



An Roinn Oideachais  
agus Óige  
Department of Education  
and Youth

## Education for Sustainable Development Newsletter

Welcome to the **May 2025** issue and **19<sup>th</sup> publication** of the Department of Education and Youth newsletter on **Education for Sustainable Development (ESD)**. We would like to thank all of those who have contributed. We hope that you enjoy this edition and will find inspiration, ideas, useful links and resources to help you to play your part in sustainable development.

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

### **ESD in County Waterford and Westmeath – Calling All Educational Institutions!**

Do you attend, work for or collaborate with an educational establishment or institution in **Waterford** or **Westmeath** 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 and Youth if we publish your piece!

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## 1. ESD to 2030 Updates



### a. ESD to 2030 – Funding for Organisations

The Department is now inviting **Organisations** to apply for ESD funding of up to €25,000 for projects that support implementation of ESD to 2030 in the school sector.

Details of the funding call and application process are available on the on the [ESD Funding Call](#) page on Gov.ie. The closing date for receipt of applications is **Friday 30 May 2025**.

The Department will run a separate ESD funding call for schools in September. Details of the call for schools will be published in the September issue of the ESD Newsletter to which you can subscribe [here](#).

Organisations and schools who received ESD funding in 2024 are now being asked to submit a report to the Department on their projects.

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## b. Basic Biodiversity Online Training Programme for Schools



The All-Ireland Pollinator Plan launched a free online training course '**Managing School Grounds for Biodiversity**' in March. The course can be accessed at <https://learn.biodiversityireland.ie/courses/schools>

There has been a great take up of the course since it's launch and we encourage schools and in particular school caretakers, groundskeepers, and anyone responsible for caring for school grounds to check it out.

Through ten evidence-based actions, it guides you through different ways of helping biodiversity no matter the size of your school or the space availability.

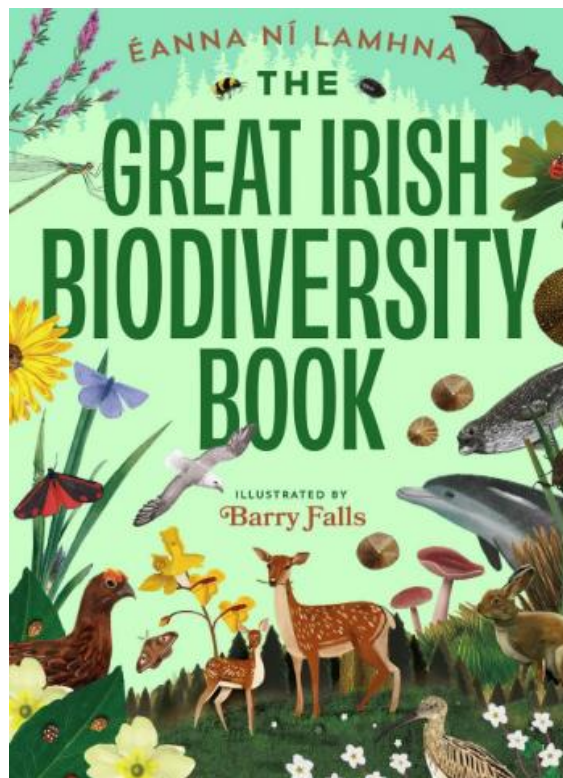
From pesticide alternatives to plant lists, biodiversity-friendly mowing tips to ideas on getting the school community involved, this is an opportunity for anyone who wants to manage school grounds in a more nature-friendly way and engage pupils, students and staff along the way.

The All-Ireland Pollinator Plan is a framework bringing together different sectors across the island of Ireland to create a landscape where pollinators can survive and thrive. Its implementation is coordinated by the National Biodiversity Data Centre.

**Find out more:** <https://pollinators.ie/schools/>

### **WIN a copy of Eanna Ni Lamhna's 'Great Irish Biodiversity Book'!**

Enrol for the free course '**Managing School Grounds for Biodiversity**' by **Friday 23<sup>rd</sup> May 2025**, to be in with a chance of winning a copy of Eanna Ni Lamhna's 'Great Irish Biodiversity Book'!



## c. CPD Programmes for Teachers – Update



The Department will be updating its [CPD Programmes for Teachers](#) in September 2025.

If you would like to add or include a course, please email [ESD@education.gov.ie](mailto:ESD@education.gov.ie) by **5pm on Friday, 8 August 2025**.

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## d. Curriculum Developments – CASD and SEE

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

Sample papers for the new Leaving Certificate subject “Climate Action and Sustainable Development” were published by the State Examinations Commission on 9<sup>th</sup> April. Four sample examination papers in the subject - two Higher Level and two Ordinary Level – have issued to schools. You can view the papers here: [Senior Cycle Redevelopment - State Examination Commission](#). In **September 2025**, a sample brief for the Additional Assessment Component – the Action Project – will be in schools. A live brief for AACs will be issued in January 2026.

A small number of network schools called Phase One schools will deliver the new subject from September 2025, with the first Leaving Certificate examination in the subject in summer 2027. The teachers in these schools are currently undertaking Teacher Professional Learning with Oide in preparation for the roll-out in September. A list of the schools is available at: [gov.ie - Minister Foley announces schools participating in phase one rollout of new Leaving Certificate subjects](#) and the specification 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.

Through SSE, 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 from the consultation was subsequently analysed and two consultation reports were published in late 2024.

The curricula will be introduced from the 2025/2026 school year and implementation will be on a phased basis, over a 5 – 6 year period. Each of the five curriculum specifications, including SEE, will include a 'Toolkit'. In addition, professional development opportunities will be provided to school leaders and teachers. The model of professional development is currently being considered.

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## e. Updated Sustainability Toolkit for Schools



An Roinn Oideachais  
Department of Education

### School Sector – Climate Action Mandate

#### Sustainability Guidelines

We are in the process of reviewing and updating the Sustainability Toolkit for schools. If there is anything you would like to see added to the toolkit, please let us know ([esd@education.gov.ie](mailto:esd@education.gov.ie)). We plan to publish the updated toolkit in September.

The **Sustainability Toolkit**, first published in September 2022 was developed to support schools in adopting a Sustainability Policy Statement in accordance with the School Sector Climate Action Mandate: [gov.ie - School Sector Climate Action Mandate](https://gov.ie/SchoolSectorClimateActionMandate)

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

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## f. Solar Panels for Schools Programme update – May 2025



Since the launch of the Schools PV Programme in November 2023, more than 3,303 schools have been approved to progress to tender for installation of PV panels with more than 2,410 of those so far approved for funding. To date, 1,160 schools have had their PV successfully installed.

For more details, please see: [gov.ie - Schools Photovoltaic Programme](https://gov.ie/SchoolsPhotovoltaicProgramme)







**Above:** Castletown National School , Donegal, with newly fitted solar panels.

## g. REPowerEU Energy Inventory Profile Survey of schools



The Department has commenced the national roll out of the REPowerEU Energy Inventory Profile Survey of primary and post-primary schools.

As part of their work towards 2030 and 2050 climate targets, the department is establishing a national energy profile of all schools. This is an important component of the department's School Sector Technical Climate Action Roadmap which was published in 2023 and updated in 2024.

A pilot phase of the energy inventory profile was funded by European Investment Bank (it comprised all schools across five counties) and was completed in 2023. The department was successful in seeking funding in 2024 for the remaining schools nationwide from the REPowerEU Programme which is funded by the European Union – NextGenerationEU

The approach of bringing energy and condition data together in the one survey database is very innovative and has significant potential to assist with future prioritisation of decarbonisation and investments in the school estate, enabling identification and targeted development of future school sector energy and decarbonisation programmes that will reduce overall reliance on fossil fuels and accelerate the deployment of renewable energy.

The department has appointed a framework of surveying companies to complete the Inventory. Each school will be surveyed by an experienced construction professional using a new survey

tool developed by Planning and Building Unit of the department. This data is entered on a tablet computer onsite, imported into the department's Geographical Information System (GIS), then processed into a relational database which performs the required technical calculations to determine a School Energy and Carbon Estimated Rating which is a bespoke rating developed specifically for the school sector by the department.

All schools have now been contacted directly by the department. The schools in the first tranche of surveys (in the counties Dublin, Cork, Kerry, Galway and Mayo) have been advised of their appointed surveying company and timelines.

The second and remaining tranche of surveys will commence this year. Schools in these areas will again be contacted nearer the time advising of their appointed surveying company and timelines.

The REPowerEU programme is funded by the European Union – NextGenerationEU. REPowerEU is the EU's plan to rapidly reduce dependence on Russian fossil fuels following the war in Ukraine, boost the independence and security of the Union's energy supply and accelerate the green transition. It aims to fast forward the clean transition and joining forces to achieve a more resilient energy system and a true Energy Union. REPowerEU is financed via the National Recovery and Resilience Facility (NRRF).

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## h. SDG Posters and Information Flyers for Schools

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

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



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## 2. ESD Around the Country – Sligo and Tipperary

### a. ESD in County Sligo



**Public Participation  
Network Sligo**



Ollscoil  
Teicneolaíochta  
an Atlantaigh

Atlantic  
Technological  
University

**School children and schoolteachers in Co. Sligo co-create nature-based workbook on the Sustainable Development Goals with the Power to Change project.**

The [Power to Change](#) Climate Education Clubs aim to develop links between schools and communities and provide opportunities to co-design projects related to climate action and sustainability. The clubs include (i) Primary Connections Clubs - Empowering primary school children to take positive actions and voice their opinions, (ii) Youth Connections Clubs - Encouraging post-primary school students to engagement in the Climate Conversations, and (iii) Community Connections Clubs -Engaging higher education students in community-based and community-related projects.

In January 2024 schoolchildren and schoolteachers across County Sligo were invited to co-create a nature-based workbook through the Primary Connections Clubs. Schools were provided with a draft workbook containing an introduction to the SDGs that could foster environmental awareness and encourage meaningful conversations around sustainability. The workbook was explored and evaluated through a series of workshop days and self-directed activities. Schoolchildren and schoolteachers provided invaluable feedback, content, recommendations, and artwork that have been integrated into the final version of the workbook to ensure that it is a useful and enjoyable learning resource.

The participating schools were St. John's NS, Sligo town, Scoil Naomh Eanna, Carraroe, St. Aiden's NS, Monasteraden, and St. Joseph's NS, Templeboy. The revised workbook was released in February 2025 at the Power to Change [Climate Education Clubs Celebration Day](#).

Minister of State Marian Harkin TD attended the launch event and said “I am hugely impressed with the workbook “SDGs and Me – Nurturing our World” that has been produced by the schoolchildren and schoolteachers. Practical suggestions within the workbook show how each one of us as individuals, and as a part of a wider community, have the power to address the challenges of climate change. The title of this project “Power to Change” is so apt, and this workbook clearly demonstrates how we all have that the power to change.”

Watch the Creative Journey of the workbook at [SDGs and Me Workbook - The Creative Journey - YouTube](#)

View the workbook and download the activities at [SDG Workbook | Sligo PPN](#)

Please contact [Yvonne.lang@atu.ie](mailto:Yvonne.lang@atu.ie) for further details



**The Power to Change project is a partnership between Atlantic Technological University and the Sligo Public Participation Network that aims to build capacity within community groups to lead on climate action. It is part of the Community Climate Action Programme (Strand 2) funded by the Government of Ireland through the Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications.**

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## b. ESD in County Tipperary



Comhairle Contae Thiobraid Árann  
Tipperary County Council

Tipperary County Council has identified a 'Decarbonising Zone' called the 'Mid-Tipperary Decarbonising Zone' (one of 41 Zones across Ireland), the focus is on support and advocacy for climate action and lower carbon emissions in the area. A key action of the Tipperary DZ is to support the development of a sustainable and Circular Bioeconomy, noting the location of the National Bioeconomy Campus in the Tipperary DZ at Lisheen. Tipperary County Council is actively working with partners and stakeholders promoting learning about the Bioeconomy.

