



HANDBOOK FOR YOUTH WORKERS



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Introduction to the LIVE-Ex Mentorship Project (Living Earth Exchange)



LIVE

Living Earth Exchanges

Welcome to the LIVE-Ex Mentorship Programme

You're about to become part of an exciting project that empowers young people to stand up for the planet and work towards a fairer, greener future.

As a LIVE-Ex mentor, you'll help guide young changemakers in tackling big challenges like climate biodiversity loss, climate injustice and advocating for actions that prioritise the well-being of both people and the planet.

This LIVE-Ex project was born out of the Earth Advocacy Mentorship project as part of the [Living Earth Campaign \(LIVE\)](#) of CCIVS. The Earth Advocacy Mentorship programme was a six month, online international programme co-funded by the LIFE programme of the European Union, that supported Earth activists to identify a local cause, plan an action, implement their action, report and share, and connect with each other and other engaged people. The sessions included information about ecology and restoration, as well as advocacy and fundraising knowledge. It culminated in a webinar, which was co-facilitated by some of the participants and showcased their actions on behalf of life on the occasion of World Volunteer Day and World Soil Day (5th December 2022).

With this toolkit, we hope to inspire many more mentors and Earth Activists to support each other, share insights and networks, deepen connection and most importantly, highlight the need to take action to address radical biodiversity loss, pollution, climate injustice and promote instead the deep, just transition to regenerate and protect our beautiful living planet.

This toolkit is designed to support and prepare you to become a LIVE-Ex Mentor, guiding young people to become engaged and passionate activists. It will provide you with content on Earth Advocacy and Climate Justice, along with valuable tips and tricks for both facilitation techniques, and insights into the qualities needed to be a mentor to young Earth Activists.

The main objectives of the LIVE-Ex Project are to

1. Support high-quality, inclusive, and sustainable cooperation among youth organisations and build capacity of youth workers in the IVS sector on developing, facilitating, and evaluating virtual exchanges with an inclusive and participatory approach.
2. Build capacity of youth workers in the IVS sector on developing, facilitating, and evaluating virtual exchanges with an inclusive and participatory approach
3. Use digital, youth-friendly technologies to encourage intercultural dialogue, enhance critical thinking, foster digital skills and empower the voices of youth stakeholders in the IVS movement
4. Strengthen the promotion of virtual exchanges as complement to physical mobilities, as well as an outlet for the promotion of common values

Main goals of a LIVE-Ex mentor:

1. **Take Action Together:** Help participants take concrete steps towards making a difference in climate and social justice. From organising events to spreading awareness online, it's all about making an impact.
2. **Learn and Grow:** Be a guide as they explore environmental justice, and social equity. Help them connect what they learn with the real world and show them how they can be part of the solution.
3. **Build Advocacy Skills:** Show them how to use their voices to stand up for what matters most.
4. **Connect and Collaborate:** Help them link up with other young people, groups, and organisations so they can work together and amplify their efforts.

Many of your interactions will be online, through social media or virtual events. It's a great way to reach more young people; to create a strong, diverse network of earth activists and to keep conversations going across different platforms.

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Your role as a mentor is to support and inspire young people to turn their passion for the planet into real change. You'll help them understand the big issues and show them how to take action in their own communities and beyond. It's all about turning their passion into real action that makes a difference, and having fun while doing it! Have an inspiring learning journey!



“Eventually tides will be the only calendar you believe in...
And someone’s face, whom you love, will be as a star
Both intimate and ultimate,
And you will be heart-shaken and respectful.

And you will hear the air itself, like a beloved, whisper
Oh let me, for a while longer, enter the two Beautiful bodies of your lungs...

Look, and look again.
This world is not just a little thrill for your eyes.

It’s more than bones.
It’s more than the delicate wrist with its personal pulse.
It’s more than the beating of a single heart.
It’s praising.
It’s giving until the giving feels like receiving.
You have a life- just imagine that!
You have this day, and maybe another, and maybe
Still another...

And I have become the child of the clouds, and of hope.
I have become the friend of the enemy, whoever that is.
I have become older and, cherishing what I have learned,
I have become younger.

And what do I risk to tell you this, which is all I know?
Love yourself. Then forget it. Then, love the world.”

Mary Oliver

01 Module: Being a LIVE-Ex Mentor



“A single tree cannot make a forest”

Ewe proverb

Qualities of a mentor

Let's begin!

Think of a person who has been a support and inspiration to you along your life path or work journey. Describe the qualities that made them a mentor for you (eg. *They listen deeply, they were patient, they gave me useful feedback, they supported me in my personal path etc*)

Write your answer below:

Horizontal lines for writing the answer to the 'Qualities of a mentor' question.

Expectations

Here is a description of what makes a mentor. Please add your own ideas in the blank spaces! A Live-Ex mentor:

- Is an active and assertive listener
- Is interested in knowing and supporting their mentee or group
- Is knowledgeable of the appropriate topics or willing to learn
- Is unafraid to admit their ignorance of things and willing to learn
- Shows genuine interest in the mentee and is invested in their success
- Is flexible, adaptable and willing to meet the mentee where they are
- Is encouraging and positive
- Gives constructive and uplifting feedback
- Creatively responds to challenges (such as language differences, connectivity issues and diverse experience and learning styles)
- Is humble: knowing that the focus is on the mentee and the project being a success
- Knows how to ask for help
- Cares about the Earth, the environment and the future
- Is passionate about climate, social justice and diversity
- Has a deep love of our living Planet Earth

Horizontal lines for writing additional ideas or notes under the 'Expectations' section.

Listening and learning

“Genuine listening is not about providing solutions, but creating a safe space for others to express themselves.”

Marshall B. Rosenberg,

founder and facilitator of NVC (Non-Violent Communication)

Listening is an art. As a LIVE-Ex mentor you have the opportunity to support and encourage young people so that they can gain confidence to step into positive action in their local communities and ecosystems. You are not expected to have all the answers or to be an expert about their local context or situation. It is your role to enquire, to listen deeply and to offer understanding and support. When we listen deeply, we listen beyond just the words that someone is saying. We listen for what is important for them, the values they are expressing and the places where they may be challenged or blocked. There are many ways to listen- by observing body language, tone of voice, speed at which someone is talking, etc. When we observe someone while they are sharing, we can learn to ask the right questions.

Some ways to support a deep listening space:



Ask **HOW, WHY, IN WHAT WAY, WHICH, WHERE, WHEN, WHO** questions. Such as “How do you imagine this action will impact your community on a social level?”, “Why do you feel this action is important for the present and future generations?”, “In which way could you make this action even more appealing to gain the support it deserves?”



As in the above examples, ask questions that expand the answers across time and inspire creative thought.



Avoid yes/no questions “Do you think this action will impact your community positively?”



People process at different speeds! Some people need space and time to reflect before answering a question. Give people time and don't rush.



If people are slow to respond, give them the opportunity to journal or write down their response first. Or, allow people to share in pairs or small groups first (for digital exchanges using Zoom you can use the Breakout Rooms function for this). Then get each pair/ group to briefly share the outcome of the dialogue with the larger group.

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In group settings, encourage those who aren't speaking to contribute, by inviting them to share their answer in just a few words. Even offering a single word response can be very powerful! For example, you can say, "If you could summarise your answer in just 3 words, what would they be?"



In a digital exchange, it can be very helpful to write the question in the chat for people to read, and allow participants to write their responses in the chat too. This is especially helpful if the internet connection is causing challenges for people to hear/ speak into a mic. It also gives participants a chance to see the question before answering. In an in-person exchange, it can be helpful to write questions on the board first, and allow a few minutes of silent, reflection time before participants speak their answers.



If someone is blocked, never force them to respond, always allow for the option to pass and come back to that person at the end.



Remember that people can be different on different days.



If possible, answer the questions you are asking by modelling an answer, or give your authentic answer too. The more you participate authentically, the more connection you will create with participants

Giving and receiving feedback

Feedback is very useful and helps us to learn and grow. Offering feedback in a supportive and constructive way can be uplifting and very useful- like watering a plant. Harsh, aggressive or insensitive feedback can have the opposite effect of shutting people down and harming their self-confidence or belief in a project- like a hailstorm or flood can damage a plant. It may be the same water, but the **way** it's given makes all the difference!

A useful formula for giving feedback is to ask two questions. Allow participants to first give feedback to themselves.

- What went well (for you)?
- What could be better (for you)?

Then you can offer your feedback to them too, and if they are open to it and there is time, they could give feedback in the big group.

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Always start on the positive! This sets up a strong foundation to receive input and maintain a positive, growth mindset.

Always ask for feedback for yourself too! Evaluate your own contributions, your own participation and the sessions. A quick and useful way to end a session is to ask these three questions:

- How do you feel?
- What did you learn?
- Would you change anything about today if you could?

Knowing your strengths and your challenges

"Nature does not hurry, yet everything is accomplished."

Lao Tzu

A supportive mentor is authentic, kind and encouraging. You do not need to know the answers or outcomes, your role is to guide the participants to find their strengths and to hold the group in a positive, accountable and generative space.

If you do not know something, honesty is always best. Take the opportunity to do some research, reach out to someone who might be able to help you, connect to the network of other LIVE-Ex mentors and ask or share challenges there. When you have doubts, be honest about that too. Modelling courage in the face of unknowing is a powerful and inspiring act!

In these times of great ecological and social injustices we need to be creative and flexible! Not-knowing can be a doorway into deep inquiry and new, innovative and creative actions.

Fostering a sense of belonging and a deep, love for Planet Earth

As Earth Advocates and LIVE-Ex mentors, at the heart of our actions should be a sense of love and belonging for the planet and people. Otherwise, why would we be motivated to do this work?

It can be hard to stay motivated when we hear about all the shocking, overwhelming and depressing news about wars, pollution, inequality, exploitation, destruction and greed. Our social media platforms, news reports and scientific research papers are often filled with very disturbing information about what's happening today. It is important to acknowledge the weight of this, and to remember that this can be heavy to bear witness to.

Remember that we can only feel worried, angry, sad or shocked for things that we care deeply about! The fact that we may experience days where we feel overwhelmed by the climate crisis is natural. We are part of this living planet. We breathe the air and oxygen that the plants breathe out. The plants breathe in carbon dioxide which we exhale. We drink the water that rains from the clouds and filters through our rivers. We eat food that is grown in the soil, under the sun that shines on everything. We are not separate from nature- we ARE nature! That means, when we take action for life, we are taking action for ourselves. When we heal and repair the Earth, we are healing and repairing ourselves. We can draw great strength from this.

Connecting to nature can help us to regain calm, focus, stability and connection. There are many ways to connect to nature, even in an urban environment!

- Spend time observing a living plant or tree or bird
- Sit in a quiet, green space, such as a park or garden
- Walk barefoot in the grass
- Put your feet in a river or pool
- Grow some plants or flowers for the bees

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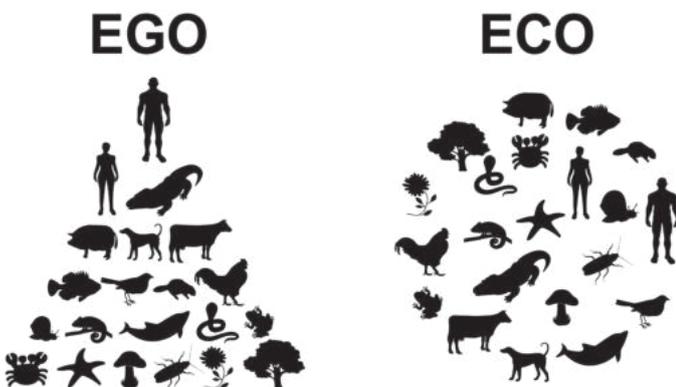
02 Module: What is Earth Advocacy?



State of the world & the climate crisis

We are facing an unprecedented triple planetary crisis that includes: climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution. The causes of which are largely due to a crisis in values and a dominant worldview and economic model that places profit over planetary well-being (which includes the well being of people).

Some would say it is a crisis of disconnection and separation from nature. We have forgotten that we, humans, are a part of nature. Many traditional cultures and indigenous people have a worldview which places people as custodians and caretakers of the Earth. Many indigenous cultures see animals, plants and mountains and rivers as kin (family). In the current, dominant neoliberal worldview, nature is seen as a resource to be exploited for profit and gain, with 20% of the world's human population controlling and owning 80% of the wealth, this creates a very unjust and dangerous situation for planetary wellbeing.



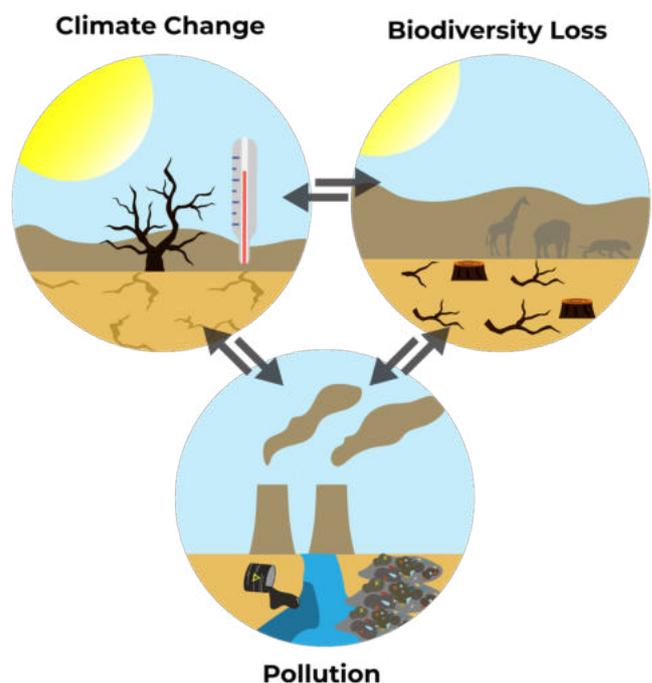
Climate Change: The global climate crisis is characterised by rising temperatures, increased frequency of extreme weather events, and shifting weather patterns. It is primarily caused by the burning of fossil fuels and deforestation (such as for mining, industrialization, industrial agriculture, large agri-business, urbanisation, transport, etc), which are driving the increase in greenhouse gases. It is important to note that small but powerful groups of industries, enterprises and corporations are driving the relentless burning of fossil fuels, deforestation and destruction of ecosystems, such as peat bogs and oceans, while gaining unprecedented economic benefits. This warming affects entire ecosystems, weather patterns, sea

levels, and human societies, leading to more intense heat waves, droughts, floods, powerful and more frequent cyclones and tornadoes, biodiversity loss and disruptions to food and water supplies.

Biodiversity Loss: We are facing a rapid decline in biodiversity, with species extinction rates accelerating beyond natural norms. Habitat destruction, climate change, pollution, and overexploitation are key drivers. The loss of species undermines healthy ecosystem functioning such as pollination, photosynthesis, clean water, and nutrient cycling, which are vital for human survival and the health of the planet.

Pollution: Pollution from various sources, including industrial activities, agriculture, and urban areas, contaminates air, water, and soil. This includes plastic pollution, chemical runoff, and greenhouse gas emissions. Pollution not only harms wildlife and ecosystems but also poses significant risks to human health now and for future generations, leading to respiratory and cardiovascular diseases, as well as autoimmune diseases, affecting overall quality of life.

Interconnectedness: These crises are deeply interlinked. Climate change exacerbates biodiversity loss and pollution, while pollution and habitat degradation worsen climate impacts and drive species extinction. Addressing this triple crisis requires a holistic approach, integrating climate action, biodiversity conservation, and pollution control to foster a sustainable and resilient future.



The time to act is now!

Self Reflection:

How do you feel when you read about Climate Change and the Triple Crisis?

