



An Roinn Oideachais  
Department of Education

## Education for Sustainable Development Newsletter

Welcome to the September issue and 12th publication of the Department of Education newsletter on **Education for Sustainable Development (ESD)**. We would like to thank all of those who have contributed. We hope that you enjoy this edition and will find inspiration, ideas, useful links and resources to help you to play your part in sustainable development.

### **ESD in County Kildare and Kilkenny – Calling All Educational Institutions!**

Do you attend, work for or collaborate with an educational establishment or institution in **County Kildare or Kilkenny** that is taking action for sustainable development? Would you like to win funding for ESD work for your institution and project?

If you would like to share what you are doing in the area of sustainable development and have it featured in future editions of the ESD Newsletter, please get in touch with [ESD@education.gov.ie](mailto:ESD@education.gov.ie). You will receive a €500 One-For-All voucher if we publish your piece!

# Contents

1. ESD to 2030 – Funding Call for Schools .....	4
2. ESD to 2030 – Organisation Funding Grantees .....	5
3. Sustainability Toolkit for Schools.....	5
4. Teacher CPD for ESD.....	6
5. SDG Posters for Schools .....	6
6. ESD Around the Country – Galway and Kerry.....	7
a. ESD News from Galway.....	7
b. Sustainable Action at Coláiste na Sceilge, Cahersiveen, Kerry .....	9
7. School Updates.....	10
a. ESD at Celbridge Community School.....	10
b. SDGs at St. Aloysius School in Cork.....	11
8. Competitions .....	12
a. ESD to 2030 Newsletter Competition .....	12
b. ECO-UNESCO – Young Environmentalist Awards 2023.....	14
c. INTO Global Citizenship Schools ‘One Minute Video’ Competition.....	15
d. Our World Irish Aid Awards 2023-2024 .....	15
9. Programmes, Resources and CPD .....	16
a. CPD Inventory.....	16
b. UCD – Master’s Pathway in Foundations of Sustainable Development.....	16
c. Take 1 Programme – Post-Primary Pilot .....	17
e. Reduce your School’s Energy Costs – free SEAI course .....	19
f. The Blue Star Primary Programme .....	20
h. AIB Future Sparks programme for Post-Primary Schools.....	22
i. Bright Start Profile Assessment Booklet for Junior Infants.....	22
j. Climate Smart – TY Programme.....	23
k. Empowering Youth for Climate Action – Education for Sustainability.....	24
l. Young Social Innovators (YSI) – Free SDG workshop for Students and Teachers ....	25
m. IDEA: Providers of ESD in Schools .....	26
n. Craft my Learning – Workshop for Teachers.....	26
o. New Certificate Course in Forest School Leadership .....	27
p. Rediscovery Centre Workshops for Schools .....	28
q. ECO-UNESCO – Workshops, Nature Toolkit and Supporter Programme .....	29
r. Teaching Nature – Environmental Leadership Development Programme .....	31

s. Oide – TY Project and SDGs in STEM .....	32
t. ISSN – CPD Opportunities .....	33
10. HEI Sector updates .....	33
a. MIC Thurles links with Teacher Educators in Malawi.....	33
b. VIBE – UCD Innovation Academy and The National University of Vietnam Collaboration Nurturing Sustainable Innovations for a Brighter Future .....	34
c. ESD-Net 2030 Interactive Learning Webinars on ESD Pedagogy .....	35
d. NTFL - UN Award .....	36
e. TU Dublin - Sustainability Education Toolkit.....	36
f. Gap to target tool – SEAI .....	36
g. City of Dublin ETB – Climate Justice Education Tutor Handbook.....	37
h. Other News from the Higher Education Sector.....	38
11 . Reports .....	40
a. School Sector Technical Climate Action Roadmap to 2030.....	40
b. Climate Action Plan – Progress Report .....	40
c. CSO 2022 Census Summary Report.....	40
12. European Council News.....	41
a. Council Conclusions on Skills and Competences for the Green Transition.....	41
b. GreenComp Community of Practice – New Online Course .....	42
c. Teacher Education for the Green Transition and Sustainable Development.....	42
13. UN News.....	43
a. Ireland’s Voluntary National Review of the SDGs.....	43
b. UN – SDG Progress Report 2023 .....	43
c. UNESCO – ESD Net Europe and North America Meeting.....	44
d. UNECE to Create a Youth Task Force on Education for Sustainable Development .	45
14. Other News .....	46
a. SDG Week 2023 .....	46
b. SDG – National Stakeholder Forum .....	47
c. Climate Action Week.....	47
d. Walk to School Week 2023 .....	47
e. Ireland’s Climate Youth Delegate 2023/24 .....	48
f. Climate Conversations .....	48
g. IDEA Annual Conference – June 2023.....	48
h. Teachers COP 2023 .....	49
i. COALESCE (Collaborative Alliances for Societal Challenges) – Research Funding .	49
j. The Big Beach Clean – Register to Take Part .....	50
k. Three Simple Actions .....	51
l. Climate Action Newsletter – September 2023 Issue.....	51

# 1. ESD to 2030 – Funding Call for Schools

The Department is now inviting recognised primary and post-primary schools to apply for ESD to 2030 funding for projects and programmes that support the implementation of ESD to 2030. Further details and the application form are available [here](#). The closing date for receipt of applications is midnight on Friday 6 October 2023. Successful schools will be notified directly before the end of October and details of grantees will be published on the ESD to 2030 webpage.

In 2022, Kinsale Community School was one of the schools to receive ESD to 2030 funding which was used to purchase and install a MyGug biodigester to deal with the problem of food waste at the school. Kinsale Community School told us that when food breaks down in landfill it emits methane gas - a more potent greenhouse gas than CO<sub>2</sub> - into the atmosphere. The MyGug on the other hand, converts food waste using a natural process called anaerobic digestion, turning it into a useable form of methane and a liquid fertiliser, thus eliminating the need to send food waste to landfill. The gas is pumped into one of the school's home economics rooms where it is used for cooking, and the liquid fertiliser will be used as a plant/soil feed in the school's greenhouse.

The MyGug has been designed and produced by Kieran Coffey in Co. Cork and comes in different sizes. In order to choose the right sized digester, the school's TY 'Waste Watchers' team weighed the food waste from the canteen over a period of a week to determine the quantity produced. Based on this evidence the appropriate size was selected, which is the 'Mini' MyGug which converts up to 5.5kg of food waste per day. Unlike a composter, it doesn't take garden waste, but most forms of raw and cooked food. It uses a macerator to reduce the food waste to smaller 'digestible' pieces, so large solid items such as heavy bones and avocado stones cannot be inserted.

The MyGug will be managed and operated by members of the KCS Staff Sustainability Team and the Green Schools committee.

For more information on MyGug, visit: <http://mygug.eu>



Above: Students of Kinsale Community School with the MyGug Biodigester.

[Back to top](#)

## 2. ESD to 2030 – Organisation Funding Grantees

A funding call for organisations and projects supporting the implementation of ESD to 2030 in schools was made in the May ESD Newsletter and funding of just over €267,000 has now been awarded. A list of grantees is available on the ESD webpage at [gov.ie](http://www.gov.ie) - [National Strategy on Education for Sustainable Development in Ireland \(www.gov.ie\)](http://www.gov.ie)

[Back to top](#)

## 3. Sustainability Toolkit for Schools

Under the Climate Action Plan, all public sector bodies are required to comply with a Public Sector Climate Action Mandate, other than some specified organisations including schools for which a separate mandate would apply.

The [School Sector – Climate Action Mandate](#) was published on 14 March 2023

One of the objectives in the Mandate is that schools would adopt a **Sustainability Policy Statement**. A working group was established by the Department to develop templates and guidelines to support schools in adopting their statement. These documents are now available on the ESD to 2030 webpage including:

- A self-assessment audit to help schools identify their strengths and weaknesses in terms of Sustainable Development
- A Sustainability Guidelines document
- A Sustainability Policy Statement template

We hope these documents will assist schools in drafting their Sustainability Policy Statements and that schools will publish the statement on their websites. The toolkit is available [here](#).

[Back to top](#)

## 4. Teacher CPD for ESD

In March 2023, the Department commissioned a mapping exercise in order to identify the available ESD related CPD that is available for primary and post-primary teachers. The inventory of CPD is now available on the ESD to 2030 webpage [here](#). The list will be updated regularly as new CPD opportunities become available.

[Back to top](#)

## 5. SDG Posters for Schools

The Department issued 2 x copies of a poster of the **17 Sustainable Development Goals** to all schools in September 2022, as well as a flyer with information on Ireland's new **National Strategy on Education for Sustainable Development: ESD to 2030**, and how to access resources for schools.

If you require additional copies of either the poster or flyer, please email [ESD@education.gov.ie](mailto:ESD@education.gov.ie).

## 6. ESD Around the Country – Galway and Kerry

### a. ESD News from Galway

#### **Galway’s Pilot City Activity: Net Zero Pilot**

Improving energy efficiency in buildings is a top priority for Galway on the road to net zero and the focus of the City’s Net Zero Pilot activities. The City Council currently focuses on retrofitting public buildings and social housing, but the decarbonisation of private buildings remains a major challenge. The goal of the pilot activities is to address systemic barriers across the entire retrofitting value chain in Galway, tackling demand and supply challenges. The pilot activities will do so by engaging citizens, energy cooperatives, local education and training bodies, city, regional and national government officials, and research institutes in novel ways to accelerate the retrofitting process and increase the energy efficiency of homes in Galway.

There is a national scheme to facilitate 500,000 retrofits by 2030 but the scheme has thus far fallen well short of its target. Ireland’s ambitious retrofitting goals are being held back by a lack of awareness, insufficient contractors, significant upfront costs and an overly bureaucratic process. Galway will pilot activities to address these and showcase how local authorities can overcome challenges to reaching climate and retrofitting goals. The main activities will involve increasing awareness of retrofitting programmes and benefits through community outreach, providing support to homeowners across the entire retrofitting timeline, and offering training courses and incentive schemes to build a highly skilled workforce that can meet the retrofit demand in Galway. Additionally, administrative and policy barriers to retrofitting will be addressed by introducing a Quadruple Helix Steering Group with a mandate to introduce reforms.

Galway City Council owns a social housing stock of approximately 3,000 houses/apartments and has been steadily improving the building fabric of the houses. In 2022, University of Galway partnered with Galway City Council to complete comprehensive monitoring programme of energy consumption and indoor environmental conditions of homes before and after retrofit through SEAI-funded HEAT-CHECK project.

