

# Activities guide for rural communities

*Discover, understand and ACT for the planet*

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January 2024



## INTRODUCTION

# Discover, understand and ACT for the planet

On the Youth Conservation site, you have discovered the concept of nature and learned why it is important to preserve it to ensure the survival of the planet.

This guide is intended for trainers working in rural areas, but also for communities and anyone involved in environmental education and in contact with children.

It aims to support the transition to action by proposing concrete activities that can be set up with young people (from primary level upwards) to raise their awareness and encourage them to take action to protect the environment. These activities are chosen according to the ecosystem and context in which they take place. They are classified by theme and by level of complexity (difficulty of implementation and cost).

So don't wait any longer, and take action with your children and young people!

If you have any questions or require further information about this guide, please contact us by email: [info@youth-conservation.org](mailto:info@youth-conservation.org)



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# Making a nesting box for bats

## Benefits

- Discovering, understanding and raising awareness of biodiversity conservation
- Educational tool
- Collective and creative activity

## Material

- A wooden box (recycled or make your own)
- Mosquito netting
- A strip of fabric
- Thick black tape
- Paint to protect the wood from the weather



## How it works

- Draw a small rectangle under the box with a pencil. Open this entry hole with a small saw.
- Tape the mosquito net to the bottom of the box and leave it sticking out through the entrance hole. The bats will be able to hang on to it!
- Tie a knot at the end of the fabric and wedge it when you close the lid of the box: this will be used to hang the shelter.
- Tape the box shut. Paint the roof and the sides exposed to the elements to extend the life of the box.
- Choose a tree in the sun. Hang the shelter securely 3 metres high. When night falls, you might just see a bat emerge to hunt flying insects...

## Partners

- Schools
- Communities

Difficulty  

Cost  

## They did it!

Would you like feedback from schools and/or NGOs that have set up this activity? Consult our regularly updated database: <https://bit.ly/46Vg9gZ>

## PRESERVING BIODIVERSITY

# Making a herbarium

### **Benefices**

- Discovering, understanding and raising awareness of biodiversity conservation
- Educational tool
- Collective and creative activity



### **Material**

- Pruning shears or scissors
- Containers to collect the harvest
- A pen to write down the names of the plants collected
- A notebook with blank pages
- Newsprint or magazines
- A stack of books and A4 plastic sleeves
- Pencils and tape



### **How it works**

- Collecting plants: go out into nature and collect leaves, plants, flowers, etc. (give the children some freedom in their collection or guide them by asking them to find a plant of a particular colour or beginning with a particular letter).
- Collect preferably in dry weather.
- To identify the plants, use your own knowledge, an encyclopaedia or the Internet.
- Drying the plants: place the plants between two sheets of newspaper, place a weight on top like a book and check regularly to see how drying is progressing.
- Laying out the plants: carefully remove the dried plants and arrange them harmoniously on the pages of the notebook (one sample per page), leaving space for notes.
- Secure them with tape.
- Annotate the page with the name of the plant/flower and decorate!

### **Partners**

- Schools
- Communities



### **They did it!**

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# A treasure hunt on the beach



## Benefices

- Discovering, understanding and raising awareness of biodiversity conservation
- Educational tool
- Collective and creative activity



## Material

- A clean, empty 6-egg box
- Labels or markers to identify the finds
- A sheet of paper with instructions for the treasure hunt



## How it works

- Organise a trip to the beach and divide the children into teams of 3 to encourage cohesion and group work.
- Give each child an egg box and instructions (e.g. find sand, 3 shells, 1 seaweed, 4 pebbles, 2 small sticks, something grey, the prettiest thing you can think of, etc.).
- The children should put their finds in the egg box.
- Come back to class and discuss their finds with the children.
- Give each child an "Explorer" diploma.
- The children return home with their box and must present it to their parents, explaining the activity.