For National Bioeconomy Week, in mid-October 2024, the Tipperary County Council Climate Action Office assisted the Tipperary County Council library service in providing contacts with personnel at the National Bioeconomy Campus, at Lisheen, Thurles, so that engaging talks could be delivered to senior cycle science and Agricultural Science students in secondary schools within the catchment area of Cashel and Nenagh

Libraries. These presentations were given by Naveen Kumar, European Project Manager, National Bioeconomy Campus, Lisheen, Thurles.

In 2025, a detailed programme of education and learning in the Tipperary DZ is scheduled, including Climate Action and Circular economy/Bio economy training for primary school children by the 'Rediscovery Centre', ongoing delivery of the Green Schools programme and participation in the forthcoming 'Ours to Protect' radio services on climate action.

See <https://www.tipperarycoco.ie/climateaction/mid-tipperary-decarbonising-zone> for further information regarding the Mid-Tipperary DZ.



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### 3. School Updates

**Editor's Note:** Thank you to all the schools who sent us in updates on their activities for ESD. There is great work going on in schools all across the country. We had a record number of schools sending in their ESD news for this issue so thanks to all of you for taking the time to let us know what you are doing for ESD; unfortunately, we can't include all the submissions in the ESD Newsletter but here are two great examples:

#### a. ESD at Roscommon Community College – Learning for Life class

“At Roscommon Community College, we are deeply committed to embedding Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) across our curriculum. This year, our *Learning for Life* class has been at the forefront of promoting sustainability initiatives in our school by integrating environmental themes into various modules and short courses.

Some of the key initiatives include the ongoing efforts in the *Horticulture* module, which focuses on promoting biodiversity and pollination on our school grounds, advocating for climate action through litter picking, upcycling, and recycling in *Art* class, and fostering local-to-global connections in the *Living in the Community* module.

In Horticulture class, students nurture bulbs each year, welcoming an array of vibrant colors come spring. This hands-on experience does more than beautify our school grounds; it helps students connect with important environmental concepts and their role in the world as global citizens. By caring for plants, they learn about the broader impact of protecting the Earth and the critical importance of pollinators like bees and butterflies. These efforts contribute to creating a pollinator-friendly space on our school grounds, helping to protect Earth's ecosystems amidst the ongoing biodiversity crisis. During this class, students have also upcycled materials to create bird feeders, created bug hotels and have re-connected with nature and their surroundings in a sustainable manner.



In addition to these initiatives, the Learning for Life class actively participates in climate action by picking up litter around our school grounds and adopted area as part of our ongoing work as part of the *Green Schools Programme*. This simple yet impactful activity highlights the importance of recycling and demonstrates how small individual actions can contribute to addressing the larger climate crisis.

As part of the *Living in the Community* module, students have explored the UN Sustainable Development Goals and their relevance to our local community. To further

this understanding, the class organized an educational trip to a local farm in Roscommon, providing a valuable opportunity to connect theoretical knowledge with real-world practices in sustainable farming.

In preparation for the trip, students watched videos on sustainable farming practices in both Ireland and Australia, gaining a global perspective on farming and food security. They learned that each cow on the farm visited produces up to 50 litres of milk daily, which is used to create products such as butter, cheese, and yogurt, sold throughout Ireland and exported worldwide. This experience deepened their understanding of the role sustainable agriculture plays in supporting local communities and global food security, forging connections between local and global sustainability efforts.



Through these initiatives, our Learning for Life class is not only gaining knowledge about sustainability but also actively contributing to the global conversation on protecting and preserving our planet for future generations.

We are very proud of the ongoing efforts of our Learning for Life class, taking collective action to champion Education for Sustainable Development in RCC. Well done!

**Editor's Note:** Congratulations to all at Roscommon Community College, especially the Learning for Life Class. Keep up the great work! A €500 One-For-All voucher to support ESD projects is on its way to you!

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## b. ESD at Gurraneasig NS, Kibrittain, Co. Cork.

### **Vitamin Sea – A Whole-School Dive into Sustainability, Creativity, and Wellbeing**

This school year, our learning journey took an exciting turn through the Creative Clusters initiative, as we launched a whole-school project that truly reflects who we are and where we're from. Aptly named Vitamin Sea, the project drew inspiration from our stunning coastal location at Howe Strand — a place that's not just a view, but an extension of our classroom. Locally, we're often affectionately called the "beach school", and for good reason.

The beach is central to our students' daily experience. It serves as a pitch for football and city sports training, a classroom for ecology, and a haven of wellbeing. During the summer months, our aquatics strand comes to life through surfing lessons, and throughout the year we ensure our pupils develop a deep respect for the sea and the coastline. RNLI water safety talks are a regular feature, as are beach clean-ups that foster active environmental stewardship.



With this strong relationship to the coast, it felt only natural to focus our Creative Clusters project on our local marine environment. While our students have previously conducted research and surveys on mermaid purses and fish spawning along our shoreline, this year's project – Vitamin Sea – took a more creative and wellbeing-focused approach.

To support this, we partnered with WiseWater, who delivered inspiring workshops to our senior classes. Their wellness programme blends environmental awareness with holistic health, helping students connect the wellbeing of our oceans with their own physical, mental, and emotional wellbeing. Through interactive activities and hands-on experiments, the children discovered just how deeply intertwined we are with our natural world. Our whole-school beach clean-up became a key moment in the project. The plastics collected were transformed into art through the guidance of Geraldine Quinn from Heritage in Schools, who taught the children traditional weaving techniques. The result? A revitalised discarded fisherman's net woven with collected plastics, giving new life to old materials.

The heart of the project, however, is our newest (and most imaginative!) playground addition — Penguin the Currach. The boat was generously donated by Meitheal Mara, a community boat-building organisation based in Cork City, and brought to life in our schoolyard with the help of the WiseWater team. As part of our School Self-Evaluation Plan, improving outdoor spaces to promote wellbeing is a key target, and Penguin has become a beloved centrepiece. The team removed the original seating, repurposed an old raised bed to create new ones, secured the currach safely in place, and even added a steering wheel — sparking endless imaginative play and storytelling.

To complement the reuse of plastic, students also collected driftwood, writing one positive thought about the sea on each piece. These were woven into the net alongside the plastics, bringing together environmental reflection, creativity, and gratitude in one powerful artwork. Giving it even more character, the students decided to paint the boat to resemble a penguin — furthering their sense of ownership and pride in the project.

The Vitamin Sea project has truly brought together the values at the core of our school: creativity, sustainability, wellbeing, and a deep connection to the land and sea that surround us. It has reminded us of the magic that happens when we learn with the sea, not just beside it.

See more here: [Gurraneasig Vitamin Sea 1080WebShareName - YouTube](#)

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

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### c. Special Delivery at Scoil Bhríde Primary School, Kilcullen



Scoil Bhríde in Kilcullen sent us in a lovely photo (above) of their recycled school benches, purchased with their ESD funding. Well done Scoil Bhríde!

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## 4. Competitions

### a. ESD to 2030: Art Competition for Schools – Winners and Awards Ceremony



The awards ceremony for the **ESD to 2030 Art Competition for Schools** was held in the Department's Clock Tower on 10 April 2025.

Twelve students whose work was shortlisted were invited to the Department for the awards ceremony.

The overall prize-winner was Jemimah Foster from Tralee Educate Together Primary School who received the ESD Art Competition Trophy from Dr. Katie Sweeney, National Director for the Integration of the Arts and Creativity in Education and Chair of the judging panel who said *"I am so pleased to announce the winner of the ESD Art Competition for Schools. Education is a place for creativity, innovation and collaboration. This competition provided an opportunity for students and teachers to collaborate and engage in creativity and critical thinking which will be beneficial in developing their knowledge and skills in promoting sustainable development."*

Minister McEntee said, *"It is a great honour to see the fantastic creative works by children and young people from across the country, demonstrating their artistic abilities but also showcasing their knowledge and interest in sustainability. I am delighted that these 12 winners have been recognised for their talent and hard work."*

Jemimah's work was titled '**The Future is in Our Hands**' and was a 3D model of the world being held in a hand with trees and turbines. The model was made from recycled boxes, old shopping bags, wood, straw and feathers found on a walk. The piece was linked to SDG 7 – Affordable and Clean Energy, SDG 12 – Responsible Consumption and Production, SDG 14 – Life Below Water and SDG 15 – Life on Land.





**Above:** Jemimah receiving the ESD Art Competition for Schools trophy from Dr. Katie Sweeney.



**Above:** All the winners with their certificates and the overall winning entry 'The Future is in Our Hands'.

A list of the competition winners is as follows:

Primary			Post Primary		
Lower (Junior Infants to 2 <sup>nd</sup> class)	1 <sup>st</sup> prize	Jack Wall from St Anne's Special School	Junior (Junior Cycle)	1 <sup>st</sup> prize	Vakare Lengvinaite from Mercy Secondary School
	2 <sup>nd</sup> prize	Róise Fahy from Lakyle NS		2 <sup>nd</sup> prize	Kiera Kelly from Coláiste Einde
	3 <sup>rd</sup> prize	Kora Wheatman from Raharney NS		3 <sup>rd</sup> prize	Kayla O'Neill from Mean Scoil Nua an Leith-Triúigh
Upper (3 <sup>rd</sup> to 6 <sup>th</sup> class)	1 <sup>st</sup> prize	Jemimah Foster from Tralee Educate Together NS	Senior (TY/ Leaving Cert)	1 <sup>st</sup> prize	Kirrissa Burns from Moate Community School
	2 <sup>nd</sup> prize	Nathan Canty from Ballymoney NS		2 <sup>nd</sup> prize	Caityln Ablett from Ardscoil na Mara
	3 <sup>rd</sup> prize	Saorfhlaith Stafford from Tralee Educate Together		3 <sup>rd</sup> prize	Robyn Farrell from St. Clare's Comprehensive

**Note from the Editor:** A big thank you to all of the students who entered the competition and to their teachers for supporting them. Thank you also to our Judges: Dr. Katie Sweeney (National Director for the Integration of the Arts and Creativity in Education), Roisin Collier (Department of Education and Youth) and John Copley (NCCA). All the competition entries can be viewed in an online exhibition hosted by Scoilnet at: [www.scoilnet.ie/esdartcomp/](http://www.scoilnet.ie/esdartcomp/)

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## b. March ESD Newsletter Competition - Winner

### The Question:

What proportion of the world's food is wasted or thrown away?

- a. 1/3
- b. 1/6
- c. 1/10
- a. 1/3**

N.B. This is more than 1.3 billion tonnes per year



**The Answer:** 1/3 of food is wasted around the world per year

The winner of our March ESD Newsletter Competition was Scoil Naomh Mhuire National School in Limerick. A prize of a €500 One-For-All voucher is on its way to the school for its ESD work. Congratulations!

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## c. May ESD Newsletter Competition – SDG 13

Write down 5 (or more) things that you can do to reduce your own impact on climate change.



To enter the May 2025 ESD Newsletter competition for a chance to win a €500 One-For-All voucher for your school simply answer the question above and email your answer with the subject line 'ESD Newsletter Competition SDG13 - May 2025' along with the name of your school to [ESD@education.gov.ie](mailto:ESD@education.gov.ie) by 5pm on **Friday, 22 May 2025**.

