



Young Reporters for the Environment and the Sustainable Development Goals

Introduction

This document serves to highlight the link between the Young Reporters for the Environment (YRE) programme and the UN's Sustainable Development Goals 2015-2030. As will be explained below, the YRE programme supports the 17 goals in a multifaceted way.

The essence of the YRE programme is to encourage students aged 11-21 to investigate a specific environmental issue in their community, propose solutions and articulate their findings through the media of writing, photography or video.

The environmental aspect has been, and continues to be, a key part of the programme. However, based on the Sustainable Development Goals 2015-2030, YRE is in the process of incorporating the 17 goals into the programme and expanding the range of topics that can be investigated by students. It is evident that many issues whether environmental, social or economic are interrelated, and helping students understand these links is an important part of Education for Sustainable Development.



The first step is taken in the YRE competition 2017/2018, where it is recommended that every environmental-related topic investigated by students should be related to another relevant SDG. For example, students investigating the issue of marine litter can choose to connect the SDG 14 (Life below Water) with the SDG 12 (Responsible Consumption). The 2017/2018 competition will serve as a trial period and depending on the outcome, this recommendation might become a criterion.

Furthermore, being an educational programme of high quality, it is evident that YRE in itself is directly related to SDG 4 (Quality Education). However, education is fundamental to achieving all 17 goals. Education facilitates appropriate knowledge on issues related to health etc., environmental awareness and promoting peaceful societies and tolerance to diversity.

Thus, the YRE programme supports the Sustainable Development Goals in a multifaceted way. This is evident through the work of the students, the investigations they make and the influence their journalistic pieces have on local communities, but also through the particular structure of the programme. Below, the YRE programme's links to each of the 17 SDGs are presented.

Links to the Sustainable Development Goals



Access to quality education improves children's chances of breaking the cycle of poverty, meaning that education is fundamental to poverty reduction. Being an educational programme, YRE therefore helps decrease poverty in the long-term.

Through YRE, students develop important skills such as communication, critical analysis and in-depth research, and improve their knowledge of subjects related to sustainability and the environment. These skills can be used in a variety of other classes and further studies, improving the students' job opportunities and thereby their future economic prospects.

So far, every year more than 275,000 students from 35 countries around the world have been involved in the YRE programme. The programme is flexible and can be adapted to any social and cultural background, meaning that countries dealing with issues of poverty are also able to implement and benefit from YRE.



Through the YRE programme, students are encouraged to investigate and propose solutions for issues related to food production, agriculture and nutrition.

This can help promote the awareness of improved nutrition, sustainable food production and healthy lifestyles. It also creates opportunities for developing new ideas related to food consumption and agricultural practices, ultimately making a positive impact on improving nutrition and ending hunger. Students' articles, videos and photos shared with the local and wider community are educating and encouraging people to make a change e.g. in lifestyle.

3 GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING



The YRE programme encourages students to look into environmental issues that affect the health and wellbeing of the students, teachers and the wider community.

By investigating issues related to subjects such as health care services, traffic congestion, pollution, and smoking, the awareness of such issues are increased (not only by students, but also the people that read their journalistic pieces).

4 QUALITY EDUCATION



YRE is a high quality educational programme based on a tried and tested four-step methodology which can be integrated into the existing curriculums of students aged 11 to 21. The process is seamless, non-disruptive, and positively contributes to develop students' soft and hard-skills, such as source criticism, communication and critical thinking,

Currently, new YRE lesson plans are being developed which will use the Sustainable Development Goals as point of departure. Teachers will be able to adapt the lesson plans to their specific field, age group and country.

Most of the countries offer trainings, workshops and missions for teachers and students. Teachers have an opportunity to get inspiration on how to incorporate e.g. modern technology (making videos, photos) into the teaching process. Students can increase their skills as potential future employees and decision-making people.

5 GENDER EQUALITY



The YRE programme encourages students to actively work together and support each other without prejudice of any kind. All students, regardless of gender, have equal rights to participate in YRE and all ideas and viewpoints are welcomed and encouraged.

YRE gives girls and women, alongside other gender, an opportunity to look into an issue that they feel strongly about and to express their opinions freely.

6 CLEAN WATER AND SANITATION



Through the YRE programme, students can choose to investigate issues related to sanitation or water quality of nearby areas. By involving key local stakeholders in their work and informing communities of their findings, students can support and strengthen the sustainable use of water, the local sanitation conditions and the protection of water related eco-systems.

