Green Futures

Transition Year Module

September 2026

LESSON 4

GreenFutures

Climate Justice, Futures Thinking and Green Innovation

Who is most affected, what futures are still possible and what part you can play.

UNESCO Greening Curriculum concepts: Climate Justice · Resilience Building · Post-Carbon Economies

BEFORE WE START

A Word Before We Begin

- The topics in this module so far have been heavy: climate change, AI risks, difficult trade-offs. It is completely okay to find that difficult.
- This final lesson is different: it is about the people, ideas and movements already changing things for the better.
- Writer Rebecca Solnit (Hope in the Dark) describes hope as the belief that the future is not yet written - nothing here is decided yet and that includes the part you will play in it.

- Rebecca Solnit - Not Too Late: Changing the Climate Story from Despair to Possibility

What you'll learn today

1. Explain the concept of climate justice
2. Discuss how climate change affects different communities differently, including within Ireland
3. Evaluate the role of technology, policy and behaviour in climate action
4. Reflect on possible future climate scenarios
5. Identify emerging green careers and finish with your own climate action proposal

FAIRNESS AND CLIMATE

Climate Justice and Global Inequality

- Climate justice recognises that those who contributed least to climate change are often affected first, and worst
- Global North vs. Global South: wealthier nations have historically emitted the most, while many lower-income nations face the sharpest impacts
- Intergenerational justice: today's decisions shape the world younger and future generations will inherit

Watch Mary Robinson discuss Why Climate Change Is a Threat to Human Rights

IE Irish Example

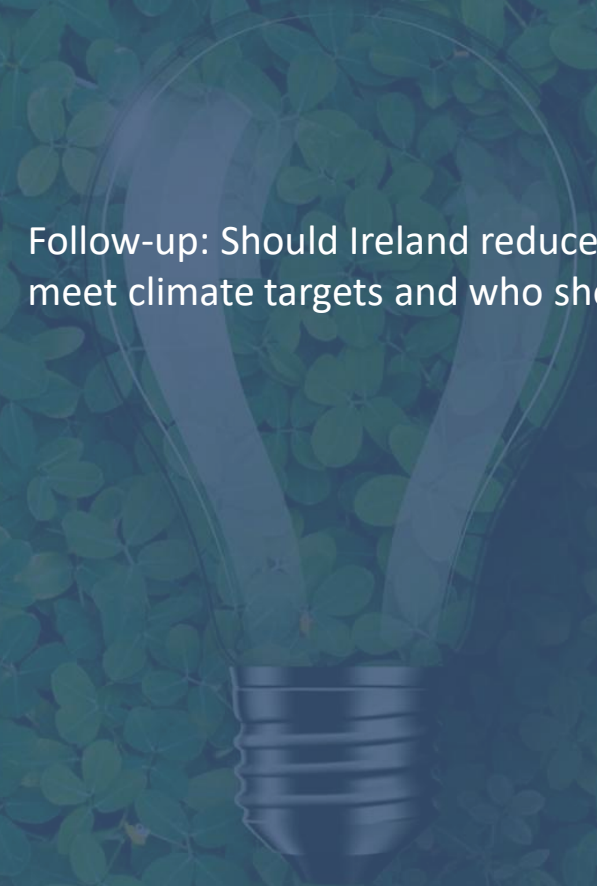
Climate Justice Is Not Just Global, It Is Local Too

- Climate impacts fall unevenly within Ireland too, not just between countries
- Older people and those in energy poverty are more exposed to cold-related harm and rising energy costs (The Irish Times)
- Rural communities can bear a disproportionate share of the cost of agricultural transition
- Traveller and some coastal communities face particular exposure to environmental and climate risk (National Women's Council)

Reflection – There is no single right answer

Is it fair to ask individuals to change their lifestyle when corporations cause most emissions?

Follow-up: Should Ireland reduce its national herd to meet climate targets and who should decide?



BACK TO AI, BRIEFLY

Fairness in AI Systems, Revisited

- In Lesson 2 we saw that AI systems can be biased when their training data doesn't reflect everyone fairly
- The same justice questions we are asking about climate apply to AI: who designs these systems, whose data trains them, and who is left out?
- Fairness and climate justice are two versions of the same underlying question: who benefits and who bears the cost?

- World Economic Forum asks ‘How can we ensure climate justice in the age of AI?’

LOOKING AHEAD

Possible Climate Futures

- Global agreements aim to limit warming to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels. Every fraction of a degree beyond that increases risk
- A 2–3°C future looks meaningfully different: more extreme weather, greater sea-level rise, more disruption to food and water systems (Carbon Brief Interactive)
- The gap between these futures is not fixed yet and it depends on choices being made now
- Technology alone will not get us there: policy, culture and collective action all matter too.
- How is Ireland doing in 2026?

ACTIVITY

⏱ ~10 minutes

Choose a Future

1. Your teacher presents a short scenario: a decision Ireland (or the world) faces on the path to a low-carbon future
2. In small groups, choose your response and predict its likely consequences
3. Compare with another group who chose differently. What trade-offs did each choice involve?
4. One sentence each: what surprised you about this exercise?

REASONS FOR HOPE

Innovation and Collective Action

Innovation, near and far

- From solar microgrids bringing power to rural communities in Kenya, to mangrove restoration protecting coastlines in Bangladesh
- Ireland's own examples from today's lesson, Bord na Móna's transition, Dublin's transport shift, and many others are part of this same story

People making it happen

- Fridays for Future Ireland and the work of Irish youth climate councils show young people already shaping this agenda
- Change does not only come from governments and companies, movements and communities drive it too

YOUR FUTURE

Green Jobs and Future Skills

- A real and understandable worry for your generation: as AI automates more tasks, what happens to entry-level jobs? There's no clear answer yet and this is worth discussing openly

- Emerging green careers in Ireland include: ecological restoration technician, energy systems analyst, sustainable food systems designer but also climate policy analyst, environmental data scientist, circular economy consultant/economist, agriculture-environment advisor
- Employers already working in this space include Coillte, Bord na Móna, the EPA, and a growing number of Irish green-tech startups
- Many of these roles combine environmental knowledge with digital and data skills (green skills), exactly the combination this module has covered

APPLY IT

⏱ ~15 minutes

Your Climate Action Proposal – Module Capstone

Drawing on everything from this module, including your climate journal entries from Lessons 1-3, design and present a ***climate action proposal***: one realistic action or idea (personal, school-based, or community-based) that responds to something you have learned. Support it with at least one piece of evidence or example from the module.

How they show their work: Written or sketched proposal (worksheet or slide), presented briefly to the class or in small groups. This is the assessable capstone task for GreenFutures.

ACTIVITY

⏱ ~5 minutes

Closing Reflection

1. Fear, hope, action: write or sketch one thing about the future you fear, one thing you hope for and one small thing (however small) that you personally could do, learn, or pursue that connects to that hope.

2. One-word takeaway: what is one word to describe what you are taking away from this module?

3. Optional closer: what is one thing within your sphere of influence, however small, that connects to what we have discussed today?

What have we learned across all four lessons?

- ✓ Lesson 1: how scientists study a changing climate and why data matters
- ✓ Lesson 2: what AI is, how it helps climate science, and the ethical questions it raises
- ✓ Lesson 3: how energy, nature, food and cities connect to sustainability, with real Irish examples
- ✓ Lesson 4: climate justice, possible futures, and your own climate action proposal

Congratulations! You have completed GreenFutures.

Thank you for taking part in GreenFutures

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