

# Where to start



Ages: Can be adapted for any age



Time: 1 hour +

## Purpose:

To think about your role within the climate movement.

## Youth work outcomes:

**Outcome 1:** Young people are confident, resilient and optimistic for the future

**Outcome 3:** Young people create, describe and apply their learning and skills

**Outcome 5:** Young people consider risk, make reasoned decisions and take control

**Outcome 6:** Young people express their voice and demonstrate their social commitment

## Sustainable development goals:



## Context:

Hosting COP26 and the associated side events in Glasgow in November 2021 has meant that for many young people in Scotland, the climate crisis has never felt closer to home. Whether they followed the negotiations, attended the school strikes, or took part in the incredible array of civil society, artistic and cultural events happening in Glasgow over the two weeks of COP, young people were engaged in this COP more than any other. For many, this may be the first time they had heard of the UN COP negotiations, and this new wave of interest can be supported by the youth work sector to help strengthen the youth climate movement in Scotland.

## Finding your place in the climate movement

It can be hard for young people to know where to start when getting involved in the climate movement as there is so much happening across such a wide spectrum. One of the fundamental principles of youth work is meeting young people where they are at, which means not expecting them to have prior knowledge or experience of the climate crisis, but supporting them to educate themselves and engage at whatever level they are able to. This lack of expectations will help bring new young people into the climate movement who haven't been involved until now, and who come from less privileged backgrounds, as the movement needs all voices to be successful. As youth workers we can support young people to find their place in the climate movement, and use this process to help the young people reflect on what is important to them, and what solutions are needed. To do this, [Ayana Elizabeth Johnson](#) suggests drawing a simple [Venn diagram](#), which can be adapted according to the young people's needs. It can also be useful for youth workers to think about where climate action can fit into our youth work practice.

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## What do you love doing?

On a large sheet of paper, ask the young people to draw a circle and write inside it things that bring them joy. What do they love doing? This is important to make sure that any actions they take are sustainable and that they don't burn out. When thinking about this you can also encourage the young people to discuss what aspects of COP26 they particularly enjoyed or were inspired by. For example, did they enjoy learning from the many talks, panels, films and other events that were running during COP? Did they attend the youth strikes, or get involved in a community climate action? Were they inspired by the way that artists and musicians used their work to highlight the climate emergency and bring the movement together?

## What are you good at?

Next, draw a second circle which slightly overlaps the first. Inside, ask the young people to write down things that they are good at – this could be a specific skill like making films or coding or painting, or it could be something like talking to others, or spreading optimism. The climate movement needs all sorts of people and skills, so everything is relevant here.

## What needs doing?

Then draw a third circle which intersects both of the other circles. Inside this one, the young people should write down what kind of work needs doing in the climate movement. This is a big question so you may want to do a separate exercise to come up with some ideas. You could encourage the young people to draw a map of their town or local area and mark on it the things that are already happening to identify where they might fit in or whether there are any gaps. These actions could be individual, on a community level, or on a national or international level – everything counts!

## Where do I fit in?

In the centre of the Venn diagram where all three circles overlap is where the young people should be thinking about how they themselves can get involved in the climate movement. It should be something they enjoy doing, something they are good at, and something that needs doing. There is a place for everyone in the climate movement, and young people bring a vital energy and sense of urgency to the conversations around the climate crisis. There are no right or wrong answers here!

### Some ideas to get started:

- Make a film about how climate change will affect your local area.
- Host a local mini-COP to get people talking about local climate issues and solutions.
- Sign up for the Climate Emergency Training for young people to expand your knowledge of the climate crisis.
- Join a session of Climate Fresk for a fun and interactive way to learn about the science behind the IPCC reports.
- Use the activities in the climate emergency toolkit for fun and accessible ways to get young people interested in climate action.
- Start a climate club in your school or community to connect with like-minded others and share experiences.
- Attend Fridays for Future protests or start your own local group.
- Get in touch with your COP26 Local Champion to find out about local youth climate action.
- Put on a climate change related show or musical as a way of raising awareness and funds.
- Start a resource-sharing network – you could share books, clothes, tools, toys, lifts, food – this will reduce waste and consumption, save people money and build community spirit.
- Record a podcast and interview local experts on climate solutions.
- Create a collaborative artwork depicting climate change in your community, for example a mural or a tapestry.