Unit D contains instructions for developing your own activities. Before doing each activity, you might want to read or re-read the relevant readings in the *Future Forests* Magazine and discuss them with your group. You can use the reading and discussion tools in the Teacher's Tools provided in Introduction of the *Future Forests* Teacher's Guide.

## MESSAGES THAT YOUR GROUP SHOULD LEARN IN UNIT D

- There are many things that we can do to make a difference.
- Everyone – every single person – is responsible for the health of the environment.
- Young people can make a difference too.
- If forests are to be available for the future, young people need to help to use forests wisely.

READINGS FROM THE *FUTURE FORESTS* MAGAZINE FOR UNIT D

Let's Get Started - pages 18-21

Get Connected! - pages 22-23
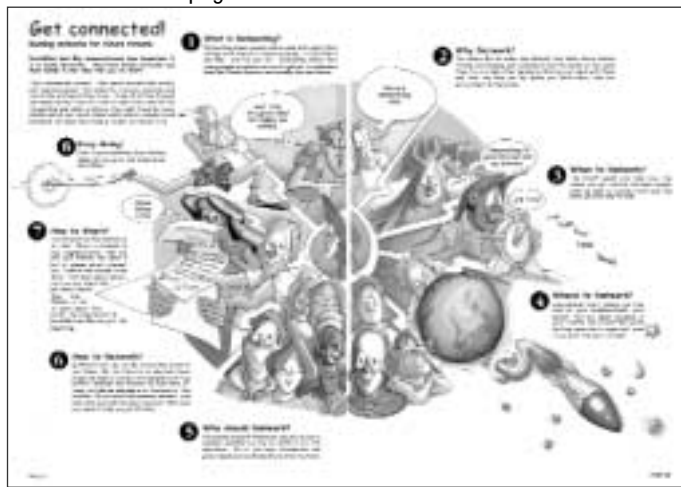
ACTIVITY FOR UNIT D

Activity 9: PLANNING OUR OWN ACTIVITY

This activity will help your group to learn about the way their forests and trees are used by their community and about pressures on forests and trees.

WHY MAKE UP YOUR OWN ACTIVITY?

This activity is an opportunity for your young people to get involved in helping to manage their community's forests and trees. Through this activity, your young people will use the skills and knowledge they have gained in the other *Future Forests* activities to become active in the management of their community's trees and forests. In this activity, your group can decide for itself what is important to it about the community's forests and trees and become involved in practical ways in those things that are important to it.

Through this activity, your young people will learn to plan and work together and to use the skills that they have acquired.

WHAT IS THIS ACTIVITY ABOUT?

This activity will help your group to understand the concept of sustainability. By doing all of the activities in the *Future Forests* Teacher's Guide, your group has practised many skills and learned many new things. The members have learned about their forests and trees and their community, and also how to work together, plan and make decisions. The activity in Unit D is about using all of the experience and knowledge that your group has gained to design and implement an activity or project of its own. Unlike the instructions for the other activities, this activity provides detailed instructions for planning an activity for your own community, but leaves it up to your group to decide what kind of activity this will be. You can use the instructions provided in order to plan an activity or project that is longer-term and more substantial, such as a school garden or a nursery.

HOW TO PLAN YOUR ACTIVITY

1 Review before you start.

Before you begin, you may find it useful to have your group reflect on or think about what it has learned from doing the *Future Forests* activities. This will help prepare it to decide what it wants to focus its activity on. You may want to use some of the discussion tools from the Teacher's Tools provided in the Introduction. You can go over the pictures, letters, maps and lists that it developed and think about why forests are important to it. Ask your young people to consider what they have learned:

- from the magazine
- from the transect walk
- about how to give a presentation
- about how to raise awareness of what they have learned
- about how their community views what they have learned
- about pressures on their trees and forests
- about how forests and trees have changed over time
- about how to organize information through mind maps
- about what it means to use forests sustainably
- about how to collect information about their forests
- about how to present information through a community map

2 Name the activity and decide what it will be about.

In the pages following these instructions, there are several suggestions for activities. However, the best activity for your group is one that it plans for itself and that focuses on a problem or issue that is important to it. There are many different approaches your group can use to think of what to do for an activity. You could try a round-robin exercise from the Teacher's Tools provided in the Introduction to brainstorm about different activities that your group could do to address the issues that concern it. When deciding on the kind of activity, you might want to consider the following:

■ If you have found out about a problem or an issue in the community that your group is interested in, you might want your activity to address that problem or issue.

■ The activities in the magazine.

■ How can your forests and trees benefit from your project, and how can your group of young people benefit?

■ Are there other local organizations that could be involved or that your group could get involved with?

■ Give the activity or project a name that people will remember.

3 Brainstorm tasks and resources.

When you have decided on an activity and its name, work together with your group to decide on the tasks and the resources needed. You may find it helpful to use a mind map with your group to help plan all the tasks you will need to do as part of your activity. Here are the steps to follow:

■ Write your activity idea in a small circle in the middle of a sheet of paper.

■ As each new idea for tasks to do comes to you, write it in a circle next to the idea most like it, then connect the two circles with a line. Think of the small tasks that make up big jobs. Keep going until you can't think of any more tasks that need to be done.

■ For each task on your mind map, decide what resources you will need to complete that task and write them down. Think of all of the resources (tools, information and advice from people) you need to get each task done.

■ Do you have all the information that you need about the trees and plants that your project involves?

4 Complete the activity-planning page in the back of the guide.

Now that you have brainstormed all of the tasks and the resources you will need, you and your group can fill in the activity-planning page (found at the end of the guide). Using the information on the mind map, fill in your activity plan with your group. You might want to discuss each box you fill in with your group.

