LOUDER

YOUTH ACTIVISM IN ACTION

A YOUTH WORK IRELAND WEEK ACTIVITY PACK 2026

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

LOUDER IS THE THEMED ACTIVITY PACK FOR YOUTH WORK IRELAND WEEK 2026

This activity pack uses art, movement and music to support young people to explore how creativity, voice and energy can be mobilised for social change, and how they can become **LOUDER** about issues that matter to them and their communities. The activities provide a safe and inclusive space for young people to think critically, reflect, express themselves, and learn about youth activism and advocacy. **LOUDER** sits alongside wider sector-led efforts such as the Youth Work for All campaign, which calls for youth work to be recognised, valued, and accessible to all young people, irrespective of their backgrounds.

LOUDER is not about shouting over others, but about making youth voices clearer, stronger, and harder to ignore. It's about turning feelings into expression, expression into collective power, and collective power into change. The sessions in this activity pack invite young people to explore through a critical social education approach, what they care about, express it creatively, and make their voices **LOUDER** through shared reflection and action.

In our youth groups every young person's story matters, every concern, every hope, every frustration has value. Together, we can turn those into something powerful like a piece of art, music, movements, banner messages, campaigns and get **LOUDER** about what needs to change. Because change doesn't always begin in institutions or politics, sometimes it begins with a drawing, a beat, a group of young people saying, "this isn't right."
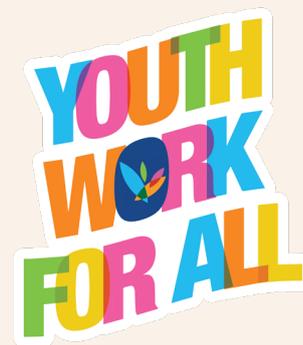
YOUTH WORK IRELAND WEEK

Youth Work Ireland works across the country to support young people through youth clubs, cafés, projects, and services, providing safe and supported spaces where young people can connect, learn, question, and grow. We believe that youth work is about giving young people a voice, letting them decide what matters, figuring out what they care about, and how they want to act. We work within the values of inclusion, equality, participation, principles echoed in the Youth Work for All campaign's call for universal access to youth work spaces. During Youth Work Ireland Week we celebrate and highlight these values, giving young people the opportunity to engage more deeply with social justice, being heard, and leading change.

This activity pack is directly in line with those values and with Youth Work Ireland Week's spirit. It's about giving young people from different backgrounds and experiences the tools to speak out, create, challenge inequalities, and demand change, helping them make their voices LOUDER in their communities and beyond.

YOUTH WORK FOR ALL & LOUDER

The Youth Work for All campaign advocates for the right of every young person, no matter who they are or where they live, to have access to open, welcoming, high quality youth work. The campaign also shines a light on the huge role volunteers play and calls for stronger support so youth spaces can stay inclusive, fun, and accessible for all.

Facilitators may reference this campaign as an example of collective advocacy, while remaining non-directive and allowing young people to form their own views and messages.

Find out more at www.youthworkireland.ie/youthworkforall

# LOUDER IS HOW WE DESCRIBE THE JOURNEY THESE SESSIONS SUPPORT...

Private Thoughts = Shared Voices
Individual Feelings = Collective Action
Creativity = Activism
"This isn't fair" = "Let's change this"

Throughout LOUDER, we'll explore:

- How art, movement and music have historically been used to protest, to raise awareness, to build solidarity and make youth voices LOUDER, from murals and posters to protest songs and spoken word.

- What issues matter to young people. These activities will help young people to explore what are the unequal power structures, whether it's inequality, discrimination, climate, mental health, access, identity, or any injustice that they see.

- How young people can channel feelings into creative expression by using visuals, lyrics, beats, or other art forms to make their values and messages LOUDER in the world.

- Power in the collective = the activities will support young people to work together, combine voices, share ideas, support each other, and make their collective voice LOUDER than any single one alone.

- It will support young people to identify a collective commitment or a collective call to action for real change that they and the group can forward and maybe present later at a youth activist event or gathering.

