

## **Youth Climate Action Training**

### **Workshop 4:**

### **How Can We Act When The House Is On Fire?**

**Sinéad Wallace**

#### **Introduction**

While exploring big ideas, we all want to make relevant work that speaks to people. One of the biggest challenges we face today is Climate Collapse. This interactive workshop explores a methodology for creating Theatre That Doesn't Cost the Earth.

Approaching the subject both scientifically and creatively, we examine where we are and how we got here, where we can go from here and how we can shift our mindset to embrace new ways of working. Through the lens of theatre production this workshop addresses circularity, networks of sharing, re-use, data usage and making smart, greener choices in Design.

Using the [Theatre Green Book](#) as a guide, we look at Purchasing, Fast Fashion, Materials, Transport, Paper vs Digital and we create our own guides to building a Sustainable Theatre Practice for Youth Theatre.

The structure of the workshop is based on the National Youth Council of Ireland's The Art of Change from their [How Dare YOUth publication](#).

#### **What to Expect:**

Through the lens of theatre production this workshop will address circularity, social justice, networks of sharing, re-use, data usage and making smart, greener choices in Design.

We are past the point where we can make vague commitments without action. We must embrace circularity in our Theatre making with great urgency. The task is huge, but our potential to make change is exciting, and the moment to affect change is now. We will approach the subject both scientifically, looking at where we are and how we got here, and creatively, looking at where we can go from here and how we can shift our mindset to embrace new ways of working. Artists are creative thinkers and solution finders, to gather a group like this together and work out some real actions for Youth Theatre in Ireland is an exciting opportunity.

This workshop was created for Youth Theatre Ireland's Climate Action Training Workshops series by [Sinéad Wallace](#) who is a freelance lighting designer and sustainability advisor in Irish theatre. She wrote The Lir Academy's Sustainability Policy and Action Plan in 2023 and supports The Lir Academy in producing shows to Theatre Green Book standard annually.

These workshops and resource development was supported by a grant from the Climate Action Works Programme through the [Community Foundation Ireland](#) in 2025. Huge thanks to the incredible artists who delivered this programme and to Amy Redmond for the editorial support in preparing these resources.

This workshop was delivered to two youth theatre groups in Bray, Co. Wicklow, Ireland, in November 2025. This workshop was delivered over one full day, but it is possible to break it down into 3 workshops to be delivered over several sessions as time allows.

### **Requirements**

Projection surface and projector or very large monitor / Flipchart / Sticky notes / Printed material included in resources / Internet access (WIFI ideally not Data) / Participant seating and floor space to move around.

### **QR Code for Resources**



Please scan this QR Code to gain access to all resources, slides and other materials used in this workshop.

P 9- Global Youth Work: A Transformative Youth Work Practice Model reproduced here with kind permission from Valerie Duffy, National Youth Council of Ireland(NYCI).

## Arrival

A flipchart/whiteboard can be set up at the entrance to allow participants to answer the following questions:

*How often to you think about Climate Change?*                      Scale line from never to daily.

*How does Climate Change affect you?*

## The Capacity Game - Group Juggle [15mins]

All participants stand in a circle facing inward.  
See below. (With thanks to <https://www.tdsb.on.ca/> )

### Key Learning

Each group will learn how complex problems can cause systems to collapse when there are too many issues to work with.

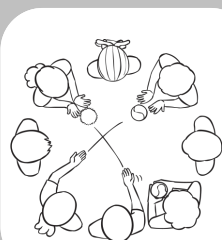
**Goal of the Game:** Players toss an increasing number of balls/items around the group following a pattern. Members try to keep all the balls in motion without dropping them.

**Recommended Grade(s):**  
3- 8

**Duration:** 10-15 minutes

### What You Need:

- Up to 3-5 different balls or throwable objects
- Space group to stand in a circle
- Up to 6-20 players



### Background

People have become accustomed to the idea that problems will grow slowly in number and that it will usually be possible to deal with each issue as it arises. However, greenhouse gases are increasing in quantity at an ever increasing rate causing many places to change faster than anyone expected. For example: the Arctic is warming almost four times faster than anywhere else in the world. Climate change is also impacting the planet in multiple ways, causing some systems to reach their limit of coping with all the changes. For example, coral reefs are dying and may not be able to return to healthy ecosystems. This game shows how when too many things are happening at the same time, it is almost impossible to keep everything in balance.

