



*YouthAction*⁷⁵
NORTHERN IRELAND

Steeper Steps

*A journey of discovery, awakening
and positive action in nature.*

**A youth work resource for working
with young women in nature**
(Johnston, Mack, McBride and Redpath)
2021



YouthAction Northern Ireland

YouthAction Northern Ireland is a membership based youth work and arts charity with over a 75 year history of working with young people to tackle inequalities in their lives; improve their life chances; inspire them as activists; and contribute to flourishing communities in a peaceful and shared society.

For over thirty years the organisation has been developing work to improve the equality of participation of young women. This resource enables and inspires young women to be activists, to champion their local environments and connect to broader environmental issues that benefit them, their communities and beyond.

Far and Wild

Far and Wild is a not-for-profit community interest company established in 2011 to develop people and sustain the environment through adventure sport. Starting from the traditional 'challenge' type approach, through practice and reflection the company has developed a new approach to outdoor activity and leadership based on nature being the principal agent or catalyst of change.

This has come from staff feedback and reflection and led to specific methodologies for instructing and of understanding the dynamics inherent in outdoor play and recreation, and how these relate to society.

Cultural identity and heritage seen from a broad perspective, has also become part of the company's approach to learning by valuing and respecting the natural as well as societal phenomena and forces in any particular place they work in.

With thanks

They say one of the most precious thing you can give another human being is your time and there are definitely people we need to thank for offering their time and dedication to this resource so freely and willingly.

To Nick Mack, our nature warrior, for your patience, insight and kindness to the development of this resource. You didn't just keep us on the right track but walked with us.

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To Emma Johnston, who was the shining light throughout it all, a beacon of joy and hope for a more positive future for young women.

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Finally to our young women, our courageous warriors, who fully embraced and immersed themselves into every element of this programme, we are so grateful.

Nick Mack is a free-lance action learning consultant, smallholder and occasional artist with a strong focus on sustainability, nature, creativity and social equality; particularly the participation of women in social and political life and the role of young people in achieving a sustainable future.



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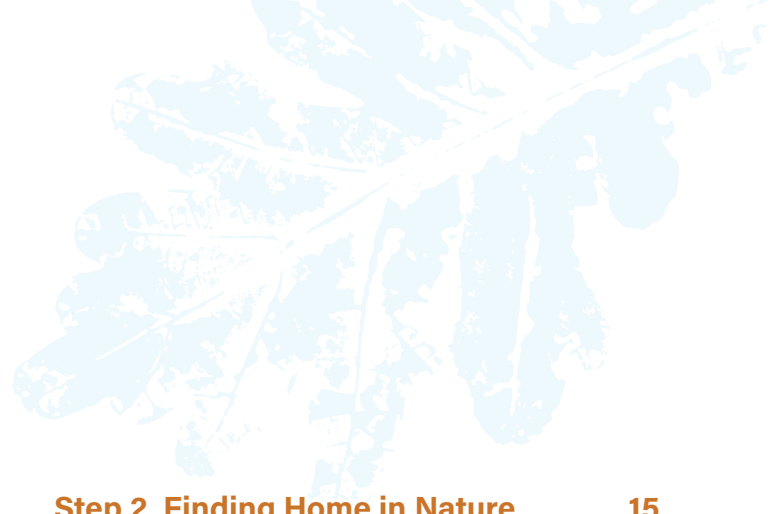
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"One day when lockdown was bad, we were just out on the paddleboards sitting on the water, the water was pure calm and we just laid down flat on the boards, I just thought 'this is so good for my mind', everything was still around us."

Section One

Introduction and Context



Introduction

Being confident and competent to go out into nature and spend time outdoors, to be able to actively enjoy forest trail, mountain walk and seashore, is vital to our health and wellbeing. A growing body of medical and social research is providing us with a robust evidence base for the physical and mental benefits. Our experience of the lockdowns brought about by Covid 19 has increased our awareness of the many values and pleasures of access to nature. This comes at the same time where young women are disconnected from physical activity as they spend more and more time online.

In this Steeper Steps model, we are helping young women form their own strong connection with nature. A stronger connection with nature can make us want to protect, nurture and sustain it. From a gender conscious perspective, an historic pattern of male dominance around the status and treatment of natural resources and spaces has established nature as subservient; something to be tamed, harnessed and conquered. Challenging these culturally inherent attitudes with a strong, confident and equal female perspective could be pivotal in shaping a relationship with nature that can be sustainable.

Building from youth work principles, methodologies and practice Steeper Steps enables young women to draw on nature and time outdoors to achieve a healthy and positive life. The process enables them to explore, appreciate and give voice to their connection to nature and to each other and to become active in promoting the value of nature to others. It helps empower young women to become leaders in shaping local initiatives around greenspaces, environmental issues, health and wellbeing and for gender equality in the outdoors. As such, it can help improve the long term prospects for young women, their families, their communities, and for nature and society.

Background to the Model: Ethos and Values

In 2017 YouthAction Northern Ireland embarked on a journey in partnership with Far and Wild, an outdoor pursuits and environmental learning organisation, to work with young women to build agency and confidence and instil in them a belief that they can overcome the barriers they face and achieve their full potential.

The resulting Steeper Steps programme brought together two key areas of practice:

1. YouthAction's expertise of equality work with young women, that underpinned the programme with a feminist ethos and gender conscious youth work practice¹. This helps young women to explore the social construction of gender and how it impacts on their lives. It also aims to raise young women's 'sense of self' and their capabilities as well as the opportunities that should and could be available to them outside the confines of gender.

2. Far and Wild's expertise in outdoor learning, which enabled youth work programmes that utilised outdoor spaces and embraced nature alongside engaging in outdoor education activities and sport. Steeper Steps built a sense of purpose in outdoor settings and nature and included cycling, climbing and SUP paddle boarding as well as encouraging mindfulness and a sense of being in nature.

Gender Conscious Practice

Understanding gender is the backbone of working with young women. This perspective means that society is understood from a feminist standpoint which recognises the barriers young women face are a result of how patriarchy has developed systems which historically favour men. This has adverse effects on everyone regardless of gender or gender identity. Gender conscious practice therefore creates opportunities which move beyond the fixed and binary understanding of gender for young women and young men, creating opportunities, challenging the status

¹ Documented in Youth Actions' Bullseye publication which is a valuable resource to draw upon in working with this model - [19195 YouthAction Bullseye document FINAL.pdf \(cdn-website.com\)](https://www.youthaction.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/19195-YouthAction-Bullseye-document-FINAL.pdf)

“It seems like something that’s just fun and stuff to get people active and exercising, but it’s also good for your mental health, having fresh air and not having to think about everything.”

quo and working towards dismantling systems, gender norms and stereotypes. These interventions educate young people to believe they have the power to be who they want to be without gender disrupting this process and reach their full and personally driven potential.

