Democracy and climate change How can we achieve our climate targets while strengthening and reinvigorating democratic governance?

GrACE – Green Europe: Active Citizenship and the Environment seminar series, 14 November 2024

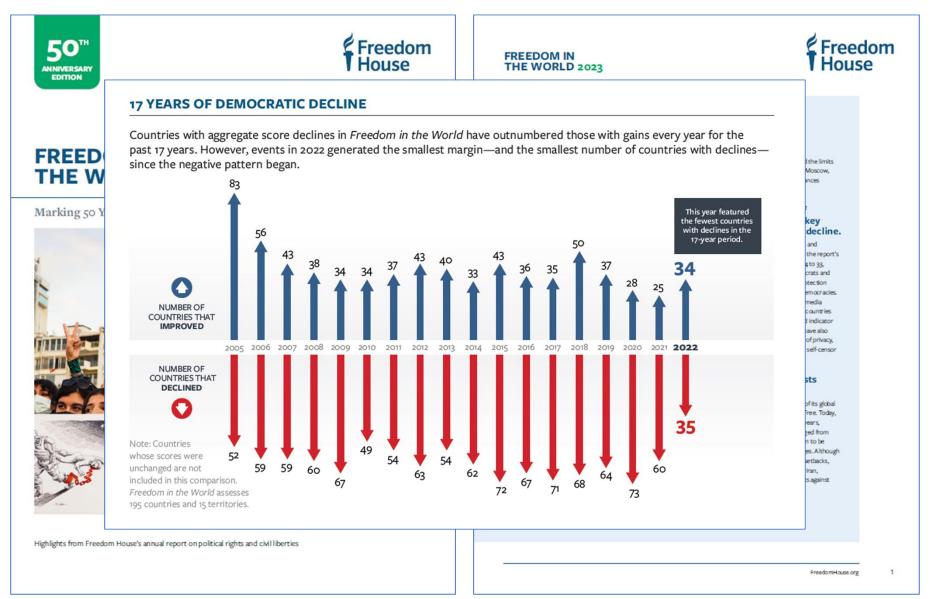
Diarmuid TorneyDCU Centre for Climate and Society



Overview

- Why do democracies struggle to address climate change?
- How can democratic governance be better equipped to tackle climate change?
- A case study from Ireland: The Children and Young People's Assembly on Biodiversity Loss

Why do democracies struggle to address climate change?



https://freedomhouse.org/sites/default/files/2023-03/FIW_World_2023_DigtalPDF.pdf

Why do democracies struggle to adequately address climate change?

Willis, Curato and Smith (2021) identify a number of reasons in the literature:

- Time horizons: Short term vs. long term
- Use of expert evidence in decision-making
- Power and the role of special interests
- Responsiveness to public opinion

Democracies come in many shapes and sizes

Factor	What the research suggests
No. of veto points	More veto points may impede climate action
Electoral rules	PR more conducive to climate action
Federal/unitary	Unclear
Patterns of governance	Neo-corporatist systems better at reaching agreement and implementing policies
Degree of consolidation	Consolidated democracies have better institutional capacities
Fossil fuel dependence	FF dependence increases transition costs
Economic inequality	High inequality makes collective action difficult

Source: Fiorino (2018)

Eco-authoritarianism

"A public policy model that concentrates authority in a few executive agencies manned by capable and uncorrupt elites seeking to improve environmental outcomes."

"Public participation is limited to a narrow cadre of scientists and technocratic elites while others are expected to participate only in state led mobilisation for the purposes of implementation." (Gilley 2012)

The case of China

- Eco authoritarianism perspective misses complexity of domestic politics in China
- Tensions between economic, energy, and climate priorities
- Limited implementation capacity at local level



How can democratic governance be better equipped to tackle climate change?

Modifications of democracy

- Less democracy: delegation to experts
- More democracy: deliberative democracy

The "time inconsistency" problem

- Governments have an incentive to renege on their commitments
- "Commitment devices" allow governments to credibly commit to policy stability
- e.g. independent central banks

Put the experts in charge?

