



An Roinn Oideachais
agus Óige
Department of Education
and Youth

Education for Sustainable Development Newsletter

Welcome to the **March 2026** issue and **22nd 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 2025/26 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. Annual National ESD Stakeholder Forum 2025

The report on the 10th National ESD Stakeholder Forum held on 29th October 2025 in Maynooth University has now been published on the ESD to 2030 webpage.

You can read it here: [Education for Sustainable Development](#)

b. School Sustainability Policy Statements - Map

Thank you to schools who have sent us in links to the Sustainability Policy Statements Map which we will be updating over the coming weeks.

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

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c. ESD and Creative Clusters Update

The National Arts in Education team based in Tralee have shared on a video of a Creative Cluster themed on ESD. This video shows the interconnectedness and potential synergies between Creative Youth and ESD Strategies.

Students, teachers, special needs assistants (SNA's) and creative practitioners participating in two separate Creative Clusters explored different sustainable pillars under UNESCO's Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) programme.

Schools within these two Creative Clusters were supported by Limerick and Clare Education Support Centres to explore sustainability challenges with their unique communities. They addressed ways in which they can take informed and meaningful action for a just and sustainable world.

Please visit the NAE YouTube page to watch: [Creative Clusters - Education for Sustainable Development](#)

Congratulations to both Creative Clusters involved in showcasing your fantastic achievements.

Clare Education Support Centre Cluster

Facilitator: An Colomer

Lead School: Killaloe Boys National School, Killaloe, Co. Clare

School 2: Killaloe Community School, Killaloe, Co. Clare

School 3: Broadford & Killaloe National School, Broadford, Co. Clare

Limerick Education Support Centre Cluster

Facilitator: Noelle Gleeson

Lead School: Holy Family School for the Deaf, Cobra, Co. Dublin

School 2: Midwest School for the Deaf, Co. Limerick

School 3: Bishopstown Community School, Bishopstown, Co. Cork

Filmed in 2024

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d. SDG Posters and Information Flyers for Schools

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

If you require additional copies of either the poster or flyer, please email ESD@education.gov.ie.

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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 all 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:

ESD at Ballyshannon National School, Co. Kildare

At Ballyshannon National School, Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) enables pupils to understand how their daily actions impact the world locally and globally. This year, our Green Schools focus is Energy, with strong links to globalisation and global citizenship.

Pupils actively promote energy conservation throughout the school. Classroom Energy Monitors ensure lights, interactive whiteboards, projectors and chargers are switched off when not in use. Classes prioritise natural daylight and complete a simple end-of-day energy checklist.

Energy learning is integrated across SESE. Pupils explore renewable and non-renewable energy sources, examine where energy comes from, and understand why conservation matters. Through experiments, storybooks and discussion, they learn how energy use in Ireland connects to people and environments worldwide.

Whole-school initiatives include a pupil-led Switch Off Campaign, a No Power Hour, and an Energy Use Chart to track weekly progress and celebrate improvements. These initiatives promote teamwork and shared responsibility. Outdoor learning further supports our goals through movement breaks, outdoor lessons and participation in Walk to School Days.

Our Green Committee's Energy Team leads regular energy audits, presents findings at assemblies and encourages each class to make Energy Pledges. Families are involved through newsletters and home challenges, reinforcing the message that small actions can make a big difference. Pupils also participate in workshops with the Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland and Bright Eyes, deepening their understanding of climate action and sustainable energy choices.



Editor's Note: Well done to all at Ballyshannon NS - keep up the good work! Funding for this project was received by ESD to 2030 funding for organisations. A €500 One-For-All voucher to support ESD projects is on its way to you!

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ESD at Christian Brothers College, Kilkenny

Young People Taking Action: One Stop Closer to Sustainable Transport

Students in Christian Brothers College Kilkenny are currently leading a sustainability campaign that places young people at the centre of local climate action and civic engagement. The One Stop Closer Campaign 2026 is a student-led initiative advocating for a Kilkenny city bus stop to be located closer to the school, reducing car dependency and supporting more sustainable travel to and from school.

The campaign is driven by a cross-curricular collaboration between Green Schools, Transition Year Politics and PR students. Through data collection, community engagement and sharing their views, students are applying classroom learning to a real-world sustainability challenge that directly affects their daily lives. Students surveyed both parents and students to gather evidence on transport patterns and to highlight the potential impact of a closer bus stop. They also met with student representatives from other local secondary schools to get their views. This ensures their proposal is informed by research, lived experience and community voice.

As part of the campaign, students have drafted a formal letter to Kilkenny County Council and are actively engaging with local elected representatives. These actions provide students with meaningful opportunities to practise active citizenship and democratic participation, while developing confidence in advocating for change at a local level.

This project is a strong example of Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) in action. Students are developing key competencies such as critical thinking,

collaboration, communication and systems thinking, while exploring the environmental, social and economic dimensions of sustainable transport. Most importantly, the campaign empowers young people to see themselves as agents of change, capable of influencing decision-making and contributing positively to a more sustainable local community.

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

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3. NEW: Youth Section

a. Would you like to represent Ireland on the UN ECE Steering Group for ESD Youth Platform? We are seeking Expressions of Interest.

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 inviting Expressions of Interest from young people to be Ireland's Focal Point to the UNECE Steering Group for ESD Youth Platform.

The Terms of Reference for the group are available here: [Terms of Reference | UNECE](#)

In accordance with the Terms of Reference, members of the Youth Platform are:

- Individuals aged between 18 and 30, OR
- Individuals aged under 18, subject to appropriate consent, OR
- Representatives of youth led organisations up to the age of 35.

There is normally one in-person meeting of the Youth Platform per year, which is typically held at the UN Headquarters in Geneva. Any travel and subsistence costs incurred for this meeting will be borne by the department in accordance with normal department/Civil Service travel and subsistence terms and conditions.

The Co-ordinator of the Youth Platform may call on-line meetings during the year, and the frequency of these meetings depends on matters arising. Members may also from time to time be invited to attend, for example, a relevant Youth Conference, either in Ireland or internationally.

If you are interested in being considered for this role, please submit an Expression of Interest letter. This should include an outline of why you are applying, why you would be suitable for this role, and details of any experience in this area which would support your application. Two references from any youth led organisations or ESD related organisations that you have been involved with can be submitted in support of your Expression of Interest.

The Focal Point will be nominated for a two-year period from 1st September 2026 to 31st August 2028.

If you have any questions, please contact us at ESD@education.gov.ie

Please E-mail your Expression of Interest to ESD@education.gov.ie by the closing date of **5pm on Friday 24th April 2026**.

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b. The Next Generation Calls to Action



We are Estelle Mioni and Aleksander Sokolski, and we are youth co-researchers in the Environmental Protection Agency project The Next Generation Calls to Action, which investigates the attitudes, knowledge and actions of young people in Ireland concerning climate change.