### How to Play

1. Form a circle with everyone facing inward.
2. Have the group develop a sequence for passing the ball to each other. When making the sequence, pass the ball to a player across from you, no player should pass the ball to a person standing next to them, and no one should get the ball more than once while the pattern is being developed. Have people raise their arm after receiving the ball to indicate they are now part of the sequence.
3. Each person will always have one person they receive the ball from and one person to whom they throw the ball. The last person throws it to the person who started the sequence.
4. Begin tossing the ball underhand in the designated sequence. The goal is accuracy not speed.
5. When the group is comfortable with the sequence explain the rules of the game.
6. **Rules:** "Your team's goal is to keep as many balls in motion at the same time. Do this by continually catching balls from your designated thrower and then throwing them to your designated catcher".

## Group Juggle Considerations

### How to Play Continued

8. Explain what you will do, *“We will start the game slowly. As I see you successfully keeping balls in motion, I will throw in more balls to anyone I see who is not currently holding a ball.”* As players start passing the ball around according to the established sequence, wait 5 seconds then throw in another ball. Wait three more seconds and then throw in another. Soon you will overwhelm the capacity of the group to maintain the balls in motion. Encourage group members to retrieve missed balls and put them back into the game. To provide even more distraction, throw in a rubber chicken or something similar. As the chaos grows and the group is having great difficulty or is laughing too hard, stop the game.

#### Watch For



- Establish ground rules for tossing the objects, underhand, help the receiver catch the ball, focus on accuracy. For safety, objects or balls should be fairly lightweight and soft or flexible material.

#### Discussion



- What happened? How did you feel during the first stage of the game? How did you feel when multiple balls were in the circle? How difficult is it to keep all objects in motion?
- The objects in this game are like things we need to do or things that cause us stress, “stressors”. What activities in life cause you stress? Too many things to do or stressors can distract and confuse us – we don’t know which one to give our attention to. Can you give an example when you are trying to do too many things at the same time? Do you ever have to make a choice – and let other things “drop”?
- Just like we have limits to what we can handle, so do other systems, even planetary systems. We can handle small changes – like adding a second ball in our game, but when we add too many, we can’t keep all the balls in motion. Can anyone think of an example of people or places that are under a lot of stress because of climate change? What ways can we take action on climate change and reduce the stressors?

#### Variations



This game can be simplified or made more challenging depending on how close players are to each other, and what is thrown.

#### Inclusion



**Overall considerations:** The game can be simplified or made more complicated depending on age group and abilities. All players can be seated to accommodate those players with mobility challenges. Choose objects that allow participants to demonstrate their different strengths and skills, e.g., balls with bells inside, larger softer beach balls, colour stringy balls (e.g., Koosh ball).

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## **Presentation: The Science Bit [60 mins]**

The presentation gives participants the basics in Climate Science in order to understand why we need to change.

This content can be emotive and the presentation should be preceded by permission to tune out, take a toilet break, get some air. The facts can be hard to face but the presentation concludes with Our Power to make change so should feel empowering for the participants.

Some level of understanding of the content is useful for the facilitator.

To learn more about this topic you can undertake Creative Climate Literacy Training 101 with Julie's Bicycle [here](#), or watch a 1 hour webinar CCI Skillnet and Performing Arts Forum commissioned for the launch of the Theatre Green Book [here](#).

Slide deck #1 covers these areas:

- Climate Change Facts.
- How we got here.
- Why we didn't see this coming.
- Growth vs the Planet.
- Climate Justice.
- Emissions in Ireland
- What do we need to know to make a change?
- Where is our power?

## The Story of Stuff

Introductory video:

The Story of Plastic

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O4YzWDp3f\\_E](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O4YzWDp3f_E)

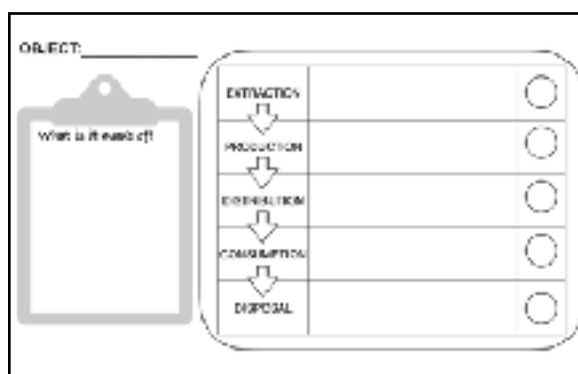


## Object Lifecycle game [30 mins]

Each group of 4-6 is given an object.