The starting point is awareness raising around those inequalities that have gone unquestioned in relation to sex, gender, sexuality and identity, challenging these and working towards equality to benefit all young women. As well as challenging gender stereotypes and ensuring arrangements for outdoor activities were safe and comfortable, the Steeper Steps approach used gender conscious principles to nurture and empower the young women taking part. These resonate with in depth research conducted by Women in Sport² which identified similar important influences for shaping positive lives in young women: These include;

- A good support network of family and friends
- Independence and new experiences which build formative memories
- Moments of pride – a sense of achievement that fuels self worth
- Keeping on top of it all – young women setting their own priorities for what they need to do in their day to day lives

The research also identified eight principles for success that were felt to help “reframe sport as something that girls value and perceive to enhance their lives” which were also central to Steeper Steps and to this model. These include:

1. **No Judgement** – take the pressure off performance and give girls and young women freedom simply to play
2. **Invoke Excitement** – bring a sense of adventure and discovery.

3. **Clear Emotional Reward** – reframe achievement as ‘moments of pride’, not winning.
4. **Open Their Eyes to What’s There** – redefine sport as more than school sport.
5. **Build into Existing Habits** – tap into existing behaviours in other spheres.
6. **Give Girls a Voice and Choice** – allow girls choice and control to feel empowered.
7. **Champion What’s in it for Them** – make it much more than just about health.
8. **Expand Image of What ‘Sporty’ Looks Like** – create truly relatable role models which inspire.

Nature Conscious Practice

The effect of working with young women in an outdoor space with a strong connection with nature is significant. It is a powerful means to unlock unconscious barriers and hurt, reawaken physical self and physical learning, and open up possibilities for wellbeing, purpose and sisterhood. It also connects young women to wider concerns and synergies about the environment both locally and globally. Learning how to work with nature to realise these benefits and make these connections became known in the Steeper Steps programme as *nature conscious practice*. This practice brings together:

- An approach that draws attention to nature as a core part of each individual’s sense of wellbeing, of identity and of purpose, for themselves and their family.

² The charity Women in Sport was founded in 1984, with the goal of “giving every woman and girl in the UK the opportunity to experience the transformational rewards of sport” It is “the only organisation in the UK that researches sport purely from the perspective of women and girls”, using the insight gained to drive change through campaigns and partnerships.

- A method that uses nature within youth work to achieve outcomes associated with mental and physical well-being and personal actualisation.
- An increase in awareness of outdoor spaces locally.
- An increase in awareness of how nature is treated culturally and socially.

Nature conscious practice also touches on ecofeminist thinking as a further development of YouthAction's gender conscious practice. Ecofeminism is an ideology and movement that sees climate change, gender equality, and social injustice as intrinsically related issues. It draws attention to the fact that women are disproportionately affected by environmental issues e.g as women worldwide typically hold less monetary wealth and rely on the natural environment more, they are more likely to be displaced by climate change and have to travel further for resources, like water.

Activities in the model also draw attention to the natural resources of spaces local to young women. Heightening awareness of local natural resources not only makes it easier for young women to make spending time outdoors part of their daily life, particularly important to those living in urban environments, but provides a meaningful focus for eco-activism and social projects based on green spaces, and so provides a foundation for the effective involvement of young women, particularly from disadvantaged backgrounds, in achieving sustainability³ and tackling climate change.

Outcomes that can be achieved from the model

The Steeper Steps model comprises four steps, as detailed in Section Two. These contribute a set of personal and educational outcomes that take young women on a learning journey. These include:

- Increased confidence to be active outdoors and explore sports and outdoor pursuits;

- Tools and resources to manage positive physical and mental health; and
- Pathways to active citizenship such as social and eco-activism projects.

Outcomes are listed in the model under each step and for each of the activities. These are aligned to youth work outcomes⁴ and include:

- Increased confidence and self-esteem;
- Improved health and wellbeing through increased physical activity;
- Enhanced skills and capabilities, leadership and active citizenship;
- Stronger connectedness with nature and confidence to use outdoor spaces to enhance health and well-being;
- Stronger support network encompassing other young women on the programme alongside programme staff.

In addition, the programme encouraged young women to become more visible, confident users of their local outdoor spaces as well as an encouragement for other young women to do so. Through their leadership they also encouraged friends, local youth and community groups and family to also actively enjoy the outdoors.

Bringing young women out into nature and inviting them to experience outdoor activities helps them to recognise that:

1. They already have resilience, strength and courage which low self-worth might have prevented them from recognising.
2. The outdoor spaces around them are a valuable resource for themselves and their families and friends which they can navigate and enjoy safely.
3. There are practical and meaningful things they can do to nurture greener communities around them and thereby contribute to sustainability.

³ The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development adopted by all United Nations Member States in 2015, provides a shared blueprint for peace and prosperity for people and the planet, now and into the future. At its heart are the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which are an urgent call for action by all countries - developed and developing - in a global partnership. [THE 17 GOALS | Sustainable Development \(un.org\)](https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/)

⁴ Youth Service Sectoral Partners Group (YSSPG) January 2015 devised these following publication of Priorities for Youth in 2013 and are recognised by Education Authority Youth Service. <https://www.eani.org.uk/sites/default/files/2019-01/Youth%20Work%20Outcomes%20Summary%20%28January%202015%29.pdf>



The scenery was amazing. I live in the middle of town just looking at the buildings. The places we went were all less than 15 minutes away from my home. We all had a big discussion about how the lockdown helped us get back into nature and realising we had so much around us, we forget, we got lost in the city before."

Section Two

Steeper Steps model and activities



Steeper Steps Model

The Steeper Steps model provides a range of exercises to take young women on a journey of discovery that both awakens and transforms their understanding and use of the outdoors and nature. The following **four steps** act as building blocks as young women progress to richer and deeper levels of discovery for learning and sustainable growth.

Each step can be developed suited to the needs of the group whilst taking into account time, resources and the overall outcomes of the programme being followed.

The **four steps** are;

Step 1 Arrival and Awakening

- Developing curiosity, awakening the senses, creating meaningful engagement in the outdoors, (re)connecting to physical self, noticing and appreciating self and others in nature.

Step 3 Belonging in Nature

- The seed is planted and growing as young women feel safe and secure in nature, they know how to approach, enjoy, embrace and act in outdoor spaces.
- Young women value their own inner strength as they identify solutions and apply this confidence in other areas of their lives.

Step 2 Finding Home in Nature

- Deepening connection to nature, engaging the child-like and playful spirit and creative self.
- Enabling young women to move beyond their past and limited experiences of the outdoors to developing curiosity of the power of nature and possibilities.

Step 4 Awakened Activists

- Young women act as positive peer role models creating social awareness, creating change, campaigning, talking to decision makers' taking action on environmental issues; local, regional or global.
- Young women are outside and visible, 'We own this space' 'I own my space.'
- Young women are confident to make their own decisions, confident with who they are as young women.

Steps 1 and 2 are particularly valuable in helping young women improve their physical and mental wellbeing in outdoors and nature.

Steps 3 and 4 can empower young women to become activists and gain greater voice and leadership in green and other social issues.