Estelle: In my capacity as a psychology student, the NextGen project has offered me the precious opportunity to contribute to the body of knowledge on climate change via the methods offered by psychology. My position as a youth co-researcher involves guaranteeing that every step of the research process is tailored to young people, so as to gather their thoughts and opinions with maximal transparency and confidence. This unique contribution which youth co-researchers bring to the project is incredibly empowering, as it allows us to use our knowledge of our age group and the knowledge we have obtained so far in our undergraduate degree to tackle a phenomenon with incredibly far-ranging implications.

Aleksander: For me the project is a great opportunity to feel my career path can have a real positive impact related to climate change. Between all of the sleepless nights spent on countless assignments it's sometimes hard to find meaning in my studies. The early involvement in research helps me understand how the skills I'm learning translate into the real world context and environment. It has been inspiring to see how many young people are ready to devote themselves to act on climate change through this project.

For more visit: <https://sites.google.com/dcu.ie/nextgen/home>

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c. Darrara National School – Green School Committee

Our names are Seán, Fionn Ellie, and Ena and we are in 4th and 5th class in Darrara National school. This year in school we are working really hard on climate change. Our Green School committee has nine green flags, and we are working hard on receiving our tenth focusing on food, global citizenship and biodiversity.

Due to our hard work, we received a grant from Education for Sustainable Development for a MyGug. A MyGug is an anaerobic digester. Our leftover food is broken up into tiny bits and the MyGug has bacteria inside it to eat the food like a human stomach. This produces useful materials such as liquid fertilizer and biogas, leading to zero food

waste. Using the idea of a circular economy, we use the liquid fertiliser to feed the crops we are growing in our raised beds and we use the bio gas to boil the kettle and cook food in the school kitchen! We have named our MyGug 'Eggward'!

Our third to sixth class are also doing a climate literacy programme which is fully funded by ESD funding. So far, we have learned why and how long climate change has been going on for. We have explored the meaning of sustainability, and we designed sustainable islands. In the climate justice unit, we are learning about the Paris agreement. We really enjoyed the Fast fashion lesson about understanding the problems with producing high volumes of inexpensive trendy clothing and selling them for cheaper prices. As we are a coastal school, the plastic and our oceans module was of high interest to us. We learned more about different types of plastic, and we looked at three different possible paths for three plastic bottles, and which choices are best for the environment.

This journey has helped us to learn more about the climate while also doing our small bit to make climate change better and help make our world better for everyone.

Editor's Note: Well done to all Darrara NS and to the Green School Committee - keep up the good work! It's great to hear about how you have used your ESD funding to promote sustainability in your school.

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d. Fanad Coastal Group & Loreto Community School Milford

Youth Initiative Winners at the 2025 Clean Coasts Ocean Hero Awards

The intersection of community action and classroom learning has reached a new high-water mark in Donegal. We are thrilled to highlight the Fanad Coastal Group, who, alongside the students of Loreto Community School, Milford, recently secured the prestigious Youth Initiative Award at the 2025 Clean Coasts Ocean Hero Awards in Dublin.

The Project: Restoring the Sentinel Dunes

The collaboration focused on the restoration and protection of Whiteshore Beach, a vital coastal ecosystem facing pressure from erosion and human activity. Rather than simply discussing coastal squeeze, the students took physical action to mitigate it.

- **Sand Dune Restoration:** Students took the lead in sourcing and funding over 200 metres of natural picket fencing. This fencing was strategically installed at the back of the beaches to trap sand and encourage dune growth.



- **Marram Grass Replanting:** To stabilize the shifting sands, the youth volunteers engaged in replanting marram grass, a native species whose deep root systems act as a natural "glue" for the dunes.
- **Long-term Monitoring:** Over the past year, students have been consistently monitoring the progress of the fencing and the health of the newly planted vegetation.

Recently, the students with the local coastal group have moved their attention and concern to Portsalon beach where there is considerable damage to the sand dunes with a 6ft drop onto the beach. Students have installed a picket fence here to protect the path from further damage and loss.

Educational Impact: From STEM to Stewardship



The partnership with Fanad Coastal Group provided a "living laboratory" for the students. By participating in specialized marine workshops, the curriculum was extended to the coastline, allowing students to see the immediate results of their labour.

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4. Competitions

a. December ESD Newsletter Competitions – Winners



The winner of the “**Airfield Farm Class Visit**” was **Ballinakill Mixed National School** in Co. Laois.

Editors Note: Congratulations, we look forward to hearing all about your visit. Thank you to Airfield Estate for sponsoring this prize.

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The winner of the **SDG 15 competition** in the December issue of the ESD Newsletter is **Burnfort NS** in Co. Cork.

According to the [CSOs Hub for the SDGs](#), what percentage of Ireland’s land area is covered by Forests?

- a) 4.8% b) 11.6% c) 31.2% d) 63.7%

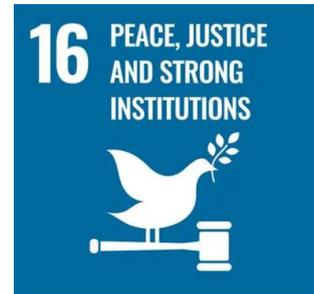
Answer: 11.6%

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

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b. March ESD Newsletter Competition – SDG 16, Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions

Compassion and a strong moral compass is essential to every democratic society. Yet, persecution, injustice and abuse still runs rampant and is tearing at the very fabric of civilization. We must ensure that we have strong institutions, global standards of justice, and a commitment to peace everywhere.



Question:

According to the CSO's progress report on SDG 16 (2023), what was the Satisfaction Rate with quality of Public Service (2021) for Education (SDG 16.6.2)?

- a. 50% b. 60% c. 70% or d. 80%

[Sustainable Development Goal 16 Progress, Ireland | Irelands Hub for Sustainable Development Goals](#)

E-mail your answer, name and school to esd@education.gov.ie before **Wednesday 18 March** to be in with a chance of winning a €500 one for all voucher for ESD projects in your school. Please use the title 'March newsletter competition' in your e-mail.

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c. Dublin Zoo - Class Trip Competition



Dublin Zoo Teacher Training – Summer Course

This summer, Dublin Zoo is offering a special, reduced-rate training course for primary teachers: "Cultivating the Next Generation of Conservationists." Thanks to support from ESD to 2030 funding, this week-long course is part-funded and therefore available this year at a reduced rate.

Taking place in July and August, the course is designed for 3rd to 6th class primary teachers and provides active engagement in Education for Sustainable Development (ESD), with a strong emphasis on conservation education. The course will equip participants with the skills, knowledge and confidence to teach about nature and conservation in their classrooms. The course will assist teachers in

fostering positive connections to nature in their classrooms and motivating their students towards pro-environmental actions.

Conservation Education is a broad term which includes:

- Education for Sustainable Development (ESD)
- Environmental and biodiversity education
- STEM education

Modules on the course include Conservation, Outdoor Learning, Climate Change, Bird Identification, Sustainability, School Gardening and School Self Evaluation.