1. Bottle of water
2. T shirt from Penneys (sweatshop)
3. Beef burger
4. Bottle of Coke
5. A phone

The lifecycle is explained under the headings in the Object Lifecycle Chart.



Each group has 20 minutes to research the object using the Object Lifecycle Chart above. Printable QR codes leading to web resources can be distributed with the chart.

Webpage links below can be found in resources as Printable QR codes to be handed out with each Object Sheet.

Group 1: [https://thewaterproject.org/bottled-water/bottled\\_water\\_wasteful](https://thewaterproject.org/bottled-water/bottled_water_wasteful)

Group 2: <https://www.just-style.com/analyst-comment/ethical-dilemma-shopping-primark/?cf-view>

Group3: <https://consumerecology.com/beef-carbon-footprint-environmental-impact/>

Group 4: <https://www.greenpeace.org/aotearoa/story/unbottling-the-truth-coca-colas-role-in-plastic-pollution/>

Group 5: <https://www.tier1.com/the-hidden-environmental-impact-of-our-smartphones/>

The facilitator travels between groups to assist, directing them towards resources.

The main resources are Google search, Wikipedia.

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## **Honest Sales pitch improv [30 mins]**

Task: Sell your OBJECT to the room. Honestly.

Rules: 2 minutes only for sales pitch.  
Seller must be honest using the things you've learned.

Any style: eg. 1950 US TV, podcast, Radio Ad, in store.

Timing:  
15 minutes to prep.  
2 minutes to pitch.

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## **Lunch Break**

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## **Introducing the Theatre Green Book [30 mins]**

Slide deck #2 presentation guide to The Theatre Green Book and it's development.

Contents:

The Why of Theatre Green Book  
Principles of Theatre Green Book  
Circular Economy

The National Theatre's video on Youtube as an introduction to exploring Theatre Green Book:



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## **A Book of Youth Theatre - how we act now [30 mins]**

Attendees are split into groups of 4-6 depending on numbers.  
Each group is assigned a role in their Youth Theatre.

Directors and playwrights - what will you say?  
Admin, organisation and rehearsals  
Performers  
Costume  
Props & Set

Using a large sheet of paper, compose a list of what they do and how they do it now.  
Alternatively the groups can use the tables included in the Resource file.

Group comes back together and shares their practices, everyone can add to the list.

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## **A Green Book for Youth Theatre [20 mins]**

Slide Deck #3 is presented as a best practice guide for Theatre.  
Slide deck offers best practice guidelines in:

The creative process  
Admin, organisation and rehearsals  
Performers  
Costume  
Props & Set

The groups are then asked to review their current practices with that learning using the following exercise.

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## Stop Start Continue [20 mins]

Coming back together, the groups are invited to discuss the topics under the headings provided. All the large sheets are positioned so they can be seen by the full group.

The facilitator can use the whiteboard/flip chart with page for each heading

'STOP' (red traffic light)  
'CONTINUE' (orange light)  
'START' (green light)

Each action from the subject lists is added to either one of the Traffic Light sheets until everyone is satisfied that the list is complete.

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## Closing Activity [30 mins]

Task: Using the Stop/Start/Continue lists create a 10 line poem/rap or a sonnet about Youth Theatre's journey to sustainability.

Rules: 20 minutes to write and rehearse the 10-line performance.  
Perform to the group.

Short conversation about key points each group presents to conclude the learning.

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## Final words

*Emphasise the Power of the Group to make change.  
Refer to the 'Art of Change' slide below.  
Reminder of the 'Social tipping point' - 25% rule.  
Encourage Conversation.  
Take the learnings to your life and work.  
Praise what they already do.*

