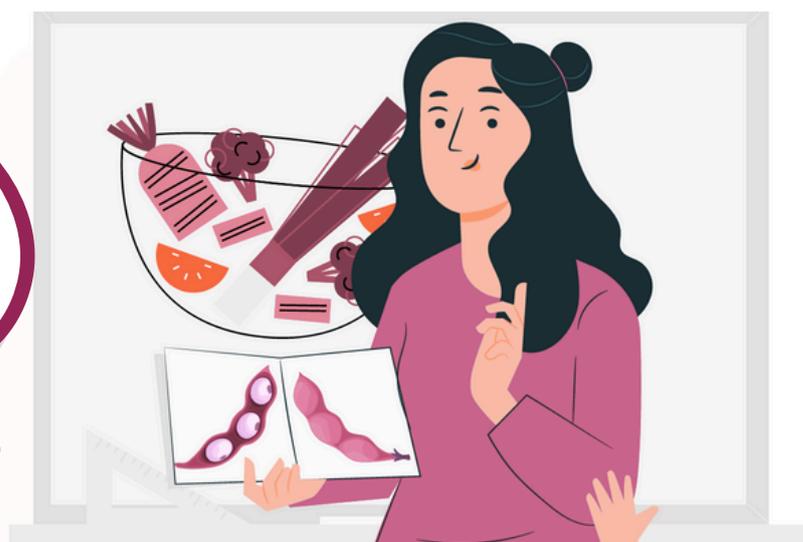Young Reporters for the Environment (YRE)

Teacher Guide on Food Literacy

Using the PLAN'EAT food sustainability education materials through the YRE 4-Step Methodology

Theme:
Food Security &
Climate Change

For secondary schools (ages 11–18)
Adaptable for ages (19–25)

How to Use
This Guide

This guide helps teachers use the PLAN'EAT food sustainability education materials as a knowledge base and then guide their students to investigate a local food issue through the four YRE steps:

Investigate ➡️ **Research** ➡️ **Solutions** ➡️ **Report** ➡️ **Disseminate.**

It is written for teachers who may be new to food sustainability OR new to youth journalism/project-based learning.

Time options

A 45-minute launch lesson; a 4-lesson sequence (one lesson per YRE step); or an extended project (2-6 weeks).

Student output

An evidence-based story (article, photo story, video, podcast) or a small campaign, plus a clear call to action.

Student output

Students complete the YRE workbook as their planning log and reflection (11-16 or 16+ version).

Teacher role

Facilitator and YRE editor! You are not expected to be the 'expert' on every food topic; the thematic fact sheets support you with key concepts and evidence.

What **you need**

1 PLAN'EAT Food Sustainability Fact Sheets booklet (printed or digital).

2 YRE Student workbook copies (print or digital)

3 Optional: phones/tablets for photos/videos; access to school canteen menu; weighing scales for food waste audit (only if permitted).
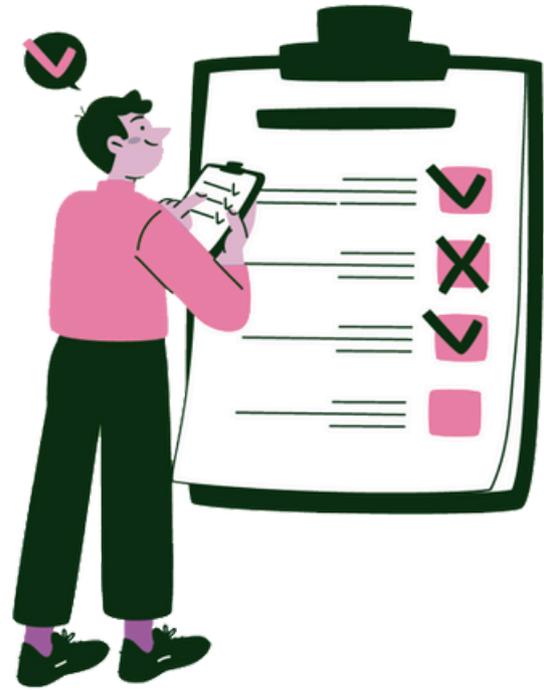
Suggested
teacher checklist

☐ Choose your delivery model (45-min launch only, 4-lesson sequence, or extended project).