Galway City Council has also undertaken significant activities to identify suitable districts in the city for decarbonisation pilot activities, “Decarbonisation Zones.” As such, a detailed assessment for the decarbonisation potential of the city’s neighbourhoods was undertaken. The Built Environment was a major theme in this assessment and data including Building Energy Ratings of residential buildings was included.

Read more on [Galway's Pilot City Activity: Net Zero Pilot - NetZeroCities](#)



### **University of Galway ranked 34th in the world for Sustainability**

The Impact Rankings place University of Galway number 1 among Irish universities for addressing UN Sustainable Development Goals

- University of Galway has been named the number one university in Ireland for sustainable development for a second year in a row.
- The accolade has been awarded by The Impact rankings in recognition of University of Galway's progress in responding to the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).
- University of Galway has increased its ranking in the world's top 50 universities for sustainable development – jumping more than 10 places to 34th
- The Impact report cements University of Galway's position as number one in Ireland for sustainable development
- University of Galway recognised globally for significant contribution to progress on 11 of the 17 UN SDGs
- World ranking of number 5 for Responsible Consumption and Production (SDG 12)
- University of Galway ranked top 50 for 7 of the 17 SDGs

According to The Impact, the University is top 50 in seven areas and retained the top 10 rank in one area:

Ranked 5th in the world for SDG 12: Responsible Consumption and Production (same as 2022)

**Ranked 21st for SDG 14:** Life Below Water, up 10 places

**Ranked 23rd for SDG 7:** Affordable & Clean Energy, up from 75th

**Ranked 43rd for SDG 3:** Good Health & Wellbeing, up from 51st

**Ranked 44th for SDG 11:** Sustainable Cities and Communities



**Ranked 47th for SDG 17:** Partnership for the Goals, up from 63rd

**Ranked 50th for SDG 16:** Peace, Justice & Strong Institution, up from 5

Read more at [June - University of Galway](#)



Above: President of University of Galway Professor Ciarán Ó hÓgartaigh with the University's Sustainability Officer Michelle O'Dowd Lohan and Established Professor and Director of Research & Innovation, School of Engineering Jamie Goggins, who was formerly Chair of University of Galway's Community University Sustainability Partnership (CUSP), to mark achievements in THE Impact rankings. Credit Aengus McMahon.

[Back to top](#)

## b. Sustainable Action at Coláiste na Sceilge, Cahersiveen, Kerry

Muinín Catalyst Sustainable STEAM (MCSS) is a cross-curricular programme with a range of Transition Year Units, that blend the skills and competencies from the arts into the STEM subjects, with a focus on sustainable action. Muinín Catalyst Solutions have been working with Transition Year learners for the past three years in Coláiste na Sceilge, Cahersiveen, to design and develop a [1km Health and Wellbeing Trail](#).

Incorporating geography and enterprise, learners have been using [circular design thinking](#) to develop the overall trail layout and different poise points along it. This ongoing sustainability project develops 21st century skills and encourages learners to consider every aspect of the sustainable design process. To encourage problem-solving, the learners have been working with a specific pause point, a Sustainable Development Goal to incorporate into it, specific users to design for, and a challenge to overcome. These challenges included low to no

budget, designing points which do not require planning permission, using only reused and recycled materials, etc. Last year's TY learners presented their ideas to Kerry ETB, the school board, and peers.

Engaging in this project has given the learners the opportunity to work autonomously, to develop 21st century skills such as creativity and critical thinking, and to develop enterprise skills.

The Health and Wellbeing Trail is a continuing TY project in the school, as more pause points are developed alongside their teachers using this sustainable, circular design thinking approach.

This project is co-funded by the Department of Education and SFI under the Discovery Programme between 2022-2024.

To find out more see [Muinín Catalyst Sustainable STEAM](#)

[Back to top](#)

## 7. School Updates

### a. ESD at Celbridge Community School

"This year in CCS, we started a new horticulture short course. Once the winter had passed, we began learning about spring planting. We planted over 200 spring flowering bulbs around the school, especially flowers which would be good for early emerging bee.

The TY Horticulture Class created six large flower planters which were planted with bee-loving flowers and herbs later in the spring. These are placed at the front of the school, and we have spotted native bumble bees enjoying the nectar from the flower. Also, this year ECO-UNESCO held a workshop under our World Wise Global School sustainable food production and waste goals.

The workshop took place during 'May Day for Sustainability' on Tuesday 9 May and the school is now signed up for the @Take 1 national programme for promoting sustainability in schools.

We were busy every week planting different vegetables in our expanding garden. This year we hope to harvest potato, peas, strawberries and more. Working with the local Doonbeg Community Farm and National Tree Council we prepared a new mini-forest area at the back of the school and mulched it with four tonnes of compost.

Later in the autumn the horticulture classes will plant over 100 native Irish saplings, oak, birch, hawthorn and more. We are hoping to create a circular forest as an area for wellbeing and mindfulness."



Above: Students at Celbridge Community School planting saplings.

*ESD Newsletter* is delighted to announce that Celbridge Community School win a €500 One-For-All Voucher towards ESD projects for their input to the September issue of the ESD Newsletter. Congratulations!

[Back to top](#)

## b. SDGs at St. Aloysius School in Cork

In December 2022, Rang Lorcán, St Aloysius School, Sharman, Crawford Street Cork, decided to run a soccer competition involving the whole school as their CAR for CSPE. This was to highlight 1) exploitation of people from developing countries in sporting events around the world, 2) the work of Irish Aid and 3) the relevant SDG's.

To enter the 'St Als Protest Cup' each class had to pick a country from the developing economies supported by Irish Aid and design a poster with information on how Irish Aid supports their chosen country. The posters were displayed in the foyer along with match times and references to SDGs.

The goals highlighted were Goal 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth, Goal 10: Reduced Inequality, Goal 16: Peace and Justice Strong Institutions. The tournament was run over a two-week period on our Astro pitch and each match was six minutes long (with some penalty shootouts). This CAR developed the skills of literacy, numeracy, time management, organisation, teamwork, sports skills and overall wellness which was displayed in interest, excitement and fun.

It was a great whole school event, of which the staff and students said, "We have a better insight and understanding of inequality in our world and the aid that helps to reduce these inequalities so everyone in the future can hopefully live in a more equal and fair society."



Result  
The sixth years won  
the St Als World Cup  
representing Malawi.



We enjoyed this CAR  
(Some members of our class  
- Lorcán)



Above: A montage by students at St. Aloysius at their soccer competition.

*ESD Newsletter* is delighted to announce that St. Aloysius win a €500 One-For-All Voucher towards ESD projects for their input to the September issue of the ESD Newsletter. Congratulations!

[Back to top](#)

## 8. Competitions

### a. ESD to 2030 Newsletter Competition

Enter the September 2023 **ESD Newsletter Word Search Competition for Primary and Post-Primary Schools** and you could win an insect hotel or a garden planter for your school!

Complete the Word Search in either [English](#) at or in [Irish](#), then simply take a screenshot or photo of your completed word search and email it to [ESD@education.gov.ie](mailto:ESD@education.gov.ie) with your school's name, address and contact details by Friday, 20 October 2023.

## May Competition Winner

The winner of the **May ESD Newsletter Photo Competition for Schools** is Stepside Educate Together with their photo below titled 'No Mow, let it Grow' , which has selected a garden planter for the schoolyard.

Congratulations!

“At Stepside Educate Together Secondary School we are working towards creating an environment that is rich in Biodiversity around our school. We believe by that using the school grounds to support and attract nature we can create a space that can inspire, educate, and raise environmental awareness in our students.

Since moving to this site in 2020 we have developed the grounds with nature in mind: to date, we have planted two pocket forests of native trees and each year we are expanding these by planting additional native trees. We have reduced our mowing to allow Irish wildflowers to thrive as depicted in our chosen photograph, we have planted two dedicated wildflower areas. Each autumn students plant pollinator-friendly spring bulbs, we built and planted pollinator flower beds and we are growing our own fruit and Vegetables in our poly-tunnel.

We have promoted nature education by conducting wildflower, insect, and tree surveys. We have brought in a range of speakers who are masters in their field including an ecologist an organic farmer, and a nature photographer, and we even had a dedicated Bio-diversity day. We are working on engaging more with the community by creating a parents' garden.”



Above: The wildflower meadow at Stepside Educate Together.

[Back to top](#)

## b. ECO-UNESCO – Young Environmentalist Awards 2023



### **Registrations are now open for the ECO-UNESCO Young Environmentalist Awards 2024!**

Over 60,000 young people have taken environmental action and participated in the ECO-UNESCO Young Environmentalist Awards over the last 25 years. Young people from all over Ireland have taken action to have a positive impact on the environment in their local communities.

The Young Environmentalist Awards Programme is a fun and exciting way to empower young people to become active citizens, to build awareness of environmental issues in the community and promote local actions and lifestyle changes to protect the environment.

Register today and be part of the action: <https://ecounesco.ie/young-environmentalist-awards/register/>

This year the awards will be even bigger and better as ECO-UNESCO are celebrating 25 years of youth environmental action. Since 1999, ECO-UNESCO has run the YEA programme to honour and make a difference to young people's work to protect, conserve and enhance the environment through local environmental projects, actively making a difference in their lives and the lives of others both locally and globally.

The YEA programme is open to any group of 2 - 25 young people in the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland aged between 10 -18 years. There are three age categories:

**Super Junior Group:** 10 - 12 years (non-category specific)

**Junior Group:** 12 - 14 years

**Senior Group:** 15 - 18 years

We offer support and excellent resources every step of the way, including the 6 Steps to Success workshop. With 14 categories to choose from, including Water, Waste, Biodiversity, Energy, there are no limits to what young people can achieve!

For more information visit [www.yea.ie](http://www.yea.ie)

Register here: <https://ecounesco.ie/young-environmentalist-awards/register/>

Watch the [Podcast](#) on the ECO-UNESCO Young Environmentalist Awards in Ireland (featuring Elaine Nevin and Patrick Kirwan who spoke at Kinsale as well as participating students).

## c. INTO Global Citizenship Schools 'One Minute Video' Competition



“Th’ whole worl’s in a terrible state o’ chassis”

– *Juno and the Peacock*, by Irish playwright Sean O’Casey, first performed in 1924.

So, 100 years later let’s turn Learning into Action in 2023/24!

This school year, show other schools what your school has done for the SDGs (Sustainable Development Goals) by taking part in our “ONE MINUTE VIDEO – What we did for the SDGs.” President Michael D. Higgins has endorsed these local and national showcase events designed for schools to share their positive actions with other primary schools and so promote more genuine primary school-friendly action for a better and fairer world.

