

YOUTH CLIMATE JUSTICE

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Welcome!

We are 11 Young Climate Activists who are part of an advisory team for a global research project about how children are taking climate action. We have created this Zine to share what we've been doing over the last year. **We hope you enjoy it!**

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Introducing the Youth Climate Justice Project

The Youth Climate Justice Project, led by University College Cork in Ireland, is a research project that investigates how children and youth globally lead climate action, through protests, legal advocacy, or community projects, to secure their rights to a healthy environment.

It looks at how justice systems can be changed to actually support children and young people fighting for their future.

The YCJ project wants to understand youth climate activism and what youth-led climate action means for children's rights and justice.

It explores the idea that children are leading the changes they want to see themselves **NOW**, without waiting for permission, or for adults to do it. This idea is called 'postpaternalism'.



This research project has received funding from the European Research Council under the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme (Grant agreement No. 101088453).



Useful Terms

We have created a glossary explaining some key words used in our project in case you are not familiar with them.

CHILDREN'S RIGHTS

Children's rights are the basic rights every child has, no matter where they live. These include the right to go to school, to be safe, to have clean water and healthcare, to express their opinions, and to grow up in a clean and healthy environment. These rights are protected under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.

CLIMATE ACTION

Climate actions are efforts aimed at reducing the impact of climate change and building a more sustainable, resilient future for the planet. Climate actions can take many forms such as advocacy, raising awareness, helping communities adapt, research, taking action at homes, in schools and the community (e.g. saving water, energy, reducing waste), creating art, going to court, making new laws. We all can find different, creative ways to take climate action.

CLIMATE LEADER

To be a climate leader means taking responsibility, inspiring others, and taking action to protect our planet. It's about using your voice and efforts to create change, no matter how small, for a better and fairer future.



CLIMATE JUSTICE

The climate crisis isn't just an environmental issue, it's also a social and human rights issue. Climate justice is recognizing that climate change impacts people differently, with marginalized communities being the most vulnerable. Children are among the vulnerable communities disproportionately affected by climate change. Climate justice puts an end to the suffering of people who haven't contributed towards the dire consequences of climate change.

Leadership is all about:

- > Being Cool.
- > Making boring things a bit interesting.
- > The ability to take responsibility
- > Being someones idol/Role Model
- > Being Humble
- > Leaving everytime to improve

YCJ Young Advisors

In June 2024, the **Youth Climate Justice** project team invited us to join their Young Advisory Team. We are 11 children aged 9 - 17 from across the world, each with different, unique experiences of taking climate action.

So, what does being a Young Advisor involve? In the context of the Youth Climate Justice Project, a Young Advisor is a child or young person who helps guide and shape the project. We bring our experiences, ideas, and perspectives to make sure the research truly reflects the realities of youth climate activism.

As Young Advisors, we contribute our perspectives from different countries where climate impacts are severe, to ensure the research reflects real-world challenges children are facing. We are shaping research that proves children are vital climate leaders, inspiring change through collaboration and action.

We have been given a platform to express our concern for climate change and look for collective solutions where youth have a say. We help ensure that the project genuinely empowers youth, rather than just speak for them.

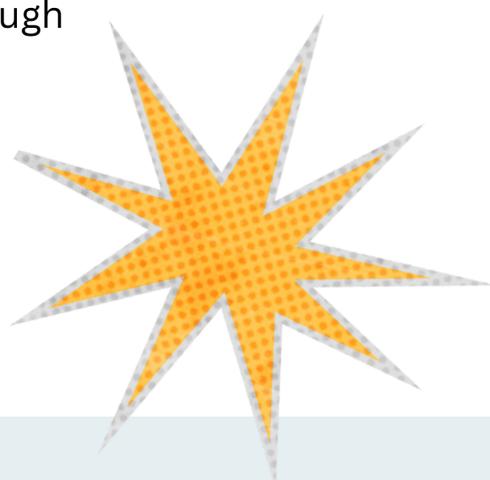
What have we been doing? A bit of everything - it's been a mix of learning, creating, and collaborating! We have met each month online, and actively involved in the project beginning with setting the objectives, designing the methodology and testing activities and materials.