- LOUDER supports young people to be heard, reflecting the Youth Work for All vision that every young person deserves space, support, and having their voice heard.
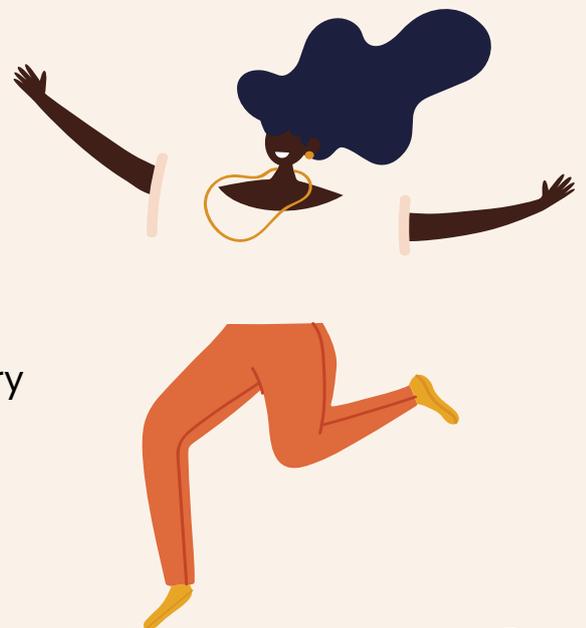
LOUDER LEARNING GOALS
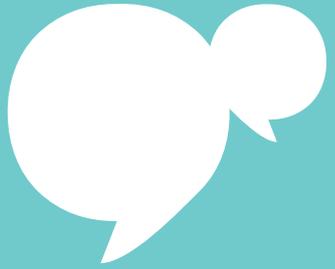
LOUDER isn't just about what happens inside a youth group, it's about building a youth-led campaign, a collective voice, and a pathway to being heard more widely. We invite you to see this as the first step in a LOUDER journey: from ideas to expression, from expression to action, and from action to impact.

LOUDER Learning Goals:

- Recognise the difference between activism and advocacy and understand how to make their voices LOUDER in both.
- Explore how art, movement, and music can influence social change and amplify messages LOUDER than words alone.
- Identify the power structures and power dynamics that exist and consider how youth voices can challenge and shift them.
- Work collaboratively to create a campaign message using both art and music, making their collective voice LOUDER.
- Plan a concrete call to action they can develop further to ensure their ideas are expressed LOUDER and can reach wider audiences, including decision makers and power holders.

Note: Young people who reviewed the pack noted that some activities might feel intimidating for certain participants, so facilitators need to be mindful of this and avoid pressuring young people to take part in any of the activities they are uncomfortable with.

YOUTH ACTIVISIM IN IRELAND

YOUTH ACTIVISM is when young people use their voices, creativity, and collective power to make positive change. They often bring fresh ideas, bold actions, and a strong sense of solidarity and future vision. Throughout history, youth activism has reshaped societies, challenged unfair systems, and imagined better futures, through protests, campaigns, art, online organising, and speaking out. In Ireland, young people have long been central to social change. In the early 20th century, teens in groups like Fianna Éireann took part in independence efforts. From the 1960s to the 1980s, young people were active in the Northern Ireland Civil Rights Movement, peacebuilding during the Troubles, and in anti-war, women's rights, and early LGBTQ+ organising. Since the 1990s, the youth sector has grown, with groups like Comhairle na nÓg giving young people a voice in decision-making on issues like education, mental health, and community safety.

More recently, young people have driven major social shifts such as Marriage Equality (2015), Repeal the 8th (2018), climate strikes, LGBTQIA+ rights, anti-racism, disability justice, anti-genocide organising, and housing activism, showing that youth leadership continues to shape Ireland's future.

GROUP AGREEMENT

IMPORTANT!

Prior to starting, establish group guidelines to ensure that the group is comfortable, has trust and confidentiality. Assure the young people that the session is a safe place to share and explore their views and feelings, but this must be done in a spirit of respect, curiosity and kindness.

Depending on your group or time schedule you can go through this pack session by session, or you can dip in and out of it, choosing the activities you feel best suit your group.

Before you start make sure that the group sign up to a group contract – noting...

- Be yourself. Speak your truth. Share honestly.
- Be curious. Ask questions. Challenge ideas.
- Be respectful. Listen to others. Value different perspectives.
- Be bold. Use art and music to express what matters

Ask the young people to add in anything they feel is relevant to the Group Agreement.

SESSION ONE
WARM UP: LOUDER POWER MOVES

ABOUT

This session is about noticing where your voice already is, and where it could become LOUDER through connection with others.

MATERIALS

Place movement statements around the room:
Strongly Agree | Agree | Disagree | Strongly Disagree

METHODOLOGY

- Ask the young people to stand in a line.
- Reading a statement aloud.
- Ask everyone to move to the corresponding statement on the wall that most aligns with their opinion.

STATEMENTS

"Young people have the power to change things."
"Activism starts with one person."
"Everyday activities can be used as a form of protest."
"Art can change minds."
"You don't need to protest to be an activist"
"Social media helps positive change"
"Youth work is a right, not a privilege."

BRIEF REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- Why did you choose this spot?
- What makes activism powerful?
- Who gets heard?
- Who is silenced?

Focus on listening to each other without debating.

SESSION TWO
SO, YOU WANT TO MAKE A DIFFERNCE

ABOUT

This session supports young people to connect to the values that sit underneath their voice, the things that make them want to speak up, stand up, or get LOUDER about. It will support young people to understand that activism starts with knowing what matters to them, it will help to build confidence in expressing identity, values, and motivations and support the group to connection and trust through shared storytelling.

