



Youth Work Ireland

MY PLANET MY PLEDGE

Environment and Climate Change
Activity Resource



#myplanetmypledge

“Nobody can go back and start a new beginning, but anybody can start today and make a new ending”.

Mary Robinson

Former President of Ireland & UN High Commissioner for Human Rights

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Youth Work Ireland

Introduction

Deborah Fakeye
President, Youth Work Ireland



It's shocking to think that our planet is at a scary crossroads at the minute. On one hand, we could all wake up tomorrow and realise it is not too late to reverse the damage that has been done to the environment. On the other less hopeful hand, things could continue right now as they are, sea levels rising, global temperatures increasing, flora and fauna disappearing. Climate change worsening by the second. Personally, I choose hope.

Young people have been at the forefront of so many incredible movements across the world, from the Anti-War Movement of the last century to the more recent [March for Our Lives](#) protests. The passion, knowledge and determination we have to offer is no more present than in the incredible Climate Strikes we've seen blaze across our villages, towns and cities. For a moment, think of Greta Thunberg as a seedling. She started her journey all alone, before the seeds of her influence spread all across the globe. She is now an integral structure - the tallest of trees - in this forest with a network of roots that will change the world.

I want you to think of yourself as one seed in a packet of many. You might all individually think you have little impact, but together we make a vibrant garden. All it takes is that little bit of awareness and action. Reusing, reducing and recycling. Using public transport. Being an active citizen. Ensuring our voices are heard by key decision makers.

I want future generations to look back and praise ours as the one that did the impossible. That saved our planet and guaranteed health and happiness for centuries to come. Will you take the pledge?

Deborah

My Planet My Pledge

About

As part of Youth Work Ireland's Consensus Process 2019, young people told us that the environment and climate change were key issues they wanted to learn more about and campaign for change on. At the moment it is young people who are leading the way in terms of activism and bringing attention to the need to combat climate change. Through demonstrations and protests they are challenging government and decision-makers to act now to ensure the environment is protected for all generations.

The **My Planet My Pledge** pack was originally developed as a resource to be done in a group work setting, however, with the COVID-19 outbreak and youth groups meeting online, it has been adapted to be delivered as an online resource with downloadable printouts. Workers delivering this pack can either select individual activities to suit their group and time, or work through it systematically. The activities can be done without too much preparation or materials, be delivered by both youth workers and volunteers and each worksheet is available in a downloadable format - just click on the image.

Learning Outcomes

- Young people will be able to critically examine key issues around climate change and the environment.
- Young people will develop skills and knowledge to enable them to live an environmentally friendlier life.
- Young people will be able to recognise their responsibilities and abilities to become advocates for the environment and climate change.
- Young people will be able to make the link between how individual behaviours can impact and affect climate change.
- Young people will be able to recognise their personal power to make a positive impact on the planet.

#myplanetmypledge

The last activity in this pack asks young people to name one pledge they will commit to, to help make the world a better place for all. We are asking that these pledges are shared out on social media pages using the hashtag **#myplanetmypledge** and tagging **Youth Work Ireland**. Young people can take photos, create posts and Insta stories of their pledges.

This pack and each individual session is also available online at:
www.youthworkireland.ie/myplanetmypledge

Key Terms and Background Information for Workers

Air Pollution: This occurs when dust particles, gases, factory fumes or smoke are introduced into the Earth's atmosphere and cause harm to humans, animals and plants.

Bio-Diversity: This term describes the variety of living things, we share the planet with. The pressures humans are exerting on the planet and its resources can damage these living things.

Climate Change: Term which refers to any change in climate over time, whether due to natural causes or as a result of human activity.

Climate Justice: This term links climate issues to human rights and development and frames global warming as an ethical and political issue, rather than one that is purely environmental or physical.

Climate Refugee: This term describes a person who has been forced to leave their home as a result of the effects of climate change.

Climate Strike: When people absent themselves from school or work to join marches demanding action to climate change.

Carbon Footprint: This term describes a measure of the impact our activities have on the environment and in particular climate change.

Deforestation: The term given to the clearing or removal of trees from land which is then converted to a non-forest use.

Global Warming: The term for a long-term rise in the average temperature of the Earth's climate system.

Greenhouse Effect: This is the process that occurs when gases in Earth's atmosphere trap the sun's heat and makes the Earth much warmer.