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## d. Biodiversity in Schools - Competition Winner



The winner of the [Outdoor Wildlife Signs](#) competition, courtesy of [Biodiversity in Schools](#) is Scoil Mhuire na nAingeal National School in Clonmel.

The signs are a wonderful tool to help young people learn about the biodiversity found around their school and are designed to be mounted around the school grounds for a fun, outdoor, active nature trail.

The answer to the question was Hedgehog.

**Editor's Note:** Congratulations to Scoil Mhuire na nAingeal, we hope you enjoy the signs.



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## e. Junk Kouture - 2024 World Finals



[Junk Kouture](#) is a zero-cost programme which offers schools and students aged between 12 and 19 a creative way to become involved in active climate change initiatives, empowering them to lasting behavioural change. The World Final was held in The Helix on 5 March with 60 finalists from Ireland, the UK, France, Italy, the USA and the UAE taking part.



The winner of the Junk Kouture 2024 World Designer of the Year was “Aquacultural” by Clodagh Ramsey from Wilsons Hospital School whose design was made from 200 mussel shells.

The 32kg organic waste design champions sustainable food production and gender equality.

Congratulations to Clodagh and to all the participants for their stunning and innovative designs.

The winner of two of tickets for the Dublin City Final of Junk Kouture in May is Ashanthi Kalenga from Carrigaline Community School. Congratulations and have a great time at the event.

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## f. Picker Pals - Story Competition 2025



### Calling all Picker Pals!

Get ready to unleash your creativity, as submissions are now open for this year's storytelling competition!

Your class has the chance to win fantastic prizes, including the **Grand Prize**: an unforgettable visit to the **SKY TV studio in Dublin** with transport costs included, where your students will get a behind-the-scenes look at how television broadcasts are made.

Students can choose from one of our suggested themes or dream up their own adventures featuring the Picker Pals characters. We've created a variety of [downloadable](#) templates to support different writing styles and abilities, and we welcome both handwritten and typed submissions in either English or As Gaeilge—so everyone can take part!

**See the poster below** for full competition details, and don't forget to send your entries to [pickerpals@voiceireland.org](mailto:pickerpals@voiceireland.org) by **9th May**!



# STORY COMPETITION 2025



## GRAND PRIZE

Visit the SKY TV studio in Dublin with transport included. & a visit to your school by the Picker Pals.

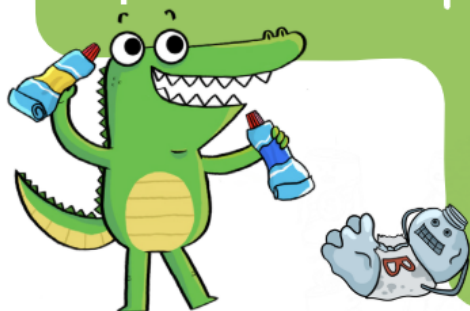
## CATEGORY PRIZES

Visit the Sky TV studio in Dublin (Transport to be provided by the school) & receive a visit to your school by the Picker Pals.

# WIN

## CATEGORIES

- Junior Classes
- Senior Classes
- Special Classes



## THEMES

Children should use the Picker Pals characters for their story.

- A Zero Waste Idea
- A Litter-Picking Adventure
- How Reusing Can Save the Day
- Clever Ways to Upcycle Materials
- A Good Environmental Choice



## Format of Entries

Use one of the templates sent to you by email or downloadable at [www.pickerpalsworld.org/teacher-resources/](http://www.pickerpalsworld.org/teacher-resources/)

Template 1: 6-box comic book grid

Template 2: 8-box comic book grid with space for writing

Template 3: Lined paper (wide) with space for illustration

Template 4: Lined paper (narrow) with space for illustration

## Entry method

Irish & English accepted.  
Hand-written or typed accepted.

All entries in zip folders with school roll number in folder title sent by email to [pickerpals@voiceireland.org](mailto:pickerpals@voiceireland.org)

Launch: 03.04.25

Winners Announced: End of May

DEADLINE FOR ENTRIES:



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## g. SDG 4.7 Day: Education for Sustainable Development Chalk Art Competition



The contest aims to engage participants in exploring how education can address sustainability challenges through creative expression. The contest will start on 7 April 2025 (4.7 Day), as this is an emblematic date to celebrate SDG Target 4.7 following the same logic as the celebration of Pi Day every 14 March (3.14 Day).

Participants are invited to reimagine how education can tackle global sustainability challenges, such as climate action, equity, and inclusive education through *chalk art*. The **SDG 4.7 Day education for sustainable development chalk art competition** invites learners to transform a school space into inspiring canvas that highlights sustainability, education, and a better future for all.

For more details, see: [SDG 4.7 day: Education for sustainable development chalk art competition | #LeadingSDG4 | Education2030](#)

The competition is open until **16 May 2025**.

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## h. Rediscovery Centre – Relove Fashion Competition



### **The Situation: Climate Anxiety is Taking a Toll**

Open any news website, and you'll see it. Wildfires, storms, plastic oceans, rising seas, melting ice caps, dying polar bears, a heating planet.

On the other hand...Open any social media platform, scroll through an online retailer, or check out the latest 'influencer' haul, and you'll see the same pattern - cheap, trendy clothing designed to be worn a handful of times before being tossed aside. Temporary, trending, terrible quality. Fast fashion retailers target teenagers, tempting them with trends that make them fit in or stand out, the affordability giving them their first experience of having buying power, independent of their family.

The numbers are staggering. The fashion industry accounts for around 10% of global carbon emissions, textile waste is piling across the world at an exponential rate, and the industry is responsible for massive social and environmental destruction.

With these overwhelming waves of news of impending doom, of a planet pushed to the brink, recent studies have documented the growing levels of climate anxiety amongst young people in our society.

What we're faced with is young people overwhelmed with the weight of the world on their shoulders, with little idea of how they can make a change, who are simultaneously engaging in an industry heavily responsible for the climate crisis we find ourselves in.

What can they themselves do in their small school, on a small island on the edge of Europe?

### **The Answer May be as Simple as...Sewing**

The **Relove Fashion Competition** empowers young people to adopt an action-based approach to address their concerns.

The competition was developed and is funded through a partnership between the Regional Waste Management Planning Offices, The Government of Ireland and the Rediscovery Centre, Ireland's National Centre for the Circular Economy.

To enter the competition, young people aged 12-19 are challenged to explore their creative design skills to create a sustainable and wearable outfit using pre-loved clothing



from the treasure troves of charity shops, swap shops, or reused items already available at home. Young people have the opportunity to engage hands-on with sustainable fashion, exploring creative reuse options such as upcycling, repairs, alterations and mending.

The Relove Fashion competition provides participants with an opportunity to channel their growing climate anxiety through positive, creative, engaging and fun action, nurturing a much needed sense of agency.

### **Relearning Old Skills for a Modern Solution**

One of the biggest challenges in moving away from fast fashion is that we've lost many of the skills that once made sustainable fashion the norm. Previous generations repaired, altered, and passed down clothing. Today, many young people lack basic sewing skills or the confidence to upcycle clothing rather than buy new. But that's starting to change.

Relove Fashion is one of the initiatives helping young people reconnect with practical skills - sewing, repairing, and repurposing clothing into something unique. This isn't just about crafting a one-off outfit; it's about shifting mindsets and proving that second-hand and upcycled fashion can be just as exciting (if not more so) than buying brand new.

### **Can Individual Action Really Make a Difference?**

A common argument against sustainable fashion is that personal choices don't matter when the industry itself is so flawed. And while systemic change is undoubtedly needed, individual actions create ripple effects. When young people embrace sustainable fashion, they influence their peers, challenge brand narratives, and push for better industry standards.

Using something as tangible as the clothes on our backs, and the agency of mending and creating something of our own, young people are stepping into the world of sustainability and circularity.

This year alone over 400 young people from across Ireland designed, crafted, stitched, researched, and submitted a sustainable fashion project for Relove Fashion.

This awareness does not rest only with the participants but is spread out through their friends, youth workers, teachers and families. Testimonials cite starting swap shops in schools, encouraging their friends to nab deals in charity shops instead of fast fashion retailers, repairing school uniforms and so many more stories which show the actions they have taken.

### **The Future of Fashion: What Comes Next?**

Aligned seamlessly with the Irish secondary school curriculum, this competition opens doors to innovative learning that extends beyond textbooks.

By combating climate anxiety with fun, creative, tangible action, we're creating a generation of sustainable changemakers ready to make innovative change, one stitch at a time.

Help your class join the hundreds of young people that dove into the world of sustainable fashion this year, [register your interest for 2025/26!](#)



**Above:** the announcement of the overall winner of the Relove Fashion Competition 2024, Beatrice Fortuna, Loreto, Bray.

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## 5. Programmes and Resources

### a. Take 1 Leadership Training



#### Unlocking Leadership for a Global and Sustainable Society with the Take 1 Programme

The *Take 1 Programme* is transforming how Irish post-primary schools embed Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) by weaving the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) into everyday learning. Moving beyond isolated global challenges, it uses the SDGs as a lens to reveal our world's interconnected nature, making ESD a seamless part of every subject and classroom. Aligned with Looking at Our School 2022 (LAOS), it empowers schools as “*dynamic learning organisations*” (p. 9) and students as “*active agents*” (p. 9), breaking down barriers with resources that reflect current Irish education strategies. Reflective of SSE needs, including DEIS, the *Take 1 Programme* highlights context-based learning opportunities for all schools, supporting school and wider community engagement.

The *Take 1 Programme* does not replace existing learning activities but enhances them, fostering a whole-school commitment to sustainability that ‘*leaves no one behind*’, as pledged by the United Nations in 2015.