■ Begin with the tasks. What is the most important task on your mind map? Write it under "What is the task?" on the activity-planning page. Below that task, write the next most important task, and then the next one, until all the tasks are on the activity-planning page.

■ Next decide who will do each task. Go down the "Who will do the task?" column and write the names of those who will do each task beside the task. You can do the tasks as teams. Those who have their names beside a task must make sure that the task gets done.

■ Now use the activity plan to make a project schedule. Go down the "When will they do the task?" column and decide when each task will be done: a specific month, a specific day.

■ Next write all of the resources needed to complete each task from the mind map in the "What will we need to do the task?" column.

■ To make sure that each task is done, decide with your group how you will know that each task has been done. How will you know that the task was done well? The better you can answer these questions at the start, the better your project is likely to turn out. For each task, work with your group to fill in the "How will we know when the task has been done?" column.

Teacher's Tip: Provided on the back page of the *Future Forests* Teacher's Guide is an activity-planning page. This page will be most useful to you if you make a large copy of it on a blackboard or large piece of paper: this will make it easier for your entire group to work together to plan the activity.

5 Check your plan.

Once you have your plan and your schedule, be sure to check them with anyone who might need to give you permission, such as the school principal or parents. If you know of anyone with experience in this kind of activity, you can do more by teaming up with them. A partner or other experts or organizations can gives resources, help and advice. Other groups of young people may help to share tasks. Who could you team up with?

6 Record your activity.

Measure and record your activity as you do each task. There are many ways to show what you have done on your project. People are more likely to give permission, help and resources when you have a history of success. Ways to show what you have done are:
- mapping your activity and showing it to your community
- doing a presentation about your activity
- making a drawing to illustrate the activity
- making a bulletin board display for your community centre or school: include your mind map information and your activity-planning page
- giving a team walk or tours or demonstrations to show members of your community your activity area

7 Celebrate!

After all your hard work, it's nice to celebrate. Not only is a celebration fun, but it's a good way of saying thank you to people who helped you. Invite everybody!

PROJECT IDEAS

Demonstration garden

Starting a demonstration garden is a great way for young people to learn about forests, trees and the environment in general. Such an activity can be simple if your club or school has a small plot of land available and a reliable water source. There are only a few tools required, and seeds may be collected by the young people. Plan your garden together and experiment with different types of tree. Have your group research which species grow locally and which are most useful to the community. Find out which species grow well together. Have your group find out the best growing conditions for each species and make a plan.

Have your group divide the responsibilities for running the garden and keep track of progress. If problems occur, have your group work together to solve them. If you are successful, you may be able to use tree seedlings grown in your garden to improve your community! Invite others to see the garden. The young people can show others what they have accomplished.

Awareness raising

Your group of young people can help to raise awareness about problems with the forests and trees it depends on. What important pressures on the trees and forests that your group of young people depends upon did it identify? Are these problems well known? Assist them in raising public awareness about the problem and in suggesting possible solutions. Ask your young people if they can think of ways of raising awareness about the laws and policies that benefit people and the environment that they learned about. As follow-up, you could help your group to identify ways in which forest products are wasted or misused in your area. A good example may be paper products (such as packing materials) which are used only once and not recycled. Have your group research the situation in your area and discuss its findings.

Continued learning

Identify ways in which your young people can continue learning about trees, forests and the environment.

► Are there special clubs or interest groups they can join?

► Can they volunteer to work in forest areas?

► Would it be useful for them to work with forest users?

► Is continuing education on the subject available?

► Can you find books and other publications that might be of interest?

Networking

One of the best ways for youth to learn about their environment and their futures is from one another. By "networking" – or sharing information in a strategic manner – youth can take an active role in educating themselves and others. Networking means sharing information for a specific purpose. Networking can involve your youth in helping their community and world at the same time. Through networking young people anywhere can work together to make sure that the Earth's forests are healthy for the future. The following suggestions will help you lead your group in starting their own network.

► **Why do you want to network?** Before your group members begin networking, they should set goals for their network. Ask your group what they want to achieve through networking. Ask them what type of information they want to collect and what information they wish to share. Ask them to list changes to their environment which they would like to bring about through networking. Write down the goals for networking and post them in your school or club.

► **Who do you want to network with?** Review your objectives and determine who will be most useful in helping you achieve them. Ask your group who they should include in their network. They may also wish to start their network with people you know or have ready access to. One option might be to begin with people with whom you share something in common – for example, other EarthBird readers.

► **Where do you want to network?** Where must your group network to reach their objectives. Keep in mind that networks start small and it may take a while for your group to get enough contacts to include all the places they wish to explore. You can always add to your network as your contacts grow and your needs change.

► **How to network?** Networking can be conducted successfully by mail, by phone, through club meetings or through one-on-one discussions. If your club or school has the necessary equipment, networking can be done through Email and/or the Internet. Work with your group to select the most practical and efficient way to network. Decide on a networking method that is affordable, practical and will hold your group's interests. Letter writing is inexpensive but it may take a while to get a reply. Face-to-face networking is effective but it may be limited to people from your area.

► **Get started!** Encourage your group to contact the people on your list. Start by introducing your group, explaining your objectives, and why you are interested in networking with them, asking them to reply and inviting them to become part of the network. You may wish to make the first contact as a group or have students try to make the contact by themselves. Divide the list of contacts among your students. If you choose to network in writing, assist your students in writing their first letters or E-mails. When the first replies come in, post them or discuss them with the group. Ask your group what they find interesting about the replies and how they may use the information they received. Decide together how to proceed.

► **Monitor and evaluate**. Keep track of your group's networking progress and adjust your objectives, plans and list of partners as your network grows and matures. Involve your students in monitoring progress and post the results. Discuss the networking goals with your students on a regular basis and ask them if networking is providing them with the information they need and why (or why not).