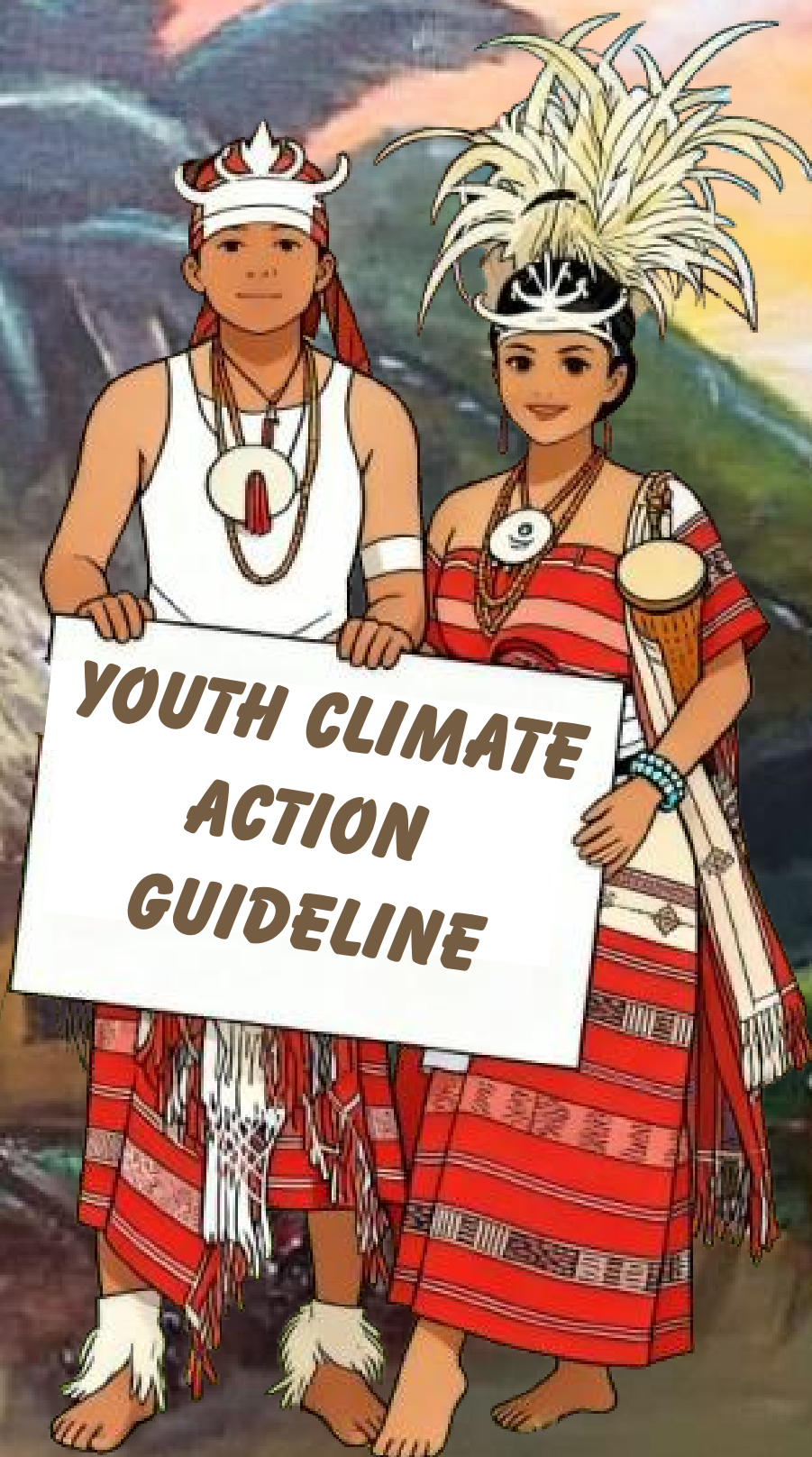




Acknowledgements

Youth Climate Action Guideline



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With contributions from:

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Their meaningful contributions helped shape the content, language, and tools to ensure they are relevant, inclusive, culturally appropriate, and youth-friendly.

Disclaimer:

This guide is an educational resource intended to support learning and youth engagement in climate action. It simplifies climate change, advocacy, and policy concepts for educational purposes and does not replace official government policies or United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) documents.

The Development of Adolescent and Youth-Friendly Climate Change Module and Toolkit Series was funded by the Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA).

How to Use this Resource?

The Youth-Friendly Climate Change Module and Toolkit Series were developed to empower adolescents and young people in Timor-Leste, especially those aged 15 to 28, by providing climate change learning resources that support informed, inclusive, and locally driven climate action. These resources are:

1. Youth Climate Change Module
- 2. Youth Climate Action Guideline**
3. Climate Action Tool
4. International Climate Agreements Guide
5. Climate Governance Guide
6. Photo Essay Toolkit
7. Climate Glossary Toolkit



This **Youth Climate Action Guideline** is the second resource of the Youth-Friendly Climate Change Module and Toolkit Series. We recommend starting with the **Youth Climate Change Module** to build a strong foundation before diving into this guide. But you're also welcome to jump straight in if you're mainly looking for practical ways to take climate action now. This resource is available in two languages: **English and Tetun**. Both versions are intended to ensure broader accessibility and understanding

How to use this guide: It is yours to explore in your own way. Climate action can take many forms: speaking, writing, observing, organizing, creating, or supporting others. You can read alone, with friends, or in a group. If reading is tricky, try discussing sections aloud, drawing, role-playing, or storytelling. Every action, big or small, makes a difference!



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INTRODUCTION



Dear Changemaker,

This is usually where people list their impressive biographies, but we the authors, facilitators, contributors, and editors of this guide are just like you.

Young hearts, different journeys, coming from every corner of Timor-Leste, connected by one belief: that we, as young people, hold the power to shape a brighter world, today and for tomorrow.

But why take action?

Here's what you already know:

Our communities, our world, face enormous challenges.

Our planet, our common home is under pressure like never before.

Most of these problems were not caused by us,
but now we have to help fix them.

We feel these problems in our daily lives:

poverty that is real,

schools that are not easy to reach,

unequal treatment of men and women,

and climate change that makes life harder every day.

This **Youth Climate Action Guideline** is your companion,
your spark, your map, your mirror.

It will help you discover your role,

ignite your power,

and navigate the path of meaningful change.

Inside, you'll find clear steps,

and stories of young people just like you

turning ideas into action,

facing challenges with courage,

from tackling inequality to protecting our environment.

You are not alone! You belong to a growing wave of young
changemakers,

shaping a better world, step by step, heart by heart.

So, dive in, explore, and rise.

Change begins somewhere and we believe it begins with **YOU**, today.



1. UNDERSTANDING THE TERMS: CLIMATE ACTION, YOUTH PARTICIPATION, ADVOCACY AND POLICY

1.1. CLIMATE ACTION

Think of climate action like a strong, growing tree made of many parts working together.

Every leaf, branch, and root represents a way to make a difference.

Some actions start with you, some happen with friends or your community, and some aim to change the bigger systems that shape our world.

Confused? Don't worry! Let's break it down so you can see how **you, your friends, and your community** can all play a part in protecting our planet.

What is climate action?

Climate action means taking steps to respond to climate change both to **reduce its causes and to protect people and nature from its impacts.**

It includes:

- **Mitigation:** Reducing the causes of climate change.
- **Adaptation:** Preparing for its effects now and in the future.
- **Loss and damage:** Addressing harms and losses caused by climate change that cannot be avoided or adapted to.

Three Levels Of Climate Action

In this Youth Climate Action Guideline, we organize climate action into **three simple levels**, so you can see where you can make a difference no matter your age, background, or experience:



Individual Action : What you do on your own, like learning, changing habits, or using your voice.



Collective Action : Working together with friends, youth groups, or communities to make a bigger impact.



Systemic Action : Influencing rules, systems, or decisions through advocacy and policy work to create long-term change.

All three levels are important, and every step counts!



Why it matters?

This approach comes from **Sustainable Development Goal 13**, which calls on everyone countries, communities, and individuals to take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts.





1.2. YOUTH PARTICIPATION

Imagine youth participation as a big, colorful umbrella it covers all the different ways young people can get involved. Joining activities, sharing ideas, volunteering, and taking part in decision-making are all forms of youth participation.

Definition

Youth participation refers to how young people can get involved in processes, institutions, and decisions that affect their lives. Since adolescents and young people make up a significant share of the global population, they should be able to participate in all areas of social, political, and economic life.

YOUTH PARTICIPATION CAN BE **ACTIVE** OR **PASSIVE**

- ✦ **Active youth participation** means you are engaging or ready to engage.
- ✦ **Passive youth participation** means you are willing to allow whatever happens to happen and you are not changing or controlling the situation.



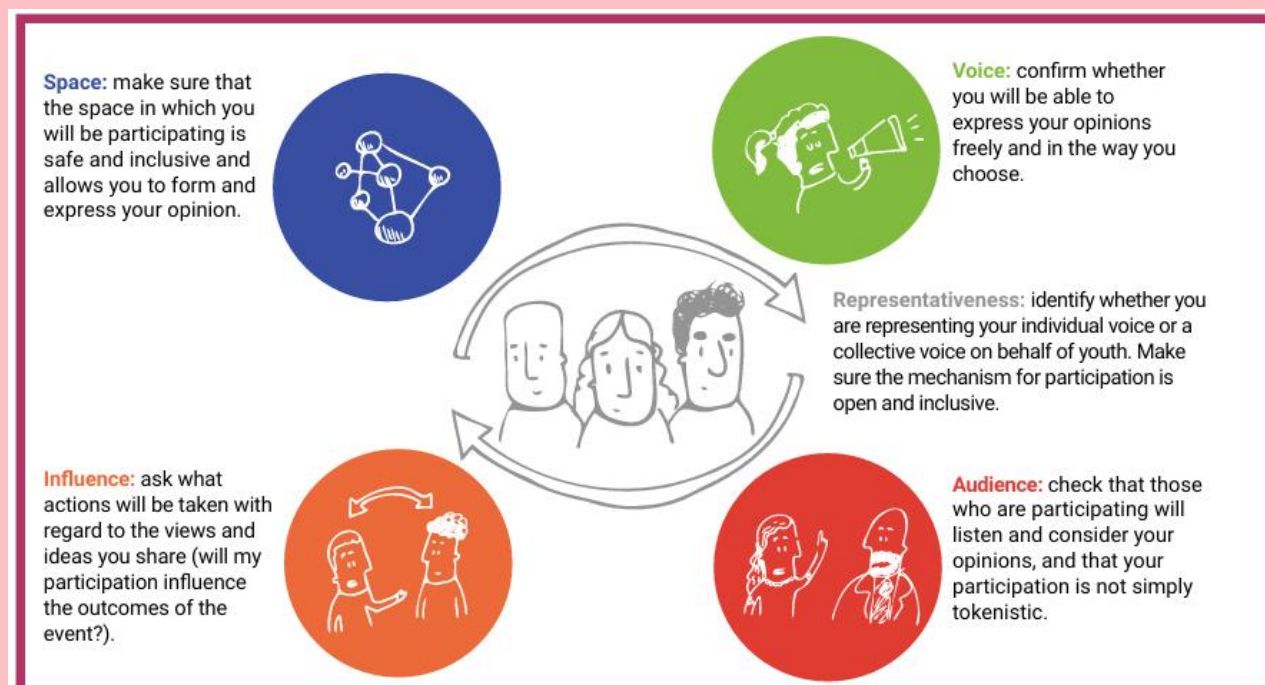
For example, you can participate **passively** by listening to someone speak at an event, with no intention of getting involved in the issue or making any changes in your life. By contrast, you can participate **actively** by researching a topic, finding actions you can take, and raising awareness with the goal of changing the behavior of others.

Both types of youth participation have a time and place – sometimes it is necessary to remain passively involved in an issue. Other times it is necessary to become actively involved by taking a definite stand.



Josue Wiliam/LSM-TL/Viqueque/2026

Spaces for youth participation is increasingly being promoted but, in some cases, participation is merely symbolic, manipulated or unsafe. Before you participate, it is important to identify whether participation will be **meaningful**, **effective** and **ethical**. To do this, you can consider the following:



Source: Lundy, L., 'Voice is not enough: Conceptualising Article 12 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child', British Educational Research Journal, vol. 33, no. 6, pp. 927–942, accessed [15 June 2021](#).

Let us Pause for a Moment

So far, we've talked about:

- ◆ **Climate action** : the actions that protect our planet and communities.
- ◆ **Youth participation** : the ways adolescents and young people take part and have a voice.

THEY ARE NOT THE SAME, BUT THEY ARE CLOSELY CONNECTED.

Now comes the next step:

How do adolescents and young people use their participation to influence climate action at a deeper level?

That's where **advocacy and policy** play a role.





1.3. ADVOCACY

Definition

Advocacy focuses on doing something to support, recommend or implement actions linked to an idea or cause you care about. All people, including adolescents and young people, are entitled to a say in the decisions that affect them. When you speak up for an issue, you make sure leaders do their job and respect your rights. You are not asking for favours.

Advocacy also means making your voices heard, as often the ideas or practices you want to change affect the most vulnerable people in society. Your advocacy can bring about changes in policies, programmes, actions, behaviours, institutions and investments.

Youth advocacy is not about asking for favours

People often associate advocacy with a dramatic event or impassioned cause and tend to think of advocacy on large scales, such as the rise of youth movements like #FridaysForFuture global climate strike movement, and #BlackLivesMatter against police violence and racism. In many ways, this is true. Advocacy can become something big, and it does involve collective action. But this only tells part of the story.

Advocacy can also be a small act, such as telling a friend not to bully someone and encouraging your friends to do the same. It can be more independent, such as researching and providing climate information to a community leader to help promote environmental awareness or local action. Or it can focus on communicating ideas, such as writing a blog or sharing your experiences. Advocacy can also concentrate on changing rules or laws and organizing legal demonstrations or rallies to support this cause.

The world is filled with inspiring youth advocates, each doing their bit to transform their societies. **Now that you know more about advocacy and the many forms it can take, do you think you are a youth advocate? Or could you become one?**



LSM-TL media/Ainara/2025



1.4. POLICY

Most institutions or organizations have policies that provide a guide for **how to make decisions**. At the highest level are global policies – agreements between countries on how to engage in certain areas, such as trade or the environment. National policies outline a country's objectives and its plans to achieve those. Company policies detail how employees should behave in a work environment, and school policies outline appropriate behavior for students and staff.

If you can use your advocacy work to influence the fundamental principles that guide decisions, you will have a better chance of effecting sustainable change. This is why advocacy always links back to policy.



Definition

A policy is a set of principles, ideas, or plans that guide decisions to achieve a certain outcome. Policies are important because they determine how we behave and affect how we experience our everyday lives.

If you still feel a bit uncertain about some of these ideas, that's OK. As you begin your advocacy journey, you will start to see how everything is interconnected. There is no perfect time to start. Find an entry point and jump in!





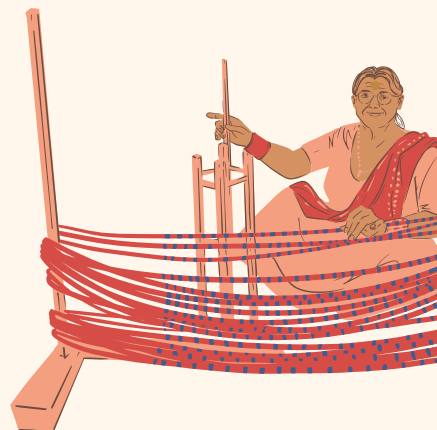
2. STARTING WITH YOU

Before climate action happens in communities, policies, or systems, it begins with **you**.

