



An Roinn Oideachais
agus Óige
Department of Education
and Youth

Education for Sustainable Development Newsletter

Welcome to the **May 2026** issue and **23rd 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 you or 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 for Organisations 2026

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

Details of the funding call and application process are available on the on the ESD Funding Call page - [National Strategy on Education for Sustainable Development in Ireland](#). The closing date for receipt of applications from organisations is Friday **5th June 2026**.

Please consult the FAQ list when completing your organisation’s application: [FAQs for ESD Funding Call for Organisations 2026](#)

Organisations can apply for a maximum of €25,000 to support ESD projects with schools. ESD Funding for Organisations 2026 has a total fund of circa €650,000.

The department will run a separate **ESD funding call for schools in September**. Details of the call for **schools** will be published in the September 2026 issue of the ESD Newsletter to which you can subscribe here: [Education for Sustainable Development Newsletter](#) .

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b. ESD to 2030 – Funding Evaluations 2025

Organisations and schools who received ESD funding in 2025 are now being asked to submit evaluation reports to the department on their projects. The required form has been emailed to the schools and organisations. The deadline to submit your funding evaluation is **30 June, 2026**.

Evaluation reports provide great insights into what is happening on the ground and are an significant source of “case studies” for progress reports. Importantly, evaluation reports demonstrate the positive impact that ESD funding has on implementation of the strategy.

Please contact us (esd@education.gov.ie) if your organisation or school has yet to receive an email with instructions on how to submit your evaluation report.

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c. The 11th National ESD Forum – Save the Date!

The Eleventh National Forum on Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) will take place on **17 November 2026** at **Croke Park, Dublin**, during Ireland's Presidency of the European Union. This annual event under Ireland's ESD to 2030 Strategy is led this year by the Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science (DFHERIS) in coordination with Department of Education and Youth and the Department of Children, Disability and Equality.

The theme of this year's Forum is ***Education for Sustainable Development: A Critical Enabler of EU Values and Goals*** and seeks to build from the the high-level ESD conference hosted by the Cypress EU Presidency in May 2026 under the theme of [Whole-Institutional Approaches to ESD](#).

The November forum will bring together ESD stakeholders from across Ireland and the EU to share practice, experience and learning, while exploring Education for Sustainable Development through a wider European lens

Key questions that will be explored through plenary sessions, lightening talks, exhibition stands and workshops include:

1. How can ESD continue to advance shared EU values and goals?
2. How can ESD better empower young people to participate meaningfully in democratic processes at local, national and EU level?
3. How does ESD support learners to translate sustainability knowledge into civic action? What is working well in educational settings and what needs to change?
4. What skills are most critical for young people to live and work in a sustainable Europe, and how effectively is education and ESD equipping learners to tackle real-world sustainability challenges? What improvements are needed?
5. How can ESD promote respect, inclusion and equality across society?
6. What changes are needed to create more inclusive education systems that ensure young people are meaningfully involved in decision-making?

For now, **please Save the Date**. Further information and how to register your interest will be issued through our national ESD Advisory Groups. Keep an eye on DFHERIS social media pages.

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d. Youth Climate Justice Funding announced

The Department of Education and Youth has recently announced almost €500,000 in funding through the Youth Climate Justice Fund. Ten youth-led climate justice projects taking place across Ireland in 2026 are being funded as part of Government's ongoing commitment to supporting young people to lead on climate change within their own communities.

This funding will support young people to develop projects which raise awareness, enhance skills and take action on community-based climate issues, as well as supporting peer learning activities, social innovation, and engage with young people through science and technology, environmental awareness, community awareness, theatre and the arts.

This year's projects include:

Kinia – To further support the 2025 funded hydrogen project: This project builds on the 2025 funded hydrogen project and aims to engage 100 young people

Ógras - This project focuses on SDG 15 – Life on Land.

Localise Youth Volunteering - To develop and disseminate a climate-justice volunteering toolkit integrated with their My VP portfolio system.

Youth Work Ireland - To deliver youth-led climate justice assemblies, local action groups, global-south peer learning, and capacity-building initiatives.

Scouting Ireland - To enable and empower young people to create and deliver workshops, activities and action projects on climate justice and environmental action.

Young Social Innovators - To Strengthen climate literacy, youth leadership, and civic engagement through workshops, digital storytelling, and collaborative arts.

Foróige – To review Foróige's existing Future Proof programme and deliver a Virtual Reality version of the programme. To develop the Foróige Forest concept, expand and translate the Just Grow initiative and run climate justice webinars.

Youth Theatre Ireland - To run workshops and production of climate focused youth theatre toolkit.

In addition, two consortium groups led by ESD to 2030 advisory group members ECO-UNESCO and National Youth Council of Ireland will oversee climate justice projects being rolled out around the country.

More details can be found here: [Ten Youth Climate Projects funded with €500k investment](#)

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e. Sustainability Toolkit for Schools

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

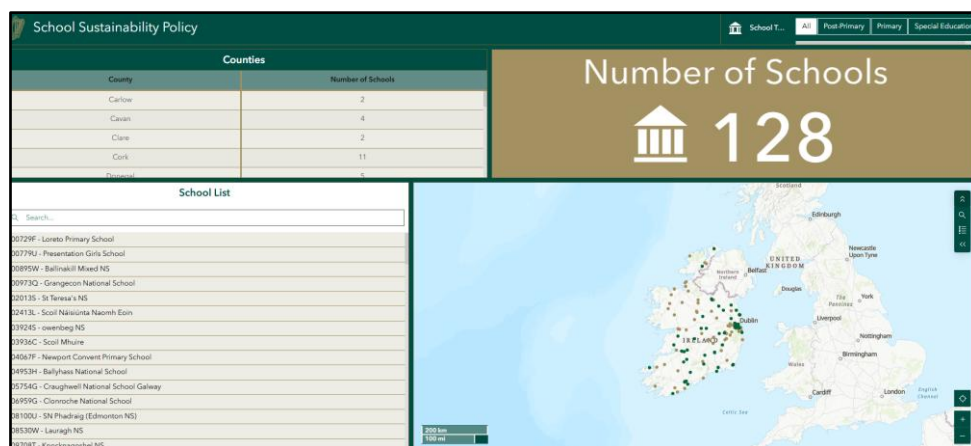
Please let us know if you would like to suggest any amendments to the toolkit for the 2026/27 school year. Contact: (esd@education.gov.ie).

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](#).

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f. School Sustainability Policy Statements - Map

Thank you to schools who have provided links for the 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](#)



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g. School Transport - Big Yellow Bus

School Transport Section is happy to report on the roll out of 39 new replacement 'Yellow School Buses' that are initially being allocated across three Bus Éireann garages in Ballina, Longford and Cork. For the 2026/2027 school year and beyond, these buses will serve areas that most need them.

