



An Roinn Oideachais
agus Óige
Department of Education
and Youth

Education for Sustainable Development Newsletter

Welcome to the **September 2026** issue and **24th 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 Schools – share your story

In the 2026/27 school year we are focused on promoting **Local Community Level Action for sustainable development**, so If your school collaborates with a local community group in ESD activity, and you would like to share this in the ESD Newsletter, please get in touch by emailing 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 Call for Schools



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The Department of Education and Youth is now inviting applications from recognised primary and post primary schools for ESD funding for school projects during 2026/27 in the area of Education for Sustainable Development (ESD).

Priority will be given to ESD projects that include an element of Local Level Action and/or Teacher Professional Learning. Further criteria are set out in the application form available on the ESD to 2030 webpage. Applicants are invited to submit an online application or to download and email a completed application form.

To complete the online application: [ESD to 2030 - Funding Call for Schools - September 2026 – Fill in form](#)

Download and complete the application: [ESD to 2030 Funding Call for Schools 2026](#)

An FAQ document is available for applicants to consult: [FAQs for ESD Funding Call for Schools 2026](#)

Funding of up to €2,500 per school is available with a total available fund of circa. €1m. This is a competitive process and depending on the number of applications received, not all projects might be successful. Schools who obtained funding in 2025/26 are eligible to apply; however, priority will be given to schools who did not receive ESD funding previously and all schools who have received funding previously, must have completed evaluation reports and submitted a school sustainability policy.

Visit the ESD website for full details on the application process. [National Strategy on Education for Sustainable Development in Ireland](#)

The completed form should be emailed to ESD@education.gov.ie

All applications must be submitted before 6.00pm on Friday, October 23rd, 2026.

Late applications will not be processed under any circumstances.

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b. ESD to 2030 – Funding of €625,000 for Organisations



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In the May 2026 issue of the ESD Newsletter, the department issued the 2026 ESD funding call for Organisations.

Minister for Education and Youth Hildegard Naughton TD has announced the delivery of €624,523 in funding for Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) projects for 27 organisations across the country.

Funding of between €6,325 and €25,000 has been announced to organisations who successfully proposed their 2026 / 2027 sustainability projects for funding under the 2nd National Strategy on Education for Sustainable Development (ESD to 2030).

ESD to 2030 aims to ensure that all learners have the knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development. The strategy contains five priority areas: Aligning Policy, Transforming Learning Environments, Building Capacity of Educators, Empowering and Mobilising Youth and Accelerating Local Level Action.

Minister Naughton said “I am delighted to see such a wide range of projects in receipt of funding to support Education for Sustainable Development in our primary and post primary schools across the country. Congratulations to all of the organisations and projects involved. This funding will support an increase in teacher professional learning in ESD, increased availability of resources and teaching and learning materials for ESD linked to subjects across the curriculum, increased school engagement with a wide range of programmes and in particular, an increased level of participation by students in local and community action for sustainability. It is important for us that students not only acquire the knowledge about ESD themes but also acquire the skills to take action both locally, nationally and globally.

Through collaboration with these organisations, we can ensure that our learners receive quality education for sustainable development across its many facets. I look forward to reading about how these projects develop and grow over the coming year”.

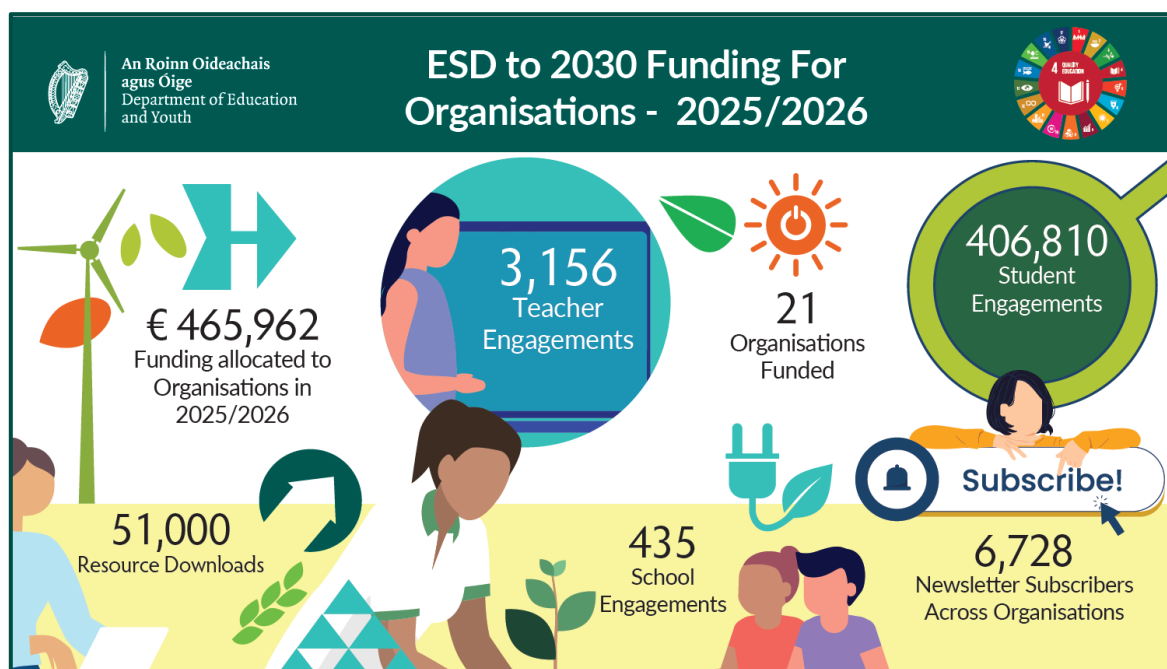
The full list of funded organisations, including information on the projects and the funding awarded can be accessed at this link: [HERE](#)

The official press release from the Department of Education and Youth with breakdown of ESD to 2030 funding for organisations is available here: [Minister for Education and Youth announces over €624,000 in funding for Education for Sustainable Development projects](#)

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d. Infographic – 2025 funding for organisations

In 2025, 21 organisations were granted €465,962 in ESD funding. Based on the evaluations received and data supplied, this funding supported direct engagement with 97 schools, 2,525 teachers, 309,210 students, 151,000 resource downloads and awareness raising through 10,066 newsletter subscribers.



The ESD Team would like to wish all the organisations the very best of luck with their projects, and we look forward to hearing back with various updates.

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c. The 11th National ESD Forum

11th National Forum on Education for Sustainable Development – Registrations now open!

Registration is now open for the 11th National Forum on Education for Sustainable Development (ESD), which will take place on the **17th of November 2026** at **Croke Park, Dublin**, during Ireland's Presidency of the European Union.

This annual event is being led this year by the Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science (DFHERIS) in partnership with the Department of Education and Youth and the Department of Children, Disability and Equality.

Register your interest now via [Eventbrite](#). Details are available on the Departments' LinkedIn channels.

Participants can look forward to:

- Plenary sessions and keynote discussions
- Workshops and lightning talks
- Exhibition stands showcasing ESD initiatives
- Opportunities to network with ESD practitioners, policymakers, educators and researchers from across Ireland and the EU
- Strong youth participation, including a youth panel and youth rapporteurs supported by NYCI, while Cork YMCA youth reporters capture the conversations and highlights from across the day

The Academic Panel, chaired by Dr Daniella Tilbury, will feature Dr Annette Kearns, Dr Aravella Zachariou and Dr Mark Kelly, who will explore why ESD matters for today's learners, spanning early childhood through to higher education.

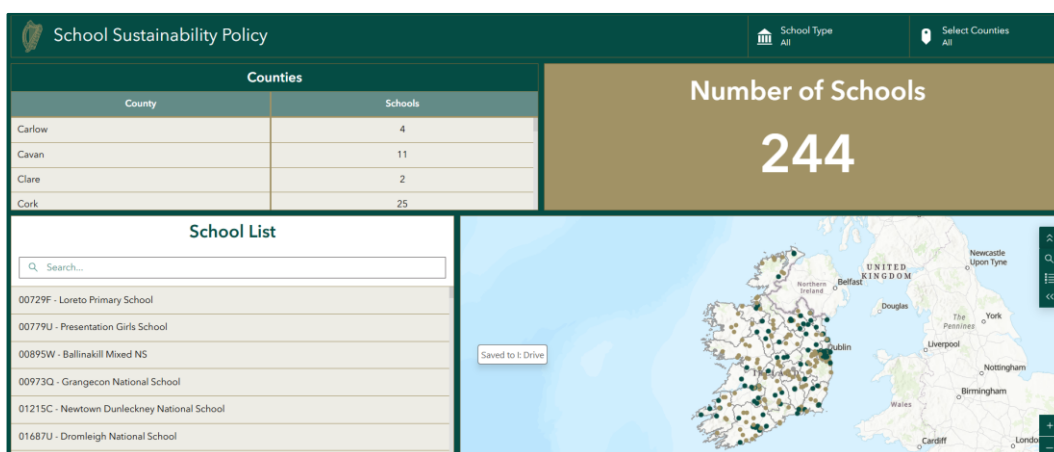
Please note: As this is an official EU Presidency event, registration will take place in two stages. Interested participants must first complete an Expression of Interest (EOI) form via Eventbrite. Places will then be allocated to ESD stakeholders, who will receive a follow-up email inviting them to complete photo ID verification (accreditation). Full accreditation and attendance details will be provided to confirmed participants, who will need to provide photo ID on the day to access the event.

We encourage ESD stakeholders to [register their interest early](#) as places are filling up. All queries should be directed to esd_eu26@dfheris.gov.ie

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e. School Sustainability Policy Statements – Map

Check if your school is on the map and if not e-mail (ESD@education.gov.ie) the link to your Sustainability Policy Statement for inclusion: [School Sustainability Policy](#)



Thank you to schools who have submitted a Sustainability Policy Statement. We were grateful to receive over 250 new sustainability policy statements as part of the evaluations for ESD to 2030 Funding for Schools, and more arrive all the time.

This is sure sign of the commitment schools are showing to keeping sustainability at the forefront of primary and post primary education in Ireland.

Completing and making a Sustainability Policy Statement available is a condition of ESD to 2030 funding call for Schools.

Updates to the map are ongoing, so please check to see if a) your school has been added and b) the link to your Sustainability Policy Statements Map online is correct.

Remember: if you have submitted your link, it will be added to the map in due course. If you haven't email us once it is available online!

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f. 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.

We now have copies of the **17 Sustainable Development Goals** in four European modern languages. The languages available are French, German, Spanish, or Italian.



If you require copies of either the posters or flyer, please email ESD@education.gov.ie. Remember to let us know which language poster you would like.

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g. Updated ESD CPD list for 2026/27

The Department of Education and Youth has an updated list of ESD related CPD. The list is available on the ESD webpage, and teachers will find all the necessary details required for signing up and joining courses from providers around the country.

This list is updated annually, and we welcome new contributions for ESD related teaching and learning activities. Please contact ESD@education.gov.ie if you have any content you would like included in this list.

See below for [updates on ESD Teacher CPD](#)

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h. Updating Sustainability Toolkit for Schools

We are continuing the process of reviewing and updating the Sustainability Toolkit for schools. See the current version here: [National Strategy on Education for Sustainable Development in Ireland](#)

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](#).

Contact: esd@education.gov.ie

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2. School Updates

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

Scoil na Mainistreach, Co. Kildare.

"At Scoil na Mainistreach, our staff have worked hard to promote biodiversity and Sustainability. Our students have created post-and-wattle willow fences, living hedges (fedges) and a willow dome and have planted 1,000 native trees, now flourishing hedgerows through collaborating with the local tidy towns. Through ESD grants, we have built a thatched early Christian-style hut and new mud kitchens, developed a wellbeing walkway and forest with deadwood habitats and 'wild spaces' and created unique biodiverse-rich micro-environments in the forms of a Bog Garden and dinosaur habitat, with murals and signage to support engagement.



