



Sustainable Youth

Young people taking action for the
environment and sustainability



**Youth Worker
Guide**

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Sustainable Youth - Introduction

The aim of Sustainable Youth is to increase young people's engagement with the environment and sustainability. It does this by providing a seven stage framework for young people to take action around an environmental issue of their choosing. This guide is for Youth Workers wanting to deliver the programme and thereby support young people (at Key Stage 2, 3 and 4) to carry out an environmental social action project.

So why is it important to increase young people's engagement with the environment and sustainability?

- It's important because we are in a climate and biodiversity crisis. Young people's lives will be impacted most and for the longest period by the consequences of this.
- Young people can bring energy, ideas and new solutions to help address these issues.
- Taking part in Sustainable Youth provides the opportunity to explore a range of societal issues and appreciate their interconnection to the environment and global citizenship.
- The EA Regional Assessment of Need has highlighted climate and environment as increasingly important issues to young people.
- An increasing number of young people are so worried about these issues that they are experiencing "eco anxiety". Taking part in positive action has been shown to help alleviate such feelings.
- Being outside and engaging with nature promotes positive health and wellbeing.

From a youth work point of view this programme can be used to deliver core elements of the Model for Effective Practice. Participation can be accredited through OCN (levels - foundation, 1 and 2) or recognised through Ulster Wildlife's Wild Youth Award Scheme.



Sustainable Youth - Introduction

In the session plans that follow you will see references to Resources that you will need to print out or obtain. The things to print are provided in separate documents accompanying this guide. Each resource relates to one of the seven stages of the programme and an explanation of how to use them can be found in the relevant section further on.

Open College Network

Young people may wish to receive an endorsed certificate from the Open College Network (OCN) recognising their learning and development. If so, the youth worker must contact the Education Authority Youth Service to register the young people as learners and to request evidence booklets.

OCN certification is available at foundation level, level one and level two, course title - Environmental Issues, course codes 132315, 132316 and 132317. These equate to Key Stage 2, 3 and 4. However regardless of age, the youth worker will need to decide on the ability level of the young people they are working with and select the appropriate level of OCN certification to pursue.

Wild Youth Awards

As well as or instead of OCN certification, all young people can gain Bronze, Silver or Gold "Wild Youth Award" certificates from Ulster Wildlife. These recognise the time young people have devoted to helping the environment starting at just 12 hours for Bronze, 25 for Silver and working up to 52 for Gold. They also incorporate a positive peer comment from another member of their project team.



Seven stages of Sustainable Youth



What's all the fuss about?

What's going on around here?

What's important to us?

What should we do about it?

Lets do it!

What did we achieve?

What's the bigger picture?

Stage 1 - What's all the fuss about?

Most young people will already have some awareness that there are current issues around climate change and loss of wildlife. Rather than start with doom and gloom, this stage aims to create excitement and energy about what we have and what we can do to make things better.




Key Objectives

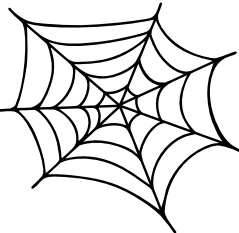
- Inspire young people by highlighting the amazing wildlife that we still have in this part of the world.
- Introduce the concept that everything in the environment is interconnected.
- Give them a chance to reflect on how they feel about nature and the environment.