#### Take 1 Programme Training – 2025/26

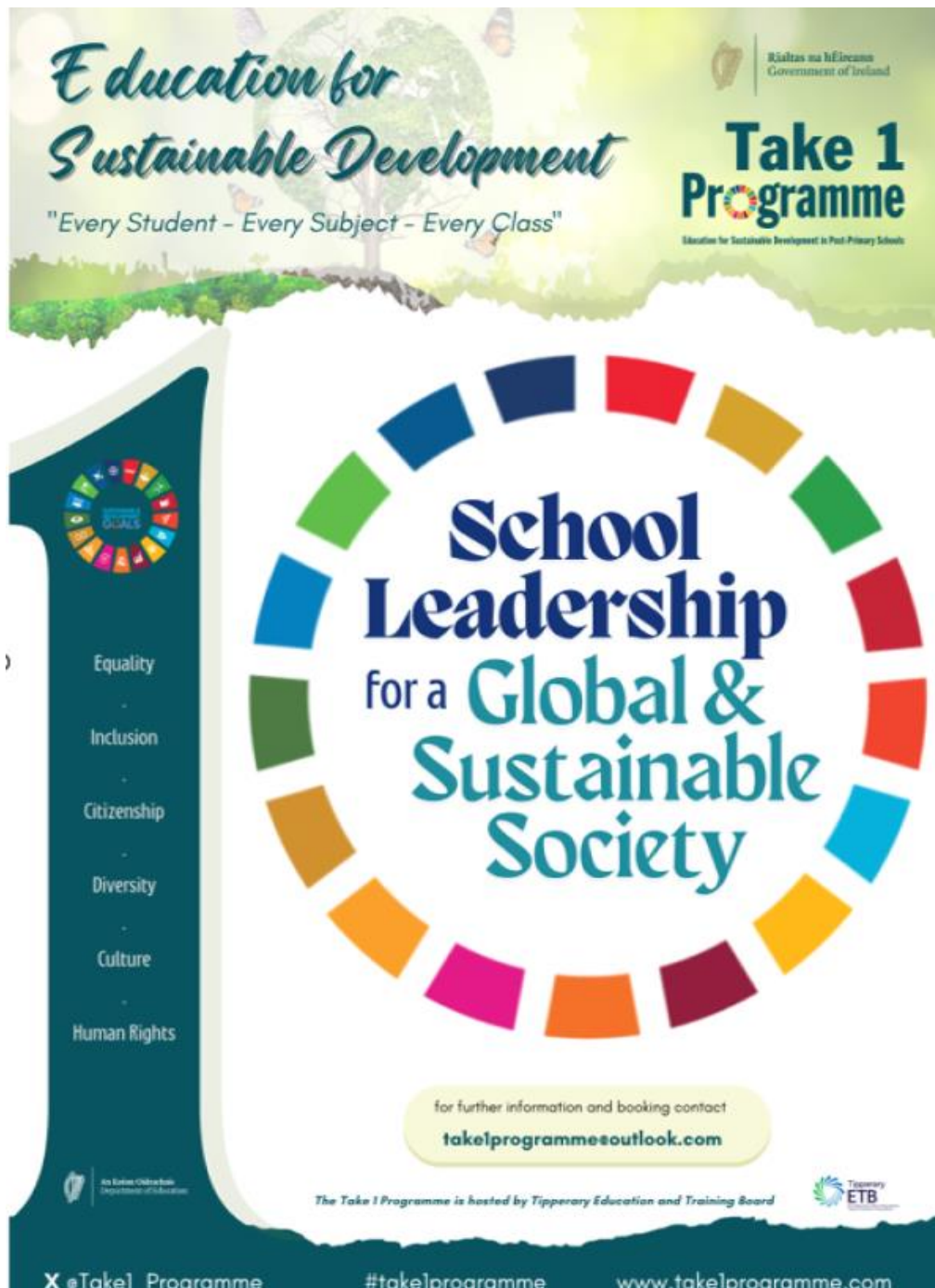
Ready to bring ESD to life? The *Take 1 Programme* invites second level school leaders to participate in online and in-person training in ‘Leadership for a Global and Sustainable Society’. By mapping ESD learning to existing Junior Cycle subject specifications, the *Take 1 Programme* ensures every teacher has the capacity to support experiences of sustainability learning without requiring additional curriculum content. Endorsed by the Centre for School Leadership (Oide), and supported by the Department of Education and

Youth, this programme empowers teachers to inspire active citizenship and sustainable practices through a built-in curriculum approach.

Bookings taken now for online and whole school training.

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

[www.take1programme.com](http://www.take1programme.com) @take1programme.bsky. social X -  
@Take1\_Programme



## b. Circular Bioeconomy Education Centre (CBEC)



Ireland's Circular Bioeconomy Education Centre (CBEC) will provide a coordinated approach to integrate the bioeconomy into all levels of the Irish education system, from primary, secondary and university level, as well as lifelong learning and continuous professional development. The CBEC project is a collaboration between Munster Technological University, Trinity College Dublin and Maynooth University. The two-year project, which kicked off in February 2025, is supported by funding of €350k from the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine.

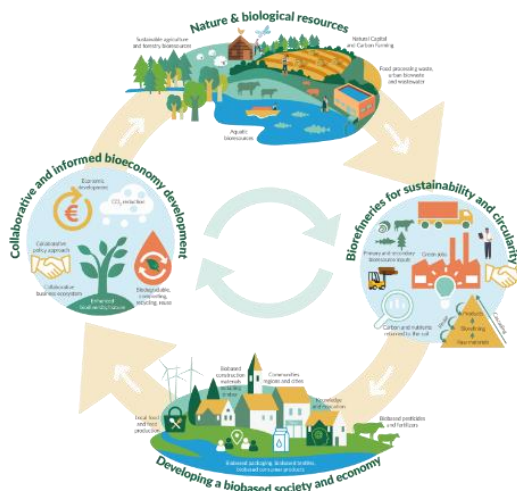
### The Bioeconomy in Ireland

The bioeconomy is a “multi-layered” concept referring to the sustainable and circular use of renewable biological resources from land and sea - like crops, forests, fish, animals and micro-organisms - to produce food, bio-based materials and bioenergy.

Ireland is on a journey towards embedding sustainable and circular bioeconomy approaches in many sectors of our economy. This transition will allow us to harness our renewable, biological resources and ecosystem services to benefit our climate, our businesses, and the social well-being of our farming community and citizens.

Bio-based innovation and solutions allow us to produce, for example, new sources of healthier food and feed ingredients, to produce new sustainable inputs for agriculture such as bio-based fertilisers and bio-based plastics, and to produce new sources of bioenergy.

The Government's vision for the bioeconomy, as outlined in the [Bioeconomy Action Plan 2023-2025](#), is to be a global leader for the bioeconomy. To achieve this vision, education has been identified as a key enabler to increase understanding, interest, and awareness of the bioeconomy at a young age.



## Education and the Bioeconomy

The CBEC project will establish a bio-based education, training and skills network, to identify opportunities to integrate bioeconomy themes and concepts into curricula and provide evidence-based recommendations for future curriculum developments. This will be achieved by:

1. Establishing an Irish bio-based education training and skills network that can be leveraged to validate research and analysis, collaborate on piloting and implementation phases and communicate the needs of educators.
2. Mapping and assessing the current trends in bioeconomy education, complete a skills gap analysis, and review industry educational requirements.
3. Create, trial and implement pilot programmes for schools at various levels, to test different pedagogies and provide opportunities for feedback.
4. Based on the pilot programmes, develop a roadmap for the integration of bioeconomy education into primary and secondary school curricula
5. Transfer knowledge to the education community, sharing the content and class plans created.

As bioeconomy and education cut across several sectors, the Irish CBEC will require coordination and joined up thinking between public bodies, research institutions, industry, educators and the wider public. The actions planned in this project will provide the framework for coordination while bolstering bioeconomy education through the pilots.

Project coordinator Dr. Helena McMahon, Munster Technological University, outlines her vision for the Irish CBEC: *'This centre will be a flagship destination for bioeconomy education, skills & training, integrating the bioeconomy sector with education stakeholders, providing a pathway for integration of bioeconomy education at all levels. It will focus on several key areas: developing the CBEC stakeholder network, creating pilot programmes and materials, and providing the evidence base to integrate the bioeconomy into all levels of the education system in Ireland'*.

To learn more about Ireland's Circular Bioeconomy Education Centre (CBEC), to view a range of bioeconomy educational resources, or to join the stakeholder education network, visit [www.circbio.ie/CBEC](http://www.circbio.ie/CBEC).

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## c. SustainABILITY for Beginners training course for everyone



### Do you want to live a Greener Life?

We've got exciting news for anyone curious about how to make their daily habits a little more eco-friendly. [Kildare & Wicklow Education and Training Board](#) (ETB), in collaboration with [SOLAS](#) and [Fifty Shades Greener](#), has launched a SustainABILITY Awareness, brand new, fully funded, online course all about practical green living. And the best part? You can take it in English, Irish, Polish, or Ukrainian.

### So what's it all about?

This isn't another lecture-heavy course full of abstract ideas. It's a short (just 2 hours) interactive learning experience that shows how the little things you do every day, how you use energy, manage waste, or even shop, can have a big impact on the planet.

Whether you're looking to reduce your carbon footprint, save on bills, or simply understand how your actions affect the environment, this course is packed with useful tips, real-life examples, and guidance to help you start making positive changes right away.

### Why now?

The course is part of a national push to support Ireland's green transition. As part of the first National Further Education and Training (FET) Strategy for the Green Transition, SustainABILITY Awareness helps everyone, from students to professionals to retirees, get the knowledge and confidence to live more sustainably.

### Quick facts:

- 🕒 **Duration:** Just 2 hours
- 💰 **Cost:** Absolutely free, this course is fully funded by SOLAS
- 🌍 **Languages:** English, Irish, Polish, Ukrainian
- 📅 **Start date:** Anytime—registration is open now!
- 🌿 **Topics include:** Climate change, biodiversity, energy and water conservation, waste reduction, climate justice and more

### Ready to get started?

Sign up now and start your journey to greener living: [SOLAS Sustainability for Beginners](#)

[Programme in 4 languages](#)

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## d. Global Education Time Project



The Global Education Time (GET) project 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).

Our teaching and learning units (TLUs) on Migration, Climate Change and International Inequalities are currently being piloted in 8 schools nationwide. These units are clearly aligned with the Junior cycle curriculum for Geography, History and CSPE. It is envisaged that this process will be finalized by September 2025 when they will be available at [www.globaleducationtime.eu](http://www.globaleducationtime.eu).

Webinars have been held for participating schools, one of which was delivered by Concern's youth climate ambassador Alannah Wrynn who delivered a very informative webinar on the outcomes of Cop 29 and how to inspire youth activism at school level. In May we will hold a webinar featuring [Young Voices of Africa](#) focused on their [African Youth Goals](#) project to inform our TLUs on International Inequalities

In March we held our first face to face meeting of teachers from participating schools in Athlone. The event included inputs from [Charity Retail Ireland](#) focused on our TLU on Climate Change and the Irish Refugee Council around ways to incorporate their resource [Tight Spaces](#) into our TLU on Migration.

Our international website can be accessed [here](#) and the Irish page [here](#). Updates will be posted on our social media outlets at [BlueSky](#), [Instagram](#) and [LinkedIn](#).

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



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## e. Leadership for Sustainable Development training programme for TY students



A new 13-week programme for TY students has been developed by Grainne McKeever, an art teacher with a great interest in sustainability, with the help of a Department of Education and Youth ESD grant.

The programme '**Leadership for Sustainable Development**' focuses on sustainability and the fashion industry. The course is also recognised as part of the Gaisce Award if it is undertaken as an extra curricular activity, but it can also be undertaken as a TY module within the curriculum. There is a free comprehensive work booklet available as part of the programme, with short chapters on the circular economy, fast fashion etc. There is also an action project element to this course, whereby students are encouraged to host a pop-up swap shop in their school, either collecting clothes donations for students or working together with local charity shops to sell clothes on their behalf. There is a variety of additional resources in the back of the book, YouTube clips and websites for students to explore.

The course is currently being rolled out in ten schools and we would like to welcome other schools to take part, we have a limited number of free resources to offer schools before the booklets will need to be paid for by TY students.

Free online training and support for teachers is offered and questions regarding the course can be emailed to: [grainnemckeever@lucancc.ie](mailto:grainnemckeever@lucancc.ie)

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## f. Airfield Estate – Summer Tours



### **Go Wild this Summer at Airfield Estate!**

Airfield Estate, Dublin's Sustainable Food Hub, is delighted to announce that its 'Summer Tours' are back!!

Located on 38-acres of farm and gardens, students will explore the world of sustainability, farming, gardening, cooking, and nature through hands-on activities.

The school tours are designed to be adaptable to suit the specific needs of your class, offering a unique, educational experience that brings learning to life. Whether it's teaching young minds about seasonality or diving into more complex topics for older students, there's something for everyone!

Whether its Bug hunting, Pond dips, Soil experiments or Cooking your own breakfast from ingredients collected fresh from the farm, ...don't miss out on this fantastic opportunity to inspire the next generation of explorers and environmental stewards.

Email [education@airfield.ie](mailto:education@airfield.ie) for more information or click here - [Educational Farm Visit | Airfield Estate Education](#).



