Co-funded by the European Union

Activity sheet

Eco-anxiety grips young people (graph)

Duration : 45 minutes to 1 hour

Number of participants : 16 participants

Age : 16- 25 years

Material :

- a printed version of the "pour une Terre solidaire"" map (https://catalogue.ccfd-terresolidaire.org/index.php?id_product=943&controller=product);
- coloured stickers;
- a pack of post-it notes.

Objectives :

- Address the issue of climate change and its impacts on young people worldwide;
- Highlight the inequalities related to this phenomenon across different regions of the world;
- Provide a space for young people to express their concerns about climate change.

Progress :

Step 1 : presentation of the map « Pour une terre solidaire » (10 min)

Questions :

Ask the participants to react to the "Pour une terre solidaire" map: Do they recognize it? How do they feel when they see the map like this? Is it really "upside down"? Compared to what? Does it bother them? How does it make them feel to see France of this size and in this position?

Explanations :

Geographical maps typically place Europe and France at the center of the world. The equator (an imaginary line drawn around the Earth, marking the separation between the northern and southern hemispheres) is not in the middle of the map but placed towards the south. Therefore, northern countries occupy more space. The North is placed at the top and the South at the bottom. However, a geographical representation is not neutral. The Mercator projection, created in 1569 and which we usually use, gives a certain representation of the globe where the northern countries occupy a predominant place, impacting our view of the world.

Presentation of the « Pour une terre solidaire » Map

This map is a combination of two maps:

- **Peters Projection**: Historian Arno Peters created a projection in 1974 that accurately represents each State's actual area: Africa, Latin America, the Amazon region, and India regain their true size. The equator is situated in the middle of this map, dividing the world into two equally sized hemispheres. On this map, Algeria is shown in its real size, four times the area of France, whereas, with Mercator, it appears only twice as large. This map forces us to reconsider our world view and the importance of each country, as well as the relationships between peoples.
- **Stuart MacArthur Projection**: In 1979, Stuart MacArthur proposed an inverted map to challenge our perceptions: in space, there is no up or down. Putting the North at the top is an arbitrary choice, a norm. Moreover, this map is not upside down because you can still read the country names. By choosing to do the opposite, MacArthur invites us to think differently about our representations, which influence our perception of other peoples.

Step 2: Introducing Climate Change Issues through a Quiz (20 min)

Instructions :

The participants are invited to form 8 groups of 2 people to answer questions in a quiz format. For each question, group members must agree and indicate the chosen country(ies) by placing a sticker directly on the map.

Examples of questions :

1) **In 2023, which region of the world was most affected by meteorological, climatic, and hydrological disasters?**

- The answer is Asia, according to a study[1] published on April 23, 2024, by the World Meteorological Organization (WMO), the United Nations agency responsible for weather, climate, and water issues. The region, which covers nearly one-third of the world's land area and is home to 60% of the global population, including giants like China and India, is warming faster than the global average: the warming trend has almost doubled since the 1961-1990 period. The report notes that 79 disasters related to hydrometeorological hazards were reported in Asia in 2023, according to the emergency events database. More than 80% of these were related to floods and storms, resulting in over 2,000 deaths and directly affecting 9 million people.

2) **Which countries are most at risk of having the highest number of victims due to climate change by 2050?**

- The answer includes the Democratic Republic of the **Congo, Angola, Gabon, Equatorial Guinea, and the Central African Republic**, according to a study[2] published in the medical journal The Lancet. The team, led by University College London and including researchers from the Philippines, Uganda, and Brazil, highlights a geographical paradox. The countries of the "Global North," which represent 14% of the world's population, are responsible for 92% of cumulative CO2 emissions from 1850-2015. However, it is the countries in the Southern Hemisphere that will suffer more from the effects of climate change. To reach these conclusions, the authors combined disease risks calculated by the World Health Organization (WHO) with human population projections made by the UN. Besides exposure (tropical belt),

[1] https://www.lemonde.fr/planete/article/2024/04/23/l-asie-continent-le-plus-touche-par-les-catastrophes-climatiques-en-2023_6229366_3244.html#:~:text=L'ann%C3%A9e%202023%20fut%20celle,enregistr%C3%A9es%2C%20signale%20l'OMM.

[2] https://www.geo.fr/environnement/etude-the-lancet-liste-pays-rechauffement-climatique-victimes-mortalite-maladies-chaleur-nutrition-paludisme-215142

southern countries are more severely affected by climate change because they rely on sectors that are particularly sensitive to climatic conditions (agriculture, fishing). The countries most affected by climate change also host the most fragile economies and populations, as they depend on rudimentary housing and work and lifestyles exposed to climatic conditions (outdoor activities, farming, etc.).