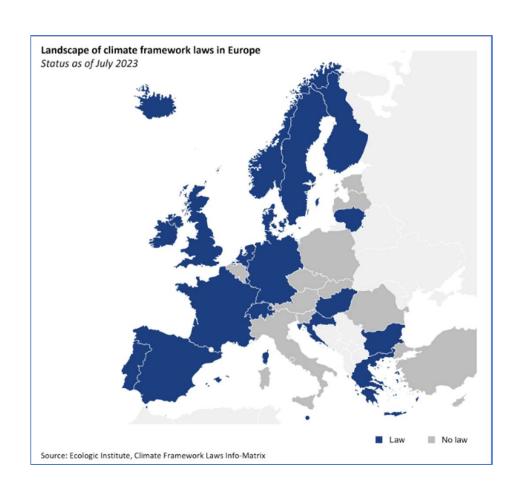






Framework climate laws

- Targets
- Planning and measures
- Progress monitoring
- Institutional arrangements
- Scientific advice
- Public participation
- Long-term guidance



Deliberative democracy

- Origins in Athenian democracy
- Contrast with representative and direct democracy
- Open, inclusive, public decision-making that includes affected citizens on equal terms
- Not simply the aggregation of individual preferences
- Collective decisions arrived at through reasoned debate

Deliberative democracy and climate change

- Deliberative democracy is well equipped to deal with:
 - Complexity
 - Long-term challenges
 - Value conflicts and trade-offs

Growing experience of using citizens' assemblies for climate change











Scotland's Climate Assembly Seanadh Gnàth-shìde na h-Alba

ILMASTOTOIMIA ARVIOIVA KANSALAISRAATI



A case study from Ireland: The Children and Young People's Assembly on Biodiversity Loss

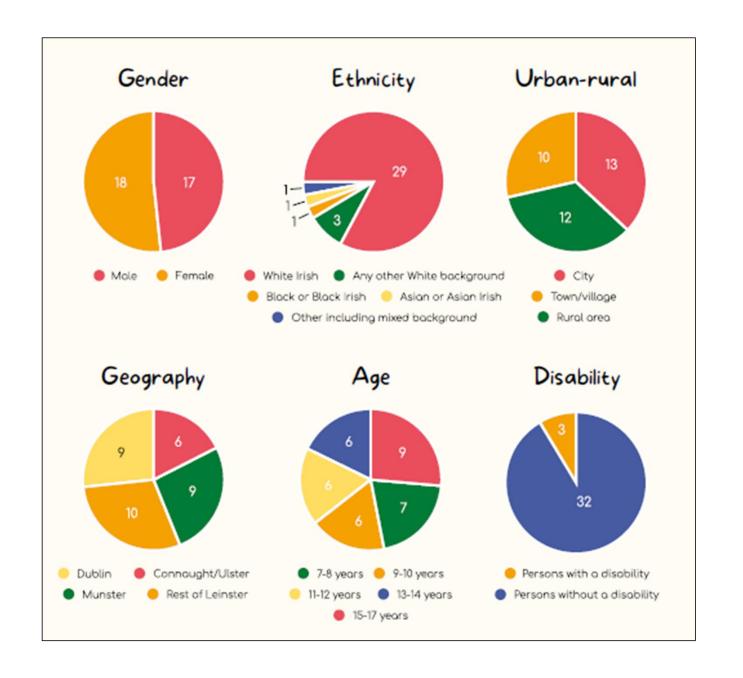
The team

- An intergenerational design & implementation team:
 - Consortium of adults from DCU, UCC & terre des hommes
 - A Young Advisory Team of 9 children & young people aged 8-16



Participant recruitment

- A stratified random sample, but...
- 510 responses to a call for applications
- From which we selected 35 Assembly members



































































Note: Not all Assembly members consented to having their photos included in this report.

The process of learning and deliberating





An Ireland where we are connected to, and care for the rights of nature (and each other) so that biodiversity is restored and protected and we live and grow up in healthy, clean and fair environments.

