



An Roinn Oideachais
Department of Education

Education for Sustainable Development Newsletter

Welcome to the May 2024 issue and 15th 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 issue and will find inspiration, ideas, useful links and resources to help you to play your part in sustainable development.

ESD in County Louth and Mayo – Calling All Educational Institutions!

Do you attend, work, or collaborate with an educational establishment or institution in **Louth** and **Mayo** that is taking action for sustainable development? If so we would love to hear from you for the 15th issue of the ESD Newsletter!

ESD in Schools

If you would like to share what you are doing in the area of sustainable development in your school and for it to feature in future issues of the ESD Newsletter, please get in touch with ESD@education.gov.ie. You will receive a **€500 One-For-All voucher** from the Department of Education if we publish your piece!

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c. ESD to 2030 – Research Funding

The **Irish Research Council** is inviting research project applications on Education for Sustainable Development and Global Citizenship Education.

New Foundations is sponsored by the Department of Foreign Affairs/Irish Aid, the Department of Education, and the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth.

DCEDIY's research focus is on ESD for Early Learning and Care which align with our goals under First 5, and, in particular, ESD to 2030. At least one grant will be awarded for projects focused on ESD/ GCE in the ELC sector. For further information on both strategies see [gov - About First5 \(www.gov.ie\)](http://www.gov.ie) and [gov - National Strategy on Education for Sustainable Development in Ireland \(www.gov.ie\)](http://www.gov.ie)

Awards will be 12 months in duration up to a maximum value of €10,000. The call closes on **20 June 2024**.

For more information, see: [New Foundations 2024 | Funding | Irish Research Council](#)

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d. Curriculum Developments

The call for applications by schools to become a Phase One school for new Leaving Certificate subjects is now closed. Thank you to all those that applied. Phase One schools have been selected and notified. 170 applications were received across both new subjects. The two new Leaving Certificate subjects are **Drama, Film and Theatre Studies**, and **Climate Action and Sustainable Development**. Teaching and learning in these new subjects will commence in the 2025/26 school year.

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e. Solar Panels for Schools Programme - update

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

The first phase of the Schools PV Programme launched in November 2023 to over 1600 schools. As of 7 May 2023, 1503 (92%) of schools have expressed an interest in the scheme through the School Hub. Of those, 1324 (88%) school have submitted tenders and 1126 (85%) have so far been approved to award contract. 98 schools have confirmed they have had their PV installed.

Doon CBS Primary School is the first school in Limerick to have solar panels installed under the programme, funded by the Climate Action Fund. Principal Joanne O'Connell says "These environmental beneficial savings have resulted in both the students and staff of the school

taking a significant interest in the operation and benefits of the solar panels. It will help pupils from 2nd to 6th classes to learn about energy in a real way and why as a society, we need to develop new ways to meet our energy needs”.



Above: Joanne O’Connell, Principal of Doon CBS Primary School, shows pupils their new solar panels on the roof of their school

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

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f. 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: Schools wishing to apply 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, please let us know by emailing ESD@education.gov.ie

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g. SDG Posters and 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 or flyer, please email ESD@education.gov.ie.



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h. ESD Art Competition – Coming Soon!

A Department of Education **ESD Art Competition for Schools** will be announced in September. Details will be available in the September issue of the ESD Newsletter and published on the [ESD webpage](#)



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i. Buying Greener: Green Public Procurement Strategy and Action Plan



The Government has approved the **Green Public Procurement Strategy and Action Plan 2024-2027**. The strategy, which outlines Green Public Procurement policy and guidance, including the implementation mandate for the public sector, is available to view on the Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications [website](#).

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j. SDG National Stakeholder Forum, 6 June 2024



This year's forum, on the theme of '**Transformative Education for Sustainable Development – Reaching the Furthest Behind First**' will take place on 6 June 2024 at Croke Park, Dublin. The event will feature speakers from the Department of Education, Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science, the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth, Aontas, and Education For Sustainability. In the morning there is an option of attending one of four workshops on the themes of: Global Citizenship Education; Healthy Communities; Education in the Community; Accessing Education.

Registration for in person and online attendance is now open [here](#).

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2. ESD Around the Country – Limerick and Longford

a. Shannon Foynes Port COMPASS Competition

TY students across the Mid-West were given an opportunity, in the return of the Shannon Foynes Port Company Compass schools competition, to have their say on our future by visualising the transformational potential of the Shannon Estuary as a global renewable energy hub in the decades ahead.

Organised by the port authority, the biennial competition was an opportunity for TY students in counties Clare, Kerry and Limerick to create a short film that predicts what realising the unprecedented renewable energy opportunity on the Shannon Estuary will do for the region and nation.

Themed ‘Shooting the Breeze’, the competition returned for the first time since pre-COVID and had a top prize of €2,000 for the winning school. Students created a film of a maximum duration of seven minutes that focused on the impact of wind power, what it will deliver in terms of sustainability and the downstream economic opportunities as the Shannon Estuary becomes the production hub for Ireland’s estimated 80GW of offshore wind – ten times our domestic requirement – waiting to be tapped off the Atlantic seaboard.

The awards ceremony took place on 26 April 2024. Some 250 plus attendees, including students and teachers, poured into the venue for the event as four finalists from Limerick – two from Salesian College Pallaskenry and one each from Ardscoil Ris and Laurel Hill Secondary School – battled it out with the sole Clare finalist, St Joseph’s Secondary School Spanish Point.

And it was the most westerly school in the competition, St. Joseph’s Spanish Point, that walked away with the top prize and a €2,000 cheque for the school, a school facing right into the teeth of the very offshore winds that inspired the competition and that will drive Ireland’s transformation into an international renewable energy hub.

The winning team members each received an iPad for their efforts and a Gold Commemorative Medal. Each of the runners up also received a silver medal and a days’ sailing on the Shannon Estuary sponsored by Foynes Yacht Club.

The status of the competition was also reflected by the attendance of two cabinet ministers Minister for Education Norma Foley and Minister for Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science Patrick O’Donovan, as well as Minister of State at the Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science Niall Collins, Member of European Parliament Sean Kelly, Dail Deputies Richard O’Donoghue and Michael McNamara and Senator Ned O’Sullivan.



Above: Minister Foley with 6th class pupil James Keane, 6th Class, Foynes N.S.

See also [Shannon Foynes Port COMPASS competition, supported by Hunt Museum, returns to deepen awareness of estuary opportunity | Shannon Chamber](#)

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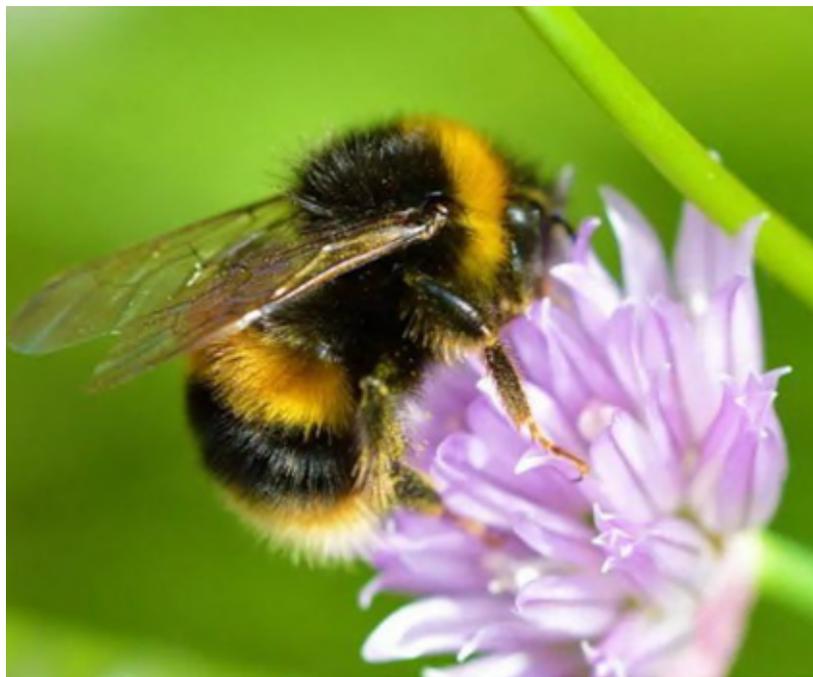
b. Limerick County Council – Castletroy Greenway

[GoGreenRoutes](#) (H2020, 2020-2024), is a €10.5 million international project. Its aim is to enhance the physical and mental well-being of urban residents by increasing their connection to nature. Limerick City & County Council chose an NTA founded Active Travel route, the Castletroy Greenway, which was completed in 2021. GoGreenRoutes was shortlisted for the LAMA [Best Green Sustainable Initiative](#).

In late 2021 a new suburban street opened in Limerick. On this 1.3km stretch sits a primary school, a post-primary school, a crèche, a supermarket, a cinema, a shopping centre, a natural playground, and a tiny forest, alongside a number of new housing estates. What makes this 'street' so unlike any other in the country is that no cars are allowed to use it. It was designed with pedestrians and cyclists in mind and there is no vehicular alternative running alongside it.

