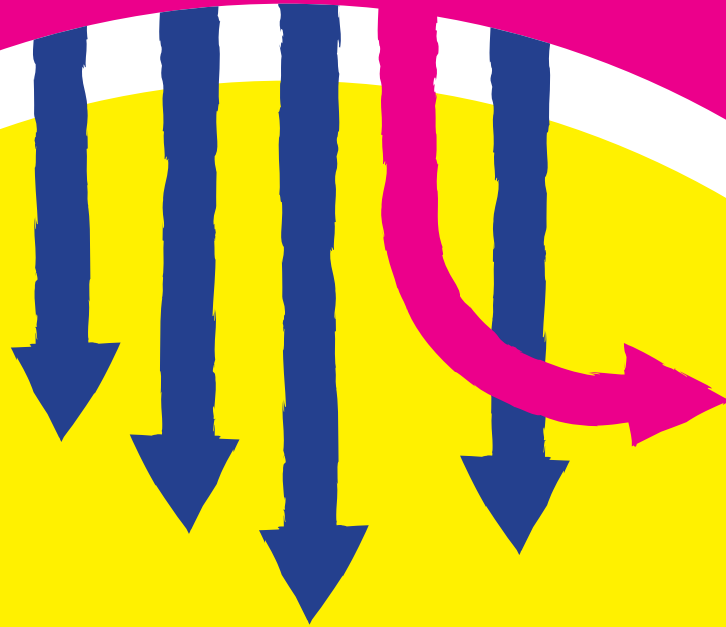


FUTURE GENERATIONS

CLIMATE JUSTICE PROJECT



HOW TO CREATE
CHANGE
AT THE LOCAL LEVEL



FUTURE GENERATIONS CLIMATE JUSTICE PROJECT

Future Generations – Climate Justice Project is a consortium project between the National Youth Council of Ireland (lead agency), Macra na Feirme, Sphere17 Regional Youth Facility, YMCA Ireland, and 1Planet4All (Concern Worldwide). It is funded by the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth and Irish Aid.

Future Generations – Climate Justice Project seeks to explore and highlight the systemic and human rights issues related to the climate crisis. With this partnership, we set out to bring the unique voices of young people who are missing from the climate discourse. Young people from marginalised, rural, and disadvantaged backgrounds are often left out of the conversation and their reality is oftentimes not represented in national and global policies as a result.

<https://www.youth.ie/climate-justice/>

For more information on our partner organisations:

National Youth Council of Ireland – www.youth.ie

Macra na Feirme – www.macra.ie

Sphere 17 Regional Youth Service – www.sphere17.ie

YMCA Ireland – www.ymca-ireland.net

Concern Worldwide – www.concern.net

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KEY DEFINITIONS



Climate Change

Climate Change describes a change in the average conditions such as temperature and rainfall in a region over a long period of time. Climate Change captures global warming driven by human emissions of greenhouse gases and the condition it creates in our weather such as extreme drought, storms, flooding, and heatwaves. Due to the work of the climate movement in recent years, the term 'Climate Change' is deemed too neutral and does not take account of the gravity and urgency of the situation. 'Climate crisis', 'climate breakdown' and 'climate disruption' are better terms to describe what is happening to our planet.

Climate Action

Climate action refers to the stepped-up efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and to strengthen resilience and our capacity to adapt to climate-induced impacts. Important actions include increasing cycling paths and public transport corridors and retrofitting homes (among other things).

Climate & Biodiversity Crises

The United Nations Secretary General António Guterres has urged governments around the world to declare a state of climate emergency until the world has reached net zero CO2 emission. In declaring a state of climate emergency, governments acknowledge their vulnerability to the impacts of climate breakdown and set up their response in curtailing the climate and biodiversity crises. In May 2019, Ireland joined 37 countries in the world that have declared a state of climate and biodiversity emergency.

Climate Justice

Climate Justice is a term used to frame global warming as an ethical and political issue, rather than one that is purely environmental or physical in nature. Therefore, any solution proposed to an environmental problem needs to take into consideration the unjust and unequal situation our current system has produced (from an economic, social, political, cultural, technological, and environmental perspective). Climate Justice argues that the only way the world will overcome the environmental challenges is by working together and by accepting a readjustment of the current system.

For more information on Climate Justice visit: <https://www.youth.ie/whatisclimatejustice/>

Also, check out the Mary Robinson Foundation website: <https://www.mrfcj.org/pdf/Principles-of-Climate-Justice.pdf>

Local Level

In Ireland, local level refers to local governments, which operate within specific geographic areas. Read more about how local level politics works on page 11.

Policymaker

A policymaker is someone who is responsible for creating policies (guidelines or rules), particularly in government.

Youth Participation

Youth participation is the active, voluntary engagement of young people in any activity that shapes, affects, or involves them as citizens, particularly in a governmental context.

Tokenism

Tokenism is making a visible effort to do something (such as invite young people to give their opinions in a political space) only to prevent criticism and give the appearance that people are being treated equitably.

Dialogue

A conversation or discussion that aims to resolve a specific problem.

Do-It-Ourselves Activism

Many social movements are also known as 'Do-It-Ourselves' activism. Do-It-Ourselves activism involves participation that is outside of traditional political institutions but can sometimes be run in conjunction with them. Read more about Do-It-Ourselves Activism on page 20.

Intergenerational

Including or involving people from different generations.



WHAT IS THIS RESOURCE FOR?