An essential contractual requirement to lease this fleet was for buses to be HVO (Hydrotreated Vegetable Oil) compatible. HVO is a sustainable, low-carbon, fossil-free biofuel alternative to conventional diesel. This requirement was conditioned following careful examination by the Department and following discussions with the Office of Government Procurement (OGP) and was agreed as a short-term measure as the EV infrastructure and availability of suitable EV vehicles evolves.



The new fleet is currently going through quality checks by the Maintenance Department within Bus Éireann and also have to go through the registrations process before they take to the road. Driver training and training for maintenance staff is currently underway. It is expected that the new fleet will roll out from the end of April to the middle of May.

We can all reminisce when we see the 'Big Yellow Bus' pass by!

Read the ESD Newsletter update on the [Department of Transport's new Moving Together strategy for sustainable transport in Ireland here!](#)

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h. SDG Posters and Information Flyers for Schools

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

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

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i. Minister Naughton celebrates ESD in schools in Limerick

Minister for Education and Youth Hildegarde Naughton visited schools in Limerick on Friday, May 1. She had the opportunity to meet with many dedicated staff and students and hear about their achievements. The Minister said that she was delighted to be visiting schools in the region, and to be able to witness learning and teaching that is dynamic, creative and very much student-centred.

During her visit, the Minister attended an event at Thomond Community College in the afternoon where she officially launched the book - *Teaching the Sustainable Development Goals to Young Citizens (10-16 years): A Focus on Teaching Hope, Respect, Empathy and Advocacy in Schools*. The book was edited by Dr. Anne Dolan, Associate Professor and Lecturer in Geography in Mary Immaculate College.



Minister Naughton with Dr. Anne Dolan

Hosted by Thomond Community College, the launch was part of a showcase event to celebrate the extraordinary work in ESD taking place in Irish schools. The event was supported by the Limerick Education Centre which plays an important role in bridging gaps between schools and 3rd level locally. Representatives from several education organisations attended the event including members of the ESD Advisory Group for Schools, such as NCCA, Oide, Ubuntu, Eco-UNESCO, and the Irish Schools Sustainability Network. A special welcome was issued to international students from Palestine, Afghanistan, Senegal and Vietnam.



Minister Naughten meets students from Thomond Community College

Students from Thomond Community College together with their teacher Ms Veronica Lavin highlighted the school's magnificent projects including an inspiring model of a sustainable town, examples of lessons inspired by the SDGs, an choill bheag, the school orchard and geodome.

In her address, the Minister said "Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) is a key priority for myself and my department as we face huge global challenges such as climate change and growing global inequalities. We want to ensure that all schools are places and spaces for sustainability. That all learners have opportunities to engage with sustainable development both in their learning but also in the development of their skills. We want to see them actively taking part in sustainability initiatives around the school and in the local community. Empowering and mobilising our young people to take action for sustainable development both as individuals but also as members of the wider community is a key aspect of ESD".

A comprehensive set of teaching resources is available on the Teaching the Global Goals padlet <https://padlet.com/annedolan/teaching-the-global-goals-o6rds38ylyfy6a28h>

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2. School Updates

a. Leaving Certificate - Climate Action and Sustainable Development at Loreto Secondary School, Balbriggan.

Climate Action and Sustainable Development: A Year in Review

The following piece is from Mary O'Connell and Lauren Garraway both teaching in Loreto Secondary School, Balbriggan. In this piece they reflect on the first year of Climate Action and Sustainable Development in their school.



Teaching CASD has been an incredibly rewarding experience for both students and teachers. Throughout the year, we explored key topics such as just transition, climate justice and injustice, social position and power, and the importance of nature-based experiences. These themes encouraged students to think critically about global challenges while reflecting on their own role in creating a more sustainable future.

An impactful aspect of the course is the opportunity to bring learning beyond the classroom. Our nature-based experience at the beach stood out as a particularly memorable moment. Students immersed themselves in their local environment engaging with the natural world in a meaningful and reflective way. This experience deepened their understanding of sustainability and had a noticeable positive effect on their wellbeing. Many students expressed how calming and grounding they found the experience, highlighting the importance of connecting with nature in today's fast-paced world.

Classroom discussions were equally powerful, particularly when exploring issues of climate justice and social inequality. Students demonstrated empathy, curiosity and a growing awareness of the complexities surrounding climate action. Building on this, our TY class is currently working on creating and facilitating workshops for Earth Day, which they will deliver to other TY and 1st Year students. This initiative has empowered students to take ownership of their learning while promoting sustainability across the wider school community.

As we look ahead, we are excited to build on this foundation, with plans for a school trip to Iceland next year. This will offer students a unique opportunity to witness climate processes firsthand and further deepen their understanding of sustainability in action.

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b. ESD in Schools updates

Editor's Note: Thank you to all the schools who sent us in updates on all of 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 Rushall National School

At Rushall National School in Co. Laois, we are thrilled to share our exciting progress in our journey towards sustainable education. Over the past three years, our school garden has blossomed, and we are delighted to announce that we have received funding from ESD to 2030 for a new Polytunnel. This initiative has been a fantastic opportunity for our small rural school, thanks to the dedication of our active Green Schools team.



With the generous support of our wonderful Parents Association, we were able to expand our Polytunnel to a spacious 8m x 3m, providing ample room for our students to engage in hands-on learning. One of the highlights of our gardening efforts is our annual BBQ in June, where we celebrate the fruits of our labour by enjoying the food we have grown together.

This past month, we planted a variety of crops in our new Polytunnel, including strawberries, potatoes, tomatoes, lettuce, onions, and peppers. The enthusiasm among our students is palpable as they eagerly take on the responsibility of caring for these plants. We are also grateful to our local Tidy Towns group for their involvement, offering invaluable planting advice and sharing their knowledge with our community.



As we look forward to tasting our produce in June, we are proud of the collaborative spirit and commitment to sustainability that defines our school. Together, we are nurturing not just plants, but also a love for the environment and a sense of community.

Editor's Note: Well done to everyone at Rushall National School on your ESD work. A €500 One-For-All voucher to support your ESD projects is on its way to you!

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ESD at Ramsgrange Community College

Students from Ramsgrange Community School, Wexford alongside their teacher Alanna Roche have been recognised for their outstanding environmental research, showcasing innovative and practical solutions to real-world sustainability challenges.

Running Road Run-off Off The Road investigated the impact of road run-off on soil quality and plant health. Their research found that pollution levels increase with road usage due to contaminants such as heavy metals, oils and salts. They explored phytoremediation using native plants and found that species such as sorrel can help absorb pollutants and improve soil conditions, providing a natural and biodiversity-friendly solution. This project received a research award at the Stripe Young Scientist competition.



When the wind blows, where the plastic go? examined the impact of storm events on coastal pollution. Their findings highlighted a significant increase in shoreline litter following storms, with fishing-related materials a major contributor. Building on this, they developed an innovative biodegradable fishing rope made from recycled cotton T-shirts to help reduce long-term marine pollution.

Both groups presented their work at the Young Environmentalist Awards semi-final in Cork and also participated in the Stripe Young Scientist competition. They were commended in the AIB Future Sparks competition and will present their projects at SciFest at the end of April and the YEA Final in May. These student achievements reflect a strong commitment to sustainability, scientific inquiry and student innovation.