☐ Decide how students will work (pairs, groups of 3-5, or whole-class story).

☐ Select 2-4 investigation routes that match your school context (e.g., food waste in canteen; labels and ultra-processed snacks; local/seasonal sourcing; food footprint).

☐ Check safeguarding and school policy for filming/interviewing and online sharing.

☐ Identify 1-3 local stakeholders students could speak to (canteen manager, local shop owner, farmer, school nurse, municipal waste team, parent, etc.). No canteen?

☐ No problem: investigations can focus on packed lunches, nearby shops/markets, home food routines, water access, food prices, or local food initiatives.

Optional:
Free FEE Academy courses

FEE Academy is FEE's free, self-paced online learning platform. Use these short courses to build your own confidence facilitating YRE, or set them as optional homework/extension tasks for students (flipped learning).

For educators and older students

(topic deep-dives for stronger evidence)

• Leading with Purpose: Implementing the Young Reporters for the Environment Programme
• Learning & Teaching About the SDGs
• Introduction to Environmental Literacy
• Climate Change Education: From Knowledge to Action
• Outdoor Education: Using Nature as a Classroom

Coming Soon – Introduction to Planetary Health Diet

For educators
(professional learning)

• GAIA 20:30 Circular Economy Course
• GAIA 20:30 Pollution Course
• GAIA 20:30 Biodiversity Course

Tip: learners will need to create a free account on feeacademy.global to enrol.

How PLAN'EAT project
and YRE Fit Together

Use the PLAN'EAT toolbox resources to build food sustainability understanding; use the YRE leadership development methodology to turn that understanding into a localised investigation and community solution.

PLAN'EAT: what the toolbox covers

The PLAN'EAT toolbox provides easy-to-understand, evidence-based information and classroom-relevant concepts across seven topics:

1 *Understanding food labelling*

2 *Understanding food portion and guidelines*

3 *Understanding plant-rich protein diet*

4 *Understanding food processing*

5 *Understanding food waste and food loss*

6 *Understanding food footprint*

7 *Understanding food systems*

These topics connect to three key behaviour areas emphasised in the PLAN'EAT Curriculum Framework:

➡ *Shifting to a Planetary Health Diet*

➡ *Reducing food waste*

➡ *Supporting local and seasonal food systems*

YRE:
Turning learning into youth-led action

YRE uses a project-based learning approach. Students identify a real local issue, investigate, propose solutions, communicate, and share it with an audience.

The YRE 4 Step Methodology

Step 1	Step 2	Step 3	Step 4
Investigate	**Research and propose solutions**	**Report**	**Disseminate**
Observe and gather first evidence about a local issue and who is affected.	Deepen research, interview stakeholders, evaluate solutions.	Create an engaging, evidence-based story in a chosen media format.	Share the story with the right audiences and measure influence/impact.

The key idea
for teachers

Think of the **PLAN'EAT** resources as your 'evidence toolbox' and the YRE steps as your 'delivery structure'. Students use the workbook to capture decisions, evidence, and reflection.

Use this scan list to choose an investigation route quickly. For student-friendly prompts that help localise the inquiry, see 'School Food Security Campaign: Big Questions and Research Prompts' below.

1   **Food labelling:** Audit labels on popular snacks/drinks; decode claims; map origins.
YRE Outputs: Infographic, article explainer, photo story.

2   **Portion and guidelines:** Compare portions and student feedback; link portions to food waste.
YRE Outputs: Article and interviews, canteen poster.

3   **Plant-rich protein diet:** Track plant protein options and barriers; link to footprint and affordability.
YRE Outputs: Long-form video report, podcast debate, menu proposal.

4   **Food processing:** Classify foods by processing level; analyse marketing and packaging patterns.
YRE Outputs: Short-form video, article.

5   **Food waste and loss:** Waste tally/audit; identify where waste happens and why; test small changes.
YRE Outputs: Campaign, photo story, action plan.

6   **Food footprint:** Estimate footprint of one lunch item; compare local/seasonal vs imported.
YRE Outputs: Data story, infographic, video explainer.