We use our woodland for Forest School and nature crafts and have developed our own willow plantation to sustainably maintain our willow structures. We have invested in gardening CPD for teachers and new garden equipment to support student engagement and have purchased a wormery and composters to support our whole-school 6th class-led composting programme. Recently, our Green School Committee collaborated with a local nursery (Plant Collector) and Tidy Towns volunteers to create a wattle-lined raised bed containing pollinator friendly plants and bug hotel on the Shackleton Road beside our school.

Our key objective is to transform our outdoors into an educational outdoor classroom where children not only experience pro-biodiversity and sustainability policies in action, but are actively involved in engaging hands-on activities. We feel that these initiatives not just tie well with the child-centred play-based ethos of our Curriculum, but help our students become more connected to and appreciative of their natural environment".

Editor's Note: Well done to all at Scoil na Mainistreach. A €500 One-For-All voucher to support ESD projects is on its way to you!

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Coláiste Cholmcille, Co. Galway

Hydrogen Transport for a Sustainable Future

“As 2nd-year students in Coláiste Cholmcille, we wanted to explore how innovation and sustainability could work together to create a better future for rural Ireland. Our project, **Hydrogen Transport for a Sustainable Future**, investigated how hydrogen-powered trains could reduce carbon emissions while improving transport links and celebrating Connemara's rich railway heritage.

We were inspired by the historic Galway–Clifden railway, which transformed life in the region when it opened in 1895. Through our research, we discovered that hydrogen trains produce no direct emissions other than water vapour, can travel long distances, and are particularly suitable for rural routes that are not easily electrified.



To develop our project, we researched hydrogen technology, explored local railway history, and spoke with railway professionals. We also designed and built a model hydrogen transport system using skills from Woodwork, Metalwork and Art. The project allowed us to combine learning from many subjects, including CSPE, English and Wellbeing.

Throughout the process, we developed valuable skills in teamwork, communication, critical thinking and problem-solving. Most importantly, we learned that young people can contribute meaningful ideas to discussions about climate action and sustainable development.

We encourage readers to think about how transport can become more sustainable in their own communities by learning about new technologies and supporting climate-friendly future for Ireland

Check out this video on the schools project which is available here:

<https://www.youtube.com/shorts/XI3vDIEe5i0>

Editor's Note: Well done to all at Coláiste Cholmcille. A €500 One-For-All voucher to support ESD projects is on its way to you!

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b. Student takeover – Bayside SNS

Editor's note: We were delighted to be sent on Bayside SNS annual Green and Clean Newsletter. Well done to all the students who wrote and collected this highly useful and relevant information

The ESD Newslettter is not the only dedicated sustainability newsletter Bayside SNS's annual Green and Clean Newsletter is also a popular publication. The school code is 'It's our duty to protect nature', and according to their newsletter editors, they want to

'share our learning, our knowledge, activities and memories of the recent Environmental projects we completed.

Below are some of the fun and interesting ESD related tidbits the students put together. Answers to questions at the [end of the newsletter!](#)

*

Sustainability Jokes

- Why did the leaf go to the doctor? It was feeling green.
- How do trees access the internet? They log in.
- What kind of hair do oceans have? Wavy.
- Why are trees so great at networking? They have a large branch network.
- What did the tree wear to the pool party? Swimming trunks.
- How do marine biologists prefer to communicate? Sea-mail.

Riddles

I eat up your leftovers, banana peels too, and turn them to soil for the garden and you. I'm nature's recycler, a wonderful treat, I take your old garbage and make dirt complete. Who am I?

Have you ever lost a sock?

Believe it or not, the "mystery of the missing sock" has actually been studied. In 2016, 2,000 people were surveyed about odd socks! Look at the results ...

- The average person loses about 1.3 socks every month.
- This adds up to about 15 individual socks per person each year.
- Based on an average lifespan of 81 years, the study estimated that a person will lose over 1,200 socks in their life!
- The Cost: In the UK alone, this is estimated to cost citizens about **£2 billion** (€2.3 billion) every year in replacement costs.

Quiz time

1. If you leave the tap running while you brush your teeth you can waste up to 4 litres of water. True or false?
2. How much water is wasted every day in Ireland?
3. In 2026, which country is recognised for getting nearly 100% of its electricity from renewable sources?
4. How many marine animals die every year as a result of human discarded rubbish?
5. What do the 7 R's stand for?
6. All paper can be recycled, even if it's greasy or covered in food. True or False?
7. Roughly, how many years does it take for a single plastic bottle to decompose.

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3. Youth Section

a. New UN ECE ESD Youth Platform representative



The Department of Education and Youth, in collaboration with ESD to 2030 co-sponsoring departments, Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science and the Department of Children, Disability and Equality, are very happy to welcome David Smith as Ireland's new Youth representative on the UN ECE ESD Steering Group Youth Platform. The Youth Platform brings the voices of young people to the Steering Group and to the centre of developments on ESD at a UN ECE level. David has shared an update on his values and hopes for his time in this role:

Hello there, I'm David, and I'm honoured to be the Irish representative on the UNECE Steering Group for the ESD Youth Platform. It is a pleasure for me to take on this position and help to promote the voices of youth within the UNECE region.



My experience of involvement in youth organisations and advocacy encouraged my passion for youth advocacy and participation. I have had the privilege to work alongside young people on issues that are important to them through Scouting Ireland, the National Youth Assembly of Ireland, and other youth-led organisations. I have witnessed first-hand the positive outcomes that young people can have when they are given genuine chances to contribute to decision-making.

I have a particular passion for ensuring sure that young people are given a genuine voice in the decisions and solutions that will shape their futures, in addition to being consulted on matters that shape their lives and prospects. This corresponds directly to my strong commitment to social justice and environmental protection.

I'm looking forward to working with young people and stakeholders around the UNECE region, exchange Irish perspectives and experiences, and make sure that youth voices continue to be critical to the success of Sustainable Development”.

Editor's note: Congratulations David! We look forward to hearing more about the work of the Youth Platform in future newsletters.

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b. National Youth Council of Ireland



Three Key Takeaways from Ireland's Youth Representative to the UNECE ESD Steering Committee Youth Platform – Eimear Manning, outgoing Youth Representative

Four years as Ireland's Youth Representative to the UNECE Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) Steering Committee Youth Platform has come to an end, and throughout my time in this role, many interesting lessons were learned:

3. ESD is the future of impactful and inclusive education.

ESD actively promotes the development of the values, skills, knowledge and attitudes, and supports the active engagement of citizens in decision making processes. It helps to foster greater awareness of the challenges we face and can empower citizens to think critically, and act for a fairer, more just world. Ultimately, ESD assists in preparing society to envision the future of life for people and the planet in a sustainable way.

2. Meaningful change is a slow, steady process.

Change in UN bureaucratic spaces can feel tediously slow. There are always detailed negotiations on aspects such as language, ways ESD is embedded in education, and ESD implementation framework. The constant back and forth within the UN can often leave young people feeling frustrated.

Ultimately, we need to remember that we've come a long, positive way. We have a growing youth platform, more ministers in attendance, and evidence of the positive impacts of ESD across society. While change is slow, we can't lose sight of how far we've come.

3. A lot of great people are doing a lot of great things.

At every UNECE Ministerial meeting on ESD agenda items are dedicated to sharing the progress of ESD within member states. These show examples of good practice in all areas of education, from kindergartens to youth centres to universities. A lot of great people are doing great things!

Those who make up the UNECE ESD committees and platforms are genuinely passionate about ESD as a transformative educational strategy. They bring a collective wealth of knowledge, ideas, and encouragement to continue pushing the bar for the successful implementation of ESD.

Concluding remarks

"As I step down from my post on UNECE ESD Steering Committee Youth Platform, I am reminded of the momentous amount of experience gained throughout the duration

of my role. I wish my successor, David Smith, every success in their representation of the young people of Ireland to the UN.

Finally, I wish to extend my sincere gratitude to all three co-sponsoring government departments (DEY, DFHERIS and DCDE) for their support, guidance, and encouragement throughout my representation. This is an exceptional opportunity for young people offering a direct voice in their advocacy on ESD, while also offering a rare and important opportunity to experience UN internal processes that only comes with first-hand experience. The continual commitment to meaningful youth inclusion in decision-making spaces is a benefit to us all!"

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c. Comhairle na nÓg



Delegates from Comhairle na nÓg met in Dáil Éireann on 1st May 2026 to debate critical issues in Irish education. Over 174 delegates from around the country discussed issues such as the Relationship and Sexual Education curriculum, creation of school resources and exam stress. The parliament which takes place every two years provides a necessary platform for young people to speak out and share recommendations on issues relevant to them.



Ceann Comhairle, Verona Murphy said "The Dáil Chamber is at the heart of our democracy, and it is vital that young people have the opportunity to bring their voices directly into it. In an increasingly polarised and online world, it is encouraging to see young people from all backgrounds come together in person to engage respectfully and constructively with one another on the issues that affect their lives." She commended delegates for sharing their input which will hopefully have a valuable role in informing policy in Ireland.

You can read more about this here: [Dáil na nÓg 2026 - Comhairle na nÓg](#)

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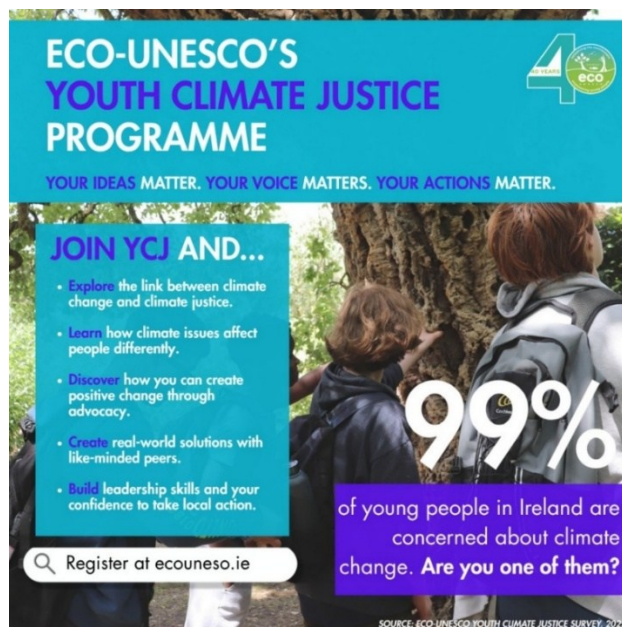
d. ECO-UNESCO



Youth Climate Justice Programme 2026 – Open for Registration!

Do you want to make a difference? Are you ready to become an advocate for people and the planet? ECO-UNESCO welcome curious young people (14 to 17) to register for our 2026 Youth Climate Justice (YCY) Programme – a wonderful opportunity for aspiring leaders and advocates for climate action and justice. This after-school programme runs from September to December, providing young people with resources to develop new skills and grow as young climate leaders in a safe and supportive environment.

Taking place after-school, participants will engage in games, group discussions and debates, hands-on workshops, guest speakers and expert sessions, and community action projects at our youth space located in Dublin 2. The programme will culminate at the annual Earth Gala Event, hosted by ECO-UNESCO in December, where participants will have the chance to celebrate their achievements throughout the programme.



Do you know a young person who may be interested in our YCJ Programme? Feel free to share this information and encourage their involvement. No prior experience is required to participate! To register, complete the registration form [here](#).

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e. Foróige & Biorbic



Generation Glas: Young Sustainability Ambassadors Take Over UCD

In early August, 25 young people from across Ireland arrived in UCD for the Generation Glas bioeconomy summer school - four days launching them into eight months as sustainability ambassadors.

Generation Glas is a Research Ireland Discover-funded partnership between BiOrbic and Foróige for youth from marginalised and under-resourced communities, too often left out of environmental conversations despite being most affected by climate change.



Participants set the tone themselves, writing a group agreement naming the values they would hold each other to before any content began. A Draw-and-Tell session asked what helps or stops them taking action. Eimear Manning of NYCI ran a climate session, Martin O'Donoghue led a workshop on play facilitation, and a BiOrbic lab tour went behind the scenes of bioeconomy research. Downtime was spent on woodland walks, five-a-side football, and a cinema night.

