



An Roinn Oideachais  
Department of Education

## Education for Sustainable Development Newsletter

Welcome to the March 2024 issue and 14th publication of the Department of Education newsletter on **Education for Sustainable Development (ESD)**. We would like to thank all those who have contributed. We hope that you enjoy this issue and will find inspiration, ideas, useful links and resources to help you to play your part in sustainable development.

### **ESD in County Limerick and Longford – Calling All Educational Institutions!**

Do you attend, work for or collaborate with an educational establishment or institution in **Limerick** and **Longford** that is taking action for sustainable development? If so, we would love to hear from you for the 15th issue of the ESD Newsletter! Get in touch at [ESD@education.gov.ie](mailto:ESD@education.gov.ie)

### **ESD in Schools**

If you would like to share what you are doing in the area of sustainable development in your school and have it featured in future issues 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** from the Department of Education if we publish your piece!

# Contents

<b>1. ESD to 2030 Updates</b> .....	<b>4</b>
a. ESD Newsletter .....	4
b. Curriculum Developments .....	4
c. Solar Panels for Schools Programme - update .....	6
d. Sustainability Toolkit for schools.....	6
e. SDG Posters and <b>NEW</b> Information Flyer for Schools .....	7
<b>2. ESD Around the Country – Laois and Leitrim</b> .....	<b>8</b>
a. Sustainability in Co. Laois.....	8
b. Sustainability in Co. Leitrim .....	11
<b>3. School Updates</b> .....	<b>12</b>
a. ESD at Ballymakenny College, Drogheda.....	12
b. ESD at SS Michael and Peter JNS Arklow.....	13
c. Scoil Réalt na Mara –Trip to France for Sustainability Project.....	14
<b>4. Competitions</b> .....	<b>15</b>
a. ESD to 2030 March Newsletter Competition – Share <b>YOUR</b> 3 Simple Actions! .....	15
b. December Competition Winner - National Parks Competition .....	15
c. Junk Kouture - Ireland wins top prize for 2nd year in a row.....	16
d. Biodiversity in Schools – Wildwalls! .....	17
e. Win a FREE Bosca Dúlra! .....	17
f. Bord na Móna – Schools’ Upcycling Competition.....	18
g. Global Citizenship Schools – One Minute Video Competition - Schools Visit to Áras an Uachtaráin.....	20
h. ECO-UNESCO – Young Environmentalist Awards 2024 .....	21
i. Green Schools Poster Competition – Winner Announced .....	23
<b>5. Programmes, Resources and CPD</b> .....	<b>25</b>
a. Three Simple Actions – SDG 7 - Affordable and Clean Energy.....	25
b. WWGS Annual Teacher Conference - 1 February 2024 .....	26
c. Refund of Fees scheme for Teachers .....	27
d. Climate Change Resource for Primary Teachers.....	27
e. Irish Schools Sustainability Network - Teaching Nature CPD .....	28
f. Wise Water – Learn About Water in 5 Lessons .....	29
g. Biodiversity in Schools.....	31
h. Heritage Council – New Programme for Primary .....	32
i. Global Citizenship Education - Opportunities for Primary School Teachers .....	33
j. Rediscovery Centre – Workshops for Primary and Youth Groups.....	34

<b>6. HEI Sector.....</b>	<b>37</b>
a. ATU – Digital Certificate in Sustainability .....	37
b. ESD News from TU Dublin .....	38
c. Education for Sustainable Development Officer - UCC .....	39
d. M.Ed. in Education for Sustainability and Global Citizenship.....	39
e. Other News and Updates from the HEA Sector .....	41
<b>7. International Updates .....</b>	<b>43</b>
a. ESD-Net in Toyko – December 2023.....	43
b. GEM Report – Activities in 2024.....	44
<b>8. Other News .....</b>	<b>46</b>
a. ISSU – SDGs and Me and Debate your Decision Makers Events.....	46
b. SDG Champions 2024 - 2025 – Call for Expressions of Interest.....	47
c. Take 1 Programme at the World Environmental Conference 2024 .....	48
d. Cloughjordan Eco-Village .....	50
e. Climate Action News – February 2024 Issue Published.....	52
f. CSO – SDG 1: No Poverty .....	52
g. COP28 Reflections.....	51

# 1. ESD to 2030 Updates



## a. ESD Newsletter

At the start of 2024 we welcomed our 1000<sup>th</sup> subscriber to the ESD Newsletter. Join us in sharing all the positive news and activities taking place across the education sector that promote sustainable development – send your news to [ESD@education.gov.ie](mailto:ESD@education.gov.ie) and subscribe to the newsletter [here](#).

[Back to top](#)

## b. Curriculum Developments

### **Applications Open to Join Rollout for New Leaving Certificate Subjects**

On 13 March, Minister for Education, Norma Foley TD, invited schools to apply to be in the first phase to offer the two new Senior Cycle subjects: Drama, Film and Theatre Studies; and Climate Action and Sustainable Development.

Climate Action and Sustainable Development aims to develop students' capacity to take informed and meaningful action for a just and sustainable world as they engage with key sustainability challenges including the climate crisis. Students will be empowered to build their understanding of a number of interconnected core concepts and principles related to climate action and sustainable development.

Post-primary schools are invited to consider the information provided on [Phase One Call for Applications 2024 | Gov.ie](#) and submit an application to be in the first phase of schools introducing the new subjects from the start of the 2025/26 school year.

**Applications will close on 19 April 2024.**

[Back to top](#)

# Leaving Certificate - Climate Action and Sustainable Development



**Have your say - draft specification for Climate Action and Sustainable Development now out for consultation.**

The draft specification for new Leaving Certificate subject Climate Action and Sustainable Development is now out for consultation.

The consultation involves in-depth engagement with a wide variety of stakeholders across Ireland. The National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA) have also contacted schools to participate in

school-based focus groups involving teachers, students and school leaders.

You can share your views via an online survey, and/or an online submission.

Full details on the consultation and the draft specification can be found here: [Climate Action and Sustainable Development | NCCA](#)

## **Roll out of the new subject**

Climate Action and Sustainable Development is one of two new subjects developed as part of Senior Cycle Redevelopment, providing greater choice for students to better reflect their range of interests and support the development of a wider range of talents and skills.

These new subjects will be introduced to schools on a phased basis in 2025.

Schools will be invited to apply to become part of a network of schools rolling out these two new subjects.

The application process (see article above) has been announced, and further details will be communicated to schools.

## **What to expect from the draft specification**

Leaving Certificate Climate Action & Sustainable Development enables students to apply an interdisciplinary and solutions focused approach to living in a sustainable world as they engage with complex and relevant sustainability challenges, including the climate crisis.

The draft specification sets out the knowledge, skills, values, and dispositions for students in four strands - Earth & Planet; People, Power and Place; Global Connections; and the Applied Learning Tasks strand.

The draft specification has two assessment components: a written examination and an additional assessment component comprising an Action Project.

**The consultation will close on 5 April 2024.**

## Primary – Social and Environmental Education

Social and Environmental Education is one of the new subject areas under the revised Primary Curriculum Framework, published in March 2023.

The draft specification for the new subject has recently been published by the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment for public consultation.

To review the draft specification and/or provide your views on it, see [Consultation 2024 | NCCA](#)

**This consultation will close on 7 June 2024.**

The NCCA will also be consulting with children on this specification in collaboration with Marino Institute of Education.

[Back to top](#)

## c. Solar Panels for Schools Programme - update

On 23 November 2023, the Department of Education announced the **Schools Photovoltaic Programme**.

As of 28 February 2024, of the 1628 schools invited to apply for the first phase of the Schools PV Programme, 1467 have expressed an interest in the scheme through the online School Hub (90%).

Further details including an overview of the programme and technical FAQs are available on the website at: <https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/562dd-schools-photovoltaic-programme/>.

[Back to top](#)

## d. Sustainability Toolkit for schools

Don't forget to check out the ESD to 2030 **Sustainability Toolkit** consisting of a self-assessment Sustainability Audit, Sustainability Guidelines and a Sustainability Policy Statement Template. Celebrate and share what your school is doing to support and promote sustainable development by developing your schools Sustainability Policy Statement and

check out the A – Z in the guidelines for some great ideas to take action for sustainability!  
The Toolkit is available [here](#).

ESCI held an information session on ESD and the Sustainability Toolkit on 24 October 2023.  
A recording of the event is available at: [ESCI - Education Support Centres Ireland - Primary and Post-Primary Teacher events courses and webinars Ireland](#)

**NOTE: Applicants for ESD funding in September 2024 will be required to have published their Sustainability Policy Statement on their school website.**

**If you have already published your statement and would like to share it, let us know by emailing [ESD@education.gov.ie](mailto:ESD@education.gov.ie)**

[Back to top](#)

## e. SDG Posters and **NEW** Information Flyer for Schools

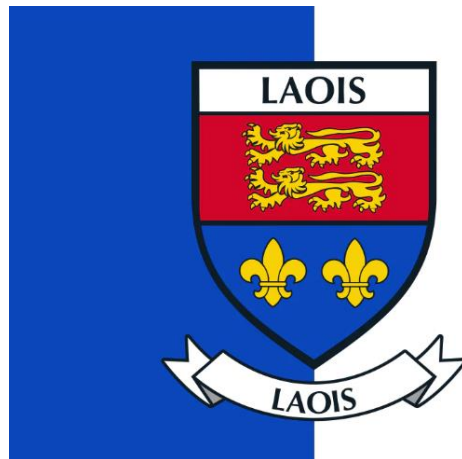
The Department issued two copies of a poster of the **17 Sustainable Development Goals** to all schools in September 2022, as well as a flyer with information on Ireland's new **National Strategy on Education for Sustainable Development: ESD to 2030**, and how to access resources for schools.