Climate action is not only about big projects or loud voices. It starts with understanding **why you care, what you can offer, and where you can take action** as an individual, with others, and within systems.

Every young person has a role to play.
And every climate action journey looks different.

This section invites you to **pause, reflect, and recognize** your place in the movement.

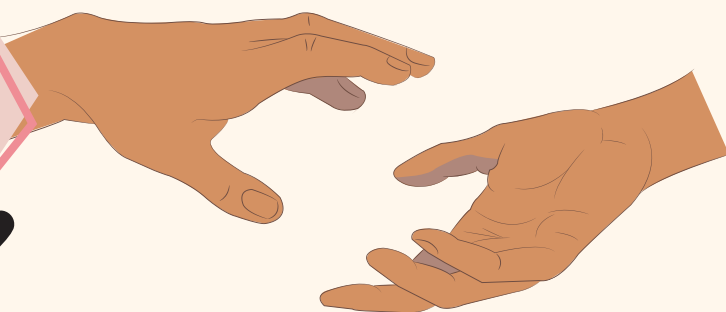


Climate Action Starts With YOU

Before joining activities, campaigns, advocacy efforts, or policy discussions, take a moment to understand yourself.

- ◆ **Reflect**
What climate issue affects your life or community the most?
- ◆ **Recognize**
What skills, experiences, or passions do you already have?
- ◆ **Decide**
Where can you take action on your own, with others, or by influencing systems and decisions?

“CLIMATE ACTION IS A JOURNEY.
YOU DON'T NEED ALL THE ANSWERS
AT THE START”



Climate Action Roles You Can Step Into

1

RESEARCHER

A researcher asks questions and looks for answers. They explore why climate problems exist, how they began, and what can be done to change them. Research helps make climate action informed, strong and credible.

Research can include reading, listening to audio, interviewing community members, or working with others to collect information.



2

SPEAKER

A speaker shares ideas through conversation, discussion, or public speaking. Good speakers connect with people's experiences and inspire others to care, reflect, and take action.

Speaking can happen in public spaces, small groups, online, or through recorded messages.



3

WRITER

A writer uses words to connect ideas, people, and realities.

Through stories, articles, posts, or reports, writers help others understand climate issues and feel motivated to act.

Writing can include drawing, visual storytelling, captions, or co-writing with others.

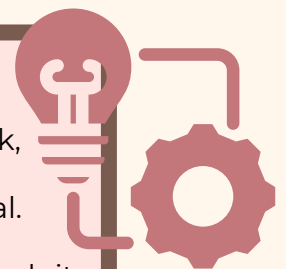


4

IMPLEMENTER

An implementer turns ideas into action. They enjoy organizing activities, joining field work, and helping plans move forward step by step. Implementers keep climate action active and real.

Implementing does not always mean physical work it can include planning, coordination, monitoring, or supporting logistics.



There is a Place for Everyone

Climate action works best when adolescents and young people work **together**, combining different skills and strengths.

One person
researches.

Another speaks.

Another writes.

Another
implements.

This is how **youth participation, advocacy, and policy influence** grow stronger through teamwork.

Reflection Box

Which role feels most natural to you right now?



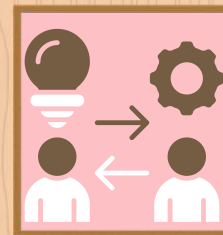
Researcher



Speaker



Writer



Implementer



Why this role fits
me:

Remember 🌿

- You don't have to be perfect to start
- You can grow into new roles over time
- Climate action needs many voices and many hands



3. TIPS FOR ENGAGING IN CLIMATE ACTION

A brief compass to help you begin with confidence and care

Taking part in climate action is a journey that begins with your intent and values. It doesn't matter where you start what matters is that you start with purpose, respect, and awareness. The following tips will help you prepare emotionally, ethically, and personally before you move into planning and action.

Start Where You Are



You don't need to be an expert; you don't need all the answers. Your lived experiences, questions, and interests are valuable. Climate action includes listening, learning, and showing up authentically in ways that fit your life.

For ideas on building knowledge and identifying issues, see **Section 4 < Fact-Finding**

Begin with Small Steps

You don't have to lead big events at first. Small conversations, listening to others, learning together, and trying simple actions build confidence and long-term impact. Every step counts.

Planning and scaling your efforts are supported in **Sections < 8 & 9.**



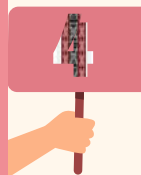
Act with Respect



Climate action is most effective when it's respectful to people, cultures, environments, and communities. Listen before speaking, and be open to different perspectives.

Be Inclusive and Community-Centered

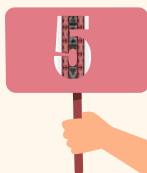
Everyone can participate your friends, family, neighbors, and community leaders. Diverse voices make climate action stronger and fairer. You'll find more on inclusive collaboration in **Section 7 < Networking and Fostering Allyship.**



Work Together

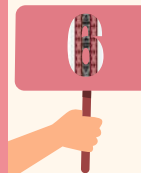
Climate action is rarely done alone. Working with peers and allies helps you learn faster, share responsibilities, and create shared impact.

Tips on building networks and allies are in **Section < 7.**



Stay Mindful of Safety

Your safety physical, emotional, and digital—matters. Understand any risks, ask for support when you need it, and choose safe spaces to participate. Practical guidance on safe engagement is in **Section 4 < Fact Finding.**



Rest and Reflect

Caring about climate change can feel heavy. Taking breaks, reflecting on what you'll learn, and caring for your wellbeing helps sustain you on this journey.

Self-care strategies are explored in **Section 11 < Maintaining Mental Wellness as an Advocate.**



This section is your **compass and mindset starter** the place to prepare your heart and head before you learn the how-to's later. Keep this with you as you read on, and return to it whenever you need encouragement or grounding





4. FACT-FINDING

4.1. CHOOSING YOUR CLIMATE ISSUE

Before taking action, start by **choosing the climate issue that matters most to you.**

Everyone has different reasons for caring about different issues, and that's a good thing. Timor-Leste faces many climate-related challenges, and we need adolescents and young people to get involved in ways that connect with their **passions, skills, and communities.**

Once you have identified your climate issue, take time to think about **what you can do to help address it.** This could be a small action in your community, working with friends or youth groups, raising awareness, supporting local solutions, or advocating for change at school or local government level. You don't need to solve everything at once what matters is taking a meaningful first step.

Your chosen issue might focus on local action, such as restoring mangroves, organizing community clean-ups, protecting water sources, or raising climate awareness in schools. Or it could involve broader advocacy, like influencing policies or national decision-making.



When choosing your issue, look back at your own community and daily life. Ask yourself:

- Does your community struggle with **lack of clean water** or **water contamination**?
- Have you experienced **flooding, landslides, or strong winds** damaging homes?
- Are farmers facing **crop failure** due to drought or unpredictable rain?
- Has a place you love like a **river you used to swim in** or a **beach you visited been damaged** by waste, flooding, or erosion?
- Have you seen **neighbours' houses affected by storms** or extreme weather?

What matters most is that you choose an issue you truly care about one that motivates you to take action and stay committed. By acting now, you can help shape the future of Timor-Leste its education, jobs, health, and environment for years to come.





Reflection Activity: Choosing Your Issue

My Community

Which climate issue affects my community the most?



My Passion

Which climate issue am I most interested in?



My Skills & Strengths

Which of my skills could help address this issue?

- Research & learning
- Speaking & inspiring others
- Writing & storytelling
- Organizing & implementing actions
- Creative skills (art, media, music)



My strengths:

Where Can I Make an Impact?

Which level of climate action fits your issue?

- Individual action
- Collective action
- Systemic action



My strengths:



Linking to Advocacy & Policy

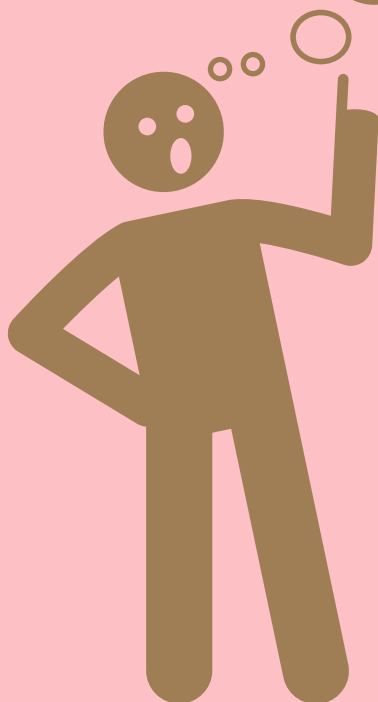
Once you know your issue, you can start thinking about **how to influence change**:

- **Individual action:** Learn more, change habits, or speak up.
- **Collective action:** Team up with friends, schools, or communities.
- **Systemic action:** Use advocacy, campaigns, and policy engagement to influence leaders and decisions.

Choosing your issue is the first step in turning your concern into meaningful action.

Remember

- You don't have to be perfect to start.
- You can grow into new roles over time.
- Climate action needs many voices and many hands.





4.2. GATHERING INFORMATION



The first step in taking climate action is to **understand your issue deeply**.

This is where you use your skills as a **researcher**. The more you know about your topic, the better prepared you will be to take action whether individually, with your community, or by influencing policies and systems.



When gathering information, think about these key areas:



History and Background: Understand how this climate issue started and what has been done before, both locally and globally.



Social Context: Learn how this issue affects people in your community and which groups are most impacted.



Environmental Context: Observe how the issue affects the natural environment, including land, water, forests, and biodiversity.



Policy and Governance Context: Look at the laws, policies, and systems that influence this issue and identify opportunities for advocacy or change.

By collecting information in these areas, you will **build a strong understanding** of the problem and be ready to **take informed and effective action**.

HISTORY & BACKGROUND

Most climate issues don't appear out of nowhere. To take meaningful action, it's important to understand **how the issue started** and what events or factors have shaped it over time.

When looking at the history and background of a climate issue, think about:

- **What is the issue?**
- **When did it start?**
- **What events or developments influenced this issue?**
- **Who has been involved or affected?**
- **What impacts has this issue had on communities and the environment?**

Reflecting on the history of a climate issue helps you **see its root causes**, understand its **social and environmental impacts**, and recognize the **different perspectives people have developed over time**.



For example, if your focus is **deforestation or mangrove loss**, understanding past land use, policies, and community practices will help you see why the problem exists today and where action can be most effective.

By learning the history and background, you will have a **strong foundation** to guide your climate action, whether individually, collectively, or through advocacy and policy.

SOCIAL CONTEXT



Understanding the **social context** of your climate issue is key to making a real impact.

To create change, you will need support from people in your community, schools, youth groups, or local leadership. Knowing how people think and feel about your issue will help you **build relationships**, gain allies, and work together toward solutions.

When exploring the social context, consider:

 **Who is involved?** Think about community members, other young people, government representatives, school boards, local leaders, and NGOs. Who supports the issue, and who might resist it?

 **How do people relate to each other?** Are there strong connections, or tensions, between groups that might affect your work?

 **What social and cultural factors matter?** Consider religion, culture, gender, traditions, and local customs. How do these influence the way people see your issue?

 **What engagement has already happened?** Learn from past projects, campaigns, or initiatives in your community.

 **How can you stay safe?** Some climate issues might involve risks, like challenging policies or confronting harmful practices. Understand local power dynamics and know where to find support if needed.

Your safety and well-being are always a priority. Take steps to **manage risks**, protect yourself and others, and seek help from trusted adults or organizations when necessary.

Understanding the social context will give you the insight you need to **connect with your community, mobilize others, and make your climate action effective and inclusive.**

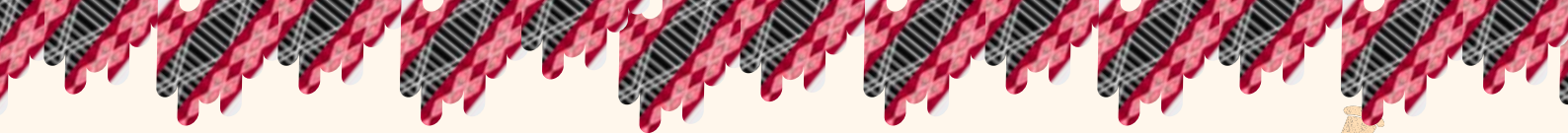


Remember:

Taking climate action is all about creating positive change. To do this effectively, you need to build support and form strong relationships. Working with other passionate adolescents and young people, community members, and local leaders can make your actions stronger and more impactful. Forming alliances and fostering collaboration are powerful tools for driving change—whether through individual, collective, or systemic action.

For more tips on connecting with others and building your network, see the section on Networking and Allyship.





ENVIRONMENTAL CONTEXT

Climate issues don't just affect people they also affect **the land, water, air, forests, oceans, and wildlife**. Understanding the **environmental context** of your issue helps you see the full picture and identify where action is needed most.

When exploring the
environmental
context, consider:

What natural resources are affected?

Are forests, rivers, coasts, or farmland at risk?

What are the immediate impacts?

How is your local environment changing because of this issue?

What are the long-term impacts?

How could this issue affect the environment in 10, 20, or 30 years?

How do humans and nature interact?

How do people in your community depend on and affect the environment?

By understanding the environmental context, you will be able to **link your actions to real-world impacts** and make informed decisions about **individual, collective, and systemic climate action**.



POLICY & GOVERNANCE CONTEXT



Every climate issue exists within a **policy and governance context** the rules, systems, and decision-making processes that shape how your community and country respond. Understanding this context is key to **influencing change through advocacy and systemic action**.

Start by getting a general sense of your context:



Who makes the rules? Identify the people, institutions, or organizations that control decisions related to your issue.



How are decisions made? Learn how policies are developed and implemented in your community or nationally.



How can young people engage? In Timor-Leste, this might include participating in **stakeholder consultations, community validation sessions, or local meetings**. You might also contribute by submitting letters, proposals, or feedback during these processes to make your voice heard.



Are voices represented? Are there local structures, youth councils, or organizations that represent the community's interests?



LSM-TL/LCOY-TL/Dili/2025

Next, take a deeper look at existing policies or regulations related to your climate issue. Some policies may exist but are **weakly implemented**, while others might leave gaps that you can help address. Understanding these policies will strengthen your ability to advocate for **real, meaningful change**.

Once you know what to look for, gather information through:



Desktop research : reading reports, policy documents, news articles, or government publications.



Personal engagement : speaking with community leaders, policy makers, NGOs, or other stakeholders.

By understanding the policy and governance context, you will be better prepared to take informed action that influences systems, decisions, and structures for lasting climate impact.





4.3. CONDUCTING DESKTOP RESEARCH

Desktop research means gathering published information about your climate issue. You can do this **online**, visit a **library**, or read **reports, newspapers, academic journals, official documents**, or even **ask local authorities, schools, or community leaders** for printed copies.

Using different sources helps you **broaden your perspective** and **build your understanding** of the issue.