Top tips for working with young women in nature

1. **Starting point.** Experiences that young women have in the outdoors can be very different. Invest time at the start to enable young women to share their experiences with each other. Young women will then be co designers as they support and encourage each other to develop healthy habits in the outdoors.
2. **A journey.** The steps in the model are progressive in nature. Alongside recognising the need to be flexible approach this process with young women as a learning journey where they discover new and exciting possibilities in the outdoors for themselves and their families.
3. **Being flexible.** As with any youth work resource you can pick and choose from the exercises as you go. You may feel more time is needed in certain steps or they may be ready to move into **Step 4 - Awakened Activists** at an earlier stage. That's the beauty of youth work, you have the relationship with the young women, you know them so feel free to tailor, add, take away to meet the needs of the group.
4. **One step at a time.** Every young woman will be on their own journey and going at their own pace. Take care to take this into account when planning any of your activities so it will be suitable for the different abilities of the young women in your group AND don't forget to celebrate as you go!
5. **Positivity and optimism.** This is an exciting path you are about to embark on with young women. Presenting an optimistic style can offer inspiration for young women.
6. **Being practical.** Be mindful that for some young women this may be the first time they have been doing outdoor activities and do not have suitable clothing. You may need to build a bank of suitable clothing that can be used by young women at your sessions.
7. **Feel good factor.** Each step in the model has purposefully included fun and playful activities which allow young women to connect to their 'inner child'. As we mature we can lose sight of its importance. Providing a space to play, act in silly ways and laugh raises our endorphins and makes us ultimately feel good.
8. **Gender reality.** Be mindful that everyone has been affected by gender messages. Young women receive gender messages about how they should 'be', 'feel' and 'behave.' These messages can restrict possibilities for young women and limit their power. This model works to dilute these messages so young women can make informed choices about their future. Be mindful also about the messages you as a worker give to young women consciously or unconsciously as this will influence their actions and behaviours.
9. **Beauty of youth work.** This model is open to change and isn't a stand alone resource. Wider links to campaigns, research and areas of activism are there to expand your thinking and inspire the young women.
10. **Promoting solidarity and safe spaces.** This model encourages collaboration and teamwork as young women learn from each other. Sometimes life can be challenging and difficult for young women and we want to encourage them to support and inspire one another. This focus on relationship building, friendships and solidarity can then be mimicked in other relationships they have outside of the group.
11. **Right on your doorstep.** Take time to research local outdoor areas and spaces. This will be helpful in young women discovering these and making greater use of them in their everyday lives. Also widen their experience if you have the resources to do so. This will broaden their knowledge and experience and make them more aware of what's available locally to enhance their own life experiences as well as their friends and family.
12. **Managing risk.** It goes without saying that you need to complete a risk assessment for all activities to ensure young women's health and safety.
13. **Skills of the worker.** Moving outside and into big, beautiful and resourceful spaces liberates young women as they realise the benefits of being outdoors and in nature. It is important to note that this may at times release deeply held traumas from young women's lived experience. Being mindful and prepared for this will ensure your youth work skills move into action to acknowledge, listen and support. It may also be the case that you may need to follow up and identify specialised support as required.
14. **Caring for the environment.** We only have one Earth as our home. Taking care of whatever natural environment you find yourself in is important learning for us all as well as the young women you are working with. Educate as you go and don't disturb or disrupt natural habitats and leave nothing behind.

I find freedom in movement, in nature, through new experiences. Freedom has the qualities of spontaneity, passion, flow, adventure, risk, independence and creativity. It's about expressing myself creatively, doing what matter most and the power of play.

Easkey Britton

Step 1 Arrival and Awakening

Developing curiosity, awakening the senses, creating meaningful engagement in the outdoors, (re)connecting to physical self, noticing and appreciating self and others in nature.

Walk and Talk

This is a perfect first activity to get outdoors. Plan a walk that gives you an opportunity to point out areas of interest that may also include the built environment as well as nature. The main aim is first and foremost taking time soaking up the fresh air, enjoying spending time with others and connecting to nature. It is an opportunity for conversations to grow holistically with the leader supporting the forming of and nurturing 'new' relationships. A good way to finish is to have tea/coffee and snacks available as this provides an opportunity for the young women to reflect on their experience and what they have now noticed and appreciated.

Additional activities during walk and talk

Steeper and Higher

In order to assess the aerobic fitness of the young women for future activities you may want to change track and walk up a hill. You may want to also veer off the 'beaten track' to test how they feel about getting stuck in the mud for example or work their way through a wooded area or one in which they have to navigate through nature. Use questioning to ask:

- Have you been here before?
- Do you notice anything different?
- How did it feel to leave the path that you are used to?





Minding the Senses

Icebreakers and energisers that promote joy and happiness and express respect for the natural habitat around us (i.e ones that are fun but don't disturb or disrupt nature and wildlife) work well in between sections of the 'walk and talk' especially with a group who don't know each other well.

Encourage young women to notice and explore on a walk what they see, feel, taste, smell and hear. This is a good way to be mindful and to listen and appreciate each other's perspectives. It allows young women to become fully involved in what is going on around them and promotes a sense of appreciation in the outdoors. It is also lots of fun and shows how all of us as individuals notice different things e.g someone may hear the wind, another may hear birds and others may hear the distant sound of cars and vehicles on a nearby road. Use questioning to ask:

- Was there anything new you discovered when you awakened your senses?
- What stood out the most about what nature has to offer young women?

You can also add different elements to this as you go e.g

- **Feet first** - ask young women to take their shoes off and feel the grass beneath their feet.
- **Early bird** - arrive early to a forest or local park and listen to the dawn chorus.

Resources

Encourage young women to wear suitable warm clothing and footwear. If you have access to waterproof coats its useful to have these at hand in case anyone has forgotten.

Bring flasks for a warm cup of tea/coffee and snacks as it is a good way to finish the walk and debrief/evaluate the young women's experiences during the walk and talk.

Reflection Questions

- How did you feel during the walk and talk?
- Did you learn anything new about yourself or anyone in the group?
- What did you notice? Anything new?
- Did you feel connected to nature?
- Was there anything new you discovered when you awakened your senses?
- What stood out the most about what nature has to offer young women?
- On a scale of one to ten with ten being the highest how are your energy levels?

Youth Work Outcomes

- Increased self-awareness.
- Improved health and well-being.
- Development of positive relationships with others.

Seed of Happiness

Sustainability is a vital element of outdoor education and promoting the development of 'healthy habits' in nature with young women. With this in mind, build into the programme an opportunity for young women to really 'muck' in and get their 'hands dirty' with some healthy planting.

The young women's past experiences of this may be different within the group (you know your group) so it would be beneficial to do a little research with them first?

- What has been your experience of growing plants/helping others grow?
- Why grow own food? e.g self-reliance, sense of accomplishment, being in the outdoors, improving mental and physical health etc)
- Are you aware of any garden's/allotments near you that grow their own food? You could follow this up by visiting local places that do this. Depending on the time of year you could bring samples with you – explore where they came from, how do they grow?
- What would you like to plant/see grow? What have you discovered that you are happy to/feel confident to grow?