Article on [Wexford Science buffs available here](#), article on [tackling pollution through science available here](#).

Editor's Note: Well done on your achievements at Ramsgrange Community College. A €500 One-For-All voucher to support ESD projects is on its way to you!

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3. Youth Section

a. Kerry Comhairle na nÓg



Supporting young people since 1971



In Méanscoil Nua an Leith Triuigh, Castlegregory, Co. Kerry we are extremely lucky to have the unique facility of a Geopark in our school.

Our group project is called *“Tales of the Trails”*. Our plan is to construct a walking path around our school’s Geopark to benefit our local school community and the surrounding wildlife of the area. Our Geopark was founded by a TY class over 3 years ago and since then a group of TY’s every year have taken care of it! It contains such facilities as a nature pond, an outdoor classroom, a wellie library, a dry-stone wall and now our path!



So far, we have planted over 50 trees with the assistance of local environmentalist and photographer, Micheal Kelly. We planted a corridor of oak trees at the entrance of the geopark. We have planted many native Irish trees around the geopark including Alder, Hawthorn and Willow. These trees protect the inhabitants of the geopark as well as acting as a home for the local native species. We were also kindly donated over 50 trees of 5 different species such as oak, birch, rowan, hawthorn, hazel and even apple tree from the Hare’s Corner in County Galway.

We decided to construct a path because it was something that hadn’t been done before and what better way to access all these amazing facilities than build a path! Our plan for the conclusion of our TY school year is to have good progress made on the construction of our path so the incoming TYs can hopefully take on where we left off and finish the project.

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4. Competitions

a. May ESD Newsletter Competition – SDG 17, Partnerships for the Goals

SDG 17 focuses on the global economy and prioritises a strong commitment to partnership and cooperation through open and universal trade for sustainable development. Coordinating policies to help developing countries, particularly the least developed countries, is vital to achieving sustainable growth and development. Monitoring this area resulted in more focus on global partnership and financial governance.



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

See: [Irelands Hub for Sustainable Development Goals](#)

E-mail you answer, name and school to esd@education.gov.ie by **Friday May 22nd** to be in with a chance of winning a €500 one for all voucher for ESD projects in your school.

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b. May ESD Class Trip Competition – Rediscovery Centre

The Rediscovery Centre's Summer Workshops

Is your school providing a summer programme? Why not book in for one of our interactive workshops! From biodiversity to engineering, the Rediscovery Centre delivers a wide range of exciting, hands-on workshops for primary and secondary schools across the country either in your classroom, online or at our unique eco-demonstration centre in Dublin. These workshops are available for both primary and secondary school groups, and they can be adapted to suit all needs and abilities.

About the Rediscovery Centre's Workshops

The Rediscovery Centre is Ireland's National Centre for the Circular Economy. We facilitate interactive, hands-on workshops in schools and libraries across the country, online, or in our hub in Dublin, in the repurposed Ballymun boiler house.

Our interactive 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, and packed full of fun!



For post-primary schools, we offer an extensive selection of interactive workshops connected to Science, Geography, Maths, CSPE, ESS, and Art, Craft and Design. Many of our programmes align closely with the new Climate Action and Sustainable Development subject, as they engage with key sustainability challenges. Participants will explore solutions to these challenges through collaborative, hands-on activities and interactive learning. Our workshops empower young people to understand their role in creating a more sustainable future and provide practical examples of local climate solutions in action.

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, linking with the Sustainable Development Goals.

- [Explore our Primary Workshops](#)
- [Explore our Secondary Workshops](#)
- [Explore our Additional Needs Workshops](#)
- [Explore our Teacher CPD Workshops](#)

[Book now!](#)

The Rediscovery Centre's Competition

One lucky class will be offered a free trip to the Rediscovery Centre. The trip will include a tour of our unique sustainable centre, as well as a workshop of your choice! Just answer the question below and send your entry with details of your school/class to ESD@education.gov.ie by **Friday, May 22nd** to be in with a chance of winning. Be sure to include the title "*ESD Newsletter Rediscovery Centre Competition*" in the subject line of your email.

Question: What did the Rediscovery Centre's building used to be?

- a) A factory**
- b) A recycling centre**
- c) A boiler house**
- d) A power station**

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c. ESD Newsletter Competitions – Winners



The winner of the **Dublin Zoo Class Visit** was **Clooney National School** in Co. Clare.

Question: How old is Dublin Zoo? Answer (a) 150 years old (b) 40 years old (c) 194 years old or (d) 75 years old

Answer: c. 194 years old

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



The winner of the **SDG 15** competition in the March issue of the ESD Newsletter is **Eske Educate Together National School** in Co. Dublin.

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)?

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

Answer: c) 70%

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



Ballinakill N.S. were the lucky winners of the December ESD competition of a trip to Airfield Estate in Dublin. Pupils from the school had a great day exploring and learning.

“The children had the opportunity to tour the working farm, meet the animals, and discover more about sustainable food production and biodiversity” – Read more and see some of the photos from their visit : [Airfield Trip | Ballinakill N.S.](#)

Also see [Airfield Estate](#).

School displays Smurfs SDGs pack to spread positive ESD message



Previous winners of the Smurfs SDG materials competition (December 2025) from Queen of the Universe National School in Carlow sent us in a photograph of a wonderful ESD focused display which incorporates resources from the All Ireland Pollinator Plan.



We are grateful for this little update from Queen of the Universe NS as it gives an insight to how prizes are implemented, as well as highlighting that even small prizes can help to spread positive messages about ESD.

If you wish to share how an ESD Newsletter Competition prize has impacted your school, please email ESD@education.gov.ie.

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d. LCETB Make a Switch Competition - Exhibition Day

Following the success of the inaugural 'Make a Switch' Schools competition in 2024-2025, Limerick and Clare Education & Training Board hosted its second annual exhibition day on 20th March 2026 at the College of FET, **NZEB** Green Innovation Campus in Roxboro, Limerick. Students from a number of primary and post-primary schools across the organisation showcased a wide range of projects with a focus on climate and sustainability.

Exhibition stands featured representatives from the organisation, including the Mulgrave Street Campus, An t-Ionad Glas Organic Campus, Outdoor Education Centres and the DECO2 project in partnership with TUS. NZEB also displayed what is on offer at its campus by showcasing solar panels, heat pumps, VR units and simulators which were available for students to explore.

The winners on the day were:

Top Post-Primary School Award:
Desmond College “3D Whiteboard Cleaner”

Top Community National/Special School Award: Fedamore CNS “Re-Action”

Most Engaging Exhibit Award:
Castletroy College “Our Air Quality Journey”

Creativity (Thinking Outside the Box) Award: Mungret Community College “Eco Volt”

Seeds of Change Award: Limerick Community Special School “LCSS Can Reduce”

Outstanding Student Contribution:
Zeina Mohammed, Coláiste Iósaef



Prizes received included money towards sustainability for the winning schools, bespoke perpetual trophies made by artists Simon Donnelly and P.J. Hehir (sponsored by IPB), and vouchers for a trip to an Outdoor Education and Training Centre. It is hoped that a separate ‘Make a Switch’ competition will be developed in 2026 for Further Education and Training centres with the aim of organisation-wide participation and knowledge sharing.

