

MICHELLE CHIPERI AIVAZOVA, SINEAD POKALL, ELLEN BUTLER

SAUTI-YOUTH, YOUTH WORK IRELAND, GALWAY CITY

STAND



THE STORY

Meet Michelle, Ellen and Sinead. They are three active, engaged members of Sauti Youthreach who are “tired of climate policy not climate action”. The EU funded programme, running concurrently in Galway and Tanzania, facilitates a space where young people can explore issues impacting their community and learn a set of skills that enable them to lobby policy makers and advocate for systemic change. Michelle, Ellen and Sinead volunteer with the group because they are frustrated with the lack of action and not being listened to by decision makers.

“Young people aren’t being taken seriously, we want to learn the skills so we can be taken seriously.”

Michelle, Ellen and Sinead are representatives of a larger group whose priority is to work:

“Collaboratively not combatively”

and to:

“Act local and think global.”

They do this by working with their local councils to reduce the city’s pollution and improve transport manifestos. They are learning how to scrutinise local policy documents, survey local areas to see if commitments have been fulfilled, and attend regular meetings to discuss the city’s Climate Action Plan and work on solutions for a sustainable city. They hope to leave a legacy in the form of a permanent strategic Galway Youth Advisory Committee. This would bring the voice and

opinions of young people to the Galway Local Council to support the creation of an action plan for a liveable city and Just Transition.

THE WHY

“We want to create a permanent governance structure so young people don’t have to fight so hard to have their voices heard and their opinions listened to on whatever issue they care about.”

THE HOPE

Michelle – Sometimes it’s not even about hope, it’s about coping. Seeing other people trying to make a difference makes me feel better.

Ellen – My hope comes from seeing how far we have come in five years and attributing a lot of that energy and power to the youth movement.

Sinead – Seeing all the people around the place doing what they can and lifting each other up.

THE CHALLENGE

“Let it go, take a breath and remember you are not solely responsible for the climate crisis. You don’t have to have an Instagram perfect life, you don’t have to know all the answers or have the perfect solution. All you can do is your best and that is enough.”

THE RECOMMENDATION

BOOK – *Climate Justice: A Man-Made Problem With a Feminist Solution* by Mary Robinson.

BOOK – *How to Save Your Planet One Object at a Time* by Tara Shine.

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We want to empower young people to realise they have a voice, that their voice should be heard and that they have every right to be informing policy!

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