What’s involved?

1. Scan the QR CODE to check out the website for ideas.
2. Make a ‘One Minute Video’

The closing date is 31 January 202 and videos can be emailed to [info@globalcitizenshipschool.ie](mailto:info@globalcitizenshipschool.ie)

Find out more at [Global Citizenship School - One Min. SDG Video](#)



**Editor’s Note:** This project has been granted ESD to 2030 funding in 2023 by the Department of Education.

## d. Our World Irish Aid Awards 2023-2024

The Our World Irish Aid Awards is a primary school programme aimed at third-sixth class pupils which teaches them all about the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals and the work of Irish Aid.

Through a range of exciting and engaging Lesson Plans and the annual Pupils’ Magazine, specifically curated to the programme, children all around Ireland can submit a creative entry based on what they have learnt from our resources. Entries can come in all shapes and sizes using artwork, writing, music, or film and can be based on the work of Irish Aid, the 2024 theme, the countries in focus or the Sustainable Development Goals, or a combination of all!

Every entry received will be in with a chance to be featured in the prestigious Global Goal Getters – an online multimedia magazine displaying the best entries to the Awards. For inspiration check out last year’s magazines [here](#).

Schools with the best submissions will be invited to the National Final event in June 2024 with lots of games and prizes to be won on the day!

To learn more and stay up to date with everything on the Our World Irish Aid Awards (including the announcement of this year’s theme and when to expect packs to land in schools) on social media channels:

Facebook: @ourworldawards

Twitter: @irishaidawards

[Back to top](#)

## 9. Programmes, Resources and CPD

### a. CPD Inventory

The Department of Education has commissioned a mapping exercise of ESD-related continuous professional development (CPD) for primary and post-primary teachers. A list of ESD-related CPD for teachers is now available on the ESD to 2030 webpage [here](#).

If your organisation provides ESD-related CPD for teachers, please let us know and we will add it to the list.

[Back to top](#)

### b. UCD – Master’s Pathway in Foundations of Sustainable Development

**SDG**academy



The Master’s Pathway in Foundations of Sustainable Development Professional Certificate is for learners who want to earn academic credit towards a Master’s degree. See [Master’s Pathway in Foundations of Sustainable Development Professional Certificate | edX](#)

The Master’s Pathway is a partnership between the SDG Academy and University College Dublin (UCD), one of Europe’s leading universities, to give learners a flexible, accredited pathway to further education in the field of sustainable development. Students who complete the Master’s Pathway on edX will be eligible to receive 10 credits towards [UCD’s online](#)



[Professional Diploma in Foundations of Sustainable Development](#). \* Once they complete the Diploma, students can continue into [UCD's Master's of Science \(MSc.\) in Sustainable Development](#) – offsetting those academic credits and providing a pathway for learners with non-traditional academic backgrounds.

Delve into the foundations of sustainable development and the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) with world-renowned economist Jeffrey Sachs, environmental scientist Johan Rockström (one of TIME magazine's 100 most influential people of 2023), and other global leaders in the field. For this graduate certificate, you will learn the tenets of sustainable development and how our societies can develop within the planet's boundaries to prevent biodiversity loss, deforestation, desertification, and environmental degradation.

From learning the interactions between sustainable economic growth and environmental sustainability to understanding activities that drive climate change and the boundaries set by the planet's natural resources, this sustainable development micro-credential will set you on a path to tackle challenges locally and globally.

The Master's Pathway in Foundations of Sustainable Development Professional Certificate is an eligible programme under the **Teachers Refund of Fees Scheme** (Circular 0005/2023).

[Back to top](#)

### c. Take 1 Programme – Post-Primary Pilot



The Take 1 Programme completed its first pilot phase of training for post-primary schools outside of the education and training board (ETB) sector, during the second and third terms of the 2022/23 academic year. Programme director, Valerie Lewis met with principals, deputy principals as well as a variety of teachers and support staff from over 40 post-primary schools around the country, as they embarked on their journey to enhance their engagement with Education for Sustainable Development (ESD). Training took place using a blended approach of both online and in-person engagement. Participating schools showcased their learning by highlighting their activities as part of May Day for Sustainability 2023. This year's challenge encouraged schools to create a 'Metre of Meadow' on their grounds, aimed at enhancing local biodiversity and supporting targets aligned to SDG 15 – Life on Land.

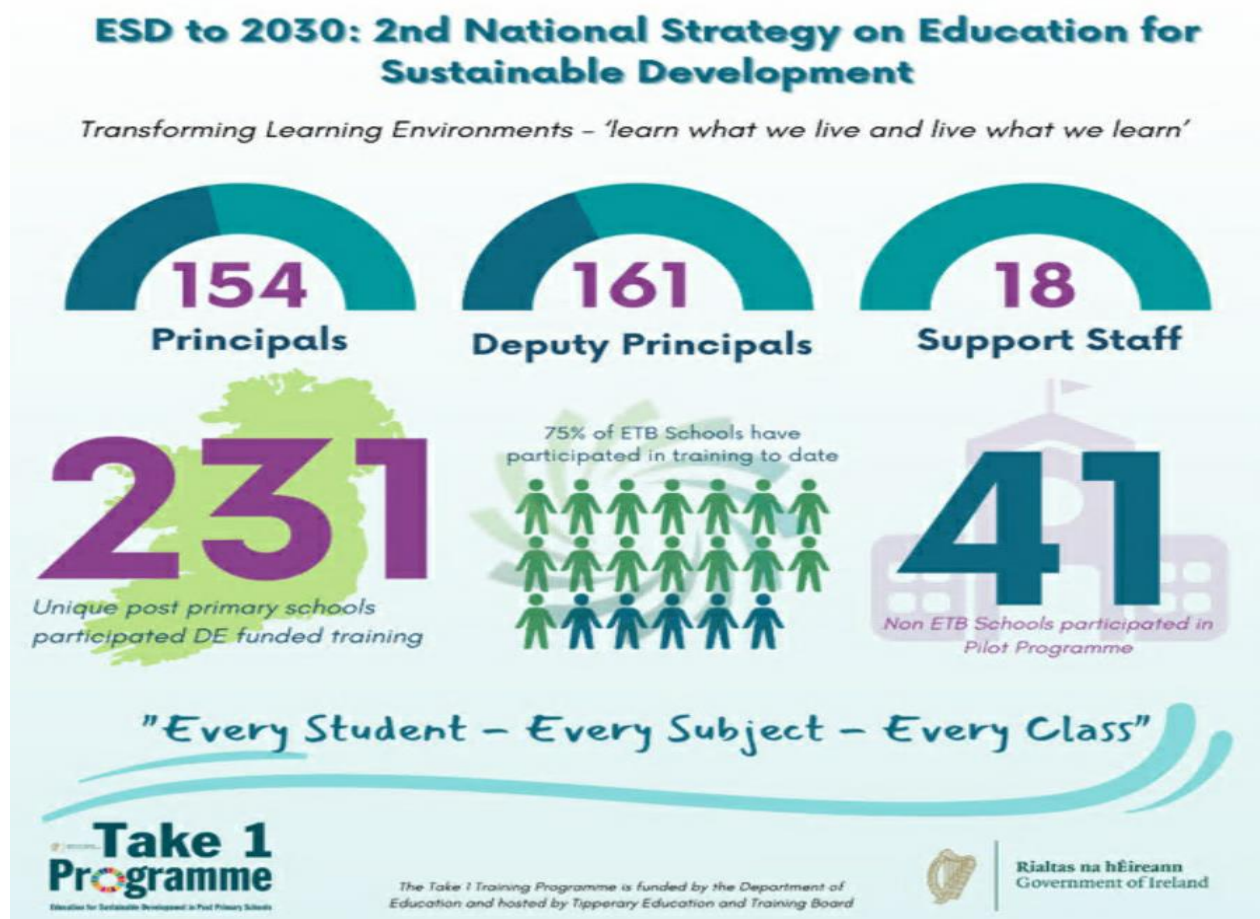
The Take 1 Programme is funded by the Department of Education as part of ESD to 2030, Ireland's second National Strategy on Education for Sustainable Development, with its work aligned to Priority 2 – Transforming Learning Environments. To date 231 unique post-primary schools have participated in Take 1 Programme training representing over 30% of second-level schools in the country. Training will be offered again in the coming academic year. It is hoped to grow and enhance ESD knowledge, participation and transformation as part of this inclusive sustainability programme.

Take 1 Week: 20 – 24 November 2023.

Keep up to date and follow @Take1\_Programme on Twitter

Contact: Valerie Lewis at [take1programme@outlook.com](mailto:take1programme@outlook.com)

[Back to top](#)



## e. Reduce your School's Energy Costs – free SEAI course



Are you interested in reducing your school's energy costs? Sign up today for a free training course to find out how you could save money by better managing your school's energy use.

Course participants are guided step-by-step through the energy management process from understanding bills and energy use in the school to developing and implementing an energy saving plan.

Schools that attend courses may be eligible for an Advice, Mentoring and Assessment (AMA) service, a school visit to identify energy saving opportunities and with three months mentoring support.

Courses will be held online and will consist of three sessions of 2 hours each from 10am to 12pm. The school can nominate any representative to attend e.g. member of staff or of the board of management.

Course 1	Tue 26/9/23	Tue 10/10/23	Tue 24/10/23	To register <a href="#">click here</a>
Course 2	Thu 28/9/23	Thu 12/10/23	Thu 26/10/23	To register <a href="#">click here</a>
Course 3	Wed 8/11/23	Wed 22/11/23	Wed 6/12/23	To register <a href="#">click here</a>

Delivered under the Energy in Education programme developed by the Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland (SEAI) in partnership with the Department of Education.

For any queries contact: [energyineducation@seai.ie](mailto:energyineducation@seai.ie)

[Back to top](#)

## f. The Blue Star Primary Programme



The Blue Star Programme is now open for registration! Primary school pupils around the country are being challenged to get creative in how they learn and think about Europe through the Blue Star Programme!

This Programme teaches primary school pupils about European cultures and the EU through creative activities and projects which complement the national primary curriculum. Over 1,000 primary schools have taken part in the Blue Star Programme, as the programme grows from strength to strength! So come take part, and let's get creative about Europe!

### **Sustainable Development Goals**

Learning and thinking about Europe through the Blue Star Programme!

Did you know the Blue Star Programme aligns with Sustainable Development Goals? For example, SDG 4: Quality Education and SDG: 10 Reduced Inequalities. This programme teaches primary school pupils about European cultures and the EU through fun creative activities and projects which complement the Primary Curriculum.