You could choose to plant something which has a good chance of growing well so young women feel that sense of accomplishment in the planting/nurturing/growing process. You could always use this exercise to do up an outside space or to provide ingredients for group cooking for a meal time.

Once this process is finished and you have time to buy the raw materials the next step is setting the time and location and do some planting.

Resources

- Vegetables/flowers
- Seed packets
- Pots
- Compost

Reflection Questions

- How did it feel to plan and plant your own flowers/vegetables?
- What benefits do you think planting 'a seed of happiness' brings?
- Did you learn anything new about the food industry, where food comes from?
- Did you learn anything new about yourself or the group?

Youth Work Outcomes

- Enhanced personal capabilities
- Increased physical and mental health
- Active citizenship

Group Juggle

This is a variation on a 'name game' where the leader asks each young woman to throw a soft ball to someone and call out their name (if they don't know their peers name encourage them to ask). Encourage each young woman to remember who they threw the ball to and caught from and this continues until each person has caught and thrown the ball. If someone happens to drop the ball start the full round again. This is NEVER to shame anyone but simply to show that it's important to try again and keep trying. This promotes team work, good eye contact, use of voice messaging and importantly is lots of fun. If appropriate add in a second or third ball to increase focus and attention.

Reflection Questions

- Why do you think we do this activity?
- Did you enjoy this activity? Why?
- What is one thing we can bring to this female only space to work well together?

Youth Work Outcomes

- Improved health and well-being.
- Development of positive relationships with others.

Treasure Hunt

This is a fun experience for young women which promotes healthy competition, problem solving and team work. Before the session identify a local space to use for the activity. Have a look around and devise clues for signs, areas of interest, trees/plants and building etc. Tune into your creative self for the clues adding humour to make it as fun as possible, it will be fun for you too! You can then create an A4 sheet or use online tools like Typeform giving instructions, adding your clues and answers. Aim for around 10 clues and bonus points for quickest time if suits.

As the session starts hand out the sheet /send link and in pairs/groups ask the young women to set off on their treasure hunt adventure.

NOTE: As with all activities of this nature complete a risk assessment beforehand taking into account the age/ability/knowledge of space etc of young women involved.

This could also be the start of a mini league of games to promote sport, physical activity and healthy competition with the group

Youth Work Outcomes

- Improved health and well-being.
- Development of positive relationship with others.
- Development of thinking, work and life skills.



Archery

Archery is commonly provided in outdoor activity centres requiring a qualified leader who is sensitive to the needs of young women. It is often underestimated as an activity requiring very specific skills and aptitudes to master completely. Ironically, as with climbing, often there is a gender misperception attached to the sport, and many individuals who have never tried the sport and who excel quickly, are girls and women. This is also an accessible activity for young women with varying levels of fitness as they can take part on a par with their peers.

The fact that archery also moves an ancestral muscle where we may all have some genetic memory passed down from earlier ancestors may assist young women when (re)introduced to the sport. It certainly can work as a motivating factor. Competition at archery can be keen, close and enable a supportive environment between young women that isn't based on physical prowess, dexterity and aerobic health. It can often provide an excellent complement to a multi-activity session.

Reflection Questions

- What skills did you use during archery?
- What emotions did you feel?
- Did you feel in competition?
- What do you need to promote healthy competition?

Youth Work Outcomes

- Increased confidence and self-esteem.
- Improved health and well-being.
- Development of thinking, work and life skills.



No-one will protect what they don't care about and no-one will care about what they have never experienced.

David Attenborough

Step 2 Finding Home in Nature

Structured activities that deepen connection to nature, engage a child-like and playful spirit and creative self. Helping young women move beyond their past and limited experiences of the outdoors to developing curiosity of the power of nature and possibilities.

Let's go on a Nature Trail

Prepare for this activity by finding pictures of different plants/trees/birds found in the areas you are visiting and gather fun and interesting facts about them, provide copies of these or send link to look at on their phone. Start by asking the young women if they know what they are and if they can find them. Guide and encourage when they find them and use additional facts to draw out their understanding of them, where they came from, their meaning/links to different cultures/place etc. e.g the oak tree is deeply embedded in Derry~ Londonderry's history as Derry comes from the old Irish word Daire (meaning Doire) meaning 'oak grove' or 'oak wood'.

Information gained may also include what is edible or has a fragrance. If edible, try and encourage young people to taste or alternatively smell if it has a fragrance. You can again draw on each of the five senses to promote curiosity asking questions:

- What colours do you see?
- What do you smell?
- What can you hear, does it remind you of anything from your own life?
- What does it taste like?
- What is it like to touch?

Reflection Questions

- Have you been to this space before? Did you know it was here?
- What special qualities have you noticed about this area?
- Did you learn anything new about plants, animals or local history or culture?

Youth Work Outcomes

- Increased health and well-being
- Development of thinking, work and life skills
- Increased sense of belonging to community

Identity in Nature - Part 1 (Part 2 follows in Step 3)

Identity is important to each of us and the first thing that stands out to describe our identity is our name. This activity focuses on a young woman's name, developing a sense of pride for who they are and what they bring to the group. Ask each young woman to find a raw material or something existing which has fallen from nature which spells out each letter of their name.

Reflection Questions

- Was it easy to find things to match each letter of your name?
- What was it like to explore nature in this way?

Youth Work Outcomes

- Development of thinking skills, life and work skills
- Development of positive relationships with others

Regroup and ask the young women to physically lay out their names with the item they have found (encourage creative thinking where necessary for example if someone has a Z in their name they could simply use 3 reeds/twigs to demonstrate a Z and explain each letter and the thinking around how they came up with it.

This encourages creative thinking and problem solving and promotes experiences where young women notice what is around them on a deeper level. It also values each individual and what they bring to the group. In addition you could also ask them to come up with a quality/value/skill under one or more of the letters of their name for example EMMA could be enthusiastic, merry, moral and adaptable.

Nature in Picture

This activity works best in a forest, wooded area or park. Allow a specific amount of time and ask young women to go on a wander/adventure to collect raw materials naturally fallen in the earth to create a portrait of someone else in the group. This will work best if you assign young women to a partner to ensure each young woman gets to complete the task but also create a portrait of someone else. This also contributes to building sisterhood in that young women are supported to be positive and encourage each other and reduce negativity. This process will therefore be one which will raise self-esteem and build flourishing relationships as well as lots of fun! In these moments young women will have discovered more about nature, themselves and others in the group with nature as a friend supporting this process.

Reflection Questions

- Why is it important to collect materials fallen from the ground rather than cutting down a natural resource?
- How did it feel to create your partner's picture in nature?
- How did it feel to see your own?
- Have you ever looked to nature as a resource that can contribute to something positive?

Youth Work Outcomes

- Increased confidence and self-esteem.
- Improved health and well-being.
- Development of positive relationships with others.
- Development of thinking skills, life and work skills.