On the final morning, at Airfield Estate, they brainstormed the sustainability events they will lead in their communities over the coming months as part of the programme. Over the coming months they will visit sustainability hubs nationwide and meet expert guests online, before delivering their own initiatives with programme mentoring and funding, closing with a youth-led national event in spring 2027.



This is an ESD programme that gives young people the knowledge, networks and confidence to act. As one participant put it: "This week has made me realise how much easier it is to be active on both a small and big scale and how much your actions on sustainability can help a community."

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f. Happy Days, Ballyporeen – Tipperary Childcare Committee



Sustainability as a Way of Being at Happy Days

“At Happy Days, Education for Sustainable Development is not viewed as an additional activity or something confined to recycling or caring for the environment. Rather, it is woven through our pedagogy, everyday experiences and relationships with children, families, educators and our community.

Central to our approach is a strong image of the child as capable, competent, curious and an active citizen with rights, ideas and the ability to influence their world. Children are not simply taught about sustainability; they experience it through participation, responsibility, relationships and meaningful involvement in daily life.

This begins with our youngest children. A baby putting their used tissue into the bin is experiencing responsibility and learning that they can contribute. Toddlers watering flowers, caring for their environment and helping with everyday tasks begin to understand that their actions have an impact. Preschool children growing vegetables experience where food comes from, what living things need to thrive and the importance of patience and care.



Sustainability is also social. Sharing resources, taking turns, helping friends, listening to different ideas and solving problems together support children to develop empathy, cooperation and respect. Through our emergent curriculum, children investigate real questions, develop theories, make choices and influence decisions about their learning and environment.

As a community-based service, we recognise that sustainability is rooted in connection between children, families, educators, community and place.

Ultimately, we want children to recognise that they have both a voice and influence. By trusting them as competent citizens today, we are helping to build the foundations for a more thoughtful, equitable and sustainable future.”

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4. Competitions

a. Support the ESD Newsletter

Would your organisation or learning space like to support the ESD Newsletter and offer schools a unique and meaningful learning opportunity? Our competitions section is always looking for willing supporters.

Every quarter, the ESD Newsletter reaches over 2,300 individual subscribers, as well as being sent to every primary and post primary school in Ireland and key stakeholders in the ESD advisory group. As well as being a great source of ESD related news, it is key for communicating updates on the progress of ESD to 2030.

If you think you could offer a prize of a school trip, activity or ESD related materials for schools, please get in touch: ESD@education.gov.ie

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b. September ESD Newsletter Competition - SDG 1 No poverty

SDG 1 focuses eradicating poverty and access to the services and facilities which can help us to progress. Eradicating poverty is an act of social justice and is key to unlocking human potential. Nearly half of the world's population lives in poverty, and lack of food and clean water is killing thousands every single day of the year. The key focus is to reduce the proportion of people living in poverty in all its dimensions by at least half. It goes beyond just monetary measures to address social protection, resource access, and vulnerability.



Question:

According to the EU (see 'SDGs and me' website below), what percentage of the entire EU population are at risk of poverty and social exclusion in 2020?

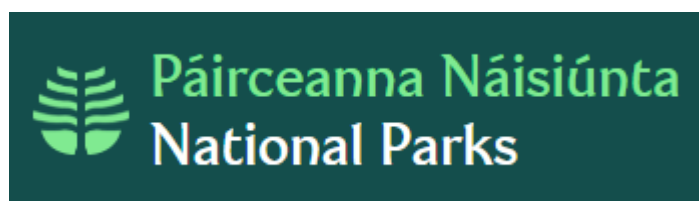
- a. 19.5% b. 21.5% c. 23.5% d. 25.5%**

See: [Sustainable Development Goals \(SDGs\) and me - 2025 edition](#)

E-mail you answer, name and school to esd@education.gov.ie by **Friday October 2, 2026** to be in with a chance of winning a €500 one for all voucher for ESD projects in your school.

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c. September ESD School Trip Competition – National Parks



This September's ESD Newsletter school trip competition has an exciting prize of a trip to one of Ireland's national parks!

National Parks are guardians of Ireland's unique geography and ecology to preserve nature for future generations. Ireland's National Parks provide unique opportunities to be at one with nature; the purest of experiences in nature giving emotions of awe, wonderment, feelings of connectedness and peacefulness.

For more information, visit the National Parks website [National Parks of Ireland - Where Nature Speaks](#)

Entrants to the competition have the option to chose a day trip to one of three participating parks.



NPWS

An tSeirbhís Páirceanna
Náisiúnta agus Fiadhúlra
National Parks and Wildlife Service

Glenveagh National Park, Co. Donegal - [Glenveagh - National Parks of Ireland](#)

The Burren National Park, Co. Clare - [Burren - National Parks of Ireland](#)

Wild Nephin National Park, Co. Mayo - [Wild Nephin - National Parks of Ireland](#)

How to enter the National Parks Competition

One lucky class will be offered a free trip to a National Park! Just answer the question below and send your entry with details of your school/class to ESD@education.gov.ie by **Friday October 2, 2026** to be in with a chance of winning. Be sure to include the title "ESD Newsletter National Parks Competition" in the subject line of your email.

Which is Ireland's newest national park?

- A. Glenveagh, Donegal**
- B. Páirc Náisiúnta na Mara**
- C. Wicklow National Park**
- D. Wild Nephin National Park**

Would your organisation like to support the ESD Newsletter and offer schools a unique and meaningful learning opportunity? If you think you could offer a prize of a school trip, activity or ESD related materials for schools, please do get in touch:

ESD@education.gov.ie

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d. COGG – Comórtas Flóra na hÉireann

An Chomhairle um Oideachas
Gaeltachta & Gaelscolaíochta



OLLSCOIL NA GAILLIMHE
UNIVERSITY OF GALWAY

Flóra na hÉireann

In partnership with Dr Seathrún Ó Tuairisg (Acadamh na hOllscolaíochta Gaeilge, University of Galway), COGG is providing information panels to T1 primary schools this year. The panels give an insight into the flora of Ireland.

Eight panels have been designed to be taken on nature walks and used in the classroom, enabling children to explore their surroundings, increase their knowledge of native plants and flowers and how they were used in the past, and strengthen their knowledge of and interest in the environment and biodiversity. They will also be able to learn the Irish-language names that have been used for this flora for hundreds of years. Other resources will also be provided, including a short video, classroom presentations (PowerPoints), and a booklet in which information can be recorded.



The panels were designed and developed by Dr Ó Tuairisg. He identified a gap in knowledge about the environment and the common plants growing all around us. Dr Ó Tuairisg decided to bring together a collection of this information, resulting in this excellent resource, which will enable pupils to identify plants by name and learn more about the places, or habitats, in which Ireland's common plants grow.

Comórtas Fhlóra na hÉireann

To be in with a chance to win Flóra na hÉireann panels simply answer the question! This competition is limited to **Irish-medium schools only**. Please include your school's role number with your answer.

Ceist: Cén planda a úsáidtear go traidisiúnta le dó neantóige a leigheas?

Seol d'fhreagra, d'ainm agus ainm do scoile ar ríomhphost chuig esd@education.gov.ie roimh **Dé hAoine, 2 Deiradh Fomhair, 2026** le bheith i seans sraith de 8 bpainéal **Flóra na hÉireann** a bhuachaint do do scoil.

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e. ESD Newsletter Competition Winners



The winner of the **Rediscovery Centre Class Visit** was **Donabate Portrane Educate Together National School** in Co. Dublin.

Question: What did the Rediscovery Centre's building used to be? a) factory b) recycling centre c) boiler house or d) power station

Answer: c) boiler house

Editors Note: Congratulations! You can read about the schools Green School Committee visit below. Thank you to Dublin Zoo for sponsoring this prize.



The winner of the **SDG 17** competition in the March issue of the ESD Newsletter is **Esker Educate Together National School** in Co. Dublin.

Question: In 2022, what was the net amount of Official Development Assistance (ODA), which is defined as government aid designed to promote the economic development and welfare of developing countries, according to the [CSO](#)?

a. €2.3 million b. €230 million c. €2.3 billion d. €23 billion

Answer: c) 2.3 billion

Editors Note: Comhghairdeas! A €500 voucher for ESD in your school is on its way to you.

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f. Relove Fashion



WIN a Sewing Machine for Your School with [Relove Fashion](#)

Schools across Ireland, we have a challenge for you! Our FREE sustainable fashion competition is perfect for the classroom, and invites teenagers to turn unwanted clothes and fabrics into creative, unique, wearable designs.



Entries to Relove Fashion & Elżbieta Klonowska from St Louis Community School, the overall winner.

Those who register their interest before 30th September will be put into a draw to win a sewing machine for their school.

From grandad's old shirts and mum's vintage bridesmaid dresses to ripped jeans, worn bedsheets, holey hats and even old trampoline nets, young people across Ireland are giving everyday items a stylish second life through upcycling with the [Relove Fashion competition](#).

The nationwide competition, custom built for Irish secondary schools, encourages teenagers to repair, redesign and remake old textiles into original fashion creations. Along the way, they learn about sustainable fashion, and discover how reusing and repairing clothes can make a real difference to the planet!

Included: Lesson guides & teacher resources, flexible programme, curriculum aligned, perfect for TY. The competition is open to young people aged 12-19.

[Register your interest now, and you might win a sewing machine for your school!](#)

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g. Re-turn Awards



The Re-turn Awards are back – and bigger for 2027!

Following an extraordinary inaugural year, the Re-turn Awards are returning for primary schools and third-level institutions – and launching for post primary schools for the first time.

In just four months, participating primary schools and third-level institutions returned more than **1.6 million cans and bottles**, raising over **€305,000** for schools, campuses and chosen causes.

Now, primary, post primary and third-level communities across Ireland are invited to take part. By collecting eligible drinks containers through Ireland's Deposit Return Scheme, participants can raise valuable funds while putting sustainability into practice, developing teamwork and bringing their wider communities together.

Every school and institution can approach the Re-turn Awards in its own way. Campaigns might involve pupils, students, staff, families, Students' Unions, Parents' Associations, clubs, local businesses or community organisations.

The Awards are not decided by collection volume alone. Judges consider each entrant's size, circumstances and starting point, with a strong focus on the positive impact achieved through learning, creativity, leadership, problem-solving, fundraising and community involvement.

There are fantastic prizes and national recognition available across all three Awards programmes, with top prizes of up to **€5,000**.

Ready to take part?

Visit re-turn.ie/awards to:

- Order your FREE orange Re-turn bins and bags
- Register for Awards updates
- Find guidance, resources and entry information for your sector

Turn everyday cans and bottles into something brilliant.

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h. Young Environmentalist Awards

Register for ECO-UNESCO's Young Environmentalist Awards 2026-2027



Calling all young changemakers and environmentalists! Registration is now open for ECO-UNESCO's Young Environmentalist Awards (2026-2027).

At ECO-UNESCO, we believe change starts with action, and no difference is too small.

This environmental youth programme is free and open to young people aged 10 to 18 across the island of Ireland. We welcome group sizes ranging from 2 to 25 participants. After registration, participants get access to a range of support for both group mentors and young people. This can include mentor training, workshops, manuals, and support from the ECO-UNESCO YEA team throughout the programme. The registration deadline is **November 13th, 2026** and the submission deadline for participating projects is **12pm on February 4th, 2027**. The final showcase and awards ceremony will take place in May 2027.

You can register for our upcoming YEA Programme or find more information on awards categories by visiting our [webpage](#). Be sure to check out [last year's winning group projects](#).

Learn more about how young people can make an impact through YEA in this [video](#).

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i. Class Trip Competition updates

Donabate Potrane Educate Together NS was the lucky winner of the May ESD Newsletter competition which earned them a trip to the Rediscovery Centre. You can read about their experience here.

"Thanks to our prize from ESD, Donabate Portrane Educate Together's Green School Committee had a fun, educational and informative day out at the Rediscovery Centre in Ballymun in June. They learnt about the historical roots of the building and project and

got a tour of the sustainable grounds. The children were impressed by the upcycling that takes place with bikes, furniture, clothes and even jewellery.