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

[Back to top](#)



## 2. ESD Around the Country – Laois and Leitrim



### a. Sustainability in Co. Laois

#### County Development Plan – A Climate Friendly Future for Laois

Laois County Council are in the process of drafting a new County Development Plan, with climate considerations front and centre. The Council have already begun the process of [consultation with both the citizens of the County](#) as well as public representatives. These consultations will continue throughout the drafting process.

#### Housing

*“A key component is delivering housing in a compact, sustainable way which better integrates with sustainable transport modes to become less dependent on single vehicular use.”*

The Council's preferred choice for residential development is within town and village centres, setting a target of at least 30% of housing to be built in these areas.

The redevelopment of brownfield lands (previously developed land, which is or was occupied by a permanent structure) is seen as being socially and economically beneficial.

It is believed that this would promote urban regeneration and support the growth and regeneration of under-utilised sites in towns and villages throughout Laois. Specifically, the redevelopment of these sites is seen as a way to contribute to the viability of services, shops and public transport; increase housing supply; and enable more people to be closer to employment and recreational opportunities. 1,709 such sites have been identified, which equates to 33% of the household allocation for the County. All changes and improvements made to the housing situation will take transport into consideration – another fundamental aspect of the Development Plan.

With more houses being created in urban areas, it is expected that there would be a reduction in travel demand, with the Council planning to prioritise cycling, walking, and public transport.



## Transport

The majority of County Laois commuters drive, with car the preferred mode of transport for 73% of those who commute to work.

30% of those commuting to third level education drove, while driving accounted for 60% Of those commuting to primary and secondary schools.

There are plans to increase accessibility to public transport and walking and cycling infrastructure within main residential areas with schools, community, and sports facilities.

In an effort to offset the greenhouse gas emissions, the Council plan to implement several a number of measures.

The Council also plan to develop a Low Carbon Transportation Hub at Midway, Portlaoise, to include a Compressed Natural Gas hub.

## Rural Land – Bogland, Woodland & Agriculture

The Council says it will support the designation of a National Park for the peatlands area in the Midlands

This will involve examining the tourist potential of peat ways, such as a peat way link from Portarlinton to the Grand Canal and River Barrow Greenway.

This will form part of the longer-term strategic planning for industrial peatland areas, which is planned to address environmental, economic, and social issues.

Peatland areas are to be conserved is essential for their ecological, climate regulation, archaeological, cultural, and educational significance.

The Council are planning an expansion of the forestry sector, including afforestation (establishment of a forest or stand of trees in an area where there is no current tree cover).

They say this will form part of their support for the creation and protection of “resilient and varied ecological landscapes, which will help support a wide range of species.”

The development of abandoned road and rail infrastructure for walking and cycling will be explored. The Council are also keen to support carbon neutrality in the agriculture, forest and land use sectors “through better sustainable agricultural, land management and resource efficiency.”

Part of this will be diversification of the rural economy to increase crop viability options.

## Renewable Energy

The Council are prioritising the development of energy from renewable sources such as hydro, bioenergy, wind, solar, and geothermal.

This will include technologies that utilise grass for energy extraction, such as anaerobic digestion.

There will be community-led renewable energy projects which has the support of the majority of the community

Photovoltaic solar panels will be introduced in new public and community buildings for electricity generation, storage, and water heating purposes.

## Community

There is a desire to facilitate a more diverse and socially inclusive society, targeting equality of opportunity and a better quality of life for all citizens.

New and existing school buildings will become as self-sustaining as possible, with the Council seeking to avoid fossil fuel dependence.

The Council will encourage community gardening, allotments and other use of open space to facilitate lower carbon living education and practice.

The use of Green Roof technology will be introduced, particularly on apartment, commercial, leisure, and educational buildings.

## Tourism

The Council say they will “promote Laois as a hub for sustainable tourism,” centred around ‘low-impact activities’ like orienteering, angling, equestrian, bird watching, kayaking, paragliding, photography, and more.

There is a desire to increase connectivity and accessibility to public transport, walking and cycling infrastructure, and Electric Vehicle Charging Points.

All new tourism related development proposals will be required to maximise energy efficiency.

The Council have proposed an expansion of tourism around the Slieve Bloom Mountains, Inland Waterways, historic towns and villages, geo tourism, food-based tourism, diaspora-based tourism and spiritual tourism.

## Flooding

Several measures have also been outlined which the Council see as vital to protecting against flooding.

For more, see: [County Development Plan - A climate-friendly future for Laois - Laois Today](#)

[Back to top](#)

## b. Sustainability in Co. Leitrim



### Our Rural Future: Opening of 'The Junction' in Ballinamore, Co. Leitrim

On 16 February, Minister for Rural and Community Development, Heather Humphreys TD, today visited Ballinamore, Co Leitrim, to officially open The Junction.

Leitrim County Council was awarded funding of €2.47 million under the Rural Regeneration and Development Fund to deliver the project.

The project has restored two listed buildings to provide a digital hub and co-working space, an artistic space for the promotion of local arts and crafts, along with a youth facility.

The Junction links directly to the Cavan and Leitrim Greenway and will create jobs, develop local businesses and provide more social activities and facilities for people in the area, as well as those visiting.

The investment comes as part of the Government's commitment to the revitalisation of rural towns under its Rural Development Policy, Our Rural Future and the Town Centre First policy which aim to bring more people, business, and investment opportunities to Irish towns.

Of the opening, Minister Humphreys said:

"I am delighted to officially open The Junction in Ballinamore. With the support of €2.47 million from my Department's Rural Regeneration and Development Fund this project has brought two historical buildings back to life to provide much needed facilities for the community

"This is a fantastic project that will bring increased vibrancy and activity in the town centre and will have significant social and economic benefits for the wider region."

For more information, see: [gov - Our Rural Future: Minister Humphreys opens 'The Junction' in Ballinamore, Co. Leitrim \(www.gov.ie\)](#)

[Back to top](#)

### 3. School Updates

#### a. ESD at Ballymakenny College, Drogheda



*“In May 2024 19 students from TY and 5<sup>th</sup> Year, and 5 staff members will be travelling to Uganda with Nurture Africa. Nurture Africa is an Irish organisation which works in Uganda with focus on healthcare, education, child protection, gender equality and economic empowerment through business training and micro-finance projects. While in Uganda, we will get to see the difficulties that the local people face about both climate change and poverty. We will get to see the true strength and determination of the community to improve the lives of their children. We are very lucky to get an insight into the local people's lives when visiting people living in the community, experiencing their food, culture and more. During our time in Uganda, we will get to visit local schools and visit the Irish Embassy in Kampala to meet the Irish ambassador to discuss Ireland's assistance to Uganda. Students have been working extremely hard to fundraise towards their individual goal of €2,900 to go towards this project. Fundraising events have been held throughout the year including a night for Uganda hosted by Eurovision winner Niamh Kavanagh, bake sales, raffles and car washes. This project is an excellent opportunity for students to gain many skills while organising and running different events. The overall fundraising target is €55,100, and over €40,000 of this has already been raised! Both the students and staff have worked extremely hard and put a lot of effort into organising fundraising events. This is a once in a lifetime opportunity which I knew I could not give up. I believe we will all truly benefit from this experience as it will help us appreciate everything we have and never take our education, opportunities, lifestyles or healthcare for granted. It will also open our eyes to climate change's effects on our planet”*

Written by Samara Black Dunne (5<sup>th</sup> Year Student)

**Editor's note:** Congratulations to Ballymakenny College! The school win a €500 One-For-All voucher to support their ESD projects.

[Back to top](#)

## b. ESD at SS Michael and Peter JNS Arklow



*“SS Michael and Peters JNS Arklow are delighted to be starting our journey as a sustainable school. Just this year we voluntarily undertook a school sustainability plan to better inform ourselves and our school community on this important area. We have begun work on a beautiful school garden where our pupils learn about growing, food, weather and seasons. We're harvesting our own rainwater to feed our produce and all the work is done by our pupils' staff and community volunteers. We've also acquired some equipment for our outdoor classroom, benches, mud kitchens and tea sets. Our pupils are also enjoying the local wildlife especially the bees, insects and birds in our bee hotels and bird houses which teaches us about biodiversity. Finally, we've got a few new books to start our sustainability library. We look forward to building on our progress in the years to come”*



[Back to top](#)

## c. Scoil Réalt na Mara – Trip to France for Sustainability Project



Pupils from Scoil Réalt na Mara in Kilmore will be travelling to France next year as part of a project which seeks to broaden their understanding of their homeland and its neighbouring countries. Entitled 'Promoting Sustainability at our Seashore Environment', the project will highlight local issues around sustainability and will see the school community conduct a series of projects to examine the local coastline.

School Principal Micheál Martin said: "Like all schools, our school has changed significantly in recent years with an influx of new pupils and the addition of new teachers. While our standards of education remain exceptionally high, we wish to broaden the understanding of our school within the context of the local environment and community.

"Our location beside the sea and in a large catchment area gives all of our community an opportunity to learn more about our area and compare and contrast it to other areas of Europe, while further learning about the necessity to care for our environment. The seashore close to our school is a popular area but the problem of climate change and coastal erosion is significant and one that we wish to highlight for future generations."