Complete the following sentences:

1. One thing I love about the world today is

2. One thing that concerns me about the world today is

3. One story I know about people taking action to make a better world is

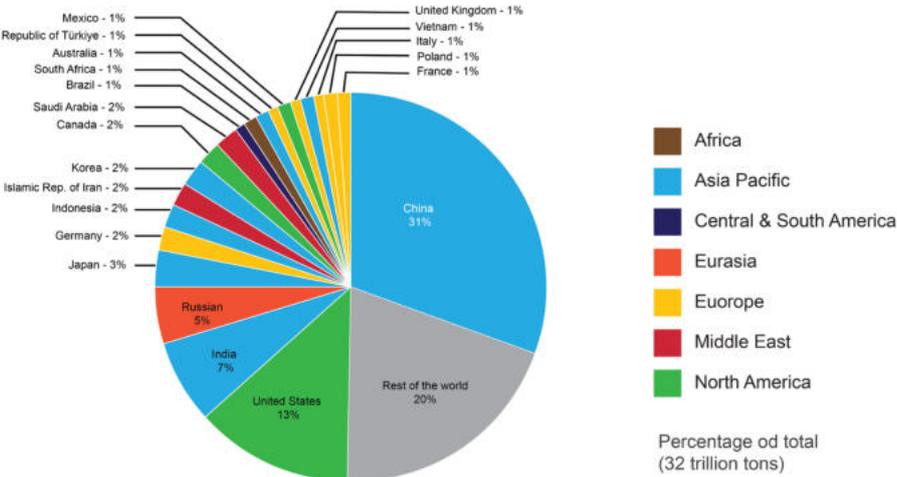
Climate Justice



Those who contribute least to greenhouse gas emissions and pollution are often the most affected by its impacts. Climate justice addresses the ethical and equity dimensions of climate change seeking to rectify the disproportionate burden borne by marginalised communities, particularly in so-called developing countries, who face severe consequences such as extreme weather events, sea-level rise, and health risks, yet did not contribute towards the causes of global warming. It seeks accountability from those who benefit from exploiting natural resources both in the present and the past.

Climate justice advocates for fair distribution of resources and support, recognizing that vulnerable populations need help in both mitigating climate impacts, restoring ecosystems and adapting to changes. It also calls for inclusive decision-making processes that ensure all voices are heard and that policies are designed to benefit those most in need. It calls for accountability from large corporations and governments who make (or have made) financial and political gains by harming the environment and people, especially in the Global South.

Top Annual CO₂ Emmitting Countries, 2020
(from fossil fuels)



Source: <https://www.ucsusa.org/resources/each-countrys-share-co2-emissions>

Actions and advocacy

Understanding Advocacy

Advocacy is about **empowering individuals to have their voices heard** and **ensuring that their rights are understood and respected**. Whether you're new to advocacy or already engaged as an earth activist, this module will provide valuable insights and inspiration for your journey. Advocacy involves supporting people in expressing their

Whether it's through petitions, campaigns, or public actions, they'll learn how to speak out and demand that decision makers and leaders prioritise climate justice and sustainability. Plus, working in a team not only amplifies their message, but it also offers protection and support as they stand up for important causes. It's all about turning their passion into real action - with the power of community behind them!

advocacy

noun [U]

UK  /æd.və.keɪ.sɪ/ US  /æd.və.keɪ.sɪ/

public support for an idea, plan, or way of doing something:

- *She is renowned for her advocacy of human rights.*
- *a nonprofit advocacy group*

views and making sure their perspectives are considered in decision-making processes. Let's dive deeper into what advocacy entails and how you can effectively use it in your efforts.

Advocacy is the practice of influencing decisions through the efforts of an individual or group. It encompasses a range of activities designed to raise awareness and educate the public about a specific idea, cause, or policy.

As a **crucial tool for citizen participation and democracy**, advocacy aims to drive change by presenting compelling evidence and arguments for why and how that change should occur. Advocacy can operate at various levels - local, national, international, or even global - depending on the scope and impact desired.

Advocacy is a collective action, so as a mentor, you'll help young change makers understand the importance of working together and building partnerships and to hold those in power, like governments, accountable. Whether they're teaming up with friends, local groups, or larger movements, it's through collaboration that their voices will be stronger and more impactful.



Self reflection:

- Check your level of understanding and skills in the field of advocacy. This will help you identify your learning needs
- Write the number of the skills below in the corresponding zone (Comfort, Learning or Panic) according to your level of knowledge/competence
 1. Public speaking in your own language
 2. Public speaking in English
 3. Replying constructively to critics, remarks and accusations expressed towards your organisation/network
 4. Designing and developing a campaign
 5. Working on a position paper
 6. Cooperating with representatives from other Member Organizations /activists - networking
 7. Using social media to communicate your cause
 8. Designing visual materials for advocacy tasks
 9. Building new relationships with decision makers

Comfort Zone

Learning Zone

Panic Zone

03 Module: Essential Ecosystem Understanding

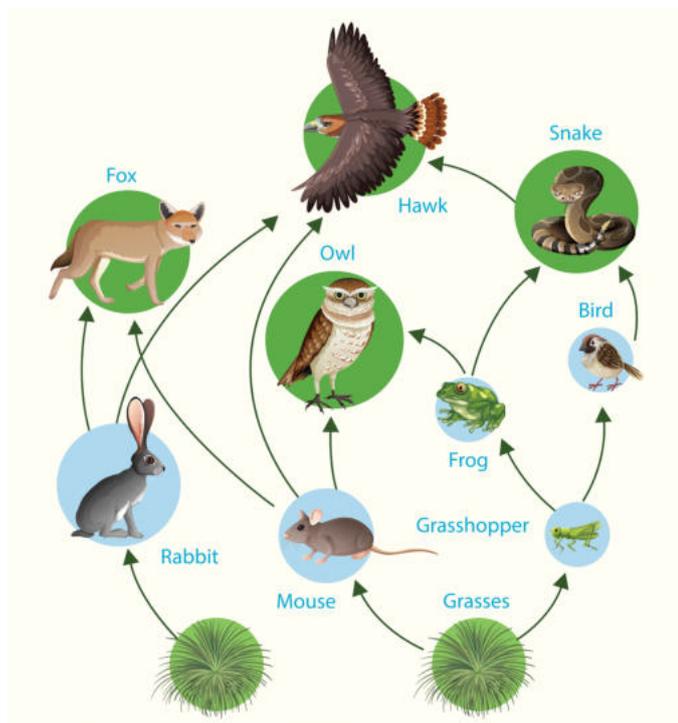


**"Man did not weave the web of life
he is merely a strand in it.
Whatever he does to the web, he does to
himself."**

**Chief Seattle, a Native American leader of the Suquamish
and Duwamish tribes**

Living systems, biodiversity and ecosystem restoration

Our Earth is an interconnected, living system. To put it simply, all life relies on a balance of energy exchanges fuelled by sunlight, air, soil and water. As humans, we are a part of this system, and our lives depend on it- we breathe the air, we drink the water, we eat the food that is produced through soil, sunlight, plants and animals.



The more diversity there is in an ecosystem, the more ***resilience** the environment has to withstand challenges and changes. The more different types of plants, animals, bacteria, fish, etc there are in an ecosystem, the more possibility that ecosystem has to adapt and evolve to external changes.

***Resilience noun:** the capacity to withstand or to recover quickly from difficulties; toughness.

-(Oxford Languages)

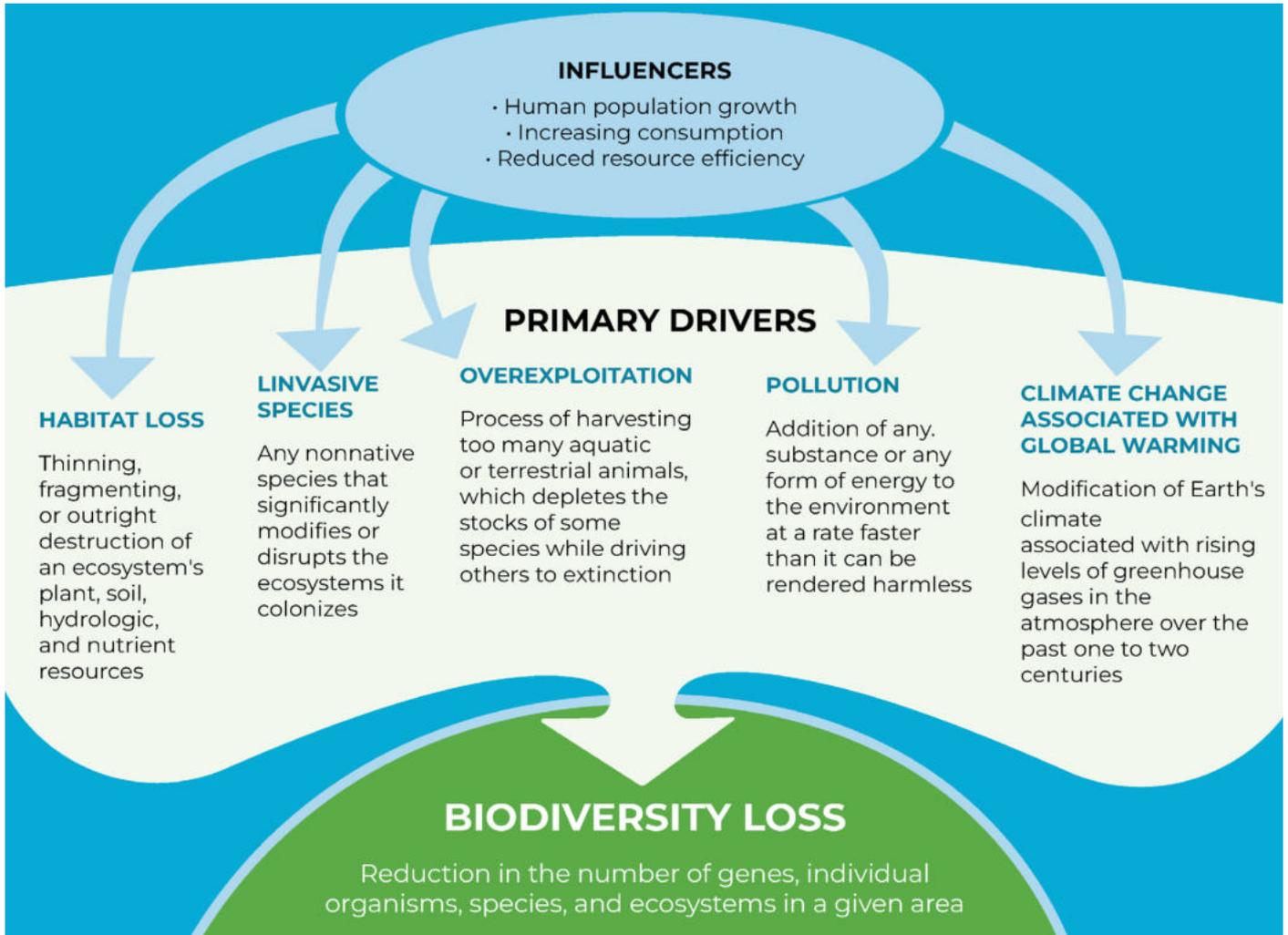
It is extremely important that we protect biodiversity and life-supporting systems such as our rivers, lakes, oceans, forests and grasslands. We need to also consider the need to regenerate natural ecosystems, and restore the health and functioning of the water cycle, the nutrient cycle for biodiversity to thrive.

Even in urban spaces, we need to ensure a healthy environment, by including habitat for wildlife, green spaces, clean waterways and gardens. The way we produce, consume and process our waste affects our environment and can cause harm for generations to come. Sadly, many problems we face today were caused in the past, but the solutions to a healthy, thriving future depend on our actions and choices today.

Biodiversity Loss: The world is experiencing an unprecedented loss of biodiversity, with species extinction rates accelerating. Human activities such as habitat destruction, pollution, overexploitation, and the introduction and spread of invasive species are major drivers. This loss threatens ecosystems' stability and the essential services they provide, such as pollination, water purification, and climate regulation.

We can advocate for ecosystem restoration based on the UN declaration of our right to a healthy environment.

“On October 8th 2021 the United Nations Human Rights Council adopted a landmark resolution recognizing that a clean, healthy and sustainable environment is a human right. The Human Rights Council resolution is a watershed moment in the fight against the triple planetary crises of climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution.”



Write a brief description of your local environment and describe some of the challenges faced by your local ecosystem eg. I live in a big, bustling city. There are very few trees and no green spaces left. There is a lot of pollution caused by single-use plastic rubbish and when it rains, that rubbish flows into the waterways and to the beach and ocean. There are very few birds and little habitat for insects, or other creatures. The air isn't very clean, especially during the rainy season.

Living Soil

"When one tugs at a single thing in nature, he finds it attached to the rest of the world."

John Muir,

Also known as "John of the Mountains" and "Father of the National Parks", was a Scottish-born American naturalist, author, environmental philosopher, botanist, zoologist, glaciologist, and early advocate for the preservation of wilderness in the United States. Source: Wikipedia

Soil is alive! It is made up of millions of microorganisms in an interconnected, diverse and complex food web where nutrients are exchanged

between plants, micro and macro organisms, fungi and animals. A healthy, living soil is essential for ecosystems to thrive and survive.

Our global soils are under serious threat! The main threats to soil according to the FAO (Food and Agriculture Organisation of the UN) are:

1. Pollution caused by harmful chemicals such as pesticides, fungicides and chemical fertilisers, mining, industry, landfills, microplastics and heavy metals.
2. Erosion and desertification due to deforestation and devegetation, overgrazing, and large scale industrial monoculture agricultural practices.
3. Soil sealing, which is the covering of soil with cement due to urban and industrial expansion (buildings, roads, runways, train tracks, factories, urban spaces, etc)
4. Salinization, which is soils becoming salinated due to over application of fertilisers.

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Image from FAO United Nations, Free International Soil Day campaign materials

Source: <https://www.fao.org/global-soil-partnership/resources/news/detail/ar/c/284443/>

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Key points about soil:

- Soil is alive! It is made up of minerals, water, air, organic matter and millions of microorganisms that form a living food web
- Healthy soil = healthy ecosystems = healthy people
- Soils plays a vital role in the healthy water cycle
- Soil plays a vital role in nutrient cycling
- Soil is the foundation of our land-based food system
- - Soils rely on plants and organic matter to remain healthy
- Healthy soil structures play a vital role in disease and pest prevention and resilience to drought, floods and climate change

The soil food web with various indicators of soil health overlaid (black boxes).

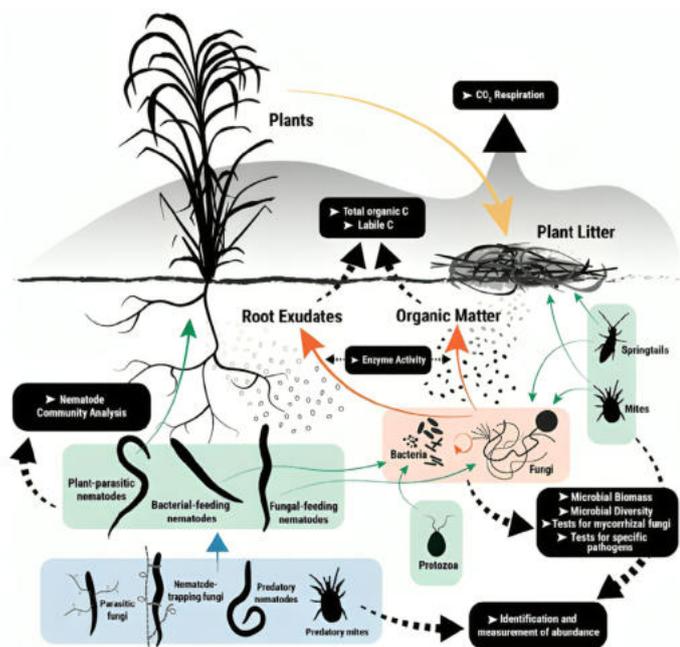


Image source: https://www.researchgate.net/figure/The-soil-food-web-with-various-indicators-of-soil-health-overlaid-black-boxes_fig1_316820459

Soils are being lost and degraded at a rapid rate. They need to be protected, conserved and regenerated.

The Voluntary Guidelines for Sustainable Soil Management (VGSSM)

The Voluntary Guidelines for Sustainable Soil Management (VGSSM) were developed through an inclusive process within the framework of the Global Soil Partnership (GSP). The guidelines provide technical recommendations on how sustainable soil management can be achieved. The VGSSM are of voluntary nature and are not legally binding. They elaborate the principles outlined in the revised World Soil Charter, taking into account the evidence provided in the Status of the World's Soil Resources (SWSR) report.