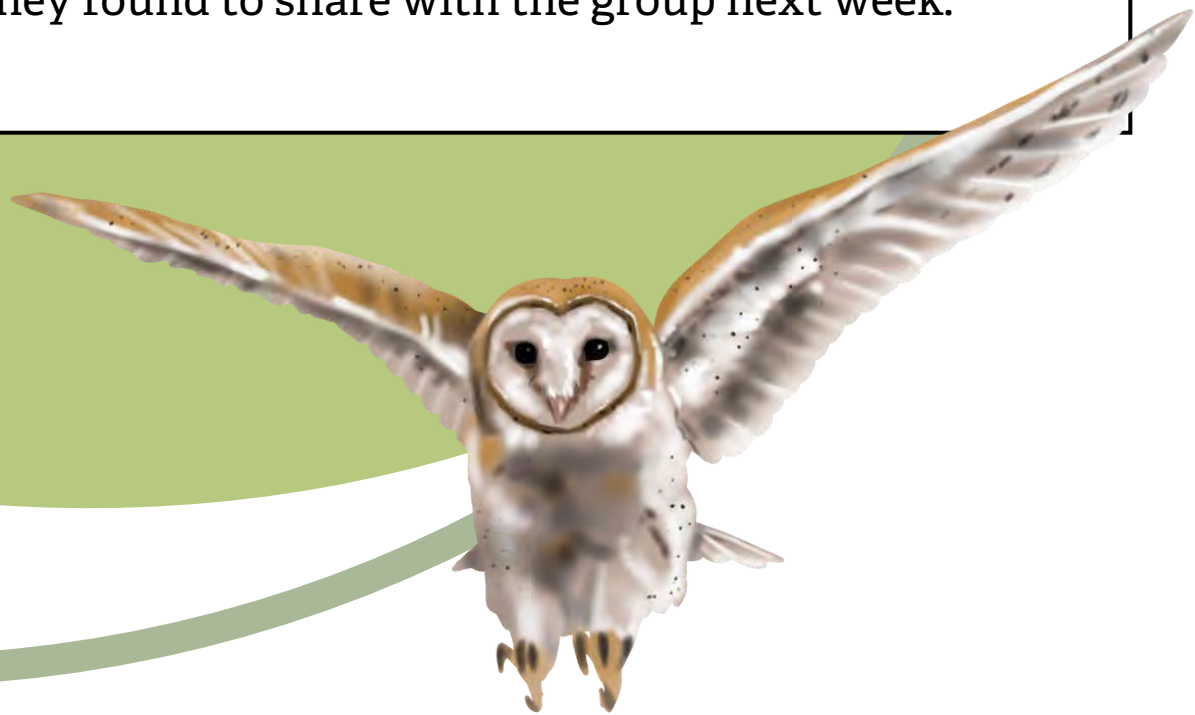
Key skills

- Improving confidence – try new opportunities, able to make mistakes in a safe place, stepping out of their comfort zone.
- Working as a team- communicating with others, following instructions, supporting and encouraging others in the group.
- Communication- sharing ideas, listening to others.



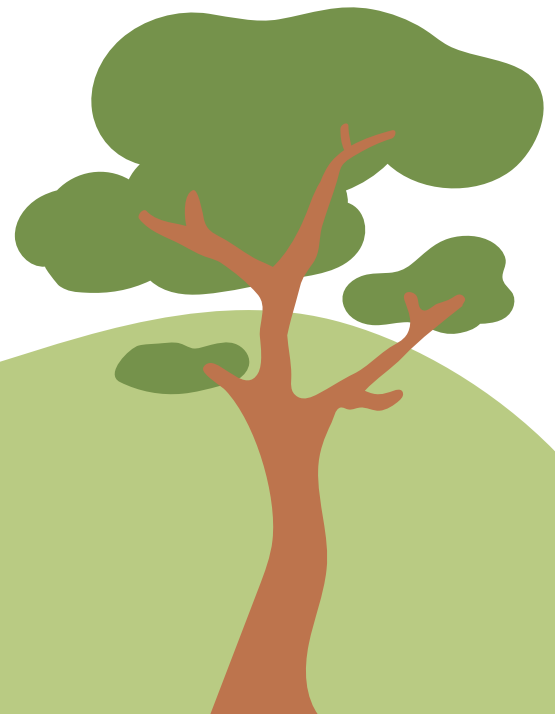
Activity	Comment
<p data-bbox="76 443 272 488">Welcome</p> 	<p data-bbox="331 230 1522 651">Explain the aim of the project - An opportunity to take action in the local area. The group will learn lots about the environment and sustainability working through the project. They will be able to achieve a certificate e.g. OCN or Ulster Wildlife's Wild Youth Award. Ask them to think about what they would like to get out of experience and to fill in the Pre project survey form.</p> <p data-bbox="331 663 1086 712">Resource - Pre project survey form</p>
<p data-bbox="87 1059 268 1227">Wildlife Mystery Cards</p> 	<p data-bbox="331 781 1485 1014">How much do you know about local wildlife? Place the mystery cards face down on the table. Each person picks one card then, one at a time ask them to turn over their card to discover their mystery wildlife.</p> <p data-bbox="331 1025 1501 1384">Ask them if they know what it is and then give them some facts about it from your information sheet. The aim of this game is to show that we have lots of interesting local wildlife. Many people playing this game realize they know a lot more about exotic species than they do about local wildlife.</p> <p data-bbox="331 1395 1305 1507">Resource - Set of Wildlife Mystery Cards and accompanying information sheet.</p>
<p data-bbox="68 1798 236 1899">Good Memories</p> 	<p data-bbox="331 1585 1522 1821">Ask the group to create a big string map of Northern Ireland/ Ireland on the floor. Everyone should now stand on the part where they have had the best outdoor experience. Each person relates their experience.</p> <p data-bbox="331 1832 1513 2067">Discuss how our environment sustains us both physically e.g. providing food but also emotionally with great memories. If possible this activity is best done outdoors.</p> <p data-bbox="331 2078 850 2128">Resource - Ball of string</p>

