A STEP-BY-STEP MANNER.



6 Steps to Success Framework:

Practical guidelines for young people at each step



Tips for YEA Mentors:

Information to help YEA Project Mentors support their group of young people



Activities:

Interactive activities suggested for YEA Project Mentors to facilitate youth-led learning



Toolkits:

Easy-to-use toolkits for YEA Project Mentors to employ when facilitating activities and for young people to use as part of project work

Please note that this manual is not intended to be prescriptive. It should be used as needed and any instructions, activities and worksheets in the manual should be seen as suggestions that may help participants carry out a successful environmental action project.



YOUNG

ENVIRONMENTALIST

AWARDS

PROGRAMME

- **YOUTH-LED**
- **ACTION-BASED**
- **PROJECT-BASED LEARNING**
- **ENVIRONMENTAL AWARENESS-RAISING**

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 reward the work of young people who protect, conserve and enhance the environment through local environmental action projects.

WHY GET INVOLVED?



Have fun



**Make friends & network
with others**



**Boost confidence & improve
self-esteem**



Develop new skills
(e.g. critical thinking, research,
problem-solving, planning, action,
communication, IT, leadership skills)



**Receive a Certificate
of Participation**



**Build a college/university
application or CV**



Win prizes



**Increase youth involvement
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 such as climate
change, poverty and gender
inequality and how these
issues are interconnected**



**Increase environmental
knowledge and awareness
& learn how to plan,
develop and implement
an environmental and
sustainability action
project**



**Develop an attitude of
empathy and care for 'the
other' and for the planet,
and how to make a positive
difference in the world**



**Learn about and practice active
citizenship & environmental
stewardship**

WHO CAN TAKE PART?

The YEA is open to any group of young people in the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland from 10-18 years of age.

Senior: 15-18 years

Junior: 12-14 years

Super Junior: 10-12 years
(non-category specific)

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.

AWARD CATEGORIES

There are 10 main YEA award categories which help young people critically think about, and take action towards, various environmental and sustainable development issues.

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.

Find the SDG icons that are relevant to each of the YEA categories!



Source: www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/news/communications-material

MAIN CATEGORIES

Category	Description	Relevant SDGs
 Biodiversity	Biodiversity ranges from different types of plants and animals to a particular habitat. Biodiversity projects may comprise research on a particular species or habitat. However, YEA action projects are not just traditional projects where you research a topic and present your findings. You should also make sure to take action based on the research findings.	  
 Climate Change	Climate change is a complex and broad topic. Climate Change projects need to identify the particular/most interesting aspect of the issue that will become the focus of the project.	
 ECO-Art & Design	This category is ideal for the groups with artistic skills. ECO-Art & Design projects involve creating artworks (e.g. murals, sculptures, mosaics, drawings, etc.) to inform people about nature or environmental problems. Try to use recycled materials where possible. How the artworks will be kept or disposed of sustainably after the project will need to be considered.	 
 ECO-Community Development	ECO-Community Development projects will 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-Innovation	ECO-Innovation projects look into products, technologies, services and processes that contribute to sustainable development. This can include working with local businesses or perhaps developing environmentally-friendly technologies/products.	  
 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.	 
 Transport	This category includes anything that is based around transport such as the impacts of the transportation we use, more sustainable means of transport, etc.	   
 Waste	We generate large amounts of waste (e.g. plastic, food, electronic and garden waste, old clothes, etc.) Disposing of waste has huge environmental impacts and also wastes the raw materials and energy used in making the products. Waste projects may explore our consumption and production patterns, and how to reduce waste.	 
 Water	Water projects may look at water-related issues such as impacts of pollution in oceans or rivers, water scarcity, water waste, etc.	 

ADDITIONAL AWARDS

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, apply for an 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.

YEA 5 KEY STAGES

STAGE 1

REGISTRATION
(SEPTEMBER – NOVEMBER)

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

STAGE 2

YEA 6 STEPS TO SUCCESS TRAINING
(OCTOBER – NOVEMBER)

Free YEA '6 Steps to Success' training workshops are available for the registered groups of young people and their YEA Mentors. These provide knowledge, skills and know-how to help groups grow their ideas into a successful action project.

STAGE 3

PROJECT SUBMISSION
(LATE FEBRUARY)

Registered groups submit their eco-action project. ECO-UNESCO's internal judging panels assess all submitted projects and create a shortlist. See pp. 70-72 for the YEA submission guidelines.