Scoil Réalt na Mara has a tradition of environmental care having been awarded Wexford's cleanest school in 2023 and the school has been awarded The Green Flag on seven occasions. The project will see the school apply for the award of the European Blue flag certification for Coastal Care.

"The overarching objective is to enhance our sense of school community in a European context in light of the changing demographic within our school," continued Mr Martin. "The staff mobility and attendance at courses will ensure that we develop a sense of successful initiatives of school communities elsewhere in Europe while the culmination of the project will see a group of pupils travel to France in 2025."

The school has recently commenced French lessons under the The Say Yes to Languages Programme as it prepares for its trip overseas.

[Back to top](#)

## 4. Competitions

### a. ESD to 2030 March Newsletter Competition – Share **YOUR** 3 Simple Actions!

Every issue of the ESD Newsletter, we share 3 Simple Daily Actions you can take to make a difference and help transform our world into a more sustainable and prosperous planet.

Now, we would like to hear from you! What do you do to make a positive impact on a daily basis? Send your 3 actions to [ESD@education.gov.ie](mailto:ESD@education.gov.ie) by **Friday, 12 April** along with your school name and address, and you could win a **€500 One-For-All Voucher** for ESD work in your School!

We will publish a selection of the actions in the May issue of the ESD Newsletter.

[Back to top](#)

### b. December Competition Winner - National Parks Competition



The winning class entry in the **December ESD Newsletter – National Parks Competition** was Scoil Chroíl Barr Dubh, Headford, Killarney, Co. Kerry.

The six national parks, correctly identified by 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> class pupils are:

The Burren in Co. Clare

Connemara in Co. Galway

Glenveagh in Co. Donegal

Killarney in Co. Kerry

Wicklow Mountains in Co. Wicklow

And

Wild Nephin in Co. Mayo.

Congratulations to the class and teacher Claire O'Halloran who have won a guided visit to Killarney National Park. We look forward to hearing all about the visit and what they learnt in future editions.

Thanks to the National Parks and Wildlife Service for their collaboration on this competition.

[Back to top](#)

### c. Junk Kouture - Ireland wins top prize for 2nd year in a row



Congratulations to Moate Community School who took home the top prize of World Designer of the Year, at the recent Junk Kouture International competition in Monaco with their #TagMe design.

Junk Kouture is an eco-conscious fashion competition that allows post-primary school students from across the country to design, create, and model creations all of which made from recycled items.

The winning design was made from 2,500 plastic colour sample tags which were hands sewn together. These samples usually end up in landfill because the different colours make them difficult to recycle.

World Designer of the Year at Junk Kouture 2022 was won by Cnoc Mhuire from Granard in Longford for their “Back to the Future” design.

[Back to top](#)



#### d. Biodiversity in Schools – Wildwalls!



Applications are currently open for Wildwalls, which is a nature-themed design competition that asks young people across Ireland to creatively reimagine spaces for nature.

Students are invited to design a wall mural for their school that raises awareness of biodiversity but also integrates features to support local wildlife. Being creative with small, over-looked or even vertical spaces is essential and especially for schools where space can be very limited.

There's €5,000 worth of prizes available including a school mural by a professional artist, indoor vertical garden system, wildlife signs, workshops and teaching kits.

Categories open to pre, primary, secondary and home-schools in Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland.

To download an entry sheet and FREE poster/ nature trail sheet please visit the website <https://www.biodiversityinschools.com/wildwalls.html>

#### e. Win a FREE Bosca Dúlra!



Biodiversity in Schools are offering one lucky school a chance to win a Bosca Dúlra for their class! See [Bosca Dúlra \(biodiversityinschools.com\)](http://biodiversityinschools.com)

To be in with a chance to win, please answer the following question and email your answer, along with your school name and address to [ESD@education.gov.ie](mailto:ESD@education.gov.ie) before **Friday, 12 April 2024**.

Q: What bird, fáinleog as gaeilge, travels over 9,000km to Ireland from southern Africa each spring?

A: \_\_\_\_\_

[Back to top](#)

## f. Bord na Móna – Schools’ Upcycling Competition

# Bord na Móna

Bord na Móna Recycling is currently inviting applications for their [Schools Upcycling Competition](#), an educational challenge designed to provide primary school students with a platform to raise awareness about upcycling as an environmentally friendly practice, whilst fostering creativity and innovative thinking. Bord na Móna recycling is committed to environmental education and offers classroom presentations, educational resources, and information packs to schools in order to educate future generations about recycling.

**Bord na Móna**  
bnmrecycling.ie

**SCHOOLS**

# Upcycling Competition

WIN  
**€5,000**  
FOR YOUR SCHOOL

WIN A CLASS TRIP TO **Bord na Móna LoughBoora** & **Bord na Móna Mountlucas Wind Farm**

Calling all schools! Bord na Móna Recycling invite entries to the 'Schools Upcycling Competition', an educational challenge designed to provide students with a platform to raise awareness about upcycling as an environmentally friendly practice while fostering creativity and innovative thinking. Schools are encouraged to show their ability to repurpose discarded materials into innovative and functional creations.

The winning school of the Bord na Móna Recycling 'Schools Upcycling Competition' will receive a prize of **€5000**.

Furthermore, students from the winning class will receive a guided tour of Bord na Móna's Lough Boora Discovery Park in Offaly which includes entry to the sculpture park and a field study, including a nature walk and examination of local flora and wildlife. The winning class will also receive a guided tour of Bord na Móna Mountlucas Wind Farm, including entry to its interactive learning hub, a VR turbine tour, and the chance to see a turbine up close.



## Eligibility:

- The competition is open to students from primary schools in the Republic of Ireland only.
- Entries can be made individually, in teams, or as a class.
- Only one entry per student is permitted.
- Entries must not contain hazardous waste or any material that could harm students.
- Participants must use materials that would typically be considered waste or discarded items.
- Suggested categories include but are not limited to; Home Decor, Fashion and Accessories, Functional Tools or Gadgets and Artistic Creations.
- See full terms and conditions below.

## To Enter

Download the entry form below.

Email your completed form and photos of your entry to [marketing@bnm.ie](mailto:marketing@bnm.ie)

Closing date - 01/05/24

[Back to top](#)

## g. Global Citizenship Schools – One Minute Video Competition - Schools Visit to Áras an Uachtaráin



Global Citizenship Schools promotes the mainstreaming of Global Citizenship.

Education in schools and supports teachers and schools in taking human rights-based school appropriate action on local, national and global issues of justice, equality and sustainability.

The GCS One-Minute Video project is about schools making very simple, one-minute videos about what the school did for the Global Goals (SDGs). These videos are then shared by GCS with other teachers and schools to promote turning their school learning into action.

### **National Showcase Event in Áras an Uachtaráin**

Global Citizenship Schools are in the process of organising a national One-Minute Video showcase in May/June with President Michael D. Higgins in Áras an Uachtaráin.

The outline plan is for 5 representatives (2 adults & 3 pupils) from 17 schools, inclusively selected, to attend the national showcase event in Dublin at a date in May/June – yet to be fixed.

**Scan QR Code** below to apply.

**Closing Date for videos is 24<sup>th</sup> April**



[www.GlobalCitizenshipSchool.ie](http://www.GlobalCitizenshipSchool.ie) or [info@GlobalCitizenshipSchool.ie](mailto:info@GlobalCitizenshipSchool.ie)

**Editor's Note:** The Department of Education was pleased to support this initiative through ESD to 2030 funding.

[Back to top](#)

## h. ECO-UNESCO – Young Environmentalist Awards 2024



### **ECO-UNESCO - Conserving the environment, empowering young people**

ECO-UNESCO channels the passion and energy of young people into positive environmental action by developing their knowledge, skills, and attitudes. Working with young people aged 10 to 25 years of age, they run a wide range of engaging and expert programmes that support young people and give them the skills to take positive environmental action.

### **ECO-UNESCO's Young Environmentalist Awards**

This year ECO-UNESCO are proudly celebrating their 25th year of young people taking part in environmental action projects in communities all over Ireland. To date, they have engaged with over 60,000 young changemakers through the programme. YEA is a catalyst for environmental action, encouraging youth involvement in sustainable development issues such as climate change, biodiversity, energy and water conservation. Through this initiative,

ECO-UNESCO aim to inspire positive actions, increase environmental knowledge, boost self-esteem, and nurture leadership skills in young people. Participants from all over Ireland participate in ECO-Dens, the YEA semi-finals, that offers them an opportunity to come and present to a panel of experts during March and April. Young people have the chance to attend the YEA Finals and Showcase which takes place in May 2024 and join them in celebrating 25 years of eco-action.

To learn more about their YEA programme, visit [www.ecounesco.ie](http://www.ecounesco.ie)

### **ECO-UNESCO's Youth for Sustainable Development – shaping tomorrow, today!**

In the non-formal education sector, their Youth for Sustainable Development Programme provides young people with the knowledge and skills needed to make a lasting impact on communities. Their team is creating a network of empowered individuals across Ireland, committed to sustainable development. The YSD team have clubs in Dublin and Drogheda, and are now thrilled to announce the launch of their new Galway, Cork and Maynooth clubs.