The [Castletroy urban greenway](#) is not like most other greenways developed around Ireland for pleasure, making the most of scenic coastal routes or disused rail tracks to encourage physical activity and tourism. This also isn't a pedestrianised city centre shopping street which are common around Ireland. This is a purposely designed suburban amenity to facilitate the safe movement of local residents around the community facilities and to provide additional outdoor amenities for those living in the neighbourhood.

Since the greenway was officially opened by [Limerick City and County Council](#), it has been part of an EU project called [GoGreenRoutes](#). This project focuses on nature connection, physical activity and enhancing biodiversity. The input from the community, local schools and the council is central to this co-creative and collaborative process. There has been [ongoing community engagement](#) with the sharing of ideas on 'greening' the greenway, a series of public workshops and lots of native trees planted for a tiny forest, [a Choill Beag](#).



For more details, see: [How car-free urban greenways support local communities](#) and [Growing community greenspace in Limerick](#) [podcast]

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c. ESD at Limerick ETSS



It has been a busy few months at Limerick ETSS; they have just moved into their state-of-the-art new campus in Castletroy from temporary accommodation in Fernbank. Already the Green Team are working hard on implementing sustainable practices and ensuring that staff and students are doing all they can to work hand in hand with their new environment.

Active travel is being promoted and an awareness week was held to show the students the benefits of walking and cycling to school. Students calculated how far they lived from the school and then completed that distance on an exercise bike or treadmill. They covered the "Malin to Mizen" challenge during the day. Other activities included "Bike Art", the launch of a school Bike Library and a raffle for a brand-new mountain bike. The initiative has seen an increase of over 300% in students cycling to school.

Other great work being carried out include waste segregation. New bin stations were installed, and Bin Monitors advised their peers on what bin to use at lunch time.

Swift nesting boxes were also installed so hopefully LETSS will play host to some feathered friends in the very near future!



Above: Limerick ETSS Students getting active!

Editor's note: Congratulations to all at Limerick ETSS. Great to see "transforming learning environments" in practice - keep up the good work! A €500 One-For-All voucher to support ESD projects is on its way to you!

d. Longford County Council – Bottles to Benches



Longford County Council has established a climate action team and published a climate action plan for County Longford containing 53 actions related to climate action and sustainable development. Each action is linked to one of the 17 sustainable development goals. All policies from the Corporate Plan to the County Development Plan are now climate proofed. The plans help ensure economic growth and prosperity, improved quality of life in the county while preserving natural resources and improving biodiversity.

Longford County Council are working with all schools in the county through the Environmental Awareness and Green Schools programmes on climate action and sustainability initiatives as well as other climate programmes such as the Dream Space programme and the solar retrofitting programme. A number of schools in Longford have also completed the SEAI energy in education programme. Longford County Council are also helping establish Sustainable Energy Communities across the county that will help local communities establish and develop climate programmes.

A good example of a climate action and sustainability project conducted with schools in Co Longford was the Bottle to Benches plastic recycling programme. Longford County Council and Longford Comhairle na nÓg engaged local secondary schools around Longford in collecting plastic bottles with the initial goal of 5,000 units to create one recycled plastic wheelchair accessible bench. The H.O.P.E. Bench acronym stands for Helping Our Planet's Environment and symbolises how much plastic waste can be generated by the community in a very short period of time.



Above: From Bottles to Benches

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3. School Updates

Editor's Note: Thank you to all the schools who sent us in updates on their activities for ESD. There is great work going on across the country, and unfortunately, we can't include all the submissions in the Newsletter on this occasion, but here are some great examples:

a. ESD at St. Patricks National School, Slane, Co. Meath



“St. Patrick's National School, Slane, Co. Meath has a long tradition of involvement in the An Taisce Green Schools programme. We also participate in the Meath County Council Pride of Place and Royal Horticultural Society school gardening schemes.

This year we have focused on a number of initiatives in relation to Education for Sustainable Development (ESD):

1. Sustainability Policy Statement - our Board of Management has created a sustainability policy statement under the headings of the 17 United Nations Sustainable Development Goals for our school. The policy has been created after consulting with parents, staff and pupils. It lists all the things we are doing and hope to do to improve sustainability in our school. See St. Paul's Sustainability Policy Statement here: <https://www.slanens.ie/policies/>

2. Greening School Grounds - this year, 4th class pupils have planted 60 native Irish trees to create a woodland at the back of our school. Some of the trees were grown from seeds sown by the pupils. This follows the creation of a mini-woodland, wildflower meadows and building a school pond which took place in previous years. We hope to attract more biodiversity to our school grounds in the process.

3. Teaching and Learning - some of our classes are taking learning outdoors to connect with nature, understand the seasons and help pupils to learn better. Aistear for infants now takes place three times a week outdoors. The pupils have willies and outdoor clothing on their school uniform list at the start of the school year. A senior class in the school is also trailing one lesson a week outdoors also in SESE. Recently they went on a field walk at the back of the school to see signs of spring.

4. Air Quality Study - this year our school was fortunate to participate in the GLOBE air quality study which assesses levels of nitrogen dioxide in the air. Our school is on a busy road and our nitrogen dioxide levels recorded over a one-month period were very high. We have included the study results in our school's submission to the National Roads Authority who are proposing to build a bypass around Slane village. As over 20,000 vehicles use the roads around Slane every day, this would be very welcome for our school community.

5. School Hens - we have had hens in our school for many years now. 5th class pupils run a company selling their eggs. Having hens teaches the pupils about where food comes from, respecting and caring for other animals and the rhythm of the seasons. This year the pupils made a video to explain what they do. You can check it out [here](#) “



Above: Pupils checking the Air Quality test tubes



Above: Infants in St. Patricks engaging in Outdoor Play

Editor's note: Well done to St Patrick's National School, great work and great to see you have adopted a Sustainability Policy Statement. A €500 One-For-All voucher to support ESD projects in your school is on its way to you.

If your school is developing a Sustainability Policy Statement in accordance with the School Sector Climate Action Mandate, check out the Sustainability Toolkit published on the ESD to 2030 webpage for help: [gov - National Strategy on Education for Sustainable Development in Ireland \(www.gov.ie\)](http://www.gov.ie)

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b. ESD at Dublin 7 Educate Together National School



During the 2023 – 2024 academic year, the 5th class pupils of Dublin 7 Educate Together N.S. embarked on an interdisciplinary project exploring the role of plants in sustainability. This initiative deepened students' understanding of environmental science and botany, while fostering skills in STEM, communication, collaboration, creativity, and critical thinking.

The project began with lessons on sustainability and plant life, where the students learned about the ecosystem roles and human benefits of plants. They delved into carbon sequestration, climate regulation, water conservation, and the importance of native species. Using this knowledge, the pupils explored organic farming and permaculture, while also examining sustainable techniques like green roofs and living walls. They applied their learning to the design and construction of planters for the school grounds and also helped develop the urban community garden, emphasising local plant growth to reduce food miles and support fair trade.

A highlight was presenting their project at the RDS Science Blast in Dublin, and also reaching the finals of the Young Environmentalist Awards. Throughout the project, the class completed hands-on activities such as tree planting, building planters from recycled materials, seeding planting and gardening. Community garden visits reinforced classroom learning and a stronger link to community engagement. The project culminated in presentations to the wider school community, showcasing their integrated learning approach to real-world environmental challenges. In addition, the class created a website to share their findings with an international audience <https://sites.google.com/view/d7et-plants-and-sustainability/home>

This educational initiative not only transformed the school grounds and local spaces but also instilled a commitment to sustainability in the children. This demonstrated the transformative power of education in fostering environmental stewardship.



Editor's note: Well done! The Dublin 7 Educate Together National School is looking good! A €500 One-For-All voucher to support ESD projects.in your school is on its way to you.

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c. Cross-curricular approach to ESD at Temple Carrig School



**TEMPLE
CARRIG**

SCHOOL

The second National Strategy on Education for Sustainable Development - ESD to 2030 aims to ensure that by 2030, all learners acquire knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development in accordance with UNESCO's Sustainable Development Goals target 4.7.

In an effort to meet this challenge and support a whole school approach to sustainable education, 2nd years in Temple Carrig School in Greystones were invited to create cross curricular CBAs on an issue related to sustainability and examine our planet through the lens of Science, Geography and Maths. To deepen their understanding to what or who matters in the world, their brainstorming started in the Philosophy classroom. To inspire future projects, a group of students, led by Ms Andrews and supported by the Science and Geography teachers, documented their progress with a film funded by the Department of Education.

The school said that:

“As this was an experiment, no one knew what would come up in our discussions, would it work, would we be able to capture some of the learning? How could we possibly make one CBA out of four? So we started with the question about what or who matters? Do humans have more value than every other species? Does nature exist for us to use? Why should we care about the future of our unborn generations? What obligation did we have to act?”

