

# Action Plans and Sustainability

## What are the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDG's)?

The United Nations has come together to give us planet-wide goals which countries need to work together to reach by 2030! 17 goals were created, each one has a different topic that stands for major issues that are currently being faced around the world. Many governments are devising ways to address these issues on a large scale, but many of them need the help of their citizens to achieve them (that's you!). Let's develop an action plan around one of the UN SDGs to help to move the world one step closer to reaching these goals!



# What is Ocean Acidification?

SDG number 14 covers “Life Below Water.” This is a really big topic, so the United Nations broke it down into smaller topics that are easier to manage. The topic we will focus on today is called Ocean Acidification or OA for short.

OA is a chemical process that happens when too much carbon dioxide is taken up by the oceans. This carbon dioxide makes the oceans more acidic, and it is harder for important animals like muscles and crabs to live and build their shells. OA impacts different regions in the ocean very differently and because of this many communities need to develop their own action plans.

OA impacts everyone. Even if you live nowhere near the ocean! Critters that we eat like fish and shellfish need to grow in the ocean and can be greatly affected by OA. Also, all water eventually flows to the ocean, any pollution that is put into rivers and lakes near you may reach the ocean and make the effects of OA worse. The rivers and lakes themselves can also become more acidic, creating problems for the plants and animals that live in them. Important ways that you could help take OA action in your community are; raising awareness by educating people, making sure your communities are not adding to the problem of pollution leading to OA.

## What is an Action Plan?

An action plan is a map that is created to reach a goal. An action plan is made up of steps that will allow you to achieve your goal. Action plans can be made for everyday things like getting a better mark in math, but they are also used by governments of cities, countries, and even by the whole world in the United Nations. They take large problems that are complex and seem impossible to solve and break them down into smaller more achievable steps that, when done, add up to a larger solution.

Goals are not always reached but a good action plan can make sure that your team gets as close as possible to reaching them. To create a good action plan it is important to:

1. Have a clear *achievable* goal in mind
2. Account for all the resources that are needed to reach your goal
3. Break the goal into smaller steps that you can measure the progress of
4. Give yourself realistic expected due dates to finish a step/reach your goal
5. Remember to keep checking to make sure that what you are doing is working/you aren't moving in the wrong direction.

Remember that the goals we are working towards were set by the United Nations and we are trying to reach them together. It is okay to ask for help from people that have more experience, knowledge, or resources. This team effort will help the world work together to achieve its goals and become a better place. For example, if you develop an ocean acidification action plan and want some help/advice, the OA Canadian Community of Practice would be happy to help out!

Promoting your action plan can be an important step in achieving your goals. It can help raise awareness for the issue you are working on, or it could attract people that could help to reach your goal.

We are the Ocean Acidification Canadian Community of Practice, this means that our main goal is to help deal with the growing problem of OA. We want to encourage as many communities as possible to start thinking about creating action plans. Youth are stepping up and acting as leaders in their communities today, and we are dedicated to helping young people take action. By helping you learn to make action plans it helps us achieve steps in our action plan!