

**Youth Climate Action Training  
Workshop 2:  
Nature's Voices  
Alex Konieczka & Barry Morgan**

**Introduction**

Dive into climate action and sustainability through creative and hands-on approaches. Nature's Voices invites participants to explore different perspectives of species and common items and experiment with playful, imaginative activities that challenge how we see the world and our impact on it. The workshop encourages collaboration, reflection, and resourceful problem-solving. It's immersive, experimental, and fun — fostering creativity, curiosity, and agency while engaging with climate challenges in unexpected and inspiring ways.

This workshop was created for Youth Theatre Ireland's Climate Action Training Workshops series by [Alex Konieczka of Understory](#) & Barry Morgan of [Taitiu Theatre](#) to help Youth Theatre leaders develop and strengthen their capacity for creative climate leadership through the practice of imaginative play, collaboration, and mindful ecological awareness.

**What to Expect:**

The workshop focuses on creative sustainability in youth theatre, exploring how reclaimed and repurposed materials, imaginative practices, and systems thinking can transform theatre-making. Participants experiment with theatre-making choices — from props and materials to stories and collaboration, discovering how these decisions affect audiences and the wider arts world. The training develops practical skills such as perspective-shifting storytelling and theatrical advocacy, offering fresh ways to engage with climate action. By combining environmental awareness with imagination and play, participants gain tools to embed sustainability into their creative work, make actionable improvements, and inspire ongoing climate engagement.

Expect to challenge assumptions, spark creativity, and reflect on your own theatre practice, discovering fun, practical ways to make your work more sustainable while building insight, empathy, and agency. Along the way, you'll see the world through an entirely new lens, stepping into perspectives you've never considered before.

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This workshop runs over one full day, divided into two sessions, but can be delivered over several sessions as time allows.

<b>Morning session:</b>	10:30am–1:00pm
<b>Afternoon session:</b>	2:00pm–5:00pm
<b>Participants:</b>	Up to 30 young people

### **Materials / Advance Preparation**

- Craft and art materials (cardboard, paper tape, markers, recycled materials, etc.) If possible, use second-hand or repurposed materials. Aim to avoid single-use plastics, plastic Sellotape, or anything difficult to recycle or compost after the activity. Encourage participants to be creative with what's available. Resourcefulness is part of the challenge!
- WIFI access to do research
- Info sheets or cards for each chosen species/item (see list below)
- Props and costume pieces for character creation
- Puppets or puppet-making materials (optional demonstration)
- Space for walking observation

### **Facilitators should:**

- Prepare or print category cards featuring species or objects (e.g. bat, puffin, nettle, balloon, mobile phone). We have chosen Irish organisms and common items.
- Familiarise themselves with the flow of activities and where to introduce discussion and reflection points.
- Bring examples of circular economy items (reused materials, upcycled costumes, etc.) to illustrate sustainability in creative practice.

### **Participant Engagement**

This workshop is highly interactive, blending theatre games, environmental learning, and group reflection. Participants should come ready to move, play, observe, and discuss. The environment is supportive, open, and collaborative — with space for laughter, experimentation, and curiosity. Facilitators are encouraged to establish group agreements early in the session to foster respect, inclusion, and shared responsibility throughout the day.

### **Workshop Outline**

<b>Welcome &amp; Introductions</b>	5 minutes
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Begin by welcoming participants and introducing facilitators.

### **Physical & Vocal Warm-Up**

20 minutes

Guide participants through energising activities to prepare body and voice for creative work:

Head-to-toe body activation

Humming for voice connection

“[Soup Song](#)” for group rhythm and fun

Objective: Get participants physically and mentally ready to create dynamic, embodied work.

### **Agreements**

5 minutes

Co-create simple agreements for the space e.g., be respectful.

Ask participants to set an intention for the day e.g. be brave, get to know someone new.

Objective: Build trust and set expectations for collaboration and creative exploration.

### **Framing Climate Action**

25 minutes

Lead a walking debate starting with simple prompts. Invite a few participants to explain what influenced their choice from different sections.

Objective: Introduce systems thinking, explore what participants know and challenge their perceptions.