To inspire our cross curricular projects, one of the areas we looked at first was water. Out our classroom windows we had a view of the sea and that morning we had a boil notice on our water in Greystones after elevated levels of E.coli were detected. Dr Cathcart showed us how to test our drinking water for different bacteria and explained the issues surrounding E.coli.

Ms Keogh and Ms O'Brien led a field trip to our local beach in Greystones to examine the effects of erosion, measuring the rates of sediment transport, and looking at different types of coastal protection strategies for Greystones north beach as well. Suddenly climate change didn't seem so far removed. This led to students' research about recent flooding and rainfall in one of our wettest Springs in a long time, and the impact it was having on the farming community locally in Wicklow. This was followed with questions about how rainfall had intensified over the years and led to students using the weather station at TCG to map out changes in rainfall in recent years, trying to predict further changes in the future.

Other emerging issues coincided with topical events in the news during early 2024, for example looking at the environmental effects of migration, the increase in intensity in recent storms, the subsequent repair work needed on our dart lines, the closing of our local amenities like the Bray to Greystones cliff walk, the debate surrounding local offshore wind farms effects on biodiversity and recent farmers protests. We looked at our possessions and this led to an exploration into where our batteries come from in our electric vehicles and smart phones, which all served as new stimulus for learners. Many of the CBAs reflected these topics in their local news, demonstrating their ability to apply classroom learning to real-world challenges. Through this interdisciplinary approach, students not only gained knowledge but also developed critical thinking skills and a sense of responsibility towards creating a sustainable future.

Undertaking a cross curricular project about sustainable issues is not an easy task. We learnt that the knowledge and understanding didn't fit into one neat box or subject and just like in the real world it required a multi-disciplinary approach to tackle some of our most pressing issues around the changing climate. It had logistical and timetabling challenges and we had to critically look at different angles to fit the features of learning required in each subject"

On the 1 May, UCD Science and Geoscience departments invited students in to showcase and exhibit their CBAs and were impressed with the engagement and connections made between the variety of subjects. The 2nd years also shared their film documenting the process with other participating schools and academics involved in Education for Sustainability and were congratulated on their creativity. It left the room of experts full of hope and energy for what our learning in schools can do to influence what comes next in our ever-changing climate.

Click here to watch the students film documenting their project:

<https://www.templecarrigschool.ie/sustainabilitycba>



Above: Temple Carrig students showcasing their project in UCD on 1 May.

Editor's note: Well done to all at Temple Carrig School, great to hear how your ESD funding has facilitated this project!

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d. Ardcoil Na Mara - EU-Conexus competition



“Last academic year four of our second year students, Diana, Grace, Michelle, and Valerie, designed a model for a sustainable school. They entered their model in EU-Conexus competition and won it. Inspired by ‘Waterford Walls’ they included a nature themed mural in their model and this year we applied for ESD funding to realise their vision. The girls and the TY Environmental Leadership Team were thrilled that we were successful in getting funding. We contacted Edel Tobin, the founder of Waterford Walls, and talked about a

biodiversity themed mural on the front of our school that would reflect coastal flora and fauna. Juliette Viode, who works with Edel in Street Art Ink, designed a beautiful mural that included Bombus muscorum, a bumble bee species whose population is increasing in the dunes of Tramore owing to the brilliant conservation work of Tramore Eco Group.

As part of this project, Street Art Ink delivered spray painting workshops for our leaving certificate art students which they thoroughly enjoyed. Edel also gave all of the leaving certificate art students a talk about the importance and value of street art. The mural is a much loved additional to the school and sends a strong message to our community that we value biodiversity. We've also made other changes to the front of our school including the installation of a pond, a meadow, a living willow fence, and an ornamental pollinator patch. Hopefully in time our students will not just be able to explain what biodiversity is but they'll see it and experience it on our school grounds."



Editor's note: Well done to all at Ardscoil na Mara, we love your school mural, great to hear how your ESD funding has facilitated this project!

4. Competitions

a. ESD to 2030 – May Newsletter Competition – How well do you know your SDGs?

To take part in this issue ESD Newsletter competition, please visit the [Department of Education's ESD Newsletter webpage](#).

Completed entries should be sent to ESD@education.gov.ie by 5pm on **Friday, June 28th**. The winning school will receive a €500 One-For-All Voucher for ESD work, and will be announced in the September issue of the ESD Newsletter.

b. ESD to 2030 March Newsletter Competitions

March ESD Newsletter Competition Winners

The **winner** of a free [Bosca Dúlra](#) from Biodiversity in Schools is Lissycasey NS in Ennis. Congratulations, well done!

The **winner** of the 3 Simple Actions Competition is 5th class in Holy Family National School in Rathcoole. Congratulations, a €500 one-for-all voucher is on it's way to you for ESD projects in your school.

Some of the great Simple Actions submitted included:

"We collect our pencil shavings and use them to compost or to create art".

"Saving energy is another way we're making a real impact daily. We're all about flicking those switches off when lights, monitors, or projectors aren't in use. Natural light is the best light. Our school has also made the smart move to energy-efficient bulbs, helping us slash our energy use over the past year. With new solar panels set to be installed this summer, we're hoping to take our energy-saving game to the next level!"

"All sustainable goals can seem huge! However, if you think and plan small steps like trying to plant a courgette plant this year in one class and then move onto to more classes the years after eventually it will have a tsunami effect as you will get more confident every year and every time!"

"We have made a hotel for earthworms which includes an earthworm spa on the top floor; a 'bed' of deeper soil on the 3rd floor; a dining room with decomposing leaves in the

entrance hall; and an earthworm playroom too! Every day in the woods, we check that there is enough moist soil and decomposing leaves to keep our earthworm friends happy”.

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c. Global Citizenship Schools – One-Minute Videos



Check out some of the entries from schools for the Global Citizenship Schools One-Minute Video initiative [Global Citizenship School - One Min. Video \(google.com\)](#)

You will see a wide range of topics covered by the schools from “leaving no one behind” to “Our favourite SDGs”, “The Litter Wardens” to “43 nationalities making the world a better place” and “Is the water safe” to “Poetry to make a difference”.

Editor’s note: The Department of Education was pleased to support this initiative through ESD to 2030 funding.

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d. CareersPortal Skills Competition 2024 – Green Careers



The 2023/2024 Career Skills Competition ran from September to April and culminated in an awards ceremony held in the Department of Education's Clock Tower on Wednesday, 8 April.

An excellent entry that came 3rd in the Transition Year category, which is the largest and most competitive of the competition. Her name was **Julia Van Coller from St Vincent's Post-Primary School in Dundalk, Co. Louth**

Julia undertook her work experience in Uisce Eireann and focused a lot on sustainability, sustainable development goals and water usage. Julia commented:

"We did sustainable development games with ECO-UNESCO who taught us a lot about sustainability. We learned about sustainable development and about how all the SDGs (sustainable development goals) are all linked to each other, so if one is affected, they all are. We also learned how water is linked to sustainability."

Her tasks included:

"During the challenge called imagination island we had to come up with rules or laws for a civilisation to make it more sustainable towards water usage. Examples include use geothermal energy, or you have shower limits."

Some observations from Julia included:

"Guest speakers came to talk to us about different aspects of water. They talked to us about what happens when you flush the toilet and where the water comes from when you turn on your tap. We talked about sustainability and how terrible it is to flush wipes."

TY student **Anna McNulty from Drogheda Grammar School** (picture attached) who received a Highly Commended Certificate for her entry where she talked about her work experience at ESB where she was introduced to their sustainable practices.

A highlight for Anna was "working with the ESB engineering team, exploring new technologies on how to produce sustainable energy and keep electricity as clean as possible."

"ESB talked a lot about sustainable ways of producing energy to power the country." Anna reflected on how she "enjoyed the activities where we thought of new ways to create sustainable energy sources and we even got to make our own working wind turbines and test them out. The week really opened my eyes to the many career paths that I could choose to go down, some of which I wouldn't have even thought about."

A video entry came from student who did their work placement as an MEP. The student is looking to tackle lots of issues in the future including those involving the environment and sustainability: https://youtu.be/4GnM_8MhXk4?si=9fjF19oO5WPJVFR0

There were a broad range of occupations investigated in the area of both primary and post-primary education including, STEM, science educator etc. lots of exciting interest in future education careers overall!



Above: Students Julia Can Coller and Anna McNulty with Eimear Sinnott, CareersPortal and Fiona Dunning, AIB.

