



An Roinn Oideachais
Department of Education

Education for Sustainable Development Newsletter

Welcome to the September 2024 issue and 16th publication of the Department of Education newsletter on **Education for Sustainable Development (ESD)**. We would like to thank all of those who have contributed. We hope that you enjoy this edition and will find inspiration, ideas, useful links and resources to help you to play your part in sustainable development.

You can read past issues of the newsletter [here](#) and [subscribe](#) to receive it directly into your inbox every quarter!

ESD in County Meath and Monaghan– Calling All Educational Institutions!

Do you attend, work for or collaborate with an educational establishment or institution in **Meath** and **Monaghan** that is taking action for sustainable development? If so we would love to hear from you for the next 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 see it featured in future issues of the ESD Newsletter, please get in touch by emailing ESD@education.gov.ie. You will receive a **€500 One-For-All voucher** from the Department of Education if we publish your piece!

1. ESD to 2030 Updates



a. ESD to 2030 – Funding for Organisations Delivered

The Department has delivered €253,910 in funding to 12 organisations for ESD projects on foot of a call issued in the May ESD Newsletter.

Many of the funded Projects include the development of ESD resources and the roll-out of teacher CPD in ESD. Funding has also been delivered to increase the number of schools participating in a range of ESD programmes such as Wool in Schools, Wise Water, Global Citizenship Schools One Minute Video project, Design your Future City project and the Rubbish Film Festival. We wish all the organisations well with their projects and look forward to hearing more about them during the year.

Further details on the grantees and projects is available on the [Funding Call](#) section of the ESD to 2030 webpage.

[Back to top](#)

b. **NEW** - ESD to 2030 – Funding Call for Schools

The Department of Education is inviting applications from primary and post primary schools for funding of up to €2,500 to support the implementation of Education for Sustainable Development (ESD).

The application form is available on the [ESD to 2030 webpage](#). The closing date for receipt of applications is **Friday, 11 October 2024**.

There is a total fund of €600,000 available. This is a competitive process and not all schools who apply will be successful. Priority will be given to schools who meet the

criteria set out in the application form, including schools who have published their [Sustainability Policy Statement](#), in accordance with the School Sector Climate Action Mandate (see d. below).

Free Workshops on how to apply to the funding call for schools are being offered by the Irish Schools Sustainability Network – see details below:

Irish Schools Sustainability Network	Leading Education for Sustainable Development: Workshop on Sustainability Toolkit and Funding	Primary	11 September 2024 15:00 – 16:00	Register here
Irish Schools Sustainability Network	Leading Education for Sustainable Development: Workshop on Sustainability Toolkit & Funding	Post-Primary	11 September 2024 19:00 - 20:00	Register here

[Back to top](#)

c. Department of Education - Publication of Reports



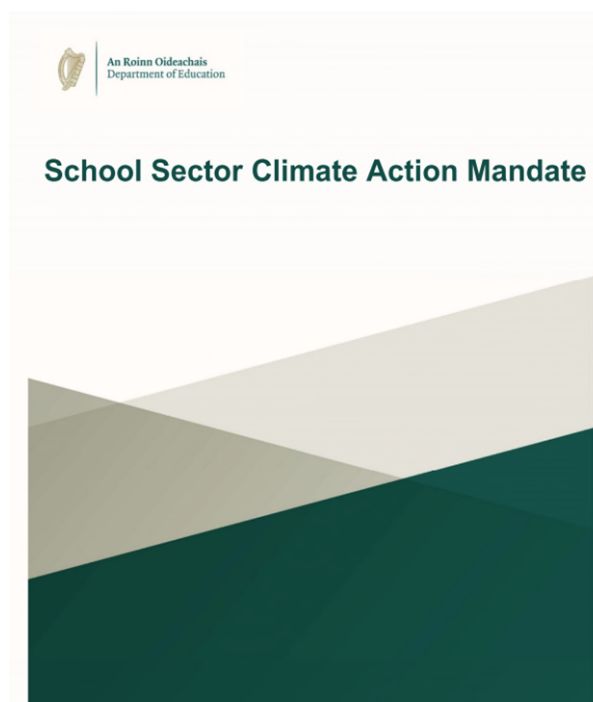
The Department has published the new report '**Living today for a better tomorrow: Insights into effective practice in education for sustainable development in early learning and care settings and schools**'

Insights in the report are derived from inspections conducted during the period January to June 2023 and showcases a selection of the practices to support ESD that were observed. The report concludes that *“to foster children and young people’s competencies related to sustainability, it is crucial that ELC settings and schools have a comprehensive understanding of the multifaceted nature of sustainable development”*. The spotlights in the report give an insight into the practical ways in which this can be achieved.

You can read the report [here](#)

[Back to top](#)

d. School Sector Climate Action Mandate



Read the **School Sector Climate Action Mandate** [here](#).

The **Sustainability Toolkit** published in September 2022 was developed to support schools in adopting a Sustainability Policy Statement in accordance with the Mandate.

The Sustainability Toolkit consists 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 who have published their Sustainability Policy Statement on their school website will be prioritised for ESD to 2030 funding.

See some examples of school Sustainability Policy Statements:

Árdscoil na Mara's Sustainability Policy Statement at:
<http://ardscoilnamara.ie/page/Policies/64238/Index.html>

Ballymoney National School's Sustainability Policy Statement at:
https://www.ballymoneyns.com/files/ugd/fef759_c43ba4ab9dfe4820b30ad5ba5cfc7314.docx?dn=Sustainability%20Policy.docx

Queen of the Universe N.S's Sustainability Policy Statement can be found at:
<https://www.queenoftheuniversens.com/policies>

Kilroe Primary School's Sustainability Policy Statement can be viewed at www.kilroens.ie

We plan to add links to more Sustainability Policy Statements on the [ESD to 2030 webpage](#) and in the ESD Newsletter in due course.

If you have already published your statement and would like to share it, let us know – ESD@education.gov.ie

[Back to top](#)

e. ESD CPD

The ESD-related CPD list on our webpage has now been updated. Please see the new version now published at [ESD CPD](#).

Note: Teachers can apply for a Refund of Fees for programmes related to Sustainability in accordance with Circular 5/2024: [gov - Teacher Fee Refund Scheme 2023 \(www.gov.ie\)](#)

If you are an organisation that provides ESD-related CPD for teachers and would like to include your programme on the above list, let us know at ESD@education.gov.ie

f. Curriculum Developments

Leaving Certificate – Climate Action and Sustainable Development

Leaving Certificate Climate Action and Sustainable Development aims to develop students' capacity for informed and meaningful action for a just and sustainable world as they engage with key sustainability challenges, including the climate crisis.

More specifically, Leaving Certificate Climate Action and Sustainable Development aims to empower students to build their understanding of a number of interconnected core concepts and principles related to climate action and sustainable development; apply their learning in exploring, designing, and taking informed action on key sustainability challenges, including the climate crisis; manage complexity using critical thinking, making informed decisions based on scientific evidence and grounded in human rights and principles; develop their competence in thinking systematically, considering different perspectives and analysing the root causes of global issues; respond reflectively to environmental challenges and opportunities, and realise the many benefits of place-based and outdoor learning.

Climate Action and Sustainable Development, and Drama, Film and Theatre Studies will be rolled out to a small network of schools, called Phase One Schools, in 2025. The introduction of these exciting subjects provides greater choice for students to better reflect their range of interests and support the development of a wider range of talents and skills.

The new specification is available at: [Climate Action and Sustainable Development | Curriculum Online](#)

Primary – Social and Environmental Education

Social and Environmental Education (SEE) is one of the five broad curriculum areas in the new Primary Curriculum Framework which was launched in March 2023.

Social and Environmental Education contributes to children's understanding and development of the interconnected historical, geographical, and societal dimensions and processes of life.

It supports children's awareness, appreciation and understanding of the world through learning about the rich diversity of peoples: their experiences, cultures, religions, beliefs, and environments in different times, places and circumstances. It helps children to develop an understanding of the human and natural environments and the relationship between them.

Through Social and Environmental Education, children develop the attitudes, concepts, dispositions, knowledge, skills, and values that motivate and empower them to become informed and active citizens who promote a more sustainable future. This is made more meaningful and empowering through children's active identification, exploration and investigation of local, national, and global challenges

and opportunities, past and present. Hence, children come to an understanding and appreciation of their inherent rights and responsibilities as custodians of this planet.

Public consultation on the draft SEE specification commenced in March 2024 and concluded in June 2024. The feedback gathered in the consultation process is being analysed and will be reported upon, and will help to finalise the new curriculum for primary schools.

It is expected that the new SEE curriculum will be introduced from the 2025-2026 school year and implementation will be on a phased basis. The timing and pacing of implementation from September 2025 and the supports necessary for schools are being considered by the department, Oide, NCSE and the NCCA.

[Back to top](#)

g. Solar Panels for Schools Programme

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 20 August 2024, 1505 (92%) of schools have expressed an interest in the scheme through the School Hub. Of those, 1141 schools have awarded contracts and 555 schools have confirmed that they have had their PV installed.

Congratulations to the team in the Department's Planning and Building Unit who won at the 9th Annual Civil Service Excellence and Innovation Awards in the category of *Climate Action and Sustainable Government* for this project.

[9th Civil Service Excellence and Innovation Awards - csrenewal.per.gov.ie](https://csrenewal.per.gov.ie)

[Back to top](#)

h. SDG Posters and Information Flyers 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 **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.



[Back to top](#)

i. Meet the New ISSU Sustainability Officer!



“My name is Orla Quigley and I am the Oifigeach Inbhuanaitheachta (Sustainability Officer) of the Irish Second-Level Students’ Union (ISSU) for the 2024/25 Coiste Gnó term.

A little bit about me, I am 16 years old and from County Dublin. I am a Youth Activist working predominantly in the areas of sustainability and climate justice. I was recently

elected as the Oifigeach Inbhuanaitheachta and I will be in this position until July 2025! This means I take overall responsibility for actions surrounding sustainability and climate justice within and on behalf of the ISSU. I also ensure student voice is recognised in the implementation of the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDG’s). I have a lot of plans this year regarding sustainability in our union including improving transport in rural areas, women in sport and supporting Green School Committees.

I believe that together, we can make small yet impactful changes that will greatly benefit our communities, young people, and students. One of my key priorities for

the coming year is Education for Sustainable Development (ESD). As a member of the Department of Education Advisory Group on ESD, I am committed to engaging students in vital sustainability projects. I am especially motivated to ensure that sustainability is accessible and equitable for everyone. This commitment drives my work not only as an ISSU officer but also as a passionate youth activist! If you have any questions or ideas about sustainability, I encourage you to reach out to me at sustainability@issu.ie I would be delighted to hear from you!"



[Back to top](#)

2. Around the country – Louth and Mayo

a. ESD at Kilroe Primary School – A Small School with a Big Green Heart!



Kilroe Primary School is a picturesque country school located on the kindly, contentious Galway-Mayo boarder. A love of nature has always been at the heart of this school, and this has been fostered and passed down lovingly from previous generations. Planting trees to mark the passing of loved ones, retired friends and local families has always been a fond tradition. Since the introduction of their Outdoor Classroom, 'Cara Dúlra', in 2021 the school has engaged in many outdoor projects, the latest involving local Forest School 'Go Wild'; embedding nature connection into everyday learning. With the help of green-fingered parents, pupils, staff and Heritage in School advisors, the area is now dedicated to Education for Sustainable Development and Wellbeing. Apple trees are the main pollinators with perennials attracting mayfly, butterflies, bees, bugs and many other little visitors. A willow dome is the most sought-after refuge during the all-popular 'hide and seek' games and a closely monitored bird table is helping to document bird types in the area. Planting flowers and vegetables has been common practice for this school for years with raised beds always working hard. Wildflower clay balls are the children's newest contribution and they are eagerly awaiting their bloom!

Returning children to what is innate to them is a passion for this school. It is their hope that this deep grá for nature will foster a desire to care for it in the future as they become custodians of this earth. Although this is a small school, it has an important message to share; that hope in the form of love for nature can help dispel fear and eco anxiety in a world where children only know of a climate that is in crisis. This small school with a big green heart is making its voice heard...where there is love, there is hope!



Above: Pupils engaged in nature art with Forest School Leader Dianora from Go Wild Forest School.



Above: MEP Maria Walsh officially opening the space at the first 'Kilroe Wellbeing Community Day'.

Kilroe Primary School's Sustainability Policy Statement can be viewed at www.kilroens.ie

Editor's note: Congratulations to all at Kilroe Primary School – keep up the good work! A €500 One-For-All voucher to support ESD projects is on its way to you!

[Back to top](#)

b. ESD in County Mayo – 'Gunnera Tinctoria' Grazing Project



Comhairle Contae Mhaigh Eo
Mayo County Council



Old Irish Goat Conservation Grazing Project

Gunnera tinctoria or Giant Rhubarb is an alien invasive plant that was first introduced to Ireland from South America as an ornamental plant over 100 years ago. It is predominantly found in western coastal counties, where conditions are similar to those found in its natural habitat. It is spreading rapidly in coastal areas of Mayo, including Belmullet, Louisburgh, Curraun, Achill and Clare Island, and is a cause for concern.

Plant invasions pose a threat to ecosystems and are associated with significant economic costs, due to the impact on the services that ecosystems provide. Increasing concerns about the impacts of herbicides that are typically used for the control of invasive plants argues for more sustainable and environmentally compatible approaches.

Mayo County Council in partnership with the Old Irish Goat Society and University College Dublin has initiated a conservation grazing research project targeting *Gunnera tinctoria*. Having established that Old Irish Goats graze *Gunnera*, one of the aims of this project is to obtain data and information to accurately assess the efficacy of goat grazing to affect the long-term viability of the plant and successfully control it.

