



An Roinn Oideachais  
Department of Education

## Education for Sustainable Development Newsletter

Welcome to the December 2024 issue and 17<sup>th</sup> 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 Newsletter – Reader Feedback



Do you enjoy the content in the ESD Newsletter? Your feedback would help us improve the newsletter and enable us provide more of what our subscribers wish to read. Please see [gov.ie - Education for Sustainable Development Newsletter](https://gov.ie/education-for-sustainable-development-newsletter) for how to provide your feedback.

## **ESD in County Offaly and Roscommon – Calling All Educational Institutions!**

Do you attend, work for or collaborate with an educational establishment or institution in **Offaly** or **Roscommon** 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 your school is doing in the area of sustainable development and see it featured in future issues of the ESD Newsletter, please get in touch by emailing [ESD@education.gov.ie](mailto:ESD@education.gov.ie). Your school will receive a **€500 One-For-All voucher** from the Department of Education if we publish your piece!

# Contents

<b>1. ESD to 2030 Updates.....</b>	<b>6</b>
a.ESD to 2030 – Funding for Schools Awarded .....	6
b. 9 <sup>th</sup> National Forum on Education for Sustainable Development .....	6
c. Curriculum Developments .....	9
d. Updated School Sector Climate Action Mandate .....	11
e. Solar Panels for Schools Programme - Update .....	12
g. SDG Posters and Information Flyers for Schools.....	13
<b>2. ESD Around the Country – Meath and Monaghan.....</b>	<b>14</b>
a. ESD in St Patrick's NS, Stamullen County Meath.....	14
b. Promoting Environmental Sustainability in Meath Schools .....	16
c. ESD in County Monaghan.....	18
<b>3. School Updates .....</b>	<b>20</b>
a. ESD at St. Mary's Newport, Co. Tipperary.....	20
b. ESD at St. Wilson's Hospital, Dublin.....	21
c. Take 1 Week at Loreto on the Green, Dublin 2 .....	23
<b>4. Competitions .....</b>	<b>25</b>
a. ESD Art Competition .....	25
b. ESD to 2030 September ESD Newsletter Competition - Winner .....	25
c. ESD Newsletter – December Newsletter Competition .....	26
d. BT Young Scientist and Technology Exhibition 2025.....	27
e. Ballymoney NS win International Creativity in Schools Award.....	28
f. Our World Awards 2025 for Primary Schools – Irish Aid.....	29
g. YEA 2025 – ECO-UNESCO.....	31
h. AIB – Future Sparks School Impact Awards for Post-Primary Schools.....	31
i. Biodiversity in Schools - Coill na nÓg .....	33
j. Global Citizenship School - One Minute Video 2024 – 2025.....	34
k. Global Village – Teach Meet 2025 .....	34
l. Bord na Móna Recycling Competition for Post-Primary .....	35
<b>5. Programmes and Resources.....</b>	<b>36</b>
a. Take 1 Programme – Pre-Summit of the Future Event in New York.....	36
b. The Edible Landscape Project for primary schools .....	37

c. Climate Smart - Programme for Post-Primary Schools .....	38
d. Creative Technology Libraries Programme in Tipperary .....	39
e. WorldWise Global Schools – Post-Primary .....	40
f. Picker Pals – Primary School Programme .....	41
g. Teaching the SDGs to Young Citizens .....	43
h. Biodiversity in Schools – Nature Hero Awards Programme .....	45
i. Education for Sustainability - Free Climate Literacy Programme for Schools ....	46
j. Junior Cycle Short Course on Climate Action – Evaluation .....	47
k. WiseWater - ESD in Primary Schools .....	49
l. Rediscovery Centre – Free Resource for Primary Schools .....	51
m. Post-Primary Languages Ireland – CLIL Fair Trade Module Pilot .....	52
n. GROW at School – Programme for Primary .....	54
<b>6. CPD.....</b>	<b>56</b>
a. Oide – ESD Updates.....	56
b. SEAI – Free Energy Management Courses for Schools .....	58
c. Forest School Leadership Course - Brigit's Garden .....	59
d. Education Support Centres Ireland – Winter to Spring 2025 CPD Itinerary .....	60
e. CPD News from the ISSN – Winter 2025.....	61
<b>6. HEI Sector .....</b>	<b>63</b>
a. Technological University of the Shannon – ESD News.....	63
b. Consultation on National Strategy for Teaching and Learning in Higher Education .....	64
c. Student Summit on Climate Change in Higher Education - Thursday, 31 October 2024.....	65
d. N-TUTORR Showcase - Transforming Learning, Celebrating Collaboration ....	66
<b>7. International Updates.....</b>	<b>68</b>
a. EU Working Group for Schools: Learning for Sustainability .....	68
b. EU Launch of Education and Training Monitor 2024.....	69
c. EU Council Recommendation on Young People and Climate Action.....	69
d. COP 29 .....	70
e. SDG Summit of the Future.....	71
<b>8. Other News .....</b>	<b>73</b>
a. Three Simple Actions – SDG 11 – Sustainable Cities and Communities .....	73
b. SYNAPSES Schools Project in Curraghboy NS, Athlone .....	73
c. Global Education Time – Project Update .....	75

d. SDG Geohive – Ireland’s SDG 3 & SDG 4 Reports 2024 .....	76
e.UNICEF – World Children’s Day 2024 .....	78
f. Adventurous Plan and Outdoor Learning (APOLE) Conference .....	80
g. SDG Week 2024 and SDG 2023 - 24 Champions Showcase.....	81
h. SDG National Stakeholder Forum.....	82
i. ECO-UNESCO Young People’s Survey – Climate Change and Climate Justice	83
j. Tipperary Education and Training Board – Green Spaces Project.....	85

# 1. ESD to 2030 Updates



## a. ESD to 2030 – Funding for Schools Awarded

The Department has delivered over €450,000 in funding to 190 schools for ESD projects on foot of a call issued in the September ESD Newsletter.

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

[Back to top](#)

## b. 9th National Forum on Education for Sustainable Development

The **Ninth National Stakeholder Forum on Education for Sustainable Development (ESD)** was held at the Printworks, Dublin Castle on 22 November. It was co-hosted by the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth; Department of Education and Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science under the Second National Strategy on Education for Sustainable Development – ESD to 2030, which provides a framework to support the contribution that the education sector is making towards a more sustainable future.

The Forum's purpose was to facilitate dialogue on the implementation of ESD to 2030, as well as to showcase and celebrate exemplars of quality, excellence, and

innovation in ESD across the Irish education system. This year there was a focus on facilitating discourse between different generations and highlighting the sector's role in contributing to a more sustainable future for future generations.

Keynote speakers included:

- David Donoghue, former Permanent Representative of Ireland to the UN and co-facilitator of the intergovernmental negotiations on the 2030 Agenda.
- Professor Laura Lundy, Co-Director of the Centre for Children's Rights and Professor of Education Law and Children's Rights at Queen's University.
- Beth Doherty, environmental activist and Ireland's Climate Youth Delegate.
- Professor Daniella Tilbury, policy expert, change-maker and Chair of the Network for Institutions and Leaders for Future Generations (NiFG).

The event also included:

- an intergenerational panel discussion with both Departmental representatives and young people led by Professor Laura Lundy.
- an intergenerational workshop for young people and educators co-devised by Eimear Manning of the National Youth Council of Ireland and the ESD Youth Advisory Group (made up of representatives from Comhairle na nÓg and the National Youth Assembly of Ireland).
- an outdoor play workshop for young children with artist Siobhán Jordan, who then represented their perspectives in a breakout session for attendees.

Among the ESD Youth Advisory Group's recommendations was the creation of a resource with volunteering opportunities for young people to get involved in ESD. The National Youth Council of Ireland partnered with them to create a webpage which includes useful guides on how to create change at local level, an interactive ESD map and a list of organisations that work with ESD. Colleagues and stakeholders can access the website [here](#).

Libraries Ireland has also created an ESD-themed reading list, with recommendations for all ages. It can be viewed [here](#).





**Above:** The intergenerational panel taking place at the 9<sup>th</sup> annual ESD Forum.

A big thank you to all our speakers, panellists, presenters and attendees for their contribution to making this a successful Forum. A special thank you to the members of the Youth Advisory Group (YAG) who worked hard to ensure that young people's voices were represented and heard.

Further details on the event and slides are available on the [ESD to 2030](#) webpage.



**Above:** Children building the Sustainability Hut at the ESD Forum.





[Back to top](#)

## c. Curriculum Developments

### Leaving Certificate - Climate Action and Sustainable Development

Congratulations to the 43 schools selected to deliver the new Climate Action and Sustainable Development Leaving Certificate subject from September 2025. A list of the schools is available at: [gov.ie](https://gov.ie) - [Minister Foley announces schools participating in phase one rollout of new Leaving Certificate subjects](#)

The new curriculum was published in September 2024 and is available to view here: [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.

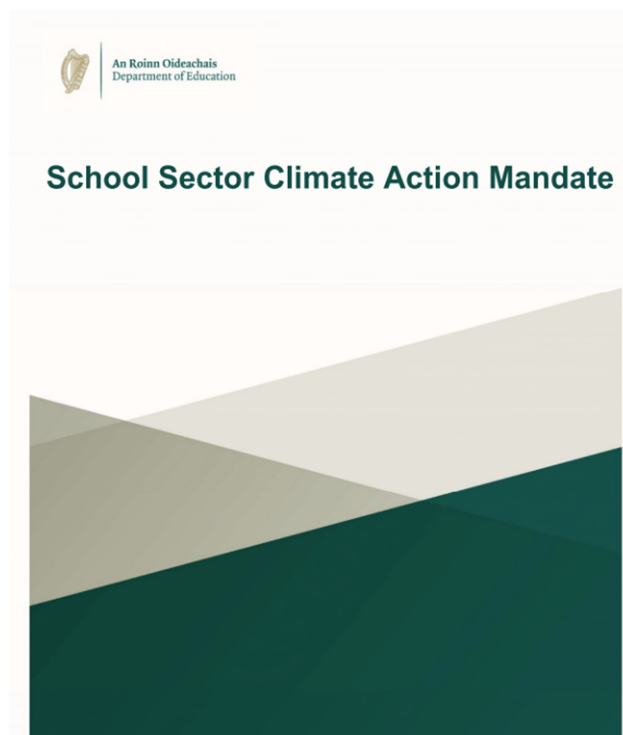
Through Social and Environmental Education, children develop the attitudes, concepts, dispositions, knowledge, skills, and values that motivate and empower them to become informed and active citizens who promote a more sustainable future. This is made more meaningful and empowering through children's 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](#)

## d. Updated School Sector Climate Action Mandate



An updated School **Sector Climate Action Mandate** has been published.

The School Sector Mandate was updated to ensure it aligns to the Public Sector Mandate while recognising the differences between large Public Sector bodies and Schools.

The updated Mandate includes links to the School Sector Climate Action Roadmap and to the ESD to 2030 strategy.

Some of the topics in Section 3 of the Mandate were further developed including: Education for Sustainable Development, Managing Resources and Eliminating Waste and Procurement.

Some additional items were added to the Section on School Buildings including Monitoring and Reporting for Schools, Energy Management for Schools and the Energy Efficiency and Decarbonisation Pathfinder Programme.

In the Section on Travelling to School, additional information on the Safe Routes to School scheme and School Transport 2030 were added.

The School Sector Mandate will be reviewed annually, following the annual update of the Public Sector Mandate.

Read the School Sector Climate Action Mandate here: [gov.ie - School Sector Climate Action Mandate](https://gov.ie/SchoolSectorClimateActionMandate)

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.**

You can see, as an example, Árdcoil na Mara's Sustainability Policy Statement at: <http://ardscoilnamara.ie/page/Policies/64238/Index.html>

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

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

[Back to top](#)

## e. Solar Panels for Schools Programme - Update

Since the launch of the first phase of the **Schools Photovoltaic Programme** late last year, more than 1,100 schools have been approved for PV panels on their roofs in eleven areas around the country. More than 1,000 installations have been confirmed so far in Clare, Donegal, Galway, Kerry, Kilkenny, Leitrim, Limerick, Offaly, Waterford, Wicklow and the Dublin City Council area.

The second and final phase of the scheme opened for applications on 11th November 2024 to all remaining eligible schools in 16 counties – Carlow, Cavan, Cork, Dublin, Kildare, Laois, Longford, Louth, Mayo, Meath, Monaghan, Roscommon, Sligo, Tipperary, Westmeath and Wexford. To date, almost 50% (1316 schools) of those schools have expressed an interest in the scheme, with 97% (1275 schools) of those so far approved to apply for funding for the installation of solar PV in their schools.

[Back to top](#)

## g. 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](mailto:ESD@education.gov.ie).



[Back to top](#)

## 2. ESD Around the Country – Meath and Monaghan

### a. ESD in St Patrick's NS, Stamullen County Meath

“We are passionate about creating a sustainable society in St Patrick's NS, Stamullen, Co Meath. We believe there are multiple strands to sustainability. With such a large school and an active Student Council, this term has been full of different examples of activities aimed at promoting ways of doing and thinking that can be sustained more easily and ultimately begin to build a more positive future for the next generation.

We love working outside, keeping the school grounds as biodiverse and environmentally friendly as we can. Pupils give generously of their time, picking litter (almost all of which is blown in from the surrounding roads etc and sorting recyclable from non-recyclable waste, when possible). We plant where, when and however we can. Mrs Grehan and her helpers planted wildflower seeds before the summer break and we returned to beautiful blooms in late August, which were literally buzzing with activity. Sunflower seeds, also, were distributed before the summer holidays. Pupils emailed photographs of their progress to Ms Griffin. We have many pupils who grow their own and share with the school community, inspiring others to try their hand at a more sustainable approach to food production. We harvested carrots and parsnips in late October, which we'd planted in May. We recently planted onions and garlic and are keeping our fingers crossed for a small spring harvest.