Hide and Seek

Hide and seek needs few resources. Ask for a volunteer to be the 'seeker' for the first game. Hide and seek is where the 'seeker' counts to 100 to allow the 'hidiers' to find a suitable place to hide. The 'seeker' then explores the area to try and find each of the 'hidiers'. The first person found becomes the new 'seeker' for the next round of the game.



Photo by K. Mitch Hodge on Unsplash

123, I am Free

'1,2,3 I am free' starts by selecting a tree or other suitable marking point for the game. Ask for a volunteer for the first game and their task is to count to 100 to allow the others to hide. When the counting is completed the volunteer tries to find the others. The 'others' will be trying to find the right moment to run to the tree and if they get there shout '1,2,3 I am free.' Once they successfully make it to the tree they are free and not involved in the next game. If the finder sees someone hiding they run to the tree and shout '1,2,3 I see Emma'. Emma will then be involved in the next game. This continues until everyone is found or become free.

Reflective Questions

- How did you feel taking part in these activities?
- What did you notice about the roles yourself and others took on during the game?

Youth Work Outcomes I

- Improved health and well-being.
- Development of positive relationships with others.
- Development of thinking skills, life and work skills.

I Trust You

In pairs using blindfolds or closing eyes ask young women to pick a place to guide their partner to. Focus on how you can support the person to feel at ease using verbal communication and also by using appropriate ways to physically support i.e. holding them by the arm as you move. Ask the helper to be mindful of safety or anything that could cause their partner to fall and let the process grow naturally. Ask young women to swap roles so they have an opportunity to be a helper and helpee i.e the person who is being helped.

Reflective Questions

- What did it feel like to be blindfolded and led by your partner?
- How did it feel to lead?
- What helped the process to work well, as a helper and someone being helped?

Youth Work Outcomes

- Increased empathy, ability to manage feelings
- Development of thinking, life and work skills
- Increased ability to work with others

Selfie Orienteering

Gather a list of places of interest including buildings and sites in parks etc in town, city, townland etc. Split young women into pairs and ask them to find each of these places and once found take a selfie pic at it. As group returns to chosen point answers are collated and the young women reflect on sites as well as experiences.

Reflective Questions

- Have many of these sites/places were you aware of? What did you learn?
- Was there anything that surprised you?
- How did you feel during the experience?

Youth Work Outcomes

- Development of thinking, life and work skills
- Increased ability to work with others
- Increased sense of belonging to community



Being Human in Nature

This is a non-intrusive way to start a healthy conversation around the messages young people receive about gender. This isn't an exercise about assumptions, it's simply a frank and honest conversation with young women to enable them to deconstruct the messages they receive and how they may have influenced how they view themselves, others and their world perspective. It also encourages young women to understand how gender is an important aspect of their identity.

As youth workers we are familiar with a room, chairs in a circle and dependency on a flip chart and markers and this may therefore seem like a very different way of carrying out this task i.e. outside. However, embrace it and watch it grow as you discover what the outdoors, fresh air and space can do to create a welcoming and safe space for dialogue to develop.

Using natural resources fallen or lying around in nature or recyclable materials you have brought with you ask young women to create two circles on the ground of what they agree represents a young woman and a young man.

Other options may involve bringing a rope to make two circles with other materials added to represent a young woman and a young man.

NOTE: the circles need to be created dependent on how many young people in your group are able to stand within them.

Once the circles are prepared begin by asking the young women to move into a circle depending on who they see doing the following activities:

- plant a tree
- stand up for the environment
- be a tree surgeon
- read a map to track a destination
- empty the bins
- cut grass
- grow plants
- take part in a kayaking course
- captain a rugby team

Reflective Questions

- Was it easy or difficult to decide what circle to go into? Why?
- Where do messages come from about women's and men's roles?
- How do these messages make young women feel, behave or act?
- What happens when young women step outside their 'circle'?

Youth Work Outcomes

- Increased self-awareness.
- Development of thinking, life and work skills.
- Increased ability to work with others.
- Increased awareness of local and global issues.



Cycling or Mountain Biking

This activity provides a very clear base-line on aerobic health as a short and quick initial cycle will demonstrate an overview of fitness among young women. Again this activity requires a qualified leader who is sensitive to the needs of the young women. Ultimately cycling can lead to enormous personal gains for young women as they overcome fears and build confidence.

Young women who are active smokers, or have aerobic issues through congenital issues such as asthma, will struggle to maintain a fast cycle pace over distance, while others will perform better. It will also highlight issues with balance and coordination, as it isn't always a given that young women have had prior experience on a bicycle. Some individuals may require basic support that would be given to a child learning to balance on a two wheel bike. Bikes can be adapted to support this basic competence, however in a mixed ability group a leader should be dedicated to those who cannot cycle at all.

Having said the above, cycling is generally a good entry level activity which allows most if not all participants to get active and take part in a journey which can explore their local environment slightly quicker (and a more substantial radius from base) than a walking activity would allow.

Participants can easily cluster into groups of equal speed or competency, this tends to happen naturally. Cycling is a democratic activity once basic competency has been achieved, as has been demonstrated by the exponential increase in popularity of the activity during the 2020 Covid-19 pandemic.

Reflective Questions

- How did it feel to be out on the bike?
- What skills did you use?
- Is cycling something you have done often or never?
- Would you like to do more cycling?

Youth Work Outcomes

- Increased confidence and self-esteem
- Improved health and well-being

"Everybody was so welcoming and really nice. Within a few weeks we were having really deep conversations. If you had anything to get off your chest, you knew you could say it because you had people there you could really trust. I think everyone became more comfortable showing their own vulnerabilities because they felt so well supported."



Nature has been for me, for as long as I remember, a source of solace, inspiration, adventure, and delight; a home, a teacher, a companion.
Lorraine Anderson

Step 3 – Belonging in Nature

- **The seed is planted and growing as young women feel safe and secure in nature, they know how to approach, enjoy, embrace and act in outdoor spaces.**
- **Young women value their own inner strength as they identify solutions and apply this confidence in other areas of their lives.**

A to Z

Young women are placed in small teams and given a reusable 'pot' or 'container.' Ask the young women to find items beginning with each letter of the alphabet. These items may have fallen from nature or left as litter through human error. This works well on a beach, in a park or in a local forest. Creativity and thinking outside the box is welcomed i.e. a group once named a left behind coke can as 'u' for urban waste. This is a fun mindfulness activity which nurtures young women's sense of ownership and looking after nature especially through collecting litter. The youth leader joins each group during the process to clarify and encourage.

Once each group has completed their task they share their items calling out each letter one by one and celebrating their accomplishments. Also ensure to have some fun and informative facts about the area to add to the conversation and build local knowledge.

NOTE: Don't forget to provide gloves and washing materials etc.

Reflective Questions

- What did you notice about this outdoor space? What were some of the key features you noticed or felt connected to?
- Is the area well looked after and cared for?
- How did you find searching for items to match each letter of the alphabet?
- Is there anything we can do to help protect our outdoor spaces?

Youth Work Outcomes

- Increased planning and problem solving skills.
- Increased sense of belonging to community.
- Increased awareness of local and global issues.