Activity	Comment
<p data-bbox="124 633 284 741">Web of Life</p> 	<p data-bbox="365 264 1505 1055">This activity is crucial to help build the concept that everything is interconnected. Give each young person one of the web of life cards and ask them to stand in a circle. Give the end of a ball of string to the young person with the oak tree. Ask them to read out what the oak tree supports and use the string to connect the tree to one of them. Repeat this until everyone is connected to at least two others and there is a good web created in the middle of the circle. Make sure the string is held tight and explain that everything is in balance. Now ask the oak tree to let go of the string as if it had been cut down and let everyone feel the impact.</p> <p data-bbox="365 1066 1369 1115">Resource - Web of Life Cards and ball of string</p>
<p data-bbox="124 1379 284 1429">Reflect</p>	<p data-bbox="365 1193 1485 1305">Review today's activities, discuss what would make a perfect place for nature and people.</p> <p data-bbox="365 1379 1497 1552">Ask the group to take some time in nature during the week and if possible bring in something interesting they found to share with the group next week.</p>



Bonus activity - The woodcutter game

- Pick a number of young people to be trees, they should stand in the game area well spaced out.
- Everyone else should become a bird, squirrel, hedgehog etc.
- Everyone will run from tree to tree eating nuts etc. They must hold their breath between the trees.
- After a short time blow a whistle at which point the children run to the nearest tree and stay there.
- You are a wood cutter and you cut down a few trees.
- Repeat this over and over.
- Each time give reasons why you are cutting down more trees
- Cut the trees in such a way that each turn becomes more difficult.
- In the end all the wildlife must shelter under one tree which is overburdened.
- Ask the children what impact this will have?



Stage 2 - What's going on around here?

This stage is about young people looking carefully at what's around them and getting some initial inspiration and ideas for their project. This stage involves taking the young people on a walk around the building and grounds where they meet and then out around the local area.

Key Objectives

- Young people closely observe their local community through the lens of different environmental issues.
- An opportunity to walk and talk increasing group cohesion.
- The Youth Worker has an opportunity to listen to the observations and views of the young people in the group.


Key skills

- Improving observation skills.
- Confidence.
- Building and maintaining positive relationships.
- Teamwork.
- Communicating ideas.



Activity	Comments
Welcome back	Reflect back on Stage 1 - in particular how everything is interconnected.
Walk and talk	<p>Explain that a bit like a scavenger hunt, you are going to walk around the building, grounds and local area to spot environmental issues and things that could be changed for the better. Split in to pairs and give each a copy of the walk and talk recording sheet. This has 9 headings (distilled from the Sustainable Development Goals) of things to look out for and record. Challenging them to find at least one thing under each of the headings. They can photograph what they notice as well. Choose a route that takes in a variety of features, e.g. food outlets, bus stops, cycle lanes, a park or local greenspace. If there is no greenspace this can be part of your observations. If a local area walk isn't suitable for your group, then just keep within the building and grounds where you meet. The Youth Worker's role is to encourage as much discussion as possible. Asking prompting questions like what stands out, what do you notice, what can you hear etc. is crucial to the success of this activity. Mention respect for others and for wildlife. Take a minute or two to experience a mindful moment outdoors.</p> <p>Resource - Walk and talk recording sheet</p>



Activity	Comments
<p data-bbox="188 1093 408 1142">Feedback</p> 	<p data-bbox="539 271 1461 1048">After the walk and talk get each of the pairs to feedback what they recorded. You can structure this by taking feedback on each of the topics at a time. Use prompting questions like did something stand out, annoy them, please them, puzzle them. Ask is there something immediately that they think needs addressed in the building, grounds or local community. Encourage the group to think of what's good for both people and the planet.</p> <p data-bbox="539 1126 1461 1570">If at this point, the group has already clearly identified and agreed on a key issue to address, then they could move straight to stage 4. If they also know what it is they want to do then they could even jump straight to stage 5 - Lets do it.</p> <p data-bbox="539 1648 1437 1966">Before the next session with the group you could ask them to talk to older family members and see if they know about changes to the local environment during the last 20-40 years.</p>



Bonus activity - Using your phone to connect with nature

Key Objectives

- To encourage young people to look carefully and learn to appreciate the beauty in the "ordinary" nature they see around them.
- To encourage and develop the well being skill of appreciating nature.

Key skills

- Communication, Confidence, Observation, Teamwork.

This is a simple activity which helps focus a group to look more carefully at nature when walking outdoors. Combining walking outdoors with taking photos is good for both physical and mental health and can become a healthy habit for some people.

The activity allows you to connect with your surroundings, find beauty in small things and works in any weather.

Focusing on beauty around us helps to improve mood, similar to gratitude activities.