- “Today is Saturday — agree or disagree?” – warm up.
- “Chocolate is good” – you might expect most people to agree based on personal opinion!
- “Chocolate is good for the environment” – introduces systems thinking. There are issues: Cocoa farming and deforestation; Use of pesticides and water; Fairtrade; Food miles; Exploitation of labour; Packaging and waste.
  - Key insight: Something can be “good for me” while being harmful to the wider system. Does this mean we need to stop eating chocolate? Or improve the system?
- “More than half of the clothing we get rid of gets recycled” – this statement is false/disagree as most end up in incineration, landfill or get exported and cause issues in other countries like Ghana. Introduces the idea of fast fashion, natural vs synthetic fibres. You can ask participants to check their clothing labels to see what materials they’re wearing.
  - Key insight: The system has created a plastic industry resulting in plastic pollution crises. Clothes by fast fashion companies are designed for disposability, not longevity.
- “Consumption rate in Ireland is double the EU average” – agree or disagree. This statement is true/agree. Ireland has an extremely high consumption + import dependence. We love to buy stuff all the time.

Key insight: Our environmental impact isn’t just about what we produce — it’s also about what we buy.

- “Ireland is doing enough on climate action.” - Explore perceptions vs. realities of policy and leadership.  
Key insight: Climate action is political and constantly evolving. Ireland is not doing enough yet, but progress is happening. Public demand is a major driver of change — if we don’t show we care, how can we expect our leaders to act with urgency?
- “We can fix climate change” - Forward-looking hope + responsibility conversation. What does “fix” mean? Preventing? Adapting? Restoring? What role does creativity and imagination play? How might the arts drive social change?  
Key insight: The future isn’t fixed — movements, storytelling, and community action greatly influence outcomes.
- “I can make a difference” - Explore agency, simple actions and large scale solutions.  
Key insight: Individual actions matter most when they ripple into collective change. Shift from a self-centred mindset to a collective community-based approach.

### **Nature Walk & Observation**

30 minutes

Walk together to a nearby green/blue space. Encourage participants to slow down, observe details, and notice connections between living and non-living elements. Include short reflection stops: What are they noticing? How does it connect to us, and wider systems? Activate sensory awareness — what do they see, hear, and feel that might inspire their characters later?

Prompt: Ask the group if they can imagine what it’d be like to be this tree/plant/stone/stick? What might it say right now?

Objective: Regulate the nervous system, foster curiosity, and practise mindful nature observation. Start perspective-shifting.

### **Group Formation**

5 minutes

Ask participants to walk around the room, each time you call out a number, form a team of that size, ending in groups of around 5 (or what fits the number attending for the next part). Objective: Strengthen social mixing and new connections.

### **Species & Systems**

15 minutes

Ask each group to select a species or item — e.g., bat, puffin, blue-green algae, slime mould, salmon, dandelion, balloon, mobile phone. Encourage brave choices even if participants don’t know much about them. Explain that each has a life cycle, needs, uses, and impacts within a larger system.

Invite groups prepare a short creative piece — scene / performance / speech — from the perspective of their chosen organism or object. Encourage emotive, imaginative storytelling about how their character experiences the world and environmental change.

Tips: Blend imagination with some scientific accuracy. Embody the organism — how might it move, sound, think, feel?

Prompt if needed:

- What do you see every day?
- What challenges do you face?
- Are you thriving or struggling?
- What do you wish humans understood about you?

Objective: Encourage empathy and perspective-taking while laying the groundwork for collaborative research and storytelling.

**Character Creation & Research** 30 minutes

Participants turn their species or item into a character. Use repurposed or compostable materials for simple costumes, props, or puppets — introducing circular economy ideas through practice. Encourage reflection on how materials can be diverted from landfill or return to the soil.

Objective: Explore ecological systems while practising resourcefulness and creative problem-solving.

**Scripting** 30 minutes

Groups shape short scenes. Support them to build a clear arc by introducing a second character (human being, item or another species that might be connected through a food-web, habitat etc): What does the character want? What obstacles do they face? What message do they want to share?

Objective: Transform research into creative storytelling through dialogue and improvisation.

**Lunch Break**

**Post-Lunch Re-Energiser** 15 minutes

Playful games (e.g., Zip Zap Boing) restore focus and energy.

Objective: Re-establish ensemble connection after the break.

**From Page to Stage** 45 minutes

Groups keep developing their work focusing on movement, sound, and staging. Facilitators circulate to provide constructive support.

Objective: Build confidence in communicating ideas and refine storytelling through rehearsal.

**Pre-Flight Checks** 20 minutes

Check in with each group. Offer supportive notes to enhance clarity, flow, and ensemble cohesion.

Objective: Strengthen pieces before sharing.

**Sharing**

60 minutes

Groups present their performances. Foster appreciation and curiosity — not judgment.

Objective: Practise perspective-shifting storytelling and use performance as environmental advocacy.

**Reflection & Next Steps**

20 minutes

Discuss what was portrayed in their performances and what materials were used.

Celebrate their creativity and problem-solving with reused and compostable materials.

Explore how they might support their species or reduce the impact of their item. What did they learn? What connections emerged?