Many classes marked Sustainable Development Goal Awareness Week in September. The SDGs are important to us and the children engaged marvellously in discussions, activities, reading of library books and websites, note-taking and thinking of creative ways we can take action, in order to do our part to help achieve these goals. 5th class pupils entered artwork in Meath County Library's SDG poster competition and Faye won! Everyone filled their pieces with important facts and helpful suggestions.

In early October, 5th class had the opportunity to spend a morning at a local walled garden with Ciarán de Buitléir. The class learned about where some of our fruit, vegetables and eggs come from. Many children tasted some of the produce, some trying tomatoes and other food for the first time. We learned about sustainable practises in horticulture, such as composting in stages, harvesting seeds for planting, natural pest-repellants, such as French marigolds, and mulching. Ciarán gave the class a lovely compliment, when he said “they were a delight: so knowledgeable, interested and excited about gardening and the environment. They are the future and the future is bright!” Huge thanks to Ciaran for sharing his time, knowledge and expertise.

Friday, October 19th, was a very special day in our school. We celebrated GOAL's Jersey Day and an array of colourful tops were sported. As part of the day, Brenda



from GOAL talked to 5th and 6th classes about the organisation's work around the world, providing essential and life saving items to those in need. We raised over €1,000 for GOAL.

In conjunction with Jersey Day, pupils from 5th and 6th classes, and from the Student Council, held a 'Swap Shop'. The children wanted to promote a more sustainable way of living and of using our things ie Responsible Production and Consumption, the twelfth of the UN's Sustainable Development Goals. There was an encouraging level of interest in the idea of swapping belongings to give them a new lease of life. We will organise something similar in the future. Well done to everyone who got involved.

In November, 5th class embarked upon a series of workshops with the organisation Education for Sustainability. The children are learning about global inequality. Aoife, the workshop facilitator, taught us about the "Sustainability Cake". The environment is the bottom tier of this 'cake', with Society and the Economy comprising the other two tiers. We created Sustainable Islands, which prompted thought about consumption, production and the circular nature of a healthy economy. We also created a display of Carbon Footprints - filled with ways we might have a negative impact on the environment - and Helping Hands - filled with ways we can care for the environment better. Climate Justice is an important element of these workshops and there has been great debate during Aoife's visits, showing deep thinking about some of the issues faced by governments and communities.

Connected with SDG 13, Climate Action, is learning about Soil. 5th class have learned about soil, examining samples, carrying out investigations such as measuring the water contained, and exploring the connections between soil, rocks, minerals, plants, our food and other aspects of our lives!

Our Parents' Association ran a clothing collection in November. This was facilitated by the Bag2School initiative, which also donates a proportion of funds raised to the Laura Lynn Foundation. This was a great way to give used clothing a new lease of life.

On Wednesday, November 20th, the school marked UN World Children's Day. This is an annual day for children to have their say in what the world should look like. This year's theme was Listen to the Future. The Student Council invited everyone to create a drawing, poem, list of bullet points ... anything, really! ...in response to this year's theme. They created a display with the submissions. Many pupils wrote and drew about hopes for creating a more sustainable country and wider world. We have entered the Nature Heroes competition and plan to install bat and bird boxes and to plant more vegetables and pollinator plants, in order to create more biodiversity around the school grounds.

We are excited about making the impact we have on our community, country and the wider world a positive one!"





**Above:** Pupils at in St Patrick's NS hard at work!

## b. Promoting Environmental Sustainability in Meath Schools



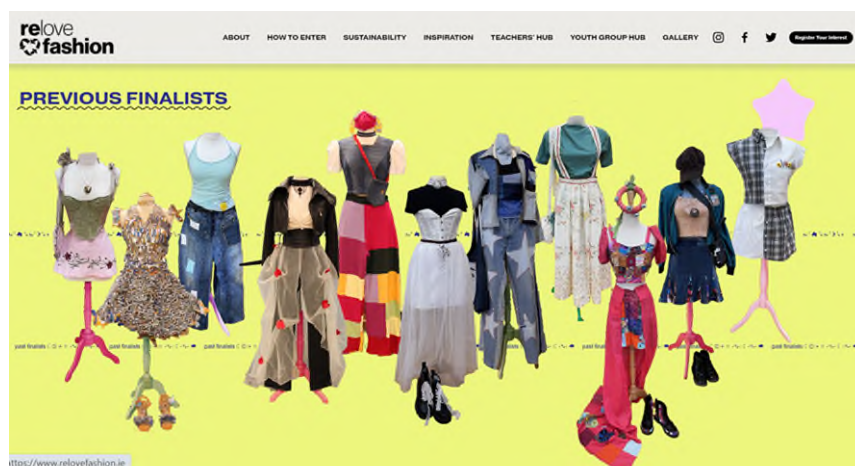
Meath County Council is dedicated to promoting environmental sustainability through a variety of initiatives aimed at primary and secondary educational institutions across the county.

We invite all schools to engage in a diverse range of programs designed to enhance environmental awareness and foster active participation in ecological practices. The initiatives include:

- **Green Schools:** A programme that empowers schools to embark on a journey towards environmental excellence by adopting sustainable practices within the school community.

- Picker Pals: A primary-level initiative that encourages young students to engage in litter picking and develop a sense of responsibility for their local environment.
- ReLove Fashion: A secondary-level programme that promotes sustainable fashion practices by encouraging creativity and innovation in clothing reuse and recycling.
- Rubbish Film Festival: A secondary-level initiative that invites students to explore waste management through filmmaking, inspiring creative storytelling about environmental issues.
- Composting and Recycling for Schools: A comprehensive programme available to all schools, aimed at implementing effective waste management practices, including composting and recycling, within school settings.
- School Garden Support Scheme: This programme offers guidance and resources to all schools interested in establishing and maintaining vegetable and flower gardens, promoting hands-on learning about horticulture and sustainability.
- Pride of Place for Schools: An initiative designed to encourage schools to take pride in their surroundings, fostering community spirit and environmental stewardship.

For further information or to address any questions, please email [environment@meathcoco.ie](mailto:environment@meathcoco.ie)



## c. ESD in County Monaghan



### **Community Climate Action Programme**

The Community Climate Action Programme is a new programme to support small and large, rural and urban communities to take climate action at a local level. Monaghan County Council is delighted to welcome the announcement by the Minister for Environment, Climate and Communications of a new Community Climate Action Fund, which will become available to support communities to promote and assist in the scale up of community climate action.

The overall objective of the programme is to shape and build low carbon, sustainable communities in a coherent way to contribute to national climate and energy targets.

There are two strands:

#### Strand 1- Action: Building Low Carbon Communities:

Monaghan County have been given an allocation of €392,000 for projects under strand 1. Under this scheme communities will carry out projects that have a direct climate action impact.

#### Strand 1a- Shared Island Community Climate Action:

This strand has a national budget of €3 million to enable communities and local authorities to carry out a cross-border project in partnership with a community in Northern Ireland. Unlike strand 1, Local Authorities have not been automatically allocated funding under strand 1a and is open for all communities to apply.

#### What groups are eligible?

Eligible community organisations must:

Be not-for-profit.

Be located within the boundaries of Monaghan County.

Be registered with the Monaghan PPN or be connected with other collectives such as The Wheel, Tidy Towns, or be a community group with Articles of Association, which hold an AGM with appropriately approved minutes.

#### Project themes

Projects must demonstrate the delivery of national climate action at a local level for strand 1 and on a cross-border basis on the island of Ireland for strand 1a. There are five programme themes and communities should try to incorporate as many themes as possible. The themes are: Community energy; Travel; Food & waste; Shopping & recycling; Local climate & environmental action

### **Project funding scales**

Funding is available for 100% vouched expenditure of the project and there are three project sizes eligible: Small scale projects < €20,000; Medium scale projects €20,000 to €50,000; and Large scale projects €50,000 to €100,000

### **How does the programme work?**

Several projects will be selected which demonstrate climate action at a local level in Monaghan. Local communities will be selected following an Application phase and will carry-out their direct climate action projects over 18 months. Projects can include a suite of measures, not just one specific action.

### **Documents and Resources**

["Briefing note and Guideline Document of Community Climate Action Fund](#)

[Examples of Community Climate Action Projects](#)

[Planning Your Project And Applying For Funding](#)

[Community Climate Action Fund High Level Overview](#)

**For more information, please contact** [climateaction@monaghancoco.ie](mailto:climateaction@monaghancoco.ie)

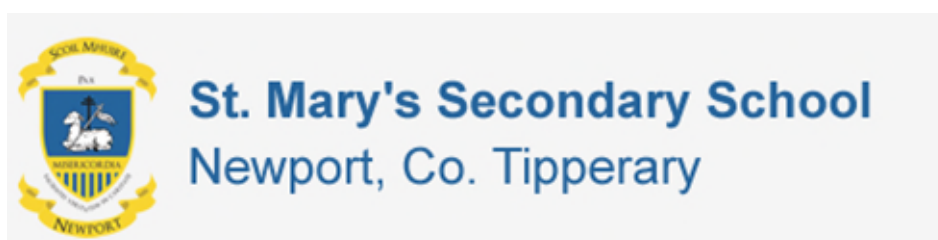
[Back to top](#)



### 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 three great examples:

#### a. ESD at St. Mary's Newport, Co. Tipperary



“Here in St. Marys’ Secondary school, Newport, Co. Tipperary we are proud to say we take sustainability and the environment seriously. As part of our pledge to do better for our planet each year we celebrate our annual Global Citizenship & Sustainability week. This is a chance for our staff and students to get involved in events and initiatives that create awareness about the environmental issues we all face and also to celebrate the positive aspects of what we are doing.

A sample of these events include - a student made video about waste segregation and using the correct bins. We have plenty of budding acting talent in the school and the video was very well received by all! A litter pick, walk for water event, guest speakers, workshops from Self Help Africa, sustainability cake sale, and a ‘Keep it local’ zero food waste workshop, among other things. In our classrooms, teachers did tailor made lesson plans based on the theme of water. The staff really got involved this year, partaking in a colours day and getting to school by car pooling to reduce the amount of cars coming into the school car park. The teachers also showed off their vocal ability along the way with a little karaoke fun!

Our polytunnel is currently ready and waiting for its peas and barley to be planted as part of the ‘Grow it your own’ initiative. It will be watered by our newly installed rain harvester and our very own compost from our two food waste composters will provide plenty of nourishment to the soil.

Our TYs ran a wonderful Art installation in their GCE class, decorating stones with pledges on how they intend to make small changes to their lifestyle. The TYs also interviewed our wonderful caretaker, John who tirelessly works to maintain our clean & green school.

Other events that we got involved in are the student leadership CEIST conference in Dublin. Our students delivered a presentation to their peers nationwide on what our school is doing in this area. This was a fantastic opportunity for all involved. Also our very successful swap shop event happened in a one day Fashion Bonanza, where our TY Junk Kouture fashion show took place and the winners of the competition were judged and decided on by a teacher representative, a parent representative and a student in Leaving Cert who did very well in the Junk Kouture competition when she was in TY.

A very busy time in school overall but very rewarding. A huge thanks to all the staff and students who work tirelessly to bring all our initiatives to fruition”

**Editor’s Note:** Congratulations to all at St. Mary’s Newport - 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 St. Wilson’s Hospital, Dublin



### Exploring Life on Land: A Horticultural Journey

“Our second-year Horticulture class at Wilson's Hospital School has been actively engaging with Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 15: *Life on Land*. This global goal emphasizes the importance of protecting, restoring, and promoting sustainable ecosystems while combating biodiversity loss.

Students have brought this vision to life through hands-on work in our school's parkland and along its hedgerows. By tending to these areas, the class has actively contributed to the restoration of native habitats in our local ecosystem. The orchard not only provides a haven for pollinators like bees and butterflies but also symbolizes the importance of sustainable agricultural practices.

The hedgerow work further reflects their commitment to biodiversity. Students learned about the role of native plants in supporting wildlife and explored practical ways to enhance these natural corridors, creating a safe space for birds and small mammals. Their efforts have directly supported the preservation of local flora and fauna.

This project highlights the importance of connecting classroom learning with real-world applications, inspiring our students to be stewards of the environment and to take meaningful steps toward achieving the SDGs.

Students focused on maintaining our bug hotel, an initiative designed to create safe habitats for native insects and promote biodiversity in our area.

This project allowed students to deepen their understanding of the importance of preserving natural habitats while directly contributing to the health of our local environment. By nurturing the bug hotel and observing its impact on native species, the class gained valuable insights into how small actions can support the global mission of restoring ecosystems and protecting life on land. This activity not only brought classroom learning to life but also reinforced our commitment to sustainability and environmental stewardship. We are proud of our students' efforts and their role in making a positive ecological impact!

Additionally, as part of the *Sustainable Development Goals Take 1* programme, our third-year students enthusiastically engaged with SDG Bingo, focusing on the goal of *Life on Land*. Through this fun and interactive activity, they explored the importance of sustainability and biodiversity in our world. A lot of fun was had while learning!"



**Above:** Students at St. Wilson's Hospital School working on their hedegrow

**Editor's Note:** Congratulations to all at St. Wilson's Hospital - keep up the good work! A €500 One-For-All voucher to support ESD projects is on its way to you!

[Back to top](#)



### c. Take 1 Week at Loreto on the Green, Dublin 2



“This week was Take 1 week in our school. The Green Committee organised events to raise awareness about the 17 Sustainable Development Goals and how they impact both school and everyday life. These events included an open meeting of the Green Committee, a lunch time screening of a David Attenborough documentary, a Sustainable Development Goal themed Kahoot quiz and a poster competition to redesign some of the SDG icons. Our teachers also made a conscious effort to link their own subjects to the goals, such as in Science we debated which sustainable energy resources Ireland should invest in and in Home Economics we examined the sustainability of different farming practices in Ireland and how it impacts food production. This week the school also had its college awareness week so we had a particular focus on the sustainable development goal of Quality Education.