Greenhouse Gases: These are gases that absorb and emit radiant energy within the thermal infrared range which then cause the greenhouse effects on the Earth.

Ozone Layer Depletion: This term describes the gradual thinning of the Earth's ozone layer caused by the release of chemical compounds.

Plastic Pollution: This term describes toxic pollutants from plastics that damage the environment and can take hundreds or thousands of years to break down. This issue is currently one of the biggest environmental concerns.

Water Pollution: Term to describe the contamination of oceans, seas, lakes and rivers usually caused by human activities.

How are we doing in Ireland?

Ireland's **Climate Action Plan** was published in June 2019 following recommendations and reports from the **Citizen's Assembly** and **Oireachtas Committee**.

The Action Plan outlines 183 actions which aim at achieving a net zero carbon energy objective for Irish society and in the process, create a resilient, vibrant and sustainable country. The actions focus on a broad range of issues, including the science of climate change, current efforts to tackle it in Ireland and internationally, energy generation and efficiency, transport policy in Ireland, current agriculture and land use policy and the climate change advisory council.

International Actions

Ireland has also signed up to both the European Green Deal and the Paris Agreement.

The **European Green Deal** is a set of policy initiatives by the European Commission which aims at making Europe climate neutral by 2050.

The **Paris Climate Agreement** is an agreement adopted by nearly every nation in 2015 to address the negative impacts of climate change and aims at reducing global greenhouse gas emissions in an effort to limit the global temperature increase, and includes commitments from all major emitting countries to cut their climate-altering pollution.

ACTIVITY ONE

Ireland 2100 - The Flood

ABOUT

This activity is adapted from [NYCI's Climate Revolution - One World Week Resource Pack 2020](#) and aims to explore the realities of living in an Ireland that has been drastically affected by climate change.

The map of Ireland is a portrayal and forecast of a worst-case scenario in which climate change and global warming would see a 70m rise in sea-levels around Ireland by the year 2100.

AIM

To examine an exaggerated map of Ireland in the year 2100 and talk about the impacts that may result in our home environment by climate change and the resulting extreme sea rising.

MATERIALS

[Print outs of the map of Ireland, 2100](#)

TO BEGIN

Share the map to the young people and ask them to see if they can locate their town/village.

TALKING POINTS - START A GROUP DISCUSSION ON

1. How do you feel looking at this map of Ireland?
2. If sea levels rose this much, how different would the lives of young people be in 2100?
3. How would your life be affected living in this Ireland?
4. Is your hometown/youth centre/school/ sports club still visible on this map?
5. Where on the map would you like to live?

ACTIONS

1. Explore with the young people the issue of global warming and rising sea levels
2. How can we stop this from happening – what are the global, local and personal acts / actions that can happen to prevent this from happening.
3. Ask them to think about one thing they could pledge to do in their everyday lives that could combat climate change.

Ireland 2100



Source: *Climate Revolution, One World Week Activity, NYCI, 2019*



ACTIVITY TWO

If the World were 100 people

ABOUT

There are nearly 7 billion people living on planet Earth and it can be hard for us to understand the different life experiences that exist, and the social injustices different peoples can experience due to climate change.

AIM

This activity tries to offer a more manageable way for young people to reflect on our lives in Ireland as a fraction of the world. It supports young people in their learning around both the diversity, inequality and privilege that exists.

TO BEGIN

Share the following YouTube video with the young people [If the World Were 100 People](#)



TALKING POINTS:

1. What are the most surprising, most disturbing, and most challenging statistics from the video.
2. What concerns you the most?
3. What impacts will climate change have on the world in 10 years from now.
4. What do we really know about the people we share the planet with?
5. Why should we care about them?
6. What did they think about the closing question, 'If the world were 100 people would we all fight harder for equality?'

ACTIVITY THREE

What's My Carbon Footprint?

ABOUT

The idea of a carbon footprint was developed to determine how human actions impact the environment, such as transport and what we eat. The goal of the carbon footprint is to bring awareness to how much each of us contribute to climate change and how are personal choices have impact on the planet.

An important part of exploring our carbon footprint is encouraging others to take positive action so we can shrink our carbon footprint. When we join together with many others to multiply our positive actions, our footprints shrink even more.

AIMS

The aim of this activity is to get young people to start think about their actions, lifestyles and daily choice and how they impact on the environment. It is also about building the awareness young people need to make changes in their daily actions.