ECO-UNESCO are actively recruiting volunteers for their Cork club, located at the Rainbow Club in Mahon, Cork so if you know someone passionate about sustainable development, eager to share their knowledge, let them know at [ysd-project@ecounesco.ie](mailto:ysd-project@ecounesco.ie)

### **Expert Environmental Workshops**

Their workshops are available to schools and youth groups, with each workshop designed to empower young people to learn more about environmental topics in an interactive, positive way. Topics include Fashion Focus, Food for Future, Waste Warriors and amongst others and include fun activities and games appropriately designed for each age group.

Their workshops are available through flexible delivery methods which can take place in-person in schools, youth venues or through online delivery, suitable for any age-group, can accommodate up to 30 students and last approximately 1.5 – 2 hours. They look for a solutions-based approach to challenging environmental issues in an interactive and engaging manner. Learn more about their workshops <https://ecounesco.ie/10-18-youth-programmes/environmental-workshops/>

### **Easter Camps**

ECO-UNESCO have engaging and exciting Easter camps running over the Easter break for young people to discover nature in the heart of the city! With a focus on sustainability and biodiversity, young people will have the opportunity to experience the local environment and learn important environmental skills. Sign up today by emailing [bookings@ecounesco.ie](mailto:bookings@ecounesco.ie)

#### **Green Teens Easter Camp**

Young people aged 13-16 years old. Monday 25 – Thursday 28 March 2024 @ 10:00-15:00, €160 per participant.

#### **ECO-Explorers Easter Camp**

Young people aged 10-12 years old. Tuesday 2 April– Friday 5 April 2024 @ 10:00-15:00, €160 per participant.

For more information on any of ECO-UNESCO's programmes or if you would like to get involved, please contact [info@ecounesco.ie](mailto:info@ecounesco.ie), visit [www.ecounesco.ie](http://www.ecounesco.ie) or call 01 662 5491.

[Back to top](#)

## i. Green Schools Poster Competition – Winner Announced

At the start of the 2023/2024 Academic Year, the Green Schools/Marine Spatial Planning Poster Competition was announced and over 2,500 entries from Primary and Post-Primary Schools nationwide were received.

Under the heading of “What I’d like to see for the Sea,” the aim of the competition was to find out how students around the country wanted our seas and oceans to be used in the future. They were asked to consider different activities that work well together at sea; plants and animals that co-exist on the seashore and in the ocean, as well as why and how we can protect the ocean for the future.

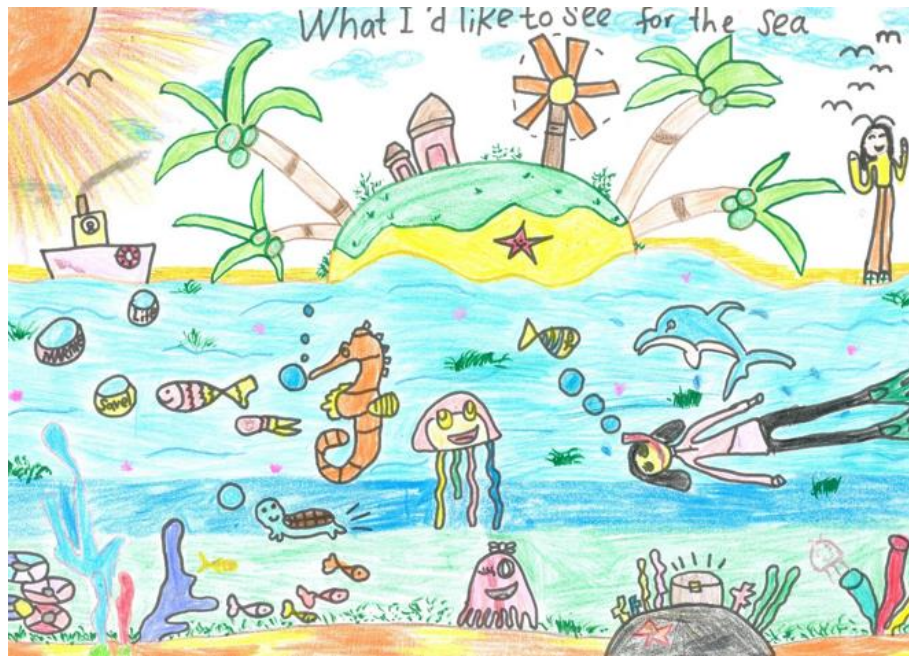
The abundance of artistic talent of students was in full evidence and made the job of selecting category winners and runners-up very difficult for our judges. Categories were as follows: Infants (Junior & Senior Infants); Junior Primary (1st – 3rd Class); Senior Primary (4th – 6th Class) and Secondary School (1st – 6th Year). See our winners below.

Prizes included an Art Workshop for the winner’s class, framed versions of their posters as well as certificates and One4All Vouchers. The competition was entered by schools working on the Global Citizenship Marine Environment theme for the 2023/2024 academic year and those who have achieved their Marine Flag already.

The prize-giving ceremony took place in the Radisson Hotel, Little Island, Cork on 19th January 2024 amid great excitement as parents, siblings and teachers alike were in attendance. Minister of State with responsibility for Local Government and Planning, Kieran O’Donnell TD recorded a video message congratulating all the winners. Also in attendance were representatives from the Marine Planning Section of the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage and An Taisce.



**Above:** Infants Poster Winners - (Junior & Senior Infants):  
1st place: Gus McDonald, Newtown Junior School, Waterford City



**Above:** Junior Primary Poster Winners - (1st – 3rd Class):  
1st place: Summerly Liyange, St Joseph's N.S., Kingscourt, Co. Cavan.



**Above:** Secondary School Poster Winners (1st – 6th Year):  
1st place: Esier Bairova, Corran College, Ballymote, Co. Sligo.






**Above:** Senior Primary Poster Winners – (4th – 6th Class)  
1st place: Ella O'Neill, Coars N.S., Cahersiveen, Co. Kerry.

## 5. Programmes, Resources and CPD

### a. Three Simple Actions – SDG 7 - Affordable and Clean Energy

Below are three simple daily actions you can take to support **SDG 7: Affordable and Clean Energy**:

<p><b>7</b> AFFORDABLE AND CLEAN ENERGY</p> 	<p>19. Cover the pan when cooking, it lowers the energy needed to boil water by 75%</p> <p>20. Only fill the kettle with the amount of water you need</p> <p>21. Turn off plug switches when going on holiday</p>
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[Back to top](#)

## b. WWGS Annual Teacher Conference - 1 February 2024



### **Schools build Solidarity in County Laois**

Solidarity is a broad concept, widely used but often hard to pin down. At the annual National Teacher Conference run by [WorldWise Global Schools](#) (WWGS) in February, almost ninety post-primary teachers gathered to build solidarity, both in their personal lives and in their schools.

Solidarity brings people together on an equal footing to change systems that cause global injustice. It is key to sustainable development and one of the Guiding Principles of Global Citizenship Education (GCE) for WWGS, Irish Aid's national GCE programme for post-primary schools. Solidarity contrasts with a charity approach: the one-way flow of 'help' from a dominant giver to a disempowered receiver.

In the beautiful grounds of the [De La Salle Retreat Centre](#), County Laois, teachers walked and talked in pairs, sharing stories of their personal journeys towards solidarity. Using the [Narrative 4](#) methodology, they built empathy and deep listening skills by repeating their partner's story to a wider audience. In workshops run by NGO practitioners, they explored ways to boost solidarity in the classroom, from inspiring empathy to challenging stereotypes and transforming unjust power systems. Following an NGO exhibition fair, at which teachers connected with staff from fifteen NGOs, ideas were shared to build solidarity in their schools. A wonderful day of connection, creativity and, of course, solidarity.

### **WWGS Annual Grant Call**

The WWGS Annual Grant Call is an online application process and will open on 19 April and close on 19 May 2023. Any school, School Cluster, School Network or NGO applying for funding for the school year 2023/2024, and who were a grantee in 2022/2023 must complete an end of year Report on the previous year's grant. For more details, see [Who Can Apply - WorldWise Global Schools \(worldwiseschools.ie\)](#)

## c. Refund of Fees scheme for Teachers

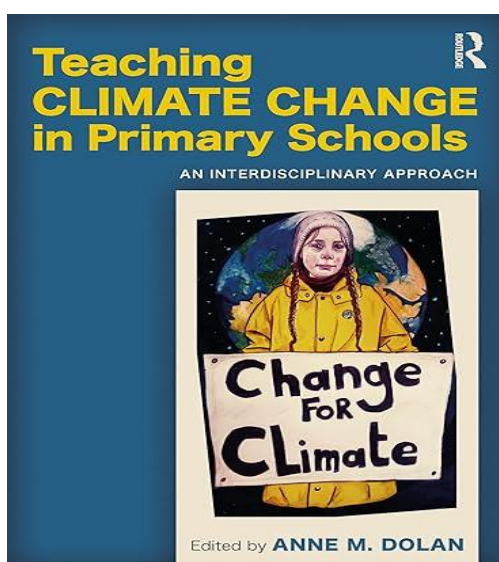
A new circular (0005/2024) on the Refund of Fees scheme for teachers issued in early January: [gov.ie](http://gov.ie) - [Teacher Fee Refund Scheme 2023 \(www.gov.ie\)](http://www.gov.ie)

The scheme includes courses on Education in the area of Sustainability for primary and post primary teachers.

Check our inventory of CPD courses for teachers on the [ESD to 2030](#) webpage. If there are other courses of which you are aware, please let them know and they will be added to the list.