Bonus activity - Using your phone to connect with nature

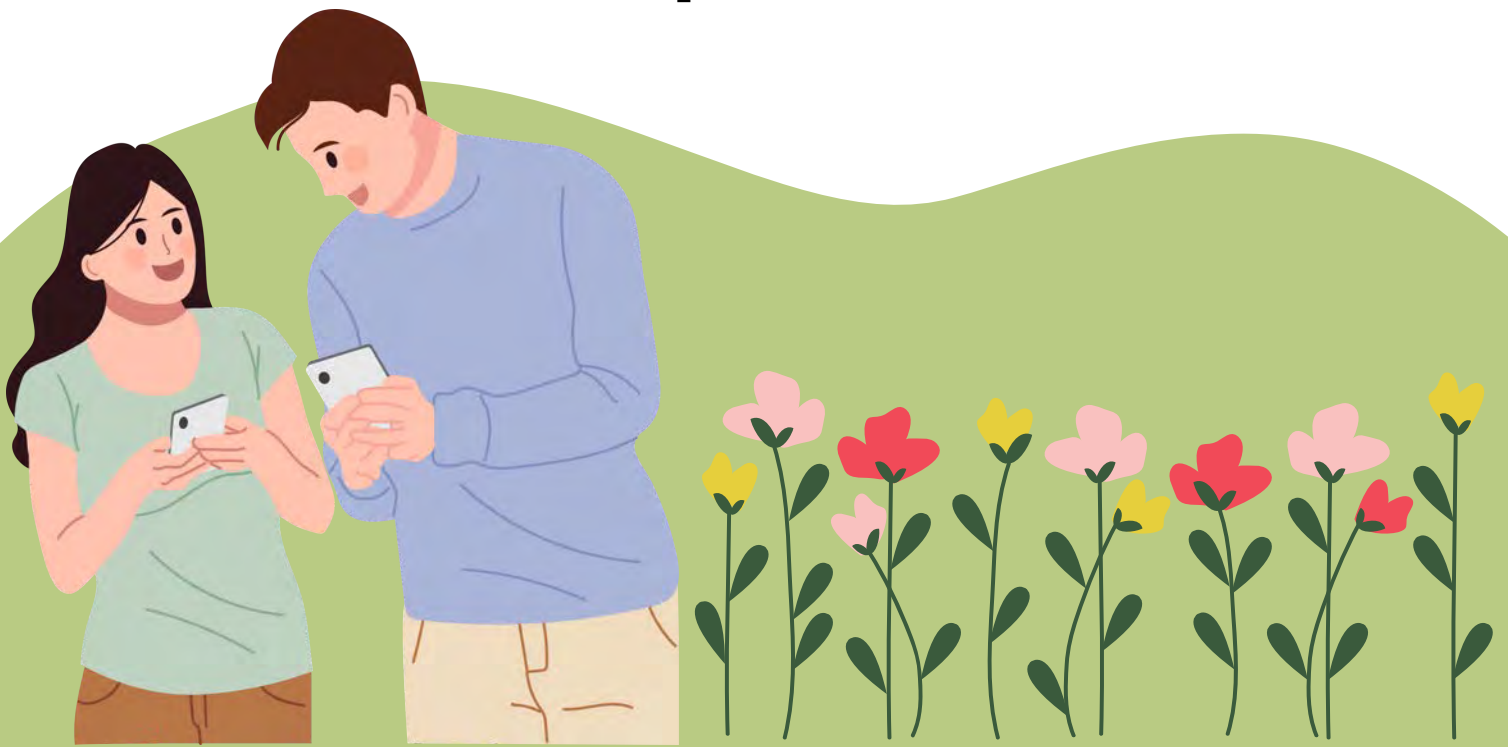
1. Divide the group into pairs.
2. Ask each group to take a walk and look carefully at the nature around them.
3. Ask them to decide between themselves on 5 nature photos.
4. One person will take the photo the other will use their fingers to frame each photo.
5. Together the pair decide on one photo for each of the following 5 headings.

- Something that made me curious
- Something very beautiful
- Something unusual
- Something I hadn't noticed before
- Something that made me feel happy



6. The pair now team up with another pair in the group to share their photos and explain their choices.

Photographs could be printed and displayed to create a nature wellness record of the activity.



Bonus activity - Mindful moment in nature

Key Objectives

- To encourage young people to look carefully and learn how to use nature to help them with relaxation.
- To encourage and develop the wellbeing skill of appreciating nature.

Key skills

- Resilience
- Selfcare

Activity

This is simple activity which helps teach the skill of grounding. Go to a local green space. Stop and sit for a while noticing things around you.

Look for:

5 things you can see

4 you can touch

3 you can hear

2 you can smell

1 you can taste

For the taste one, bring and give them each something nice to eat like a strawberry raspberry, blackberry etc. - do not encourage young people to eat unfamiliar or unwashed wild plants or berries etc.



Stage 3 - What's important to us?

At this stage young people work together to look at issues in more depth, then decide together as a group which issue they will focus on to create their own social action project. The older and more engaged the group, the more time you may be able to spend exploring issues in more detail. If you are working with younger or less engaged groups then you may want to just move straight to voting on which issue the group wants to address.