## Partners

- Schools
- Communities



## They did it!

Would you like feedback from schools and/or NGOs that have set up this activity? Consult our regularly updated database: <https://bit.ly/46Vg9gZ>

## PRESERVING BIODIVERSITY

# A treasure hunt in the forest



### Benefices

- Discovering, understanding and raising awareness of biodiversity conservation
- Educational tool
- Collective and creative activity



### Material

- A clean, empty 6-egg box
- Labels or markers to identify the finds
- A sheet of paper with instructions for the treasure hunt



### How it works

- Organise a trip to the forest and divide the children into teams of 3 to encourage cohesion and group work.
- Give each child an egg box and pre-defined instructions (e.g. find a piece of bark, 3 pebbles, 1 leaf, something yellow, 2 small sticks, a plant beginning with the letter..., etc.).
- The children should put their finds in the egg box.
- Come back to the classroom and discuss their finds with the children.
- Give each child an "Explorer" diploma.
- The children return home with their box and must present it to their parents, explaining the activity.



### Partners

- Schools
- Communities

Difficulty



Cost



### They did it!

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## PRESERVING BIODIVERSITY

# Building an insect hotel (1/2)



### **Benefices**

- Discovering, understanding and raising awareness of the importance of preserving biodiversity: an insect hotel is very useful in the garden, as it provides a refuge for lots of insects such as bees, osmids, ladybirds, carabid beetles (which eat lots of aphids) and butterflies.
- Educational tool
- Collective, aesthetic and fun activity

### **Material**

- 7 wooden pencil pots
- Varnish and wood glue
- Paint and brushes
- String
- Clay pots and skewers.
- Accessories to decorate the hotel: straw, bamboo stalks, dry leaves, cardboard, bark, branches, small pine cones.

### **Partners**

- Schools
- Communities



### **They did it!**

Would you like feedback from schools and/or NGOs that have set up this activity? Consult our regularly updated database: <https://bit.ly/46Vg9gZ>



# Building an insect hotel (2/2)



## How it works

- Drill two holes in each pencil pot for a string.
- Assemble all the pots together and glue them with wood glue for extra safety. Leave to dry thoroughly in all cases.
- Varnish the outside of your insect hotel and leave to dry thoroughly.
- Turn a terracotta pot upside down, thread a string and a small bamboo rod across it.
- Stuff with straw and hang the pots from the insect house. These upside-down pots lined with straw will make a great nest for earwigs, which love to eat aphids.
- Choose your 'natural trimmings' according to the insects you want to attract.
- For example, dry leaves and rolled cardboard are good for ladybirds and lacewings (aphid predators). The leaves need to be quite dry and fairly tightly packed.
- Bamboo stalks are for solitary bees – there's no risk of swarms, as they live alone. They will stay and pollinate your flowers in the summer.
- Rose stems are for Osmies (pollinators), hoverflies (aphid predators) and solitary bees. You can use any hollow stems...
- Bark is good for carabid beetles (aphid and larva predators, they also like to hunt slugs and snails).
- Use skewers or glue to build a fence to protect the little creatures from predators, but also to prevent their new habitat from being destroyed over time.
- Tie a knot around a piece of skewer with a string and pass it through the hole in a terracotta pot. Repeat the same operation to get two terracotta pots on each string.
- To attract the little creatures even more quickly, place your insect hotel at least 30cm from the ground. Shelter it by facing south or south-west (so that it gets the morning sun).
- Ideally? On a tree trunk sheltered from the wind, against a wall, protected from the rain and above a vegetable garden or near flowers.

# SUSTAINABLE MANAGEMENT, REDUCTION AND RECOVERY OF PLASTIC WASTE

## Collecting plastic waste



### Benefices

- Raising awareness and combating plastic pollution
- Group activity
- Educational tool



### Material

- The location of the collection: around the school, at the market, at a nearby beach – take care to ensure children's safety.
- Duration: allow 1 to 2 hours depending on the age of the children and the number of participants / ideally, plan the activity around World Cleanup Day (which generally takes place in September: <https://www.worldcleanupday.org/>).
- –Post-collection waste management: check with your local council or community.
- –Communication: communicate before and after the event.
- Post-collection monitoring: take photos of the site before, just after and in the months after to encourage the community to keep the site clean.