STAGE 4

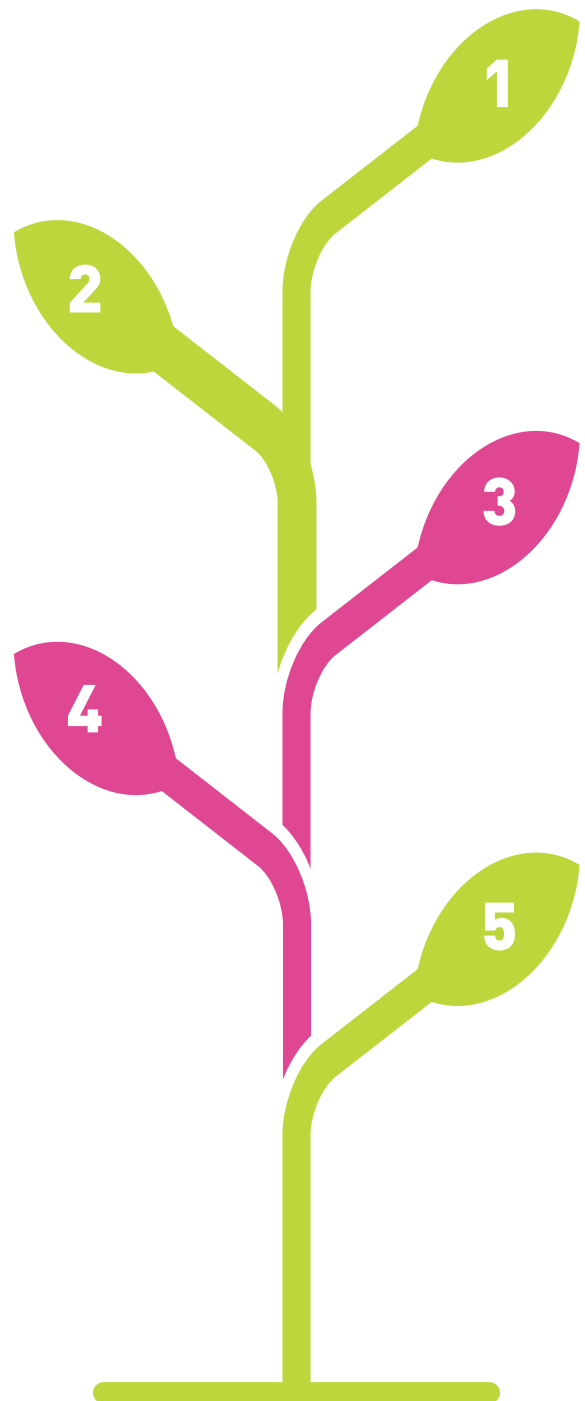
REGIONAL SEMI-FINAL ECO-DENS
(MARCH/APRIL)

Shortlisted groups are invited to pitch their projects to a panel of expert regional judges at the ECO-Dens semi-final judging rounds in Connaught, Leinster, Munster and Ulster. Semi-finalists' projects will be judged again after the ECO-Dens by an external examiner.

STAGE 5

NATIONAL SHOWCASE & AWARDS CEREMONY
(LATE MAY)

Finalists showcase their project and winners are announced at the ECO-UNESCO YEA Final Showcase and Awards Ceremony in Dublin.



WHO ARE YEA PROJECT MENTORS?

YEA Project Mentors are volunteers (i.e. youth workers/leaders, teachers, or parents) who guide young people throughout their YEA action project by offering support, 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.

* **A Certificate of Appreciation** will be provided to every YEA Project Mentor. Also all YEA Mentors are eligible for the **ECO-Mentor of the Year Award** that recognises outstanding YEA Mentors who go above and beyond to encourage and support young people in their eco-action.

WHAT YEA PROJECT MENTORS SAY?

“

I was attending an ECO-UNESCO teachers training course in summer 2016 when I heard about the Young Environmentalist Awards. I was immediately intrigued and I wanted to get involved. I approached a primary and a secondary school in my local area about facilitating the YEA and both schools eagerly agreed. The YEA enables students to learn about the environment but to also learn new skills as they interact with their communities to showcase their projects. Both schools were thrilled to have an opportunity for some of their students to up skill in areas that are not currently available on the school curriculum. It was an amazing experience watching the students stretch and grow throughout the projects that they planned for themselves. As a YEA project mentor, I would highly recommend the experience. It was a wonderful opportunity to inspire learning and to motivate students to become empowered and take action towards a sustainable future. Each group paid me with buckets of enthusiasm and oodles of fun. It was a very special experience to be a part of something that had the potential to impact so positively on their young lives. It was truly a very special experience and one that I will remember fondly forever.

Sue Adams, YEA 2017 ECO-Mentor of the Year Winner

”

“

My students loved the autonomy and responsibility that doing the project afforded them. Both myself and the students learned lots of new interesting information about everything from using Twitter to how plastic is made. It also created and supported more healthy relationships in our class. It gave my students a sense of pride, confidence and most importantly changed their behaviour and attitude to many issues including recycling, poverty, climate change etc.

Bridget McAssey, Teacher, Carlow Vocational School, Carlow

”

“

I feel the YEA gave the students a hands-on learning experience where higher order skills of problem solving, creative thinking, and social justice promotion were developed. The students excelled as a team, learned about responsibility towards each other, team cohesion and tolerance. Their social skills improved greatly when they spoke to adults and students about their project and also when organising various activities. I think their learning, motivation and determination grit and resilience were also challenged and enhanced, when learning how to structure a detailed report, research and keep records of all their work. Their IT skills were utilised and further enhanced by the experiential use of same during project. I think our students have a much more enlightened respect for the environment and most importantly have gained the skills and action based tools, confidence and belief in themselves as positive active citizens who are capable of making a difference in their communities and wider society. It was a very worthwhile experience for me as a TY teacher. I found all resources very useful. I was very happy to have the ECO-UNESCO team visit my school to deliver a very experiential knowledge-based workshop to our students and support for me as a first time teacher in the programme.

Mary McMullen, TY Coordinator, Bailieborough Community School, Cavan

”

“

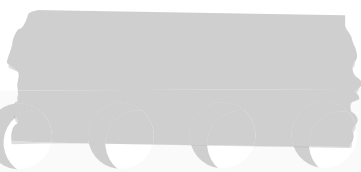
The YEA is a great way to involve young people in the community, get them more educated on environmental issues in a fun way and also a good way to get new people with different interests involved in the youth club.

Julie McGuirk, Youth Support Staff, Youth Work Ireland Monaghan, Monaghan

”



WHAT YOUNG PEOPLE SAY?



"After the YEA I am more conscious in my action and more aware of what I am doing!"

Participant from St Joseph's College Summerhill, Athlone

"My favourite thing about the YEA project is being able to see what a difference we made to the local community."

Participant from Presentation Secondary School Tralee, Kerry

"Through the YEA project, I learned all the impacts our lifestyle has on climate change, all of the consequences, and what we can do individually and as a nation to tackle the issue."