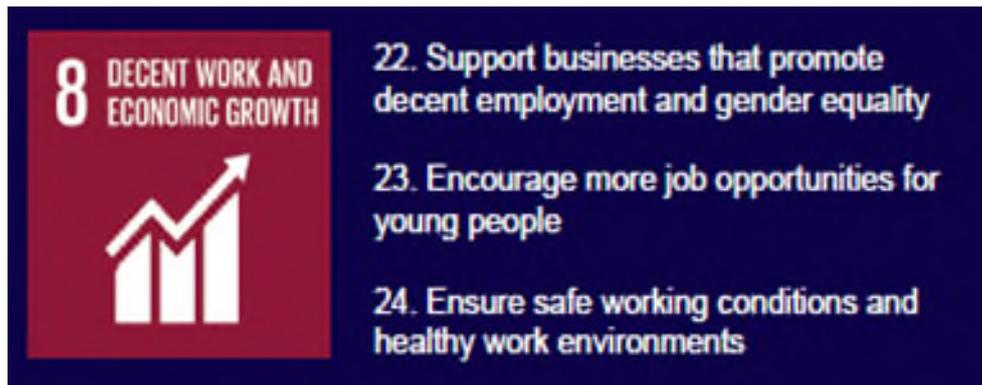
To read more on the 2024 Career Skills Competition, see:
<https://careersportal.ie/news/students-crowned-at-career-skills-competition>

Editor's Note: The Career Skills competition is developed by CareersPortal and sponsored by AIB. It is supported by the Department of Education, An Chomhairle um Oideachas Gaeltachta & Gaelscolaíochta (COGG) and the TY, LCVP and LCA Programmes.

5. Programmes, Resources and CPD

a. Three Simple Actions – SDG 8 – Decent Work and Economic Growth

Below are three simple daily actions you can take to support SDG 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth



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b. Green Flag Awards 2024

Green-Schools to award 758 schools this May

An Taisce's Green-Schools Programme begins its awards season on Monday, the 13th of May, awarding schools across the country with their Green Flags for sustainability in education. Twelve ceremonies will take place in 9 locations around Ireland throughout the month of May, awarding 758 schools in the areas of Litter & Waste, Water, Travel, Biodiversity and Global Citizenship, to name a few.

Green-Schools is a long-term, whole school, action-based programme and award scheme for both primary and second-level schools. Green-Schools operates in more than 92% of Irish schools and is now in its 26th year. Within the Green-Schools programme, schools work through ten sustainability themes in a consecutive order. Schools spend two academic years working on each theme before they may apply for the Green Flag award for that theme.

Of the hundreds of schools receiving awards in May, 50 schools will receive their first Green Flag for their work on the theme of Litter & Waste over a two year period. At the other end of the journey, 13 schools will be awarded their 10th flag for an incredible achievement of 20 years commitment to the Green-Schools programme.

Guests at each of the ceremonies can expect student entertainment and displays of the wonderful work being done in schools across Ireland.



Above: Students at the recent Big Travel Challenge Awards ceremony at Dublin Zoo.

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c. Teaching Climate Change - resource for Primary

A free copy of the book “Teaching Climate Change in Primary Schools: An Interdisciplinary Approach” has now gone out to primary schools who emailed us following the March ESD Newsletter article. We hope you find the resource useful to support the teaching of ESD in your schools.

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d. Oide – ESD Updates



Oide - Online Summer Course: Multimedia Projects on Climate and Sustainability

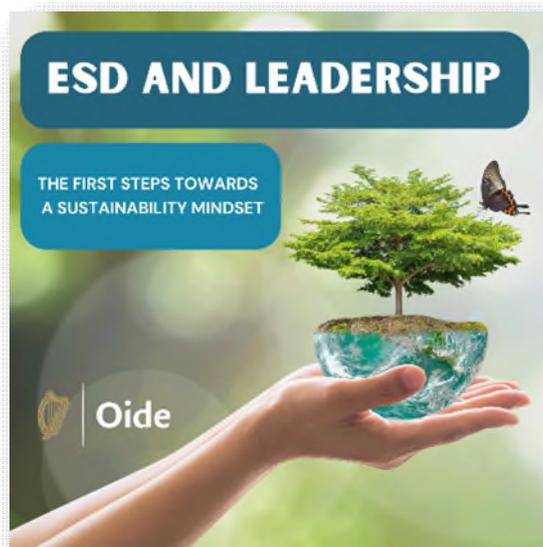
Oide Technology in Education will provide its free, 20-hour online summer course, 'Multimedia Projects on Climate and Sustainability' from 1 - 18 July this summer. It is approved for extra personal vacation (EPV) days.

Teachers learn how to find quality ESD resources, create multimedia resources on this topic and enable pupils to plan and carry out projects on ESD topics. Scoilnet's ESD hub features in the course.

The course has been offered for the last two summers and has proven to be very popular with excellent feedback. "The course was laid out well, easy to follow and appropriately challenged me in a way that I was motivated to learn and eager to improve", said one participant, while another described it as "a most informative and engaging course that went far beyond the titled description".

Self-enrolment opened on 1 May and remains open until all places are filled.

[View course description and self-enrol with a Scoilnet account here.](#)



Oide - ESD and Leadership: First Steps Towards a Sustainability Mindset Policy | People | Planet

An online workshop was facilitated on 25 April 2024 to support school leaders and teacher leaders with a passion for ESD, to take the first steps towards developing a sustainability mindset in school. The workshop provided an overview of ESD and developed environmental sustainability in greater detail. The workshop introduced some of the supports in place, while making connections between ESD and other policy areas, including LAOS 2022, SSE, Wellbeing Policy Statement and Framework for Practice 2019, connecting policy, people and planet.

The workshop incorporated the voice of a practising teacher and a school leader. Patrick Kirwan, Science teacher in Ardscoil na Mara and Director of Irish Schools Sustainability Network (ISSN), and Claire Matthews, Principal in Firhouse Educate Together Secondary School, shared ideas and actions they are leading through a Learning Walk of their schools. Participants collaborated to discuss and share ideas possible for their own schools based on three themes: campus, curriculum, and community, exploring actions for short-, medium-, and long-term goals. Many suggestions were made, including leading daily routines to support deliberate actions to protect and preserve the planet, greater development of ESD throughout the curriculum, and moving beyond the school for greater support with this work.

For more information on supports from ISSN, please check out the [ISSN website](#).

To stay informed of supports, you may wish to join Oide's [mailing list](#).

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e. WorldWise Global Schools – JC CSPE Teacher Guide



Students Lead the Way in Sustainability

Creating a sustainable future lies at the heart of Civic, Social and Political Education (CSPE). The Junior Cycle course aims to equip students with the ‘awareness, knowledge, skills, values, and motivation to live sustainably’, as well as to inspire active citizenship and promote human rights. These goals also underlie Global Citizenship Education, and a new guide brings the two together, supporting teachers to bring a global justice focus to the teaching of CSPE.

The [CSPE Teacher Guide](#) is produced by WorldWise Global Schools, Irish Aid’s national GCE programme for post-primary schools, and was launched on 2 May 2 in the [Mary Robinson Centre, Ballina, County Mayo](#). The family home of the former president and renowned champion of human rights set the perfect scene for teachers and students to learn about the guide, which embeds sustainable development and global citizenship both within and beyond the curriculum. Activities include how to measure development, exploring the merits and limits of the Sustainable Development Goals, and examining the effectiveness of campaigns for sustainability.

Students shared their own expertise at the launch, presenting creative projects they have initiated in their schools. Roscommon Community College students explored air quality locally and nationally and researched its effects on health and education globally. Students at Gort Community School planted ‘Primroses for Palestine’ in solidarity with people seeking peace in Gaza and all world conflicts. And thanks to a local gym, they cycled and rowed ‘from Gort to Gaza’ to honour the struggle of Palestinians. At St Mary’s Secondary School, Ballina, students focused on water sustainability, organising a Walk for Water and a clothing swap shop to highlight both the lack of accessible clean drinking water for more than a quarter of the world’s population, and the huge wastage of water in the fashion industry. And diplomacy was the theme at St Michael’s Holy Faith Secondary School in Finglas. At a workshop with the Department of Foreign Affairs, students explored diplomacy, contrasting Ireland’s military neutrality with its political support for Palestine. They linked this global perspective to the local setting, promoting peace and restorative justice in posters around the school.



Above: Students from Roscommon Community College present air quality project at WWGS CSPE Guide launch at the Mary Robinson Centre in Co. Mayo.

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f. Global Village Resources



Global Village has recently published a new primary school resource to support the exploration of Global Citizenship Education (GCE).

Their teacher's accompanying guide for "The Day War Came" picture book aims to spark meaningful discussions about the struggles faced by those forced to flee from conflict. The resource is linked to the primary curriculum and is available for free download, providing teachers with the tools they need to inspire empathy and understanding in the classroom.

Find the resources here: [Global Village Primary Resources](#)

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g. Global Action Plan – Just Action Primary and Post-Primary teacher resources



**Co-funded by
the European Union**

A new set of teacher resources have recently been launched by Global Action Plan as part of the Erasmus+ funded Just Action project.

Just Action consists of classroom activities for upper-primary and lower-post-primary teachers, and a self-guided teacher training component to support deeper engagement in GCE and ESD. The activities are connected to learning outcomes in curriculum, ensuring that teachers can meet objectives while foregrounding questions of environmental and social sustainability. The ultimate goal of Just Action is that teachers will be better able to support students and colleagues in whole-school action that reaches beyond the school gates.