### How it works

- Before the event: invite parents, local residents and the local media.
- On the day: form mixed teams of children of different ages and divide the teams up around the site.
- Make sure the children are safe by giving them precise instructions on what they can collect.
- Organise the collection as a big treasure hunt for the children. Have them fill in a mission sheet after the collection:
  1. Do you recognise the rubbish you collected? Can you name them?
  2. Do you use any of these products yourself? Which ones do you use?
  3. Do you have any ideas for convincing others to stop littering?
- Afterwards: make sure the area is kept clean and repeat the cleaning operation 2 or 3 times a year..



### Partners

- Schools, nature clubs
- Communities and local authorities
- Local media
- Local businesses, depending on the scale of the event
- Local NGOs for technical and/or financial support (bags, drinks, food, etc.)

Difficulty



Cost



### They did it!

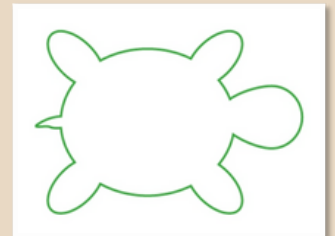
Would you like feedback from schools and/or NGOs that have set up this activity? Consult our regularly updated database: <https://bit.ly/46Vg9gZ>

# Recycling waste into decorative objects – the turtle



## Benefices

- Waste recovery
- Raising awareness of the need to protect the environment
- Creativity and personal development
- Playful group work
- An educational tool



You can download the pattern of the turtle



## Material

- A plastic bottle
- A pair of scissors
- A thick sheet of coloured paper
- The turtle pattern (opposite) for the body
- Moveable eyes (or alternatively a black felt-tip pen to draw the eyes)
- Glue or 2 rubber bands to hold the shell to the turtle's body
- Polystyrene balls or beads, buttons, small pieces of paper, plastic buttons (to fill the shell)



## How it works

- Cut out the turtle on thick paper (pattern to download from the Drive file).
- Offset the shape of the turtle on the coloured paper and cut it out.
- Cut the bottom of the bottle about 5 cm high.
- Fill the bottom of the bottle with whatever you have (piece of paper, pearl, dried vegetable seeds, etc.) to form the shell.
- Glue the shell onto the shape of the turtle.
- Draw the eyes and legs.



## Partners

- Schools
- Communities

Difficulty



Cost



## They did it!

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## SUSTAINABLE MANAGEMENT, REDUCTION AND RECOVERY OF PLASTIC AND METALLIC WASTE

# Recycling waste into decorative objects

## The guitar



### Benefices

- Waste recovery
- Raising awareness of the need to protect the environment
- Creativity and personal development
- Playful group work
- An educational tool



### Material

- A flat, empty, washed tin (such as a fish can)
- Electrical tape
- Rubber bands
- Permanent markers



### How it works

- Decorate the box with the markers.
- Tape around the edge of the box with electrical tape.
- Cut the tape to the edge at the corners.
- Fold the tape inside (to protect little hands from sharp edges).
- Thread rubber bands around the box, making several turns if necessary. Vary the size of the rubber bands and the tension to vary the 'notes'.
- And there you have it, your tinned guitar is ready! The kids will have a blast playing it for a little concert at home or during the music festival!



