

#iwill4nature

CONNECTING YOUNG PEOPLE WITH THE ENVIRONMENT

#iwill

Year of
Green Action
2019

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What is the #iwill campaign?

Young people have the energy, skills and ideas to change their communities and society for the better. However, too many young people, particularly from less affluent backgrounds, fail to have their voices heard or capacity to make a difference recognised.

All young people should be supported and empowered to be active and engaged citizens. That's why the #iwill campaign, comprised of over 900 organisations from across the UK, aims to make participation in social action – such as volunteering, campaigning or fundraising – the norm for young people aged 10 to 20.

When young people take part in social action, everyone benefits. Young people do because they build their skills, character and wellbeing; and communities do, because they are healthier, more cohesive and more integrated.

#iwill4nature

Connecting young people with the environment

Young people are passionate about the environment. In their communities, young people want to feel safe and proud of spaces in which they spend time and socialise with family and friends. On a global level, young people are worried about environmental challenges that threaten their future.

Results from the National Youth Social Action survey show that there is a strong appetite from young people to engage in environmental social action, particularly to protect animals and wildlife. By utilising their talents, entrepreneurialism and creativity, young people can and should be a key part of the solution to environmental threats.

To coincide with the Government's plans to make 2019 a "Year of Green Action", this year the #iwill campaign has launched #iwill4nature: a partnership between young people and organisations to grow participation in high quality environmental youth social action.

We want organisations to understand and champion the vital role that young people can play in supporting and improving the environment, and to embed youth social action into their work and long-term strategies.



#iwill Ambassadors, Yetunde, age 16 and Princess, age 17. Photo credit: Zach Haynes, #iwill Ambassador, age 14

Making the case for environmental youth social action

There are a wide range of benefits to involving young people in environmental social action, which are outlined below:

IMPROVING HEALTH AND WELLBEING



Engaging with the natural world can have significant mental and physical health benefits, with reductions in stress, fatigue, anxiety and depression. However, 1 in 10 children do not spend any time in the natural environment, and children from less affluent backgrounds visit natural environments less than their wealthier peers. By integrating environmental social action into the day-to-day lives of all young people, we could see positive improvements to health and wellbeing.

INCREASING AWARENESS AND UNDERSTANDING



Involving young people in social action can develop their understanding of key environmental issues and create opportunities for them to lead change. By informing young people about environmental challenges and empowering them to find solutions to tackle them, we can increase not only the understanding and commitment of the young people involved, but of their peers, families and wider communities.

REDUCING ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT



We use more ecological resources than nature can regenerate. Young people are already getting involved in practical clean-up and sustainability efforts, and are also showing how their voice and leadership can influence consumer behaviour, businesses and Government policy. We want to increase the opportunities available to young people to address these issues and to be actively involved, such as through increased recycling and influencing the behaviour of their peers and adults.

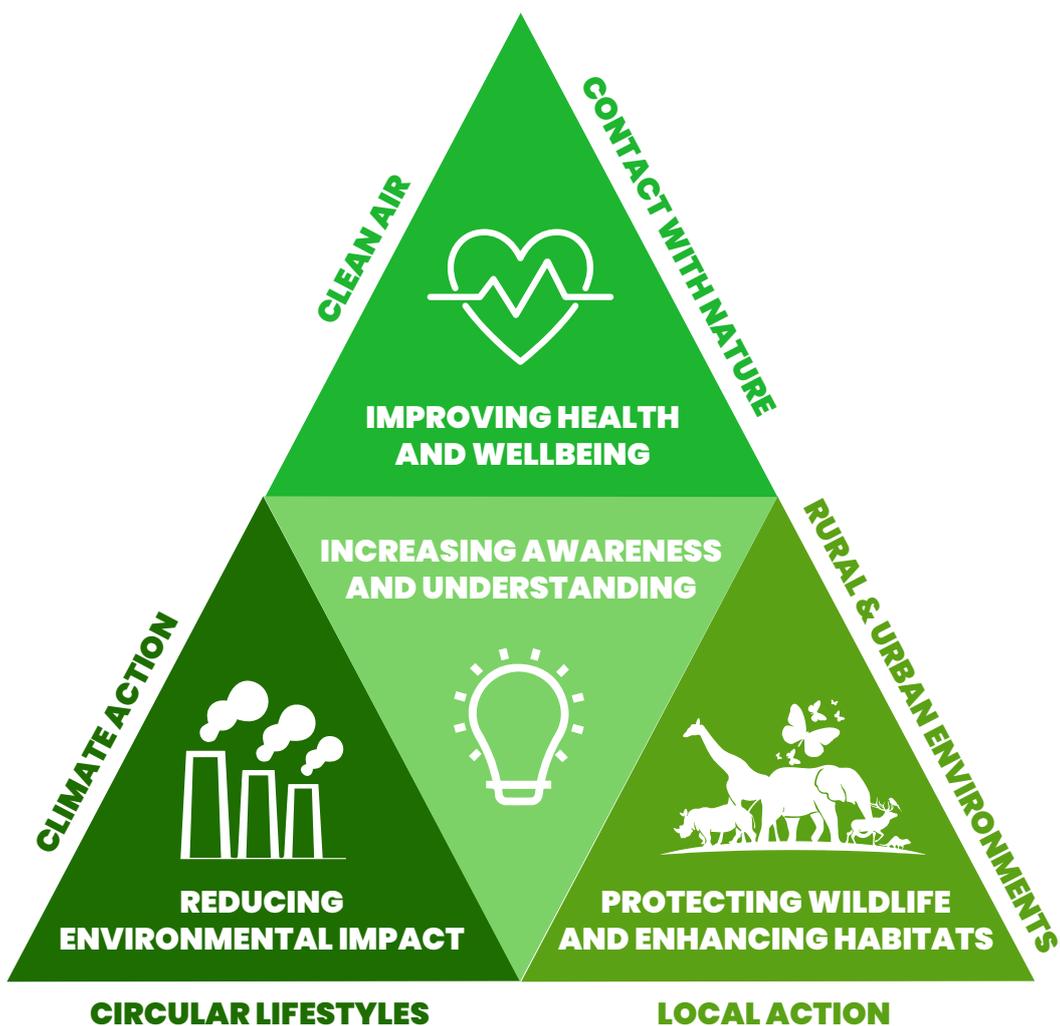
PROTECTING WILDLIFE AND ENHANCING HABITATS



It is estimated that we are currently losing species at a speed that is between 1,000 and 10,000 times higher than the natural extinction rate. This issue affects us all and reduced biodiversity means millions of people face a future where food supplies are more vulnerable to pests and disease. Young people are keen to help protect animals and habitats and this issue could help to engage those not already involved in social action.

What can you do to be involved in #iwill4nature?

- ▶ Pledge to the campaign to demonstrate your commitment to environmental youth social action.
- ▶ Review your organisation's current youth engagement – what role could young people play in your organisation's decision-making? Are there opportunities for up to younger ages or opportunities that could benefit your organisation which aren't currently in place?
- ▶ Showcase and share best practice examples from your organisation and communicate the benefits of environmental youth social action to your contacts and networks.



For more information visit www.iwill.org.uk or e-mail hello@stepuptoserve.org.uk.



#iwill Campaign



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