Participant from Ashbourne Community School, Meath

"I think our project has brought everyone closer as a group, getting involved in the community."

Participant from Youth Work Ireland Monaghan, Monaghan

"I had fun making new friends, sharing jobs, communicating with other people, trusting others to do their part, and finding people in my school who are also interested in making a change to our environment!"

Participant from St. Cecilia's College, Derry

"Through the course of the project I was delighted to develop many skills. These included communication, research, organisation and people skills. My confidence has grown and I can give my opinion without feeling shy. Working as a team player has improved and I really enjoyed it."

Participant from Bailieborough Community School, Cavan

"I enjoyed working with my team as we had a lot of fun while doing the project!"

Participant from Sancta Maria College Louisburgh, Mayo

"I enjoyed being able to work with my friends on an issue I care passionately about. I liked how each member of the team had their own tasks to complete and responsibilities to fulfil but then at the end of the day we came together to share the information we discovered and got to work collectively as a team to put it all together to make our project."

ECO-UNESCO's Youth for the Sustainable Future Programme Participant

UNESCO's

Young Environmentalist Awards

ECO-UNESCO

Young Environmentalist Awards

YEA

6 STEPS TO SUCCESS

FRAMEWORK



STEP 1:

GET A TEAM TOGETHER

IMPORTANT!

Ensure that you are keeping a record of the work carried out at every stage of the process - this will be of great benefit when creating a portfolio for your action project for submission in February.

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!

TIPS FOR YEA MENTORS

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



ACTIVITY 1: TEAM SKILLS AUDIT (p. 19)

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. 20)

ACTIVITY 2: ROLE ASSIGNMENT (p. 21)

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. 20)

ACTIVITY 3: TEAM CONTRACT (p. 23)

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

TIME

30 minutes

PREPARATION

Team Skills Matrix (p. 20),
Role Cards (p. 22), pens

HOW TO RUN

1. Duplicate the Team Skills Matrix (p. 20) 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 a 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 they are struggling with the brainstorming, hand out the Role Cards (p. 22) and ask them to have a discussion on what responsibilities each role requires.
4. After the discussion, ask everyone to think about their skills and what other skills they would like to develop during the project, then add their names in the second and third columns in the Team Skills Matrix.
5. Using the team skills analysis let the group decide and assign every team member to the tasks that he/she is most interested in and qualified to perform. For example, it is a good idea to pair up someone who has good communication skills with someone who wants to develop their skills - so they can learn from each other.

ACTIVITY 1 TOOLKIT

TEAM SKILLS MATRIX

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, taking into consideration their skills and talents and how they can be best used to increase the effectiveness of the team to achieve the team goals

TIME

15 minutes

PREPARATION

Whiteboard, board markers, Role Cards (p. 22)

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.

2. Ask them to discuss what responsibilities are involved in each role.

Note: For younger groups, you can prepare a set of the Role Cards (p. 22) and mix them randomly so they need to match the Role Card with the Responsibilities. Encourage them to find more roles and discuss the responsibilities involved.

3. Ask them to assign roles to each team member based on their talents and their wish to develop new skills (see Team Skills Matrix on p. 20).

ROLE CARDS

Role: Team Leader

Responsibilities:

- 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

Role: Recorder

Responsibilities:

- 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

Role: Timekeeper

Responsibilities:

- 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

Role: Spokesperson

Responsibilities:

- 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

Role: Researcher

Responsibilities:

- Identifying where the team's ideas require more details and explanations
- Conducting the research and providing it to the team

Role: Resource Manager

Responsibilities:

- Managing materials in the team during group work
- Being responsible for collecting, distributing and putting away project materials

Role: Social Media Specialist

Responsibilities:

- Setting up the project team page within social media platforms (e.g. Facebook, Twitter, 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

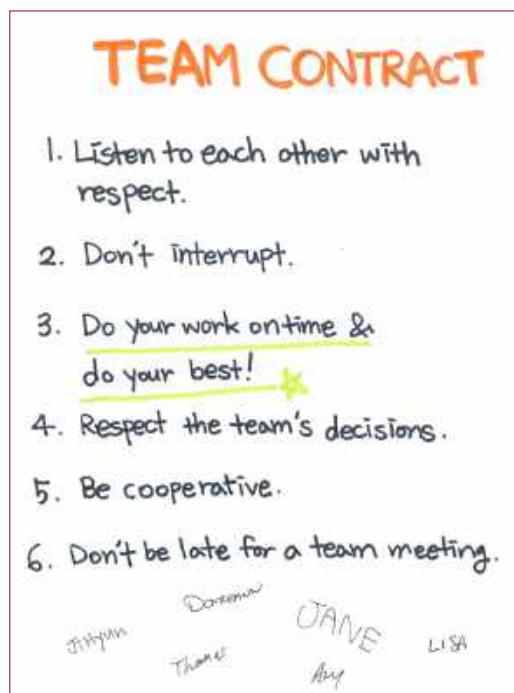
15 minutes

PREPARATION

Team Contract Template
(p. 23), pens

HOW TO RUN

1. Give your group some time to reflect their experience of group work in the past.
2. Ask them to write down what they liked and what they didn't like about working in a group and what challenges they encountered when working in a team on a project considering their past experiences.
3. Ask to share what they have written and brainstorm a set of ground rules and expectations. Alternatively, have everyone come up with a list independently and then compile them.



4. Ensure that they also discuss the specific process for dealing with problems that might arise. For example, what will happen if a team member doesn't follow the terms of the contract?
5. Once the ground rules are discussed, ask them to fill out the Team Contract Template provided (p. 23) or create their own contract.
6. When the terms of the contract are fully agreed by everyone, ask each team member to sign their name at the bottom of the contract. Once signed by everyone, display it in a room where the team regularly meets or bring it to every team meeting.