Primary teachers can find out more about the course

here: <https://www.dublinozoo.ie/conservation-education/courses-for-teachers/>

Dublin Zoo - School Visits

Dublin Zoo welcomes over 65,000 learners every year. Their experienced and passionate Conservation Education Team have in-depth experience in planning and delivering a range of primary and secondary programmes designed to reflect the current needs of the curriculum. Find out more about the range of educational programmes Dublin Zoo has available for schools here: [School Visits | Dublin Zoo](#)

Dublin Zoo - Competition

To celebrate this collaboration, we have a free class trip to Dublin Zoo for one lucky winner (to be used before end of 2026). Just answer the question below and send your entry with details of your school/ class to ESD@education.gov.ie by **Wednesday 18th March** to be in with a chance of winning. Be sure to include the title "Dublin Zoo Competition" in your e-mail.

Question: Dublin Zoo question

How old is Dublin Zoo?

Answer (a) 150 years old (b) 40 years old (c) 194 years old or (d) 75 years old

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d. ESD prize winner at the *Stripe Young Scientist & Technology Exhibition 2026*

The **Stripe YSTE 2026** took place in the RDS in Dublin from 8 to 11 January. Over 1,000 students from over 200 schools across the island of Ireland showcased their innovation and ingenuity. 550 projects were selected from 1,974 entries to this year's event. Projects tackled a broad range of topics across four categories: Social and Behavioural, Health and Wellbeing, Biological and Ecological Science, Technology, and Chemical, Physical and Mathematical Sciences. Overall, 550 shortlisted projects represented their schools and local communities at the Stripe YSTE in January 2026.

Department of Education and Youth - ESD Award 2026

The winner of the ESD Special Award at the Strip YSTE 2026 was Rea Vinovrski from St. Mary's Secondary School, Mallow, Co. Cork. Rea's project was titled "An Investigation into the Role of Noise in Irish Schools: Impacts on Behaviour, Learning, and Emotional Health in Mainstream and SEN Students". You can read a summary of her project below.



Above: Department of Education and Youth official Karen Murtagh presenting Rea Vinovrski with the 2026 ESD Award

An Investigation into the Role of Noise in Irish Schools: Impacts on Behaviour, Learning, and Emotional Health in Mainstream and SEN Students

By Rea Vinovrski (St. Mary's Secondary School, Mallow)

Introduction

Noise is an unavoidable part of school life, yet it is rarely treated as a serious educational or health concern. International research identifies environmental noise as a cognitive and emotional stressor for children and adolescents. This investigation examined the extent, nature, and impact of noise in Irish secondary schools, with particular focus on whether students with Special Educational Needs (SEN) were more affected than mainstream peers. Using surveys, objective noise measurements, and controlled cognitive testing, I found clear evidence that noise negatively affects concentration, emotional regulation, and learning performance, and that current school environments do not support all learners equally.

Overview of the Study

A mixed-methods approach was used. Data included surveys from 760 students and 48 teachers, sound-level measurements in multiple school locations, and controlled cognitive testing under different sound conditions. This allowed comparison of perceived noise, measured noise levels, and performance outcomes, while identifying differences between mainstream and SEN students.

Key Findings

Survey results showed noise is a common barrier to concentration. 43% of students reported difficulty concentrating due to classroom noise, while 19% reported stress or discomfort. Sudden noises (chairs scraping, doors slamming), background chatter, and talking were the most distracting.

Noise measurements showed many areas exceeded recommended levels. Classrooms typically measured 40–55 dB, above the WHO recommended 35 dB for learning. Canteens regularly reached 70–80 dB with peaks above 80 dB. These levels increased listening effort, fatigue, and reduced concentration.

Cognitive testing showed a clear disruption hierarchy: best performance in silence, slight reduction with instrumental music, larger reduction with construction noise, and greatest reduction with meaningful conversation. Speech caused the greatest disruption due to competition for working memory resources.

SEN students showed larger performance drops and higher stress levels in noisy conditions, often experiencing sensory overload. Teachers also reported impacts, with 58% saying noise reduced student focus and 73% experiencing voice strain.

Recommendations and Conclusion

Schools should recognise noise as a factor affecting learning, wellbeing, and inclusion. Improvements should include better acoustic design, quiet or sensory-friendly spaces, noise-awareness training for teachers, and canteen noise reduction strategies.

Noise is not a minor inconvenience but a measurable barrier to equitable education. Creating calmer, more predictable sound environments can improve learning, wellbeing, and inclusion for all students.



Above Rea Vinovrski with Stripe YTSE awards in front of her school, St Mary's Secondary School, Mallow

Editor's Note: Congratulations to Rea on a great win!

The Department held a 'UN Sustainable Development Goals quiz at its ESD Stand at the Stripe YSTE event, and the winner of this competition and a €500 One-For-All voucher is Holy Family Secondary School, Newbridge, Co. Kildare. Congratulations!

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e. Young Environmentalist Competition



ECO-UNESCO's Young Environmentalist Awards: Expanding ECO-Dens Semi-Finals 2026

ECO-UNESCO is in the full swing of their Young Environmentalist Awards (YEA) Programme, which rewards and recognises young people's environmental action projects across the island of Ireland. YEA calls for young people aged 10-18 to explore environmental issues that matter to them through inquiry-based learning and local action in their communities. As part of this, Dragons' Den-style judging events called ECO-Dens, are held across the island in March, allowing young people to present their work to a panel of judges. This year, ECO-Dens have grown, and a new location has been added to the current lineup of Dublin, Armagh, Cork, Galway and now including Limerick! With over 300 environmental action projects taking part in YEA this year, March is set to be a month full of energy, ideas and inspiration!

YEA culminate in the Final Showcase and Awards Ceremony in May, featuring a shortlist from the many exceptional action projects. Young people are given a platform to amplify their voice on their selected environmental cause, in front of peers, judges and the wider public.

To learn more, head to yea.ie or email myea@ecounesco.ie

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5. Programmes and Resources

a. Biodiversity in Schools Updates

New online course - Helping nature at school

'Helping nature at school' is a new, free, online course 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, supported by a dedicated course coordinator. Digital certificates are provided upon completion.



This is a free course developed thanks to the **funding provided by the Department of Education and Youth through the National Strategy on Education for Sustainable Development - ESD to 2030.**

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

Classroom nature printables and videos

'Biodiversity in Schools' hosts the largest library of free, printable nature resources for schools including trails, games and videos. These are created in-house by the 'Biodiversity in Schools' team of teachers and scientists with a specific focus on Irish nature.

This resource was created with funding provided by the Department of Education and Youth through the National Strategy on Education for Sustainable Development - ESD to 2030. To explore: <https://www.biodiversityinschools.com/free-resources>

Pollinator Project

The Pollinator Project is Ireland's largest & longest running school pollinator education programme. The project works with schools across Ireland to train young people as pollinator ambassadors and assist in delivering bee-positive actions such as creating 'no-mow' meadows. To date almost 34,000 pollinator ambassadors have been trained. This year there is space for an additional 5,000 students.