The aim of this resource is to support young people's understanding on how they can create meaningful change at a local level, particularly with regards to climate change and climate justice.

Young people have taken on the climate and biodiversity crises as a personal issue for them, and they have reminded us, that we should all take these crises more seriously. For a long time, young people's voices were not included in the climate conversation, and that has stalled global progress. In 2019, when young people across the world took to the streets in protest, it was young people who put climate change on the international agenda. However, young people have now been delegated to the street in this conversation. They know the facts. They have tried to negotiate and educate, to raise awareness. They are now shouting and demanding, but still young people are being left out of shaping our planet's recovery and its future.

Youth participation at governmental level is a fundamental right, and to shape institutions, you need the right mechanisms in place. Through this resource we hope to provide information and knowledge and we hope to inspire and encourage young people to shape how their community and local government responds to climate change.

We know that change relating to the climate and biodiversity crises needs to happen at many different levels, but this resource will focus on the governmental institution closest to each person: their local government.

After reading this resource you should understand:

- How local level government operates in Ireland, and how beneficial action at a local level is to national and international issues
- What meaningful participation should look like, and how to hold institutions accountable if they do not practice meaningful participation for young people
- How to identify different interest groups and stakeholders within your locality, so that you have allies in your push for change

SECTION 1

RECOGNISING MEANINGFUL YOUTH PARTICIPATION

Youth participation is the active, voluntary engagement of young people in any activity that shapes, affects, or involves them as citizens, particularly in a governmental context. Youth participation can happen on many different levels and can play a role in how your community, region, country (or world) is shaped.



“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it’s the only thing that ever has.” MARGARET MEAD

Youth participation is a powerful tool! And young people are powerful, often beyond their own imagination. Young people have the innovation, passion, and courage to assert their values, because they know without their democratic input, the issues they are facing may continue to negatively affect their lives, or others’ lives in the future. Young people are a powerful force in ensuring that political participation is structured in a way that prevents marginalisation and strengthens social cohesion. Young people are the drivers that often encourage an intergenerational approach and ensure that vulnerable and diverse voices are included in decision-making conversations. Youth participation can also be a transformative experience for the young person themselves, by creating an early interest in politics, collaborative working, and active citizenship.

Young people have been the driving force in many of the recent mobilisations, including climate change movements (Fridays For Future and Extinction Rebellion), gender equality and feminist movements (#MeToo), and social justice movements (Black Lives Matter and the Irish Marriage Equality Referendum). On the back of these successes, many political bodies are now actively encouraging young people to join them for conversations and consultations on issues of interest.

But are these conversations ‘meaningful’?

Meaningful Participation

'Meaningful' youth participation means that the dialogues had will ultimately be significant, useful, or important to the policy-making process. Simply inviting young people to a conversation, but policymakers not adhering to the advice given by young people, is an example of 'tokenism'.

Tokenism is making a visible effort to do something (such as invite young people to give their opinions in a political space), only to prevent criticism and give the appearance that people are being treated equitably but really not taking new ideas on board. There are ways to assess whether a dialogue that has been created for young people in a political space is tokenistic.

If you have been invited to an event that includes youth participation, follow the below checklist to see if your participation will be truly meaningful:



The 'Is It Meaningful?' Checklist

When you are invited to contribute to an event or activity in your community, the first thing you should ask yourself is:

- Are the aims of this event achievable?

Next, look at the other people who have also been invited:

- Are you the only young person in the room?
- Do you feel as though you were invited to tick the 'we invited a young person' box on the event organiser's checklist?
- Have they invited a mix of all ages (intergenerational)?
- Have they invited a mix of all people (included diverse and marginalised groups)?

Think critically about your participation, and about what you have been told (or not told):

- Have I been called to participate because they believe that I can contribute with something valuable? Such as a skill or expertise that I have?
- Have you been told the outcomes of the event and where/for what these outcomes will be used?
- Will you receive feedback on the event and on any change that might be brought about as a result of the event, conversation, or consultation?

If you haven't been told the anticipated outcomes of the event, ask for them. Read through them and see if they align with your own ideals and principles. Finally, based on the listed outcomes, ask yourself:

- Will my perspectives be valued and contribute to actual change?
- Is there a pathway to where my contributions will go?

If your event/activity involves policy, be sure to also think about who is having the most weight in the policy creation:

- Will my participation as a young person have the same weight as a policymaker?
- What about the other people at the event (or even others that are not at this event) - will they have a similar say?

After assessing the event using the checklist above, if this event does not currently align with your values, needs, priorities, etc, you should message the event organiser and explain to them what you would like to see change. If they can/cannot make these changes, you can then make an informed decision on whether you would like to participate in the event.

(Adapted from 'Meaningful Youth Political Participation In Europe: Concepts, Patterns and Policy Implications')

Now you know what to look out for, so when you practice your right to participate, make sure you're satisfied with what you're engaging in before engaging.

Different Types of Participation

The world is hearing the word 'change' from many different sources recently – youth; media; government; schools; and more. From climate change to systemic change, many are advocating for a better, more equitable world. Change itself comes in many different forms, but the single greatest way to create lasting change, is to participate in projects and strategies that directly influence the change you want to see.

Participation is a process that enables young people to have an active involvement and direct influence on decisions that will affect their lives.