Share examples of future action — reuse in productions, circular design, partnerships with local groups.

Objective: Link creative insights to personal and collective responsibility. Empower participants to carry their learning into daily life and creative practice.

**Links & Resources**

Facilitators may prepare additional support materials such as:

- Fact sheets or info cards about each species or object.
- Examples of sustainable art and costume practices.
- Reading and reflection prompts related to climate storytelling and creative agency.

**Attachments**

- Species list
- Actions we can take to help nature

**Bat** — Ireland's natural pest control: a single bat can eat thousands of insects in one night.

**Pigeon** — Descended from wild cliff birds, they've adapted brilliantly to city "cliffs", buildings and ledges. They clean up leftover food waste in cities.

**Solitary Bee** — They pollinate far more efficiently than honeybees. The most diverse type of pollinators in Ireland.

**Nettle** — A powerhouse plant that supports over 40 species of insects and makes great fertiliser too.

**White-tailed Eagle** — Once extinct in Ireland — now making a comeback thanks to reintroduction.

**Witch's Egg** (Stinkhorn fungus egg) — A mysterious, foul-smelling fungus that attracts flies to spread its spores.

**Atlantic Salmon** — Born in rivers, mature in the ocean, and return home to spawn — incredible navigators.

**Dandelion** — Every part is edible and they're a crucial early spring food for pollinators.

**Irish Elk** — Not actually an elk — a giant deer with the largest antlers ever in the animal kingdom.

**Greater White-toothed Shrew** — An invasive species in Ireland — speedy, chunky, with a high-energy appetite.

**Native Pygmy Shrew** — Tiny, frantic, native and endangered — losing ground to the newcomer shrew.

**Eelgrass / Seagrass** — Sea carbon-keepers: they lock away carbon faster than forests on land.

**Lamprey** — Ancient, jawless fish older than dinosaurs — nature's living fossils.

**Fox** — Urban survivor — thriving in cities by adapting to our waste and green spaces.

**Mobile Phone** — Packed with metals mined from nature — our tech has deep environmental footprints.

**Fast Fashion Clothing Item** — Often made from plastic fibres derived from fossil fuels that shed microplastics into waterways with every wash.

**BAT**

**FOX**

**PIGEON**

**MOBILE**

**PHONE**

**SOLITARY**

**FAST**

**BEE**

**FASHION**

**CLOTHING**

**ITEM**

**NETTLE**

**ATLANTIC**

**WHITE TAILED**

**SALMON**

**EAGLE**

**DANDELION**

**SEAGRASS/  
EELGRASS**

**IRISH ELK**

**LAMPREY**

**NATIVE PYGMY  
SHREW**

**WITCHES EGG**

**GREATER WHITE  
TOOTHED SHREW**

<b>Big Action</b>	<b>Who it helps</b>	<b>Why it matters</b>
<p><b>Make space for wildness</b> (leave messy corners, native plants, don't spray chemicals)</p>	<p>Solitary bee, Native shrew, Greater white-toothed shrew, Fox, Nettles, Dandelions, Pigeons, Bats</p>	<p>Habitat to live, reproduce, hibernate + food webs and ecosystem services restored that benefit us.</p>
<p><b>Protect and restore waterways</b> (reduce pollution, support river conservation, slow the flow of rain water through water butts and rain gardens)</p>	<p>Atlantic salmon, Lamprey, White-tailed eagle, Bats (insects over water), Fox (healthy prey)</p>	<p>Clean water is the backbone of healthy ecosystems.</p>
<p><b>Reduce plastic + sea/ocean pollution</b> (cut single-use plastic, reduce fast fashion purchases, choose natural/compostable materials, wash synthetics in a wash bag)</p>	<p>Atlantic salmon, Kombu/seagrass, White-tailed eagle (marine prey safety), Fox (pollution through food chain)</p>	<p>Seas and oceans feed and regulate the whole planet.</p>
<p><b>Support rewilding + habitat recovery</b> (no mow, woodlands, wetlands, coastal zones)</p>	<p>White-tailed eagle, Fox, Bats, Shrews, Nettles, Dandelions, Seagrass</p>	<p>More homes for wildlife, more carbon stored, more mindfulness and nature connection.</p>
<p><b>Choose slower, lower-impact consumption</b> (less fast fashion, repair phones, buy less stuff, second hand)</p>	<p>Seagrass, Salmon, Lamprey, Fox, White-tailed eagle (toxins + mining impacts), All species</p>	<p>Reduces extraction + waste harming ecosystems, climate justice to not negatively impact less well off communities, less plastic in our bodies.</p>