

I ACT@SCHOOL

GUIDELINES FOR I ACT TEACHERS

WHAT IS I ACT

I ACT is about encouraging and helping teachers to bring key environmental and social issues into their teaching in order to raise awareness and trigger action among young people on the threats and challenges to our living environment.

It is a teacher-driven action initiated and launched by a group of teachers in different European countries. They strongly believe in our responsibility for the future of young people and call upon other teachers who share this belief to join them and contribute to safeguarding the future for our children and the generations beyond them.

The main objectives of I ACT are:

- To raise awareness among young people on climate change and other key environmental and social issues important for the future of our planet and our societies and to help them formulate an agenda for action at different levels.
- To encourage and support teachers ready to take on this missions to contribute to safeguard the future for current and future generations of young people.
- To build local, regional, national and European networks of such teachers for exchange of information, ideas and resources and for giving visibility to the views and actions of young people.
- To make young people familiar with enquiry- and action-based approaches to learning.

The engine of the action is a network of networks of teachers who have committed themselves to its aims and objectives by signing the “I ACT” Charter.

The charter is the mission statement of the action. It gives the vision and the objectives of the action, defines its challenges and defines the commitments of the teachers who join the action.

The action will happen in the local environment. This is where teachers will apply their skills and imagination to involve their pupils (and possibly also the community at large) in a pedagogical process to raise awareness, building an agenda for action and foster advocacy.

I ACT can be implemented in almost all curricular areas and also lends itself perfectly to cross-curricular work. It provides a methodological framework to help and assist teachers in the implementation of the action at school and in the local environment.

Teachers who join the action will support each other by forming local, regional or national networks and will also be able to rely on the advice of teams of teachers with a long and solid experience of school networking and the issues of the action.

[The I ACT blog](#) provides detailed information on the action. It also gives news and information on the I ACT issues, tips on resources and ideas from other teachers.

There is also an [“I ACT for our common futures”](#) group on Facebook for teachers to meet and share on I ACT.

I ACT IN MY SCHOOL

This guideline is meant to help teachers who want to set up an I ACT activity in the school. It is supplemented by a set of practical examples of how one can set up an I ACT activity, which is available in the I ACT blog.

Every effort has been made to make it easy to do this and to be part of the I ACT community. There is no formal procedure to be followed for this and you have the ability to decide on each aspect of the I ACT activity that you would like to do with your pupils. The only thing you should bear in mind is that the activity should raise their awareness on issues important for the future of our societies and include an action to demonstrate the result of the activity to other pupils or groups.

You can prepare your activity in three steps as outlined below but this is only a recommendation, not an obligation.

1. DECIDE THE FORMAT OF YOUR ACTIVITY

1. WHAT TYPE OF ACTIVITY; FOR HOW LONG; WHEN

You should decide if the activity will be done within the framework of your own curriculum or rather as an extra-curricular one and whether you will do it on your own or work together with other teachers (see below). You should also consider what sort of tools and technologies that you will have at hand for the activity. Then depending on your school year calendar, the pupils you teach and how many hours a week, you may extend the activity over a semester or the whole school year or prefer to focus on it for a shorter period of time. Finally, you will adapt the whole timeline to the type of action at the end of the activity that you will plan and the date you choose to make it happen.

2. COOPERATION WITH OTHER TEACHERS

- In my school

I ACT themes and topics cover overlapping curricular subjects that easily lend themselves to team work, they allow you to link sciences and humanities, arts and languages, etc. They can be implemented with one or many more groups of pupils over one subject, but they offer interesting transversal potential and can spread beyond the classroom to whole school situation. You can also consider setting up an I ACT network of teachers in your school.

- In the region or country

If you are not already part of one, try to identify regional and national teacher networks that could be interested in the activity. Subscribe to their newsletters, join their discussion forums and visit their web sites, they may help you a lot with the activity development and its dissemination. If you find other teachers in your region that take part in or are interested in I ACT you can start to communicate with each other in the “I ACT for our common future” group in Facebook or through other means.

- In other countries

I ACT can easily be adapted to European schemes like Comenius, Leonardo or eTwinning. The activity that you choose to do can also be developed within the framework of existing international teams, teachers associations or networks. Do not hesitate to identify ways to develop your activity through partnerships and funding opportunities; the I ACT education and ICT experts situated in different countries may be able to help and advise you

3. PARTNERSHIP WITH OTHER GROUPS AND INSTITUTIONS

Environmental and societal issues are top priorities in many regions and countries. Most governments are setting up schemes to motivate environmental awareness and action, identify those schemes and consider involving their experts.