3) **Which country reached Earth Overshoot Day the earliest in 2023?**

- The answer is Qatar. In 2023, Qatar's Earth Overshoot Day was on February 10. It is followed by Luxembourg, with its Overshoot Day on February 14. According to a WWF report, it would take 9 planets if humanity consumes as much as Qatar. This highlights the disproportionate relationship between the small size of these countries and the magnitude of their ecological resource demands to sustain their consumption systems.
  Calculated by the Global Footprint Network, Earth Overshoot Day is the date when humanity has consumed all the resources that Earth can regenerate in a year. This concept is called biocapacity. Once this day is passed, humanity lives on 'credit.' This assessment is made by dividing Earth's biocapacity by humanity's ecological footprint. This tool, also developed by the Global Footprint Network, measures the amount of biologically productive land required to produce the goods and services we consume and absorb the waste we produce. Currently, we need 1.75 Earths to regenerate what humanity consumes.

Step 3: Addressing the Issue of Youth Eco-Anxiety Globally (20 min):

Introduction :

Ask the participants if they are familiar with the term "eco-anxiety." Then, invite them to define it.
Eco-anxiety refers to "anxiety caused by environmental threats to our planet" or "a form of anxiety related to a feeling of helplessness in the face of contemporary environmental issues."

In 2021, the largest study[3] on eco-anxiety among young people aged 16 to 25 worldwide was conducted by a team of researchers from universities in Great Britain, the United States, and Finland. Together, they interviewed 10,000 young people in ten countries from the Global North and South to understand their level of eco-anxiety and how it affects their daily lives.

[3] https://fr.statista.com/infographie/25762/eco-anxiete-jeunesse-part-des-jeunes-effrayes-avenir-changement-climatique/

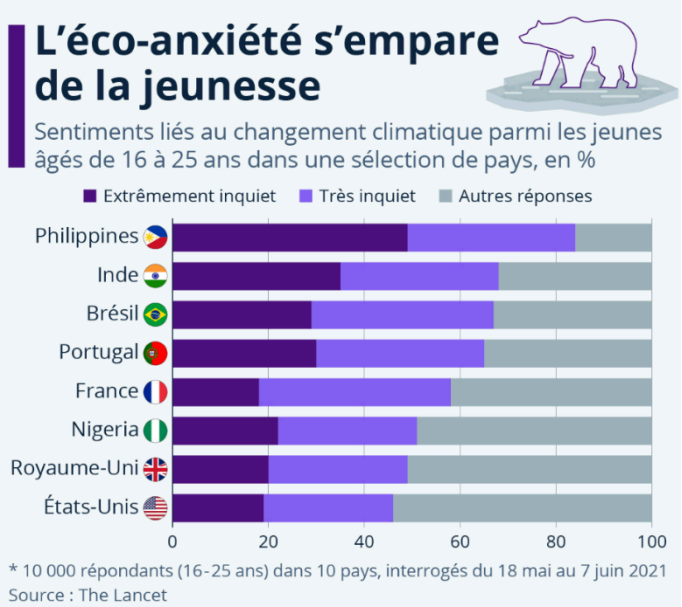
Nearly 70% of the young people interviewed said they were "very worried" or "extremely worried" about climate change. This study was published in the scientific journal The Lancet Planetary Health in December 2021.

Instructions :

The participants each (or by pairs) receive a label representing one of the 8 countries targeted by the 2021 eco-anxiety study. They must then work together to arrange the labels in ascending order, from the country where the fewest young people report being extremely worried and very worried about climate change to the country where the most young people report being extremely worried and very worried about climate change.

Debrief :

The correct order is provided according to the chart below:



The following questions can be addressed to the participants:

- What are your reactions to these figures? Are you surprised by the results?
- In your opinion, why do countries like the Philippines, India, or Brazil show such high levels of eco-anxiety among young people?

- Do you personally feel affected by eco-anxiety?
- Do you know any solutions to fight eco-anxiety?

Some solutions to fight eco-anxiety:

- Connect with like-minded individuals by joining an environmental group or participating in environmental campaigns.
- Take care of yourself by engaging in activities that help reduce stress (meditation, time in nature, physical activity, etc.)
- Educate yourself on how to take action on environmental issues to make a positive impact.
- Limit the use of apps to reduce exposure to negative information.
- Carefully choose your sources of information and stick to reputable and unbiased organizations. Avoid sources that sensationalize or rely on catchy headlines.
- Focus on progress and positive news about the climate whenever possible.

Source : https://www.anxietycanada.com/fr/