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e. Young Environmentalist Awards Finals



ECO-UNESCO's Young Environmentalist Awards 2026: Final Showcase & Awards Ceremony on May 12 in Dublin

The ECO-UNESCO Young Environmentalist Awards (YEA) 2026 will culminate in its Final Showcase and Awards Ceremony on Tuesday May 12 at the Concert Hall, RDS Dublin.

This action-packed national event brings together finalist groups from across Ireland to present their youth-led environmental action projects, developed throughout the year as part of the YEA programme. The day is split into two key events: a Showcase, where young people (10-18), exhibit over 110 finalist projects from 29 counties and share their achievements with peers, judges and guests, and an Awards Ceremony, where Awardees for each category are announced and celebrated. The day will also feature interactive exhibitions, workshops and talks, where up to 1,000 attendees will get to experience the inspiring work on display.



The projects reflect a wide range of environmental themes, including biodiversity, climate action, fast fashion, and sustainable living, highlighting the creativity and commitment of young people addressing real-world challenges.

At the final stage of their 2026 YEA journey, this event celebrates the innovation and dedication of young people taking meaningful action in their communities, while showcasing their achievements on a national stage.

The showcase is open to all. Click the link for tickets to this event:
<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/1986324497041?aff=oddtcreator>

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5. Programmes and Resources

a. Irish Schools Sustainability Network

Checklist for selecting ESD resources for your school

The ISSN have a checklist that schools can use to help them select appropriate ESD resources for the classroom: [Five key questions to ask when choosing resources for ESD](#)

ISSN STUDENT AMBASSADOR SHOWCASE

Congrats to our Student Ambassadors who completed the Student Ambassador Programme 25-26 on March 3rd with a Final Showcase at Airfield. Since September, the Ambassadors have been learning about Sustainable Energy, Global Citizenship, the Just Transition, Human Rights and more.



Their work has been about hands-on engagement and actions:

- Each Ambassador ran a sustainable energy workshop in their school before Christmas
- The group took collective action by deciding to write a letter to the Minister for the Climate, Energy and the Environment, Darragh O'Brien to gain almost 300 co-signatories and ultimately a response

- 4 of the Ambassadors participated in a Student Panel Discussion ‘Are we teaching the skills needed for a changing planet?’
- In the Final Showcase, each School presented an inspiring overview of further action projects in their school - tackling topics such as waste, water, fast fashion and biodiversity.

In all of this work, the Ambassadors started conversations with their peers, teachers and families. This work was acknowledged by Uachtarán na hÉireann Catherine Connolly, who within a day of hearing about it, sent a lovely letter to reaffirm the great work they are doing.

This Programme is not only about valuable information, skills and confidence, but also the connections and friendships that the 27 Ambassadors have made with each other across 16 schools all around the country.

Thanks to all the parents and teachers, our SAP partners SEAI and World Wise Global Schools, our guest speakers Aoife McMahon (SAP Alumni), Ali Sheridan (Just Transition) and Craig Douglas from Feet On The Soil as well as Nicky Coghlan from the RTÉ Ecolution podcast who has been documenting the Ambassadors’ journey.

We hope the Ambassadors continue to think Globally and Act locally.

IRISH SCHOOLS SUSTAINABILITY NETWORK
POST-PRIMARY SUPPORTS FOR SCHOOLS 2026/27

HOW WE CAN HELP

Whether schools would like help in delivering the ISSN Environmental Influencer Module, are seeking support to set up a whole school Environmental Programme, or would like us to deliver a workshop at a staff training day or with a sustainability team, we can support you.

Contact us if you would like to find out more about:

- ISSN Environmental Influencer Module
- Staff training workshops & CPD
- Whole school Environmental Leadership Programme
- Student Ambassadors & Biodiversity Champions

LIMITED PLACES - REGISTER NOW

CONTACT US
www.issn.ie
info@issn.ie

ISSN is grateful for the support it receives from:

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b. Education for Sustainability



Education for Sustainability invites teachers to register for their 8-week Climate Literacy Programme starting in September 2026. This in-person facilitated programme helps schools meet sustainability requirements while empowering students to become changemakers in their communities.

If you would like a class in your school to participate, please register by [completing this form](#) by **Friday, May 22**. We will be in touch at a later date to arrange a suitable time slot for delivery.

Who is this programme for?

This programme is ideal for 5th and 6th class in primary schools and 1st year and Transition Year in secondary schools. It is suitable for a range of topics including Science, Geography, Wellbeing, SPHE and Home Ec and compliments the new Climate Action & Sustainable Development Leaving Cert course.

What's included?

This award-winning Climate Literacy Programme is in line with the Education for Sustainable Development framework, and will support your school to be more sustainable through the three pillars of Campus, Community and Curriculum.

We deliver on these pillars through our fun and interactive learning methodologies, climate action projects and teacher training.

Click here to [REGISTER NOW!](#)

About Education for Sustainability

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

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c. Global Education Time



Global Education Time continues to support youth action in 10 schools, focusing on the global challenges of **migration, international inequality, gender inequality, and climate change**.

A powerful example of this is the work of students in **Coláiste Mhuire, Tuar Mhic Éadaigh, Co. Mayo**. Students engaged with the theme of water and migration through projects in Transition Year and CSPE classes, exploring its importance from both local and global perspectives. Student **Zadig O Cionnaith** created a video titled *Uisce*, examining how access to clean water can act as a push or pull factor for migrants through the theme “*Bhogfá freisin*” (“you would move too”). In addition, Transition Year student **Polina Lisnivska** produced *Mise & Uisce / Water & Me*, which was selected as the winner of the Green-Schools Water Video Competition 2026, highlighting the creativity and impact of student-led work.



Ava McNally & Rachel McEntee at the Global Education Time seminar in Warsaw March 2026

In March, a **Global Education Time seminar**, was held in Warsaw with a strong focus on youth action. **Rachel McEntee (St Oliver’s Community College, Drogheda)**, alongside **Niamh O’Halloran** and **Ava McNally (Kingswood Community College, Dublin 24)**, shared impactful classroom experiences with educators from across Europe on behalf of the Irish team. Rachel also contributed to a panel on Youth Action, highlighting the vital role of young people in shaping a more just and sustainable future.

Across the activities of Global Education Time, student voice and participation remain central to driving meaningful change.