During our Toy Repair Workshop, the children considered the linear economy of lots of our toys and considered the more sustainable circular economy. They got to fix broken items in imaginative and creative ways and came away with an enthusiasm for making small changes at home and in school.

Some inspiration that the children would like to bring back to our school includes:

- “Up-cycling as much as possible.”
- “Doing our own bike library where you can take a bike and leave a bike.”
- “Build your own board game and make your own whiteboard cleaners.”
- “Create our own bottle cap art wall and time lapse display (how long it takes various items to decompose).”

You can learn more about the Rediscovery Centre’s excellent education programmes here: [Learn with us – The Rediscovery Centre](#)

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j. ECO-UNESCO YEA Showcase 2026



For over 25 years, ECO-UNESCO has proudly delivered the Young Environmentalist Awards (YEA), empowering young people across Ireland to take meaningful environmental action.

In our 2025-2026 programme, we had over 340 local environmental and sustainable action project registrations and over 7000 young people take part from across the island of Ireland. At our awards and showcase ceremony, we presented 28 well-deserved awards and celebrated not only awarded groups, but every young person who stepped forward with ideas, actions, and solutions for a more sustainable future.

We were delighted that the new Patron of ECO-UNESCO, President Catherine Connolly shared a thoughtful, written message with young environmentalists, which was shared during the awards ceremony by Elaine Nevin, National Director of ECO-UNESCO.

“The scale of involvement speaks to the commitment, organisation and determination of the young participants. It reflects a generation that understands the urgency of climate action and has bravely responded to it.” - President of Ireland Catherine Connolly, at the occasion of the Young Environmentalists Awards Ceremony RDS, Dublin May 2026

To view the remarkable achievements of young environmentalists across the island of Ireland, check out our [Young Environmentalist Awards & Final Showcase 2026](#) video or read up on the event [here](#).

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k. Irish Aid *Our World Awards 2026*

“A wonderful day was had at the National Finals of the Our World Awards last May, when St. Joseph’s N.S., Dundalk, Co. Louth was crowned **School of the Year 2026** for its excellent submission, *Our World, Our Choice – Actions Speak Louder Than Words*.

A total of **534 entries** were received from schools across the country, with pupils submitting projects through a wide range of creative media, including videos, posters, short stories, crafts, songs and dramas.



Awards were presented across the following categories:

- Our World Awards Global Goals
- Our World Awards Active Citizenship
- Our World Awards Irish Aid Programme
- Our World Awards Outstanding School Engagement
- Our World Awards Rising Star
- Our World Awards STEM
- *Gradaim Ár nDomhan – An Iontráil Ghaeilge is Fearr*
- Our World Awards Creative Star

The category-winning schools were:

- Balbriggan ETNS, Dublin
- Dunboyne Senior Primary School, Meath
- Gaelscoil Bhrian Bóroimhe, BÁC
- Inver N.S., Donegal
- Kilcooley N.S., Galway
- Limerick ETNS
- Mercy Convent Primary School, Kildare
- Scoil Bernadette, Cork
- Scoil Mhuire, Corr na Móna, Galway
- Scoil Mhuire, Mount Sackville, Dublin
- St. John the Baptist Girls’ School, Tipperary
- St. Patrick’s N.S., Curtlestown, Wicklow
- Togher Boys N.S., Cork
- Wicklow ETNS

It was a fantastic day of celebration for all 15 shortlisted schools, who enjoyed an unforgettable experience at the National Finals. Congratulations to every school, teacher and pupil who took part.

We are now finalising the resources for the **2027 Our World Awards**, featuring new case studies and themes, including a new focus on **Life Below Water**. The programme will launch in mid-October, with entries closing on **19 April 2027** and the National Finals taking place in **June 2027**.

Register now at <http://ourworldawards.ie/register-submit> to receive **FREE** Pupil Magazines and support your pupils in becoming informed, active global citizens in line with the new primary curriculum.

Be sure to follow us on **Facebook and Instagram** for all the latest news and updates throughout the year.”



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5. Programmes and Resources

a. #andshecycles – Green Schools



Get More Girls Cycling to School with #andshecycles

Are you ready to help teenage girls in your school break the gender gap in cycling?

The #andshecycles Ambassador Programme empowers young girls to cycle to school with greater confidence, while developing student leaders who can inspire positive change among their peers.

Throughout the school year, ambassadors will take part in training days developing their leadership skills, cycling experiences and bike related workshops, all designed to build their skills, knowledge and confidence. They'll explore the barriers that can make cycling less accessible for girls and work together to develop ideas and actions that encourage more girls to cycle in their school and local community.

Students will also join a national community of #andshecycles ambassadors connecting with young people across Ireland who share a passion for cycling and creating change.

Who Can Apply?

This is a secondary school programme and teachers can apply on behalf of their school by completing this [application form](#). The school must be a current Greenschools Ireland school. Each selected school can choose 4 – 10 female students/those who identify as female to become their #andshecycles ambassadors.

The programme is an opportunity for schools to help students develop their cycling skills, confidence and independence while contributing to a healthier, more active and sustainable school.

Don't miss out and apply today by completing this form: [#AndSheCycles Ambassador Programme 2026/2027 School Application Form](#) **Applications close 8th October.**

For more information, contact Lorraine Farrell, #andshecycles Programme Coordinator, lfarrell@antaisce.org or visit www.greenschoolsireland.org/andshecycles



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b. Biodiversity in Schools



Online course relaunched - Helping nature at school.

Biodiversity in Schools has re-launched its popular 'Helping nature at school' online course for educators. Over 650 educators took part in the course last year.



The online course is free and designed for teachers, principals, caretakers, SNAs, secretaries and indeed everyone involved in the education community across Irish primary, secondary and preschools.

In a simple and relaxed manner, you will explore the importance of biodiversity and learn practical steps to help it at your school. Digital certificates are provided upon completion.

To register: <https://www.biodiversityinschools.com/online-course-helping-nature-at-school>

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c. Creative Clusters



Creative Clusters 2026-2028: From Farm to Fork on the Wings of Wild Things

Creative Clusters demonstrate the powerful role that creative learning plays in advancing Education for Sustainable Development (ESD). In 2026, the Department of Education and Youth will fund 42 new Creative Clusters through Education Support Centres Ireland, supporting 147 schools and Youthreach centres to collaborate, innovate and learn together in creative learning communities. Each cluster brings together between three and five schools to explore a shared theme or challenge through creativity, partnership and learner-led inquiry.

While many schools have chosen themes that align with ESD six Creative Clusters have specifically selected themes that place sustainability, biodiversity and environmental stewardship at the heart of creative learning. Themes include Cork's Wings & Wild Things: Exploring Biodiversity Through Birds; Cluster led by Scoil Bernadette, Montenotte, while Holy Trinity N.S. Dunfanaghy's Donegal Cluster aims to encourage pupils to connect with their local natural environment. In Kildare, Scoil



Junior and Senior infants's classes, Killaloe

Phadraig Naofa's Cluster will explore food sustainability and biodiversity through its From Farm to Fork! theme, while Gaelscoil Éadan Doire's will use local peatlands as a living classroom for inclusive outdoor learning. Waterford's St. Mary's Parochial School's Inventing a Sustainable Tomorrow will inspire innovation and sustainable thinking, and Wexford's Belonging in Nature, Belonging in School will strengthen connections between wellbeing, learning and the natural world for students in Kilnahanagh CNS cluster.

Creative Clusters is supporting rich opportunities for young people to develop the creativity, critical thinking and environmental stewardship needed to build a sustainable future. Creative Clusters is administered by NAE, Tralee Education Support Centre, for information on Creative Youth in schools visit [Creativity, Arts and Culture in Education](#).

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e. Dúlra Éireann

Dúlra Éireann: 10 growing projects for small spaces

In September 2025, Dúlra Éireann commenced its new project on demonstrating to teachers, children and the wider public that quite a range of vegetables and fruit can be grown where space is limited. Twelve videos were produced in the academic year, 2025-2026 demonstrating the process. All the videos were created in a wide range of schools varying from inner-city to rural with teachers and children participating.

The videos covered vegetable topics such as growing organic baby-leaf spinach, garlic, onions, sugar snap peas, scallions and carrots in pots and fruit topics such as growing strawberries and autumn-fruited raspberries in a window box and a tub.

During the videos the teachers and children learned about the following: the difference between seed, potting and home-made compost, the conditions necessary for seeds to germinate, how to handle seedlings when transplanting, how to care for them and how to harvest the crops. Caring for the vegetables sown covered topics such as thinning, watering and feeding.



Gardens from Rutland St NS & Gaelscol an Choilín

Feedback from teachers was always positive. The videos demonstrated to teachers that schools don't need to have lots of expensive raised beds in large spaces to engage in gardening with their children. They also helped teachers with very little confidence in their gardening skills to start growing.

SEN teachers were particularly generous in their praise for the project. They stated that the videos provided them with a plan of work for a whole year's gardening with the children under their care.

Link to videos: <https://www.engagewithnature.ie/small-space-gardening/>

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f. Global Action Plan



This September sees us begin the second year of our 'Just Maps' Erasmus+ project whose aim is to strengthen students' global citizenship skills through participatory mapping of local communities. Students continue to critically analyse the areas in which they live and learn, and then to map them! The maps highlight problems and opportunities for improving local areas and are the basis for students taking local climate-based action for fairer and more sustainable communities. The first phase of the project saw students gathering important information focusing on the environment and social justice. Based on this data, students then created their digital maps.



Our two participating schools are St Catherine's Senior School, a primary school in Cabra, and Ard Scoil na Mara, a post primary school in Waterford. Students have been responding enthusiastically to the project and relishing its very practical and hands-on approach. This includes observing the area and documenting what is there and what could be there, interviewing local stakeholders and community members, and conducting surveys with other people who use the area.



In addition to our two Irish schools, there are also schools involved from Poland, Italy, Spain and Kenya. A focus of the project is when 'mappers' from all countries gather in Zaragoza in October to share their maps. This will highlight how local problems are interconnected, and together with a Global South perspective, students will take a justice-based approach in addressing them.

After this meeting, students will implement their proposed solutions by launching an awareness-raising campaign and contacting local administrators. This gives them the opportunity to be involved in creating a tangible change in their community towards a more inclusive and sustainable future for all.

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g. Global Citizenship School



Global Citizenship Schools continues to develop our website, www.globalcitizenshipschools.ie, where we encourage teachers to participate in our "[Share One Lesson](#)" initiative. Through this campaign, teachers are invited to contribute a lesson that can be shared with colleagues across Ireland. Our aim is to build a comprehensive bank of lessons that can be used as part of a progressive, age-appropriate scheme of work for primary schools throughout the academic year.

With the support of ESD earlier this May, we were delighted to host a wonderful showcase event at Áras an Uachtaráin, where President Catherine Connolly welcomed 60 children from schools across Ireland. The students proudly showcased how they are using the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and other global citizenship initiatives to make a positive difference in their schools and local communities. Their projects demonstrated how local action can contribute to global change, making the day a genuine celebration of hope, creativity and active citizenship.



Please take a look at the short video highlighting some of the inspiring work undertaken by the children during the event: <https://vimeo.com/1177108822?fl=pl&fe=cm>

Looking ahead, we are excited about returning to Áras an Uachtaráin in 2027 for another national showcase of Global Citizenship Schools. In the meantime, we encourage you to explore the links above and discover the wealth of resources available.

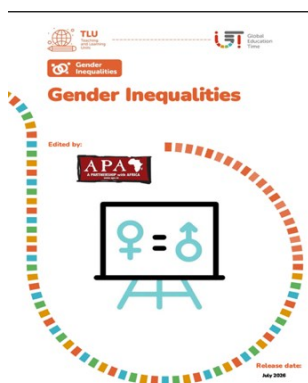
If you are a teacher, we would be delighted if you considered taking part in our 2027 "Share One Lesson" campaign and sharing an inspiring classroom activity with colleagues across Ireland. Thank you for your continued support.