This Take 1 week at Loreto on the Green aimed to make sustainability accessible to our school community. The Green Committee wanted to create an inclusive learning experience which everyone could get involved in. We believe that sustainability should be an integral part of school life and that change is made by the student body and teachers alike. Our school has a history of strong beliefs and practical initiatives which we aim to continue. We believe that making changes in our everyday lives has a positive impact, not only in our school but also the wider environment around us. As climate anxiety is an ever increasing problem amongst youth, the Green Committee strives to form a network of young leaders who are ready to lead the way. We believe at Loreto that participation is a vital component of school life, and this week, the Green Committee hoped to expand our outreach while also addressing the serious issues of climate change. The mental health organisation, Spunout suggests that to deal with climate anxiety, we talk to the people around us about how we are feeling and take meaningful action. In a recent climate change survey from Eco-UNESCO, 84% of young people are either involved or want to become involved with tackling climate change. In the future, our school's Green Committee hopes to empower our student body and the wider community to make more positive changes in our school and daily lives”.



- by Faye Cunningham 5th Year

**Editor's Note:** Congratulations to all at Loreto on the Green - 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 Art Competition



In September of this year, the Department launched a National **ESD Art Competition for Schools**. The deadline for the competition was extended and closed on 15 November. We received lots of fantastic entries and our judging panel are currently reviewing these. We hope to announce the category winners early in the new year. Entrants will be notified directly and we will publish details on the [ESD to 2030 webpage](#).

[Back to top](#)

### b. ESD to 2030 September ESD Newsletter Competition - Winner

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

The answer was: The 17 Sustainable Development Goals were adopted by all United Nations Member States **in 2015**.

The winner of our September ESD Newsletter Competition was Gaelscoil Phádraig in Dublin and a prize of a €500 One-For-All voucher is on its way to the school for its ESD work. Congratulations!

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

[Back to top](#)

### c. ESD Newsletter – December Newsletter Competition

From highest to lowest  
which type of transport is  
the most polluting on a  
10Km journey in a city?

- a. Underground      b. Bus
- c. Car      d. Tram
- e. Bicycle      f. Motorbike



To enter the December 2024 ESD Newsletter competition, simply answer the question above and email your answer with the subject line 'ESD Newsletter Competition December 2024' along with the name of your school to [ESD@education.gov.ie](mailto:ESD@education.gov.ie) by 5pm on Friday, 18 January 2024.

[Back to top](#)

## d. BT Young Scientist and Technology Exhibition 2025



The **BTYTE 2025** will take place in the RDS in Dublin from 8 to 11 January. Over 4,000 students from over 352 schools across the island of Ireland have showcased their innovation and ingenuity through the 2,069 project entries received for the BT Young Scientist & Technology Exhibition (BTYTE) 2025. Tackling a broad range of topics relating to Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM), the 550 shortlisted projects will represent their schools and local communities at the BTYTE in January 2025.

**Health** has emerged as a key theme, accounting for over one-third (42%) of all project entries across a number of categories with topics covered ranging from the impact of vaping to **mental health**, to **hospital queues**. The second key theme (27%), is **environmental sustainability**, included projects on **pollution**, **waste management**, **renewable energy**, **biodiversity** and **conservation**.

**Editor's Note:** We look forward to finding out who the winners of the 2025 Special Award for ESD are and to meeting some of you at the Department of Education/ ESD Stand.

[Back to top](#)

## e. Ballymoney NS win International Creativity in Schools Award



**Ballymoney National School**, located in Ballineen County Cork, has been honoured with the prestigious **International Creativity in Schools Award 2024** at a ceremony in Paris. The award, presented by The Global Institute of Creative Thinking, recognizes the school's innovative approach to teaching climate change. Competing with entries from 27 countries across six continents, the school's project stood out for its integration of music, science, art, and technology to address climate change.

Students aged 9-12 took part in the project, which involved writing and performing a climate awareness song, creating a sustainability leaflet for their local community, building models of sustainable homes, and engaging in gardening activities. They also constructed a "free little library" using repurposed materials. The project highlights how hands-on creative learning can inspire young people to tackle environmental issues and engage their communities in sustainability efforts. It demonstrates how creativity and leadership can address real-world challenges.

Principal Shireen Rountree attended the Global Education Summit to accept the award, along with a bursary of £8,000. She explained that the school's creative approach to teaching climate change aims to instil hope in students by encouraging them to take action and be part of the solution. "This award is incredibly meaningful to us," she said. "It celebrates the creativity, teamwork and leadership of our pupils and strengthens our commitment to sustainability and climate action. We are thrilled with our achievement!"





**Above:** Shireen Rountree is currently studying for the M.Ed. in Sustainability in Global Citizenship Education in Mary Immaculate College.

**Editor's Note:** Congratulations to Ballymoney National School and to your Principal Shireen on this great achievement. Well done to all involved.

[Back to top](#)

#### f. Our World Awards 2025 for Primary Schools – Irish Aid



Students and staff at Portlaoise Educate Together National School were delighted to host the launch of the **Our World Awards 2025** last September!

Now in its 20th year, the Our World Awards is a simple and flexible platform for 3<sup>rd</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> class primary school pupils and their teachers to learn how Irish Aid, the Government's International Development Programme, is working with partners around the world to create a fairer, safer and more sustainable world through the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.



Aligning seamlessly with the Primary School curriculum, Our World Awards offer teachers an exciting opportunity to inspire pupils to explore global citizenship, sustainable development and social justice through creative projects and classroom activities.

The programme has been designed to help teachers cope with the demands of a packed curriculum. See the **free ready-to-use resources** for 3<sup>rd</sup> – 6<sup>th</sup> class pupils at <https://ourworldawards.ie/teacher-zone/lesson-plans>.

Register for a free class pack containing pupils' magazines at <https://ourworldawards.ie/register-submit/>

Irish Aid would encourage all pupils to prepare and submit a project on their learnings to Our World Awards before **28 March 2025** to be in with a chance to attend the National Finals in Dublin Castle in May 2025 plus the opportunity to win some prizes along the way.



[Back to top](#)

## g. YEA 2025 – ECO-UNESCO



### Calling all young people!

**ECO-UNESCO's Young Environmentalist Awards (YEA)** is open for registration. YEA is a free all-Ireland eco-action programme that empowers young people aged 10-18 to take action for a sustainable future. Whether it's a biodiversity trail, an upcycled art project, or an energy saving campaign, there's a way for everyone to get involved!

Join **ECO-UNESCO's Environmental Workshops!** Are your students passionate and eager to find ways to protect our planet? Dive into our series of engaging environmental workshops tailored for young individuals aged 10-18! The workshops offer hands-on activities, discussions, and expert-led sessions. Topics include: Fashion Focus, Exploring Ecology and Biodiversity, Climate Action, Waste Warriors and more.

To participate or learn more about YEA or workshops, visit [www.yea.ie](http://www.yea.ie), contact ECO-UNESCO at [bookings@ecounesco.ie](mailto:bookings@ecounesco.ie) or call (01) 662 5491.

[Back to top](#)

## h. AIB – Future Sparks School Impact Awards for Post-Primary Schools



The **AIB Future Sparks School Impact Awards** is an exciting initiative designed to recognise and reward post-primary schools that contribute to their community's **social, financial, and environmental wellbeing**. These awards provide a platform for showcasing impactful projects and activities that inspire positive change, such as fundraising, volunteering, and mentoring.

## What are the Impact Awards?

The AIB Future Sparks School Impact Awards aim to celebrate the efforts of post primary schools that have made significant contributions to sustainable development in their communities. Schools can submit projects under three categories - **Environmental, Social or Financial**. Whether through environmental projects like tree planting and biodiversity surveys or social initiatives like mental health awareness and skill-sharing, the awards highlight the power of collective action in shaping stronger, thriving local communities across Ireland!



## What Do Schools Need to Do?

Participating in the awards is simple! Post primary schools can choose to submit past activities conducted from **March 2024** or plan and execute new projects up until **February 2025** benefiting their communities.

Examples of eligible activities include:

Environmental	Social	Financial
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Litter Picking</li><li>• Planting Trees</li><li>• Biodiversity Surveys</li><li>• Water conservation campaigns</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Mental Health Awareness Events</li><li>• Visiting the Elderly</li><li>• Volunteering with Community Groups</li><li>• Social Inclusion</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Teaching Financial Literacy</li><li>• Setting up Social Enterprises</li><li>• Fundraising for important causes</li></ul>

## What Can Schools Win?

The total prize fund for the awards is **€25,000!** Prizes include:

- **€10,000** awarded to the Overall Winning School.
- **€2,000** for large groups (35+ students) at both Junior and Senior Cycle.
- **€1,250** for small groups (2-34 students) at both Junior and Senior Cycle.
- **€500** for individual submissions.

### Get Involved!

- If you are interested in participating, register for a **free participation pack** at the following link: <https://aibfuturesparks.ie/register-now/>.
- If your school has already completed impactful projects or plans to embark on a new initiative, submit your project by **14 February 2025** here: <https://aibfuturesparks.ie/submission-form/>.

Celebrate and showcase your school's dedication to building a sustainable future for our communities!

[Back to top](#)

## i. Biodiversity in Schools - Coill na nÓg



### **Share your tree and hedgerow adventures and win one of three outdoor classrooms!**

Coill na nÓg, the annual tree and hedgerow campaign from Biodiversity in Schools, continues into December.

Over 4,000 free trees will be planted as mini-woodlands & hedgerows in hundreds of schools over the next few weeks.

If you missed out on the free kits, remember there is a €12,000 fund available to schools through the social media competition. Three lucky schools will share the fund to create a brand new school garden/ outdoor classroom.

All you have to do to enter is get outside with your students and share your tree and hedgerow adventures on social media!

Full entry requirements are on our website here:

<https://www.biodiversityinschools.com/coill-na-nog.html>

**This Competition Closes on 19 December 2024.**

[Back to top](#)

## j. Global Citizenship School - One Minute Video 2024 – 2025



President MD and Sabina Higgins have invited **Global Citizenship Schools** back to Áras an Uachtaráin next May and they have asked that they expand the **One-Minute Video** programme to include pupil poetry, art, and stories to expand the reach of the campaign to help more pupils become more active global citizens in 2025.

Last May, GCS with representatives of 12 schools from around our island visited Áras an Uachtaráin and had a One-Minute Video Showcase with President Higgins and Sabina Higgins and hopefully another dozen schools representatives will visit the Áras again in May 2025. The idea of sharing good practice from pupil to pupil, teacher to teacher, and school to school in a positive pupil-friendly manner is what this is all about. These are the most challenging of times all around our planet.

For more details please check out [www.GlobalCitizenshipSchool.ie](http://www.GlobalCitizenshipSchool.ie)

Lá Nollaig shona daoibh go léir from all at Global Citizenship School!

[Back to top](#)

## k. Global Village – Teach Meet 2025



**Global Village** are hosting a interesting and important Global Village Teach Meet 2025 in Limerick's Mary Immaculate College on Thursday 23 January 23 from 9.30am to 3.30pm for teachers who wish to upskill in dealing with 'controversial issues/contentious topics' in the primary school classroom. Substitute cover is provided.

Please see: [www.GlobalVillageSchools.ie](http://www.GlobalVillageSchools.ie)

[Back to top](#)

## I. Bord na Móna Recycling Competition for Post-Primary

# Bord na Móna

### Calling all Post-Primary Schools!

Bord na Móna are inviting entries to their inauural Secondary Schools Challenge!

The competition is open until 4pm on Friday, 28 February 2025 and the entry form can be found here: <https://www.bnmrecycling.ie/secondary-schools-upcycling-competition-entry-form/>

For more details, see: <https://www.bnmrecycling.ie/secondary-schools-competition/>

[Back to top](#)



## 5. Programmes and Resources

### a. Take 1 Programme – Pre-Summit of the Future Event in New York



On 19 September, Valerie Lewis, Director of the **Take 1 Programme** was selected to present a paper at the high-level, two-day, **Pre-Summit of the Future Event**, hosted by the [Sustainable Development Solutions Network](#) (SDSN), as part of the [United Nations](#) UN's [International Conference on Sustainable Development \(ICSD\)](#) Summit of the Future , which convened in New York. Her paper 'Niche to Normal: Building Teacher Capacity to Embed the Sustainable Development Goals in Learning and Teaching as part of a Whole-School Curriculum' highlights the varying challenges of embedding ESD in Irish schools and how they might be overcome.

The presentation provided an overview of the Take 1 Programme, as a teacher professional development initiative designed to embed ESD in second level education. By integrating the Sustainable Development Goals into subject-specific learning outcomes, the programme seeks to engage 'every student, in every subject and every classroom', promoting inclusivity and collaboration across the entire school community, fostering a shared commitment to a sustainable future.

The paper was accepted under the theme of 'Children, youth and the future of the SDGs' with the intention of informing outcomes of the Summit as part of its annual [International Conference on Sustainable Development \(ICSD\)](#). The session was chaired by Karen Brown, University of Minnesota and Susan Murphy, Trinity College Dublin.

The Take 1 Programme is funded by the Department of Education as part of the Implementation Plan for the 2nd National Strategy on Education for Sustainable Development - ESD to 2030 under Priority area 2 - Transforming Learning Environments - 'learn what we live and live what we learn'.





## b. The Edible Landscape Project for Primary Schools



### **The Edible Landscape Project (ELP) Food Forest, Climate Education**

**Programme** provides primary schools with the tools to create small food forests, mini ecosystems, where through curriculum-linked teaching resources, students learn about ecology, sustainability, and climate action through hands-on experience.

