

# GROW WITH TRÓCAIRE

**Teacher Note:** It is an essential aspect of development education to look to a better, more hopeful future. This activity encourages the students to imagine what that better future can be, and also consider what the alternatives may be. A real action that students can take is to engage with an existing school/community garden, or to examine the potential of starting a new garden in the school. It is part of an initiative called #GrowwithTrocaire. We want to hear stories of schools around the country working to build a sustainable future for all by focusing on what they can do locally and using sustainable practices.

## ACTIVITY 1: Vision for the Future

Arrange the students into two groups and give each a different future scenario from Worksheet: Futures Thinking. Ask each group to consider the following questions in relation to their scenario:

- What are some of the good things/difficult things about this future?
- Who will benefit and who will lose in this future?

Ask each group to draw their assigned version of the future, showing us what has happened to communities in Ireland, communities overseas and what the planet will look like.

Discuss how the pictures created relate to the students' own hopes for the future. Is there any common agreement about what they want? Join together to make a list of the essential criteria for a happy, healthy and sustainable future for all. How does your list compare to the Global Goals? Finally, have a vote in the class. Ask the students to vote for which version of the future seems the most likely right now. What do we need to do to ensure that it is the sustainable version of the future that transpires?

## ACTIVITY 2: School/Community Gardens

School or community gardens are a wonderful way for young people to learn about and get involved in developing areas of their school or community to help reconnect with the natural world, learn about gardening, agriculture and forestry.

School gardens are used for:

- Education
- Growing healthy food
- Contributing to a healthy environment
- Providing a space for people to come together and connect with nature, and have different sensory experiences
- Contributing towards a more sustainable food system
- Your school may already have a school garden. If so, congratulations, we hope it is going well. If not, we would like to encourage you to join Trócaire's drive to 'grow together' in 2022 to help contribute to a more sustainable food system, and a sustainable future for all, and to show solidarity with Thandekile and her family and the millions of others struggling with food insecurity around the world.

Check out this [TED talk](#) on the guerrilla gardening phenomenon that has gained in popularity over the last few years, but has in fact been around for centuries.

We do not recommend that you or your students start taking over parts of the school without consultation, but there may be areas in the school where it might be possible to apply some of the elements of guerrilla gardening, and make a massive difference. You do not have to plant crops – but maybe a small bush or some flowers. Use pots if no green space is available. Everything we plant can make a difference!

**Teacher Note:** Please watch the video before showing it to the students and make sure the language (in particular the last minute) and message is appropriate.



There are many excellent organisations in Ireland that can help with setting up and maintaining a school garden, including:

<https://greenschoolsireland.org/>

<https://www.biodiversityinschools.com/school-gardens.html>

<https://www.schoolearthed.ie/who-we-are.html>

<https://www.bordbia.ie/primary-school/organic-gardening-for-primary-schools/>

<https://schoolgardening.rhs.org.uk/resources/info-sheet/setting-up-a-school-garden>

### What To Do

- 1) If you do not already have a community garden in your school, please look around and see if there is an appropriate space where you can start one. Make sure to seek permission from your principal and school council.
- 2) Make a plan for what your garden will be used for. Is it to make the school look nicer? Is it to grow food for the canteen? Something else? Can you link it to community or school projects already taking place?

- 3) Think creatively. Can you apply the principals of guerrilla gardening (with permission) to your school? Are their potential spaces around the school to use? Remember, it doesn't matter how small or seemingly inappropriate, it can still work!

- 4) Windowsill gardening. If you don't have lots of space, or for an easy way to get started, why not do some windowsill gardening? Many options are perfect for school windowsills, such as herbs, small vegetables and radishes. Visit the [Eco-Schools](#) website for more suggestions.

- 5) Tell us about your projects! Please share your projects with us in whatever way you choose. We would love to get pictures, blogs, stories, documentaries, games, presentations, tweets, posts – anything really. We want to grow a community in Ireland of schools who are 'growing together' for a more sustainable future, and link this community to the wider world. Use the hashtag **#GrowwithTrocaire** on social media or send updates on your projects to us in Trócaire.



# WORKSHEET: FUTURES THINKING

## Edge of Disaster

It is 2050. Since 2022 governments have been slow to make important decisions about stopping climate change, ending poverty and fighting inequality. They thought that these problems were manageable, and could be fixed over time without massive government intervention; they were wrong. Many communities have been destroyed by climate change, agriculture has failed in many parts of the world, and there is now not enough food to go around. People are dying of starvation across the Global South, and have been forced to leave their homes. Many species of animal and plant are now extinct, and even drought-resistant crops are now failing in the extreme temperatures. Supplies of fossil fuels are running out, though consumerism is still rampant. People still want to buy the things they desire but do not need. Some people still claim humans are not to blame for climate change, and that we just have to learn to deal with it. Meanwhile, millions of people across the world are on the move to escape the worst effects.

## Technological Fix

It is 2050. Since 2022 there has been a huge interest in technology because people thought that new technology and inventions would be the way to create a sustainable world. There have been some fantastic new inventions for agriculture, which have made it more productive and reduced the need for small farms across the world. Mega farms now produce more food than ever before. However, the technology is expensive. Only rich countries can afford to use this technology, so agriculture is now a thing of the past in many countries in the Global South, which is ravaged by climate change. Food is plentiful, but must be shipped into many countries each week in enormous container ships. Land that was once agricultural is used for other purposes, mostly housing for an ever-increasing global population, now standing at 10 billion.

## Sustainable Living

It is 2050. Since 2022, we have made big changes in our governments, in our workplaces, in our schools and in our homes. There is less of a gap between the rich and the poor, due to the growth in awareness that we need to ensure human rights are respected and that everyone has an equal opportunity to live in a safe community, to be healthy and achieve their dreams. We have managed to stop the most damaging effects of climate change because we realised that caring for the environment, other people and future generations makes our own lives much better. People spend more time outdoors, enjoying nature and evidence suggests that people are happier now than they have ever been. School and community gardens have sprung up everywhere. Green spaces are now places of great beauty and are used to grow healthy food for local people. Even though the global population is now 10 billion, people in all countries have never had better access to food, or healthier diets.