The technical principles recommended by **VGSSM** are the following:

1. to minimise soil erosion
2. to enhance soil organic matter content
3. to foster soil nutrient balance and cycles
4. to prevent, minimise and mitigate soil salinization and alkalinization
5. to prevent and minimise soil contamination
6. to prevent and minimise soil acidification
7. to preserve and enhance soil biodiversity
8. to minimise soil sealing
9. to prevent and mitigate soil compaction
10. to improve soil water management

While these soil management principles are technically straightforward, they pose major challenges for global implementation and require an enabling environment to be achieved through the following government and international core actions:

1. establishing or strengthening inclusive SSM-supportive agricultural/environmental policies
2. increasing responsible investment and positive incentives aimed at promoting Sustainable Soil Management

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3. promoting secure land tenure rights according to the Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure
4. fostering and strengthening targeted soil research
5. preventing or minimising soil degradation and restoring/rehabilitating degraded soils
6. promoting effective education programmes
7. ensuring adequate inclusion of SSM in extension services
8. promotion of SSM principles and practices by agricultural extension services
9. establishing/strengthening soil information systems
10. fostering international cooperation/collaboration on soils
11. promoting communication on SSM practices

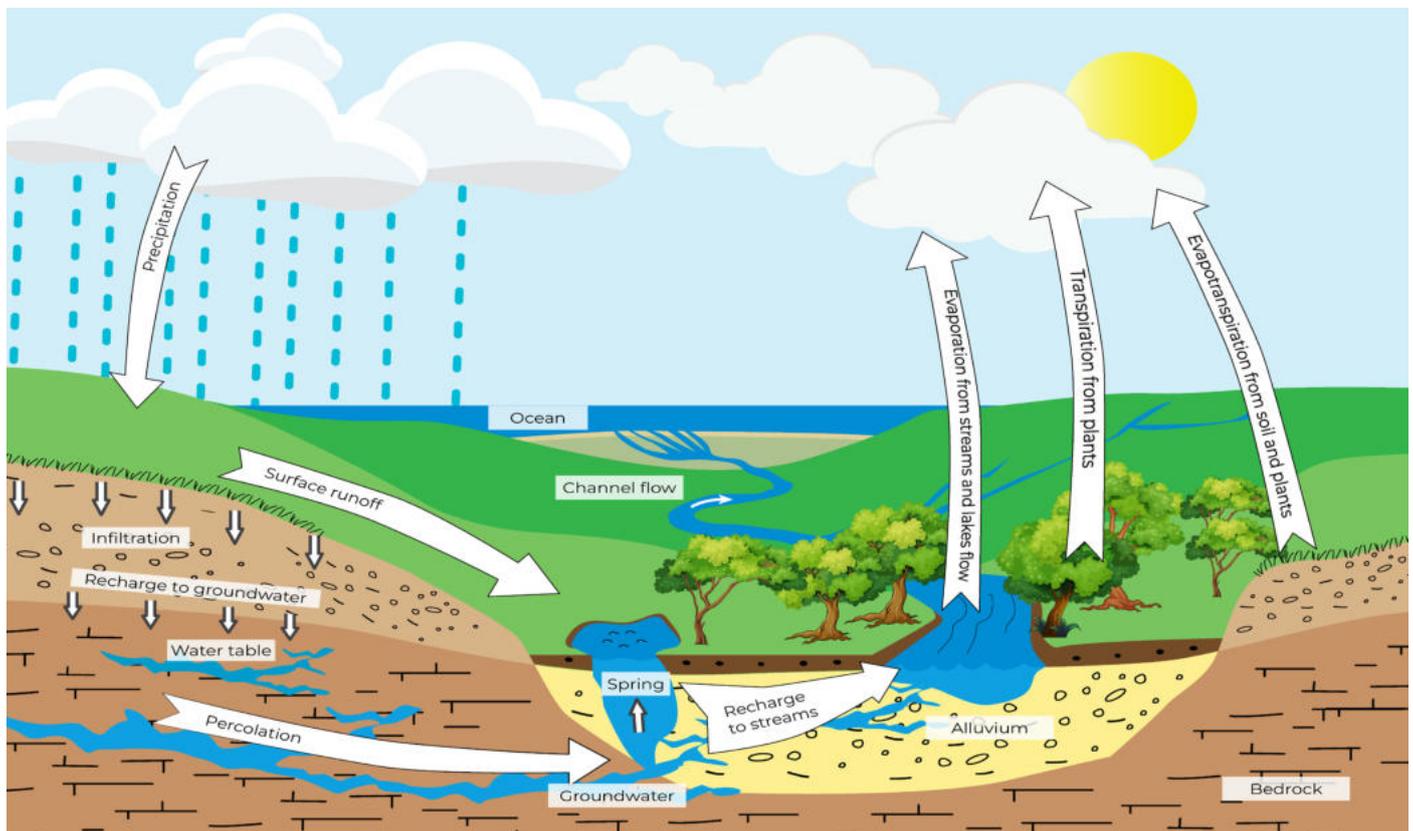
Water is Life!

Water is the most important element on our planet. The quality and quantity of water in an area will affect the conditions and the quality of life there. It influences temperature, climate, soil life, photosynthesis, animals, food production, vegetation, and, of course, the quality of human lives.

Many of us have been taught a limited understanding of the water cycle, it is imperative to understand the critical relationship between a complete water cycle, plants and living soil. Water needs to slowly and gently infiltrate and restore the water table, it does not simply run off the surface and into rivers and out to sea to become rain. Underground aquifers and spring water play a vital role, as do forests, prairies and grasslands.

Trees, plants, roots and living soil play a vital role too! In fact, it has recently been scientifically shown that forests bring rain. Through microorganisms and dust particles that form condensation nuclei that allow the raindrops to condense and fall.

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Please watch this video called Water Earth's Blood, The New Water Paradigm on YouTube <https://youtu.be/Vik4vUN3SPI?feature=shared>

which explains this phenomena of forests creating rain, and explains why it is so critical to have a new water paradigm and how important it is to restore landscapes to be water-retentive by restoring vegetative cover and other techniques.

Learn more about the complete water cycle <https://www.noaa.gov/education/resource-collections/freshwater/water-cycle>

Water influences the intensity of climate variability and change. It is the key part of extreme events such as drought and floods. Its abundance and timely delivery are critical for meeting the needs of society and ecosystems.

Plants and living soil mitigate damage and balance the flow of water in an ecosystem. We need greener, more permeable surfaces (including in cities) that allow water to infiltrate and replenish the water table. The way to mitigate both for flood and drought is to restore living, perennial, photosynthesising cover, and to work with and along contours so that water can be stored in the soil, and the roots, leaves and stems of plants.

Plants, through photosynthesis and by creating shade, lower ground temperatures which allows water to infiltrate and be better-absorbed into the plants and trees. Covering soil prevents evaporation and this creates a compounding positive effect, the soil stays cool and is able to absorb and hold more water.

Africa's rain harvesters: Replicating Zephaniah Phiris' techniques is ensuring good yields to Zimbabwean farmers in arid areas

"You must plant the rain before you plant a seed or tree!"

Proclaimed rain farmer Mr. Zephaniah Phiri
Maseko of Zimbabwe.

Read the inspiring story about Zepehnia Phiri, who defied laws to harvest water in arid landscape and "planted the rains".

<https://www.downtoearth.org.in/africa/africas-rain-harvesters-replicating-zephaniah-phiris-techniques-is-ensuring-good-yields-to-zimbabwean-farmers-in-arid-areas>

The screenshot shows the 'DownToEarth' website header with a navigation menu (Health, Agriculture, Water, Waste, Climate, Air, Africa, Data Centre, Video, Gallery) and a 'Subscribe' button. The main article title is 'Africa's rain harvesters: Replicating Zephaniah Phiris' techniques is ensuring good yields to Zimbabwean farmers in arid areas'. Below the title is a sub-headline: 'Zimbabwe is known for recurring droughts but some resilient farmers in arid zones are adapting, thanks to their rainwater harvesting strategies'. There is a photo of a farmer in a field. To the right, there is a 'Related Blogs' section with two entries: 'As anarchic as it sounds, we need a jungle worldview to ensure a sustainable future for humanity' by Keyoor Pathak (3 hours ago) and 'Rice farming in India is...'.

World Water Day is observed annually on March 22.

<https://www.un.org/en/observances/water-day>

The privatisation of water is a serious climate justice issue!



Human health and planetary health: Food production, agroecology and activism

The three foundational ethics of Permaculture **Earth care, People care, Fair share (self-regulation)**

Human health and planetary health are intricately linked, particularly in the context of food production. The methods used in agriculture not only affect the nutritional quality of food but also have profound impacts on the environment and biodiversity. Agroecology and Permaculture are practices which emphasise sustainable farming methods that work in harmony with nature, can enhance soil health, restore water tables, eliminate the use of chemicals, and promote ecosystem resilience.

Activism plays a crucial role in advocating for these sustainable practices, pushing for policies that prioritise both human well-being and environmental stewardship. By promoting and subsidising local food systems that prioritise health—both for people and the planet—we can contribute to a future that cultivates vibrant communities and thriving ecosystems.

Seed saving and the preservation of indigenous, heirloom varieties are vital for maintaining biodiversity and ensuring food sovereignty. Heirloom seeds, which have been passed down through generations, are usually more resilient to pests and diseases and adapted to local growing conditions, offering an important genetic reserve. The widespread use of genetically modified organisms (GMOs) raises concerns about their environmental impact, corporate control of the seed supply, and potential health risks associated with chemical treatment, pesticides, herbicides and other practices promoted by big agribusiness. GMOs lead to a reduction in genetic diversity, grown in monoculture, they make crops more vulnerable to pests and climate change. By promoting seed saving, seed swapping and heirloom cultivation, we can contribute to the future resilience of our traditional food systems, protect our ecosystems, and promote sustainable food production that empowers local communities.

Read an extract from an article in Forbes magazine (online) about the negative effects of large agribusiness promoting chemical agriculture and the dangerous lobbying that these companies are capable of to prevent traditional seed saving and even change policy.

04 Module: Bringing Soil and Advocacy Together: The Soil4Life Manifesto



“Healthy, living soil is essential for all life to thrive. With this manifesto we provide a tool for advocacy, a call to positive action and good practice on our living Earth”

Soil4Life Manifesto

The Soil4Life Manifesto

The **Soil4Life Manifesto** highlights the crucial importance of protecting and preserving soil health as a cornerstone of sustainable development and environmental conservation. Healthy soil is essential for food production, biodiversity, climate regulation, and water management.

- The manifesto calls for a common responsibility for soil care and health, and urges the adoption of stronger policies and practices to prevent soil degradation, pollution, and erosion. It also calls for increased public awareness and the promotion of sustainable and indigenous land-use practices. It serves as a powerful advocacy tool, inspiring positive action and responsible stewardship of our planet.
- We acknowledge the invaluable contributions of those who work tirelessly to restore balance and justice to our ecosystems - farmers, land stewards, and volunteers dedicated to regenerating soil and ecosystems.
- The Soil4Life Manifesto was initially drafted on October 17th, 2019, by a group of young Soil Ambassadors during an international training on Soil Protection and Management organised by The Coordinating Committee for International Voluntary Service (CCIVS) as part of the Soil4Life project coordinated by Legambiente Onlus and funded by the LIFE programme of the EU.
- The manifesto serves as a call to action, developed over a two-year participatory process, urging global leaders and decision-makers to support the transition towards a sustainable, healthy, and thriving environment.

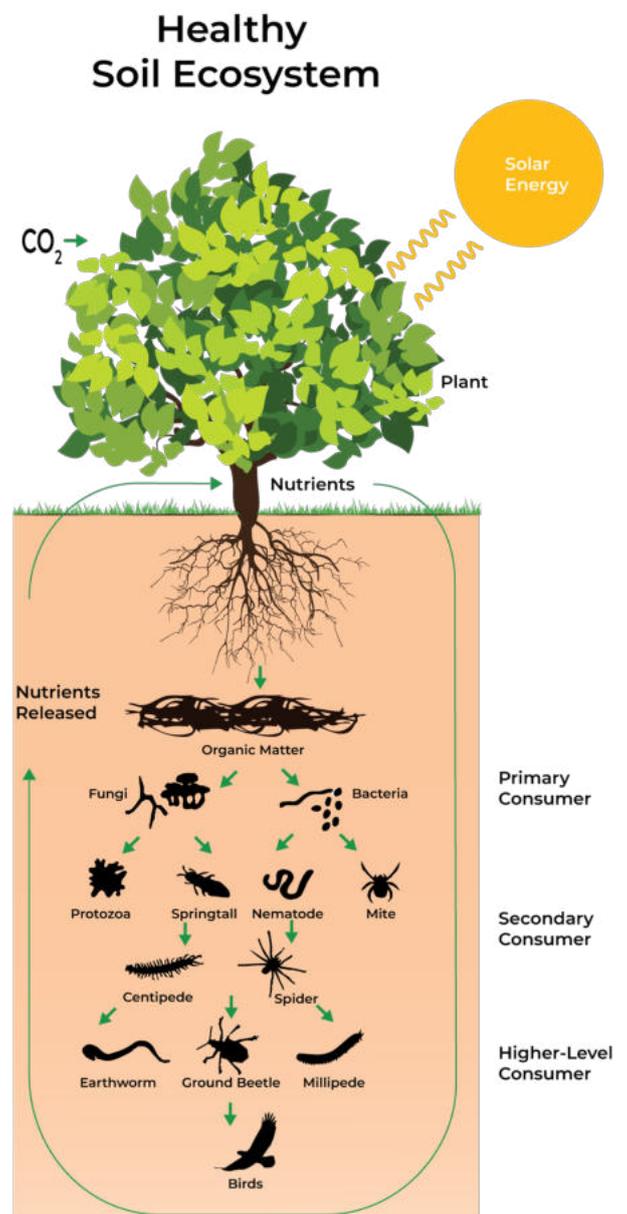
Read the Manifesto: https://ccivs.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/soil4life_manifesto_-_with_signatures_collectives.pdf - Manifesto with collective signatures

Sign the Manifesto: <https://form.jotform.com/212072578209052>

Now that you have read and hopefully signed the Soil4Life Manifesto, we invite you to join us in taking meaningful actions.

*link to the MOOC *

<https://ilearn.ccivs.org/mod/scorm/view.php?id=270&preventskip=1>



05 Module: Core knowledge and skills for advocacy Manifesto



**“In the end we will remember not the words of
our enemies, but the silence of our friends”.**

-Martin Luther King, Jr.

Understanding advocacy: a complex and ongoing process

Advocacy is a dynamic and multifaceted process that requires not only passion and commitment, but also strategic thinking and careful planning. Central to this is the idea of advocacy as an 'umbrella', encompassing a range of activities and approaches that need to be harmonised in order to achieve meaningful and lasting change. Above all, however, successful advocacy relies on building and maintaining relationships that enable you to influence policy-making in favour of your cause, while identifying the key institutions and individuals involved in decision-making.

The complexity of advocacy

At its core, advocacy is about influencing those in power - be they politicians, institutions or the wider public - to bring about social, political or environmental change. But the process is far from straightforward. Advocacy is a continuous journey, often marked by setbacks and challenges. In order to navigate these complexities, it is crucial to approach advocacy with a well-thought-out strategy that takes into account the various forces at play, including the needs and perspectives of different stakeholders.

An effective advocacy campaign is not just a series of actions, but a carefully orchestrated plan that unfolds over time. Each step in this plan must be informed by a clear understanding of the context, the goals to be achieved and the tactics that will be most effective in achieving those goals. This requires not only a deep understanding of the issue at hand, but also a keen awareness of the broader social, political and cultural landscape in which the advocacy work is taking place.

What needs to change?

When advocating for Earth and climate justice, it's important to be clear about your goals and the change you want to see. Even if you already have a clear vision and mission, it's often difficult to pinpoint exactly what's wrong or what needs to change.

You may feel a sense of unease or frustration, or you may see many individual situations that feel unfair but are difficult to connect. This first stage is about bringing these thoughts together in a structured way to better understand the core issue at hand.