While researching:



- 1 Take notes** to capture key ideas and important facts.
- 2 Organize your documents** so you can easily find them later.
- 3 Keep track of sources** to support your ideas with credible evidence.

The internet is a powerful tool, but not all information is trustworthy. To ensure your research is reliable, ask yourself:

- Who?** Who published this information? Do they have expertise or experience with the topic? Are they recognized by governments, organizations, or academic institutions?
- What?** What is the main idea? Are the claims supported by evidence and references?
- Where?** Where did you find the information? Prefer official websites, government sites (.gov), educational institutions (.edu or .ac), or respected organizations.
- When?** When was the information published? Make sure it is current or provides relevant historical context.
- Why?** Why was it published? Check for bias or agendas that could influence the content.

TIPS:

The strength of your climate action depends on the quality of your information. Reliable research makes your ideas stronger, more credible, and more effective when you take action whether individually, collectively, or through advocacy.



4.4. EXPANDING PERSONAL ENGAGEMENT

Personal engagement is **another powerful way to gather information** about your climate issue. It's about **talking to people and listening to their experiences** to understand how your issue affects them and how they feel about it.

A **stakeholder** is anyone individuals, groups, organizations, or institutions **who has an interest in your issue**. Some may be closely involved, others more indirectly, but all perspectives matter. Mapping out stakeholders can help you see who to talk to and how they connect to your work.

1

Who to engage with

Think about the groups you identified during your social context research, and include:

- Peers and other young people
- Local government representatives or officials
- Experts, scientists, and academics
- Community-based organizations (CBOs), NGOs, or INGOs
- Religious groups and faith leaders
- Private sector organizations
- Family members, guardians, and mentors

2

Preparing to engage

Before speaking with people, learn about them and their relationship to the issue. You can also prepare questions, such as:

- How does this issue affect you or your community?
- What has been your experience with it so far?
- What solutions or opportunities do you see?
- Would you be willing to participate in advocacy or climate action activities?

Tips while engaging

- Compare what you hear with your desktop research to see if they match.
- Try to distinguish facts from opinions. Both are important, but understanding the difference will help you make informed decisions.
- Be respectful, open-minded, and listen actively.

Personal engagement turns research into real understanding and helps you design climate action that fits your community and makes a real difference.



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5. FROM KNOWLEDGE TO ACTION: MAPPING YOUR CLIMATE PATH

Now it's time to turn all that knowledge into action. This section helps you map out **how your knowledge, skills, and passions can create real change** at the individual, collective, and systemic levels.

Mapping your climate path ensures your actions are focused, strategic, and ready to connect to advocacy and policy engagement.

STEP 1 : REFLECT ON WHAT YOU'VE LEARNED

Look back at what you discovered through:

- **Desktop research:** Reports, studies, news, and government documents.
- **Personal engagement:** Community members, youth groups, local leaders.

Ask yourself:

- What surprised me?
- What challenges or opportunities exist in my community?
- Which stakeholders are already involved, and who else should I connect with?



Reflection Box:

List 3 important things you've learned about your climate issue so far:

STEP 2 : IDENTIFY YOUR ENTRY POINTS FOR ACTION

Climate action can happen at three levels:

- **Individual Action:** Changes you make in your own life, habits, or knowledge.
- **Collective Action:** Projects or campaigns you can join or lead with friends, youth groups, or communities.
- **Systemic Action:** Influencing policies, institutions, or decisions that shape your environment.

Ask yourself:

- Where can I act today?
- Which level excites me the most?
- Can I combine levels for greater impact?



Reflection Box:

Circle your focus:

- ☐ Individual
 - ☐ Collective
 - ☐ Systemic
- List 2–3 possible actions you could start this month:

STEP 3 : CONNECT YOUR ACTIONS TO CHANGE

Now link your actions to the broader change you want to see:

- How will my individual actions inspire others or reduce harm?
- How can collective projects amplify my impact?
- What systemic changes could address root causes?



Tip: Start small, grow your network, and gradually connect your efforts to bigger goals.



Reflection Box:

Draw a simple “Climate Path Map” showing:

- Your chosen issue
- Your entry points (individual, collective, systemic)
- Potential outcomes or impacts

STEP 4 : LINK YOUR ACTIONS TO ADVOCACY AND POLICY

Once you’ve identified where you can make a difference:

- Your actions give you first-hand knowledge to comment on or advocate for better policies
- Collective and systemic actions amplify youth voices and influence decision-makers.
- Mapping your climate path ensures advocacy is grounded in evidence and community needs.

Not everyone needs to work on policy, and that’s okay

Remember

- Mapping your climate path is about connecting what you know to what you can do.
- Every action counts small or large, personal or collective.



#MyStory

Hello, my name is Enny Gusmão, and I am from Baguia. In my community, we face many challenges: plastic waste, deforestation, slash-and-burn farming, and overuse of chemical fertilizers. Young people have limited opportunities, and climate change—with long dry seasons and heavy rains—has made farming and daily life more difficult.

So, we knew change had to start with us. Through *WithOneSeed*, I work with youth and farmers to plant trees, promote eco-friendly farming, reduce plastic use, and bring back traditional knowledge. We also support women and young people to lead, build skills, and take part in community decisions. Over the years, we have planted more than 625,000 trees, supported many farmers, and created jobs. Our journey shows that when a community comes together with a shared purpose, small actions can grow into lasting change. 🌱💪





6. UNDERSTANDING AND ENGAGING WITH POLICIES

Strong climate action needs policies—plans and rules that guide decisions and help communities and governments respond to environmental challenges.

For young people in Timor-Leste, understanding these policies helps make your actions stronger and more effective. It may feel difficult at first, but knowing the right policies and how they connect to your issue can help you create real change.



What is a Policy?



A **policy** is a set of plans, rules, or methods designed to guide decisions or achieve a specific goal. Policies can exist at many levels:

- **Local:** Municipal or village regulations and initiatives.
- **National:** Government strategies, laws, and plans, including climate and environmental policies.
- **Regional or Global:** Agreements and frameworks like the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and international climate commitments.

Not every climate action project needs to target policy directly. Sometimes, your work might focus on community awareness, behaviour change, or grassroots projects.

However, linking your actions to policies when possible helps ensure your efforts have a broader, lasting impact.

Why Policies Matter for Youth Climate Action

- Policies shape how climate issues are addressed in communities, schools, and national planning.
- Understanding existing policies helps you identify gaps, opportunities, and entry points for advocacy.
- Engaging with policies strengthens your credibility as a youth advocate and empowers your community to take informed action.



This section can break down into three practical sub-sections:



Identify the Right Policy : Find out which policies relate to your climate issue and what levels of governance they operate at.



Read and Understand the Policy : Learn the key points, goals, and actions outlined in the policy to see how it aligns with your work.



Engage and Comment on Policy : Explore ways to provide input, feedback, or suggestions, and find opportunities to participate in consultations, forums, or youth advisory panels.





6. 1. IDENTIFYING THE RIGHT POLICY

Before engaging with policies, you first need to know **which policies exist** and which ones relate to your climate issue.

Ask yourself:



Which climate or environmental policies relate to my issue?



Are these policies available for public comment or are they mainly for reference?



At the local or national level, which ministry, agency, or department is responsible for this policy?



Are there regional or international frameworks that influence this issue?



Where can I access the documents online, in schools, local government offices, or community centres?

Policies should be public, but they are not always easy to find. Looking for them is part of your research and advocacy.

Youth Advocacy Tip:

Sometimes, making policies accessible is an advocacy goal in itself.

For example, if a climate policy or environmental law isn't available online, you could ask local authorities, schools, or community leaders for copies and even advocate for your government to share these documents so all young people can engage with them.





6.2. READING AND UNDERSTANDING A POLICY

Policies can seem long, complicated, or full of technical words—but don't worry! Understanding them is a skill that gets easier with practice. Reading policies is important because youth voices are often missing in decisions that shape our climate, communities, and futures.

Here's how you can approach it step by step:



Dig Deeper and Spot Opportunities



You might need to read a policy several times or discuss it with others to fully understand it. Take your time—it's normal if it feels complicated at first!

As you read, **look for gaps or areas for improvement**. Ask yourself:

- Does the policy mention youth as key stakeholders?
- Are the needs of marginalized groups considered?
- Are there climate issues that are missing or underrepresented?

If you notice anything missing or unclear, **make notes**. This is your opportunity to suggest improvements or identify areas where advocacy could make a difference.

Policies can also guide your next steps:

- They may provide **useful data** and statistics about climate issues.
- They can explain the **history** and background of environmental challenges.
- They often list **stakeholders and decision-makers** you might need to engage with.





6.3. COMMENTING ON POLICY

Sometimes you may feel a bit afraid to comment on policy. But as a young person, you have a voice and the right to be involved in any policy that affects your life, your community, and your environment.

Here's how you can **approach it step** by step:

- 1 How was it created?
- 2 What rules exist for making changes or giving feedback?
- 3 Is there a process for youth input?

If there isn't a formal way to comment, **don't be discouraged**. You can:



Partner with other young people or organizations to call for open consultations.



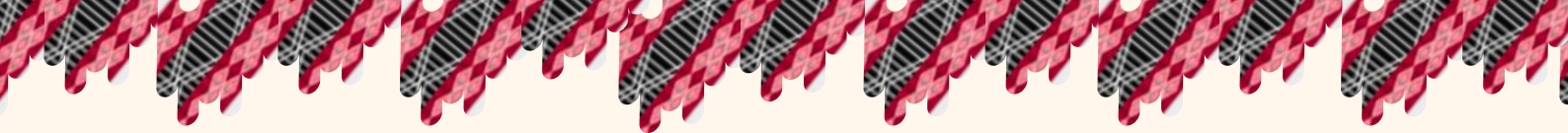
Advocate for a youth-friendly version of the policy so that more young people can understand and engage with it.

Before commenting, **read the full** document carefully. Don't focus only on one section—you might miss where your points are already addressed. Check related laws, policies, or international agreements, as these often connect to the issue you care about. Understanding these connections will make your comments more informed and impactful.



Youth Tips:

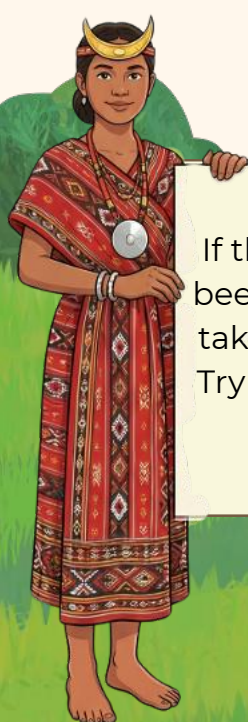
Take a deep breath and tackle it step by step. You don't need to do everything at once — small, well-informed contributions can make a real difference, influencing local, national, and even global climate policies. Remember, changing the world doesn't happen overnight.



When you are ready, here are a few ways to approach commenting on a policy document:

- **General comments:** Whether you write a few sentences or a page, try to provide your overall views on the document. You can provide personal comments, but you should also refer to your fact-finding research to help you include a wider perspective. General comments can also offer new ideas and solutions that are not already in the policy.
- **Specific comments:** If you feel comfortable moving beyond general comments, you can then focus on specific sections of the policy document that are relevant to you and your cause. Identify gaps and weaknesses and offer ways to strengthen pertinent sections.
- **Changes to the language:** A strong policy should use decisive and progressive language. It should inspire action and give timelines. Language should also be simple, inclusive and non-discriminatory. Editing the language of a policy can strengthen the document and make it more impactful.

Generally, the more specific you are, the more useful your comments will be. As you can see, it is important to clearly identify the issue you are addressing. If you plan to present your comments verbally, make sure you come prepared with clear talking points. Write down your thoughts while reading the document, as well as any specific comments on the policy. You will need these notes when you enter spaces where you can voice your opinions.



If the policy is past the commenting phase and has already been finalized, focus instead on its implementation. You can take a deeper look at the promises made around the policy. Try commenting on the mechanisms put in place to ensure policy goals are accomplished.



#MyStory

Hi, my name is **Nelson Amaral**. I decided to take part in the public consultation on the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP) and other national policies about the environment and oceans because protecting biodiversity is important to both my work and my personal commitment to coastal and marine sustainability in Timor-Leste.

Through my work with Blue Ventures Timor-Leste (BVTL) and Sustainable Ocean Alliance (SOA) Timor-Leste, I've been involved in sustainable fisheries and marine conservation. Joining the consultation felt like a natural way to share practical insights and represent the communities I work with. In my comments, I emphasized that local knowledge and youth voices should be included in national policies, because community experiences are important for making policies work in real life.

Participating in this process showed me that even small contributions can make a difference. It also gave me confidence and motivation to continue engaging in shaping Timor-Leste's environmental future.



7. NETWORKING AND FOSTERING ALLYSHIP

Climate action is strongest when it is collective. Individual actions matter, but lasting and inclusive change happens when people work together.

Networking and fostering allyship are about building relationships—with other young people, communities, organizations, and institutions—that help turn ideas into collective action.

By working together, young people can amplify their voices, learn from one another, and strengthen their influence in decision-making spaces. Climate challenges are complex and interconnected, and addressing them requires collaboration, trust, and shared responsibility.



Jeto Xavier/LSM-TL/Dili/2025



7.1.NETWORKING

Definition

Your **network** is made up of the people you know – friends, family, colleagues, peers – as well as the people they know (your extended network). Networking sounds intimidating, but it simply means initiating and maintaining contact with individuals and organizations.

Networks exist and collaborate on different platforms and settings. Some networks thrive on online platforms, as they are a group of people based in different parts of your country or the world. In other cases, networks are groups of people who may physically collaborate on projects.

Networking can serve many purposes:



It can help you access opportunities you might not find on your own;



It can introduce you to people who can offer advice or provide a different perspective;



It can connect you with people who have varying skills.

You can build your network by attending events, meeting people through social media or other online platforms, or by connecting with people during your daily life.

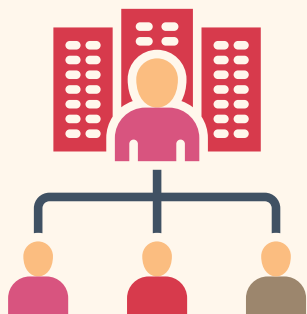


Here are some tips to get you started on networking:

Try making a 'network map.'

01

Put yourself at the center, and draw circles around yourself to help visualize all the groups that you intersect with in your life (for example, in your town or village, at your school, with any sports groups, religious groups, on social media, etc.).



02

Take some time to consider what you know about the people in these networks

You can look on social media for people who share your values, or look for events (local or online) where you can meet people. Or you can identify people within your current network who can connect you to others.

Look for existing youth communities or organizations you can join or collaborate with.

03

Consider what commitment or skill you can provide or work you can do to become actively involved in their networks.



04

Remember that networking can happen anytime!

It can be at a sporting event, a religious meeting place, a family gathering or really anywhere.