MATERIALS

Copy of the [Carbon Footprint](#) sheet, [10 Areas of Action](#) sheet, markers and pens.

TO BEGIN

1. Give each young person a Carbon Footprint sheet and a marker.
2. Discuss with them what a 'carbon footprint' is.
3. Ask them to think about the 10 areas of action – housing, water, recreation, heating, electricity, transport, food, waste, travel and consumption.
4. Ask them to go through each of the 10 areas of action and colour in the section of the footprint that applies to them and their life.
5. Once they have finished use the Talking Points to discuss the impact of our carbon footprint.

TALKING POINTS

1. How can we reduce the impact households have on climate change?
2. How does individual behaviour affect the global distribution of resources?
3. How much energy is actually saved by turning off the lights?
4. How can each one of us be empowered to take positive action to benefit the environment?



Source: www.climatechangeconnection.org

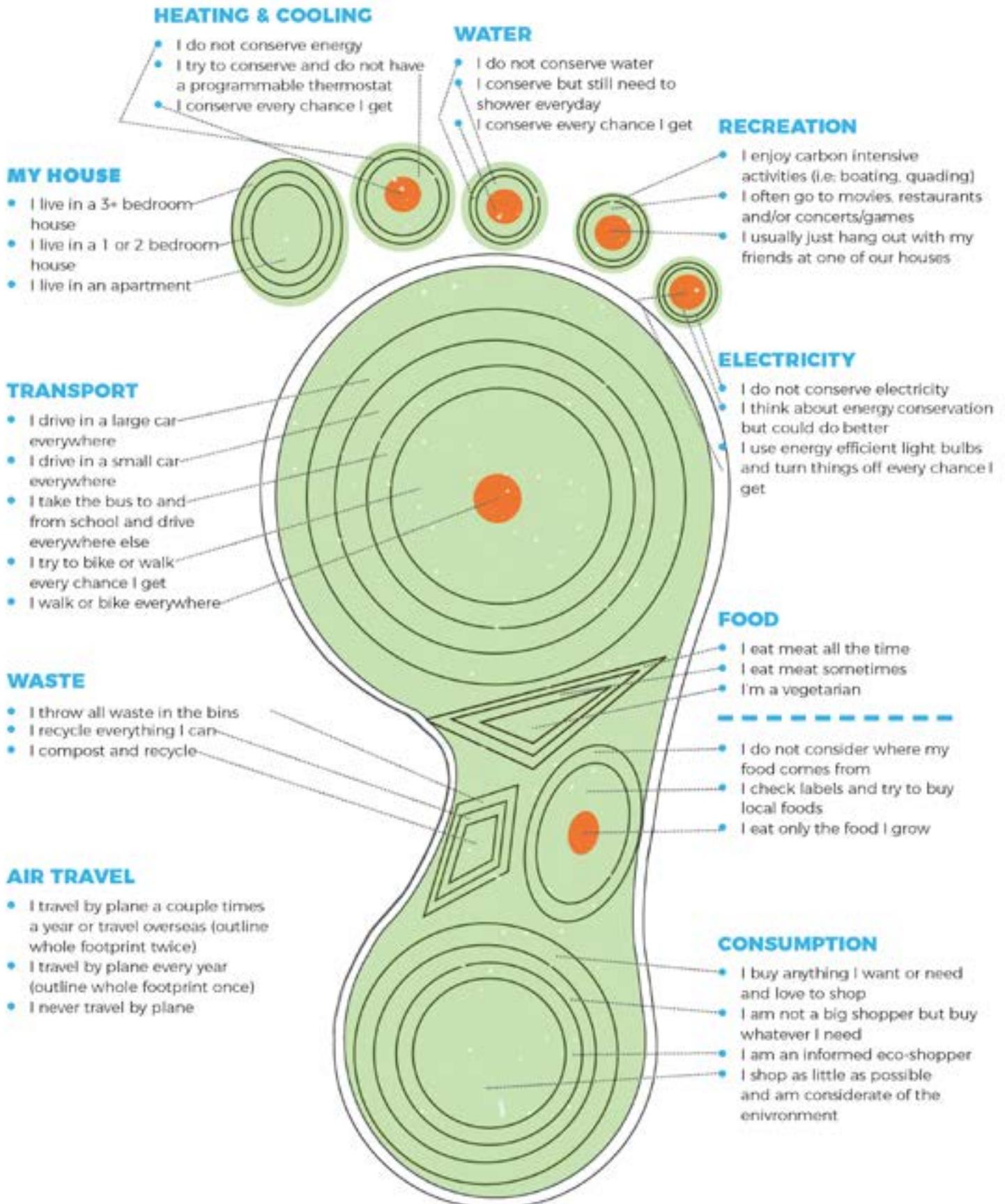
My Carbon Footprint

Areas of Action

- **MY HOUSE:** Larger houses and buildings need more energy to heat, cool, and light up.
- **HEATING AND COOLING:** Using a programmable thermostat is a great way of reducing the amount of energy needed to heat and cool our homes, schools, and workplaces. Air conditioning and heaters do not need to run at full capacity if no one is in the space.
- **WATER:** We use water to cook, clean, and bathe and pumping water to homes requires the use of energy in most homes. Water must also be treated before we use it and after, which creates more demand for pollutants. Conserving water is a great step in reducing a carbon footprint.
- **RECREATION:** Spending time in nature, instead of indoors, is fun and good for our health. Choosing recreational activities that require less waste and less fuel is a great way to reduce a carbon footprint!
- **ELECTRICITY:** Greenhouse gases are required to get electricity to homes. Turning off lights, electronics, and kitchen appliances when not in use are simple ways that can make a big difference in reducing a carbon footprint!
- **TRANSPORTATION:** Larger vehicles burn more fuel than smaller or more fuel-efficient ones. Walking and biking have no carbon footprint, because no pollution is created!
- **WASTE:** Most household wastes (like packaging, food scraps, and batteries) don't have to go to a landfill site. Instead, we can compost and recycle many items. Taking the time to properly dispose of waste is an important step in reducing a carbon footprint!