By fostering collaboration between students, the ELP creates a lasting, positive impact on the environment while supporting the well-being of students and their communities. The project's emphasis on systems thinking and practical engagement with nature, equips children with skills and knowledge essential for addressing the global climate crisis and biodiversity loss. See

<https://www.ediblelandscapeproject.ie/education-primary-schools>

Here is a link to an article from September 2024 'The Irish Psychologist' about the Programme including expert testimonial from DCU Professor of Entrepreneurship Colm O'Gorman: <https://online.fliphtml5.com/gypz/evvec/#p=18>

To view a video featuring wonderful drawings from children who participated in **Edible Landscape Project's** Food Forest Schools Programme in Mayo in 2024,

illustrating student's growing awareness of systems design within food forests:  
<https://www.ediblelandscapeproject.ie/post/august-2024>

[Back to top](#)

## c. Climate Smart - Programme for Post-Primary Schools



### Is your school Climate Smart?

The freely accessible Climate Smart educational platform: <https://climatesmart.ie/> supports young people in learning about the complex issue of planning for climate change adaptation. Going from strength to strength in 2024, the platform released a new Cork-based edition, as well as all materials as Gaeilge, supported by SFI Discover funding.

To date, 79 schools, 104 teachers and 3685 students have followed the online module in their schools and play the Climate Smart Game:  
<https://climatesmart.ie/game>.

The Climate Smart game was recently a runner up at the International Educational Game Competition as part of the 18<sup>th</sup> European Conference on Games Based Learning, held in Aarhus, Denmark and the platform was selected as an “inspiring science-based climate change education intervention” for presentation in Brussels on 28 November at the [#EducationForClimate Day 2024](#).

Climate Smart was also featured in RTE's series Ten Things to Know About in an episode on flooding broadcast on 2 December 2024 at 8.30pm.

An Taisce's [Environmental Education Unit](#) teamed up with Trinity College Dublin Geographers Anna Davies and Stephan Hgel in 2023 to help disseminate the Climate Smart programme and support the roll-out of climate change adaptation education in Ireland.

An Taisce will continue to support the programme in 2025 so if any post-primary schools would like to find out more please email: [climatesmart@eeu.antaisce.org](mailto:climatesmart@eeu.antaisce.org). In particular, schools and teachers involved in the pilot for the new Leaving Certificate

subject 'Climate Action and Sustainable Development' are encouraged to get in touch.

[Back to top](#)

#### d. Creative Technology Libraries Programme in Tipperary



As part of their work this year, Kinia has been working closely with staff from 10 libraries across Co. Tipperary. The staff were interested in learning more about sustainable technology and building a green future. They signed up to Kinia's Smart Energy training which is supported by Creative Ireland through the Creative Technology programme.

Libraries across the country are looking to engage their communities in STEAM learning and collaborations. Kinia worked with library staff through an online training over a two week period. As part of this initiative, all of the staff members received Smart Energy equipment kits. The kits include a range of reusable electronic components and activity packs to bring the learning into the hands of young people.

Once the educators have completed the hands-on training, they are supported to bring their equipment and knowledge back to the young people they work with so they too can learn about Smart Energy.

Find out more about the initiative here: [Smart Energy – Kinia's Creative Technology Programme develops sustainable course - Creative Ireland Programme](#)

[Back to top](#)

## e. WorldWise Global Schools – Post-Primary

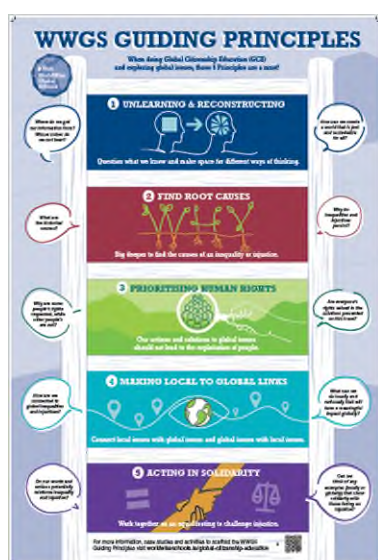
### Journey to Justice with the WorldWise Guiding Principles

Justice, equity and compassion lie at the heart of a sustainable future. Without addressing global inequality and power disparities, we can never tackle the world's greatest challenges, from climate change and food security to poverty and human rights abuses.



To help learners and educators understand their rights and responsibilities as global citizens, WorldWise Global Schools has developed five Guiding Principles for Global Citizenship Education (GCE). Nearly 200 schools and other educational settings have received a poster of these principles, in both English and Irish, to display in classrooms and to provide a foundation for building a fairer, kinder and more sustainable world.

### The WorldWise Global Schools Guiding Principles for GCE



**Unlearning and reconstructing.** Question what we know and make space for a new way of thinking.

**Finding Root Causes:** Dig Deeper to find the causes of an inequality or injustice.

**Prioritising Human Rights:** Our actions and solutions to global issues should not lead to the exploitation of people.

**Making Local to Global Links:** Connect local issues with global issues and global issues with local issues.

**Acting in Solidarity:** Work together on an equal footing to challenge injustice.

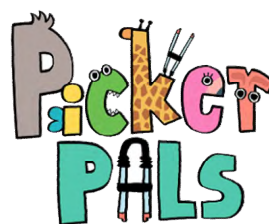
These Guiding Principles also underlie the WWGS Global Passport, a roadmap for Global Citizenship Education, which school grantees will complete over the year.

Irish Aid's WorldWise Global Schools is Ireland's national Global Citizenship Education programme for post-primary settings.

See <https://www.worldwiseschools.ie/global-citizenship-education/> for more information on the Guiding Principles and links to classroom activities that explore each principle.

[Back to top](#)

## f. Picker Pals – Primary School Programme



2024-25 is shaping up to be an exciting year for Picker Pals, so just in case you are hearing about Picker Pals for the first time, or if you haven't kept up on the rapid development of the programme, here is a brief snapshot of who Picker Pals are and what they do:

The main aim of Picker Pals is to give young children the chance to take the lead as environmentalists at home and in their communities. They do this by leading their family on litter-picking adventures around the local area, using the beautiful and sturdy equipment we provide. Being put in charge of the operation opens the children's eyes to their own role in caring for the world around them and builds positive attitudes later in life.



Picker Pals re-enforces the impact of litter-picking with an engaging suite of online educational resources for use at home and in school. These include monthly live lessons in which the team from VOICE and Picker Pals 'Zoom' into hundreds of classrooms at a time to teach the children about a wide range of environmental topics from the PP syllabus.



In addition, Picker Pals are very agile in its ability to create high quality media content that is themed with key national topics like explainer videos about the SDGs and the Deposit Return Scheme.





Picker Pals also run art and story-telling competitions that give children the opportunity to express their views on environmentalism. Last year's art competition winner was spectacular reinterpretation of 'The Great Wave', with Wicklow's Sugarloaf Mountain standing in for Japan's Mt. Fuji. The winning entrants were the Picker Pals from St. Catherine's Special School in Greystones who, rode a wave of litter on their mission to clean up the sea. This year's competition is being prepared right now!



As Picker Pals continue to improve its programme, they are aware of the responsibility to reduce our impact on the environment and behave sustainably, so the present school year has seen the introduction of our new Booster Boxes that allow dedicated schools to remain in the programme while still using their pre-loved Picker Packs.

Picker Pals delivers this high-quality programme with the generous support of our funders, DECC, 29 out of 31 Local Authorities, and our valued corporate supporters.

If you would like to get in involved as a teacher, parent or potential sponsor of the programme please get in touch at [pickerpals@voiceireland.org](mailto:pickerpals@voiceireland.org)

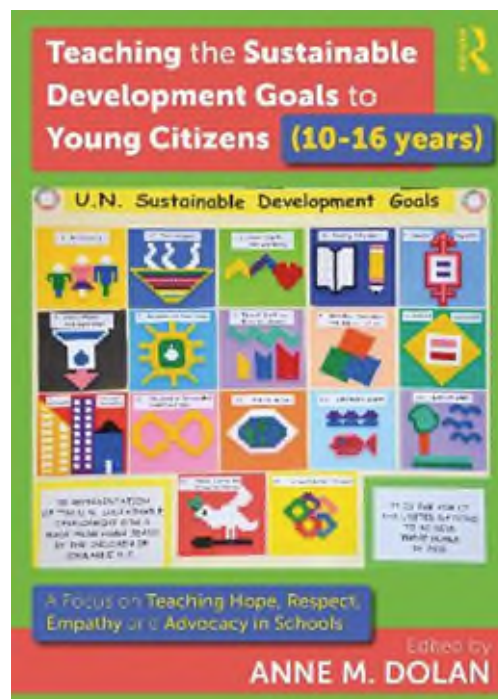
## Our Supporters:



[Back to top](#)



## g. Teaching the SDGs to Young Citizens



### Teaching Hope, Respect, Empathy and Advocacy to Young Citizens

Preparing our young people to deal with complex contemporary events and environmental issues is challenging for teachers. A new book to help teachers navigate the big issues of our time including climate, biodiversity, peace, poverty and gender equality among others was launched by TV and Radio journalist and presenter Philip Boucher-Hayes.

Edited by Associate Professor Anne Dolan, *Teaching the Sustainable Development Goals to Young Citizens (10-16 years) A Focus on Teaching Hope, Respect, Empathy and Advocacy in Schools* is a key resource for teachers at a time of war, **environmental** crisis, migration and human rights abuses. Hosted by the Galway Education Centre, the launch celebrated the innovative work taking place in schools to address these issues. With contributions from Ireland's leading experts in the fields of sustainability, climate change and global citizenship education, the book is published by Routledge and is available to order online through most bookshops.

Commending the book for its emphasis on teaching the 'Polycrisis' Philip Boucher Hayes said 'This book affords equal space not only to issues of climate and biodiversity but also to poverty, inequality, war and those things that need to change right now in the light of extreme capitalism. The climate crisis is primarily a failure of imagination.' The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), also known as the Global Goals, were adopted by the United Nations in 2015 as a universal call to action to end poverty, protect the planet, and ensure that by 2030 all people enjoy peace and prosperity. According to Boucher Hayes 'Transformative education advocated by this book needs to be rolled out across all schools in Ireland as we are not reacting

quickly enough to address the challenges posed by the climate and biodiversity crises, as illustrated by recent catastrophic weather events and scientific evidence.'

Dr. Anne Dolan is an Associate Professor and lecturer in Mary Immaculate College, Limerick. She is director of the recently launched M.Ed. in Education for Sustainability and Global Citizenship. She is passionate about the transformative power of education. 'By teaching young people about climate change and the biodiversity issues through developing an appreciation about the power, beauty and resilience of nature, change can be ignited. Instead of focusing on facts and figures, this book also introduces strategies for **promoting an ethos of hope, respect, empathy and advocacy in schools**. The book is timely as the new Leaving Certificate subject: Climate Action and Sustainable Development will be introduced in pilot schools in September 2025.' The foreword to the book is written by Ms Stefania Giannini **UNESCO Assistant Director-General** for Education.

Dr Angela Canny, Acting Dean of Education in Mary Immaculate College highlighted the importance of facilitating and supporting the agency of young people in our schools. Primary teacher Geraldine Whelan from Coolarne National School, County Galway spoke about the power of children to interrogate complex issues such as biodiversity and climate. According to Geraldine education for sustainability begins with developing children's love and appreciation for the nature on our doorstep. Geraldine's class of senior infants designed the front cover for the book.

The event was supported by Galway Education Centre, Galway National Park City, Galway Science and Technology Festival, Atlantic Technological University (ATU), University of Galway, Aerogen, Youth Work Galway, Sauti-Youth and Mary Immaculate College Limerick.

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development adopted by all United Nations Member States in 2015, provides a shared blueprint for peace and prosperity for people and the planet, now and into the future. At its heart are the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which are an urgent call for action by all countries. They recognize that ending poverty and other deprivations must go hand-in-hand with strategies that improve health and education, reduce inequality, and spur economic growth – all while tackling climate change and working to preserve our oceans and forests.



**Above:** Dr. Anne Dolan with Phillip Boucher Hayes at the launch of her book

[Back to top](#)

## h. Biodiversity in Schools – Nature Hero Awards Programme



The **Nature Hero Award**<sup>™</sup> is Ireland's largest outdoor learning award across the education sector. It is a mark of excellence for a school recognising exceptional work by young people & teachers to help nature.

The aim 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 wellbeing.

While it is mainly an award of participation, there's also some great prizes to be won too including a top prize of a school garden makeover worth €10,000! It is open to preschools, primary and post-primary schools within the Republic of Ireland.

Over 90,000 young people are currently taking part, with limited places still available. Register at <https://www.biodiversityinschools.com/nature-hero-awards.html>

[Back to top](#)

## i. Education for Sustainability - Free Climate Literacy Programme for Schools



As a non-profit social enterprise, Education for Sustainability is delighted to invite any primary or post-primary schools to avail of a funding opportunity (to the value of €1800 per school) to participate in an 8-Week Climate Literacy Programme in January 2025.

**Spaces are limited and on a first come first served basis. Register your interest now by completing the [January 2025 Registration Form](#).**

### **Background**

Benefit from a trained facilitators visiting your school each week to deliver the programme to one class grouping whilst simultaneously training the teacher present to deliver the programme to more cohorts. The learning platform, resources, lesson plans, student workbooks and student community are all online and interactive. A facilitator would join you for one hour each week. The online materials can be made available to all teachers in your school, and online training can be arranged for any teachers wishing to integrate climate literacy into other classes.

### **Course topics include:**

- Climate Change
- Sustainable Development

- Climate Justice
- Plastic
- Fast Fashion
- Sustainable Transport
- Biodiversity Loss
- Food and Soil
- Taking Action

Don't hesitate to forward this memo to a relevant member of staff who might be interested in engaging with the programme: In a secondary school, that might be the TY coordinator; Science, Geography, Wellbeing, CSPE teachers or a Year Head. In a primary school, please forward to the teachers of 5th and 6th class.

You can get in touch via [info@educationforsustainability.ie](mailto:info@educationforsustainability.ie) to discuss any element of the climate literacy course, and if you're interested, don't hesitate to reach out ASAP as **spaces are already filling up for the new year and there is limited availability.**

Head on over to the [website](#) to find out more information about the programme and services.