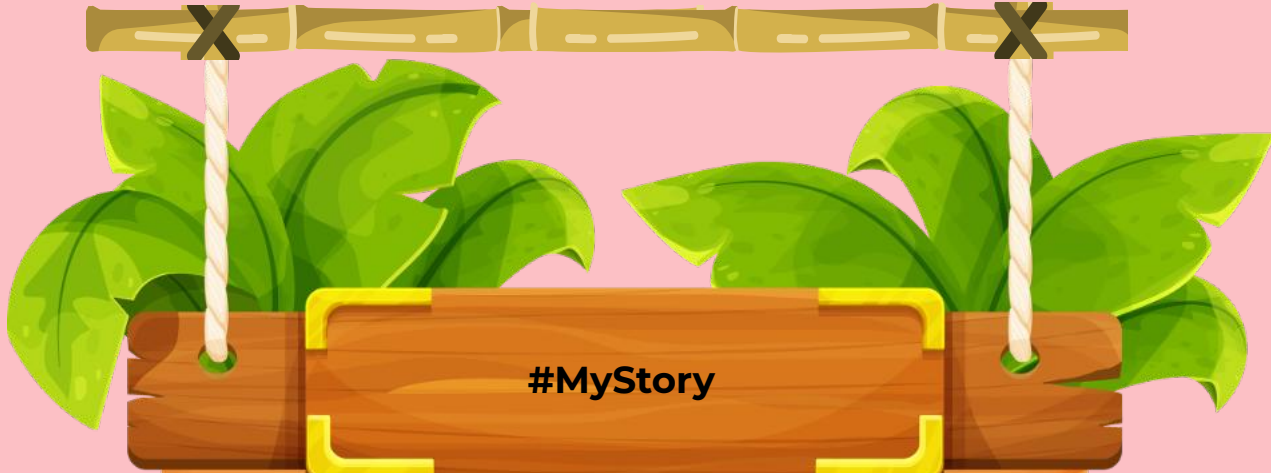
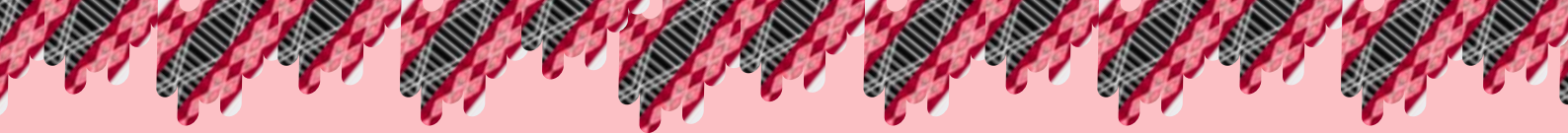
Consider how you will maintain your connections once you've made them.

05

We know that networking might feel stressful and uncomfortable, and many people get nervous when they think about the pressures of networking. Try to be easy on yourself.



Networking really means connecting and building relationships, and it takes time. Ultimately you want to build a network of people you can turn to for support – and who feel comfortable asking for your help, as well.



#MyStory

Hi, I'm **Lucrecia Nessi** from Oe-Cusse. I grew up loving nature—playing near the beach, hiking, and exploring forests—but I had never imagined joining an environmental movement. Moving to Dili for university changed that. I started volunteering in clean-ups, workshops, and community campaigns, and along the way, I met other young people who shared the same passion for the planet. Through these actions, I realized that every small effort is a connection. Volunteering opened doors to mentorships, regional projects, and even my first fellowship in Hawaii with YSEALI. I learned that you don't need a title or perfect skills to build a network—just show up, stay consistent, share your story, and commit to making a difference. That's how real trust and meaningful connections grow.





7.2. FOSTERING ALLYSHIP

Networking offers **new connections**, but much more benefit comes from genuinely building relationships and creating allies. Building a supportive group of allies is generally more deliberate and strategic (as compared to networking). Your allies are closer, trusted people around you who offer their support, assistance, advice, information, protection and even friendship. They supplement your skills and compensate for your weaknesses with their unique abilities and approaches and also can help you view situations from a different perspective. Your allies are there when you need to work through an idea, need emotional support or want someone to just pause and listen.

Note that here we use **'allies'** in the general sense – to mean a **group of supportive people**. Today, you may hear the term **'allyship'** commonly used in conversations regarding social justice, diversity and equity.

In this sense, allyship is used as a term for someone who makes the commitment and effort to recognize their privilege (based on gender, class, ethnicity, sexual identity, etc.) and work in solidarity with marginalized groups.

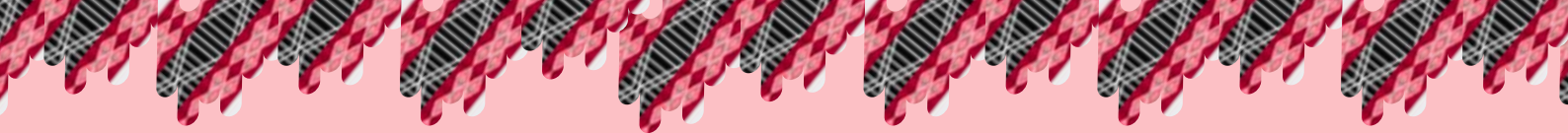


In many rural communities, influence comes through trust, relationships, and service—not titles. Elders, catechists, teachers, women leaders, and youth volunteers are often key allies.

Fostering allyship takes commitment and practice. You might find allies in younger people, peers or older people. If you work with people from different fields (like most of us do), gaining their respect and working well together will make you a better teammate.

Intergenerational dialogue brings together people of different ages to share their experiences and ideas about how to improve the community and address its challenges. There is great benefit to combining the wisdom of older people who have more life experiences with the views and voices of children and youth.





Whether you want to serve as someone's ally or are seeking support for your cause, consider the qualities that make a good ally – someone who:

-  Listens to and believes the people who are affected by an issue
-  Becomes aware of their own biases and works to eradicate them
-  Offers support but doesn't assume they know what's best
-  Provides their viewpoint but doesn't speak over others
-  Educates themselves about an issue or others' experiences
-  Works to make space for others, especially in places where others have been excluded

A strong ally for youth, for instance, values and respects young people, treats them as equal partners, and provides the support young people need to speak up and participate meaningfully in society.



Here are some youth groups in Timor-Leste focused on the environment that you might consider collaborating with.

No	Name of Group	Focus
1	Laudato Si' Movement de Timor-Leste (LSM-TL)	Climate change, environmental education, eco-spirituality, advocacy, reforestation, youth empowerment, campaigns
2	Sustainable Ocean Alliance Timor-Leste	Ocean ecosystems, coral reefs, research, data collection, conservation, advocacy
3	ESHANA - UNTL	Community outreach on environmental protection, forestry, eco-tourism, advocacy
4	Timor-Leste Matak no Azul	Digital content creation for environmental awareness, storytelling, and education
5	GreenGuardians Timor-Leste	Environmental and climate education, advocacy, community outreach
6	Tropas ba Ambiente Saudável	Waste management, reforestation, advocacy
7	Lenuk Tasi	Sea turtle conservation
8	Underwater Cinema	Snorkeling activities and Beach Clean-ups
9	Rotary Club of Dili	Community service, environmental education, clean-ups, reforestation

No	Name of Group	Focus
10	Feto Foinsa'e Sékulu-XXI (APFTL)	Climate Justice and finance, advocacy, research, community outreach
11	Juventude Hadomi Natureza	Community outreach in environmental protection, forestry, natural tourism, advocacy
12	Grupo Alteração Klimatika Universidade	Mangrove restoration
13	Konservasaun Flora Fauna	Flora and fauna conservation
14	RYLA Timor Lorosa'e	Community outreach and biodiversity protection
15	Youth Community Care	Environmental education, waste management, community outreach

Note: Most of these groups can be found on social media especially Facebook. You can search for them using their group names to learn more about their work and find ways to connect or collaborate.





8. PLANNING YOUR CLIMATE ACTION

You now have a good sense of the climate issues that matter to you and probably feel excited to take action. Before you jump in, it helps to have a climate action plan. You will use the information you have gathered, along with a few more details, **to create your plan.**

This is how you can **take action on climate change!** Sometimes people ask young people to start projects or initiatives, but it can be hard to know where to start. If you're not sure how to come up with an idea or put it into action, don't worry—here's a simple way to get started



Estorso Santana/LSM-TL/Dili/2025



8.1. CONSOLIDATING INFORMATION

Now is the time to look at all the information you gathered, start consolidating it and write it all down. Break your information into the following topic areas and think about the following questions:



Main problem or concern: Brief overview of the main problem

- What is the main problem?
- How does it affect the target population?
- Why is this issue important?

Context and Background: Overview of the factors leading to this situation and important considerations about the social and political environment around you.

- What engagement has already occurred around the issue?
- Who are the main decision makers and how can you best engage with them?
- What sensitivities should you consider when engaging with different people



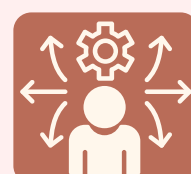
Possible allies, networks and youth platforms: Different people and groups you can collaborate with or learn from.

- Which peers can work with you at this early stage? What would this look like?
- Who will you need help or support from? What would this entail?



Possible opportunities and solutions: An overview of possibilities to address the situation.

- What are some ideas you have to bring about change?
- Are there any key events or upcoming opportunities that you can connect your advocacy to?
- How can you influence the decision-making process?

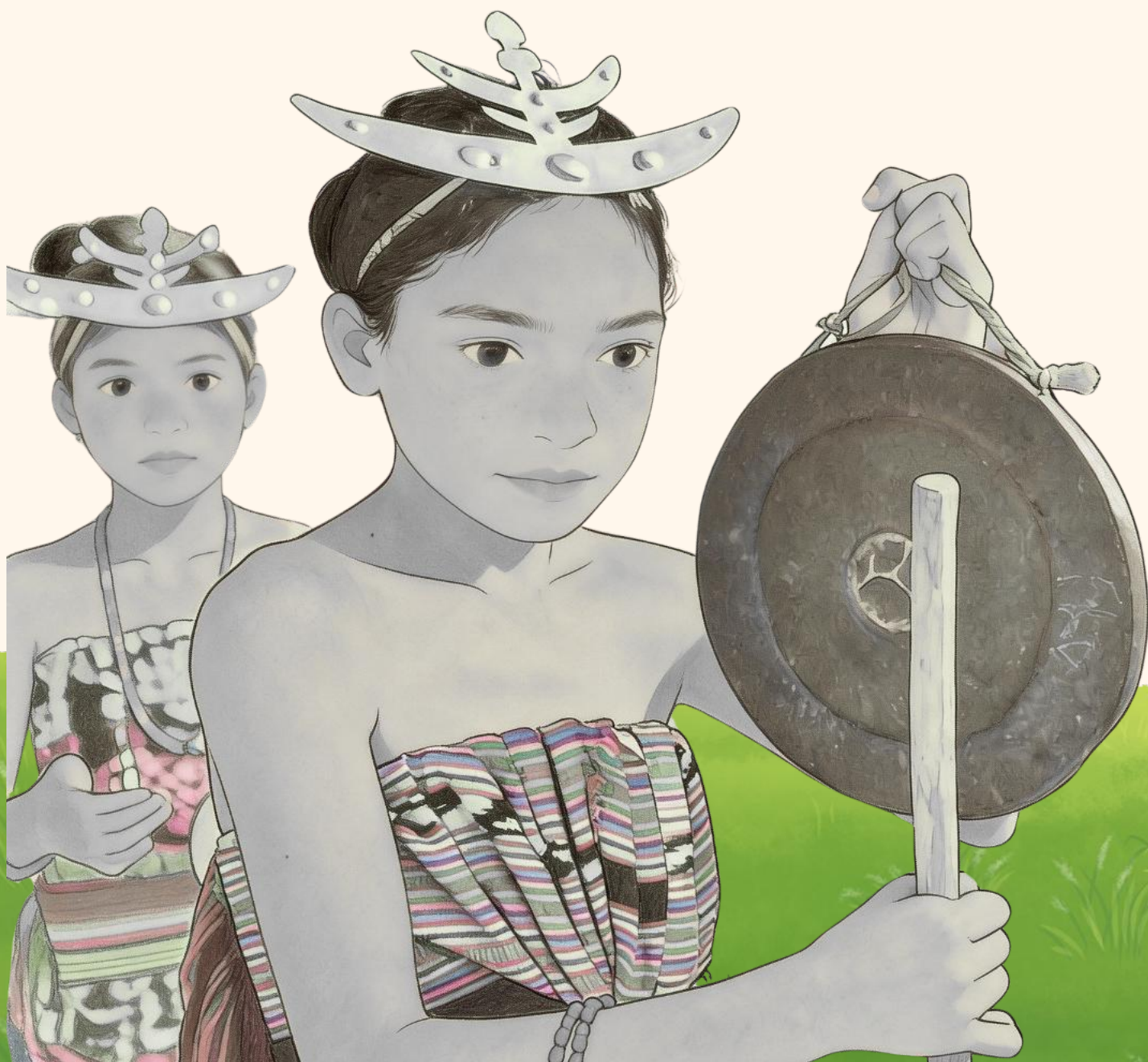


Key activities: Some of the main activities needed to achieve your goal, including the main actors who need to be involved.



- What is the best way to gain support for your cause, and how should you engage with people to encourage this?
- Will you need some kind of financial or human resources for your project?
- How can you secure the financial support this project needs?

At this stage, don't worry too much about writing well. The most important consideration is to consolidate your ideas and make sure you have a fairly good overview of the main components listed above. You may not have answers to all the questions but keep them in the back of your mind.





8.2. REACHING YOUR GOAL

Now that you have brainstormed and brought information together, it is important to have a clear long-term goal and an idea of how it can be reached – so you can plan how to get there!

To make this easier, you can put your ideas into an **“impact model.”** This means thinking about the change you want to achieve. Then, work backwards to see what resources, actions, and progress steps you need to reach your goal.

The following are questions to ask yourself:



What are your big picture *GOALS* or *IMPACT*?



What are your main *OUTCOMES* or the change you hope to see in the short term?



What are the direct *RESULTS* or *OUTPUTS*?

Outputs are the immediate results achieved through the activities you undertake. For example, this could be the number of people that attend a workshop or training session you organize.



What are the *ACTIVITIES* needed to achieve your outcomes (and also to support your longer-term impact)?



What are the **INPUTS** needed to implement your key activities?

These are the resources invested in the programme – for example, funding, training, supplies and human resources.

Your activities, outputs, outcomes and actions should include specific actions, strategies or implementation steps that will contribute to the realization of your long-term goals. These should be SMART, an acronym that stands for **specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and timely**. A SMART indicator considers all of these criteria to help you focus your efforts and increase the chances of achieving your impact.

On the next page, you can find an example of an impact model, with examples for each component. This example assumes a long-term goal of increasing youth participation in community climate action.







8.3. WRITING YOUR CLIMATE ACTION PLAN

With all the information you've gathered and a sense of the impact you want to make, you can now pull together a first draft of your climate action plan. **A climate action plan** is simply a tool to help you organize your ideas and actions in a clear and practical way. It can include different pieces of information, depending on what you find helpful.

Everyone organizes their work and ideas differently, so feel free to structure your plan in a way that works best for you.

If you're just starting your climate action journey, you might not yet be clear on every action or detail. That's completely normal! Your plan will evolve over time.

Example: Simple Climate Action Plan

Section	Example
Climate Issue	Plastic waste in my community
Why it matters to me	Plastic pollution affects beaches, marine life, and community health.
Goal	Raise awareness about plastic waste among students within 3 months
Planned Actions	• Organize a school discussion on plastic pollution • Create posters and social media content • Join or organize a beach clean-up
Who can support me	Friends, teachers, youth environmental groups
Timeline	March – May 2026

How I'll measure success

- Number of participants
- Social media engagement
- Cleaner school or beach areas

Next Steps

Review results, improve activities, and plan future actions





8.4. MONITORING YOUR ACTIVITIES

As you develop and put together your climate action plan, it's important to think about how you will **monitor your activities**.

