



Gaisce
Glas
YOUTH
CLIMATE
JUSTICE
PROJECT

Gaisce Glas

The Youth Climate Leader Toolkit

by

Crustaí ó Nualláin



Introduction

Speaking at the launch of the Planet Youth Strategy in 2020, President Michael D Higgins said, “Younger citizens in Ireland are increasingly important drivers of change. Empowered only on their own lives but on the lives of others, organisations, and communities. It is an important challenge, and one I know that young people will continue to meet with a sense of enthusiasm, underlain by a sense of social and environmental responsibility.”

With that in mind, this resource was designed to offer some thoughts on the different ways you may begin, contributions you would like to offer to yourself, to your community and to the only planet in the universe we call home. Whether we are trying to bring a new sustainable society into life, or if you are reading this from that society, the question still remains about the mark we would like to leave on our world, and how we might be of service to others, and the skills and qualities we will need in a life-sustaining society.

I hope that these suggestions are of use to you, and that they inspire ideas of your own. After all, the greatest contributions we can offer one another in the climate crisis are our passions, our curiosities, our willingness to learn, our patience and humanity for one another that refuses to leave anyone behind.

Beir bua!

Crustai

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Activity 1: Growing Food

Suggest Challenge area: Personal Skill

WHY GROW FOOD?

Going back to the dawn of human civilisation, our ability to grow food has had a defining role to play in human history leading to where we are today. However, in our modern world we increasingly rely on a harmful global food system. This sees food travel across the globe for “just in time” deliveries which leave us very vulnerable to shocks in global trade, as well as the system being very harmful to the environment.

Learning to grow food is a vital skill that reconnects us to both the land and our ancestors, many of whom as recently as a few generations ago would grow food in their back gardens! With some preparation, in a matter of weeks you too could be enjoying the fruit of your labours!

SOME THINGS TO CONSIDER:

- What time of the year is it? Depending on when you are planning on beginning, the seasons will decide what you are able to grow. Some crops such as garlic can be planted anywhere between November and March in a given year while crops such as spinach have a shorter window between March and June.
- Next consider how much space you have in your garden. If you do not have a garden or access to an allotment (or even a polytunnel?!), you might consider starting a herb garden instead! Also take time to note what the conditions in your space are like - does your garden get much sunshine?
- Some plants grow better with limited sunlight, others need shelter so be sure to plan your garden accordingly!
- Start simple! Some vegetables and herbs are more hardy than others. If this is your first time growing food, popular crops such as potatoes and kale are good choices because they can thrive across many different seasons. Other crops such as cabbage can grow more easily in different seasons, such as summer cabbage being easier to grow than autumn cabbage.
- Are you growing from seed or sapling? It might be intimidating to start right at the beginning and instead you may want to simply learn with looking after plants. Many garden centres across the country sell saplings of crops such as tomatoes which can
- Who are you growing for? In foraging circles there exists something called the “rule of thirds”, which basically means you only ever harvest up to one third for yourself, allowing people and animals alike to also share in the bounty of nature. It also gives nature the space to recover for the following year.
- Biodiversity - as plants grow, they can attract the attention of other animals and insects. How do you protect them? Do you use pesticides? Or do you grow enough for everyone? Or do you plant other flowers and plants to keep their predators at bay?

- Compost! Your plants need more than just rainwater, they also grow to be big and strong from rich soil. Perhaps you might also consider starting a compost bin, or a wormery. A wormery can be preferable to other forms of composting as it doesn't use cooked food, or acidic foods such as onions, garlic or citric fruits and so is less likely to attract the attention of other animals such as rats.
- Feed your friends! What better way to celebrate your new green thumb than to prepare a meal with the food you've grown yourself?

USEFUL LINKS:

Grow It Yourself: <https://giy.ie/veg-directory/>

This website offers extensive information on growing different vegetables, ideal conditions for growing them, important signs to look for as they develop and problems you might face.

Get Ireland Growing: <https://getirelandgrowing.ie/resources/>

This useful website contains information to get you started growing a range of crops, but it also include helpful advice on managing compost, pests and diseases, as well as planting crops in different containers.



Activity 2: Bike Repair

Suggest Challenge area: Personal Skill

WHY REPAIR BIKES?

Cycling is an incredibly low carbon mode of transportation, that is both kind to your body and the environment. It's exhilarating to feel the wind on your face and the freedom it offers to just hop on your bike and go where you please. But how of us are nodding along while our bike sits forgotten in the shed? How many bike have fallen into disrepair and neglect just because we never learned how to fix a puncture? How often have we brought them to a workshop for repair only to find the chain has now rusted and the list of repairs gets more and more expensive? Learning to look after two wheeled friends is almost as important as being able to cycle them.



SOME THINGS TO CONSIDER:

- Do you own or have access to a bike? Take a look in the shed or ask a friend if they have an old bike gathering dust.
- Do you have space to set up a small workshop for yourself? This doesn't have to be anywhere fancy, but a garage / shed is a good choice so that you can store your tools nearby. Also consider wearing an old set of clothes when working on your bike as you WILL get covered in bike grease and oil!
- Start with the basics: There's a lot to repairing a bike so it can be encouraging to begin with the bike maintenance fundamentals; things like knowing how to pump tyres, adjust the saddle to your height, oil your chain, adjust your brakes.
- Move on to other repairs. Every part of a bike has a lifespan, with some materials being prone to replacement more often than others. When you are happy you have covered the basics, consider learning how to change brake pads, the link cables for your gears / brakes or change your saddle. Learning how to repair a puncture is also an invaluable skill, practice with a puncture repair kit as well as changing an inner tube.

- Put together an emergency repair kit. What do you need if you need to do repairs on the go? A small kit of tools such as allen keys, a puncture repair kit, and a small pump can save you a lot of hassle if you run into trouble and it's a long walk home.
- Pace yourself. You don't need to learn how to make a bike from scratch! With just the skills listed above, you will be prepared for many situations. There are some complicated mechanics to fixing a bike including changing a chain, or the gears and sometimes it's best to let a professional worry about these things! Learning these skills and sharing them with your friends or family can give you many bikes to practice with as well as encourage you to go on a cycle adventure together!

USEFUL LINKS:

Bike Ride: <https://www.bikeride.com/guide/>

This website offers a directory of repairs you can browse to help you with your bike repairs. Either click on the part of the bike you want to maintain, or simply scroll down the page to the relevant section.