TEAM CONTRACT TEMPLATE

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 _____

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 _____

Date: _____

Team Members' Signatures:

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____



STEP 2:

SELECT AN ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUE & RESEARCH

IMPORTANT!

Ensure that you are keeping a record of the work carried out at every stage of the process - this will be of great benefit when creating a portfolio for your action project for submission in February.

STEP 2: SELECT AN ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUE & 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-Innovation



ECO-Health & Wellbeing



Energy



Transport



Waste



Water



BRAINSTORMING TIPS

- 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 (Activity 4-6).

Some Examples of Local Environmental Issues

- Air pollution
- Dog nuisance
- Flooding
- Littering
- Waste & sewage disposal
- Not enough public bins
- No recycling/incorrect recycling
- Loss of local plants and animals
- Lack of green space
- No bike paths
- Biodiversity and wildlife in the local area

Some Examples of Global Environmental Issues

- Air, water, soil pollution
- Global warming
- Overpopulation
- Natural resource depletion
- Waste disposal caused by over consumption of resources and creation of plastics
- Climate change
- Loss of biodiversity
- Deforestation
- Ocean pollution and acidification
- Ozone layer depletion
- Public health issues

TIPS FOR YEA MENTORS

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: ALPHABET RACE (p. 30)

This activity can be useful for young people who are unsure where to start and are looking for speedy, fun motivation.

ACTIVITY 5: FINDING STORIES (p. 31)

This activity also can be useful for young people who are unsure where to start. It requires some preparation.

ACTIVITY 6: ENVIRONMENTAL FILM SCREENING (p. 32)

This activity is suitable for a large group. If your group is looking for fun motivation or not able to have direct discussions, having a film screening could be a good idea. Do your research and be sure you are familiar with the topic of the film so you can comfortably lead a discussion after the screening.

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. Also look into any links between your chosen issue and how it impacts you and other people around the world. If your project's main focus is on the local to global link, you can apply for the 'Local to Global SDG Award' in addition to your main category award (See p. 10).

TIPS FOR YEA MENTORS

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. 33)

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 MIND MAP (p. 34)

TOOLKIT: RESEARCH RECORD SHEET (p. 35)

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.

ACTIVITY 8: LOCAL TO GLOBAL MAKING CONNECTIONS (pp. 36-37)

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.38)

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

TOOLKIT: LINKING WITH THE SDGS WORKSHEET (p. 39)

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

CHECK OUT USEFUL RESOURCES

- Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Live Green: <http://www.epa.ie/livegreen/>
- Trócaire: <https://www.trocaire.org/getinvolved/climate-justice>
- Developmenteducation.ie: <http://developmenteducation.ie/resource/resource-category/climate-change-and-sustainable-development/>
- World's Largest Lesson: <http://worldslargestlesson.globalgoals.org/global-goals/protect-the-planet/>
- A wide range of ECO-UNESCO's environmental education resources are available at <http://ecounesco.ie/eco-unesco-resources>.



ACTIVITY 4: ALPHABET RACE

AIM

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

TIME

30 minutes

PREPARATION

Two flipchart sheets with letters of the alphabet listed on them, markers

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.
4. Each team lines up in single file behind the start line.
5. 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.
6. The first person must run to the sheet and write down a word for 'A', then run back, handing the marker to the second person and going 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'.
7. Announce the winner when one group reaches 'Z' but allow the game to continue for the others to finish.
8. Ask the whole group to examine the winning team's sheet to check if all the words are connected to sustainability and environmental issues and if there are any words that don't make sense. Decide together if the group will allow that team to win.
9. Once the race is complete, your group will have a list of environmental issues which they can choose from.
10. 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?
11. Once young people have selected an issue, they can move onto 'Step 3. Develop an Action Plan' (pp.40-47).

[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

Newspapers, magazines

HOW TO RUN

1. Ask your group to sit together in their project teams.
2. Give a selection of newspapers and magazines and ask them to choose one or two stories which they think relate to environmental issues. If you meet your group regularly it is a good idea to ask them to find some news stories in advance and bring them to the next meeting.
3. Ask them to identify what environmental issues are related to each news story and discuss which story they feel most strongly about and explain why.
4. Encourage them to discuss what actions can be taken to tackle the issues featured in the stories and start developing an action plan [See pp. 40-47].
5. If the chosen story is about someone who has taken inspiring actions as an agent of change, ask the following questions for further discussion:
 - 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 his/her 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 sustainability and
environmental issues, paper,
pens/markers

HOW TO RUN

1. Choose an environmental film/documentary considering your group's age and environmental knowledge level. Pre-screen your choice to make sure the film is appropriate for your group.

Some Environmental Films Worth Watching

- <http://www.pbs.org/independentlens/blog/earth-day-watch-list-17-new-films-about-sustainability-climate-change/>
- <http://topdocumentaryfilms.com/category/environment/>
- Many more are available online

2. Prepare and provide some prompt questions on a handout for your group to jot notes down on while watching the film, ready for a discussion after the screening. 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 watching the film, have a discussion with the group based on the questions given prior to the screening and ask additional discussion questions as follows:

- 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 with potential actions that can be taken to combat the issue. Although some action ideas may sound silly or unrealistic it is important to encourage them to think of and write down as many ideas as possible. The group will decide which actions they will pursue in more detail later at 'Step 3. Developing an Action Plan' (See pp. 40-47).

ACTIVITY 7: CAUSES AND 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, flipchart paper, markers

HOW TO RUN

1. Have computers ready for your group to research the issue of their choice:
 - 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. 35).
4. After gathering the needed information, ask the group to create a Research Mind Map (p. 34) 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. 40-47).

ACTIVITY 7
TOOLKIT

RESEARCH MIND MAP

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?