To apply, please visit: <https://www.biodiversityinschools.com/pollinator-project>

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b. Youth Action and Acmhainní i nGaeilge

Youth action in Practice: Global Education Time's Youth Actions give students the chance to move from learning about global issues to taking meaningful, real-world action. Linked directly to GET's [Teaching and Learning Units](#) on Migration, International Inequalities and Climate Change these events help young people develop critical thinking, empathy, and active citizenship through creative, student-led projects.



As part of a recent youth action, students from Roscommon Community College took part in a workshop on fast fashion and visited the A Partnership with Africa charity shop in Athlone. The visit highlighted how buying second-hand clothing reduces waste and challenges fast fashion and supports APA projects in Ethiopia and Tanzania.

Acmhainní i nGaeilge

Tá áthas orainn a roinnt go bhfuil ár ndoiciméid príomhchoincheapa agus bileoga oibre dár n-aonaid teagaisc agus foghlama ar fáil anois i nGaeilge anseo:



[Imirce Teaching and Learning Unit](#)



[Éagothroimí Idirnáisiúnta – Teaching and Learning Unit](#)



[Athru Aeraide – Teaching and Learning Unit](#)

Tá bileoga oibre samplacha ó gach aonad faoi iamh, agus tá nasc soiléir eatarthu go léir le torthaí foghlama Stair, Tíreolaíocht agus OSSP na Sraithe Sóisearaí. Tá naisc thraschuraclaim fhiúntacha ann freisin le Staidéar Gnó, Eacnamaíocht Bhaile agus Oideachas Eitice, agus bheidís oiriúnach le húsáid i modúil na hIdirbhliana. D'aistrigh múinteoir iar-bhunscoile go cúramach iad lena chinntiú go bhfuil an teanga inrochtana, aoisoiriúnach agus praiticiúil le húsáid sa seomra ranga.

For more information about Global Education Time visit: [GET Ireland](#).

For more details contact: get@apa.ie

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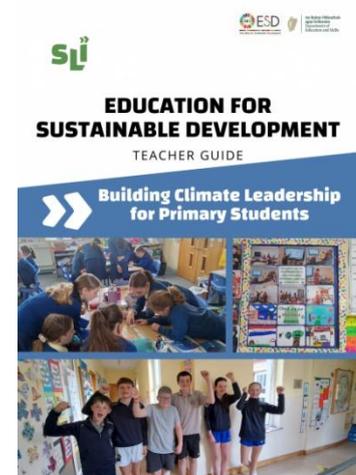
c. New SLí resource – Building Climate Leadership for primary schools, A Teacher Guide



Waterford SLí, a Global Citizenship Education NGO that works in the southeast of Ireland, has developed a new ESD Resource for primary teachers. This resource, Building Climate Leadership for Primary Students, is the result of a peer teaching and learning programme that took place in 2024, and **was funded by the Department of Education's ESD to 2030 scheme**.

This programme saw upper primary students learn how to deliver an ESD-themed workshop to their younger counterparts. The resource includes a general introduction to ESD (with accompanying workshop), followed by in-depth content lessons that cover 5 topics of interest to primary students: fast fashion, water, plastics, food supply chains and food waste. Each content activity culminates in an action that students can carry out in school, at home or within your community.

Building Climate Leadership for Primary Students is available free of charge for download from SLí's website: <https://sliwaterford.ie/resources/building-climate-leadership-for-primary-students>



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d. Global Citizenship School



Share One Lesson - Inspire Classrooms Across Ireland

Global Citizenship School invites teachers to take part in *Share One Lesson* — an opportunity to showcase your ideas, creativity, and classroom impact by contributing just **one SDG-focused lesson plan** to our soon-to-be relaunched website. Selected lessons will be published in our dedicated SDG Lesson Plans section, building a practical, teacher-led resource hub for schools across Ireland.

By sharing one simple lesson, you help fellow educators bring the 17 Sustainable Development Goals to life for their students. Your approach, activities, and insights can spark discussion, critical thinking, and real-world action far beyond your own classroom. This is about teachers supporting teachers, and students learning through shared best practice.

To recognise your work, we will award **100 × €50 One-for-All vouchers** to teachers whose submitted lessons are selected for publication. (Vouchers are provided for published lessons only.) We use a simple, clear lesson format [HERE](#) to make submission quick and easy, and selected lessons may also be translated into Irish to widen their reach.

In addition, all lessons submitted will be **eligible for inclusion in our planned visit to Áras an Uachtaráin in the final school term**, where participating work may be highlighted during our meeting with President Catherine Connolly. (Date to be confirmed).

Whether your lesson is project-based, discussion-led, creative, or action-focused — we would love to receive it. Click [HERE](#) to submit your lesson.

Editor's Note: This project is supported by **ESD to 2030 Funding for Organisations 2025**.

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e.ECO-UNESCO Summer Camps



Enrol in July 2026 ECO-UNESCO Summer Camps Now: ECO-Explorers & Green Teen

ECO-UNESCO is hosting another year of summer camps! The action-packed Green Teen and ECO-Explorers Camps have been designed to support young people's personal development through physical activity, nature learning and engaging in environmental thinking. Participants will explore environmental issues in a fun and creative way, go on day trips around Dublin, meet like-minded people, and gain confidence and new skills.

The Camps are run by ECO-UNESCO, Ireland's environmental education and youth organisation, which has over 30 years' experience working with children and young people raising environmental awareness in a fun, interactive and creative way. ECO-UNESCO's staff are fully qualified in all areas of environmental education and are delighted to welcome young people into the world of environmental exploration!

Sign-ups are now accepted for the following dates:

ECO-Explorers:

Mon 15 June – Fri 19 June, 10:00-15:00

Mon 6 July – Fri 10 July, 10:00-15:00

Green Teen:

Mon 1 June – Fri 5 June, 10:00-15:00

Mon 27 July – Fri 31 July, 10:00-15:00

Link to fill out signup form, located on our website: [ECO-Camps - ECO-UNESCO](#)

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f. Our World Awards



Special Visitor from Mozambique!

We were delighted to recently welcome Paula Ferro from the Yao Crochet Project to two Cork primary schools — 3rd class at Carrigaline Educate Together N.S. and 6th class at Gaelscoil Mhichíl Uí Choileáin, Clonakilty.

During her visits, Paula spoke to pupils about her work with the Yao Community in Mozambique, offering a real-world insight into global justice, sustainable livelihoods and community-led development. The Yao Crochet Project is featured within the *Our World Award* resources for 3rd–6th class (<https://ourworldawards.ie/>) and provides an engaging case study that supports teaching and learning across SPHE, Geography and Social, Environmental and Scientific Education (SESE).



1 Paula Ferro from the Yao Crochet Project visits schools in Cork

With the support of Irish Aid, the Yao community in the Niassa Reserve has developed practical skills that enable them to earn an income while strengthening their local economy and preserving cultural traditions. Pupils learned how access to skills, education and fair opportunities can have a positive and lasting impact on communities around the world.

The visits gave pupils an opportunity to ask questions, make connections between their own lives and those of children in Mozambique, and deepen their understanding of global citizenship. For teachers, the sessions demonstrated how the *Our World Award* resources can be used to bring development education to life in a meaningful, age-appropriate way in the classroom.