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h. Global Education Time

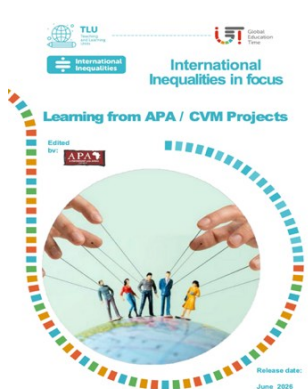


Global Education Time: Connecting Curriculum, Global Issues and Youth Action



Global Education Time (GET) Ireland has added two new free Teaching and Learning Units (TLUs) to our growing collection of classroom resources.

The [Gender Inequalities TLU](#) enables students to explore gender roles and stereotypes, human rights, equality and positive action, while [International Inequalities in Focus: APA/CVM Projects](#) uses real examples from Ethiopia and Tanzania to examine issues including education, decent work, access to clean water and environmental sustainability. Tá na bileoga oibre ar fáil i nGaeilge freisin.



Both resources encourage students to make local-to-global connections and consider how they can respond through youth action, from awareness-raising and creative projects to community engagement and advocacy. Both units include practical youth-action ideas linked to sustainability and global justice. Explore further at: [GET Ireland Teaching & Learning Units](#)

Alongside these new resources, GET has published its [National Curriculum Mapping of Global Citizenship Education: Opportunities and Challenges](#). The research examines how migration, climate change, gender inequalities and international inequalities are represented within school curricula across the eight GET partner countries.

For Ireland, curriculum case studies identify opportunities within History, Geography and CSPE, highlighting how existing curriculum learning can support students to understand interconnected global challenges and develop the knowledge, skills and values needed to participate in creating a more just and sustainable future. Explore further at: [GET Ireland Studies](#)

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i. Global Village



Discover new opportunities this school year with Global Village

It is the start of a new school year and with it comes a chance to set new goals, welcome new possibilities and discover new opportunities to grow.

The team at Global Village is looking forward to working with primary school teachers across the country to help children become more informed, curious and open-minded citizens, ready to understand and embrace the increasingly connected, diverse and ever-changing world around them.

Through a dedicated Global Citizenship Education (GCE) programme, Global Village offers professional learning opportunities and curriculum linked resources to support teachers in exploring fairness, equality, sustainability and human rights in the classroom.

GCE helps children to become active citizens by developing the skills they need to live and work positively with others - communication, empathy, cooperation, critical thinking and respect. By introducing GCE in primary school, teachers can help children become thoughtful, open-minded and responsible individuals prepared to make a positive contribution to their local community and the wider world.

How can Global Village help?

Find out more at the QR code about how Global Village can support teachers bring GCE to life across teaching, learning and school culture. Follow the links for ready to use resources, free staff workshops and upcoming events, all aligned with the Revised Primary Curriculum Framework.

You can also contact us directly via email to info@globalvillageschools.ie



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j. Green Schools



Teachers' Seminars for the 2026-27 school year

A series of regional webinars are being organised by Green Schools in September and October to help teachers understand the theme for the school year 2026/27.

This seminar is aimed at primary schools, as support for Green-Schools Coordinators.

East region: 22 September (Tuesday), 5pm-6pm

South region: 30 September (Wednesday), 5.30pm-6.30pm

North & west region: 7 October (Wednesday) 5.30-6.30pm

Project schools (for schools working on [Green Schools Projects](#)): 8 October (Thursday) 5pm-6pm

Participants will meet Green Schools staff, meet their Environmental Awareness Officer (EAO), and also get a chance to see the theme handbook.

Visit the link to find out more and to register: [Teachers' Seminars for the 2026-27 school year | Green-Schools](#)

Post primary school students and their GS Coordinators are invited to their own Seminar - 29 September (Tuesday), 1pm-2pm

Interested schools can visit the Green Schools website to find out more and to register:

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k. GROW at School



Primary

This year marks five years of GROW at School, GIY's primary school programme supporting children to learn about food, growing and sustainability through hands-on gardening. The programme is now in **more than 600 primary schools** across the Republic of Ireland.

The programme has had a positive impact on children's practical food-growing skills and their connection with food. Educators reported that **96.5% of students had a positive relationship with eating fresh produce** in connection with the programme, while resources received an average ease-of-use rating of **4.5/5**.

This year, we're launching new resources to help educators use the garden as a practical classroom, including guidance on preparing and sharing food at school and new cross-curricular activities. We're also excited to launch **Junior Growers Assembly**, a monthly opportunity for students to take part in mini competitions and showcase their garden projects.

New **Sow membership** provides free access to core resources, including garden planning guidance, site selection advice and monthly tips from our education team. Educators can also join the waiting list for a fully funded place, while schools can choose to fund their own participation through our premium membership.

[Explore membership options](#)

Post primary

Our post primary programme launched in 2025–26, **reaching 51 schools in its first year**. This year, a further **25 schools will join**, bringing the programme to **76 schools - approximately 10% of post primary schools in Ireland**.

Supported by philanthropic donations and ESD funding through the Department of Education and Youth's ESD to 2030 strategy, the programme provides raised beds, soil, seeds, garden plans and educational resources for hands-on learning, while supporting student wellbeing and connection with food and nature.

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k. IDEA – Irish Development Education Association



IDEA Member Knowledge Shares 2026: Sharing Global Citizenship Education Practice

The Irish Development Education Association (IDEA) successfully delivered its Summer Member Knowledge Share series throughout July and August 2026. The series provided a valuable space for IDEA members to learn from one another through short, peer-led online sessions showcasing innovative Global Citizenship Education (GCE) practice.

This year's programme featured contributions from Development Perspectives, An Taisce, Nano Nagle Place, Oxfam, Schools of Sanctuary, the Irish Global Health Network, AKIDWA, STAND, and WorldWise Global Schools. Together, these sessions explored a wide range of topics, including connecting GCE to local contexts, strengthening good practice, social impact, forced migration, global health education,

migrant women leading change for the Sustainable Development Goals, digital learning opportunities in GCE, and the use of school gardens as spaces for human rights education.

Knowledge Shares began in 2020 as a way for IDEA members to stay connected and share learning during the Covid-19 pandemic. They have since evolved into a valued annual opportunity for practitioners across the sector to exchange ideas, reflect on practice, and strengthen Global Citizenship Education in Ireland.

If you missed any of this year's sessions, recordings and recaps are available on the IDEA Knowledge Share webpage. We invite IDEA members to explore the full series and catch up on the wealth of insights, practical approaches, and shared learning from colleagues across the sector.

[Find out more...](#)

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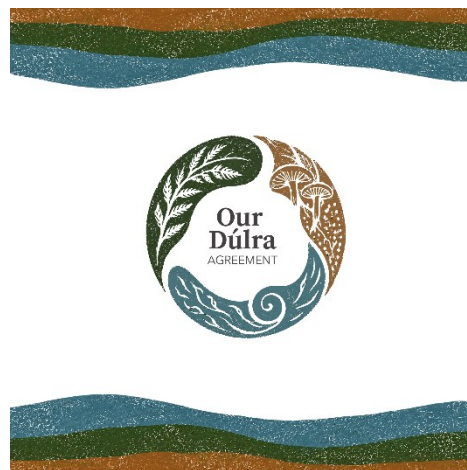
I. Irish Schools Sustainability Network – ISSN



Our *Dúlra* Agreement

In June the Biodiversity Working Group for Schools hosted a landmark gathering of education leaders in Wildacres to advocate for a nature-rich education. Marking the first time system leaders have convened to address biodiversity loss, the event opened with a powerful address by Minister Hildegard Naughton T.D Naughton. Paul Fields, Director of Schools for ETBI introduced Our *Dúlra* Agreement. Education system leaders (Patron Bodies, Educational Trusts, ETBs and management bodies) have been invited to engage with their organizations' trustees to sign Our *Dúlra* Agreement, committing to a Nature-First mindset and a future of nature-rich education. We will officially launch the Agreement during the Biodiversity COP in October.

Find out more information and how to sign it [here](#).



Bitesize Biodiversity Schedule for 2026



Our new Autumn Schedule for our [Bitesize Biodiversity](#) CPD sessions is also out. Every Monday during term time join us at 4-4.15pm for just 15 minutes to learn about one species of our native flora and fauna at a time. It is developed in collaboration with ESCI, Biodiversity in Schools and Green Schools and is also made possible by ESD to 2030 Funding for Organisations. Participants receive a CPD certificate upon completion at the end of the term.



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m. Junior Achievement Ireland



Sustain_Ability: Bringing Sustainability Learning to Life

Junior Achievement Ireland (JAI) is pleased to introduce Sustain_Ability, a new programme that helps senior cycle students deepen their understanding of sustainability and make a positive impact in their communities. Developed with funding from Research Ireland's Discover Programme, Sustain_Ability supports the Leaving Certificate Climate Action & Sustainable Development curriculum and is designed for 4th and 5th year students.

Across four modules, students explore the UN Sustainable Development Goals, examine climate change from different perspectives, discover the role of natural carbon sinks and use design thinking to develop solutions to challenges in their local environment. Along the way, they strengthen their critical thinking, teamwork and problem-solving skills while linking classroom learning with future opportunities.

Sustain_Ability is delivered by volunteers from JAI's network of 160 partner organisations, bringing sustainability professionals into the classroom. Volunteers share their knowledge and career journeys in sustainability, giving students a unique understanding of how learning can translate into future study, careers and opportunities to drive positive change.

Teachers who participated in the pilot welcomed the programme's strong curriculum links and engaging approach. Teacher Claire Healy of Douglas Community School, Co. Cork described Sustain_Ability as "a fantastic interactive resource aligned very well with the new Climate Action & Sustainable Development subject," adding that "the SDG game in particular was a big hit" with students.

At its heart, Sustain_Ability opens students' eyes to the opportunities within sustainability. JAI aims to launch the programme to schools nationally later this year.

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n. Libraries Ireland



Your Local Library: A Resource for Every Classroom

Did you know that your local library offers a wide range of free resources and educational opportunities to support schools, teachers and students?

What Your Library Can Offer:

- Musical Instrument Lending
- Citizen Science Kits & Seed Libraries
- Games & Play Resources
- Library Visits, Tours & Storytimes
- Class Sets & Curriculum Resources
- Sensory Toy Lending

Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) Reading Lists - Libraries Ireland has developed reading lists for children and young people linked to all 17 United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, helping schools explore topics such as climate action, equality, health and wellbeing through books.

[SDG Reading List | Libraries Ireland](#)

**Featured Book
Recommendation
(Ages 9–12) for SDGs
1 – 17.**



Short Stories for all your Class

This inspiring collection features 20 powerful short stories about remarkable people who have taken action on climate change, sustainability and human rights. Each story highlights an individual who has made a difference, showing young readers how one person can help create positive change.

With 20 short, accessible stories, this book is ideal for classroom use. Each student can read a different story and share what they learned with their classmates, making it a simple and engaging way to encourage discussion and participation.

From young activists and innovators to environmental champions and problem-solvers, there is a story to capture every reader's interest. The book explores real-world challenges while celebrating the people developing creative solutions for a better future.

Every library service is different, with many offering unique programmes and resources for schools. Contact your local library today to discover what's available in your area.

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o. National Walking Day

7th annual National Walking Weekkicks off on Monday, 21st September!

This week is a fantastic opportunity for schools, youth groups, communities, and families across Ireland to celebrate the outdoors and experience the incredible physical and mental health benefits of walking. The week will conclude on Sunday, 27th September with **National Walking Day: Teen Step Out Day**, featuring a special emphasis on youth-led engagement. This day encourages teenagers across Ireland to get outdoors, connect with others and enjoy the many benefits of walking.

Throughout the week, we will celebrate a range of campaign themes that promote inclusion and encourage participation from all communities and abilities, including:

- Mindful Walking Day
- Equality, Diversity & Inclusivity Day
- Workplace Walking Day
- Active Travel Day
- Access for All Day
- Happy Hiking Day
- National Walking Day: Teen Step Out Day

How to join in: No matter when or where you walk, please register your activity and share your journey using the hashtag **#WalkHikeRunPushRoll**.