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## g. ECO-UNESCO – Biodiversity Week 2025



This Biodiversity Week get online and join ECO-UNESCO for a week of exciting events celebrating biodiversity and the wonders of our natural world! This Biodiversity Week, we're hosting a series of engaging online workshops to raise awareness about the importance of preserving our ecosystems. Whether you're a nature enthusiast or just starting to learn about biodiversity, there's something for everyone. Come together to explore, learn, and take action for a more sustainable future!

**When:** 16 to 25 May 2025

**Where:** Online

**Register for the workshops:** <https://www.eventbrite.com/cc/biodiversity-week-2025-4212503>

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## h. Explorers Education Programme – New Resources and Webinar for teachers and 3<sup>rd</sup> – 6<sup>th</sup> class pupils



Calling all budding scientists, engineers and eco-explorers, the Explorers Education Programme, funded by the Marine Institute, are holding a webinar for teachers and children (3<sup>rd</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> class), on **20 May from 11.15am to 12pm.**

Prepare to dive into the fascinating world of “Renewable Ocean Energy – the Power of the Future” with the Marine Institute’s Explorers Team. Perfect for 3<sup>rd</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> class pupils and teachers, this interactive session will explore the wonders of wave energy, tidal power and offshore wind. It will focus on the engineering behind these incredible

technologies and uncover how nature inspires innovative designs from whale-inspired wind turbines to snake-like wave energy devices and lots more.

Register here: <https://www.livingearth.ie/events/school-renewable-ocean-energy-webinar/> and join the Marine Institute – Foras na Mara Explorers Team on May 20<sup>th</sup>.

### **New Resources Inspire Students to Explore Ocean Energy's Potential**

Budding engineers and scientists across Ireland can now explore the power of the ocean with the launch of the Marine Institute's Explorers Education Programme's new educational resources, "Renewable Ocean Energy – The Power of the Future.

To help celebrate the launch of the new materials, the Explorers Education Team are delighted to host an online webinar with Calmast as part of the Bealtaine Living Earth Festival this May. The webinar, entitled 'Unleash the Oceans Power: An Engineering Adventure with the Explorers!' will take place at 11.15am on the 20<sup>th</sup> May.

Perfect for 3rd to 6th-class students and teachers, this interactive session will explore the wonders of wave energy, tidal power, and offshore wind. And will focus on the engineering behind these incredible technologies and uncover how nature inspires innovative designs, from whale- inspired wind turbines to snake-like wave energy devices... and lots more.

Learn how the largest untapped energy source on Earth can help us combat climate change and create a sustainable future. Let's ride the wave of innovation together!

Registrations will open soon at <https://www.livingearth.ie/events/>

And schools can continue the learning with resources that can be accessed at "[Explorers Renewable Ocean Energy – The Power of the Future](#)" on the Explorers Education Programme website: [www.explorers.ie](http://www.explorers.ie)

The Explorers Education Programme promotes ocean awareness, knowledge and engagement, as well as supports ocean literacy and marine education in primary schools. The programme is funded and supported by Foras na Mara, the Marine Institute.

The Bealtaine Living Earth Festival celebrates biodiversity and natural heritage in the South-East of Ireland. This year the festival runs from 17 – 25 May. For more information see <https://www.livingearth.ie/>

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## **i. Leave No Trace – Programme for Primary**



Leave No Trace Ireland provides research, education and outreach so every person who ventures outside can protect and enjoy the outdoors responsibly. Leave No Trace Ireland is about encouraging young people to discover, learn and connect with nature.

The overall aim of the programme is to introduce primary school students to the principles of Leave No Trace and provide opportunities to explore and build awareness of their own behaviour in the outdoors in an interactive, fun and educational manner. It incorporates curriculum links from SESE, Science, Geography, History, Maths, SPHE, Primary Language, & Art.

The programme aims to facilitate children's learning by inspiring respect for and raising awareness of their natural environment through the following learning objectives:

- Create an awareness of Leave No Trace and the seven principles
- Develop participants' understanding of key concepts relating to ethical behaviour in the outdoors
- Encourage children's awareness of their own behaviour in the outdoors
- Examine and discuss current environmental issues and challenges
- Develop children's personal connection with nature
- Provide opportunities for place and nature-based learning
- Create awareness and increase knowledge of Ireland's wildlife, flora and fauna
- Improve critical thinking, decision making and problem-solving skills
- Support Social and Emotional Learning and encourage empathy
- Provide an opportunity to develop a real-world project based on the above learning objectives

### **Programme Delivery**

This school programme consists of 2 x half day workshops and will be delivered by our Accredited Leave No Trace Trainers.

- Workshop 1 will introduce the principles of Leave No Trace and present the class with a project to prepare in advance of Workshop 2.
- Workshop 2 will provide an opportunity for participants to present their project and further develop and reinforce an understanding of the principles of Leave No Trace.

If you would like to learn more about these primary school programmes, or any of our other training programmes and resources you can check out our website here:

<https://www.leavenotraceireland.org/>

Please contact us: [info@leavenotraceireland.org](mailto:info@leavenotraceireland.org) or call us on: +353(0)1 9059009

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## j. Academy of the Near Future – *Treoraigh do Thodhchaí* programme in the Gaeltacht

An exciting new programme, *Treoraigh do Thodhchaí*, was delivered at Stiúideo Cuan, Spidéal, Co. Galway by Academy of the Near Future in partnership with Gael Linn's Gaelbhratach team and the School of Education, Trinity College Dublin, with support from the ESD to 2030 Fund.

This immersive, week-long Irish-language educational initiative engaged 18 students aged 15–17 in hands-on workshops exploring environmental challenges through the lens of Irish language and culture. Throughout the week, students examined the role of technology and innovation in tackling climate issues, gaining valuable insights into how traditional knowledge and modern advancements can work together to build a more sustainable future. By nurturing leadership, creativity, and problem-solving skills, the programme empowered the next generation to harness sustainability and technology to shape a better tomorrow.

Students from across the country took part, including participants from Galway City, Cois Fharraige, Spiddal, Inis Meáin, Dublin, Carlow, and Rathcairn. At the end of the week, students presented their visions for a sustainable future to guests from Trinity College Dublin, Údarás na Gaeltachta, Galway County Council, University of Galway, TG4, and members of local sustainability initiatives. One group proposed a 'digital fáinne' to promote opportunities for speaking Irish, while others explored the use of technology to support youth health and wellbeing.

Commenting on the initiative, Minister for Education Norma Foley TD said: *"This initiative encourages students in the Gaeltacht to get involved in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics and to be excited about the role they can play in tackling climate issues in their community using technology."*



**Editors Note:** Delighted to see this project coming to fruition, with the support of ESD to 2030 funding.



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## k. Biodiversity in Schools - Pollinator Project 2025



The **Pollinator Project 2025** is now open!

The Pollinator Project is Ireland's largest & longest running pollinator education programme for schools, now in its 14th year.

We have again joined forces with the wonderful SIRO.

We have **FREE teaching kits** for up to 9,000 young people across Ireland to train as pollinator ambassadors for their school.

All schools can also take the Pollinator Pledge on our website for access to your **FREE certificate, signage, classroom worksheets & online training invite**. Also available as gaeilge.

Our **Gold Bee** trophy is looking for a new home too! We're seeking Ireland's most outstanding pollinator-friendly school. As well as our Gold Bee trophy you'll also receive a €1,000 biodiversity hamper.

Many thanks again to our sponsor SIRO, Ireland's 100% fibre broadband network, connecting communities across Ireland.

Open to Pre, Primary, Secondary and Homeschools within ROI & NI.

For everything you need to take part please visit our website:

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



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## I. Cloughjordan Ecovillage – Tours for Post-Primary



### **Discover a Greener Future: Secondary School Tours at Cloughjordan Ecovillage**

Looking for an impactful school tour? Bring your secondary school students to Cloughjordan Ecovillage and witness sustainable living in action! Our guided tours offer a unique educational experience, exploring real-world solutions to environmental and social challenges.

#### **See Sustainability Firsthand:**

Students will explore:

- Renewable energy systems powering a community.
- Eco-friendly housing and sustainable building.
- Organic food production from farm to table.
- Innovative waste management practices.
- Biodiversity and permaculture principles.
- The power of community collaboration.

#### **Connect to Your Curriculum:**

Our tours complement subjects like Geography, Science, SPHE, CSPE, and Economics, fostering critical thinking and teamwork. Students will gain practical understanding of sustainable development, environmental science and responsible citizenship.

#### **Inspire Future Leaders:**

A visit to Cloughjordan aims to inspire the next generation by demonstrating a tangible model for a sustainable future. Students will develop a deeper understanding of environmental issues, gain a sense of agency and explore alternative ways of living.

#### **Book Your Educational Visit:**

Give your students an inspiring and educational day out. Contact Cloughjordan Ecovillage to learn more about our secondary school tours and book your visit today!

Please contact Veronica Ryan for more information and bookings.

Tel: 086 085 1576

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

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

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## m. Education for Sustainability – new School Leadership Platform



### Introducing LEAF - an online, one-stop shop learning platform and community for school principals and management to fulfill Schools Climate Action Mandate and ESD 2030 Agenda

Through **expert guidance, practical tools, and a vibrant community**, we will support you to:

- Conduct sustainability audits
- Create a sustainability schools policy
- Build a Green Team
- Gain support with reporting on sustainability for the inspectorate
- Execute projects across the three pillars of Curriculum, Campus and Community
- Gain access to sustainability best practices from schools nationwide

#### **€950 annual membership includes:**

- Access to our online training platform and resources portal
- Self-paced training courses certified for Croke Park hours
- Monthly online webinars with expert speakers
- Regular online "Ask Us Anything" and work-along sessions
- WhatsApp community
- Regional, in-person training and consultation days
- Ready-to-use auditing and reports templates and tools

With this structured, community-driven approach you can confidently fulfill requirements and lead your school's sustainability transformation!

This programme begins in August. Please register by the end of May.

Find out more and register your interest!



## Doing Your Timetable for September? Include Climate Literacy!

Delivered in 540+ schools nationwide, Education for Sustainability's award-winning Climate Literacy Programme is now open for September registrations. Ideal for 5th and 6th class in primary schools and 1st year to TY in post-primary schools, this **fully-funded** 8-week programme is in line with the ESD framework and will support your school to be more sustainable through the three pillars of Campus, Community and Curriculum.

### What's Included?

- 8 weekly, 1 hour in-person training sessions with your class
- Teacher trainings
- Access to our online learning platform
- Comprehensive lesson plans
- Digital student workbooks

### What topics are covered?

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

The sessions are fun, interactive and game based and simultaneously training teachers so that they can go on to deliver the programme to other cohorts, ensuring the programme's legacy.

Hurry! Funding places are limited.

To find out more and to register, please visit Education for Sustainability's website.

[Education for Sustainability | Empowering Change in Ireland](#)

EFS is a non profit social enterprise created in response to the climate and ecological crisis. It is our mission to ensure all young people are climate literate by 2030

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## 6. Teacher Professional Learning

### a. Oide – ESD Updates



### ESD in New Curricular Areas

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

The Oide Environmental Education (SEE) team is actively preparing for the implementation of a SEE curriculum in Irish primary schools in the near future. This draft curriculum has a geographical, and historical emphasis, incorporating learning about religions, beliefs and worldviews also. It empowers children to see themselves as active citizens, with rights and responsibilities to engage in local, national, and global matters.