Our Key Messages

- 1. We must treat the Earth like a member of the family or a friend.
- Children and young people must be included in decisions being made about biodiversity.
- 2. Future generations must live in a world where there isn't a biodiversity crisis and where children don't have to take action because of the incapability of past generations.
 - Biodiversity protection must be a shared responsibility and a global, collaborative effort.
- 3. Every decision must take biodiversity into account.
- We must consume resources in a Sustainable, moderate way that neither diminishes the environment/ biodiversity or our rights, wellbeing and livelihoods.

Education & Raising Awareness

Governance

Energy Transport

Waste Consumption

Restoring Rewilding

under :

Habitat & Species Protection

Overexploitation

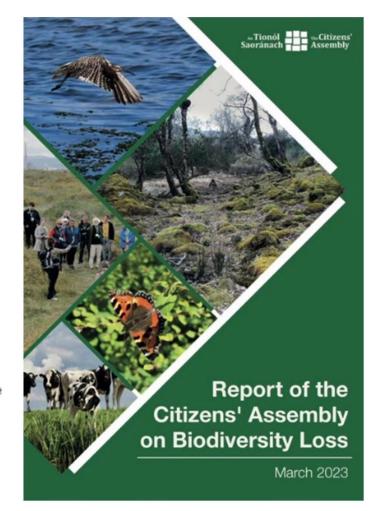
Actions

The story didn't end there...





20. The State is urged to take into account the recommendations from the Children and Young People's Assembly on Biodiversity Loss, an initiative featuring our next generation, and continue to engage with children and young people on the environment.







- The Committee recommends that the calls to action as set out in the Children and Young People's Assembly on Biodiversity Loss should be examined and considered for implementation by the relevant government departments.
- The Committee recommends that the calls to action set out in the Children and Young People's Assembly on Biodiversity Loss should be reflected in the National Biodiversity Action Plan and superseding plans and other relevant policies and decision-making processes.



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West Waterford groups allocated community and sports funding

The Journal



Children's assembly on biodiversity calls on Ireland to 'treat the Earth like family'

Young people aged seven to 17 have created nearly 60 recommendations on

Home Stations Shows Podcasts Search Ep 61 - Children and Young People's **Assembly on Biodiversity Loss**





Cathaeirleach,turned the sed near future.

Children and Young People's

Assembly on Biodiversity Loss address Council

Delegates from the Children and Young Persons Assembly on Biodiversity Loss spoke to Wicklow County Council's Climate and Biodiversity Policy Committee last week. At the invitation of SPC Chairperson Clir Lourda Scott, the final report of the Assembly was presented, including the 58 calls to action.

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meeting new friends and Assembly members to all the connecting with like minded aspects of biodiversity that people my news age in the we had been working on was Assembly, I learned a lot' I great. And helping them. Clir Lourdu Scott enjoyed discussing important input their new ideas.

topies.

"Number 39 was my (Make use the modic overs swinned) and modified in singestance to me right now. Make the the modic overs swinned and modified and the same of the s

Representatives from the tions. That we unite to solve Children and Young People's our biodiversity loss and Assemby included Lucas and other climate issues. That Olwyn, delagates from hope is not lost. There are Greystones and young advi- solutions and we can work

people.

Olwyn, a 14-year-old condoor activities together.

Assembly member from Co. The weekends away were Wicklow, said: "I enjoyed great. Introducing the

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"Call to Action number 6 under 18. They must take it importance to me right now.

wonderful children and young people who took part. It was great to meet members of the Co Wicklow Climate and Biodiversity Policy Group to tell there about the work of the Assembly. We are excited to see how they use the children and young people's calls to action in Co. Wicklow." Cllr Lourds Scott said:

*As Chair of the Co Wickley Climate and Biodiversity Policy Group, when I read the report that was pub-lished by the Young Person's exembly, I know that we seeded to hear from them reparing to develop the County's first Biodisersity

give everyone a femest to Einergency. More people all young people (like our "make some than this explore near them. The would be aware and act if Assembly did for so.) impact with be insuediate but they saw the numbers on TV. De. Dummid Tertery, proposely it is will build our futures.