A series of experimental plots have been established which have invasive populations of *Gunnera* of similar age/size, along with comparable adjoining uninvaded areas. The impact of the goats on plant populations are assessed using a rotational grazing approach, where goat populations are cycled among invaded and uninvaded areas at various stages of growth, and the impact on plant performance measured. The effects of goat feeding on the viability of *Gunnera* seeds is also assessed. The plots are

monitored using a time-lapse camera to record and monitor the behaviour of the goats and their grazing activity.

This project is providing very useful results and data on the potential role of Old Irish Goats in controlling *Gunnera*. Long-term research and monitoring will be needed to accurately assess the efficacy of these animals to control *Gunnera*.

This project is supported by the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage through the National Parks and Wildlife Service's Local Biodiversity Action Fund.



c. ESD in County Louth

Dundalk Pilot Site: The Still

On Monday 24 June, Louth County Council celebrated the official opening of the Dundalk Pilot at a special event held at the Pilot site in the Museum Quarter.

The Dundalk pilot was officially opened by Cathaoirleach of Louth County Council, Kevin Callan, and Chief Executive of Louth County Council, Joan Martin.

Chief Executive of Louth County Council, Joan Martin, said: "The regeneration of this part of Dundalk will assist in the creation of a diverse, accessible, safe, inclusive and high-quality area that will increase health and well-being and deliver a sustainable urban space. It is wonderful to see the heritage of the town honoured as part of this project, with a former industrial site transformed into a peaceful, reflective sanctuary."

Louth County Council presented their three implemented 'Visionary Solutions' to the public for the first time:

- VS1 an Outdoor Learning Pod
- VS2 Outdoor Urban Green Learning space and a Sensory Garden for Health & Well-Being
- VS3 Sensor-equipped bike-stations

A significant feature of the Dundalk project is the relocation of staff car parking spaces to provide increased public space, and reduce climate exposure, noise and air pollution and environmental stress, which directly support the urban regeneration of the courtyard area.

The improved outdoor space is now known as: 'The Still'.

'The Still' provides a venue for use by all, and the name honours the heritage of this area as an old whiskey distillery, blending history with tranquillity. This unique name reflects both the distillation process and the calm, contemplative atmosphere of the garden. It's a tribute to the past, transforming an industrial site into a peaceful, reflective sanctuary.

VARCITIES [Health and Well-being platform](#) was also presented during the event. The platform will be showcased on the site's interactive touchscreen. With real-time data sourced from on-site sensors, the H&WB platform offers dynamic graphical representations of the site data including noise levels, air quality indices, carbon emissions, energy consumption and the monetary savings generated by the Museum's solar (PV) panels.



GenComm Energy Storage Project



Project Background

In March 2017, Project Gencomm secured Interreg North-West Europe funding of €9.3 million for a 3 year project. Project GenComm - GENerating energy secure COMMunities, comprises 10 Strategic Partners across the UK, Germany, France, Belgium and Ireland, with Belfast Met being the Lead Partner and 23 Associate Partners. Louth County Council is an associate partner in this project. Gencomm aims to answer the energy sustainability challenges facing remote communities across NE Europe through production and storage of renewable hydrogen.

Project Summary

Gencomm will develop 3 pilot facilities fuelled by Solar Power, Wind Power and Bioenergy to measure their ability to produce and store hydrogen, together with its viability as a sustainable energy solution for heat, power and fuel for remote communities across NW Europe. The hydrogen produced will be used to create power, heat and for use in transportation (both as a fuel and for fuel cells in batteries). Data from the 3 pilot sites will create a model, which will be used to create a web portal for the end user to assist in better energy planning in order to assure energy sustainability, autonomy and competitiveness.

A distinct difference in this project is that hydrogen will be produced from curtailed and restrained renewables i.e. when the grid is experiencing an overproduction. This excess electricity, rather than being wasted will be converted into hydrogen and stored remotely to be used for power, heat and transportation fuel. The hydrogen is stored in tanks and therefore no grid connection is required for use of this, making it a portable source of energy to serve remote communities or hydrogen vehicles.

Role of Louth County Council

As an Associate Partner Louth County Council is expected to technically supporting the communications and dissemination work package, support the development and utilise the Decision Support Tool (DST) and its roll out activities. This is fundamental for the development, validation and divulgation of the activities within the project. All associated partners are expected to become ambassadors of the project within their network, hence improving the perspectives of hydrogen based renewably powered energy matrixes in their regions and across NWE communities. At the end of the project, associated partners will be invited to be the first users of the DST and to try to incorporate its results, when possible, to their main activities. Once the project has concluded, associated partners and partners will also be integrated in a GENCOMM association that continues to present the results of both, the DST and the pilot plants.

Read more at: [GenComm Energy Storage Project - Louth County Council \(louthcoco.ie\)](https://louthcoco.ie/GenComm_Energy_Storage_Project_-_Louth_County_Council)

[Back to top](#)

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 all across the country; unfortunately we can't include all the submissions in the ESD Newsletter but here are two great examples:

a. ESD at Ballymoney National School, West Cork

The pupils of Ballymoney National School have taken a number of initiatives to raise awareness about sustainability within their local community.

Community Leaflet



5th and 6th class conducted research, designed, and produced a community leaflet that provided information on recycling facilities, public transport options, their free little library, and various support activities available for all age groups in the area.

They reached out to the sustainability officer in a local business, Carbery Group Products, who generously sponsored the full printing costs of 500 leaflets. The pupils thoroughly enjoyed personally delivering these leaflets to houses throughout the village.

Models of Sustainable Houses

In an innovative educational approach to understanding insulation and heating systems, pupils constructed detailed models of sustainable homes using repurposed materials. These models incorporated advanced features such as solar panels and wind turbines for power generation and utilised air-to-water heat pumps for efficient

heating. The homes were meticulously insulated with double-glazed windows to minimize heat loss, and each was equipped with rainwater harvesting systems and vegetable gardens. Some pupils even incorporated cutting-edge building materials like hempcrete for the walls, reflecting modern sustainable construction practices. Additionally, many models included electric vehicle chargers and bicycles, emphasising sustainable transportation options.

These models were prominently displayed in the window of the local library to inspire and inform the broader community about the practical applications of sustainable living and renewable energy systems. This project not only fostered environmental awareness among the pupils but also contributed to a wider community dialogue on sustainability.



Free Little Library

In a heartwarming initiative aimed at promoting literacy and community engagement, the school has unveiled its latest sustainability project: a Free Little Library constructed entirely from repurposed materials. The eye catching Free Little Library stands as a testament to the school's commitment to environmental stewardship and community welfare. Designed and constructed and adorned with colourful artwork hand painted by parents, the fish bowl themed library radiates a sense of charm and warmth, inviting passersby to delve into its literacy treasures. The Free Little Library initiative not only encourages children to explore the joys of reading but also fosters a sense of ownership and pride in their community. This is a positive initiative that has brought great excitement and pride to the school and to the village.



Read Ballymoney National School's Sustainability Policy Statement at [Policies | ballymoneyns.com](https://ballymoneyns.com/Policies/)

Editor's note: Congratulations to all at Ballymoney National School – keep up the good work! A €500 One-For-All voucher to support ESD projects is on its way to you!

[Back to top](#)

b. ESD at Queen of the Universe N.S. in Bagenalstown, Co. Carlow



Queen of the Universe N.S. in Bagenalstown, Co. Carlow are very proud of the work they do encouraging sustainability to have a positive impact on the environment.

“We believe involving children to undertake small actions like composting can have a big impact. We try to empower them to be involved in their locality and to understand that they can play a part in creating a better community and thus a better world”.

“We do this by giving them ownership and responsibilities for sustainable actions so that they realise that they can make a difference. This is part of our school’s sustainability journey to get children more connected with nature and their surroundings and to be motivated to continue this contribution as they get older”.

“We try to reduce our carbon footprint by reducing our waste & composting. Carlow County Council supplied our school with a 5 Litre Food Waste Kitchen Caddy for each class. There are many items like apple cores & banana skins that are left over from lunches daily, so we collect these compostable items from each class to compost. We have used the traditional composting system and more recently The HotBin composter (<https://www.quickcrop.ie/hotbin-composters/>) Both systems are effective but they do require careful management so they function correctly. This school year, we invested in a new Irish product, the Harp Renewables Home Composter <https://harprenewables.com/harp-home-composter/> Ms. Salter’s First Class took responsibility for it and gathered the food waste from each class. This has resulted in many Eureka moments as everyone is amazed at how our food waste was transformed to nutrient-rich compost in 24 hours! As our Harp Home Composter is such an outstanding success, Mr. Cox travelled to Bloom @bordbiabloom to join the panel discussion on “Food waste to fertiliser” How to create a circular economy’ at the Sustainable Living Stage”.

“We already had a circular economy with our school hens, using their eggs to make scones to sell to staff and then to buy hen food from the profits. Now we have another circular economy started as our food waste is transformed into compost! We would encourage all schools to join this food waste problem solving solution too!”



Queen of the Universe N.S’s Sustainability Policy Statement can be found at:
<https://www.queenoftheuniversens.com/policies>

Editor’s note: Congratulations to all at Queen of the Universe N.S - keep up the good work! A €500 One-For-All voucher to support ESD projects is on its way to you!

[Back to top](#)

4. Competitions

a. ESD to 2030 Art Competition for Schools Launched!



The Minister for Education, Norma Foley TD has launched the **ESD to 2030: Art Competition for Schools** to encourage students to create an artwork exploring Education for Sustainable Development under the theme '**What Sustainability Means to Me**'. The aim of this competition is to encourage students to think creatively about how ESD is implemented in their school or local area and raise awareness of this important area. Entries are welcomed from all individual primary and post-primary students. The competition will remain open until Friday, 1 November 2024.

For more details and how to enter, see [ESD Art Competition for Schools](#)

[Back to top](#)

b. September 2024 ESD Newsletter Competition for Schools

To enter the September 2024 ESD Newsletter competition, simply answer the question below, selecting A, B or C and email your answer with the subject line 'ESD Newsletter Competition September 2024' along with the name of your school to ESD@education.gov.ie by 5pm on Friday, 18 October 2024.

Question: The 17 Sustainable Development Goals were adopted by all United Nations Member States in what year?

A: 2017

B: 2015

C: 2021

The winning entry will be announced when the competition closes on Friday, October 25 and published in the December 2024 issue of the ESD Newsletter.

The prize is a €500 One-For-All voucher for the school to use for its ESD work.

Details can also be found on the [ESD Newsletter Competition](#) webpage.

c. Winner of May ESD Newsletter Competition

The **winner** of the May ESD Newsletter Competition 'How Well do you Know Your SDGs' and a €500 one-for-all voucher for ESD in their schools is St. Anne's Special School Roscrea.

Congratulations!

[Back to top](#)

d. Winner of December 2023 ESD Newsletter National Parks Competition



Barraduff N.S who won our National Parks Competition in the December 2023 ESD Newsletter, enjoyed a wonderful visit to Killarney National Park on 21 May 2024. The 5th class pupils were given a guided tour of the park by the NPWS.

Editor's Note: Congratulations to Barraduff N.S., we are delighted that you enjoyed your prize. Thanks to the National Parks and Wildlife Service for their support. To find out more about our National Parks, see here: [National Parks of Ireland - Where Nature Speaks](#)

[Back to top](#)

e. YEA 2025 – ECO-UNESCO



ECO-UNESCO is Ireland's Environmental Education and Youth Organisation that works to conserve the environment and empower young people.

ECO-UNESCO's Young Environmentalist Awards 2025

With environmental issues at the forefront of young people's concerns, now is the perfect time to support them to take action to protect our environment. The Young Environmentalist Awards is a free programme that supports and encourages young people (aged 10-18) from all over Ireland to get involved in an environmental action project. Through taking action, young people develop greater knowledge and awareness of a range of environmental issues as well as developing important life skills and core competencies. Young people feel encouraged and inspired to take part in making the world a better place and are rewarded with a chance to attend the finals and showcase in May 2025.

Key dates:

Registration opens now until 22 November 2024 on yea.ie

Project submissions due by 12 February 2025

ECO-UNESCO's ECO-Week 2024

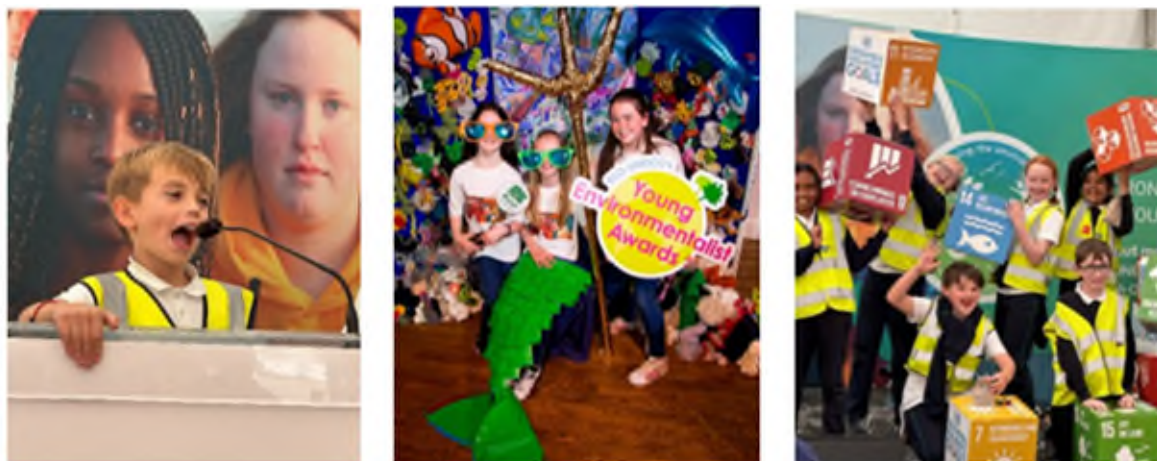
ECO-UNESCO's ECO-Week 2024 will be running alongside SDG week! From 23-27 September ECO-Week will consist of 10 different snappy sustainability sessions which will be available for schools, individual young people, youth groups and even after-school clubs to join virtually and tune in live. ECO-Week will have two groups one for young people aged 8-12 and the other for those aged 13-18. Each session will be exploring a different sustainable development goal. ECO-Week provides young people a unique opportunity to explore current environmental concerns through the experiences and knowledge being passed down by guest speakers and organizations that are doing wonders in the environmental field.