Get started:

- Register for your free magazines: ourworldawards.ie/register
- Explore resources: ourworldawards.ie/teacher-zone
- Submit pupils' work: ourworldawards.ie/take-part

Closing date for entries Monday 23rd March 2026.

Thanks for continuing to inspire Global Citizens in your classroom!

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g. Education for Sustainability



Inspiring Day for Future Change Makers at Maynooth University

As part of [Research Ireland](#)'s Discover Programme, Education for Sustainability recently held their CLOuD project's flagship day at Maynooth University. Watch [the video](#) to catch a glimpse of the day!

CLOuD - Climate Literacy Outreach inclUision Diversity - is an outreach and engagement project led by our Advocacy Manager, Hilary McNamara and Project Co-Ordinator, Tarren Leigh Agnew-Skalska bringing climate literacy education directly to Dublin's DEIS schools. Over 100 students have been engaging in the programme, co-creating climate solutions with our team and partners, climate solutions and fostering a sense of agency and ownership over local environmental issues. By taking part in class-based learning and community projects, exploring sustainability in their daily lives, these students have been examining the connections between climate justice, sustainability, and global citizenship.



This trip to Maynooth University was an opportunity for these students to learn more about options at third level and to hear from inspiring speakers Prof. Katriona O'Sullivan, Director of the National Research Centre for Inclusive Higher Education and Prof. Jennie C. Stephens, Professor of Climate Justice at the ICARUS Climate Research Centre. Rounding out the day, students also enjoyed a yoga session and biodiversity walk through the campus with the Green Campus team.

Read more about the project on the [Education for Sustainability website](#) and follow them on social media, [@educ4sustain](#).

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h. The Rediscovery Centre – STEM/ ESD Digital Toolkit!



In need of some fresh resources for your library? Make sure to check out the Rediscovery Centre's free Sustainable Schools - Digital Toolkit for Teachers.

From designing green energy cities, to cleaning-up oceans, this toolkit is packed full of exciting, hands-on activities, to engage students with STEM and sustainability!

Please more information please use the following link:

<https://www.rediscoverycentre.ie/learn/sustainable-schools-digital-toolkit-for-teachers/>

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i. Libraries Ireland Resources



Your local library has a lot more than books and curriculum support materials to offer schools! Drop into your local library for information on borrowing any of the following items – free of charge!

- BorrowBox – eBooks and eAudiobooks
- Musical instrument lending
- Citizen Science Kits – Bat Detectors, Nets, Field Guides
- Games – outdoor play sets, Boules, Board Games, Puzzles, Jigsaws
- Clothes swap events such as Halloween, Christmas Jumper, Winter coats and even Debs!
- Class sets – SEAI, Climate S.O.S and any titles you require.
- Seeds.

Libraries Ireland also have a list of SDG related reading books for all ages: [SDG Reading List | Libraries Ireland](#)



Check out this recommendation for 8 – 12-year-olds that covers SDGs 4, 13 and 15.

Song of the River by Gill Lewis. Barrington Stoke publisher. 2022.

Sadly, this is an apt tale for Ireland these days! This dyslexia friendly book tells the story of Cari and her mother as they battle to save their home and livelihood from rising flood waters.

Primary and post primary teachers can avail of a Teacher's Card where you can borrow up to 30 items for a longer period.

Why not check with your local library and see what they have!



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j. Fifty Shades Greener



Irish post-primary schools can now access **Building a Greener Future**, a fully funded sustainability education programme supported by the Kildare & Wicklow Education and Training Board. Available nationwide until May 2026, the initiative equips students with essential environmental knowledge and future-focused green skills.

Delivered through an online platform, the programme provides teachers with video lessons, classroom activities, and ready-to-use resources, no prior sustainability expertise required. Core themes include climate change, water conservation, waste management, energy, biodiversity, ocean health, climate justice, and green careers. Each 40–60 minute lesson blends instruction with hands-on activities that encourage students to take practical climate action in their daily lives.

Thanks to full funding from the Board, participation is free on a first-come, first-served basis, ensuring equal access for schools across both urban and rural Ireland. This removes financial barriers and supports national efforts to build environmental literacy among young people.

Green skills—competencies that enable sustainable practices in work and society, are increasingly vital as Ireland transitions to a low-carbon economy. Sectors such as energy, construction, transport, and hospitality are expected to evolve rapidly. Early exposure helps students understand environmental systems, adapt to emerging job roles, and drive future innovation.

The programme aligns with national priorities, including the SOLAS Green Skills 2030 strategy, which emphasises embedding sustainability across education.

Building a Greener Future offers schools a meaningful way to support climate goals, empower students, and prepare Ireland’s future green workforce. Schools can register by contacting info@fiftyshadesgreener.ie or visiting the programme website <https://www.fiftyshadesgreener.ie/schools-programme>

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k. By Land and Sea



The website <http://ByLandAndSea.ie> has lots of useful information about travelling by land and sea to and from Ireland.

Did you know that one passenger on one return flight Dublin-Paris causes as much climate pollution as a parent who lives 7.5km from a school driving a car to and from a school twice every school day for the whole year (167 days)?

But if that passenger did that trip to and from Paris using ferry and train, that would be equivalent to only 12 days of the same school runs? *

Your school can have a big impact by opting to stay in Ireland for school tours instead of flight-based school trips. There are plenty of excellent and fun school trips which can be done on the island of Ireland. Or if you do have a school trip abroad, for cultural exchange for example, your school can look into travel by land and sea! Travelling in this way is a great experience for students, who see the places they are travelling through, and have fun on the journey!

Will your school join the Slow Travel movement?

* Calculations

One return flight Dublin Paris per passenger	639,000 g CO2 eq	https://lowtrip.fr/					
Emissions of a typical car, per km	127.6 g CO2	https://www.eea.europa.eu/highlights/average-co2-emissions-from-new-cars-vans-2019					
Number of kms of car travel equivalent to the Dublin Paris flight	5,008 km						
Number of school days in secondary school	167 days						
Number of kms of car travel per day	30 km						
How far child lives from school (round trip morning and afternoon - divide by 4)	7.5 km						
One return trip Dublin Paris by ferry and train, per passenger	46,000 g CO2 eq	https://lowtrip.fr/					
Ferry&train emissions for Dublin Paris as % of flight emissions for Dublin Paris	7%						
Ferry&train trip in terms of number of school days by car	12 days						

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I. COGG: An Chomhairle um Oideachas Gaeltachta & Gaelscolaíochta



An Chomhairle um Oideachas
Gaeltachta & Gaelscolaíochta



Island Students Collaborate on a Sustainable Future

Scoil Eoin Pól II on Inis Mór and St Mary’s Primary School on Rathlin Island are participating in the cross-border project *Smart Islands: Beyond the Bridges*, an initiative that places island pupils at the heart of science, sustainability and innovation. Through the project, pupils will explore local challenges and develop ideas to imagine a more sustainable future for their own communities.