Rei.com: <https://www.rei.com/learn/series/intro-to-bike-maintenance>

This series may help you identify the different parts of a bike and help you learn to keep it in good condition.

Evans Cycle: <https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL977A4AC506FFF09E>

This YouTube playlist offers extensive information on everything from finding a bike suited to your size, cleaning and maintaining it, and making minor adjustments



Activity 3: Embroidery and Hand Crafts

Suggest Challenge area: Personal Skill

WHY LEARN HAND CRAFTS?

Whether it is rivers polluted with dyes and chemicals, or the volume of water needed to produce cotton, the fashion industry is one of the most environmentally damaging sectors on the planet. It is also responsible for many human rights abuses as the fast fashion industry is propped up through sweatshop labour.

Learning to make and look after our clothes is an important skill to have in breaking our dependency on these harmful industries. Embroidering clothes can also be a relaxing and meditative pastime, and it gives us the tools so that we can truly express ourselves through our clothing!

SOME THINGS TO CONSIDER:

- Take stock of the tools and materials you have access to. Many households have a collection of sewing needles and thread hidden in an old biscuit tin, or a relative might have a set of crochet needles or even a sewing machine!
- Focus on your technique by practicing on old material. It's important to get the basics right before working up to a bigger project. This might include the different kinds of stitches and learning where they are best applied. This also applies to the basics of using a sewing machine, how to work it properly as well as understanding the safety risks.
- Many of us have an item of clothing we love to wear until it slowly starts to fall apart. If we learn to look after our clothes, our clothes can look after us for many years. Practice repairing rips and tears in old clothes with different stitches, or sewing on a patch.
- Once you get more confident, you might also consider other kinds of alterations such as fixing a zipper, altering clothes that may be too big for you, or even making your own clothing from fabrics!
- If you are considering learning to knit or crochet, many people begin by making something simple; be it a scarf, a hat, or a tea cosy. These simple activities can be carried over a number of weeks and the end result can either keep you warm in the winter or be a timely gift for a friend's birthday!

USEFUL LINKS:

Gathered.how: <https://www.gathered.how/>

This website has it all - helpful guides to support you in knitting, sewing and crochet. It's also full of ideas and patterns to help you at the start of your embroidery journey!

Sarah Maker: <https://sarahmaker.com/how-to-crochet/>

This website offers a walkthrough of beginner steps in crochet, the materials you will need as well as some basic patterns.

Activity 4: Food Preservation

Suggest Challenge area: Personal Skill

WHY LEARN FOOD PRESERVATION?

Human beings have been preserving food for as long as we have known how to grow it. In the depths of winter when no new crops could grow, preservation and fermentation became vital skills to safeguard food supplies and live through challenging periods.

Nowadays, as much as 1/3 of all food grown goes to waste. One simple way to reduce our food waste (and make tasty food in the process) can be in learning these simple skills.



SOME THINGS TO CONSIDER:

- Before preserving or fermenting (or eating!) anything, consider the safety risks. Often fermentation involves controlled use of bacteria and if we are not careful, we can make ourselves sick (and put ourselves off learning how to preserve food in the process).
- There are many ways to preserve food, give some thought to the skills you would like to learn. Maybe you want to learn to make jam, kombucha, kefir, pickling, or some combination of these.
- Each of the above activities will need different kinds of environments and materials. If you have a lot of fruit you way want to learn how to make jam, or if you're fond of tea you might want to learn how to make kombucha.
- Create a sterilised environment. Without sterilising your storage materials (like jars, presses etc) you run the risk of contaminating your food with bad bacteria. Learn to identify the signs of unhealthy bacteria so that you can save your batch if something goes wrong. It is also helpful to know what kinds of materials you should use. Since kombucha acidifies the tea in the fermentation process, using materials made from metal or plastic can be harmful as they can leach into your food.
- If you're making kombucha, ask yourself where you will find your SCOBY. If a friend makes kombucha, they will often have a spare SCOBY. Otherwise you may need to buy a starter kit in a shop or online. You will also need to learn about the kinds of food a SCOBY likes or doesn't like. This can affect everything from the final taste to the overall health of the SCOBY.
- Experiment with different foods! If you're learning how to pickle savoury food, think about starting with food kimchi from cabbage, or pickles from cucumbers. When deciding what you are going to preserve, make sure to research at what stage of maturity you should begin pickling. This also goes for making jam.
- Share your food! If at the end you are happy with your results, take the time to share your results with your friends. Cook something where your pickled goods can really take the spotlight!



USEFUL LINKS:

Eating Well: <https://www.eatingwell.com/article/15855/10-steps-to-water-bath-canning/>

Eating Well: <https://www.eatingwell.com/article/114109/how-to-pickle-anything-no-canning-necessary/>

These two links from Eating Well offer a beginners guide to different approaches to pickling vegetables in jars.

Good Food Ireland: <https://goodfoodireland.ie/blog/darina-allens-jam-making-tips/>

In this link, Darina Allen explains everything you will need to start making jam!

You Brew Kombucha: <https://www.youtube.com/c/YouBrewKombucha/>

This YouTube channel covers all the steps and questions you might have about brewing Kombucha.

Activity 5: Biodiversity Conservation

Suggest Challenge area: Personal Skill

WHAT IS BIODIVERSITY?

When we talk about biodiversity, we are talking about the amazing diversity of plant and animal species that weave together the web of life on Earth. Currently as a result of human activity and climate change, we are currently experiencing the 6th Mass Extinction Event threatening the survival of many plants and animals. This has wide reaching consequences for ecosystems to sustain themselves and for our ability to grow food.

As a result, some of the most important work of our time is learning how we can all play a role in reversing the damage to our local environments, supporting species to thrive, and uproot invasive species where they pop up.