Registration open until **6 October 2023**. [www.bluestarprogramme.ie](http://www.bluestarprogramme.ie)

[Back to top](#)

## g. Global Citizenship Education Programme for Primary Schools



Global Village is delighted to announce that the Global Village programme has been extended for three more years, commencing in September 2023. The Global Village pilot programme in 2022/2023 carried out research on teachers' understanding and practice of Global Citizenship Education (GCE). It provided online and face-to-face training, supporting primary school teachers and leaders to integrate GCE into their practice. The first Global Village summer course was hosted in DCU on its All Hallows campus in July 2023, with 15 enthusiastic participants (primary teachers and principals) learning about primary curriculum links to GCE.

The new programme will offer a range of resources and professional development supports, online and face-to-face, to primary school teachers and leaders around the country. It will also include research and policy activities on the role of and potential for GCE in the primary school setting. For more information, visit [www.globalvillageschools.ie](http://www.globalvillageschools.ie) or email the team at [info@globalvillageschools.ie](mailto:info@globalvillageschools.ie) to be added to Global Village's email list for event, resource and research updates.

Global Village is the strategic partnerships for Global Citizenship Education in primary schools in Ireland, between Irish Aid at the Department of Foreign Affairs and a consortium of four partners: Dublin City University (DCU), Irish National Teachers' Organisation (INTO), Irish Primary Principals' Network (IPPN) and Trócaire.



Above: Spinning the Wheel of Sustainable Development Goals at the Global Village Summer Course.

[Back to top](#)

## h. AIB Future Sparks programme for Post-Primary Schools



[AIB Future Sparks](#) is an interdisciplinary programme for post-primary schools which encourages the development of key life skills and supports young people and their teachers across 9 different subject curriculums throughout Junior and Senior Cycle.

One of the highlights of the programme is its focus on 21<sup>st</sup> Century Themes including sustainability, development and global citizenship. This provides an engaging way for students to explore sustainability through subjects such as business, TY modules, and guidance-related learning..

Visit [aibfuturesparks.ie](http://aibfuturesparks.ie) to discover a wide range of resources for students, teachers and parents.

Check out the AIB Future Sparks TV series, featuring lively interviews and discussions with social entrepreneurs and leaders in the environmental industry, plus inspiring stories from real Irish students who have developed valuable skills through sustainable projects like local vintage clothing shops and beekeeping.

From videos to workbooks, activities, slides, podcasts, lesson plans and more, AIB Future Sparks offers a host of support to enhance students' learning experience.

If you are new to AIB Future Sparks, you can register on [aibfuturesparks.ie](http://aibfuturesparks.ie) to get your school's access codes and start accessing free resources.

[Back to top](#)

## i. Bright Start Profile Assessment Booklet for Junior Infants

This booklet is designed to assess the extent to which children are ready to thrive as they begin junior infants, and then to re-assess this readiness approximately six months later.

The hand-drawn artwork features native trees, flowers and creatures to encourage children to reconnect with nature, and in time to become more invested in caring for our natural but fragile world.

The tasks assess children's early numeracy and language skills, their ability to match images that are similar (but not identical), their cutting skills, their crayon control and their ability to draw a simple self-portrait. Children are provided with opportunities to match and count, but also to subitise, that is, to recognise the number of objects in a small set with the need to count them.

Children are provided with opportunities to match and count, but also to subsidise, that is, to recognise the number of objects in a small set without the need to count them.”

The open-ended questions “what do you see?” and “what do you notice?” are designed to encourage children to look closely at the related autumn and spring images, and to begin to notice similarities and differences.

Taken together, children’s performance on these tasks provides a useful indicator of their potential to flourish in the junior infant classroom.

Find out more by emailing [brightstartprofile@gmail.com](mailto:brightstartprofile@gmail.com)

**The first five primary schools to send an email [ESD@education.gov.ie](mailto:ESD@education.gov.ie) will receive 30 free copies of the booklet for their junior infants class!**

[Back to top](#)

## j. Climate Smart – TY Programme



More than 23 schools and 800 students are already learning about climate change adaptation in Ireland with the FREE TY Unit, Climate Smart!

In the academic year 2023/ 2024, the Climate Smart team, led by Prof. Anna Davies from Trinity College Dublin and An Taisce’s Environmental Education Unit, is looking to support 12 more Dublin schools through the programme. Places are provided on a first come first served basis and are filling fast. Schools can register their interest by emailing [climatesmart@eeu.antaisce.org](mailto:climatesmart@eeu.antaisce.org).

Not Dublin-based but still interested in participating? Get in touch by email at [climatesmart@eeu.antaisce.org](mailto:climatesmart@eeu.antaisce.org).

Climate Smart is a flexible platform developed by Trinity College Dublin and supported by Science Foundation Ireland (SFI) that can be adapted to class timetabling needs. With links to geography, maths, science, technology, politics, planning and active citizenship from a local to global scale, Climate Smart takes an interdisciplinary approach to teaching and learning about why we need to adapt to climate change and how we can do this. Follow a series of seven online workshops and a suite of hands-on activities focused on flooding, a key challenge from climate change in Ireland. In the final workshop students get to put their knowledge into practice through the serious game i-Adapt. They take on the role of Dublin City Mayor and must prepare, consult and implement plans to protect the city from flooding, all while keeping their citizens happy and staying within budget.

Explore the platform at [www.climatesmart.ie](http://www.climatesmart.ie)

Follow socials [@climatesmart\\_ie](#) (Twitter) [@climate\\_smart](#) (Instagram).



[Back to top](#)

## k. Empowering Youth for Climate Action – Education for Sustainability

Education for Sustainability (EFS) is a non-profit organisation established in 2017 to equip youth with the knowledge and agency to make a difference.

EFS sends facilitators to primary and post-primary schools, offering tailored programmes that train teachers, provide resources, and engage students with interactive workshops. Through game-based techniques, EFS instils a sense of environmental stewardship, going beyond teaching climate change to empowering students and teachers to enact change now and in the future.

Since its inception, Education for Sustainability has reached 200 schools through an eight-week climate literacy course, trained 242 teachers, and inspired 18,000 students to drive sustainable initiatives. Action projects under EFS have led to the planting of 3,000 trees and 44 plastic-free schools.

Despite its youth, EFS is driving real change. By engaging students and arming them with tools for change, EFS is brightening the planet's future. With each empowered student, the path to a more sustainable world becomes clearer.

To learn more about engaging your school in sustainability initiatives or to sign up for the climate literacy course visit [www.educationforsustainability.ie](http://www.educationforsustainability.ie) or email [sharon@educationforsustainability.ie](mailto:sharon@educationforsustainability.ie)



**Editor’s Note:** Education for Sustainability has received ESD to 2030 funding to support its climate literacy schools’ programme.



[Back to top](#)

## I. Young Social Innovators (YSI) – Free SDG workshop for Students and Teachers



YSI’s “Championing the SDGs” workshop aims to increase awareness among teenagers around the UN SDGs and create leadership within school communities to champion and encourage action around the Sustainable Development Goals. Integral to its format is the design of an SDG Champion Action Plan which some students will lead in the school community. It will encourage young people to become champions for the SDGs and lead their school community in efforts to address the SDGs.

The free workshop is for students and teachers, is 90 minutes in duration, and is available all year round.

Register or find out more about the workshop here: [Championing the SDGs | Young Social Innovators \(YSI\) - Young Social Innovators Changing the World for Good](#)

[Back to top](#)

## m: IDEA: Providers of ESD in Schools



The Irish Development Education Association (IDEA) is the national network for Global Citizenship Education in Ireland. IDEA represents over 110 members involved in the practice, promotion and advancement of Global Citizenship Education in formal, non-formal, and informal settings. These include Development NGOs, community and voluntary organisations, educational institutions and networks, trade unions, educators, researchers and activists, and many of these provide and support Education for Sustainable Development in schools.

See a full list of IDEA's members [here](#) and one can search by sector to find organisations and practitioners that can support work on ESD. [Find out more](#)

## n. Craft my Learning – Workshop for Teachers



"It's time to merge the power of gaming with education for a greener future!"

**CRAFT MY LEARNING** is part of the **CRAFT-MY-STREET Project**, an initiative developed in UCD that aims to bridge the worlds of gaming and participatory decision-making processes for climate action. The goal is to elevate young people's voices in the decision-making process, which is essential for addressing pressing societal challenges, including climate change and sustainability. Addressing the urgent and complex issue of climate change demands innovative solutions in education. Teachers must equip themselves with new tools to tackle evolving curricular content and effectively engage students across multiple disciplines. The educational value of the games has proven very effective in terms of student engagement. However, integrating games as applied educational tools presents does present significant challenge for teachers.

The CRAFT-MY-STREET team invites primary and post-primary teachers to take part in a dynamic, hands-on session focused on exploring innovative game-based approaches to address climate change. By learning fundamental game design and prototyping concepts, teachers will gain the skills to create their own games and rigorously test their functionality.

A cutting-edge game design framework has been meticulously crafted, tailor-made for this unique experience.

UCD highly values your expertise and commitment to enhancing learning experiences. Your presence and active involvement in these workshops will play a pivotal role in shaping the success of CRAFT-MY-STREET and, more importantly, in advancing educational practices for the new teaching challenges.

The Workshop: 'CRAFT MY LEARNING' An introduction to game-based teaching about climate change!' is 3 hours long and includes: Ice-breaking exercises ► Playing the flooding game ► Game design and content lectures ► Game creation and playtesting ► Discussion

Express your interest in participating in the Workshop here: <https://lnkd.in/eCvGvAns>. Numbers are limited. Substitute cover will be provided to enable your participation.

Venue: [Spatial Dynamics Lab, University College Dublin, Richview Campus, D04 V1W8](#)

[Back to top](#)

## o. New Certificate Course in Forest School Leadership



Brigit's Garden is delighted to announce the first Irish training in Forest School Leadership, accredited as a Level 6 course by Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI). Two courses are currently running at Brigit's Garden with two more courses starting in the autumn in Galway and Kildare. The course is a professional, part-time training that equips learners with the theory, practical skills and experience needed to be effective Forest School leaders. It is suitable for teachers, early years practitioners, environmental educators and others who wish to run Forest School sessions.

Forest School offers children nature-based play and activities on a regular basis, through their school or community group. The demand for Forest School is growing fast, and research shows that it has a significant positive impact on children's development and wellbeing.

"This is an exciting new development at Brigit's Garden," says Director Jenny Beale. "The new Irish course has been developed in close collaboration with the Irish Forest School Association and experienced Forest School leaders and offers a unique opportunity to train in this expanding and exciting area of work."