MATERIALS NEEDED

• A large printed set of words or word cards scattered around the room examples: Respect, Equality, Safety, Pride, Freedom, Community, Creativity, Justice, Love, Care, Belonging, Courage, Expression, Environment, Friendship, Diversity, Joy, Honesty, Hope, Fairness, Accessibility, Trust, Voice etc...
• Paper & pens
• Optional: phone or camera to record short statements
• Flipchart or board for group notes
• A quiet, comfortable space with room to move

METHODOLOGY

Introduce the session by saying that every activist and every advocate, starts with values. Before we think about campaigns or actions, we need to take a moment to understand what matters most to us. This helps us move from reaction to purpose, from frustration to change.

- Get the group to pair up and ask each person to tell the other one thing that has mattered to them this week, big or small, could be something in the news, or something locally.
- Scatter the printed value words around the room or display them around the walls.
- Get the group to walk around the room and look at these words.
- Ask them to notice which ones they feel drawn to, reminding them that there is no right or wrong answer, just notice what feels important, powerful, or inspiring to them.
- They can stop at any word that stands out and chat to each other about why this is the case.
- Encourage them to trust their instinct and use gentle prompts like:
     - Which words make you feel something?
     - Which words describe who you already are?
     - Which words describe who you want to be?

Next ask them to choose 3 values that matter most to them. They can write, draw or use emojis to represent their values. Ask them -

- Why is this important to me?
- How does this show up in my life?
- Where did this value come from? (family, culture, community, experience)

Return to the full group and share one insight from conversations (only if they are comfortable doing so).

SESSION THREE
THE ART OF ACTIVISM

ABOUT

This session will demonstrate to young people that everyday activities can be used as powerful forms of activism, especially through art and music which are ways of making feelings public, and of turning what's inside us into something that can be seen, be shared and made LOUDER than words alone. By exploring creative practices, they already engage in, they will learn how artistic expression can challenge norms, communicate lived experiences, and build solidarity.

Before the session collect some examples of art and music activism. This can be images printed out from the internet, or some music clips downloaded on your phone, depending on your group you can choose one or mix between both.

Examples - Art Activism:
- Street murals (BLM, climate art, peace murals)
- Disability rights protest posters
- Gaza Protests
- Pride artwork / trans rights
- Feminist images
- Human Rights
- Banksy images
- ICE Protests in USA

Examples - Youth Activism
- Greta Thunberg (climate activism)
- Trinity Student Protest (Student Accommodation)
- Malala Yousafzai (girls' education)
- Marcus Rashford (food poverty)
- Black Lives Matter (youth marchers)
- Young disabled activists (Right to Access)
- Gen Z Protest in Kenya and Nepal (Civil and Social Change)
- Local grassroots youth campaigns (if possible)

Examples - Music Activism:
- Knee Cap - H.O.O.D (community resilience and resistance)
- Stormzy: Superheroes (black youth empowerment)
- Billie Holiday: Strange Fruit (anti-racism)
- Bob Marley: Get Up, Stand Up (justice)
- J Cole: Neighbors (racial relations)
- H.E.R: I Can't Breathe (BLM)
- Childish Gambino: This Is America (systemic racism)
- Local youth artists (if any)
- Protest chants (e.g. "People united will never be Divided")

METHODOLOGY

In the group show or play the clips and encourage a general discussion again encouraging the young people to focus on active listening to each other. Some prompt questions could be:

- Whose voices are these lifting up?
- What problems are they challenging?
- How do art and music make people feel?
- What are young activists trying to change?
- Who/what are they advocating for?
- What makes their message powerful?
- How does art or media help them?

Key points to reinforce

Activism is taking action for change
Advocacy is speaking up for yourself or others
Young people can do both.

SESSION FOUR
WHO'S GOT THE POWER?

ABOUT

This session will support young people to understand why some voices are loud and heard in society, while others are ignored, and how collective action can change that balance. This session will support young people to think and understand power dynamics by exploring social issues and scenarios and envisioning pathways for change. It will support them to explore how power operates and to consider who has power, who doesn't and how young people can influence change through activism and advocacy.

MATERIALS:

- Large sheets or flip chart paper
- Sticky notes in 3 colours
  Pink = Power holders,
  Yellow = Influencers,
  Blue = People affected
- Paper sheets
- Markers
- Pre-written scenario cards

METHODOLOGY

Begin by asking the young people who they think are the power holders in their schools, community, country or world. Let them call out answers and as they do write the names of the power-holders on paper sheets and place them on the walls or floors around the room.

They could include - Parents, Teachers, Corporations, Politicians, Youth workers, Social media companies, Journalists, Activist groups, Older people, Young people

Next read out a social issue and ask the young people to go stand beside the sign representing the power-holder group they think holds the most power in relation to the social issue. Issues could include:

Climate change, Racism, Gaza, LGBTQ+ rights, Disability Inclusion, War, Mental health, Housing, Homelessness, Cost of living, Refugee and Asylum Rights, Sexual harassment or Domestic Violence.

DISCUSS:

- Why do they think this particular group has the power?
- How do they think this group maintains power?
- Is it right they have this power?
- How can young people influence or challenge them?