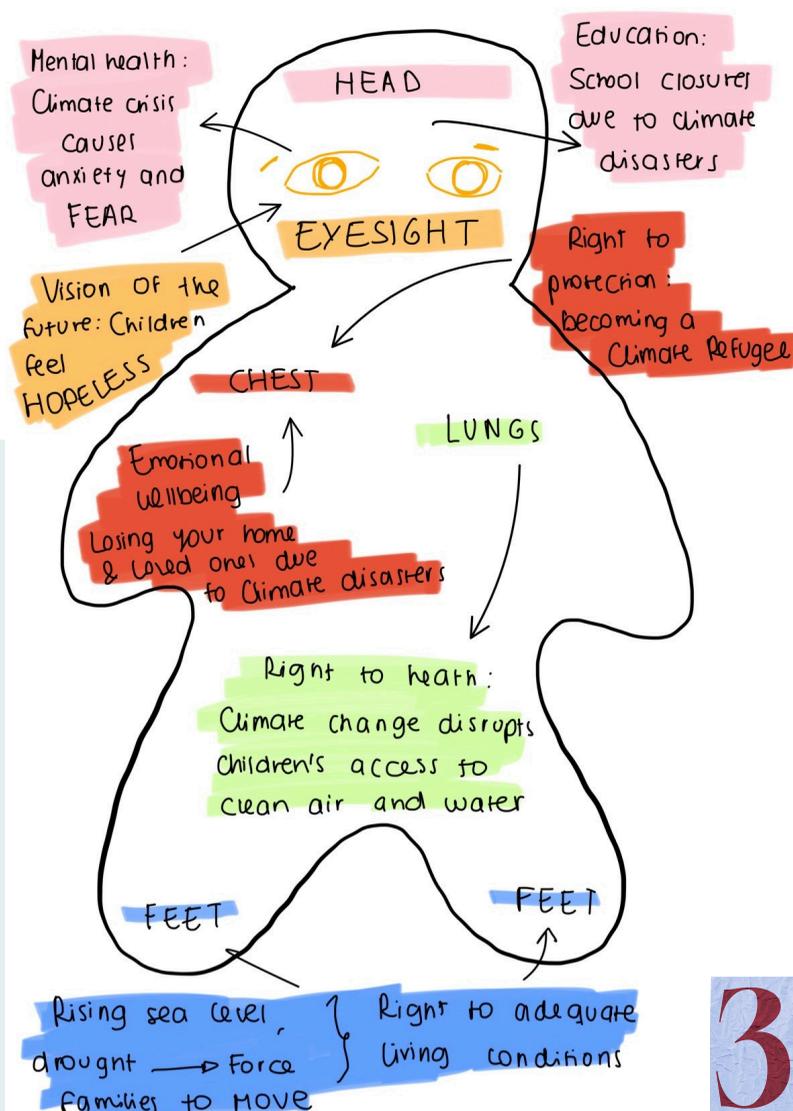
We have also helped to tell the research stories in ways that speak to both kids and adults; like giving feedback on a child-friendly summary of the Sacchi climate case.

We've also been writing short blogs about our own activism for the YCJ project website.

Check out our blog posts at: www.ucc.ie/youthclimatejustice



“Being a Young Advisor has given me the drive and motivation to go beyond my comfort zone. The various discussions of different people from different parts of the world has opened my mind to different solutions for every situation and region. Seeing how we can integrate something as simple as art with climate action shows how we can explore solutions to climate problems creatively.”



Meet the team

What makes this team so special is how diverse it is. We're Young Advisors from 11 different countries, with different ages, stories, and experiences, but we're all connected by the same passion for climate justice. Here are our stories.



Emilia, Peru

What I love most about Peru is its amazing biodiversity. The Amazon covers nearly two-thirds of Peru and is home to thousands of species. One of them is the pink river dolphin, a freshwater dolphin known for its striking color and intelligence. A fun fact is that they can turn their necks at a 90-degree angle, which helps them navigate through the river!

What first motivated me to take climate action was witnessing the climate crisis in my country, one of the most biodiverse in the world.



It felt like a generational duty to protect not only the future of my generation and those to come, but also the life in our forests and rivers; beings that deserve rights just like we do.

That's how, in 2019, I became a plaintiff in a young-driven climate lawsuit against the Peruvian government for its inaction on deforestation. Being part of spaces like the Young Climate Justice Project, alongside other young people rising for the planet, reminds me I'm not alone.

Om, Nepal

Growing up in Nepal, where diverse climates affect daily life, I witnessed how climate change disproportionately impacts children limiting their access to education, health, and basic necessities. This reality deeply moved me and motivated me to take climate action from a young age. I began by attending environmental education camps to build my knowledge, then actively collaborated with NGOs and social clubs to raise awareness and educate local communities.