SOME THINGS TO CONSIDER:

- Decide the area you are going to make a biodiversity sanctuary. For many of us, this might be as simple as our back garden, or that of a friend or family member if you do not have a garden in your home.
- Take stock of the seasonal biodiversity activities you can tend to. In the summer, you can forgo mowing the lawn to create a meadow paradise for small animals and insects. In the winter you can put up bird feeders and bird houses for your feathered friends!
- If you have any pets, take care to notice the impact they will have on your biodiversity area. Some pets such as cats can be particularly harmful to the mice and birds in your area, or can be a threat if you do not carefully position your bird houses and feeders.
- Learn to identify local plants and animals. Are there any invasive species you are aware of? Some species, such as the infamous Japanese knotweed can be particularly harmful to other plant life and will need to be carefully removed by a professional.
- Practice seedbombing your garden in the spring! Identify what kinds of plants are good for the animals and insects in your area and give them all the flowers they need. Flowers such as dandelions are an excellent source of food in the late spring for bees and other pollinators. This point is also helpful to consider if you grow your own food and wish to distract food predators without using harmful practices such as poison pellets.
- Make an insect hotel. With an old pallet of wood, some moss, soil and stones you can create an insect paradise in your garden!

USEFUL LINKS:

DIY Garden: <https://diygarden.co.uk/wildlife/bug-hotel/>

This website offers a range of ideas you can use to build homes for insects of all types!

Wildlife Trusts: <https://www.wildlifetrusts.org/actions/how-make-seed-bomb>

This resource explains how you can make a seed-bomb for your garden. Take a look at the rest of the website for other helpful biodiversity tips!

Activity 6: Upcycling

Suggest Challenge area: Personal Skill

WHY LEARN TO UPCYCLE?

Upcycling is all about finding new uses for old objects – either by putting them to use in different ways, or altering them for new uses. At its heart, it's about doing the most we can with what we have before drawing on new resources.

Besides the positive environmental impact, upcycling is a wonderful activity where we can re-imagine our worlds in simple and creative ways.

SOME THINGS TO CONSIDER:

- What skills are you drawing on? If you have a background in woodwork or metalworking, you might want to consider a project such as making decking chairs from old pallets of wood. If you enjoy painting you might also decorate the final product with a coat of paint or a cool design!
- You don't need to be a construction expert to upcycle though, this can be anything from turning cutlery into door handles to making plastic bottle bricks for a garden greenhouse!
- Ask yourself what your interests are. What would you actually make use of? Do you like music, fashion, construction, jewellery?
- Where are you sourcing your materials? Do a clear-out at home. Ask your friends and family to donate any odds and ends they may have.
- Start small. You don't need to have a full project in mind from the beginning, just have fun putting things together and seeing what you can make.



USEFUL LINKS:

Upcycle My Stuff: <https://upcyclemystuff.com/what-is-upcycling/>

This page offers a comprehensive view of what upcycling is and offers ideas for what you can do with different materials!

Paguro: <https://paguroupcycle.com/blogs/news/101-upcycling-ideas-the-ultimate-list>

Paguro has compiled a list of inspiring simple ideas to help you start breathing new life into old household objects.

Activity 7: Media / Podcasting Project

Suggest Challenge area: Personal Skill

WHY LEARN MEDIA SKILLS?

Speaking in 2013, Professor Sir Mark Walport told a meeting at the Royal Society that "science isn't finished until it's communicated. The communication to wider audiences is part of the job of being a scientist, and so how you communicate is absolutely vital."

How information is presented can have a radical impact on the way people receive it. Therefore, it is an important skill to develop in learning how to make the connection between the daily lives of people and the impacts of climate change.

SOME THINGS TO CONSIDER:

- How are you getting your message out? Will you make a documentary? Will you set up a radio station / podcast? Will you design a poster campaign for your area around an environmental issue?
- Who is on your team? A lot of work goes into designing and creating a media project. Working with other people affords us different possibilities, and different perspectives help us to refine our ideas into something other people may be interested in hearing.
- What are you talking about? Are you going to discuss one narrow theme or will you explore a series of topics connected by a common subject?
- What do you need to do? Think about all the work that needs to go into a media project; research skills, scripting, recording, editing, publishing, advertising. What do you need to know about sound to record well? How long should your project be? How will you advertise your project - in school? On social media? Posters? Word of mouth?
- What programmes are you using? If you are working on a podcasting project, you may record through open source software such as Audacity, or apps such as Anchor. Depending on the hardware you have available, you may have different options but remember to keep it simple for yourself!
- Will it be just you or will you invite people to contribute through interviews or vox pop? Consider the ethical issues of recording people and their right to be represented fairly, even if they decide to pull out of the project right before you publish.



USEFUL LINKS:

Radio YNP: http://www.radioynp.com/uploads/1/1/9/1/119137280/radio_ynp_guidebook.pdf

This is an excellent guide to setting up a radio programme / podcast, covering everything from pre-production, useful equipment and software, to tips and tricks which will help you polish your project.

The Podcast Host: <https://www.thepodcasthost.com/planning/how-to-start-a-podcast/>

This page covers all the big questions you will need to ask yourself from start to finish.

Activity 8: Foraging

Suggest Challenge area: Personal Skill

WHY LEARN TO FORAGE?

Many of us have fantasised at some point or another of living in the wild – either by choice or lost in the wilderness. Even though foraging might one day save your life, we don't need to be trapped on a desert island or lost in a jungle to see its value. While it might seem an intimidating prospect, we can learn how to distinguish the delicious food from the deadly food, right on our doorstep! With some practice and support you can quickly become more confident in navigating the edible world around you!

SOME THINGS TO CONSIDER:

- Above all, be sure to note the safety risks associated with foraging and misidentifying plants. Plants can appear different at different times of the year and change in accordance with their surroundings. Therefore, the safest way to learn to forage is to do so with an experienced forager.
- What kinds of equipment will you need? At first, you may be primarily identifying plants and distinguishing them from similar looking ones, so perhaps a pen and paper, as well as your smartphone will all be useful to develop good notes.
- Over time add to your notes, the time of the year you are exploring, the environments and areas you are foraging in, associated plants, whether there are any important properties to note (for example, how dock leaves can be used to treat a nettle sting).
- After taking time to become acquainted with your local flora and fauna, you may then decide to move on to harvesting foraged goods. Take stock of what you will need for this, including your trusty notes, the advice of experienced foragers, gloves, containers and so on.
- Start simple! You may be surprised at what you can already identify. In autumn, there is often an abundance of ripe blackberries, much like we can smell the coming of wild garlic in March-April.

USEFUL LINKS:

Woodland Trust:

<https://www.woodlandtrust.org.uk/visiting-woods/things-to-do/foraging/>

This site offers helpful tips to get you started as well as a monthly guide to foraging. However take it with a pinch of salt - the UK biosphere is similar to the Irish, but they are not identical!