Now ask the young people to think about whether any of the other power holder groups could create change on this issue, and ask them to move to the group they believe has that potential.

DISCUSS:

- Did anyone move to "Young People"? Why?
- Can power be built or given?
- What does "people power" look like?
- How can collective action shift power?

SCENARIOS: DEPENDING ON YOUR GROUP, YOU CAN USE THE SAME METHOD BUT WITH SCENARIOS BY BREAKING THE YOUNG PEOPLE INTO SMALLER GROUPS AND GIVING EACH GROUP A REALISTIC YOUTH-RELATED SCENARIO (YOU CAN ADD YOUR OWN).

- The youth centre is closing.
- Your school is considering banning phones.
- The local bus service for young people is being cut.
- Your school is considering switching to renewable energy

Give them each a pink, yellow and blue sticky notes ask them to write down who they think are the groups that hold the most power (pink), can influence power (yellow) or are most affected (blue). On a big sheet draw 3 concentric circles and ask the young people to place sticky notes in a rough map:

- Centre: The power-holders (pink)
- Near the centre: People who influence power (yellow)
- Outer ring: People affected (blue)

When they have placed their stickies start a discussion using prompt questions such as - Who had unexpected power? What surprised you? What would be hardest to change? What strengths can young people bring to advocacy? Ask them to think about any actions that could move power from one circle to other or influence the issue, such as

Youth & Student Mobilisation - Contact media - Meet councillor
Gather signatures - Present evidence - Partner with youth organisation - Social media campaign - Pressure school board - Propose alternatives

SESSION FIVE
GETTING LOUDER TOGETHER!

ABOUT

This session uses art and music to amplify voices and challenge injustice. In small groups ask the young people to consider their own lives and to choose one issue they would like to highlight and challenge e.g. racism, riots, bullying, climate justice, cost of living, mental health, LGBTQ+ rights, ableism, gender equality, housing, refugee rights, local safety. This is where LOUDER becomes visible: young people turn their concerns into shared messages, creative actions, and public statements.

MATERIALS

- Art materials
- T-shirts
- Paper and markers
- Magazines
- Canva app
- Phone

METHODOLOGY

In their groups ask them to create their own activist piece using art or music.

- ART: Poster, Collage, T-shirts, Canva digital image.
- MUSIC: A short chant/chorus/spoken word verse, with optional beat (apps: BandLab, Groovepad; or body percussion).

MUSIC PROMPTS	A chant A short chorus A rhyme or spoken word piece A beat using body percussion or free music apps (e.g., Groovepad, BandLab)
PROMPTS TO WRITE LYRICS	Who or what are you speaking up for? What do you want to change? What do you want people to FEEL and DO?
OPTIMAL MUSIC TOOLS	Use simple rhythms with claps, tapping tables, beatboxing. Use smartphones for backing beats
ART PROMPTS	Bold Image + Issue Statement + Call to Action (e.g., "Homes for All," "Save Our Planet", "Love is a Human Right", "No Pride in Genocide", "Youth Work for All")

Encourage the young people to think about structures (systemic causes), not only individual choices by asking:

- Who holds power?
- Who is being affected?
- Who is excluded?
- What needs to change?
- What is fair or unfair?
- How can we make things better?
- What do you want people to feel or do when they see this?
- Where could this artwork be seen by others
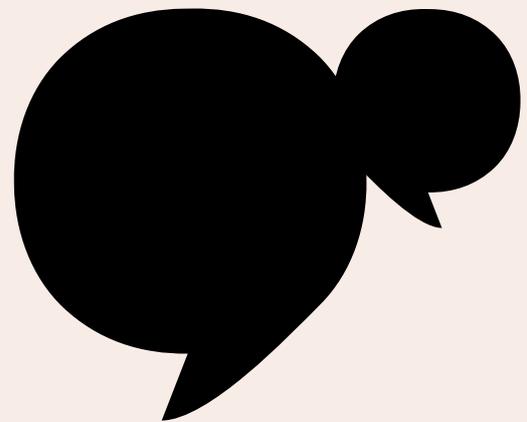
Each group then shows their art piece or performs their chant/lyric/spoken word piece.

SESSION SIX
IF I RULED THE WORLD

About

This session invites young people to imagine what the world could look like if youth voices were taken more seriously and if young people's priorities shaped decisions, policies, and culture. It will encourage young people to use the learnings from previous activities to imagine a fairer, safer, and more equal world. It aims to build confidence in expressing their values and visions through art, and to spark meaningful discussion about real-world advocacy and the importance of youth voice.

MATERIALS:

- Magazines, newspapers, printed images
- Scissors, glue sticks
- Markers, coloured paper
- Stickers and other arts materials
- Large A3 sheets or card
- Or Canva app

METHOD

- Start with a fun, quick question: "If you ruled the world for one day, what's the first thing you'd change?"
- Let them shout out answers, silly ones are welcome. This breaks the ice and gets them thinking about priorities.
- Explain: "You're going to create a visual artwork showing what the world would look like if you were in charge. This is about imagination, fairness, and the kind of world young people want to live in."