The student activities map out a student journey (pictured), focusing on thematic topics relevant to GCE and ESD. By starting in the centre, teachers can engage their class in building the knowledge and values of active citizens; the second layer offers ways that classes can influence change at school, while the outer layer reaches out to support and influence the wider community.

Just Action also aims to bring teachers on a journey too. The self-guided learning component can be used as a training module, a reference, or a source of inspiration. Beautifully designed reflective tasks encourage teachers to go deeper in their own practice and find ways to develop as practitioners teaching for social and environmental justice.

Just Action resources are and will always be free, but one needs to set up an account to get started. Check out www.justactionjourney.com.

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h. GLOBE Ireland – Summer CPD



Are you interested in NASA [#CitizenScience](#), Climate Literacy, Global Citizenship and project-based [#STEAM](#) Education?

Would you like to learn more about environmental science, inquiry-based learning & human-centred design thinking?

The Global Learning and Observations to Benefit the Environment (GLOBE) Program is an international hands-on environmental science and education program. GLOBE Ireland's Accredited Summer CPD is open for both primary and secondary teachers and runs 1 – 5 July in Herbert Park, Dublin. The course covers a variety of GLOBE citizen science outdoor observations bridging atmosphere, biosphere, hydrosphere and pedosphere activities alongside climate adaptation, design thinking, science communication and project-based learning workshops.

Course Cost: 50 EUR

Learn more & sign up here: <https://arcq.is/1T1um4>

Here what last year's course participants had to say!

Listen to Secondary School Teacher Marianne Gardiner from Gort Community School: [GLOBE Teacher Training Summer Course Testimonial: Marianne Gardiner- Gort Community School - YouTube](#)

Listen to Primary School Teacher Brian Skelly from St Patricks Boys National School: [GLOBE Summer CPD Testimonial: Brian Skelly St Patricks Boys National School \(youtube.com\)](#)

GLOBE's vision is to create a worldwide community of students, teachers, scientists, and citizens working together to better **understand**, **sustain** and **improve** Earth's environment at the local, regional, and global scale. The process of teaching observation, to inquiry, to data collection, to analysis, to **action** additionally increases student ownership fostering leadership competencies and inspiring students to be change-agents for their local environment. Established in 1995, there are now more than 30,000 GLOBE trained teachers from over 30,000 GLOBE schools in 119 countries.

GLOBE encourages and supports students, teachers, and scientists to collaborate on inquiry-based investigations of their local environment, sharing results in person and virtually through local, regional and international science symposia. GLOBE provides visualizations, maps and graphs presenting reported data. Raw data can also be downloaded to compare local and global environment. By learning how to engage in these tools and use [the GLOBE reporting app](#), teachers can apply real-life examples and state of the art information to their life-science, mathematics or even writing assignments to ensure a high level of student engagement.

Contact: globe@eeu.antaisce.org with any queries

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g. Dublin Zoo – Summer Course for Primary Teachers 2024



Dublin Zoo's popular summer course 'Cultivating the Next Generation of Conservationists' is back this July. This jam-packed course aims to provide participants with active engagement in teaching and learning about Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) with an emphasis on conservation education. It provides participants with the skills, knowledge, and confidence to teach about nature and conservation in their classrooms, foster positive connections to nature in their classrooms and motivate their students towards pro-environmental actions.

Topics are delivered by expert facilitators in the Discovery and Learning Centre and from the immersive living classroom, the grounds of Dublin Zoo. Teachers participating have exclusive access to state-of-the-art teaching spaces as well as the opportunity to explore the zoo after the daily programme.

Note: this course is aimed at primary teachers of 3rd – 6th class.

This course is currently open for bookings. Tickets are available [here](#).

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h. Climate Smart – TY programme



Free Transition Year Unit on Climate Change Adaptation recruiting for September 2024!

Join over 2000 students from 75 schools who have learnt about climate change and flooding adaptation in Ireland with the FREE TY programme, Climate Smart.

With links to geography, science, sustainability, politics, planning and active citizenship from a local to global scale, Climate Smart takes an interdisciplinary approach to learning about how we can adapt to climate change. Structured as a series of seven workshops consisting of videos, quizzes and hands-on activities focused on a key challenge in Ireland, flooding, Climate Smart is flexible and can be adapted to class timetabling needs. Culminating in a serious web-game, iAdapt, students get to put their knowledge into practice. In this final game, students act as mayor of Dublin or Cork city and must prepare, consult, and implement plans to protect the city from flooding, all while keeping their citizens happy and staying within budget.

Climate Smart recently celebrated translating our resources as Gaeilge and are delighted to see the development of this side of the project. As this academic year draws to a close, Climate Smart looks ahead to September, and cannot wait to support a new cohort on their climate smart journey.

To tell you everything you need to know, a teacher CPD webinar is being hosted on Wednesday 22 May at 16:30, register here: <https://eeu-antaisce.org.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZMod-irrisuGdGmsuUc0zVCODXiR534i0vb>

Please get in touch at climatesmart@eeu.antaisce.org and explore the platform at www.climatesmart.ie

Follow socials [@climatesmart_ie](https://twitter.com/climatesmart_ie) (twitter) [@climate_smart](https://www.instagram.com/climate_smart) (Instagram).

i. Development Education Updates



Launch of the Developmenteducation.ie Members Area

Some people use it to save stories throughout the day to read when they're ready.

Foragers use it to save all the things they want to read, watch, listen to or to build notes and ideas for lesson planning on the go.

Curate a personal library of resources, articles, methods posts and teaching materials that you can return to.

Build your own teaching plans, curated lists and thematic library of hundreds of resources, videos, and blogs.

Join the new developmenteducation.ie members area and create a free account at <https://developmenteducation.ie/members-area>

Myth buster: 10 Myths About Greenwashing

Is the transition towards clean renewable energy taking place quick enough to overturn our reliance on fossil fuels by 2050? Do green labels always mean what they say?

Take a look and explore 10 common myths about buzzwords, marketing tactics and green credentials of businesses and governments: <https://developmenteducation.ie/resource/10-myths-about-greenwashing/>

Written by Kai Evans and launched by developmenteducation.ie

For more, check out [a teachers' guide to greenwashing](#) by Rachel Elizabeth Kendrick (suitable for Politics and Society, Geography (LC), Business Studies (JC), CSPE and Home Economics (JC)).

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j. ECO-UNESCO - Updates



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, ECO-UNESCO runs 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 2024

Lobbying to ban unsustainable fishing practices in Kenmare, a nature trail as an outdoor classroom in Armagh, a school orchard in Tipperary, and a biodiversity garden in Mayo were among the 26 eco-projects recognised this week at this year's annual ECO-UNESCO Young Environmentalist Awards (YEA).

The Young Environmentalist Awards showcase and finals took place at the Royal Convention Centre, Dublin on April 15, with over 1,000 people in attendance. From nearly 280 projects across 30 counties, 110 were shortlisted the event.

Now in its 25th year, the YEA programme has reached over 65,000 young people with 6,000 projects in every county in Ireland. The awards recognise the work of young people who are tackling key issues in relation to climate and biodiversity loss, taking environmental action in their school or community and coming up with creative solutions to solve environmental issues.

Winners by Category

Projects were awarded across three age groups – super junior, junior and senior – and in twelve categories including biodiversity, climate change and eco-community development.

The Overall Senior Winner was ‘The Impact of Unsustainable Pair Trawling in Kenmare Bay’ from Pobalscoil Inbhear Sceine, Kenmare, Co. Kerry. There were joint winners of the Junior category, with first prize going to groups from both St. Catherine’s College, Armagh and Scoil Ruain, Killenaule, Co. Tipperary. The joint winner, ‘SustainApple Future’ from Scoil Ruain, aimed to raise awareness about the local and global issues around food.

A group of young environmentalists from Kinaffe National School, Swinford, Co. Mayo were awarded the Overall Super Junior prize for their project ‘Creating a Biodiversity Garden’. The winner of the People’s Choice Award, chosen by online vote with nearly 4000 votes cast, was young environmentalists from St Brigid’s College, Loughrea, Co. Galway for their project – A campaign to Reduce Nitrous Gases in our School Community

To learn more about our YEA programme, visit www.yea.ie

Expert Environmental Workshops

ECO-UNESCO environmental workshops cover topics such as Fashion Focus, Food for Future, Waste Warriors, and are available to schools and youth groups. Each workshop is designed to empower young people to learn more about environmental topics in an interactive, positive way and include fun activities and games appropriately designed for each age group. Find out more by visiting <https://ecunesco.ie/10-18-youth-programmes/environmental-workshops/>

Environmental Summer Camps

We have engaging and exciting summer camps running during the summer 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@ecunesco.ie

Green Teens Summer Camp

Aged: 13-16 years

Date: 24 - 28 June

Cost: €195

ECO-Explorers Summer Camp

Age: 10-12 years

Date: 1 - 5 July 2024

Cost: €195

To register for the ECO-UNESCO Summer Camps, click on the following link:

<https://lnkd.in/eEAydYGx>

ECO-UNESCO’s Youth for Sustainable Development

In the non-formal education sector, ECO-UNESCO's Youth for Sustainable Development Programme provides young people with the knowledge and skills needed to make a lasting impact on communities. ECO-UNESCO's team is creating a network of empowered individuals across Ireland, committed to sustainable development. If you know someone passionate about sustainable development, eager to share their knowledge, let us know at ysd-project@ecounesco.ie

For more information on any of our programmes or if you would like to get involved, please contact info@ecounesco.ie, visit our website www.ecounesco.ie or call us on 01 6625491.