[Back to top](#)

## d. Climate Change Resource for Primary Teachers



The first 10 primary schools to email [ESD@education.gov.ie](mailto:ESD@education.gov.ie) will win a copy of the book **‘Teaching Climate Change in Primary Schools: An Interdisciplinary Approach’** edited by Dr. Anne Dolan. Please be sure to include your school’s full name and address, and a contact phone number.

This important and timely book provides an overview of climate change and highlights the importance of including climate change education in primary schools. It emphasises the importance of cross-curricular pedagogical approaches with a focus on climate justice, providing in-depth assistance for teaching children aged 3–13 years.

Informed by up-to-date research, the book helps teachers to remain faithful to climate change science whilst not overwhelming children. Accompanied by online resources, this book includes practical and easy to follow ideas and lesson plans that will help teachers to include climate change education in their classrooms in a holistic, cross-curricular manner. Specific chapters address the following topics:

- Inter-disciplinary approaches to climate change
- Early childhood education

- Pedagogies of hope
- The importance of reflective practice
- Ideas for including climate change education in curricular areas such as literacy, geography, science, history and the arts

Designed to promote climate change education in primary schools, this resource will help primary teachers, student teachers, geography specialists and all those interested in climate change education develop their own conceptual knowledge and that of the children in their class.

[Back to top](#)

## e. Irish Schools Sustainability Network - Teaching Nature CPD



Susan Adams  
Education for Sustainability

### **Roadmap to Sustainability: Unlocking Potential with the Schools and Principals Toolkit**

Are you passionate about fostering sustainability within your school community? Education for Sustainability and the ISSN have joined forces to introduce the Schools and Principals Platform, an innovative toolkit designed to empower school leaders in meeting the Department of Education's new 'Education for Sustainable Development' requirements.

Their Principals Platform serves as an invaluable resource, offering comprehensive guidance across curriculum, campus, and community sustainability domains. Education for Sustainability understand the importance of aligning with the Department's framework, and their platform is tailored to support principals and schools every step of the way.

But they need your help to make this initiative truly impactful. They are searching for schools eager to showcase their efforts in Education for Sustainable Development. Your success stories and innovative projects can inspire educators worldwide to embrace sustainability in their own schools.

Would you be willing to share your school's journey through a short video? They are here to provide assistance and support every step of the way. If you're interested, please reach out to Sue at [sue@educationforsustainability.ie](mailto:sue@educationforsustainability.ie). Your participation could make a significant difference!

They are specifically seeking case studies in the following areas:

For **POST-PRIMARY** schools:

- Curriculum case studies in woodwork, English, and Maths.

- Community case studies for LGBTQ+, Anti-bullying, Safe spaces, Equality and Diversity, Global Citizenship Education.

For **PRIMARY** schools:

- Campus case studies for waste, biodiversity, energy, procurement, catering, travel, and water.
- Curriculum case studies under any of the curriculum areas – language, STEM, SEE, the arts, wellbeing, religion.
- Community case studies for LGBTQ+, Anti-bullying, Safe spaces, Equality and Diversity, Global Citizenship Education, Connections with community groups.

Your contribution could be the catalyst for positive change in education. Don't hesitate to step forward and be part of this transformative journey!

[Back to top](#)

## f. Wise Water – Learn About Water in 5 Lessons



**1 Learn about the water cycle**

[Introduction to the Water Cycle](#) with a short cloze activity at the end of this PDF.

**2 Learn about river catchments**

We all live in a river catchment. [This short-animated video](#) explains what a river catchment is.

**Discussion point:** what catchment do you live in?  
Find out at [www.catchments.ie](http://www.catchments.ie)



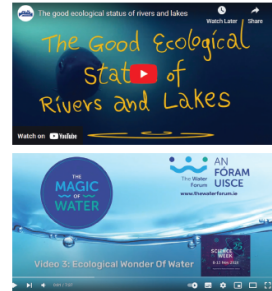
**3 Learn about water quality**

From the EPA [www.catchments.ie](http://www.catchments.ie) website this short video tells what 'good ecological status' means and why it is important.

**Discussion point:** what is a clean river? Find out about your local river water quality at [www.catchments.ie/map](http://www.catchments.ie/map)

Ecological Wonder of Water the bugs that live in rivers need clean water, learn more in this short video.

**Discussion point:** what do fish eat?



**4 Learn about water services**

The Story of Water is a [45 minute video](#) from Uisce Éireann on how water services is provided in Ireland:

**Discussion point:** how is drinking water treated and what happens after you use it?



**5 Learn what we can do to protect water**

[Water Matters at Home](#) is a short-animated video (3 minutes) about how we are connected to water, our impact on it and how we can protect it.

**Discussion point:** what action can I take to protect water and nature?



An Fóram Uisce – the Water Forum is the national statutory body representative of stakeholders with an interest in the quality of Ireland's waters.  
Find more learning resources at [www.thewaterforum.ie](http://www.thewaterforum.ie)

## g. Biodiversity in Schools



'Biodiversity in Schools' is a social enterprise that empowers the next generation to help nature by giving them the support they need.

This is important for two reasons. Firstly, to nurture the wellbeing of our young people through outdoor learning. Secondly, to rewild the next generation through improved eco-literacy and involvement in hands-on nature projects.

To make this process as fun and effective as possible 'Biodiversity in Schools' offers everything teachers need including:

- School workshops
- Outdoor classroom & school garden creation
- Bosca Dúlra - nature teaching kits
- Outdoor wildlife signs
- Free project ideas, instructions and printables

Biodiversity in Schools also run some of the largest nature education campaigns in Ireland, with lots of free resources available, including the Pollinator Project, Coill na nÓg, Wildwalls as well as the Nature Hero Awards.

They work across the whole island of Ireland, north and south, and are fully inclusive across the entire education system including pre-school, primary, secondary and home-school.

To get involved visit their website [www.biodiversityinschools.com](http://www.biodiversityinschools.com) and sign up to their newsletter.

[Back to top](#)

## h. Heritage Council – New Programme for Primary



A new Heritage Council education programme emphasises vital role of peatlands in battle against climate change and biodiversity loss. This new primary school programme is designed to educate children on the environmental and economic advantages of our blanket bogs. The programme was developed by the [Heritage Council](#) as part of [LIFE IP Wild Atlantic Nature](#), is being rolled out to schools in Donegal, Mayo, Galway, Sligo and Leitrim.

LIFE IP Wild Atlantic Nature is an EU-funded environmental project aiming to improve Ireland's performance in conserving habitats and in particular improving the quality of our blanket bogs, focusing primarily on the blanket bogs in the northwest of the country. It is coordinated by the [National Parks and Wildlife Service](#) with nine additional partners including the Heritage Council.

The education programme itself takes children on a journey through the wonders of bog habitat, learning about how the bogs can control floods, provide clean drinking water and high-quality food, support biodiversity and help tackle climate change by storing millions of tonnes of carbon. As our future farmers, children are learning how to actively manage habitats through sustainable farm practices. The learning begins in the classroom, where pupils learn about the key plants and bog habitat and how to use the habitat assessment scorecard developed with DAFM as part of Wild Atlantic Nature Results-Based agri-environmental Payment Scheme (RBPS). A subsequent field trip to a local bog is organised where a bog plant identification swatch is used to observe whether the plants found are positive or negative indicators of the condition of a bog. Back in class, the scores are calculated to determine if their local blanket bog was considered healthy or if it required a helping hand from farmers and the local community to improve its condition. The final phase of the programme involves a follow-up project designed to consolidate the pupils' learning.

The education programme was developed by the Irish Peatlands Conservation Council (IPCC) and NatureNorthWest, and will be delivered by heritage specialists from the Heritage Council's [Heritage in Schools Scheme](#).



## i. Global Citizenship Education - Opportunities for Primary School Teachers



Global Village offers a range of Global Citizenship Education (GCE) resources and professional development supports both online and face-to-face, to primary school teachers and leaders around the country.

In this [short documentary](#), Global Village pilot-school teachers share their views on GCE, alongside practical examples on taking action in the classroom, exploring topics such as homelessness, disability and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The teachers speak of the relevance of GCE in their day-to-day interactions with students, how it cultivates tolerance, respect, interdependency, and empathy with others around the world. GCE can be seamlessly and effortlessly included into curricular areas such as SESE, SPHE and Visual Arts. It offers young learners the opportunity to develop the knowledge, skills and understanding of how to work together to make the world a better place. Demonstrating how teachers can cultivate a sense of justice and responsibility in their students, the documentary is a great example of the ripple effect we can all have on other places and other people. The documentary can be viewed on the Global Village website [Home - Global Village Schools](#)

A further opportunity to learn more about GCE, is through the Global Village in-school workshops.

The workshops are free to all schools and will provide:

- An introduction to what is meant and understood by **Global Citizenship Education (GCE)**.
- Suggested approaches for incorporating GCE across the **primary school curriculum**.
- **Free resources** on different GCE themes.
- An opportunity to **share learning and ideas** with peers.
- Guidance on **taking action** on global challenges.

If you would like a Global Village Education Officer to visit your school, please reach out and to arrange a suitable date and time: [info@globalvillageschools.ie](mailto:info@globalvillageschools.ie)

Global Village is a strategic partnership 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:** School workshop in Melview NS, Longford, led by Global Village Education Officer, Ailbhe Joyce.