Youth participation is a relatively new, but ever-growing process in modern society. The Council of Europe has identified four levels of participation that citizens (including you!) can get involved in:

- 1) **RECEIVING INFORMATION:** This is a low level of participation which usually involves local government providing information but having little to no interaction or involvement from others.



2) **CONSULTING:** A medium level of participation where local government request the opinions of others on a specific topic.

Engaging in Dialogue: A high level of participation where either the local government or the 'other' (NGOs, individuals, etc) request to have a conversation. This can be either broad or collaborative.

Broad dialogue: a conversation built on mutual interests. Both parties are encouraged to share their views. Examples of broad dialogues include private and public meetings, as long as there are two parties or more involved to exchange opinions. Policy will not necessarily change after a broad dialogue.

Collaborative dialogue: similarly built on mutual interests but this time in relation to developing, changing, and/or updating a specific policy. Collaborate dialogues are often more participatory than broad dialogues, as they require many meetings and joint effort to reach agreed outcomes.

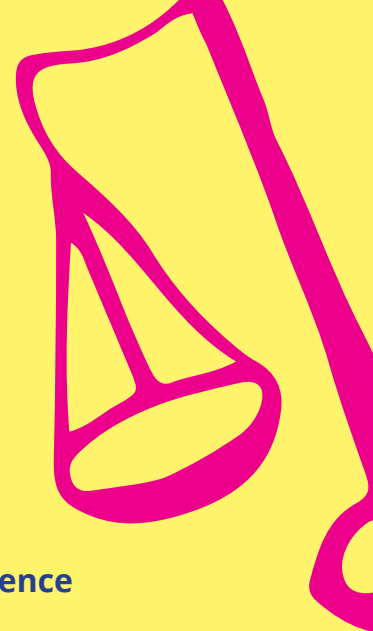
3) **BUILDING PARTNERSHIPS:** This is the highest level of participation. It involves local government working closely with an NGO or individuals, while allowing the opinions of the NGOs or individuals to remain independent. NGOs and individuals have the right to express their opinions as part of the on-going partnership.

Participation for change can happen at one or multiple of these levels. For example, you could build a partnership with a policymaker through a youth club that you are a part of, but you could also participate outside of that club as an individual consultant. Most meaningful change at a local level will have an aim of 'changing the norms' or 'changing the policies' that currently exist within your locality. However, before we can delve into how to create change locally, we must first understand how Irish political systems operate at the local level.



SECTION 2

UNDERSTANDING LOCAL LEVEL POLITICS



Participating in local level politics is a great way to try to influence and change how things work locally, for the good of everyone in the community, locality, or region. Local government have responsibilities in planning and development, transport, parks and public spaces, housing, environmental protections (air pollution, noise pollution, litter, waste run-off, etc.). These are all key areas where young people can make direct and positive impacts in mitigating the climate and biodiversity crises. Local level government is a good way for young people to engage in local climate action, so it's important that we understand how local government works and what mechanisms are in place for us to influence them.



.....
"Everything is Politics."
.....

THOMAS MANN

11

In Ireland, local government is run by local authorities known as city councils or county councils. One county can have multiple local authorities depending on the number of citizens the council caters for. You can find out more about your local authority on the [Local Government Management Agency](#) website.

Many of the local authorities use social media to engage with the public so do a search for these!





COUNCILS & COUNCILLORS

Ireland has 31 councils – 26 county councils, 3 city councils, and 2 city and county councils. There are 949 councillors in the country

SERVICES PROVIDED BY COUNCILS



Housing



Road, Transport & Safety



Recreation & Amenity



Planning



Library Services



Water



Environmental Protection



Economic Development



Fire Services



Register of Electors

WHO MAKES DECISIONS

Elected Councillors

The Chief Executive

The role of the elected councillors is to create policies. A significant part of this process is listening to the opinions and concerns of their local constituents (you), and trying to find solutions to the problems that you raise. This is why it's so important to share your voice within your local community. We will discuss how you can do this in Section 3 of this resource. Elected councillors don't often have the power to implement policies – this is generally the mandate of the chief executive (head) of the council, who holds a paid, unelected position.

Each councillor attends meetings of the full council (including with the chief executive) and will represent their constituents and act as a mouthpiece for the concerns of their local residents. In order for councillors to be able to advocate for the changes that you would like to see in your locality, they need you to be an active citizen, willing to participate and to have your voice heard. This way, the Chief Executive can make more accurate decisions on what is wanted and needed within the local community.

Both councillors and the chief executive have a common interest in serving the community



Locality Map

Use the [Local Government Management Agency website](#) to investigate your local authority.



How many city and/or county councils are within your locality?


How many councillors do you have?

What areas of your locality do they work in? Are there some councillors who live in your neighbourhood?

What are some of the projects that they are currently working on?

List some good contacts you can find that are connected to issues you care about.

Draw your locality as a map:



Allies

If you are interested in making changes in your local area, you need to understand the vision and mission of local stakeholders (groups, organisations, committees, and community councils) to either get on-board as allies of your actions, or to try to convince them as to why your vision is important. Think about the local stakeholders in your community. GAA Club? Parish? Tidy Towns Committee? Active Retirement Group? If you have space, add them into your Locality Map!

Allies are groups of people who will help us make the changes we want to see. Groups who are not currently allies are the people we will need to lobby. Lobbying those that aren't currently allies will be hugely important in delivering change locally, as leaving them out of your vision could be a potential block towards the change you want to bring about. The more people that are involved with your idea, the more perspectives and input you will have to ensure you are making a beneficial change for all aspects of your locality.