Editor's note: The Department was delighted to support ECO-UNESCO with ESD funding in 2023/24 to support increased CPD for teachers and the 25th anniversary of the Young Environmentalist Awards.

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k. Biodiversity Ireland – Pollinator Project



Pollinator Project

The Pollinator Project is Ireland's largest and longest running pollinator education programme.

The project works with schools across Ireland to train young people as pollinator ambassadors and assist in delivering bee-positive actions on the school grounds such as creating 'no-mow' meadows. Up to 4,000 young people across Ireland will be involved this year through free teaching kits and in-school workshops.

Showcase your bee-friendly actions

While free kits and workshops have already been assigned to schools, every school in Ireland can still take the Pollinator Pledge to download your free certificate, sign and worksheet.

Biodiversity Ireland also looking for outstanding pollinator work at schools across Ireland. Simply share your work with us on social media (Facebook, Instagram, X). One lucky school will win the Gold Bee trophy and a biodiversity fund of a €500 garden supplies voucher. Details on how to enter are here:

<https://www.biodiversityinschools.com/pollinator-project.html>



Above: Pippa Hackett, Minister for Land Use & Biodiversity launching the Pollinator Project 2024 in St. Stephen's Green, Dublin.

I. Irish Schools Sustainability Network



Education for Sustainable Development CPD Schedule 24/25

The ISSN has created a CPD schedule that responds to the needs of teachers and students. This schedule runs from Sept to Dec 24/25. If you have any suggestions for a topic or skills that haven't appeared in the schedule, please make your suggestions [HERE](#). The schedule design is supported by Susan Adams Education for Sustainability and the CPD is hosted by Education Support Centres Ireland.

The CPD Schedule is published at: <https://www.issn.ie/new-page-2>

ISSN Student Ambassadors Programme

The ISSN are recruiting student ambassadors for 24/25. Applications are now open so if you have some students that are interested, please alert them to this opportunity.

Apply at: <https://forms.gle/EH2j7aQ8y8T1FEkx9but>.



The poster features the ISSN logo (a tree with 'Irish schools sustainability network' text) in the top left. The main title 'ISSN Student Ambassador Programme 2024/25' is centered. Below it, a call to action 'Calling all teachers' is followed by the question 'Do you have students that are passionate about sustainability?'. A paragraph describes the program's goal: 'Students that would love to develop their leadership & communication skills and work with other young people from around Ireland.' A QR code and a URL are provided for sign-up. The background includes an illustration of a globe with a person on a ladder and another person holding a tree sapling, symbolizing environmental care and growth.

Irish schools sustainability network

ISSN Student Ambassador Programme 2024/25

Calling all teachers

Do you have students that are passionate about sustainability?

Students that would love to develop their leadership & communication skills and work with other young people from around Ireland.

Sign your school up for the ISSN Student Ambassador Programme 2024/25 below

 <https://forms.gle/K9wyMp7cGmWZsGbU8>

6. HEI Sector

a. DCU MSc in Climate Change

DCU MSc in Climate Change: Policy, Media and Society

The challenges posed by climate change are hugely complex and require a broad range of responses from many sectors of society. We currently lack many of the appropriate policies, institutions and societal responses.

DCU's MSc in Climate Change: Policy, Media and Society interrogates how societies are responding to climate change, and how that response can be strengthened. It examines the roles played by politics, regulation, law, education and the media in creating the broad societal response demanded by climate change.

This programme equips students with critical insights and analytical skills to enable them to play a part in shaping the transition to a decarbonised and climate resilient future. Most postgraduate courses focused on climate change are concerned with the science of climate change. DCU's MSc in Climate Change: Policy, Media and Society is unique in Ireland in its focus on the social sciences and humanities, on media, policy, law, governance, regulation and politics.



Above: Graduates of the DCU MSc in Climate Change on 5 April 2024

Register for the September 2024 programme here: [MSc in Climate Change: Policy, Media and Society | DCU](#)

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b. SETU – Early Childhood Conference

“Early Childhood Education for Sustainable Development”



South East Technological University (SETU) Summerhill Road, Wexford marked a significant milestone on Friday, March 1st, as it hosted its first-ever Early Childhood Conference at the Newbay Hotel. The conference, centered around the theme of "Early Childhood Education for Sustainable Development," was made possible through funding from the N-TUTORR project.

The event showcased a diverse array of exhibitors, each bringing a unique sustainability perspective. Participants had the opportunity to engage with organisations such as the Wexford County Childcare Committee, Wexford Library, SETU LifeLong Learning, and SIPTU, all of which contributed to the sustainability discourse.

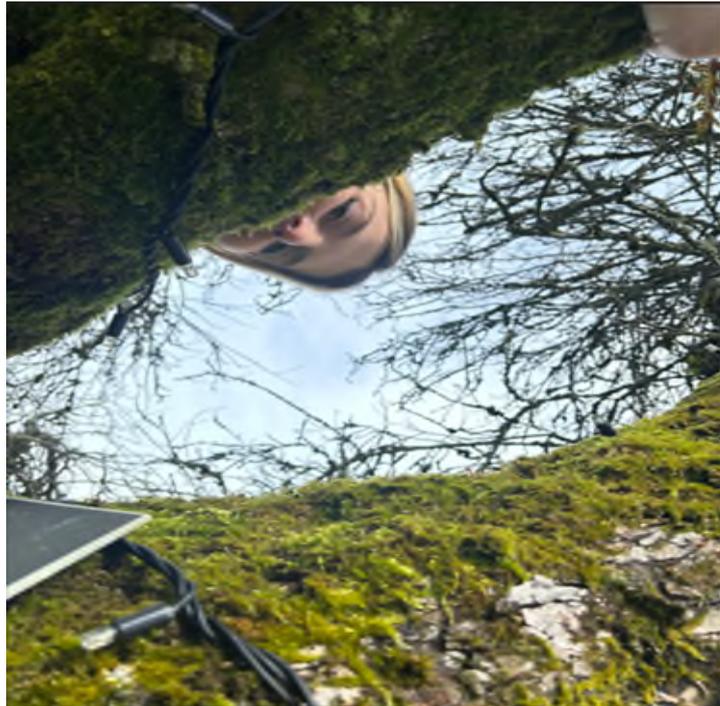
Distinguished speakers enriched the conference with their insights. Mark Nolan, representing Biodiversity in Schools, shared invaluable perspectives on environmental stewardship. Additionally, Dr. Mary Daly and Dr. Sharon Skehill from the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA) provided updates on Aistear, the Early Childhood Curriculum Framework.

Workshops throughout the day offered hands-on learning experiences on various sustainability-related topics. From nature walks with Mark Nolan to paper-making with Siobhan Jordan, attendees had the chance to explore innovative approaches to early childhood education. Dr. Dawn Murphy and Dr. Carol Yelverton-Halpin led a workshop on retaining early years educators in Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) settings, emphasising the importance of sustainability in professional development.

Participants shared positive feedback about the conference, highlighting the enriching experience it provided. One attendee remarked, "It was a fantastic conference, and I have certainly got a new sustainability toolbox to bring home with me. The company, venue, keynote speakers, and the connections I made were all magnificent." Another participant, a student, praised the event's informative sessions and networking opportunities.

The conference also included a lucky draw, with Abbie Conroy Doyle winning a dinner voucher for the Talbot Hotel. Abbie's winning photo, captured during the Nature Walk Workshop, encapsulated the spirit of the event and celebrated the beauty of nature.

Overall, SETU Summerhill Road's inaugural Early Childhood Conference was a resounding success, fostering dialogue and collaboration towards sustainable practices in early childhood education. With its engaging sessions and diverse perspectives, the conference left a lasting impact on attendees, equipping them with valuable tools to promote sustainability in their professional endeavours.



Above: The Winning Photo from Abbie Conroy Doyle

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c. Other News and Updates from the HEA Sector



Enabling Student Volunteering Open Course: Registration now open



The HEA National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education are delighted to announce that the fully online Open Course, Enabling Student Volunteering, will run from **June 2024**. This course has been developed in partnership with [Student Volunteer Ireland](#). This **free 4-week course** is available to all staff currently working in tertiary education in the Republic of Ireland, subject to availability of places.