1. Promote the campaign Please help us spread the word through your networks, partners, communities and social media channels.

2. Register your walks Register your walks on the Get Ireland Walking website. Registered walks will become part of the national campaign and help us showcase the fantastic work taking place across the country.

Register your walk here:

<https://www.getirelandwalking.ie/nwd-2026#register>

Find out more about the campaign:

<https://www.getirelandwalking.ie/nwd-2026>

This year, **all registered walks and groups will automatically be entered into our National Walking Week photo competition**, with some fantastic Get Ireland Walking prizes up for grabs.

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p. The Rediscovery Centre



Go Circular Goes to School!

We are bringing a game-changing project to schools in Ireland, Go Circular Goes to School! The programme is designed for students in the Pilot Leaving Cert subject, *Climate Action and Sustainable Development*, exploring the principles of the circular economy: reducing waste, reusing materials, and rethinking how we produce and consume. Through hands-on education workshops and classroom



activities, students will be empowered to become active agents of change in their communities.

[Apply for your school here!](#) *Use the code 'Go Circular' as the Workshop Topic*

Go Circular Goes to School is a schools' programme brought to classrooms across Ireland by the European Commission Representation in Ireland

About the Rediscovery Centre's Workshops

The Rediscovery Centre facilitates interactive workshops in schools and libraries across the country, or at our Centre in Ballymun, Dublin.

For **post primary schools**, we offer a selection of workshops connected to **Science, Geography, Maths, CSPE, and Art, Craft and Design**. Many workshops align closely with the new **Climate Action and Sustainable Development** subject, engaging with key sustainability challenges. Participants explore solutions to these challenges through collaborative, hands-on activities.

Our **primary workshops** are curriculum-linked through subjects including Science, Geography, Maths, SPHE and Visual Art. Each 90-minute session is designed to inspire curiosity and active learning for participants.

The Rediscovery Centre also provides a range of interactive **Teacher CPD Workshops** for primary and secondary teachers, covering a variety of environmental and STEM topics.

For more: [Primary Workshops](#) / [Secondary Workshops](#) / [Additional Needs Workshops](#) / [Teacher CPD Workshops](#)

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r. SEAI



Interested in reducing your school's energy costs?

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

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

Courses will be held online and will consist of three sessions of 2 hrs each. Courses 1 & 3 are scheduled for 10am to 12pm. Course 2 is held in the evening from 7pm to 9pm. The school can nominate any representative to attend e.g. member of staff, caretaker or Board of Management.

Course 1 (AM)	Tuesday 22/09/26	Tuesday 06/10/26	Tuesday 20/10/26	To register for Course 1 click here
Course 2 (PM)	Thursday 24/09/26	Thursday 08/10/26	Thursday 22/10/26	To register for Course 2 click here
Course 3 (AM)	Wednesday 14/10/26	Wednesday 04/11/26	Wednesday 18/11/26	To register for Course 3 click here

For queries, please contact energyineducation@seai.ie

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Wool in School's Wool2Ewe programme continues to grow

Wool in School's main objective is to reach as many children as they can and teach them about wool and nature's other wonders. The programme covers a variety of topics, including the history of Irish wool, the science behind the fibre, and its many uses. It also highlights the importance of supporting local farmers and the benefits of using sustainable, locally sourced materials.

Fun Wool Facts

- 100% natural: wool is 100% natural grown year-round consuming a simple blend of water, air, sunshine and grass.
- It's hypoallergenic: Skin health research is showing superfine wool base-layer garments to be beneficial to people with sensitive skin, such as eczema sufferers.
- Sleep quality research by the University of Sydney has shown that wearing superfine wool sleepwear; shortens the time it takes to fall asleep.
- Flame resistant: wool's inherent chemical structure makes wool naturally flame resistant. Wool does not melt, drip or stick to the skin when it burns.
- Wool fibres can absorb large quantities of moisture vapour and then move it away to evaporate into the air.
- It's UV resistant and biodegradable, when wool is disposed of, it will naturally decompose in soil in a matter of months or years.

For more information log on to www.woolinschool.com

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t. World Wise Global Schools

Kinsale Community School Inspires the primary school students through Student-Led COP Conference

As part of Kinsale Community School's whole school approach to Global Citizenship Education, students from Transition Year planned and delivered a COP conference for almost 300 local primary school pupils.



Known as the Kinsale Community School Conference of Primary schools, the Transition Year students designed interactive workshops, games and hands-on activities for young learners to explore biodiversity, sustainability and climate change through a global justice lens. Primary school students were encouraged to think critically about the root causes of environmental challenges, make local to global

connections and consider the role of human rights in creating a more sustainable and fairer world.

A new element of COP this year was a presentation from Politics and Society students that examined the Gibe III Dam project in Ethiopia. This project is being examined by scientists, human rights organisations and international bodies like UNESCO as well as independent researchers. Using this case study, the Politics and Society students explored how environmental initiatives can sometimes have unintended impacts on local communities, prompting thoughtful discussion about balancing environmental, social and economic priorities.

Through COP26, Transition Year students were at the centre of planning, leadership and peer education. It is a remarkable example of how Kinsale Community School is empowering young people to become informed and critical global citizens. The conference is extending the impact of Education for Sustainable Development beyond the school itself and inspiring the next generation to take meaningful action for a more just and sustainable world.



For more information www.worldwiseschools.ie

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u. YES Campaign - Business in the Community Ireland



As part of Business in the Community's [World of Work](#) programme schools have an opportunity to take part in the YES (Youth Engagement in Sustainability) Campaign. A national competition that focuses on the theme of 'How can I make my world a better place?'

"Gas Networks Ireland are proud to sponsor the Youth Engagement in Sustainability (YES) Competition and to partner with BITC's World of Work programme. Both initiatives are vital in reinforcing the importance of continuous learning, while also deepening young people's understanding of sustainability. Every year, we are truly inspired by the passion and creativity shown by participants. Their innovative thinking and drive to make a difference give us great optimism for a sustainable and regenerative future." **Gráinne O'Reilly, Social Sustainability Manager.**

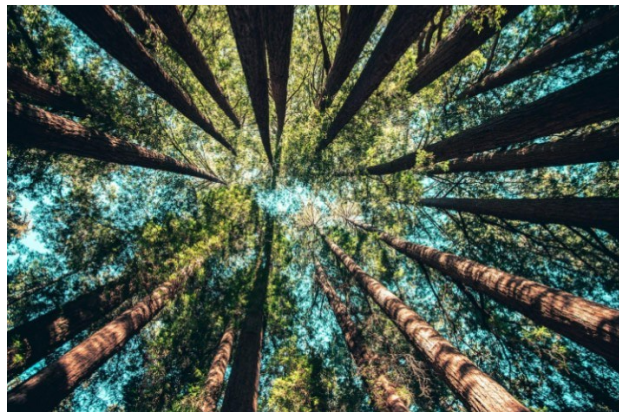
First place was awarded to **Coláiste Cholmcille** for *Hydrogen Train: A Cleaner Future for Connemara* (supported by Irish Rail). Judges praised the project's strong research, clear presentation and ambitious vision for hydrogen-powered local trains, describing it as an "excellent, transformational idea." [Read more about Coláiste Cholmcille here!](#)

"We are incredibly proud of our students for their creativity, teamwork and commitment to sustainability. This recognition reflects their hard work and enthusiasm, and we look forward to seeing their ideas develop further." **Peadar Ó Sé, Principal**

St. Joseph's Mercy Secondary School, Navan were recognised as second place with a school swap shop and fashion show, while **Mercy College Woodford** and **O'Carolan College** shared third for biodiversity and social impact initiatives.

Congratulations to all participants. Their projects demonstrate the important role young people play in creating a more sustainable and inclusive future.

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6. Teacher Professional Learning/ CPD

d. Dublin Zoo

Thanks to funding from ESD, Dublin Zoo's Primary School Summer Teacher Course was expanded this year from the usual two weeks to three weeks, while also offering a reduced participation fee of just €60. This increased accessibility resulted in tremendous participation, with **222 teachers** taking part across three course weeks held in early July and mid-August.



Participants enjoying Dublin Zoo's Courses for Teachers this summer.

The programme offered a broad range of learning experiences focused on conservation education and Education for Sustainable Development (ESD). Outdoor learning sessions in the Phoenix Park introduced teachers to ecology basics, while modules in Wild Space explored nature connectedness activities. Participants met members of Dublin Zoo's Conservation Science team to learn about the zoo's conservation work in Ireland and around the world and animal keepers shared insights into elephant care and welfare. Teachers also engaged in STEM-based activities linked to engineering and climate change, explored sustainability and habitat design, and took part in a gardening module led by Dr. Paddy Madden, which provided practical ideas for developing school gardens and fostering children's connection with nature.

The course aimed to deepen teachers' understanding of conservation and sustainability while equipping them with practical tools, resources and experiences to bring back to their classrooms. By supporting 222 teachers, the programme has the potential to positively influence thousands of students, helping to build a stronger culture of environmental awareness in schools across Ireland and inspiring pro-environmental behaviours from an early age.

Through empowering teachers, we are helping to inspire the next generation of conservationists and look forward to working with even more teachers next summer as the programme continues to grow. For more visit: [Courses for Teachers - Dublin Zoo](#)

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a. ECO-UNESCO



ECO-UNESCO's QQI Ecology and the Environment Course

Looking for a career change? Or have a special interest in the natural world and its systems? ECO-UNESCO is offering a Level 6 Ecology and the Environment course for learners, providing a thorough introduction to ecological systems, biodiversity, and environmental conservation. We are proud to share this course is validated by Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI), the national awarding body for further and higher education and training.

We welcome diverse learners to this QQI-accredited course, whether you're looking to upskill your current ecological and environmental knowledge or step into a developing field. Participants will explore habitat management, biodiversity protection, and environmental policy, while building practical field skills in species identification, habitat surveying, water quality assessment, and invasive species management across a range of Irish ecosystems.

Delivered in Dublin 2, the programme combines classroom-based learning with field trips to local ecological sites. Our final intake offers a flexible schedule beginning on September 16, with 10 weeks of evening sessions and dedicated fieldwork days on weekends.

In 2026 and 2027, ECO-UNESCO will be providing other training and education courses in the areas of Sustainable Development, Peer Education, Growing Vegetables, Outdoor Vegetable Crop Production, and Community participation. To apply or find more information on application deadlines and our other accredited and non-accredited courses, visit our [website](https://ecounesco.ie).

Unsure if you meet application requirements or if you require fee assistance? Contact Tim Mac at training@ecounesco.ie.

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b. Irish Schools Sustainability Network



New GCE and ESD CPD Schedule for 2026



We are delighted to announce our new dynamic [Autumn CPD schedule](#) developed in collaboration with ESCI and experts from across Ireland and is supported by the SSE Airtricity Generation Green Community Fund. These sessions include up to date information, not found in textbooks and engaging activities for you and your students in GCE and ESD. Participants receive a CPD certificate upon completion.

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Further and Higher Education News

a. Higher Education Authority



The Higher Education Authority (HEA) recently launched the [HEA Education for Sustainable Development \(ESD\) Framework for Higher Education](#) a connected suite of resources designed to support higher education institutions in strengthening, connecting and making visible their approach to Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) across teaching and learning, governance, campus operations, research, community engagement and student partnership.



The launch involves three new publications:

- The [HEA ESD Framework for Higher Education Overview](#) explains what the Framework is, how its components relate to one another and how institutions and partners can use it.
- The [HEA Enablers for Whole-of-Institution ESD in Higher Education](#) sets out five strategic enablers for embedding ESD across institutional activity.
- The [HEA ESD Self-Evaluation Tool](#) is a voluntary, developmental resource to support institutions in reflecting on strengths, identifying priorities and planning next steps.

The Framework builds on sustained national investment in this area. ESD has been one of three focus areas of the [Strategic Alignment of Teaching and Learning Enhancement \(SATLE\) fund](#) since 2022, supporting institutions to advance ESD initiatives from curriculum innovation and interdisciplinary modules to staff development and institution-wide sustainability projects.

