

Children and Young People's Assembly on Biodiversity Loss



In October 2022, Ireland held its first Children and Young People's Assembly on Biodiversity Loss. The Assembly brought together 35 randomly selected members aged 7-17 from across Ireland to explore, discuss and create calls to action on how to protect and restore biodiversity in Ireland.

The Assembly was designed and run by an intergenerational team consisting of a Young Advisory Team working with researchers from Dublin City University, University College Cork, and terre des hommes.

Biodiversity loss is a children's rights issue, not least because of its impact on their rights to grow up in clean, healthy, and safe environments now and in the future. Ireland has a longstanding commitment to upholding the rights of children and young people, having ratified the UNCRC in 1992. Under the UNCRC, it is the responsibility of decision-makers to include children and young people as active participants in the development of forthcoming policy-making regarding biodiversity restoration in Ireland.

The Assembly members created 58 calls to action to protect biodiversity, and presented them to Minister Malcolm Noonan on the final day of the Assembly last year.

Read the report and calls to action at cyp-biodiversity.ie.

In October 2023, a one-year reunion of the Assembly was held in Dublin so that the children, young people and adults involved could reflect on the impact of the Assembly, and share stories of where individuals, schools and communities have been taking action.

Meet the representatives



Two of the 9 Young Advisors who co-designed and facilitated the Assembly with the team at DCU, UCC and terre des hommes.



Niamh
17, Co. Waterford
Young Advisor



Elsie
9, Co. Tipperary
Young Advisor



Oisín
14, Co. Galway
Assembly member



Eleanor
16, Co. Kildare
Assembly member



Conor
12, Co. Dublin
Assembly member



David
13 Co. Mayo
Assembly member

Four of the Assembly members who were part of the representative random sample of 35 children and young people aged 7-17 from across Ireland

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Meeting with Joint Oireachtas Committee on Environment and Climate Action, Tuesday 21 November

Proposed running order for Opening Statement segment:

Introduction (3 minutes)

Niamh, Young Advisor, will begin by introducing herself and then handing over to the other five representatives to introduce themselves. The children will share their first name, age and county.

Film (7.5 minutes)

Niamh will briefly introduce the film to be played.

Facilitated discussion among the children and young people (15 minutes)

Niamh will facilitate a short conversation with the other representatives, posing a series of questions about their experiences in the Assembly and their 58 calls to action outlined in their final report, published April 2022.

At the end of this Opening Statement segment, Niamh would hand over to Cathaoirleach Brian Leddin T.D.

Keeping everyone safe and well

It is really important that all children and young people involved are supported to feel safe and well in our work.

In our work, we follow Dublin City University's child protection policy and procedures. All adults involved have been approved by child protection authorities (such as the Garda) for working with children and young people.

If, at any point, a child does not feel happy, safe or comfortable, they can speak to Diarmuid and Katie (our Child Safeguarding Team) who will be present on the day so they can provide the right support.

Diarmuid Torney, Dublin City University

diarmuid.torney@dcu.ie

Katie Reid, terre des hommes

k.reid@tdh.de

Young Advisors' Top Tips for engaging with children and young people

Here are a few suggestions from the Young Advisors on how to help children feel respected and listened to.

Ask everyone questions

Explain information clearly

Listen attentively

Use good body
language

Smile!

Show signs of
response (nodding and
smiling) and listen for
the ideas

Be present

Make sure everyone is
included and comfortable