As part of this effort, the SEE team is facilitating a series of workshops on "Fieldwork in History and Geography," in schools across the country. The workshops provide an excellent opportunity for teachers to explore outdoor learning, foster a strong sense of place and connect to the environment. Through inquiry-based learning in the workshop, participants are encouraged to explore their roles as active citizens, reflecting on their local communities' past and present to imagine a sustainable future. The workshops are promoted through the Oide website (<https://dms.oide.ie/event/public>) and on the Oide 'X' account (@Oide\_SEE).

Looking ahead, the team will host a webinar titled "Facilitating Discussions in History and Geography" in mid-May. This session aims to enhance teaching and learning. It will outline engaging stimuli and strategies to foster meaningful classroom discussions in History and Geography. This webinar will support critical thinking as it looks at critiquing evidence in a variety of formats where children may examine the past and present as they begin to understand motivations and implications of actions for the future. The team looks forward to the launch of the SEE curriculum in the near future, and in the interim will continue to support teachers in this space.

#### Leaving Certificate Climate Action and Sustainable Development

The value of Climate Action and Sustainable Development cannot be understated, as environmental degradation and sustainability are some of the most significant issues facing our society. Leaving Certificate Climate Action and Sustainable Development seeks to enable 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.

Furthermore, this subject provides opportunities for students to 'act on issues that may allow them to see change locally whilst connecting to the bigger picture nationally and



globally'. The value to both students and society is acknowledge in the rationale in the subject specification which states 'by examining environmental issues through lenses of empathy, leadership, and community, the student experience in this subject has the potential to be transformative – not only for the students themselves but also for those in their surroundings' (Leaving Certification Climate Action and Sustainable Development, NCCA, 2024).

Currently the Oide CASD team are working with teachers from the 43 Phase One schools who have participated in multiple professional learning events to date with more to come by the end the school year. The most recent of these professional learning events included a 2 day in-person professional learning experience which took place in March and April. The focus of this PLE was to ...

- explore strategies to support the affective dimension in the learning and teaching of this subject
- examine how social position and power effects capacity for action
- examine the concept of just transitions in Ireland
- support planning for the first term of the learning journey for students in Climate Action and Sustainable Development, beginning in September 2025.

Overall, participating teachers are feeling positive and looking forward to introducing this important new subject in their school in September.

## **ESD in the Economics Classroom**

The Business Subjects team have recently developed an effective workshop for teachers of Economics entitled "Exploring the SDGs in Economics".

Economic, social and environmental sustainability is an area of learning identified in the unifying strand of the Leaving Certificate Economics specification. This workshop will help teachers to appreciate how students' understanding of economic, social and environmental sustainability can be enhanced through engagement with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) across the 2 years of study. In this workshop, participants will explore national and international sources of information and data related to the SDGs that will enable teachers to integrate the SDGs into the teaching and learning in their Economics classroom.

Among the SDGs that are explored in the workshop are SDG 5: Gender Equality and SDG 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth both relevant to the threatening trade turmoil caused currently being experienced globally. The role of inquiry-based learning in sustaining quality teaching and learning with links to SDG 4: Quality Education is considered throughout.

"Exploring the SDGs in Economics"  
will take place online on May 14<sup>th</sup> at  
6.30pm, click to register [here](#).



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## b. Digital Citizenship Champion Programme for primary teachers



The Council of Europe have set 2025 as the European Year of Digital Citizenship Education to give a new impetus to the development and promotion of digital citizenship education in all member states. This will help enhance the visibility and impact of digital citizenship education and reaffirm its value.

To support this initiative [Webwise](#) has, in collaboration with Oide - Technology in Education, developed the Digital Citizenship Champion programme.

Webwise is part of the Safer Internet Ireland consortium who support teachers, students and parents on online safety. They provide a wide range of training material and resources. The Irish Safer Internet Centre partners are Webwise, Hotline.ie, ISPCC Childline and the National Parents Council. Webwise promotes safer, better internet use through awareness raising and education initiatives targeting teachers, children, young people and parents. Webwise develops and disseminates resources that help teachers integrate digital citizenship and online safety into teaching and learning in their schools.

The programme aims to upskill primary teachers to champion digital citizenship in schools and through their local Education Centre.

It is designed to equip them with essential knowledge, skills and resources to effectively teach and champion digital citizenship in schools and through their local Education Centre.

It focuses on promoting safe, ethical, and responsible online behaviour, covering key areas such as digital literacy, online wellbeing and privacy.

75 primary teachers who opted to participate in the programme are being trained to deliver a range of practical interactive workshops. These workshops integrate key resources and guidance from Webwise, ensuring parents have access to expert-led strategies that promote responsible and safe engagement in the digital world.

Further details of the programme are available at <https://www.webwise.ie/webwise-digital-citizenship-champions-programme/>

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## c. ISSN and ESCI – Autumn 2025 Schedule – Coming Soon!



### ESD CPD Schedule 25/26

The Irish Schools Sustainability Network (ISSN) and Education Support Centres Ireland (ESCI) will have a new and exciting ESD CPD Schedule for the next academic year. Keep an eye out. [www.esci.ie](http://www.esci.ie) and [www.issn.ie](http://www.issn.ie) for details.

### Training Day Report

#### **Training: Managing School Grounds for Biodiversity: The Crucial Role of Facilities Teams and GroundsKeepers**

The Irish School's Sustainability Network (ISSN), Waterford City & County Council, the National Biodiversity Data Centre and Waterford Education Support Centre piloted a training event for groundskeepers: **'Managing School Grounds for Biodiversity: The Crucial Role of Facilities Teams and GroundsKeepers'** in Ardscoil na Mara, Tramore, Co. Waterford on April 29th.

Participants had an opportunity to explore Ardscoil na Mara's school grounds, and discuss challenges and solutions with their peers. Kate Chadler from the National Biodiversity Data Centre introduced their new online course 'Managing School Grounds for Biodiversity', developed in collaboration with the Department of Education and Youth. <https://pollinators.ie/managing-school-grounds-for-biodiversity/>

When asked to give one word to describe how they were feeling at the end of the day the participants used the words: optimistic, informed, energised, inspired, excited, and hopeful.

*"I had no training in my job as caretaker and this has been very informative. School grounds are underused and today has given me lots of ideas in how to use some spaces to help our biodiversity"*

*Edward Coree*

*"I would recommend this course absolutely. The information given has been so interesting. I feel like I can move forward with a plan for the school without feeling too overwhelmed"*

*Daithi MacGearailt*



**Above:** Facilities teams discussing the value of ponds and woodlands for biodiversity and nature engagement. Ardscoil na Mara got advice and support from LEAF this year, through the ESD fund, which enabled them to make their woodlands accessible and set up a forest classroom.

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#### d. DCU – Master of Education in Global Citizenship Education



Interested in exploring the role of education in responding to global challenges? Consider **Dublin City University's Master of Education with a special option (3 modules) in Global Citizenship Education** designed to support educators to analyse, discuss and reflect on education for human rights, social justice and climate action.

This option will enable you to develop your understanding, knowledge and skills in global citizenship education, in formal and informal educational settings. The course is targeted at teachers, school leaders and other education practitioners who wish to respond to global and justice issues with creative and culturally relevant practices. It empowers teachers and learners to engage reflectively and critically with issues such as: climate change, human rights and democracy, migration and sustainability. In your second year, you will undertake research relating to global citizenship education.

The course is blended learning (a mix of online and face-to-face), two years, part-time. Further details are available [here](#) or contact Dr Rowan Oberman, rowan.oberman@dcu.ie. Deadline for enrolment is May 2025.

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## e. Global Village – GCE Summer Course



### **Integrating Global Citizenship Education Across The Primary Curriculum**

#### **Global Village Schools Summer Course at DCU All Hallows**

Looking to bring Global Citizenship Education (GCE) into your primary classroom? Join the EPV day-approved summer course "*Integrating Global Citizenship Education Across the Primary Curriculum*" from Monday 7 – Friday 11 July 2025.

This highly interactive course will explore active learning methodologies to help you embed GCE across subjects, fostering critical thinking, empathy, and global awareness in your students.

- ✓ EPV day approved
- ✓ Hands-on activities & engaging methodologies
- ✓ Lunch provided daily

📍 DCU All Hallows

📅 7 - 11 July 2025

📖 Limited spaces available so book your place now via the link [here](#)

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## 7. Further and Higher Education News

### a. News and Updates from the HEA Sector



The Higher Education Authority (HEA) ESD Spotlight Series has featured 8 institutions so far, who have shared some examples of their ESD practice. All recordings to date are available at <https://hub.teachingandlearning.ie/esd-spotlight-series/> by clicking on the relevant institution.

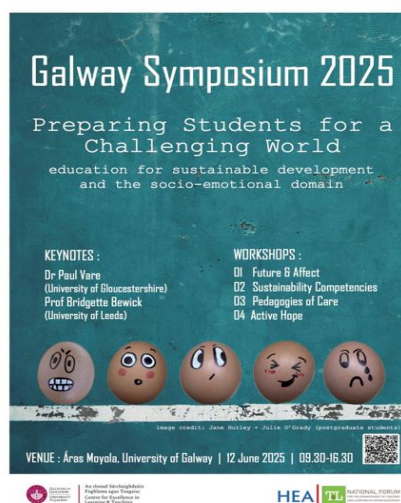
The HEA ESD Spotlight Series will resume on May 9<sup>th</sup> with Trinity College Dublin, continuing until the 30 June when we will take a summer break, resuming again in September. Registration for updates is also available at <https://hub.teachingandlearning.ie/esd-spotlight-series/>

There is an open call for ESD case studies until September. You can submit your case study using the template provided at <https://hub.teachingandlearning.ie/esd-spotlight-series/submit-an-esd-case-study/>

There is an open call for Open Educational Resources (OERs) until September. You can submit your OERs at the following link, <https://hub.teachingandlearning.ie/esd-spotlight-series/esd-oer/>

The HEA delighted to host Dr. Alex Ryan on 12 May in UCD for a HEA ESD Community of Practice (CoP) workshop on 'ESD and Academic Quality'. The workshop will explore ESD contexts, quality frameworks, student agency, decision-making on quality ESD, and share some case studies. Dr. Ryan will be supported by Dr. Amanda Platt and Colette Murphy, who will share Ulster University's ESD journey so far. The workshop is funded by the HEA and will be hosted by Dr. Mark Kelly, who is currently on secondment as a national policy on ESD.

The Centre for Excellence in Learning and Teaching (CELT) at the University of Galway are hosting a symposium on Thursday, 12 June on 'Preparing Students for a Challenging World: ESD and the Socio-Emotional Domain'. Registration at the [link](#).



## Springboard

In January, Higher Education Institutions across Ireland were invited to submit course proposals for the 2025/2026 Springboard+ programme.

The courses were varied across a range of diverse disciplines including new and emerging technologies. In line with enterprise engagement and demographic demand, a **mandatory requirement** on the application form also requested that course providers outline how their **proposal would address the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)**.

In particular, how their course proposal would enhance the contribution of higher education to the sustainable development agenda.

The online application portal closed in late February and a panel of independent evaluators were assigned to evaluate all proposals. It is expected that all course applications will open in late Summer/early Autumn. This is following Ministerial approval in accordance with governance procedures.

For additional information on the Springboard+ programme, visit [springboardcourses.ie](https://springboardcourses.ie).



Springboard+ is co-funded by  
the Government of Ireland  
and the European Union.



Rialtas na hÉireann  
Government of Ireland



Arna chomhchistiú ag  
an Aontas Eorpach  
Co-funded by the  
European Union

HEA | HIGHER EDUCATION AUTHORITY  
AN tÚDARÁS um ARD-OIDEACHAS

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## b. Further Education and Training driving the Green Transition in Ireland



SOLAS, the Further Education and Training (FET) Authority is committed to integrating climate change and sustainability education across all FET programs. In line with this commitment, SOLAS launched [Green Skills 2030](#), the first National FET Strategy for the Green Transition in the autumn.