Monitoring means regularly checking how your climate actions are going. It helps you see the effect of what you're doing and decide if you need to make any changes while your activities are happening.

Anyone can do good monitoring, and it's a great way to see what's working well and what could be improved so you can adjust your climate activities as needed. Monitoring lets you check how you're using your resources, the quality of your actions, and whether your activities are making an impact. It's important to stay open-minded and be ready to tweak your activities or solve problems as they come up.

For example, let's say your goal is to **increase tree planting in your community**. How would you know if you're on track? First, identify **markers of progress**—specific signs that show whether your actions are leading to your desired outcomes. Possible markers could include:

- The number of trees successfully planted and surviving after a few months
- Increased participation of youth in tree planting or environmental events
- More community members becoming aware of local climate issues
- Local authorities supporting or promoting green initiatives

These measurable markers help you track progress toward your goal. You can monitor them through simple activities like **surveys, attendance sheets, photos, or check-ins with participants**.

As mentioned earlier, it's important to plan how you will **monitor your climate action** before you start any activities. You can begin monitoring from **day one**: What was the situation in your community before you took action? Make sure to document this baseline.

Once you start implementing your activities, keep monitoring what's happening. This will help you see whether you're on track to reach your goals and whether your actions are creating the changes you hope for—or if you need to adjust your approach.

Monitoring involves regularly collecting different types of information or data. Choose your monitoring methods based on the markers of progress you identified earlier, such as participation numbers, survey results, or observations of changes in your community.

Once you've identified your markers of progress, you can plan how to monitor your outcomes (for example, an increase in the number of trees planted or youth participating in environmental activities) and collect data. Feel free to get creative in how you gather monitoring information!

Some ideas include:

- Taking photos or videos to show changes in your community or local environment over time
- Talking with community members to hear their perspectives and feedback
- Walking around your neighbourhood or school and taking notes on improvements or changes resulting from your activities

These simple methods help you track your progress and show the difference your climate actions are making.

Getting Started with Monitoring: Example Questions

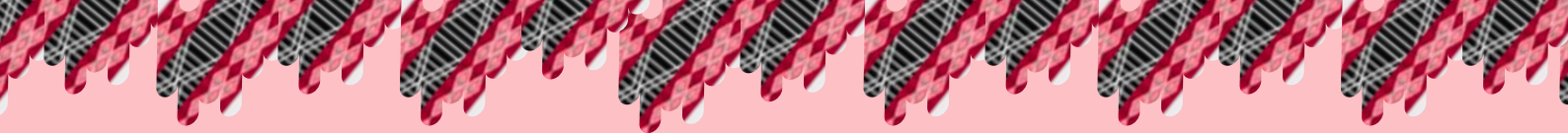
To help guide you, here are some questions and examples to spark your **monitoring thinking** using a climate-focused example. One example of each part of the impact model is shown to give you an idea of how to set up your own monitoring strategy.

Your monitoring plan can have multiple parts, but when you're just starting, **keep it simple and manageable**. Focus first on:

- Activities – What actions are you taking?
- Outputs – What immediate results do you see (e.g., number of trees planted, workshops held)?
- Outcomes – What short-term changes are happening as a result of your activities (e.g., more youth participating, greater community awareness about climate issues)?

This approach helps you track your progress without feeling overwhelmed and ensures you can adjust your plan as you learn and grow.

WHAT TO MEASURE?	HOW TO MEASURE?	HOW TO VERIFY?
INPUTS	Human resources: The number of youth volunteers, community leaders, or staff involved in climate activities	Count the number of people trained or actively participating in planning and implementing climate activities.
ACTIVITIES	Number of climate activities conducted (e.g., tree planting, clean-up campaigns, workshops).	Count the number of activities held over a certain period (week, month, or project duration).
OUTPUTS	Number of youth and community members who participated in climate activities.	Count the participants at each activity.
OUTCOMES	Percentage of participants who show increased awareness or behavior change regarding climate action (e.g., recycling more, planting trees, reducing waste).	Conduct short surveys or interviews with participants before and after the activities to measure changes in awareness or behavior.
IMPACT	Long-term environmental and community outcomes (e.g., number of trees surviving, cleaner public spaces, more youth actively engaged in climate initiatives).	Track community-level indicators, such as number of trees grown after one-year, reduced litter in targeted areas, or ongoing youth-led climate projects.



To make sure your climate action is making a real difference, it's important to regularly reflect and improve your activities. Here are some questions to guide you:

- **Reflect on your experience:** What has changed for you since you started? Have you learned anything that would change the activities you originally planned?
- **Check the context:** What social, environmental, or political factors affect your initiative?
- **Identify enablers and barriers:** What helps your work move forward, and what makes it harder?
- **Look at other initiatives:** Are there other community or youth climate activities happening nearby? Could they support or overlap with your project? Have you talked with their leaders to find ways to work together?

Quantitative data, which is objective, gets measured and conveyed with numbers and graphs; **qualitative data**, on the other hand, is subjective and descriptive, and focuses on a topic or item's characteristics as well as people's opinions. Both types of data can help your cause.



Youth Tip:

Use your notes to plan further research or shape your climate actions—whether individually, collectively, or systemically. Every insight helps you connect knowledge to action.

#MyStory

My name is **Ponciano da Costa de Jesus**, and I am from Manufahi. In Timor-Leste, climate threats such as floods, landslides, coastal erosion, drought, and environmental degradation affect daily life but many of these risks are not accurately reflected in existing maps. Vulnerable areas, roads, rivers, and the like are not updated or lost, which makes climate planning difficult.

And therefore, I started mapping using GIS and OpenStreetMap to make these realities visible. Through this process, I realized how closely linked climate impacts are to land use, deforestation, infrastructure, and human activities. Climate change is becoming a local, lived issue not just a global concept.

By engaging youth, community members, and local leaders, we combine technology with local knowledge to accurately improve data. Today, our maps support disaster risk reduction and environmental planning, demonstrating that technology and community action together can strengthen climate resilience.





9. PARTICIPATING IN CLIMATE ACTION EVENTS

Climate action events happen at many levels local, national, regional, and international. These include village meetings, school or church discussions, youth forums, workshops, consultations, exhibitions, and conferences. They bring together young people, communities, government, civil society, and other partners to share ideas, learn from each other, and shape climate solutions.

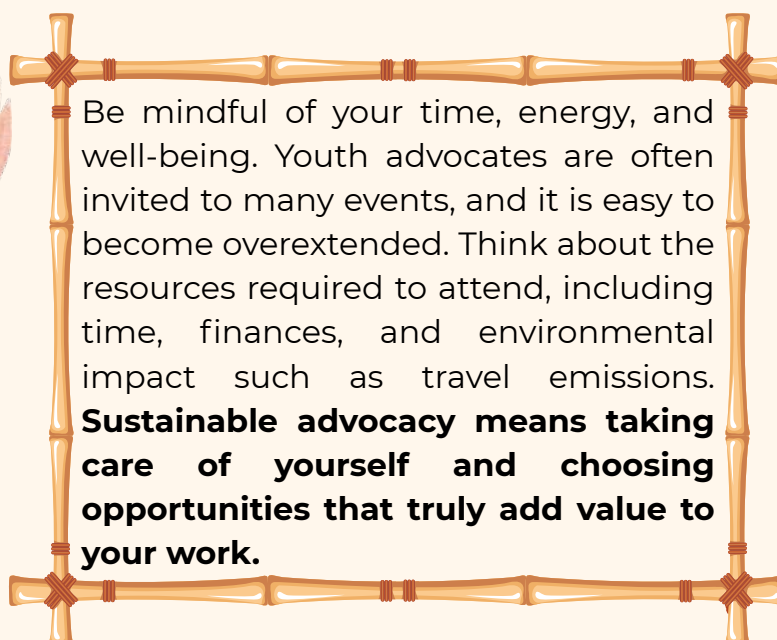
In **Timor-Leste**, many of these spaces take place in person, giving young people valuable opportunities to engage directly with decision-makers, community leaders, and fellow youth. Your participation whether speaking, listening, or supporting helps ensure youth voices are included in decisions that affect our future.

Choosing Events Mindfully

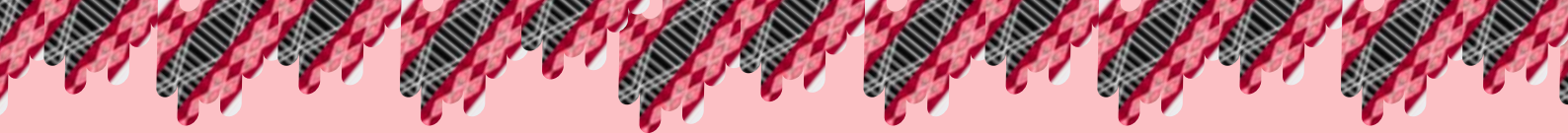
Not every event will be the right fit. Before joining, think about:

- How does this event connect to my climate issue?
- What do I want to learn or contribute?
- Is this a good use of my time and energy?

Being intentional helps you focus on opportunities that truly support your climate action journey.



Be mindful of your time, energy, and well-being. Youth advocates are often invited to many events, and it is easy to become overextended. Think about the resources required to attend, including time, finances, and environmental impact such as travel emissions. **Sustainable advocacy means taking care of yourself and choosing opportunities that truly add value to your work.**



Your Voice Matters

Many young people feel they don't belong in these spaces because of their age, background, or lack of formal experience. But your lived experience of climate impacts is valuable, and you don't need a title to take part. Show up with confidence, listen carefully, and share your perspective when the moment feels right.

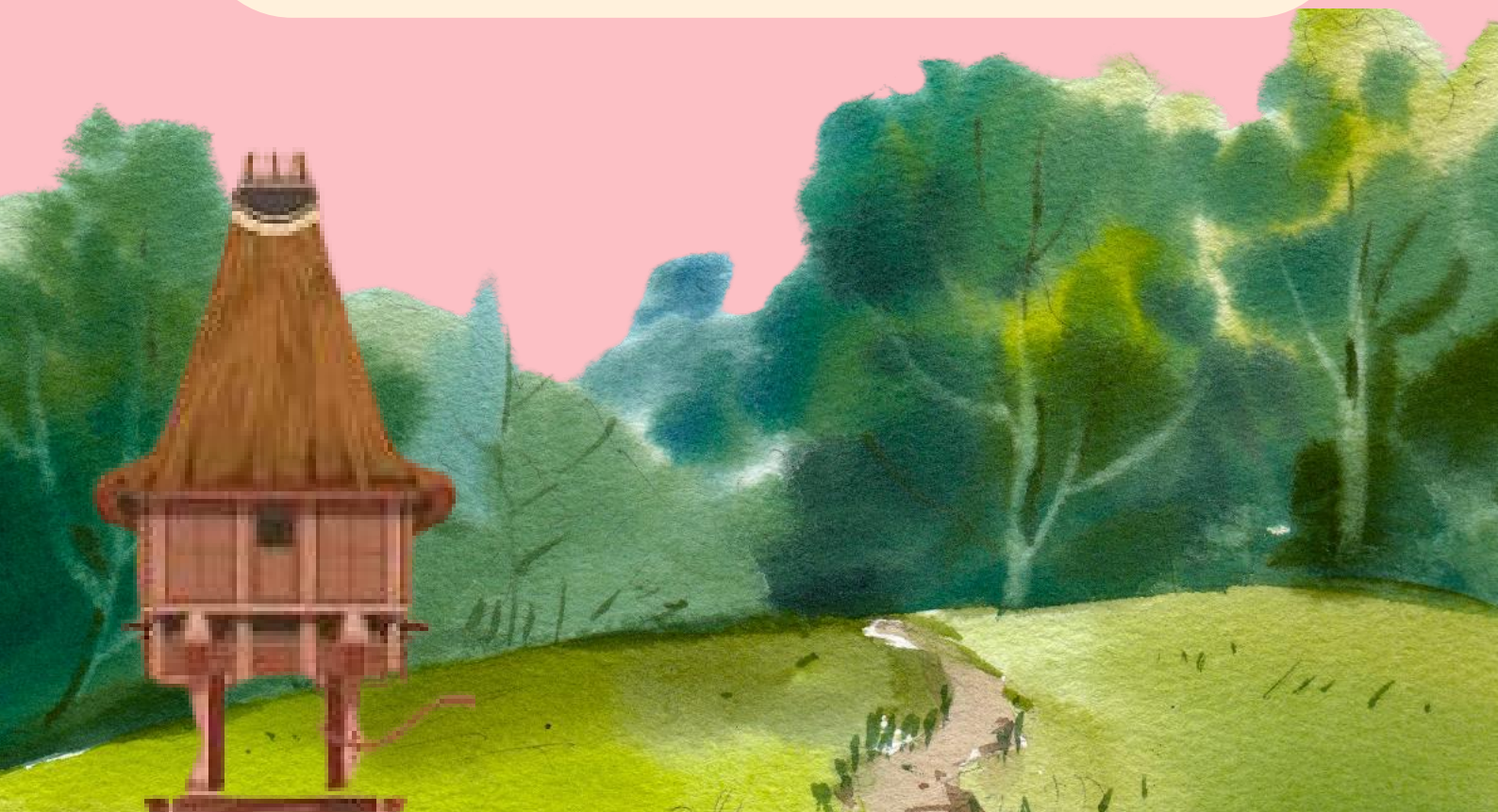
Participation may feel uncomfortable at first, but every experience helps build confidence, connections, and your role as a climate leader.

Meaningful vs. Token Participation

When joining events, reflect on these questions:

- Are youth voices being listened to?
- Are youth prepared and supported?
- Are youth safe and respected?
- Are expectations clear?

Meaningful participation empowers young people and leads to stronger, more inclusive climate solutions.



#MyStory

Hi, my name is **Isaura Barros**. I've joined many climate events because, with my background in International Relations and training as a Laudato Si' Animator, I see climate change not just as an environmental issue, but as a matter of global justice. I wanted to connect Timor-Leste's local realities with regional and global discussions and make sure youth voices from vulnerable countries like ours are heard.

Most of these events have been exciting and empowering. I've met young people from different countries, shared our challenges, and learned what others are doing to take action. The group discussions were especially meaningful, showing me how local experiences connect to national and global policies.

To other young people: don't worry if your field isn't about the environment—climate change affects everyone. These events are a great way to learn, connect with others, and find ways to make a difference both at home and globally.



LSM-TL/LCOY-TL/Dili/2025



9.1. ATTENDING AN EVENT



Finding Events

You can search for events on the internet and social media: following other activists or climate movements is one way to find out about events that might interest you. You can also visit the websites of organizations, leaders or influential people on the subject or follow them on social media to be aware of what they are sharing.

Some examples are Laudato Si' Movement de Timor-Leste (LSM-TL), LCOY Timor-Leste, Sustainable Ocean Alliance Timor-Leste, YOUNGO, UNICEF, UNFCCC, UNEP, UNDP, WWF and Greenpeace. If you do not have good internet access, you can also ask the authorities or other influential people in your community in person.