**Beyond the above link, this section has been kept deliberately blank. This is to encourage you to connect with any foraging groups in your area - ultimately the safest way to learn foraging is with experienced foragers and no online links or resources are an appropriate substitute for that.*



Activity 9: Fishing

Suggest Challenge area: Personal Skill

WHY LEARN HOW TO FISH?

As an island nation with our fair share of lakes, canals and rivers, there is hardly a body of water in Ireland where you would struggle to find someone fishing. At a time globally where fishing stocks are depleted the world over, it is vital we move away from this industrial mode of fishing which has had a profound negative impact on life in water. Industrial scale fishing is also largely responsible for the levels of plastic in the world's oceans, with 86% of the Great Pacific Garbage Patch estimated to be from discarded fishing nets.

Learning to fish is an important skill if we are to move away from this harmful model towards taking only what we need and building relationships with our local waterways.

SOME THINGS TO CONSIDER:

- Take stock of any local fishing spots in your area. Are you near the sea, or a river? Research the kinds of fish in your area.
- Pay attention to local laws around fishing. Some councils welcome fishing but may forbid fish from being caught for food. Likewise, some areas may be designated as a special area of conservation (SAC) and it may be an offense to fish there.
- What equipment do you need? Some tools such as a fishing rod and bait may be obvious, but if you are going fishing for a number of hours even something as simple as a packed lunch may be quickly forgotten!
- Bring a friend! Maybe you would prefer to enjoy the peace of sitting by a body of water for a number of hours, but fishing can also be a nice pastime to share with friends or family.
- If you plan on catching fish to eat, what other skills will you need? There are many stages of preparing a fish, from gutting them, de-boning them, disposing of waste, as well as how to cook them!

USEFUL LINKS:

Angling Ireland: <https://fishinginireland.info/>

This website offers a range of useful information from regulations on fishing particular species, purchasing fishing permits, safety information, information on stocked lakes and rivers, as well as where to purchase equipment.

Outside Online: <https://www.outsideonline.com/outdoor-adventure/water-activities/how-to-start-fishing/>

This guide covers some important details you'll need to consider as you start out including gear, securing a permit, as well as basic fishing skills.

Activity 10: First Aid

Suggest Challenge area: Personal Skill & Community Involvement

WHY LEARN FIRST AID?

When cultural anthropologist Margaret Mead was once asked what she considered the earliest sign of human civilisation to be, it is alleged that she held up a human femur and pointed to signs of fracture and healing saying, "Such signs of healing are never found among the remains of the earliest, fiercest societies. But this healed bone shows that someone must have cared for the injured person—hunted on his behalf, brought him food, served him at personal sacrifice."

Whether it is in our own lives, our communities, with an organisation, either professionally or voluntarily, there has never been a period in human history where healers are not needed. As we go through life, accidents happen and people can become sick where they were once healthy.

Particularly in this moment of the climate crisis where extreme weather events become even more ferocious, to learn first aid is a valuable skill that extends far beyond our own life but is truly a gift to others.

SOME THINGS TO CONSIDER:

- Take a moment to consider the kind of aid you would like to offer. There are many types of first aid training, from emergency first aid, first aid response, sports first aid, to paediatric first aid. Where do you think your skills will be of use?
- After completing an accredited training, you may wish to volunteer with an organisation. Organisations such as the Irish Red Cross can be an accessible and safe environment to hone your skills.



USEFUL LINKS:

Irish Red Cross: <https://www.redcross.ie/>

Irish Red Cross covers a range of different training courses you can explore for accredited first aid training.

First Aid Ireland: <http://firstaidireland.ie/courses.html>

First Aid Ireland also offer a range of accredited first aid trainings in Ireland.

Activity 12: Sign Language

Suggest Challenge area: Personal Skill

WHY LEARN SIGN LANGUAGE?

As we attempt to shift away from the harmful excesses of our carbon-intensive society to a more sustainable way of living, it is vital that everyone is a part of the conversation. But how can you offer your perspective if no one speaks your language? How can you be heard if no one knows how to listen?

Being able to bridge these inequalities is a vital component to embodying the values of inclusivity we hope to embed into our society going forward. Learning sign language, (or indeed any other minority language) is an important skill to help raise the voices of marginalised minorities who otherwise go unheard.

SOME THINGS TO CONSIDER:

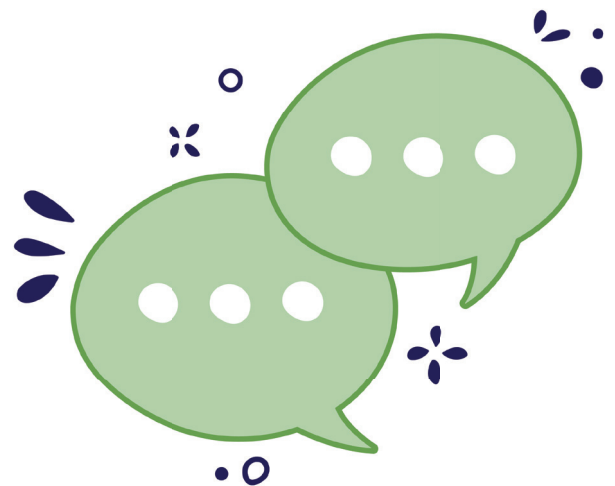
- What do you want to learn? The example above focuses on sign language, but perhaps if you live in a community with particular minority ethnic groups, learning their language can be a powerful and welcoming gesture.
- Where can you learn? There are a number of websites you can connect with a sign language tutor through which will be linked below.

If you wish to learn another language you can make use of free online tools such as Duolingo, as well as researching courses in your area or online. Be aware that some of these courses may incur an entrance fee.

USEFUL LINKS:

Irish Deaf Society: <https://www.irishdeafociety.ie/booking-an-irish-sign-language-classes/>
Irish Deaf Society offers a wealth of information on Irish Sign Language, as well as delivering trainings.

Irish Sign Language: <https://www.irishsignlanguage.ie/>
Irish Sign Language offers training in ISL, including offering training to Gaisce students.



Activity 13: Circus Arts

Suggest Challenge area: Personal Skill & Physical Recreation

WHY JOIN THE CIRCUS?

While the circus as we know it is relatively new, dating back to the 18th century, many arts we now associate with circus have much older histories finding origins in ancient China (diabolo), Maori culture (poi), Egypt and Europe (juggling) to name but a few. Today there is a vibrant circus community all around the globe with groups meeting regularly throughout the country, organising trainings, workshops, conventions and gatherings. You will be hard pressed to find another practice as multicultural as circus, a global heritage in a time of global challenges.