- **FOOD:** Producing, processing, transporting, and disposing of food creates a lot of greenhouse gases! Animal products, like meat and dairy, are the most resource-intensive food on the table. Meat and dairy take 4-8 times more energy to produce than the food gives us. In contrast, breads, oils, potatoes, nuts and flour, contain more energy than it takes to produce them. If you're a meat eater, try cutting out one meat meal each week.
- **CONSUMPTION:** Our everyday consumption contributes to a large amount of our Green House Gas emissions, through manufacturing, packaging, transportation, consumption, recycling and disposal. The best solution is to "keep it simple" – buy less and more durable goods, re-usable products with less packaging.
- **AIR TRAVEL:** Travelling by air is the most fossil fuel intensive means of getting from place to place. Reducing the number of trips taken by planes is also a great way of reducing a carbon footprint.



My Carbon Footprint



Source: www.climatechangeconnection.org



DOWNLOAD

ACTIVITY FOUR

Reuse to Recycle

ABOUT

Plastic is everywhere, including the ocean, beaches and stomachs of animals, the volume of plastic waste is choking our oceans and wildlife.

AIM

This activity will support young people's learning around plastic use and empower them to take everyday actions to reduce and recycle.

TO BEGIN

Share the following video with your group.



1. Afterwards ask them to take a wander around their home and make a list of 10 items of varying materials.
2. Ask them to consider what will happen to each of the items once they are no longer needed and thrown out.

TALKING POINTS

1. When each item is no longer needed and thrown away, where will it go?
2. Ask them to try to identify strategies that they can use or do at home to limit the amount of rubbish they are producing (such as re-using, reducing or recycling).
3. Talk about how many things that are thrown away could be re-used or recycled – Can they come up with ideas to re-use, re-cycle rubbish that is accumulated in their homes.
4. Can they make a poster which can be displayed in their home which will help raise awareness about rubbish, where it goes – what to throw away etc.
5. Challenge them to find a 'treasure' in the rubbish by suggesting that things can be hidden treasure, and what is rubbish to one person could have value to someone else.

ACTIVITY FIVE

You Are What You Wear

ABOUT

The rapid rise in consumerism in the last 50 years has put a considerable strain on the environment.

AIM

To raise awareness about where our clothes come from and the distance they have travelled to get here.

MATERIALS

[You Are What You Wear Checklist](#), [You Are What You Wear Country Distance Chart](#) and pens.