7   **Food systems:** Map 'farm to fork'; identify climate risks; investigate food security locally.
YRE Outputs: Long-form report, podcast with stakeholders.

If time is limited, let groups choose ONE topic. If time allows, run stations so groups briefly explore several topics before selecting their focus.

Using the student
workbook
(alignment guide)

The YRE workbook is designed as a student planning log for the 4 steps. It includes a version for ages 11-16 and a version for ages 16+.

Suggested approach:

➡ Print the workbook and hand it out during the launch lesson. Students start Step 1 immediately and keep it as their project folder.

➡ Use the workbook tasks as your lesson outcomes and as weekly check-in points.

➡ Collect the workbook at key milestones (end of Step 2 and final submission) to give quick feedback.

What teachers should look for in each step

1 **Step 1: Investigate** A clear local issue; an initial example (photo/sketch/description); who is affected; early cause/effect thinking; local-global link.

2 **Step 2: Research Solutions** At least 2 credible facts cited; at least 2 interview questions; evidence of checking trustworthiness; notes on existing good practice and possible solutions.

3 **Step 3: Report** A defined format and target audience; a clear message; evidence integrated (quotes/data); an ending that includes one sustainable food tip / call to action.

4 **Step 4: Disseminate** A realistic plan for where and how to share; partners who can help; ideas for measuring impact; a next step beyond the report.

Cross-curricular **entry points**

This work fits in many subjects. You do not need to be a food specialist!
Focus on inquiry, evidence, and communication.

Subject area	Natural curriculum entry point	Best YRE Dissemination formats
Science	Climate impacts on agriculture; nutrition; energy and resources	Article, long-form video, short-form video
Geography	Food systems, trade, local-global connections, food security mapping	Article, photo story, podcast
Maths	Data collection and analysis (surveys, waste weights, charts)	Data article, short-form video
English / Languages	Persuasive writing, storytelling, audience awareness	Article, podcast
Media / ICT	Content creation, editing, responsible publishing	Video, podcast, short-form video
Design & Technology / Food tech	Food processing, recipes, product design, packaging	Video, short-form video, photo story
Citizenship / PSHE	Equity, access, choices, wellbeing, community action	Long-form video, podcast
Business / Economics	Supply chains, pricing, marketing, externalities	Article, podcast

Delivery **options**

45-minute INTRO lesson
(one lesson)

Students leave the lesson with a chosen investigation focus and an initial plan recorded in the workbook (Step 1). This light-touch session supports independent completion of YRE steps 3–4 and is designed for classes with limited teaching time.

More suitable for older students who require less support.

Student Learning objectives

➡️ I can spot food-related issues in my school/community that link to climate change and/or food security.

➡️ I can ask an investigative question that could be answered with evidence.

➡️ I can identify who is affected and why it matters.

Resources Needed

➡️ PLAN'EAT fact sheets booklet (printed or on devices).

➡️ Student workbook (Step 1 pages).

➡️ Post-it notes/ mini whiteboards, sample packaging/wrappers gathered cleanly in advance.

Time	Activities	YRE Student Workbook
0-5 min	Show 3-5 images of school food moments (canteen queue, packed lunches, vending machine, leftovers). 'What story does our food tell about climate and fairness?'	Introduce theme
5-10 min	Explain YRE 4 steps and the idea of 'youth lead reporting'. Students will investigate something real, not just write an essay.	Workbook intro and Step 1 heading
10-25 min	PLAN'EAT stations (choose 4-7 topics). In groups, students skim one fact sheet and answer on sticky notes: 1)What surprised you? 2) Where could we see this in our school/community? 3) One question we could investigate.	Students list 3 problems they notice
25-35 min	Each group shares 1 'story lead'. Class votes or groups decide independently. Teacher (or class) helps refine into an open end, investigative question	Students choose one example and explain why it matters
35-43 min	Students write who might be affected and what first evidence they can collect (photo, menu, waste count, label samples, short survey). By when depending on teaching schedule	Complete 'who is affected' and 'what happens if no one acts'
43-45 min	Each student writes the investigation question and 1 stakeholder they could interview.	*Set rest of the booklet and completion as suitable for your timetable and teaching schedule.