[Back to top](#)

## j. Junior Cycle Short Course on Climate Action – Evaluation



The **Climate Action** short course is the first subject at second level in the formal Irish education system centering on climate action. The specification and assessment guidelines were developed independently by a group of educators in



2020-21, in accordance with NCCA guidelines template and feedback for 100 hours of engagement over the three years of Junior Cycle. When writing the specification, the development team came together around a shared aim: to produce a course that is guided and informed by the views of young people, and support their demand for empowering education and a sustainable future. The course development process included consultation with youth groups, teachers, and experts in pedagogy and education for sustainability.

The fourth year of the Junior Cycle - Climate Action short course has been running successfully since September in 26 schools, with 45 teachers and approximately 1,500 students. The development team are also very excited to have welcomed Kathryn Mc Cabe as the new assistant coordinator, who brings her unique expertise on transformative learning theory and democratic participatory practice. Her experience, honed working with similar educational projects internationally, has deepened the support for teachers. Like all impactful climate actions, they must work through the challenges and benefits of innovative teaching content and methodologies, as they navigate new perspectives. The CASC programme delivers 100 hours over three years, and supports the development of root-cause understandings, fostering youth voice and developing key skills to reimagine the world.

The short course development team have been training teachers since the pilot began, as well as creating specific teaching resources for the course. In general, they are seeing a lot of positive feedback from teachers and students. Many find the participative methodologies engaging and empowering, although there are some challenges along the way to embedding this more learner-centred approach. The development team continually assesses and adapts the course so that it better supports teachers to be more equipped to engage with democratic education and outdoor education which are essential parts of the course.



**Above:** Teacher training at Cloughjordan Eco-village, September 2023

## Student Actions

In June 2024, the first group of junior cycle students completed the Climate Action junior cycle short course which has been piloting in schools since September 2021.



Students across all participating schools have carried out exciting actions with their teachers, including trips to visit renewable energy communities, planting a school forest for outdoor learning, exploring the social and environmental impacts of Dublin Airport Expansion, a whole school Christmas swap shop, doing a town sustainability survey and presenting the results and suggestions to local councillors and much more.

## Next Steps

During this fourth year of the pilot, the team are carrying out a comprehensive evaluation of the course's impacts which will inform their strategy document for the coming three years. Their aim is to make this pioneering education accessible to as many students across Ireland as possible. A short video on the impacts of the course is available [here](#)

The new Leaving Certificate Course 'Climate Action and Sustainable Development' due to begin in September 2025 has many similarities to this Junior Cycle short course in Climate Action. The team are certain that the training and experience this pilot programme has offered teachers will be invaluable to supporting their teaching of the Leaving Cert Course if their school should decide to pilot it. The team plan to make valuable links with these schools over the coming year.

The Development Team welcome any feedback on the course from students, parents, teachers, principals or others. They can be contacted at: [info@climateactionsshortcourse.ie](mailto:info@climateactionsshortcourse.ie)

All the teacher resources are available by signing up on the website: [www.climateactionsshortcourse.ie](http://www.climateactionsshortcourse.ie)

[Back to top](#)

## k. WiseWater - ESD in Primary Schools



WiseWater is delighted to expand its innovative programme to ten additional primary schools across County Cork and beyond, thanks to ESD funding from the Department of Education. This six-week programme delves into the importance of water—the fundamental resource for life and sustainability—in engaging and thought-provoking ways. Through hands-on, multi-sensory activities and thoughtful discussions, students explore how water supports human well-being, connects us to the natural world, and provides the essential resources we rely on every day. Water, often taken for granted

is the foundation of sustainability and is a tangible way to learn practical tools for environmental action and for well-being.

The programme incorporates ESD principles by blending water-related topics throughout the curriculum areas, encouraging peer learning, and fostering connections from local to global. Students gain a new perspective on water, strengthening their relationship with it and recognising its vital role in our world. WiseWater ignites curiosity, promotes active citizenship, and empowers young people to recognise that their actions can make a real difference. Feedback from participants shows that today's students are not only aware of global challenges but are also eager to contribute to solutions and take action.

Upon completing the programme, each participating school is awarded a sustainable 'flag' in the shape of a water drop, made from upcycled sailing cloth and suspended from a metal wave crafted from old wagon wheels. This flag serves as a reminder of the importance of sustainability. It also reinforces WiseWater's mottoes of "every drop counts and together we can make waves," encouraging the school community to continue whatever actions they can, to work towards a sustainable future. To further extend the programme's impact, WiseWater will be making a range of teaching resources available on their website at [www.wisewater.ie](http://www.wisewater.ie) in 2025. These resources are designed to inspire broader awareness and action around the value of water, helping to create lasting ripples of change.

For further information WiseWater can be contacted at:  
[wisewatereducation@gmail.com](mailto:wisewatereducation@gmail.com)



**Above:** Pupils of Dunderrow National School who participated in the WiseWater schools' programme.

[Back to top](#)

## I. Rediscovery Centre – Free Resource for Primary Schools



The Rediscovery Centre is thrilled to announce that our new project, **Sustainable Schools: Achieving the SDGs through STEM**, will be open for bookings soon. This innovative programme is designed to fully integrate the SDGs into STEM education. For the first time, this hands-on approach brings the SDGs to life in primary schools, embedding them into workshops that engage children in meaningful, interactive ways.

### **What are the Sustainable Development Goals?**

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are a set of 17 global targets established by the United Nations to address critical challenges such as climate change, protecting life below water, and ensuring access to quality education. These goals provide a shared framework for creating a sustainable future. Understanding the SDGs equips young learners with the knowledge, skills and inspiration they need to become active participants in solving real-world problems

### **Free Resource for Primary Schools**

To help teachers and students get started, we're offering a **free SDG matching activity!** This resource introduces learners to each Sustainable Development Goal, encouraging them to match the goals with their meanings and titles. It's a fun, engaging way to spark curiosity about sustainability and global challenges, to test their knowledge or to let them engage with the SDGs for the first time.

[Download Your Free Resource Here](#)

### **STEM Workshops: Built Around the SDGs**

The programme offers teachers a series of four interactive workshops, delivered in schools or at our cutting-edge demonstration facility in Ballymun.

- The **first workshop** introduces students to the concepts of STEM, essential STEM skills, and the SDGs, showing how science and technology can drive solutions for sustainability.
- The remaining **three workshops** focus on specific themes chosen by the class. Options include food, biodiversity, energy, waste, climate, and water.

These workshops are hands-on and inquiry-driven. Each session concludes with a science investigation that allows students to explore how STEM can make the world more sustainable, providing a direct link between classroom learning and real-world applications.

### **Supporting Teachers with an Online Toolkit**

To further integrate the SDGs into classrooms an **online toolkit** for teachers is being launched. This resource includes:

- Practical how-to guides for STEM projects.
- Creative classroom activities aligned with the SDGs.
- Tips for weaving sustainability themes into lessons.
- Inspiring examples from schools already making a difference.

### **Be the first to hear**

Bookings for this transformative programme will open soon, and spaces are limited. Don't miss out, [subscribe to the Education Newsletter](#) and be the first to receive updates.

The **STEM & SDGs Project** is funded by Research Ireland under the Discover Programme.

[Don't forget to download the free resource](#)

## m. Post-Primary Languages Ireland – CLIL Fair Trade Module Pilot



As part of **Languages Connect – Ireland's Strategy for Foreign Languages in Education 2017-2026**, Post-Primary Languages Ireland (PPLI) launched a two-year CLIL (Content and Language Integrated Learning) pilot in 2021/22 for Transition

Year (TY) students. This initiative addresses declining engagement with foreign languages in Irish schools and reflects the growing need to support all students in an increasingly plurilingual and globally connected society.

### **Fair Trade and ESD: A Cross-Curricular Focus**

At the heart of the pilot is a six-week CLIL module on **Fair Trade**, designed to integrate themes from geography and maths. Available in French, Spanish, German, and Italian, the module includes comprehensive resources for teachers - support documents, student worksheets, and presentations - alongside professional development through both in-person and online training sessions.

Recognising the need to make CLIL accessible for all language teachers, including those without specific content subject expertise, PPLI selected Fair Trade as a universally relevant and significant theme. This theme aligns closely with Ireland's ESD to 2030 Implementation Plan, which emphasises the integration of ESD across all levels of teaching. Specifically, it addresses action 3.1i to "incorporate ESD themes into PPLI CPD for MFL teachers" (Government of Ireland, 2022, p. 12).

The Fair Trade module exemplifies how CLIL can support ESD by embedding sustainability into the language classroom. By exploring topics such as ethical consumption and global trade, students engage with globally significant issues while developing their linguistic and intercultural skills. This innovative approach not only enhances the relevance of foreign language learning but also equips students with the knowledge and competencies needed to contribute to a sustainable future.

The CLIL pilot demonstrates how ESD can be meaningfully incorporated into language teaching. By fostering interdisciplinary collaboration among teachers and linking language learning with ESD themes, the initiative showcases the potential of CLIL. Moving forward, PPLI's work in this area continues to highlight the importance of connecting local actions to global priorities, ensuring that language education in Ireland prepares students for the challenges and opportunities of a sustainable, interconnected world.



[Back to top](#)



## n. GROW at School – Programme for Primary



**GROW at School** is a national food growing & sustainability programme for primary schools delivered by social enterprise GIY (GROW It Yourself). Through the GROW at School programme, GIY equips schools with a comprehensive school garden kit, which includes four raised beds, soil, seeds, and bulbs, along with curriculum-linked lesson plans and educator professional development support. GROW at School supports teachers to grow food within the school through garden-based learning, exploring topics such as soil science, climate change, water, biodiversity and other food system themes. As a key programme outcome, GROW at School connects students to where their food comes from, fosters environmental agency and inspires healthy, climate-friendly behaviours amongst young people.

The GROW at School programme provides a catalyst through which students are scaffolded through hands-on, authentic Sustainable Development learning. While GROW at School explicitly targets several United Nations 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDG's), each of the goals are inherently explored throughout the programme. Through garden-based learning and hands-on growing experiences, GROW at School enables students to develop a deeper understanding of the origins of healthy, sustainable food, fostering 'food empathy' in alignment with SDG 2 (Zero Hunger) and SDG 3 (Good Health and Well-being). Food Empathy is a concept proven by GIY research; when people grow their own food it shifts their knowledge, attitudes and behaviours around food. It empowers them to make healthier and more sustainable choices, resulting in the adoption of 5 distinct 'food empathy' behaviours. These are; increased likelihood of eating plants, reduced food waste, connection to food system & where food comes from, increased connection with local food suppliers & producers, reduced pollution (chemical & plastic).

The GROW at School initiative contributes to SDG 4 (Quality Education) by integrating practical sustainable systems education into the curriculum for schools across the country. GROW at School transforms knowledge, attitudes, and behaviours surrounding food, promoting the fight against food waste while modeling a more sustainable pathway to food consumption (SDG 12: Responsible Consumption and Production). Furthermore, the programme enhances students' connection to the environment (SDG 15: Life on Land) while building resilient human communities (SDG 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities).

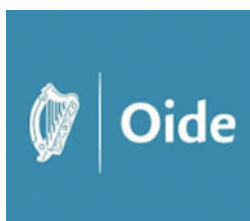
GIY aim to engage 50% of primary schools in Ireland through the GROW at School programme by 2026 and are currently recruiting schools for the 2024/2025 term and, in parallel, raising funding to support same. The GROW at School programme is free of charge to schools to participate, as GIY raise funding through corporate and philanthropic partners to facilitate programme delivery.



To learn more about the GROW at School programme, visit:  
<https://giy.ie/programmes/grow-at-school/>

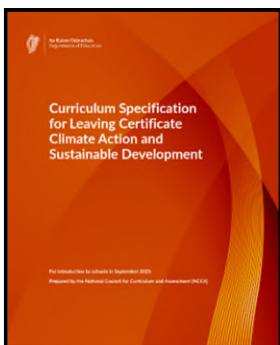
## 6. CPD

### a. Oide – ESD Updates



#### **Leaving Certificate Climate Action and Sustainable Development**

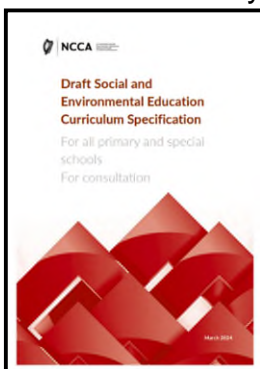
The value of the new Leaving Certificate subject, Climate Action and Sustainable Development, cannot be understated, as environmental degradation and sustainability are some of the most significant issues facing our society. According to the curriculum specification, this subject ‘enables students to apply an interdisciplinary and solutions focused approach to living in a sustainable world as they engage with complex and relevant sustainability challenges, including the climate crisis’ (NCCA, 2024, p.4).



Oide’s Climate Action and Sustainable Development team will work with teachers from the 43 Phase One schools who will participate in several Professional Learning Experiences (PLEs) throughout 2024/2025. The first event occurred online in October, where teachers and school leaders had an opportunity to meet one another and the Oide team. During November and December 2024, two teachers from each participating school will attend a two day in-person PLE. This will be followed by the first online webinar for teachers in December 2024. Between January and May 2025, the PLEs continue, with teachers having the opportunity to take part in two collaboratives, a second webinar and a further in-person PLE during the academic year.

#### **Primary Social and Environmental Education (SEE)**

The Oide Primary Social and Environmental Education (SEE) team was established at the beginning of the 2024/25 academic year. This dynamic team is committed to supporting the draft SEE curriculum, which has a historical, geographical and contemporary focus. An important aim of SEE, is to ‘empower children to promote a more environmentally, socially, and economically sustainable present and future’ (NCCA, Draft SEE Curriculum Specification, 2024, p.7).