Each opportunity to engage is different. Events vary in terms of their purpose and setting, so how you prepare and the actions you take while attending will differ. Events can take place in person and online and can be anything from a 30-minute conversation to a daylong engagement. Here are some examples:

1. Meeting

- This can be an engagement between two people or a group of people.
- Meetings can be organized to discuss an issue or make a decision in a formal or informal setting.

2. Conference

- Conferences are larger, more specific meetings, where participants come together to present, debate and discuss a particular issue or topic.
- Different conferences can have different outcomes, such as knowledge sharing, creating a shared document or communiqué or reaching some kind of agreement as a group.

3. Training / Workshop

- Trainings aim to equip participants with new skills and information relating to a specific topic.
- These engagements can vary in size and length, as well as level of interactivity.



Preparing to Attend an Event

Before you go to an event, it's helpful to get ready so you can make the most of it. Here's how:

1. Learn about the event

- Who is organizing it?
- Where and how will it happen (in person or online)?
- Why is the event being held?
- Who will be there (youth, government officials, community leaders, organizations)?
- What activities are planned (discussions, presentations, consultations)?

2. Research the topic

- What issues or themes will be discussed?
- Are there any important documents, policies, or background materials to check out?
- What information will help you feel prepared and confident?

3. Know your role

- Will you just observe, or will you speak and share your ideas?
- Are you attending as yourself or representing a group or community?
- What do you want to contribute, and what do you hope to learn?

4. Organize what you need

- Do you need to pay, travel, or arrange transport?
- Are there scholarships, travel support, or stipends available?
- Do you need someone to accompany you or help you attend?

Tip: Try to find out if other youth will be there. Knowing someone can make new spaces less intimidating and more fun. You can also invite friends to join—more youth voices make a stronger impact!



Participating During an Event

So, you're at the event—now what? Here's how to make the most of it:

- 1 **Be confident and engage:** Speak up, ask questions, share your ideas, or just listen carefully. Every perspective counts.
- 2 **Share your experiences:** Talk about challenges, solutions, and ideas. People want to hear them!
- 3 **Use your notes:** Bring your research or advocacy work to support your points.
- 4 **Listen and take notes:** Capture ideas, insights, or concepts to use later.
- 5 **Network:** Meet other participants, peers, leaders, and authorities. For virtual events, use chat rooms, discussion spaces, or follow up online.
- 6 **Collaborate and exchange ideas:** Talk to others, share solutions, and explore ways to work together.
- 7 **Find other youth:** Connecting with peers can make the event feel more comfortable and help you learn from each other.
- 8 **Take a notebook:** Write down what interests you, what you want to learn more about, and the people you meet. Check recordings later if you miss something.
- 9 **Make it easy to stay in touch:** Have QR codes or social media info ready so others can connect with you quickly.
- 10 **Reflect afterward:** Think about what you learned—about yourself, your issue, the process, and the people you met. Use these lessons in your future work!



9.2. ATTENDING THE CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES (COP)

Not many young people get the chance to travel and attend a COP. Some join as part of their country's official delegation, while others attend through civil society or youth organizations. Even if you don't travel, there are still many ways to influence what is discussed at the COP from your own country.



Before the COP: How to Influence the Agenda



Make a simple plan

- Decide what message you want to share;
- Be clear about your goal
- Identify who you want to talk to (decision makers, leaders, media, youth groups);
- Choose how you will share your message (meetings, social media, events).



Push for youth inclusion

- Ask for youth to be included in national delegations;
- Reach out to your country's climate focal point or youth desk;
- Explain why youth voices matter and how they can strengthen climate action.



Learn how your country prepares for COP

- Follow national climate discussions and consultations;
- Join National Climate Change Working Groups or consultation;
- Share your views during consultations—your input matters.



Understand your country's climate position

- Check what your government plans to raise at the COP;
- Join pre-COP workshops or youth discussions;
- Speak up about issues that matter to young people.



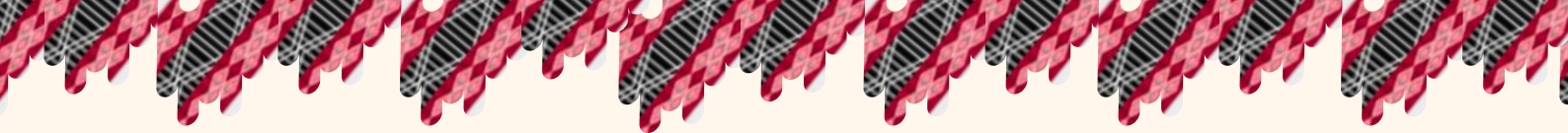
Use social media

- Talk about COP topics online using hashtags;
- Share youth perspectives, local stories, and community impacts;
- Follow what was discussed at the last COP to stay informed.



Join YOUNGO spaces

- YOUNGO is the official youth group under the UN climate process;
- Youth voices shared here can influence discussions at the COP;
- You can join through Local Conferences of Youth (LCOYs) or the Youth Conference (COY).



YOUNGO is the children and youth representation at the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. YOUNGO has the Local Conferences of Youth (LCOYs), which are organized by young people in the different countries, and a Youth Conference (COY) that takes place prior to the COP to coordinate young people's voices and participation.

Attending the COP

Join a delegation

- You may attend as part of your country's delegation or through an organization
- Reach out to the UNFCCC national focal point or climate representatives
- Some UN agencies and NGOs also support youth participation

Plan your budget

- COP travel can be expensive, so plan early
- Look for scholarships, grants, or organizational support
- Ask organizers if financial support is available

Focus on key topics

- Each COP has priority themes—choose one or two to focus on
- You don't need to know everything, just what matters most to you

Be clear about your role

- Ask what is expected from you
- Set personal goals for what you want to achieve

Create your own agenda

- Many sessions happen at the same time
- Pick the ones that match your interests
- Check daily updates, as schedules can change

Speak up and connect

- Share your ideas during side events and discussions
- Talk to other young people, experts, and decision makers
- Exchange contacts and follow up after the COP

Learn as you observe

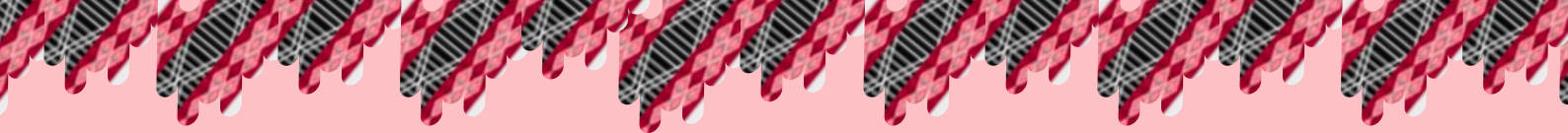
- Some spaces are for negotiations, others for sharing experiences
- Understanding the difference helps you engage better

Take notes

- Write down key ideas, people you meet, and questions
- This helps you reflect and take action later

Take care of yourself

- COPs can be intense and overwhelming
- Take breaks when you need them—it's okay
- Your well-being matters



Remember

Do not underestimate yourself. Young people often think they lack the skills or abilities to participate, but your experiences and ideas are important, and they are enough for you to take part.





9.3. COMMUNICATING WHAT YOU KNOW AND RAISING AWARENESS

To keep climate action moving, share what you know. Tell your story and help others understand why your cause matters and why action is needed. Raising awareness doesn't have to be big; it can start with a class discussion, a small-group talk, or an online post, and grow into a larger campaign.

Climate stories can be shared through spoken stories, songs, poems, drawings, radio discussions, or short videos—not only written text.

Good awareness-raising means turning what you've learned into messages people can easily understand and connect with. To inspire action, think about who you are talking to and communicate in ways that fit their daily lives, culture, values, and beliefs so they can see how climate change affects them.

Ask yourself:

- What is important to the people you want to reach?
- What do people need to hear to realize the importance of this issue?
- Who do they need to hear this message from?
- How do you want them to get involved?
- What kind of language seems most appropriate?

Telling a Powerful Climate Story

Stories help people feel, understand, and care. Think about moments that shaped you—stories from your family, something you experienced in your community, a memory from childhood, or a moment that made you realize why climate action matters.

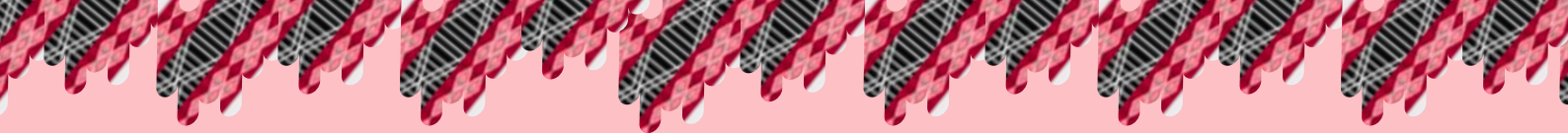
Strong stories connect emotions with meaning. They help people see climate change not just as a problem, but as part of our lives, culture, and future.

A good advocacy story usually:

- Has a clear beginning, middle, and end
- Is simple, clear, and straight to the point
- Connects to issues people care about
- Shares something personal and real
- Clearly invites people to take action

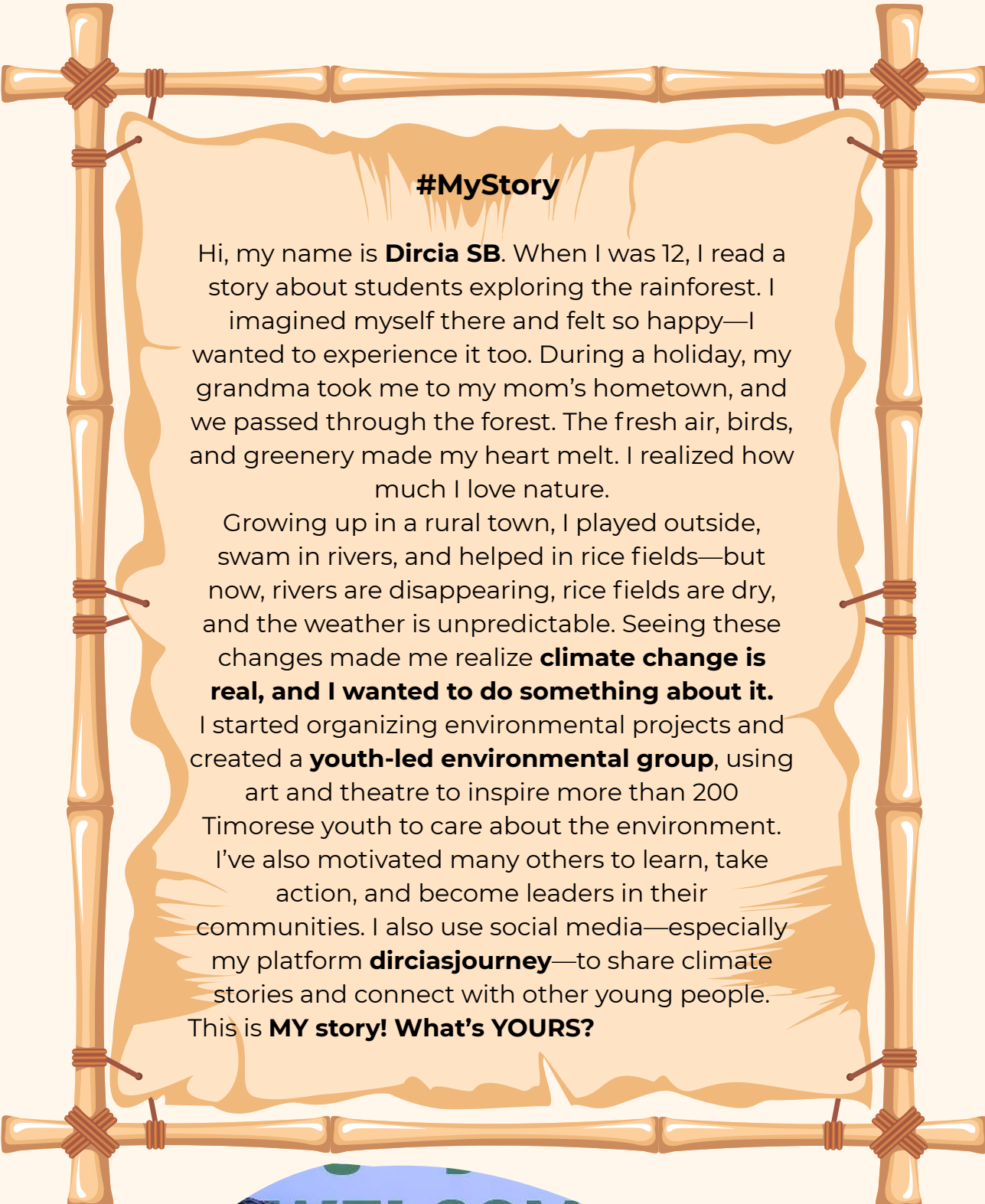
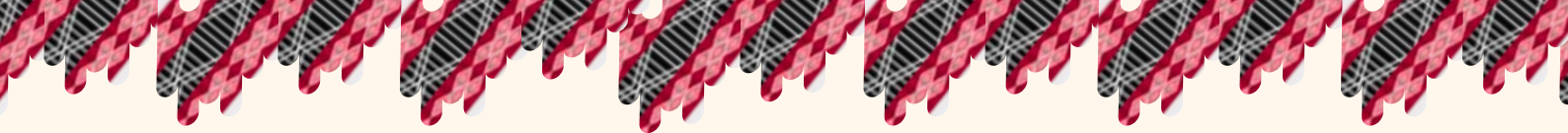


Try to keep your tone respectful and constructive. You are starting a conversation, not an argument.



Once you know your audience and your story, choose how to share it—through videos, art, music, talks, group discussions, or social media. Pick what feels natural to you and fits your community. Always think about the change you want to inspire and how your message can help people care, reflect, and take action.





#MyStory

Hi, my name is **Dircia SB**. When I was 12, I read a story about students exploring the rainforest. I imagined myself there and felt so happy—I wanted to experience it too. During a holiday, my grandma took me to my mom's hometown, and we passed through the forest. The fresh air, birds, and greenery made my heart melt. I realized how much I love nature.

Growing up in a rural town, I played outside, swam in rivers, and helped in rice fields—but now, rivers are disappearing, rice fields are dry, and the weather is unpredictable. Seeing these changes made me realize **climate change is real, and I wanted to do something about it**. I started organizing environmental projects and created a **youth-led environmental group**, using art and theatre to inspire more than 200 Timorese youth to care about the environment. I've also motivated many others to learn, take action, and become leaders in their communities. I also use social media—especially my platform **dirciasjourney**—to share climate stories and connect with other young people. This is **MY story! What's YOURS?**





9.4. ORGANIZING A CLIMATE EVENT

You can organize events to **move your climate goals forward**. Events are a great way to bring together youth to share ideas, create proposals, take action, and learn from each other. In Timor-Leste, this could be a village discussion, school or church activity, youth workshop, or community dialogue with leaders, elders, or government representatives.

Events can be **small and simple or larger like youth forums or Local Conference of Youth (LCOY)**. Online events are also a good way to connect with youth from other areas or countries.