Through these efforts, I've seen how grassroots action can inspire real change. What gives me hope is the growing momentum among young people like my peers and teammates who are committed to learning, advocating, and creating solutions for a more sustainable future.

I love how, despite the vast cultural and geographical diversity, the people here in Nepal are always warm and kind. And it's not just the people - I'd proudly describe my country as one blessed with heavenly, natural beauty.



Agastya, India

I am a 16-year-old boy from Delhi, India. I was diagnosed with asthma, and the pollution and climate change have worsened the situation. This situation gave me personal motivation and an eagerness to understand climate change. I started reading and researching about climate change. Besides, my travels through many places in India exposed me to the harsh climate impacts. I realized that I am not alone; millions of children like me are facing the brunt of climate change.

Some of the climate impacts felt by children in India include harsh heat wave conditions impacting health. Floods and droughts lead to water shortages and food security, impacting their health, well-being, and even education. Being a developing country, children from poorer sections and vulnerable areas are facing the exacerbated impact of climate change.

I have been trying to understand about climate change and advocate for children's voices to be heard. I am part of a social enterprise that is involved in solar energy promotions.

I have been part of their advocacy in promoting solar rooftops and solar pumps and stoves for irrigation and cooking purposes. I have also been researching the governmental steps to address climate change and advocating for incorporating more understanding of climate change in the school curriculum. Even though climate change threatens nations' existence, how countries and institutions talk about youth participation in climate change decision-making gives me hope regarding the future where we show solidarity with each other.



Aitzaz, Pakistan

I love Pakistani culture because of its incredible diversity and uniqueness. From region to region, we have different languages, traditions, foods, clothes, and festivals that beautifully reflect our rich heritage. Whether it's the colorful attire of Balochistan, the vibrant celebrations of Eid, or the wide variety of traditional dishes, every part of our culture has something special to offer, and that's what makes it so inspiring to me.

Growing up in flood-prone Balochistan, I witnessed firsthand how climate change devastates children's lives, from the loss of homes and schools to long-term disruptions in their education. What began as a volunteer effort during the 2022 floods turned into a deeper commitment.

Through WANG, I helped organize climate education sessions as part of our relief work, and later, with support from a UNICEF grant, I conducted research on how climate change impacts girls' education. I personally saw how deeply children suffered in that crisis, but what gives me hope is the rising wave of young people who, like me, are stepping up to protect our communities and our planet.



Omar, Morocco

I've always had a deep love for Morocco—its rich history, colorful souks, diverse landscapes from the Sahara to the Atlas Mountains, and the warmth of its people make it a truly special place. But what makes me admire Morocco even more is its bold leadership in the fight against climate change. The country has made sustainability a national priority, setting ambitious goals to reduce carbon emissions and transition to clean energy.

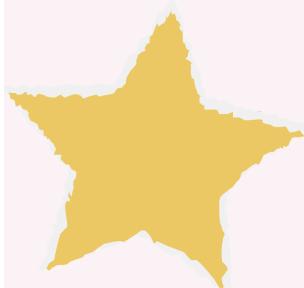
Morocco is home to the Noor Ouarzazate Solar Complex, one of the largest solar power plants in the world, and is rapidly expanding its wind and hydro power capacity. Through reforestation programs, water conservation initiatives, and its commitment to the Paris Agreement, Morocco is setting an example for how developing nations can drive meaningful environmental change. It makes me proud to love a country that's not just beautiful, but also forward-thinking and deeply committed to protecting the planet.

Charmaine, Malaysia

My climate action story might be a bit unconventional, as it isn't rooted in science or activism, but in my deep fascination for Southeast-Asian history and the cultures that have shaped it.

We often forget that our stories, languages, and ways of life are rooted in the very landscapes now slipping away. Landscapes that cradle generational solutions to the answers to we are only now beginning to seek. Hence, protection of our watersheds, reefs and land doesn't merely mean cultural preservation: it is climate action, and survival.

I bring this enthusiasm into the causes closest to my heart: The Sea is Indigenous "Land" Too (Founder), YUFE Malaysia and Young Climate Justice!



Sneha, Canada

I have been motivated to start taking climate action because of my dad. He has always been involved in helping the environment which has inspired me. Climate change affects children in my country by affecting their education. Canada has always had very polarizing seasons, cold winters and hot summers. Climate change can intensify the seasons. It could snow more in the winter and become unbearably hot in the summer. This means that there is the potential for more school closures and a lesser ability for children to focus due to the temperatures.