Each skill demands focus and dexterity, developing quick co-ordination and reflexes, but they can also be effective exercises with each skill honing specific muscles. Activities such as aerial circus arts make for an intensive whole-body workout that will leave you feeling limber and full of life!

SOME THINGS TO CONSIDER:

- What do you want to learn? Different props have varied experience curves - juggling can be frustrating to begin as you build your dexterity but once you establish some basic patterns you will be pleasantly surprised at your progress. In contrast, poi is a very accessible flow art some people may choose to begin with. You can always mix and match a few circus skills; you'll be surprised how much carries over from one to the other!
- Experiment with props of different sizes and weight. If you care more about fitness than art, you may simply want to learn a basic juggling pattern and practice building stamina and strength.
- Expect to hit yourself! Bruises are common when you first start circus - things don't go quite where you hope they will and with props like poi, a misplaced swing makes all the difference!
- Remember to warm up appropriately. Some practices will see you working with muscles you may not usually exercise.
- Consider learning with a friend. Many jugglers start out learning by practicing passing, or play games such as Gladiators which is a competitive juggling sport. Other practices such as acro-yoga require two people or more participants.
- Mix this skill with an upcycling project by making your own equipment!
- How will you learn? It's entirely possible to buy / make equipment and learn from YouTube tutorials, but many cities in Ireland now have a circus project where you can be supported in a safe, professional environment.

USEFUL LINKS:

Emerald Circus: <https://emeraldcircus.com/>

Emerald Circus offers a directory of circus groups, schools, societies and festivals across Ireland and the UK. Is there a group in your area?

Lucas Jet: <https://www.lucasjet.party/circus-skills-tutorials>

In response to the 2020 lockdowns, Lucas Jet has prepared a range of YouTube tutorials to help get you started at home!

Activity 14: Cycling

Suggest Challenge area: Physical Recreation

WHY CYCLE?

Is there anything more exhilarating than the feel of the wind on your face as you cruise along on your bike? Is there a fuel more low carbon than the packed lunch you bring with you? Cycling is a wonderful pastime that connects us to our bodies and our environments. It is both a means and an end in itself, whether you want to go off somewhere for a spin, or just feel like letting off steam.

But figures also suggest that it is very feasible for there to be a positive environmental impact by making cycling our main form of transportation. According to the National Transport Survey in 2019, the average journey distance was 13.7km. Even if you only used your bike for short term trips, this could have a significant impact in reducing dependency on cars and their carbon emissions.

SOME THINGS TO CONSIDER:

- What condition is your bike in? Think about pairing this activity with the bike maintenance skill to keep your bike in tip-top shape!
- What are the roads like? Do you have access to segregated cycle lanes or will you be sharing roads alongside other road users? Make sure to note the safety precautions you will need to take.
- Can people see you / hear you? It is a statutory requirement for cyclists to have bike lights if you are cycling in low-light conditions, as well as a bell to make your presence known to other cars, cyclists and pedestrians. Don't forget your other equipment like a good helmet, a puncture repair kit and some water!
- Do you have a good lock? Most corner-shops will sell cheap bike locks for a couple of euro. These locks can easily be broken by thieves, so it pays to invest in a good D-lock or chain.
- Where are you going? You may decide to plan this activity with a weekly trip - take the time to get to know your area, or steadily push the boundaries.
- Bring a friend - when on the road we can feel safer in numbers, but it can also make for more fun if we do things we enjoy with the people we care about.

USEFUL LINKS:

Cycling Ireland: <https://www.cyclingireland.ie/>

Cycling Ireland is the one stop site if you're interested in exploring cycling as a sport, connecting with groups and events across Ireland.

EuroVelo: <https://en.eurovelo.com/>

EuroVelo offers a guide to various cycling routes all across Europe!

The Irish Cycling Advocacy Network: <https://cyclist.ie/>

If you are interested in supporting cycling as a form of active travel and advocacy, this site has all the information you need from minding your bike to different cycling campaigns across Ireland.

Activity 14: Yoga

Suggest Challenge area: Personal Skill

WHY PRACTICE YOGA?

The origins of yoga remain something of a mystery, dating back several thousand years to ancient India. When we think of yoga, you might think of elaborate postures by limber people, but in truth this is only a small aspect of what is a deep and complex spiritual tradition. Asana practice, or the images we associate with yoga, while demanding physical activity in itself is instead intended to prepare the body for meditation. And so, taken in its entirety the practice of yoga is an opportunity to transform our inner and outer lives.

In a time of climate breakdown, when the world feels to be tipping out of balance, it is important to resource ourselves and bring our own internal lives into balance.

SOME THINGS TO CONSIDER:

- There are many yogic forms, each with their own practices and ethos. Take time to research what style is right for you, whether it is ashtanga yoga, hatha yoga, yoga nidra, and many more.
- While there is an abundance of material available online, consider the benefits of joining a local yoga group. Many groups now offer services for people of all ages and it can be encouraging to practice alongside our peers.
- Don't push yourself. Let yourself walk your yoga journey at your own pace. Yoga as a practice is a reminder to come into presence in our bodies, to listen to them and not just see them as tools for our minds to act in the world. Don't push yourself beyond what your body is capable of and try to find joy in the practice!



USEFUL LINKS:

Irish Yoga Association: <https://www.iya.ie/iyayoga/>

The Irish Yoga Association offers links to accredited yoga teachers across the country for you to link in with.

Yoga with Adriene: <https://www.youtube.com/c/yogawithadriene>

Yoga with Adriene is a YouTube channel offering free online yoga classes for you to access remotely.

Activity 15: Hiking & Hillwalking

Suggest Challenge area: Physical Recreation

WHY GO HIKING?

In the 6th mass extinction event, it's easy to focus on everything that has already been lost. Staggering statistics of species now gone or at risk of disappearing forever, it can all become a bit much and abstract. But traversing rolling hills or walking through dense woodland, it can be hard to stay in that mindset when you're immersed in the beauty of nature. At the top of a hill, eating lunch with your friends after a morning of hiking, it's hard not to feel a sense of wonder looking out on the landscape like you're in Lord of the Rings on your own adventure.