TO BEGIN

1. Give each young person a '[You Are What You Wear Checklist](#)' handout.
2. Ask them to check the tag on each item of clothes they are wearing and write down the country each piece of clothing was made in on the handout.
3. Next get them to check the country chart to determine how far each piece of clothing has travelled and add in the points to the relevant boxes (e.g. if their skirt was made in Cambodia it travelled approx. 10,331kms so they get 12 points).
4. You can either share the [Country Distance Handout](#) or you can call out the points for each country and have them write them down.
4. Discount – if the item of clothing is more than 5 years old, is second hand or bought from a second-hand shop divide the points for that item by 2.
5. Have them add up all the points, and the person(s) with the lowest points is the most environmentally friendly.

TALKING POINTS

1. Why are so many of our clothes made in faraway countries?
2. Do we know anything about the working conditions for people in these countries?
3. Why aren't as many clothes made in Ireland?
4. Would you re-think about shopping in second-hand shops after doing this activity?
5. Have you ever thought about making your own clothes?

Source: www.climatechangeconnection.org

REDUCE

An easy way to lessen the amount of waste we create is to use products that have less packaging or can be used more than once.

REUSE

As we reuse items not only do they become more useful, it helps us from not sending more rubbish to landfills.

RECYCLE

Many items can be recycled which means they can be broken down and the materials used to make a new product.

RENEW

We can't go on using up the Earth's resources indefinitely, we have to give back too, like planting trees, re-wilding our environments.

YOU ARE WHAT YOU WEAR

Use the 'Distance Chart to find out how far each piece of your clothing has travelled.

If the article of clothing is more than 5 years old, or second hand divide the points for that item by 2.

TOP

Made In: _____
Points: _____
Discount: _____

TOTAL

JACKET

Made In: _____
Points: _____
Discount: _____

TOTAL

TROUSERS

Made In: _____
Points: _____
Discount: _____

TOTAL

DRESS

Made In: _____
Points: _____
Discount: _____

TOTAL

SKIRT

Made In: _____
Points: _____
Discount: _____

TOTAL

JUMPER

Made In: _____
Points: _____
Discount: _____

TOTAL

T-SHIRT

Made In: _____
Points: _____
Discount: _____

TOTAL

SHOES

Made In: _____
Points: _____
Discount: _____

TOTAL

SHIRT

Made In: _____
Points: _____
Discount: _____

TOTAL

HOODIE

Made In: _____
Points: _____
Discount: _____

TOTAL

You will receive a discount if your item of clothing is older than 5 years, bought from a second hand store or handed down to you

TOTAL



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DISTANCE CHART

How far have your clothes travelled?

RUNAWAY GROWTH IN CONSUMPTION IN THE PAST 50 YEARS IS PUTTING STRAINS ON THE ENVIRONMENT NEVER SEEN BEFORE

DISTANCE TRAVELLED TO REACH IRELAND

MADE IN	KM TRAVELLED	POINTS
AUSTRALIA	15,556	20
BANGLADESH	8,429	9
CAMBODIA	10,331	12
CANADA	5,792	6
CHINA	8,144	9
CUBA	6,788	7
ETHIOPIA	9,682	10
HONG KONG	9,932	10
INDIA	7,966	8
INDONESIA	12,112	15
ITALY	2,618	3
JAPAN	8,977	9
KOREA	9,545	10
MALAYSIA	10,912	12
MEXICO	8,233	9
PHILIPPINES	11,240	12
SRI LANKA	9,200	10
TAIWAN	10,138	12
THAILAND	9,785	10
U.K.	500	1
USA	5,024	6
VIETNAM	10,393	12

Source: www.climatechangeconnection.org



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ACTIVITY SIX

My Planet My Pledge

ABOUT

This activity will support young people to think about their personal choices and behaviours in relation to climate change and commit to one action they will make or do to help make the world a better place for all.

MATERIALS

[My Planet My Pledge Footprint Outline](#), pens, markers and arts materials.