This is why I have joined the YCJ project, in hopes to participate in activities where I can learn more about what I can do regarding climate change. I am hopeful for the future because a lot of the younger generation, including me are aware of climate change and are willing to take action to fight it.

I love the diversity of Canada. In Canada, there are some areas with big snowy mountains while others have oceans right next to them. A fun fact about Canada is that it has the largest moose population in the world.



Akshita, Ireland

After moving from India to Ireland, my journey of climate activism started. I joined Cork City Comhairle Na Nog (Youth Council) in 2021 and got to know about Fridays For Future Cork, a youth-led organisation inspired by Greta Thunberg's demonstrations. I became extremely passionate for its cause.

I organised two global climate strikes in Cork City in 2023, which received attention from politicians, the Lord Mayor and many young people who joined our strike. I delivered speeches and gave an interview to the local newspaper. It was a fantastic experience to take effective climate action. My school's Green School committee members felt inspired to take further climate action and more people started to join Fridays for Future Cork, which was extremely rewarding to witness.

In 2024, I was honoured to receive the position of Cork City Council's first climate youth representative on their Climate Action Leadership Committee, which creates policies to make Cork a climate-neutral city.

One of the best experiences as a climate activist is my role as a Youth Advisor in the YCJ project, a team I absolutely love and have learned so much from! Attending the international conference last September was amazing and I can't wait to see the results of this research project.

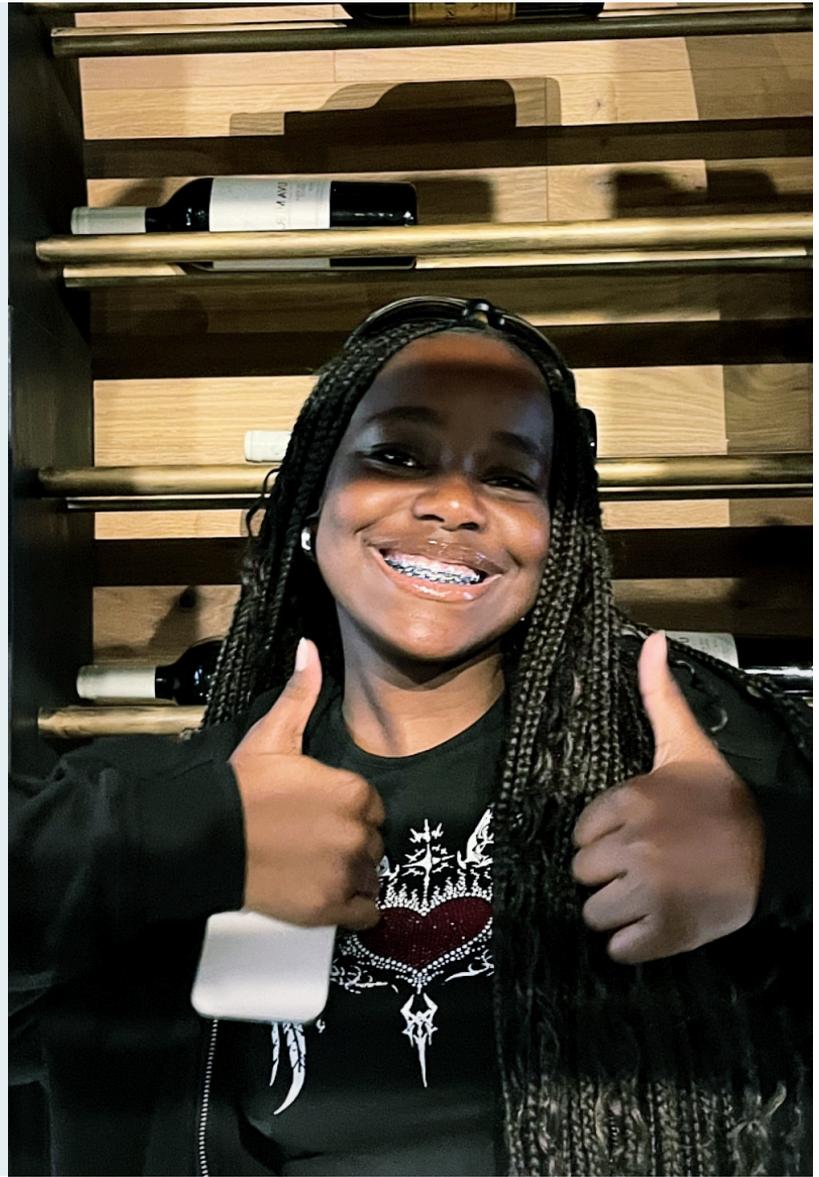
My hope for the future is simply the passion of young people. I really believe that our generation is made for creating impactful change and when we reach positions of power, we will change the destiny of our planet because evidence clearly shows that we don't wait, we act!