SOME THINGS TO CONSIDER:

- Be prepared. Hiking and hillwalking can be transformative experiences for your body and mind, but if you are ill-equipped for your journey, what could otherwise be a pleasant day may easily give rise to danger. Take time to consider what you need on your trip - plenty of water, a packed lunch, a good pair of hiking boots, charging your phone, informing your loved ones where you are going, plotting your route. All of this and more may seem trivial to the point of being mundane but will stand to you if things don't go to plan.
- Many areas have hiking or hillwalking groups. Connect with one in your area, or plan a trip with friends and family.
- Mix and match with other skills explored in this resource. You may want to pair this activity with foraging, biodiversity conservation, first aid or another skill of your choosing.
- Start simple - you don't need to aim for the top straight away! Over your 13 weeks steadily set yourself new challenges and adjust to your ability.

USEFUL LINKS:

Mountaineering Ireland:

<https://www.mountaineering.ie/default.aspx>

Mountaineering Ireland is a fountain of information of all things you will need in order to hike or hill-walk safely, to respond to emergency, as well as equipment you will need for your trek. It also has a directory of various groups on a countywide basis.

The Ireland Walking Guide:

<https://www.theirelandwalkingguide.com/trails.html#List>

This website provides an overview of different trails you can walk, including how long they are and their difficulty level. It also provides links to purchasing maps of the trails / area you have selected.



Activity 16: Swimming

Suggest Challenge area: Physical Recreation

WHY SWIM?

Despite all our efforts to preserve the environment for future generations, it's also important for us to take time to build our own relationships with the nature around us. Some people are drawn to the woods and some are drawn to the water. There are few things more invigorating than the initial shock of stepping into the sea, like a hard reset to your nervous system!

SOME THINGS TO CONSIDER:

- Where will you go? As an island nation, nearly 40% of the population of Ireland live within 5km of a coast, with many more near lakes, rivers and other bodies of water.
- Are there any good swimming spots in your area? Remember to
- Are you a confident swimmer? If this is your first time learning to swim, you may want to join a class at a local gym where you can build confidence in a safe environment.
- Be prepared - it can be a shock to the senses getting in the sea or a river, so pack accordingly. Remember to bring the essentials like a towel or dry robe, but a hot water bottle may be just what you need to keep you warm when you get out of the water!
- Set yourself goals. Perhaps this might be the length of time you spend in the water, or measuring the distance you can swim or if you will mix this with other activities such as cycling and running. And remember, don't push yourself - a cramp or ache can quickly lead to greater difficulty in the water if you are not prepared or overexert yourself.
- Mix this activity with others such as biodiversity conservation and foraging if you are more drawn to marine environments!

USEFUL LINKS:

Swim Ireland: <https://www.swimireland.ie/news/open-water-swimming-safety-in-ireland>

This website contains important information if you are planning on swimming in open water such as lakes, rivers or the sea. It also contains links to local clubs and swim spots in your area for you to start!

Spunout.ie: <https://spunout.ie/voices/advice/my-tips-swimming-irish-sea>

This is a great article expounding the benefits of sea swimming and some helpful tips to prepare you!

Activity 17: Tai Chi & Qi Gong

Suggest Challenge area: Physical Recreation

WHY LEARN TAI CHI / QI GONG?

Much like yoga, tai chi and qi gong are two closely related disciplines dating back to ancient China. They have a rich philosophical roots mediated through careful intentional movements. In the climate crisis, our bodies can often harbour repressed challenging emotions; these practices offer us a path to mobilise this energy, and support both our bodies and minds.

If you experience reduced mobility, these practices may be ideal for you.

SOME THINGS TO CONSIDER:

- Where will you learn? At present there is an abundance of online and written materials to draw on, but take time to research if there is a group or class that meet in your area.
- Enjoy the process - take time to acquaint yourself with the practice, but over the weeks set small goals for yourself to build your own practice, to take the exercises to heart and to find what works for you and your body.

USEFUL LINKS:

Chen Tai Chi Ireland: <http://www.chentaichiireland.com/learn-tai-chi-online/>

If you would like to learn tai chi in person, Chen Tai Chi offer classes in a variety of locations around Ireland.

Tai Chi Basics: <https://taichibasics.com/the-best-way-to-learn-qi-gong-at-home/>

This article covers some basics behind starting your qigong practice at home, including the time of the day, the best place to practice, and how to evaluate your practice as you progress!

Yoqi Yoga and Qigong: <https://www.youtube.com/c/yoqi>

This channel offers free tutorials for a number of different practices to get you started at home!

Activity 18: Dogwalking

Suggest Challenge area: Physical Recreation

WHY WALK DOGS?

When building relationships with the natural world, some of the first relationships that grow are with our pets or the pets of friends. There are few joys in this world as pure as spending time with dogs and their unbridled enthusiasm. Taking time to walk in nature with pets, to look after them and tend to their needs are a window to a wider world as we share in their curiosity taking in the sights and sounds around them.

You may find an activity such as this to be preferable if you find other forms of exercise to be too strenuous!

SOME THINGS TO CONSIDER:

- Do you know any dogs? First and most important, you probably won't be able to walk a dog if you don't live with one or know any friends with pets. Also consider how well you know any animals and work to earn their trust first.
- Are they trained? When out walking dogs, it's to be expected you will cross paths with other dogs and their human companions. Dogs can become excited in the company of other dogs and so it's important you can command their attention and for them to listen to you.
- How are you prepared to look after the dog's needs? Bring some of their favourite toys, some treats and water with you. Our furry friends may be full of energy most of the time but that doesn't mean they don't need to stay hydrated!
- Some dogs need more regular daily exercise. Instead of walking, maybe consider jogging alongside your friend.

USEFUL LINKS:

The Wildest: <https://www.thewildest.com/dog-lifestyle/10-dog-walking-tips-everyone-should-know>

This website covers some helpful tips for your dog to get the most out of your walk!

Country File: <https://www.countryfile.com/go-outdoors/walks/dog-walking-guide-expert-training-tips-to-help-your-dog-behave/>

This list focuses mostly on training your dog and being mindful of your surroundings.

Activity 19: Rowing, Kayaking, Canoeing

Suggest Challenge area: Physical Recreation

WHY LEARN ROW / KAYAK / CANOE?