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	Coming of Age at the End of Nature: A Generation Faces Living on a Changed Planet	Julie Dunlap and Susan Cohen	2016	Trinity University Press

FOR WEBSITES, BLOGS & ONLINE ARTICLES

Resource Type	Title	Author Name	Date Published	Link	Search Date
Online Article	Beached Whale Found With 30 Plastic Bags Crammed In Its Belly	Mary Papenfuss	02/04/2017	http://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/beached-beaked-whale-had-30-plastic-bags-stuffed-in-belly_us_58957a1de4b0c1284f262e91	14/09/2017

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

Image cards of local environmental issues and global environmental issues (p. 38), SDG cards (p. 8), flipchart paper, markers

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 and add them to the image cards already on the floor.
4. Ask everyone to find any links between the local and global issues and pick one local issue card and one global issue card that are linked. They then need to quickly explain how the two cards they picked are linked to the whole group. For example:

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

Alternatively, ask your group to work in pairs. Ask a pair to select one random image each, they must then make a forced connection between their two images.

5. As environmental issues are broad, your group should identify the particular aspect of the environmental issue that will become their goal and focus for 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. There are two 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. 39) 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.



Source: www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/news/communications-material

ACTIVITY 8 TOOLKIT

LOCAL & GLOBAL ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUE IMAGE CARDS



[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?

(Adopted from the ECO-UNESCO Learning2Change workshop)

STEP 3:

DEVELOP AN ACTION PLAN

IMPORTANT!

Ensure that you are keeping a record of the work carried out at every stage of the process - this will be of great benefit when creating a portfolio for your action project for submission in February.

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.

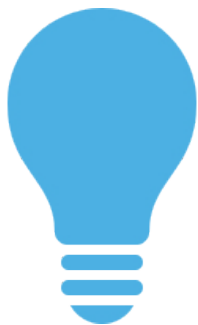
- **Overview:** What is your project about?
- **Specific Goals:** Why are you doing this project? What do you want to achieve?
- **Audience:** Who is your target audience?
- **Actions:** What actions are you taking to achieve your goals?
- **Person Responsible:** Who is responsible for what tasks?
- **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?

IMPORTANT

An action plan should be structured around the YEA 6 Steps to Success framework and the key dates/deadlines of the YEA programme.

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



TOP TIP

Various types of actions that can be used for a YEA project are suggested at Step 4 (pp. 48-53). However, we want you to surprise us with creative and innovative ideas we have never thought about!

TIPS FOR YEA MENTORS

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. 43)

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 ways of looking at a problem before deciding on their real action project.

ACTIVITY 10: RAPID ACTION BRAINSTORMING (p. 44)

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. 45-46)

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. 47)

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. 45-46).

ACTIVITY 9: THE IMPOSSIBLE ACTION

AIM

- Stimulate creative thinking before deciding on a real 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 can be the one that no one manages 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

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.
3. Challenge everyone to come up with as many solutions to each goal as they can within 2-5 minutes. When doing this, 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 each goal. Give them 5 more minutes to look over what they've written down.
6. Ask them to discuss what to do for their action project. Make sure that they choose something creative which they are passionate about, as both are required to have a good project.