The project began on Rathlin Island, where pupils and community members took part in hands-on activities using LEGO to share ideas about island life in the past and to imagine solutions for the future. This experience highlighted the value of collaboration, creativity, and respect for local knowledge.



Building on this experience, pupils from Scoil Eoin Pól II on Inis Mór will take part in a series of interactive workshops on Tuesday, March 3rd, where they will use LEGO as a tool for thinking and communication. During the “Future Casting” session, they will work together to design solutions related to sustainability, the environment and the island’s quality of life. They will also reflect on the ideas they develop and consider the next steps in the project.

At the end of the school year, pupils from both islands will come together for a Shared Learning Day, where they will present and exchange their experiences, learning and the solutions they have developed. The project is delivered in partnership with AMBER (Trinity College Dublin) COGG, Ulster University, AIB Trinity Climate Hub and Co-Centre for Climate, Biodiversity and Water and demonstrates how STEM can empower young people to imagine a sustainable future rooted in place, community and collaboration.



Inis Mór & Bere Island students collaborating on a sustainable future on Cúla 4!

Tríona Nic Fhinn, COGG's STEM Officer, paid a very successful visit to Inis Mór last Tuesday, accompanied by colleagues from the other organisations involved in the project.

Please find links to several posts, in both Irish and English, including the main feature on *Cúla 4* which aired yesterday.

<https://www.instagram.com/p/DVgnjbXDryq/> (Cúla 4 post in Irish by COGG) and
<https://www.linkedin.com/feed/update/urn:li:activity:7435611974513836032/>
(Information on the project in English)

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6. Teacher Professional Learning/CPD

a. New Teacher Refund of Fees Circular

The Department of Education and Youth recently published Circular 003/2026: Teacher Refund of Fees Scheme 2025. <https://www.gov.ie/en/department-of-education/circulars/teacher-fee-refund-scheme-2025/>

The objective of the Teacher Refund of Fees Scheme is to provide a partial refund towards the cost of course fees and examination fees upon the successful completion of the teacher professional learning course/s. Where the course duration is longer than one year, funding is provided upon successful completion of each year of the course.

Currently serving primary or post primary teachers who are registered with the Teaching Council, paid by the state and employed in a Department of Education and Youth recognised primary or post primary school are eligible to apply for funding under the scheme, as are fully registered teachers on secondment within the education sector.

In order to prioritise teachers' professional learning in areas clearly linked to learning, teaching and assessment, 80% of funding is allocated to relevant programmes in line with policy priorities and curricular initiatives identified by the department **including education in the area of sustainability.**

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b. Oide - ESD and Leadership



Oide

Tacú leis an bhFoghlaim
Ghairmiúil i measc Ceannairí
Scoile agus Múinteoirí

Supporting the Professional
Learning of School Leaders
and Teachers

As part of Oide's Spreagadh professional learning series, which ran from Monday 23rd to Friday 27th of February, Oide Leadership offered a professional learning event (PLE) for post-primary school leaders - ESD and Leadership: First Steps Towards a Sustainability Mindset. This was an updated interactive workshop that included contributions from Claire Matthews, Principal of Firhouse ETSS; Patrick Kirwan founder of Irish Schools Sustainability Network, and Aonghusa Fahy, Sustainability Co-ordinator in Clarin College, GRETB.

This returning workshop offered fresh insights to explore how Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) can meaningfully shape leadership practice, school culture, and the student experience.

Through policy connections, real-world examples, learning walks and collaborative goal-setting, participants reflected on their influence, examined daily school routines through a sustainability lens, and identified actionable steps to embed sustainable thinking across campus, curriculum and community.

The workshop was designed to cater for a range of experience in relation to leading ESD in schools among those who attended. The session aimed to offer inspiration and practical support to school leaders who want to lead a more sustainable future for their school. Professional learning materials from this workshop are available at www.oide.ie.

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c. Oide Inspiring change: One schools journey with Leaving Certificate Climate Action and Sustainable Development

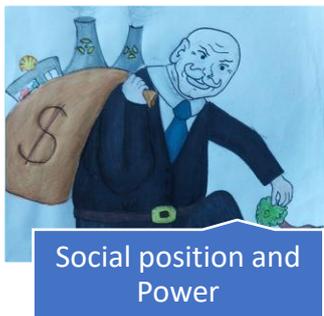
The following piece is from Mary O'Connell and Lauren Garraway both teaching in Loreto Secondary School, Balbriggan. In this piece they describe their experience of Oide's professional learning and how it is supporting the learning and teaching of the new Leaving Certificate subject Climate Action and Sustainable Development.



“Climate Action and Sustainable Development teaching is most impactful when professional learning is meaningfully applied in the classroom. Following a recent two-day professional learning experience, we have been intentional about embedding its key themes into our CASD lessons.

The PLE prompted us to reflect on how concepts such as Climate Justice/Injustice, Social Position and Power, and Just Transitions can be explored in ways that are relevant and engaging for students.

One classroom activity that strongly reflects this approach involved students working with real-world settings focused on Climate Injustice. In small groups, students analysed how climate change disproportionately affects certain communities and countries, particularly in the Global South such as in the Democratic Republic of Congo. With a focus on the root causes of Climate Injustice students, through guided discussion and research, examined how historical and contemporary power structures shape these inequalities and the root causes behind them. They then created photo stimuli either by hand or using digital tools to reflect their learning.



Building on this, students explored the idea of a just transition, considering how climate action can be fair and inclusive. They debated how societies can reduce emissions while also protecting workers, communities and those most vulnerable to change. This task encouraged critical thinking, collaboration and empathy, while giving students space to question dominant narratives around climate solutions.

We've noticed students are increasingly confident in connecting global climate issues to questions of justice, fairness and responsibility, and in seeing themselves as informed participants in shaping a more sustainable future."

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d. ECO-UNESCO



ECO-UNESCO Offering QQI Accredited Level 5 Course in Sustainable Development

ECO-UNESCO's QQI Level 5 Sustainable Development course is now open for enrolment! This course is a part of ECO-UNESCO's QQI-accredited Training and Education programme, which offers multiple courses aimed at equipping young people with the skills and knowledge to become active leaders in environmental causes. The Level 5 Sustainable Development course provides the opportunity for 25 participants to learn how sustainability works in practice, spanning over 12 weeks and starting in April 2026. Participants examine topics such as climate change, biodiversity, sustainable communities, economics, the agriculture industry, consumerism and its resulting impact on the planet.

The course explores key themes in Sustainable Development through discussion, examination, investigation, analysis, and planning. Upon completion, participants are awarded with 15 QQI credits that can contribute toward a Level 5 Major award, supporting progression into further education, training or sustainability-focused roles.

Enrolment closes on March 27, 2026. To learn about eligibility and course pricing, please contact training@ecounesco.ie!

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e. Irish Schools Sustainability Network



A New Season in Nature Education

The Irish Schools Sustainability Network (ISSN) and partners have just closed a month-long celebration of 'A New Season in Nature Education', to encourage teachers all across the country to join our Bitesize Biodiversity Movement. The Bitesize community has grown from 300 participants registered to over 550.