Places on the courses are limited and further details can be found on [www.brigitsgarden.ie/forest-school-leadership](http://www.brigitsgarden.ie/forest-school-leadership), or by phoning 091 550505.

[Back to top](#)

## p. Rediscovery Centre Workshops for Schools

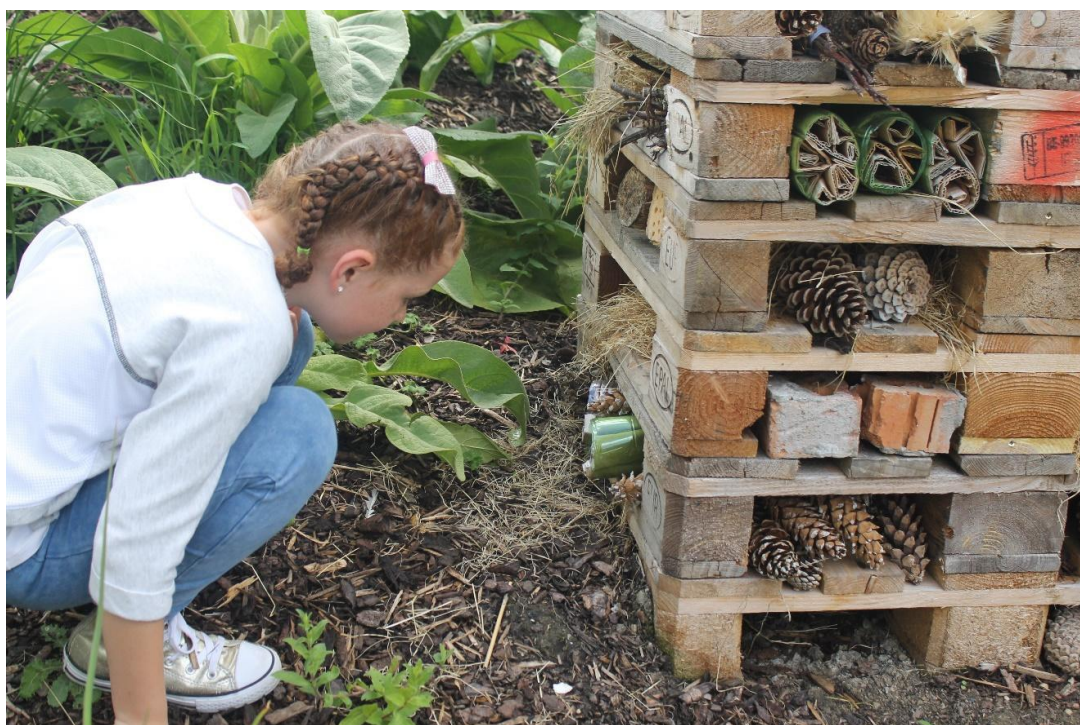


Creating a better future for all of us is a team effort. Schools all around the country are doing great work, and the Rediscovery Centre are here to support and provide schools with a large variety of well-researched, engaging workshops, offering hands-on enquiry and experiential learning.

The Rediscovery Centre's Education workshops educate students and teachers on the science of sustainability, by examining and exploring how STEM can solve societal challenges and help build a more sustainable future. Explore the societal challenge of sustainability, and use STEM thinking and creative activities to examine and come up with possible solutions!

Workshops are 90 minutes in duration and can facilitate a maximum of 30 participants. They are available for schools all around the country and can be delivered directly in schools, at our unique centre in Ballymun, or virtually online. Each workshop features a presentation and a range of fun, interactive activities, and ends with a feedback session to encourage the students to share what they have learned throughout the workshop.

For bookings and more information please visit [www.rediscoverycentre.ie/education](http://www.rediscoverycentre.ie/education).



[Back to top](#)

## q. ECO-UNESCO – Workshops, Nature and Wellbeing Toolkit and Supporter Programme



### ECO-UNESCO Workshops and Training

ECO-UNESCO is a specialist provider of environmental education in Ireland. We offer engaging, expert environmental workshops to schools and youth groups, with each workshop designed to empower young people to learn more about environmental topics, including fun activities and games appropriately designed for each age group.

Workshops include Climate Action, Fashion Focus, Waste Warriors, Exploring Ecology and Biodiversity, Plastic Patrol, Climate Justice, Food for Future, Climate Campaigning, 6 Steps to Success, Student Council Training and TY Sustainable Development Programme.

Our workshops are available through flexible delivery methods which can take place in-person in your school/youth venue or through online delivery, as well as being suitable for any age group. Up to 30 students can be accommodated per workshop and workshops last approximately 1.5 – 2 hours.

Sign up for the workshops today email [bookings@ecounesco.ie](mailto:bookings@ecounesco.ie) or call 01 6665491

<https://ecounesco.ie/10-18-youth-programmes/environmental-workshops/>



## **Youth Action for Nature and Wellbeing Toolkit**

After two years of dedicated work, our Youth Action for Nature and Wellbeing project has developed an excellent, high-quality toolkit – Toolkit for Youth ECO-Activism. This project was funded by Erasmus+, led by ECO-UNESCO and involved a collaborative partnership between five European environmental educational organisations, including Gaia Education, Resilience.Earth, The Rural Parliament of Slovakia, Youth for Smile, and Ecowellness Consulting.

The Toolkit for Youth ECO-Activism reflects a holistic and transformative pedagogy which draws from a range of learning theories to promote eco-activism. It features many system thinking models and nature connection methods, providing community formation, action-orientated and resilience-building tools for the youth.

Find out more about how you might use this excellent resource here:

<https://bit.ly/YouthActionNatureWellbeing>

## **ECO-UNESCO Supporter Programme**

Climate education and empowerment of young minds is key to encouraging action to positively impact climate change and protect our environment. Become an ECO-UNESCO supporter today and educate and empower young people from all over Ireland to make a difference.

Since 1986, ECO-UNESCO has focused on taking direct action to advance sustainability at the local level. Collectively, ECO-UNESCO have led thousands of eco-action projects, working with young people all over Ireland. Your support of ECO-UNESCO will help us advance our mission to empower young people and conserve the environment.

There are many benefits for your school to become an ECO-UNESCO supporter, including:

- Discounts on our range of expert environmental workshops
- Environmental educational resources
- Monthly email updates
- And much more.

Don't forget your school can also attend online ECO-Weeks, ECO-UNESCO's annual Young Environmentalist Awards programme including free access to the 6 Steps to Success online Workshop.

Sign up to become a supporter today: <https://ecounesco.ie/get-involved/support-our-work/>

If you have any queries or require any more information about the wide range of programmes and services, visit [www.ecounesco.ie](http://www.ecounesco.ie) or email [info@ecounesco.ie](mailto:info@ecounesco.ie)

[Back to top](#)

# r. Teaching Nature – Environmental Leadership Development Programme



ARDSCOIL NA MARA  
AN EDMUND RICE SCHOOL

Ionannbhas Scoilenna Éamainn Rís  
Edmund Rice Schools' Trust



## TEACHING NATURE

### An Environmental Leadership Development Programme

Wed. 27th Sept. Mon. 23rd Oct. Thurs. 23rd Nov.  
Time: 9:30 - 3:00 Venue: Ardscoil na Mara, Tramore

– 10 Places Available – For Primary & Post-Primary Teachers

Free Programme

To register a place, email: [aoifedenton@ardscoilnamara.ie](mailto:aoifedenton@ardscoilnamara.ie)



#### 9:30 - 10:00 **Get up to speed on biodiversity**

In this workshop we will explore what biodiversity is, the drivers of biodiversity loss, & biodiversity in an Irish context.

#### 10:00 - 10:20 **Observing a class in the outdoor classroom**

Here we'll take an opportunity to observe part of a lesson in the outdoor classroom to understand how we work with whole class groups.

#### 10:20 - 11:00 **The moral purpose for teaching nature & the challenges**

In this session we will look at the extent of nature knowledge in schools, the benefits of teaching nature, challenges & solutions.

#### 11:00 - 12:00 **A new model for teaching nature: the Environmental Leadership Development Programme**

This **PRACTICAL** session takes place in our **outdoor classroom**.

#### 12:00 - 1:00 **Awareness to action**

We'll share some whole school action projects & resources, and discuss how we can avoid subconsciously greenwashing ourselves.

#### 1:00 - 1:40 **Lunch**

#### 1:40 - 2:00 **Utilising our school grounds**

Walk & talk around the school ground exploring how best they can be utilised for nature education.

#### 2:00 - 3:00 **A Strategy for Nature Education**

To round off the day we'll develop a school action plan.



*I would highly recommend this course to other teachers. It is amazing, inspirational and thoroughly enjoyable!!!*

## s. Oide – TY Project and SDGs in STEM

Oide plans to promote the Department's Education for Sustainable Development by working with schools to assist in transforming learning environments in the 2023/24 academic year by facilitating different projects and workshops and working to embed ESD in curricula and programmes.

The Oide Science team has planned to further develop the collaborative TY 'Climate Detectives Crossing STEM' project that was piloted in schools last year.

TY teachers (inter disciplinary) will be supported to build their own capacity to identify climate related issues in line with adjustments to '*Looking at Our School 2022: A Quality Framework for Post-Primary, Schools*' and develop research questions with their students around the theme of Climate Change / Action in their local area. They will:

- follow the scientific method to investigate their question
- receive feedback from scientists / engineers working in the field
- include a design and make solution to their problem
- present their findings at a national event

This is a collaboration between Oide, SFI and ESERO.

Oide will also facilitate regional evening professional learning events for teachers promoting Sustainable Development Goals in STEM Education. This workshop will introduce teachers to new high-quality learning and teaching resources which focus on the United Nations' sustainable development goals and how these can be enacted through engagement with STEM. These resources have been developed by Science on Stage Europe as a collaboration between teachers from across a number of European countries and will be available to teachers online through the 'Scoilnet' portal. Through the workshop, teachers will explore:

- the UN's 17 sustainable development goals and their importance in education
- the suite of lessons and associated resources which promote students as active and responsible citizens through STEM
- participation by schools in the Future League STEM competition

[Back to top](#)



## t. ISSN – CPD Opportunities



The Irish Schools Sustainability Network have teamed up with Education Support Centres Ireland to put together a schedule of CPD for Education for Sustainable Development from September to December. The hope is to make this CPD more accessible to teachers. There are lots of educational organisations involved and a wonderful spread of fantastic CPD in many subject areas.

