

CLIMATE CHANGE AND CONFLICTS

HOW CAN I MAKE A DIFFERENCE?

The public debate on climate change often reiterates the idea that young people cannot influence decision-making because they are not yet of voting age. It is true that those who exercise the most power are older people. Yet there are many ways young people can influence the social climate and decision-making.

WHAT THE EXERCISE IS ABOUT

- Duration: first part about 20 minutes, or both parts about 35 minutes.
- Exploring together the different methods and channels for influencing climate change, and get to grips with new ones.

THE GOAL OF THE EXERCISE

The purpose of this exercise is to become aware of the different ways of influencing that are open to a young person and the choice of options available to each young person: what are they already doing in the sphere of influencing climate change and what they could do within their range of possibilities? The aim is also to be jointly empowered to more broadly influence the climate policy of one's community and society.

HOW THE EXERCISE SHOULD PROCEED

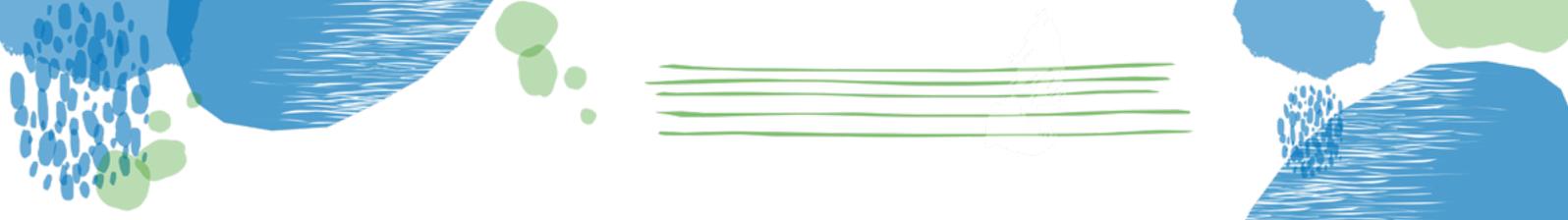
PART 1

To start with ask the students:

- What are the ways by which young people can influence the debate on climate change, and the measures and policies to do with it?
- What sorts of ways of influencing do the group members have based on their own experience?

Then, take the chart of different ways of influencing. Ask everyone to consider for a moment:

- Which of the present ways of influencing do they already have experience of?
- Which ways of influencing are totally unfamiliar to them?
- Which ways of influencing would they be interested in but about which they would need more information or encouragement to get started?



Divide the students into small groups (e.g., of 3-5 members). Ask the students to first of all review each group member's answers to their previous deliberative task in the group. Ask students to teach each other and get information on ways of influencing that are not yet familiar to everyone.

Next, ask the group members to discuss what each of them would be ready to do to broaden their own impact on climate change. You can use the following pointers for the discussion:

- Consider how you could extend your own range of measures. What new ways of influencing feel the most natural?
- What possibilities do you have at present?
- What would you be prepared to commit to right now - e.g., taking up one or more new way of influencing?

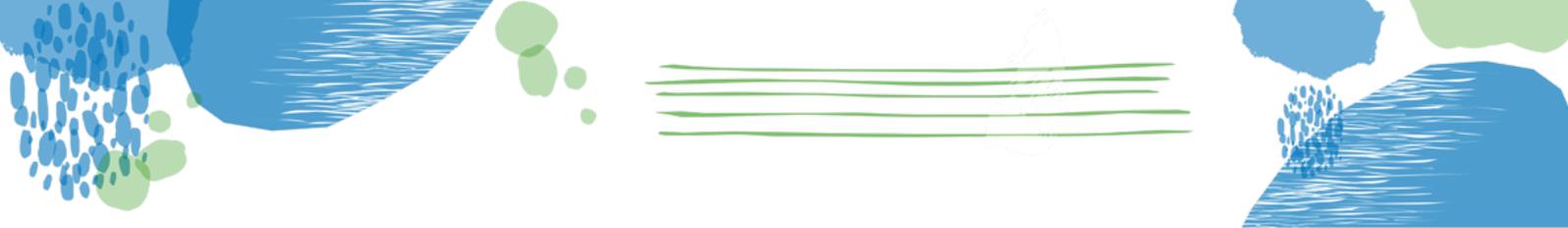
NB: When the group discussion begins, keep the chart of ways of influencing visible, e.g. on a smart whiteboard. Ask one of each group to come up on the board and mark the statistics for their group, e.g., as tally marks. Use one colour to mark the squares on the chart to show what activities the group members have experience of, and another colour to show what they are interested in but do not yet have experience of.

When you have finished the task, look together at the “repository” of ways of influencing for the whole group as it appears on the chart. If you wish, you can compare the concentration of the influencers already in the group with the percentage of young people in Finland as a whole, see p.5 (“Growing faith in extra-parliamentary forms of participation”) of the link: <https://tietoanuorista.fi/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/nuorisobarometer2018-infografiikka-netti-EN.pdf> (Youth Barometer 2018, infographics)

PART 2

Based on the preceding discussion, ask the small groups to make a plan of what the group members commit themselves to. So the group can decide to try some ways of influencing together, or they can jointly list what new way each member of the group will commit to. The idea is that, for an agreed period, group members will remind each other and make sure that commitments are kept. After the agreed time, for example at the end of the course or other unit, each small group will report on the results. This can be implemented as a joint discussion or in virtual form, e.g. on shared Padlet wall space. Reporting could include questions such as:

- Briefly describe how each member of your group adopted the new form of influencing.
- What successes did you have and what challenges?
- Will you continue to use the new ways of influencing in the future?



Tip: If you are enthusiastic and your group has the possibility to do more extensive work on the topic, the Teacher's Climate Guide provides comprehensive and concrete instructions for planning and implementing a variety of longer-term climate related projects and campaigns: <https://teachers-climate-guide.fi>