A range of related information is also available on the National Resource Hub page (search 'ESD') – [You searched for 'ESD' – National Resource Hub](#)

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b. University of Limerick

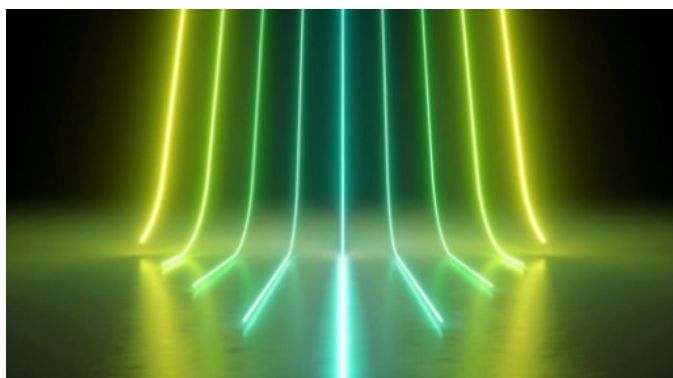


Leading from Within: Capacity Building for ESD Leadership

In May/June 2026, a new pilot open course was delivered through the HEA National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning. Focused on building the capacity of staff in Higher and Further Education to take leadership roles in ESD, the course explored a range of sustainability leadership models while using the creative arts and humanities to foster inner development. Participants engaged in creative and reflective activities both individually and in peer groups. By the end of the course, each participant had developed an action plan tailored to their own context.

31 people took the pilot from 15 different institutions. The course was designed and delivered collaboratively, led by University of Limerick in partnership with Atlantic Technological University, Technological University Dublin, Institute of Art, Design & Technology and South East Technological University. It aims to further the goal of strengthen ESD across the sector, and developing a network of leaders taking action at local and national level.

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8. International Updates

a. Council of European Union – Cyprus Presidency



During Cyprus's recently concluded presidency of the European Union, an international ESD conference was hosted in Lefkosia from May 7-8. The title of the conference was "Whole Institution Approach and Education for Sustainable Development: from Policy Vision to Educational Transformation".



Over 200 delegates attended this event, with representatives joining from across Europe. Officials from both Ireland's DEY and DFHERIS EST teams also participated in the event.

The conference successfully laid a pathway for the annual ESD Forum which takes place in November under the auspices of the Ireland's EU presidency.



A summary of the event can be read at the following link: [European Conference "Whole Institution Approach and Education for Sustainable Development": Sustainability as a central dimension of education](#)

You can also access an extended documentary at this link: <https://we.tl/t-c8s5dboVuj2rXuYE>

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b. European Commission – Working Group Schools on Learning for Sustainability



The European Commission recently released *A Compendium of Good Practices for Learning Environments for Sustainability*. This forms part of the commissions efforts to integrate sustainability across education. There are 23 snapshots of good practice from across member states at both institutional and policy level, with infrastructure and learning environments taken into consideration. Learning spaces are key to this compendium and are defined as those which support teaching and learning for sustainability. These include three features.

1. They are sustainable and follow environmental and bio-climatic principles.
2. Observe high-quality educational facility interventions.
3. Involve a whole-school approach to learning for sustainability.

In total there are 23 example snapshots in the compendium, as well as material of the design of effective learning spaces for sustainability. The compendium organises best practices under a number of thematic categories:

- Engagement of students, school community, parents and multi-level collaboration
- Sustainable architecture and modernisation of classrooms
- Circular economy principles
- Energy efficiency
- Climate resilience and nature-based solutions
- Outdoor learning and learning cities
- Whole-school approach to sustainability.

To download and read the compendium, please click on this link:

[A compendium of good practices for learning environments for sustainability – Publications Office of the EU](#)

ESD examples from across Europe: Snapshots of inspiring practices and programmes for learning environments for sustainability

Majorana-Maitani Scientific and Technical High School Institute, Orvieto, Italy

Disconnection Room

Thematic areas: Student engagement, sustainable architecture and modernisation of classrooms, whole-school approach



The Disconnection Room's bifunctional spatial design aims to optimise the learning environment. Teachers and students jointly conceived the Disconnection Room, with access to surrounding green spaces. This is a relaxed environment for cooperative learning used by different groups and with different objectives. In this welcoming and multifunctional room, everyone's mobile devices – including those of the teachers – are stored in special lockers, allowing everyone to work without distraction. It comprises a study area encouraging interaction and collaboration and welcoming relaxation area. The breakout room addresses multiple educational objectives, which combine the acquisition of knowledge with the development of transversal skills and values oriented towards sustainability. This integrated approach aims to help students to become prepared for today's challenges and to contribute actively to building a more sustainable and inclusive future.

Miravete Garden, Murcia, Spain

Traditional orchards in a school garden

Thematic areas: Climate resilience and nature based solutions.



Huerto del Miravete was a two-year project to create a school garden and irrigation system for primary school students. The garden is a central element in the appreciation of the region's ecosystem, its culture and history, and leads students towards ecological awareness to create a more sustainable city. Huerto del Miravete is supported by local, regional and national policies for environmental education through orchards. The initiative has achieved widespread environmental and socio-cultural impacts. The initiative has had a broader impact on the region, with 252 primary and 52 secondary schools participating in the programme in 2024. The intervention presented here is an attempt to introduce students to the traditional

orchards of the region and the work involved, as well as to teach them about ecological processes through their participation in the garden. The school garden has become the main space supporting the teaching of curricular content in various subjects, such as mathematics, natural sciences, and social sciences. Activities include workshops, literary recitals with the garden as the central theme, photo exhibitions of produce from the garden, meteorology, biodiversity, healthy food and intensive agriculture and agroecology themes, as well as cultural activities highlighting the value of the Murcian dialect.

Across Austria

Austria's school development programme 2020

Thematic areas: Sustainable architecture and modernisation of classrooms, whole-school approach to sustainability.

This programme aims to uphold the architectural and structural quality of existing buildings, taking into account sustainability objectives and responding flexibly to evolving pedagogical needs and new educational content. The reorganisation of physical and architectural structures into a school living space is essential to enhance learning and teaching conditions for all groups involved in the initiative. This effort looks beyond simply good architecture and aims to ensure that the built environment is effective in supporting the pedagogical practices that take place within it. The demands placed on a school as a living and experiential space where young people can grow in various ways must be reflected in its architecture and interior design. From a pedagogical perspective, it is widely acknowledged that facilities should not be designed for single or specific purposes. They should facilitate various forms of teaching and learning. While the classroom remains the focal point, it must be flexible enough to accommodate and integrate various teaching and learning models, from small group instruction to inter-class projects. This approach emphasises continuity by building on the existing practice of its predecessor while ensuring the flexibility to accommodate different pedagogies. By focusing on sustainability and adaptability, schools can create spaces that support the holistic development of students in a dynamic educational landscape.

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c. UN ECE Steering Committee on ESD



Irish organisations engaged in ESD activities have made extended contributions to the 2026 Compendium of ESD Stories: [2026 Compendium of ESD stories – Role of ESD in advancing SDGs 6, 7, 9, 11 & 17](#) This edition focuses on the role of ESD in advancing a number of SDGs:

- SDG 6: Clean water and sanitation
- SDG 7: Affordable and clean energy
- SDG 9: Industry, innovation and infrastructure
- SDG 11: Sustainable cities and communities
- SDG 17: Partnerships for the goals

The compendium of stories is part of the work conducted by the UNECE Steering Committee on Education for Sustainable Development, which the Department of Education and Youth acts as Ireland's representative.

Seven contributions from Irish organisations were included in the compendium, and these were:

- ECO-UNESCO – ECO-UNESCO's QQI Accredited Training Programme p. 117
- ECO-UNESCO – ECO-UNESCO's Young Environmentalist Awards Programme p.119
- Galway Atlantaquaria – Engaging 3rd level teaching students on Sustainable Ocean Marine Communities p. 122
- HEA – A systems approach to ESD in Higher Education in Ireland – p. 126
- NYCI – Sphere17 Regional Youth Service – Future Generations Climate Justice Project – p. 131
- Take 1 Programme – Embedding ESD in Learning & Teaching – p. 135
- WiseWater Academy – Water- The Foundation of Sustainability and wise teacher of ESD – p. 139

Follow this link for further information on the ESD related activities of UN ECE:

[Education for Sustainable Development | UNECE](#)

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d. National Education Nature Park



National Education Nature Park: free education programme reaches nearly 10,000 education settings in England

The [National Education Nature Park](#), a free UK education programme launched in October 2023, has reached nearly 10,000 schools, colleges and nurseries in the UK. Led by the Natural History Museum with the Royal Horticultural Society, and commissioned by the UK Department for Education, it aims to empower young people to understand and support nature by transforming their learning sites for people and wildlife.

Through a [five-step, curriculum-linked process](#), young people turn concrete 'grey' spaces 'green', creating new habitats such as ponds, living walls and wildflower meadows. These spaces [boost wellbeing and learning](#) and allow young people to support nature recovery and contribute data to global biodiversity research. The [Nature Park Map](#) tracks all the changes being made, so those taking part can see the collective impact they are having. Beyond England, the programme has partnered with Canada's

[Learning By Nature](#) initiative, with ambitions to expand internationally so more children can learn in nature and feel empowered to protect it.

[Kender Primary School, London](#) Many children at Kender Primary come from migrant or refugee families, and the school connects nature to their own journeys and histories. A 'migrant corridor' lets amphibians travel between ponds, and they've built bird boxes for migrating swifts. Rockeries and a reading bower support outdoor learning, wellbeing and belonging, linking to Science, DT, Maths, and Kender's 'Writing for Pleasure' programme.

[Co-op Academy Manchester](#) Students greened their grounds with wildflowers, IBC planters, a living wall, and wetland habitats. IBCs (intermediate bulk containers) were repurposed cheaply into movable planters and a pond. Curriculum links included Business Studies (budgeting) and Physics (thermal imaging of the living wall's cooling effect).

Read more about the Nature Park: www.educationnaturepark.org.uk

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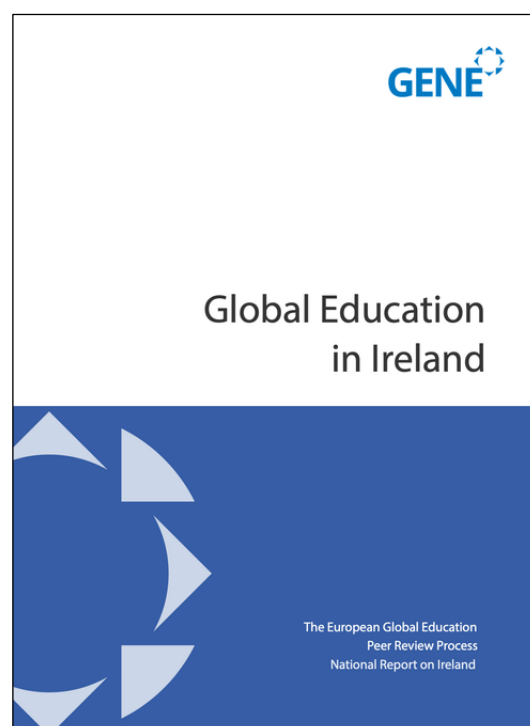
e. GENE – Peer Review Report Global Education in Ireland



June 30th saw the publication of its Peer Review Report on Global Education in Ireland. The launch took place in Dublin and included an address by Minister of State for International Development and Diaspora, Neale Richmond. This is considered a key milestone for the ongoing commitment to Global Citizenship Education in Ireland, as well as supporting the promotion of democracy, human rights, international solidarity and sustainability.

Click here to [access the GENE Peer Review Report on Global Education in Ireland](#).

This reporting process commenced in 2025 with consultations with Irish Aid, the reports core partner, who coordinated between the Department of Education and Youth, IDEA. Also involved were international peer experts from Luxembourg and Portugal. Due to the changing policy landscape of GCE in Ireland, the report is positioned well to offer a timely reflection on future directions and opportunities.