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

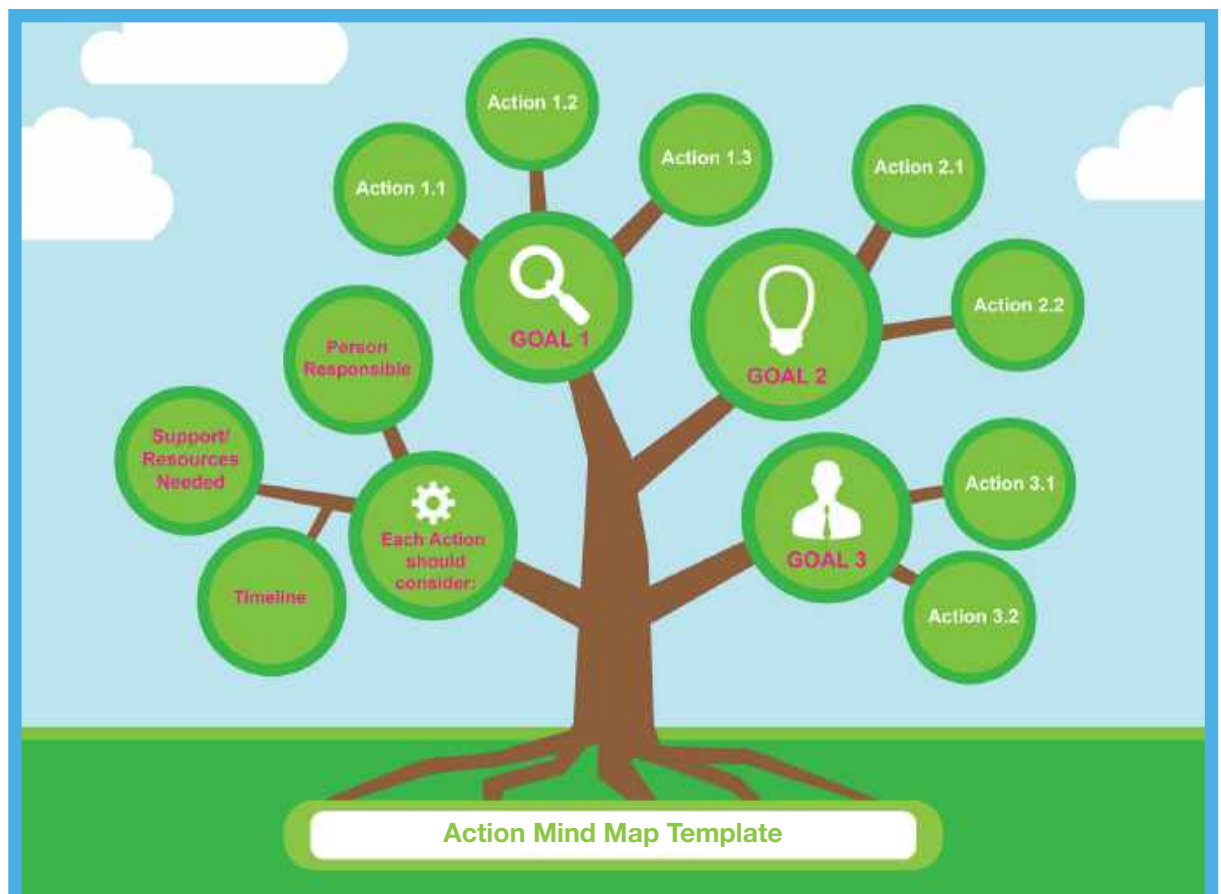
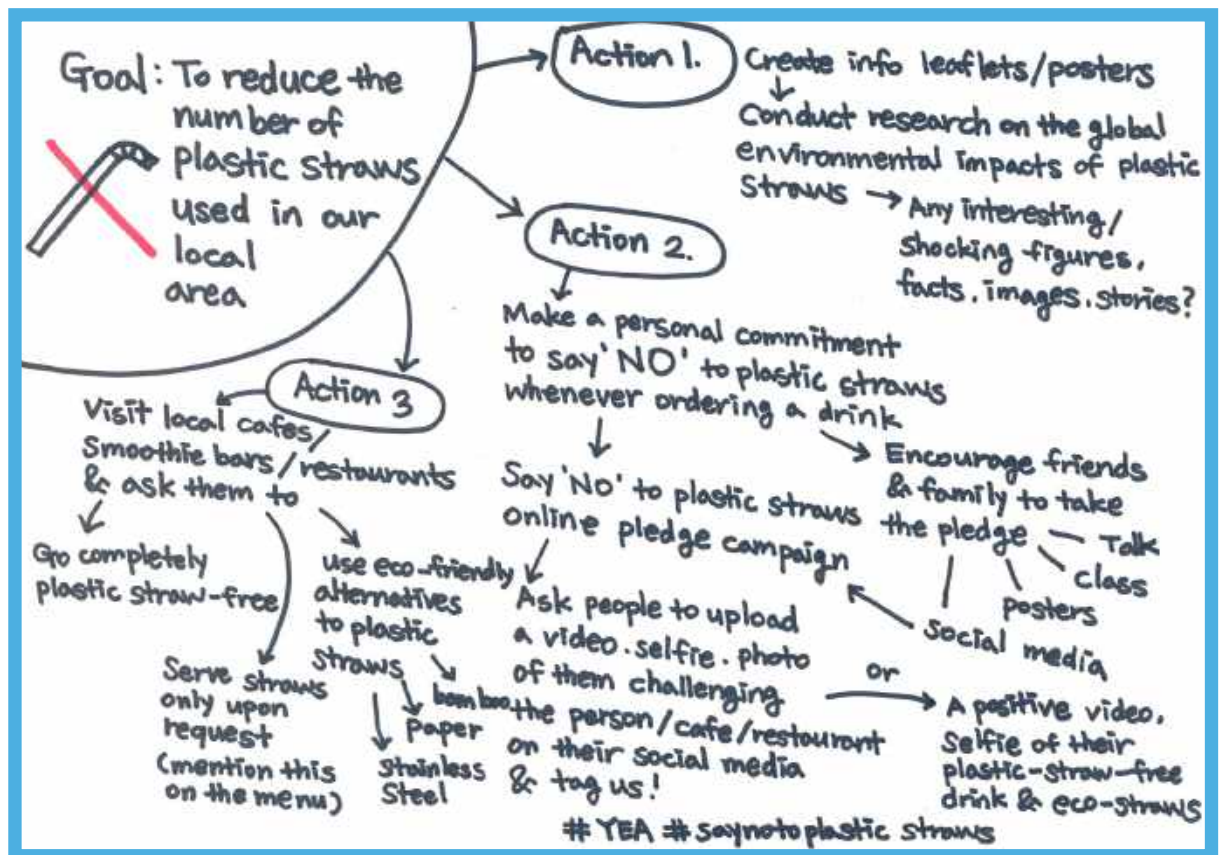
PREPARATION

Action Project Planning Worksheet (p. 47), flipchart paper, markers

HOW TO RUN

1. Provide your group with flipchart paper to create an Action Plan Mind Map (p. 46) 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. Then ask them to think of a couple of actions to take in order to achieve each goal. From here, they can determine who the target audience is, how each action will be carried out, who is responsible for what tasks, what support/resources will be needed. It is also very important to include a timeline for each step (i.e. when each action needs to be completed by) as this will ensure the team to stay on track and reach their targets.
4. After completing the Action Plan Mind Map, ask them to evaluate their plan:
 - 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 to use the Action Project Planning Worksheet (p. 47) to create a final action plan. This should be brought to every team meeting as it is important to review it over time to ensure it continues to reflect the current situation and the team's wishes.

SAMPLE ACTION PLAN MIND MAP



(Source: www.vecteezy.com)

Note to YEA Mentors:

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

ACTION PROJECT PLANNING WORKSHEET

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?

STEP 4:

TAKE ACTION

IMPORTANT!

Ensure that you are keeping a record of the work carried out at every stage of the process - this will be of great benefit when creating a portfolio for your action project for submission in February.

STEP 4: TAKE ACTION



You are finally ready to take action based on your plan! Action projects are not traditional projects where you research a topic and present your findings.

Taking action is a crucial element of the YEA programme. It is with these actions that you can truly demonstrate what you have learned, and become empowered to take more action in the future.