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



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d. Sligo County Childcare Committee



A Year In Nature – Sligo County Childcare Committee Supporting Education for Sustainable Development in ELC settings

The A Year in Nature initiative has significantly enhanced environmental awareness and outdoor learning for children aged 2 to 5, fostering a sense of citizenship among young learners. Central to this programme is the Aistear Principle, which emphasises children's rights to be heard and to participate in decisions affecting their lives. This initiative, led by the Sligo County Childcare Committees and funded by Healthy Ireland through the Sligo Leitrim CYPSC, involved workshops and collaborations with key partners like the Sligo Woodland School and the Soil Collective, who provided expertise in nature-based education and soil health.



Through sensory-rich activities such as foraging, crafts, and water play, children have engaged in experiences that promote mindfulness and physical development. These immersive nature-based workshops have not only equipped educators with innovative teaching practices but also created communities of professional practice where knowledge is shared across services. With 8 successful sessions and quarterly meetings, the programme has indirectly impacted nearly 4,800 children as educators cascade their skills within their settings.

Additionally, the Balance Bike Programme delivered by Sligo Sports & Recreation Partnership supports children's physical development by providing bicycles for children and training for educators, ensuring these activities can be integrated effectively. Overall, the initiative has strengthened the connection among children, their educators, and the natural environment, nurturing a generation that is not only physically active but also environmentally conscious and prepared to take on their roles as responsible citizens. Families and communities have also derived benefits, enhancing collective awareness and participation in these vital learning experiences.

More information can be found at these sources:

- [Sligo County Childcare Committee | Supports For Families With Children & Childrens Care Professionals](#)
- [Children and Young People's Services Committees \(CYPSC\) - Interagency Working in Ireland](#)
- [Healthy Ireland](#)

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e. Junior Achievement Ireland



Junior Achievement Ireland's Energize Programme Promotes Sustainability Awareness in Primary Schools

Aligned with the objectives of Ireland's national climate and sustainability goals, Junior Achievement Ireland (JAI) has launched its Energize programme in primary schools nationwide, supporting young people to better understand environmental responsibility and sustainable development.

Funded by the Research Ireland Discover Programme, with support from the Department of Education and Youth and Gas Networks Ireland, Energize is a five-module education programme designed for 6th class students. The programme complements the social, environmental and scientific education curriculum, helping students explore how sustainability issues affect their communities and the wider world.

Environmental awareness and climate action are embedded throughout the programme. Students take part in hands on learning activities that explore topics such as renewable energy, biodiversity, the role of trees and pollinators, and responsible use of natural resources. A key element of the programme involves students designing their own "Leave No Trace" campaigns, encouraging positive environmental behaviours in everyday life. Through this learning-by-doing approach, students gain a tangible understanding of how science and STEM skills contribute to addressing global environmental challenges.

Energize also aims to spark early interest in pursuing STEM pathways as students move into second level education. Beyond traditional STEM careers, Energize shines a spotlight on rapidly growing green careers. Speaking about the programme, JAI CEO Helen Raftery said, "By connecting students with inspiring role models from the world of work and providing hands-on learning experiences, Energize gives young people the chance to see themselves in the STEM and green careers that will shape Ireland's future.

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f. WorldWise Global Schools



A Year of Growing Global Citizenship in Schools - WorldWise Global Schools

WorldWise Global Schools continues to support post-primary schools across Ireland to embed Global Citizenship Education throughout school life. Over the past year, schools have engaged in a wide range of activities exploring climate action, equality, migration, human rights, sustainability and global justice. A major focus for WorldWise Global Schools has been supporting whole-school approaches through the Global Passport. This approach encourages schools to move beyond one-off events and instead integrate Global Citizenship Education into teaching and learning, student leadership, school policies, school culture and community engagement.

Throughout the year, teachers and school leaders took part in workshops, conferences, webinars and peer learning events. Schools also benefited from in-person support visits, professional learning opportunities and a growing range of curriculum-linked resources.



At WWGS Annual Teacher Conference held in the Nano Nagle Centre in Cork. A fantastic day centred on the WWGS Guiding Principle for GCE - Finding Root Causes.

WorldWise Global Schools also continued to develop new subject guides, lesson plans and practical classroom resources to help teachers connect global issues to everyday learning. Case studies from schools across the country show the positive impact of this work, with students becoming more confident, informed and active in their communities.

Further updates:

'Global Citizenship Education at the Margins: Insights from Youthreach and Alternative Education': <https://www.developmenteducationreview.com/issue/issue-42/global-citizenship-education-margins-insights-youthreach-and-alternative-education>

Villiers School in Limerick case study: <https://www.worldwiseschools.ie/2026/02/05/community-connections-at-villiers-schools/>

WWGS seeks participant schools for research focused on Irish schools with partnerships in the global south. Interested schools contact: katie.chapple@worldwiseschools.ie

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g. Our World Awards



Our World Awards National Finals 2026

After a hugely competitive judging process and many tough deliberations, we are thrilled to announce that **15 schools from across Ireland** have been shortlisted for the **Our World Awards National Finals 2026** from Irish Aid.

Representing **Cork, Dublin, Donegal, Galway, Kildare, Louth, Limerick, Meath, Tipperary, and Wicklow**, these fantastic schools will travel to **O'Reilly Hall, UCD** on **Thursday, 7 May** for what promises to be a truly unforgettable day.

Reaching the National Finals is an incredible achievement, and we cannot wait to welcome all of our finalists and celebrate their creativity, hard work, and success. Awards will be presented across **eight categories**, and the highly anticipated **School of the Year 2026** winner will also be revealed.

It is set to be a day filled with **energy, excitement, celebration, and joy** — and we are so looking forward to sharing it with everyone involved! The event will be live streamed on the day – check out our website for more information www.ourworldawards.ie

Finalists Schools for 2026 are as follows:

Cork: Togher Boys N.S.; Scoil Bernadette;

Dublin: Balbriggan ETNS; Scoil Mhuire Mount Sackville; Gaelscoil Bhrian Bóroimhe;

Donegal: Inver N.S.

Galway: Kilcooley N.S.; Scoil Mhuire, Corr na Móna;

Kildare: Mercy Convent Primary School

Louth: St. Joseph's N.S., Dundalk

Limerick: Limerick City ETNS;

Meath: Dunboyne Senior Primary School

Tipperary: St. John the Baptist Girls School

Wicklow: St. Patrick's N.S.
Curtlestown; Wicklow ETNS



St. Patrick's N.S. Curtlestown, Co. Wicklow showcasing their entry to the Our World Awards

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h. ECO-UNESCO



ECO-UNESCO's QQI Level 5 Course in Sustainable Development and QQI Level 6 Course in Ecology and the Environment

ECO-UNESCO is offering a Level 5 Minor Award in Sustainable Development designed to build understanding and practical skills in sustainability practice. Delivered in-person in Dublin over 10-12 weeks, the programme combines collaborative group learning with practical, hands-on sustainability activities and independent work, supporting participants to apply their learning in meaningful environmental contexts. If you're interested in this course, please fill out the form linked below on our website, and we'll contact you with more details.

Please visit [Level 5: Sustainable Development - ECO-UNESCO - Environmental Youth Organisation](#) for more information.