Once you know who you can influence, you can then start to think about how you can collaborate.

SECTION 3

MAKING CHANGES THROUGH THE POLITICAL SYSTEM

Ireland has come a long way in recognising the importance and the power of youth participation. We now have policies in place that require local, regional, and national government bodies to work in partnership with young people and youth organisations in their regions. Youth participation in Ireland has helped to solve problems, improve well-being, create an interest among young people in the democratic process, and has bridged gaps between marginalised and diverse communities.



Since 1996, policies have been implemented across the country to ensure that all citizens, including young people, can have their say on policy creation. In these following sections, this resource will help you identify some of the primary ways to get involved in your locality in both political and non-political ways.

Beginning with local authority partnerships and elections, here are some of the ways that you can participate and engage with creating change at the local level directly through the Irish political/electoral system:

Working with your Local Authority

Local authorities do a lot of work and policy creation with organisations and individuals in their locality. Specifically relating to climate change, the new [Climate Action Plan](#) recognises the crucial role that local authorities will play in the implementation of Ireland's climate action. One key action in the Climate Action Plan with regards to the role of local authorities in achieving Ireland's climate objectives is the establishment of a Climate Action Charter for 17 local authorities. This charter ensures that every local authority embeds decarbonisation, sustainable development, and climate resilience into every aspect of the work they do. This means that citizens can hold their local authorities accountable if they believe they are not upholding the spirit of the charter they signed.

If you are over 18, there are numerous ways to get involved directly with your local authority, such as:

Public Participation Networks (PPN)

There is a PPN in each of the 31 local authority areas. PPNs are a network of different groups and organisations within their local community. PPNs are recognised as the main channel by which local authorities and local government connect with their communities. The main role of a PPN is to nominate and elect local representatives to sit on council committees and working groups.

Each PPN has its own website, which you can find [HERE](#) by clicking on 'Find your local Public Participation Network'.

It may be possible to get nominated onto a PPN sub-group. If you are interested, you should get into touch with the PPN Co-ordinator in your area and see what might be possible.

Strategic Policy Committees (SPCs)

Each Local Authority must have at least one SPC set up to support its community. SPCs were introduced to ensure that NGOs, voluntary organisations, and local communities could all input into the decision-making process for their locality. SPCs encourage citizens to participate, and even form partnerships, with their local authorities. SPCs involve locals sitting down with elected representatives to discuss matters such as local businesses; farming; environmental issues; and more.

If you would like to get involved in your local SPC, visit your local council website and search for 'Strategic Policy Committees' in the search bar. Alternatively, you can call your local council on the phone and ask how to get involved directly.

Local Community Development Committees (LCDCs)

LCDCs are groups that are established in each local authority area and will set out objectives to reach over a six-year period. LCDCs oversee:

- Coordinating and pursuing community development funding
- Creating collaborations between community programmes
- Promoting meaningful and proactive citizen engagement on development matters within the community

- Ensuring that priorities within the community are adequately funded and resourced

Each LCDC has its own website, which you can find [HERE](#). Each LCDC will have its own needs, so to get involved, call or email your local LCDC and enquire about how you can participate.

Comhairle na nÓg

Comhairle na nÓg means 'Youth Council', and there is a Comhairle na nÓg set up in all 31 local authorities in Ireland. Comhairle na nÓg gives children and young people (under 18) opportunities to be involved in policy creation within their locality, but also in the development of local services. Comhairle na nÓg is used as a mechanism to give those, who have not yet reached voting age, a say on issues that affect them in their local area.

Comhairle na nÓg operates in two ways:

Each Comhairle na nÓg holds an Annual General Meeting (AGM), where children and young people from the locality are invited to attend. At the AGM, the participants will identify local topics of importance – things that matter to them and/or are affecting their lives.

A Comhairle na nÓg Committee is also elected at the AGM. The committee will take these topics of importance and will consult on these issues. Suggestions and solutions from these consultations are then delivered to local policymakers to review. The committee also acts as a consultative forum that works with policymakers and local government.

To get involved:

You can find your local Comhairle na nÓg on their website [HERE](#). Call or email your local Comhairle na nÓg to find out about their upcoming AGM dates and ask to participate. To learn more about youth organisations that aren't linked to local authorities, see page 21.



Children and Young People's Services Committees (CYPSCs)

Children and Young People's Services Committees (CYPSCs) bring together local organisations and agencies to assess the needs and aspirations of children and young people. CYPSCs work directly with children and young people to ensure that they can engage in meaningful participation on policy measures that affect them.

Each CYPSC is required to produce a 3-year Children and Young People's Plan, which provides for national policy and local needs and priorities. The plans must address anticipated issues that may affect the children and youth of the area.

To get involved:

You can read more about CYPSCs and get involved by contacting your local committee [HERE](#).

The Register of Electors

Arguably, the most important way to create change at both the local and national level, is by adding your name to the Register of Electors when you come of voting age (18 years old). The Register of Electors is a list of people who are registered to vote at an election or referendum. Voting is extremely important when it comes to having your say on important issues that affect you, such as education, climate change, housing, employment, and more. Voting gives you the choice to select who you want to tackle the issues that matter most to you. By not voting you are letting other people make that choice for you.

Complete the activity on the next page to ensure that your name is on the register of electors. Remember: you must be over 18 years of age to appear on the register!