If you only have one lesson total students can still complete Steps 2-4 as homework or small tasks across other lessons:

➡️ *Step 2 as homework: find 2 credible facts and write 2 interview questions.*

➡️ *Step 3 as homework: draft a title and 3 key points; choose a YRE media format.*

➡️ *Step 4 as homework: share within school (noticeboard, tutor group) and reflect on impact*

4-lesson sequence
one lesson per YRE step

This is the recommended minimum for a meaningful YRE experience: one lesson for each step, with short homework between lessons. Better suited for younger students who may need more guidance and support.

Lesson 1 Investigate (Step 1)

Run the 45-min launch lesson as above or adapt it necessary
Homework- collect 1 piece of evidence related to the particular theme covered in the lesson (photo, label, menu screenshot, tally count, short quote).

Lesson 2 Research and propose solutions (Step 2)

AIM: Use credible sources and stakeholder voices to understand causes and test solutions.

Teach 'credible sources' mini-lesson. Highlight the difference between opinion, evidence, and expertise; how to spot bias.

Students write interview questions and identify those in the school community who could be interviewed

Use the PLAN'EAT fact sheet to understand the topic and introduce solution directions (diet shift, waste reduction, local/seasonal systems).

Students complete workbook Step 2 tasks (2 questions, 2 facts and trust check.

Homework: conduct 1 mini-interview (in school) OR write an email request; gather 1 more source.

Optional (FEE Academy research boost)

If students want stronger background knowledge, you can offer a short "pick one" course and ask them to extract two credible facts/definitions to add into their Step 2 workbook evidence log.

- [Learning & Teaching About the SDGs](#)
- [GAIA 20:30 Circular Economy Course (ages 16+)](#)
- [GAIA 20:30 Pollution Course](#)

Lesson 3 Report (Step 3)

AIM: Produce a first draft in a chosen media format that is accurate and engaging.

Students complete workbook Step 3 (Report) tasks. Choose a YRE media format; draft a title/headline or slogan; define target audience; outline key points/visuals; end with one

Sustainable Food Tip / call to action; and record feedback improvements.

Teach one key journalism skill such as; a strong lead/angle, using quotes, showing evidence, and avoiding exaggeration.

Homework: Finalise the first full draft in the chosen format, adding evidence (at least 2 cited facts and 1 quote/interview OR a data point from your audit). Bring a near-final version next lesson for dissemination planning.

Optional student skills boost (FEE Academy)

If students are new to journalism or media-making, they can complete one short course that matches their chosen format (homework/extension). Ask them to bring one technique back into their Step 3 workbook plan (e.g., a stronger lead, an interview approach, a shot list, or an editing decision).

- *Storytelling for Climate Action: Writing with YRE*
- *Storytelling for Climate Action: Photography with YRE*
- *Storytelling for Climate Action: Filmmaking with YRE*

Lesson 4 Disseminate (Step 4) and Reflection time

AIM: share their work with an audience and evaluate impact.

Students create a simple dissemination plan (where, who helps, how to measure).

Students complete workbook Step 4 (Disseminate) tasks: where to share; who can help amplify; a short call to action; how to measure impact; and one next step after sharing.

Share in-school: tutor-time showcase, library display, school website, assembly slot, parent newsletter, cafeteria noticeboard.

Ask: what changed (awareness, conversations, behaviours)? What next?

Homework: Disseminate according to the plan (aim for at least 2 channels) and collect proof (photo of display, screenshot/link, note from assembly/tutor-time). Use school-approved channels only. Students record impact evidence (who saw it, reactions, pledges, behaviour change) and complete the workbook reflection: 'My YRE Journey' and 'My Next Steps'.
Optional: prepare entries for the YRE National Competition (if applicable).

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Extended Project

AIM: A whole-school campaign led by YRE-trained students.

This extended project helps students move beyond a one-off lesson and into a deeper, real-world investigation of Food Security and Climate Change. Using the PLAN'EAT fact sheets as a knowledge base, students work through the full YRE 4 Steps to produce an evidence-based report or campaign that is locally relevant, creative, and designed to inspire action. Along the way, students practise the same skills professional journalists and changemakers use: asking probing questions, checking facts, listening to different perspectives, communicating clearly, and evaluating impact. The project culminates with students sharing their work to a real audience and reflecting on what changed, what they learned, and what should happen next. Mirroring the reflection prompts and "Next Steps" sections in the YRE student workbook.