Ultimate Frisbee

This team game promotes competition and joy as well as teamwork as young women learn more about following instructions and team work. This is a fast paced physical game which needs to be carefully considered in response to the needs of the group. The aim is to provide opportunities which stretch ability and are challenging but don't leave young women feeling overwhelmed.

Ultimate frisbee is a game for two teams of seven, played on a field similar in size to a football pitch (see diagram below). The last 18 metres at either end of the field are called endzones. A goal is scored when the frisbee is thrown to a member of the team standing (or more likely running) in the endzone the team is attacking. Players cannot run with the frisbee. When a player catches the frisbee, they must come to a stop. A team can only move the frisbee up field by throwing it from player to player. The defending team takes possession if the frisbee touches the ground, or if they make an interception by catching the frisbee or knocking it to the ground in mid-flight. The game is non-contact so when contact between players does occur, it may be deemed a foul. The winner is the first team to reach a previously decided number of goals, typically fifteen or seventeen.

Reflective Questions

- What skills did you use or see others use during the game?
- What emotions did you feel playing a fast paced team sport?
- What helped your team to work well together?
- How did it feel when your team scored a point?

Youth Work Outcomes

- Improved health and well-being.
- Increased ability to work with others.
- Increased planning and problem solving skills.

Walking Debate

Walking debate builds on previous activities where a safe and secure space has been created to enable young women to share their own views and ideas. It is straightforward to set up and involves creating a physical space outdoors e.g using lamp posts/trees/your own markers to represent a line from 1 to 10 that means the following;

1 = Not true at all

10 = Absolutely true

Statements are read out (see below) and the young women are asked to move to a position on the line depending on their views. As facilitator you then ask two/three young women from the group:

- Why have you moved to that position?

As they actively listen to each other they learn to understand different perspectives. You can then ask them the following:

- Do you want to stay in the same position or move to another position?
- If they move, ask why?

Statements

(please add your own!)

- Where I live has lots of outdoor places I can enjoy.
- I understand the importance of looking after our community/environment.
- I understand how being in nature can be of benefit to me.
- Young women feel comfortable in outdoor spaces.
- The environment is my biggest concern.
- Young women are actively involved in creating change.
- I understand what climate change is.
- Young women can be leaders in making the future safe.

Reflective Questions

- Which statement spoke to you the most?
- Did you learn anything new from someone else?
- How did it feel to speak out and voice your opinion?
- What do you feel are important issues for you and young women you know? Are these local, national or global issues?

Youth Work Outcomes

- Increased self-awareness.
- Increased leadership and communication.
- Increased participation.
- Increased ability to develop positive peer relationships.
- Increased awareness of local and global issues.

Identify in Nature – Part 2

Identity in Nature part 2 involves researching women who are positive role models and have made a significant impact locally and beyond. See link below⁵ for ideas for women globally who have advocated for actions to fight climate change.

Print out an image of them and collect information on how they have changed things in your community/society/their country/made a positive impact and/or contributed generally to women's lives. Display the images in a safe outdoor space and visit each image one by one using these questions.

- Do you recognise this/these woman/women?
- Does anyone know her/their story/journey?

Explore reasons why they may/may not know them. Share information including talking through the struggles these women met, injustices they may have faced, how they fought to overcome them and take back their power or make a change. This will widen the young women's perspectives as to how gender stereotypes can be overcome and women are strong, independent and determined.

Finish by asking them to consider:

- Who do you admire in your own life as a positive female role model?

Reflective Questions

- Ultimately what were these women trying to achieve?
- What barriers did they face along the way? What did they do to overcome these?
- What qualities do these women have that made them determined to affect change?
- What is one of your top qualities you are proud of as a young woman?

Youth Work Outcomes

- Increased confidence and self-esteem.
- Increased leadership and communication.
- Increased awareness of local and global issues.

⁵ 14 Inspiring Women Leading The Fight Against Climate Change - <https://www.refinery29.com/en-gb/women-working-in-sustainability>
Raging Grannies International – Welcome to the International Raging Grannies website!

Raging Grannies International started in Canada, they are non-violent, believe in only peaceful protest (with lots of laughter), work for the 'many not the few' (motto of an old Mechanics' Institute) and see their work as spreading green branches of a great tree, rising up to provide shelter and nourishment for those who come after them. They also have lots of songs on their site which could inspire young women to write their own song.

⁶ Garvagh Forest **"Communing today for life tomorrow"**

Garvagh People's Forest (GPF) project **"Communing today for life tomorrow"** began in 2014 when the local high school closed which borders the forest. A local community development worker then began hosting a conversation on the asset of the high school land and then the forest and how greater community involvement might bring value both to the land and to local people. Hosted by Garvagh Development Trust plans include forest schools, workshops, walks and establishing co-operatives to promote sustainability.



Message in a Bottle

By this stage of the programme the relationship you have developed with the young women and the relationships they have with each other will have been built on mutual trust and respect and you will have become more aware of what they are interested in or passionate about. The focus is therefore helping the young women consider what they would like to change about their local outdoor spaces or a much larger campaign on the environment that they create themselves or contribute to others.

Consider the outdoor space to host this activity in, the more creative the better. You could have some music in the background, picnic blankets, food, lots of creative materials e.g pictures, pens, material etc and a bottle or something to represent a bottle to put a message in. This creates a welcoming and stimulating environment to encourage the young women to come up with ideas.

Ask the young women using the creative materials to think of what change they would like to see in their local outdoor spaces or a much larger campaign on the environment to create their own message. Collect examples of these e.g local allotment that provides food boxes, Garvagh Forest Project⁶ where the local Garvagh community and schools have a plan to reclaim the forest for greater community use.

Once the message is completed take time for feedback, group photograph the messages and place in a bottle as though they were sending it. or send to each other online. These ideas will be followed up by the young women in **Step 4** as they make their decision on social action.

Reflective Questions

- What might you need to happen to make your message in a bottle come true?
- Who might you need to get on board to make this happen?
- How does it feel to discover new and exciting ways to affect positive change?

Youth Work Outcomes

- Increased ability to work with others.
- Increased planning and problem solving skills.
- Increased awareness of local and global issues.

The following activities require a qualified leader who is sensitive to the needs of the young women. These activities can lead to enormous personal gains for young women as they overcome fears, build confidence and apply this confidence in other areas of their lives.



Stand Up Paddleboarding (SUP)

This activity is essentially immersive, the paddle board being the ultimate safe flotation platform that allows participants to access water safely with support and supervision in sheltered environments.

The growing popularity of the sport is testimony to its accessible nature. Young women with accessibility needs, including those related to obesity can take part on a par with their peers.

What emerges as with all water sports is a prevalent fear or inexperience of water. With SUP, this fear can be gradually worked with and overcome using the SUP as an accessible platform.

A good general introduction to SUP can be completed in a two hour session, leaving participants to advance as they gain more time on the water in repeat sessions.