Download the [CPD Schedule 23 24](#) and share it with staff. Click on the registration link to sign up to the different sessions [Irish Schools Sustainability Network \(issn.ie\)](#)

[Back to top](#)

## 10. HEI Sector updates

### a. MIC Thurles links with Teacher Educators in Malawi

MIC Thurles, with the support of their Centre for Leadership and Inclusive Studies (CLISTE), the

Irish Embassy in Malawi and the Malawi Ministry of Education, currently sponsor seven teacher education lecturers from Malawi to participate in MIC Thurles' Postgrad in Middle Leadership and Mentoring, accessing the programme on-line. The Teacher Education lecturers work in the teacher education sector in Malawi preparing teachers at primary and post-primary. Through Erasmus funding the students plan to travel to Ireland in 2023/24.

In August 2023, representatives from MIC Thurles visited Malawi and met with their students in the company of Malawi Minister of Education, the Hon Madalitso Wirima Kambauwa MP. Currently, the Ministry is drafting a Memorandum of Understanding to explore how MIC might support teacher educators across the 11 Teacher Training Colleges in Malawi.



Above: Mr Misheck Munthali (Ministry), Ms Ann Percy, Dr Finn Ó Murchú (MIC), Ms Florence Phiri, Malawi Minister of Education the Hon Ms Madalitso Wirima Kambauwa MP, Ms Martha Msowoya, Ms Beatrice Wawanya, Ms Rebecca Makanga, Dr Tayo Adenusi (MIC) Ms. Holly Cowman (MIC).

[Back to top](#)

## b. VIBE – UCD Innovation Academy and the National University of Vietnam Collaboration Nurturing Sustainable Innovations for a Brighter Future

The collaboration between the UCD Innovation Academy (IA) and The National University of Vietnam, Hanoi (VNU) under the DFA Irish Aid 'Vietnam Ireland Bilateral Education Exchange (VIBE)' Programme has been ongoing since 2017.

With the partnership now in phase 3 of the project, this April, the IA introduced the theme of Sustainability to the VIBE community by delivering a *Design Thinking for Sustainability* module at VNU Hanoi. More recently, this August, 15 VNU Hanoi academics arrived at the IA for a two-week programme focused on Sustainability with a lens on eco-tourism. With the delivery of the *Innovation for Sustainability* module at UCD, the VIBE team focused on exploring the themes of fast fashion, clean water and waste management, concluding with a question for the following week ahead of their empathy phase – *'How might we develop a sustainable eco-tourism idea for Vietnam'?*

To assist the VIBE team in developing their ideas, week two involved visiting some of Ireland's best eco-tourism destinations, including one of Ireland's most sustainable craft beer

brewing companies and one of Ireland's only fully Carbon Neutral hotels. Visiting nine different sites gave the VIBE team a real sense of what could be achieved in Vietnam.

The two-week programme concluded with three VIBE teams presenting their ideas in a concept pitch format. They offered ground-breaking prototype ideas to return to Vietnam to develop further with their faculty and students.

Since the partnership in 2017, we have also welcomed VNU academics on our UCD Professional Certificate/Diploma in Creativity & Innovation for Education, and we eagerly look forward to continuing this collaboration to collectively contribute to building a better tomorrow.



[Back to top](#)

### c. ESD-Net 2030 Interactive Learning Webinars on ESD Pedagogy

The webinars organised by UNESCO to promote knowledge sharing, collaboration and mutual learning are available to watch [here](#). The [March series](#) included a session facilitated by the International Association of Universities on Higher Education and ESD – 'Taking a transdisciplinary approach to teaching based on SDG 4 and ESD at universities'.

[Back to top](#)

## d. NTFL – UN Award

**National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning named as UNESCO Laureate in recognition of work on open educational resources and practices via the National Resource Hub.**

Ireland's National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education has been announced as a Laureate of the esteemed [UNESCO King Hamad Bin Isa Al-Khalifa Prize for the Use of ICT in Education on 7<sup>th</sup> June 2023](#). The Laureate will receive US\$25,000 for its work in making public digital learning platforms and digital content universally accessible, developing digital competencies for all teachers and learners, and promoting universal connectivity in education. This milestone highlights the initiative's alignment with education for sustainable development objectives in Ireland and creation of active contributors to a more sustainable and inclusive future.

[Back to top](#)

## e. TU Dublin – Sustainability Education Toolkit

TU Dublin's Strategic Intent 2030 sets out that all programmes will have sustainability learning outcomes. This toolkit, launched in June, is designed to provide users with a choice of educational resources relevant to sustainable development, enabling academic staff to embed sustainability within the curricula. [The Sustainability Education Toolkit](#) is an ever-evolving resource, which will be updated as newer, more relevant, or effective resources become available.

[Back to top](#)

## f. Gap to Target Tool – SEAI



All public bodies, including schools, must achieve a 51% reduction in energy-related greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and a 50% improvement in energy efficiency by 2030. It is up to each individual organisation to determine how the targets can be best achieved and they must report their energy performance annually. In 2022, 345 public bodies including ETBs and 2,898 standalone schools reported using the SEAI Monitoring and Reporting (M&R) system.

The SEAI Monitoring and Reporting (M&R) system offers several benefits to your organisation:

- Enables your organisation to fulfil your legal obligations with respect to reporting
- Provides a summary of your organisation's overall energy performance
- Access to your organisation's electricity and natural gas consumption data
- Allows comparison with the progress of other public bodies in achieving targets
- Showcases your achievements

It also helps organisations understand their energy consumption, target areas for improvement, identify opportunities, review progress, monitor and benchmark performance and validate savings.

The SEAI offer a range of supports including free training workshops, step-by-step videos and guides to help you complete your M&R report.

For more information please go to: <https://www.seai.ie/business-and-public-sector/public-sector/monitoring-and-reporting/>

[Back to top](#)

## g. City of Dublin ETB – Climate Justice Education Tutor Handbook

On 9 June 2023 City of Dublin ETB's Adult Education Service launched its **Climate Justice Education Tutor Handbook**. This comprehensive handbook provides a wide range of teaching and learning resources, using development education methodologies. It includes a wide range of suggested participatory activities, learner worksheets and handouts, and tutor guiding notes. It is targeted at tutors teaching adults at Level 3 on the NFQ but many of the activities will be of use for Level 2 – 4 learner groups too.

The Climate Justice Education in Practice Tutor Handbook was written by Sian Cowman, PhD Researcher with Melíosa Bracken, Community Education Facilitator.

**Tutor training on Climate Justice Education will be held on 22 November** by City of Dublin ETB Adult Education Service for any adult or community education tutor who would like to start to use the Handbook. Please contact [southinnercity@aes.cdetb.ie](mailto:southinnercity@aes.cdetb.ie) if you would like to register your interest to attend this training. This will be an inperson training event and places are limited.

Please follow the link to download the Handbook <https://adulthoodeducationcityofdublincityofireland.ie/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/138530-CDETb-Climate-Justice-book-WEB-Version.pdf> or contact [southinnercity@aes.cdetb.ie](mailto:southinnercity@aes.cdetb.ie) if you would like a hard copy posted to you.

City of Dublin ETB Adult Education Service is committed to being a lead educator in developing public awareness on climate change and just transitions in the City of Dublin. The Adult Education Service in City of Dublin ETB provides Adult Literacy, Community Education and English language classes across the city. We have a wide range of courses, from reading and writing, maths, digital literacy to English language classes, arts, crafts and cultural programmes, wellbeing programmes, social justice, community development and of

course, climate justice. We also provide an information and guidance service. All our courses are free and are targeted at communities and social groups facing economic, social or educational disadvantage.

[Back to top](#)

## h. Other News from the Higher Education Sector

### **PROFessional skills for Engineering students – Summer School to achieve SDG 12 (PROFESS 12).**

Engineering students from TU Dublin and Ulster University recently took part in [a pilot Summer School](#) designed to equip them with the professional skills required to prevent unsustainable consumption and production patterns and work effectively with people from different cultural backgrounds and career disciplines. The innovative and inclusive Summer School was organised by the [PROFESS 12](#) project, funded by the HEA and DFHERIS through the North-South Research Programme.

### **RCSI first in the world for 'Good Health and Well-being' in THE University Impact Rankings.**

RCSI University of Medicine and Health Sciences has ranked number one in the world for SDG3 'Good Health and Well-being' in the Times Higher Education (THE) University Impact Rankings 2023. Professor Cathal Kelly, RCSI Vice Chancellor, said: "We are driven by our mission to educate, nurture and discover for the benefit to human health. We place a particular emphasis on nurturing the well-being of our staff and students, which includes the introduction of a lifestyle medicine student choice module and becoming a signatory of Ireland's 'Healthy Campus Charter'. Further information is available [here](#).

### **Springboard + and HCI Pillar 1 courses places for 2023 announced.**

[Springboard+ and HCI Pillar 1 were launched on 7th June 2023](#). Springboard+ 2023 will offer 8,291 places on 252 courses and HCI Pillar 1 will offer 2,922 places on 105 courses for the academic year 2023/24. Through these two initiatives learners can access free or subsidised places on courses, including programmes in Climate, Sustainability and Energy. Applications are now open. Candidates who wish to participate in Springboard+ 2023 or HCI Pillar 1 courses will find full details on the approved courses [here](#).

### **The Digital Academy for Sustainable Built Environment (DASBE) courses**

The Digital Academy for Sustainable Built Environment (DASBE) is a partnership between the Technological University of the Shannon and Atlantic Technological University, along with industry partners the Irish Green Building Council and Tipperary Energy Agency and is funded by the Government's Human Capital Initiative Pillar 3. The academy offers a wide range of programmes available covering topics from Drones in Construction, Residential Energy Retrofit, Community Energy, BIM, and others. Programme details and information of registration can be found at [DASBE.ie](#).

### **Mid-term evaluation report on the Human Capital Initiative (HCI) Pillar 3.**

This report, launched at the [HCI Mid-Term Conference on 29 June 2023](#), outlines the progress on innovations across teaching and learning, supported by access to technologies (both software and hardware), which are actively being piloted and deployed in learning environments nationally. Some HCI projects addressing ESD which feature in the report include The [Sustainable Futures](#) project, Ireland's Knowledge Centre for Carbon, Climate, and Community Action ([IKC3](#)) project, and The Digital Academy for the Sustainable Built Environment ([DASBE](#)).

### **UCD and MTU have published details of ESD initiatives funded through SATLE.**

In autumn 2022, funding from the Strategic Alignment of Teaching and Learning Enhancement Fund (SATLE) was allocated to higher education institutions to drive teaching and learning innovation and enhancement across the higher education sector on specific themes. Learning enhancement projects span the full range of discipline areas and have engagement from students, staff and external partners. Further information on all projects funded at UCD are available [here](#) and at MTU [here](#). Events, resources and other information from SATLE 2022 projects will be shared and publicised on [teachingandlearning.ie](#).