The strategy identifies how FET can meet the skills needs of both emerging and existing green jobs in areas such as construction, engineering, transport, agriculture, tourism and business. It also shows how FET can provide the transversal skills learners require in the green economy so they can thrive in a society that is fair and inclusive for all.

[Green Skills 2030](#) was developed in partnership with KPMG and in consultation with the 16 Education & Training Boards, public bodies, government departments, and key industry stakeholders. It presents strategic and sector specific recommendations that open opportunities for FET to contribute towards meeting Ireland's climate targets to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 51% by 2030.

Working with KPMG, the current focus is on creating an implementation plan with actionable and measurable targets developed through collaboration with the FET sector, industry partners and government departments. The Green Skills 2030 Advisory Group, which includes representatives from SOLAS, the Education and Training Boards, the Education and Training Board Ireland, and the Department of Further & Higher Education, Research, Innovation & Science, will oversee the delivery of this strategy.

You can find more information about FET Green Skills at:

<https://www.solas.ie/programmes/green-skills/>

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## c. M.Ed. in Education for Sustainability and Global Citizenship in Mary Immaculate College

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During the Olympics, we witnessed the very best of human nature through a celebration of diversity, dignity, harmony and human effort. After the celebrations, the challenges for our society remain through war, racism, the rise of the far right, a severe abuse of human rights, climate change and biodiversity loss. Mary Immaculate College is now accepting applications for the M.Ed. in Education for Sustainability and Global Citizenship to begin in September 2025. The course will now be offered on a bi-annual basis.

The aim of this programme is to provide an opportunity for advanced study in the foundations, pedagogies, critical perspectives, contemporary issues and research in the field of Sustainability and Global Citizenship. This programme has been designed to equip educators with the pedagogies and theoretical frameworks to consider climate change, a loss in biodiversity and challenges to world peace.

Every school is now required to have a sustainability policy. This course promotes best practice in sustainability and allows participants to share and show case some of the excellent work currently taking place in our schools. The programme is designed for those working in education including pre-school practitioners, primary and secondary teachers, and those working in non-formal education.

Through Global Citizenship Education (GCED), the programme aims to focus on agency, empowering students of all ages to assume active roles, both locally and globally, in building more peaceful, tolerant, inclusive and secure societies. The programme is also informed by recent and ongoing curricular reforms.

Shortlisted for the Aontas STAR Awards in 2023, this programme is designed to support educators to deal with the extraordinary challenges facing our world today through a pedagogy of possibility and hope. The course can be undertaken on a one year full time basis or two year part time basis. It is possible for teachers to complete either option while teaching. A partial refund of fees can be claimed through the Teacher Fee Refund Scheme administered by Clare Education Centre on behalf of the Department of Education and Youth.

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

For more info contact [Anne.dolan@mic.ul.ie](mailto:Anne.dolan@mic.ul.ie)



**Above:** M. Ed students working in Terryland Forest Park, Galway City



**Above:** M.Ed. students visiting the outdoor classroom in Fedamore Community National School

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#### d. Research Ireland – New Foundations programme 2025

Research Ireland has announced funding for 59 projects under its New Foundations programme.

Comprising a total investment of €683,677, these awards will support researchers in developing collaborative projects with community organisations and government departments. The projects will address health, social, environmental, and economic challenges in Ireland and beyond.

New Foundations promotes close collaboration between researchers, civic society groups, and policymakers. The programme includes co-funding from a range of Government Departments and agencies, including the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (Irish Aid), Department of Education and Youth, Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth, Policing and Community Safety Authority (PCSA), Department of Rural and Community Development, and The Heritage Council.

A strand of the New Foundations funding is for research in the area of Global Citizenship Education and Education for Sustainable Development, co-funded by the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade/ Irish Aid, Department of Education and Youth and Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth.

The call opens on Thursday 5<sup>th</sup> June and the application deadline is 4pm on 17<sup>th</sup> July. See more details here: [New Foundations 2024 | Funding | Irish Research Council](#)

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## 8. International Updates

### a. UNESCO – Japan Prize on Education for Sustainable Development



UNESCO launched the 2025 Japan Prize on Education for Sustainable Development earlier this year.

Funded by the Government of Japan, the Prize rewards exceptional projects and programmes undertaken in the field of Education for Sustainable Development. It consists of three awards of **USD 50,000** for each recipient.

Ireland has now submitted two nominations following a National Selection process.

Best of luck to our nominees.

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## b. Irish Launch of the 2024/25 GEM Report



The Irish launch of the 2024/25 Global Education Monitoring (GEM) Report took place on the **11th April 2025** supported by DFA/ Irish Aid.

In partnership with UNESCO—the UN agency dedicated to advancing education, science, culture, and communication—the Irish Network for Education Worldwide (INEW) co-hosted the launch of the 2024/5 GEM Report in Ireland. Education is central to UNESCO’s mission to build peace, eradicate poverty, and drive sustainable development. The GEM Report, hosted and published by UNESCO, provides crucial evidence and analysis to support policymaking and facilitate the sharing of good practice in achieving Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG 4) on quality education. DFA/ Irish Aid is a key funder of the GEM Report, which is supported by a group of governments, multilateral agencies, and private foundations.

The 2024/25 GEM Report focuses on Leadership in Education—a theme that resonates both within Ireland and in its global efforts to strengthen SDG 4. Education is a key pillar of Irish Overseas Assistance and a catalyst for achieving all Sustainable Development Goals. Leadership is at the heart of quality education, and we are delighted that the Irish launch of the GEM Report will highlight its impact on learning outcomes, both nationally and internationally.

The Reports four recommendations focus on actions governments can take to foster leadership in education at school and in the civil service. They are underpinned by the four dimensions of an education leader’s role that are relevant for them to lead effectively, whether they work in a school or a government education office – to set expectations, to focus on learning, to foster collaboration and to develop capacity. These dimensions should be the basis upon which to build coherent national strategies of education leadership that cut across all levels of the system. For an education system to work well, leaders at different levels need to be working in the same direction to achieve a common goal.

The Report is available to read here: [2024/5 GEM Report on leadership in education](#)

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### c. EU Commission Study on the benefits of Learning for Sustainability.



A [study](#), commissioned by the European Commission on the benefits of learning for sustainability that go beyond sustainability competences was recently published. The present report looks specifically at the broader learning benefits Learning for Sustainability (LfS) offers for education, which directly and indirectly promote students' academic success and wellbeing.

While evidence on its direct impact on **numeracy** is limited, LfS can improve these skills by connecting learning to real-world issues, fostering engagement, and making subjects such as mathematics more relevant. In addition, interdisciplinary LfS approaches, while less frequently studied, appear promising in simultaneously improving **numeracy and reading skills**, as well as providing other learning benefits.

In addition to potentially enhancing numeracy and literacy, nature-based LfS appears to be highly effective in supporting a wide range of **psychological benefits**. Research has demonstrated that LfS can positively impact students' academic **achievement and motivation**.

In relation to the role of LfS in developing **STEM skills**, the present findings underline the importance of **real-world problem-solving** in fostering **student engagement** and **critical thinking**. LfS initiatives encourage students to investigate socio-scientific issues, promoting **scientific enquiry** and **collaboration** while increasing their motivation towards STEM subjects. Furthermore, LfS offers the potential to enhance inclusivity in STEM education, making it more accessible to minority groups and fostering diversity among students.

The present report emphasises that LfS not only develops essential academic skills but can also cultivate transversal and lifelong learning skills such as **higher-order skills, citizenship, entrepreneurial skills and adaptability**. These skills are crucial for navigating the complexities of today's world and preparing students for future challenges. Furthermore, effective LfS pedagogies empower students to explore their identities and recognise their interconnectedness with their communities and the global environment, thereby promoting **active citizenship**.

The psychological and physical well-being benefits of nature-based LfS are profound. The present report highlights the connection between the quality of the environment and children's overall well-being and development, underlining the importance of creating healthier school environments. Through enhanced contact with nature, students

experience a range of benefits, including **increased physical activity, reduced stress, improved self-esteem, and enhanced overall well-being.**

Overall, the insights in the present report underline the growing importance of LfS in shaping the future of education by integrating real-world contexts, fostering interdisciplinary learning and supporting student well-being. This approach not only supports academic achievement but also equips learners with essential lifelong skills to navigate the complexities of a rapidly evolving world. The path forward lies in further research and the broader implementation of LfS, ensuring that its benefits reach all students and contribute to a more sustainable, equitable future.

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#### d. A Minute for Hope Initiative – 9 May



We are delighted to share with you an invitation to “A Minute for Hope”, coordinated by the organization *Plant and Care for Peace*.

On Europe Day, **May 9 at 12:00 local time**, communities across the world are invited to pause for one minute and take part in a small **act of hope and peace** — such as planting a flower, helping neighbors, picking up litter, or sending a kind message.

This simple and inclusive action is part of the **Peace Circle** initiative, promoting peace, solidarity, and intergenerational, values-based learning. While schools are central, the campaign invites all sectors of society to join in.

On the same day, a Peace Circle park will be inaugurated **in Vinnytsia, Ukraine** – as a living symbol of peace and international support.

The initiative is supported by Finland’s national broadcaster YLE, and is coordinated by the organisation *Plant and Care for Peace*.

Participants are encouraged to share their actions on social media using the hashtag  
👉 #MinuteForHope

🌐 **Learn more (available in 6 languages):**

👉 [www.pacpeace.net/start](http://www.pacpeace.net/start)

Let's keep hope growing – one small act at a time.

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## 9. Other News

### a. Climate Action Plan 2025 Published



An Roinn Comhshaoil,  
Aeráide agus Cumarsáide  
Department of the Environment,  
Climate and Communications


The government has approved **Climate Action Plan 2025**. It is the third statutory update to the plan since the Climate Action and Low Carbon Development (Amendment) Act 2021 was signed into law, committing Ireland to reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 51% by 2030 (relative to 2018 levels) and achieving climate neutrality by 2050. It builds on Climate Action Plan 2024, outlining how Ireland will accelerate the actions required to respond to the climate crisis, putting climate solutions at the centre of Ireland's social and economic development.

**Climate Action Plan 2025** is a streamlined Climate Action Plan, to be read in conjunction with Climate Action Plan 2024. It is also the final Climate Action Plan of the first 5-year Carbon Budget – marking an important midpoint in what has been called the decade of climate action.

**Climate Action Plan 2025** can be viewed on the [Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications website](#).