Give them a few prompts to spark ideas, such as:

- What would be different?
- What would be fairer?
- What would be safer?
- What would be banned?
- What would be protected?
- Who would have more power?
- Who would have less power?

Get them to jot down 5–10 ideas before starting the art, and then create a vision board, collage, drawing or canva image that answers - "If I ruled the world, my world would look like…" Encourage them to include Images, words or slogans, symbols, colours that represent their values and/or drawings of people, places, or systems they'd change

Next ask them to add a "Power Statement" to go with their artwork. Examples:

- "If I ruled the world, every young person would have a safe place to be."
- "If I ruled the world, climate justice would be the law."
- "If I ruled the world, no child would die of hunger"
- "If I ruled the world, kindness would be a requirement."
- "If I ruled the world, everyone would have a voice."
- "If I ruled the world, youth work would be available to all young people."

Display all the artworks around the room and let the young people walk around, read, and admire each other's visions. Give each person 3 sticky dots to place on the ideas they find inspiring. Bring the group together and ask:

- What themes appeared again and again?
- What do young people value most?
- What surprised you?
- What does this tell us about power and leadership?
- How could some of these ideas happen in real life?
- If they have done their art piece on Canva, get their permission to share out via the youth service's social media platforms.

HISTORY OF PROTEST BANNERS

Protest banners have a long, creative history dating back to ancient China, Egypt, Greece, and Rome, where groups carried standards to show identity and collective power. By the 18th and 19th centuries, as ordinary people organised for rights, banners became central to public demonstrations such as labour movements in Britain and Ireland and the bold, hand-sewn banners of the women's suffrage movement.

Throughout the 20th century, banners were at the heart of major social movements: the US Civil Rights Movement, anti-war and student protests, LGBTQ+ rights, trade union organising, and anti-apartheid campaigns. Many were made in community centres and youth spaces, turning banner-making into a shared act of resistance.

By the late 20th and early 21st centuries, cheap materials like bedsheets, cardboard, spray paint, and tape made banner-making more accessible, while digital tools allowed for polished printed designs. Even so, handmade banners remained valued for their authenticity and emotional power.

Today, banners continue to shape movements such as climate justice, Black Lives Matter, LGBTQI+ rights, Free Palestine protests, and feminist activism. Across all eras, their purpose remains the same: to make voices visible, to unite people behind shared messages, and transform creativity into a force for change.

SESSION SEVEN

RAISE IT UP!!
BANNER MAKING FOR CHANGE

ABOUT

Banners are a classic way of making a message LOUDER in public space and turning voice into something visible, mobile, and collective. This session will focus on designing and making powerful youth-led protest banners which is a great way to empower young people to articulate and demonstrate what they care about.

MATERIALS

- Bedsheets, cardboard, paint, fabric markers, tape, stencils, printed letters, brushes, old clothes for collage, clear tape, scissors, spray paint (only if safe), plus music for atmosphere.

METHODOLOGY

- Show how banners have been used creatively through time by sharing images of banners from civil rights, LGBTQI+ pride, climate strikes, feminist movements, disability rights, etc.
- Ask young people to note what stands out: colours, fonts, materials, symbols.
- Ask the young people to think about (based on the previous activities) what issue they would march for tomorrow?
- In small groups ask them to brainstorm words, emotions, hopes, and frustrations linked to their chosen issue.
- Ask them to think about colours, cultural symbols, shapes, flags, or motifs that represent their identity or cause.
- Ask them to turn these ideas into short slogans or maybe 5-8 words max.

- On a piece of paper get them to sketch out their banner layouts, thinking about where the text will sit, if they will use symbols to support the message and can it be easily read from far away.
- Once they have their final design, they can transfer it to a larger banner lay out and get on with decorating it.

PROMPTS

Solidify learning and emotional impact by starting a discussion asking

- What message are you most proud of?
- What did you learn about activism?
- How did working together feel?
- Where would you take your banner next?

This session shows that making banners isn't just about paint and cardboard, it is about turning learning into visuals. Protest banners have always been a way for people to show what matters to them. Ask them to hold up their finished banners and invite them to reflect on the pride they feel in their message, the strength of working together, and where they imagine their banner being carried next, whether at a march, in their community, or simply as a reminder that their voices matter.