Here are some tips for before, during, and after your event:



Before the Event

- **Form a team:** Work with other youth, assign roles, and build a diverse group. Include voices that are often left out.
- **Set goals and plan:** Decide your objectives, audience, and expected outcomes. Choose the right activities.
- **Set a budget:** Think about venue, transport, materials, and support. Look for funding or partners.
- **Build partnerships:** Invite NGOs, community leaders, or organizations for support.
- **Be creative:** Use ideas that fit your community and problem. Make the event original.
- **Make it inclusive:** Consider accessibility, finances, or language support.
- **Promote it:** Use social media, community spaces, or local leaders to invite participants.



During the Event

- **Engage participants:** Use icebreakers, quizzes, or interactive activities to build trust.
- **Make it participatory:** Include small group discussions or breakout rooms. Encourage voluntary participation.
- **Livestream and share:** Post updates online or create a hashtag.
- **Document everything:** Take notes, record discussions, and collect ideas.



After the Event

- **Organize notes and data:** Track attendees and feedback.
- **Prepare a report:** Summarize key points, proposals, and lessons learned.
- **Plan next actions:** Turn event outcomes into concrete steps.
- **Share results:** Post on social media, write press releases, or send to partners.
- **Recognize participants:** Give certificates, thank-you notes, or public acknowledgments.

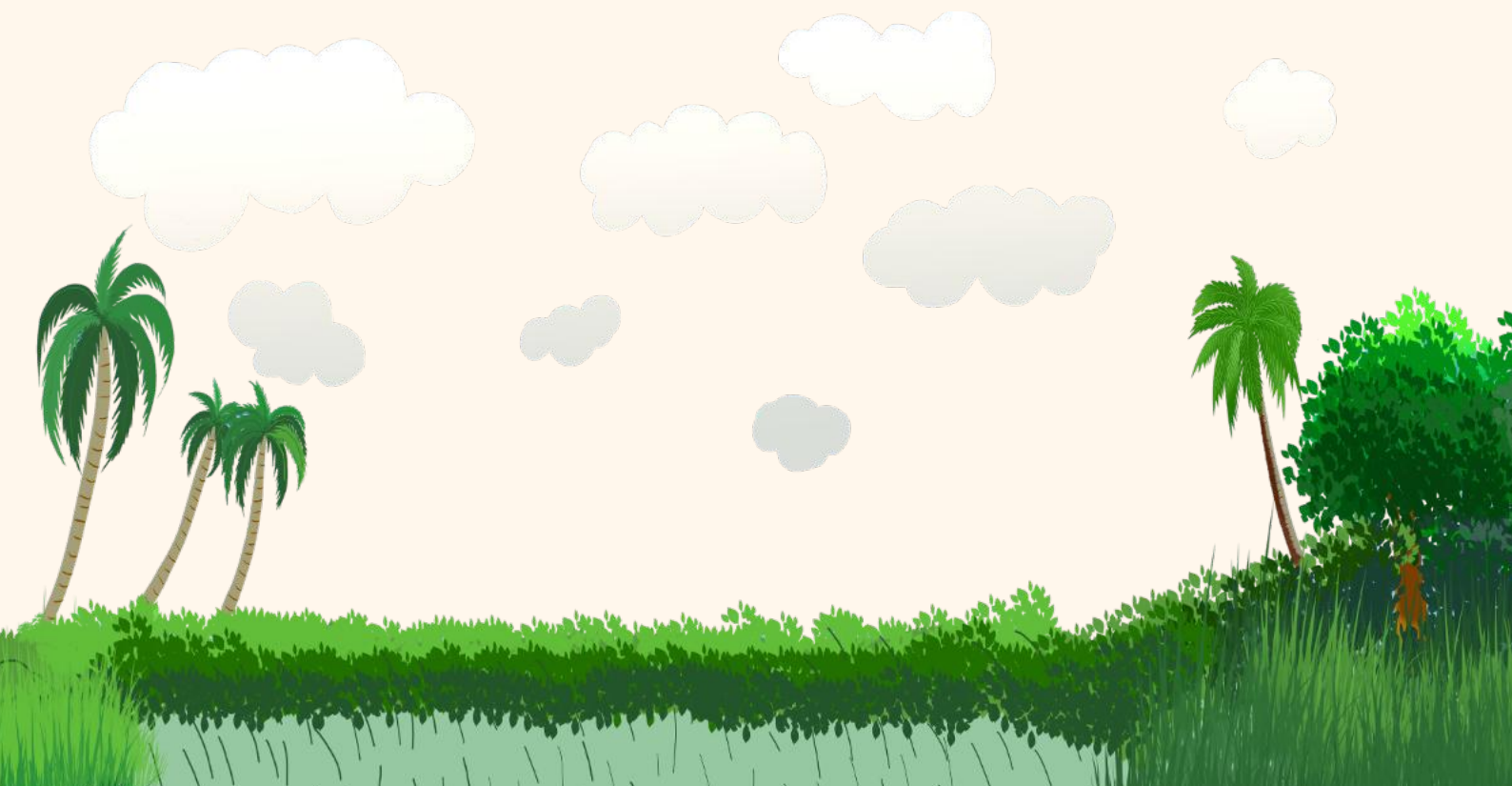


Accessibility Tip

When organizing climate action activities or events, think about accessibility from the start.

- Is the space physically accessible?
- Can information be shared verbally, visually, or in writing?
- Are roles flexible so everyone can participate meaningfully?

Inclusive planning strengthens climate action for everyone.



#MyStory

Hi, my name is **Jose (Jeto) Xavier**, and I had the amazing opportunity to lead LCOY Timor-Leste 2025. Organizing this event was a huge milestone in my volunteer journey. It taught me how to plan and manage activities, connect with experts, and learn about important climate topics like adaptation, mitigation, loss and damage, and climate finance.

Leading LCOY also helped me build a network with other youth groups, stakeholders, and donors, which was a big boost for my personal and professional growth.

LCOY-TL became a friendly and knowledge-rich space where youth could actively participate in climate action. I loved seeing participants take responsibility, share ideas, and develop their national youth statements, making sure their voices were heard both nationally and globally.

When my team and I successfully organized the event, I felt proud to contribute to my community and fellow youth. This experience showed me that with teamwork, commitment, and creativity, young people can make a real difference in climate action.





9.5. PARTICIPATING IN CLIMATE CHANGE PANELS

More and more young people are joining **climate panels**, which is great! Panels are spaces to **share your experiences, show your solutions, and learn from others**. They bring together people from different sectors and regions, spark new ideas, and inspire action. Virtual panels make it easier for youth from remote areas to join too.



Before the Panel

- **Ask questions:** Make sure you understand the topic, audience, other panelists, and logistics.
- **Apply if you can:** Some panels let you apply to be a speaker—grab the opportunity!
- **Give others a chance:** If you've already spoken at other panels, consider letting someone else participate.
- **Check diversity:** Panels should include different voices—youth, gender, communities. Suggest improvements if needed.
- **Prepare your points:** Research the topic, reflect on your experiences, and write key messages.
- **Practice:** Speak in front of friends, family, or a mirror. Practice answering questions too.
- **Know the panel:** Learn who the other panelists are and how the event will run, especially if online.

Tip: Structure answers like this:

1. **Start with your main point** – be clear and concise.
2. **Explain or give context** – share relevant facts, examples, or research.
3. **Reflect personally** – link the answer to your experiences or local context.
4. **End with a takeaway** – leave a clear message for the audience.



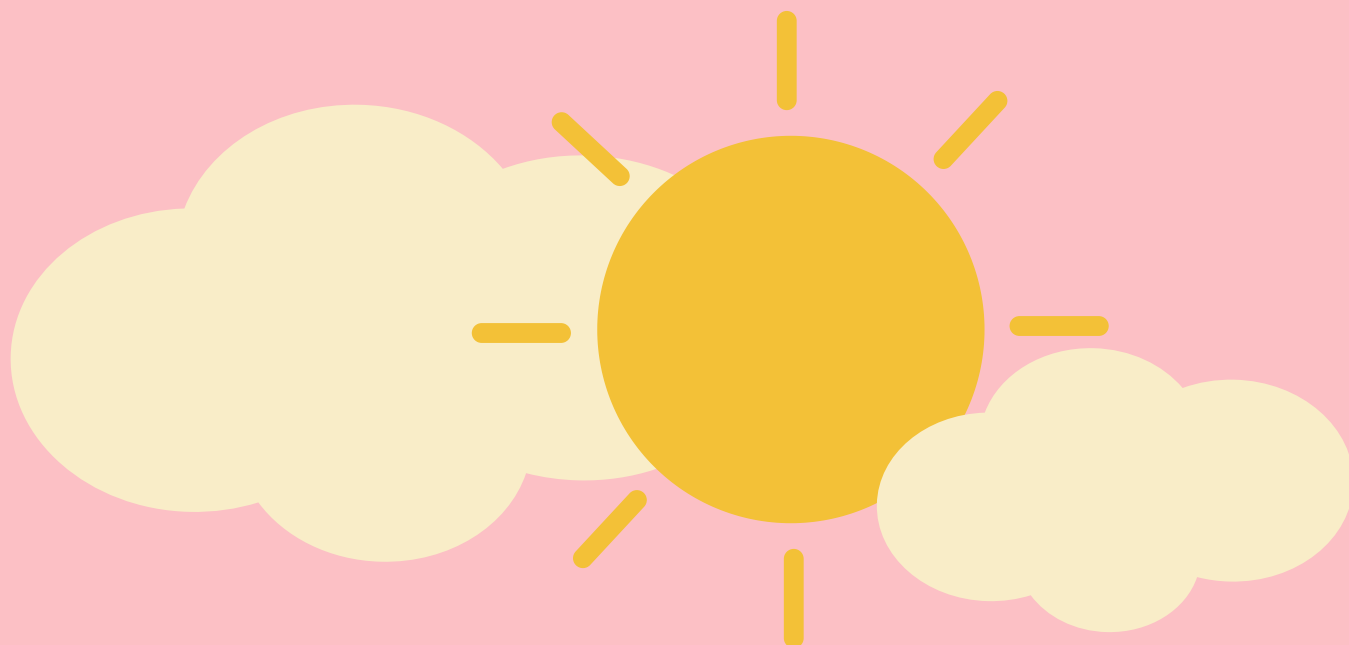
During the Panel

- **Leave a strong message:** Balance facts with your story or passion.
- **Listen and take notes:** You can refer to others' points and make your answers richer.
- **Answer carefully:** Take your time and respond only to questions you feel confident about.



After the Panel

- **Connect with others:** Exchange contacts with panelists or audience members. This can help you **build networks and start joint actions.**



#MyStory

Hi, I'm **Amandina**! I'd like to join local panels because climate change doesn't just affect people it affects the whole planet. When nature suffers, we all feel it. I wanted to speak up for climate justice and feminism and make sure our voices and the community's ideas are heard.

Before a panel, I make sure I really understand the issues and think about how to bring people together, not just talk. When I share my thoughts, I speak with empathy and empowerment, knowing I'm representing more than just myself.

For me, the best panels are participatory, where everyone feels included, respected, and responsible for action. Through these experiences, I've grown more confident, strengthened my advocacy skills, and learned that shared dialogue can inspire real change.



Remember: It is normal to be nervous about participating in a panel. The main thing is to take advantage of the opportunities and get your message about climate action across. It will become easier and easier to participate in panels with practice.



9.6. PARTICIPATING IN MEETINGS WITH LOCAL, NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL AUTHORITIES

As a young climate advocate, you may get the chance to join meetings with decision-makers in your community, across Timor-Leste, or even internationally. These spaces are where real decisions are made, so it's important to be prepared and confident.



Before the Meeting

- **Set clear goals:** Know what you want to achieve. For example, you might advocate for a new policy, action plan, or community program.
- **Plan ahead:** If you organize the meeting, clearly explain the purpose, topics, and expected outcomes. Invite decision-makers through emails, official letters, social media, or youth networks.
- **Ask questions if invited:** Find out why you're attending, who else will be there, and if there are any costs or logistical needs.
- **Boost your skills:** Practice your communication and negotiation skills with support from mentors, teachers, or fellow youth.



During the Meeting

- **Introduce yourself:** Say who you are, where you're from, who you represent, and briefly share your work or group's efforts.
- **Listen and take notes:** Respect other opinions and focus on common points instead of conflict.
- **Negotiate and collaborate:** Be clear about what you want, offer what you can contribute, and be patient—change takes time.
- **Plan follow-up actions:** Exchange contacts and set ways to stay in touch, like email or WhatsApp.



After the Meeting

- **Write a report:** Summarize what was discussed and any agreements made, and share it with attendees and your group.
- **Follow up with youth:** Meet with other young people to plan next steps and make sure the agreements move forward.





9.7. PARTICIPATING IN CONSULTATIONS AND REVIEWS OF CLIMATE POLICIES AND TOOLS

Climate policies and tools guide how countries respond to climate change, including programs that affect local communities. In Timor-Leste, young people's voices are important to make sure these policies reflect real needs, protect rights, and respond to local realities.

You can get involved by reviewing key national documents like the Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC), National Adaptation Plan (NAP), Technology Needs Assessment (TNA), or other strategies. Your ideas help make these policies more inclusive, practical, and connected to what youth and communities actually experience.



Before the Consultation

- **Ask questions:** Make sure you understand the purpose of the consultation, the expected outcome, and who will be involved.
- **Read the materials:** Look at draft or final versions of the policy or tool. Focus on the table of contents and summary if it's long.
- **Learn from others:** Check how similar policies are implemented in Timor-Leste or other countries.
- **Take notes:** Write down comments, questions, and ideas you might want to share.



During the Review

- **Work with other youth:** Share experiences and build confidence.
- **Use your experience:** Include your own stories or community observations. Represent the voices of young people.
- **Spot strengths and gaps:** Suggest practical ways to improve the policy or tool. Check if it is truly inclusive.
- **Offer solutions:** Give ideas for mitigation, adaptation, and ways to reach communities.
- **Keep language simple:** Make your suggestions clear, inclusive, and inspiring.



After the Consultation

- **Follow up:** Ask for the final document to see if your input was considered.
- **Stay involved:** Partner with youth groups or others to help monitor and implement the policy.



9.8. ORGANIZING AND PARTICIPATING IN CAMPAIGNS

Campaigns are a powerful way to raise awareness about climate change and get people, including leaders, to take action. They can be big or small, online or in your community, and can include things like clean-up drives, social media challenges, or awareness events.



Before the Campaign

- **Set your goal:** Know what you want to achieve and why. For example, promoting a climate law is different from a clean-up campaign.
- **Check for existing campaigns:** You can join forces with other groups instead of repeating the same work.
- **Ask questions if invited:** Make sure you understand your role and who else is participating.
- **Start your own campaign if needed:** Decide the type of campaign and who you want to reach.
- **Build a team:** Invite other youth with different skills and backgrounds. Include everyone fairly, and aim for gender balance.
- **Choose your message:** Keep it simple and clear—who you are, what you want, and why it matters.
- **Find allies:** Work with local organizations or leaders who can support your campaign.
- **Plan practical actions:** Make it easy for people to join in.
- **Get support or training:** Learn skills like public speaking or organizing from other youth leaders or groups.



During the Campaign

- **Share your message:** Make sure people know the goal of your campaign.
- **Spread the word:** Use social media, posters, or community channels.
- **Invite the press:** Let journalists cover your activities.
- **Be creative:** Use art, music, or videos to make your campaign stand out.



After the Campaign

- **Write a report:** Include your actions, results, and lessons learned.
- **Plan next steps:** Think about what comes next to grow your impact.
- **Expand your network:** Connect with more groups and people to amplify your cause.