This ECO-Week event also provides an opportunity for the invited speakers to highlight the impact of their work and raise awareness on how to take action to protect the environment. Many of the workshop topics during ECO-Week can help

provide further inspiration, project ideas, and support to participants for the Young Environmentalist Awards (YEA) 2025.

To book your spot now, visit [ECO-UNESCO's Eventbrite](#)

To stay up to date on all things YEA and ECO-Week follow us on Instagram @ecounesco and @youngenvironmentalistawards



YEA Judge Aoife Cannon from SEAI's Education & Youth Programme tells us about being involved in the Young Environmental Awards 2024

"It was almost 4pm when they filed into the judges' room, all 6 of them decked out in their Transition Year Class of '24 hoodies. While chatting quietly among themselves they attached a memory stick to the laptop and up popped their presentation. These students from Pobal Scoil Neasain (PSN) Baldoyle or PSN in short, were the last team of the day to present at the Eco Den semi-finals of the Young Environmentalists Awards (YEA).

Elaine and her colleagues from Eco UNESCO who organise the Young Environmentalist Awards had asked SEAI to judge at the Eco Dens – a perk of being a sponsor. And here we were about to hear what sustainability and environmental endeavours PSN had undertaken over the past few months.....

"We realised our waste management system needed improvements, big time. So we did a map of the whole school, the number of bins, where they were, what was in them" starts Dahlia

Hannah Mae adds *"we're planning a clothes swap – tackling the fast fashion issue in our school while also raising money for new recycling bins"*.

It's Archie's turn and he tells us about their [Pocket Forest](#), a mini native forest about the size of 2 car parking spaces. A montage of photos and creative artwork helped us to picture this small plot of biodiverse heaven in a suburban school yard on the northside of Dublin city.



Above: PSN students mapping out their Pocket Forest for their YEA

Waiting patiently outside the judging room was their teacher. All judges commended the students for their project and hard work, but their teacher deserves it in equal measures, if not more. It was evident these young people had her unwavering support throughout their YEA journey from the start of this academic year.

It wasn't surprising to see PSN involved in an environmental project. This school has long been committed to sustainability and improving the environmental credentials of the whole school community. And, as frequently is the case, it's down to a few passionate teachers who mentor and encourage students, attend [SEAI](#) training courses and report their energy use annually. All of which led to PSN receiving a significant energy upgrade from SEAI and Department of Education in 2019.

Back in the judging room it's quiet now that students are all homeward bound. The judges sit back and reflect on a day that lifted spirits and gives hope for the future"



Above: PSN students presenting at the YEA Eco-Dens

[Back to top](#)

f. Biodiversity in Schools - Golden Bee Champions 2024



St. Molaga's National School in Balbriggan were recently announced as the Golden Bee Champions 2024 as part of the Biodiversity in Schools pollinator project competition.

The competition recognises schools who are making a significant contribution to promoting biodiversity on their school grounds and creating habitats for pollinators such as bees, butterflies, moths, and other insects where they can thrive.

St. Molaga's were recognised for the abundance of initiatives undertaken to protect pollinators such as pollinator friendly trees and plants, wildflowers, bee hotels and no-mow meadows. The school also emphasises biodiversity education and awareness raising as part of the curriculum.

St. Molaga's explained: "a beekeeper associated with our locality, is the patron saint of our school and a beehive features on our school crest.

It is perhaps fitting then, that we have been awarded the Golden Bee trophy for our efforts as a whole school in looking after the bees in our area. We have incorporated work on the Sustainable Goals into all that we have done in our school garden and grounds.

We have taken lots of small steps to help our environment and enhance the biodiversity of our school grounds.

As part of our work on the 9th Green School Flag (Global Citizenship Travel) we worked on four specific Global Goals.

Goal 3: Good Health and Wellbeing

Goal 10: Reduced inequalities

Goal 11: Sustainable cities and communities

Goal 15: Life on land

Initiatives included promoting walking, and cycling/scooting to school. Classes with the best results (most walkers/cyclists) could win the Golden Boot or the Golden Bike awards.

We collaborated with our local community in promoting Fresh Air Friday, an initiative to encourage our whole local community to leave the car at home on Fridays.

We raised awareness of the health benefits of walking and cycling to school and held an action day in our school for parents and members of the community to visit. We had lots of projects focusing on the importance of developing sustainable cities and towns (Goal 11) with areas for play and recreation and safe routes for walking and cycling.

In addition we continued to develop our school garden (Goal 3). In our garden we grow fruit and vegetables as well as pollinator friendly flowers. Our garden featured on News2Day last September.

We have a school pond, which this year had frog spawn (Goal 15) for the first time. We have bee hotels for solitary bees, we have a wild area with nettles, we have a no mow area, we have bat boxes and bird boxes! All of these initiatives have helped to encourage wildlife into our garden. We were delighted this year to find a rare 'Cuckoo flower' in our no mow patch and this flower attracts the rare Orange Tipped butterfly too.

This year we also started a wormery so that we will have our own compost for the garden. We feed the worms with the contents of the brown bins in the classrooms. (Goal 11)

We were delighted to be awarded Nature Hero status in May for our work in promoting biodiversity and encouraging actions to help it. We are one of only 43 schools in the entire country to achieve this award.

In June of this year we were also crowned with the Golden Bee Award. This award recognised our efforts in promoting pollinators, the judges commented; *'They've done exceptional work to help pollinators at their school including no mow meadows, solitary bee homes, orchard, pond and pollinator-friendly planting.'* This award means that we are Ireland's most bee-friendly school.

We at St Molaga's are very proud of our efforts this year, and think it fitting that we are Bee Champions. We are sure that even St Molaga himself would be pleased"

Congratulations to St. Molaga's NS!

Find out more about the Biodiversity in Schools programme here: [Biodiversity in Schools](#)



Above: Amanda Glancy, Director of Corporate Affairs SIRO, presenting teacher Cliona Brennock and her class with the Gold Bee. Also pictured is Mark Nolan, Director Biodiversity in Schools and Catherine Mullan, SIRO Sustainability Specialist.

"St. Molaga,

[Back to top](#)

g. Biodiversity in Schools – Nature Hero Awards

Nature Hero Awards are open for registrations - win a school garden makeover worth €10,000!



The Nature Hero Award is Ireland's largest outdoor learning award across the education sector. It is a mark of excellence for a school that recognises exceptional work by young people and teachers to help nature.

The aim of the achievement is to create an educational space that nurtures a love of nature, develops a knowledge of our biodiversity and encourages action to help it locally. It covers many topics from nature conservation to school gardening, ecoliteracy to responsible citizenship as well as physical and mental wellbeing.

The awards have been refreshed for 2024 with a new, more accessible application form to welcome more schools starting on their biodiversity journey.

There's still lots of great prizes to be won including a €10,000 school garden makeover, thanks to our partner Glenveagh Homes.

The award is open to preschools, primary schools, secondary schools within the Republic of Ireland but spaces are limited.

To register, please visit: <https://www.biodiversityinschools.com/nature-hero-awards.html>

h. Sustainable Development Goals Art Competition. County Louth

Over the last two years, the Louth Library service and Louth County Council's Climate Action Team have run a children's art competition to celebrate the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

The first National Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) week in Ireland was in September 2022. The art competition was launched to be part of this week. The aim

is to highlight the SDGs and to raise awareness of them, among school children in county Louth.

The first year, the focus was on Goal 13, Climate Action. Children had to produce a picture or painting around this theme. To accompany the competition advertisement, teachers were sent material on where the children could find information about the SDGs, specifically Goal 13.

Last year, the focus was on on Goal 17, Affordable and Clean Energy.

This year, it's back to Goal 13, Climate Action Again as this is a pressing topic for the teams from within the Louth County Council.

Year on year, this competition has gone from strength to strength with great engagement from local children in County Louth.



SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS (SDG) WEEK 2023

CHILDREN'S ART COMPETITION

CATEGORY 1:
JUNIOR INFANTS - 2ND
CLASS

CATEGORY 2:
3RD - 6TH CLASS

As part of Ireland's annual Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) Week, Louth County Council is holding an Art Competition.

Theme:



Rules:

- Artwork may include drawings, sketches and paintings
- Entries must be submitted on an A4 page and must have the artist's name, class and school written clearly on the back
- One entry per student
- Entries must be accompanied by the art competition callout document, which must be signed by the class teacher

1ST PRIZE

€50 Eason voucher

2ND PRIZE

€30 Eason voucher

3RD PRIZE

€15 Eason voucher

For more information, see the callout document attached



[Back to top](#)

5. Programmes and Resources

a. Peace Heroines – Resource for Schools



The new interactive digital exhibition peaceheroines.org has been launched.

This new engaging education resource is specially created to give young people authentic female role models and teach them strategies to rethink power, become active citizens and peace-builders.

The website features the inspirational stories of individual peace women and cross-community organisations from Northern Ireland and internationally. It's designed to integrate with the school curriculum, aimed at 11 – 14 year olds, with [curriculum linked tasks](#) for students that encourage discussion, debate and creativity.

There is also an invitation to [Add your Voice](#) and nominate your local peace heroine, upload her portrait and share her story, creating a living archive and legacy education resource for future generations.

The project was sparked by a timely conversation at the United Nations back in 2019. The then Irish Ambassador to the UN Geraldine Nason-Byrne, revealed to me that the pivotal role of women in the Northern Ireland Peace Process is a key United Nations case study. When I returned home I reached out to schools North and South and discovered that this key story is missing from the curriculum.

Since the printed [Peace Heroines](#) exhibition launched in September 2022, it has toured the world opening hearts and minds, from the Northern Ireland Assembly in Belfast to the US Congress, Áras an Uachtaráin, Leinster House, United Nations in New York, Derry Tower Museum, Linen Hall Library, Dundalk County Museum, Enniskillen Castle, and more. On Brigid's Day 2024, Ambassador Fiona Flood launched the South American tour at the Irish Embassy in Brazil. Our peace activists are truly making waves worldwide!

This new interactive education resource is a collaboration between the [Herstory Education Trust](#), with the Nerve Centre and National Museums NI. The project is funded by the Irish Department of Foreign Affairs Reconciliation Fund, the Irish Department of Culture's Co-Operation with Northern Ireland Scheme, the Ireland Funds of Great Britain, and the Integrated Education Fund.

[Back to top](#)

b. Revitalising Multilateralism for a Sustainable Future – Free Course



International cooperation and collective action are needed more than ever; yet our existing systems of global governance weren't designed for the complex, interconnected, and rapidly-changing world in which we live.

It's time to revitalise and reimagine multilateralism for the 21st century.

On 22-23 September, the United Nations will host the Summit of the Future, a “once-in-a-generation opportunity” to reframe global governance for the future. To help you prepare for this unprecedented event, the SDG Academy has launched [Revitalizing Multilateralism for a Sustainable Future](#), a new, free online course.

In this unique course, SDG Academy Director Patrick Paul Walsh will guide you through the past, present, and future of the global development agenda, examining the Summit's five Chapters, 11 policy briefs, and three Compacts with the aid of renowned leaders in the field of sustainable development.

After the Summit, new modules will be added to discuss its outcomes, as well as preparations for the UN World Social Summit in 2025.

How do we cooperate better to deliver on our shared goals? How do we better meet the needs of the present while also preparing for the challenges of the future? Find out in [Revitalizing Multilateralism for a Sustainable Future](#).

Join us today: <https://bit.ly/RM4SF>

Note: The [SDG Academy](#) is the flagship education initiative of the UN Sustainable Development Solutions Network (SDSN), with a mandate to create the best freely available educational content on sustainable development. The SDG Academy works with global experts on sustainable development from around the world on the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), equipping the next generation of sustainable development practitioners to take on the complex challenges facing our

planet and people. Since 2014, the SDG Academy has reached over 1,000,000 enrolments in more than 190 countries and territories

[Back to top](#)

c. Free Global Citizenship Education Resources, Workshops and Events for Primary School Teachers



The Global Village team are delighted to announce **a new series of professional development opportunities for primary school teachers in the 2024/2025 school year!** Whether you are new to **Global Citizenship Education (GCE)** or have a long-term interest and commitment to teaching children about global themes, Global Village have something to offer you!

The website www.globalvillageschools.ie hosts a series of curriculum-linked resources for exploring GCE in the primary classroom, including:

- **‘Join the Dots’**: a two-minute animation with an accompanying curriculum-linked activity pack, for introducing the concept of Global Citizenship Education to junior and senior classes. Available in English and as Gaeilge.
- **‘The Promise’**: two curriculum-linked activity packs exploring the themes of environmental degradation and stewardship, and action and hope for the future - one for junior classes and one for senior classes, to accompany the picture book ‘The Promise’ by Nicola Davies, illustrated by Laura Carlin. Coming soon as Gaeilge.
- **‘The Day War Came’**: two curriculum-linked activity packs exploring the themes of war, conflict, migration, integration and inclusion - one for junior classes and one for senior classes, to accompany the picture book ‘The Day War Came’ by Nicola Davies, illustrated by Rebecca Cobb. Coming soon as Gaeilge.
- A **Padlet** listing a range of Global Citizenship Education resources by curriculum subject and by global themes

In the 2024/2025 school year, Global Village are offering:

- **Whole Staff In-school Workshops, all year** – curriculum-linked and tailored to the needs and interests of your staff, offered across the island of Ireland, email us to book a date that suits you. Topics offered include: An Introduction to Global Citizenship Education; Global Citizenship Education across the Primary Curriculum; Whole School Approaches to Global Citizenship

Education; Active Learning Methodologies and Action for Global Citizenship Education

- **Education Support Centre Workshops (see ESCI list of course in the CPD section of the ESD Newsletter)**
- **Weekly GCE&Tea! An online drop-in Community of Practice**
- **Annual Teach Meet: Limerick, February 2025**
- **Annual School Leadership Symposium: Dublin, April 2025**
- **Outdoor and GCE Events: Co. Laois, June 2025**
- **Certified Summer Course: Dublin, July 2025**
- **Bursaries for primary school teachers completing the [Certificate in Global Citizenship Education](#): Maynooth University, apply by 30 August 2024**

For more information, visit www.globalvillageschools.ie and subscribe to the Global Village e-newsletter by emailing info@globalvillageschools.ie

Global Village is the 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 organisations: Dublin City University (DCU), Irish National Teachers' Organisation (INTO), Irish Primary Principals' Network (IPPN) and Trócaire.