The Level 6 Minor Award in Ecology and the Environment launches in June 2026, and provides a thorough introduction to ecological systems, biodiversity, and environmental conservation. 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 over two weeks in Dublin, the programme combines classroom-based learning with field trips to local ecological sites. Assessment is based on a project, assignment, and written examination, supporting applied learning and progression into further study or work in environmental and sustainability fields.

More information is available here: [Level 6: Ecology and the Environment - ECO-UNESCO - Environmental Youth Organisation](#)

Applications close in May.

For information on fees and application requirements, please contact training@ecounesco.ie

ECO-UNESCO's Summer Camps: Open for registration

ECO-UNESCO's summer camps will be running all summer, throughout July and August in Dublin and Cork. The action-packed Green Teen (ages 13-16) and ECO-Explorers (ages 10-12) 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 and Cork, meet like-minded people, and gain confidence and new skills. Drop-offs and pickups will be from the same locations in central Cork or Dublin, and the camps run 5 days a week from 10am – 3pm.



For dates, more info and to register, please see ECO-UNESCO's website: [ECO-Camps - ECO-UNESCO](#) or book directly here: [Booking Form](#)

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i. Libraries Ireland Resources



Did you know your local library offers a wide range of educational and learning resources for schools?

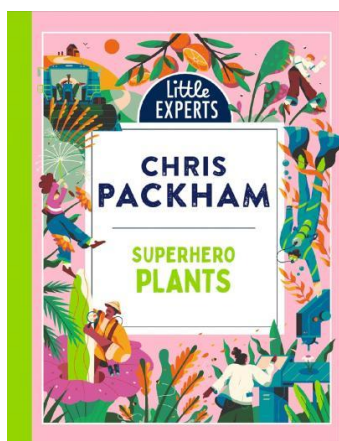
What your library may provide

- **Musical instrument lending**
- **Citizen Science Kits and Seed Libraries**
Bat detectors, nets, field guides
- **Games & Play Resources – Great for the Yard!**
Outdoor play sets, boules, board games, puzzles, jigsaws and party sets
- **Story time and tours of the library**
- **Class Sets**
SEAI resources, Climate S.O.S materials
- **Sensory Toy lending**

SDG-Themed Reading Lists

Libraries Ireland also offers reading lists for all ages aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals: [SDG Reading List | Libraries Ireland](#)

Featured Book Recommendation (Ages 5–12) for SDGs 4, 11, 13, and 15.



Not all Superheroes were capes!

This richly illustrated nonfiction book is packed with fascinating and practical information about plants, making it an excellent resource for memorable STEAM activities.

Readers will be inspired to explore scientific investigation and creative art projects after delving into its pages. More than just informative, the book is a powerful call to action, encouraging young readers to protect plant life and make environmentally responsible choices — such as using peat-free compost to help reduce carbon dioxide emissions.

Discover More - Why not check in with your local library to see what's available in your area?

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j. Fifty Shades Greener



Building a Greener Future Programme is now CPD Certified

The Building a Greener Future programme, has been successfully delivered to post-primary classrooms across Ireland during this school term, fully funded by the Kildare and Wicklow ETB.

Designed to make sustainability education accessible and engaging, the programme equips both teachers and students with practical green skills, covering topics such as climate change, biodiversity, waste, water, and green careers. Delivered through an easy-to-use online platform, it includes video lessons, classroom activities, and ready-to-use teaching resources, allowing teachers to confidently deliver impactful lessons without prior expertise in sustainability or climate change.

“The Building a Greener Future course has been an absolute Godsend for us and we have really enjoyed teaching it but also learning from it ourselves. The manual, videos and resources are phenomenal. We only have 40 minutes per week to cover content and the biggest “problem” was the intensity of student engagement, making it take longer to cover topics! We are delighted to have the opportunity to finish off the course in 2026 and we would love to continue with the programme.” States a teacher from in St.Vincent’s Secondary School in Dundalk.

A major new milestone has now been announced: the programme is officially **CPD certified**, with teachers who deliver it earning **5 Continuing Professional Development (CPD) credits**. This recognition highlights the programme’s quality and its alignment with national education and sustainability priorities.



Following its success, expressions of interest are now open for the next rollout beginning in **September 2026**. Schools and teachers who wish to take part are encouraged to secure their place early by contacting info@fiftyshadesgreener.ie .

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k. 5*S: Space, Surveyors & Students, STEM and the Sustainable Development Goals



5*S: Space, Surveyors & Students, STEM and the Sustainable Development Goals is a collaborative project between Maynooth University, Tailte Éireann, TU Dublin, Esri Ireland and the Society of Chartered Surveyors Ireland. It is funded by [Research Ireland](#) and [ESERO Ireland](#).

The project's purpose is to connect students and teachers with real-world applications of science, geography, and sustainability through engaging interactive tools and workshops. We deliver three free in person workshops to Transition Year students to integrate STEM and SDG themes in a relatable and interactive format.

We use an augmented reality app designed to visualise complex space-based data in new and engaging ways. We also use ArcGIS for schools [Sign Up - ArcGIS Online for Schools \(esri-ireland.ie\)](#). This helps promote spatial literacy and guides students and teachers to explore the science and technology behind space observation and spatial data.

We are delighted to have received funding for a third phase to continue our work with second-level schools. [5*S project recognised as MU awarded €1 million in HEA funding | Maynooth University](#)

We are also very proud to have received the HEA impact award in 2025 [Maynooth University 2025 | Funding, Governance and Performance | Higher Education Authority](#)

To register your schools' interest or find out more please follow this link [5*S: Space, Surveyors & Students – Copernicus in the Classroom](#) or contact helen.cullen@mu.ie directly.

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I. Global Village – Global Citizenship in Primary Schools



Global Village is currently piloting the Being an Active Citizen Thematic Planning Series, a new resource for primary teachers developed with the DICE Project and DevelopmentEducation.ie. The series supports teachers in building Global Citizenship Education into everyday classroom practice across the revised Primary Curriculum.

The series offers two sets of thematic plans, on Environment and Fairness, with fortnightly plans for Junior Primary (Junior Infants to Second Class) and Senior Primary (Third to Sixth Class). Each fortnight provides one lesson across the five curriculum areas in the revised Primary Curriculum: Arts Education, Language, STEM, Social and Environmental Education, and Wellbeing. The pack also includes guidelines for teachers who wish to design their own fortnightly plan on the overarching theme of being an active citizen.

The Environment plan includes activities that will be familiar to ESD educators. Junior classes can carry out a classroom waste audit, interpret satellite views of Earth using NASA Climate Kids, take part in a mini-bioblitz of the school grounds, or design pollinator-friendly spaces as part of their wellbeing lessons. Senior classes can take part in an activism gallery walk, hold a structured debate on fast fashion, compare climate indicators from NASA datasets, or contribute to a citizen-science bird count with Birdwatch Ireland. Each activity is paired with a free, open-access resource, and every fortnight links to international dates such as COP, Earth Day, and World Oceans Day.



