

A Digital Toolkit for Climate Justice| Final LiA Report

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1 Introduction

Originally I had planned to travel to Guyana from where I hold heritage, and travel around schools to teach to secondary school pupils what research level Chemistry looks like and the importance of Chemistry in the emerging country. I was deeply dedicated to this proposal to the point that I had written an eight page proposal in which I had indexed all secondary schools, calculated expenses and provided motivation for my Leadership in Action (LiA) amongst other work. Unfortunately I had to accept the reality that hard work doesn't translate into results as I received no reply when I reached out to the University of Guyana who I had proposed to supervise this LiA. This is despite sending follow-up emails, calling and being promised on multiple occasions that I will hear back soon regarding my proposal. At some point however I was forced to abandon the proposal when I learned that the neighbouring country of Venezuela had become increasingly unstable after US interference led to the removal of their president amongst other events. As such, all the work I had put into planning and designing my LiA went up in smoke and I had to return to the drawing board.

For months I spent reaching out to organisations all over the world, trying to design new and original and relevant LiA's. Some showed interests, most did not. I tried to make my interactions fruitful when rejected by adding them to my network. But it was painful to experience the absolute silence when you are approaching professionals with funding for a six-week project. The amount of LinkedIn posts I've seen in which job seekers complain about this phenomena is worrying, but I can report that I even experienced this when I was the person arriving with the funds. Logically a concern rises with how I was reaching out to organisations, but I had my emails and correspondence methods checked and they were not at fault. I met with career advice professionals from the career centre at Trinity College Dublin who had few suggestions I could implement on top of the ones I had attempted. Honestly, it makes me worried about the upcoming job market applications because if applications have a low success rate when you arrive with funds, imagining when you are asking for a salary?

Eventually I did manage to find a project here in Dublin that I could work on which does overlap somewhat with my original LiA proposal. I didn't have to go and visit schools, make a practical chemistry presentation workshop or travel to a different continent. Instead, for my LiA I developed a *digital toolkit* for *Youth Localise Volunteering*, a youth organisation in Dublin. For six weeks I would be compiling this toolkit that would assist young people in Dublin from economically disadvantaged backgrounds to partake effectively and meaningful with climate justice volunteering. Whilst I received a general overview of what the organisation hoped this toolkit would contain, I was given creative freedom to populate this toolkit, structure it and determine on what platform it would be made available. With this report I'll be taking you through that journey and how the digital toolkit fairs against my SMART goals.

2 Specific

This LiA aims to develop an accessible, practical, flexible and collaborative digital toolkit that can be printed or accessed on a website/online hub that acts as a facilitator guide for youth leaders. I chose to use the *Notion* application given it's modern website-like feel, shallow learning curve and free accessibility.

Specifically, I wanted the toolkit to provide less-discussed examples of climate change that go beyond the typical CO₂ and water rising arguments. My concern namely was that young people would lose interest upon hearing common talking points. Once I decided to include less-typical examples of climate change I felt obligated to dedicate work towards highlighting obstacles to addressing them. I felt that young people should be made aware and prepared for the reality of such obstacles and how they arise so that they can research into these topics further. But, with the rise of AI I felt it could be beneficial to dedicate a part into good research practices also.

Part of the general guidelines given to me by the organisation showed interests towards leadership, management, character and reflection tools. Hence when outlining the digital toolkit I decided that I would write about those topics also through the lens of climate justice volunteering. This left me with the main and key part of the digital toolkit which was to generate project ideas for young people to work on that themselves have good SMART goals.

In collating such project proposals I decided to first find inspiration. Hence I dedicated parts of my travel fund for a trip to Bergen where I had previously lived and where I heard about local community projects that might be adoptable in Dublin. Furthermore, I decided I wanted to attend some events that could act as inspiration to this toolkit. With that I had set up my Smart goal and could proceed with making process measurable.

It should be noted that once this toolkit is complete, the organisation will integrate it with their upcoming myVP online platform. This will allow young people to use their volunteering experience as social credits which will help them apply for jobs and educational institutions. Whilst this doesn't affect the toolkit design, it did affirm the choice of using Notion since it integrates well with other applications.

3 Measurable

To make progress measurable I considered what type and how many topics I wanted to include under each specific section. For example, I set a minimum of three examples for 'interesting' climate change, I insisted on commenting on the use of AI when conducting research, etc. When progressing every week on the toolkit I could thus effectively tick-off parts of the toolkit hence measure my progress. Whilst I was working on the toolkit I quickly found myself working ahead of schedule which did allow me to expand on sections. Again, I could do this in a controlled fashion through making each goal specific and measurable.

4 Attainable

Ensuring each task was attainable was feasible since I already have an abundance of previous writing experience through my academic journey. But to smoothen the process I considered sources I could access easily and quickly and tried to think ahead of the writing process before committing myself to it. Could I lean on my course on environmental chemistry if I got stuck? Are there review articles I can scour ahead? Can I think ahead on the writing style i.e. reflect on setting the language and terminology to the appropriate audience? I also thought about the size of the digital toolkit and decided that whilst I could list hundreds of examples, listing around 3 as a start would suffice and is more beneficial to the reader. In the end I thus found that planning for an attainable project simplified the synthesis of the digital toolkit.