[Back to top](#)

## j. Rediscovery Centre – Workshops for Primary and Youth Groups

**NEW subsidised workshops**  
designed for a playfully sustainable world

**jiminy**  
eco toys

**REDISCOVERY CENTRE**

In a world where the toy industry's pollution and waste loom large, Jiminy Eco Toys and the Rediscovery Centre have teamed up to create **The Big Toy Swap**, dedicated to making play not only fun, but also sustainable.

As part of this project, the Rediscovery Centre will conduct 100 fun, interactive workshops for primary schools and youth groups across Ireland. These workshops are offered at a **60% subsidised rate**, costing **only €80** for a hands-on workshop for your class.

Follow [this link](#) to reserve your place!

### **Have you ever thought about the sustainability of a simple toy?**

A toy's start-of-life is highly polluting. The Ellen MacArthur Foundation estimates humanity's use of petro-plastic (not just in toys) contributes 6% of global carbon emissions. Toys is the world's most plastic-intensive industry, with 90% made from virgin petro-plastic. Most toys then travel 22,000km to us from China, all emitting so much CO2 it's the equivalent of permanently deforesting 1 billion trees!

A toy's mid-life is hit-and-miss. The average child under 12 in Ireland receives €450 per year of new toys. How many hours does each get used? Some studies show toys are set-aside within a month.

A toy's end-of-life is a waste problem for families, local authorities, and charity shops. It's socially unacceptable to re-gift a used toy, and charity shops often decline soft toy donations. Most toys are mixed material so not recyclable, and the small minority of toys that do get "recycled", actually get downcycled into park benches etc.

### **So what can we do?**

Jiminy Eco Toys and the Rediscovery Centre have teamed up to create The Big Toy Swap, dedicated to making play not only fun, but also sustainable.

As part of this project, the Rediscovery Centre will conduct 100 fun, interactive workshops for primary schools and youth groups across Ireland.

The interactive workshop involves:

- Age-appropriate demonstration of the problem of toy pollution and waste, and the ways in which children and young people can have a big positive impact
- Hands-on upskilling of participants in simple, commonly needed toy repairs
- Getting creative to brainstorm clever ways to rehome used toys
- The group getting "real work" done together, planning their very own Big Toy Swap

The workshop links with the curriculum in a range of subjects including Science, Maths, and Geography, and is suitable for children of 3rd to 6th class ages.

When you sign up, your school commits to hosting a Big Toy Swap in your school, joining schools all across the country in the **largest sustainable toy festival** yet seen in Ireland!

Schools will be equipped with comprehensive resources to host their own Big Toy Swap, including how-to guides on toy swap and repair, event organisation, and curriculum integration.

Your Big Toy Swap can be held in your school/community space at any time before the end

of the school year. The goal is to provide a fun and sustainable way for children and families to refresh their toy collections without spending money on new toys, and to reduce waste by giving unwanted toys a new home. When you have hosted your very own Big Toy Swap, send in your Big Toy Swap postcard, documenting how many lucky toys were re-homed.

Sign-up and join the journey to a playfully sustainable world!

### **Booking**

We are delighted to provide this workshop at a **60% subsidised** rate, costing **only €80** for a hands-on, interactive workshop for your class.

Follow [this link](#) to reserve your place, and visit [rediscoverycentre.ie/learn/](https://rediscoverycentre.ie/learn/) to learn more about Rediscovery Centre's work.

**Please note:** We have a **limited number** of workshops available, so book now to reserve your place!

## 6. HEI Sector

### a. ATU –Digital Certificate in Sustainability

Technological University Dublin (TU Dublin), South East Technological University (SETU), Atlantic Technological University (ATU) and the National Forum of Teaching and Learning (T&L) are teaming up to jointly deliver the Education for Sustainability Digital Badge in a fully online format.

#### The course aims to:

- Reflect on the role of education for sustainability in the context of global, national, and local drivers.
- Engage with education for sustainability concepts, contexts, principles, and practices.
- Examine the EU Competency Framework (GreenComp) through the lens of embodying sustainability values, embracing complexity in sustainability, envisioning sustainable futures, and acting for sustainability.
- Explore how to redesign elements of your teaching and learning practice by embedding education for sustainability principles.

# Education for Sustainability

## Digital Badge

### Course overview

The Education for Sustainability digital badge is an introductory course, exploring the basic concepts and practical steps on how to embed sustainability across the curriculum. Education for Sustainability aims to empower learners with knowledge, skills, values, and attitudes to take informed decisions and make responsible actions for environmental integrity, economic viability and a just society empowering people of all genders, for present and future generations, while respecting cultural diversity (UNESCO, 2021).

### Who is this Digital Badge for?

This introductory course is available to staff working in TU Dublin, SETU and ATU.

### Starting date

Starting 04 March 2024, for six weeks.

### Time commitment

25 learning hours over six weeks. Weekly live one-hour webinars (Thursdays) and self-directed learning and peer engagement. Optional five-hour add-on for a Facilitator Digital Badge.

### Deadline

Registration is open until 29 February, 17:00 hrs



### Register here Contact

on a first-come first-served basis.

lucia.walsh@tudublin.ie

nataliya.romanyatova@setu.ie

mark.kelly@atu.ie



NATIONAL FORUM  
FOR THE ENHANCEMENT OF TEACHING  
AND LEARNING IN HIGHER EDUCATION



ATU's N-TUTORR Week takes place from 26 Feb. to 1 March, hosting 50 events including daily Eco-Action Higher Lower Online Tournaments to test your eco-action knowledge: workshops on integrating the SDG Student Digital Badge into the Curriculum, Towards a Zero Waste Kitchen workshop, and An Introduction to the Inner Development Goals.

The N-TUTORR Students as Partners in Innovation + Change Showcase event will take place in Croke Park on April 17<sup>th</sup>, which will include a range of Education for Sustainability initiatives. Full programme to be announced. See <https://www.transforminglearning.ie/>

[Back to top](#)

## b. ESD News from TU Dublin



**Education for Sustainability & EU GreenComp Framework**

**Keynote**  
Dr. Guia Bianchi will deliver 'GreenComp: sustainability competences for lifelong learning, the European framework'.

**TU DUBLIN**  
TECHNOLOGICAL UNIVERSITY DUBLIN

**nemos**

This is a hybrid event and places may be reserved [here](#).

TU Dublin has set out an ambitious strategic aim to embed sustainability in all academic programmes. This event is another “*Building the capacity of educators*” activity as set out in ESD to 2030. Last year, over 500 academic staff in TU Dublin participated in 34 workshops to embed ESD in their modules and programmes. Over 100 academic staff have completed a 5 ECT CPD in Educating for Sustainability. This semester, TU Dublin will be rolling out the National Forum Digital Badge for Educating for Sustainability, in collaboration with colleagues from SETU and ATU.

More information about TU Dublin's Sustainability Education activities and the TU Dublin Sustainability Education toolkit can be found [here](#).

[Back to top](#)

## c. Education for Sustainable Development Officer - UCC



Three-year position advertised by University College Cork for an **Education for Sustainable Development Officer**.

UCC Seeking an enthusiastic Education for Sustainable Development Officer to work with staff in University College Cork to ensure that the SDGs, sustainability, and related environmental, social and economic issues are addressed across the curriculum. This three-year position builds on existing initiatives such as a digital SDG Toolkit and short course on learning and teaching with the SDGs, and the post holder will connect with engaged and passionate colleagues building on UCC's international reputation in sustainability.

Interested? Search portal <https://shorturl.at/cdkU9> using job id 073291

**Deadline for applications, 22 March 2024 at 12noon**

Contact Catherine O'Mahony [catherine.omahony@ucc.ie](mailto:catherine.omahony@ucc.ie) with informal queries.

[Back to top](#)

## d. M.Ed. in Education for Sustainability and Global Citizenship

**Are you interested in teaching about climate change and sustainability issues?**

Mary Immaculate College is now accepting applications for the M.Ed. in Education for Sustainability and Global Citizenship. The aim of this programme is to provide an opportunity for advanced study in the foundations, pedagogies, critical perspectives, contemporary issues and research in the field of Sustainability and Global Citizenship. This programme

has been designed to equip educators with the pedagogies and theoretical frameworks to consider climate change, a loss in biodiversity and challenges to global citizenship. The programme is designed for those working in education including pre-school practitioners, primary and secondary teachers, and those working in non-formal education. Through Global Citizenship Education (GCED), the programme aims to focus on agency, empowering students of all ages to assume active roles, both locally and globally, in building more peaceful, tolerant, inclusive and secure societies. The programme is also informed by recent and ongoing curricular reforms including the new Leaving Certificate Subject Climate Action and Sustainable Development. Shortlisted for the Aontas STAR Awards in 2023, this 28 programme is designed to support educators to deal with the extraordinary challenges facing our world today through a pedagogy of possibility and hope.

The programme can be taken over one year on a full-time basis or two years on a part-time basis.

For more information contact [anne.dolan@mic.ul.ie](mailto:anne.dolan@mic.ul.ie)



**Above:** M.Ed. students (Education for Sustainability and Global Citizenship) together with Professor Eugene Wall, President of Mary Immaculate College, Limerick.



## e. Other News and Updates from the HEA Sector



### Open Courses

Minister Simon Harris has announced [10 new upskilling courses](#) for staff in Higher Education. The [Open Courses](#), funded through the HEA National Forum for Teaching and Learning, span a range of areas including the use of technologies to support learner inclusion; recognition of prior learning; cyber-security awareness; artificial intelligence; circular economy and sustainable development, and will be rolled out in Spring and Autumn 2024.