### **TU Dublin Healthy Campus 'Living Lab' project**

TU Dublin's Healthy Campus initiative received [N-TUTORR funding](#) for two student interns from the final year of the Public Health Nutrition Programme to implement sustainable, health and wellness initiatives across the University for staff and students. The "Living Lab" Project aligns with the Strategic Intent for the University of "People, Planet & Partnership", UN Sustainable Development Goals, and progresses International Healthy Campus Accreditation for TU Dublin which includes substantial environmental components.

### **MTU Kerry Campus Nursing department recently hosted Sustainability Leadership for Nursing Students Seminar event**

As part of the N-TUTORR project, Nursing students and staff from Ireland, the UK, China, and the USA recognised that climate change poses the greatest threat to global health and wellbeing. They discussed their role in reducing healthcare's contribution to our carbon footprint on a global scale. Now this global network of nurses is determined to progress this vital agenda of sustainability and climate action within their own spheres of influence. This vital work goes on with the roll out of the next stages of the N-TUTORR project. Contact [gerardina.harnett@mtu.ie](mailto:gerardina.harnett@mtu.ie) for further details.

### **Green space project in Ballina achieves Ireland's first win in the New European Bauhaus Award in Brussels**

The Ripple Project created a climate-friendly amenity in the Greenhills area of Ballina, Co. Mayo, which includes a haven for wildlife, a tree nursery for local oaks, heritage fruit trees, vegetable beds, pollinator-friendly planting, and a nature-based play area. The project was a collaborative effort involving experts from the University College Dublin Centre for Irish

towns (CfIT), the Ballina Green Towns initiative, and the local residents. Read more about the initiative [here](#).

### **Call for citizen scientists in Dublin for 2-year water quality project**

DCU have partnered with Earthwatch Europe, Dublin City Council, and the Local Authorities Water Programme (LAWPRO) on the 'Urban Citizen's 6.3.2' project, which aims to work with local communities to monitor Dublin's rivers and streams. The project, supported by the [Irish Research Council](#), is currently recruiting members of the community from the Tolka, Dodder and Santry catchments, and the catchments of the Kill-o-the-Grange and Loughlinstown streams to monitor water quality (by measuring a number of plant nutrients) and biodiversity (macroinvertebrates – insects that live in the water), and will be running training days over the coming weeks. Those interested in taking part can sign up to Urban Citizen 632 [here](#).

[Back to top](#)

## **11. Reports**

### **a. School Sector Technical Climate Action Roadmap to 2030**

The Department of Education published the School Sector Technical Climate Action Roadmap 2023 to 2030 providing an overview of the school sector requirements and roadmap to 2030 and towards 2050 in the transition to net zero in our schools. It includes the strategic vision, outlines the high level initial trajectory for the school sector delivery of its energy efficiency and greenhouse gas emission reduction targets.

Read the Roadmap here: [gov.ie - School Sector Technical Climate Action Roadmap 2023 to 2030 \(www.gov.ie\)](#)

### **b. Climate Action Plan – Progress Report**

The Climate Action Plan 2023 Quarter 2 Progress Report, published 25 July highlights a completion rate of 63% on significant and reportable climate actions.

Read the report here: [gov.ie - Climate Action Plan Progress Reports \(www.gov.ie\)](#)

### **c. CSO 2022 Census Summary Report**

The recently published CSO 2022 Census Summary Report shows for the first time ever, a decrease in car usage for children being driven to school, with 55% of primary and 42% of post primary students being driven or driving to school. This is a decrease from 59.8% since the 2016 census.



The report also showed an increase in the number of students walking and cycling to school and college since 2016. In 2022, there were 88% more primary school pupils and 79% more post-primary students cycling to school than in 2016. The number of teenage girls cycling to school more than doubled in 2022 from 2016.

The Green-Schools Travel Programme works directly with schools promoting active and sustainable transport to school. When working on the Travel themes of the programme, schools are assigned a dedicated Travel Officer to work with their school identifying opportunities for, and promoting, walking, cycling, scooting, park 'n' stride, public transport use and carpooling on the journey to school.

Read the 2022 Census Summary report here:

[Employment, Occupation, Industry and Commuting - CSO - Central Statistics Office](#)

Find out more about the Green-Schools Travel Programme here: [Travel - Green-Schools \(greenschoolsireland.org\)](https://greenschoolsireland.org)

[Back to top](#)

## 12. European Council News



### a. Council Conclusions on Skills and Competences for the Green Transition

On 7 March, the Education, Youth, Culture and Sport Council gathered in Brussels. Education ministers approved conclusions on skills and competences for the green transition and held a policy debate on high-quality teachers as the cornerstone of a successful European Education Area.

The conclusions on skills and competences for the green transition relate to the European Council conclusions of 9 February 2023, when EU heads of state and government called for bolder and more ambitious actions to further develop the skills required for the green and digital transitions, through education, training, upskilling and reskilling.

The EU education ministers adopted the document to support the role of vocational and higher education in transferring the skills.

[The newly approved document](#), dated 7 March, follows the [European Council Conclusions of 9 February 2023](#), in which the EU Heads of State and Government called for more ambitious action to further develop the skills needed for the **green and digital transition** through **education, training, upskilling and reskilling**. The document was adopted in the context of the [European Year of Skills](#) and reacts also to the [Council Recommendation on Vocational Education and Training for Sustainable Competitiveness, Social Equity and Resilience](#), the [European Strategy for Universities](#), the [Council Recommendation on Learning for Environmental Sustainability](#) and the [European Competence Framework on Sustainability \(GreenComp\)](#).

Sustainability competences include the knowledge, skills, and attitudes that learners of all ages need to live, work and act in a sustainable way. Green skills refer to the professional skills that are needed in all sectors and levels of the labour market to transition to green living, including the creation of new green jobs. They also refer to cross-cutting skills that enable critical and systems thinking, problem solving and innovation.

[Back to top](#)

## b. GreenComp Community of Practice – New Online Course

There is a **new online course** on futures literacy, [Futures Forward](#), developed by the Commission and supporting Green Comp. It is hosted and promoted via [Ted-Ed](#) (the educational partner [Ted-X](#)). Inspired by [EarthSchool](#) (Ted-Ed), the goal is to help young people better prepare for their future, by teaching them about the future. Futures Forward is set-up around 5 futures literacy topics 1. Perception of time, 2. Futures mindset, 3. Multiple futures, 4. Investing in imaginations, 5. Taking action, and provides easily digestible videos and online lessons on key GreenComp competences such as systems thinking, futures literacy or critical thinking.

[Back to top](#)

## c. Teacher Education for the Green Transition and Sustainable Development

A recent EENEE report by Ingrid Mulà and the European Council's Working Group consultant Daniella Tilbury focuses on how to ensure that teachers are sufficiently equipped to facilitate students' learning for sustainability. Read further in the [full report](#); [policy brief](#); [case studies](#).

See [recording](#) of the Swedish EU Presidency youth dialogue on climate education students share their views on how they want to learn about sustainability – and our WG gets a mention

[‘Bothered’](#) short film from the UK where teachers and students are asked their views on climate education – you can see the 14' film 'Bothered' [‘at the recording of the launch event’](#) (from 4 mins 55 seconds).

[Back to top](#)

## 13. UN News



### a. Ireland’s Voluntary National Review of the SDGs

In July 2023, at the UN’s High Level Political Forum in New York, Ireland was among 39 countries to present its Voluntary National Review (VNR) of progress towards achieving the 17 Sustainable Development Goals.

Ireland’s second VNR was developed in collaboration with multiple stakeholders through a stakeholder forum, online consultation and a youth consultation process. The focus of the VNR was “Building Back Better while Leaving No One Behind”. It aimed to facilitate the sharing of experiences including successes, challenges and lessons learned, with a view to accelerating the implementation of Agenda 2030. Chapter 7.1 of the VNR focuses on Education.

The Irish VNR is the first to include a standalone Youth chapter and Irish UN Youth Delegates held a side event at the HLPF on meaningful inclusion of youth in the VNR process.

The VNR is available to read here: [Voluntary National Review 2023, Ireland | High-Level Political Forum](#)

[Back to top](#)

### b. UN – SDG Progress Report 2023

**The Sustainable Development Goals Report 2023: Special Edition** provides a powerful call to action, presenting a candid assessment of the SDGs based on the latest data and

estimates. While highlighting the existing gaps and urging the world to redouble its efforts, the report also emphasizes the immense potential for success through strong political will and the utilization of available technologies, resources, and knowledge. Together, the global community can reignite progress towards achieving the SDGs and create a brighter future for all. According to the report, the impacts of the climate crisis, the war in Ukraine, a weak global economy, and the lingering effects of the COVID-19 pandemic have revealed weaknesses and hindered progress towards the Goals. The report further warns that while lack of progress is universal, it is the world's poorest and most vulnerable who are experiencing the worst effects of these unprecedented global challenges. It also points out areas that need urgent action to rescue the SDGs and deliver meaningful progress for people and the planet by 2030.

Read the [SDG Progress Report 2023](#)

[Back to top](#)

### c. UNESCO – ESD Net Europe and North America Meeting

The Department of Education and the Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science both attended UNESCO's First ESD Net (Europe and North America) meeting on 25 and 26 June. 22 member states were represented at the meeting.

UNESCO confirmed at the meeting that Ireland and Spain are the first two countries in the region with a completed Country Initiative. Other Member States in the region are in the process of developing their Country Initiative. ESD to 2030 is Ireland's Country Initiative and is now available on the UNESCO website: [ESD for 2030 country initiatives | UNESCO](#)

Ireland shared updates on progress on ESD to 2030 with the network including a presentation on embedding ESD competencies, content, attitudes and skills across the curriculum at all levels. Ireland's Youth representative on the UNECE Youth Platform also attended and lead a session on Youth Engagement and Empowerment. Ireland's National Youth Assembly on Climate was highlighted at this session as an example of good practice in the region.



Above: ESD Net Europe and North America participants – June 2023, UN Offices, Paris.

[Back to top](#)

## d. UNECE to Create a Youth Task Force on Education for Sustainable Development

**Written by:** Eimear Manning, Youth Task Force representative for Ireland and Youth & Climate Justice Development Officer with the National Youth Council of Ireland.