Making it a whole-school Food Security campaign (student-led)

This extended model is also designed to become a broader school campaign, led by students who are already YRE-trained (or who become trained through this project). These student leaders can act as a Food Security Editorial Team; planning the focus, mentoring younger students, coordinating data collection, and ensuring outputs meet YRE standards (accurate, evidence-based, clear, and impactful).

A whole-school approach might include:

➡️ School-wide actions tied to evidence (not just awareness): for example, reducing food waste in one area, improving labelling/signposting, running a "smart portions" week, promoting plant-rich options, or highlighting food-sharing initiatives. All based on what students find.

➡️ Visible dissemination: assemblies, displays, canteen messaging, tutor-time showcases, newsletters, school website/social channels, and local community partners. Supported by a simple impact check (conversations, pledges, behaviour changes), as encouraged in Step 4 of the YRE students workbook.

By positioning YRE-trained students as campaign leaders, the work becomes more sustainable: each year's cohort can train the next, strengthen the school's food culture, and keep building a living archive of student reporting and solutions, while still allowing individuals or groups to submit their strongest pieces to the YRE international competition if applicable.

Suggested Timeframe

Week/ Period	Focus	Key outputs
1	Launch and Step 1 Investigate	Issue chosen; baseline evidence collected; workbook Step 1 complete
2	Step 2 Research sources and identify stakeholders	• IA shared campaign question (e.g., "How food-secure is our school community?" or "What's the climate footprint of our lunch choices?"), with different classes investigating different angles. • Student leadership roles: editors, interviewers, data leads, creatives, and dissemination leads. So the project builds teamwork and ownership. nterviews planned; 2-5 credible sources; workbook Step 2 in progress
3	Solutions testing in school community	Solution evaluation matrix; choose recommendation; workbook Step 2 complete
4	Step 3 Report drafting and initial assessment	First draft/storyboard; feedback cycle ed
5	Finalise report Step 4 Dissemination planning	Final output; dissemination plan; permissions checked
6 onwards	Disseminate, measure and reflect/ evaluate	Sharing event; simple impact measure; reflection prompts complete

Safeguarding and permissions note:
No filming/photographing students without permission; avoid collecting sensitive personal data; get allergy/hygiene approval for any food-related activity; confirm school rules before running tastings, surveys, or interviews.

Equity and Wellbeing
Guardrails

➡️ Keep the focus on systems and environments, not blaming individuals or families.

➡️ Avoid activities that judge bodies, weight, or personal diets. Use neutral language and offer opt-outs.

➡️ Do not collect sensitive personal data (e.g., household income, health conditions). Keep surveys anonymous and optional.

➡️ Respect cultural and religious food practices. Invite multiple viewpoints and frame differences with care.

➡️ When discussing food insecurity, emphasise dignity, support, and solutions; signpost to school support routes where relevant.

School Food Campaign
Big Questions and Research Prompts

Use these ideas as prompts in lessons to get students thinking. They are not set questions - encourage students to localise them (in our school/community) and turn them into research questions that matter to them.

Pick one theme per group (or assign different themes to different groups). Students can then use their chosen question(s) to complete YRE Step 1 (Investigate) and Step 2 (Research) in the student workbook.
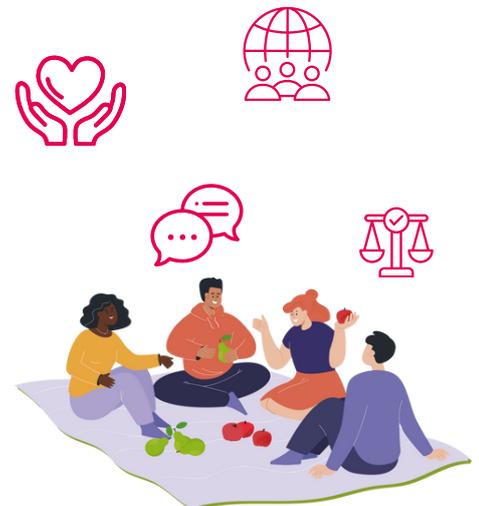
Food labelling

Big campaign question: Can students in our school confidently understand food labels and sustainability/health claims?