# UNIT 3: Global Youth Work: A Transformative Youth Work Practice Model

## THE ART OF CHANGE

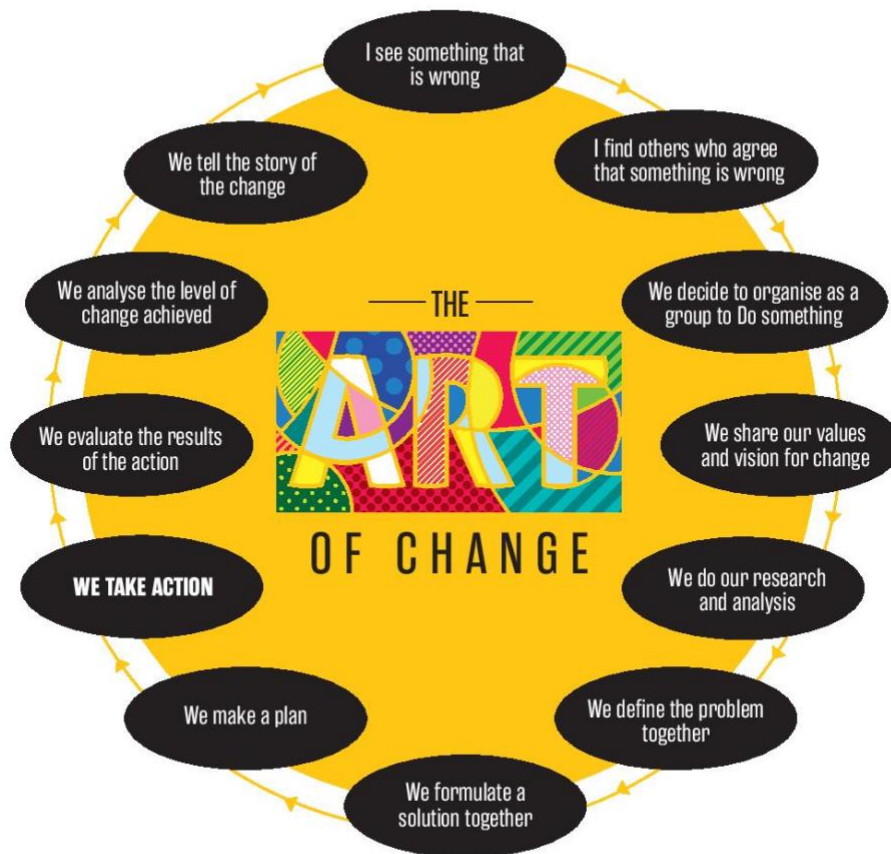


**Aim: To introduce the Art of Change as a tool for young people to use in their activism.**

The Art of Change reminds us that change is a journey, a process with stages, a set of signposts for how we might best attempt to DO something about the issues that are causing harm to our communities, our society and the world as a whole.

The Art of Change is a tool, it challenges us to be prepared for change making, to be conscious of the journey at all stages, to commit to a process and to accept that it may take time.

The Art of Change is an invitation to START something, it's a reason to gather the combined energy and the collective imagination of a group of people who see the necessity of change making and the responsibility of being a change maker as fundamentally linked.



Climate Revolution 15

Art of Change tool from the Activism, The SDGS, and Youth resource available: <https://www.youth.ie/documents/activism-the-sdgs-and-youth/>

# Resources & Print Outs

Objects Game

Honest Sales pitch

YOUth make theatre

**Note:**

All materials are in Arial typeface for accessibility.

All materials are black and white and free from additional embellishment to reduce ink used and therefore our impact on the environment.

It is suggested that materials are printed on the reverse side of previously used paper and recycled/reused afterwards.

# Resources & Print Outs

Objects Game - QR codes

Objects Game - QR codes

SMARTPHONE



Objects Game - QR codes

**BOTTLE OF WATER**



Objects Game - QR codes

**BEEF BURGER**



Objects Game - QR codes

T-SHIRT FROM PENNEYS



Objects Game - QR codes

**BOTTLE OF COCA COLA**



OBJECT: \_\_\_\_\_



EXTRACTION ↓		<input type="checkbox"/>
PRODUCTION ↓		<input type="checkbox"/>
DISTRIBUTION ↓		<input type="checkbox"/>
CONSUMPTION ↓		<input type="checkbox"/>
DISPOSAL		<input type="checkbox"/>

OBJECT: \_\_\_\_\_



EXTRACTION ↓		<input type="checkbox"/>
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DISTRIBUTION ↓		<input type="checkbox"/>
CONSUMPTION ↓		<input type="checkbox"/>
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OBJECT: \_\_\_\_\_



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OBJECT: \_\_\_\_\_



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OBJECT: \_\_\_\_\_



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# Resources & Print Outs

YOUth make theatre