This report is part of the European Global Education Peer Review process and places attention on Ireland's approaches to global citizenship education, which also links to ESD. This includes scrutiny of policy, funding, and partnerships across all areas of education. The report offers conclusions which encourage Ireland to sustain its commitment to addressing global challenges through dialogue and cross-government coordination.

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f. UNESCO Greening Education Partnership



How teachers are transforming climate education

The Greening Education Partnership has released a range of stories showing amazing activities from Green Schools from around the world. Green Schools works to take abstract, global issues like climate change and then support the transformation of local issues into actionable projects.

For example, take a few minutes to enjoy this video from a project in Rwanda: [Green Schools in Action: Teachers transforming climate education in Rwanda – YouTube](#)

In this example, the Foundation for Environmental Education supported Green Schools where teachers were trained to integrate climate awareness into everyday school life. Planting trees on school grounds was seen as a great way to protect the soil, but also to provide shade and provide a better environment in schools. Now, students have learned solutions to bigger problems in their local physical environments.

You can read about more examples here: [How teachers are transforming climate education | UNESCO](#)

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g. UNESCO World Conference on Education for Sustainable Development



The 2027 UNESCO World Conference on Education for Sustainable Development is scheduled to place in Nairobi, Kenya on 13-15 January, 2027. The theme of the conference is: **Learning in action. Shaping our future.**

This event will be hosted by UNESCO and the Government of Kenya, and will gather ministers, youth leaders and stakeholders from around the world for strategic dialogue.

The World Conference will highlight emerging trends such as the integration of green skills, the digital transformation of education, and the role of social-emotional learning in fostering holistic sustainability approaches.

More information, including a concept note and upcoming details on registration etc. are available here: [UNESCO World Conference on Education for Sustainable Development](#)



Please note, registration will be opened soon

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h. UNESCO ESD to 2030 mid-term review



In July, UNESCO launched the mid-term review of the ESD for 2030 Framework. This evaluation covered the period January 2021- December 2024. The evaluation assessed the relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability of ESD for 2030, while identifying lessons learned and recommendations to strengthen implementation during the remaining years of the framework.

This report established that ESD for 2030 has helped to build a strong framework for transformative education, thus driving progress in integrating ESD across national policies, curriculum, and teacher professional development. Knowledge sharing between national organisations also proves an integral aspect.

Ireland's noted contributions include cooperation between different government departments to integrate ESD across multiple national policies, including the Climate Action Plan and Creative Youth. The launch of the Leaving Certificate course Climate Action and Sustainable Development was also highlighted, as well as Aistear and Comhairle 66an Óg.

The evaluation concludes that ESD for 2030 remains well positioned to accelerate progress towards SDG 4.7 and the broader Sustainable Development Goals.

The report can be accessed at this link: [Mid-term evaluation of the ESD for 2030 framework, 2021-2024 | UNESCO](#)

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8. COP31: Antalya 2026



The global conference on climate change, COP31, will take place in Antalya, Türkiye from November 9 – 20. This year's gathering will focus again on Global Climate Action. With Ireland holding the presidency of the European Council during this important event, it will be an ideal opportunity to lead Europe's direction.

Information on COP31 can be found here: [UN Climate Change Conference – Antalya, November 2026 | UNFCCC](#)

Likewise, the EU's climate page in relation to COP31 is at this location: [Global climate action – Climate Action – European Commission](#)

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9. Other News

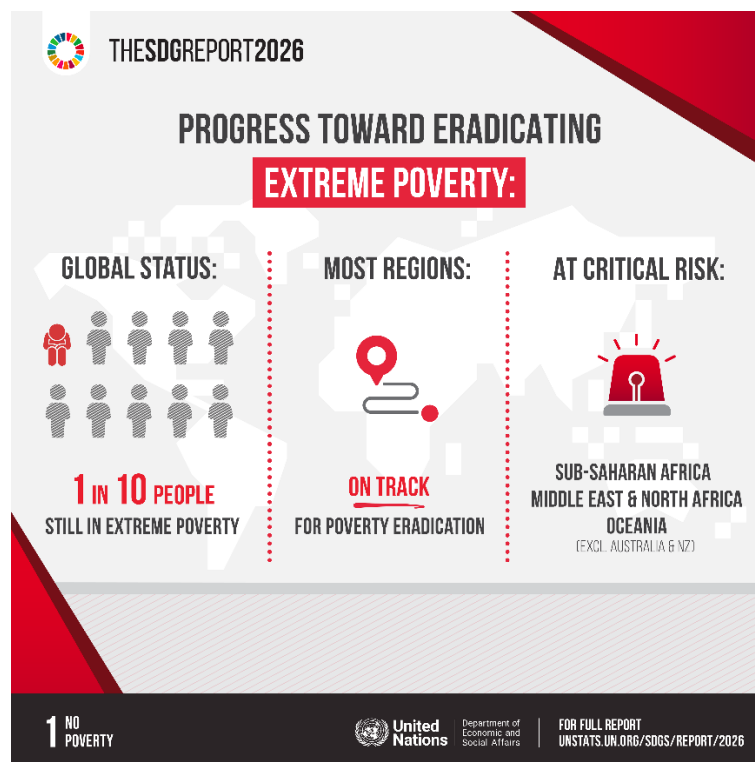
a. Three Simple Actions – SDG 1 – No Poverty



1. **Give items:** Donate clothes, books, and household goods you no longer need .
2. **Give food:** Contribute non-perishable items to local food banks.
3. **Give funds:** Support reputable organizations fighting poverty.

Find SDG resources for schools here: [The World's Largest Lesson](#)

There are also a range of infographics available for each SDG based on the SDG Report 2026. For more visit: [THE 17 GOALS | Sustainable Development](#)



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b. SDG Week

SDG week will run from 19 September – 27 September. This is part of the wider European Sustainable Development Week - [ESDW](#). Last year, ESDW saw over 3860 activities taking place across 39 countries, with almost 100 events held across Ireland.

The flyer below contains all required information to find out how you can get involved.

Also at: [Sustainable Development Goals - SDG Week](#)

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

Take Part in SDG Week 2026!

Ireland's fifth Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) Week is taking place this year from **19 - 27 September**. It forms part of the wider European Sustainable Development Week (ESDW), which runs from 18 September - 8 October 2026. Last year ESDW saw almost 4,000 activities taking place across 39 countries, with almost 100 events taking place in Ireland.

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

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

- 1 START NOW!**
Think about how you could promote sustainable development and plan an activity, project or event to take place during SDG Week
- 2 REGISTER**
Upload your idea on the ESDW website:
www.esdn.eu/esdw
- 3 ACT!**
Organize and promote your initiative during ESDW - 18 September - 8 October 2026!
Explore which events are taking place and participate in activities near you!

DeptCEE
EuropeanSustainableDevelopmentWeek

Department of Climate, Energy and the Environment
European Sustainable Development Network

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

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c. Department of Climate, Energy and Environment



An Roinn Aeráide,
Fuinnimh agus Comhshaoil
Department of Climate,
Energy and the Environment

Minister O'Brien sets out Ireland's commitment to sustainable development at global United Nations event

Minister for Climate, Energy and the Environment Darragh O'Brien reaffirmed Ireland's commitment to sustainable development at the United Nations 'High-Level Political Forum (HLPF) on Sustainable Development' in New York on July 13.

Minister O'Brien explained:

"This year's High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development comes at a critical time, as we continue our collective journey towards 2030 and as we seek to urgently accelerate implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals – especially for the furthest behind.

"Especially now, we can see the importance of strengthening inclusive partnerships and focusing on impacts – across governments, the UN system, civil society, the private sector and under-represented groups, as well as women, youth and academia."

During the HLPF, the minister will represent Ireland across a number of events focusing on wind, critical energy systems and financing resilience in agrifood systems.

The national statement can be read here: <https://www.gov.ie/en/department-of-climate-energy-and-the-environment/speeches/national-statement-by-minister-darragh-obrien-at-the-un-high-level-political-forum-2026/>

Full details on the ministers visit to New York can be found here: [Minister delivers Ireland's National Statement at the UN High-Level Political Forum in New York](#)

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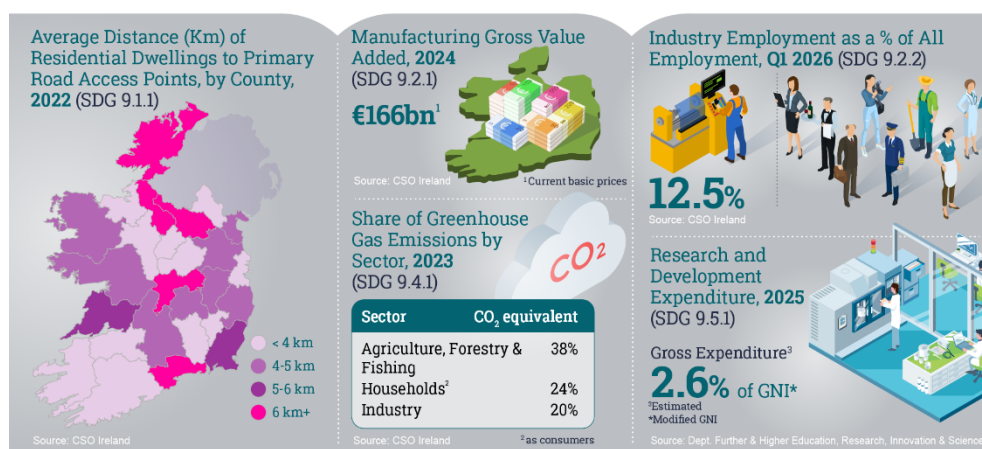
d. Central Statistics Office



The Central Statistics Office have published a new infographic on Ireland and the UN SDGS - Goal 9 Industry, Innovation & Infrastructure.



Goal 9 - Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure



Some of the key findings from this update include:

- Employment in Industry was 12.5% of all employment in Q1 2026.
- Ireland's Gross Expenditure on Research and Development (GERD) stood at an estimated 2.6% of GNI in 2025, up from 2.5% in 2024.
- Manufacturing Gross Value Added (GVA) at current basic prices in 2024 was €166.4 billion, up from €156.4 in 2023.
- Ireland's total Official Development Assistance (ODA) for 2024 was €2.35 billion, representing 0.56% of Gross National Income (GNI).
- Six sectors accounted for 78% of territorial greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions in 2023, with Agriculture (38%) and Households (24%) being the two highest emitting sectors.

Click here to explore the infographic and data in more detail: [Ireland's UN SDG's - Goal 9 Industry Innovation and Infrastructure 2026 - Central Statistics Office](#)

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e. Independent Advisory Committee on Nature Restoration

In May's ESD Newsletter we announced the launch of the Independent Advisory Committee on Nature Recommendations report. This is a vital document and our stakeholders are encouraged to read and consider its contents.

The Independent Advisory Committee was established by the Minister of State for Nature, Heritage and Biodiversity to provide recommendations to the Minister relating to the development and content of Ireland's national Nature Restoration Plan (NRP) as required under the EU Nature Restoration Regulation. The Committee met 15 times from January 2025 to March 2026.

The committee's makes notes that Education and community are cornerstones of a thriving society, holding the power to inspire a deep connection to nature and empower a generation of environmental stewards to meet the challenges of the climate and biodiversity crises.

Significant recommendations for education are put forward, where are summarised here:

6.1 Incorporate ecological literacy in curricula – lay foundations for future study through early years and primary school education.



6.2 Develop food literacy – link understanding of food with local food production and the economy.

6.3. Support Green Skills – support and develop SOLAS’s Green Skills Framework.

6.4 Embed nature in further and higher education – greater incorporation of nature and biodiversity through micro-credentials, with industry relevant pathways developed.

6.5 Review education policy to align with a whole of government, whole of society approach – include Nature Restoration Plan in future ESD Policy, and prioritise sustainability in other areas, such as STEM.

6.6 Emphasise ecological literacy for farmers, fishermen and foresters – support integration of Green Cert and other agricultural qualifications with relevant knowledge.

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