Thubelihle, South Africa

One of the main environmental issues that is plaguing South Africa is the pollution in our rivers, dams, and lakes. Due to various human activities such as industrial waste disposal, agricultural runoff, and littering, our water bodies are becoming increasingly polluted. This pollution not only affects the aquatic life that depends on these bodies of water for survival, but also poses a serious threat to human health.

As the Vice President of the Environmental Club at our school, and while our club is known for organizing cleanups around our community, we make efforts to educate others about the importance of protecting our planet through simple actions.

Whether it be through social media posts, presentations at school, or conversations with friends and family, I believe that raising awareness is key to inspiring others to make a difference. By organizing tree-planting days, we are not only improving air quality, but we are also providing habitat for wildlife and beautifying our community. I believe that small everyday actions can also contribute to a sustainable environment.



Moriah, Trinidad and Tobago

I'm 10 years old and live in Trinidad and Tobago—it's one of the coolest places to be! I love being outdoors, especially near the beach or hiking to waterfalls.

I'm really interested in children's rights and climate justice because my mom is an environmental planner, and she's always encouraging my siblings and me to learn about how climate change affects our islands. I'm a member of Green Enviro TT, a local NGO that promotes environmental stewardship in our communities. Since I joined, I've been learning about how climate change impacts our region and what we can do to make a difference.

I'm also part of my school's Environmental Club, where we talk about ways to reduce our carbon footprint.

I'm really interested in finding better ways to reach young people and share what I learn about climate justice, especially because small changes can make a big difference for our islands.

I believe that I have an equal voice to adults in society in showing them how I feel about decisions being made about the climate. Having positive relationships with adult leaders is good for me to learn from them and share my experiences with them.



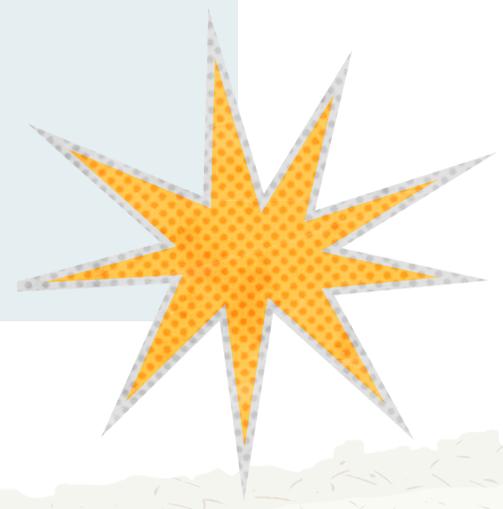
Alana, Kenya

I believe in action! I am a climate activist from Kenya, a country filled with incredible nature—from the vast savannas to the mighty mountains. But climate change is changing everything. Sometimes we get long droughts, and families struggle to find water. Other times, floods take away homes and schools. I see it happening, and I know that young people like me can make a difference.

That's why I started *Climate Gumzo with Alana*, a podcast where I talk about climate change in a way kids can understand. I want to make sure children everywhere know they have a voice. We are not too young to care about our planet.

I also take action. I have planted over 20,000 trees in my nursery to help fight deforestation. I join clean-up drives, and teach kids about recycling, and remind people that small actions matter. Recently, I spoke at COP29—a big meeting where world leaders talk about climate change. I stood up and told them that kids deserve a seat at the table because we are the ones who will live in the world they are shaping. I was also honoured to be crowned Little Miss Environment Kenya 2025, which motivates me even more to keep pushing for change.

My dream is simple: a greener Kenya, a healthier planet, and a future where children's voices matter. And I won't stop fighting for it!