Here are a few questions that can help clarify your advocacy actions:

- **What is the problem you're addressing?** Start by clearly identifying what you see as the issue. It could be anything from climate inaction to environmental degradation or social inequalities linked to ecological harm.
- **Why is it a problem?** Understand why this issue matters. How does it impact people, communities, and ecosystems?
- **Is this the actual problem, or a symptom of something deeper?** Often, what seems like the problem may only be a surface-level symptom of a larger, underlying issue.
- **Who or what is causing this problem?** Who are the key players, and what economic, political, or social systems enable it to persist? Identifying those responsible is crucial, as they hold the power to implement change. Understanding these dynamics will help you focus your advocacy efforts more strategically and effectively.
- **Who is affected by the problem?** Identify the individuals, communities, or ecosystems most directly impacted by the issue. Knowing this helps ground your advocacy in real-world consequences.
- **What does the ideal future look like?** Envision a future where the problem has been solved. What changes would make a meaningful difference for those affected? This vision can guide your goals and the steps you'll take to reach them.

By working through these questions, you'll gain clarity on what needs to change, and be in a stronger position to advocate for solutions that address both the symptoms and root causes of the issue. Our advocacy efforts seek to create a world where environmental justice is achieved, with sustainable systems in place that protect the planet and ensure the well-being and rights of all communities.



Advocacy Planning Steps

- **Step 1:** Identify the Problem
What specific issue do you want to address?
- **Step 2:** Set Your Goals
What outcomes are you aiming to achieve?
- **Step 3:** Identify Key Influencers
Who are the decision-makers you need to influence?
- **Step 4:** Craft Your Message and "Ask"
What is your core message, and what exactly are you asking for? Who has the power to grant your request?
- **Step 5:** Timing and Target Audiences
When is the best time to communicate your message? Who else do you need to reach to meet your objectives? When can you most effectively influence the decision-makers?
- **Step 6:** Develop and Implement Your Plan
How will you execute your strategy? Assess your resources, choose the appropriate tactics, and put your plan into action. Do you have sufficient resources?
- **Step 7:** Measure Success
How will you evaluate the impact of your advocacy efforts?

Knowledge-Check: Advocacy Basics

Circle the answers you think are correct (can be more than one) and check the answers

1. Advocacy involves...
 - a) Raising awareness about a cause
 - b) Influencing decision-makers
 - c) Avoiding conflict
2. Can advocacy be done individually?
 - a) Yes
 - b) No
3. Before launching an advocacy campaign, you should first...
 - a) Identify your target audience
 - b) Understand the stakeholders involved
 - c) Plan your public events
 - d) Build a team of supporters
4. What are some key reasons to engage in advocacy?
 - a) To create social change
 - b) To amplify marginalised voices
 - c) To increase public awareness
5. Advocacy and activism...
 - a) Are the same thing
 - b) Often overlap but are distinct activities
6. In order to advocate for any issue you must first...
 - a) Identify and analyse the issue and know exactly what you are advocating for, you need you "immerse yourself" into the cause and gain a deep understanding of what you are supporting
 - b) Set your timeline
 - c) Make sure it is a global problem
 - d) Care about the issue
7. Why engage in advocacy?
 - a) To solve specific problems
 - b) To promote and consolidate democracy
 - c) To strengthen and empower civil society

Check how you did

1. a) b)
2. b)
3. a) b)
4. a) b)
5. b)
6. a)
7. a) b) c)



One example of a climate advocacy campaign is the Climate Justice Charter Movement in South Africa. The Climate Justice Charter emerged out of six years of campaigning, during the worst drought in South Africa's history, by the South African Food Sovereignty Campaign and the Cooperative and Policy Alternative Centre. It has been informed by grassroots input from water stressed communities, the media, labour, faith based communities, youth, climate scientists, academics, women's organisations, environmental and social justice organisations, as well as, think pieces by leading activists.

The main aim of the campaign was to demand that the Parliament adopt the Climate Justice Charter as per section 234 of the South African Constitution.

To find out more you can visit the website <https://cjcm.org.za/>

Here the direct link to the Charter: <https://cjcm.org.za/the-charter/en>

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Another international Climate Justice Movement is La Via Campesina. La Via Campesina, founded in 1993, is an international movement bringing together millions of peasants, landless workers, indigenous people, pastoralists, fishers, migrant farmworkers, small and medium-size farmers, rural women, and peasant youth from around the world. Built on a solid sense of unity and solidarity, it defends peasant agriculture for food sovereignty.

To find out more you can visit the website <https://viacampesina.org/en/>

Activity: Researching Climate Justice Movements

This exercise will help you understand the landscape of climate justice efforts and how collective action, both locally and globally, strengthens the fight for a sustainable and just future.

Research and learn about other Climate Justice movements in your region, country or continent. Or see if there are movements that are international that share relevant issues and concerns with your area. Research and share what you learn with your mentees and colleagues to inspire collective action and knowledge sharing.

1. Identify Local and Regional Movements:

- Research at least two climate justice movements or organisations within your region, country, or continent.
- Take note of their goals, key actions, and the communities they serve.
- What specific climate or social justice issues do they focus on? (e.g., environmental racism, land rights, clean energy transitions)

2. Explore International Movements:

- Find at least one international climate justice movement or network that addresses similar challenges to those in your region.
- How do their goals or methods align with the local movements you've researched?
- What can be learned from their strategies or campaigns that could apply to your own advocacy efforts?

3. Share Your Findings:

- Summarise your research into a short report or presentation.
- Share it with your mentees or colleagues, either in a group discussion or through an online platform.
- Highlight the connections between the movements you've researched and the advocacy work your group is involved in.

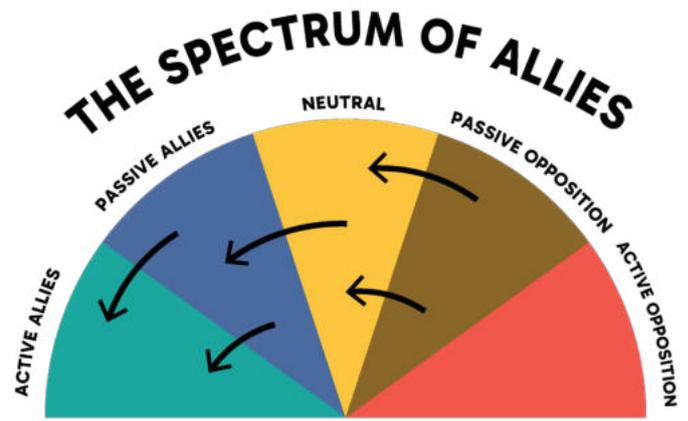
4. Reflection Questions:

- What are the common themes across the movements you researched?
- How do local issues connect with global climate justice efforts?
- In what ways can your advocacy actions support or collaborate with these movements?

The Spectrum of Allies:

A strategic tool for advocacy

One of the most powerful tools is the "Spectrum of Allies," (George Lakey), a strategic framework that helps advocates map out the social groups and networks affected by their issue, ranging from active opposition to active allies. By identifying where different individuals and groups fall on this spectrum, advocates can tailor their strategies to effectively engage with each segment.



Applying the Spectrum of Allies to advocacy campaigns

The Spectrum of Allies divides the stakeholder landscape into five key categories:

1. **Active Allies:** These are individuals or groups who are fully committed to your cause and actively work to support it. They are your core supporters and can be relied upon to take action on behalf of the movement.
2. **Passive Allies:** These are individuals or groups who support your cause but may not be actively engaged. They might agree with your goals but need encouragement or specific opportunities to take action.
3. **Neutral:** This category includes those who are indifferent or undecided about your issue. They have not yet taken a stance and could be swayed to either side with the right messaging or approach.
4. **Passive Opposition:** These are individuals or groups who oppose your cause but are not actively working against it. They may hold opposing views but are not yet mobilised to take action.
5. **Active Opposition:** These are individuals or groups who are actively working against your cause. They are fully committed to opposing your efforts and may pose significant challenges to your advocacy work.

The process of mapping out the Spectrum of Allies is more than just a theoretical exercise; it is a critical step in developing a targeted and effective advocacy strategy.

To create a Spectrum of Allies, it is essential to spend a significant amount of time brainstorming and discussing the groups and individuals that belong in each section. This process should be as detailed and specific as possible, with identifying characteristics listed for each group. For example, if you are working on an environmental advocacy campaign, your active allies might include environmental NGOs and climate scientists, while your passive opposition might include industries that contribute to pollution but are not yet mobilised against your cause.

Once the spectrum is mapped out, the next step is to develop strategies for engaging with each group. For active allies, this might involve deepening their involvement through leadership roles or joint actions. For passive allies, it might mean creating easy entry points for them to get involved, such as petitions or awareness campaigns. For those in the neutral category, the focus might be on education and outreach to shift their perspective in favour of your cause. And for those in passive or active opposition, your strategy might include counter-narratives or efforts to mitigate their impact.

The importance of strategic planning in advocacy

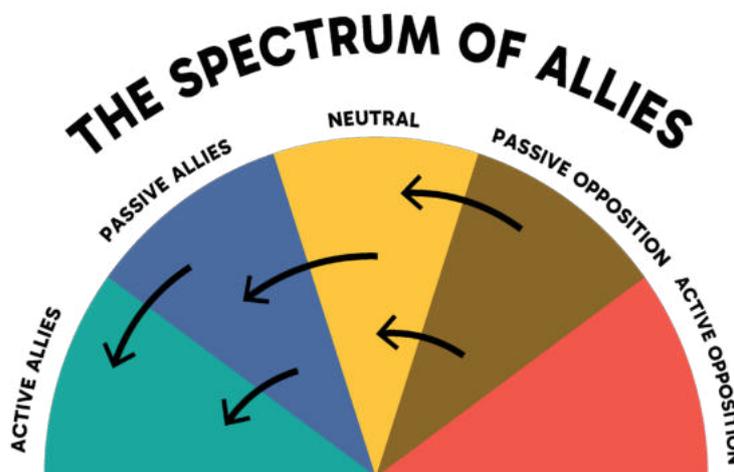
Strategic planning is the backbone of any successful advocacy campaign. By systematically identifying and analysing the different stakeholders involved in your issue, and by placing them within the Spectrum of Allies, you can significantly increase the potential effectiveness of your advocacy efforts. This process allows you to prioritise your actions, allocate resources more efficiently, and anticipate challenges before they arise.

In conclusion, advocacy is both an art and a science. It requires a deep understanding of the issue, a clear vision of the desired outcome, and a

strategic approach to engaging with the various stakeholders involved. By embracing the complexity of advocacy and utilising tools like the Spectrum of Allies, advocates can increase their chances of success and drive meaningful change in their communities and beyond.

“Movements win not by overpowering their active opposition, but by shifting the support out from under it” - <https://beautifultrouble.org/toolbox/tool/spectrum-of-allies>

Use this template to develop your own strategy!



Active participants	Passive supporters	Neutral	Passive opponents	Active opponents

Activity: Creating a Spectrum of Allies for an Environmental Cause

Objective:

This activity will guide participants through mapping out the Spectrum of Allies for an environmental cause they care about. They will learn to identify allies, opponents, and neutral groups to strategize better advocacy efforts. This can be done in person or through digital collaboration tools like OpenBoard or Miro for virtual exchanges.

Step 1: Introduction to the Spectrum of Allies (10-15 mins)

- **Objective:** Explain the concept of the Spectrum of Allies. This tool helps visualise different groups of people or organisations based on their stance on the issue—whether they are strong supporters, passive supporters, neutrals, passive opponents, or strong opponents.

Explain the categories:

1. Active Allies: Groups that strongly support the cause and are willing to take action.
2. Passive Allies: Supporters who agree but may not yet be involved actively.
3. Neutrals: Those who are undecided or unaffected but could be influenced.
4. Passive Opponents: Those who disagree but are not actively blocking the cause.
5. Active Opponents: Groups that actively work against the cause.

Step 2: Choosing the Cause (5-10 mins)

- **Objective:** Have participants identify the environmental cause they are passionate about. Examples might include:
 - Deforestation
 - Climate justice for marginalised communities

- Plastic pollution and packaging contaminating an ecosystem/ environment
- The loss of heirloom and indigenous seed heritage due to promotion of commercialised, hybrid seed varieties
- Erosion along the banks of a local river
- Pollution and trash accumulating on a beach
- Food price increases which causes more people to consume “cheap” processed foods which lead to health issues (such as diabetes)
- The promotion and use of harmful chemicals in agricultural production (such as chemical fertilisers, herbicides and pesticides)

Tip: Encourage them to choose a cause that resonates deeply with their local community or one that reflects global concerns they feel connected to.

Step 3: Mapping the Spectrum of Allies (20-30 mins)

- In-Person:
 - Provide materials like large sheets of paper, sticky notes, and markers.
 - Draw the Spectrum of Allies on the paper as five columns representing the categories (Active Allies to Active Opponents).
 - Participants write names of individuals, organisations, businesses, or community groups on sticky notes and place them in the relevant category on the Spectrum.
- Online (using OpenBoard or Miro):
 - OpenBoard or Miro provides a shared virtual whiteboard. Create a template with five columns (similar to the in-person setup).
 - Share the board with participants, who can add digital sticky notes in real time.
 - Encourage participants to add their inputs simultaneously, discussing their choices as they map out the spectrum together.

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- Questions for participants:
 - Who is already advocating for this issue?
 - Which groups or people may be neutral but could be persuaded to support?
 - Are there any active opponents, and how can we engage with or avoid them?

Step 4: Analysing the Map (15-20 mins)

- **Objective:** Guide participants through analysing the completed Spectrum of Allies.
 - Ask participants to reflect on the strongest allies: How can we further engage them?
 - Discuss potential ways to mobilise passive allies and influence neutral groups.
 - Consider strategies to counteract passive or active opponents without wasting resources.
- **In a virtual setting:** Use the chat or voice function in your platform to facilitate this discussion. Participants can add additional thoughts as sticky notes on the board.

Step 5: Organising an Advocacy Campaign (30-40 mins)

- **Objective:** Teach participants how to use digital tools for organising and running advocacy campaigns based on their Spectrum of Allies.
- **Digital Tools for Organizing:**
 - **Trello/Asana:** For project management and task tracking.
 - **Google Drive:** For collaborative document creation and storage.
 - **Zoom/Teams:** For virtual meetings and workshops.
 - **Canva:** For designing infographics, posters, and social media posts to promote their campaigns.

■ Steps for Campaign Planning:

- Define the Campaign Goals: What specific change do you want to achieve with your advocacy efforts?
- Identify Target Audiences: Use the Spectrum of Allies to determine who should be targeted in the campaign - focus on engaging neutrals and mobilising passive allies.
- Select Digital Tools: Depending on the campaign type (e.g., online petition, social media awareness, or virtual workshops), choose the best platforms to reach your audience.

■ For Example:

- Social Media Campaign: Teach participants how to create impactful posts using platforms like Instagram, Twitter, and Facebook to reach their target audience. Demonstrate how to use hashtags to boost visibility.
- Online Petitions: Show participants how to use platforms like Change.org to gather support for their cause.
- Virtual Workshops: Guide participants on hosting virtual advocacy events via Zoom or Google Meet, engaging their community with presentations, discussions, and action plans.

Step 6: Launching a Virtual Advocacy Workshop (Optional)

- **Objective:** Show participants how to host and run virtual advocacy workshops in their communities.
- **Steps to Organise:**
 1. **Choose the Theme:** Decide on the focus of the workshop (e.g., environmental justice, plastic pollution).
 2. **Invite Allies:** Use the Spectrum of Allies to invite key stakeholders, including active allies and neutral groups who may benefit from learning more.
 3. **Create an Agenda:** Plan engaging sessions (e.g., guest speakers, Q&A, breakout discussions).

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4. Use Digital Collaboration Tools:

During the workshop, use Miro or OpenBoard to engage participants in real-time exercises, just like the Spectrum of Allies activity.

5. Share Resources and Next Steps:

End the workshop with actionable steps participants can take, such as joining social media campaigns, signing petitions, or organising local events.

3. How can you engage passive supporters or neutrals to turn them into active allies?
4. What digital tools will be most effective in organising your campaign?

By creating a Spectrum of Allies, participants will not only understand their support network but will also be empowered to organise effective, strategic advocacy campaigns. Using digital tools like Miro, Trello, and social media platforms will enable them to collaborate, communicate, and launch impactful campaigns, whether locally or globally.