Banners can be displayed around the youth centre or brought to national events
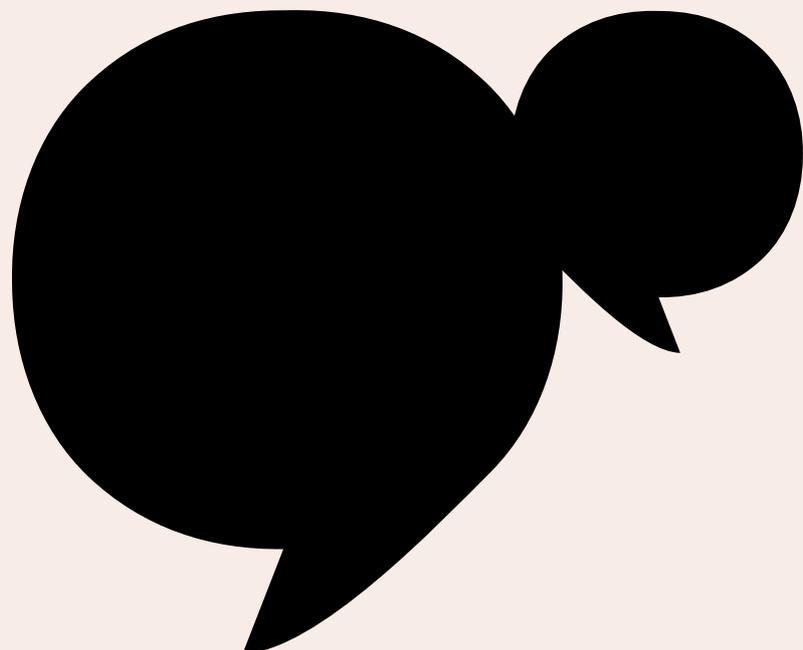
SESSION EIGHT
THE RIPPLE EFFECTS OF CHANGE

ABOUT

This final session shows how LOUDER spreads, how one voice becomes many, and how many voices together can shift culture, conversations, and power.

The session pulls together everything we've been exploring and helps young people see how their individual actions can connect and grow into something bigger. It makes abstract ideas about power and change visible and tangible, showing that small steps really do matter when they're linked together.

By working as a group, young people experience how collective movements can shift power and create change, while also recognising the unique role that youth voices and creativity bring to activism. In the end, the session highlights that change doesn't just happen from the top down, it can be sparked and carried forward by young people themselves when they act together.

MATERIALS

- Large sheet of paper or a roll of paper
- Markers
- Sticky notes in different colours
- Tape or Blu Tack
- Space for movement
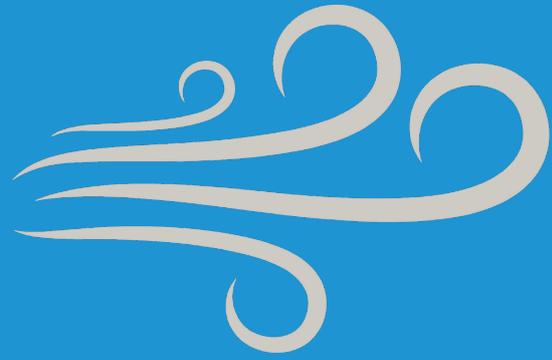
START WITH A SPARK

- Ask each young person to write one small action they could take on a social issue they care about (e.g., posting online, talking to a teacher, joining a protest).
- Place these sticky notes in the centre of the paper, this is the "spark."

BUILD THE RIPPLES

- In pairs or small groups, ask them to brainstorm what happens when more people join in.
- Each new idea (e.g., media attention, petitions, community meetings) gets added in rings around the centre, showing how actions ripple outward.

CONNECT THE DOTS

- Use markers to draw lines between actions that influence each other (e.g., a petition leads to a meeting with politicians, which leads to policy change).
- This creates a visual "map of change."

EMBODIED COLLECTIVE ACTION

- Call out one of the issues (e.g., climate change).
- Ask participants to physically move together to represent different roles: activists, influencers, decision makers.
- Show how standing together feels stronger than standing alone.

REFLECTION CIRCLE

- What surprised you about how actions connect?
- Where do young people fit into the ripple?
- What does collective action feel like compared to acting alone?
- How can art (like banners, slogans, performances) amplify these ripples?

CONCLUDING LOUDER

This activity pack has been about getting LOUDER together, about helping young people recognise what they care about, express it creatively, and connect their voices into something bigger than any one person.

Through art, movement, music, dialogue and imagination, young people have explored power, injustice, identity and hope, and have begun to see themselves not just as individuals with opinions, but as a collective.

LOUDER is not something you finish in this room, it's something that can be carried forward. The ideas, messages, artworks, and commitments created through this work can be shared, developed, and carried into wider spaces such as youth forums, community events, campaigns, conversations with decision-makers, and everyday acts of advocacy.

LOUDER is a beginning, not an end, it is an invitation for young people to keep speaking, creating, organising, and shaping the world they want to live in.

LOUDER uses a critical social education approach as outlined in the facilitators' notes. It starts from young people's lived experiences and values them as real knowledge. Through discussion, art and reflection, it helps young people notice power, question what's taken for granted, link everyday life to wider social issues, and imagine and work towards collective change.

Every time a young person speaks up, creates, connects, or challenges injustice, LOUDER continues...

The ideas developed here may connect with wider movements and campaigns, such as Youth Work for All, which seek to ensure young people's voices shape the systems that affect their lives.