The team is committed to providing high-quality, innovative, and responsive support for teachers. To achieve this, they are

collaborating with stakeholders to design a range of resources and professional learning experiences. These efforts aim to ensure a smooth introduction and effective implementation of the curriculum in future academic years.

In addition, the team is engaging directly with schools to deliver tailored support in geography and history education at primary level. These efforts aim to empower educators and enrich the learning experiences for all children.

## **A sample of ESD in Oide Professional Learning Events**

### **Oide Home Economics**

The current professional learning experience (PLE) for teachers of Home Economics is grounded in the themes of Education for Sustainable Development and Education about Sustainable Development. It explores SDG 4: Quality Education and its relationship to *Looking at Our School* as the quality framework that supports effective practice in learning and teaching in the Irish post primary context. The role of formative assessment in sustaining quality learning and teaching is also considered. Teachers reflect on how their use of formative assessment strategies such as sharing learning intentions and co-creating success criteria with students develop students as active, agentic learners.

‘Sustainable and responsible living’ is a cross-cutting element within the Junior Cycle Specification for Home Economics with some learning outcomes explicitly identified as developing students’ knowledge, understanding, skills, values and attitudes relating to this theme. A key component of this PLE is to give teachers time and space to consider where the interlinked pillars of Sustainability are implicit throughout the learning outlined in the specification. Teachers work together to arrive at new ways to engage with learning about sustainability in a broader sense. They establish meaningful connections across the specification and develop ideas to support rich learning in relation to Education about Sustainable Development.

### **Oide Wood Technology**

As part of the professional learning experience (PLE) for 2024/2025, the Wood Technology team are using the craft of marquetry as a medium to explore strategies



to support students on a design journey. Marquetry is the craft of applying pieces of veneer to a base material to form decorative patterns and designs.

In the context of Wood Technology, veneer is a thin slice or layer of wood normally between 0.5mm to 2mm in thickness. Veneer is obtained either by “peeling” the trunk of a tree or by thinly slicing strips of the wood from a cut section of the trunk. From a sustainable perspective, converting the log to veneer is

the most economical method of using any tree, primarily due to its minimal wood waste during production.

In preparation for PLE workshops 15,000 individual pieces of veneer were required to share with 1,350 registered Wood Technology teachers in order to provide a practical learning experience. To model and promote sustainable practice, the team endeavoured to secure these materials from a sustainable source.

Déanta Doors, an Irish joinery company, offered to supply off-cut veneers that were designated as waste. These veneers provide teachers with the opportunity to explore design strategies, engage with a variety of wood species, and appreciate sustainable practice throughout their learning. Additional veneers were also sourced from another Irish company called The Galtee Group. These veneers are now recycled into the circular economy and continue to be a carbon store rather than going up in smoke! Wood Technology teachers use these off-cuts as part of a practical learning experience during PLE workshops.



[Back to top](#)

## b. SEAI – Free Energy Management Courses for Schools



### **Interested in reducing your school's energy costs?**

Sign up today for a **FREE** training course to find out how you could save money by better managing your school's energy use.

Course participants are guided step by step through the energy management process from understanding bills and energy use in the school to developing and implementing an energy saving plan. Participants are given access to a range of resources, online tools, expert advice and opportunities to network and share knowledge & experiences with other schools.

### **Book a course now!**

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

Course 5	Wed 22/01/25	Wed 05/02/25	Wed 26/02/25	To register for Course 5 <a href="#">click here</a>
Course 6	Thu 06/02/25	Thu 27/02/25	Thu 13/03/25	To register for Course 6 <a href="#">click here</a>
Course 7	Tue 11/02/25	Tue 25/02/25	Tue 11/03/25	To register for Course 7 <a href="#">click here</a>

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

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

For more information visit the Energy in Education website [www.energyineducation.ie](http://www.energyineducation.ie)

[Back to top](#)

### c. Forest School Leadership Course - Brigit's Garden



**What is Forest School?**

Forest School is a well-developed form of teaching in a woodland setting where children learn through play and exploration, and it is really fun, as well!

Forest School is not a one-off experience but offers regular sessions over a period of time to maximize the benefits. Forest School is becoming increasingly popular in primary schools, early years' groups and in community settings.

**Forest School** provides dynamic real-life learning experiences for children that will benefit them for a lifetime and Brigit's Garden are the only provider of Forest School Leadership in Ireland. You can see a video which explains it really well [here](#).

### **Forest School is fun!**

Outdoor, hands-on and interactive 'classrooms' make learning fun!

When children have fun learning in a natural environment, it helps to nurture their self-confidence, social skills, creativity, self-awareness and much more.

### **Study alongside your work & family commitments**

Forest School Leadership courses are part-time, consisting of 8 - 9 onsite learning days and 4 - 5 webinars over a 4 - 6 month period. On successful completion of the 6-month coursework, leading to certification, there is a 5 - 6 month timeframe for independently completing a forest school pilot work experience.

### **Who can apply**

No previous experience required other than having considerable experience working with learners (min 2 years) and a passion for learning and being in nature.

### **There are new courses starting in Kerry and Kildare in April 2025.**

- ✓ Earn a QQI Level 6 qualification in Forest School Leadership
- ✓ Help meet your school's priorities for ESD and Well-being
- ✓ Apply both practical and theoretical knowledge to bring all aspects of the curriculum alive including Aistear, STEM, SESE, CSPE and more

Positive, appropriate, seasonal outdoor experiences provided by qualified leaders can engage and motivate learners to grow and develop in confidence and learning power.

The cost of the course is €1,500. Teachers may be able to apply for funding under the Refund of Fees scheme: [gov.ie - Teacher Fee Refund Scheme 2023](#)

[Learn more and apply today](#)

[Back to top](#)

## **d. Education Support Centres Ireland – Winter to Spring 2025 CPD Itinerary**



# EDUCATION FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT CPD SCHEDULE.

WHO WHEN WHAT

JAN - APRIL 2025

The January to April 2025 ESCI list of courses is now available at:

[ESCI Education for Sustainable Development CPD Spring 2025.pdf](#)

[Back to top](#)

## e. CPD News from the ISSN – Winter 2025



### The Irish School Sustainability Network – ESD CPD Schedule

The Irish School Sustainability Network (ISSN), in collaboration with ESCI, is delighted to announce its CPD schedule for 2025. Designed by teachers for teachers, our CPD offerings provide a comprehensive resource for Education for Sustainable Development (ESD), covering a wide range of topics in partnership with fantastic NGOs.









- **SEAI:** Explore sustainable energy with SEAI.
- **STAND:** Learn how stories can change perspectives and encourage students to 'imagine better'.
- **Sea Synergy:** Discover the oceans' vital role in supporting life and combating climate change.
- **Self Help Africa:** Understand how our food system affects farmers and how we can move towards a fair trade system.
- **Understory:** Explore how reducing, reusing, recycling, and regeneration drive innovation.

- **Change Clothes Crumlin:** Tackle fashion, ethics, and climate change in preparation for Fashion Revolution Week.





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 learn more and explore a 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.





### EDUCATION FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT CPD SCHEDULE.

WHO	WHEN	WHAT	JAN - APRIL 2025
	EVERY MONDAY 12PM - 12PM 18-FEB-25-25	<b>Biodiversity: Primary and Post-Primary CPD, Science, SPHE, Transition Year</b> Join us for Biodiversity, weekly 15-minute sessions where we explore our local area and nature. Discover fascinating wildlife insights, gather resources, and give your students' curiosity about the natural world.	<a href="#">REGISTER</a>
	MON 13 JAN 7-8PM	<b>Teaching Sustainable Energy across the Junior Cycle with SE4:</b> Post-Primary. In this session, you'll deepen your understanding of sustainable energy, explore strategies for addressing student misconceptions, and develop a shared understanding of the concept "Sustainable energy".	<a href="#">REGISTER</a>
	TUES 21 JAN 7-8PM	<b>Climate Action through Water and Land Management in preparation for World Water Day with Fethim Haly:</b> Primary and Post-Primary. In many ways, the climate and biodiversity issues we face can look completely overwhelming. However, local practical measures can be surprisingly effective. If we look at climate and biodiversity holistically and working through the lens of water, in this CPD we'll explore an accessible overview of how we can find solutions in our schools.	<a href="#">REGISTER</a>
	TUES 28 JAN 7-8PM	<b>Imagining Better: Activating Student Imagination for a Better World:</b> Post-Primary. This workshop explores how we can encourage students to "imagine better" and take action on issues of justice. Drawing on the idea that real, sustainable change requires new, inspiring stories and futures, we'll focus on how to shift perspectives and foster hope amidst social and environmental challenges.	<a href="#">REGISTER</a>
	TUES 4 FEB 7-8PM	<b>Our Ocean, Our Home with Seaweggs:</b> Primary. In this session, you'll explore the ocean's vital role in supporting life and combating climate change, using resources from The Ocean Road. We'll guide you through a 10-minute lesson plan to teach students about the ocean's importance to the planet.	<a href="#">REGISTER</a>
	WED 12 FEB 7-8PM	<b>Student panel: Discussion: Is our education system preparing us for the polycrisis we face?</b> Post-Primary. We are living through a polycrisis: war, hunger, climate impacts, food insecurity, and biodiversity loss. Our education system is preparing students to tackle these challenges. In this session, we'll explore what students think about the skills they need to navigate and address the polycrisis ahead.	<a href="#">REGISTER</a>
	TUES 25 FEB 7-8PM	<b>We are what we eat: Physically and Ethically:</b> Preparation for Fairtrade Fortnight 2025 with Self Help Africa. Post-Primary. Learn how unfair trade affects rural communities in Africa, where farmers grow food for export but face hunger. This session explores Fairtrade through videos and activities, highlighting actions you and your students can take to support fair trade.	<a href="#">REGISTER</a>
	WED 12 MARCH 7-8PM	<b>Running a student leadership program with the ISSN:</b> Post-Primary. In this session, we'll explore a framework for successful student leadership, discuss key elements for building student confidence, and review a project example that combines awareness and action.	<a href="#">REGISTER</a>

### EDUCATION FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT CPD SCHEDULE.

WHO	WHEN	WHAT	JAN - APRIL 2025
	TUES 18TH MARCH 7-8PM	<b>Zero waste and the Circular Economy with Alex from Underbury:</b> Post-Primary. Join Alex from Underbury for an online workshop on the Circular Economy, exploring how reuse, recycling, and regeneration drive innovation. Learn practical strategies to challenge the "take, make, waste" model and bring these concepts to life in your classroom.	<a href="#">REGISTER</a>
	WED 26TH MARCH 7-8PM	<b>How to be a Nature Hero School with Biodiversity in Schools:</b> Primary and Post-Primary. The Nature Hero Awards recognise schools for outstanding efforts to support nature. In this session, Biodiversity in Schools will show you how your school can get involved, with tips from teachers who've successfully participated.	<a href="#">REGISTER</a>
	WED 9TH APRIL 7-8PM	<b>Connected Classrooms: Tackling Fashion, Ethics, and Climate Change Together in preparation for Fashion Revolution Week:</b> Post-Primary. This 80-minute CPD workshop equips secondary school teachers with practical tools to explore fashion, ethics, and climate change in the classroom. Teachers will learn to integrate these topics across various subjects, encouraging students to consider the global impact of their fashion choices.	<a href="#">REGISTER</a>
	TUES 28TH APRIL 7-8PM	<b>Curious Teachers, Critical Classrooms: SE4 for a changing Curriculum:</b> Primary. In this session Bridget Golden - a lecturer in Global Citizenship Education at Maynooth University College in Limerick will introduce two resources designed to help teachers integrate global citizenship education (GCE) into their practice. GCE enables teachers to address complex, global issues in an interactive, supportive way, focusing on values, dialogue, and critical thinking.	<a href="#">REGISTER</a>

The ISSN is dedicated to creating a CPD schedule that reflects and responds to the needs of teachers and students. If you have any suggestions for a topic or skills that haven't appeared in the schedule, please make your suggestions [HERE](#).

[Back to top](#)

## 7. HEI Sector

### a. Technological University of the Shannon – ESD News



#### **TUS students gain award for their computer game developed with Trocaire**



A game developed by TUS students and graduates, in conjunction with Trocaire has received 3<sup>rd</sup> prize at a major international games competition in Denmark. *Madzi, Water Justice in Malawi*, received the accolade at the European Games Based Learning Conference held in the University of Aarhus Denmark in early October.

The game is based on the daily challenges faced by a family in rural Malawi as a result of climate change. It highlights the impact of drought on health, agriculture, the environment and the resultant workload often placed upon children. The game emphasises the efforts being made by individuals, communities and NGOs to develop and implement more sustainable technologies and practices, emphasising the power of collaboration.

The research and development for the game was undertaken by first year Game Art and Design, and Creative Media students in Clonmel. Paul Keating and John Hannafin supported them in their research and integrated the work into modules on their programmes. Trocaire provided funding, workshops and primary content relating to their work in Malawi. The Sustainable Development Institute, under Seamus Hoyne, gave additional resources. Malawian Academics and Activists based in Ireland also advised on the project as did students in the Gaelscoil, St Oliver's and Loreto schools in Clonmel.



The artwork in the game, which was created by Daria Kravtsova, a graduate of Game Art and Design Clonmel, has come in for particular praise.

Try the game out here:

<https://games.trocaire.org/madzi/>

## TUS ESD Compendium

As part of the SATLE-funded *Technological University of the Shannon Compendium Series*, TUS will be publishing an ESD Compendium in 2025. *Compendium of Embedding Education for Sustainable Development in Teaching and Assessment at TUS* will feature a diverse collection of approaches to teaching, learning and assessment aligned with the key principles of Education for Sustainable Development in the Technological University of the Shannon.

[Back to top](#)

## b. Consultation on National Strategy for Teaching and Learning in Higher Education



The [Higher Education Authority](#) is calling on staff, students, and all stakeholders in higher education to contribute to the development of a new national strategy for teaching and learning in higher education.