Katie



Agastya



Charmaine



Aitzaz



Thubelihle



Omar



Aoife



Emilia



Moriah



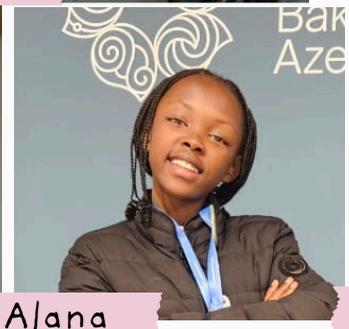
Om



Akshita



Sneha



Alana



Emily

What kind of

Climate

Leader

Are You?

The Youth Climate Justice project is all about exploring how children and young people are leading different types of climate action.

We worked together to create these different examples of climate leaders, to spark reflection and conversation with children involved in the research workshops.



Demonstrator

Joins in with protests and strikes to call for change.



Challenger

Uses the law to challenge climate inaction, or other forums for influencing policy and legal change.



Coordinator

Brings people together to take action, such as organising petitions, support groups.



Storyteller

Tells other about the climate crisis, communicating in different ways that inspire action online and offline.



Healer

Supports the conservation and protection of nature, and tries their best to live sustainably.



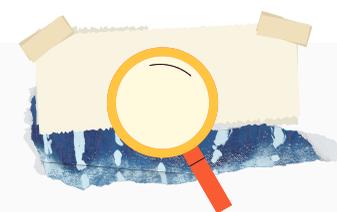
Innovator

Finds technical, scientific and creative solutions to climate issues.



Educator

Shows people the ropes, showing them what they can do to help.



Researcher

Investigates what's happening, and helps others to make sense of the issues.



“I’m the **storyteller**, always seeking to understand and share stories from an eagle’s perspective—high up, seeing things clearly and from a fresh angle, where every detail matters.” **Om**

“I see myself as a **Challenger, Researcher, Storyteller, and Coordinator**. As a Challenger, I’ve taken legal action against the Peruvian government through a youth-led climate lawsuit. As a Researcher, I’m constantly learning, driven by curiosity, and committed to understanding environmental justice, especially through Indigenous perspectives. I’m a Storyteller when it comes to sharing knowledge, like how I frame the lawsuit or write about the nature rights movement. I take on the Coordinator role when organizing meetings and interviews with my fellow plaintiffs from the climate lawsuit.” **Emilia**

“Recently, I’ve been working on a research paper myself about the Pan-Borneo Highway and its impacts on both the indigenous and local communities in Sabah, Malaysia. I realize that I actually love the research process as I love the process of learning. I love it because I’m a very factual yet emotional type of person. **Storytelling and Research** provides me with both worlds to explore!” **Charmaine**

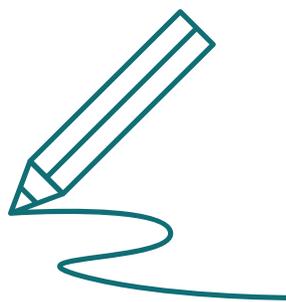
“I’m a **Challenger, Researcher, and Storyteller**. I challenge climate inaction by researching how floods hurt girls’ education in Balochistan. As a researcher, I study issues like my grant-winning project on flood-affected schools. As a storyteller, I write essays and stories to show how climate impacts kids and get others to act.” **Aitzaz**

I find myself as a **Challenger, Demonstrator, Researcher and Storyteller**. So far, my activism deals with advocacy and changing policies related to climate change. This requires a lot of background research to lobby decision makers. Organizing strikes requires a lot of planning and networking to get the right people in the right place at the right time for effective impact. I always like to portray any form of youth activism in newspapers, speeches, conferences through storytelling.” **Akshita**

“**Coordinator and Researcher**. I have coordinated school programs by promoting waste management and emphasizing sustainable practices. I have also undertaken research and advocacy as part of my internship with institutions.” **Agastya**

...what about you?

In what ways are you a climate leader? Do these roles reflect the action you are taking?





Top Tips

Are you interested in involving children in your research, as Young Advisors or in some other way? Here are our top tips!

“My top tip would be trying to understand what children are trying to say because sometimes some people think that a child might say this when they actually say that. I think adults should try to understand what a child is trying to tell you.”