You should also be aware that there is an ongoing campaign to encourage government to reduce the voting age for young people to 16 years. Learn more about this via www.voteat16.ie



ACTIVITY

Are you Eligible to Vote? (& if you are eligible, but aren't on the register, sign up)!

Check the Register at local authority offices, Garda stations, public libraries, or online at www.checktheregister.ie.

If your details are not showing up, but you would like to join the Register, you simply need to complete an RFA form and return it to your local authority. All details on the RFA forms can be found [HERE](#). If you live in Dublin, you can register online at www.voter.ie, as long as you have a verified MyGov account.



SECTION 4

MAKING CHANGES THROUGH DO-IT-OURSELVES ACTIVISM

Do-It-Ourselves activism involves participation that is outside of traditional political institutions but can sometimes be run in conjunction with them.

There are many forms of 'Do-It-Ourselves' activism that don't directly involve acting through the Irish political system but can sway political change. Some of these include:

- Signing a petition
- Doing environmentally friendly actions (recycling, being vegetarian/vegan, using public transport out of principle, etc)
- Boycotting brands/products/retailers/countries
- Performing artistically or culturally to respond to something political
- Protesting through marching or holding a demonstration/rally
- Occupying a public/private space (eg. To prevent the destruction of a heritage site)
- Volunteering with an NGO, association, community group or network

(Adapted from 'Meaningful Youth Political Participation In Europe: Concepts, Patterns and Policy Implications')



This resource will mainly focus on the ways you can volunteer with different groups and organisations within your locality to make an impact, but it should be noted that many of the Do-It-Ourselves tactics listed above can be done together for a stronger and more direct approach.

The following pages contain some of the major organisations within a community (but not directly linked to a local authority) that you can join to have your say on what happens on a local and national level.

Youth Organisations

Participating in a local youth organisation has many benefits both for you, and for your entire community. Youth organisations give young people a space to discuss and find solutions for issues that matter to them. Topics of interest can include: the climate crisis; climate justice; LGBTQIA+ discrimination; social exclusion; racism; feminism; education; and much more. Different youth organisations focus on different topics, so with some research, you can find the youth organisation that best aligns with your interests and needs.

To get involved:

There are many different youth organisations across the country, so doing some research into which youth organisations focus on topics that matter

to you will go a long way. You can check out NYCI's interactive maps to find youth organisations in your area. Do note that these lists are ever-growing, and does not show every youth organisation:

[☞ Youth Work Activities for Youth Asylum Seekers and Refugees](#)

[☞ Youth Arts](#)

[☞ Development Education and Sustainable Development Goals](#)

You can also check out NYCI's website for information on national youth organisations and see if they operate in your area and maybe get in touch with them if you wish to volunteer or wish to join some of their projects and programmes:

[☞ Members - National Youth Council of Ireland](#)

Community/Town Councils

Community Councils are voluntary organisations that are set up and elected by the people of the community, usually alongside their local authority, but not directly a part of it. Community councils aim to achieve a shared sense of place and pride within a community. The community council also provides a space for locals to raise and deal with matters of importance to the community.

There can often be many smaller organisations and groups that operate within the community council, for example:

- Tidy Towns
- Community Sports, Leisure & Games
- Landmark protection and care
- Parks & Playground services
- Local magazines/newspaper publishing

To get involved:

If you want to become part of your local community/town council, contact a local organisation or your local authority and they will be able to tell you about community or town councils around your area, and how to get in contact with them. These groups are always looking for volunteers!

Tidy Towns

The Tidy Towns competition is increasingly popular throughout Ireland. The main focus of Tidy Towns is to encourage communities to improve their local environment and 'make your place a better place'. Taking part in the Tidy Towns competition can be a wonderful way of generating wider interest in community effort, because this is a key part of the assessment criteria of the competition. Encouraging broader community involvement in a fun way, such as Tidy Towns, can often act as steppingstone to longer-term engagement within a locality also.

In recent times, efforts have been made to link Tidy Towns work to the Sustainable Development Goals. For more info on the SDGs, check out NYC1's Resource Pack [☞ 'Sustainable Development Goals and YOUth'](#).

To get involved:

The Tidy Towns competition is open to all areas, big or small, urban or rural. Entry is free regardless of the size of an area (and sometimes it is possible to get a grant to undertake a project). Start by finding your local Tidy Towns committee on their website [☞ HERE](#).

Student Councils

Student Councils are set up within schools to allow post-primary students the opportunity to be involved in the affairs, and to make changes, within their school. Student councils are run by students and are often chaired by one elected young person. Student councils work directly with school staff to review the school's Code of Behaviour, and other school policies (such as their environmental policies). Student council members often have the autonomy to create meeting agendas that revolve around the issues they want to tackle most.

There are currently discussions being had to implement student councils in primary schools also.

To get involved:

Ask a teacher in your school about who to talk to if you'd like to become part of the student council. Schools usually elect student councils before the start of the next school term, or very early in the school term. Sometimes there is even an in-school election campaign! You can also contact the Irish Second-Level Students' Union (ISSU) and Union of Students in Ireland (USI) for information on how to get involved in nation-wide student movements.



ACTIVITY

Teamwork makes the Dream Work

So, you have a team set up of your peers, but you don't know where to start. Teamwork can be tricky to navigate, but there are a few key steps you can take together to ensure that your actions will be meaningful.