Picture this; you are steadily rowing down the banks of a river. All you can hear is the sound of flowing water, the trees swaying in the wind and birds calling in the distance. As you turn a corner, you spy a heron perched on a rock waiting patiently. It eyes you from a distance but it is not bothered by your presence. As you pass it by, in the corner of your eye you notice it lance a fish from the water, swallowing it with a single bite. You carry on downstream in awe at the nature around you. You no longer feel you are in nature, you are a part of it.

There are few activities such as rowing, canoeing and kayaking which allow us to exercise in the stillness of nature. Across these three activities, there are a range of different entry points for people learning to be in a boat for the first time, to people who feel a strong affinity with water.

SOME THINGS TO CONSIDER:

- Where will you learn? Many towns across Ireland will have a club of some kind where you can join and learn alongside your peers. If you are new to kayaking, canoeing or rowing, this can be a good place to begin as they may have access to equipment you may decide to invest in later. You can also practice in a safe and supportive environment from experienced professionals.
- Gauge your comfort levels. Start where you are able and build your confidence, but also keep an eye on pushing your boundaries. Activities such as kayaking involve learning to re-orient your kayak if it capsizes and so it can be useful to dedicate time to becoming a stronger swimmer if you feel it would support you in any of the above activities.

USEFUL LINKS:

Rowing Ireland: <https://www.rowingireland.ie/>

This website features a list of rowing clubs across Ireland for you to link in with.

Canoe.ie: <https://www.canoe.ie/>

Canoe.ie also has a directory of clubs you can contact if you would like to learn to canoe or kayak.

The Adventure Junkies: <https://www.theadventurejunkies.com/kayaking-tips/>

This page covers some general safety tips that will broadly apply whether you are learning to canoe, kayak, or row. This is just to give you an idea of some safety concerns, all of this will be addressed if you are planning on joining a club!

Activity 20: Horse Riding

Suggest Challenge area: Personal Skill & Physical Recreation

WHY LEARN HORSE RIDING?

For millennia, the relationship between horses and humanity has been a driving force in human civilisation. It was only in the past hundred years or so with the introduction of cars and industrialisation that they have seen less use. This has also been the case among the Traveller community where horses traditionally drew wagons and caravans, although horse ownership remains an important cultural touchstone in the community.

Now with experts calling for fewer cars to bring down carbon emissions, some people are calling for the re-introduction of draught animals like horses. But horses are not only measured by their value to the economy, with many people keen to maintain their close bonds with them, as they travel, race and live alongside one another.

Learning horse riding is an opportunity to develop your own relationships with these animals and tap into a part of human heritage as old as humanity as we know it.

SOME THINGS TO CONSIDER:

- Where will you go? There are many equestrian centres around the country offering classes to youth groups. These spaces have trained professionals who know the horses very well and are prepared to prevent and respond to incidences of accident and injury.
- What do you hope to learn? For some, the aim here will be to build relationships with their animal friends and learning to look after them, others may want to pursue horse riding, racing and show-jumping.

USEFUL LINKS:

Association of Irish Riding Clubs: <https://airc.ie/clubs/>

The AIRC have compiled a list of different clubs and organisations across the country - whether you are planning on learning to show jump or go for a leisurely trek, this is your first stop!

The Spruce Pets: <https://www.thesprucepets.com/tips-for-safe-horseback-riding-1886886>

This website covers some helpful information if you are starting out horse-riding. The club you are learning with will cover details like safety equipment and so on, but this page addresses details like finding the right horse and giving horses space from one another.

Activity 21: Green Gym

Suggest Challenge area: Personal Skill & Physical Recreation

WHY CYCLE?

A Green Gym is an idea that has taken off in the UK in recent years. Members of a Green Gym would meet regularly to work together to bring together fitness and conservation work – after all it can be hard work clearing out brambles, planting new vegetation and generally upkeeping a natural area!

SOME THINGS TO CONSIDER:

- Is there a Green Gym in your area? Reach out and see if they have a youth group you could join.
- Where will you train? If there are no Green Gyms in your area, discuss with your family or friends how you might rotate work on a few gardens over a number of weeks together.
- If you are planning on doing this work outside a Green Gym, remember to acquaint yourself with different safety precautions. This means safely using the gardening tools, but it also means warming up correctly to avoid injury. For this, you may consider mixing a Green Gym with a traditional gym to develop that understanding.
- Combine this activity with other activities such as foraging or biodiversity conservation!

USEFUL LINKS:

Fitfam: <https://fitfam.ie/gyms-ireland/>

Fitfam has a good list of gyms, personal trainers, yoga and pilates classes across Ireland you can join. Because Green Gyms are so rare in Ireland, consider joining a gym to better understand how different activities exercise different parts of the body before applying this to a green gym project of your own. Here you can learn how to prepare your body for strenuous activity and gauge your limitations in a supportive and professional environment.

Better Health: <https://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/health/healthyliving/gardening-safety>

This helpful page provides a comprehensive list of safety considerations when working in the garden, including having the appropriate equipment, taking regular breaks, and working with young people in the garden.

Activity 22: Dance

Suggest Challenge area: Physical Recreation

WHY DANCE?

Instead of making the argument about why a person should learn to dance, it may be simpler to simply ask; why not? In every culture across the world, dance and physical expression play an important role in expressing the identities and stories of their people. There are few things in this world more liberating than the freedom dance offers us in our bodies, the sense of belonging we feel dancing with others and the understanding we build learning the cultures of others.

This feels more important than ever in a world where division has become commonplace; instead we must actively cultivate spaces for us to dance, create joy and build connections with one another.

Dancing is also a wonderful way to keep fit and limber!

SOME THINGS TO CONSIDER:

- Samba? Sean-Nós? Square dancing? The possibilities for expression are endless. Ask yourself what style you feel drawn to learn, whether you want to reconnect with your own culture, to bond with your neighbours or friends or just challenge yourself physically.
- Research groups in your area. Some dance groups will offer training in a number of forms, but there can also be groups that meet through drama groups and cultural spaces if you struggle to find what you are looking for.
- Cross boundaries. Maybe dance isn't your thing. That's okay! Instead you might feel drawn to gymnastics, acrobatics or capoeira, a practice that has its origins among slaves in Brazil who disguised a martial art and self-defence through dance.
- As with all our activities, take time to prepare yourself with the appropriate attire, to warm up, and create a space at home to practice outside of class. Is there anything else you need to be mindful of?
- Work towards a performance! At the end of your 13 weeks consider showing off all you have learned so far. You don't need to be a master at the end, but it's important to celebrate your achievements to date.