### Partners

- Schools
- Communities

Difficulty



Cost



### They did it!

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## SUSTAINABLE MANAGEMENT, REDUCTION AND RECOVERY OF PLASTIC AND METALLIC WASTE

# Recycling waste into decorative objects

## Music box



### Benefices

- Waste recovery
- Raising awareness of the need to protect the environment
- Creativity and personal development
- Playful group work
- An educational tool



### Material

- An empty tin, washed and thoroughly wiped dry (such as a tin of beans, lentils, etc.)
- A sheet of paper
- Glue and felt pens or coloured pencils
- Dried vegetable seeds (lentils, rice, beans, etc.): vary the seeds to get different sounds
- A rubber band



### How it works

- Make sure the tins are well washed and wiped dry.
- Decorate a strip of paper the height of the can.
- Cover the can with the decorated strip of paper.
- Place a dab of seeds in the can.
- Draw a paper circle larger than the circumference of the can (allow about 3cm extra).
- Decorate the top of the paper circle.
- Glue the top and outside edges of the box for 2 cm.
- Cover the top of the can with the paper circle, glue and secure the paper and reinforce with a rubber band.



### Partners

- Ecoles
- Communautés

Difficulty



Cost



### They did it!

Would you like feedback from schools and/or NGOs that have set up this activity? Consult our regularly updated database: <https://bit.ly/46Vg9gZ>

# SUSTAINABLE MANAGEMENT, REDUCTION AND RECOVERY OF PLASTIC AND METALLIC WASTE

## Recycling waste into decorative objects

### Walkie-talkie



#### benefices

- Waste recovery
- Raising awareness of the need to protect the environment
- Creativity and personal development
- Playful group work
- An educational tool



#### Material

- 2 tin cans
- A nail and a hammer to pierce the 2 tins
- A sheet of paper
- Everything you need to customise and personalise your walkie-talkie: glue, coloured paper of your choice, stickers, glitter, etc.
- Felt pens or scissors and about 10m of string or cord
- Glue



#### How it works

- Pierce the bottom of the tins with a nail and hammer.
- Cut a sheet of coloured paper the width of the tins.
- Decorate the paper.
- Fix the paper around the cans with glue.
- Pass one end of the string through the centre of a can.
- Form a knot on the inside of the can.
- Attach the other end of the string to the other can.
- To use the telephone, simply speak into the can while the other person puts the other can to their ear to listen. The vibrations emitted by the voice travel along the string and are reflected in the can, which acts as a resonator.



#### Partners

- Schools
- Communities

Difficulty



Cost



#### They did it!

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# SUSTAINABLE MANAGEMENT, REDUCTION AND RECOVERY OF PLASTIC WASTE

## Recycling waste into decorative objects Planter in a plastic bottle



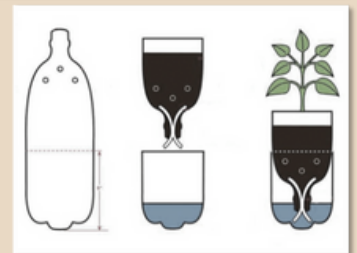
### Benefices

- Recycling plastic waste
- Soilless farming
- Educational tool
- Well-being



### Material

- 1.5 litre or 2 litre plastic bottle
- Cutter and potting soil
- Gardening and watering equipment: small shovels, watering can, gloves
- A little compost (if possible natural compost such as sand, cow dung, peanut shells, charcoal residue, etc.)
- Water (must be easily accessible)



### Questions to ask

- What type of planting? Vegetables such as kale are suitable, as are herbs and salads.
- Seasonality: when is the best time to plant?
- Who will be responsible for maintenance? Make the children responsible for everything from planting to the day-to-day upkeep of the plants.



### How it works

- Ask the children to each bring in an empty plastic bottle.
- Cut it 12 cm from the base.
- Turn the top of the closed bottle upside down and put in the potting soil with the seedlings.
- Turn the top part upside down, remove the button and insert it into the bottom part of the bottle, which has been filled with water beforehand.
- Water regularly, and ask the children to follow the plant's growth by noting its development every week in a notebook (size, appearance, etc.).