• Which claims appear most in our canteen/vending/local shops, and what do they really mean?
• What do students look at first on packaging, and why?
• What misunderstandings are most common (ingredients, allergens, portion guidance, eco-labels)?

Portions and guidelines

Big campaign question: Do our school food portions meet students' needs while reducing waste?

• Do students feel portions match hunger and activity levels (and does this vary by year group, timetable or sport)?
• What food is left most often, and what reasons do students give (taste, time, portion size, choice)?
• What small change could improve satisfaction and reduce waste, and how would we measure it?

Plant-based protein

Big campaign question: How realistic is it for our school to normalise plant-based meals that students actually want?

• How many plant-based protein options are available across a week, and how visible/appealing are they?
• What stops students choosing plant-based options (taste, cost, culture, habits, misinformation)?
• What swap would students genuinely try, and what evidence supports that?

Food processing

Big campaign question: How much of what we eat at school is ultra-processed, and what drives those choices?

• Which common school snacks/meals are most processed, based on ingredients/additives?
• How does marketing/placement influence choices more than ingredients or nutrition?
• What practical alternatives could work here without increasing cost or excluding students?

Food waste and food loss

Big campaign question: What do we waste in our school, why, and what would actually reduce it?

• Where does most waste happen (serving, plates, unopened items, storage) and what patterns can we measure?
• Why do students throw food away (time, taste, portion, queues, social factors)?
• Which intervention would work best in our school, and how will we track impact?

Food footprint

Big campaign question: What changes would most reduce the footprint of lunches in our school community?

• What is the estimated foodprint of a typical lunch here, and which part matters most (ingredients vs packaging)?
• How do two lunch choices compare (cost, footprint, student preference), and what does that suggest?
• Which packaging items are most common, and what realistic reduction idea would students support?

Food systems

Big campaign question: How food-secure is our school community, and what makes it more resilient and fair?

• Where does our school food come from (as far as we can trace), and what climate risks affect supply/price?
• How easy is it locally to access affordable healthy food (distance, cost, time, transport)?
• What is one realistic school action that could improve food security, and who would need to be involved?

Evidence, Ethics, and
Quality

Evidence types students can use

Encourage a mix of:

Primary evidence: observations, surveys, measurements (e.g., waste counts), photos, interviews.

Secondary evidence: government/UN reports, reputable NGOs, scientific summaries, school policy documents, canteen procurement info (if shared).

Making facts trustworthy (mini-lesson)

- Who wrote it and why? (purpose and possible bias)
- Where does the data come from? (methods, sample size, transparency)
- Is it recent and relevant to our context?
- Can we cross-check it with at least one other credible source?

Safeguarding and permissions

Before students interview or film, check your school policy. Good practice includes:

- Get permission before recording audio/video or taking identifiable photos.
- Avoid naming individual students in public outputs without consent.
- Use school-approved platforms for publishing; teacher reviews final content before sharing.
- When contacting external stakeholders, use school email channels and teacher oversight.

Reporting Formats
(Step 3)