Key Objectives

- Young people work together as a group to narrow the focus of the project and begin to plan a project activity.
- Young people feel a sense of ownership of the project.



Key skills

- Organisation and planning.
- Decision making - assessing information.
- Teamwork - listening skills, reaching agreement, being aware of the feelings of others.
- Communication- speaking in front of others, expressing thoughts or feelings.



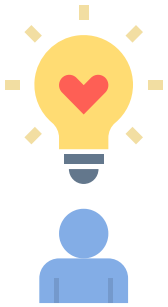
Activity	Comment
Set the task 	Layout the 9 topic fact sheets. Divide your group in to small groups of 3 or 4. Get everyone to think back their walk and talk activity and the kind of issues that came up. Then ask each of the groups to pick a topic fact sheet that interests them. Resource - Topic Fact Sheets
Find out more	Ask that someone in each group reads out their fact sheet to their fellow group members. Each factsheet also has a video link to watch. Ask them to think about the issue and how it relates to them locally. Ask them to create a summary sheet to feedback to others about the issue.
Tell others	Each small group provides feedback to the rest of the group on their issue.
Time to vote	Lay the fact sheets out and place a container by each. Containers with a slit in the top are best as they keep secret how many votes are inside until opened at the end. Give everyone three tokens. Everyone can split their tokens across three topics, put two tokens against one topic and one against another or if they are very passionate about one particular topic then give all three votes to that one.



Activity	Comment
<p data-bbox="181 600 488 645">Decision time</p> 	<p data-bbox="603 271 1414 387">If there is an obvious issue that gets most votes, that is great.</p> <p data-bbox="603 405 1469 972">There may be a few issues that get similar amounts of votes, its then up to the group to use their decision making skills to come up with a consensus to move forward. Some groups create projects looking at more than one issue, others decide to vote again until they get one issue. It's up to them.</p>
<p data-bbox="137 1151 536 1267">Blue sky thinking time</p>	<p data-bbox="603 1052 1465 1227">If you had unlimited funds/ help what would you do as a group to address the issue?</p> <p data-bbox="603 1245 1442 1366">Create a big list of possible solutions/ action projects.</p>
<p data-bbox="242 1671 427 1715">Feelings</p> 	<p data-bbox="603 1442 1436 1617">Some young people may feel anxious when looking in more depth at the environmental issues we face.</p> <p data-bbox="603 1635 1442 1953">If appropriate in your group take some time out to address the feelings that these issues bring up. Focus on the positive feelings that come from taking action to address these issues.</p>

Stage 4 - What should we do about it?

At this stage the group need to decide on one clear and achievable action to address the wider issue that they wish to tackle . To achieve the most youth work outcomes, the young people should be enabled to have as much autonomy as possible in choosing and creating their social action activities. This can involve them working out what they will need help and support with to achieve their action. It might also involve having a visiting speaker or a trip to gain more knowledge around their issue and proposed action.



Key Objectives


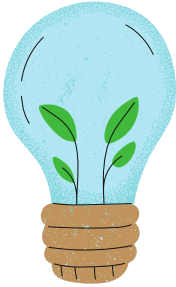
- Young people work as a team to develop an action plan.
- Young people identify a list of tasks needed to be able to complete the social action activity.
- Tasks are divided among the group and assigned.

Key skills

- Resilience- taking on new challenges.
- The ability to create change - taking social action.
- Teamwork.
- Communication.
- Leadership.



We are going to.....

Activity	Comment
 <p data-bbox="97 607 304 1048">Review ideas and decide on a realistic action to be taken</p> 	<p data-bbox="357 244 1497 1413">Look at all the ideas that were expressed during the previous stage. In small groups ask the young people to write and or draw their top 3 ideas (each idea on a separate piece of card). Ask them to focus on ideas that they could achieve themselves over a short period of time (days or weeks not months and years). Explain an action could be a step towards a much longer term goal - e.g. a petition to improve a local green space for people and nature. Ask them to share their ideas with the wider group placing the cards where everyone can see them. Look for ideas that are similar and place these together. Through discussion, see if one clear action comes to the surface. Sometimes combining two or three ideas in to one action can be the solution but keep it realistic and achievable by the young people. If needed, vote to reach a decision on the group's chosen action.</p>
<p data-bbox="113 1532 288 1648">Finalise plans</p>	<p data-bbox="357 1496 1398 1615">Ask the group to come up with a plan for their action and assign group roles and tasks.</p> <p data-bbox="357 1626 1062 1675">Resource - Action Plan booklet</p>



Stage 5 - Lets do it!