#GetLouder #LouderYouth

FACILITATOR NOTES

EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY

LOUDER is grounded in a critical social education approach. This means young people are not seen as empty vessels to be filled with knowledge, but as knowledge-holders, meaning-makers, and agents. It understands that education is not transmission of knowledge, but as a relational, dialogical, and political practice that supports young people to:

- Make meaning of their lived experiences.
- Recognise power, inequality, and injustice.
- Connect personal experience to social structures.
- Imagine and enact possibilities for change.

The programme follows a praxis cycle:
Experience = Reflection= Discussion = Critical Awareness = Expression = Action. Facilitators are therefore not neutral, but ethical, reflective practitioners who shape the conditions under which critical consciousness can emerge.

THE ROLE OF THE FACILITATOR

Within a critical social education approach, the facilitator's role is not to provide answers, but to support discussion rather than instruction, create conditions for critical reflection, help surface and question taken for granted assumptions, and support young people to connect their individual stories to wider collective patterns and social issues.

The facilitator is a:
- Co-learner, not an expert authority.
- Discussion partner, not a judge.
- Political being, but not a political director.

This means facilitators:
- Do not claim neutrality, but practice ethical reflexivity about their own position, power, and assumptions.
- Actively resist reproducing hierarchies of voice, knowledge, and legitimacy within the group.
- Intentionally work to shift power from facilitator-centred to youth-centred processes.

KNOWLEDGE, VOICE, AND POWER

LOUDER treats young people's lived experiences as a valid and necessary form of knowledge. Using a critical social education approach, it invites young people and facilitators to question whose knowledge counts, whose voices are heard and taken seriously, and who gets to decide what is seen as "normal", "possible", or "important" in society.

LOUDER invites young people to recognise:
- How power operates in everyday life.
- How some voices are amplified while others are marginalised.
- How cultural tools (art, language, music, symbols) can challenge dominant narratives.

Facilitators support young people to move from "this is how things are" = to "this is how things are made" = to "this is how things could be different"

DISCUSSION AS METHOD

Discussion is not about comfort, but about creating space for productive discomfort held within safety. It involves holding multiple truths at once, exploring contradictions, surfacing tensions, and deepening understanding rather than rushing toward easy agreement or simple answers. Facilitators support this kind of discussion by asking open, generative questions; encouraging listening across difference; slowing down moments of disagreement rather than resolving them too quickly; and making space for silence, uncertainty, and not-knowing.

EMOTION, IDENTITY, AND LIVED EXPERIENCE

Critical social education recognises that learning is not purely cognitive, and LOUDER intentionally engages emotion, identity, creativity and imagination as part of the learning process. This is not "soft" work; it is central to how people come to understand injustice, power, voice, and what is possible.

INCLUSION AND JUSTICE ORIENTATION

A critical social education approach requires facilitators to actively attend to inequalities within the group, notice whose voices and experiences are centred or marginalised, and be aware of whose stories are normalised and whose are silenced or absent.

Facilitators should:
* Notice power dynamics in participation.
* Gently intervene when certain voices dominate.
* Actively create space for marginalised perspectives.

ETHICS AND NON-DIRECTIVE POLITICS

Critical social education does not impose ideology, but supports young people to analyse, critique and form their own positions.

Facilitators should:
* Resist steering young people toward "correct" conclusions.
* Resist framing certain views as more legitimate than others.
* Avoid substituting their own political desires for young people's agency.

WHAT TRANSFORMATION LOOKS LIKE

In a critical social education frame, transformation is not only external (policy change, campaigns), but also internal and relational:

* Shifts in how young people see themselves.
* Shifts in how they understand power.
* Shifts in their sense of agency.
* Shifts in their connection to others.

FACILITATOR REFLEXIVITY

Critical social education is not something facilitators deliver; it is something they must also practice. Facilitators are part of the system they are working within, and they are encouraged to reflect on:

* Their own social position and power.
* How this shapes interactions with young people.
* When they are tempted to control outcomes.
* When they are uncomfortable with uncertainty, conflict, or critique.