Young people are the cohort of the population most impacted by decisions and actions on [Education for Sustainable Development](#) (ESD) in Ireland and throughout the world. Ministers at the recent [9th Environment for Europe Conference](#) highlighted a need for ESD to empower all learners with the knowledge, skills, values and attitudes to address the global challenges faced by current and future generations. Therefore, the opinions and experiences of young people are fundamental to ensure that ESD is accessible, inclusive, and relevant.

In response to the need for more meaningful youth participation and youth engagement, the [United Nations Economic Commission for Europe \(UNECE\) Steering Committee on ESD](#) - the only regional body in the UN system on Education for Sustainable Development - has recently agreed in principle (May 2023) to establish a Youth Task Force. The UNECE Youth

Task Force on ESD will be created by the end of June 2023, pending the finalisation of formal documentation.

So, what does this mean? The Youth Task Force (consisting of young people from Member States of the UNECE Region) will contribute to the implementation of the [UNECE Strategy for Education for Sustainable Development \(2021-2030\)](#), which aims to encourage countries to integrate ESD into all forms of their education systems - from primary to tertiary, including vocational, youth work, and adult learning; and through formal, non-formal and informal methods of learning.

The UNECE Youth Task Force for ESD is proposed to:

- Advise the Steering Committee (comprised of government national focal points) on all issues and activities of the Steering Committee related to young people. The Steering Committee meets at least once annually.
- Contribute to the effective mainstreaming of youth in the implementation of the UNECE Strategy for Education for Sustainable Development.
- Formulate opinions and proposals concerning the priorities and expected results for youth. Where appropriate, address these opinions and proposals to the UNECE Steering Committee on Education for Sustainable Development or other relevant stakeholders.
- Promote the UNECE's ESD youth policies within the organisation and beyond. Hold an exchange of views and report to the relevant meeting of the UNECE Steering Committee on ESD annually in order to evaluate the activities and advise the ESD Youth Platform on future priorities including possible new activities.

Members of the Youth Task Force will be designated by Governments of the UNECE Member States (including Ireland), and those selected will represent young people in their country in the Steering Committee.

“This is a welcome development”, says Eimear Manning, Youth Task Force representative for Ireland. “The decision to set up a Youth Task Force on ESD shows the UNECE’s acceptance of young people as both stakeholders and key actors of the 2030 Agenda. I look forward to working alongside the Steering Committee to progress the implementation of ESD over the coming months”.

[Back to top](#)

## 14. Other News

### a. SDG Week 2023

The Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications has announced that Ireland’s second SDG (Sustainable Development Goals) Week is taking place this year from 23 September to 1 October.

SDG Week forms part of the wider European Sustainable Development Week (ESDW) which this year, will run from 18 September – 8 October. Last year, ESDW saw over 7,000 events taking place across 24 countries, with over 100 events held across Ireland.

The SDGs belong to everyone and SDG Week is open to all – individuals, groups, schools and colleges, businesses and institutions.

To take part, organise an event – however big or small – or highlight an activity or project that promotes sustainable development and join the annual week of action for the SDGs.

Think about how you could promote sustainable development and plan an activity, project or event to take place during SDG Week some ideas for taking part are available here:

[gov.ie/sdgs](http://gov.ie/sdgs)

Upload your idea on the ESDW website: [www.ESDW.eu](http://www.ESDW.eu)

Explore which events are taking place and participate in activities near you!

Queries can be sent to [SDGs@decc.gov.ie](mailto:SDGs@decc.gov.ie).

[Back to top](#)

## b. SDG – National Stakeholder Forum

The Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications will host the 3rd Sustainable Development Goals National Stakeholder Forum at the Aviva Stadium, Dublin, on Friday, 17 November 2023.

Register or find out more here:

[gov.ie](http://gov.ie) - [National Sustainable Development Goals Stakeholder Forum \(www.gov.ie\)](http://www.gov.ie)

[Back to top](#)

## c. Climate Action Week

**Climate Action Week 2023**, organised by An Taisce, will take place between the 16 and 21 October. See the [full schedule of events](#).

[Back to top](#)

## d. Walk to School Week 2023

An Taisce/Green Schools – Walk to School Week 2023 will take place from 2 - 6 October. This week is all about celebrating walking as a positive mode for school journeys. We are asking schools to celebrate with us and try to make this the best most inclusive walk to school week yet! Find resources and send in your schools story: [Walk to School Week 2023 - Green-Schools \(greenschoolsireland.org\)](http://WalktoSchoolWeek2023-Green-Schools@greenschoolsireland.org)

[Back to top](#)

## e. Ireland's Climate Youth Delegate 2023/24

Dublin law student Jenny Salmon has been named **Ireland's Climate Youth Delegate for 2023-2024**. She will work to ensure youth perspectives inform the work of Ireland's Climate Delegation and will be invited to attend COP28. Congratulations Jenny and good luck!

[Back to top](#)

## f. Climate Conversations

This year's **Climate Conversations** have started!

People across the country are invited to have their say on how we can all work together on climate solutions that are fair for everyone. Climate Conversations 2023 will feed into and shape the next iteration of the Climate Action Plan. Join the Climate Conversation here: [gov.ie](http://gov.ie) - [Climate Conversations 2023 \(www.gov.ie\)](http://www.gov.ie)

[Back to top](#)

## g. IDEA Annual Conference – June 2023

**The 2023 Irish Development Education Association (IDEA) Annual Conference** was held in the Morrison Hotel on 21 June 2023. The Keynote address was given by Leonardo Garnier, Special Advisor to the United Nations Secretary General for the transforming Education Summit. He is also Associate Professor of Economics at the Universidad de Costa Rica. The Theme of the Conference was “Transforming Global Citizenship Education: Innovating for a better world” exploring what innovation is, how it can strengthen the impact of Global Citizenship Education, the opportunities for innovation, as well as challenges, and how to overcome them, and it also celebrated the innovative work of Global Citizenship Education practitioners across Ireland.

A key message from the keynote by Leonardo Garnier was that ‘Education implies every person’s right to be an active, productive, and significant member of society. It is supposed to produce people capable of living together well, and this has a lot to do with citizenship and Global Citizenship Education. In a world with increasing inequality, rising tensions, fraying trust, weakened democratic culture, increased displacement and a dramatic environmental crisis, education must help us to better live with each other, and with nature.’

Find out more about the conference here: <https://www.ideaonline.ie/idea-conference-2023>

[Back to top](#)



## h. Teachers COP 2023

The **TeachersCOP** is an international event created by the Office for Climate Education (OCE), to highlight to global politicians and decision-makers the work of teachers, the challenges they face and the key role they play in the global climate response.

The Ministry of Education of the United Arab Emirates in partnership with the Office for Climate Education and ALEF Education will select 30 Educators from across the world to participate in the #TeachersCOP during COP28.

[Submit your project](#) and get a chance to present at COP28! The deadline for submissions is before 30 September 2023.

Find out more at [TeachersCOP | Office for Climate Education \(oce.global\)](#)

[Back to top](#)

## i. COALESCE (Collaborative Alliances for Societal Challenges) – Research Funding 2023



### COALESCE 2024 will open on Thursday, 28 September 2023

The Irish Research Council (IRC) recently announced the fifth call under a fund for research that addresses national and global societal challenges.

COALESCE builds on and brings together two of IRCs former funding programmes, namely *Research for Policy and Society* and the *New Horizons Interdisciplinary Research Awards*.

The call seeks to fund excellent research addressing national and European/global challenges as set out in the challenge frameworks now in place. The call is run in partnership with a number of Government departments and agencies, who fund specific strands.

COALESCE 2024 will consist of the following strands:

- Strand 2A: Open call for interdisciplinary research addressing national or global societal challenges led by AHSS PI with STEM co-PI (max. €220,000 per award).
- Strand 2B: Better World Awards, in partnership with the Department of Foreign Affairs, whereby the lead PI will work with a co-PI in one of Irish Aid's partner countries – ODA-eligible country on the African continent; any ODA-eligible Small Island Developing State (SIDS); Vietnam; Palestine; Laos; Cambodia; Myanmar (max. €350,000 per award).
- Strand 1L: INSTAR+ awards, funded by the National Monuments Service of the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage in partnership with the Heritage Council (max.€220,000 per award).

FAQs should be submitted through the Research Office in the first instance and then directed to [projects@research.ie](mailto:projects@research.ie)

Further information is available is available [COALESCE \(Collaborative Alliances for Societal Challenges\) | Funding | Irish Research Council](#)

[Back to top](#)

## j. The Big Beach Clean – Register to Take Part

The Big Beach Clean 2023, brought to you by Clean Coasts and supported by Cully and Sully taking place September 15 – 17 2023.

The Big Beach Clean is part of the International Coastal Cleanup (ICC), organized by the Ocean Conservancy that annually invites communities and volunteers to come together and host a clean-up after the bathing season ends. This exciting initiative invites you to join a worldwide citizen science project by signing up for a free clean-up kit and collecting data on the litter you collect which will contribute to raising awareness nationally and globally about the issue of marine litter. This data serves as an indicator of the problem's scale and aids in shaping future policies and campaigns.

In 2022, over 500 clean-up events took place and volunteers made an incredible impact by removing 42 tonnes of litter from the Irish coast and inland locations. As Clean Coasts celebrated its 20th anniversary in 2023, the aim is to make this year's Big Beach Clean the most remarkable one yet.

**Register to take part** by heading to <https://cleancoasts.org/our-initiatives/big-beach-clean/> and join the already 200+ groups that have registered to join in the big event!

Any questions? Just send an email to [cleancoasts@eeu.antaisce.org](mailto:cleancoasts@eeu.antaisce.org).



[Back to top](#)

## k. Three Simple Actions

Below are three simple every day actions you to support the achievement of **SDG4: Quality Education**:



The icon for SDG 4, Quality Education, features a large white number '4' in the top left corner. To its right, the words 'QUALITY' and 'EDUCATION' are stacked vertically in white, uppercase letters. Below the text is a white line-art illustration of an open book with a pencil standing vertically to its right. The entire icon is set against a dark red background.

- 10. Support charities that are working in education in poorer parts of the world
- 11. Donate old books to your local library or school
- 12. Share your skills with someone who needs them

[Back to top](#)

## l. Climate Action Newsletter – September 2023 Issue

The September 2023 issue of the Government of Ireland's Climate Action Newsletter 'Climate Action News' has now been published

To read features on District heating developments, Your Journey Counts, waste levy, renewable heat consultation and the National Ploughing Championships, along with latest consultations, calls for research and events, see [LinkedIn](#), or you can sign up to receive the newsletter by email [h-ere](#)

[Back to top](#)

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