Materials Needed:

- **In-Person:** Large paper, markers, sticky notes, pens.
- **Virtual:** OpenBoard or Miro (for collaboration), Zoom/Google Meet for video conferencing.

Advocacy asks are clear statements that define the specific outcomes you aim to achieve through your advocacy efforts. Each ask serves to clarify what you are striving to accomplish at various stages and with different key stakeholders.

Reflection Questions (Wrap-Up):

1. What surprised you while mapping out your allies?
2. How will you use this Spectrum of Allies to guide your next advocacy steps?

These asks should be crafted with the Theory of Change in mind, which outlines the desired change expected to occur in a particular context. They should be connected to short, mid, and long-term outcomes, ensuring that each ask aligns with the overall strategy and vision for achieving your advocacy goals.

Why these Advocacy Asks?		
Advocacy Asks(s)	JUSTIFICATION: Why this advocacy ask compared to everything else you could advocate for	Evidence(reports, programmatic experience, observation etc)

What is The Theory of Change?

The Theory of Change is a planning tool that helps you map out how to create the change you want to see. It's like a roadmap that shows the big goal you're working toward and breaks down the steps needed to get there.

Here's how it works:

- 1. Start with the goal:** think of the big difference you want to make. For example, maybe you want to clean up a river and restore the ecosystem and biodiversity there.
- 2. Identify needs:** imagine what needs to happen to reach that goal (what steps come before that?)
- 3. Identify key actions:** a list of specific actions and events needed to make each step happen. These actions are what you'll focus on the suggestion is to create a clear path from where things are not to your final goal

Allies > people who are 'on your side' – either because they will directly benefit from the policy changes, or because they want to bring about these changes for reasons of justice. Spectrum-of-allies analysis (Lakey), a tool used to identify the social groups affected by your issue, and locate those groups along a spectrum, from active opposition to active allies, so you can focus your efforts on shifting those groups closer to your position.

Campaigning > mobilising public concern in order to achieve a social, political or commercial aim. It is a series of activities designed to influence the policies and practices of public or private bodies (e.g. governments, institutions, companies). It helps demonstrate that members of the public, voters and consumers are concerned about the issue. A successful campaign is one that demonstrates the concern of large numbers of the public.

Coalitions > group of like-minded organisations or individuals who unite to create policy change. Coalitions are a great way to build or enhance your advocacy network and connect with similar organisations to advance a policy goal.

Lobbying > attempts to influence the decisions, actions, or policies of legislators or members of regulatory agencies. Moreover, lobbying may involve directly contacting or getting the public to contact the policymakers in order to support or oppose certain legislation.

Mission > brief, powerful statement of the reason an organisation exists. It uses bold, clear and memorable language, inspiring people to support the work being done by the organisation. It often explains why the organisation was founded, along with what it actually does in terms that convey the organisation's values. Mission statements look at what can be accomplished today.

It answers these key questions: • What do we do? • For whom do we do it? • What is the benefit?

Opponents > people who are opposed to the policy change. They may be actively opposed to the policy change. Or they may be ignorant or uninformed – these could be potential allies, given greater understanding.

Advocacy glossary

Activism > activities undertaken by individuals or groups to drive social, political, or environmental change, often using direct methods like demonstrations, boycotts, and civil disobedience. Activism relies on direct action and public pressure to challenge and disrupt existing systems, aiming for immediate, significant, and often radical transformation.

Advocacy > activities by a group of people aiming to influence decisions within the economic, social, and political institutions. Advocacy involves a wide variety of activities. It involves raising awareness and informing the public about an idea, cause, or policy. It can also involve researching new solutions, creating coalitions of like-minded people, as well as public campaigning. Advocacy seeks change through engagement and collaboration within existing institutions, focusing on influencing policies and decision-makers.

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Promotion > activities focused on raising awareness and gaining support for a cause, policy, or issue. This includes strategies like media campaigns, public relations, social media, and community engagement to influence public opinion, mobilize support, and advance advocacy goals. Promotion helps amplify the message, increase visibility, and drive change.

Values (statement) > represents the core beliefs of the organisation that inspire and guide its choices in the way it operates and deals with people. These values should be embedded in both the mission and the vision and part of all internal and external communications.

It answers these key questions: · What are the key values that guide our organisation? · How will we define and implement these values for our organisation? · Do they inspire pride and bring out the best in us?

Targets > people whom you wish to influence. Primary targets are those with the ability to affect your objective directly. Secondary targets are those who can influence primary targets.

Vision > a one-sentence statement describing the clear and inspirational long-term desired change resulting from an organisation or program's work. It is part emotional, intending to inspire people to imagine a better future, and part rational, presenting a view of the future that everyone can believe in.

It answers these key questions: · What does success look like for our organisation? · How will the world be different if we succeed in our mission? · What makes our organisation unique?



06 Module: Fundraising



**"Fundraising is the gentle art of teaching
the joy of giving."**

-Hank Rosso

Fundraising is about raising money to support a specific cause, such as a charity or community project or initiative. It's a powerful way to bring people together and make a real difference in the community. At its heart, fundraising is about building relationships, because that's what keeps an organisation strong.

Key ideas to keep in mind

1. Relationships matter

- Donors are real people, and having a good connection with them is super important.
- Think long-term! It's better to have someone support you over time, rather than just once.

2. It's a process, not a one-time event

- Fundraising is ongoing. It's not just about a single event but a strategy you build on.
- Make sure you communicate well. Share the wonderful things your organisation is doing so people are excited to give.

3. Show your impact

- Let your donors know exactly how their money helps your cause.
- Everyone in your organisation should be able to explain what the organisation stands for and why it matters.

Key fundraising principles

1. You need to ask

- If you need support, you need to ask for it! Having a plan is good, but you will not have results unless you start asking people to donate.

2. Say thank you

- Always thank your donors right away. It shows you value them, and it makes them more likely to help again.
- Keep them updated on how their money is making a difference.

How to build a fundraising strategy

1. Why you need one

- If you start fundraising without a plan, you might miss out on good opportunities.

2. Give yourself time to plan

- A solid fundraising plan should cover about three years. It should include realistic goals and a clear budget.

3. Set clear goals

- Decide exactly what you want to achieve and how fundraising will help you get there.

4. Use your network

- Think about the people your organisation knows—past donors, foundations, companies, and partners.
- Make sure your contact list is up to date so you can keep in touch easily.

5. Learn from the past

- Look at past fundraising efforts to see what worked and what didn't. Use those lessons to improve in the future.

The fundraising cycle

Fundraising doesn't end once you collect money. It's a continuous cycle of building relationships, planning, and figuring out what works. By following the steps of the fundraising cycle - research, planning, asking for donations, and evaluating - you can build a strong fundraising strategy that will keep your organisation successful for the long term.

Fundraising is essential to the success and sustainability of any advocacy initiative, especially in areas such as climate justice and environmental advocacy. However, many organisations make a common mistake: they focus solely on demonstrating how their project improves their own impact, without linking their work to the broader goals of institutional donors. While it's important to demonstrate your organisation's effectiveness and results, **donors** - especially large institutional donors - **are more likely to invest in projects that align with their own strategic priorities and impact goals.**

Fundraising for advocacy and climate justice projects

Aligning your work with donor goals

Institutional donors are not just looking for good projects; they are looking for initiatives that help them achieve their mission. When approaching donors, it's important to articulate how your work contributes to their impact and objectives. This involves doing thorough research on potential funders and understanding:

- Their mission and strategic goals: What issues do they care about most?
- The kind of impact they seek: Are they focused on short-term results or long-term systemic change?
- Geographic focus: Do they prioritise work in certain countries or regions?

By demonstrating how your project advances the donor's agenda, you position your initiative as a means for them to fulfill their own impact goals, making your proposal more appealing.

Key donors and funders worldwide

There are a number of key institutional donors around the world that focus on climate justice, environmental protection, and sustainable development. Each has its own set of priorities and funding guidelines. Below is a table summarising some of the major donors and their focus areas:

Donor	Focus Areas	Regions
Green Climate Fund (GCF)	Climate finance, adaptation and mitigation	Global, focus on developing countries
The Ford Foundation	Social justice, human rights, climate justice	Global
Global Environment Facility (GEF)	Biodiversity, climate change, pollution control	Developing countries
UNDP (United Nations Development Programme)	Climate action, sustainable development goals	Global
MacArthur Foundation	Climate solutions, sustainability	Global

Fundraising and Decolonisation

The ethics of funding, when viewed through the lens of decolonisation, is about understanding the unjust systems created by colonial history and working to improve them.

Often funders have their roots in the colonial era, and decolonising funding requires them to give up some control. But it's an important step towards equality. Funders make most of the decisions about how money is spent.

Decolonising funding means giving more power to the local communities that need support to set their own priorities and make a difference. Funders have their own agendas and values, which may not be in alignment with the values or ethics of your project or action. Be sure to do some research and be clear about contract terms before accepting or agreeing to receive funding. For example, some funders may be promoting GMO seed and chemical inputs for agriculture as a proposed solution to food insecurity, without fully understanding the long term harmful inputs of these practices.

Check out the policy paper “Decolonising EU Funding Mechanisms for Youth”

https://ccivs.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/06/final_decolonising_eu_funding_mechanisms_policy_paper_may_2024.pdf

that offers a critical reflection on the neo-colonial mechanisms in the funding structures of the European Union

This is one of the outcomes of the Decolonise IVS! - 2.5 year project, which aims to build a new framework for decolonial thinking in International Voluntary Service organisations in order to better understand the power dynamics and obstacles at stake when organising IVS projects worldwide.

Practical tips for successful fundraising

- 1. Research and target:** Before approaching a funder, research their priorities thoroughly. Many funders have public strategies and reports that outline their objectives. Use this information to craft proposals that clearly align your project with their objectives and language.
- 2. Storytelling with impact:** While it is important to show how your organisation makes a difference, focus on how your work enables the funder to achieve its own goals. Position your project as part of the bigger picture, contributing to a larger movement or cause that the donor already supports.
- 3. Build relationships:** Fundraising isn't just about asking for money; it's about building long-term relationships with donors. Engage with them regularly, share updates on your work, and show genuine interest in their mission.
- 4. Diverse fundraising streams:** Don't rely on any one donor or funding source. Institutional donors, individual philanthropists, grants and crowdfunding (see section below) can all play a role in a diversified fundraising strategy.
- 5. Use digital fundraising tools:** Use digital platforms such as GoFundMe, GlobalGiving or specialised grant databases such as FundsforNGOs to find new opportunities and connect with potential funders.

Fundraising vs Crowdfunding: what's the difference?

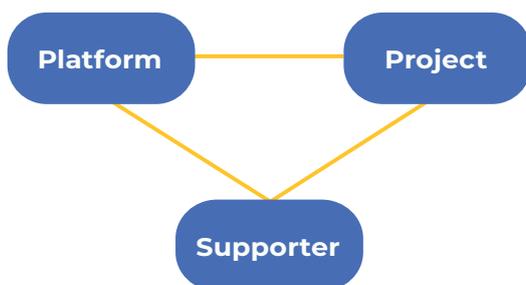
Crowdfunding is a cool, modern way to raise money by getting lots of small donations from people, usually online. While it might seem like a new idea, it's actually been around for hundreds of years! Back in the day, artists, musicians, and even churches would ask many people to pitch in to fund their work or build community spaces like schools.

Why Crowdfunding works

Crowdfunding helps you gather a lot of money quickly from small donations, just by sharing your cause online. You can reach way more people, faster, compared to traditional fundraising methods like applying for big grants or sponsorships.

It's also a great way to build a community around your cause - people aren't just donating money; they're becoming part of your mission. When they support you, they feel like they're helping to make a difference.

The Crowdfunding Triangle



Crowdfunding works because of three key parts:

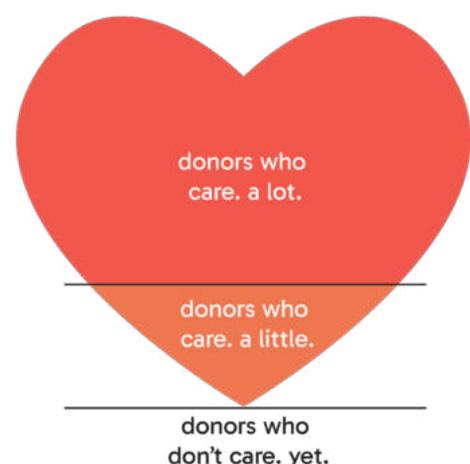
- 1. The Project:** That's you! The person or group asking for donations to fund an awesome cause or idea.
- 2. The Supporters:** These are the people who believe in your cause and decide to donate.
- 3. The Platform:** This is the website or app (like GoFundMe or Fundrazr) that connects you with people who want to help.

There are over 1,478 crowdfunding platforms worldwide! Some of the most popular ones include GoFundMe, GlobalGiving, Donorbox, and more.

How to get started with Crowdfunding

- 1. Pick a platform:** First, choose a site that best matches your needs. Whether you're raising money for a community project, an environmental cause, or even launching a new product, there's a platform that's right for you.
- 2. Engage your supporters:** Crowdfunding isn't just about getting donations - it's about building connections. Share your story! Tell people why this cause matters and how their help will make a difference. Be real, be personal - the more authentic you are, the more people will want to jump on board.
- 3. Offer cool rewards:** If you can, offer some kind of reward to donors - like a thank-you shoutout, a small gift, or early access to something you're working on. Make it fun and exciting!
- 4. Example:** If you're crowdfunding for a local clean-up project, you could offer personalised eco-friendly tote bags or plant a tree in a donor's name!
- 5. Keep everyone updated:** Once your project is rolling, make sure to update your supporters. Tell them how things are going, what you've achieved, and how their money is making a difference. This helps build trust, and who knows—they might donate again in the future!

Crowdfunding is a simple, effective, and fun way to raise money while building a community around your cause. With the right platform and a compelling story, you can turn small contributions into big change!



07 Module: Practical Planning Time for Action



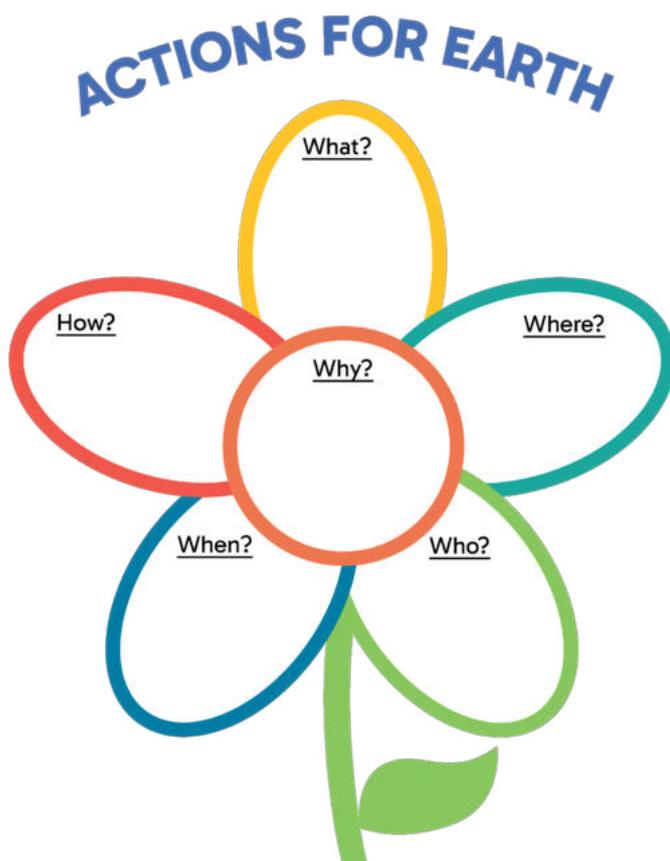
“If you have come here to help me you are wasting your time, but if you have come because your liberation is bound up with mine, then let us work together.”

Lilla Watson, Murri visual artist, activist and academic working in the field of Women's issues and Aboriginal epistemology

Step 1: “Dreamstorming”

Ask each participant to take some time to reflect on the cause which they identify with and to consider possible actions to take. Invite them to feel free with this process- and for a moment to imagine there were no limits. Ask questions such as “What would you like to see happen? Imagine there were no funding limits, no time limits- what would you do? Who would you reach with your message? How would people respond to your action?”