This is your chance to help determine where our resources and attention are focused over the coming years for teaching and learning excellence across Ireland's higher education institutions.

### Why Get Involved?

- Influence national priorities for teaching and learning.
- Share your insights on professional development, digital transformation, sustainability, academic integrity, and more.
- Help advance policy and initiatives that empower students, staff, and institutions.

### How to Participate:

Reflect on questions about HEA's role, strategic priorities, ongoing initiatives, and new opportunities.

Submit your thoughts via the consultation form here: [Consultation - National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education](#)

This is an opportunity to make your voice heard and contribute to a strategy that will shape higher education in Ireland for years to come.

**Deadline: 24 January 2025**



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



A **Student Summit on Climate Change in Higher Education in Ireland** was hosted by TU Dublin at Grangegorman on the 30th October. Eighty students from eleven HEIs across Ireland took part in a World Café style consultation process that asked students to identify what higher education institutions could do to address their concerns around climate education, justice, anxiety, food production, travel and climate activism.



The key findings were that there should be a discipline focused climate change module offered to all students. To promote climate justice there was a call for more links between global north and global south colleges. In addressing climate anxiety, the consensus was that action (supporting students to participate in climate activism on campus and in the community) could reduce anxiety. On climate activism there is an opportunity for universities to raise awareness on climate action not just for students but also communities.

The summit was supported with funding from N-TUTORR. The National Youth Council of Ireland, the Union of Students in Ireland, An Taisce and Concern facilitated deliberations on the day and provided support in promotion of the summit. A report on the outcomes of the summit is in preparation and will shortly be available.

Contact Dr Ken Boyle, Sustainability Education Lead, at [ken.boyle@tudublin.ie](mailto:ken.boyle@tudublin.ie) for more information



**Above:** Students participating at the Student Summit on Climate Change in Higher Education in Ireland.

#### d. N-TUTORR Showcase - Transforming Learning, Celebrating Collaboration

The HEA Executive joined presidents, staff, and student champions from across seven partner institutions and other key stakeholders in commemorating the final N-TUTORR Showcase: Transforming Learning, Celebrating Collaboration. The event, held on 26 November 2024 in the Dublin Convention Centre, celebrated a wide range of transformative work undertaken across the technological higher education

sector, showcasing innovation, collaboration, and the impact of the N-TUTORR national programme over the past two years.

There were various plenary and parallel sessions over the course of the day highlighting work achieved under the project's four work streams. Some of the areas covered in the sessions included Academic Integrity in higher education and GenAI, Education for Sustainability (Climate Action Leadership + Climate Literacy initiatives for students) and other various transformative initiatives that aimed at empowering students, develop staff capabilities, and enabling digital ecosystems.

Mr Tim Conlon, Head of Policy and Strategic Planning shared the plenary session with the TU Presidents to discuss on the future of the Technological Higher Education Sector.

Learn more about the programme and access resources here: [Online Learning Platform - Technological Higher Education | N-TUTORR](#)



**Above:** Presentation/Session on Academic Integrity at the N-TUTORR Showcase

[Back to top](#)

## 8. International Updates

### a. EU Working Group for Schools: Learning for Sustainability

The Department of Education attended the **EU Working Group for Schools: Learning for Sustainability Peer Learning Activity (PLA)** in Lisbon on 16 – 18 October.

The theme of the PLA was Citizenship Education and the Group heard how Portugal is promoting Citizenship Education for ESD in line with their National Strategy for Citizenship Education under which all schools are required to have a Citizenship Education School Strategy. We visited a large post primary school in Lisbon and heard from students about some of their Citizenship projects including protecting a stream that runs through their school grounds. They regularly test the water for contaminants and report any findings of concern to their Local Authority. They also raise awareness in their local community and with their fellow students about the importance of the stream for local biodiversity.

Active/ participatory education – both at school and in wider life – features strongly in both Citizenship Education and Education for Sustainable Development suggesting strong synergies between the two. One of the five priority areas for action in ESD to 2030 is to empower and mobilise young people to take action for sustainable development.

You can find out more about the Working Group here: [Register of Commission expert groups and other similar entities](#)



**Above:** The EU Working Group for Schools on Learning for Sustainability in Lisbon.

[Back to top](#)

## b. EU Launch of Education and Training Monitor 2024

The **European Commission's Education and Training Monitor 2024** was launched on 28 November 2024. This annual suite of publications that provide comparative policy analysis and data on ECEC, school education, adult learning, higher education, vocational education and an annual focus theme in the EU. This year the focus theme is on learning for sustainability, and there is a deeper look at basic skills (in the context of EU 2022 PISA data).

Section 1 of the Ireland report focuses on learning for Sustainability and notes that the green transition and sustainable development are key priorities for reforms and developments in education and acknowledges that ESD is embedded into the education system. The report highlights the lack of systematic monitoring mechanisms to implement sustainability and that key challenges relate to the extent to which learning for sustainability is embedded in teaching practice. The report also points to a disparity in Ireland between students' awareness of key global issues and their actual engagement and a need to close the knowledge-action gap. It also suggests a need to improve the focus on civic, cultural and sustainability education across the Irish education system which it notes are also the aims of the national strategy - ESD to 2030.

All content is available at this link: [Education and Training Monitor \(europa.eu\)](https://eumonitor.europa.eu/) including a toolbox to explore the data.

[Back to top](#)

## c. EU Council Recommendation on Young People and Climate Action

The EU Council of Ministers adopted a Recommendation on Young People and Climate Action on 23 October aimed at addressing the challenges faced by all young people, and in particular young environmental defenders, especially when advocating for a clean, healthy and sustainable environment. It states that “*Climate Action is one of the top priorities for young people in Europe*” and that “*Youth Participation in decision making processes improves the effectiveness of climate policies and young people need to be given the necessary support and resources for their climate advocacy, and adequate social and legal protection*”.

Measures include recommendations on; Ensuring young peoples access to rights, Strengthening youth participation; Investing in green jobs, education and green skills; Investing in tailored support to youth workers; Ensuring access to healthcare and targeted youth services; Accessing information and the right to be informed and Tackling discrimination and ensuring intergenerational equity.



The National Youth Council of Ireland (NYCI) is proud to have played a role in this groundbreaking recommendation through their membership in the European Youth Forum (YFJ). “With a strong foundation in climate justice and youth action through the [Youth2030 – Global Youth Work programme](#), NYCI supported the involvement of our Climate Justice representative, Eimear Manning, in the Council of Europe’s drafting group. Working alongside other youth advocates, Eimear contributed to shaping the framework and co-writing the recommendation, which reflects young people’s essential role in climate action and youth rights protection. This recommendation calls on governments to empower young environmental defenders, foster democratic participation in climate policy, and prioritise themes like climate justice, green jobs, and sustainable development.

Education for Sustainable Development also features three times throughout the recommendation, calling for the promotion of collaboration between teachers and youth workers on education for sustainable development; advising for the allocation of resources to formal and non-formal education frameworks, such as education for sustainable development, global youth work, global citizenship education and media and information literacy; and finally, for governments to offer regular and tailored training to educators to increase their proficiency in climate-related topics, including education for sustainable development and global citizenship education.

It is now vital that government departments, ministers, TDs and councillors are made aware of this instrument and urged to implement the recommendations within. Read more about the recommendation on the [Council of Europe’s website](#) and view the [recommendation on young people and climate action](#).”

[Back to top](#)

#### d. COP 29



**COP 29** (Baku, Azerbaijan) took place and marked the first ever COP where Education was included on the official Presidency agenda. UNESCO continued to advocate for the critical role of education in global climate action discussions as part of the new “Baku Guiding Principles on Human Development for Climate Resilience”.

There were a number of education related events held at COP 29 including:



- a meeting of the Greening Education Partnership which marked the start of a global consultation on two of its guidance documents; the Greening Teacher Capacity Policy Dialogue Tool and the Greening Communities guidance document: [Greening Education Partnership | UNESCO](#)
- a high level meeting on the Baku initiative on Human Development for Climate Resilience: <https://cop29.az/en/news/cop29-presidency-launches-initiatives-to-focus-global-attention-and-accelerate-climate-action>
- a Ministerial round table on greening education and enhancing climate literacy metric focused on the role of greening education in achieving three major priorities of the COP 29 Presidency – nationally determined contributions, financing and country level implementation: [COP29 Ministerial Roundtable on greening education and enhancing climate literacy metrics | UNESCO](#)
- The Teachers COP: [TeachersCOP | Office for Climate Education \(oce.global\)](#)

[Back to top](#)

## e. SDG Summit of the Future



### **Irish Delegation attends United Nations Summit of the Future in New York**

The Summit of the Future took place on 22 and 23 September, at UN Headquarters in New York bringing world leaders together to forge a new international consensus on how to deliver a better present and safeguard the future. Michael D. Higgins, President of Ireland delivered the [National Statement](#) and the Tánaiste gave remarks at the [Interactive Dialogue: Towards a Common Digital Future](#).

The Irish delegation attending the Summit also included Minister Eamon Ryan, representatives from the Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications, and from the Department of Foreign Affairs, as well as Ireland's newest UN Youth Delegates Natasha Maimba and Lauren Brennan Jones.

At the Summit, on Sunday 22 September, World leaders adopted a [Pact for the Future](#) that includes a [Global Digital Compact](#) and a [Declaration on Future Generations](#). The Pact covers a broad range of issues including peace and security, sustainable development, climate change, digital cooperation, human rights, gender, youth and future generations, and the transformation of global governance. The Pact is designed to turbo-charge implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals.

Further details can be found at this [link](#).



**Above:** The Irish delegation attending the Summit

In advance of the Summit, [Action Days](#) took place at UN Headquarters in New York bringing together representatives from Member States, civil society, private sector, academia, local and regional authorities, youth, and many more.

The delegation attended a number of events, including '[Peace not War](#)', hosted by the Irish Permanent Mission to the UN, as well as events on Localisation of the SDGs, Citizen Data, Climate Finance and SDG Lounge events diving into vital questions on how to keep the promise of the SDGs today, tomorrow and for future generations. In addition, Fiona McManus from the SDGs Unit participated in a [Side Event on the LEAP-FAST Initiative](#) for Accelerating Sustainable Transformations through Higher Education Networks. Current [SDG Champion](#) UCD is now a member of the LEAP-FAST Network.

[Back to top](#)

## 9. Other News

### a. Three Simple Actions – SDG 11 – Sustainable Cities and Communities

Below are three simple daily actions you can take to support **SDG 11 – Sustainable Cities and Communities**:



### b. SYNAPSES Schools Project in Curraghboy NS, Athlone



#### **Eco-Warriors in Action: How Curraghboy NS and Ellinogermaniki-Agogi are Shaping Future Sustainability Leaders**

“In a rapidly changing world, empowering young minds with the tools and mindset to champion sustainability is not just a responsibility - it’s a necessity. Curraghboy National School in Roscommon, Ireland, and Ellinogermaniki-Agogi School in Athens, Greece, have joined forces under the banner of SYNAPSES Schools – ESD/SC Eco-Warriors, an Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) and Sustainability Citizenship (SC) initiative. This project exemplifies how collaboration, innovation, and education can inspire students to become active stewards of the environment.

## A Vision for Sustainability Citizenship

The SYNAPSES project, supported by the DWEC (Dublin West Education Centre), brings together educators and students from two countries to engage in meaningful discussions and actions around sustainable practices. With over 500 participants expected, the initiative is designed to promote whole-school eco-friendly activities while fostering critical thinking and global citizenship.

The program centers on helping students explore the concept of being “eco-warriors” in their school communities. Through a blend of theoretical and practical learning, students gain a comprehensive understanding of sustainability, from analyzing the energy efficiency of their schools to creating miniature habitats that illustrate sustainable living.

## Learning Through Inspiration and Action

At the heart of the SYNAPSES project are interactive, student-centered sessions. The journey begins with exploring the idea of sustainability citizenship by reflecting on the work of influential figures such as Greta Thunberg. Students delve into the practices of established eco-schools, comparing maps of these schools and examining what makes them models of green innovation.

In the next phase, students form ECO-ESD/SC committees, where they collaboratively design action plans, sign commitment contracts, and propose eco-friendly changes for their schools. Quizzes and discussions enhance their vocabulary and understanding of environmental issues, building a strong foundation for leadership in sustainability.

A highlight of the project is the creation of miniature habitats and energy-efficient, STEAM-focused environments. This activity combines creativity with research, as students present their work and propose actionable steps for fostering sustainability in their communities.

## Extending Beyond the Classroom

To enrich the experience, guest speakers from environmental organizations are invited to share their expertise, bridging the gap between classroom learning and real-world applications. Resources like the Green Flag program and the Biomebioyou platform serve as reference points, inspiring students to envision practical and impactful sustainability solutions.

## The Power of Collaboration

This bilateral initiative not only enhances students’ understanding of ESD but also builds bridges between Irish and Greek cultures. By comparing their practices and exchanging ideas, participants develop a deeper appreciation for global perspectives on sustainability.

The project demonstrates how partnerships between schools, supported by organizations like the DWEC, can have a transformative impact on education. It fosters a sense of shared responsibility among students, teachers, and the wider community, emphasizing that sustainability is a collective effort.

## A Model for the Future

The SYNAPSES Schools – ESD/SC Eco-Warriors program offers a replicable framework for other schools looking to integrate sustainability into their curriculum. Its emphasis on collaboration, critical thinking, and hands-on learning provides a roadmap for shaping environmentally conscious and proactive citizens.

As Greta Thunberg reminds us, "You are never too small to make a difference." Through initiatives like SYNAPSES, students at Curraghboy NS and Ellinogermaniki-Agogi are proving just that. Together, they are not only learning about sustainability but actively creating a sustainable future.