"My loope now it that pool—and were said what they can professor in Dablin City ment at our meeting that they can people listen to children and do to help smil it is fixed.

University, said: "I had the will pay close attention to

Multimedia coverage from local - international news (2022 - 2023)

MARKEGOE

To Orshew 2017, Included the Common of the Commo

Youth having their say on biodiversity loss

NEWS SPORT ENTERTAINMENT BUSINESS LIFESTYLE CULTURE PLAYER IV RADIO



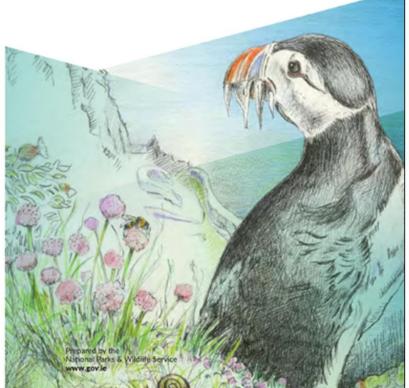






Ireland's 4th National Biodiversity Action Plan

2023-2030



ACTIONS FOR NATURE 2023-2030



Children and Young People's Assembly on Biodiversity Loss

Ireland's first Children and Young People's Assembly on Biodiversity Loss published its final report in April 2023, calling for biodiversity to be at the centre of decisionmaking and for children and young people to be included in how we respond to biodiversity loss.

The Assembly met over two weekends in October and aimed to ensure Ireland's youngest citizens have their say in how Ireland responds to the challenge of biodiversity loss. Over 500 children and young people aged 7-17 years from across Ireland applied to be part of the assembly, of which 35 were selected, representing a diverse cross-section of society.





Colliders, and Young Prople's Assembly loan, Condit: EUA Productions, Illustration by Hazel Harley



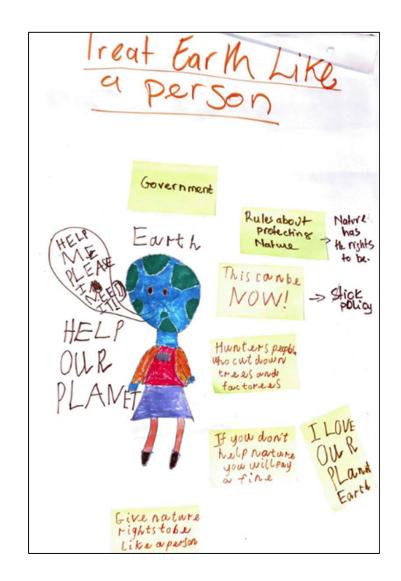
Youth Assembly Vision, Credit; Hazel Hurley

Theme 2: Governance: To put biodiversity and the rights of nature at the heart of the decisions that we make

No	Call to Action	Government Response	Status
7	Every decision being made must consider	Action 1C2 of the 4 th NBAP commits to explore the ways in	In progress
	biodiversity and the rights of nature.	which the rights of nature could be formally recognised.	
		Relevant public bodies are bound by a Biodiversity Duty	
		which requires them to report on how they have given due	
		consideration to biodiversity in their programmes of work.	
		Other legislation requires biodiversity to be taken into	
		account through SEA, EIA and Habitat Regulations among	
		others.	
8	Involve children and young people in	The 4 th NBAP provides for the establishment of a Children	In progress
	decision-making so that more children and	and Young People's Biodiversity Forum.	
	young people are given the chance to		

Key take aways

- Democracy can be strengthened by including voices of ordinary people
- Children and young people's participation brings new and different perspectives and ideas
- Importance of co-design with children and young people
- Follow-up and feedback creates sense of being heard



Thanks for your attention

- For more information about the Assembly visit: www.cyp-biodiversity.ie
- Follow the story in this video: <u>https://www.youtube.com</u> /watch?v=gZAZnJ10vVY
- Contact: <u>diarmuid.torney@dcu.ie</u>