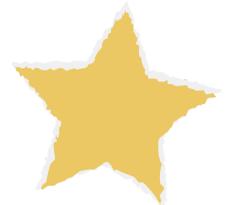
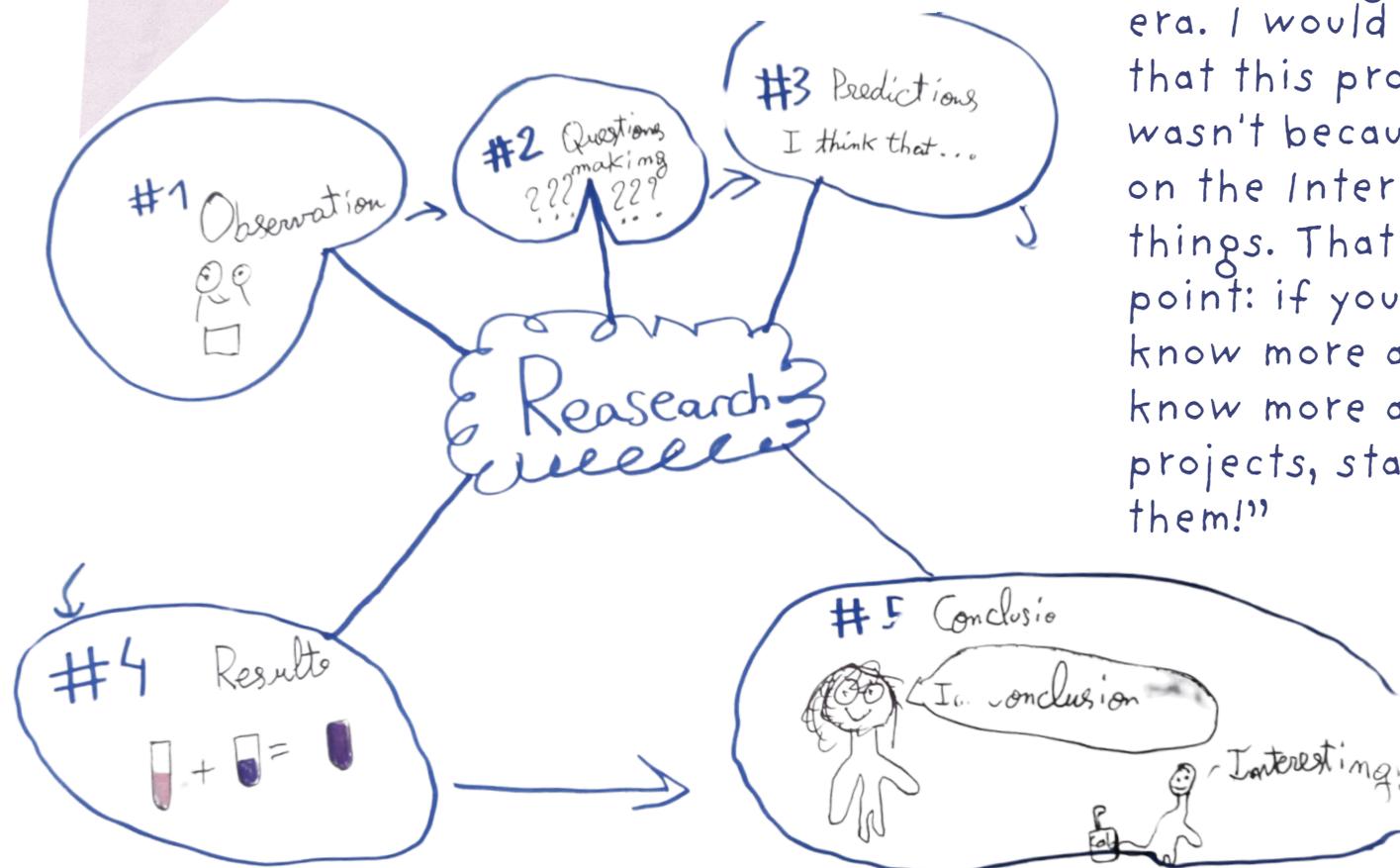
Moriah

“Adults need to think like children. They need to remember and think like a child because I would say children are a bit more creative than adults in many different ways. Adults can take those opinions into consideration, because I think those can make new discussions all together.”

Agastya

If you're a child or young person looking to get involved in research or projects like the **Youth Climate Justice project**, Emilia has great advice to share:

Take advantage of the fact that we're living in this technological era. I would have never known that this project existed if it wasn't because I am constantly on the Internet searching for things. That would be a start point: if you actually want to know more about research or know more about these kinds of projects, start searching for them!”



We hope you have enjoyed reading our Zine! If you would like more information about the **Youth Climate Justice** project or if you would like to join our research network, head over to our website: www.ucc.ie/youthclimatejustice