You can also try to link up with the key people in your local community or region who are dedicated to and involved in the issue you have chosen. You should at least make sure that the results of your activity are disseminated to this kind of people to make them aware of the opinions and the work done by the pupils.

A broad range of associations and NGOs deal with climate change, biodiversity and intercultural issues, they should be actively involved whenever and wherever possible, to bring in an interesting civil society dimension to school work. You can also see if some of your pupils' parents belong to such associations and make them join the activity team.

2. DECIDE ON THE FOCUS OF YOUR ACTIVITY

1. CHOOSE ONE OF THE I ACT ISSUES

I ACT is launched with a focus on three core issues for the future of our living environments. They are:

- A Planet At Risk (climate change)
- Safeguarding Our Ecosystems (biodiversity)
- Living Together (intercultural understanding)

It is recommended that you choose one of them. You can then benefit from the work done by other teachers to identify pedagogical resources for each of the issues.

However, you can also choose another issue that you find more relevant and interesting for your pupils. If you do this, please use the I ACT blog to tell other teachers what issue you have chosen and how you are dealing with it. Other teachers may be interested in this issue and then you can help each other finding suitable pedagogical resources. The document "I ACT issues" available on the I ACT blog includes a list of other possible issues that you might like to consider.

1. Identify some elements or factors behind the issue you have selected for your activity. It can be items, phenomena or societal sectors (see below).
2. Agree with your pupils (and others involved in the activity) on one element or factor that you will focus on for the rest of the activity.

The way you focus the work of your pupils in the first step might vary from issue to issue.

If you are dealing with climate change, then the task of the pupils could be to identify how different aspects of our life contribute to global warming or to focus on a particular process that influences it.

For biodiversity, the focus could be to identify processes that are important if we are to keep our ecological systems in balance or finding factors that have made a certain species or plant endangered.

The approach for Living Together could be to take one of the sub issues and identify the factors that shape it in the local community.

CHANGE

In the first part of this phase, the pupils should agree on an agenda of priority actions for the sector, item or phenomenon that they have decided to focus on. They should do this making use of the results of the work done in the analytical phase.

The agenda should basically be a list of a small number of concrete actions and measures that they consider most important to implement in the local or regional context or in their private lifestyle with the purpose to contribute to meet the challenges and dangers of the overall issue of the activity. Preferably, the agenda should also include a “message” or call for action addressed to national or European decision-makers.

The second part of the phase should be to plan how the agenda for action will be communicated and made visible to those who are expected to take action, whether it is local and regional policy-makers or fellow pupils and their families.

This is basically about deciding on:

- Which is the target group(s)
- How will you reach it (them)
- What is the key message
- When will you do it

TRANSFER

The final phase of the activity is to make the agenda of actions that your pupils agreed upon in the previous phase known to others. This is a small communication campaign and a day or week of action. The action time can be linked to a global, European or national event like “the world water day” or you may create your own “I ACT day” named after the focus of your activity.

A good communication action is well prepared, original and attractive for everyone. It is fun and serious, educational and entertaining, striking and reassuring. It has an

impact on the target-group(s) and raises awareness among the wider audience that it reaches.

To reach out to as many people as possible, do not hesitate to use all the means of communication and networks available at school, through your pupils and colleagues. Make full use of old and new technologies to amplify and showcase the impact of your action.

FOLLOW UP YOUR ACTIVITY

To let other participants in I ACT and peers in other countries know what you and your pupils have done, you can make a summary presentation of your activity and its achievements in the I ACT blog. You just send it to the editor of the blog who will take care of the publishing. More information on this is available in the blog.

You should also discuss with your pupils how you should follow up the work they have done in the activity and what they have learnt from it inside or outside the classroom during the rest of the school year or the next one.. The purpose of this is to ensure that you and your pupils continue to have a focus on the issues and develop a deeper understanding of the complex interrelationships behind it.

You may also choose to continue to work on the activity for another or more years, either deepening the same issue with the same pupils or focusing on another area with another class. The issues at the core of I ACT will need many schools and many projects to make the difference our common future needs.