Step 2: My Flower for The Earth



Now each participant creates their flower.

In the center circle: Write the overall intention of your action (awareness raising, positive change, education, inspiration, ground-based action, etc)

WHAT? Describe the action

WITH WHO? Who are your allies, supporters, co-creators of this project

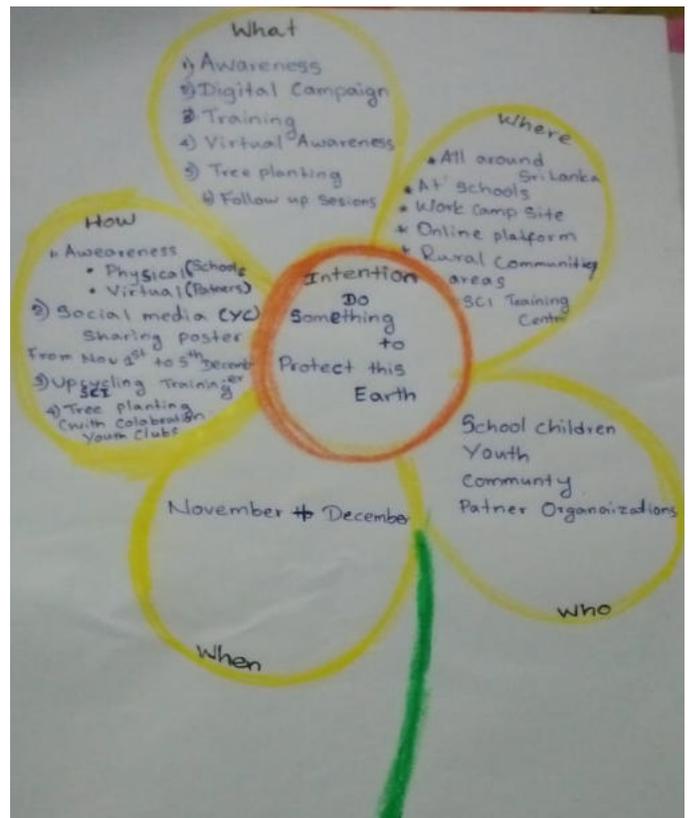
WHERE? The location of the action/ where will it take place

WHEN? Add a deadline for the action, timelines and goals are very helpful for staying on track and being accountable

HOW? Add some details here, but you do not need to know every aspect of the plan yet.

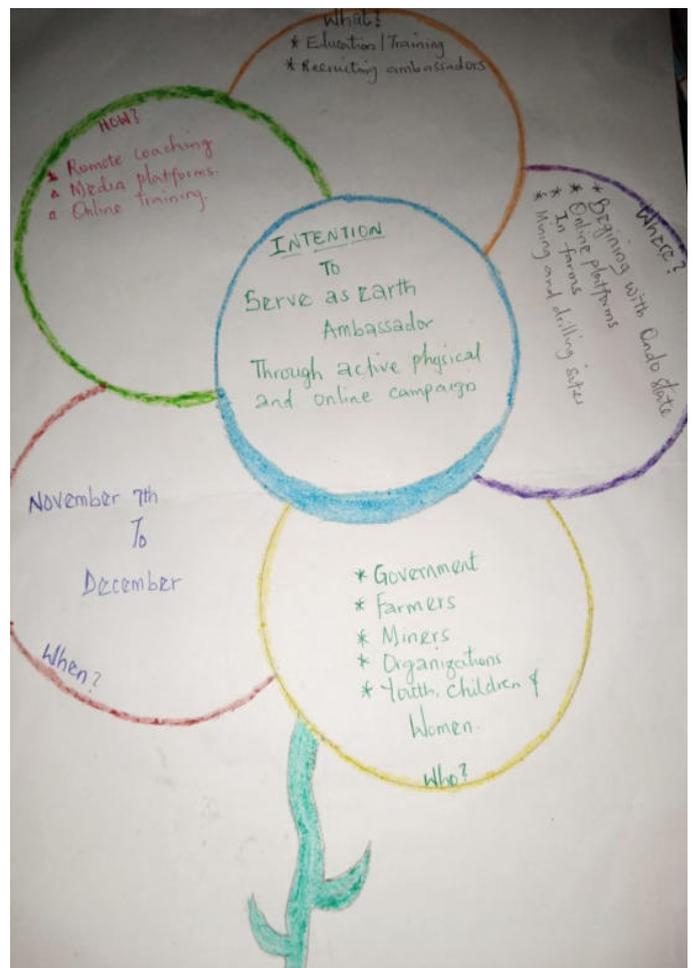
Ask the participants to send a photo of their flower by WhatsApp or email to the group so that they can give feedback to each other in the next session

Examples of flowers from the Earth Advocacy Mentorship Programme participants (2022):



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Step 3: Detailing the plan for action

Next you will support the participants to develop more details of the actions.

This is a very simple and useful tool to develop a strong, realistic plan in a step-by-step way. Simply follow the steps, writing and recording as you go.

OBREDIMET

Observations: What are the possibilities, potential and scope of this proposal/ action?

Boundaries: What are the limitations or restrictions that affect this proposal? (budget, time, scope, experience, etc)

Resources: What resources are available to realise this action? (money, technology, data, team members, skills, network, access to land, etc)

Evaluation: Assess the possibilities, respecting the real limitations and being realistic about the resources available.

Decide and Design: Plan your action in detail. Adding goals, a timeline and milestones to achieve.

Implement: ACT!

Measure and **E**valuate: Take photos (maybe before and after the action), write a report, ask for feedback, give yourself and those involved honest, constructive feedback

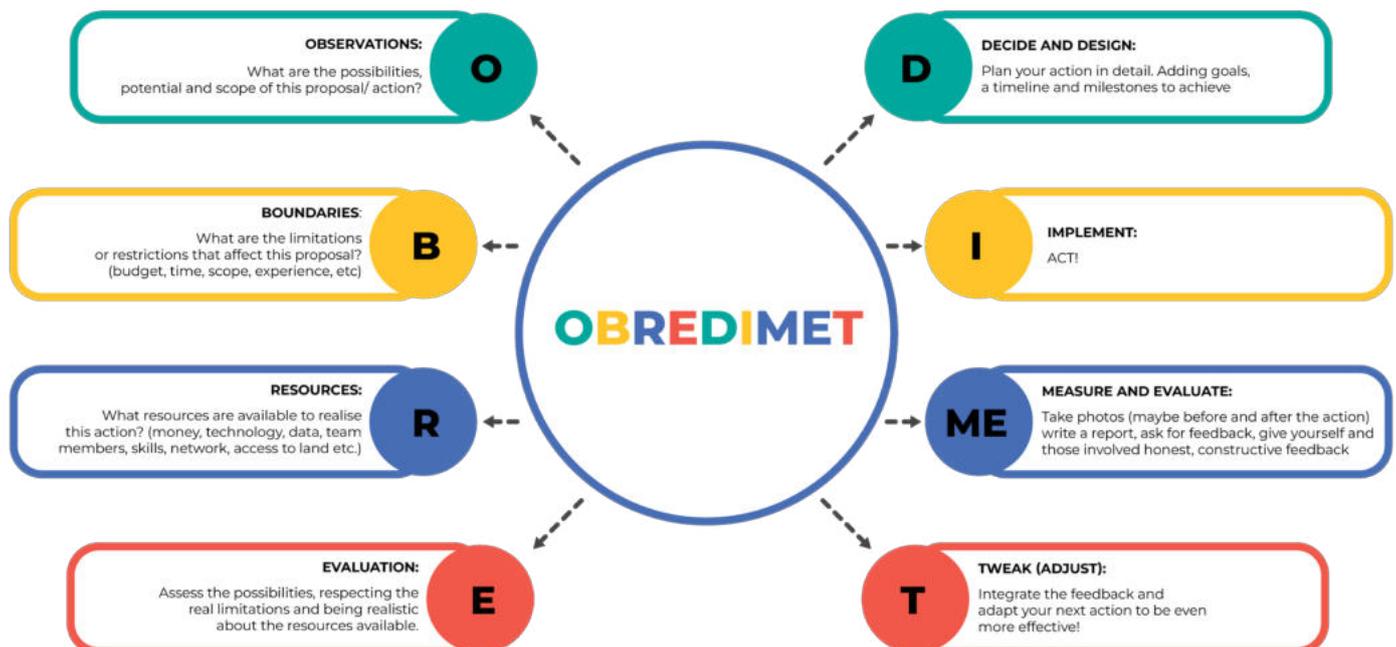
Tweak (Adjust) : Integrate the feedback and adapt your next action to be even more effective!

Action ideas are unlimited, be creative!

A LOCAL RIVER CLEAN UP!

School children speak up for nature and plant a vegetable garden for hungry students

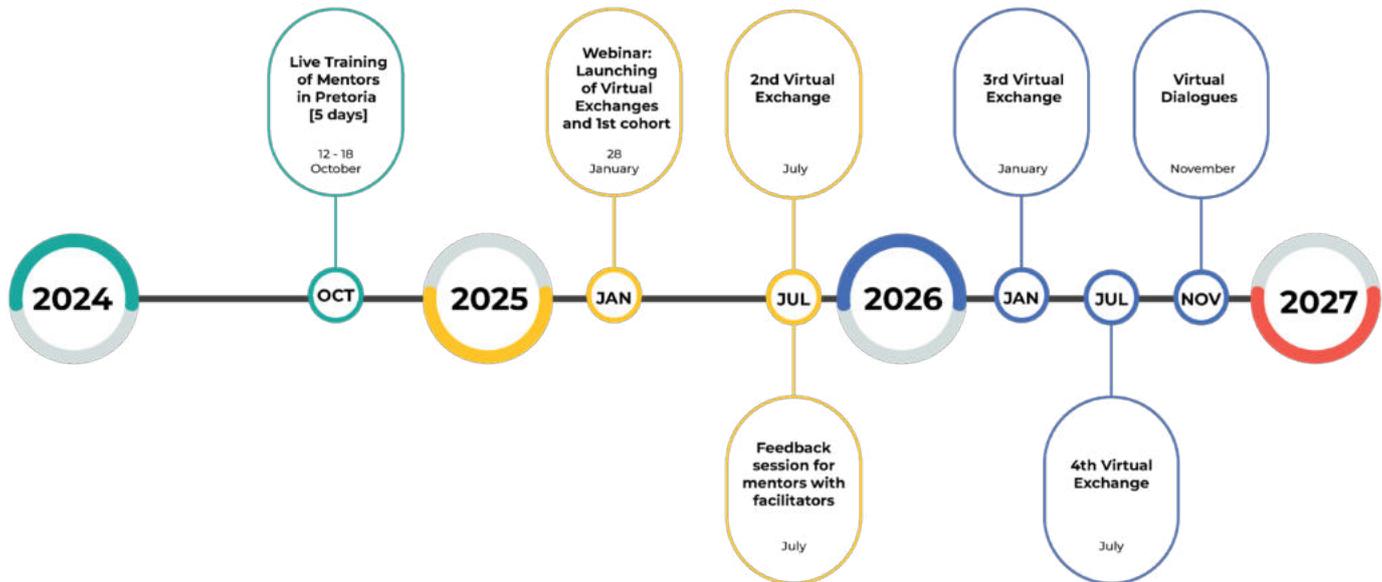
Local youth advocate for the right to a healthy environment and start creative, upcycling projects !



08 Module : The LIVE-Ex Mentorship Pathway



2024 - 2026 Timeline Live-x Mentorship Project



The suggested LIVE-Ex mentorship session outline for each cohort

- Session 1:
Getting to know each other and identifying causes/concerns
- Session 2:
Researching and sharing about a local concern/cause
- Session 3:
Essential ecosystem understanding and action planning
- Session 4:
Advocacy
- Session 5:
Fundraising
- Session 6:
Sustained activism and staying connected

As a mentor, it is up to you to design the sessions to be suitable, accessible and age-appropriate. You can be creative with the suggestions below. You could have a session every week for 6 weeks, or you could have 2 full-day workshops with 3 sessions per day.

You could run an activity at a school with youth, and facilitate a condensed version of all 6 sessions in 1 full day... It's up to you! The main goal is to inspire young activists and create a ripple of positive change!



Earth Activist Pathway/ Good Practice Map:

This is a suggested outline of aims, objectives and outcomes for each session. As a mentor, you are free to use your creativity and personal strengths and passions to direct the process in a way that is appropriate and supportive of your mentees and youth workers. This pathway is intended to be a guideline to support the mentees and yourself in implementing their climate actions.

Session 1: Getting to know each other and identifying causes/concerns

- Welcome and greeting
- Introduce the LiveEx Project & handbooks
- Participants introduce themselves
- Sharing concerns for the Earth
- Sharing local concerns regarding climate and environment
- Inspiring stories of actions

There are many fun ways and icebreakers to use in virtual or in-person exchanges. Make sure to introduce yourself and that everyone has a chance to say their name and a few words about why they joined the programme.

A simple introduction structure:
My name is... I live in...
I joined the programme because

Then you can give each participant to complete this unfinished sentence:
One thing I love about the world is
One thing that concerns me about the world is ...
...
One person who inspires me is ...
(These questions invite a deeper reflection and a chance to connect on our common concerns and cares)

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A fun icebreaker is to stand with participants in a big circle and say a sentence. If the sentence is true for them, they change places, if it's not true, they stay in their place.

On a digital platform, you can play the same game, people can react with a raised hand or heart, if the sentence is true for them.

For example:

Change places if you travelled over an hour to get here today.

Change places if you drink coffee.

Change places if you have a garden or grow vegetables.

Change places if you speak more than 2 languages.

Change places if you live in a city

Change places if you live in a rural area

If time allows, at the end of the first session, share a positive, inspiring example of a local action, campaign or similar to inspire participants to start thinking about possible future actions!

The Blue Blanket is an inspiring 5 minute video made by environmental activists to raise awareness about the dangers of big oil companies fracking along the east coast of South Africa. It was used as part of a campaign and court case to stop harmful fracking along the sensitive and protected coastline.

<https://youtu.be/4UBublpCWuk?feature=shared>

<https://youtu.be/4UBublpCWuk?feature=shared>



Outcome:

- The group feels connected and know something about the mentor and the other participants
- Participants understand the LiveEx pathway and expectation

Watch an example of Session 1:

<https://youtu.be/swpUDhrXup4>



Session 2: Researching and sharing about a local concern/cause

- Greeting and Check in
- Allow participants to share about their local ecological/climate justice issues. Share from your own experience too (or invite a guest speaker, or show a youtube video about an issue you are passionate about)
- In this module you will lead participants to identify a main cause that they're action will address.

Identifying a concern/cause

How to research and share/ communicate about a cause/ concern

Reflection questions to ask:

- What moves me to action, What inspires me?
- What keeps me engaged and motivated?
- What specific skills do I want to gain/ enhance?

ACTIVITY IDEA: An activity you could do is to give the participants the following exercise:

Assignment: Write an article describing (a local) cause or concern that you are passionate about

- Describe the cause and why it is important to you/others
- Research and summarise the main threats/ challenges affecting this cause (approx 200- 400 words)
- Add maximum 2 images (at a low resolution)
- Save as a pdf/word docx.
- Email the article to your partner/group for review and feedback.

The feedback structure is "What went well? what could be better?" (See module 02 Being a LIVE-Ex Mentor for info about feedback tips)

Return your partner's email to them with feedback and suggestive comments..

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Outcome:

Participants feel empowered to do research and find out more about a local cause that they care about and to share about it in the next session, either through a presentation/ article/ short video



Watch an example here Session 2: https://youtu.be/Rb_4s0MnTvs

Session 3: Essential ecosystem



understanding and action planning

Check-in: Take a few minutes for each participant to say how they are feeling- there are many, creative ways to do this

Fun check-in ideas (for virtual or in-person exchanges):

Show an image of different animals/ cartoon characters and ask each participant to choose the one that represents their mood today. You can close the session with the same image and question to assess whether anything has changed in the moods of the participants

OR

Simply ask each participant to say their name, a colour and an animal that represents their mood today eg. "Kate, yellow sunbird"

OR

Ask participants to describe how they are feeling as if it was a weather report eg. "Today I

feel sunny with a hint of clouds"

Choose to focus on one aspect of ecosystem understanding that you feel comfortable with: Soil, water, biodiversity, agroecology etc. You can then discuss how climate change is affecting this or other threats to these foundational elements (See Module 03 for content ideas)

Find an example of a good news story related to the topic you are addressing. Have a discussion about the example and ask participants to share stories that they are aware of about positive actions for climate justice or environmental actions.