5 Relevant

This goal was the most important to me since I wanted to make absolutely sure that this toolkit would actually be used by the organisation instead of collecting digital dust somewhere. It is also why I chose the Notion application since sharing work made with Notion is very easy thus allowing other people to access the toolkit for themselves. It also meant that even if the entire toolkit wasn't useful to an individual, a specific aspect like how to conduct effective research or the importance of character could remain relevant for them and easy to navigate to.

One of the reasons I specifically decided to use less-typical examples of climate change was to add novelty to the digital toolkit. By making examples of climate change more interesting and appealing I figured that it would raise the level of relevance of the toolkit. It is also why I wanted to limit the size of sections and add different 'branches' to the toolkit. Whether it is leadership or obstacles to climate justice, I wanted each bit of the toolkit to read somewhat like a news article: important & enticing. Since relevance for this project is making people use the toolkit, giving them reasons to use it became my SMART goal.

6 Time-bound

Since I had set specific, measurable, attainable and relevant SMART goals and since I wanted to complete the LiA in about six weeks I could allocate time per goal. Every week I would work towards a goal (sometimes working ahead on others) and present my progress to my supervisor *Harry Keogh*. These Friday weekly meetings ensured enough progress was made every week and keep me on schedule whilst also ensure I didn't accidentally detail from my objectives or get stuck on an interesting but less relevant tangent.

My trip to Norway was equally kept short so that I could realistically manage all the photographs and other content I would gather. This was one of the last tasks towards finishing the toolkit and I'm pleased to see how the planning turned out.

7 Venting about my LiA

Whilst I'm pleased with the outcome of the digital toolkit and am confident it will be having a long lasting and positive impact on communities based on the feedback from my supervisor and other staff at Localise Youth Volunteering, I can't help but feel there was a missed opportunity here. It also worries me that I haven't identified the barrier I couldn't overcome, a kin to my struggle to separate NiTPP from my summer 1 research project, please see my article on the Laidlaw Scholar network called '*What Didn't Make The Cut...*' for further details.

Why did organisations and individuals often not show an interest in getting a person to work with or for them for free and arriving with funds? What had made so many professionals so adverse for taking risks? Is there a reason that I'm not seeing that justifies why people have become so close minded? I felt that unless I came with a perfect pitch and solved every possible imperfection, people wouldn't be interested. In fact, I often felt that prospective partners would try to find an excuse not to work on a project instead of honestly declaring they didn't share an interest. My experience with pitching the summer 1 project was the opposite as I felt that prospective partners would add onto projects and ideas instead of knocking them down. The conclusion I thus draw, potentially incorrectly, is that we'll have to face the apathy in the work culture and be more selective to who we pitch as we easily can waste resources to a large ensemble of people that under no circumstances will be persuaded to hire/work with you.

8 Conclusion

My LiA wasn't what I had initially hoped. I didn't get to travel abroad to new unexplored places, I didn't come into contact with new cultures but I did find the use of SMART goals to streamline my LiA experience. I also managed to squeeze in an insightful trip to Bergen and learned to take ideas and inspiration from nearby places and re-purpose them. Ironically, this circularity became a key part of my toolkit when proposing prospective projects for young people in Dublin. Furthermore, this experience completely flipped my view on leadership on its head, something you can read further about in my *Final Reflection* that I posted on the Laidlaw Scholar Network. Despite being kept at my desk for most of this LiA, I can confidently say that I have been apply my leadership in steering this toolkit and getting it across the finish line along with maturing my leadership skills. I finally also know what I hope society will move towards to in terms governance.

With regards to the toolkit, you can access it here: [Digital Toolkit for Climate Justice](#).

A Events Attended

Group Meetings

These meetings summarised the recent progress made towards the digital toolkit. Topics we discussed include feedback and suggestions to the digital toolkit.

- 29/05/2026 (Presenter)
- 12/06/2026 (Presenter)
- 26/06/2026 (Presenter)
- 05/06/2026 (Presenter)
- 19/06/2026 (Presenter)
- 10/07/2026 (Presenter)

Seminars/Workshops

- 26/05/2026 (Spectator): Opening the Black Box | Design Process-focused Assessment for the Age of AI - by *Prof. Naomi Winstone* from the University of Surrey, UK
- 29/05/2026 (Spectator): Pathways to Sustainable Industry Practices in Ireland - by *Dr. Mohammad Reza Ghaani* from Trinity College Duvlin, Republic of Ireland.

Trips

- 29/06/2026 - 01/07/2026 Trip to *Bergen*, Norway.

B Acknowledgements

This *Leadership in Action* was funded by the Laidlaw Foundation through the Laidlaw Scholars Leadership and Research Programme and hosted by Localise Youth Volunteering. I've enjoyed holding weekly meetings with my supervisor *Harry Keogh* and receive inputs on what further additions I could make to the toolkit as I was developing it. My hope is that this toolkit will help both Localise Youth Volunteering and other organisation have succesful projects towards climate justice volunteering and provide insight to research and aspects of leadership to young people and others having an interest in these topics!

C Declaration

I have read and understood the plagiarism provisions in the General Regulations of the University Calendar for the current year, found at <http://www.tcd.ie/calendar>.

I have also read and understood the guide, and completed the 'Ready Steady Write' Tutorial on avoiding plagiarism, located at <https://libguides.tcd.ie/academic-integrity/ready-steady-write>.

Supervisor: *Harry Keogh*

Organisation: *Localise Youth Volunteering*