[Back to top](#)

d. Global Action Plan - Workshops and Resources in 2024-25



Changing Lives;
Changing the Planet

FREE online teacher CPD

- GCE and Climate Action webinar series – 17 September to 8 October 2024 - [Register now](#)

- Recycling & global justice (hosted by ISSN & ESCI) – 19 November 2024 - [Register now](#)
- Migration – 20 January 2025 - [Register now](#)
- Waste colonialism – 17 February 2025 - [Register now](#)
- Critical media literacy – 18 March 2025 - [Register now](#)

In-school workshops

The workshops equip primary and post-primary students to take climate action in school. Expert facilitators adapt workshop content to the needs of your school, leaving your students informed and ready to act! Topics include water, waste, biodiversity, and circular economies. Special schools-only pricing begins at €160 for a 90-minute session.

[Learn more on the website](#) or email schools@globalactionplan.ie.

ESD & GCE classroom supports

- [Just Action](#) - Primary & post-primary classroom activities and self-guided teacher training
- [Post-primary GCE Resources](#) from Global Action Plan
Whiteboard classroom activities for primary students on [fast fashion](#), [biodiversity](#), [waste](#) and [water](#)

[Back to top](#)

e. NEW Cloughjordan EcoVillage School Tour



A unique opportunity to strengthen your school's ESD - Promoting place-based education – outdoor learning – creative imagination – within community.

Following up on the new Ecovillage School Tour, Cloughjordan introduced in last March's ESD Newsletter, they are wholeheartedly bringing this vision to fruition and making sure it becomes the best possible support for schools in their endeavor to

enliven and deepen their approach to ESD within the curriculum and on their school grounds.

Cloughjordan's focus is to inspire and empower schools to take action informed by living examples of environmental, social, economic and cultural sustainability. This is achieved by inviting students and teachers to a full-day immersion in the Ecovillage, leading to meaningful action relevant to their school and rooted in their communities.

Come explore, eat local food and sow seeds with Cloughjordan!

For more information, please visit <https://www.thevillage.ie/education-group-visits/school-tours/> (in 'Our Packages' see 'Action Visit – 4 hour Deep Dive').

Cloughjordan's Ecovillage place-based education visit meets the criteria for ESD to 2030 funding for schools for which one may be interested in applying. Do not hesitate to get in touch with Cloughjordan's Education Officer (contact details below) - you will become informed advocates for your school and students will get to witness the ripple effects of their actions far and wide!

Contact: education@thevillage.ie – 086 085 15 76

[Back to top](#)

f. Dúlra Éireann – Free Instructional Videos

Dúlra Éireann, which is an environmental education organisation, has produced 12 instructional videos on ESD during the past academic year 2023-2024 with ESD funding. These videos are available for all to view on its website: www.engagewithnature.ie/esd

The 12 videos include areas such as growing organic vegetables in schools, composting in hot bins and New Zealand bins, maintaining raised beds over the holidays, managing a whole class sowing carrots in a raised bed as well as planning a scheme of work in the school garden covering junior to senior classes.

Each one of these videos was filmed in a different school garden involving teachers, SNAs and pupils.

In the next academic year 2024-2025, Dúlra Éireann will produce 10 more videos with ESD funding approval from the Department of Education. Each video will place a particular emphasis on encouraging biodiversity in practical ways in schools. They will cover areas such as: How to create pollinator-friendly zones in school grounds; investigation of a biodiverse hedge; the creation of habitats for invertebrates, etc.

Throughout the coming academic year, additional information and videos covering ESD topics in schools will be uploaded monthly to the website:
www.engagewithnature.ie.



Above: Dúlra Eireann working with Scoil Chaoimhín Naofa, Hollywood, County Wicklow working on the video on raised beds.

[Back to top](#)

g. Environmental Sustainability Leaders Platform – New Resource for Schools



The Irish Schools Sustainability Network (ISSN) and [Education for Sustainability](#) are launching the pilot phase of their new "**Environmental Sustainability Leaders Platform**" in September 2024.

The aim of the platform is to support schools in meeting some of the aims of the Climate Action Mandate for Schools and the 'ESD to 2030' national strategy, by offering in-depth information and guidance on curating and managing your school's approach to sustainability.

Learn more about the platform and pilot phase here: https://youtu.be/o_RQYuHcC_o

The pilot phase will initially be open to **post-primary schools only** and will look at the opportunities for improvements in your school's environmental sustainability through the lens of campus, community and curriculum.

Participation is via an online self-guided programme and it's flexible within the general timeframe of Sept-Dec. Occasional feedback and discussion and support sessions/meetings will be scheduled by the platform providers across the pilot phase. A certificate of programme completion will be provided.

If your post-primary school is interested in being part of this **FREE** pilot programme, a school representative(s), e.g. principal, deputy principal, BOM member, post-holder teacher, will be selected by your school to participate in the programme. Schools will be selected on a regionally-strategic basis in order that regional support clusters will be formed.

Please complete this form

<https://forms.monday.com/forms/6375da3a75f22c1aea68a246857c3f7d?r=euc1> to register your interest in the pilot phase or contact info@educationforsustainability.ie if you have any questions.

[Back to top](#)

h. Rediscovery Centre - Free Workshops for Primary Schools



The Rediscovery Centre is very excited to announce the launch of a new project, **Sustainable Schools: Achieving the SDGs through STEM!**

STEM education plays a crucial role in preparing young people for a future of complex challenges such as climate change and biodiversity loss. To this end, the Centre is offering a national programme of education workshops, backed up by an online toolkit, which integrates the [Sustainable Development Goals](#) into STEM education at primary school level.

Part 1: Education Programmes for Schools

This new offering will involve a series of 4 workshops to primary classes throughout the academic year, delivered in your school, or at a state-of-the-art centre in Ballymun.

The first workshop will introduce students to the topics of STEM, STEM skills, and the Sustainable Development Goals. Classes can then choose topics for the following three workshops: food, biodiversity, energy, waste, climate or water.

Classes will complete a science investigation on each theme after the workshop to explore how STEM can contribute towards a more sustainable world.

Part 2: Online Toolkit for Teachers

To support the workshop programmes, an online toolkit will be launched for teachers including how-to guides, tips for integrating the SDGs into STEM lessons, practical activities for classrooms, and examples from schools that have taken part in programmes.

The Rediscovery Centre wants to hear what **you** want to see on the toolkit! What will help you in the classroom?

[Share your thoughts here](#)

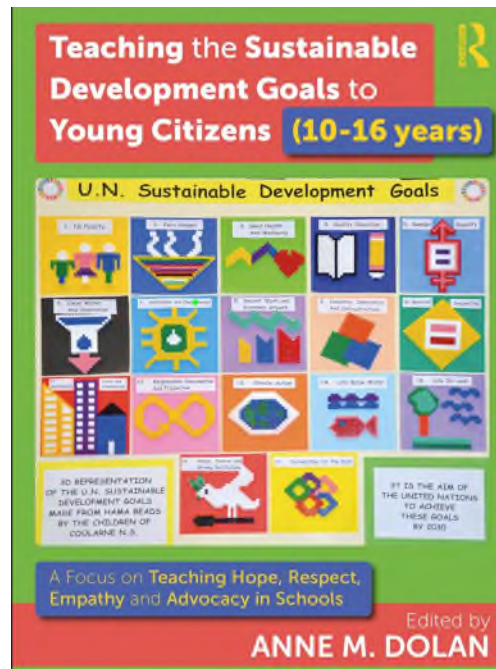
Secure Your Spot

Get ready for when bookings open soon! Limited spots are available, and they'll go fast. [Subscribe to the Education Newsletter](#) now to be the first to know.

The STEM & SDGs Project is kindly funded by Science Foundation Ireland.

[Back to top](#)

i. Teaching the Sustainable Development Goals to Young Citizens (10-16 years) – New Publication



Teaching the Sustainable Development Goals to Young Citizens (10-16 years): *A focus on teaching Hope, Respect, Empathy and Advocacy in schools.*

With the current climate and economic crises, education for sustainability has never been more critical. A new publication will greatly assist teachers to introduce complex sustainability issues into the classroom in an age appropriate manner.

This timely and essential book encourages readers to rethink our current values systems and to interrogate common assumptions about our world. Written for all educators with an interest in sustainability, chapters address several possible future scenarios for our planet, allowing readers to make more educated choices about sustainability and to transfer this knowledge to students within the classroom. This unique publication offers teachers a bridge between primary and post primary education through the lens of Education for Sustainability.

Each chapter focuses on a specific Sustainable Development Goal. Beginning with a brief historical and theoretical introduction to contextualise the goal, chapters then showcase the practical activities, case studies and exemplars that teachers can adopt when teaching. Topics explored include, but are not limited to:

- Poverty
- Renewable energy
- Climate change
- Peace and justice
- Human rights
- Access to education

This book is an essential classroom resource for any teacher or student teacher wishing to promote the Sustainable Development Goals and to teach for a better and brighter future. It can be purchased at your local bookshop (by order) or via Routledge and Amazon websites.

Dr. Anne Dolan is a lecturer in primary geography with the Department of Learning, Society and Religious Education in Mary Immaculate College. She is the author of *Powerful Primary Geography* and *Teaching Climate Change in Primary Schools*. Anne is the director of Mary Immaculate College's M.Ed. in Education for Sustainability and Global Citizenship.

For more information contact anne.dolan@mic.ul.ie

Editor's Note: The Department has **five free copies** of 'Teaching Climate Change in Primary Schools: An Interdisciplinary Approach' also by Anne Dolan to give away. If you would like a copy, please email ESD@education.gov.ie and the **first five entries** will receive a copy of this publication.

[Back to top](#)

j. Global Citizenship Schools - One-Minute Video Programme



On 23 May, President Michael D. Higgins and his wife Sabina welcomed over 50 students and their teachers from twelve schools from across the country to a gathering at Aras an Uachtarain. The schools from right across the country were a selection of those who participated in the Global Citizenship Schools – One-Minute Video programme in 2023/24. The students presented their videos and explained which SDG they had chosen as their theme and what they had done.

The students who attended had worked in their schools and classes to produce One-Minute Videos about what their school did to make the world a better place locally or globally during the school year. For the students attending, they had prepared a sentence or two explaining their work and intention to the President, and a

compilation video of many of the videos was shown on a large screen in the Áras much to the delight of all who had gathered. For the students who attended this was indeed a “pinch me moment” such was their excitement at their day in the Áras and we recorded the event in [photos](#) for all to see afterwards. The event was followed by refreshments and a guided tour of Áras an Uachtaráin. This Project was funded by an [ESD](#) grant from the Department of Education and their continuing support allows us to prepare for a bigger campaign in the new academic year.

See more of the videos on the Global Citizenship Schools website [here](#)



After the resounding success of the [2023 – 2024 One-Minute Video Campaign](#) , GCS are encouraged and excited to launch this new One-Minute Video Campaign for the new academic year, 2024 - 2025.

We are asking all schools to begin their planning for their video that we will share with all as examples to others of what our young active Global Citizens are doing to make our world a better place for all by taking concrete action as they prompt others to do likewise. For more on how your school can participate, visit the [website](#) where you will find all you need to prompt active participation of the students in your class or school.

Contact: Brian O' Toole 0872988930 presinterprovjustice@gmail.com

Editor's Note: A very big congratulations to all the schools involved and to the students who spoke so well about their projects at the event. The Department of Education was delighted to deliver ESD funding to Global Citizenship Schools for this great initiative.

k. BioBeo – New Videos for Schools



BioBeo EU project launches new animated videos including Beo's sing-along bioeconomy song

The BioBeo Horizon Europe project, promoting bioeconomy education in schools, has launched a series of videos to highlight the key themes of the food loop, forestry, life below water, interconnectedness, and outdoor learning. The project is led by UCD with other key Irish partners, Maynooth University and An Taisce Green Schools.

The aim of the animated storytelling videos is to introduce the concept of the bioeconomy through fun and engaging animations that illustrate how we can all participate in creating a sustainable world fostering understanding of environmental stewardship, innovation, circularity and a bioeconomy.

The videos are available at <https://www.biobeo.eu/project-outcomes/videos/> with other project outputs including comics, games, app and newsletter at <https://www.biobeo.eu/project-outcomes/> - further information for teachers and students will follow before the project ends in April 2025.

[Back to top](#)

I. An Taisce - Climate Ambassador Programme



The Climate Ambassador programme is an intergenerational school, college, work and community-based education and action programme with a difference: you get to save the planet! This year-long programme strikes the right balance between taking positive action to mitigate climate change and developing personal skills and a sense of empowerment to overcome climate anxiety.