Enable the young people in the group to take the lead and have as much autonomy and responsibility as possible during this stage of the project. This stage may take a few sessions to complete or could be achieved through a one off concerted effort. This will all depend on the chosen action as well as the abilities and age of the group. If appropriate, consider supporting them to generate publicity about their achievements.

Key objectives

- Young people work as a team to implement their action plan.
- Young people are supported to carry out tasks needed to complete the social action activity

Key skills

- Resilience - taking on new challenges, being flexible and adaptable, motivation.
- Organisation and planning - managing time, budgets, prioritising tasks.
- Decision making.
- The ability to create change- taking social action.
- Teamwork.
- Communication.
- Leadership.



Activity	Comment
<p>Young people leading and carrying out their chosen social action</p>	<p>There are endless ideas for action to tackle one of the sustainable youth topics. Here are some possibilities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nature - Improve grounds for nature, record local wildlife, peer education about a local endangered species. • Energy - Put up signs and advice to reduce energy use, research and propose alternatives. • Climate - Measure everyone's carbon footprint and work out ways to reduce it. • Health and wellbeing - Organise a trip to a green spaces and take part in nature based wellbeing activities. • Air - Find out about local air pollution levels and raise awareness of the impact on health. • Water - Promote use of reusable drinking bottles, peer awareness around where tap water comes from and goes to, peer education about saving water. • Waste - Explore waste in the fashion and beauty industries, art work with waste products. • Food - Research and promote locally grown and organic food. Start growing your own. • Transport - Build go carts out of reused materials and have a race, campaign for cycle lanes and bicycle racks/shelters.

Stage 6 - What did we achieve?

Hopefully young people have not only created positive change in their community, but also positive changes in themselves and their relationships with each other. Looking back at what they achieved creates an opportunity to highlight both the practical work they accomplished along with their personal growth. The young people will achieve a certificate to confirm their participation in the project.

Key objectives

- Young people see that they can work together and achieve a goal.
- They realise they can create an action to change/ improve their community/ environment.

Key skills

- Resilience - taking on new challenges, being flexible and adaptable, motivation, improved optimism.
- Confidence - greater self belief and raised appreciation of their abilities.
- Decision making.
- The ability to create change - taking social action.
- Teamwork.
- Communication.
- Leadership- motivating others.



Activity	Comment
<p>Reflection</p> <p>What did we do, what did we achieve?</p>	<p>Looking back at photos of the project can be a good way to start. Divide the group in to small groups. Give them a large sheet of paper and pens and ask them to produce a poster that depicts what they have done and achieved. Share these and discuss highlights and positive outcomes.</p>
<p>How did taking part impact me and members of the group?</p>	<p>Ask the young people to think about and share their personal growth as a result of taking part in the project. Get each of the group to write a short positive comment about another member of the group.</p> <p>Incorporate these comments on to "Wild Youth Award" Certificates.</p> <p>Resource - Wild Youth Award certificate request form</p>
<p>What did we learn?</p>	<p>Discuss anything that went wrong? What did the group learn from it?</p> <p>What would they do differently if they were going to do this action again?</p>



Stage 7 - What's the bigger picture?

This activity helps put the social action taken by the group into a bigger context. It highlights the impact of the action and shows how numerous small actions can effect big changes. It also links the project to the Sustainable Development Goals.

Key Objectives

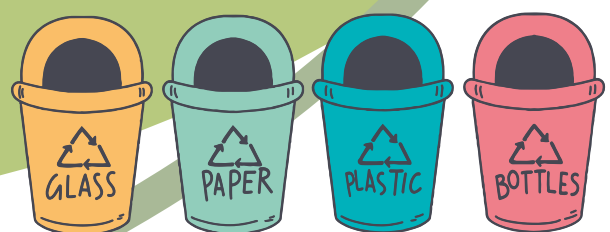
- Young people learn the concept that everything is interrelated.
- Young people appreciate the impact of their action.
- Young people appreciate how all the issues discussed at the beginning of the project are inter related and that their project has multiple impacts.
- young people experience how small actions feed into a bigger picture.

Key skills

- Local and global citizenship.
- Leadership - Motivating others.
- Creating change - systems thinking.
- Improved critical thinking.



Activity	Comment
Impact of our action?	Have a look at the posters made by the young people in the previous stage.
Mind map / seeing the links	<p>Give the young people's project a name and write it in the centre of a large piece of paper. Remind the young people of the 9 Sustainable Youth topics and ask them which did their action contribute to and how. Create a mind map of this (see diagram below for example) The more creative and artistic this can be the better. As the map is created young people will come up with many more connections. This will help reinforce the concept that everything is interconnected.</p>
Introduce the Sustainable Development goals	<p>The Sustainable Development Goals (SDG's) provide a global plan for a better future. Print off and cut up the 17 goals. Ask the group to place them on the mind map to show where their project has contributed towards an SDG. This lets young people see how their action is part of a larger vision and that it fits into the global plan of action. With any project, most of the SDG's will find a place on the mind map, many in several places.</p> <p>Resource - Sustainable Development Goal tiles</p>





Transport

Clothes get transported all over the world, reusing clothes reduces transport problems

Nature

Growing cotton can have a negative impact on biodiversity due to the land needed
Pollution from clothing factories can harm wildlife



Water

Making clothes uses a huge amount of water, there is also often water pollution issues with the factories where the clothes are made.