➡️ YRE outputs can be an article, photo, video or podcast that can lead to a much bigger school campaign. Help them choose the format that best fits their audience and their evidence.
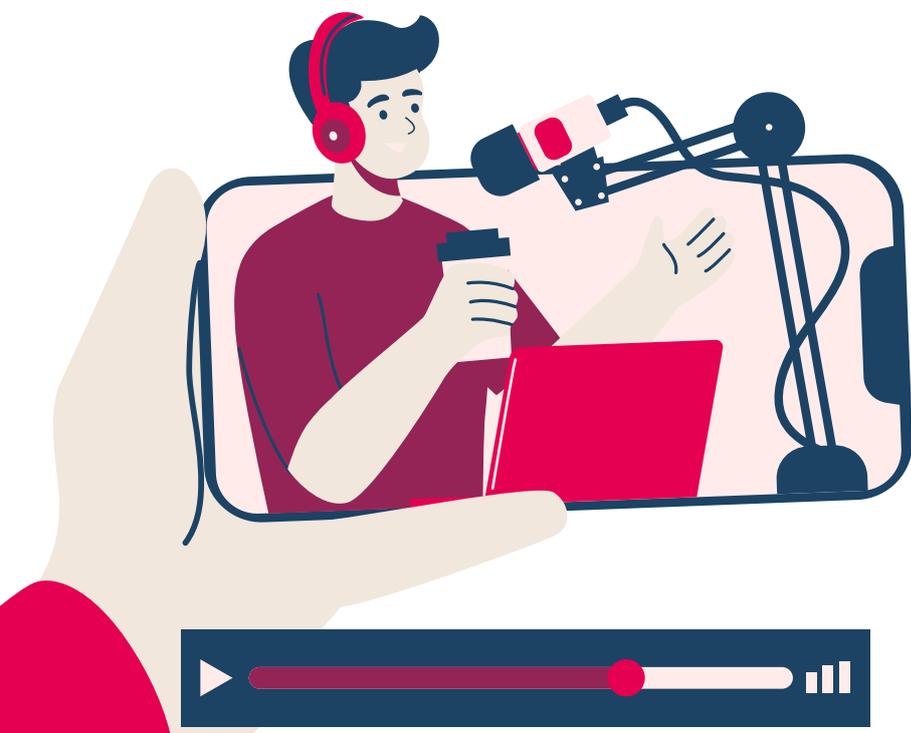
Dissemination Ideas (Step 4)

➡️ Dissemination is not an 'extra'. It is the final learning step where students practice influence and civic engagement.

School-friendly dissemination routes

- Tutor-time or assembly showcase (2-minute pitch per group).
- Canteen display: posters/infographics + QR codes linking to stories.
- School website, newsletter, or learning platform (teacher-approved).
- Community sharing: local library, youth club, local council meeting, local newspaper.

Measuring impact (simple options)

- Count views/likes/engagement (if online).
- Run a before/after survey (1-3 questions) on awareness or intention to act.
- Measure one behaviour: e.g., waste weights for one week before/after a campaign.
- Collect quotes: 'What changed your mind?' from peers or staff.

Differentiation (11-16 vs 16+ Student Workbook)

Both age groups use the same YRE 4-step structure, but with different depth.

For ages 11-16 (accessible pathway)

- Keep investigations very local (school canteen, packed lunches, nearby shops).
- Use simple data: tallies, counts, short surveys, labelled photos.
- Limit interviews to within school (staff, peers) first.
- Focus on one clear solution with a realistic call to action.

For ages 16+ (stretch and challenge)

- Add stakeholder diversity: local NGOs, policymakers, farmers, researchers.
- Use stronger evidence: multiple sources, small calculations, comparative case studies.
- Require explicit evaluation of solution trade-offs (cost, feasibility, equity, unintended impacts).
- Encourage more ambitious dissemination beyond school (local media, YRE network).

And **Finally...**

By completing this PLAN'EAT YRE journey, your students have done something genuinely powerful: they've taken a global challenge and made it local, evidence-based, and meaningful. They have practised the skills that matter for life (curiosity, critical thinking, fairness, creativity, and the confidence to communicate clearly to a real audience) while exploring food security and climate change in ways that connect to their own lives and communities.

Whether your class runs a single lesson, a short sequence, or a whole-school campaign led by YRE-trained students, every step helps build a culture where young people don't just learn about sustainability they help put thoughts into action.

Thank you for supporting student voice, strengthening learning through action, and helping the next generation investigate, report, and inspire change.

The **Foundation for Environmental Education (FEE)** was established in 1981. FEE is one of the world's largest environmental education organisations, with over 110+ member organisations in 85 countries. With 40 years of impactful experience in ESD, our strategic plan - GAIA 20:30 - prioritises climate action across all five programmes to address the urgent threats of climate change, biodiversity loss and environmental pollution.

PLAN'EAT is a Horizon Europe research project, funded by the European Commission, which aims at transforming food systems and food environments towards healthy and sustainable dietary behaviour.