You can access the Fairness and Environment Thematic Plans [here](#)

Teacher feedback will shape the final version of these documents.

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6. Teacher Professional Learning/ CPD

a. 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

Oide's Climate Action and Sustainable Development Professional Learning Update

Oide's Climate Action and Sustainable Development Team facilitated a professional learning experience to participating teachers of our Phase One Schools in March. The two-day event, titled "Think Forward, Learn Forward", provided an opportunity for participants to further develop their knowledge of the specification and experience various teaching methodologies for classroom practice.

During the first day, participants explored the concept of Planetary Boundaries and the economic approach of Doughnut Economics. Participants then examined how different values underpin attitudes and dispositions to Climate Action and Sustainable Development, the origin of these values and how values towards nature can change over time. Participants also engaged in different methods of inclusive dialogue to discuss activities that cause the enhanced greenhouse effect.

Professional learning materials from workshops are available at www.oide.ie.

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7. Further and Higher Education News

a. Higher Education Authority



The Higher Education Authority (HEA) continues work on the development of the [HEA ESD Framework for Higher Education](#). Feedback on the draft framework closed in February 2026, receiving 23 individual and group responses. The Executive is currently progressing the development of a supporting toolkit and guidance for higher education institutions, expected in Q3 2026. The framework will support higher education institutions in further advancing a whole-of-institution approach to responding to the *ESD to 2030 Strategy* and its associated Implementation Plan.

In **April**, the HEA supported the rollout of a number of facilitator-led professional development initiatives through [OpenCourses.ie](#). These included [Leading from Within: Capacity Building for ESD Leadership](#), delivered in partnership with Atlantic Technological University, University of Limerick, Technological University Dublin, South East Technological University and Institute of Art, Design + Technology.

The HEA is also supporting the delivery of [Embedding Global Citizenship Education \(GCE\) in Higher Education](#), developed in partnership with Maynooth University, STAND, University College Cork and Mary Immaculate College. This initiative focuses on equipping staff to embed global justice, sustainability and ethical perspectives within curricula and institutional practice.

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b. TU Dublin - First National Student Sustainability Research Conference



The first national Student Sustainability Research Conference (SSRC) was hosted by TU Dublin at Grangegorman on the 31st March. On the day an attendance of 140 represented 14 of Ireland's Higher Education Institutions.

Sixty presentations from undergraduate and postgraduate students addressed the SDGs from the perspectives of the sciences and humanities. Themes included nature, biodiversity, nutrition, wellbeing, tourism, climate education, just transitions, data centres, cultural sustainability, storytelling, sport, the circular economy, materials and design, and business and industry. The work reflected the wealth of ways in which sustainability and the SDGs are being addressed by students of Ireland's HEIs and the role that all disciplines play in working with the SDGs.



Six workshops with 90 of the attendees were facilitated by colleagues and practitioners from UG, National Youth Council of Ireland, TU Dublin, UCC, and SETU.

- **Coping with Climate Change: Climate Justice and Action in a World on Fire**
- **Careers in Sustainability**
- **Sustainability Impact Workshop**
- **Planit Play**
- **Step into the Doughnut**
- **Beyond 2030 The Future of the SDGs**

The SSRC was an excellent networking opportunity for students and gave participants a sense of the breadth of the SDG research community. The response from participants was strongly supportive. It is intended that the conference move between HEIs in Ireland and we are currently working to identify the 2027 host.

Contact ken.boyle@tudublin.ie

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8. International Updates

a. UNESCO GEM Report Launch



The launch of the 2026 Global Education Monitoring (GEM) Report took place on 25 March 2026 at UNESCO's headquarters in Paris. The report focused on access and equity in education and was hosted back-to-back with the Global Education Coalition sixth annual meeting, which took place on **March 23 and 24**.

Details of the event, include a full recorded video of the event can found here: [High-level launch of the 2026 GEM Report Countdown to 2030: Access and equity | Global Education Monitoring Report](#)

The SDG 4 High-level Streeting committee saw that this launch event brought together ministers of education and leading voiceds from around the world.

The 2026 GEM Report is the first in the three-part Countdown to 2030 series, which in addition to access and equity (2026) will also cover quality and learning (2027) and relevance in education (2028). This builds on 25 years of experience monitoring education progress, and the series will assess what policies have enabled some countries to improve faster than their peers. This will help to frame the international dialogue on a future education agenda in the run up to 2030. Five years away from the SDG 4 deadline, 272 million children and youth remain out of school.

The GEM Report can be accessed here: [Global education monitoring report 2026: access and equity, countdown to 2030 - UNESCO Digital Library](#)

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b. 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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c. ESD Okoyama Award



The ESD Okayama Award recognizes outstanding ESD (Education for Sustainable Development) activities around the world, and is now open for applications.

The ESD Okayama Award Steering Board and the City of Okayama, Japan are calling for initiatives from around the world that contribute to the spread of ESD in local communities that can serve as models of good practice. Projects that educate and encourage people to learn from each other to take action and create a sustainable society are welcome.

You can view the latest news about the Award and previous applicants: <https://www.city.okayama.jp/kurashi/category/1-9-9-8-3-0-0-0-0-0-0.html> and <https://www.youtube.com/@esd7141> for previous winning projects' presentations.

Eligibility: ESD projects conducted by an organization (not an individual) that have been ongoing for at least three years as of April 2026.

Application Deadline: 14 May 2026 (Thursday), 5pm (Japan Standard Time)

For more, please visit <https://www.city.okayama.jp/kurashi/0000070653.html>

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9. Other News

a. Three Simple Actions – SDG 17 – Partnership for the Goals



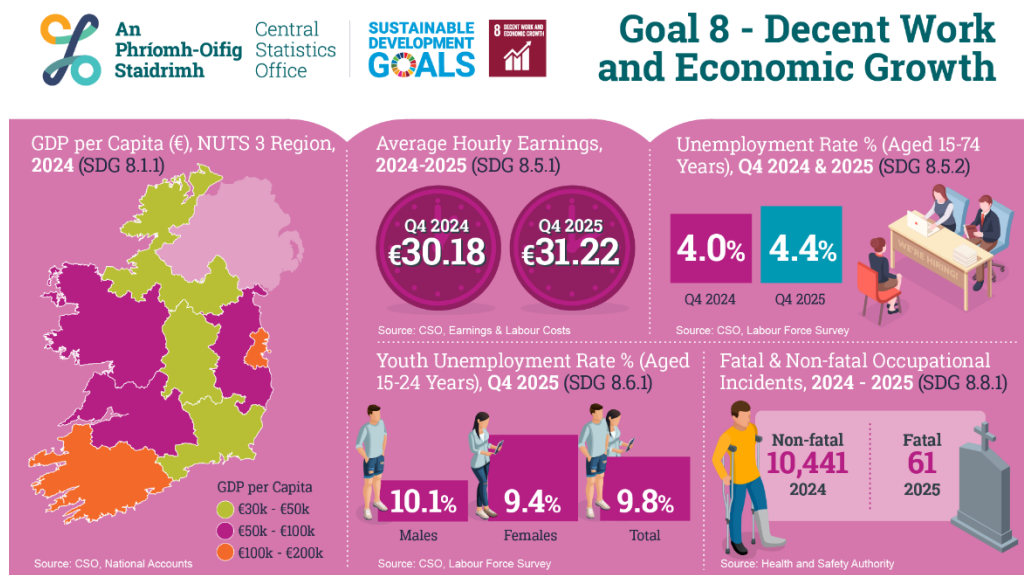
1. Work with local organisations, schools, community groups and business to tackle community issues.
2. Use your skills to help others, and offer training and mentoring to help young people, the elderly, and more.
3. Support fair, rules-based trading by choosing to buy from local producers or purchasing fair-trade products.