### Shaping Sustainable and Health-Promoting Campuses

The **EU Green Alliance** held a [4-day workshop](#) at **ATU** in January as part of its Work Package 8. The workshop brought together staff and students from various universities and disciplines throughout Europe, to share best practices, challenges, and innovative solutions in the realm of sustainability and health promotion. The HEA presented on the national rollout of the Healthy Campus Charter and Framework.

### National Technological University Transformation for Recovery and Resilience (N-TUTORR) – ESD resources for students and educators:

The National Technological University Transformation for Recovery and Resilience (N-TUTORR) project is an innovative collaboration across the technological sector in Ireland to transform the student experience in higher education, with ESD as one of its 6 Core Themes. [N-TUTORR Week](#) (26 February – 1 March 2024) saw more than 170 events happening across all seven of N-TUTORR's higher education partners, including many that focused on the theme of Education for Sustainability. For example, **MTU** and **TUS** hosted an online workshop, 'Embedding Education for Development - A Collaborative Approach,' sharing practical examples of how lecturing staff are including the SDGs within their modules; guest speaker David Williamson from IKC3, Ireland's Knowledge Centre for Carbon, Climate and Community Action, highlighted the importance of providing opportunities for students across disciplines to learn about sustainability skills required for the future workplace; and N-TUTORR student champions led a practical workshop on how to plant sunflowers from seed.

The N-TUTORR project website hosts a range of ESD resources including [Masterclasses](#) for teaching staff on ESD, UDL and other topics, and a [Digital Backpack](#) providing non-

accredited online courses to students across the Technological University (TU) sector on topics including 'Introduction to SDGs' and 'Civic Engagement'.

### **Strengthening higher education-school partnerships for green and digital innovation**

The Education and Innovation Practice Community (**EIPC**) have published the first in a series of '*Innovation Bulletins*' on developing competencies to support innovation for the digital and green transitions. EIPC is a European Commission initiative, implemented with the OECD as part of the New European Innovation Agenda, flagship 4, '*Fostering, attracting and retaining deep tech talent*'. ['Strengthening higher education-school partnerships for green and digital innovation'](#) presents key lessons and inspiring examples of policy and practice to inform collaboration between secondary education and higher education. Further EIPC peer workshops were held in January and February on '[Cultivating the next generation of green and digital innovators – the critical role of mainstream higher education](#)' and '[Building competencies for green and digital innovation through higher education – what are the options?](#)' To receive notification of future bulletins and events, sign up to the EIPC mailing list [here](#).

[Back to top](#)

## 7. International Updates

### a. ESD-Net in Toyko – December 2023



In December 2023, UNESCO hosted the ESD-Network for 2030 global meeting in Tokyo, Japan. This meeting brought together practitioners of ESD from across the globe to connect, collaborate, and create action areas for each region to focus on, based on the five priority areas.

Ireland is a forerunner for ESD in Europe, as one of the only countries in the European Union that has a [National Strategy on ESD](#). Ireland also works cross-departmentally on ESD, partners with the Irish NGO and education sectors and works with UNESCO to ensure that mechanisms for implementation are equitable and holistic.

Before creating the actions for each region, there were knowledge-building workshops hosted by experts in each of the five priority areas. These sessions were used to equip the ESD practitioners attending the conference with the knowledge, skills, and values needed to build beneficial regional plans regarding ESD for the coming years. Ireland's Youth Representative for ESD, [Eimear Manning](#) from the [National Youth Council of Ireland](#), co-delivered the session on 'Empowering and Mobilising Youth' with several other young professionals who actively engage with ESD.

#### **Outcomes of the Global Meeting**

The global meeting gave attendees the opportunity to plan actions that would benefit their region. Regions included Africa; Arab; Asia-Pacific; Europe and North America; and Latin America and Caribbean regions. Each regional cohort worked collaboratively to devise activities that they will implement together, as one region, between December 2023 and the next global meeting of ESD-Net in 2025/2026.

Regions had differing activities based on their own contexts and where they are on their ESD journey. For example, the Asia-Pacific region is proposing to have a declaration on ESD at an upcoming 'ASEAN' Ministerial Meeting, whereas the Arab region plans to establish their first regional ESD network. For Europe and North America, regional plans are set out to:

1. Collaborate and share knowledge on trending themes within ESD, such as eco-anxiety, ecophobia, shortage of teachers, necessary system changes, etc.
2. Develop specific projects and activities that can be worked on with practitioners across the region, such as 'ESD and Digital Futures'.
3. Share good practice examples and success stories, particularly those showcasing the implementation of ESD at an international level.
4. Establish a peer-to-peer learning network, especially regarding the development and implementation of ESD initiatives within individual countries on a national or local level.
5. Develop approaches in going beyond the formal education system, addressing youth work, adult education, and lifelong learning with purpose. This also includes increasing public awareness of ESD and the benefits of its implementation.

Outside of these outcomes, the Europe and North America region also called upon UNESCO to meaningfully include youth as a central actor in all ESD activities.

## Conclusions

For ESD to be successful, it requires continued multilateral and cross-departmental collaboration and spaces to share good practices. UNESCO is facilitating this through both regional and global meetings on ESD which create tangible actions. They also utilise their #TransformingEducationTogether social media campaign to highlight ESD to those who may not currently be aware of this framework and encourage curiosity about ESD. Finally, UNESCO's 'Spotlight Series' showcases how different countries implement ESD successfully, to be used as positive examples for other ESD practitioners to use as inspiration for their own application.

Recently, UNESCO highlighted Ireland on their Spotlight Series. If you would like to read about how Ireland promotes youth engagement in education for sustainable development, you can read more here: <https://www.unesco.org/en/articles/how-ireland-promotes-youth-engagement-education-sustainable-development>.

## b. GEM Report – Activities in 2024

In 2024, the GEM Report will continue monitoring progress on SDG 4 and analysing the implementation of national and international strategies to help hold all relevant partners to account for their commitments as part of the overall SDG follow-up and review progress. We are excited for what 2024 awaits and we are looking forward to continuing working closely with partners around these issues.

The GEM Report team will continue the outreach and dissemination of the [2023 GEM Report](#) on technology in education and will work closely with partners and countries to organize national, regional, and thematic discussions around its findings. We are envisaging:

- A series of national and regional [events](#) to launch the different language versions of the global report and summary; the last one took place in [Islamabad](#).
- The release of the Malay, Khmer, Lao, Indonesian, Burmese, Filipino, Thai, Tetum and Vietnamese versions of the Southeast Asia regional report [summary](#) to support the dissemination of its key findings.

- A [series of youth-led regional consultations](#) to inform the 2024 youth edition of the 2023 GEM Report in partnership with Restless Development.
- The publication of a gender edition of the 2023 GEM Report on technology in education.
- The second regional edition of the 2023 GEM Report covering the Pacific, in partnership with the Commonwealth for Learning.

### **2024/5 GEM Report on leadership and education**

- The [2024/5 report](#), due for release at the end of the year, which will examine what is good leadership in education and how it varies between countries and over time.
- A series of consultation events to help inform the development of the report.
- Research and drafting of two regional editions for the leadership cycle: on inclusion and leadership in Central and Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia in partnership with NEPC; and on distributed leadership in Latin America in partnership with OEI.
- A new layer of [PEER profiles](#) on leadership and education

### **Spotlight report on foundational learning in Africa**

- The second cycle of the [Spotlight Report](#) on basic education completion and foundational learning in Africa, in partnership with the AU and ADEA, will conclude with the launch of a continental report and four country reports from Mauritania, South Africa, Uganda and Zambia.

### **SDG 4 monitoring**

- Participation in the first [Conference on Education Data and Statistics](#) on 7-9 February in Paris.
- The release of the 2024 SDG 4 Scorecard, showing countries' progress towards their national SDG 4 benchmarks, with a focus on teachers.
- Data collected for a new indicator on youth participation in policy making, developed in response to the Transforming Education Summit.
- The 2024 Education Finance Watch, in partnership with UIS and the World Bank

### **Education and sustainable development**

- A new paper on the links between education and climate change, in partnership with MECCE, with data from a new greening education content indicator developed in response to the Transforming Education Summit.
- A new paper on the links between education and nutrition.

The GEM Report will also continue its discussions with its many partners, as it works towards the development of a new strategy that will guide its work until 2030.

Stay informed and [sign up](#) for updates, customising your experience by specifying your interests and language preferences. We look forward to sending you relevant news about GEM Report events, campaigns, and publications tailored just for you!

## 8. Other News

### a. ISSU – SDGs and Me and Debate your Decision Makers Events



The Irish Second-Level Students Union (ISSU) held an SDGs and Me event in UCC on 12 January 2024, IFA speakers, John Barrimo, young activists, debates, workshops, platform to speak.



For more information on upcoming ISSU events, please see [Events — ISSU | Irish Second-Level Students' Union](#)

[Back to top](#)

## b. SDG Champions 2024 - 2025 – Call for Expressions of Interest



The Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications is seeking Expressions of Interest for participants of the **2024-2025 Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) Champions Programme**. Under the Programme, the Minister for the Environment, Climate and Communications will appoint several organisations as SDG Champions for a period of 12 months. The organisations will be selected from a wide range of sectors of Irish society, representing the commitment to sustainable development across the public, private, community, voluntary, youth and NGO sectors.