First, you need to communicate with one another. A great way to do this is through the use of a 'Vision Board'. Everyone should fill in their own vision board separately first, and then feedback to the group. Fill in your vision board below:

VISION BOARD QUESTIONS:

1) What are the problems I would like to address?

2) What change am I seeking in relation to these problems?

3) What are some possible ways to create this change?

4) What can I contribute through my own skills, strengths, experiences?

5) Who am I targeting with my actions for change?

6) Who could possibly help us with these actions?

Once you have all finished your vision boards, discuss each person's answers. Find patterns and commonalities. Discuss the skills, strengths, and experiences of your team members.



Next, you need to collectively decide on what problem you would all like to address first (as a few may have presented themselves from the Vision Board). Choose something that everyone is interested in, and that sounds achievable for your group. Below you will find a Planning Sheet for each project. Fill in the Planning Sheet for each person's desired project:

PLANNING SHEET QUESTIONS:

What is the aim of the project? (Should be 1 sentence)

How will the aim be achieved? (What will the project look like? Online? In-person? What actions will take place as part of achieving the project?)

What is our timeframe? (Do members of the group need to leave after a certain number of weeks or months? Are we trying to achieve our project before a specific policy is passed?)

What is our budget? (What are the costs of our project? Where could we get this money from?)

What human resources will we need? (Are there people outside our team that we would need/want to bring on board? If so, how do we get them on board?)

What skills/strengths/expertise do we have?

What skills/strengths/expertise do we not have, but need for this project?

What are our potential challenges and barriers? How might we overcome these?

Take time to go through everyone's Planning Sheets and discuss potential projects that your whole group would be keen to advocate for. Collectively, you can decide which project seems most do-able in terms of:

- Interest of the group
- Achievability
- Time
- Money
- Strengths/Skills/Experiences
- Challenges and barriers

Once you have decided on a project together, you should then decide on Action Groups within your team. The Action Groups should directly benefit the project, and also should be made up of people who have skills/strengths/expertise in that area. Examples of Action Groups are:

- **Project planning group** - overseeing the other groups to make sure their jobs are being done and that the overall aim of the project is being achieved.
- **Budget group** - overseeing the budget and ensuring that there is no overspending. Could also be responsible for trying to source new income for the project.
- **Communications group** - emailing, phone calling, talking with media, etc.
- **Social media group** - graphic design, familiarity with a variety of social media platforms.
- **Videography/Photography group** - working with the social media team to ensure the project is well documented and promoted.
- **Analysis group** - if you are conducting research/a survey as part of the project, having someone with good statistical knowledge may help.
- **Event planning group** - if smaller events or training sessions are needed as part of the project, someone with experience in planning events may be useful.
- **Policy group** - if trying to change or amend policy, someone with experience in policy-writing/editing would be ideal.
- **Recruitment group** - a group dedicated to involving more people in the project. This may look like a different process for each project, so be sure to take time to discuss recruitment if it's needed. If you are also lacking certain skills in your project that you feel would be beneficial, the recruitment group could be assigned the task of finding someone that fulfils that role.



- **Inclusion & Accessibility group** – ensuring that your project is welcoming to everyone will go a long way in making your project successful. Having a group that enables all voices to have a say will only strengthen your project, make it more equitable, and have a stronger and more diverse following.
- **Other** - all projects look different and need different elements to make them work. Communicate as a team about what your project will need to achieve its aim and create your own Action Groups based on those needs.

When you have the initial working groups set up you can start discussing what are the important first tasks that each group can undertake to get the project rolling. It's important to ensure that you're having frequent meetings and check-ins with the other groups to see where you can collaborate and how you can all continue to grow and move your project forward.

Parish Pastoral Council

A parish pastoral council is a group of members from a diocese or parish that provide advice to the local priest or bishop about pastoral matters. The major tasks of the pastoral council involve:

- Identifying the needs of the parish community.
- Ensuring that the whole parish can respond to and communicate about the needs of the community.
- Up-skilling parishioners by providing them with access to information and events.
- Reviewing the activities of the parish and identifying how to progress the parish.

To get involved:

For more information on how to join your local pastoral council, you can read the Parish Pastoral Council Handbook [HERE](#). You can also speak to your local priest or bishop about joining the council directly.

Active Retirement Ireland (ARI)

ARI is a voluntary organisation that caters for older people between the ages of 50-100+ from a range of socio-economic backgrounds. If you are interested in bridging the intergenerational gap at policymaking level, then volunteering at ARI may be beneficial for you. ARI already has over 4,000 volunteers, and their aims are:

- To promote older people as independent and active members of their communities
- To act as a voice for older people and their concerns at national level
- To provide training and peer support of older people

To get involved:

You can reach out to your local ARI branch through their website [HERE](#) and ask how you can get involved as a volunteer.

Irish Countrywomen's Association (ICA)

The ICA is the largest women's association in the country. The ICA aims to provide support and personal development to its members through education, lifelong learning, activities and events. ICA guilds have a direct voice within their localities. The ICA work to ensure that women's interests are considered in governmental policies both locally and nationally. They also have different committees that may be of interest, including a Climate Action and Sustainability Committee.

To get involved:

You can find your local ICA federation (or set up a new one!) through the ICA website [HERE](#).

Macra na Feirme

If you are a young Irish farmer, you might benefit from joining Macra na Feirme. They are a voluntary organisation that advocate for young rural people between the ages of 17-35. They encourage young people to take an active role in their local communities, and their mission is:

- To support the social, economic, cultural, and personal development of young people who have a rural connection, including young farmers
- To represent young rural people's interests in the development and implementation of relevant policies at local, regional, and national levels

To get involved:

You can find out more about a Macra na Feirme membership by visiting their website [HERE](#).