Air

Clothing factories can cause air pollution
A huge amount of fuel is burnt during the transport of clothes, if less clothes are bought this will reduce.



Our project - Clothes Swap

THRIFT SHOP



Waste

Swapping clothes avoids them being thrown away and therefore reduces waste.



Food

Land that could be used for food production is used to grow cotton.
Pollution from clothing factories may impact crops



Climate

Large amounts of fossil fuels used in clothing production and transportation will have a negative impact on the climate



Energy

Creating clothing is energy intensive
This can take important energy supplies away from other things



Health and well being

Better personal finances as less money spent on new clothes.
Improved confidence when not following fast fashion
Improved creativity and individuality

Activity	Comment
<p>Thousands of small actions add up to something much bigger</p>	<p>Ask the group to imagine what would happen if more people took actions such as the one they have taken.</p> <p>What if every youth group did what they had done, what impact would that have across the county?</p> <p>The young people should see the importance of everyone doing what they can where they are and how this can add up to create bigger changes at both local and global level.</p>
<p>Well done Celebration Time</p>	<p>Time to celebrate the group achievements. Share what's been done and the outcomes on social media. Present certificates and have a fun trip, BBQ, parent evening with video of project etc.</p> <p>Ask them to think about what they gained from taking part and to fill in the Post project survey form.</p> <p>Resource - Post project survey form</p>
<p>What next?</p>	<p>Has anything been created that will need maintained and if so who will do it? What would the next natural stage of the project be? Could you continue or improve on the social action?</p>





Appendix

Key concepts

Five concepts that Youth Workers may find it useful to have some understanding of before beginning work with young people around environmental and sustainability issues are as follows:

Climate and biodiversity crisis

Increasing average global temperatures and declines in wildlife populations are well established facts. Whilst a few still argue about the causes, most agree it is clearly human activity that is responsible.

Everything in the environment is interconnected

Every action we take has consequences, sometimes positive sometimes negative. Becoming aware of the consequences of our actions gives us the opportunity to create positive change rather than further damage.

Sustainability

Looking after our needs today in ways that will still allow future generations to meet theirs, in other words being fair to our grandchildren. Sustainable Development aims to get the right balance between the needs of society, the economy and the environment.

Environmental justice

We need to achieve a fair and equal future for all when working to address the climate and ecological crisis.

Active Hope

Taking part in positive social action can decrease the level of anxiety felt by young people in relation to environmental issues and climate change.



SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS



Sustainable Youth aims to empower young people to see how their actions can help address the Sustainable Development Goals.

The Sustainable Development Goals are a blueprint to achieve a better and more sustainable future for all.

They are a key part of the 2030 agenda, developed on the seventieth anniversary of the United Nations in 2015. The aim is to address global challenges of poverty, inequality, climate, environmental degradation, prosperity, peace and justice.

The Goals interconnect and, in order to ensure a just transition that leaves no one behind, it is important that we achieve each Goal and target by 2030.



The Sustainable Development Goals

1 - No poverty– end poverty, in all its forms, everywhere.

2 - Zero hunger– end hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition, and improve agriculture.

3 - Good health and wellbeing– ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all, at all ages.



4 - Quality education– ensure inclusive and equitable, quality education, promote lifelong learning opportunities for all.

5 - Gender equality– achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls.

6 - Clean water and sanitation– ensure the sustainable management and availability of water and sanitation for all.

7 - Affordable energy– ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all.

8 - Decent work and economic growth– promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment, and decent work for all.

9 - Industry innovation and infrastructure– build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialisation, and foster innovation.



10 - Reduced inequalities– reduce inequality within and among countries.

11 - Sustainable cities and communities– make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable.

12 - Responsible consumption and production– ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns.

13 - Climate action– take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts.

14 - Life below water– conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development.

15 - Life on land– protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, halt and reverse land degradation, and halt biodiversity loss.