An Taisce's dedicated Climate Action Team delivers in-person training in Climate Science, Solutions and Communications, as well as ongoing support for planning and

promoting initiatives that play to your strengths. Whether it's reducing food waste in the canteen, increasing biodiversity on the grounds, or using creative campaigns to get colleagues using active travel – there is huge scope for developing new skills! Applications open in September so why not feel part of something bigger by contributing to an exciting programme of events across the country for Climate Action Week. This year's Climate Action Week will take place from 14 – 20 October 2024. Information on this will also be published at www.climateambassador.ie

Applications are open until 20 October 2024 at www.climateambassador.ie – don't delay, apply today!

Throughout the year, you can attend regular Network Gatherings on themes such as habitat restoration, foraging for wild food, repair and upcycling, and sustainable business. We are strong advocates of the power of nature-based solutions to counter the climate crisis and maintain positive mental health, so there will be numerous opportunities to connect with the calming power of nature: tree-hugging not essential. Working together in this intergenerational setting with a diverse group of people will also equip young people with the self-confidence and agency to be leaders of active citizenship in their communities on issues that matter to them.

The programme is very versatile, and upon completion of a summary report of climate actions and communications undertaken, you will be invited to the prestigious Climate Ambassador Awards, where you will receive your certificate from An Taisce and be eligible for an outstanding achievement. But the biggest benefit of participation in this programme is getting to be part of a growing group of extraordinary people who are changing the narrative on Climate Action from one of loss and hardship, to one of immense opportunity that creates a happier, healthier future for all.

The Climate Ambassador Programme has a podcast series featuring thinkers and innovators from the fields of Irish Folklore, building, transport, rewilding, psychology, marine ecosystems and more. Listen back: <https://loom.ly/v5PMfN4>

For more information reach out to the Climate Action Team at caw@eeu.antaisce.org or visit www.climateambassador.ie to apply!



[Back to top](#)

m. **NEW** OECD Publication for Teacher Trainers



Are you a teacher trainer?

The OCE has published a new training protocol "**The Emotions of Climate Change**," designed to help teachers address the complex emotions students may feel towards climate change, known as "eco-anxiety." The resource is divided into several parts that guide trainers through activities designed to help teachers identify and express their emotions regarding climate change. The goal is to encourage the sharing of ideas and the implementation of practical solutions at various levels, from individual to global.

See: [The Emotions of Climate Change | Office for Climate Education \(oce.global\)](https://oce.global/)

[Back to top](#)

n. Blue Star Programme for Primary Schools



The Blue Star Programme is running for its fourteenth year over the **2024-2025 school term**.

The Blue Star Programme teaches primary school pupils about European cultures, diversity and the EU through creative activities and projects which complement the national primary curriculum. The aim of the Programme is to foster better knowledge and understanding of the EU and how it affects our lives among Irish primary pupils through fun, creative classroom projects and activities.

Since the first year of the Programme in 2011-2012, the Blue Star Programme has had just over 1,200 primary schools registrations across the country, as the Programme grows from strength to strength!

How does it work?

Pupils of all ages, from primary schools all over Ireland, are challenged to **get creative and think about Europe** by carrying out projects in relation to four key elements: **the history, geography, culture and creativity, and Institutions of the EU**.

The Blue Star Programme is designed to be as **curriculum friendly** as possible so it can fit in with lesson plans already in place. It also aims to draw in the wider school and local community to **engage and get involved**.

One of the advantages of this Programme is its **flexibility**: you, the teacher, can decide whether your entire school or individual classes participate. Most of all, this is a fun Programme that encourages pupils and teachers to be as creative as possible in their project work, particularly in the use of online technologies and tools.

Schools interested in participating:

If schools are interested in taking part in the Programme, or just to learn more about what is involved, they can visit www.bluestarprogramme.ie. Registration for the thirteenth year of the programme is open until **11 October 2022**, schools can register at the link below.

The Blue Star Programme Team

The Blue Star Programme is a venture of the Communicating Europe Initiative, supported by the Office of the Minister of State for European Affairs, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, the Department of Education and Skills, the European Commission Representation in Ireland, the European Parliament Liaison Office in Ireland and European Movement Ireland who are the National Implementation Body of the Programme.

6. CPD

a. Education Support Centres Ireland – Autumn CPD Itinerary



The new September – December 2024 CPD list has been published!

To read the full list of courses and register, please see: [Courses / CPD \(wtc.ie\)](#)

[Back to top](#)

b. Oide – ESD Updates



ESD in Oide Professional Learning Events

A number of upcoming professional learning events (PLEs) throughout 2024/25 will incorporate a focus on ESD. For example, a full day PLE is currently being planned

to take place this year aimed at teachers in schools selected to introduce the new Leaving Certificate *Climate Action and Sustainable Development* subject into their school curriculum from September 2025. Further, the role of ESD will form a core part of a full-day PLE event which will be offered to teachers of Junior Cycle *CSPE* in the Spring of 2025. This online event will focus on how the World Wise Global Schools *CSPE* resource can assist teachers in their planning on how to provide students with the opportunity to lead with actions, by learning knowledge and skills which relate to sustainable development and global citizenship. Schools will be notified in advance of when and how to register their teachers for these events.

A full day PLE event for teachers of senior cycle *Politics and Society* was held in Leinster House earlier this year. Entitled ‘Exploring Power, Decision Making and Sustainable Development in Politics and Society’, a range of speakers worked in person with the group of attending teachers. Among the speakers were Mohammad Naeem from Claremorris, Co. Mayo who has been serving as a United Nations Youth Delegate for Ireland since September 2023. Also in attendance was Dr Micheál Ó Cinnéide who was a member of the Expert Advisory Group with the Citizens’ Assembly on Biodiversity Loss in 2022/23, as well as members of the All-Oireachtas Group on Sustainable Development Goals and the Oireachtas Committee on Environment and Climate Action. Oide intends to provide further opportunities for teachers of *Politics and Society* to attend such PLEs related to sustainable development in early 2025.

To stay informed about further PLE events that have an ESD focus, and information on relevant supports, readers can join one or more of Oide’s mailing lists. Sign up today at oide.ie.

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

[Back to top](#)

c. M.Ed. in Education for Sustainability in Global Citizenship Education

Unique post graduate opportunities for educators to study Global Citizenship Education

During the Olympics, we witnessed the very best of human nature through a celebration of diversity, dignity, harmony and human effort. After the celebrations, the challenges for our society remain through war, racism, the rise of the far right, a severe abuse of human rights, climate change and biodiversity loss. Sustainability and Global Citizenship issues are central in curricular reforms at early childhood, primary and post primary education, the introduction of a new Leaving Certificate Subject, Climate Action and Sustainable Development being a case in point.

If you are an educator with an interest in Global Citizenship Education, there are two unique opportunities for further studies available:

A full-time or part time blended M.Ed. in Education for Sustainability in Global Citizenship Education offered in Mary Immaculate College, Limerick.

See <https://www.mic.ul.ie/faculty-of-education/programme/m-ed-in-education-for-sustainability-and-global-citizenship?index=0>

For more info contact Anne.dolan@mic.ul.ie

A one year part-time Certificate in Global Citizenship Education offered in Maynooth University

See <https://www.maynoothuniversity.ie/international-development/certificate-global-citizenship-education>

For more info contact: tom.campbell@mu.ie

These postgraduate programme are designed for educators working with learners at all levels including early childhood practitioners, primary and secondary teachers and those working in the youth and adult education sectors. Registered teachers can apply to the Department of Education for a partial re-fund of fees. There are also bursary options available for students applying to the GCE cert. There are some places left for September 2024. If you interested in either programme you are welcome to find out more information by contacting anne.dolan@mic.ul.ie or Tom.campbell@mu.ie

d. Masters in Outdoor Education, Sustainability and Wellbeing at Atlantic Technological University



“My return to college...a journey of a lifetime!

Having spent sixteen very happy years teaching, I suddenly felt a little overwhelmed with the imminent, yet necessary, emergence of areas such as Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) and Wellbeing in schools. This inspired my return to college. I wanted a Masters that reflected the core competencies of the New Primary Curriculum Framework along with one that would align with my own values as an educator. The Masters in Outdoor Education, Sustainability and Wellbeing at Atlantic Technological University (ATU) Castlebar appealed to me as it explored these newer areas through an immersive, place based, experimental approach to learning, mirroring the pedagogy that lies ahead in areas such as Social and Environment Education (SEE). Admittedly I was apprehensive, having little experience in the outdoors; however, little did I know the adventures I would go on would be nothing

short of life changing for me and hugely inspirational to our whole school community. The theory based lectures explored the latest research and methodology in these areas allowing us, as students, to critically reflect on and develop strategies, place based education programmes and policies that would have an impact on our own chosen specialist sectors. Although we were a group of fifteen students from all different walks of life, the theory was inspiring and relevant to all. The residential trips included time spent in The Burren in Co. Clare, Cloughjordan Ecovillage and a very special kayaking/camping trip around Lough Corrib. Here we were in the flow of experiential learning; given opportunity to co create learning opportunities with wonderful lecturers and, most importantly, we were living in harmony with nature for a few days, leaving no trace behind. This was a pivotal moment for me when I realised that, as a teacher, I was overwhelmed as to where to start with ESD, to a point where I was almost avoiding it. This immersive trip opened my eyes to the value of teaching outdoors, being in nature and appreciating how vital it is to feel connected to nature in order to want to save it. Sometimes words provoke fear and overwhelm...this immersive experience, for me, restored my sense of awe and wonder, something that comes easy to a child...something we need to preserve if we are to have any success in ESD. Time dedicated to nature connectedness is now knitted into the vision of our school as I complete my thesis with ATU Castlebar entitled; *Back to basics; Investigating the impact of implementing a dedicated nature-connectedness time slot, on the Wellbeing and Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) of primary school pupils.*

By Éilish Mc Donagh, Principal, Principal Kilroe National School, Galway.

For more details on the Masters in Outdoor Education, Sustainability and Wellbeing at Atlantic Technological University, see [Master of Science in Outdoor Education, Sustainability and Well-being | ATU - Atlantic Technological University \(gmit.ie\)](https://www.atu.ie/gmit/programmes/master-of-science-in-outdoor-education-sustainability-and-well-being)

[Back to top](#)

e. CPD News from the ISSN



The Irish School Sustainability Network – ESD CPD Schedule.

The Irish School Sustainability Network (ISSN), in collaboration with ESCI, is excited to announce their diverse CPD schedule for 2024-2025, designed by teachers for teachers. This year's CPD offerings serve as a comprehensive resource for Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) and cover a wide range of topics:

- **Activism:** Explore the intersection of art and activism.
- **Organic Gardening in Schools:** Learn sustainable practices for growing organic produce.
- **Eco-Wellness:** Focus on holistic environmental health.
- **Critical Thinking in Recycling:** Engage in thoughtful discussions on recycling practices.
- **Climate Crisis Education Through Games:** Discover how to use games as an educational tool.

In addition, our popular ECOED4ALL sessions will continue to cover key topics like biodiversity, the circular economy, energy, and sustainable farming. There will also be Global Citizenship Education (GCE) sessions in partnership with WWGS and lots more. Take a look and book your slot [HERE](#)

The ISSN is a network of teachers and students working together to bring climate literacy into schools across Ireland. Visit [ISSN.IE](https://www.issn.ie) to find out more and to explore the wide range of free programs and resources, including:

- [15-minute Bite-sized Biodiversity Sessions:](#) Every Monday at 4 PM.
- [Monthly ISSN Meet-ups:](#) Connect and share with teachers and students.
- [Workshops, Videos, and Worksheets:](#) Free resources for your classroom to address climate change and biodiversity loss.

- [**Student Ambassadors:**](#) New Student Leadership Program.

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

[Back to top](#)

7. HEI Sector

a. News and Updates from the HEA Sector



HEA National Forum welcomes Dr Mark Kelly as Teaching and Learning Policy Advisor (Education for Sustainable Development)

The Higher Education Authority (HEA) and its National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning are pleased to announce the appointment of Dr Mark Kelly as the new Teaching and Learning Policy Advisor, focusing on Education for Sustainable Development.

Dr Kelly joins the HEA National Forum on an eighteen-month secondment from his role as Head of the Atlantic Technological University (ATU) Centre for Sustainability, where he has also served as a Senior Lecturer in the Department of Building and Civil Engineering. With a background in sustainability, Dr Kelly has been a leading figure in advancing sustainability initiatives in higher education at a national level, his research interests encompass Education for Sustainability, Digital Construction, Construction Resource Efficiency, and the Circular Economy.

In his new role, Dr Kelly will support the development and implementation of national policy on teaching and learning across Irish higher education institutions. He will lead analysis on developments in teaching and learning at both national and international levels, authoring reports on HEI progress, and engaging with key stakeholders to advance the Forum's strategic priorities. As the HEA and National Forum continue to advance initiatives that enhance teaching and learning, Dr Kelly will also play a key role in the ongoing review and renewal of the strategy for the enhancement of teaching and learning, in line with the priorities set out in the HEA Corporate Strategic Plan 2023–2026.

In addition to Dr Kelly's appointment, the National Forum is also set to welcome three additional secondments beginning in September. These secondments will focus on key areas including Professional Development/Recognition and Impact of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education, Student Success, and Artificial

Intelligence. These roles will further develop the HEA's capacity to support strategic teaching and learning initiatives across the sector. We extend a warm welcome to Dr Mark Kelly and look forward to the impact he will have on the higher education community in his new role.

HEA Health and Wellbeing Conference – June 2024

The second national health and wellbeing conference '*A Whole of Institution Approach to Health & Wellbeing*' was held on 5 June 2024 at the Clayton Hotel Cardiff Lane.

Over 100 representatives from institutions attended the event including leadership and staff working on the implementation of both the [HEA Healthy Campus Charter and Framework](#) and the *HEA National Student Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Framework*. Experts in campus health & wellbeing, mental health, health promotion and suicide prevention shared insights and guidance on effective implementation of the frameworks.