Local Clubs

Sports and arts clubs are often integral to community life. By joining a local club that interests you, you can have a direct impact and voice within your community.

To get involved:

Research your locality and discover some of the local clubs you can join. Some of the most common are:

Sports Clubs:

Football (Soccer, Gaelic, American)	Rugby	Golf	Archery	Badminton	Sailing/Boat
Martial Arts	Boxing	Hurling/ Camogie	Swimming/ Surfing	Tennis	Triathlon

Arts Clubs:

Music	Poetry	Painting/Drawing	Sculpture/Pottery	Dance
Theatre/ Speech & Drama	Comedy	Cinema/Videography	Photography	Radio

There are many more than the clubs listed above too, so explore your locality and see what possible clubs there are for you to join based on your own interests.

Contact your Elected Officials

One of the easy (but effective) steps that you can take to make change at the local level is to email your local councillors and policymakers. Remember that your elected officials are there to represent you and your opinions on what could make your locality a better place. Elected officials can't fulfil that duty if they don't know their constituents' opinions, so it's important that you let them know. It is crucial that citizens hold their elected officials accountable, but you should also be able to reach out to them if you need help.

To get involved:

If you don't know who your local councillors, Teachtaí Dála (TDs), or Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) are, you can find out on [🔗 https://www.whoismytd.com/](https://www.whoismytd.com/). Once you find the details of who you want to contact, write them an email by following the activity below.



ACTIVITY

Send an Email/Letter to an Elected Official

On the following page you will find a sample email that can be adjusted and sent to any elected official and/or decision-maker in your locality.

It is important to keep your email:

- **Concise:** No more than 3 sentences per paragraph
- **Well-informed:** Use examples to strengthen your email. Below you will see examples of 'IPCC', 'Frans Timmermans', and a direct link to the elected official themselves
- **Polite:** Elected officials get lots of 'ranting' emails every day. The emails that stand out the most are the ones that are sensibly written, and clearly have passion not just for the writer's own needs, but for the needs of their fellow citizens also

Email Template:

Section 1: Introduction

Dear [FIRST NAME, LAST NAME],

My name is [FIRST NAME, LAST NAME], I am [X] years old, and I am one of your constituents from [CITY/TOWN]. I am writing to you today to express my concerns on [THE LACK OF CLIMATE JUSTICE LANGUAGE IN THE CLIMATE ACTION BILL].

Section 2: Explain Your Concern

This issue is a concern to me because [IN THE RECENT CLIMATE BILL THAT WAS PROPOSED, THE TERM 'CLIMATE JUSTICE' IS UNDEFINED, AND THUS WILL BE LEFT MEANINGLESS. FURTHERMORE, THE CLIMATE BILL MAKES NO REFERENCE TO A 'JUST TRANSITION'. EU COMMISSIONER FRANS TIMMERMANS SAID 'WITHOUT A JUST TRANSITION, THERE WILL BE NO TRANSITION'].

Section 3: Why is your Concern Important to you?

[CLIMATE JUSTICE AND A JUST TRANSITION] are important to me because [THEY ENSURE THAT HUMAN RIGHTS, PARTICULARLY OF THE MOST VULNERABLE AND MARGINALISED IN OUR COMMUNITIES, ARE SAFEGUARDED. FURTHERMORE, CLIMATE JUSTICE AND A JUST TRANSITION WILL ENABLE BOTH THE BURDENS AND BENEFITS OF CLIMATE CHANGE IMPACTS TO BE SHARED EQUITABLY].

Section 4: Link your Concern Directly to the Elected Official

I am bringing this to your attention because you [ARE THE MINISTER FOR X or ARE A MEMBER OF X PARTY or YOU RECENTLY SPOKE ABOUT X or YOU RECENTLY ALLOCATED FUNDING TO X], and I believe that you must have similar concerns, or are open to hearing potential solutions.

Section 5: Describe your Solutions

I would appreciate your support on this matter, and I ask you to please [REQUEST THAT THE CLIMATE ACTION BILL BE STRENGTHENED WITH REGARDS TO CLIMATE JUSTICE AND A JUST TRANSITION]. In order to achieve this, I would ask you to [ALLOW FOR COMMUNITIES TO ENGAGE AND FEEDBACK ON THE CLIMATE ACTION BILL, AND TO ALSO ALLOW TIME FOR PARLIAMENTARY SCRUIITY BEFORE THE BILL IS PASSED].

Section 6: Show them you're Passionate about Continuing the Conversation

I appreciate you taking the time to read my email. If you would like to discuss this further, please don't hesitate to reach me by email so we can arrange a phone call or a conversation at your office. I look forward to your reply.

Sincerely,

[FIRST NAME, LAST NAME]

[OPTIONAL: PHONE NUMBER]

SECTION 5

MAKING CHANGES GLOBALLY

The problems that you're facing in your area probably don't end at the borders of your locality. Similar issues can be happening in many localities around Ireland, or beyond. Making changes at a national and international level are also crucial, so never be afraid to take your local opinions to a higher forum.

Check out NYCI's video on Global Issues [@ HERE](#) for more information.