### **The SDG Champions Programme**

Established in 2019, the Programme was developed to raise public awareness of the importance of the SDGs. As part of the Programme, Champions show, through their activities, that everyone in society can make a contribution to the [2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development](#). The 2030 Agenda and the 17 SDGs which aim to “end poverty, protect the planet and ensure prosperity”, were adopted in 2015 at the United Nations, with Ireland and Kenya leading the negotiations.

For the 2019 Programme, 12 Champions were chosen to participate. Following the pandemic, the Programme was relaunched, with over 80 organisations applying to take part. For the 2023-2024 Programme, 26 Champions were chosen, ranging from smaller, community groups including Rush Tidy Towns, Sustainable Life School, and Ballyhoura Development, to larger organisations such as An Post, Clare County Council, the GAA, and Irish Rail.

### **How to apply**

Applications are sought from all organisations and groups, big and small, from a wide range of sectors of Irish society, who would like to act as an advocate for the SDGs and a good practice example of how to promote and progress them.

Applications will be accepted from organisations/groups based in the Republic of Ireland. This can include cross-border, multi-national organisations with Irish operations.

Applications will be accepted in written or video format up until **5pm, Monday 8 April 2024**.

For further information on the SDG Champions Programme and full details on how to apply, please see: <https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/85f09-expressions-of-interest-sought-for-participants-of-the-2024-2025-sustainable-development-goal-sdg-champions-programme/>



### c. Take 1 Programme at the World Environmental Conference 2024



In early February 2024, Valerie Lewis was invited to make a presentation about the Take 1 Programme at the 13<sup>th</sup> World Environmental Education Conference in Abu Dhabi. This



year's congress focused on "Connecting People, Creating Tomorrow" and was attended by over 3100 delegates, representing 83 countries from around the world.

During the conference Valerie shared the development and experiences of the Take 1 Programme, highlighting its capacity to support teacher readiness to engage with Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) themes in lower second level education in Ireland. The presentation and discussion aligned with the conference theme 'A Worldwide Community for Sustainability as a Goal', which aimed to reflect how real sustainability "must permeate teaching and learning, support whole institutional approaches and acknowledge that real world systems are complex and dynamic".

Her roundtable session provided an opportunity to demonstrate the connections between ESD policy and practice in Ireland, noting the collective engagement of government departments aligned through policy development (ESD to 2030), strategy documents (School Sector Climate Action Mandate) and updates in Looking at Our School and School Self Evaluation. It was a valuable opportunity to showcase national developments with education professionals from other jurisdictions, sharing progress and make connections.

The [WEEC Network](#) is an international congress addressing education for environment and sustainable development that offers experiences in connecting people from all over the world to discuss, learn and share the updates in education programmes surrounding environmental and sustainable development.

Valerie Lewis: Take 1 Programme - Director

[take1programme@outlook.com](mailto:take1programme@outlook.com)



[Back to top](#)

## d. Cloughjordan Eco-Village



Cloughjordan Ecovillage is a living community of 120 residents and 10 businesses as well as an educational project, responding to the greatest challenges facing humanity today: the growing impact of human activity on the planet and how its people live and work together.

The deeper purpose of the Ecovillage is to create a living example of a healthy and harmonious future while treading more lightly on Planet Earth. This village has the lowest ecological footprint in Ireland, is people led and local focused.

It is:

- building a resilient, supportive community based on fairness and mutual respect.
- caring for the land in partnership with the living world.
- learning to live more socially, economically and environmentally sustainable lives.
- sharing the fruits of this exploration through research and education.

The Ecovillage was designed with key permaculture principles in mind:

- clustered high performance green homes.
- planted woodland, edible landscape, wildlife corridors.
- organic farm feeding the community, regenerating soil and supporting biodiversity.
- sustainable energy systems: community owned heating system with renewable local fuel, urban drainage system, solar panels, car sharing.

With 20 years of environmental action, Cloughjordan Ecovillage has so much to share. It is currently launching a new education offering for post-primary schools to support them in their cross-curriculum SDG requirements.

There is a rich tapestry to explore, and the Ecovillage has designed a full-day immersion into sustainability and regeneration in action. This is a unique opportunity for students and teachers alike to bring their school subjects to life and experience a day in the life of a community living sustainably.

The day includes a slideshow presentation on the Ecovillage project, setting the scene and rooting it in a local and global context. It all then comes to life with a tour of the Ecovillage,

meandering from the historical townland of Cloughjordan to the more recent builds and everything in between, including an amphitheatre hailing the importance of play and celebration, a community supported farm (CSA) and allotments, a wildlife pond, orchards with 60+ varieties of native Irish apple trees and native woodland.

Each one of the expert guides on this tour is a resident of the Ecovillage, sharing their own lived experience and inviting the group to be curious, inquisitive and use all their senses to explore. You might bump into the farmer or one of the farm volunteers, a resident grower or the local baker. All are invaluable encounters and opportunities to ask questions.

The highlight of this new offering is a journey from seed to the food on your table. A visit to the Cloughjordan community seedbank is a deep dive into our food systems. The group will experience sowing a seed, walking through the stages of growth and composing their own lunch with locally grown food.

A mini creative writing workshop will deepen their encounter: what new stories would you like to sow for a more regenerative future?

A companion workbook will invite students and teachers to document their day, map out the diversity of observations and harvest their findings. This way the Ecovillage residents learn and grow from their encounter with the schools and the groups return to their schools with a tailored classroom activity in response to the question: what is one thing you would like to see happen / built / grown in your school?

Cloughjordan Ecovillage is eager to cultivate an enduring relationship with visiting schools.

Please contact Veronica Ryan for more information and bookings.

Tel: 086 085 1576

Email: [education@thevillage.ie](mailto:education@thevillage.ie)

[www.thevillage.ie](http://www.thevillage.ie)

[Back to top](#)

## e. Climate Action News – February 2024 Issue Published



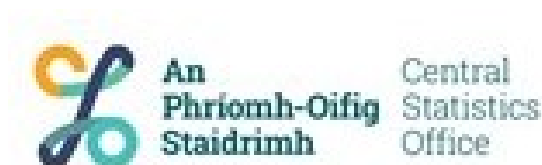
The February 2024 issue of the Government of Ireland's **Climate Action News** has now been published.

To read features on the newly launched Community Climate Action fund, Deposit Return Scheme, Ireland's recently published Climate Change Assessment Synthesis Report, National Biodiversity Plan, and lots more on public consultations, competitions and resources, see [LinkedIn](#).

Sign up to receive **Climate Action News directly** into your inbox every month [here](#)

[Back to top](#)

## f. CSO – SDG 1: No Poverty



See new SDG data published on 12 February [Ireland's UN SDGs - Goal 1 No Poverty](#)

The CSO and Department of Social Protection collaborated on this publication, and providing the Overview Chapter; also thanks to the Departments who provided specific indicators data (Data source quoted in the publication for each indicator).

The CSO are now commencing Goal 2 Zero Hunger, in collaboration with the lead, Department of Agriculture Food & Marine (DAFM). This will be an update of the first version of [Goal 2 Zero Hunger](#) (published in April 2020).



[Back to top](#)

## g. COP28 – Reflections



*“97,000 delegates attended COP28 in Dubai in December 2023, 4409 from UAE, 3081 from Brazil, and 1411 from China and Nigeria. I am not a mathematician, nor am I a scientist but this seems to be an awful lot of people, all criss-crossing the globe emitting (according to my amateur calculations) 184,400,000 kgs of carbon dioxide.*

*In the Green Zone, where I was presenting at Teachers COP, there were considerably less people. I was one of five teachers selected to present at Educators Voice, a wonderful initiative by the Office of Climate Education in Paris, with Cikgu Noor Harlini from Malaysia, Judith Priam from French Guiana, Esther Gacigi from Kenya, Isis Flores from Mexico and myself, Paula Galvin from Ireland.*

*We are all passionate advocates for climate action and climate justice, all engaged in local, grassroots community and national activism. We all believe passionately in the work we are doing. We all believe in its significance and we know it makes a difference to the lives of our students and our communities.*

*Our five voices echoed in a large auditorium, livestreamed across the world to our delighted communities. Our communities at home were immensely proud of us and we were immensely proud of Noor Lini whose inspirational call for climate action in mangrove restoration gave us hope to act in solidarity in her wonderful project, "I can, you can, we can"*

*But in the grand scheme of things, our voices were whispers, lost in the loudness and stridency of overpoweringly strong voices. Our voices, the voices of indigenous peoples from Fiji and Tuvalu and Kiribati, young climate activists, all those who are vulnerable were not listened to!*

*One of my nine-year-old pupils, from Clonburris N.S wrote this amazing poem which I read in Dubai.*

*The Earth is poor  
The Earth is crying and screaming for help  
But her cries are muffled by the laziness and arrogance of all Earth`s people  
The Earth is poor  
Her seas are drowning in plastic  
Her animals become extinct  
The Earth has had enough  
Hear her ROAR!*

*COP28 has been called "historic" but it is not my history! It must be that of "the history of the hunt" for more and more and more which "will always glorify the hunter" (Chinua Achebe)*

*It can be difficult to remain hopeful in the midst of this selfish, arrogant inhumanity. It is really difficult to "Sing high and aloof, safe from the wolf`s black jaw, and the dull ass`s hoof" (Ben Johnson)*

*But we must continue to call for climate action and climate justice and to make our calls louder so that we will be heard above the rhetoric and the empty promises"*



[Back to top](#)

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