Here is an example of a success story from South Africa, where environmental activists, indigenous communities and lawyers got together to prevent an environmental catastrophe and stand up for their rights and the rights of nature!

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WBNqg4KQiAs>

Court ruling on Shell's exploration rights a victory for Eastern Cape communities: Siquhamo Ntola



Some ideas for midway evaluation questions:

- What moves me to action, What inspires me?
- What keeps me engaged and motivated for LIVE-Ex?
- What am I finding most challenging about the LIVE-Ex programme?
- What specific skills do I want to gain/ enhance?

Action planning first phase:

Each participant is invited to create their "Flower for the Earth" by drawing on a piece of paper (see module 07)

In the center circle: Write the overall intention for the action (awareness raising, positive change, education, inspiration, ground-based action, etc)

WHAT? Describe the action

WITH WHO ? Who are your allies, supporters, co-creators of this project

WHERE? The location of the action/ where will it take place

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WHEN? Add a deadline for the action, timelines and goals are very helpful for staying on track and being accountable

HOW? Add some details here, but you do not need to know every aspect of the plan yet.

Ask the participants to send a photo of their flower by WhatsApp or email to the group so that they can give feedback to each other in the next session

Outcome:

Participants are driven by a desire to make meaningful contributions to ecological sustainability, motivated by the tangible benefits of their efforts and community collaboration. Interest in developing both technical skills (e.g., soil management, permaculture) and soft skills (e.g., project management, community engagement) to enhance personal and professional growth within the programme.

Session 4: Advocacy



A powerful advocacy tool: the Soil4Life Manifesto From Advocacy to Earth Advocacy

Core knowledge and skills for advocacy: the advocacy cycle and the Spectrum of Allies as strategic tools for change

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY:

Group Discussion about the Manifesto:

https://ccivs.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/soil4life_manifesto_-_with_signatures_collectives.pdf



Read the Soil4Life Manifesto with the group, or ask them to read it before the session.

Ask them which two or three points they feel most resonant with and why they feel that way.

ACTIVITY IDEA: Create a common ground for advocacy

Goal: Help your mentees understand and connect on key advocacy concepts.

Steps:

- 1. Review key terms:** Go through the glossary of advocacy together at the end of Module 05. and encourage mentees to look up additional information online for any term that feels unclear or particularly relevant
- 2. Discussion and reflection:** Discuss how these terms and concepts might look different in your community or region. This will help mentees see the real-world relevance of advocacy terms in their own lives and work.
- 3. Wrap-up & next steps:** Recap the main points learned about advocacy

This session builds a foundation for future advocacy by developing a clear understanding of key terms.

ACTIVITY IDEA: Group discussion (15-20 minutes), it's possible to divide the group in breakout rooms in a virtual exchange setting (2-3)

- a) Do you have any experience in advocacy work within your organisation/on a personal basis?
- b) In your opinion, which are the priority topics to advocate for (Earth Advocacy) and why?
- c) Is there something else you would like to share?

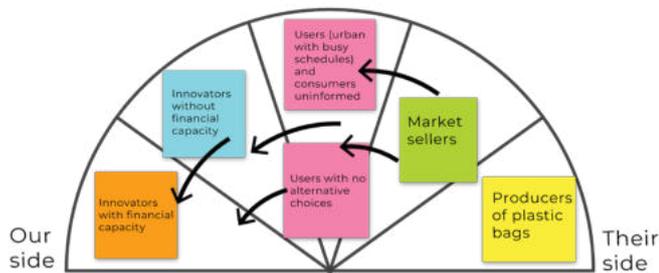
Next, each participant will present:

1. The cause they wish to take action on and an explanation about the challenge and why it is important (photos/images are welcome)
2. Their Flower for the Earth (Action plan)

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3. A Spectrum of Allies related to this cause (See the activity in Module 05 that details how to create a spectrum of allies and why it is a useful tool)



Outcome:

Participants will have gained a core knowledge of how to develop and implement effective advocacy strategies for environmental issues, together with a strong motivation that provides a sense of purpose and a clear direction for further action. They will also have created a spectrum of allies for their proposed action.

Session 5: Fundraising



Relationships matter! Key fundraising principles and practical tips for successful fundraising

ACTIVITY IDEA: Donor mapping for fundraising success

Assignment: Identify your potential donors

Help mentees understand how to identify and map potential donors to build long-term relationships, explaining that donor mapping helps organisations find the right people or groups to support their cause (explore more in Module 6 - Fundraising)

Why donor mapping?

Helps identify who is most likely to support the cause, based on interests, capacity, and existing connections.

1. Mentees will brainstorm in groups and list potential donors who are aligned with their organisation's cause
2. Creation of their own tool to collect relevant information (eg. donor mapping worksheet on Excel - starting from the table proposed in Module 6 | Fundraising and share with others
3. Wrap-up by the mentor to encourage mentees to reflect on what they've learned and how they can apply it to their own context

Participants now delve deeper into elaborating their action plans using the **OBREDIMET** tool (Module 07)

Introduce the tool first, using plenty of examples and keeping it simple.

Now participants can work in pairs, small groups or alone to develop the details of their action plan. Allow participants to present their plans and to include fundraising ideas.

Watch a session here for inspiration Session 9: https://youtu.be/-3zNx_sVRck



Outcome:

Participants have gained a deeper understanding of the importance of cultivating long-term relationships with donors recognizing that strong connections are the core of sustainable fundraising efforts.

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Session 6: Sustained activism and staying connected

Now is the chance for you to plan the closing



session with your mentees!

Ideally, they will have implemented their actions or be ready to do so soon. What are you, as a group and individuals planning to do to continue the work, and strengthen /maintain the network you have created.

Decide with the group on how you are going to report on their actions and stay connected as a group. Will you open a whatsapp group for sharing images and reports? A google drive folder? How will you give visibility to each other's actions?

Next steps:

ask each participant to share about their next steps.

Evaluation:

ask for feedback (both spoken and written) so that you as a mentor can improve, adapt, grow and continue to learn for the next LIVE-Ex cohort.

SOME IDEAS FOR A CLOSING SESSION:

Watch a session for inspiration here Session 12:
<https://youtu.be/RCwr4nNfxu8>



Burnout in activism: What motivates us? What keeps us motivated? The Work That Reconnects (the work of Joanna Macy and Molly Brown) : a framework for staying connected to purpose and belonging.

Ask each participant what they do to stay connected or to take care of themselves during challenging times?

Here are some possible responses:

Tools to reconnect:

- Time in nature
- Connecting to others (like-minded, like-hearted)
- Sharing
- Balancing time
- Self care IS earth care
- The power of gratitude
- Remembering our place in time/
- The Great Turning

Outcome:

Participants have a sense of belonging to a greater network of engaged citizens who are actively caring for and using their time and energy to work for ecological restoration, climate justice and earth activism. Participants are motivated, connected and ready to continue acting on behalf of life on Earth. Mentors will have received feedback and evaluation of the sessions.

09 Module: Training Approaches



Digital tool for youth work: let's make our daily work easier!

In today's fast-paced world, training has become more flexible and tailored, moving beyond traditional face-to-face sessions. Thanks to technology, training can now reach participants

anywhere, whether they're nearby or across the globe. Choosing the right delivery method is crucial to keep learners engaged and ensure they get the best experience.

Let's take a look at the different types of learning together:

	Face-to-Face Training	Hybrid Training
Overview	Overview: Trainers and participants meet in person at a physical venue for a residential training or seminar	A mixed approach where some participants join face-to-face, while others participate remotely. For example, a portion of the group may meet in a classroom with the trainer, while others join the session online
Best for	Best for: Building strong connections, immersive learning experiences, and hands-on activities	Offering flexibility for participants who cannot attend in person, expanding access to training
Advantages	Advantages: Immediate interaction, direct engagement, networking opportunities, focused environment	Inclusive for participants who cannot travel, allows simultaneous participation of both remote and in-person learners.
Consideration	Considerations: Requires travel, accommodations, and scheduling commitments for all participants	<p>Requires advanced technology, such as video conferencing and online collaboration tools, to ensure that online participants stay engaged.</p> <p>Audibility and sound quality need to be good enough for everyone present to hear and be heard</p> <p>A skilled moderator or facilitator will make sure that the process is smooth and that everyone present and virtually is able to follow and participate. Creative and spontaneous solutions are sometimes needed- such as everyone coming to the front of the room, one by one, to greet the person who is joining virtually.</p> <p>Time management is key- try to keep things short and interesting to make sure people remain engaged.</p> <p>Have a designated technical person on your team who can support and manage internet connectivity issues, settings, sound, microphones and software, etc. This can be the difference between a flowing, fun, successful event and losing participation and interest.</p>

	Blended Learning	Synchronous Learning	Asynchronous Learning
Overview	Combines face-to-face training with online learning activities. For instance, participants might meet online a week before the in-person session for introductions and preparatory work	Learning sessions are conducted in real-time, with trainers and participants engaging together, either face-to-face or online.	Participants access learning materials and resources at their own pace and time, from various locations
Best for	Flexible learning paths, continuity between sessions, accommodating varying learning preferences	Immediate feedback, live discussions, and collaborative exercises.	Flexible schedules, self-paced learning, participants in different time zones or with busy schedules.
Advantages	Prepares participants for in-person sessions, balances convenience of online learning with the richness of face-to-face interaction	Advantages: Interactive and dynamic, encourages direct participation and fosters engagement.	Advantages: Complete freedom over when and where to learn, accommodates different learning speeds and styles.
Consideration	Requires careful scheduling and integration of online and in-person components	Requires all participants to be available at the same time, time zone differences can be a challenge for global audiences.	Lack of real-time interaction, requires strong self-discipline and motivation to keep participants engaged. MOOC and i-learn platforms

ONLINE TOOLS

The advancement of digital tools and the accessibility of devices and internet connectivity enable trainers to offer their training modules remotely. On one hand, these resources assist organisations and expand the reach of participants geographically; on the other hand, the virtual format doesn't always perfectly substitute for in-person education sessions, which may need physical interaction, extended time, and materials such as flipcharts, markers, and paper to be effective.

There are numerous tools available that can assist in incorporating non-formal education techniques into virtual training sessions. Let's have a look together!

What's in your Digital Toolbox?

Zoom

is a video teleconferencing software that allows users to host virtual meetings. The free plan with no limit to the number of meetings you host and 40-minute time limit per session up to 100 participants.

For larger or longer sessions, users can upgrade to paid plans (e.g. Pro version approx 14\$/month and meetings up to 30 hours).

In addition to video conferencing, you take advantage of Zoom's additional features, such as the digital whiteboard for collaborative work and virtual breakout rooms for smaller group discussions.

Padlet

is a cloud-based software-as-a-service platform that hosts real-time collaborative virtual bulletin boards, referred to as "padlets." These boards allow users to upload, organise, and share a variety of content, making it an ideal tool for interactive communication and collaboration.

- **Pre-Training Use**

Before training begins, Padlet can serve as an interactive platform where participants can familiarise themselves with both the training content and their fellow participants. It offers a space for introductions, sharing resources, and previewing key materials, encouraging engagement and collaboration even before the training officially starts.

- **During Training**

Throughout the training sessions, Padlet can be utilized to share key information, such as session agendas, schedules, and other essential documents. This allows participants to easily access materials, collaborate, and provide feedback in real-time, ensuring a seamless and dynamic learning experience.

Mentimeter

is an excellent tool for non-formal education settings, where engagement and participation are key. Here's how it can be effectively used for:

- a) Icebreakers and introductions: such as word clouds or fun quizzes. Participants can introduce themselves anonymously, share thoughts, or respond to questions, creating a comfortable and inclusive atmosphere right from the start;
- b) Polling for opinions or ideas: during discussions or workshops, you can use live polls to gather participants' opinions on various topics. This promotes active involvement and provides real-time feedback on the group's understanding or attitudes, helping to shape the direction of the session;
- c) Brainstorming sessions: to allow participants to contribute ideas anonymously, fostering a sense of openness and creativity. This is especially effective in group activities or problem-solving tasks where everyone can participate without feeling pressured;
- d) Knowledge checks and quizzes: the anonymous responses ensure a low-pressure way for learners to engage, while also helping facilitators gauge the effectiveness of the session.
- e) Reflection and feedback: at the end of a session or activity, you can use Mentimeter to collect anonymous feedback or reflections. This allows participants to express their thoughts openly, and provides valuable insights to improve future learning experiences.

Using Mentimeter in non-formal education creates an interactive and learner-centred environment, encouraging active participation and ensuring all voices are heard.

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Miro

is a cloud-based collaborative whiteboard platform designed for teamwork. It enables users to create, share, and collaborate on virtual boards that can host a variety of content, including sticky notes, diagrams, images, and more. It is widely used for brainstorming, project planning, and interactive workshops across different sectors, including education, business, and design.

How to use Miro in non-formal education

- a) **Icebreakers and Introductions**
Participants can introduce themselves by adding virtual sticky notes with their name, interests or fun facts. This visual engagement helps create a relaxed, collaborative atmosphere.
- b) **Visual brainstorming and idea sharing**
Participants can contribute ideas through sticky notes, drawings or images, encouraging a creative flow of ideas. The platform enables real-time collaboration, so teams can see each other's input instantly and build on ideas together.
- c) **Mind mapping and concept mapping**
Participants can visually connect ideas to gain a deeper understanding of the topic. This is particularly effective for group discussions or workshops where learners are exploring new concepts.
- d) **Collaborative project planning**
Teams can create timelines, assign tasks and visualise the workflow. This helps learners stay organised and track progress while developing project management skills.
- e) **Reflection and feedback**
At the end of a session or activity, Miro can be used to collect feedback. Participants can drop sticky notes with their reflections, comments or suggestions on the board, creating a visual feedback space that encourages openness and interaction.

Miro enhances non-formal education by providing a flexible, visual, and interactive platform where participants can actively engage and collaborate. Its versatility makes it ideal for a wide range of educational activities.

Whatsapp Community and groups

A useful tool for mobile phone apps for group and community engagement, sharing information and photos quickly and there is the option to run polls and respond to messages with reactions and emoticons. E.g. Share a green heart if you are ready to present your action plan, or share an orange heart if you need more time, etc.

You can also do a group video call, but this needs very clear rules around muting microphones and designating the next speaker, etc.

Google Workspace

Suite of tools for real-time interaction that fit perfectly with a non-formal education approach creating an inclusive, interactive, and productive learning experience.

Each tool encourages active participation, easy collaboration, and open communication:

- Google Meet enables live video calls for group discussions, icebreakers, and interactive activities, creating a dynamic space for everyone to connect and share ideas
- Google Forms allows for quick polls, surveys, or quizzes, letting participants share their opinions or check their knowledge in a low-pressure way. Responses come in real time, so everyone can see the results as they happen.
- Google Docs offers a shared space for brainstorming and collaborative writing, where everyone can add thoughts, comments, and edits at the same time, making it easy to build ideas together.
- Google Slides supports group presentations and creative projects.
- Google Drive provides a central storage space for all shared files and resources, accessible to everyone in the group. It's like a virtual binder where you can keep everything organised and accessible anytime.

Google Workspace for Nonprofits, the basic version of Google Workspace for free for non-profit. Currently only available for a few African countries. <https://support.google.com/nonprofits/answer/1614602?sjid=5662190795514541486-EU>

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Slack

is a powerful communication tool that improves collaboration, streamlines communication and fosters community among members. It works through dedicated channels for specific topics, which helps keep conversations focused and allows the team to easily find relevant information without having to wade through long email threads. It makes it easy to share documents, images and other files directly in conversations, which can be integrated with other applications and tools, including Google Drive and Zoom.

Kahoot (quiz tool)

is a learning platform that is easy to use that transforms traditional learning into a fun experience. It allows users to create and participate in quizzes, surveys and polls that can be accessed on any device (smartphones, tablets, computers). Platform Instant in-game results to help participants understand how they're performing.

