

# Making Decisions

- ▶▶▶ EcoTeams are often faced with having to make decisions as a group. It is helpful if teams have discussed a decision-making process that works for them before having to make actual decisions. In our experience, high-functioning EcoTeams have identified a way to make decisions as a group that everyone can agree upon.

## **Democratic decision-making**

Each method has both its advantages and disadvantages.

### **1. Reaching consensus\***

Consensus means that everyone agrees or can at least 'live with' the decision. Polling the group: Do a go-around, asking each person to verbally state where she/he stands. YES, OK ("I can live with this decision").

### **2. Voting**

Majority vote means that you can reach a decision even if a certain percentage (e.g. 1/3 of your group) or some other agreed-upon number or percentage disagrees with the majority.

Thumbs up and down: Ask people to give a hand sign (thumbs up = YES; thumbs to the side = you are OK with the decision; thumbs down = NO).

### **One-party rule** (teacher or team president decides)

Allowing a single person to decide can be very efficient. It also limits opportunities to make decisions that take many perspectives into account. Efficient may not always mean effective.

\* **Reaching consensus** takes longer and is often not always realistic for groups greater than 8. However it fosters a more complete discussion of the issues and ensures that once a decision is made, everyone in the group is behind the decision.