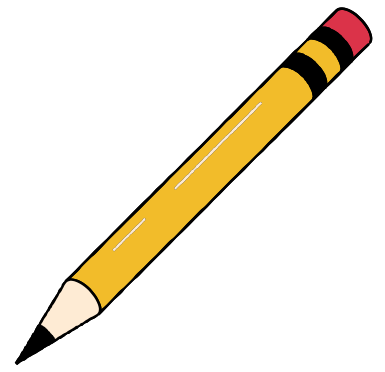
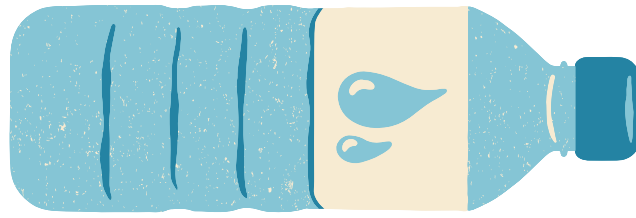
16 - Peace, justice and strong institutions– promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all, and build effective, accountable institutions at all levels.

17 - Partnerships for the goals– strengthen the means of implementation and revitalise the global partnership for sustainable development.





Sustainable or not?



This activity is best introduced at a point in the project when young people are beginning to understand their project and its impact on the environment.

Key objectives

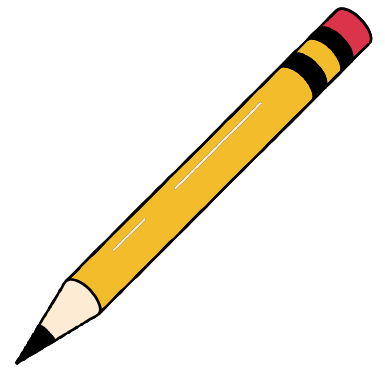
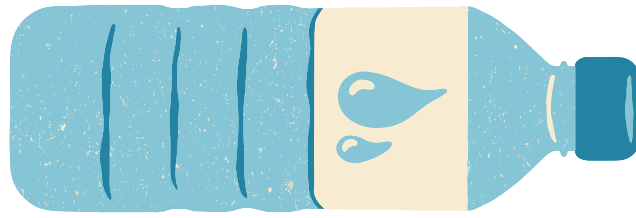
- Young people think about the environmental impact of everyday items.
- Young people begin to see that everything is connected.

Key skills

- Confidence.
- Decision making.
- Communication.



Sustainable or not?



- Gather a set of everyday items e.g. pencil, pen, reusable cup, bottled water, drinks can, fleece top, cotton hoodie, local fruit e.g. apple, fruit from abroad, chocolate, etc. and anything of interest to the young people in your group.
- Place each item on the table and ask everyone in the group to pick one.
- Once everyone has an item ask them to describe how sustainable they think the item is and why?
- This activity is about stimulating discussion and critical thinking, there are no absolutes.
- The group can think about the wider impact of each item including where the raw materials came from, who made the item etc.



Litter Challenge

This activity helps young people think about litter and packaging. They can think about the packaging that is sustainable compared to that which is unsustainable.

Key objectives

- Young people work as a team to make a decision on the challenge.
- Young people are confronted by the issue of litter.

Key skills

- Teamwork.
- Communication.

Gather two sets of clean litter and place each outside the building, if possible somewhere where nice.

Ask for a reaction when young people see the litter.

Divide the group in two and ask each group to put the litter into order that it will decompose first to last.

(decompose = break down into very small parts).



Litter Challenge

The following times may vary due to environmental conditions, density of product etc.

- Paper - 2-6 weeks
- Cardboard - 2 months to 5 years
- Cotton - 6 months
- Tin Can - 50-100 years
- Aluminum Can - 200 years
- Fleece clothing - a few hundred years depending on composition
- Plastic bottle - up to 450 years
- Polystyrene - 500 years
- Glass - estimates to one million years!



Use any other items you feel may be of interest to your group. e.g. disposable vapes, disposable nappy etc.

- Discuss how sustainable each product is.
- What products are better and what products are harmful to the environment?
- Ask about other solutions e.g. reusable cups.



Reduce, reuse, recycle game

An activity suitable for children to help reinforce the concept of Reduce, Reuse and Recycle.

Key objective

- Children enjoy an active game, can be played outdoors.
- Children remember the 3 R's of sustainability, reduce, reuse and recycle.

Key skills

- Listening.
- Physical activity.
- Decision making.

Explain the concept of Reduce, Reuse, Recycle - The most important part is to reduce, the less products produced in the first place, the less the environmental impact.

If reducing is not an option the next best thing to do is to reuse. Recycling is the third and least best option, many things are simply not recycled, are difficult to recycle or become poorer quality when recycled.



Reduce, reuse, recycle game

Put three bases out around the area as far apart as practical. One each to represent reduce, reuse and recycle. Ask everyone to stand in the middle of the bases.

Read out an action from the list below, or add in your own. The group then run to the correct base. Continue this with lots of different actions until the children get a sense of the different concepts. Expand the activity by asking group members to come up with ideas.

Idea list examples.

A packed lunch, donating books to a charity shop, sewing, composting food waste, putting old batteries in a collection container, using plastic bags for shopping, borrowing a game instead of buying one.





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