Over 25 [Healthy Campus Case Studies](#) were showcased on the day, on topics including wellbeing on the curriculum, breakfast clubs, student and staff surveys on health and wellbeing and many more.

Keynote speakers include Professor Mark Dooris, Emeritus Professor in Health & Sustainability at the University of Central Lancashire presenting on '*Healthy Campuses: Mobilising for the Future Wellbeing of People, Places & Planet*' and Professor Barbara Dooley, Dean of Graduate Studies and Professor of Psychology at University College Dublin on '*The complexity of student mental health: risk and protective factors*'.

Conference recordings, presentation slides and more can be accessed [here](#).





Above: Thomas O'Dowd, DCU Students Union President Right: Dr Celine Murin, UCD.

[Back to top](#)

b. SDG Challenges – Research Funding



The SDG Challenge, a joint initiative of Irish Aid and Taighde Éireann / Research Ireland (formerly Science Foundation Ireland), seeks to support diverse, transdisciplinary teams to develop transformative, sustainable solutions to development challenges. Funding is available for collaborative research teams based in eligible research institutions in Ireland and partner countries, and successful teams are awarded up to €300k to work through a series of phases to develop their idea. An overall prize award of up to €1M is available to teams that demonstrate the highest potential for transformative impact.

To date two rounds of calls have resulted in four prizes being awarded. The first round, which focused on **SDG3: Good Health and Well Being**, saw awards being made to Maynooth University, to partner with Makerere University in Uganda to work on a new approach to identifying sepsis in newborn babies. The team was supported by the Irish Neonatal Health Alliance as its societal impact champion. A runner-up prize was awarded to University College Dublin and Mzuzu University in Malawi for the BIOTOPE project, which is working to reduce deaths from childhood pneumonia.

Under the second round of calls, which focused on **SDG13: Climate Action**, the prize winner was RCSI University of Medicine and Health Science and Malawi University of Business and Applied Sciences who continue to explore an innovative, low-cost solution to providing clean water to healthcare facilities in Malawi. A runner-up prize was awarded to Trinity College Dublin, and the Southern African Institute for Policy and Research in Zambia for the REHEATZ project, which is developing the first hybrid wastewater heat recovery technology for application in Zambian food production.

A third round of calls, focussing on **SDG 2: Zero Hunger** is open until 8 October 2024. Applications will be considered that contribute towards one or more of the five SDG 2 outcome targets; improving access to food, ending all forms of malnutrition, enhancing agricultural productivity, sustainable food production and resilient agricultural practices, and maintaining genetic diversity of food production.

More details on the SDG Challenge can be found at [SDG Challenge \(sfi.ie\)](https://sfi.ie)

c. Student Summit on Climate Change in Higher Education - Thursday, 31 October 2024



A **Student Summit on Climate Change in Higher Education in Ireland** will be hosted in TU Dublin this October. This addresses the ESD to 2030 national strategy *Priority Action Area 4: Empowering and Mobilising Young People*. Student representatives from all Irish Higher Education Institutions are invited to attend. This summit is supported by N-TUTORR and follows on from the [Higher Education Climate Leadership Summit](#) for senior management in HE hosted by TU Dublin in May of this year.

The Sustainability Education team in TU Dublin are working with ECO-UNESCO, National Youth Council of Ireland, Union of Students in Ireland, STAND, and An Taisce to facilitate the summit. This is a forum where students from Higher Education Institutions across Ireland will consider what direction higher education and higher education institutions should take in addressing climate change and climate change education.

The day long summit will be hosted at TU Dublin, Grangegorman, on Thursday the 31 October 2024 and will address issues of climate change education, climate activism, climate justice, food, travel and climate emotions. Part of the deliverables from the summit will be a call to action from the students to higher education in Ireland.

Contact Dr Ken Boyle, Sustainability Education Lead, at ken.boyle@tudublin.ie for more information.

8. International Updates

a. UN News

Economic Growth & Sustainable Development

AI Hub for Sustainable Development: Strengthening Local AI Ecosystems through Collective Action

<https://www.undp.org/publications/ai-hub-sustainable-development-strengthening-local-ai-ecosystems-through-collective-action>

The G7 Leaders' Summit in June 2024 welcomed the Italian Presidency's decision to establish the AI Hub for Sustainable Development, in collaboration with UNDP. As affirmed in the G7 Leaders' Declaration, the AI Hub aims to enable multi-stakeholder partnerships to support local AI digital ecosystems, strengthen capacities to advance AI for sustainable development, and complement existing initiatives including the AI for Development Donors Partnership. This is the first public report on the co-design of the AI Hub. It lays out initial suggestions and consolidated feedback from local AI ecosystems to understand opportunities and enhance ongoing AI development initiatives underway.



Connections that matter: how the quality of governance boosts climate action

<https://www.undp.org/publications/connections-matter-how-quality-governance-boosts-climate-action>

This report reflects the findings of a systematic literature review jointly undertaken by the UNDP Global Policy Centre for Governance and the German Institute of Development and Sustainability. The report offers aggregated empirical insight from across the globe about how inclusive, effective and accountable governance systems produces positive effects on climate action. The report aims to galvanize development actors and stakeholders to invest in SDG 16 and the strengthening of governance systems, and to better identify pathways that raise the ambition and effectiveness of climate action.



Reversing direction in the used clothing crisis: Global, European and Chilean perspectives (UNECE / UNECLAC)

Report: <https://unece.org/info/publications/pub/391996>
Executive Summary: <https://tinyurl.com/2tf7da3a>

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The textile industry has evolved from a production model based on natural fibres and protectionist policies for local industry to a model where synthetic fibres have become pervasive, production has been offshored, and the speed of manufacture and distribution of products has increased rapidly. Most of the fashion industry operates under the fast-fashion model, which involves more collections per year, generally at low prices, used for less and less time. This has led to a growing rate of overproduction and overconsumption of clothes. These excesses have boosted the development of an important market for second-hand clothes, with international trade worth USD 9.3 billion in 2021. These garments largely flow from higher- to lower-income countries. The main exporters (by value) are the EU, China, the United States, and the United Kingdom, and the principal importers are Pakistan, Ukraine, Kenya, and Chile

The State of the World's Forests 2024: Forest-sector innovations towards a more sustainable future (FAO)

<https://doi.org/10.4060/cd1211en>



Innovation is essential for achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals. It is also an important accelerator for the transformation to more efficient, inclusive, resilient and sustainable agrifood systems and for achieving global goals such as the eradication of hunger and poverty and the sustainable management and use of natural resources. But innovation does not arise in a vacuum. Among other things, it requires enabling policies; strong, transformative partnerships; investment; an inclusive culture that is open to and encouraging of new ideas; and a willingness to take calculated risks. This edition of The State of the World's Forests (SOFO) provides highlights on the state of the world's forests and explores the transformative power of evidence-based innovation in the forest sector, ranging from new technologies to creative and successful policies and institutional changes, to new ways of getting finance to forest owners and managers. Eighteen case studies from around the world provide a glimpse at the wide range of technological, social, policy, institutional and financial forest-sector innovations – and combinations of these – being tested and implemented in real-world conditions.

SOFO 2024 identifies barriers to, and enablers of, innovation and enumerates five actions for empowering people to apply their creativity in the forest sector to solve problems and scale up positive impacts.

Africa Sustainable Development Report 2024: Reinforcing the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063 and eradicating poverty in times of multiple crises: the effective delivery of sustainable, resilient and innovative solutions

<https://repository.uneca.org/handle/10855/50186>

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), and the African Development Bank (AfDB), presented on 16 July 2024 the 2024 Africa Sustainable Development Report (ASDR), at an event held on the margins of the UN High-Level Political Forum for Sustainable Development in New York. Scaled-up access to concessionary development financing, strengthened climate information and early warning systems, and economic reforms are amongst the key recommendations raised in the new ASDR. The report provides an in-depth review of African countries progress towards five sustainable development goals and their 32 targets to meet the 2030 Agenda and the African Union 2063 Agenda. The five SDGs under review are: ending poverty (Goal 1); eliminating hunger (Goal 2); combating climate change (Goal 13); promoting peaceful societies (Goal 16) and strengthening global partnerships (Goal 17). The research shows that Africa is on track to reach only less than three of the 32 targets assessed in this report (ASDR-2024) and that setbacks have been recorded for 8 of them, with slow progress or status quo registered for the remaining targets.



b. UN SDG Report 2024



The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals Report 2024 – launched on 28 June 2024 - details the significant challenges the world is facing in making

substantial strides towards achieving the SDGs based on the latest data and estimates:

Under SDG 4 – Quality Education, the Report includes “**An urgent need for enhanced climate change and sustainability education and teacher training**” and goes on to say that “*Although 90 per cent of countries report that they mainstream sustainable development and global citizenship subjects in national education systems, evidence suggests scattered uptake. A 2023 study of more than 530 ninth grade science and social science curricula found that 69 per cent did not mention climate change and 66 per cent omitted sustainability. Despite claims by some teachers that these topics were covered, 50 per cent admitted to not teaching them. Three quarters of countries expressed intentions to revise their curricula within the next three years to prioritize climate change and sustainability. Simply revising curricula may not be sufficient, however, if teachers lack the confidence or willingness to teach these subjects. Comprehensive support from schools, training institutions, communities and governments is essential to encourage educators to effectively transmit sustainability principles to future generations*”.

Read the full report here: [The-Sustainable-Development-Goals-Report-2024.pdf \(un.org\)](#)

[Back to top](#)

c. UN Development Programme (UNDP) – People’s Climate Vote 2024 Results

The Peoples’ Climate Vote is the world’s largest standalone public opinion survey on climate change. It serves as a platform for people to express their concerns and needs on climate change to world leaders. Carried out by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the University of Oxford, the survey asked how people’s day-to-day lives are impacted by climate change, how they feel it is being addressed in their countries and what they would like the world to do about it.

The survey found that People want more climate change education in schools. When asked “Should schools in your country do more or less to teach about climate change?” eight in ten (80 percent) of people globally called on schools in their country to teach more about climate change, while just 6 percent of people globally said schools should teach less about climate change.

Read the full report here: [The Peoples' Climate Vote 2024 | United Nations Development Programme \(undp.org\)](#)

[Back to top](#)

What is the #TeachersCOP?

This year, in partnership with [VVOB](#), it will continue to promote good educational practices focused on the four pillars of UNESCO's [Greening Education Partnership](#): green schools, green curricula, green teacher training, and green communities.



ON THE ROAD TO THE #TEACHERSCOP

Project submissions

Educators have until October 3rd to submit their initiatives and/or projects.

Evaluation of projects

The submitted proposals will be evaluated by a jury of experts to lead to a selection of 12 projects. The selected project leaders will be contacted in October.

Presentation of projects and teacher's vote

In November, the 12 winners will present their projects online to policymakers at COP29 in Baku.



For more details, see [TeachersCOP | Office for Climate Education \(oce.global\)](https://oceans.un.org/en/teacherscop)

[Back to top](#)

e. Case Study: UNECE Forum on ESD



Is Your Event Meaningfully Including Youth? Case Study: UNECE Forum on ESD

This summer, the Republic of Cyprus hosted the UNECE Forum on ESD. Ireland's representative to the UNECE ESD Youth Platform and the National Youth Council's Climate Justice Officer, Eimear Manning, attended the event as a keynote speaker and panel facilitator. She also contributed to the Youth Statement, a recommendation document created by young attendees for the event organisers to ensure that future events were just as (if not more) inclusive of/for youth. Here are the main takeaways from the youth perspective.

The UNECE Forum on ESD was held in Limassol, Cyprus on the 27-28th of June 2024 and was organised by the Republic of Cyprus (Ministry of Education, Sport and Youth), the UNECE, the Swiss Government and UNEP. The theme was "Empowering Youth for Sustainable Futures: Entrepreneurship Education and Youth Engagement", and this was the very first forum organised in the UNECE region for ESD and youth specifically.

Dr. Athena Michaelidou, Cyprus Minister of Education, Sport and Youth stated, "our commitment to fostering ESD policies is not merely a directive; it is a moral imperative to safeguard the future of our planet for generations to come. Central to our discussions in these forums will be the pivotal role of youth in driving ESD policies for a sustainable future. Imparting young minds with the knowledge, skills, and passion for environmental stewardship is paramount to engendering an awareness of and a commitment to ESD."

There was significant pressure for the event organisers to ensure that youth voices were central and that solutions accounted for the opinions and perspectives of the younger generations in the room. But were they successful in achieving this objective?

Fortunately, the aspiration to meaningfully include young people was achieved at this Forum. While there were some areas for future improvement, this event should be viewed as a good practice example of how to engage early-career professionals in a high-level intergenerational dialogue. So, what did the organisers do right?

1. Young people made up to 25% of the 450+ attendees.
2. Young people were included in all aspects of the event - from hosts to keynote addresses, to panellists and workshop facilitators.
3. Most mid-late career professionals made a concerted effort to ensure the young participants felt welcome and listened to by taking interest in their aspirations and their ongoing work on ESD.
4. Commitments were made to continue to include youth meaningfully in future events. Tatyana Molcean, Executive Secretary of UNECE, noted that there will be a youth summit in the future to ensure youth voices are taken into consideration in ESD policy making.
5. Young people were encouraged to write a '[Youth Statement](#)' outlining how the organisers could continue to improve their meaningful engagement with young people when working on ESD. This forward thinking and drive to further improve laid the groundwork for a more transparent and trusting relationship between young ESD practitioners and the UNECE.