USEFUL LINKS:

Dance Ireland: <https://www.danceireland.ie/>

Dance Ireland is a treasure trove of dance related information! They have links to in-person and online dance classes you can join, list of member organisations across the country for you to connect with, as well as research papers and podcasts if you're a dance nerd.

Mundo Capoeira: <https://www.capoeiraireland.com/>

Mundo Capoeira offer classes around Dublin and Wicklow if you would like to learn a practice that combines dance and martial arts!

World Irish Dance Association: <https://www.irish.dance/ireland>

Supporting Irish dance across the world, WIDA also link you in with teachers across the island of Ireland, with a focus on competitive dance and striving for different dance grades.

Gymnastics Ireland: <https://www.gymnasticsireland.com/>

There are many gymnastics clubs across Ireland working at both competitive and non-competitive levels. Is there one near you?

Activity 23: Organise a Clothes Swap Event

Suggest Challenge area: Community Involvement

WHAT IS A CLOTHES SWAP?

A clothes swap is an event where people bring their old clothes they no longer want, and in exchange can take home clothes donated by other people. It's a simple way to keep clothes in circulation and combat the needless waste of the fast fashion industry.

SOME THINGS TO CONSIDER:

- As a community activity there are a number of dimensions to consider. Many hands make light work as the saying goes, so consider organising this project alongside your friends, or other people striving for their Gaisce award.

Where will you host the event? Check in with different youth or community spaces who may be able to offer support. If you already participate in a youth group or as part of a club, organising a clothes swap through them can be a good way to raise money for a cause!

- Will it be monthly or bimonthly event, or a once-in-a-blue-moon event? It can be challenging (although not impossible!) to organise events such as these every month. Ask yourself how much time you are free to offer.
- Advertising. How will you get the word out? You will also need an open call for people to donate clothes beforehand, how will you co-ordinate that / get them to the venue? Remember to remind people to offer only clean clothes!
- Event management. On the day little things such as a tea/coffee station can offer people a space to sit and chat, while an alterations corner can be especially welcome if attendants find something they like that doesn't quite fit them. Do you have enough clothes racks and spaces to display / separate out all the clothes? Does the venue require a fee to cover the event? Is the event covered by the venue's insurance?
- Team management. How will you work together with your team? What jobs need doing? Who will look after the tea and coffee? Who will look after the cash box / greet people? Will you have people floating to make sure everyone is happy and understands the format? If there are clothes leftover, who will bring them to a charity shop at the end? How do you all decide which charity shop(s) to donate to?

USEFUL LINKS:

Eco-Age: <https://eco-age.com/resources/how-organise-clothes-swap/>

This website details all the steps you'll need to consider in running a clothes swap, both beforehand and on the day.

Sustain Your Style: <https://www.sustainyourstyle.org/en/blog/2020/6/25/how-to-organize-a-clothes-swap>

Aside from more helpful advice, this article also contains some inspiration for why host a clothes swap at all and the impact they can have!

Activity 24: Repair Café

Suggest Challenge area: Community Involvement

WHAT IS A REPAIR CAFÉ?

A repair café is a community space that meet on a regular basis where volunteers support attendants with items that are either broken or in disrepair, for free or a suggested donation. These can also be useful spaces to learn and share new skills.

SOME THINGS TO CONSIDER:

- What services will be offered at the repair café? Consider the skills on hand in your group. This could also be an opportunity to practice some of the skills you have worked on from this resource including bike repair, embroidery and upcycling!
- Where will the repair café happen? What kind of space will you need? Will you have enough access to utilities like power sockets? Is there an organisation you are currently active with who might be able to support you in some capacity?
- Who is on your team? Events like repair cafés are a major undertaking, delegating work and deciding how your team will work together are all important conversations to have.
- How will you promote your event? Think about designing posters, having a social media presence and word of mouth.

USEFUL LINKS:

Change X: <https://cdn.filestackcontent.com/DcPPzmtBRS6E2bSllixJ>

This helpful PDF from Change X should give you some ideas about how to get your Repair Café off the ground.

The Guardian: <https://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2014/sep/17/how-to-set-up-your-own-repair-cafe>

This article from the Guardian speaks to a volunteer behind a repair café, as well as providing links to other kinds of repair cafés who have a very specific focus. This might offer some inspiration about the service you provide!

Repair Café: <https://www.repaircafe.org/en/community/tips-tricks/>

This website has a good overview of different kinds of repairs you might consider at your café, but it is also a helpful repository of other information and FAQs you might have as a new organiser.



Activity 25: Community Potluck

Suggest Challenge area: Community Involvement

WHAT IS A POTLUCK?

A potluck is a kind of meal where everyone prepares a dish to be shared with others. They can be welcoming spaces to bring a community together and bond over food!

SOME THINGS TO CONSIDER:

- As with any event that involves the public, safety is a paramount concern. Any venue you choose will need to have insurance in the event of accident or injury. For people under the age of 18, this might be a challenging hurdle to work through, so events like a community potluck might best be organised through an organisation or group you are already a member of. This may also address other challenges such as securing a venue and gathering an organising team.
- Who is your target group? Hosting a potluck is an opportunity to bring people together, but who? Perhaps you might want to offer a space for people to share vegetarian / plant based food, maybe it is a cultural space for different minority ethnic groups to share their local cuisine, maybe there are no preconditions about food but instead you want to gather people to discuss a social or environmental issue.
- Like the repair café or the clothes swap event, ask yourself what will you need on the day? Facilities such as access to a microwave or a kitchen are important, as are cutlery and crockery, washing and sanitising stations, waste facilities, etc. Having a stack of board games, or some icebreakers prepared can also inject some fun into the event!
- Perhaps this event might connect with other skills you are cultivating such as growing food, foraging and fermenting. Think about how they might overlap or be celebrated with a potluck!

USEFUL LINKS:

Galway Vegan Potlucks:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yfqB2bKfynM>

This video tells the story of a vegan potluck event in Galway - take in the inspiration for how you might run an event, who you would run it for and if there is anything else you can add to draw people in!

Network of Wellbeing:

<https://networkofwellbeing.org/wp/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/Comunity-Potluck-Guidelines-by-NOW.pdf>

This is an excellent resource covering everything from why set up a potluck, pulling together an organising team, roles on the day and all the practical concerns down to when you should buy the milk!





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