This Spring Season has covered The Kingfisher, The Wren, The Swan, The Snowdrop, Soft Rushes and The Atlantic Salmon in Bitesize detail. Four lucky schools have won prizes as well.

The campaign also featured two interactive events.

- 1) A Bitesize Special for our Comhrá Cuppas (28th January) where Natalie O'Neill, Orla Kelly and Catherine Cleary gave lightning talks on biodiversity. They took everyone on a journey from understanding plant and forest blindness to agentic teachers and students who look through a nature lens and learn through their fingertips!
- 2) A Panel Discussion chaired by Ella McSweeney: "Leadership Schools for a Resilient Future. Why Nature Education Matters Now" featuring senior education leaders: Dr Orla Condren, Rachel O Connor, Dr. Pauline Egan, Miriam Hurley and Denis Leamy. It really does make a difference to hear from leaders at their level being honest and frank and acknowledging where we are at and what needs to happen.

Bitesize Biodiversity is a collaboration between the Irish Schools Sustainability Network, Education Support Centres Ireland, Biodiversity in Schools and Green Schools. The project is also made possible by **ESD to 2030 Funding for Organisations**.

Bitesize Biodiversity continues every Monday during term time 4-4.15pm for just 15 minutes. For more information on Bitesize visit our [website](#) and please [join us](#) to receive our fortnightly newsletter.

We look forward to Bitesize Biodiversity continuing to branch out across the country.

Join us for Bitesize Biodiversity, weekly 15-minute sessions where we explore our native Irish flora and fauna. Discover fascinating wildlife insights, gather resources, and ignite your students' curiosity about the natural world. Leave with resources for your classroom. Open to teachers, Student Teachers and SNAs.

Date	Topic	Presenter
Jan 12	The Wren	Clare Patten, An Taisce Green Schools
Jan 19	Swan	Laura Ni Mhálle
Jan 26	Snowdrop	Mark Nolan, Biodiversity in Schools
Feb 9	Atlantic Salmon	Patrick Kirwan, ISSN
Feb 23	Water boatman	Codie Preston, ISSN
Mar 2	Blackthorn	Mary Moore, ISSN
Mar 9	The Buzzard	David Edgar
Mar 23	Plaice	Gillian Wheatley
Apr 13	Wild Garlic	Clare Patten, An Taisce Green Schools
Apr 20	Primrose	Laura Ni Mhálle
Apr 27	Teddybear	Mark Nolan, Biodiversity in Schools
May 11	Puffins	Patrick Kirwan, ISSN
May 18	Irish Honey bee	Codie Preston, ISSN
May 25	Foxglove	Mary Moore, ISSN

OUR BITESIZE SESSIONS ARE BROUGHT TO YOU BY

ESCI
Education Support Centres Ireland

Biodiversity in Schools

Green Schools
17 All Funder

SIGN UP →
OR SCAN QR CODE

Learn more on www.issn.ie/bitesize-biodiversity

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7. Further and Higher Education News

a. News and Updates from the HEA



The Higher Education Authority (HEA) launched the ESD Compendium at the ESD Spotlight Series Celebration event in the Royal Irish Academy on November 21st:

<https://pressbooks.oer.ie/hea-esd-spotlight-series-case-studies-compendium/>

This was followed by the release of the 'Education for Sustainable Development in Higher Education in Ireland: A Landscape Report' in January 2026:

<https://hub.teachingandlearning.ie/wp-content/uploads/2026/01/hea-esd-higher-education-ireland-landscape-report.pdf>

The HEA also have an open consultation on the development of an ESD Maturity Framework for the higher education sector, which is open until Feb. 13th:

<https://hub.teachingandlearning.ie/education-for-sustainable-development/education-for-sustainable-development-esd-maturity-framework-for-higher-education/>

The HEA National Forum Open Course 'Education for Sustainability' will be running again from Feb. 12th, with registrations at <https://opencourses.ie/opencourse/education-for-sustainability/>

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b. TU Dublin - First National Student Sustainability Research Conference



TU Dublin are hosting the first National Student Sustainability Research Conference at TU Dublin Grangegorman on the 31st March. The conference, which is free of charge, welcomes contributions from undergraduate and postgraduate students working on projects, group or individual, that focus on any of the 17 SDGs. It can be work in progress/and activities or cases studies that address some aspect of any of the SDGs. In addition to student presentations there is a panel discussion around the theme 'Visions for a Sustainable Future'. The afternoon will focus on workshops on climate justice and activism and doughnut economics as well as information on careers in sustainability.

This is the first in what will be an annual event for students that will move between HEIs from year to year.

The conference will be an opportunity for students to present to a supportive audience and to take part in workshop activities themed around sustainability.

Registration details are here: <https://www.tudublin.ie/explore/about-the-university/sustainability/about/news-and-events/register-now-all-ireland-student-sustainability-research-conference-2026.php>

The conference is endorsed by the HEA and has the support of HEIs throughout Ireland.

Any queries on the conference can be sent to ken.boyle@tudublin.ie.

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c. STAND – National Digital Badge and GCE Forum



STAND is partnering with colleagues at Maynooth University, University College Cork and Mary Immaculate College to deliver a new HEA National Forum Open Course on *Embedding Global Citizenship Education (GCE) into Higher Education*, launching in April 2026. The course will support academic and professional staff to integrate global justice, sustainability and inclusion across teaching and institutional practice.

Find out more: <https://stand.ie/whats/stand-joining-development-global-citizenship-education-gce-open-course>

We are also launching the first meeting of the **Global Citizenship Education Higher Education Forum** on 11 March 2026 (11–12.30pm), a new collaborative space for those advancing GCE across higher education. **To join:** <https://stand.ie/whats/save-date-first-meeting-global-citizenship-education-higher-education-forum>

DEFY: Working with Difficult Knowledge

In January, STAND and partners launched [DEFY: Pocket Workshop and Exhibition](#), part of a three-year Erasmus+ project supporting educators to engage with difficult global issues. An online seminar, *DEFY: The End of the Story?* will take place on 18 March (12–1pm). **Sign up:**

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSc1kpFaL_eE15Ex8Tt8j52GKgMH_FowUo_bPL6FbrUsSbP5-Hg/viewform



Above Photographs from STAND's digital badge launch event in January 2026

Ideas Collective Expands

The Ideas Collective Bootcamps are expanding to Cork and Galway in 2026, alongside Dublin. This five-day social innovation programme offers design thinking, expert mentorship and up to €1,000 seed funding, with progression to a nine-month incubator.