### Partners

- Schools
- Communities
- Local authorities
- Local media



### They did it!

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# SUSTAINABLE MANAGEMENT, REDUCTION AND RECOVERY OF PLASTIC WASTE

## Making natural compost



### Benefices

- Reduction in organic waste (up to 50%)
- Improved soil quality in the long term: more nutrients, better drainage, etc.
- Reduced greenhouse effect due to lower methane production
- Economic benefits: less fertiliser and less water for irrigation



### How to obtain natural compost

- Compost is obtained from the decomposition of certain types of organic waste. The most recent waste is poured into the bin from the top, while the compost is collected through an opening at the base of the composter.
- Ideally, the waste should be as varied as possible. In very hot weather, it's advisable to moisten the compost to encourage decomposition, and to cover the composter to prevent it drying out.
- If the compost is too dry, it is not rich enough in green waste. If it is too wet, add dry waste.



### Location and equipment

- Choose a flat spot in a secluded area of the school. Allow at least 2 m square.
- Compost can be made :
  1. with an easy-to-build silo (4 stakes surrounded by wire netting and a plank acting as a door (see illustration on the student sheet).
  2. with a commercial silo (made of recycled plastic)
  3. without a silo, but directly in a heap on the ground.
- A long spade or rake to stir up the compost from time to time.

### Waste for composting

- Vegetable and fruit peelings and tops
- Dead leaves and fine branches
- Coffee and tea grounds
- Manure
- Untreated and unpainted wood ash

### Waste not to be composted

- Waste ash (presence of heavy metals)
- Excrement (presence of pathogenic germs)
- Animal carcasses (presence of pathogenic germs)
- Treated or painted wood (presence of toxic products)
- Large branches (decomposition too slow)
- Weeds (risk of re-growth)

### Compost use

- Once a good quality compost has been obtained (minimum 4 months), it can be used as a soil improver.
- When preparing the soil, a few weeks before sowing, the product is placed in small piles and then mixed with the soil, worked in with a pickaxe or daba hoe, to a depth of around twenty centimetres.
- Before collecting the compost, it is advisable to leave the composter wide open for a few hours, so that any animals (rodents, reptiles, etc.) hiding there can escape.



### They did it!

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## FIGHTING CLIMATE CHANGE

# Reforestation



### Benefices

- Ecological restoration and combating global warming
- Provision of firewood and/or building wood (depending on the plant) and soil fertilisation
- Medicines (depending on the plant)
- Involving the community through an activity involving children, parents and villagers



### Equipment

- Soil and seedlings
- Gardening and watering equipment: spade, rakes, wheelbarrows, shovels, watering can, gloves
- Compost (if possible natural, such as sand, cow dung, peanut shells, charcoal residue, etc.)



### Questions to ask

- Choice of planting: which plants are best suited to the soil and climate?
- Seasonality: when is the best time to plant?
- Choice of site: choose one that's close by! Within the school? Near the village?
- Maintenance: who will look after the plants after planting? Get the children involved by giving them responsibility for a plant!



### How it works

- Plan the reforestation operation well in advance and buy the seedlings.
- Choose and treat the site: clear the soil of harmful vegetation to ensure that the new plants have an adequate supply of water and nutrients.
- Stake and plant the soil, respecting the spacing and density of the plants.
- Carry out maintenance and monitoring, involving children and the community.
- Communicate before and after the activity about the dangers of deforestation.
- Involve the children: every month, they must write a report on the growth of the plant for which they are responsible.



### Partners

- Schools and environmental clubs
- Plant nurseries
- Communities (donation of plants) and local authorities
- Local media
- Local NGOs for technical and/or financial support

Difficulty



Cost



### They did it!

Would you like feedback from schools and/or NGOs that have set up this activity? Consult our regularly updated database: <https://bit.ly/46Vg9gZ>

## IMPROVING HUMAN HEALTH

# Creating a school vegetable garden



### Benefices

- Diversifying children's diets with fresh vegetables
- Supplying vegetables to the school canteen
- Collective activity involving children, parents and villagers
- Numerous educational benefits: development of vocabulary, measurement of lengths/surfaces, drawing up a plan, knowledge of the germination and growth process of plants, etc.