Young People's Committee

If you would like to make change on a national scale, check out NYCI's Young People's Committee. This committee explores global justice issues such as inequalities, protection of human rights, and power dynamics. The work of the committee will improve young people's participation around the issue of global justice in Ireland.

To get involved:

You can read more about our the Young People's Committee [@ HERE](#). There is also an application form open on the website if you are interested in applying to be part of the committee.

EU Structured Dialogue

If you would like to make a larger-scale change, the European Union is also available to listen to your opinions and concern. The 'EU Structured Dialogue' process allows European-based young people to have their say on decisions that affect their lives. This process brings young people together with policymakers to discuss youth policy and find solutions to issues that matter to youth at a national and European level.

The EU Structured Dialogue takes place in 18-month cycles, and each cycle there is a different overarching topic up for discussion. This topic is decided upon by the young people who are a part of the Structured Dialogue. The discussions that take place between young people and the policymakers help to create policy proposals that are then brought to the Member States (countries) in the Council of the European Union.

To get involved:

The National Youth Council of Ireland (NYCI) are proud to play a key role in supporting the implementation of Structured Dialogue from Ireland. You can read more about our work on the EU Structured Dialogue [HERE](#). If you would like to get involved in the Young Voices programme you can email international@nyci.ie.

REMEMBER: Collaboration is the Key to Meaningful Change

Collaboration is hugely important when trying to create local change. Climate justice is going to require all of us coming together. Just because we want change, doesn't mean it will happen. Generating real, meaningful change will take a collaborative effort. In order to make this process as easy and inclusive as possible, try to work with existing networks and groups that are established within your community. This makes interacting with officials and councillors easier and more diverse.

Furthermore, any time your local council puts out a call for submissions, you can respond collectively through your collaborations. This is beneficial because during the creation of that submission you can ensure that many different opinions and experiences are included in your proposed solutions.

It's important to understand that we live in an inequitable world, and marginalised voices are often left out of important conversations. By collaborating with a larger network, you can ensure that everyone has an equal voice.

Climate Justice Manifesto

A manifesto is a public declaration of an individual's goals, aims, or policies. For international change to be achieved, it's important to ensure that everyone is on the same page. Manifestos are excellent tools that can help frame your message to policymakers and stakeholders, but can also be used to explain your goals to new activists who may want to join the movement. Taking a pledge to support a manifesto is a personal commitment to the aims enclosed within it.

To get involved:

During the Future Generations Project in 2020, young people from across Ireland came together to create Ireland's first Climate Justice Manifesto. You can download the manifesto and take the pledge to lend your voice to the Climate Justice movement [HERE](#).



Climate Justice Charter

A charter is a document that describes the principles of a group or organisation. Organisations can 'sign up' to a charter to publicly announce their support of the guidelines within the charter. Furthermore, the more organisations that join a charter, the more influential that charter becomes. This is particularly true at a policymaking level. If there is a lot of backing support for a particular charter, it can be easier to sway policy on a national and international scale to align with the principles of that charter. Charters can be powerful documents. Most charters need to be passed through the decision-making body of an organisation (such as the Board of Directors). This is because, if the charter is accepted, the principles stated in the charter will now become an integral part of how that organisation operates.

To get involved:

During the Future Generations Project in 2021, organisations and young people from across Ireland worked collaboratively to create Ireland's first Climate Justice Charter. If you are part of an organisation or group that has a decision-making body, you can present the Climate Justice Charter to them and suggest that the organisation becomes a signatory. This would mean that they would join many other organisations across Ireland to fully embed good climate justice practices within the organisation, at all levels. This would include from top management, to staff and volunteers, to the young people they work with on a daily basis.

You can download and read more about how your organisation can sign up to the Climate Justice Charter [HERE](#).



SECTION 6

RESOURCES & REFERENCES

- 🔗 [Future Generations – Climate Justice Project – NYCI Webpage](#)
- 🔗 [Activism, the SDGs and Youth – NYCI \(Downloadable Resource\)](#)
- 🔗 [Building Back Better: Youth, Power and Planet – NYCI \(Downloadable Resource\)](#)
- 🔗 [What is Climate Justice? – NYCI \(Downloadable Resource\)](#)
- 🔗 [Youth Work Activities for Youth Asylum Seekers and Refugees – NYCI \(Online Map\)](#)
- 🔗 [Youth Arts – NYCI \(Online Map\)](#)
- 🔗 [Development Education and Sustainable Development Goals – NYCI \(Online Map\)](#)
- 🔗 [National Strategy on Children and Young People’s Participation in Decision-making – Department of Children and Youth Affairs \(Downloadable Resource\)](#)
- 🔗 [How to be an Active Citizen – RTÉ Radio Series and Podcasts – TASC](#)
- 🔗 [A Guide to Local Government – TASC \(Downloadable Resource\)](#)
- 🔗 [Principles of Climate Change – Mary Robinson Foundation](#)
- 🔗 [Code of Good Practice for Civil Participation in the Decision-Making Process – Council of Europe](#)
- 🔗 [European Youth Portal – European Union](#)
- 🔗 [Meaningful Youth Political Participation In Europe: Concepts, Patterns and Policy Implications – European Union \(Downloadable Resource\)](#)
- 🔗 [1Planet4All – Concern Worldwide Webpage](#)
- 🔗 [USI – Union of Students in Ireland](#)
- 🔗 [ISSU – Irish Second Level Students’ Union](#)







FUTURE
GENERATIONS

CLIMATE
JUSTICE
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