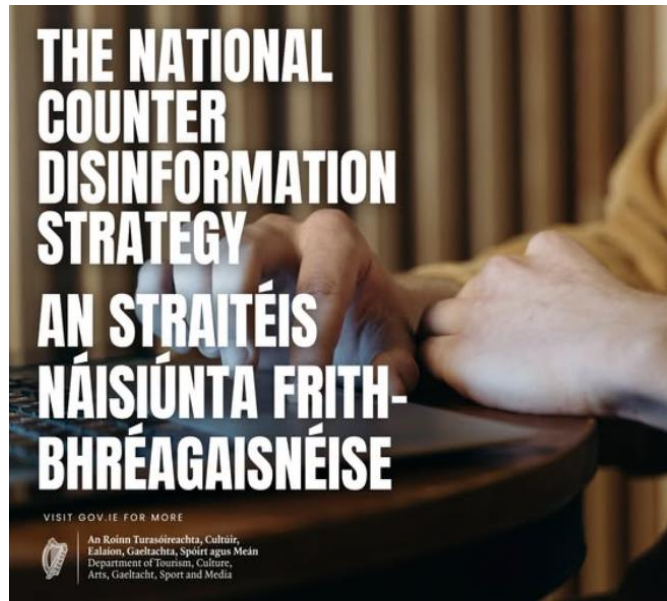
### b. Three Simple Actions – SDG 13

Below are three simple daily actions you can take to support **SDG 13 – Climate Action**

	<p>37. Take re-usable bags to the shop and only buy what you need</p> <p>38. Maintain your car, it will let out less toxic fumes</p> <p>39. If possible think about making your home more energy efficient</p>
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### c. Publication of National Counter Disinformation Strategy



The Minister for Arts, Media, Communications, Culture and Sport, Patrick O'Donovan TD, has welcomed the publication of the National Counter Disinformation Strategy, which is now available to download [here](#)

The development of a National Counter Disinformation Strategy was a recommendation of the Future of Media Commission. Its report recognised that disinformation is a complex challenge and so recommended that a strategy should be developed to coordinate national efforts and furthermore, that it should not rely solely on regulation but should involve a wide spectrum of Irish society in dialogue with Ireland's digital industry.

That is why the Strategy was developed by a working group comprised of a diverse mix of representatives from industry, academia, civil society and Government Departments, with consultant in Media Literacy, Ms. Martina Chapman, as the independent Chair.

The Strategy explores the challenge of disinformation in Ireland, its harmful effects on society and its complexity as a policy issue. It seeks to identify how the challenge of countering disinformation may be met. This Strategy is not about what is or isn't disinformation but instead sets out actions which help counter disinformation.

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## d. Campus News from the Department of Education and Youth



An Roinn Oideachais  
Department of Education

### Tree Planting in the Department of Education and Youth, Tullamore

As part of the Corporate Service [Biodiversity Action Plan](#), Accommodation & Services Unit (ASU) Tullamore organised the planting of 13 fruit trees (Plum, Pear, Cherry, and Apple) during National Tree Week (9<sup>th</sup> to 16<sup>th</sup> March), under the objective of “making more room for biodiversity in Department of Education and Youth offices”. These trees are positioned on the open green area at the back of the Government Offices, Tullamore and form part of an outdoor seating area where staff can enjoy getting closer to nature. Spending time in green spaces has been linked to reduced stress, improved mental health, and increased physical activity.

In 2019, Ireland’s report (Article 17) on the [Status of EU Protected Habitats and Species](#) found that of the 59 habitat types and 60 species assessed, 85% of the habitats and 30% of the species were in an ‘unfavourable’ status (i.e. Inadequate or Bad), indicating no improvement on the 2013 assessments or a continuing decline in condition, extent and numbers. Tree planting aligns with global sustainability goals, such as the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals, addressing issues like climate action, and stopping or slowing biodiversity loss.

National Tree Week, Ireland’s largest annual tree celebration, is proudly organised by the Tree Council of Ireland in partnership with Coillte. This special week invites communities across the nation to come together to appreciate the beauty and crucial importance of Ireland’s trees. This year’s theme was “Planting Trees & Growing Together”, and the staff in Tullamore were delighted to have the opportunity to meet and chat over a coffee during the event.

A special thanks to Hubert Loftus for highlighting the ongoing work of the Green Teams and ASU in delivering positive change in the workplace during his address at the coffee morning. We would also like to thank the ASU Tullamore team for driving this project to completion, and to Mary Duffy (Tullamore Green Team) for planting the first tree.





**Above:** Newly planted trees in the Department's grounds in Tullamore

### **No Mow May and Flower Insect Timed Count – National Biodiversity Data Centre**

**The Department** will be participating in the 'No Mow May' campaign again this year in its Marlborough Street, Athlone and Tullamore campuses. We have also published **Flower-Insect Timed (FIT)** count details to encourage Department of Education and Youth and and Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science staff to engage with citizen-led data collection with the National Biodiversity Data Centre which will run from 1 April – 30 September 2025.

More information and there is a simple video to help too: [Flower-Insect Timed Count \(FIT Count\) – National Biodiversity Data Centre](https://www.nationalbiodiversitydatacentre.ie/fit-count/)

The app can be downloaded here:

Android: <https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=uk.ac.ceh.fit>

Apple: <https://apps.apple.com/app/id1540771889>



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## Little Seeds, Lasting Roots – News from the Department’s Horticultural Club

*“About a year ago, staff from the Department of Education and Youth and the Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science extended an invitation to colleagues to join the newly revived Horticulture Club. Thanks to the enthusiasm and involvement of many, our shared vision has flourished - quite literally. Today, the plot behind the canteen in Marlborough Street has been transformed into a vibrant green haven, offering all staff a chance to disconnect from screens and reconnect with nature.*

*With financial support from both departments, we were able to purchase the resources needed to get started. But it was the spirit of collaboration that truly brought the project to life. Colleagues donated a delightful mix of plants—from fragrant roses and strawberry plants to a few mystery specimens. These thoughtful contributions have turned the space into a welcoming, living habitat for everyone to enjoy. Sustainability has been at the heart of our approach from the beginning. We adopted the eco-friendly practice of reusing coffee grounds from the canteen’s coffee machine as a natural deterrent for snails. While the snails may not appreciate the new flavour, our plants certainly do. Coffee grounds provide excellent nutrients, especially for hydrangeas and roses.*

*The Horticulture Club stays connected through a dedicated Microsoft Teams group, where members share ideas, updates, and plans for the garden. We also gather regularly, in groups large and small, to tend to the plot and enjoy the fruits of our labour. As we deepen our understanding of plants and build connections with one another, our shared green space continues to grow—both in size and in spirit. The success of this initiative is a testament to what we can achieve when we come together. The Horticulture Club is about more than gardening; it’s about nurturing wellbeing, sustainability, and a sense of community.*

*Spring has brought a colourful display to our plot and to the wider Marlborough Street campus, as bulbs planted earlier in the year burst into bloom. Their vibrant presence is a joyful reminder of the collective effort behind them—and the photos below speak volumes about the dedication of our members. We’ve also added more plants indoors, bringing life to the reception corridor and canteen. These plants not only brighten the space but also support wellbeing and purify the air. As we prepare the plot for summer bulbs, we’re excited for the seasons ahead full of colour, growth, and a continued sense of community.*

*Here’s to many more blooms, shared moments, planting ideas, growing friendships and harvesting joy – one leaf at a time”.*





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#### e. Climate Action News – April Issue Published



The April issue of **Climate Action News** has been published and is available to read [here](#).

For more information, contact: [climatenews@Taoiseach.Gov.IE](mailto:climatenews@Taoiseach.Gov.IE)

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#### f. DCU Institute for Climate and Society Newsletter – Issue 32



The new issue of DCU's Centre for Climate and Society newsletter has been published and is available to read [here](#)!

For more information, visit: [DCU Institute for Climate & Society](#)

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## g. Department of Children – News and Updates



An Roinn Leanaí, Comhionannais,  
Míchumais, Lánpháirtíochta agus Óige  
Department of Children, Equality,  
Disability, Integration and Youth

### DCEDIY's Deirdre Reidy interviewed on Times Higher Education podcast

Professor Laura Lundy is a professor of children's rights and is a co-director of the Centre for Children's Rights at Queen's University Belfast. She was also a keynote speaker at the ESD Forum at Dublin Castle last year. She has developed a widely used toolkit called the "Lundy Model" of child participation -to help enable adult decision makers to engage meaningfully with child participation, and several organisations use the model to promote children's participation in decision-making. When Professor Lundy was recently asked to host an episode of THE Connect Podcast for Times Higher Education, she invited **Deirdre Reidy, Assistant Principal in DCEDIY's Participation Play and Recreation Unit**, to join her to include the views of a policy maker committed to this work.

The podcast discussion considers the reasons to involve children and young people in decision-making, how to make it meaningful, the challenges which can be experienced and examples of change that have resulted from the involvement of children and young people in policy development.

Ireland's Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth is developing a series of toolkits "to ensure that all adults working for and with children and young people will have an arsenal of toolkits at their disposal", Reidy said. These include a practical, user-friendly toolkit for including babies, toddlers and young children under the age of five. "This year, they will be launching an introductory e-learning module to help those interested in understanding child participation in decision-making.

Reidy gives the example of when children were included in the consultation process around Ireland's Traveller and Roma Education Strategy. "The children asked for supportive and understanding teachers because they feel that having understanding teachers, particularly from Traveller and Roma communities, would make school better for them," she said. This input helped to develop practical solutions, such as teacher training, education around Traveller and Roma culture, and encouraging individuals from these backgrounds to become teachers and mentors.

Listen to Deirdre Reidy's interview on THE Connect podcast by clicking the link below:

[THE Connect podcast: Empowering children to participate in policymaking | Times Higher Education](#)

## **Comhairle na nÓg National Showcase 2025**

Comhairle na nÓg National Showcase 2025 in Dublin Castle took place on Tuesday, 15 April 2025.

The event brought together the Taoiseach Micheál Martin, Minister for Children, Disability and Equality Norma Foley, members of Government and Senior Government Officials to engage directly with young people on the issues that matter most to them. Presenter and podcaster Fionnuala Jones was the MC for the event, that was attended by over 400 young people aged 12-17.

Hosted by the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth (DCEDIY), the biennial Showcase provides a national platform for the 31 Comhairle na nÓg groups to present their work and connect directly with decision-makers on policies that impact their lives. The Showcase highlights the power of youth-led action, policy influence, and social change, demonstrating the powerful influence of young people in driving progress across Ireland today.

Taoiseach Micheál Martin praised the event, stating: “Comhairle na nÓg provides young people across the country with the opportunity to have their voices heard. I am delighted to see so many energetic and engaged young people here today expressing their views on topics that impact them. It is of the utmost importance that we consider their inputs, and keep their futures in mind, in all of our Government’s work.”

Minister for Children, Disability and Equality, Norma Foley, highlighted the importance of youth participation, saying: “Comhairle na nÓg is a fantastic forum for young people across Ireland, giving them an opportunity to share their views and influence policy development on a local, regional, and even national level. Today’s event provides these young people with an excellent opportunity to speak directly with policymakers, Government representatives and those having a direct impact on their lives on a wide range of issues, and I have thoroughly enjoyed witnessing it first-hand.”

Throughout the day, young people participated in panel discussions, interactive exhibitions, and networking sessions with policymakers and government representatives. These discussions tackled pressing issues such as mental health, education reform, climate action, and youth rights, reinforcing the significant role young people play in shaping Ireland’s future.

'The most important aspect of the Comhairle Showcase is connection. It allows young people from all over the country to connect with each other, to share ideas and perspectives and most of all to connect with decision makers. As well as that, we are given the opportunity to see the work of other Comhairlí, and bring those ideas back to our own Comhairle and our own projects.' Connor Knapp - Cork City Comhairle na nÓg

The 2025 Comhairle na nÓg Showcase at Dublin Castle proved to be an inspiring, thought-provoking, and impactful event that celebrated the power of youth participation in Ireland today.

## ESD resources published by Childminding Ireland



Childminding Ireland, a not-for-profit organisation founded and run by childminders to provide free expert childminding advice, have published a series of ESD related resources for childminders which can be accessed via the links below:

[Recycling & Upcycling in your Childminding Home - Childminding Ireland](#)

[Reducing Food Waste & Sustainable Snack Ideas for Your Childminding Business - Childminding Ireland](#)

[Tips for Saving Water - Childminding Ireland](#)

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