### Equipment

- Plants
- Gardening and watering equipment: spade, rakes, shovels, watering can, gloves
- Compost (if possible natural, such as sand, cow dung, peanut shells, charcoal residue, etc.)
- Water: water must be easily accessible (especially for children)



### Questions to ask

- Choosing seedlings: which plants to choose according to soil and climate? For example, in a tropical climate: horsehair, manioc, carrot, amaranth, chilli, squash, sweet potato, tomato, okra, etc.
- Season: when is the best time to plant?
- Choice of location: directly on the ground or in a container?
- Maintenance: who will look after the vegetables and fruit after planting? Involve the children by giving them responsibility for a plant.



### How it works

- Treat the land and clear the soil of harmful vegetation (pruning or stumping) to ensure the plantations have an adequate supply of water and nutrients.
- Stake and plant, respecting the spacing and density of the plants (the ideal distance between 2 plants depends on their species and the nature of the soil).
- Maintain the garden and monitor it, involving the children (and parents!).
- Communicate before and after the activity about the benefits of the vegetable garden.



### Partners

- Schools and environmental clubs
- Plant nurseries
- Communities (donation of plants) and local authorities
- Local media
- Local NGOs for technical and/or financial support

Difficulty



Cost



### They did it!

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# RAISING AWARENESS OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

## Creation of a CLUB NATURE



### Benefices

- Reconnecting with nature, moral and physical well-being
- Raising awareness of nature conservation
- Personal development: children can overcome their fears through contact with nature



### Equipment

- Offer leisure activities for children and young people to discover and recreate a link with nature through various activities and outings close to home.
- Frequency: 1 session a month to start with, after school or at weekends.
- Mini-camps during the school holidays if logistically and financially possible.



### Questions to ask

- Find out from the local authorities about the arrangements for taking in children (particularly the liability aspects).
- Try out a pilot school.
- Start "small" by offering one activity per month and with a limited number of children (e.g. target children from the same neighbourhood).
- Ask parents or guardians to supervise the children during the activity or outing.
- Suggest activities that are easy to carry out and suited to the age of the children: a walk in the nearby park or forest, building a bird's nest box, making a herbarium, a nature treasure hunt, observing the local wildlife, reforestation, etc.



### Partners

- Schools
- Communities
- Local authorities
- Local media
- Local NGOs for technical and/or financial support

Difficulty



Cost



### They did it!

Would you like feedback from schools and/or NGOs that have set up this activity? Consult our regularly updated database: <https://bit.ly/46Vg9gZ>

# RAISING AWARENESS OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

## Organization of an art competition



### Benefices

- Involving children and young people in taking action for the planet
- Creativity
- An educational tool
- Involving an entire community in a meaningful project



### Questions to ask

- Competition format: type of work expected (poem, essay, drawing, slam, etc.), deadline for entries, etc.
- If applicable, define age groups: 7-11, 12-15 and 15+.
- How will the competition be publicised before, during and after? Local media, social networks, etc.
- Who will make up the jury?
- What are the rewards for the winners? Publication of their text in a collection, prize in kind (visit to a zoo or protected area, voucher for a nature camp, etc.), etc.



### How it works

- Define the details of the competition (who, what, when, etc.).
- Communicate about the competition well in advance and through the appropriate channels.
- Receive the entries and select the winners.
- Make the decision and award the prizes at a formal ceremony.



### Partners

- Schools (children at the end of primary and secondary school)
- Communities, villagers
- Publishers/printers to publish the winners' book (if possible, but not essential)
- Local NGOs for technical and/or financial support

Difficulty



Cost



### They did it!

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