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

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b. Central Statistics Office

The Central Statistics Office have published a new infographic on Ireland and the UN SDGS - Goal 8 Decent Work and Economic Growth 2024.



Click here to explore the infographic and data in more detail: [Ireland's UN SDG's - Goal 8 Decent Work and Economic Growth 2024 - Central Statistics Office](#)

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c. New – Circular Economy Strategy published



Rialtas na hÉireann
Government of Ireland

A new whole-of-Government Circular Economy Strategy has set out the pathway to a more sustainable economy where materials and products are kept in use for longer and waste is reduced.

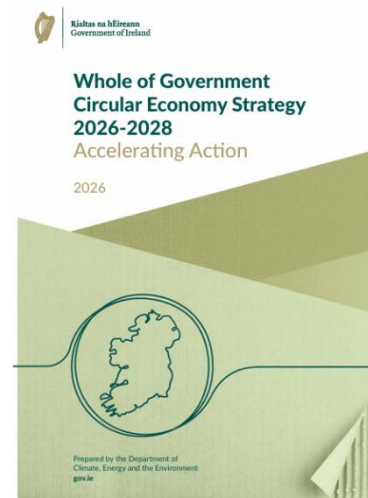
Among many goals, the strategy will look to embed circular economy principles in education, such as through the Green Skills National Further Education and Training Strategy ([green skills 2030](#)), and engagement between local authority Civic Amenity Sites and Circular Economy Demonstration and Outreach Hubs, such as The Rediscovery Centre ([The Rediscovery Centre](#)).

The policy aligns with the National Policy Statement and Roadmap of Circular Textiles (more details below: [National Policy Statement and Roadmap on Circular Textiles](#))

Notably, the strategy acknowledges the potential of delivery targeted circular economy education, with the formal education sector. This can be enhanced through ongoing curriculum development and CPD opportunities designed for and delivered to school leadership and staff.

You can read the strategy at this link: [Whole of Government Circular Economy Strategy 2026-2028. Accelerating Action](#)

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d. New – National Policy Statement and Roadmap of Circular Textiles

The Department of Climate, Energy and the Environment have recently published the National Policy Statement and Roadmap of Circular Textiles.

Details can be found here: [National Policy Statement and Roadmap on Circular Textiles](#)

The National Policy Statement and Roadmap sets out a clear policy direction for Ireland to realise its potential for a more circular and sustainable economy for textiles. Extensive consultation was conducted with stakeholders, including the Department of Education and Youth, prior to the launch of the roadmap. DCEE also engaged widely with policy and legislative developments at EU level, the EPA, and Local Government partners. A public consultation was completed in 2025, and research was commissioned in 2024 which both informed the roadmap.

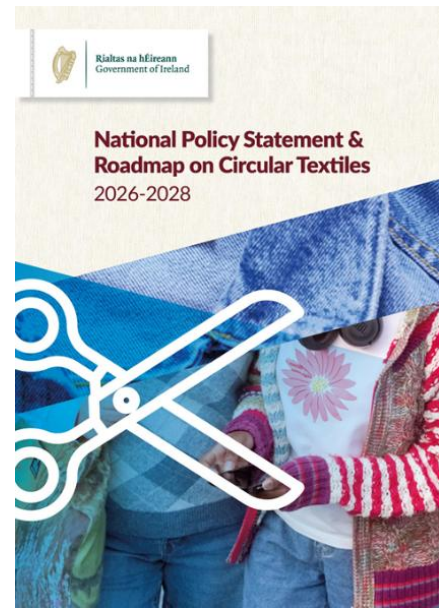
ESD to 2030 includes strong commitments to embedding sustainable themes and principles, which includes the circular economy, across the curriculum.

The roadmap seeks to link with ESD to 2030 and to build awareness around shared themes.

Some relevant educational resources on the circular economy and textiles include:

- [The Fast Fashion Problem: Who Pays the Real Price? - Scoilnet](#)
- [Let's Fix Fashion | Join | Green-Schools](#)
- [Fast Fashion - Global Action Plan](#)
- [Fashion Focus – ECO-UNESCO](#)
- [Relove Fashion](#)
- [Junk Kouture: Youth Sustainable The World's First Sport for Creatives for Schools!](#)
- [Educating the next generation about wool | Wool in School](#)

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e. New – Sustainable Transport Strategy published



An Roinn Iompair
Department of Transport

A new transport strategy called **Moving Together**, has been published by the Department of Transport - [Moving Together – A Collaborative Approach to Systems Change in Transport 2026–2030](#). Following a public consultation process and the incorporation of new commitments arising from the Programme for Government 2025, the strategy will fulfil an important commitment in recent Climate Action Plans, and will support efforts to reduce unsustainable transport demand and complement the significant Government investment in public transport and active travel. This shall help to address the negative impacts of traffic congestion on well-being, the economy, and the environment.

Education is recognised for its significant impact on transport in Ireland (see page 53-55) and for its ability to effect behavioural change and establish sustainable habits. As education is generator of demand, this places it as a priority area in the strategy. For example, the strategy highlights that up 19% of all travel by families is carried out for educational activities. In addition, the Department of Education and Youth transports over 181,000 children, including greater than 24,000 children with special educational needs, to and from their school daily. It is integral that sustainable transport be linked closely to education and schools around Ireland.

ESD to 2030 is a highly important piece of this strategy through its driving role in sustainability education in schools. Moving Together points directly to the Sustainability Toolkit and ESD Newsletter as key enablers of promoting and supporting sustainable practices in Education, including transport.

Supporters of sustainable school transports are listed as the Department of Education's School Transport Scheme - [School transport](#) – An example of the adapting to the sustainability challenges faced in school transport can be read in our update on [The Big Yellow Bus](#).

The strategy also highlights Green Schools extensive work with sustainable travel supports - [Travel | Green-Schools](#) – one positive initiative is #AndSheCycles – [#andshecycles Campaign | Green-Schools](#).

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f. New – Independent Advisory Committee on Nature Restoration Recommendations



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.

We hope that you enjoyed reading this issue the department's ESD Newsletter. If you wish to receive it directly into your inbox every quarter, please [sign up](#) to the circulation list!

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