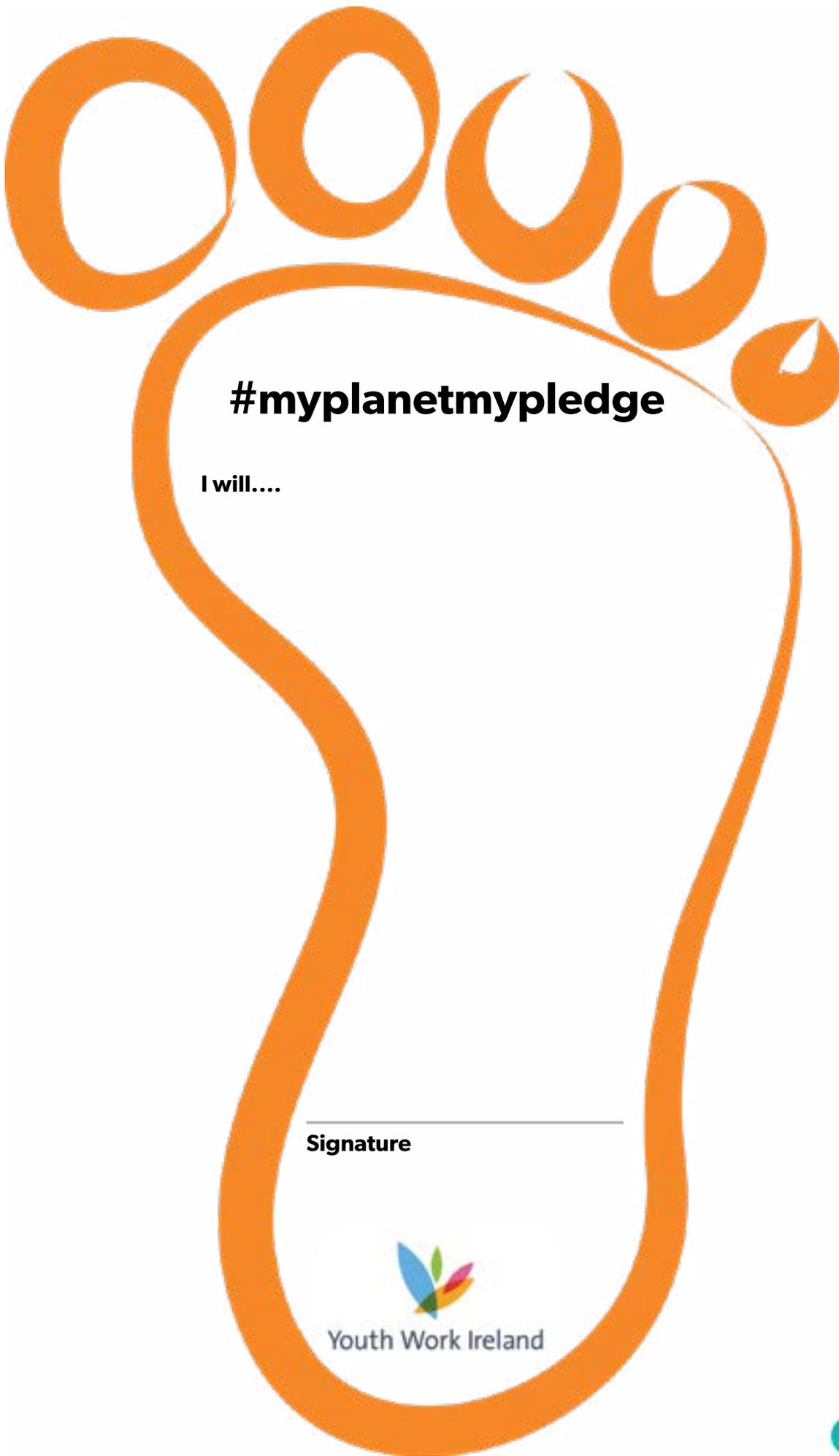
TO BEGIN

1. Ask each young person to think about one thing they will pledge to do in their own lives to help create a better world for all.
2. If possible, get them to print out a footprint outline and cut out the shape of the footprint.
3. They can write out their pledge and sign the bottom.
3. This is something they can encourage their parents and siblings to do.
4. Once they have finished, have them take a photo of their footprint pledge and upload it to your youth group's Instagram, Facebook or Twitter using the hashtag **#myplanetmypledge** and tagging **Youth Work Ireland**.

Join the Conversation [#myplanetmypledge](#)

www.youthworkireland.ie/myplanetmypledge

For more information on any of this contact Gina - ghalpin@youthworkireland.ie



#myplanetmypledge

I will....

Signature



Youth Work Ireland



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*“The climate crisis has already been solved,
we already have the facts and solutions.
All we have to do is to wake up and change”*

Greta Thunberg



Youth Work Ireland

www.youthworkireland.ie/myplanetmypledge

#myplanetmypledge

 @youthworkireland
 @youthworkireland
 @ywirl



**An Roinn Leanaí
agus Gnóthaí Óige**
Department of Children
and Youth Affairs