There are relaxation benefits too, as the SUP can be used as a stable and safe place to do yoga or even to lie, close eyes and breathe on, opening the opportunity to participants to connect with air and water in a more immersive way than they may be familiar with.

While there are some versions of the SUP board designed for dynamic (river/surf) or even racing environments, an introduction best takes place on a lake or sheltered area and would focus on basic competency with a paddle, how to self-rescue from the water to the board, and how to maintain contact with the board as a life-line to allow the participant to enjoy swimming and connecting with the water in a very supportive way.

Reflective Questions

- How did it feel to be out in the water?
- Did you notice anything new about yourself? About being in nature?
- How do you feel the experience of SUP paddle boarding has benefited you?
- How did you support yourself and the rest of the group?

Youth Work Outcomes

- Increased confidence and self-esteem.
- Improved health and well-being.
- Increased leadership and communication.

Rock Climbing

Rock climbing may be traditionally viewed alongside mountaineering as quite a technical craft and suited to those wanting to use it as a 'challenge yourself' model or way of thinking.

Rock climbing also suits an analytical brain often best suited to participants, including young women, many who don't necessarily have a traditional motivation to conquer or compete. Some of the best technical climbers at a local wall will be women. This is because, as well as developing muscular/ligament strength and flexibility, climbing is essentially a mathematical problem applied in three dimensions, with the climber making repeat attempts at the equation until they crack it. Add to this the fear factor related to off-the-ground work or fear of heights, and the activity is well-attuned for developing minds, fortitude/courage and musculoskeletal health⁷ equally. It is often a surprise to a young woman who first tries the sport that they have an aptitude at it, as the combination of skills referred to above are rarely required in either sports or walks of life.

Rock climbing can be very mutually supportive between individuals who combine to encourage and practically support (through belaying and buddying) each other to achieve personal bests. An individual who gets hooked to climbing will develop muscular strength, flexibility, as well as mental agility and courage in equal proportion as they progress.

Reflective Questions

- How did you feel completing the climb?
- What skills did you use/learn?
- Was there anything you or anyone else did to help you?

Youth Work Outcomes

- Increased empathy, confidence and self-esteem.
- Improved health and well-being.
- Increased planning and problem solving skills.

⁷ The **musculoskeletal** system is an **essential** component of human **health**. In addition to providing the body with structure and the means for movement, the **musculoskeletal** system acts as an endocrine system, stimulated by exercise, interacting through biochemical signalling with other organs in the body.



“We showed that we are united and that we, young people, are unstoppable.”

Greta Thunberg

Step 4 - Awakened Activists

- Young women as positive peer role models creating social awareness, creating change, campaigning, talking to decision makers taking action at local, regional or global levels.
- Young women are outside and visible, ‘We own this space’ ‘I own my space’.
- Young women are confident to make their own decisions, confident with who they are as young women.

Alongside supporting young women’s leadership at this stage ensure young women continue to build on their connection to nature/outdoor activities. This should both encourage play and continue to strengthen their understanding of the benefits of nature/being outdoors.

There is also a growing interest in and need for effective leadership amongst young women to help them understand the benefits of and address the challenges from climate change and environmental crisis to thinking about the finite resources available to us on planet Earth.



What would Greta⁸ do?

Life can be challenging and often very busy for young women as they navigate school, work, relationships, coping with unemployment, training, caring for a relative, social media and socialising to name a few. This takes a lot of investment, time and energy. They make decisions quickly as we all do with little time to really think about the impact of these decisions. What we know is by connecting to our beliefs and values and dedicating time to process and weigh things up improves our confidence, giving us the courage to make the right decisions.

What would Greta do (thanks Dominic) aims to help young women think about decisions they make that impact on nature and the resources they use. **What would Greta do** is a range of statements (could be pictures) to help young women consider the impact of their decisions. To do this activity plan a **Walk and Talk** trail (see Step 1) or identify a large space in a park to create ‘stations.’ Along the trail or at the ‘stations’ place statements/pictures of situations where young women are asked to make a decision. As you walk along the trail/stations ask the young women to consider each statement/picture and ask the question - **What would Greta do?**

- You see litter left behind on a beach
- You want to visit a friend who lives 2 miles away and you consider getting a bus/taxi
- There’s a gathering in town to promote a local council environment motion
- A friend suggests going camping
- You want a coffee and have forgotten your reusable cup
- You go shopping for a new outfit
- You are re-decorating your room and have a clear out
- You are planning a trip for a friend’s birthday
- You witness someone dropping litter

⁸ **Greta Thunberg** is a Swedish teenager who skipped school and inspired an international movement to fight climate change.

Greta said “For way too long, the politicians and the people in power have gotten away with not doing anything to fight the climate crisis, but we will make sure that they will not get away with it any longer. **We are striking because we have done our homework and they have not.**”

Add to this by getting young women to think about their daily and weekly activities where they make decisions about what they eat, where they go etc and again ask - **What would Greta do?**

Reflective Questions

- What influences the decisions we make?
- Does thinking about What would Greta do? change your mind about any of your decisions?
- Can you see how you might change your decisions in the future?

Youth work outcomes

- Increased ability to make informed choices and decisions.
- Increased ability to work with others.
- Increased awareness of local and global issues.

Steeper Steps

This activity connects young women to the time they spend with family members and friends in the outdoors. The young women are set a task for a week e.g achieve 20,000 steps recorded on their phone, for whatever they have access to (all devices now have these in built and if you have a budget they are not expensive to purchase for anyone who needs it). Ask them as they do this to send images/evidence of what they notice and the steps they have completed. At the follow up session reflect on these images, count up their steps and announce the 'winner' during the next session. As the way has been paved for young women to 'notice' nature this is part of their progression of continuing to develop healthy habits and notice what is going on in the outdoors.

This can be amended to suit the needs of the group by changing the number of steps or type of activity. It could also be developed to carry out a review/survey for example:

- amount of litter seen.
- number of people seen out.
- number of empty green spaces.
- number of park benches.
- taking pictures of 'things that inspire/delight you.'
- taking pictures of 'things that disappoint you.'

This can then contribute to identifying issues to address or something to do more of etc.



Similar to other exercises this is not about winning or losing but healthy competitiveness to motivate young women on their journey. The aims remain the same i.e they spend time in nature, notice what is around them and they see the outdoor space as belonging to them.

Reflective Questions

- How did you find carrying out this task each week? Was it easy to fit into your daily routine?
- Were you able to involve other family or friends?
- What route did you choose? Did you go on different journeys?
- How did walking made you feel?
- Did you learn anything about yourself or the outdoor spaces you passed along your journey?

Youth Work Outcomes

- Improved health and well-being.
- Increased sense of belonging to community.
- Increased awareness of local issues.

The Wim Hof

As a youth leader you will know if this activity is the right fit for the young women you are working with and by step 4 they may be ready to attempt this. Wim Hof, a warrior in cold water swimming, has presented a vast amount of information and research about the benefits of being in cold water. He argues how cold water improves our mental health and well-being, connects us to our physical self, resets us for the day and makes us feel healthier overall. After providing this insight this activity involves encouraging young women in their own time to immerse themselves in cold water in the shower or alternatively if they have access to safely do so in water in their local spaces. In the shower this can be explained as after having a hot shower allowing the water to run cold for 10-30 seconds or to wade into the shallow bit of a lake/ sea and immerse yourself in it for 5 seconds. This is completed in their own time and fed back to the group during the next session.