#MyStory

Hi, I'm **Elizabeth (Micky) Ximenes**. In 2021, I led the "Healthy Planet, Healthy People " petition in Timor-Leste, inspired by Pope Francis' Laudato Si' teachings on caring for our common home.

I invited Laudato Si' Animators, students, and parish members to join, showing them that signing a petition isn't just paperwork, it's a way to live our faith through action for justice and care for creation.

By the end, we gathered over 2,000 signatures across four municipalities: Dili, Baucau, Ainaro, and Lautém. This petition helped send a message to world leaders, urging them to take bold action on climate and ecological justice, especially during a year of global meetings and the ongoing pandemic.

Through this campaign, I realized that small actions like signing a petition can amplify youth voices, connect communities, and contribute to global change.





9.9. PARTICIPATING IN ADVOCACY OR LOBBYING FOR CLIMATE ACTION

Advocacy and lobbying are powerful ways to **make your voice heard** and influence decisions on climate change. Lobbying means taking action to influence laws, policies, or decisions—but it must always be **peaceful, ethical, and based on facts**.



Before

- **Set your goal:** Be clear about what you want to achieve. For example, you might ask your local government to create a climate adaptation plan.
- **Know your audience:** Find out who makes the decisions and learn about them. See if you share common interests or concerns.
- **Understand the context:** Know where decisions are made, in local government, national parliament, or ministries, and who might support or resist your ideas.
- **Coordinate with others:** Check whether similar lobbying efforts are already underway and join forces rather than starting alone.
- **Plan your activities:** Decide what actions you will take, such as meetings, letters, social media campaigns, or peaceful demonstrations, and assign responsibilities.



During

- **Take action respectfully:** Follow your plan but stay flexible and adapt if needed.
- **Share information:** Provide decision makers with facts, videos, or documents to help them understand the issue.
- **Raise awareness:** Organize sessions or discussions to explain why your cause matters and involve others.



After

- **Say thanks:** Send a note to decision makers thanking them and reminding them of next steps.
- **Follow up:** Keep track of their actions through media, emails, or social networks.
- **Connect with others:** Join other networks or advocacy spaces to strengthen your impact.



9.10. ENGAGING ON DIGITAL PLATFORMS

Digital platforms and social media are **powerful tools** to share ideas, raise awareness, and get support for your climate cause. With mobile phones and the internet, you can reach people locally and globally, learn from others, and build networks with young people around the world.



How to use digital platforms for climate advocacy:

- **Create a presence:** Set up social media accounts for your cause. Share posts, photos, videos, memes, or music that are true, inspiring, and easy to understand.
- **Plan your content:** Post regularly and creatively. Focus on meaningful engagement rather than just followers. 100 active followers are better than 10,000 who don't engage.
- **Monitor online conversations:** Research hashtags and discussions to understand what people are saying about your issue.
- **Run a digital campaign:** Use social media to spread messages, encourage action, or organize virtual events.
- **Collaborate:** Team up with other organizations, youth groups, or influencers to amplify your message.
- **Go live:** Use live videos to show climate action in real-time, like clean-ups or community projects.
- **Create online petitions:** Ask for change and gather signatures to show support to leaders or organizations.
- **Use data:** Share facts and evidence to strengthen your cause, e.g., air quality results from your community.
- **Fundraise online:** Use crowdfunding to support your activities. Be clear and transparent about how funds will be used.



Staying safe online:

- Use strong passwords and protect your accounts.
- Stay respectful online, even when others disagree.
- Know your country's social media laws.
- Get consent before sharing others' photos or information.
- Protect personal info don't overshare about your life.
- Take breaks from social media to protect your mental health.

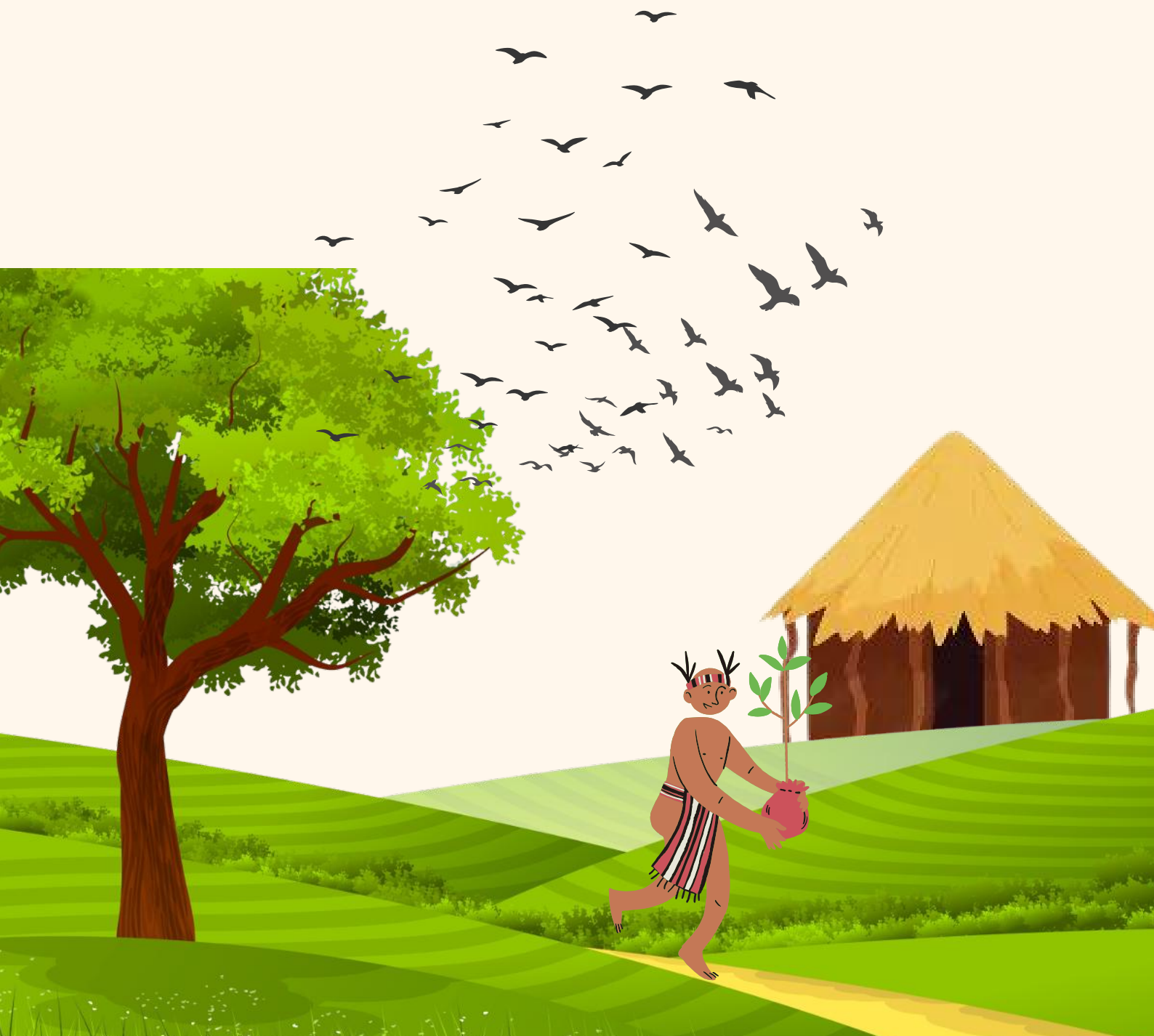




Dealing with online harassment:

- Stay calm and don't argue with trolls.
- Express that their behaviour is not okay.
- Ask for help from someone you trust.
- Report harassment on social media platforms.
- Disconnect if online activity is affecting your well-being.

Remember: Your safety and mental health come first. Thoughtful, responsible online engagement makes your climate advocacy stronger and more effective.





10 . FEELING STUCK

Feeling stuck or unmotivated? It's normal!

At times in your climate action journey, you might feel lost, confused, or tired. Don't worry this happens to everyone. Often, these moments teach you the most and help you grow. Here's how to get back on track:



1 Get support

Talk to someone you trust a friend, family member, teacher, mentor, or fellow youth leader. Sharing your thoughts and ideas can help you feel encouraged and less stressed.



2 Remember you're not alone

It can feel like you're the only one taking action, but young people in Timor-Leste and around the world are facing the same challenges. Learn from their stories, connect with others, and find inspiration from how they overcome difficulties.



3 Don't do everything alone

Leading a project is exciting, but you don't have to do it all yourself. Build a small team, share tasks, and take care of your energy. Everyone has different skills—working together makes your impact stronger.



4 Use available resources

Many tools, organizations, and networks can support your climate action. Reach out to youth groups, environmental organizations, or online communities. Collaborating with others can give you new ideas, energy, and motivation

Have a mentor ★

It's very helpful to have a mentor, someone you feel comfortable sharing with. A mentor can be older or even younger, as long as they have experience or understanding of what you're doing. They can guide you, remind you of your achievements, and help you see how far you've come.



11. MAINTAINING MENTAL WELLNESS

Working on climate issues is exciting and meaningful, but it can also be tiring and stressful. Many young people feel eco-anxiety (worry about climate change), frustration, guilt, fatigue, or loss of motivation. Feeling disappointed or overwhelmed is normal you are not alone.

Climate anxiety or eco-anxiety is the worry, fear, or distress some people feel because of climate change and environmental harm.

Everyone experiences these feelings differently. Some days feel strong and energized, others heavy. What matters is noticing your feelings and knowing there are ways to cope and get support. Caring for yourself is just as important as caring for the planet it helps you stay strong and continue your work



1. Recognize and Accept Your Feelings

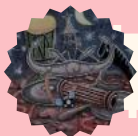
Check in with yourself regularly:

- What emotions did I feel today?
- What were the main feelings this week?
- What helped me feel better when I was stressed?

All feelings are valid. Feeling tired or anxious doesn't mean you're weak; facing your feelings takes courage.

Try to reframe negative thoughts:

"Having difficult feelings makes me weak"		Facing my feelings shows strength	
"My feelings are not important"		My feelings matter	
"I must always stay positive"		It's okay to feel sad sometimes	
"I can't handle this"		I have ways and people to help me cope	



2. Find Healthy Ways to Cope

Do things that make you feel safe and happy:

- Listen to music
- Watch a favourite show or movie
- Spend time with friends or family
- Talk to someone you trust
- Eat healthy meals
- Move your body (walk, stretch, play sports)
- Reduce screen time or social media
- Try creative or relaxing activities

Make a small support list:

- 3 things that make you happy
- 3 people you can talk to when struggling



3. Manage Stress and Calm Your Mind

Stress is normal. Learn to notice it and calm yourself:

- Close your eyes and take slow, deep breaths
- Focus only on your breathing for a few minutes

Notice stress in different ways:

- Emotionally: sadness, fear, mood swings
- Physically: headaches, fast heartbeat, tiredness
- Mentally: racing thoughts, hard to focus
- Behaviourally: withdrawing, anger, sleep changes





4. Communicate Your Needs and Set Boundaries

It's okay to say no or ask for help. Use "I" statements:

- "I feel overwhelmed and need a break."
- "I need more time to think about this."
- "I would like support with this task."

Set boundaries politely:

- "I can't right now, maybe later."
- "This doesn't work for me at the moment."



5. Remember You're Not Alone

Climate action is collective. Young people in Timor-Leste and worldwide face similar challenges. Share responsibilities, work in teams, and support each other. You don't have to solve everything alone.



6. Seek Support and Rest

Talking to someone you trust, a friend, family, teacher, or mentor, helps a lot.

- Take time to rest and enjoy hobbies
- Spend time with friends outside activism
- Keep personal life separate from activism when possible

Rest is not a reward it's a right and a necessity. If feelings get too strong or last long, seek professional help. Caring for your mental health is part of caring for your future and your community.

Calming exercises

Slow, deep breathing is one of the simplest and quickest ways to calm the body when you feel overly stressed or experience strong difficult feelings.



Close your eyes and sit comfortably.



Notice how you are feeling and what you are thinking.



Slow down and connect with your body by taking three slow and deep breaths.



Refocus on your surroundings by engaging your different senses – what do you see, what do you hear, what do you smell, what do you taste, and what do you feel?

It may take practice, but even a few minutes a day helps. For more tips, check the WHO guide **‘Doing What Matters in Times of Stress’**, which includes simple exercises and audio guides.





11. 1. KNOWING WHEN YOU NEED HELP

It can feel scary to ask for support, but it's actually a sign of courage and strength. **You don't need to wait until things get really bad asking for help early is better.**

Here are some signs you might need support for your mental health:



Feeling tired all the time or finding it hard to get out of bed



Avoiding friends or important tasks



Losing interest in things you usually enjoy



Having trouble concentrating



Feeling irritable or easily frustrated



Feeling sad most of the day, nearly every day



Having thoughts of harming yourself or feeling life has no purpose



Experiencing any of these feelings for more than a couple of weeks

If you notice any of these, it's okay to reach out. You don't have to handle it alone.



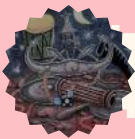
11. 2. FINDING HELP

Taking care of your mind and body means knowing what actions you can take and where to find support. You are never alone, and there are people and resources to help you along your advocacy journey.

You already have some tools like breathing exercises, reflecting on your feelings, or calmly moving through challenges. But if you ever face a real mental health crisis, call your local emergency number or a medical professional.

If it's not an emergency, you can get support from people around you:

- **Comfort:** Talk to a friend you trust
- **Guidance:** Turn to an adult you trust
- **Support:** Speak with a community leader or someone you know who supports you
- **Perspective:** Connect with other young people who understand what you're going through



How to Ask for Help?

If it feels hard to ask, try these examples:

- **Not sure what you need:** "I'm feeling _____. I'm not sure what to ask for, but I think I need some support. Are you free to talk on (day/time)?"
- **Feeling stuck:** "I'm struggling. Can we meet on (date)? I'd love your help to think through some ideas and make a plan."
- **Not ready to talk:** "I'm in a bad place, but not ready to talk. Can we do something together to help me feel distracted?"

Remember: asking for help is a sign of strength, not weakness. You don't have to face everything alone.





12 . LAST THOUGHTS

Dear Changemaker,

Here's a little secret: this is not the end.

If you've made it this far, you've probably noticed that climate action isn't a straight path. It moves in cycles—growing, pausing, and starting again. Just when you think you're done, a new idea, challenge, or opportunity appears and encourages you to keep going.

Along the way, you'll see small wins, quiet shifts, and moments that remind you why you started. Some changes happen fast. Others take time. That's okay. Growth is not a race, it's a journey.

You may also face people who question climate change or give excuses tied to politics. It's good to acknowledge these perspectives, but don't let them distract you too much. Keep your focus on your community. Your work is about helping people be more resilient, encouraging actions that reduce emissions, and protecting nature and lives.

As you look ahead, be bold enough to take brave steps, even when the results aren't immediate. The actions you take today may shape the future someone else gets to live in.

So, **keep going. Be patient. Take breaks when you need them.** Remember, you are not alone. You are part of a powerful generation of young people, here in Timor-Leste and across the world, rising, leading, and shaping a better tomorrow.

And yes, this is just the beginning ✨🌍

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Dili

timorleste@unicef.org
www.unicef.org/timorleste/

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