7 AFFORDABLE AND CLEAN ENERGY



The YRE programme encourages students to investigate subjects related to renewable energy, clean energy technology, and energy efficiency. These are topics that can be investigated at home or in school, looking at the energy sources being used. Through their entries students encourage the local community to take action.

In the long run, the student's engagement can help facilitate clean energy research and technologies.

8 DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH



A key aim of the YRE programme is to increase students' knowledge of sustainable development and give them the opportunity of being creative and innovative. They also learn how to take leadership and how to work together. The experiences gained through the programme can increase the students' interest in working with sustainability in the future and the knowledge and skills they develop will be vital when entering the job market.

9 INDUSTRY, INNOVATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE



Through the YRE programme, students often develop creative ideas for solving the environmental issues they investigate. This kind of innovative thinking is extremely valuable for finding solutions to future problems.

Furthermore, the programme provides an important base for enhancing future scientific research. Students become familiar with key research techniques, such as data collection, interviewing, source criticism and validity. Being able to try out these techniques at an early age gives students a good platform to enhance their research skills.

10 REDUCED INEQUALITIES



The YRE programme brings students of all backgrounds together with a sense of common purpose.

An essential part of the programme is for students to seek out different points of view on a particular issue in order to understand that a subject can be seen from many angles. In this way, YRE seeks to enhance teamwork, citizenship skills, social responsibility, leadership abilities and cultural understanding.



The YRE programme takes the immediate local environment as point of departure, meaning that students often investigate issues that directly affect them, their family or community. A great place to start is at the school or at home, looking at how resources are used. Heating and electricity sources, household appliances, waste management etc., improve resource efficiency.

Influence local action by journalistic pieces. Students become more aware of their environmental impact and the impact of their schools, personal lifestyles. Through the fostering of responsible behaviour within the school environment, students will also learn how to value and protect the cultural and natural heritage in their countries and abroad.

YRE students are also actively involved in the litter topic, through Litter Less Campaign, run in 15 countries, together with Wrigley Company Foundation.



YRE students are actively involved in sustainable management and efficient use of natural resources through the programme steps and investigation phase.

Through the competition theme International collaboration, YRE encourages students to investigate the impact of fresh air, clean water and soil on their life, to promote public procurement practices that are suitable in accordance with national policies and priorities and compare it with the partners from other countries, to exchange know-how, research for solution and get inspired by each other to make a change.

YRE pieces prepared by students educate people and increase awareness for sustainable lifestyles in harmony with nature.

YRE actively support waste minimisation and sustainable waste management through Litter Less Campaign.



YRE programme, through its construction, is developing active solution-oriented learning. Students develop their knowledge about environmental issues through working on local problems and trying to improve it without forgetting about global problems, e.g. reducing CO₂, promoting the consumption of local products etc.

Students participating in the programme are encouraged to participate in international events and conferences, such COPs, and act as reporters to raise awareness about climate change.





The YRE programme encourages students to investigate issues that have an impact on marine and coastal eco-systems related to marine pollution and subjects related to how to sustainably manage and protect marine and coastal ecosystems and the resources they provide. Their suggestions on how to reduce the negative effects that litter has on the flora and fauna of the ocean.

Taking action in order to reduce negative human impacts and restore these ecosystems and achieve healthy and productive oceans. It is especially visible through Litter Less Campaign where students focus on marine litter and beach cleaning.



Several environmental issues related to 'Life on land' are addressed by YRE students. These include the issue of deforestation and desertification and the promotion of sustainable management of all types of forests and reforestation activities.



YRE helps to promote peaceful and inclusive societies by enhancing students' skills within communication and citizenship skills, teamwork, social responsibility, and leadership abilities.

Justice and democratic values are integral elements of the YRE programme. The students are encouraged to collect views and opinions from different sources in order to learn that an issue can be seen from many angles. This also encourages them to respect the views and opinions of others.



YRE encourages collaboration between schools and students from different countries. The YRE competition includes a category aimed at international collaboration.

At the international level, students may cooperate with young reporters from other countries for sharing information or data, with the aim of proposing a solution and disseminating it. These partnerships serve to exchange ideas and knowledge and build relations between students from different countries.

Furthermore, the winning journalistic pieces that are awarded on international level are shared in international networks, websites and newspapers – spreading the stories worldwide. To collaborate and exchange information and prepare a joint article/effort.