Facebook, Instagram, Tiktok and YouTube live meetings

Can enhance communication, foster community, and create a more dynamic learning environment for mentees. These platforms allow young advocates (mentees) to engage directly with their audiences and relevant stakeholders, sharing real-time updates and insights in real-time that facilitate communication around their ongoing Earth Advocacy initiatives.

Microsoft Teams

is a tool that helps to communicate and collaborate, allowing you to send instant messages to individuals or groups, share quick updates or discussions, make video calls, and collaborate on shared documents. You can organise conversations and work by creating different channels for specific projects to keep discussions focused and easily searchable.

Tools for design:

Canva

is a graphic design platform that allows users to create a wide range of visual content, from social media graphics and presentations to posters and flyers, accessible to people with varying levels of design experience. Free version Pro available for non-profit: <https://www.canva.com/canva-for-nonprofits/>

Postermywall.com

Another graphic design tool for creating multi-purpose visuals, including posters, flyers, social media graphics and promotional videos. Intuitive interface, highly accessible to users of all skill levels, from beginners to experienced designers

REMEMBER!

It's important to remember that these digital tools are updating and changing regularly, and that new tools become available often too. It's up to you to stay informed and use the ones that work for you and your mentees. Keep it simple, low data and accessible to as many people as possible.



Good practices for virtual exchanges

When thoughtfully designed, virtual exchanges can be as engaging and powerful as face-to-face interactions. By integrating interactive tools such as Zoom, Padlet, Mentimeter and others, and using a mix of synchronous and asynchronous approaches, you can encourage active participation and strong group cohesion.

Here are some best practices for keeping participants engaged and connected in online settings, as well as strategies for supporting asynchronous learning.

1. Use interactive tools for real-time engagement

In virtual environments, attention spans can wane without interactive elements. Tools such as Zoom, Padlet, and Mentimeter can make your sessions dynamic and participatory.

- **Zoom:** Use breakout rooms for small group discussions to encourage deeper conversations. Use the digital whiteboard for collaborative work and enable the show of hands feature for orderly contributions.
- **Padlet:** Create interactive bulletin boards where participants can post ideas, comments, or resources before, during, and after sessions. This can be a space for ongoing reflection and group sharing.
- **Mentimeter:** Use live polls, quizzes and word clouds during sessions to quickly gather anonymous feedback or test knowledge. This is particularly useful for ensuring the participation of those who may be shy in larger groups.

2. Foster group cohesion

Building strong connections in an online environment is essential for effective collaboration. Here are some tips for building cohesion in virtual exchanges:

- **Icebreakers:** Start each session with icebreaker activities to help participants get to know each other and feel more comfortable.

Use Mentimeter or Zoom chat to ask fun, light-hearted questions, or Padlet for quick introductions.

- **Breakout rooms:** Divide participants into smaller groups using Zoom's breakout room feature to encourage intimate discussions and teamwork. Rotate groups periodically to ensure participants are interacting with different people.
- **Regular feedback loops:** Encourage ongoing interaction by creating regular feedback moments. Use tools like Mentimeter for anonymous feedback during or after sessions, and Padlet to collect insights or suggestions for improvement.

3. Asynchronous learning tools for flexibility

While synchronous sessions are valuable, allowing participants to engage in their own time enhances accessibility and deeper learning. Asynchronous tools provide flexibility, especially for those in different time zones or with varying schedules.

- **Record sessions:** Record your live Zoom sessions so participants can catch up on missed content or review important points. Make sure these recordings are easily accessible later.
- **Extra materials:** Share additional learning resources such as videos, articles, and case studies to supplement the live sessions. These materials can deepen participants' understanding and allow them to explore topics at their own pace.
- **Discussion boards:** Use tools such as Padlet to create discussion boards where participants can reflect, ask questions, or share their insights. This encourages ongoing dialogue, even when live sessions aren't taking place.

4. Combine synchronous and asynchronous Approaches

A balanced virtual exchange includes both live and self-paced elements. Consider the following tips for integrating both approaches:

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- **Pre-session activities:** Use Padlet or Google Docs to share pre-session readings or videos so that participants can familiarise themselves with the topic beforehand.
- **Post-session reflections:** Post-session reflections: After a live session, provide a space for participants to share their reflections asynchronously. They can post on a Padlet board, complete a short survey, or answer follow-up questions via Mentimeter.
- **Ongoing collaborative projects:** For long-term engagements, set up ongoing projects where participants can work asynchronously in groups using shared tools like Miro, Google Docs, or Padlet to track progress and share ideas.

5. Maintain regular check-ins

In virtual exchanges, it's important to check in with participants regularly to ensure they feel supported and connected.

- **Scheduled check-ins:** Schedule one-on-one or small group check-ins via Zoom or a similar tool to provide personal feedback and guidance.
- **Progress surveys:** Use Mentimeter or Google Forms to gather anonymous feedback on how participants are finding the pacing, content, and engagement levels. Adjust accordingly based on their input.

REMEMBER!

That the key to successful virtual exchanges is to balance interaction, flexibility and meaningful engagement across all learning modalities.



10 Module: Practical Tools for in-person(or virtual) exchanges

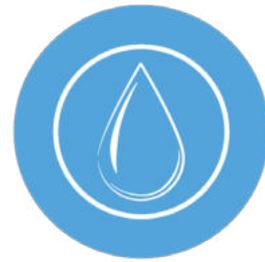




EARTH



AIR



WATER



ETHER



FIRE

Earth:
Preparation

Air:
The physical container

Water:
The emotional container

Fire:
Activity

Ether:
Feedback/ reflection for
creative adaptation

As LiveEx Mentors and Earth Activists we want to foster a sense of care, community and activism. When we work with groups we want to inspire, connect and strengthen the existing skills, talents, ideas and values of the participants. For a holistic process, it is useful to consider a “head, heart and hands” framework.

Head, Heart and Hands



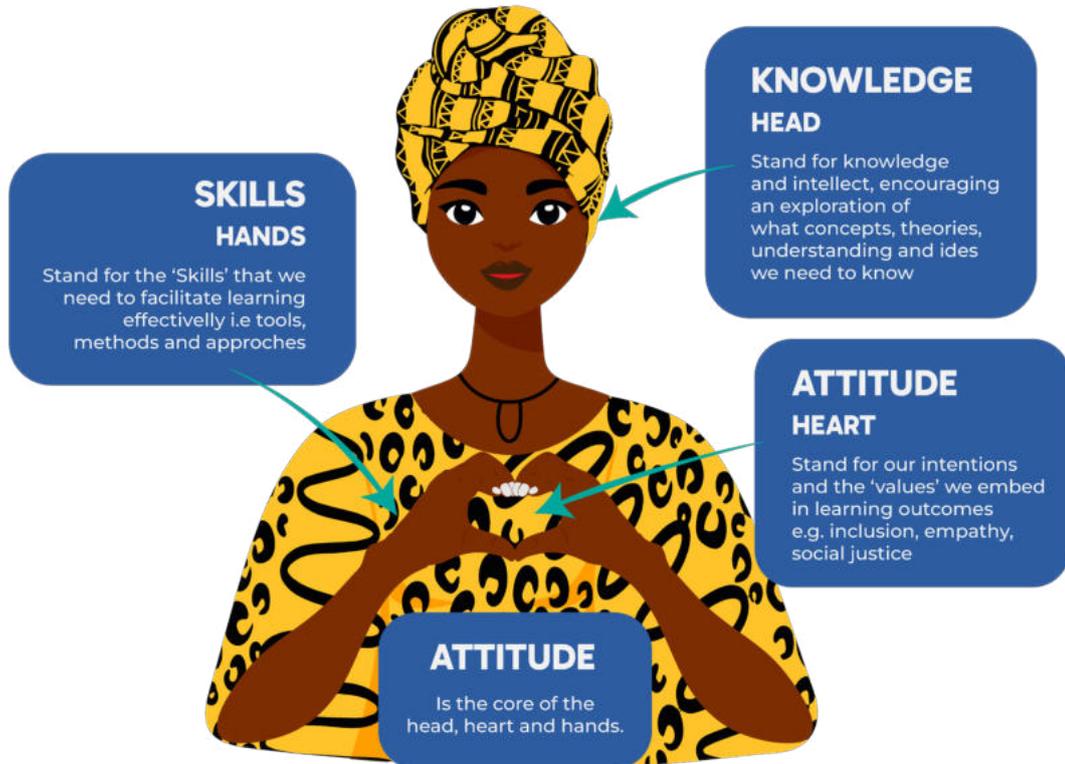
Head: intellectual understanding and knowledge acquisition eg. learning about biodiversity and threats to biodiversity through a lecture, video or presentation

Heart: emotional engagement and motivation eg. a reflection exercise that invites participants to express how they feel when they hear about biodiversity loss and rapidly increasing extinction rates and ask them to draw a picture or write a poem about it

Hands: embodying the learning through action eg. Planting a pollinator garden or planting trees as part of a reforestation project, cleaning a polluted waterway.

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A HOLISTIC APPROACH TO LEARNING



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This holistic approach aims to create a more comprehensive and meaningful learning experience by addressing all dimensions of participant development. It also gives a much deeper meaning to the action, when we are aware of both the emotional and intellectual reasons for taking action.

Preparation:

Preparing the participants:

It can be helpful to send out a friendly reminder to participants with information that helps them to know what to expect such as a) timings and breaks, b) venue location and arrival/ parking instructions c) what to bring (a notebook, pen, pencil, etc) d) extra useful information such as "please wear comfortable clothes and shoes as we will be doing some movement/ outdoor activities" or "bring a hat for the sun, as we will be outside if the weather is good".

Remind participants to please be punctual, or even to arrive a few minutes early.

Prepare yourself:

- Create a clear outline of the activities you want to include in the session.
- Allocate the time needed to each activity, including time for giving instructions and taking short breaks, or for questions and answers.
- Check that the time allocated is sufficient for the number of people participating.
- Have one or two energizers or alternative exercises ready in case you need them!
- Ensure you have all the materials you will need (eg. papers, pens, props, etc)
- Check your devices are fully charged and that you have the right cables and adapters, if needed ask the venue about the projector requirements, etc.
- Practice or read through your material so that you feel confident and up to date.
- Check-in with any co-facilitator or partners to make sure that you are all clear about the outline, roles and responsibilities.

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- When you arrive at the venue, take a walk around to make yourself feel familiar with the space and access. If needed, set up the space so it is comfortable, light, bright and clear of distractions (if possible). Arrange chairs or seating in a way that works for your first activity. It's helpful if participants can see each other and you - circles and semi-circular seating arrangements work well for this.

Arrival and welcome:

It's important to make sure that participants feel welcome, safe and comfortable. If it's a large group and people don't know each other, it's useful to have a system such as name tags so that everyone can see everyone's name easily. (It's good practice to try to think of the most ecological way - no plastic and use recycled paper. This eases the tension of trying to remember everyone's names.

Always allow participants a few minutes to settle into the space. It can feel pressured when there is a time-constraint, but try not to create an atmosphere of rushing or pressure. In today's high-pressure world, it is a brave act to slow down!

Welcome:

Introduce yourself briefly and orientate participants to the venue. Introduce the schedule and time. Introduce any requests around meeting protocol, such as "please turn off your phones" or "are there any objections to photographs being taken?" etc.

Share about the learning culture you would like to promote, eg "please take this workshop as an opportunity to practise active listening."

Introductions:

Introductions need to be designed to fit the number of people in the group and time available. Always participate in introduction activities yourself.

There are many ways to do this! Invent your own way, be creative and encourage acceptance and listening. Some examples are:

- Allow all people present to say their name and where they have come from.
- Ask each person to say their name, how they feel, a colour and an animal (eg. "My name is Rakesh, curious, red, fox"). This gives visibility to the diversity present in the group.

- Ask each person to say why they joined the workshop, or what they are hoping to learn.
- Have participants introduce themselves in pairs. Then join another pair and introduce each other.
- Give open-ended questions such as "One thing I love about the world today is..." and answer them in a circle

Icebreakers/ Energizers/ grounding exercises:

Icebreakers are short activities that help people to feel comfortable to talk and participate, especially with people they don't know well. Laughter and play are powerful tools to encourage creativity and participation! We usually use icebreakers at the beginning of a workshop, but we can use them to start a group work session, or to bring the group back together after a break or individual activity.

Energizers or grounding activities keep the energy flowing and balanced. It is good practice to be aware of the energy of the whole group. If people are becoming tired, distracted, anxious or unfocused, this can be important feedback to change the activity, or offer a short break or breathing/ stretching exercise, or an energizer.

Intention and attunements:

These are an invitation to go into silence as a group, to come into mindful awareness of the space around us, the sounds around us, the feeling of wind or sun or the ground beneath our feet. They are also an invitation to become aware of the elements of nature that are present - such as birds, animals, trees and plants. It is important to remember our greater intention and purpose for these workshops or activities. As Earth Activists, we can intentionally choose to remember why we do this work, and become aware of nature around us and inside us. This can be as simple as taking a moment to feel our breath, and become aware that the trees around us are breathing too, that what we breathe in, the trees breathe out.

When we are connected to nature and our deeper intentions, it helps us to feel empowered and supported by the greater living beings around us, not only humans.

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“Knowing that you love the Earth changes you, activates you to defend, protect and celebrate. But when you feel that the Earth loves you in return, that feeling transforms

the relationship from a one-way street into a sacred bond.”

- Robin Wall Kimmerer, Braiding Sweetgrass

Useful tips for Facilitators:

Use diverse presentation methods:

Include different formats like discussions, activities, multimedia, and hands-on, creative



exercises. Allow for individual, pair work and group work. This keeps the session dynamic and integrates to different learning styles.

Encourage interaction:



Foster an environment where participants feel comfortable sharing their thoughts and asking questions. This can lead to richer discussions and deeper learning.

Manage time effectively:



Be mindful of time to ensure you cover all necessary topics without rushing or dragging on. Keep an eye on the clock and be prepared to adjust if needed.

Provide clear instructions: Make sure your instructions are clear and easy to follow. If necessary, write them on a poster or board, or project them onto a screen. This helps avoid confusion and ensures that everyone is on the same page.

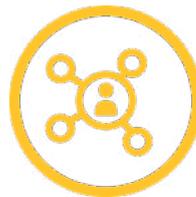
Be flexible and adaptable:

Be prepared to adjust your plans based on the



needs of the group or unexpected challenges. A good facilitator listens and responds creatively to changing needs. Be curious! Sometimes meeting objectives happens in unexpected ways.

Feedback and Reflection



At the end of the session, ask for feedback from participants and co-facilitators. Always do your own deep reflection too. This can help you to get valuable insights and to get better and more confident as you gain experience.

Two useful questions to ask are:

What went well?

What could be better?

What did I learn?

TIP! A great way to end each session is to ask two simple questions: “How do I feel?” and “What did I learn?”

Authors Corner

Kate Curtis

Kate is passionate about heart-centred facilitation, ecological education, permaculture, agroecology and ecosystem restoration for positive change. She formed part of the team on the CCIVS Living Earth Campaign (and formerly CCIVS for Climate Justice), Soil4Life and the Earth Advocacy Mentorship Programme.



Being a facilitator on the LIVE-Ex mentor training with eight African partner organisations was especially meaningful for her, as she is inspired to promote a decolonial approach to environmentalism and advocacy.

She is currently growing a non-profit project in South Africa called Green Hearted Projects, which supports food sovereignty and local food gardening projects. With broad practical experience growing in diverse soils, cultures and locations, she is inspired to be part of the deep, just transition using an eco-feminist approach to activism.

Giada Martin

Giada has been involved in the International Voluntary Service (IVS) since 2017, first as an active member of the Team External Affairs of the Alliance of European Voluntary Service Organisations and currently as the Communications and External Affairs Manager within its Secretariat.



Her advocacy journey began in 2012 during her Master's studies in Public and Political Communication, combined with her experience as a representative of the World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts (WAGGGS) Europe Region External Relations and Communications Working Group, where she was involved in advocacy and lobbying towards European institutions.

Complementing her expertise, Giada holds a Postgraduate Diploma in Fundraising, which has given her advanced skills in building sustainable resources and strategic partnerships for non-profit organisations, particularly in the field of international cooperation.

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LIVE

Living Earth Exchanges

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