Register at <https://opencourses.ie/event/enabling-student-volunteering-june-2024/>. For additional queries, please contact Dr Lorraine Tansey, Lorraine.Tansey@ul.ie directly.

Panel discussion: ‘Supporting climate action through activism and litigation,’ Friday, 17 May 2024.

On Friday, 17 May 2024, the DCU Centre for Climate and Society will host an in-person panel discussion on the theme of [Supporting climate action through activism and litigation](#). It will be held in room **GLA.S212** on the **DCU Glasnevin campus** and will run from **10:00-13:00**. Attendance is free, but registration is required. For in person attendance, please [register here](#). Anyone interested in joining virtually should email diarmuid.torney@dcu.ie and will be sent the zoom link closer to the time.

The event is taking place as part of the [RETOOL project](#): **Strengthening democratic governance for climate transitions** - a new three-year Horizon Europe project coordinated by Dublin City University and involving nine partners across eight European countries.

Education Spotlight: ‘Building Competencies for Digital and Green Innovation in Higher Education.’

This [Education Spotlight \(oecd-ilibrary.org\)](#), the second in a series of three, presents key lessons and inspiring examples of policy and practice to inform how traditional higher education programmes, like bachelor’s degrees, can effectively cultivate competencies crucial for green and digital innovation. The Spotlight was prepared by the OECD Higher Education Policy Team as part of the Education and Innovation Practice Community (EIPC), an action of the European Union’s New European Innovation Agenda, flagship 4 on “Fostering, attracting and retaining deep tech talent”. EIPC seeks to bring together peers from policy and practice to advance understanding of the competencies that can trigger and shape innovation for the digital and green transitions, and the mechanisms through which higher education can contribute to their development in secondary education, higher education, and adult upskilling and reskilling.

Co-Centre for Climate+ Biodiversity+ Water launched

The formal launch for the Co-Centre for Climate+ Biodiversity+ Water took place on Wednesday, 8 May 2024 at Trinity College Dublin. The new €41.3 million research centre will be the home of research, innovation, and policy development across the interlinked challenges of climate change, biodiversity loss, and water degradation on the

islands of Ireland and Britain. The Climate+ Co-Centre, which will initially be funded over six years by Science Foundation Ireland, Northern Ireland Department of Agriculture, and the Environment & Rural Affairs and UK Research & Innovation, will receive more than 30% co-funding from 29 industry partners.

First international Conference of FEE EcoCampus; ‘Getting Higher Level Education Climate Ready’ - presentations available.

The conference, hosted by the Escola Superior de Educação de Lisboa of the Polytechnic University of Lisbon on - 26-27 April 2024, explored the many different dimensions and challenges of greening HEIs. The event featured a presentation from ATU on a case study from its Mayo campus, and the plenary session was delivered by Michael John O’ Mahony, former Director of the Environmental Education Unit of An Taisce.

Slides from the event are available to download here: [2024 | Presentations – EcoCampus \(abaae.pt\)](#)

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7. International Updates

a. EURYDICE Report: Learning for Sustainability in Europe

Eurydice is an EU network whose task is to explain how education systems are organised in Europe and how they work. They publish descriptions of national education systems, comparative studies devoted to specific topics, indicators, and statistics in the field of education.

Eurydice have recently published a report "[Learning for Sustainability in Europe: Building competences and supporting teachers and schools](#)".

The report focuses on the development of sustainability competences among learners and the support offered to teachers and schools to meet the challenges of the green transition in 39 European education systems. It analyses how learning for sustainability is embedded in European curricula, and to what extent sustainability competences – defined on the basis of the European GreenComp framework – are included. It examines the role of teachers and school leaders in promoting sustainability, covering areas such as the integration of sustainability in teacher competence frameworks initial teacher education, promoting teacher professional development in sustainability, building school leadership for sustainability and supporting teachers in delivering sustainability education. The report finally explores whole-school approaches to sustainability, support for schools, and monitoring, including guidance, support, and incentives, as well as monitoring the integration of learning for sustainability in school activities. Covering primary and general secondary education, the report relies on qualitative data on policies and support measures.

Among the key findings from the report are:

- All European countries include the topic of sustainability in their curricula, and sustainability competences are cross-curricular in the majority of education systems.
- Among the sustainability competences, futures literacy is the least present in European curricula.
- Almost half of the education systems set sustainability-related learning objectives for teacher education programmes.
- Education systems usually provide in-service teachers with training, teaching materials, resources and guidelines relating to sustainability education.
- Support for whole-school approaches to sustainability is widespread.
- Nearly half of education systems have national sustainability school label.
- Only a third of education systems provide financial support for small-scale infrastructure or field trips related to sustainability, and this support is rarely granted automatically

- Less than a third of education systems monitor how schools embed sustainability in their activities.

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b. UNESCO



29 May - ESD-Net 2030 Learning Webinar on Whole School and Whole Institution Approaches in ESD

The second session of the ESD-Net 2030 Learning Webinar will explore how schools and learning institutions promote holistic ESD principles across all aspects of school life, empowering students and teachers with the knowledge, skills, and values necessary for addressing global challenges and building a sustainable future. Speakers will share best practices from across Arab states and beyond, allowing participants to learn concrete examples and adapt them to their contexts.

[Register here](#)
[Visit the event page](#)

Share Your Expertise!

The ESD-NET invites individuals and institutes to submit proposals for thematic papers on current issues in ESD. The papers will contribute to the advancement of transformative education, aligning with the objectives outlined in the ESD for 2030 framework and across all 17 SDGs.

[Please find more information here.](#)

Submit your proposal to esd-net@unesco.org by **31 May 2024** with the subject line: *Thematic Paper Proposal* and join us in shaping a more sustainable future for all!

ESD Spotlight Stories

As part of its work to strengthen education for sustainable development, UNESCO is spotlighting good practices in line with our five ESD action areas: advancing policy; transforming learning environments; building capacities of educators; empowering and mobilizing youth; and accelerating local level actions. Let their story inspire you to take action for a sustainable future!

Schools in the Maldives are transforming into spaces for environmental and climate conscious learning. Through the implementation of green school activities under the Fehi Madharusa framework (Green School framework), students and teachers are taking action to promote eco-literacy, reduce their environmental footprint and enhance climate prosperity. [Read their story](#)

Rohey L Ceesay, a dynamic Gambian youth activist and advocate for intangible cultural heritage (ICH), is a lead teacher at the Children First Academy in the Gambia. She passionately teaches the significance of ICH to students through interactive activities that incorporate ESD. [Read their story](#)

Ireland's Story was published by UNESCO under this series in December 2023 spotlighting young people's engagement through initiatives supporting the empowerment and mobilisation of youth for ESD. Read the story here: [How Ireland promotes youth engagement in education for sustainable development | UNESCO](#)

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8. Other News

a. National Youth Assembly on Climate

The National Youth Assembly on Climate is a forum where young people aged between 12 – 24 years, from across the country, are provided with the opportunity to make recommendations directly to Government to inform the Climate Action Plan.

Approximately 70 young delegates from Comhairle na nÓg (Local Youth Councils), various youth organisations and climate organisations are contributing their ideas and recommendations at the Assembly.

The third **National Youth Assembly on Climate** convened on Thursday 11 April 2024. In last year's 2023 assembly, the Assembly recommended key actions related to circularity; imposing tariffs on fast fashion, financial incentives, legislation and the introduction of sustainability labelling. This year focused on engagement, to provide youth input into the Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications' Year of Engagement campaign and the Climate Action Plan 2025.

Read more [here](#).

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b. Climate Action in the Department of Education



An Roinn Oideachais
Department of Education

Among a range of other initiatives, the Department of Education is supporting the [All-Ireland Pollinator Plan](#) campaign “No Mow May” in an effort to boost biodiversity in our campuses in Marlborough Street, Athlone and Tullamore. We have signs around the campus and we expect to see lots of dandelions, daisies and clover in the grassed areas which are a vital food source for pollinators. The Department's Green Teams say that while it may look a little untidy for a few weeks, they are asking for patience and understanding during this time.

Even small actions can have a positive impact on reducing the impact on the loss of natural and semi-natural habitats which has been a key driver in pollinator declines. Research has shown that more than half of Ireland's bee species have undergone substantial declines in numbers since 1980, with 30% of species considered threatened with extinction from Ireland.

The Department is also encouraging its staff to 'Pledge Your Garden' at home as a part of this initiative and to follow the link [here](#) for more information. Other useful resources for the identification of local flora and fauna have also been circulated to staff: [Plant Atlas](#), [Mammal Atlas](#), [Bird Watch Ireland](#).



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c. SDG National Stakeholder Forum – SDGs Mean Business –
1 March 2024



The SDGs faced down the climate on March 1 in Tullamore and won! Despite a sudden snow storm, **SDGs Mean Business!** The first forum of 2024 kicked off the in the Tullamore Court Hotel.