After the official agenda of the Forum had commenced, youth delegates gathered together to discuss their experiences and observations. While, ultimately, they wanted to praise and thank the organisers, there were a few recommendations for improvement. Here is what they suggested would better bolster meaningful youth engagement in future ESD events:

1. Include youth in the planning of the event, rather than just in the participation.
2. Allow more time for intergenerational dialogues as part of the official event agenda (eg. World Cafe discussions). This discourages the top-down approach to problem solving, where youth are regularly placed at the bottom, by instead adopting a horizontal approach where many different actors can learn from each other.
3. Remove financial barriers from young people to attend. While some young people had costs covered, others did not. Having to pay for flights, food, and accommodation can further marginalise young people who may already be underrepresented, but whose perspectives are vital for ensuring holistic approaches to ESD. In this regard, organisers should consider online participation as being an asset of the event.

With these considerations in place, the goal of embedding a holistic ESD approach across all educational sectors is sure to be more equitable. Many challenges remain, such as the utilisation of digital education and the strengthening of the digital capacity of educators and learners; the further development of non-formal education;

the recognition of the benefits of youth work within the ESD space; the creation of green learning spaces; and many more. However, these challenges are likely to be less of a burden with the inclusion of a diverse network of committed ESD actors, all willing to share best practices and work united towards common solutions.

9. Other News

a. SDG National Stakeholder Forum



The 2nd Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) National Stakeholder Forum of 2024 took place on Thursday, June 6th in Croke Park. The theme was **Transformative Education for Sustainable Development – Reaching the Furthest Behind First**. Minister Ryan opened the event and heard presentations from the Department of Education, DFHERIS, DCEDIY, AONTAS and Education for Sustainability followed. The Minister was then joined on the morning panel by Assistant Secretaries Dalton Tatton from the Department of Education, Keith Moynes from DFHERIS and Anne Marie Brooks from DCEDIY.

The delegates had the option to attend one of four workshops: -

1. **Global Citizenship Education**
2. **Healthy Communities**
3. **Education in the Community**
4. **Accessing Education**

All of the workshops provided an opportunity for learning, discussion and sharing expertise. Each workshop had the opportunity to report their findings to the forum

There were also a number of lived experience presentations on the day, the first of which was by Dr. Katriona O'Sullivan, Associate Professor, Maynooth University, who shared her personal experience of entering education following a childhood dominated by family addiction. Her story was inspirational with lessons to be learned on the obstacles faced by those with challenging early lives when attempting to access education. Rachel Kuhn from Wicklow Democratic School shared her experience of teaching in a participative environment where students are the decision makers and Noel Clancy from the Farmer Time Programme

spoke of his experience engaging with and educating young people on the journey of food from farm to fork.

As part of the Forum an information area is provided for participants and this included representatives from Dignity Partnership, Belong To, the Institute of Antiracism and Black Studies, Forager.ie, ECO- UNESCO and Oxfam.

The final SDG Stakeholder Forum of 2024 will take place in Dublin Castle on 21 October. The theme for October is “**Partnerships for Climate Action - From Plans to Community Action**”

For further information on the SDGs and the National SDG Stakeholder Forum go to www.gov.ie/sdgs

[Back to top](#)

b. SDG Champions 2024-25 Announced!

The Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications has announced the new SDG Champions for 2024-25. 20 champions have been selected from across the public, private, community, voluntary, youth and NGO sectors.

The role of the SDG Champions is to advocate and promote the SDGs and to share good practice on integrating the SDGs into work or activities. This year's SDG Champions include the Irish Girl Guides, Junk Kouture, Kinvara Tidy Towns, UCD and Waterways Ireland.

The full list of the new SDG Champions is available here: [gov - SDG Champions 2024-2025 \(www.gov.ie\)](http://gov.ie/sdgs)

[Back to top](#)

c. SDG Week 2024

Ireland's third SDG Week takes place from 20-29th September forming part of the wider [European Sustainable Development Week \(ESDW\)](#), which will run from 18 September – 8 October. .



Take Part in SDG Week 2024!

Ireland's third Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) Week is taking place this year from **20 - 29 September**. It forms part of the wider European Sustainable Development Week (ESDW), which runs from 18 September - 8 October 2024. Last year ESDW saw over 5,000 activities taking place across 28 countries, with almost 200 events taking place in Ireland.

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

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

1

START NOW!

Think about how you could promote sustainable development and plan an activity, project or event to take place during SDG Week

2

REGISTER

Upload your idea on the ESDW website:
www.esdn.eu/esdw

3

ACT!

Organize and promote your initiative during ESDW - **18 September - 8 October 2024!**
Explore which events are taking place and participate in activities near you!

@Dept_ECC
@EuropeanSDWeek



DeptECC
EuropeanSustainableDevelopmentWeek



For more information on sustainable development, SDG Week and ideas for taking part please see www.gov.ie/SDGs

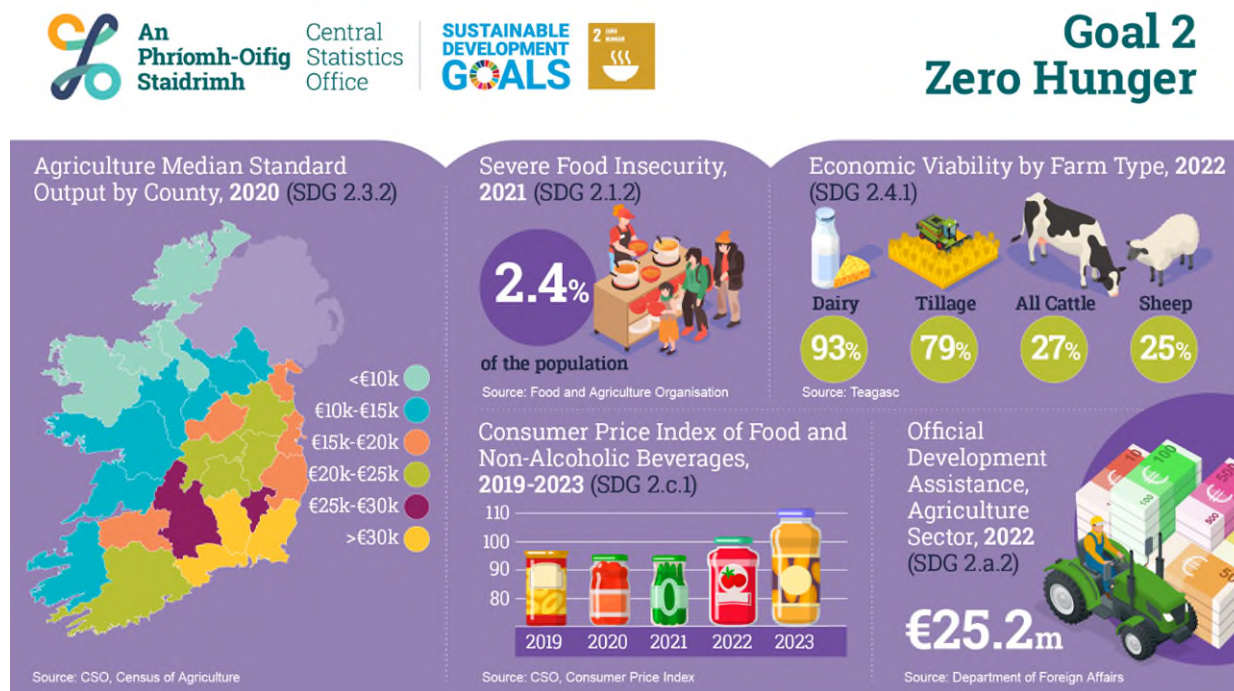
d. Ireland's National Statement on the SDGs 2024

Ossian Smyth, Minister of State at the Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications, with special responsibility for Communications and Circular Economy, reiterated Ireland's support for the call for renewed impetus and accelerated actions for reaching the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) at the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF) at the UN on 17th July.

Read the Ministers statement here: [gov - National Statement by Minister of State Ossian Smyth at the UN High-level Political Forum \(www.gov.ie\)](http://gov.ie/NationalStatementbyMinisterofStateOssianSmythattheUNHigh-levelPoliticalForum)

[Back to top](#)

e. CSO Publish SDG 2 Report



The Central Statistics Office (CSO) published Ireland's UN SDGs - Goal 2 Zero Hunger 2024 report in June.

This latest report on the UN SDGs has data on 14 indicators for Ireland, divided over three chapters: Hunger, Agriculture, and Economic indicators. Data are presented in categories relevant to the indicators and geographical location, where possible. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and their associated indicators are, by design, wide-ranging in their coverage. As a result, the Irish data is provided by a number of sources including government departments, official organisations, and international organisations such as the UN. This publication for Goal 2 was developed in collaboration with the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine.

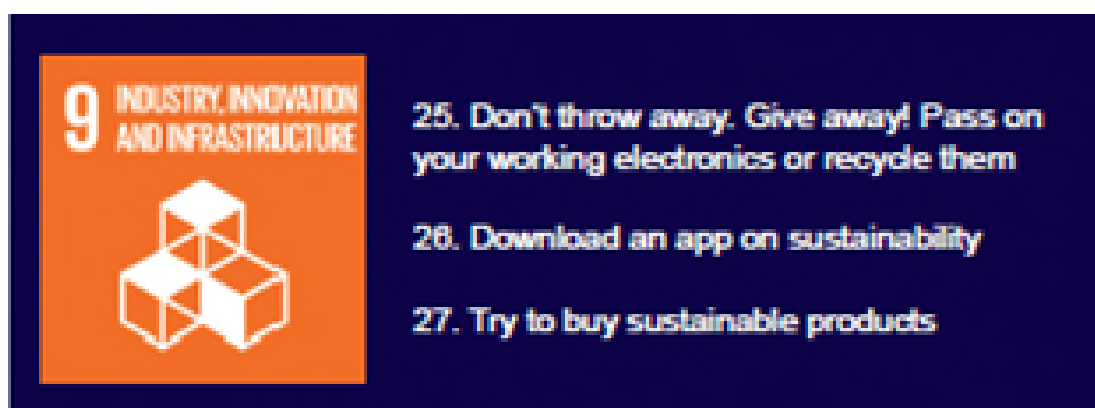
All of the data is available on the CSO website:

<https://www.cso.ie/en/releasesandpublications/ep/p-sdg2/irelandsunsdgs-goal2zerohunger2024/>

[Back to top](#)

f. Three Simple Actions – SDG 9 – Decent Work and Economic Growth

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



[Back to top](#)

g. Generation Glas Summer School 2024



Deputy Bruton Launches Second Year of Generation Glas Youth Summer School at UCD

On 1 August 2024, BiOrbic, Ireland's national bioeconomy research centre, and Foróige proudly launched the second year of their flagship youth sustainability ambassador programme, Generation Glas, with 25 teenagers taking part for 2024-5. Richard Bruton TD, Fine Gael spokesperson for the Environment, Climate and Communications, officially launched the programme on Wednesday 7 August 2024. The event took place at the UCD University Club on 7 August 2024 at 11am.

Generation Glas is a pioneering programme designed to empower teenagers from marginalised and underserved communities across Ireland. Following a successful pilot year, the programme's second cohort of 25 young participants has embarked on

an 8-month journey focused on sustainability, climate action, and community engagement. This year's participants come from Nenagh (Tipperary), Whitechurch (Dublin), Mahon, Glanmire, and Castletownbere (Cork).

The summer school kicked off with a 4-day residential experience at University College Dublin (UCD). The rest of the programme includes further residentials, field trips to sustainability hubs around Ireland, biweekly online sessions with expert guests, and a series of youth-led community events. These activities are designed to build vital skills such as critical thinking, teamwork, planning and goal setting, by unlocking access to experts in environmental and sustainability science, communication, advocacy, and more. Throughout the programme, participants are supported to identify and engage with sustainability topics that resonate with them, ultimately bringing their messages back to their communities by organising their own outreach and awareness events.

Deputy Bruton's commitment to environmental sustainability and his influential role in shaping Ireland's climate policy made his presence at the launch especially inspiring for the young ambassadors. His address underscored the importance of youth involvement in climate action and the significant impact that young people can make in their communities and beyond.

"We are delighted to launch the second Generation Glas summer school," said Derek O'Brien, Executive Director at BiOrbic. "Our partnership with Foróige has been fantastic. It has enabled us to engage directly with and be inspired by young people, who are increasingly the drivers of proactive positive change to create a sustainable future".

Sarah Haslam, Director of Programmes and Research at Foróige, stated "We are immensely proud of our young participants and their growth into informed, confident sustainability ambassadors through this programme. Generation Glas continues to show the impact that young people can have when given the chance and support. We are delighted to partner with BiOrbic to ensure that young people have opportunities to develop important life and employability skills that will help to prepare them to tackle some of the biggest and most existential issues of our time."

BiOrbic and Foróige are excited to continue this vital work, empowering young people to become leaders in sustainability and advocates for a better future. The Generation Glas programme represents a significant step towards fostering a new generation of environmentally conscious citizens who are equipped to tackle the challenges of climate change.

For more information about Generation Glas and future events, please contact amanda.mathieson@biorbic.com

About BiOrbic

BiOrbic, Ireland's national bioeconomy research centre, funded by Science Foundation Ireland, is a partnership between Ireland's leading universities, coming together to create a platform for collaboration and a central point of access for the

wider academic and industrial community to develop holistic solutions to tackle the key challenges facing us today, including climate change. BiOrbic has been leading on the development of Ireland's circular bioeconomy through breakthrough research and the development of new biobased products in collaboration with industry and other partners. It is also working to create the world's first climate-neutral, economically viable dairy farm in West Cork with Carbery Group.