Above Participants at STAND's Ideas Collective showcase

Find out more: stand.ie/what-we-do/ideas-collective

Global Issues Courses

Our six-week, in-person Global Issues Courses return this spring in Cork and Galway, exploring climate justice, inequality, decolonialism and more. Participants receive a certificate for their CV and LinkedIn. Find out more: stand.ie/what-we-do/global-issues-courses

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8. International Updates

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



The final meeting of the EU Working Group for Schools on Learning for Sustainability took place in December, 2025. The group's Final Report is now available: [Learning for sustainability in Europe's schools - Publications Office of the EU](#). There is also a range of information and resources, including helpful factsheets on areas such as Whole-school approach, student engagement and participation, outdoor learning and eco-anxiety, are all available on the website: [Learning for Sustainability - EACGroups - EC Public Wiki](#)

In addition, a free self-paced online course has also been released which includes many examples and case studies from the working group. The course includes modules on:

- whole-school approaches
- sustainability competences
- teaching, learning and assessment
- student participation and action,
- teacher capacity building.

The course involves expert videos, example of European initiatives and reflective exercise on how to apply insights in one's own context. The course can be accessed here: academy.europa.eu/courses/leading-sustainability-in-school-education

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b. UNESCO-Japan Prize on Education for Sustainable Development



On 20 November, UNESCO proudly hosted the award ceremony for the [2025 UNESCO–Japan Prize on Education for Sustainable Development \(ESD\)](#) at its Headquarters in Paris. This year's edition once again highlighted the transformative power of education to build more sustainable, resilient, and inclusive societies.

Awards to 2025 laureates were given to projects from Benin, Brazil, and Panama. The laureates were chosen from 120 nominations from UNESCO member states, and represent diverse educational contexts and approaches. Each displays the transformative power of education in society and its role in strengthening climate resilience. The awardees were:

- The Culture at the Heart of Development (CACD-NGO) (Benin): Preserving forest heritage and climate resilience.
- Instituto Akatu – Edukatu (Brazil): Rethinking consumption through educational platform.
- Fundación Pro Eco Azuero (Panama) – Spider Monkey School Initiative: Youth-led reforestation and environmental education.

The Prize underscores the critical role of ESD as an integral element of Sustainable Development Goal 4 on Education, and as key enabler of all 17 SDGs. The next call for nominations is set to be issued in 2027. Learn more about the Prize and its winners at: <https://www.unesco.org/en/prizes/education-sustainable-development>.

Funded by the Government of Japan, the UNESCO-Japan Prize on ESD was established in 2014 and is awarded on a biennial cycle. Successful projects in 2025 each receive an award of US\$ 50,000. The Prize has encouraged outstanding practices of ESD and has greatly contributed to spread ESD around the world. To date, it has honoured 21 ESD projects and programmes from Botswana, Brazil, Cameroon, Germany, Ghana, Guatemala, El Salvador, Estonia, Indonesia, Japan, Jordan, Namibia, the State of Palestine, Peru, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, and Zimbabwe.

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c. COP30: UNESCO calls for urgent action to accelerate green schools



Ahead of COP30, new UNESCO data shows that 96,000 schools in 93 countries have adopted green practices recommended by the Greening Education Partnership (GEP).

The GEP is a global initiative launched by UNESCO to support countries in transforming education systems to address the climate crisis and broader sustainability challenges. It aims to ensure that education plays a central role in building climate resilience, promoting sustainable development, and empowering learners to take meaningful environmental action.

The GEP framework is built around four pillars:

1. **Greening Schools** – Transforming schools into sustainable, climate-resilient environments.
2. **Greening Curriculum** – Embedding sustainability and climate education across subjects.
3. **Greening Teacher Training and Education Systems Capacity** – Ensuring educators are equipped to teach sustainability.
4. **Greening Communities** – Engaging wider communities in climate action through education.

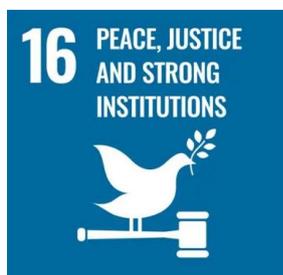
Pillar 1 focuses specifically on supporting schools to adopt a whole-school approach to sustainability integrating environmental action into governance, facilities, teaching and learning, and community engagement.

Read more: [COP30: UNESCO calls for urgent action to accelerate green schools](#)

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9. Other News

a. Three Simple Actions – SDG 16 – Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions



- **Exercise Your Right to Vote and Hold Officials Accountable**
- **Promote Inclusivity and Oppose Discrimination**
- **Support Organizations Working for Peace and Human Rights**

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

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b. Ireland Achieves UNESCO Greening Education Partnership Pillar 1 Target “Greening Schools” through An Taisce’s Green-Schools and Green-Campus Programmes



In Ireland, An Taisce acts as the national operator for FEE programmes, with Green-Schools and Green-Campus programmes having already successfully achieved the *Pillar 1 target* of the UNESCO Greening Education Partnership (GEP). This significant milestone highlights the programme’s longstanding leadership in environmental and sustainability education.

There are 3,548 primary and secondary schools in Ireland registered and active in the Green-Schools programme nationwide, which is nearly 90 percent of all schools in the country. 3,395 of these schools are already awarded at least one Green Flag. In addition, 60 third level campuses including Higher Education Institutes, Further Education sites, Teaching Hospitals, and Teacher Training sites around Ireland are

active in the Green-Campus programme, with 24 awarded at least one Green Flag to date.

FEE is one of the world's largest environmental education organisations, operating in over 80 countries. It delivers internationally recognised programmes including:

- Eco-Schools
- Eco-Campus
- Blue Flag
- Green Key
- Young Reporters for the Environment
- Learning about Ecosystems and Forests (LEAF)

Through these programmes, FEE promotes environmental awareness, sustainable development, and climate literacy on a global scale. The strong alignment between the programmes, FEE, and UNESCO's Greening Education Partnership demonstrates that Ireland is not only participating in global sustainability education efforts but also leading them.

Through its internationally recognised Seven-Step methodology, schools:

- Establish a Green-Schools Committee with strong student leadership
- Conduct environmental reviews on thematic topics
- Develop and implement action plans
- Monitor and evaluate progress
- Integrate sustainability into curriculum learning
- Engage the wider community
- Create a green code or charter

This whole-school framework aligns directly with the objectives of GEP's Pillar 1 creating environmentally sustainable learning environments, while fostering active citizenship and climate action.

For more information on both programmes visit

- www.greenschoolsireland.org
- <https://www.greencampusireland.org>

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c. Sustainable Progress Index 2026 - Social Justice Ireland



For the past 30 years, Social Justice Ireland has been presenting reports which measure Ireland's progress in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.

According to the recently published 2026 report, Ireland ranks 7th out of 14 comparable EU countries in this year's Sustainable Progress Index, commissioned by Social Justice Ireland. The index comprises three dimensions: economy, society and environment. Ireland is ranked in the middle of the 14 countries on the economy index in 6th place, and slightly higher on the social index in 5th place. On the environment index, Ireland performs very poorly, coming second from the bottom in 13th place. The EU14 countries are: Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Portugal, Spain and Sweden. Social Justice Ireland picked these countries because they are in the Eurozone and because they have adjusted to the European Union standards. Social Justice Ireland believe this comparison provides a useful benchmark that shows what similar countries have achieved.

Read the full report here: [Sustainable Progress Index 2026 - Social Justice Ireland](#)

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