With Minister Pippa Hackett in attendance, the first speaker was David McRedmond, CEO, An Post who presented a case study on the challenges of transitioning to a sustainable business model. This was followed by Offaly Local Development Company and Green Offaly sharing their experience of mapping the SDGs locally and how their findings have been implemented in their subsequent work. Cairen Power, Principal Officer, Department of Enterprise Trade and Employment updated the audience on financial supports the Department offer to business.

Three lived experience speakers shared the challenges of running small sustainable businesses in the areas of printing, high quality wool products and eco toys. Their honesty and ingenuity were inspirational and greatly appreciated by both in-person and online audiences. The event also hosted an exhibition area dedicated to local business and training and crafters who produced beautiful and practical work.

If this has piqued your interest, please register for the next forum in Croke Park on 6 June when our theme will focus on **Goal 4, Quality Education**. Find out more here: [gov - Sustainable Development Goals \(www.gov.ie\)](http://www.gov.ie)

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d. Generation Glas - Cork



Young ‘Generation Glas’ ambassadors from Cork celebrated at sustainability event.

Red Abbey Court in Cork City was turned green on Sunday, 24th March, when a sustainability event co-designed by young people from Cork took place to celebrate the completion of the first year of the [Generation Glas](#) programme,

Generation Glas is a joint initiative between [BiOrbic](#), Ireland’s national bioeconomy research centre, and Foróige, the leading youth organisation in Ireland.

The Climate Collective event was co-designed by young people from Foróige youth projects who completed the course, including from Glanmire, Mahon and Castletownbere.

The Generation Glas programme supports 15-18-year-olds to become sustainability ambassadors, so that they can engage underrepresented groups in green issues, including through the delivery of co-designed sustainability events in their own communities.

The free, public event was an opportunity for the young climate action champions from Cork to put their new knowledge and skills into action, and they co-delivered a line-up that included climate games, an art display, chats, live music by a youth band and a clothes swap.

The first Generation Glas

Thirteen young people from three underserved communities in Cork took part in year one of Generation Glas.

Over the course of the programme, they participated in workshops in youth climate justice and ocean conservation, delivered tree-planting and sustainability talks in schools and an art gallery, undertook three fieldtrips and attended 14 online sessions.

They also staged six sustainability events that attracted a total of around 300 attendees, in addition to co-designing the Climate Collective event.

Congratulating the young sustainability ambassadors on their Climate Collective event, Generation Glas project coordinator Conor Haugh said: “Generation Glas is about leveraging the energy, passion and potential that young people in the whole of society in Ireland can bring to pressing environmental issues. The programme recognises the capacity of youth to galvanise their local communities and empowers them with the expertise and confidence to be a key part of the solution to our climate challenges. We’re looking forward to seeing the young sustainability ambassadors going on to make further impact around climate action in their local communities by putting on more engaging events to connect with people, build networks and share their knowledge.”

Welcoming its continued partnership with BiOrbic, Marina Lambrakis from Foróige said: “We are very proud of our young members and their aptitude for becoming knowledgeable, confident ambassadors for sustainability. Their Climate Collective event is proof of how the new skills, knowledge, and self-belief they gained through the Generation Glas programme can help them make a difference.”

Generation Glas is a partnership between Foróige and BiOrbic, Bioeconomy SFI Research Centre, and features input from various other stakeholder groups. Generation Glas is an SFI Discover funded project.

Generation Glas will run for a second time starting in July 2024, with more information available on www.biorbic.com/generation-glas.



Above: Representatives from BiOrbic and Foróige youth projects in Glanmire, Mahon and Castletownbere, pictured at the Climate Collective event at Red Abbey Court in Cork City on 24 March to celebrate Generation Glas.

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e. GAA Green Clubs - Milltown GAA Westmeath



Milltown GAA Westmeath, working closely with local national schools as part of the national GAA Green Club Initiative

“The Green Club Programme was established by the GAA to support Gaelic Games clubs to take simple and effective sustainability actions in their grounds and day to day club activities. The Programme is structured around the themes of Energy, Water, Waste, Biodiversity and Travel & Transport and is designed to promote sustainability awareness and action in GAA clubs and communities. In our very rural county Westmeath location, for Milltown GAA, the Green Club journey commenced in 2021 with LED light upgrades at our club grounds. Subsequently, through the support of LAWPRO, the Local Authorities Waters Programme, the club were able to purchase a large number of native trees and shrub species for planting to enhance biodiversity and pollinator species in the club grounds. Through partnering with our key local stakeholders, Milltown National School, Emper National School, Moyvore National School and Gaelscoil an Choillín, we were able to get the youth of the club engaged on our project also. We gave a native tree to any student who requested one, and we also purchased biodiversity education signage to install on our club grounds to create greater awareness of the native plant and animal species in our locality.

In the coming years, the club will take part in various other waste, water and transport sustainability to improve the 'environmental performance' of our club at a local, grassroots level”

Milltown GAA have utilised the fantastic resources available on www.learning.gaa.ie/GreenClub to develop our actions to recognise Milltown as a 'Green Club'. There are five key themes in the toolkit, and below you will see an example of what these are.



WHAT IS THE GREEN CLUB TOOLKIT?

The GAA Green Club Toolkit is divided into five themes:



Energy

The Energy Toolkit contains advice on tracking your energy use and on making immediate savings through energy efficient behaviour. The Energy Toolkit also includes information on a range of medium- to long-term energy-saving and renewable energy projects, from clubhouse insulation through heat pumps to solar PV generation and LED floodlight upgrades.

The Energy Toolkit is designed for clubs who are interested in learning about energy savings opportunities or are at the early stages of planning energy actions. Clubs who have already carried out an energy audit and who have identified priority energy projects should contact a qualified independent

Water

The Water Toolkit contains advice and guidance on water conservation and quality in your club. The water conservation section of the toolkit includes a simple club house audit to help your Green Team identify areas where you can make water savings in your club and grounds. The toolkit also contains a water conservation action sheet, containing a range of short-, medium- and longer-term actions your club can choose from to conserve water in your clubhouse.

The water quality section of the toolkit focuses on measures you can take in your club to prevent contamination or pollution of water and waterways. It also suggests simple and engaging biodiversity and communication actions that you can take to enhance local waterways and to celebrate your club and community's water

Waste

The Waste Toolkit sets out a simple and straightforward pathway for clubs looking to reduce waste. It starts with simple audit guidance on measuring and recording waste and provides templates, advice and information for managing and segregating waste in your clubhouse and grounds.

The Waste Toolkit also includes guidance on further initiatives that clubs can undertake to reduce waste, including eliminating single-use plastics and organising a club gear swap. The practical guidance in the Waste Toolkit is complemented by posters and social media templates designed to raise awareness and encourage action among club members.

Building 'bug hotels' and looking after pollinators

Another initiative completed in 2023 was the installation of a biodiversity/pollinator friendly 'bug hotel' at our club grounds in Milltown. Completed in October 2023, the 'MEM Bug Hotel' opened for business for all our little insect friends who are now busily working away at Sean Doolin Park in Milltown.



Milltown's first 'community orchard'

In November 2023, the club were successful in being sponsored with 20 fruiting tree species, including apple, pear and plum, under the DC's (Data Centre's) for Bee's initiative. We used the funding from LAWPRO to develop signage to promote this initiative also. Following an assessment of suitable areas for planting biodiversity species, the Green Club committee created a plan for improving the tree, shrub and plant mix in these areas. An example of the biodiversity signage for creating awareness on some of our local fauna as part of our Green Club/ LAWPRO project at the club grounds. Bilingual signage (English and Gaelic) biodiversity awareness signage created uniquely for the Milltown.

National Tree Week - March 2024 - engagement with local national schools and the community by giving out free native tree species

Capacity building through the Green Club process

One of the keys steps enabling our projects to get across the line was the engagement, involvement, and volunteer commitment of a wide number of club and community stakeholders, especially our local schools and their wonderful students. By following the excellent resources from the Green Club online archive, we sought out on this 'capacity building' process through community mapping as outlined below. We are always looking for new volunteers for our Green Club committee, so if anyone would like to get involved know more, please do get in touch with treasurer.milltown.westmeath@gaa.ie

National recognition for our 'community orchard'

In recognition of our efforts to encourage bee's and biodiversity in our area, Milltown Green Club Committee were pleased to receive this certificate from the DC's for Bees initiative. We would hope this orchard will not only benefit biodiversity in our area, but will also encourage the students of our local schools to enjoy healthy fruit for years to come in the future.

Local remote working option for parents of local school children

In our rural area, we have also recognised there are limitations for parents of young school goers to remote work in the area adjacent to their children's schools. So we have created a 'remote working hub' in our community facility for anyone to book in and use. We have been recognised as 'digit innovators' in the upcoming national Digital Town awards in this regard see: [ie Digital Town Awards Finalists 2024 \(weare.ie\)](#) for more"

We hope that you enjoyed reading this issue the Department's ESD Newsletter. If you wish to receive it directly into your inbox every quarter, please [sign up](#) to the circulation list!