For more information on this project and related resources, visit <https://www.biomebioyou.eu>, or the SYNAPSES Schools <https://www.ea.gr/en/ellinogermaniki-agogi/establishment/> or Dublin West Education Centre: [SYNAPSES - Dublin West Education Centre CPD Courses for Teachers](#)"

- by Rory Leonard, Principal

[Back to top](#)

## c. Global Education Time – Project Update



It's Global Education Time (GET) is an EU-DEAR & Irish Aid funded initiative designed to enhance national Global Citizenship Education (GCE) strategies in eight EU countries and help integrate GCE within secondary school curricula. Along with partners in Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Greece, Italy, Poland, Portugal and Spain, the project is led in Ireland through the charity A Partnership with Africa (APA). The GET project builds on the work of the Get up and Goals Project 2017- 2020 [www.getupandgoals.euti](http://www.getupandgoals.euti)

Over 3 years 2024-2027, the overarching aim of the project is to develop and share teaching and learning units aligned with national curricula around four key challenges: Migration, Climate Change, Gender Equality and Global Inequalities. In Ireland the resources have been developed in line with the Junior cycle curriculum for geography, history and CSPE. Currently 8 schools across Ireland are piloting the resources which when finalized will be available at [www.globaleducationtime.eu](http://www.globaleducationtime.eu) in 2025. A key aim is to maximize the use of the teaching and learning units through teacher training and online visibility campaigns

The next stage of the GET project is to inspire and support youth activism. Collaborations have begun with ECO-UNESCO Young Environmentalist Awards and Concern's youth climate ambassador to work towards using curriculum-based learning on these 4



challenges to foster active engagement of youth in global citizenship in and beyond the classroom.

For more details contact: [get@apa.ie](mailto:get@apa.ie)



[Back to top](#)

## d. SDG Geohive – Ireland's SDG 3 & SDG 4 Reports 2024



The Central Statistics Office, in collaboration with the Department of Health and the Department of Education, has recently published its latest Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) reports – **SDG 3 Good Health and Wellbeing** and **SDG 4 Quality Education**.

The series of SDG reports set out Ireland's progress against each of the UN and EU agreed SDG targets and indicators using national and international statistical reports.

**SDG 3** is the largest SDG with 28 indicators.

Commenting on the publication, Mary Smyth, Statistician, said: *"This latest report on United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (UN SDGs) has data on 28*

*indicators for Ireland, divided over 6 chapters: Childbirth, Communicable Diseases, Premature Mortality, Health Care, Environment, and Health Infrastructure. Data are presented in categories relevant to the indicators and geographical location, where possible. The SDGs and their associated indicators are, by design, wide-ranging in their coverage. As a result, the Irish data are provided by a number of sources including government departments, official organisations and international organisations such as the UN. This publication for Goal 3 was developed in collaboration with the Department of Health.”*

The 2024 report on **SDG 4 – Quality Education** published on 2<sup>nd</sup> December has 12 indicators which are organised into three chapters:

- Childhood Education
- Adult Education
- Education Infrastructure

The key findings in the **SDG 4** report include:

- In 2024, 65% of 25- to 34-year-olds held a third level qualification, similar to the rate for 35-44-year-olds (61%).
- Almost two-thirds of adults (64%) aged 25 to 34 years, participated in lifelong learning in 2022, compared with one-third (35%) of people aged 55 to 69 years, in 2022.
- The retention rate of pupils sitting the Junior Certificate was 97.6%, for those who started secondary education in 2016 (2016 Cohort). The Leaving Certificate retention rate was 91.7%.
- Over 91% of three- to four-year-olds were enrolled in the early years sector in 2022/23, up from 83.5% two years previously.
- Nearly four-fifths (78%) of Early Years Educators working with groups of three- to five-year-olds in 2021 had a qualification at level 6 or higher, while it was three-fifths (60%) of Early Years Educators for the younger age groups.

Read the SDG reports on the Geohive here: [Goals | Irelands Hub for Sustainable Development Goals](#)

[Back to top](#)

## e. UNICEF – World Children’s Day 2024



### Listen to the Future: Celebrating World Children’s Day 2024

Children’s lives were at a crossroads as the world rapidly changed. On November 20th, World Children’s Day marked the anniversary of the [UN Convention on the Rights of the Child \(CRC\)](#), which had transformed millions of lives. Despite progress, UNICEF urged adults to listen to children, engage with their dreams, and work toward a sustainable future.

#### Why “Listen to the Future”?

This year’s theme, "Listen to the Future," is a call to action. Children are not only tomorrow's leaders but today's change-makers. World Children’s Day activities highlighted the importance of sustainability. Children’s art and expressions showcased their vision for a cleaner planet, better education, and urgent climate action. They called for a world where their rights are respected and their voices heard.

#### What’s Happening on World Children’s Day?

Schools and communities worldwide celebrated World Children’s Day, focusing on children’s voices and rights.

- **Kids' Takeovers:** Students took leadership roles, leading classrooms and organizing activities.
- **Creative Projects:** Children expressed their hopes through workshops, art, and video



**Above:** Students from schools involved in UNICEF Ireland's Child Rights Schools Programme created drawings and wrote letters about the future world they envision.

- **Global Solidarity:** Students showed support through peace walks and activities, highlighting issues like climate change and education access. For example, Griffeen Valley Educate Together National School hosted a peace walk for children's rights. Take a look at [RTE's coverage](#) of the event.

Watch this [video](#) to see how students at St. Joseph's National School in Dundalk, part of our [Child Rights School programme](#), celebrated World Children's Day, sharing their hopes and desire to shape decisions that impact their lives. In Dublin, the Lord Mayor lit the Mansion House blue to highlight the importance of children's rights. Globally, children and youth inspired change in their communities. Read the [stories](#) of nine UNICEF Youth Advocates leading the charge for a better future for all children.

### Standing in Solidarity with Children Worldwide

On **World Children's Day**, we stand with children affected by conflict and injustice. Many still lack basic rights like education, healthcare, and protection. UNICEF Ireland advocates for these rights, believing education is key to lasting peace and opportunity for all children.

### What can you do today!

One thing you can do today is read [UNICEF's State of the World's Children 2024 report](#), which focuses on three trends affecting children today and in the future: climate crisis, disruptive technologies and demographic change.

[Back to top](#)

## f. Adventurous Plan and Outdoor Learning (APOLE) Conference



The **Adventurous Play and Outdoor Learning (APOLE) Erasmus+ Conference** took place on Saturday 12 October at St. Patrick's Campus.

This Erasmus project seeks to promote and integrate the practice of outdoor learning through weekly risky or adventurous play activities in primary schools across Europe. This work is ultimately motivated by a desire to enhance the well-being of all primary aged children through active and engaging experiences outdoors.

This event was attended by teachers (early years and primary), school leaders, parents, initial teacher education educators, stakeholders in early years and primary education and researchers.

The event began with an introduction to the APOLE project and an overview of the outcomes from the three year project including teacher resources and research with parents and children.

This was followed by a series of ‘experiential’ outdoor workshops, facilitated by APOLE partner teachers from St Patrick’s National School, Slane, Co Meath; De Tandem Freinetschool, Bruges, Belgium and Primary school Koseze Ljubljana, Slovenia.

A keynote presentation '*Outdoor Learning and Risky Play for All Children*' was given by Mr Tomás Aylward, Lecturer in Adapted Physical Activity & Outdoor Learning at Munster Technological University.

[Back to top](#)



## g. SDG Week 2024 and SDG 2023 - 24 Champions Showcase



Ireland's third Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) Week was held between 20 and 29 September 2024. SDG Week celebrates and raises awareness of the Sustainable Development Goals and forms part of the wider European Sustainable Development Week (ESDW). Over 198 [events](#) were organised across Ireland, with over 4,000 activities taking place across 39 countries in Europe.

The SDG Champions 2023-2024 Showcase took place at the Ashling Hotel in Dublin on 30 September, rounding off SDG Week 2024. The Showcase was an opportunity for SDG Champions from the 2023-24 Programme to illustrate their great work and initiatives on the SDGs.

With the theme 'We are all connected – Progressing SDG 17 Partnership for the Goals', the event also brought together the 2023-24 SDG Champions with representatives from the new Champions Programme (2024-25) as well as those from civil society, NGOs, the private and public sector and government departments to discuss important topics relating to the Goals, particularly around the theme of SDG 17.

You can find out more about the SDG Champions programme on [gov.ie](https://gov.ie).



[Back to top](#)

## h. SDG National Stakeholder Forum

On Monday, 21 October the final SDG National Stakeholder Forum of 2024 was held in Dublin Castle. The theme was Partnerships for Climate Action – From Plans to Community Action. The programme attracted a wide range of stakeholders who attended and participated throughout the day.



Comedian and author Colm O'Regan opened proceedings by sharing his personal efforts to live sustainably as well as the work he undertakes with his local community action group. There were several key speakers including Sean McCabe, Head of Climate Justice and Sustainability at Bohemians Football Club. He spoke on Action Through Sport and the great work Bohemians are involved, both in sports and in their local community. Robert Mooney, Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications, and Niall McCaffrey, Director at IPSOS Ireland updated the forum on the National Dialogue on Climate Action and the Climate Actions Work Programme. Rounding up the keynote addresses was Tara O'Leary, Community Engagement Practitioner. She spoke under the heading of Experiments in Community Resilience and shared learnings from the many Scottish community projects she has supported and engaged with over the last decade.

There were 4 Workshops on the day with themes on: -

Climate Led Community Action- 5 Learnings From 5 Programmes Over 5 Years 2019-2024

Sustainable Farming – An Irish View

## Climate, Community and Connectivity: Ensuring Sustainable and Accessible Transport

Summit of the Future 2024, Pact for the Future



**Above:** Secretary-General of Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications, Oonagh Buckley.

Laura Burke, Director General, Environmental Protection Agency updated the forum on the work and current initiatives of the agency. Members of the Shared Island Youth Forum shared their experience of working together over the last twelve months and their hopes and recommendations. Secretary General of the Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications, Oonagh Buckley, closed the forum with reflections on the workshop feedback and the key presentations from the day. The SDG Stakeholder Forum will be back in 2025.

### i. ECO-UNESCO Young People's Survey – Climate Change and Climate Justice



ECO-UNESCO is carrying out a survey on Young Peoples views on Climate Change and Climate Justice as part of our Youth Climate Justice programme.

ECO-UNESCO are excited to announce the Youth Climate Justice Survey 2024, created in collaboration with SpunOut, is up and running. Since 2020, we've been gathering the voices of young people on climate change and justice. ECO-UNESCO want to hear from even more young people from across Ireland!

This survey is your chance to share your thoughts on how you and other young people can get involved in climate action, the challenges you face, and which issues you think need to be prioritized. The responses will help us inform relevant stakeholders at a national and local level about young people's priorities on climate change and climate justice, together while shaping our future work as an organisation.

By completing the survey, you'll also have the chance to enter a draw to win a prize - simply submit your email at the end.

Make your voice heard and help drive real change!

[Take the survey in English](#)

[Take the survey in Irish](#)



[Back to top](#)

## j. Tipperary Education and Training Board – Green Spaces Project



Tipperary Education and Training Board (TETB) developed and coordinated a Green Spaces Project during the school year, supported by funding from the Department of Education ESD 2023/24. Twelve post-primary and one primary school in the ETB engaged in a range of activities which either commenced or developed a 'green space' in their respective school communities. The collective application was organised through the Director of Schools – Clodagh Kelly, who saw the project as an opportunity to promote collective engagement across the ETB schools, aligned to the social and environmental pillars of ESD.

As part of the total funding amount granted, each school was provided with the expertise and advice of a local gardener (Joe Buckley) who visited each school site and provided information and onsite advice on design, planning and development for the assigned spaces. In addition, each school was allocated a portion of the overall grant which was used to purchase plants, landscaping, equipment and materials.

Coordinating staff members from each school site participated in regular online collaborations, sharing their progress and challenges, with an opportunity to provide support and insights from their different school contexts. Additional assistance was provided by the Take 1 Programme (Valerie Lewis) which is based in Tipperary ETB and whose schools have been early adopters of the programme approach.

Where schools used the funding for the enhancement or development of poly tunnels, the gardener provided valuable advice in relation to produce which would be harvested before or after the summer break. Edible produce was used or will be used in the school kitchen and/or by the Home Economics departments, providing a lived experience of the food production cycle. Other themes included the development of pocket gardens, wildflower areas, chicken coop, woodland garden, organic gardening and pollinator planting.

The participants who joined in learning activities in each location, included students, teachers, school caretaker, parents/guardians, and local communities. While some schools had a focus on enhancing sensory areas or areas for students aligned to the school ASD unit, all participants noted that the entire school community would benefit from the development of the 'Green Space'.



The staff of Newport College reflected the sense of achievement from all schools when they noted *"the entire school community has been given the opportunity to contribute, not only staff and students, but parents with a particular interest in gardening have also been helping. This has connected the school with an enjoyable experience so far"*. In addition to the practical aspects of the project, each school developed and published their School Sustainability Policy, providing them with an opportunity to plan for future engagement and learning.

For information: **Tipperary ETB** - Church Road, Nenagh, Co. Tipperary. E45 XD59

### **Post Primary Schools:**

- Borrisokane Community College
- Raheen College (Clonmel)
- Colaiste Dún Iascaigh (Cahir)
- Coláiste Mhuire (Thurles)
- Coláiste Phobal Ros Cré, Roscrea
- Comeragh College (Carrick on Suir)
- Gaelcholáiste Chéitinn, Clonmel
- Nenagh College
- Newport College
- Scoil Ruáin (Killenaule)
- St. Ailbe's School (Tipperary Town)
- 

**High Support Special School** Coláiste Sliabh na mBan (Clonmel)

**Primary School:** Nenagh Community National School

### **Links to Powerpoints:**

[Scoil Ruain Green Spaces Project.pptx](#) and [Newport College Green Space Project.odp](#)



**Above:** St. Ailbe's School planting their sensory garden

[Back to top](#)

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