Your project can focus on one particular action thoroughly or use a mixture of various actions considering your team's interests, skill sets, project goals, timeline, and budget.

ACTION IDEAS

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



YEA FINALIST BOOKLETS

To read about previous YEA projects, find the YEA Finalist Booklets at <http://ecounesco.ie/forms-resources>.



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. Follow the YEA project submission instruction (pp. 70-72) to record all the actions taken.

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. 53) or create your own. Make sure that your team's 'Resource Manager' keeps them together and brings them to the next meeting.

TIPS FOR YEA MENTORS

- 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. 51)

- Recommend your group to write a meeting minute at every meeting. They can create their own meeting minutes or you can provide printed copies of the Team Meeting Minutes Template (p. 53).

TOOLKIT: TEAM MEETING MINUTES TEMPLATE (p. 53)

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. 53),
Team Contract (pp. 23-24),
pens

HOW TO RUN

1. Before a meeting, ask your group to think:
 - Why they are meeting
 - What they want to get out of the meeting
2. Provide a copy of the Team Meeting Minutes Template (p. 53) and explain how to use the Template:
 - **Date of Meeting** – Write a meeting date. Try to meet up regularly (e.g. every week/second week/month).
 - **Time Started** – Write the time that the meeting started.
 - **Time Finished** – Write the time that the meeting finished.
 - **Location** – Write where the meeting takes place.
 - **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.
 - **Attendees** – List all the people who attended the meeting.
 - **Non-attendees** – List non-attendees. Ideally every team member should attend meetings.
 - **Update on Action Items from Previous Meeting** – Check how everyone is getting on with their tasks as discussed at the last meeting and record progress on actions. (i.e. Is everything on track? If not, what are the challenges? How will you resolve them?)
 - **New Action Items** – Discuss actions to be taken until next meeting, who is responsible, and what deadlines are.
 - **Proposed Date of Next Meeting** – Set a date for the next meeting.
 - **Any Other Business (AOB)** – Write any other items that need to be addressed and discussed.
3. Ask the group to lead a team meeting by themselves using the Team Meeting Minute Template (p. 53). Make sure everyone has a chance to contribute.



TEAM MEETING MINUTES TEMPLATE

- DATE OF MEETING:
- TIME STARTED:
- TIME FINISHED:
- LOCATION:
- NOTE TAKER:
- 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!

Ensure that you are keeping a record of the work carried out at every stage of the process - this will be of great benefit when creating a portfolio for your action project for submission in February.

STEP 5: RAISE AWARENESS

During and after taking action, you need to raise awareness about your topic and project. Raising awareness is to inform and educate people about a topic or issue with the intention of influencing their attitudes, behaviours and beliefs towards the achievement of a defined purpose or goal. **Thus, awareness-raising is an essential element that can be ongoing 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.

COMMUNICATION GUIDELINES

- 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.

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.

AWARENESS RAISING IDEAS

There are various methods that can be used for awareness-raising. Think what the best way is to convey your message to the target audience considering your project's goals. Check out some of the ways of raising awareness about your YEA project.

TOOLKIT: PRESS RELEASE (pp. 57-58)

TOOLKIT: SOCIAL MEDIA CAMPAIGN (p. 59)

TOOLKIT: EVENT ORGANISATION (p. 61)

TOOLKIT: LOBBYING (pp. 62-63)

TIPS FOR RAISING AWARENESS IN YOUR COMMUNITY

- Talk to your friends, family and neighbours.
- Talk to local businesses to support your cause.
- Contact the local paper and radio stations.
- Connect with local groups who care about the environmental issue of your choice.
- Attend a community fair/event or organise your own.
- Give presentations to the public in your local library.
- Display posters/information leaflets in your local County Council, shops, and libraries.
- Meet with your local TDs/local county council's Environmental Awareness Officer.

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>.



PRESS RELEASE

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!

TIPS FOR WRITING A PRESS RELEASE

Follow these four tips to write a successful press release:

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



Ambitious Youth Group Project Leaps to Success

A group of young people involved with ECO-UNESCO'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 Leon Gill, Emma Kennedy, Sean Young and Philip Manifold 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."

Group member Leon Gill 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:
Lisa Wilson, ECO-UNESCO Communication Officer
E. communications@ecounesco.ie
T. +353 1 6625491

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

TOOLKIT

Social media can be a great communication tool for raising awareness about your project with a larger audience. Think about #BlackLivesMattercampaign. 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!

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, Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat, YouTube and Pinterest. 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 tag, share or retweet 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. 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



@ECO-UNESCO



ECO UNESCO

Use the YEA hashtags (#YEA, #ECO-UNESCO)



CHOOSE OUR FUTURE

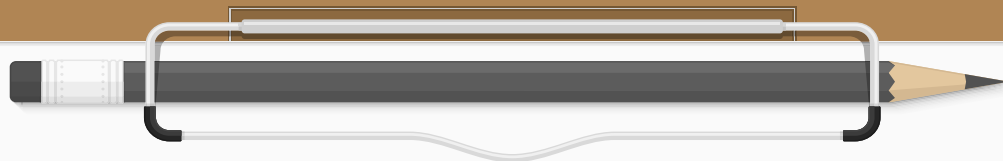
@people of earth
Make your choices and
make your choice

EVENT ORGANISATION

Events are a great way to create awareness and get others involved in your cause.

TYPES OF EVENTS

School/Community Fair, March, Exhibition, Concert, Film Screening, Sports Challenge Day, Drawing/Poster Competition, Bake Sale, Table Quiz, Talk/Presentation



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.