About Foróige:

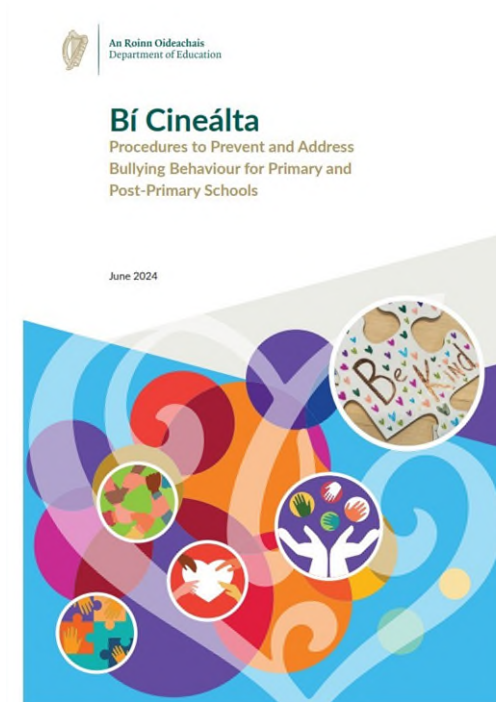
Foróige is the leading youth organisation in Ireland, working with young people since 1952. Its purpose is to enable young people to involve themselves consciously and actively in their own development and the development of society.

Foróige engages over 50,000 young people aged 10-18 each year through volunteer-led Clubs and staff-led Youth Projects. Operating in 26 counties in Ireland, Foróige encompasses more than 600 Foróige Clubs, 150 Youth Projects, the Big Brother Big Sister mentoring programme, the Foróige Youth Entrepreneurship programme, and its Youth Citizenship and Youth Leadership programmes.

Foróige serves all young people through its general services. Foróige Clubs, Foróige Juniors, Foróige Interest Clubs, and Foróige Youth Cafés encourage young people to take responsibility for themselves and contribute to shaping the world around them while developing their talents, skills, and abilities. Additionally, Foróige provides a full range of targeted services to support vulnerable young people who require additional assistance.

[Back to top](#)

h. Cineáltas Update - Bí Cineálta Procedures



On 19 June 2024, the Bí Cineálta Procedures to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour for Primary and Post-Primary schools were published.

These 'Bí Cineálta' ('Be Kind') procedures were developed in collaboration with the education partners and are heavily informed by the views of children and young people, parents, school staff, board of management members and the wider education community.

The 'Bí Cineálta' procedures are centred on a child rights-based approach and support a partnership approach where all members of the school community work together to prevent and address bullying behaviour.

The procedures have been updated to take account of gender identity bullying, cyberbullying, racist bullying, sexist bullying, and sexual harassment. They support schools to develop clear strategies to prevent and address these bullying behaviours.

The new procedures result from a review of the 2013 anti-bullying procedures for primary and post-primary schools. This is a flagship item in Cineáltas: Action Plan on Bullying.

Implementation of these procedures will be supported by a suite of professional learning resources and information sessions for school staff, board of management members and parents.

Cineáltas Showcase

The inaugural Cineáltas Showcase event will be held in Croke Park on 25 September 2024.

The event will provide an opportunity for schools to show what they have already done to promote Cineáltas in their school community and the impact that it has had on the life of their school.

Schools have also been invited to nominate individuals or groups who through their personal leadership, participation, or achievements have made an outstanding contribution to preventing and addressing bullying behaviour and promoting equality, inclusion, diversity and wellbeing in their school community. These are just some of the actions that have been taken under Cineáltas.



Above: Minister Foley and students at the launch of Bí Cineálta Procedures to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour for Primary and Post-Primary schools.

i. Reading Goals Book Club Ambassador Programme for Primary in Co. Wicklow

"I am the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals spokesperson for the Wicklow Library Service. I promote the Goals to all our library users, in all Co. Wicklow.

I began a pilot project, of my own design, of a book club for primary school children in my library's geographical area. It was aimed at children aged 9 – 12 years old. It worked with the strong school/library links that we have in our library service.

The basis of the book club was that we would meet monthly and discuss a book, which the children could get freely from the library.

All the books were carefully researched and selected by me. Each book would lead to a conversation regarding at least one of the 17 Goals. However, at the meetings, each Goal was read aloud and we would all take it in turns to ascertain if the Goal was in some way applicable to the book we had just read.

Our First Meeting

During February 2021, we held our first meeting and I was delighted to welcome children from 4 different primary schools to the library. The children all had copies of *Swan Song* by Gill Lewis, which they had borrowed from the library.

Since then, the book club have met every month for 2 years. Every Goal has been discussed. The book club have their meeting usually in the library but during the Summer of 2022 we took our meeting to the beach in Greystones and made "beach art" to highlight Goal 14 Life below Water.

Transition to Ambassadors

As 8 of the children were now going into 6th class in their school, I decided to mark their achievement by introducing the Ambassador Programme. The 8 children had read over 20 fiction, non-fiction, graphic novel and literacy books connected to the UN SDG's and their knowledge and passion for the Goals was growing.

They were to be our first group of Ambassadors for the Goals in Co. Wicklow.

They were awarded special UN SDG pins and a UN SDG tote bag as a special ceremony in Greystones Municipal District offices on Tuesday 26 September 2023. They pledged to continue their work with the SDG's and to promote them to their families, school friends and team mates.

Funding for the project was received from the Wicklow Climate Action Team of Wicklow County Council and Codling Wind Park. These were key partnerships that were created to help achieve the Goals.

The Cathaoirleach of Greystones Municipal District and DOS were presenting the awards on the night.

As a result of the press attention on the programme, new members joined the group. We got 8 new members from 3 more schools. The total numbers of primary schools in the area now represented are 7. This will mean that the Ambassador programme is run every year for the life time of the Goals.

In September 2024, we will have 5 more Ambassadors to spread the word of the Goals.

The book club was a pilot project in Co. Wicklow. Since the ceremony it has started in another branch in Co. Wicklow. To date there are 12 new members there.

It will also commence in another Co. Wicklow branch in 2024.

A school in Dublin will also join the club in January 2024.

The LGMA are looking at spreading this pilot project to all library authorities, since the UN SDGs are a cornerstone of their new strategy The Library is the Place.

The effect of the book club and Ambassador programme isn't quantifiable; however, the book club is growing strong and gaining new members all the time. The Goals are now incorporated into the décor of Greystones Library and soon in Arklow and Wicklow branch libraries.

Anyone can get the reading list of the book club and frequently, local schools will use the books for classes.

If we achieve any of the UN SDGs, we will all benefit. By the children learning about each Goal and telling their families, friends and team mates, everyone benefits.

The message of each Goal has spread through each family, every class of every school who have a child involved.

The schools that the children attend have asked their Ambassadors to speak at assembly in order to educate all the children on the Goals and their values. This has led to new partnerships with local schools whereby their Ambassadors speak on their involvement in the book club to foster not only a love of reading but to create a strong interest in the United Nations and links to Government and local Government.

The Wicklow Climate Action Plan makes explicit reference to the Reading Goals Ambassador programme as it follows Strategic Objective 2 to "integrate the SDGs into Local Authority work to better support the localisation of the SDGs. It states that "Wicklow County Council are leading the way with Greystones Library running a Sustainable Development Goals students Reading Goals Book Club since 2021".

*By Catherine Costello, Librarian, Greystones Library, Mill Road, Greystones, Co. Wicklow A63 KN52.
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[Back to top](#)

j. Open-Mic -Youth-Led 'Voices Of Tomorrow Take 2



93% of Ireland's young people believe that we can mitigate climate change effects by changing our lifestyle habits yet there are still major gaps in action – only 44% have ever taken part in an environmental campaign. Social issues like climate change and equal rights, and the challenges they pose, can be scary topics and thus lead to inaction.

Waterford's Youth Advisory Climate Council (YACC) are bridging this gap once again in the second instalment of their open mic night, "Voices Of Tomorrow Take 2" a free social issue themed open mic night in **St. Patrick's Gateway Centre, Waterford at 7.30pm on Friday 20 September 2024**. It's a fun and creative way to encourage you to speak out in a safe space. Make your voice heard by the community and decision makers.

Last year's event was so successful – a huge number of performers, a massive audience filled with people of all ages, press and media as well as MEP Grace O'Sullivan - they had to run it again! Have you written, or want to write, a poem, song, spoken word, sketch, jokes, or anything about the planet we live on and the challenges it faces? Then this is the evening for you – sign up now! Don't feel like performing? No problem, just come along and listen to the amazing performances. The YACC are eager to involve all communities in the conversation about our home, how we can protect it and make Waterford more sustainable and climate conscious. This shared space is a fantastic opportunity for the people of Waterford to interact with the topic of climate change and other social issues creatively and meaningfully, to express this to decision makers and to develop relationships for working towards a better future together.

Express your thoughts and ideas for change. Use your voice, show your passion, save our planet - join us and be heard! To sign up email sarah@slewaterford.ie or contact us on social media @waterfordsli. See you in **St. Patrick's Gateway Centre, Friday 20 September 2024 at 7.30pm**.

The YACC is made up of passionate climate activists aged 16-35 who wish to work together with decision makers and the creative community to make Waterford an even better city. We hope you will attend the event for a chance to express YOUR thoughts, opinions, hopes and ideas in your creative style.

Editor's Note: Statistics from People & Planet Baseline report, 2021.

Contact: For more information or further details contact Sarah Keane, Communications and Project Officer, Waterford Sustainable Living Initiative (SLI), sarah@slewaterford.ie

About: SLÍ is focused on driving sustainability, climate action and responsible consumption. We do this through education and inspiring action at a community level. Our Vision is of a global community working together to ensure an equitable and sustainable future for all.

[Back to top](#)

k. Big Beach Clean 2024 – Register Now!



It's that time of year again! The Big Beach Clean is back and we want YOU to join us once more! Mark your calendars for 20 – 22 September 2024, because it's time to come together and be part of one of the largest clean-up events nationwide!

In 2023, over 400 clean-up events saw volunteers removing an astounding 466 tonnes of litter from our beloved Irish coast and inland areas, and we hope this year is no different as we aim to make the #BigBeachClean24 the most impactful yet.

With our new supporters from Kia Ireland, we're calling on all beach lovers across Ireland to sign up and receive your very own clean-up kits to protect

our beloved ocean, ensuring you have the necessary tools to make a significant impact. Additionally, the National Spring Clean campaign will also be participating, making this a collaborative effort towards a cleaner environment.

Together, we can make a huge difference and keep our coastline pristine.

The Big Beach Clean is part of the International Coastal Cleanup (ICC), a global initiative operated by Ocean Conservancy. This event not only encourages the removal of litter from Irish beaches but also provides an opportunity to contribute to a vital citizen science project. By collecting data on the amount and types of litter found, we raise awareness about marine litter and advocate for impactful policies and campaigns.

Not living near the coast? No problem! Litter dropped in towns and cities is a primary cause of marine pollution. So, no matter where you reside in Ireland, you can help prevent litter from entering our precious waterways. Let's tackle this issue at its source, wherever we are!

Get a head start and secure your spot by registering for the Big Beach Clean by clicking the link below to register or learn more about the initiative. Trust us, you don't want to miss out on this chance to make a huge difference to your community: <https://cleancoasts.org/our-initiatives/big-beach-clean/>

Let's make this year's Big Beach Clean the best yet. We can't wait to see your incredible clean-up efforts and witness the power of Clean Coasts communities in 2024.

Register at: <https://cleancoasts.org/our-initiatives/big-beach-clean/>

[Back to top](#)

I. Climate Action in the Department of Education – Update



An Roinn Oideachais
Department of Education

Among a range of other initiatives, the Department of Education supported the [All-Ireland Pollinator Plan](#) campaign 'No Mow May' in an effort to boost biodiversity in our campuses in Marlborough Street, Athlone and Tullamore. Signs around the campus ensured that campus lots of dandelions, daisies and

clover sprang up in the grassed areas which are a vital food source for pollinators.

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](#).

We are hopeful to have an increased number and more diverse flora and fauna visible during the next campaign!



Above: No Mow May sign in the Marlborough Street, Dublin complex.

The Department also hosted a coffee-morning on 22 May for **National Biodiversity Week** to raise awareness and promote engagement amongst staff. The Department's very active Horticultural Society also had a 'plant donation' drive which was well supported. Information booklets from the [All-Ireland Pollinator Plan](#) and the DoE Biodiversity Action Plan were published along with identification posters for bees, butterflies and dragonflies.



Above: New insect hotels established in the Horticulture's Society's plot in the grounds of the Marlborough Street, Dublin complex.

Nesting House Martins have taken up residence in the Tullamore site and we are hopeful to have some sightings of the adult birds come Spring 2025!



Above: House Martins' nest on the Tullamore campus.

m. Water Forum



An Fóram Uisce – the Water Forum commissioned research to find out water consumers knowledge of water supply, quality and security. The survey was hosted online by Interactions Research Ltd. A demographically presentative sample of 1,518 adults completed the survey in August 2023.

The findings included:

- 54% reported they are ***completely or somewhat lacking in knowledge*** of where their drinking water came from or how it was treated.
- 26% use bottled water for drinking all of the time, despite tap water being of a very high standard.
- People were unsure about potential future water supply and quality challenges.

The Water Forum believes that, for the public to appreciate and value water resources, a public information campaign is needed to improve awareness of where water comes from, how it is treated and the potential challenges to future water quality and supply security.

In 2022, to support and encourage education on water supply and quality, rivers and water ecosystems the Water Forum commissioned Maigne Rivers Trust, with support from Mary Immaculate College, to develop education modules for schools on four key topics:

- The global impacts of how we use water,
- Using digital maps to explore local rivers, water supply and treatment,
- Freshwater life and habitats with an Atlantic Salmon case study,
- Water quality assessment and types of pollution.

The modules address requirements for subject areas such as biology, agricultural science, science, geography, CSPE and Climate Action and Sustainable Development and supports the Education for Sustainable Development Curriculum. Modules are suitable for Junior Cycle classroom-based assessments, Transition and Leaving Cert students and for any learner

who would like to learn about water supply, treatment, freshwater life, habitats and the impacts of water pollution.

All modules comprise a resource book for teachers that includes 4 or 5 lesson plans with supporting Power Point presentations and links to additional information and an assessment of learning workbook for students. The modules and resources are all available to download for free from www.thewaterforum.ie or from www.scoilnet.ie

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!