YOUTH WORK IRELAND MEMBERS

Canal Communities Regional Youth Service
www.ccrys.org

Carlow Regional Youth Service
www.carlowrys.org

CDYS Youth Work Ireland
www.cdys.ie

Clare Youth Service
www.facebook.com/clareyouthservice

Donegal Youth Service
www.donegalyouthservice.ie

FDYS
www.fdys.ie

In Sync Youth and Family Services
www.insync.ie

KCYS
www.kcys.ie

Limerick Youth Service
www.limerickyouthservice.com

Ossory Youth
www.ossoryyouth.com

Waterford & South Tipperary Community Youth Service
www.wstcys.ie

Youth Work Ireland Cavan/ Monaghan
www.ywicm.ie

Youth Work Ireland County Longford
www.lcrl.ie/youth-service

Youth Work Ireland Galway
www.youthworkgalway.ie

Youth Work Ireland Laois
www.ywilaois.com

Youth Work Ireland Louth
www.youthworkirelandlouth.ie

Youth Work Ireland Meath
www.youthworkirelandmeath.ie

Youth Work Ireland Midlands
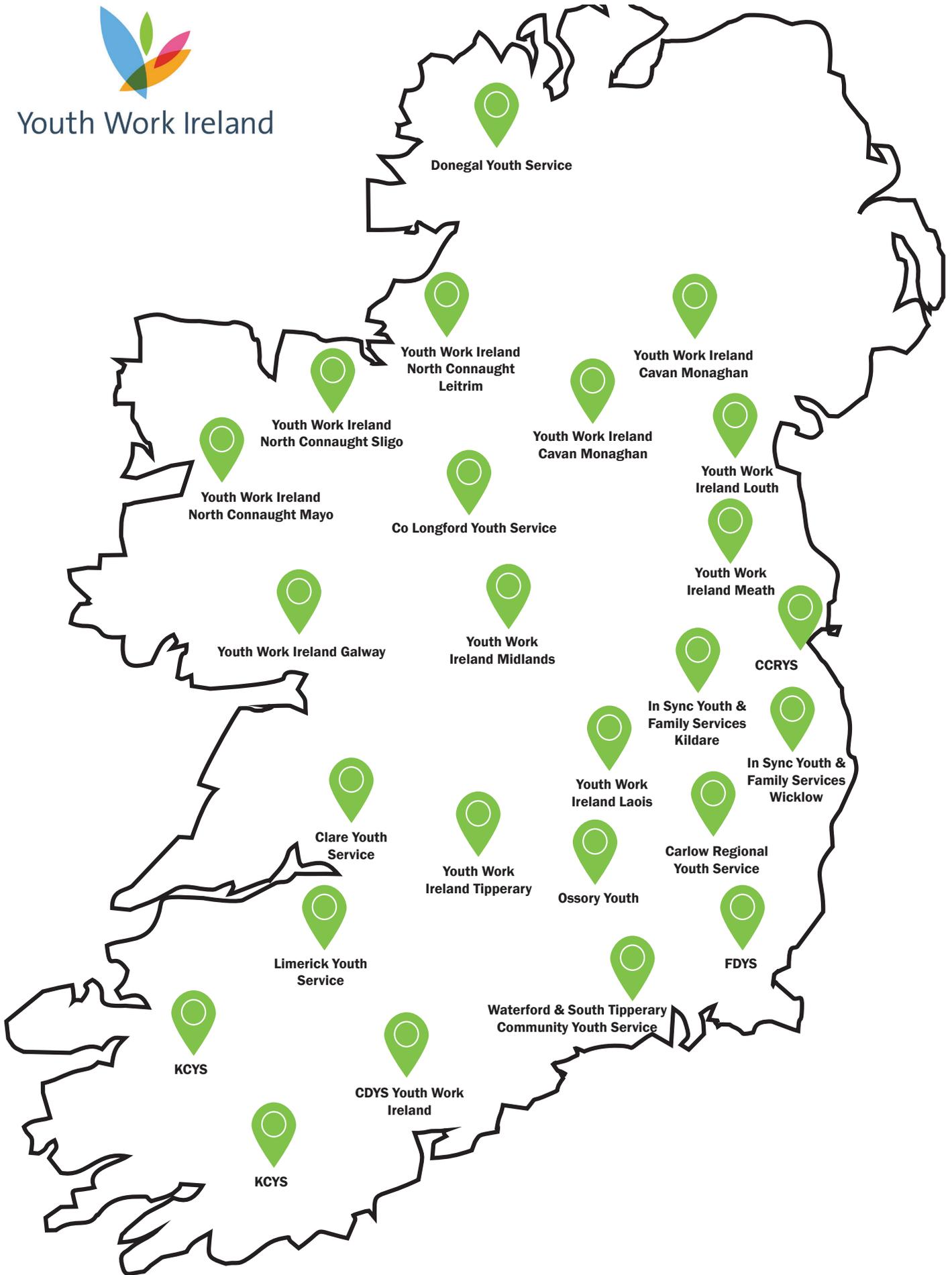www.youthworkmidlands.org

Youth Work Ireland North Connaught
www.ncycs.ie

Youth Work Ireland Tipperary
www.youthworktipperary.ie

Youth Work Ireland

Donegal Youth Service

Youth Work Ireland
North Connaught
Leitrim

Youth Work Ireland
Cavan Monaghan

Youth Work Ireland
North Connaught Sligo

Youth Work Ireland
Cavan Monaghan

Youth Work
Ireland Louth

Youth Work Ireland
North Connaught Mayo

Co Longford Youth Service

Youth Work
Ireland Meath

Youth Work Ireland Galway

Youth Work
Ireland Midlands

CCRYS

In Sync Youth &
Family Services
Kildare

In Sync Youth &
Family Services
Wicklow

Clare Youth
Service

Youth Work
Ireland Laois

Youth Work
Ireland Tipperary

Carlow Regional
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Service

Ossory Youth

FDYS

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