Reflective Questions

- How did you feel beforehand?
- How did it feel afterwards?
- How do you feel it benefited you?
- Did you enjoy it?
- Would you do it again?

Youth Work Outcomes

- Increased self-awareness.
- Improved health and well-being.

Social Action

A social action project is a multi-step process in which young women address an issue they care about, learn about it and potential solutions to solve it, then take action to create positive change. Social action is the ability to take the perspective of and empathise with others from diverse backgrounds and cultures, to understand social and ethical norms for behaviour, and to recognise family, school, and community resources and supports. In the context of Steeper Steps we would also describe this as eco-activism. *eg eco-activism is an active and ongoing commitment to the wellbeing of nature, the environment and sustainability. It emphasises eco-justice and non-violence. It can be inspired by the stories of eco-activists who use non-violent actions to address ecological issues such as: pollution; degradation of the environment; exploitation of farm animals and human health and social costs.*

Within Steeper Steps young women continue their journey and identify what change they would like to focus on for young women, women, the environment, locally, globally or internationally. Essentially this activity should be approached with a realist attitude (one which matches capacity and resources) but also one which is framed with 'the world is our oyster'. Why not? There are many accomplishments which we can endeavour to achieve without only recognising the economical factor attached to it.



Also one of the key benefits of social awareness/ action projects is it also considers socio-economic, cultural, environmental and many times spiritual factors moving beyond finding a 'problem' and wanting to 'fix' it to more sustainable change. It is important to note after working through steps 1 to 3 you will have developed a relationship which has already formed part of the journey to step 4. You know and understand the young women, what they are bringing to the space and to each other.

Remember, success is not measured by the size and impact of the action but rather a desire to speak out against inequalities and promote positive change.

The process of agreeing on social action can encompass the following;

Preparing the ground

- Identifying the issue, topic or concern. This will be based on learning started in Step 1 to Step 3 and giving consideration to the resources, time and most importantly the interests and passions of group members.

Planting the seed

- The seed has been planted and young women can now connect to their local space, their environment, understanding its benefits and what needs to happen to help protect it. The focus will now be on exploring areas or issues and identifying what change(s) they want to make, what their vision is, what they want to achieve and milestones along the way.

Tending the crops

- The young women now look at what experience and skills are needed to bring about change. They identify what they themselves have and what other help they might need including those who have power and influence to help bring about change. The next action is to take the first step and working towards each milestone.

Reaping the harvest

- Regardless of the outcome of the social action it is important to celebrate the process and the

involvement of all members of the group. Remember, success is not measured by the size and impact of the action but rather a desire to speak out to promote positive change. It is also important to look to the future and how their lives and the lives of other young women can be enhanced and celebrated.

NOTE: Have a look at *Quadrant 4 – About action* section in Bullseye⁹ to help plan the social action.

Reflective Questions

- What was achieved as a group as a result of their social action?
- Who has benefitted?
- What was the hope for change for others?
- What can be built on as a result of the social action?

Youth Work Outcomes

- Increased confidence and self-esteem.
- Increased ability in planning and problem solving.
- Increased ability to influence others.

Celebration

As well as celebrating the process of social action it is important that time is taken to celebrate both throughout and at the end of the group process. This can take the form of asking the young women to document their journey in creative ways e.g. using pictures and quotes to make a collage, creating their own video or podcast or using online tools to tell their story.

As well as recognising achievements this helps to build confidence and gives the young women the opportunity to think about their next step and beyond, plan for a positive future utilising the outdoors and continuing to campaign for better local spaces for young women to utilise.

⁹ Bullseye –Hitting the mark in working with young women - YouthAction Northern Ireland 2021
[7195 YouthAction Bullseye document FINAL.pdf \(cdn-website.com\)](https://www.youthactionni.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/7195-YouthAction-Bullseye-document-FINAL.pdf)



Further Resources



Further Resources and Support

Keep Northern Ireland Beautiful - Carbon Literacy Training

Carbon literacy training for teachers, students, youth workers and young people leading to accreditation through OCN, CPD and with the Carbon Literacy Project – <https://www.northernirelandscreen.co.uk/news/online-carbon-literacy-training-2020/>. The course aims to empower young people to be involved and raise awareness of how they can take action. It includes the following;

- Agency and the significance of action at an individual and group/community level.
- Core science around climate change and global warming
- Global issues around equity and responsibility,
- Focus on vulnerable groups linked to climate change
- Global, national and local impacts and responses.

Further information from Scott Howes scott.howes@keepnorthernirelandbeautiful.org

Leave No Trace Ireland

Leave No Trace Ireland offers a range of educational opportunities through workshops, certified training courses, events and schools programmes all based upon seven principles on anyone visiting the outdoors. These include:

1. Plan Ahead and Prepare
2. Be Considerate of Others
3. Respect Farm Animals and Wildlife
4. Travel and Camp on Durable Ground
5. Leave What You Find
6. Dispose of Waste Properly
7. Minimise the Effects of Fire

[7 Principles of Leave No Trace - Leave No Trace Ireland](#)

Far and Wild – Outdoor Pursuits and Environmental Learning

Far and Wild are an outdoor pursuits and environmental learning organisation who organised and facilitated outdoor activity into the Steeper Steps model. The Far and Wild team have developed their own values and approach to coaching for outdoor activity. In particular, they have focused on how their practice can develop people and sustain the environment as closely inter-related and inter-dependent; developing people through rekindling their sense of self in nature and in so doing, their appreciation of how important it is to them for positive health and wellbeing.

Further information from Lawrence McBride hello@farandwild.co.uk

Building Activism through Youth Work

This resource supports young people to formulate their particular activism interest areas in which they want to build their campaign or social action and to create a workable plan which is regularly reviewed.

Boyd and McMullan, YouthAction Northern Ireland (2021) [YouthAction Northern Ireland](#)

Rethinking Youth Work for a Climate Changed World

Youth work supporting young people who are leading the way in climate conversation and action.

Nolan, YouthAction Northern Ireland (2021) [YouthAction Northern Ireland](#)

Bullseye – Hitting the Mark in Working with Young Women

Bullseye is a resource to support work with young women. Young women have many different interests and engage in youth programmes for a variety of reasons. Therefore, youth work can offer young women a wide range of learning opportunities. By participating in youth programmes and through use of this resource, young women can:

- Boost their self-confidence.
- Explore their interests and try new things.
- Develop a sense of belonging to a group.
- Have a break from everyday routines.
- Learn to think about the world differently.
- Speak up on issues that are important to them.
- Engage in action with others to create change.

YouthAction Northern Ireland (2021)

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YouthAction⁷⁵ NORTHERN IRELAND

YouthAction Northern Ireland:

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