Contact your elected representatives (e.g. Taoiseach, Ministers, TDs, Senators, Politicians, Councillors, MEPs) as well as school principals, youth leaders, local business groups, and anyone with a decision making capacity connected with your issue. You can write a letter or request a face-to-face meeting to express your concerns regarding your chosen environmental issue. At this meeting you can request their support.

Remember that you are all future voters! Therefore you can demand politicians to listen what you think about the policies that affect your life. 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!

USEFUL CONTACTS

- Find Your Councillors, TDs, and MEPs
<https://www.whoismytd.com/>
- Department of Communications, Climate Action and Environment
www.dccae.gov.ie
Twitter: @Dept_CCAE
- Green Party Ireland
Twitter: @greenparty_ie
Email: info@greenparty.ie
- Local Authorities
<http://www.gov.ie/tag/local-authorities/>

YEA LOBBYING PROJECT EXAMPLE 1

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.



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. Ask if they have any questions.
- Make the case for your cause and ask for their support.
- 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 EXAMPLE 2

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.



STEP 6:

REFLECT

IMPORTANT!

Ensure that you are keeping a record of the work carried out at every stage of the process - this will be of great benefit when creating a portfolio for your action project for submission in February.

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.

TEAM REFLECTION

- Did your project achieve its goals?
- What impacts did your project have on your target audience?
- What worked well and what didn't work? Are there any lessons to be learnt?
- What are your team's next steps?

Make time for team reflection and fill out the Team Reflection Form (p. 67) together. This form or the questions on the form must be included as part of their YEA project portfolio for submission.

INDIVIDUAL REFLECTION

- What did you learn by doing this project?
- What did you learn about the chosen environmental issue?
- What skills did you develop/improve?
- What was the most enjoyable and challenging part of your project?
- Have any of your behaviours/attitudes/ opinions changed as a result of the project?
If so, how?

Additionally, all team members need to examine their own personal development using the Individual Self-Reflection Form (pp. 68-69). The forms must be completed by each individual member and included in the YEA project portfolio.

TIPS FOR YEA MENTORS

TOOLKIT: TEAM REFLECTION FORM (p. 67)

This form or the questions on the form must be included in the YEA project portfolio.



TOOLKIT: INDIVIDUAL SELF-REFLECTION FORM (pp. 68-69)

Make sure every single person in the team fills out this form and ensure the completed forms are included in the YEA project portfolio.

YEA Mentor Reflection Survey: ECO-UNESCO would like to hear about your experience as a YEA Mentor. Your feedback is highly appreciated and will help us to make improvements in the YEA programme. The online survey form will be sent to you separately after receiving your group's project.

FURTHER GROWTH AWARD

Your project is not over yet! ECO-UNESCO strongly recommends you to enter the Further Growth Award. The Further Growth Award is an award which rewards a sustainable project which is a continuation of a previous YEA project from the same team or the same school/youth organisation. Discuss with your team how your project can potentially be continued into the next year, how the project can grow and improve and what else can be done.



TEAM REFLECTION FORM

NOTE: This form or the questions on the form must be included in the YEA project portfolio.

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

NOTE: This form must to be completed by every team member and included in the YEA project portfolio for submission by late February.

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

Registered groups must submit their project portfolio which is the documentation of their action project. The portfolio should be A4 size and presented in either a scrapbook or folder. You are encouraged to be as creative as possible but the YEA 6 Steps to Success Framework should be used to assist you in completing the portfolio.

WHAT TO INCLUDE IN YEA ACTION PROJECT PORTFOLIO

1. FINAL PROJECT DETAILS

- Registration Number
- School/Youth Organisation Name
- Project Title
- Age Category
- Award Category
- Additional Awards

2. PROJECT SUMMARY

Briefly describe your project (max. 100 words) considering the following questions in order:

- Goals: What was your project about? How did you come up with the idea? What were your project goals?
- Actions: What actions did you take to achieve the project goals?
- Achievements: What did you achieve as a result of your project?



3. YEA 6 STEPS TO SUCCESS

At each step consider the following questions when you include evidence of your work.

STEP 1. GET A TEAM TOGETHER

- How was your team formed?
- What skills does each team member have? What skills did you develop during the project?
- What role and tasks did each team member fulfil?
- Did you do any team building activities?
- Suggested evidence: Team skills audit, role assignment sheet, team contract

STEP 2. SELECT AN ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUE AND RESEARCH

- How and why did you choose the issue?
- What are the causes and impacts of the issue?
- Did you find any local and global links for the issue?
- How did you research the issue?
- Suggested evidence: Worksheet for brainstorming environmental issues, research mind map, research record sheets

STEP 3. DEVELOP AN ACTION PLAN

- How did you develop an action plan?
- Specify your project details (e.g. overview, goals, actions, person(s) responsible, timeline, etc.)
- Suggested evidence: Worksheet for brainstorming environmental actions, action plan mind map, action project planning worksheet

STEP 4. TAKE ACTION

- What actions did you undertake?
- Suggested evidence: Action plan mind map, action project planning worksheet, meeting minutes, photos, videos, website/blog, drama, songs, books, social media, news articles, events, meetings, etc.

STEP 5. RAISE AWARENESS

- What did you do to raise awareness about the issue?
- What did you do to raise awareness about your team's work and achievements?
- Suggested evidence: Press release, social media campaign, event organisation, lobbying, petition, etc.

STEP 6. REFLECT

- Did your project achieve its goals?
- Are there any lessons to be learnt?
- What did you learn and what skills did you develop by doing the project?
- Have any of your behaviours and attitudes changed as a result of participating? If so, how?
- Suggested evidence: Team reflection form and individual self-reflection forms

NOTES

[illegible]

NOTES

[illegible]

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.



ECO-UNESCO

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For more information about the Young Environmentalist Awards programme,
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An Roinn Leanaí
agus Gnóthai Óige
Department of
Children and Youth Affairs

